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**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** City of Northville Planning Commission

**FROM:** Sally M. Elmiger, AICP

**DATE:** April 26, 2022

**RE:** Discussion on Mobility Questions with Representatives of Mobility Network, River Task Force, Sustainability Task Force, Dan Burden (Walkability Consultant), City Manager, City Engineer, and City Planner

As requested, a group discussion was convened with representatives of the Mobility Network, River Task Force, Sustainability Task Force, the walkability expert Dan Burden, the City's traffic and civil engineers, the City Manager and me to discuss the big-picture pedestrian and traffic mobility questions regarding the Downs development proposal. The purpose of this meeting was to establish consensus, if possible, in the resolution of these topics. This memo lists the major issues that were discussed, and the recommendations made by the group. It also attempts to list the main reasons for the recommendation under "clarification."

We shared this memo with the attendees for comment. We made changes provided that were consistent with our and OHM's recollection of the meeting. However, not all of the attendees agreed with everything in this communication, as put forth in the attached memo (dated April 18, 2020). We expect this information will be reviewed and discussed by the Planning Commission at some time in the future, where all the participants of the mobility/traffic meeting may provide comments and clarifications regarding these topics.

**1. Desirability of a roundabout at the intersection of 7-Mile and S. Center/Sheldon Road:**

**Recommendation:** The group recommends a roundabout at this intersection, as it has the greatest ability to increase the level of vehicular service and improve pedestrian safety. However, it is recommended that the roundabout design be a "one-lane" roundabout, if traffic volumes will allow, and that it includes pedestrian refuge islands and accommodations for bicycles.

**Clarification:** Per the City and project traffic engineers, there are two solutions that have an impact on vehicle "level of service" at this intersection:

- 1) Modernize the traffic signal, and widen the bridge over Johnson Creek (on south side of 7-Mile) to accommodate a left-turn lane and signal phase for north-bound traffic with sufficient vehicle storage for turning cars; and

2) A roundabout.

The first option will achieve a level of service of “C” during peak hours, with some driver movements experiencing a “D” level of service. It would also negatively impact Johnson Creek and floodplains/wetlands along Sheldon Road. A roundabout would achieve a level of service of “A,” and have no significant environmental impacts. Also, roundabouts designed with pedestrian facilities have proven to be much safer for the pedestrian than a four-way traffic signal.

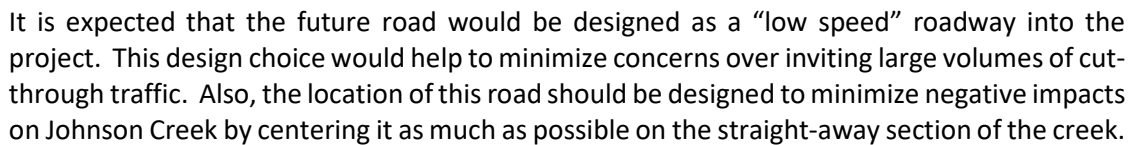
It was indicated that Wayne County would support a roundabout at this intersection as long as it receives sufficient technical backing from the design engineers. The City’s engineers would work with the project engineer on the proposed design during the Final Site Plan stage to ensure that there is sufficient undeveloped land from the proposed development and within Wayne County property to locate the roundabout on.

It was also indicated by the City Engineer that, after a general discussion with Wayne County, Wayne County would support a roundabout as the subject of a Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program grant, and if awarded, CMAQ funding would substantially assist in the cost of constructing a roundabout. (Note: CMAQ grants are only available to State and local government applicants. CMAQ funding does not cover design engineering, construction engineering, and contract administration costs.)

The group also discussed the need for public education regarding the pros and cons of a roundabout vs. a traffic light.

**2. North/South connection of the development across Johnson Creek to 7-Mile and Hines Drive intersection.**

Recommendation: Adjust the location of carriage homes on the south side of the easterly curve in proposed U-shaped road and add a “stub” that clearly indicates the intention of a future road connection south. The stub could be used in the mean time as a small parking lot for the River Park. The City Engineer and Mobility Network members have created a conceptual design (shown below) illustrating this recommendation on the next page.



**Clarification:** In the past, the developer has stated that they will not build a connection with 7-Mile over Johnson Creek at the Hines Drive intersection. Also, it was communicated that, per the City Engineer, a second roundabout at 7-Mile Road and Hines may dilute the City's ability to secure a CMAQ grant for the roundabout at the 7-Mile and S. Center St. intersection, based on scoring criteria.

