

THE ADA VILLAGE DESIGN CHARRETTE FINAL REPORT

Ada Township



PREPARED BY

ACP-VISIONING & PLANNING, LTD.

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

GLATTING JACKSON KERCHER ANGLIN

RANDALL GROSS/DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS

GARY BUMPUS

JANUARY 2007

Acknowledgements

Ada Township Supervisor George Haga wishes to thank all those who participated in the Ada Village Design Charrette, including the hundreds of citizens who joined in the workshops, those who volunteered to facilitate at the events, the community leaders who made time to attend stakeholder interviews, members of the Outreach Committee who encouraged the public's involvement in the Charrette process, as well as representatives from neighborhood associations and area churches who helped spread the word about the Charrette. Finally, thanks to members of the Charrette Task Force for their time, insight, and commitment to guiding the preparation of this vision for the Future of Ada Village.

Ada Village Design Charrette Task Force Members

Susan Burton, Planning Commission Representative

Dr. Devin Norman, DDS

Georgia Gietzen

George Haga, Township Supervisor

Nina Harrington

Jim Ippel

Robert Kullgren

Robert Lowry, Planning Commission Representative

Tim Pratt

Kathy Sweedyk

John Westra, Township Trustee

Ada Township Board

George Haga, Township Supervisor

Deborah Ensing Millhuff, Township Clerk

Diane Fase Pratt, Township Clerk

Randy Damstra, Trustee

Robert Proos, Trustee

Mischelle Sytsma, Trustee

John Westra, Trustee

Special thanks to Shannon Reincke of Doubledog Design, LLC and Karen Johnson of Johnson Design Group for donated graphic design services, to Grand River Grocery for donated promotional materials and meeting refreshments, to Forest Hills Public Schools for providing facilities for the Charrette public meetings, and to those who made financial contributions to help offset the costs of the Charrette process.

Table of Contents

Chapters

1. Introduction	1.1
2. Methodology	2.1
3. Findings	3.1
4. Planning and Design Principles for Ada Village	4.1
5. A Portfolio of Initiatives	5.1
6. Village Form Standards	6.1
7. Implementation	7.1

Appendices

- A. Building, Street, and Frontage Standards
- B. Market Analysis
- C. Glossary

1. Introduction

This report is the final product of the Ada Village Design Charrette. It includes the planning, design, and regulatory recommendations resulting from a four-month effort that involved the public, community leaders, and the consultant team.

The purpose of conducting the charrette was to capture the community's vision for the Village in a manner that will guide public policy and private investments in the area; to identify catalyst projects that can leverage public funds and private investments; and to ensure that the Village maintains its role as both the vibrant social and physical center of the Township community and as a sought-after destination within the Grand Rapids region.

An 11-member Task Force representing a broad range of interests in Ada Village and the Township provided guidance and feedback throughout the charrette process. A full list of the Task Force members can be found on the Acknowledgements page.

The consultant team retained for the charrette effort included: ACP – Visioning & Planning as the planning and urban design lead firm; Troy P. Russ, AICP, Principal, Glatting Jackson Kercher Anglin, as the transportation specialist; Randall Gross, Development Economics as the economic development specialist; and Gary Bumpus as the architectural illustrator.

Following this brief introduction, the report is organized according to the following chapters:

2. Methodology – provides an overview of the entire charrette process.

3. Findings – highlights the major strengths and weaknesses of the existing Village context, as determined through observation, stakeholder interviews, and public input gathered during charrette meetings and activities.

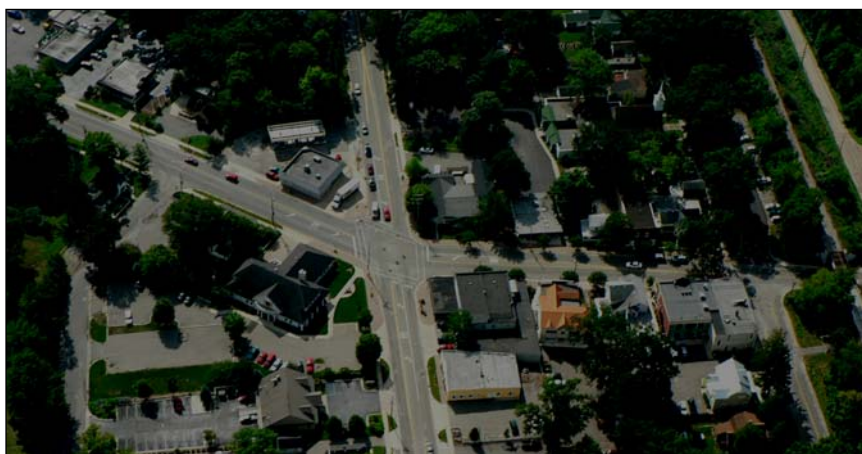
4. Planning and Design Principles – includes a discussion of ten development principles that should be adhered to as the Village moves forward with future initiatives.

5. A Portfolio of Initiatives – provides a detailed description of 35 initiatives for the Village, which were identified during the charrette process and will help the community to achieve its vision.

6. Village Form Standards – recommends an approach for implementing the Plan through modifications to the Village’s development regulations.

7. Implementation – presents strategies for moving forward with implementation of the 35 initiatives. This chapter highlights catalyst projects that can jump-start implementation. An implementation matrix is also included in this chapter. This matrix consolidates key information for each of the 35 initiatives – including first steps, responsible parties, timing and potential funding sources.

With this report, the results of the Ada Village Design Charrette are now in the hands of the community as it faces the complex task of implementing its Plan. From this perspective, the charrette is not the end of a process, but the beginning of a new era for the Village. It is a call to action that will bring public, private, and civic sectors together to work towards achieving the community’s vision.



2. Methodology

A charrette is a technique that has been widely applied throughout the world to bring together—in a compressed period of time—the multi-disciplinary talents and energies of consultants, staff, and all interested parties. For Ada Village, the ACP – Visioning & Planning Team used a two-charrette format to provide the widest range of opportunities for public input over a month-long period of time.

This chapter is divided in two parts:

- A. The Charrette Process – describes specific charrette steps.
- B. Technical Analysis – describe the Team’s development of baseline information for use in the charrette.

A. The Charrette Process

Structured Interviews

The process of public input started with a series of structured interviews with Village stakeholders: merchants, property owners, businesses, advocates for the arts and historic preservation, and residents living in the Village. The purpose of these interviews was to identify perceived strengths and weaknesses in the Village, to gauge the public’s attitudes, identify hot button topics, and to help fine-tune the overall process. In addition to the stakeholder interviews, the consultants also met with individual property owners whose properties were likely to be affected by the charrette. Parallel

to the interviewing process, the Charrette Task Force organized a thorough township-wide outreach and publicity campaign designed to build interest for the effort, invite residents to the public meetings, and ensure that charrette events would be attended by a broad cross-section of the community. The effort included articles in the local press, electronic flyers and brochures, as well as a geographical and demographic outreach campaign with door-to-door recruiting in various parts of the Township and Village.

A charrette studio was set up in the center of the Village, at 583 Ada Drive. Members of the public were invited to stop in at any time during the charrette to observe and comment on the development of the Plan.

Throughout the entire charrette process the consultant Team met with the Charrette Task Force to review progress, test alternatives, and gain consensus on how to move forward.

The First Charrette: Schedule of Public Events

October 3rd
Public Meeting, 6:30-9:30 PM
Forest Hills Central High School

October 5th
Open House, 6:00-9:00 PM
Charrette Studio

October 9th
Draft Plan Presentation, 7:30-9:00 PM
Township Offices

The First Charrette

The First Charrette, held October 3rd through October 9th, offered numerous opportunities for community members to share their ideas and respond to the initial work of the consultant Team.

Three major public events framed the First Charrette: a public meeting held on the evening of October 3rd, an Open House hosted at the charrette studio on the evening of October 5th, and a presentation of the Draft Plan on October 9th.



Public Meeting

The First Charrette kicked off with a major public meeting held the evening of October 3rd. With over 140 attendees, the 3-hour meeting attracted a wide cross-section of the public and generated hundreds of ideas about the desired future for the Village.

The central activity of the public meeting was an interactive small group mapping exercise entitled “Good Places, Bad Places.” Each group focused on one of five topics: walking, driving and parking, commercial areas, community appearance, and open space and recreation. With help

from several volunteer table facilitators, the small groups mapped the good and bad places throughout the community in regard to their specific topics. They identified reasons why the good places are viewed positively, and reasons why the bad places are not. Finally, they generated numerous recommendations for the future of the physical environment in the Village.



This activity demonstrated a high level of consensus among participants, and produced valuable information that enabled the Team to proceed with the development of the Plan. Specific details on the results of this exercise are highlighted in Chapter 3 – Findings.

Open House

Over the next day and a half (October 4th and 5th), the consultant Team used the results from the public meeting to identify development principles that captured the values of the community, to develop initial “broad-brush” design options for the future of the Village, and to identify several key initiatives that the community could pursue in order to achieve its vision for the future.

On the evening of October 5th, the Team hosted an open house at the charrette studio. Approximately 80 people attended over the course of the evening. Community members had the opportunity to review a map that illustrated a preliminary design Plan for the future of the Village. Attendees asked questions, discussed initiatives with the consultants, and commented on the emerging Plan. They also reviewed and commented on the ten development principles. The feedback gathered at this open house provided guidance to the consultant Team as they further refined the vision for the Village, probed various initiatives, and developed illustrations to vividly depict future development possibilities for various portions of the Village. For example, a key outcome of the Open House was to focus on the issue of the two dangerous railroad

underpasses at the southern and western gateways to the Village. Community members also highlighted the need to consider residential areas located southwest of the railroad tracks and incorporate them into the Plan.



Draft Plan Presentation

On the evening of October 9th, the consultant Team presented the Draft Plan back to the community. The event was held as part of a meeting of the Ada Township Board of Trustees and was attended by over 80 residents. The question and answer period following the presentation revealed strong support for the vision for Ada Village, with some reservations about the appropriateness of proposed traffic roundabouts to the character of the Village.

The Second Charrette

In the period between the First and Second Charrette, the Team began developing form standards that would be consistent with and supportive of the Plan's initiatives. The Team also developed a Regulating Plan map that defines the type and character of development in relationship to various areas of the Village.

The core of the Second Charrette was the Community Choices Workshop, which was a public event held on October 30th, 2006.

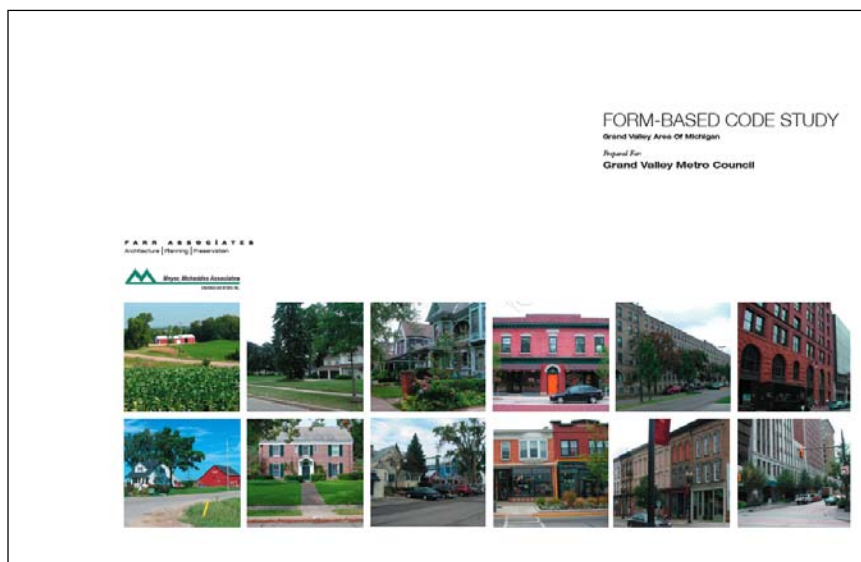
The Community Choices Workshop

The Community Choices Workshop included several hands-on activities. Thirty-five proposed initiatives were presented at the beginning of the meeting. As the initiatives were presented, participants were instructed to identify initiatives with the potential to be catalyst initiatives—initiatives that could help Ada Village in implementing the charrette Plan and that should receive immediate attention. This activity also provided an opportunity to identify any remaining concerns about the Plan.

The second activity of the Workshop consisted of a small group review of the proposed Village Form Standards and Regulating Plan. Participants focused on three specific areas of the Regulating Plan: the Village Core, the Village Center, and the Village Proper. Within each of these areas they reviewed the appropriateness of proposed building and frontage form standards. Finally, the participants completed a ballot form to express preferences on the catalyst initiatives.

B. Technical Analysis

In preparation for the charrette, the Team reviewed and evaluated existing plans and studies, including the 1995 Master Plan, the draft Vision Statement for the 2006 Master Plan Update, and the 1992 Restoration Plan for the Village of Ada, among others. The Team also reviewed relevant studies focused on the Grand Rapids region and Kent County, including the Form-Based Code Study commissioned by the Grand Valley Metro Council.



The review helped the Team obtain a useful inventory of existing information about the community and minimized duplication of efforts. They also met with representatives of the Kent County Road Commission and the Michigan Department of Transportation to discuss issues related to transportation and road improvements in the Village.

The Team created the necessary base maps to depict existing conditions in the Village, including simplified maps for use in the public process. Present day and historic images of the Village were collected for use during the charrette.

Concurrent with the charrette, the Team conducted a market analysis focused on the existing and forecasted potential market for retail commercial development within the Village. Based on the findings from the market analysis, recommendations were made with respect to the scale and type of development or reuse that would be appropriate, the business mix that would

help meet the needs of residents, and the marketing strategies that would help target the types of uses that are best suited to the community's vision.

An assessment of housing opportunities was also conducted. Since some previous work had been accomplished on the overall market for village-oriented housing, the housing assessment focused on identifying the key opportunities best suited for Ada. Key findings are summarized in Chapter 3 - Findings. The full report is attached as Appendix B.

3. Findings

This chapter highlights the major findings that informed the charrette process. The findings come from a variety of sources, including direct observation, interviews with stakeholders, input received at public meetings, technical analysis, and conversations with Task Force members. The chapter is organized into the following three sections:

- A. Observations and Perceptions – addresses the Village conditions related to community character, commercial areas, vehicular travel, the pedestrian environment, and the public realm.
- B. Good Places, Bad Places – summarizes the Village’s strengths and weaknesses, using community input gathered at the first Public Meeting.
- C. Retail and Housing Markets – discusses the Village’s retail and housing market potential.

