

Grand Valley Metro Council

Metropolitan Framework

Interim

November, 2003

Introduction

Metropolitan Development Blueprint.

Though now nearly a decade old, the Metropolitan Development Blueprint (MDB) was clearly ahead of it's time. It defined what our metropolitan region looked like and offered us a chance to act in a more consistent, well organized manner. The promise of the MDB paralleled the promise of the Grand Valley Metro Council (GVMC) in that both were organized as a response to decades of ineffective efforts to coordinate the scores of governmental entities each acting independently, yet each striving for ways to better collaborate.

The MDB Process. With funding from the Michigan Department of Transportation and the Michigan Department of Commerce as well as its own contributions, GVMC began a process which enlisted hundreds of interested regional citizens in four subject groups: Land Use, Transportation, Utilities and Environment/Natural Resources. After a year long effort, which led to 23 visions supported by 53 individual strategies, the MDB Steering committee condensed the final report into three central themes and seven broad initial strategies. (see below). These were adopted by the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council in their effort to “change business as usual”.

Three Themes:

1. A network of open lands and greenways should developed and preserved,
2. The creation of compact centers of regional economic activity, and
3. Promote compact livable communities

Seven Initial Strategies:

1. Create a Blueprint Commission.
2. Complete an inventory of natural assets.
3. Design a transit system based on Blueprint themes.
4. Define regional employment and activity centers.
5. Review region-wide water and sewer utility systems in relation to land use.
6. Convene an collaboration of public and private planners to encourage compact livable communities.
7. Create and encourage sub-regional planning alliances.

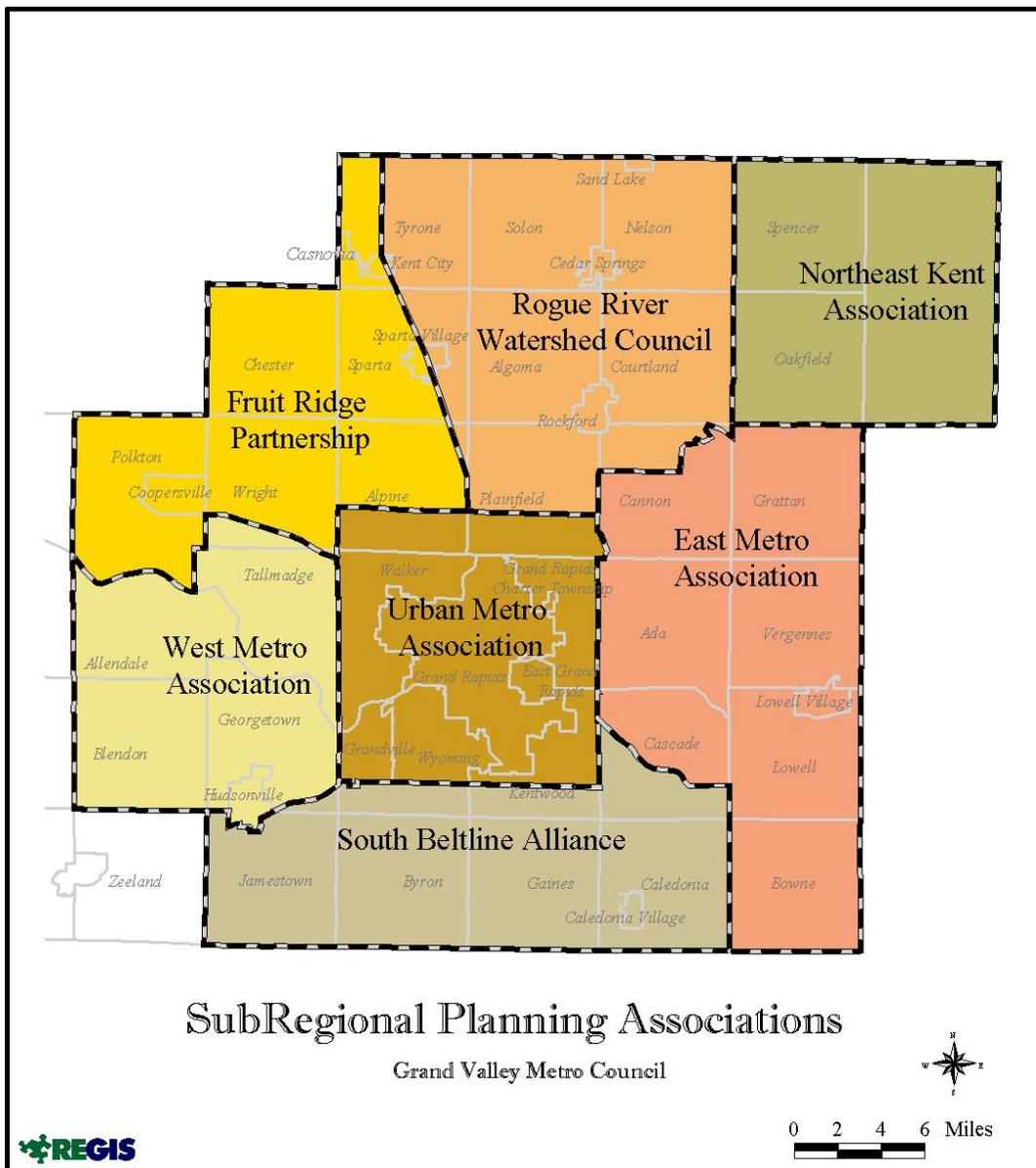
The Metropolitan Framework

Beginning with Principles. A newly established Blueprint Committee started out by declaring a set of guiding principles spelling out its beliefs pertaining to shared regional interests. These Principles were adopted by GVMC in September of 2000, and were used as one of many important guides in the remaining process. These principals added significantly to the central themes and initial strategies of the MDB and gave a much clearer picture of future directions for Metropolitan Planning.

Planning within a Metro Region. The GVMC Planning Department soon determined that the best way to accomplish nearly all the remaining strategies and to do so living within the spirit of both the original MDB and the Blueprint Principles, a type of regional “plan” would be necessary for the Greater Grand Rapids metropolitan area. This plan would not be like a local land use plan in that it would cover development patterns and regional infrastructure in a much

broader way. Over a two year period, GVMC staff devised and proposed a methodology which established a process for planning our metropolitan region.

Subregions After discussions with local officials throughout the metro area, it was concluded that the best way to gain a single regional perspective on growth was to group the 50 or so governing entities of the metro area into logical divisions. The “logic” in this case applies to a particular regional perspective shared by many local governments in a particular portion of the metro region. For example, 10 communities in the southern part of the metro region saw their greatest regional role to be related to the newly forming M-6 Southbelt Freeway. On the north end of the metro region, 14 communities within the Rogue River watershed believed a Watershed Council was the most appropriate regional role for them. In all GVMC staff helped establish 7 such “subregional entities” through which joint planning could be conducted through a single metro-wide perspective.



