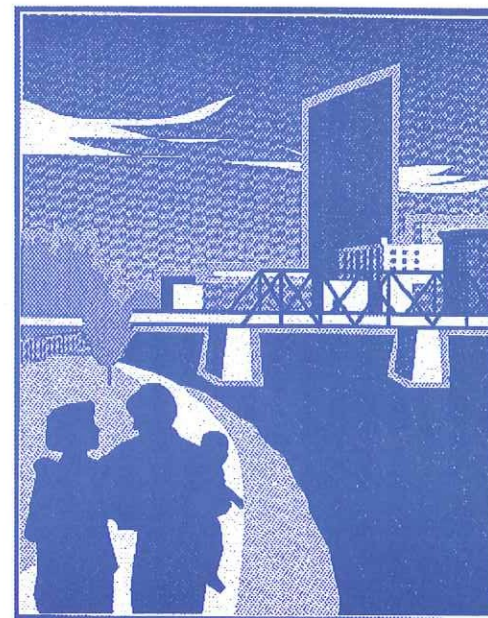

VOICES & VISIONS

COMMUNITY
PLANNING
FOR
DOWNTOWN



Summary Report

VOICES & VISIONS Summary Report

TIM AALSBURG
CARYLE ABENDROTH
GRACE ACHTERHOFF
LYNN AFENDOULIS
MARTIN ALLEN
FRANCESCA AMARI
CARL ANDERSEN
LAURA ANDREA
DORETHA ARDOIN
RENEE ASPER
CHRIS ATWATER
DAVID AUSSICKER
JOHN BAAB
SARA BAAR
WALT BAGBY
JEAN BAHLE
PHYLLIS BALL
DAVID BARNEY
VERNE BARRY
GREG BEGO
VICTOR BELL
LINDA BESSEF
EMA LEE BIRNIE
JOHN BIRNIE
CRAIG BLACK
STEPHEN BLAHA
SARA BLAKELY
TOM BLANDFORD
WILLIAM BLESSING
LA VERNE BLICKLEY
RICHARD BLODGETT
LYLE BOATMAN
R BOATMAN
DAVID BOEHM
EDWARD BOLT
FRANCES BOND
RANDY BOND
GRETCHEN BOUWSMA
JOHN BOWEN
WILLIAM BOWLING
LARRY BRATSCHE
JOANNA BRAUN
AL BREGANTE
CHARLES BREIHOF
NORMA BRINK
BOB BROWN
LUKE BROWN
PATRICIA. BROWN

BRUCE BROWN
ROBERT BUFFHAM
LINDA BURPEE
ROSE BUSH
TOM BUTCHER
BILL BYL
TOM CAECHELE
RICHARD CALKINS
MARGURITE CALLAGHAN
JOHN CANEPA
ED CARLSON
LIZ CARRIER
CHUCK CARTER
JOHN CARTER
DAVID CASSARD
JOHN CATZERE
BRUCE CHEADLE
PAT CHEADLE
FLORENCE CHESTER
TIMOTHY CHESTER
MARTI CHILDS
JULIE CHRISTIANSON-STIVERS
DOUGLAS CHUNG
CAROLYN CIULLO
SCOTT CIULLO
VALENTINO CIULLO
CORIN COEN
TRICIA CONKLIN
SYVIA COOPER
MACARENA CORREA
BEN COURSON
JIM COURSY
KAY COURTNEY
ERWIN COYKENDALL
BRIAN CRAIG
ELIZABETH DAINING
CHRIS DAVE NPORT
EDWARD DAVIS
KAY DAVIS
GERALD DAWKINS
AL DEAN
RICHARD DEBOER
TELLY DEBOER
BILL DEBRUYN
MARY DECHOW
SCOTT DEGAYNOR
BILL DEHAAN
CHARLES DEIHL

DAVE DEJONGE
MIKE DEVRIENDT
DIANE DEVRIES
MIKE DEWITT
AMY DILLON
DAVID DOYLE
BEVERLY DRAKE
PAUL DREHER
GORDON DUDLEY
SUSAN DUNAVIN
GLENN DUNLAP
KAYEM DUNN
BRIAN EASTWOOD
MICHAEL ELLIS
PHIL EVANZO
RONALD FASSET
HARRIET FIELD
FRANCES FIGURSKI
LARRY FINNERALL
KEN FITZHUGH
BARBARA FLETCHER
CAROLE FLETCHER
KEVIN FLOOD
JAMES FOTIS
JAY FOWLER
KRISTEN FRAIN
LYNN FRANCIS
VICKI FRANCIS
CONNIE FRAZIER
STEVE FRENETTE
JUDITH FREY
JERRY FRIESEMA
HAL FROOT
STEVE FRY
PATRICIA GARDNER
TOM GENSON
JOSIE GIECHEL
CHERIE GILES
CLARENCE GOBROGGE JR
JOHN. GOETZKA
JAMES GRAY
LYNN GREER
JEFF GRILL
ROBERT GROOTERS
JEFFERY GROTSKY
SUE GULCH
ANNETTE GULLEY
WILLIAM GUTOS

