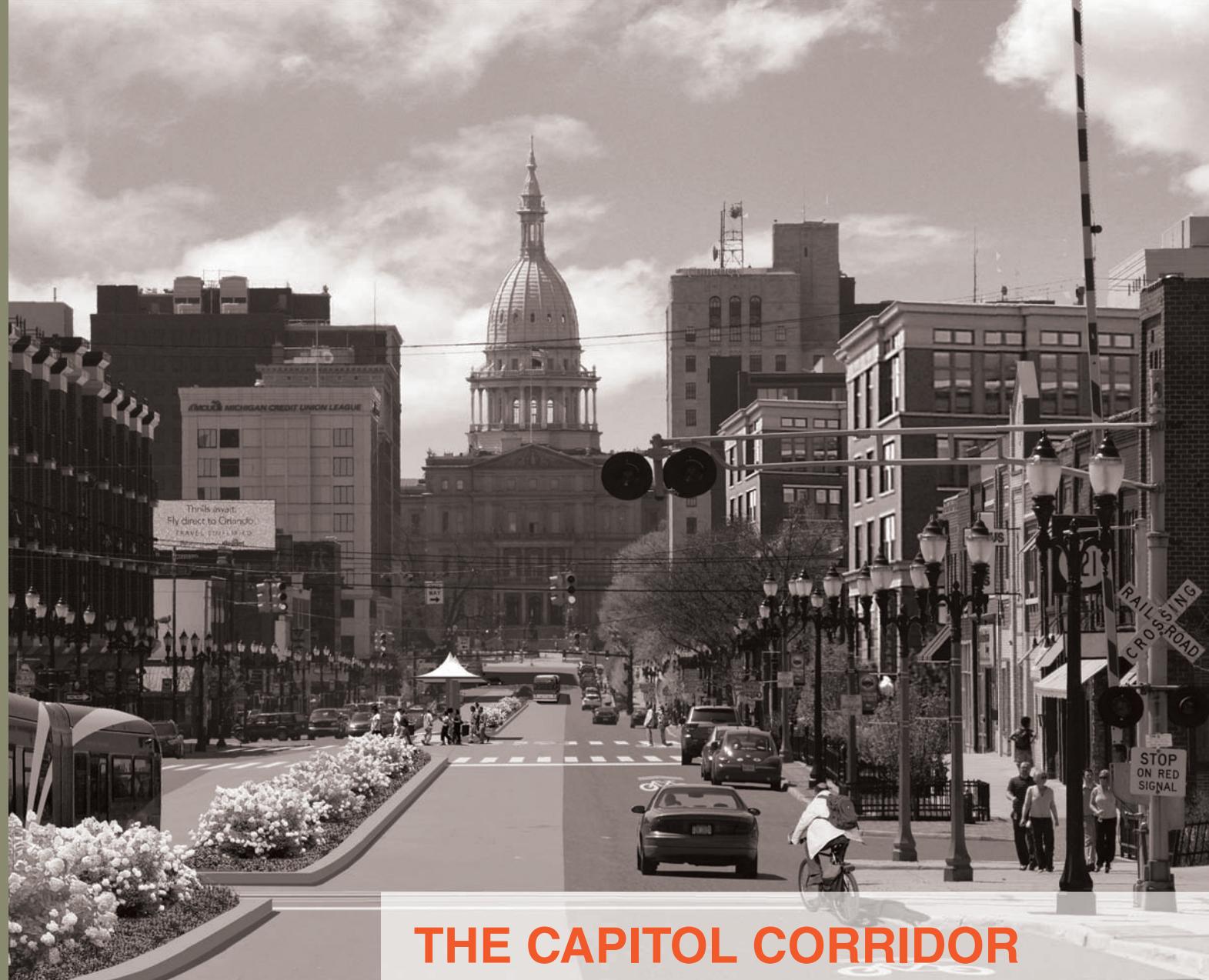




THE CAPITOL CORRIDOR

a regional vision for
Michigan Avenue / Grand River Avenue



THE CAPITOL CORRIDOR

a regional vision for
Michigan Avenue / Grand River Avenue



THE CAPITOL CORRIDOR

a regional vision for
Michigan Avenue / Grand River Avenue



created by:



National Charrette Institute (NCI)
planning team lead | project management

Dover, Kohl & Partners
town planning

Mead & Hunt, Inc.
community outreach | charrette logistics

Strategic Economics
economic strategy

Parsons Brinckerhoff
transportation analysis

Landscape Architects & Planners, Inc.
landscape architecture

UrbanAdvantage and Inside Out Viz
computer visualizations

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

Mid-Michigan Program for Greater Sustainability (MMPGS)

*... along with hundreds
of participants from the
Greater Lansing Region*

Administered by the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission through the Mid-Michigan Program for Greater Sustainability, a sustainable communities program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) and other local partners.



TRI-COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Planning for People in the Greater Lansing Region Since 1956

2014 OFFICERS

CHAIRPERSON

Brian McGrain, Ingham County

VICE-CHAIRPERSON

David Pohl, Clinton County

TREASURER

Kenneth Fletcher, Eaton County

SECRETARY

Ralph Monsma, CATA

TRI-COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Daryl Baker
Russel Bauerle
Judi Brown Clarke
Roger Eakin
Kenneth Fletcher
Dianne Holman
Kara Hope
Denise Jackson
Dorothy E. Maxwell
Brian McGrain
Ralph Monsma
Jim Osieczonek
David Pohl
Shirley M. Rodgers
Adam Stacey
Nathan Triplett
John Veenstra
Carol Wood
Jessica Yorko

EX-OFFICIO

City of Lansing Mayor
Clinton, Eaton and Ingham
County Chairpersons

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Susan M.C. Pigg, CECD

A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE CAPITOL CORRIDOR: A REGIONAL VISION FOR MICHIGAN AVENUE/GRAND RIVER AVENUE

WHEREAS, the Capitol Corridor of the Greater Lansing Michigan Tri-County Region is Grand River Avenue and Michigan Avenue from Webberville to the Capitol building in downtown Lansing; and

WHEREAS, the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission recognizes that widespread public involvement in civic affairs generally results in better decisions and is more likely to result in decisions that are acceptable to the community; and

WHEREAS, the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission employed the expert assistance of the National Charrette Institute and the firms of Dover, Kohl & Partners town planning, and Mead & Hunt, Inc. community outreach, to facilitate Charrettes vision and planning events on the Capitol Corridor in 2013; and

WHEREAS, working collaboratively with local governments, stakeholders, and residents, the Tri-County Regional Commission enjoyed the widespread participation of our community in developing a regional vision for the future of our Capitol Corridor; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission does hereby recognize and receive with great pride a summary report of The Capitol Corridor: A Regional Vision for Michigan Avenue/Grand River Avenue; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission does establish this vision to guide public investment and future growth choices and encourages its member municipalities, area residents, business owners, and others to recognize and share this regionally developed vision for our region's 'main street', the Capitol Corridor.

Brian McGrain, TCRPC Chairperson

2/26/14

Date

contents

Overview

- chapter 1** **The Corridor Today**
- chapter 2** **Mi-Grand Charrettes**
- chapter 3** **Vision**
- chapter 4** **Design Details**
- chapter 5** **Next Steps**

advancing sustainable communities

The *Capitol Corridor* planning effort is a project of the Mid-Michigan Program for Greater Sustainability, a sustainable communities initiative funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) and other local partners. This visioning effort exemplifies the collaborative community planning and sustainable *Livability Principles* promoted by the Partnership for Sustainable Communities.

The Michigan Avenue / Grand River Avenue corridor has a rich history. Originating as an Indian trail, it became an Old Plank Road, and was included as part of the first cross-state trunkline highway. A congressionally-designated auto heritage zone, the first autos were built and tested on this road. Today, the corridor acts as the economic engine of the region, home to many important businesses and institutions, and is often described to as “Michigan’s Main Street”.

Working collaboratively with local governments, stakeholders and residents of the Lansing region, the task at hand is to plan a new, sustainable future for this historic urban-to-countryside corridor. Exciting upgrades such as street design retrofit and beautification to create improved environments for pedestrians and bicyclists, the implementation of Bus Rapid Transit, street-oriented housing and mixed-use buildings on vacant and underutilized properties, the revitalization of towns and preservation of the countryside are all part of the solution. The Michigan Avenue / Grand River Avenue envisioned is one that will better serve the present and future needs of this region’s communities. The *Capitol Corridor* effort endeavors to establish this vision to guide public investments and future growth choices, directing a new chapter in the history of this storied corridor.





Livability Principles

Provide more transportation choices. Develop safe, reliable, and economical transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, reduce our nation's dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote public health.

Promote equitable, affordable housing. Expand location- and energy-efficient housing choices for people of all ages, incomes, races, and ethnicities to increase mobility and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation.

Enhance economic competitiveness. Improve economic competitiveness through reliable and timely access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services and other basic needs by workers, as well as expanded business access to markets.

Support existing communities. Target federal funding toward existing communities—through strategies like transit oriented, mixed-use development, and land recycling—to increase community revitalization and the efficiency of public works investments and safeguard rural landscapes.

Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment. Align federal policies and funding to remove barriers to collaboration, leverage funding, and increase the accountability and effectiveness of all levels of government to plan for future growth, including making smart energy choices such as locally generated renewable energy

Value communities and neighborhoods. Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in healthy, safe, and walkable neighborhoods—rural, urban, or suburban.

Reduce greenhouse gases and address climate change. This seventh principle was introduced for this planning effort, and is of crucial importance to citizens of the region. Improvements in the Michigan Avenue/ Grand River Avenue corridor should incorporate green design solutions and alternative energy sources, so that growth and change can help the region to be ready to face the challenges of climate change.

Partnership for Sustainable Communities

The Partnership for Sustainable Communities – the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – helps communities nationwide improve access to affordable housing, increase transportation options, and lower transportation costs while protecting the environment. The partnership agencies incorporate the above six principles of livability in their work to coordinate federal housing, transportation, water, and other infrastructure investments to make neighborhoods more prosperous, allow people to live closer to jobs, save households time and money, and reduce pollution.

For more information, refer to sustainablecommunities.gov.

the corridor today

introduction 1.2

looking back: history of the corridor 1.4

previous plans and studies 1.6

physical conditions 1.8

transportation analysis 1.16

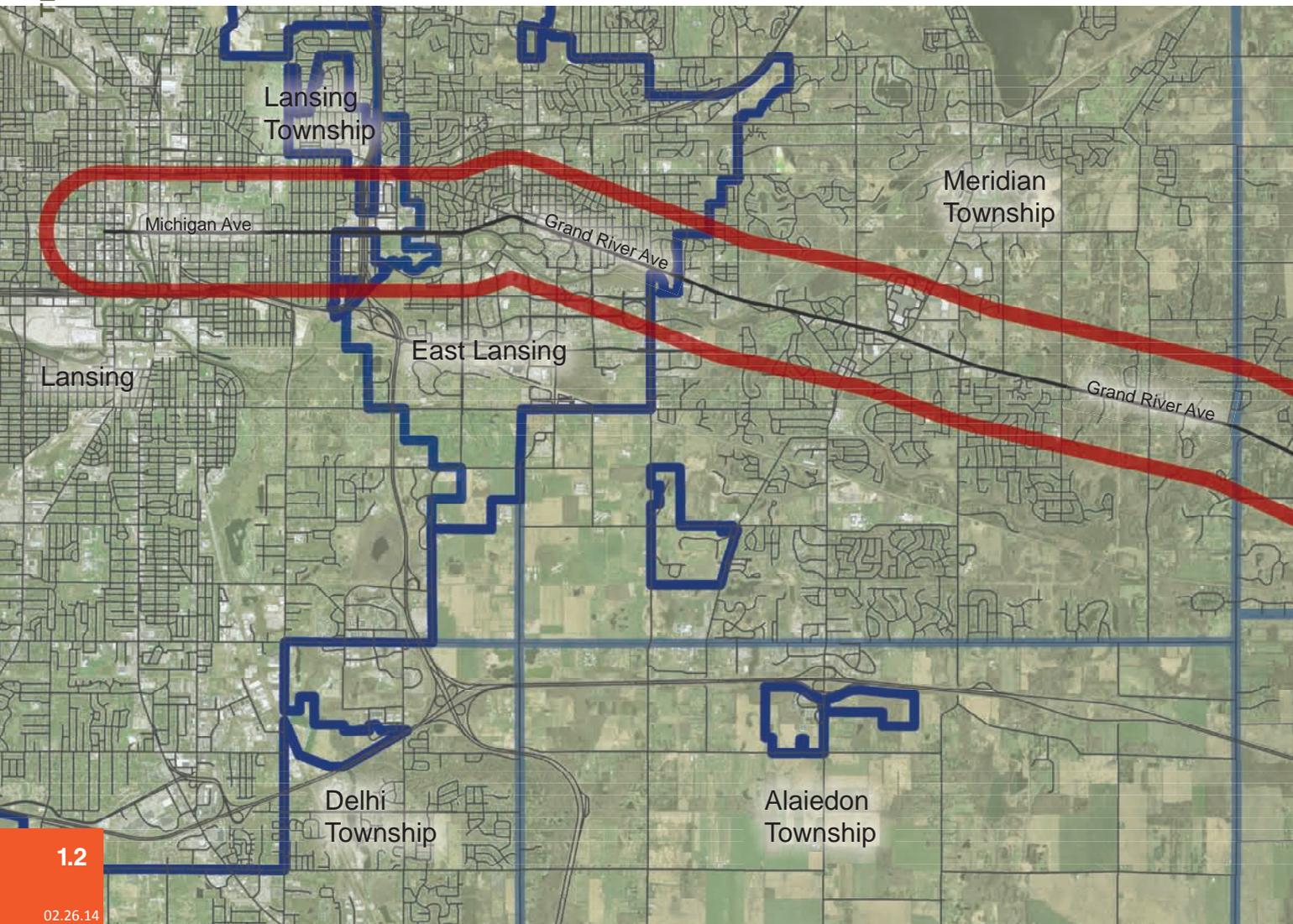
economic analysis 1.18

introduction

The purpose of this planning effort is to engage the Lansing region in defining a unified vision for the Michigan Avenue / Grand River Avenue corridor. A series of charrettes provided the opportunity for an in-depth community conversation about the future urban form of the corridor, and produced a consensus-based vision for urban design, land use, transportation, and economic development.

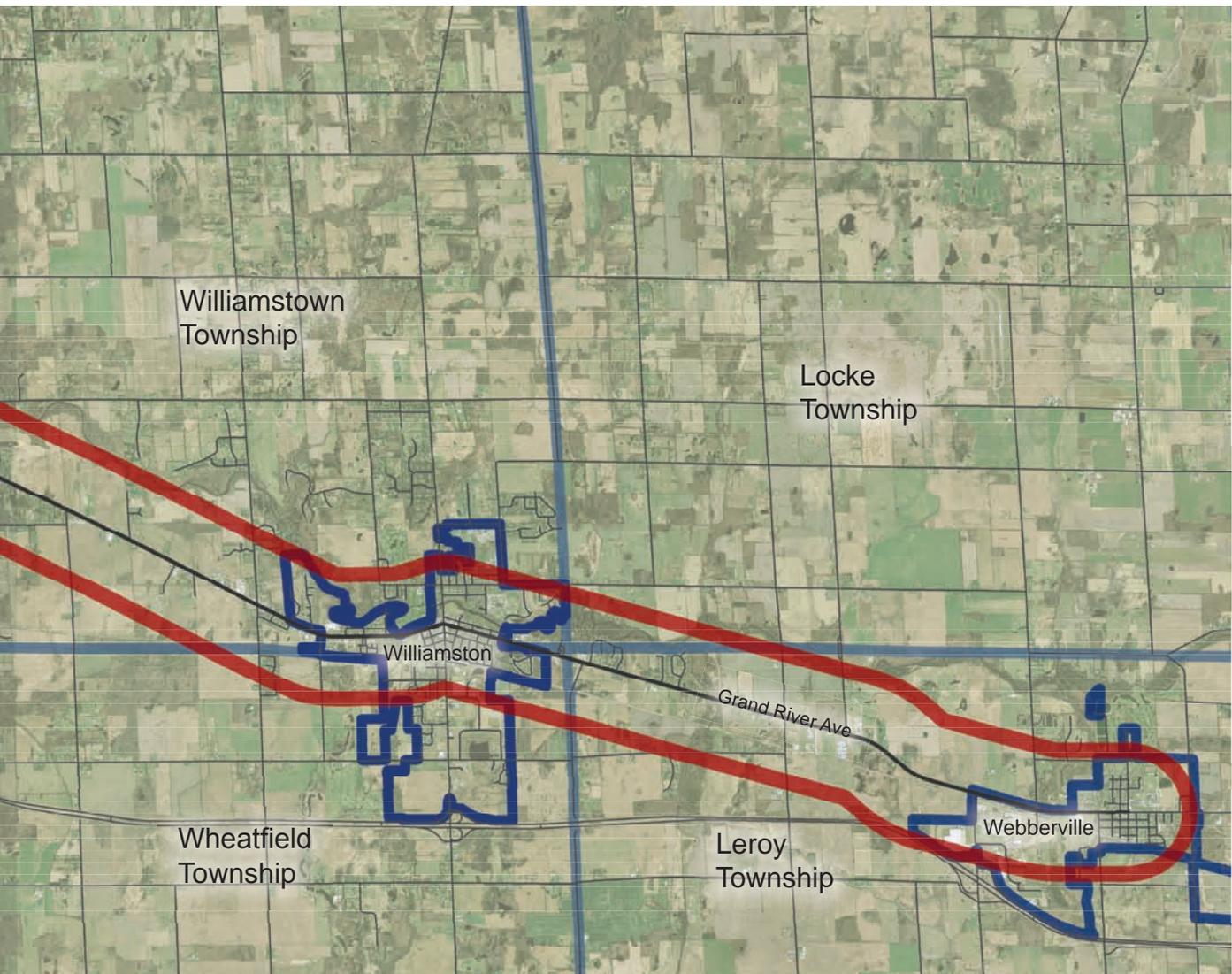
For planning purposes, the corridor was defined as the area within 1/4 mile of Michigan Avenue / Grand River Avenue, extending approximately 19-miles from the capitol building to the town of Webberville. Spanning 10 municipalities, the corridor transverses cities, towns and countryside. It is the identifying address for institutions such as Michigan State University and Sparrow Hospital, and contains shopping and entertainment destinations, workplaces, and residences.

This report documents ideas to guide future growth, change and preservation in the corridor generated by residents, property owners, stakeholders and technical experts, municipal staff, public officials, and the planning team over the course of two 7–8 day charrettes; it also provides recommendations for municipalities and key stakeholders to carry these ideas to implementation.



*“Let’s make the Grand River corridor **GRAND!**”*

- Participant at the Hands-on Design Session,
May 1, 2013



looking back: history of the corridor

As part of the process, the planning team studied historic maps and photos to gain an understanding of the history of the corridor and its development patterns.

The City of Lansing grew from the decision to relocate the state capital from Detroit in 1847, further from British controlled Canada. Lansing was chosen after legislators were unable to decide among existing cities such as Ann Arbor, Marshall and Jackson. The city quickly grew as settlers moved to the new capital, with new settlements growing along the banks of the Grand River.

Lansing would undergo steady growth following the completion of the current capitol building in 1878 and the extension of railroads through the city. Deliberate decisions were made to grow the city around the new capitol building, and terminate important streets, including Michigan Avenue on the new capitol dome.

At the turn of the century, Lansing grew to become an industrial powerhouse. Following the founding of the Olds Motor Vehicle Company, the City became a major center for automobile manufacturing.

Meanwhile, a few miles away, East Lansing grew around what was originally the Agricultural College of the State of Michigan, which eventually became Michigan State University. The university was a pioneer land-grant institution serving as a model for other land-grant colleges around the country. The MSU campus was established on the banks of the Red Cedar River and connected to East Lansing across Grand River Avenue.

During the early part of the 20th century an electric streetcar ran along Michigan Avenue and Grand River Avenue, connecting East Lansing and MSU to downtown Lansing and the capitol. Within a short time the streetcar line was upgraded to an interurban line that connected Lansing and East Lansing with nearby towns, eventually reaching all the way to Owosso. After the rise of organized motordom and the state highway system, the line began to lose business, eventually discontinuing service in 1929.

Over the past few decades, both Lansing and East Lansing have made significant efforts to diversify economically. New investments in walkable infill development can be seen in several places along the corridor, particularly close to downtown Lansing and across from the MSU campus. With the planned investment of Bus Rapid Transit on the corridor, this trend is expected to continue.

(Historic photos courtesy of MSU archives.)

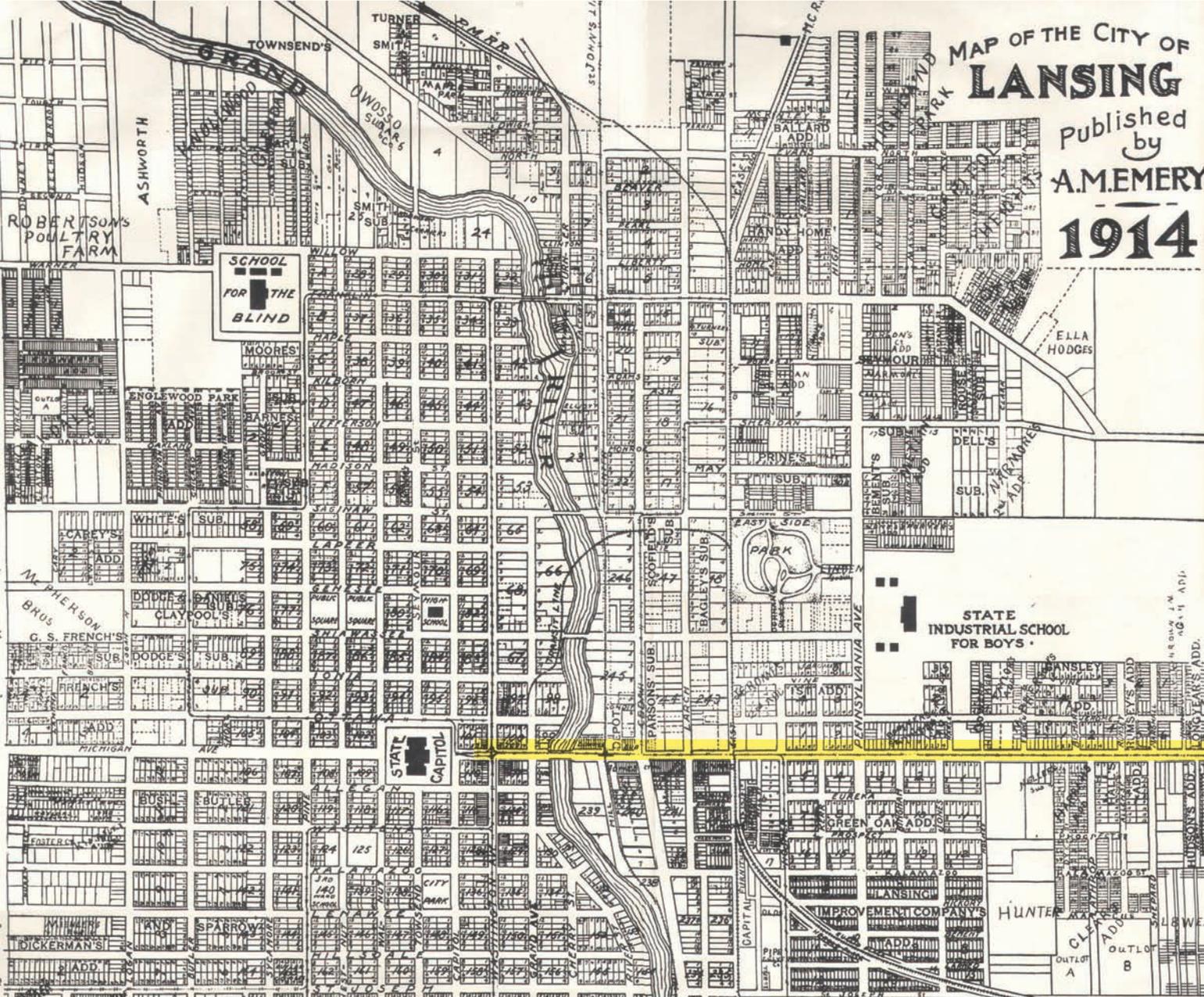


top: Grand River Ave. and Abbot Road, East Lansing, 1920s

middle: Michigan Avenue between Lansing & East Lansing, early 1900s

bottom: Grand River Avenue, East Lansing, 1960s

right: Map of Lansing, 1914; View of Michigan Avenue, looking east, early 1900s



MAP OF THE CITY OF
LANSING
Published by
A.M. EMERY
1914



previous plans & studies

The *Capitol Corridor* Plan builds on previous planning efforts undertaken throughout the region. Prior to the charrettes, the planning team carefully studied several key reports and background documents that have a direct impact on the vision for the Michigan Avenue / Grand River Avenue corridor.

Regional Vision

From 1999 to 2005, the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission undertook development of a vision for the growth of the tri-county region. *“Regional Growth: Choices for our Future”* provided an opportunity for the region to decide how and where to grow. The preferred scenario from this process directs development to existing urban areas with a focus on infill development in urban, suburban and rural centers.

Transit Vision

In 2011, the Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA) Board of Directors voted to pursue a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system for the Michigan Avenue / Grand River Avenue corridor. Bus Rapid Transit operates like a light rail system without the rails; the proposed BRT system includes a series of 28 stations with fare collection, arrival time signs, and level boarding platforms, dedicated travel lanes for the BRT vehicles and articulated buses designed to facilitate boarding. Peak service is expected to operate at 6 minute frequency.

Part of the implementation of the BRT system is expected to include infrastructure improvements, particularly in regards to pedestrian and bicycle access, as well as new park-and-ride facilities at Meridian Center and the area around Red Cedar / Frandor District. The Capitol Corridor plan is an important part of the vision for these areas as CATA moves from funding to implementation.

Green Infrastructure Vision

Following the Regional Growth study’s recommendation that Open Space and Resource protection be promoted through regional planning, the Tri-County Land Use and Resource Team embarked on a study to identify existing open space networks and ways to link them together. As a result of the work of *“Greening Mid-Michigan”* a comprehensive map was produced showing a snapshot of the existing green infrastructure system throughout the region, with proposed linkages.

“Missing Middle” Housing

Concurrent with this planning effort, a target market analysis was commissioned by the Michigan State University Land Policy Institute and the Michigan State Housing Development Authority. Prepared by LandUse|USA, the housing study looked to identify the specific types of housing formats that are currently missing along the corridor. The study reveals the need for more urban housing types that help to fill the gaps in what is currently available in the Lansing market. Called the “missing middle” the types include townhouses and live/work units. This study is thorough and extensive, and is focused on a reasonably foreseeable time horizon. The housing types identified in the report correspond to many of the development priorities identified by participants in *The Capitol Corridor* planning process.



above: Target Market Analysis, Final Report

right top: *Greening Mid-Michigan* green infrastructure map

right middle: Vision for transit improvements in the corridor

right bottom: Regional Growth Report, with adopted Land Use Policy Map

physical conditions

An the onset of the planning process, the consultant team drove, walked and photographed existing conditions in the corridor to gain an understanding of the physical form of development. The following pages provide a snapshot of the urban form found in the corridor today.

Lansing and Lansing Township

Lansing today continues to be characterized by its historic neighborhoods and eclectic mix of small businesses. Downtown Lansing and the popular Stadium District are offering many new, attractive urban buildings that are displaying local investment in the neighborhood. Although some investment has happened, the corridor is still incomplete in segments. There are areas where pedestrians face hostile environments, the result of streets that lack pedestrian amenities like coherent sidewalks and street trees. The corridor is often wide, high-speed, and with buildings that do not address the street. These problematic features create unwatched, uninteresting, even seemingly dangerous areas.

The medical campus of Sparrow Hospital is a major employer and an important amenity in the region. The hospital operates the only dedicated pediatric emergency room and the largest adult emergency room in the region.

Despite the hospital's great interior attributes, the experience outside along Michigan Avenue is not pedestrian-friendly. Sparrow Hospital's buildings are set back from the street with large asphalt parking lots in front, and few seating options are present for pedestrians.

Some of the commercial areas are considered an eyesore by the community. Even though several buildings are constructed close to the sidewalk, in many instances they are only one or two stories and have architecture that is haphazard, generic and often built of inexpensive materials. Frequently these are commercial-style additions as new fronts to wood frame homes. The pedestrian realm is substandard, hindering comfortable pedestrian movement in the commercial areas. Sidewalks are discontinuous and interrupted by numerous curb cuts, and pedestrians often have little protection from the elements and traffic.

Single-family homes are located both directly north and south of the corridor. These neighborhoods offer a variety of home sizes to cater to a wider range of family types and income levels. Although quaint, these neighborhoods are often majority tenant-occupied and many are in need of investment from property owners.



top: Michigan Avenue, looking east from the Capitol

middle: small businesses on Michigan Avenue

bottom: residential streets in Lansing

right: Capitol building, downtown Lansing



East Lansing

Home to Michigan State University (MSU), the corridor in East Lansing is lined with many college-oriented businesses, such as bars, tanning salons, coffee shops, restaurants and bookstores. Seen as both a dividing line and uniting feature, Grand River Avenue divides the MSU campus from the city. Due to its proximity to the campus and highly walkable urban environment, businesses in downtown East Lansing and along the corridor are stable. However, very few are oriented to family or destination shopping, unlike the situation just a decade ago.

The city has several neighborhoods of detached, single-family houses within a mile of the MSU campus. Under a 2004 city zoning ordinance, several of those neighborhoods have used a petition process to establish zones that prohibit or severely restrict renting.

The bicycle culture in East Lansing is understandably strong. The recent addition of buffered bicycle lanes on the corridor have become popular. The Lansing River Trail is a well-used trail that connects the MSU campus and downtown Lansing, and continues north towards to the airport.

above: businesses on Grand River Avenue

right: Michigan State University edge on Grand River Avenue

bottom: downtown East Lansing

facing page: MSU Beaumont Tower Carillon





Meridian Township

Meridian Township begins at the eastern border of East Lansing. Haslett and Okemos are two healthy and active communities within the township. Residents pride themselves in their quiet and safe neighborhoods with a park system, pathways, and recreational opportunities for the enjoyment of families and visitors. The historic core of Okemos, located south of the corridor, contains a handful of traditional street-oriented shopfront buildings.

Despite the array of recreational activities available in the township for residents, the Grand River Avenue corridor is quite hostile to bicyclists and pedestrians. The street itself has wide travel lanes and multiple turn lanes that encourage higher travel speeds and make crossing difficult. The Meridian Mall shopping center, a primary destination, is surrounded by large parking lots and thereby only convenient to reach by car. Typical development on surrounding parcels is in the form of conventional suburban-style strip commercial, with parking toward the street. Neighborhoods are disconnected from commercial uses, which creates excessive reliance on vehicular trips.



above: sidewalk along Grand River Avenue

right: typical commercial building



bottom: current transit stop facility

facing page: Okemos main street building





Grand River Avenue countryside

Eastern Meridian Township transitions to countryside, and the corridor continues through portions of Williamstown Township, Wheatfield Township, Locke Township and Leroy Township. The countryside of Grand River Avenue is lined with farms, pastures, and fields. Much of the area is devoted to small working farms that serve both as economic assets and as key contributors to the rural character of the mid-Michigan region.

The Grand River corridor through this area narrows to a simple two-lane thoroughfare with wide shoulders. While automobile speeds are high along rural stretches of the corridor, the wide shoulders can generally accommodate an occasional bicyclist or pedestrian.



above: farm house set back from corridor

right: rural character of eastern Grand River Avenue

bottom: pastures and fields along the corridor



Williamston & Webberville

Traveling east on Grand River Avenue, picturesque views of the countryside are briefly punctuated by the historic towns of Williamston and Webberville. Once reliant on farming as an occupation, in recent years this trend has declined; today there is little farmland in city limits.

Williamston is primarily a bedroom community, as many residents commute west to Okemos, East Lansing, or Lansing. It is well known to the region for its antique stores and specialty shops in the attractive downtown area. The downtown is walkable with wide sidewalks, new street trees and recently improved streetscaping, and street-oriented shopfronts.

Webberville is small community with a true small town atmosphere. The residential neighborhoods are relatively relaxed and rural. The town's small commercial core is centered on the intersection of Grand River Avenue and Main Street.



above: quaint neighborhood in Webberville

right: Webberville's mixed-use buildings



bottom: downtown Williamston



transportation analysis

To prepare to work with the community in visioning potential future improvements for the corridor, the planning team first conducted a preliminary analysis of existing roadway and traffic characteristics.

Roadway Characteristics

Roadway characteristics including speed limit, number of lanes, and average annual daily traffic (AADT) vary along the corridor. The highest traffic volumes are in the Michigan State University (MSU) and Meridian Mall areas, with 28,000 and 27,000 vehicles per day, respectively. Speed limits ranged from 25 miles per hour (mph) near MSU, in Williamston, and in Webberville, to 55 mph in rural areas.

The table on the following page outlines the roadway laneage along the 19-mile corridor. Sidewalks are present along Michigan Avenue / Grand River Avenue in most areas, except along the rural two-lane sections where a 10-foot shoulder is present. Bicycle facilities are only included in a few areas – bike lanes on Michigan Avenue between Frandor and the intersection of Michigan Avenue/ Grand River Avenue in East Lansing and on Grand River Avenue in Webberville. In both cases, a motor vehicle travel lane was removed in order to accommodate the bicycle lane.

Existing Traffic Operations

Existing traffic operations in the study area were evaluated qualitatively. Typical areas of peak hour congestion include the Michigan Avenue and Pennsylvania Avenue intersection in downtown Lansing, Grand River

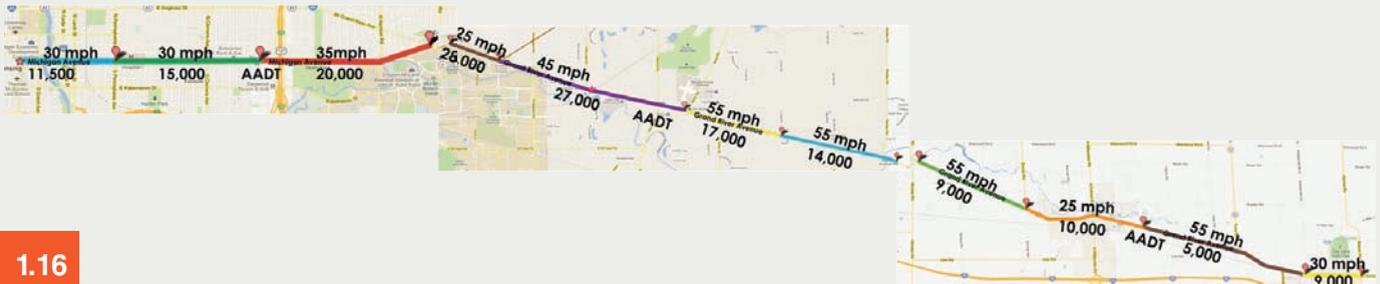
Avenue between Michigan Avenue and Bogue Street in East Lansing, and Grand River Avenue between Okemos Road and Meridian Road in Meridian Township. Traffic simulation models of some areas of the corridor were provided by the City of Lansing and MDOT which were used to evaluate the impacts of proposed improvements evaluated during the planning process (as described in Chapter 4).

Adjacent Roadways

Since the discussion of land uses along the corridor included areas to the north and south of the study roadway itself, adjacent roadways were considered in the transportation analysis. Major adjacent roadways that were evaluated at the design charrettes included:

- **Grand River Avenue and Saginaw Avenue between US-127 and Coolidge Road.** This 1/3 mile section currently consists of two one-way four lane roads. The intersection of Grand River Avenue and Saginaw Avenue has been a safety concern for the City of Lansing and MDOT. Both roadways have a 35 mph speed limit.
- **Kalamazoo Street between Capital Avenue and US-127.** Kalamazoo Street is a three-lane roadway with a two-way left-turn lane and a narrow striped shoulder. It parallels Michigan Avenue in Downtown Lansing and is currently a preferred alternate route for cyclists to cover the 2.25 mile distance between the Capitol and the Red Cedar Trail. The speed limit is 30 mph.

