

From: [Linda Hodor](#)
To: [Dianne Massa](#)
Subject: Northville Downs
Date: Tuesday, May 10, 2022 3:39:37 PM

Dear Clerk Massa:

Please find below a letter we would like included in the materials to be considered at the next Northville Downs Redevelopment Committee meeting.

Thank you,

Linda and Daniel Hodor

Dear Members of the Northville Downs Redevelopment Committee:

In further considering the proposed plans for Northville Downs and following recent town hall meetings and community input, one idea that may offer a solid property tax base future for the city while maintaining the unique features of downtown Northville is a single family home development of historical and rural style architectural, upscale homes that are not in a subdivision but situated along tree-lined, well landscaped streets, somewhat like Gross Pointe or Birmingham or northern Royal Oak, surrounded by community park space and featuring larger lot sizes. A beautiful local example is Grace Street, at 8 Mile and Center Street in Northville where the old and new merge in a unique architectural fusion of historical and rural style home elevations.

Following are a few thoughts regarding other aspects of the current redevelopment proposals:

COMMERCIAL/RETAIL SPACE:

Many retailers throughout metro Detroit continue to struggle in this economy, and many retail and office storefronts remain vacant and non-income producing. Adding more commercial space in downtown Northville does not seem practical in this challenging business environment. Abundant shopping and dining venues already exist throughout Northville and its bordering cities.

MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING:

Regarding townhouse, row house, and apartment development proposals, it appears that multi-family housing is already quite abundant throughout the Northville, Novi, Plymouth and Livonia areas. Adding more cookie-cutter style, population-dense, multi-family housing units and more unsightly parking lots or structures in the downtown Northville area will only add to traffic congestion and put downward pressure on the surrounding single-family home property values and deteriorate the solid tax base they provide.

SUMMARY:

We think the developer could oversee a panel of custom home builders with historical and rural style architectural design proposals to fill the high demand by individual home buyers seeking to invest in a long term future in Northville. There is a continued shortage of single family homes on the market, and we believe a custom home, non-subdivision development as

described in the first paragraph above would sell faster than they can build them.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda and Daniel Hodor

47738 Dunhill Court
Northville, MI 48067

Sent from my iPhone

May 10, 2022

To: Northville City Planning Commission
Subject: Down's Development Street and Traffic Deliberations

The plan to efficiently manage and disburse the additional traffic is an extremely important one as part of your deliberations leading to approval of the PUD. I have several personal passions regarding this topic which I would like to share with you for consideration as part of your deliberations. Thank you all for your time and efforts as you plot the future of our special community.

Cady Street Shopping District

The plan to make Cady Street a vibrant shopping district seems to be for most, a mainstay of the success of the entire Down's Development. I am disappointed that the Traffic Studies prepared for the project and summarily presented at the May 3rd meeting which have focused on the numbers with little narrative about the contributing root cause of our local traffic condition.

We only have only one North-South pass way through the city, Center Street with Wing Street providing some opportunity to divert through traffic. Similarly for East-West traffic we have Main Street, with Dunlap efficiently rerouting some through traffic and directing traffic to major parking lots. Center, Main Street, and Wing all provide desirable parallel parking which is part of the character of our town. These streets are all relatively narrow for the intended traffic flows and parallel parking significantly contributes to traffic delays as patrons attempt to park. Traffic is even delayed in the opposite direction as drivers swing widely into the oncoming traffic lane while parking, causing those drivers to stop unsure of how wide their arc might be creating additional delays. Obviously, these conditions are an integral part of our city and it's character that few would propose to change. The question at hand is how to utilize the new Down's Development in a way that can best compensate for these shortcomings while improving the ability to efficiently disburse both current traffic while providing for the anticipated increase in traffic from the Downs Development itself.

Cady Street needs to be a significant bypass to Main Street as well as it's own destination.

- ***It needs to be able handle traffic flow similar to Dunlop*** (which primarily only has parking on one side). Therefore it should be wider than the existing surrounding streets to handle the flow, and to allow for less disruptions during parallel parking. Bike lanes in the street could perhaps help in a dual role in this regard, but the total impact of bike lanes is less well understood. IMO the target width should be like the east end of Cady is significantly wider compared to the first than block adjacent to Center.
- ***To be effective as a significant bypass Cady needs a designated efficient entry/exit from the East.*** (Northville Rd.) The proposed extension of widened Cady past Griswold to Main/Northville Rd is seen as highly desirable.
- ***The Intersection of Cady and Center must have some traffic control.*** A 4 way stop sign is a minimum. I see the need for a traffic control here to be equal to those along West at Cady, Main, and Dunlop which already have signs. I was appalled at the May 3rd meeting that explained that traffic volume would not warrant either a light or stop sign here. Pre-Covid without any traffic control, I would have labeled this the most dangerous intersection with the Central Business District. As a resident of the South West corner of the city I previously avoided this intersection whenever possible due to the traffic volume and limited sight lines. With the stop signs in place, I now use it all the time, particularly when travelling to the 8Mile/Haggerty area via Griswold. With effective traffic control Cady Street can provide an efficient alternate bypass to the Main Street/Center Street intersection. In addition, traffic control here would help facilitate an increase in pedestrian traffic across Main as patrons utilize the parking lot on the south-west corner when shopping along Cady
- ***Need to plan ahead for a future elimination of the Offset Intersection at Cady and Center.*** Though a bit beyond the scope of the PUD, this offset contributes to the intersection danger due to driver confusion. Since travelling this intersection more frequently with the stop sign in place, I am much more aware of the hazardous condition and have witnessed two accidents at the intersection. **How can the PUD help with this issue?** *Relocate the curb location in front of the commercial/retail area so that the new curb with parking can allow for a straight through*

street in the future. Therefore it would seem that the building would have to be significantly increase to allow for the desired street alignment at the Cady/Center street intersection.

- **Create an improved North-South passway through the City.** A plan which could divert some traffic around the Main/Center intersection is highly desirable. This is among the biggest challenges. A widened Cady can improve the flow and it could efficiently redirect traffic to Griswold to head north. But there does not seem to be an obvious solution for improving the ability to bypass traffic to head North on Center. A widened Hutton between Mary Alexander and Cady although a need is apparently is not a possibility. Traffic flow as part of the current detour has shown it, IMO, to be unsustainable. The street is too narrow for the expected two way traffic flow. Drivers turning west from Hutton to Cady, frequently swing wide as they turn disturbing the traffic traveling east on Cady. Perhaps the best that could be done/hoped for would be to return Hutton to one Way northbound (with no parking) between Cady and Mary Alexander Court to allow traffic to proceed to Dunlop and avoid the Main/Center intersection.
- **New businesses along Cady need to have a real, accessible parking lot.** The current parking structure accessible from Cady is usually full. It is unreasonable to think these businesses can thrive without access to nearby parking. The hidden parking off of Beal provided in the plan will service the apartments well, but it does not seem very accessible for the retail need.

Disbursement of Traffic from the Residential Area of the Downs Development

Major Areas of Concern

1. The proposed site plans only provide for exits to the North to either Beal primary and secondarily to Cady and West to Center causing big traffic concerns for current residents despite negligible numbers shown in the Traffic Study.
 2. Beal Town residents don't want Beal Street to become a major thoroughfare to Northville Road!
 3. River Street seems destined for a major change in character due to access to the new River Park. Some Beal Town residents will see this increased traffic as a detriment to their neighborhood.
- **The site plan must provide for a major outlet to the south east end.** With the park to the West and River bordering the south, no other outlet is possible. The recommendation presented at the May 3rd meeting to provide for a future minor street across the river is a step in the right direction, but I don't believe it goes far enough. While I can understand that the Developer will not commit to the funds to make any roadway across the River part of the Development due to costs, I believe it is imperative that the Developer design the site layout assuming a major ingress/egress outlet at some point in the future to a city owned street. This likely will impact the type and positioning of the residential structures to be built adjacent to such a roadway. It is VERY important to provide the Developer with firm direction of intent on this subject as soon as possible. The ability to connect the extension of Griswold into the 7 Mile/Hines Dr intersection is seen as vital in the efficient disbursement of traffic and highly desirable to direct travelers from the Hines Park or to the Central Business District while diverting some of that flow away from the Center Street corridor. Assuming the Farmer's Market eventually is placed at the old McDonald Ford site, this could also provide an additional approach to that site as well which otherwise might find such traffic using River Street instead.
 - **The Road currently labeled Griswold in the site Plan need to be a true extension of Griswold at the north end, not a "T" intersection at Beal.** Designing a curve into the street to align the existing Griswold in the new development along the west end of the River Park would be a major improvement to the traffic flow. It could then encourage continued north bound travel toward Main (or a Cady Street extension to Northville Rd). Perhaps there are other opportunities to discourage additional traffic along Beal as well. Maybe a T intersection at Griswold, or maybe Beal needs to be blocked off between Yerkes and Northville Rd to discourage through traffic. *I hope you would challenge your traffic experts to make a recommendation to reduce the severity of the impact the Development will have on Beal Street residents.*

Thank you for your work and the opportunity for the citizens to provide input as you travel along this historic journey.

