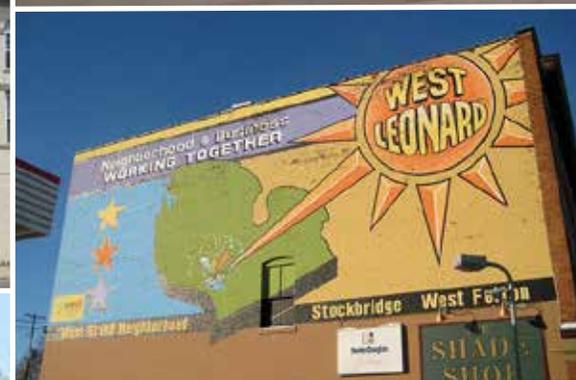


WestSide ASP

Grand Rapids, Michigan



adopted May 12, 2015

prepared by:



project manager:



Area Specific Plan

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The WestSide Area Specific Plan is the result of collaboration between a steering committee, city staff, city officials, planning consultants, and the public.

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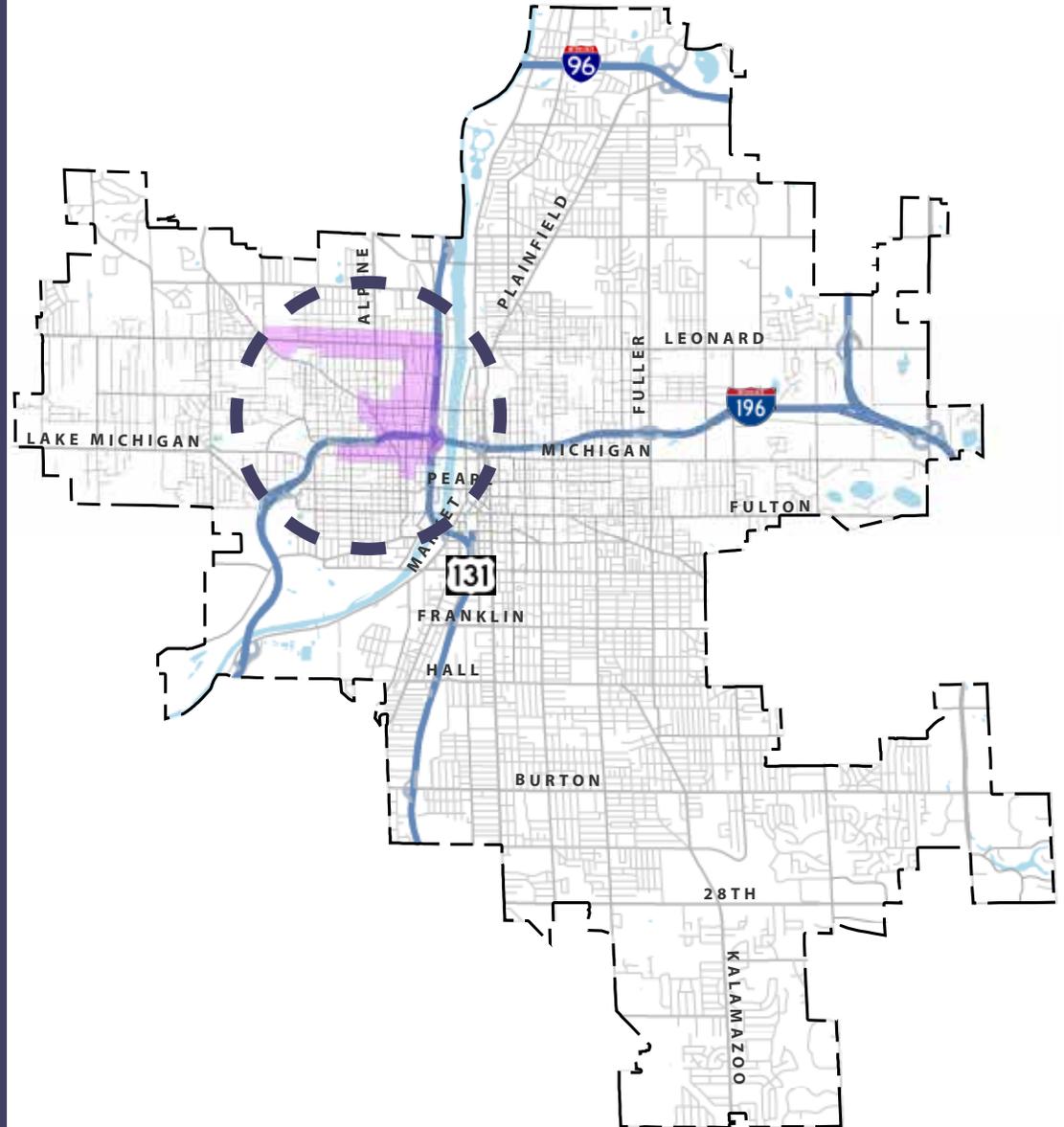
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STUDY AREA

The West Side ASP study area is composed of the West Leonard Business District, Stockbridge Business District, and the US-131 corridor as the eastern boundary. This map is to show the study area within the context of the entire city of Grand Rapids. (See full sized land use study area map at end of document with parcel definition - 11x17 fold out.)

PURPOSE

This plan is the community's vision and the guiding planning principles for the Corridor Improvement District (CID) for the WestSide. A CID is the next necessary step to implementing this vision shared by the community, and the City, as outlined in the Master Plan. The Area Specific Plan will define a direction for the future development and redevelopment of the WestSide Area of Grand Rapids.



I. SETTING THE STAGE



Photo credit: Brandon Bartoszek

Relationship to Other Plans

This ASP provides detailed, neighborhood-specific recommendations for land use, circulation, parking, and development character for the WestSide neighborhood consistent with the objectives of the Grand Rapids Master plan (2002). In conjunction with its companion plan, the U to the Zoo ASP was adopted in 2011 for the West Fulton Street corridor. The two plans serve as the foundation for a new WestSide Corridor Improvement Authority that will serve as the implementation agency.

11.0 - Area-Specific Plans

11.1 - Introduction

The Master Plan provides a city-wide vision of how to direct and manage land use change in the community. In some instances, a more detailed approach will be required to insure that appropriate consideration is given to character, design and detailed issues. Area-specific planning provides the opportunity to more closely examine a particular geographic area of the city and tailor appropriate recommendations that best suit the needs of area residents, businesses and property owners.



implementation steps

Planning is not an end in itself. The true measure of a plan's value is the extent to which it is carried out. Putting the plan into action involves orchestrating multiple activities among a variety of groups to assure consistency with the vision. It is important to remember that all recommendations stem from extensive public input and the actions listed below will help guide the implementation of this Area Specific Plan. For ease of use the action items are organized by topic. Although successful implementation will involve efforts from many, the key groups responsible for each one have been identified.

U TO THE ZOO WORK PLAN				
Action	Lead	Support	Resources	Priority
ZONING ORDINANCE While zoning currently supports traditional urban patterns and architectural forms, the TRS and FCC designation do not reflect all plan recommendations. An overlay district should be explored, which retains the majority of current allowed uses and zoning requirements, but addresses inconsistencies, such as those related to building heights and mandatory first floor commercial uses in the TRS.	City Planning Department	U to the Zoo Steering Committee	Neighborhood and Business Organizations	2012
CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT Economic development tools to help spur corridor improvements and new investment should be explored to implement plan recommendations.	City Planning and Economic Development Departments	West Fulton Business Association	MEDC CAT Team	2012
STREETSCAPE/TRANSPORTATION A key concern is the quality of public spaces (along both streets) and opportunities to enhance biking and walking. Consequently, a planning and design process and funding strategy to pay for streetscape improvements and street tree replacement should be initiated.	City Planning and Engineering Departments	MDOT/RAPID	GVSU Neighborhood and Business Organizations	2013
PARKING Given the conflicts between residents and students who park in the neighborhood, a dialogue must be maintained with GVSU, neighbors and the City. Among the options to explore should be an on-street parking permit system.	City of Grand Rapids	GVSU Neighborhood and Business Organizations	Parking Services	Ongoing
CODE COMPLIANCE Issues related to property maintenance and enforcement of building and rental codes need to be a major concern and should be addressed.	City of Grand Rapids	GVSU Neighborhood and Business Organizations		Ongoing
BUILDING COMMUNITY Among the benefits of this planning process was the dialogue between its various participants. Many ideas were expressed that are clearly beyond the scope of this effort -- communicating with stakeholders about change, attraction for children, welcoming GVSU as part of the neighborhood and many others. While the plan may be finished it is imperative that discussions continue to strengthen the community's vision. For that to happen a partnership of all stakeholders and stakeholder groups must be established.	City Planning	Neighborhood and Business Organizations, GVSU		2012

development concepts



future land use concept



acknowledgements

The U to the Zoo planning initiative would not have been possible without the generous support and funding assistance of the Dyer-Ives Foundation, whose mission is to build capacity in those grassroots, neighborhood organizations and related efforts that address issues of systemic poverty or diminish a sense of isolation among residents of the central city of Grand Rapids; the South-West Area Neighborhood Association; and the City of Grand Rapids.

Thank you also to Margo Johnson and Kurt Reppart for their time and commitment to the planning process and for taking a leadership role as the liaison between the Steering Committee and consultant team. Their efforts helped make sure that all meetings and workshops were well organized and well attended. The U to the Zoo Steering Committee further thanks the countless citizens who provided their input and participated in the community workshops -- their ideas helped frame the plan and its recommendations.

Technical Assistance

LSI Planning, Inc. thanks its consultant team -- Progressive AE, Design Plus, Project Innovations and Guy Bazzani for their efforts and excellent counsel. Their guidance and constant input helped to ensure that the work of the committee and all participants was focused in a positive and meaningful direction.



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How to Use this Plan

This plan's chapter outline, analysis, key recommendations, and implementation actions are by topic. The concluding appendices are detailed background studies and data that informed recommendations and community input for the WestSide Area Specific Plan.

Vision:

Uniting diverse business districts and neighborhoods in a collaborative, yet individualized, WestSide “brand” grounded in a rich history and looking toward a vibrant, sustainable, desirable future.

Summary of the Process

The WestSide Area Specific Plan (ASP) is the result of a collaborative effort that engaged the broad community and, more directly, affected stakeholder groups. While the process included traditional community meetings, it also included highly interactive methods to engage the community and stakeholders, allowing them to see their community from a different perspective.

The ASP was crafted concurrently with the WestSide Corridor Improvement District (CID) plan. The CID plan is the basis for a corridor improvement authority, a vehicle to fund qualifying infrastructure improvements, marketing initiatives, and economic growth projects. A summary of the public involvement process follows.

Planning Timeline

The planning process began in June 2012 with a thorough assessment of the existing traffic, land use, economic, and aesthetic conditions.

Three kick-off public workshops were held in 2012 with the West Leonard Downtown Business Association, Stockbridge Business Association, and West Grand Neighborhood Organization. These sessions focused on issues revolving around the Leonard, Seward, Bridge, and Stocking corridors. A walk and a trolley tour of the Leonard Street, Seward, Bridge, and

Stocking corridors were conducted.

In 2013, a fundamental understanding of the character of the business districts had been established, a complete review of other relevant information and documents was performed, including: the 2002 Master Plan, Green Grand Rapids update to the Master Plan, Zoning Ordinance, Streetscape Guidelines, Neighborhood Pattern Book, City Commission Policy for Corridor Improvement Districts, City Commission Policies for Neighborhood Business Improvement, Parking Services in Neighborhood Business Areas, Neighborhood Business District Identification Signs and Directories, locations of DASH routes and stops, and economic development designated parcels including brownfields.

In February 2014, stakeholder interviews with community members were held to gather additional insight regarding issues facing the WestSide and what various businesses, individuals, and organizations are doing in response. Representatives from Grand Valley State University, the Grand Rapids Police Department, the Grand Rapids City Commission, as well as developers involved on the WestSide were consulted for their visions, goals, and plans for the area.

Goals:

- *Strengthen physical ties to GVSU and promote Stockbridge as the University's business district.*
- *Visually and physically connect the WestSide to Downtown, especially with gateway features at underpasses at Leonard Street and Bridge Street.*
- *Establish buffers between residential neighborhoods and commercial business districts to protect neighborhood character.*
- *Encourage mixed-use redevelopment, especially parallel to Seward east to US-131, creating an eclectic mix of repurposed industrial spaces and new loft-style living.*
- *Enhance non-motorized connections, primarily along Seward Avenue as the north-south spine.*
- *Capitalize on the riverfront and expected river restoration project, exploring opportunities for a boardwalk, park trailhead, views from adjacent parcels.*
- *Support existing local businesses and foster entrepreneurship.*
- *Enhance streetscape features with WestSide-branded street furniture, signage, wayfinding, and public art.*
- *Promote compatible infill development that respects the historic character of the traditional neighborhoods and business corridors but doesn't mimic it, creating a varied array of compatible but distinctive styles.*



Vision



Goal



Action

After assembling the wealth of information about the study area, the consultant team conducted a public open house in April, 2014 to update the community and elicit their thoughts on the work that had been completed. Nearly 180 WestSide residents, business owners, and community leaders attended the event, providing input on issues concerning SWAN, West Grand, transportation, placemaking, urban design, and civic amenities through a variety of interactive exhibits.



In June, a bilingual open house was conducted with materials and translation in Spanish in order to more fully engage the area's sizeable Hispanic population. This successful presentation at Harrison Elementary School, to parents and children drew another 100+ participants.



The final public open house was held in July to introduce the recommendations that would be presented to the Planning Commission in August. The information gathered through the open houses is summarized throughout the document.

In total, there have been 14 events which invited citizen input (this does not include additional citizen input events associated with the Corridor Improvement District process).

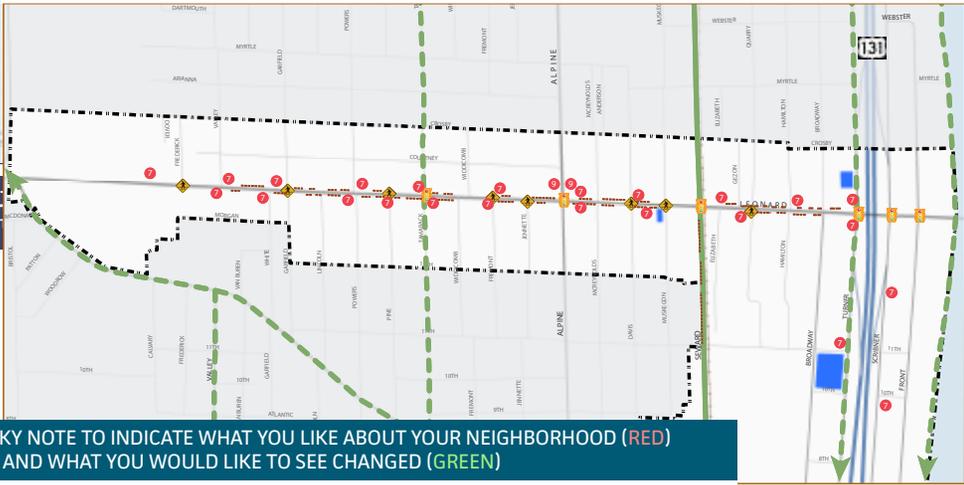


WITH A GREEN DOT, INDICATE ON THE MAP PLACES THAT ARE ESSENTIAL TO THE CHARACTER AND VALUE OF THE WESTSIDE
 WITH A RED DOT, INDICATE ON THE MAP PLACES THAT DETRACT FROM THE CHARACTER AND VALUE OF THE WESTSIDE



PLACE A PIN ON THE MAP TO INDICATE YOUR RESIDENCE, PLACE OF WORK, AND PLACES YOU VISIT FREQUENTLY

Civic Amenities Map
 WestSide Area Specific Plan
 Grand Rapids, MI



PLEASE USE A STICKY NOTE TO INDICATE WHAT YOU LIKE ABOUT YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD (RED) AND WHAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE CHANGED (GREEN)



- Medians
- Public Parking
- On-Street Parking (main corridors only)
- Prop. Bike Lanes
- Pedestrian Crossing
- Traffic Signal
- Potential LakeSide BRT Route and Stations
- Bus Stops (Route #)

Placemaking Map - Bridge Street
 WestSide Area Specific Plan
 Grand Rapids, MI

Open House Draft

City of Grand Rapids, Kent Co. GIS, GVMC, MDOT

- Retail
- Restaurant/Bar
- Services (Personal)
- Entertainment
- Neighborhood Center
- Medical
- Manufacturing
- Public/Gov't Services
- Office
- Traditional Business Area

Stakeholders were asked to interact using a series of boards, comment cards, and displays on April 2, 2014 at an Open House

History of Grand Rapids' West Side

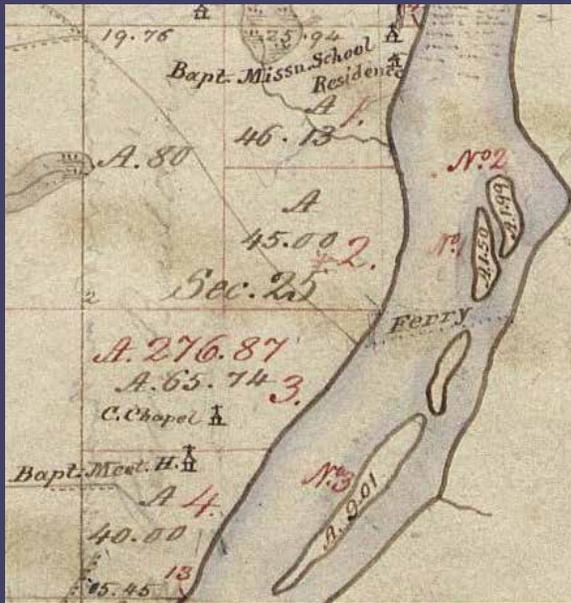
For much of its early history, the western banks of the Grand River developed with an identity distinct from the east side of the river. While the city's official founder Lucious Lyon built his trading post and cabin on the east side of the river, it was Isaac McCoy's Baptist mission that was founded a year earlier in 1825 on the west side. The mission, consisting of a house, schoolhouse, a stable, and a blacksmith shop, was located on the site where the Gerald R. Ford Museum currently stands today.

