

Grand Rapids Soccer Stadium: Frequently Asked Questions

Background

Why is a soccer stadium being proposed?

- In 2017 public and private leadership in Grand Rapids commissioned CSL International to conduct a citywide study to identify future community assets determined to be essential to positioning our city and region for future growth. Professional sporting and entertainment venues were identified as key components in the Destination Asset study. Soccer is the fastest growing and most popular sport in the world and across the United States. Grand Rapids and the West Michigan market is primed for the addition of a professional sporting team and venue. It is envisioned as a vibrant multi-use professional sports venue – a place to gather, live, work, and play.

Where will the soccer stadium be located? Why was this location selected?

- The stadium is proposed to be located at a handful of parcels bounded by Lake Michigan Drive to the south, Mount Vernon Avenue to the east, Blumrich Street to the north, and Winter Avenue to the west. Grand Action 2.0 and the Grand Rapids Kent County Convention/Arena Authority studied numerous sites within Grand Rapids before this one was prioritized.
- Over the past several years all new stadiums have been built in urban/downtown areas for the following reasons:
 - Walkable from bars/restaurants that are such an important part of the pre- and post-game fan experience.
 - Professional soccer leagues identified downtown locations as their primary interest for a stadium.
 - Convenient to larger numbers of residents who are living and working in the city.
 - Accessible via transit and other modes of transportation.
 - Existing infrastructure, access, and utilities on contiguous property in downtown ready for development.

How does the creation of a soccer stadium advance the goals of the City of Grand Rapids Master Plan?

- The City's [Master Plan](#) outlines strategies to create and enhance the city's business districts, foster a strong economy, improve quality of life, increase access to the Grand River, and use strategic partnerships to guide land use policy and action in the city. The proposed stadium advances numerous goals of the *Master Plan*, including:
 - Continue to reinforce Downtown's role as the multipurpose urban center for the metropolitan region. (VB1)
 - Encourage major institutions to remain and grow in a mixed-use context in Downtown and on its edges. (SE4)
 - Expand open space and recreational opportunities. (EOL3)
 - Encourage intergovernmental and public/private cooperation in decisions concerning the location of developments of greater than local impact (e.g., major new shopping centers, employment centers, cultural facilities). (P1f)
- The location of the proposed soccer stadium is also addressed in the Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. (DGRI) Bridge South Plan. The development of a stadium, with its potential to be a catalyst for future housing and private commercial development, is aligned with the goals of the Bridge South Plan. DGRI has confirmed that the stadium will not impede any elements called out in the Bridge South Plan.

Who is developing the soccer stadium?

- Grand Action 2.0 is a private economic development organization working on planning, designing, developing, and raising private and public funds for the soccer stadium.
- The project costs associated with the proposed soccer stadium total to \$175 million. \$115 million will come from public sources, and \$60 million will be raised from private philanthropic donations.
- The Grand Rapids Kent County Convention/Arena Authority (CAA) will own, operate, and maintain the venue.

Which team will be playing at the stadium? Who is sponsoring the soccer team? Who will own the soccer team?

- At this time, the team has not been finalized. There must be a stadium built before ownership of a team or teams is determined. It is Grand Action 2.0's vision to bring professional soccer to West Michigan. Our focus is on getting a stadium built.

What are the benefits of the soccer stadium?

- The stadium will host 17 home games per season and approximately 56+ other community-based events each year, generating \$408 million in new economic impact in Grand Rapids over 32 years.
- The influx of people and revenue contributes millions of dollars on an annual basis, increasing revenue for hotels, food & beverage, parking, and tourism.
- Previous public assets such as the Van Andel Arena, DeVos Place, and Downtown Market have been a catalyst for significant economic development over the years. These venues have spurred ancillary development and have become iconic locations in the fabric of the city.

How is equity being considered?

- Grand Action 2.0 has created a culturally competent community engagement plan to seek input from people from all walks of life.
- The project will also have an inclusion plan that is filed with the City of Grand Rapids Economic Development Department to increase contracting opportunities for minority-owned and women-owned businesses. The inclusion plan will be updated to track changes in scope, contract value, and reports.

Site

What will the seating capacity of the stadium be?

- The soccer stadium will seat 8,500 people. In addition to the seating, there will be concessions, food and beverage along the concourses, and a main entrance plaza – off the southeast corner of Lake Michigan and Mt. Vernon with the ability to expand capacity to 11,000.

Will there be parking on site for the stadium?

- There are no public on-site parking spaces available at the stadium. There is no parking on site, if you wanted to talk about operational parking you could say, Emergency vehicle parking for events will be in the loading dock area or in adjacent street or surface parking spaces. Employee parking for events will be off-site with an employee shuttle.
- There are approximately 16,400 parking spaces within a 15-minute walk of the soccer stadium.