Kevin Clark
777 Spring Dr. , Northville



The Downs Development: Citizens' Feedback

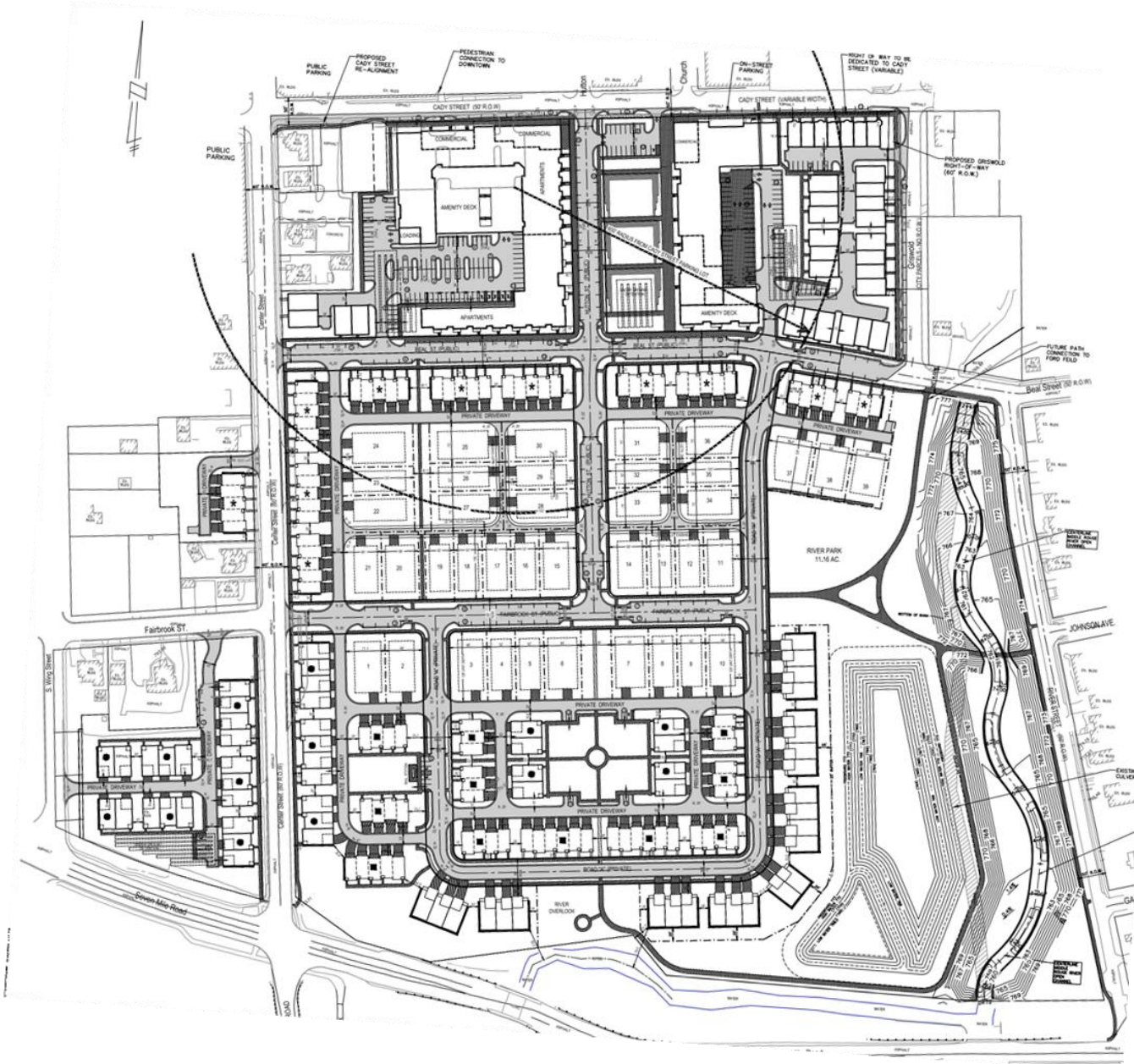
Following April 19 & May 3, 2022
Planning Commission Meetings

Updated: May 12, 2022

Dave Gutman
Susan Haifleigh
Kathy Spillane

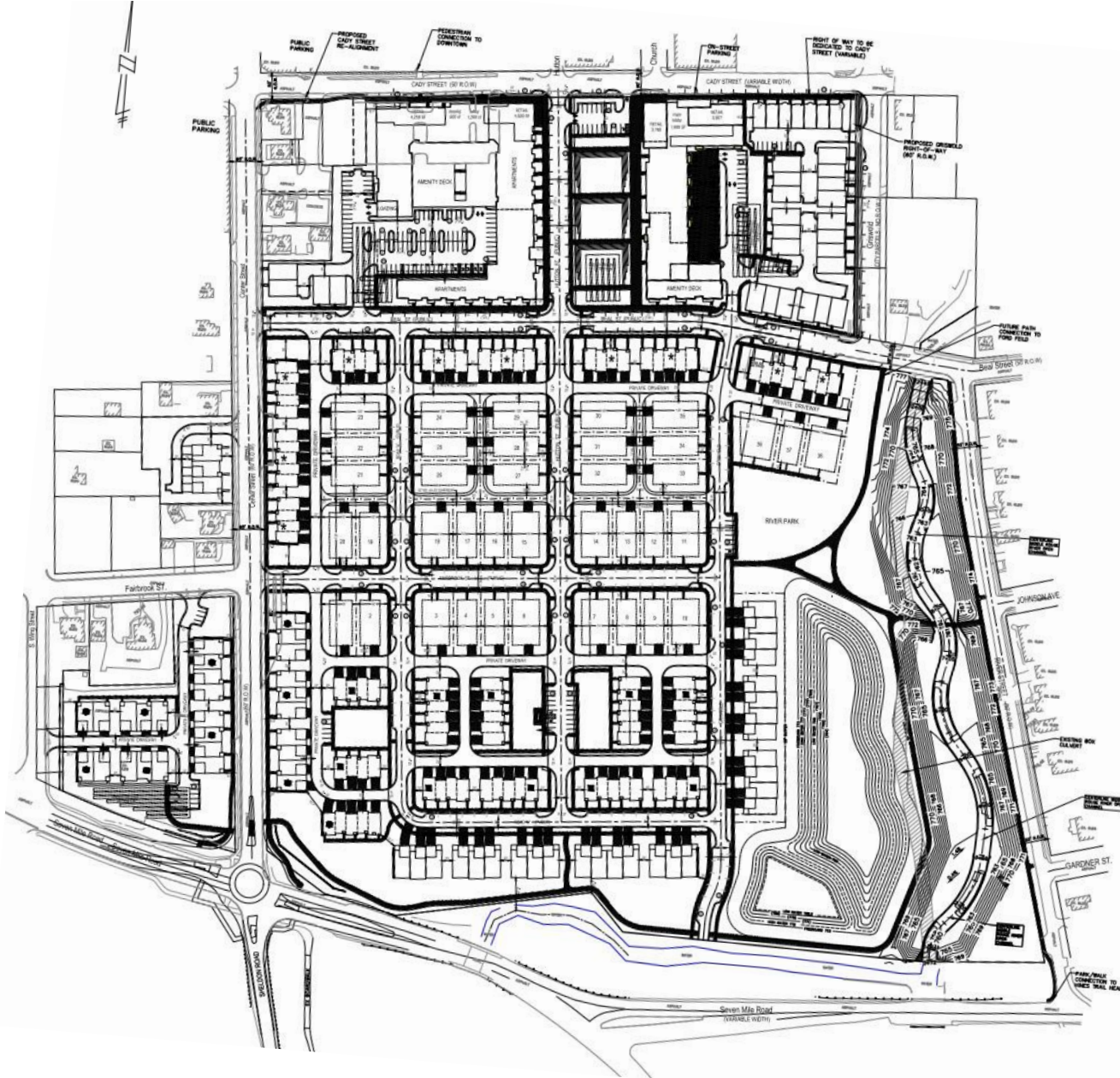
Site Plan Feedback

Previous Site Plan Concerns



- ❑ Connectivity/limited traffic dispersion
- ❑ ROW (Right of Way) size not conducive to walkability below Beal Street
- ❑ Private roadways vs. Public street grid
- ❑ Inadequate guest parking south of Fairbrook
- ❑ Aesthetics of alleys
- ❑ Edges/sides of building/views

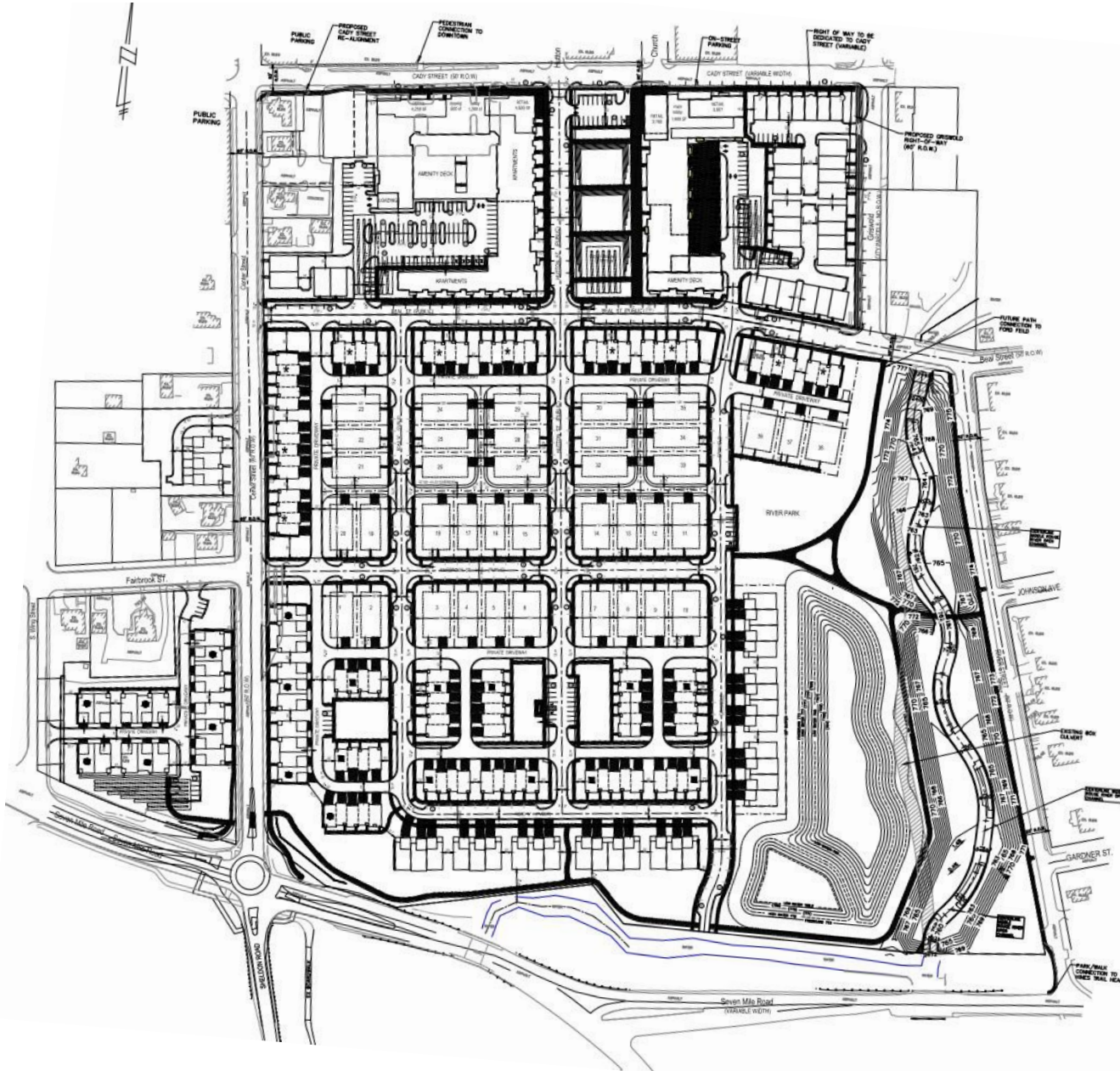
New Site Plan Impacts



Positive Impacts:

