

Heather Hanover
Chair

James Eshelman
Vice-Chair

Commissioners

Scott Dzurka, *Mayor*
Eric Hufnagel, *City Commissioner*
Eric Harger
Mark Holden
Todd Krajniak
Brian Mills
Melvin Renfrow



Chad A. Gamble
City Manager

Mindy J. Seavey
City Clerk

Kristina Kinde
City Treasurer

Michael Homier
City Attorney

Christopher Khorey, AICP
Planning Consultant

PLANNING COMMISSION

July 9, 2025

The St. Johns Planning Commission will hold a regular meeting on
July 9, 2025 at 5:30 pm in the County Commission Chambers located at the
Clinton County Courthouse, 100 E. State Street, St. Johns, MI. (Please use Cass St. Entrance.)

AGENDA

1. Call to Order (5:30 p.m.)
2. Approval of Agenda (5:31-5:32 p.m.)
3. Approval of Minutes (June 9, 2025, Meeting) (5:33-5:35 p.m.)
4. Public comment for non-agenda items (5:35-5:45 p.m.)
5. Public Hearings:
 - a. Zoning Amendment: Vendor Trucks (5:46-6:00 p.m.)
6. New Business:
 - a. Update on Rental Inspections Program (6:00-6:10 p.m.)
7. Old Business:
 - a. Zoning Amendment: Vendor Trucks ACTION ITEM (6:10 – 6:20 p.m.)
 - b. Zoning Amendment Discussion: Repealing Special Use Requirement for Outdoor Dining (6:20–6:30 p.m.)
 - c. Ordinance Amendment Discussion: Revisit 2024 Draft Golf Carts Ordinance (6:30 – 6:45 p.m.)
 - d. Master Plan Discussion:
 - i. Draft Action Plan (6:45 – 7:00 p.m.)
 - ii. Old 127 Redesign Concepts (7:00 – 7:15 p.m.)
8. Committee Site Plan Approvals: Proliant Dairy – 1660 Technical Drive
9. City Commission Update – Mayor Dzurka (7:15 – 7:20 p.m.)
10. Commissioner Comments. (7:20 – 7:25 p.m.)
 - a. Adjournment (7:25 pm) Next Meeting: August 13, 2025

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Mark Holden
Melvin Renfrow
Eric Harger
Brian Mills
Todd Krajniak



PLANNING COMMISSION

JUNE 9, 2025
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the St. Johns Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Hanover at 5:30 p.m.

Members Present: Heather Hanover, Mark Holden, Eric Hufnagel, Brian Mills, Scott Dzurka, Todd Krajniak, Eric Harger (left at 6:39), James Eshelman

Members Absent: Melvin Renfrow

Staff Present: Chad Gamble, City Manager; Mindy Seavey, City Clerk; Eric Ensey, McKenna

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Commissioner Hufnagel seconded by Commissioner Holden to approve the agenda as presented.

YEA: Hanover, Harger, Holden, Hufnagel, Eshelman, Mills, Dzurka, Krajniak

NAY: None

Motion carried.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MAY 14, 2025 MEETING

Motion by Commissioner Dzurka seconded by Commissioner Holden to approve the minutes as presented.

YEA: Hanover, Harger, Holden, Hufnagel, Eshelman, Mills, Dzurka, Krajniak

NAY: None

Motion carried.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT FOR NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Chairperson Hanover asked if there were any public comments. She said the city planning commission did a long study of golf carts and came up with a plan, sent it up to the city commission and it didn't get enough votes. We were the ones that sent it there, you need to convince the city commission.

Alex Shinabarger said he is trying to get the golf carts here. He discussed: there are no issues with golf carts in town; a PILOT program; was told by a police officer he couldn't have his golf cart on the road; and he was going to keep driving it.

Mayor Dzurka asked how many people here are interested in golf carts. He discussed mobility issues and a state permit.

Those in attendance regarding golf carts were Beverly Masarik; David Andrews; Cathy Kochensparger; and Connie Skorna.

Commissioner Eshelman said the majority of the Planning Commission sent this up to the city commission.

There was a discussion about golf carts and the interest in them.

It was stated that the city commission meeting is June 23rd at 6:00 p.m.

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS - NONE:

6. NEW BUSINESS:

A. 901 N. Old US-127 – Brandon Rotary Glass Site Plan Review

Chris Khorey, McKenna, discussed the demolition and site plan for a new Rotary Glass on the site.

Brandon from Rotary Glass was present. He said his parents started Rotary Glass in 1990. He said the building is in pretty bad shape and they would like to grow as a company and are proposing to build a new facility. They wish to operate out of the existing building while construction happens.

Chris Khorey discussed setbacks, circulation and parking, sidewalk, landscaping (already fence and trees), no reason for additional shrubs, front of property (trees and shrubs), recommend adding 434 square feet of greenspace.

There was a discussion of:

- New building will be larger: moving from two 10x20 foot bays to three 12x50 foot bays, plus a small office.
- Plan includes demolition of the old building and construction of the new one within 10 feet of the current site.
 - Operation will continue in the old building during construction, with a move to the new building within a week of occupancy permit.
- Setback requirements, circulation, and parking are all met.
- Sidewalk addition is appreciated.
- Landscaping: 34 trees and 12 shrubs proposed (requirement is 14 trees and 28 shrubs if no fence); fence and existing trees provide sufficient screening.
- Frontage landscaping: 3 trees and 8 shrubs proposed (requirement is 6 trees, no shrubs); limited space cited.
- Building landscaping: 10% of building area (434 square feet) required; not shown on plans yet.
- Parking: 13 spaces proposed (requirement is 9).
- Lighting: concerns about fixture allowing uplighting (not allowed), photometric plan shows possible dark areas in parking lot, need for downward-facing lights and possibly additional lighting for safety.
- Fence ownership and maintenance discussed; fence is on residential property, but sufficient trees provide screening if fence is removed.
- Drainage has been addressed with DPW.
- Minor concerns and suggestions for improvement
 - Suggestion to move shrubs away from ingress/egress for better visibility and pedestrian safety.
 - Lighting plan may need revision to avoid dark spots in the parking lot.

- Consider mounting additional downward-facing lights on the building instead of installing a pole.
- Fence conditions could be made a condition of approval but are not recommended.
- Landscaping area of 434 square feet adjacent to the building must be added.

Motion by Commissioner Dzurka seconded by Commissioner Eshelman that the planning commission recommend conditional approval on site plan: photometric plan, stormwater management, final removal of the building, and landscaping to work out with McKenna.

YEA: Hanover, Harger, Holden, Hufnagel, Eshelman, Mills, Dzurka, Krajniak

NAY: None

Motion carried.

7. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Zoning Ordinance Amendment Discussion – Draft Regulations for Vendor Trucks

Chris Khorey, McKenna, said this is an updated version.

There was a discussion of:

- The draft ordinance is a creative and fair solution balancing food truck operations and brick-and-mortar business interests.
- Requiring additional parking spaces for transient customers (e.g., 5 spaces) may be an unnecessary burden for property owners.
 - Food truck customers often make quick stops (10-15 minutes).
 - Example: If a business has 30 required spaces, 35 actual, and a truck blocks 3, they have 32 left and would need 37 if the 5 extra are required.
- Parking requirements should be based on minimums plus the impact of the food truck, not an arbitrary extra 5 spaces.
 - Calculation could be based on square footage added by the truck (e.g., 400 square feet).
- Public parking within 300 feet can help meet requirements; off-site parking is a benefit.
 - 300 feet is the standard length of a city block.
- Enforcement could be handled by code enforcement or zoning, depending on the violation.
 - Examples: Vendor truck blocking spaces without replacement is a zoning violation; illegal customer parking is a code enforcement issue.
- Ease of application and administrative handling is important; inspections should ensure compliance without excessive burden.
 - Modeled after right-of-way permit process.
- Parking burden should not be excessive for existing businesses; the ordinance should encourage food trucks as an option for businesses.
- Parking impacts are self-regulating to some extent; if there are too many trucks or not enough customers, the market will adjust.
- There is a need to balance public complaints (e.g., residents losing street parking) with the benefits of increased commerce.
 - In other cities, food trucks parked in front of houses caused complaints.
- Restrooms.

Chris Khorey discussed zoning, noise ordinance, liquor control or other ordinances.

Commissioner Harger left at 6:39 p.m.

The ordinance will be revised per discussion and prepared for public hearing at the next meeting.

8. COMMITTEE SITE PLAN APPROVALS - NONE:

9. CITY COMMISSION UPDATE – MAYOR DZURKA:

City Manager Gamble discussed MDOT (through Clinton County Road Commission) alerted us late last week they have extra maintenance dollars for milling and resurfacing the center turn lanes on 27.

Mayor Dzurka discussed the commission held the first hearing on the rezoning for State Street.

10. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Hufnagel welcomed Todd.

Commissioner Holden asked if it would be possible for the city to make a map of possible locations for the food trucks.

Commissioner Mills discussed having a sub-committee and said that it would be great to have an update on the rental inspections.

Mr. Khorey said Mr. Skunda is available that night.

City Manager Gamble said we will finish the first cycle of the rental inspections this year and we can do an annual report in conjunction with that.

Commissioner Mills said this is the second application we have seen where the stormwater regulation, we kind of punt on it and it puts the stormwater person in a bad spot. He discussed having that with the application.

Commissioner Mills asked if there were any updates on Melvin.

City Manager Gamble said the city commission is preparing to have a public hearing at the next city commission meeting in regard to that. He discussed the efforts to communicate with him.

Commissioners Eshelman discussed walkability and bike ability. He discussed golf carts, permitted for mobility issues, and using them in place of a bicycle.