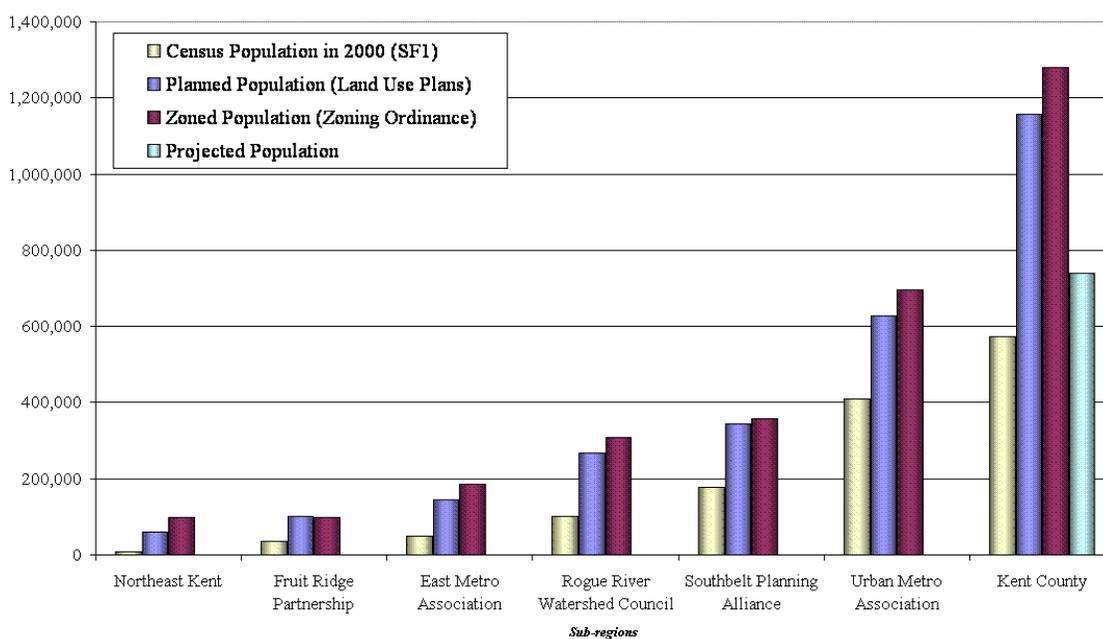
The Metropolitan Framework

By the year 2030 there will be another 211,000 persons in the Grand Valley Metro Council planning area¹. The population is now 665,705. Within that planning area Kent County will gain another 175,000 persons. The population of Kent County is now 574,335.

The aggregated plans of Kent County townships, cities and villages would accommodate 1,160,000 persons and their zoning ordinances would accommodate even more – 1,280,000 persons. These rough calculations show a large gap between local plans and the likely future. The bar on the far right of the graph below represents the forecast population of Kent County. The bars next to it represent the aggregated buildouts of zoning ordinance maps and local plans, and existing population.

Population projection vs zoning and land use planning

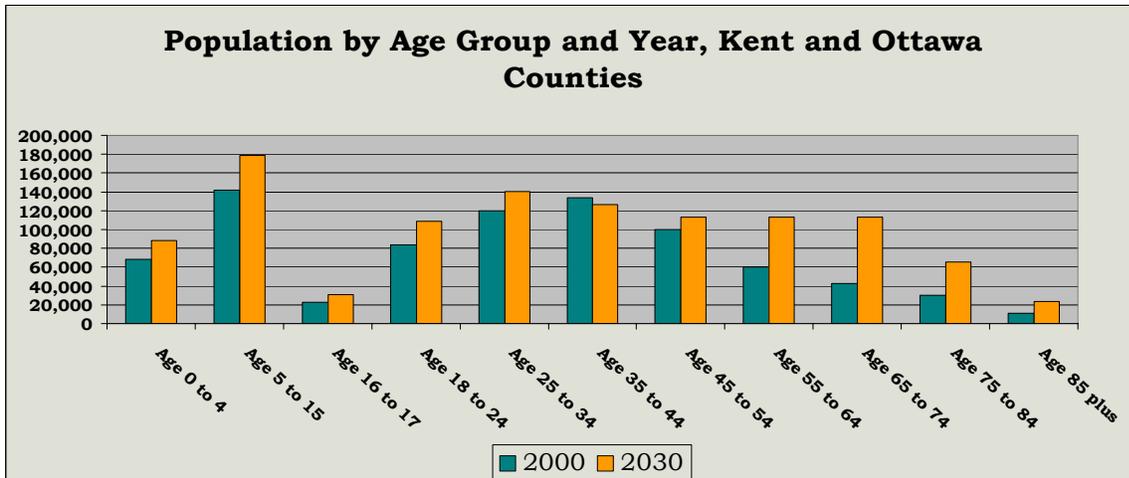
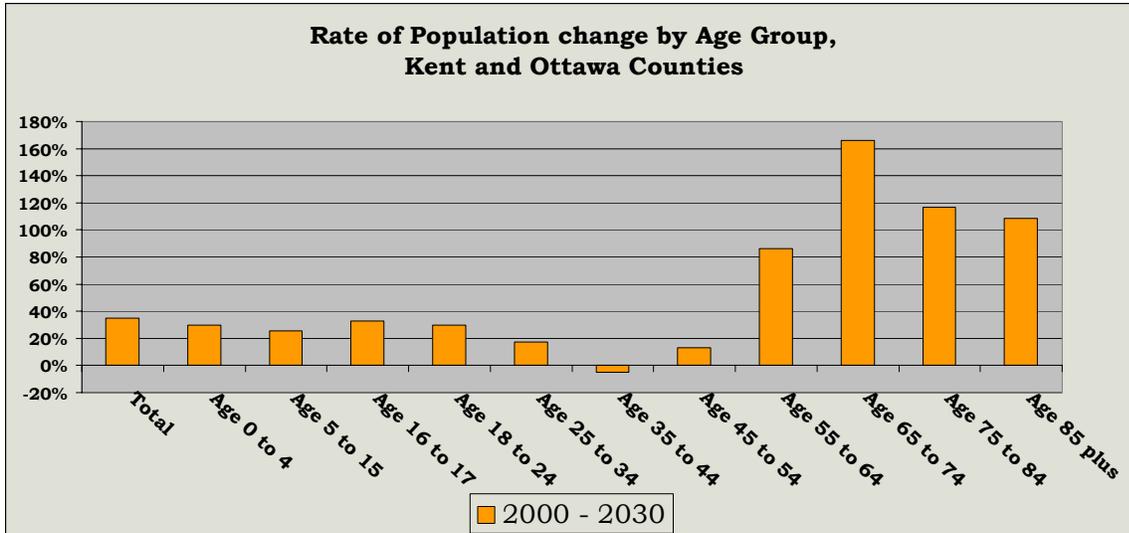
aggregated values to the level of sub-regions



