The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee convened for its third meeting at 6:00 pm on Wednesday, June 9th. Committee members briefly introduced themselves. The consultants led the Committee in discussion of two primary topics: the process and results of the May 25th public meeting; and the final visions to the 2003 Plan vision, values, and principles to update for the new Plan.

**Public Meeting:** The Committee discussed the process of the public meeting and the results of the issue identification exercise. The Committee was in general agreement that the low turnout for the public meeting diminished the value of the meeting as a reflection of the issues important to the community. The issues that did rise to the surface in the meeting were, however, believed to be legitimate reflections of sentiments in the community, such as the emphasis on improving pedestrian modes of travel throughout the community and concerns about portions of the downtown. Several committee members also expressed concern that the issue identification exercise did not allow a wide enough breadth of issues for discussion. The consultant lead a discussion on what specific issues were missing; missing issues could be covered more explicitly in the public survey and the focus group outreach to be conducted later in the process. Missing issues included: need for a diversity of housing types and mix of land uses with housing; neighborhood character; issues revolving around energy use, energy efficiency, and greenhouse gas emissions; economic opportunities (as opposed to malaise), and; mass transit.

The Committee also discussed goals for the public survey to be conducted during the summer months. They noted that different segments of the community would respond to different commenting opportunities. Segments that should be considered include: property owners, youth and young adults, elderly, renters, business owners, and rural residents who don’t receive utilities from the City.

**Draft Vision Narrative/Vision, Values, and Principles:** Based on the work of Committee members at the first two Steering Committee meetings, the consultants had made a number of modifications to the 2003 Plan Vision Statement, Community Values, and Guiding Principles. The Committee went through each section and discussed modifications and new language. The Committee both added new language and simplified language that was getting too lengthy. They decided to keep the Vision statement relatively succinct, to expand the Community Values, and to adopt a rewritten set of Guiding Principles that provided significantly more detail on applying the Community Values. The Committee also discussed the interplay of the Community Values – how to balance values that might seem to come into conflict. Ultimately the Committee decided to emphasize in the preface to the Values section that section must be applied to decision making as a whole rather than by looking at individual value statements. Each individual value statement must be assumed to shape the other values, so that a balance should be struck, for instance between enhancing information technology and maintaining fiscal responsibility, or between pursuing economic development opportunities and protecting neighborhoods or natural systems from risks associated with some economic opportunities.

The results of this discussion are included after this meeting summary.

**Adjournment.** The next meeting is set for July 14th, at 6:00 pm. The meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.
Vision Statement

A community vision is an expression of possibility, an ideal future that the community hopes to attain. The vision sets the stage for where the community, as a whole, desires to go. By creating the foundation for underlying goals, objectives, strategies, and policies, the vision statement directs future action and helps bring that desired future fruition. The vision statement presented below describes, for key issues, where community members would like Grand Rapids to be 20 years in the future:

*Grand Rapids is a unique blend of small town hospitality and character with big city conveniences and opportunities. Grand Rapids offers an excellent quality of life to residents of the region with outstanding educational opportunities, excellent medical care, exceptional cultural, natural, and recreational amenities, and an unequaled sense of community spirit. Grand Rapids provides all residents safe, friendly, affordable housing and inclusive neighborhoods that retain and enhance nature in the City. Residents and visitors can move around the City with equal ease by car, bicycle, walking, or other mode of transportation. Grand Rapids welcomes and supports a diverse mix of thriving businesses and industry that provide quality jobs, promising careers, and economic vitality. Grand Rapids is a welcoming gateway to Minnesota’s Northwoods tourism.*
Community Values

Community values are the fundamental principles and beliefs that guide a community-driven process toward the realization of the community’s vision statement. Community values describe the enduring beliefs about what is right, good and desirable and provide the foundation for making Grand Rapids a positive place to live. Each of the following values are recognized to shape the other values, and should therefore be considered comprehensively rather than individually.

1. **Small Town Feeling:**
The notion of ‘small town feeling’ means living in a friendly vital neighborhood where people know and care about each other, have an unequalled sense of community, a sense of investment in the neighborhood and the city, and convenient access to shops, businesses, and the rest of the City. The small town feeling must be nurtured as the community grows and must welcome an increasing cultural diversity as our population changes. This small town feeling is dependent on the relationship between the City and its surrounding rural areas. Growth of the urban area should not diminish the quality of the surrounding rural areas.

