

# 5. DESIRABLE DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER



Managing the community's physical environment, both built and natural, is a critical aspect of the Community Master Plan. This chapter provides guidance for the physical development of Grand Rapids and substantially influences the CMP's other topics, particularly transportation, housing, and economic prosperity.

# DESIRABLE DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER

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## GOAL

**Grand Rapids will have a strong sense of place through high quality design.**

New development will improve or support the existing fabric of each neighborhood.

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## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### PUBLIC INPUT

- **There is support for integrating more housing types.** Round 3 of public engagement specifically asked about comfort with housing types other than single-family homes in residential areas. The results showed significant support for accessory dwelling units in all neighborhood types and all locations. There was similar support for duplexes everywhere. Just under half of Round 3 participants supported triplexes or quadplexes in all locations. However, people were largely comfortable with these housing types being located along primary streets and near business districts.
- **There are opportunities to refine the approach to employment land.** Strategies that catalyze more regionally driven innovation districts framed by anchor institutions and high-wage, high-growth industries that attract talent, create density, and draw in capital to create further investment and growth (i.e. the Medical Mile).
- **There is a desire to preserve and create places that strengthen quality of life.** When asked about design, many people pointed to bulk and height, as well as exterior materials of a building as being important to the character of development in their neighborhood. However, residents are open to unique architectural designs that allow for creativity and innovation. Quality was highlighted as the most important thing to emphasize in the design of new buildings.

## COMMUNITY PROFILE

- **Neighborhoods are currently categorized into three unique types.** The Zoning Ordinance, which regulates land use and development standards, defines three types of neighborhoods, Traditional, Mid-Century, and Modern Era. Each neighborhood type allows for a variety of uses from mixed residential to office to commercial. Aligning regulations with neighborhood types reinforces the importance of building strong communities with access to essential services.
- **Industrial land is currently integrated along key corridors.** Industrial land today covers six percent (1,750 acres), primarily located along the river and major roadways. These areas offer unique opportunities for future redevelopment. With limited land availability, relocating industrial uses within the city would require careful consideration.
- **Grand Rapids has a number of brownfield sites.** Brownfield sites are former industrial or commercial sites where future use is affected by real or perceived environmental contamination. This inventory includes identified sites monitored by the EPA, many of which have received funding for remediation or redevelopment. A majority are located near downtown or along the Grand River. These may present unique environmental factors for redevelopment.



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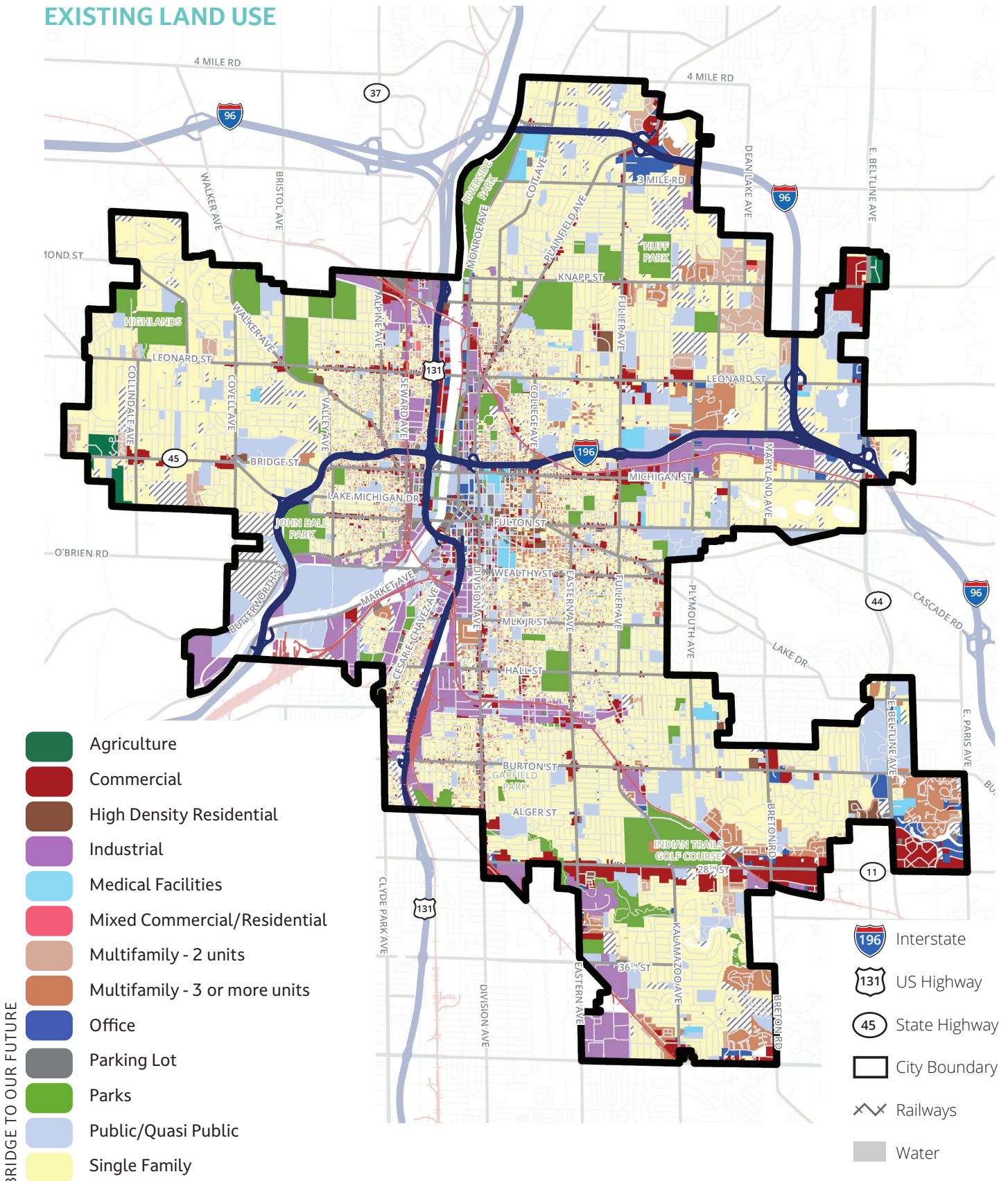
## DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Development principles describe the intent about “how” (general character) and “where” (conceptual location) growth and development in Grand Rapids should occur. They provide additional guidance for desired development outcomes and reflect a variety of themes that are mutually reinforcing, including the quality, appearance, pattern, character, and organization of development. These principles are supported by the Future Character Map, which depicts the locations where certain concepts apply through character types.

