CUTTING THROUGH THE NOISE:
CITIES FACILITATING MEANINGFUL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Suzanne M. Schulz, AICP
Managing Director
City of Grand Rapids, MI
PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS

- Believe the public’s voice has value
- Believe that the wisdom of the group is greater than your own
- Trust that there are enlightened ideas
- Respect and honor input – be humble
- Know that many hands make light work; by engaging the public you can build “owners”
- Know that you can build something that endures – community memory is “sticky”
HOW DO YOU DO THIS WORK?

Make sure agendas and tasks are learning-focused:

- What do you want the community to know?
- Is the information that you are providing useful to the community?
- Will the questions that we ask the community provide useful answers to consultants and/or staff?
- How will we demonstrate to the community that their input informed our work?

Design intuitive processes
Consistently deliver visible results
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS IN GR

- 2000 – 2002  Citywide Master Plan
- 2004 – 2005  Neighborhood Pattern Workbook
- 2006 – 2007  Form-Based Zoning Ordinance
- 2011       Transformation Advisors
- 2011 – 2014  Michigan Street Corridor Plan
- 2013 – 2014  Sustainable Streets Task Force
- 2014 – 2016  GR Forward (Downtown and River)
3.2.2 - Urban Heritage

We will capitalize on the urban assets of our older neighborhoods to make them the location of choice for households of all sizes, ages, incomes and races. The architectural character, compatible mix of uses, convenience and walkability of these areas will be reinforced by rehabilitating existing homes and businesses and carefully designing new infill development. Housing codes will also be important to the success of older neighborhoods. Because standards for quality and maintenance will be clearly expressed, supported by consensus and equitably applied, they will inspire all property owners to invest in their neighborhoods and take pride in their unique characters and values.

3.2.3 - Committed Home Owners, Landlords and Tenants

Home ownership for all income, racial, ethnic and disability groups will increase in many neighborhoods that have low rates of owner occupancy. Effective affordable housing and homebuyer assistance programs will help first time owners to achieve the American Dream. Grand Rapids will succeed in ensuring that rental housing is also a neighborhood asset. Landlords in our city will be responsible business professionals who maintain their rental properties to provide safe and decent homes that are also viable investments. Both landlords and tenants will be actively involved in their neighborhoods. They will be recognized for, and proud of, the contributions they make to neighborhood quality.

3.2.4 - Collaboration and Community

Grand Rapids will be a city of inviting neighborhoods because caring and committed residents, landlords and business people will work together to maintain public safety, private property and public spaces to create an outstanding quality of life. Neighborhood-based planning and collaborative problem-solving will inspire a sense of mutual respect, shared responsibility and pride within each of the city's neighborhoods. Partnerships between neighborhood residents, business people and institutional leaders will take much of the uncertainty and conflict out of planning for new development and the reuse of existing buildings.
NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER
Neighborhood Patterns

Turn of the Century Neighborhood
- Development Era: Built between 1850 and 1900
- Street Pattern and Block Size: Straight, corner streets with alleys and sidewalks predominant
- Walkability: High walkability, connected street system. Walking distance generally 5 minutes.
- Land Use Patterns: Mixed use within the neighborhood and within selected blocks. Housing, commercial, institutional (churches, schools) and factories well integrated (e.g., apartments above stores, factories close to homes). Single and multi-family housing also integrated with a broad range of mid-rise (3 to 7 stories) and high-rise buildings, often located on major streets and at intersections. Little open space.

Early 20th Century Neighborhood
- Development Era: Approximately 1900 to 1945
- Street Pattern and Block Size: Straight, corner streets with sidewalks predominant.
- Walkability: High walkability, connected street system. Walking distance generally 5 minutes.
- Land Use Patterns: Mixed use within the neighborhood and within selected blocks (apartments/office above stores). Commercial/industrial districts located on street ends with easy walking distance of residential. Single and multi-family housing also integrated with a range of mid-rise types, often located on major streets and at intersections. Larger parks with trees and on the “outer” edges of neighborhoods.

Post War Neighborhood
- Development Era: Built after World War II, approximately 1945 to 1970
- Street Pattern and Block Size: Curvilinear streets, introduction of cul-de-sacs. May or may not have sidewalks.
- Walkability: Reduced walkability, disconnected street system. "Prairie" streets go into larger areas.
- Land Use Patterns: Substantially reduced integration of residential and non-residential use within the neighborhood and/or on selected blocks. Commercial clustered in centers at major intersections and/or in strip commercial formats. Beauty large institutional stores, larger blocks. Some smaller-scale multifamily housing clusters and no larger blocks.