PAUL HAAGSMAN
PAUL HAAN
RAYMOND HAEMCKER
JOANNA HAINER
JOHN HAIR
FRED HALL
SHARON HALL
VERGINIA HALLWACHS
DIANE HAMILTON
JEAN HANKS
ERICK HANSEN
LISA HANSEN-TICE
VIRGINIA HARDING
ERNESTINE HARRIS
LAURIE HAVLIK
GEORGE HEARTWELL
DEE HEATH
BRANDON HEITZMANN
GERALD HELMHOLDT
GREGG HENDERSON
CLARE HENDRICKS
JEFFERY HENDRICKS
JERRY HERREMA
JEFF HEYNE
GARRY HICKS
ROBERT HILL
JACK HOFFMAN
REBECCA HOFFMAN
DON HOLSTEGE
RUTH HORNBACK
SUE HOUDMAN
MARK HOUSEMAN
MARSHA HOWARD
BARBARA HUDSON
GEOFF HUGHES
BEN HUISMAN
JOHN HYATT
PATSY JACKSON
HERB JENSEN
MARC JOHNSON
MARIE JOHNSON
CHUCK JYLHA
JAMES KADLECEK
FRANCES KEEPSTRA
TIM KELLY
ED KETTLE
KURT KIMBALL
CRAIG KINNEAR

RAY KISOR
JIM KNACK
MICHAEL KNISELY
JIM KOELZER
DIRK KONING
JAMES KOZAK
DALE KRAKER
JIM KRATSAS
KIM KRAUSE
KEN KROMBEEN
LISA KROMMINGA
JAN KRYGOWSKI
KATHERINE KUHN
MARJORIE KUIPERS
JACK KUNG
MARY KUNG
MIKE KUNG
RON LA REAU
BETTY LADD
PATRICK LADWIG
TOM LAMBERT
STEVE LANGWORTHY
NANCY JEAN LARKIN
KEITH LARSON
JEAN LAUG-CAROL
SISTER HELEN LAVALLEY
LEE LEBBIN
PAUL LEBLANC
CHUL LEE
JES LEE
ANNA LEECH
DIANN LEETE
ROSEMARY LEFFLER
JACKIE LEMKE
RUSS LEWIS
TOM LOGAN
SUSIE LOGIE
JOHN LOGIE
VALERIA LONG
JOHN LONGCORE
SONDRA LOUCKS
AREND LUBBERS
SALLY LUNDQUIST
FRANK LYNN
NANCY MACCARTNEY
FAITE MACK
DON MAINE
MARY LOU MAINIER

ANDREA MAITNER
JOYCE MAKINEN
DAYLE MALLORY
HAROLD MARKS
KELLY MARLOW
DEAN MARTIN
DAVID MARTY
SHEILA MARZOLF
STAN MAST
ETTA MAY
CHARLES MCCALLUM
LIZ MCCORMICK
MIKE MCDANIELS
HERBERT MCDONALD
PATRICK MCGEE
ROB MCKEON
MIKE MCLELLAND
ROBERT MEEKER
RICHARD MEHLER
LEWIS MERIWEATHER
MARY MILANOWSKI
STEVE MILLER
GRETCHEN MINNHAAR
MIKE MOHAN
SUE MOLHOEK
MICHELLE MONTESANO
DENNIS MOORE
RICHARD MORTON
LEIGH MURRAY
DAVE NEDERHOOD
CAROLYN NELSON
TIM NELSON
PAUL NELSON
TOM NEMITZ
RICK NEWBERRY
DAVID NEWTON
NOLA NIELSEN
CRAIG NOBBELIN
STEVE NOBEL
TOM NOBEL
JEFF NODURFT
WAYNE NORLIN
PATRICIA O'CONNOR
KEITH OBERFELD
VERN OHILMAN
JUAN OLIVAREZ
SIMON OPPENHUIZEN
JOHN OTT

PAM PATTON
BOB PATTULLO
JIM PAYNE
VIRGINIA PEARCE
JEFF PEREZ
SHIRLEY PERKINS
DAN PERREAULT
LISA PERREAULT
THERESA PETKO
STEVE PIERPOINT
RICHARD PLATTE
MARV POLDERMAN
CHUCK POSTHUMUS
DICK PRATT
PATRICIA PULLIAM
BARBARA RAAYMAKERS
DONALD RAAYMAKERS
LYNN RABAUT
ROBERT RAZ
JUDY RAZMUS

THANKS to all those who took time to participate in Voices & Visions!

STEVEN REDMOND
TRACEY REED
PEG REMELTS
JIM REMINGA
TOM REYES
JAMES RICHMOND
JOANN RICI
STACY RIDENOUR
JIM RIEKSE
JOHN RITZEMA
DALE ROBERT II
LOUIS ROBERT
DANIEL ROCKEY
MILT ROHWER
TOM ROODE
TINA ROSATO
JUDY ROSE
CHUCK ROYCE
SHARON ROYCE
C RUEBECK
DAVE RUEBECK
CHARLOTTE RUNNELS

JOHNNY RUSH
BARB SACKAS
LINDA SAMUELSON
ROBERT SANCHEZ
JANET SANDERS
EMILY SANDONA
MARY SAVAGE
KEN SCHILLING
ROY SCHMIDT
JACK SCHWAB
TERRY SCHWEITZER
PAUL SCRIPSEMA
DAVID SEAMON
LES SEATON
LAURIE SELINGER
MARGARET SELLERS
SHEILA SELLNER
T J SELLNER
MARY SEYMOUR
BONNIE SHUPE