### Our Grand Rapids community will...

1. Ensure the development process incorporates residents' needs to maintain a safe, equitable, and healthy neighborhood environment.
2. Preserve and enhance the uniqueness of each neighborhood's history including physical landmarks and lived experiences.
3. Serve as stewards of the environment through development decisions that integrate natural features and climate considerations.
4. Provide desirable housing options at a broad range of styles, price levels, and occupancy types that complement established neighborhoods.
5. Focus development that integrates mixed-uses (residential, commercial, civic, institutional, office, etc.) at key locations to serve adjacent neighborhoods.
6. Connect places such as neighborhoods, mixed-use districts, employment centers, and other activity centers with opportunities to walk, bike, drive, and access public transit.
7. Cultivate community-based placemaking through infill and redevelopment that complements the form, scale, design, and cultural histories of the surrounding area.
8. Foster a downtown district that features a vibrant mix of businesses, diverse housing options, and entertainment or recreation amenities with a unique character.
9. Feature access to the Grand River through strategic development opportunities and preservation efforts.
10. Maintain the City's financial health through efficient use of infrastructure, strengthening employment centers, and expanding development incentives.

### EXISTING LAND USE



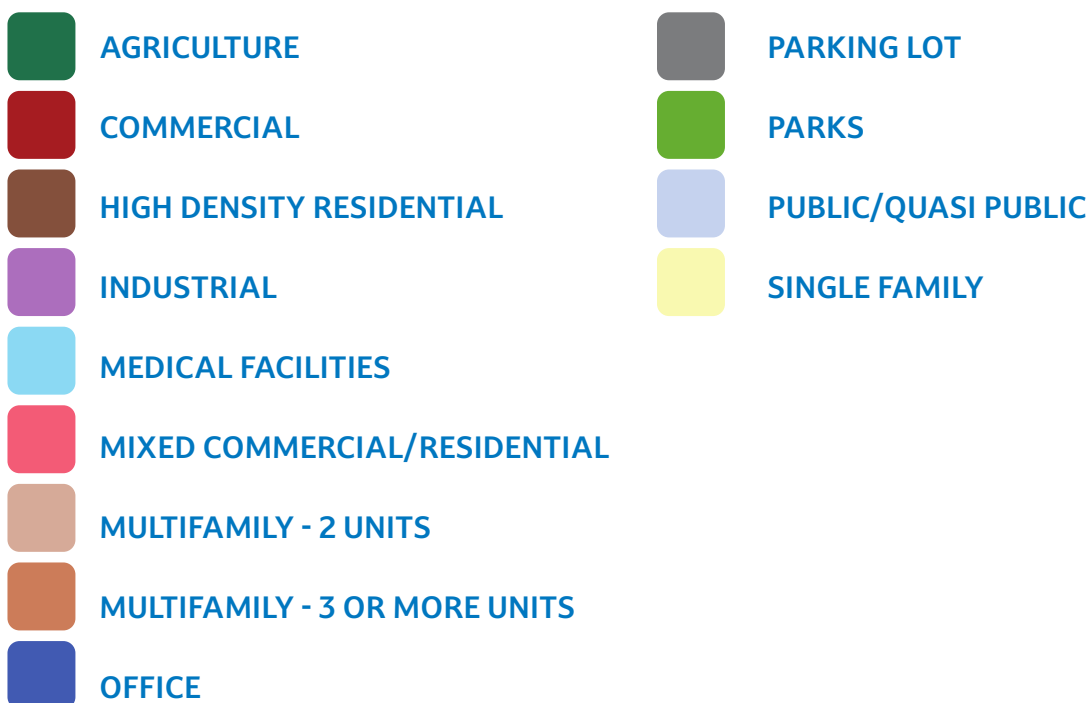
BRIDGE TO OUR FUTURE

## EXISTING LAND USE MAP

Determining desired future land use changes in Grand Rapids required first developing an understanding of current land use and development patterns.

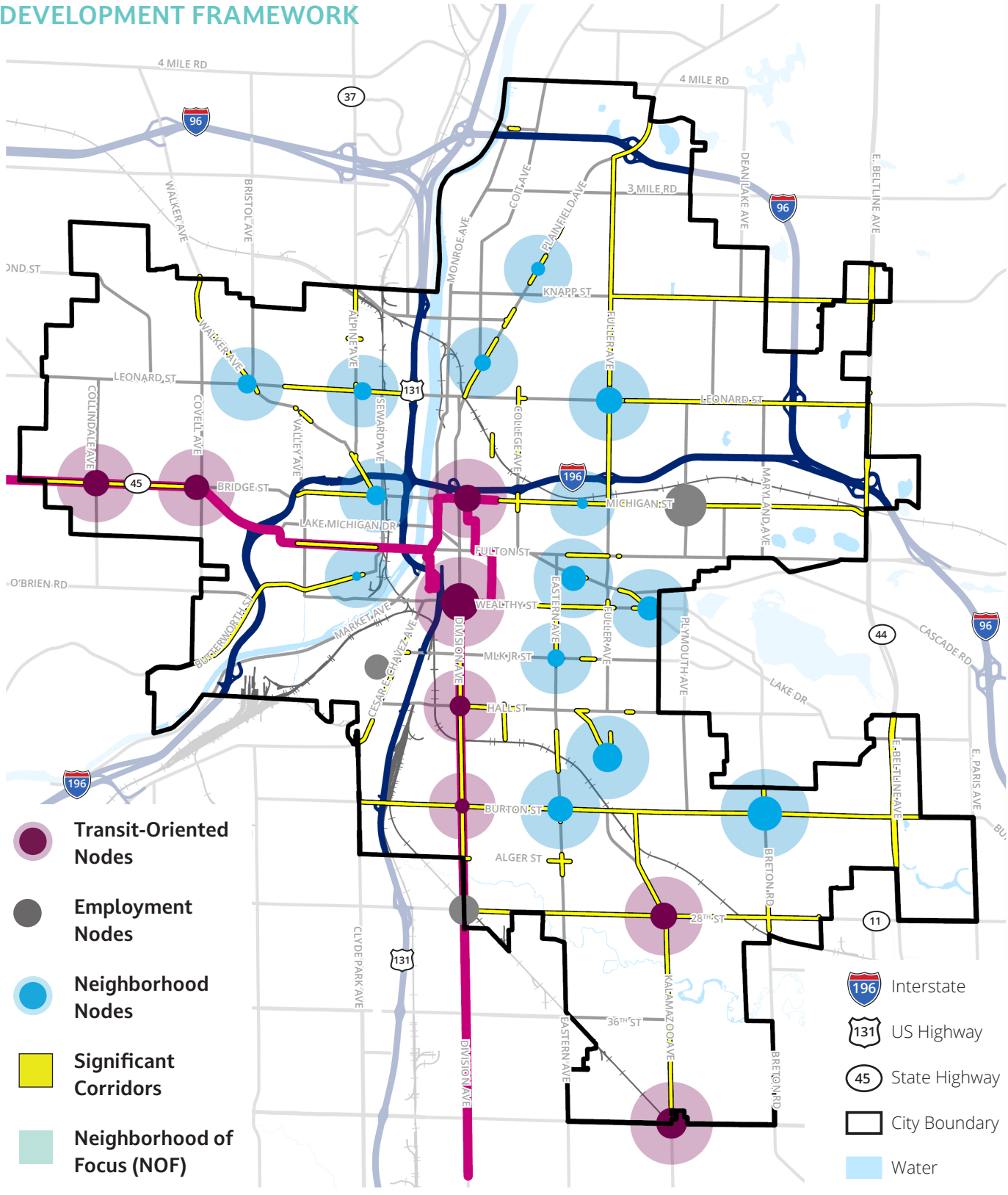
### HIGHLIGHTS OF HOW LAND IS USED TODAY

