Civic Engagement as a Placemaking Strategy

Sponsored by: MERS

Moderator: Terra Langham, MERS of Michigan
Sarah Craft, Michigan Municipal League
Suzanne Schulz, Grand Rapids
In this presentation:

Why do engagement?
Strategies for great engagement
Discussion Question
Engagement case study: Grand Rapids
Discussion Question
Questions and further discussion
Get your mindset right
• Believe the public’s voice has value
• Believe the wisdom of the group is greater than your own
• Respect and honor input and perceptions
• Believe you can build something that endures
WHY ENGAGE?
WHY ENGAGE?

Community

WHY ENGAGE?
Community

Capacity

WHY ENGAGE?

Implementation
WHY ENGAGE?

Community

Fun!

Capacity

Implementation

WHY ENGAGE?
How do you do great engagement?
1) Agree on vision, values, goals, and capacity for engagement
2) Do engagement throughout the project’s lifecycle, including ideation and implementation
3) Build a team of community stakeholders to guide engagement
4) Build capacity through relationships, trust, and leadership on a individual and institutional scale
Washtenaw County’s Sustainable Community Project
SEMCOG + Matrix Theatre
5) Build a campaign around the project, illustrate a sense of urgency, and celebrate small “wins”
6) Document, evaluate, and make changes accordingly
Marquette’s Third Street Corridor
7) Have fun!
What’s the best engagement experience you’ve been part of?

Why was it successful?
Insert Suzanne’s slides here!
How can you simplify engagement?
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)
MASTER PLAN PROCESS
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: 1890s and 1900s
- Street Pattern and Block Size: Transit-oriented, with short and subdivided blocks.
- Grid
- Small blocks (150-200 ft)

Early 20th Century Neighborhood
- Development Era: 1910s to 1920s
- Street Pattern and Block Size: Straightened streets, with subdivided blocks.
- Grid-like
- Small blocks (100-150 ft)

Post War Neighborhood
- Development Era: 1940s to 1950s
- Street Pattern and Block Size: Connectivity, with subdivided blocks.
- Grid-like
- Large blocks (200-300 ft)

Late 20th Century Neighborhood
- Development Era: 1980s to 1990s
- Street Pattern and Block Size: Free-standing, with subdivided blocks.
- Grid-like
- Large blocks (350-500 ft)

Turn of the Century Neighborhood
- Walkability: High walkability, connected streets network.
- Access to public transportation.

Early 20th Century Neighborhood
- Walkability: Medium walkability, connected streets network.
- Access to public transportation.

Post War Neighborhood
- Walkability: Low walkability, disconnected streets network.

Late 20th Century Neighborhood
- Walkability: High walkability, connected streets network.

Land Use Patterns

Turn of the Century Neighborhood
- Land Use: Mixed-use, with blocks (commercial and residential).
- Blocks are small and subdivided.
- Blocks are connected by narrow streets.

Early 20th Century Neighborhood
- Land Use: Mixed-use, with blocks (commercial and residential).
- Blocks are medium-sized and subdivided.
- Blocks are connected by medium-width streets.

Post War Neighborhood
- Land Use: Mixed-use, with blocks (commercial and residential).
- Blocks are large and subdivided.
- Blocks are connected by wide streets.

Late 20th Century Neighborhood
- Land Use: Mixed-use, with blocks (commercial and residential).
- Blocks are very large and subdivided.
- Blocks are connected by very wide streets.
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>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single-Use Area</td>
<td>12-17 Points</td>
<td>18-23 Points</td>
<td>24-35 Points</td>
<td>36-40 Points</td>
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<tr>
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<th>Distance to Destination</th>
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<th>21</th>
<th>22</th>
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<th>Parkways and Streetscapes</th>
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<tr>
<th>Civic Structures (Churches, Schools)</th>
<th>34</th>
<th>35</th>
<th>36</th>
<th>37</th>
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<tr>
<th>Mixed Uses In a Building</th>
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<td>Early 20th Century Neighborhood</td>
<td>1890 - 1940</td>
<td>1940 - 1970</td>
<td>1970 - Present</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post War Neighborhood</td>
<td>1945 - 1970</td>
<td>1970 - Present</td>
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<td>1975 - Present</td>
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Photos also served as a basis for visual preference surveys in community meetings.
GGR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

• Steering Committee
• Stakeholder Interviews
• Green Pursuits
• Green Gatherings
• Inventory “Atlas”
• Objectives, Strategies, Actions
• Special Studies
• Community Champions
MASTER PLAN: OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE
SPECIAL STUDY: JOE TAYLOR PARK
Steering Committee Walk with Disability Advocates of Kent County
Past
Preserve the best of our past and present

Values
Important personal and community priorities

Transformation

Together

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?
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

**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/Fuller
- 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

February 22, 2012
Just how bad?

2002: 60% Fair to Good
2012: 60% Poor
2019: 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 MONEY
$3,000,000+

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

There are 588 miles of street in Grand Rapids. 371 miles look like this!

63%

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

Thank you!
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:
FOSTER COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP

- Align community values between advocates and city staff; make shared goals a priority
- Solutions become high reward
- Faster, more cost effective/brings resources, easier
- Actively cultivate and celebrate “champions”
- Government is no longer a “vending machine,” it must be a “platform for engagement.”