Mayor Dzurka thanked the people who are passionate about the golfcarts for coming this evening and sharing their thoughts.

There was a discussion of meeting for a committee site plan approval on June 13th at 1:00 p.m.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Dzurka seconded by Commissioner Eshelman that the Planning Commission adjourn the meeting.

YEA: Hanover, Holden, Hufnagel, Eshelman, Mills, Dzurka, Krajniak

NAY: None

Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:21 p.m.



Memorandum

TO: St. Johns Planning Commission
FROM: Christopher Khorey, AICP, Vice President
Ethan Walthorn, Assistant Planner
SUBJECT: **Draft Vendor Trucks Amendment**
DATE: July 2, 2025

INTRODUCTION

At the June 9, 2025, meeting, the Planning Commission reviewed the proposed text amendment regarding Vendor Trucks. The Commissioners provided valuable feedback and modifications to the draft text amendment. Below, for public hearing at the July Planning Commission meeting, is the proposed amendment to allow and regulate vendor trucks of private property. Should the Planning Commission find the text acceptable, a recommendation to the City Commission would be appropriate.

VENDOR TRUCK TEXT AMENDMENT – TEMPORARY USE OPTION

The proposed text amendment would include the addition of a new subsection (E) in Section 155.183, allowing a vendor truck as a temporary use subject to a new Vendor Truck Permit. Also, this would include amending Section 155.004 with the addition of a definition for a “Vendor Truck”.

Section 155.183 Temporary Uses Permitted

E) Vendor trucks, open to the general public, shall be approved as a temporary use subject to approval of a Vendor Truck Permit in accordance with the standards outlined in this section.

- (1) **Accessory Use.** Vendor trucks shall only operate as an accessory use to a permanent, principal, nonresidential use contained within an enclosed building. Vendor trucks may be allowed as the principal use on non-residential zoned land subject to a Special Use process described in Sections 155.255-261.
- (2) **General Provisions.** The following shall apply to all Vendor Trucks:
 - (a) **Number.** Multiple vendor trucks may operate on the same site.
 - (b) **Hours of Operation.** Operating hours shall be no later than 10:00 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 11:00 p.m. on Friday and Saturday.
 - (c) **Parking.** The minimum number of spaces provided shall meet the required parking for any permanent, principal use on the site.
 1. For principal use vendor trucks approved by Special Use, the Planning Commission and/or City Commission may require additional parking spaces upon determination that existing spaces will not be sufficient for the anticipated parking demand at the truck. They may also determine that public parking that would otherwise count



towards the requirement under Subsection a is insufficient and require on-site parking.

2. Parking spaces covered or otherwise rendered unusable by the placement or operation of the vendor truck shall not count towards the required parking.
 3. The placement of the vendor truck shall not reduce the dimensions of drive aisles below the minimums described in Section 155.343, unless any drive aisle reduced in size shall be completely closed to traffic by virtue of temporary traffic control devices, such as cones or signs. The property owner shall be responsible for installing the temporary control devices. The Zoning Administrator shall review the revised traffic pattern to ensure that overall traffic within the site and on neighboring properties and public streets will not be hampered.
 4. The placement of the vendor truck shall not cause an impediment to the usual movement of automobiles and pedestrians through the site, in the opinion of the Zoning Administrator. Appeals of decisions of the Zoning Administrator in this regard shall be to the Zoning Board of Appeals.
 5. Vendor trucks shall not be parked in the public right-of-way unless granted a right-of-way permit by the City, or as part of a temporary event granted approval by the City to operate for a limited period of time.
 6. Vendor Trucks in place for more than seven (7) days must be placed on a paved surface.
- (d) **Setbacks.** Vendor trucks shall comply with the minimum front setback for the primary structure and side and rear setbacks required for accessory buildings in the Zoning District they are located within.
- (e) **Waste Receptacles.** Waste receptacles shall be provided for the general public in the vicinity of the vendor truck.
2. **Application Required.** A Vendor Truck Permit shall be applied for subject to fees established by the City Commission for said application. The following information shall be required for a Vendor Truck Permit:
- (a) **Site Plan.** A site plan in accordance with the requirements of an Administrative Site Plan Approval as outlined in Section 155.279, unless waived by the City Manager or his/her designee. In addition, the site plan must contain any information required in this section.
 - (b) **Proof of Insurance.** Demonstration of proof of insurance shall be provided for any business seeking to engage as a vendor truck in the following coverage amounts:
 1. Proof of Commercial General Liability policy with limits of no less than one million dollars (\$1,000,000.00) per occurrence with a two million dollar (\$2,000,000.00) general aggregate including products liability issued by an insurer licensed to do business in the State of Michigan and which names the City as additional insured.



2. Proof of public liability and property damage motor vehicle policy with limits of no less than one million dollars (\$1,000,000.00) used by an insurer licensed to do business in the State of Michigan.
 - (c) **Duration.** The applicant for a vendor truck shall specify the duration of operation. An approved Vendor Truck Permit shall be applicable for the time specified in the Vendor Truck Permit, up to one year and must be renewed in subsequent years.
3. **Other Jurisdiction Compliance.** Vendor trucks shall comply with all relevant City, County, State, and Federal regulations, and shall demonstrate compliance to the City as part of the approval process.
4. **Exemptions:** The following shall be exempt from the provisions of this section:
 - (a) Transient food trucks that do business by travelling on public rights-of-way from neighborhood to neighborhood, such as ice cream trucks.
 - (b) Vendor trucks associated with a city-sponsored event or festival.
 - (c) Vendor trucks hired for private parties or other events that are not open to the general public.

SECTION 155.004 DEFINITIONS (UPDATE)

Vendor Truck: A retail or food service establishment operating from a vehicle or trailer that operates in a fixed location for a temporary period of time.

Note: This definition is based on the State of Michigan's definition of a "Temporary or Mobile Food Service Establishment."

We look forward to continuing the discussing of this amendment at the Planning Commission meeting on July 9th. Following the discussion, if consensus from the Planning Commission is reached to move forward with the regulations as proposed, or with modifications, we will present the item at the next Planning Commission meeting as a public hearing for recommendation to the City Commission.



Memorandum

TO: St. Johns Planning Commission
FROM: Christopher Khorey, AICP, Vice President
Ethan Walthorn, Assistant Planner
SUBJECT: **Outdoor Dining as a Special Land Use**
DATE: July 2, 2025

It has recently come to our attention that the City of St. Johns Zoning Ordinance currently only permits outdoor dining accessory uses under a Special Land Use from the Planning Commission. Imposing Special Land Use review onto an accessory use as small as outdoor dining area may be overly restrictive to restaurant businesses that may desire to take advantage of outdoor space. Additionally, outdoor dining is considered positive for the vibrancy and economic health of the downtown, as outdoor dining can promote more patronage due to favorable weather conditions and help to improve the aesthetics of the outdoor space.

It is also not clear that the City has been enforcing the Special Land Use requirement.

Therefore, we recommend the Planning Commission discuss a potential text amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to permit outdoor dining accessory uses by right rather than through a Special Land Use.

We look forward to discussing this potential amendment at the next Planning Commission meeting on July 9th. Following the discussion, if consensus from the Planning Commission is reached to move forward with the regulations as proposed, or with modifications, we will present the item at the next Planning Commission meeting as a public hearing for recommendation to the City Commission.

§ 155.446 SIDEWALK CAFÉ.

Sidewalk cafes are permitted by special use permit in the GC and CBD Districts, provided:

- (A) The café will be designed so as not to block pedestrian traffic or access to the restaurant or adjacent businesses.
- (B) Outdoor speakers are prohibited.
- (C) The outdoor café shall be limited to specific hour of operation established in the approved special use permit.
- (D) The café operator shall be responsible for maintaining the area trash free.
- (E) To avoid wind blown trash, the pre-setting of tables with napkins, glasses or utensils is prohibited.

(Ord. 616, passed 9-23-2013)

CITY OF ST. JOHNS, MICHIGAN
REQUEST FOR COMMISSION ACTION
April 8, 2024

Department: Planning and Zoning	Attachments:
Subject: <i>Golf Cart Policy</i>	[X] Draft Golf Cart Ordinance (Subject of April 10 Planning Commission Public Hearing)
Prepared by: Chris Khorey	Approved by: City Manager, Chad A. Gamble, P.E.

SUMMARY/HIGHLIGHT: Because of the proliferation of golf cart usage on City streets, especially during events, the St. Johns Planning Commission has solicited public and expert comment regarding the topic. While golf carts are not “street legal” under State law and **are not currently permitted on St. Johns City streets**, the Michigan Vehicle Code permits cities with populations under 30,000 people to legalize and regulate them for use on city streets. Some nearby communities, such as Owosso and Elsie, have legalized golf cart usage on local roads.

The Planning Commission has a public hearing scheduled for April 8 regarding a proposed Ordinance to allow golf carts on City streets as a pilot program from May 24, 2024 to September 3, 2024. This RCA is being provided in advance so the process of approved the pilot program, if desired by the City Commission, can be completed before May 24.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION: While some community members has advocated for the legalization of golf carts, the City’s police department and Clinton County Ambulance have both advocated against.

Points made in favor of golf carts include efficiency during busy events, reduced carbon emissions, providing a healthy recreational outlet for families, and enhancing the City’s character and reputation.

Based on the public comment, the Planning Commission developed the following policies, which are reflected in the draft Ordinance:

- Rely on the Michigan Vehicle Code for most safety rules and regulations (i.e. do not reinvent the wheel).
- Require safety related upgrades in order for a golf cart to be legally operable on St. Johns City streets. The list in the draft Ordinance is the full list of allowable requirements under the Michigan Vehicle Code. The Planning Commission may remove some requirements form the list prior to making a recommendation to the Commission.
- Prohibit golf carts on Clinton Avenue between State Street and Railroad Street.
- Prohibit golf carts on roads with speed limits over 30 MPH.
- Establish a City-wide 15 MPH speed limit for golf carts.

