



**CITY OF GRAND HAVEN
GRAND HAVEN, MICHIGAN**

**AGENDA FOR
SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION**

**GRAND HAVEN CITY HALL*
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
519 WASHINGTON AVE**

**OCTOBER 6, 2025
7:00PM**

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL

3. PRESENTATIONS

- A. Grand Haven Children's Museum Proposal.
Rachel Dody, Founder

4. ADJOURNMENT

CITY OF GRAND HAVEN

519 Washington Ave Grand
Haven, MI 49417 Phone:
(616) 847-4888



TO: Mayor, and City Council

FROM: Ashley Latsch, City Manager

DATE: 10/2/25

SUBJECT: Grand Haven Children's Museum Proposal

The City has received a formal proposal from the Grand Haven Children's Museum to utilize a portion of Central Park Place for the development and operation of a dedicated children's museum.

The proposed use includes the lower level of Central Park Place, as well as new construction extending off the rear of the building. Under the terms of the proposal, the Children's Museum would enter into a rental agreement with the City that includes a base rental rate and a proportional share of utility costs.

This proposal presents a significant opportunity for the City and community. It would drastically reduce the City's fiscal operating obligations for the facility, while the City retains ownership of the property and community access to key spaces within Central Park Place that are most frequently utilized by the public including the ballroom and theater.

The nature of this proposal is unique. It offers a viable path to bringing the concept of a children's museum to life in Grand Haven, while safeguarding the City's and community's long-term interests in this important civic asset.

To ensure transparency and community engagement, a public presentation of the proposal will take place at your October 6 meeting. This session is intended to inform City Council and the public, answer questions, and gather feedback to help shape next steps.

What is being presented is ultimately a proposal and concept. The Grand Haven Children's Museum has expressed, and shown, a willingness to negotiate potential lease terms, to come to a mutually beneficial agreement that takes into consideration the City's lost revenue potential, staffing, space requirements, and so forth. We are now taking a step to seek consensus from Council surrounding the concept, prior to the City and Museum incurring any additional attorney and design fees.

Following this presentation, City staff will present a resolution at the October 16, 2025, City Council meeting, seeking direction on whether to proceed with further negotiations with the Grand Haven Children's Museum. Should the resolution be approved, the City would engage legal counsel to begin further negotiating, or fine tuning, terms including: Space use and access, base rent and utility contributions, construction timelines and responsibilities, and other long-term maintenance considerations.

LEASE PROPOSAL

Central Park Place

Grand Haven
Children's Museum
explore • dream • discover



OUR MISSION





“MARRIAGE OF TWO THINGS”

Children’s museum **AND** community space

- **Maximizes community impact** of Central Park Place
- Public-private **partnership**
- **Civic value**
- **Reduces City’s operational burden**
- Enhances downtown **vibrancy & connection**
- **Fulfills long-standing community desire** for local children’s museum



Proposed Lease

- ~13,500 sq ft
- Initial **10-year lease**, with **five 5-year renewal options**
- During construction: **\$2,150/month rent**
- Once operational: **\$1/year rent**
- Museum assumes **pro-rata share** of operating costs (utilities)



Proposed Lease (cont.)

Capital Investment

- Museum will **fully fund & build** a main-level expansion, **\$1.5–\$2 million**
- **No cost to the City**
- All improvements become **City property**



Proposed Lease (cont.)

Shared Community Use

Key spaces remain fully accessible for public events and City programs:

- Theater
- Mackinaw Room
- Catering Kitchen
- Main Entry
- Main Hallway & Restrooms
- Office Space & Storage





- 12,600 sq ft exhibit space
- 85,000 visitors/year



Grand Haven
Children's Museum
explore • dream • discover



- 13,500-18,500 sq ft
lease proposal



GRAND RAPIDS
Children's
MUSEUM

- 14,000 sq ft exhibit space
- 150,000-200,000
visitors/year



Tangible Benefits to the City

Lowers City Operating Costs

- Projected \$128,000 in annual savings by FY 2027-28 – pro rata utilities, reducing staffing needs

Privately Funded Renovations

- **No tax increase, millage, or financial risk to City**
- All improvements **increase value of City-owned asset**



Tangible Benefits to the City (cont.)

