

July 17, 2024

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

I moved to Grand Rapids a year ago and the things I have loved most about living here are the natural resources available for recreation and the community-oriented nature of people. These are the reasons we would like to continue to call Grand Rapids our home. It makes sense for Grand Rapids to be a climate leader to protect our natural resources and community, and being a climate leader will continue to draw new people and make current residents able to stay here.

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.

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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