

4. Resolution setting April 29, 2025 as the date to hold a public hearing on the Grand Rapids Climate Action and Adaptation Plan



# CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS AGENDA ACTION REQUEST

Item Number: 6

**DATE:** April 15, 2025

**TO:** Mark Washington, City Manager

**COMMITTEE:** Committee of the Whole

**LIAISON:** Mark Washington, City Manager

**FROM:** Annabelle Wilkinson, Chief Sustainability Officer  
Office of Sustainability

**SUBJECT:** **Resolution setting April 29, 2025 as the date to hold a public hearing on the Grand Rapids Climate Action and Adaptation Plan**

The attached resolution would establish April 29, 2025, as the date for the City Commission to hold a public hearing on the Grand Rapids Climate Action and Adaptation Plan.

## Overview

The Grand Rapids Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP) is a road map for how the Grand Rapids community will reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and prepare for the impacts of climate change on people, the environment and infrastructure. The CAAP features goals, strategies and actions for the community to meet the established community-wide science-based targets:

1. 62.8% per capita GHG reduction communitywide by 2030 from 2019 emissions
2. 100% per capita GHG reduction by 2050 from 2019 emissions.

The CAAP, once adopted, will serve as an educational resource as well as an action-based guide for climate change work within the City and across community. The City is committed to evaluating the Climate Action & Adaptation Plan every five years in tandem with a new GHG emissions inventory.

## Engagement Process

Before commencing the CAAP process, the City of Grand Rapids worked with an intersection of 20 local BIPOC leaders and traditional white environmentalists to create the framework for the community-based organization, Community Collaboration on Climate Change or C4. The City partnered with the C4 to design a planning process for the CAAP that would focus on a targeted universalism approach. Targeted universalism is a process that includes setting universal goals and assessing how

different groups in the community fare relative to the goals. Barriers, structural impediments, and resource deficiencies are addressed directly to ensure all groups achieve the goals. This approach was chosen because while all residents regardless of socioeconomic status will feel climate impacts (with many impacts projected to worsen). Individuals will not equally experience these changes. An EPA report found that four socially vulnerable populations, low-income communities, BIPOC, educational attainment below a high school graduate level and individuals ages 65 and older may be more exposed to the highest impacts of climate change. Understanding the comparative risks to vulnerable populations was critical for developing effective and equitable strategies for responding to climate change.

In practice, the CAAP's target universalism approach centered community engagement on those most likely to face barriers to participation, including residents who are unhoused, identify as BIPOC, youth and seniors, and Spanish-speaking communities. The planning process was designed to include three rounds of community feedback opportunities.

#### 1. Visioning: (March 2023 – February 2024)

Residents provided insights into how a changing climate affects their life, priorities for the CAAP, and their vision of a just climate future. Using the results of the Visioning feedback and the GHG Emissions Inventory, the City identified the key sectors of focus for the CAAP and began drafting each of the six chapters. The City created Climate Advisory Teams (CAT) for the Transportation, Commercial Buildings, and Residential Housing sectors as no active local multi-stakeholder groups existed on these subjects that addressed climate change. The CATs met monthly to draft key sector strategies and actions. A total of 81 individuals participated across three CATs. The strategies and actions for the key sectors of Energy Systems, Nature Based Solutions, and Food Systems were drafted based on multiple rounds of survey feedback, focus groups and 1-on-1 meetings with local subject matter experts.

#### 2. Analysis: (February – October 2024)

Once all key sector chapters were drafted, the City, in partnership with the C4 and other community stakeholders, engaged with residents at community events, focus groups, an online survey, and hosted seven community listening sessions (six of the seven located in NOFs) to receive input on the drafted strategies and actions. Simultaneously, the Climate Risk & Vulnerability Assessment engagement occurred for the plan and included six in-person focus groups hosted by C4 with vulnerable populations to discuss participants past experiences with and the possible future impacts of heat and flooding.

#### 3. Plan Development: (December 2024 – February 2025)

After incorporating all analysis engagement into the CAAP a final draft was released in December 2024. Residents and community stakeholders provided feedback on their satisfaction with the plan and any additional suggested changes. Overall, the feedback received from the survey on the CAAP was constructive, providing appreciation for the plan and relaying technical language adjustments of the goals, strategies and actions. Office of Sustainability staff incorporated public feedback and comments from City staff into the final draft. Many of the changes were minor and clarified language, but more significant changes included: adding an action (RH S1 A9) to educate on climate resilient building design, adding an action (T S4 A2) to advocate for transit funding, and adding a goal to the Transportation chapter around increasing public, active and shared modes of transportation.