- Prohibit children under 3 years old from being passengers on golf carts.
- Prohibit animals from being passengers on golf carts.

STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVE: Master Plan Transportation Goal #1 States: “Preserve and enhance the level of service circulation and safety of the road network to support all users in the community.” However, “all users” does not necessarily mean all modes of transportation. While automobiles, pedestrians, trucks, emergency vehicles, and bicycles should clearly be accommodated in the transportation system, other types of vehicles are subject to the review and regulation of the City Commission.

FISCAL IMPACT: Legalizing golf carts would create new public safety costs, but could also produce revenue if the City decides to charge for registration. There could also be indirect economic development benefits.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve First Reading on the new Ordinance, with instructions to McKenna to make any requested revisions prior to Final Adoption.

St. Johns Golf Cart Ordinance

DRAFT April 10, 2024

Regarding a pilot program allowing golf cart use and operation in the City of St. Johns from the Friday before Memorial Day (May 24) to the day after Labor Day (September 3), 2024.

Sec. 70.06. Operation of golf carts on city streets.

No person shall operate a golf cart on city streets, except under the following circumstances:

As used in this article, "golf cart" means a multi-passenger electric vehicle designed for low speeds (less than 25 miles per hour) with four wheels and a roof, generally designed for use during the game of golf. To operate on city streets in St. Johns, a golf cart must have the following:

- At least 2 headlamps that comply with section 685.
- At least 1 tail lamp that complies with section 686.
- At least 1 stop lamp and 1 lamp or mechanical signal device that comply with sections 697 and 697b.
- Turn signals
- At least 1 red reflector on each side of the golf cart as far to the rear as practicable and 1 red reflector on the rear of the golf cart as required for low-speed vehicles by 49 CFR 571.500.
- A manufacturer's identification number permanently affixed to the frame of the golf cart.
- Safety belts that comply with section 710a and that are used as required by section 710e.
- Windshield (with wipers) that complies with section 708a.
- One exterior mirror mounted on the driver's side of the golf cart and either 1 exterior mirror mounted on the passenger side of the golf cart or 1 interior mirror as required for low-speed vehicles by 49 CFR 571.500.
- The crash helmet requirements applicable to low-speed vehicles under section 658b.
- Brakes and a parking brake that comply with section 704.
- Front and Rear Bumpers
- A horn that complies with section 706.
- A Roof

Prohibitions:

- (1) Golf carts are prohibited from operating on Clinton Avenue between Railroad Street and State Street, at any time.
- (2) Golf carts are prohibited on roads with a speed limit over 30 mph.
- (3) Golf carts are prohibited from operating at speeds faster than 15 mph.

- (4) Children under 3 years old are prohibited from being passengers on golf carts in St. Johns.
- (5) Pets and livestock are prohibited from being passengers on golf carts in St. Johns.

next planning commission meeting. There is no current committee. Do we think we should have a committee? He said he would request for the planning commission to appoint 3 members. He said one would be a city commission member.

Chairperson Hanover said that was used in the past.

Mr. Khorey said there is nothing in the ordinance that would prohibit the group from meeting virtually. He said it is not an official body and subject to any of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act.

There was a discussion of:

- Transparency and who would otherwise approve the site plan.
 - Right now, they are brought here.
- A way to roll in decisions of this committee as a standing agenda item for this commission's purview.
 - Have a heading on the agenda and could put the approved site plan in the agenda.
 - All decisions are appealable to the ZBA (Zoning Board of Appeals) by the applicant and their neighbors.
- It would be for under 5,000 square feet, unless a single-family home or duplex, which goes to Mr. Khorey.
- A preliminary review for the mini commission.
 - McKenna would still provide a report.

Commissioner Mills said he was shocked these sorts of developments have to come for approval.

Mr. Khorey said you could recommend those go to administrative. He said you would have to do a public hearing, etc.

Commissioner Eshelman and Chairperson Hanover offered to be on the committee.

Mr. Khorey said we need one of the city commissioners also.

Motion by Commissioner Harger seconded by Commissioner Mills that the planning commission appoint 3 individuals to serve on the site plan committee (Hufnagel, Eshelman, Hanover).

YEA: Hanover, Holden, Mills, Harger, Eshelman

NAY: None

Motion carried.

Mr. Khorey said he would like a standing meeting time every two weeks and we can cancel if we don't need it.

7. OLD BUSINESS

A. Golf Cart Policies and Potential Amendment

Commissioner Eshelman said his focus was on people with limited mobility. He said for those people with electric wheelchairs, we can't prevent them from having golf carts. He said to take a step back and figure out what we do about people with golf carts at the Mint Festival. He said he lives on the same street as the police station and it appears there is no enforcement on this issue. Should we have a special access week for the Mint Festival? He said there have been a few garage sales since then and he noticed golf carts are out.

Chairperson Hanover said she doesn't like to make rules unless there is a need for rules.

Commissioner Eshelman said he was looking to make sure people with mobility issues had access. We can't overrule Federal law that allows it.

There was a discussion of:

- If there is a need for us to have a law.
 - If the community is under 30,000, you would have to make them street legal.
- ADA is a separate issue.

- Is there something to allowing them during Mint Festival.
- Is it a safety risk?
- Newer golf carts have headlights, brakes, turn signals, etc.
- Local municipalities that allow golf carts.
- Use of golfcarts with a boundary for their use or tied to a special event permit with street closures or a specific boundary.
- If golfcarts can be parked in the front and back yards.
- The police chief is opposed to allowing golf carts on the streets 365 days.
- Possibly allowing on Saturdays.
- Exemption for enforcement of trail system.
- Get a recommendation from the DDA from an economic development standpoint.
- Chris researching LTV.
- Taking a look at the chief's email and bullet points.
- Setting up appointment for the chief to discuss with and Owosso and Elsie.
- Moving forward cautiously on this.

B. Downtown Parking Policies and Potential Amendment

Chris Khorey discussed: the map; the Brush, State, Walker, and Ottawa area; avoids residential; Lansing Street is out right now, but could be added; could add the entire mixed-use district.

Chairperson Hanover discussed the purple area. She asked that we discuss this another evening.

Mr. Khorey said he can make a couple of edits to the map and bring it back next time.

Chairperson Hanover said she liked the idea of a fee.

8. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Eshelman said we should take the time and follow-up on what the business community thinks about golf carts. He said they should get Scott and Eric's impressions as city commissioners also. He said it changes the aspect of the community. He said golfcarts are primarily around retirement communities. Do they want to see the city go in that direction?

9. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Holden seconded by Commissioner Mills that the Planning Commission adjourn the meeting.

YEA: Hanover, Holden, Mills, Harger, Eshelman

NAY: None

Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

Motion carried.

7. OLD BUSINESS

A. Golf Cart Policies and Potential Amendment

Chris Khorey, McKenna, said we have a first draft of a golf cart ordinance. He discussed what the first draft includes and the rules.

Chair Hanover said she talked to the downtown businesses and it didn't matter to them if people use a car or a golf cart.

Alex Shinabarger was present. He said he recently got a golf cart and loves riding around town and takes his niece. He said it has a horn, headlights, blinkers, and wipers.

Chair Hanover said right now golf carts aren't legal.

Mr. Shinabarger said he is good with the city coming up with a sticker that registers them and put that money towards a park. He said Gratiot County requires you to put an ORV sticker on it.

Mr. Khorey said it would require you to register your golf cart and you get a sticker, but at no cost.

Commissioner Eshelman asked if he got a golf cart preliminarily because of limited mobility.

Mr. Shinabarger said no.

There was a discussion of:

- State law says we have to pass something to make them legal.
- Public safety concern.
- Campgrounds are, in most cases, private roads.
- Issues with utilizing public streets.
- Ease of golf carts tipping over.
- ORV sticker allows you to do that, offroad.

David Andrews was present. He said he has a golf cart he spent \$10,000 on and they ride along the side of the road. He discussed motorized bikes.

There was a discussion of:

- Helmets
 - Additional rules of reflectors and helmets if conventional golf cart.
- List of things under LVT is up for discussion.
- No helmet law for bikes.

Chief Kirk said they are not legal because they are not safe. He discussed: the fulcrum points on golf carts vs. ORV; the county ordinance mechanically excludes golf carts; seeing golf carts with additional seating on Halloween and feet blocking the taillights; closing streets to vehicular traffic for an event; crossing at Sturgis & 27, not enough time with the light; catastrophic injuries at 10 mph; motorized vehicles have gotten ahead of the motor vehicle code.

There was a discussion of:

- Rule for a helmet on a moped.
 - Up to a certain age; special insurance also.
- No travel lanes to protect those vehicles right now.
- Liability on behalf of the city.

- Staff will get more information from the legal perspective and report back.
- What liability the city might have if creating an ordinance and then if we don't enforce it adequately.
- Questions of enforcement and potential staff time, registering people and staff time, staff time making stops.
- Insurance
- Elsie and Owosso allow golf carts
 - Chief Kirk talked to the Elsie police chief.
 - Roadway in Elsie is significantly different.
 - They haven't had significant problems.
- Gauge sentiments of community
- If there is a meeting set up with Owosso, maybe Commissioner Eshelman could attend.

B. RV Parking Amendment

Chris Khorey, McKenna, discussed 155.341 of the zoning ordinances. He discussed: it includes RV parking; subsection E would expand the allowable materials that would be considered a hard surface.

