



2004 United Growth for Kent County Annual Report

Mission

To serve as a sustainable, citizen-based organization that unites people and organizations around the promotion of positive land use in Kent County and West Michigan.



Making the Urban-Rural Connection!

United Growth for Kent County
 c/o Kent / MSU Extension
 775 Ball Avenue
 Grand Rapids, MI 49503
 Tel: (616) 336-3265
 Fax: (616) 336-3836
ugkc@msu.edu
www.msue.msu.edu/unitedgrowth

United Growth for Kent County held a Search Conference in January 2004 to develop goals and action steps for 2004. These goals and action steps are stated below as well as the related 2004 accomplishments.

Goal 1: To establish a base of support to sustain the Coalition over the long term.

Action Steps	2004 Accomplishments
Write grants in the short-term	United Growth staff wrote and submitted 12 program proposals in 2004. Seven were funded. Three are still pending. Over \$50,800 in grant funds have been secured. (See attached list)
Talk to other organizations about partnering. Seek funds for joint projects.	<p>United Growth staff partnered with Vergennes Township to conduct a study on developmental options in an area near Lowell High School. \$3500 contract funded by the Lowell Area Community Fund.</p> <p>Purdue Extension contracted Kendra Wills to speak on the United Growth project at a meeting in Lake County, Indiana. (\$250 including the cost of materials.) [I think this should go in fee for service]</p> <p>United Growth staff partnered with LISC (Local Initiatives Support Corporation) to conduct a MSU Urban Planning Practicum project in Creston Neighborhood. LISC paid the cost of the project - \$2500.</p> <p>United Growth also partnered with LISC on a Capacity Mapping (CAP MAP) project in the SECA neighborhood. LISC covered the cost of the assessment process - \$3000.</p> <p>Per discussions at the Search Conference, Rich Jelier talked with staff at the Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy at GVSU regarding a potential partnership with United Growth. They were not interested.</p> <p>Kent County has contracted with Kent / MSU Extension to cover 50% of Kendra Wills' salary in 2004 toward the staffing of the Kent County Agricultural Preservation Board and providing land use education.</p>
Develop a membership structure.	Accomplished. Over \$3500 in membership dues has been contributed by 44 members. Members are listed on pages 8-9 of this report.
Explore holding a fundraising event.	Different options were explored including a "Barn Red" movie event, which was not held. Still exploring.
Work toward developing a \$7 million endowment.	Determined to be unrealistic at this time.
Seek in-kind contributions	Participation at committee meetings is a very valuable contribution of time and expertise by members and others. The following are some specific services/products that were contributed to the United Growth project in 2004: newsletter articles from 15 authors, photography for newsletter from Mr. Holt and Steve Petrides, graphics from Cynthia Price and Bonnie Kim with Kent / MSU Extension. Kent / MSU Extension also contributes office and meeting space, telephone, fax and other utilities for the project.
Fees for services	The Rural Committee held a grant writing workshop where a registration fee was charged.

Goal 2: To provide a resource network on land use. To educate the community about the benefits of positive land use.

Action Steps	2004 Accomplishments
Expand United Growth web site and add new links.	<p>Have added 3 new features including Public Service Announcements and Membership form to the United Growth web site. Received an average of 98 hits per week or approximately 400 hits per month in 2004. Both the Urban and Rural minutes received the most activity. Most requested page was Resources and Related Links.</p> <p>Partnered with Drs. June Thomas and John Schweitzer on mixed income neighborhood research project, which is one of the leading research projects in the nation that defined mixed income neighborhoods. The project was sponsored by MSU Urban Collaborators and partially funded by the Agricultural Experiment Station. Organized focus groups in three neighborhoods: John Ball, West Grand and Creston. A summary of the report is posted in the United Growth web site. A meeting was held with the three neighborhoods to explain the results of the project. Brian Anderson, summer intern, started to develop an “easy to understand” report in newsletter format on the research findings.</p>
Collect past history of United Growth and post on web site.	Accomplished. A link to the project’s history is included on the home page. Information related to the project’s history will continue to be added.
Offer a Tour de Sprawl.	Project Management Team decided not to offer in 2004 but revisit in 2005. Noted that Michigan Society of Planning annual conference in September 2004 was offering tours of the area.
Maintain and promote comprehensive resource list.	<p>Over 400 resources and links are posted on United Growth’s web site. United Growth also has a library of land use materials available for loan. Resources are promoted in new expanded newsletter. The United Growth listserv was created in 2004 and reaches 672 individuals. Emails were distributed to the listserv related promoting United Growth and other land use related conferences and events.</p> <p>Secured grant funds from the MSU Land Policy Program to air land use public service announcements. 195 PSAs were aired on four area Clear Channel stations from August – October. Clear Channel also posted a link to United Growth’s web site. The text of the messages is posted on the United Growth web site.</p> <p>Carol Townsend and Kendra Wills co-authored a book chapter with Dr. Rich Jelier on the United Growth project as a successful land use initiative. <i>Partnerships for Smart Growth: University-Community Collaboration for Better Public Places</i> is scheduled for publication by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy in 2005.</p>
Secure funding for a new computer.	Determined by staff not to be needed. United Growth has a laptop available for use by interns and volunteers.
Market the On-Line Citizen Planner Program.	Not yet available in 2004.
Expand the quarterly newsletter.	Accomplished. Distributed over 4000 hard copies of Summer 2004 edition. The newsletter is displayed at all local government offices as well as Kent District Library branches. Published the Fall 2004 edition electronically to reduce printing and postage costs.
Host discussions with legislators.	The Legislative Committee and other Coalition members met with Representatives Steil and Kooiman and Senator Hardiman in August