- **Position within the state and region.** At approximately 45 square miles (29,000 acres), Grand Rapids is roughly one-third the size of Detroit. However, the city makes up only a small portion of the county's land area (five percent).
- **Residential land.** Approximately 35% of the land in the city is single-family residential. That percentage increases to which increases to 43% when two- or more-unit structures are included. Complementing neighborhoods and enhancing housing is an important piece of land use decisions.
- **Industrial Land.** Industrial is integrated along key corridors. Industrial land today covers six percent (1,750 acres), primarily located along the Grand River and major roadways. These areas offer unique opportunities for future redevelopment. With limited land availability, relocating industry within the city would require careful consideration.
- **Park Space.** Approximately 80% of residents are within a 10-minute walk to parks. Most residents are within walking distance of either a neighborhood or city park. This includes public parks, schools, and open spaces available for use by the public.





# DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



- Transit-Oriented Nodes
- Employment Nodes
- Neighborhood Nodes
- Significant Corridors
- Neighborhood of Focus (NOF)

- Interstate
- US Highway
- State Highway
- City Boundary
- Water
- Bus Rapid Transit

## DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Nodes are places where people and transportation routes congregate and converge. They are typically pedestrian-friendly areas where high concentrations and a wide variety of residential, employment, retail, and other uses are located. The nodes identified in the Community Master Plan indicate the planned future context of the area and identify opportunities for future development to meet the policy intentions of this plan.

Nodes

**Transit-Oriented Nodes** are located along major transit routes. These districts are intended to contain a diverse mix of businesses that could have a regional and/or local draw and are designed to provide a range of housing choices within a ten-minute walk. Transit-oriented development is a significant solution to climate change as it creates dense, walkable communities that significantly reduce the need for driving and energy consumption.

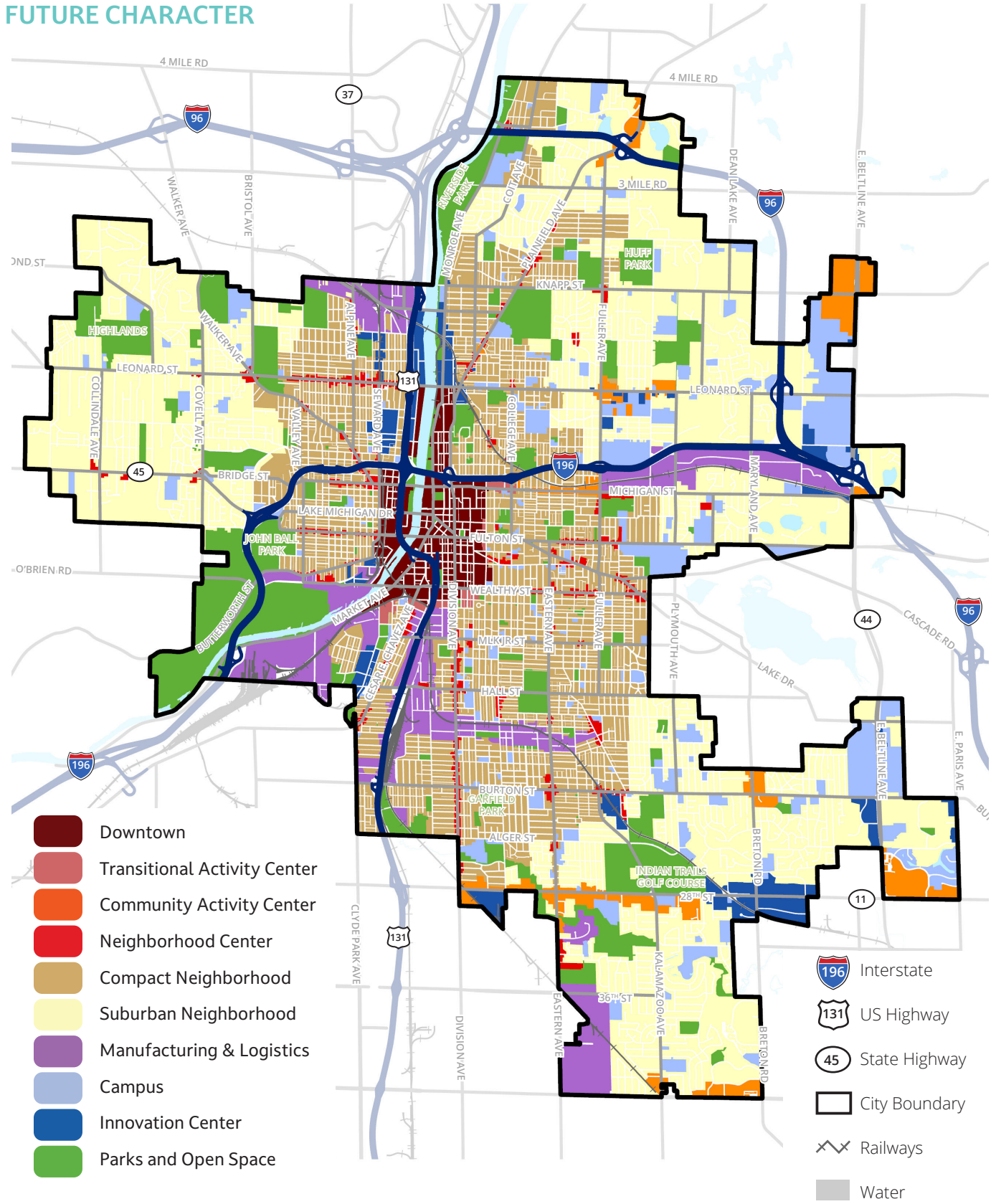
**Employment Nodes** host a mix of employment opportunities either within the node or in the surrounding areas. These nodes encourage growth within areas that support or could support regionally significant concentrations of non-retail employment including institutional, office, and industrial centers. There may be opportunities for high- and medium-density residential, retail, and supporting services.