2. **Housing Diversity:**
We value a variety of housing types in our community to meet the needs of all residents, no matter their stage in life. Quality, affordable housing is a basic need. Housing diversity is enabled when neighborhoods are connected to cultural, recreational, economic, natural, education, and transportation systems.

3. **Cultural and Recreational Opportunities:**
We value the availability and quality of artistic, cultural, and recreational opportunities. Cultural and recreational opportunities contribute to our quality of life, define Grand Rapids as a regional creative destination, and enhance our City’s role as a center of state tourism.

4. **Fiscal Responsibility:**
Being accountable to our community means managing our financial resources wisely. This core value is expressed in many ways, including encouraging sustainable growth and development, efficient provision of services and programs, and fully accounting for costs associated with public decisions.

5. **Safety – Neighborhoods and Streets:**
Safety is a priority for us, especially in our homes, our neighborhoods, and on our streets. Safety means that our children have safe environments in which to grow and residents and visitors can walk, bicycle, and drive in safe, regulated traffic environments.

6. **Healthy Living:**
Opportunities for healthy living is a core value. Creating healthy living opportunities requires careful management of our built environment (housing, roads, other infrastructure) our natural
systems (recreation, natural resources), and other local amenities (economic systems, education, local food systems, health care).

7. Accessible Movement:
We understand and support the need for residents and visitors to move around our City with equal ease by car, bicycle, or on foot. Streets design should accommodate all modes of transportation and public transportation provides mobility to those without cars.

8. Sustainable Built Infrastructure:
The provision and maintenance of high-quality grey infrastructure is necessary to foster investment in a sustainable economy and maintain a high quality of life. Grey infrastructure includes: drinking water and wastewater utilities; energy systems; technology infrastructure; and surface and air transportation systems.

9. Sustainable Natural Infrastructure.
Our natural environment and natural resources are a defining and valued characteristic of our community. People, economy, and natural systems are connected in all aspects of daily life. Development should enhance natural systems, and sustainable natural systems should promote a sustainable economic base.

10. Education:
We value and promote equal access to quality, lifelong, educational opportunities for all residents. Education includes workforce development, continuing education, and information access, in addition to traditional schools. The more that education is integrated into the community, the better all other aspects of the community will function.

11. Economic Opportunities.
A strong diversified economy is a prerequisite to the full realization of all other values. We value a healthy, growing economy that provides opportunities for large and small businesses, rewards entrepreneurship, and provides meaningful careers to residents.
Guiding Principles

Guiding principles reflect the community vision and values by setting standards that can guide the development of the Comprehensive Plan. The principles demonstrate how distinct values frequently overlap and create complex decisions from seemingly straightforward values. Additionally, the guiding principles can be carried beyond the plan to provide guidance to decision-makers in implementing the plan.

1. Direct growth and development to locations that serve community vision and values.
   Recognize that development and redevelopment activities should be guided to appropriate locations in order to realize the community’s vision. Choices about where and how growth occurs will define community character for decades, affect the cost and quality of public services, and shape future development markets.

2. Harmonize change with the existing community fabric and natural systems.
   Change is inevitable but opportunities and risks can be managed to protect and sustain community and natural infrastructure. Change can be structured to enhance rather than detract: creating synergies between new and existing businesses, transforming buildings to be more sustainable, designing new housing or commercial buildings to match existing scale.

3. Promote local economic vitality.
   Support activities and investments that promote the creation of and sustaining of careers and wages, provision of a diversity of services and goods, and long-term business investment and market expansion.

4. Sustain Grand Rapids’ neighborhoods.
   The City’s neighborhoods and the social networks that connect neighborhood residents require conscious attention and support. Integrate housing with other land uses, design appropriate transportation infrastructure, protect community character in public and private development decisions, enhance natural systems and create connected green spaces.

5. Enhance healthy lifestyles, families, and community.
   Direct public and private investment to create opportunities for healthy choices. Physical systems such as designing complete streets and programmatic development such as social services and educational programs can be designed to make healthy choices easier.

   The City is the commercial and service center for the surrounding region, serving surrounding communities and rural areas, and in turn is supported by them. Investment in regional infrastructure such as information technologies and both commercial and recreational regional transportation are critical, as is intergovernmental coordination, to sustain the City’s regional benefits.
7. **Practice community participation.**
   Community participation is a necessary part of sustainable growth and development. Regular and routine communication with residents, businesses, and visitors should direct and help create support for City investments, regulatory actions, and management choices.

8. **The Comprehensive Plan is the foundation for City actions.**
   The Plan should be followed, updated every five years, and progress is reported to the public.