FACILITATING MEANINGFUL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:
HOW YOUR RESIDENTS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

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DO YOU HAVE A CHOICE?

- Government is no longer a “vending machine”; it must be a platform for engagement
- Building citizen capacity to solve community problems is necessary with limited resources
- One way or another there’s a problem that needs a solution
- Many hands make light work; by engaging the public you can build “owners”
- You can build something that endures – community memory is “sticky”
BENEFITS

- Increases awareness and democratizes community issues
- Aligns community values between advocates, policy-makers, and staff; creates an environment for internal and external interests to work together
- Builds a constituency; policy makers are rewarded for being proactive and supporting community vision
- Staff is protected/given room to try new things
- Gives “permission” to participate, people learn how to engage
- Solutions are dynamic
- Faster, more cost-effective, easier
YOUR COMMUNITY ISSUE

- View community issues as a way of organizing work, the issue becomes refined and coupled with solutions in the process.
- Participants can “surface the strands” of existing interest, expertise, and organizing and make new connections.

**Community interest**  
**Name the issue**  
**Emerging priorities and resources**
KNOWING

LISTENING

EXPERTISE

DATA
Green Pursuits

Hours of interesting conversation with friends, neighbors and fellow Grand Rapidian's guaranteed!
MAP DESCRIPTION:
Results from the city-wide tree canopy analysis highlight the % canopy cover within Rights-of-Way (ROW) of major arterial streets in Grand Rapids. Those results parallel those of Green Gathering #1 and Green Pursuits, where greening priority streets were identified.
GGR OUTCOMES

- $15 million + investment to date in parks, trails, trees, bike lanes, restoring the Grand River, and green infrastructure
- Community Champions 3 new non-profits formed: Friends of GR Parks, Greater Grand Rapids Bicycle Coalition and Grand Rapids Whitewater
- Local philanthropy identified funding GGR implementation as one of their top priorities
- 0 to 78 miles of on-street bike facilities in 5 years
- $500,000 investment in tree canopy
- 3 expanded or new city parks
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESSES

High Inclusion

Low Participation

Low Inclusion

High Participation
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESSES

High Inclusion:
- Transformation Advisors 2009
- Sustainable Streets Task Force 2012
- Master Plan 2002
- Green Grand Rapids 2008-09
- GR Forward 2015

Participation:
- Low
  - Urban Renewal 1970s
- High
  - Community Budget Meetings 2005

Low Inclusion
Values
Important personal and community priorities

Past
Preserve the best of our past and present

Reality
- $33 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, 2012

- Comprised of Community Stakeholders (City Commissioners, 21st Century Infrastructure Task Force, Chamber of Commerce, Disability Advocates, Bicycle Coalition, Transit, MDOT, Neighborhoods, Businesses, Transformation Advisors, Road Commission, Hispanic Chamber, West Michigan Environmental Action Council)

- City Commission’s 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  
COMMERCES 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  
SCRIIBNER AT ROAD COMMISSION  
FIX on I-196  
WEALTHY  
LAKE DRIVE (ROAD DIET)  
6TH STREET BRIDGE  
PLAINFIELD  
MONROE CENTER  
COIT 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/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
VISION

City Streets and rights-of-way will be accessible, attractive, and safe; serving all people of our community, contributing to the livability of our neighborhoods and business districts, and increasing economic opportunity to individuals, businesses, and new development. Infrastructure assets will be maintained and well-managed, using a multi-faceted funding strategy and innovative approaches to preserve our investment.
STREETS ARE VITAL FOR

RESIDENTIAL
INCREASED PROPERTY VALUES AND BETTER MOBILITY (Cars, Biking, Walking and Buses)

SMALL BUSINESS
CUSTOMERS NEED TO SAFELY REACH RETAILERS & RESTAURANTS IN THE AREA

BIG BUSINESS
STREETS ARE VITAL FOR MOVING GOODS & PRODUCTS TO CONSUMERS
ACCESSIBILITY

We need to provide quality accessible transportation options for all modes so people can get to work, school, healthcare, shopping and places of worship.
JUST HOW BAD?

2002  60%
FAIR TO GOOD

2012  60%
Poor

2019  87%
Poor

WITH NO NEW INVESTMENT

ONLY 8% OF OUR STREETS ARE IN GOOD CONDITION
*Aren’t my taxes used for streets?

**Answer: No**

**Property Tax Distribution FY12**
- 34% General
- 29% Voted Library Millage
- 22% Refuse
- 15% Capital Improvement

**Income Tax Distribution FY12**
- 83% General
- 13% Transformation
- 4% Capital Improvement
CURRENT FUNDING SOURCES DECLINING OR NO LONGER AVAILABLE

- State gas tax hasn’t increased since 1997
- State revenue sharing down
- City property taxes down*
- One time programs such as stimulus & CSO funding are gone
- Costs are going up

*City property taxes down due to various factors including but not limited to economic constraints and budgetary adjustments.
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!

POOR ROADS

Reporting for duty!
Our Goal: 70% Good Repair

What's Needed?
$22 Million a Year
($294.6 Million over 15 years)
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
$1 MILLION: WHAT DO YOU GET?