A. Observations and Perceptions

Ada Village

Ada Village is an attractive community located just 11 miles from downtown Grand Rapids, near the confluence of the Grand and Thornapple rivers. A small collection of historic houses and vintage commercial buildings is clustered around the intersection of Ada Drive and Thornapple River Drive. This quaint and natural setting, epitomized by the historic



Ada Village from the air. The railroad is on the left, Fulton Street is in the upper right corner, and the Thornapple River at the bottom right.

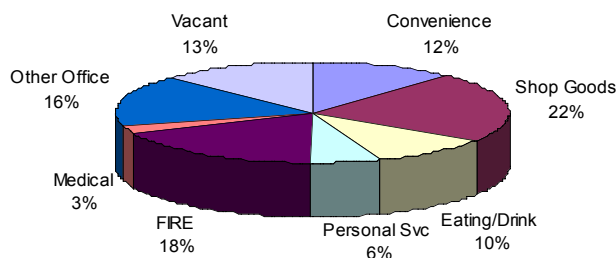
covered bridge, forms the historic heart of Ada Village.

The heart of Ada Village is hemmed in by significant natural and man-made boundaries. The Thornapple River lies to the east, and creates a distinctive natural environment in this portion of the Village. A railroad lies along the southwest, creating a distinguishing and insurmountable barrier along Bronson Street. To the north, Fulton Street is an important east-west corridor linking Ada with downtown Grand Rapids and with Lowell. The World Headquarters of Alticor (of which Amway is a division) is located across that road, within walking distance of the Village core.

The Business Environment

An analysis of the existing business mix in Ada reveals a relatively diverse cluster of convenience businesses, shoppers goods stores, restaurants, personal services, finance/insurance/real estate concerns, and medical and other office uses. Based on site reconnaissance, it would appear that about 13% of the building floor area within the Village is unoccupied. However, a large share of that space is concentrated in one building, an old school building located on Ada Drive that could be adapted for a mixed residential and commercial use. The overall existing mix is summarized below.

CHART 1: EXISTING ADA VILLAGE BUSINESSES BY TYPE



Source: Ada Township Assessor and Randall Gross/Development Economics

Interviews were conducted with a selection of businesses in the study area and in competitive locations. The key finding from these interviews was that Ada's businesses are generally growing, but often lack opportunities for space in which to expand. The cramped conditions are most apparent in the Godwin Hardware store, which barely has room for its lawn and garden equipment center. Other shops, like the Ada Bike Shop, were only able to expand through the persistence and ingenuity of their proprietors to gain better access to available space and parking.

In general, many of the commercial spaces in Ada's historic Village center are located in historic buildings or houses that were ill-designed to accommodate modern retail needs. As a result, the spaces can be more



Many of the commercial spaces in Ada's historic Village center are located in historic buildings or houses.

Local businesses must contend with a growing range of competing business districts and stores in other parts of the Grand Rapids market.



Residents would like to maintain a healthy residential/commercial balance, limiting the conversions of residential properties.

challenging to market for attracting or expanding certain types of competitive retail uses.

Successful existing businesses are generally either serving primarily a community/commuter market (e.g., gas stations, banks) or are a destination for specialty goods (e.g., bike shop, art galleries). In either case, the businesses must contend not only with existing constraints in their locations, but also with a growing range of competing business districts and stores in other parts of the Grand Rapids market. Many of the destination-oriented businesses garner 30% or less of their market from within the affluent (but sparsely populated) Ada, Cascade, and Forest Hills areas. At least 70% of their trade is typically generated from other portions of the Grand Rapids metropolitan area.



The structured interviews revealed a dual sentiment on the part of the public regarding commercial conditions in the Village. On the one hand, residents are pleased and supportive of the improved commercial viability of the Village. They mention the recent expansion of arts-related shops, galleries, and restaurants as a positive trend. On the other hand, they express concerns that the types of commercial uses flourishing throughout the Village do not address basic community needs. They would like to see more convenience uses located within the Village, in particular a pharmacy and a supermarket were often mentioned. They also would like to maintain a healthy residential/commercial balance, limiting the conversions of residential properties to commercial uses.

Traffic

Ada Drive and Thornapple River Drive are the two major thoroughfares that traverse Ada Village. Both roads connect with Fulton Street (Route M-21), and accommodate a notable amount of traffic. As noted, Fulton Street carries the majority of the commuter traffic en route to Grand Rapids and back. Many drivers, however, appear to be using Ada Drive and Thornapple River Drive as cut-through roads to travel to rural/suburban residential areas to the south of Route M-21. This cut-through traffic provides some market

Parking

Merchants interviewed complained about a lack of adequate parking in the Village. Further probing revealed that customers find parking, but not immediately in front of stores. The success of a shared parking arrangement among property owners adjacent to the Ada Bike Shop bodes well for expanding the shared parking program to other parts of the Village. In combination with improvements to the walkability of the community, Ada Village can realistically aspire to the creation of a “park once” environment with easy and pleasant reach to all destinations within the Village.

support for Village core businesses, but also increases congestion, a major source of annoyance for Ada residents.

Traffic along Ada Drive and Thornapple River Drive moves at fairly high speeds in spite of posted speed limits. The design features of the two roadways offer no reason for the drivers to slow down. The lanes are wide and the blocks are long. There is little consistency between the road design and the small-scale, compact and pedestrian character of the adjoining residential and commercial areas.

Interviews with community members revealed the highest concern with the speed of traffic and peak hour congestion in the Village. They expressed a strong interest in mitigating congestion and reducing vehicle speeds throughout the Village.

Civic Spaces

Currently, Ada Village lacks the type of public spaces and civic facilities that make for good community life. There is no community center in the Village for meetings, outdoor events, or formal and informal gatherings. While the Village is a host to major arts events, it does not have a cultural center or performance space that could serve as a focal point for these events. Throughout the process citizens have vocalized their desire for a place to gather—a place that could build community life within the Village.

B. The Good and Bad Places of Ada Village

Character is Ada Village’s best asset. The goal of the charrette was to build on that character and to identify and correct places in decline.

At the public meeting held October 3rd, participants were divided in 15 small groups and were asked to identify and discuss “Good” and “Bad” places in the Village. Good places were defined as places that reflect well on the appearance of the community. Bad places were defined as places that are undesirable to visit, that are eyesores, or that generally reflect poorly on the appearance of the community. Participants identified good places by placing green dots on a large map of the Village and bad places by using red dots.

The exercise and discussion that followed revealed an extraordinary degree of consensus among the participants. They identified remarkable strengths on which to build the Plan as well as weaknesses. This section provides a summary of the results.

The Good Places

A strong consensus emerged among the 15 small groups about the location of Ada Village’s good places. These include:

Ada Drive between Bronson Street and Thornapple River Drive –
This single block was identified as the premier commercial place in the Village. Converted residential buildings and recently renovated commercial



The good places, from the top: Ada Drive, the corner of Ada Drive and Bronson Street, residential neighborhoods, the Thornapple River, and an aerial view of the covered bridge, the river and Leonard Field.

buildings create the diversity and quirkiness that are the hallmarks of the Village.

Participants mentioned “buildings close to the street,” “the mix of stores,” “the scale of the buildings,” and “parking behind businesses” among the characteristics that make the place special and “pedestrian friendly.”

The compact older residential areas – The two residential blocks between Bronson Street and Thornapple River Drive on both sides of Ada Drive are the pride of the Village and constitute its premiere residential address. The blocks are characterized by a tremendous inventory of diverse building types, configurations, and sizes. The variety in the building inventory translates into a variety of setbacks, sidewalk treatments, and tree canopy, which opens peculiar and unexpected views and makes a stroll through the neighborhoods an activity full of surprises and pleasures. A remarkable number of uses were accommodated in the original plan of the Village or have been accommodated over time. For example, churches, shops, homes—and homes converted into shops—all intermingle in this historic area.

Participants mentioned “historic character,” “the ambiance of a small town,” and “trees, flowers and landscapes,” among the attributes that make the older neighborhoods attractive.

The Thornapple River – The Thornapple River is a signature natural feature within the Village and one of its key strengths. In making reference to the river, participants were also pointing to the covered bridge, a key local historic marker, and Leonard Field, a beloved facility. They were making reference to the existing physical place as well as to the desire to see greater access to the river in the future.

Participants pointed out “the rustic” and “natural beauty” of the place, its location in the core of the Village, and its “connection to trails throughout the region.”

Today, access to the river is severely limited with buildings often situated in ways that disregard the river, even impeding public access to its banks. Throughout public meetings and workshops community members expressed pride in the river, and indicated that they would like to find ways to improve river access, increase its recreational use, and celebrate this valuable natural feature.

Lessons Learned

Ada Village owes its unique character to the quirky and loose fit of its physical components. As conditions and styles have changed over time, the Village has adapted to those changes without losing its identity. This adaptability over time is what gives the Village and its streets their charm and unique character. The challenge for the charrette was how to apply the Village’s lessons of diversity at a time when residents, consumers, and developers have become accustomed to the



The Thornapple Village commercial area does not provide the model public realm seen in the older section of the community. The bleak and anti-pedestrian qualities of this area do not make it conducive to social interaction. Undistinguished, one story high buildings are dramatically setback from the road. Many of the Village's newer commercial uses are concentrated on Ada Drive closer to Fulton Street.



The lack of an edge between sidewalks and parking areas were identified as a primary condition that adversely affects the walking experience. These conditions found in several parts of the community and are the kind best addresses through prototype standards and regulations.

relative simplicity and predictability of the suburban development model.

The Bad Places

The character of Ada Village takes a turn for the worse when diversity is substituted by sameness and when its public realm favors mobility over the creation of place.

The Village's top physical weakness was identified in one specific area, Thornapple Village. The recurring problem of poor sidewalk treatment was identified as a weakness, as was the perceived danger of the railroad underpasses at Ada Drive and at Thornapple River Drive. Weaknesses include:

Thornapple Village – Thornapple Village dominates the commercial landscape in the northern portion of the Village. Several local restaurants are found here, which contribute to the economic vibrancy of the community. However, this and other newer commercial developments on Ada Drive have been criticized for being more suburban in nature, and out of character with the rest of the community. The large parking lots that front the street are out of character with the walkable, historic areas of the Village. Without a clearly defined public space, the increased traffic surrounding these uses jeopardizes pedestrian safety and detracts from Ada's walkability.

Participants pointed out the "unattractiveness of the area," "lack of Village feeling," "poorly designed parking and buildings," and "poor use of the place in relation to the river." While being identified as a weakness in the Village, residents also recognized that Thornapple Village, as the site of several successful destination restaurants and other well-patronized businesses, has played and will continue to play an important role in contributing to the quality of life of the community.

Poor sidewalk conditions – In general, public perception indicates that Ada Village is a walkable community. In reality, the historic core is the only portion of the Village that offers a unique and pleasant walking experience, and the pedestrian environment breaks down quickly as one moves away from this core. Participants pointed out a number of places where the walkable experience deteriorates; they identified places where buildings recess from the street, parking lots and curb cuts multiply, sidewalks disappear, and the sense of place is lost.

The loss of quality in the walking experience is compounded by the fact that where sidewalk conditions deteriorate, the mix of uses is lost and the areas are "underused" compared to the rest of the Village. This situation was noted in the northernmost part of Ada Drive, where typical suburban conditions—strip malls and drive in banks—are found. Headley Street was also singled out as one of the places where walkability declines dramatically.

Railroad underpasses – The two railroad underpasses were identified as places that are dangerous for the pedestrian as well as for vehicles. The underpass at Ada Drive is at the bottom of a hill and very little in the road



The underpass at Ada Drive.

treatment prepares motorists for the changing street environment on Ada Drive in the center of the Village. The two, 14-foot vehicular lanes are too wide to slow traffic, while the sides of the bridge obstruct the view of vehicles turning from Bronson Street into Ada Drive.

The underpass at Thornapple River Drive presents similar problems in the transition from open road driving to the core of the Village. The problem there is compounded by the fact that the underpass is a de facto yield-road for large vehicles. For vehicles entering the Village, the underpass requires a sharp right turn in limited visibility conditions.

Lessons Learned

The character of Ada Village is the result of a diverse set of conditions accrued over time. The place is quirky, surprising, and, in places, conducive to walking. Repetitious, generically designed buildings, poor sidewalk conditions, poor or non existing landscaping, and congested and dangerous traffic situations detract from the Village's unique character and inevitably push the Village in the direction of undistinguished suburban type of development. The lessons learned from the Village strengths must be applied in addressing its weaknesses to avoid this destiny.

C. Retail and Housing Markets

A market analysis was conducted to help inform the Ada Village Design Charrette. This market analysis focused on the existing and forecasted potential market for retail commercial development within the Village study area. A more limited assessment of housing opportunities was also conducted. The housing assessment focused on identifying the key opportunities best suited for Ada.

The methodology and findings from both the retail market analysis and the housing opportunities assessment are presented in full in Appendix B. This section reports the findings of the potential market analysis for the

Village and the assessment of the housing market opportunities. Recommendations for a Village market strategy are presented in Chapter 5.

Village Retail Potentials

The potential for further sales growth and retail development within the Village study area was determined based on its capture of the competitive market. An analysis was conducted not only of competitive shopping centers and malls, but (more appropriately) competitive Village and town centers in the region. Ada is most competitive with other small towns, specialty districts such as in Lowell and Rockford, in addition to new mixed-use commercial nodes such as in East Grand Rapids.

Two scenarios were run to assess the Village potentials. Under the first “community” scenario, it was assumed that no changes would occur that would enhance or increase the Village’s competitiveness for attracting more of the region’s destination market. In a second “destination” scenario, it was assumed that urban design and amenity improvements would be made to enhance and celebrate the physical environment of the Village, that additional retail building opportunities would be provided that allow for modern retail use and for expansion of existing businesses, and that a proactive marketing strategy would be initiated to recruit certain businesses that meet the community’s vision.

Based on this assessment, warranted gross demand was determined for the study area. Once existing uses were accounted for, then “warranted” demand was determined above and beyond existing retail use. Finally, the amount of vacant space was subtracted with the assumption that some of the net new demand for retail could be captured in vacant buildings under the right conditions. The ultimate findings are summarized below for the destination scenario.