J SHUPE
DIANA SIEGER
TISHA SIMMONS
CLAUDIA SINGLETON
JOSEPH SINGLETON
DONALD SMALLUGAN
DAVID SMITH
GRACE SMITH
MARK SMITH
MICHAEL SMITH
PETER SMITH
JUDITH SOBOL
MICHAEL SPURGIN
CHISTOFER STACKHOUSE
SUSAN STANLEY
GINNY STAUER
CLIFF STEFFEN
SHARON STEFFENS
CLIFT STEFFON
GARY STEINHOFF
ROBERT STEKETEE SR
MARK STEPHENS

FRANCES STEWART
VICKI STEWART
JULIE STONEMAN
SANDRA STRAAYER
JAMES STREETER
EDWARD STRONG
DENNIS STURTEVANT
RICHARD SUSAN JR
DONNA SUSEMIHL
DAVE SWART
BARBARA SYREK
LARRY TANIS
STEELE TAYLOR
TRACY TAYLOR
KATY TEETER
DICK TERMAAT
ALICIA THOMAS
ALLIE THOMAS
MARY THOMAS
TOM TILMA

MARILYN TITCHE
RICK TODD
CHERYL TOLLEY
JOSEPH TOMASELLI
PHIL TOWER
CAROL TOWNSEND
RUDY TREECE
JOHN TREMORE
JAN TREUR
CHARLOTTE TURSKY
HEIDI UECKER
RENEE VAN HOUTEN
BILL VAN PORTFLEET
DIANE VANALLSBURG
FRED VANDENBERG
ANNE VANDERLENDE
LISA VANDER PLOEG
CHARLES VANDERBEEK
MICHELLE VANDERMEIDEN
JIM VANDERSCHAAP
BOB VANDERSON
BEN VANDERWILP

SHARON VANDERWILP
RONALD VANSTEELEND
DICK VAUGHAN
SHERYL VEENEMA
ERIC VIELAND
RON VOOGT
HAROLD VOORHEES SR
VIRGILIA WADE
ELIZABETH WAITE
JOHN WALLSTEADT
ALDEN WALTERS
GLENN WARNER
GLENN WARNERS
SOPHINA WASHINGTON
DEBBIE WATKOSKI
PETER WEGE
T WELCH
WILLIE WELLS SR
TOM WESHOLSKI
TY WESSELL
DARRYLE WEST
R D WEST
JOHN WESTRA
IRE WIERSMA
MARCIA WILCOX
DAN WILJANEN
KARISA WILSON
STEVE WILSON
JIM WINTER-TROUTWINE
CRAIG WISNER
JOHN WISNIEWSKI
RICK WITHAM
CASEY WONDERGEM
BOB WOODRICK
GABRIEL WORKS
SHARON WORST
SHARON YENTSCH
DAVE YOUNG
JOE ZAINEA
KIMM ZAMARRON
GEORGE ZIMMERMAN
NED ZIMMERMAN
DEB ZONDERVAN
GRANT ZONDERVAN
MIKE ZUZIAK

Our apologies to those whose names we may have inadvertently omitted.

Acknowledgements

City Commission

John H. Logie, Mayor
George Heartwell, Third Ward
James Kozak, First Ward
Lewis Meriweather, Third Ward
Linda Samuelson, Second Ward
Roy Schmidt, First Ward
Sharon Worst, Second Ward

Downtown Development Authority

Thomas J. Wesholski, Chair
Robert Buffham
John Canepa
David Cassard
Katherine Kuhn
John Logie
Patricia O'Connor
Judy Rose
Casey Wondergem

Working Committee of the DDA

David Cassard, DDA
Bruce Cheadle
Beverly Drake
Dick Morton
Vern Ohlman
Judy Rose, DDA
Robert Steketee
James Streeter
Thomas Wesholski, DDA

Downtown 21 Coordinating Committee

John Logie, Co-Chair
Katherine Kuhn, Co-Chair
John Canepa
David Cassard
Arend Lubbers
Charles McCallum
Diana Sieger
Milt Rohwer, Staff

Institutions and Neighborhoods Task Force

Arend D. Lubbers, Chairperson
Diana Sieger, Vice Chairperson
Grace Achterhof
William Blessing
Bill Byl
Dick Calkins
Charles Deihl
Diane De Vries
David Doyle
Beverly Drake
Jeffery Grotzky
John Hair
George Heartwell
Rebecca Hoffman
Jim Kadlecsek
Craig Kinnear
Ron LaReau
John Logie
Faite Mack
Don Maine
Harold Marks
Paul Nelson
Dave Newton
Juan Olivarez
Shirley Perkins
Judy Rose
Roy Schmidt
Margaret Sellers
Fred Vandenberg
Ron VanSteeland

Urban Center Task Force

David Cassard, Chairperson
Martin Allen
John Baab
David Barney
William Bowling
Robert Buffham
Valentino Cuillo
Kayem Dunn
Michael Ellis
Lynn Francis
Patricia Gardener
Robert Grooters
Joanna Hainer
Katherine Kuhn
Mike McDaniels
Steve Nobel
David Smith
Craig Kinnear, Staff

Convention, Culture and Entertainment Task Force

Charles McCallum, Chairperson
Bruce Brown, Vice Chairperson
Martin Allen
Timothy Chester
Paul Dreher
Don Maine
David Marty
Nancy MacCartney
Richard Platte
Chuck Royce
Peter Smith
Judith Sobol
Joseph Tomaselli
Casey Wondergem
Connie Frazier, Staff

Design Studios West, Inc.

