

WORKSESSION

CITY OF MANISTEE PLANNING COMMISSION

70 Maple Street, Manistee, Michigan 49660

**Thursday, October 18, 2001
7:00 p.m. - Council Chambers, City Hall**

AGENDA

The City of Manistee Planning Commission will hold a worksession on Thursday, October 18, 2001 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, City Hall, 70 Maple Street, Manistee, Michigan.

- I Roll Call

- II Public Participation:

- III Unfinished Business and Reports:
 Master Plan Update

- IV New Business and Communications:

- V Adjourn.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Commission Members

FROM: Jon R. Rose 
Community Development

DATE: October 12, 2000

RE: Worksession October 18, 2001

The September Worksession has been scheduled for Thursday, October 18, 2001 at 7:00 p.m.

Jerry and Dan from LSL will be in attendance at the worksession. Dan faxed over four items that they will be covering during the worksession. Those items are:

1. Review relationship of the (draft) Filer Township Master Plan future land use map to common boarder areas with the City and along U.S. 31.
2. Presentation of the concept of "New Urbanism" and relationship to the City of Manistee. Is the City of Manistee already a New Urbanist Community? Does it wish to become one?
3. Update Planning Commission on survey effort.
4. Future Land Use Districts - preliminary discussion of plan districts. Please note, this discussion will focus on the general types of districts (district needs), as opposed to the planned location of said districts.

Reminder*** bring your copies of the "Draft" Filer Township Master Plan and Map.

See you at the Worksession!!

cc: City Manager

October Planning Commission Meeting:

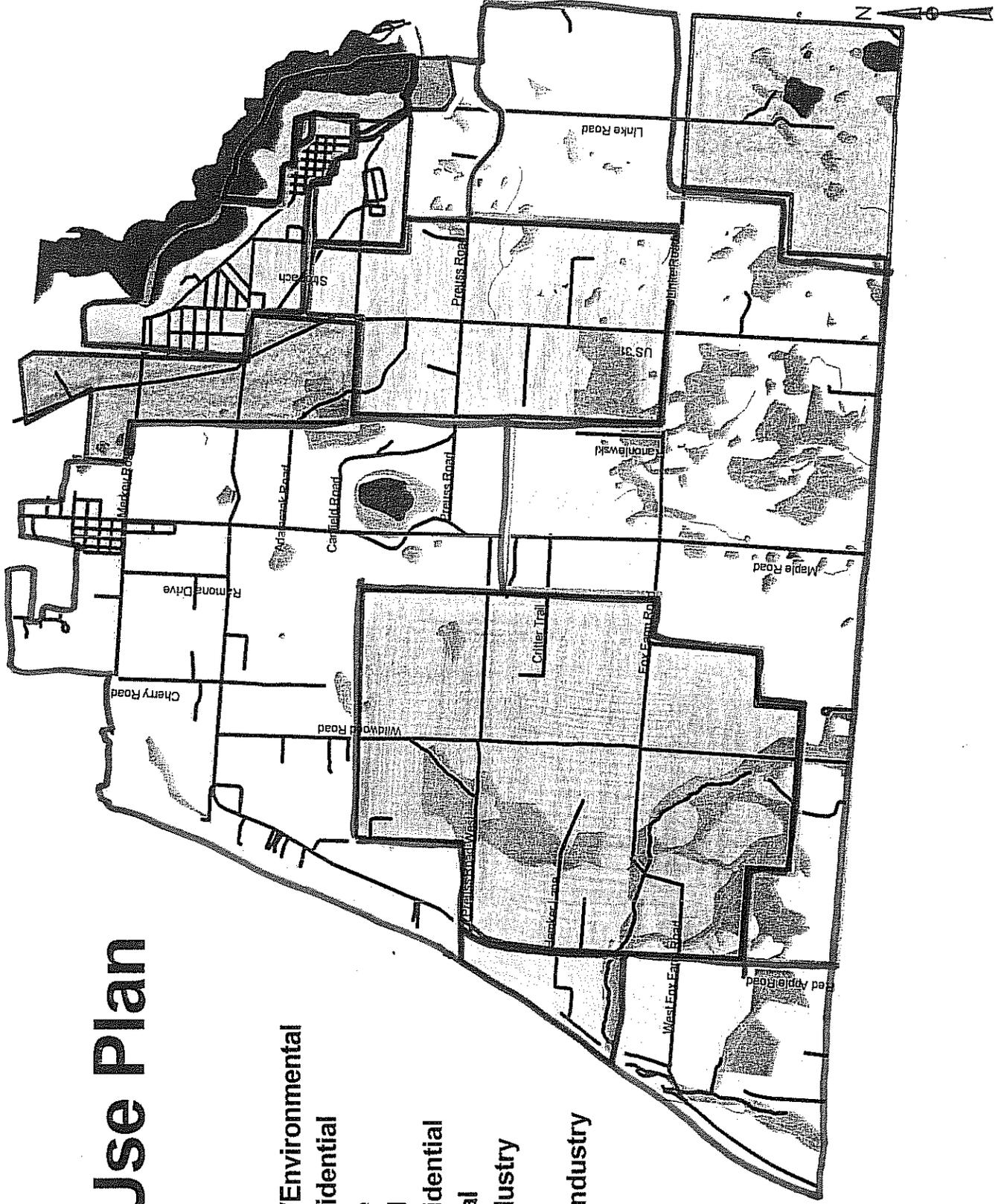
1. Review relationship of the (draft) Filer Township Master Plan future land use map to common border areas with the City and along US-31.
2. Presentation of the concept of "New Urbanism" and relationship to the City of Manistee. Is the City of Manistee already a New Urbanist Community? Does it wish to become one?
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Post-it® Fax Note	7671	Date	11 Oct	# of pages	1
To	Denise	From	LSL		
Co./Dept.		Co.	Don Reed		
Phone #		Phone #			
Fax #	231-723-1546	Fax #			

Filer Charter Township
 Manistee County

Land Use Plan

-  Lakeshore/Environmental
-  Forest Residential
-  Agriculture Residential
-  Urban Residential
-  Commercial
-  Limited Industry
-  Mixed Use
-  Lakefront Industry



PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY TO PLAN

Filer Charter Township is authorized to prepare a Master Plan pursuant to Township Planning Act 168 of 1959, as amended. This statute enables a Township to prepare a plan for the purpose of promoting the public health, safety, and general welfare; encouraging the use of resources in accordance with their character and adaptability; avoiding the overcrowding of land by people and buildings; lessening congestion on public roads and streets; facilitating systems of transportation, sewage disposal, water supply, recreation, and other public improvements; and considering the character and suitability of the Township for uses judged in terms of such factors as the trend in land and population development.

The Master Plan is no more and no less than a statement of public policy based on a vision of the future as embodied in the statement of Township goals. Goals are a statement of how the Township wants to look and function in the future and the Land Use Plan, consisting of guiding principles, policies, and character descriptions, are the vehicles by which the vision will be attained. The Guiding Principles are especially important because they comprise the basic rules or standards against which all decisions will be measured and from which the Township does not intend to depart.

The Master Plan is intended to be general but not too general; specific, but not too specific. It establishes concepts, relationships, and patterns of development and circulation in broad-brush fashion rather than legal descriptions so it can be more broadly interpreted than, and can give meaning to, zoning.

To remain viable the plan must be flexible and dynamic, not static. It will have to respond to change as well as guide it. It will need to be evaluated and amended periodically to keep it fresh and current but each change must be evaluated on its merits (i.e., whether it enhances or detracts from the Township's vision). It will not always be easy to tell.

The Master Plan is the Planning Commission's plan and it alone is charged with interpreting, evaluating, amending, and keeping the Plan current. If it becomes stale and outdated, or is ignored, it will not further the vision of the Township. If it is used only when convenient, it will not withstand the challenges of law, which demand consistency in its application. It is important to note that plans do not implement themselves, Planning Commissions and Township Boards implement plans.

Finally, all public decisions relating to land use, transportation, and major capital improvements, that can be interpreted to influence the vision, must first be reviewed and acted upon by the Planning Commission. While the Township Board can take action contrary to the Planning Commission's recommendations, the Commission has the authority, according to state law, to evaluate such proposals regarding their consistency with the Master Plan. This gives the Commission the enormous responsibility of making sure that the Master Plan is current and generally consistent with what the public and the Board want the Township to be in the future.

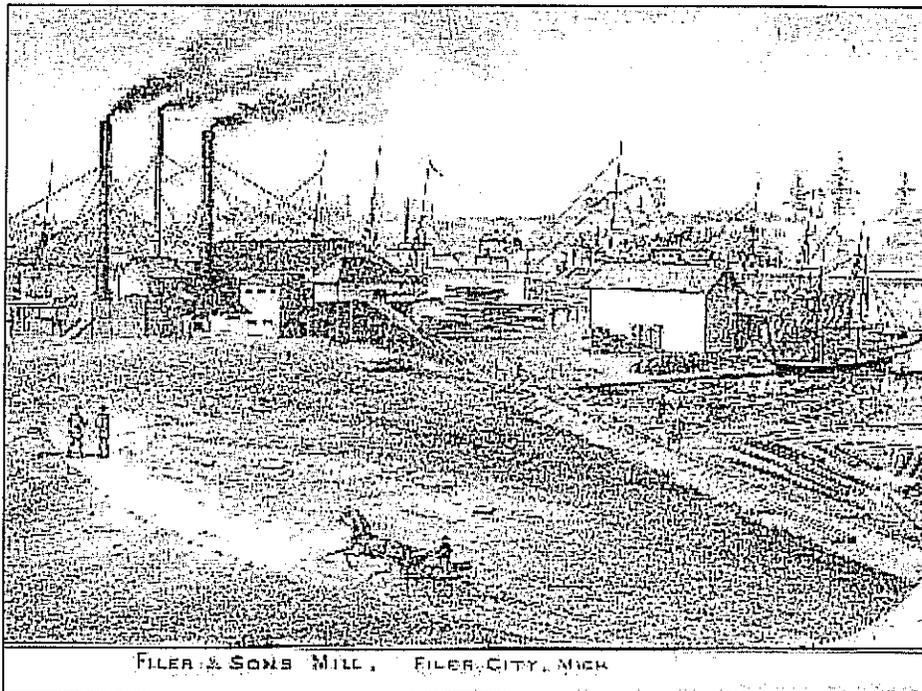
REGIONAL AND HISTORICAL SETTING

Filer Charter Township is located on Lake Michigan in Manistee County's southwestern corner, just south of the City of Manistee. The township consists of 16.5 square miles and approximately four miles of Lake Michigan shoreline. Filer Charter Township also boasts almost two miles of Manistee Lake shoreline. It is bordered on the north by the City of Manistee on the east by Stronach Township. Mason County is to the south and Lake Michigan is to the west.

Lumbering activity began in the area now known as Filer Township with the settlement of the Stronach family nearby in 1841. The lumbermen who came to Manistee County around this time were the first purchasers of the majority of land in Filer Township. Major activity commenced in 1867 when the Filer family, at the time one of the largest lumbering operators in Manistee County, moved to today's Filer City area. They built a large mill, platted a village, and commenced to log all the nearby land. About the same time, two other mills were built on Manistee Lake in today's Oak Hill area. With all of this activity, the Township established its own local government in 1868.

Industrial activity has continued to be centered in Filer City. The Filer and Sons mill operated until about 1914. This was replaced in 1917 by a pulp mill. Over the years, this plant has been sold and expanded into a large industrial center.

