



April 14, 2025

Grand Rapids City Commission
City of Grand Rapids
300 Monroe Ave NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Mayor LaGrand and Members of the City Commission:

The Grand Rapids Chamber, the Building Owners and Managers Association of West Michigan, and the Commercial Alliance of Realtors support moving the city of Grand Rapids into a green, sustainable future through the use of public-private partnerships. Our community has often been recognized as a leader in sustainability and collaboration.

While we support a number of the objectives proposed throughout the Climate Action Adaptation Plan, there are several recommendations/action steps where we have received strong concerns from the businesses we represent.

We strongly oppose any policy that mandates Energy Benchmarking and Transparency Requirements on commercial building owners, such as referenced in Action 1 of Strategy 2 for Commercial Buildings¹.

Energy Benchmarking and Transparency Requirements put an undue burden on commercial building owners and the business that operate in them. Policies such as this fail to consider the diverse designs, uses, and ages of buildings in Grand Rapids. The recommendations to publicly fine and/or score businesses and owners of buildings who may not meet the arbitrary blanket energy standards set is extremely concerning.

Such requirements will have a disproportionate impact on older buildings and small businesses that lack the staff, resources, and capacity to comply. This is likely to place a disproportionate burden on microlocal businesses across Grand Rapids, particularly in areas that have seen less investment and have older infrastructure. It also acts as an additional obstacle to new investment or rehabilitation in Grand Rapids compared to neighboring communities.

The best way forward is collaboration and public-private partnerships. Community goals, education, and incentives offer non-punitive opportunities to showcase those who have the interest and ability to support shared objectives.

Thank you for your consideration. We are happy to continue discussions on a green and sustainable future in Grand Rapids, but it is crucial to avoid putting unnecessary burdens on buildings and businesses.

¹ Grand Rapids Climate Action & Adaptation Plan Public Draft December 2024 – Page 63