

BOOK 3

# FOCUSED REDEVELOPMENT

MT. PLEASANT MASTER PLAN 2050

# Acknowledgments

## CITY ADMINISTRATION

Nancy Ridley — *City Manager*  
Jacob Kain — *City Planner*  
William Mrdeza — *Director of Community Services  
and Economic Development*  
Chris Bundy — *Director of Parks & Public Spaces*  
Ryan Longoria — *Director of Recreation and Sports*

## DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Tim Coscarelly  
Tim Driessnack  
John Hunter  
Tom Krapohl  
Doug LaBelle II  
Margaret McAvoy — *Isabella County Representative*  
Lisa Orlando  
Nancy Ridley  
Robby Roberts  
Jeff Smith  
Robert VanDorin

## PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Megan Barber  
James Batcheller  
Liz Busch  
Peter Little  
Brian Mitchell  
Brian Sponseller

## PLANNING COMMISSION

William Dailey  
Corey Friedrich  
Lesley Hoenig  
Susan Horgan  
Glen Irwin II  
Michael Kostrzewa  
Matthew Liesch  
Christine Ortman  
Kathy Rise

## CITY COMMISSION

William L. Joseph — *Mayor*  
Amy Perschbacher — *Vice Mayor*  
Mary Alsager  
Lori Gillis  
Kristin LaLonde  
George Ronan  
Petro J. Tolas

## PLANNING CONSULTANTS – MCKENNA

John Jackson, AICP — *President*  
Paul Lippens, AICP, NCI — *Project Manager*  
Chris Khorey AICP  
Laura Haw, AICP, NCI  
Carrie Leitner  
Chris Madigan  
Wendy Caldwell  
Irvin Wyche  
Adam Cook, CNU-A, NCI, FBCI — *Seamless Collaborative*  
Michael Campbell — *Campbell Planning and Design*

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# Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION . . . . .

Eight Square Miles. . . . .

Pedestrian Sheds. . . . .

MISSION STREET . . . . .

Mission Street Concept Plan . . . . .

University Connections . . . . .

Mission Street Vision. . . . .

Re-envision The Business Loop  
and Site Retrofits . . . . .

PICKARD STREET . . . . .

Neighborhood Node Example. . . . .

DOWNTOWN . . . . .

Town Center Vision Plan. . . . .

TOWN AND GOWN . . . . .

The University Avenue Connection . . . . .

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN . . . . .

Introduction . . . . .

Opportunities, Strategies, and Challenges . . . . .

Consistency with Local and Regional Plans . . . . .

LIST OF MAPS

Map 3.2: Mission Street Layout. . . . .

Map 3.3: Pedestrian Shed Map. . . . .

1

.1

2

3

3

4

5

8

10

10

15

15

18

18

20

21

21

26

9

12









# Introduction

## Eight Square Miles

The City of Mt. Pleasant is eight square miles and the place hierarchy of the City is predominantly influenced by three districts: Central Michigan University, Downtown, and the Mission Street Corridor. These three locations provide the overarching structure for Citywide wayfinding, district identity, development, and neighborhood planning. Book 2 dealt with the mobility systems that influence people's ability to access the destinations throughout the City. Book 4 illustrates how the parks system is designed to weave throughout the City to provide all residents with access to recreation and natural beauty. This Book illustrates that the City is a network of places, some with Citywide influence, and some serving unique neighborhoods. Concept plans have been developed to illustrate preferred development patterns for realizing the vision of the 2050 Master Plan. Each of these plans can be used as a model for nodal development not illustrated herein, according to the Future Land Use Plan and Zoning Ordinance.



*A Pedestrian Shed is a mixed-use district limited to a ¼ mile radius from its center to its edge, typically with neighborhood institutions located at its center and shopping along its edge (preferably shared between Pedestrian Sheds for retail viability). The concept of the Pedestrian Shed has been popular in the New Urbanism and can be originally traced to planner Clarence Perry's Neighborhood Unit concept, which he set forth in 1939.*

## Pedestrian Sheds

Many Central Michigan University students come from suburban areas and are paying a premium to “go away” to school (far from the commuter campuses back home), but due to lack of walkable housing choices, wind up living a commuter campus lifestyle in Mt. Pleasant. Students may want the opportunity to live in a walkable and bikeable neighborhood but find limited housing choices outside of apartment complexes.

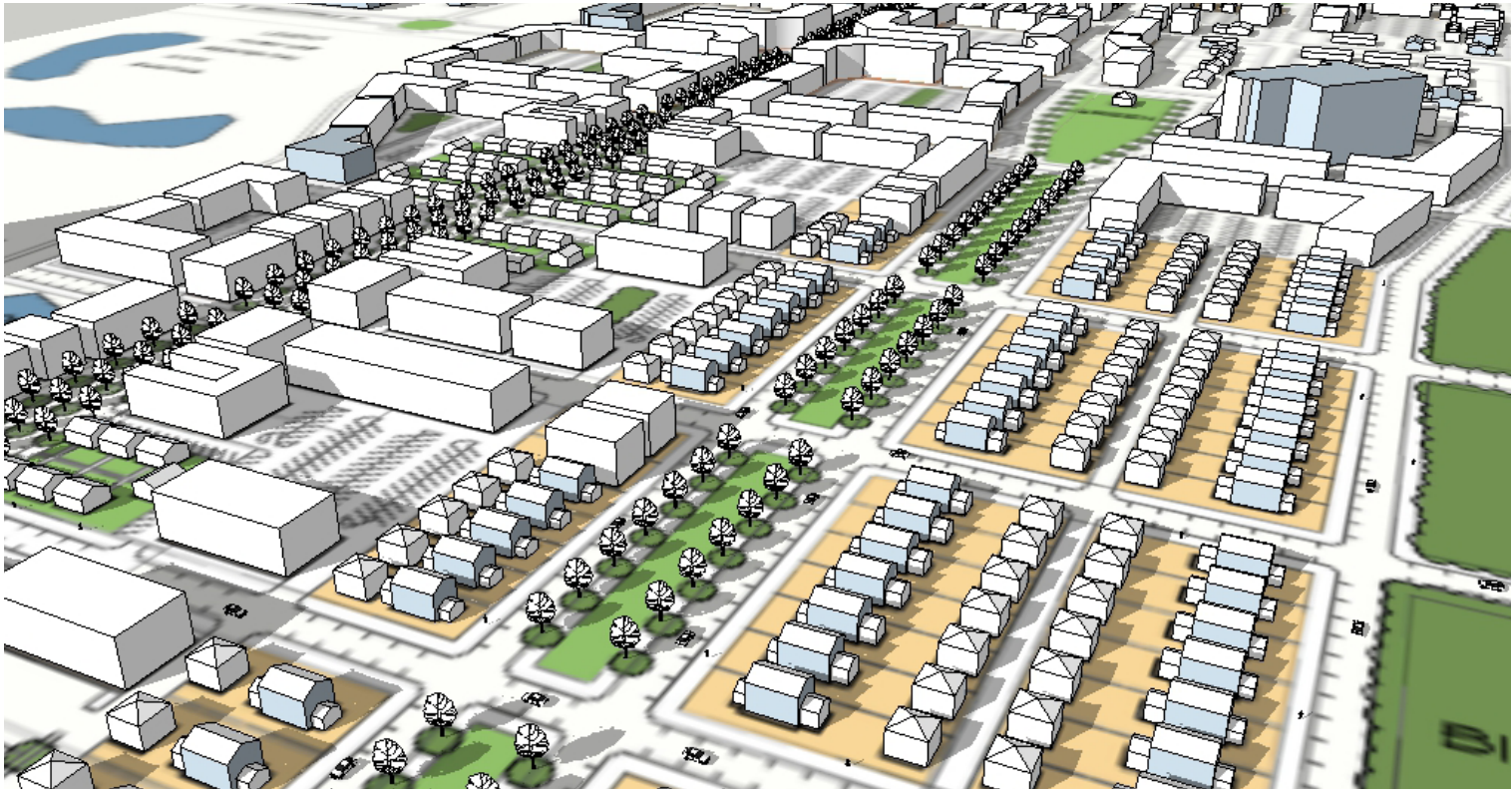
As the zoning ordinance is implemented with design treatments that support urbanism, students will be encouraged to lead a walkable lifestyle in Mt. Pleasant. Mt. Pleasant 2050 envisions redevelopment of some existing districts within the City limits into walkable neighborhoods, or Pedestrian Sheds. In this model, students and others can reside closer to campus and within walking distance of employment and services, such as a dry cleaner, a barber shop, a coffee shop, or a small market, that meet every day needs.