Filer Charter Township provides residents with a quasi-rural lifestyle and offers a high quality of life with a varied four-season recreational climate. The Township's Lake Michigan and Manistee Lake shoreline, as well as its inland lakes and streams provide some of the finest fresh water recreation opportunities in northwestern Michigan.



URBAN FORM

Filer Charter Township is a community with two distinct personalities. The old Company Town, Filer City, and to a lesser degree, Oak Hill, is an urban place with narrow streets, small lots, and land uses that intermix businesses, industries, and shops with homes. These are compact and walkable neighborhoods because they were developed prior to the advent of the automobile when walking was a necessity and industrial Manistee Lake, one of the Township's truly defining elements, was its highway. Auto parking in these areas does not dominate the landscape, choosing instead, to occupy street edges and small, shared parking lots.

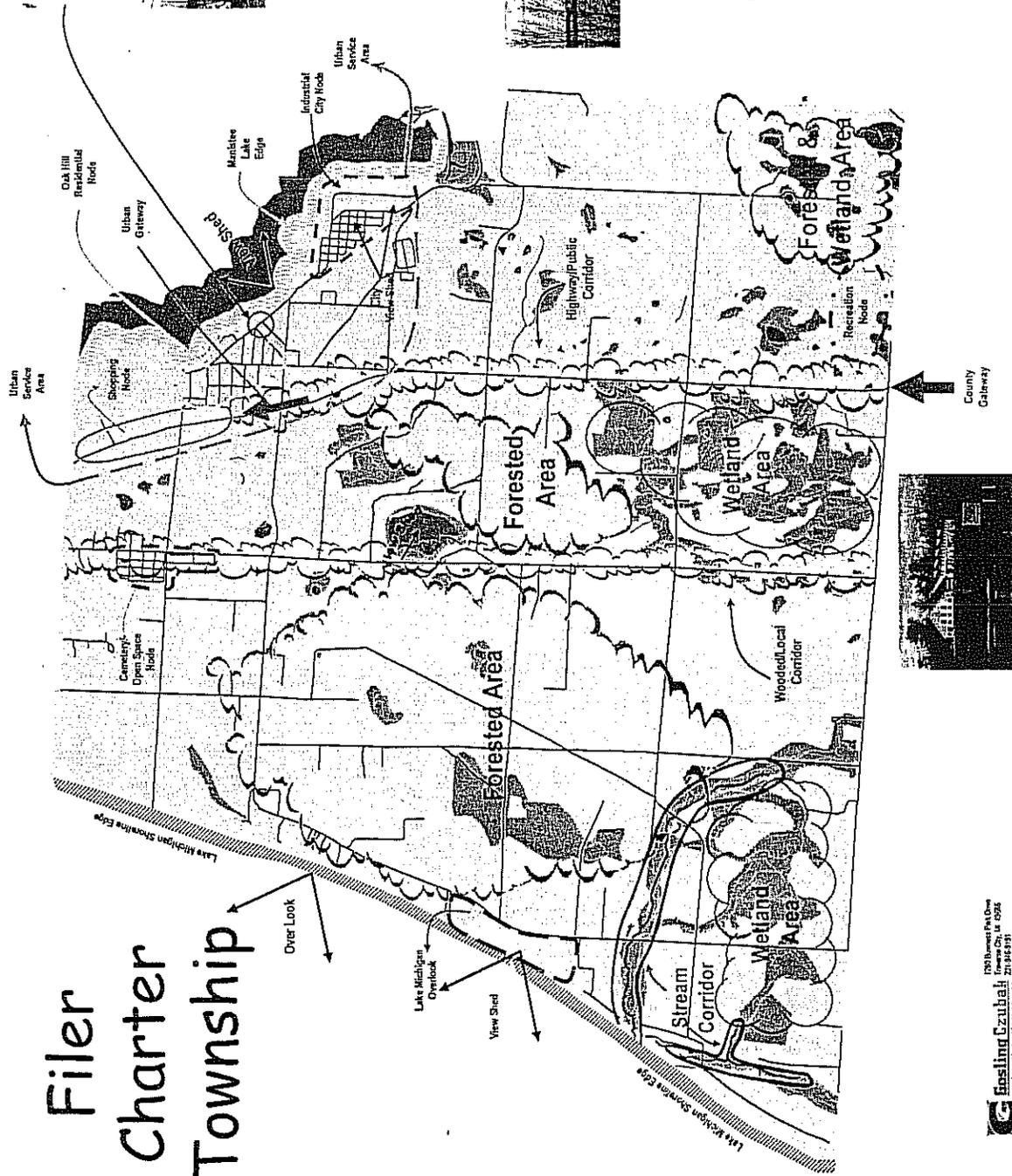
Both Filer City and Oak Hill are historic neighborhoods with historical street patterns and buildings that portray a unique character and identity. These neighborhoods feel like places that have a physical, visual, and social character based on the interrelationships of buildings and uses. While Oak Hill has been able to maintain its wonderful residential character, it has always been difficult for Filer City because of the dominance of heavy and obtrusive industry immediately next door. Nonetheless, these are very urban places that were developed more in the character and period of the City of Manistee.

The new Township represents a contrast with Filer City and Oak Hill. In fact, the memory of Filer City, the growing awareness of public health, and the influx of a seasonal population are likely the primary reasons for this change in land use patterns. The result has been very low-density development that generally stretches along road frontages and clearly separates residential uses from commercial and industrial uses. Furthermore, this contemporary pattern of development employs a one-building/one site approach and does not consider how development might relate to another use located next door. This pattern separates even similar and complementary uses to "protect" them from whatever might be located on an adjacent site.

While residential uses are generally tucked into wooded sites and are, therefore, not highly visible from road frontages, commercial development along US-31 exemplifies this one-building/one site approach. Each site accommodates a freestanding commercial use and each use has its own access to the Highway and overly generous parking located immediately in front of the building. This means that more parking is available than is actually needed, greater traffic conflict potential exists, and the need to widen the highway is increased. And, there is no provision for walking, except in driving aisles. While commercial development in Filer Township tends to be suburban in character, residential development in the more contemporary areas of the Township is very low in density and emulates a rural character, which is probably why residents elected to live here in the first place.

There is nothing inherently right or wrong about having two distinct community personalities so long as the servicing implications of this dichotomy are understood and equitably addressed by the Township's plans.

Filer Charter Township



Historic Town Center



Community Character Elements



County Gateway

HOUSEHOLDS

For the past five years an average of 16 housing units have been built per year in Filer Township based on known building permit activity. It is projected that the number of households will continue to increase, while the number of persons per household will decrease following national trends.

Year	Population	Households	Homes Built minus 3% for Vacancies	Persons per Household	Housing Units	Vacant Housing Units	Seasonal Housing Units
1960	1,704						
1970	1,921				580		
1980	2,143	718		2.98	786	68 (9%)	
1990	1,966	763		2.58	885	122 (14%)	47
1994		774					
1995	2,153	860	21	2.5			
1996		877	17				
1997		890	13				
1998		902	12				
1999		915	13				
2000	2,240*	935		2.4			
2010	2,600	1130		2.3			
2020	3,000	1330		2.25			

Bolded numbers have come from the 1990 United States Census Bureau.

*The 2000 Census indicates a population of 2,208, an increase of 12.3% since 1990.

POSTULATED GOAL STATEMENT

The following statement of goals was derived from two discussions with the Filer Charter Township Planning Commission on May 3 and June 7, 2000. They are based on the principle that the Township has two distinct characters or parts, one rural, the other urban, and that maintaining the character of both are essential to the future well being of the community.

1. Quality of Life.

To *protect and enhance* the quality of life in Filer Township (quiet, natural beauty, lakeshore, small town atmosphere, historic, safe).

2. Growth.

To provide opportunities for good design, mixed-use, *place making*, and flexibility to drive the growth of the Township.

3. Rural Character.

To promote development patterns that *preserve the Township's rural landscape and appearance* and minimize the visibility of rural area developments from roads.

4. Urban Form.

To establish consistent relationships between buildings and roads that create a *sense of place* and a meaningful urban character. Also, to encourage compact, walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods within the Township that provide opportunities for residents to work, shop, and play.

5. U.S. - 31 Corridor Visual Character.

To maintain the *gateway appearance* of the U.S.-31 corridor in areas that are currently rural and undeveloped.

6. Housing.

To encourage a *variety of housing*, including affordable housing, to satisfy the lifecycle needs of Township residents.

7. Urban Services.

To provide the full complement of urban services to the north U.S. - 31 shopping district, Oak Hill and Filer City in the interests of protecting the health, welfare, and safety of the most urban parts of the Township. Also, to maintain a level of services elsewhere in the Township commensurate with the demands of density.

8. Civic Space.

To promote the establishment of a historically significant public space that is the *focus of civic life* in the Township.

9. Economic Development.

To maintain the Township's role as a strong *partner in the regional economy* as a provider of shopping opportunities for the regional population.

10. Heritage/Culture.

To protect and build on the *historical, archeological and cultural character* of the Township.

11. Open Space Preservation.

To encourage the development of *planned communities* within the Township that preserve and incorporate natural features and maintain natural patterns and connections while protecting permanent open space.

12. Agricultural Land Preservation.

To maintain opportunities for farming while preserving the rural character and appearance of the Township.

13. Transportation.

To *protect the roadway capacity* of U.S. -31, maintain safety, and minimize the need for major capital improvements and expenditures for capacity enhancement.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Population projections for 2020 put the population of Filer Township at approximately 3,000 people with the average household size being 2.25 people. This represents an increase of 395 total households in Filer Township.

The recent trend has been to develop residential areas in "neighborhood like" settings under the current PUD ordinance. For the past 5 years an average of 16 houses has been built per year. Most of these houses (approximately 88%) have been built in new 'neighborhoods', while rural development has been declining.

The current average urban lot size in Filer Township is 22,000 square feet. By multiplying the estimated number of urban households (345) by the current average lot size (22,000 sq. ft.), we can estimate how much land will be needed for residential developments. It is also important to take into account that some multiple family homes may be built and some homes are still being built in rural areas. By taking all of these things into consideration, we can surmise that Filer Township is going to use approximately 175 acres of land for urban residential development between 2000 and 2020.

According to information provided from the Michigan Resource Information System Base Maps (MIRIS), in 1993 there was approximately three hundred (300) acres of vacant land in the commercially zoned district in Filer Township. Commercial uses will increase by 2020 due to a rise in population, but the changes will most likely be subtle. There is adequate land already zoned in commercial districts for expansion of commercial enterprises to support the increased demand based on anticipated population growth.

An increase in industrially zoned land is not foreseeable. Although the type of industry or the companies may change, a substantial increase in industrial activities in Filer Township is not expected. If a substantial new industrial employer decides to locate in Filer Township, it will likely generate a significant increase in households and population in the general area.

Land Use	Approximate Acreage to be utilized in the future
Residential	175
Commercial	0
Industrial	0
Other *	30

- * Other Land Uses refers to land that is used to support the infrastructure of a community such as land for schools, churches, roads, parks, etc.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES FOR COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DESIGN

“When we look at the most beautiful towns and cities of the past, we are always impressed by a feeling that they are somehow organic...Each of these towns grew as a whole, under its own laws of wholeness...and we can feel this wholeness, not only at the largest scale, but in every detail: in the restaurants, in the sidewalks, in the houses, shops, markets, roads, parks, gardens, and walls. Even in the balconies and ornaments”

Christopher Alexander,
A New Theory of Urban Design

The following are the planning principles and policies of Filer Charter Township.

