

Leslie Lechner-Salemi
Chair

James Ensign
Vice-Chair

Commissioners

Eric Hufnagel, *Mayor*
Jean Ruestman, *Vice Mayor*
Heather Hanover
Mark Holden
Melvin Renfrow
Wendy Ward
Eric Harger

Dave J. Kudwa, P.E.
*Community
Development Director*



CITY OF ST. JOHNS PLANNING COMMISSION

MEETING AGENDA

MEETING DATE: MARCH 9th, 2022

The St. Johns Planning Commission will hold a regular meeting on March 9th, 2022 at 5:30 pm in the 2nd Floor Commissioner 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 pm)**
2. **Approval of Agenda (5:30 pm – 5:32 pm)**
3. **Public Comment for Agenda / Non-Agenda Items (5:32 pm – 5:33 pm)**
4. **Old Business**
 - A. **February 9th, 2022 meeting minutes review**
(5:33 pm – 5:34 pm) (ACTION ITEM)
5. **New Business**
 - A. **Special land use / site plan review – 311 N. Clinton Avenue**
(Presenter: Chris Khorey, AICP, McKenna & Associates)
(5:34 pm – 6:00 pm) (ACTION ITEM)
 - B. **Downtown parking discussion – Public comment**
 1. Add angle parking spaces on side streets and creation of one-way streets - Walker Street and Higham Street (6:00 pm – 6:15 pm)
 2. Allow overnight, on-street parking on side streets (6:15 pm – 6:30 pm)
(Excluding Clinton Avenue)
 3. New funding for parking improvements (6:15 pm–6:30 pm)
 4. Elimination of parking passes (6:30 pm – 6:35 pm)
 5. Focused parking enforcement on Clinton Avenue (6:35 pm – 6:45 pm)
 6. Special passes for overnight parking on Clinton Avenue (6:45 pm – 7:00 pm)
(Presenter: City staff)
(6:00 pm – 7:00 pm) (DISCUSSION ONLY)
6. **Adjournment (7:00 pm)**

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**CITY OF ST. JOHNS
PLANNING COMMISSION**

**FEBRUARY 9th, 2022
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

Members Present: Salemi, Hufnagel, Hanover, Holden, Renfrow, Ward, Harger

Staff Present: Dave J. Kudwa, Chris Khorey

Others Present: Jeff Simpson, Kelly Havens, Boone Deshano, Cord Ferris, Alex Kusnich, Mike Matheson, Chris Hyzer, Sean Dush, Sue Pung, John Ashley, Christine Ashley, Sherri Martens, Kevin Palmatier, Emily Palmatier, Mark Kenel, Terry Black, Ken Harris, John Thelen, Susan Ouellette, Ross Pope

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A. A motion was made by Commissioner Ward and supported by Commissioner Hanover to approve the agenda as presented.

Yes: Salemi, Hufnagel, Hanover, Holden, Renfrow, Ward, Harger

Nay: None

Motion carried

3. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA / NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None

4. OLD BUSINESS

A. A motion was made by Commissioner Hanover and supported by Commissioner Ward to approve the December 8th, 2022 meeting minutes as presented.

Yes: Salemi, Hufnagel, Hanover, Holden, Renfrow, Ward, Harger

Nay: None

Motion carried

*100 East State Street, P.O. Box 477, St. Johns, Michigan 48879-0477
(989) 224-8944 Fax (989) 224-2204
E-mail: dkudwa@stjohnsmich.com*

5. NEW BUSINESS

A. Development Proposal – 450 E. Townsend Road

Deshano Development presented a concept plan to build senior housing at 450 E. Townsend Road. They discussed the need to rezone the property from residential to office and presented a concept plan. The planning commission received comments from residents regarding the proposed development.

B. Rental Housing Program

City staff gave the planning commission an update regarding a future rental housing program. The planning commission received comments from residents regarding a proposed registration and certification program for residential rental units.

C. FY 2022/2023 Capital Improvement Plan

Staff presented the FY 2022/2023 Capital Improvement Plan and the planning commission made the following recommendation:

A motion was made by Commissioner Ward and supported by Commissioner Holden to recommend approving the proposed capital improvement plan.

Yes: Salemi, Hufnagel, Hanover, Holden, Renfrow, Ward, Harger

Nay: None

Motion carried

6. PLANNING COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

None

7. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Hanover and supported by Commissioner Ward to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 pm.