The western side of the Grand River remained isolated from its eastern counterpart due to the natural separation of the river which often proved difficult to cross by ferry. In 1842, a footbridge was constructed across the river at Bridge Street and replaced two years later by a wooden plank bridge. By 1858, the Leonard Street bridge was constructed a mile up-river. However, the west side of the river largely remained separated due to the limited mobility options resulting in more concentrated neighborhood focused development.

People lived largely in moderate walking distances to their places of work, worship, school, and social activities. This in turn spawned the dense neighborhoods and traditional business districts the WestSide sees today. Neighborhoods formed around prominent commercial streets like Bridge, Stocking, and Leonard as immigrants from Poland, Germany, Lithuania, Ireland, and the Netherlands came to the west side en masse.

With the availability of the river and the influx of immigrant groups to provide labor, industry quickly emerged on the western banks of the Grand River. In 1866, William Powers financed the construction of a canal between Fulton Street and Seventh Street. The canal brought industrial growth between Front Avenue and the river. Industries such as sash and door factories, casket companies, and mills made use of the river's resources.

By 1870, the railroad arrived on the west side just west of Elizabeth Avenue accelerating the industrial growth. The Detroit,



Survey west of the Grand River (1837). Isaac McCoy's Baptist mission school and residence is featured where the Gerald R. Ford Museum currently sits.



Factories along the West Side of the Grand River (1911). The Voigt Mill, producer of Crescent Flour, with its tall smoke stack is in the center of the photo. At the far left is the West Side Iron Works, and at the right the J.H. Benton Co. At the far right is Brown & Sehler located at 279-285 Bridge.

Grand Rapids & Milwaukee and Grand Rapids & Indiana lines brought freight and commerce to the core of the west side. Furniture factories, such as American Seating and Widdicomb, found the location between the river and railroad tracks to be very favorable for operations.

Even after the arrival of the railroad, the lumber industry and steamboats began to compete for the waters of the Grand River. Each spring lumbermen sent miles of logs down the river to the sawmills and furniture factories lining the western banks. Log jams were not uncommon at the time. One particular jam in 1883, (pictured) saw five miles of logs roar through the city for over two hours destroying bridges and everything else in its path.

Other factors complicated life along the river. Snow melt, ice jams, and early rains caused spring floods that would inundate homes and factories along the western banks. After an unusually severe flood in 1904, thousands were forced from their homes and damage exceeded \$500,000 (more than \$10 million today) leading the city to construct flood walls to hold back future flooding.

By the early 1900's, the streetcar system was rapidly growing in the city. The first line installed was the Leonard Street, providing a needed and convenient, connection across the river to the east side. This service greatly increased mobility at a relatively low cost of a few cents per fare. Convenient travel stimulated commercial activity westward

along Leonard as residents were no longer bound by the distance they could travel on foot to reach their destinations. Expansion of the streetcar system induced neighborhoods and commercial districts to densely occupy the corridors served by the streetcar. This expansion and form of development reached its height in the 1920s but, continued until World War II.

As suburbanization took hold, the strong ethnic, working neighborhoods of the west side began to see the residents migrate to the fringes of the city and outlying communities.

The 1950's through 1990's were characterized by an exodus of the population and lack of investment in the established commercial corridors as businesses followed customers.

Revitalization Efforts

While the West Side has experienced significant change and transition, it has



Flood water from West Bridge Street (1883). View of the log jam on the Grand River from West Bridge street, facing north. The movement of the logs has created a blur in the center of the photo.

survived. Despite its generic name, the West Side is made of several distinct neighborhoods that include: the West Fulton Business District (covered in the U to the Zoo Plan adopted in 2012), Stockbridge Business District, West Leonard Business District, South West Area Neighbors (SWAN), John Ball Neighborhood Association, and the West Grand Neighborhood Organization (WGNO).

During the initial stage of their collaborative efforts, it was determined that the first step would be to create a Corridor Improvement District (CID) to encourage thriving business districts, safe neighborhoods, quality public places, and a place that fosters a sense of community pride.

The result of targeted investment within these aging commercial corridors by local stakeholders and City representatives began to bring new life into the West Side. Revitalization efforts for West Side neighborhoods and business districts began taking hold in the 1970's.

In 1991, Grand Rapids West filed a report documenting the challenges and opportunities for the entire West Side called "A Profile of Opportunity." This report was a response to the anticipated growth of the business districts and Grand Valley State University. As part of this effort, West Side neighborhood associations and business districts anticipated and gave their input on the growth and sustainability of the West Side.

7 P's of Implementation

This Area Specific Plan is intended to be a policy guide for moving the WestSide forward, guiding decisions about future physical and economic development. With the commitment of resources to this planning effort comes the high expectation that the recommendations will be implemented, some soon and others over the next five to ten years.

Putting the plan into action involves orchestrating multiple activities among a variety of groups to assure consistency with the vision. How each entity interacts to make decisions and implement plans is important to consider. By highlighting the type of action, processes and roles may be easier to prioritize, resources can be more easily allocated and partnerships aligned more quickly.

The 7 P's of Implementation is a framework to help organize planning processes and roles. It is outlined in the table at right. Each element of this planning framework builds off of each "P", and each "P" is necessary to ensure greater success.

Within each section of the ASP an implementation table will identify the type of "P" or "P's" that ensure the successful completion of each action in the implementation matrix.

7 P's of Implementation	
Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision makers/funders • Future CIA
Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision: aspirations of the community and how it seeks to move into the future
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development regulations (zoning)
Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing the policies
Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical manifestation of philosophy, policy, and procedure
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working together • Government • Private sector • School District • Neighborhood organizations • MSHDA • Habitat for Humanity
Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrating completed projects • Branding and marketing of the district

An example table:

Action	Lead	Type	Resources	Priority
INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS Reconfiguring the intersection of Leonard and Turner...	City Planning and Engineering Departments	Project: Capital Improvement	Future CIA Funding; TIF	2016
CROSSWALKS AND PEDESTRIAN SIGNALS Install new signals at...	City Planning and Engineering Departments	Policy: Pedestrian Zone; Project : Capital Improvement	Main Streets Grant	2017

Full Table of Implementation will be available in Appendix A.

The 7 P's are adapted from the Built Environment Policy Blueprint Fall 2010 LiveWell Colorado; co-authors Rebekah Kik and Jessica Osborne

II. TRANSPORTATION



Transportation - Community Comment Summary

- On-street parking lacks proper striping and signage; snowplowing issues arise from accumulating snow banks during winter causing vehicles to park in travel lanes.
- Poorly-managed parking for businesses along major corridors encroaches into adjacent neighborhoods.
- Leonard Street operates as a major east-west arterial thoroughfare moving heavy amounts of traffic daily.
- Lane configurations under expressway overpasses are poorly signed and striped at Leonard St. result in confusion for motorists.
- Limited opportunities are available for on-street bicycle traffic on Leonard Street given high traffic volumes and narrow rights-of-way.
- Pursue transit-oriented development opportunities that will increase mobility and accessibility for Bridge Street.
- Pedestrian underpasses beneath highways require lighting, signage, and physical enhancements to make them more user-friendly.
- Provide safe routes for children to schools and parks through connected sidewalks, intersections, crosswalks and signage.

Streets as Place

Streets are among the most important public infrastructure and place-making elements of the WestSide because they can define how a visitor, resident, or worker perceives the area as a whole. While it is important that streets foster safe and convenient access and travel for all modes of transportation and are easy to navigate, they should also be attractive and well maintained.

The “main streets” on the WestSide (Leonard, Bridge, Seward, and Stocking) historically were designed to accommodate pedestrians and non-motorized users, as well as vehicles. Sidewalks were lined with interesting buildings and spaces, with a mix of uses that gave people somewhere to go. This ASP plan chapter seeks ways to strengthen pedestrian-friendly development in its relationship to the sidewalk.

Streetscape elements that can be used to create such environments include inviting building facades, landscaping, sidewalks, street paving, street furniture, signs, awnings, and street lighting. These simple improvements to the streetscape will significantly improve the pedestrian experience and further emphasize the intended district character.

Pedestrian improvements to the streetscape create safe walkable environments that contribute to the economic vibrancy of WestSide neighborhood businesses. Consider the pedestrian at every point in the

design experience; arriving at the building door, parking your car, standing at the bus stop, and walking down the street. The more pedestrian friendly the place, the better able and more likely the pedestrian is to move from place to place.

While the condition of the infrastructure is one reason people will choose to walk, it is not the only reason. Using these recommendations as design guidelines to foster better placemaking will also help future development on the WestSide.

Complete Streets

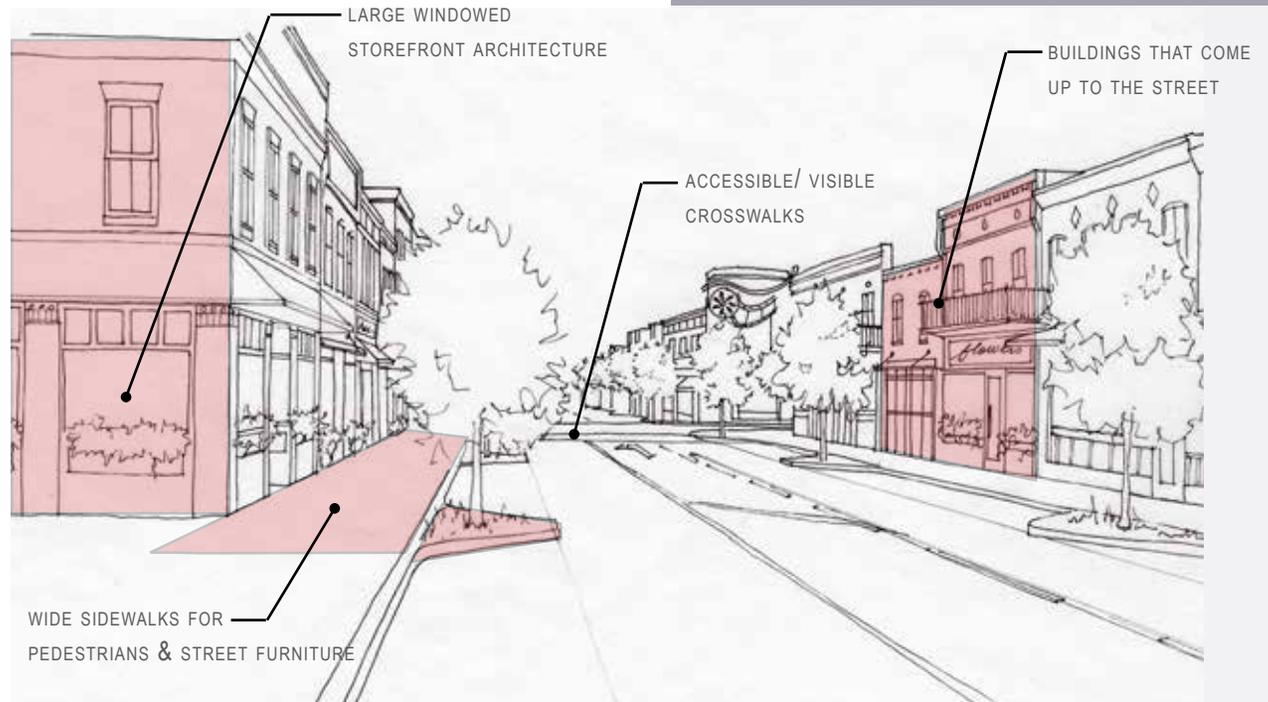
For the next 20 years, improvements to the WestSide transportation system will be as much about complementing the desired character of the surroundings and moving all types of users as it will be about moving autos. Recommendations in this plan build upon the city’s recent efforts to reconstruct streets to fit the context of the adjacent land uses – safe for motorists, and including streetscape and design details catering to the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists.

Nationally, this approach is often referred to as “complete streets,” harmonizing streets with their surroundings while interlacing transportation networks to meet the mobility needs of all users, of all ages — motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and emergency service vehicles — making trips easier around the WestSide no matter what mode of transportation is chosen.

DEVELOPMENT GOALS FOR STREETScape

- The sidewalk environment should accommodate ample space for pedestrians, street furniture, prominent storefronts, even outdoor seating where feasible.
- Street trees and other elements should create a comfortable separation between parking and drive lanes; pedestrian areas should also be included.
- Streetscape improvements should be integrated with and connected to future transit amenities such as bus stop benches and shelters.
- The street should be a safe, comfortable place to sit, catch transit, interact, get information, shop, eat, walk, run, ride a bike, or get a paper.
- Receptacles, planters, benches, pedestrian-scale lighting, and other such amenities should be judiciously placed throughout the District.
- A snow removal plan and emergency routes should be created for business areas, schools, and residential streets with bus routes.

Pedestrian priorities include: crosswalks, wide sidewalks, sound and vibration enhanced pedestrian signals, curb extensions that reduce crossing times and increased pedestrian visibility, and landscaping that enhances the beauty of the street as well as providing shade.



Walkable and lively streets have a mix of uses with diverse shops along primary streets



Walkable streets are also easy to navigate and provide safe, accessible pedestrian activity

Transit Service

While Bridge Street west of I-196 and Leonard Street west of US-131 are served by The Rapid, north/south connectivity within the WestSide and to downtown or the Medical Mile is circuitous. Recent decisions regarding the routing of the proposed Laker Line BRT along Fulton Street to link the GVSU downtown and Allendale campuses makes the desirability of a more direct north/south connection to Leonard all the more apparent. Likewise, expanded employment and housing development along Michigan Street and in the Belknap neighborhood suggest a need for a more direct connection between the west side and the Michigan Street corridor. Improved transit service will also enhance the development potential for the Neighborhood and Village centers by promoting more intense transit-oriented development

West Leonard Street Traffic Study

Wade Trim completed a comprehensive traffic

review for the West Leonard Street Corridor in conjunction with the preparation of the WestSide Area Specific Plan. The West Leonard Street project study area began at Walker Avenue and ended at the Grand River, east of Front Street. Once the review was complete, the information was compiled into the open house formats and introduced to the community for feedback. Comments and suggestions received have been incorporated into the recommendations set forth in the action items.

Leonard Street

Leonard Street operates as a major east-west arterial thoroughfare moving heavy amounts of traffic daily, creating a low quality of pedestrian level of service. Pedestrian improvements need to be addressed along the entire length of Leonard. The existing cross section varies between two and six lanes through the corridor. Between Walker Avenue and Fredrick Avenue, Leonard Street is a two-lane undivided arterial with on-street parallel parking. Leonard Street has a three-lane cross section between White

Avenue and Turner Avenue with a two-way center left-turn lane and on-street parallel parking. In addition, a right turn lane is provided for west-bound right turns at Alpine Avenue under US-131 (between Turner and Scribner Avenue), Leonard Street is a six-lane undivided arterial in this location with side-by-side left turn lanes. Between Scribner Avenue and just east of Front Street, Leonard Street is a five-lane undivided arterial with no on-street parking.

