



## REQUEST FOR COUNCIL ACTION

**AGENDA DATE:** March 27, 2023

**AGENDA ITEM:** Consider the adoption of a resolution authorizing the City to make application to and accept funds from the Minnesota Department of IRRR Development Infrastructure grant program for the Grand Rapids Early Childhood Education Hub

**PREPARED BY:** Rob Mattei, Director of Community Development

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### BACKGROUND:

Staff has prepared a grant request of \$300,000 to the IRRR Development Infrastructure program for site development costs associated with KOOTASCA's conversion of the former Murphy Elementary School to the Grand Rapids Early Childhood Education Hub.

The proposed ~\$2 million investment to convert the site from Elementary to Pre-K and Infant/Toddler care, would create a 38,000 square foot early childhood hub with 221 slots of childcare at the site (creating 10 new slots). The facility will be home to 66 full-time staff who will operate the site year-round- creating 3 additional full-time positions and retaining 63 full-time positions. The project would create 12 temporary full-time construction positions, per IRRR.

As KOOTASCA and Invest Early (IE) move into the Grand Rapids Early Childhood Hub, following renovations, other childcare providers will be able to occupy the classrooms we have built and are vacating- thus enabling new development otherwise not possible. Notably, the Itasca County Family YMCA is pursuing occupation of 4 early childhood classrooms at the Itasca Resource Center and 2 classrooms at the Itasca Campus of MN North College will remain for the college's childcare use.

By creating a one-stop location, families with children falling into multiple age groups can deliver their children to the appropriate classrooms and immediately access services onsite such as workforce counselors and representatives from education and social service. In addition to childcare operated by KOOTASCA and IE, the site will also be home to ISD 318's ECSE and ECFE programs as well as KOOTASCA's TAPP Program. The site will host AEOA's Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Employment Services programs, behavioral health services and

supports for Children Mental Health Services (CMHS), as well as employment and workforce services for the NE Minnesota Office of Jobs and Training.

The facility will also provide Early Childhood internships for students enrolled in the accredited Early Childhood Education certificate program at MN North College's Itasca Campus.

Certification and program graduation requires a 150-hour internship with a licensed Early Childhood teacher in a licensed Rule 3 Preschool setting. DEED's Occupations in Demand tool identifies an 11% ten-year growth rate for preschool teachers and our area is currently in a severe childcare shortage limiting workforce participation.

**REQUESTED COUNCIL ACTION:**

Make a motion to adopt a resolution authorizing the City to make application to and accept funds from the Minnesota Department of IRRR Development Infrastructure grant program for the Grand Rapids Early Childhood Education Hub