
MEMO

TO: Doug Christensen, Mead and Hunt
FROM: Glen Bolen, Fregonese Associates
SUBJECT: Grand Vision Scorecard top line summary
DATE: 1/8/2009

During October and November, thousands of people took time to voice their opinions about the future of the six county Grand Traverse region. Following a successful series of hands-on public mapping workshops, the Grand Vision asked for citizen response to a series of future growth options. The unveiling of the growth scenarios began with a full-house crowd at the historic State Theatre in downtown Traverse City. Events followed in Antrim, Benzie, Kalkaska, Leelanau and Wexford Counties.

The growth options were encapsulated in a range of future scenarios depicting how people might live, work, and travel in the decades to come. The scenarios were created from input received from the more than 2,500 citizens during the mapping workshops. The range of growth scenarios were compared to highlight the benefits and costs that could be associated with differing future decisions. These future outcomes and trade-offs were described through a “scorecard” that was available at many locations throughout the region, at a series of meetings, and online during the three week polling period. The result was a resounding success inspiring people take the time to make their voice heard.

The following memorandum provides report on the responses to the Grand Vision Scorecard. The team tallied nearly 12,000 scorecards from around the region. All told, more than seven percent region responded. Of the respondents that listed their county of residence, the breakdown is as follows:

	Responses	Population	Percentage
Antrim	1,209	24,463	4.94%
Benzie	962	17,652	5.45%
Grand Traverse	6,447	84,952	7.59%
Kalkaska	536	17,330	3.09%
Leelanau	1,771	22,112	8.01%
Wexford	678	31,994	2.12%

Scorecard Meetings

Six scorecard meetings held throughout the region drew exceptional participation. All told, nearly 900 individuals spent the evening learning about land use planning and talking about the changes they would like to see. Residents’ hunger to discuss land use



planning resulted in several ‘at capacity’ crowds. Following is a breakdown of attendance by meeting location with the approximate head count.

Vision Decision Kick-Off Events	Date	Number of Participants
Grand Traverse County—State Theatre	10/7/2008	510
Leelanau County	10/13/2008	65
Kalkaska County	10/9/2008	90
Antrim County	10/14/2008	80
Benzie County	10/14/2008	104
Wexford County	10/13/2008	40

Not apparent in the numbers described above is the large turnout from younger residents. Typically planning activities follow trends similar to voting for public office. Attracting participation from people younger than 35, or even 25 is a hard fought goal of any public engagement effort; unfortunately, it is rarely met. Through an aggressive program of employing the internet, social networking and engaging high school classes the Grand Vision received completed surveys from more than 3,500 people younger than 25 years of age; a phenomenal success indeed.

Scorecard Questions

During the spring of 2008 the Grand Vision conducted a focus group and an extensive scientific survey on resident values. These values form the definitions of success for the planning process. The scenarios were measured as to how they performed in models as related to the resident values and goals. The scorecard provided at the meetings was also made available on the internet at www.thegrandvision.org. Scorecard input is what is known in the values research field as “self selected”. Similar to an election or public hearing, the research represent the opinions of residents who pay attention to public issues and take the time to get involved.

The Scenarios

Four scenarios were presented in the scorecard. For a quick refresher, the general theme descriptions have been replicated below.

***Scenario A** - Future growth will follow the existing trend of low-density development in rural areas, with minimal growth in existing cities and villages. Transportation investments will be largely in widened roadways for commuters. Some multiuse trails will be added but overall there will be minimal investments in bus service and walkability*

***Scenario B** - Future growth will occur in rural area in a pattern such that new homes are clustered to maximize open space. There will be minimal growth in existing cities and villages. Transportation investments will be largely in new or widened roadways for*

commuters. This scenario includes some investment in walking and bicycling trails but the effectiveness of transit and walkability for commuting is limited by low densities.

Scenario C - Future growth will occur primarily in the region’s cities and villages, with additional growth in the main cities of Traverse City and Cadillac. Large amounts of rural open space are preserved. This development pattern will require investments in regional bus service as well as sidewalks and bike trails in villages and cities. There will be some investments in new or widened roadways.