Speed Limits and Average Annual Daily Traffic on Michigan Avenue and Grand River Avenue



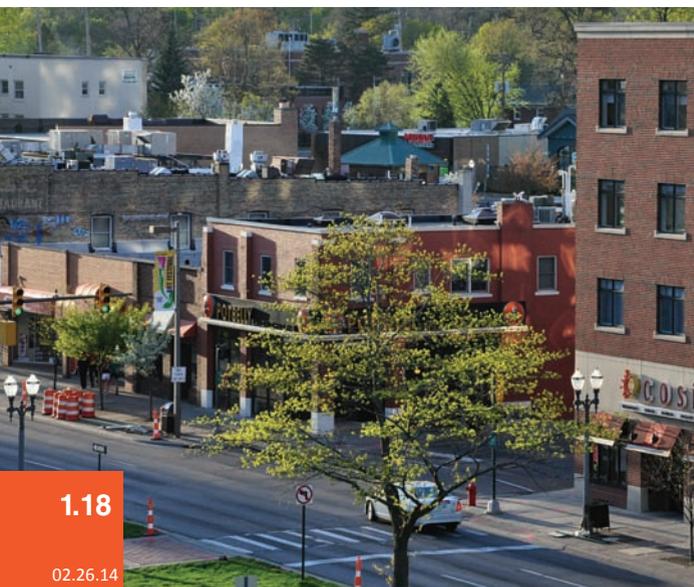
Existing Roadway Laneage and Features from West to East

	Location	Laneage	Other Features
LANSING & LANSING TOWNSHIP	Michigan Avenue from Capital Avenue to Pennsylvania Avenue	5-Lane roadway with Two-Way Left Turn lane (TWLT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available on-street parking • Sidewalks on both sides with curb extensions
	Michigan Avenue from Pennsylvania Avenue to Charles Street	5-Lane roadway with TWLT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidewalks on both sides • Some areas with on-street parking
	Michigan Avenue from Charles Street to Grand River Avenue	4-Lane boulevard with a 60-foot median	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidewalks on both sides • Buffer bike lanes in recently converted outside lane
EAST LANSING	Grand River Avenue from Michigan Avenue to Bogue Street	Boulevard with 3 lanes west-bound (WB) and 2 lanes east-bound (EB), 30-foot median	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidewalks on both sides
	Grand River Avenue from Bogue Street to Marsh Road	5-Lane roadway with TWLT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidewalks on both sides, including the railroad overpass
MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP	Grand River Avenue from Marsh Road to Cornell Road	5-Lane roadway with TWLT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous sidewalks on the south side of the road • Inconsistent sidewalk on the north side of the road
	Grand River Avenue from Cornell Road to Meridian Road	3-lane roadway with TWLT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous sidewalks on the north side of the road • Inconsistent sidewalk on the south side of the road
	Grand River Avenue from Meridian Road to Zimmer Road	2-Lane roadway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10-foot shoulder bikeway • No sidewalks
WILLIAMSTOWN TOWNSHIP & WILLIAMSTON	Grand River Avenue from Zimmer Road to Block Street	4-Lane roadway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available on-street parking in downtown Williamston • Sidewalks on both sides with curb extensions in downtown Williamston
	Grand River Avenue from Block Street to Webberville Road	2-Lane roadway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10-foot shoulder • No sidewalks
WHEATFIELD, LOCKE, LEROY TWP. & WEBBERVILLE	Grand River Avenue from Webberville Road to Gramer Road	3-Lane roadway with TWLT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-street parking in downtown Webberville • Sidewalks on both sides • Bike lanes

economic analysis

Future development opportunities along the Michigan Avenue / Grand River Avenue corridor will be determined first and foremost by regional economic and demographic growth trends, the role the corridor can play in capturing some of this future growth within the regional economy, the strength of local market areas along the corridor, and the Bus Rapid Transit line's perceived value to real estate consumers based on its travel benefits. This summary of economic conditions opens with a general description of transit-oriented development and how it can potentially capture economic activity. This is followed by an analysis of the Lansing regional and corridor real estate markets – by product type and location – to better understand the potential that the new investment in Bus Rapid Transit creates to leverage other investments from both the public and the private sectors.

below: Grand River Avenue in East Lansing



Introduction to Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)

Bus Rapid Transit's introduction to the corridor can potentially transform the land use pattern along the route into a denser, well-connected, and vibrant series of neighborhoods and destinations. However, this impact will only occur if corridor land uses, transportation linkages, public investments, and public policy are all focused together on fostering "transit-oriented development" ("TOD"). This section introduces the TOD concept, its benefits, and what components are necessary for its implementation.

The term "transit-oriented development" refers to an area with a mix of residential and commercial uses that is designed to maximize multi-modal transportation options, including walking, biking, public transit and automobiles.

TOD includes existing and new development, usually with a focus on the area within a half-mile to a mile of a transit facility (about a ten to twenty minute walk). TOD consists of a wide range of scales and uses, and includes a well-connected street network, safe streets for pedestrians and bicyclists, and a balanced mix of uses that can satisfy many of the daily retail and service needs of residents and workers. The goal of TOD is to create appealing, walkable, sustainable communities that offer expanded choices for all kinds of households, including families with children, seniors, and young adults.

Well-designed transit that connects people from their home to their destinations provides added value for users and increases the demand for living and working in transit-oriented locations.

Transit maximizes its usefulness when it is permanent, frequent, comfortable, and provides useful connections between a wide range of places with different market strengths and uses. Its benefits for users often drive increased demand for housing and commercial real estate near transit stations/stops. For example, the 2008 report *Capturing the Value of Transit* by the Center for Transit-Oriented Development (CTOD) cataloged studies indicating that properties located near robust transit exhibited a two to twenty percent price premium, with the highest premiums concentrated within one-quarter to one-half mile of the transit station/stop.

Transit can enhance any given location's market strength, but does not create or transform the market; areas of existing market strength are always better-positioned to attract development, while additional public policy and investment

interventions may still be required in weaker market areas to maximize transit's transformational impact.

The addition of transit does not create a new market for the included land uses, but instead reorganizes and redistributes regional market demand. TOD accommodates unfulfilled regional demand for denser, transit-connected neighborhoods, driven by households and employers eager to enjoy the amenities, cost efficiencies, and transportation access of a well-designed TOD. Local market forces and existing land use patterns also shape demand for TOD at a particular transit station. For example, the CTOD analyzed development along three new transit corridors and found that development was most heavily concentrated near existing employment centers, despite land available for development in other parts of corridors.

Due to the importance of commute trips for transit ridership, transit corridors maximize TOD potential when they connect residential origins to employment destinations.

According to national research by the American Public Transportation Association, 59 percent of public transit trips are taken for the purpose of work commutes, in contrast to 18 percent of all trips on all modes of transportation. Furthermore, dense employment near transit is more closely associated with transit ridership than dense residential uses. Transit serves commute trips well since most are predictable, occur during the highest levels of transit service in rush hours, allow riders to avoid the heaviest period of automobile traffic congestion, and consist of a single destination. The benefits of transit access to jobs also drive increased demand for housing near the line.

Industries with relatively dense employment are more likely to be “transit-supportive” since they concentrate a larger number of workers in any given location.

Certain industries feature high worker densities due to the type of building they occupy; for example, office buildings have high numbers of workers per square foot of building, while warehouse and manufacturing facilities have far fewer. Transit access at employment destinations can be maximized by concentrating workers within walking distance of a station.

“Transit-Supportive” industries consist of knowledge-based, entertainment, and government jobs; large education and health care institutions are also significant transit-supportive destinations when located along a major transit corridor.

National research by CTOD found that the following industries are most “transit-supportive,” i.e. they are more likely to locate within a half-mile of transit stations, and benefit the most from transit-rich locations with access to high-frequency, fixed-guideway transit.

- **Knowledge-based Jobs.** This sector includes Information; Finance and Insurance; Real Estate; Professional, Scientific and Technical Services; and Management of Companies and Enterprises, and showed the highest propensity to be located in a transit area. While low transportation costs and building space requirements allow these firms to cluster more densely, their role within the regional economy often dictates whether they chose to do so. For instance, a financial services firm for which the rapid transmission of information may be critical to business may have a strong incentive to aggregate within a major financial services node. In contrast, local-serving firms (such as commercial banks) may locate closer to their customers, in smaller, peripheral, retail or general commercial nodes. In addition, there is evidence that high-tech, bio-tech and information technology firms also gain significant benefits from agglomeration in industry nodes.
- **Government Jobs** were shown to have the greatest affinity for transit and tend to cluster in central districts within dense urban capitals such as Downtown Lansing. Often these jobs not only locate in areas with high employment densities, but are also placed near transit as a matter of policy, to both support the transit system and facilitate access by employees and citizens.
- **Education Services Jobs** are not universally transit-supportive, but **universities and colleges** often serve as institutional anchors in transit locations, and students can contribute significantly to ridership during off-peak hours. Michigan State University is an example of a high-density institutional anchor for transit service.
- **Health Care Jobs** are often dispersed throughout a region, but **large hospitals** such as Sparrow Hospital can serve as institutional employment anchors for transit.

Economic and Market Potential

Employment growth in the Lansing region is relatively slow, resulting in limited demand for commercial real estate and requiring a strategic, deliberate approach to targeting economic development. Between 2001 and 2012 the Lansing regional economy – defined here as Ingham, Eaton, and Clinton Counties – lost jobs at an average year-over-year rate of -.18 percent, compared to a positive .16 percent nationally.

The Lansing economy has a high concentration of TOD-supportive industries. Over 60 percent of jobs in the Lansing region are in the TOD-supportive industry sectors including Knowledge-Based Industries, Educational Services, Health Care and Social Assistance, and Public Administration. This compares to approximately 45 percent in the State of Michigan and United States.

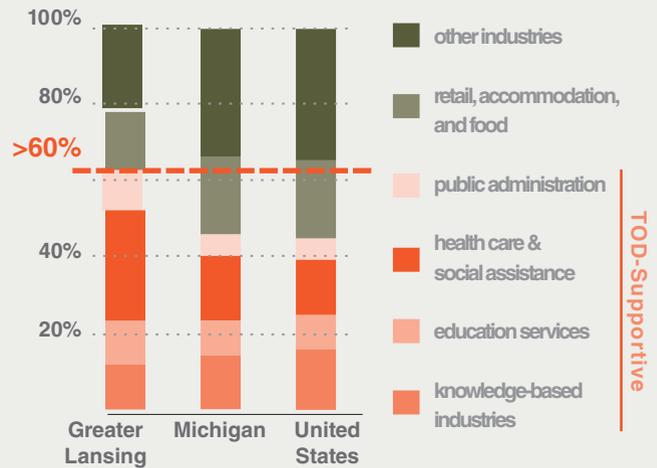
The corridor already connects the region’s densest employment centers, creating the potential to leverage these job concentrations for development. Approximately 40 percent of the Lansing region’s jobs are within a half-mile of proposed Bus Rapid Transit stations, and the corridor connects many of the region’s densest employment centers.

The concentrated job centers along the corridor are heavily comprised of TOD-supportive industries, particularly in government, health care, and education. Over 80 percent of the jobs located within a half-mile of the corridor are in the TOD-supportive industries, and half of all Lansing region TOD-supportive industry jobs are found along the corridor.

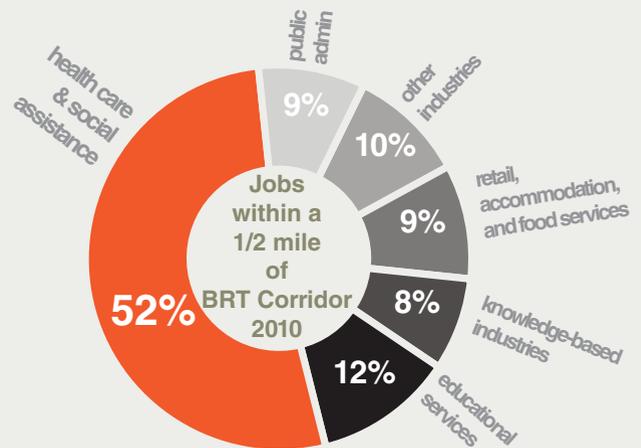
Five unique, significant employment destinations are located along the corridor and anchored by a major institution or destination. The planned Bus Rapid Transit corridor links five unique and sizable employment destinations anchored by Michigan state government offices in Downtown Lansing, Sparrow Hospital, Frandor Shopping Center, Michigan State University, and Meridian Mall. The industry mix in each of these areas reflects the activities of their economic/institutional anchor.

The regional office market is experiencing high vacancy rates overall, but demand for high quality Class A space is relatively strong. According to brokerage firm CBRE|Martin, overall office vacancy rates in the region were a high 17.8 percent in the second half of 2012, but Class A vacancies were only 7.3 percent. Local brokers interviewed for this study reported that a significant amount of Class B and C space needs reinvestment or removal from the market, but demand exists

Share of Employment

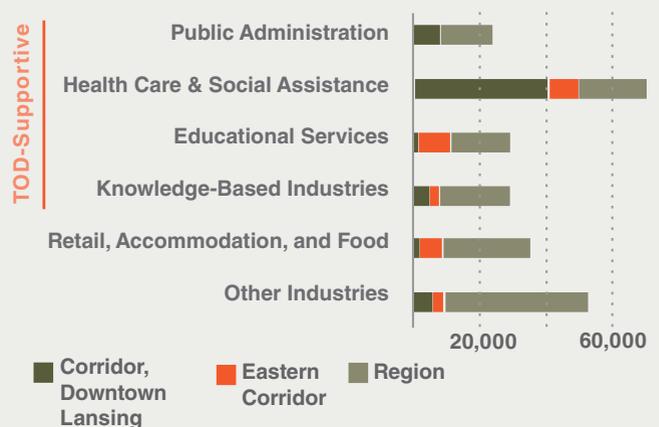


Source: U.S. Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, 2010; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2013 (for United States data); Strategic Economics, 2013



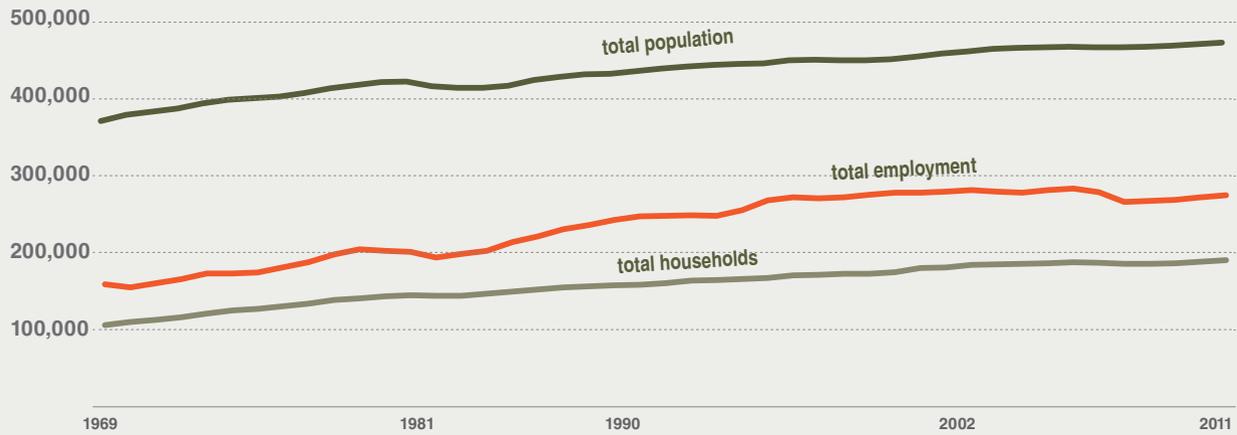
Source: U.S. Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, 2010; Strategic Economics, 2013

Lansing Region Jobs by Location & Industry, 2010



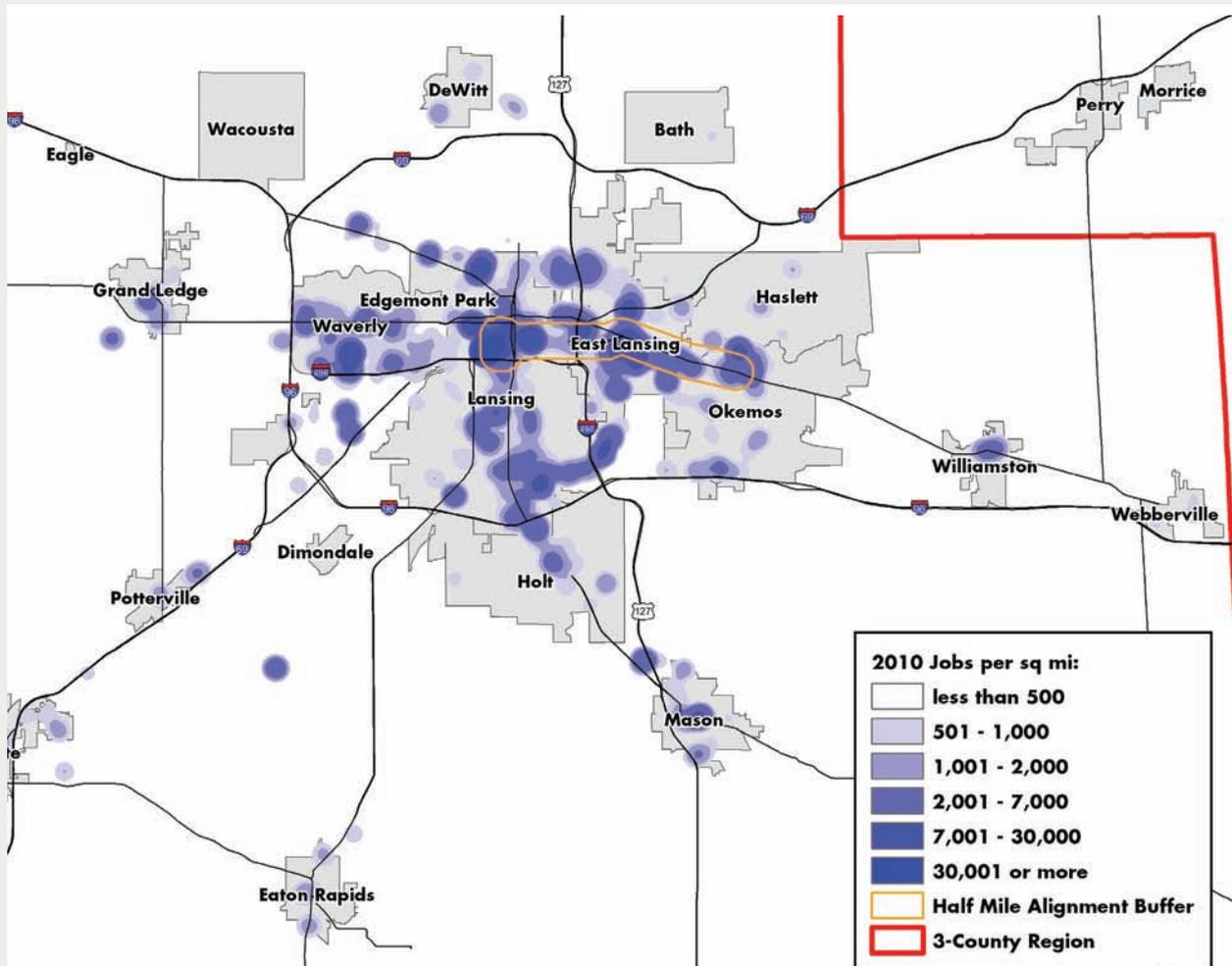
* “Corridor, Downtown Lansing” includes jobs within a 1/2-mile of the planned BRT corridor from Downtown Lansing to just past Sparrow Hospital. “Eastern Corridor” includes jobs within a half-mile of the remainder of the Bus Rapid Transit corridor.

Source: U.S. Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, 2010; Strategic Economics, 2013.



Source: Woods & Poole Economics, 2013; Strategic Economics, 2013

Job Density in the Lansing Region, 2010



U. S. Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Program, 2010; Strategic Economics, 2013.

for Class A space. Large office developments are typically constructed for build-to-suit tenants, while speculative office space targets small firms seeking smaller and/or mixed-use formats.

Future office development along the corridor is most likely to occur near the largest existing nodes. The corridor includes larger office nodes in Downtown Lansing and Downtown East Lansing, with smaller increments of space near Red Cedar/ Frandor District and Meridian Mall. The corridor also includes a concentration of medical office space adjacent to Sparrow Hospital. Further office development is likely to occur near these existing concentrations to take advantage of agglomeration benefits and accessibility.

Growth in office demand will be limited, therefore increasing the importance that public policy and the actions of major institutions support employment growth along the corridor. Based on analysis of employment projections produced by Woods & Poole Economics, the Lansing region will experience demand for 650,000 square feet of additional traditional office space by 2020 and another 2.1 million by 2035. Medical employment is also projected to grow rapidly in the region, suggesting demand for additional space – though demand for medical office will be tempered by the trend toward decentralized service facilities closer to patients instead of

large single facilities such as Sparrow Hospital. Given the corridor’s inclusion of Michigan state government offices, Sparrow Hospital, and Michigan State University, much of its future potential will be determined by actions of these large institutions. Public policy decisions and incentives will also be necessary to reorient development toward, rather than away, from the corridor through incentivizing upgrading class B and C space, as well as encouraging new office construction in the corridor rather than in suburban auto-oriented locations.

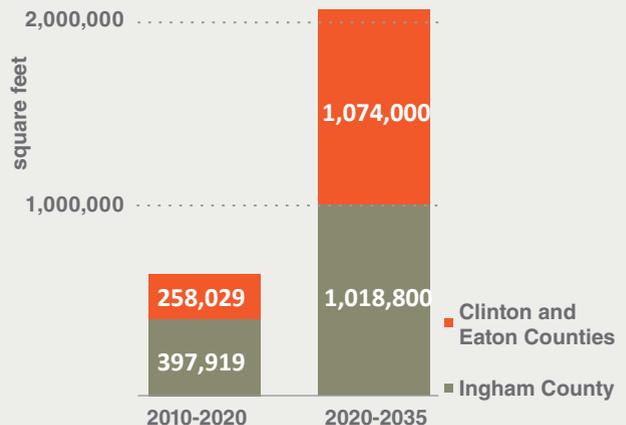
Frandor Shopping Center and Meridian Mall are best-positioned to serve regional retail demand on the corridor. The corridor’s far east side lies within the highest-income area of the Lansing region. However, the presence of Frandor Shopping Center, Meridian Mall, and Eastwood Town Center (to the north) within this relatively small area presents the risk that the region is over-supplied with retail.

Household growth on and near the corridor will generate additional retail demand over time. Household growth within a 15-minute drive-time of the corridor will generate additional retail demand that could be served by corridor businesses. Household growth on the corridor itself will unlock new opportunities to attract neighborhood-serving retail and services (such as dry cleaners, drug stores, coffee shops, and restaurants). Household

Industry Mix by Area of Corridor, 2010

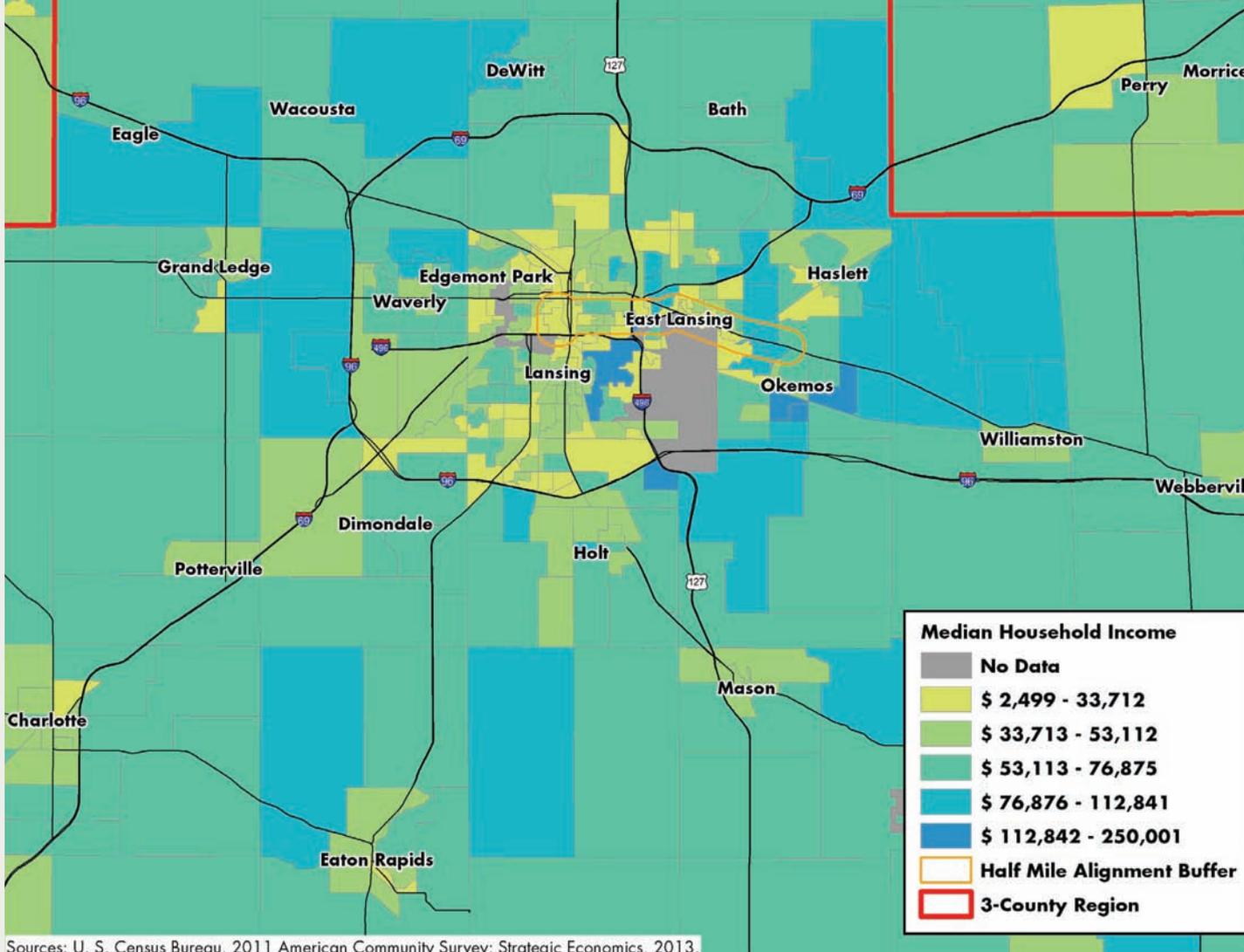
Area	Employ	Industries & Retail Employment
CBD and Stadium District	64,000	65% Health Care and Social Assistance 13% Public Administration 9% Knowledge-Based 5% Retail, Accommodation, Food Svcs
Sparrow Hospital	8,500	81% Health Care and Social Assistance 3% Knowledge-Based 3% Educational Services 4% Retail, Accommodation, Food Svcs
Red Cedar/ Frandor Area	3,500	18% Health Care and Social Assistance 8% Knowledge-Based Industries 4% Educational Services 52% Retail, Accommodation, Food Svcs
East Lansing / MSU	12,000	77% Educational Services 6% Knowledge-Based Industries 2% Health Care and Social Assistance 10% Retail, Accommodation, Food Svcs
Meridian Mall	3,500	6% Knowledge-Based Industries 2% Health Care and Social Assistance 77% Retail, Accommodation, Food Svcs

New Office Demand by Area and Time Period



Source: Woods & Poole, 2013; Norm Miller, Burnham-Moores Center for Real Estate, UCSD, 2012; Strategic Economics, 2013.

Note: Employment estimates are based on the US Census LEHD data set, which is based on a variety of inputs. Accuracy decreases at smaller geographies; it is best to use the "Approximate Employment" as a relative comparison.



Sources: U. S. Census Bureau. 2011 American Community Survey; Strategic Economics. 2013.

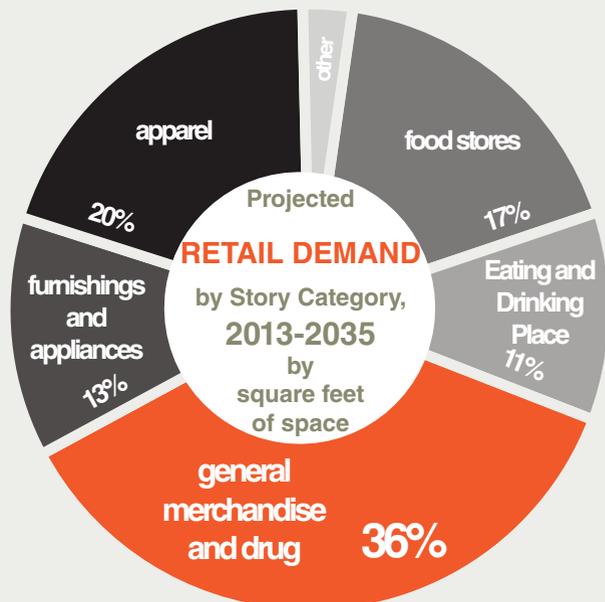
Median Household Income in the Lansing Region, 2011

New Retail Demand from Household Growth within 15-Minute Drive-Time of Central Corridor

Retail Category	2013-2020	2020-2035
Food Stores	95,000 sqft	100,000 sqft
Eating and Drinking Places	60,000 sqft	63,000 sqft
General Merchandise and Drug	197,000 sqft	206,000 sqft
Furnishings and Appliances	69,000 sqft	72,000 sqft
Apparel	107,000 sqft	112,000 sqft
Other Retail and Retail Services	14,000 sqft	15,000 sqft
Total	544,000 sqft	567,000 sqft
Total less vacancy absorption*	246,000 sqft	567,000 sqft

*Assumes 15% stabilized vacancy rate. Numbers may not sum due to rounding

Source: Claritas, 2013; Woods & Poole, 2013; International Council of Shopping Centers, 2007; Strategic Economics, 2013.



Source: Claritas, 2013; Woods & Poole, 2013; International Council of Shopping Centers, 2007; Strategic Economics, 2013.

growth in the larger drive-time area can widen opportunities for region-serving retail at Frandor Shopping Center and Meridian Mall, and draw additional customers to entertainment and nightlife destinations in the Stadium District and Downtown East Lansing areas.

Lansing’s slow population and household growth requires a strategic approach to attracting residential development in concentrated areas of the corridor.

The Lansing region has long grown slowly, and growth is slowing. Average year-over-year household growth was .33 percent between 2003 and 2013, .71 percent in the last 20 years, and .87 percent in the last 30 years. An average of 611 households were added annually over the past ten years, and 1,240 annually over the last 20 years. Given that only a portion of these households will have an interest in denser, urban housing products along the corridor, a highly targeted and strategic approach will be required to attract households to infill housing locations along the corridor.

Lansing housing values are recovering, suggesting that development of new housing may soon accelerate.

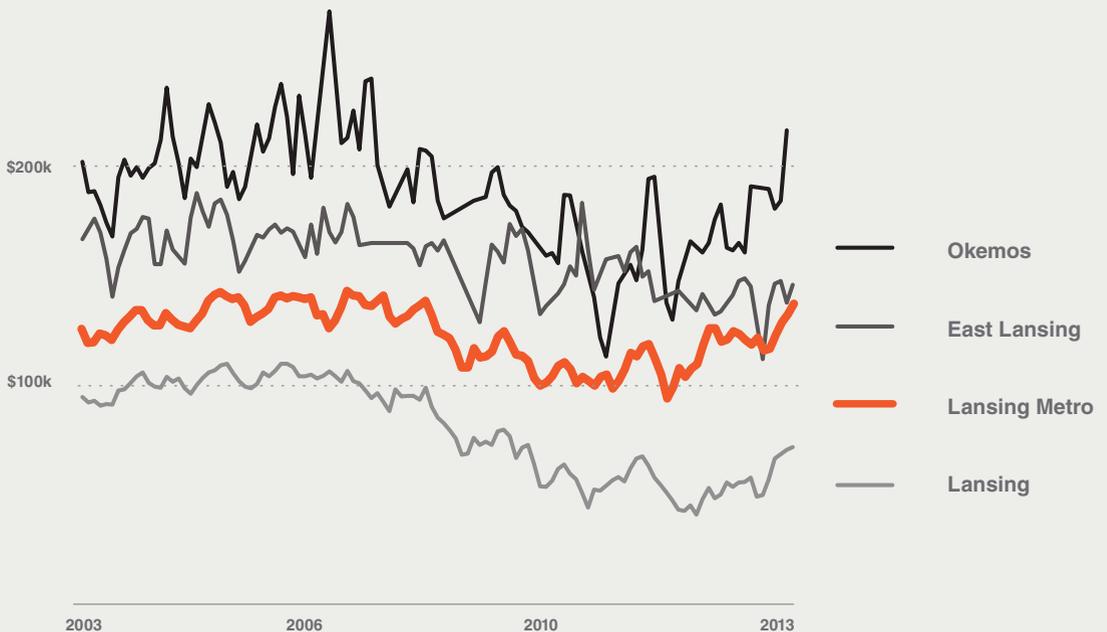
Median home sales prices in the Lansing region are now 3.8 percent below their peak prior to the market downturn in 2008. Values are highest along the corridor in Okemos, reflecting its housing stock of largely single-family homes on large lots located close to Meridian

Mall, MSU, and Downtown Lansing. However, Meridian Township does have several clusters of higher density housing that still serve this more affluent demographic. The higher incomes, proven market demand for condominiums, and the presence of many “empty nester” households suggest that Meridian Township does have potential to support housing development at transit-supportive densities at some point in the future.

A housing market analysis by Sharon Woods / LandUse|USA – commissioned by the Michigan State University Land Policy Institute and Michigan State Housing Development Authority – found potential demand exists for 680 units per year along the corridor through 2018; attracting this demand will require targeted public incentives, public-private partnerships, and public investments beyond the Bus Rapid Transit.

The analysis assumed that obstacles to development – including affordability constraints – are largely overcome through public incentives and public investments (such as the Bus Rapid Transit and other connectivity and public amenity improvements). The analysis also assumes that expanded higher-density housing offerings in appealing urban environments will increase the total capture of households to the region by drawing households that might otherwise have located in nearby metropolitan areas.

Median Home Sales Prices



Momentum is building for constructing denser, urban-format housing projects near the corridor, but public assistance and cost-efficient building configurations are often necessary due to market price constraints. A variety of recently-built urban residential products in the Lansing region have begun to “prove” the market for denser, urban housing products, but these projects have frequently required public subsidies and lower-cost design formats to achieve financial viability. A review of recently-constructed denser, urban-format housing developments on or near the corridor found that the majority have received public subsidies. Developers typically sought to further reduce costs with heights below six stories (which allows less-expensive construction techniques and life-safety measures) and surface or shared parking arrangements (which eliminates the need to construct costly structured or underground parking).

In the longer-term, the transformation of corridor areas into appealing residential communities will widen the types of households interested in residing in these urban format housing developments, including seniors/empty-nesters and graduate students and/or young professionals. Much of the recently-constructed housing on or near the corridor is targeted to undergraduate students at Michigan State University, though a few development projects have targeted young professionals, empty-nesters, and graduate students. As urban neighborhoods are built out with appealing amenities, atmosphere, and transportation access, an opportunity will emerge to increasingly attract households other than undergraduate students.



Lansing, Residential Neighborhood

Summary of Transit-Oriented Development Opportunities

The Lansing region’s economic composition and concentration of employment along the corridor create strong opportunities for transformative reinvestment and TOD.

The Lansing region’s economy features a TOD-supportive mix of public administration, education institutions, and knowledge-based industries. The corridor also includes the largest and densest concentrations of these industries, and large public and institutional employers. These strengths create significant potential for the corridor to attract transformative long-term development.

Achieving the corridor’s TOD potential will require deliberate public policies, investments, and incentives that direct limited regional growth to the corridor – instead of greenfield locations – and create walkable, amenity-rich urban neighborhoods.

The addition of Bus Rapid Transit will create significant potential to enhance growth and reinvestment along the corridor, but only in conjunction with other targeted public investments and incentives. Bus Rapid Transit can enhance the corridor’s existing market strengths, but will not create market opportunities where none exist. The corridor competes for development in a region featuring slow growth in demand, easy automobile commutes, and low costs for greenfield development. Public incentives should target attracting development to “prove” the market

for urban developments, improving walkability, reinforcing employment destinations, and adding housing to leverage employment access. The corridor’s long-term competitive strength will rest in the vibrancy of its neighborhoods and not the appeal of individual development projects.

The corridor’s employment and housing nodes have different, unique strengths and potential; corridor improvement strategies should first concentrate on stronger nodes in order to focus investments and gradually contribute to corridor-wide value enhancement over time.

Public investments and incentives targeted to the corridor can leverage the greatest results by strategically targeting the strongest market uses in the corridor’s different nodes. In general, the corridor’s strongest market areas of Downtown Lansing and Downtown East Lansing hold the greatest potential to easily “prove” the market for urban-format commercial and residential uses, while reinforcing their strengths as walkable places. The Stadium District and Sparrow Hospital are emerging opportunities to create complementary housing and employment districts. The Red Cedar/Frandor District can be reinforced as a retail destination with additional housing and retail. Meridian Mall is a longer-term opportunity for additional housing and retail.



Grand River Avenue in East Lansing



Downtown Lansing

Future office growth along the corridor is most likely to occur at the largest office nodes in Downtown Lansing and Downtown East Lansing; reinforcement of these employment nodes will increase the Bus Rapid Transit’s usefulness as a commute tool for corridor residents.

The corridor’s strongest and largest office nodes are in Downtown Lansing and East Lansing; office development will be limited and is likely to concentrate in those nodes, with some smaller opportunities at Red Cedar/Frandor District and the Meridian Mall areas. Unique institutional or large-user build-to-suit opportunities may also arise, and medical office opportunities exist in the Sparrow Hospital vicinity. The corridor office strategy should concentrate on attracting office users to strong market areas in order to reinforce the transit’s value as a commute tool and encourage development of housing in other corridor locations. These strong employment nodes also anchor the “destination” end of future transit trips. Future housing development along the corridor should be targeted to the workers in these strong employment nodes, as well as to the more obvious sources of housing market demand, including students.