Andrew Bush
Donald Brandes
Joel Freedman

**Partners for
Livable Communities**

Robert McNulty

Dr Evan Vlachos, Futurist
Richard Louv, Author & Journalist
Nick Wolterstorff, Author

Aves Inc.

Linda Gubitz
Jim Markle

Inwords Inc.

Ron Koehler
Bill Holm
Cindy Sharp
Barbara VanderKallen

**Michigan Message
Center, Holland**

24-Hour HotLine

Special Thanks To:

Grand Center
Grand Rapids Art Museum
Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce
Grand Rapids Public Library
Public Museum of Grand Rapids
Warner, Norcross & Judd

Project Manager

Sheila Mast

Administration

Kurt Kimball
James H. Knack
William F. Hoyt

Graphic Design

Chris Gray

Planning Staff

Jay Fowler
Dave Jensen
Keith Larson
Marv Lummen
Kurt Mai
Ken Schilling
Margaret Shackelton
Valencia Thompson

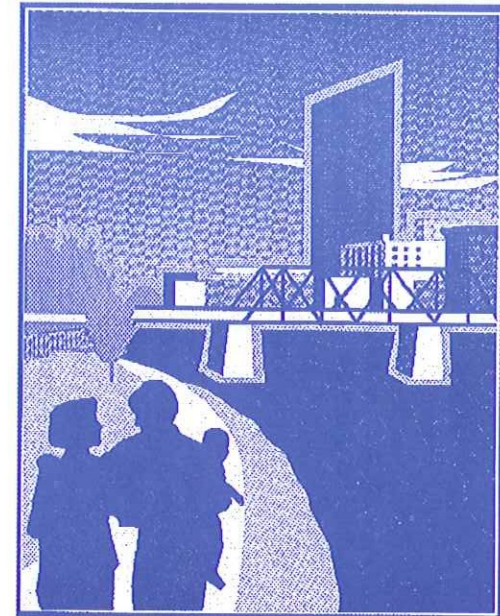
Media

Jon Koeze, GRIN
GRTV Staff

Printing

Jack DeYoung

**VOICES
&
VISIONS**
COMMUNITY
PLANNING
FOR
DOWNTOWN



Summary Report

July, 1993

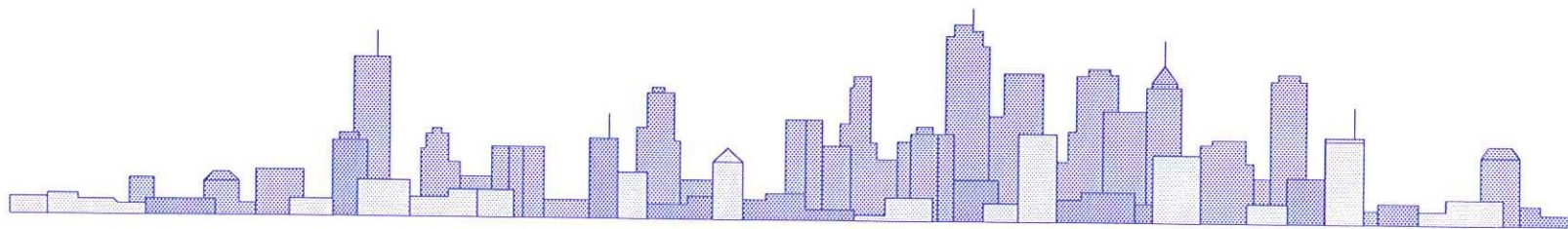
Voices & Visions is sponsored by the
Grand Rapids Downtown Development Authority.

Table of Contents

Preface	9
Introduction	11
● Chapter 1...A People Place	17
Combine Efforts to Expand and Promote Downtown Arts and Entertainment Activities	18
Combine Arts Marketing	18
Expand Evening & Weekend Activities	19
Create a Youth Activity System	19
Seek Local-Public Funding Support for the Arts	20
Create a Shared Auditorium	21
Make the Arts More Visible in Downtown	21
Create Downtown Artist Spaces	21
Expand Storefront Art Galleries	22
Make Downtown "Pedestrian-Friendly"	23
Re-design Pedestrian Walkways & Monroe Center	23
Make Downtown Feel Safe for Everyone	23
Provide Housing in Downtown Buildings	24
■ Chapter 2...A Growing Place	27
Make The Public Sector a Partner	28
Establish One-Stop Help for Downtown Developers	28
Improve Coordination of Institutional and Neighborhood Planning	28
Expand DDA's Boundaries	29
Bring Private and Nonprofit Groups Together	30
Create Shared Offices for Downtown Organizations	30
Expand Support and Involvement in Business Recruitment and Retention Efforts	30
Building Pride in Downtown	31
Establish a Presidents' Council for Educational Institutions	32
Organize a Downtown Partnership	32
Consolidate Review Processes for Health Care Institutions	33

Table of Contents

Build Necessary Support Services	33
Create a Child Care System for Downtown	33
Put More Downtown Shuttles on the Road	34
Make Heartside a Better Place to Live and Work	35
◆ Chapter 3...A Place to Be Proud Of	37
The Greening of Downtown	38
Develop Incentives for Private Sector Reuse of Older Buildings	38
Implement a Trailblazing Sign Program	39
Create a Downtown Lighting Program	40
Clean-up Downtown	40
Create Positive, Forward-Looking Building and Development Guidelines	41
▲ Chapter 4...A Place for the Future	43
Create a Library Beyond Walls	44
Coordinate Convention Center & Arena Plans with the Arts & Entertainment Community	44
Create a Shared Health Care Management Institute in Downtown	45
Create a Partnership for Conflict Management in Transition Areas	46
Build the Regional Bus System of the Future	47
Conclusion	49
Index	50