The zoning needed to realize walkable neighborhoods is already in place in Mt. Pleasant. The City's zoning ordinance includes the mixed-use categories CD-4 General Urban and CD-5 Urban Center that each allow for the creation of new Pedestrian Sheds where they don't already exist. Furthermore, these categories encourage the construction of Missing-Middle Housing types, which are both affordable and conducive to walkable neighborhood development, such as duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, rowhouses, individual apartment buildings, bungalow courts, and mixed-use buildings that accommodate retail uses on the ground floor and residential above.

The vision for Mt. Pleasant can easily support the eleven (11) Pedestrian Sheds, which include the larger regional areas of downtown and Mission Street. Based on the location of the General Urban and Urban Center zones and the planned future land use, eight additional walkable neighborhood centers can be spread throughout the City. Given the size of individual neighborhood pedestrian sheds, with roughly ¼ mile radius from center, the size of the City, and the land planned and zoned for such development, these Pedestrian Shed areas should be prioritized for redevelopment that prioritizes walking and biking trips.

Eleven envisioned Pedestrian Sheds are illustrated as beige circles and overlaid upon a copy of the Mt. Pleasant Zoning Map on page 12.





# Mission Street

## Concept Plan for Mission Street

The charrette focused on developing a concept plan for Mission Street that addressed community needs. The objectives for Mission Street are summarized, as follows:

- » Transform Mission Street from a transportation corridor to a business corridor.
- » Maintain safe and efficient traffic flow.
- » Reduce the average speed of traffic.
- » Increase pedestrian and bicycle safety and incorporate Complete Streets in future design considerations.
- » Provide better access to businesses, including shared access drives and cross connections.
- » Improve aesthetics on Mission Street to make it an exemplary “front door” to the community.
- » Create an environment that encourages redevelopment and investment in the corridor.

The concept plan presents one way to accomplish these objectives. Additional study and funding evaluation is needed. As such, this concept plan strongly encourages ongoing flexibility and collaboration with residents, businesses, the DDA, CMU, and MDOT. Working together, Mission Street will be more than a through-way, it will be reimagined with a vibrant mix of activity, inclusive of the current uses and connections.





*View of Mission Street Concept Plan looking south. A series of development nodes.*

## University Connections

To better serve the University, as well as for the safety of pedestrians and cyclists that need to cross Mission Street, traffic along Mission Street should be mitigated in favor of non-motorized travel and accessibility. Taking the business nature of this thoroughfare into consideration, the ideal mechanisms for further slowing that traffic are to add parallel, on-street parking, increase building heights, and locate buildings closer to the street. Drivers tend to slow down in proximity to on-street parking in anticipation of parked cars trying to re-enter the traffic flow. They slow in the presence of taller buildings closer to the street because slower speeds are naturally perceived as faster in this context. On-street parking will, in addition to slowing traffic, provide pedestrians along sidewalks a buffer from moving traffic and support the retail activity located there. Additionally, taller buildings will accommodate more uses and higher population in close proximity, further supporting retail activity and contributing to the pedestrian-related functionality and character of the area.

With slower traffic, on-street parking, an abundance of business, taller buildings closer to the street, and prioritized pedestrians, the vision for Mission Street as a vibrant, mixed-use shopping corridor, with multi-story buildings constructed up to the right-of way line, can become a reality.



*View of Mission Street Concept Plan looking north.*

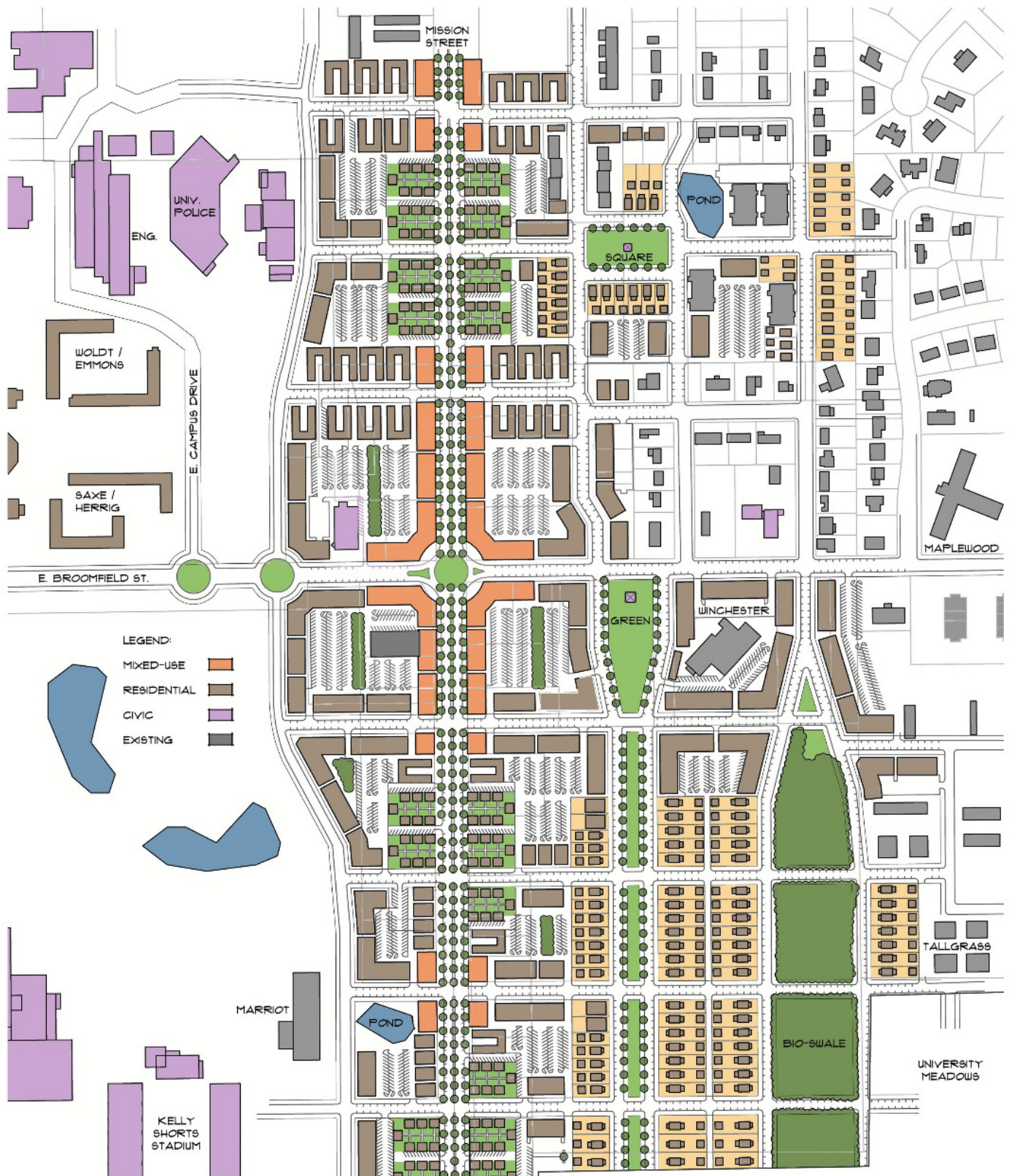
## Mission Street Vision

The vision illustrated here and embraced by this plan is for Mission Street to become a regional center which complements downtown. Development along Mission Street is shown as intensified and parking lots are shown placed behind buildings, out of the way of pedestrian activity. Buildings along Mission Street are located at the right-of-way line and buildings elsewhere are located in close proximity the right-of-way lines, providing for pedestrian convenience. Moving away from the Mission Street Corridor, development is envisioned to gradually lower in intensity, providing for some lower density development, shared open spaces, and the implementation of storm water management techniques.

A network of interconnected streets is illustrated to provide cars, bicycles, and pedestrians alike alternate routes that will shorten trips. Shorter trips will encourage walking and alleviate traffic congestion. This interconnected street network is also shown to integrate with existing streets and provide connections directly into existing development.

Slightly higher building heights occupy sites around the intersection of Mission Street and Broomfield, drawing attention to a new roundabout proposed for that location, and, in order to keep retail districts within lengths manageable for pedestrians, retail activity is concentrated at intermittent nodes along the Mission Street Corridor, with the intensity of development reduced in-between. Consistent with this reduction in development intensity, while ensuring building faces continue at the right-of-way line, bungalow courts should be encouraged along Mission Street itself. Additionally, these courts will evoke the scale and history of the motels that thrived along this corridor when it served as US-27, the main highway to Northern Michigan.





View of Mission Street Concept Plan from above.

