



REQUEST FOR COUNCIL ACTION

- AGENDA DATE:** September 20, 2021 Work Session
- AGENDA ITEM:** Discuss the former Forest Lake School site housing opportunities and potential plan of action with representatives of Greater Minnesota Housing Fund
- PREPARED BY:** Rob Mattei, Director of Community Development
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BACKGROUND:

The City of Grand Rapids recently closed on its final exchange of property with Independent School District #318, with the City receiving title to the former Forest Lake School property. As agreed, the two-block site had been cleared of buildings and site improvements and graded by the School District prior to the transfer.

The City's *Comprehensive Plan* indicates housing as the preferred future land use for the site. With that goal in mind, staff initiated discussions with Greater Minnesota Housing Fund (GMHF) to explore their resources, interest and capacity to assist the City and GREDA in the redevelopment of this site to provide workforce-housing opportunities in Grand Rapids.

GMHF is a non-profit launched in 1996 in a joint effort of the McKnight and Blandin Foundations to address the urgent need for decent, affordable housing in Greater Minnesota. GMHF assisted the City with the planning and financing of the successful redevelopment of the former Middle School site.

GMHF will attend this meeting virtually to discuss a possible plan of action for the former Forest Lake School site, first looking back at the former Middle School project to provide perspective and highlight potential techniques to build upon the success of that project. GMHF will focus the rest of their presentation on the current opportunity of the newly acquired site, market demand considerations; describe their process ideas and ways to incorporate opportunities for feedback from the public, tools to create affordability, and present similar projects they have worked on.