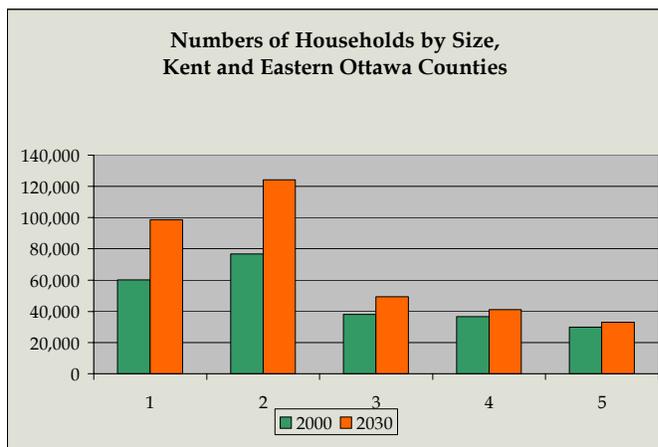
Demographic Changes

The 877,000 people who will reside in the metro area in 2030 will include a much greater proportion of older people than now and will consist of many more small households. For example the rate of change in the number of people in the age group between 65 and 74 during the years 2000 to 2030 will be around 160%. In contrast all the age groups from zero to 54 will increase 33% or less. So while there were roughly 35,000 persons age 65 to 75 in 2000; in 2030 there would be 90,000. Of course the other age groups will continue to be as large as or larger than the oldest groups; and they will increase. However the growth in the number of persons 55 and older will be dramatic.

¹ U.S. Census and forecasts done by the University of Michigan for Michigan Department of Transportation



The other significant change will be in the number of small households. There will be some increase in the number of larger households - 3, 4, 5 or more persons – another 19,000 households. However this number looks small relative to the additional 86,000 one or two person households.



These demographic changes will bring shifts in housing needs and demands. A reasonable assumption is that there will be less demand for single family, detached housing and more demand for other forms of housing.

The Form of Development

Blueprint I committed the metropolis to 1]compact, livable communities, 2] centers of activity and 3] committed open space and greenways. In order to bring clear options for future development to subregions, compact communities as well as the usual forms of development were more precisely described, both in form and intensity.

Recent forms of development were described by three types: suburban development, residences on two acre lots, and residences on ten acre lots.

Compact, livable development

Some members of the urban metro subregion planning group discussed the number and type of compact communities that would be used for planning. They concluded that in our metro area we should use four types: hamlet, neighborhood, community and major downtown. The radius of these compact communities would be between 1200 and 1900 feet - a walkable distance to the center from the furthest edge. They would vary in the proportions of land devoted to commerce, residences and open space. They would also vary in the proportions of housing and building types.

The major downtown type of center is downtown Grand Rapids; although a metropolitan area of our size could sustain another major urban center.

The neighborhood and community types were used in subregional planning sessions. The “community” was called a “town” center. The hamlet type may have been represented in the cluster type of development or by the neighborhood type in some locations.

Whatever their density, all compact types were defined as having the following essential characteristics:

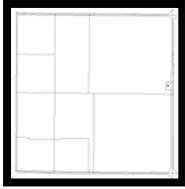
- A center: with stores, jobs, institutions, and a public square
- A highly interconnected network of streets with small blocks
- Concentrated housing gradually decreasing to the edge. Includes a mixture of housing types and costs.
- A discernable edge
- Pedestrian friendly
- Schools and recreational facilities to which young children can walk.
- Buildings are close to the street
- Streets that are used for parking
- Prominent sites reserved for civic buildings and monuments
- Good access to public transportation

Examples of recent forms of development and some of the compact forms were found in the region. The amount of growth each form would contain is listed below.

Development Types

Persons Accommodated Per Square Mile

Amount of Land Used to Accommodate Thirty Years' Growth - 211,000 Persons



Agricultural Preservation
0 Persons



Ten Acre Lots
160 Persons
1319 Square Miles [36 Townships]



Two Acre Lots
660 Persons
320 Square Miles [9 Townships]



Cluster Development
660 Persons
160 Square Miles [4+ Townships]

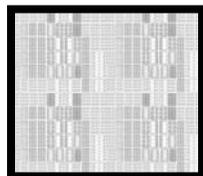


Suburban
2500 Persons
84 Square Miles [2+ Townships]



Neighborhoods
8,500 Persons
[24 Square Miles]

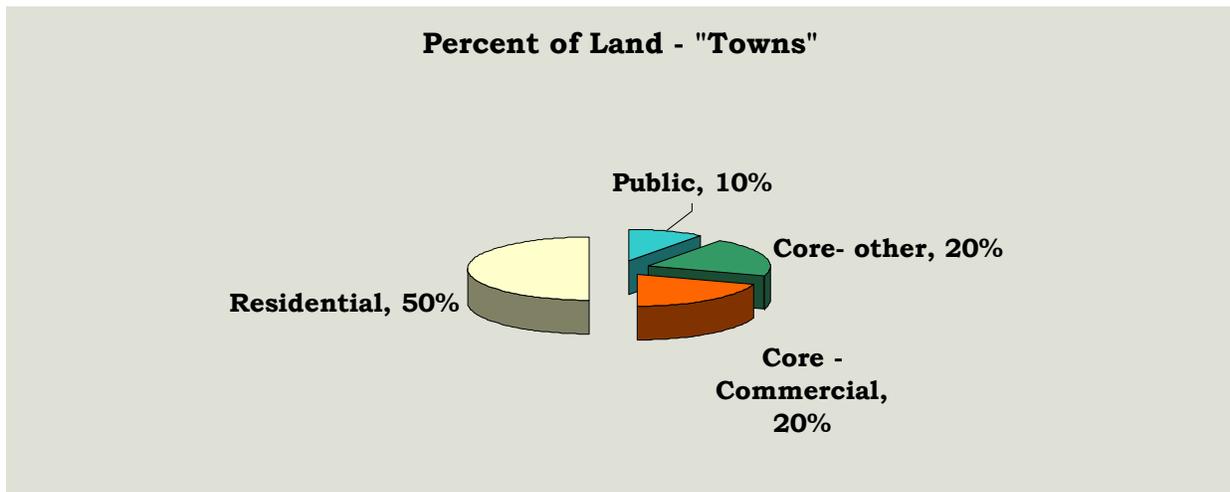
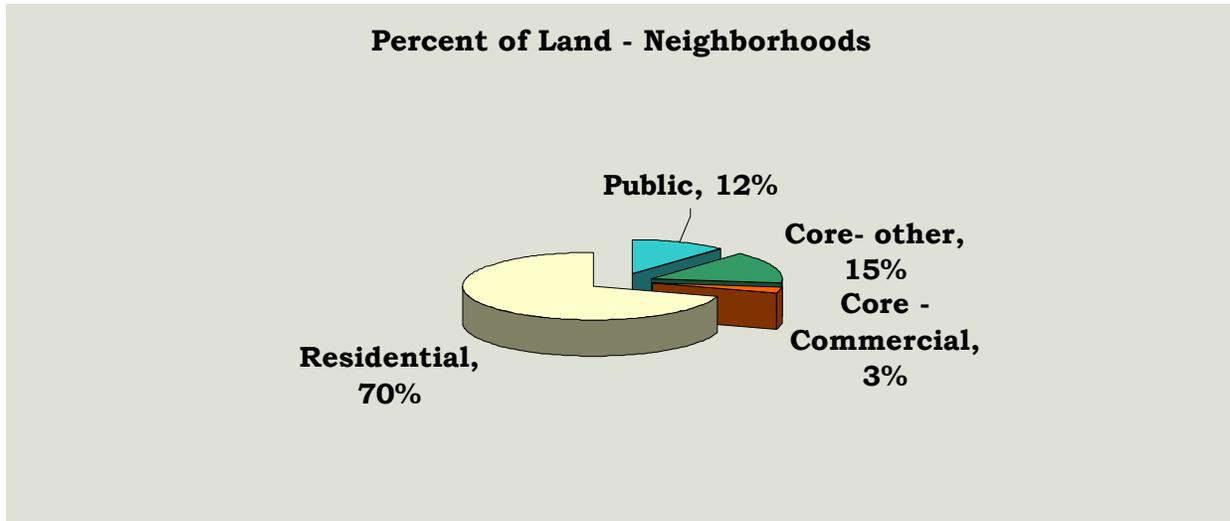
Infill Neighborhoods
2100 Persons