Note: The concept plan shows one build-out and roadway reconstruction scenario that aligns with City, DDA, CMU, and MDOT design objectives, as expressed during the charrette and master planning process. The redevelopment of the corridor will require significant efforts by all agencies and the Mt. Pleasant community.



MISSION STREET SITE ANALYSIS

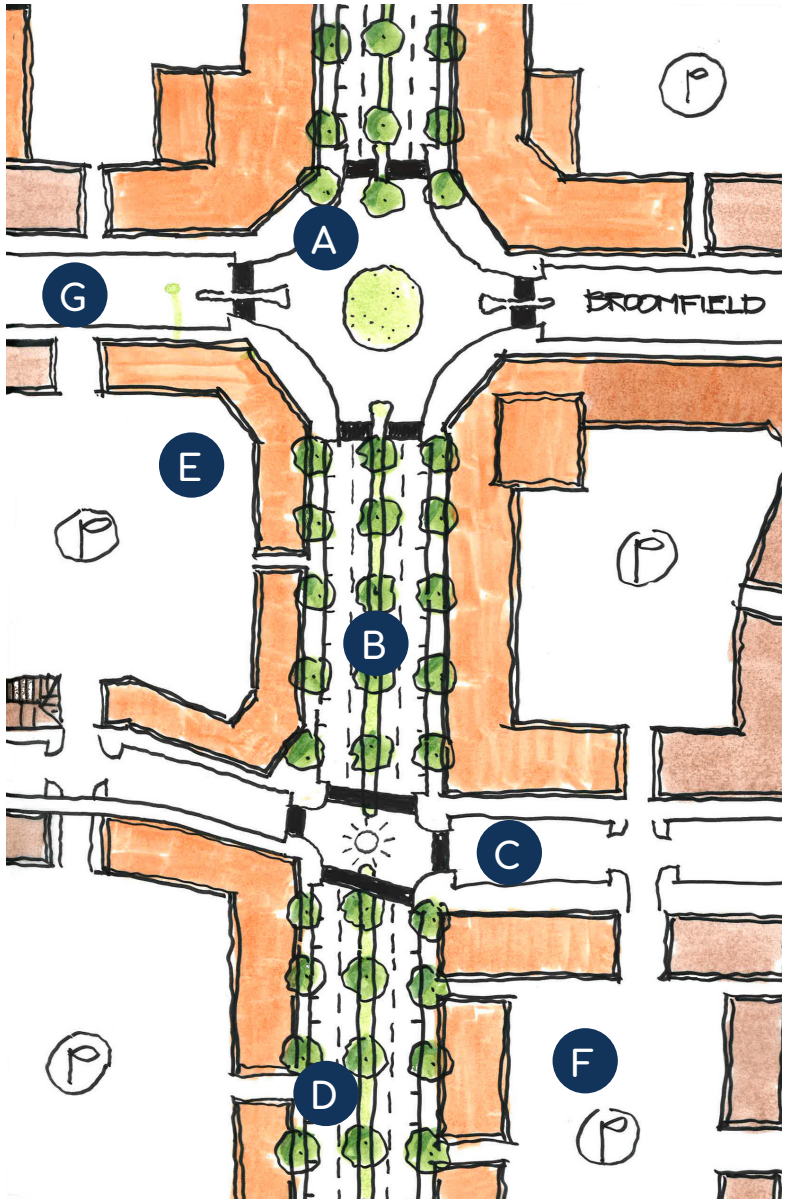
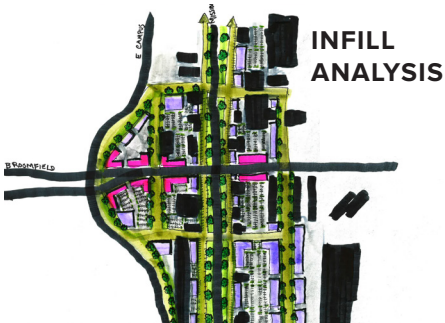
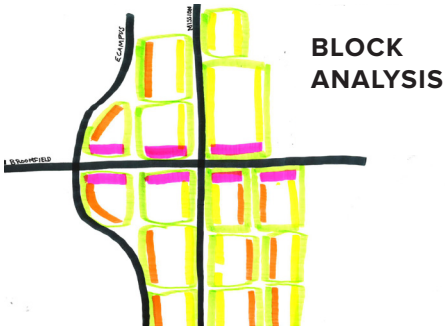
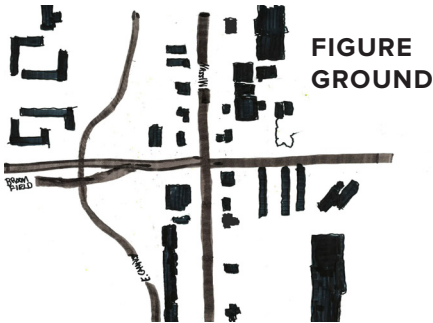


ILLUSTRATION KEY

- A Utilize roundabouts for traffic management
- B Provide landscape median for visual enhancement and traffic control
- C Utilize and retrofit existing street grid
- D Create access management along parcel frontage
- E Take advantage of underutilized parking lots for infill development
- F Locate new parking behind buildings
- G Create a residential "front door" to CMU

*“First and foremost, a great street should help make community... A great street should be a most desirable place to be, to spend time, to live, to play, to work... Streets are settings for activities that bring people together.”*

*– Allan Jacobs*

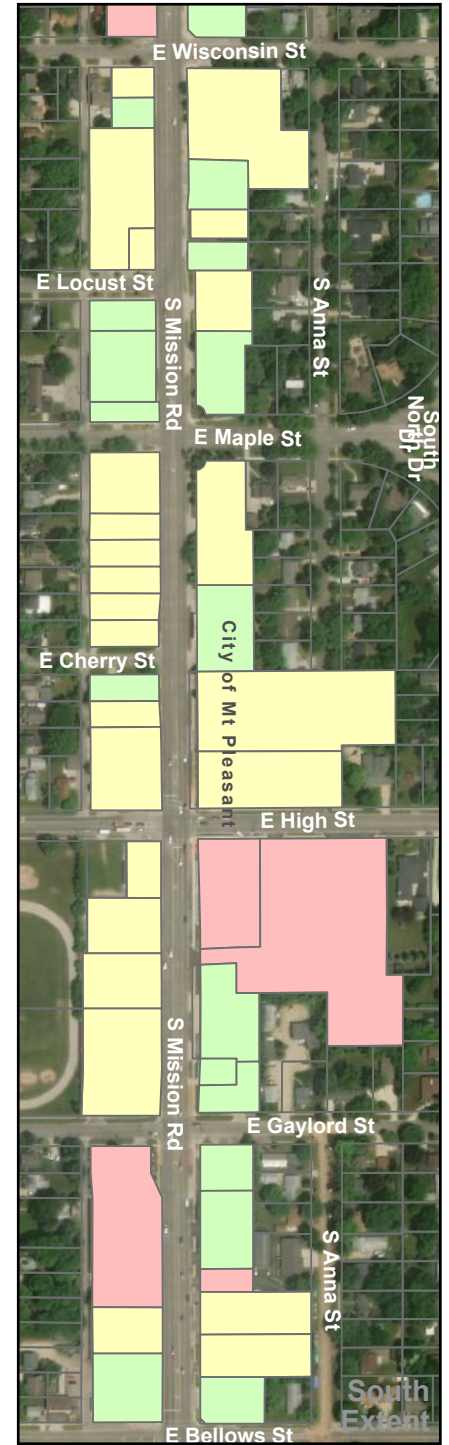
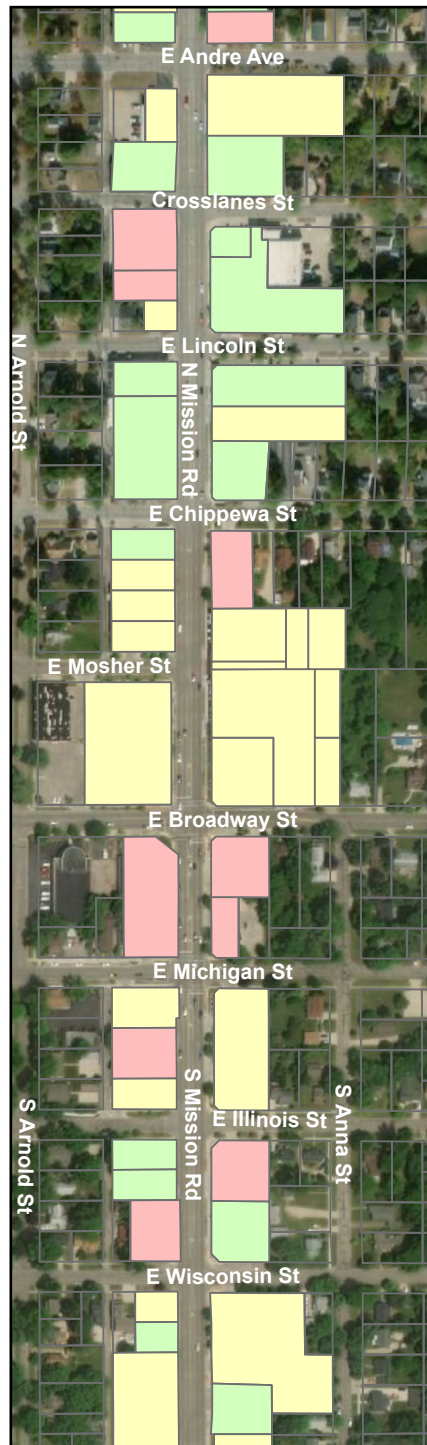
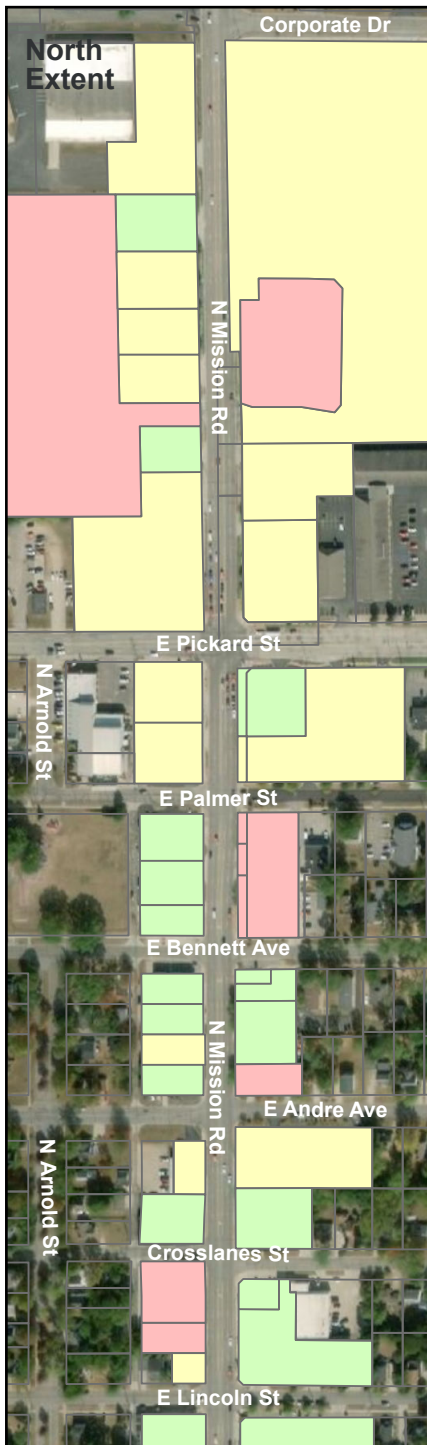
## Re-envision The Business Loop and Site Retrofits