**3. East/West vehicular and/or pedestrian bridge over daylighted river, connecting Fairbrook and Johnson St.**

Recommendation: A vehicular bridge over the daylighted river is not necessary, nor is there clear support by the Beal Town neighborhood that this is desirable. However, a wide (10-14 feet) pedestrian-only (non-motorized) bridge is recommended. Another suggestion is that the pedestrian bridge have enough structural integrity to support emergency services such as a fire truck; however, this is just a suggestion to investigate, but isn't necessary if it doesn't provide clear benefits.

Clarification: It was indicated that the Friends of the Rouge consider a vehicular bridge to be environmentally damaging and undesirable.

**4. Project changes at 7-Mile and S. Main St. intersection and 7-Mile and Northville Road intersection.**

Recommendation: Leave this design up to the applicant's traffic engineer's recommendations.

Clarification: Per the City Planner and City Traffic Engineer, the Traffic Impact Study (TIS), prepared by the developer's Traffic Engineer and reviewed by the City's Traffic Engineer, identified the intersections of 7-Mile and S. Main St., and 7-Mile and Northville Road as being significantly impacted by The Downs development; and as a result, this study recommended improvements to mitigate these impacts. Alternatively, the TIS studied the S. Main and Cady St. intersection, and did not identify any impacts from The Downs project to this intersection; therefore, no mitigation measures were offered for this intersection. The Planning Commission will discuss the proposed improvements with the development team and City's Traffic Engineer; any required improvements must be based on professional studies and recommendations of both Traffic Engineers.

**5. Angled parking on Cady St.**

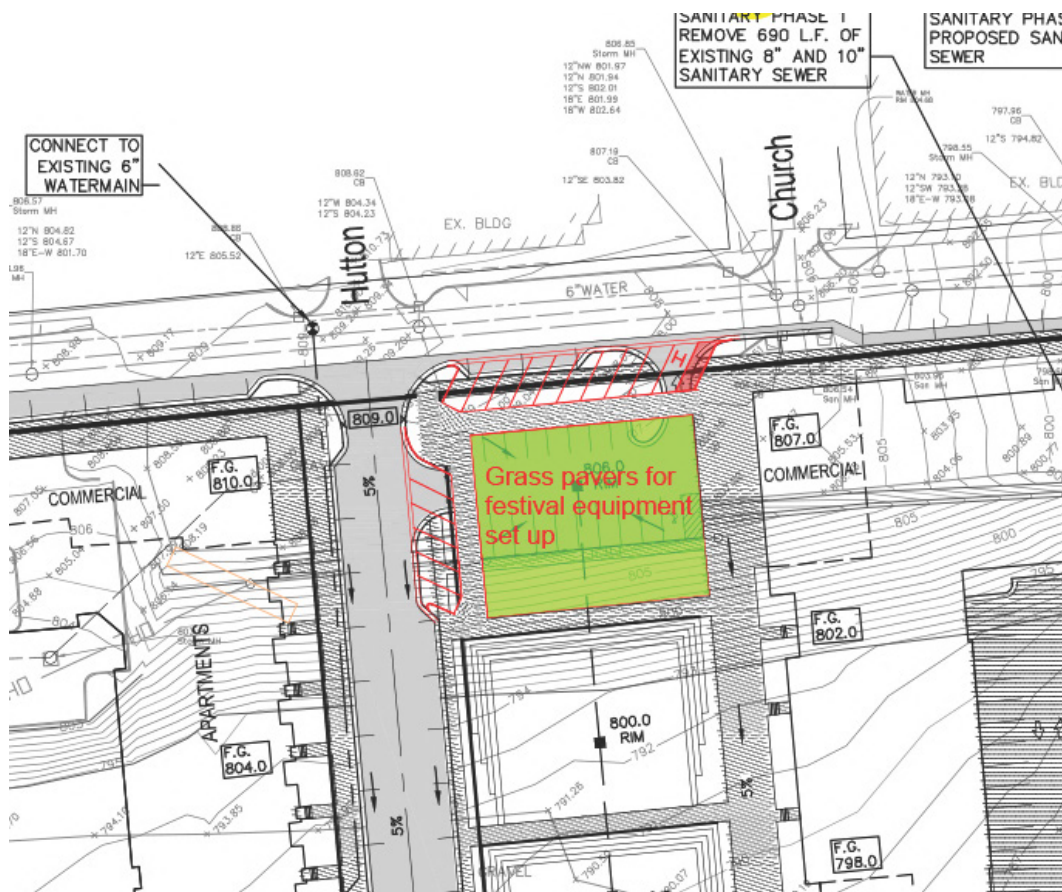
Recommendation: Leave parking along Cady St. as parallel parking. Another possibility discussed was whether angled parking could be configured along Cady St. to see if there are any benefits to this change (i.e., does this configuration generate significantly more parking spaces than parallel spaces?). The discussion determined that integrating angled parking along *one side* of Cady St. would probably require a 60-65-foot wide right-of-way; moving the buildings back so there is enough room for wide sidewalks; and the use of 60-degree "back-in" angled spaces to accommodate safe bicycle use of the travel lanes. Having angled parking along both sides of Cady would require a right-of-way width of at least 70 feet.