	<p>2004.</p> <p>The Legislative Committee took a statewide leadership role in educational efforts on the affordable housing crisis in Michigan. The Committee convened a network of West Michigan organizations and individuals interested in affordable housing and the proposed legislation (HB 4787 & 4788), which would establish the MI Housing & Community Development Fund. An active partnership with the Community & Economic Development Association of Michigan (CEDAM) was formed. Several West Michigan business people were identified to educate decision-makers about the economic impacts of affordable housing. Rep. Kooiman was able to secure \$2 million in TANF funding to seed the Fund. As a result of these efforts, over 100 letters were generated to area legislators and the Governor. The bills are slated for hearing in early December 2004.</p> <p>The Legislative Committee's efforts also motivated at least two nonprofit organizations to begin developing processes for handling legislative action requests.</p>
Develop issue-based talking points with pros and cons aimed at voter participation and education.	MSU Extension 2004 Ballot initiative report was posted on United Growth web sites and distributed at meetings (Proposals 1 & 2). Distributed People and Land's "Common Ground" brochure and posters to United Growth members, legislators and others. The brochures contained land use questions for candidates.
Host an event with a famous speaker in the fall or winter.	<p>Still pending.</p> <p>Hosted the October 5, 2004 Land Use Networking Luncheon at Gaines Township Offices. 52 attendees. 13 individuals gave updates on their organization's land use projects. Dr. Soji Adelaja, John A. Hannah Distinguished Professor in Land Policy at MSU was the keynote speaker. Learned that at least two projects resulted from last year's luncheon.</p>
Promote the use of the This Land Is Your Land series within the Kent ISD by face-to-face meetings with educators and administration. Monitor progress.	<p>Was not able to take this project on as the Citizen Planner Program contracted 25% of Ms. Wills' time and 10% of Ms. Levandoski's time to develop a statewide Junior Citizen Planner program based on the This Land Is Your Land learning series.</p> <p>Updated the This Land web site with new links. Worked to get the entire series available in hard copy format available through the MSU Bulleting Office for the cost of printing (\$25). Made contacts with 17 web sites/organization to post a link to This Land web site.</p>
Organize a land use book club or movie club.	<p>United Growth members and staff worked in partnership with GVMC's PIE committee to organize a book discussion session with John Norquist on his book, <u>The Wealth of Cities</u> at the June GVMC conference.</p> <p>Jay Hoekstra's land use book review "Urban –Rural Connection" article also relates to this action step.</p>
One member reports on issue/activity at United Growth meetings. Members vote on presentation schedule.	Used the Fall Networking Luncheon Meeting to accomplish this action step.
Organize a Speakers Bureau to conduct presentations to community groups on land use issues.	Did not work on.

Goal 3: To assist and empower communities in implementing positive land use projects and practices.