- In addition to surface lots and garages offering public parking, select ramps and lots owned by public and private owners are available for evening or weekend use. The City of Grand Rapids also offers on-street parking available to visitors.
- [Mobile GR](#) maintains a list of all public parking facilities and multimodal transportation options to the sites.

What Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) features will be utilized for the soccer stadium?

- The new soccer stadium will be designed employing features to ensure the safety of all the guests and participants including your experience upon arrival to the stadium, participation in the event, and exiting to your method of departure.
- The property perimeter will be designed with adequate lighting, clear lines of sight, and clearly demarcated areas of pedestrian and vehicular travel. The on-site security team will utilize video surveillance and all areas of entry and exit will have clean lines of sight from landscaping or building appurtenances to prevent obscure zones.
- Security will be further reinforced through access control systems connected to the video surveillance providing a comprehensive system to prevent unauthorized access or entry to the facility. An emphasis on natural surveillance by on site security teams in combination with best practices through building design, landscaping and electronic protective measure will be the features used to enhance security at the venue.

How will a person with mobility concerns enter your building and move through it?

- The proposed soccer stadium will employ universal design guidelines to provide an equitable experience for everyone attending events. The accessibility features will meet or exceed the Barrier Free and ADA requirements in many areas. The main entries and concourse will align with the existing public sidewalk, creating a zero-entry experience for all guests. The pitch will be accessible to all guests via an accessible ramp and several elevators are proposed. The project will be designed to eliminate barriers and provide a universal experience for all guests, visitors, and athletes.

How will the city manage and mitigate traffic? What will happen at the interchanges?

- The City of Grand Rapids is committed to a balanced transportation network that advances walking, biking, and transit use in addition to driving, especially in the city's downtown. The policy of the city is that a downtown venue such as the soccer stadium does not need to provide on-site parking for all attendees. As shown in the graphics below, over 16,000 parking spaces exist within a 15 minute walk of the stadium.

Is there adequate parking if VanAndel, DeVos place, the Amphitheater and Stadium all have events on the same night? Even if just two of them have an event is there enough parking?

- The Amp parking has 18,000+ parking spaces in the 15-minute walking radius. The stadium has 16,000+ parking spaces in the 15-minute walking radius. Some of these spaces are counted in both the overlapping areas, so the total is *not* 34,000. There are more than 18,000 public and privately managed spaces within the larger context of the City. Using standards parking ratios for assembly spaces; 3 people per vehicle (3:1), the parking demand is:

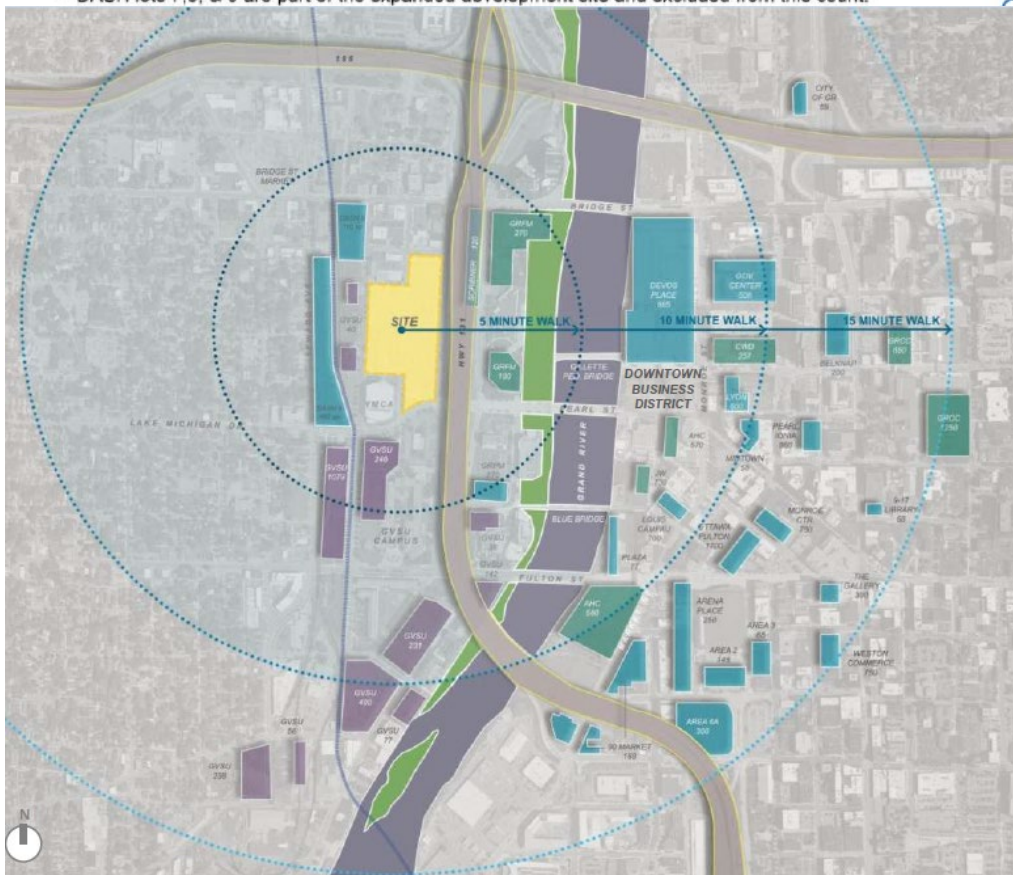
$$\text{VAA } 12,000 / 3 = 4000$$

DeVos Performance Hall 2500/3 = 833
 Amphitheater 12,000/3 = 4000
 Stadium 8500/3 = 2833
 Convention Center 10,000/3 = 3334

15,000 spaces required with all 5 venues operating at full capacity on the same night can be accommodated by existing parking. Please also note that should this occur, it is likely, an event specific parking plan and strategy would be developed in concert with Mobile GR, the Rapid, City leadership, and ASM Global and the CAA.

	WALK DISTANCE			TOTAL (BY TYPE)
	0-5 MINUTE	5-10 MINUTE	10-15 MINUTE	
● PUBLIC LOTS	390 *	2,623	5,816	8,829
● SELECT PRIVATE LOTS (potential public access)	370	2,137	1,900	4,407
● GVSU LOTS	1,365	886	294	2,545
● ON STREET PARKING (City metered parking west of Grand River)	173	88		261
	2,298	5,734	8,010	16,042 Total Spaces

* DASH lots 7, 8, & 9 are part of the expanded development site and excluded from this count.



Operations

What will employees at the stadium be paid? Will these employees be full or part time?

- Staff of the soccer stadium will include both full and part time employees. It is expected that there will be ten full-time staff members who are fully benefitted, and have an average salary of \$70,000. An additional 250 part-time employees will have wages of \$20 or more dollars an hour.

Will the venue be open for the public to use? How will the Grand Rapids-Kent County Convention/Arena Authority (CAA) manage booking and what would the pricing be?

- Grand Action 2.0 is working with the CAA to formulate ideas on how to utilize the stadium on non-game days. The CAA will utilize ASM Global to allow community members to book and reserve the space, similar to how this process is currently preformed with the DeVos Convention Center and Van Andel Arena.

Will the Soccer Stadium apply for a pyrotechnic permit?

- It is anticipated that the soccer stadium will occasionally apply for a pyrotechnic permit. This will be dependent on the tenant's desires and comply with city requirements.

How many events are anticipated in a season?

- 17 home events per season are expected with a projected 164,000+ visitors and 56+ community events.

Would the stadium field be able to host a hockey event in the winter?

- An outdoor AHL-quality rink would be a seven-figure commitment. While it is possible for the stadium to have this feature, it is unlikely at this time due to this additional cost beyond the scope of soccer. An ice rink is something that could be explored in the future.

How will the space be used on days when no soccer events are scheduled? Will there be security or policing on days with no events?

- The venue will be utilized in many ways in addition to professional soccer. Some potential uses are listed below:
- Collegiate and High School sporting events
- West Michigan Sports Commission youth and adult events
- Collegiate and High School events and tournaments
- World of Winter venue
- ArtPrize venue
- Riverbank Run venue for staging and assembly of community races
- Christkindl Markt
- Year-round restaurant and team shop with entrance off Winter Ave

When will the major events occur?

- Major events will likely occur on evenings and weekends. However, we anticipate usage any day of the week.

Next Steps

What is the project timeline?

- The stadium is currently in the schematic design phase of the project. Land acquisition and special land use approval will be sought by early-2024. The goal is for the soccer stadium to host its first game in Spring of 2026.

What community engagement is being done?

- The community engagement strategy includes meetings with local business and neighborhood associations, four focus groups, and a community open house with in-person and virtual options in the early spring of 2024.
- Grand Action 2.0 will be seeking “Special Land Use” approval for the stadium from the City of Grand Rapids Planning Commission later this spring. .

General Questions

Will there be a way to donate online/through the project websites?

- More information regarding public donations and participation will be identified during the fundraising phase of the pre-project events.