1. **Consider every development as part of the larger neighborhood and community.** The problem with contemporary community development is that each site is planned and developed as if it needed to defend itself from neighboring sites and the larger community. Every site functions as an independent entity rather than as part of the larger whole. Each site provides its own parking, resulting in more land being used than is collectively needed. Each site depends on its own access creating more congestion and more dangerous streets. Each site has its own unused yards. And each building looks as though it has no relationship, either architecturally or functionally, to buildings on adjacent sites.
 - Require each development to demonstrate how it relates to and is part of the larger neighborhood and community and how it will become part of the development and natural patterns on adjacent sites.
 - Encourage the integration of new development with existing development so that everything is connected and a part of something else.
2. **Make things connect.** Recognizing that natural systems most always extend beyond the limits of a single site, these features should be connected and employed as the framework for future development.
 - Connect the valuable resources that define the Township and give it character including lakes, wetlands, stream corridors, viewsheds, parks, and historical features.
 - Require the connection of and protection of natural environmental corridors as the organizing structure, as greenway infrastructure, for future development.
 - Insure that greenways are sufficiently wide to serve as wildlife corridors.

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Filer Charter Township Master Plan

- Wherever possible interconnect activity centers and natural and historical elements with pedestrian and bikeways.
 - Interconnect new projects with existing development, via roads, shared drives, and pedestrian accesses, wherever possible, as means to facilitate emergency access and minimize the number of direct accesses to major roads and Highways.
3. **Create a “sense of place”. Make things look like you want them to look.** A few communities understand why they are great places. Others haven’t a clue about what makes them unique and memorable. In still others, they don’t value place making because they are just a place to sleep. Why do we have to give any thought to looking like an identifiable and memorable place? Unfortunately, most communities are more concerned about how they will be affected by traffic than how things will appear from the vantage point of the road.
- Require that development plans define and reflect the natural, historical, and cultural characteristics that make the community unique.
 - Establish a physical design framework, a look, which guides developers and the public in the planning and design of buildings and sites so they look like they belong to the larger whole.
 - Identify, preserve and restore the Township’s heritage, wherever possible.
 - Protect and incorporate valuable natural resources as elements of all development plans.
 - Create a community or civic focus as the social center for the Township.
 - Develop and refurbish places to live in urban service areas using traditional neighborhood design principles that create identifiable neighborhood places.
 - Minimize the visual impacts created by wireless communications facilities from road and residential vantage points by encouraging the use of existing structures, collocation of antennas, and the use of colors and materials that camouflage towers.
4. **Create land use patterns that foster convenience and safety and result in the least demand for supporting services and infrastructure.** Land use patterns dictate the type, scale, and nature of public services and facilities. The more development is spread out, the more cost is associated with serving it.
- Create development patterns that tightly mix uses for the sake of convenience and reductions in travel demand.

- Confine pure commercial uses to areas already zoned commercial or to infill commercial sites and accommodate new commercial development in areas requiring rezoning to be part of mixed use developments.
 - Establish increasingly compact districts rather than allowing development to strip along roadways.
5. **Maintain the rural character and appearance of the highway and road corridors.** With the exception of the commercial district, the highway and road environs are rural in appearance. This quality will change if not controlled and managed with the understanding of what is to be achieved. Commercial districts, on the other hand, tend to feature parking lots as their visual roadside focus. Buildings are set far back into the site as a backdrop.
- Insure that the development of road and highway frontages incorporates and protects the existing rural character of rural road frontages.
 - Establish a pattern for commercial development that features buildings as the primary roadside image and narrows the distances between buildings on either side of the road.
6. **Keep streets and highways from becoming barriers.** Wide streets and highways often create barriers for pedestrians, causing residents to become increasingly dependent on the automobile for mobility or being isolated if the auto is not a transit option. The young and elderly are especially disenfranchised where the auto is the only form of mobility. While cars will continue to have a significant presence in the community, they should neither dictate how people live nor restrict mobility. Moreover, street width is directly related to the numbers of points of access to them. The more private driveway accesses there are, the more street width is required to both carry traffic and accommodate turning movements. More and narrower streets with good access control have proven to carry more traffic with the least amount of impact on neighborhoods and loss of accessibility. And, land use and access can be planned to minimize road width, thus making friendlier pedestrian places.
- Generally limit local road width in urban and rural areas to two lanes plus single turn lanes at intersections.
 - Wherever possible, employ or encourage on-road parking on both sides of neighborhood streets and other devices to slow traffic.
 - Except for roads that intersect the Highway, require short intersection curb radii in urban service areas to facilitate pedestrian accessibility.
 - Establish patterns of land use and access that optimize the spacing and number of direct accesses to allow for the maintenance of the present Highway width throughout the US-31 Corridor.

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- Limit direct access to the Highway to well spaced public or private streets as a means to reduce congestion, minimize crashes, maintain capacity, minimize surface width, and improve traffic safety.
 - Always encourage the use of alternative accesses in lieu of direct access to the Highway.
 - Where direct Highway access cannot be avoided, require an access management plan that calls for well spaced shared accesses and future compliance with access standards.
7. **Establish transportation choices.** The Township has virtually no place for pedestrians to walk and limited transit options.
- Require sidewalks and/or bikeways on at least one side of all roads in urban service areas.
 - Cooperate with MDOT in developing a regional trail within the US-31 corridor.
 - Explore improvements in public transportation in cooperation with the City of Manistee and the school district to facilitate public transit choice and accessibility throughout the region.
 - Encourage the maintenance of rail service and all rights-of-way for future transportation use.
8. **Provide the full complement of housing.** Certainly, not everyone will wish to live in the same house for as long as they live in Filer Township and then elect to move away from familiar surroundings when their housing needs change. Likewise, business and industry need employees who in turn need to live somewhere nearby. If the housing stock is limited to higher value single-family units, there will be no place for any but the highest paid employees to live.
- Provide opportunities for a wide range of housing types to satisfy the lifecycle needs of Township residents of all income levels.
 - Consider a range of quality affordable housing types that cater to the needs of employees.
 - Disperse affordable housing throughout the community rather than concentrate it in larger developments.
 - Require a minimum of 10%, but not more than 20%, of housing units within projects consisting of 10 or more units be comprised of affordable housing.

9. **Think regionally, act locally.** Some decisions are just too big to be made exclusively by local governments. Virtually every decision will have at least some effect on the larger region but some such decisions must be made by local units. All decisions should be made to serve the best interests of the larger region as well as the Township.
 - Always consider the regional implications of local decisions, no matter how small that decision may seem, and act responsibly in the Region's and Township's best interests.
 - Cooperate with municipal neighbors, the County, and State in the consideration of a US-31 Bypass.

10. **Engage the public in planning.** While the tendency is for communities to plan for stuff like buildings, roads, parks and the like, the real purpose of planning is to plan for people and how and where they will live, shop, work and play. Thus, people having a stake in the community should be continuously and productively engaged in its planning.
 - Program and design public involvement (not just public hearings) as a regular component of all decision making.

11. **Provide urban services that represent the best value for residents and businesses and reflect the demands of density.** Public water is already available to the urban portions of the Township and sewer service is needed. Great care must be taken to objectively evaluate alternative methods of sewerage service/treatment to insure that the approach employed represents the best value for the ultimate users of the service, in balance with environmental effects, whether provided by the Township or some other entity.
 - Cooperate with neighboring municipalities to objectively evaluate alternative public service delivery options.
 - Use public utilities (sewer and water) as tools to encourage development within urban service areas.
 - Require all local and collector roads in Urban Service Areas to be paved with bituminous or similar hard surfaces and, with the exception of arterial roads, require gravel surfaces in areas designated as Rural Service Areas.

12. **Maintain the character of rural and agricultural areas.** While much of the rural area of the Township has been divided into large residential lots and is no longer farmed, the character of these areas has not yet been significantly altered. The character of these areas should be protected for as long as possible.

- Encourage the clustering of development as a means to preserve valuable natural resources and open space.
 - Create incentives to encourage the incorporation of desirable views and vistas, woodlands, farmlands, and the protection of ridgelines into development plans.
 - Encourage development in areas furthest from the urban service area to be delayed for as long as possible by requiring large lot developments.
13. **Reclaim the Lakeshore.** Industry as we know it will not always occupy the shoreline of Manistee Lake. Originally dependent^{on} the Lake for transportation and later rail, heavy industry will have less need to occupy the Lakeshore as historical transportation needs continue to weaken.
- Formulate plans for future reuse of the Lakeshore.
 - Protect the waters edge for future public use and access.
14. **Protect the public from industrial hazards.** The Township harbors an industry that processes and transports sour gas and oil containing high levels of hydrogen sulfide. Unless responsibly and prudently regulated, these activities could represent a significant public health hazard.
- Establish and enforce responsible standards for the release of hydrogen sulfide (H₂S) at wellheads, processing facilities, and pipelines.
 - Establish and maintain separation distances between wellheads, processing facilities, pipelines and residential areas and places where the public congregates, that minimize the potential for hazards.

LAND USE PLAN

The following descriptions represent the land use intent within the areas designated on the Land Use Plan:

Urban Residential – Areas designated Urban Residential correlate with the older residential areas of the Township and are intended to accommodate a variety of housing types ranging from attached and detached single-family to multiple-family housing. These richly historical areas are urban in nature with a distinct character that reinforces the feeling of neighborhood cohesion rather than a collection of unrelated houses. They are intended to infill with development of the same character as Oak Hill and Filer City with smaller lots, sidewalks, narrow paved streets with tree lawns built on a fine grid street pattern, alleys, public water and sewer utilities, on-street parking, and garages located in the rear yards, making buildings the prominent features of neighborhood streets, not garages.

Allowable densities in these areas are intended to range from a low of three units per acre for single-family housing to a high of 10 units per acre for multiple-family housing with flexibility allowed within these parameters by special use permit and PUD. Public and institutional uses including parks, churches, schools, historical features, and essential services are intended to be allowed in Urban Residential Areas, provided they are compatible and in scale with surrounding residential development.

Filer City is the most at risk residential area in the Township because of the influences of Lakefront industry. This area, in particular, should be studied to see whether there are opportunities and incentives to improve or rehabilitate the housing stock and strengthen the general character of the neighborhood.

Residential – Areas designated residential consist of low-density detached single-family housing that do not offer the full complement of urban services. These areas are intended to have on-site sewer and water systems and rural roads with improved surfaces, shoulders, and ditch sections. These areas are not intended to have publicly maintained parks but should have access to the Township's park system via an interconnecting trail network. Here, the rural appearance is intended to be perpetuated and tract subdivisions striped along roadways are to be avoided by the creative placement of structures and appropriate screening to minimize the appearance of homes from road frontages. Public and institutional uses that can be accommodated with on-site utilities and essential services are intended to support the needs of residential neighborhoods.

Densities are intended to range from not more than two residential units per gross acre for standard subdivisions, condominiums, and land divisions to three units per gross acre where clustering is employed, provided such developments have approved waste disposal systems and at least 40% of the land area is maintained as open space correlating with valuable natural features such as wetlands, steep slopes, mature trees, and shorelines. Where clustering is employed, lot sizes are intended to be based on the capability of the soils to accommodate on-site wastewater treatment. The intent is to preserve larger tracts

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Filer Charter Township Master Plan

of interconnected open space in residential areas. Such open space is not intended to be used or maintained as public land unless it exceeds an area of 10 contiguous acres. These areas are intended to be usable by residents of the development and to be connected to other existing or potential open space preservation areas. Connected open space preservation areas are intended to be protected by conservation easements or other appropriate measures.