"Towns"
11,000 Persons
19 Square Miles

Infill "Towns"
2,900 Persons

Neighborhood and Town development types include a variety of housing types, public uses, parks, schools, retail and office and work spaces. The proportions vary according to the type. The Neighborhood has more residential and more of it is single family. The “Town” center has more space devoted to commercial uses.



The other development types – ten acre lots, two acre lots, suburban, and cluster are uniformly residential, single family houses. In fact there will be commercial, public, multifamily housing and employment uses associated with that growth; although it would be located elsewhere. For the subregional planning exercise, the average amount of land per capita was incorporated into the square mile calculation and the number of persons accommodated was decreased.

Subregional Planning

Five subregions each separately participated in a series of three meetings. The first meeting consisted of presenting the future population forecasts, the aggregated local plans, a description of the regional landscape, a description of development types and a participant listing of important issues in their subregion. The Interurban Transit Partnership described a variety of fixed route transit options and how they related to a variety of urban forms. The participants marked maps showing significant features and issues of their subregion.



The second session was long. The development types and a description of a normative transect from nature/agriculture to downtown were looked at. Participants in small groups planned out their subregion using chips representing development types placed on a base map. There were two versions. What they felt would happen if status quo trends would continue; and what they would prefer to see happen. At the end of both versions, the amount of population accommodated was calculated. In all cases more population was accommodated than was

needed. And in preferred scenarios, where more land was preserved and more compact development types were dominant, even more population was accommodated.

During the third session each subregion voted on how much of regional population growth they wished hold and how much they thought each of the other subregions should receive. Since their plan scenarios provided for more growth than was needed, subregions prioritized where growth should go. They voted on what ratio of growth should go into each of the development types in their subregion.



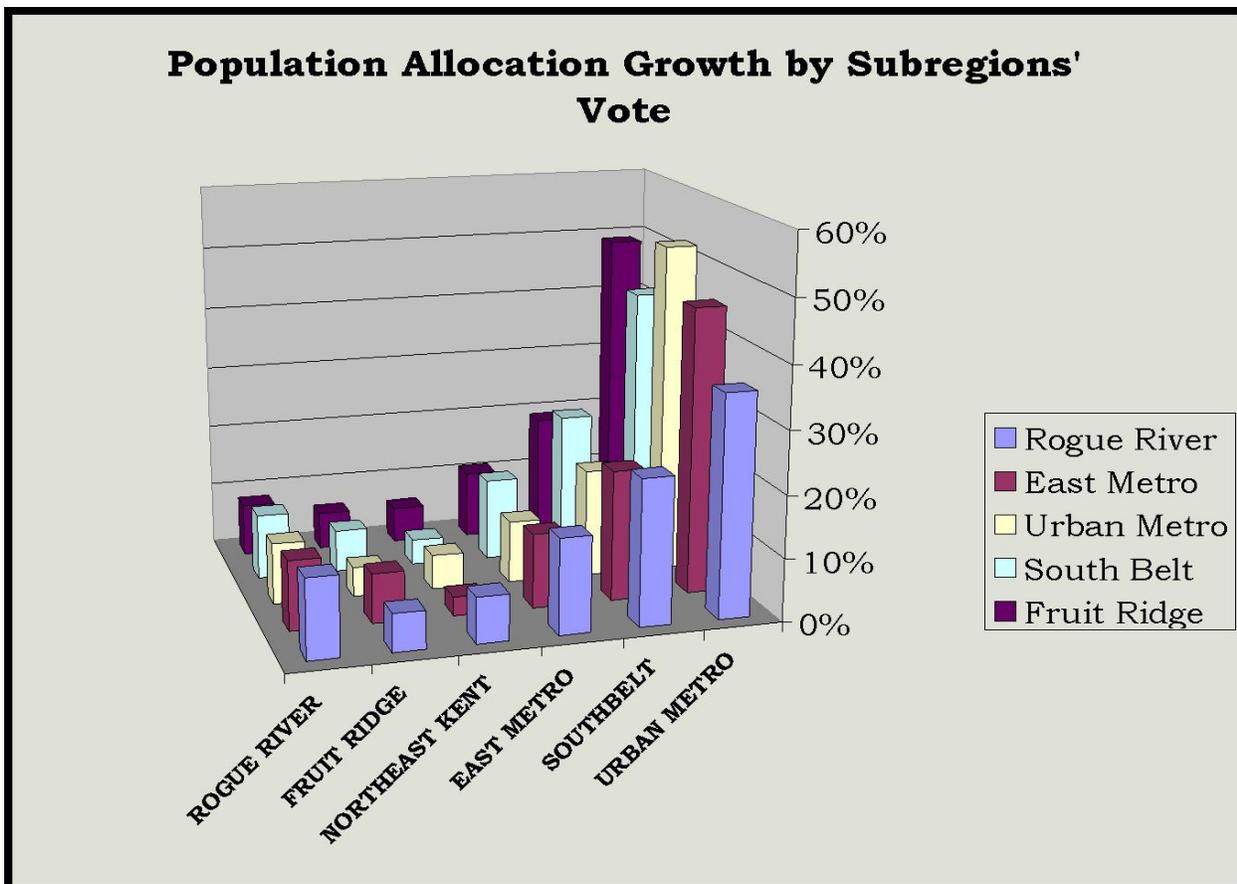
Where growth should occur

Although participants did not know how the other subregions had voted the choices were very consistent. In fact there was very little variation among the voting of individual persons.

The averages were:

| | |
|------------------|-----|
| Rogue River – | 11% |
| Fruit Ridge - | 6% |
| Northeast Kent - | 5% |
| East Metro - | 12% |
| South Belt | 20% |
| Urban Metro | 46% |

All participants wished to see a large proportion of the growth go into the Urban Metro subregion, and secondly into the Southbelt subregion.