Clarification: The group thought angled parking did not fit into the present plan without moving the buildings and increasing the right-of-way width. It was stated that the current proposal supplies approximately 40 more parking spaces than required over the entire project. The apartments/ condominiums are slightly under parked compared to requirements, but residents of these buildings couldn't use on-street parking overnight so

extra spaces along Cady St. would only serve day-time users. The degree of change to the site design required to include angled parking was not justified by parking space count.

## 6. Desirability of 18-space parking lot adjacent to Cady St. and the Central Park.

Recommendation: The group had different opinions about this feature of the site design, and a clear consensus was not reached. However, a compromise could include replacing the parking lot as designed with “back-in” angled parking spaces directly adjacent to Cady St. These angled spaces could be used by parents of the church pre-school as well as the restaurants. The City Engineer prepared the conceptual design below, showing back-in angled parking spaces (in red) along Cady St. and on the north part of the new Hutton St. to offer approximately the same number of spaces as shown in the parking lot. However, as can be seen from the attached memo, not all participants agreed with placing angled parking along Hutton St. These angled parking spaces would require additional right-of-way that would come out of the Central Park area. (Note: This design could be further studied to see if there is enough space for a future drop-off lane along the Church curb on the north side of Cady St.)



Clarification: The attached memo expresses different solutions in an effort to create a more aesthetically pleasing and pedestrian friendly result is desired.

**7. Improvements to River St. and pedestrian crossing/signal at 7-Mile and River St. intersection.**

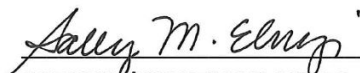
Recommendation: River Street should be reconstructed, including curbs on both sides of the street, some type of drainage (swales?) on the west side of the street, and a continuous pedestrian pathway along the west side of the street. A crossing of 7-Mile Road at River Street should include a cross-walk, a pedestrian-activated signal, and safety island (if possible). This design work could be included as part of the Final Site Plan.

A spillway design that is used on Taft Road was discussed as an option to address stormwater. Parking on both sides of the street was also discussed, but no consensus reached. This would require additional right-of-way and preliminary engineering to see what cross section might work. There is a conflict with existing DTE Overhead lines so any west side parking would require bump outs at poles.

Clarification: As part of the upgrades needed to the City's watermain to serve this project, the watermain within the River St. right-of-way will need to be reconstructed. Therefore, the roadway will be significantly disturbed to rebuild the watermain, necessitating reconstruction of the roadway itself. The curb along the west side of River street will help to protect pedestrians on the park pathway from vehicles.

The group conceded that improvements to this roadway will remove the existing trees on the west side of River Street. However, these trees have been severely pruned by DTE in maintaining the overhead powerlines along this street. Lastly, the grading to install the daylighted river may also impact these trees.

We look forward to discussing this information with you.

  
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CARLISLE/WORTMAN ASSOC., INC.  
Sally M. Elmiger, AICP, LEED AP  
Principal

Cc: Patrick Sullivan  
Dianne Massa  
Hunter Pasteur Homes, LLC

# MEMORANDUM

TO: Sally Elmiger, Carlisle Wortman, Patrick Sullivan, City of Northville

FROM: Nancy Darga, Chair River Restoration Task Force, Co-Chair Mobility Network Team

Susan Haifleigh, Sustainability Team, Mobility Network Team

DATE: April 18, 2020

Thank you for the chance to review the report on the meeting we had on traffic issues related to the Down's project. The way you organized the summary is very impressive. There are some items that we feel need to be addressed.

## **Memorandum Titles:**

In the title of the meeting under "RE:" you mentioned the Mobility Network, River Task Force, Dan Burden, the City Manager, City Planner and City Engineer but the Sustainability Team was not included in which Susan Haifleigh represented. I believe the Planning Commission would want to know someone from Sustainability participated.

### **1. Roundabout at intersection of Seven Mile and S. Center St.**

In the summary of the recommendation of a roundabout at the intersection of 7 mile and S. Center St. there is mention that the City's engineer would work with the project engineer to insure there is sufficient land to locate the roundabout. It should also state that the City will also work with Wayne County on the southern half of the proposed roundabout to ensure there is enough road right away for the approach design. The Planning Commission needs to understand that the land required for the roundabout cannot be situated entirely on the Down's land.