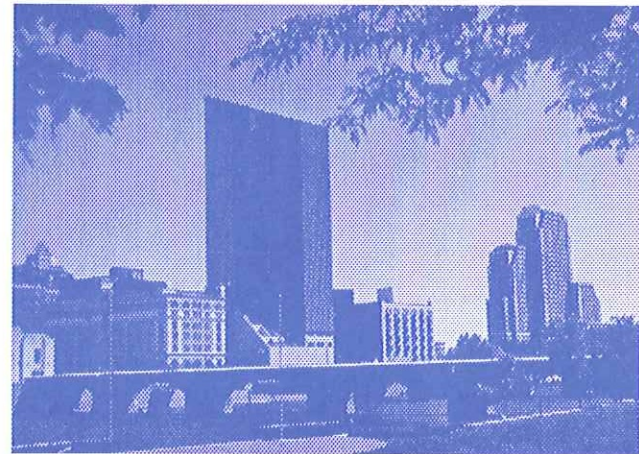


Preface

This document is a summary report to the community from Voices & Visions, the community planning process for downtown Grand Rapids. The following pages review the work completed thus far and describe the more than 30 specific actions proposed by Voices & Visions.

Most of these actions are already being worked on. Some will take up to 10 years to complete. Taken individually, the proposals represent specific public and private strategies and actions for downtown growth and development. Taken together, the proposals complement and support one another to form a comprehensive agenda for change.

*Consider this document a snapshot of where we are now, as well as a vision of what downtown should be a decade from today. It is not intended to be read and then relegated to a bookshelf. This is a living document – a guide, if you will, for the people, organizations, and institutions who must work together to remake downtown Grand Rapids...into the place **YOU** want to be.*



The Voices of the People Shape Visions for Downtown

Voices & Visions is giving new direction to an old friend – downtown Grand Rapids. How do we know downtown needs something new? Because we asked, and the people of metropolitan Grand Rapids told us so.

What Is Voices & Visions?

Voices & Visions is a planning process set in motion in 1990 by the City of Grand Rapids Downtown Development Authority. Its charge was to discover what we needed to make Grand Rapids grow and prosper in the 21st century. As it proceeded with its work, Voices & Visions attracted national attention and created some local controversy – as well as deep commitment and enthusiastic support. That's often how it is with something new.

And, indeed, Voices & Visions – both the plan and the process is something new.

What makes Voices & Visions different?

It's about PEOPLE – their needs, values, and beliefs.

Voices & Visions was launched with the realization that traditional planning methods do not embody the needs and desires of the people. So we turned the planning process upside down. We built the proposals around a metropolitan consensus, not on the advice of a few professional planners and consultants. We asked the people who live in the community to develop their own ideas, and then we challenged downtown's leaders to run with them, refine them, and work together to make them happen.

Yes, downtown Grand Rapids has seen many plans. But in the past, we always created plans that had to be "sold" to the community and downtown stakeholders after a few leaders told us what downtown should be. The people were told – never asked – how "the City" would change the physical face of

downtown. Our citizens were never before asked what they need, what they feel is important to hang onto, and what must be changed. They were never asked what values and beliefs they would like to see reflected in their downtown and their children's downtown.

Voices & Visions **did** ask, so the proposals have special meaning and importance. They embody the experience, wisdom, and thought of those who care about downtown and want it to be a great place for themselves and their families, now and in the future.

In short, Voices & Visions gave the pencil back to the people.