**Neighborhood Nodes** are central to residential neighborhoods or areas of businesses. These mixed-use areas are primarily neighborhood-serving but may have a regional draw. They provide residents with access to businesses, services, and amenities within a short walk of their home. Neighborhood nodes are intended to include a mix of commercial, civic, institutional, and residential uses. Allowing for increased residential density within a short radius (quarter-mile) of neighborhood nodes is important for supporting existing and future nodes.

**Significant Corridors** are important connectors along which safety and access for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-car modes should be prioritized. These corridors connect residents to important places in the community, such as the nodes described above. Increased residential density may be appropriate along significant corridors. Enhancements may include investments in sidewalks, crosswalks, bicycle routes, traffic calming, street trees, street lighting, and other public realm improvement, in line with the Vital Streets Plan.

**Neighborhoods of Focus (NOF)** are the census tracts in the near west and south side of Grand Rapids in relation to downtown. Due to systemic and historic inequities, residents in NOFs experience the most disparate outcomes in income, educational opportunities, home ownership, and wealth accumulation compared to other Grand Rapids census tracts and the city as a whole. The City of Grand Rapids strives to eliminate inequities, therefore is intentional to invest in these areas.

# FUTURE CHARACTER



- Downtown
- Transitional Activity Center
- Community Activity Center
- Neighborhood Center
- Compact Neighborhood
- Suburban Neighborhood
- Manufacturing & Logistics
- Campus
- Innovation Center
- Parks and Open Space

- Interstate
- US Highway
- State Highway
- City Boundary
- Railways
- Water

BRIDGE TO OUR FUTURE

## FUTURE CHARACTER MAP

The Character Map expresses the City’s intent for where and how Grand Rapids should use its land in the future with a particular focus on the character and qualities of development. Each type describes attributes of urban form and function, including the size and type of buildings and their relationship to the street, the surrounding street and block pattern, parking and access, and land uses. They encompass a range of conditions that can apply to places citywide. In this way, the Future Character Map depicts appropriate future development patterns throughout the city. It reinforces existing patterns in some areas and supports changes to land use or development patterns in other areas.

The map is a tool for the City to guide decisions about future land use and development over time. It is not a mandate for development or redevelopment but describes the City’s expectations regarding the use and character of future development. It will serve as the basis for potential future zoning updates and will be implemented through the administration of the City’s zoning regulations and various public and private development decisions.

-  **DOWNTOWN**
-  **TRANSITIONAL ACTIVITY CENTER**
-  **COMMUNITY ACTIVITY CENTER**
-  **NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER**
-  **COMPACT NEIGHBORHOOD**
-  **SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD**
-  **MANUFACTURING & LOGISTICS**
-  **CAMPUS**
-  **INNOVATION CENTER**
-  **PARKS AND OPEN SPACE**

### NOTE

This element of the Community Master Plan is implemented through the City’s Zoning Ordinance. Zoning is a legal tool that regulates land use and the intensity of development, including types of structures that may be built, how they are to be built, where they are to be built, and how they may be used. Each property in the city is assigned to a zoning district. There may be more than one appropriate zoning category for a particular future land use category.

## DOWNTOWN

### INTENT

Promote a dense development pattern focused on the close proximity of services, a diversity of uses, and dynamic building styles.

### LAND USE

- Many buildings contain multiple uses with restaurants or retail on the ground floor and office space or residential units above.

### BUILDING FORM

- Predominantly mid- or high-rise with commercial, institutional, multi-family, or a mix of uses.
- Buildings are located close to the street frontage with streetscape elements and designed with active ground floor uses to support a vibrant pedestrian environment.

### OPEN SPACE

- Built open spaces such as parks, plazas, courtyards, and outdoor recreational facilities.

### MOBILITY

- The transportation network supports a "park once" environment defined by a grid street pattern composed of short, walkable blocks.
- Mobility hubs with transit stations, pick-up and drop-off areas, bike parking, and micro-mobility options are provided.

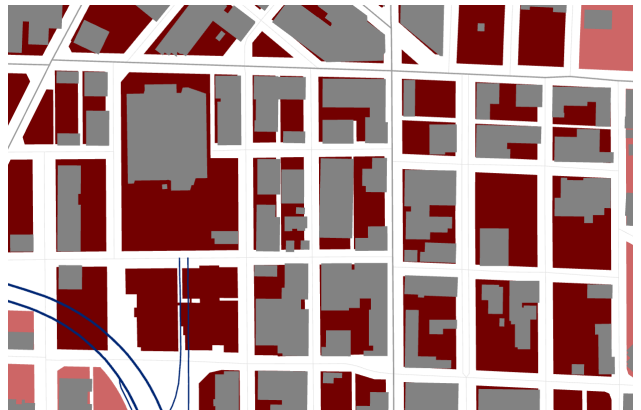
### APPROPRIATE ZONING DISTRICTS

- City Center

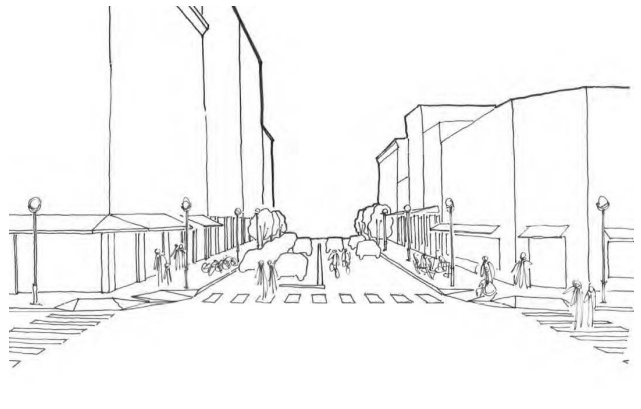
### EXAMPLE CHARACTER



### EXAMPLE PATTERN



### CONNECTION TO THE VITAL STREETS PLAN: URBAN CENTER



## TRANSITIONAL ACTIVITY CENTER

### INTENT

Provide a connection between downtown and the surrounding residential or commercial areas and transition the intensity of the downtown development pattern to adjacent areas.