- Future access to Hines & 7 Mile per Mobility Team recommendation
- Restores the neighborhood street grid
- Multiple North/South routes
- Public roads per DPW/City request
- Parking increased with fewer private & alley roads
- Increased walkability due to reduction of ROW from 60' in many places
- Bringing Hutton south improves overall walkability
- Positive addition of pocket parks along Center Street
- Adding public roadways between the previous orphan homes increases walkability
- Like the row homes on Center vs. single family homes
- Carriage home rendering shows street trees

New Site Plan Impacts



Negative Impacts:

- Increased impervious surfaces (recommend exploring green infrastructure such as storm trees)
- Increased segregation of building types south of Fairbrook ~ townhomes replaced row homes
- Extensive use of bump-outs to achieve ROW section is incompatible with typical neighborhoods.
- Parking spaces on the three southern parks significantly reduces the enjoyment of the space and the likelihood that they will be welcoming to residents
- Parking on the river park ~ better to be consistent with parallel along the route instead of lot style parking
- Lack of parking along the carriage homes
- What are the number of lanes at the roundabout? We are advocating for a single lane roundabout
- Townhomes at south break visual line of carriage homes across entry gateway

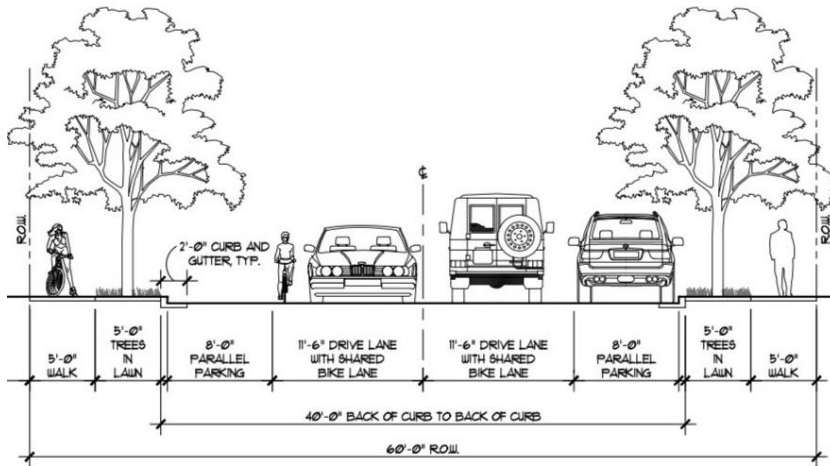
Roads/ROW/Buffers/Curbs/Sustainability/Parking/Alleys/Utilities

ROW at 60' Is Not Typical in the City Of Northville



50' ROW may necessitate using bump-outs for trees but it must be designed based on each road

60' ROW Example



11'-6" lane width encourages higher speeds

					Right of Way Width										Source: John Roby					
				Intersect Bump Passage Width	permeable		Roadway Width						permeable							
					Walk	Buffer	Curb	Park	Lane	Lane	Park	Curb	Buffer	Walk	Travel Lanes	Parking	Face To Face	Roadway Width	RoW Width	
City Sidewalk (no grass buffer) - Both Sides Parallel Park																				
REFERENCE-Bartram Street (Dover/Massengale)	20?				10.0			0.0	7.0	10.0	10.0	7.0	0.0		10.0	20.0	14.0	34.0	34.0	54.0
East Main Core (present) (at clock pinch...exag.	21.5/25				var			var	8.8	10.7	10.7	8.8	var		var	21.5	17.5	39.0	var	~67
North Center Core (present)	25/31				var			var	6.3	12.5	12.5	6.3	var		var	24.9	12.7	37.6	var	~59
Main at Wing (present) east bumped, west not	24.5/36				var			var	6.6	12.3	12.3	6.6	var		var	24.5	13.3	37.8	var	~61.5
East Cady Typical (present)	25.8				var			var	7.5	12.0	12.0	7.5	var		var	24.0	15.0	39.0	var	~50(-)
East Cady (Downs Site)	25.8				var			var	7.5	12.0	12.0	7.5	var		var	24.0	15.0	39.0	exist	~50(-)
Yield Lane or Park One Side																				
NACTO Ref Example 30-50	20?				5.0	5.0	0.5	7.5	7.0	7.0	7.5	0.5	5.0	5.0	14.0	15.0	29.0	30.0	50.0	
Cady west of Wing parked one side	NA				3.0	10.5	0.5	7.5	10.1	10.1	0.0	0.5	var	var	20.3	7.5	27.8	28.8	~50	
Dunlap west of Wing	NA				3.0	10.5	0.5	7.5	7.8	7.8	7.5	0.5	10.5	3.0	15.6	15.0	30.6	31.6	~64	
Village Sidewalk (grass buffer) - Both Sides Parallel Park																				
Common in References Downtown Plan	20.0				5.0	5.0	0.5	7.5	10.0	10.0	7.5	0.5	5.0	5.0	20.0	15.0	35.0	36.0	56.0	
Wing (Main to Cady) standardized both walks	?20?				5.0	5.0	0.5	7.5	10.1	10.1	7.5	0.5	5.0	5.0	20.2	15.0	35.2	36.2	56.2	
New Fairbrook (as is)	?23?				5.0	5.0	0.5	8.0	11.5	11.5	8.0	0.5	5.0	5.0	23.0	16.0	39.0	40.0	60.0	
New Fairbrook (reduced)	20.0				5.0	5.0	0.5	7.5	10.0	10.0	7.5	0.5	5.0	5.0	20.0	15.0	35.0	36.0	56.0	
Current Recommendation	20.0				4.0	3.5	0.5	7.0	10.0	10.0	7.0	0.5	3.5	4.0	20.0	14.0	34.0	35.0	50.0	

Typical ROW around Northville/Recommended ROW

Achieving Narrower ROW: Buffers/Sidewalks/Rolled Curbs

Minimum 4'-0" green
buffer for street trees

3'-0" minimum
4'-0" walkway better



Green buffer 4'-0" minimum for trees, rolled curb, walkway 3'-0" minimum



Rolled Curbs allow vehicles to park on curb vs. 6" raised curb

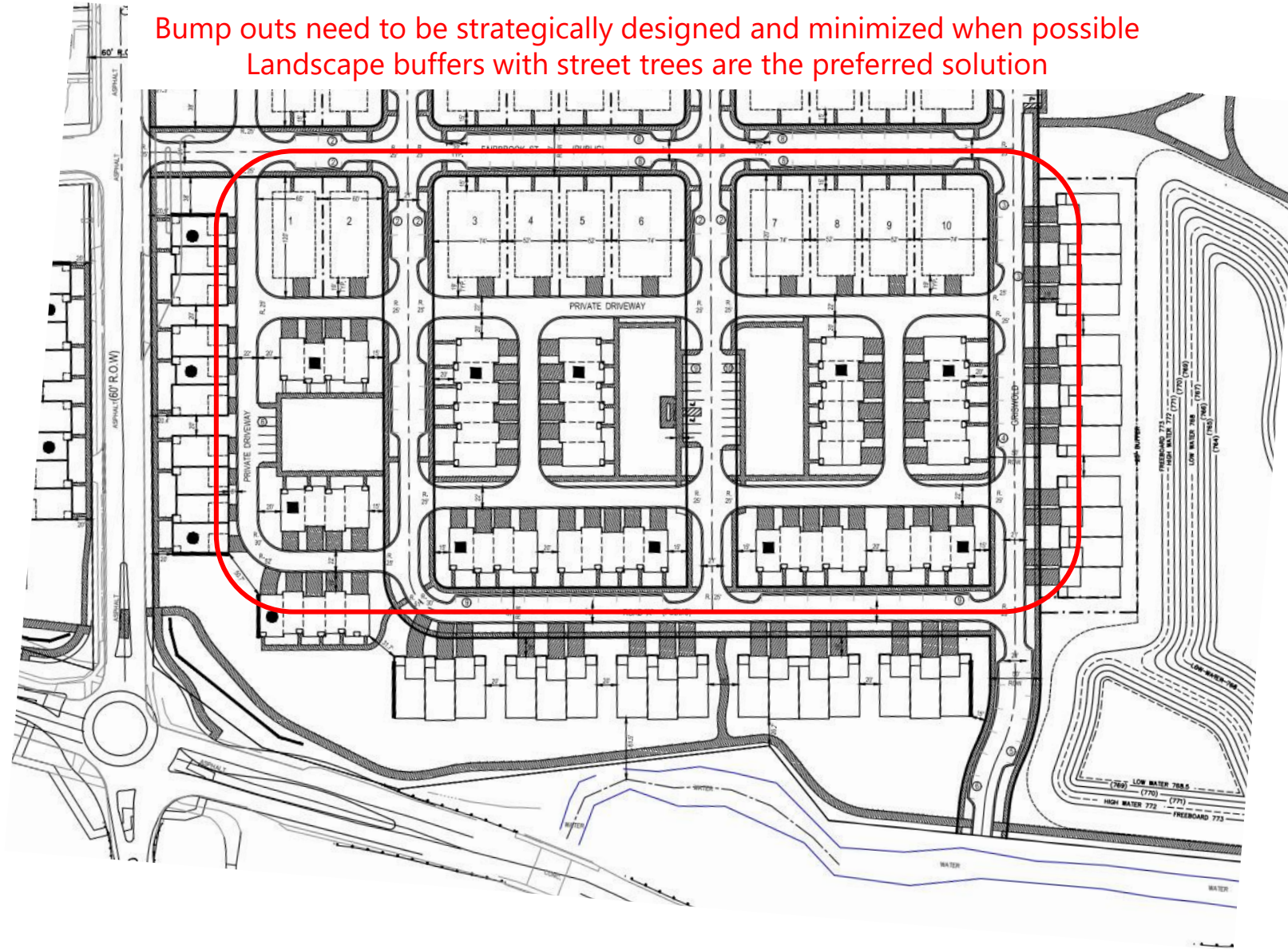
Sidewalk/Buffer/Bump-out ~ Not Typical In Our Neighborhoods