Growth of housing along and near the corridor will gradually increase demand for additional retail.

The east side of Lansing includes a large amount of region-serving retail at Meridian Mall, Frandor Shopping Center, and Eastwood Town Center. Although significant retail expansion along the corridor is unlikely to be supportable in the near term, future household growth will gradually create new opportunities. In the short-term, local, neighborhood-serving retail along the corridor – such as grocery stores, dry cleaners, coffee shops, and restaurants – can

serve local residential growth. Residential growth can strengthen existing small-scale retail nodes along the corridor, such as the stores and restaurants near Clemens Avenue and Michigan Avenue.

Denser, multi-family housing products are gaining acceptance as early examples achieve success; directing additional housing development to targeted corridor areas will allow the creation of comprehensive neighborhoods and gradually widen the market appeal of these products.

Recently-constructed denser multi-family housing products along and near the corridor are slowly “proving” the market for these units. However, achievable values remain limited, as demonstrated by the cost efficiencies many buildings have incorporated, including surface parking lots, heights generally below six stories, and use of public incentives/subsidies. An opportunity exists to continue to concentrate residential development in specific corridor areas to create functioning neighborhoods. These neighborhoods will gradually widen the market appeal beyond student housing and the small number of pioneering young professionals or “empty-nester” households. Given the limited projected demand of 3,400 units along the corridor by 2018 if ideal conditions are met, public support for development should target the creation of clusters/communities of new housing instead of spreading this limited supply throughout the corridor. The densest products – and strongest markets – are currently in or near Downtown Lansing and Downtown East Lansing. These areas feature amenities and employment/education destinations that increase the demand for housing.

Mi-Grand charrettes

establishing a common vision 2.2

vision charrette: May 2013 2.4

community input: vision 2.6

design charrette: October 2013 2.14

community input: design 2.16

establishing a common vision

A primary goal of this planning effort was to involve Lansing area residents, property owners and stakeholders in actively planning for a more sustainable future for the Michigan Avenue / Grand River Avenue corridor. Direct community input gathered through a public charrette-based planning process shaped the ideas and recommendations found in this report.

Preparing for the charrettes began months before the first workshops. In February 2013, members of the NCI team traveled the corridor conducting a series of meetings with representatives from municipalities, Michigan State University (MSU), Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA), Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA), Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP), and Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC). The purpose of the meetings was to learn about current initiatives, issues and opportunities in the corridor, as well as to coordinate schedules and begin to generate excitement for the upcoming charrettes. The team also conducted a preliminary analysis of existing conditions, walking and photographing key streets and neighborhoods.

In March 2013, the team's economist (Dena Belzer of Strategic Economics) conducted a series of meetings to present the planning team's initial analysis of economic conditions and potential for transit-oriented development in the Michigan Avenue / Grand River Avenue corridor. The NCI team and TCRPC worked together throughout the months of March and April to notify community members of upcoming events, arrange technical meeting sessions for the charrette week, and gather necessary base information.

On May 1 - 7, 2013, the first charrette was held to establish a preliminary vision for the future of the corridor. During the charrette week, hundreds of participants gave their input at public meetings and at the on-site design studio, describing how they would like to see the corridor evolve. The planning team consolidated these many ideas into plan "cornerstones," or big ideas to guide future change and growth (as described in Chapter 3). In October 2013, a second charrette was held to continue work on that vision by studying three specific areas in greater detail, in order to illustrate how the cornerstones can be applied to sites throughout the corridor (as described in Chapter 4).



top: February 2013 Site Analysis

middle: Design Session at Pattengill Middle School

bottom: Open House, Design Charrette

right: Open House, Vision Charrette



vision charrette: May 2013

Opening Event

On the evening of May 1st, approximately 120 community participants gathered for the Vision Charrette Opening Event at the Lansing Center. The event began with a “food-for-thought” presentation on street design basics, planning for mixed-use and mixed housing types, and designing sustainable settlements. A summary of existing conditions along the 19-mile corridor was presented, and participants were asked to think about how they might like to see these areas change and grow, and what aspects of the existing urban form should be preserved.

Participants then worked in small groups on a series of Hands-on Design Exercises for the overall corridor as well as an area of focus (Western Corridor, including Lansing and East Lansing; Central Corridor, including Meridian Township; and Eastern Corridor, including Williamston and Webberville). The intent of the exercises was to identify areas of consensus and begin to create a long-range community vision for the future of the corridor. At the end of the workshop a spokesperson from each table reported the findings and major points from his or her group to the entire assembly. The presentations allowed the community and planning team to see common interests emerge, laying the foundation for the corridor vision. (A summary of that input can be found on the following pages).

Design Studio

From May 2 through 7, the planning team continued to work with the community at an Open Design Studio at an open shopfront location on Grand River Avenue in East Lansing. Residents, business and property owners, local leaders, and other interested citizens were encouraged to stop by the studio throughout the week to check on the status of the vision, provide additional input, and to ensure that the planning team was on the right track. Community drawings from the Hands-on Design Session were placed around the room for new participants to review as they joined the planning process.

In addition to drop-ins to the Open Design Studio, members of the planning team met with key stakeholders and experts in scheduled technical meetings. These meetings included sessions focused on transportation, housing, energy, environment, economic development, cultural arts, and meetings with representatives from the local jurisdictions, Michigan State University, the Corridor Improvement Authority, property owners and developers. The technical meetings served to shape the detailed elements of the vision and ensured that the ideas being proposed were feasible and shared by many parties.



© 2013 Matt Radick



© 2013 Matt Radick

top: Hands-on Design at the Opening Event

middle: Vision Charrette Opening Event

bottom: Pattengill Middle School Design Session



On Sunday afternoon (May 5th), an Open House event was held at the studio. The planning team stopped drawing for a couple of hours, and pinned their draft work up for the community to review. A summary of input from the Opening Session was displayed. Members of the planning team were available to answer questions and gather feedback on the drawings and concepts in-progress.

Pattengill Middle School Design Session

On May 3rd, members of the planning team conducted a Hands-on Design Session at Pattengill Middle School. The team explained the benefits of planning, and worked with the fifth-grade class to draw their ideas for improvements on the blocks surrounding their school site (located in the corridor). The student drawings included new parks and open spaces, street trees, sustainable energy (solar panels), infill and preservation of neighborhood housing, and new development with retail stores the students felt were needed in the area. As was done at the Charrette Opening, the student groups presented their work to each other so everyone could hear all of the ideas.



Work-in-Progress Presentation

On May 7th, community members gathered at the East Lansing Hannah Community Center for the conclusion of the Vision Charrette, the Work-in-Progress Presentation. Victor Dover of Dover, Kohl & Partners began the evening's presentation with a summary of charrette events. He then presented the draft "vision cornerstones" formulated over the week, which are the "big ideas" to guide future change and growth. Moving along the corridor, photos and diagrams showed concepts for infill, preservation and redevelopment in specific segments of the corridor. "Before and after" illustrations helped attendees to envision the ideas discussed.



During the presentation, the group would break for keypad polling questions; this interactive polling method helped the planning team to get an initial sense on how the concepts were received by those in attendance. An exit survey was also distributed to gauge response to the ideas presented. Victor Dover concluded the Work-in-Progress Presentation by reminding attendees that the work presented was a draft, and that community members must continue to offer input on the vision, and participate in the second charrette in the Fall to explore the concepts in greater detail.

top: Technical Meetings at the Design Studio

middle: Open House at the Design Studio

bottom: Work-in-Progress Presentation

community input: vision

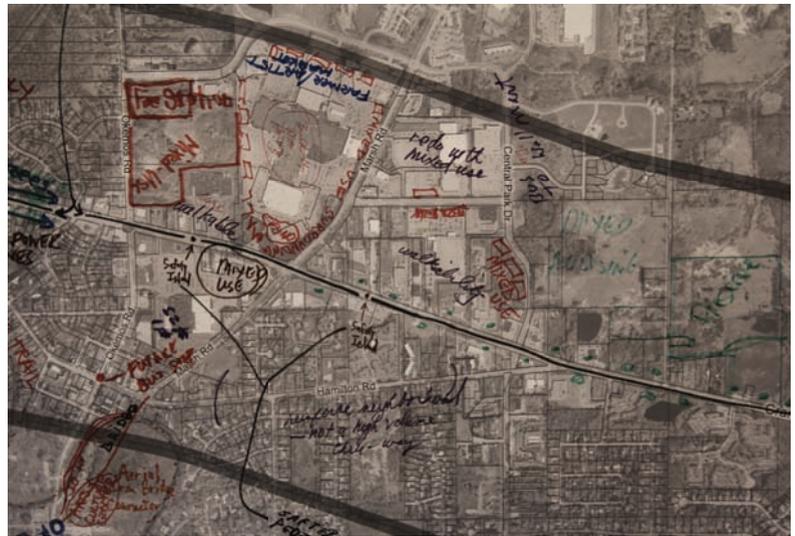
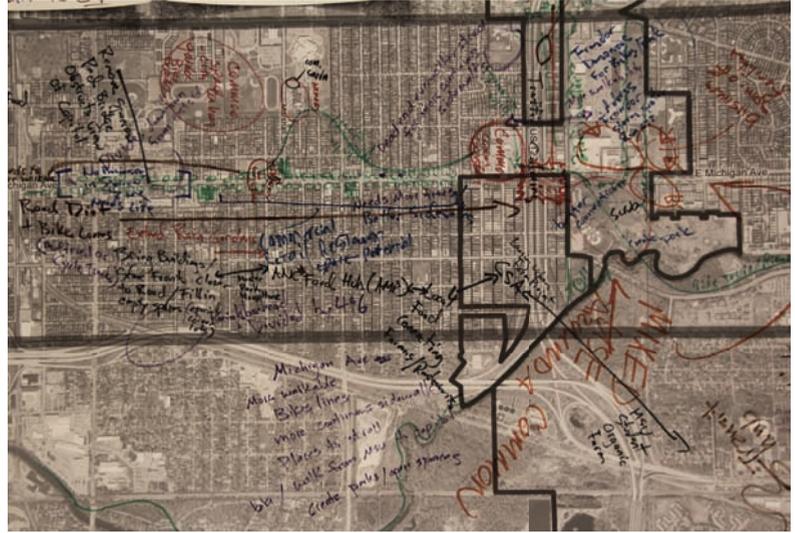
Vision Charrette Hands-on Design Session

At the Vision Charrette Hands-on Design Session, facilitators led participants through a series of design exercises to document their ideas for the future of the corridor.

Each table started with a map of the entire 19-mile corridor. Topics of discussion included ideas for future development character/ preservation/ open spaces for various segments of the corridor; identifying areas the design team should focus on during the charrette week; and identifying problem areas, or areas that are examples of a positive development form that could be emulated in other parts of the corridor.

The table participants then moved on to a second map focusing on a specific segment of the corridor (east, central, and west). Conversation continued as participants described and illustrated ideas for future improvements, desired uses, pedestrian and bicycle facility improvements, open spaces and trail connections, and the desired form for new development.

At right are examples of the maps created; although not great works of art, these maps are packed with information, and were used to guide the planning team in generating the vision cornerstones. A summary of the ideas participants found most exciting following the presentation of each table's work can be found on page 2.8.



top: Western Corridor Map, including Lansing and East Lansing

middle: Central Corridor Map, including Meridian Township

bottom: Eastern Corridor Map, including Williamston and Webberville

facing page: Input cards distributed at the Hands-on Session capture a snapshot of participants initial thoughts.

Suggestions, Ideas, Priorities...

(input cards received from participants at hands-on design workshop on May 1, 2013)

THE #1 PRIORITY to improve & strengthen the corridor:

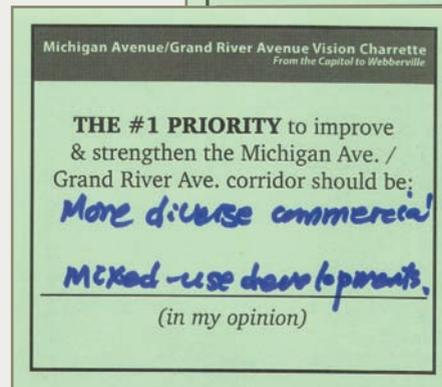
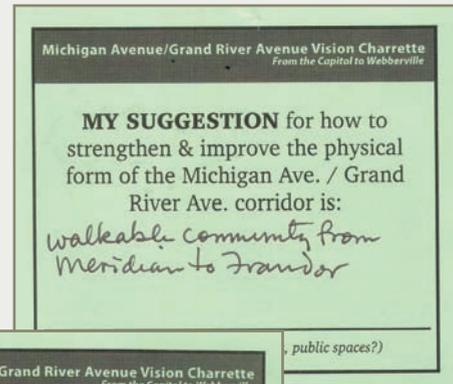
- Become safe and welcoming to pedestrians and bicyclists end to end
- Meridian Township – it is sorely lacking any sense of place
- Aesthetically pleasing, smart growth – informed infill to reign in sprawl and provide more connectivity along the streetscape (code, incentives?)
- Path from 127 / Frandor to MSU needs to be cool
- Trees between street and sidewalk to improve walkability
- Give State Capitol employees and Sparrow employees attractive ways to live, shop, and have fun, in the corridor, without driving
- Connect MSU / East Lansing with Lansing
- Anchor the corridor and transit at a new mixed use center in the Meridian region
- Universal appeal to all walks of life
- Complete streets / mixed-use / walkability / sense of place
- More diverse commercial mixed-use development

ONE IDEA the planning team should explore this week:

- How to improve streetscapes along the corridor
- Buffered bike lanes / cycle tracks along the Michigan Ave corridor from Capitol eastward
- Make it tree-lined for more of a pedestrian scale and calming environment, more green spots
- Unified corridor design
- Less parking
- Disc golf course on the Red Cedar course – place for young professionals and would help with flooding
- Bus stop improvements
- In urban zone – a series of commons – open space with surrounding high density use
- Government policy needs to be sympathetic to urban redevelopment and small business; this should include brownfields & permitting
- Create a sense of entry and place between Fairview/Foster and the former Silver Dollar area, a strong sense of a gateway / arrival
- Ensure development is concentrated and not just continued low density sprawl
- Mix housing types
- Generating a transportation loop between multi-modal stations, Frandor, MSU, etc. with connecting feeders south and west
- Old Barnes and Noble should be a local grocery store... Trader Joe's
- First do no harm! Existing neighborhoods should not be damaged by tall buildings blocking views, there is plenty of redevelopment space in blighted areas
- All non-motorized users needs within the corridor
- Entrances to cities / townships should be no more than simple signs. Show off your hometown pride
- What would community be like if we did not grow. Less growth, less consumption – one that takes care of itself with the current resources and uses them wisely
- A tram or subway
- Make parking free on weekends like Lansing does; the City of East Lansing hurts enough when students leave over the summer
- Refuge stations for peds mid-block in center of Grand River
- Need some nodes – public gathering spaces / plazas every so often along the corridor
- Incremental economic development / tactical urbanism

MY SUGGESTION for how to strengthen & improve the physical form of the corridor:

- Walkable community from Meridian to Frandor
- Beautification – trees, islands, etc. on south side of Grand River, Marsh Road east
- Use principles of universal design



A few years from now, I WOULD HOPE TO SEE the following in the corridor:

- Bus rapid transit
- River trail all the way to Lake Lansing
- Vastly improved non-motorized facilities
- Improved sidewalk / streetscape
- More dining / leisure options
- Higher quality / better buildings
- A degree of connectivity and connectedness, thoughtful redevelopment as the antidote to haphazard sprawl
- Sidewalks with more trees / cute street lamps
- Beautiful storefronts
- Free flowing traffic through East Lansing
- Enhanced tree-scaping and boulevards
- Sustainable community with focus on urban agriculture and renewable energy
- Sidewalks, trees, friendlier environments

What PLACES that you visited have an image, character, or sense of place that could be a model for future development in the corridor:

4th Street in Cleveland • Downtown Indy • Boylston Street, Boston • Grand Rapids riverfront • The Gulch, Nashville, TN • California • Madison, WI • Bardstown Road, Louisville, KY • South Main, Ann Arbor, MI • Old Woodward / Birmingham, MI • South Kalamazoo Mall Drive / Burdick Street, Kalamazoo MI • Charlottesville, VA • Ann Arbor • Grand Rapids (river utilization!) • Cooly Gardens • Ashville, NC • Francis Park • Williamston, Mason, Holland (MI) • Marquette • North Street / Western Street in Brighton & Hove, England • Sparrow professional building • Stadium District • Denver • Seattle • Minneapolis • Savannah • Portland • Goetsch Winkler House, Okemos • Busch Gardens Williamsburg • Istanbul, Turkey

Of the many IDEAS you heard, which ones are most exciting to you?

(responses from participants at hands-on design workshop on May 1, 2013; all responses were grouped into categories. The word cloud at right illustrates those ideas voiced most often.)

Architectural Character

- Attention to architecture, wide sidewalks & gathering places, less road
- Brownstones, black iron fencing, keep street parking

Attractive Parking

- Attractive multifamily parking

Changing Density

- Rolling development throughout Lansing to Webberville; increase density locations, housing, businesses
- Increased density, mixed-use
- Changing density patterns – adding balance, diversity
- Higher Density Development
- Connecting Lansing (old town) and East Lansing with greater density of residential and commercial

Changing Regulations

- Form-based code for entire LEAP region
- Smaller signage (removing billboards)

Code Enforcement

- More code enforcement
- Code enforcement on businesses
- East Lansing town/gown issues: density, code enforcement, etc.

Comprehensive Plan

- A comprehensive plan for the region. Nice to hear emphasis on natural, resources and outdoor spaces.

Complete Streets

- Complete streets
- Bury utilities, more greenspace and connected walkable spaces for kids, adults, families, elders.... Complete streets!

Connected Trails

- Extend and connect bike trails/lanes puts pedestrians and cyclists on a level footing with drivers instead of relegating the major trails to a floodplain that is often impassable
- Complete the trails system
- Trail system across region/corridor
- Area-wide connectivity thru trails
- Increase trail connectivity in the region and use the rivers

Connectivity

- Connect neighborhoods/service (doing so with more pathways and non-motorized opportunities)
- Transportation loop
- Connecting feeders from north to south
- Connection between areas
- Connectivity

Culture

- Cultural emphasis (arts/music/entertainment)
- Promote all walks of life

Economic Development

- More focus on arts and culture as economic development tool

Gateways

- Really announce entries into new cities or townships

Greener, Tree-lined Streets

- Tree-lined
- Tree-lined streets, road diet boulevards, utilizing Red Cedar for trails bike/walk
- Densification with tree-lined corridor
- Treescaping, capitalizing on our natural resources, landscaping seem most “doable” in the present.
- More trees
- Make it beautiful!
- More trees
- Greener
- “Greening of the corridor”
- More landscape considerations throughout the corridor
- Like the idea of greening the corridor, tree canopy
- Creating easy / people friendly walkable places, creating nice sidewalks by shopping plazas and adding street lamps and greenery
- I liked the ideas of prettying up the corridor and making it inviting
- Tree canopy along entire corridor and plantscaping and greenspace
- Greening the corridor – street trees, green/living buildings with green roofs and walls, parks, food gardens

High-Quality Public Spaces

- Focus around the river in the corridor that enhances public spaces
- Common spaces for families, youth, elderly
- Public gathering spaces in the corridor
- Enhance natural features
- More farmers markets, public gathering spaces, widen sidewalks for use by cafes
- Large fountains around downtown
- Green space, pocket parks, connect trails
- Red Cedar area as a natural highlight / feature
- Red Cedar development for recreation

Jobs & Business

- Concentrate commerce
- Diversification of businesses and designation of density hubs
- I am having trouble entertaining most of these ideas because there’s no business plan attached to the ideas. It takes money to beautify, where does it come from? Job growth / attracting higher wage office users to increase tax base.

Keep Rural Character

- Keep the rural character between Meridan and Williamston

Keep the Mall

- The mall is a popular spot for adolescents my age.

Meridian Mall Town Center

- Make Meridian Mall multi-use – two storied – downtown like, canopy of trees!
- Creative redevelopment at Meridian Mall
- Changes in Meridian Township – eliminating vacant big box stores, greening parking lots, repurpose Meridian Mall

Michigan Ave Main Street

- Improving Michigan Ave from Sparrow to Frandor – housing, retail, restaurants
- Between downtown/127: closer storefronts, more cohesive, light posts
- Creating a vibrant life / corridor along Michigan Ave – neighborhoods, quality housing, strong code enforcement, owner occupancy



Mixed-use, Mixed Housing

- Concentrated mixed-use, mixed housing types along the corridor
- Multi-use, multi-ages
- Mixed-use development
- More mixed-use developments along the corridor
- Mixed-use

Optimize the Rivers

- Make Red Cedar River a focal point
- Optimization of the river
- Accentuate the rivers (Grand & Red Cedar)
- Optimize the River
- Rivers as connectors
- Enhancing the river front along the border of East Lansing
- Use of Red Cedar River / riverfront as a feature to attract development
- Red Cedar River focus for development

Protect Farmland

- Protecting farmland

Rethink Frandor / 127

- Make Frandor multiuse, making Frandor a welcome to city
- Rework Frandor area
- 127 as a gateway
- Frandor walkable under 127
- Gateway area at 127
- Aesthetics along 127: greener, more attractive intro to the city
- Frandor transform to more of a town center
- Frandor as a gateway
- Gateway at 127/Frandor
- Redevelop Frandor as urban mixed-use center
- Redeveloping Frandor to be sustainable
- Improving Frandor area
- US 127 overpass – redesign it
- Gateway at 127
- Developing a “gateway to Lansing / East Lansing” area off 127
- Start with Frandor: this should be a welcoming area
- Make Frandor into more of an urban development
- Re-designing Frandor area
- No one likes Frandor
- Address “deserts” and barrier areas like area around 127 and Frandor/ Meridian Mall areas – making them destinations that emphasize their positive aspects

Rethink Retail

- Better shopping
- Less fast food

Sense of Place

- Mixed-use with a center for arts and culture creating a sense of place in Okemos on vacant property @ Okemos Road and Mt Hope
- Specific areas with a sense of place
- Design for sense of place
- Sense of place
- Create a greater sense of place for Lansing Township area especially between Fairview and 127, and 127 to MSU Brody/Harrison

Strategic Infill

- Fill in the missing teeth
- Less parking lots and more density

String of Pearls

- “String of pearls” centers interspersed with lower density
- “String of pearls” – improve Frandor and Meridian Mall, East Lansing CBD
- Defined neighborhoods (stadium district, midtown, etc)
- Neighborhood nodes
- Focus on nodes of development, more mixed-use and higher density interspersed with agriculture and green space
- String of pearls: each area to shine, unique
- Build up around nodes
- Develop a consistent “style” vision with a cohesive theme but emphasizing the “string of pearls” concept with distinct “downtown/ town center” feels to distinct neighborhoods and cultural areas

Sustainable Design / Energy

- Incentives for LEED-ND development, CSAs
- CSAs, better farmers markets, rain gardens
- Sustainable growth
- Re-use of asphalt parking
- Friendlier regulations to cottage industries and renewable energy production
- Building energy efficient / sustainable as close to zero carbon use as possible

Transit

- Increase public transit options; faster, more frequent buses to points of interest; make buses easier to use with better schedules (ie gps tracking, smartphone app)
- Transit connectivity
- Transit center at Meridian Mall
- Multi-modal station near Frandor with bike, trails, bike lockers
- Reviving rail corridors
- Design, revive rail corridor at Hobby Lobby
- Connect, link transit hubs
- BRT to cut down Frandor and campus traffic and to connect East Lansing to Lansing
- Focus on multi-modal transit (slower traffic / road diets)
- Connect transit hubs (CTC, Frandor, MSU, Amtrack multi-modal center)

Walkable & Bikeable

- Better height to width ratio in downtown Okemos
- Better pedestrian access from neighborhoods
- Bridging the gaps, improving walkability, bike-ability
- Improve safety for cyclists and pedestrians
- Improve/create a non-motorized path across 127. Lake Lansing, Saginaw, and Michigan are not safe, less inviting to non-motorized users
- Non-motorized accommodations
- Walkability
- Connectivity: walkability, bike paths, improving river use
- Increase/connect non-motorized network
- In City of Lansing building near street with parking behind / human scale streetscapes
- Walkability – bringing it to the corridor.
- Bikeability
- Pedestrian connectivity – trails, sidewalk enhancements
- Walkable, bikeable, completely re-do Michigan Ave
- Pedestrian and bike-friendly
- Maintain existing infrastructure especially sidewalks & parks

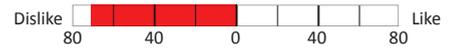
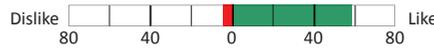
Community Image Survey Results

Participants at the Hands-on Design Session were asked to place red and green dots next to a series of images; green dots meant participants liked the image, red dots meant they did not like the image. The intent of the exercise was to start a dialogue about physical design elements participants would prefer to see and that were appropriate for the corridor. Results have been paired to highlight contrasting opinions on varying building typologies.

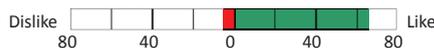
© 2013 Matt Radick



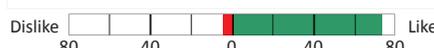
RETAIL / MIXED USE BUILDINGS



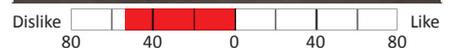
RETAIL / MIXED USE BUILDINGS



APARTMENT BUILDINGS



TOWNHOUSE

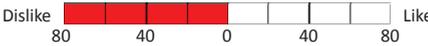
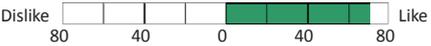




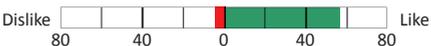
SMALL SINGLE FAMILY HOUSE



LARGE SINGLE FAMILY HOUSE



STREETSCAPE



CIVIC BUILDINGS

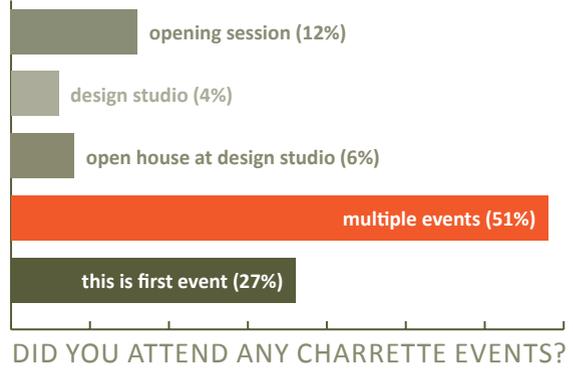


CIVIC BUILDINGS

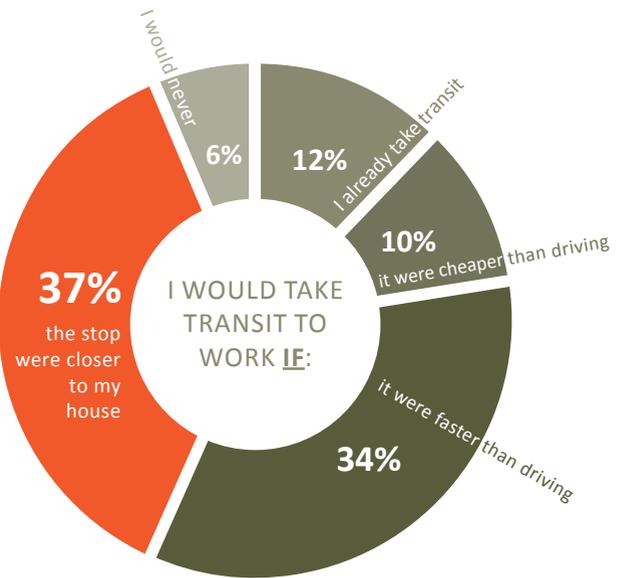
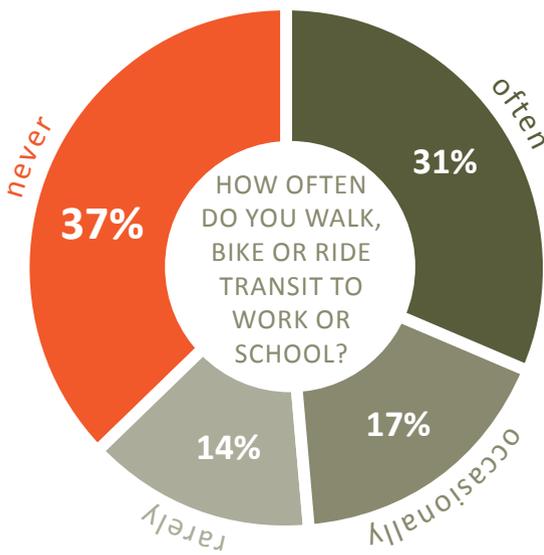
Vision Charrette

Keypad Polling Results

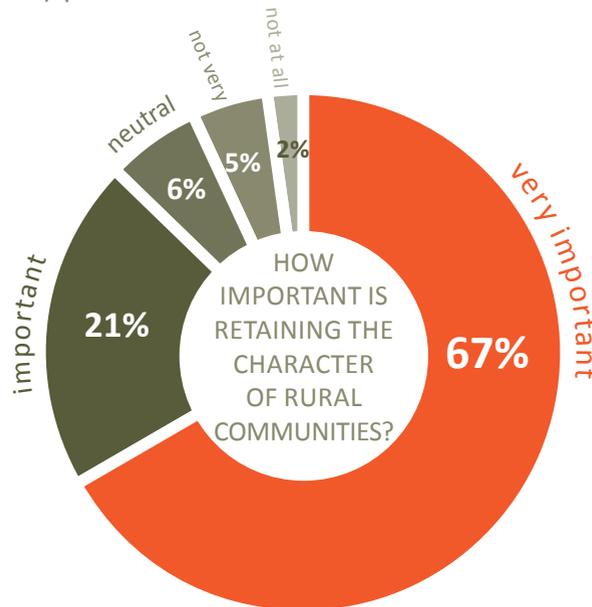
(responses from participants at work-in-progress presentation on May 7, 2014)



Using Transit:



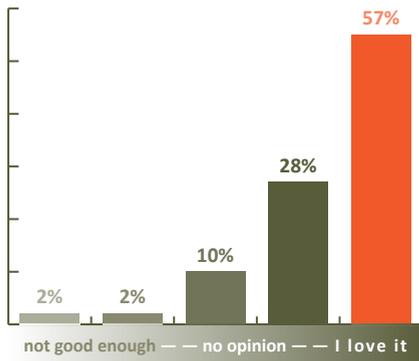
Rural Communities:



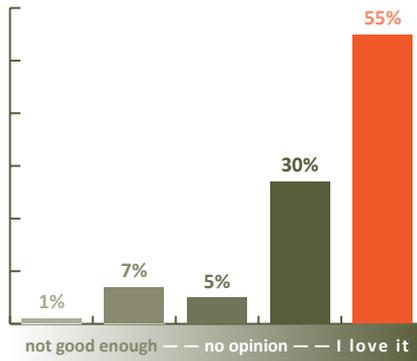
A Good Model for the Future?



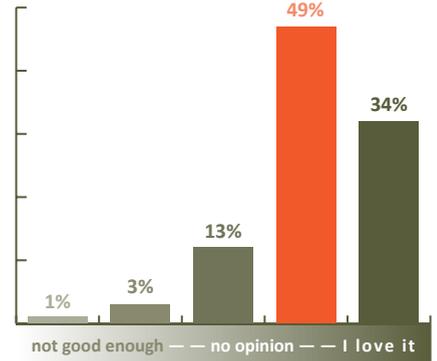
DID YOU LIKE THIS IDEA FOR M-43 IN **RESIDENTIAL SEGMENTS** IN WILLIAMSTON?



IS THIS A GOOD MODEL FOR THE FUTURE **RETROFIT OF CENTERS** ALONG THE CORRIDOR?



IS THIS A GOOD MODEL FOR FUTURE **INFILL** ALONG THE CORRIDOR?



design charrette: October 2013

On October 22 - 30, 2013, the planning team returned to Lansing for a second charrette, to apply the draft vision concepts and work on detailed design for three areas: Sparrow Hospital and its surrounding neighborhoods; the Frandor area; and the Meridian Center area (near the intersection of Grand River Avenue with Marsh Road).

During this Charrette, separate Hands-on Design and Open House review sessions were conducted to explore and review urban design concepts for the Lansing Area sites and the Meridian Area site (see pages 2.16 and 2.22).

The team consolidated the input received and refined design concepts at an Open Design Studio on Grand River Avenue in East Lansing, October 23 - 29. Plan drawings and photo-realistic visualizations were created to illustrate the design ideas. A series of technical sessions were scheduled at the studio to review the work-in-progress. These included sessions with stakeholders from each of the focus areas and representatives from each municipality, as well as with experts on the topics of transportation, economic development, housing, water, conservation, and planning.

A Design Session was conducted with seventh and eighth graders at Chippewa Middle School on the afternoon of October 24th. The students were given a brief explanation of how they could benefit from coherent planning. The team worked with the tables to draw their ideas for improving the area around the school and Old Town Okemos. The student drawings included restoration of Red Cedar River for canoe/kayak activities, new parks, trails along the river, wider sidewalks with more crosswalks, and new development in Old Town Okemos with stores the students felt were needed in the area. Afterward, the students individually explained their table's big ideas to the rest of the room.

On the evening of October 30th, community members gathered again at the East Lansing Hannah Community Center for a Work-in-Progress Presentation. Bill Lenertz of the National Charrette Institute and Victor Dover of Dover, Kohl & Partners led the session, which included a review of drawings and ideas for each study area, as well as keypad polling and 60-second "shout-out" sessions to gather input from participants on the ideas discussed.



top: Working at the Open Design Studio

middle: Design Session at Chippewa Middle School

bottom: Work-in-Progress Presentation

right: Hands-on Design Session, Lansing Area

MARKET
A BIG FUSS
ood!"
AlsoMarketPlace.org



community input: design details

Lansing Area Hands-on Design & Open House

On October 22, a Hands-on Design Session was conducted at the Allen Market Place to work on design details for the two Lansing focus areas: the Sparrow area and the Frandor area.

The event began with an opening presentation that recapped work from the Vision Charrette, and presented the ground rules for the evening's exercises. Participants then worked in groups to discuss urban design concepts for the focus area of their choice. During the first design exercise, participants worked to apply the vision cornerstones to specific streets and properties, drawings and writing ideas for neighborhood character, design features for new buildings, desired public improvements such as street beautification and new open spaces, and where new pedestrian or bicycle facilities are needed.

For the second exercise, participants were given "playing pieces," or stickers showing potential infill or redevelopment building footprints (such as mixed-use building, townhouse, apartment, etc.) at the same scale as the base map. The number of playing pieces approximated anticipated market demand for new development in the near term (0-5 years); additional black-and-white pieces were also provided to show further potential growth and change. Participants were asked to arrange the playing pieces on the map to show one way their table's vision could be applied in short-term, and grow to be more complete in the long term.

At the end of the design exercises, each table presented their work to the entire assembly. The planning team took notes; common ideas among multiple tables started to become evident.

On October 27, an Open House was held at the Allen Market Place to review the work-in-progress and gather additional feedback. Draft illustrative plans and illustrations were pinned up around the room; in addition, a summary of input from exit surveys and "one word" cards received at the Hands-on Session was also displayed. This information is also summarized on the following pages.



top: Participants at the Hands-on Design Session

middle: Arranging "playing pieces" to visualize the table's vision

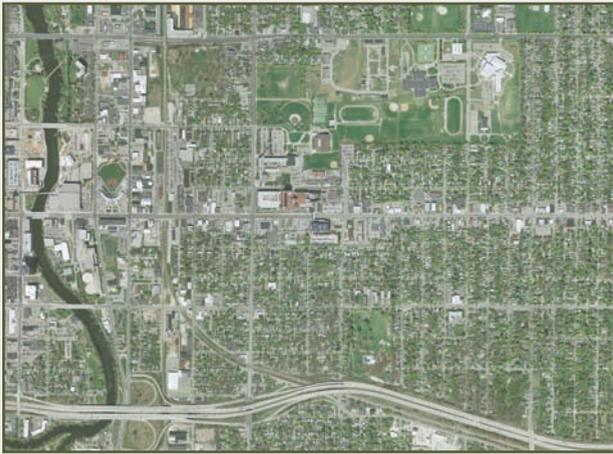
bottom: Presenting the work completed at table design sessions

Naming the Focus Areas

At the Lansing Hands-on Session, there were comments regarding the “name” of each focus area. Participants felt that “Sparrow” and “Frاندor” did not accurately capture the entire neighborhood studied. At the Open House, participants were asked to help come up with a name for each area. Below is a summary of ideas provided by attendees, with the most popular at the top.



