

July 18, 2024

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

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. You must 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.

Furthermore, I would like to address the impact climate change specifically has on our food system. We will undoubtedly see stresses in food production and availability as the climate crisis worsens. This is why I urge you all to consider actions that support young farmers and small farms financially so they can more easily provide healthy, local food to our area.

As a member of the Grand Rapids Food Co-op, I also urge the City to incentivize cooperative businesses like the Grand Rapids Food Co-op that bring democracy and collective ownership to our economy. Food co-ops and other cooperative businesses have shown to be more sustainable than regular grocers, provide better wages to their workers, and are more resilient in times of stress like we saw during the Covid-19 pandemic.

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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