Turner Avenue Intersection

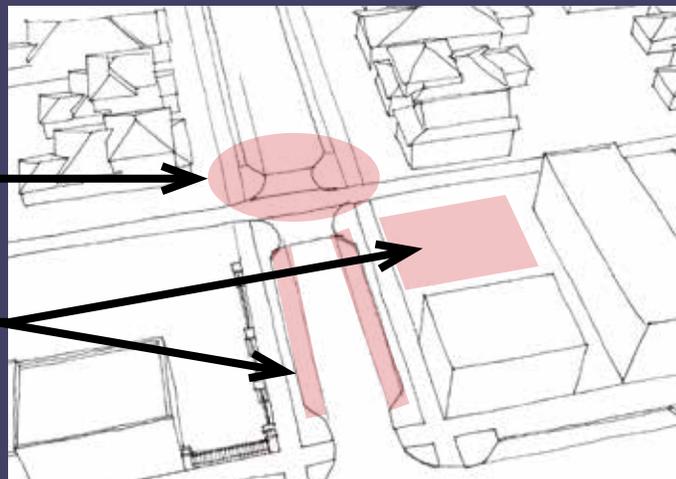
The Leonard and Turner Avenue intersection was found to experience a greater than average crash rate. Turner Avenue serves as a one-way (southbound) service drive adjacent to US-131. The existing signal is in a diagonal-span configuration.

Relatively few drivers select the northernmost westbound through lane on the westbound Leonard Street approach to Turner Avenue because that lane ends at an alley only 150 feet west of Turner Avenue. Lane markings are

NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC CALMING & PARKING MANAGEMENT

Place neighborhood traffic calming on 'entry' location. Typically where alley access ends for commercial use.

Define on- and off-street commercial parking before entry into residential areas. Parking should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis on shallow lot conditions for minimal residential impacts.



- Retail/ Business parking should not encroach into the neighborhood, typically past the alley access. Curb bump-outs and colored, textured crosswalks should be employed for traffic calming.
- All residential streets past this point should be signed for residents' parking only.
- Retail/ Business parking should be well signed and designated for that purpose. Shared parking policies and parking management strategies should be incorporated to ensure maximum benefit to business owners and patrons.

absent between the westbound lanes on this segment of road, and on-street parallel parking is allowed west of the alley to Broadway Avenue (except between the hours of 3:00 pm to 6:00pm). On-street parallel parking is allowed at all times west of Broadway Avenue. Increasing the use of the northernmost westbound through lane would improve traffic operations and reduce congestion along westbound Leonard Street between Turner Avenue and Front Avenue, but it would come at the expense of on-street parking west of Turner Avenue.

The eastbound Leonard Street approach lacks lane definition. The approach is wide enough for two lanes of traffic yet lane markings are absent. Most vehicles were observed to be using this approach as a two-lane approach. During the morning and mid-day peak periods, eastbound queues from the Scribner Avenue intersection (located just 175 feet east of Turner Avenue) often extended into the Turner Avenue intersection, blocking southbound Turner Avenue traffic from proceeding through the intersection.

Observations of drivers making the dual-lane southbound-to-eastbound left-turn indicated driver confusion regarding which lane on eastbound Leonard Street they should select when completing the turn. There are three receiving lanes for the dual-lane southbound-

to-eastbound left-turn movement. Under the US-131 overpass, Leonard Street widens from a 5-lane section to a 6-lane section with side-by-side left-turn lanes. As a result of the cross section change, both directions of Leonard Street are slightly misaligned as the alignment shift occurs within the Turner Avenue intersection. (See *Figure 1* on pg. 20)

Scribner Avenue Intersection

Angle crashes make up 41% of the crashes at this intersection with rear-end and side-swipe crashes following at 28% and 20%, respectively. The high degree of turning traffic and the dual northbound-to-westbound left-turn lanes may contribute to angle and side-swipe crashes.

Intersection spacing is very tight with only 177 feet of left-turn lane and through lane storage between Turner Avenue and Scribner Avenue. The high degree of rear-end crashes may be partly due to the limited storage for northbound-to-westbound vehicles entering the westbound through lanes under US-131. Westbound traffic backs from the Turner Avenue intersection through the Scribner Avenue intersection, contributing to congestion and rear-end crashes.

Seward Avenue Intersection

Operations at Seward Avenue are impacted by the railroad that crosses Leonard Street just east of Seward Avenue. The stop bar on westbound Leonard Street is located east of the railroad to prevent motorists from stopping over the tracks. A protected left-turn phase is activated only to clear the railroad tracks in the event of railroad pre-empt. The signal operates as a two-phase signal at all other times. The existing signal is in a diagonal-span arrangement with 8-inch lenses. The westbound Leonard Street approach has an additional set of 12-inch signals mounted on span wire that stops westbound traffic before reaching the railroad tracks, The north leg of the intersection provides access to a strip mall.

A single red ball is positioned above the intersection facing traffic exiting the strip mall. The red ball flashes during the Seward Avenue signal phase and is solid red during the Leonard Street signal phase. Observations revealed that motorists exiting the strip mall appeared confused with the flashing red/solid red signal.

Other Transportation Recommendations

Highway Underpass Recommendations

NON-MOTORIZED RECOMMENDATIONS

Increasing and enhancing non-motorized connections throughout the WestSide is a high priority for the community. The open house participants told us each time that they wanted a safe, attractive, connected non-motorized network for walking and bicycling people of all ages and physical abilities.

To achieve this goal, we evaluated several plans that the City of Grand Rapids is already using including Grand Rapids Green Streets, the existing Master Plan, and the traffic analysis that was done for the West Leonard corridor.



Catalytic Project: Seward Avenue

Seward Avenue is an important north-south connector to the Leonard and Bridge Street Business Districts. Seward's character has a mix of building types; commercial, industrial and residential uses. Traffic is constant but not heavy. Its right-of-way is wide and accommodating for bicycles and traffic together.

On the south end of Seward, a median of planters and trees makes a civic entrance into the Bridge Street District. Because parcels are large along this route, redevelopment may come slowly.

As a transformative area our recommendations include focus on the streetscape and planting of Seward as a sustainable greenway.

- Continue the tree-lined median to Leonard Street.
- Reinforce the axis and define the character of Seward with a linear park along the east edge where the railroad easement lies. Use native grasses, drainage, and railroad inspired art to draw



Creating memorable landmarks for visitors make them easy to locate and orient themselves for directions

people to the area.

- North at Leonard Street and south at Bridge Street, create trailheads to demarcate the walking path along the sidewalk.
- Use the railroad signal tower as a trailhead to the south on Bridge Street.
- Define a park or recreational amenity like an ice skating rink near the few residential homes that exist near the intersection of Leonard as a trail head.
- If feasible, create an additional wider path along the railroad. Create opportunity for relaxation along the way with benches and art. Possible historical markers and information about the railroad in the area could be added along the way.
- Seward should serve as a vital link between Ann Street or the future Musketawa Trail on the north and Wealthy Street/Kent Trails to the south.



Places that people can linger and slow down are highly desirable for identity

The overpasses of US-131 and I-196 are often seen as pedestrian barriers between neighborhoods. While they are a permanent part of the landscape, many improvements can be employed to make the walk underneath them safer, more interesting, and continue to connect the WestSide in a more walkable manner. Concepts to create a brighter passage for non-motorized transportation and pedestrians are illustrated on pg. 21.

The streetscape would continue along the street to fully realize the pedestrian environment as a complete place. New railings, LED lighting, landscape, and ADA pavement markings, curbs, and wayfinding will be constructed to improve the underpasses.

Traffic Calming Recommendations

Residents and business owners along Leonard Street have remarked specifically on the high-speeds of traffic, lack of parking definition, heavy trucks in the neighborhood, and the degraded, unattractive streetscape. While the traffic volumes on Leonard are restrictive to road dieting, there are some traffic calming solutions that can be employed. (See illustrations on page 16)

- Curb extensions can be employed at major intersections to define parking and to shorten pedestrian crossing times.
- Trees and landscaping can be used to define entrances to neighborhoods. Residents also expressed their concerns with traffic entering their neighborhoods both as cut-through delivery traffic and searching for parking.
- The neighborhoods can be better delineated from the commercial areas with visual cues such as colored pavement, gateways or speed tables to slow traffic where appropriate and will help maintain the value of the neighborhood.

Parking Recommendations

Pavement Marking Recommendation

Many of the streets on the WestSide are lacking (or paint has faded) directional, parking and wayfinding roadway striping. These pavement markings are often overlooked, but they are an important component of the transportation system. Much

like signs, pavement markings help inform motorists, pedestrians and bicycles on the “rules of the road” and influence how they travel along streets.

Specifically on Leonard Street, a conflict at the intersection of Turner Avenue is being addressed through marking a left lane more clearly. This helps motorists navigate a merging of streets and define a travel lane on Leonard, and helps high turning volumes to maneuver onto US-131 more easily.

Pavement markings are a relatively easy way to change driver behavior, such as adding painted crosswalks or defining a lane width and parking spaces with striping. Frequently on the WestSide, the on-street parking spaces are signed but not striped or vice-versa. Both striping and signage are necessary for a busy business district street to be successful.

Using striping in the busy commercial corridor locations helps direct visitors to parking and pedestrians to safe crossings. Within the neighborhoods, especially when near a school or along major pedestrian/bicycle routes, boldly striping and signing crosswalks may help lower speeds (i.e. “calm” traffic).

Striping recommendations include: markings for parallel parking on-street spaces, striped crosswalks and stop bars. Each area and intersection should be considered independently as there are a variety of painted warnings and crosswalks that can be used. In cases where the pedestrian needs to cross very wide pavement, curb extensions should be used to shorten this distance.

Off-Street Parking Recommendations

Off-Street parking (parking lots) are an

important part of a businesses success. Customers are more likely to frequent a business where parking is viewed as safe and convenient. In some cases, however, the amount of parking provided is excessive. A large parking lot with many empty spaces does not say, “shop here” it says, “nobody shops here.”

Some off-street parking best practices are:

- Study location of unused parking spaces, the amount of parking needed for different uses has changed in recent years.
- Conversion of some parking spaces to parking islands can also help improve circulation, aesthetics and make it more inviting for customers to walk rather than drive to individual businesses.

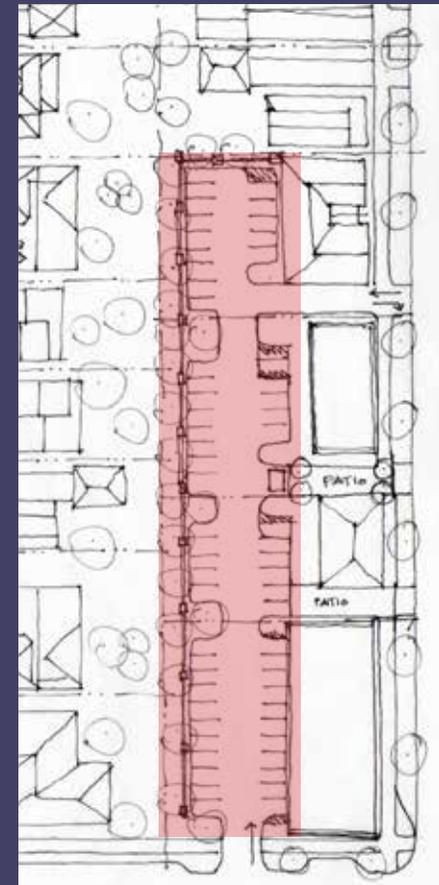
On-Street Parking Recommendations

In order to promote the business districts as walkable activity centers, excess off-street parking is neither necessary nor desirable. On-street parking is prevalent on most of the WestSide’s streets. This parking not only provides a convenience to residents and access for customers, it also helps to calm traffic speeds and makes walking along the sidewalks more comfortable.

On-street parking best practice management recommendations are:

- Commercial corridor areas and centers create a parking management policy. This would include an inventory of existing on-street spaces, re-striping, signing and potentially consolidating driveways to accommodate more on street parking spaces.

Off-Street Shared Parking Diagram



Off street parking can be linked together behind buildings with common exit and entry points helping visitors and employees park once and walk. Lessening drive way curb cuts onto primary streets creates a safer sidewalk for pedestrians.

LEONARD & TURNER INTERSECTION

Install dotted white lines within the Turner Avenue intersection to provide drivers with visual guidance through the lane transitions.

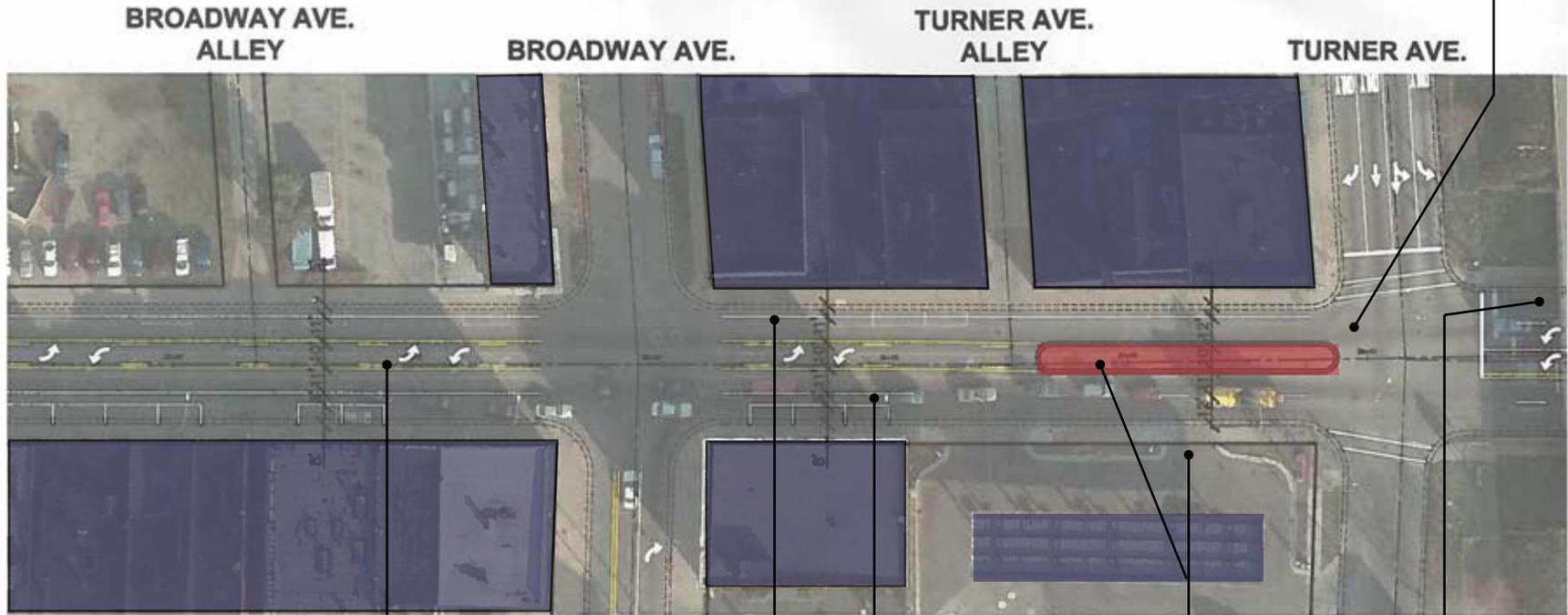


Figure 1: Turner

Install dotted pavement marking lines delineating the turning movements to improve driver understanding and to reduce the potential for lane changing and sideswipe crashes.

Install dotted pavement marking lines delineating the turning movements to improve driver understanding and to reduce the potential for lane changing and sideswipe crashes.

Prohibit on-street parking (6 total spaces) along westbound Leonard Street between Turner Avenue and Hamilton Avenue (600 feet west of Turner Avenue) to provide more distance for traffic in the northernmost westbound lane to merge left. Such a measure could be temporary to determine if drivers adequately respond in a manner that substantially improves the traffic operations at the intersection.

Study driveway consolidation or removal in the southwest quadrant as opportunities for access management modifications are presented through the site plan review process.

Install a Lane Ends Symbol (W4-2) sign on westbound Leonard Street prior to the lane drop to reduce confusion and encourage use of the northern through lane

- Protect on street parking for residents. Many residential properties do not have off-street parking and rely solely on on-street parking for themselves. These areas should be protected as much as possible from commercial visitor parking. There are some changes that can improve the effectiveness of parking through management solutions:
 - Signage for on-street parking throughout the WestSide is lacking. Signs should be installed that articulate when on-street parking is allowed; and where emergency snow plowing zones are located.
 - Side streets leading to adjacent neighborhoods should be signed (along with traffic calming measures described above) to clearly identify where customers may park. This plan recommends the use of neighborhood parking permits for areas along Bridge and Leonard that are intended to remain single-family residential in character.
 - Use of curb extensions along Leonard Street (see page 22-23) to help distinguish the parking lane from the travel lane while also slowing down traffic and shortening the paved distance a pedestrian must cross.