© 2013 Matt Radick



Eastern / Eastside District

Medical District

Lantown

Spandor

Uptown

Lansing East Village

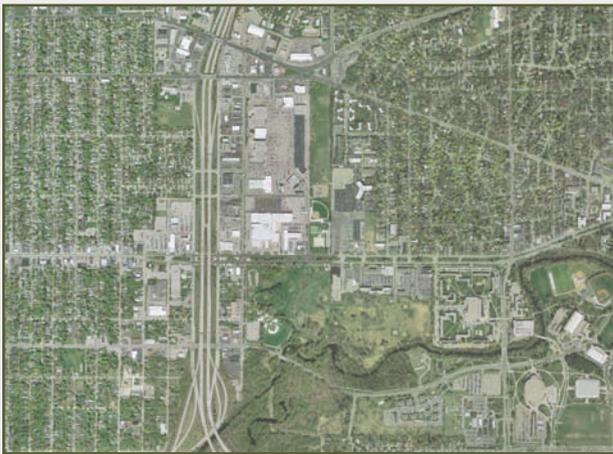
Sparrow District

Non-Profit District

West Central / East Side

Michigan / Penn District

Health District



Red Cedar/Frandor District

River Trail District

The Void

Frاندor Area

Gateway

Green Mile Gateway

Crossroad

Watershed District

Sciurus Park

Magic District

Midtown

ONE WORD that comes to mind about the SPARROW AREA

(responses from participants at hands-on design workshop on October 22, 2013)

NOW:



IN THE FUTURE:



ONE WORD that comes to mind about the FRANDOR AREA

(responses from participants at hands-on design workshop on October 22, 2013)

NOW:



IN THE FUTURE:



Of the many ideas suggested, what is most

(responses from participants at hands-on design workshop on October 22, 2013, ranked by participants at the Lansing area open house on October 27, 2013)

Create Quality Open Spaces

- **Preserve and increase green spaces**
- **Community gardens, farmers markets**
- **Saving Red Cedar Green Space**
- **Repurpose parkland in Frandor & Red Cedar**
- **Preserving natural areas**
- **Green Space**
- **Green space, save the river**
- Use green space for parks, playground, music gathering
- Recreational areas
- Preserve a large area of the open space at Red Cedar, like Central Park
- Pocket parks next to Sparrow
- City parks near freeway buffer residential
- Gray infrastructure with a lot of adjacent green
- Maximize view of park on east side of Frandor
- Green space in the light industrial area SW of Frandor
- Expand campus to Red Cedar golf course

Beautify

- **Beautification project – make trees, flowers, street lights**
- More plantings – trees, rain gardens
- Make the area from Frandor to Sparrow visually appealing
- Widen sidewalks – Mich Ave, Streetscapes, Facades, etc
- Bury wires if possible
- Beautify East Michigan

House a Diverse Population

- **Keep professionals here**
- **Multigenerational – welcome young families and seniors**
- **Housing mixes students, young adults, families, retirees**
- **Residential at Frandor**
- **Too much student housing**
- More affordable housing downtown
- Affordable multi-unit low income family housing
- Accessible housing or seniors
- Add housing, amenities in Frandor

Preserve & Create Sense of Place: Quality Streets, Buildings, Neighborhoods

- **Fixing Mich Ave 2000 east to Frandor**
- **Ethnically diverse dining options, sustainable food from urban gardens**
- **Michigan Ave is a second downtown w/ vibrant night life, entertainment, restaurants**
- **Create a new village at Frandor**
- Urbanize Frandor & Sparrow and have a Michigan Ave that supports a vibrant night life and entertainment scene
- Preserve diverse, older buildings and architecture
- Reuse Eastern High School
- Nodes of mixed-use along Michigan Ave
- New street system in Frandor
- Multi-use development TOD
- Mixed use around Sparrow
- Improve properties on Penn. Ave
- Improvements between 496 and Sparrow on Penn. Ave.
- Diversity of architecture on Michigan Ave
- Fun, safe, comfortable Michigan Ave crossing at Frandor/ Red Cedar Area
- Fill in spaces with green / walk friendly / diverse mixed-use
- Creating a Frandor Village from Saginaw to the river
- Create iconic buildings (or at a minimum signs) to give people a greater sense of place
- Small stores
- Residential village at Frandor
- Frandor village to the river
- North-South Boulevard central to Frandor
- Create a complete neighborhood about Sparrow
- Preserving the historic area where is old Downtown Lansing
- Explore preservation of Eastern HS
- Rebrand the Avenue
- Diverse shopping options on West Side for daily needs
- Consider children's needs

Create Gateways, Connections

- **Joining East Lansing / Frandor / Lansing**
- **Add interest, character and depth to Frandor to be a bridge between 2 cities**
- Beautiful welcome center
- Need for Gateway – sense of arrival into East Lansing
- Connect East Side to West Side
- Welcome into Frandor not a barrier to Michigan Ave
- Focus on Michigan – 127 area and Sparrow

useful to achieve YOUR vision?

Improve Transportation Options: Transit, Walking, Biking

Better walk / bike flow into Frandor

- Connecting downtown Lansing with neighborhoods through bike lanes
- Bike paths
- Improve walkability
- BRT supports a vibrant Michigan Avenue
- Multimodal Transportation & Transit / BRT
- Add walkable / bikeable paths from Frandor to Eastside
- Walkability
- Make Michigan Avenue multi-modal
- Supported by BRT, restaurants throughout this area should thrive
- Alternative transportation options
- Bike lanes
- Non-motorized walkable, bikeable transportation corridors
- Non-car corridor – connect Frandor to Sparrow on the north side
- Bike, public transport, zipcars – consider vehicle-free blocks
- More walking / biking routes / lanes, paths
- Mobility
- Bike friendly, bike lanes on the Avenue
- Safe, comfortable biking w/ buffer between cars, not shared lane
- Multimodal transportation options
- Connections between Frandor, East Side and River
- Improve non-motorized transportation
- Expand sidewalks

Improve Access

- Improve entrance to Michigan Ave off 127
- Re-work of Saginaw / Grand River intersection, put traffic under, parks on top
- Under/overpass at Frandor – route main traffic under
- Transforming traffic flow at junction if Grand River / Saginaw through
- Engineering of traffic flow and under passes
- Redesign of Saginaw
- Redesign Saginaw / Grand River at Frandor over/ under pass

Grow More Densely in the Right Places

- More dense area with a mix of commercial, retail, residential
- Build-up Frandor – add apartments on top of shops
- Higher Density on Main Street
- Increased Density in close proximity to Frandor
- Each neighborhood should have a unique and appropriate density
- Varied height development from two to 8 stories
- Lower Density in balance with High Density plus green space
- Densify Michigan Ave
- More density on Michigan Avenue
- Highest density on Michigan Ave at Frandor
- Diversity of housing types and density
- High density not appropriate for Frandor area
- Height & Density along the corridor
- Urbanize Frandor and Sparrow

Promote Sustainable Development

- Green roofs
- Green infrastructure
- Water filtration in Frandor/ Red Cedar District
- Energy efficient architecture : green roofs, straw bale houses, passive solar.....
- Diversity of green landscape

Other Ideas:

- Invite Visitors (give them something to come for)
- Mixed-use on South Clemens
- “People-mover” type transportation connecting EL / Lansing / Sparrow
- Make Downtown Lansing a place (Theater, Grocery Stores, Boutiques - more than just lunch for State workers)
- Ban billboards
- Tourism as industry
- Pedestrian Priority over car priority
- Cell-charging station in the public
- Make some commercial associations (take ownership)

Meridian Area Hands-on Design & Open House

On October 24, a Hands-on Design Session was conducted at Chippewa Middle School to work on design details for the Meridian Center focus area (generally, Meridian Township along the Grand River Avenue corridor, focused between the intersections of Grand River Avenue with Marsh Road and Okemos Road).

The event began with an opening presentation that recapped work from the Vision Charrette; keypad polling was used to begin to gather input regarding desired building form and neighborhood design features. Participants then worked in groups to discuss urban design concepts for the Meridian Center area.

The focus of the first exercise was to identify and design a transit village. Meridian Center is planned to be the end of the line for the bus-rapid transit system (or as referred to by residents in Meridian Township, the start of the line). However, the exact location of the station and park-and-ride has not been chosen. Each group was assigned one of the three general locations (Meridian Mall site, Best Buy site, Meijer site) to focus on first and design as their ideal urban environment. After exploring design options at their assigned location, each table worked on a second location of their choosing for the creation of a transit village.

As done previously for the Lansing focus areas, for the second exercise, participants were given “playing pieces,” or stickers showing potential new building footprints. Participants arranged the playing pieces on the transit village map started in exercise one to show one way their table’s vision could be applied in the near-term (utilizing current market demand), and grow to be more complete in the long-term (when additional new development is viable). At the end of the design exercises, each table presented their work to the entire assembly.

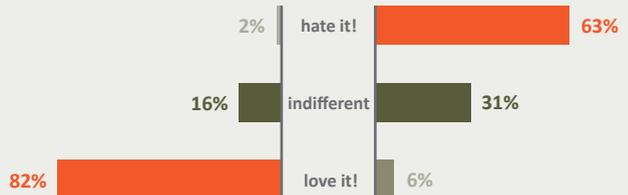
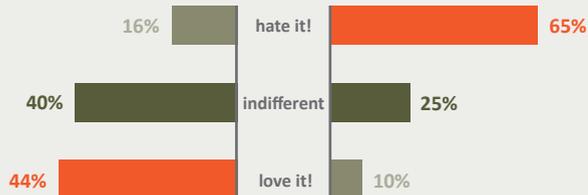
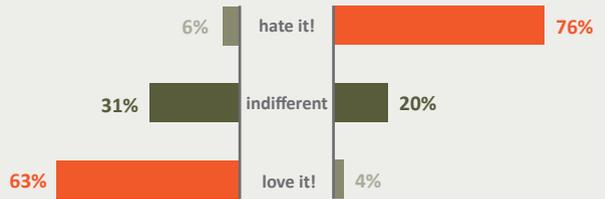
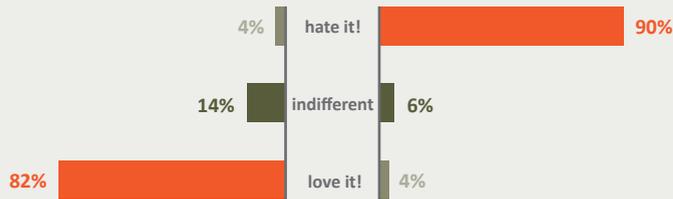
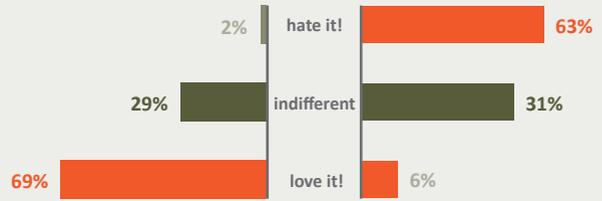
On October 28, an Open House was held at the Meridian Township Hall to review the work-in-progress and gather additional feedback. Draft illustrations were pinned up around the room, and a summary of input from the Hands-on Session was displayed. This information is also summarized on the following pages.



top and middle: Participants at the Hands-on Design Session

bottom: Presenting the work completed at table design sessions

Rating Urban Form: Love It or Hate It



ONE WORD that comes to mind about the Meridian Center

(responses from participants at hands-on design workshop on October 24, 2013)

NOW:



IN THE FUTURE:



IDEAS: What should be explored this week? What is most useful to achieve YOUR VISION?

(responses from participants at the hands-on design workshop on October 24, 2013, and ranked by participants at the Meridian area open house on October 28, 2013)

Improve Transportation Options:

Walking, Biking (not just cars)

- **Smaller blocks = more walkable and less traffic**
- **Safe crossings all along Grand River. Too many pedestrians racing across for their lives – including by railroad bridge to apartments by Park Lake.**
- Accommodate pedestrians and bikes, including crossing Grand River north to south
- Pedestrian crossing midblock like the one just west of Hagadorn on Grand River
- Connecting big boxes with covered walks / walkways

Create Quality Public Resources:

New Parks and Plazas, New Connections to the River Trail

- **Strong connections to Red Cedar river trail**
- **The River needs to be considered**
- **People gravitate to “outdoor rooms”**
- Connect the bus rapid transit to the River and Park – this is a huge asset for the community that’s currently under-utilized
- Open Space
- Create public square between Marsh and Grand River
- Tree lining the parking lots

Utilize BRT: Stimulate New Development Forms, New Connections

- **BRT station – moving to mixed-use development**
- **Connecting Mall to BRT**
- Park & ride to connect BRT with the commercial core and future high density residential along the corridor
- Needs arts and culture and medical around BRT
- Bus Rapid Transit
- Transportation hub as focal point for where people live, learn, work and play
- Mixed-use bus terminal with shops and restaurants
- TOD, mixed-use along all roads, residential square behind
- BRT in and out of the area

Other Ideas (add to the list!)

- **Community energy planning**
- **BRT, Farmers Market, Art & Culture multi-use facility**
- **Utilize parking lots as areas of development**
- **Green Infrastructure for stormwater management**
- This area needs a hotel
- Keeping Meridian Mall central
- Form-based code
- 2-levels at Marsh & Grand River with Roundabout; BRT upper level, Marsh Road lower level; hotel/ conf center in middle of intersection
- Parking ramp is more expensive but it reduces the parking footprint
- LEED and energy efficient / climate sensitive designs
- Be open minded
- All of the team 11 ideas
- Affordable
- The 3 options provides more hope to achieving a vision and solution that works

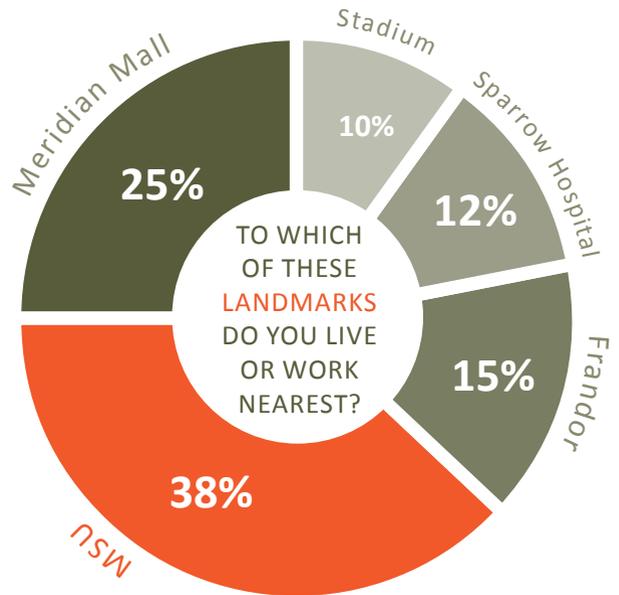
Design Charrette Keypad Polling Results

(responses from participants at work-in-progress presentation on October 30, 2013)

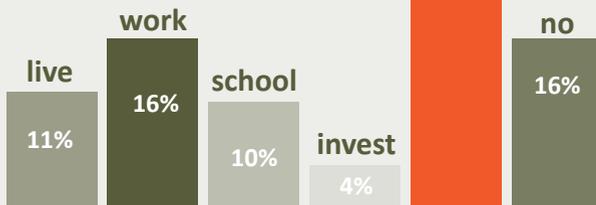
Did you attend the *last* WORK-IN-PROGRESS PRESENTATION IN MAY?

YES 44%

NO 56%



DO YOU LIVE, WORK, GO TO SCHOOL, OR INVEST IN THE NEIGHBORHOODS ALONG THE CORRIDOR?



DO YOU AGREE THAT "WALKABILITY" SHOULD BE A MAJOR THEME OF FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS & DEVELOPMENTS?



YES

95%

NO 5%

YES

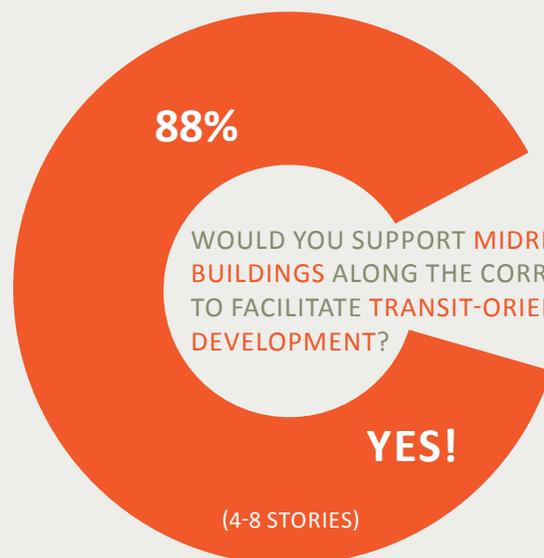
74%

MAYBE

18%

NO 8%

DO YOU THINK A **FORM-BASED CODE** MIGHT FACILITATE GOOD DEVELOPMENT IN YOUR PART OF TOWN?



86%

YES

14%

NO

Does your area have **"LOST SPACE"** (empty lots, under-utilized properties, or vacant space) that could be **FILLED IN** to create walkable, complete neighborhoods?



IF THE **BRT** WERE IN PLACE TODAY, AS ENVISIONED, **WOULD YOU SOMETIMES RIDE IT?**

NO 5%

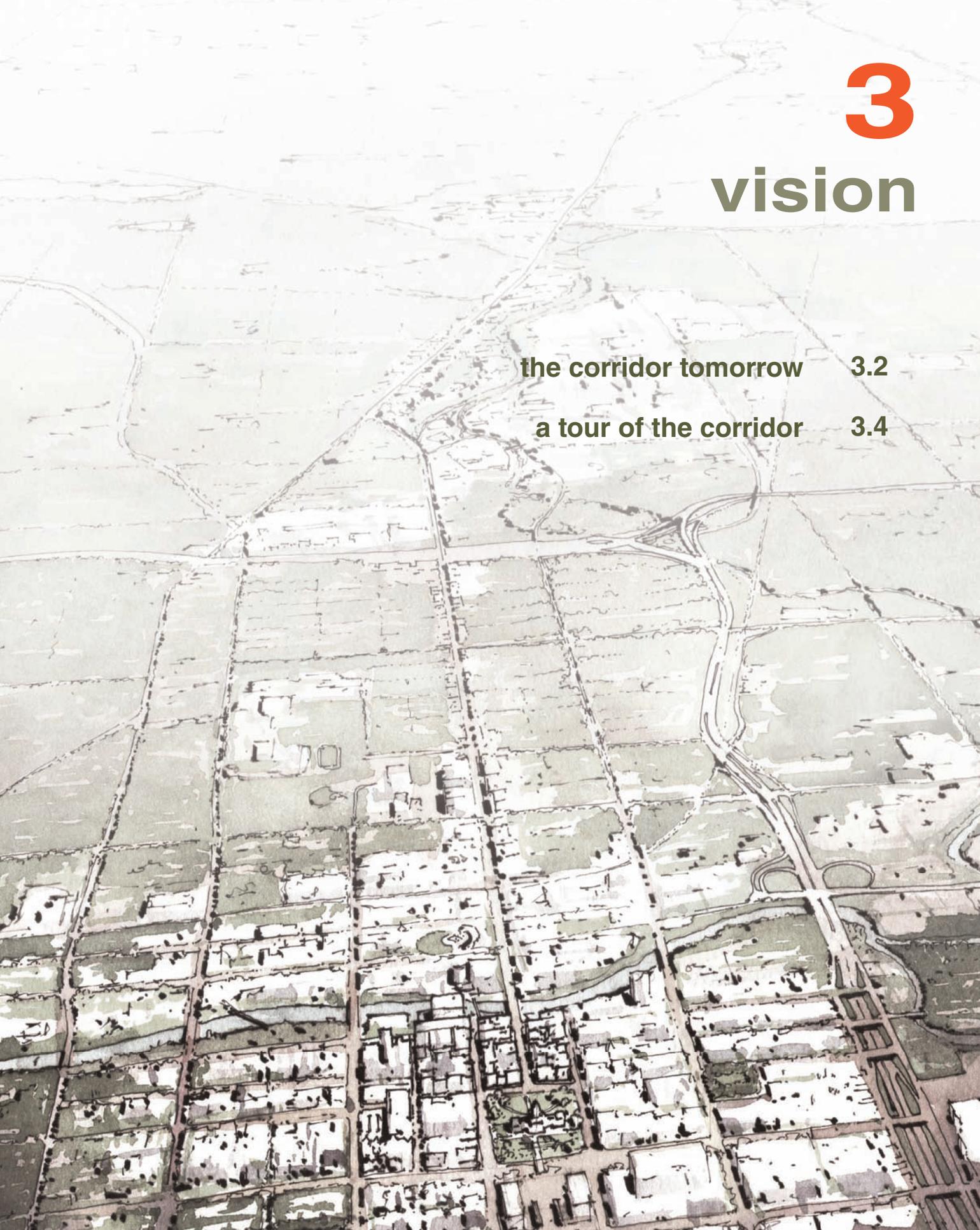
MAYBE

14%

YES

82%





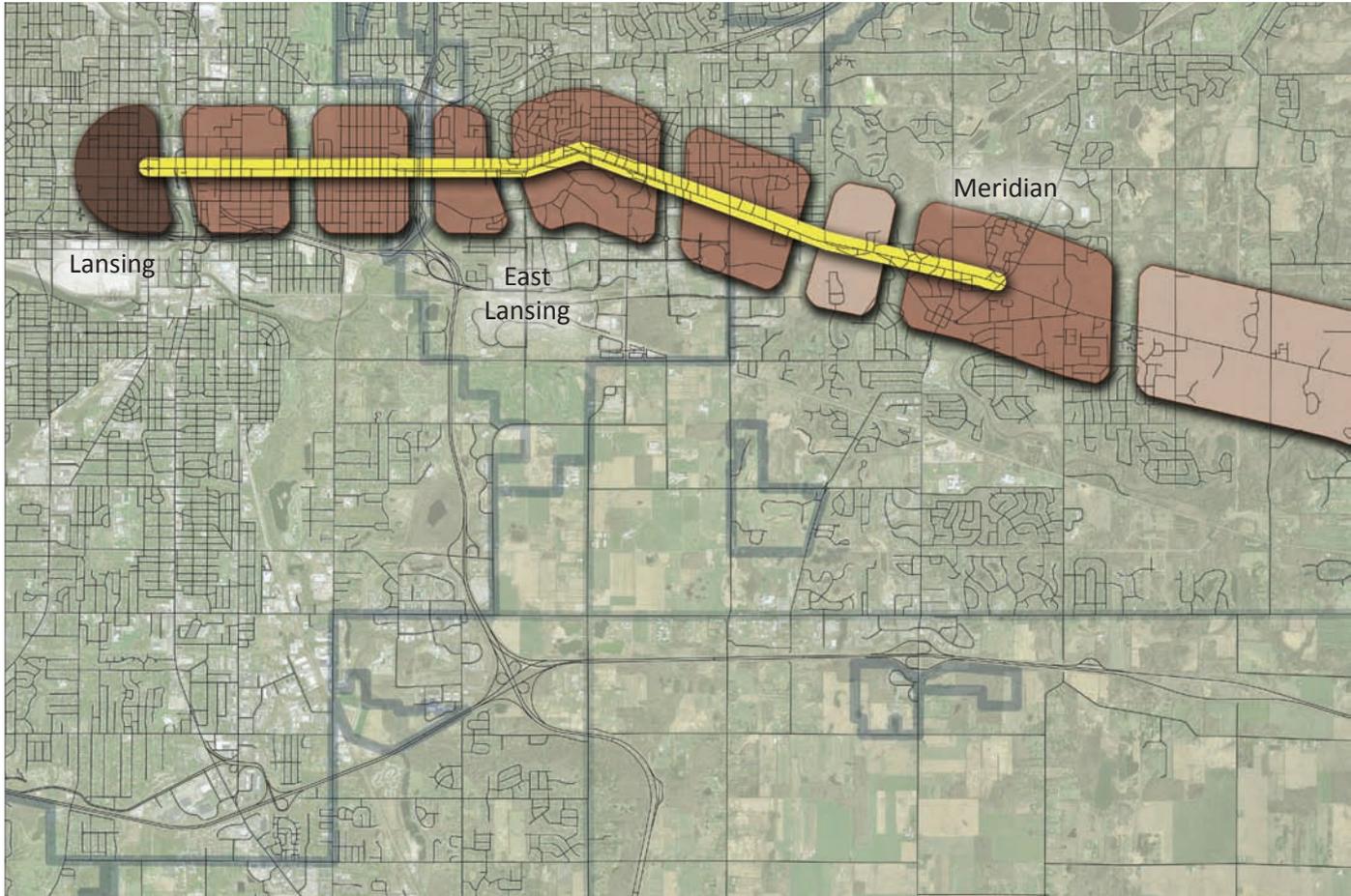
3

vision

the corridor tomorrow 3.2

a tour of the corridor 3.4

the corridor tomorrow: a string of pearls



Vision Cornerstones

During the Vision Charrette, hundreds of participants described how they would like to see the Michigan Avenue / Grand River Avenue corridor evolve through drawings, surveys, and conversations with the planning team. These many ideas were then consolidated into plan "cornerstones", or big ideas to guide future change and growth. Summarized on this page, the application of these "vision cornerstones" along the corridor is described in this chapter.

Restore the balance of transportation & placemaking

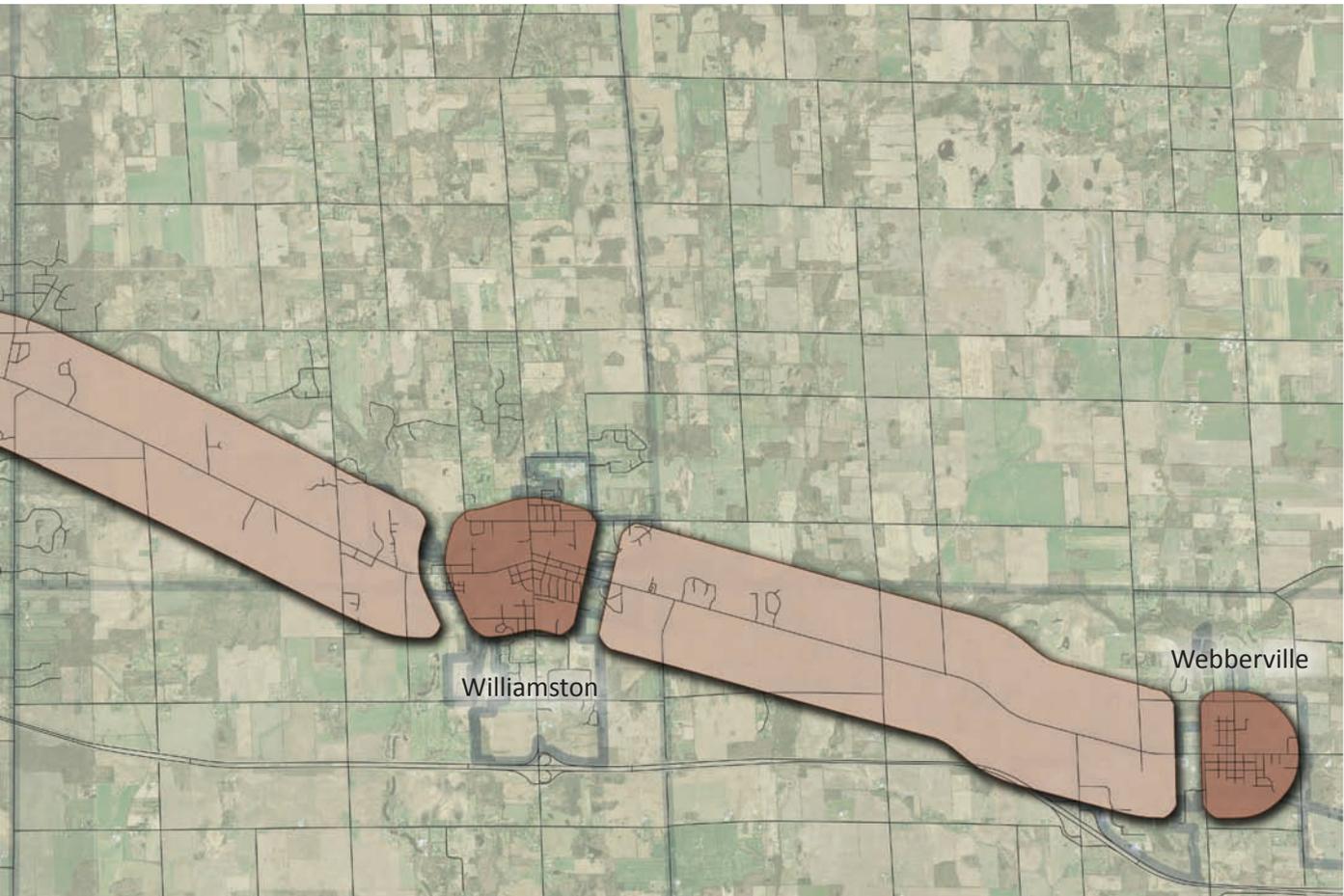
Michigan Avenue / Grand River Avenue is an important corridor for moving people and cars but it also has the dual purpose of providing unique settings for businesses, institutions and homes. The physical design of the corridor should balance transportation functionality with establishing a strong "sense of place" on both public and private property, to create a corridor that is not only functional but also memorable and uniquely Lansing.

Create distinct, character-rich places, linked by transit

In the future, traversing the 19-mile corridor should reveal a sequence of distinct settlements, each with their own character and feel. This "string of pearls", each a gem in its own right, will be linked by an enhanced transit system to make it easy to move from one to the next.

Protect rural views & reinforce historic towns

Along the eastern corridor, the memorable sequence of town-and-country with long views across open fields interrupted by the historic towns of Williamston and Webberville should be protected for future generations; this includes strengthening land preservation policies, focusing new development in strategic locations, and ensuring the character of development is complementary with each town's fabric.



Fill in vacant lots with street-oriented designs

During the charrette, participants spoke about "dead zones" where the vitality and activity of the corridor dropped off, primarily due to vacant lots. When these lots are filled in, the design of buildings should reinforce a "street-oriented" urban form, which includes buildings with doors and windows providing active uses along the street, and parking / service activities located to the rear.

Unlock private investment: smart rules, improvements

Public improvements (such as transit enhancements and street trees / beautification) can give property owners the confidence needed to make additional investments to their own properties. Creating smart rules which prescribe the desired physical form for new development can play a key role in ensuring future improvements follow the community's vision.

Rethink suburban strip into memorable town centers

Strip shopping centers typify the central portion of the corridor. As new options for mobility (walking, biking, and transit) become more prevalent, these generic, auto-oriented uses can be re-imagined as authentic town centers which strengthen the corridor's identity.

Make it all walkable and bikeable by design

The desire to make walking and biking easier and safer was heard often during the charrette week. Every new improvement: to streets, buildings, and public open spaces, should consider walking and biking foremost in the design. Sidewalks and trails, street trees, awnings and other shading devices, on-street parking, and dedicated bicycle facilities should all be part of the mix.

a tour of the corridor

The Capitol to U.S. 127

The segment of Michigan Avenue between the Capitol and U.S. 127 contains a mix of businesses in both historic and non-historic structures. Moving east (away from downtown Lansing) the urban form becomes more residential in character, and includes modest and larger homes.

Planned transit enhancements will upgrade the public streetscape in this portion of the corridor. The vision for private property is for careful infill, adding a more continuous, connected, and complete system of building facades with doors and windows facing the street. New buildings should respect the tradition and pattern for meeting the street already established: main street buildings with shopfronts, and houses with front porches that give a public face to the buildings.

During the charrette week, there was discussion of the “missing middle”. The corridor has many examples of apartment complexes and single family detached housing, but what is missing are the middle types: townhouses and live/work units. These are expected to be desirable to the next generation of home buyers as well as retiring baby boomers, and can fit easily on vacant lot sizes found fronting the corridor.

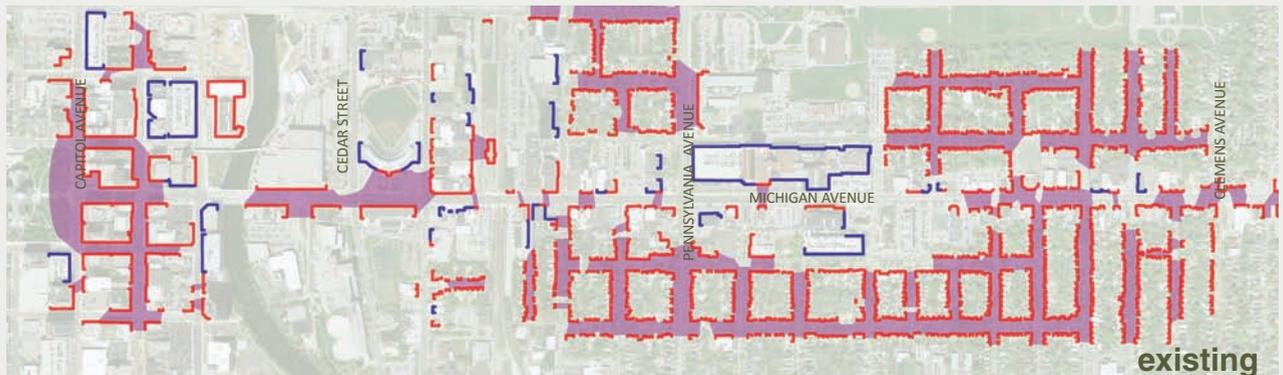
Stimulating new investment from the private sector requires a reduced risk environment for property owners, and reform of the land development regulations. A form-based code can be the tool used to streamline approvals and facilitate getting the desired building details and housing types.

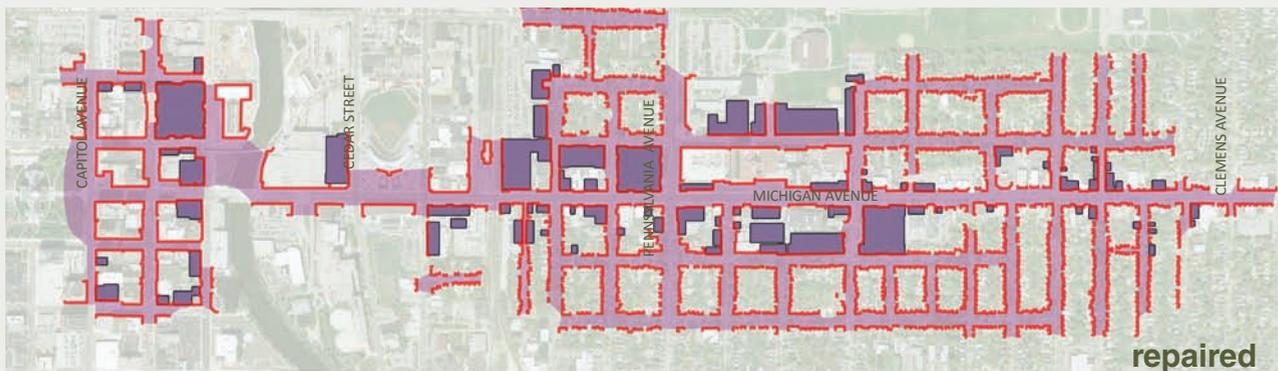


above: Existing conditions, Michigan Avenue, 2013.

right: Implementation of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is a subtle change to the streetscape: part of the road is now used for dedicated transit lanes. The BRT looks and functions more like a streetcar or train and less like the existing buses. This upgrade in transit service is also an opportunity for beautification, newness, and establishing identity through the architecture of station locations and detailing of the new median, which will create a new formal foreground view to the Capitol.

Michigan Avenue Street Repair





REPAIRED: As this area fills in over time, the built environment can be stitched back together. New buildings (in purple) provide a continuous public street frontage, creating a walkable, active urban environment.

Sparrow Hospital and Environs

Sparrow Hospital is a major presence along the Michigan Avenue corridor. The hospital is a major regional employer as well as provider of important healthcare services. As the existing environment surrounding the hospital was examined during the charrette, opportunities for improvements to the urban form became apparent.

Today, there are many empty sites and parking lots, and even when there are buildings in the right place they often have feeling of vacancy, with no visible doors and windows. As future infill happens it should be designed and positioned in such a way to address these problems and help the corridor grow out of its problems. Vacant sites can be utilized as opportunities for the hospital to grow while also helping the neighborhood get better by adding active building facades along the street.

In the streetscape, the replanting of missing street trees accompanies transit enhancements, leading to a rebalance of driving, walking, biking and transit use.





above: Infill envisioned in and around Sparrow Hospital to create a more continuous street frontage.

right: Existing Conditions, Michigan Avenue near Sparrow Hospital, 2013.



Red Cedar/ Frandor District

The Frandor shopping center, located immediately east of U.S. 127, is a contradiction: economically vital and fully leased, many people use it; yet it is not an urban design success in its existing layout (but it is full of potential). As busy as the site is, it is also under-utilized, especially along the Michigan Avenue frontage which today is faced by the rear of buildings.

The existing conditions in this segment of the corridor find a generous wide median, with oversized asphalt travel lanes on either side. The abandoned Red Cedar golf course is on the south, and the rear of the Sears store to the north.

The vision for this area is for transformative redevelopment, to create a new, transit-oriented development (TOD) form. Some of the land to the south may be used where it is practical to do so for income-producing use while preserving the rest for a stormwater park. Redevelopment of the northern side will create a destination, a “somewhere” close to the planned BRT stop; instead of the backs of buildings transit users will see building fronts that are welcoming and comfortable to walk alongside. Some participants at the charrette thought the buildings illustrated were too high for the area. The transit-oriented development envisioned must be scaled to the market and location; not skyscrapers, but what is feasible and financeable given this is a landmark location on the enhanced transit system.