TABLE 1: WARRANTED DEMAND BY USE , ADA VILLAGE DISTRICT – DESTINATION SCENARIO 2006-2011

Type of Good	Gross Demand (Sq Ft)		Existing Uses	Warranted Demand
	2006	2011		
Convenience	43,344	53,625	18,236	35,389
Shopper Goods	24,797	70,211	33,638	36,573
Eating & Drinking	11,649	27,754	15,208	12,546
Entertainment	2,772	5,989	-	5,989
Personal Svcs	7,382	12,188	9,108	3,080
TOTAL	89,944	169,767	76,190	93,577
<i>Less Vacant</i>			<i>10,206</i>	<i>83,371</i>

Source: Randall Gross/Development Economics

Based on this methodology, there is total demand for about 90,000 square feet of retail commercial space within the study area. In the community scenario, demand will increase slightly, but much of that demand could be captured by highway-oriented convenience uses or existing businesses. In the destination scenario illustrated above, gross demand is

expected to equal potentials for 170,000 square feet by 2011. ***Thus, growth assumes that urban design, amenity, retail space, and pro-active marketing changes all occur within the next five years.***

Given that there are over 76,000 square feet of existing retail uses in the study area, then the warranted demand for additional space will be 93,600 square feet. Once vacant space (excluding the old school building) is subtracted from this amount, then there is net demand for 83,400 square feet of retail / commercial space by 2011.

A fair amount of this warranted space is in convenience uses, but also specialty shoppers goods, eating and drinking, entertainment, and personal services. Table 2, next page, provides detail on the warranted demand by type of good or service in the destination scenario.



Aerial view of Thornapple River Drive.

With design, traffic, and other improvements to the Village commercial district, it is likely that the study area could capture demand for almost 18,000 square feet of grocery store space. Pharmacy demand would total only 4,500 square feet above and beyond what is already captured by the existing drugstore outside of the study area. Shoppers goods demand is highest for miscellaneous shoppers goods (14,700 square feet), followed by apparel and accessories, home furnishings (including art galleries and antique stores), and other uses.

Finally, there is significant net warranted demand for restaurants (12,500 square feet), entertainment (6,000 square feet), and to a lesser extent, personal services.

**TABLE 2. WARRANTED DEMAND BY USE, ADA VILLAGE DISTRICT -
DESTINATION SCENARIO, 2006-2011**

EXISTING DEMAND, 2006-2011

Type of Good	Gross Demand (Sq Ft)		Existing	Warranted
	2006	2011	Uses	Demand
<u>Convenience</u>				
Grocery	15,168	17,967	-	17,967
Food	7,322	10,240	4,600	5,640
Pharmacy	3,837	4,536	-	4,536
Gas	8,543	10,834	5,786	5,048
Misc Conv	8,475	10,048	7,850	2,198
Sub-Total	43,344	53,625	18,236	35,389
<u>Shoppers Goods</u>				
Apparel/Access	4,581	9,693	2,610	7,083
Footwear	916	1,634	-	1,634
Furniture/Home	8,074	16,184	10,176	6,008
Hardware	7,693	10,930	8,216	2,714
General Mdse	1,249	1,702	-	1,702
Auto Supply	1,363	1,720	-	1,720
Electronics	920	995	-	995
Misc S.G.	-	27,353	12,636	14,717
Sub-Total	24,797	70,211	33,638	36,573
<u>Eating/Drinking</u>	11,649	27,754	15,208	12,546
<u>Entertainment</u>	2,772	5,989	-	5,989
<u>Personal Svces</u>	7,382	12,188	9,108	3,080
TOTAL	89,944	169,767	76,190	93,577
Existing Vacant			10,206	
Net New Space				83,371

Source: Randall Gross / Development Economics.

Housing Market Opportunities Assessment

While a full housing market potentials analysis was not conducted, housing opportunities were identified based on site reconnaissance and interviews, previous market studies, and real estate data on housing market trends. This section summarizes some of the key findings from the housing market opportunities assessment.

Household Demographics

Demographers are projecting an increase of **1,500** households in zip code 49301 by 2011, for an increase of 9.7%. This compares with a 3.7% increase metro-wide. Average household income levels are at **\$125,000** (versus \$64,300 metro-wide). Incomes are expected to increase by 8.7% by 2011. *These data suggest overall growing demand for housing within the area, especially to meet the needs of an affluent market.*

Housing Market Trends

Average housing sale price in Forest Hills School District (Ada Township) increased by **58%** since 1996 (about 6% per year), from \$185,934 in 1996 to \$293,699 by 2006. The number of existing and new houses sold annually in Forest Hills School District has gradually increased, from 645 in 1996 to 836 in 2005, with an annual average of **756**. This district includes most of the suburban communities east of Grand Rapids, from the airport north past 4-Mile Road. Thus, demand for housing is translating into increasing housing sales within the market, at a rate of 6% per year. Demand for additional housing is expected to increase by 2.0% per year based on the demographic projections.



A conventional low-density single family type of housing product found in subdivisions south of the Village.

A two-county regional housing study conducted by Zimmerman/Volk Associates, Inc. (ZVA) projects demand for about 1,000 new housing units per year (5,000 over the next five years) within areas which have characteristics similar to Ada Village: “town center – medium to low density, mixed use downtowns of smaller cities and towns located in rural and suburbanizing areas.” ZVA suggests that 20% of this demand would be generated from outside of the metro area. Besides Ada Village, other communities with similar characteristics might include the town centers of Rockford, Lowell, Kent City, Caledonia, Cedar Springs, and a few others.

Market Opportunities

One of the largest housing growth markets for town centers will be housing for empty nesters / 55+, including single-family detached, condominium, and apartments. Within Ada Village, a relatively high density one-story single-family product would be appropriate that can take advantage of proximity to a walkable village center, recreation/trails, and scenic natural viewshed. Two-story product would be less desirable among empty nesters, but may be viable if well-designed and consistent with the

existing building stock. Nationally, an average 20% of residents in 55+ housing communities are under age 55.

Based on market reconnaissance, comparable high-density, 55+ housing product is selling in the \$600,000 range in Ada. However, lower-priced product will generate faster absorption of housing product. Quality and amenity value will play a large role in determining price and absorption. For those housing units that might be located alongside the river/water and natural areas, there is a premium in price.



The quality of the walking experience in the Village is likely to attract aging baby-boomers.

Marketing and Development Strategies

Clearly the findings for both housing and retail confirm the Village's strengths in terms of its natural, rural setting and small town charm. Existing houses are part of that charm and every effort should be taken to ensure there remains a balance of older houses available and maintained for residential use rather than wholesale conversion to commercial. At the same time, opportunities should be provided for development of new residential that is consistent in character and vernacular with the older homes and is in walking distance to the Village center. Large undeveloped sites on the periphery of the core along Route 21 should be available for this purpose.

Overall, the marketing strategy for housing within the Village should integrate new and existing housing with the concepts and marketing of the business district. Focus should be given to development of amenities which strengthen the market both for residential and commercial uses, such as trails, urban design improvements, and public boat landings. These uses also appeal to the empty nesters that are a growing part of the primary market for housing in the area. Greater use of the Thornapple River for recreation and in marketing for housing should be encouraged. Overall, the Village's natural small town setting and lifestyle are its greatest assets. These assets should be celebrated and strengthened to help leverage the community's vision for future development.

4. Planning and Design Principles

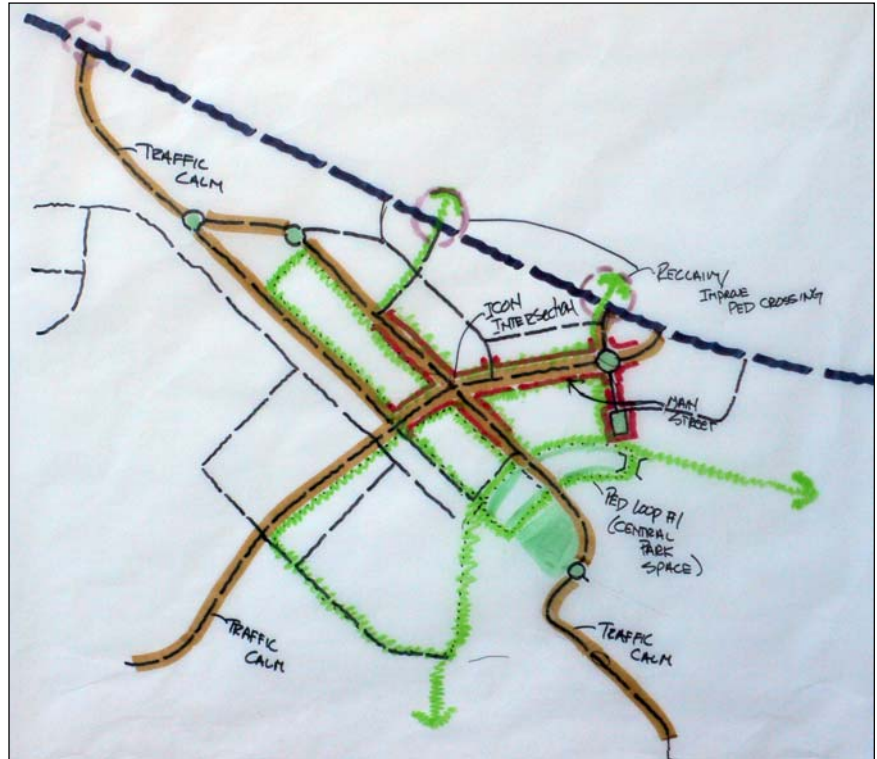
The vision set forth by the public and articulated in this document is multifaceted and complex. It requires a rethinking of transportation priorities within the Village with emphasis given to traffic calming. It calls for celebrating the special character and quirkiness of the Village over more conventional and predictable development choices. It demands maintaining a balance between commercial and residential development so that the Village does not become another dormitory community in the greater Grand Rapids region, but remains a complete community. It requires carefully rebuilding the quality of the walking experience (reversing the damages brought about by car dominated development) not only for its aesthetic value, but also to encourage park-once strategies. It requires establishing a new set of form based development regulations that protects and enhances the visual quality of what makes the Village special. And, finally, it will require innovative partnerships of private, public, and civic interests committed to the vision over the long haul.

These are a few of the challenges facing Ada Village and its leaders. There are, however, encouraging signs as commerce is coming back in the form of specialty stores with an emphasis on arts and crafts type of retail.

The Village has become a Mecca for bicyclists and outdoor enthusiasts in part due to the success of the Ada Bike Shop. Restaurants have

successfully established themselves in the Village and draw customers from the whole region. National demographic trends are making housing in a place with Ada Village's characteristics a desirable choice for the growing ranks of baby-boomers turned empty-nesters.

These positive trends make the development of a Plan for the Village both timely and more likely to be implemented.



The conceptual framework of the Plan was developed early on after an early review of public comments. It emphasizes the creation of a connected street grid, the need to calm traffic, place creation, and the integration of trails.

The following ten design and development principles were identified (based on ideas and comments provided by the public and the Charrette Task Force) to provide guidance in the planning and design process for the Village. The principles include:

1. Take full advantage of Ada Village's natural assets – specifically the Thornapple River. Consider a riverwalk and potential trail connections. Identify ways for nearby commercial areas to engage with the riverbank environment.
2. Create a focal point in the heart of the Village that can serve as a community hub and gathering place, and expand opportunities for civic buildings.
3. Ensure roadway corridors complement Ada's distinctive, intimate village feeling, resulting in slower traffic and improved safety.
4. Improve walkability throughout the Village, and create attractive, safe, contiguous pedestrian connections between the Village core and surrounding areas.
5. Encourage building types that preserve the quaint, historic, small-scale feeling of the Village.

6. Reconfigure the Thornapple Village shopping center in order to reduce the prominence of parking, provide for more trees and green spaces, reconnect to the river, and encourage pedestrian access and activity.
7. Strike a balance between residential and commercial uses within the Village, and encourage a healthy mix of commercial activity.
8. Encourage shared parking and provide appropriate, village-scale parking options.
9. Expand outdoor recreation opportunities and enhance existing parks and green spaces, connecting them with a regional network of trails and open spaces.
10. Establish standards that ensure the implementation of the community's vision for Ada Village.

These principles were used as guidelines in developing the 35 initiatives described in the next chapter.

5. A Portfolio of Initiatives

Achieving the community's vision for Ada Village will require the implementation of a complex mix of initiatives that together can create the critical mass for success. This chapter lists 35 initiatives identified through the charrette process. Some of the initiatives are brick and mortar initiatives, for example promoting infill development on Headley Street. Some suggest regulatory or management steps, such as developing urban form standards and incorporating them into a form-based code. Some require municipal or state level policy steps, for example, expanding the road network or undertaking traffic calming efforts.

Rarely can a single entity, such as the government, implement these initiatives. Most of them will require the creation of complex partnership arrangements to sustain implementation. Undoubtedly, the private and civic sectors will play a major role in realizing the vision for Ada Village. A key example of this type of multi-sector involvement can be found in the proposed initiative to develop a public park on the Alticor land between Fulton and Headley.

The initiatives in this chapter focus on seven areas:

- Expand Road Network
- Traffic Calming
- Sidewalks and Trails
- The Gallery District

- The Civic District
- Village Retail District
- General Initiatives

Each of these areas and their associated initiatives are described in this chapter. Illustrations are provided throughout the chapter to clarify many of the initiatives.

The initiatives were presented at the Community Choices Workshop in order to identify catalyst initiatives that could help jump start implementation. For specific information on catalyst initiatives, implementation steps, key responsibilities, and potential sources of funding for each initiative, please refer to the implementation matrix in Chapter 7. Implementation.

Area 1: Expand Road Network

Observations



Fulton Street (M21) is a high-speed, five lane state route that serves as the northern boundary to the Village.

Fulton Street is a high-speed, five-lane state route that serves as the northern boundary to the Village. It connects with both Ada Drive and Thornapple River Drive, which are the present day crossroads of Ada Village. Historically, the Village crossroads was at the intersection of Bronson Street with Ada Drive. As the community grew these streets evolved into thoroughfares and congestion gradually increased. On a daily basis, each of these streets accommodate increasing levels of traffic, pressuring the County and the Township to favor mobility-based solutions over placemaking and property access solutions within the older core of the Village.

At its peak traffic hour (during the evening rush hour) Ada Drive accommodates over 1,000 vehicles and Thornapple River Drive accommodates over 500 vehicles.

As the County and the Township continue to grow, there will be continued pressure on both roadways to better accommodate traffic flow. In order to balance mobility needs with economic and quality of life expectations, connectivity and routing options become the central transportation issue for the Village.

Minor modifications and enhancements to the street grid will allow the Village to maximize the use of its existing street network, reducing the traffic pressure on both Ada Drive and Thornapple River Drive, enabling the Township to use improvements to both of these roadways so that they contribute to, not burden, the community's quality of life.

