

PUBLIC SPACE STRATEGY

EAST HILLS COUNCIL OF NEIGHBORS



“A good city is like a good party – people stay much longer than really necessary because they are enjoying themselves.”

-Danish urbanist Jan Gehl

The East Hills Public Space Strategy was created through a collaborative effort between the East Hills Council of Neighbors and the citizens of East Hills. This resident-driven Strategy was shaped by the citizens through a dedicated and inclusionary public process that resulted in ideas, goals, and strategies that can be implemented over the next decade to shape the future East Hills Neighborhood.

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“First we shape our cities, and then our cities shape us.”

-Danish urbanist Jan Gehl

BASIS FOR STRATEGY

WELCOME TO EAST HILLS!

Over the past 20 years, East Hills has undergone a remarkable transformation: once-empty storefronts are occupied by vibrant businesses; residents and visitors of all ages enjoy our streets and sidewalks at all times of day and night; our housing stock has become the most sought-after in the City of Grand Rapids.

These changes did not occur by accident – they were the result of a clear vision that placed people at the center of planning decisions and respected the architectural and physical heritage of our built environment.

The exciting things happening in East Hills today are a direct result of the concerted efforts made by dedicated residents over the course of two decades to implement this vision.

We at East Hills Council of Neighbors are aware that over the next 20 years, new challenges and other changes will come to our community. We need a strategy that moves us forward purposefully and thoughtfully, while preserving the values that brought us to this point.



In this Public Space Strategy, we articulate a clear vision for our community as we move into the rest of the 21st century.

OUR VISION

- A **vibrant urban space** with people at its focus.
- A **full menu of amenities** for residents and visitors: healthy business districts, varied recreational opportunities, and a first-rate neighborhood school.
- **Diverse residential options** for people of all ages, backgrounds, family configurations, and a wide range of incomes.
- An **active, green, four-season community** with well-maintained parks, a lush urban forest, and plentiful outdoor meeting places.
- A **walkable, bike-able streetscape** with easy access to multiple transit options.
- **Preservation** of historic buildings with creative, context-sensitive redevelopment of open spaces.

We invite you to join us in the active community building that makes East Hills a wonderful place to **LIVE, WORK, SHOP, and PLAY!**

In East Hills Living,

The Board of Directors and Staff of East Hills Council of Neighbors

PARTNERS

The East Hills Public Space Strategy was generously funded by the **Dyer-Ives Foundation**.

East Hills Council of Neighbors would like to thank the Dyer-Ives Foundation for their continued support of community building in our central city neighborhoods.

We would also like to thank:

- The **Inner City Christian Federation**, for the generous use of their space for our Public Input Sessions and the First Draft Review at our Annual Meeting.
- **Grand Rapids Public Schools**, for a great partnership around Congress Elementary School, our neighborhood school.
- **Friends of Grand Rapids Parks**, for valuable input and for the use of their Parks Alive Report Card in evaluating our parks.
- **Highland Group**, for their services and contributions to shaping the project.
- **Mark Rumsey**, for all his years of service to East Hills - and for getting the ball rolling on this Strategy.

So much of East Hills' success is due to 25 years of tenacious work from our longtime Community Organizer **KC Caliendo** and those relentless neighborhood activists **Carol Moore**, **Dotti Clune**, **Rebecca Smith-Hoffman**, and **Gabriel Works**. We are so thankful for all they have contributed to making East Hills what it is today!

A portion of East Hills funding is provided by the City of Grand Rapids Community Development Department re-disbursement of Federal Community Development Block Grants.

To start supporting your community, join us at easthillscouncil.org.

We Love Our Neighborhood, Thank You For Your Support!



ICCF
INNER CITY CHRISTIAN FEDERATION
Making places to come home to.



WELCOME TO EAST HILLS

The East Hills Neighborhood:

7 DISTINCT NEIGHBORHOODS

- Fitch Corners
- Congress Park
- Diamond Gate
- Cherry Hill
- Fairmount Square
- Orchard Hill
- Wealthy Heights

3 VIBRANT CENTERS OF COMMERCE

- East Fulton Business District
- East Hills Business District
- Wealthy Street Business District

1 NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL

Congress Elementary School



1 GREAT PLACE WHERE PEOPLE CAN LIVE, WORK, SHOP, AND PLAY



EAST HILLS HISTORY AND LEGACY

EARLY YEARS

Following the Civil War, Grand Rapids experienced an influx of European immigrants and people from other parts of the United States seeking employment and business opportunity in the booming city. From 1860 until 1900, the population doubled every ten years. East Hills is a relatively intact example of the type of development that grew along the early streetcar routes to accommodate this rapidly expanding population.

Prior to 1870, the land on which East Hills stands was mostly small farms and orchards. In the early 1870s, the Grand Rapids Street Railway Company ran a line from Fulton Street to the corner of Eastern and Sherman, opening residential development along that route.

In 1875, the Grand Rapids and Reeds Lake Railway Company constructed a horse-drawn streetcar line along Wealthy Street from downtown to facilitate the development of Reeds Lake as a recreation area. This line was funded in part by business and real estate men who wanted to further expand development along Wealthy Street.

The streetcars provided easy access to downtown, and the farms located along the line were soon replaced by houses and commercial structures. The location of subsequent street car lines along Eastern Avenue, Cherry Street, and Lake Drive in the 1880s and 1890s encouraged further development. Business districts grew along Wealthy Street, Cherry Street, and Fulton Street, providing area residents with basic needs and services within easy walking distance.

Known as the *East End*, the neighborhood became home to a wide variety of residents - builders, salesmen, business owners, railroad workers, bankers, attorneys, grocers, clerks, policemen, and teachers all made their homes here. It was the classic urban model of residential neighborhoods served by nearby business districts, with reliable mass transit to the downtown business district and other parts of the city.

The houses of East Hills exhibit the wide variety of architectural styles popular in Grand Rapids between 1860 and 1960, including Italianate, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, American Foursquare, and Midcentury Modern. There are also a number of small vernacular farmhouses dating from the 1850s and 1860s surviving amid later development. Although a few wood commercial structures dating from the 19th century remain in the business districts, those dating from the 20th century are brick with the standard feature of large tripartite storefront windows with transoms, recessed entry, and simple cornice detailing.



Wealthy Theater, 1936



D.A. Blodgett Home For Children, circa 1908

EAST HILLS HISTORY AND LEGACY

A NEW CENTURY

By the turn of the twentieth century, the area had become a lively and prosperous district that included a variety of restaurants and entertainment venues. Wealthy Street was a popular stopping point for people traveling to and from Reeds Lake, which had become a popular resort destination. In 1911, the Pastime Vaudette (now the Wealthy Theatre) opened to show vaudeville, though it soon dropped the live acts for film.

The urban development pattern began to change with the coming of the automobile. By the 1920s, gas stations began to appear on neighborhood corners and transit ridership declined. Buildings came down to make way for parking lots. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, the city used WPA money to remove the streetcar lines. Following World War II, federal housing and transportation policies, along with extensive advertising campaigns selling the “good life” of the suburbs led to the decline of all the city’s neighborhoods, including East Hills.

By the 1970s, the neighborhood showed signs of decline and abandonment. Large homes were converted into apartments, many of them owned by absentee landlords. Banks and insurance companies red-lined the area, making mortgages unavailable to those wishing to purchase homes. Tax reversion policies led to the demolition of housing. With the loss of residents and an increasing instability, many businesses along Fulton, Cherry, and Wealthy either moved or closed, leaving boarded-up storefronts. Only a few longtime businesses remained.



Wealthy Street, 1936



742 Wealthy Street, 1996



Wealthy Theater, 1998



D.A. Blodgett Home For Children, circa 2000

EAST HILLS HISTORY AND LEGACY

REVITALIZATION

In the late 1980s, neighborhood residents acted to reverse the decline and to revitalize the area using the traditional urban development model of comfortable residential streets housing a wide variety of people, with locally-owned businesses within walking distance, which would be accessible by a choice of transit options.

The designation of historic districts became an important planning tool in this revitalization effort. Designation halted the on-going demolition, which stabilized the neighborhood, as well as protected the area's greatest asset – its historic structures. This proved to be a major element in eventually convincing banks to once again provide mortgages to prospective home owners and businesses. Major efforts were made to increase the number of owner-occupants to further increase stability.



742 Wealthy Street, 2012

Some notable turning points:

- By 1991, fully a quarter of the houses in Cherry Hill were vacant and falling into disrepair. Cherry Hill residents, tired of dealing with the problems resulting from these neglected properties, organized the Cherry Hill Revitalization Project to promote the sale of the district's historic houses.
- Resident efforts led to the designation of three historic districts: Cherry Hill Historic District in 1994; the Wealthy Theater Historic District in 1997; and the Fairmount Square Historic District in 1999.
- In 1998, the \$2.5 million restoration of the Wealthy Theatre—closed since the 1970's—as a multi-cultural community arts center sparked the revitalization of the Wealthy Street business district.
- In 2005, the restoration of the D.A. Blodgett Home for Children as the ICCF headquarters sparked another renaissance on Cherry Street.



Wealthy Theater, 2012



D.A. Blodgett Home For Children (ICCF offices), 2011

EAST HILLS HISTORY AND LEGACY

Through all of these efforts, East Hills has chosen to preserve its traditional relationship to pedestrians. We have focused on being a walkable neighborhood with locally owned businesses that serve the neighborhood and have a clear relationship with the sidewalk. Historic preservation served as a key planning strategy to maintain the housing stock and to preserve the integrity of the business districts.

Today's East Hills embodies multiple legacies:

- A neighborhood of thriving commercial and residential districts from the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
- A community of diverse backgrounds and incomes comprised of renters and owners, as it was in the mid-twentieth century.
- A walkable community that values people-centered planning based on the preservation of our built environment - the key to the citizen-driven revitalization of the last 20 years.

Because of the vision held by residents and business owners more than twenty years ago, community landmarks like the Wealthy Theatre and the ICCF at the Blodgett Home for Children have been restored; well-designed new construction has filled the vacant lot at Lake Drive and Diamond and other key locations; and locally-owned businesses like Marie Catrib's and Art of the Table are now community institutions.

Today, we are reaping the rewards of the efforts of many dedicated community-builders over the last two decades.



632 Wealthy Street Before and After



Art of the Table, Wealthy Street 2010



Marie Catrib's, Cherry Street 2009

“Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.”

-Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*

PUBLIC SPACE STRATEGY

This section contains four Public Space Strategies for the East Hills Neighborhood.

These Strategies include design solutions, guidelines, best practices, and goals for reinvesting and accentuating the public spaces of East Hills in order to maintain and enhance walkability and livability within the neighborhood.

These Strategies should be used by the East Hills Council of Neighbors (EHCN), City leadership, citizens, land owners, and developers to continue and accentuate **PLACEMAKING** activities within the neighborhood.

The Public Space Strategies for the East Hills Neighborhood are:

STRATEGY ONE NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS and GREEN SPACES

The East Hills Neighborhood will have verdant and vibrant parks and green spaces that are widely accessible to the entire community and well connected to the neighborhood. These parks will be well designed with robust year-round programming, effectively making the neighborhood and its open spaces a “four-season community”.

STRATEGY TWO STREETS AS PUBLIC SPACE

The East Hills Neighborhood will be the most walkable, pedestrian/bicycle-welcoming, and environmentally-friendly neighborhood in Michigan. The neighborhood’s streets will provide multi-modal connectivity throughout the neighborhood and to other areas of the city. Neighborhood streets will provide safe, balanced facilities for pedestrian, transit, bicycle, and automobile users - with the highest priority reserved for pedestrian activity.

The streets of East Hills will be true public spaces that enrich and enliven the neighborhood.

STRATEGY THREE ADAPTIVE REUSE and NEW CONSTRUCTION

The East Hills Neighborhood will be characterized by adaptive reuse and new construction that promote walkability and high-quality urbanism through design and neighborhood-sensitive solutions.

The required quantity AND location of parking for adaptive reuse and new construction will reinforce the goals of walkable urbanism and will help to accentuate the neighborhood’s character.

STRATEGY FOUR EAST HILLS LOVES CONGRESS

We envision a first-rate neighborhood school that also serves as a seven-day a week community center, offering unique extracurricular opportunities, art and language classes for adults and children, dance and exercise classes, adult education classes, space for community meetings and gatherings, opportunities for parents with children of school age and younger to gather, and much more.

“What is the city but the people?”

-William Shakespeare, Coriolanus, Act III

HOW TO USE PUBLIC SPACE STRATEGY

The following information is provided as a guide on how to use the four Public Space Strategies within this document.

Sample pages of the Streets as Public Space Strategy are depicted with annotated explanations on the contents of each page.

Each of the four Strategies is consistent with these sample pages.

STRATEGY INTRODUCTION PAGE:

A Description frames the neighborhood's strategic goals as they relate to the specific public space.

B A list of key elements for the strategy that will help to inform future decisions and implementation for stakeholders, citizens, property owners, City staff, and the development community. These elements serve as guidelines for decision-making regarding the design, placement, use and programming of public space within the East Hills Neighborhood.

WHY THIS STRATEGY IS IMPORTANT PAGE:

C The narrative on this page describes why this specific Public Space Strategy is important to placemaking endeavors, which include the creation of a neighborhood that provides diverse living, working, playing, and shopping options for all of its residents.

The narrative serves as a basis for decision-making in terms of future investments.

D This page also typically includes a "Citizen Attitude" for the most important considerations in terms of decision-making.

STRATEGY TWO

STREETS AS PUBLIC SPACE

The East Hills Neighborhood will be the most walkable, pedestrian/bicycle-welcoming, and environmentally-friendly neighborhood in Michigan. The neighborhood's streets will provide multi-modal connectivity throughout the neighborhood and to other areas of the city. Neighborhood streets will provide safe, balanced facilities for pedestrian, transit, bicycle, and automobile users - with the highest priority reserved for pedestrian activity.

The streets of East Hills will be true public spaces that connect and enliven the neighborhood.

The Neighborhood Streets as Public Space Strategy includes the following elements:

- 1 Put People FIRST:** When decisions related to street design and performance are made, the voices and values of neighborhood residents and the people who use the streets should be given primary consideration. Additionally, decisions related to neighborhood street design should seek to accomplish slowing vehicular traffic and increasing pedestrian traffic.
- 2 Be Done in INCREMENTAL Changes:** Start a proactive initiative to change the design of neighborhood streets by incrementally adding the street attributes discussed in this strategy. Remember that the street may not be complete all at once, but attributes added over time will accomplish the overall vision. These incremental changes will increase walkability, provide balanced facilities, and enhance connectivity.
- 3 Create COMPLETE Streets:** Create and support design solutions, policies, and initiatives that make neighborhood streets multi-modal and safer for all users. These solutions should incorporate complete street policies in all design approaches for street repair, improvement and reconstruction throughout the entire network of neighborhood streets.
- 4 INCREASE Transit Infrastructure and Choice:** Collaborate with the Rapid and the City of Grand Rapids to provide more transit infrastructure (including shelters and shelters) that is contextually-sensitive to the urbanism of the neighborhood.
- 5 INCREASE Bicycle Facilities and Choice:** Collaborate with the City of Grand Rapids and the Greater Grand Rapids Bicycle Coalition (GGRBC) to increase the quality and quantity of bicycle facilities in business districts (including more bike racks and protected bike lanes).
- 6 Create OUTDOOR Rooms and Experience:** Consider the experience of the person using the street and how the walls of buildings help to make a quality experience, which will lead to increased vibrancy and safety, as well as making the neighborhood an even better place to live, work, shop, and play.
- 7 Make SAFE Streets for Everyone:** Advocate for the increase of all-way stops (as traffic control devices) and traffic calming elements (including bulb-outs and narrower travel lanes) on neighborhood streets.
- 8 Use Streets to Promote COMMERCE:** Advocate for street tree planters in business districts to protect pedestrians and increase commerce. Installation of street tree planters on commercial streets have been found to increase money spent in business districts by 12%.

EAST HILLS COUNCIL OF NEIGHBORS PUBLIC SPACE STRATEGY

STRATEGY 2: STREETS AS PUBLIC SPACE

29 June 2, 2014

STREETS AS PUBLIC SPACE

WHY THIS STRATEGY IS IMPORTANT

The largest collection of public space in the East Hills Neighborhood is represented by the neighborhood's streets. These streets are made up of commercial streets (like Wealthy, East Fulton, Cherry, Lake Drive, and Diamond) and residential streets.

The neighborhood's commercial streets typically have mixed-use storefront buildings of the sidewalk. These buildings provide transparent and permeable building walls that accentuate commerce, activity, and vibrancy along the streetscape while also providing opportunities for upper floor residential uses that help to support the street activity. These commercial streets provide the best opportunities for achieving shared use in terms of pedestrian amenities, bike facilities, and transit. The neighborhood commercial streets are places where people **LIVE, WORK, SHOP, PLAY, and MOVE** within the neighborhood.

Neighborhood residential streets typically have a collection of residential structures that include single-family homes, two-family homes, a variety of apartment buildings, and even an occasional rowhouse - all built within an urban context of compatible mass and scale. These residential streets, while primarily places for the citizens of the neighborhood, provide excellent opportunities to create shared spaces for pedestrians and bicyclists. The neighborhood residential streets are places where people **LIVE, PLAY, and MOVE** within the neighborhood.

All of the neighborhood streets provide opportunities to increase quality public space that can accommodate all types of users, without being overly wide as to prevent the sense that a person is in a neighborhood.

This accommodation of multiple users and transportation choices is often referred to as multi-modal street design or as complete streets - essentially, the creation of a **PUBLIC SPACE** that can truly be used by all of the public, as an equally shared space.

It is the intent of the East Hills Public Space Strategy to express a framework for creating streets that act as shared public space.

CITIZEN ATTITUDE TOWARD DECISION-MAKING ABOUT NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS

When making decisions regarding existing streets and new street improvements, ask the questions:

Does the decision put people first?

Does the decision benefit the citizens of East Hills?

EAST HILLS COUNCIL OF NEIGHBORS PUBLIC SPACE STRATEGY

WHY THIS STRATEGY IS IMPORTANT

June 2, 2014 30

HOW TO USE PUBLIC SPACE STRATEGY

NEIGHBORHOOD VISION AND VALUES PAGE:

E This page frames the vision and values that were generated during citizen input as part of the public outreach portion of the Public Space Strategy.

This information is depicted through photos from the neighborhood and illustrates simple themes that can help to guide future decision-making.

STRATEGY DETAIL PAGES:

The remaining pages of each strategy define and illustrate the importance of the key elements that are associated with the specific strategy.

While these pages vary slightly from strategy to strategy, they convey detailed information on design solutions, guidelines, and best practices that will aid in setting priorities and determining implementation.

The pages provide the following information:

F Across the top navigation bar, each of the key elements for the strategy is highlighted with a number that corresponds to the introduction page. These help users to quickly determine what elements they are using.

G The content of the page conveys:

- Design solutions (as in the Neighborhood Parks and Green Spaces Strategy),
- Guidelines (as in the Adaptive Reuse and New Construction Strategy), and/or
- Best practices that can be applied to neighborhood assets to achieve the goal of the Strategy.

H In the Streets as Public Space Strategy, the top navigation bar also includes an icon that references the items on that page to one of the zones of a complete street, as outlined on page 30. These icons help users to determine what part of the street they are referencing.

STREETS AS PUBLIC SPACE
VISION AND VALUES

It is essential to remember that existing streets will not change from auto-centric thoroughfares to true public space overnight. Additionally, in today's era of scaled back municipal budgets, the likelihood that an entire street can be rebuilt as one silver-bullet transformative project is slim.

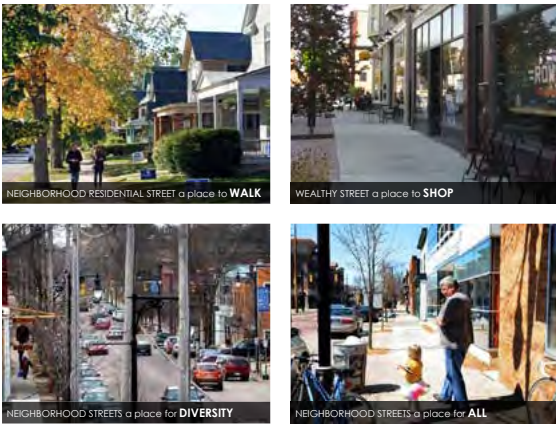
It is with this in mind that this strategy defines key attributes and best practices that, when applied both individually and collectively, begin to transform the street network into a public space that is representative of the values of a unique urban place.

THE STREET AS PUBLIC SPACE
This strategy divides the public space of a typical street into a series of zones. Each of these zones plays a key role in building a complete street and is essential to placemaking and the building of dignified places for people.

These zones include:

- The **BUILDING FRONTAGE ZONE** of the private property.
- The **WALKING and FURNISHING / TREE** the sidewalk.
- The **BIKE LANES, ON-STREET PARKING, and VEHICLE TRAVEL LANES** of the street.