Yes: Salemi, Hufnagel, Hanover, Holden, Renfrow, Ward, Harger

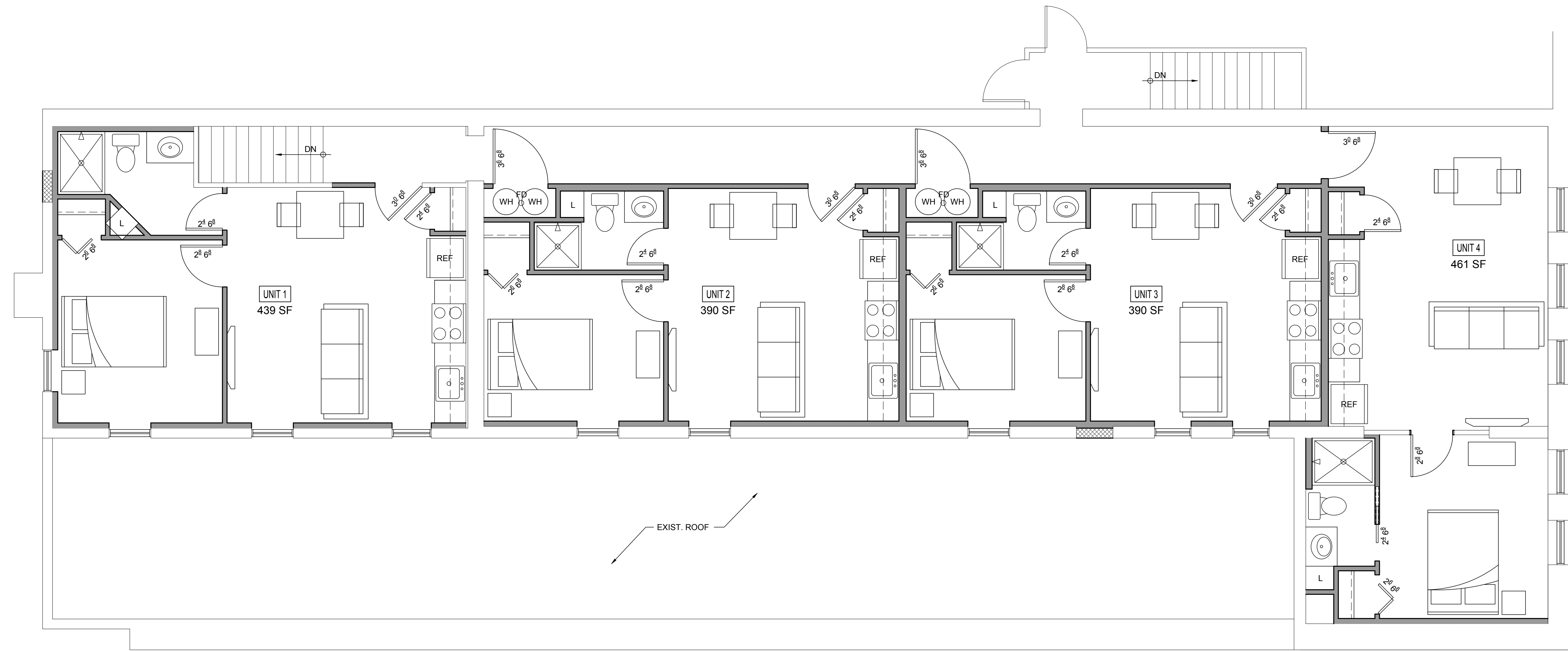
Nay: None

Motion carried

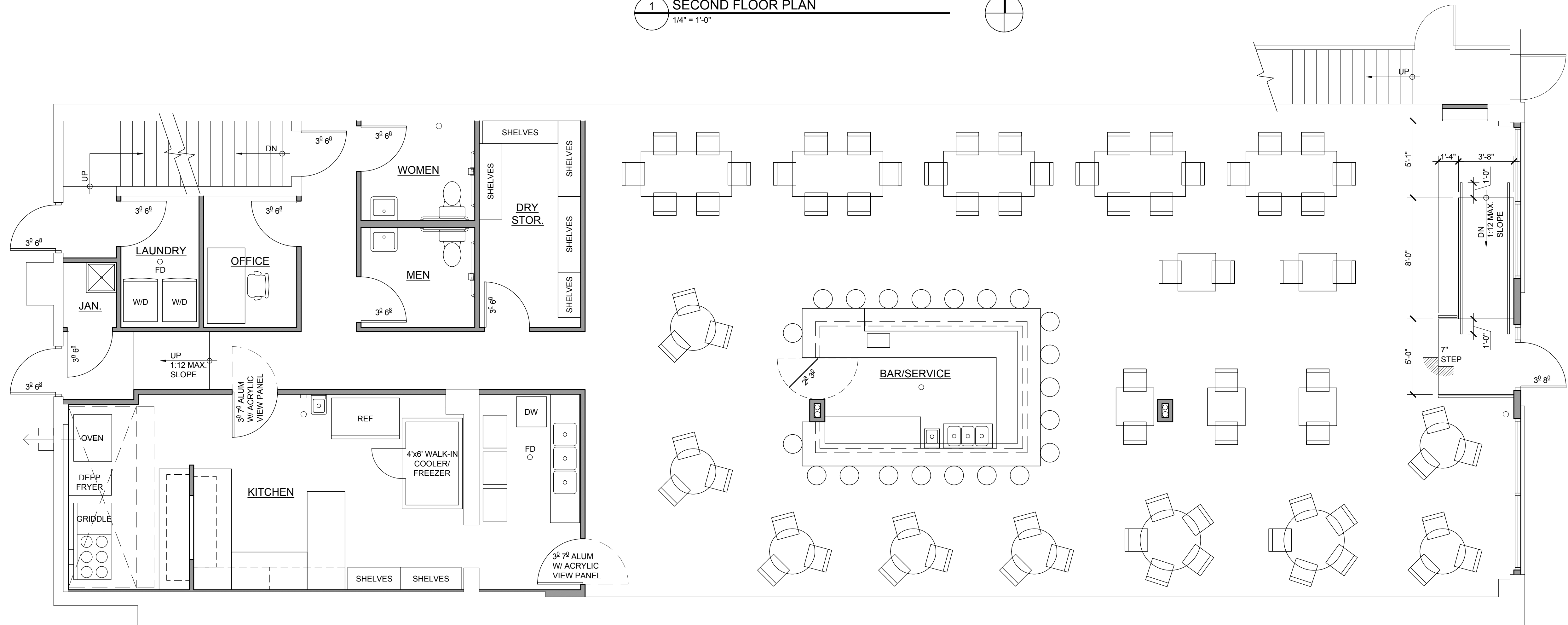
311 N CLINTON VICINITY MAP



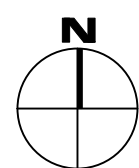
NOTE: BUILDING TO INCLUDE REMODELED BAR/RESTAURANT AT FIRST FLOOR AND FOUR REMODELED APARTMENT UNITS AT SECOND FLOOR. BUILDING FOOTPRINT/AREA TO REMAIN AS-IS.



1 SECOND FLOOR PLAN
1/4" = 1'-0"



2 FIRST FLOOR PLAN
1/4" = 1'-0"

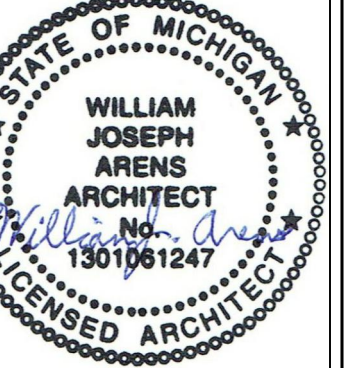


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311 N CLINTON
INTERIOR & FACADE RENOVATION
311 N CLINTON AVE
ST JOHNS, MI 48879

PROJECT NO.: 21042
DATE: 02/07/22

REVISIONS:		
NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION

SHEET NO.:
A102



MCKENNA

March 1, 2022

Planning Commission
City of St. Johns
100 E. State Street, Suite 1100
St. Johns, Michigan 48879

Subject: 311 N. Clinton Avenue Special Use and Site Plan Review

Dear Commissioners,

As requested, we have reviewed the application materials submitted for 311 N. Clinton Avenue. The applicant proposes to renovate the existing building to contain the following uses:

- Restaurant (first floor)
- Four Residential Units (second floor)

The building already contains commercial space on the first floor and residential space on the second floor, but the renovation would alter the interior floor plan on both floors, as well as modernizing the systems in the building.

The building is zoned CBD Central Business District. Section 155.101 regulates uses in the CBD District differently depending on what street they are on. Clinton Avenue allows first floor restaurants and upper floor residential by right. However, the units are proposed to be under the minimum area for a dwelling unit, which is 500 square feet. The four units are proposed to be 461, 439, 390, and 390 square feet.

Section 155.199 allows the approval of dwelling units below the minimum size by Special Use Permit. Therefore, while all other aspects of the redevelopment are permitted by right, the layout of the dwelling units must be approved for a Special Use Permit before the renovation can move forward. As with any Special Use Permit, Site Plan Approval is also required.

Our comments below are divided into two parts – the first part discusses the criteria for approving the Special Use for unit size, and the second part discusses the physical site design and whether the Site Plan should be approved.

Special Use (Unit Size)

In order to be approved, the City Commission, upon recommendation of the Planning Commission, must determine that the dwelling units meet the standards of both Section 155.199 (which are specific to undersized dwelling units) and Section 155.258, which are the general standards applicable to all Special Uses.