Late 20th Century Neighborhood
- Development Era: 1970 to present, mainly 1980 to 1990
- Street Pattern and Block Size: Curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs. Few sidewalks.
- Walkability: Reduced walkability, disconnected street system. "Prairie" streets go into larger areas.
- Land Use Patterns: Little to no Gehry of uses within a neighborhood or on selected blocks. Larger institutional complexes separated from single-family residential areas. Commercial development increasing in large strip centers or major shopping centers. Downtown and industrial uses are checkered with larger parks or campuses. Large “natural areas” used as green space.
What’s Your Neighborhood Pattern?

Please help test the four neighborhood pattern types by marking the number in each category that best describes your neighborhood. When finished, use the sum of the marked numbers to determine your neighborhood pattern and then answer the questions on Page 14. Use the maps concerning street patterns (Pages 8-11) and existing land use (Page 12) to help answer the following questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Street Pattern</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Striaght, Continuous</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Striaght, Contorted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curvilinear</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curvilinear, Money/Hide</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block Size</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small (60' or Less)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small/Medium (60'-120')</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium-Large (120'-240')</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superblocks (25' - 1 Mile)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Walkability</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School/y Background</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting/Organ/Depart</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some/Few Schools, Locking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Schools, Consistent Connections</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance to Destination</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 15 Minutes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 15 Minutes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to Schools, Shopping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parks</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small, Often Associated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w/Schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium, Includes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks &amp; Areas Recreation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parkways and Streetscapes</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Narrow Path (1/2 - 1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrow Path (1/2 - 2')</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Path (2 - 3')</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Path (3' - Larger)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Civic Structures</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small in Neighborhood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large in Neighborhood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mixed Uses In a Building</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Many Mixed Use Buildings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Mixed Use Buildings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One/Mixed Use Building</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mixed Uses On a Lot</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Many (5 or More) Units On a Lot</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some (2 - 3) Units on a Lot</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One/None Mixed Use</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mixed Uses In a Block</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Many Blocks w/Mixed Use</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Blocks w/Mixed Use</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One/None Blocks w/Mixed Use</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Single-Use Areas</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use is Mixed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Uses are Separate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Diversity</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large Range of Choices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Family, Two Family, MultiFamily</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Choices of Housing Types</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited Choices of Housing Types, Smaller Floor Ranges</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| TOTAL | 11 | 10 | 9   | 8   |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>12-17 POINTS</th>
<th>18-23 POINTS</th>
<th>24-35 POINTS</th>
<th>36-40 POINTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turn of the Century Neighborhood</td>
<td>Early 20th Century Neighborhood</td>
<td>Post War Neighborhood</td>
<td>Late 20th Century Neighborhood</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Photos also served as a basis for visual preference surveys in community meetings.
GREEN
GRAND
RAPIDS
GGR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Steering Committee
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Green Pursuits
- Green Gatherings
- Inventory “Atlas”
- Objectives, Strategies, Actions
- Special Studies
- Community Champions
GREEN GRAND RAPIDS
URBAN FOREST. Arterial ROW Canopy Cover

MAP DESCRIPTION:
Results from the city-wide tree canopy analysis highlight the % canopy cover within Right-of-Way (ROW) of major arterial streets in Grand Rapids. These results parallel those of Green Gathering #1 and Green Pursuits, where greening priority streets were identified.

% Canopy Cover within Arterial ROW:
- 20.7% - 40% Canopy Cover
- 18.5% - 20.7% Canopy Cover
- 13% - 18.5% Canopy Cover
- 9% - 13% Canopy Cover
- 0% - 9% Canopy Cover
MASTER PLAN: OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE
SPECIAL STUDY: JOE TAYLOR PARK
“Dave’s Solar Bicycles”
Planning score: 17.27
Steering Committee Walk with Disability Advocates of Kent County
Past
Preserve the best of our past and present

Values
Important personal and community priorities

Reality
- $27.4 Million GOF deficit
- Significant decline in tax revenues
- Revenue Sharing cuts
- Unemployment
- Rising personnel costs

Sustainable Future
What scenario will allow us to become the city we want to be?

