

**AGENDA**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING**  
**CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS**  
**NOVEMBER 17, 2022, 6:00 P.M.**  
**FARMINGTON HILLS CITY HALL – COMMUNITY ROOM**  
**31555 W. ELEVEN MILE ROAD, FARMINGTON HILLS MI 48336**  
[www.fhgov.com](http://www.fhgov.com)  
**(248) 871-2540**

1. **Call Meeting to Order**
2. **Roll Call**
3. **Approval of Agenda**
4. **New Master Plan Study**
5. **Public Comment**
6. **Commissioner's  
Comments**
7. **Adjournment**

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Marisa Varga**  
**Planning Commission Secretary**

**Staff Contact**  
**Erik Perdonik**  
**City Planner, Planning and Community Development Department**  
**(248) 871-2540**  
[eperdonik@fhgov.com](mailto:eperdonik@fhgov.com)

NOTE: Anyone planning to attend the meeting who has need of special assistance under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is asked to contact the City Clerk's Office at 248-871-2410 at least two (2) business days prior to the meeting, wherein arrangements/accommodations will be made. Thank you.

# memorandum

**DATE:** November 11, 2022  
**TO:** Farmington Hills Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Joe Tangari, Principal Planner, Giffels Webster  
 Jill Bahm, Partner, Giffels Webster  
 Rod Arroyo, Partner Giffels Webster  
**SUBJECT:** Master Plan Work Session on November 17, 2022, 6:00 p.m.

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## Agenda for the September 15 Study Session

1. Discuss this month’s reading – Suburban Placemaking
2. Discussion of Special Study Areas
  - a. Update areas from 2009 plan
  - b. Discuss focus corridors
  - c. Potential new focus areas

## Reading for the November 17 Study Session (included in this packet)

### Suburban Placemaking

[Are the Detroit Suburbs Headed for Trouble?](#) from Hour Detroit

[Shifting Suburbs: Reinventing Infrastructure for Compact Development](#) from Urban land Institute

PC Discussion: The documents we’ve shared highlight the need for American suburbs to evolve past the planning and zoning paradigms of the mid-to-late 20<sup>th</sup> Century in order to attract new families and young professionals and remain economically competitive. Housing diversity, walkability, community amenities, and access to goods and services are all important factors in continuing to grow as a city.

### Master Plan Phase 2

As a reminder, Phase 2 of the Master Plan process is heavily focused on obtaining public input, and includes the following elements (crossed out elements have occurred):

- |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <del>1. Leadership Advance with City Staff</del> | <del>Held October 6</del>             |
| 2. Online Public Input Platform                  | Online and accepting responses        |
| <del>3. Open House</del>                         | <del>Held October 20</del>            |
| <del>4. Student (Youth Council)</del>            | <del>At Open House (Preview)</del>    |
| 5. Neighborhood Toolkits                         | 12-15 distributed; 3 returned to date |
| 6. Developer / Real Estate Forums                | December 1st                          |
| 7. Report from Consulting Team                   | Early December                        |
| 8. Joint Meeting PC / CC                         | December                              |
| 9. Student Art Contest                           | January/February                      |

## Special Study Areas

The 2009 Master Plan identified 15 special residential planning areas, and about a dozen non-residential development areas, primarily in the Orchard Lake Road, I-696, Grand River Avenue, and Eight Mile Road corridors.

### Special Residential Planning Areas from 2009

At our November meeting, we will be reviewing each previously identified special residential planning area. The [map of these areas](#) is included in this packet. Our preliminary comments on each site are as follows (red areas have not changed, orange areas have partially changed, green areas have changed and should be removed from the list):

#### Planned for Site Condominiums/Subdivisions

1. **13 Mile Rd near Middlebelt.** This area has not changed since 2009.
2. **12 Mile and Drake.** The former Steppingstone school is now home to a mosque; there could be potential to split some of the land.
3. **Sarah Fisher site.** There is an approved PUD for this piece of land use; it should be removed from consideration.
4. **Sisters of Mercy Campus/Costick Center.** A new senior facility is under construction, the Costick Center is still in operation, and the city is planning for independent senior housing on the southern portion of the site. This site should be removed from this list.
5. **10 Mile near Orchard Lake.** An approved subdivision is under construction.
6. **10 Mile east of Middlebelt.** This area has not changed since 2009.
7. **Boys and Girls Republic.** Though preliminary qualification was granted to a PUD here in 2021, the project has not advanced further; a sticking point has been the cost of a new bridge over the Rouge.
8. **Halsted near 8 Mile.** This area has not changed since 2009.
9. **Metroview Street.** This area has not changed since 2009.

#### Planned for Cluster Option (possibly attached housing)

10. **Historic Halsted Rd.** This area has not changed since 2009.
11. **12 Mile & Schroeder.** This area has not changed since 2009.
12. **Orchard Lake north of 11 Mile.** Some development has occurred roughly along the lines of the 2009 Master Plan on the east side of the road; on the west side, the Michigan School of Psychology has expanded southward, but other sites are unchanged.
13. **East side of Orchard Lake, south of 11 Mile.** This area has not changed since 2009.
14. **Inkster and 10 Mile.** This area has not changed since 2009.
15. **Inkster and 9 Mile.** This area has not changed since 2009.

### Non-Residential Development Areas

We will also review our non-residential development areas; [maps are included in this packet](#).

1. **Freeway Redevelopment Areas.** We discussed these sections of the city at our last meeting in September. By and large, the planned overlays for these areas have been implemented, but no developer has yet utilized them. We should consider whether further study is warranted here.
2. **Orchard Lake Rd Redevelopment Areas.**
  - a. **Northwestern Highway and Orchard Lake Road.** One PUD has been approved here, and the Sam's Club next door is empty. This area remains a prime study area.
  - b. **14 Mile Rd and Northwestern Highway.** A major PUD development, and another possible pending PUD (the applicant will be coming back to Council soon), this area has changed considerably since 2009. Some further study may be warranted, with its extent determined by the outcome of the proposed PUD.

- c. Orchard Lake Rd north of 13 Mile; Orchard Lake Rd 12 Mile-13 Mile; Orchard Lake & 12 Mile. The Orchard Lake Road corridor north of I-696 remains a prime study corridor.
3. Haggerty & 14 Mile Rd. This is a strip center that has not significantly changed since 2009.
4. 12 Mile & Farmington Rd. 3 hotels have been built here since 2009, finishing the area's build-out. We should consider whether further study is warranted here.
5. 10 Mile and Orchard Lake Rd. This area has not changed since 2009 and the recommendations of the last plan can be reviewed and carried forward.
6. Grand River Ave and 8 Mile Rd & Grand River Avenue Mixed Use. The lower Grand River corridor between Farmington and 8 Mile remains a prime study area; in particular, we'd like to study the area around the "mixing bowl" where M-5 meets Grand River Avenue.
7. 8 Mile Rd Industrial. Small changes have occurred in this area. We should consider whether further study is warranted here.





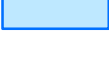
#### Potential New Focus Areas

We should discuss whether any other areas in need of special study have emerged or become apparent since 2009. The 12 Mile and Northwestern Highway corridors are two of the most likely corridors to yield new study areas.



# Special Residential Planning Areas

## Special Residential Planning Areas

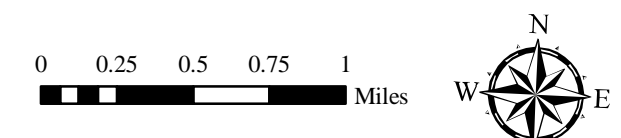
-  Single-Family Residential
-  Single-Family Cluster Option-Detached
-  Single-Family Cluster Option-Attached
-  Single-Family or Public
-  Special Planning Area

## Site Condominiums and Subdivisions

1. Thirteen Mile Road near Middlebelt
2. Twelve Mile and Drake Roads
3. St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher
4. Sisters of Mercy Campus
5. Ten Mile near Orchard Lake
6. Ten Mile Road, east of Middlebelt
7. Boys and Girls Republic
8. Halsted near Eight Mile
9. Metroview Street

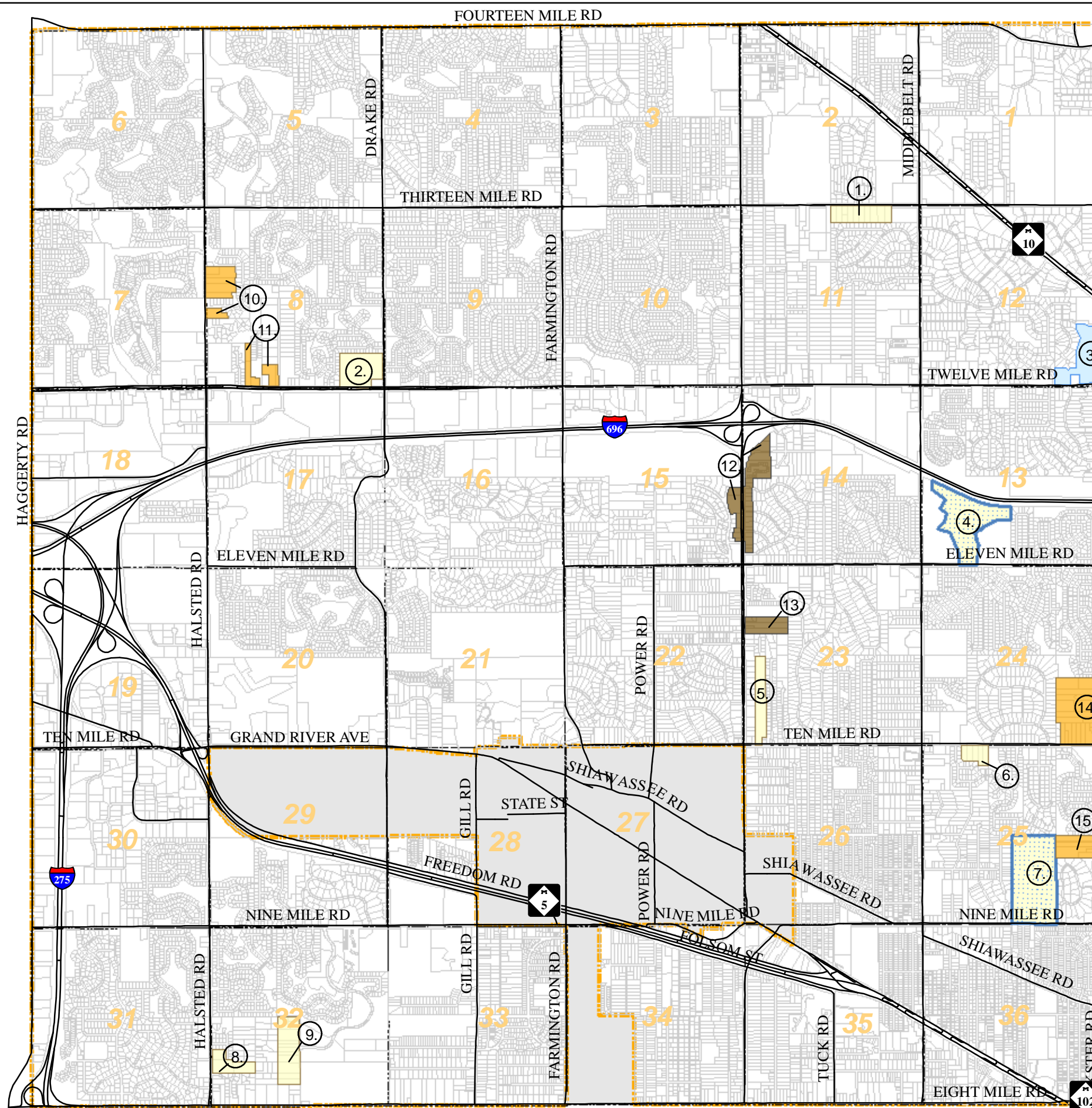
## Cluster Options

10. Historic Halsted Road
11. Twelve Mile Road and Schroeder
12. Orchard Lake Road north of Eleven Mile Road
13. East side of Orchard Lake Road, south of Eleven Mile Road
14. Inkster and Ten Mile Road
15. Inkster near Nine Mile Road



SOURCE: City of Farmington Hills, Planning Division, January 15th 2009.

DISCLAIMER: Although the information provided by this map is believed to be reliable, its accuracy is not warranted in any way. The City of Farmington Hills assumes no liability for any claims arising from the use of this map.

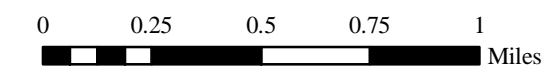




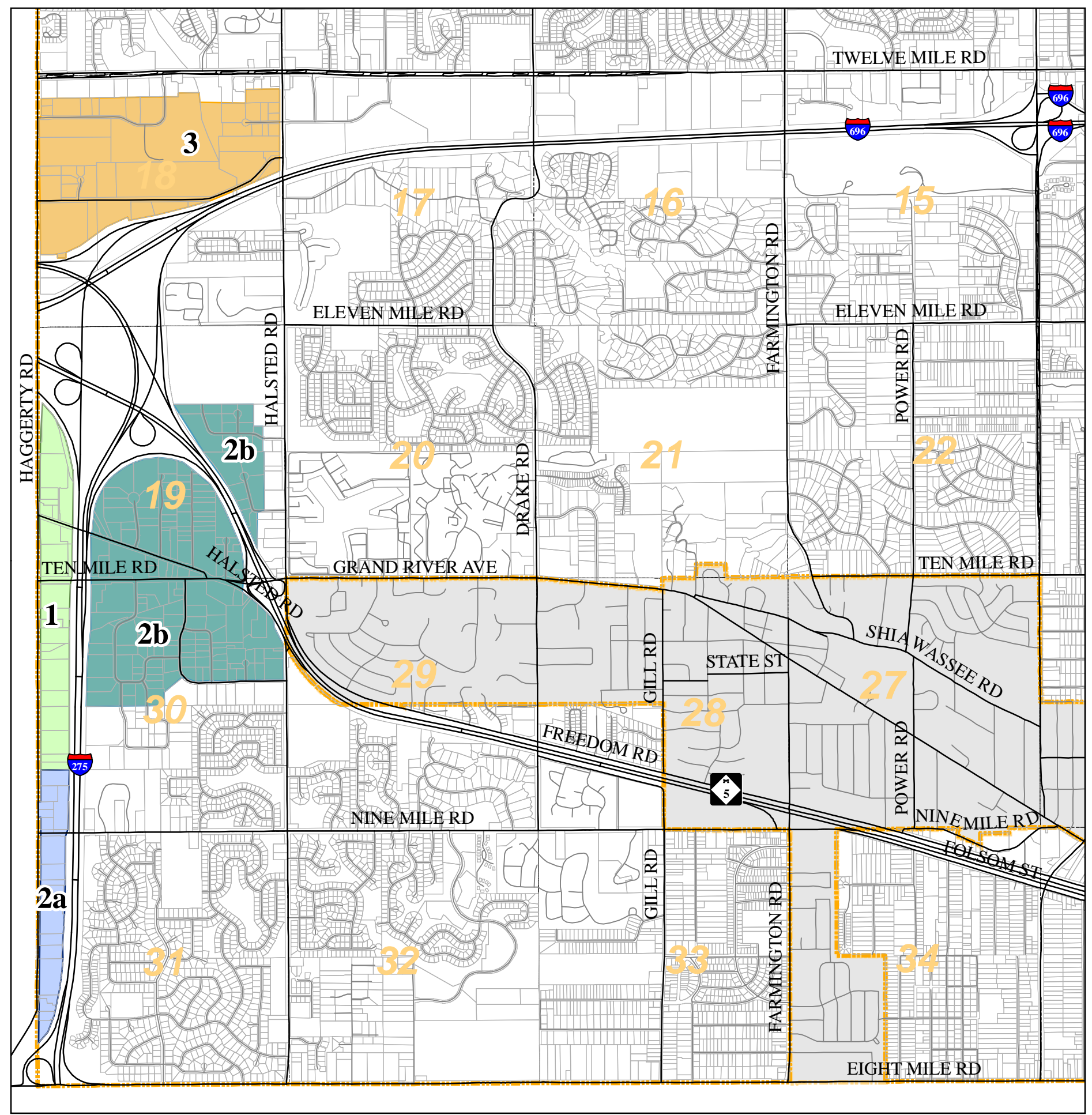
# Freeway Redevelopment Areas

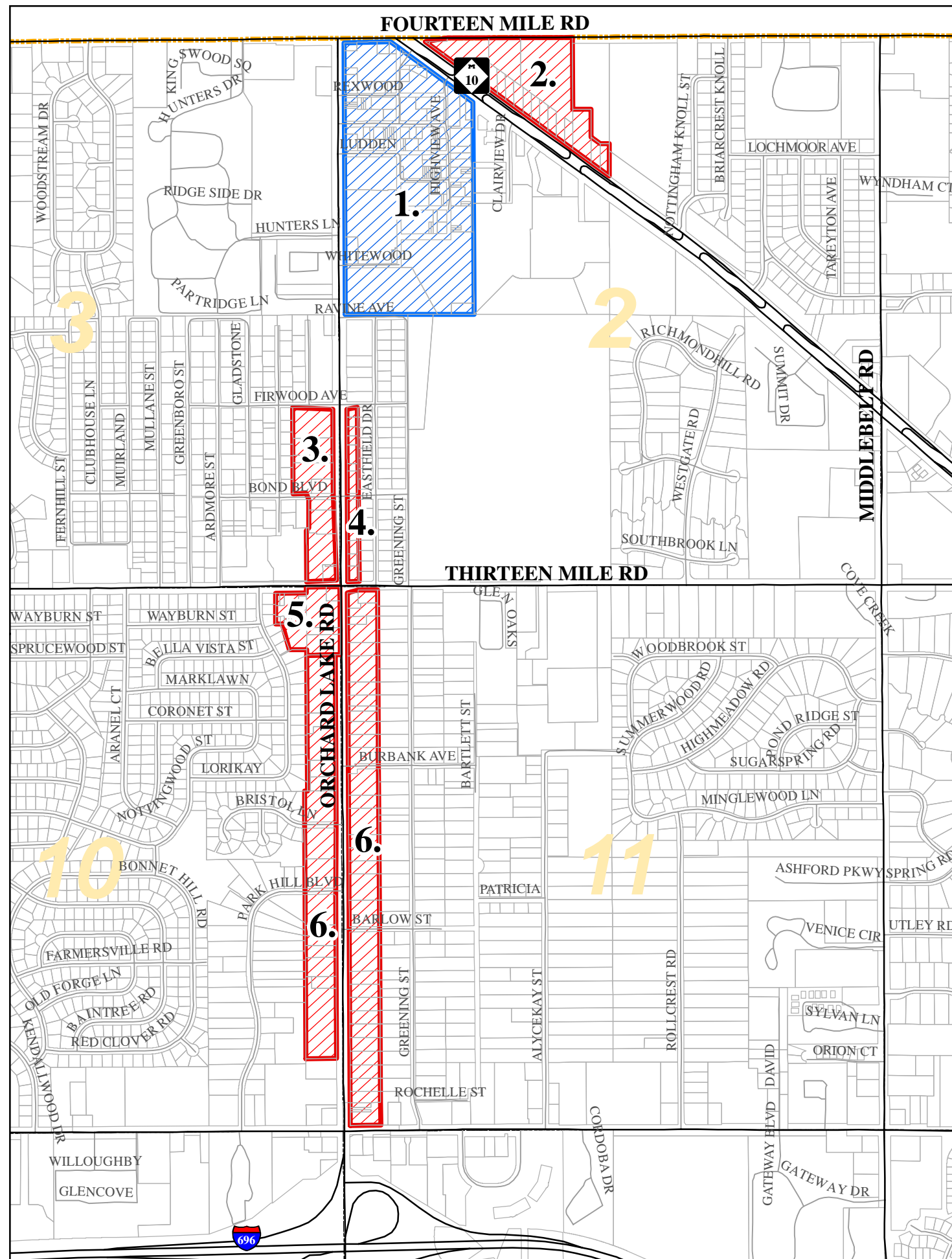
## Redevelopment Areas

- Freeway Redevelopment 1 (8 Stories)
- Freeway Redevelopment 2a (5 Stories)
- Freeway Redevelopment 2b (5 Stories)
- Freeway Redevelopment 3 (5 Stories)





SOURCE: City of Farmington Hills, Planning Division, January 15th, 2009.  
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# Orchard Lake Road Redevelopment Areas

## Redevelopment Areas

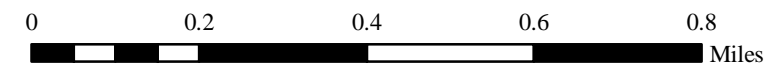
-  Business Redevelopment
-  Mixed Use Redevelopment

## Mixed Use Redevelopment

1. Northwestern Highway and Orchard Lake Road

## Business Redevelopment

2. Fourteen Mile and Northwestern Highway
3. West side of Orchard Lake Road, north of 13 Mile Road
4. East side of Orchard Lake Road, north of 13 Mile Road
5. West side of Orchard Lake Road, south of 13 Mile Road
6. Orchard Lake Road, between 12 and 13 Mile Road






SOURCE: City of Farmington Hills, Planning Division, January 15th, 2009.

DISCLAIMER: Although the information provided by this map is believed to be reliable, its accuracy is not warranted in any way. The City of Farmington Hills assumes no liability for any claims arising from the use of this map.