Forest Residential – Forest Residential areas are rural in nature and have a very low density of one residential unit per 10 acres. They are intended for detached single-family housing that is serviced by on-site sewer and water utilities and rural road sections and the keeping of limited domestic livestock such as fowl and horses. Larger areas of interconnected open space, and especially trees, are intended to be preserved by the clustering and positioning of housing. A 20% density bonus is intended as an incentive to preserve open space and natural features provided developments have approved wastewater disposal systems and valuable natural features are preserved that interconnect with larger tracts of open space. Shared residential wastewater treatment systems are not intended to be employed in these areas. With the exception of essential services, forest and game preserves, and golf courses, uses that require public maintenance like parks are not intended to be located in Forest Residential areas.

Commercial – Commercial areas generally correlate with the existing retail development located along US-31. These areas are intended to accommodate pure commercial uses that augment the shopping center character of the corridor. These areas are intended to have limited and/or well spaced access to the Highway to minimize traffic conflicts and the need for Highway widening. Generally, these are shopping center type uses that cater to the shopping needs of the greater Manistee community. These areas are intended to be served by public utilities.

Mixed-Use – Mixed-use areas are intended to accommodate planned residential (attached and detached single-family housing and apartments at densities of up to 10 units per acre), commercial retail, limited industry (as described below), office, public, institutional, and recreational uses that have well-spaced or alternative access to US-31 and yet prominently display buildings rather than parking lots from the Highway. Properties within this area are intended to, be planned as larger land units (10 acres or larger in size), have a predominance of residential uses (over 50%), and integrate three or more of the specified uses to maximize compatibility. The emphasis with PUDs is to be more on establishing good relationships between buildings and uses, establishing walkable places, improving the appearance of development from streets and highways, preserving natural features, and respecting already existing residential areas rather than limiting uses.

All developments in Mixed-Use areas are intended to be processed as PUDs to insure that uses are compatible and complementary to each other and with uses that may border the PUD. Here, a host of design principles are intended to apply including requirements for generally smaller buildings, buildings facing the Highway and having a planned relationship with each other, minimum front building setbacks, parking primarily located at the side and rear of buildings (parking limited to a single bay width if located in front of

the building), shared parking, alternative access, quality building materials, use of windows, hidden loading docks, and no outdoor storage. Mixed-use developments are intended to be serviced by public sewer and water utilities as soon as they can be made available.

Limited Industry (should we be calling this Business Park?)– Limited industrial (business Park) areas are primarily places to work. They are intended to accommodate generally smaller employment uses involving manufacturing, testing, processing, assembly, and storage of finished or semi-finished products, and office uses all having no outdoor storage that is visible from residential areas or public roads and which have the need for neither rail nor Lake transportation. An incidental amount of commercial and retail development is also intended to be accommodated in support of the business park. These areas are intended to accommodate clean industries and support facilities that have a quality appearance from the road and meet high-level environmental performance standards. Such areas are intended to be serviced by public sewer and water utilities, when available.

Lakefront Industry – Lakefront industrial areas correlate with the existing industrial development located on Manistee Lake. This area is intended to accommodate larger employers that depend on the Lake or rail to satisfy their transportation needs. It is intended to be serviced by public sewer and water utilities and its boundaries are intended to remain fixed.

Heavy industry was the catalyst for the original settlements of Filer City and Oak Hill and it continues to have a significant influence in the neighborhood. On the other hand, this area is susceptible to change over the next 20 years and any new industries should be held to a higher standard of site design and lakeshore protection than those present. Future users may not have a need for either rail or Lake transportation so this area may actually lose its historical allure for heavy industry suggesting a change in use to clean industry, office, residential, institutional, and open space uses attributable to the growing amenity value of the lakeshore. It is intended that thought be given to the possible reuse of the Lakeshore 20 or more years into the future as industries elect to seek other locations or are eliminated through merger.

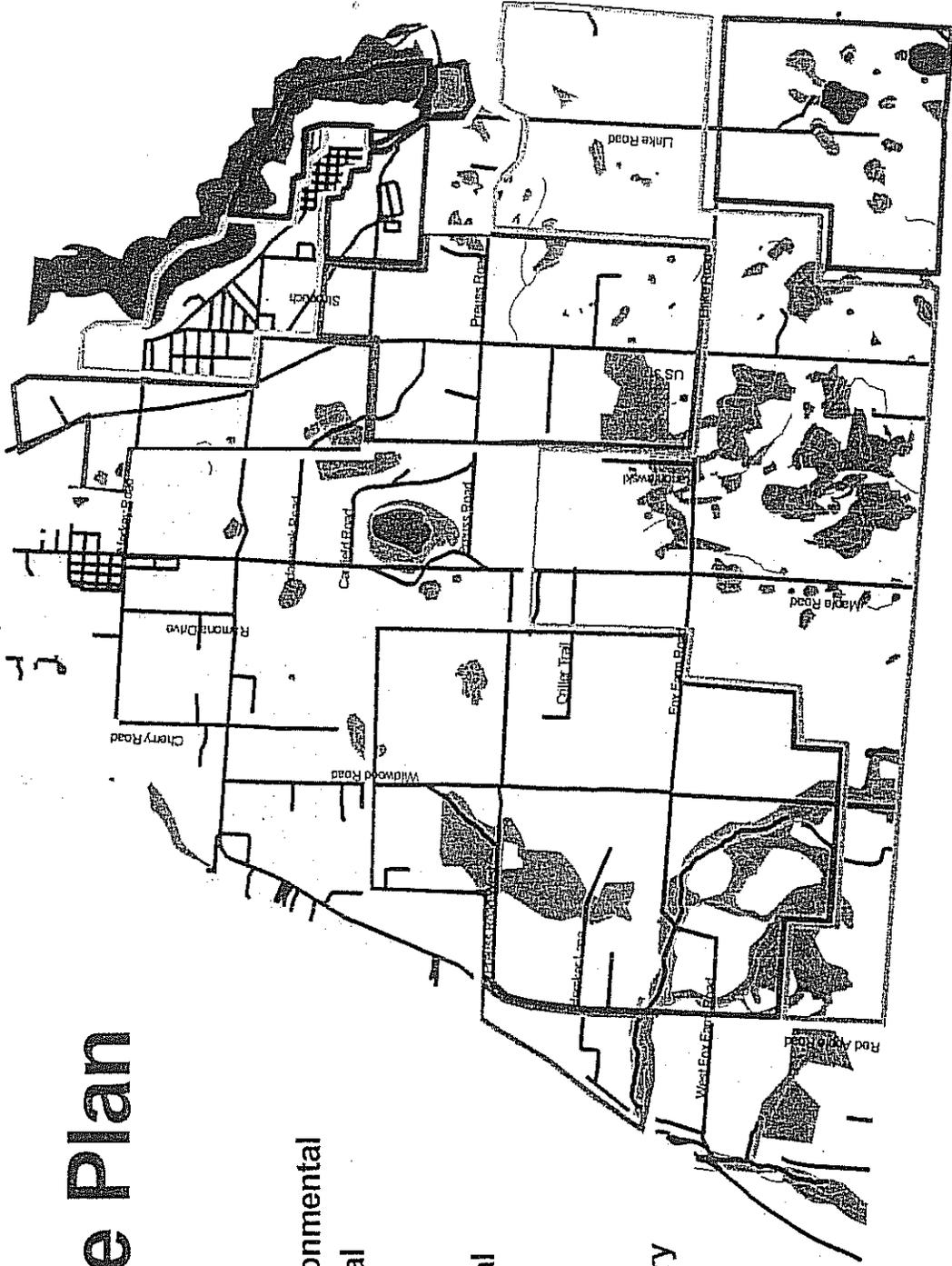
Agriculture – Though only a few operations remain, farming is intended to be encouraged for as long as possible with minimum conflicts from residential uses. In order to minimize conflicts, the residential density in Agricultural areas is intended to be one unit per 10 acres and farming operations are intended to be small, providing for such limited agricultural uses as the raising of farm animals, the production and sale of agricultural crops such as fruits, grain, vegetables, greenhouse plants, trees and nursery plants, related farming activities, roadside stands, and home-based businesses.

In Agricultural areas, rural road sections are intended and the clustering of housing is encouraged, provided residential units have access to an improved road (no access allowed to US-31, however) and approved on-site wastewater treatment is provided. Clustering is encouraged both to protect natural resources and to provide for the continuation of

Filer Charter Township
 Manistee County

Land Use Plan

-  Lakeshore/Environmental
-  Forest Residential
-  Agriculture
-  Residential
-  Urban Residential
-  Commercial
-  Limited Industry
-  Mixed Use
-  Lakefront Industry



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Filer Charter Township Master Plan

farming. A 30% density bonus is intended as an incentive to encourage clustering. With the exception of essential services, and privately owned golf courses, uses requiring public maintenance such as public parks and institutional buildings are not intended to be permitted in Agricultural areas. Shared residential wastewater treatment facilities are not intended to be employed in Agricultural areas.

Lakeshore/Environment – These areas are essentially lakeshore protection areas that are either owned by the Township or are wetlands needing protection. These are high amenity areas that will remain as permanent open space and view sites. The only improvements that are intended to be allowed in these areas are to be recreational in nature.

TRANSPORTATION PLAN – FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

The transportation plan consists of one major arterial road (US-31), urban and rural collector roads, and urban and rural local roads. The plan also advocates the employment of access management to minimize the amount of future roadway needed to satisfy travel demands.

Principal Arterial.

US-31 is classified as a Principal Arterial under the National Functional Classification System. It is also on both the National Highways of Significance System and the Priority Commercial Network.

US-31 is the only Principal Arterial in the system. Its primary function is to carry relatively high volumes of traffic, medium to long distances, to and through the Township. It is intended that arterial roads offer only very limited direct land access, primarily at road intersections and shared commercial driveways, that accesses be well spaced or alternative access be provided, that major intersections be signalized, and that no on-street parking be allowed. Arterials are primarily intended to carry through traffic, not to provide direct access to individual homes and businesses. Limiting the number and type of direct accesses will provide for less conflict and safer travel if the road width remains as narrow as possible, except at intersections where turning lanes may be warranted to facilitate traffic movement. Access management is especially needed throughout all segments of US-31 in Filer Charter Township to maintain the efficiency and safety of the road.

Collector Roads

Urban collectors such as Merkey Road and 28th Street are intended to carry moderate volumes of traffic relatively short distances, collecting traffic from urban local streets and distributing it to other collectors and arterials. These are intended to be built to an urban standard with paved surfaces, curb and gutter, piped storm drainage rather than ditches, and associated sidewalks, bikeways or trails. Urban collector roads are intended to be two to four lanes in width providing for two moving lanes of traffic plus on-street parking. Turning lanes are warranted at major intersections. Accesses are intended to be adequately spaced to maintain traffic capacity. Wherever possible direct access to collectors should be limited to roads and shared driveways. Design practices and features are encouraged that slow traffic to less than 35 miles per hour.

Rural collectors are intended to carry relatively low volumes of traffic longer distances in areas of the Township where rural residential development exists. Improved rural collectors are two lane roads with paved surfaces, shoulders, and ditches. Rural collector roads with minimum improvements are also two lane roads with graveled or paved surfaces, shoulders, and ditches. Direct access from homes and businesses to rural collectors is intended to be permitted but developments having two or more buildings are intended to share driveways and roads. All collectors are intended to be public roads and have a minimum surface width of 24 feet where on-street parking is not allowed.