Our neighborhood streets:



NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTIAL STREET a place to **WALK**

WEALTHY STREET a place to **SHOP**

NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS a place for **DIVERSITY**

NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS a place for **ALL**

EAST HILLS COUNCIL OF NEIGHBORS PUBLIC SPACE STRATEGY
VISION AND VALUES
June 2, 2014

STREETS AS PUBLIC SPACE
SIDEWALK DESIGN

F

The walking zone of the sidewalk is the area dedicated to pedestrians. Just like any travel zone it should provide a logical path of travel and be clear of all obstructions.

H The walking zone should be straight and continuous. Attempts to create meandering sidewalks usually occur because people want to walk in the most direct route possible. It should be sized to provide sufficient space for the expected pedestrian volumes, but not overly wide as to appear barren.

East Hills has two primary types of walking zones, one on commercial streets and one on residential streets. Walking zones along commercial streets should be wider than those on residential streets in order to accommodate more pedestrian activity due to the commerce that is occurring at those locations.

SIDEWALK DESIGN: WALKING ZONE WIDTH
Encourage wide sidewalks and spaces for outdoor seating at commercial frontages in order to promote commerce and activity along the street.

This commercial sidewalk example along Wealthy Street is wide enough to accommodate pedestrians and a small seating area next to the building. Care should be taken to ensure that sidewalk seating does not encroach too far into the pedestrian zone.

This pedestrian space is clear, connected, and defined by a building wall that has transparency and permeability - all hallmarks of a well designed sidewalk.



SIDEWALK DESIGN: WALKING ZONE RIGHT SIZING and MEANINGFUL CONNECTION
Encourage design of sidewalks that are sized to promote walkability and accentuate connectivity. Sidewalks should provide pedestrians space to move while providing a clear vision to the next destination, in order to get people to stroll longer in the commercial district.

This commercial sidewalk along Lake Drives is sized to accommodate pedestrians who are walking side by side, while allowing two-directional flow. This is a sign that the commercial sidewalk is sized sufficiently for expected pedestrian volumes.

G The logical path of travel follows the line of the storefront and gives visual cues to continue to the next destination.



BEST PRACTICES: HUMAN-CENTERED DESIGN SOLUTIONS
In order for sidewalks to be used to their full potential, care should be taken to consider the convenience and safety of the people that the sidewalk is intended for.

When user convenience is part of the design, then safe street crossings, accessibility to homes and businesses, and an evident, easy, and connected pedestrian route, are all essential considerations.

When safety is part of the design, then "eyes on the street" (buildings with windows facing the sidewalk) and protection from auto traffic are essential considerations.



EAST HILLS COUNCIL OF NEIGHBORS PUBLIC SPACE STRATEGY
SIDEWALK DESIGN
June 2, 2014

“We’ve got to get people out of their cars, out of those drive-thru windows, get them walking, get them in parks and get them more active.”

-Mick Cornett, Mayor Oklahoma City, OK

STRATEGY ONE

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS and GREEN SPACES

The East Hills Neighborhood will have verdant and vibrant parks and green spaces that are widely accessible to the entire community and well connected to the neighborhood. These parks will be well designed with robust year-round programming, effectively making the neighborhood and its open spaces a “four-season community”.

The **Neighborhood Parks and Green Spaces Strategy** includes the following elements:

- 1 Put People FIRST:** In decision-making related to parks programming, design of parks, and accessibility of open spaces, the voices and values of neighborhood residents and the people who use the parks should be given primary consideration.
- 2 Create a 4 SEASON community :** Increase active and passive recreation opportunities in all East Hills parks and open spaces through high quality design and effective programming.
- 3 Increase the QUALITY of Parks:** Collaborate with City staff, Friends of Grand Rapids Parks, and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to improve existing park assets, including water resources, playground equipment, courts, paths, lighting and other park infrastructure.
- 4 Increase the QUANTITY of Parks:** Collaborate with City staff, Friends of Grand Rapids Parks, the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board, property owners, and the local business community to seek opportunities for new park and open space locations that strategically position the new assets in places where the neighborhood has park deficits. Refer to the Map on page 18 to determine where the most appropriate locations are for new parks that may best serve areas with a parks deficit.
- 5 ACTIVATE Congress School Park:** Collaborate with the Grand Rapids Public Schools to find solutions that allow Congress School Park to be used by the entire community.
- 6 ADDRESS Neighborhood Parks Deficit:** Refer to the City of Grand Rapids Green Grand Rapids Master Plan and the Map on page 18 to determine where the most appropriate locations are for new parks that may best serve areas with a parks deficit.
- 7 Plant MORE TREES and Cultivate HEALTHIER TREES:** Increase tree canopy in parks, parkways, open spaces, and on private property. Seek solutions to ensure the long term health and maintenance of both existing and new trees within the neighborhood. Encourage tree planting on private property to help Grand Rapids meet its canopy goals.
- 8 De-Pave to INCREASE Green Space:** Increase the amount of neighborhood greenspace by removing pavement and eliminating surface parking lots.
- 9 Create “DO IT TOGETHER” Opportunities:** Continue and expand “Do-It-Together” projects, such as the community garden at Congress School Park, that promote and enhance a wide variety of uses within the existing park assets of the community.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS AND GREEN SPACES

WHY THIS STRATEGY IS IMPORTANT

A vital element of a great city is accessible, verdant, and vibrant parks.

Good parks provide kids with places to play, improve health, strengthen community, make the city and her neighborhoods more attractive places to live and work, and provide improved environmental performance within urban areas.

Parks have a fundamental responsibility to the social, economic, and physical well-being of cities and the citizens who live in them. These green spaces, whether large or small in size, provide relief from the intensely built environment of structures and streets, while bringing people together across social, racial, and economic divides.

East Hills is home to a wide variety of parks and open spaces that together form the most visibly recognizable public spaces within the neighborhood. These parks include Cherry Park, Congress School Park, Baldwin Park, Fulton Street Cemetery, the Fairmount Square Park, and several other green open spaces.

CITIZEN ATTITUDE TOWARD DECISION-MAKING ABOUT NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

When making decisions regarding existing park and open space facilities and new locations for parks and open space, ask the questions:

Does the decision put people first?

Does the decision benefit the citizens of East Hills?



NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS AND GREEN SPACES

VISION AND VALUES

This Strategy envisions rehabilitation, rigorous programming, and enhanced features for all neighborhood park and open spaces through design, “Do-It-Together” urbanism, and community involvement. The Strategy includes the design vision for two of the neighborhood’s parks, depicted in illustrative plans and informed by neighborhood input.

Our neighborhood parks:



The map on this page depicts the existing neighborhood parks and open spaces. The map also illustrates dashed circles that represent a 5-minute walk. These circles, often referred to as pedestrian sheds, depict a 1/4-mile radius, from center of circle to the edge of circle and represent the distance that it takes the average person to walk in 5-minutes. This walking radius is important because it shows how these open spaces are arranged within a walkable context.

In other words, how close is a neighborhood resident to a park or open space?

The map illustrates that well over half of neighborhood residents are within the pedestrian shed of the two major parks (Cherry and Congress School). This tells us two important things about the location and potential future location of neighborhood parks:

- Congress School Park, even though it is not technically a city park (but rather a Grand Rapids Public School park), is an essential open space for the people of the neighborhood. The configuration of both passive and active recreation opportunities, the rehabilitation and maintenance of the park, and the future design decisions within the park are all essential to the health and sustainability of the neighborhood. It is therefore paramount that any decisions made in regards to this park, be made in **collaboration with the neighborhood**.
- The residents near Fuller and Wealthy, along the Wealthy Street corridor, and along the Fuller Avenue corridor are not within a comfortable walk to a park. Decisions made in terms of determining the future locations of open space within the neighborhood should be informed by this deficit.



EAST HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD
EXISTING PARK AND OPEN SPACE MAP





DESIGN DIAGRAM: Congress School Park

DESIGN VISION FOR PARKS

An essential implementation step for the Grand Rapids parks millage that was passed in 2013 was to engage residents in envisioning their future neighborhood parks - for both capital improvements and for park repair and rehabilitation.

This requires a community-supported design plan for neighborhood parks.

The East Hills Council of Neighbors and their community stakeholders, in a proactive initiative, began to craft this design vision as part of this Public Space Strategy.

The Strategy includes design plans for Cherry Park and Congress School Park.

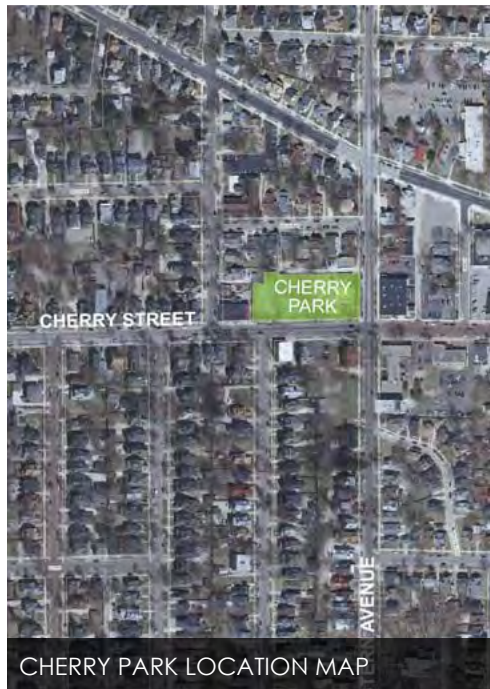
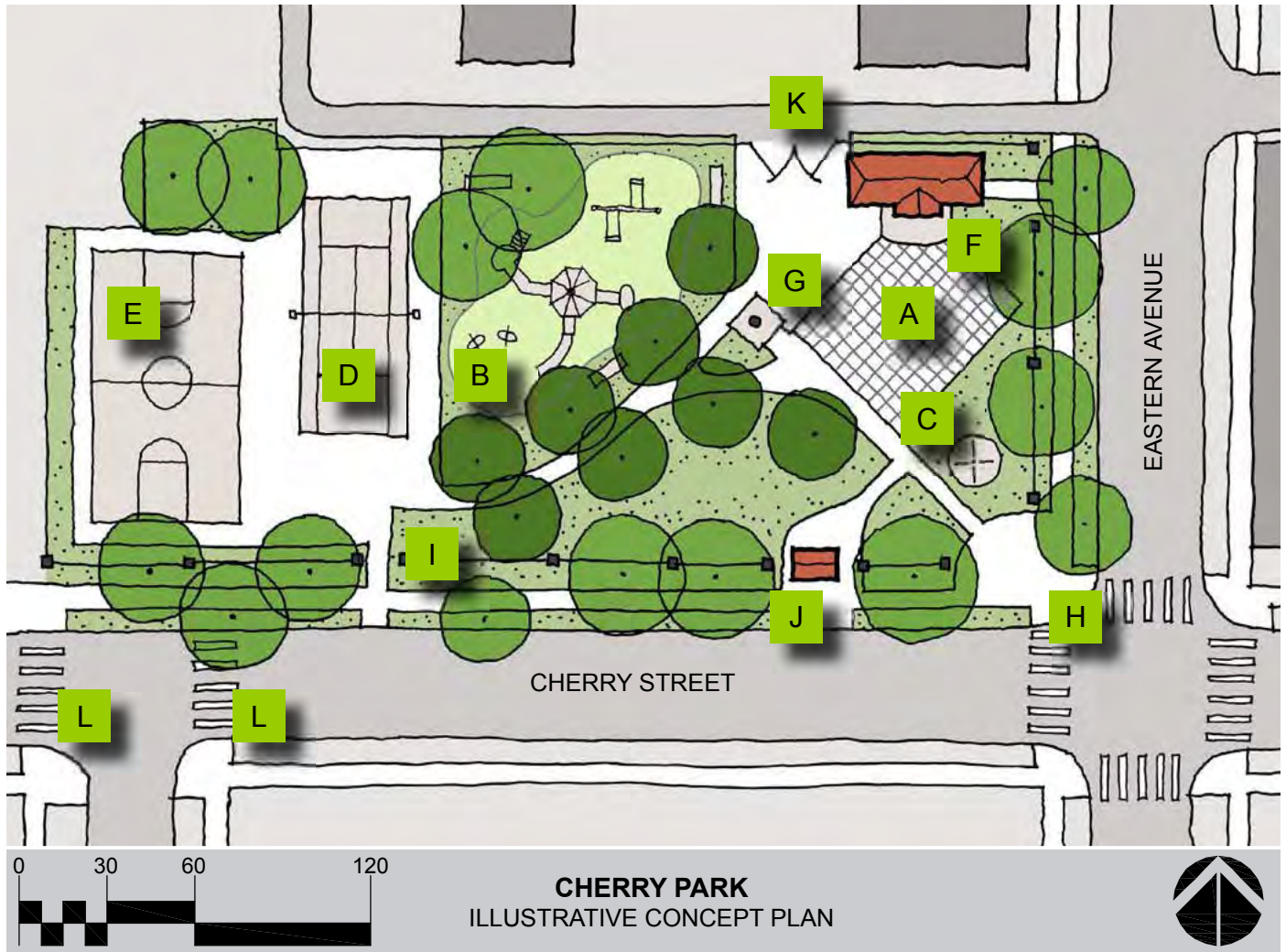
Neighbors, through public workshops, established specific design direction for both of these neighborhood parks.

As part of capturing neighborhood ideas, design diagrams were created that conveyed the general vision for each park. These diagrams are illustrated on this page.

Subsequent illustrative concept plans were then generated to depict the specific design of each neighborhood park. These plans are on the following pages and illustrate the design, improvements, and features for each park.



DESIGN DIAGRAM: Cherry Park



- A** New water feature that can be used during the winter months as an ice-skating rink. Water feature surface may also be used as a plaza.
- B** Reconfigure existing playgrounds to incorporate new and / or repaired equipment and combine the existing two playgrounds into one location.
- C** Keep existing merry-go-round in current location.
- D** Repair or replace existing tennis court and keep court in its current location.
- E** Repair or replace existing basketball court and keep court in its current location.
- F** Repair and update the existing park building and incorporate an outdoor stage adjacent to the building. Seating for stage may occur in the plaza / water feature area.
- G** Install public art that serves as a terminal vista along the entry access. Seating shall be incorporated around the art.
- H** Relocate main entry of the park to the Cherry / Eastern street corner. Entry area may have a decorative paved surface that differentiates it from the sidewalks and delineates it as a plaza space.
- I** Replace existing chain link perimeter fence with a decorative fence that is sensitive to the context of the neighborhood. Place new fence closer to sidewalk than the existing fence location to reclaim park land.
- J** Install a new covered bus stop that is sensitive to the context of the neighborhood and incorporated into the park and streetscape.
- K** Service access to park shall be from alley.
- L** Consider appropriate locations for crosswalks to connect park to people. Refer to Streets as Public Space Strategy.

GENERAL PARK ATTRIBUTES AND IMPROVEMENTS

More bicycle racks shall be added to the park and located appropriately for access.

Provide benches, trash receptacles, and other amenities within the park.


Install a neighborhood wayfinding sign in a strategic location within the park.

Provide lending library within park space.

PARK TREES (STRATEGY ELEMENT #7)

The tree canopy in neighborhood parks is essential and should be maintained and increased in order to provide shade and increase environmental performance.

 Existing trees (depicted as light green) shall be maintained and incorporated into the design.

 New trees (depicted as dark green) shall be planted as part of redesign and reconstruction activities.

A WATER FEATURE

Water features are more economically and environmentally sustainable than pools or wading pools because of water usage, maintenance and supervision costs. Additionally, incorporating recessed water jets (in lieu of projecting water spouts that extend beyond the paved surface) allow water features to be used during winter months as an ice-skating rink. This dual use effectively helps to make parks four-season public spaces.



E STAGE AND PLAZA

Small outdoor stages or amphitheatres permit public spaces to serve multiple functions while also activating the space.

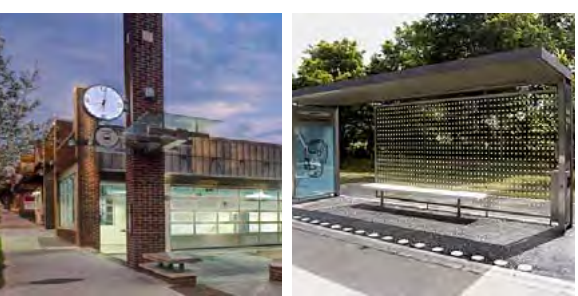
Plaza space, when appropriately scaled can provide a public gathering space, outdoor seating, passive outdoor spaces for contemplation and active places for discourse or events.

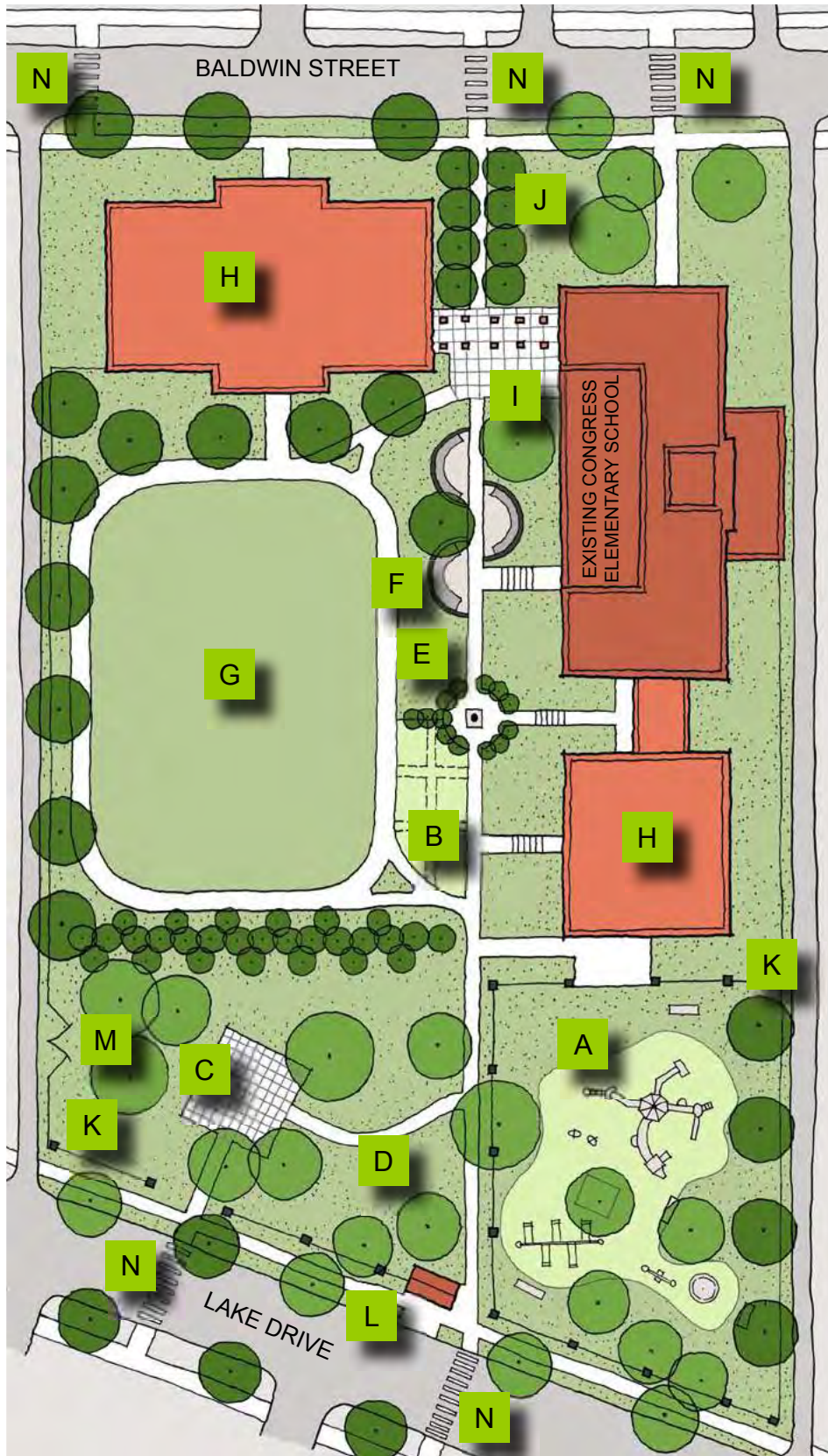


I CONTEXT SENSITIVE BUS STOPS

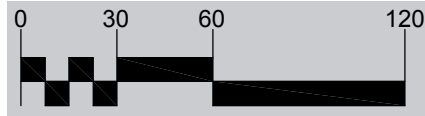
East Hills currently has a unique and contextually sensitive bus stop at the Cherry, Lake, and Diamond intersection (not shown).

Integrated and sensitively designed bus stops (similar to the one at Fulton Street Farmers Market - below, left image) can be neighborhood gateways that help to identify East Hills as a unique place.