# Southeast Business and Industrial Redevelopment Areas

## Redevelopment Areas

-  Business Redevelopment
-  Industrial Redevelopment
-  Mixed Use Redevelopment

### Business Redevelopment

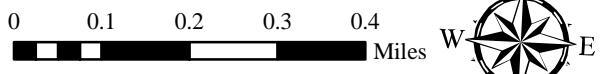
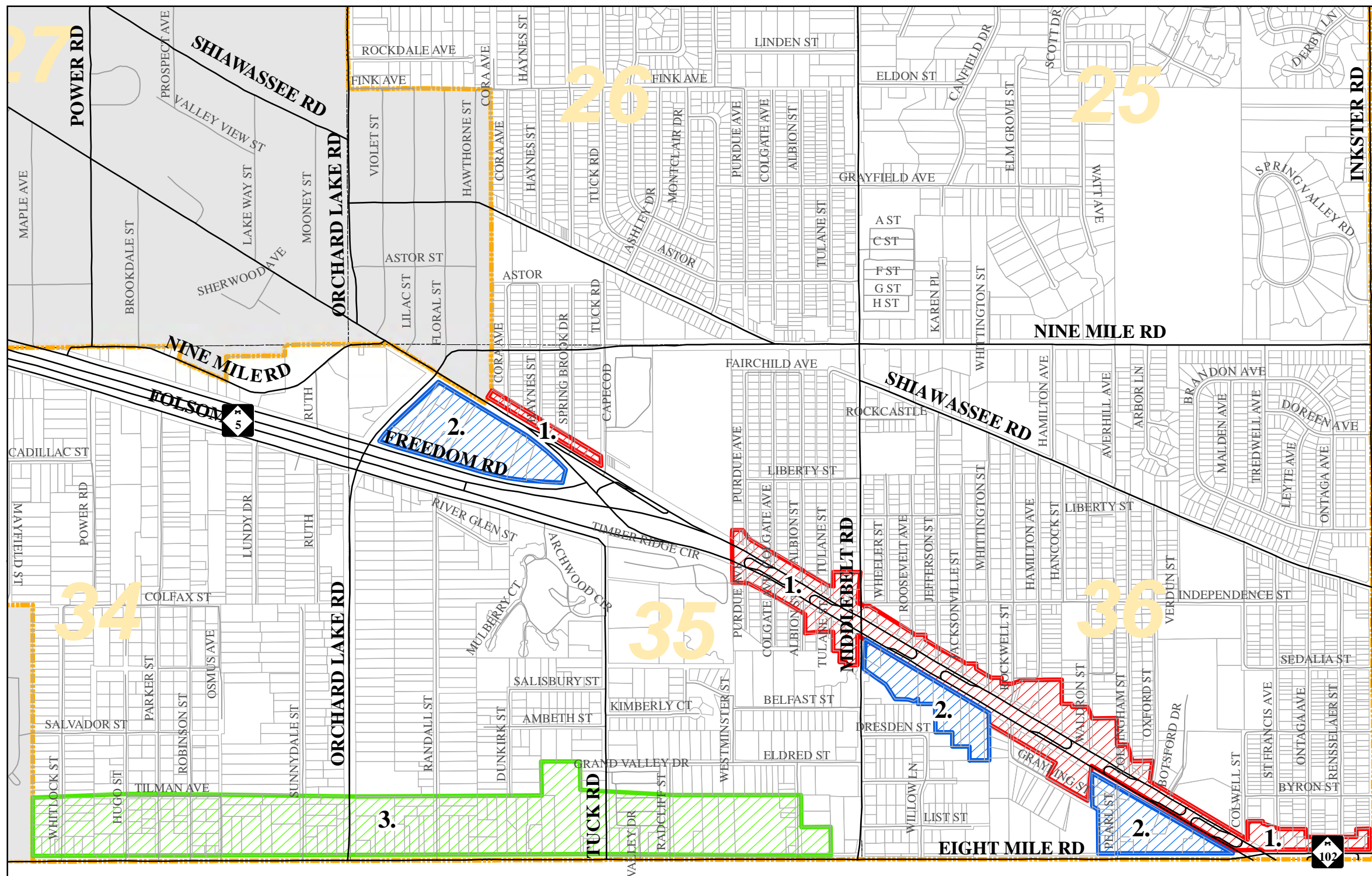
1. Grand River Avenue and Eight Mile Road

### Mixed-Use Development

2. Grand River Avenue

### Industrial Redevelopment

3. Eight Mile Road



SOURCE: City of Farmington Hills, Planning Division, January 15th, 2009.

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# Are the Detroit Suburbs Headed for Trouble?

## The American dream is no longer in suburbia

BY LOU BLOUIN

**B**rent Savidant has never eaten at a Chili's nor Outback Steakhouse and sees no reason to start now. It's an improbable streak, really, given that he lives in the Detroit exurbs (Clarkston) and works in the suburbs (Troy), where chain restaurants can feel like a way of life. But Starbucks — yes, the Troy city planner can live with that, and actually suggests the one at the suburban intersection of two busy surface arteries for an out-of-office interview. In fact, Savidant wants to show it off.

"I mean, going back 10 years, this site was a gas station," he says, easing into a glass-half-full defense of the chain cafe's existence. "And we're sitting here on the patio, shooting the sh\*t, watching the cars go by, and there are five people here enjoying the sunshine who could have sat inside. We're still in Troy, and the automobile is a big part of what we are, but I'd say this works out here."

At first, it's difficult to see the coffeeshop as much of an upgrade of this corner's social capital. For starters, it's loud — so loud that Savidant's argument often struggles to compete with the sounds of mid-day traffic. And the backdrop of strip retail, surface parking lots, and absence of foot traffic instantly undercut his pitch that this is a credible "third place" — a placemaking social hub that isn't work or home.

But let Savidant finish his argument, and you start to see what he's getting at. The Starbucks is in fact just a small, early part of an audacious retooling of Big Beaver Road — one that's been in the works for more than a decade. So far, the city's tried to soften the personality of the busy 200-foot-wide boulevard with bigger sidewalks for pedestrians and cyclists. They've revamped the zoning to allow the one-story strip retail to be gradually replaced with taller buildings, including apartments and condos, that are moved closer to the road, in an attempt to create a streetscape. They've even introduced a kitschy trolley system to add some public transit to the corridor. The transformation could take generations, but when it's finished, the hope is that the makeover will give Troy something this sprawling, mid-century suburb never got around to building: a walkable Main Street — or at least something resembling one.

Savidant admits it's been a tough concept for some to wrap their minds around. "You'll never make Big Beaver walkable" has almost become a mantra among residents who hardly see the point in trying. Even if they pull it off, many doubt it will feel like an authentic downtown. But the idea of retrofitting suburban spaces to become more like cities is actually an experiment that's playing out in communities all over the country. In general, these retrofits involve replacing the bread-and-butter forms of the postwar American suburbs (shopping centers, office parks, overbuilt parking lots, even cul-de-sac neighborhoods) with denser walkable areas that blend workplaces, housing, retail, and green space. It can scale big and small, and can take all kinds of forms: In suburban Denver, a developer created — from scratch — a downtown-like center on the site of a dead mall. In Washington, D.C., one of the fastest-growing metros in the country, planners are shooting to turn 80 million square feet of aging retail and parking lots into what would be America's seventh-largest downtown — all anchored by a light-rail hub.

Such projects aren't just suburban planners trying out trendy ideas. In many cases, they're key parts of big-picture adaptation strategies — arguably urgent ones — that are borne of emerging social and economic forces. Suburbs like Troy have largely run out of the inexpensive vacant land that fueled their growth, so building anything new, by necessity, usually involves replacing something old. And the country is also on the cusp of several substantial demographic shifts that promise to reorder where and how we live.

In particular, an increasing share of baby boomers no longer see their four-bedroom, suburban empty nests as the ideal place to spend their retirement years (when compared to, say, two-bedroom downtown condos where somebody takes care of all the maintenance and you can walk to dining and shopping). And today's 20- and 30-somethings, who, in general, prefer smaller-footprint housing that's embedded in walkable communities, aren't drawn to the car-fueled suburban dream like their parents were. Given these trends, demographers expect up to 85 percent of new American households in the coming years won't have children in them. In Troy, two-thirds of its households are already childless, though this is due to its aging population more than an influx of young childless newcomers.





**“WE HAVE A LOT OF CORPORATIONS WHO WANT TO ATTRACT YOUNG EMPLOYEES, BUT THOSE YOUNG PEOPLE DON’T WANT TO LIVE IN TROY. THEY GREW UP IN SUBURBS; THEY DON’T WANT TO BE ADULTS IN SUBURBS. SO WE HAVE TO EVOLVE, OR I THINK WE DIE ON THE VINE.”**

**- BRENT SAVIDANT**

The implication is if single-family-home-dominated suburbs like Troy don’t adapt to what these two large demographics want, they could be passed over for other places in the coming years. Savidant, who’s not one for unnecessary drama, casts the issue with even more urgency. “With baby boomers getting older and household sizes getting smaller, we’re going to be at a point in the next 15 years where we have a dramatic oversaturation of large homes. And we have a lot of corporations who want to attract young employees, but those young people don’t want to live in Troy. They grew up in suburbs; they don’t want to be adults in suburbs. They want to go to real cities. So we have to evolve, or I think we die on the vine.”

That Troy could be facing quite so stark a demographic crisis is not obvious today. By many measures, Troy is doing just fine: The city represents the third-largest tax base in Michigan, and the market for those four-bedroom homes is so strong, the crisis of the moment is tight inventory. Troy’s industrial sector is also booming, fueled by a recovery in the auto industry; and its office market, which hit 33 percent vacancy after the recession, has recovered faster than any suburb, with around 14 percent vacancy today.

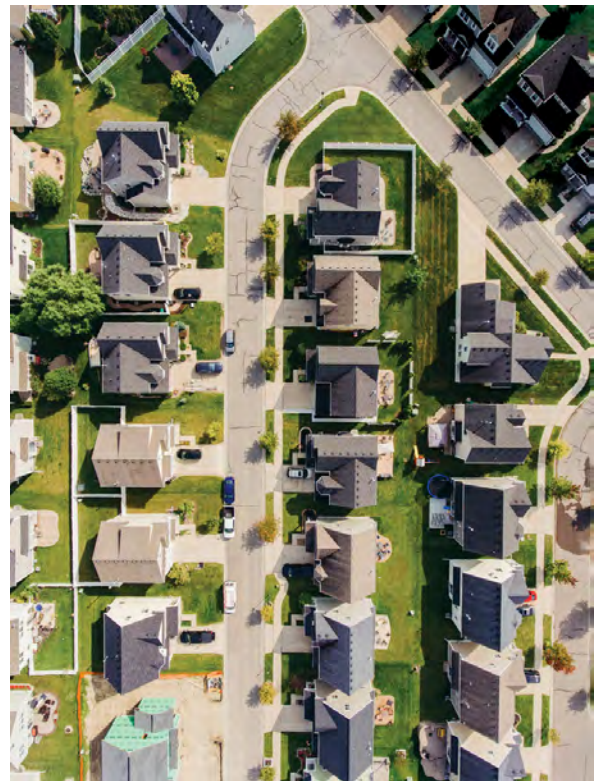
Core Partners CEO and real estate adviser Matt Farrell, who recently helped the city analyze trends in its commercial, industrial, and office markets, says Troy still has a lot of strengths. Many of them are things that have always attracted people to the suburbs: good schools, excellent public safety, and shopping (the upscale Somerset Collection, he says, still ranks as one of the top malls in the country). But he buys Savidant’s argument about future demographic shifts, particularly because Michigan has essentially zeroed out when it comes to population growth. With that dynamic, he says, you could see a future that resembles a game of musical chairs in which you’re adding chairs instead of removing them.

“In places like North or South Carolina, where you have 7 percent growth, some want the new thing, but others are willing to backfill into the old thing, so there’s still a market for that,” Farrell says. “Unfortunately, that equation doesn’t work in southeast Michigan. So we add new buildings, new apartments; but without growth, we end up leaving something behind without a population to fall into it. There will be an empty chair in the room.”

It’s a process that’s arguably already underway. Many places are quickly adding to their density with new apartments, parking decks, and multi-story, multi-use buildings. But Farrell says that kind of reinvestment is unevenly favoring cities like Birmingham, Royal Oak, Ann Arbor, downtown Detroit, and other places with walkable urban centers. Developers in downtown and Midtown Detroit, in particular, can’t build apartments fast enough to keep pace with the demand; and vacancy in the city’s downtown office market is now at a decades-low 8 percent (compared to 14 percent in Troy). In more historic suburban cities like Berkley, Ferndale, and Royal Oak, the appetite for walkable places is even fueling a different form of suburban retrofit: Developers are buying up the tiny matchstick bungalows, knocking them down, and replacing them with 2,000-square-foot modern single-family homes in older neighborhoods. In these places, walkable locations — not houses — are what the market is chasing.

Meanwhile, in Troy, Farrell doesn’t disagree with the characterization that the city’s current strength is somewhat a matter of running on fumes more than a sign of future momentum. He worries in particular that in an era where the workforce is increasingly choosing where to live first, then looking for employment, Troy’s legacy housing and lack of walkability hurt its chances in the evolving competition between our urban and suburban places.

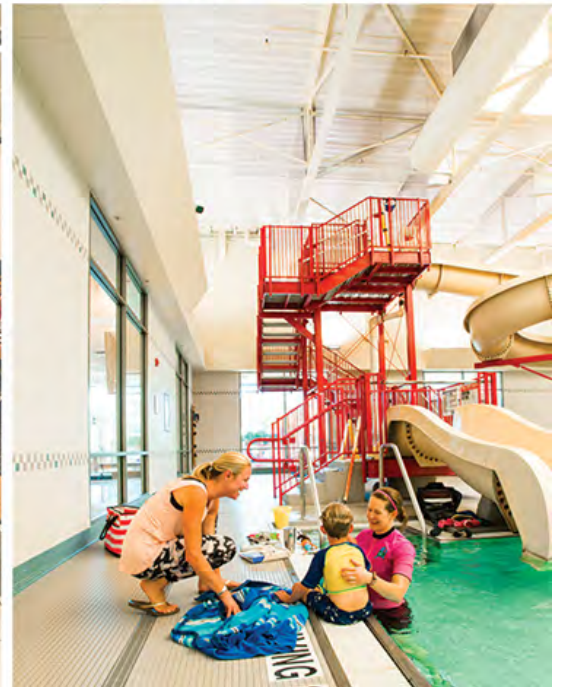
“It’s never been more difficult than it is today to recruit companies to come to Troy, Farmington Hills, Southfield, and markets that have been easy in the past,” he says. “Royal Oak, Plymouth, and Rochester are winning that battle. The city of Detroit is winning that battle. Some people might have a hard time hearing that, but Detroit is very real competition.”



### Troy: c.1980 & Today

Photos of Troy in the 1980s (top) show a community defined by single-family households. Portraits of life today (bottom) reveal how changing demographics are reshaping the city’s identity. An aging population means two-thirds of households are childless; roughly 20 percent of residents are of Asian descent.





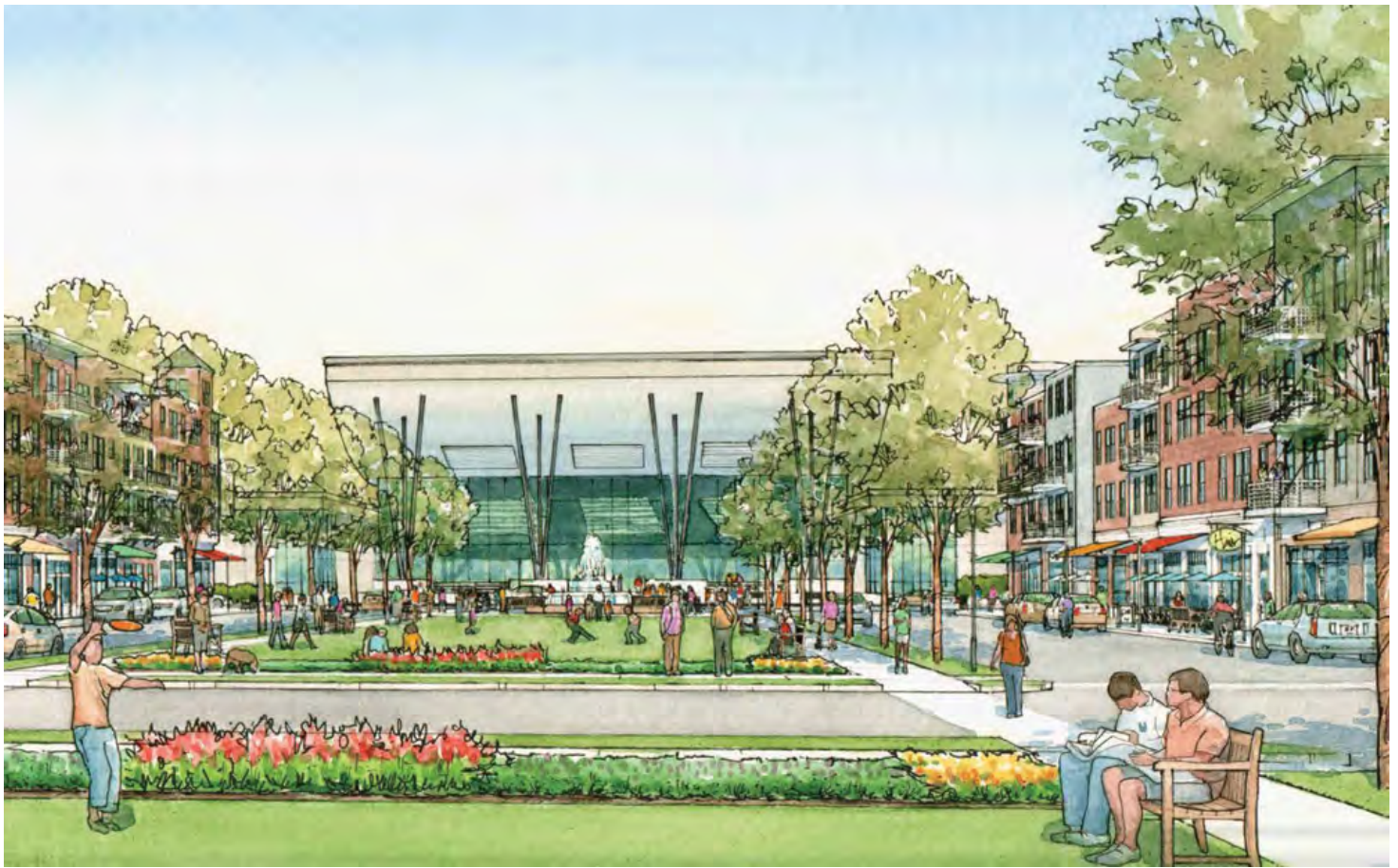
ARCHIVAL PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF TROY HISTORIC VILLAGE; ALL OTHER PHOTOS BY JOSH SCOTT.

When Savidant finally opens the spiral-bound book that's been until now sitting restlessly under his hands, the vision for Troy's future town center proves to be more exciting than a Starbucks. If the cafe felt like dipping a toe in the suburban retrofit pool, this is a dive into the deep end: The set of colorful artist renderings shows a whole new walkable, citylike neighborhood that combines just about everything from an urban planner's fetish list. Tucked along the eastern edge of the Big Beaver corridor, there are blocks of smaller-footprint, small-lot cottage-style homes; new streets that mix and match apartments and condos with ground-level storefronts, offices, restaurants, and a boutique grocery. Sixty of the town center's 125 total acres are new parks. There are even plans to build a 5-acre lake. And unlike on the Big Beaver of today — at least in the drawings — there are people on the sidewalks.

The project, which the city has been planning for more than a year and hopes to soon attract a developer for, is often described in the media as an attempt to give Troy the downtown it never had. But Savidant resists the characterization, and he's likely right to do so. By the numbers, the town center is mostly housing — 800 units total. What's different for Troy is that it's a kind of housing that lets people live, work, shop, and go to the park without getting in the car. As such, it's a direct attempt to address what city leaders see as Troy's core vulnerability: That they need more than just large homes on cul-de-sacs to adapt to changing times.

Bob Gibbs, the project's designer, says his inspiration actually came from a nearby source: Birmingham, a metro Detroit community unique for its historic urbanism, and one which is far from the center of the conversation about potential trouble in the suburbs. "People say, 'Oh, that's because Birmingham is rich,'" Gibbs says. "I say it's wealthy because it's planned. Back in the 1920s, Birmingham hired a Harvard urban planner to build their civic plan. The planner said, 'Buy five blocks of houses and tear them down and build a park, build a city hall, build a library.' So they did it. Could you imagine — a city buying five blocks of occupied housing and tearing it down, just because a planner told them to? But I think they're reaping the benefits today."





CITY PLANNER BRENT SAVIDANT SAYS DON'T CALL IT A DOWNTOWN, BUT THIS ARTIST RENDERING SHOWS HOW TROY COULD RETROFIT ITS SPRAWLING CIVIC CAMPUS INTO A WALKABLE, CITYLIKE NEIGHBORHOOD THAT COMBINES SMALLER-FOOTPRINT HOUSING, SHOPPING, OFFICES, AND PARKS.

Troy likely won't have to do anything quite so dramatic to build its town center. The potential site is a sprawling, publicly owned civic campus that, right now, houses the city hall, library, community center, playgrounds, an aging swimming complex, half a dozen overbuilt parking lots, and plenty of open space. It's not exactly a park; more like large swaths of well-maintained lawn surrounding the main buildings. But as a mostly open area in a sea of suburban development, it's often described as the most valuable undeveloped site in the region.

But the idea of remaking the largest piece of public open space in Troy into an urbanlike neighborhood isn't a vision that everyone here is comfortable with. In July, at an informational public meeting about the project, it took just two minutes to see that the city's presenters were going to be on the defensive; another 30 minutes for Bob Gibbs to get into a mild shouting match with a longtime resident who argued this plan would turn "Troy's Central Park" into an enclave community. Gibbs insisted the design was built to do the opposite, but it was clearly a tough sell.

After the meeting, Gibbs said he wasn't surprised by the reaction. A few years back, he was hired to design a much smaller but similar project for Rochester Hills. His original plans called for three stories, with retail, restaurants, and offices on the bottom level with apartments and condos above. "When I proposed it, the city just rolled their eyes and said, you know, 'No way, we don't want renters living in Rochester Hills.'" The built version ended up as a one-story outdoor mall without a single house or apartment. They even insisted on an earthen wall separating it from the nearby neighborhood. "Designing these things is the easy part. Politically, they can be impossible."

It's difficult not to frame the emerging debate over Troy's town center project — and its retrofit plans in general — as a clash of future and past visions of the city. When I ask to chat with members of the citizen group who felt so passionately about it they organized a petition drive to give voters a say on the project, I'm referred to Jeanne Stine and Brian Wattles. Stine, now 88, is a former mayor of Troy and moved here in 1962 when building a house here meant having a dairy farm as a neighbor. And Wattles — his family has roots which date back to 1837, and is almost apologetic that he grew up in Warren and has only lived in Troy for 31 years. (Yes, Wattles Road is named after his family.)

They have a lot of objections to the project, from what they say is a lack of public input to the simple fact that they like their civic complex the way it is. But they also just aren't fans of bringing city living to Troy. After chatting for a bit, I joke with Stine, who recently fought the construction of a new apartment building near her neighborhood, that she uses the word "density" like it's a bad word. "It is a bad word," she says, only she's not really joking.

Wattles then offers his own critique of urbanism: "My line about this walkability thing is that the only reason you see people walking in downtowns is because they had to park three blocks away to get there. Just last week, my daughter wanted to go out to eat in Royal Oak, and I had to drive around looking for a place to park. Then, the parking structure is five dollars. I tried to convince her all week that there are plenty of restaurants in Troy — and there's plenty of parking."

They do acknowledge the exodus of young people from the region. But they don't buy that a more citylike Troy is going to do much to win young people's hearts when they have other urban places to choose from. That, of course, begs the question: Who will be populating the city in the next 25 years as the population continues to age? And for that, Stine and Wattles offer their own observations of emerging demographics in America: They both say the Troy of the future will be decidedly less white.