### **2. North/South connection of the development across Johnson Creek to 7-Mile and Hines Drive**

Under "Recommendations," it would be helpful to the Planning Commission to mention this recommendation was made to deter any negative impacts on a future crossing of Johnson Creek by centering it on the straight-away section of the creek.

Under "clarifications," there was never any mention that a second connection to 7-Mile may dilute County support for support at the 7-Mile and S. Center St. intersection. We have not met with Wayne County yet to discuss this option. Nor has Wayne County offered any County funding for any of the proposed road improvements, only federal funding through CMAQ for the roundabout at 7-Mile and Center. This statement can be contested and should be taken out.

### **3. Project Changes at 7-Mile Main Street Intersection and 7-Mile and Northville Road**

Under "recommendations," it states that the design should be determined by the applicants traffic engineer's recommendations. The Mobility Network study highlighted the intersection of 7-Mile and S Main Street as an area of concern because both sides of 7-Mile is off set and is hampered by the railroad crossing. Since the main entrance and exit to the Downs Project is off Center and Cady Street the



Mobility Study did not associate the intersection of 7-Mile, low service rate to anything associated with the Downs project. This intersection is a current problem with or without the Down's project and the City should develop recommendation in partnership with Wayne County and Northville Township who is trying to develop a pedestrian crossing by the rail road tracks.

The Mobility Network Team did identify that the intersection of Cady St. and S. Main would be greatly impacted by both the Foundry Flask and the Downs project. This issue was brought up towards the end of the meeting and was dismissed. The report should indicate that there is a disagreement as to the impact of both the Down's and Foundry Flask projects on Cady and S. Main in this report. If there is a reluctance to do so, the Mobility Network Team can address this issue separately to the Planning Commission in writing. Please advise us on how you want to handle this.

### **5, Angle Parking on Cady Street.**

We did all agree that parallel parking along Cady was acceptable. Under "clarification," it states the group thought either option would work. The only person who thought angle parking along Cady Street would work was Dan Burden. Please do not say the group in whole thought it was okay.

### **6. Parking Lot adjacent to Central Park**

As you know the proposed parking area behind the church was a very contentious discussion that became lengthy. Dan Burden wanted to insert a budling in the areas because he was afraid it would look like a missing tooth. I wanted the parking lot as proposed to service the church, restaurants, and park users. John Roby suggested we incorporate a decorative half wall with lavish landscaping to cut down on the missing tooth look and lessen the visual impact of the parking lot. I threw out the idea of angle parking where the parking lot was to offer a compromise but now, I see there is a proposed additional angle parking along the park. I objected to this concept earlier in the meeting, so I am surprised to see it crop up again. I would rather see John Roby's idea of a half wall in front of the original proposed parking lot than angle parking along the side street and along Cady Street behind the church. The original parking lot allows for needed parking for the church, restaurants, and the park. The proposed angle parking along the side street abruptly introduces a change in parking layout along the street, messes up the pedestrian walkway and the geometrics of the park. This issue is still not resolved as shown.

### **7. Improvement to River Street**

We all agreed that River Street needs to be upgraded to include two-way traffic, on street parking, curbs, a drainage plan and new landscaping. It was however not clear who is responsible for what. The City Manager made it sound like he wants the developer to pay for everything even the redesign of the street, the relocation of the water line that is in the street ROW. It was mentioned by one of the City engineers that the water main project was already planned for hydrants along River Street for Beal Town residents not the Downs. The Planning Commission will need clarification on what the developer is required to do and what is a public benefit.

- A. It was agreed upon to provide parking on both sides of the street. On the west side adjacent to the park, parking would have to be designed in a series of bump out areas to avoid the power lines that are within the "Right of Way, "(ROW).
- B. In response to questions about how to handle storm water the City Manager recommended that the curbs along the west side integrate a spill way design used on Taft Road. An



example picture of such a spill way was shown to the group. In that a spillway design introduces sheet flow that will have to cross the proposed shared use path a storm water design will be needed. The River Task Force can work with the engineering firm contracted for the road design to introduce a drainage system that ensure the safety of pedestrians and protect the river riparian corridor.

- C. As stated in your summary, all agreed that a cross walk at River Street and 7-Mile should include a pedestrian activated signal and safety island as you have outlined in your summary.

Once again thank you for letting us review the summary write up. Both John Roby and Susan Haifleigh reviewed this memorandum, and their input was included. Please feel free to call me if you have any questions.

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