Overview of Initiatives

A key priority for the Village is providing routing options and consequently relief from growing traffic congestion by opening up and enhancing the street grid system. The following three initiatives will help alleviate the community's concerns about traffic flow. This expansion of the street network will also open up new areas to appropriate infill development.

The cost of the three proposed roadway extensions can be budgeted between \$1,200 and \$1,500 per linear foot. This cost includes the two-lane roadway, sidewalks, landscaping, and typical underground utilities.



Minor modifications and enhancement to the street grid will allow the Village to maximize the use of its existing street network. Modifications include: 1. A new connection between Ada Drive and Fulton Street; 2 Extending Headley Street to Fulton Street; and 3. Connecting Headley Street to Thornapple River Drive

1. **New connection between Ada Drive and Fulton Street. (Shift signal from Ada Drive to new street on Fulton).** Creating this new connection will provide an alternative access point from Ada Drive onto Fulton Street. This network improvement will improve the geometric of the intersection, improve access into Alticor and Ada Village, improve traffic flow on M-21, and improve pedestrian connectivity across M-21.

Intersection geometrics will be enhanced to a more traditional 90 degree intersection, improving sightlines for motorists. The new alignment of the signalized intersection will provide Alticor a signalized intersection, improving both ingress and egress into their site. Similarly, Ada Village's access will be improved because the Village will have two access points where there was once only one.

The introduction of a new street across from the Alticor east entrance drive that connects back to Ada Drive, along with the conversion of the Ada Drive intersection into a "right-in / right-out," should reduce the amount of green time needed for Ada Drive, improving traffic flow on M-21.

Finally, the alignment of the new intersection will offer pedestrians an enhanced street crossing. This will better connect the Alticor property and its employees to the rest of the Village.

A diagram of the proposed alignment can be found on page 5.6.

2. **Extend Headley Street to Fulton Street (new signal).** Currently Headley Street is not configured in a manner that encourages traffic flow, supports pedestrian mobility, or lends itself to potential infill development. Creating an extension onto Fulton will open up Headley Street as a functional part of the road network. This will



The diagram to the right shows the proposed alignment of the Headley Street extension. The proposed alignment will require the relocation of the Rix Robinson monument to the new park proposed in Initiative 23, page 5.15.

help to frame the future park between Fulton and Headley (see Initiative #23), and encourage appropriate infill development along Headley. The addition of another signal on Fulton will provide a better indication of the presence of the Village, and facilitate access to the Village by Alticor employees.

3. **Connect Headley Street to Thornapple River Drive.** This additional street will further enhance the road network. It will provide a break in an unusually long block, which will create a better pedestrian experience and provide for better access to the new park. With appropriate infill development, this new street can become an integrated, walkable portion of the Village. The new

intersection on both Headley and Thornapple River will also provide traffic calming features to each roadway, reducing speed and increasing pedestrian safety.

Area 2: Traffic Calming

Observations

First, traffic speed is one of the most frequently-cited concerns among community members. The fast movement of traffic detracts from pedestrian safety. Business owners note that slower traffic speeds could also help to improve the commercial environment of the Village; Local businesses can achieve better visibility when traffic moves at a slower pace.

Second, the transportation strategy of improving the street network will necessarily increase traffic volumes on secondary streets. A comprehensive Traffic Calming Plan is needed to ensure the redistributed traffic (using new streets) do so on the Village's terms, not the terms of the motorists.

Overview of Initiatives

The eight traffic calming initiatives fall into two categories: Roundabouts and Street Treatments. Roundabouts are highly engineered traffic calming devices. The center of a roundabout has an island, which is surrounded by curb that is mountable for larger vehicles. All of the streets leading into the roundabout feature pedestrian crossings, with pedestrian refuges in the center of each crossing. Roundabouts effectively slow the speed of traffic, while increasing the capacity of a street, and enhance the safety of motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists. Roundabouts would be particularly suitable for certain intersections in Ada Village. They could be designed and landscaped to complement the character of the Village.

The cost for the proposed roundabouts, as designed, will range between \$300,000 and \$500,000. They can be built for far less or more depending on their final design. The public desire to maintain the character of the Village will play a key role in the ultimate design and cost of the roundabouts.

Street treatments are changes to the roadway that can slow traffic speeds while enhancing community appearance. Street treatments can include landscaping, medians, and special paving, among others initiatives. In many cases the treatments create narrower travel lanes, which result in slower, safer traffic without impeding the road's capacity.



Roundabouts are highly engineered traffic calming devices.



The center of a roundabout has an island, which is surrounded by curb that is mountable for larger vehicles.

A. Roundabouts

4. **Roundabout at Thornapple River Drive and Bronson Street.** As traffic exits off of M-21 at Thornapple River Drive, there are no physical indicators to alert the motorists that they are entering a village in which neighborhoods, pedestrians and cyclists are present.

A roundabout at the intersection of Thornapple River and Bronson Street will provide a gateway feature for the community,



Roundabouts effectively slow the speed of traffic, while increasing the capacity of a street, and enhance the safety of motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists

alert motorists to the changing environment, improve the sight lines of the intersection, and reduce travel speeds along both Bronson Street and Thornapple River Drive in the heart of the Village.

A roundabout can handle 1,500 vehicles per hour entering at any single location, and 2,000 vehicle per hour circulating within the roundabout. Thornapple River Drive and Bronson Street's entering and through volumes range between 350-650 vph.

5. **Roundabout at Ada Drive, creating new connection between Ada Drive and Fulton Street.** This roundabout will provide several design opportunities for Ada Drive. The roundabout will provide an aesthetic gateway feature for the Village, efficiently distribute traffic between Ada Drive and the new roadway connection to M-21, calm traffic to better balance mobility and access needs along the corridor, and improve the walking and cycling environment on Ada Drive. Ada Drive's entering and through volumes do not exceed 1,000 vph in the peak hour. A roundabout can easily accommodate this volume of traffic.



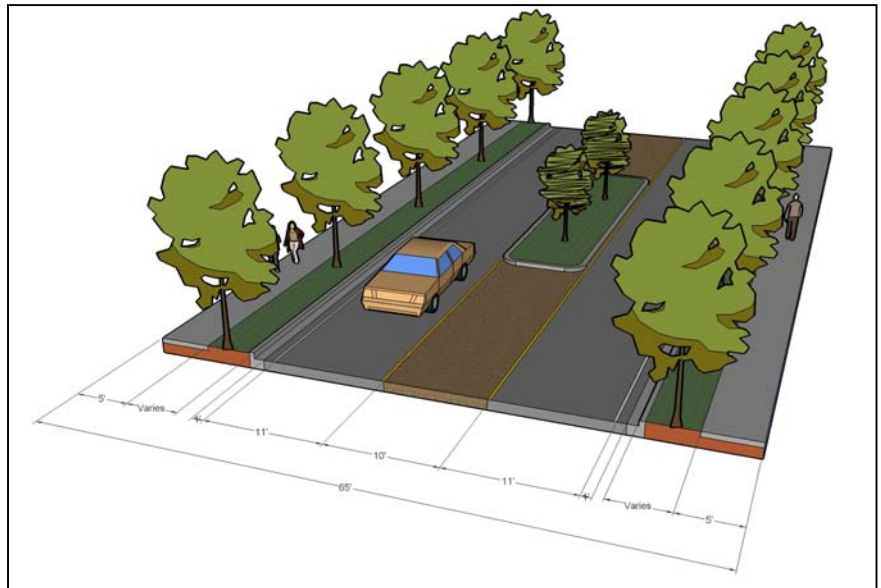
The diagram to the right shows the proposed alignment of both the new connection between Ada Drive and Fulton Street (described in Initiative 1, page 5.3), and the roundabout at Ada Drive.

B. Street Treatment

6. **Calm Thornapple River Drive to Thornapple River Drive bridge.** Thornapple River Drive is a very wide street. There are few design features in the roadway that are consistent with the adjoining residential and commercial land uses. The roadway currently has two 16-foot travel lanes with occasional on-street parking. Interstate standards for lane widths call for twelve-foot lanes. Clearly, Thornapple River Drive is not an Interstate. This Plan recommends traffic calming Thornapple River Drive to 20 miles per hour. In addition to the roundabout at Bronson Street, the Plan calls for reducing the travel lane widths and accommodating a textured center left turn lane and landscaped traffic island spaced approximately 600 to 800 feet.



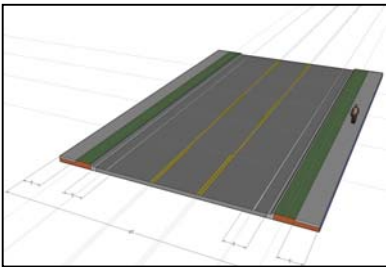
Thornapple River Drive, existing, above, and proposed traffic calming, right.



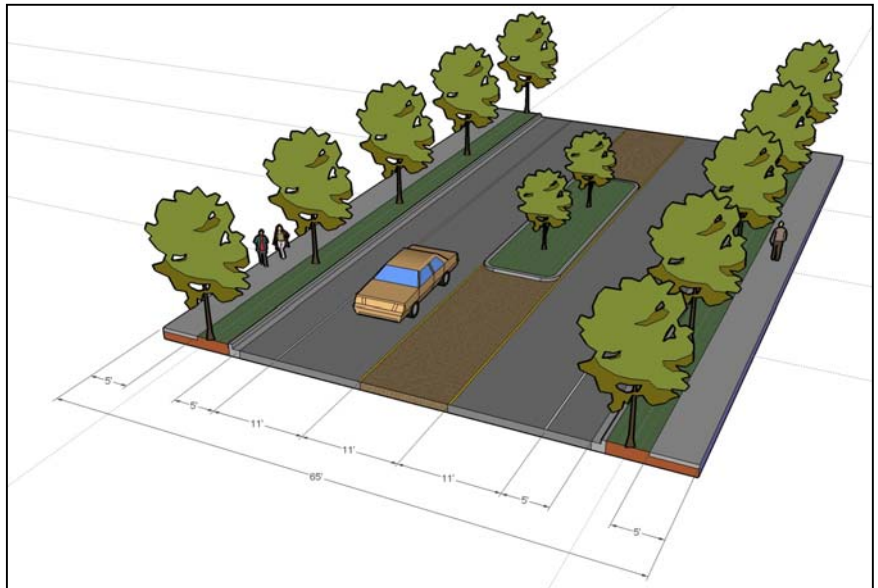
7. **Calm Thornapple River Drive from Leonard Park to the Thornapple River Drive/Buttrick Avenue intersection.** In traffic calming Thornapple River Drive it is important to establish transition zones to prepare motorists for lower travel speeds. There are several points along the corridor that naturally calm traffic. The curves approaching Bronson Street and approaching the rail bridge both require slower travel speeds for motorists to safely negotiate. This Plan calls for preparing motorists for these curves by narrowing travel lanes and introducing traffic calming measures from Fulton Street to Bronson Street and Leonard Park to Buttrick Avenue. Efforts currently underway to enlarge the section of the underpass should continue in order to provide better visibility.
8. **Calm Ada Drive between Thornapple River Drive and Fulton.** The recent “road diet” of Ada Drive from four-lanes to three-lanes between Fulton Street and Thornapple River Drive should be

applauded. The next evolution of the corridor should reinforce the design intent of the road diet and provide aesthetic amenities to ensure motorists maintain pedestrian compatible travel speeds and provide the visual incentives needed to attract reinvestment from the private sector on adjoining properties.

The Plan calls for introducing street trees, landscaped traffic islands, and a textured center left turn lane (or flush median). In the long-term, as redevelopment occurs along this portion of Ada Drive, the Township should work with private land owners to reduce the driveways and introduce on-street parking to complete a truly balanced street that accommodates both motorists, pedestrians, and street fronting land uses.

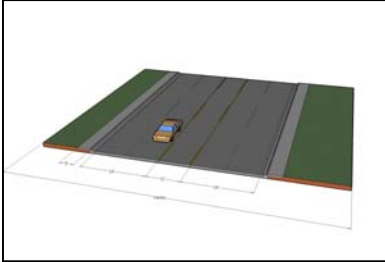


Ada Drive, existing, above, and proposed traffic calming, right.

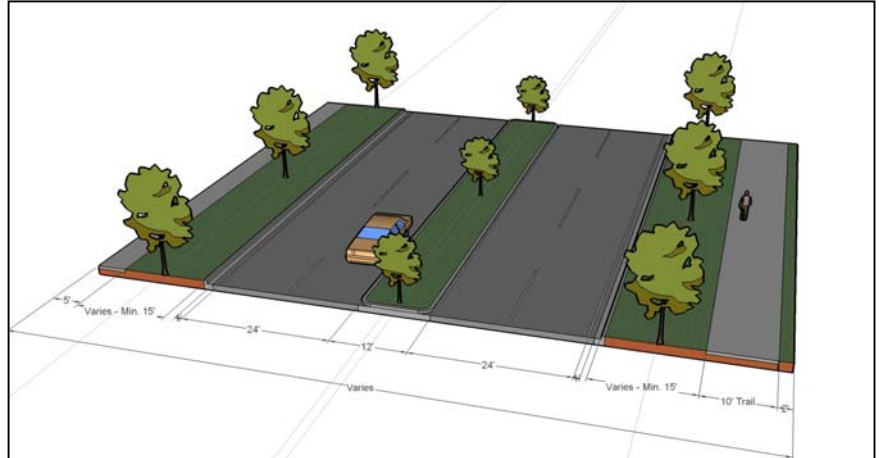


9. **Calm Ada Drive between railroad underpass and Windy Hill Drive.** Similar to the Thornapple River Drive traffic calming strategy, it is important to prepare motorists to the changing street environment on Ada Drive in the center of the Village. This Plan calls for traffic calming Ada Drive between the Windy Hill Road and the railroad under pass. Treatment of the corridor would include lane-width reductions and traffic islands to manage travel speeds as motorists enter the Village.

10. **Traffic Calm Fulton Street between Bronson Street and the Gateway Bridge.** The current design of Fulton Street does little to alert motorists to Alticor or Ada Village. A redesign of the section of Fulton Street between the Gateway Bridge and Bronson Street is



Fulton Street, existing, above, and proposed traffic calming, right.



recommended. This redesign does not change travel lane widths. This redesign introduces landscaped median, textured left turn lanes, and pulls the sidewalk away from the back of curb. These improvements will greatly improve the pedestrian environment and better manage traffic speeds.