Street trees in curb extensions for downtown but not residential

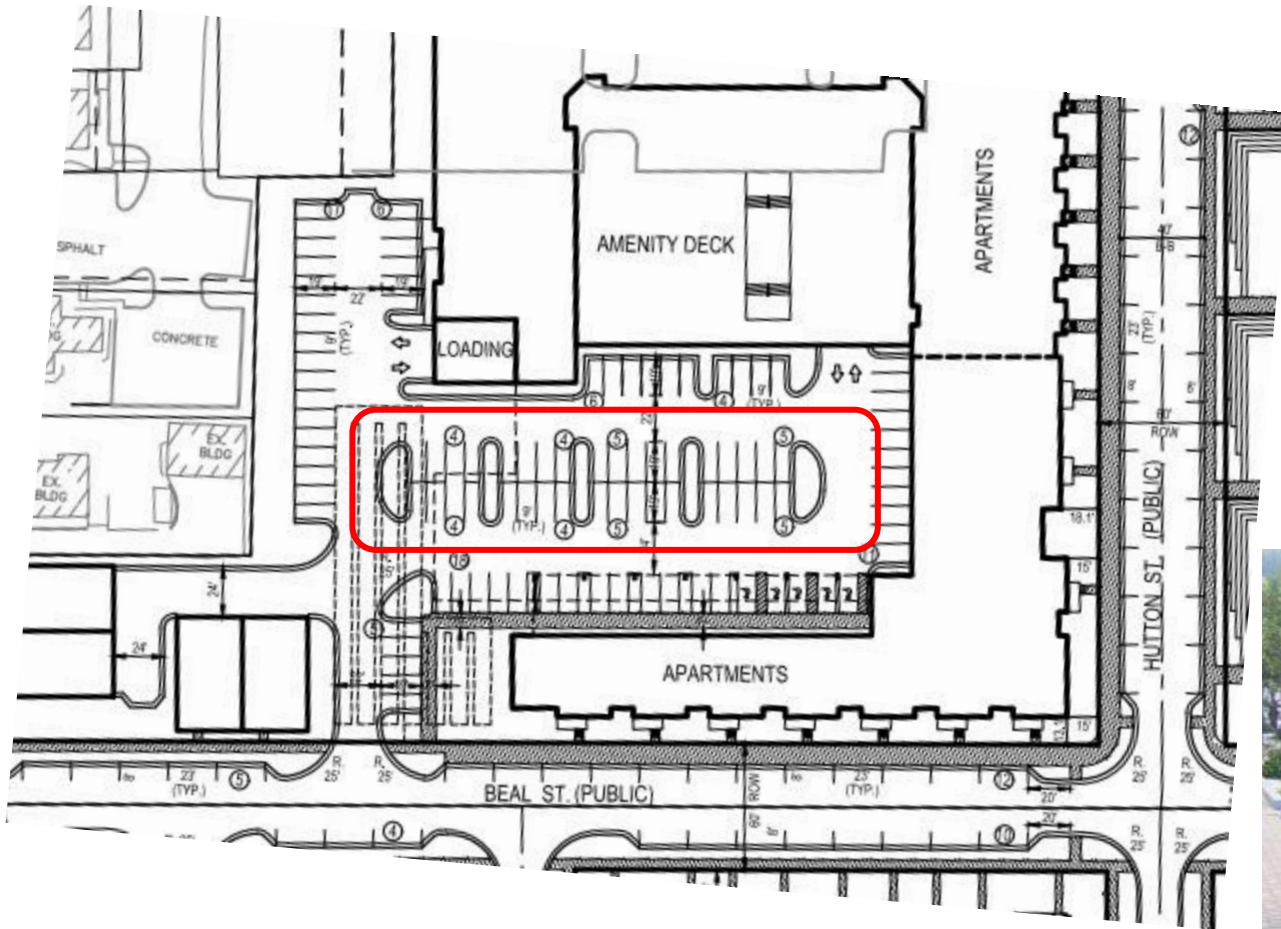


Treatment of sidewalk and buffer is not consistent with site plan



Bump outs need to be strategically designed and minimized when possible
Landscape buffers with street trees are the preferred solution