It's a trend that is already transforming Troy. In the past few decades, well-educated families from Asian countries, particularly China, India, and Pakistan, have been drawn in part by the engineering and technology sectors associated with the auto industry. In fact, roughly 20 percent of the city's population today is of Asian descent, and like many residents, they have been attracted to Troy for the good school systems.

It's a demographic that's also leaving its own mark on the housing and redevelopment landscape. Savidant says it's largely these immigrant groups that are feeding current demand for those four- and five-bedroom traditional homes in the city — in part to accommodate multi-generational families. And in a trend that's almost the reverse of what's happening in more historic, denser Detroit suburbs like Berkley and Ferndale, some residents are buying up multiple large lots with existing homes, tearing them down, and putting up even larger McMansion-style homes. It's proof perhaps that many here are still drawn to Troy's original postwar version of the suburban American dream.





NOT ALL RETROFITS ARE ABOUT MAKING LANDSCAPES MORE URBAN. CASE IN POINT , THIS HOUSE IN FERDALE WHERE THE BUILDER T ORE DOWN THE TINY BUNGALOW AND REPLACED IT WITH A MODERN 2,000-SQUARE-FOOT HOME.

It's hard to say which ideal has more momentum today. Even as those larger houses are replacing mid-century ranches in subdivisions, multi-story apartment buildings and condos are popping up in other parts of Troy. But the community may soon face an important straw poll: Stine and Wattles' petition drive will put a measure on the November ballot that, if approved by voters, could make it harder for the city to sell or lease public land — a step that's being seen as a de facto referendum on the town center project. No one seems sure which way the vote will go. But even the specter of community ambivalence has already had an impact: Savidant says the city has decided to temporarily withdraw its request to developers to submit qualification bids for the project. That doesn't mean the town center is dead, but where voters land — particularly if they show support for the project — could impact how quickly the city moves forward with future retrofits.

June Williamson, the City College of New York professor who inventoried hundreds of redevelopment projects for her co-authored book *Retrofitting Suburbia*, isn't surprised Troy is experiencing growing pains. She says because land has always been scarce in cities, we've grown accustomed to understanding them as places of constant reinvention. But the postwar American suburbs, which are a development form that's only been around for a little more than half a century, are just now entering a first phase of regeneration. As such, there's no proven roadmap for evolution — architecturally, politically, or philosophically.

"Culturally, we understand suburbs as being built and then frozen in amber," Williamson says. "When you run out of room in the old one, you just build a new one. So, adding the idea of retrofitting requires an adjustment in how we think about our suburban places. To some — and maybe particularly in a place like Michigan, where the car has been really important to the history and economy of the region — that's going to feel like you're denigrating a certain ideal. But it's a retooling. It's not a wholesale replacement of one thing with another. It's about adding more diversity to the mix."

Williamson agrees that long-term, southeast Michigan risks suffering continued population loss if it resists serving the emerging demographics looking for smaller housing and walkable neighborhoods. Oakland County alone may need to add 50,000 apartments over the next 20 years to keep pace with demand. Still, unlike some futurists who see suburbs devolving into the new American slums, Williamson is not a doomsdayer about communities like Troy. And despite acknowledgement of the urgency of the challenges, she actually advocates a certain degree of patience with the transformation process.

"My main advice would be to stay tuned to the short-, long-, and medium-term feedback loops. If people do start to move to the community in response to some of the early projects, who are they? Why are they coming? Does that match what you were expecting? And then make corrections accordingly. But the suburbs aren't going anywhere. It's not a zero-sum game in which cities are ascendant and the suburbs are losers. There are millions of people living there, and they can't all be dismissed."

Patience is something Savidant can live with. On the weekends, he's accustomed to driving roughly 33 miles, 45 minutes depending on traffic, to Red Hook, an independently owned bakery and cafe in Ferndale so aware of its cool, it's named after a trendy Brooklyn neighborhood. To him, the long commute is worth it — just to experience a Saturday morning on one of the more authentic, small-business focused Main Streets in the metro region. When he looks into the future, he sees a similar cafe — only he's here, in Troy, walking down the Big Beaver corridor, having a chance sidewalk conversation with a neighbor en route to a midday latte. "When I came here in 2002, and it was lunchtime and I wanted to grab something to eat, you had to get in your car. Now, I can at least walk and grab a sandwich," he says, laughing. "So maybe all this is just me being selfish. I mean, I would love to pay \$3.80 for a coffee and \$4 for a muffin like I do at Red Hook. That's how I'll know we're on the right path."



# Shifting Suburbs

**Reinventing Infrastructure  
for Compact Development**



**Urban Land  
Institute**

Infrastructure Initiative



## About the ULI Infrastructure Initiative

The mission of the ULI Infrastructure Initiative is to promote more sustainable infrastructure investment choices and to foster an improved understanding of the links between infrastructure and land use. Because infrastructure is the foundation for metropolitan prosperity, and because it provides the physical framework for real estate investment, ULI has identified infrastructure as a key priority.

Established in 2007, the Initiative achieves its mission through a multifaceted program of work that leverages ULI's extensive public and private networks and includes research and education, publications, and convenings.

ULI's Infrastructure Initiative is led by full-time staff with a deep understanding of global infrastructure challenges and opportunities. An advisory group composed of industry leaders guides the program. Key ULI Infrastructure Initiative activities include

- A global infrastructure report, produced in collaboration with Ernst & Young since 2007;
- Ongoing programming to promote regional infrastructure solutions;
- Regular e-mail updates to infrastructure audiences; and
- Exploration of infrastructure topics relevant to ULI members and to ULI's public and private partners.

## About This Report

This report is part of a series of activities exploring suburban infrastructure opportunities and challenges. It includes observations from experts and leaders who participated in two forums held in Atlanta, Georgia, and Minneapolis, Minnesota, investigating how to plan and build infrastructure for compact development in the suburbs, along with other research and analysis by the ULI Infrastructure Initiative.

This work stream explores

- How public and private sector stakeholders are working together to build and retrofit suburban places;
- How infrastructure—including roads, transit, and more—can be transformed and leveraged to support compact development;
- How local governments and regional coalitions can position themselves for compact growth; and
- What funding, financing, and regulatory sources and tools are being used or are needed.

## Connect with the ULI Infrastructure Initiative

Visit the ULI Infrastructure Initiative's website (<http://www.uli.org/infrastructure>) to learn more about our work, and visit our blog (<http://www.uli.org/infrastructureblog>) to read about news and research of interest to the ULI network. Follow us on Twitter (@uli\_infra). E-mail us to subscribe to our regular e-newsletter ([infrastructure@uli.org](mailto:infrastructure@uli.org)).

We welcome new partners and sponsors. Contact us to explore opportunities to work with us ([infrastructure@uli.org](mailto:infrastructure@uli.org)).



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# Part I. Introduction



In this report, the terms *suburb* and *suburban* can refer to a place's political or geographic location, but, more important, they reference its development form. The suburban places explored in this report's case studies began as spread-out, automobile-oriented areas. Suburban places can be found everywhere, including within city boundaries.

America's metropolitan areas have always been the scenes of dynamic change. In the great metropolitan dance, suburbs and central cities have each played starring roles in their turn, learning from each other, sharing missteps, collaborating, and competing.

Until World War II, most metropolitan action happened in cities, which served as retail, cultural, and workplace hubs. The suburbs were the boomtowns of the second half of the last century, the repositories of the post-World War II American dream, where ample space and strong consumer appetites combined to generate an unparalleled prosperity. During that period, central cities struggled, their economies and populations sapped by the suburban exodus and a host of political and policy failures.

The 1990s and early 21st century were a time of continued transformation for cities and suburbs alike. Many cities engineered remarkable economic turnarounds, employing a host of new tools to attract both private investment and people. Suburbs were changing as well. Some continued to thrive, but challenges mounted too. Inner suburbs struggled to update their image, infrastructure, and economic dynamism, whereas some outer

State Road 7 in Florida, before and after improvements. Investments in bus stop infrastructure have made waiting for the bus more comfortable for passengers. (STATE ROAD 7 COLLABORATIVE)

suburbs faced a wave of foreclosures and the terrible convergence of personal and civic financial crises.

At the same time, driven in part by powerful demographic forces, market preferences have been shifting. Signs point to an increasing appetite—especially among generation Y—for higher-density living patterns and for transportation options that include transit, walking, and biking.

Over the last two decades, driven in part by a desire to attract and retain a young talented workforce, suburban places have launched important initiatives aimed at meeting shifting market demands. Across the country, dozens, if not hundreds, of suburban places have worked to reimagine their future and to build or rebuild in more compact and sustainable ways.

The signs point to continued change—and a continued need for innovation—in the suburbs. The aging of the baby boomers—an upwardly mobile generation that helped fuel decades of suburban growth—means that one engine of suburban expansion is receding. According to the Brookings Institution, the suburbs are now home to a greater proportion of people age 45 and older than are cities, as the baby boom generation ages in place. In 2010, for the first time, the majority of the nation's poor lived in suburbs, as suburbs absorbed more of the national rise in metropolitan poverty. Immigrants also make up an increasingly important component of the suburban population.

The way that the U.S. Census Bureau aggregates population and economic data at the regional level can make it challenging to quantify what is happening in suburban places, and to compare that information with growth patterns in cities. But clearly, efforts at suburban redevelopment and reinvention are continuing and will likely accelerate in the years to come. As this transformation continues, infrastructure is and will be a key piece of the compact suburban growth puzzle.

## **Infrastructure for a More Compact, Walkable Future in the Suburbs**

As American suburbs build in more compact ways—with higher-density development clustered in nodes or along corridors and with increasing options for getting around without a car—reworking or rethinking infrastructure can be essential. For compact development to occur, developers and municipalities must determine how to plan, fund, and finance the often costly and complicated infrastructure required for suburban compact growth. That infrastructure can include transit investments, structured parking, intricate street grids, sidewalks, streetlighting, and water, sewer, and other utility upgrades.

A rich body of work, undertaken by ULI and other organizations, explores what works and what does not work in suburban redevelopment, what is happening nationwide, and where American suburbs are heading. This report complements that work by providing case studies that highlight the infrastructure aspects of eight redevelopment efforts from across the country.

The report looks at infrastructure in the context of the development project. It examines the infrastructure that was built and how that infrastructure was paid for, in an effort to illuminate the shape that infrastructure investments are taking and the tools being used to fund and finance them.

*The case studies in this report illuminate the infrastructure side of the suburban compact development story.*



Before upgrades were made along the Aurora Corridor in Shoreline, Washington, buses obstructed traffic in order to pick up passengers waiting without shelters. (CITY OF SHORELINE)

## Suburban Development Types

The case studies explored in this report represent five overlapping compact and walkable suburban development or redevelopment types:

- **Suburban mall retrofits.** Built on the site of dying or obsolete shopping malls, these projects transform sprawling parking lots and mall complexes into compact, mixed-use places. These projects take advantage of consolidated landownership patterns and a sophisticated set of financing and regulatory tools. Examples included in this report are Belmar, Colorado, and CityCentre in Houston, Texas.
- **Suburban transit-oriented development.** Many transit-oriented development (TOD) opportunities are located in the suburbs. These projects seek to leverage their location near fixed-rail transit stations or bus transit corridors to build in higher-density ways, connecting the development with transit using sidewalks, bikeways, and other kinds of transportation infrastructure. Examples included in this report are projects in Richardson, Texas.
- **Suburban arterials or commercial corridors.** These efforts seek to transform aging or dysfunctional land uses and transportation infrastructure along highly traveled stretches of road. Such endeavors often focus on the densification of identified nodes and involve investments in transit service, especially bus transit. Examples in this report include State Road 7 in Florida and the Aurora Corridor project in Shoreline, Washington. As described in more detail below, this type is proving to be one of the most challenging forms of suburban redevelopment.
- **Wholesale or large-scale suburban transformation.** By their very nature, such transformations are rare. The redevelopment of Tysons Corner in Fairfax, Virginia—now simply called Tysons—is an example of an effort to reshape in a fundamental way how a suburban place functions. Tysons has been explored extensively elsewhere and is not included in this report. This report examines how Dublin, Ohio, is attempting to launch a similar transformation. These efforts require strong leadership and support from regional and local planning bodies, including metropolitan planning organizations.





Improvements along the Aurora Corridor have included a new pedestrian bridge, landscaped medians, and upgrades to utility infrastructure. (HDR ENGINEERING INC.)

■ **Suburban town centers.** Suburban town centers are being developed or enhanced in many communities across the country. These mixed-use hubs offer many of the options that a larger city might provide—entertainment, residential buildings, offices—but in a suburban or small-town setting. Many suburban town centers are being retrofitted on existing sites—Belmar, Colorado, is an example explored in this report—but they can also be built on greenfield sites.

These typologies are not mutually exclusive; a suburban TOD might be built on the site of an obsolete suburban mall, for example. And additional typologies likely exist. These descriptions are offered as a helpful way of thinking about the compact suburban development projects that are happening across the country.

## Two Key Challenges and Opportunities

Over the last few decades, much progress has been made, and many lessons have been learned, in the art and science of the redevelopment of suburban sites. Looking both at the projects examined in this report and beyond them, two important overlapping challenges and opportunities emerge. The rebirth of suburban arterials and the reimagining of inner-ring suburbs for more compact growth will be essential components of efforts to create a new kind of suburban future.

### Suburban Arterials

Across the country, approaches to suburban arterials and commercial corridors remain works in progress. Designed for easy access by car to retail destinations, or for the swift movement of through-traffic, many of these corridors are disjointed jumbles of strip retail centers, utility wires, narrow or nonexistent sidewalks, parking lots, and extensive curb cuts. You get the picture.

For these places, it can be hard to imagine an alternate future, to say nothing of actually building one. Because of their important transportation role, and because of the development challenges they pose, they are often overlooked or disregarded as priorities for redevelopment. And even when a vision is in place, coordination across multiple jurisdictions, land assembly, prioritization of development nodes and sites (often necessary because of the sheer volume of land involved), and infrastructure investment needs all pose challenges—challenges that public and private stakeholders are still developing tools to effectively address.

But commercial corridors and suburban arterials represent an important opportunity. Despite being home to extensive amounts of large, underused and low-value land, they are often the sites of important commercial, retail, and entertainment activities in suburban locales. And despite their infrastructure challenges, they often have preexisting transit service, especially bus service, that can be leveraged with targeted investments like improved bus facilities and enhanced bus frequency.

How to make progress in unlocking the redevelopment potential of these corridors is an area that deserves additional attention.



## First-Ring Suburbs

First-ring suburbs are another area of opportunity. “America’s first-ring suburbs,” noted ULI’s CEO Patrick Phillips, “could be the sweet spot for future growth.” In many cases, these suburbs are already well served by transit, roads, and other transportation infrastructure, including highways, and they were designed in an efficient, adaptable urban pattern. They are home to well-established neighborhoods with mature trees and other amenities and have the locational advantage of being close to the center of a metropolitan region and to other suburbs. All of these features make inner suburbs attractive places for redevelopment.

However, redevelopment in first-ring suburbs can be a challenge. Convincing residents of the need for change can be difficult; local government bodies don’t always sing from the same song book; and—importantly—modifying and upgrading the often outmoded infrastructure that would make redevelopment feasible or attractive can be challenging and expensive. In some cases, readily available redevelopment sites are not obvious. Still, solving the redevelopment challenge in first-ring suburbs is an effort worth taking seriously.

## Thinking on a Broader Scale

Stepping back and looking at a broader, metropolitan-level scale, the implications of changing demographics and preferences on regional transportation investment priorities could clearly be profound; more compact growth trajectories could require significant shifts in the types of transportation improvements that will be needed in the coming years.

Metropolitan planning organizations have a critical role to play in understanding and anticipating demographic and market shifts, and in ensuring the most strategic use of increasingly scarce public transportation dollars. To the extent that metropolitan planning organizations can help foster consensus around the need to use transportation investments to help advance more compact forms of suburban development, they will be key partners in the suburban redevelopment effort.



Houston’s CityCentre project, which replaced an obsolete mall, emphasizes pedestrian-friendly features and green space. (CITYCENTRE)

As the portal to critical transportation resources, state and local departments of transportation are other key stakeholders. These agencies can help support compact development by building or rebuilding multimodal, human-scale streets, prioritizing investments in transit and transit-supportive infrastructure, modifying parking requirements, and taking other related actions.

## **The Infrastructure Piece of the Puzzle**

The U.S. population is expected to grow by another 95 million people over the next 30 years, making the United States one of the fastest-growing countries in the world. The vast majority of that growth will take place in metropolitan areas, and as has been the case in the last 40 years, the majority of metropolitan growth will likely occur outside the central core, in suburban places.

Although the story of compact suburban development and redevelopment is not a new one, it is one that is acquiring new energy. The good news is that the momentum is shifting away from sprawling, auto-oriented growth patterns in many places. The bad news is that changing the way development happens, and putting the appropriate infrastructure and other policies in place, are still a formidable task—despite the experience that the country is accumulating.

Compact development in the suburbs often requires extensive cross-jurisdictional infrastructure planning and coordination, as well as the commitment of many different players, including sometimes-overlapping local government entities, state departments of transportation, developers, and others.

To ensure that today's suburbs become more compact, sustainable places for the future, stakeholders will need to work together to identify and implement innovative solutions to infrastructure coordination, funding, and financing challenges.

Despite the progress made and lessons learned, these efforts are challenging, and there is still work to be done. We hope that the case studies and lessons learned in this report will shed light on the infrastructure piece of the suburban development and redevelopment puzzle and will help inform continued efforts to develop more compact and walkable places in the suburbs.

## Part II. Lessons Learned



The projects explored in part III of this report are works in progress. They run the gamut from suburban mall retrofits and arterial or corridor reinventions to comprehensive rethinking of development patterns for a whole town. Each project offers its own food for thought, and in looking at this set of projects as a whole, themes emerge.

Key elements have been distilled here, providing insights into two basic questions: What successful strategies have been employed to make progress toward building more compact, pedestrian-friendly places? and What are the stumbling blocks that are obstructing additional progress?

Some of these elements are focused squarely on infrastructure, and some have broader implications.

This rendering shows plans for the transformation of automobile-centric Rockville Pike in Montgomery County, Maryland, into a walkable, transit-oriented corridor with center-running bus rapid transit. (FEDERAL REALTY INVESTMENT TRUST)

## Winning Strategies

### *What successful strategies have been employed to progress toward building more compact, pedestrian-friendly places?*

**Partnerships.** Effective partnerships are at the core of many of the efforts to transform the suburban places explored in this report, with public and private sector partnerships long recognized as essential. The West End project in Minnesota demonstrates the value of long-term public and private collaboration. Partnerships among private sector actors are also emerging as powerful organizing forces. In Montgomery County, Maryland, the White Flint Partnership is aggregating the resources of key real estate players to collectively address infrastructure challenges.

**A comprehensive approach to infrastructure and access.** Stakeholders from many or most of the places explored in this report have creatively and comprehensively considered the infrastructure and transportation needs of their projects. For the Belmar project in Lakewood, Colorado, an urban street grid was the transportation pattern of choice. Designers of Minnesota's West End project carefully orchestrated the reworking of utility infrastructure. And in the case of the Aurora Corridor in Shoreline, Washington, project leaders are seeking to make the most of bus system improvements with comprehensive upgrades to the corridor and public realm.

**Programming and place management.** If you build it, they will come. But will they come back? The projects explored in this report are using a variety of strategies to foster sustained engagement with customers and residents. Festivals, concerts, farmers markets, and other special events draw visitors and interest to the CityCentre project in Houston, as well as other projects in this report. Ongoing investment ensures a pleasant user experience. And organizational tools like business improvement districts and community improvement districts apply coordination and promotion methods, some developed for shopping mall or downtown contexts, to suburban places. These are the soft infrastructure strategies needed for success.

**Public space and plazas; trails and sidewalks.** Sidewalks and trails provide the connective tissue for compact suburban places, and public space and plazas can provide the heart. Much more than an afterthought, they are essential infrastructure elements. CityCentre Houston's central plaza is the gathering point for hundreds of events each year, and upgraded, 7.5-foot-wide (2.3 m) sidewalks and landscaped medians are providing pedestrian access along Washington's Aurora Corridor. Public realm investments are at the core of the efforts to reinvent the White Flint area in Maryland.

**Proactive planning.** Putting the planning pieces in place—market studies, infrastructure strategies, zoning changes—can help facilitate and attract compact growth. Whether the target for transformation is large scale or site specific, proactive planning can remove uncertainty, speeding redevelopment and ensuring that it happens according to a larger vision for the community. Dublin, Ohio, is an example of a place that is carefully laying the groundwork for more compact future development.

**Stakeholder engagement and buffering of existing neighborhoods.** Public involvement can help tame opposition to and build support for projects. Richardson, Texas, has built extensive public engagement into its transit-oriented development strategy, and the White Flint, Maryland, partners harnessed the power of social media to build public support for the corridor's transformation. A clear articulation of public benefits was essential. And a commitment to protecting existing neighborhoods from development impacts, including increased traffic, meant that a road in the West End project in Minnesota could not be extended.



*Above:* Mixed-use development makes for a more walkable experience at Belmar. (CITY OF LAKEWOOD) *Below:* The pedestrian bridge on the Aurora Corridor connects to the three-mile (4.8 km) Interurban Trail network. (CITY OF SHORELINE)





**Riding the demographic wave.** The localities examined in this report are working to capitalize on growing demand for compact, walkable places. Members of generation Y, America's largest single generation since the baby boomers, favor a more urban vibe. Dublin, Ohio, is an example of a place making a major mental and programmatic shift: it is retooling its sprawling suburban downtown to compete in a shifting marketplace and to attract companies that care greatly about where their workers (or potential workers) want to live. Dublin recognizes that it can ride the demographic wave, or risk missing it.

**Many sources of funding.** To build the transformative infrastructure required by these projects, many different sources of funding and a variety of financing tools were necessary. In the White Flint area of Maryland, special property assessments volunteered by the property owners are paying for a portion of the transportation costs. A nearly \$2 million federal grant, along with assistance from a number of foundations, has helped State Route 7 stakeholders in Florida create a plan for the road. In Belmar, Colorado, the developer fronted the transportation construction costs and is slowly being repaid by the city. For these projects, no one-size funding approach would fit.

## Stumbling Blocks

***What are the stumbling blocks that are obstructing additional progress? And what are some potential avenues for change?***

**Trouble working across boundaries.** Compact development in the suburbs often requires extensive cross-jurisdictional planning and coordination, as well as the commitment of many different players, including sometimes-overlapping local government entities, state departments of transportation, developers, and others. Although both the Corridors of Opportunity project in Minneapolis–Saint Paul and the State Route 7 effort in Florida show how regions are striving to crack this nut, working across boundaries or jurisdictions remains a challenge just about everywhere.