11. **Add cantilevered pedestrian walk and raised median with textured surface on the planned M-21 replacement bridge over the Grand River.** As part of the bridge's reconstruction, the Ada Village Plan calls for the extension of the River Trail to Grand River DNR Boat Ramp and across the Grand River on the new M-21 Bridge. The textured median will improve the aesthetics of the bridge and the gateway treatment entering the Village from the east.



Conceptual rendering of planned bridge, looking south west toward the Village, showing cantilevered pedestrian walk.

Area 3: Sidewalks and Trails

Observations

Ada Village has a good sidewalk network in its historic core, but walkability swiftly deteriorates outside of this immediate area. Moving west on Bronson Street the sidewalk ends abruptly. Looking eastward from the core, there are limited pedestrian connections across or along the Thornapple River. Moving north towards Thornapple Village the streetscape takes on a more suburban feel that is less accommodating to pedestrians.

Sidewalks on Fulton Street are narrow and deteriorating, and pedestrian crossings on Fulton Street are not well-marked and feel very unsafe. In fact, although Alticor employs about 3,000 people, few of them cross into the Village on foot.

Overview of Initiatives

The six initiatives discussed below focus on enhancing sidewalks, improving pedestrian street crossings, and expanding the trail network in the Village in a manner that better engages the community with the Thornapple River and other natural areas.

12. Extend sidewalk along Bronson Street. (Do not widen street.

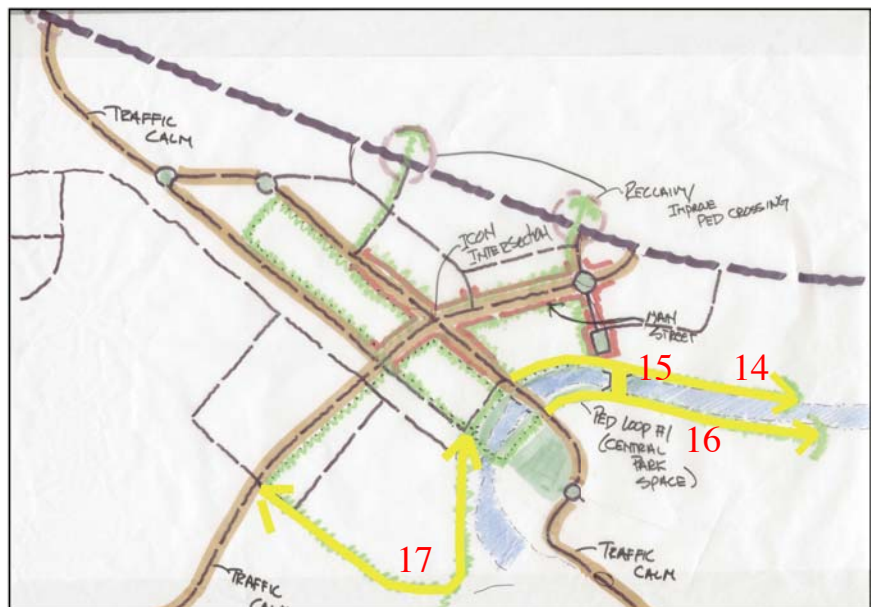
Take out double yellow line.) Moving west from the Village center, the sidewalk on Bronson Street ends abruptly in the middle of a block. Traffic on Bronson Street moves very fast, in large part due to the double-yellow line in the center, which indicates to motorists that they can drive at higher speeds. By removing the double yellow line, and completing the sidewalk, the character of



Bronson Street. The double-yellow line in the center, indicates to motorists that they can drive at higher speeds.

the roadway can be aligned with the picturesque, residential nature of Bronson Street. Innovative storm water strategies are needed so that storm water improvements can be accommodated so that they do not take away from the residential village qualities of Bronson Street. Widening the street (increasing the impervious surface) to accommodate storm water and streetscape improvements does not appear to be the correct solution.

13. **Improve pedestrian crossings on Fulton Street.** As mentioned above, Fulton Street features very high traffic speeds and pedestrians rarely traverse it. Improving pedestrian crossings will make it safer for people to walk between the Village and the Alticor property on Fulton Street.
14. **Develop trail on the north bank of the Thornapple River.** Community members expressed a very strong desire to improve their access to the Thornapple River. A village trail along the river extending northeast under the M-21 bridge to the DNR boat launch and across the Grand River on the new bridge would be a prized amenity for the community.
15. **Build new pedestrian bridge across the Thornapple River.** The new bridge would provide a much-needed alternative to the limited pedestrian options moving eastward from the Village.



16. **Develop trail on the south bank of the Thornapple River.** The best pedestrian environments combine pedestrian circulation needs with recreational opportunities. A trail on the south bank of the Thornapple River would connect the Village to the Grand River

Natural Area, McGraw Park and Forrest Hills Public Schools Crew House.

17. **Extend river trail through natural area south of the railroad, looping to Ada Drive.** This trail will create a connection between the developing natural trail system and Ada Drive extending the regional system of trails and creating new opportunities to the walkability of the Village.

Area 4: The Gallery District

Observations

The historic crossroads of the Village is the intersection of Ada Drive and Thornapple River Drive. The Village core can be found between this intersection and the railroad tracks to the south. This charming area is home to a variety of unique local businesses, including a number of art galleries. Residents have expressed the desire that any new development be appropriate to the character of the historic Village core / Gallery District.

As noted in the Market Analysis (attached as Appendix B), there is the opportunity to build on the Gallery District to capture more of the destination potential for the Village. Additional galleries are part of the recommended mix for this area, along with some nominal entertainment uses (such as live music at galleries), restaurants, and “boutique” retail uses as enumerated in Appendix B.



The Gallery District.

In addition to the Gallery District, the Market Analysis also recommends building on the Village’s strengths in terms of its natural setting to recruit “green” businesses that specialize in river sporting goods, environmental engineering, health and beauty care, etc. Amenities such as an extensive trail system, bike racks, and canoe/kayak landing can help strengthen this marketing concept. Annual events for the galleries and for river activities would also help increase the visibility of Ada as a destination.



The 100% intersection of Ada Village.

Overview of Initiatives

The five initiatives below focus on enhancing Ada Village’s “100% intersection” – where Ada Drive crosses Thornapple River Drive. These two major streets mark the central core of the Village; however, the intersection currently lacks a character that complements the historic Village core / Gallery District that is so widely prized in the community. The proposed initiatives focus on creating a pedestrian-friendly, vibrant space at the core of the Village. They include adding pocket parks and special paving to better designate this unique area and provide for new public spaces. Initiatives also highlight minor alterations that can be made to change the way existing and proposed buildings interact with public streets. Such changes will lead to a more seamless transition between the Gallery District and the rest of Ada Village.

18. **Create two pocket parks at the intersection of Ada Drive and Thornapple River Drive.** The historic and present-day significance of the Ada Drive / Thornapple River Drive intersection indicates that this “100% intersection” should be treated as an important component of the public realm. Two buildings at this intersection – the Speedway Gas Station and the Peninsular Oil building – have underutilized space immediately fronting the intersection. This initiative recommends transforming the spaces into mini-parks. The mini-parks provide a remedial solution to the limited options that currently exist. In the longer term, as redevelopment possibilities arise, any new development should take full advantage of the significant corner location. Guidelines for doing so will be found in the design standards that have been developed as products of this charrette. Special color paving should mark and celebrate this intersection.





The physical orientation of the gas station and Peninsular Oil building does not enhance the Village's 100% intersection

19. **Open up the gas station building to the intersection of Ada Drive and Thornapple River Drive.** The charrette process recognized that the gas station plays an integral role in the community. It provides an essential service, and also acts as an informal meeting place. However, its physical orientation does not enhance the 100% intersection. The current entrance to the station's convenience store faces away from the street, and towards the gas pumps. A blank wall and a tire station front the corner. Negotiations should begin in order to re-landscape this corner, and to change the façade to open up the building towards the street. The convenience store should be accessible from the sidewalk and the mini-park as well as from the gas pumps.
20. **Open up the Peninsular Oil building's Ada Drive wing to the street, for potential retail use.** This is a relatively new building that currently offers no commercial activity or sidewalk amenities. The building itself is not oriented to the corner, or to Ada Drive. Over the long term, consideration should be given to using the Ada-facing wing of the building for a commercial or retail function.
21. **Conduct an art competition to cover the telephone switching building.** The telephone switching building has an essential function, but it does not provide for any active uses. Such inactivity does not contribute to creating a vibrant 100% corner. The Village should conduct an art competition to dress up the building and give the corner a significant visual presence. Attention could also be given to the space around the building, which may have possibilities for developing shared parking or creating an additional mini-park.
22. **Realign future buildings on Ada Drive to move to the street line, using landscaping for grade transition.** This initiative is about extending the atmosphere of the historic core north of the 100% intersection. This section of Ada Drive is where the walkability and consistent character of the core currently breaks down. Moving the building proposed for development on the site of the Grand River Grocery to the street line will contribute to the sidewalk vitality of Ada Drive, particularly since the proposed use for the ground floor includes a restaurant. Design guidelines and the adoption of a Regulating Plan will further support this desire to create a consistent, walkable character throughout the Village.

Area 5: The Civic District (Park and Civic Site)

Observations

Community members have expressed a strong interest in developing a community center and gathering place within the Village. Alticor owns a significant open space located between Fulton and Headley Streets. In the past, the Village has used this green space to host annual festivals and other events.



Overview of Initiatives

The five initiatives listed below detail the amenities of the park and civic site, and provide information about how the site will interact with the surrounding Village. In addition to a public park, the initiatives recommend the development of a community center and an informal outdoor performance space. Landscaping and infill development will give a suitable sense of enclosure to the site, while providing some level of visibility for passing motorists.

23. **Develop a public park on the Alticor property. Relocate the Rix Robinson monument to the park.** This park can become the central park of the community, offering space for passive recreation, as well as organized festivals and activities. In keeping with the artistic identity of the community, the park could feature an amphitheater (see Initiative 25), and outdoor sculptures. The park could also serve as the new home for the Rix Robinson memorial. The memorial currently faces high-speed traffic on M21, but could be much better positioned and appreciated by the community if relocated to the park. The Village should consider taking an organized approach to programming activities in the park, in order to focus the larger region's attention on the Village. For example, Ada Village could use the park for events, performances, and other activities that expand upon and capitalize on its successful art festivals.



Rendering of the proposed public park with the proposed civic building on the right.

24. Develop a civic building (possible uses include multipurpose community center, library, Township offices, arts center, etc.).

This community center could be a multi-purpose building that serves a variety of community functions, offering meeting rooms, gallery space, etc. If appropriate, Alticor could retain some level of use within the building.

25. Create an informal amphitheater with a temporary performance structure. A temporary performance stage could be put up during the summertime for performances, festivals, and other events. Taking it in down in the wintertime and when it is not in use will help to maintain the natural integrity of the park. The use of temporary performance structures is a common practice. For example, the New Haven Green in New Haven, Connecticut sets up temporary stages during its International Festival of Arts and Ideas.



An aerial view of the proposed site of the new public park

26. Landscape the edges of Fulton to open up a view near the new open space. Currently, Ada Village is invisible to passing motorists on M21 (Fulton Street). There is a disconnect between the celebratory nature of the Alticor site – with flags, banners, and sculptures, and the lackluster presentation of the Village immediately across the street. Passersby have little indication that a charming, attractive village lies just to the south. Ada Village should landscape the edges of Fulton Street in order to connect the two spaces, and provide a response to the Alticor site. Appropriate landscaping can provide more visibility to the community, with particular attention to creating a visual entry point at the new park.

27. Develop an infill strategy for properties backing into or facing Headley Street (south side). The development of a new public park has the potential to transform Headley Street from an

underutilized secondary street (fronted primarily by parking lots), to an important component of the street grid and a contributor to the walkable, quality pedestrian environment of the Village. The parking lots that currently face Headley should be targeted for small-scale redevelopment and infill. Any loss of parking spaces can be mitigated through the use of shared parking strategies. (See initiative 31). The Village's new design standards and Regulating Plan will ensure that new development on Headley fits into the context of the existing community.

Area 6: Village Retail District

Observations

From the standpoint of commercial activity, the Thornapple Village shopping center plays a key role in the life of Ada Village. However, community members have expressed numerous concerns about the layout and appearance of the shopping facility, which features a suburban-style development pattern that does not fit in with the historic core and cottages found throughout the rest of the Village. Additionally, a large plot of land is ready to be developed immediately adjacent to Thornapple Village, and residents expressed an interest in determining how the new development will fit into the existing context. Taken together, Thornapple Village and this proposed development will constitute a significant Village Retail District.

Findings from a Market Analysis of the retail potentials for this area are detailed in the Appendix. In general, there is significant unmet potential for retail uses within the study area, but only if Ada is pro-actively marketed as a destination. The Market Analysis found potential demand for more than 90,000 square feet of additional retail space in Ada by 2011, assuming a pro-active destination marketing strategy and design improvements are initiated.



The Village Retail District.

The recommended mix generated from this analysis focuses on developing the two key destination themes, one relating to the Gallery

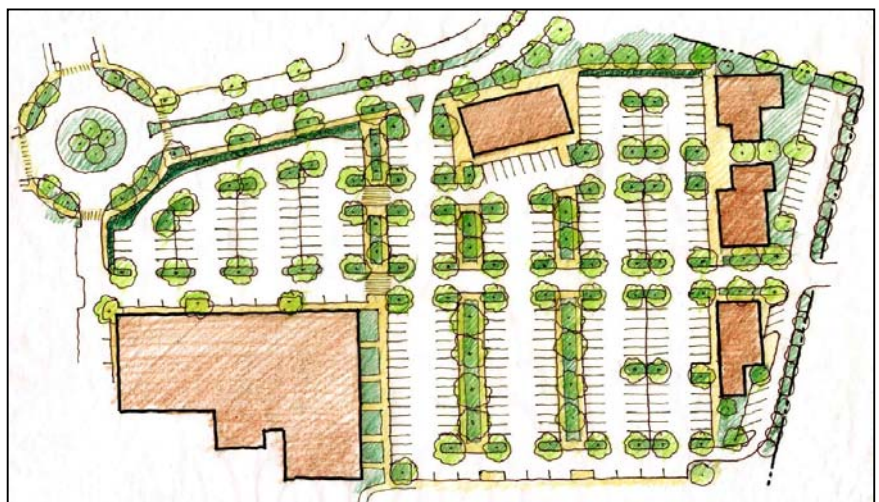
District and the other relating to the healthy lifestyle orientation (“green” businesses, health, 55+ housing, and outdoor recreation). There are also opportunities to expand and attract new uses in the Village. Overall, amenities such as trails, riverfront recreation access, and design improvements are critical elements of the marketing strategy.