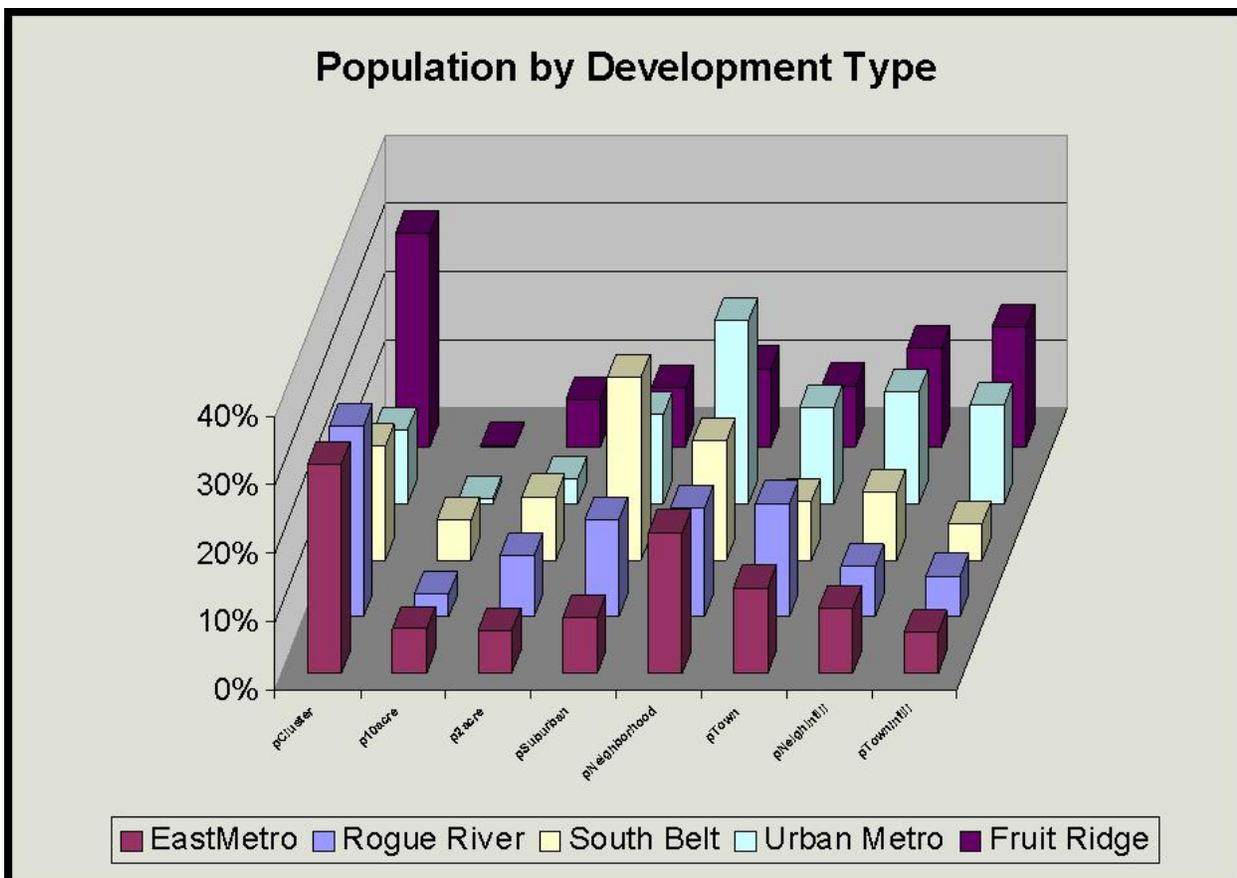
How Growth Should Occur

Participants in each planning voted on what proportion of future growth should go into the various forms of development. Naturally this varied by the character of the subregion. For example there was little 10 acre lot development chosen for the Urban Metro subregion. Cluster development was a popular choice for the rural areas of the other subregions.

There were some consistencies across subregions. Suburban development was thought to continue to be a significant component. However, as is seen on the graph that the four rows of columns on the right which represent traditional neighborhood or town type of development, represent a large proportion of the future development. **Traditional neighborhood and town development is a preferred growth mode by community leaders.**

The general framework suggested to the subregional planning groups and adopted in this metropolitan framework was to consider the region and subregion in tiers. There would be:

- Areas of preservation – permanently undeveloped – farmland and natural areas
- Areas of conservation – likely not to be developed for multi decades – cluster development
- Tiers of hamlets, villages and towns
- Tiers of towns and cities made up of neighborhoods centered on central business districts

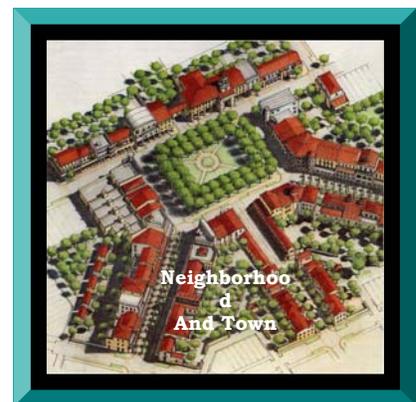
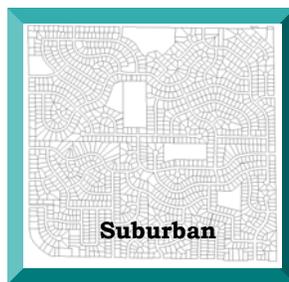
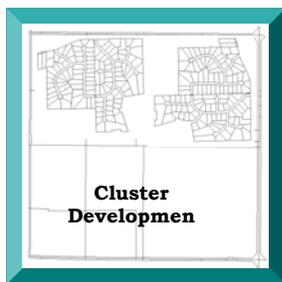


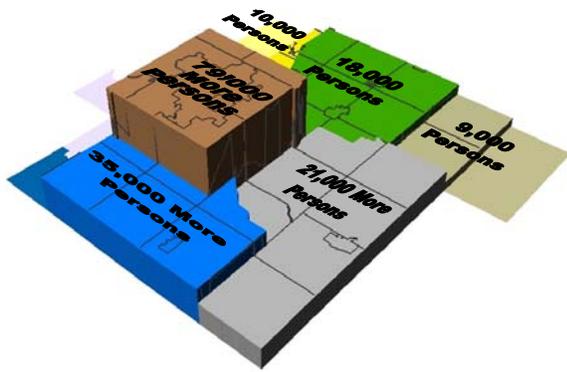
Synthesizing the Metropolitan Framework

The subregional planning session participants had shown more development on their plan maps compared to the proportion of growth they wished to see in their subregion. However they had provided ratios of growth for development types and some prioritizing of development locations. Using these ratios, tables of growth by type were calculated for each subregion; and locations for each type were chosen from the prioritized maps.

Some development is quantified in units of square miles. The traditional neighborhood development types are quantified by their number. They are defined to be close to the normative size of one quarter square mile.

So for example if Southbelt voted to have 20% of its growth in suburban style development, and the consensus was that Southbelt should get 30% of the population growth; staff calculated how much land that 20% of 30% of 167,000 households would need to be. Then by looking at the preferred maps the most likely suburban locations that the groups had shown could be found and used. This process became quite complex. So for each subregion and each scenario there was a list of development types and acres of each that were filled by choosing off of the planning scenarios that the subregions had produced in their workshops.