Sustainability/Curb Cuts/Storm Tree Curbs



Parking lots present opportunities for curb cuts and storm trees

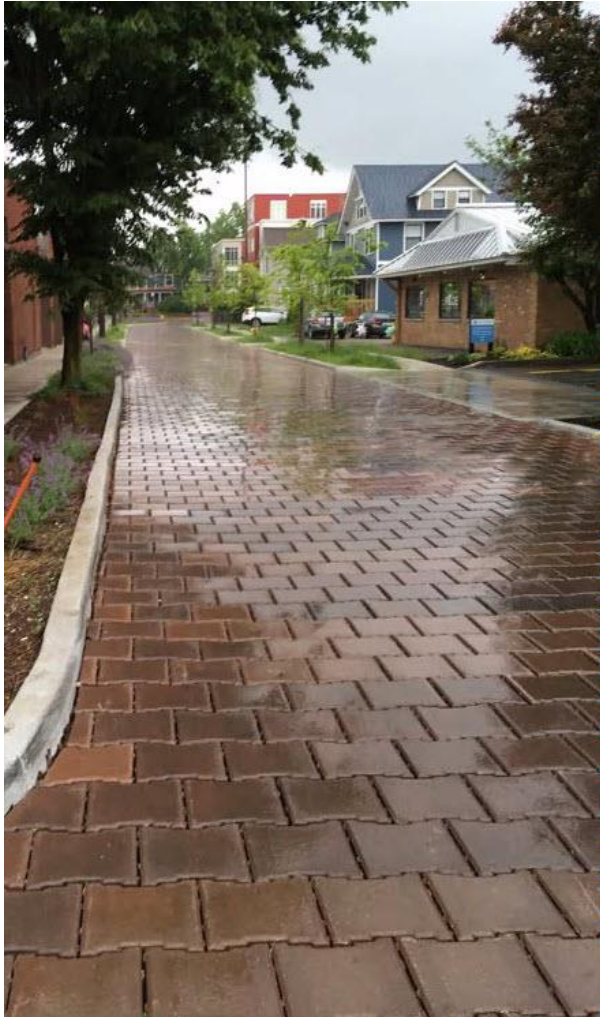


Curb cuts for plantings



Storm tree curb cut

Permeable Paver Roads & Paths



Permeable Pavers, Grand Rapids MI

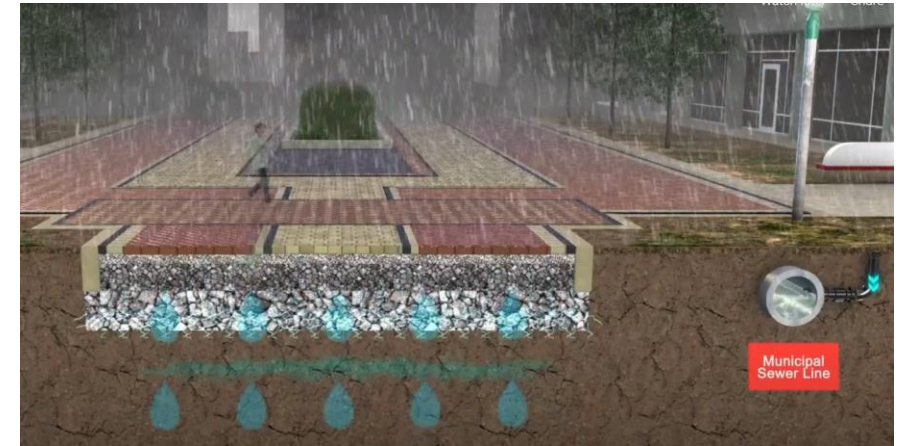


Permeable paver road & pathways

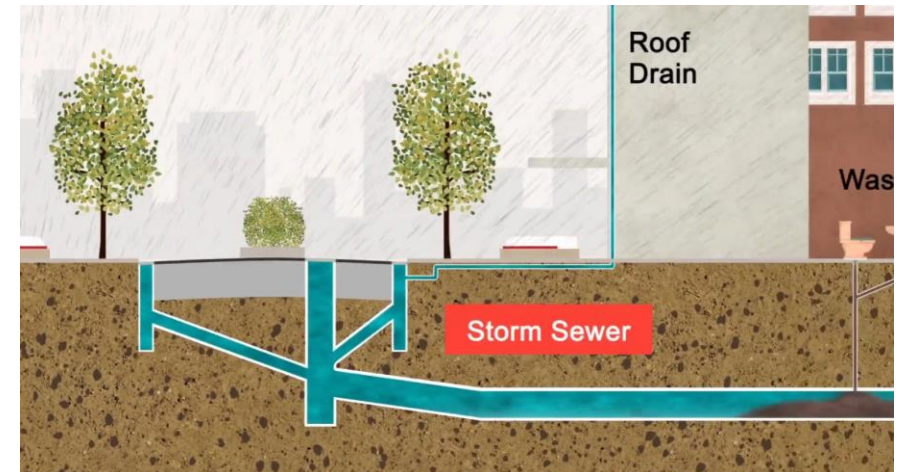


Mechanical rolled and large-scale installation

Permeable section into ground w/ overflow



Typical non-permeable section to storm sewer



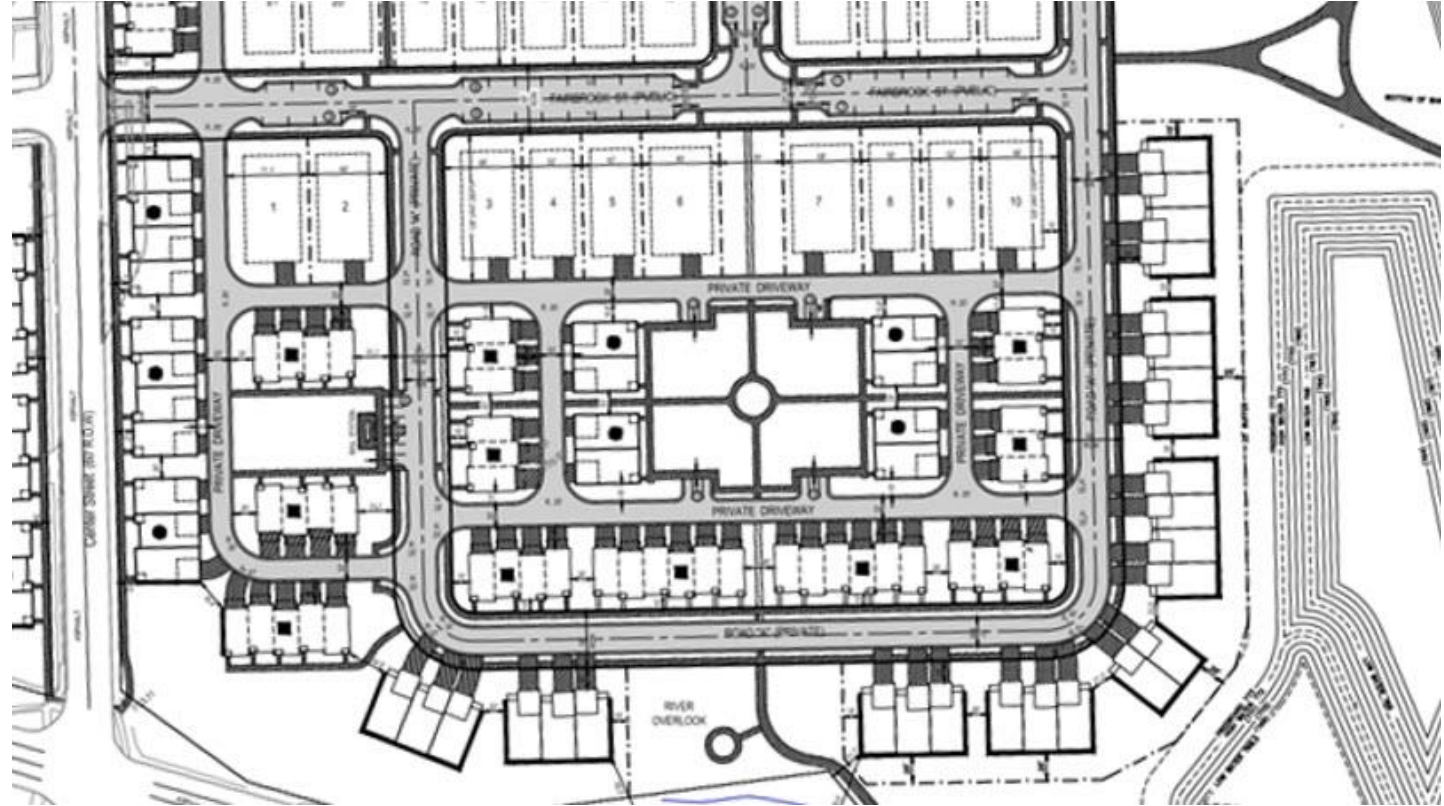
Inadequate Guest Parking



Source: River Park Condos/Northville

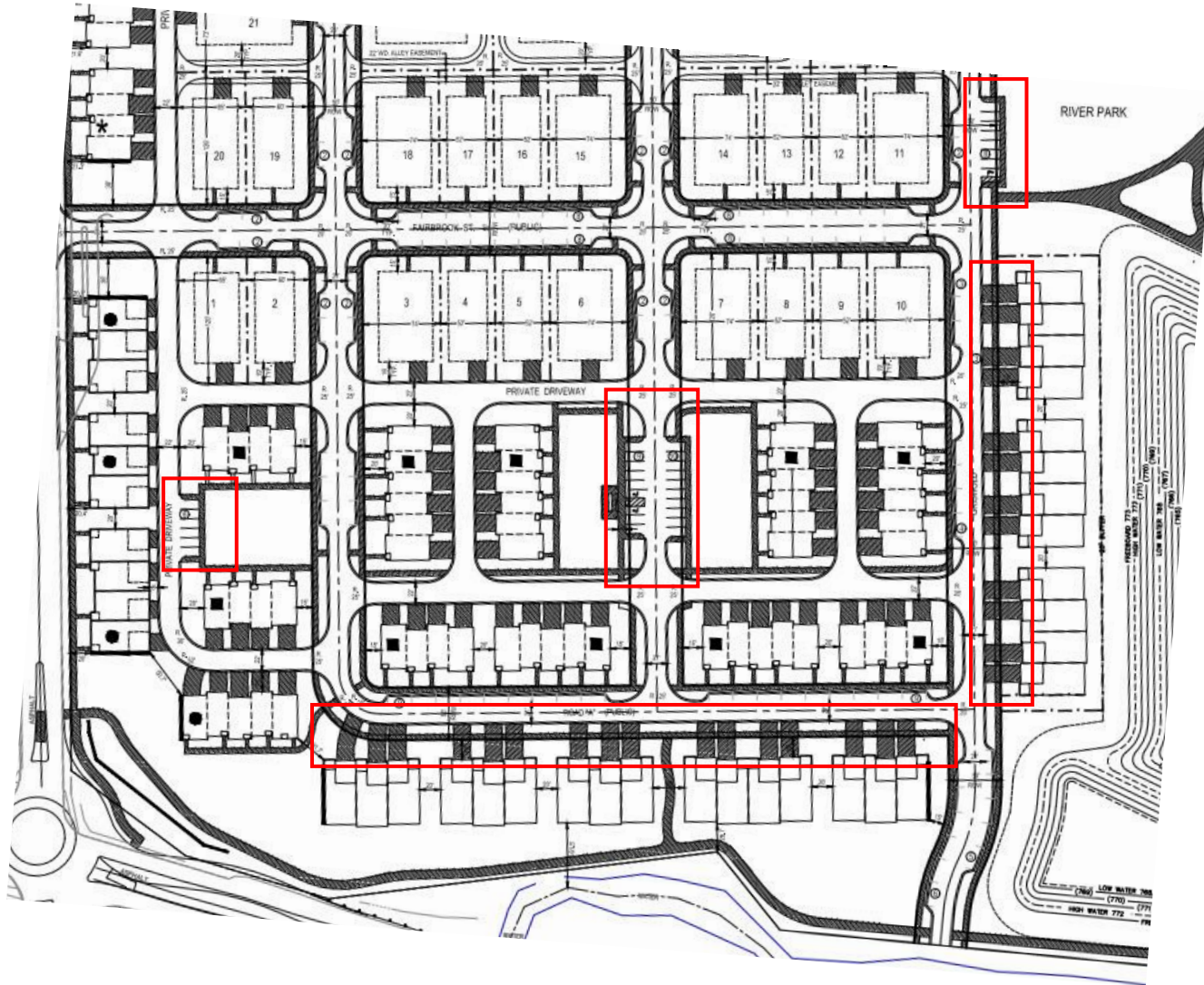
Examples:

- Parking adequate for residents only
- Guests must block the garage door, or they must park across the street at the Cider Mill



May 3 Site Plan Example

Guest Parking Strategies: Evaluated



Positive:

- More guest parking provided on public roadways

Negative:

- 90-degree parking provided on parks
- Parking spaces on the three southern parks significantly reduces the enjoyment of the space and the likelihood that they will be welcoming to residents



Alleys/Access/Visual Interest



Green Alley

Source: NACTO Urban Street Design Manual

The majority of residential alleys have low traffic and infrequent repaving cycles, resulting in back roads with potholes and puddling that are uninviting or unattractive.

Green alleys use sustainable materials, **pervious pavements**, and effective drainage to create an inviting public space for people to walk, play, and interact.¹

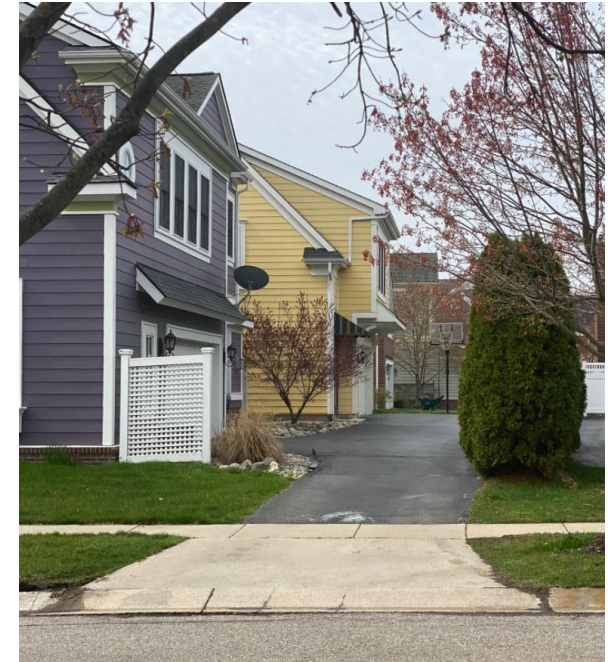
The alley shown below depicts a 14-foot path within a 28-foot right-of-way.



Alleys designed as shared passageways



Hidden/better alleys



Shared hidden driveway

Utilities Along Roads/Pathways



Utilities poorly done

Utilities hidden properly

Edges/Setbacks/Corners

Articulate façades

The overall architecture of a development can be a determining factor in creating a desirable townhouse development. Townhouse buildings are large structures with long façades and significant building massing comprised of 3 to 8 units in a row. These structures can feel imposing if careful consideration is not taken to create a well-articulated façade with visual interest and architectural details. Architectural concepts can be viewed at three levels: the individual dwelling unit, the townhouse building, and the community.

Recommended architectural elements



Corner building articulation affects walkability and interest



Good corners on multi-unit building

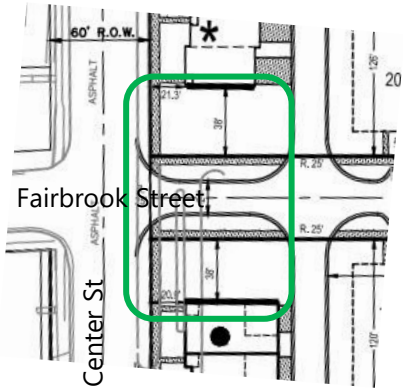


Changing setbacks/relationship to street/walkways

Edges/Corners/Fences



Corner and Side yard Fences ~ good solution (not allowed in our ordinances)



New pocket parks provide opportunity to implement landscape buffer to soften edges



Good corners & edges



Consider allowing fencing along alleyways since low visibility of backyards creates potential safety hazards

Feedback on Building Types ~ April 19 Meeting

Comparison to Pulte Development at 9 Mile and Novi Road



2-Story Condominiums with basements

3 Basement options:

- Fully underground
- Partially underground
- Walkout

Observations:

- Side and rear views of buildings create an unremarkable entrance to development.
- Patios and balconies face the rear.
- Brick and siding veneer colors are repetitive.