Each round included in-person events and an online survey for additional accessibility. Events focused on removing barriers to participation by providing dinner, childcare, translation services, and compensation for participation. The C4 created a CAAP Committee to plan the engagement events, provide feedback on the CAAP process, collaborate on a Racial Equity Framework, and review drafted recommendations through the planning process.

Concurrently, the City's Office of Sustainability collaborated with the City's Planning Department to understand the intersectionality of the Community Master Plan (CMP) and the CAAP. As climate change and environmental justice emerged as key themes in the CMP's pre-planning engagement, the Office of Sustainability coordinated with the Planning Department and CMP consultants to receive applicable community engagement data from the CMP process to include in the CAAP.

In total, the CAAP process engaged over 1,600 people. However, the strategies and actions in the CAAP are also from the incorporation of CMP engagement and data. CMP data was sourced specifically from the CMP's second round of engagement, which included over 1,800 participants and held workshops on the topics of:

- Land use planning for climate mitigation and adaptation
- Land use planning for environmental justice, health, and equity

The majority of those engaged (937) in the CAAP engagement process were during in-person events. While demographic data was requested at events with feedback sheets, often demographic data was not provided. However, by focusing on a targeted universalism approach, CAAP in-person events removed barriers to participation and were intentionally located and marketed to residents in the neighborhoods of focus. Demographic data (race, ethnicity, gender identity, zip code/ward) was collected from each round of the CAAP surveys, but alone does not capture the authenticity of the planning process (as it captures only 41% of those engaged). A complete breakdown of the community engagement process and participation can be found in Appendix B of the CAAP.

## Plan Content

The CAAP brings together targeted universalism community engagement with local community-based organizations and technical resources, such as a greenhouse gas emissions inventory and climate risk and vulnerability assessment, to identify the key sectors needed to address climate change. Collectively, the plan offers 16 goals to be met by 2030 that will help get us on the pathway to carbon neutrality by 2050. The plan includes 32 over-arching strategies and 197 actions to be implemented to meet the City's established community-wide science-based targets. Based on the public engagement and data analysis, six key sectors of focus were established and five themes reflecting community's values were woven throughout the plan's actions.

### *Key Sectors of Focus (Chapters)*

1. Energy Systems: Addressing the generation, distribution and consumption of fossil fuel-based energy.
2. Residential Homes: Increasing the affordability, energy efficiency, health, climate resilience and access to renewable energy of housing.
3. Buildings & Industry: Reducing GHG emissions from buildings and industrial processes.
4. Transportation: Reducing reliance on fossil fuel powered single-occupancy vehicle usage, increasing active and shared modes of transportation, and increasing access to electric vehicles.
5. Nature Based Solutions: Increasing sequestration and increasing nature's resilience to climate change.
6. Food Systems: Reducing waste and increasing access to local food and growing opportunities.

### *Themes*

1. Equity: Leveraging City influence to intentionally remove and prevent barriers created by systemic and institutional injustice.
2. Economic Prosperity: Increasing financial opportunities for both individuals and organizations in a just transition to a greener economy
3. Health: Considering physical, mental, and emotional well-being as a significant indicator of quality of life
4. Resilience: The ability of people, systems or community assets exposed to a hazard to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, transform and recover from the hazards' impacts

5. Collaboration: Working together in partnership with others; teamwork.

When implemented, the CAAP's vision is that Grand Rapids will be a resilient, low carbon city that centers equity in climate solutions to ensure a safe and healthy community. To review the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan please visit the CAAP webpage at:

<https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Government/Departments/Sustainability/Climate-Change/Climate-Action-and-Adaptation-Plan>.

### **City Commission Action**

The attached resolution would establish April 29, 2025 as the date for a public hearing on the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan. It is anticipated that the City Commission will consider adoption of the CAAP on May 13, 2025.

Your COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE recommends the adoption of the following resolution setting April 29, 2025 as the date to hold a public hearing on the Grand Rapids Climate Action and Adaptation Plan.

WHEREAS:

1. On September 28, 2021, the City Commission passed a resolution declaring climate change a crisis, which committed to creating a Climate Action and Adaptation Plan with the inclusion of community-wide science-based targets; and
2. The Office of Sustainability, with guidance from community stakeholders, Climate Advisory Teams, and City staff helped to create and conduct robust community engagement and outreach over the course of two years, which resulted in over 1,600 participants engaged; therefore

RESOLVED:

1. That the City Commission hereby schedules a public hearing on April 29, 2025 at 7:00p.m. or soon thereafter to take public testimony on the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan; and
2. That the City Commission hereby directs the City Clerk to publish notice of the public hearing to be held at 300 Monroe Avenue NW, Grand Rapids, MI, in a newspaper or general circulation.

  
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