Parking Hold Line Recommendations

Recognizing that the historically small block sizes, narrow parcels, and some existing building configurations do not always have adequate space to accommodate off-street customer parking, the parking “hold” line seeks to establish a maximum possible development

extension into the neighborhood.

The businesses and residents alike are looking for parking solutions that will create a transitional model, that if controlled, can balance developmental pressures with residential neighborhood preservation.

There are some commercial properties which have already expanded into residential areas with off-street parking. In those areas, they should be held to that perimeter. For other properties, the proposed hold line (the maximum extension) should be held to two residential lots.

The recommendations are as follow:

- Use the parking hold line map (pg 24-25) to locate parcels for acceptable commercial parking lot expansion.
- If a parcel is in question the Director of Planning may interpret the parcel distinction.

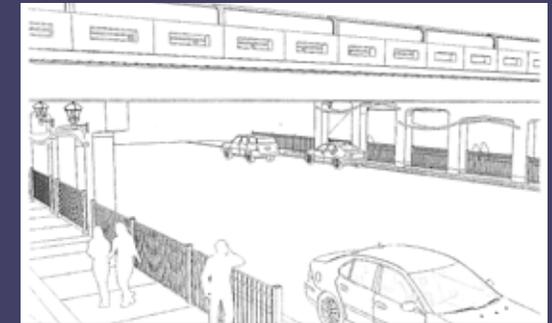
Leonard Street Reconstruction Options

Three Leonard Street reconstruction options were developed by the City of Grand Rapids for the area between Alpine Avenue to Turner Avenue. The Leonard Street reconstruction options maintain a three-lane cross-section through the area under each option.

Options #2 and #3 place bike lanes along both sides of Leonard Street and eliminate one-side of on-street parking. In option #2, on-street parking is eliminated along the entire south side of Leonard Street while under option #3, on-street parking is eliminated along the entire north side of Leonard Street.

All three options utilize curb extensions/bump-

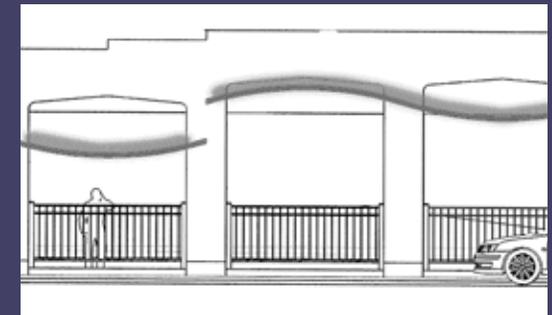
Underpass Improvements



Railings, LED lighting systems, new sidewalks will finish out the underside of the underpasses.



New concrete finishes and bright lights.



PREFERRED OPTION

LEONARD STREET RECONSTRUCTION OPTION 1



Figure 2 Leonard Street Option #1 Preferred alternative between Wengers Bowling Center and Gezon Avenue (Source: City of Grand Rapids)

All of the options will need to be further vetted through study. The WestSide ASP supports pedestrian friendly improvements in ALL options of Leonard Street reconstruction, including curb extensions, crosswalks, traffic calming measures, preserving on street parking where possible, bike lanes where possible, and improving traffic flow. Each option is reviewed and are discussed in this document. Option 1 is considered the preferred option and proposes the following curb extension/bump-outs:

- » In the northwest and southeast quadrants of the Alpine Avenue intersection.
- » In the northwest, southwest, and southeast quadrants of the McReynolds Avenue intersection.
- » In the northwest, northeast, and southeast quadrants of the Davis Avenue intersection.
- » In the northwest and southeast quadrants of the Muskegon Avenue intersection.
- » In the southwest and southeast quadrants of the Seward Avenue intersection (see Figure 2).
- » In the southeast quadrant of the Elizabeth Avenue intersection (see Figure 2).
- » In the northeast quadrant of the Gezon Avenue intersection.
- » In the northwest and southeast quadrants of the Quarry Avenue intersection.
- » In the northwest and southeast quadrants of the Hamilton Avenue intersection.
- » Curb extension along the north side of Leonard Street that extends from Wengers Bowling Center to Gezon Avenue (see Figure 2).

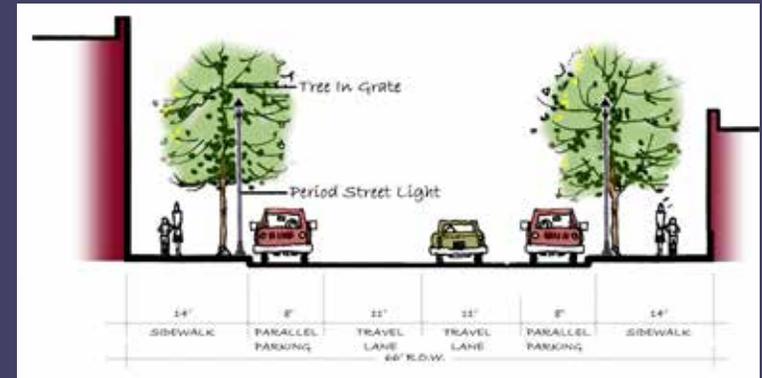
outs along the corridor. This will help delineate the through lane along Leonard Street from the parking lane. They will also reduce the walking distance across Leonard Street and the side-streets along the corridor.

Some of the operational concerns at the intersection of Turner Avenue and Leonard Street have been addressed by the City by providing eastbound pavement markings providing lane definition and eliminating the second westbound lane between Turner Avenue and the Turner Avenue Alley. The change in the westbound lane configuration from an exclusive left turn lane and two through lanes to dual left turn lanes and one through lane will improve the westbound through traffic operations. However, there is some concern over where the eastbound left turn for Scribner Avenue is provided with the creation of two westbound lefts for Turner Avenue and if adequate storage will be provided for this movement.

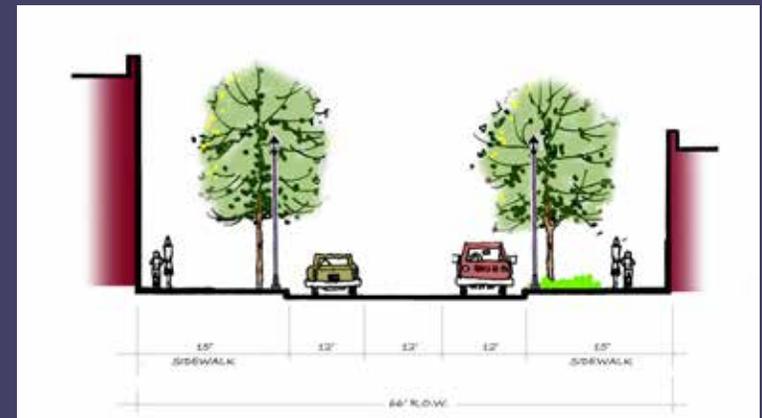
In options #1 and #2, a curb extension has been proposed along the north side of Leonard Street between Wengers Bowling Center and Gezon Avenue. Where possible, consideration should be given to closing or combining existing driveways in this segment and providing access from side streets to reduce vehicular and pedestrian conflicts. Consideration should be given to providing full signalization for this north leg of the intersection instead of the flashing red/solid red signal.

As stated previously, Options #2 and #3 eliminate parking along one side of Leonard Street to provide bike lanes. The elimination of on-street parking along an entire side of Leonard Street possibly leaves some businesses without any on-street parking options adjacent to their store. The implementation of bike lanes and the reduction of on-street parking spaces raises some concerns that should be addressed before any reconstruction of this corridor. However, the potential to link existing bike lanes along the north side of Leonard and between Seward and Garfield should be explored.

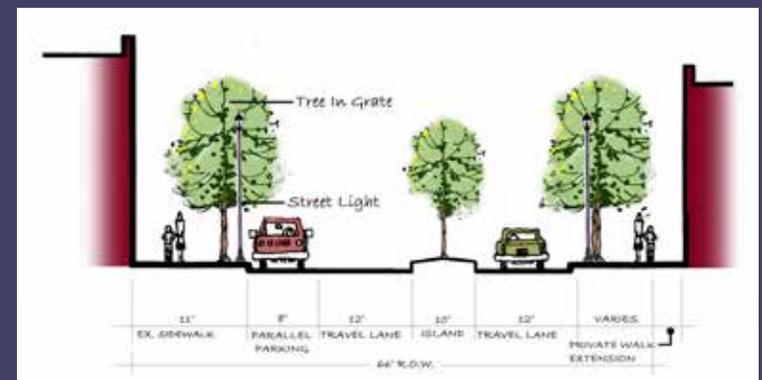
The purpose of a parking study is to determine where current on-street parking activity exists and recognizing that many small businesses have a limited number of on-site parking spaces, determine where it is feasible to permit on-street parallel parking in areas where it could be accommodated with a reasonable level of safety. If areas with insufficient parking exist, the study should also look at alternatives such as providing on-street parking on side streets. After a parking study is completed, a reconstruction plan for West Leonard Street can then be developed based on the results of the study.



A typical roadway on the WestSide with streetscape improvements.



Seward Avenue roadway section with streetscape improvements.



Seward Avenue roadway section with entry island/median streetscape improvements.

MAP 1: Transportation - Leonard Street

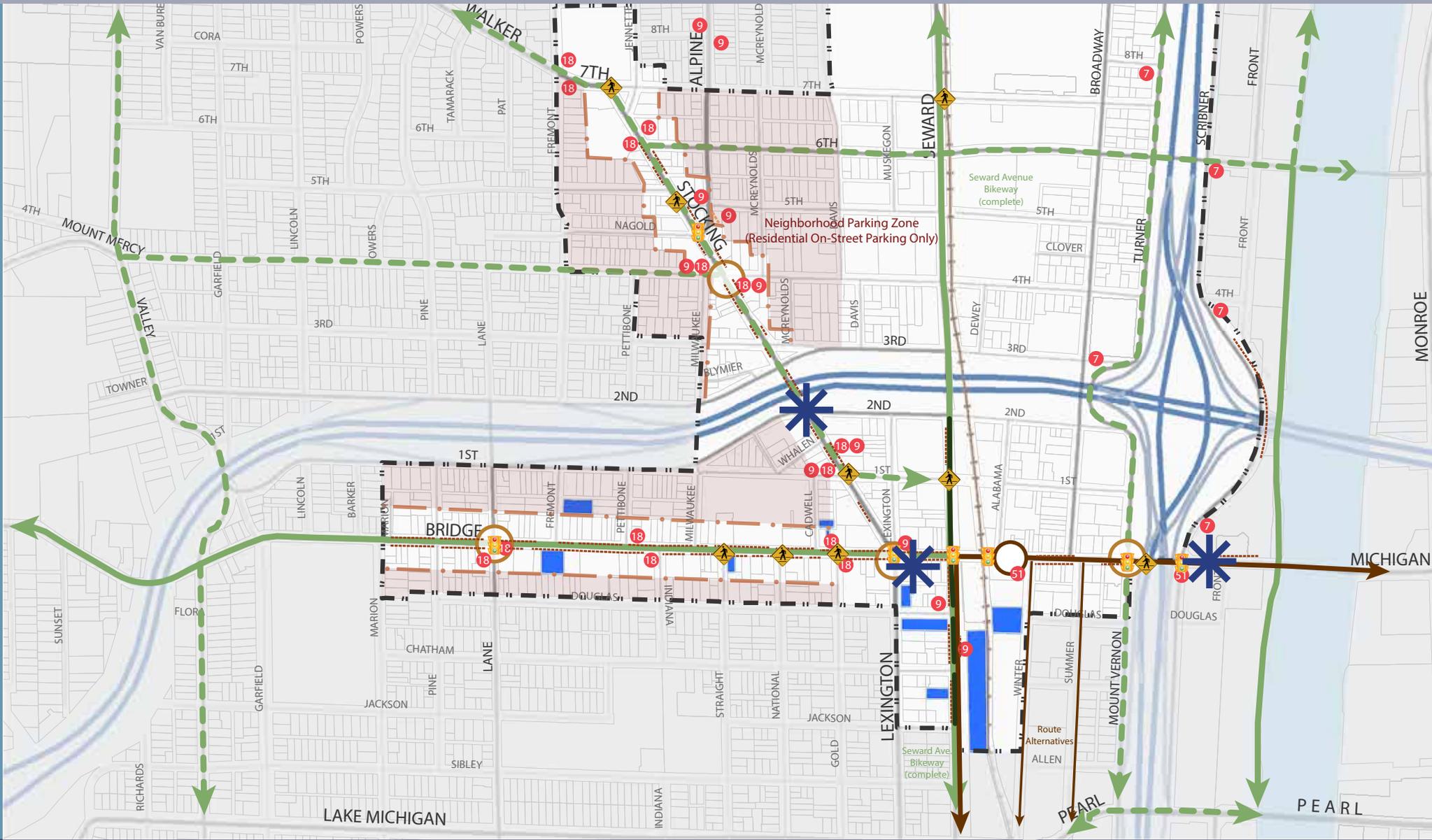


- Medians
- Public Parking
- On-Street Parking (main corridors only)
- Bus Stops (Route #)
- Pedestrian Crossing
- Traffic Signal
- Potential LakerLine BRT Route and Stations
- Existing Bike Lanes
- Prop. Wayfinding & Parking Signage
- Intersection Treatments
- Parking Hold Line
- Proposed Bike Lanes



Sources: City of Grand Rapids, Kent Co. GIS, GVMC, MDOT

MAP 2: Transportation - Stocking & Bridge



- Medians
- Public Parking
- 1 2 On-Street Parking (main corridors only)
- 1 Bus Stops (Route #)
- ▲ Pedestrian Crossing
- Traffic Signal
- Potential LakerLine BRT Route and Stations
- Existing Bike Lanes
- ★ Prop. Wayfinding & Parking Signage
- Intersection Treatments
- - - Parking Hold Line
- - - Proposed Bike Lanes



Sources: City of Grand Rapids, Kent Co. GIS, GVMC, MDOT

TRANSPORTATION IMPLEMENTATION

Action	Lead	Type	Resources	Priority
INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS Reconfiguring the lanes on Leonard under US-131 at Turner and implementing the pedestrian underpass improvement to ensure the gateway to the neighborhood is welcoming and safe for pedestrians.	City Planning; Engineering; CID	Project: Capital Improvement	Future CIA	2016
RESTRIPING AND PAVEMENT MARKINGS Evaluate on-street parking, crosswalks, and bicycle lanes throughout the WestSide. Faded street paint makes it difficult for residents and visitors to distinguish where to cross the street, park, and bicycle safely. Improving the striping can better organize the parking configurations.	City Planning; Engineering; CID	Project, Policy: Parking Management	Future CIA	
PARKING STUDY A comprehensive study of on and off street parking spaces throughout the business districts would determine the impacts that the City's commercial parking restrictions are having on adjacent residential areas. Particularly, on Leonard - the impact that taking a lane of parking would have if a bike lane were added. Once the study is complete a full parking management policy can be drafted.	City Planning; Engineering; CID	Policy, Partnerships	Business Organizations, WGNO	
TRAFFIC CALMING IMPROVEMENTS Install curb extensions at each neighborhood entry as a traffic calming measure into neighborhoods. (See Illustration on pg 16) Pedestrian improvements are necessary to create a safer environment for walking and bicycling. Curb extensions reduce crossing time and define parking along neighborhood streets. This also alerts drivers that they have crossed into a neighborhood, to slow down.	City Planning; Engineering; WGNO; CID	Policy, Partnerships, Project: Capital Improvements		
SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS Evaluate all sidewalks for missing, disrepaired, ADA non-compliant curbs; and prepare an action plan for connectin missing sidewalks, repairing , maintianing, weeding, moving utilities or other obstructions that block passage for disabled pedestrians, replace or supply wayfinding signage.	City Planning; Engineering; CID	Policy, Partnerships, Project: Capital Improvements	Future CIA	
IMPROVEMENTS FOR SEWARD Post a small advisory sign or plaque facing traffic exiting the mall in order to clarify the flashing red/solid red function; Install a box span signal with 12-inch lenses whenever the signal is scheduled to be modernized; Provide full signalization of the north leg (red/yellow/green) whenever the signal is scheduled to be modernized; Install crosswalk markings with ADA -compliant pedestrian facilities across the east leg.	City Planning; Engineering; CID	Project: Capital Improvements	Future CIA	
IMPROVEMENTS FOR SCRIBNER Install dotted pavement marking lines delineating the turn movements to improve driver understanding and reduce the potential for lane changing and sideswipe crashes; Install dotted white lines within the Scribner Avenue intersection to provide drivers with visual guidance through the lane transitions.	City Planning; Engineering; CID	Project: Capital Improvements	Future CIA	
PUBLIC TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS Explore north-south transit route to link Leonard Street more directly with Bridge St. and Fulton St.	City Planning; The Rapid	Study		2015
BIKE IMPROVEMENTS Expand bike lanes and pathways to complete the network for non-motorized circulation as shown on Maps 1 and 2.	City Planning; Engineering; CID	Project: Capital Improvements	City; Future CIA	On-going

III. LAND USE



Photo credit: Brandon Bartoszek

Land Use - Community Comment Summary

- Older industrial areas along Seward are transitioning, presenting opportunities for mixed-use loft-style warehouse living.
- Historic “main street” storefronts along Leonard, Bridge, and Stocking provide a unique character to the WestSide and are a strong asset.
- Single-family detached homes converted to businesses along main corridors could better match the Traditional Business Area (TBA) character since they are no longer used primarily for residences.
- The riverfront between Bridge St. and Leonard St. is currently being underutilized given its advantageous location. Opportunities exist to redevelop into housing, riverfront shopping, and/or recreation.
- Affordability of housing must be retained as new development is introduced.
- The proximity of GVSU presents a unique opportunity to establish Bridge St. as a “campus village.”