The future vision for Mission Street recognizes that it is no longer a conduit skirting the far eastern edge of Mt. Pleasant. Mt. Pleasant has grown around Mission Street over the past half-century, as has the CMU campus. Mission deserves to take its place as a principal street that is indeed a ‘street’ in the fullest sense of the word: to quote urbanist Allan Jacobs, “First and foremost, a great street should help make community... A great street should be a most desirable place to be, to spend time, to live, to play, to work... Streets are settings for activities that bring people together.”

For these conditions to be met, redesigning the cross-section of Mission to calm traffic cannot suffice alone. Land uses along Mission must evolve away from auto-oriented, single use complexes to a mix of interesting buildings providing an equally interesting mix of functions and uses. By building in a full-time presence of people living on the street, who can access the University, the downtown, and other areas of Mt. Pleasant by foot or bicycle, a new level of vibrancy can be brought to a corridor previously overwhelmed by sameness and traffic.

A parcel-by-parcel site analysis was conducted for Mission Street from Bellows Street north to Pickard Street; this is the ‘older’ segment of Mission that first saw development as a corridor of auto-oriented businesses. There is currently a mix of parcel sizes and building footprints along this segment, and residential neighborhoods abut the rear of properties on both the east and west.

Parcels have been classified into ‘A’, ‘B’, and ‘C’ sites: those that have buildings currently oriented toward the street at a frontage line, and can be compatible with the vision for the corridor with little to no change (‘A’ sites); those that can accommodate new development compliant with the vision and form-based code in addition to existing structures (‘B’ sites), and those that cannot accommodate compliant new development due to the placement of existing buildings (‘C’ sites).



# Mission Street: Thoroughfare Retrofit, Frontage Conditions

City of Mt. Pleasant, MI

January 20, 2020

## LEGEND

City and Township boundaries  
Retrofit Type

- A, Existing building at frontage
- B, Existing building near frontage
- C, Existing building set back from frontage
- Other Parcels



Basemap Source: Michigan Center  
for Geographic Information, Version 17a.  
Data Source: City of Mt. Pleasant 2109, McKenna 2019

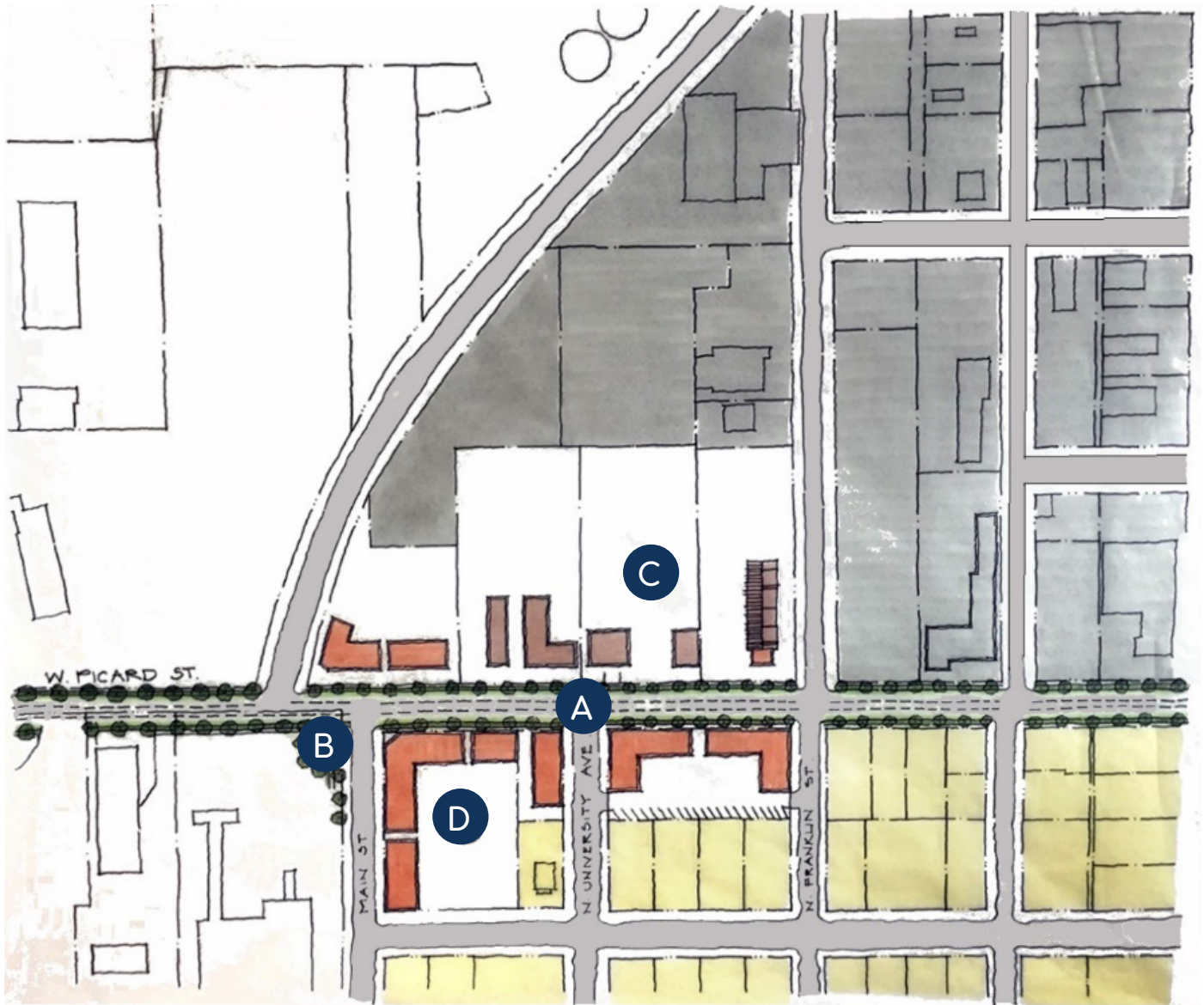




## Pickard Street

### Neighborhood Node Example

The area immediately to the north and east of the intersection of West Pickard Avenue and North Main Street was identified, at the outset of this planning process, as a location warranting a new, focused vision. Existing there is an interconnected network of streets that lends itself to a walkable, mixed-use center with buildings and trees lining street frontages. Upon further consideration, however, the stakeholders agreed that the area, in its current state, serves a critical function within the City as a small-scale industrial hub. It was furthermore agreed that it could continue to accommodate entrepreneurs, living and working in a dynamic creative environment.