CONGRESS SCHOOL PARK LOCATION MAP



CONGRESS SCHOOL PARK
ILLUSTRATIVE CONCEPT PLAN



- A** Reconfigure existing playground to incorporate new and / or repaired equipment.
- B** Community gardens to remain in existing location.
- C** New community gathering space with plaza and seating. Space may be used as a passive recreation area.
- D** New community activity space for active recreation (including possible location for chess tables, ping-pong tables, etc).
- E** Install public art that serves as a terminal vista along the entry access. Seating shall be incorporated around the art.
- F** Outdoor classrooms as extensions of the learning environment for the elementary school.
- G** Open space that can serve as soccer field or multi-use play field with a track around its perimeter.
- H** Future school expansion locations shall be consistent with historic standards and guidelines. Use these future building sites to help frame the outdoor space of the campus and park.
- I** Plaza space with open-air colonnade connector to act as northern gateway into the campus and outdoor space
- J** Allee (walkway lined with trees or shrubs) to accentuate the promenade into the northern entry of campus.
- K** Replace existing chain link perimeter fence (and playground fence) with a decorative fence that is sensitive to the context of the neighborhood.
- L** Install a new covered bus stop that is sensitive to the context of the neighborhood and incorporated into school site and streetscape.
- M** Service access to park shall be from alley through double width gate at new fence.
- N** Consider appropriate locations for crosswalks to connect park to people. Refer to Streets as Public Space Strategy.

GENERAL PARK ATTRIBUTES AND IMPROVEMENTS

More bicycle racks shall be added to the park and located appropriately for access.

PARK TREES (STRATEGY ELEMENT #7)

The tree canopy in neighborhood parks is essential and should be maintained and increased in order to provide shade and increase environmental performance.



Existing trees (depicted as light green) shall be maintained and incorporated into the design.



New trees (depicted as dark green) shall be planted as part of redesign and reconstruction activities.

F OUTDOOR CLASS ROOMS

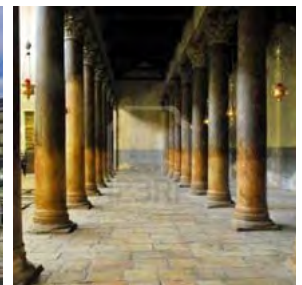
An outdoor classroom intends to give children the opportunity to have an alternative educational experience outdoors. These outdoor venues increase the quantity and quality of the educational experience and help to provide children with a more meaningful connection to their environment.



I COLONNADE

A colonnade, or long sequence of columns, helps to define space while offering the ability to create thresholds into spaces, buildings, and parks.

On the Congress School Park plan, the colonnade is envisioned to connect the existing school to a potential expansion, while also providing a physical edge and a threshold into the park space.



J ALLEE

An allee is a pedestrian walkway that is lined on both sides with canopy trees. These trees help to define unique pedestrian space.

The uniform and straight alignment of the allee allows for a the definition of a formal entry, arrival, or threshold into a feature.



THE IMPORTANCE OF NEIGHBORHOOD TREES

Trees are a critical component of both public spaces and private property in East Hills. In our parks, parkways, and parking lots, our residential properties and neighborhood business districts, trees are crucial to our neighborhood's quality of life, environment, economic vitality, and sustainability.

East Hills is committed to maintaining and enhancing its tree canopy because:

1 TREES INCREASE LIVABILITY: Shade from mature trees makes our streets more walkable and bikable, parks more desirable outdoor activity spaces, and yards more inviting.



2012 Arbor Day Tree of the Year, Wealthy Street

2 TREES INCREASE PROPERTY VALUES: Studies indicate when single properties, streets, or neighborhoods have a healthy and mature tree canopy that the values and desirability of the homes and businesses increase.

83% of realtors believe that mature trees have a 'strong or moderate impact' on the salability of homes listed for under \$150,000; on homes over \$250,000, this perception increases to 98%.

Arbor National Mortgage & American Forests

Healthy, mature trees add an average of 10 percent to a property's value.

USDA Forest Service

Landscaping, especially with trees, can increase property values as much as 20 percent.

Management Information Services/ICMA



- 3 TREES PROMOTE VIBRANT COMMERCE:** Trees in business districts provide a competitive edge, drawing more customers and encouraging them to stay longer.

Trees can be a stimulus to economic development, attracting new business and tourism. Commercial retail areas are more attractive to shoppers, apartments rent more quickly, tenants stay longer, and space in a wooded setting is more valuable to sell or rent.

The Arbor Day Foundation



- 4 TREES INCREASE WATER QUALITY:** Trees reduce stormwater runoff, improving water quality and reducing flood hazard.



The planting of trees means improved water quality, resulting in less runoff and erosion. This allows more recharging of the ground water supply. Wooded areas help prevent the transport of sediment and chemicals into streams.

USDA Forest Service

- 5 TREES IMPROVE THE ENVIRONMENT :** Trees reduce heat islands and air pollution.

Trees properly placed around buildings can reduce air conditioning needs by 30 percent and can save 20–50 percent in energy used for heating.

USDA Forest Service

One acre of forest absorbs six tons of carbon dioxide and puts out four tons of oxygen. This is enough to meet the annual needs of 18 people.

U.S. Department of Agriculture

6 **TREES PROVIDE HABITAT FOR WILDLIFE:** Urban wildlife habitat can promote connectivity within urban landscapes, serve as a refuge for species impacted by urbanization, and deliver valuable ecosystem services to support dense urban populations.



7 **TREES CONNECT US TO NATURE:** In a dense urban environment, trees provide a much-needed connection to nature.

In laboratory research, visual exposure to settings with trees has produced significant recovery from stress within five minutes, as indicated by changes in blood pressure and muscle tension.

Dr. Roger S. Ulrich Texas A&M University





East Hills' urban forest is a valuable green infrastructure asset—an asset that actually increases in value over time. To protect this asset, we support and promote:

- **Preservation** of mature trees (which provide more than 70 times the benefits of young trees).
- Tree planting in **public spaces** and on **private property**.
- **Community involvement** in our urban forest, from advocacy to hands-on tree planting, watering and maintenance.

PRESERVATION OF MATURE STREET TREES



TREE PLANTING IN PUBLIC SPACES



TREE PLANTING ON PRIVATE PROPERTY



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: VOLUNTEERS PLANTING TREES AT FRIENDS OF GRAND RAPIDS PARKS EVENT



“The street is the river of life, the place where we come together, the pathway to the center.”

-William H. Whyte

STRATEGY TWO

STREETS AS PUBLIC SPACE

The East Hills Neighborhood will be the most walkable, pedestrian/bicycle-welcoming, and environmentally-friendly neighborhood in Michigan. The neighborhood's streets will provide multi-modal connectivity throughout the neighborhood and to other areas of the city. Neighborhood streets will provide safe, balanced facilities for pedestrian, transit, bicycle, and automobile users - with the highest priority reserved for pedestrian activity.

The streets of East Hills will be true public spaces that enrich and enliven the neighborhood.

The **Neighborhood Streets as Public Space Strategy** includes the following elements:

- 1 Put People FIRST:** When decisions related to street design and performance are made, the voices and values of neighborhood residents and the people who use the streets should be given primary consideration. Additionally, decisions related to neighborhood street design should seek to accomplish slowing vehicular traffic and increasing pedestrian traffic.
- 2 Be Done in INCREMENTAL Changes:** Start a proactive initiative to change the design of neighborhood streets by incrementally adding the street attributes discussed in this strategy. Remember that the street may not be complete all at once, but attributes added over time will accomplish the overall vision. These incremental changes will increase walkability, provide balanced facilities, and enhance connectivity.
- 3 Create COMPLETE Streets:** Create and support design solutions, policies, and initiatives that make neighborhood streets multi-modal and safer for all users. These solutions should incorporate complete street policies in all design approaches for street repair, improvement and reconstruction throughout the entire network of neighborhood streets.
- 4 INCREASE Transit Infrastructure and Choice:** Collaborate with the Rapid and the City of Grand Rapids to provide more transit infrastructure (including signs and shelters) that is contextually-sensitive to the urbanism of the neighborhood.
- 5 INCREASE Bicycle Facilities and Choice:** Collaborate with the City of Grand Rapids and the Greater Grand Rapids Bicycle Coalition (GGRBC) to increase the quality and quantity of bicycle facilities in business districts (including more bike racks and protected bike lanes).
- 6 Create OUTDOOR Rooms and Experience:** Consider the experience of the person using the street and how the walls of buildings help to make a quality experience, which will lead to increased vibrancy and safety, as well as making the neighborhood an even better place to live, work, shop, and play.
- 7 Make SAFE Streets for Everyone:** Advocate for the increase of all-way stops (as traffic control devices) and traffic calming elements (including bulb-outs and narrower travel lanes) on neighborhood streets.
- 8 Use Streets to Promote COMMERCE:** Advocate for street to planters in business districts to protect pedestrians and increase commerce. Installation of street tree planters on commercial streets have been found to increase money spent in business districts by 12%.

STREETS AS PUBLIC SPACE

WHY THIS STRATEGY IS IMPORTANT

The largest collection of public space in the East Hills Neighborhood is represented by the neighborhood's streets. These streets are made up of commercial streets (like Wealthy, East Fulton, Cherry, Lake Drive, and Diamond) and residential streets.

The neighborhood's commercial streets typically have mixed-use storefront buildings at the sidewalk. These buildings provide transparent and permeable building walls that accentuate commerce, activity, and vibrancy along the streetscape while also providing opportunities for upper floor residential uses that help to support the street activity. These commercial streets provide the best opportunities for achieving shared use in terms of pedestrian amenities, bike facilities, and transit. The neighborhood commercial streets are places where people **LIVE, WORK, SHOP, PLAY,** and **MOVE** within the neighborhood.

Neighborhood residential streets typically have a collection of residential structures that include single-family homes, two-family homes, a variety of apartment types, and even an occasional rowhouse - all built within an urban context of compatible mass and scale. These streets, while primarily places for the citizens of the neighborhood, provide excellent opportunities to increase shared spaces for pedestrians and bicyclists. The neighborhood residential streets are places where people **LIVE, PLAY,** and **MOVE** within the neighborhood.

All of the neighborhood streets provide opportunities to increase quality public space that can accommodate all types of users, without being overly wide as to prevent the sense that a person is in a neighborhood.

This accommodation of multiple users and transportation choices is often referred to as multi-modal street design or as complete streets - essentially, the creation of a **PUBLIC SPACE** that can truly be used by all of the public, as an equally shared space.

It is the intent of the East Hills Public Space Strategy to express a framework for creating streets that act as shared public space.

CITIZEN ATTITUDE TOWARD DECISION-MAKING ABOUT NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS

When making decisions regarding existing streets and new street improvements, ask the questions:

Does the decision put people first?

Does the decision benefit the citizens of East Hills?



It is essential to remember that existing streets will not change from auto-centric thoroughfares to true public space overnight. Additionally, in today's era of scaled back municipal budgets, the likelihood that an entire street can be rebuilt as one silver-bullet transformative project is slim.

It is with this in mind that this strategy defines key attributes and best practices that, when applied both individually and collectively, begin to transform the street network into a public space that is representative of the values of a unique urban place.

THE STREET AS PUBLIC SPACE

This strategy divides the public space of a typical street into a series of zones. Each of these zones plays a key role in building a complete street and is essential to placemaking and the building of dignified places for people.

These zones include:

- The **BUILDING FRONTAGE ZONE** of the adjacent private property.
- The **WALKING** and **FURNISHING / TREE ZONES** of the sidewalk.
- The **BIKE LANES**, **ON-STREET PARKING**, and **VEHICLE TRAVEL LANES** of the street.

Our neighborhood streets:



“Forget the damned motor car and build cities for lovers and friends.”

-Lewis Mumford

PEOPLE FIRST

Neighborhood street design shall consider the safety, comfort, and convenience of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and motor vehicle drivers. Balance in all types of transportation and development of transportation infrastructure shall accommodate all users, so that even the most vulnerable – children, elderly, and persons with disabilities – can use and travel safely within the public right-of-way.

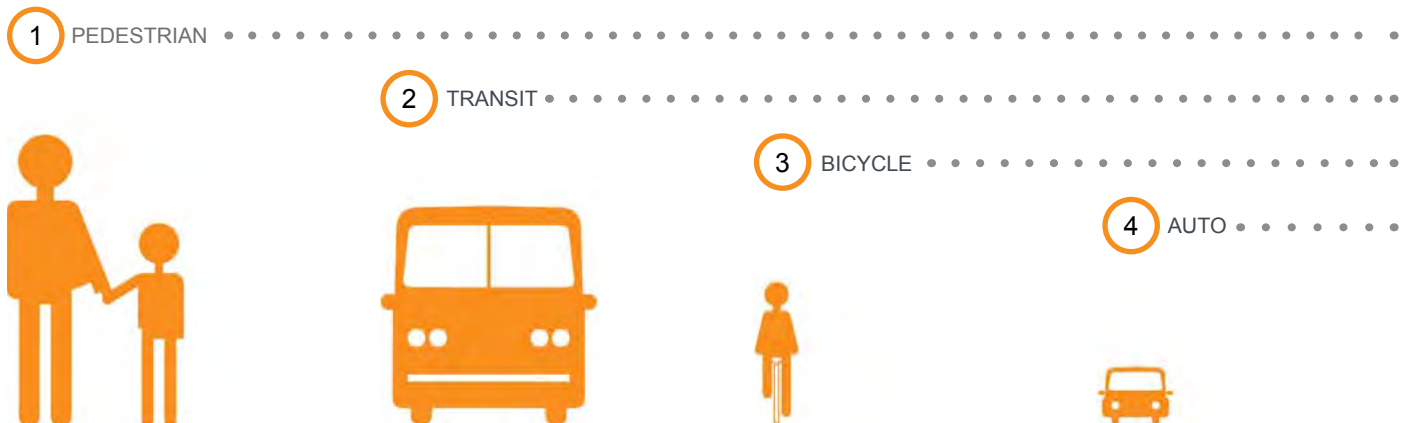
This paradigm will balance neighborhood streets and make them more “complete.” In addition, street design will be conducted in a manner that supports the neighborhood’s urban context and modal priorities while not being limited by rigid engineering standards. This will allow the development of innovative solutions that meet the over-arching goal of a complete street.

To create these complete streets, East Hills Council of Neighbors has adopted a **pedestrian-first policy** that establishes a modal hierarchy.

All transportation projects and programs, from design to implementation to maintenance, will favor pedestrians first, then transit riders, cyclists, and finally, automobiles. (Refer to figure below).

This inversion of the dominant, auto-based paradigm will allow the neighborhood’s transportation network to grow safely, sustainably and equitably into the 21st Century.

PEDESTRIAN FIRST MODAL HIERARCHY



WHAT IS A COMPLETE STREET?

The streets of our cities, towns, and neighborhoods are an important part of the livability of these communities. They are public spaces for everyone, whether young or old, motorist or bicyclist, walker or wheelchair user, bus rider or shopkeeper.

Too many of our streets are designed only for speeding cars, or worse, creeping traffic jams.

The complete streets movement is the planning, design, and operation to create and maintain a street network that is safer, more livable, and welcoming to **everyone**.



Complete streets are roadways designed and operated to enable safe, attractive, and comfortable access and travel for all users (of all ages and abilities), including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and public transportation riders. Complete streets improve safety, lower transportation costs, provide alternatives to private cars, encourage health through walking and biking, create a sense of place, improve social interaction, and generally improve adjacent property values.

Building Complete Streets directly benefits the following **PEOPLE**:



CHILDREN:

Complete streets provide children with opportunities to walk, bike and play in a safe environment. More children are likely to walk or bike to school when sidewalks or footpaths are present, when there are safe street crossings, and when school zones enforce a reduced vehicle speed. Streets that provide dedicated space for bicycling and walking help kids get physical activity and gain independence.



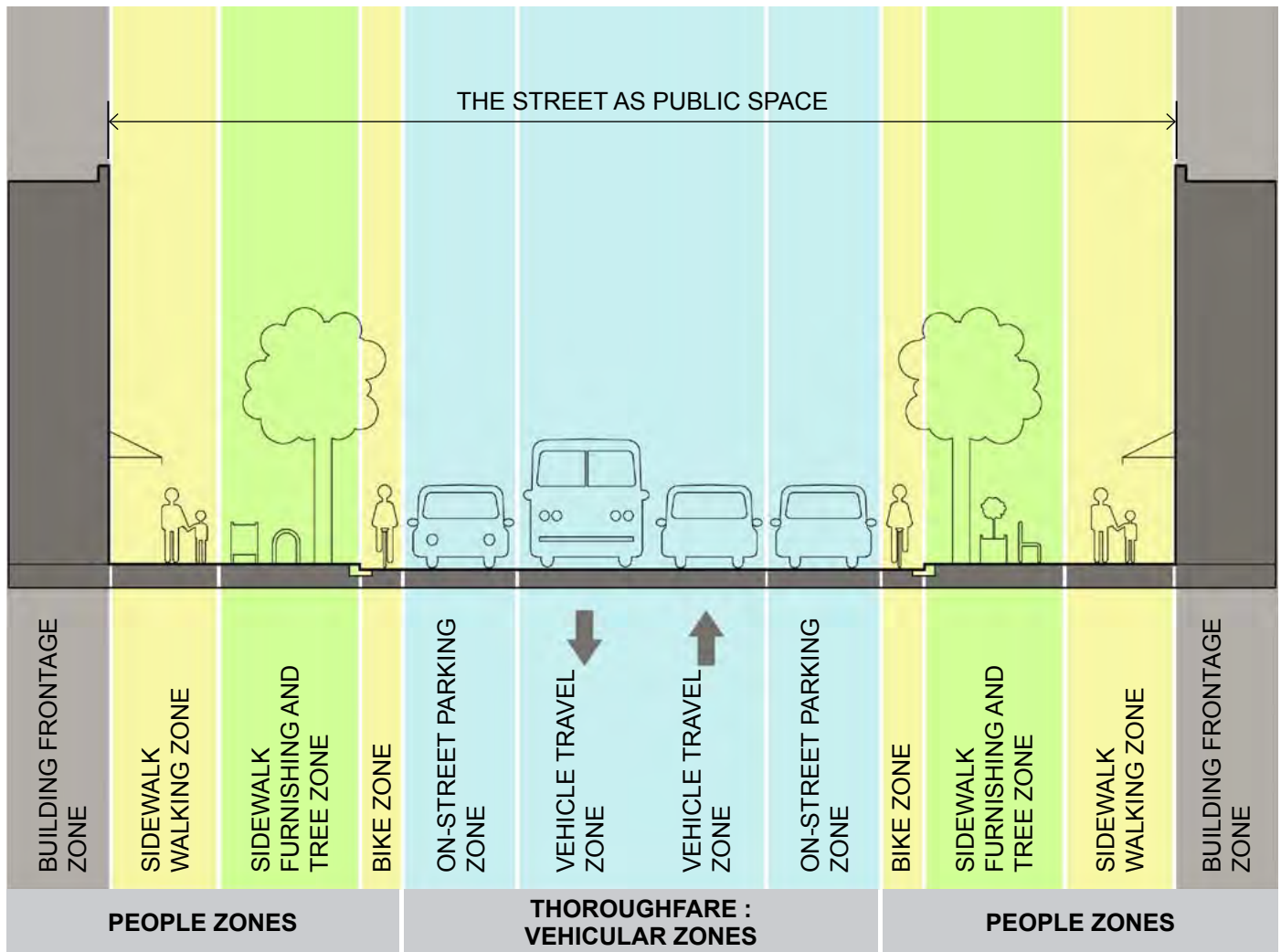
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES:

Streets that are truly “complete” provide all of us with a choice of mobility options. They allow everyone to travel to and from work, school, and other destinations with the same level of safety and convenience, whether or not they have mobility, vision, or cognitive disabilities. Complete streets also help people who are coping with temporary disabilities as well as those pushing strollers, pulling wheeled luggage, or managing large packages.



OLDER ADULTS:

Complete streets policies offer the opportunity to improve travel options of people of all ages. Planning, designing, and building streets with all users in mind will provide older adults a variety of options for getting around, whether walking, taking public transportation, or sharing rides with family and friends.



ZONES OF A COMPLETE STREET

Since streets are the neighborhood's largest collection of public space, they need to be treated as an important part of this Public Space Strategy. Understanding the essential components that make up a complete street will help citizens and decision-makers alike usher in a new and enhanced public realm that serves a true multi-modal capacity.

The diagram above depicts a cross section of the zones that make up a multi-modal, people-centered street. Each of these zones contain attributes that, when combined, can reshape and repurpose the street into a true public space.

The following pages of this strategy highlight each of these zones and related attributes that can be used to build a more meaningful public realm and generate key placemaking initiatives within the neighborhood.