There was a discussion of:

- People parking on the driveway approaches.
 - Clarified that it also needs to be paved.
- Definition of recreational vehicle: ATV's and golf carts are listed as RV's.
- For small RV, we may have a different set of standards.
 - Right now, only allows one RV to be parked outside.
- The draft language.
- Hard surface, widens out description but doesn't include gravel.
- Added rear yard.
- Corner lots.
- Driveway in front of the house.
 - Change confusing language and remove driveway.
- Not sure about allowing in summer to put vehicles on grass.
- Should be allowing in the rear yard.
- Providing clarity on ordinances; importance of us communicating to the public about what our ordinances are.
- Definition of recreational vehicle - list is concerning and pretty restrictive.
- Turf pavers
- Section E, clarify complete surface.
- Section F, small RV.
- Some sort of initial grace period, such as 7 days.
- Trailers being separated out.

C. Downtown Parking Policies and Potential Amendment

Chris Khorey, McKenna, said if you are comfortable with the policies, we could put it in ordinance format. He summarized the proposed changes.

There was a discussion of:

- Payment in lieu of parking.
 - Case-by-case basis.
- Percentages and numbers.

Mr. Khorey said the next step would be a public hearing in January.

8. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Eshelman said he appreciated everyone's efforts. He discussed making fellow citizens' lives better, input from the police chief. He said Owosso was surprised we had an active planning commission.

Chair Hanover said she appreciated his and Brian's engagement.

Commissioner Mills said Chair Hanover and himself met with the committee on the rental checklist. He said the chair did an excellent job with changes and he thinks we are making progress with them and they feel part of the process. He discussed that anyone that is willing to invest their time and come to a meeting we should get their name, address, and email and add them by default to the planning commission's notice of meetings.

City Manager Gamble said we are actively looking at different types of software. He said we anticipate having a proposal in the 2024/25 budget. He said we want to have them sign up and desire that.

Commissioner Hufnagel apologized for being absent at the last meeting.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Dzurka seconded by Commissioner Eshelman that the Planning Commission adjourn the meeting.

YEA: Hanover, Holden, Harger, Dzurka, Hufnagel, Eshelman, Mills

NAY: None

Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

From: [Chad Gamble](#)
To: [Christopher Khorey](#)
Cc: [David Kirk](#)
Subject: FW: Golf Cart Follow Up
Date: Sunday, November 12, 2023 6:47:50 PM

Chris,
FYI.

Chad A. Gamble, P.E.
City Manager
989-224-8944 EXT. 231 (office)
City of St. Johns, Michigan
100 East State Street, Suite 1100, P.O. Box 477
St. Johns, Michigan 48879-0477

-----Original Message-----

From: David Kirk <dkirk@sjpolice.org>
Sent: Friday, November 10, 2023 7:10 AM
To: Chad Gamble <cgamble@stjohnsmi.gov>
Subject: Golf Cart Follow Up

Good morning,

I followed up Owosso's Public Safety Director regarding golf carts. I was particularly interested in what "mobility" was resolved with the carts that was referenced at our meeting as well as anything else that stood out. In my assessment, if we create a solution for a bonafide issue such as limited mobility, the benefit could mitigate some of the risk factors. Director Lenkart is unaware of any issue related to an improving mobility for a group or area within the city. He added that seeing golf carts in use is relatively rare. One person who is a crossing guard 2 blocks from his home drives from his house to the crossing. That person doesn't have limited mobility but rather uses the cart as a convenience. The only other noteworthy thing that the Director recalled was a subject drove a cart while intoxicated, flipped it and injured himself. The operator inevitably was arrested for OWI.

I also contacted State Farm and inquired about insurance for golf carts. According to that office, golf carts can not have road coverage unless they are permitted by the city, township or village they are operating in. If there is no such allowance then the carts can only be insured for damage while on private property. The example the agent gave was hitting a stump and damaging the cart. Lastly, I asked who is responsible if a cart is struck by a vehicle when they're operating on the road. Those claims revert back to the insurance on the motor vehicle that collides with the cart regardless of who's at fault.

Just wanted to share a couple informational tidbits.

Have a great weekend!

Sent from my iPhone

From: [David Kirk](#)
To: [Christopher Khorey](#)
Subject: FW: Golf cart use thoughts
Date: Tuesday, January 2, 2024 8:46:32 AM

Chris,

Attached is information from our ambulance service regarding golf cart operation that was requested at the last Planning Committee meeting. I think I inadvertently failed to copy you when I sent the response to the City Manager.

Chief David Kirk
St. Johns Police Department
989-224-6721 ext. 277

dkirk@sjpolice.org

"Be sure you put your feet in the right place, then stand firm."
-Abraham Lincoln

From: director clintonambulance.com <director@clintonambulance.com>
Sent: Friday, December 29, 2023 2:01 PM
To: David Kirk <dkirk@sjpolice.org>; Andrew Tobias <atobias@sjpolice.org>
Cc: admin clintonambulance.com <admin@clintonambulance.com>; innovationcoordinator2 clintonambulance.com <innovationcoordinator2@clintonambulance.com>
Subject: Golf cart use thoughts

Greetings Gentlemen,

The conversation regarding the operation of golf carts in the City has generated plenty of conversation around the base. Several of our crew have responded to these crashes here, as well as with other agencies they have worked for, some with severe injuries and one death. Jen has done most of the research, and links to some of the articles of interest are below. A major point of interest is the fact that many of the articles are published by law firms, and deal with the likelihood of litigation in these incidents. There are always damages, and someone must be sued to recover those damages. Those being sued must now retain legal counsel to defend themselves from losing everything they may have, making the only winners the law firms. In our opinion, there is a significant risk with adding vehicles with no safety requirements or equipment to our streets, with no benefit other than perhaps convenience.

Some points of interest:

- There are an estimated 15,000 golf cart accident injuries *reported* annually.
- Many of these accidents are in gated communities, where traffic volume is much lower than what we see in St Johns, and speeds limited.
- Approximately 10% are rollover events, which have the highest incidence of death and serious

injury.

- Small children and teenagers account for approximately one-third of reported injuries.
- The lack of seat belts allows for ejection, resulting in neck and spinal injuries, traumatic brain injury, fractures, lacerations, and significant “road rash”. Think minimally an ED visit, possibly an expensive ambulance ride, and a potentially astronomical hospital stay, or perhaps a funeral.
- Much of the published information is by law firms, who often recommend consulting an attorney that specializes in golf cart accidents. This should provide folks with an idea of what they may have to go through emotionally and financially should they be a party involved in a golf cart accident.
- A person’s automobile insurance doesn’t cover a golf cart in most cases. Litigation is presented as the best way to recover expenses related to a golf cart accident with the cart owner and/or operator potentially liable. The more serious injuries that result in death or disability will take a huge emotional and financial toll on those involved, on both sides of the battle...

[https://link.edgepilot.com/s/a892bc1d/ziQ3wyYtXkSXbxwuqjahvA?
u=https://www.medlegal360.com/golf-cart-accidents/](https://link.edgepilot.com/s/a892bc1d/ziQ3wyYtXkSXbxwuqjahvA?u=https://www.medlegal360.com/golf-cart-accidents/)
[https://link.edgepilot.com/s/5f1eec9e/ACnX0TBsbUCVAwb8YDLBdQ?
u=https://www.lowmanlawfirm.com/blog/bid/103748/4-Golf-Cart-Accident-Statistics-That-May-Surprise-You](https://link.edgepilot.com/s/5f1eec9e/ACnX0TBsbUCVAwb8YDLBdQ?u=https://www.lowmanlawfirm.com/blog/bid/103748/4-Golf-Cart-Accident-Statistics-That-May-Surprise-You)
[https://link.edgepilot.com/s/8e1aa9d8/NVBIINbPEUSek-zHworeZg?
u=https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36939841/](https://link.edgepilot.com/s/8e1aa9d8/NVBIINbPEUSek-zHworeZg?u=https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36939841/)

[https://link.edgepilot.com/s/d7f6b68b/ISJYN-vt6UKcNr_5j9D2nw?
u=https://www.thedrive.com/news/golf-cart-crash-test-is-absolute-carnage-even-at-just-30-mph](https://link.edgepilot.com/s/d7f6b68b/ISJYN-vt6UKcNr_5j9D2nw?u=https://www.thedrive.com/news/golf-cart-crash-test-is-absolute-carnage-even-at-just-30-mph)

This last video was done by Euro NCAP, the British version of NHTSA. This is a crash test video, using a golf cart that does have seat belts in frontal and side impact crashes at 31mph. I was originally thinking that if a compromise were sought, that safety equipment would be a part of that. Watch the videos to see how little protection seat belts offer. Some may argue that carts may go slower than that, the speed that matters the most is whoever is going faster, the cart or any vehicle they encounter.

If there is anything else you need, please let us know. We feel we are far enough removed from the conversations to be unbiased, and we feel putting golf carts on the streets and sidewalks of St Johns is a bad idea.


Respectfully,


Lynn


**Lynn Weber EMT-P/IC
Director**

Clinton Area Ambulance Service Authority

 Email: director@clintonambulance.com

 Phone: cell 517-719-8090 / office 989-227-5713

 Fax: 989-224-7870

 Address: 1001 S. Oakland St. PO Box 203 Saint Johns, MI 48879

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As a citizen of St. Johns I feel that golf carts and side by side vehicles should be allowed on city streets. I also feel that if this is allowed that there needs to be rules in place. I have occasionally operated my golf cart on city streets giving my grandchildren and senior citizen members of our family rides. The children really enjoy this, but the senior citizens I believe enjoy this more. I took my 82 year old Aunt for a couple of rides this summer and you would have thought that I took her to Disney World. I believe that this would be a good thing for our community. I have attached a list of rules that I feel would help make this successful. Thank you for your consideration on this subject.