Overview of Initiatives

The three initiatives listed below involve reconfiguring the existing Thornapple Village site in order to frame the parking lot, enhance landscaping, and create an environment more accommodating to pedestrians. Two potential development options are suggested for development on the vacant lot east of Thornapple Village, which will be well-connected to Thornapple Village and easily accessible for pedestrians and cars alike.

28. **Priority landscaping of the Thornapple Village to contain and frame the parking lot.** During the first public meeting of the charrette, community members participated in a mapping exercise to identify the good and bad places in Ada Village. The Thornapple Village parking lot received the most negative comments for several reasons. The parking lot lacks a sense of place and is out of character with the rest of the Village. It has no clear physical containment – cars can move in any direction, and there is no boundary between the lot and the sidewalk on Ada Drive. This severely detracts from a pedestrian’s sense of safety. Landscaping the parking lot can provide for the necessary edges to protect pedestrians, frame parking spaces, and develop interior roadways to guide vehicle movement within the lot.

The proposed re-design of the parking area of Thornapple Village (right). There are approximately 253 delineated spaces in the existing layout. The proposed re-design rationalizes the eastern edges of the parking and provides approximately 269 parking spaces.



29. **Reconfiguration of the east and north sides of Thornapple Village.** This rather complex initiative seeks to extend the walkability of the community further north from the Village Core. Currently, there are no buildings in the Village Retail District that

front Ada Drive and generate pedestrian activity. Over the long-term, the Village should encourage the placement of small commercial buildings on the northern and eastern edges of the lot in order to enhance sidewalk vitality and better frame the physical space. This initiative will need to be conducted in conjunction with a shared parking strategy (see initiative 31), and could eventually spur the development of a structured parking facility.

30. **New development site – one of two options: 1) Create a residential neighborhood for ages 55 and up. 2) Create a mixed use village square.** There are positive and negative aspects associated with each of these options. From the market perspective, highway sites are better suited to capturing convenience retail potential. However, any significant retail development of this site would have a negative impact on the marketability and economic potentials for the Village core. A “mixed-use” concept may compete head-on with efforts to strengthen the existing Village commercial area, especially if it is viewed as a separate entity and not integrated with the central historic core of the Village. Further, there is no evidence from the Market Analysis to suggest that there is significant net *new* demand for convenience retail when it is not integrated into the Village destination concept unless accommodating expansion of existing businesses.

Development of this site for a 55+ residential community would help to generate additional retail market demand within walking distance of the Village. Plus, it is likely that this new residential community would pro-actively support businesses located within the Village as part of a lifestyle commitment.



The proposed development site is located at the north- eastern edge of the Village and adjacent to the Thornapple Village shopping area.



Alternative 1: The proposed development site developed as a residential neighborhood for ages 55 and up.



Alternative 2: The proposed development site developed as mixed use commercial and linked to Thornapple Village.

In general, residential zoning and sale of the land by itself may not generate the highest economic return to the private property owner. However, the land owner stands to gain significantly if participating as an equity partner in the development of the site for high-end residential use. Thus, the question of economic return revolves more on whether the property owner participates in the development of the property or sells the land outright.

Area 7: General Initiatives

Observations

Certain issues were raised frequently in discussions with community members, and call for a more generalized approach. For example, Ada residents place particular importance on Village appearance. They would like to see some type of design standards put into place in order to guide future development. Parking is another issue that arose frequently. Ada Village already has several successful examples of shared parking lots, and residents are interested in encouraging additional shared parking opportunities.

Overview of Initiatives

The five initiatives below focus on expanding shared parking and providing regulations to guide future development in Ada Village.

31. **Expand shared parking initiatives to the whole Village.** The market analysis indicates there is the potential for an additional 90,000 square feet of commercial space to be created in the Village, provided several physical improvements conditions are met (See Market Analysis, Appendix B). The increase in commercial space

will create a need for additional parking. Given the limited amount of available land in the Village, Ada Township should expand on its success with the shared parking initiative involving the Ada Bike Shop and adjacent properties. In this model, the property owners participate in joint or cross access easements that allow parking lots on individual parcels to be seamlessly connected to form one, centralized parking lot. This “park-once” concept should be expanded to the whole Village.

32. Develop a Regulating Plan.

Current Township development regulations do not assure that the Plan will be built as recommended. The key is to develop more form-based rather than use-based regulations. Form-based regulations incorporate a method of regulating development to achieve a specific urban form. Form-based codes create a predictable public realm by controlling physical form primarily, with a lesser focus on land use. A critical part of any form-based code is the Regulating Plan, just as the zoning map is part of the zoning ordinance. A Regulating Plan is a plan or map of the regulated area (in this case the Village area) designating the locations where different building form standards apply, based on clear community intentions regarding the physical character of the area being coded.

33. Prepare urban form standards.

Urban form standards are an integral part of a form-based code. They typically cover lots, buildings and streets. Lot and building form standards are regulations controlling the configuration, features, and functions of buildings that define and shape the public realm. Street standards give specifications for the elements within the public realm (e.g., sidewalks, travel lanes, street trees, street furniture, etc.). Form-based codes also sometimes include: architectural standards or regulations controlling external architectural materials and quality. Both the Regulating Plan and the urban form standards are discussed in detail in Chapter 6 - Village Form Standards and in Appendix A.

34. Incorporate the urban form standards into a form-based code.

The Regulating Plan and urban form standards described in Chapter 6. Village Form Standards cover only the Village area. The Plan and standards are intended to be made a part of a larger form-based code (similar to the one described above) for the entire Township. Ultimately, the Plan and standards will be expanded to not only regulate the Village area, but control development in the less urbanized portions of the Township.

35. **Develop a Village Marketing concept.** The marketing concept should draw on the strengths of Ada Village and its natural, rural, small town setting. In particular, two themes emerge. The first theme draws on the Village's existing cluster of specialty shops, including art galleries. There is an opportunity to create a "gallery district" within the older buildings in Ada that takes advantage of the pleasant historic setting and the walkability of the Village core. Entertainment, such as a live acoustical music venue, could help add to the ambiance of the district. More importantly, art galleries and artist work spaces are less constrained by unusual or older buildings that have challenging display spaces. Thus, galleries and artist work spaces are a good use for some of the vacant or underutilized vacant buildings in the Village. The second theme is the relationship of Ada to the surrounding natural environment and to healthy living. As the population ages, places like Ada become more attractive because of their peaceful surroundings and natural lifestyle. The introduction of additional outdoor recreation goods, businesses, spas, "green" businesses, and health stores can help solidify this theme in marketing. Amenities such as canoe landings and trail systems further strengthen the amenity value. The marketing concept for Ada Village should focus on the "Gallery District" as well on a healthy living and back-to-nature concept.

6. Village Form Standards

Overview

Initiatives 32-34 (see Chapter 5) provide recommendations for how the Village's development regulations can be modified in order to facilitate the realization of the community's vision for the Village. By placing greater emphasis on regulating the *form* of the built environment and reducing the emphasis that is currently placed on *use*, Village regulations can be better tailored to achieve the desired future for the community. This chapter examines the subject of Village form standards in greater detail. It is divided into the following four sections:

- A. The Basics: Form-based Codes
- B. An Initial Regulating Plan for Ada Village
- C. Initial Lot and Building Standards
- D. How to Apply Form-Based Regulations

A. The Basics: Form-Based Codes

Historically, communities like Ada Township have relied on design guidelines to make up for the lack of design direction afforded by zoning. But these guidelines, by their nature, are voluntary, difficult to apply consistently, offer too much room for subjective interpretation, and can be

difficult to enforce. Similarly, while Planned Unit Development (PUD) processes allow for variation from the existing zoning regulations (for example to encourage a mix of uses), they lack the specificity necessary to ensure that the community's desired physical form will be realized and require negotiation on a project-by-project basis.

Like most codes, the Ada Township code regulates development on the basis of use. These regulations tend to be *proscriptive*, segregating different land uses and focusing on what should *not* be developed in particular locations. They provide little guidance as to how development should occur or what form it should take in order to fit the existing community character. In order to influence the form of future development in the community, Ada Township may want to consider adopting regulations that are more *prescriptive*, that depict what *should* be developed, what form it should take, and with less emphasis on a building's occupying use.

An alternative way to direct the form of future development is to adopt regulations that focus more on the form of the development than the occupying use. These "form-based" codes can be used to achieve a specific urban form. Form-based codes create a predictable public realm by controlling physical form primarily, with a lesser focus on land use.

Form-based codes address a number of issues, including: the relationship between building facades and the public realm (e.g. the streetscape, or area normally within the right-of-way); the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another; and the scale and types of streets and blocks. The regulations and standards in form-based codes are easy to interpret and are presented using both diagrams and words. Standards and regulations are connected to a Regulating Plan that designates the appropriate form and scale of development for particular locations.

These illustrated, highly visual form-based codes contrast with conventional zoning codes that focus on permissible property uses and control development intensity through numerical parameters (e.g., FAR-floor area-to-land area ratio, dwellings per acre, height limits, setbacks, parking ratios). Not to be confused with the aforementioned design guidelines or general statements of policy, form-based codes are regulatory, not advisory. They are drafted to achieve a community vision based on time-tested forms of urbanism, and commonly include the following five elements:

1. **Regulating Plan.** This is a plan or map of the regulated area. It designates the locations where different building form standards apply based on clear community intentions regarding the physical character of the area being coded.
2. **Building Form Standards.** These are regulations that control the configuration, features, and functions of buildings that define and shape the public realm. (See photo at left.)



Example of a Cottage House and Lot, one of five lot and building types illustrated in Appendix A.

3. **Public Space/Street Standards.** These provide specifications for elements within the public realm (e.g., sidewalks, travel lanes, street trees, street furniture, etc.).
4. **Administration.** A clearly defined application and project review process is included in a form-based code.
5. **Definitions.** A glossary is also included to promote the common understanding of technical terms.

In addition to these five elements, form-based codes may also include architectural standards. These standards control external architectural design as well as the type and quality of building materials.

B. An Initial Regulating Plan for Ada Village

The initial Regulating Plan for the Village area is made up of four separate but related maps. They include the Regulating Plan Diagram, the Initial Street Grid Map, the Initial Street Type Map, and the Initial Frontage Type Map. This section describes each of the four maps. The maps can be found following the descriptions, on pages 6.5 – 6.8.

1. Regulating Plan Diagram

The Regulating Plan Diagram (Map 6.1) divides the Village into a planning geography that includes the following four distinct zones:

- **Core** – The Core is the most intensely occupied zone with attached buildings that create a continuous street façade within walking distance of surrounding residential uses.
- **Center** – The Center is the second most intensely occupied zone with a range of uses in both attached and detached buildings.
- **Village Proper** – The Village Proper includes a mix of homes (mostly detached), separated from the street with a front yard.
- **Edge** – The Edge includes larger lots for detached homes and provides a physical transition to the surrounding countryside.

The Regulating Plan Diagram indicates where various lot, building, street, and frontage types (shown in the illustrative plan) apply. Parks, open space, and the location of various civic uses are also shown on the Regulating Plan.

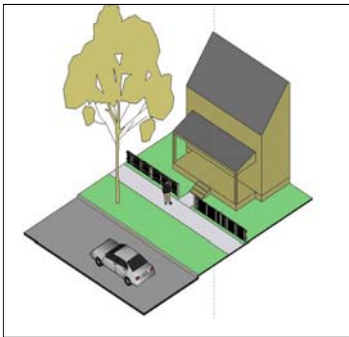
2. Initial Street Grid

The Street Grid Map (Map 6.2) indicates how the street network or grid will function. The grid is divided into two levels: the Primary Grid and the Secondary Grid. The Primary Grid includes those roadways that function primarily for pedestrian access and secondarily for vehicular access. They include amenities along the roadway or within the streetscape (e.g. sidewalks, street trees, lighting, street furniture, signage, landscaping, etc.) that serve the pedestrian. This grid level allows the Village area to retain its

walkability. The Secondary Street Grid, because of its importance to the regional transportation network, primarily accommodates vehicular access. This includes M-21 or Fulton Street, Thornapple River Drive and Ada Drive outside the Village area.

3. Initial Street Type Map and Standards

The Street Types Map (Map 6.3) indicates the type of streets that are recommended in the illustrative plan for the Village area. Each street has a particular function and design depending on its relation to the larger regional network and the types of adjoining development (e.g. commercial scale, neighborhood scale, etc.) it serves. Most of the recommended street types are either modifications of existing streets (based on the proposed roadway network) or new streets that are aligned to improve connectivity. All streets incorporate some form of traffic calming device to slow traffic (e.g. boulevards, on-street parking, round-a-bouts, etc) and pedestrian amenities. Appendix A gives the standards for various street types and illustrates how they should be applied.