- 1) Undersized Dwelling Unit Criteria.** Section 155.199 requires undersized dwelling units to be “safe, sanitary housing promoting high quality of life for their residents.” The apartments will be completely renovated with modern amenities, and will actually be slightly larger than the existing apartments in the building. All four units have full kitchens and bathrooms with a shower. All living areas and all bedrooms have windows.



The second floor of the building is not as big as the first floor, leaving space for second floor windows that look out over the first floor roof. The building to the south is set back from 311 N. Clinton, giving more light to the windows. But even if a building were to be built right up to the side wall of 311 N. Clinton (which is allowed under the zoning ordinance), the windows would still have light. The front unit has windows that look out over Clinton Avenue, and the rear unit has windows over the alley.

From a planning perspective, the units meet the standard. However, the City Commission and Planning Commission should also consult with the Building and Fire departments in making a final determination.

2) Special Use Criteria. Section 155.258 includes the following criteria:

a) Will be harmonious with and in accordance with the community development plan. In order to be considered “harmonious and in accordance”, the Special Use proposal must:

- **Be consistent with the City’s goals for Land Use, Neighborhoods, Transportation, and Sustainability as articulated in Chapter 3 of the City of St. Johns Master Plan.** The relevant pages of the Master Plan are attached for reference.

This proposal advances Land Use Goals 1, 2, 4, and 5, and is neutral on Goal 3 (which is specifically about the Federal Mogul/FC Mason site).

It also advances Neighborhood Goals 1 and 4, while being neutral about Goals 2 and 3 (which relate to neighborhoods, not the downtown).

With regard to Transportation goals, it is neutral on all goals – while Goal 2 discusses the downtown, the size of these units will no impact on whether the downtown becomes more easily navigable.

The proposal is also neutral on the specific Sustainability goals, though it advances the City’s broader Sustainability goal of creating quality housing in already built-up areas, by modernizing existing downtown apartments.

- **Positively promote the vision described for the Community Character Area that the use will be located in, as described in Chapter 4 of the City of St. Johns Master Plan.**

The proposed use is located in the “Core Downtown” Community Character Area, which specifically states that “upper floor apartments” are appropriate and that “re-use and re-occupancy of existing buildings is preferred whenever possible.” Allowing the undersized units allows the building to be redevelopment and modernized without reducing the number of housing units, which specifically advances the vision of the Community Character Area. The Core Downtown page from the Master Plan is attached for reference.



- **Not hinder the implementation of the Mobility Plan for the street(s) it is adjacent to, as described in Chapter 6 of the City of St. Johns Master Plan.**

There are no concerns that this proposal will negatively impact Clinton Avenue or any other nearby street. The relevant Mobility Plan pages are attached.

- b) **Will be designed, constructed, operated, and maintained so as to be safe, harmonious and appropriate in appearance with the existing or intended character of the general vicinity. Factors affecting this standard include noise, lighting, parking, traffic, garbage, large gatherings of people, water runoff, neighborhood character, heat island effect, and other similar off-site impacts of a use.**

The footprint, height, and use of the building will not change, so this standard is met. Our site plan comments address specific physical development issues.

- c) **Will be a substantial improvement to property in the immediate vicinity and an economic asset to the community as a whole. “Substantial improvement” and “economic asset” shall mean that the proposed use will clearly generate more economic activity, tax revenue, jobs, housing units, and/or spinoff development than the site would generate without the approved Special Use. In evaluating this criteria, the City Commission shall compare the site to its current state at the time of application, not to hypothetical alternative developments other than the proposed Special Use.**

Without the approved Special Use, the building could still be renovated and modernized, but the number of housing units would have to be reduced in order to meet the minimum unit size. Removing the hallway, there are 1,680 square feet on the upper floor that could be used for housing. That means that, using the 500 square foot minimum, the number of units would have to be reduced from 4 to 3. Therefore, approving the Special Use meets this standard, because the Special Use will prevent a decrease in the number of housing units while allowing for investment in the building.

- d) **Will be served adequately, based on the anticipated needs of the use in question, by existing public facilities and services, such as highways, streets, police and fire protection, drainage structures, parking lots, refuse disposal, water and sewer utilities, non-motorized pathways/sidewalks, communications infrastructure, public transportation, waste removal, and schools. The City Commission may also require upgrades to public services directly related to the proposal as a condition of Special Use approval.**

There are already four housing units in the building, and the footprint and height of the building will not expand, so the impact on highways, streets, drainage, water/sewer, sidewalks communications, Blue Bus, waste removal, and schools will be minimal. See Criteria F for an analysis of the impact on parking.

We will defer to the police and fire departments regarding the impact on those services.



- e) **Will be consistent with the Purpose and Intent of allowing Special Uses (see Section 155.255) and the Purpose and Intent of the Zoning District the Special Use is located within.**

The purpose and intent of allowing Special Uses is:

“The special use permit process is based on the concept that some uses are appropriate in a zoning district only under certain circumstances and with specific conditions. The special use permit review process allows the city to review a proposed use, determine if it is appropriate in the location proposed and what conditions are required to be placed on the use to ensure it’s compatibility with other uses in the area.”

The City specifically granted itself the power to approve housing units under 500 square feet by Special Use Permit on the recognition that undersized housing units can be appropriate in some, but not all, contexts. One context where undersized housing units work is in historic downtown buildings, where not only can the residents make use of the City’s parks, businesses, and amenities just steps away from their homes, but where keeping historic buildings historically viable is also an important consideration. Therefore, undersized housing units can be allowed to further the goals of a vibrant downtown.

The purpose and intent of the CBD Zoning District is:

“The CBD District is designed to provide for a variety of retail stores and related activities, and for office buildings and service establishments which occupy the prime retail frontage in the Central Business District, and which serve the comparison, convenience and service needs of a consumer population well beyond the corporate boundaries of the city. The district regulations are also designed to provide for a centrally located major shopping complex, serviced by conveniently located off-street parking facilities and allowing safe pedestrian movement; but to exclude non-retail uses which typically require large areas of land or generate truck traffic”

The Zoning District is specifically designed for the historic buildings along Clinton Avenue, which have unique needs. One of those unique needs is the need for flexibility in certain regulations to keep them economically viable, so the flexibility in unit size is appropriate here.

- f) **Will be served by adequate, safe, and efficient parking. “Adequate, safe, and efficient parking” shall mean not only meeting the requirements of Section 155.342, but also ensuring that the parking for the use does not burden nearby uses, does not create safety hazards for motorists, cyclists, or pedestrians, does not take up excessive land that could be used for more productive purposes, and does not create a blight on the historic character and charm of the City.**

There is no parking requirement in the CBD District. If this proposal was outside of the CBD District, the requirement would be:



- 4 Residential Units x 2 Spaces per Unit = 8 spaces
- 92 seats maximum restaurant capacity x .25 spaces per Seat = 23 spaces

The total requirement would be 31 parking spaces. If the building were proposed to be built from scratch, we would recommend a more detailed analysis of the capacity of the downtown parking system to absorb that number of spaces. However, the building is already existing, and the uses are permitted by right. The size of the dwelling units (which will actually increase) will not change downtown parking demand from what already exists. Therefore, this standard is met.

g) Comply with the applicable design standards outlined for the specific proposed use in Sections 155.415 through 155.448 of this chapter.”