The streetscape will be rebalanced to accommodate the needs of many modes of travel. The overage of space dedicated to cars can be redistributed to provide space for BRT and bike facilities.

The shopping center itself is an opportunity to create a new network of streets and blocks, to continue walkable frontages north of the corridor. Knowing some parcels may be locked down with leases, the long term plan for this area will need to allow for incremental implementation. The future redesign of this area needs to be thought of holistically – it is not just the shopping center, but a network of streets, open spaces, homes and businesses that will connect and function together to provide a quality neighborhood for residents and visitors.





above: Redevelopment envisioned for the Red Cedar/Frandor area is an opportunity to put a new public face on Michigan Avenue.

right: Existing Conditions, Michigan Avenue in the Red Cedar/Frandor area, 2013.



East Lansing

The implementation of BRT on the Michigan / Grand River corridor will provide an enhanced link between Michigan State University and downtown Lansing to the west, and the Meridian area to the east. The design of BRT lanes and station areas in this corridor segment must also consider connectivity (in sidewalks, trails, crosswalks, and bike facilities) for the large pedestrian and bicyclist population at the University, as well as the functionality of East Lansing's retail frontage, and the character-defining tree-lined median. During the charrette week, questions arose about how all of the desired elements would fit – the new busway plus the median, vehicle lanes and potentially on-street parking, sidewalks and bike paths.

This area needs a greater focus on design details to accurately define a vision. The Capital Area Transit Authority (CATA) is organizing a charrette to address these questions, and a solution is anticipated to be produced as part of a community planning process.



Grand River Avenue near Bogue Road

East of the MSU frontage, the vision for Grand River Avenue in East Lansing is easier to define. The existing urban form is more suburban in nature, with parking lots facing the street frontage. There is a desire for a change to a more walkable frontage, with the fronts of buildings facing the street edge. This can be achieved through incremental, gradual swap-outs; as buildings are upgraded a new urban form will take place.

The City of East Lansing has a form-based code framework that can be updated to guide this type of incremental growth and change. A change in form on just a few properties, if located near each other, can make a remarkable impact on the physical character of a place. The illustrations at right show an example of the type of infill and redevelopment that could occur near the intersection of Grand River Avenue and Bogue Road.



right: Diagrams showing existing conditions (top) and potential infill/ redevelopment with street-oriented building forms (bottom) near Bogue Road.

far right: Illustration of potential redevelopment of key parcels near the intersection of Grand River Avenue and Bogue Road.



Meridian Township

At the Vision Charrette Hands-on Design Session, the Meridian Township area (specifically the portion of the corridor near the intersections of Grand River Avenue with Marsh Road and Okemos Road) was identified for a mixed use, dense, walkable, urban village. Many participants specifically said “Why not use the big empty parking lots for new building sites?”

The big idea that emerged for the Meridian area was that by directing the form of new growth over time, instead of a conventional mall and strip shopping area you could have a walkable center and destination – much like the historic form found in Old Town Okemos. The next generation of growth and change, however modest, can be linked with the ideas of the new transit enhancements, and be street-oriented and mixed-use, set forward rather than set back, and have doors and windows facing the street.

The first new buildings can reflect and be part of that vision for the place, set forward to define the edges of streets and public plazas and squares, rather than set behind large parking lots as is the pattern today.

In the long term future, if the big box retail format becomes obsolete, there is a possibility of further extending a new walkable and bikeable street network deeper into each parcel. This should be planned in coordination with surrounding parcels so that over time new street connections will align. Mixing the land uses allows shared parking solutions to be very efficient; eventually it may reach a stage when surface parking is no longer adequate, and structured parking could be introduced at block interiors. This is another example of shaping the next generation of growth and change to build your way out of problems and achieve a more desirable, sustainable settlement form.





above: Long term redevelopment prospects include subdividing large parcels with a new walkable street network faced by street-oriented building forms. The block and street network can accommodate a variety of uses, including retail destinations, housing, offices, and new public spaces.

right: Initial infill on the site could begin with a few outparcels near Grand River Avenue designed with street-oriented buildings. The existing big box retailer and its parking could remain.

below right: Existing Conditions, big box retail parcel in the Meridian area, 2013.

left: Aerial view showing the potential future transformation of the Meridian Center area into walkable, transit-oriented development. This concept was further explored during the design charrette, to include potential locations for the Bus Rapid Transit turnaround (see Chapter 4).



Williamston

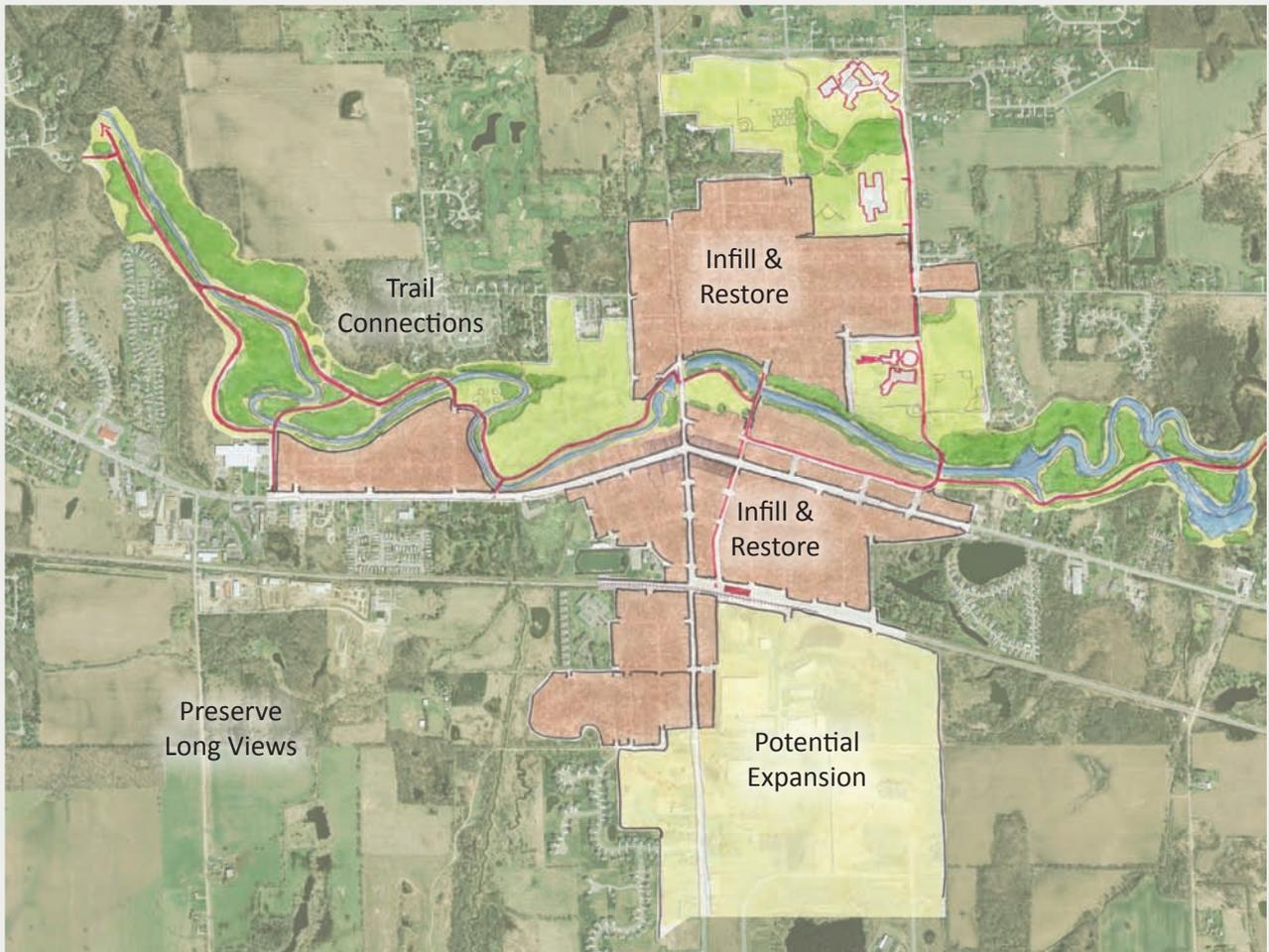
The Town of Williamston is one of the memorable post-card views in the corridor east of East Lansing. One of the reasons it is so memorable is because the core of the town itself is contained over a short stretch of the corridor, and yet the Main Street and its terminated vista creates a large visual impact. Residents are right to cherish this place – it has a picturesque, unique small town character all its own, not trying to be like Lansing or East Lansing.

The vision for Williamston is to preserve the existing character through further restoration and surgical infill of vacant parcels in its commercial core and residential neighborhoods, enhance connections to the surrounding trail network, and preserve long views of farmland along

the Grand River corridor to retain a defined sequence of town and country.

There is a tension today where the corridor transitions into town. Grand River Avenue is a four lane road – this provides no more capacity than a three lane road, it is simply just wider and faster, and thus less safe. The design of the road is inconsistent with residential neighborhood it transverses in town. Preliminary traffic analysis completed during the charrette demonstrated the existing and projected volumes do not require a four lane street. Options for a road diet – or narrowing of vehicular travel lanes to provide additional amenities such as bike lanes and landscaping – are part of the vision here.

Williamston Vision: Infill. Restore. Connect. Preserve.





above: Proposed “road diet” for Grand River Avenue through Williamston neighborhoods. The four lane road becomes three lanes, with a marked bike lane added. The travel lanes are narrowed visually to make traffic move at the right speed for a neighborhood. The lowered travel speed does not impact the ability of the road to support higher traffic volumes on special occasions – like game day or when the interstate is backed up – but does make it more livable. A tree island is added in the third lane in certain locations – this can be located so as to not inhibit necessary turning movements, and gives the reminder for vehicles to slow down, people live here.

The planting strip here is wide – which can support a continuous tree canopy. Where there are trees they can get nice and big. Gradually over the years trees have been lost to power lines and new driveways. Replacing street trees should be part of street improvements here, to bring the continuous canopy back.

right: Existing Conditions, Grand River Avenue in residential neighborhood of Williamston, 2013.

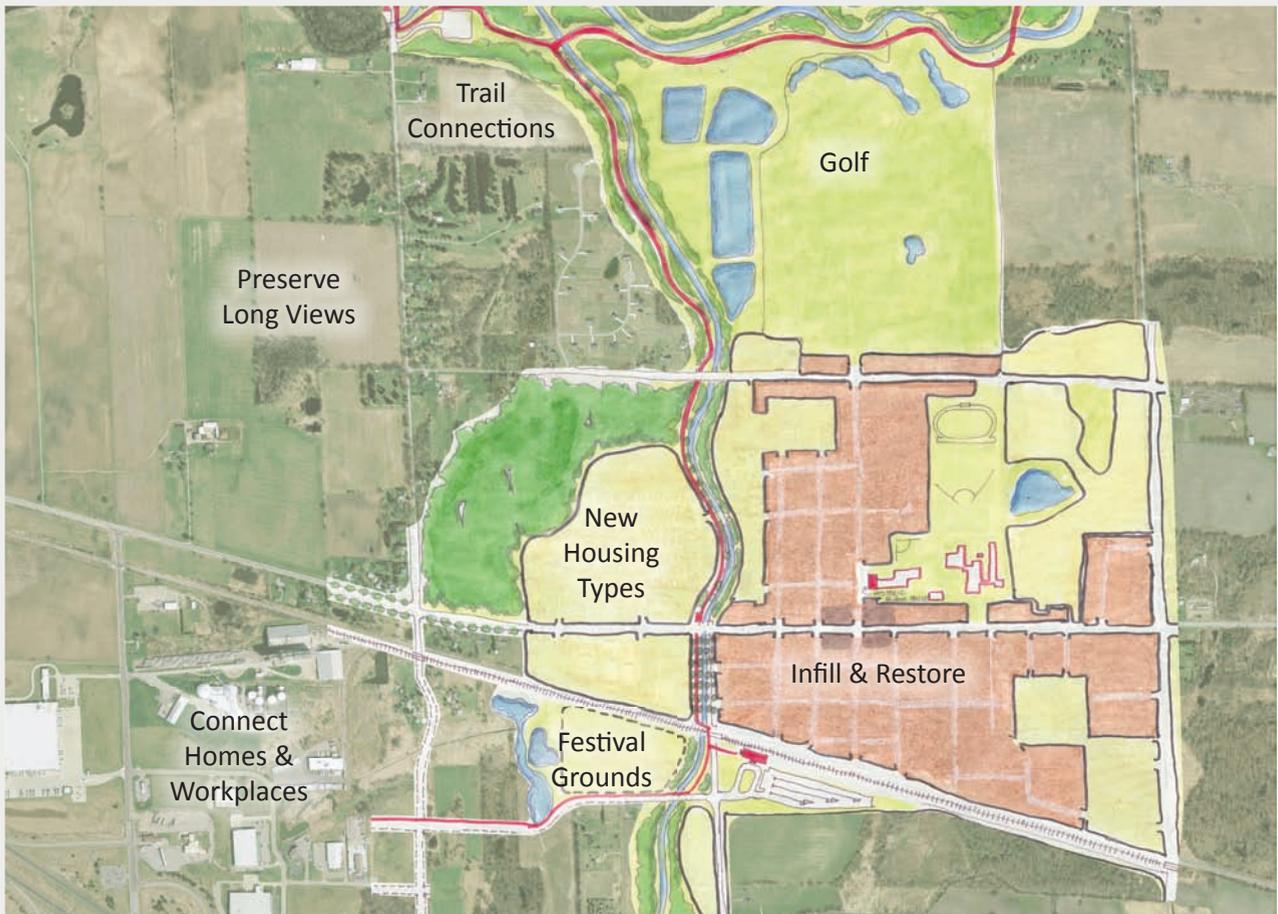
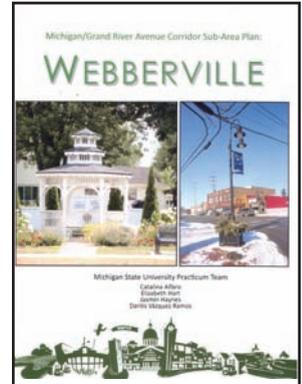
left: Diagram for Williamston that captures big ideas from charrette participants.

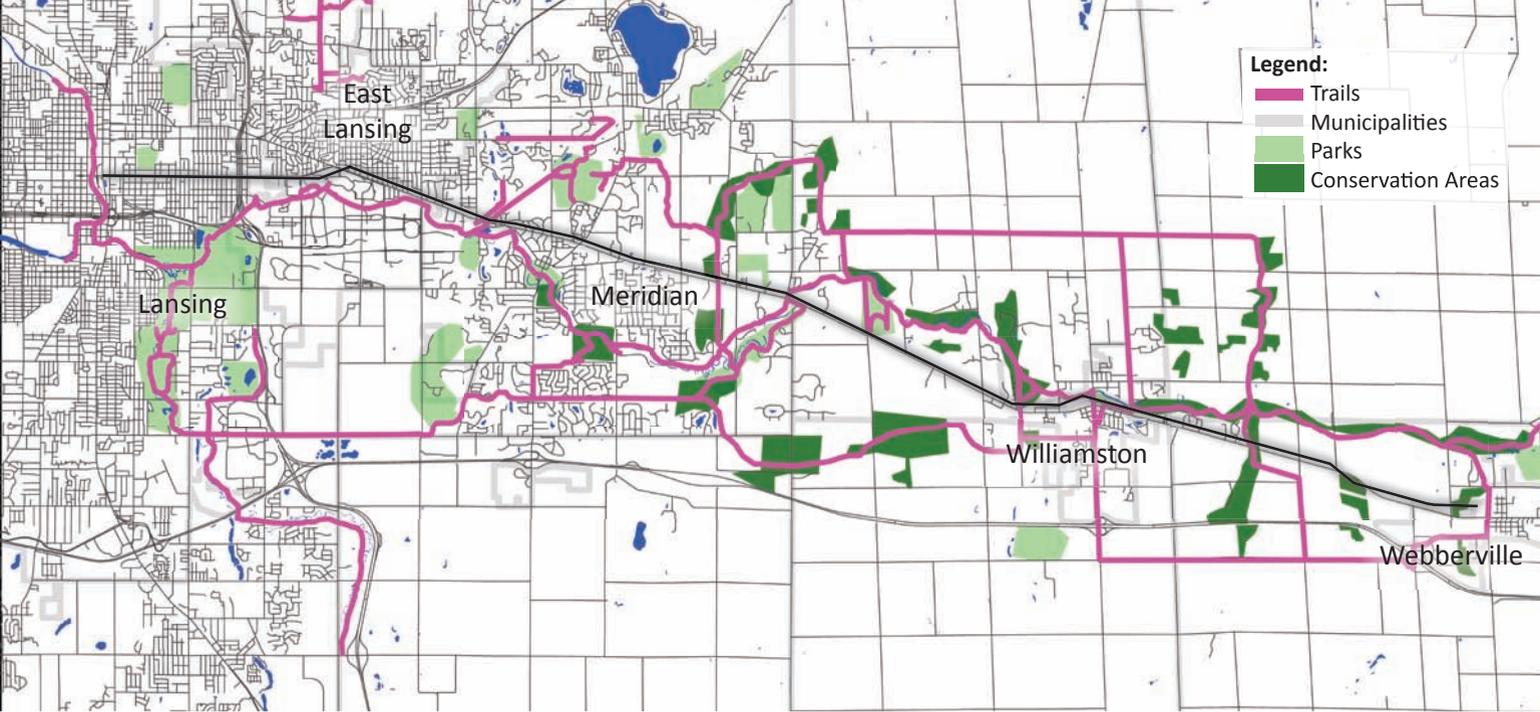


Webberville

The Town of Webberville has many similarities to Williamston. The vision here is also for infill and restoration of the core of town, to retain the small town charm that makes this place special, and to preserve long views of farmland; but there is also a desire to attract new young families through new growth and housing in strategic locations. There is a planned rebuilding of the drainage system which will result in roadways being altered, driveways being moved around, and culverts changing. These streetscape improvements can be an important opportunity to also improve the sidewalks and restore the tree canopy.

The diagram below illustrates the preliminary vision, based on community input for preserving long views, where an expansion should occur (if it does), key trails/roads connections, and the priority for infill and restoration. A Michigan State University Student Practicum Team has been studying Webberville, assembling a document of key facts and figures, including recommendations. This group made a presentation to the planning team during the charrette. Additional study and design is anticipated in future semesters, to refine and illustrate possibilities for the future.





Regional Greenway & Trail Connectivity

During the Vision Charrette, the planning team also looked at the big picture, assembling relevant trails and conservation area plans. The goal was to combine these many plans together into one map, sketching an inclusive web of trails for hiking, biking, and strolling, and connecting parks and schools along watercourses and conservation lands.

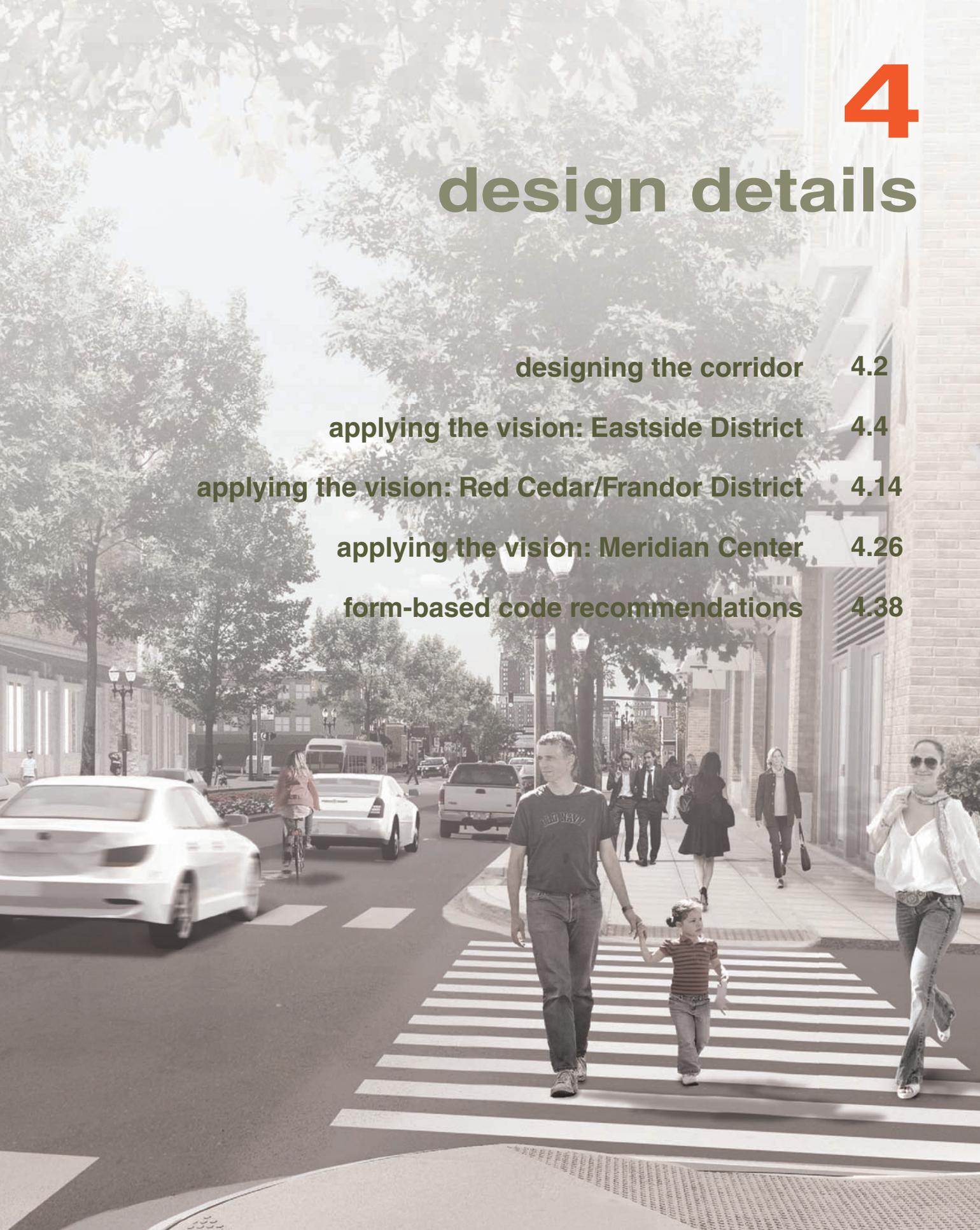
Some of the proposed trail linkages are connectivity ideas that have been around a long time, others are missing links found during the charrette week worth investigating. Many of the existing trail maps focus on the bike network, and most of that is on existing roadways; this map goes beyond that network to include an off-road system of pedestrian and bicycle trails through parks, open spaces and conservation lands. This preliminary analysis is subject to more feasibility work (such as available land, acquiring easements, etc.)

References utilized included: Crosstown Bicycle Route Map, 2012 (Tri-County Bicycle Association); University Region, Road and Trail Bicycling Guide (MDOT); Discover Michigan Trails (Governor's Council, et al.); Vision for Bicycles in the Michigan Ave/Grand River Corridor (CATA); Pedestrian Bicycle Pathway Map (Meridian Township); Greening Mid-Michigan Plan (TCRPC); and Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (GIS).

4

design details

designing the corridor	4.2
applying the vision: Eastside District	4.4
applying the vision: Red Cedar/Frandor District	4.14
applying the vision: Meridian Center	4.26
form-based code recommendations	4.38



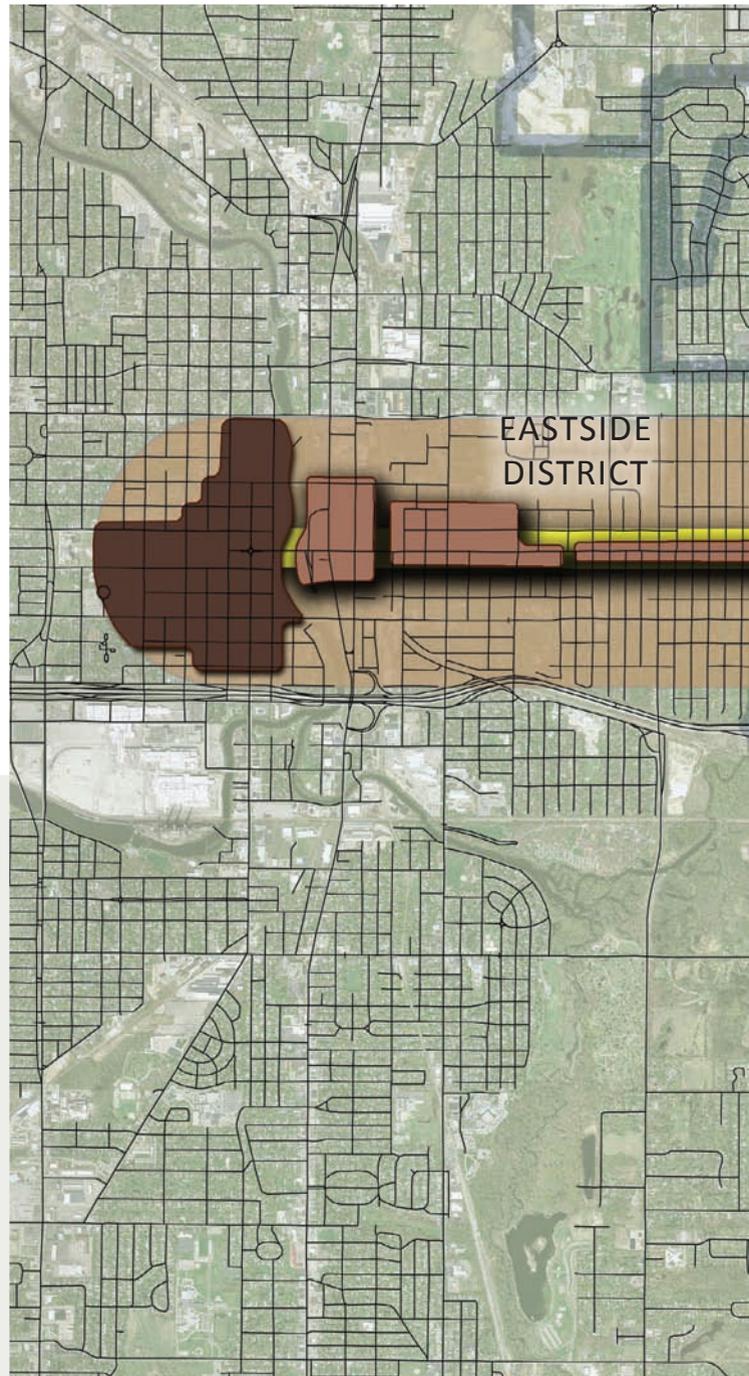
designing the corridor

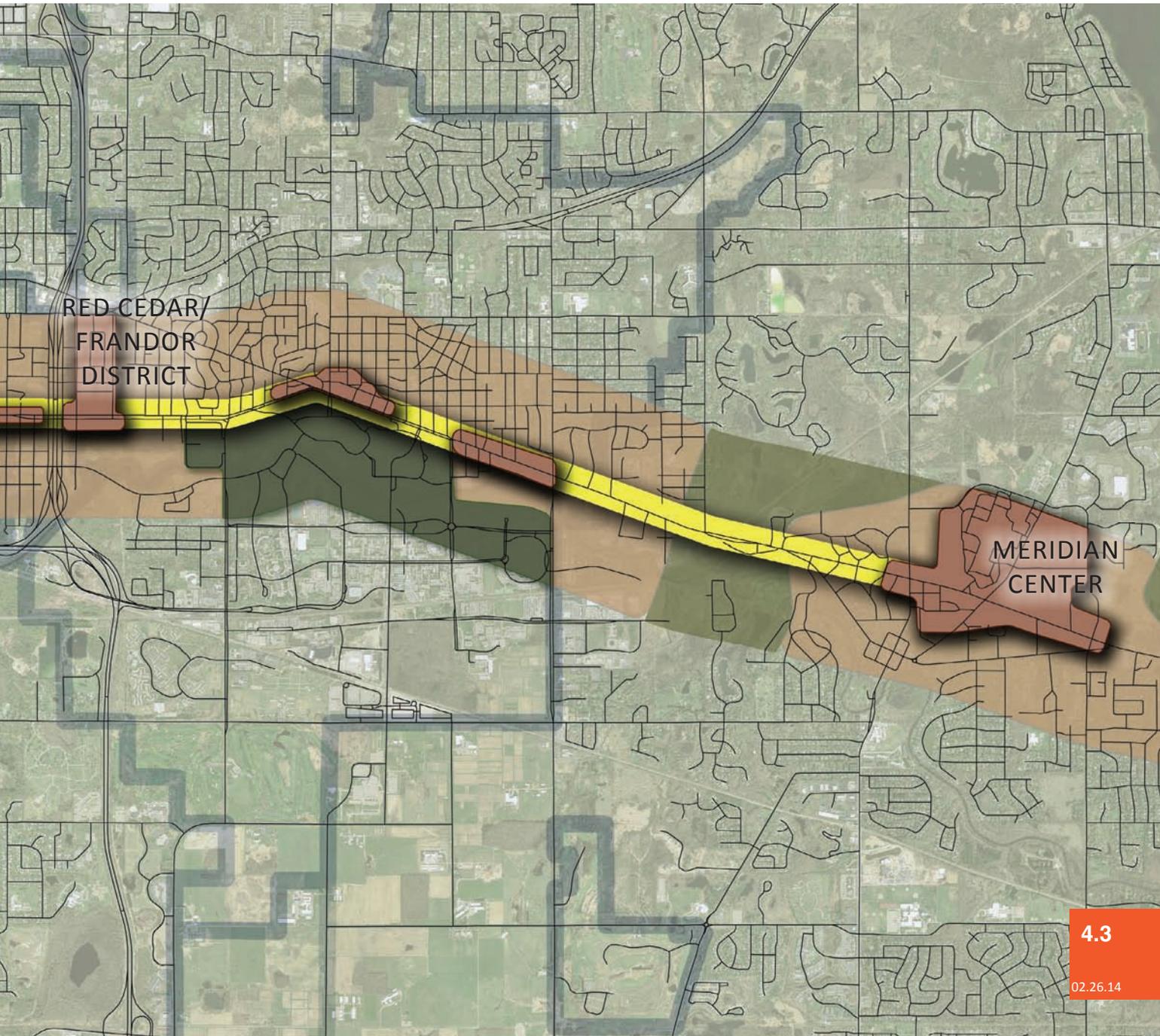
Detailed Plans for Focus Areas

During the second charrete, the planning team drafted detailed urban design studies for three focus areas within the Michigan Avenue/ Grand River Avenue corridor: the Eastside District, the Red Cedar/ Frandor District, and the Meridian Center. Their goal was to illustrate implementation of the corridor vision, showing details such as desired land uses, housing diversification, economic development, and transportation and environmental infrastructure investments.

These areas were chosen as focus areas since they each represent a specific design/ implementation challenge: stimulating appropriate neighborhood infill to improve the public realm; shaping redevelopment with sustainable development forms; and designing a transit-oriented village for the end of the planned Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line.

The recommendations in this chapter reflect the ideas and input gathered through charrette Hands-on Design Sessions, Open Houses, and Technical Meetings. The infill and redevelopment concepts illustrated for focus sites could be utilized throughout the corridor (calibrated for new areas as needed through additional community input) to guide sustainable building, street, and public open space design.





RED CEDAR/
FRANDOR
DISTRICT

MERIDIAN
CENTER

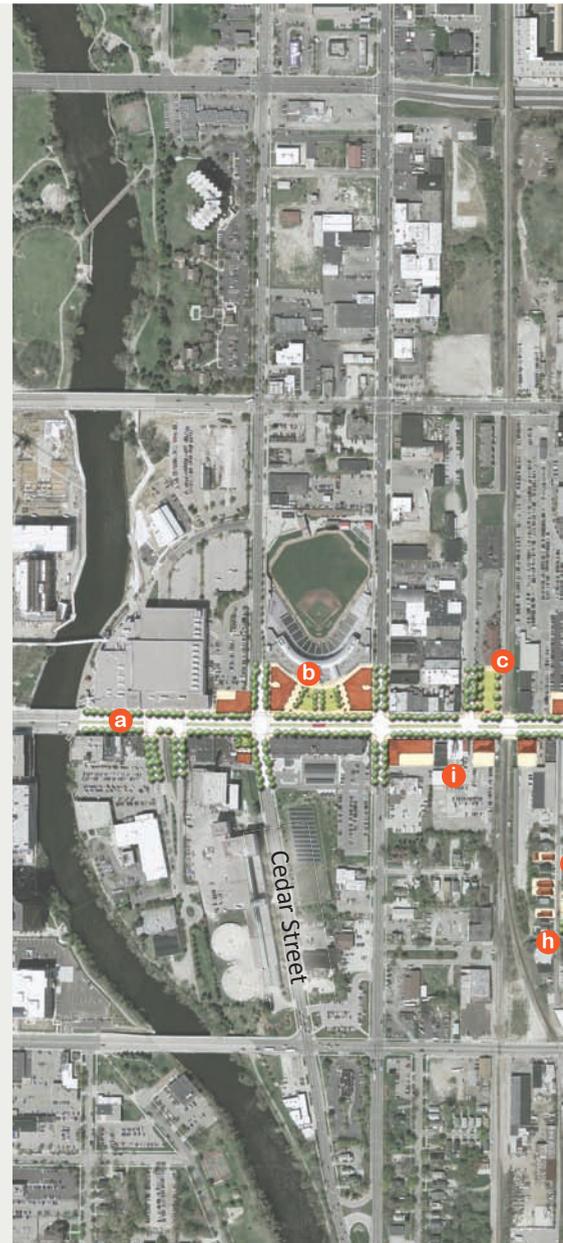
applying the vision: Eastside District

The Eastside District, centered on Michigan Avenue between Pennsylvania Avenue and Clemens Avenue, is comprised of historic residential neighborhoods, small shops & businesses, and major employment centers. The area features many historic buildings and quality street-oriented building fabric. Preservation and enhancement is a major focus of the plan, given the fine-grained integration of commercial life on the corridor and residential life in the neighborhoods. With careful enhancement and revitalization, this area is poised for a more prosperous future.

As new development opportunities occur, open spaces should be incorporated along with new infill buildings to reinforce a sense of community. Buildings should generally be placed close to front property lines (buildings that are set back away from the sidewalk are generally less conducive to creating walkable environments). A mix of uses should be pursued to activate sidewalks and allow daily needs to be met within a five-minute walk of residences. Pedestrians are attracted to active and walkable streets. There is a stronger sense of security with increased pedestrian traffic, window shoppers, outdoor diners, and cyclists.