ZONES OF A COMPLETE STREET (refer to diagram on facing page)



Building Frontage Zone - One of the key parts of creating vibrant public space is to think of the space as an outdoor room that provides a dignified place for people to live, work, play, shop, learn, and move. These outdoor rooms are defined by the buildings that frame them like walls, while also providing a transparent and permeable edge that adds to the vibrancy of the public space. More information about building frontages is in the Adaptive Re-Use and New Construction Strategy.



Sidewalk Walking Zone - This area of the sidewalk is reserved for people walking to and from destinations and places of commerce. It is typically adjacent to buildings on commercial streets and provides the primary pedestrian connection between blocks and buildings. Sidewalk walking zones are connected between blocks by a network of crosswalks.



Sidewalk Furnishing and Tree Zone - Typical on commercial streets, this area of the sidewalk is between the pedestrian walkway and the roadway. It is a highly flexible area which contains elements that can be used by all modes. This area can include space for street trees and landscaping, bicycle parking facilities, seating areas, benches, street lights, and sandwich board signs.



Bike Zone - An important element to any street is how it balances the needs of multi-modal transportation. Bike lanes and sharrows (shared lanes) provide travel lanes in the thoroughfare for bicycles. Locating and designing these facilities is often a difficult challenge in street design because cyclists can operate like both pedestrians and automobiles. A high quality street will, when possible, separate cyclists from both automobiles and pedestrians.



On-street Parking Zone - On-street parking is essential to commercial streets where retail activity relies on its convenience to provide necessary parking in front of businesses. On all streets, on-street parking provides an essential buffer between pedestrians and vehicular traffic, which makes the street safer for those walking on the sidewalk. On-street parking also effectively slows street traffic because it can make the travel lanes narrower and adds a layer of complexity to the roadway.



Vehicle Travel Zone - The travel lanes of commercial and residential streets, which are primarily spaces for automobiles and transit, require careful scrutiny in balancing the travel lane width. The narrower the travel lane width, the slower vehicular traffic is likely to move, resulting in streets that are better and safer for pedestrian activity.

UNDERSTANDING THE ATTRIBUTES & BEST PRACTICES OF EACH OF THE ZONES

The following pages of the Streets as Public Space Strategy will highlight the zones and related attributes that make up a complete street.

The icons that are depicted on the right hand side of the descriptions above will be used throughout the remainder of this chapter to help categorize where on the street it is most appropriate to apply specific attributes.



The walking zone of the sidewalk is the area dedicated to pedestrians. Just like any travel lane, it should provide a logical path of travel and be clear of all obstructions.

The walking zone should be straight and continuous. Attempts to create meandering sidewalks usually fail because people want to walk in the most direct route possible. It should be sized to provide sufficient space for the expected pedestrian volumes, but not overly wide as to appear barren.

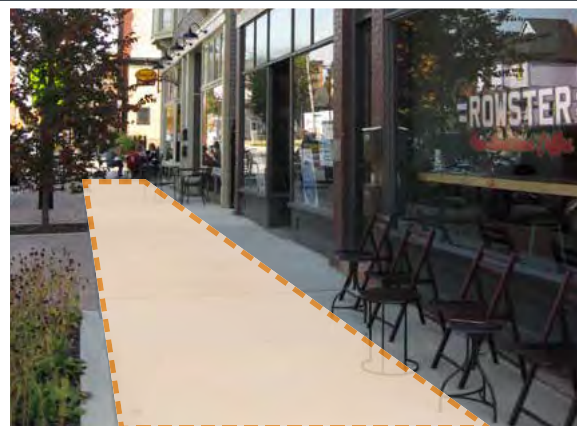
East Hills has two primary types of walking zones, one on commercial streets and one on residential streets. Walking zones along commercial streets should be wider than those on residential streets in order to accommodate more pedestrian activity due to the commerce that is occurring at those locations.

SIDEWALK DESIGN: WALKING ZONE WIDTH

Encourage wide sidewalks and spaces for outdoor seating at commercial frontages in order to promote commerce and activity along the street.

This commercial sidewalk example along Wealthy Street is wide enough to accommodate pedestrians and a small seating area next to the building. Care should be taken to ensure that sidewalk seating does not encroach too far into the pedestrian zone.

This pedestrian space is clear, connected, and defined by a building wall that has transparency and permeability - all hallmarks of a well designed sidewalk.



SIDEWALK DESIGN: WALKING ZONE RIGHT SIZING and MEANINGFUL CONNECTION

Encourage design of sidewalks that are sized to promote walkability and accentuate connectivity. Sidewalks should provide pedestrians space to move while providing a clear vision to the next destination, in order to get people to stroll longer in the commercial district.

This commercial sidewalk along Lake Drive is sized to accommodate pedestrians who are walking side by side, while also still allowing two-directional flow. This is a sign that the commercial sidewalk is sized sufficiently for expected pedestrian volumes.

The logical path of travel follows the line of the storefront and gives visual cues to continue to the next destination.



BEST PRACTICES: HUMAN-CENTERED DESIGN SOLUTIONS

In order for sidewalks to be used to their full potential, care should be taken to consider the convenience and safety of the people that the sidewalk is intended for.

When user convenience is part of the design, then safe street crossings, accessibility to homes and businesses, and an evident, easy, and connected pedestrian route, are all essential considerations.

When safety is part of the design, then "eyes on the street" (buildings with windows facing the sidewalk) and protection from auto traffic are essential considerations.





Walks are far more fulfilling, more likely to occur, and even more likely to continue, if there are interesting things (and people) to look at. Having interesting activities and people in a public space will increase the activity and the number of people in the space. It will also typically lead to another recent measure of the quality of a public space - whether or not it is a "sitabile" place.

Blank walls, empty spaces, parking lots, and non-active uses within the buildings at the street level are major detractors of creating a desire to walk (or sit). While specific building development will be addressed in the Adaptive Re-Use and New Construction Strategy, it is important to remember that the quality of the sidewalk walking zone is impacted by the quality of the building frontage zone that typically defines one of its edges.

SIDEWALK EXPERIENCE: TRANSPARENCY and PERMEABILITY



Mandate retail uses along the building frontage zones on commercial streets within the neighborhood.

Retail frontages provide activity along the sidewalk and promote building walls that have transparency (through clear glass storefronts) and permeability (via doors at the sidewalk). This transparency and permeability gives people opportunity to access and engage retail spaces and provides for more vibrancy at the sidewalk.

Note that the landscape area and seating area (on the right side of the image) also provide an edge to the walking zone, which effectively aid in defining the space.

SIDEWALK EXPERIENCE: INTERESTING FRONTAGES



Storefronts along Cherry Street provide a compelling walking experience as people stroll between destinations.

Each of these building frontages provides visual cues to continue the walk and gives the opportunity to pedestrians to casually look into windows and go into places of commerce. The lack of blank walls and empty spaces allow for a more complete experience.

In situations where retail uses can not be accomplished, advocate for a storefront that can temporarily house the non-retail use and permit a retail function in the future when it becomes viable. This form-based scenario will more easily permit future incremental redevelopment.

SIDEWALK EXPERIENCE: SAFETY and COMFORT



Sidewalks are for pedestrians. The comfort and safety of people walking on the sidewalk is important to promote walking, shopping, and vibrancy within the complete street design.

Because of the scale and design speeds related to the various zones of a complete street, riding a bicycle on the sidewalk (the pedestrian zone) should be strongly discouraged. When people walking do not have to worry about conflicts with faster moving bikes, their comfort and safety will increase, and they will be more likely to actively use the sidewalk.

Consider creating a stencil that can be used to paint the sidewalk with a "no bike zone" or "walk your bike" marking, which will clearly delineate the pedestrian zone.



STREETS AS PUBLIC SPACE

CROSSWALK DESIGN AND LOCATION



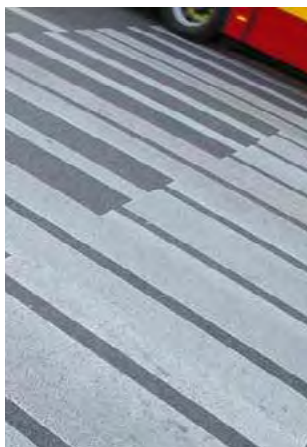
Marked crosswalks are most often located at intersections, and may be delineated by a variety of patterns. These patterns, which serve to mark the extension of the walking zone into the street area, provide visual cues to both pedestrian and drivers that this area is a shared space. While marked crosswalks will typically be placed at intersections, mid-block locations may be warranted when safety of schoolchildren and elderly users is present, along evident "desire lines", and at existing uses that generate more pedestrian traffic.

The pattern of crosswalks, while typically a standard set of white bars (often referred to as "a ladder stripe"), can also be treated in a more creative fashion - while accomplishing the same safety goals. As the images on this page illustrate, crosswalks can become forms of street art and markers of neighborhood identity.

Consider creating an East Hills neighborhood specific crosswalk pattern (or multiple patterns) as a public art competition that would generate awareness to the importance of complete streets and pedestrian activity within neighborhood streets. These crosswalk patterns can be a feature that helps to brand and identify the neighborhood and may also act as gateways.

CROSSWALK DESIGN

Consider creating an East Hills neighborhood specific crosswalk pattern (or multiple patterns) as a public art competition that would generate awareness to the importance of complete streets and pedestrian activity within neighborhood streets. These crosswalk patterns can be a feature that helps to brand and identify the neighborhood and may also act as gateways.



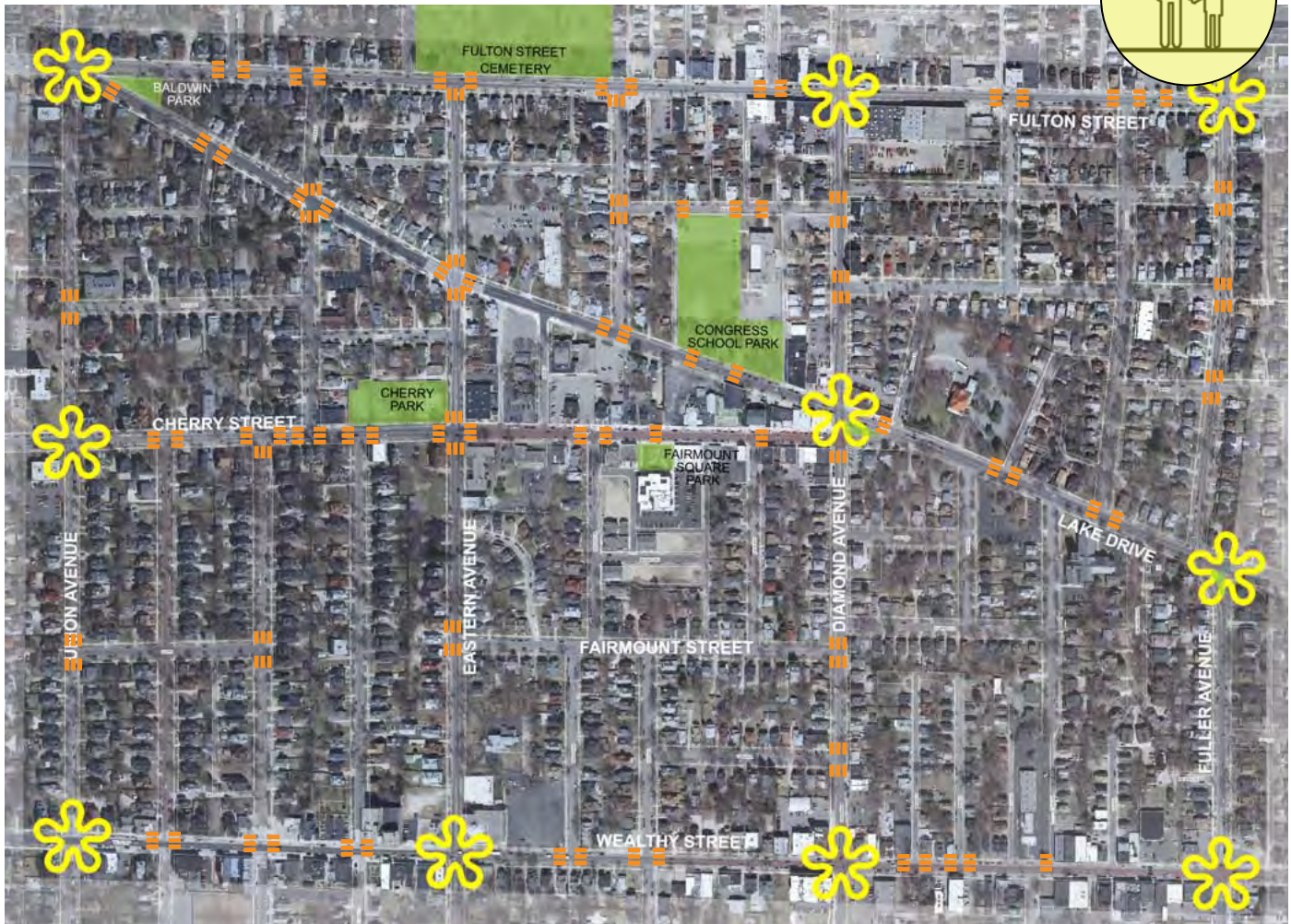
CROSSWALK LOCATION



Advocate for the placement of crosswalks that encourage pedestrian activity between blocks. This includes locations at existing intersections and also at appropriate mid-block locations where school children may be crossing and where adjacent uses create more pedestrian traffic (this is often referred to placing crosswalks along "desire lines").

At areas where desire lines are present, crosswalks every 400 to 500 feet should be considered.

Refer to map to the right for an illustration of key locations for crosswalks. Note that some crosswalks depicted on map may currently exist.



EAST HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD CROSSWALK STRATEGY ILLUSTRATIVE:

Crosswalk locations at intersections, every 400 to 500 feet at key locations, and along “desire lines” where adjacent uses and pedestrian safety warrant placement.



Crosswalks at neighborhood gateway locations. Crosswalks at these gateway locations shall help to identify the East Hills Neighborhood through pattern design.



Crosswalks at neighborhood intersections along commercial streets and major through streets to promote pedestrian connectivity and provide safe access for schoolchildren.

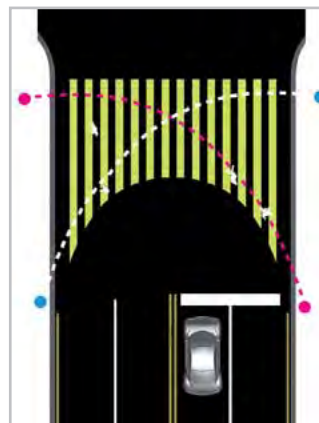
BEST PRACTICES: HUMAN CENTERED DESIGN SOLUTIONS

Designer Jae Min Lim developed the “ergo crosswalk,” highlighted in the 2010 Seoul Design Fair. His inspiration? The jaywalkers who cross streets by taking the fastest possible route from one side to the other. Lim says, “if regulations cannot force people to follow the law, wouldn’t it be more reasonable to change the law and fulfill the main purpose of keeping the safety and convenience of the pedestrian?”

The design allows pedestrians to literally dominate the intersection, for at least a short period of time.

This idea mimics the urban planning philosophies that recognize how people move across space in ways that are convenient, safe, in dialogue with the urban landscape, and bring life to streets.

Lim’s “Ergonomic” crosswalk photo via designboom.com





STREETS AS PUBLIC SPACE SIDEWALK FURNISHING ZONE



The sidewalk furnishing zone is located between the curb and walking zone, and contains items such as street trees, planters, bus shelters, bike racks, benches, outdoor seating, lamp posts, signs, waste receptacles and parking meters.

Placing these items in this zone keeps the walking zone free of obstructions. This zone is often landscaped in residential neighborhoods and provides some level of separation between people on the sidewalk and the adjacent moving traffic within the thoroughfare.

FURNISHING ZONE: BALANCED ACTIVITY AND USE

Advocate for continued design and placement of furnishing zones that provide space for a variety of amenities that support balanced activity for people using the street.

This commercial sidewalk on Cherry Street contains bike racks, sandwich board signs for local business activities, planters and street trees.

These elements help to promote the activity and multi-modal features of the public space and support continued activity within the space, without getting in the way of pedestrian movement connectivity.



FURNISHING ZONE: BUFFER FOR SAFETY OF PEOPLE

Different view of the same furnishing zone on Cherry Street that depicts how the space is delineated from the walking zone through landscape planters and trees.

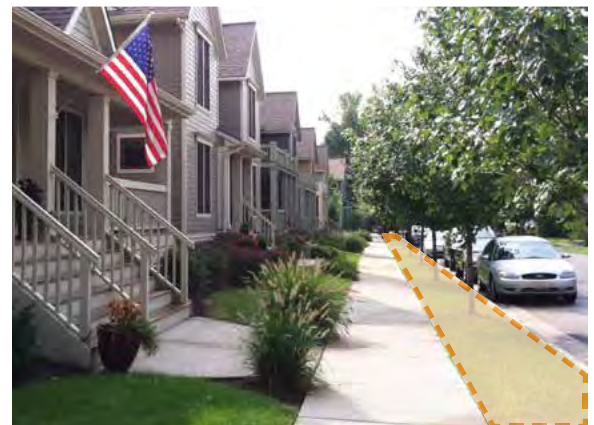
This extra space and the trees and landscaping, when combined with the on-street parking, provide a physical buffer between pedestrians and street traffic, effectively increasing safety (both real and perceived) and enhancing the pedestrian experience.



FURNISHING ZONE: ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Promote and advocate for the aggressive planting and continued maintenance of street trees in all furnishing zones on both commercial and residential streets in the East Hills Neighborhood.

This residential furnishing zone, sometimes referred to as a parkway, provides trees and landscaping. This more naturalized treatment provides opportunities to better achieve environmental sustainability because the trees and landscaping will reduce heat island effect, provide space for rain gardens, and allow for more permeable surfaces for stormwater management.





The furnishing zone is a highly flexible area which contains elements used by all modes. It is oftentimes the leading indicator as to how complete a street is - the more shared elements in this space, typically the more modes of transportation and functions the street carries.

The furnishing zone provides a physical buffer between people on the sidewalk and vehicle movement in the street. This buffer is also a perceptual buffer in the sense that it gives the feeling of increased safety to pedestrians and pedestrian activities.

The furnishing zone, whether in a residential or commercial setting, provides space for street trees, which provide increased property values, stormwater management, heat island reduction, and protection from sun and rain for pedestrians.

ELEMENTS IN THE FURNISHING ZONE: STREET TREES



Plant more street trees. Street trees are proven to provide numerous measurable benefits to residents:

- Calm Traffic: Cars drive more slowly on streets with trees.
- Make Neighborhoods Quieter: Street trees cut traffic noise.
- Walkability: Residents walk more on streets with trees.
- Better Environment: Trees improve air quality.
- Economics: Street trees increase property value.

Refer to pages 24-27 of the Neighborhood Parks and Green Spaces Strategy for more information on trees.

ELEMENTS IN THE FURNISHING ZONE: BIKE FACILITIES



Encourage more bike parking.

Locating and designing bicycle facilities is often a difficult challenge in street design because cyclists can operate like both pedestrians and automobiles.

A high quality facility will separate cyclists from automobiles and pedestrians.

The placement of bike racks within the furnishing zone should be considered from the perspective of resident and business owners perspective, and at locations that exhibit high bike usage.

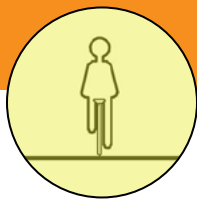
ELEMENTS IN THE FURNISHING ZONE: SEATING



Encourage more outdoor seating.

Outdoor seating creates a comfortable, useable, and active public space where people can sit, rest, socialize, read, or people-watch. It is a simple gesture that can go far to create an important sense of place. Seating creates places where people can see and be seen. This ability to entice people to linger is the hallmark of great and successful public spaces.

Adding seating to the furnishing zone is an easy street improvement that can be made by individuals, community groups, and businesses as part of an overall streetscape project.



STREETS AS PUBLIC SPACE

BIKE LANES AND SHARROWS



An important part of the Streets as Public Space Strategy is the creation of multi-modal and complete streets. For a street to be complete, it needs to accommodate cyclists. The East Hills Neighborhood supports a robust network of bike facilities.

One such facility is commonly referred to as a protected bike lane or cycletrack (as illustrated in the street cross section diagram on page 30). Protected bike lanes should be considered as ways to accommodate cyclists in East Hills.

Other bicycle facilities that aid in creating more complete streets have been used throughout the City of Grand Rapids, and should be considered as additional ways to accommodate cyclists within East Hills. They include bike lanes and sharrows.

BIKE LANE: SAFER STREETS

The bike lane is a portion of a roadway that has been designated for the preferential or exclusive use of bicyclists by striping, signing, and pavement markings. Bike lanes typically range from four to six feet in width and are traditionally adjacent to vehicle travel lanes.

Adding a bike lane to a street will likely reduce the size of vehicular travel lanes. Reducing the size of vehicular lanes has been proven to reduce traffic speeds and increase pedestrian safety. (City of Portland, Oregon, Traffic Speed Study, 2001)

Additionally, where vehicle travel lanes were narrowed to 10' to install 5' bike lanes in Chicago, studies have revealed that average crash rates decreased at intersections by 9.9% and at mid-block by 15.4%.