### LAND USE

- Many buildings contain a mix of uses such as retail, office, and residential while others may be single-use office or housing.

### BUILDING FORM

- Predominantly mid-rise with commercial, institutional, multi-family or a mix of uses.
- Buildings are typically located close to the street frontage. Some may have setbacks large enough to accommodate active street-level uses, such as outdoor dining..

### OPEN SPACE

- Built open spaces such as parks, plazas, courtyards, and outdoor recreational facilities.

### MOBILITY

- Defined by a grid street pattern composed of blocks that are similar or slightly larger than those in the center.
- Transit stations, pick-up and drop-off areas, bicycle parking and bicycle share, and micro-mobility options are provided

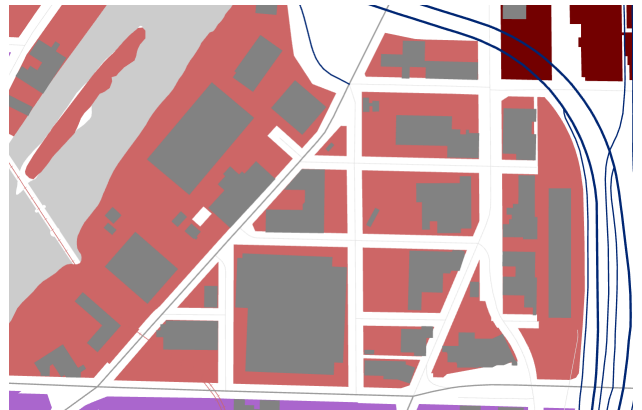
### APPROPRIATE ZONING DISTRICTS

- Transitional City Center
- Transit Oriented Development

### EXAMPLE CHARACTER



### EXAMPLE PATTERN



## COMMUNITY ACTIVITY CENTER

### INTENT

Provide places to live, work, and shop around key intersections, to create well-connected, walkable places within a 15-minute walk, bike, or transit trip of surrounding neighborhoods.

### LAND USE

- Many buildings contain a mix of uses such as retail, office, and residential with a few that may be single use office or housing.
- These may currently include shopping centers or “big-box” stores along major corridors that are intended to redevelop with more density.
- These areas have the potential to become less auto-oriented through incremental development and improved multi-modal infrastructure.

### BUILDING FORM

- Predominantly low- to mid-rise with commercial, institutional, multi-family or a mix of uses.
- Buildings are designed with active ground floor uses to support a vibrant pedestrian environment.

### OPEN SPACE

- Built open spaces such as parks, plazas, courtyards, and outdoor recreational facilities.

### MOBILITY

- Typically located at or near key intersections or on major corridors with transit service.
- The street network is or will redevelop to be well-connected, with walkable connections along streets and between destinations.

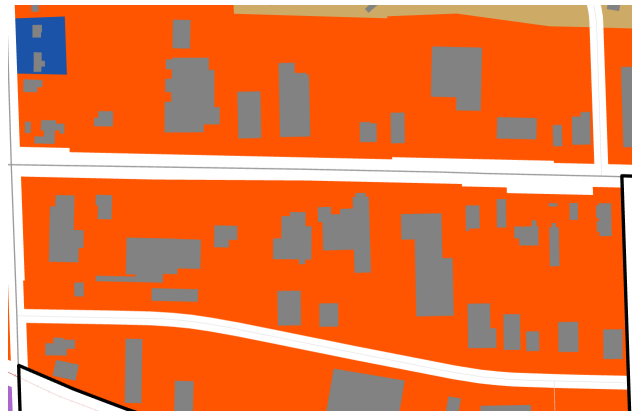
### APPROPRIATE ZONING DISTRICTS

- Commercial
- Neighborhood Office Service
- Planned Redevelopment

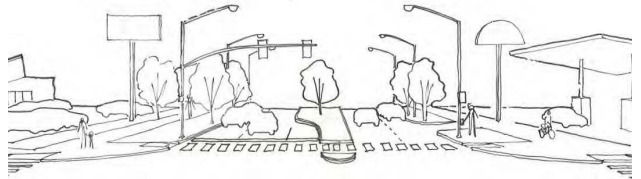
### EXAMPLE CHARACTER



### EXAMPLE PATTERN



### CONNECTION TO THE VITAL STREETS PLAN: CROSTOWN CONNECTORS



## NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

### INTENT

Reinforce a pedestrian and transit-friendly environment in a compact area and promote a mix of small-scale retail, service, entertainment, civic, office and residential uses to enhance the vitality of surrounding neighborhoods.

### LAND USE

- A variety of retail, restaurants, and personal services at a local, neighborhood scale are provided within nodes and corridors.

### BUILDING FORM

- The typical building does not exceed three stories.
- Buildings are designed with active ground floor uses to support a vibrant pedestrian environment.

### OPEN SPACE

- Built open spaces may include plazas, patios, courtyards, small parks, and greenways.

### MOBILITY

- Directly accessible from nearby neighborhoods to encourage walking and cycling, and to support the concept of a complete neighborhood.
- The street network is well-connected, designed to slow traffic, and includes complete pedestrian facilities.

### APPROPRIATE ZONING DISTRICTS

- Traditional Business Area
- Neighborhood Office Service
- Transit Oriented Development

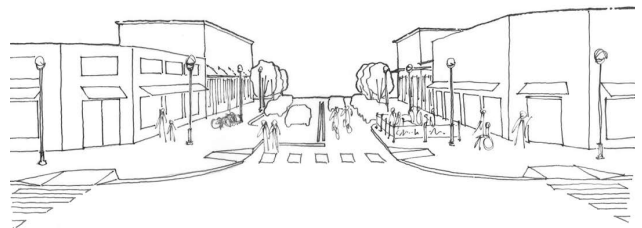
### EXAMPLE CHARACTER



### EXAMPLE PATTERN



### CONNECTION TO THE VITAL STREETS PLAN: NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS





## COMPACT NEIGHBORHOOD

### INTENT

Create, maintain, and promote a variety of housing opportunities to meet the needs of a diverse population while maintaining the desired physical characteristics of the City's existing neighborhoods.