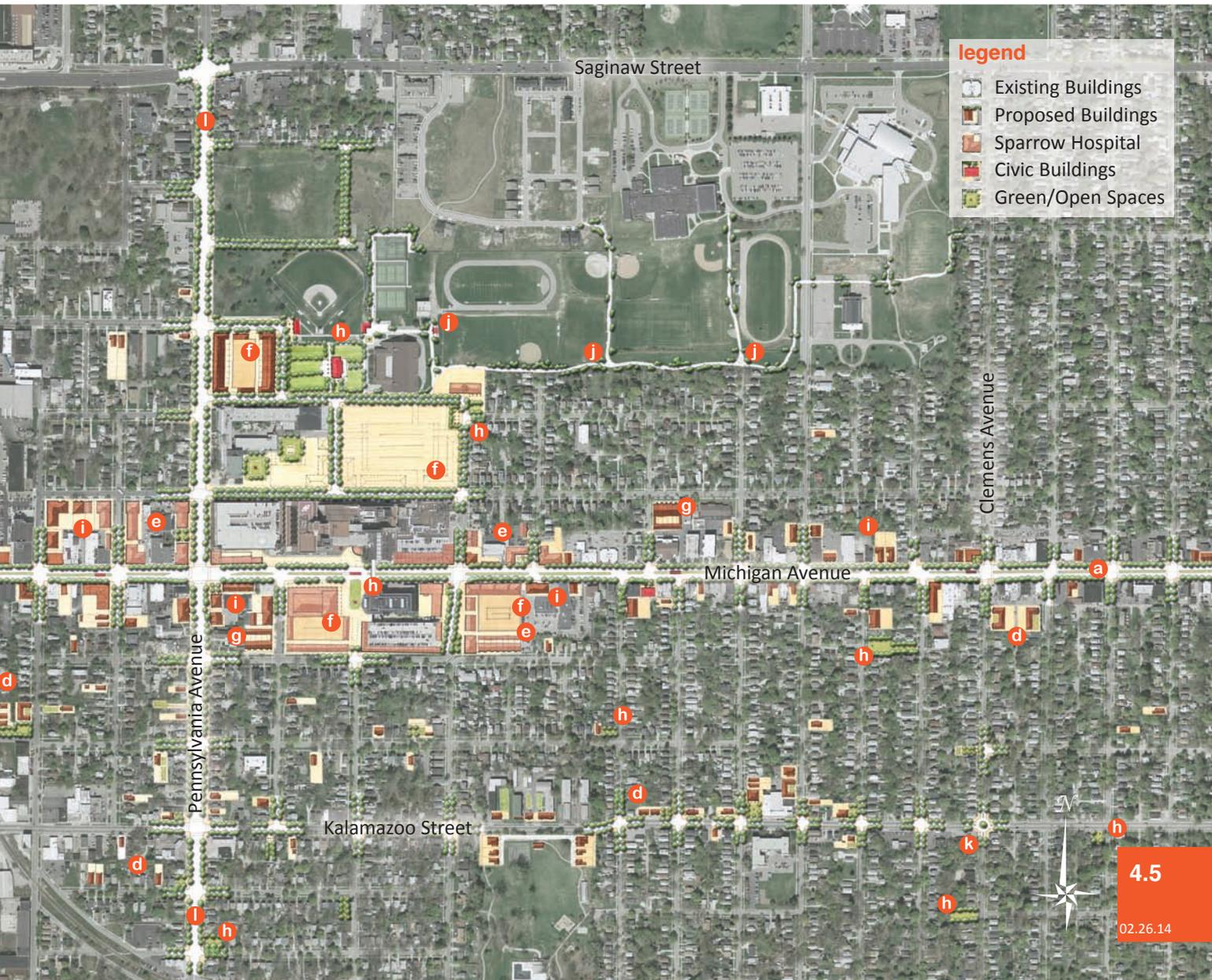
key recommendations

- a** Redesign Michigan Avenue to incorporate dedicated BRT lanes, center stations, on-street parking, and trees
- b** Fill in parking lots in front of Cooley Law School Stadium with mixed-use development to create a daily safe and attractive atmosphere
- c** New public green in front of Clara's Lansing Station
- d** Various new construction and rehabilitations of small apartment buildings and single family homes respect the scale and character of the neighborhood
- e** Sparrow Hospital expansion and their parking needs should be accommodated in ways that improve the pedestrian experience
- f** Parking ramps in large parcels along the corridor allow consolidation of parking needs
- g** New rowhouses constructed close to the street with garages accessed by a rear lane at the back of the lot
- h** Additional civic spaces provide gathering places for neighborhood residents
- i** New buildings on the corridor are built close to the street with parking placed at the rear of lot
- j** Additional pedestrian/bicycle paths across fields increase north/south connectivity
- k** A small roundabout helps to calm traffic on Clemens Avenue
- l** Improve trees and landscaping on Pennsylvania Avenue as a gateway to Sparrow from I-496 and from Saginaw Street



right: Options for Sparrow Hospital Expansion

As Sparrow Hospital grows within the neighborhood, new buildings should be designed to fit the neighborhood character. There are several different ways to configure a heart of the campus for the hospital. One is shown in the Illustrative Plan below; a second option showing a larger green space is illustrated at right. The important design concepts that should remain constant is the way buildings address the street: buildings should face streets and public spaces with doors and windows, and blank walls should be hidden mid-block by buildings with active frontages.



Michigan Avenue: Urban Design

Michigan Avenue is the spine of the Eastside District. It will be the busway for the Bus Rapid Transit; a growing area of many businesses; the access for Michigan State University; and the established home of Sparrow Hospital. Despite these great ingredients for walkability, the design of Michigan Avenue is not yet an environment optimized for pedestrian activity. Auto-oriented street dimensions, buildings set far apart behind parking lots, and frequent or continuous curb cuts which result in discontinuous sidewalks make walking and biking uncomfortable - even dangerous.

In order to solidify Michigan Avenue as a premier walkable destination, it is imperative to provide streetscape improvements that will place a renewed emphasis on the public realm. In place of surface parking lots and parking ramps which currently abut sidewalks, new street-oriented liner buildings (narrow buildings placed between the sidewalk and blank walls / parking areas) should be added over time. These buildings should front the sidewalks with doors and windows to help provide a comfortable place for pedestrians to walk. This strategy will help to provide spatial enclosure and “eyes on the street.”

New street-oriented building fabric should not only provide additional opportunities for retailing and dining in this high pedestrian traffic area, but also additional housing along the Bus Rapid Transit line for easy and convenient access. More intimate street proportions, and additional pedestrian crossings will alert drivers to the presence of pedestrians.





above: Michigan Avenue in the Eastside District is transformed; new liner buildings and infill development provide active facades and interest for pedestrians. The introduction of the busway and median, and replacement of missing street trees further enhance the streetspace.

right: Existing Conditions on Michigan Avenue near Sparrow Hospital.



Michigan Avenue: Street Details

The redesign of Michigan Avenue itself will play an important role in creating a new transit-served, pedestrian-oriented identity for the Eastside District. The existing right-of-way is 99 feet wide in this area including sidewalks, parking lanes, two vehicle travel lanes in each direction, and a two-way left-turn lane. There is no exclusive bicycle facility; bicycles and motor vehicles share the rightmost lane.

The proposed cross-section for this area (shown below) shows a street designed for multiple modes, including the proposed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system. Sidewalk widths may be reduced slightly from their existing 20-foot width. However, other changes to the roadway design are anticipated to result in reductions in vehicle travel speeds, which would render the proposed 15-foot sidewalk space more pedestrian-friendly than the existing conditions.

A single 11-foot travel lane in each direction is proposed, which is a reduction from the current two lanes in each direction. An exclusive bicycle facility is not included, but it is expected that this travel lane would be shared between motor vehicles and bicycles. With a reduced

width of the roadway for drivers, speeds are expected to decrease. This should make sharing the single travel lane more comfortable for cyclists.

A 7-foot parking lane is also retained on both sides of the roadway. Current usage of on-street parking is low in some areas; however, with the envisioned change to additional active, pedestrian-oriented uses along the street, demand in this area will increase. On-street parking offers a number of benefits to the urban environment, including providing a buffer between the sidewalk and the travel lane to separate the pedestrian and motor vehicle space. On-street parking is also desired by local businesses. Retaining on-street parking also improves the likelihood that off-street lots would be redeveloped into more vibrant land uses.

The center of the roadway is allocated to the exclusive use of the BRT vehicle, BRT stations, and left-turn storage lanes at signalized intersections. Left turns from Michigan Avenue would only be allowed across the BRT busway at signalized intersections. These turns would be made using a protected left-turn only phase at the signal.



Expected Traffic Operations

During the charrette, a preliminary operational evaluation of the intersection of Michigan Avenue and Pennsylvania Avenue was performed to test the functionality of the proposed street design. This evaluation included the reduction in travel lanes on Michigan Avenue from two in each direction to one in each direction and the addition of protected left turn phases for eastbound and westbound Michigan Avenue traffic. The following assumptions were applied:

- The City of Lansing's PM Peak Hour model of the corridor and existing traffic volumes were used.
- No vehicle traffic growth rate was applied, and no mode-shift to the BRT was assumed.

Under these conditions, the intersection operated at an acceptable level of service (LOS D) during the PM peak hour, with some movements operating at LOS E which is considered acceptable for an urban area. (For an explanation of LOS and how it is used for transportation analysis, refer to page 4.22).



Michigan Avenue

Repairing Blank Facades

Sparrow Hospital is an important neighborhood and regional amenity, but the current physical configuration fails to enable a sense of place that fosters walkability or active street life. Buildings are set far from the street; parking ramps rather than street-oriented buildings are located along the sidewalks.

The hospital's planned expansion could include new buildings that repair the Michigan Avenue streetscape. New buildings should be located close to the thoroughfare with off-street parking positioned behind buildings in existing or new parking structures and away from the sidewalk. The buildings should be street-oriented featuring windows and doors which face and address the public realm. Liner buildings (narrow buildings placed between the pedestrian realm and parking areas) can be built in front of current parking structures. Ground floor uses can offer small cafes, doctor offices, pharmacies, medical supplies, health foods, dry cleaners, and other conveniences for employees, patients, visitors, and residents. Providing similar uses on the ground floor can contribute to healthy pedestrian activity at the street level. The floors above can be luxury patient rooms, extended stay rooms, or other more private hospital related uses.



right: Existing Conditions, Sparrow Hospital facing Michigan Avenue.

below: A new liner building is placed between the existing parking and the sidewalk, providing a more pedestrian-friendly streetscape. This visualization demonstrates how new growth in the district, if shaped into appropriate forms, can help to repair existing design shortcomings.



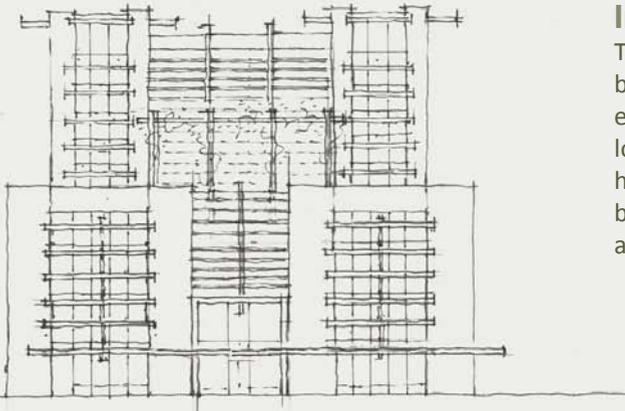
Repairing the Neighborhood

An important component of sustainable growth in the Eastside District will be infill of vacant lots and parking areas with a variety of building types. New buildings should be street-oriented to provide convenience and activity to the sidewalk. Building use is secondary to form; a well-designed building that undergoes thoughtful renovations can accommodate many different uses over its lifespan, including housing, office, and retail. Architectural style can be diverse as well.

New residential units should be encouraged in a variety of formats to appeal to residents of varying lifestyles. In the past, neighborhoods in the Lansing region were built with a diverse housing stock. Cottages, mansions, and apartment houses can be found on the same street in the historic neighborhoods. This tradition should continue with new development; the “missing middle” of townhouses and live work units, which fit well on smaller infill lots, can be added to the mix to make the

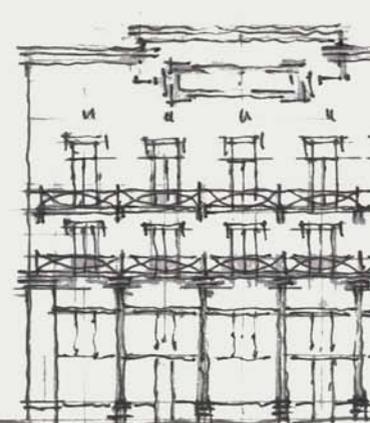
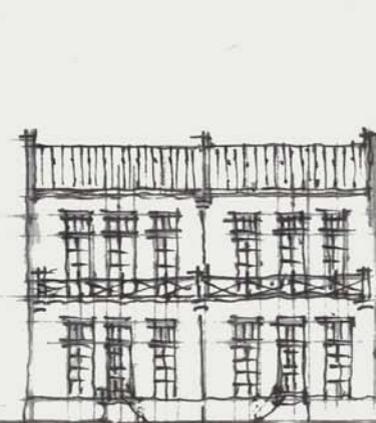
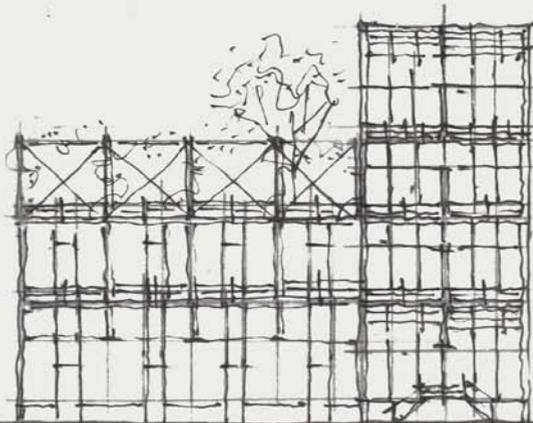
neighborhood even more complete. Apartment houses, which allow a greater number of residents to live within walking distance of the corridor’s retail, services, transit, and public spaces, will be an important part of the solution. Well-designed multi-family buildings can offer both compact and spacious dwelling units, which can appeal to more than just students. Mixed-use buildings that include residences above shops and services should also be encouraged to allow people to live without requiring everyday use of an automobile.

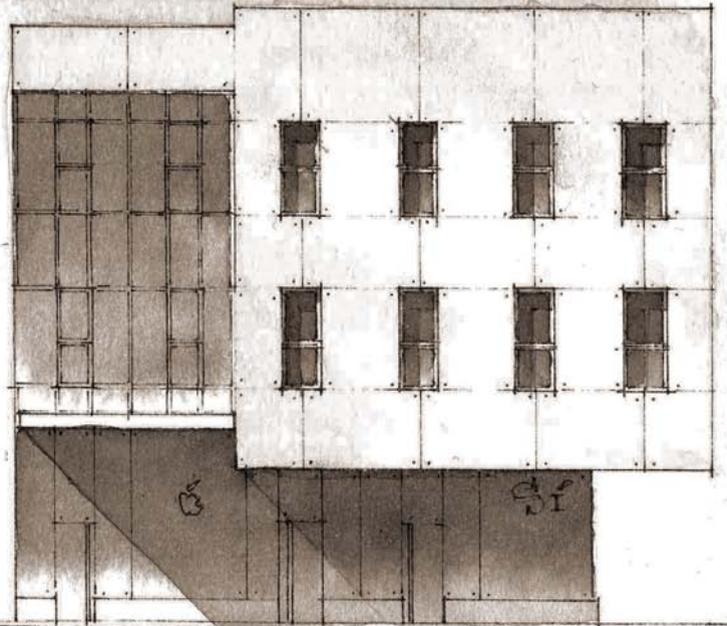
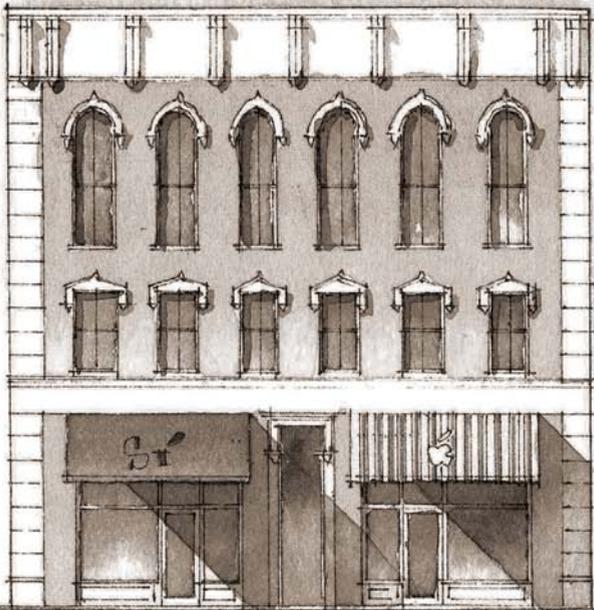
A form-based code, which prescribes the desired form of new development, can be the implementation tool used to encourage the desired form of infill development. The code should be flexible to allow many different architectural styles, but stipulate the urban form basics: relationship of the building to the sidewalk, and transparency of the facade to activate the street space.



Infill Over Time

To repair the corridor, Michigan Avenue buildings should be designed to a human-scale. Some recently constructed buildings have created large blank walls, garages, and loading docks that face the street, which disrupts the historic pattern and pedestrian-friendly streets. New buildings should both fill-in the gaps of the urban wall and provide eyes-on-the-street surveillance.



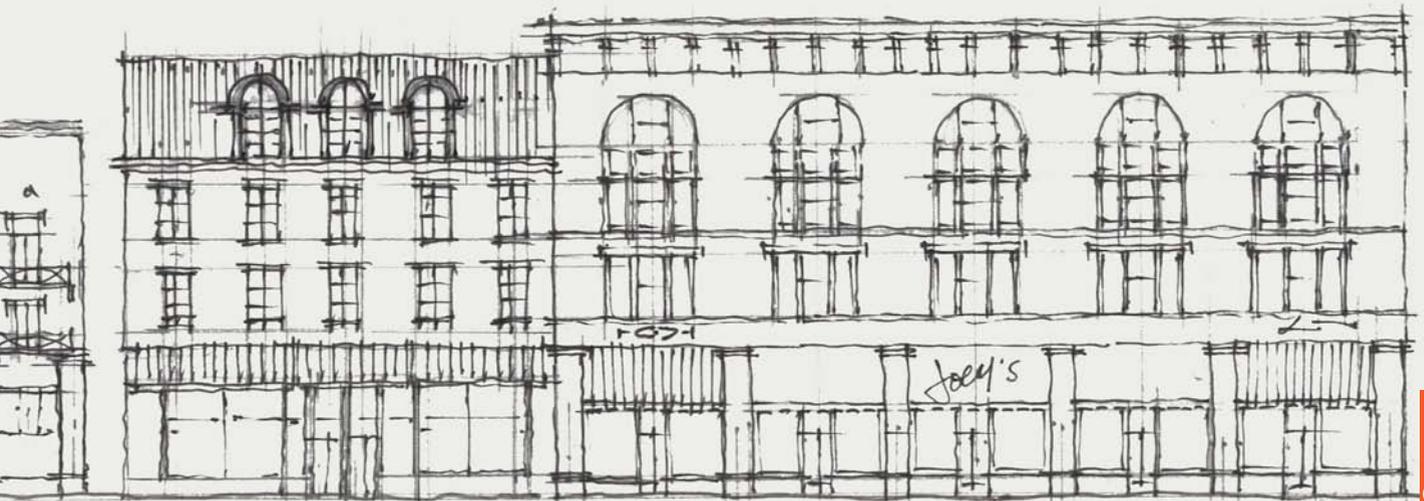
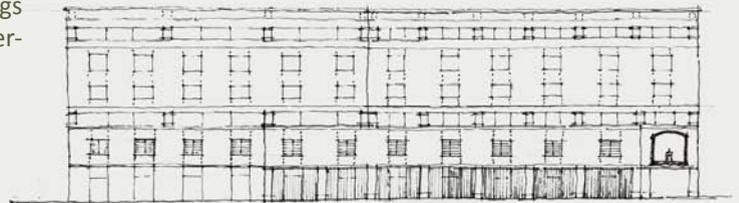


Designing Modern Street-Oriented Buildings

Architectural styles can be diverse along Michigan Avenue and within the Eastside District neighborhoods. Many of the regional traditions grew from centuries of design in the setting, social cultures, and climate. Future buildings can revitalize these diverse regional languages of vernacular design using varied, creative solutions.

above: Traditional and modern main street buildings side-by-side

left and below: Architectural studies for appropriate infill buildings along the Michigan Avenue corridor, in a variety of styles. The unifying feature is the relationship of building to the streetspace.



applying the vision: Red Cedar / Frandor District

The Red Cedar/ Frandor District is located at the western edge of Michigan State University, at the site of the existing Frandor Shopping Center and former Red Cedar golf course. This area is envisioned to transform over time to a more sustainable settlement form, which provides a greater mix of uses (including housing), improved stormwater handling, and greater benefit to the surrounding community.

A continuous network of green / park spaces is introduced through the site, culminating at Red Cedar Park. Stormwater is managed with innovative techniques, including swales and water features that also provide civic art in green spaces. A portion of the former Red Cedar golf course is allocated for new development, the remainder is utilized for stormwater retention as well as active and passive recreation. New streets are added to the existing street network, subdividing large parcels and providing more ways to transverse the district. Streets are fronted by buildings; the tallest, most dense are envisioned for the Michigan Avenue frontage, decreasing in scale away from the corridor.

below: The existing Frandor Shopping Center consists of single story buildings surrounding a large parking lot with little trees or shelter. The view below (area “d” in the plan at right) shows the desired new form of development, enhancing the experience for users by placing parking behind liner buildings and creating high quality public park and plaza spaces at the core of the mixed-use district. Street trees and on-street parking along the open spaces and shopfronts provide shade and shelter for pedestrians.

key recommendations

- a** Design Michigan Avenue to incorporate dedicated BRT lanes and center stations, wide medians, crosswalks, street trees and on-street parking
- b** Activate public park space along the Red Cedar river with recreational fields and mixed-use development adjacent to Michigan Avenue
- c** New development between Homer and Clippert street includes apartments, townhouses, mixed-use and office buildings
- d** Create defined center with civic, plaza and green spaces, and redefine Frandor Avenue as the central axis
- e** Rethink intersection of Saginaw Street and East Grand Avenue (see page 4.22)
- f** North to south connection of green spaces and parks, including new pedestrian/bicyclists paths
- g** New buildings on corridor front the street with parking placed at the rear of lot
- h** A new network of streets is introduced to subdivide large parcels and provide connectivity





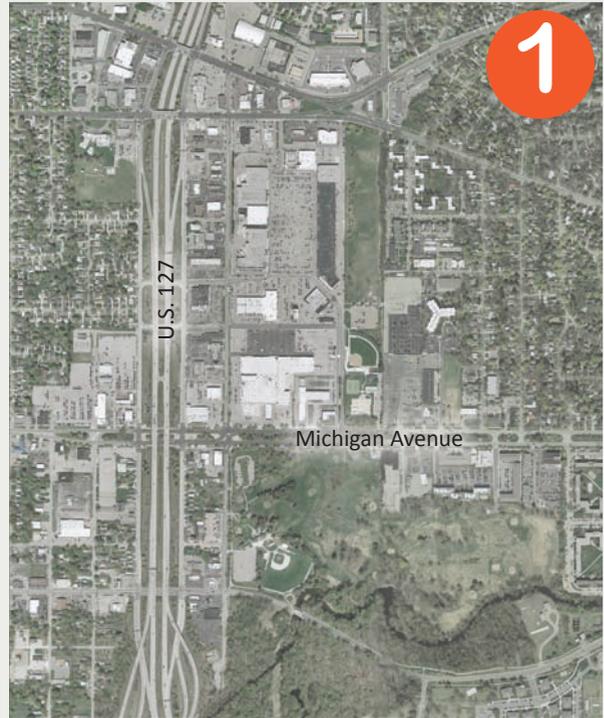
Legend

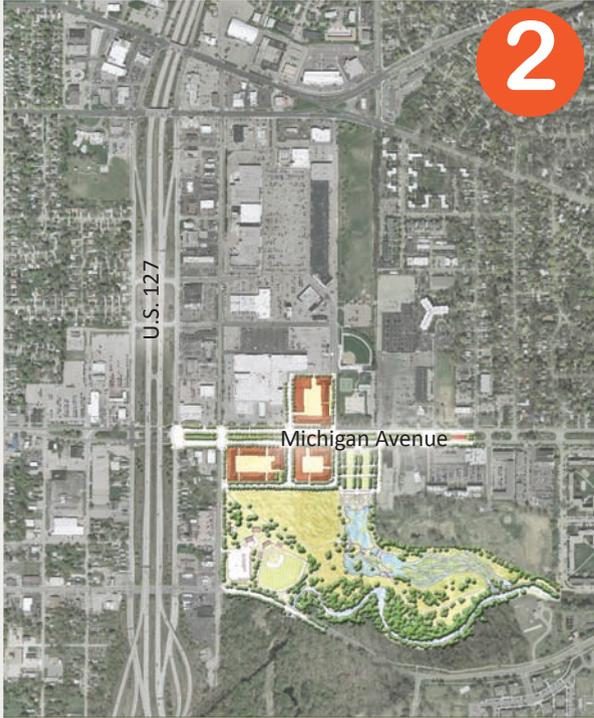
- Existing Buildings
- Proposed Buildings
- Proposed Station
- Existing Aerial
- Green/Open Spaces

Change Over Time

The physical transformation envisioned for the Red Cedar/ Frandor District is anticipated to take place in phases, over many years. There are long term leases and other ownership conditions which make redevelopment of certain parcels easier in the near term than others. In addition, the market absorption of new units and mixed-use development in the district needs to be considered.

During the charrette, a potential phasing scenario was explored. The first phases included new development along Michigan Avenue, proximate to the new BRT station, as well as improvements to Red Cedar Park. Additional phases include the incremental transformation of the shopping center to the north, and new residential development that fronts the park space to the south. Although future redevelopment may take a different path, this illustration demonstrates the important principals of having a plan in place for the long-term, so that streets, park spaces and infrastructure connects, and each new development makes a positive contribution toward the ultimate vision.



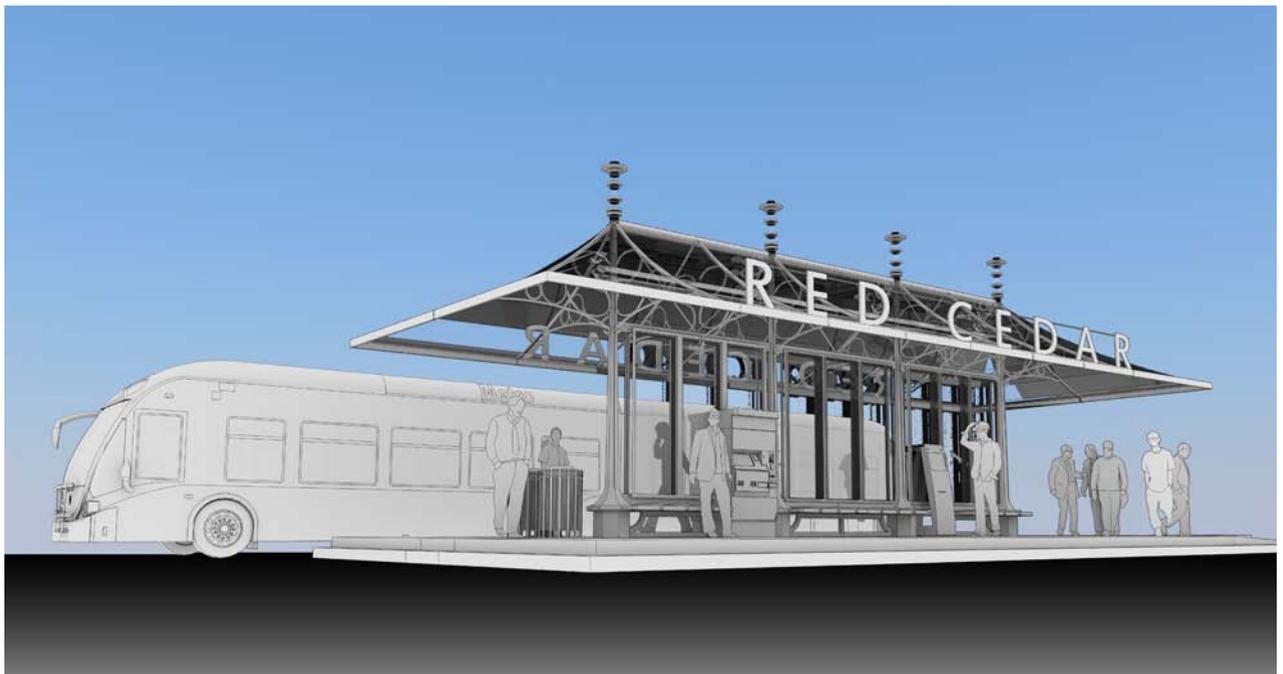


Michigan Avenue: Urban Design

Today, Michigan Avenue in the Red Cedar/ Frandor District is faced by parking lots, loading docks and the back of buildings. Planned transit enhancements and new development can transform this area into a pedestrian-oriented center that better meets the needs of the surrounding community.

On Michigan Avenue, the existing wide medians are retained, and BRT lanes and stations added. Wide sidewalks, street trees, pedestrian-scaled illumination, crosswalks, and new street-oriented buildings with awnings and overhangs work together to enhance the pedestrian environment.

Red Cedar Park is currently under-utilized and undervalued. A formal entrance from Michigan Avenue, and the addition of trails and recreational spaces will bring people to the park. The park will serve two purposes: community recreation as well as stormwater retention. New development should front the park, providing natural surveillance and additional safety. In locations where the floodplain meets the proposed mixed-use urbanized environment, innovative techniques such as dry floodproofing should be explored to retain active uses along the sidewalk.





above: Future view of Michigan Avenue at the entry to Red Cedar Park.

right: Existing conditions, Michigan Avenue in the Red Cedar/Frandor District. Currently, there is little to no shelter for pedestrians and small, unattractive sidewalk; some stores have parking lots fronting the road instead of storefronts.

left: The BRT Stations located in the Michigan Avenue median are designed in such a way that they facilitate and expedite boarding and exiting the BRT, as well as giving identity and character to the district.



Michigan Avenue: Street Details

The section of Michigan Avenue through the Red Cedar/ Frandor District has a 200-foot right-of-way. This includes an expansive, 60-foot wide tree-filled median. This median prohibits left turns, requiring drivers to make a U-turn at a median opening to complete their left turn movement. This indirect left, or Michigan left, is a common application in the area and something local drivers are familiar using. Storage for these left-turning vehicles is provided in the median, reducing the total landscaped area where the 50-foot left-turn pockets exist.

The proposed cross-section for this portion of the corridor is shown below. Since it was a priority to maintain the median while still adding space for the proposed BRT, the vehicle travel lanes, buffered bicycle lane, and sidewalks were shifted further to the edges of the right-of-way taking up currently unused space.

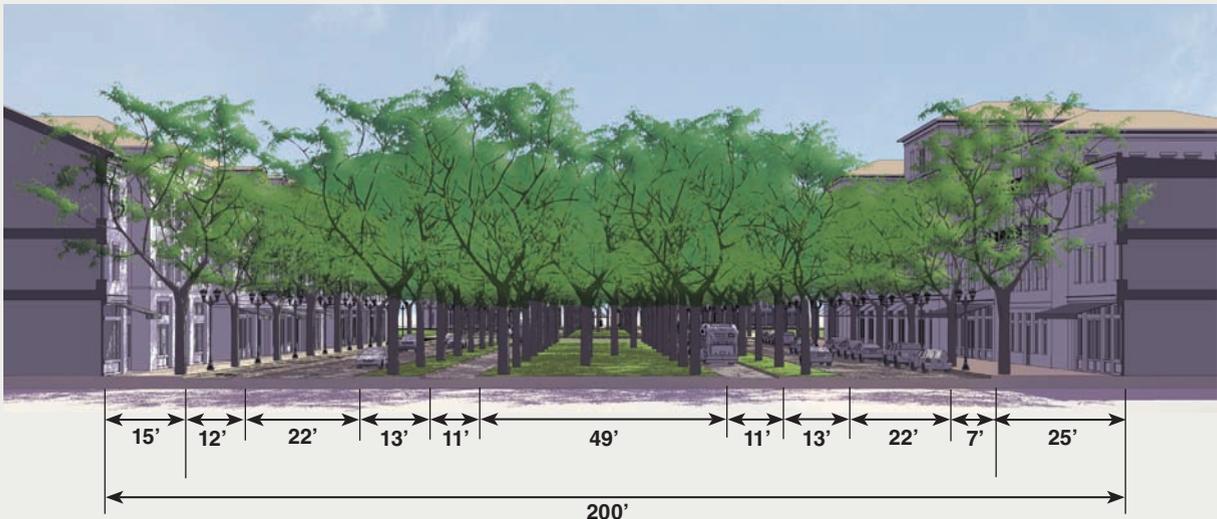
Sidewalk widths are proposed to increase from 7 feet to 15 feet allowing ample room for higher pedestrian volumes. The buffered bicycle lane and two vehicle travel lanes are retained in each direction. The proposed BRT busway would be adjacent to the median. The median

would be reduced minimally to a 56-foot width, with the BRT stations located in the median space.

Due to the envisioned nature of future development in this area, the addition of on-street parking was not deemed necessary. If it were to be added, the median width would be reduced to accommodate it.

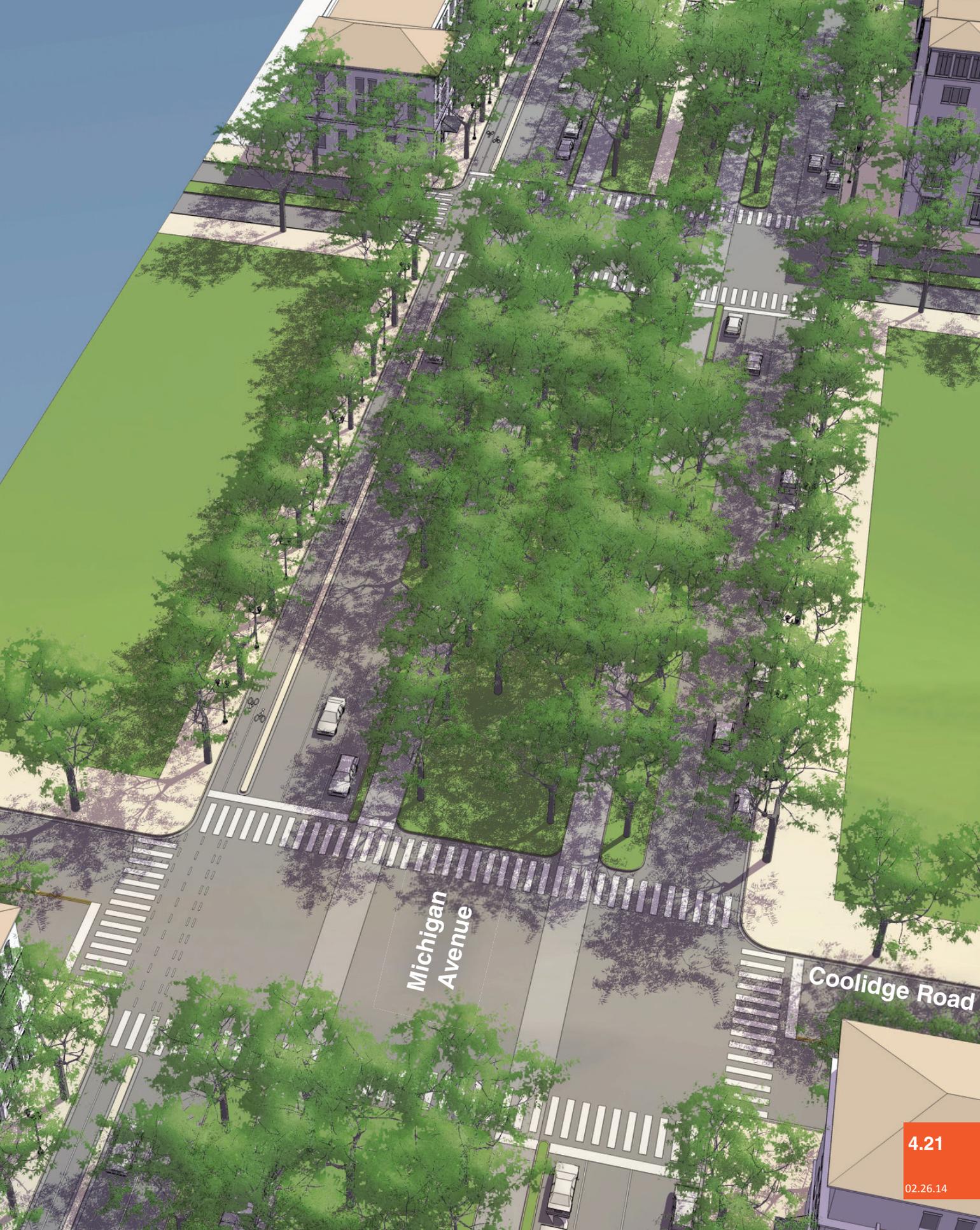
Signalization of left turns across the BRT busway would be required to reduce conflicts between the BRT and motor vehicle traffic. As a result, any unsignalized median openings in this section of Michigan Avenue would be consolidated and signalized. All left turning or U-turning traffic would be served at the signalized intersections.

Michigan Avenue Design: Red Cedar / Frandor District



Expected Traffic Operations

Because no vehicle travel lanes are proposed to be removed in this section, motor vehicle operations with the proposed street redesign are expected to remain at currently acceptable levels. Traffic simulation models provided by MDOT show existing traffic operations at LOS A or LOS B in this area. Based on the traffic volumes shown in the models, the signalization and consolidation of left turns in this area is not anticipated to cause an operational issue. This analysis was performed using MDOT's PM Peak Hour model of the corridor and existing traffic volumes (no vehicle traffic growth rate was applied, and no mode-shift to the BRT was assumed).



Michigan Avenue

Coolidge Road

Grand River/ Saginaw Intersection

The complex intersection of two major east-west roadways on the north side of the Frandor Shopping Center has been a safety concern for MDOT and the City of Lansing for many years. Charrette attendees expressed discomfort with driving in this area, and indicated that walking or cycling is only done if absolutely necessary. The one-way pair allows for high-speed vehicle travel, well above the posted speed limit is 35 mph. The diagram below shows traffic volumes for the area collected by MDOT between 2010 and 2012. West Saginaw Street (I-69 Business Route) is a high volume connection between Lansing and the I-69 freeway.

The illustrative plan provides proposed intersection modifications to Grand River Avenue and Saginaw Street, converting the area into a civic plaza, with vehicle traffic traveling around the exterior in a one-way loop. The east end is similar to a roundabout with free-flow vehicle movements. Eastbound traffic on Saginaw Street and westbound traffic from West Saginaw Street to East Grand River would have the most direct paths through the area. Geometric design of a half-roundabout would be critical

to maintaining smooth east-west flow. Vehicle traffic from West Grand River onto East Grand River would be the most impacted by the new design.