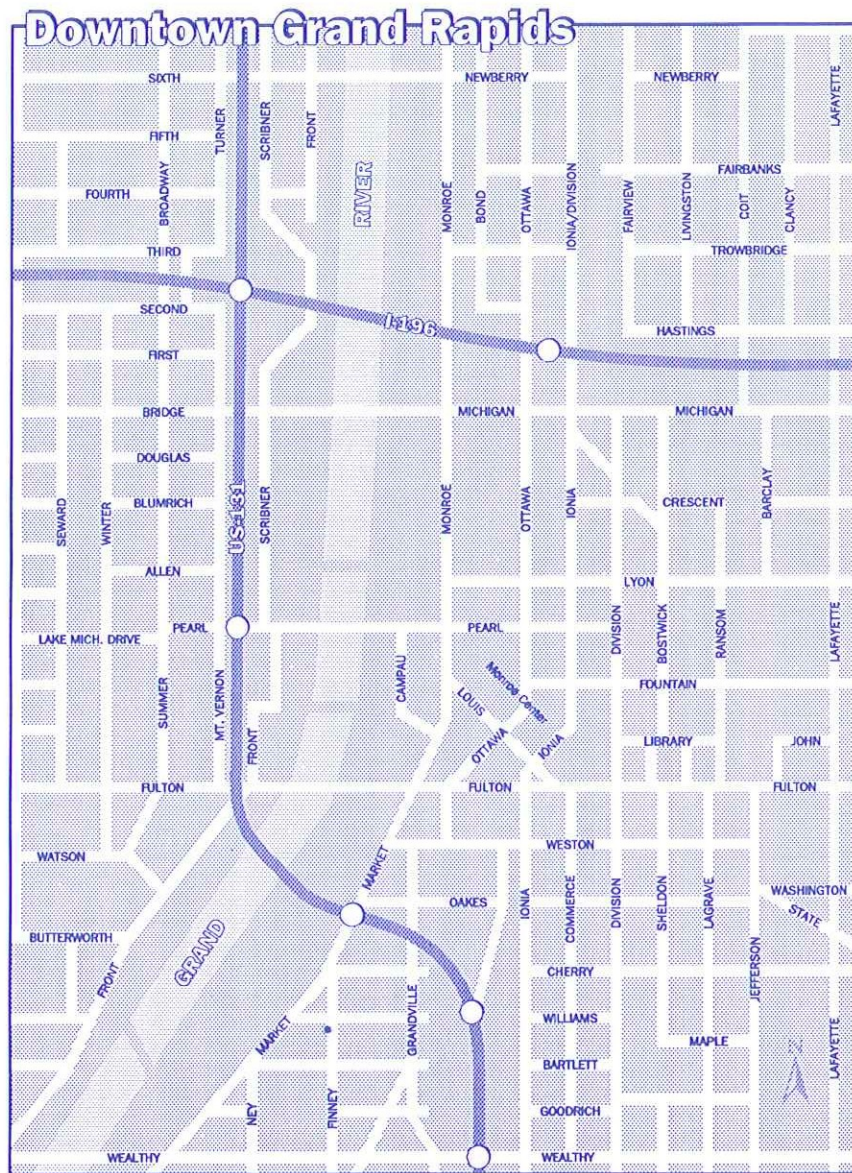
How Was This Done?

Voices & Visions brought the community together in working sessions, citizen forums, task forces, discussions and debates to share ideas and participate in setting downtown's new course for the future.

From all over the metropolitan area, citizens shared their hopes, dreams and desires for downtown Grand Rapids. Voices & Visions organizers also recognized that, after all, if downtown is to become a place where people want to be, every citizen in the Grand Rapids area should be given the chance to contribute to its future.

And contribute they did! Nearly 500 people from throughout the metro area volunteered over 3500 hours and participated in meetings. These people came from Ada, Allendale, Caledonia, Cascade Township, Coopersville, East Grand Rapids, Grand Rapids, Grandville, Hudsonville, Kentwood, Lowell, Rockford, Spring Lake, Walker and Wyoming. And many (thousands) more used the 50 Voices & Visions suggestion





boxes located throughout the metro area, called the Voices & Visions 24-hour HotLine to give comments and get information, wrote letters to the Voices & Visions organizers, or responded to a special *Grand Rapids Press* insert to test the results of early meetings and discussions.

Once the people's visions for downtown were heard, a number of task forces refined the visions into concrete proposals. The task forces were made up of interested citizens as well as representatives of the businesses, organizations, and institutions who will turn the visions into reality. Out of this inclusive process came specific proposals and practical plans of action. The process also helped forge the partnerships that are so vital to carry out the actions.

What Were the Results?

Voices & Visions produced proposals – more than 30 of them – that will change downtown and make sure it becomes the place people want to live, work, and play, no matter what their interest, age, income or background.

And Voices & Visions has already brought together many downtown organizations, institutions, businesses, and individuals who are now committed to carrying out those actions.

The proposed actions were born from the consensus of many. They embody the values we, as a community, hold dear. They challenge us to change, yet preserve our heritage. They call us to bold action, yet have the patience to talk and plan. Above all, the proposals reflect a desire by the people to make downtown a place for people – to design a downtown that is economically stronger, more useful and more fun.

Some people have asked why there are more than 30 Voices & Visions proposals. Why not limit the proposals to a few “major” actions that are easily explained, highly visible, and have immediate impact?

There is no “silver bullet” that will resolve the complicated issues downtown must face. We must heed the voices of the community that said downtown must see many changes before

Introduction

it will have the broad appeal of a true gathering place – a place where people and families want to come, again and again.

Downtown is complex, and change is not easy. An effective plan must address many individual issues while recognizing that the issues intertwine and affect one another. For example, a plan that calls for more housing in downtown buildings must also remove the financial and code barriers that currently make reuse of older buildings impractical for developers. At the same time, downtown must be an attractive place to live, so the housing plan's success depends on the success of other plans, such as expanded entertainment and cultural activities, enhanced lighting, more green space, a better pedestrian system, and other improvements.

What Happens Next?