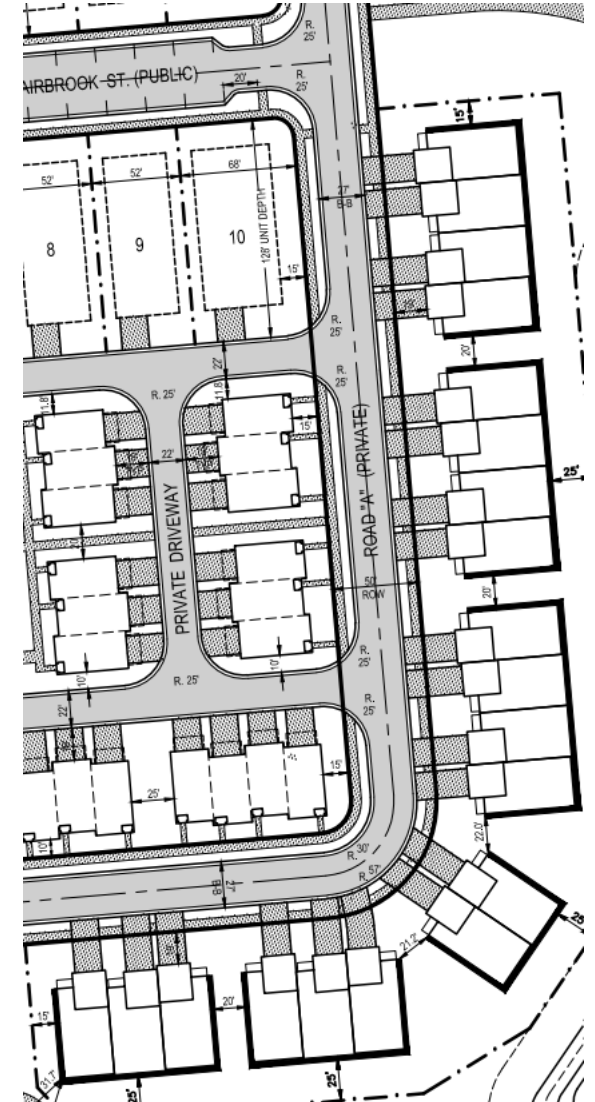


Comparison to Pulte Development at 9 Mile and Novi Road



Observations:

- Little dimensionality in facade
- Majority of frontage dedicated to the vehicle
- Limits "eyes on the street", which lowers perception of safety
- Recessed front stoops are for passage only. Chance of a social encounter while walking is low
- Very narrow porch/entry door



From April 19 Site Plan Example

Comparison to Pulte Development at 9 Mile and Novi Road



Pulte: Woodbridge
Park Townhomes



Toll Brothers:
Downs Carriage Homes

- Wider & visible entrances
- Garage designs change
- More dimensional than typical designs
- Materials more appropriate to Northville

Rendering of Carriage Homes



This housing type provides opportunity to create diversity ~ note: Porch in front of garage is very important

From: [Dave Gutman](#)
To: [Donna Tinberg](#); [Dianne Massa](#)
Cc: [Kathy Spillane One](#)
Subject: Sustainability Sub-Team Formation for Downs Central Park Analysis
Date: Sunday, May 15, 2022 8:39:18 AM
Attachments: [Purpose and Intent of Special Sustainability Sub-Team .pdf](#)

Good morning. I realize I am submitting this letter well past the deadline for Tuesday's PC meeting. However, if the members of the Planning Commission could all receive a copy before the meeting, that would be great.

To summarize briefly, the new "city square" proposed by Hunter Pasteur presents a unique opportunity for uniting the existing Northville community with the new residents of the proposed Hunter Pasteur Development. This park has been presented as a community benefit by the developer. During our Sustainability Team meeting held on April 25th, the committee recommended establishing a sub-group to explore possible public uses of this space. The letter details the purpose and objectives of this group.

Kathy Spillane has graciously volunteered to lead this effort. We are currently in the process of talking to individuals who could form the team. Once launched, we look forward to sharing the team's work as we explore the placemaking opportunities offered by this exciting public space. If any members of the PC have feedback on the formation, intent or purpose of this team, we would be happy to receive it.

Again, sorry about the late submission. Thank you for all your support. And enjoy this beautiful weather!

| **Dave Gutman**
| c 248-880-1462



Special Sub-Committee to be formed by the Sustainability Team

Purpose and Intent: To study the proposed new City Square of the HPH (Downs) development

The new city square proposed by Hunter Pasteur is a conceptual design that identifies a unique opportunity for uniting the existing Northville community with the new residents of the proposed Hunter Pasteur Development. This park has been presented as a community benefit by the developer. However, at this time, it remains a conceptual placeholder and has not been adequately vetted for purpose and intent of use.

During our Sustainability Team meeting held on Monday April 25th, the committee recommended establishing a sub-group to explore possible public uses of this space. The charge of this group would be to:

1. Better understand the original proposed design and use intentions of Hunter Pasteur.
2. Identify preliminary project budget and first costs and (when applicable), revenue for each placemaking opportunity.
3. Identify preliminary operation and maintenance costs of proposed spaces and activities.
4. Identify operational management options and responsibilities of involved parties.
5. Provide a list of preliminary issues and opportunities to be considered by the Planning Commission, City Council, the developer, and the public during the Site Plan Approval (SPA) process.
6. Provide a plan that can be agreed to by all parties for preliminary infrastructure and programming for this area before the Planning Commission grants final SPA approval.

It is the Sustainability Team's desire to meld the existing skills and knowledge of those in our community. We are encouraging representative participation from DDA, Rotary, the City, Parks & Recreation, Chamber of Commerce and other community resources. We will also explore the need to employ professional resources to inform the process and content of the study.

Due to the need to assemble a sub-group in a timely fashion, the Sustainability Team is currently connecting with Chairs of those organizations to assemble qualified volunteers to sit on this sub-committee.

Since the project is already into preliminary site plan approval, we would like to begin immediately to ensure we are in lockstep with the timing of the SPA process. Obviously, this effort is in no way designed to delay your ability to move forward according to plan.

Thank you for your consideration and support of this important placemaking effort.

The Sustainability Team

May 16, 2022

Northville Planning Commission

City Council as Mobility Network Sponsors

Subject: Foreshadowing: Non-Motorized Pathway Widths – Downs Site and Beyond

Dear Commissioners and Councilmembers:

Effort to compress neighborhood street RoW in support of The Downs site optimization is underway. I support the safety, space, permeability, and commercial gains that result from the reduction of vehicle travel and parking lanes. I am far less comfortable with losses of sidewalk and green buffer width.

Aware I often “ask too much of the Royal Ear”, I made no progress with the ‘home team’ on these concerns. But seeing the story laid out, Greg Presley came to the same conclusion. We addressed it heavily over the weekend. I hope to hear more about it from Seth in your meeting.

In the process, our approach to pathway widths came to the fore. Let’s start with a map (surprise):

https://www.dropbox.com/s/eufzshn8jflkpsn/Connectivity_May15-22_11x17Lpng.png?dl=0



Please download to a viewer for a good look...you can zoom in quite tight. You may find it useful as you weigh our Questions of Connectivity. (The EZ Online Map is still there at <https://arcgis.com/webapp/viewer/index.html?appid=00000000000000000000000000000000> but I was not able to update it for the new SKE site work, as shown here.)

The process may say sidewalk width is a matter for final site plan, but SKE is laying out geometry with finely-honed sizes NOW. A couple of feet of width in high-use connections can be integrated fairly painlessly, but could trash an entire cluster if left 'til the ink dries (so likely would not happen at all).

As a level set, most of our grid-zone sidewalks are 4 feet wide. These days, everybody authentically 'Walkable' sets neighborhood sidewalks at minimum 5-foot clear passage...going less only for a special problem or an isolated, low usage path. Upgrades to 5 feet with new work are common (as north side of Cady by the Post Office and inserts along the nominally 4 ½ foot walk on the south side of W. Main).

ADA says this (a blog paraphrase, not the code)...

Sidewalk width requirements are especially important for wheelchair-bound individuals. For ADA compliance, the minimum sidewalk width is 36 inches (3 feet), though sidewalks can be wider. If sidewalks are less than 60 inches (5 feet) wide, passing spaces must be constructed every 200 feet.

Most every current ref like this FHWA Training Course want at least 5 feet, often 6 feet...

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/4kwkw63dld1m73f/FHWA%20Training%20Sidewalks%20less13.pdf?dl=0>

Sidewalks require a minimum width of 5.0 feet if setback from the curb or 6.0 feet if at the curb face. Any width less than this does not meet the minimum requirements for people with disabilities. Walking is a social activity. For any two people to walk together, 5.0 feet of space is the bare minimum. In some areas, such as near schools, sporting complexes, some parks, and many shopping districts, the minimum width for a sidewalk is 8.0 feet.

Here's a recent Toole NMT manual for Ohio that Susan Haifleigh found and the team passed around...

https://www.dropbox.com/s/sli8ozipfksy3hp/ODOT%20Multimodal%20Design%20Guide_Final_20220415-1.pdf?dl=0...the specifics are exhaustively treated. Toole writes many state and national guidelines:

Table 4-1: Pedestrian Zone with Sidewalk Widths for Urban Core, Urban, Suburban, and Rural Town Areas

Land Use	Frontage Zone Minimum Width (FT)	Pedestrian Through Zone Sidewalk Width (FT) (B)	Buffer Zone Width (FT) (C)
Central Business District	2 – 6 (A)	8 - 14	4 – 8
Commercial	2 – 6 (A)	6 – 8	2 – 8 (D)
Residential	2	5 – 7	2 – 6 (D)

(A) 2 ft. Frontage Zone is the recommended minimum, and a 1 ft. Frontage Zone may be used in constrained environments. A 6 ft. Frontage Zone is the minimum width to accommodate sidewalk cafés.

(B) In rare, constrained conditions, the Pedestrian Through Zone width can be reduced to 4 ft, although this width does not provide adequate space for pedestrians passing in opposite directions and requires at least a 5 ft. wide by 5 ft. long passing sections every 200 ft. (see PROWAG Section R302.4).

(C) Where trees are desired and permitted within the buffer, the buffer width must sustain the long-term health and vitality of trees and accommodate the urban lateral offset or clear zone as appropriate.

(D) When a buffer cannot be provided, then the minimum curb- attached sidewalk width is 7 ft. for residential areas and 8 ft. for all other contexts. All roadways with curb-attached sidewalks or buffers should be constructed with vertical curbing.

So, 5 feet does not seem excessive for an **Capable Walkable Town**. To burn it in, please consider how you walk and what you encounter when you do. For some folk, who have every right to go side-by-side, it can look a lot different...