There are no standards for restaurants or upper floor residential in that portion of the Ordinance. If the applicant decides to add a Sidewalk Café to the use, then the standards of Section 155.446 will apply. But that is not proposed at this time, nor is it relevant to the size of the dwelling units.

Site Plan (Physical Characteristics). Because the building is existing, there are few site plan considerations.

- 1) **Dimensional Standards:** There are no required setbacks in the CBD District. The maximum building height in the CBD District is 35 feet (with extra height allowable by Special Use Permit). Neither the footprint, nor the height, of the building are changing.
- 2) **Parking, Loading, and Access.** There is no parking requirement in the CBD District.
- 3) **Landscaping.** There is no landscaping requirement, and no room for landscaping on the site.
- 4) **Lighting.** No information on exterior lighting has been submitted. The applicant should submit information on proposed light fixtures along Clinton Avenue, along the south side of the building (which partially faces a parking lot), and along the alley to the west of the building. Lighting should be sufficient for safety and aesthetics without becoming a nuisance to nearby properties (or the upstairs residents at 311 Clinton).
- 5) **Trash Receptacles.** No information on trash receptacles has been submitted. Presumably there will be a trash receptacle in the alley for the restaurant? Will the residents use the same dumpster?

RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that the Planning Commission recommend approval of the Special Use to the City Commission, to allow the dwelling units at the square footage proposed by the applicant.

We recommend that the Site Plan Approval be tabled until after the City Commission approval of the Special Use. In the meantime, we recommend that the applicant submit additional information lighting and trash receptacles for review by the Planning Commission.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Respectfully submitted,
McKENNA



Christopher Khorey, AICP
Senior Principal Planner



Core Downtown

DESIGN GUIDELINES

LOT DIMENSIONS

Minimum Lot Area:
None

Minimum Lot Width:
None

BUILDING SETBACKS

Minimum / Side:
None

Maximum:
Zero feet

Rear:
As needed for loading / parking

BUILDING HEIGHT

Minimum:
2 stories

Maximum:
4 stories

STREET FRONTAGES

Retail storefronts
Outdoor patio / seating areas
Windows and displays
Awnings and canopies
Insert pictures of example development types

General Characteristics. St. Johns Core Downtown area consists of one block on either side of N. Clinton Avenue between State Street and Railroad Street. This area is a hub of commercial activity in the core of the City, and the buildings have historic architectural characteristics and define the downtown character.

Appropriate Land Uses. Mixed uses are compatible within the Core Downtown area. Commercial businesses intended for this category include service, professional, and retail businesses that encourage foot traffic and do not require large parking lots. Other land use types such as institutional or recreational uses, as well as small business “maker spaces” are also encouraged. Some residential uses, such as upper floor apartments, are also compatible in this area.

Density. There is no maximum density recommendation. The design recommendations of this Plan will set densities to a reasonable number of units by requiring good design. Setbacks on the front and side should be minimal and setbacks along the rear of lots should be respectful of parking, loading, and circulation needs.

Streets and Transportation. On-street parking, two-way traffic, and high walkability should be continued on N. Clinton Avenue. Bicycle lanes should be incorporated on all east-west streets through the downtown core. Bicycle parking should also be encouraged in strategic locations. N. Clinton Avenue should include streetscape and landscape elements that enhance the feel and character of downtown. Off-street parking lots serving downtown should include wayfinding signs such as “Free Parking Walk to Shops” or other ways to direct drivers to the downtown area.

Building Location. New buildings or infill development should be built to the sidewalk.

Building and Site Design. Reuse and re-occupancy of existing buildings is preferred whenever possible. Any new buildings should match existing feel and character of N. Clinton Avenue. Buildings should contain two or more stories, be located right on the sidewalk, and have off-street parking located to the rear. No front and side yard setbacks are encouraged. First floor storefronts should be transparent and welcoming with minimal window signage. Signage should be attractive, with projecting signs encouraged.

Parking. Any parking lots should be open to the public and serve the entire Core Downtown area. On street parking should be encouraged where street right-of-way permits, and off street parking should be located at the rear of buildings. Shared parking should be encouraged, and new uses shall not be required to create parking. Wayfinding signage should clearly identify public parking in this district.

In the St. Johns Downtown Plan, the Core Downtown Land Use Category in the provides additional recommendations for this Community Character Category.

CURRENT CHARACTER



PLANNED CHARACTER



Land Use – Development and Redevelopment

Policy Statement: Build an awareness of the City of St. Johns as an outstanding place to live, work and visit by promoting a positive business environment; encouraging new development in industrial parks; supporting redevelopment of brownfield sites; broadening and strengthening the tourism sector; and facilitating economic diversification and business growth. All while preserving and enhancing the traditional, mixed land use character of the City by offering planned integration of land uses that promote positive relationships between businesses and neighborhoods and careful separation of conflicting land uses.

GOAL #1: ACCOMMODATE A DIVERSE, STRONG COMMERCIAL AND OFFICE BASE THAT SERVES THE NEEDS OF RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.

- a. Increase small business development.
- b. Recruit a diverse number of businesses to St. Johns.
 - 1. Attract Tech Companies to St. Johns.
 - 2. Attract higher education to St. Johns through partnerships with regional institutions.
- c. Provide financial or regulatory incentives for Hotel development.
- d. Increase small town-appropriate commercial options that appeal to young professionals.
- e. Identify and discuss the best and highest uses for Township land that is close to City and within agreed upon development areas.

GOAL #3: REDEVELOP THE FEDERAL MOGUL / FC MASON BUILDING.

- a. Work with owner to address old Federal Mogul / FC Mason building and promote highest and best use of the property.
- b. Implement a phased redevelopment strategy for FC Mason.

GOAL: #2: CREATE A VIBRANT DOWNTOWN WITH DIVERSE BUSINESSES.

- a. Implement the best use of City owned properties downtown.
- b. Create attractive corridors that tie downtown to Old 127.
- c. Provide sidewalks along Old 127.
- d. Increase the amount of retail stores.
- e. Provide business location for online businesses that want a storefront.
- f. Provide incentives to attract, restaurants, brew pubs and entertainment.
- g. Provide outdoor family events such as movie nights downtown.
- h. Attract businesses with varying hours of operating and uses to create vibrant streets.
- i. Add new businesses along the side streets downtown to expand the retail area.
- j. Use public engagement to find the potential uses for the silo / elevator property and other City owned properties in and around the downtown.



GOAL #4: ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC DIVERSITY AND JOB CREATION THAT WILL LEVERAGE ST. JOHNS' GEOGRAPHIC AND CULTURAL ASSETS.

