

July 17, 2024

Subject: Beyond a Number: Making Grand Rapids a Climate Justice Leader

I am a lifelong Grand Rapids resident, person of faith, and climate activist. I care deeply about Michigan's future, including our ability to create a just and rapid transition to a clean energy, sustainability city. We can be leaders!

As the second largest city in Michigan, Grand Rapids should be a municipal leader on climate action and climate justice. This is why I am calling on you and your colleagues in City Hall to take concrete actions to help achieve the City of Grand Rapids' community-wide emissions reduction goals of 62.8% per capita by 2030 and 100% by 2050.

We cannot meet these goals without implementing meaningful policies and providing adequate funding. Please prioritize the city's stated goals by increasing investment in public transit, walkability, and bikeability, especially in Black and Brown neighborhoods in Grand Rapids historically impacted by environmental injustices. The city's Office of Sustainability should also have more funds and staff to carry out this work, which should be shared on a public dashboard to increase transparency and accountability.

Finally, please publicly acknowledge that the goals you have set are a floor, not a ceiling. I urge you to take every opportunity for additional support or funding that will help us reach our emissions reduction goals sooner than planned. In the midst of an undeniable climate crisis, our community is counting on you to provide ambitious leadership. Please show us you are up to the challenge.

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