Existing Land Use

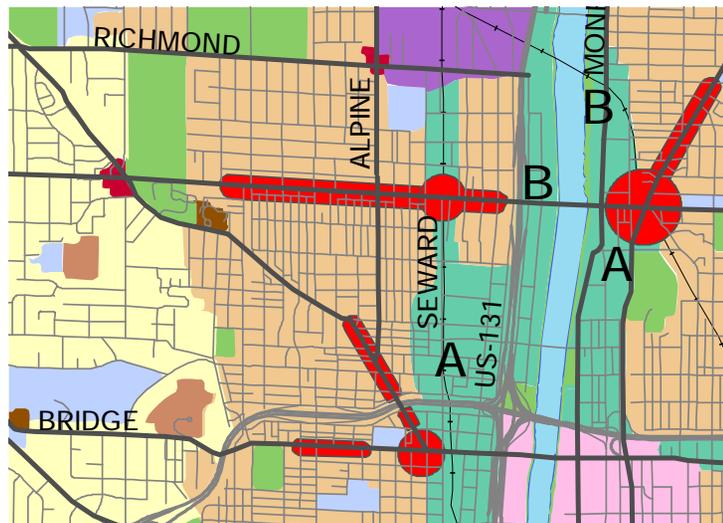
The land uses on the West Side’s existing framework, recognizes economic realities, and emphasizes residents’ strong appreciation of neighborhood character. To envision the WestSide of tomorrow, it helps to understand what makes it unique today. The future land uses keep the characteristics that make the West Side special, and identify the key features that should be reviewed when making decisions about supporting existing development and redevelopment.

The analysis of existing land use, the 2002 Master Plan Future Land Use, and current zoning in conjunction with public participation has helped shape these plan recommendations; describing where land use and character relationships can be strengthened. In some cases, the land use arrangement needed to be addressed.

For example, the master plan suggested neighborhood center locations far from natural gateways on Leonard and smaller centers for the multiple Bridge Street neighborhood.

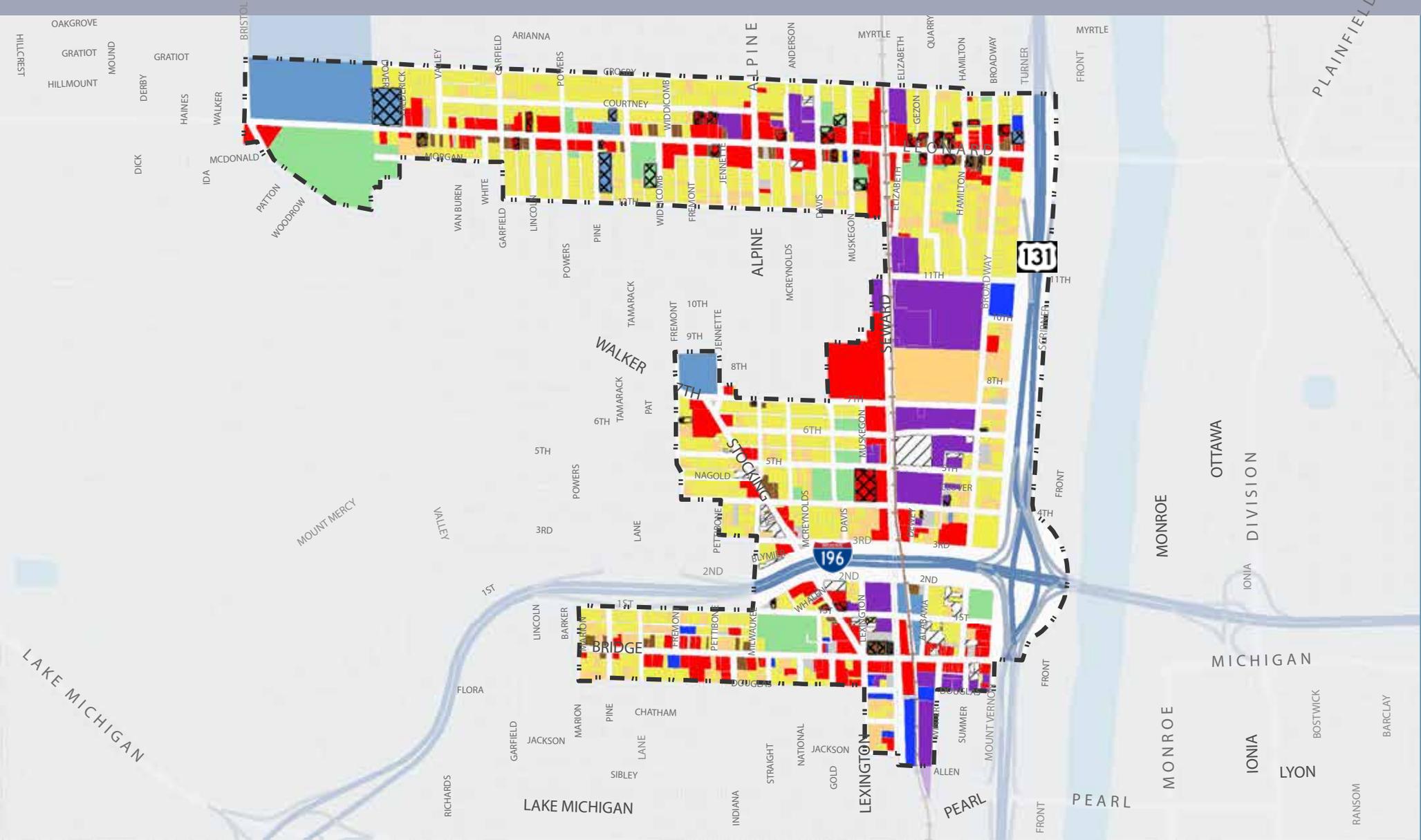
Potentially conflicting land uses can benefit the neighborhoods in which they are located, and the community at-large, if appropriately designed and operated. The relationship between industrial uses and residential neighborhoods is a good example; when properly sited, industrial land uses can provide nearby jobs for residents and support area retail. But sometimes the use needs to change.

2002 Future Land Use



The 2002 Future Land Use map depicts a generalized pattern. Additional detailed recommendations are provided by this ASP.

MAP 3: Existing Land Use



- | | | |
|--|---|---|
|  Single-Family Residential |  Mixed-Use (Res. / Non-res.) |  Public (Governmental & School) |
|  Multi-Family / Two-Family Residential |  Industrial |  Public Parking |
|  Institutional (Religious, Cultural) |  Vacant Land |  Parking |
|  Commercial (Retail, Office, Service) |  Vacant Structure |  Public Parks |



Sources: City of Grand Rapids, Kent Co. GIS, GVMC, MDOT

The Master Plan

The City of Grand Rapids 2002 Master Plan designates the Seward corridor and transitioning industrial areas as “Mixed-Use: Near Downtown.” This designation, which seeks reinvestment to help “provide a transition between Downtown’s high intensity concentration of institutions, office and entertainment opportunities and surrounding lower density neighborhoods” fits the goals of this ASP.

Neighborhood Centers are identified at the intersections of Bridge/Stocking and Seward/Leonard. This plan recommends shifting the Neighborhood Center on Leonard from Seward to Broadway since Seward Ave. dead ends at Leonard. Another recommendation is to change the Neighborhood Center designation at the intersection of Bridge/ Stocking to become a Village Center and extend it to First Street. The corridors of Bridge, Stocking, and Leonard are identified as Traditional Business Areas, however this plan seeks to refine those classifications.

Mixed-Use

Mixed-use development is a concept that blends a combination of residential uses and non-residential uses within a large development or even one building, where those functions are physically and functionally integrated. By locating places where people live, work and shop in close

proximity to one another, alternatives to driving, such as walking or biking, become more viable. Mixed-use developments can offer a variety of residential opportunities so that younger and older people, singles and families of varying income levels may find places to live. A more diverse and sizable population and commercial base can also better support public transportation. Mixed-use developments facilitate pedestrian oriented, nonresidential, which creates gathering places.

Transit-Oriented Development

Transit-oriented development (TOD) land use supports public transportation systems by directing dense, mixed-use development to transit corridors and nodes

The following TOD best practice principles were used to develop the standards for the TOD Centers:

- Allow the highest commercial intensity in areas within ¼ mile of locations that seem most suitable for transit stations. Expand maximum building heights, encourage high floor-to-area ratios, or minimize lot coverage limitations to provide greater development intensity.
- Consider increased residential densities within ½ mile area from station locations.
- Allow for intensification of uses over time, such as increased building heights or allowing surface parking lots to be gradually replaced by buildings and

parking structures.

- Implement standards to limit parking in core TOD areas. Regulations like maximum parking standards, parking space reductions, shared parking, payment-in-lieu of parking programs, floor-to-area ratios (or requiring them where they do not exist) can be applied for this purpose.
- Provide incentives in core TOD areas to reduce parking, or encourage structured lots over surface lots.

Buffering between Land Uses

A key concern raised during the public input process was the impact of the commercial corridors on adjacent residential neighborhoods. As described previously under “Parking,” a hold line has been recommended to reinforce that commercial uses and parking will not expand beyond a defined point into residential areas. Sometimes, this transition is an existing alleyway and in other places the rear parking lots directly abut residential lots. In order to best preserve the residential character, commercial uses should provide sufficient buffering as required by the zoning ordinance.



During the open house sessions, residents were asked to vote for architectural and street life images that best suited the West Side. These are examples of some of the most preferred images.

FUTURE LAND USE TYPES

The underlying principle for future land use within the WestSide planning area is to promote varied land uses while retaining traditional neighborhood character. This is accomplished by encouraging mixed-uses, including commercial and residential uses, along the main corridors, identifying key centers of greater development intensity, and identifying areas changing from their historic industrial land use patterns, primarily along Seward east to the river.

Medium Low Density Residential

As identified in the 2002 Master Plan, these residential areas should retain their historic neighborhood fabric, with a mixture of housing types and a relatively fine-grained mix of densities. Rehabilitation and infill housing is encouraged and should respect the massing and character of nearby homes.

Traditional Business Areas

Centers

A key principle of this ASP is to target, concentrate, and require the greatest intensity of development at center locations. These mixed-use centers incorporate the recommendations from the 2002 Master Plan. However, this ASP seeks to create a more detailed hierarchy of center locations to strengthen existing development patterns and encourage new areas of intensity at key locations. This will help create the synergy necessary to support viable and first-floor retail at key intersections and accommodate future

transit-oriented development.

A center location has higher density located at specific corners of primary intersections and first-floor retail uses that are required to create a vital placemaking and pedestrian experience. For this reason, office/service uses should be permitted by special use only. The mixture of uses on upper floors of buildings should be a combination of office and residential uses. The building heights proposed for the Village or Neighborhood Center types are identified in the Place Types section of the Placemaking Chapter (Chapter IV).

Traditional Business Corridors

Similar to the description in the 2002 Master Plan, the Traditional Business Areas are intended to respect the historical “storefront” character of the West Side and encourage a vertical mixture of uses.

This plan seeks to further refine that classification by recommending that retail be the preferred first-floor use, but not required outside the center. Similarly, while having two stories is desired, it is not always practical, especially with the more mid-century character of Leonard Street west of Alpine. Therefore, this plan recommends that the zoning for this Leonard Street segment be changed to require a minimum building height rather than minimum two stories to achieve the desired street character.

Given the concern for the preservation of residential neighborhoods, proposed Traditional Business uses along Leonard, Stocking, and Bridge (west of Stocking) should be limited

to the minimum depth necessary to support viable development options. Further expansion of any non-residential land uses (or their supporting activities) into adjacent Medium Low Density residential areas (see page 22 and related references in the City of Grand Rapids 2002 Master Plan) is not supported beyond the Parking Hold Line discussed on page 20. Building heights along the TBA corridors should be in scale with existing buildings in the area but not more than four stories or two stories higher than adjacent buildings, whichever is less.

Mixed-Use Areas

The 2002 Master Plan identifies a large portion of the planning area, roughly between Seward and US-131, as mixed-use and Medium Low Density Residential refer to Section 4.3.3 of that plan. It also references Section 4.3.5 for Mixed-Use Neighborhood Center. This plan generally follows the recommendations outlined in the Master Plan and its sub-classification as Near Downtown; it also provides a reference to the Mixed-Use Neighborhood and Neighborhood Centers with the following descriptions of intended uses and characters:

Transitional Mixed-Use

As evidenced by recent reuse of industrial buildings as residential and mixed-use, this area is ripe for a creative blend of uses. Sometimes described elsewhere in the U.S. as a “warehouse district” the areas straddling Seward and bordering the Stockbridge business areas are transitioning from historic industrial uses to more residential and small upstart uses.

This plan recommends allowing a sensitive mixture of light industrial with continued adaptive reuse of industrial buildings as offices, live-work units, and housing. The mixture of uses is intended to be eclectic and market-driven by similar reuse projects across the river. An important feature of this land use category will be to ensure that infill development and redevelopment matches the traditional industrial character.

Traditional Mixed Neighborhood

This segment of Bridge Street exhibits a random collection of homes, businesses and institutions that have co-existed for decades along this arterial street. A linear pattern of low profile neighborhood businesses dominates the segment but is interrupted by small clusters of modest two-story homes. Some apartments are also found above businesses within the few two story commercial buildings. This assortment of residential and non-residential uses creates an appropriate transition between the proposed Neighborhood Node on the west end of Bridge Street and the intense Village Center on the east.

Within the Transitional Mixed Neighborhood, the eclectic combination of residential and non-residential uses should be retained. Businesses should be neighborhood-scale offices and personal services, no more than two stories in height and limited to a floor area consistent with the current character (maximum 5,000 square feet). Expanded or new non-residential uses should not intrude further north or south into the established residential neighborhood. Buildings should be located near the street and, if provided, off-street parking should be behind the buildings or to the side, but not projecting forward of the building face. In order to retain

the mix of uses, residential should be permitted on the street level, where desired, as well as on infill properties.

Traditional Mixed Neighborhood

Neighborhood Center



Definition: Neighborhood Centers serve as the focus of a neighborhood, or several neighborhoods, and are located on a major transit route.

The Master Plan recommends using the city's existing commercial concentrations and activating them as compact, walkable, mixed-use centers at appropriate scales. Mainly, these centers are at key transit routes. A Neighborhood Center is proposed at Seward Avenue and Leonard Street in the future Master Plan. This ASP recommends moving the Neighborhood Center to Broadway Avenue and Leonard Street.

The intersection at Seward Ave. is essentially a 'dead-end' and no longer a thru street. The properties are auto oriented (a strip mall) and not likely to change in the long term for the center type development that business owners, the city and residents of the area desire. The corners at Broadway Ave. are already populated with strong commercial anchors like Brann's, DeVries Jewelry, West Grand Neighborhood Organization and the Shade Shop. The building density, and mixed-use building types already exist in this location and it is one block from a complete transit connection north-south for the Rapid Route 7 bus on Leonard Street to the Grand Valley State University Campus on Fulton.

Building heights are limited to 4 stories without a variance but can go higher if acceptable

design elements are incorporated.