Population Growth by Subregion, 2000 to 2030

Sources: Grand Valley Metro Council Blueprint II, and Univ. of Mich. Institute for Labor and Industrial Relations

Fruit Ridge Subregion

| Name of Sq. Mi. Block | Preferred Population Per Subregion | Number of Towns or Neighborhoods or Square Miles |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| | | Square Miles |
| Cluster from Two Acre Lots | 930 | 0.85 |
| Ten Acre Lots | 5 | 0.01 |
| Two Acre Lots | 223 | 0.20 |
| Conventional Suburb | 310 | 0.10 |
| | | No. of Towns or Neighborhoods |
| Neighborhood TND | 4554 | 2.1 |
| Town TND | 2109 | 0.8 |
| Neighborhood TND Infill | 793 | 1.5 |
| Town TND Infill | 1096 | 1.5 |
| Totals | 10,020 | |

South Belt Subregion

| Name of Sq. Mi. Block | Preferred Population Per Subregion | Number of Towns or Neighborhoods or Square Miles |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| | | Square Miles |
| Cluster from Two Acre Lots | 1089 | 0.99 |
| Ten Acre Lots | 123 | 0.39 |
| Two Acre Lots | 654 | 0.60 |
| Conventional Suburb | 6424 | 2.02 |
| | | No. of Towns or Neighborhoods |
| Neighborhood TND | 14030 | 6.6 |
| Town TND | 7361 | 2.7 |
| Neighborhood TND Infill | 1780 | 3.4 |
| Town TND Infill | 1941 | 2.7 |
| Totals | 33,400 | |

East Metro Subregion

| Name of Sq. Mi. Block | Preferred Population Per Subregion | Number of Towns or Neighborhoods or Square Miles |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| | | Square Miles |
| Cluster from Two Acre Lots | 835 | 0.76 |
| Ten Acre Lots | 135 | 0.43 |
| Two Acre Lots | 152 | 0.14 |
| Conventional Suburb | 1246 | 0.39 |
| | | No. of Towns or Neighborhoods |
| Neighborhood TND | 9779 | 4.6 |
| Town TND | 5906 | 2.1 |
| Neighborhood TND Infill | 1208 | 2.3 |
| Town TND Infill | 778 | 1.1 |
| Totals | 20,040 | |

Urban Metro Subregion

| Name of Sq. Mi. Block | Preferred Population Per Subregion | Number of Towns or Neighborhoods or Square Miles |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| | | Square Miles |
| Cluster from Two Acre Lots | 1777 | 1.62 |
| Ten Acre Lots | 43 | 0.14 |
| Two Acre Lots | 691 | 0.63 |
| Conventional Suburb | 7400 | 2.32 |
| | | No. of Towns or Neighborhoods |
| Neighborhood TND | 27431 | 12.9 |
| Town TND | 25508 | 9.3 |
| Neighborhood TND Infill | 6362 | 12.1 |
| Town TND Infill | 7608 | 10.5 |
| Totals | 76,820 | |

Rogue River Subregion

| Name of Sq. Mi. Block | Preferred Population Per Subregion | Number of Towns or Neighborhoods or Square Miles |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| | | Square Miles |
| Cluster from Two Acre Lots | 1506 | 1.37 |
| Ten Acre Lots | 63 | 0.20 |
| Two Acre Lots | 294 | 0.27 |
| Conventional Suburb | 2474 | 0.78 |
| | | No. of Towns or Neighborhoods |
| Neighborhood TND | 6450 | 3.0 |
| Town TND | 4355 | 1.6 |
| Neighborhood TND Infill | 1617 | 3.1 |
| Town TND Infill | 1611 | 2.2 |
| Totals | 18,370 | |

The Framework Map

The Metropolitan Framework Map portrays a turn in development trends. It contains many circles which represent compact, walkable neighborhoods. While neighborhoods like this have existed here for a century, few have been built in the last 40 years. Yet they represent a part of the future strongly preferred by many community leaders and citizens. The recently adopted plan of the City of Grand Rapids shows many of the compact, livable centers promoted by the Metropolitan Development Blueprint. Other communities are actively pursuing this pattern of development and the State is beginning to promote them as part of a “smart growth” policy direction.

Most of the neighborhood and town centers are along important corridors, many are at existing but less intensely developed places; all must be and are in locations that are or will be served by public water and sewer. They are clustered by established jurisdictions and places such as Lowell, Rockford, Byron Center, Kent City, Cedar Springs, Casnovia, Coopersville and others.

Others build on healthy neighborhood centers in the urban core like Alger Heights, Grandville Avenue, and East Grand Rapids downtown. Some are placed to build existing urban spots into more vibrant places like Wyoming city hall, Remembrance Road in Walker, 44th and Breton in Kentwood, and others. While some of these locations may not be developed for decades and others may be added, choosing specific locations gives the region a basic pattern and common components within which all jurisdictions and institutions can work. As time passes and the Framework is adjusted, a more definite pattern of transit strong corridors, centers, permanent countryside and rural reserve areas will emerge.

The specific areas for suburban, cluster, two acre and ten acre development types were chosen from many subregionally suggested locations. Because participants preferred to see growth occur in neighborhoods and town centers, and predominately in the urban metro subregion; not very much area was needed for these types. This is especially striking considering that most recent development has been in these forms.

Preservation of Natural Areas and Agricultural Land

During the subregional planning exercises, the groups had outlined or used square mile markers to indicate land they wished to see preserved, either because of its valuable natural character or for support of agriculture. These areas have become part of the draft metropolitan framework along with a mapping of existing parks and publicly owned open space.

The choice of land for agricultural preservation was facilitated by the features on the base map. The base map showed the planned sewer or water service areas. It also showed combined scores for 4 of the criteria of the Kent County Agricultural Preservation rating system. The factors were: soil productivity, parcel size, agricultural zoning, and proximity to livestock operations. Other maps showed local plans, zoning, parcel size and land use in 1991.

While some preservation areas were painstakingly outlined with detailed knowledge of local conditions, others were not thoroughly examined or, in the case of northeast Kent County were not examined at all. Northeast Kent County contains soils which would likely be rated by an

alternative soil rating because of their value for irrigated specialty crops like seed corn. Therefore the Agricultural Preservation Board was consulted. They indicated townships where they felt there was likely potential for agricultural preservation and where the draft framework map needed work. By examining maps of parcel size and land use showing agricultural lands, the framework plan was considerably adjusted for this category. Areas of parcels of less than 35 acres and especially areas predominately of parcels less than 20 acres were avoided. Muck soil areas were likely to be included because of the difficulty of building on them.

Areas of parcels greater than 35 acres and in agricultural use were included; unless they were inside the planned sewer/water service boundary. The choices were more likely to include land than exclude, because the purchase of development rights program of Kent County is beginning and it remains to be seen where the most participation by farmland owners will be. As the program proceeds the planned areas can be adjusted. It was considered important to provide for enough land to sustain the agriculture industry and supporting businesses. The agricultural preservation areas contain about 1100 parcels of 35 acres or more totaling about 127,000 acres. Some of that land may contain woods, wetlands or water bodies.