BIKE LANE: PROVIDING MORE CHOICES

According to studies in Chicago and Portland, bicycle usage increases after bike lanes are installed.

One study found a 23% increase in bicycle traffic after bike lanes were installed (Toronto ITE Journal) The majority of these new bicyclists did not feel comfortable riding on that road prior to the installation of bike lanes.

Bike lanes give more people comfort and security to make the choice to take their bike instead of their car.



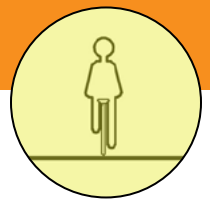
SHARROWS: SHARED PUBLIC SPACES

A sharrow is a shared-lane marking in a street. This marking is placed in the center of a travel lane to indicate that a bicyclist may use the full lane. Sharrows force cyclists and automobiles into the same spaces within the roadway and create a true shared environment.

Sharrows provide the easiest way to quickly build a bike network. Unlike bike lanes, sharrows do not designate a particular part of the street for the exclusive use of bicyclists.

Sharrows guide bicyclists to the best place to ride on the road and remind drivers to share the road with cyclists. This shared space, slows traffic speeds and aids in making bicycle movements more predictable.





The City of Portland, Oregon conducted a study of its population to better understand why people ride or don't ride their bicycle. The number one reason people do not ride is because they don't feel safe sharing the road with motorists. The results of the survey led to the conclusion that approximately 60% of the population is interested in riding their bike, whether for work, fun, or errands, but are concerned about the safety of riding in traffic. This includes families, children, and seniors.

Building safer bike facilities will encourage this portion of the population to ride their bike. Additionally, as many cities across the country continue to build better biking systems, it has become clear to both businesses and politicians that, when used right, these networks are part of the path to prosperity. In fact, in the context of the new American urban economy, protected bike lanes promote economic growth in several common ways, three of them are illustrated below.

PROTECTED BIKE LANES: INCREASE RETAIL VISIBILITY AND SALES VOLUMES



In vibrant, livable, and growing urban communities, protected bike lane networks encourage more people to ride bikes for everyday trips. When people use bikes for errands, they're the ideal kind of retail customers: regulars. These customers on bikes stop by often and spend as much or more per month as people who arrive in cars.

As a bonus, ten customers who arrive by bike fit in the parking space of one customer who arrives by car.

A law of real estate is that land is more valuable if more people can get to it easily.

PROTECTED BIKE LANES: FUEL REDEVELOPMENT TO BOOST REAL ESTATE VALUE



As the City population continues to grow, automobile congestion, the demand for parking, and traffic all increase. New streets and parking are not options for mature neighborhoods.

Protected bike lanes bring order and predictability to streets and provide transportation choices while helping to build neighborhoods where everyone enjoys spending time.

Extending the geographic range of travel, bike lanes help neighborhoods redevelop without waiting years for new transit service.

PROTECTED BIKE LANES: HELPING COMPANIES ATTRACT TALENTED WORKERS



Many workers, especially Millennials and members of Generation X, increasingly prefer downtown jobs and nearby homes.

Because protected bike lanes make biking more comfortable and popular, they help companies locate in urban neighborhoods without breaking the bank on surface parking lot construction.

They also allow workers to reach their desk the way they increasingly prefer: under their own power.



STREETS AS PUBLIC SPACE

ON-STREET PARKING

On-street parking provides critical support for retail establishments on commercial streets. It also provides parking for residents in more densely populated residential neighborhoods. As the neighborhood (and City of Grand Rapids) continues to densify, on-street parking will need to be continuously scrutinized in order to provide balance between the livability and mobility of the neighborhood and the commercial vibrancy of the business districts.

On-street parking provides a buffer between pedestrian activity in the walking zone and faster moving traffic on the street; this buffer makes the street safer for people on the sidewalk, whether they are sitting or walking.

ON-STREET PARKING: TRAFFIC CALMING & CONVENIENCE

On-street parking on a residential street (Blodgett Street) in East Hills. The parking effectively narrows the street (when combined with urban scaled travel lane widths), which slows down traffic without the use of added features like speed bumps.

The on-street parking on this residential street provides residents with extra parking at the fronts of their homes for both convenience and for visitors.

Blodgett Street, a recently constructed street, is 28 feet wide, measured from face of curb to face of curb. It includes on-street parking on both sides and two-way vehicular travel.

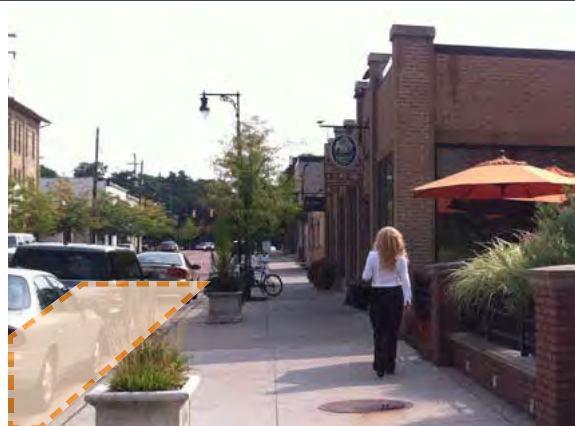


ON-STREET PARKING: THE PEDESTRIAN SHIELD

On-street parking isn't just a car storage device. There are other benefits as well. It has been noted that "when fear arrives, pedestrians depart".

One major source of fear is the possibility that a car might run off the street and hit you.

On-street parking alleviates this fear, because each of those parked cars acts as a shield of several thousand pounds of metal between you and the moving traffic. People don't consciously realize this, but you've never seen a sidewalk cafe next to the expressway, have you?



ON-STREET PARKING: THE TEASER

A small amount of short-term on-street parking that is placed in front of businesses can lure potential customers with its apparent convenience. Customers are more likely to come to a business district if they might find "some parking out front". This is known as "teaser" parking, which gives motorists a reason to stop on a whim.

Partially because of this phenomenon, retail experts have estimated that every on-street parking space in a thriving retail district is worth about \$250,000 in annual sales to the nearby merchants on that street.





In an effort to continually put pedestrians (and bikes) first, the neighborhood should consider tactical responses to the shaping of its public spaces. These efforts, whether in collaboration with the City of Grand Rapids or as temporary experimental adjustments, can quickly and cheaply test and implement people-centered design within neighborhood streets and public spaces. Replacing on-street parking with people-centered initiatives is an example of this type of tactical urbanism. As with any initiative, careful consideration should be given when replacing on-street parking because of its importance to urban retail.

The following “lighter, quicker, and cheaper” replacement strategies, whether temporary or permanent will give the neighborhood (and City) valuable insight into how streets can truly become public spaces.

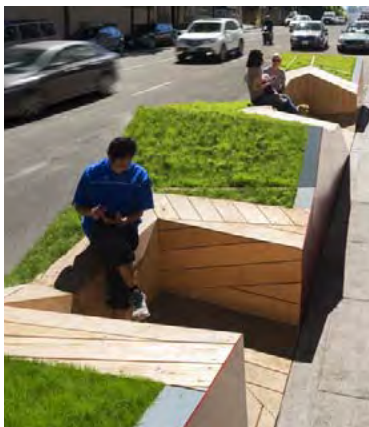
ON-STREET PARKING REPLACEMENT: PARKLET WITH BIKE PARKING



Parklets are being successfully implemented in cities such as San Francisco, Philadelphia, and Long Beach. A new program sponsored by Downtown Grand Rapids Inc (DGRI) is now guiding their installation in downtown Grand Rapids.

DGRI has completed a Grand Rapids Parklet Manual, that provides guidelines for replacement of on street parking with parklets. While these guidelines are for specific installation downtown, the manual may be referenced as inspiration for neighborhood based projects.

ON-STREET PARKING REPLACEMENT: PARKLET WITH GREEN SPACE AND SEATING



In efforts to balance the needs of all users in the multi-modal street, strategic replacement of on-street parking with temporary green space or seating should be considered to test potential longer term strategies.

Parklets can provide pocket spaces for pedestrians to sit and relax, while also improving walkability.

Parklets provide a public space for neighbors to meet and get to know each other. In some cases neighbors can even participate in the design and implementation of parklets.

ON-STREET PARKING: PARKLET WITH OUTDOOR SEATING



In efforts to accentuate commerce, vibrancy and street life, strategic replacement of on-street parking with temporary or seasonal seating should be considered to test potential longer term strategies.

Additional outdoor seating attracts attention to businesses and provides additional seating that can be used by cafe customers and others. This leads to support of our local businesses.

A parklet can also beautify the street and can create neighborhood destinations.



STREETS AS PUBLIC SPACE

VEHICLE TRAVEL LANES

An important element to streets is the vehicle travel zone. This zone provides the place for cars, trucks and public transit to move within and through the neighborhood. Thus, the primary function of the vehicle travel zone (the thoroughfare) is movement. Movement of people and movement of goods. Because of this aspect of movement, there are many factors that influence the way that the thoroughfare is designed.

Since the locations of streets in East Hills are well established and the dimensions of the thoroughfare are basically fixed due to existing buildings and infrastructure, the best way to seek a different approach is to effect the travel lane sizes. Taking capacity away from the dominant road user (i.e. the private car) is a brave decision - but a decision that can lead to a more complete street and a street that can become more of a people space.

VEHICLE TRAVEL LANES: CONTEXT SENSITIVE and NEIGHBORHOOD STREET SAFETY

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) is a standards setting body which publishes specifications, test protocols and guidelines which are used in highway, road, and street design and construction throughout the United States.

AASHTO publishes a manual entitled "A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets", referred to as the Green Book (because of its cover color).

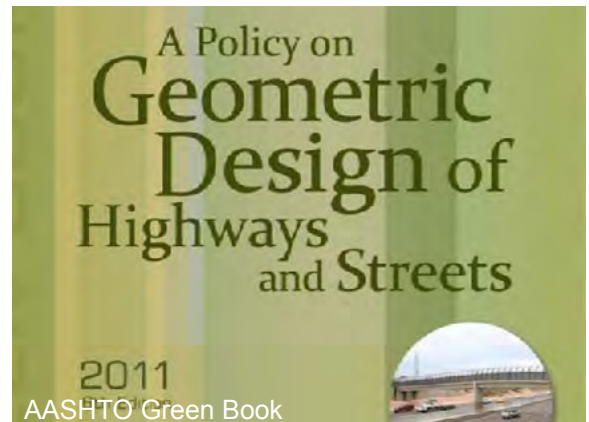
The Green Book contains a general set of guidelines on road (and street) design, however, it is not meant to be a design manual.

The Green Book recognizes the need for flexibility and provides that flexibility, citing how lane width can be tailored, to a degree, to fit the particular environment in which the roadway functions.

From the book's forward:

"Emphasis is placed on the joint use of transportation corridors by pedestrians, cyclists and public transit vehicles. Designers should recognize the implications of this sharing of the transportation corridors and are encouraged to consider not only vehicular movement, but also movement of people, distribution of goods, and provision of essential services. A more comprehensive transportation program is hereby emphasized."

When considering design changes to travel lanes in neighborhood streets, use context sensitive, flexible solutions that not only consider vehicle movement, but also movement of PEOPLE.



TRANSIT TRAVEL LANES: ACCOMMODATION IN THE STREET

The pedestrian first modal hierarchy (page 28) that permeates the Streets as Public Space Strategy, positions transit as the second (right behind pedestrians) highest preferred mode of transportation within the neighborhood.

This means that, while the Streets as Public Space Strategy seeks to "put people first", it does not lose site of the importance of a robust transit system that can serve the diverse population of the neighborhood.

With this in mind, all decisions made regarding the design and operation of neighborhood streets, shall include considerations for the movement of transit service.

Travellane width and design should be balanced to accommodate transit, promote slower speed traffic, and accentuate the street as a people first public space.





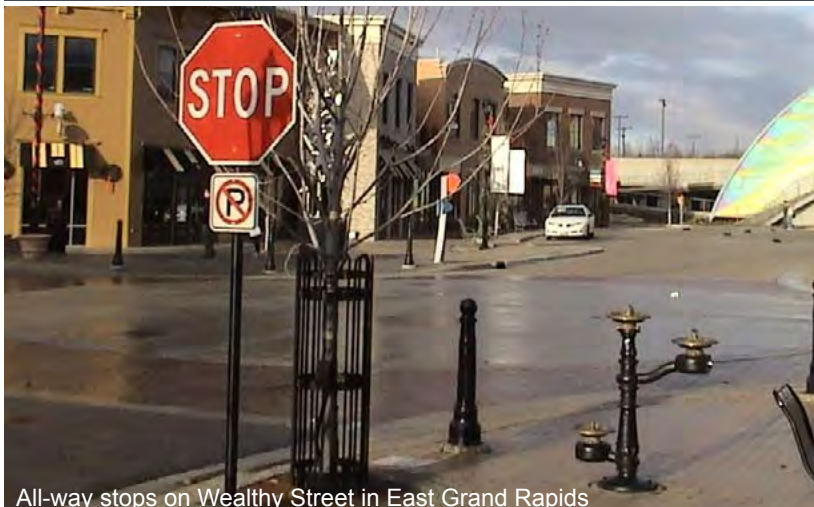
EAST HILLS ALL-WAY STOP / TRAFFIC CONTROL STRATEGY ILLUSTRATIVE:

Use all-way stops at intersections at key locations in order to act as traffic control features for neighborhood streets.



All-way stops at key intersections to control traffic

ALL-WAY STOPS: TRAFFIC CONTROL



All-way stops on Wealthy Street in East Grand Rapids

All-way stop signs are traffic control devices primarily installed to assign the Right-Of-Way at intersections.

These measures are also installed to improve safety at intersections where there is a need to control vehicle-pedestrian conflicts, and where cars cannot see well enough to proceed into the intersection safely.

In most cases, a two-way stop sign is sufficient to define who has the right-of-way. A four-way or all-way stop should be considered only when an intersection is the site of numerous crashes, has traffic congestion problems, has a high level of pedestrian activity, and/or has site line issues that compromise the drivers ability to see pedestrians.

The neighborhood promotes the use of all-way stops to control traffic and reduce vehicle-pedestrian conflicts at specific intersections as depicted on the map on this page.

“Old ideas can sometimes use new buildings. New ideas must use old buildings.”

-Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*

STRATEGY THREE

HISTORIC PRESERVATION, ADAPTIVE REUSE and NEW CONSTRUCTION

The East Hills Neighborhood will be characterized by adaptive reuse and new construction that promote walkability and **high-quality urbanism** through design, historic preservation, & neighborhood-sensitive solutions.

The required quantity AND location of parking for adaptive reuse and new construction will reinforce the goals of **walkable urbanism** and will help to accentuate the neighborhood's character.

The **Historic Preservation, Adaptive Reuse and New Construction Strategy** includes the following elements:

- 1 Construct Sensitive NEW Buildings:** New construction will be consistent with the neighborhood context, including mass, scale, composition and character. New buildings should be designed and constructed to be environmentally-friendly. New buildings shall adhere to the infill guidelines of the Grand Rapids Historic Preservation Guidelines.
- 2 REUSE Existing Buildings:** Adaptive re-use of existing buildings will be sensitive to the historic context and tradition of the building. Removal of historic materials or features that characterize the building shall be avoided. Adaptive re-use shall adhere to the Grand Rapids Historic Preservation Guidelines.
- 3 Construct Historically Sensitive Building ADDITIONS:** New additions to existing buildings will be consistent with the building, including the mass, scale, composition, character and materials. Building additions shall adhere to the Grand Rapids Historic Preservation Guidelines.
- 4 Build CONTEXT SENSITIVE Development:** Design of development shall respond to existing neighborhood urban and architectural patterns. Developers shall collaborate with the East Hills Council of Neighbors and adhere to the City of Grand Rapids Historic Preservation Guidelines when proposing development in the neighborhood.
- 5 Prioritize PARKING Requirements:** Parking for adaptive reuse and new construction, while important, will not be the primary feature of the development and will not drive the use or size of the development.
- 6 Consider VISIBILITY of Parking Lots:** Parking for adaptive reuse and new construction will NOT be visible from the street or the sidewalk.
- 7 Develop Appropriate Retail Frontages and STOREFRONTS:** In certain neighborhood locations where traffic volumes, existing retail nodes, and business districts are present, retail activities that generate foot traffic and street vibrancy shall be part of the ground floor use on adaptive reuse and new construction projects. These retail uses shall be housed in buildings with storefronts to promote visibility, transparency, and permeability at the street wall.
- 8 Build DENSITY:** Development shall provide context sensitive density solutions that will accentuate the neighborhood livability and continue to reinforce diversity, choice, vibrancy, and activity.
- 9 Build MIXED-USE:** Development shall provide diverse residential and commercial choices in multi-story mixed-use buildings that will accentuate the neighborhood vibrancy and continue to reinforce diversity, choice, livability, and activity.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION, ADAPTIVE REUSE & NEW CONSTRUCTION

WHY THIS STRATEGY IS IMPORTANT

"The fundamental physical elements of an ideal neighborhood include walkable streets, human scaled blocks, varieties of housing choices, usable public space, an identifiable center, and definable edges."

-City of Grand Rapids Master Plan 2002

East Hills has become one of the city's most desirable neighborhoods for living and working. Throughout this time, the East Hills Council of Neighbors has helped form a bridge between neighborhood interests and developer interests to create a unique environment that expresses our neighborhood's historic character and people-centered values.

The East Hills Council of Neighbors (EHCN) welcomes new business, the renovation of existing buildings, and appropriate new construction on vacant land that will contribute to the unique character of our community. Interested investors are encouraged to open a dialog with EHCN as the first step in the process, prior to filing for planning, zoning, or historic preservation reviews. EHCN will work with business owners and developers to assist in clearly communicating their intents to the neighborhood and to craft thoughtful plans that complement the existing physical and commercial assets of our community.

EHCN supports a diverse, mixed-use environment that closely aligns with the land use definitions of the City's existing zoning ordinance. We also encourage adherence to the values and ideals exemplified by our historic districts. As a planning strategy, historic districts have succeeded in preserving the architectural heritage and aesthetic integrity of our built environment. Respect for these values must be the guiding framework for future development.

CITIZEN ATTITUDE TOWARD DECISION-MAKING ABOUT NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORIC PRESERVATION, ADAPTIVE REUSE and NEW CONSTRUCTION

When making decisions regarding adaptive reuse and new construction, ask the questions:

Does the decision put people first?

Does the decision benefit the citizens of East Hills?



HISTORIC PRESERVATION, ADAPTIVE REUSE & NEW CONSTRUCTION

VISION AND VALUES

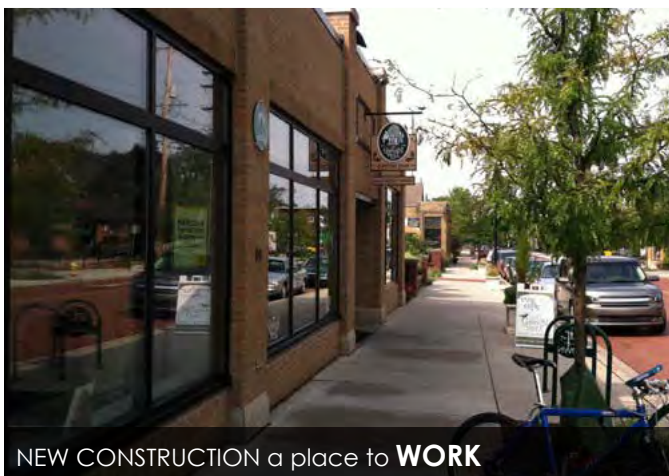
The "Neighborhood Parks" and "Streets as Public Space" Strategies set the framework for the largest (streets) and the most identifiable (parks) public space within the neighborhood. The Historic Preservation, Adaptive Reuse and New Construction Strategy sets the framework for the edges of these spaces - the walls of the outdoor room.