Although not all suburban redevelopment projects cross political boundaries, many do. And even those that do not often rely on regional investments in transit, for example, or they can run into other regional challenges (in Shoreline, Washington, for example, corridor improvements end at the jurisdiction's southern border with Seattle).

Looking forward, the development and adoption of creative models for regional cooperation and investment will be an important component of efforts to redevelop the suburbs.

**Funding.** Although local leaders and developers have become adept at pulling together many sources of funding (see above), finding the resources to plan and build projects, and to make the infrastructure investments needed, remains a challenge. For every project built, there are likely many that were unable to proceed because of a lack of funding.

Looking forward, two funding opportunities are worthy of particular attention. The first is ensuring that *state transportation dollars* are going to transportation investments that support compact development in the suburbs. Building or rebuilding complete streets that meet the needs of all users, and making other investments that help lay the groundwork for redevelopment, are important priorities.



Houston's CityCentre project emphasizes high-quality design. (CITYCENTRE)



Public hearings and charrettes guided planning efforts by the State Road 7 Collaborative. (STATE ROAD 7 COLLABORATIVE)

The second is the opportunity to develop and use *more sustainable funding solutions* that capitalize on and reinforce the link between transportation—especially transit—and land use/real estate. These solutions include the use of value-capture mechanisms that leverage real estate or property values to pay for infrastructure, such as special assessment districts or tax increment financing (TIF).

**Skill sets.** Developing suburban areas into more compact, urban, walkable environments can require a new set of skills on the part of public entities and private sector developers alike. Traffic analyses can require new paradigms—for example, acceptance of higher levels of projected congestion or a willingness to dedicate a travel lane to transit. Often, zoning must be modified, new public/private partnerships must be crafted, new financing arrangements must be established, parking must be rethought, new designs must be created, and other shifts must be made in order for dense, mixed-use projects to be possible.

These paradigm shifts require deviations from business as usual, and sometimes a leap of faith on the part of the various parties involved. Looking forward, as compact suburban projects become more common, skill sets will become more developed. In the meantime, this area is an important opportunity for more learning and exchange.

**Entitlements and zoning.** Getting the approvals necessary to move forward with projects—even those that are widely supported by local leaders—can be time-consuming and expensive. Although approval processes are important mechanisms for protecting community values, they can add elements of uncertainty that cloud the future of suburban redevelopment.

Looking forward, improving the zoning and entitlement process to facilitate compact suburban development is an important effort that community leaders seeking this kind of development should consider taking on.

**Community resistance.** Community resistance to suburban development or redevelopment projects can slow them down, or kill them entirely. And fear of opposition can push development efforts away from suburban locations before they even get started. Winning over skeptical residents can appear a daunting task, but it is one worth making, and early and consistent stakeholder engagement is a critical component of suburban redevelopment efforts.

Looking ahead, social media will be an important tool—joining more traditional tools like community meetings—in winning support for redevelopment. A clear articulation of benefits, the creation of measures to ensure that existing single-family homes are buffered from development impacts (by stepping down heights or density, for example), and thoughtful integration of existing and new development, residents, and businesses can be other important components in the efforts to win community support.

## Part III. Infrastructure for a New Suburbia: Case Studies from Across America







## Dublin, Ohio, and the Bridge Street Corridor

*Dublin, a wealthy suburban community located 13 miles (21 km) northwest of downtown Columbus, has launched a bold effort to reimagine its core, located along the central axis of Bridge Street. Rather than continuing old patterns of growth, Dublin is positioning itself for a compact, walkable future.*

*Above:* Dublin's vision includes a pedestrian bridge connecting a park to the historic district across the Scioto River. (GOODY CLANCY/CITY OF DUBLIN, OHIO)

*Preceding page, clockwise from top left:* Developers of CityCentre inserted a street grid into what was formerly a mall; the Aurora Corridor provides a vital link into downtown Seattle; the State Road 7 Collaborative engaged local citizens in planning activities. (CITYCENTRE, HDR ENGINEERING INC., STATE ROAD 7 COLLABORATIVE)

### Lessons from Dublin

- Demographic shifts and enlightened self-interest create new opportunities for communities to position themselves for more compact and sustainable growth.
- Companies making decisions about where to locate today are focused on where talented young workers want to be instead of—as in the past—where CEOs want to live.
- Dublin's public leaders have proactively launched an overarching planning effort, rather than waiting to respond to specific development proposals.

Home to several corporate headquarters, Dublin has been one of the fastest-growing cities in the state, with its population increasing from only 300 in 1970 to around 40,000 in 2010. By most measures—fiscal health, resident satisfaction, levels of public service, quality-of-life indicators, and others—Dublin has been an extremely successful suburban community, riding the wave of forces that drove the suburbanization of development activity nationally over the last 40 years.

Recognizing that the forces shaping the next 40 years of development will likely be very different, Dublin has launched an ambitious plan to rethink and convert the 1,000-acre (405 ha) core of its community. Located along Bridge Street and bounded on the north by Interstate 270, this section of the city is slated for transformation from a low-density, automobile-dependent area into a dense, mixed-use, and pedestrian-friendly corridor composed of seven new districts, with new offices and compact residential buildings complementing a preserved historic downtown.

As city manager, Terry Foegler helped lead the plan to transform Dublin. Examining demographic trends, Foegler recognized that the market forces that had shaped Dublin over the last 40 years were shifting: Dublin needed to provide housing options for talented young professionals and other workers, in order to position itself to appeal to companies as a place where those workers want to live. Its aging baby boomers were also seeking different types of housing products and environments.





This rendering, part of the Bridge Street Corridor Vision Plan, shows how Dublin is reimagining its future. (GOODY CLANCY/CITY OF DUBLIN, OHIO)

What emerged from the city’s planning process was “a development idea radically different from anything Dublin has ever experienced,” said Foegler. A new vision plan for the city was adopted in October 2010.

Market studies estimated that demand for office space and retail space will continue to be strong in Dublin over the next 20 years. City leaders are aiming to absorb as much of that growth as possible in the Bridge Street corridor, and they have modified zoning to accommodate it, shifting to form-based codes. Residential density could intensify from the city’s current limit of five units per acre (12 units/ha) in its highest-density multifamily zone to 50, 60, or even 70 units per acre (125, 150, or 175 units/ha) within the corridor.

Integrating and leveraging the design and implementation of key infrastructure projects with the proposed private investments will be key to advancing Dublin’s vision. The city’s east–west corridor of Bridge Street is a busy state highway made up of four lanes

An aerial photo shows existing conditions in the Bridge Street corridor. (GOOGLE MAPS)





The Bridge Street Corridor Vision Plan is guiding the redevelopment of land uses in Dublin. (GOODY CLANCY/CITY OF DUBLIN, OHIO)

and a median. Working with the Ohio Department of Transportation, Dublin hopes to modify the street to accommodate potential future transit service and to make other improvements, including building wider sidewalks and green spaces. The city also has plans to add an extensive grid pattern of roadways, as well as connections bisecting the corridor, to provide alternatives to driving through the downtown historic district.

Dublin is now moving toward implementing the first elements of its 2010 vision plan. Detailed traffic and infrastructure impact studies have been conducted, and the city has drawn up transportation guidelines. Most recently, Dublin has completed fiscal impact and infrastructure modeling and has adopted a form-based zoning code. The city is exploring opportunities for using tax increment financing, special assessment districts,

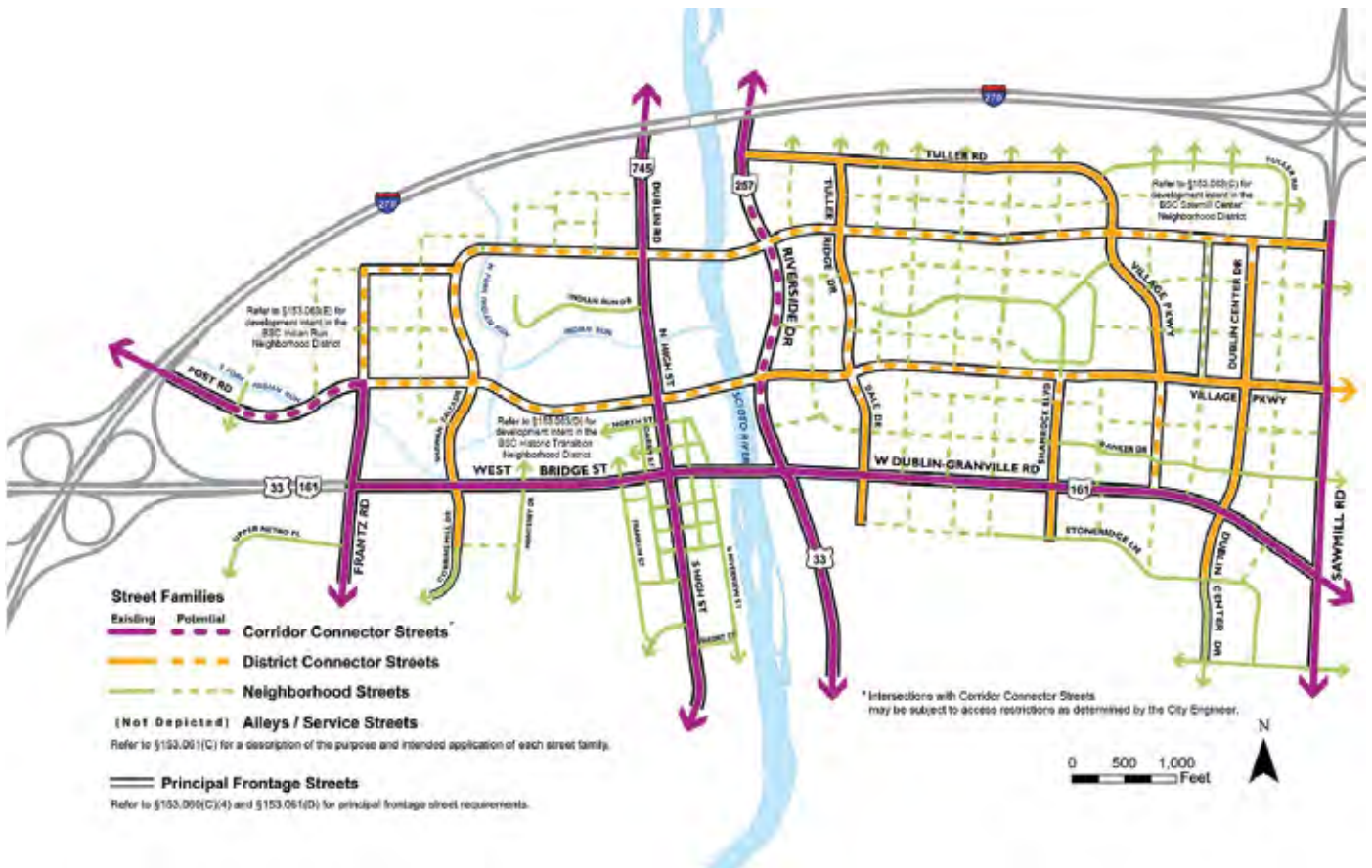


This rendering shows improvements to the park and path system, with residential development located near green space. (GOODY CLANCY/CITY OF DUBLIN, OHIO)



and public/private partnerships to fund public infrastructure—including structured parking, new streets, and public spaces. Developers have responded with a number of high-density redevelopment project proposals that are currently under review by the city.

Dublin is approaching its economic transformation from a position of strength, anticipating future demographic shifts and modifying infrastructure and land use so that population and employment will continue to grow—and grow in more sustainable ways—in the coming decades. It is aiming to maintain a high quality of life while positioning itself to remain competitive within the context of future drivers of growth.



Dublin is planning a new, dense network of streets. (GOODY CLANCY/CITY OF DUBLIN, OHIO)



## Aurora Corridor, Shoreline, Washington

*The Aurora Corridor, an arterial in suburban Seattle, is making a suite of bold infrastructure investments. Investments in sidewalks, utility lines, and transportation infrastructure are helping the corridor position itself to take advantage of market trends and regional bus system upgrades.*

A new pedestrian bridge enhances connectivity along the Aurora Corridor in Shoreline. (CITY OF SHORELINE)

### Lessons from the Aurora Corridor

- Bus rapid transit can help foster the development of a horizontally mixed-use corridor and make possible a walkable lifestyle for those who live along it.
- Suburban arterials can be made more attractive, functional, and safe for automobiles and pedestrians alike.

Three miles (4.8 km) of State Road 99, referred to locally as Aurora Avenue North, run through Shoreline, a suburban community with a population of about 53,000 people that abuts Seattle's northern border. Before it was rebuilt, it had four travel lanes and one turn lane, and carried a large amount of through- and local traffic—40,000 vehicles and 7,000 bus riders used the corridor each day. The highly congested, complicated road was plagued by one of the highest accident rates in the state, with nearly one accident per day and one fatality per year. With few sidewalks or curbs, conditions on the corridor did not support walking or transit use.

Land uses within the corridor were part of the problem. Although the corridor is Shoreline's Main Street, housing about 90 percent of the city's taxable value, the community wanted to address the strip pattern of gas stations, shopping centers, convenience stores, and auto-oriented businesses, as well as "colorful" businesses like adult clubs and tobacco and alcohol stores.

An extensive planning and community involvement process was initiated in 1998. The City Council adopted a concept design in 1999 that called for improving safety, supporting increased transit, balancing local and regional movements, catalyzing economic growth, improving aesthetics, and preserving existing neighborhoods.



In 2005, the city of Shoreline began a comprehensive overhaul of the corridor. Infrastructure improvements on the majority of the corridor, from 145th to 192nd Street, are complete, and the project's first phase won a 2008 Award of Excellence for Best City Project from the Federal Highway Administration and the Washington State Department of Transportation. The right-of-way plan for the remaining streetscape from 192nd to 205th Street has been approved by the state of Washington, with construction scheduled for January 2013.

Construction is expected to be completed in 2014 and to cost about \$120 million, with funding drawn from the city's capital improvement program and a mix of county, state, and federal dollars. The city has become adept at chasing external grants and funding to pay for the project; Shoreline taxpayers have covered only 10 percent of the project cost.

When completed, Aurora Avenue will feature landscaped medians, 7.5-foot (2.3 m) sidewalks on each side set four feet (1.2 m) back from the road, overhead utility lines relocated underground, new lighting, a north-south multimodal trail paralleling the road, and a public plaza to provide recreational and gathering space. Colored, scored concrete and artwork enhance crossings at intersections. The new corridor features two travel lanes in each direction. The original two-way center turn lane has been converted to a landscaped median with focused left-turn lanes and U-turn pockets.

In tandem with the transportation investments, the city upgraded utility infrastructure, including water, sewer, electricity, and communications conduits, at a cost of about \$3,750 per frontage foot (\$12,375/m). Unsightly power lines have been moved underground, and street lighting has been improved.

These investments are positioning Shoreline to take advantage of enhanced regional bus service that is expected in 2013, called RapidRide (see sidebar). Within Shoreline, bus reliability and travel times will be improved by the creation of new BAT (business access and transit) lanes, an innovation developed by the city, where right-hand lanes in each direction will be restricted to buses and right turns. "We invented the BAT term," said Kirk McKinley, transportation services manager for the city of Shoreline and project manager for the Aurora Corridor project, "because we had so much concern from the business community about walls of buses blocking views of their businesses. We



This map shows the three-mile (4.8 km) scope of the Aurora Corridor investments. (CITY OF SHORELINE)

These images show the Aurora Corridor before and after improvements, which included reconfiguration of traffic, creation of sidewalks and landscaped medians, installation of new lighting, and more. (CITY OF SHORELINE)



## RapidRide in King County, Washington

The Aurora Corridor project is seeking to take advantage of bus enhancements planned throughout King County, Washington. When the system is completed, the county will be home to 64 miles (103 km) of bus rapid transit service in semidedicated lanes.

Six high-usage bus corridors were chosen for significant upgrades in bus service, branded RapidRide. RapidRide's hybrid buses along the six lines arrive every ten minutes during peak periods and every 15 minutes during off-peak periods, and real-time displays at each station let passengers know when the next bus is coming. Other intelligent transportation system upgrades employed throughout the system include an off-board payment system and traffic signal prioritization for approaching buses.

Four of the six lines have been completed to date. The final two bus rapid transit lines, which will extend RapidRide service to the Aurora Corridor in Shoreline and to South King County, will be completed in September 2013. Complementary transportation investments in the road and pedestrian infrastructure are being made in selected locations throughout the system.

Funding for RapidRide is being drawn from a variety of local, state, and federal sources. At the local level, RapidRide has received \$70 million in local capital investment, and a one-cent sales tax approved by King County voters in 2006 covers about 60 percent of the system's operating costs. Seattle's Bridging the Gap initiative, also passed in 2006, is helping fund road and traffic improvements that will enhance bus speed and service. RapidRide has also accumulated \$120 million in state and federal grants, including \$93 million from the Federal Transit Administration's Very Small Starts grant program. In November 2011, a \$37.5 million federal grant was approved to fund the system's final two corridors.

decided to spin it around and call them 'business access' lanes, and that's been very helpful."

Dan Eernisse, economic development manager for the city of Shoreline and a former private sector developer, said that the investments are encouraging local landowners—many of whom are absentee landlords or trust funds—to redevelop their properties. "The city has to think like a developer," Eernisse advised, "to ask, 'What's going to catalyze the landowner to go out and find funds and invest in that property, to do something different?' You need to increase the spread between costs and rental income."







New bus stops, business access and transit lanes, and other improvements set the stage for regional RapidRide upgrades to come in 2013. (CITY OF SHORELINE)

As examples of how a city can reduce costs, Eernisse suggested lowering fees, changing zoning, speeding up the development approval process, and improving infrastructure. As examples of what cities can do to enable landowners to increase rents, Eernisse suggested place making—creating appealing locations where people want to live, work, and play—and reducing the cost of living by providing transit.

Eernisse also focused on what bus rapid transit (BRT) can offer. “With stops about a half mile [0.8 km] apart, the entire corridor—not just station areas—is activated. No one’s going to ask, ‘Do I live near a station?’ Instead, they’ll ask, ‘Do I live on the line?’ That’s what we have to sell.” The city staff projects that living along the BRT line will save motorists between \$2,000 and \$8,000 a year while connecting places along the line and system. The BRT line will allow for a horizontally mixed-use corridor, without the high costs and development expertise required to create a great vertical mixed-use development.

Although the corridor improvement project is not yet complete, the results have already been impressive, with accidents falling 60 percent and some redevelopment activity occurring—including a five-acre (2.0 ha) parcel that will include senior housing, market rate and affordable housing, and a new YMCA building. However, Shoreline faces challenges it can’t control. Immediately south of Shoreline, State Road 99 remains unchanged, and the city of Seattle and Washington State Department of Transportation currently have no plans to upgrade the road.

*Facing page:* Infrastructure improvements have made the Aurora Corridor much more appealing. (CITY OF SHORELINE)



## Belmar, Lakewood, Colorado

*With a population of 144,000, Lakewood is Colorado's fifth-most-populous city. Located immediately west of Denver, the suburb is now home to Belmar, a mixed-use, compact, and sustainable urban-style center built on the site of the Villa Italia Mall.*

*Above:* Belmar's ice skating rink is an important amenity in the new community-oriented town center. (BELMAR, LAKEWOOD, COLORADO)

*Facing page:* Belmar features townhouses built in the American mercantile style. *Insets:* Belmar added new life to an obsolete shopping mall. (CITY OF LAKEWOOD)

### Lessons from Belmar

- The urban-scale street grid is a classic choice.
- Innovative financing arrangements can enable a private landowner to build infrastructure, with public reimbursements to follow.
- The competitive advantage that compact, mixed-use development can have is demonstrated by Belmar.

**N**amed after the former Belmar estate on which it sits, Belmar was designed to give Lakewood a downtown. The massive 103-acre (42 ha) site has been transformed into 3.3 million square feet (306,580 m<sup>2</sup>) of new development on 22 urban-scale blocks. Nearing complete buildout, Belmar now contains 880,000 square feet (81,755 m<sup>2</sup>) of retail space, 250,000 square feet (23,226 m<sup>2</sup>) of office space, 5,000 public parking spaces, 800 residential units (a mix of owner-occupied and rental housing), and two education institutions, as well as public plazas, art, and green space.

When it opened in the mid-1960s, the Villa Italia Mall—composed of 1.2 million square feet (111,484 m<sup>2</sup>) of mall space and surface parking lots—was one of the most productive regional malls west of the Mississippi River. For several decades, it was a vital member of the Lakewood community; at its peak in 1994, it generated \$3.12 million in sales taxes. But by the late 1990s, occupancy had declined, storefronts were boarded up, and the property was in need of redevelopment. In 1997, city voters authorized the use of urban renewal powers.



Having to choose between building another mall and developing something entirely new, city officials decided to repurpose the massive site in a way that would achieve civic and economic goals. In 1998, the city formed a partnership with Denver-based Continuum Partners to redevelop the mall.

Building the right infrastructure has been a key consideration. After clearing the site and conducting environmental remediation in 2001, Continuum Partners designed a new grid-based street system, with a matrix of 22 streets scaled to the size of city blocks. The city assumed ownership of the streets after completion. Belmar features wide sidewalks and narrow roads, encouraging walking and slowing traffic. Over-the-road cable lighting creates atmosphere and a sense of intimacy. Parking is concentrated in three large public garages with a total of 3,000 spaces, in addition to roughly 2,000 street and surface spaces. When the Denver area's light-rail West Line, which will run east-west about two miles (3.2 km) north of Belmar, opens in 2013, existing bus service with increased frequency will connect it to Belmar.

The entire site was rezoned to launch a phased development process in which the purpose of the blocks could be determined over time. To date, 800 new housing units have been built, a mix of apartments, condominiums, townhomes, and zero-lot-line homes. In addition to being compact, the housing is constructed in the American mercantile style, reflecting Denver's architectural history. Retailers on the site include a







mix of national chains (including Target—designed in an innovative fashion, with ground-floor parking below second-story retail—Whole Foods, Nordstrom Rack, and Best Buy) and local businesses, some of which receive subsidized rents to withstand increases in rents. A number of civic and cultural spaces were also developed to encourage creative and cultural activity in the area. A movie theater and a bowling alley round out Belmar's retail offerings.



Open space is an important component of the development, making up nine acres (3.6 ha) of the site. An urban park and public plaza serve as Bellmar's center and social hub. A commitment to increasing energy efficiency and reducing emissions has resulted in several buildings being certified as LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) structures. Belmar also has one of the country's largest solar panel systems, with 8,000 solar panels that generate 20 percent of the site's energy needs. Almost 88 percent of the materials used in construction by weight were recycled or reused from the former mall site.