Everett Thornton

Must be 21 with a valid drivers license.

Can be operated during daylight hours only.

Must obey all traffic laws.

Hand signals must be used when making a turn.

Must have brake lights and a ORV license.

Children 12 and under must wear a seat belt.

Must have a rearview mirror.

Can not be operated on business 27 or M21. Only crossing these two Roadways are permitted.

Along with golf carts, side by side Vehicles should also obey these rules.

Heather Hanover
Chair

James Eshelman
Vice-Chair

Commissioners

Scott Dzurka, Mayor
Eric Hufnagel, Commissioner
Mark Holden
Melvin Renfrow
Eric Harger
Brian Mills
Vacant



PLANNING COMMISSION

DECEMBER 6, 2023
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the St. Johns Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Hanover at 4:01 p.m.

Members Present: Heather Hanover, Mark Holden, Eric Harger, Scott Dzurka, Eric Hufnagel, James Eshelman, Brian Mills
Members Absent: Melvin Renfrow
Staff Present: Chad Gamble, City Manager; Mindy Seavey, City Clerk; Chris Khorey, McKenna; Ken Skunda, McKenna

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Hanover added 5D. Chicken Ordinance Discussion to the agenda.

Motion by Commissioner Dzurka seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel to approve the agenda as amended.

YEA: Hanover, Holden, Harger, Dzurka, Hufnagel, Eshelman, Mills

NAY: None

Motion carried.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – NOVEMBER 8, 2023 MEETING

Motion by Commissioner Holden seconded by Commissioner Mills to approve the minutes as presented.

YEA: Hanover, Holden, Harger, Dzurka, Hufnagel, Eshelman, Mills

NAY: None

Motion carried.

4. NEW BUSINESS: NONE

5. OLD BUSINESS

A. Golf Cart Policies and Potential Amendment

Mayor Dzurka said it is important to share our research with other communities, insurance information, etc. He discussed the county's ORV ordinance. At this time, there is nothing on the books that allows golfcarts in the city; State legislation allows a city to pass policy to allow them.

There was a discussion of:

- The city commission might be hesitant to approve; behoove us to go to the city commission before.
 - Safety concerns; in exploration phase.
 - Commission interested, but want to know about safety.
- Concerns about use in areas of parking of higher density (Kroger, high school).
- Motor vehicles and golf carts; golf carts are not designed to take that kind of impact.
- A homeowners' policy is not going to be enough to cover.
 - You can get road insurance, but city would have to approve golf carts first.
- The county ordinance, passed ATV's not golf carts, they require helmets.
- Procedure: Planning Commission/City Commission.

Chairperson Hanover asked if there were any comments from the public.

Ed Brandon, lives outside of city and manages the hardware store, was present. He discussed: he knows golfcarts seem scary; what about mopeds; health insurance covers if there is a car accident; an opportunity to bring in business; we have a golfcart repair shop; the time slot move up may have kept people from coming; some bicycles go faster than a golfcart and are not insured; he has a golfcart at home and rides it; seatbelts can be bought on Amazon and lights; they go 20-25 miles at the most; Elsie. He asked about the stats on how many accidents involving golfcarts?

Chief Kirk was present. He said from the police department standpoint they assess safety. He discussed: collision ratings and things that happen to people on those can't be deemed safe; roads engineered for golfcarts is a different issue; no disputing there are unsafe bicycles, mopeds, and motorcycles on the streets; understand they are fun, mobility, save gas; their recommendation is from a very specific safety aspect; insurance: if allowable, there are riders you can put onto your auto insurance, one agent told him the claim would go to the driver with insurance coverage.

Chairperson Hanover said currently they are not allowed on the road.

There was a discussion of:

- Police enforcement
- Mopeds and electric bikes are allowed by the state already.
 - Technology has exceeded statutes.
- Clinton County ORV ordinance
- Possible to try for one year and look at what happens with the Mint Festival?
 - At commission level, they could set parameters.

Chris Khorey, McKenna, said on the county ORV, it applies on county roads and does not apply to the city. It is not intended to include golfcarts.

Mayor Dzurka asked if it was feasible to gather an overview of the public safety aspects of this to present to the commission so they understand.

Chairperson Hanover asked if Chris can work on this.

Mr. Khorey said potentially the chief has access to crash data.

Chief Kirk said crash data was included. He said he could get input from the ambulance and rescue personnel.

City Manager Gamble discussed a deeper scrub from the safety and insurance perspective and then do a deeper dive and start formulating the body of the ordinance.

Mayor Dzurka asked if the MML might be a resource with other communities that have adopted this. He asked Commissioner Eshelman if he had a chance to talk with Owosso.

Commissioner Eshelman said only with officials.

Chief Kirk said he did contact Owosso. He discussed an OUIL golfcart crash.

Alex Shinabarger, 609 W. Higham, was present. He said he was curious what a private parking lot has to do with golfcarts.

Chairperson Hanover said it is another part of the equation.

Mr. Shinabarger discussed one-wheel skateboards are allowed on the road.

Mayor Dzurka said that is not our choice. He said he was curious on quasi-street legal for communities and those who have set requirements. Is it safer and are they seeing less crashes?

Chief Kirk said a list of things that can be included. They are not engineered to withstand any kind of crash and discussed the fulcrum point on golfcarts. He said he can try to dig more specifically.

B. RV Parking Amendment

Chris Khorey, McKenna, discussed the first version is the one to look at.

- Changes in the latest draft
 - Section E
 - Allows permeable pavement to be used.
 - Allows zoning administrator to approve other hard surfaces.
 - Section F
 - New section, applies to driveway approaches.
 - Does not include any trigger based on sale of property. Does include trigger to pave approach at time of site plan approval.
 - Section G
 - Split into two sections, full size and small RV
 - Section H
 - Under 10,000 sf – park 1 outdoors
 - Discussion there is no minimum
 - 10,000-20,000 sf – park 2
 - Over 20,000 sf – park 3

Chairperson Hanover left at 4:55 pm

- Paved area definition.
- To store in wintertime, would have to obtain zoning permit and it doesn't have to be renewed.
- Summer RV, right now only allowed to park on side yard in grass, should be side and rear.
 - Zoning permit not required for this.
- Anyone can store on lot for 7 days (grace period).

There was a discussion of:

- Dimension for hard surface.
- Requirement for parking space in city.
- This is less restrictive.
- End of driveway.



History: 1949, Act 300, Eff. Sept. 23, 1949;—Am. 1976, Act 439, Imd. Eff. Jan. 13, 1977;—Am. 2000, Act 82, Eff. July 1, 2000;—Am. 2002, Act 494, Imd. Eff. July 3, 2002;—Am. 2015, Act 126, Imd. Eff. July 15, 2015;—Am. 2017, Act 139, Eff. Jan. 28, 2018;—Am. 2018, Act 204, Eff. Sept. 18, 2018.

257.657a Operation of golf cart on village, city, or township streets or state trunk line highway.

Sec. 657a. (1) A village or city having a population of fewer than 30,000 individuals based upon the 2010 decennial census may by resolution allow the operation of golf carts on the streets of that village or city, subject to the requirements of this section. A township having a population of fewer than 30,000 individuals based upon the 2010 decennial census may by resolution, unless disapproved by the county board of commissioners under subsection (3), allow the operation of golf carts on the streets of that township, subject to the requirements of this section.

(2) If a village, city, or township allows the operation of golf carts on the streets of that village, city, or township, that village, city, or township may require those golf carts and the operators of those golf carts to be recorded on a list maintained by that village, city, or township. A village, city, or township shall not charge a fee for listing golf carts or the operators of those golf carts.

(3) A county board of commissioners may, by resolution, disapprove the operation of golf carts on the streets of a township located within that county if the county board of commissioners conducts a hearing and determines that 1 or more of the following apply:

(a) The operation of golf carts on the streets of that township would cause significant environmental damage.

(b) The operation of golf carts on the streets of that township would cause a significant concern of public safety.

(4) The county board of commissioners shall provide public notice of a hearing under subsection (3) at least 45 days before the hearing is conducted. The county board of commissioners shall also provide written notice of a hearing under subsection (3) to the township at least 45 days before the hearing is conducted.

(5) A person shall not operate a golf cart on any street unless he or she is at least 16 years old and is licensed to operate a motor vehicle.

(6) The operator of a golf cart shall comply with the signal requirements of section 648 that apply to the operation of a vehicle.

(7) A person operating a golf cart upon a roadway shall ride as near to the right side of the roadway as practicable, exercising due care when passing a standing vehicle or a vehicle proceeding in the same direction.

(8) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (9), a person shall not operate a golf cart on a state trunk line highway. This subsection does not prohibit a person from crossing a state trunk line highway when operating a golf cart on a street of a village, city, or township, using the most direct line of crossing.

(9) The legislative body of a local unit of government may request the state transportation department to authorize the local unit of government to adopt an ordinance authorizing the operation of golf carts on a state trunk line highway, other than an interstate highway, located within the local unit of government. The request shall describe how the authorization would meet the requirements of subsection (10). The state transportation department shall solicit comment on the request from the local units of government where the state trunk line highway is located. The state transportation department shall consider comments received on the request before making a decision on the request. The state transportation department shall grant the request in whole or in part or deny the request not more than 60 days after the request is received. If the state transportation department grants a request in whole or in part under this subsection, the local unit of government that submitted the request may adopt an ordinance authorizing the operation of golf carts on the state trunk line highway that was the subject of the request. A county may submit a request for authorization under this subsection on behalf of 1 or more local units of government located within that county if requested by those local units of government.