### LAND USE

- A mix of housing with small office, commercial, and civic uses integrated at intersections or along major streets, including those designated as Network Residential in the Vital Streets Plan.

### BUILDING FORM

- Characterized by a mix of housing such as small-lot single-family, townhomes or duplexes, and small multi-family buildings.

### OPEN SPACE

- Privately-owned yards and recreation spaces, plazas, courtyards, rooftop decks, small parks and natural open spaces.

### MOBILITY

- Well-connected and dense street network with short blocks that accommodate walking, cycling, and transit use.

### APPROPRIATE ZONING DISTRICTS

- Mixed-Density Residential
- Neighborhood Office Service
- Planned Redevelopment
- Low-Density Residential

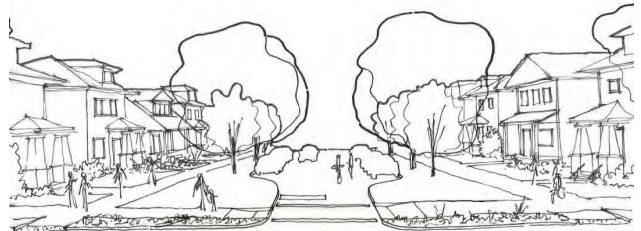
### EXAMPLE CHARACTER



### EXAMPLE PATTERN



### CONNECTION TO THE VITAL STREETS PLAN: LINK RESIDENTIAL



## SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD

### INTENT

Build on the established development pattern, consisting predominantly of low-density residential development, to evolve these areas into more walkable neighborhoods with new housing options.

### LAND USE

- Primarily low-density housing.
- Compared to Compact Neighborhoods, these areas have a more uniform housing pattern with larger average lots and longer blocks.

### BUILDING FORM

- Characterized by a range of housing sizes and styles, including duplexes and accessory dwelling units.
- Lots are typically larger than in Compact Neighborhood areas

### OPEN SPACE

- Private yards and built common areas are typical.
- Public open spaces such as small parks and natural open spaces are also common.

### MOBILITY

- New development should support a well-connected local street network that provides safe and direct access to neighborhood destinations and helps disperse vehicle traffic.
- Cul-de-sacs or curvilinear streets are common. Additional connections for vehicles, as well as people walking and bicycling should be provided as redevelopment occurs.

### APPROPRIATE ZONING DISTRICTS

- Mixed-Density Residential
- Low-Density Residential
- Neighborhood Office Service
- Planned Redevelopment

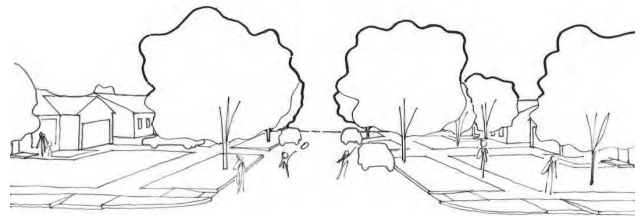
### EXAMPLE CHARACTER



### EXAMPLE PATTERN



### CONNECTION TO THE VITAL STREETS PLAN: NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTIAL



## MANUFACTURING & LOGISTICS

### INTENT

Allow for a wide range of types, services, and wage levels in sectors such as production, manufacturing, research, distribution, and logistics while preserving the character and integrity of adjacent land uses.

### LAND USE

- Primary uses include manufacturing, research and development, warehousing, distribution, and other similar uses.

### BUILDING FORM

- Characterized by large, often single-story buildings on large parcels set back from the street.

### OPEN SPACE

- Recreational facilities, picnic areas, walking trails, patios, and courtyards provided on individual sites and designed to be used by employees.
- Landscaping should be incorporated as a buffer between different land uses.

### MOBILITY

- Typically located along rail corridors or interstates. Streets and sites prioritize access for motor vehicles and truck traffic.
- Where possible, transit stations, bike parking and bike share, and micro-mobility options should be provided.

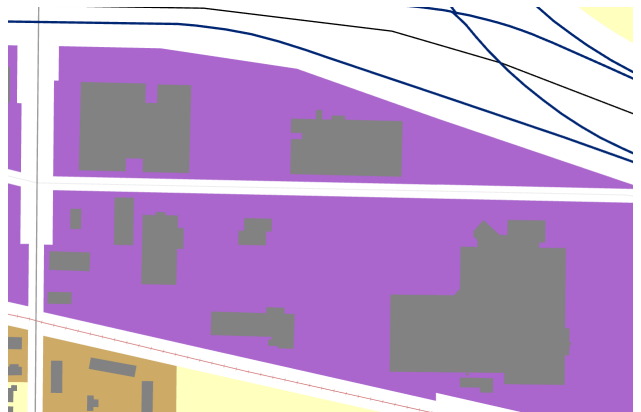
### APPROPRIATE ZONING DISTRICTS

- Industrial Transportation
- Commercial
- Planned Redevelopment

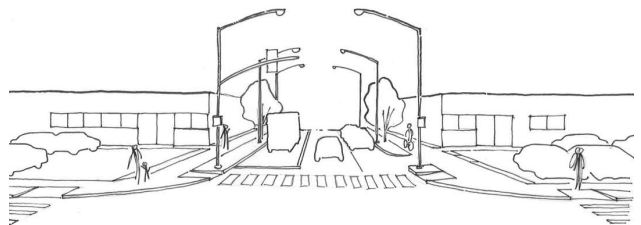
### EXAMPLE CHARACTER



### EXAMPLE PATTERN



### CONNECTION TO THE VITAL STREETS PLAN: MAKER/INDUSTRIAL



## CAMPUS

### INTENT

Campus areas are often master planned and include a variety of administrative, professional, civic, athletic or recreational, and medical office uses.

### LAND USE

- Defined by larger, campus-like settings that promote a safe and attractive environment through consolidation of driveways, increased pedestrian connections, and robust landscaping.
- Academic, government, religious, or community-focused uses may be present in a campus setting

### BUILDING FORM

- Characterized by a wide range of development characteristics to match the operational needs of the organization.
- Typically larger footprint buildings with multiple stories offering flexible space for businesses.
- Sites are developed with large, shared parking areas adjacent to buildings with large setbacks from the street.