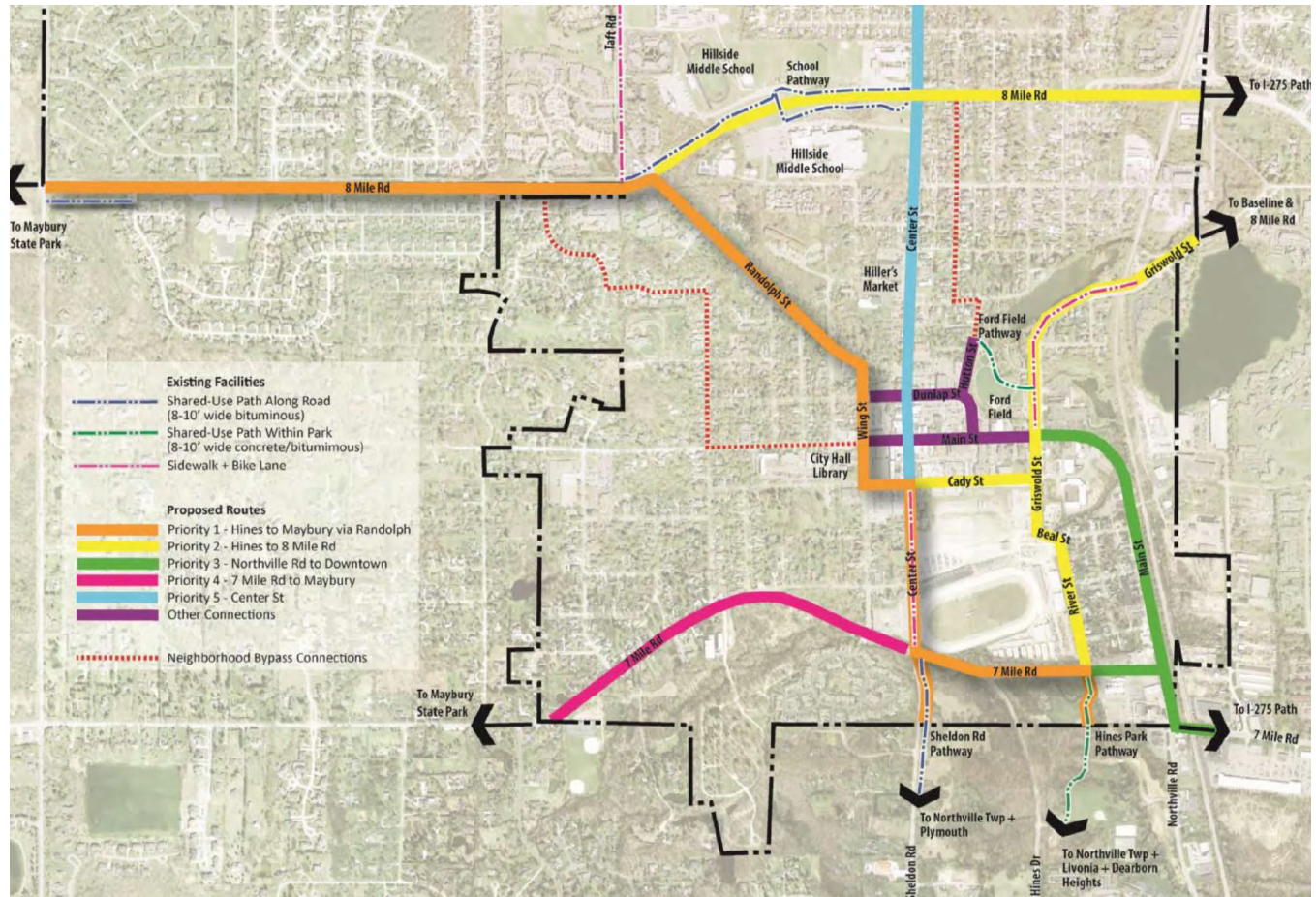
Now mix with couples and kids and dogs and bikes and carts and skates... 'Shared Paths' need more.

I'll add that when bicycles combine with other users (like bypassing a roundabout), 10 feet is considered minimum. Two-way bicycles and bridge railings demand more. This is covered in detail in the above in the ODOT ref. and more...our site plan shows 8 feet at present.

Northville is already well into all of this since 2013...

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/f4dzbq2llvi9kct/Non-MotorizedPlanReportforonlineviewing1-21-14redcombined.pdf?dl=0>

From the 2013 Non-Motorized Plan, **Figure 7: Non-Motorized Transportation Routes and Connections**



1. Sidewalks

Sidewalks are for pedestrians and are located within road rights-of way. They consist of concrete pavement and are separated from the roadway by a landscape strip or buffer area. Ideally, a buffer of 5 to 6 feet is preferred. In Northville, older existing sidewalks are 4 feet wide. Any new sidewalk construction must comply with current ADA standards which require a 5-foot minimum width as well as ramps at roadway intersection. City sidewalks should be widened depending on the number of pedestrians who are expected to use the sidewalk at a given time. Generally, recommended widths for sidewalks are:

- 5 feet on local streets
- 6 to 8 feet on arterial streets
- 8 to 12 feet in downtown
- 8 to 10 feet in parks or schools

John R's Thought Starter



not for today



There's that 5-foot standard starting point again...great minds. (OK, they looked it up, like me).

The Plan says 6-to-8-foot walks on arterial streets. I read that as arterial with respect to NMT users. So prime candidates connect our 'activated' blocks, squares, and parks. Fully shared paths like Riverwalk and west side of River Street are expected to be 10 feet, more if adjacent to walls or railings.

So, if it were my universe, I'd draw some colored arrows as per the preceding list, and wonder about an arrangement like this...



Would you consider this kind of thing helpful to your 'Walkability Principles'? If so, my eye says it would not be too onerous in most runs I cite...the drawing still shows a 5-foot standard.

Sincerely,

Curb to Curb Clear Road Widths In The City of Northville Residential Neighborhoods

Information Gathered by Thom Barry 5/16/22

High Street	35'-8"
West Main St.	35'-0"
East Fairbrook	34'-6"
West Main	35'-0"
Linden	30'-0"
West	30'-0"
Thayer	30'-0"
Beal	29'-8"
Yerkes	29'-6"
West	28'-10"
Eaton	28'-2"
West Fairbrook	27'-0"
Horton	25'-8"
Lake	25'-8"
River	24'-6"
Wing Ct.	16'-2"
OHM proposed	39'-0" w/pkg. 37'-0" wo/pkg.

Notes:

- Most of residential roads have parking on both sides of the street
- Sidewalks are 4'-0"
- Green space between curb & sidewalk varies from low of 3'-6" on E.Main in front of community center and school to 10'-0". Majority are 5' to 7'.

See yourself in an APA Division



([https://www5.smartadserver.com/click?](https://www5.smartadserver.com/click?imgid=27795934&insid=10642920&pgid=1350201&fmtid=34984&ckid=29621410440375895&uii=384884611561053852&acd=1652807580339&opid=e783df77-255e-4323-aebc-4cf939f51d06&opdt=1652807580339&tmstp=625897618&tgt=%24dt%3d1t%3b%24dma%3d505%3b%24hc&systgt=%24qc%3d1500012540%3b%24ql%3dMediumpraise-of-the-humble-sidewalk%2f&cappid=29621410440375895&go=https%3a%2f%2fplanning.org%2fdivisions%2f)

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[4cf939f51d06&opdt=1652807580339&tmstp=625897618&tgt=%24dt%3d1t%3b%24dma%3d505%3b%24hc&systgt=%24qc%3d1500012540%3b%24ql%3dMediumpraise-of-the-humble-sidewalk%2f&cappid=29621410440375895&go=https%3a%2f%2fplanning.org%2fdivisions%2f](https://www5.smartadserver.com/click?imgid=27795934&insid=10642920&pgid=1350201&fmtid=34984&ckid=29621410440375895&uii=384884611561053852&acd=1652807580339&opid=e783df77-255e-4323-aebc-4cf939f51d06&opdt=1652807580339&tmstp=625897618&tgt=%24dt%3d1t%3b%24dma%3d505%3b%24hc&systgt=%24qc%3d1500012540%3b%24ql%3dMediumpraise-of-the-humble-sidewalk%2f&cappid=29621410440375895&go=https%3a%2f%2fplanning.org%2fdivisions%2f)



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PLANNING MAGAZINE

In Praise of the Humble Sidewalk

Nine experts on why accessible sidewalks are the best infrastructure investment communities can make.

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[INTERSECTIONS \(/PLANNING/SECTION/INTERSECTIONS/\)](#) INFRASTRUCTURE



Illustration by Jason Schneider.

April 27, 2022

By STEVE WRIGHT

Wide, unobstructed, well-maintained sidewalks with no gaps or dead ends are the best infrastructure communities of all sizes can invest in. From urban to suburban to rural areas, sidewalks provide democratic, inexpensive access to transit, parks, jobs, education, and all aspects of daily living.

Yet many communities — even in denser, urban areas — lack these much-needed networks. Dallas is "[missing more than 2,000 miles of sidewalk](https://www.dmagazine.com/frontburner/2021/04/dallas-sidewalk-plan/)," while Denver [went viral last summer](https://www.5280.com/2021/10/denvers-sidewalk-infrastructure-is-failing-one-mans-tiktok-might-change-that/) when TikTok account [@PedestrianDignity](https://www.tiktok.com/@pedestriandignity?lang=en) began cataloguing its crumbling, inadequate, or nonexistent walkways. The city launched a [mobility plan](https://www.denvergov.org/Government/Agencies-Departments-Offices/Agencies-Departments-Offices-Directory/Department-of-Transportation-and-Infrastructure/Programs-Services/Pedestrians/Sidewalks) in 2018 to address the fact that 10 percent of its streets lack sidewalks, while 30 percent can't support wheelchairs, according to nonprofit [WalkDenver](http://www.walkdenver.org/).

The new [bipartisan infrastructure law](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_alternatives/) offers critical opportunities to solve these issues through initiatives like the reformed [Transportation Alternatives Program](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_alternatives/) and the recently launched [Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program](https://www.railstotrails.org/policy/trailstransform/active-transportation-infrastructure-investment-program/), which will dedicate \$200 million a year in grants to connect walking and biking routes with destinations and other transportation options. As decision makers across the country create plans for federal funding, I spoke to planning and pedestrian experts to learn why the humble sidewalk is one of the best investments a community can make — and what we need to do to make them work for everyone.