Funded through a public/private partnership, the roughly \$850 million Belmar project has been financed with a combination of government bonds, federal grants, and equity from Continuum. To date, \$160 million has been spent on infrastructure improvements, \$40 million of which was financed by developer equity. (The garages alone cost \$35 million, or about \$14,000 per space.)





The bonds for the project are backed primarily by a property tax increment pledge and the imposition of a 2.5 percent public improvement fee by the developer on retail sales. To offset the public improvement fee, the city has waived 2 percent of the 3 percent sales tax on the site. Using revenues from the public improvement fee and property tax increment, Continuum will be reimbursed for the public infrastructure by 2028, reported Larry Dorr, director of finance for the city of Lakewood.

Belmar has dramatically increased the walkability, diversity, and attractiveness of the area by providing Lakewood with the downtown it never had. People come to Belmar from a wider area, more often, and at many different times of day than they did when the mall was there. Programmed activities, including farmers markets, holiday happenings, and an annual Italian festival, are creating new traditions for Lakewood's residents.

Although sales figures at Belmar declined during the recent recession, they decreased less than sales did elsewhere, indicating the strength, durability, and appeal of Belmar's retail offerings. Residential activity has also been satisfactory. Future phases will include even more housing (the property is zoned for 2,000 units), as well as other uses—including, possibly, a hotel. "People ask me all the time, when will Belmar be finished?" said Dorr. "And I don't know—not only when it will be finished but what it might look like when it is. The market is going to drive that."

*Above and facing page:* Belmar shoppers take advantage of the site's wide sidewalks. (BELMAR, LAKEWOOD, COLORADO) *Facing page, insets:* The Villa Italia Mall was razed and redeveloped as the Belmar project, a mix of retail businesses, programmed open space, and housing. (CITY OF LAKEWOOD)





## State Road 7, Broward and Miami-Dade Counties, Florida

*A broad coalition of stakeholders has been working for more than a decade to reshape State Road 7, a north–south arterial highway in southeastern Florida, into a more multi-modal corridor with dense development at specific nodes.*

An improved public space along State Road 7 has received a strong reception. (STATE ROAD 7 COLLABORATIVE)

### Lessons from State Road 7

- A consensus vision and a master plan can help organize the infrastructure and development efforts of multiple municipalities along commercial corridors.
- Funding for collaborative efforts and infrastructure improvements can be drawn from federal, state, and local sources, as well as nonprofits and foundations.

State Road 7 (SR-7) is a north–south arterial highway that runs through southeastern Florida’s Broward and Miami-Dade Counties. Also designated U.S. Highway 441 for most of its length, the arterial is used by several popular bus routes and is frequently congested. SR-7 is squeezed between two bodies of water—the Everglades and the Atlantic Ocean.

SR-7 is lined with commercial strip development built in the 1960s and 1970s—aging businesses that are having trouble competing with newer retail areas along other roads nearby. Strong population figures, tourist activity, and a lack of available vacant land for new development indicate strong redevelopment potential for the corridor.

In 2000, local government leaders along the 32-mile (52 km) route formed the State Road 7/U.S. 441 Collaborative. Now stretching to 41 miles (66 km), the collaborative is the longest revitalization effort in the country. The goal of the collaborative—which includes all 17 of the municipalities that SR-7 traverses and is supported by the South



Photos of existing conditions on State Road 7 show an automobile-dominated corridor with few amenities for transit riders. (STATE ROAD 7 COLLABORATIVE)

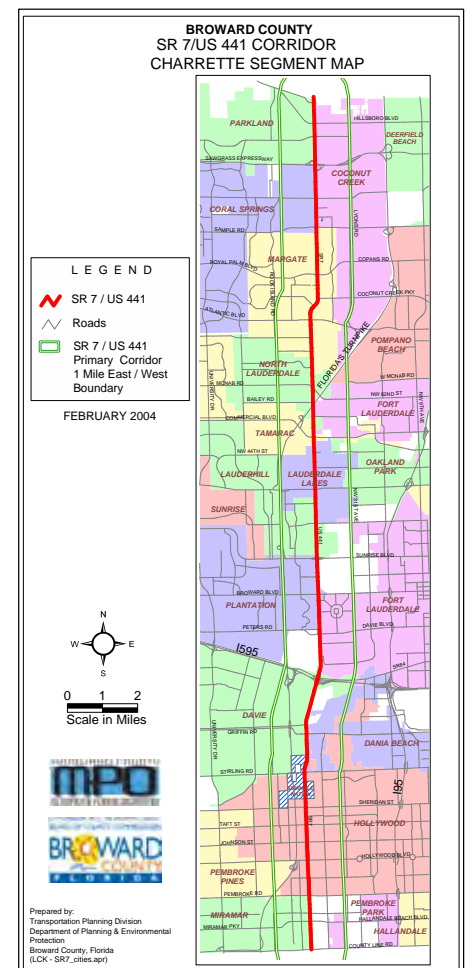
Florida Regional Planning Council—is to create a mixed-use, transit-oriented corridor with high-density activity centers located at primary intersections.

The collaborative has undertaken extensive planning and community outreach activities, funded in part by a \$1.9 million grant from the U.S. Federal Highway Administration. A ULI Advisory Services panel visited the corridor in 2004 and suggested that nodal redevelopment take place at the highway’s major and minor intersections, with less intensive redevelopment between those nodes. Community input, gathered through charrettes and interviews, revealed that citizens wanted redevelopment, improved public transit facilities and services, and new housing for all income levels, among other goals. “The charrette and the planning process set the stage,” according to Gary Rogers, executive director of the Lauderdale Lakes Community Redevelopment Agency and vice chair of the SR-7 Collaborative.

A strategic master plan for Broward County was adopted in 2004, with multiple updates since then. That plan changed the land use designation along SR-7 to “transit-oriented corridor” and promoted smart growth principles. A right-of-way improvement plan specifies recommended streetscape improvements, and three-dimensional site plan regulations offer clear, concise descriptions. The hope is that with the appropriate infrastructure and regulatory framework in place, further redevelopment—including the addition of dense office, retail, and residential space—will occur.

Major infrastructure changes to be implemented include the widening of SR-7 to accommodate future transportation needs in some areas, as well as street-width

Below left: A rendering depicts plans to redesign the Greenway Canal in Lauderdale Lakes for recreational use. Below: A map shows the State Road 7 Collaborative area, which stretches 41 miles (66 km) and spans 17 municipalities. (STATE ROAD 7 COLLABORATIVE)







Municipalities in the State Road 7 Collaborative have created master plans to guide future development. (STATE ROAD 7 COLLABORATIVE)

reductions in others, to facilitate urban-scale redevelopment and accommodate premium transit (such as fixed rail or BRT). Pedestrian amenities, such as high-visibility crosswalks and medians to serve as crossing oases, will also be built. Necessary sewer infrastructure is being constructed.

Local transit service is currently provided throughout the corridor but is intended to evolve over time. Express service overlays are being introduced through pilot programs using bus queue jump lanes on SR-7. Eventually, a premium transit system in dedicated lanes will be established using bus or fixed-rail transit.

Improvements to bus stops along the corridor offer ample seating and shade. These photos show conditions before and after improvements. (STATE ROAD 7 COLLABORATIVE)

Lauderdale Lakes has replaced a number of obsolete bus shelters with 12 new open-air shelters that feature real-time arrival message displays, with another ten planned. A weed-filled, virtually abandoned corridor along a major regional drainage canal has been transformed into a two-mile-long (3.2 km) nonvehicular path that connects city government facilities, commercial centers, schools, and recreational facilities.







SR-7 corridor investments during the last ten years have totaled more than \$165 million, including \$137 million in right-of-way acquisition and construction, \$10 million in transit enhancements, \$10 million in sewer line infrastructure updates, and \$4 million in bus shelter construction. Funding has been provided by the U.S. Department of Transportation, the state, regional planning bodies, and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, as well as through local in-kind services and funding from local governments. The Florida Department of Transportation has made a financial commitment to supporting the state road, and the Broward County Metropolitan Planning Organization has committed to finding funds to build transit once the feasibility of light rail or BRT has been determined.

Redevelopment of the land along SR-7 has proved challenging, despite the adoption of new land use and zoning standards. Challenges include land assembly and the need to extend sewer infrastructure to places where it does not currently exist, with the economic downturn stalling development of the Lauderdale Lakes Town Center and other sites along the corridor. The work of reinventing SR-7 continues.

*Top and bottom:* Renderings show hoped-for improvements and development in Lauderdale Lakes, one of the State Road 7 Collaborative communities. *Below:* Charrettes and public meetings were essential to formulating plans for the transformation of State Road 7. (STATE ROAD 7 COLLABORATIVE)





## White Flint/Rockville Pike, Montgomery County, Maryland

*Rockville Pike in Montgomery County is relying heavily on the private sector for its transformation. Major property owners in the automobile-dominated corridor have come together to support a new sector plan, rally the public behind it, and fund the needed infrastructure investments.*

A rendering shows the future of the Pike and Rose project, one of several walkable, mixed-use projects being built at White Flint. (FEDERAL REALTY INVESTMENT TRUST)

### Lessons from White Flint/Rockville Pike

- Savvy property owners who recognize that transportation improvements allow for additional density and create value may be willing to tax themselves to pay for those investments.
- The private sector can help plan and fund infrastructure improvements that cash-strapped governments may be unable to do on their own.

Rockville Pike, a six-lane major arterial, runs through the northern suburbs of Washington, D.C., from the intensively developed inner-ring suburbs of Montgomery County into the less developed but still populous Frederick County. Much of Rockville Pike is paralleled underground by the heavy-rail Red Line, run by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, although surface uses remain squarely auto dominated.

In Bethesda, Rockville Pike is home to the 43-acre (17.4 ha) White Flint Mall and is one of the highest income-generating areas in the county and state. However, the corridor is frequently congested, and the heavy traffic and orientation to drivers create safety and access issues for pedestrians, with surface parking lots standing between the road and buildings. Many Rockville Pike users are visitors to regional shopping centers and workers in office buildings, but pedestrian circulation is limited, and the few transit-





oriented nodes around Red Line stations are not well connected to one another and other area land uses.

In recent years, developers in the corridor have been working with one another and other stakeholders to transform the area’s land use and transportation patterns. The White Flint Partnership, formed in 2008 as a collaboration of the area’s six major real estate players, has been working with local planning agencies and a transportation consultant to develop, implement, and fund a new vision for the area. The goal that has emerged from this work is a denser, mixed-use, walkable, and transit-friendly corridor.

The White Flint Sector Plan, completed in April 2010, lays out land uses in 430 acres (174 ha) along Rockville Pike. The current properties in the White Flint Sector are mostly zoned for commercial uses, and many acres are occupied by surface parking lots. The vision calls for almost 10,000 new housing units along this corridor and greater density of both residences and retail around the Metro station, in order to form an identifiable center. An extensive community outreach program—including a sustained social network-based outreach effort—helped gain public buy-in for the additional density and other recommendations.

The area’s transportation infrastructure will also be transformed. The sector plan establishes a connection among land uses, transit, motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians. It aims to transform Rockville Pike from a traffic-clogged roadway into a 21st-century boulevard with wide sidewalks, streetfront retail, dedicated bike lanes, and a center lane dedicated to BRT. An expanded, pedestrian-friendly road network with 16 new roads will put the entire area within a ten-minute walk of some form of public transportation. The more fine-grained street grid will help diffuse congestion and support a more mixed-use and less auto-dependent area.

Francine Waters, managing director of transportation/smart growth enterprises for Lerner Enterprises and executive director of the White Flint Partnership, described the role that property owners will play in funding the improvements. Because public funds for such projects are limited, landowners agreed to the creation of a special property tax district, as well as to pay for the construction of new roads and upgrades to existing roads on their properties. Why? Waters explains: “With public transportation, with the new network of streets, with the greater accessibility and more mobility, the value of the property rises incredibly. The members of the White Flint Partnership recognized that they are creating value.”

The phasing plan for the Pike and Rose project shows how density will be incrementally added by increasing height and constructing new streets. (FEDERAL REALTY INVESTMENT TRUST)





*Above:* This rendering from the White Flint Sector Plan shows a transformed Rockville Pike, with multimodal transportation improvements and new bus rapid transit. (FEDERAL REALTY INVESTMENT TRUST) *Below:* The effort seeks to connect the 43-acre (17.4 ha) area with the larger region. (THE WHITE FLINT PARTNERSHIP)

The White Flint Development District was created to levy and collect an ad valorem property tax of ten cents per \$100 of assessed value. Begun in July 2011, the tax will generate about \$169 million for infrastructure improvements over 30 years. Developers will pay for an additional \$280 million of improvements and the county will invest \$152 million, for a total infrastructure development tab of approximately \$601 million. The three-phase project is expected to create \$1.3 billion in net new property revenue, \$7 billion in new property tax revenue, and 39,000 new full-time jobs by 2030.

More recently, the partnership has expanded its vision beyond the immediate White Flint area to nearby federal installations, which the partnership hopes to connect with enhanced bus service. Extending the BRT to major federal health and science campuses could create a science and health triangle, adding vibrancy and enhancing potential revenues at White Flint.





Although plans are in place to fund and build transit-supportive infrastructure, significantly improved bus service in the corridor will depend on the success of a countywide effort to implement BRT service. This new system will also likely rely on property tax assessments for funding.

Reconstruction of Rockville Pike has not yet started, although new developments, including Federal Realty's Pike and Rose project, have recently broken ground. When complete, Rockville Pike will be transformed from an auto-oriented corridor to one that is better able to use its enviable location and connections to transit to grow in more dense and pedestrian-friendly ways.

This rendering shows a denser, more human-scale environment at White Flint. (FEDERAL REALTY INVESTMENT TRUST)





## West End, St. Louis Park, Minnesota

*The West End development, located in the suburbs of Minneapolis, is adding new retail, office, and housing offerings and making major infrastructure upgrades to create a new mixed-use lifestyle center for the region.*

The West End project, shown here in a site plan, repurposed a big-box site as a denser, more multiuse district. (DUKE REALTY)

### Lessons from the West End

- A lack of abutting residential uses can make redevelopment efforts easier.
- Multiple jurisdictions make entitlements more difficult and time-consuming. Ongoing collaboration is critical.

Located four miles (6.4 km) west of downtown Minneapolis, the West End infill development is set on a 32-acre (12.9 ha) site at the crux of two highways, Interstate 394 and State Highway 100. When Duke Realty began planning the development of the property in 2004, it contained two office towers, two freestanding restaurants, six low-rise office buildings, a data center, and another large, low-rise industrial structure. It straddled two suburban cities, with 26 acres (10.5 ha) in St. Louis Park and the other six acres (2.4 ha) in neighboring Golden Valley.

Duke Realty was interested in the site because, as Pat Mascia, senior vice president of Minneapolis–Saint Paul operations for the company, put it, “We had great demographics that would support a regional retail project,” as well as “the best office development site in the Twin Cities. Putting retail and office uses together on this site created some great opportunities.”





The city of St. Louis Park sought to connect the site to the city and make it a much denser, genuine, lasting place, one that was both pedestrian and transit friendly. The city of Golden Valley was also an important stakeholder. In 2008, Duke Realty broke ground on the project.

Parking garages were pushed underground or to the perimeter of the site to enhance the walkable aspects of the West End project. These images show the site before and after redevelopment. (DUKE REALTY)

Today, the West End is a compact, pedestrian-oriented mixed-use project with 14 acres (5.7 ha) of office space, a 350,000-square-foot (32,516 m<sup>2</sup>) lifestyle retail center with 30,000 square feet (2,787 m<sup>2</sup>) of second-story office space, new entertainment offerings, and improved connections to existing office and shopping destinations in the area. A 119-unit apartment building broke ground in July 2012. Still to be built are 1.1 million square feet (102,193 m<sup>2</sup>) of office space in four towers.

Significant infrastructure investments—to provide improved connections between the new retail and existing office space—were needed. New roads were built and others widened; two parking structures were built to accommodate 1,500 stalls, and an additional 4,400-stall parking structure will be constructed to accompany the new office towers. Utility infrastructure (storm and sanitary sewers, water mains, gas lines,



The West End project offers retail and restaurant activities throughout the day. (DUKE REALTY)

## Corridors of Opportunity Project Promotes Vibrant Communities

Corridors of Opportunity (CoO) is an initiative of the Metropolitan Council—the regional planning agency that serves the seven-county Minneapolis–Saint Paul metropolitan area—to promote sustainable, vibrant, and healthy communities by using the region’s emerging transitway system as a development focus.

The initiative, which will run from 2011 to 2013, is funded by about \$20 million that comes in the form of a Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, as well as loans and grants from Living Cities, a collaborative of 22 of the nation’s largest foundations and financial institutions.

A broad consortium of policy makers, foundations, community organizations, and local and regional leaders has joined the Metropolitan Council in this effort, and CoO’s 21-member policy board meets regularly. The initiative’s operating principles focus on equity, economic competitiveness, clarity, sustainability, collaboration, and innovation. Susan Haigh, chair of the Metropolitan Council and cochair of its CoO initiative, stressed, “What we’re trying to do is align our planning efforts around our transit corridors to get a greater return on investment, to attract more private capital, and to make sure that we see these corridors of opportunity benefiting people of all incomes.”

CoO is funding about two dozen discrete projects along seven existing and planned transitways, all of which are at different stages of planning or development: Southwest LRT, the Bottineau Corridor, the Gateway Corridor, Cedar Avenue Bus Rapid Transit, Central Corridor LRT, Hiawatha LRT, and Northstar Commuter Rail. The initiative is seeking the following improvements:

- Better integration of multiple planning processes;
- Greater participation from historically underrepresented groups;



and electrical and communications conduits) was carefully coordinated to keep the streetscape looking seamless. A below-ground water retention system, with drains to collect stormwater that is used to irrigate street trees and other plantings, won Duke Realty accolades in 2010 for decreasing pollutant runoff and improving water quality.

A new road—West End Boulevard—was designed as a winding, pedestrian-friendly promenade running through the property from east to west, with sidewalk cafés, street furniture, and green spaces. Kevin Teppen, senior landscape architect involved with the project, said, “It gives you that sense of place, that opportunity to stroll down the street, to gather and mill around.” On the other hand, West 16th Street was not continued beyond the West End—partly because the city of Golden Valley wanted to protect nearby residential neighborhoods from traffic impacts—although other improvements were made.

The site is currently served by bus transit, and more intensive transit may be developed in the future. The project is also bike friendly; the city of St. Louis Park required parking for 35 bicycles on the site, and designers accommodated that requirement by placing bike racks on sidewalks and in parking garages.

The \$400 million project received partial financing from the city of St. Louis Park, which created a tax increment financing district and contributed \$21 million in TIF funds and \$5 million to rebuild an existing road.

The site’s location in two cities complicated entitlement, with two separate planning and approval processes required. Although Duke hoped to receive approvals quickly and begin construction by 2007, the process ended up taking more than three years. “And that was *fast* for us,” said Kevin Locke, director of community development for the city of St. Louis Park. “We were able to fast-track this, partly because we didn’t have any residential neighborhoods abutting it, which was a huge plus.”



The delay wound up being a blessing for Duke. “We got our development agreement in December 2007 and started going vertical on the construction in April 2008,” said Mascia. “The world fell off the cliff around October 2008.” If construction had begun a year earlier, he noted, “we would have been opening the center right about the time the economy tanked. Instead, we hit the market at a time when some retailers were doing deals again.” Duke focused on attracting retail tenants that were new to the Minneapolis–Saint Paul metro area, those that were opening their first or second store in the region and that fit well within the area’s demographics.

Collaboration—among the developer, both cities, designers, and other stakeholders—was critical. “Over the course of many years of meeting weekly, we developed an outstanding relationship, which finally made this project happen,” noted Mascia. With over 80 percent of current retail and office space already leased, the project is proving to be a successful first-ring suburb destination, and it has spurred other development in the area.



*Above:* Pedestrian-friendly features include street furniture and programmed open space. (DUKE REALTY)

*Facing page:* Using plazas and open space, events and outdoor concerts contribute to the West End’s vibrancy. (DUKE REALTY)

- Greater alignment of planning and design processes across jurisdictions; and
- Increased shared commitment at all levels within participating organizations.

For example, along the suburban Cedar Avenue BRT line, the initiative is striving to spur development in a suburban context. That three-component effort is looking at the existing market conditions at the station areas, identifying barriers that would prevent developers and lenders from working there, and creating a BRT station analysis that will become a guide for development activity along the corridor. The analysis involves creating a development typology, including preferred land uses, development practices, and funding opportunities tailored to BRT projects, coupled with a local engagement strategy along the corridor and efforts to promote interjurisdictional and interagency collaboration.

CoO is also working to accelerate the buildout of the transit system by looking at financial and political tools used by other transit systems. A related effort is being led by the Itasca Project, a business coalition that is estimating the return on investment of alternate transit buildout scenarios, including an accelerated one.

Moreover, the CoO initiative is making a significant investment—about \$700,000—in grassroots community organizing that aims to build capacity in smaller organizations, to enable them to effectively influence transit and infrastructure decision making. And a \$4.3 million CoO loan pool has been set up to help create and preserve affordable single- and multifamily housing in corridor neighborhoods.

The ultimate goal of the CoO initiative is to develop a new regional model for transitway development—as well as a regional plan for sustainable development—by aligning transit planning and engineering with land use planning, public and philanthropic investment, affordable housing, workforce development, and economic development.





## Richardson, Texas

*Richardson has sustained a two-decade commitment to transit-oriented development. Now home to significant TOD, Richardson is continuing to think about land use in the face of potential future transit expansion.*

The Arapaho Center Station includes a pedestrian underpass and appealing landscaping to connect the transit center to surrounding mixed-use development. (DALLAS AREA RAPID TRANSIT)

### Lessons from Richardson

- A long-term commitment to TOD has helped Richardson leverage its transit asset. That work continues.
- Area residents—those living adjacent to a TOD project, as well as others—are important champions of projects, if they see the benefits.

Richardson, Texas, is a 28-square-mile (72.5 km<sup>2</sup>) suburban city, with about 102,500 residents and 120,000 jobs. Located ten miles (16.1 km) northeast of Dallas, the city—with four Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) stations on the Orange Line and a fifth planned along the as-yet-unbuilt Cotton Belt Line—has made a long-term commitment to working with DART on TOD.