Maximizes Use of City-Owned Facility

- **Preserves public areas:** Theater, Mackinaw Room, catering kitchen, main hallway and restrooms, and office and storage space

Strengthens Downtown-Centertown Connection

- Increases **walkability, foot traffic, and public engagement**



Benefits to Community

Welcoming Space for Children & Families

Year-Round Community Anchor

Hub for Local Partnerships & Collaboration

Strong & Growing Support

Letters of Support

- Gerry Witherell
- GHAPS
- Grand Haven Schools Fdn
- GVSU
- Loutit District Library
- MacKite
- MOMs Club of Grand Haven
- MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers)
- Outdoor Discovery Center
- Spring Lake Public Schools
- Steve Loftis
- Tri-Cities Historical Museum

Founding Donors

Community Survey



Economic Impact & Tourism Boost

Smart Civic Investment

Year-Round Destination

Projected \$5.8 Million Annual Impact

Visitors Support Local Economy

Increase Property Values & Tax Base

Attracts Homebuyers & Investment



National Municipal Partnership Models



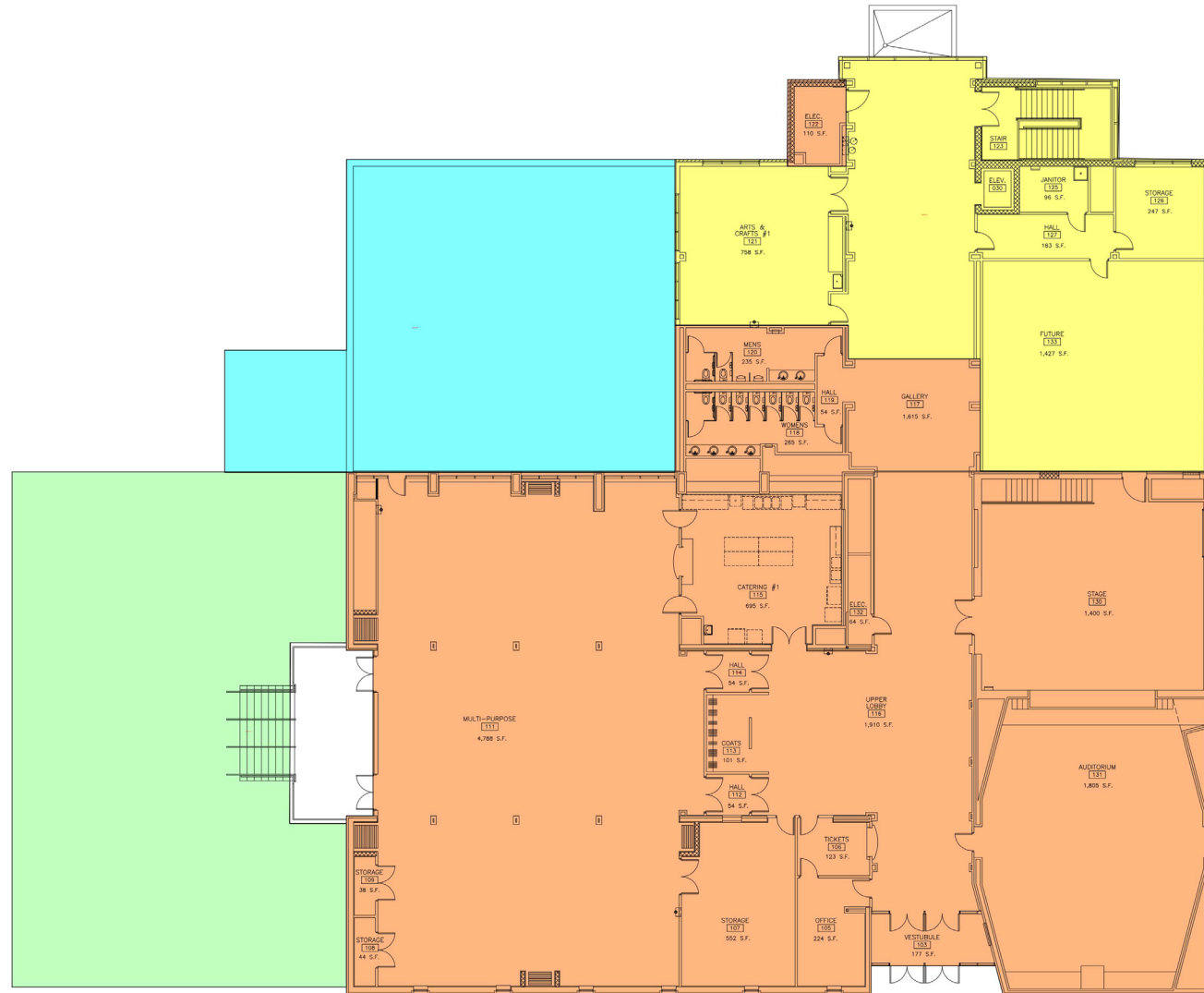
THANK YOU

*video to follow

Member of:







BUILDING GROSS AREA
33,907 SF TOTAL BUILDING AREA

GRAND HAVEN CHILDREN'S MUSEUM
13,493 SF OF TOTAL BUILDING AREA (40% OF BUILDING)

CENTRAL PARK PLACE
20,414 SF OF TOTAL BUILDING AREA (60% OF BUILDING)