(10) The state transportation department shall authorize operation of a golf cart under subsection (9) only on a state trunk line highway that is not an interstate highway within a local unit of government that has already adopted an ordinance under subsection (1), that serves as a connector between portions of the local unit of government that only connect through the state trunk line highway, and that meets 1 or more of the following requirements:

(a) Provides access to tourist attractions, food service establishments, fuel, motels, or other services.

(b) Serves as a connector between 2 segments of the same county road that run along discontinuous town lines.

(c) Includes a bridge or culvert that allows a golf cart to cross a river, stream, wetland, or gully that is not

crossed by a street or county road on which golf carts are authorized to operate under an ordinance adopted as provided in subsection (1).

(11) The state transportation department may permanently or temporarily close a state trunk line highway to the operation of golf carts otherwise authorized under subsection (9) after written notice to the clerk of the local unit of government that requested the authorization under subsection (9). The notice shall be in writing and sent by first-class United States mail or personally delivered not less than 30 days before the adoption of the rule or order closing the state trunk line highway. The notice shall set forth specific reasons for the closure. The state transportation department is not required to develop a plan for an alternate route for a state trunk line highway that it has temporarily closed to the operation of golf carts.

(12) Where a usable and designated path for golf carts is provided adjacent to a highway or street, a person operating a golf cart may, by local ordinance, be required to use that path.

(13) A person operating a golf cart shall not pass between lines of traffic, but may pass on the left of traffic moving in his or her direction in the case of a 2-way street or on the left or right of traffic in the case of a 1-way street, in an unoccupied lane.

(14) A golf cart shall not be operated on a sidewalk constructed for the use of pedestrians.

(15) A golf cart shall be operated at a speed not to exceed 15 miles per hour and shall not be operated on a state trunk line highway or a highway or street with a speed limit of more than 30 miles per hour except to cross that state trunk line highway or highway or street. A village, city, or township may, by resolution, designate roads or classifications of roads for use by golf carts under this subsection.

(16) A golf cart shall not be operated on a state trunk line highway or the streets of a city, village, or township during the time period from 1/2 hour before sunset to 1/2 hour after sunrise.

(17) A person operating a golf cart or who is a passenger in a golf cart is not required to wear a crash helmet.

(18) A person operating a golf cart on a state trunk line highway shall ride as near to the right side of the roadway as practicable.

(19) This section does not apply to a police officer in the performance of his or her official duties.

(20) A golf cart operated on a street of a village, city, or township under this section is not required to be registered under this act for purposes of section 3101 of the insurance code of 1956, 1956 PA 218, MCL 500.3101.

(21) As used in this section, "golf cart" means a vehicle designed for transportation while playing the game of golf. A village, city, or township may require a golf cart registered within its jurisdiction to meet any or all of the following vehicle safety requirements of a low-speed vehicle for approval under this section:

(a) At least 2 headlamps that comply with section 685.

(b) At least 1 tail lamp that complies with section 686.

(c) At least 1 stop lamp and 1 lamp or mechanical signal device that comply with sections 697 and 697b.

(d) At least 1 red reflector on each side of the golf cart as far to the rear as practicable and 1 red reflector on the rear of the golf cart as required for low-speed vehicles by 49 CFR 571.500.

(e) One exterior mirror mounted on the driver's side of the golf cart and either 1 exterior mirror mounted on the passenger side of the golf cart or 1 interior mirror as required for low-speed vehicles by 49 CFR 571.500.

(f) Brakes and a parking brake that comply with section 704.

(g) A horn that complies with section 706.

(h) A windshield that complies with section 708a.

(i) A manufacturer's identification number permanently affixed to the frame of the golf cart.

(j) Safety belts that comply with section 710a and that are used as required by section 710e.

(k) The crash helmet requirements applicable to low-speed vehicles under section 658b.

History: Add. 2014, Act 491, Imd. Eff. Jan. 13, 2015;—Am. 2018, Act 139, Eff. Aug. 8, 2018.

257.658 Riding on seat of bicycle, motorcycle, moped, electric skateboard, or electric personal assistive mobility device; number of persons; wearing of crash helmet; conditions; rules; requirements for autocycle.

Sec. 658. (1) A person propelling a bicycle or operating a motorcycle or moped shall not ride other than upon and astride a permanent and regular seat attached to that vehicle.

(2) A bicycle or motorcycle shall not be used to carry more persons at 1 time than the number for which it is designed and equipped.

(3) An electric personal assistive mobility device or an electric skateboard shall not be used to carry more than 1 person at a time.

(4) A person less than 19 years of age operating a moped on a public thoroughfare shall wear a crash helmet.



St. Johns Master Plan

Action Item Review – City Commission

June 30, 2025

As part of the ongoing Master Plan update, City Manager Chad Gamble and McKenna have reviewed and revised the Action Items from the 2019 Plan to better reflect the City’s current goals and priorities. Their initial recommendations, including draft priorities, are included in the tables below.

The City Commission and Police Chief have reviewed these charts, and their feedback is incorporated.

We’re now asking the Planning Commission to review these updated Action Items and provide additional input and revision. Please review all five Action Item categories in the following tables. If your preferences differ from what is shown, indicate your preferred priority and time frame for each item by marking up the respective columns. These tables will serve as a guide for the discussion at the July 9 meeting.

Note: The ID Number in the far-left column is provided for reference only and does not reflect priority. Instead, these numbers are intended to order to priorities by putting similar or related priorities together.

KEY

Priority	Time Frame
A – Most Important	1 – Within One Year
B – Very Important	2 – 1-3 Years
C – Important	3 – 3+ Years
D – Aspirational	4 – Long Term

REDEVELOPMENT

ID NUMBER	ACTION ITEM	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME
R-1	Work with the public property owners (MDOT, etc.) along the Meijer CIS Trail from Clinton Avenue to Mead Street and prepare an RFP for redevelopment as shown in this plan.	A	1
R-2	Demolish the silos and find a new use for the site that promotes the downtown.	A	2



R-3	Encourage and collaborate with the Downtown Development Authority/Principal Shopping District to develop a Downtown Capital Improvements Plan to upgrade streetscape, parking, wayfinding signage, and beautification.	B	2
R-4	Monitor the status of the private properties along the Meijer CIS Trail from Lansing Street to Clinton Avenue, and Mead Street to Old 127 for potential acquisition and redevelopment consistent with market dynamics.	C	2
R-5	Finalize the Urban Cooperative Agreement with Bingham Township to provide unified water and sewer service and promote development as envisioned in the Joint Planning Areas.	A	2
R-6	Work with regional and statewide partners such as LEAP and MEDC to continue to match appropriate incentive programs to desirable investments in the City.	B	2
R-7	Recruit a developer to partner with the City to construct housing on 450 Townsend.	A	2
R-8	Prepare development sites on the south side of town for housing to meet the needs as described in the Housing Market Analysis, including luxury housing to relieve pressure on the middle of the market.	B	2
R-9	Encourage additional housing development in and around the downtown to promote vibrancy and a wide variety of housing choice.	B	2
R-10	Collaborate with MDOT to improve safety at M-21 and Old 127 to promote new investment and incorporate that area into the City's walkable core.	B	3
R-11	Evaluate zoning options to promote a broader mix of uses at the intersection of M-21 and US 127, with the potential for mixed use to extend further east as market conditions warrant.	B	1
R-12	Implement the Zoning Action Plan.	A	1
R-13	Maintain the City's status as a Redevelopment Ready Certified Community.	A	1
R-14	Review and update this plan every five years.	C	3
R-15	Evaluate historic district designation and regulation options within the Old Village Plat.	D	4
R-16	Ensure sufficient public safety resources, including video cameras, to support redevelopment, especially in areas that do not have automobile traffic, like the Meijer CIS Trail.	A	1
R-17	Produce a report from the Planning Commission to the City Commission detailing progress on the ongoing implementation of this plan.	C	3



R-18	Create a Pre-Application Team to review major developments before they enter the zoning entitlements process.	A	1
R-19	Update the fee schedule on the City website.	A	1
R-20	Create a Development Review Guide and Flowchart to make the process of onboarding developments to the entitlements process more efficient.	A	1
R-21	<i>Other (please specify):</i>		
R-22	<i>Other (please specify):</i>		
R-23	<i>Other (please specify):</i>		
R-24	<i>Other (please specify):</i>		

MOBILITY

ID NUMBER	ACTION ITEM	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME
M-1	Prioritize downtown mobility and pedestrian safety improvement, including developing specific projects as part of an update to the Downtown Plan.	A	1
M-2	Work with the DDA/PSD to design and implement streetscape improvements downtown including furniture, amenities, and landscaping. Prioritize adding street trees, flowers, and other softscape.	B	2
M-3	Work collaboratively with the DDA/PSD to enhance and improve downtown parking options for businesses, residents, and visitors.	B	2
M-4	Utilize the permit parking system to encourage downtown residents to utilize parking on side streets to ensure Clinton Avenue parking is available for business customers.	C	3
M-5	Leverage Safe Routes to School funds to improve pedestrian and non-motorized safety in and around the schools campus.	A	1
M-6	Fill sidewalk gaps throughout the City as funds and opportunities become available.	C	3
M-7	Work with MDOT to thoroughly redesign Old 127 between Baldwin Street and Townsend Road in order to improve safety and mobility for all road users.	C	3



M-8	Fill sidewalk gaps along Old 127 north of Steel Street within the context of the current design of the roadway, which is not planned to change significantly.	B	2
M-9	Work with partners to connect to the expanding network of regional non-motorized trails.	B	2
M-10	Designate key cycling corridors through the City grid and upgrade road markings and other infrastructure as appropriate.	C	3
M-11	Develop a route for a north-south bike route along the western edge of the City.	C	3
M-12	Allot sufficient public safety resources to ensure safety along upgraded pedestrian and bicycle routes, and along newly redesigned road corridors.	A	1
M-13	<i>Other (please specify):</i>		
M-14	<i>Other (please specify):</i>		
M-15	<i>Other (please specify):</i>		
M-16	<i>Other (please specify):</i>		