Richardson's first major public/private partnership—developed by the Galatyn Park Corporation, DART, and the city—is the 27.5-acre (11.1 ha) Galatyn Park urban center, completed in 2002 to capitalize on the new Galatyn Park Station. The development includes a performing arts center, a public plaza, 283 apartments, 6,813 square feet (633 m<sup>2</sup>) of retail and restaurant space, and a 336-room hotel. Although several office buildings remain to be completed, the project has spurred additional development on adjacent land of a new Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Texas corporate headquarters complex.

Also nearby, the Nortel campus has seen recent development with Ericsson Inc. having more than doubled its footprint in 2011, and State Farm unveiling plans to expand into one of the largest office blocks on the campus in August 2012. Two transit-oriented developments, Amlie Galatyn Station and Eastside, opened within a half mile (0.8 km) of the Galatyn Park Station in 2008 and 2009, providing high-end, mixed-use amenities for residents and visitors.

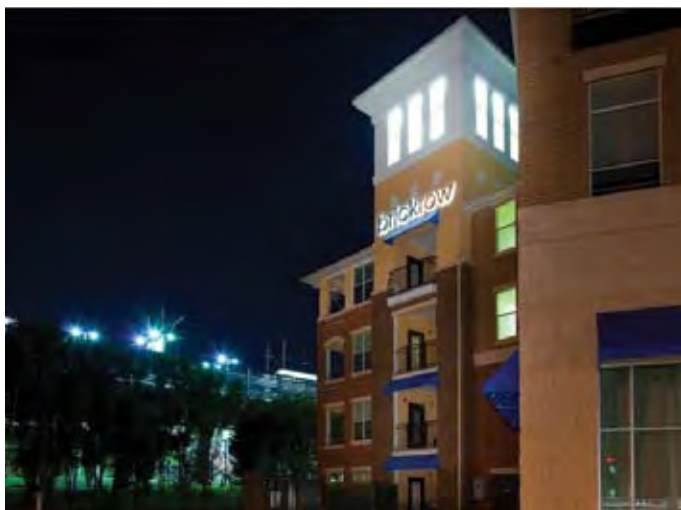


*Far left:* Richardson has four mixed-use nodes along the DART Orange Line. *Left:* The University of Texas at Dallas has developed a land use concept for a new station along the proposed Cotton Belt line. (GARY SLAGEL)

Following the success of Galatyn Park Station development, the area around Richardson's Arapaho Center Station was transformed into an adaptive use project with 14.8 acres (6.0 ha) of mixed-use development and a one-acre (0.4 ha) central park that opened in 2007. The Spring Valley Station experienced the addition of the Brick Row TOD project that opened in 2008, bringing 500 apartments, 80,000 square feet (7,432 m<sup>2</sup>) of retail and restaurants, 140 townhouses, 300 condominiums, and 11,000 square feet (1,022 m<sup>2</sup>) of office space to the area around the station.

Near the fourth and final existing station, Bush Turnpike Station, a 220-acre (89 ha) parcel is in the planning stages to become a new transit-oriented development led by the Parliament Group. This project will be part of a projected \$1.5 billion mixed-use development on 300 acres (121 ha) along George Bush Turnpike and US-75. To

The Brick Row Urban Village takes advantage of its proximity to the Spring Valley DART station. (BRICK ROW URBAN VILLAGE)





## Dallas Area Rapid Transit: TOD Innovator

Although it has been in existence only since 1983, Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) now operates the longest light-rail transit (LRT) system in the United States, with 77 miles (124 km) of track and 58 stations serving about 700 square miles (1,813 km<sup>2</sup>). Another 22 miles (35 km) and nine stations are planned by 2019, including an extension to Dallas–Fort Worth International Airport, as well as more than 12,000 bus stops. From the beginning, DART has viewed fostering transit-oriented development around its stations as part of its mission. DART’s mission has included improving the quality of life and stimulating development within its service area; partnering with its 13 member cities to encourage TOD is a natural outcome of that mission. Recent efforts have included the development of a new rating system to evaluate TOD potential and establish priorities.

The Dallas metro area’s ambitious buildout of the light-rail system has been funded by a 1983 sales tax ballot measure. David Leininger, chief financial officer at DART, noted that future funding solutions will be more complex, consisting of a blend of value capture; innovative financing, including naming rights and sponsorships; fares; and taxes. TOD—with its ability to enhance revenues from many of those sources—is an important part of DART’s overall financial picture.

Diverse TOD projects have been completed along DART’s lines; types include urban and suburban infill, suburban greenfield, and adaptive use projects. Estimates for 2009 indicated that over \$8 billion of existing, in progress, and planned TOD projects were occurring along DART corridors. Almost \$100 million of state and local tax revenue will be generated over the construction period of the DART buildout alone, with \$4 billion in



facilitate this development, the city recently initiated new TOD zoning around the station, which will eventually connect with the Cotton Belt Line. A TIF district has been created to help fund the continuing development of the area, and the city has streamlined its development approval process.

A 2000 ULI Advisory Services panel helped set the stage for TOD in Richardson. The study “was quite useful in terms of getting developers and landowners around the table to start talking about TOD and mixed-use development,” noted Gary Slagel, mayor of the city from 1991 to May 2011. Slagel is currently a member of DART’s board of directors.

Looking forward, Richardson is undertaking a station area master plan for a future Dallas Cotton Belt station, which is a joint project of the city of Richardson and the



University of Texas at Dallas. The proposed station would connect the university to Dallas–Fort Worth Airport and would serve as the focal point for a new walkable, mixed-use development, including residential, retail, office, and research and development facilities; an event center; a hotel; and public open spaces.

Because developing mixed-use projects near neighborhoods of single-family homes is challenging, Richardson has worked to communicate regularly with residents and to persuade them of transit-oriented development’s benefits. “Involve, involve, involve,” Slagel urged—and not just those who live adjacent to a new project, but the entire city.

Richardson’s early and aggressive pursuit of transit-oriented development has helped the city emerge as a TOD model and success story. The city has realized significant increases in property values at each of the four completed DART stations.

regional economic activity over a five-year period resulting in thousands of new jobs.

Jack Wierzenski, director of economic development for DART, explained, “Our philosophy for TOD is to work with the development community and with our member cities, thinking outside the box.” DART encourages development that is tailored to each specific site, relying on partnerships with member cities, other government entities, and the private sector.

In August 2008, DART adopted a formal TOD policy that calls for the agency to work in close partnership with its member cities to identify and implement TOD opportunities. By promoting high-quality TOD, the agency is creating revenue for DART, as well as fostering environmentally sustainable, livable communities focused on transit accessibility. The 13 member cities are important partners, since they have the financial tools—like TIF, public improvement districts, and grants—and the land use authority needed to make infrastructure improvements and to leverage TOD projects.

In 2009, DART took advantage of the stagnant economy to step back, look at the properties it owned, and create a new TOD evaluation and prioritization system. It developed four evaluation criteria—property attributes, accessibility, third-party interest, and market potential—that it broke down into a point system. The 20 top-ranked properties are now TOD priority areas for the agency. Moving forward, DART is reevaluating the rankings and adjusting them as appropriate. “This has been very successful,” Wierzenski commented, “not only to get ourselves at DART focused, but to get our member cities focused on where DART is moving with their properties in the future.”

*Facing page, top:* New development is located close to the DART rail line. *Bottom:* The Eisemann Center at Galatyn Park has become a cultural destination for the Dallas metro area. (DALLAS AREA RAPID TRANSIT)





## CityCentre, Houston, Texas

*A mixed-use development built on the site of a former mall, west Houston's 37-acre (15 ha) CityCentre project is a pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use destination with a one-acre (0.4 ha) heavily programmed plaza at its center.*

The focal point of CityCentre is a meticulously designed and heavily programmed plaza.  
(CITYCENTRE)

### Lessons from CityCentre

- Employers care about where their employees will shop, eat, and live. Office tenants can be enticed by retail and restaurant offerings and residential opportunities.
- Effectively programmed and managed spaces are powerful attractors of people—and dollars.
- Retention of existing structured parking facilities saved tens of millions of dollars in development costs.

The CityCentre project, which opened in spring 2010, was built on the site of an obsolete mall in the suburbs of Houston, Texas. The project's developer, Midway, has transformed the site into a thriving destination, with office, residential, and entertainment offerings. CityCentre's complex includes 400,000 square feet (37,161 m<sup>2</sup>) of retail and entertainment space, 425,000 square feet (39,484 m<sup>2</sup>) of office space, and 149,000 square feet (13,843 m<sup>2</sup>) of fitness facilities. The development has 700 residential units ranging from brownstones to lofts, a 255-room luxury hotel topped with six condominiums, and a movie theater. With the recent addition of three office buildings, the project is complete.





CityCentre, located along a major highway in Houston, replaced an outmoded mall with over 1 million square feet (93,000 m<sup>2</sup>) of mixed-use development. (CITYCENTRE)

Midway purchased the site because of its location at the demographic center of Houston. Located at the intersection of Beltway 8 and I-10, 2 million people live within a 20-minute drive of the property. Beltway 8 is the middle of three beltways that will eventually ring the city. Because the city of Houston is so vast (with a total land area of 579 square miles [1,500 km<sup>2</sup>]), much suburban-style development is located within city boundaries.

Three parking structures on the property, built for the old mall and retained in the CityCentre project, can accommodate 11,500 daily visitors in approximately 4,000 spaces, and CityCentre is visible to nearly 500,000 cars per day. But developer Midway





CityCentre features carefully crafted design elements and landscaping. (CITYCENTRE)



emphasized pedestrian circulation within the site. New, narrow streets built within the project and on-street parking add to an urban, compact feel.

The mixed-use nature of the development can create powerful linkages, said Jonathan Brinsden, chief operating officer and executive vice president of Midway. “From an investment standpoint,” he noted, “there can be tremendous synergies and value creation, if all the pieces truly add to each other. The risk is that if you get one piece wrong, it can affect the other pieces negatively.” He cited CityCentre’s appealing retail, fitness, entertainment, and restaurant offerings as powerful drivers of office and residential rents; CityCentre brings in some of the highest office and residential rents in the city, and its hotel has the third-highest revenue per available room in Houston.

Noting that “with the two big demographic bubbles, almost all of our residents are either empty nesters or new young professionals,” Brinsden added that his team focused on providing the types of amenities and experiences those households want, like a fitness center and spa, cinema restaurant, and motor club.

Midway has also emphasized place management, including programming in the plaza, which has been key to attracting shoppers and others night after night. “The town square is still in our DNA; it’s part of who we are,” Brinsden noted. Events in CityCentre’s plaza—more than 150 per year—help build relationships with workers, residents, and visitors.

CityCentre’s compact form and pedestrian emphasis set it apart from other developments in Houston. But ironically, the development was easy to entitle—Houston’s lack of a zoning code means that planning and developing a site like CityCentre are much simpler than they might be in other municipalities.

**AGENDA**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING**  
**CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS**  
**NOVEMBER 17, 2022, 7:30 P.M.**  
**FARMINGTON HILLS CITY HALL – CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**  
**31555 W. ELEVEN MILE ROAD, FARMINGTON HILLS MI 48336**  
**Cable TV: Spectrum – Channel 203; AT&T – Channel 99**  
**YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/FHChannel8>**  
**[www.fhgov.com](http://www.fhgov.com)**  
**(248) 871-2540**

- 1. Call Meeting to Order**
- 2. Roll Call**
- 3. Approval of Agenda**
  
- 4. Public Hearing**

**A. [SPECIAL APPROVAL PLAN 61-10-2022](#)**

LOCATION: 27055 Orchard Lake Rd. (28696 Oakland Dr.)  
PARCEL I.D.: 23-15-176-004  
PROPOSAL: Temporary concrete crusher and batch plant in an RA-2,  
One Family Residential District  
ACTION REQUESTED: Special Land Use and Site Plan Approval  
APPLICANT: Connor Lenington, Dan’s Excavating, Inc.  
OWNER: Oakland Community College

**B. [ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT 1, 2022](#)**

CHAPTER OF CODE: 34, Zoning Ordinance  
PROPOSED AMENDMENT: Amend the time period that recreational equipment or  
trailers may be parked on a residential premises during loading  
or unloading  
ACTION REQUESTED: Recommendation to City Council  
SECTIONS: 34-5.7.1 and 34-5.7.4

- 5. Approval of minutes** [September 15, 2022, Special and Regular meetings](#)
- 6. Public Comment**
- 7. Commissioner’s Comments**
- 8. Adjournment**

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Marisa Varga**  
**Planning Commission Secretary**

**Staff Contact**  
**Erik Perdonik**  
**City Planner, Planning and Community Development Department**  
**(248) 871-2540**  
**[eperdonik@fhgov.com](mailto:eperdonik@fhgov.com)**

NOTE: Anyone planning to attend the meeting who has need of special assistance under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is asked to contact the City Clerk’s Office at 248-871-2410 at least two (2) business days prior to the meeting, wherein arrangements/accommodations will be made. Thank you.



## **SPECIAL USE APPROVAL 61-10-2022**

Special Use Approvals are discretionary and therefore reasons need to be given for approvals as well as denial. Decisions should be based upon the facts presented.

### **Approval:**

I move that Special Approval 61-10-2022, submitted by Conner Lenington of Dan's Excavating, Inc., be approved, subject to all applicable provisions of the Zoning Chapter, for the following reasons:

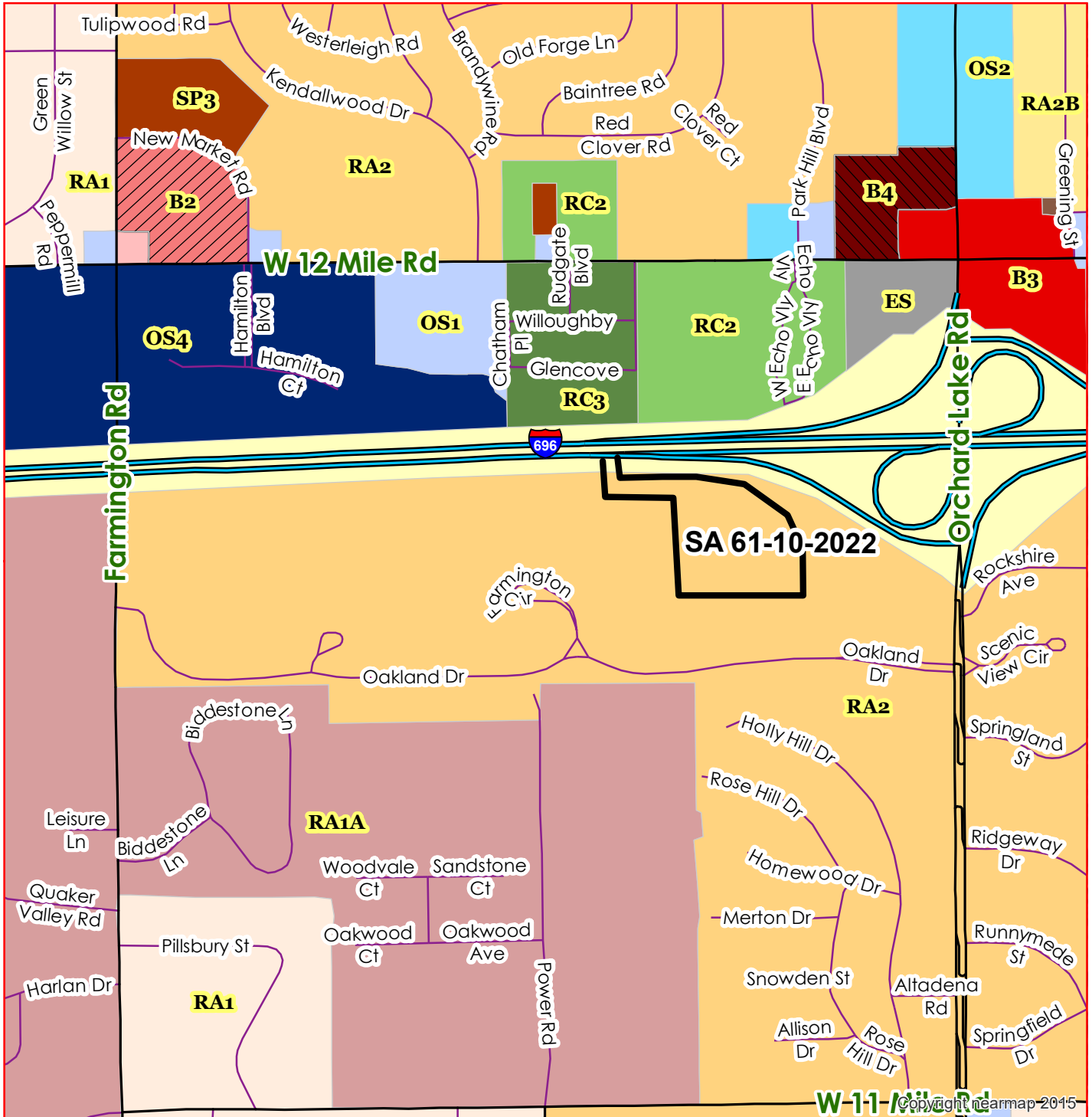
1. The use would not be injurious to the district and environs.
2. The effects of the use would not be contrary to the spirit and intent of the Zoning Chapter.
3. The use would be compatible with existing uses in the area.
4. The use will not interfere with orderly development of the area.
5. The use will not be detrimental to the safety or convenience of vehicular or pedestrian traffic.

### **Denial:**

I move that Special Approval 61-10-2022, submitted by Conner Lenington of Dan's Excavating, Inc., be denied, for the following reasons:

1. The use would interfere with orderly future development of the area.
2. The use would not be compatible with the objectives, goals, or policies of the Master Plan for Future Land Use.
3. The use would be incompatible with the existing or future uses in the area.
4. The use would have a negative impact on the district and/or environs.
5. The use would be contrary to the spirit and intent of the Zoning Chapter.
6. The use would be detrimental to the safety or convenience of vehicular or pedestrian traffic.
7. The use would make it difficult for the City to implement the uses proposed by the Master Plan for Future Land Use.

**Special Approval 61-10-2022**  
**15-176-004, 27055 Orchard Lake (28696 Oakland Dr.)**  
**Temp concrete crusher and batch plant**  
**RA-2, One-family Residential District**



|   |   |
|---|---|
| — Minor roads                           | ■ OS-4 Office Research District         |
| <b>Zoning Districts</b>                 | ■ P-1 Vehicular Parking District        |
| <b>Zoning Districts</b>                 | ■ RA-1 One Family Residential District  |
| ■ B-1 Local Business District           | ■ RA-1A One Family Residential District |
| ■ B-2 Community Business District       | ■ RA-2 One Family Residential District  |
| ■ B-3 General Business District         | ■ RA-2B One Family Residential District |
| ■ B-4 Planned General Business District | ■ RC-2 Multiple Family Residential      |
| ■ ES Expressway Service District        | ■ RC-3 Multiple Family Residential      |
| ■ OS-1 Office Service District          | ■ SP-3 Special Purpose District         |
| ■ OS-2 Planned Office Service District  |   |

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**FARMINGTON HILLS**  
Michigan

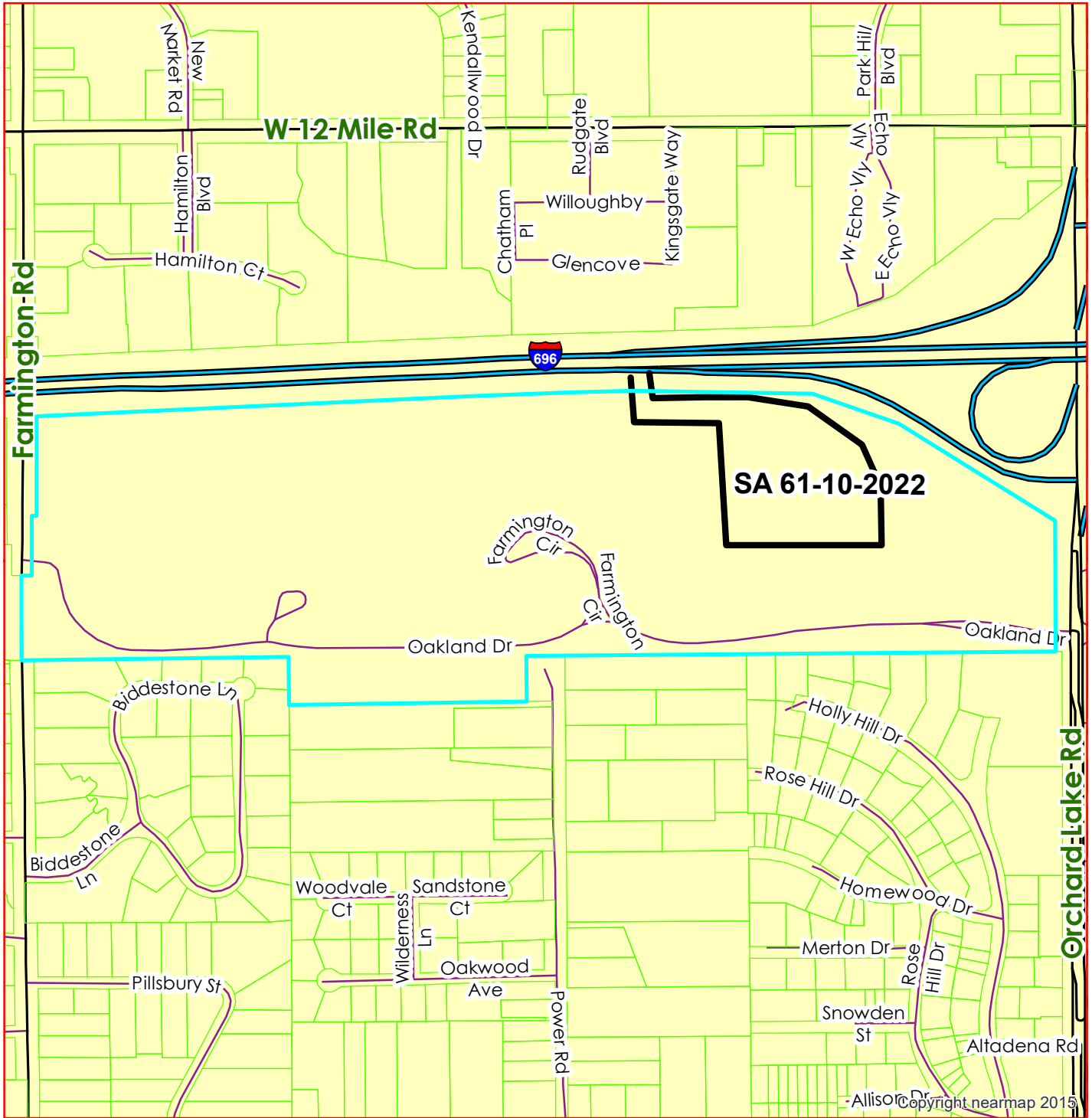
SOURCE: City of Farmington Hills, 2022  
Oakland County GIS, 2022

DISCLAIMER: Although the information provided by this map is believed to be reliable, its accuracy is not warranted in any way. The City of Farmington Hills assumes no liability for any claims arising from the use of this map.