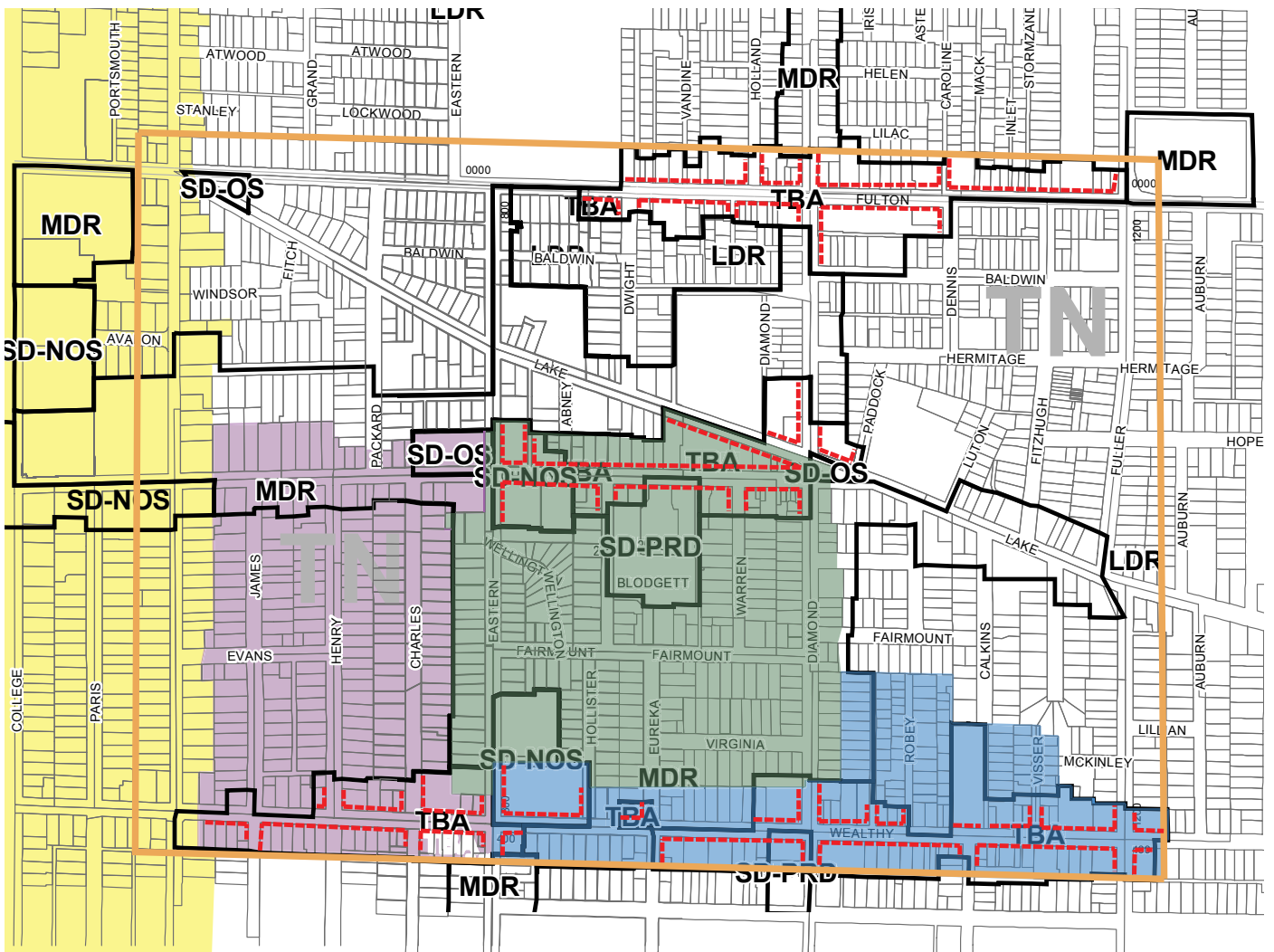
The buildings that represent these "walls" are essential to the Public Space Strategy, because they:

- **Define** the public spaces,
- **Activate** the public spaces,
- Give **human scale** to the public spaces,
- Provide "eyes on the street" to enhance the **safety** of the public spaces, and
- Provide the places for people to **live, work, shop,** and **play.**

This strategy will define key attributes and best practices for adaptive reuse (rehabilitation of existing buildings) and new construction (new building infill) that fulfill the vision established by the neighbors of East Hills.

Our Neighborhood Historic Preservation, Adaptive Reuse and New Construction:





EAST HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD
EXISTING CONTEXT AND RETAIL FRONTAGES MAP



EAST HILLS EXISTING CONTEXT (boundary, zoning, and historic districts)

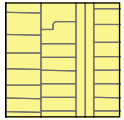
East Hills – bounded by Union Street on the West, Fuller on the East, Wealthy Street on the South, & East Fulton on the North (the orange line on the map) – has three business districts within its boundaries (East Fulton, Cherry Street, & Wealthy Street all zoned TBA) with the remaining areas being primarily residential (zoned LDR & MDR).

About half of East Hills is overlaid with four of the City's historic districts: Cherry Hill (in purple on map), Fairmount Square (green), The Wealthy Theater Historic District (blue), & Heritage Hill (yellow). All areas defined as historic districts and all zoning designations are shown for reference and descriptive purposes.

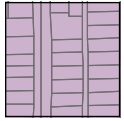
Refer to facing page for an expanded map legend.

All property owners and/or developers should verify the status of their properties with the City of Grand Rapids prior to undertaking any purchase or project.

LEGEND FOR EXISTING CONTEXT NEIGHBORHOOD MAP (refer to map on facing page)



HERITAGE HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT (designated in 1973) - The oldest historic district in Grand Rapids, and one of the largest historic districts in the nation, Heritage Hill represents the entire western edge of the East Hills Neighborhood. Adaptive reuse and new construction in this historic district must adhere to the local preservation guidelines and the Secretary of Interior Standards. **All adaptive reuse and new construction must have approval from the City of Grand Rapids Historic Preservation Commission.**



CHERRY HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT (designated in 1994) - A model revitalization project that was undertaken by residents determined to save their neighborhood from vacancy, disrepair, and blight. With their hard work and use of historic preservation, single-family occupancy and property values have dramatically increased, surpassing the City-wide average. The Cherry Hill District is completely within the boundaries of the East Hills Neighborhood. Adaptive reuse and new construction in this historic district must adhere to the local preservation guidelines and the Secretary of Interior Standards. **All adaptive reuse and new construction must have approval from the City of Grand Rapids Historic Preservation Commission.**



WEALTHY THEATER HISTORIC DISTRICT (designated in 1997) - This district was designated in 1997 to protect remaining historic structures and to aid in the economic development of this once thriving commercial corridor. The Wealthy Theater District is primarily within the boundaries of the East Hills Neighborhood, extending along the neighborhood's southern edge at Wealthy Street (part of the district is in the Baxter Neighborhood on the south side of Wealthy). Adaptive reuse and new construction in this historic district must adhere to the local preservation guidelines and the Secretary of Interior Standards. **All adaptive reuse and new construction must have approval from the City of Grand Rapids Historic Preservation Commission.**



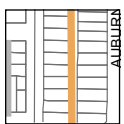
FAIRMOUNT SQUARE HISTORIC DISTRICT (designated in 1999) - This district was designated in 1999 at the request of the neighborhood residents seeking to stabilize their neighborhood, protect the historic structures, and promote the area's revitalization. The Fairmount Square District is completely within the boundaries of the East Hills Neighborhood. Adaptive reuse and new construction in this historic district must adhere to the local preservation guidelines and the Secretary of Interior Standards. **All adaptive reuse and new construction must have approval from the City of Grand Rapids Historic Preservation Commission.**



EAST HILLS RETAIL FRONTAGE - The map depicts a redline along the frontages of strategically located properties. This line represents properties in the business districts that shall have active retail uses at the street level (ground floor). Adaptive reuse and new construction at these properties shall have a storefront, per the requirements of this chapter. In instances where retail is not considered viable, the storefront frontage shall still be applied, and uses such as office or "live-work" can be used as placeholders, until such time retail is viable. **Refer to the Storefront Attribute Section of this chapter for information regarding the expectations for development of these frontages.**



EAST HILLS ZONING DESIGNATIONS - The map depicts the existing zoning districts (indicated with black lines and letters such as "LDR", "TBA", etc) within the neighborhood. These districts govern use and form of development for adaptive reuse and new construction projects and are subject to City Planning staff and Planning Commission review. Developers should verify status of their property with the City of Grand Rapids and review the City of Grand Rapids Zoning Ordinance for boundaries and definitions of these zoning districts prior to undertaking purchase or project.



EAST HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD BOUNDARY - The gold line on the map depicts the neighborhood boundary. Adaptive reuse and new construction projects that are within this boundary are subject to the Adaptive Reuse and New Construction Strategy. Developers should meet with representatives from the EHCN prior to undertaking projects within this boundary.

STRATEGY FOR ADAPTIVE REUSE AND NEW CONSTRUCTION:

- To advocate for continued infill construction on vacant lots that meets the needs of the neighborhood's residents - with the goal of having diversity within the residential building stock to allow residents to "age in place".
- To promote quality architectural design for all neighborhood buildings that fits into the neighborhood and respects the community's architectural heritage and historic structures.
- To encourage that new construction and additions are consistent with the mass, scale, and materiality of the neighborhood.
- To recognize the rich historic character of the neighborhood and to adhere to the Historic Preservation Guidelines and Secretary of Interior Standards when considering adaptive re-use of buildings.
- To collaborate with the neighborhood prior to the start of a project so that the adaptive re-use or new construction can properly fit into the neighborhood.

STRATEGY FOR STOREFRONTS AND ROWHOUSE BUILDINGS:

- To construct storefronts that are consistent with the storefront design guidelines that are described in this Strategy.
- To build new storefronts and rehabilitate existing storefronts so that they are transparent (easy to see into), permeable (easy to enter), at a scale consistent with the existing context, and with design, materials, and signage that are scaled to the pedestrian experience.
- To use rowhouses to provide neighborhood scaled density that increases livability and promotes vibrancy.
- To encourage new residential infill that increases density without compromising the existing quality of the neighborhood's urbanism.

CONTEXT-SENSITIVE NEW CONSTRUCTION



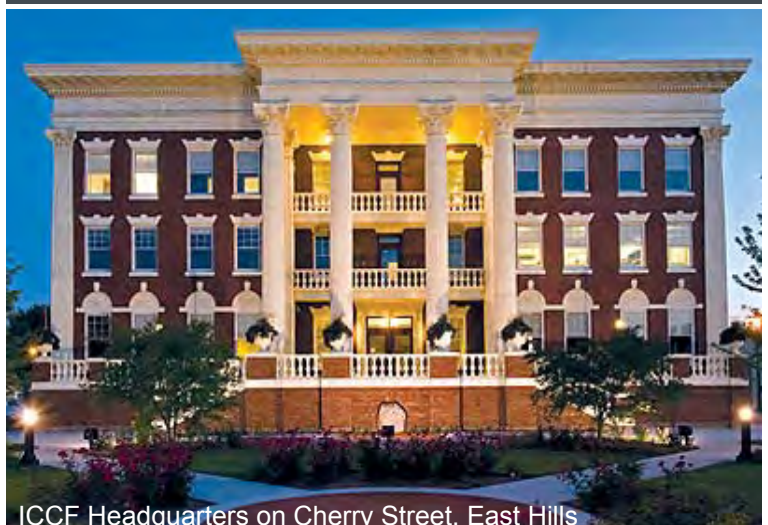
Greenwell on Cherry Street, East Hills

RIGHT SIZED NEW CONSTRUCTION



Maru on Cherry Street, East Hills

HISTORIC CHARACTER OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD



ICCF Headquarters on Cherry Street, East Hills

BEST PRACTICES: MIXED USE COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS



Mixed use buildings are essential for creating vibrant and diverse places to live, work, shop, and play. A building with apartments or offices above the street level shop provides a variety of residential and work options for a diversity of incomes and increases the number of choices for people who want to live in the neighborhood. These multi-story buildings also proportionally frame and enclose the street.

BEST PRACTICES: STREET WALL



Every street in East Hills, whether residential or commercial, has its own street wall conditions. Maintenance and support of existing street wall conditions through sensitive renovations and infill design is one of the most important initial contextual decisions. A consistent and transparent street wall provides a secure defined way for walking and contributes to the overall quality of the neighborhood.

BEST PRACTICES: OFF-STREET PARKING LOCATION AND VISIBILITY



Off-street parking at Fairmount Square



In instances where off-street parking is offered as part of an adaptive reuse or new construction project, it should not be visible from the street or sidewalk.

Off-street parking shall be behind buildings.

The screening of surface parking lots with fences and landscaping is not considered a preferred way to reduce the physical and visual impact of the parking lot on the neighborhood.

BEST PRACTICES: OFF-STREET PARKING QUANTITY, WALKABILITY, AND THE URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD



Parking, not visible from Cherry Street

Too much off-street parking can negatively impact the neighborhood's walkability, character, commerce, and economic development. The neighborhood therefore promotes a strategy of limiting the quantity of on-street parking in adaptive re-use and new construction projects.

This strategy includes promoting limited (or no) parking by using the existing City zoning apparatus with a minimum of a 50% reduction and a preferred 100% reduction of required parking.

The neighborhood desires that no new surface parking lots be built as part of adaptive reuse and new construction projects.

There will be no demolition of existing buildings for off-street parking.

BEST PRACTICES: PRESERVE THE MID-CENTURY MODERN ARCHITECTURE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

East Hills has a wonderful mixture of architectural styles, including many mid-century modern structures that accentuate the neighborhood's unique character and vitality.

These structures shall be adaptively reused by following the City's historic preservation guidelines and Secretary of Interior Standards.

Mid-century modernism is as important to the neighborhood as late 19th and early 20th century architecture. The neighborhood desires that these historic structures be treated in the same way as their Victorian cousins, and that rehabilitation is sympathetic to the building's historic context.



645 Cherry, preserved and re-used mid-century structure

BEST PRACTICES: BUILDINGS THAT SERVE A 16-HOUR / 7-DAY NEIGHBORHOOD



Meanwhile, Wealthy Street

As part of the livability objectives of East Hills, the "16/7 neighborhood" shall be cultivated whenever possible.

The 16/7 neighborhood is a place that provides commerce and services for 16 hours per day, 7 days per week. This accentuates vitality and livability by providing predictable hours of operation to shop and play for the longest stretch of each day.

The uses and operations of proposed businesses shall consider this practice to continue to reinforce the dynamic character of the East Hills Neighborhood.

HISTORIC ROWHOUSE: WITH PORCH ENTRY



East Hills Neighborhood Rowhouse on Fitzhugh Avenue

NEW ROWHOUSE: WITH LIGHTWELL ENTRY



East Hills Neighborhood Rowhouse on Diamond Avenue

NEW ROWHOUSE: WITH STOOP ENTRY



East Hills Neighborhood Rowhouse on Hollister Avenue

WHAT IS A ROWHOUSE?

A rowhouse (also sometimes called a townhouse) is a single-family dwelling unit against which other houses are pushed so close that they share a party wall and only the front and back are exposed.

The rowhouse meets the street and sidewalk (and acts as a wall for the outdoor rooms of the public space) typically with a small setback that can be landscaped with a planting bed. While the setback is small, it is variable - and can be adjusted to meet the context of surrounding buildings.

The rowhouse is typically accessed from a stoop, porch or lightwell (refer to images on this page). The front doors of rowhouses should always face the public space and car access should always be at the back of the building.

Proper siting of a rowhouse has its main floor elevated above the sidewalk in order to ensure privacy for the people who live in it.

WHY THE ROWHOUSE IS IMPORTANT?

As the neighborhoods of Grand Rapids continue to grow and densify, the question of how more people can live sustainably in smaller spaces becomes ever more pressing.

The rowhouse can accomplish housing for more people in smaller spaces and lot sizes, effectively creating more opportunities for people to live in a neighborhood. Equally important is that the rowhouse can act as a transitional building type between commercial corridors and residential districts.

THE ECONOMY OF THE ROWHOUSE

The row house is enjoying increased popularity for several reasons, the most important of which are lower construction costs and land space requirements per dwelling unit, and growing acceptance by the house-buying public. The rowhouse is cheaper to build than detached units and considerable savings are made possible through the use of fewer windows (due to the shared walls).

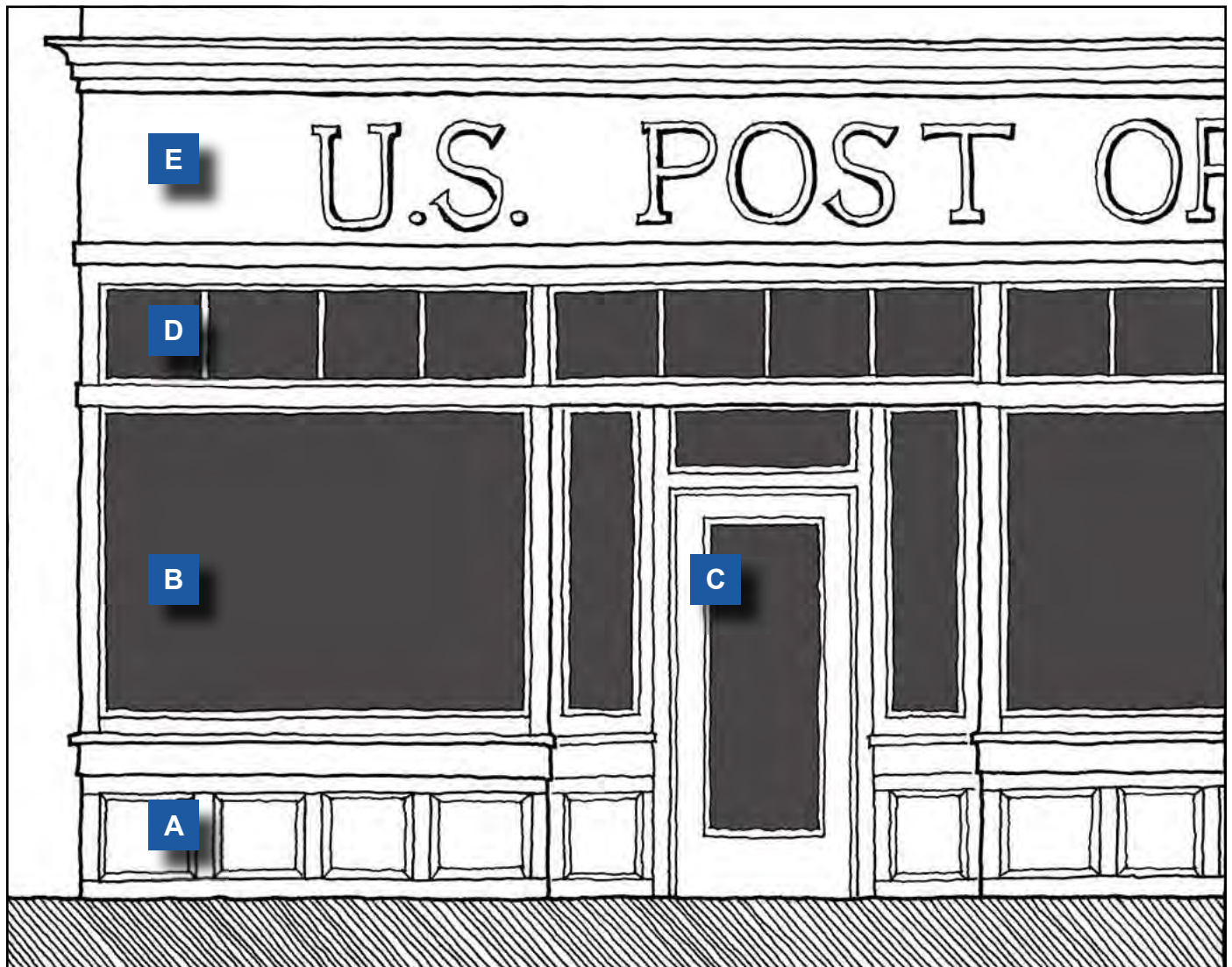
Because they require smaller lots, rowhouses can also create savings in land cost. Additionally, these buildings, due to their shared walls, have measurable savings in heating and cooling costs for residents.

WHAT IS A STOREFRONT?

The urban storefront is the physical expression of commerce within a city. The scale, proportion and placement of storefronts are designed to provide a permeable edge along the sidewalk and street that promotes an attractive and convenient shopping experience. This permeable edge provides physical and visual connection between the interior and exterior of the retail enterprise - inviting people to look, and walk, into the store.

Although storefront character varies from region to region, there are features common to almost all storefronts. The most typical configuration consists of a low wall at the sidewalk, known as a bulkhead, upon which large panes of glass are set. These panes of glass, or display windows, provide the visual connection between the inside and outside of the building and include the main store entrance, which is typically located in the center, or to one side, of the composition. This main entry is commonly recessed to provide a space for the door to swing into (so it is not swinging directly into the sidewalk) and also to provide protection from the weather to customers entering the store.

Above the display windows there is often a band of narrow horizontal panes of glass known as transoms or clerestory glazing. These transoms are usually divided into small panes of decorative or colored glass, and in many cases will have an awning projecting from them. A horizontal expression band or storefront beam caps the storefront composition and extends the entire length of the glass that it is above. This beam is oftentimes used to advertise the business by accommodating signs, either applied within the beam itself, or as a projecting sign mounted perpendicular to the building wall.