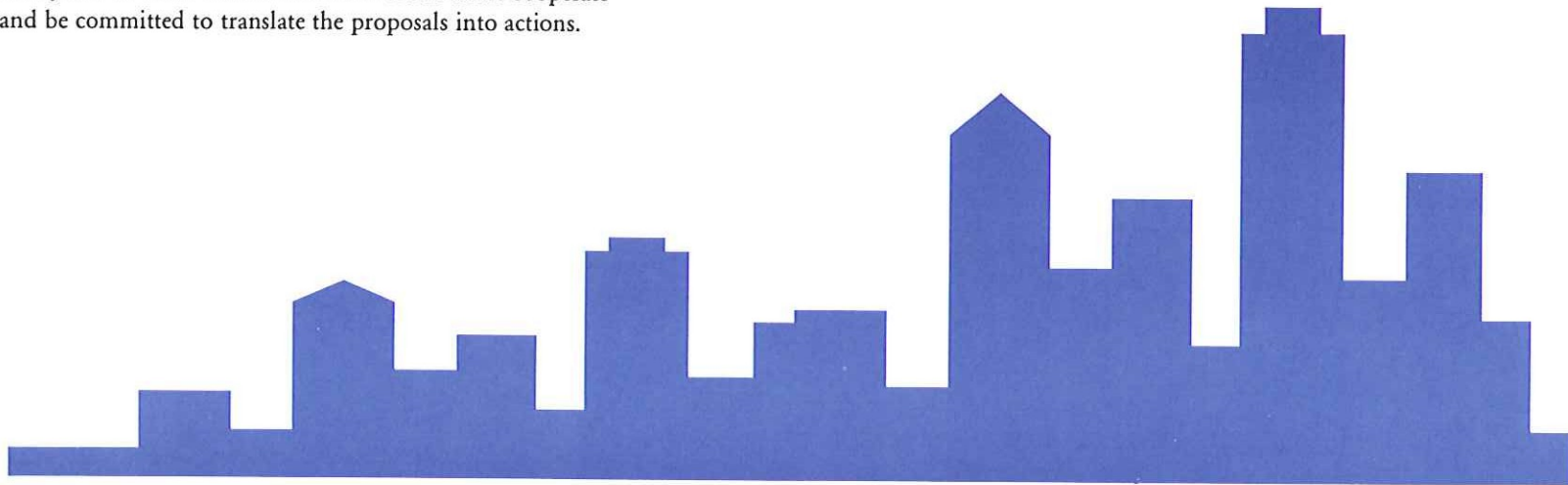
We must draw on the community's strength, just as we have throughout the Voices & Visions planning process. Because the plan is complex and comprehensive, people must continue to work together. Downtown developers, the arts community, city officials, business leaders, colleges, health care institutions, and all other downtown stakeholders must cooperate and be committed to translate the proposals into actions.

For instance, we need a quality, affordable child care system for downtown. But it won't just happen, and one person or organization can't do it alone. Human service agencies, colleges, day care providers, businesses, and others must come together, use the Voices & Visions proposals as a framework, and put together the resources to build the system.

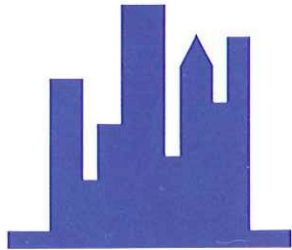
The team spirit of Voices & Visions must continue. And always, the visions of the people must stay in focus.

What Will Keep Us On Course?

Early in Voices & Visions, participants put onto paper those principles which people felt were important in guiding us as we work to achieve to our envisioned downtown. These guiding principles, along with others stated throughout the planning process, form a type of "constitution":



CONSTITUTION FOR DOWNTOWN GRAND RAPIDS



WE, THE CITIZENS OF THE GRAND RAPIDS METROPOLITAN AREA, BELIEVE THE FOLLOWING TO BE IMPORTANT FOR OUR DOWNTOWN TO BECOME WHAT WE WANT AND WILL WORK HARD TO ACHIEVE:

DOWNTOWN IS THE PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL HEART OF THE METROPOLITAN AREA.

It should reflect and represent the best of our community, West Michigan. Downtown should reflect the traditional values of respect for quality, integrity, honesty and commitment. Downtown should reflect the rich ethnic, cultural and social diversity of the region. It should clearly be an integral, interdependent part of the city and the region.

DOWNTOWN GRAND RAPIDS IS FOR EVERYONE.

Our downtown should be inclusive and open to all people. It should be a place where people from all walks of life may choose to live, work and play, together and with dignity.

Our downtown must be the community of communities, appealing to all citizens, life styles and life stages. Downtown must be barrier-free and physically safe and accessible for all.

DOWNTOWN OF THE FUTURE SHOULD INCLUDE THE BEST OF OUR PAST.

As physical changes and improvements are made to downtown, the heritage and history that connects us all, and connects us to our past, must be preserved and enhanced for future generations. Older downtown buildings should be preserved and reused wherever possible.

DOWNTOWN IS A PLACE FOR PEDESTRIANS.

People should enjoy walking in downtown Grand Rapids. Walking should be an opportunity to take in the sights and sounds of a big city downtown – only more beautiful, cleaner, of a more human scale without skyscrapers blocking the sun, and without so much traffic and exhaust fumes.

Downtown should be a place where you can walk to most everything; and want to. Walking in downtown should be a pleasant experience, regardless of the time of day or the season. And, the walking environment should be barrier-free, so all can enjoy it.

DEVELOPMENT IN DOWNTOWN MUST PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.

The river, the hill and the valley are all natural resources of the downtown, to be protected, and enhanced where possible. Views of, and from, these geographic features are important in our future development and use of downtown.

The quality of the air we breathe and the river water running through downtown matters to those who want to live, work or play here. We must work together to improve each element and its role in our changing downtown.

DOWNTOWN REFLECTS AND CELEBRATES OUR COMMUNITY'S DIVERSITY.

Diversity should be a priority for downtown business and community leaders. As the single location representing the wide variety of people and interests in the metropolitan area, downtown Grand Rapids is becoming more and more of a center of diverse interests, tastes, activities and life styles.

In the future, efforts must be made to ensure that our community's diversity is proudly reflected, displayed and celebrated in our downtown. Downtown can no longer be the single-dimensional central business district of earlier eras. Downtown Grand Rapids should, instead, emerge as the cosmopolitan urban center for West Michigan.