## ILLUSTRATION KEY

- A** Improve aesthetics and safety on Pickard with landscaping and reconfiguration of the cross-section
- B** Improve the gateway feature to downtown at Main Street
- C** Recognize what is working in the existing industrial district and continue to support entrepreneurship and creation of new job opportunities in this district
- D** Add neighborhood supportive uses at Main and Pickard as a transition to downtown and the residential neighborhood to the south



# Pedestrian Sheds

City of Mt. Pleasant, MI

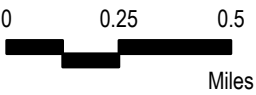
August 29, 2019

**LEGEND**

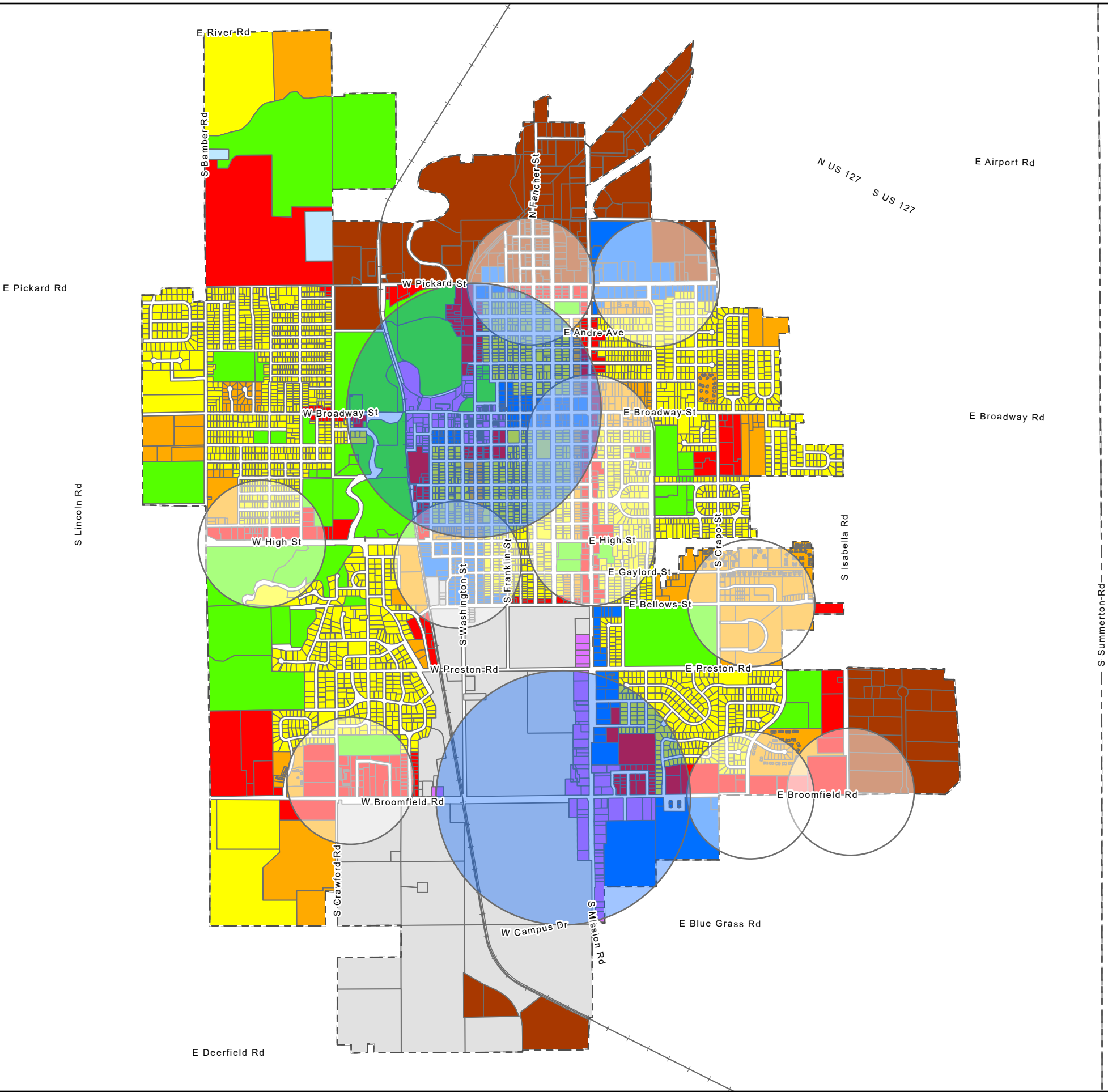
- Township and City Boundaries
- Half Mile Buffer
- Quarter Mile Buffer
- Roads
- Railroads

**Proposed Future Land Use**

- Parks/Public
- Residential
- Attached Residential
- Mixed Use Low
- Mixed Use Medium
- Mixed Use High
- Industrial
- Campus
- Tribal Land



**SOURCES**  
Data Source: McKenna 2019, Parcel data  
City of Mt. Pleasant 2018





## PICKARD STREET SITE ANALYSIS

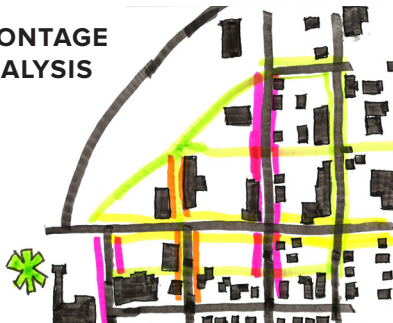
**FIGURE GROUND**



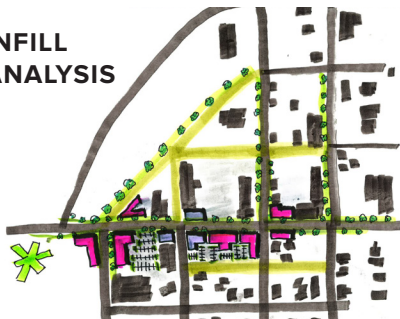
**BLOCK ANALYSIS**



**FRONTAGE ANALYSIS**



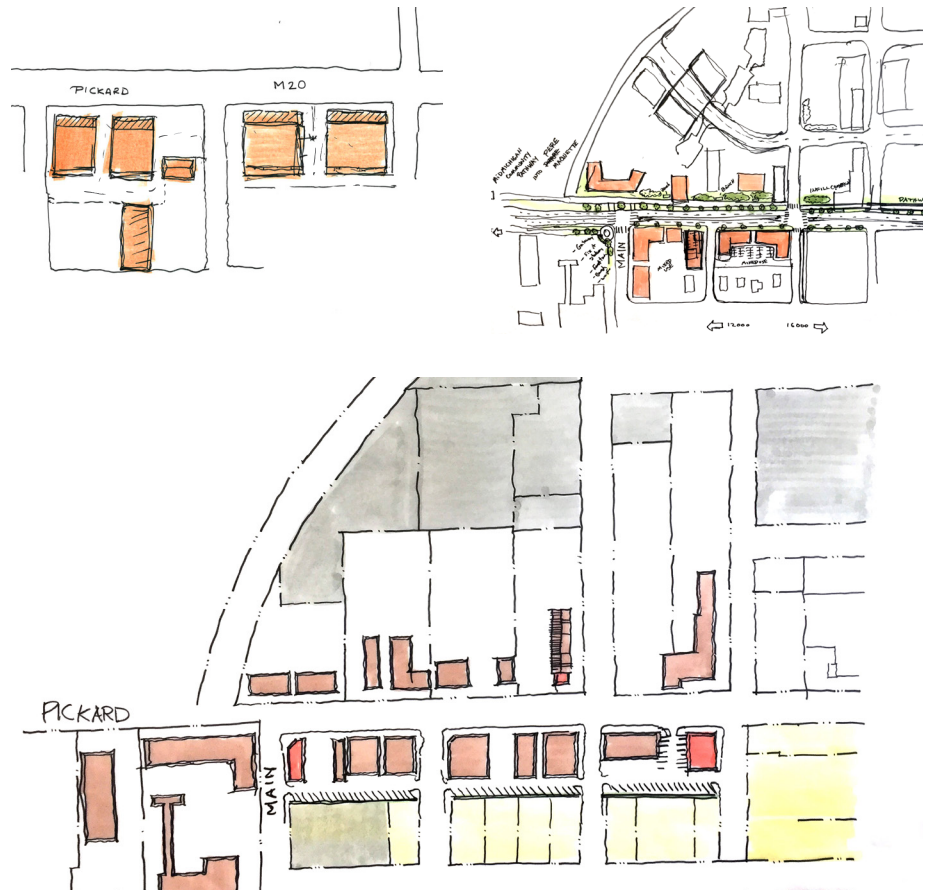
**INFILL ANALYSIS**



Residents of this area could conduct business in a wide variety of start-up enterprises, from recording and dance studios to construction, automotive, metalwork, and high-tech industries. The enforcement of residential and commercial building codes and safety regulations, and the addition of new measures to secure various outdoor hazardous activities, would be necessary to achieve this vision. However, the addition of use and/or building form regulations here might prove to be prohibitive in this capacity.