Scenario D - Future housing development and job growth will occur primarily in the region’s two main cities, Traverse City and Cadillac. Large amounts of rural open space are preserved. This development pattern will require investment in urban bus circulators, sidewalks and biking paths in those two main cities. This scenario has limited investment in new or widened roadways.

Scorecard Highlights

Scorecard Details

The following section provides a top line review of the responses gathered from the scorecards tallied to date. Additionally, thousands of respondents included written comments that are being tabulated for future analysis.

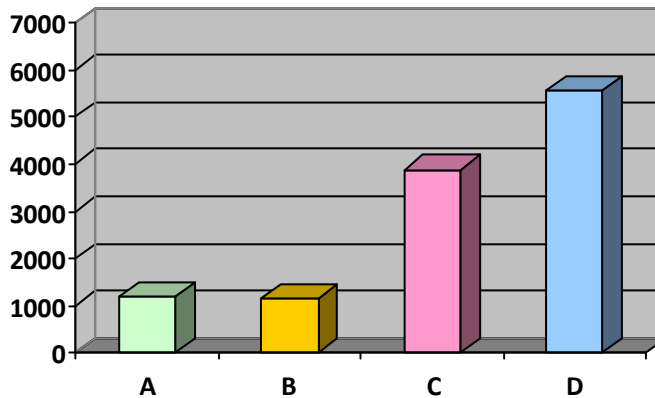
Part 1

For the first five questions, participants were asked to specify which scenario they preferred.

Question: #1 *I think the scenario that does the best job of preserving the region’s farmland and open space is:*

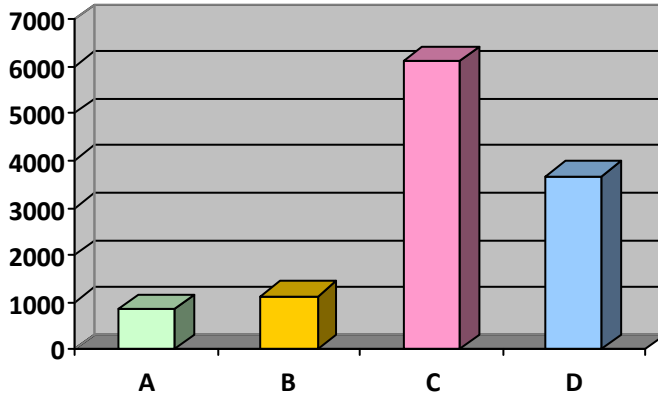
Scenario D resulted in the least amount of rural land converting to urban. Scenario C followed closely. The village focus of Scenario C was partially intended to

minimize pressure on agricultural land while also being visible and accessible to residents living and visiting the villages. While they both scored highly, the selection of scenario D as the favorite indicates a desire to minimize urban pressures, including housing growth and traffic, as much as possible.



The Regional Vision should minimize pressure and growth in rural areas through focusing new development in villages and cities and towns.

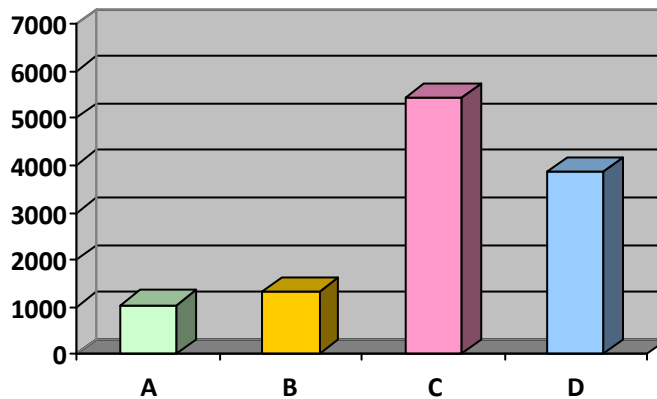
Question #2: *I think the scenario that does the best job at balancing our needs for mobility with our desires for thriving cities and towns and a cleaner environment is:*



Scenario C was by far the most popular choice. One of the more significant components of the village based scenario was intra-regional transit service. Many participants in the workshops asked for such an amenity. Scenario D, with the highest concentrations of people involved the highest level of transit service. However, with limited congestion in any scenario, the option to have multiple choices for traveling between villages and towns seemed to prevail. At the same time, it is clear that simply building more roads alone will not be well received.