Action Steps	2004 Accomplishments
<p>Create a list of definitions such as: communities, empowerment and positive land use.</p>	<p>Accomplished.</p> <p>Communities- A geographical area that is recognized by its residents (neighborhood, township, county, region, etc.). Any grouping of people, homes, businesses and public uses that share common goals.</p> <p>Positive Land Use- Goals and actions that lead communities to their preferred visions without detracting from neighboring communities' vision. Use of land that balances the benefits to all members of society.</p> <p>Empowerment- To help provide the opportunity and resources needed to achieve positive land use in your community. Creating community interest in establishing a common vision. Opportunity to participate in decisions that affect residents regarding land use.</p>
<p>Explore partnership with SECA to build capacity within the neighborhood association.</p>	<p>Partnered with SECA and LISC to conduct the Capacity Mapping (CAP MAP) project. CAP MAP assessment was completed.</p>
<p>Explore partnerships with other neighborhood organizations.</p>	<p>Explored a partnership with the Uptown neighborhood and business associations. A project has not yet been developed.</p> <p>Carol Townsend consulted with Gail Peterson with the Fuller Avenue Neighbors as she implemented the neighborhood planning process based on the Building Great Neighborhoods manual.</p>
<p>Support and conclude MSU Urban Planning Practicum projects.</p>	<p>Completed projects in Creston Neighborhood and Alpine Township, the first township to host a practicum project. Student reports are posted on United Growth's web site. The Creston report received 249 hits in the month of June, a very high frequency. Creston Neighborhood Association continues to use the report findings and Power Point presentation in their work to revitalize their business district. The Alpine Township report data fed directly into the township's Master Plan update process, which is still going on.</p>
<p>Work on implementation of South West Area Neighbors (SWAN) Business Action Team (BAT) goals.</p>	<p>Carol Townsend continued to work with SWAN and the BAT to pursue their goals for the redevelopment of their business district. Held meetings between SWAN BAT and MDOT officials regarding the installation of traffic calming, pedestrian friendly and context sensitive design amenities to the state trunk line (M 21) that runs through the neighborhood. Was able to obtain Dan Burden, an internationally recognized walkability expert, to walk the SWAN business district and give improvement recommendations. Two members of the BAT met with Dr. Soji Adelaja at MSU in regards to funding for the project.</p>
<p>Identify and work on at least one project in 2004.</p>	<p>The Urban Committee decided its focus for 2004 was to encourage neighborhood involvement in the City's zoning ordinance re-write process. A power point presentation was developed to explain basic traditional and form-based zoning code concepts. The presentation was conducted for the Urban Committee, SWAN, Creston</p>

	<p>Neighborhood, West Grand Rapids Planning Committee, the West Michigan Call to Renewal Urban Sprawl Task Force as well as other community leaders.</p> <p>The Rural Committee maintained its focus on meeting the training and technical assistance needs of local units of government expressed in the October 2003 planning and zoning needs assessment. The committee distributed information on training opportunities, hosted a grantwriting workshop and provided scholarships for training.</p>
Develop/distribute informational piece on conflict management.	Accomplished. 740 brochures were printed and distributed to 59 organizations including neighborhood associations, township offices, and Chambers of Commerce in Kent County. The brochure is also posted on United Growth's web site. In addition, Kendra Wills is serving on the Board of Director for the Dispute Resolution Center of West Michigan, which works to promote the peaceful resolution of conflict – including land use disputes.

Goal 4: Organizational Structure Issues.

Action Steps	2004 Accomplishments
Create the United Growth Coalition. Keep the Rural and Urban Committees.	Accomplished. First meeting of the Coalition was held in February 2004. Coalition meets on the second Tuesday of the month from 8:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. and Rural and Urban Committees met separately from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.
Improve efficiency.	Committee reporting at Coalition meetings is kept to only those that have new information to report.
Maintain and expand diversity of membership.	Membership recruitment efforts proved successful in securing membership from new and diverse groups. A list of current members can be found on pages 8-9 of this report.
Keep MSU as home for United Growth. Develop a list of pros and cons for becoming a 501c3.	MSU is the home organization for United Growth. A list of pros and cons for becoming a 501c3 organization was developed in 2002 through the Coalition Formation Committee process.
Define role for Project Partners.	Not needed. Project Partners were eliminated as a category when the membership structure was implemented.
Promote citizen involvement. Get new people involved.	Several new members have paid memberships to United Growth. The Urban Committee has added six new members, the Legislative Committee has added two new members and the Rural Committee has added one new member and others have been contacted.
Develop new project-based committees.	Formed a Newsletter Committee, Urban Zoning Code Committee, Urban Field Station Advisory Group, Funding Gap Task Force and Conflict Management Workshop Planning Committee.
Create a marketing plan for the Coalition.	<p>A specific plan has not been developed. Staff recommends a plan be developed for 2005 with assistance from a marketing professional not involved in United Growth. Marketing tools should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✍ Creation of a general brochure for United Growth in 2005. Plan on seeking funding from the Americana Foundation. ✍ United Growth web site ✍ public service announcements ✍ Expanded quarterly newsletter "The Urban-Rural Connection" ✍ United Growth Listserv and database ✍ Membership campaign ✍ Annual Fall Networking Luncheon

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✍ Project brochures and others publications ✍ Meetings with Legislators ✍ Kent / MSU Extension newsletter articles on United Growth projects ✍ Radio and T.V. interviews ✍ Newspaper articles and press releases ✍ Annual Report ✍ Reports to funders
<p>Explore creating a staffing plan and hiring an Executive Director for United Growth.</p>	<p>Carol Townsend developed a job description for the Executive Director position. Did not actively pursue hiring for the position due to lack of funding.</p> <p>The concept of an Executive Director was translated into a statewide project director for the proposed United Growth of Michigan initiative in partnership with the MSU Land Policy Program to the WKK Foundation.</p>

United Growth for Kent County Branch Projects

Several initiatives were spawned or supported by United Growth's efforts and are successfully functioning today as independent projects.