The number of miles we can complete per $1 million decreases as the cost of the fix increases. The longer we wait, the more our streets deteriorate!
HOW THE RESOURCES WILL BE UTILIZED

$22 MILLION

1. START WITH HIGH LEVELS OF PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE AND REHAB TO KEEP STREETS FROM GETTING WORSE

2. WE'LL THEN TURN TO RECONSTRUCTING STREETS THAT CANNOT BE SAVED

3. RELIEVE PROPERTY OWNERS OF SIDEWALK REPAIR RESPONSIBILITY
Our Streets. Our City.

Our Choice.

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

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

- Streets 66.3% Yes
- Sidewalks 71.5% Yes
- 64 out of 66 Precincts
## KEEPING PROMISES: IMPLEMENTATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Engagement</th>
<th>Type of Project</th>
<th>Methods</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Light – Informative approach</strong></td>
<td>Road maintenance like cape and crack sealings and wedgings&lt;br&gt;Rotomill and resurfacings and reconstructions that return road to previous state</td>
<td>Postcard or full mailer&lt;br&gt;Website&lt;br&gt;MailChimp&lt;br&gt;News stories and press releases&lt;br&gt;311&lt;br&gt;Construction preparation meeting (for reconstructions only)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Medium – Design input needed</strong></td>
<td>Rotomill and resurfacings or reconstructions that add green infrastructure</td>
<td>Full mailer&lt;br&gt;Website&lt;br&gt;MailChimp&lt;br&gt;SurveyMonkey&lt;br&gt;Street signs&lt;br&gt;Concept design meeting&lt;br&gt;Business association meetings&lt;br&gt;Preferred design meeting, if needed (based on results of first meeting)&lt;br&gt;Construction preparation meeting&lt;br&gt;311</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Heavy – Design input needed</strong></td>
<td>Rotomill and resurfacings or reconstructions that move curbs, are in a business district, or that change road geometry (bike lanes, parking, etc.)</td>
<td>Same as above but the preferred design meeting is usually not optional</td>
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What green infrastructure do you prefer?

- Bulbout Rain Garden
- Porous Pavement Parking
- Brick Pavers, Rain Garden, and Street Trees
- Brick Pavers and Street Trees
- Parkway Raingarden
- Infiltration Basin

Green infrastructure filters pollutants and reduces storm water runoff from entering natural bodies of water by mimicking the natural water cycle.
HEAVY ENGAGEMENT EXAMPLE – KALAMAZOO (FULLER TO HALL)

PREFERRED DESIGN
HEAVY ENGAGEMENT EXAMPLE – KALAMAZOO (FULLER TO HALL)
CONSTRUCTION PREPARATION AND CONSTRUCTION
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESSES

High Inclusion

Sustainable Streets Task Force 2012
Vital Streets Oversight Commission 2015
Vital Streets Implementation
Vital Streets Vote

Low

Low Inclusion

Master Plan 2002
Green Grand Rapids 2008-09
GR Forward 2015
Participation

High
QUESTIONS TO ASK IN ORDER TO FACILITATE MEANINGFUL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:

▪ What is the issue?
  • Are your assumptions correct?
  • How do you verify?

▪ Who needs to be engaged in the discussion?
  • Insure diversity in people, constituencies, viewpoints, and geographies
  • Disenfranchised communities
  • Who will help to implement?
QUESTIONS TO ASK IN THE FORMATION OF AN ENGAGEMENT PROCESS:

- **What resources do you have?**
  - Honor past work, and learn from it
  - Who are your community thought leaders?
  - Who are your staff experts?

- **What resources do you need?**
  - “Can’t afford it” is an excuse...
    - If there is a will there is a way
  - Does staff have capacity or are consultants needed?
  - How much time must be committed?
QUESTIONS TO ASK IN THE FORMATION OF AN ENGAGEMENT PROCESS:

- What does the community need to know?
  - How will you structure the agendas to facilitate a productive discussion?
  - Accommodate different learning types and abilities

- What do you need to learn?
  - Ask meaningful questions that will affect the process

- How will you demonstrate that you listened?
  - Design an intuitive process
  - Be flexible
  - Honor people’s time
  - Consistently deliver visible results
WORK TOWARDS IMPLEMENTATION:

- Anticipate what implementation might look like
  - Committee composition
  - Resources needed
  - Community commitments

- Provide definable outcomes
  - Make it memorable
  - Develop a uniform, replicable methodology
  - How will you report progress?

- Celebrate success
  - Continue to communicate
CHALLENGES

- Grass-Roots Capacity
- Knowledge
- Minority Inclusion
- Consistency
- Communication
- Resources
- Implementation
Steering Committee Walk with Disability Advocates of Kent County
“Dave’s Solar Bicycles”
Planning score: 17.27
TO DO THIS WORK:

- Believe the public’s voice has value
- Believe that the wisdom of the group is greater than your own
- Trust the process
- Respect and honor input – be humble
- Focus on collective leadership
- Use an iterative process: build on what you have learned
- Be flexible
THANK YOU!