The Regional Vision should include regional bus service connecting towns and villages. It should also include addition urban transit options in the more developed areas. Significant roadway expansion alone would not likely be met with support.

Question #3: *I think the scenario that best provides jobs and affordable housing for working families is:*

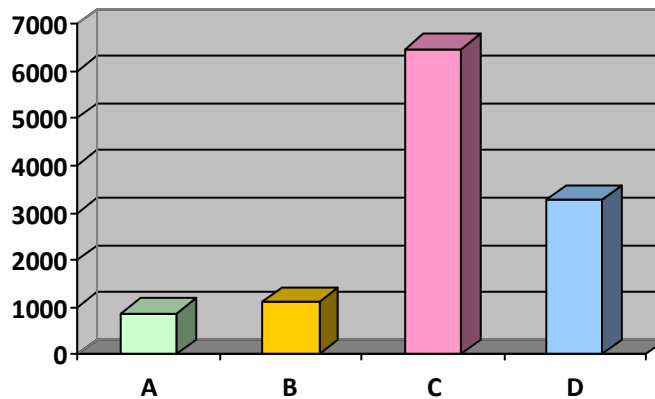


Scenarios C and D both provide significantly more small yard and multi-family housing choices than either A or B. Scenario D, in fact, estimates an even mix of new single-family and multi-family options. Scenarios A and B for comparison include

less than 25% of new housing as multi-family. The popularity of Scenarios C and D echo concerns voiced during the Grand Vision’s values research and from the public workshops. People are concerned about home prices rising and would like to see more housing options so that people can afford to remain in the region. Respondents see homes with acreage as too expensive for many residents including working families, young people and senior citizens. Smaller yards and other options such as townhomes and apartments offer the benefit of being more affordable.

The Regional Vision should be based on a mix of housing types and locations that provide a range of choices for current and future residents. Scenario C was the clear leader, and as such the Regional Vision should approximately match its 60/40 split between single-family and multi-family housing for new construction. It is important to recognize that people want addition choices and options in the villages and towns, not just in the bigger cities.

Question #4: *I think the scenario that does the best job of enhancing our region’s cities and villages is:*



Scenario C had by far the largest support. It is clear that people do not want the future to simply be a continuation of the patterns

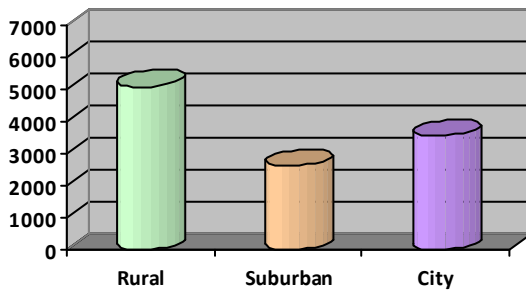
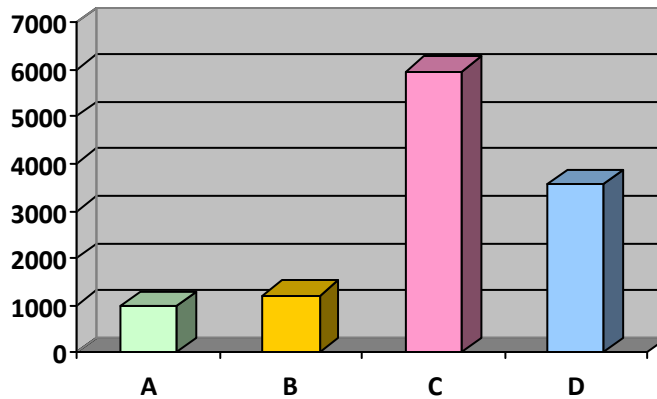
seen today which could result in additional sprawl, loss of the rural lifestyle and potential decay of the towns and villages. There is significant support for the very urban lifestyle exhibited by Scenario D. However, most are looking for change that enhances the many towns and villages of today, rather than significantly transforming just a few areas. The strong villages of Scenario C also resound with participants’ desires for shared prosperity among the counties of the region. Scenario D is slightly more supportive of intercity transit that has been shown to enhance urban life and provide sustainable transportation options. The smaller scale of the urban areas in Scenario C is not as supportive of intercity transit, but would support buses between villages. Both scenarios are highly supportive of walking.