- a. Rezone vacant or underutilized property in and near neighborhoods to encourage redevelopment that is compatible in use and intensity with the existing neighborhood.
- b. Support and encourage efforts to diversify the economic base of St. Johns.
- c. Facilitate economic development activities that will strengthen neighborhoods, provide educational training and employment opportunities and provide necessary support systems.
- d. Create a business incubator to attract small businesses and startups.
- e. Attract information technology companies and Start-Ups.
- f. Expand industrial park.
- g. Incorporate cross municipal relationship to coordinate infrastructure development with Bingham Township.
- h. Reach out to existing business to identify needs for more vocational job training.

GOAL #5: PROVIDE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES IN DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT AREAS.

- a. Encourage a diversity of business sizes and types, including retention of existing businesses and attraction of new businesses.
- b. Identify vacant and underutilized areas and plan to maximize their development.
- c. Reinforce existing business investment and provide for retention and expansion.
- d. Provide for local infrastructure development, where needed, to support economic development efforts.
- e. Continue downtown revitalization efforts by encouraging a mix of housing, retail, and complementary services.
- f. Promote expansion of successful brownfield redevelopment efforts.
- g. Explore creative partnerships between developers and the city in order to expedite environmental remediation.
- h. Encourage businesses to reuse infrastructure rather than relocating to new sites and thereby increase future public capital and operating costs.
- i. Transition of the industrial land along the CIS Trail to residential / mixed use.

Neighborhoods

Policy Statement: Sustain and enhance St. Johns neighborhoods by providing for the safety and protection of all residents, visitors, and property, and enabling the development of strong, cohesive, and stable neighborhoods.

GOAL #1: PRESERVE, PROTECT, AND ENHANCE THE INTEGRITY, ECONOMIC VIABILITY AND LIVABILITY OF ST. JOHNS NEIGHBORHOODS.

- a. Plans, programs and investment opportunities should be consistent with the Future Land Use Plan and with the strategies described below for each neighborhood area.
- b. Limit non-residential intrusions into residential neighborhoods and buffer detrimental effects of commercial and industrial uses through the use of open space and landscape treatments and site design.
- c. Evaluate zoning categories to ensure the character of the neighborhood is maintained and protected.
- d. Promote home ownership in all neighborhoods.
- e. Ensure that all new housing is compatible with the desired characteristics of that particular neighborhood and in accordance with the general neighborhood strategies contained in this chapter.
- f. Improve property maintenance of existing housing stock for renters and homeowners through enhanced code enforcement and rental inspection.
- g. Explore private / public partnerships to establish a home maintenance program for the low income, disabled, and senior populations.
- h. Unifying elements should be utilized as a neighborhood identifier, whether it is signage, similar architecture, street lighting or consistent streetscape landscaping.
- i. Provide opportunities for “aging in place” throughout the City.
- j. Provide opportunities to maintain the quality of older homes and redevelop blighted properties with grants for inside and outside maintenance on the home.
- k. Provide “curb appeal” grants to property owners.



GOAL #2: PROVIDE A HOUSING STOCK THAT MEETS THE NEEDS OF A DIVERSE CITY POPULATION WITH SUPPORTING AMENITIES.

- a. Maintain all City parks and recreation facilities and pursue cooperative arrangements with other public and private groups for maintenance of these facilities.
- b. Involve residents in planning and maintaining open space and neighborhood parks.
- c. Explore opportunities to convert active space to passive space and consider water-storage opportunities.
- d. Create mix of housing and open space in new subdivisions that include sidewalks and trail connections.
- e. Provide housing for all ages. Including younger families and the aging population.
- f. Provide affordable housing for youth families.
- g. Increase housing stock for growing work force.
- h. Provide curb improvement grants for neighborhoods.
- i. Promote and control the further development of living units in the downtown.

GOAL #3: CREATE AN IDENTITY FOR ALL NEIGHBORHOODS.

- a. Encourage cooperation between community groups and the City to implement neighborhood signage programs.
- b. Incorporate expanded streetscape improvements to foster neighborhood identities.
- c. Utilize landscaping at entry points, in rights-of-way, and park areas to improve the image of all residential neighborhoods.
- d. Install new gateway signage at entrances to the City.

GOAL #4: MAINTAIN AND PRESERVE HISTORIC PROPERTIES WITHIN THE CITY.

- a. Secure façade grants for downtown buildings.
- b. Provide a name for the Historic District.
- c. Include the Historic District in the Wayfinding Plan.
- d. Secure historic preservation awards for home restoration projects.
- e. Use historical buildings to promote the up and coming thriving City.
- f. Bed & Breakfast.
- g. Incubator Space.
- h. Determine the buildings at the grain elevator site that are most worthy of preservation, and ensure that those are preserved.
- i. Identify and promote the City's historic Old Village plat, including adding decorative street signs, creating a zoning overlay, creating a local historic district, and seeking State and/or Federal historic status.

Transportation

Policy Statement: To create a safe, connected transportation system that includes street, transit, water, air, and non-motorized components adequate to accommodate the current and future needs of the City of St. Johns and promotes the walkable, traditional character of the community for all users.

GOAL #1: PRESERVE AND ENHANCE THE LEVEL OF SERVICE CIRCULATION AND SAFETY OF THE ROAD NETWORK TO SUPPORT ALL USERS IN THE COMMUNITY.

- a. Control noise of truck traffic in expanding industrial park.
- b. Mitigate for increased truck traffic, with buffers such as street trees and green infrastructure.
- c. Improve and maintain the specific roads that are being impacted by additional industrial park traffic.
- d. Increase safety at the intersection of M-21 and Scott Road through growth of businesses and providing infrastructure to increase walkability. Consider a roundabout.
- e. Classify all existing and proposed streets by their function and develop a circulation system, which recognizes these functions. The functions should include consideration of emergency routes.
- f. Work toward the development of an overall circulation system for the City, which is coordinated with the transportation systems of the region, and which includes a connected network of residential streets designed to connect residents to each other by walking, cycling, or driving.
- g. Require that all land developments be designed in a manner that reduces the number of potential traffic conflicts (curb cuts), particularly along streets that serve as City-wide or regional traffic carriers. Require connections for both cars and pedestrians between adjacent sites on commercial thoroughfares. New developments should not adversely affect the safety, efficiency, and function of streets.
- h. Require street layouts of contiguous residential areas to be coordinated and connected. Residential street patterns should provide access for emergency vehicles and smooth and safe flow of pedestrians, bicycles, and cars through the neighborhood.
- i. Provide street layouts and street design and paving standards in industrial areas which are appropriate for the heavier truck traffic associated with such uses and which facilitate peak-hour smooth traffic flows with minimum disruption to the general traffic flow of the community.



GOAL #2: MAKE DOWNTOWN MORE NAVIGABLE AND EASIER TO ACCESS

- a. Increase signage leading to downtown, including pavement markings at M-21 and Old 127.
- b. Provide directional signs on Old 127 to direct people downtown.
- c. Increase wayfinding signs that directs drivers to available parking.
- d. Provide on-street overnight parking on Spring Street, Brush Street, and Railroad Street.
- e. Expand public parking options downtown.
- f. Repair parking lots that are damaged.
- g. Provide a variety of parking options including parking permit types and fees.
- h. Wayfinding Sign Plan with suggested designs for both the downtown and Old 127 Corridor and tying the two together.
- i. Brand Wayfinding to downtown as "St. Johns - Where Up North Begins" and "Take a shortcut through time and visit historic downtown St. Johns".
- j. Create Walk and Bike routes / maps that tie to downtown, parks, Wilson Center and Rail Trails.