0 99 FEET



**Special Approval 61-10-2022**  
**15-176-004, 27055 Orchard Lake (28696 Oakland Dr.)**  
**Temp concrete crusher and batch plant**  
**RA-2, One-family Residential District**



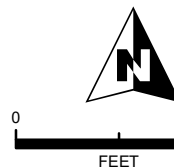
**Planning Division**



SOURCE: City of Farmington Hills, 2022  
 Oakland County GIS, 2022

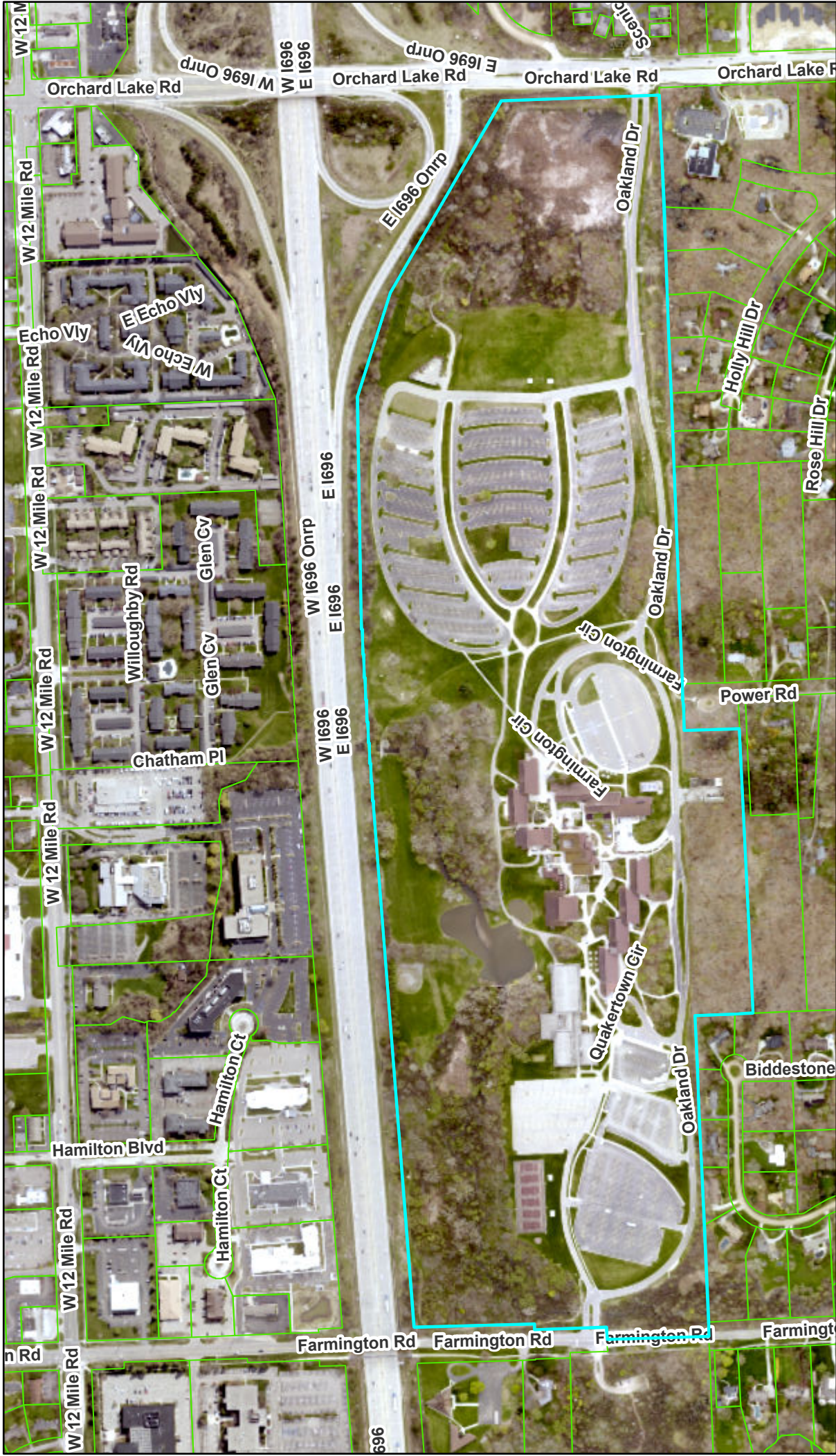
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- Tax parcel
- Minor roads





SA 61-10-2022, 15-176-004



11/10/2022, 8:35:54 AM

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0 0.07 0.15 0.3 km

□ Tax parcels

Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Farmington Hills PCD  
DISCLAIMER: Map is for reference use only and not a recorded survey. The City of Farmington Hills assumes no liability for any claims arising from use of this map.



April 11, 2022

Farmington Hills Planning Commission  
31555 W 11 Mile Rd  
Farmington Hills, MI 48336

# Site Plan Review

Case: 61-10-2022  
Site: 28696 Oakland Drive (Parcel 22-23-15-176-004)  
Applicant: Conner Lenington, Dan's Excavating  
Plan Date: 10/18/2022  
Zoning: RA-2 Single Family

Dear Planning Commissioners:

We have completed a review of the application for site plan and special land use approval above and a summary of our findings is below. Items in **bold** require specific action by the Applicant. Items in *italics* can be addressed administratively.



**SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

**Project Summary**

The applicant is proposing a temporary concrete batch plant. The application specifies that the time frame for the batch plant will be late January 1, 2023, through January 1, 2024. Requested hours of operation are 7am to 7pm, Monday through Saturday. The plant is located on an area of the Oakland Community College campus that used to be part of a large parking lot (it spills over into an area that has always been lawn).

**Summary of Issues**

1. **Provide setback distances and illustrations of the equipment indicating maximum height.**

**Existing Conditions**

1. **Zoning.** The parcel is zoned RA-2.
2. **Existing site.** The site is occupied by a campus of Oakland Community College. The area where the batch plant is proposed is a lawn, much of which was, until recently, part of a large parking lot. This parking lot was reconfigured and reduced within the last year (see the satellite photos at the beginning and end of this letter to see the change).
3. **Adjacent properties.**

| Direction | Zoning       | Land Use                        |
|-----------|--------------|---------------------------------|
| North     | I-696        | I-696                           |
| East      | RA-2         | Exit ramps and single family    |
| South     | RA-1A & RA-2 | Single family and small college |
| West      | RA-1A        | Church and park (across campus) |

4. **Site configuration and access.** The site is accessible from Orchard Lake Road and Farmington Road; the applicant’s plans show a cut-through to I-696 through an existing tree line (see comment below).

**Site Plan & Use:**

1. **Dimensional Standards (RA-2 district).** **Setbacks are not provided but appear to be met. No diagrams or other documents have been provided showing the height of the proposed equipment.**

| Standard              | Required | Proposed       |
|-----------------------|----------|----------------|
| Front setback (north) | 35 ft    | Approx. 150 ft |
| Front setback (east)  | 35 ft    | Approx. 60 ft  |
| Front Setback (west)  | 35 ft    | Approx. 87 ft  |
| Side Setback (south)  | 8 ft     | Approx. 60 ft  |
| Building height       | 30 ft    | Not provided   |

2. **Parking.** The application does not note a parking area for employees; the application has a value of zero in the space asking for the proposed number of employees. The application also states that parking “will change daily,” and that parking will occur wherever possible in the affected area. **The**



**applicant should be prepared to discuss how the site will be staffed, and how potential conflicts between parking and circulation will be managed.** Parking on the larger OCC site is unaffected.

3. **Overall Circulation.** The site is proposed to be accessed from I-696 through the tree line—circulation flows two ways from the freeway into the site and back out. There does not appear to be any direct access point to local roads.
4. **Lighting (Section 34-5.16).** No lighting is proposed.
5. **Landscaping and trees.** The trees on site are not proposed to be affected by the project. No landscaping is being proposed. We do note that it appears some vegetation, possibly including trees, must be removed to provide access to I-696. Some of this is on MDOT property within the I-696 right-of-way; the rest is on the OCC campus.
6. **Nature of equipment.** The applicant has not included diagrams or images of the proposed equipment; the letter submitted with the application does include notes about the location of fuel storage.

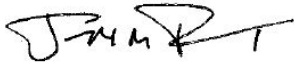
#### **Special Approval**

1. Conditions: In the B-3 district, cement batch plants are not specifically permitted; they are, however, permitted as a special land use under Section 4.20.4.C, subject to the following:
  - C. Temporary construction uses not accessory to existing uses. Temporary construction uses and structures not directly accessory to any existing use of the zoning lot, but necessary for the use or improvement of some other property or properties within the City for a permitted purpose.
    - i. The planning commission shall examine the proposed use and determine that the petitioner has adequately explored alternative locations and that the location proposed is the most reasonable.
    - ii. The planning commission shall examine the location of structures on the site and determine that they are the most appropriate, may require reasonable temporary screening of the activity proposed, may suggest the location of vehicular access to the site and make other recommendations which will assist in the protection of nearby uses during the time the construction use is in operation.
    - iii. All setbacks, land coverage, off-street parking, lighting and other requirements for protecting the public health, safety, peace, morals, comfort, convenience and general welfare of the inhabitants of the city shall be determined by the planning commission as being appropriate to the site and surrounding area.
    - iv. The act of granting approval of a use not otherwise permitted in a district shall in no way be construed as a change in the basic uses permitted in the district nor on the property wherein the use is permitted.
    - v. The granting of permission for the use shall be made in writing stipulating all conditions as to length of time, nature of development permitted and arrangements for removing the use at the termination of the period of time granted.

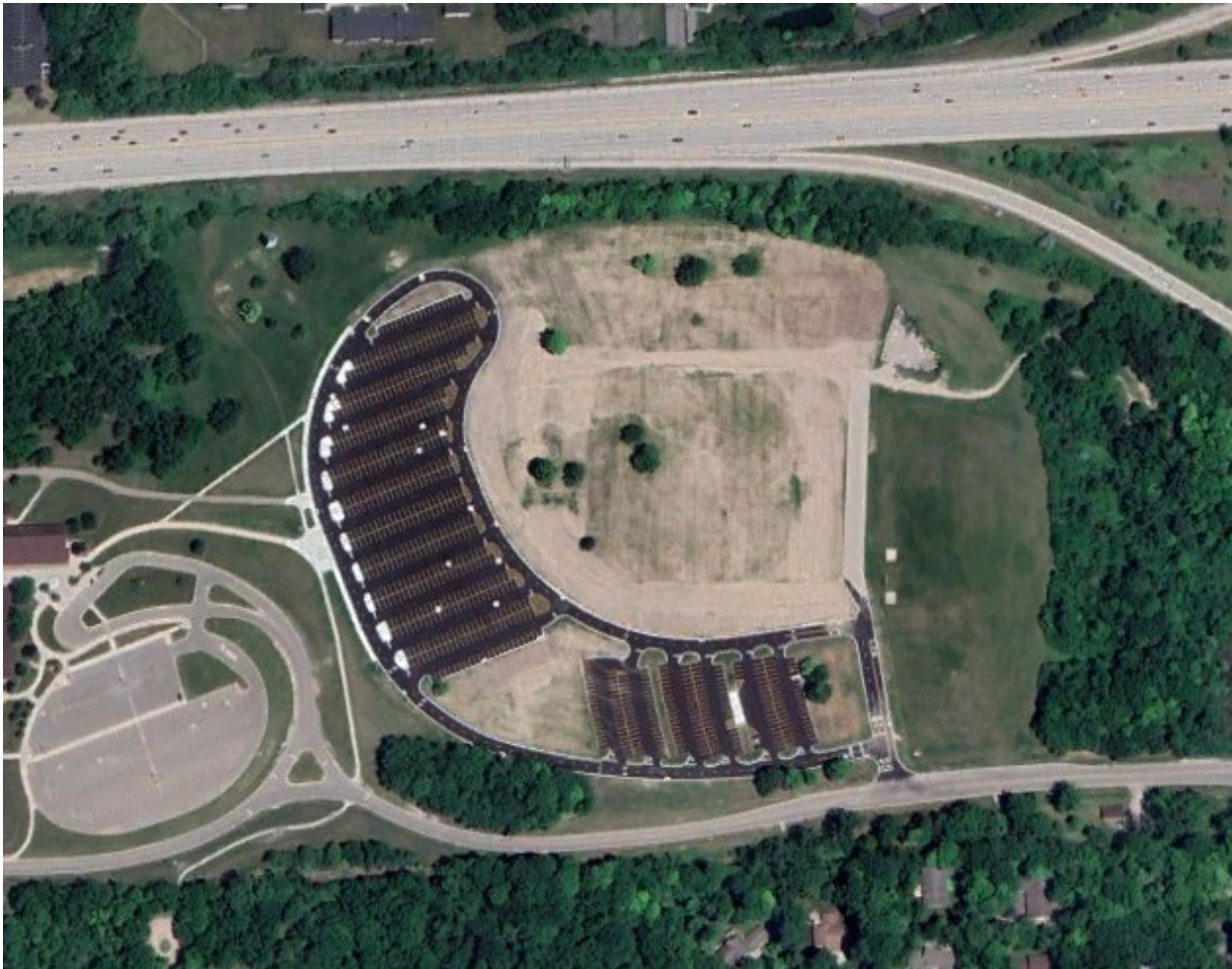
The planning commission should request additional information and explanation as it deems necessary to fully understand the proposed operation and its effects on this site and surrounding properties.

We are available to answer questions.

Respectfully,  
**Giffels Webster**

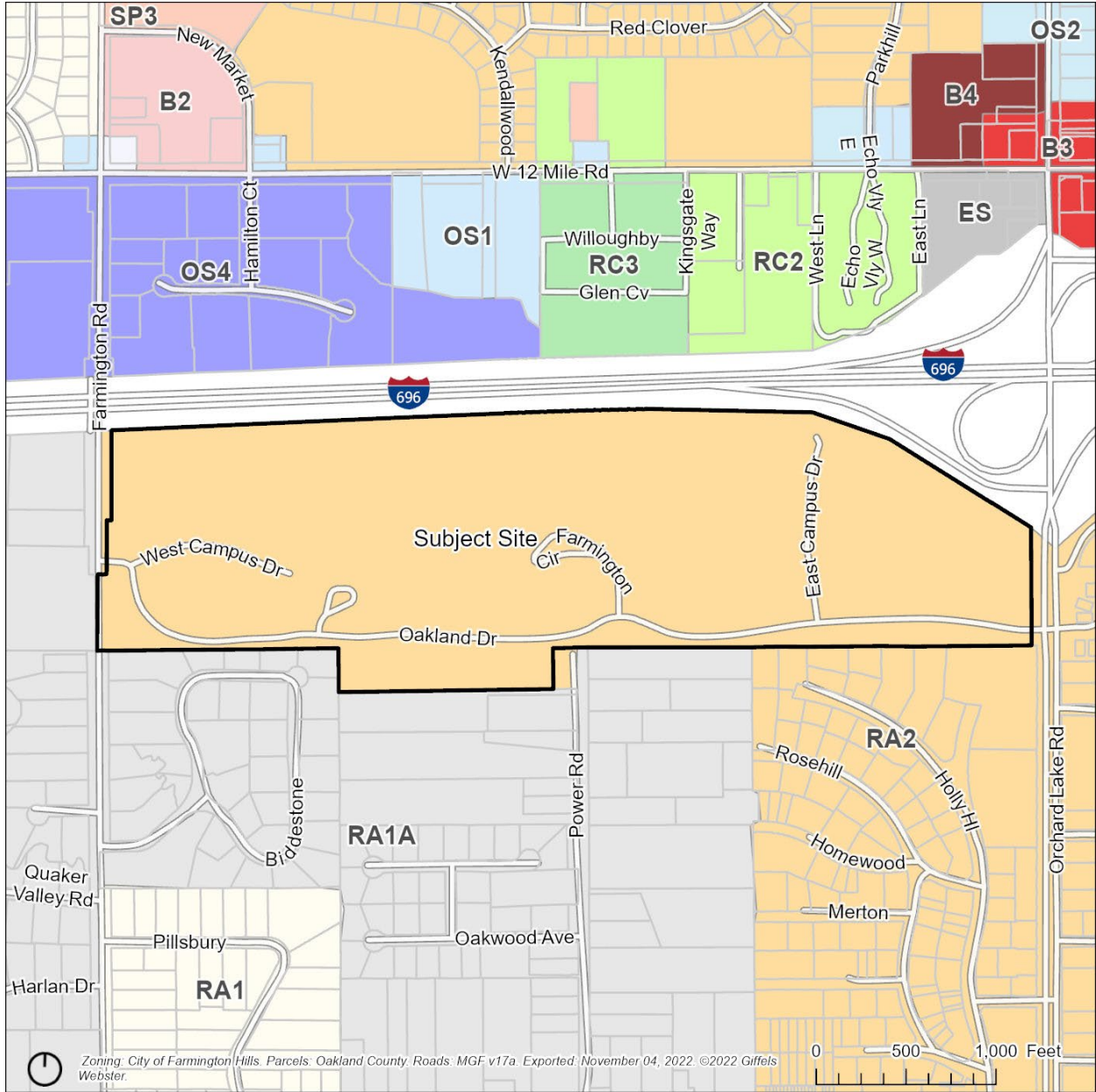


Joe Tangari, AICP  
Principal Planner



2022 Aerial showing reconfigured parking lot








DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICES  
KAREN MONDORA, P.E., DIRECTOR

**INTEROFFICE CORRESPONDENCE**

**DATE:** November 7, 2022

**TO:** Erik Predonik, City Planner

**FROM:** James Cubera, City Engineer 

**SUBJECT:** Batch Plant – Oakland Community College – 28696 Oakland Dr.  
Special Approval 61-10-2022  
PJ#: 15-22-52  
22-23-15-176-004

---

This office has no objection to the above referenced use provided as stated in the proponents temporary use letter of October 18, 2022 that all ingress and egress will be from eastbound I-696 only and that their hours of operation will be from January 1, 2023 to January 1, 2024 Monday thru Sunday 7 am to 7 pm.

Note that a separate soil erosion permit must be obtained from the City and all other appropriate permits from the Bldg Dept, EGLE etc must be obtained in advance.





**INTEROFFICE CORRESPONDENCE**

**DATE:** November 7, 2022  
**TO:** Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Jason Baloga, Fire Marshal  
**SUBJECT:** Special Approval 61-10-2022 (28696 Oakland Drive)

The Fire Department has no objection to recommending approval of the plan as submitted contingent upon compliance with the following requirements:

1. During construction and operation, site access shall be maintained; roadways capable of supporting fire apparatus up to twenty-five (25) tons shall be provided.
2. Provide an unobstructed lane for Fire Department access to eastbound and westbound I-696.
3. An additional cut out/movable jersey barrier shall be provided so that Fire Department apparatus can cross the median in an emergency. Exact locations shall be determined at a later date.
4. Proponent shall schedule a meeting with the Fire Marshal and Fire Chief to determine specific Fire Department access routes and emergency turn-around.
5. Above Storage Tank (AST) shall be installed according to the International Fire Code 2015 (IFC) and National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) requirements.
6. Protection from vehicle damage shall be provided for the AST. Jersey barriers or guard posts are acceptable. Please provide cut sheets of tank indicating secondary containment. AST shall be placarded to indicate the product it contains.
7. A fire extinguisher no smaller than 2-A:20-B:C shall be provided near the fueling area.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jason Baloga".

Jason Baloga, Fire Marshal

October 18, 2022

Planning and Community Development  
City of Farmington Hills  
31555 W Eleven Mile Rd,  
Farmington Hills, MI 48336

SA 61-10-2022

RECEIVED

OCT 18 2022

CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS  
PLANNING DEPT.

RE: Temporary Use Permit - Construction

SUBJ: Site Plan Special Approval

To Who it May Concern;

Dan's Excavating, Inc. (DEI) would like to request the use of the enclosed property as a concrete crusher and CTB batch plant on a temporary basis. DEI has been contracted by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) with MDOT contract ID 63101-131589 rebuilding I-696 from Lahser to I-275. We are currently beginning prep work for the 2023 construction season.

That being said, the enclosed location will only be utilized for operation while we have EB I-696 completely closed next year. For this reason, ingress and egress from the site will have minimal impact on the city of Farmington Hills or it's residents as our trucking will be entering to and from the site from our work zone. Operations will be conducted during the day, limiting noise issues with the surrounding public. Any potential dust issues will be controlled via water trucks already in-place for the previously mentioned MDOT job regularly scheduled dust control.

The site will be stripped of topsoil before operations begin and a stone pad will be put in place to protect the soil from the heavy machinery use. The only trees removed will be for ingress/egress to the site and are covered in the extent of our MDOT contract. After operations are completed, the stone will be removed and topsoil will be replaced, seeded, and restored. After the temporary operations, the land used will be restored to its original state.

We have been in communication with Oakland Community College directly and have come to an agreement of terms for our temporary use of their property. All necessary county permits (including SESC) will be obtained after the city of Farmington Hills has given their permission. DEI has also enclosed sample permits obtained by the concrete crusher that will be obtained after special use approval. These permits include an air quality, air visible emissions, industrial general permit, and facility inspection all from EGLE.

Included in this package are the following documentation:

- Application for Special Approval
- Site Plan
- Hazardous Substances Reporting Form
- Sample EGLE permits for concrete crusher

If there are any questions or concerns, please reach out to me directly.

Thank you;

Eric Rau  
Project Manager





INGRESS/EGRESS

INGRESS/EGRESS

Protected Tree Fencing

Proposed Area of Influence

RAW CONCRETE STOCKPILE

CTB BATCH PLANT

CONCRETE CRUSHER

PROCESSED CONCRETE

OCT 18 2022 SA 61-10-2022  
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS  
PLANNING DEPT.



**ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT 1, 2022 (Recreational Equipment or Trailers)**

**Recommended Approval:**

I move to recommend approval to City Council of Zoning Text Amendment 1, 2022, which proposes to amend Chapter 34, "Zoning", Article 5.0 "Site Standards," Section 5.7 "Recreational Equipment or Trailers," to revise the time period during which recreational equipment or trailers may be parked in residential districts for loading, unloading, and maintenance.

*List any revisions recommended below:*

**Recommended Denial:**

I move that the Planning Commission does not recommend approval of Zoning Text Amendment 1, 2022 at this time in order to allow for City Staff to address the following items and present a revised draft for consideration at a future meeting.