ANATOMY OF A STOREFRONT (refer to illustration on facing page)

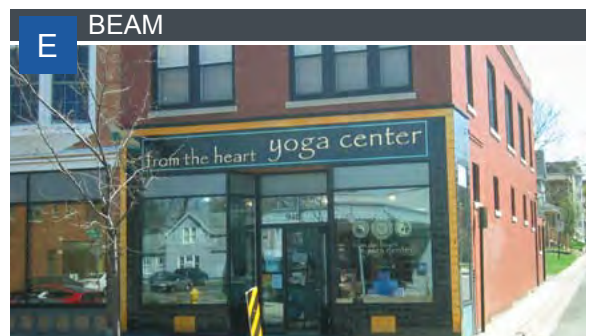
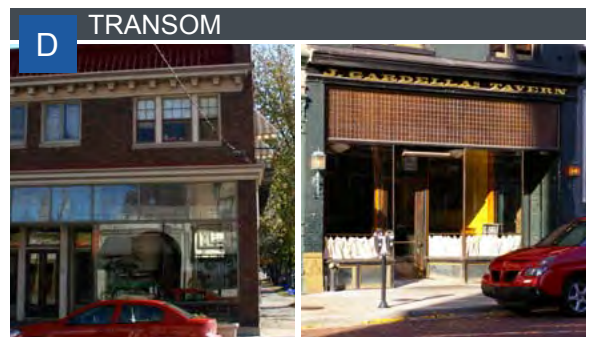
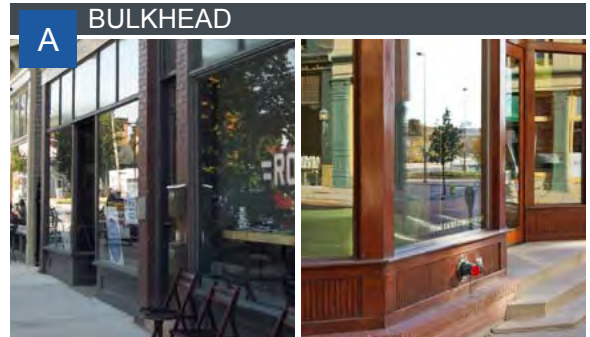
A Bulkhead: A short wall that is typically between 18 to 24 inches above the adjacent sidewalk, to maximize the amount of display window, while still giving the glass some buffer from the sidewalk. Bulkheads that are too high will limit the amount of display window, which will limit transparency, permeability and opportunities for the merchant to display goods. Another important reason to have a bulkhead in our climate is to ensure that snow does not pile up against the glass of the window.

B Display window: Large panes of transparent glass that sit on the bulkhead, typically between 7 and 10 feet tall. The display window is the essential component of the storefront and is required to provide transparent (clear) glass for at least 70 percent of the building frontage - this means that there is the possibility of vertical breaks between glass as long as they are small. Storefronts are always directly accessible from the adjacent sidewalk.

C Storefront entrance: The main entrance to the business from the sidewalk. In almost all cases this entrance is recessed and flanked by angled display windows that transition from the front building wall to the recessed entry. The importance of having a recessed entry is to allow for protection from the weather, to offer a transition between the sidewalk and the inside of the business, and so that the door does not swing into the sidewalk. The depth of this entry is typically between 3 and 8 feet from the front of the building and should be proportional to the overall building composition.

D Transom: Horizontal band of windows located above the display window, typically 24 to 36 inches high. These windows help to provide a human scale to the storefront while also providing additional light into the building (especially for inside spaces that are long and narrow). Transoms are optional in the overall composition, but when they are not provided the display window should be taller.

E Beam: Horizontal expression band that is sometimes capped with a decorative cornice. This band effectively separates the storefront from the upper stories of the building and provides an excellent place for business signs and exterior lighting. The beam is typically 24 to 40 inches high and should be proportional to the building mass and scale.



QUESTIONS EVERY DEVELOPER SHOULD ASK BEFORE PRESENTING THEIR PROJECT TO THE EAST HILLS COUNCIL OF NEIGHBORS:



3 BUILDING FACING THE STREET

1. IS YOUR PROPERTY LOCATED IN ONE OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD'S HISTORIC DISTRICTS?

Why this is important: The City's historic districts have preserved historic context and promoted a sense of place within the community. Understanding the importance of the local guidelines and federal standards that regulate these historic districts will help the project better fit into the neighborhood and also save you a lot of time and effort in the implementation of your project.

2. HAVE YOU HIRED AN ARCHITECT WHO UNDERSTANDS THE NEIGHBORHOOD?

Why this is important: Hiring an architect who has successfully completed adaptive reuse and new construction projects in the neighborhood is important because understanding the neighborhood's goals and physical context will make your project more successful. The urban context, architectural heritage, and neighborhood dynamic need to all be considered when implementing a project, an experienced architect can provide design solutions to address these elements.



4 TRANSPARENCY

3. DOES YOUR BUILDING FACE THE STREET?

Why this is important: Buildings facing the street provide a coherent and defined public space - walls for the "outdoor room". When this "outdoor room" is defined, its scale is typically at a people-centered scale, which promotes auditory and visual contact, and ultimately helps to create vibrancy.



5 CONTEXT-SENSITIVE MATERIALS

4. DOES YOUR BUILDING HAVE THE TRANSPARENCY (CLEAR GLASS WINDOWS) FACING THE STREET THAT IS REQUIRED BY ZONING?

Why this is important: When paired with question #1, appropriate transparency promotes an active and permeable street wall that leads to more vibrancy on the street and also provides opportunities for "eyes on the street", which accentuates a more safe place.



6 CONTEXT-SENSITIVE SHAPE

5. WHAT FINISHES ARE YOU PROPOSING FOR THE EXTERIOR OF YOUR BUILDING? ARE THEY MATERIALS COMMONLY FOUND IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD?

Why this is important: Building materials that are consistent with what has been used in the existing neighborhood will help the building become more contextually sensitive to its surroundings. Following neighborhood material cues will also provide new buildings with pedestrian scaled details - remember that these buildings are intended to be experienced by someone walking by at 3 miles per hour, rather than someone in a car, going by at 45 miles per hour.

6. HOW IS YOUR BUILDING SHAPED? IS IT SIMILAR TO YOUR NEIGHBOR'S?

Why this is important: Similar to question #4, roof shapes can alter the mass and scale of a building. Understanding not only neighboring buildings, but also the entire context of the neighborhood will aid in determining appropriate roof types, sizes, and slopes.

7. HOW BIG IS YOUR BUILDING? IS YOUR BUILDING SIGNIFICANTLY LARGER OR SMALLER THAN YOUR NEIGHBOR'S BUILDING?

Why this is important: The mass and scale of new buildings can significantly alter people's experience as they interact with the building and streetscape. Additionally, buildings that do not take into account their neighbor's mass and scale, can potentially overwhelm existing neighborhood context.

8. WHERE IS YOUR BUILDING LOCATED ON YOUR PROPERTY? DOES ITS FRONT ALIGN WITH YOUR NEIGHBOR'S ON THE STREET?

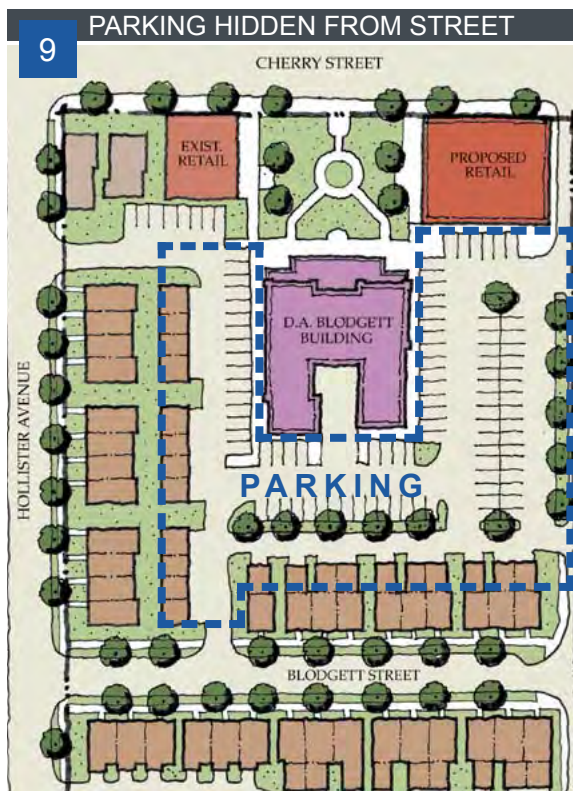
Why this is important: A major part of being contextually sensitive is looking at how your building front sits in relationship to the street and sidewalk. Different types of buildings follow different types of site placement rules. For instance, a mixed use building with a storefront will typically sit right at the property line, whereas a rowhouse will typically be setback from the property line.

9. DO YOU HAVE PARKING FOR CARS ON YOUR PROPERTY? IS THE PARKING HIDDEN FROM THE STREET?

Why this is important: Parking lots on the street promote gaps in the street frontages and deter people from walking along the street. Parking behind buildings and hidden from the sidewalk promote walkable neighborhoods.

10. IS THE PROPOSED USE OF YOUR BUILDING ALLOWED UNDER THE CURRENT ZONING ORDINANCE?

Why this is important: The current zoning ordinance enables the community vision for the neighborhood to be realized. This collective vision is established to promote a walkable and livable neighborhood for all residents.



For additional information on design practices, consult the City of Grand Rapids Historic Preservation Guidelines.

http://grcity.us/design-and-development-services/Planning-Department/Documents/6572_HPC%20Guidelines%20Book.pdf

“Our schools will not improve if we continue to close neighborhood schools in the name of reform. Neighborhood schools are often the anchors of their communities, a steady presence that helps to cement the bond of community among neighbors.”

-Diane Ravitch, Author
The Death and Life of the Great American School System

STRATEGY FOUR

EAST HILLS

LOVES CONGRESS

We envision a first-rate neighborhood school that also serves as a seven-day a week community center, offering unique extracurricular opportunities, art and language classes for adults and children, dance and exercise classes, adult education classes, space for community meetings and gatherings, opportunities for parents with children of school age and younger to gather, and much more.

The **East Hills Loves Congress Strategy** includes the following elements:

- 1 Increase ENROLLMENT Opportunities and STRIVE to Raise Attendance:** Expand from existing pre-K through 5th grade to pre-K through 8th grade.
- 2 Create New LEARNING Opportunities:** Establish a rigorous Spanish language program.
- 3 IMPROVE AND BEAUTIFY the School Grounds:** Construct a soccer field and track on the school grounds.
- 4 Promote EXTRA-CURRICULAR Opportunities:** Expand programming of extra-curricular events and opportunities.
- 5 Expand ARTS Education:** Seek opportunities for arts education partnerships.
- 6 Start a COMMUNITY Center:** Establish a community center within the existing building that provides evening community enrichment classes
- 7 Support HISTORIC Preservation and Renovation of the Building:** Restore the historic school building, including the replacement of historic windows and re-establishment of historic window openings and sizes.
- 8 GROW a Neighborhood School:** As the school enrollment and programming grows, construct a context sensitive building addition to accommodate a middle school and community uses.
- 9 Support Neighborhood PLACEMAKING:** Attracting and retaining people to the community can start with a quality neighborhood school that provides opportunities for a diverse population.

EAST HILLS LOVES CONGRESS

WHY THIS STRATEGY IS IMPORTANT

Strong schools make strong neighborhoods. A competitive neighborhood school anchors a community and draws families to it, creating a deeper sense of connection between residents and bolstering the value of properties and businesses.

A strong neighborhood school also provides a point of common interest and investment for all families, residents, and business owners in a community. Instead of spreading our collective investment in education across the city, a neighborhood school allows us to concentrate our time, energy, and talents in one place – resulting in a lasting investment in both our children and our community.

Congress Elementary School, located in the heart of East Hills between Lake Drive and Baldwin Street, has been East Hills' neighborhood school for more than 140 years. Building on a strong partnership with the Grand Rapids Public Schools, we are creating a pilot program for community investment in neighborhood schools that will make the vision of an East Hills neighborhood school for all our residents a reality.



In partnership with the Grand Rapids Public Schools (GRPS) and with the support of Superintendent Teresa Weatherall Neal and the Grand Rapids Board of Education, East Hills will enable community members – not just families, but couples without children, single people, empty nesters, institutions, and business owners – to invest in our neighborhood school. With the dedicated and talented principal and staff at Congress School, we will work with GRPS to beautify the grounds, create support for expansion of the school, and raise attendance rates.

Our Neighborhood School (Congress Elementary) and our collaborative neighborhood strategy:



STRIVE TO **RAISE ATTENDANCE**



BUILD TO **ACHIEVE ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE**



COLLABORATE WITH **NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTS**



COLLABORATE WITH **STUDENTS AND STAFF**



COLLABORATE TO **RESTORE THE BUILDING**



COLLABORATE TO **BEAUTIFY THE GROUNDS**

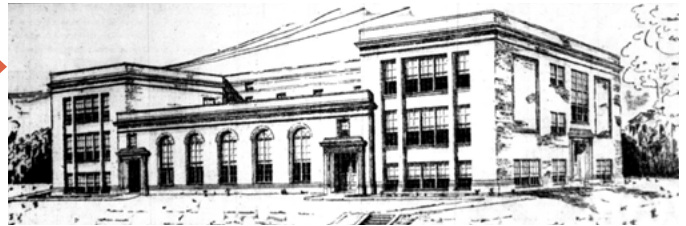
EAST HILLS LOVES CONGRESS

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND COLLABORATION

The collaboration between Grand Rapids Public Schools and the East Hills Neighborhood has led to many first steps in our continued work of fostering a neighborhood school.

OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS SO FAR

- ✓ Historic designation for building - - - - - →
- ✓ Soccer nets replaced
- ✓ Ten trees planted
- ✓ Community survey initiated
- ✓ Sign on Lake Drive fence - - - - - →
- ✓ South doors painted blue
- ✓ Sign on south façade of school replaced
- ✓ Benches/picnic tables on playground painted
- ✓ Community garden constructed - - - - - →
- ✓ Community Zumba classes in gym
- ✓ Creative Youth Center after school creative writing classes
- ✓ Community/business partnership with Brewery Vivant - - - - - →
- ✓ Girls on the Run team
- ✓ Congress Plus after school program



Brewery Vivant staff planting trees at Congress

NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS FOSTER COMMUNITY



Neighborhood schools are one of the essential elements to maintaining healthy and vibrant neighborhoods and cities. Their value stretches well beyond the traditional economic measures of dollars and cents. Neighborhood schools along with great streets, verdant parks, vibrant business districts, sidewalks, mature trees and houses with front porches create an unmatched vibrancy in our City's neighborhoods.

NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS OFFER CONVENIENCE



Neighborhood schools can provide a common focus for the energies of parents and community members, foster friendships between students and parents by promoting the ability to engage in common activities outside of school, enhance exposure to diversity of backgrounds, and build cultural awareness.

Schools that are located close to home make it convenient for parents to volunteer in classrooms and for extracurricular activities. This proximity also makes it easier for siblings to attend school together.

NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS PROVIDE SAFETY



Neighborhood schools make it easier to monitor your children because they are closer to home.

When coupled with Safe Routes to School programs, strategically designed, located and connected crosswalks, and complete streets, neighborhood schools provide unparalleled walkability and safety.

NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS INSPIRE HEALTH



A school located within close proximity to where you live provides the freedom of choice on the mode and route that you take to school. This freedom allows children to walk or bike to school and to engage their natural and built environment. Walking, biking and being outside promote healthy lifestyles.

NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS ARE FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE



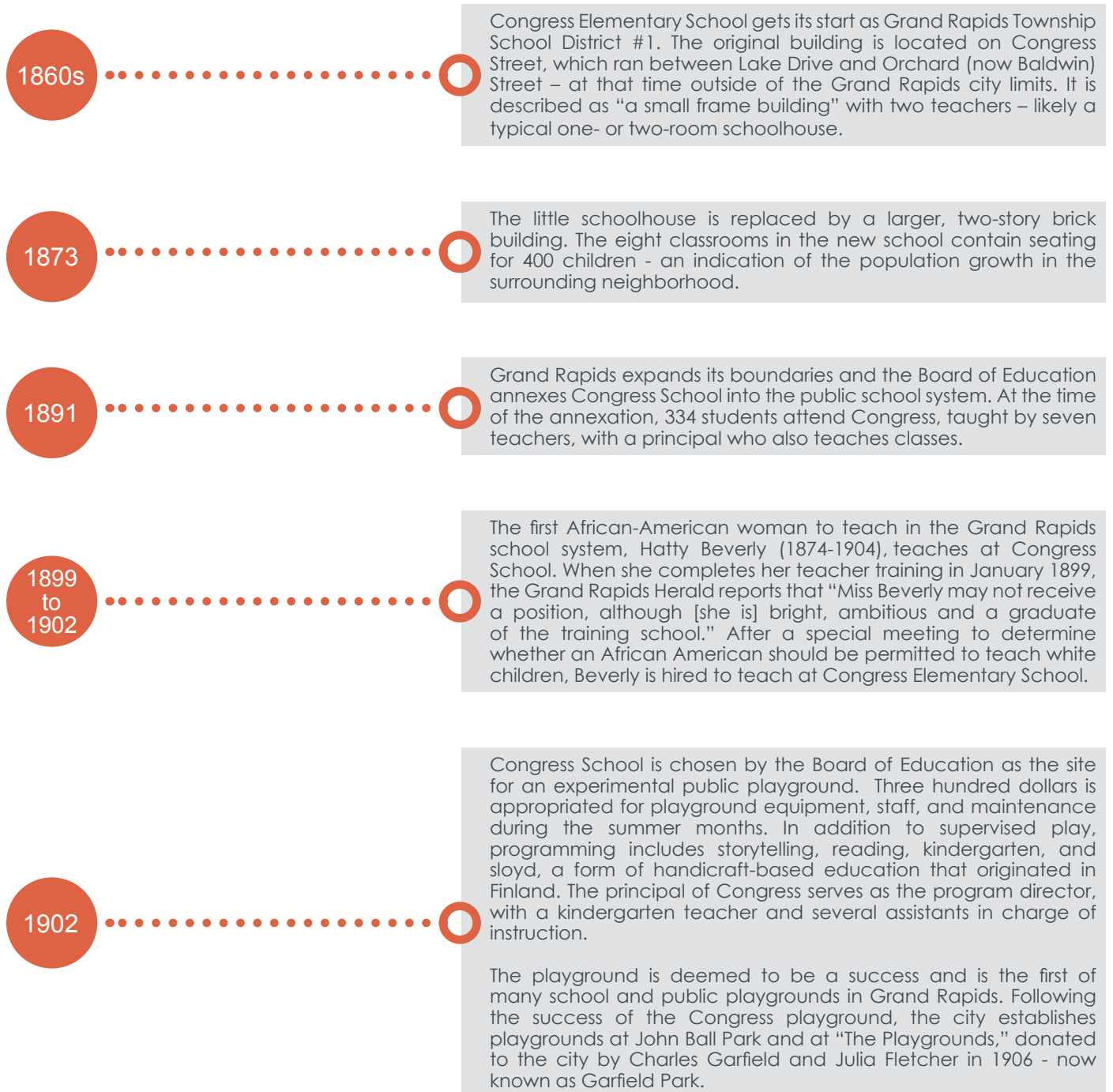
The cost of transporting students to and from school has risen. Locating schools on sites to which students can walk or bike safely and easily can avoid transportation costs and commuting time.

Additionally neighborhood public schools have no tuition.

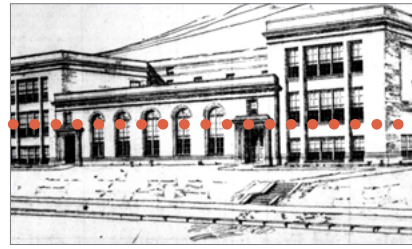
THE CONGRESS SCHOOL BUILDING

The architecture of Congress School is a fine example of early twentieth century school design by Henry H. Turner (1881-1974). Turner became a nationally recognized architect during his tenure with the Grand Rapids Board of Education from 1909 until 1919. Most of the school buildings constructed during 1909 and 1930 are Turner designs; including, in addition to Congress, Burton Junior High School (1927), Northeast Junior High School (1921), Creston High School (1922), Ottawa Hills High School (1927-destroyed), Aberdeen (1928), Dickenson (1921), Franklin (1915), Henry (1921-destroyed), Lafayette (1922), Lexington (1915), Stocking (1924), and West Leonard Elementary Schools. Through Turner's work Grand Rapids' schools gained a national reputation. Delegations from the state and across the country came to inspect his buildings, which combined progressive educational philosophy and high quality design, with reasonable construction costs.

The following is an annotated time line of Congress Elementary School's history:



Neighborhood pressure begins to build for a new school building, led by the East End Improvement Association and the Mothers' Club. The push for the new building shows the importance placed upon the education of their children by the neighborhood residents and businessmen. In January 1917, the Grand Rapids Press reports that plans and specification for the building are being prepared. Neighbors request that a gymnasium that will also serve as a social center be included in the plans.



