



# 2008 Annual Awards Program

## Program Excellence Awards Nomination Form

**Deadline for Nominations: March 14, 2008**

Complete this form and attach to your descriptive narrative.

### SECTION 1: Information About the Nominated Program

Program Excellence Award Category *(select only one)*

- Community Health and Safety
- Community Partnership
- Community Sustainability
- Strategic Leadership and Governance

Name of program being nominated: EAST GRAND RAPIDS COMMUNITY CENTER

Jurisdiction where program originated: CITY OF EAST GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

Jurisdiction population: 10,764

Please indicate the month and year in which the program you are nominating was fully implemented. (Note: All Program Excellence Award nominations must have been fully implemented by or before January 31, 2007 to be eligible. The start date should not include the initial planning phase.)

Month: AUGUST Year: 2006

Name(s) and title(s) of individual(s) who should receive recognition for this award at the ICMA Annual Conference in Richmond, Virginia, September 2008. (Each individual listed MUST be an ICMA member to be recognized.):

Name: BRIAN DONOVAN

Title: CITY MANAGER Jurisdiction: CITY OF EAST GRAND RAPIDS

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Jurisdiction: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Jurisdiction: \_\_\_\_\_

### SECTION 2: Information About the Nominator/Primary Contact

Name of person who should be contacted with questions regarding the nomination:

BRIAN DONOVAN

Title of nominator: CITY MANAGER Jurisdiction of nominator: CITY OF EAST GRAND RAPIDS

Street address: 750 LAKESIDE DRIVE SE

City: EAST GRAND RAPIDS State/Province: MICHIGAN

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## **East Grand Rapids Community Center**

The City of East Grand Rapids, Michigan, an older inner ring suburb of Grand Rapids, has spent the past six years redeveloping the central portion of the city through the redevelopment of the park and boat launch on Reeds Lake and development of a new mixed-use business district. As the community had outgrown the original Library, City Offices and Recreation facilities, community members also recognized the need for a Community Center which would house these programs as well as provide space for citizens to gather.

Early on it was determined that although the site of the existing Library, City Hall and Public Safety buildings provided an ideal setting on Reeds Lake, space was very limited due to the small 5 acre parcel of lakefront property. In addition, the original mid-1960's cluster of two-story buildings had distinctly separate shapes and identities. Oddly, one asset on the site was a 21,500 sq ft ground-mounted water reservoir and pumping station located on the shoreline next to these buildings. This reservoir had provided water to city residents but was no longer in use. Even though the massive concrete structure was a barrier between the original buildings and the waterfront area, it offered the new project a significant amount of usable space and views of the lake.

A Concept Team consisting of members of various boards and commissions representing the city, schools, library, Parks & Recreation, and Planning Commissions was organized by the Mayor to determine facility and program needs; a vision for the building; and cost estimates for this project. Early in the process this group decided that joining the buildings into a single, customer-oriented facility would save over 14,000 square feet and nearly \$2 million on the overall cost of the project.

The plan put forth by the Concept Team included expansion of the library from 11,000 sq ft to 23,700 sq ft and Parks & Recreation from 1,800 sq ft to 4,200 sq ft with City Hall operations remaining the same at 5,600 sq ft. Shared space for entries, multi-purpose rooms, restrooms, and mechanicals would increase from 3,900 sq ft to 14,400 sq ft yet be substantially less than the space needed for individual buildings. The estimated project cost was \$9.5 million dollars. The Team further determined that library volunteers and community philanthropists fundraising efforts would provide \$1 million dollars in donations to lower the overall cost of the project. Finally, they recommended that voters be asked to approve an \$8.5 million bond issue. This bond issue was overwhelmingly approved by the voters.

Following the approval of the bond issue, the City joined with a local architectural firm to develop plans to remodel and expand the existing buildings. The resulting design connected the Library, City Hall/Recreation and former water reservoir on both levels to create a multi-level facility that optimizes the use of space with six shared-use multi-purpose rooms, one of which serves as the Commission Chamber; shared restrooms, and a shared employee break room.