### OPEN SPACE

- Lawns, passive landscaped areas, park space, and natural open spaces are common.
- Improved open spaces such as plazas, courtyards, and outdoor recreational facilities may also be appropriate.
- Private plazas and pocket parks may serve as amenities for employees.

### MOBILITY

- Typically located along at least one major street with an internal street network that encourages walking and biking, particularly where sites are located near transit routes and stops.
- Streets may be publicly or privately maintained.

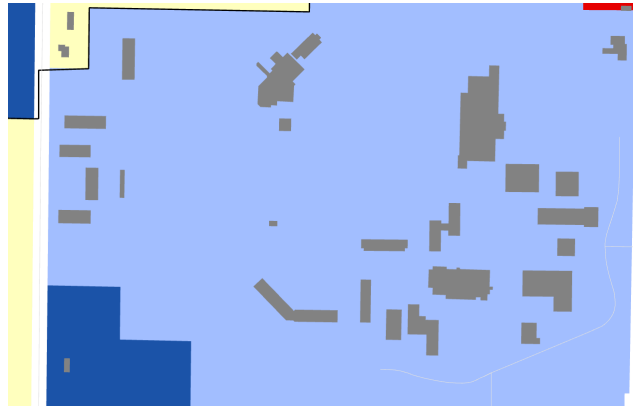
### APPROPRIATE ZONING DISTRICTS

- Institutional Campus
- Transit Oriented Development
- Planned Redevelopment

### EXAMPLE CHARACTER



### EXAMPLE PATTERN



## INNOVATION CENTER

### INTENT

Accommodate a broad range of flexible employment opportunities, with a focus on active ground floor uses abutting public streets to promote compact, walkable areas.

### LAND USE

- Academic, government, religious, or unique community-focused uses located across the city.
- They may also include office, research and development, studios, light manufacturing, hotels, multi-family residential, retail, restaurants, and services.

### BUILDING FORM

- Building form varies depending on the needs of the primary user, resulting in a range of building types and sizes.
- These areas may include older industrial structures that have been adaptively reused or retrofitted to include supporting amenities.
- New buildings are designed with active ground floor uses.

### OPEN SPACE

- Open spaces such as plazas, patios, and courtyards may include landscaping.
- Public spaces such as small parks and natural open spaces are also common.

### MOBILITY

- Streets serve all travel modes.
- Transit stations, pick-up and drop-off areas, bike parking and share, and micro-mobility options should be provided.

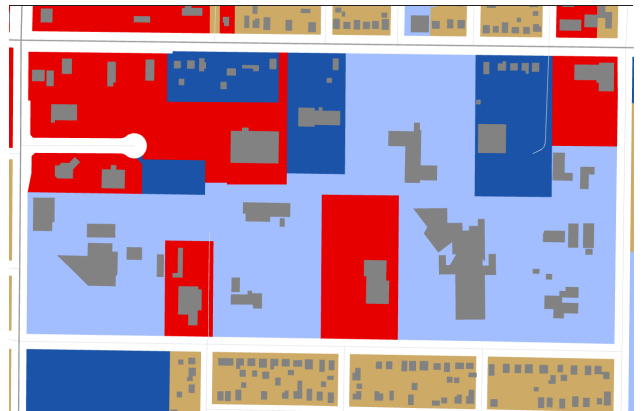
### APPROPRIATE ZONING DISTRICTS

- Transitional City Center
- Commercial
- Transit Oriented Development
- Mixed-Density Residential
- Planned Redevelopment

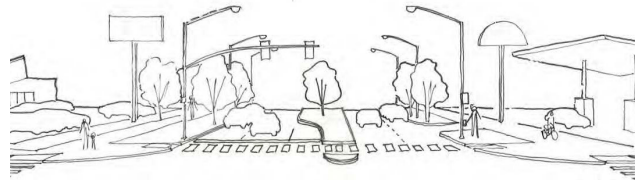
### EXAMPLE CHARACTER



### EXAMPLE PATTERN



### CONNECTION TO THE VITAL STREETS PLAN: CROSSTOWN CONNECTORS



## PARKS & OPEN SPACE

### INTENT

Accommodate natural or park-like settings and preserve identified open space land and uses from development pressures, including portions of the Grand River or other environmental preservation areas.

### LAND USE

- Support a variety of the city's parks and recreation programming.
- Open Space may range in scale from small community gardens or natural areas integrated into neighborhoods to large, regional parks.

### BUILDING FORM

- Building sizes vary depending on the purpose of the building and the setting, but are typically small and low-rise.
- Buildings may be necessary to support or service recreational and educational facilities.

### OPEN SPACE

- Open space is the primary element in this character type and is integrated throughout the city and include both passive open spaces and active park facilities.

### MOBILITY

- Internal transportation networks typically consist of pedestrian and bicycle paths, but may include driveways and low-speed streets to provide access to internal facilities.

### APPROPRIATE ZONING DISTRICTS

- Open Space

### EXAMPLE CHARACTER



### EXAMPLE PATTERN



## NEIGHBORHOOD CLASSIFICATIONS

Grand Rapids can be characterized as having three distinct residential neighborhood geographies—Traditional Neighborhoods, Mid-20th Century Neighborhoods, and Modern Neighborhoods. These classifications were established with the 2002 Master Plan and are reflected in the adopted Zoning Ordinance.

### TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOODS

Developed prior to the automobile era, these neighborhoods were designed to provide residents with a variety of commercial, institutional, and residential options within a short walking distance. Housing includes options such as single-family homes and apartments above storefronts, as well as integrated commercial and institutional uses. Diversity in building size and use enhances the vitality of these neighborhoods.

The characteristics of the built environment of a Traditional Neighborhood include:

- A pattern of small blocks, alleys, and a connected street grid system;
- Smaller building footprints on smaller sites with variable lot sizes (in contrast to the uniformity of newer subdivision housing development) ;
- Human-scaled buildings with high-quality exterior materials;
- Front building wall oriented parallel to the street;
- Well-defined building entries and windows constituting at least 50% of the street-facing wall;
- Pedestrian and transit orientation, with widespread provision of on-street parking and off-street surface parking areas that are located at the rear of the lot; and
- Integrated residential and nonresidential land uses located in the same building or in proximity to one another without extensive buffering.

### MID-20TH CENTURY NEIGHBORHOODS

These neighborhoods reflect the transition in American society after World War II towards an automobile-dependent development pattern. Homes in this period were generally built between 1936 and 1979. Residential neighborhoods have a more spacious feel with larger lots and buildings located further from the street. Many homes were built on existing lots, platted before their construction. Streets and neighborhoods are less connected; and land uses are segregated from one another, including separation of apartment buildings from single-family housing. More intense commercial and institutional uses are found on highly visible corners and along heavily traveled traffic corridors in strip developments.