The Regional Vision must make much of directing positive growth to the towns and villages of the region. Regional bus or other transit service will be integral. The developed areas will have a greater range of housing choices than is available today, and will contain more opportunities for jobs and shopping.

Question #5: I think the scenario that does the best job depicting a future I support is:

Clearly **Scenario C** received the most support when ranked overall. The focus on town and village life was expected to perform

well because it embodies much of what people say they like in the region. Town and village living is easy to imagine for people on all ends of the spectrum, from Traverse City to rural homes along Torch Lake. There was also significant support for the more urban lifestyle portrayed in scenario D.



More than one-third of respondents identified themselves as living in rural areas. However, Scenarios A and B which represent the more rural development patterns of the set together received less than 10% of the overall tally for support. People were evidently voicing the opinion of what they want to see, not just what they are

used to.

The cities, towns and villages of the region are well regarded by people in all living situations. Scenarios C and D likely benefit due to their success in modeling, but also get some grace thanks to the reputations of the towns and villages about which residents spoke fondly during the scientific survey. People expect scenario C to enhance and grow these types of places in the future.

The Regional Vision will take much from Scenario C, with enhanced villages and towns. The urban footprint will be kept small and more affordable housing options will be created for young families and the elderly. Cities like Traverse City and Cadillac will

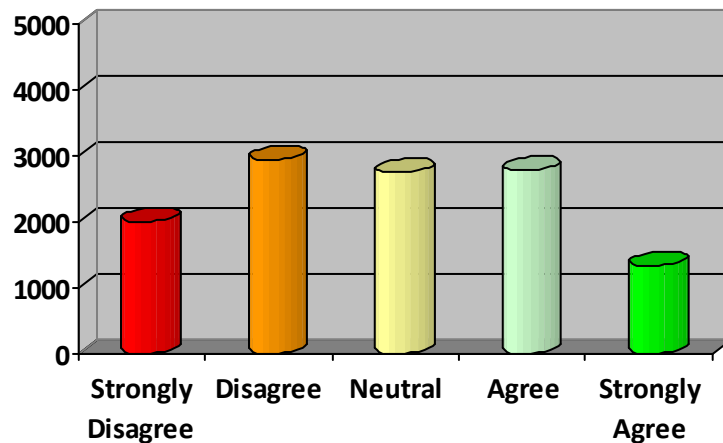
intensify with more housing options. Cities, towns and villages alike will be more pedestrian and bike friendly, with a focus on year round travel via these options. Buses will link areas throughout the region and some cities will develop more in-city routes and possibly other rapid transit options such as streetcars or Bus Rapid Transit (BRT).

Part 2

For the following section, respondents were given a statement and asked to what degree they agreed or disagreed. The questions were all directly related to scenario evaluations described in the scorecard document. The evaluations were focused on measuring future impacts based on public values determined through the Grand Vision’s values research.

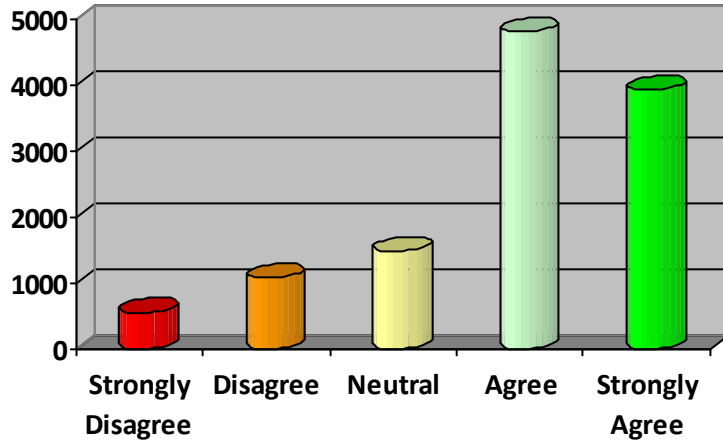
Statement #6: I think transportation investments should prioritize new and widened roads.