Village Center



Definition: Village Centers serve several neighborhoods and are located on a proposed express and/or high frequency service transit route.

The City Master Plan did not recommend a Village Center on the West Side in the future land use plan. This area specific plan recommends that the Neighborhood Center on Bridge Street and Stocking Avenue be changed to Village Center, and widened or 'stretched' to encompass the entire block area from Stocking to Seward Avenue; and allow density to continue eastward to US-131.

This entire location is key to Bridge Street's success as a transit oriented location. As a former streetcar route, development once existed which was sufficiently dense and mixed to sustain a vibrant and lively district. Reviving the district will depend on sufficient residential density to satisfy the popular universities and local employers who are looking to attract energetic new residents who want compact mixed-use living. Transit lines that can eventually serve Bridge Street, will rely on a transit-oriented development land use to be in place.

The building height in the Village Center should be limited to 4 stories, unless the design incorporates features that step the upper floors back or otherwise convey a scale that is proportionate to and compatible with the surroundings, as determined by the City. In any case, the building height should not interfere with nor obstruct views of the iconic St. Mary's Church steeple located on 1st Street.



Neighborhood Center proposed rendering concept with 3 story building on the corner, 2 story buildings along the block.



Neighborhood Center proposed rendering street view of improved crosswalks, sidewalks and parking

Neighborhood Center

The Neighborhood Center location that the Grand Rapids Master Plan identified at Leonard and Seward in 2002, was revisited during the ASP study. Seward, while it connects to the south with the Stockbridge Business District, dead ends at Leonard leaving a missing opportunity for the type of development intensity that could potentially occur with the Neighborhood Center. It is unlikely that the strip center development would change any time in the future that currently is at the end of Seward nor would the brick retailer which is a good established business. While the Leonard-Seward intersection may not be as well-positioned as a Neighborhood Center, it is a prominent transitional gateway and could be suited to more intense development if improved transit service is provided there.

Proposed mixed-use centers on Leonard Street and Stocking Street are able to serve those areas as destinations for the surrounding residential neighborhoods. Both of these neighborhood centers are located along major bus routes and can contribute to thriving multi-modal transportation routes.

The Neighborhood Center is a four corner intensity, developed along a major and minor node. It is the major destination in a connected street system that is comprehensively designed for walkability and links the mixed-use center with the surrounding neighborhood.

- Locate higher density mixed-use within the Neighborhood Center core.
- Promote building designs and a mix of uses that engage and promote street life.
- Increase sidewalk width where possible in redevelopment scenarios.
- Create a safe and walkable street with parallel parking, shade trees, curb extensions and crosswalks.

Village Center

The City Master Plan recommends restructuring many of the city's existing commercial concentrations into compact, walkable, mixed-use centers; particularly those located on transit routes. The Village Center is defined by the Master Plan as a center that serves several neighborhoods and is located on proposed express and or high frequency service transit routes. Along Bridge Street at the intersections of Stocking, Seward, and along the south edge of I-196 is just such an area.

- A Gateway should be implemented welcoming people to the WestSide at the Bridge Street underpass. This element should be dramatic and include landscaping and lighting to alert the driver.
- Retail shops and restaurants located at the intersection of primary and secondary streets create vital destinations
- Higher density housing and residentially scaled offices increase the livability of street life and support walking distance traffic to the core destinations.
- The building height in the Village Center should be limited to 4 stories, unless the design incorporates features that step the upper floors back or otherwise convey a scale that is proportionate to and compatible with the surroundings, as determined by the City. In any case, the building height should not interfere with nor obstruct views of the iconic St. Mary's Church steeple located on 1st Street.

VILLAGE CENTER



Village Center proposed rendering for the core area of Bridge Street and Seward Avenue



Village Center proposed rendering for townhomes and apartments in the Bridge Street area.



Neighborhood mixed-use retail or restaurant buildings



Attached row housing types can also be designed as live/work buildings.

Neighborhood Nodes

When a neighborhood becomes large enough to enjoy a significant population, new retail, service and dining establishments will begin to locate along the secondary streets. Small retail and office buildings may first begin to populate existing or to construct new buildings at the corners, near a significant transit route.

These buildings are typically smaller in square footage than those in Neighborhood Centers and will serve a variety of needs. Locating apartments or offices above creates significant density for a thriving neighborhood district.

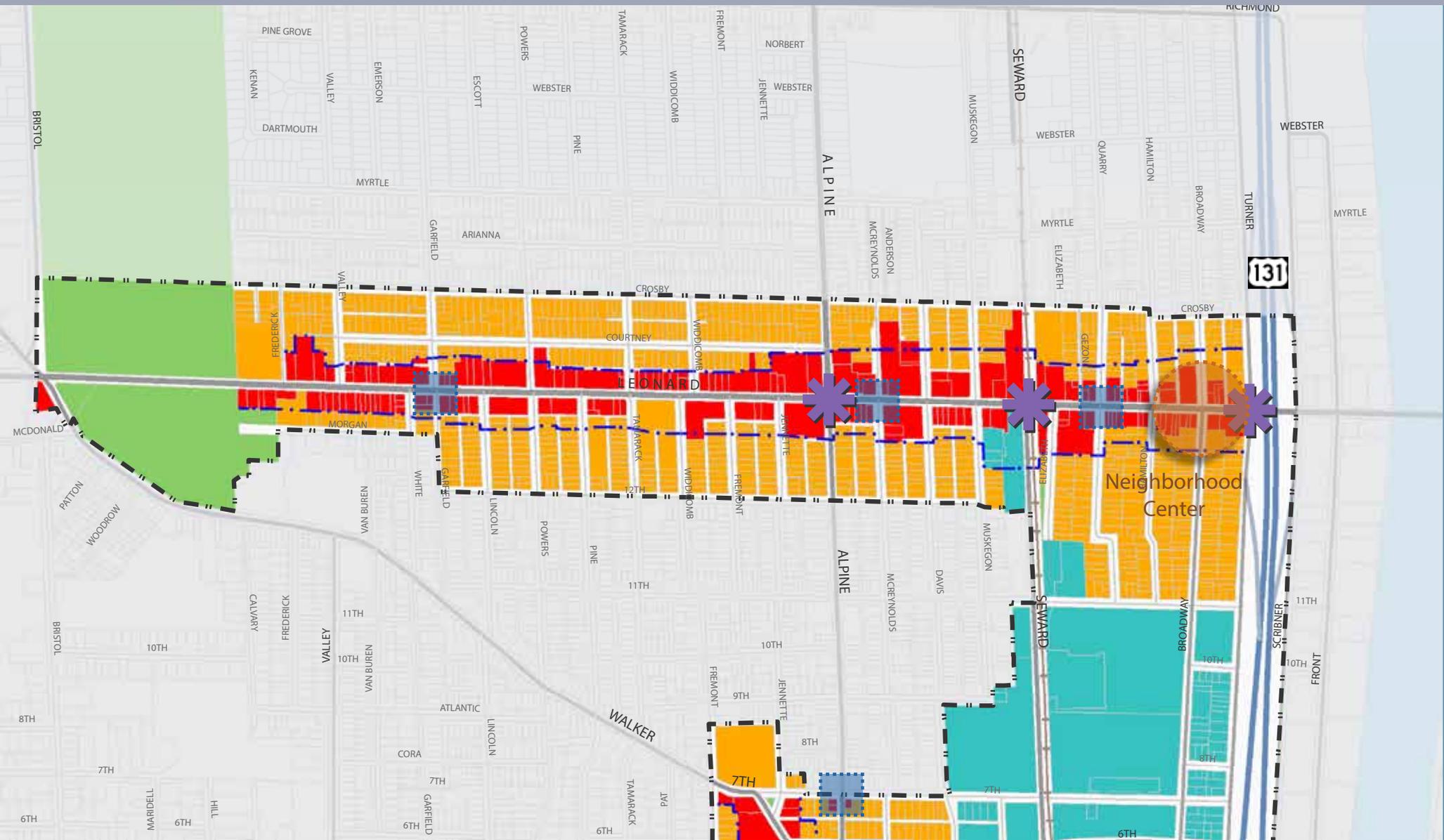
- Most neighborhood nodes are retail establishments in existing buildings, retrofitted for retail.
- New buildings should locate retail or office on ground floor with large glass architectural facades which become signage for the businesses.
- Use shared parking strategies for small development lots.
- Similar to Centers, wayfinding, lighting, sidewalk connections, signage and a consistent brand help to create place.



LAND USE IMPLEMENTATION

Action	Lead	Type	Resources	Priority
CHANGE ZONING FROM MEDIUM LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL TO MIXED USE NEAR DOWNTOWN Future land use is positioned as “Transitional Mixed Use” throughout the Seward Street corridor in order to create a mixed use neighborhood between West Leonard and Bridge Street.	City Planning Department; CID	Policy: Zoning Amendment		by 2015
MOVE NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER LOCATION Neighborhood Center designation to be moved from Seward to Broadway to more closely represent the definition and form of the neighborhood and identify a gateway for the West Leonard Business District.	City Planning Department; CID	Policy: Zoning Amendment		by 2015
CHANGE NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER DESIGNATION Neighborhood Center designation to be changed to Village Center at Bridge Street to more closely represent the definition and the identify a gateway for the Bridge Street and Stocking Business Districts.	City Planning Department; CID	Policy: Zoning Amendment		by 2015
CHANGE ZONING FROM TRADITIONAL BUSINESS AREA TO MEDIUM LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL Change the Traditional Business Area on Bridge Street Ending the Traditional Business Area at Lane Street, and replacing one block of TBA at Pettibone and Milwaukee with Medium to Low Density Residential (MLDR).	City Planning Department; CID	Policy: Zoning Amendment		by 2015
INCLUDE NEIGHBORHOOD NODES AS A DESIGNATION TYPE Include the new designation of neighborhood commercial nodes as a designation type to create a small retail center within large dense neighborhoods that have transit serving arterials. (See Neighborhood Nodes pg. 38) Neighborhood Node Zoning: Definition: Neighborhood Nodes have developed historically as a population in a neighborhood has grown in a walkable pattern that allows retail, service, and dining establishments to thrive. Neighborhood Uses: See Neighborhood Mixed-Use Center Retail Uses. Approx. Retail Sq. Footage Under 7,000 Sq. Ft. Approximate Trade Area: Under 1/2 Mile. Population to Support: Minimum: <6,000. Use Section 5.6.07A. Site Layout and Building Placement Requirements for Site Dimensions Table in the Zoning Ordinance if an established lot size is not available. Scale and height should reflect surrounding neighborhood but not more than three stories.	City Planning Department; CID	Policy: Zoning Amendment		by 2015
TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT Transit-oriented development should be strongly encouraged within the segment from US-131 to Seward. Zoning changes should be made accordingly. More intense mixed-use development should be promoted.	City Planning Department	Policy: Zoning Amendment		On-going
ADOPT ZONING CLASSIFICATION TO SUPPORT TRADITIONAL MIXED NEIGHBORHOOD LAND USE This land use category represents a condition found in other areas of the City and may warrant a zoning designation that allows the continuation of the random assortment of uses within a confined area.	City Planning Department	Policy: Zoning Amendment		by 2015
TBA MINIMUM HEIGHT REQUIREMENT Along the Leonard Street TBA west of Alpine Ave., zoning requirements should be changed from minimum two stories to a minimum height (in feet) to achieve the desired scale and character without imposing a full two-story standard.	City Planning Department	Policy: Zoning Amendment		by 2015

MAP 4: Future Land Use - Leonard

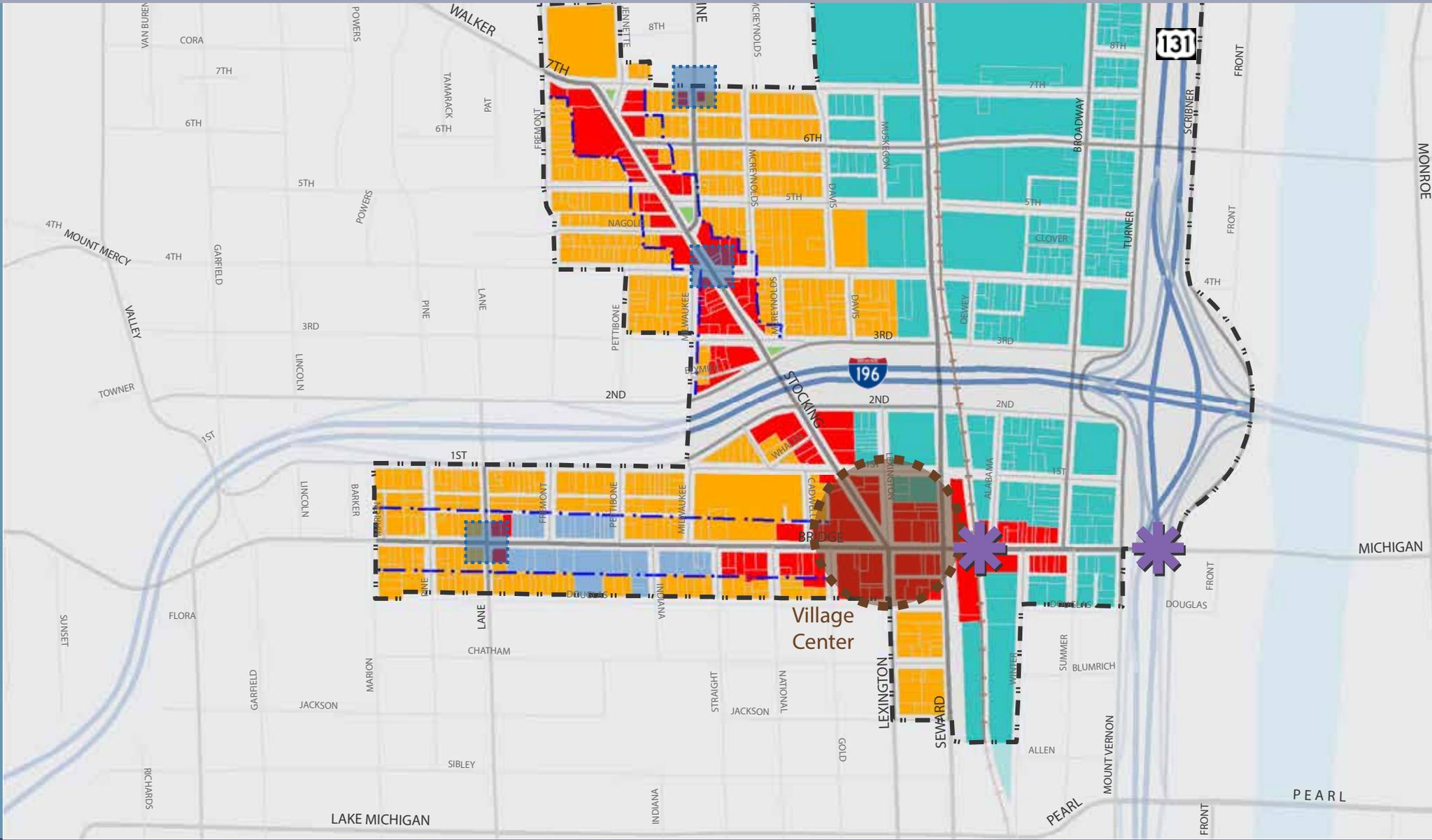


- Med. Low-Density Res.
- Traditional Mixed Neigh.
- Traditional Business Area
- Transitional Mixed-Use
- Parks & Cemeteries
- Parking Hold Line
- Neighborhood Node
- Village Center
- Neighborhood Center
- Transition Gateways



Sources: City of Grand Rapids,
Kent Co. GIS, GVMC, MDOT

MAP 5: Future Land Use - Stocking & Bridge



- Med. Low-Density Res.
- Traditional Mixed Neigh.
- Traditional Business Area
- Transitional Mixed-Use
- Parks & Cemeteries
- Parking Hold Line
- Neighborhood Node
- Village Center
- Neighborhood Center
- Transition Gateways



Sources: City of Grand Rapids,
Kent Co. GIS, GVMC, MDT

IV. PLACEMAKING



Placemaking - Community Comment Summary

- There aren't enough parks in the surrounding neighborhoods; and the entire West Side is noted as 'severely underserved' in the Grand Rapids Master Plan.
- Safety and crime are perceived issues that inhibit the area's full potential.
- Proposed Grand River restoration project may lead to renewed interest in the riverfront.
- Schools and churches contribute to the WestSide's image, identity, and social fabric.
- Opportunity exists for off-street pathway or linear park along the old Chesapeake & Ohio Railway adjacent to Seward Ave. to complement recent bike facility improvements.
- Historic rail tower near Bridge St. & Seward Ave. provides an iconic landmark that could potentially serve as a trailhead for the Seward Ave. Bikeway as well as add a unique feature.
- More green spaces, bus stop shelters, benches, trees, and street trash cans.
- Improve the sidewalks and make the stores beautiful again.
- We love the WestSide Library! We love our neighborhood!
- WestSide needs more low-cost family friendly places.