■ DOWNTOWN DECISION-MAKING MUST REMAIN OPEN AND INCLUSIVE.

Decisions for the future of downtown must continue to be based on consensus building and an open, inclusive process rather than exclusive and closed.

One of the preliminary vision statements produced early in the Voices & Visions process stated:

In the future, Grand Rapids will move closer to its vision through a policy and decision-making PROCESS, which involves all levels. By implementing an open system of equal access to all groups and individuals, decisions made will be understood. Through a commitment to excellence with integrity, the process of policy and decision-making will capture the loyalty and support of the citizens.

■ DOWNTOWN MUST BE ECONOMICALLY STRONG.

A key to the long-term health and vitality of downtown is its ability to attract and retain businesses. The public sector must join the private sector in making downtown an attractive, preferred location for a variety of businesses, their customers and their employees.

■ DOWNTOWN MUST BE "USER-FRIENDLY"

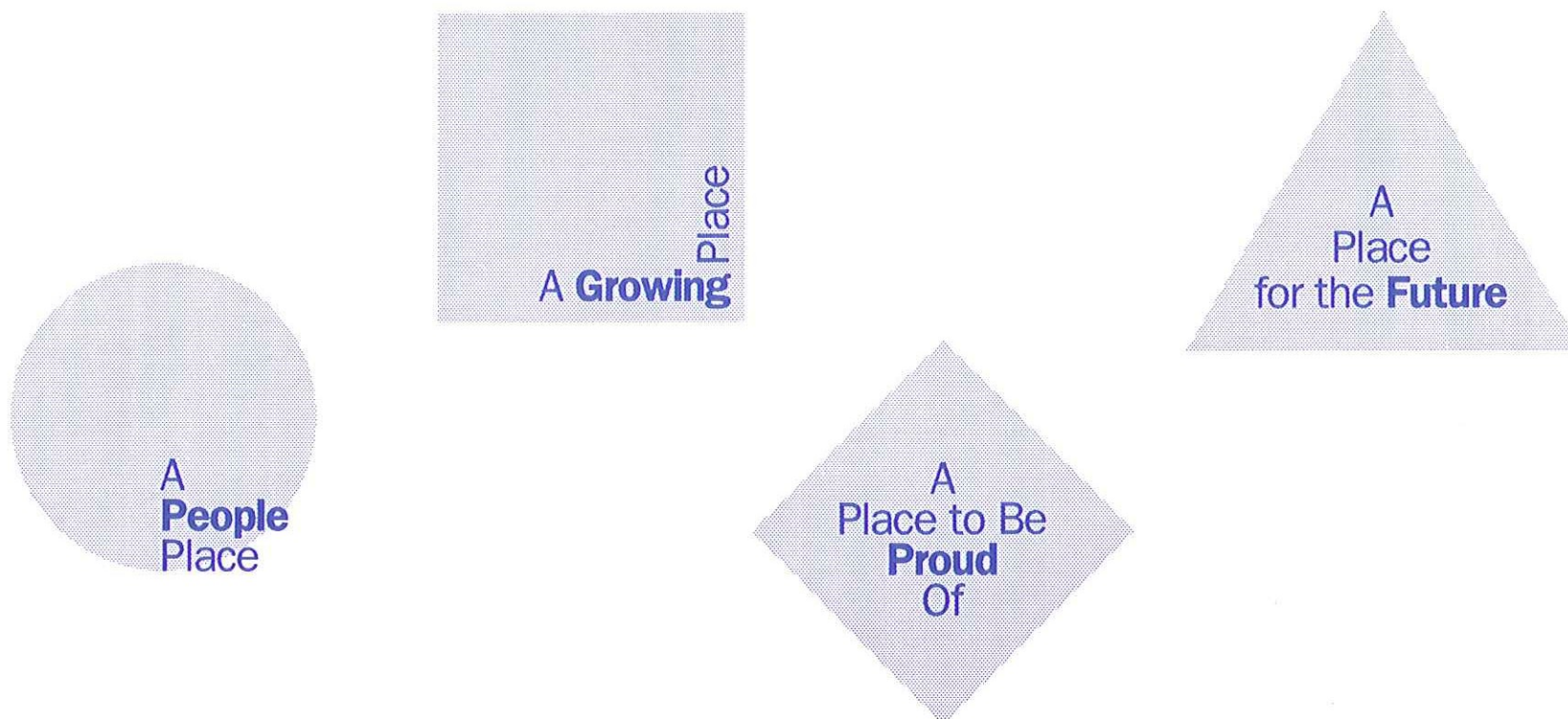
People should be able to use downtown with ease. Downtown must not be intimidating or confusing. Signage must be clear and helpful. Lighting must be appealing and reassuring. Transportation must be convenient and easy-to-use. There must be places to stop and rest.

■ TO ACHIEVE OUR ENVISIONED DOWNTOWN GRAND RAPIDS, WE MUST:

- Design downtown...Don't just let it happen.
- Do things right...If something's worth doing, it's worth doing right.
- Work together...to make downtown "The Place I WANT to Be."



What Do We Do To Get There? Working Together, We'll Make Downtown Grand Rapids...



These simple statements convey the four (4) major strategies we, as a community, will use to make sure that, in the next ten years or so, downtown will become...

"The Place I Want to Be."