19,672 SF TOTAL THIS LEVEL

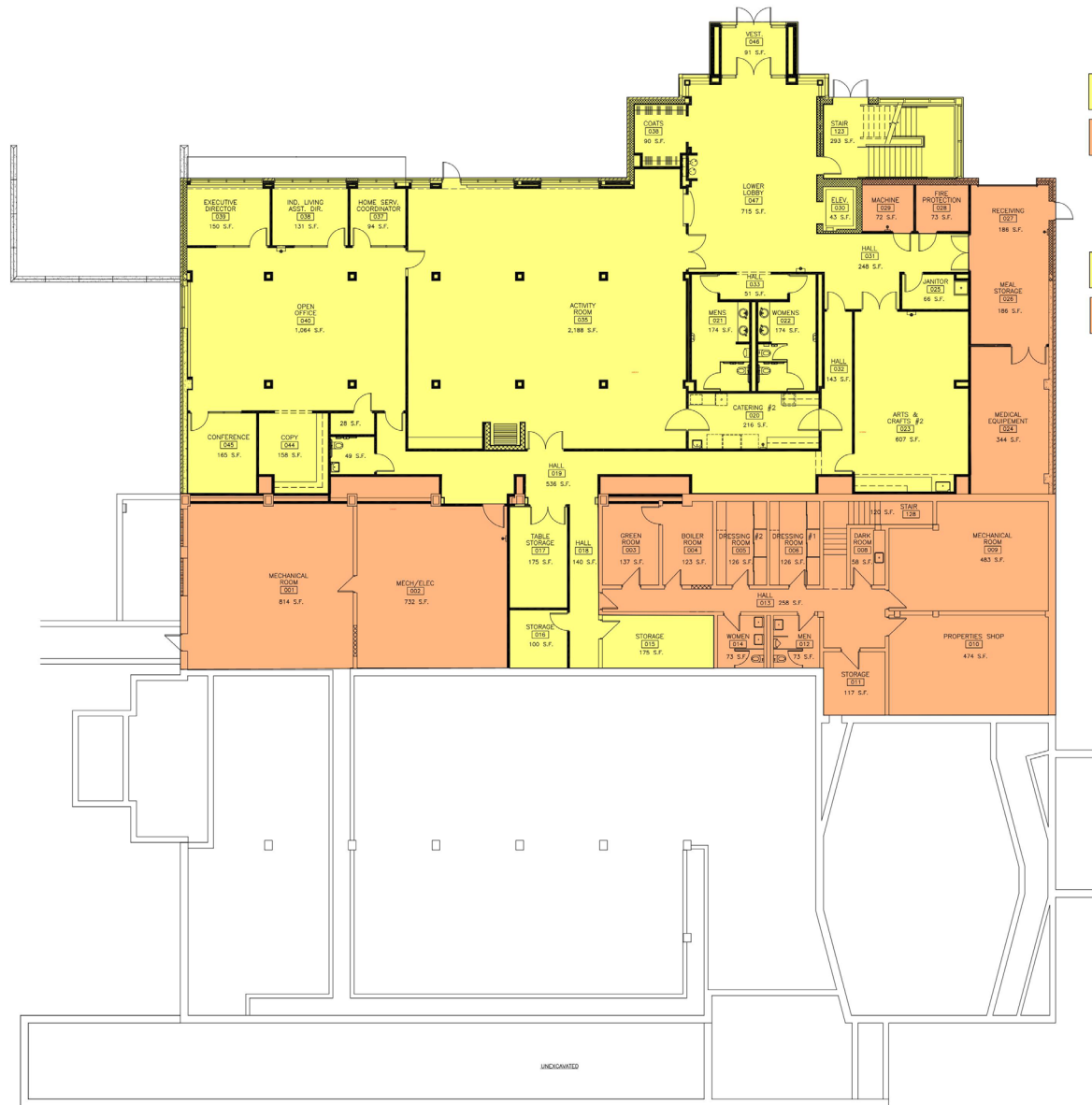
GRAND HAVEN CHILDREN'S MUSEUM
4,661 SF (24% OF LEVEL)

CENTRAL PARK PLACE
15,011 SF (76% OF LEVEL)

GRAND HAVEN CHILDREN'S MUSEUM
ENTRY GARDEN COURT (EXISTING)

GRAND HAVEN CHILDREN'S MUSEUM
3,500-5,000 SF FUTURE ADDITION

MAIN FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"
NORTH



BUILDING GROSS AREA
33,907 SF TOTAL BUILDING AREA

GRAND HAVEN CHILDREN'S MUSEUM
13,493 SF OF TOTAL BUILDING AREA (40% OF BUILDING)

CENTRAL PARK PLACE
20,414 SF OF TOTAL BUILDING AREA (60% OF BUILDING)

14,235 SF TOTAL THIS LEVEL

GRAND HAVEN CHILDREN'S MUSEUM
8,832 SF (62% OF LEVEL)

CENTRAL PARK PLACE
5,403 SF (38% OF LEVEL)

LOWER FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"
NORTH