Greater Grand Rapids Food Systems Council

The Kent County Agricultural Preservation Board [Purchase of Development Rights Program]

MSU Extension's Junior Citizen Planner Program [Based on This Land is Your Land learning series]

MSU Urban Collaborator's Statewide Neighborhood Planning Manual {Based on *Building Great Neighborhoods*, the planning process piloted with SWAN}

Ridge Economic Agricultural Partners (REAP) [an ag profitability project]

Peterson Farms in Oceana County, Michigan received a contract with McDonald's for fresh, sliced apples. This was supported by United Growth research. Most of the apples are from Kent County's Fruit Ridge.

United Growth for Kent County Members

(List name, organization and what committees they are involved in)

Individual

Katherine Brower
Grace Episcopal Church

James Buck
Grand Valley Metro Council

Michael Cary (*Urban Committee, Legislative Committee*)
Grand Rapids Housing Board of Appeals

Tom Cary (*Rural Committee*)
West Michigan Environmental Council

Brian Ellens
DuRay Development

Paul Haan (*Urban Committee, Legislative Committee, Project Management Team*)

Gail Heffner (*Urban Committee*)
Calvin College

Denny Heffron (*Associate, Rural Committee*)
Heffron Farms

Don Hilton Sr. (*Rural Committee*)
Gaines Charter Township

Barbara Holt (*Urban Committee, Legislative Committee, Newsletter Committee, Project Management Team*)
Walker City Commission

James D. Kozal

Frank Lynn (*Legislative Committee*)
Creston Neighborhood Association

Tom McWhertor
Calvin College

Dave Medema
Medema Consulting

Robb Munger
DuRay Development

Penny Pestle (*Legislative Committee*)
Potential: Community Systems Change

Cynthia Price (*Rural Committee, Legislative Committee, Newsletter Committee, Project Management Team*)
GGR Food Systems Council

Herb Ranta (*Urban Committee*)

Carol Sheets (*Urban Committee*)
Wyoming City Commission

Lori Stanton (*Urban Committee*)
SWAN Business Action Team

Patty Voss
Prudential Preferred Realtors

Joe Walker (*Rural Committee, Legislative Committee*)
East Grand Rapids Resident

Marsha Wilcox (*Rural Committee, Funding Gap Task Force, Project Management Team*)
Vergennes Open Space Committee

Gold

Alpine Township
Wege Foundation

Silver

DuRay Development
Nederveld Associates

Bronze

Ada Township
Aquinas College
Calvin College
Cannon Township
City of Walker
Fair Housing Center of Greater GR
Gaines Charter Township
Grand Rapids Dominicans
Inner City Christian Federation
Lowell Township
Moore & Bruggink, Inc.
Plainfield Charter Township
Sparta Township
The Rapid
Vergennes Township
West Michigan Regional Planning Commission
Dr. Michael Williams (*Urban Committee, Project Management Team*)
Aquinas College

Supporting Individuals

(Just an idea. These are the non members that are still active. List name, organization and committee.)

Thank you to the following organizations for supporting United Growth initiatives in 2004: MSU Extension, MSU Land Policy Program, MSU Urban Collaborators, Urban Cooperation Board, etc. MSU-West, Land Use Area of Expertise Team, Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC)

2004 United Growth for Kent County Funding

Request	Outcome
1/01 Junior Citizen Planner \$10,663	Received \$10,663
1/01 LISC Creston Practicum \$2,500	Received \$2,500
2/23 Region \$8,000	Received \$8,000
4/1 Membership	Received \$3,585
4/22 SOJI Building Great Neighborhoods Statewide \$9,850	Received \$9,850
4/22 SOJI Rapid Response Newsletter \$10,000	Received \$8,000
5/1 Grant Writing Workshop	Received \$400
5/1 Vergennes Workshop \$3,000	Received \$3,500
5/14 Urban Cooperation Board – Newsletter & PSA Letter of intent 8/1 Proposal	\$4,350 newsletter and mass media collaboration