What is Place?

Placemaking aims to strengthen connections between people and the places they share. A criticism of today's public spaces (and our cities in general) is that they do not foster adequate social interaction; they may be well-designed or planned spaces, but they often lack certain qualities that make them truly great places where residents and visitors want to be and enjoy. On the WestSide, some common issues such as traffic-dominated streets, underutilized parks, and vacant businesses may be ameliorated by shifting the perspective from auto-oriented design to a more people-oriented design focusing more on places and how people use them.

Effective community-based planning processes capitalize on a local community's assets, aspirations, and potential to help facilitate daily activities and various types of connections (social, cultural, ecological, and economic) which define a place and support its continuing evolution. This plan works to help improving public spaces and the lives of people who use them by means of finding the patience to take small steps, truly listen to people, and find what works best, eventually turning a group vision into the reality of a great public place.

The goals of placemaking are to create vibrant public places where people want to gather, live, work, and play. Public spaces may include public plazas, streets, parks, waterfronts, and any other type of green or open spaces. Placemaking reimagines public spaces as the center of the community and prioritizes how the public realm is shaped in an effort to maximize shared value. The planning, design, and management of these spaces help to create livable communities that promote people's health, happiness, and overall quality of life.

Safescaping

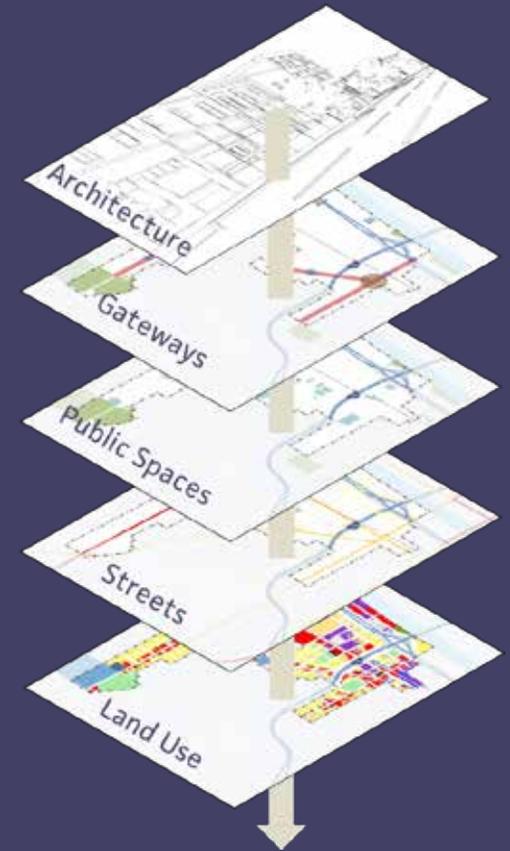
Safescaping (also known as Crime Prevention through Environmental Design or “CPTED”) is an approach to deter crime through physical development considerations. Safescaping programs join law enforcement, community awareness and personal protection efforts so public safety officials, local leaders and neighborhood groups are all working toward the same goal. Policies generally promote the following three key principles and a variety of design recommendations, which are described below.

- **Natural Surveillance:** Natural surveillance increases the threat of apprehension by taking steps to increase the perception that people can be seen. Natural surveillance occurs by designing the placement of physical features, activities and people in such a way as to maximize visibility and foster positive social interaction among legitimate users of private and public space. Potential offenders feel increased scrutiny and limitations on their escape routes.
- **Natural Access Control:** Natural access control limits the opportunity for crime by taking steps to clearly differentiate between public space and private space. By selectively placing entrances and exits, fencing, lighting and landscape to limit access or control flow, natural access control occurs.

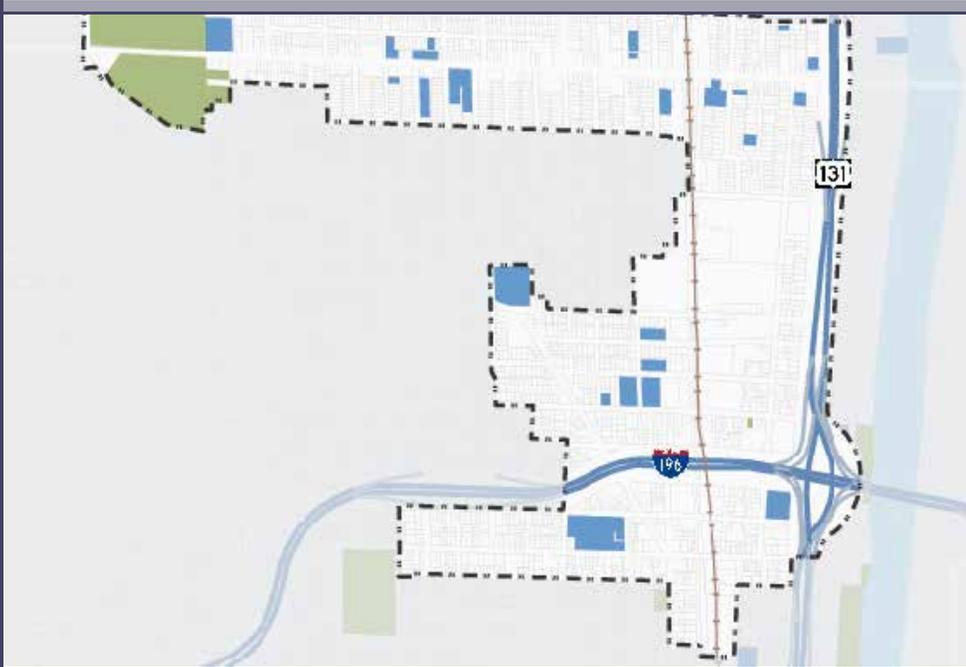
- **Natural Territorial Reinforcement:** Territorial reinforcement promotes social control through increased definition of space and improved proprietary concern. An environment designed to clearly delineate private space does two things. First, it creates a sense of ownership. Owners have a vested interest and are more likely to challenge intruders or report them to the police. Second, the sense of owned space creates an environment where “strangers” or “intruders” stand out and are more easily identified. By using buildings, fences, pavement, signs, lighting and landscape to express ownership and define public, semi-public and private space, natural territorial reinforcement occurs. Additionally, these objectives can be achieved by assignment of space to designated users in previously unassigned locations. Territorial reinforcement measures make the normal user feel safe and make the potential offender aware of a substantial risk of apprehension or scrutiny.

The National Crime Prevention Institute suggests the built environment as a key factor in reducing fear, lessening crime and improving quality of life. Safescaping is a way to proactively prevent crime and unsafe conditions without additional public safety costs. It makes logical sense to consider safety during development design, as unsafe environment, or even those that may be safe but are perceived to be unsafe, will not thrive socially, culturally or economically.

Placemaking Elements



A whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Every building, land use, streetscape, park and sidewalk can collectively help create special experiences in Grand Rapids, transcending the value of each element. Successful places throughout the city are influenced by their combination of physical, social and economic conditions that contribute to the unique character and culture of the urban fabric.



This parks map shows that there is a lack of parks throughout the West Side district and the Grand Rapids Master Plan notes that the area is severely underserved. A recommendation of this West Side ASP is to partner with neighborhood and civic organizations, especially the Friends of Grand Rapids Parks, to find more opportunities for neighborhood parks and play fields. The descriptions at right outline a variety of parks discussed with residents during public involvement that could be implemented.

Public Parkland Acreage based on Population	
Park Classification	NRPA Guideline (per 1,000 residents)
Mini Parks	0.375
Neighborhood Parks	1.75
Community Parks	6.50
Regional Parks	7.50

Parks

Parks on the West Side are few and far between. In fact, none exist in good working condition anywhere in our study area. At the public open house, we heard that the need for playgrounds, activity fields and places for all ages of children to play were needed throughout the West Side neighborhoods. To that end, we recommend that a physical activity master plan be undertaken by the Parks and Recreation Department to determine the locations of the playgrounds and actively fields. Partnering with the Grand Rapids School District to involve parents and children to design and locate potential recreational facilities. The following are a listing of park types identified by residents that they would like to have accessible.

Mini: Small, specialized parks that serve the needs of residents in the surrounding neighborhood. Provides daily places for those who cannot travel. Service area- ¼ mile, setting- residential, typical size- 2,500 s.f. to 1 acre.

Neighborhood playgrounds: Playgrounds for school aged and pre-school children in walking distances to residential. Service area- ¼ to ½ mile, setting- away from main roads, typical size- 5-10 acres.

Community parks and playfields: Basketball courts, small baseball diamond for pick-up games. Preserves unique landscapes and open spaces. Service area- ½ to 3 miles, setting- varies, typical size- 30-50 acres.

Special park areas: Historic parks, sustainably planted walking areas, ice skating.

Maintain & improve existing parks

While Lincoln Park and Douglas Park are not within our study area, we heard from residents and business owners that these parks are valuable to the neighborhood. However, they need a lot of work to become places where kids and parents feel safe. The schools are also a great partner for playgrounds and activities. Providing safe routes to play is a significant step.



River Restoration Project

Restoring the rapids in the Grand River has been identified by the community and public officials as an important catalyst in the continued revitalization of downtown as well as a monumental environmental restoration project.

The non-profit Grand Rapids WhiteWater has identified portions of the river which can be reclaimed for natural wildlife habitat and recreation facilities. Various opportunities are present for public access, rowing, fishing, kayaking, swimming, and other activities.

This plan recommends leveraging the future restoration of the river by creating visible and accessible connections to the riverfront from the proposed recreation entertainment district along Scribner and Front avenues to the proposed riverwalk along the river's edge. This enables WestSide residents the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of this civic investment.

Identity/Gateway

Developing an identity for the WestSide is important to create a unified theme that ties into Downtown while helping residents, visitors, and property and business owners efficiently utilize the public amenities and developing a sense of place. Although the identity can be developed through proper streetscape elements, signs have a profound effect on the visual impression and character of a community. Gateway signs, directional signs, and business signs for individual stores, offices, and other uses can be instrumental in creating a sense of place on the WestSide.

- Consistent public signage should be developed to promote the WestSide brand.
- A Gateway should be implemented welcoming people to the WestSide at the overpasses. This element should be dramatic and include landscaping and lighting to alert the driver.
- Directional signs should be located throughout the district to help direct vehicular and pedestrian traffic flow towards parking and destinations within the District and to Downtown.
- Recognizing that the "WestSide" is made up of distinct neighborhoods and districts, individualized branding should be created for each of these areas, rather than a generic "WestSide."
- Amend City sign ordinance to permit the retention, modification and installation of projecting signs with neon elements consistent with those vintage signs currently found in several locations.



Retrofitting

A great stock of existing older, structurally sound buildings is an asset to any city. A mature building in good condition can be an excellent economic investment for a small business owner who does not yet have the capital to start from scratch. Older buildings can typically offer lower rents, unique and flexible spaces and can revive otherwise vacant areas.

The other advantage to retrofitting is the ability to create a sustainable district. Parcels that were used in the creation of now dissolving industrial uses were large and not always friendly to neighboring residential. With retrofitting, these structures can be lined with uses that re-activate the street and district, over time, with a mix of uses.

Retrofitting buildings is not a new concept for Grand Rapids. Many former industrial uses on the east side of the river and an old high school on the west side are now enjoying a renewed life as residential and small business uses.

Rockford Construction retrofitted the abandoned Miller Products industrial coating plant at 601 First Street. They relocated on the WestSide in a brownfield site that occupies one square city block. Extensive remediation and clean-up was required prior to construction. The end result is a modern, attractive building that enhances the surrounding neighborhood.

This toolkit is another way to understand how smaller industrial buildings like the ones on Front Street, Broadway and Seward could be re-imagined.

Important elements to consider are:

- Look for ways to repair the environment. Retrofits sometimes provide the opportunity to reconstruct landscape, wetlands or other amenities.
- Improve connectivity for drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Build interconnected street networks to increase walkability and public safety while distributing traffic and reducing overall vehicle infrastructure.
- Consider future connectivity and adaptability. If street connections cannot be achieved in the first phase of

retrofitting, consider providing easements for the future. If desired densities can not yet be met, consider designing buildings structurally that can be phased and added onto later with parking garages, place utilities and other infrastructure at the outset.

- Keep block sizes walkable. When grouping or creating a district to be retrofitted, the block size should not be larger than the largest block within the existing neighborhood fabric. A typical block on the WestSide should not be longer or wider than 500 feet.
- Use shallow liner buildings to create buildings that come up to the street and define the public place. Use a building, rather than landscaping to screen the parking lot and provide a more continuous streetscape.
- Diversify business types, housing price and choice. The future success of former industrial areas are dependent on good diverse residential options and the small businesses (restaurants, dry cleaners, salons etc.) that support them.
- Invest in quality architecture. The most successful and sustainable retrofits will be culturally significant and built to meet high standards.

Redevelopment

Vacant land, a building that is beyond repair and buildings that cannot be retrofitted fall into the redevelopment scheme. Many opportunities lie in a parcel that can be redeveloped and some of them mean the infill of another building.

A primary street that has lost a significant structure that anchored the streetscape is a prime building redevelopment site. The streetscape is an excellent measure of any infill project. A parking lot is not considered a significant streetscape enhancement.

When a building site is unable to be developed, left vacant or underutilized, consider the following uses:

- Parks or other recreational programming; community agriculture

EXISTING BUILDING



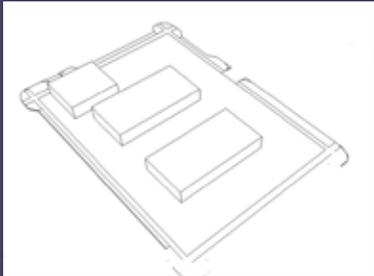
Merging “Mid-Century” with “Traditional”
For the west end of Leonard, franchises or typically auto-oriented uses can be designed in a way that fits with the traditional business character of the rest of the corridor.



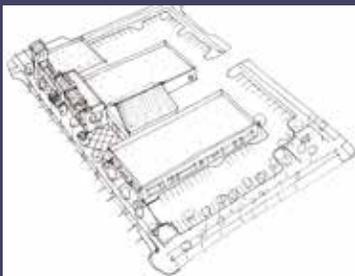
MIXED USE FACADE/ LINER BUILDINGS
Warehouse or industrial buildings can serve as the ‘back building’ to mixed use, shallow liner buildings that bring the architecture up to the street. Using the architecture to capture area for street life like outdoor seating, plantings and wider sidewalks actively engages placemaking principles.