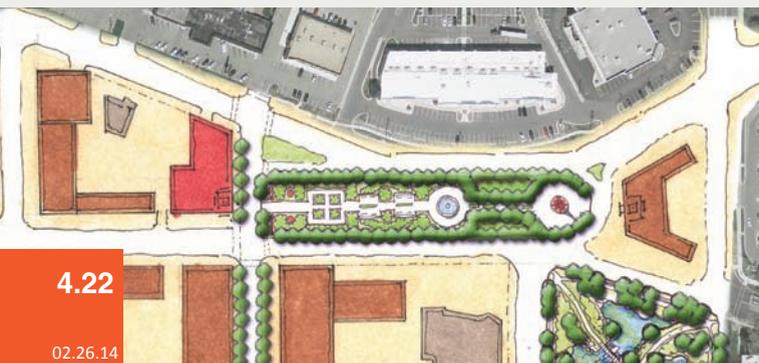
Access to the Frandor Shopping Center is improved as well by creating a better connection between East Grand River Avenue and Frandor Avenue. Field observations and anecdotal evidence from charrette attendees indicated that “cut through” traffic frequently uses the existing gas station driveways to make this connection.

The proposed design would impact traffic operations at the intersection of West Saginaw Street and Coolidge Road, which would remain signalized. The proposed conditions at this intersection was analyzed using traffic simulation models provided by the City of Lansing. Based on this analysis, it was determined that with appropriate turn lanes and adjusted signal timings, acceptable operations can be achieved at this critical intersection. Overall PM peak hour operations for this intersection changed from LOS B to LOS C with the new configuration..



above: Existing aerial with AM/PM Peak Hour Traffic Volumes

below: Illustrative Plan of Grand River/ Saginaw intersection



What is Level of Service (LOS)?

The LOS is a single letter that reflects a variety of different measurements, including travel delay, queuing, vehicle volume versus capacity, travel speed, and others. The letters, which range from A through F, are similar to but not analogous to grades on a report card.

Essentially, LOS A indicates a street or intersection that is lightly-used and possesses much more capacity than needed for given traffic volumes, present or future. LOS B and C indicate progressively busier intersections that may also have greater capacity than is needed for current traffic demands.

LOS D and E indicate intersections that are approaching their traffic-handling capacity for a given peak hour. These intersections move higher volumes of traffic. Because streets and intersections are expensive to build and maintain, many if not most cities specify LOS D or E as an acceptable LOS. Operating at LOS D or E ensures that intersections are performing at their most effective traffic-handling capacity.

LOS F indicates that a street or intersection has greater demand than capacity for a given peak hour. In many such instances however, travelers accept a trade-off of motor vehicle congestion and traffic delay in exchange for greater balance with other travel modes.

Michigan Avenue: Landscape Design Details

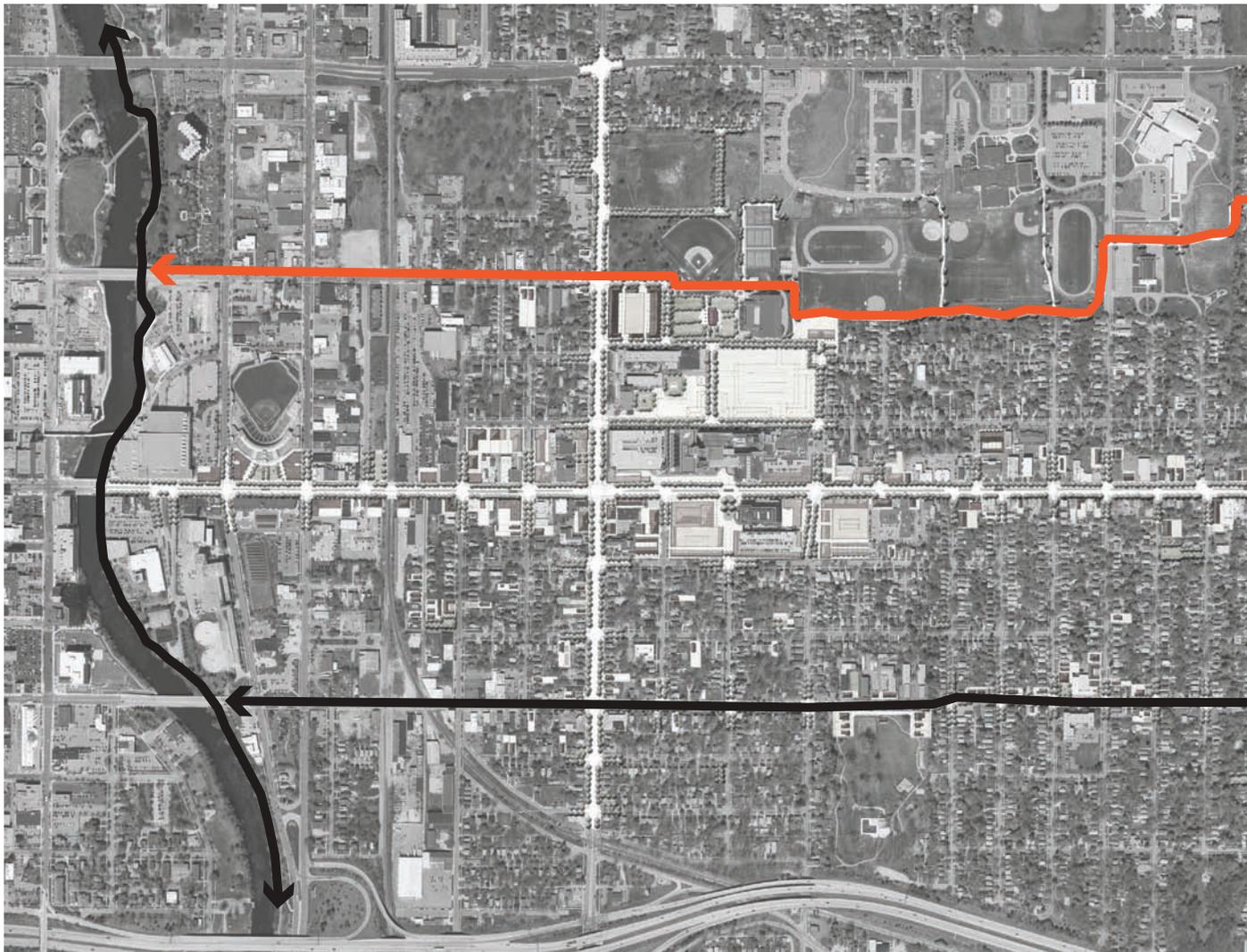
As the transformation of Michigan Avenue unfolds, there will be many opportunities for creativity in detailing and design to define character and sense of place for each district. During the charrette week, designers from Landscape Architects & Planners, Inc. (LAP) worked as part of the planning team, providing illustrative examples showing unique signage, paving patterns, and design detailing that could be used to add to the envisioned urban form and create neighborhood identity.



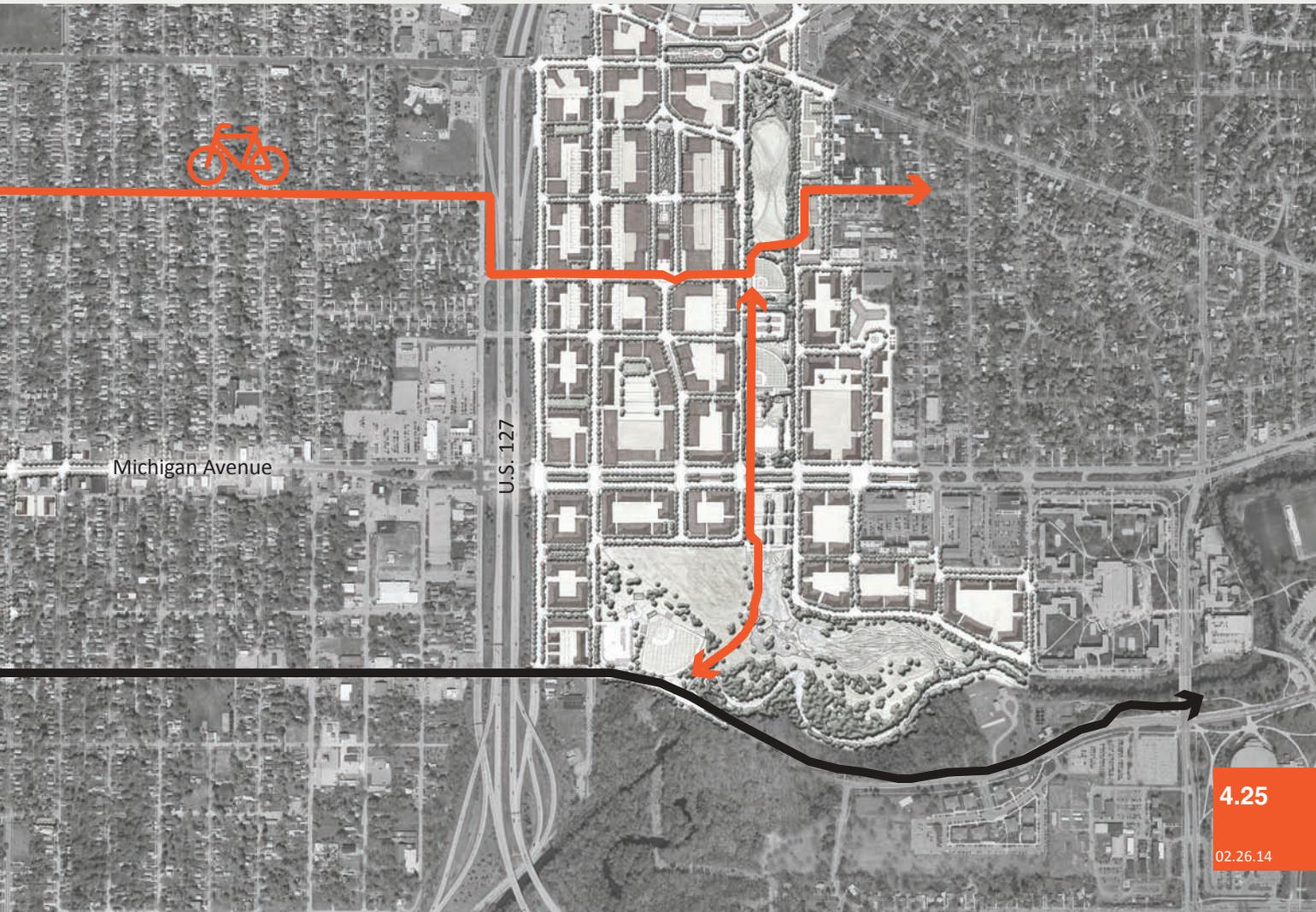
Bicycle Routes

The planning team bicycled large portions of the Lansing region while undertaking a “Handlebar Survey” so that existing bicycling opportunities and challenges could be understood - beyond what may be ascertained by reviewing existing maps and plans.

The region has a significant bicycle culture; implementation of non-motorized improvements was consistently a top priority for charrette participants. A preliminary vision for off-road paths and trails to enhance the on-street network is included in Chapter 3. With the future redevelopment of the Red Cedar/ Frandor District and infill of vacant lots in the Eastside District neighborhoods, there will be opportunities to make changes to street design and upgrade bicycle facilities. At least one additional parallel bicycle route to connect the districts was described by charrette participants; depicted below, improvements along this route should be further explored and prioritized.



Evaluating Existing Conditions:
The Handlebar Survey



applying the vision: Meridian Center

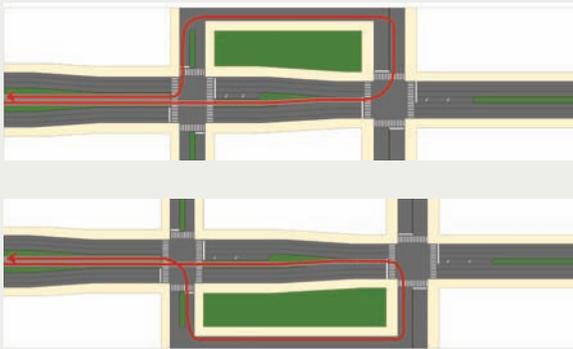
The Meridian Center area (near the intersection of Grand River Avenue with Marsh Road) is proposed to be the beginning / end of line for the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor. With this planned transit enhancement, there will be an opportunity to transform the existing suburban strip-commercial and big-box retail format parcels into a transit- and pedestrian-oriented form. There will also be a need to accommodate a BRT turn-around station as well as park-and-ride facility, which can be a stimulant for new development.

During the charrette, three sites were studied in detail as potential locations for the station area / turn-around: the Meridian Mall, the Best Buy site and the Meijers site. Preliminary analysis demonstrated that any of these sites could function equally well; the determining factor will be a combination of market conditions as well as the decisions of individual property owners.

The parcels not utilized for the BRT station can still transform over time to include a new network of streets, open spaces, and mixture of uses (including the introduction of additional housing within walking distance of commercial amenities), using the street-oriented design principles illustrated. With the vision established, new development rules can be established to guide the desired relationship of buildings to street, desired block sizes (which will result in subdivision of large parcels into walkable streets and blocks), and desired street design details (which include street trees, sidewalks, crosswalks, and provisions for bicyclists).

BRT Operation and Access

Operation and access for the new BRT station/ turn-around was evaluated for each of the three potential Meridian sites. An additional traffic signal would be required to stop motor vehicle traffic to allow the BRT vehicle to turn into and out of the site. The existing traffic signal at the Meridian Mall entrance may be moved or replaced by this signal, resulting in no additional new stops for motor vehicle traffic. The Mall and Best Buy sites are on the north side of Grand River Avenue, requiring the BRT to turn left into the station, while the Meijer site would require a right turn. In both cases, it is recommended that the BRT vehicles travel in a one-way loop through the new development. The BRT busway in this area should be designed so that the entrance and exit paths do not cross. The feasibility of two-way motor vehicle traffic on these development roads was evaluated qualitatively and may require a multi-phase signal at Grand River Avenue.



key recommendations

- a** Design Grand River Avenue to incorporate dedicated BRT lanes and on-street parking
- b** Activate public space in front of Meridian Mall with mixed-use development on corners to create a defined public space
- c** New public green south of Meridian Mall
- d** New development including small apartment and commercial buildings
- e** Parking garages on large parcels along corridor to allow consolidation of parking needs
- f** New buildings constructed close to the street with parking to the rear of the lot, accessed from the alley
- g** Additional civic spaces provide gathering places for neighborhood residents
- h** Additional pedestrian/ bicyclist path connectivity

Legend

- Existing Buildings
- Proposed Buildings
- Existing Aerial
- Civic Buildings
- Green/Open Spaces

Okemos Road

Newman Road

Meridian Mall

Grand River Avenue

Marsh Road

Hamilton Road



Meridian Center: Urban Design

Grand River Avenue through Meridian Township is a suburban road with commercial buildings set back behind parking lots. With the arrival of the BRT to this area, a new transit- and pedestrian-oriented future is envisioned. The right-of-way is redesigned to incorporate on-street parking, bicycle infrastructure (bike lane or cycle track), street trees and wider sidewalks.

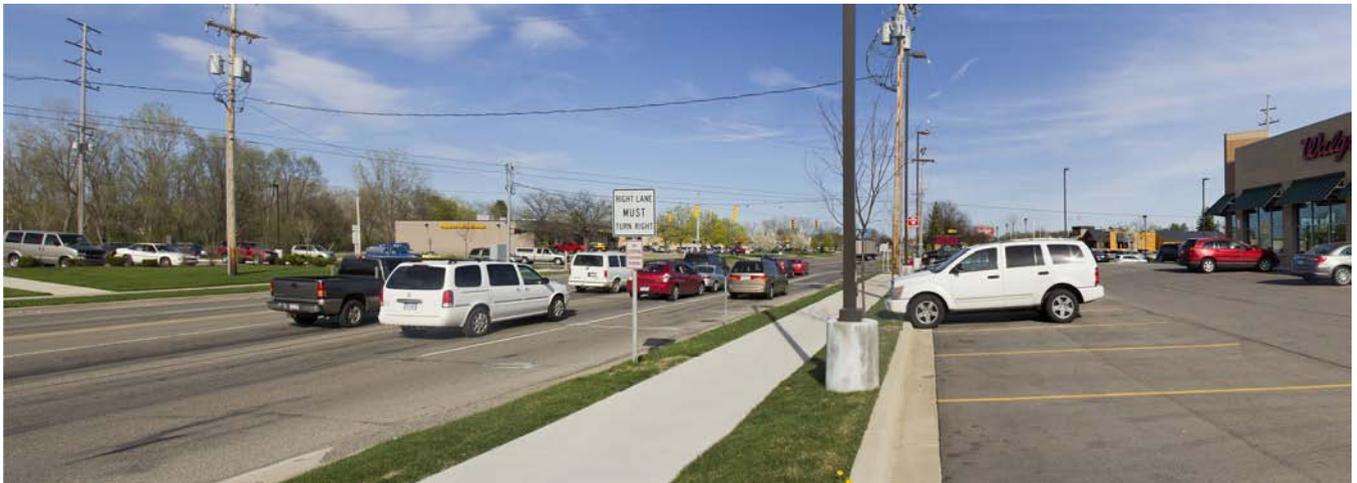
Public improvements will give property owners the confidence needed to make additional investments on their own properties. Smart rules to guide development on private properties can leverage those public investments to create an urban environment that follows the community's vision.



above: Future view of Grand River Avenue in the Meridian Center area. Infill development lines the sidewalks, creating a pedestrian-oriented environment. (Note: a cycle track at sidewalk level is shown here in place of the bike lane. Both options were evaluated during the charrette.)

right: Initial improvements in Meridian can happen with redesign of the street within the right-of-way: BRT lanes, street trees, wide sidewalks, a dedicated bicycle facility (bike lane), and on-street parking. These improvements will make feasible the envisioned changes on private properties to a street-oriented development form.

bottom right: Existing conditions, Grand River Avenue at Okemos Road.



Transit Village at the Mall

The first area studied for the potential BRT station was the Meridian Mall site north of Grand River Avenue. Today, large parking lots surround the mall and front Grand River Avenue.

The first phases of new development could occur in the existing landscape buffer. A new public square parallel to Grand River Avenue can accommodate the turn-around and station area for the BRT. New buildings front the square, defining the public space and establishing the pattern and form for new development in the area. Signage can be incorporated on new building facades to remind vehicular travelers of the mall beyond.

Additional phases can include a complete new block-and-street network to connect pedestrians and BRT users with the existing Mall. A mix of uses, including retail, commercial, and residential units, is envisioned. A new green provides a formal entry to the Macy's building. Parking is provided in mid-block locations, in surface lots initially, which may transition to structures when demand is high enough. New streets are designed to be walkable with street trees and on-street parking. Design speeds should be slow enough that bicyclists will feel safe sharing the roads with vehicles.



above: Potential infill / redevelopment at the Meridian Mall site, centered around the new BRT station / turn-around square located in the foreground.

right: Existing conditions, Meridian Mall site at Grand River Avenue in the Meridian Center.



Transit Village at Best Buy

The second area studied for the potential BRT station was the Best Buy site north of Grand River Avenue. Today, a large parking lot with outparcels faces Grand River Avenue, with the big box retailer located beyond.

The first phases of new development can focus on the outparcels. A new triangular green along Grand River Avenue can be designed for the turn-around and station area for the BRT.

As shown for the Mall site, additional phases can include a complete new block-and-street network to connect pedestrians and BRT users with the Best Buy. If, in the future, there is a desire to rethink the big-box format, this network could continue further into the site. Connectivity to surrounding parcels should be a priority to optimize use of the site for pedestrians, bicyclists, and well as vehicles.



above: Potential infill / redevelopment at the Best Buy site, centered around the new BRT station / turn-around square located in the foreground.

right: Existing conditions, Best Buy site at Grand River Avenue in the Meridian Center.



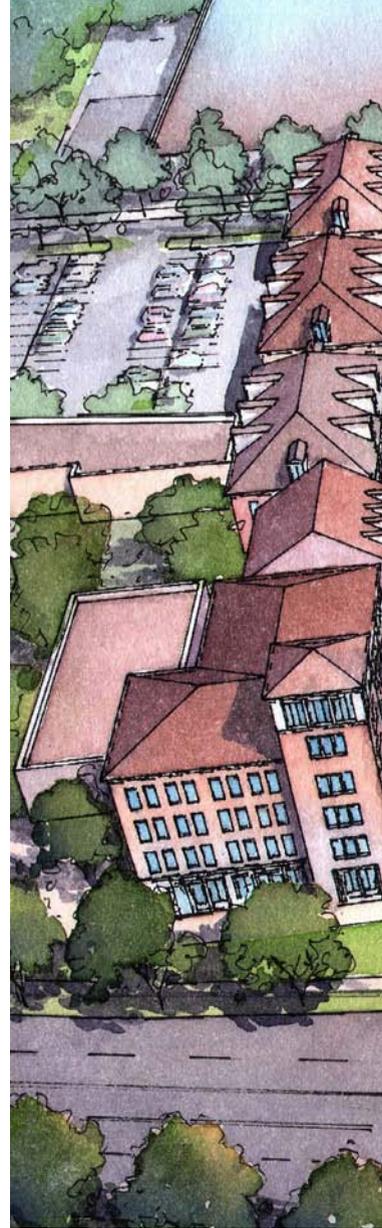
Transit Village at Meijer

The third area studied for the potential BRT station was the Meijer site south of Grand River Avenue. Today, a large green swale faces Grand River Avenue, with the big box retailer and parking lot located beyond. A series of phases show how the site can be improved with small amounts of strategic development. Similar phases could be used for each of the three Meridian sites.

If the BRT station was to be located here, the large green swale could be reconfigured as a formal green space. Although this space is open today, it is not utilized as a public space; lining it with trees, sidewalks, and streets rather than parking lots, and placing a civic building within will make it usable. The BRT turn-around can circulate this space. New buildings can front the civic green, giving it further definition and creating a sense of place.



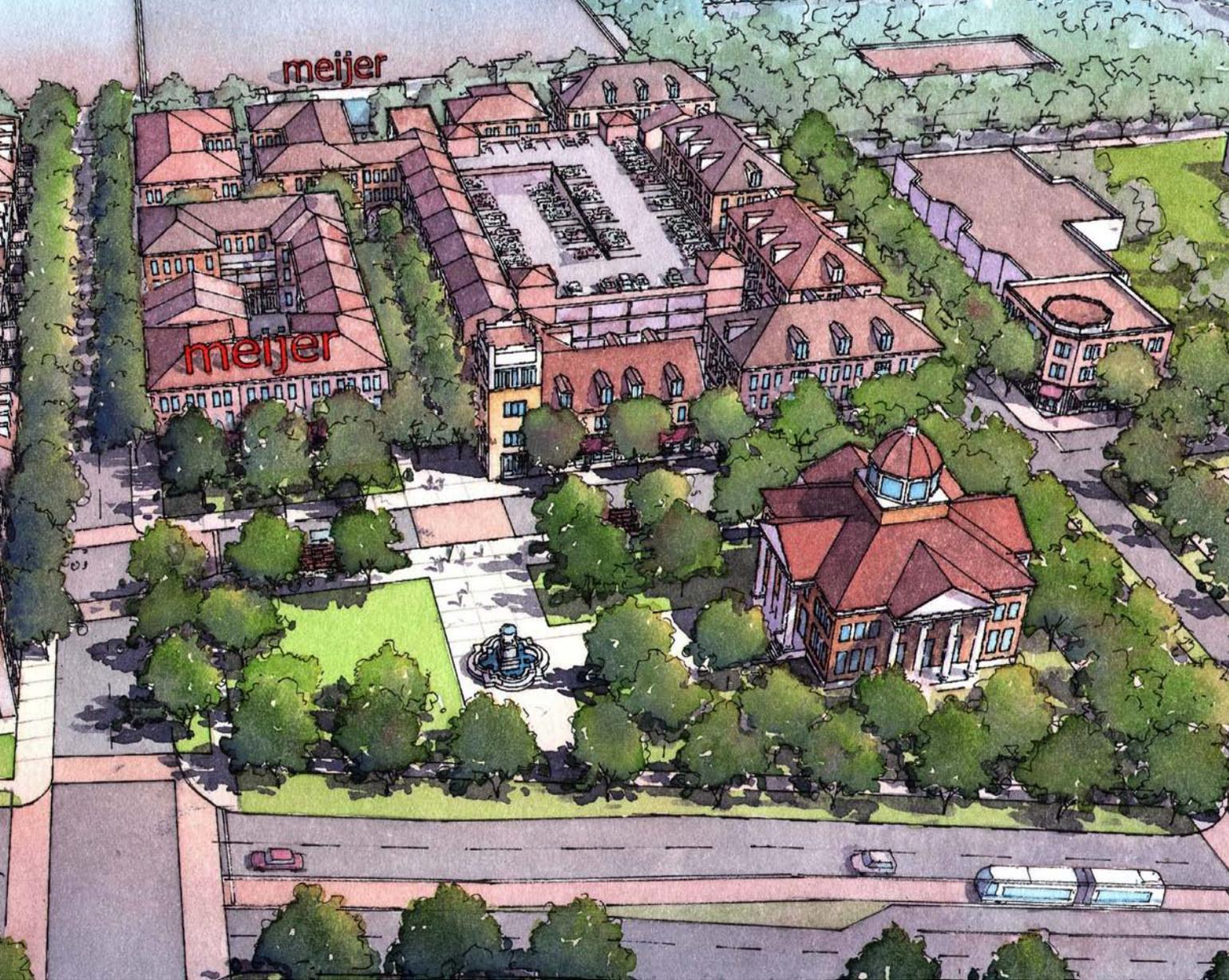
above: Existing Condition



below: Phase 1



As shown for the other two sites, future phases would include a complete walkable and bikeable block-and-street network, which can also be extended onto surrounding parcels as the area transforms.



above: Phase 3
Potential Infill / redevelopment at the Meijer site, centered around the new BRT station / turn-around civic green located in the foreground.

below: Phase 2



Grand River Avenue: Street Details

Today, Grand River Avenue in the Meridian Center area is a typical suburban roadway. The right-of-way is 120 feet, with 10 feet of space dedicated to utility poles for overhead power lines. The existing curb-to-curb width of the roadway is 64 feet. This includes two travel lanes in each direction and a two-way left-turn lane in the center. Eight foot sidewalks are set back from the roadway – this setback varies and is occasionally used for an additional turn lane.

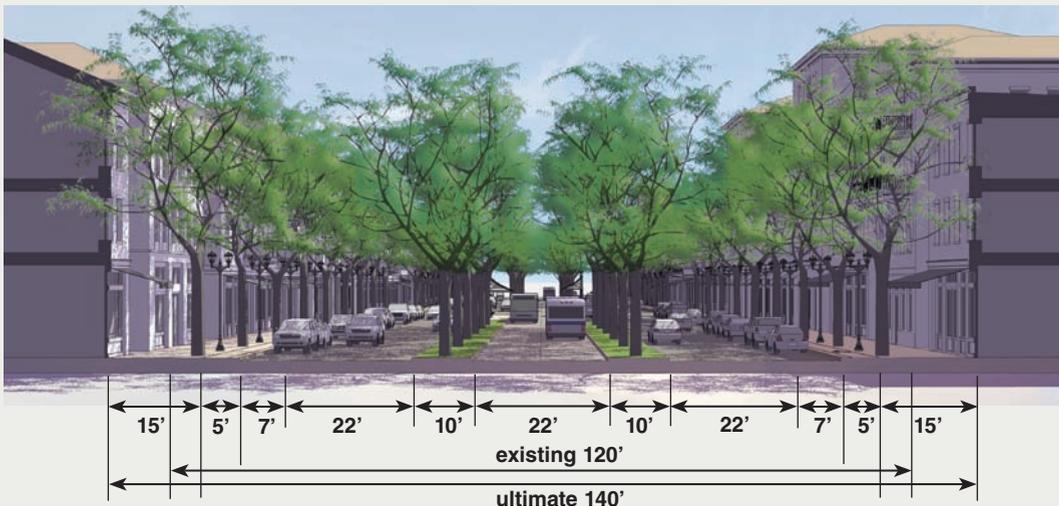
Cross-sections were developed based on the assumption that the 120 feet of right-of-way would be available – which would require utility work to bury the overhead power lines.

A 10-foot median is provided on either side of the BRT busway, replaced with left-turn storage at signalized intersections. Reserving this space in mid-block sections allows for left-turning vehicles to be accommodated at intersections, without requiring shifting vehicle travel lanes or the BRT busway. The intermittent medians also provide an opportunity for green space. An 8-foot on-street buffered bicycle lane is proposed in each direction.

The proposed cross-section in this area can be achieved in two phases. Phase 1 provides an intermediate solution, accommodating the BRT lanes, median, travel lanes, bike lane, and sidewalks in the existing 120 feet.

Phase 2 adds on-street parking and is based on the assumption that, as land uses change, additional width for sidewalks will be provided on private land to serve pedestrian-oriented shopfront buildings. In Phase 2, the 7-foot on-street buffered bicycle lane is replaced with on-street parking. While on-street parking is not necessary today, it would be an asset to new developments as the proposed land use and building form changes. The curb-to-curb width will not change, making this a potentially low cost upgrade. The bicycle lane is then moved behind the curb as its own protected space. This future condition would require the sidewalk and cycle track to be located on private land, on what is today part of the setback from the street. New buildings would be placed on the back side of this sidewalk; the proposed cross-section assumes 15-foot sidewalks, and thus a 140-foot ultimate right-of-way.

Grand River Avenue Design: Meridian Center



Expected Traffic Operations

Because no vehicle travel lanes are proposed to be removed in this section, motor vehicle operations are expected to remain at currently acceptable levels for the most part. However, the restriction of mid-block left turns due to the addition of the BRT busway and intermittent median would increase demand for left-turns at signalized intersections. In addition, the proposed cross-sections do not allow space for exclusive right turn lanes, the removal of which may introduce delay for through vehicles. Traffic simulation models were not available for this area, so anticipated motor vehicle level of service was not analyzed.



Grand River Avenue

form-based code recommendations

Character Zones

Five Character Zones have been established, each have varying urban and building form characteristics. Each Character Zone contains regulations calibrated to fit with the existing historic or envisioned future context in the three corridor focus areas.

These Character Zones have been mapped on the following pages to show the intended design and form of new buildings. These recommendations can be used by municipalities, property owners and developers to design and evaluate new development proposals, and incorporated into a new form-based code to guide new development.



zone

setbacks

Front Build-to Zone

Side Setback

Rear Setback

frontages & height

Required Frontage

Height (stories)