*List any items to be addressed:*



CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS  
OAKLAND COUNTY, MICHIGAN

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE FARMINGTON HILLS CODE OF ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 34, "ZONING," ARTICLE 5.0, "SITE STANDARDS," SECTION 5.7, "RECREATIONAL EQUIPMENT OR TRAILERS," IN ORDER TO REVISE THE TIME PERIOD DURING WHICH RECREATIONAL EQUIPMENT OR TRAILERS MAY BE PARKED IN RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS FOR LOADING, UNLOADING, AND MAINTENANCE.

THE CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS ORDAINS:

Section 1 of Ordinance. Ordinance Amendment.

The Farmington Hills City Code, Chapter 34, "Zoning," Article 5, "Site Standards," Section 5.7, "Recreational Equipment or Trailers," is amended as follows:

**34-5.7. STORAGE OF RECREATIONAL EQUIPMENT OR TRAILERS**

The parking or storage of any recreational equipment or trailer in any residential district shall be subject to the following:

1. No recreational equipment or trailer shall be parked or stored on any lot in a residential district except in a garage or carport or beyond the nearest portion of a building to a street; provided, however, that such equipment may be parked anywhere on residential premises for a period of time not to exceed ~~twenty-four (24) hours during loading or unloading~~ seventy-two (72) hours cumulatively in any five (5)-day period for the purpose of loading, unloading, or maintenance. No such equipment shall be used for living, sleeping or housekeeping purposes when parked or stored on a residential lot, or any location not approved for such use.
2. [Unchanged]
3. [Unchanged]
4. In a one-family residential condominium development, such equipment or trailers shall be stored only to the rear of any building and shall not be permitted between the sides of buildings or between a building and any private road or street, provided, however, that such equipment may be parked anywhere on the premises for a period of time not to exceed ~~twenty-four (24) hours during loading or unloading~~ seventy-two (72) hours cumulatively in any five (5)-day period for the purpose of loading, unloading, or maintenance. No such equipment shall be used for living, sleeping, or housekeeping purposes when parked or stored in a residential district.





I, the undersigned, the qualified and acting City Clerk of the City of Farmington Hills, Oakland County, Michigan, do certify that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of the Ordinance adopted by the City Council of the City of Farmington Hills at a meeting held on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2022, the original of which is on file in my office.

\_\_\_\_\_  
PAMELA B. SMITH, City Clerk  
City of Farmington Hills

DRAFT

ORDINANCE NO. C-\_\_\_\_\_ -2022

CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS  
OAKLAND COUNTY, MICHIGAN

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE FARMINGTON HILLS CODE OF ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 34, "ZONING," ARTICLE 5.0, "SITE STANDARDS," SECTION 5.7, "RECREATIONAL EQUIPMENT OR TRAILERS," IN ORDER TO REVISE THE TIME PERIOD DURING WHICH RECREATIONAL EQUIPMENT OR TRAILERS MAY BE PARKED IN RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS FOR LOADING, UNLOADING, AND MAINTENANCE.

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2. [Unchanged]
3. [Unchanged]
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---

PAMELA B. SMITH, City Clerk  
City of Farmington Hills

DRAFT



**MINUTES  
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS  
PLANNING COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING  
FARMINGTON HILLS CITY HALL – COMMUNITY ROOM  
31555 W. ELEVEN MILE ROAD  
FARMINGTON HILLS MI 48336  
September 15, 2022, 6:00 P.M.**

**CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

The Planning Commission Special Meeting was called to order by Chair Countegan at 6:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

**Commissioners present:** Aspinall, Brickner, Countegan, Grant, Mantey, Stimson, Trafelet,

**Commissioners Absent:** Varga, Ware

**Others Present:** City Planner Perdonik, Planning Consultants Bahm and Tangari

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**MOTION by Brickner, support by Mantey,** to approve the agenda as published.

**Motion carried by voice vote.**

**NEW MASTER PLAN STUDY**

Tonight's discussion was guided by elements presented in the September 9, 2002 Giffels Webster memorandum.

**This month's reading**

Planning Consultant Tangari led a discussion regarding age-friendly communities and placemaking for seniors. Reading included *The Livability Economy. People, Places and Prosperity* (AARP, July 2015) and a piece titled *Seniors and Parks: Chapter 2 The Elders' Needs for Open Space and Physical Activity*.

Discussion focused on how the Master Plan can help the City improve relative to the four factors in the AARP report:

1. Compactness
2. Integration of Land Uses
3. Housing Diversity
4. Transportation Options

Points of discussion included:

- If the SMART BUS millage passes, there should be significant improvement in the bus service.
- Widespread implementation of transportation options can help keep older people in their homes.
- By 2034 there will be more people over 65 than under the age of 18 in the United States.
- Meeting the needs of seniors should be considered in a broad sense, not in terms of individual developments here and there.
- What should senior housing look like and how should it be located? As senior population decreases, can senior housing be repurposed for other things or other populations? Can senior units be broadly appealing beyond the senior population?

- Seniors are an active population group, yet everyone will have “late stage” in their lives when they will need more help. At-grade entrances and barrier-free housing should become more universal.
- The City has approved several senior housing projects that have fallen through and are not being built.
- The Pulte development on 9 Mile included ranch homes, small yards taken care of by the condominium association, starting at \$500,000, and was targeted toward this population.

Implications for zoning:

- Current zoning limits senior housing to SP (Special Purpose) districts. It would be difficult to transition this housing to something else when it was no longer needed.
- Form based zoning, as opposed to Euclidian zoning, can address senior housing needs, and help the City get away from the hyper-specificity of SP districts. Form based zoning is concerned with what a building looks like, where it's placed on a lot, and more importantly, how it frames public spaces like streets and sidewalks, in order to create more walkable, vibrant and safe public spaces.
- Age-friendly zoning will serve both seniors and young people: putting goods and services in walkable communities, near to more dense housing. Planning that is good for reconstructed knees is also good for young legs. Building for seniors is building for children also.

Upcoming public outreach efforts.

- Nine elements of public input listed on p. 1 of tonight’s memorandum.
- Online public input platform being developed.
- Open House – tentatively scheduled for October 20.
- Neighborhood toolkit – list of potential toolkit recipients on pg. 2 of tonight’s memorandum – will reach people who will not/cannot come to the Open House.
- Toolkit discussions can facilitate activities/discussions such as:
  - Draw maps showing non-motorized connections
  - Connecting to what? Restaurants, stores, parks
  - What are the best things about Farmington Hills? and other basic questions
  - Housing diversity
  - What are the things that could be changed, to strengthen the best things about the City and to address things that are needed?
  - Placemaking
- These things can also be discussed at the Open House.
- Commissioner Stimson will reach out to COHA (Council of Homeowners Associations).

Picture This!: Online forum where residents can offer comments or upload pictures that can be tagged to specific locations in the City, based on clear questions/prompts.

Art contest: Will get students involved.

Discussion of Sections 18, 19, and 30: Zoning Map compared to Future Land Use Map

Consultants Tangari and Bahm led a discussion regarding the current zoning of Sections 18, 19, and 30 (western sections) compared to the Future Land Use Map. Area includes M-5, I-275, FRW (Freeway Overlay district), some areas governed by consent judgments, and residential neighborhoods.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None



**COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS**

None

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION by Trafelet, support by Brickner, to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 p.m.**

**MOTION carried by voice vote.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Marisa Varga  
Planning Commission Secretary

/cem

**MINUTES  
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS  
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
31555 W ELEVEN MILE ROAD  
FARMINGTON HILLS, MICHIGAN  
SEPTEMBER 15, 2022, 7:30 P.M.**

**CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

The Planning Commission Regular Meeting was called to order by Chair Countegan at 7:30 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Commissioners present:           Aspinall, Brickner, Countegan, Grant, Mantey, Stimson, Trafelet,

Commissioners Absent:           Varga, Ware

Others Present:                   City Planner Perdonik, City Attorney Schultz, Planning Consultant  
Tangari, Staff Engineer Alexander

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

**MOTION by Trafelet, support by Brickner,** to approve the agenda as presented.

**MOTION carried unanimously by voice vote.**

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**A.     REVISED PUD PLAN 3, 2021**

LOCATION:                           32680 Northwestern Hwy  
PARCEL I.D.:                       23-02-126-130  
PROPOSAL:                         Construction of a multiple-family apartment building in B-2,  
Community Business and B-3, General Business Districts  
ACTION REQUESTED:             Recommendation to City Council  
APPLICANT:                       Robert Asmar, NWH Holdings, LLC,  
OWNER:                             NWH Holdings, LLC

**Applicant presentation**

Keith Phillips, Think Shop Architects, 1420 Washington Blvd., Suite 430, Detroit MI, and Jim Butler, PEA Group, 1849 Pond Run, Auburn Hills MI, were present on behalf of this application for recommendation for Final Determination to City Council for Revised PUD Plan 3, 2021.

Utilizing a PowerPoint present and a 3-D model (passed around the Commission, and then given back to the applicants), the applicants provided the following information.

**Regarding changes to the plan:**

- After their last meeting, the applicants re-evaluated their plan, especially relative to some of the issues that were brought up related to height and density. The height was lowered from 69' high to 55' high, by lowering the building into the ground, with ~260 parking spaces provided below the building. The rest of the parking will be surface parking.
- The number of units was reduced from 253 to 217 units.



- The layout remained the same as with previous renditions, with a single access point off Northwestern Highway, and 360 degree circulation around the building. There were 4 access points into the garage all the way around the building.
- The applicants were in conversation with the Fire Marshal regarding circulation and access, and they believed that the Fire Marshal was now comfortable with the plan. Several dead end areas had been removed from the site.
- The reduction in units allowed a courtyard expansion.
- The concept was to try to keep a clean building, and conceal parking with two thirds of the parking below grade.
- The density was comparative to the units across Northwestern, as well as what was going on in neighboring communities.
- They were trying to provide as many amenities on the site as possible.

Regarding the design:

- Lowering the height lessened the impact on neighboring developments; a height deviation of 5' (instead of the previous 18') was requested.
- They tried to break up the massing with building materials, and by enlarging the courtyard by moving parking underground. They were asking for a deviation of 71' parking spaces. They were providing 1.7 parking spaces per unit (instead of the required 2.5 spaces per unit).

In response to a question, the applicants said the 55' height included the parapet, which was 4' tall.

**Consultant Report**

Referencing his August 9, 2022 memorandum, Planning Consultant Tangari reviewed this request for final PUD qualification:

Regarding PUD qualification, under Section 34-3.20.2, the Planning Commission may make a determination that the site qualifies for a PUD based on ordinance criteria and procedures. At its meeting on February 18, 2021, the Planning Commission granted preliminary PUD qualification approval to the site, citing the plan's compliance with all objective viii of Section 34-3.20.2.E. At the time, Planning Commissioners generally did not take issue with the proposed use, but several expressed reservations about the scale of the use, particularly its density and height. The PUD was also reviewed by the Planning Commission at its meeting of August 19, 2021, and again June 16, 2022; both times, a recommendation was postponed to provide an opportunity for the applicant to amend the plan in response to discussion at the meeting. The motion to postpone included non-binding advice to the applicant to reduce height and overall density, and increase the east side setback. Density and building height had been reduced since the June meeting. The applicant was seeking final PUD qualification, but was not seeking site plan approval concurrent with final qualification. Preliminary approval was not a guarantee of final approval.

In response to questions, Planning Consultant Tangari explained that the Commission would be making a recommendation 1) regarding the use as multi-family residential and 2) on the requested deviations from the ordinance. If there were things the Planning Commission wanted in terms of materials, design, etc., those could be conditions of a recommended approval.

As this was a Planned Unit Development (PUD), and the applicant was seeking some substantial deviations from ordinance standards, the Planning Commission and City Council may wish to discuss with the applicant project elements that bring greater benefit to the wider community such as art or gateway elements on the site that would be visible to pedestrians and motorists traveling in the adjacent

right-of-way, public amenities such as a wider sidewalk to accommodate more users, benches along the public sidewalk, greater landscaping in the right-of-way, public art in the right-of-way, or other items.

City Attorney Schultz explained further that the Planning Commission would be making a recommendation regarding the concept plan presented this evening. If the PUD was approved by City Council the final plans would have to be substantially similar to what was presented. If the final site plan conformed to the PUD agreement and the concept plan, the Planning Commission would have to approve it. Now was the time to list any outstanding concerns or attach conditions.

After reviewing the application against the criteria for PUD qualification in the ordinance (pages 2-7 of the review letter), and reviewing the concept site plan and use (p. 6-8 of the review letter) Planning Consultant Tangari listed outstanding issues as follows:

#### Relief from Ordinance Standards

Per the application materials, relief was sought from the following ordinance standards:

1. Height: Proposed maximum height of 55', where 50' was permitted in the underlying district (a deviation of 5').
2. East side setback (to residential): 54.47' was proposed where the underlying district requires 75' (a deviation of 20.53').
3. Density. The plan does not specify a base district for density standards. 543 rooms are proposed; the maximum number of rooms permitted in the RC-3 district was 230 rooms (a deviation of 313 rooms).
4. Parking. 365 spaces are proposed where 436 were required (a deviation of 71 spaces). This was a ratio of 1.68 spaces per unit; the Emerson across Northwestern was approved for 1.65 spaces per unit.

If City Council did grant final PUD qualification with the requested deviations, a PUD agreement would be formalized, and the final site plan would come back to the Planning Commission for further review.

#### Other issues:

- The Planning Commission and Council might want to discuss additional landscaping as a condition of PUD qualification.
- Bike storage could potentially mitigate some of the impact of the deviation from parking requirements.
- Electrical Vehicle charging stations will be essential to future marketability; the location of such stations could be discussed at final site plan review.
- The applicants had changed the architectural appearance in response to previous conversations; the Commission should decide whether the changes are acceptable or if other changes are desired.

#### Commission discussion

Commissioner Mantey was concerned that green roofs were not mentioned in the environmental review; the applicants had mentioned green roofs in earlier iterations.

Commissioner Mantey said he saw demand for an increase in rooms in order to work at home. He was not too worried about the parking.

Commissioner Brickner noted that the applicants were comparing their design to The Emerson, across Northwestern, in terms of height and density. City Planner Perdonik agreed, while noting The Emerson

was on more acreage. The Emerson was 53' high, and had ~113 rooms per acre. This proposal had ~98 rooms per acre.

In response to a question from Chair Countegan, and noting that only Objective viii. under Section 34-3.20.2.E was listed as being met in the original motion for preliminary qualification, Planning Consultant Tangari explained that a PUD became a zoning district in and of itself, and the applicant was not obligated to develop the property under the B-2 or B-3 districts. The applicant was allowed to propose residential use with the underlying commercial zoning.

Additionally, this proposal was not comparable to any of the multifamily districts in the zoning ordinance. The proposal was similar to The Emerson, which was recently approved in the area, located in one of the most built-up commercial areas in the City. There was not a lot of density that was comparable to this density in the City in general.

Chair Countegan opened the public hearing for public comment. Seeing that no public indicated they wished to speak, Chair Countegan closed the public hearing and brought the matter back to the Commission for discussion and/or a motion.

Commissioner Mantey was concerned with the over use of the PUD process. Hopefully with the Master Plan update, fewer PUD developments would be necessary. He was disappointed that this proposal only meets one of eight objectives listed in the ordinance, which was: *To bring about redevelopment of sites where an orderly change of use is determined to be desirable*. If the green roofs were provided, they would fall under Objective i.: *To permanently preserve open space or natural features because of their exceptional characteristics or because they can provide a permanent transition or buffer between land uses*. He asked that this be discussed during site plan review.

Commissioner Brickner noted that the May 2022 plans in his packet did not show the modifications being discussed this evening. He did think residential apartments were a good use, and the development acted as a buffer. His main concern was regarding the residential condominiums to the east. The greenbelt between this development and the condominiums should include taller trees that offered year-round green buffering, and more landscaping should be included. Regarding density, he hoped there was enough parking. The density was higher than normal but lower than The Emerson across the street. Recommendations by the City's consultants and staff should be included in any approving recommendation.

Commissioner Stimson said if a green roof was desired, it should be included in tonight's motion.

Commissioner Mantey said he did not want to include a green roof as a requirement, because he was unsure of its practicality.

Commissioner Stimson thought the project was too dense for this property, and too tall when it was so close to residential developments. The Emerson did not have the issue of being close to a residential complex. At a minimum, the side next to the residential development should be one less floor to make up for the too-close setback. With one less floor on the residential side, the angle to the top of the building would be the same as if the building were set back 75'. With the proposed height, the setback would be 28% closer than what would normally be allowed.

Commissioner Stimson said he liked the idea of an apartment complex, but this proposal was too massive for the small piece of land and the setbacks from the residential were too close.



Commissioner Trafelet thought the plan was improved from what was previously presented, but he agreed that the proposal was too tall and too dense. He also wanted to require more trees on the eastern side and a masonry wall.

Planning Consultant Tangari said a wall would be required on the eastern side and additional landscaping could be required as well. A 6' screen wall was typical, which would screen the parking from the neighboring use. Again, enhanced landscaping could be required. A solid evergreen screen could also be required, with deciduous trees planted in front of that.

Chair Countegan asked about any environmental aspect argument that had been made or envisioned when the project was first submitted.

Mr. Phillips said the idea was to help mitigate any environmental impacts the building might have. The entire parking structure had a green roof on it; this became the interior courtyard. They were slowing stormwater flow into the system. They had never eliminated environmental mitigation from the project, but instead had reportioned the environmental mitigation aspects to different parts of the building.

Chair Countegan asked if any baseline environmental studies had been done on the property. Mr. Butler said a Phase I environmental study had been done, and the site was clean.

Chair Countegan said he was comfortable with the project going forward, in terms of density, height, and the location of the building on the property. The Planning Commission had initiated a PUD qualification. Redevelopment was good, and there was comparable development in the proximity of this proposed development that had been successful. While there were impacts on neighbors, any time there was change there was going to be an impact, and it was up to the Planning Commission to help mitigate those effects and make sure the City was doing its best to establish good neighbors and good neighborhoods.

Chair Countegan said the issues of height, density and setback reflected a sense of the current trends, including people working from home and converting bedrooms to offices. As part of the current master planning process the Commission would be discussing how units such as these will be used in the future. He was not overly concerned about the density and he trusted the developers regarding parking – they were the ones risking capital. Again, he was in favor of moving forward.

**MOTION by Stimson, support by Trafelet**, that the Planning Commission recommend to City Council that PUD Plan 3, 2021, dated May 18, 2022, submitted by NWH Holdings, LLC, **BE DENIED**, for the following reasons:

- Exceeding height and density restrictions, and the setback on the east side.

Motion discussion:

Commissioner Brickner said that using a PUD would allow the Commission to put further conditions on the proposal, in order to protect the residential development to the east and to mitigate other concerns. For too long this property had been undeveloped, and an apartment building was a good use of the site. This proposal would bring something to the community rather than detract from it. He would not support the motion.

Chair Countegan said he would not support the motion.

**Motion failed 2-5.** (Aspinall, Brickner, Countegan, Grant, Mantey opposed).

**Motion by Brickner, support by Aspinall**, to recommend to City Council that PUD Plan 3, 2021, dated May 18, 2022, submitted by NWH Holdings, LLC, **BE APPROVED**, because the plans are consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of the Master Plan and applicable provisions of the Planned Unit Development Option in Section 34-3.20 of the Zoning Ordinance, SUBJECT TO:

1. Modifications of Zoning Ordinance requirements as indicated on the proposed plan.
2. Further modifications of Zoning Ordinance requirements as follows:
  - Height not to exceed 55' in any location on the building.
  - Density not to exceed 217 units in the building.
  - At least 365 parking spaces be provided.
  - Side yard on the east side of the building be no less than 54'.
3. The following conditions:
  - Green roofs if structurally feasible.
  - Underground water storage requirements as set forth on the June 7, 2022 Environmental Review, setting forth the requirements of proper water storage on the premises, including providing calculations details for the underground detention system.
  - Higher density of landscape material will be used on the east side of the building, including taller trees that will be green year round such as arbor vitae, and taller deciduous plants, to act as a blockade between the residential condominiums to the east and this project, and in addition, if required by ordinance and/or staff, a six foot screen wall. The screen wall does not eliminate or reduce the requirement for taller trees and landscaping including shrubs as described.
  - Bicycle parking and EV stations be provided, with EV infrastructure installed in the parking structure and elsewhere as appropriate.

And with the following finding:

The Planning Commission finds that the PUD qualifies under Section 34-3.20.2.E., objectives vii and viii.  
vi.: To promote the goals and objectives of the Master Plan for Land Use.  
viii: To bring about redevelopment of sites where an orderly change of use is determined to be desirable.

**Motion carried 7-2** (Stimson, Trafelet opposed).

## **REGULAR MEETING**

### **A. ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT 1, 2022**

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| CHAPTER OF CODE:    | 34, Zoning Ordinance   |
| PROPOSED AMENDMENT: | Amend the time period that recreational equipment or trailers may be parked on a residential premises during loading or unloading. |
| ACTION REQUESTED:   | Set for public hearing   |
| SECTIONS:           | 34-5.7.1 and 34-5.74   |

City Planner Perdonik gave the background for this zoning text amendment request. The Planning Commission was being asked to look into the reasonableness of the 24 hour period and see whether the City was in line with other communities. The norm in several other communities was 72 hours. Other communities were silent on this issue.

The question was whether 24 hours placed an undue hardship on people to clean their recreational equipment and prep it for storage. The ordinance should strike a balance between not allowing a recreational vehicle to become a permanent fixture of the neighborhood, but still give people the flexibility to do what they need to do when they're coming and going on vacation.

The requirement for 72 hours *cumulatively over 5 days* actually clarified the requirement in terms of enforcement. The language was written to prevent gaming the ordinance, and emerged as best practice as written and experienced by other communities.

**MOTION by Grant, support by Stimson**, that Zoning Text Amendment 1, 2022 be set for public hearing for the Planning Commission's next available regular meeting.

**Motion carried by voice vote.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES August 18, 2022 Special and Regular meetings**

**MOTION by Brickner, support by Trafelet**, to approve the August 18, 2022 Special Meeting and Regular Meeting minutes as submitted.

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Cynthia Lukotch, 35263 Edythe Drive, spoke in favor of the zoning text amendment just discussed and set for public hearing. She supported the 72 hour requirement.

**COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS**

The Commission discussed the new roundabout design relative to vehicles making left turns out of the Hunters Square Shopping Center.

Commissioner Grant supported the proposed change in the time frame allowing people more than 24 hours to take care of their recreational equipment after returning home from trips.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION by Trafelet, support by Brickner**, to adjourn the meeting at 8:45pm.

**MOTION carried unanimously by voice vote.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Marisa Varga  
Planning Commission Secretary

/cem