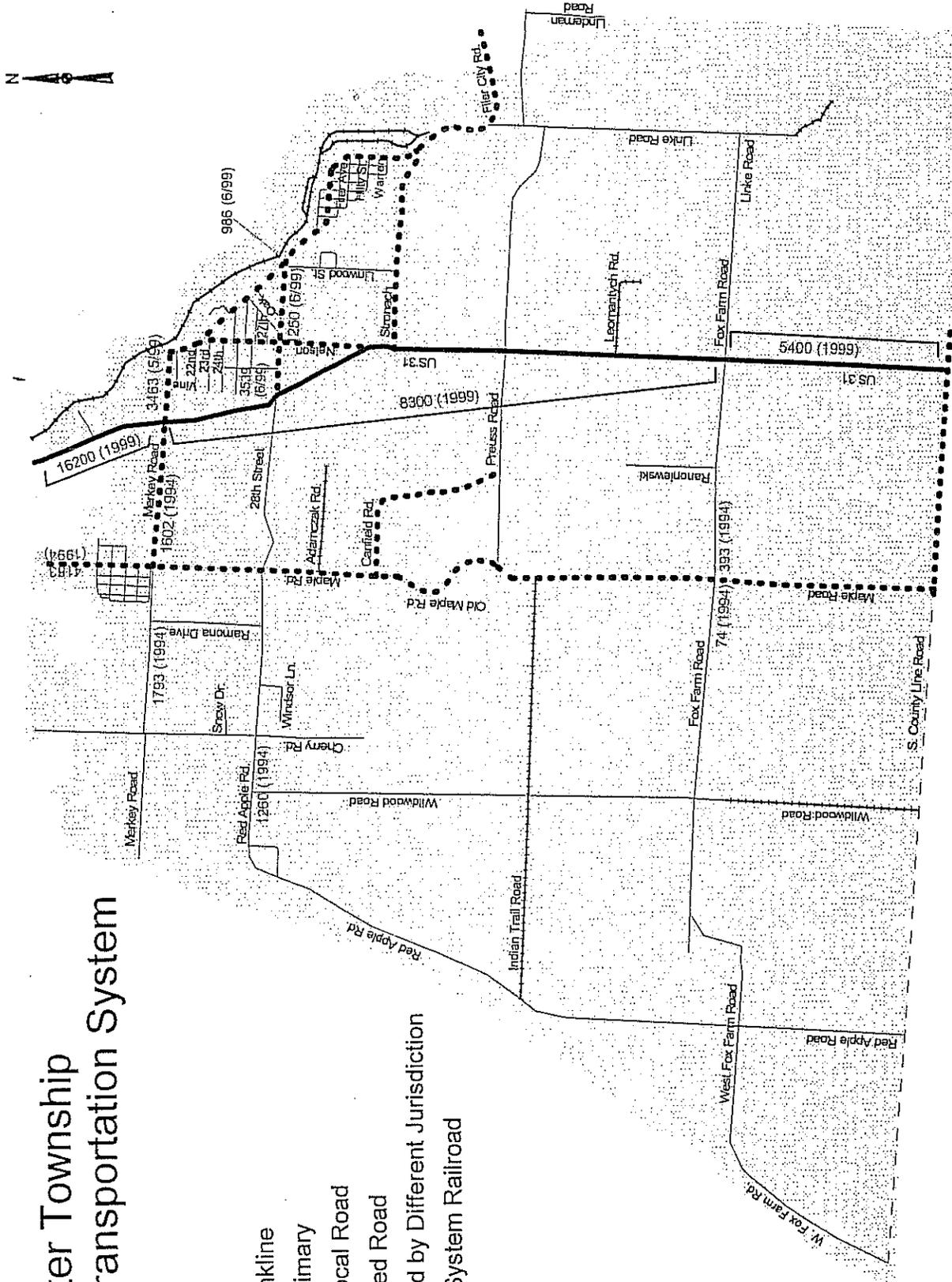
Local Roads and Streets

Urban local streets are primarily intended to carry neighborhood traffic short distances to and from homes and businesses to collector roads. These are intended to have two moving traffic lanes with paved surfaces, curb and gutter, short curb radii, piped storm drainage, sidewalks, and on-street parking. Street design and improvements are encouraged that slow traffic to less than 30 miles per hour.

Rural local roads are intended to have graveled surfaces with ditch sections, or, at the discretion of developers and residents, private roads with paved surfaces. These are intended to be either public or private roads and have a minimum surface width of 20 feet where on-street parking is not allowed. The minimum width for local roads with parking on both sides is intended to be 26 feet, allowing for a "Yield" traffic flow (to be illustrated).

Filer Charter Township Existing Transportation System

-  State Trunkline
-  County Primary
-  County Local Road
-  Unimproved Road
-  Maintained by Different Jurisdiction
-  Chessie System Railroad



IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Zoning Ordinance

This Master Plan establishes core concepts, ideas, and policies that are not consistent with the Township's present Zoning Ordinance. This means that the Ordinance will need to be amended or rewritten to support the plan or none of the ideas in the Plan will ever be realized. As the primary Plan implementation tool, zoning must reflect the directions established by the Plan.

Some examples of needed changes include the following:

1. Updating of Article 88, Planned Unit Development, to reflect the intent and purpose of the Mixed-use category of land use as specified by the Master Plan. The existing PUD ordinance is generally deficient in those things needed to make it a useful tool for creating planned communities.
2. Article 60, the Limited Industrial District, permits uses that are not intended to be allowed in the areas so designated on the Land Use Plan. In particular, Oil and Gas processing facilities, and Open-air display areas for the sale of manufactured products, do not fit with the Business Park concept established by the Land Use Plan.
3. The Zoning Ordinance currently has no access management regulations. This is a major theme of the Master Plan. An access management ordinance would regulate the nature, and spacing of accesses to major roads, and especially the Highway, to maintain their traffic carrying integrity and improve safety.
4. The urban form proposed by the Land Use Plan for Urban Residential areas and areas located near the Highway is not addressed by the current Zoning Ordinance and such patterns will not be realized unless the Ordinance is amended to reflect the Plan. This is perhaps one of the most critical changes to the Ordinance in terms of its affect on future development.
5. Institutional uses are permitted in the Agricultural Residential District as Special Uses even though the Master Plan specifies that such areas should have minimal public services. If the intent is to limit services, uses must also be restricted to those, which require little or no service.
6. Zoning district boundaries and district names may also need to change to reflect the intent of the Master Plan.

There are numerous other inconsistencies like the incentive based clustering and density bonuses advocated by the Master Plan and the preservation of open space that need to be regulated very clearly by the Zoning Ordinance. The effort to ensure that the Master Plan will be implemented successfully will require a significant rewriting of the Ordinance.

Public Utilities

Perhaps the biggest issue facing the Township is the need for public sewers in areas designated for Urban Residential, Mixed-use, and Limited Industry. While the Township offers public water service to Urban Residential areas, sewers will not be available to the

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areas that need them without a large expenditure of public moneys, a lot of planning and cooperation, and the resolution of numerous environmental and political concerns.

A number of alternatives should be evaluated including: 1) connecting to the Manistee City system, 2) cooperating with PCA to provide for shared treatment at the present PCA plant, 3) connecting a new Township plant to the PCA outfall sewer, and/or 4) building a new sewage treatment facility to serve the Township alone or both the Township and PCA. Also, the treatment of septage should be considered as part of some of these alternatives. Because of the seriousness of this issue, none of these options can afford to be discarded without first doing an exhaustive analysis.

The Township should undertake a feasibility study to determine which of the options will best reflect the interests and needs of the resident users of such a system recognizing that not all Township residents do now or will have a need for public sewer service in the future.

There are two major concerns that need to be explored in the evaluation of alternatives, the effects on the environment and the costs to provide the service, especially the cost to the ultimate users of the service. Therefore, both need to be explored as part of the feasibility study.

Regarding costs, the City has at least broached the idea of offering treatment services to existing development within the Township at a cost that reasonably reflects its cost to treat the wastewater. The City is not willing to service commercial development in the Township that competes with business in the City at these same favorable rates. Nonetheless, there may be room to negotiate an agreement with the City that may be more favorable, both environmentally and cost-wise to the user, warranting further consideration. With this approach the Township could elect to have the City own the collection system or it could own and maintain the collection system itself.

Treatment through the PCA facility will present a new dynamic since there may be the need to upgrade the treatment plant, raising public vs. private ownership issues. A complete new treatment facility will give the Township the highest level of control, however, it will also impose a new set of urban service responsibilities on the Township, as well as major environmental concerns, to provide a relatively small portion of the Township with sewage treatment and collection services.

US-31 Improvements – Access Management

Undoubtedly, the issue of widening US-31, or its relocation, will arise in the future because of the existing bottleneck in the City of Manistee. The Master Plan establishes policies that would maintain the Highway's current width, except at intersections, by requiring alternative access and limiting access to well-spaced roads plus a few shared private driveways. If the Township is diligent about enforcing these policies, the Highway may not require widening or relocation. Of course, the ultimate outcome may depend on how Manistee Township intends to deal with the Highway issue.

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Filer Charter Township Master Plan

If the Highway is relocated to the east as has been suggested, a significant volume of traffic will be able to bypass the Township's commercial district. The degree to which the district depends on passing vs. destination traffic is unknown. This would have to be determined as part of a joint realignment study that would need to be undertaken by MDOT and the affected municipalities. Such a realignment study would have to consider the benefits of realignment vs. its political, environmental and socio-economic costs. It may not be practicable to relocate the Highway, even if seemingly justifiable, which means that the integrity and capacity of the present road will need to be guarded religiously if it is to remain as the shared thread that connects the urban area's three communities.

Since two-lane roads with turn lanes at intersections appear to be the most efficient means to carry traffic according to recent studies, access management will be an invaluable tool in protecting the capacity of existing US-31 whether or not it is relocated in the future. The Township should therefore develop an access management ordinance for the US-31 corridor as part of the updating of the Zoning Ordinance in accordance with MDOT guidelines. The Township should also cooperate fully with the several municipalities affected by the possible relocation of US-31 and MDOT to insure that the correct decisions are made and all alternatives are adequately considered.

Public Transit

The Township is well served by a demand responsive dial-a-ride transit service. While this service is currently adequate to satisfy the needs of Township residents, there will be a growing need to improve service within the more urban areas of the Township as the population grows older, densities increase, and gasoline prices soar. This may include fixed route service between Filer City and the City of Manistee to facilitate the movement of employees to and from employment and shopping centers in both communities. The Township should continue to play an active leadership role to insure that the ever-changing transit needs of the Township will be satisfied.

Open Space Preservation

If the clustering of housing and "making things connect" are to be encouraged throughout the Township in an effort to preserve "greenway infrastructure", there will be the need to create the mechanisms that will make that a reality short of land acquisition. This will require the employment of such things as the transfer of development rights (TDR) and the dedication of open space by irrevocable conveyance including deed restrictions, protective covenants, and conservation easements. Dedication of open space may have application in some instances via farmland trusts, conveyance to homeowners associations, condominium agreements, and transfer of deed to the Township or some other governmental agency. Criteria should be established to determine when each of these tools would be considered to be acceptable.