In a particularly innovative use of space, the plans called for the old reservoir to be remodeled to include four of these multi-purpose rooms. These rooms would offer views of the lake as well as access to a planned boardwalk providing public access to the redeveloped park waterfront areas. This former water tank would also become home to recreation department offices, storage space and offices for the public safety department.

The once large, unfriendly and underutilized concrete plaza which formed the roof of the water tank would then become an attractive, publicly accessible green roof with a combination of 8,250 sq ft of gardens intermingled with a 13,250 sq ft plaza with tables, benches, planters and pedestrian areas covered with 12,000 recycled rubber tire pavers. Funding for this green roof came from a local philanthropist who further challenged city leaders to develop the entire project in a way that would showcase government's ability to create an environmentally friendly and energy efficient building that fully meets the needs of the citizens.

To meet this challenge, the Community Center was built to LEED specifications to promote sustainability and environmental responsibility. Per the U.S. Green Building Council's website, "The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System is the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction, and operation of high performance green buildings." Specifically, the Community Center building is noteworthy for the following sustainability highlights:

- Building design, orientation, fin walls, sun shades and high efficiency exterior glass to control solar heat gain and glare,
- Swirl chamber and phosphate filter to remove stormwater contaminants before they can enter Reeds Lake,
- 37% reduction in water use for toilets and sinks and storm water used for irrigation, zero use of potable water for irrigation,
- 3,222 tons of construction materials reused from existing library & city hall buildings,
- 93% of construction waste recycled,

- 53% of materials manufactured within 500 miles to promote local economies and reduce fossil fuel use in delivering the materials,
- Exclusive use of low VOC adhesives, carpets & paints to minimize harmful airborne contaminants,
- Wood products were manufactured without urea-formaldehyde, an EPA suspected carcinogen,
- Approximately 3,000 gallons of stormwater per rain storm retained on the green roof,
- Landscape design incorporated native plants as opposed to lawns requiring fertilization and mowing.

For the ribbon cutting ceremony in August 2006, city and library officials planned for 500 visitors. To the delight of everyone, over 5,000 community members were in attendance for the event. This provided a good indication as to how the project had been received by the community at large and how integral a part of the community the facility would become.

A comparison of the number of patrons using the library in the month of January 2006 and the month of January 2007 shows a 36.6% increase. During the first 6 months in the new facility, the number of participants in indoor recreation programs has increased by a similar 34% and more than 950 reservations have been made by city staff, library personnel, private organizations and citizens to use various multipurpose rooms.

In this age of sprawl and human disconnect, this project has shown that having a true community center is essential to a vibrant community. Combining several

operations and services with a beautiful view of Reeds Lake has created a gathering place for our community. Parents can drop kids off for a recreation program, pay their city bills then sit to read a book in the library while they wait for their children; given the proximity to the Middle School and High School, kids walk to the Community Center after school to hang out and wait for their parents to pick them up later in the day; walkers stop in the Community Center for a breather; retirees enjoy sitting and reading in the comfort of the library; students, adults and businessmen stop in to use the free wireless connections or use library computers for internet access.

A secondary benefit for the community has been the number of people coming from the greater metropolitan area into East Grand Rapids to visit the Community Center who then discover the shops in the adjoining central business district. As with many small business areas, the additional shoppers benefit the local merchants.

Finally, the Community Center building is a showcase for environmentally sustainable technologies. The green roof, storm sewer separator, storm water irrigation of plants, and the reuse of the empty water reservoir are all examples of the community's commitment to the environment. Recently installed solar panels, the gift of a local philanthropist, are an educational tool providing real time information on the output of energy from the solar panels via the City's website and a kiosk in the library.

From its inception, the purpose of the Community Center project was to provide a space that would bring the community together and provide for services now and in the future. As a culmination of the efforts to revitalize the central area of the community, this project has more than realized that vision.