RESIDENTIAL OR OFFICE FACADE/ LINER BUILDINGS

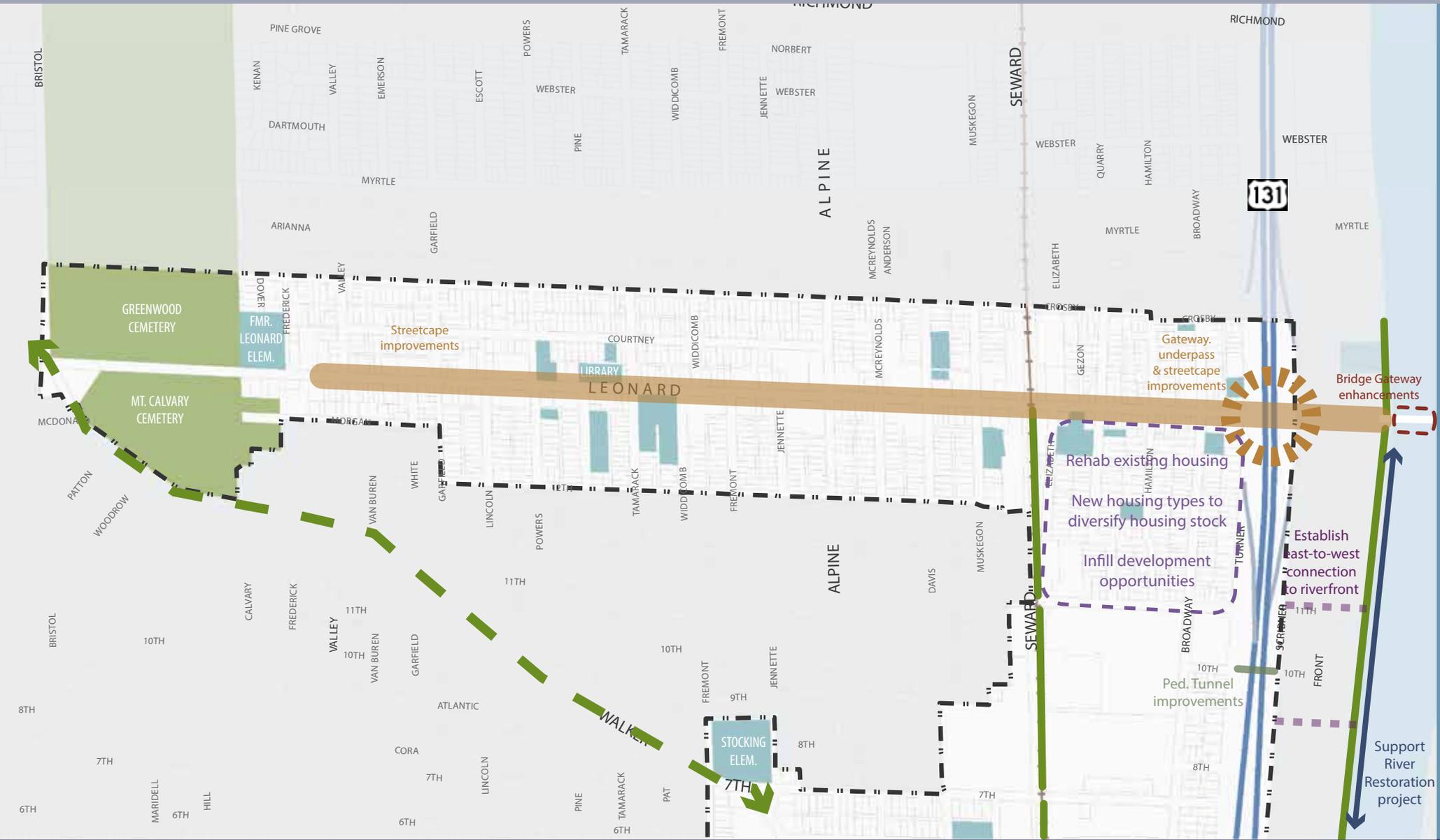


Before:
Vacant industrial building layout



After:
Lined with buildings to bring them up to the street, define public spaces and new street scaping

MAP 6: Placemaking - Leonard Street



- Existing Parks & Cemeteries
- Existing Pedestrian Underpasses
- Civic Building Sites (Public, Gov't & Community Amenities)
- Future Potential Easements to Riverfront
- Proposed Green Streets (GR Master Plan)
- Proposed Parks
- Proposed Civic Building Sites
- Proposed Gateway Improvements
- Proposed Streetscape Improvements



Sources: City of Grand Rapids, Kent Co. GIS, GVMC, MDOT

MAP 7: Placemaking - Stocking & Bridge



- Existing Parks & Cemeteries
- Existing Pedestrian Underpasses
- Civic Building Sites (Public, Gov't & Community Amenities)
- Future Potential Easements to Riverfront
- Proposed Streetscape Improvements

- Proposed Green Streets (GR Master Plan)
- Proposed Parks
- Proposed Civic Building Sites
- Proposed Gateway Improvements



Sources: City of Grand Rapids, Kent Co. GIS, GVMC, MDOT

PLACEMAKING IMPLEMENTATION

Action	Lead	Type	Resources	Priority
EVALUATE LAND FOR NEW PARKS; REPAIR/ REPROGRAM EXISTING PARKS The WestSide is severely underserved with parks both active and passive. A study should be conducted to find new locations for neighborhood parks and playfields and to revitalize existing parks.	City Planning Department; CID	Partnerships; Project: Study & Capital Improvement	Friends of Grand Rapids Parks, WGNO, and Community Schools and Churches	by 2015
USE CRIME PREVENTION TECHNIQUES IN SITE PLANNING REVIEW PROCESS The West Grand Neighborhood Organization has extensive research for the West Leonard business association area for CPTED	City Planning Department; CID	Partnerships, Policy: Use CPTED Principles in Site Plan Review	WGNO, City of Grand Rapids Public Safety, Architects and Urban Designers	by 2015
INITIATE STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS CONSISTENT WITH THE GOALS AND GUIDELINES IDENTIFIED ON P. 15 OF THIS PLAN Creating an inviting edge will not only enhance the image of the district but better define parking locations and traffic lanes as well as creating a more inviting pedestrian environment.	City Planning Department; City Engineering; CID	Capital Improvements	Future CID	On-going
INCREASE RIVERFRONT LINKAGES Additional pedestrian connections should be created under US-131 to improve neighborhood access to the enhanced Grand River and to facilitate access for riverfront visitors to the WestSide. Views of the river should also be enhanced.	City Planning Department; City Engineering; CID	Capital Improvements	Future CID	On-going

APPENDIX A



Photo credit: Steven Karsten

COMBINED IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

	Action	Lead	Type	Resources	Priority
TRANSPORTATION	INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS Reconfiguring the lanes on Leonard under US-131 at Turner and implementing the pedestrian underpass improvement to ensure the gateway to the neighborhood is welcoming and safe for pedestrians.	City Planning; Engineering; CID	Project: Capital Improvement	Future CIA	2016
	RESTRIPING AND PAVEMENT MARKINGS Evaluate on-street parking, crosswalks, and bicycle lanes throughout the WestSide. Faded street paint makes it difficult for residents and visitors to distinguish where to cross the street, park, and bicycle safely. Improving the striping can better organize the parking configurations.	City Planning; Engineering; CID	Project, Policy: Parking Management	Future CIA	
	PARKING STUDY A comprehensive study of on and off street parking spaces throughout the business districts would determine the impacts that the City's commercial parking restrictions are having on adjacent residential areas. Particularly, on Leonard - the impact that taking a lane of parking would have if a bike lane were added. Once the study is complete a full parking management policy can be drafted.	City Planning; Engineering; CID	Policy, Partnerships	Business Organizations, WGNO	
	TRAFFIC CALMING IMPROVEMENTS Install curb extensions at each neighborhood entry as a traffic calming measure into neighborhoods. (See Illustration on pg 16) Pedestrian improvements are necessary to create a safer environment for walking and bicycling. Curb extensions reduce crossing time and define parking along neighborhood streets. This also alerts drivers that they have crossed into a neighborhood, to slow down.	City Planning; Engineering; WGNO; CID	Policy, Partnerships, Project: Capital Improvements		
	SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS Evaluate all sidewalks for missing, disrepaired, ADA non-compliant curbs; and prepare an action plan for connection missing sidewalks, repairing, maintaining, weeding, moving utilities or other obstructions that block passage for disabled pedestrians, replace or supply wayfinding signage.	City Planning; Engineering; CID	Policy, Partnerships, Project: Capital Improvements	Future CIA	
	IMPROVEMENTS FOR SEWARD Post a small advisory sign or plaque facing traffic exiting the mall in order to clarify the flashing red/solid red function; Install a box span signal with 12-inch lenses whenever the signal is scheduled to be modernized; Provide full signalization of the north leg (red/yellow/green) whenever the signal is scheduled to be modernized; Install crosswalk markings with ADA -compliant pedestrian facilities across the east leg.	City Planning; Engineering; CID	Project: Capital Improvements	Future CIA	
	IMPROVEMENTS FOR SCRIBNER Install dotted pavement marking lines delineating the turn movements to improve driver understanding and reduce the potential for lane changing and sideswipe crashes; Install dotted white lines within the Scribner Avenue intersection to provide drivers with visual guidance through the lane transitions.	City Planning; Engineering; CID	Project: Capital Improvements	Future CIA	
	PUBLIC TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS Explore north-south transit route to link Leonard Street more directly with Bridge St. and Fulton St.	City Planning; The Rapid	Study		2015
	BIKE IMPROVEMENTS Expand bike lanes and pathways to complete the network for non-motorized circulation as shown on Maps 1 and 2.	City Planning; Engineering; CID	Project: Capital Improvements	City; Future CIA	On-going

LAND USE	CHANGE ZONING FROM MEDIUM LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL TO MIXED USE NEAR DOWNTOWN Future land use is positioned as “Transitional Mixed Use” throughout the Seward Street corridor in order to create a mixed use neighborhood between West Leonard and Bridge Street.	City Planning Department; CID	Policy: Zoning Amendment		by 2015
	MOVE NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER LOCATION Neighborhood Center designation to be moved from Seward to Broadway to more closely represent the definition and form of the neighborhood and identify a gateway for the West Leonard Business District.	City Planning Department; CID	Policy: Zoning Amendment		by 2015
	CHANGE NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER DESIGNATION Neighborhood Center designation to be changed to Village Center at Bridge Street to more closely represent the definition and the identify a gateway for the Bridge Street and Stocking Business Districts.	City Planning Department; CID	Policy: Zoning Amendment		by 2015
	CHANGE ZONING FROM TRADITIONAL BUSINESS AREA TO MEDIUM LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL Change the Traditional Business Area on Bridge Street Ending the Traditional Business Area at Lane Street, and replacing one block of TBA at Pettibone and Milwaukee with Medium to Low Density Residential (MLDR).	City Planning Department; CID	Policy: Zoning Amendment		by 2015
	INCLUDE NEIGHBORHOOD NODES AS A DESIGNATION TYPE Include the new designation of neighborhood commercial nodes as a designation type to create a small retail center within large dense neighborhoods that have transit serving arterials. (See Neighborhood Nodes pg. 38) Neighborhood Node Zoning: Definition: Neighborhood Nodes have developed historically as a population in a neighborhood has grown in a walkable pattern that allows retail, service, and dining establishments to thrive. Neighborhood Uses: See Neighborhood Mixed-Use Center Retail Uses. Approx. Retail Sq. Footage Under 7,000 Sq. Ft. Approximate Trade Area: Under 1/2 Mile. Population to Support: Minimum: <6,000. Use Section 5.6.07A. Site Layout and Building Placement Requirements for Site Dimensions Table in the Zoning Ordinance if an established lot size is not available. Scale and height should reflect surrounding neighborhood but not more than three stories.	City Planning Department; CID	Policy: Zoning Amendment		by 2015
	TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT Transit-oriented development should be strongly encouraged within the segment from US-131 to Seward. Zoning changes should be made accordingly. More intense mixed-use development should be promoted.	City Planning Department	Policy: Zoning Amendment		On-going
	ADOPT ZONING CLASSIFICATION TO SUPPORT TRADITIONAL MIXED NEIGHBORHOOD LAND USE This land use category represents a condition found in other areas in the City and may warrant a zoning designation that allows the continuation of the random assortment of uses within a confined area.	City Planning Department	Policy: Zoning Amendment		by 2015
	TBA MINIMUM HEIGHT REQUIREMENT Along the Leonard Street TBA west of Alpine Ave., zoning requirements should be changed from minimum two stories to a minimum height (in feet) to achieve the desired scale and character without imposing a full two story standard.	City Planning Department	Policy: Zoning Amendment		by 2015

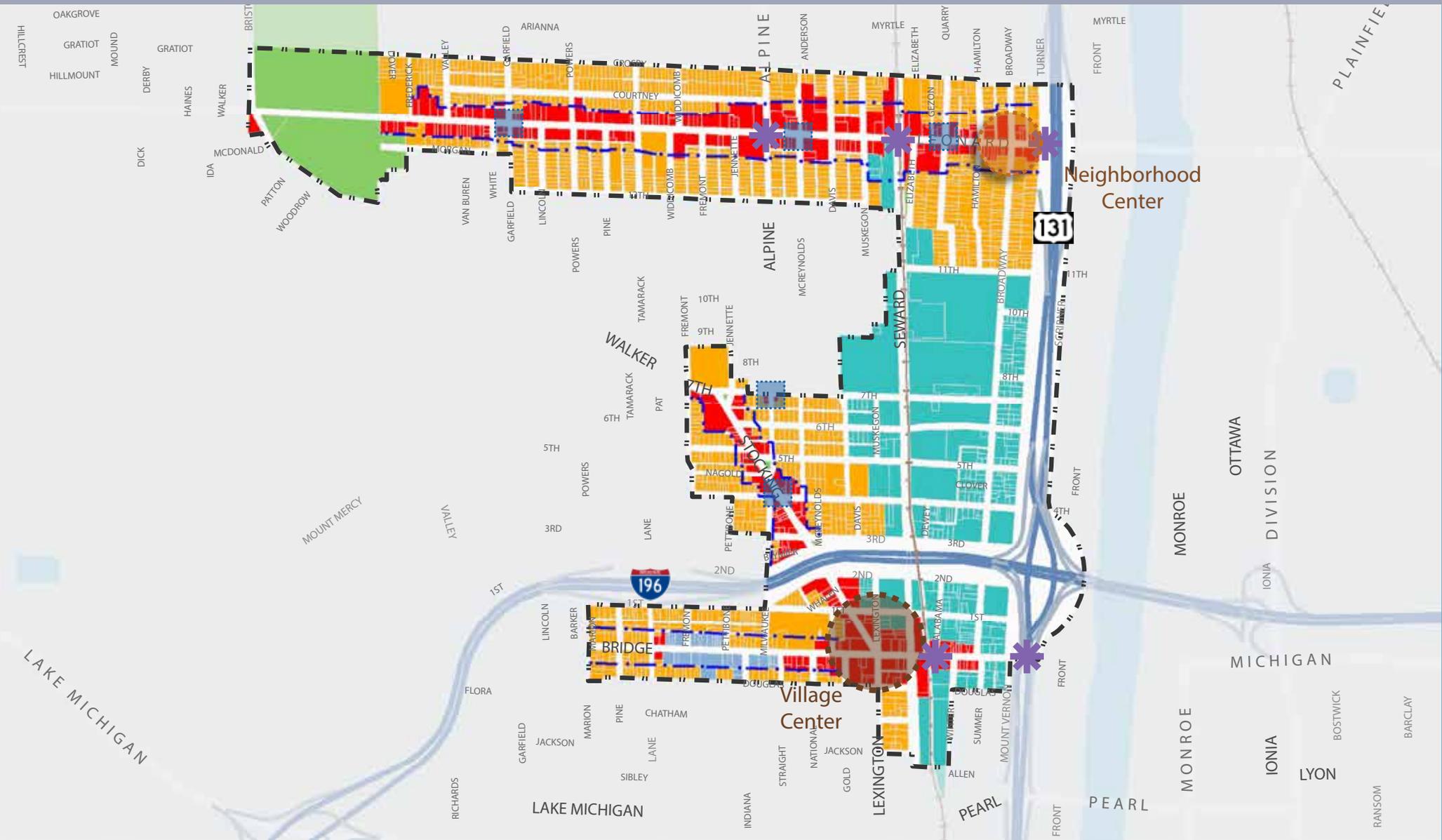
PLACEMAKING	EVALUATE LAND FOR NEW PARKS; REPAIR/ REPROGRAM EXISTING PARKS The WestSide is severely underserved with parks both active and passive. A study should be conducted to find new locations for neighborhood parks and playfields and to revitalize existing parks.	City Planning Department; CID	Partnerships; Project: Study & Capital Improvement	Friends of Grand Rapids Parks, WGNO, and Community Schools and Churches	by 2015
	USE CRIME PREVENTION TECHNIQUES IN SITE PLANNING REVIEW PROCESS The West Grand Neighborhood Organization has extensive research for the West Leonard business association area for CPTED	City Planning Department; CID	Partnerships, Policy: Use CPTED Principles in Site Plan Review	WGNO, City of Grand Rapids Public Safety, Architects and Urban Designers	by 2015
	INITIATE STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS CONSISTENT WITH THE GOALS AND GUIDELINES IDENTIFIED ON P. 15 OF THIS PLAN Creating an inviting edge will not only enhance the image of the district but better define parking locations and traffic lanes as well as creating a more inviting pedestrian environment.	City Planning Department; City Engineering; CID	Capital Improvements	Future CID	On-going
	INCREASE RIVERFRONT LINKAGES Additional pedestrian connections should be created under US-131 to improve neighborhood access to the enhanced Grand River and to facilitate access for riverfront visitors to the WestSide. Views of the river should also be enhanced.	City Planning Department; City Engineering; CID	Capital Improvements	Future CID	On-going

APPENDIX B



Photo credit: Brandon Bartoszek

MAP 8: Future Land Use



- Med. Low-Density Res.
- Traditional Mixed Neigh.
- Traditional Business Area
- Transitional Mixed-Use
- Parks & Cemeteries
- Parking Hold Line
- Neighborhood Node
- Village Center
- Neighborhood Center
- Transition Gateways



Sources: City of Grand Rapids,
Kent Co. GIS, GVMC, MDOT