There is strong sentiment that residents do not see additional road building or widening of existing roads as the top priority for using transportation investments. However, there is a strong, minority



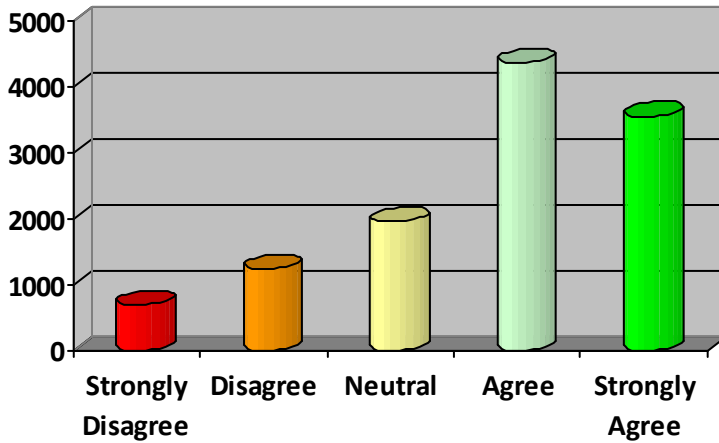
viewpoint with some agreement to this statement. Public investment must benefit all of society. Future investments need to balance the range of needs and desires of residents and business owners. The strong disagreement to this statement says three things: 1. Don’t spend too much money on new and widened roads, and 2. Maintain the system we have, and 3. Invest more money on transit, walking a biking. Participants in the public transportation workshops were generally conservative about spending on any new infrastructure, highlighting the need for careful consideration of future investments.

Statement #7: I think new transportation investments should include biking and walking facilities, even if it means some roads aren't widened.



This question was asked as a way to parse the information from the previous question about transportation investment. It is abundantly clear that residents want to see additional spending on bike and walk facilities. The question goes a step further and states specifically that the funding may be at the expense of investment in road widening for capacity. That the answers were this close to unanimous, given the tradeoff, shows significant support for public investments. Such investments will assure safer and more convenient biking and may attract additional people to utilize this mode of transportation.

Statement #8: I think new transportation investments should include enhanced transit, including in-town buses and regional bus service, even if it means some roads aren't widened.



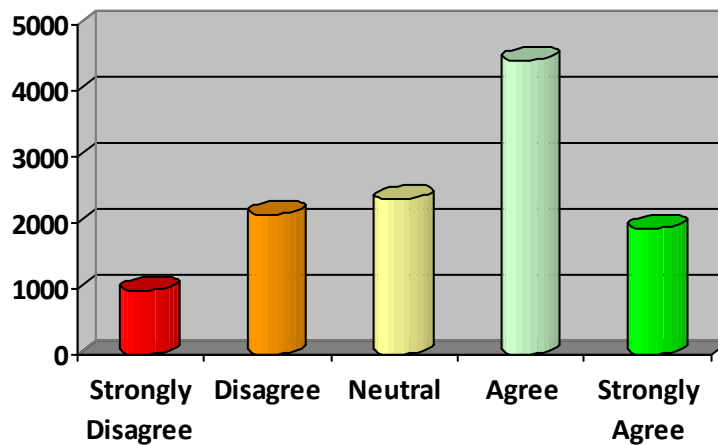
This section was also engineered to probe deeper into people attitudes about transportation investment. People have the same strong feelings of support for transit as they do for bike and walk amenities. The question purposely limited the transit options to in-town and regional bus service which are both modest investments compared to rail transit. Commuter rail and streetcars were highlighted by the participants' maps during the spring workshops but the project team chose not to test these options in the scorecard polling. This decision was made primarily because their

service area would be limited to only a few areas within the region. It is quite possible that while a streetcar, for example, would be well received in places such as Traverse City, it would not be an efficient investment for the villages of Antrim County. Localized research would need to be performed to gauge the acceptance of other, more costly transit investments. On the whole, this research hints that some parts of the region would support such plans.