The agricultural preservation component of this metropolitan framework and the framework itself is a required to qualify for state and federal agricultural preservation funds.

Master Plan for Metropolitan Sewer and Water Services

Grand Valley Metropolitan Council with the participants in the Metropolitan Water and Sewer Planning Agency has produced and periodically updated a master plan for water and sewer services. This study has been based on the same County level population forecasts as this metro framework. However at the time of the last update future population was assumed to be distributed based on recent growth trends. The results were different than those from the subregional planning process, but the service area boundary was partly determined by them.

The service area boundary for water and sewer services has been a fundamental influence on the planning process. The Metropolitan Framework will, in turn, be an influence on the next water/sewer plan update. There will be a clearer understanding of where growth will go and where it will not go. It will be based more on proactive planning and less on reactive follow up on events.

There are providers of water and sewer service who do not participate in the metropolitan plan - Lowell, Allendale, and other townships and small towns. The North Kent sewer service authority will be a new entity for the next update. These providers of services need to participate more thoroughly in metropolitan growth discussions within the context of this evolving Metropolitan Framework. Much of the Framework depends on there services.

Transportation

The Long Range Transportation Plan for the metropolitan area has as its core a computer model whose fundamental input is the location of jobs and residences. The Metropolitan Framework will provide that input. The 2003 update of the transportation plan already uses the draft framework plan as illustrative scenario of how compact development would affect transportation.

Fixed Route Rapid Transit The Interurban Transit Partnership is studying corridors for a fixed route transit mode such as bus rapid transit or light rail. This sort of transportation machinery on a fixed route strongly facilitates and depends on the compact, walkable neighborhoods and towns that have been make up so much of the framework. The interim plan should be a determinant in the location of these alternative corridors and centers.

Issues with Process

Still working on Subregions. One of the difficulties with the new subregional process is trying to fit it neatly into existing boundaries. This may be necessary for meeting jurisdictional requirements of various county, state and federal programs. For example, what is being called the “North Kent” subregion really consists of only two Kent County townships, Spencer and Oakfield, which were not fully anticipated in the beginning of the MDB project, but are now a necessary part of the plan to accommodate all of Kent County in a “land use plan” as required in their recently adopted Purchase of Development Rights program. It is presumed that these two jurisdictions share development influences with the City of Greenville as well as northern Kent County, so this subregion will require a wider perspective than originally anticipated.

A similar problem presents itself with the so-called “West Metro” subregion, involving many of the Ottawa County communities. In this case, Ottawa County is involved in their own planning efforts at the same time GVMC is attempting to bring those members of the Metropolitan Planning Organization into the Metropolitan Framework. Though Ottawa County Planning Commission is willing to be involved in the process, the sharing of data and set-up to conduct such a planning effort has been awkward at best. Recent initiatives through GVMC’s Regional GIS (REGIS) will be solving this issue, however, and planning should begin soon in this part of the metro area.

Low Participation from Certain Communities. The Cities of Rockford and Lowell are both key communities in the Rogue River Watershed subregion and the East Metro subregion, respectively. While information was provided and considerable discussion surrounding these cities was held in subregional forums, no representatives were present at any of the meetings involving subregional build-outs. While the City of Rockford has long been a strong proponent of regional planning and supports the Metropolitan Framework planning process, their role in the build-out discussion was marginal. Likewise, the City of Lowell is considered a leader in the east metro area on communicating with its neighbors, no involvement in the East Metro planning process was difficult to reconcile. Given the central role such cities play in the formation of development patterns in a subregion, special efforts will be made to involve Rockford and Lowell in the Metropolitan Framework before final adoptions.

New Concept for our Area. Past regional efforts such as the 1969 Kent County Plan and Region 8-208 Water Quality planning process are ancient history and most public officials now planning and zoning in our metro area have were not involved in these early efforts. Therefore, for over twenty years now, the metropolitan region has been creating individually rendered plans, reviewing developments on a parcel-by-parcel basis against those plans and planning services and infrastructure to meet short term demands with little assurance of future needs in a broad perspective.

A good example of this problem is the last Metropolitan Water and Sewer Plan adopted by Grand Valley Metro Council in 1999. Though existing individual sewer and water plans were collectively analyzed for regional implications, there was no corresponding “collectively” rendered, preferred land use arrangement for the region to compare it against. In other words,

whatever was being proposed at the local level on individual land use plans was adopted independently of a larger metro-wide notion of the ability to serve those land uses collectively. It could only be assumed that all local governments had adequately planned for the growth they were proposing, and no real definitive match could be made between regional water and sewer and regional development patterns.

The Metropolitan Framework can address this problem if local officials, planners, engineers, community builders and community inhabitants both understand its use and can trust its propositions. To this end, the Metropolitan Framework must be the dynamic result of a long-term process involving as many aspects of our metropolitan area as users of the framework care to include. At a minimum, land use patterns, vital community infrastructure, transportation and green spaces should be continually contemplated in the subregional process and included on an updated Metropolitan Framework.

Transit was too general. Though the Interurban Transit Partnership (ITP) staff was invited to participate in the subregional learning workshop, not enough was really known about potential “corridors” ahead of time. The ITP input during the subregional sessions really emphasized modes options instead of specific corridors or any geography associated with the provision of transit services. GVMC planning staff used what information was available concerning known bus-transit corridors and attempted to steer appropriately scaled centers into such locations. Most of this work was done in the Urban Metro area, however, and too little is known at this time about transit proposals which could be supported by proposals made by subregional participants.

The transit-and-land use chicken-and-egg needs to be solved during this Metropolitan Framework work, and we need to find common solutions to both the need for exurban forms of public transit and development patterns that support them. More work directly with ITP in this process will be vital and we cannot be designing future transit options and investments on a business as usual land use model.

Indirect Municipal Representation. An ongoing problem with a membership-based Metropolitan Council like GVMC is that municipal representation does not always translate into concurrence by local municipal officials. This is even truer at the subregional level and we must be constantly aware that those who have been delegated to be involved in regional planning processes must be strongly encouraged to communicate and even advocate for positions taken in a more regional dialog back in their local jurisdictions. It is the hope of GVMC to augment activities of the seven subregions as ongoing planning groups and find ways to involve area-wide professional planners as well.

Development Placement Inconsistencies. To meet our projected population imperative, the subregions chose some irregular locations for “suburban development styles” of development. This is partly due to not having immediate feedback on the impact of all such land use placements during the “build-out” process. Since many participants felt some level of suburban development form should be chosen, it was often hard to say exactly where such development should be located. At times it seemed as if known “availability” was the only criteria that could be reasonably applied. Staff will be acquiring software to help assess the

implications of build-out decisions as they are being chosen. Also, as successive iterations of build-outs are conducted, a better understanding of appropriate proportions of varying development forms should follow.

Not a Municipal-style Land Use Plan. The Metropolitan Framework cannot be viewed as the same thing as a local Land Use, General Development, Master or Comprehensive Plans. One major difference will be that the plan will not be proposing all traditional land use types such as Residential, Commercial and Industrial. Instead, it will attempt to show broader development patterns in relation to more concise development “centers” such as neighborhoods, regional centers or downtowns.