GOAL #3: IMPROVE SAFETY AND QUALITY OF LIFE ON OLD 127

- a. Collaborate with MDOT to increase traffic safety and walkability along OLD 127.
- b. Provide Beautification to OLD 127 to change the road into a gateway.
- c. Provide green infrastructure and landscaping to act as beautification.
- d. Provide basic signage at turnarounds along Old 127.
- e. Increase streetscape and building improvements to beautify Old 127 Corridor.

Sustainability and Environmental Preservation

Policy Statement: Create a healthy, sustainable environment for St. Johns citizens by preserving and enhancing St. Johns natural resources and planning for the efficient, attractive and environmentally sound use of land.

GOAL #1: INTEGRATE NATURAL FEATURES INTO SITE DEVELOPMENT WHILE CLEANING UP EXISTING CONTAMINATION TO PROTECT THE QUALITY OF NATURE IN URBAN AREAS.

- a. Promote the clean-up of contaminated sites with innovative incentives through zoning flexibility and with assistance from the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority.
- b. Promote sensitive and responsible storm water management practices by developing guidelines and policies based on Best Management Practices.
- c. Encourage developers to integrate existing natural features into new developments.
- d. Develop ordinances which preserve the integrity of the natural settings of neighborhoods, communities, open spaces and parks, and develop clear procedures for their enforcement.
- e. Integrate vegetation and natural features in road construction and improvements.

GOAL #2: PRESERVE EXISTING TREES AND WORK TO EXPAND THE TREE CANOPY.

- a. Regulate tree clearing through a tree preservation ordinance to preserve landmark trees and require effective tree preservation methods during construction.
- b. Establish a community-wide tree planting program to add neighborhood appeal, increase the community's aesthetic appeal, and reduce impacts of extreme heat events (saving energy costs).
- c. Research projected shifts in tree population and aggressively transition street tree-planting program to trees that will thrive in hotter summers and wetter winters.
- d. Increase the diversity of tree species planted in the City.
- e. Focus new vegetation and tree canopy development efforts on areas identified as high relative exposure to heat events and flooding.

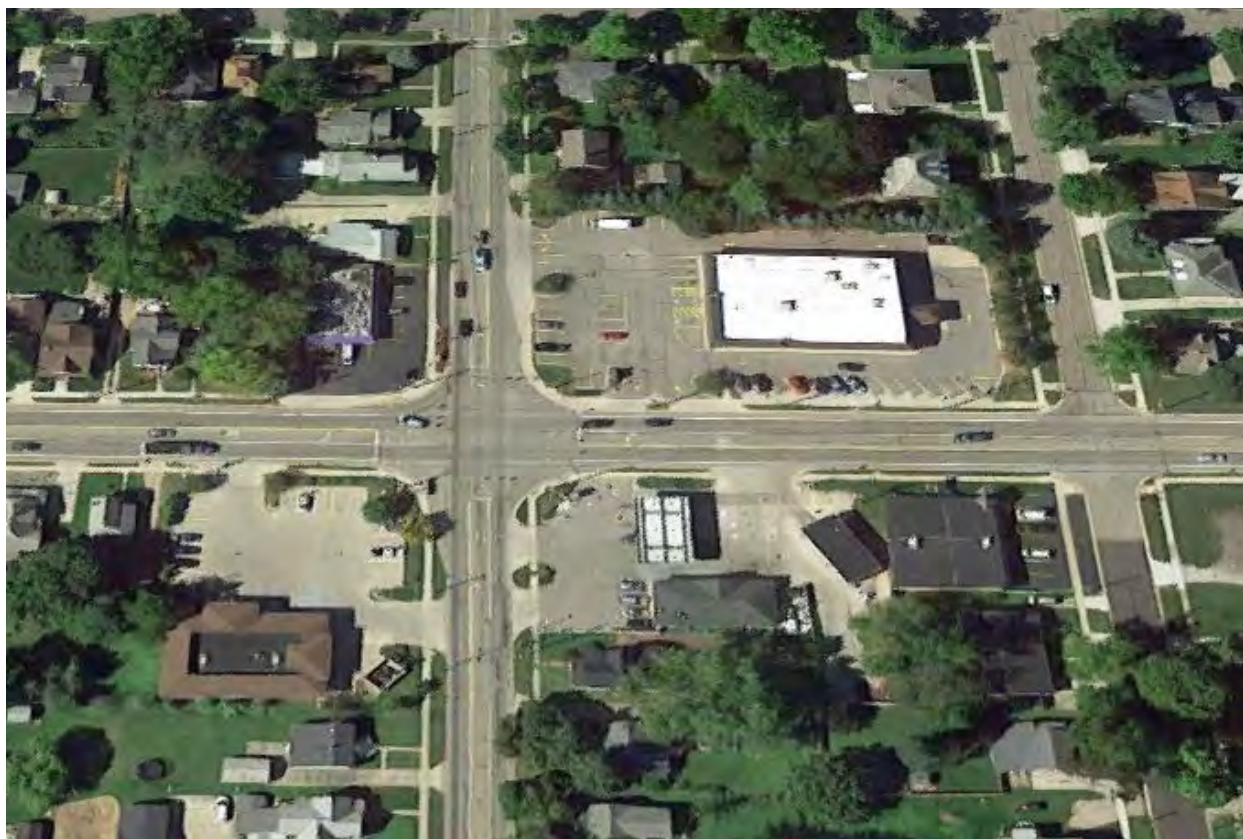


Joint Planning

Policy Statement: Coordinate with Bingham Township to do joint planning areas.

GOAL #1: IDENTIFY KEY AREAS AROUND THE CITY THAT REQUIRE JOINT PLANNING EFFORTS AND INCLUDE RECOMMENDED LAND USES FOR THESE AREAS.

- a. Plan for the area bounded by the US-127 freeway, Wildcat Road, and the City limits.
- b. Plan for area bounded by the US-127 freeway, County Farm Road, Taft Road, and Townsend Road.
- c. Plan for the area along M-21 west of the City, especially the vicinity of the M-21 / DeWitt Road intersection.
- d. Prevent areas mentioned above from turning into dead space which occurs at borders of municipalities.
- e. Assign land uses that benefit both Bingham Township and the City of St. Johns.
- f. Provide land uses based on feedback from both communities.