BEAUTIFICATION / PLACEMAKING

ID NUMBER	ACTION ITEM	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME
P-1	Ensure that zoning and other City regulations are not placing burdens on historic and architecturally significant buildings.	C	3
P-2	Continue to work with the DDA/PSD to support the façade improvement program for Downtown businesses.	C	3
P-3	Streamline and formalize the process for approving outdoor dining and other uses of downtown sidewalks.	A	1
P-4	Revitalize and market a program to allow property owners to request and fund street trees in front of their properties.	B	2
P-5	Assess the feasibility of building a permanent farmers' market space.	C	3
P-6	Implement unified wayfinding signage, commercial sign standards, light fixtures, and plantings to Old 127.	C	3
P-7	Implement unified wayfinding signage, commercial sign standards, light fixtures, and seasonal displays to N. Clinton Avenue.	A	1
P-8	Install decorative and branded pavement markings at key intersections.	C	3
P-9	<i>Other (please specify):</i>		
P-10	<i>Other (please specify):</i>		
P-11	<i>Other (please specify):</i>		
P-12	<i>Other (please specify):</i>		
P-13	<i>Other (please specify):</i>		



MARKETING / BRANDING

ID NUMBER	ACTION ITEM	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME
B-1	Support and enhance efforts by the DDA/PSD to promote special events and local business promotion.	A	1
B-2	Continue to enhance the City's online presence, including the website, local median outlets, and social media.	A	1
B-3	Develop programming for the Wilson Community Center to enhance activities and support for people of all ages.	A	1
B-4	Create a Public Participation Plan	A	1
B-5	<i>Other (please specify):</i>		
B-6	<i>Other (please specify):</i>		
B-7	<i>Other (please specify):</i>		
B-8	<i>Other (please specify):</i>		



PARKS AND RECREATION

PARK	ACTION ITEM	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME
Jaycee Park	Landscaping	C	3
	Pavilion	C	3
	Fall Zone Improvements	A	1
	<i>Other (please specify):</i>		
Kibbee Street Park	Landscaping	C	3
	Pavilion	C	3
	Replace Existing Fencing	C	3
	Fall Zone Improvements	A	1
	<i>Other (please specify):</i>		
Oak Street Park	Park Improvement Plan — explore alternative playground options (ex. nature playground)	B	2
	<i>Other (please specify):</i>		
Senior Citizen Park	Construct Parking Lot	B	2
	Construct Accessible Walk System	B	2
	Play Equipment — Install new swings	B	2
	Tennis Court Conversion to Pickleball	A	1
	<i>Other (please specify):</i>		
St. Johns City Park	Improve Sidewalk Circulation System	A	1
	Renovate Bath House and Maintain Spray Park	A	1
	Improve Trail System	A	1
	Expand and Improve Sledding Hill	B	2
	Landscaping Improvements	B	2



	Main Pavilion Exterior Renovation	B	2
	Construct New Soccer Field	C	3
	<i>Other (please specify):</i>		
Wilson Community Center	None.		
	<i>Other (please specify):</i>		
St. Johns Depot and Rotary Park	Park Improvement Plan (East Side)	B	2
	Playground Equipment	B	2
	Parking Lot Expansion	C	3
	Senior Citizen Amenities	C	3
	<i>Other (please specify):</i>		
Water Tower Park	Construct Accessible Walk System	B	2
	Land Acquisition (Purchase from Hospital)	C	3
	Playground Equipment (remove and replace)	C	3
	Park Improvement Plan	C	3
	<i>Other (please specify):</i>		
Other	Trail Connections — CIS Trail to Main Park	A	1
	Trail Connections — CIS Trail to Jaycee / Senior Citizens Park	B	2
	Trail Connections — CIS Trail to Kibbee Street Park (may include overpass at highway 27)	B	2
	Implement Park Signage System	B	2
	Revise City Recreation Website	B	2
	Park Lighting & Safety Evaluation (All Parks)	B	2
	Fell Property Development Plan / Community Building	C	3
	Identify Location for Community Dog Park	A	1
	Identify Location for Community Skate Park	A	1
	Identify Other Funding Source Options	A	1
	<i>Other (please specify):</i>		



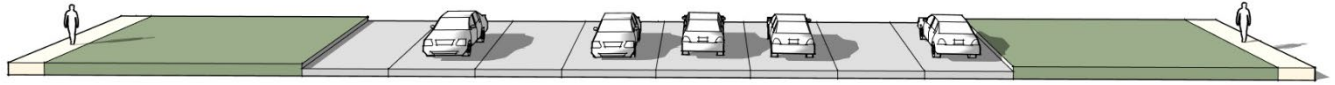
	<i>Other (please specify):</i>		
	<i>Other (please specify):</i>		
	<i>Other (please specify):</i>		
	<i>Other (please specify):</i>		



ZONING

ID NUMBER	ACTION ITEM	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME
Z-1	Review the Zoning Ordinance and Sign Ordinance for compliance with recent legislation, such as PA 233, caselaw, including cases on “uses not listed” and to ensure continuing compliance with Redevelopment Ready Best Practices.	A	1
Z-2	Review the Zoning District designation for key redevelopment areas, especially along the Meijer CIS trail, and determine any need for City-initiated rezonings.	B	2
Z-3	Revise the MU District to be more internally coherent and to better reflect the Master Plan vision for areas designated Mixed Use on the Future Land Use Map.	A	1
Z-4	Review areas designated Mixed Use on the Future Land Use map, and those Zoned MU, and correct inconsistencies between them through City-initiated rezonings.	A	1
Z-5	Determine whether I-1 and I-2 could be consolidated into a single zoning district.	B	2
Z-6	Evaluate the O District for possible elimination and consolidation into the GC and/or R-3 Districts.	B	2
Z-7	Review regulations applicable to historic properties, such as churches and older homes, and ensure that zoning regulations do not impede the preservation of historic character.	B	2
Z-8	Review standards for fences and accessory buildings to address situations where non-conforming existing setbacks create awkward situations for neighbors.	B	2
Z-9	Allow maker spaces and artisan production as allowable uses in appropriate locations in the downtown.	B	2
Z-10	Eliminate Special Use requirement for Outdoor Dining	A	1
Z-11	<i>Other (please specify):</i>		
Z-12	<i>Other (please specify):</i>		

Old US 127 Reconstruction Concepts



The US 127 right-of-way is 180' across, with 4 travel lanes, 2 center turn lanes, and 2 large shoulders.

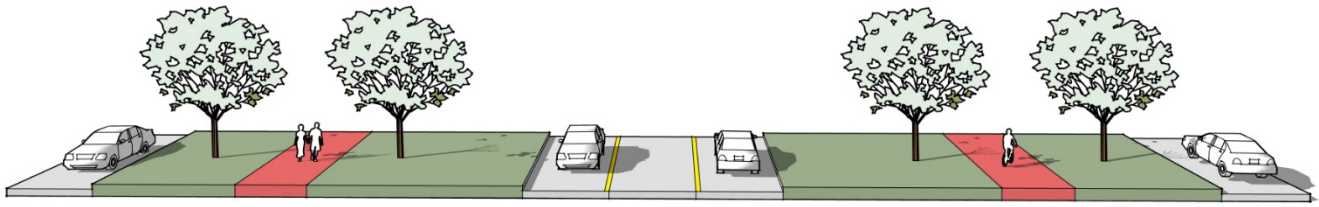
Now that the new US-127 freeway bypasses the city, Old US-127 no longer carries the traffic volume it once did. According to MDOT, the corridor sees an average of 12,600 vehicles per day—significantly lower than past volumes and well below what the existing infrastructure was designed to accommodate. The result is an overbuilt roadway that encourages speeding, limits access for pedestrians and cyclists, and represents an inefficient use of land in the heart of the community. The right-of-way measures 180 feet, and if buildings were constructed to the district's 25-foot front setback (which many are not), there would be roughly 230 feet between building frontages—much of it dedicated to vehicle movement and storage. While all of St. Johns is

within walking or biking distance, accessing destinations along this corridor without a car remains difficult and often feels unsafe. The following concepts are not intended as final designs, but as a way to begin conversations with state agencies about how the corridor could evolve to better balance the needs of motorists with those of people walking and biking. Both incorporate the precedents of projects done in cities with similar roadways as well as features that already exist on some portions of US 127.



US 127 BR today.