Transformation Together
SUSTAINABLE STREETS TASK FORCE

- Appointed by City Commission in February 2012

- Charge:
  - Create a future vision for the role of our streets
  - Determine desirable street condition and asset management approaches
  - Identify alternatives and recommend options for future investment
  - Listen to the community
  - Advise City Commission
**Favorite Street**

Lake Drive  
North Monroe south of Ann  
Wealthy  
Division, Fulton/Michigan  
Lake Drive  
Lake Drive  
North Monroe  
Grandville at the RAPID  
West Fulton, Zoo to Campus  
Jefferson, Burton/Alger  
Wealthy Street  
Cherry Street  
Seward  
Plainfield, Leonard to Ann  
Commerce Street, south of Fulton  
Brick Streets — Monroe Center  
Knapp Street  
Madison, south of Hall  
Michigan, Fuller east  
Century, Hall to RAPID  
Madison/Hall  
Lake, Diamond to Robinson (Complete Street)  
Holmdene  
Scribner at Road Commission  
Fix on I-196  
Wealthy  
Lake Drive (road diet)  
6th Street Bridge  
Plainfield  
Monroe Center  
Coi Bridge  
Monroe, north of 196  
Monroe, north of 196  
Monroe Center (echelon paving)  
Cherry/Diamond

**Least Favorite Street**

Lafayette south of Fulton  
North Monroe north of Ann  
State, Madison to Jefferson  
Woodmere  
Robinson  
Michigan  
Eastern/Alger  
Carlton  
Lafayette south of Fulton  
North Monroe, Ann to North Park  
Front, Pearl south especially Fulton south  
Jefferson at Traffic Circle  
Robey Place  
Monroe/Knapp/Ann  
Plainfield, 3 Mile/Fulmer  
Ottawa, north of Michigan  
Fulton and Lake Michigan / Pearl  
Fulton Street  
Pearl / 131 intersection  
Century, Hall to RAPID  
Alger/Eastern  
Bridge under U.S. 131  
Perkins  
Kalamazoo  
Woodmere NE  
Robinson Rd.  
Monroe, North Park to Knapp  
Lake/Robinson intersection  
Robinson Road, east of Lake  
Bridge at Mt. Mercy  
Wealthy, east of 131  
Wealthy Bridge  
Buchanan, south of Hall  
Godfrey  
Ransom/Bostwick
JUST HOW BAD?

2002: 60% FAIR TO GOOD
2012: 60% POOR
2019: WITH NO NEW INVESTMENT 87% POOR

ONLY 8% OF OUR STREETS ARE IN GOOD CONDITION
Tightening Our Belt

Here is how the city reacted to reductions in funding sources:

- Staffing reduced 19%
- Total compensation cut 12.5%
- Reduced truck fleet 10%
- Changed salting protocols
- Cut street resurfacing treatments
- Reduced routine street maintenance resources
TIME = MONEY

EXCELLENT ROADS

ROAD CONDITION

PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE

HEAVY MAINTENANCE

LIGHT REHAB

HEAVY REHAB

AS TIME PASSES

MAJOR RECONSTRUCTION!

Reporting for duty!
INVESTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

$22 MILLION

OUTCOMES OF NEW INVESTMENT
- VITAL STREETS
- BETTER SIDEWALKS
- IMPROVED ACCESSIBILITY
- 70% GOOD REPAIR ON ALL STREETS
- BETTER NEIGHBORHOODS
- THRIVING ECONOMY

FULL STATE PARTICIPATION
$6,000,000

LOCAL INVESTMENTS
$9,000,000+

GRANT MONEYS
$3,000,000+

BASE
$3,400,000
Our Streets. Our City. Our Choice.

There are 588 miles of street in Grand Rapids. 63% of the streets look like this!

Vote YES on May 6.
“The beer is black as pitch, or perhaps asphalt...”
ELECTION RESULTS

WE WON!!!!

- Streets 66.3% Yes
- Sidewalks 71.5% Yes
- 64 out of 66 Precincts in Support
LESSONS LEARNED: CREDIBILITY AND VISIBILITY FOR COMMUNITY VALUES AND VISION

- Constituency building
- Policy maker awareness and direction
- Impact on governmental decision-making
- Democratize community issues
- Permission to participate
LESSONS LEARNED: SAFE RISK TAKING

- Staff is protected/given room to try new things
- Dynamic solutions are developed/challenge old ways of thinking
- Policy makers rewarded by constituency for supporting community vision and proactively reacting to change
LESSONS LEARNED: INCLUSIVE ORGANIZING

- The “50/50” rule

- Community issues can be a way of organizing, the issues become refined and coupled with solutions in the process

- Participants can “surface the strands” of existing interest, expertise, and organizing and make new connections
LESSONS LEARNED: FOSTER COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP

- Actively cultivate and celebrate “champions”
- Government is no longer a “vending machine,” it must be a “platform for engagement.”
- Young leaders are exhilarated, feeling “Our time has come to lead.”
LESSONS LEARNED: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SUPPORT

- Align community values between advocates and city staff; make shared goals a priority
- Internal and external advocates working together is critical for success
- Solutions become high reward
- Faster, more cost effective/brings resources, easier