Automobile Transportation

OLD 127 SAFETY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Old 127 runs north-south through St. Johns, spanning four lanes for most of its length except for E. Steel Street to E. Baldwin Street, where it reduces to two lanes with a center turn lane. The width of the road poses a safety concern for not only drivers, but potential bicycle and pedestrian users of the corridor. This plan envisions the following strategies:

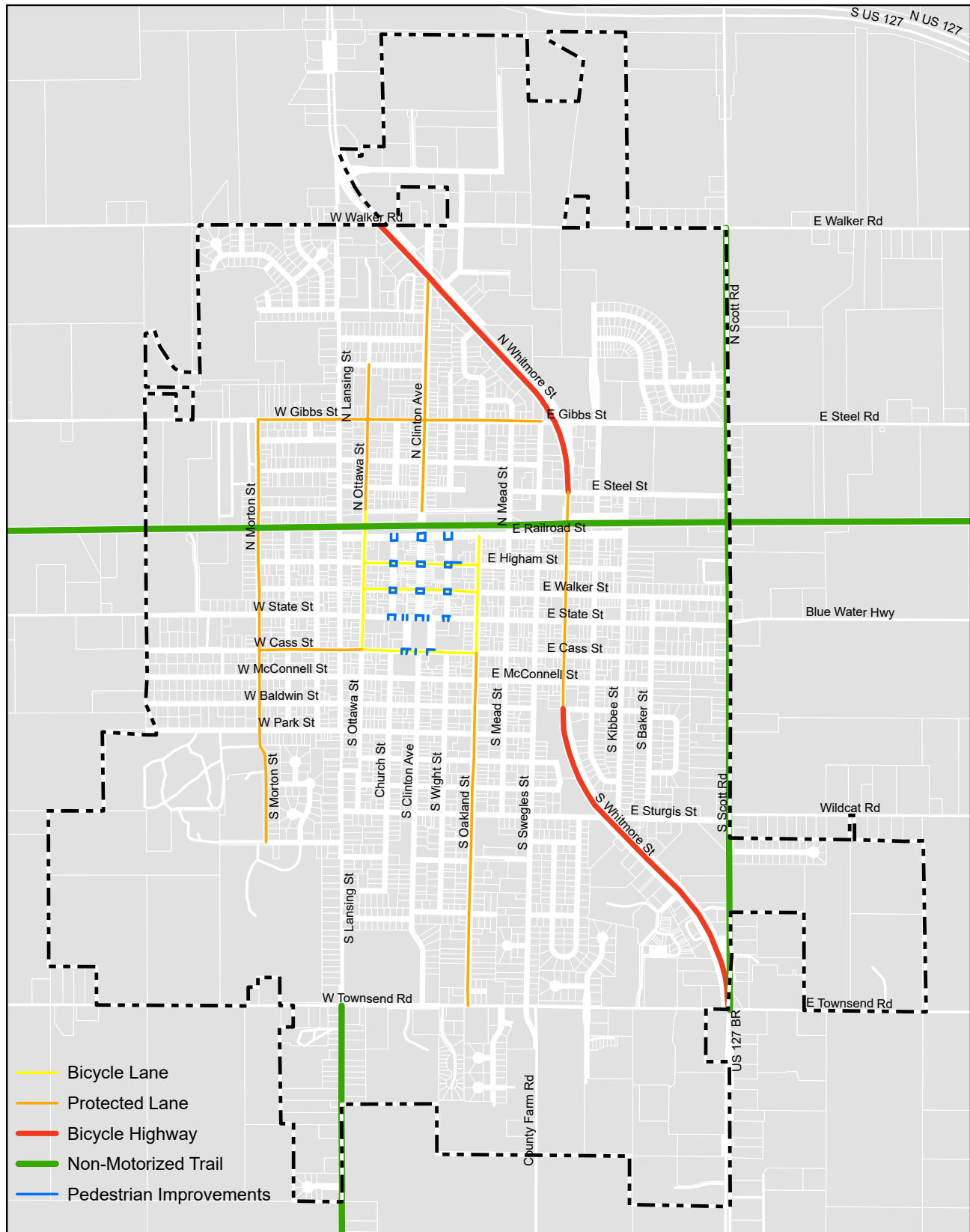
- » Create a zoning district that reflects the new Gateway Corridor Community Character District and implement a front yard setback that brings buildings closer to Old 127 for a more enclosed feeling.
- » Construct a sidewalk and plant trees along Old 127 to create visual interest and a feeling of enclosure.
- » Develop a bicycle highway within Old 127 that is physically protected from vehicle traffic.

Non-Motorized Transportation and Complete Streets

“Complete Streets” is the concept that the roads should be safe and available for all types of users, not merely automobiles. The street character and design aspects described above help to create complete streets by making walking a more enjoyable activity. On-street parking and narrow road lanes can calm traffic and lower speeds, creating a safer environment for people. New infrastructure for bicyclists and pedestrians brings encouragement and investment to these modes, and creates opportunities for both transportation and recreation.

The City of St. Johns has the opportunity to build a robust non-motorized transportation network in the near future, providing connections to the Fred Meijer Clinton-Ionia-Shiawassee Trail which extends 41.4 miles between Ionia to the west and Owosso to the east. Map 2 depicts the future non-motorized network in the City.

Map 6: Non-Motorized Network



PATHWAYS AND TRAILS

Non-motorized infrastructure should connect users to key destinations and corridors in a safe manner. Providing shared use paths and bicycle lanes where deemed appropriate can encourage users of all types and abilities to take advantage of the network. The following infrastructure priorities have been identified for the mobility plan:

- » Incorporate bicycle lanes connecting to downtown, specifically on the less busy streets parallel to N. Clinton Avenue (Ottawa Street and Oakland Street) as well as the streets that intersect with N. Clinton Avenue (Higham Street and Walker Street).
- » Install protected bicycle lanes on N. Clinton Avenue, north of the Meijer Trail up to Old 127.
- » Provide safe bicycle lane connections or shared use paths to destinations such as St. Johns Park, the Wilson Center, St. Johns High School, Gateway North Elementary School, Senior Citizen Park, Jaycee Park, and Sparrow Clinton Hospital.

SIDEWALKS

Some neighborhoods are not currently connected to the City's sidewalk network, creating a difficult walking environment. Old 127 does not have sidewalks, limiting its accessibility as a major corridor. Priorities for St. Johns should be filling in the gaps in the existing sidewalk network, connecting sidewalks to downtown and to other destinations, and requiring sidewalk improvements as part of new development or redevelopment. Priority projects include the following:

- » Complete the existing sidewalk network, especially on Old 127, Sturgis, Lincoln, and Mead Streets to provide more connections in and around downtown.
- » Sidewalks should continue to be installed as new neighborhoods are constructed to add to the extensive sidewalk network already in place.
- » Sidewalk connections to the school campus areas, particularly the middle school, are highly encouraged to promote safe routes to school and as part of encouraging more walking activity.