1916
to
1917

The current Congress School building is completed. Once the new building is complete, it becomes not only a neighborhood social center, but also a catalyst for continued economic development. The gymnasium/social center has separate entrances to allow that part of the building to be used as a neighborhood gathering place, for public meetings, and for evening education classes.

1921

Local parents fight to keep seventh and eighth grades at Congress. Parents do not want their children to go out of the neighborhood for middle school.

1920s
to
1930s

Congress becomes a "park school." The houses on the west side of Congress Avenue are demolished and the street is vacated to make room for more park space. The park-school model was initiated in Grand Rapids in the 1950's, a partnership between the city Parks Department and the Board of Education. New schools were constructed with parks as an integral part of the plan and land was cleared adjacent to existing schools for parks. By sharing the costs, the city and the public schools looked to create strong neighborhood centers and provide a playground within half a mile of every child.

1974

Congress School becomes a magnet Montessori School for the Grand Rapids Public Schools.

1986

Congress Elementary School is added to the Fairmount Square Historic District.

2012

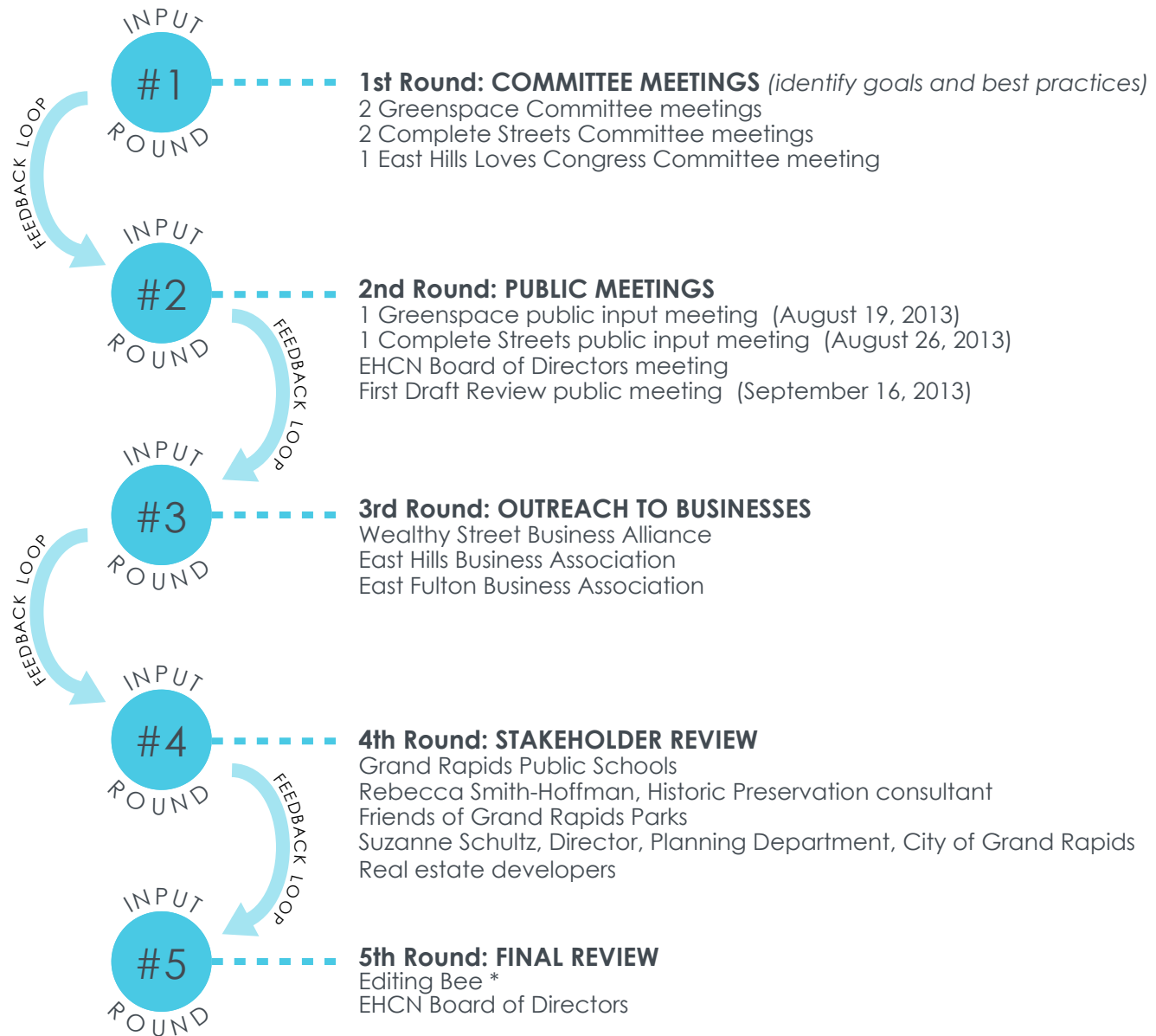


“Intricate minglings of different uses in cities are not a form of chaos. On the contrary, they represent a complex and highly developed form of order.”

-Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND INPUT

This Public Space Strategy was developed as a community-driven model, with several rounds of community input from a variety of stakeholders:



*Editing Bee:

On Friday, March 14, 2014, a group of neighbors gathered around the table in the East Hills office to edit a draft of the Strategy. This cooperative editing process encouraged questions and conversation around the Strategy. The goal of the Editing Bee was to:

- make the Strategy easily readable and understandable to a wide range of people.
- make sure our vision for the Strategy was communicated throughout all of the sections.
- gather further input on necessary changes.

Thanks to everyone who participated - Eric Baxter, Dotti Clune, Mariah Kennedy, Carol Moore, David Proulx, Elizabeth Hoffman-Ransford, Kate Shockey, and Rebecca Smith-Hoffman.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND INPUT

The following community members participated in the East Hills Public Space Strategy:

Mark Rumsey	Lynn Talbert	Gabriel Works
Dotti Clune	Roger Talbert	Elizabeth Barnum
Carol Moore	Ann Bower	Drew Stoppels
John O'Connor	Deb Barcar	Shirley Monte
Logan Lee	Johannah Jelks	Cecile Matthews
Lyon Lee	Roger McClary	Nicki Zenker
Ryan VanderMeer	Amelia Tripp	Ben Johnson
Chris Travis	Judi Buchman	Tom Cabot
Nicole Travis	Matt Kolenda	Dawn Hop
Charlie Ransford	Elizabeth Kolenda	Matt Stacks
Liz Ransford	Joy Pryor	David Joseph
Eleanor Ransford	Kyle Brunner	Dr. Patrica Houser
Susie Logie	Veda Hodges	Len Robinson
Kate Shockey	Tina Anderson	Eric Baxter
Christine Mutch	Brandy Arnold	Deborah Johnson-Wood
Margaret Werdents	Liz Triezenberg	Jamie Coffin
John Fetter	Matt Stephens	Nicole Mikkelsen
Sheila Shotwell	Lauren DeVries	Marilu Andre
Alison Dickinson	Laura Wilson	Jerry Meyer
Nicholas Dickinson	Heather Palmer	Claire Fisher
Mari Beth Jelks	Traci Montgomery	Jon Lewandowski
Mike Raymond	Victoria Cabot	Tori Pelz
Melissa Raymond	Rebecca Smith-Hoffman	Mike Pelz
Sarah Sherman	Margaret Wheeler	Megan Cottrell
Anna Hive	Jim Winter-Troutwine	Shawna Fitzgerald
Mark Lockwood	Tyler Nickerson	Heather VanDyke
Marilyn Lockwood	Brooks Twist	Rachel Zylstra
Bonnie Mulder	Kate Avery	John Walborn
Gary Mulder	TJ Masker	Lenn Beardsley
Eric Tank	Kaelee Brockway	
Vern Bultema	Josh Brockway	
Ashley Wildman	Mariah Kennedy	The East Fulton Business Association
Jen Crowley	Scott Gray	
Christian Bell	City Commissioner Rosalynn Bliss	The East Hills Business Association
Beth Bell	City Commissioner Ruth Kelly	
Shayne Malone	Karen Kehoe	The Wealthy Street Business Alliance
Larissa Malone	Sheila Knopke	
Sherry Devroy	County Commissioner Jim Talen	

Thanks to all who helped shape the East Hills Public Space Strategy.

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Front Cover: Sevens building (632 Wealthy) looking East on Wealthy Street, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Photo courtesy Mark F. Miller, Nederveld

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Page 6: Wealthy Theater 1936, Grand Rapids, Michigan
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Page 9: 632 Wealthy Street, Sevens building (before and after), Grand Rapids, Michigan
Photo courtesy Mark F. Miller, Nederveld

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STRATEGY 1: Neighborhood Parks and Green Spaces

Page 16: Cherry Park, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Photo courtesy Mark F. Miller, Nederveld

Page 17, top left: Cherry Park, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Page 17, top right: Cherry Park, circa 1960, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Page 17, middle left: Fulton Street Cemetery, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Page 17, middle right: Baldwin Park, corner of Lake Drive and Fulton Street, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Page 17, bottom left: Fairmount Square Park on Cherry Street, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Photo courtesy Mark F. Miller, Nederveld

Page 17, bottom right: Congress Elementary School Playground, Grand Rapids, Michigan
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Page 21, top left: Buffalo, New York

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Photo courtesy Ted Lott, Lott3Metz Architecture

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Page 24, top: Arbor Day 2012 Tree of the Year on Wealthy Street, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Photo courtesy Friends of Grand Rapids Parks

Page 24, bottom left: Hollister Avenue, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Photo courtesy Mark F. Miller, Nederveld

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Page 24, bottom right: Plaza space in Los Angeles, California

Page 25, top: Monroe Center, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Photo courtesy Mark F. Miller, Nederveld

Page 25, middle: SW 12th Avenue, Portland, Oregon
Photo courtesy Kevin Perry, Bureau of Environmental Services, City of Portland

Page 26, top left: Residential street, Buffalo, New York

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Page 26, bottom left: East Hills Neighborhood residential street, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Photo courtesy Mark F. Miller, Nederveld

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Page 27, middle right: Cherry Street, East Hills, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Photo courtesy EHCN

Page 27, bottom left: Fairmount Square Park, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Photo courtesy Mark F. Miller, Nederveld

Page 27, bottom right: Brewery Vivant volunteers planting trees at Congress Elementary School, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Photo courtesy Friends of Grand Rapids Parks

STRATEGY 2: Streets as Public Spaces

Page 30: Cherry Street, East Hills, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Photo courtesy EHCN

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Photo courtesy Mark F. Miller, Nederveld

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Photo courtesy Mark F. Miller, Nederveld

Page 31, bottom left: Wealthy Street looking West, Grand Rapids, Michigan

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Page 33, upper right: Rendering of complete street

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Page 36, top: Sevens building (632 Wealthy) looking East on Wealthy Street, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Photo courtesy Mark F. Miller, Nederveld

Page 36, middle: 1001 Lake Drive looking West, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Photo courtesy Mark F. Miller, Nederveld

Page 36, bottom: Corner curb ramp
Photo courtesy Dan Burden

Page 37, top: Cherry Street in front of Greenwell, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Photo courtesy Mark F. Miller, Nederveld

Page 37, middle: Cherry Street, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Photo courtesy Mark F. Miller, Nederveld

Page 37, bottom left: Walk your bike, Long Beach, California

Page 37, bottom right (upper): No bike zone, Boston, Massachusetts

Page 37, bottom right (lower): Walk your bike, Burlington, Vermont

Page 38: Miscellaneous crosswalks from various locations including Oakland, California; Seoul, South Korea; and San Francisco, California

Page 39: Ergonomic Crosswalk concept illustrations
Photo courtesy designboom.com

Page 40, top: Cherry Street looking West in front of Greenwell, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Photo courtesy Mark F. Miller, Nederveld

Page 40, middle: Cherry Street looking East in front of Greenwell, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Photo courtesy Mark F. Miller, Nederveld

Page 40, bottom: Hollister Avenue, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Photo courtesy Mark F. Miller, Nederveld

Page 41, top: East Hills Neighborhood residential street, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Photo courtesy Mark F. Miller, Nederveld

Page 41, middle: Cherry Street furnishing zone, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Photo courtesy Mark F. Miller, Nederveld

Page 41, bottom: Outdoor seating, Plano, Texas
Photo courtesy Duany Plater-Zyberk and Company

Page 42, top: Bike lane, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Page 42, middle: Bike lane, Copenhagen, Denmark

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Page 43, top: Protected bike lane, Austin, Texas

Page 43, middle: Protected bike lane, Chicago, Illinois

Page 43, bottom: Protected bike lane, Portland, Oregon

Page 44, top: Blodgett Street, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Photo courtesy Mark F. Miller, Nederveld

Page 44, middle: Cherry Street looking East in front of Greenwell, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Photo courtesy Mark F. Miller, Nederveld

Page 44, bottom: Cherry Street, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Photo courtesy Mark F. Miller, Nederveld

Page 45: Various parklets in San Francisco, California; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Boston, Massachusetts

Page 46, middle: Blodgett Street, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Photo courtesy Mark F. Miller, Nederveld

Page 46, bottom: Castle Street, Cambridge, England

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Photo courtesy EHCN

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Photo courtesy Mark F. Miller, Nederveld

Page 51, bottom left: Greenwell, 924 Cherry Street, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Photo courtesy Mark F. Miller, Nederveld

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Photo courtesy Mark F. Miller, Nederveld

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Photo courtesy Mark F. Miller, Nederveld

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Photo courtesy Inner City Christian Federation (ICCF)

Page 55, top left: Heartwood Antiques, 956 Cherry Street, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Photo courtesy Mark F. Miller, Nederveld

Page 55, top right: Cherry Market, 721 Cherry Street, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Photo courtesy Mark F. Miller, Nederveld

Page 55, middle left: 953 Cherry Street, Grand Rapids, Michigan

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Page 55, middle right: Rowsters Coffee, Sevens Building, 632 Wealthy Street, Grand Rapids, Michigan

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Page 55, bottom left: Parking lot at ICCF offices, 920 Cherry Street, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Photo courtesy Mark F. Miller, Nederveld

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Photo courtesy Mark F. Miller, Nederveld

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Page 57, top: Fitzhugh Avenue Rowhouses, 98 Fitzhugh Avenue, Grand Rapids, Michigan

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Photo courtesy Lott3Metz Architecture

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Photo courtesy Mark F. Miller, Nederveld

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STRATEGY 4: East Hills Loves Congress

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Photo courtesy EHCN

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Page 65, top right: Congress Elementary School students
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Page 65, middle left: Congress Elementary School community garden volunteers
Photo courtesy EHCN

Page 65, middle right: Congress Elementary School students and principal
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Page 66, top: Congress Elementary press illustration, circa 1916
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Page 66, bottom: Brewery Vivant volunteers planting trees at Congress Elementary School, Grand Rapids, Michigan
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Page 67, top: Congress Elementary School students
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Page 69, top: Congress Elementary press illustration, circa 1916
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Inside Back Cover: Sevens building (632 Wealthy) looking East on Wealthy Street, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Photo courtesy Mark F. Miller, Nederveld

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



TED LOTT AIA LEED-AP

Ted Lott founded Lott3 Architecture, LLC in summer of 2001 with a concentration in innovative urban design and architecture in downtown Grand Rapids. Mr. Lott has designed and led the development of some of the most important work in Grand Rapids in the past seven years.

His working relationships with some of West Michigan's leading organizations have resulted in the steady growth of Lott3, resulting in its evolution to Lott3Metz Architecture, LLC in January of 2004.

The past 6 years of Mr. Lott's work with Lott3Metz Architecture, LLC has seen a high volume of work successfully completed for organizations such as Spectrum Health and Aquinas College.

Mr. Lott is an award-winning architect, urban designer and planner who worked hard over the years as an active stakeholder in the city neighborhoods; building strong relations with not only the City of Grand Rapids but also the neighborhood residents all around the City.



MARK F. MILLER AIA AICP

Mark Miller, AIA AICP is an architect, urban designer, and planner for Nederveld in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

His planning and design work includes projects at a range of scales, including:

- Building + Block + Street
- Neighborhood + District + Corridor
- Metropolis + City + Town

Mr. Miller is the past-chairman of the City of Grand Rapids Historic Preservation Commission, past-president of the Grand Rapids Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, a member of the Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU), and a NCI Certified Charrette Planner.

He was awarded the 2009 Young Architect of the Year by the Grand Valley Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and is a contributing editor for Grand Rapids Magazine, where he writes a monthly column about urbanism and architecture in West Michigan.

Mark currently serves on the Kent County Land Bank Advisory Council, the Fulton Street Farmers Market Board of Directors, and the Downtown Grand Rapids Incorporated (DGRI) Alliance for Investment.

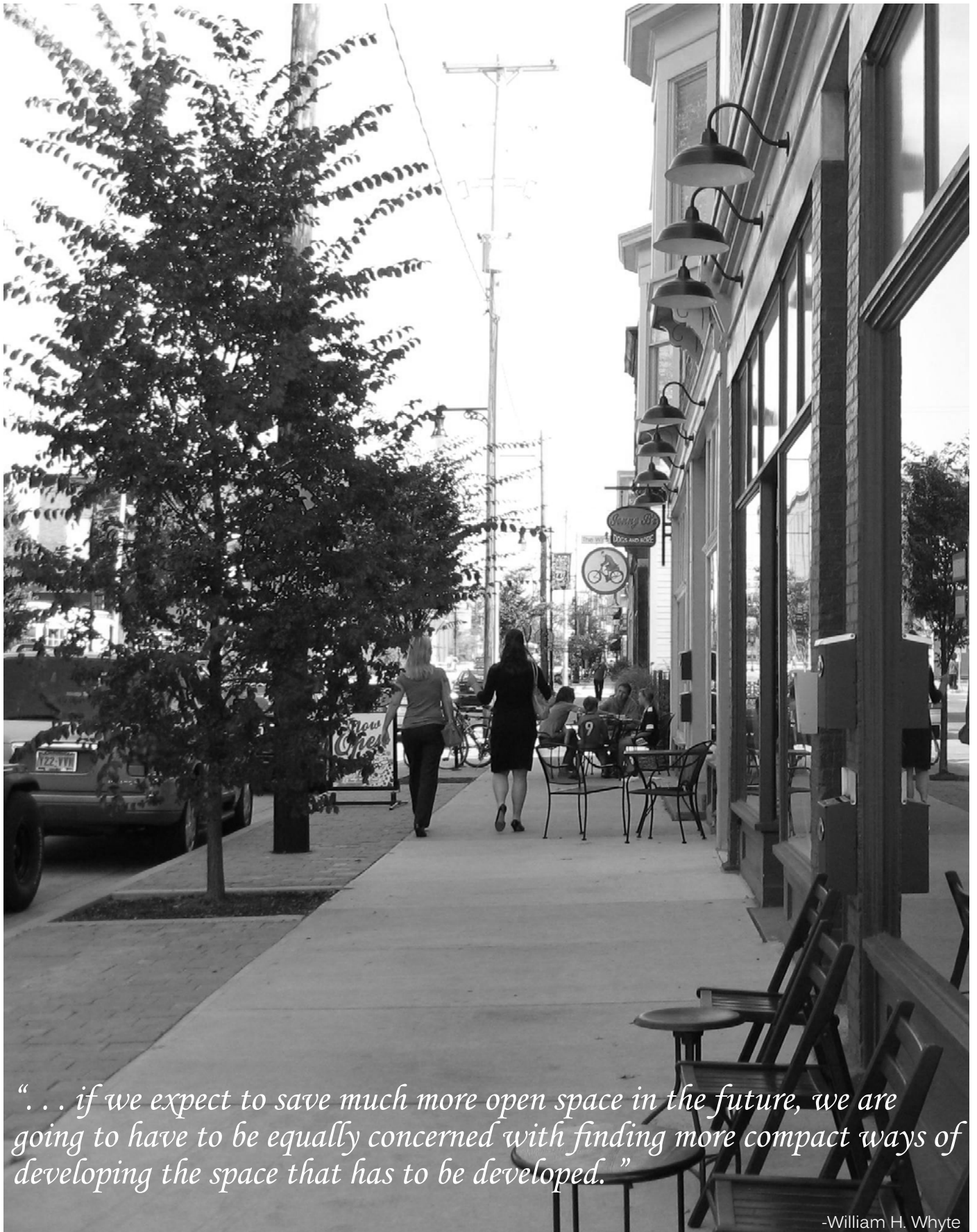
He is committed to the continued resurgence of urban living and resides in the diverse and walkable Heritage Hill historic district.

“The psuedoscience of planning seems almost neurotic in its determination to imitate empiric failure and ignore empiric success.”

-Jane Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities

*“All architecture should be beautiful. All towns should be beautiful.
Beauty nurtures the soul and the spirit. It makes life worth living.”*

-Camillo Sitte



“ . . . if we expect to save much more open space in the future, we are going to have to be equally concerned with finding more compact ways of developing the space that has to be developed. ”

-William H. Whyte

“The best way to predict your future is to create it.”

-Abraham Lincoln



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