Since the subregional groups have adopted significant growth around centers and were limited reasonably projected population for our metro region, there will be broad areas throughout the metropolitan area with no future populations being presented. This does not mean there is no current development there and it does not mean that there will be no development in these locations. It is simply a visionary representation of a) what our subregional entities wish to accomplish collectively, b) what we should be designing our regional infrastructure to accommodate and c) what we hope to encourage local officials to someday adopt as their own local growth strategies with their own plans and ordinances.

Special Collaborations. The City of Grand Rapids and Kent County have distinguished themselves as special collaborative partners in this process. The City of Grand Rapids recently undertook a planning process which promoted principles of smart growth and our own Blueprint Principles. As this areas “downtown” or central city, the City of Grand Rapids includes a majority of our neighborhood centers and interconnections with those centers. As a result of their Master Plan update, GVMC was able to partner with them within the context of the Urban Metro subregional association to enlarge upon their work and help better coordinate their ideas with the surrounding cities of Walker, Grandville, Wyoming, Kentwood, and East Grand Rapids, and the urbanizing townships of Alpine, Plainfield and Grand Rapids. In addition, GVMC and the City of Grand Rapids will be working closely with one another creating tools and educational materials which can be used throughout the metro region to help accomplish many of the new ideas being considered.

Kent County also has been showing great interest in metropolitan-wide planning. After receiving the Report of the Kent County Urban Sprawl Committee, Kent County Board of Commissioners launched a Purchase of Development Rights initiative for the county and moved to support GVMC in this effort to create a Metropolitan Framework through which land use and infrastructure planning can be accomplished for our area. With the many area-wide services provided by Kent County, including parks, health inspections, mental health, police, sanitation, public works and much more, this collaboration is essential to both Kent County and GVMC as this region heads towards its first metropolitan-wide planning initiative.

Appendix A

Blueprint II Principles, adopted by GVMC on September 7, 2000.

LAND USE PATTERNS

1. Promote regional settlement patterns in our metropolitan area to better integrate development with existing urbanized areas and to cultivate the unique qualities of community places and neighborhoods.
2. Involve regional planning entities or cooperative coordinating municipal associations in decision-making about significant land uses affecting broad settlement patterns.
3. Promote land use patterns that most efficiently use existing public infrastructure and community resources without diminishing the social, economic and cultural values of existing residential settlements and neighborhoods.
4. Promote development patterns that help maintain the viable long-term use of working open lands such as agriculture and forestry.

CONSERVATION

5. Identify and protect those natural areas in our metropolitan region which enhance the quality of our air, water and habitat for wildlife.
6. Establish a metro-wide system of environmental corridors, greenways, or landscapes, which establish convenient, non-destructive public use of our natural environment including bikeways, recreation areas, nature walks, and scenic preserves.
7. Promote the cleanup and reuse of vacant and under-utilized buildings and sites served with public utilities.

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

8. Facilitate the focused involvement of local citizens, municipal officials, regional authorities and recognized experts to identify, design and maintain desirable, attractive and stable neighborhoods.
9. Make up-to-date information on regional development and planning widely available over a variety of media including pamphlets, books, classes, presentations, broadcast, and Internet.

PUBLIC UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE

10. Plan and develop timely, orderly and efficient arrangements of public facilities and services that reinforce local land use plans developed within a regional framework or perspective.
11. Promote a single regional sewer, water and stormwater authority charged with integrating and equitably paying for the provision of these services within regionally adopted patterns of land use.
12. Utility development and management should emphasize resource conservation while assuring environmental safety from contamination.

COMMUNITY DESIGN

13. Promote the adoption of community design standards by local planning entities that improve the use and enjoyment of urban and community environments.
14. Through focused community involvement in the design process, plan neighborhoods, cities and community centers which exhibit:
 - A sense of place and community.
 - Safety and less crime.
 - Broad diversity of social and economic status.
 - Respect for cultural and natural heritage.
 - Educational opportunities and success.
 - Buildings and routes scaled to human needs for personal access, safety and aesthetic comfort.
 - Easy access to natural areas.
 - Protection of environmentally sensitive areas.

COOPERATION AND COORDINATION

15. Promote inter-jurisdictional, regional cooperation and collaboration among communities to work towards quality, efficient, equitable, cost effective and long-term delivery of government services to all residents throughout the region.
16. Further enhance mechanisms for encouraging inter-governmental cooperation between and among federal, state and local jurisdictions with increased emphasis on inter-local activities.

EQUITY AND PROPERTY RIGHTS

17. Strive to protect the interest of all landowners from poor regional development design, inefficient and costly use of land resources, unbalanced allocation of regional public resources and unnecessarily restrictive regulation.
18. The costs and benefits of regional services and development should be shared in an equitable manner and on a regional basis.

TRANSPORTATION

19. Link land use decision-making and the provision of transportation facilities so as to encourage compact livable communities.
20. Develop a system of transportation which:
 - Maintains or improves the level of service for the current system of streets and thoroughfares,
 - Supports local land use patterns and regional activity centers as outlined in a regional framework plan,
 - Incorporates where possible mass transit, bicycling and pedestrian opportunities, and Minimizes negative environmental impact.

Appendix B

| Neighborhoods | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|--|------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| For One Square Mile | | | | | | |
| | | | Percent of Land | Acres | DU's | Persons |
| Public | | | 12% | 76.8 | | |
| Core- other | | | 15% | 96 | | |
| Core - Commercial | | | 3% | 19.2 | | |
| Residential | | | 70% | 448 | | |
| | | | Dus/acre | Percent of TOD DU's | | |
| Garden Apts/Townhouses | 20 | | 25% | 43 | 851 | 2128 |
| Carriage Houses | 10 | | 20% | 68 | 681 | 1702 |
| Small Lot SF | 7 | | 20% | 97 | 681 | 1702 |
| Standard Lot SF | 5 | | 35% | 238 | 1192 | 2979 |
| | | | | 638 | 3,405 | 8,512 |
| Total | 8 | | 100% | | | |
| Town Centers | | | | | | |
| For One Square Mile | | | | | | |
| | | | Percent of Land | | | |
| Public | | | 10% | 64 | | |
| Core- other | | | 20% | 128 | | |
| Core - Commercial | | | 20% | 128 | | |
| Residential | | | 50% | | | |
| | | | Dus/acre | Percent of TOD DU's | | |
| Garden Apts | 20 | | 17% | 39 | 778 | 1945 |
| Carriage Houses | 10 | | 15% | 69 | 686 | 1716 |
| Small Lot SF | 7 | | 15% | 98 | 686 | 1716 |
| Standard Lot SF | 5 | | 0% | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Fringe SF | 2 | | 0% | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3 story apartments | 30 | | 35% | 53 | 1602 | 4004 |
| Condominiums | 15 | | 10% | 31 | 458 | 1144 |
| Townhouses | 12 | | 8% | 31 | 366 | 915 |
| Total | 14 | | | 640 | 4576 | 11,440 |
| <i>Average HHD Size = 2.55; Source US Census, Projections to 2010</i> | | | | | | |