Capital Improvements Program (CIP)

Because of the substantial costs that may be associated with developing a sanitary sewage treatment/collection system, the Township should study all of its long-term capital needs and decide how they will be paid for and over what time frames. In some manner or form, all public improvements compete for dollars with all other improvements so everything cannot be built because there are not enough monies to do everything. The idea of a

Capital Improvements Program is to compile a list of both needed and desired capital projects generally exceeding a cost of \$10,000 and prioritizing their construction or purchase over a 5 to 6-year period. Such improvements may include, but not be limited to, fire equipment, public utilities, building construction or remodeling, parkland acquisition and development, sidewalks and bikeways, and parking lot improvements. Every year the CIP should be reevaluated and updated. Priorities are frequently altered based on the availability of money. Anticipated sources of funding are also listed including grants. If this process has not yet been institutionalized as an annual procedure, it should be done in conjunction with the consideration of how to satisfy the sewage treatment needs of the Township. A capital committee could be established each year to assist the Board with the updating process.

Design Framework

Filer Charter Township has a wealth of natural, historical, and cultural characteristics that make it a truly unique and identifiable place. These characteristics will be lost if they are not carefully documented and then carefully repeated. If the Township is concerned about preserving its character it will have to achieve an understanding of what makes this a great place and then replicate the forms that give it its character. In order to do this, an urban design framework should be formulated with help from an architect and/or urban designer. The framework would establish standards for public and/or private facilities including building, road and highway, landscape, Township entry, and civic space design. The intent is to create a consistent appearance or "look" throughout the Township that is recognizable to both residents and visitors and will be the source of pride for those who live in the Township.

Affordable Housing

The shortage of affordable housing is one of the most difficult problems facing communities today. Every urban township and city has such a housing shortage but few have the conviction to do anything about it, forcing people of modest income to travel long distances from rural areas to places of employment within the urban area.

According to the US Government, an affordable house is one where not more than 30% of a family's income is used to pay the total cost of housing including principle, interest, taxes, insurance, maintenance and utilities. The National Association of Home Builders defines an affordable house as one priced at approximately three times the annual household income. Affordable housing may actually range from \$40,000 to \$120,000, or the equivalent in rent, depending on family composition and income.

There are numerous barriers to providing affordable housing including discriminatory development regulations and policies, land use policies that affect costs, raw land costs, site development costs, construction costs and the development review process, none of which will be easily overcome. What can be done to encourage affordable housing even though the Township does not regulate housing construction? First, the Township should require, by ordinance, that housing and mixed-use developments provide a minimum percentage of housing in the affordable range as a condition of project approval and that density bonuses be available to developers that provide affordable housing. This would be consistent with the policy statement on page 13 of this plan. Secondly, the Township

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Filer Charter Township Master Plan

should work closely with the Manistee County Housing Review Board and the State of Michigan to obtain grants and loans for affordable housing and housing rehabilitation. Thirdly, the Township could be proactive in establishing a site for a small manufactured home development of say 30 or less units within areas designated for residential development by the Land Use Plan. Such development would require both public sewer and water services. This too may require assistance from the County and State. Such an initiative, however, may not be politically acceptable to existing residents. Since the Township has no staff available to administer housing programs and initiatives, it will have to do those things that require a minimum of effort but still have some potential for success.

Intergovernmental Cooperation

Even when they are immediate neighbors, municipalities do not much talk to one another until a crisis has already arisen. So many issues could be avoided and so much money saved if neighbors would try to resolve shared problems before issues arise. The most contentious contemporary issues between the City and Township, even though the Township is chartered, are annexation and the delivery of sanitary sewer services. A joint written policy should be established for when and under what circumstances annexation would be agreeable. Furthermore, efforts should be made to negotiate a sewer service agreement with the City as a first resort, if that option appears to be the most feasible and desirable from cost and environmental standpoints for the ultimate users of the service. Mediation may be needed to resolve issues of such great importance to the two parties. The Township should take the initiative in establishing a stronger relationship with all of its neighbors, in particular the City of Manistee.

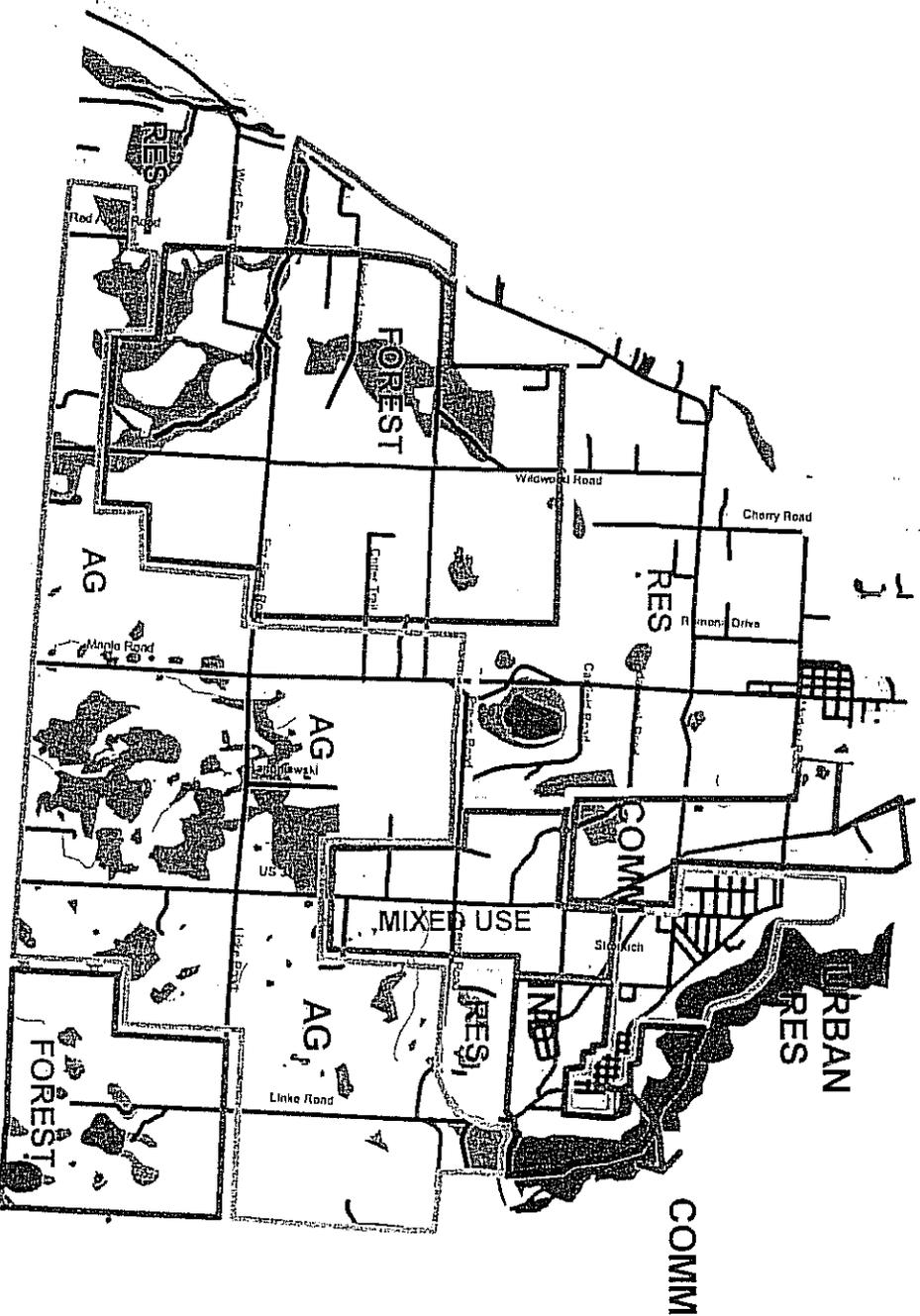
Ongoing Public Involvement

Only bureaucracies truly believe that public hearings, after all the decisions have been made, are a form of public input. Actually, a public hearing can be very useful to signify the formal completion of a project, plan, rezoning, or study, but unless there has been considerable public involvement prior to the hearing, only those who disagree with the outcome will show up. The Township should adopt a procedure that almost always provides opportunities for its citizenry to participate in, listen to, and comment on projects in progress as a means to improve credibility for the outcomes and those having to make the ultimate decisions. The public should be made aware of the problems for which solutions are being sought and they should participate in the formulation of project objectives and the development and evaluation of alternative solutions. Where such processes are strictly followed, the quality of decisions is generally much better.

Filer Charter Township
Manistee County

Land Use Plan

-  Lakeshore/Environment
-  Forest
-  Agriculture
-  Urban Residential
-  Residential
-  Commercial
-  Light Industrial
-  Mixed Use



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From Highway to My Way

By Reid Ewing

You know the world is changing when everyone from the Federal Highway Administration to state and local transportation officials uses words such as “flexible” and “context sensitive” to describe highway design.



Now that the nation's highways are nearly complete, transportation professionals are turning their sights on local communities and the inherent links between transportation systems and surrounding land uses.

There is a lot of confusion about exactly what constitutes context-sensitive highway design, what latitude exists under current standards and guidelines, what tort liability attaches to such efforts, and what effect context-sensitive designs will have on traffic safety and service levels. This article seeks to sort out myth from fact.

Main Street destroyed

In the course of writing *Best Development Practices* (1996; APA Planners Press), I visited every medium-sized town with any historic character in the state of Florida. I was on a quest for the best traditional small towns in the state, hoping to find lessons applicable to contemporary development projects. Unfortunately, I found very few good examples, mostly because of what was happening along

Main Street. Main Street, usually part of the state highway system, no longer functioned as a comfortable shopping street. It was too wide, and on-street parking had been removed, street trees replaced with asphalt, and sidewalks narrowed. Strip commercial development seemed the only practical land use. The traditional towns that did end up in the book, such as Dade City, had somehow managed to evade the standard DOT definition of “progress.”

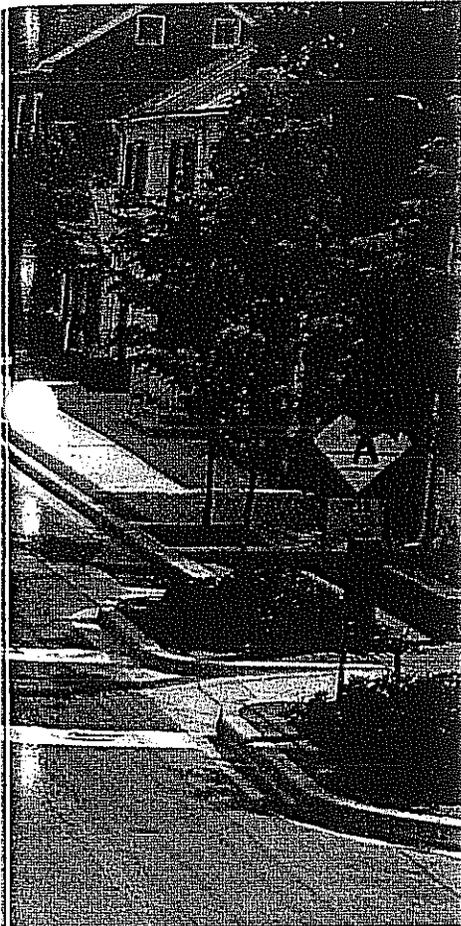
The problem of context-insensitive highways is not, of course, unique to Florida, nor to

small towns, nor to state highways. Instead of gracious boulevards, avenues, and shopping streets, America's urban areas are crisscrossed by arterials and collectors that move traffic but have no power to move men's souls.

DOTs vs. dots

Here are several examples proving that change is in the air. U.S. Route 6 narrows to two lanes as it runs through the town of Brooklyn, Connecticut. Sight distance is less than 250 feet at one point, driveways are closely spaced, and there is little roadside clearance should a

East Main Street in Westminster, Maryland, after reconstruction. The community avoided widening the road and eventually took over its operation and maintenance. Hundreds of street trees, midblock crosswalks, and other amenities were installed.



driver lose control. Yet traffic speeds through the town still range up to 54 mph.