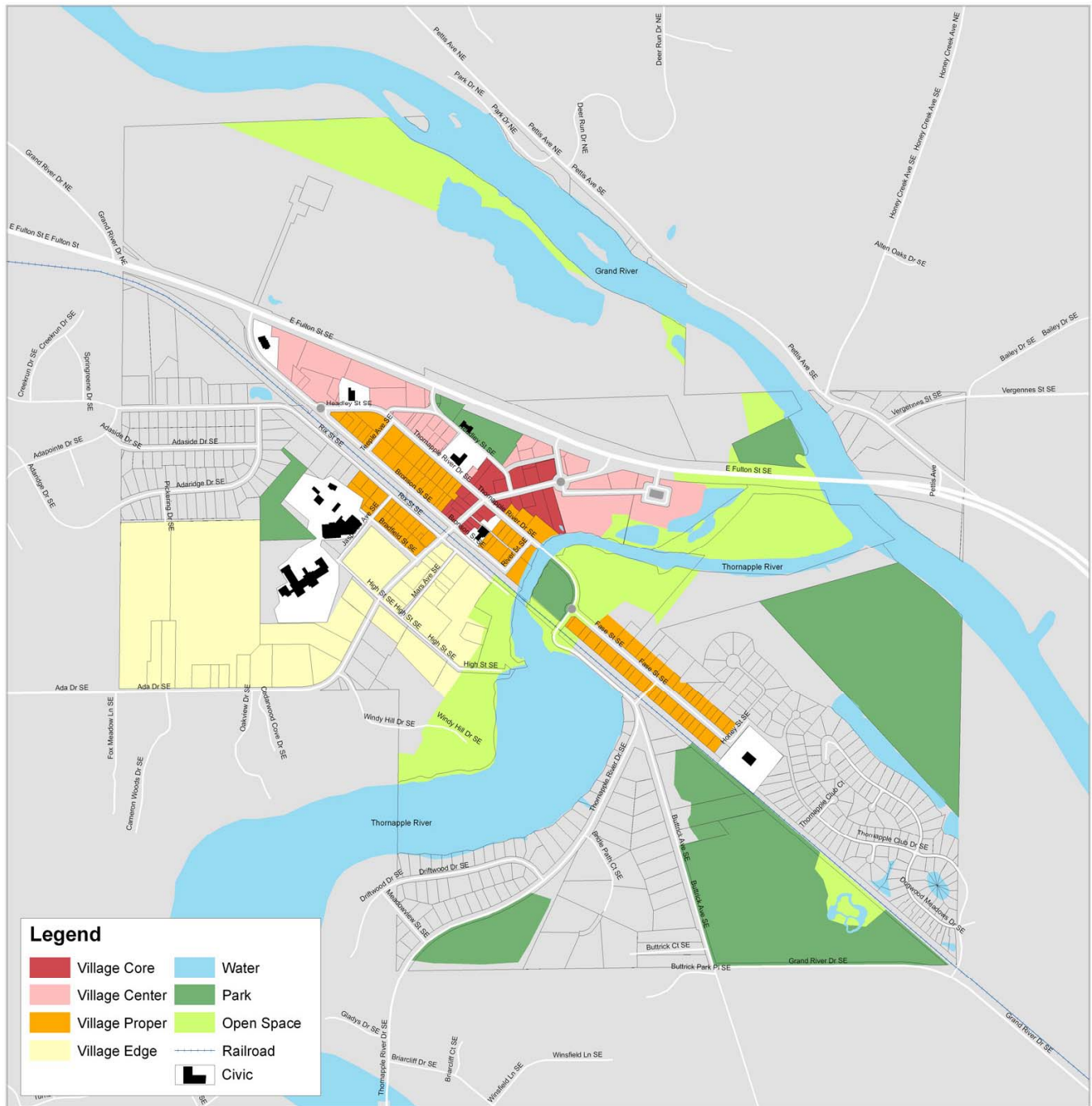
Example Front Yard and Porch frontage type that is recommended in the Village Center and the Village Proper.

4. Initial Frontage Types and Standards

Providing pedestrian amenities within the public realm or streetscape does not contribute positively to the pedestrian experience unless buildings located along the street have a strong relationship (e.g. front facing entrance, porch, walkway connections, etc) to the street. Map 6.4 shows the location of the different types of frontages recommended for various streets within the Village zones. The frontage types include: Common Lawn, Frontyard/Porch, Shopfront and Awning, Terrace, and Convenience Parking. Appendix A describes the various recommended frontage types.

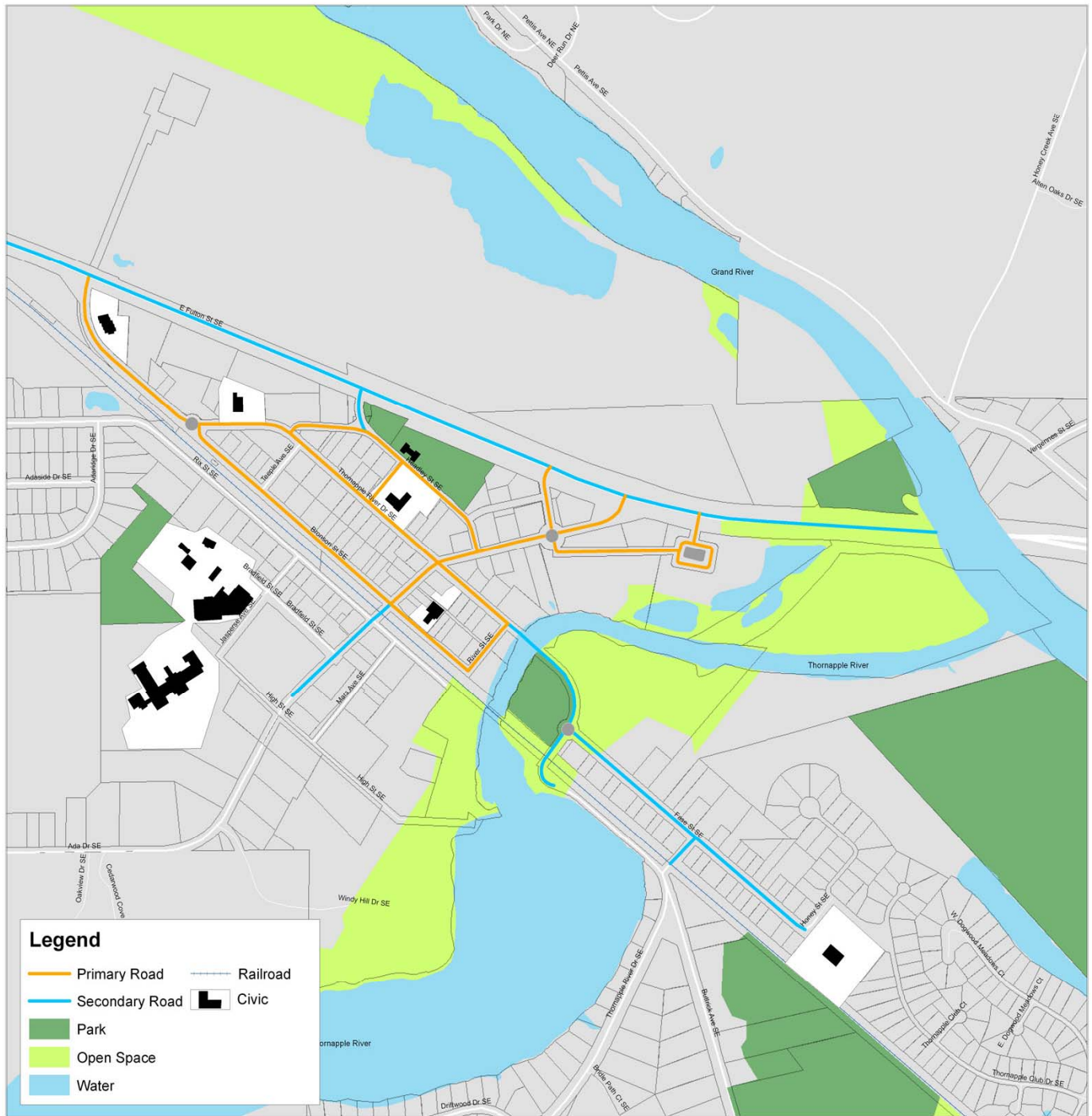
All four maps are provided below, beginning on the following page.

MAP 6.1: INITIAL REGULATING PLAN DIAGRAM



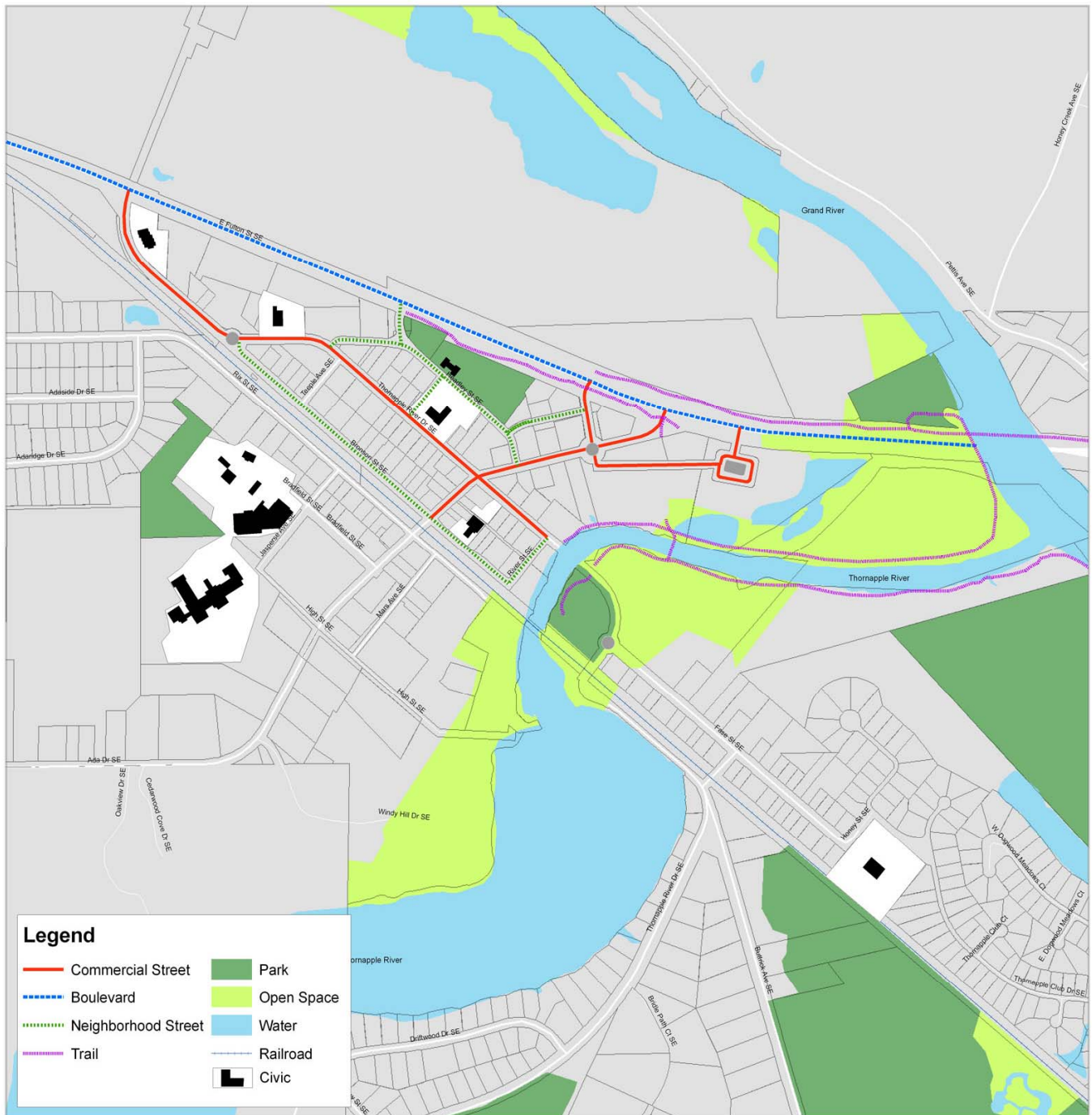
Source: Ada Township, ACP

MAP 6.2: INITIAL STREET GRID



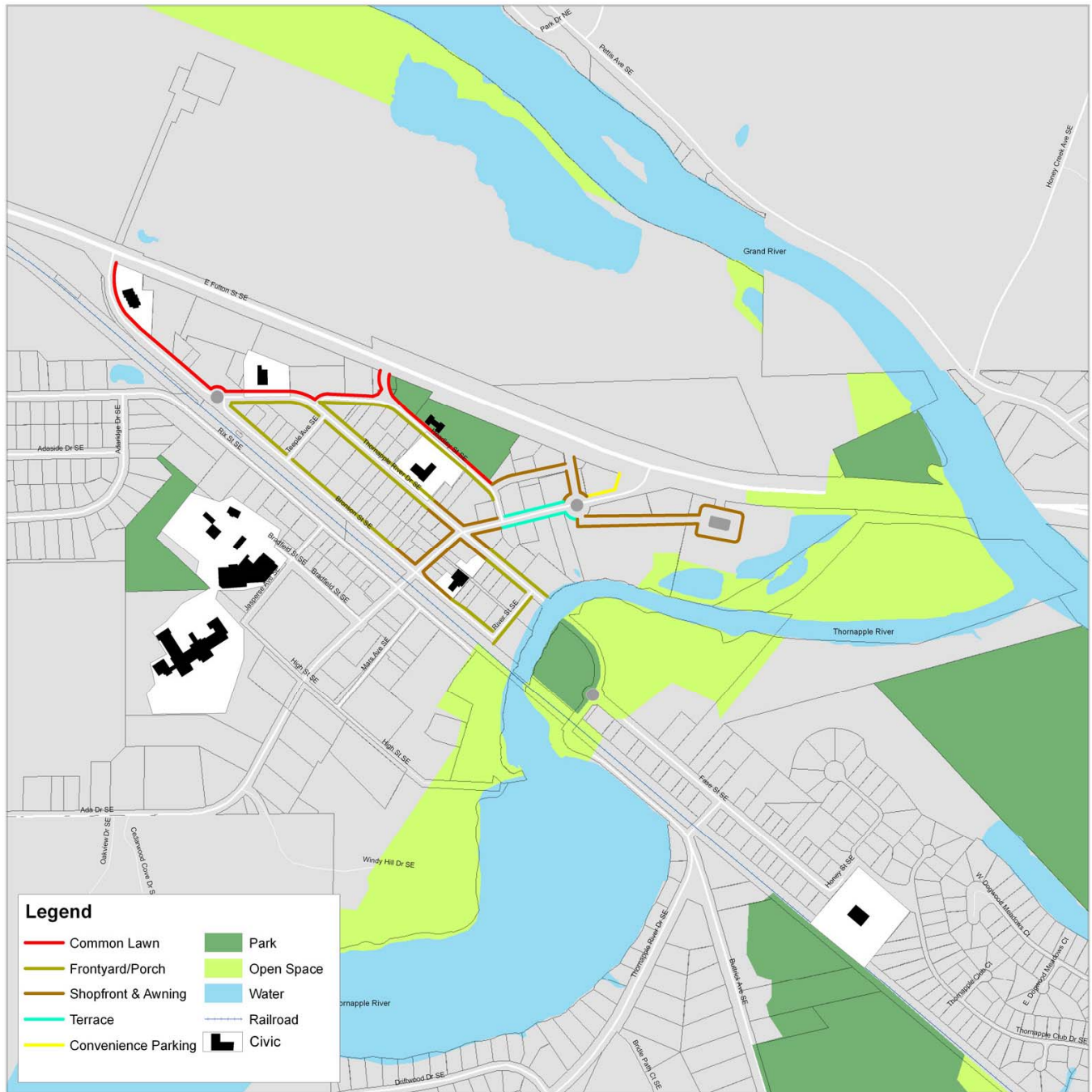
Source: Ada Township, ACP

MAP 6.3: INITIAL STREET TYPE

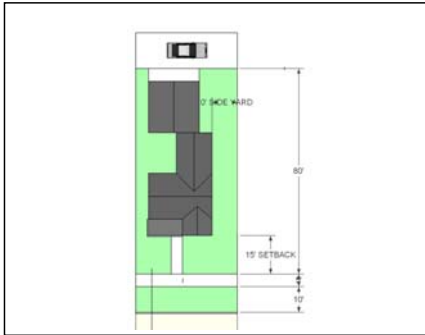


Source: Ada Township, ACP

MAP 6.4: INITIAL FRONTAGE TYPES



Source: Ada Township, ACP



Example of perspective and plan view of Cottage Lot showing recommended building and lot dimensions.