1. HEALTH BENEFITS AGES 8 TO 80

When it comes to health's "magic pill," [Gil Penalosa](https://www.gpenalosa.ca/), founder and chair of the Toronto-based planning non-profit [880 Cities](https://www.880cities.org/), points to active transportation.

"The answer is getting around by walking, crutches, wheelchair — I don't care how you move, but you need to move about in ways other than using a car. It's also very crucial to mental health," he says. "The only places where large amounts of people walk at least five days a week are those with the infrastructure to support walking, biking, transit, and mobility for people with disabilities."

Importantly, Penalosa advocates for well-built sidewalks in [suburban towns and rural villages](https://www.planning.org/2019/dec/backonitsfeet/), too, not just urban areas. He notes that even areas without much density might still have bus routes that rely on sidewalk connectivity.

"There are studies that show that when [aging residents] lose their driving privileges, it is as traumatic as a cancer diagnosis. Because in so many cities, the car is the only way to be mobile and make a doctor's appointment or grocery run," he says. "In walkable cities with transit, losing a car doesn't mean losing your friends, your stores, your places you've gone all your life."

2. LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD FOR ALL

"Sidewalk connectivity is essential for people with disabilities, but it's also just a great way of leveling the playing field for all marginalized people," says [Heidi Johnson-Wright](https://www.planning.org/2018/feb/inclusivemobility/), a renowned inclusive design expert who has been an Americans with Disabilities Act resource for large urban governments. She's currently co-teaching a groundbreaking universal design course at the University of Miami School of Architecture with me.

She's spent an entire week of the course focusing on sidewalks, complete streets, properly aligned curb ramps, and safe harbor medians to underscore their value — and what's at stake when they aren't properly designed and maintained. A curb ramp fails to function if it constantly floods, for example, and a crosswalk becomes perilous if drainage basins are placed where wheelchair tires can get stuck in them.

"My students now grasp that if one link in the chain is broken, safe mobility fails for all," says Johnson-Wright, who uses a wheelchair for mobility. She laments that cars parked over sidewalks for days are rarely ticketed in her experience. "That unwillingness to ensure safety forces me into streets and into the path of dangerous drivers in a region that consistently leads the nation in pedestrian deaths and serious injuries."



Wide sidewalks and aligned curb ramps help create sidewalk connectivity and safe, pedestrian-friendly streets. Photo courtesy of Steve Wright.

3. GREAT BANG FOR OUR BUCK

As producer of *Perils for Pedestrians Television* (<https://www.pedestrians.org/>), a safe walkability public affairs series that airs in 150 cities across the U.S., John Wetmore says sidewalks provide "clear economic benefits."

"When people walk more, they are healthier, and society will save on health care costs. When people drive less, they spend less on gas and maintenance. If living in a walkable neighborhood lets a family get by with one less car, the savings can be several thousand dollars a year," he says. "However, the biggest benefits from walkable neighborhoods have to do with the quality of life. Walking can play a big role in one's independence, which is fundamental to one's quality of life."

Wetmore cites initiatives like *Safe Routes to School* (<https://www.saferoutesinfo.org/>), which the *new infrastructure law* (<https://www.transportation.gov/infrastructure/2021/fall/7-ways-the-new-infrastructure-package-invests-in-planning/>) is expanding, as proof that a broad base of consumers supports safer, well-connected sidewalks. "The city needs to invest in the sidewalks, crosswalks, and other basic infrastructure that will make it not just possible to walk, but *desirable* to walk," he says.

4. ELIMINATE GENDER DISPARITIES

According to *Leslie Kern, PhD* ([podcast/feminist-city-author-leslie-kern-on-envisioning-more-equitable-urban-spaces/](https://www.podcastfeministcity.com/episode/leslie-kern-on-envisioning-more-equitable-urban-spaces/)), associate professor of geography and environment and director of women's and gender studies at Mount Allison University, research shows that women take more pedestrian trips daily as part of their commutes and household-serving errands. That means effective sidewalks are of heightened importance to their daily lives.

"Barrier-free, wide, and well-maintained sidewalks are particularly important for women, who still do a higher share of caregiving work," says Leslie Kern, author of *Feminist City: Claiming Space in a Man-Made World* (<https://www.versobooks.com/books/3842-feminist-city>). "Navigating sidewalks with strollers and small children is difficult if there is not enough space, if there are barriers at curbs or a lack of curb cuts, or if the sidewalk must be shared with cyclists."

Plus, there's the obvious safety component, she adds. In neighborhoods without sidewalks, people are forced to walk in the street, providing no protection from speeding vehicles — or the people operating them.

"Women and people of marginalized genders regularly experience harassment from car drivers," she says. "If sidewalks can create more distance between pedestrians and drivers, this might either cut down on this form of 'drive-by harassment' or reduce the fear it causes in walkers."



A healthy pedestrian realm allows for enough space to accommodate all ages, physical abilities, and activities. Navigating sidewalks with strollers can be difficult or even dangerous when there isn't enough space. Photo by FatCamera/E+/Getty Images.

5. MORE SPACE FOR PEOPLE PLACES

"Often, the pedestrian realm is undersized and relegated to the leftover space within the right-of-way after the traffic engineers have taken all the space they need for vehicular lanes," says Michael Huston, AIA, LEED-AP, owner of [Urban Arts, Inc.](https://www.urbanartsinc.net/) (<https://www.urbanartsinc.net/>) and partner of [Civic Plan Studio](https://civicplanstudio.com/) (<https://civicplanstudio.com/>).

To support a healthy, active "pedestrian realm" that people of all ages and physical abilities can enjoy, he says our sidewalks need to be much wider.

"To accommodate the necessary sidewalk clear zone and streetscape furnishings needed to create a comfortable pedestrian environment, a *minimum* of 15 feet is recommended between the street curb and the building," Huston adds. "It is not unusual to have a pedestrian realm that is 20 to 30 feet wide on streets that have intensive pedestrian and outdoor dining use."

6. A TOOL OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The founder and president of nonprofit [Strong Towns](https://www.strongtowns.org/) (<https://www.strongtowns.org/>), which focuses on pedestrian-friendly development, believes sidewalks and streets play an important role in environmental justice.

"Sidewalks are often treated as afterthoughts in urban transportation projects," says Charles Marohn, P.E. "This is backwards. The function of an urban street is to serve as a platform for building wealth. On a street, we're attempting to grow the complex ecosystem that produces community wealth."

One big way that can be accomplished is through proper maintenance. Marohn advocates for city plowing of sidewalks, instead of making snow and ice clearance the responsibility of thousands of individual property owners. He says it's equally or even more important than street plowing — which often creates impediments to pedestrians.

"In most of our poorest neighborhoods, the public sector is neglecting their maintenance responsibilities, and this contributes to a vicious cycle of decline," says Marohn, author of *Confessions of a Recovering Engineer* (<https://www.confessions.engineer/>). "When the streets have more potholes, the parks have more weeds, and the sidewalks have more cracks and gaps than the ones in our affluent neighborhoods, the signal being sent is that decline is going to continue, regardless of what the property owners do."

7. A CONNECTOR FOR PEOPLE (AND ROBOTS?)

Amin Gharebaghi, co-founder and CEO of *GeoMate* (<http://geomate.ca/en/>), is preparing sidewalks for an increase in traffic. His firm works with multiple cities across North America to analyze key features impacting urban accessibility like curb ramps, slope, width, and surface quality.

"Sidewalks act as a main connector in municipalities, bringing residents closer to their communities and local economies," he says. And it's a critical time to ensure that those connections work at the human level first.

"As cities become increasingly dense and new mobility technologies [like delivery robots] begin to operate on sidewalks, enhancing sidewalk safety and accessibility is becoming more important now than ever," he explains.



In Fairfax, Virginia, delivery robots wait to cross the street. An influx of robots could pose new safety and accessibility challenges. Photo by John M. Chase/iStock Unreleased.

8. FIRST AND LAST MILE MVP

"You can build a premium bus stop with shelters and amenities, but if you can't get to it, the transit fails," says David Haight, FAICP, a planner and senior project manager with planning, design, and engineering firm *Atkins* (<https://www.atkinsglobal.com/homepage>). "Without accessible sidewalks, transit doesn't work."

Apart from being wide enough to accommodate pedestrians with mobility aids like wheelchairs, accessible sidewalks should include pathways that don't flood, have crosswalks, and help people navigate from bus stops through parking lots to retail. Designers should work to understand and match users' expectations, too.

"People walk in a straight line. They will try to cross — without the protection of a painted crosswalk or 'walk' sign — rather than cross two additional lanes of busy traffic to get to the official crosswalk," he explains. And at four-lane roads, a median should be large enough to serve as a haven for those who can make it only halfway to the other side of the street. Otherwise, people — some with kids, some using assistive mobility devices — are stuck on a tiny piece of ground with huge trucks and speeding cars rushing by them.

9. "THE SINGLE MOST CRITICAL PIECE OF INFRASTRUCTURE"

Fabian De La Espriella, AICP, principal of Miami-based [Urbē Studio](https://www.urbe-studio.com/) (<https://www.urbe-studio.com/>), has nearly two decades of experience in transportation planning — and is a big fan of what sidewalks provide, particularly when it comes to equity.

"Sidewalks are the single most critical piece of infrastructure when it comes to reducing disparities between communities, especially those that are currently underserved, which coincidentally are also suffering from disproportionate pedestrian death rates," says De La Espriella, vice chair of APA Florida's Gold Coast chapter. "This equity approach applies to sidewalks being of vital importance for people with disabilities, no-car households, children, and the elderly. Sidewalks in some communities are key to getting access to transit, food, parks, or schools."

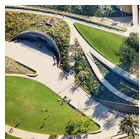
Every planning agency, local jurisdiction, and government official should prioritize safe sidewalks, he says.

"Having safe, healthy streets is part of increasing a city's competitiveness. A key component to achieving this outcome is having safe sidewalks, which increase access and create a higher value place," he says. "It is time that we acknowledge the responsibility of transportation investments in increasing equity in our communities, especially when it comes to sidewalks."

[Steve Wright](mailto:twttier.com/stevewright64) (<mailto:twttier.com/stevewright64>) is a writer, educator, pedestrian mobility activist, and marketer of planning services. He presented on sidewalks — as an element of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility — at APA Florida's conference in 2021 and is speaking about universal design at NPC22. Based in Miami, he blogs daily at [Urban Travel and Accessibility](http://urbantravelandaccessibility.blogspot.com/) (<http://urbantravelandaccessibility.blogspot.com/>).

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