A 1991 state plan sought to correct these dangerous conditions by widening the road to four lanes, straightening the alignment, and adding eight-foot shoulders. The village appealed the plan to the Federal Highway Administration under the National Environmental Policy Act, and the Connecticut Department of Transportation was sent back to the drawing board.

ConnDOT's next proposal was a bypass around the town, which was also rejected.

Finally, after years of additional planning, a compromise was reached in 1998. It keeps the existing alignment through the town center, retains the two-lane cross section, adds narrow shoulders and sidewalks, and realigns the road marginally at the most dangerous curve. Reconstruction will be completed in 2003.

In Anchorage, Alaska, engineers proposed the conversion of 15th Avenue into a one-way couplet with 14th Avenue after a safety study documented high accident rates and standard geometrics. However, residents of the adjacent Rogers Park neighborhood had seen one-way couplets in operation in midtown, and this was exactly what they didn't want. The couplets moved traffic efficiently but divided the community much as a freeway would.

And so began a four-year process of redesign that in 1998 resulted in a four-lane, tree-lined boulevard on the east end, and a narrowed three-lane cross section on the west. When construction is completed later this year, lanes will be maintained at their current 11-foot width, and shoulders excluded. Instead of a shoulder, a wide gutter pan will provide a refuge area and bike-friendly surface. Sidewalks will be set back from the street for the first time.

In Westminster, Maryland, the base layer of East Main Street needed reconstruction, underground utility lines had to be replaced, and the storm drain system needed upgrading. After checking the Maryland Roadway Design Manual, the district engineer proposed widening the road to 40 feet. Widening would have provided 12-foot travel lanes and eight-foot parking lanes on each side. It also would have eliminated nearly all street trees and reduced the sidewalk width to two feet in places.

After learning about the widening, a local resident began a campaign to preserve the street's historic character. She appealed to the mayor, who convinced the Maryland State Highway Administration to reconstruct within the street's existing dimensions. The result is a classic main street with "bulb out" curb extensions at intersections, midblock crosswalks, hundreds of additional street trees, and brick surfacing in the crosswalks.

In these and many other cases uncovered in our research, the need for road improvements was undeniable, but standard design solutions were unacceptable to the people most affected by them—those along the right-of-way. The resulting tension between DOT and community goals led to compromise and context-sensitive designs.

Reform at the top

Before 1991, all roads built in the U.S. and paid for even in part with federal funds had to meet guidelines in the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) "Green Book" (A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets). If officials wanted to do something different, their only options were to seek design exceptions from the Federal Highway Administration or to build entirely with state and local funds.

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) changed all that by creating a National Highway System made up of the interstate system and other high-performance state highways, 160,000 miles of roadway in all.

Other roads became eligible for federal funding under a separate surface transportation program. For roads not on the NHS, ISTEA gave states latitude to adopt alternative design, safety, and construction standards.

ISTEA was followed by two other milestones. The National Highway System Act of 1995 provided that even NHS highways (other than interstate highways) could be designed to take into account the environmental, scenic, aesthetic, historic, community, and preservation impacts of any proposed activity. Two years later, the Federal Highway Administration published *Flexibility in Highway Design*, which forcefully advocates flexible design of highways running through communities, encouraging highway designers to exercise flexibility within existing AASHTO guidelines.

Reform in the states

At the state level, much of the effort to promote context sensitivity has been process- and people-oriented. Five states (Connecticut, Kentucky, Maryland, Minnesota, and Utah) are participating in a joint FHWA/AASHTO training program. Many states, including New Jersey, have launched training efforts of their own. The New Jersey training consists of five day-long sessions on such unconventional topics (at least for highway engineers) as placemaking, respectful communication, and negotiation and conflict management.

While such efforts are laudable, they inevitably run up against engineering constraints unless DOT standards and policies are revised. Michael King, a consultant on the NJDOT flexible highway design project, surveyed 21 states to find out about their efforts to develop new standards and policies. As evident in the accompanying table, substantive changes are happening at the state level now.

Don't blame the Green Book

King found that few states have adopted sub-SHTO geometric standards. Among those that have, deviations from Green Book values are relatively slight. The difference between the cross-sectional width of a two-lane urban arterial under Vermont's much heralded design standards and that under the Green Book minimums is only three feet (43 vs. 46 feet). Notably, Dave Scott, director of project development and keeper of the Vermont standards, has advised our New Jersey study team not to recommend anything less than AASHTO minimums because there is little to gain on urban main streets.

This is not to say that the AASHTO Green Book is without shortcomings. Its design guidelines are often based on studies dating from a time when tires, braking systems, pavements, and vehicle dimensions were less forgiving than today's. However, these guidelines mostly affect the design of high-speed rural roads. The issue in the New Jersey study is whether good urban streets can be accomplished under AASHTO guidelines.

Here are some of the AASHTO guidelines for urban arterials:

- Design speed. AASHTO allows design speeds as low as 31 mph in central business districts and intermediate areas. Posted speeds would ordinarily be considerably lower.

- Lane width. The minimum lane width is 9.8 feet for urban arterials with little or no truck traffic. A minimum of 10.8 feet is prescribed for general traffic on urban arterials designed for speeds up to 37 mph.

- Setback of street trees. On curbed sections, the minimum clearance from the curb face is 1.6 feet. A 3.3-foot clearance is considered desirable, particularly near intersections and driveways where turning vehicles may overhang the curb.

- Midblock crosswalks. AASHTO is neutral on these.

- On-street parking. Parallel parking is allowed where adequate street capacity is available.

- Corners. Corner radii of 9.8 to 13.7 feet are reasonable under constrained conditions. On arterials carrying high volumes, larger radii are recommended (in some cases, much larger) to facilitate turns to and from the through lanes.

- Pedestrian refuge islands. Median islands are encouraged where space permits.

- Sidewalks. The minimum border width, including sidewalk and planting strip, is 7.9 feet; 11.8 feet is preferred.

- Barrier curbs. Barrier curbs are encouraged in areas of high pedestrian traffic and speeds up to 37 mph, or on discretionary basis, up to 50 mph. At higher speeds, barrier

curbs do not act as barriers anyway.

The conclusion: It appears that we cannot place too much blame on the Green Book for the sorry state of urban streets.

Liability isn't the issue, either

Governments used to have general immunity from tort liability, but that has changed since the 1960s, as various courts and legislatures made it possible for individuals and groups to sue in cases where government fails to exercise due care in its decisions.

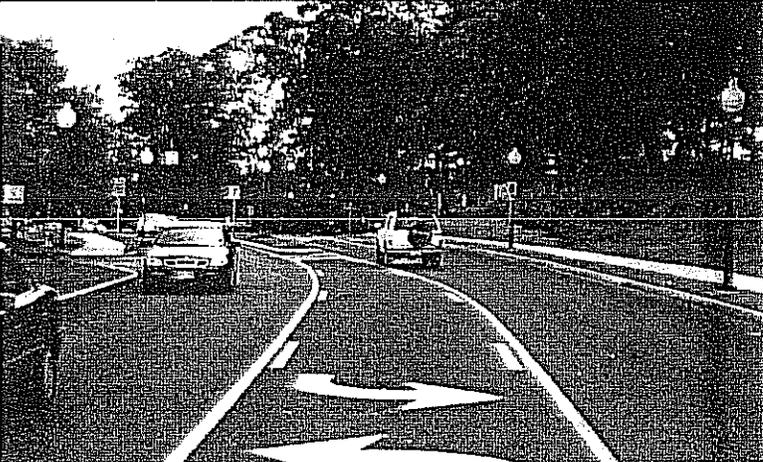
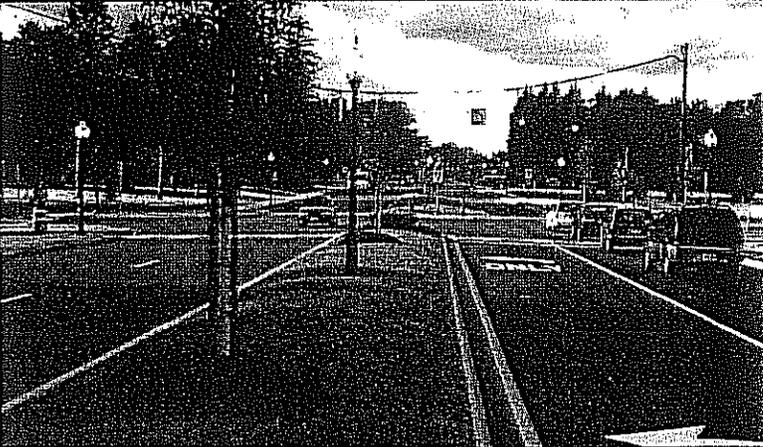
Government decisions are now divided into two classes: discretionary (planning decisions) and ministerial (operational decisions). Discretionary decisions involve a choice among valid alternatives and are generally immune from tort claims. Ministerial decisions leave minimal leeway for personal judgment and are not immune.

As part of our study for New Jersey DOT, we surveyed statutory and recent case law in 16 states. With the sole exception of local roads in Vermont, all states had replaced sovereign immunity with more limited discretionary immunity.

New Jersey has a Tort Claims Act that leaves the state almost completely immune from tort liability resulting from design-related decisions. All it takes is for the right body or person to approve a design (or the

At least a dozen states are changing the standards and policies covering their main streets.

State	NEW STANDARDS ADOPTED AND APPLICABLE TO MAIN STREETS
Connecticut	New standards for tree setback and clearance on approach to intersections, including those with multiple-lane roundabouts. NYS standards.
Delaware	New standards for width of sidewalks, trees, and curbs and for street and driveway widths and clearances.
Idaho	New standards for design speed and clearance on approach to intersections.
North Carolina	New standards for minimum corner radii and other standards in New Urban Development.
Vermont	New standards for a lower speed level of standards and a lower minimum street width. Standards have been made applicable to all non-Expressways.
State	NEW POLICIES ADOPTED AND APPLICABLE TO MAIN STREETS
California	Transportation Planning for Local Communities Initiative. Guide for urban, suburban and rural areas.
Maine	Variable Transportation Policy. Variable speed limits on highway.
Maryland	Design standards for sidewalks and trees based on AASHTO guidelines.
New York	Environmental Quality Act requires CSD to design projects.
Oregon	Special transportation Act designations allow different performance standards.
State	SCENIC/HISTORIC LAWS APPLIED TO MAIN STREETS
Connecticut	Scenic Highway Program limits cross-section width of highway approaches to roads.
Rhode Island	Scenic Roadways Board limits projects that would degrade scenic and historic road.



In Sarasota Springs, New York, U.S. 9 changes from a four-lane, semi-rural highway with a 55 mph speed limit to a three-lane urban road with a 30 mph speed limit, all within a stretch of 1,800 feet.

standards on which a design is based).

At the other extreme is Georgia, whose supreme court held in *DOT v. Brown* (1996) that the design of a roadway is an operational function, not covered by discretionary immunity: "Only the decision to build, and not where or how it is built, is immune." Between these extremes are states such as California and South Carolina, which provide design immunity but allow it to lapse as conditions change.

From our 16-state survey, we did not find tort liability much of an excuse for the sorry state of urban streets. Instead, we have identified some real culprits.

Put the blame here

The AASHTO Green Book offers design policies and guidelines, not standards. For each design element, AASHTO typically provides a range of acceptable values, from a minimum value to a more desirable target value.