coverages & parking

Lot Coverage

Parking Locations

Minimum Open Space

building type & design

Non-Residential

Allowed Building Types

Residential

Allowed Building Types

First Floor Window Area

Upper Floor Window Area

Neighborhood Edge

20 - 60 feet

8 - 15 feet

10 feet minimum

25% - 50% minimum

1-2 stories

50% - 60%

Side, on-street, or rear yards

5% of gross floor area

Live/Work

Carriage, Detached House,
Cottage Court, Duplex

30% - 50%

30% - 50%

Neighborhood General

10 - 20 feet

0 - 12 feet

10 feet minimum

40% - 75% minimum

1-3 stories

60% - 70%

On-street or rear yards

5% of gross floor area

Live/Work

Carriage, Detached House,
Cottage Court, Duplex,
Rowhouse, Multi-plex

40% - 50%

30% - 40%



**Neighborhood
Urban**

5 - 15 feet

0 - 10 feet

5 feet minimum

50% - 75% minimum

2-4 stories

70% - 80%

On-street or rear yards

5% of gross floor area

Live/Work, Storefront Mixed-Use, Flex

Carriage, Detached House:
Compact, Duplex, Rowhouse,
Multi-plex

50% - 80%

30% - 40%



**Urban
Center**

0 - 10 feet

0 - 5 feet

5 feet minimum

70% - 80% minimum

2-6 stories

80% - 90%

On-street or rear yards

5% of gross floor area

Live/Work, Storefront Mixed-Use, Mid-Rise, Flex

Duplex, Rowhouse, Multi-plex, Stacked Flats

80% - 90%

30% - 40%



**Urban
Core**

0 - 5 feet

0 - 5 feet

5 feet minimum

70% - 80% minimum

2-8 stories

80% - 90%

On-street or rear yards

5% of gross floor area

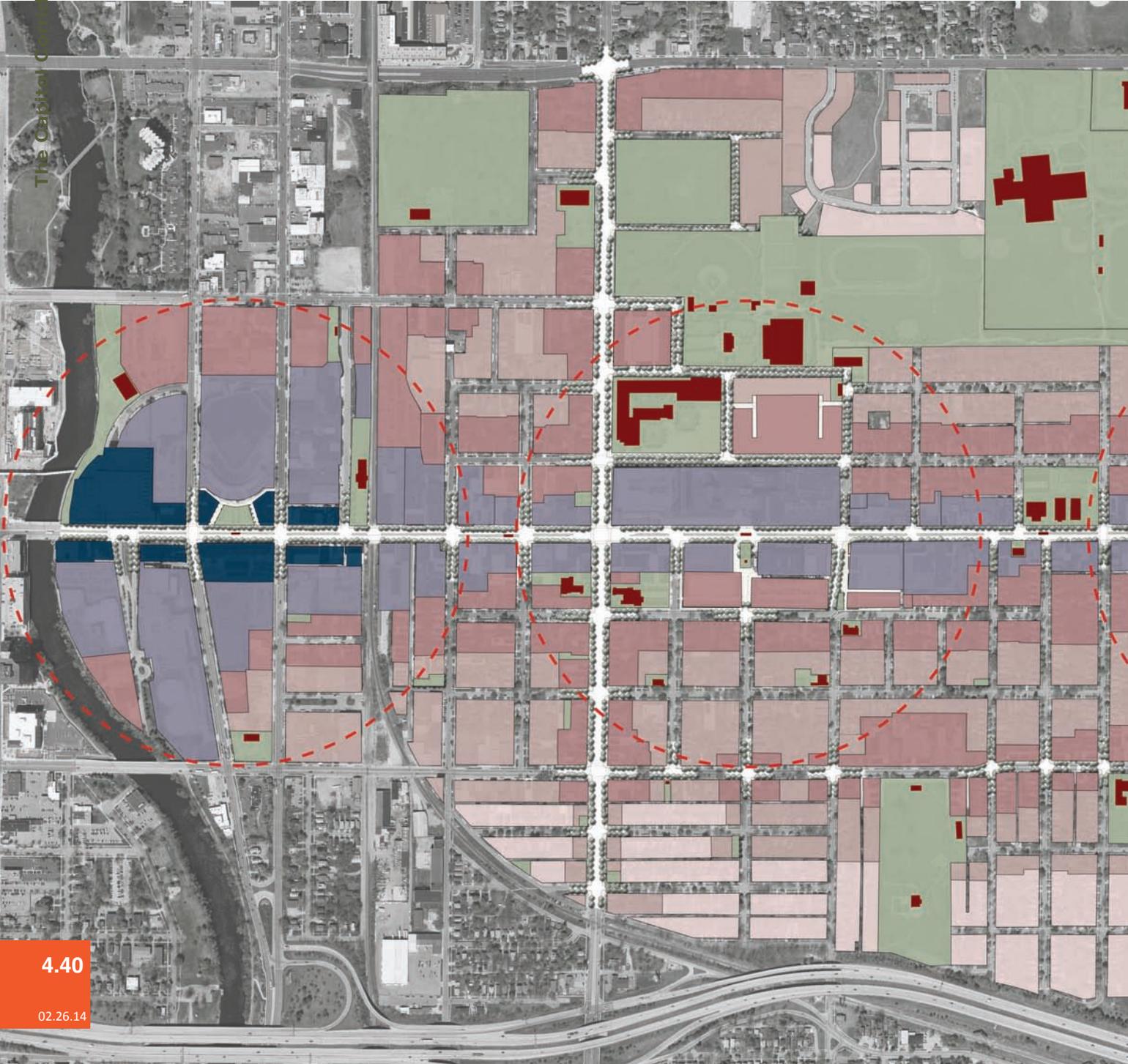
Storefront Mixed-Use,
Mid-Rise, Flex

Duplex, Rowhouse, Multi-plex, Stacked Flats

90%

40% - 50%

Character Zone Map for the Eastside District

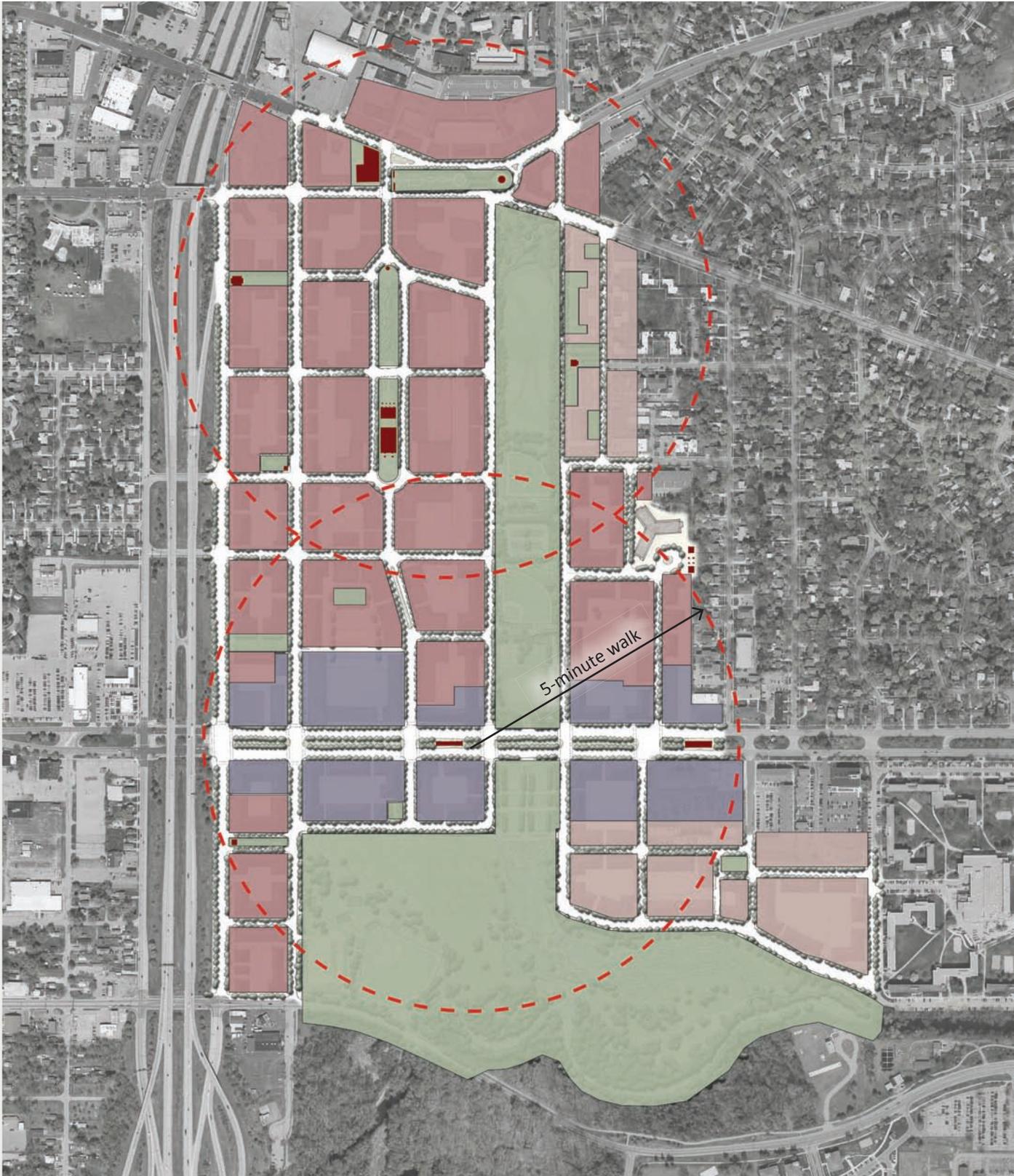


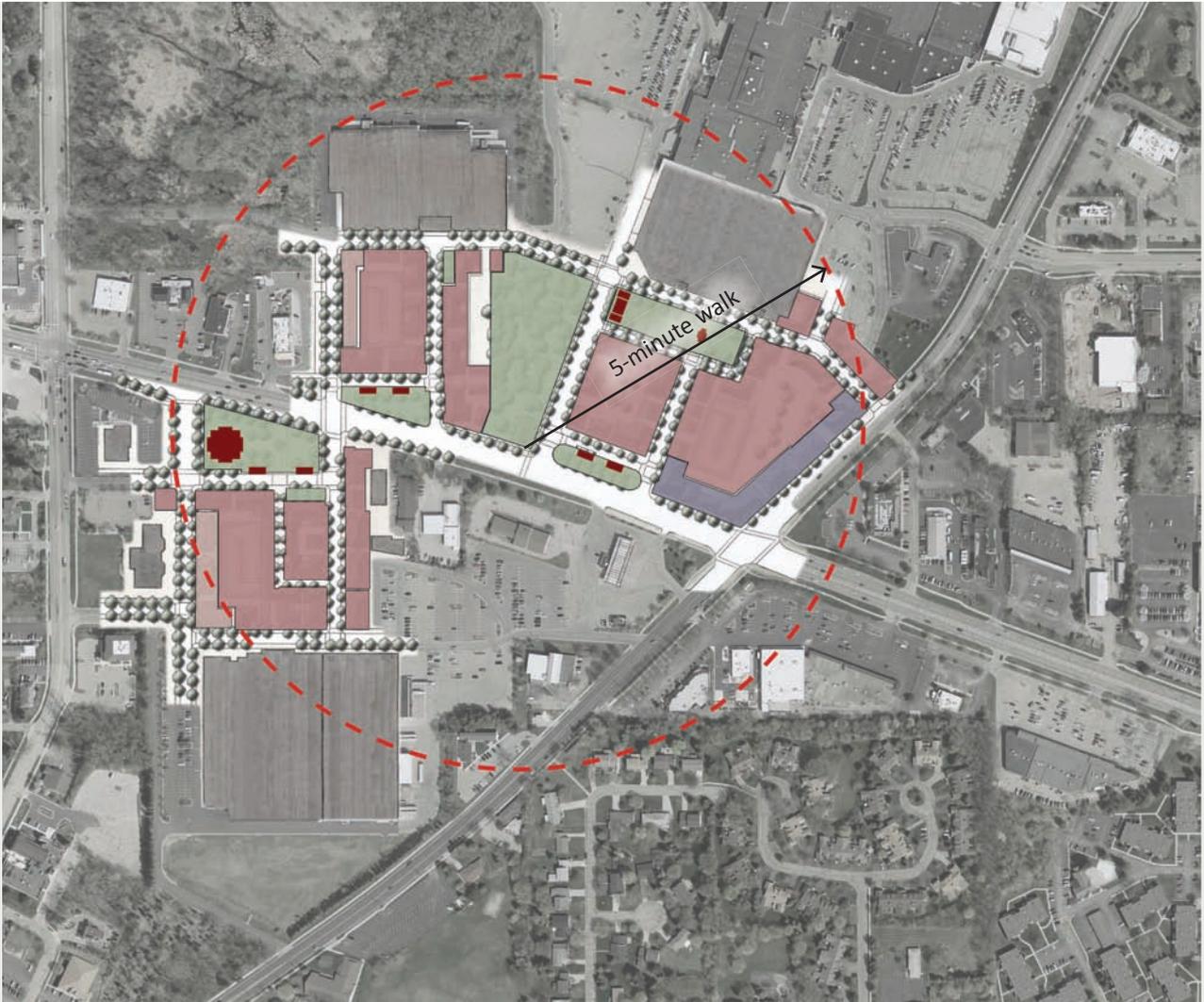


recommended character zones

-  Civic Space
-  Civic
-  Neighborhood Edge
-  Neighborhood General
-  Neighborhood Urban
-  Urban Center
-  Urban Core

Character Zone Map for Red Cedar / Frandor District and Meridian Center





recommended character zones

-  Civic Space
-  Civic
-  Neighborhood General
-  Neighborhood Urban
-  Urban Center

A variety of Building Types

Each Character Zone should encourage a variety of building types, with the least urban in the Edge and the most urban in the Core. The following photos demonstrate the potential diversity for corridor neighborhoods.

carriage house

small structure
residential or mixed-use
single-family
1-2 stories



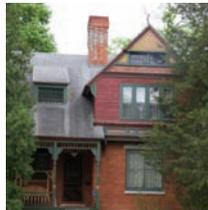
detached house: medium

medium-sized
single-family residential
1-3 stories



detached house: compact

small structure
single-family residential
1-3 stories



cottage court

multiple small structures
detached multi-family residential
1-3 stories



duplex

small- to medium-sized structure
multi-family residential
1-3 stories



rowhouse

small- to medium-sized structure
attached single-family residential
2-3 stories



multi-plex: small

medium-sized structure
multi-family
2-4 stories



multi-plex: large

medium- to large-sized structure
attached
3-5 stories



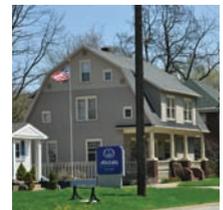
stacked flats

medium- to large-sized structure
multi-family residential
attached
4-6 stories



live/work

small- to medium-sized structure
single-family residential above business
detached or attached
1-3 stories



main street mixed-use

small- to medium-sized structure
mixed-use
detached
2-3 stories



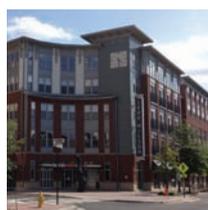
flex

medium- to large-sized structure
single- or mixed-use
structured parking
1-3 stories



mid-rise

medium- to large-sized structure
single- or mixed-use
structured parking
4-8 stories



Lighting Standards

Appropriately-scaled and attractive lighting is a critical component of creating walkable streets. Following are general recommendations for future improvements in the corridor, to create a safe and inviting environment.

Increasing illumination low to the ground in public parking lots, at building entries, public plazas and transit stops create a secure and comfortable place for pedestrians. Keeping the height of light fixtures low (less than fifteen feet) promotes a pedestrian scale in the public realm and minimizes light spill to adjoining properties. Closely spacing light fixtures in urban areas (less than thirty feet) provides appropriate levels of illumination; however, in Neighborhood General and Edge, close spacing may not be desirable or necessary.

A combination of pedestrian-scaled street light fixtures and intersection street light fixtures ensure a well lit street area and establishes a unifying element along the street. Placement of fixtures should be coordinated with the organization of sidewalks, landscaping, street trees, building entries, curb cuts, signage, etc.

On commercial streets, business owners are encouraged to assist with lighting the sidewalk and accent their business location by leaving display window and interior lighting on at night. Lighting should be designed in such a way as to prevent the direct view of the light source from neighboring residential areas.

Light fixtures that are downcast or low cut-off fixtures prevent glare and light pollution. In order to conserve energy and reduce long-term costs, energy-efficient lamps should be used for all public realm lighting.

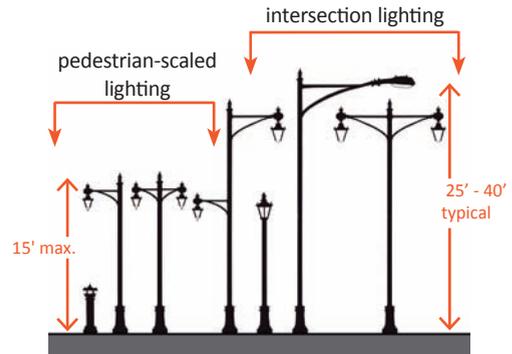
To increase safety, help geographic orientation and highlight an area's identity, below are elements encouraged to be lit:

Transit stops: People feel more secure when transit stops are well-lit. Lighting also draws attention to and encourages use of such amenities.

Edges: Edges of a park or plaza are lit to define and identify the space.

Architectural details: Lighting entrances, archways, cornices and columns can highlight the uniqueness of a building, or place. Lighting of building entrances also contributes to safety.

Focal points: Lighted sculptures, fountains, and towers in a neighborhood, especially those visible to pedestrians and vehicles, provide a form of wayfinding.



top: Types of street lighting

middle: Light poles can include armature that allows for hanging banners, flower baskets, artwork or other amenities

bottom: Shopfronts help to light the sidewalk

fixture configurations

Variety in character is good to establish identity and uniqueness. However, there should be consistency within each neighborhood or area in the corridor that creates a unifying scheme of illumination that is appropriate to the scale of the street and the level of nighttime activity. Lighting fixtures should be chosen appropriately for the Character Zone within which they are located. Below is a guide to select fixtures.

	Neighborhood Edge	Neighborhood General	Neighborhood Urban	Urban Center	Urban Core
pipe					
post					
column					
double column					

Street Types

History provides a rich menu of walkable street types that can be used to create successful cities and towns. The following is a palate of streets that can be used to guide the design of new streets and the redesign of existing streets in the Michigan Avenue / Grand River Avenue corridor. Although each street may be intended to carry different capacities and fit differing contexts, all are designed to accommodate many modes of travel (vehicles, pedestrian, bike), and can be used to create beautiful unique streets throughout the region. These street types can be included as part of a form-based code to guide new development.



type

application

Movement Type

Design Speed

Pedestrian Crossing Times

overall widths

Right-of-Way (ROW) Widths

Curb Face to Curb Face Widths

lanes

Traffic Lanes

Parking Lanes

Bicycle Lanes

Medians

edges

Curb Types

Planter Types

Landscape Types

Walkway Types

edges

Curb Radius

multiway boulevard

free (center lanes), slow (side access lanes)

35 mph (center lanes), 15 mph (side access lanes)

6.3 seconds - 12.6 seconds (center lanes)

110' - 160'

22' or 44' (center lanes) 17' or 24' (side access lanes)

two or four 11' center lanes, two 10' side access lanes

1 or 2 sides on each access lane at 7 feet marked

side access shared lane with sharrow markings

optional center median, side medians 6' minimum

6" raised curb

4' minimum continuous planter or 4'x4' planters

Trees at 30' o.c. average

6'-25' sidewalk, 6'-12' side median pathways

10' - 15'



promenade A

slow

20 mph

4.9 seconds - 6.9 seconds

100' - 120'

17' - 24' each side

two 10' lanes

1 or 2 sides on each lane at 7 feet marked

4' - 6' dedicated lanes on central median

42'-62' central median with promenade

6" raised curb

4' minimum continuous planter or 4'x4' planters

Trees at 30' o.c. average

6'-15' sidewalk, 12'-34' central promenade

10' - 15'



promenade B

slow

20 mph

4.9 seconds - 6.9 seconds

90' - 120'

17' - 24' each side

two 10' lanes

1 or 2 sides on each lane at 7 feet marked

shared lane with sharrow markings

18'-62' central promenade

6" raised curb

4' minimum continuous planter or 4'x4' planters

Trees at 30' o.c. average

6'-15' sidewalk, 18'-62' central promenade

10' - 15'



type

application

- Movement Type

- Design Speed

- Pedestrian Crossing Times

overall widths

- Right-of-Way (ROW) Width

- Curb Face to Curb Face Width

lanes

- Traffic Lanes

- Parking Lanes

- Bicycle Lanes

- Medians

edges

- Curb Types

- Planter Types

- Landscape Types

- Walkway Types

edges

- Curb Radius

boulevard / avenue A

- slow

- 25 mph

- 5.1 seconds or 8 seconds

- 80' - 120'

- 18' or 28' each side

- two or four 10' lanes

- 1 side on each side at 8 feet marked

- shared lane and shared pathway on central median

- 20'-60' central median with pathway

- 6" raised curb

- 4' minimum continuous planter or 4'x4' planters

- Trees at 30' o.c. average

- 6'-20' sidewalk, 6' minimum central pathway

- 10' - 15'



boulevard / avenue B

slow

25 mph

5.1 seconds or 8 seconds

66' - 100'

18' or 28' each side

two or four 10' lanes

1 side on each side at 8 feet marked
shared lane with sharrow markings

10'-30' central median

6" raised curb

4' minimum continuous planter or 4'x4' planters

Trees at 30' o.c. average

6'-20' sidewalk

10' - 15'



main street / neighborhood street A

slow

25 mph

10.3 seconds

66' - 80'

34'

two 10' lanes

2 sides at 7 feet marked
two 6' parking protected lanes

optional

4" raised curb and 2" bike lane rollover curb

4'x4' planters

Trees at 30' o.c. average

10'-17' sidewalk

10' - 15'



type

application

- Movement Type

- Design Speed

- Pedestrian Crossing Times

overall widths

- Right-of-Way (ROW) Width

- Curb Face to Curb Face Width

lanes

- Traffic Lanes

- Parking Lanes

- Bicycle Lanes

- Medians

edges

- Curb Types

- Planter Types

- Landscape Types

- Walkway Types

edges

- Curb Radius

main street / neighborhood street B

- slow

- 25 mph

- 10.3 seconds

- 60' - 70'

- 36'

- two 10' lanes

- 2 sides at 8 feet marked

- shared lane with sharrow markings

- none

- 6" raised curb or swale

- 4' minimum continuous planter or 4'x4' planters

- Trees at 30' o.c. average

- 12'-17' sidewalk

- 10' - 15'



yield street A

neighborhood street

yield

slow

15 mph

20 mph

8 seconds

8 seconds

50' - 60'

50' - 60'

28'

28'

28' yield lane with parking

two 10' lanes

2 sides unmarked

1 side unmarked

shared lane

shared lanes with sharrow markings

none

none

6" raised curb or swale

6" raised curb or swale

4' minimum continuous planter or 4'x4' planters

4' minimum continuous planter or 4'x4' planters

Trees at 30' o.c. average

Trees at 30' o.c. average

5'-21' sidewalk

5'-21' sidewalk

10' - 15'

10' - 15'



type

application

- Movement Type
- Design Speed
- Pedestrian Crossing Times

overall widths

- Right-of-Way (ROW) Width
- Curb Face to Curb Face Width

lanes

- Traffic Lanes
- Parking Lanes
- Bicycle Lanes
- Medians

edges

- Curb Types
- Planter Types
- Landscape Types
- Walkway Types

edges

- Curb Radius

yield street B

- yield
- 15 mph
- 6.3 seconds
- 40' - 50'
- 22'
- 22' yield lane with parking
- 1 side unmarked
- shared lane
- none
- 6" raised curb
- 4' minimum continuous planter or 4'x4' planters
- trees at 30' o.c. average
- 5'-14' sidewalk
- 10' - 15'



skinny street A

slow

20 mph

6.3 seconds

40' - 50'

22'

one 10' lane

1 side unmarked

shared lane and contraflow bike lane

none

6" raised curb or swale

4' minimum continuous planter or 4'x4' planters

trees at 30' o.c. average

5'-14' sidewalk

10' - 15'



skinny street B

slow

15 mph

4.6-5.1 seconds

30' - 40'

16' - 18'

one 9'-11' lane

1 side unmarked

shared lane

none

6" raised curb

optional 4'x4' planters

optional trees at 30' o.c. average

5'-12' sidewalk

10' - 15'



type

application

Movement Type

Design Speed

Pedestrian Crossing Times

overall widths

Right-of-Way (ROW) Width

Curb Face to Curb Face Width

lanes

Traffic Lanes

Parking Lanes

Bicycle Lanes

Medians

edges

Curb Types

Planter Types

Landscape Types

Walkway Types

edges

Curb Radius

skinny street C

slow

15 mph

2.6 - 3.1 seconds

20' - 30'

9'-11'

one 9'-11' lane

none

shared lane

none

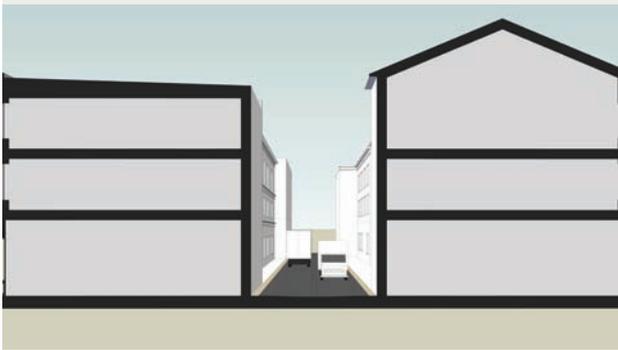
6" raised curb

optional 4'x4' planters

optional trees at 30' o.c. average

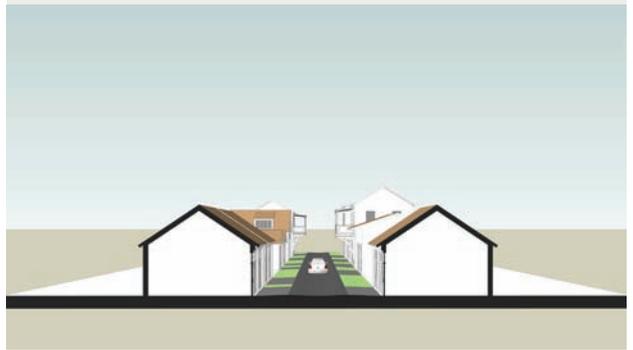
5'-12' sidewalk

10' - 15'



alley

slow
10 mph
n/a
20' - 25'
18' - 25'
n/a
n/a
n/a
n/a
curb
n/a
optional trees
n/a
10'



lane

slow
10 mph
n/a
20' - 25'
12' maximum
n/a
n/a
n/a
n/a
swale
n/a
optional trees
n/a
10'

5

next steps

implementation strategy

5.2

near-term recommendations

5.4

long-term recommendations

5.10



implementation strategy

This section describes recommended strategies and next steps to realize the vision for the corridor and focus areas described in the previous chapter's plans and illustrations. Realizing the vision will require a mixture of public improvements and policy adjustments as well as future investment by individual property owners and developers.

The implementation strategies focus on leveraging the corridor's strengths by creating a framework to establish focused long term goals, target public incentives to the corridor, prioritize physical infrastructure investments, and enhance local and regional partnerships and overall organizational capacity to proactively plan, monitor, and act. The strategies seek to build value over time through the following process:

- 1. Encourage development in the corridor's strongest market locations in order to create appealing, complete, walkable neighborhoods and increase desirability of corridor locations overall.** This corridor features a number of market and economic strengths, but the total regional demand for additional housing, office, and retail is limited. Actions by the public sector, such as the addition of Bus Rapid Transit and reforming of development regulations will help to further improve the appeal for this corridor. However, these tools alone will not fundamentally alter the real estate market in the region and the corridor's primary role as an institutional employment and retail center. Public investments and incentives should be targeted to knowledge-based business and missing middle housing in high-potential corridor locations for greatest impact.
- 2. Enhance local organizational capacity** in order to improve information sharing, joint capacity to address common concerns, and consensus regarding the long-term vision for the area.
- 3. Implement detailed sub-area plans to provide prioritization of public investments, and clear intent and development guidance for private sector developers and employers.** In the areas where detailed plans have been created, an effort should be undertaken to ensure all zoning regulations, plans, and economic development efforts are in agreement. Additional planning should be completed for other sub-areas along the corridor. These plans will allow municipalities and economic development organizations to proactively address needs and respond to new market opportunities, and are a key precondition for successful public/private partnerships by creating greater certainty, lowering risk, and providing greater leverage for all parties.
- 4. Focus on the near term with an eye to the long term.** It is important to accomplish initial improvements, however small, in the near term; once completed, this change can be used as a demonstration to help build momentum for private investment and be pointed to as an example of best practice. Ideally, near-term demonstration projects should be phased to form a complete public space (for example, all sides of a new green or plaza, all corners of an intersection, etc.) to yield the greatest visual impact. New development should contain a mixture of uses, including housing for multiple income levels; these "colonists" can demonstrate the viability of new neighborhoods in previously commercial-only locations, and their discretionary income will help support local businesses. Most importantly, new development should suggest what the larger area will eventually look like, inspiring additional investment.



FIFTH THIRD BANK

STADIUM DISTRICT

near-term recommendations

The near-term recommendations describe policy actions and regulatory changes to be undertaken by the public sector to achieve the vision for the Michigan Avenue/Grand River Avenue corridor. There are also implementation strategies to encourage initial housing and mixed-use developments in the near term (a two to three year timeframe) while developing long-term strategies and growing institutional capacity to target growth to the corridor and its neighborhoods. Recommendations are broken out by general corridor-wide strategies and focus area strategies.

Corridor-Wide

The following actions can be undertaken immediately to begin to realize the vision defined for the corridor:

Adopt the vision

The Capitol Corridor report establishes a strong foundation of vision cornerstones and design principles to guide future infill, redevelopment, and preservation along the corridor. A next logical step would be for the main ideas of the vision to be adopted, in concept, by the representative municipalities along the corridor. This will send an important message to residents, property owners, and investors that the municipalities and community support the vision and intend to implement the main concepts. This report can be used as a tool to evaluate new development proposals in the corridor for consistency with the community vision.

Revise regulatory framework

Municipalities should review and revise their Comprehensive Plans and land development regulations, if needed, to conform with the vision and goals described for the corridor. The community described a desire for walkable, sustainable neighborhood forms, including pedestrian- and bike-friendly street design, street-oriented building types with doors and windows to activate sidewalks, and connected networks of streets and open spaces. Design details, including desired building massing and setback locations for new/ infill development within the focus areas, and appropriate dimensions for new or redesigned streets, are included in Chapter 4. In the eastern corridor, the vision is for preservation of long views across open space in rural areas, and infill and restoration of the historic towns. Municipalities should ensure their regulatory framework is consistent with, allows and encourages the type of development envisioned.

Pursue a form-based code approach

Beyond simply making the type of development envisioned possible, a form-based code prescribes specific design details to ensure new development follows the community vision. By establishing clear standards that support community goals and provide a visual guide to design criteria, people can be assured that new development will be beneficial, and not harmful, to neighborhood character.

A form-based code is a land development regulatory tool that places a primary emphasis on the physical form of the built environment with the end goal of producing a specific community character. Conventional zoning strictly controls land use, through abstract regulatory statistics, which can result in very different physical environments. The root principle of form-based coding is that design is more important than land use. Simple and clear graphic prescriptions for building height, how a building is placed on the site, and building elements (such as location of doors, windows, etc.) are used to control development. Land use is not ignored, but regulated using broader parameters that allow flexibility to respond to market conditions while restricting the locations of certain undesirable combinations of uses.

Many form-based codes also streamline the development review and approvals process. Since the code regulations are created using detailed input from the community, there is already consensus on the form of development desired; new development following the rules can be approved by-right using a shortened review process. This can be an incentive for new development, removing the uncertainty and some of the expense associated with the review and approvals process.

The City of Lansing is currently in the initial stages of pursuing a form-based zoning approach; the design recommendations in Chapter 4 can be integrated into that new regulatory framework to guide new development in the Eastside and Red Cedar/ Frandor districts. In addition, other areas in the corridor should pursue a form-based zoning approach to proactively shape the form of new development according to the community vision.

Unlock potential for transformational infill and redevelopment

At the corridor-wide level, municipalities, economic development agencies, state agencies, and other public, private, and institutional stakeholders should coordinate their efforts targeted to the corridor to unlock transformational opportunities. This directed attention can ensure that the corridor's stronger market locations attract a high share of regional employment and housing growth, thus reinforcing the value of the entire corridor for its users and improving its value over time.

Increase collaboration among the public sector, development community, and major corridor institutions and businesses. Coordination and collaboration among public sector, developers, and major corridor institutions and businesses will enhance opportunities to share information, achieve consensus on corridor needs/activities/priorities, and build standing capacity to leverage new opportunities. The Tri-County Regional Planning Commission appears well-positioned to focus and coordinate attention on the corridor. TCRPC is already coordinating regional efforts related to the HUD Sustainable Communities grant and is critical in securing funding for the BRT construction. Moving forward, TCRPC can convene the key parties, as necessary, to ensure that the many small incremental decisions made by many different entities will add up to a coherent, transit-oriented development pattern.

Target economic and real estate development incentives to the corridor. Unlocking the corridor's transformation potential will require targeted use of economic development and development incentives. A number of these programs have been used by developments along the corridor, including the Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Act, Brownfield Tax Increment Financing, Ingham County Land Bank, and Neighborhood Enterprise Zone. Targeting of incentives must occur in conjunction with the multitude of agencies that administer or direct these programs, including state departments, regional and municipal economic development offices, the county, local improvement and development authorities, etc.

Consider formation of local business improvement districts and additional improvement authorities at specific locations along the corridor, when feasible.

Local business improvement districts and development/improvement authorities provide a means of re-directing targeted assistance and attention to specific corridor areas. Several examples of these organizations already operate along the corridor, including the East Lansing Downtown Development Authority, Downtown Lansing Inc., Meridian Township Downtown Development Authority (Downtown Okemos), and Michigan Avenue Corridor Improvement Authority. When applicable, new organizations and authorities should be formed to provide an additional source of funding and local control to encourage development. For example, the existing retail concentration between Sparrow Hospital and U.S. 127 is starting to attract more young households who can support the ongoing retail activity. However, both the residential and retail parts of the neighborhood require more proactive support to succeed.

Coordinate proposed public infrastructure improvements with capital improvement projects

The vision for Michigan Avenue / Grand River Avenue includes a variety of proposed improvements to infrastructure. These include planting street trees, restoring a continuous network of sidewalks, enhancing bike facilities by adding marked paths and sharrows, and adding on-street parking in mixed-use areas. In some cases, the ideas voiced by charrette participants reflect improvements already in the planning stages; in other instances, there are new ideas to be considered.

Municipalities should review their planned capital improvement projects and budgets, and look for opportunities to implement the goals of this planning process. For example, the Town of Webberville has streetscape improvements planned to upgrade its stormwater drainage. This will include alterations to roadways to accommodate new culverts and moving driveway locations; while this street work is ongoing, it could be an opportunity to also repair missing links in the sidewalk network, and replace missing street trees to restore a full canopy along neighborhood streets.

Capitalize on opportunity of BRT

The implementation of the bus rapid transit system in the corridor is a great opportunity to increase mobility options, define corridor identity, and stimulate new transit-oriented development. CATA, community members and stakeholders should continue to work together to ensure the implementation details capitalize on this important investment. As plans for the reconfiguration of Michigan Avenue and station areas designs are further detailed through engineering and design, they should be reviewed for consistency with the objectives and recommendations of this document. Walkable streets, and design that positively contributes to identity and sense of place in each district are the goal.

Support Cultural Tourism

During the first charrette, a meeting was held to discuss integration of cultural arts with the corridor vision. There are important initiatives in the planning stages, including a mapping of historic and cultural assets in the corridor; the design of walking tours to make these resources more accessible to community members and visitors (including the use of QR codes and smart phone technology to explain the history or significance of each stop); and coordination between the Greater Lansing Convention and Visitors Bureau and CATA to promote walking tours at key transit stops. These important efforts should be supported through implementation by representative municipalities and agencies. Implementing the corridor vision for preservation and appropriate infill in historic areas, and for improving the pedestrian and bicyclist experience, can further strengthen these efforts.

Utilize Sustainable Energy Technologies

An important part of planning for a sustainable future is utilizing sustainable energy options with improvements and as part of new development. During both charrettes, the planning team met with local technical experts and advocates to discuss ways in which sustainable energy could be part of the corridor design vision. Ideas discussed included incorporating energy generation as a part of public improvement projects (for example, placing solar panels at planned BRT stations or on light fixtures); requiring conformance with LEED or other similar standards for new development; encouraging the largest energy users in the corridor (currently institutions such as the hospital and state offices) to convert part of their consumption to alternative sources; and utilizing district energy solutions. There are funding incentives available for new development; increased outreach and education about these resources is needed so they can be fully utilized.

Share progress and lessons learned

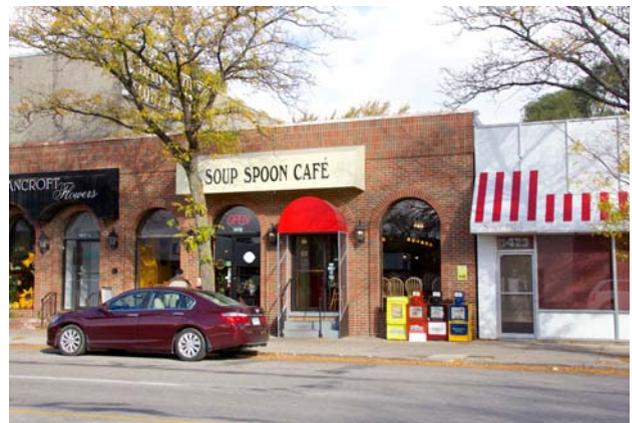
Meetings among staff members of the many municipalities along the corridor should be organized at regularly-scheduled intervals to discuss implementation issues uncovered and how they were resolved, new opportunities realized, and progress made. The sharing of information and experience among peers in different jurisdictions will facilitate further improvements and regulatory change. Regular meetings to discuss progress and lessons learned are a fun and interactive way to keep implementation of the corridor vision flourishing and a top priority.

Eastside District

The Eastside District, in conjunction with the Stadium District, is a unique opportunity to dramatically transform the immediate area and potentially shift perception of the corridor as a whole. The area already features a number of promising assets. It functions as a notable gateway between Downtown Lansing and the rest of the corridor. Significant public assistance has been targeted to the Stadium District, including construction of the Cooley Law School Stadium and development assistance or partnerships for construction of the Stadium District mixed-use building, rehabilitated buildings along Michigan Avenue, and construction of a new Lansing Farmers Market building. Sparrow Hospital is a significant institutional anchor with a long-term vested interest in the quality of the area.

Immediate strategies are to:

1. Continue building market momentum through public assistance, and for public sector and economic development institutions to proactively collaborate and assist Sparrow Hospital in developing its properties while also helping to transform the surrounding area.
2. Pursue public-private assistance actions including deployment of land bank sites for development, use of development incentive programs, and adoption of a form-based code to clarify development options in the area.
3. Explore district parking solutions which consolidate neighborhood parking resources on sites large enough to accommodate public lots and garages, and lessen parking requirements on individual sites, making infill on small parcels possible.
4. Create an inventory of vacant land and buildings to facilitate infill by targeting new users and promoting the inventoried opportunities to new investors.
5. Implement identified connectivity and infrastructure improvements to encourage pedestrian and bicycle circulation in the area, particularly across Michigan Avenue.



top: infill opportunity site on Sparrow Hospital property

middle: new development along Michigan Avenue

bottom: existing buildings in the Eastside District

Red Cedar/ Frandor District

The Red Cedar/ Frandor District features excellent regional access via U.S. 127, large amounts of developable land at former automobile dealerships and the former Red Cedar golf course, and proven development interest. This is evident in the development of the Gillespie “Midtown” project and the public-private partnership forming to develop the old Red Cedar golf course. Proximity to Michigan State University further heightens housing demand in this area.

Immediate strategies for this area are to:

1. Continue public sector support for development proposals at key sites.
2. Confirm (and make contingent public sector support of) early projects meet the physical design standards that will ensure creation of an urban, transit-oriented neighborhood, and establish an appropriate precedent for future development.
3. Ensure new development makes accommodations for street and open space connectivity in future phases, including street and/or alley stub-outs in accordance with the illustrative plan.
4. Implement identified pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and amenity improvements.
5. When possible, design necessary stormwater management facilities to also serve as civic art; this includes the design of swales, rain gardens, and other retention facilities incorporated as amenities in street and open space design.
6. Form inter-organizational capacity for information sharing and shared action to open dialog and potentially provide a funding source for district-wide maintenance and improvements.

Meridian Center

Development opportunities in the Meridian Center area are uniquely challenging. This segment of the corridor is surrounded by affluent communities, but development patterns along the corridor are large-scale auto-oriented uses that can be difficult to adapt to a pedestrian- and transit-oriented environment. The large-scale retail stores and shopping centers have potentially under-utilized land that is currently being used for large setbacks and parking lots, yet these stores’ and centers’ financial models in the current physical environment depend on this parking and visibility from customers in automobiles to be successful. This area is the planned beginning/ end of the line for the bus rapid transit, which presents an opportunity for new transit-oriented development and a park and ride facility; but the exact location for the station and turn-around has not yet been determined.

The most immediate near-term transformational development opportunities – and therefore strategies – may be targeted to Downtown Okemos. This small area retains a historic, if under-utilized, urban fabric within walking distance of Grand River Avenue. A Downtown Okemos development authority is already in place, as well as a “Downtown Site Plan” finalized in March 2009. Modest new development projects have been constructed in the area. Small scale successful development in this area, although not directly on the bus corridor, can help transform the overall image of the larger area and start to build greater market certainty about the potential for transformative development directly along the corridor.

The overarching strategy for the Meridian Mall area is to begin long-range planning for development of larger scale sites along the corridor. Early planning efforts should focus on building the infrastructure necessary to support greater pedestrian and bike connectivity so that as new development happens on these sites, the entire area can evolve into a multi-modal district. This includes review and revision of the regulatory structure to permit, and encourage/ require new development to include street-oriented building forms, a walkable network of streets and blocks, new community open spaces, and connectivity with surrounding parcels. Setbacks or build-to locations for new buildings along Grand River Avenue should be coordinated with the long-range vision for streetscape design outlined in Chapter 4, to ensure new buildings are properly oriented to the street.



long-term recommendations

This section recommends long-term actions beyond the two to three year timeframe:

Prioritize long-term strategies

Based on the work performed by the planning team, the next steps are to continue to establish and prioritize long-term strategies for corridor sub-areas. These strategies should prioritize infrastructure and connectivity improvements, and identify specific development opportunity sites. Ideally these strategies should be created by the individual jurisdictions in cooperation with regional economic development organizations and local stakeholders.

Continue implementation activities

The continued implementation of focus area plans along the corridor will increase opportunities to proactively undertake new public infrastructure projects and public-private development to create comprehensive neighborhoods.

The plans will help set expectations to align interests, vision, and outcomes while also being prepared for new market opportunities. Completion of public infrastructure improvements will create basic infrastructure that enables bicycle and pedestrian access and guides buildout of development opportunities. Over time, as public improvements are put into place, and the new street-oriented urban form becomes evident, additional change and investment will be fueled. These plans will enable weaker market areas of the corridor to respond as development activity and momentum spread from the corridor's strongest nodes.

Evaluate progress

At regular intervals (perhaps each 3 to 5 years), an evaluation should be conducted to check implementation progress, successes and failures. This evaluation should be led by TCRPC, with participation from representative municipalities and agencies, Michigan State University and other key stakeholders. The near-term strategies should be evaluated for effectiveness and re-prioritized for the next term. Members of the planning team could be invited to participate in the evaluation. New strategies can be developed, informed by experience and progress to date. *The Capitol Corridor* vision should be a "living" plan that is updated and used to guide future growth in sustainable forms for years to come.