The characteristics of the built environment of a Mid-20th Century Neighborhood include:

- Curvilinear streets with sporadic cul-de-sacs or alleys;
- Larger uniform lot sizes with generous building setbacks;
- Some mixed uses integrated within a neighborhood, but uses generally segregated;
- Pedestrian and automobile-oriented streetscapes that include sidewalks and limited parking in the front of buildings;
- Building entries predominately oriented to the street; and
- Simplified building articulation and massing.

### MODERN ERA NEIGHBORHOODS

These neighborhoods represent the most recent trends in home building and neighborhood planning. Many homes in these neighborhoods were built after the 1980's. Land patterns within these neighborhoods have been developed to serve individual uses. Major roadways connect these uses to each other. Street and neighborhood connectivity is less evident and the presence of sidewalks is often limited.

The existing development pattern of segregated land uses, cul-de-sacs, and a strong automobile orientation are intended to be minimized over time. Alternative high-quality design approaches shall promote multi-family developments within walking distance of transit and the restructuring of existing commercial concentrations as walkable mixed-use centers.

The characteristics of the built environment of a Modern Era Neighborhood include:

- Larger lots and deeper setbacks in residential areas.
- Single-family homes, apartments, office complexes, and shopping centers that are segregated.



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## DESIGN GUIDELINES

Grand Rapids has an identified need for additional housing of all types and at all price points. In order to meet the demand for housing, all neighborhoods must allow for some change. The goal of the Guidelines is to ensure new development complements neighborhood patterns and character as density increases, by providing guiding principles for new construction to coexist within the context of adjacent homes, blocks, and existing neighborhoods. They support the construction of compatible, pedestrian oriented, and high-quality housing in Grand Rapids neighborhoods.

The Housing Guidelines do not provide customized recommendations for every neighborhood. They provide recommendations for developers, the public, City staff, and other decision makers on using context to drive design and approvals and should be used in coordination with Area Specific Plans.

The guidelines do not demand a certain design aesthetic, nor do they dictate materials. By encouraging best practices, the guidelines aim to provide a framework that allows for new types of development to occur in a way that is compatible with existing development. As the city grows and changes, its needs will continue to evolve. These guidelines attempt to allow for flexibility and innovation in policy, building, and site design.



DESIGN GUIDELINES

### Compatible

Build on the context of the place and advance the vision of relevant Area Specific Plans.

**1** Build on the local identity and aspiration of the place (site, block, or neighborhood).

**2** Relate to the local architectural and development patterns.

### Pedestrian Oriented

Contribute to an active and inclusive public realm.

**3** Provide transitions from public to private spaces.

**4** Provide usable spaces for social interaction.

**5** Minimize the impact of parking areas and utilities.

### High Quality

Design resilient and visually interesting buildings.

**6** Execute a clear design concept.

**7** Utilize resilient and durable materials.

**8** Integrate features that create visual interest.

## 1 Build on the local identity and aspiration of the place (site, block, or neighborhood).

Strategies to meet this guideline:

- Integrate materials, building proportions, setbacks, entry features, and architectural details and patterns found within the area into new development and building alterations.
- Acknowledge significant or iconic community structures and spaces, such as historic or cultural resources, civic amenities, natural areas, bridges, and boundaries.

## 2 Relate to the local architectural and development patterns.

Strategies to meet this guideline:

- Minimize differences in scale between existing and new development with dormers, upper-level step-backs, and compatible roof forms.
- Relate to aspects of neighboring buildings through architectural style, roofline, detailing, fenestration, color, or materials.
- Use trees and landscaping to enhance the building design and fit with the surrounding landscape context.
- Maintain consistent setbacks, cultivate an active public realm, and continue patterns of entries, windows, and vernacular features.
- Provide landscaping, porches, and multiple unit entries at an interval that relates to existing development. This can effectively ease transitions between new, denser development and existing, less dense development.

## 3 Provide layered transitions from public to private spaces.

Strategies to meet this guideline:

- Buffer ground floor residential units with generous landscaping to provide privacy for residents.
- Use vertical separation (balconies or porches) to soften the street edge and provide semi-public spaces for social interaction.
- Provide setbacks consistent with the immediate context.
- Utilize landscaped setbacks and entry sequences that reflect nearby residential patterns.

## 4 Provide usable spaces for interaction.

Strategies to meet this guideline:

- Design porches to provide usable outdoor space. The height and depth should accommodate comfortable outdoor seating or play space.
- Design multi-unit development to include publicly visible gathering and play spaces in accessible locations. The focus in design should be on access and usability for residents.
- Outdoor spaces should be appropriately scaled for the use and neighborhood context and integrate features for year-round use.

## 5 Minimize the impact of parking areas and building services.

Strategies to meet this guideline:

- Choose locations for vehicular access that minimize conflict between vehicles and non-motorists to the greatest extent practicable.
- Locate garages behind the rear wall of the house and take vehicle access from alleys where possible.
- Place mechanical units and utility connections away from the street-facing facades and provide appropriate full-height screening complementary to the building architecture and materials.

## 6 Execute a coherent and legible design concept.

Strategies to meet this guideline:

- Design buildings such that their primary functions and uses can be readily determined from the exterior.
- Create a well-proportioned base, middle, and top to the building in locations where this is appropriate, particularly along primary neighborhood corridors.

## 7 Utilize resilient, durable, and enduring materials in building design.

Strategies to meet this guideline:

- Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials.
- Ensure that all facades are attractive and well-proportioned through the placement and detailing of all elements. Consider projections, fenestration, materials, and any patterns created by their arrangement.
- Materials that have texture, pattern, or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.
- Select durable and attractive materials that will age well in the local climate, taking special care to detail corners, edges, and transitions.
- When possible, design the project so that it may be deconstructed at the end of its useful lifetime, with connections and assembly techniques that will allow reuse of materials.

## 8 Integrate exterior building features to provide depth and articulation.

Strategies to meet this guideline:

- Add depth to facades where appropriate by incorporating façade articulation, window depth, and material fenestration.
- Incorporate street-facing decks on upper stories of multi-family buildings to provide private open space visible to the adjacent street.
- Utilize distinctive and high-quality surface materials and finishes where appropriate.
- Ensure coherent placement of window shape, size, depth, and patterning.