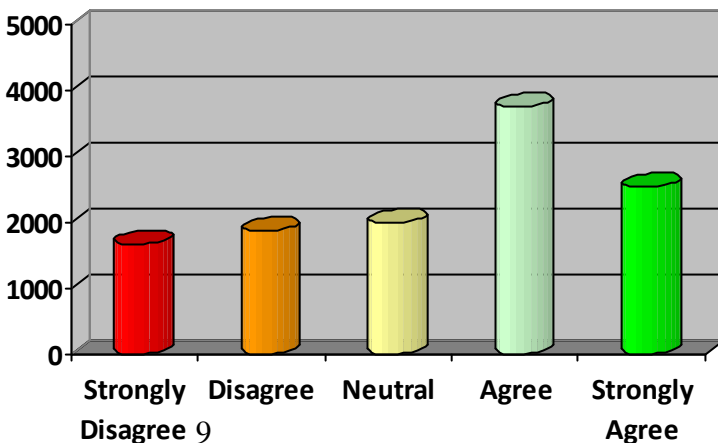
Statement #9: I think increased traffic congestion in our cities and villages would be okay if I could park once and walk to shops, jobs, schools and parks.

Response to this question shows that people generally support the notion of trading slightly more congestion for the benefits of full service towns and villages where they could walk between jobs and shopping.

However, the number of people disagreeing, or remaining neutral shows that this style of growth is not for everyone. Additionally, it may hint at the internal conflict between a desire to ‘do the right thing’ and a belief that people will be able to stick to it when the wind is blowing and snow is falling. This question generated the most written comments of any on the scorecard. Future plans clearly need to embrace urban form that encourages less auto-travel. This type of planning will largely be focused in the cities, towns and villages, leaving plenty of options for those who prefer the auto-oriented lifestyle.

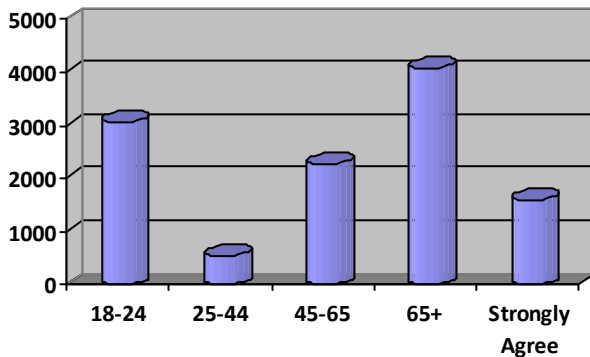


Question #10: I would consider living in a neighborhood with smaller yards and some multi-family buildings if it meant that I could walk or ride my bike to shops,



jobs, schools and parks.

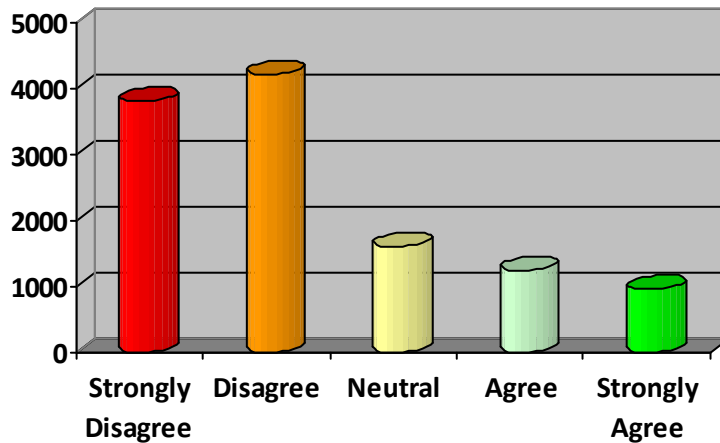
This statement goes one step beyond the previous that describes the fabric of urban and town life. In this instance, participants had to look closer to home and think about what they want in their neighborhood. Walking and biking were two things that scored well in



the scientific research. They were attached to smaller yards, apartments and condos to intentionally force a trade-off. However, the results point to a much greater acceptance, and even desire, for multi-family housing than might be expected by many reading this document. This is further compounded by looking at the ages of the participants in this survey.