1. Three-Lane Road Diet

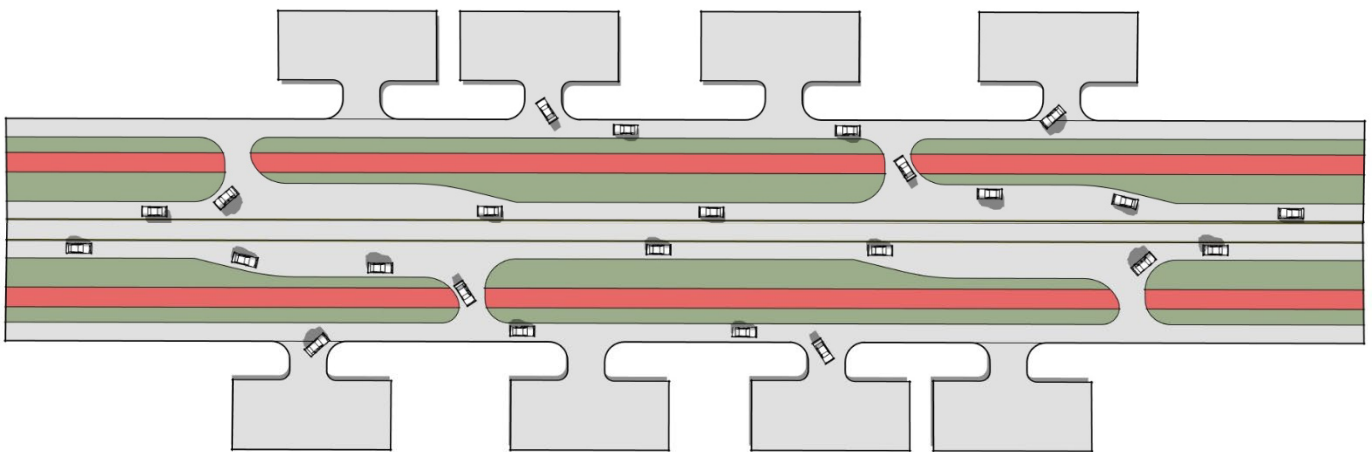


Non-motorized users are protected by large green buffers on both sides, and travel between the street and the slip street, where they are less frequently interrupted by driveways to businesses.

North of Baldwin, US 127 narrows down to a three-lane road configuration: two travel lanes with a continuous center left-turn lane. This concept proposes carrying this street design south, and putting the existing six-lane cross-section on what is sometimes referred to as a “road diet”.

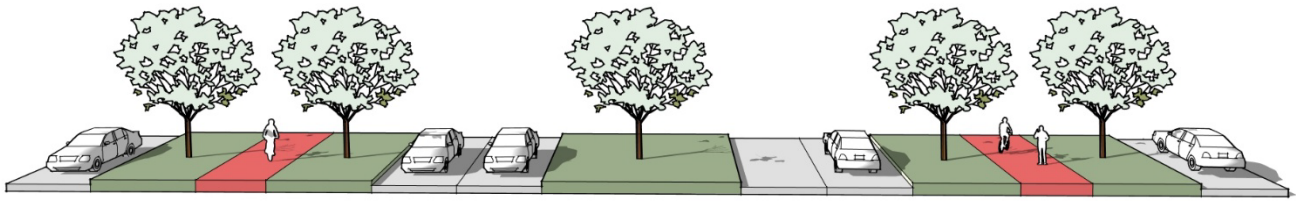
With an average daily traffic volume of just 12,600 vehicles, Old US-127 is well within the Federal Highway Administration’s thresholds for successful road diets—typically under 20,000 ADT. It also capitalizes on the corridor’s generous 180-foot right-of-way and 230 feet of space between building frontages, reallocating excess pavement toward safer, more efficient uses. National research shows this type of conversion can reduce crashes by 20–50%, slow vehicle speeds, and create space for walking and biking—all without major impacts to vehicular capacity.

One-way slip streets would be added on both sides to consolidate business driveways and reduce driveway interruptions across the pedestrian and bicycle path while maintaining vehicle access to adjacent businesses. The non-motorized pathway would run between the main roadway and the slip street in the space the large shoulder currently occupies and would be protected by curbed landscaping buffers containing trees for shade and protection where possible.



Businesses still have separate driveways on the slip street, but the exits off US 127 are consolidated. Vehicles travel one-way down the slip street.

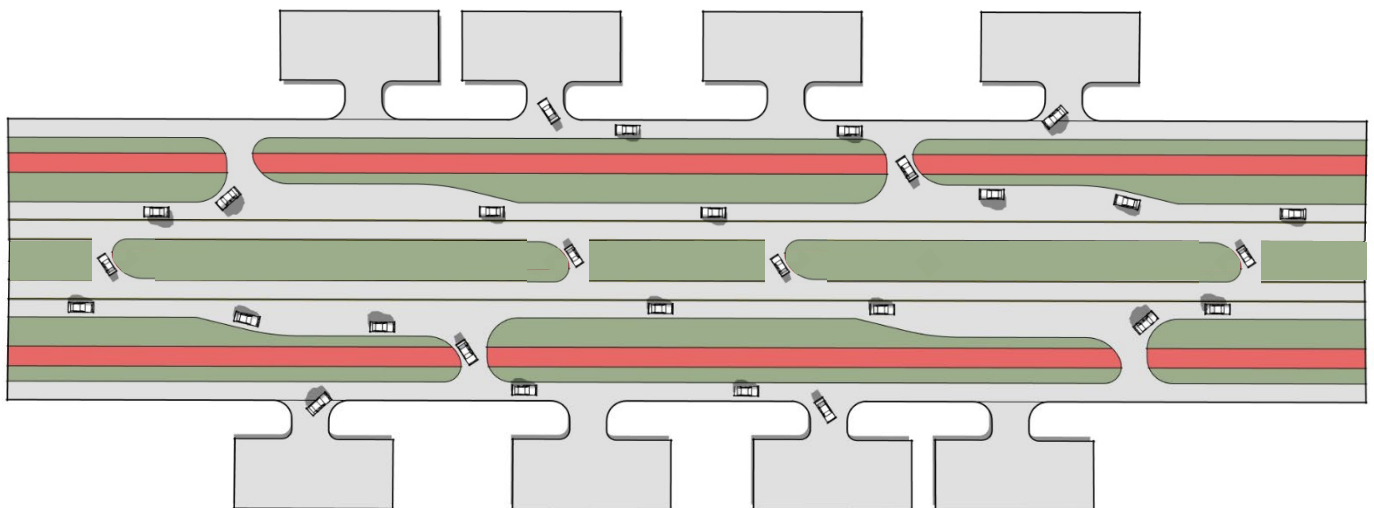
2. Landscaped Median with Four-Lane Configuration



More similar to the existing configuration, this concept replaces the center turn lanes with a large median. Non-motorized path users are protected by large green buffers and travel between the slip street and 127.

At several points along Old US-127, there is a grass median roughly 25 feet wide. This concept envisions extending that feature from Townsend Road north to Baldwin Street, where it would taper into the existing three-lane configuration. The continuous, landscaped median would build on existing conditions to provide visual definition and a more attractive gateway into the city, while also offering space for tree plantings and pedestrian refuge at crossings. The roadway would consist of two travel lanes in each direction, with dedicated turn lanes accommodated via breaks in the median—preserving vehicular capacity while significantly improving safety and aesthetics.

As in Concept 1, one-way slip streets would be added on both sides of the corridor to consolidate driveways and maintain access to adjacent businesses. A non-motorized path would run between the slip street and the main travel lanes, buffered by curbed landscaping. This concept offers a more incremental approach—maintaining a four-lane cross-section but reallocating excess space to better support walking, biking, and a more welcoming public realm.



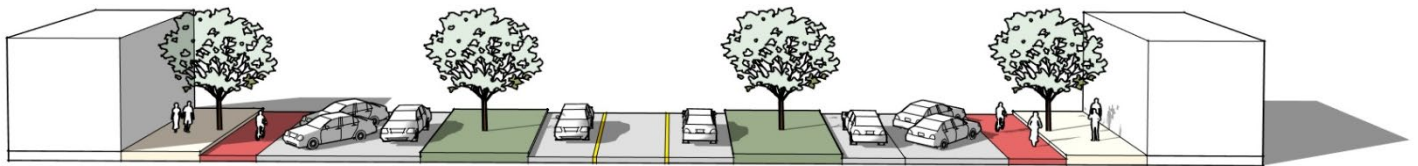
Vehicles seeking to visit businesses will exit the highway using the right turn lanes, and access parking via the one way slip street.

3. Storefront-Oriented Slip Streets

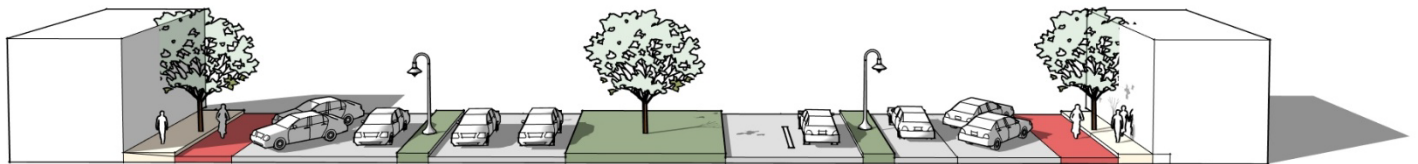
This concept builds on the previous two by reimagining the slip streets as more actively programmed, pedestrian-oriented spaces. Rather than separating buildings and parking from the main roadway, it brings buildings closer to the slip streets and integrates public space design directly into the corridor.

The non-motorized path would shift to the far side of the slip street, placing pedestrians and cyclists directly in front of storefronts and entrances, rather than between moving traffic and parked cars. To preserve the uninterrupted nature of the path, parking would be relocated from private lots behind or beside buildings into the public right-of-way, provided as 45-degree angled parking along the one-way slip streets. This arrangement would reduce conflicts between drivers and non-motorized users, while creating a more active, connected streetside environment.

To support this transformation, zoning updates would be required to reduce front setbacks along the slip street, establish design standards for pedestrian-oriented frontages, and coordinate the layout of access, sidewalks, and parking. Of the three concepts, this represents the most ambitious intervention, both in terms of physical change and regulatory shifts, but also offers the greatest potential to create a more accessible commercial district friendly to those running errands by car, on foot, or by bike.



A variation on the three-lane configuration of concept 1, with non-motorized facilities moved to the edges of the ROW, immediately next to storefronts.



A variation on the median configuration of concept 2, with non-motorized facilities moved to the edges of the ROW, immediately next to storefronts.