C. Initial Lot and Building Standards

Existing zoning regulations include various dimensional requirements regulating building bulk and size within the Village and Township. However, they do not regulate how the buildings will be placed relative to the street and relative to each other in order to optimize the pedestrian experience and enhance the character of the Village. The Lot and Building Standards provided in Appendix A give specific standards regulating each type of building (cottage house, village house, commercial block, etc.) recommended in the illustrative plan. An example of a Cottage lot and building can be found in the sidebar at left.

The Regulating Plan and the Initial Lot and Building Standards work together to create a clear picture of the desired development patterns for each area of the community. Table 6.1 below shows how all of the development components fit together. It depicts the lot and building type, street grid and type, and frontage type recommended for each zone. Additional details can be found in Appendix A.

Table 6.1: Development Feature by Village Zone

Development Feature	Requirement by Village Zone			
	Village Core	Village Center	Village Proper	Village Edge
Lot and Building Types	Commercial Block Civic	Commercial Block Cottage House Village House Civic	Cottage House Civic Village House	Village House Civic Village House
Street Grid	Primary	Primary Secondary	Primary Secondary	Secondary
Street Types	Commercial	Boulevard Commercial Neighborhood Trail	Commercial Neighborhood Trail	Trail
Frontage Types	Shopfront & Awning Terrace	Common Lawn Frontyard/Porch	Shopfront & Awning Frontyard/Porch	NA

D. How to Apply Form-Based Regulations

Form-based regulations governing development within the Village area can be incorporated into the Township's regulations in several ways. First, they can be drafted as a separate code parallel to the existing zoning regulations. Incentives to apply the code can be built into the regulations. (e.g. density bonuses, mixed-use allowances, etc.). Second, they could be applied as mandatory or optional overlay zones to selected existing base districts without making significant changes to the balance of the code. Or third, they could be made an integral part of the Township's development regulations as a "hybrid code." A hybrid code includes form-based standards

along with a combination of zoning and subdivision regulations to create one development code. A Regulating Plan covering the balance of the Township should be created before these standards are developed and applied throughout the Township. The following recommends a five-step process for creating a hybrid code:

1. Prepare Regulating Plan (which includes the balance of the Township):

This step could be accomplished the same way the Village Plan was prepared (through the charrette process). The primary result of this process is the preparation of a Regulating Plan and set of form-based standards.

2. Appoint Advisory and Technical Review Groups:

The Advisory Group would be made up of appointed and elected officials and representatives from existing boards and commissions responsible for administering the Township's development regulations. Their role is to review and approve completed drafts of the regulations and recommend the final draft for adoption. The Technical Review Group would be made up of staff and others in the Township's administration that support the various boards and commissions in their review of development projects. This Technical Review Group will be responsible for evaluating the more technical aspects of the code and reviewing and commenting on the draft regulations prior to Advisory Group review.

3. Perform Regulatory Assessment:

Based on the previously prepared Regulating Plan and Urban Form Standards, an assessment report should be prepared summarizing stakeholder and staff comments as well as the assessment of what is working and not working with the current regulations. This document is intended to help reach agreement on regulatory approaches before beginning the drafting process.

4. Draft Regulations

Following review and approval of the assessment report by the Technical Review and Advisory Groups, a draft of the proposed regulations is prepared and submitted first to the Technical Review Group and then to the Advisory Group for review and comment. An interim meeting of elected and appointed officials (Trustees, Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals) should occur prior to preparing the final code. An informal open house should also be held to solicit comments from the public.

5. Draft Final Code and Adopt

A draft of the final code should be prepared incorporating comments from elected and appointed officials as well as the public. This draft will then be submitted for formal public review and adoption.

7. Implementation

Chapters One to Five describe the vision for Ada Village that emerged from the charrette process. Chapter 6 describes the Regulating Plan and village form standards that, when turned into a form-based code, can ensure long-term implementation of the vision. Chapter Seven puts the implementation process into perspective and indicates key steps, responsibilities, and funding sources required to jump start the implementation process.

Public input at the Community Choices Workshop held on October 30, 2006 determined specific initiatives considered capable of being catalysts with the potential to spur further implementation. The results of the Workshop were further refined by the Charrette Task Force that grouped some of the priority initiatives together.

The Task Force identified five catalyst initiatives and grouped complementary initiatives under those areas. The five catalyst initiatives include:

Catalyst Initiative

Develop a public park on the Alticor property. (Initiative 23)

Complementary Initiative:

13. Improve pedestrian crossings on Fulton Street.

Catalyst Initiative

Create two pocket parks at the intersection of Ada Drive and Thornapple River Drive (Initiative 18)

Complementary Initiatives:

19. Open up the gas station building to the intersection of Ada Drive and Thornapple River Drive;
20. Open up the Peninsular Oil building's Ada Drive wing to the street for potential retail use; and
21. Conduct an art competition to cover the telephone switching building.

Catalyst Initiative

New connection between Ada Drive and Fulton Street (Initiative 1)

Complementary Initiatives:

5. Roundabout at Ada Drive, creating new connection between Ada Drive and Fulton Street;
6. Calm Thornapple River Drive to Thornapple River Drive bridge; and
8. Calm Ada Drive between Thornapple River Drive and Fulton Street.

Catalyst Initiative

Priority landscaping of the Thornapple Village to contain and frame the parking lot. (Initiative 2)

Catalyst Initiative

Develop trail on the north bank of the Thornapple River (Initiative 14)

Complementary Initiatives:

15. Build new pedestrian bridge across the Thornapple River;
16. Develop trail on the south bank of the Thornapple River; and
17. Extend river trail through natural area south of the railroad, looping to Ada Drive.

The rationale for each catalyst initiative is described in Chapter 5 - Initiatives, and they are not repeated here.

The catalyst projects will require immediate action by the parties identified as having primary responsibility over their implementation. These projects will set the stage for implementing the vision for Ada Village set forth by the charrette.

A review of the catalyst projects shows that the Township will have a critical role in implementing the vision. It is not, however, an exclusive role. As examples from myriads of communities throughout the country show, the implementation of a bold and complex vision, as has emerged in Ada, will require serious commitment by civic and business forces in addition to government.

The Charrette Task Force chose to remain in business to help “keep the flame burning” and help implement the initiatives. To do so, in addition to

working closely with Township elected officials and staff, the Task Force will need to engage leaders of the civic and business sectors. To that end, the Task Force should convene an informal round table of public, civic, and private sector leaders, as an initial step. The Task Force will also need to sustain over time the good will generated by the strong and generous charrette participation by residents. One method by which the energies harnessed during the Charrette may be sustained and focused on implementation of the catalyst projects is the preparation and issuance of an annual report to the community on the status of implementation of charrette initiatives.

The Implementation Matrix

This section contains an implementation matrix that outlines implementation steps, key responsibilities, sources of funding, and other details pertinent to each initiative and strategy described in the previous chapters.

The matrix is organized in the same sequence of initiatives used in Chapter Five.

First Steps/Next Steps indicates the preliminary actions needed for certain strategies. Such actions may include issuing an RFP (Request for Proposals), or hiring Architecture and Engineering (A/E) support.

The **Responsibility** column identifies which parties will lead or otherwise take part in the implementation of the strategy.

The **Timing** column refers to the following timeframes:

S – Short Term Initiative (0 to 3 years)

M – Medium Term Initiative (3 to 10 years)

L – Long Term Initiative (greater than 10 years)

Finally, the **Type** column places each initiative into one of the following categories:

BM – Brick and Mortar (physical improvements)

PR – Programs

REG – Regulations

STU – Studies

Catalyst and complementary initiatives are highlighted respectively in pale blue and yellow.

Area 1 - Expand Road Network					
	First / Next Steps	Responsibility	Funding Sources	Timing	Type
New connection between Ada Drive and Fulton Street. (Shift signal from Ada Drive to new street on Fulton).	Contact property owners, preliminary engineering	State / County / Township / Private	State / County / Township / Private	S	BM
2 Extend Headley Street to Fulton Street (new signal).	Contact property owners, preliminary engineering	State / County / Township / Private	State / Township	M	BM
3 Connect Headley Street to Thornapple River Drive.	Contact property owners, preliminary engineering	State / County / Township / Private	Township / Private	M	BM
Area 2 - Traffic Calming					
	First / Next Steps	Responsibility	Funding Sources	Timing	Type
A. Roundabouts					
Roundabout at Thornapple River Drive and Bronson Street.	Contact property owners, preliminary engineering	State / County / Township	State / County / Township	M	BM
Roundabout at Ada Drive, creating new connection between Ada Drive and Fulton Street.	Contact property owners, preliminary engineering	State / County / Township	State / County / Township	S	BM
B. Street Treatment					
Calm Thornapple River Drive to Thornapple River bridge.	Preliminary engineering	County / Township	MDOT - Cool Cities Initiative / Other	S	BM
7 Calm from Leonard Park to the Thornapple River Drive/Buttrick Avenue intersection.	Preliminary engineering	County / Township	MDOT - Cool Cities Initiative / Other	S	BM
8 Calm Ada Drive between Thornapple River Drive and Fulton.	Preliminary engineering	County / Township	MDOT - Cool Cities Initiative / Other	S	BM
Calm Ada Drive between railroad underpass and Windy Hill Drive.	Preliminary engineering	County / Township	MDOT - Cool Cities Initiative / Other	M	BM
Calm Fulton Street between Bronson Street and the Gateway Bridge.	Preliminary engineering	County / Township	MDOT - Cool Cities Initiative / Other	M	BM
Add cantilevered pedestrian walk and raised median with textured surface on the planned M-21 replacement bridge over the Grand River.	Continue dialogue with MDOT on bridge appearance	MDOT	M-21 Improvements	S	BM
Area 3 - Sidewalks and Trails					
	First / Next Steps	Responsibility	Funding Sources	Timing	Type
2 Extend sidewalk along Bronson Street. (Do not widen street. Take out double yellow line.)	Continue dialogue with County Road Commission	County / Township		S	BM
3 Improve pedestrian crossings on Fulton Street.	Continue dialogue with MDOT on M-21 improv.	MDOT	M-21 Improvements	S	BM
Develop trail on the north bank of the Thornapple River.	Approach property owners, develop land donation /acquisition policies	County / Township/Private	Township/Private	M	BM
5 Build new pedestrian bridge across the Thornapple River	Organize design competition	County / Township/Private	Township/Private	M	BM
6 Develop trail on the south bank of the Thornapple River.	Approach property owners, develop land donation /acquisition policies	County / Township/Private	Township/Private	S	BM
Extend river trail through natural area south of the railroad, looping to Ada Drive.	Approach property owners, develop land donation /acquisition policies	County / Township/Private	Township/Private	S	BM
Area 4 - The Gallery District (Township Core)					
	First / Next Steps	Responsibility	Funding Sources	Timing	Type
3 Create two pocket parks at the intersection of Ada Drive and Thornapple River Drive.					
Open up the gas station building to the intersection of Thornapple River drive and Ada Drive.	Prepare illustrative sketches. Meet / discuss opportunities with property owners, Identify funding sources.	Township	MI CDBG, MDOT streetscape, MI SHDA, Cool Cities grants	S	BM
Open up the Peninsular Oil building's Ada Drive wing to the street, for potential retail use.	Prepare illustrative sketches. Meet / discuss opportunities with property owner. Identify funding sources. Recruit retail tenants.	Township, business association	MI CDBG, MDOT streetscape, MI SHDA, Cool Cities grants, real estate investor(s)	M	BM
Conduct an art competition to cover the telephone switching building.	Appoint a competition committee. Promote event. Select winning design.	Township, art galleries business	Corporate sponsorships, fundraising	S	PR, BM
2 Realign future buildings on Ada Drive to move to the street line, using landscaping for grade transition.	Contact property owner. evaluate financial alternatives. Adopt regulating Plan and form based regulations. integrate planning/marketing of site with rest of Township.	Planning & property owners	private property owners	ML	REG, PR

Area 5 - The Civic District (Park and Civic Site)

	First / Next Steps	Responsibility	Funding Sources	Timing	Type
23	Develop a public park on the Alticor property. Relocate the Rix Robinson monument to the park.	Preliminary design of park	Township/Private	S	BM
24	Develop a civic building (possible uses include multipurpose community center, library, township offices, arts center, etc.)	Conduct needs assessment. Determine appropriate facility based on needs assessment. Identify tenant.	Township/Private	M/L	STU-BM
25	Create an informal amphitheater with a temporary performance structure.	Evaluate regional summer programs. Identify ADA niche. Identify users.	Township Private Not for-Profit	S	STU-BM
26	Landscape the edges of Fulton to open up a view near the new open space.	Prepare landscape plan	Township	M	BM
27	Develop an infill strategy for properties backing into or facing Headley Street (south side).	Initiate discussion with property owner	Township/Private	M	BM

Area 6 - Township Retail District (Township Center)

	First / Next Steps	Responsibility	Funding Sources	Timing	Type
28	Priority landscaping of the Thornapple Township to contain and frame the parking lot.	Initiate discussion with property owner	Township/Private	S	BM
29	Reconfiguration of the east and north sides of Thornapple Township.	Initiate discussion with property owner, adopt form based-code	Township/Private	S	BM
30	New development site - one of two options: 1) Create a residential neighborhood for ages 55 and up. 2) Create a mixed use Township square.	1) Conduct discussions with property owner and run financial alternatives. 2) re-zone as appropriate. 3) integrate planning/marketing of site with rest of Township.	Planning & property owner	1-S, 2,3-M	REG, PR

Area 7 - General Initiatives

	First / Next Steps	Responsibility	Funding Sources	Timing	Type
31	Expand shared parking initiatives to the whole Township.	Locate potential sites	Township/Private	S	BM
32	Develop a regulatory plan.	Initiate code review	Township	S	REG
33	Prepare urban form standards.	Initiate code review	Township	S	REG
34	Incorporate the urban form standards into a form-based code.	Initiate code review	Township	S	REG
35	Develop a Township marketing concept.	Work with Village Business Association	Private	M	PR