STREET CHARACTER AND GREEN TREATMENTS

The streets leading into Downtown St. Johns should be designed to feel comfortable and welcoming for all users. Consistent landscape and streetscape elements should be utilized to create a cohesive and aesthetically interesting design. The following strategies can create a distinct street character, indicating to people that they are entering a walkable and compact place while improving the environmental quality:

- » Street furniture should be strategically designed on N. Clinton Avenue and its intersecting streets:
 - Benches should be located in shaded and sunny areas and face a view that is worth looking at.
 - Bicycle parking should be adequately lit, evenly spaced, and easily accessible from all sides.
 - Lighting should be at the pedestrian scale, not to primarily light the road or cast broad shadows.
 - Signage should be consistent, clear, and well-located.
 - Trash receptacles should be easy to find, evenly spaced, and intentionally incorporated as part of the street furniture.
 - Landscaping should be featured on all streets, including street trees, ornamental trees, and landscaped beds with low-maintenance plantings. Benches should be located near landscaped areas.
- » Green treatments:
 - Plant shade trees along streets and in public spaces wherever possible.
 - Reconstruct and expand the bulb-outs at the four main intersections along N. Clinton Avenue to increase pedestrian space, trees, and landscaping, effectively improving the street character and shortening the length of the crosswalks to create a safer and more comfortable pedestrian environment.
 - Implement a cohesive landscape design along E. State Street to create a natural barrier that would help protect the historic buildings closest to E. State Street from the long-term damage that comes from the vibrations of the heavy truck traffic.

The key intersections on Map 3 are the primary focus areas for traffic calming and green nodes. The two bounding intersections of downtown, where N. Clinton Avenue crosses W. Railroad Street and where it crosses E. State Street, should have intentional pedestrian-oriented designs to draw people into downtown.

Map 7: Street Character and Green Treatments

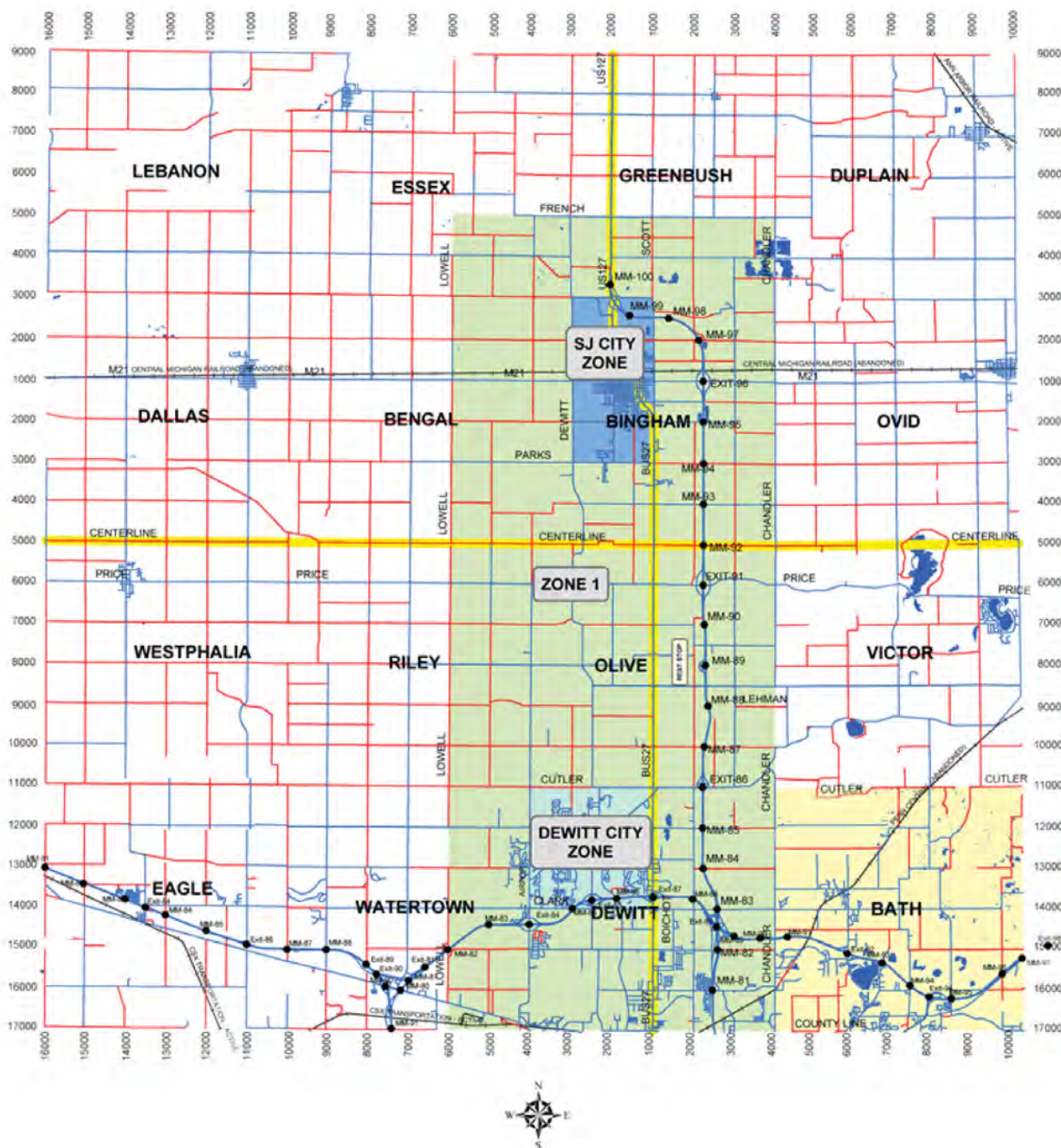


Bicycle Parking

Downtown has several bikeable destinations and will also be a main point of interest on the Meijer Trail, so it is a primary location for bike parking. There are currently several bicycle parking locations on N. Clinton Avenue between the Meijer Trail and State Street. The mobility plan envisions a City-wide non-motorized network with the following goals:

- » Ensure there is bicycle parking at key locations around St. Johns such as the Wilson Center, schools, parks, and activity nodes within the Neighborhood Center Commercial areas.
- » Develop trailheads with bicycle parking and amenities like water fountains and repair stations at key intersections of trails and pathways with other points of interest.

Map 8: Clinton Transit



Public Transit

Established in 2001, Clinton Transit services the St. Johns / Bingham Township community, as well as Olive, DeWitt, and Bath Townships, and the City of DeWitt. Service is provided on a "dial-a-ride" basis, delivering riders door-to-door through prearranged and scheduled trips.

There are no fixed route services serving St. Johns. The City will work with Clinton Transit to evaluate service and ridership on an ongoing basis, and to evaluate the need for fixed-route service, including commuter service to Lansing and East Lansing, in the future.

Let's envision the future of Downtown St. Johns

St. Johns Planning Commission:
Development of the Downtown St. Johns Area

The City of St. Johns is proud of our welcoming and walkable downtown, which invites visitors to the principal shopping district, residential properties, and community gathering spaces. We continually strive to keep the vitality of our community hubs top of mind, including conversations about how people travel to and around our downtown.

We're excited to have you join us for this conversation about potential downtown projects related to parking, navigation and infrastructure.



Meeting Agenda:

- Introductions
- Overview of current navigation and parking
- Discussion:
 - Potential creation of one-way streets downtown (Not Clinton Ave)
 - On-street, overnight parking (Not Clinton Ave)
 - Addition of angled parking spaces on side streets
 - Focused parking enforcement on Clinton Avenue
 - Elimination of parking passes
 - New funding for parking improvements