Therefore, the vision for this area has been instead confined to the frontages of West Pickard Avenue and North Main Street with a three-fold objective:

1. Provide convenient services to entrepreneurs, customers, and residents within the immediate area;
2. Line West Pickard Avenue and North Main Street with continuous building frontages, to screen parking and small-scale industrial activities taking place within these sites; and
3. Provide a gateway to downtown Mt. Pleasant.



*Charrette illustrations for Pickard Street*





# Downtown

## Town Center Vision Plan

The downtown Mt. Pleasant block defined by Mosher Street, North Main Street, and West Broadway Street (and its immediate surroundings) was the topic that received the most attention during the public engagement process. There was discussion regarding the future of the existing Town Center parking lot located within the block as well as the existing apartment tower located to its west. Additionally, it was recognized that the tower's foreground along Mosher Street was in need of a specific vision if the tower was to be retained. Finally, there was an expressed desire to strengthen connections between Downtown, City Hall, and Island Park.



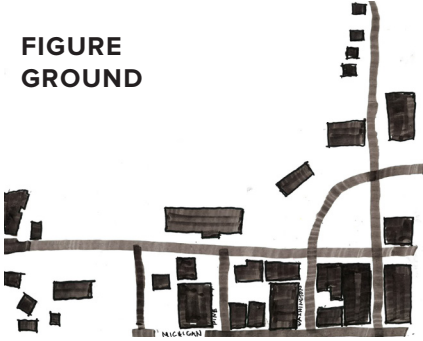


## ILLUSTRATION KEY

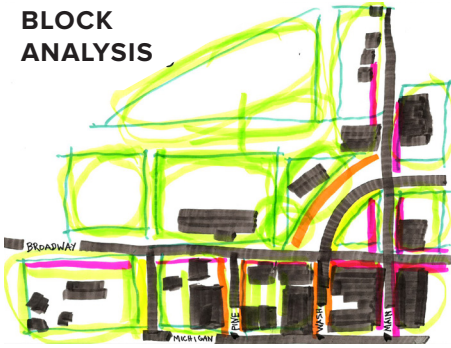
- A** Expand public gathering space at Main and Broadway
- B** Create a flexible event space with multiple programming options
- C** Add new on-street parking
- D** Create new direct connections to Island Park via trail and pedestrian bridge
- E** Develop additional residential fronting on public space
- F** Integrate Riverview apartments into downtown

## TOWN CENTER SITE ANALYSIS

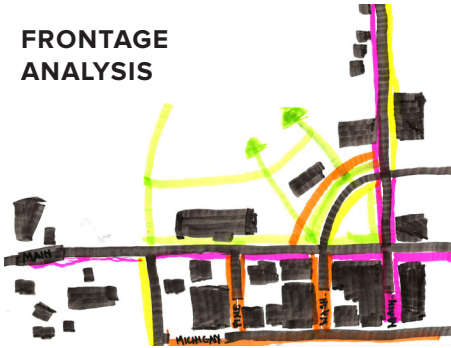
**FIGURE GROUND**



**BLOCK ANALYSIS**



**FRONTAGE ANALYSIS**



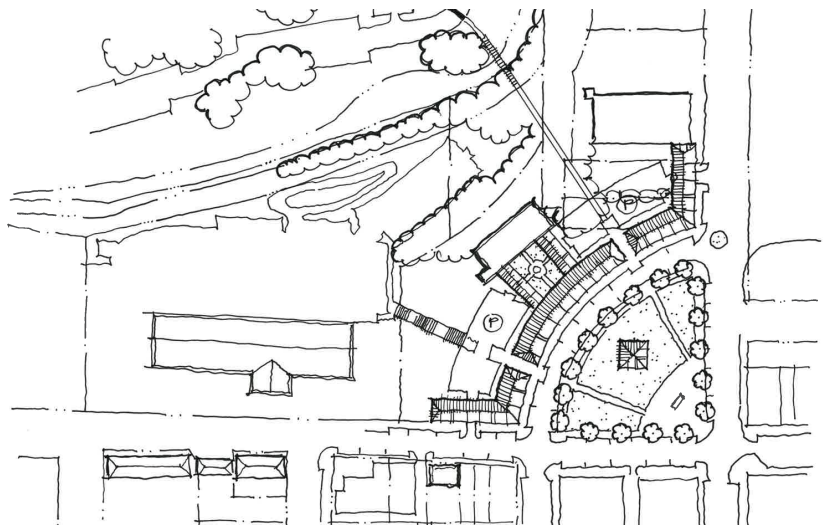
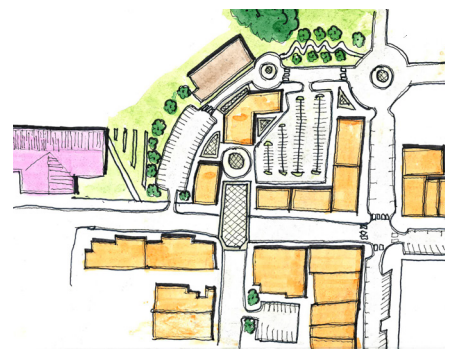
**INFILL ANALYSIS**



Various ideas for the site were proposed, including the installation of a new farmers' market, with the stakeholders eventually agreeing on the vision illustrated above.

The vision involves expanding the small existing Town Center park, currently occupying the southeast corner of the site, to fully encompass the block, which would require the redistribution of existing parking capacity to elsewhere downtown. Additionally, the vision calls for surrounding the block with on-street parallel parking and sidewalks, defining this new open space with residential facades at the Mosher Street right-of-way line (creating an outdoor room), and reconciling the back of that new residential installation with the existing tower using a private courtyard.

New connections to City Hall and Island Park are proposed to be accommodated by reserving passages through the new residential buildings to paths continuing along either side of the residential tower.