The majority of respondents are middle-aged, but not yet retired. Typically, this cohort is the most likely to be interested in conventional single-family homes. The Grand Vision research points again to people’s concern for others, and desire to ‘do the right thing.’ Here the feeling is expressed through the support for more affordable housing options in the region.

Question #11: I oppose taller buildings in our cities and villages even if it means that we need to build on farm and forest lands.

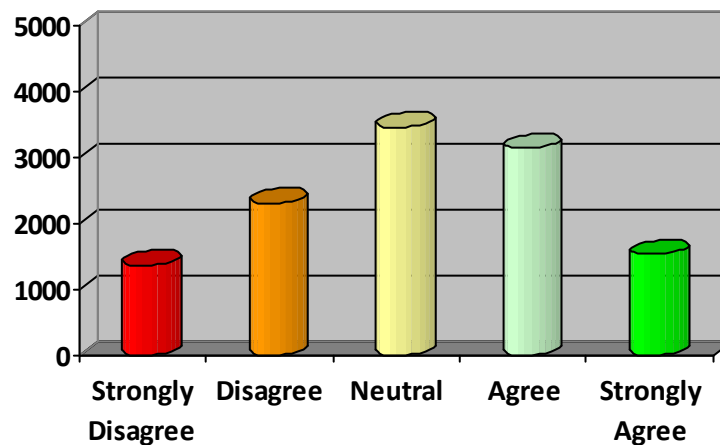


There is a saying in planning that ‘the only thing worse than

sprawl is density.’ With this statement participants were asked to reflect on the dramatic changes that might be seen in cities and towns. The scorecard even mentioned 8-story buildings in places such as Traverse City and Cadillac. The overwhelming response hints at two things. First, 6- and 8-story buildings do not cause the panic or concern that might have been expected. Coupled with the desire for an improved urban fabric as evidenced

by previous questions, one could presume that downtown buildings taller than 10 stories would indeed be embraced by many. Although, the roughly even split between ‘strongly disagree’ and ‘disagree’ suggests that support will wane proportionately as building heights go up. This again reveals that there may be more desire for urban lifestyle in some specific locations than there is region-wide. Second, this response indeed affirms residents desire to retain the farming, forestry and rural lifestyle that is present in the region.

Question #12: I think people should be able to have a home on rural acreage even if it increases new public investment in roads, sewers and schools.



This statement forces people to link planning with personal decisions and limits to private property rights. Generally, people do not fully link the two. This is the only question in the entire scorecard with such an even divide. Responses indicate approximately equal support for two different positions in this matter. On one hand, some believe that they should be able to locate a home on, or even subdivide their rural property no matter what. On the other hand, some feel that they are not willing to support a lifestyle that has cost impacts on the rest of society. Note that many people chose to remain neutral. This could be because linking individual property decisions with public costs and benefits is not intuitive. Alternatively, it could reflect people being truly torn between the notion of the public good and the private good.

The scorecard clearly supports the notion of minimizing sprawl and enhancing urban areas. The results from this statement suggest that the best way to minimize rural development is through voluntary means. This could include incentives in the development process and prioritizing public investments in the urban areas where growth is desired. Regulation could play some role in limiting sprawl. However, it should be strategic, focused on issues of human health, safety and welfare and ecosystem services rather than overarching and over-reaching.



Next Steps

During December 2008 and January 2009 the Grand Vision project team will create a draft Vision document for the region. The Vision will be built of the qualities and place types that have received favor during the, values research, the public workshops and most notably, the score card results, as described in brief above.

In February 2009, the project team will take the Vision to the public through an open house process which will provide an opportunity for interested shareholders (people of the region) to learn about the Vision and provide feedback.