*Charrette illustrations for Town Center*



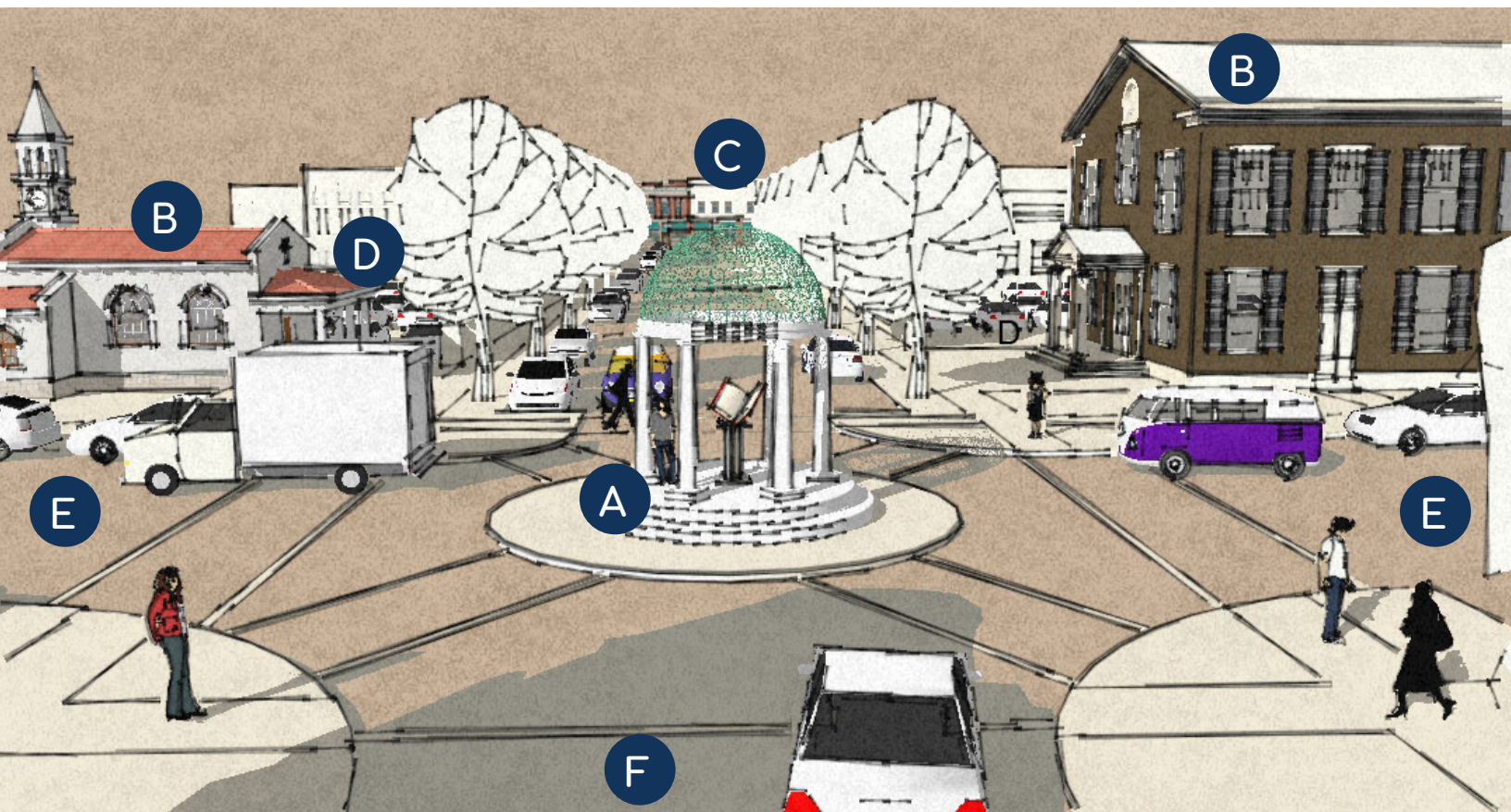


## Town and Gown

### The University Avenue Connection

South University Avenue historically served as the primary physical connection between downtown Mt. Pleasant and Central Michigan University's main campus to its south. Additionally, the University's administration building, Warriner Hall, terminates the South University Avenue vista on the south. South University has been augmented in recent decade by the use of Main Street as a second connector between Downtown and the campus. What has been missing is any kind of terminus for South University Avenue looking north toward downtown. There is no civic building aligned with South University Avenue where that thoroughfare terminates at Broadway Street; the nearest civic destination downtown, the public library, is located two blocks to the south, at East Illinois Street.





Accordingly, the intersection at South University Avenue and East Illinois Street presents an opportunity to celebrate two important civic connections and initiate dialogue between downtown Mt. Pleasant and two existing Mt. Pleasant institutions. Hence, this intersection is envisioned as the location for a new terminus, a civic sculpture with vertical characteristics located at its epicenter, providing reciprocal gesture to each of Central Michigan University and Sacred Heart Catholic Church.

Additionally, the parcels surrounding this intersection should ideally be zoned (or continue to be zoned) for civic uses in order to emphasize the symbolic importance of this particular location.

#### ILLUSTRATION KEY

- A** Proposed sculpture / terminus
- B** Proposed civic building
- C** Existing terminus at commercial center (Broadway Street)
- D** Existing / new screened parking
- E** East Illinois Street
- F** South University Avenue





# Economic Development Action Plan

## City of Mt. Pleasant, Michigan

As a component of the six best practice strategies required for state certification as a Redevelopment Ready Community, this update to the City's 2008 Economic Development Action Plan includes a brief description of the City's history; demographic information; regional context; relationship to other plans and studies; and finally, priority economic development-related goals and strategies for achieving them.

# Introduction

## MT. PLEASANT'S REGIONAL ECONOMIC AND GOVERNMENTAL CONTEXT

Mt. Pleasant is located near the center of Isabella County in the middle of Michigan's Lower Peninsula, and serves as the County Seat. The Chippewa River runs through the community, which also sits at the crossroads of US-127 and M-20. The City is home to Central Michigan University (CMU) and consists of traditional neighborhoods, student residential areas, and an historic downtown. The City and Isabella County governments enjoy a strong and supportive relationship across a broad spectrum of areas, including projects which contribute to and strengthen the tax base of all jurisdictions.

The communities of Midland, Big Rapids, Clare, Ithaca, Alma, and St. Johns are all within 40 miles of Mt. Pleasant, which is within two and a half hours' driving time from all major Michigan market areas, including Detroit, Traverse City, Grand Rapids, Saginaw, and Lansing. Other major metropolitan areas such as Chicago, Cleveland, and Indianapolis are within 350 miles. Important regional partners include the 14 county Eastern Michigan Council of Governments (EMCOG) and Middle Michigan Development Corporation (MMDC), which is the only two-county economic development organization in the state, covering Isabella and Clare counties. In addition, the City works closely with the Charter Township of Union on a number of jointly beneficial initiatives. The Township boundaries completely surround the City and as a result, a close working relationship helps to avoid duplication of effort in many instances by both units of government.

The key demographics specific to the City of Mt. Pleasant are provided in Book 5 of this Plan.

## Opportunities, Strategies, and Challenges

The City of Mt. Pleasant adopted its last Economic Development Action Plan in April, 2008. At that time, Michigan, along with the rest of the country, was entering what later became known as The Great Recession. In response, the City adopted a strategy of investing, rather than cutting, its way out of the downturn in the economy and based its plan on being more proactive to the needs of business. In addition the City Commission subsequently set aside approximately \$1.3 million in an Economic Development Fund (now the Economic Initiative Fund) for the purpose of investing in projects that bring an economic return to the City. The 2008 Economic Development Action Plan contained eight areas of focus:

- » A short term focus on economic development efforts along the Mission Street commercial corridor;
- » Becoming opportunistic across the City regarding economic development;
- » Communicating that the City is open for business in regard to good development projects;
- » Being flexible and nimble to address economic development opportunities;
- » Encouraging redevelopment and rehabilitation of existing sites served by existing infrastructure;
- » Continuing to support the City's role as the region's commerce and population center;
- » Increasing the tax base with new positive growth and redevelopment;
- » Enhancing the City's image as a good place to live and work.

While much has changed in the intervening years, Mt. Pleasant has fared better than many communities its size. However, it still faces challenges in a number of areas. These include attracting investment in new development; attracting new and retaining existing retailers; encouraging affordable housing options, including addressing the market for "Missing Middle" housing types; reducing the number of rental housing units in favor of increasing owner-occupied housing types; and other challenges that will be addressed in the Opportunities and Strategies below.



Mt. Pleasant's 2050 Master Plan has resulted in a community-wide effort to help shape and define the vision and direction of future development, including the City's economic development efforts. The Economic Development Action Plan, as an incorporated component of the Master Plan, reflects the revised economic development priorities identified by community stakeholders during the planning process.

Building on the 2008 Economic Development Action Plan, this 2019 Economic Development plan identifies three broad areas of Opportunity as outlined below. Each Opportunity includes a number of Strategies to further its accomplishment. Following this discussion, local and regional plans are identified which are related to and support the identified Opportunities and their related Strategies. Finally, a matrix outlines responsibilities for implementing the Strategies outlined in this plan.

Following the identification of Opportunities and Strategies, the plan includes a number of Challenges faced by Mt. Pleasant, as identified by stakeholders and staff. Many of these are addressed by the Strategies identified in the sections below. Most of the identified Challenges do not lend themselves to quick fixes and therefore require a longer-term commitment to the strategies identified to address them.

## **OPPORTUNITY: EMPHASIZE AND ENCOURAGE REDEVELOPMENT AND REHABILITATION OF EXISTING SPACES AND STRUCTURES**

### **Strategies:**

- » Continue to invest in capital infrastructure projects:
  - Mission Street connector streets
  - Commercial district alley maintenance
  - Downtown parking lots
  - Broadway Street reconstruction west of Main
  - Streetscape improvements
- » Focus efforts to reduce the vacant and under-utilized properties downtown
- » Invest in downtown:
  - Façade improvement assistance including façade rendering grants and no-interest improvement loans
  - Fire safety program to encourage investment in more upper-story residential units
  - Address downtown infrastructure issues
  - Address parking allocation issues
  - Promote the use of Redevelopment Liquor Licenses where appropriate
- » Recognize the importance of CMU to the economy of Mt. Pleasant and continue to explore opportunities to work together on challenges and opportunities for both:
  - Engage with faculty, staff, and students to increase the awareness of opportunities to participate in community activities and invest in the success of the community:
  - Emphasize student engagement in the U. S. Census in order to include the student population in Mt. Pleasant's Census count
- » Recognize challenges facing the retail sector and explore resources to assist business owners with addressing these challenges:
  - Partner with property owners to cost share with infrastructure costs, parking, etc.
  - Work with developers to explore available alternatives which help control development costs in order to keep lease rates competitive for the Mt. Pleasant market
- » Prioritize infill over greenfield development opportunities and address potential barriers that might exist
- » Promote the City's identified Priority Development sites on a national, state, and local level in conjunction with Middle Michigan Development Corporation (MMDC)
  - Create a development plan for the Mt. Pleasant Center property and market it for potential development as appropriate
- » Implement the Mission Street Corridor study, as addressed in the Master Plan, which will guide future design considerations that prioritize the corridor's importance as a business corridor and not just a transportation corridor
- » Engage all stakeholders when planning development strategies
- » Continue to offer assistance when appropriate to close gaps in project financing, including the use of Brownfield TIF for qualified projects
- » Promote walkability and bikeability in new project designs



***OPPORTUNITY: FOCUS EFFORTS TO PROMOTE JOB OPPORTUNITIES AND ATTRACT AND RETAIN TALENT*****Strategies:**

- » Partner with the CMU Research Corporation (CMU-RC) to promote entrepreneurship opportunities
- » Partner with MMDC and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) on commercial and manufacturing retention calls
  - Focus efforts to assist existing businesses with expansion plans or to retain them in the City
- » Partner with MMDC to promote the City's industrial parks to site selectors and developers to encourage development in the parks
- » Encourage development projects that contribute to a diversified housing stock
- » Work with MMDC and MichiganWorks! staff to attract and train qualified candidates for available positions
  - Use available programs to help employers with their existing staff training needs
  - Identify the types of businesses that would be the best fit for the community and would have market support; target these opportunities for attraction strategies
- » Pursue opportunities for additional beautification efforts which enhance quality of life experiences in the community
  - Events in the parks
  - Encourage public transportation options
  - Pursue opportunities to activate public spaces
- » Promote the opportunities available for continuing education
  - CMU
  - Mid-Michigan College
  - High school vocational education
  - Advanced certificate training institutions
  - Trade schools
  - Job fairs
  - Provide student internship opportunities
- » Engage with service groups
- » Promote community attributes important to those seeking employment opportunities
  - Mt. Pleasant as a safe community
  - Quality school system
  - Recreational opportunities
  - Cultural diversity
  - Lifelong learning opportunities
- » Highlight the advantages of the City opting-in to allow medical marihuana opportunities under state and local laws and licensing requirements

## OPPORTUNITY: MARKET AND PROMOTE THE CITY AS A REGIONAL COMMERCE CENTER

### Strategies:

- » Partner with the Public Relations Coordinator to communicate the City's story
  - Use the City's social media accounts to promote the City to internal and external stakeholders and visitors
  - Implement an area branding strategy with partner stakeholder participation that will identify Mt. Pleasant's unique characteristics and set the community apart from others
  - Explore other opportunities to engage the public to make them more aware of the community and what the City has to offer
- » Encourage staff involvement in state and regional boards and organizations to "tell our story" to others
- » City staff will promote the City when engagement opportunities present themselves
  - Includes residents and non-residents alike

## CHALLENGES: FACING MT. PLEASANT

- » The retail sector is changing, including competition from online sales, and changing consumer spending habits and preferences. This creates a challenge to retain existing establishments or attract new retail tenants as properties are built or become vacant, especially in auto-oriented "big box" or "strip retail" developments.
- » The CMU student population is present in the community for only 9 months of the year, placing a strain on businesses that rely on this market segment to remain open for the full year.
- » Graduating CMU students are a potential untapped resource; efforts should be made to provide appropriate job opportunities and a supportive entrepreneurial environment to retain them in the community.
- » Annual fluctuations in on-campus CMU student enrollment affect planning for sales and inventory estimates for area businesses, which in turn impact profitability
  - Trend of declining enrollment numbers impacts many facets of the local economy
  - The decline in the college-age demographic cohort results in more competition for incoming freshman enrollments at CMU, placing more pressure on all stakeholders to market and attract students to the community
- » Adequate, consistent marketing efforts of Mt. Pleasant in general, and downtown specifically, are lacking
- » There is a disconnect between MDOT's objectives and the City's and businesses' vision for the Mission Street Corridor
  - MDOT views Mission primarily as a transportation corridor
  - City/business community views Mission as a business corridor which greatly impacts the taxable value of the City
- » Adequate parking downtown is perceived to be a problem
- » Mt. Pleasant contains a high percentage of renter-occupied housing units compared with other similarly sized communities (62%)
  - Rental rates in the Mt. Pleasant market area are depressed compared with other communities, limiting the amount of investment developers can make in a project and still remain profitable
  - Desire to increase the number of owner-occupied housing units
  - Desire for more diversified and affordable housing choices
  - There is a demonstrated unmet demand for "Missing Middle" or "professional-oriented" housing
- » Differential which exists between the City and township tax rates (the township is substantially lower)



## Consistency with Local and Regional Plans

It is important to be sensitive to the goals and objectives of other local and regional plans in order to avoid duplicating activities and to coordinate efforts. There are a number of such documents related to this Economic Development Action Plan which are summarized below.

### **REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDS)**

The regional CEDS document is designed to provide baseline information, development strategies, and projects for stakeholders throughout the 14 county federally designated economic development region. Requirements of the CEDS document are proscribed by the US Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration. The current plan was adopted in 2016.

#### **RELATED ELEMENTS:**

- » Grow the regional economy through business retention, recruitment, and marketing efforts that support long-term economic resiliency and sustainability
- » Leverage the Region's institutions of higher education, major corporations, medical complexes, and innovation assets
- » Create a strong pipeline of talent to support the region's current and future employers
- » Make strategic infrastructure investments that improve the Region's economic competitiveness and resiliency
- » Strengthen the quality of place and reduce the vulnerabilities to create an attractive environment for existing and future residents

### **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

By its Charter, the City is required to prepare a five year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) each year. Projects must appear in the CIP in order to be budgeted for in the current and subsequent years. To be included in the CIP, a project must have a useful life of at least ten years, and cost in excess of \$5,000. Information from the strategies and priorities in the approved Master Plan, the City Commission-approved vision statement, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the TIFA districts' development plans, and input from various other Boards and Commissions is used to create the CIP.

#### **RELATED ELEMENTS:**

- » Industrial Park South retention pond improvements
- » Mission Street re-investment capital support
- » Mission Street traffic and pedestrian safety
- » Downtown fire safety program
- » Downtown streetscape improvements
- » Downtown parking lot maintenance and reconstruction

## **CITY COMMISSION GOALS**

Each year the City Commission and management staff hold a retreat to discuss upcoming goals for the coming year, as well as to review, reaffirm, and/or modify previously identified goals. The below goals are those most recently identified by the City Commission related to economic development strategies.

### **RELATED ELEMENTS:**

- » Stable funding from a diverse tax base
- » Where shopping, dining, and entertainment options thrive
- » Economic opportunities for businesses offering competitive wages are readily available
- » Well maintained, livable, and desirable neighborhoods
- » Focus on downtown success and growth by increasing the number of people living and visiting downtown
- » Offer diversified owner-occupied housing options

## **DEPARTMENTAL STRATEGIC INITIATIVES**

As part of the annual budget process, each City department must prepare a document detailing their major goals, over and above the normal expectations of the job, for the coming year. Each goal must detail implementation strategies, partners necessary for accomplishing the goal, stakeholders which need to be consulted, and expected completion dates. Progress on each goal is reported on twice during the year. Above are representative economic development-related goals from across several City departments.

### **RELATED ELEMENTS:**

- » Explore development opportunities for the 300 acre Mt. Pleasant Center site
- » Update the Economic Development Action Plan on a regular basis
- » Expand the City's tax base and increase the number of residents downtown
- » Maximize infill development opportunities
- » Continue to disseminate the results of the Target Market Analysis for housing to developers
- » Engage in a downtown parking allocation analysis
- » Analyze the cost/benefits of downtown events
- » Create and fund a downtown fire safety program to allow more conversions of upper story spaces to residential units
- » Complete certification as a Redevelopment Ready Community