For an AASHTO guideline to become a standard, it must be adopted by a responsible agency. Many states have adopted standards toward the middle or upper end of the AASHTO ranges, on the theory that if some is good, more is better. County and city engineers have then blindly adopted state standards.

As noted, Maryland's lane width standards would have encroached on trees and sidewalks in the town of Westminster. Those standards exceeded AASHTO minimums. Not only were these particular standards thrown out, but the experience convinced Bob Douglass, the Maryland State Highway Administration's deputy chief engineer, that the standards should be thrown out wholesale.

In 1998, Douglass wrote a memo banning the use of the state's highway design manual. He found that the templates were generally oversized (especially stopping sight distance and vertical curves) and stymied creativity among engineers. The agency was losing legal challenges when an element was below the state minimum value, but above the Green Book value. Now the agency relies exclusively on the Green Book.

In the wrong class

Another culprit is misclassification of streets. Streets and highways in this country are classified by location—urban or rural—and by function: arterial, collector, and local. There is a direct relationship between classification and design standards. Classification determines design speed, design vehicle, and cross section (lane width, shoulder width, and type and width of median).

The U.S. classification system has been criticized for ignoring distinctions among contexts and among roadway functions. An urban arterial conforms to the same basic standards whether it is a main street or a bypass.

Misclassification of streets commonly occurs for two reasons. A small town, village, or hamlet fails to meet the census definition of urban because it lacks a population of at least 5,000 and a density of at least 1,000 persons per square mile. That community may end up with a main street designed to rural standards. This was true in Brooklyn, Connecticut, before the compromise described at the beginning of this article.

The simple solution to this problem is to treat any place that is built up as urban, regardless of its census designation. The Federal Highway Administration policy is simple: If it looks urban, use urban standards.

The other common case of misclassification occurs as road functions change over time. In Westminster, Maryland, East Main Street had always been part of Maryland State Route 32. It began functioning more like a local street when the State Road 140 bypass opened. Accordingly, this portion of Route 32 was removed from the Maryland state highway system after the street was reconstructed, and the city assumed responsibility for its operation and maintenance. Other examples of reclassification include Sunset Drive in South Miami and Springfield Avenue (N.J. Route 124) in Maplewood, New Jersey.

Level of disservice

Level-of-service standards are yet another cause for concern. While there is a legal imperative to provide safe roads, there is no such reason to provide free-flowing roads. Some congestion may be desirable in a downtown. After all, a downtown without traffic isn't a very exciting downtown.

Virtually all DOTs have adopted level-of-service standards. Typically, the standard for urban areas is C or D, while the standard for suburban areas is B or C. As traffic volumes increase to the point where the standard is no longer met, a road and its intersections often will be widened regardless of the effects on adjacent land uses.

The alternative is to accept congestion in areas that function as destinations. Since 1993, Florida has allowed its local governments to exempt streets through downtowns and urban redevelopment areas from level-of-service standards. The effective standard becomes level-of-service F. Many cities and towns have taken this option.

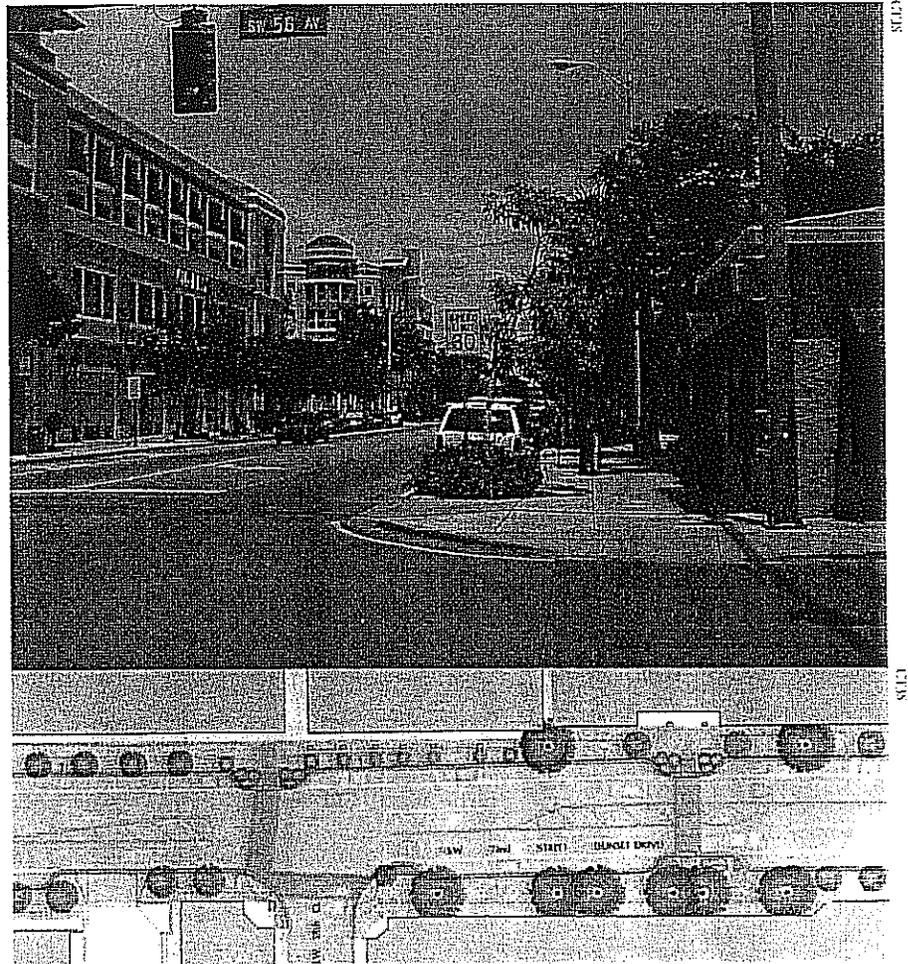
West Palm Beach, for example, has adopted level-of-service E as its standard and is seeking a complete exemption from level-of-service standards for much of the city. This city keeps an eye on both low volume-to-capacity ratios (less than 0.6) and high ones (greater than 0.9). A low volume-to-capacity ratio may offer an opportunity—a place where the street can be narrowed and street life encouraged by means of widened sidewalks, on-street parking, and landscaped curb extensions and islands.

It is worth noting that several of the con-

The standard cross section

Nearly all state DOTs include typical sections—another culprit—in their road design manuals. If an area is classified as urban, and a road is functionally classified as a principal arterial, the typical section for an urban principal arterial becomes the default roadway.

Typical sections inhibit flexible and context-sensitive design in two ways. First, where right-of-way is constrained, something must be sacrificed to maintain standard travel lanes: the sidewalk, landscape buffer, parking lane,



Sunset Drive in South Miami, Florida, is one of many roads around the country that have been reclassified—to the benefit of the surrounding community.

text-sensitive projects we studied have improved or at least maintained roadway level-of-service despite narrowed roadways. How? Through clever treatment of intersections, where most delays occur.

or bike lane. Also, there is the tendency to adopt a single, typical section for an entire stretch of road, even when conditions change along its length. Having a single typical section is convenient for the design engineer and

construction crew, but it is not good policy.

A dramatic example, to be featured in our upcoming guidebook for New Jersey DOT, is found in Saratoga Springs, New York. South Broadway (U.S. 9) changes from a four-lane, semi-rural highway with a striped median and posted speed of 55 mph to a three-lane urban road with a raised median, single northbound lane, and posted speed of 30 mph, all in a stretch of 1,800 feet.

By all accounts, the section in question would have been reconstructed as a uniform four-lane road, but for two things. First, in 1999, the New York State DOT started an environmental initiative, with context-sensitive design at its heart. Second, the highway passes Saratoga Spa State Park, the Lincoln Baths, and the Museum of Dance. Something special, more like a gateway, was required. Ultimately, a series of roadway sections were built that make a smooth transition from the high-speed semi-rural environment to the south to the low-speed urban environment to the north.

The three Rs

At least in theory, roads that are being resurfaced, restored, or rehabilitated (so-called 3R projects) do not have to be upgraded to current geometric standards. In some states, 3R projects are instead subject to special standards below those of AASHTO—with the blessing of the Green Book. By contrast, under state and federal policies, roads reconstructed down to their bases must be brought up to current standards.

In a constrained main street environment, there is no reason to treat 3R and reconstruction projects differently. In both cases, designers already know how a road performs based on historical accident and other data. The Maryland State Highway Administration reached this conclusion recently, and now leaves existing cross sections alone unless there is a documented crash problem.

Exceptions to the rules

The Federal Highway Administration grants design exceptions on the National Highway System, and the same is true for state or local DOTs on non-NHS roads. Between 1997 and 1999, New Jersey DOT engineers requested and received design exceptions for 81 projects, including most major highway projects undertaken by the state.

From our review of the 81 reports, exceptions were commonly granted for substandard shoulder width, substandard banking on horizontal curves, and substandard stopping sight distance on vertical curves. The process

appears flexible—but exceptions are typically requested in order to save money, not to preserve context.

Here is a typical scenario: A road is being reconstructed, and a sharper curve must be straightened to meet the standard for horizontal curvature. However, someone's house or business would be taken, some park or cemetery would be encroached on, a lot of extra asphalt would have to be poured, or some other big expense would be incurred.

And so the design engineer checks accident statistics for the location in question, focusing on the types of accidents associated with substandard horizontal curves, and finds that the curve generates only an average number of accidents compared to state norms. Noting that substantial costs can be avoided by allowing a substandard horizontal curve, a design exception is requested and granted.

Sometimes context also is taken into account, as with a road and bridge project in an historic district of Oxford Township, New Jersey. But that is a rare occurrence.

Let's use common sense

Gary Toth, one of the overseers of our research at New Jersey DOT, keeps saying that context sensitive design is just a matter of common sense. If the designer understands the transportation context, the safety and mobility needs to be addressed, and then uses common sense to fit sound engineering principles into the environmental and community context, a design will emerge that represents the best of both worlds.

On 15th Avenue in Anchorage, Alaska, the first common sense decision was to divide the roadway section into three segments because traffic turns off as one heads west. Daily volumes drop from 22,000 at one end of the avenue to 4,000 at the other, implying very different cross sections. Focusing on the westernmost segment, the second common sense decision was to drop a lane, from four to three, the center lane becoming a continuous left-turn lane.

In a third common sense decision, the top westbound lane was replaced with a five-foot sidewalk and landscape buffer between the road and sidewalk. By reducing the number of lanes, the state is also reducing the amount of snow to be cleared, and creating more storage space for it in the landscape buffer.

With Anchorage's low sun angle, and the sun blocked by buildings and trees, the engineers expect that three additional weeks of bare pavement a year will result from the decision to place the sidewalk on the north

side of the street rather than dropping an eastbound lane and placing the sidewalk on the south side.

The final exercise of common sense was to seek several design exceptions. Some stopping and intersection sight distances, curb return radii, shoulder widths, and clearances to obstructions will remain substandard. However, the project will still improve safety and, with the design exceptions in place, cost about a third as much.

What's next

Because AASHTO has been responsible for, or at least been blamed for, so much of what of what we don't like about urban streets in this country, it seems fitting to end on a positive note from an AASHTO draft document.

"The notion of designing a 'high quality,' low speed road is counterintuitive to many highway engineers, yet it is in many cases the appropriate solution . . . Context sensitive design in the urban environment often involves creating a safe roadway environment [by encouraging drivers] to operate at low speeds."

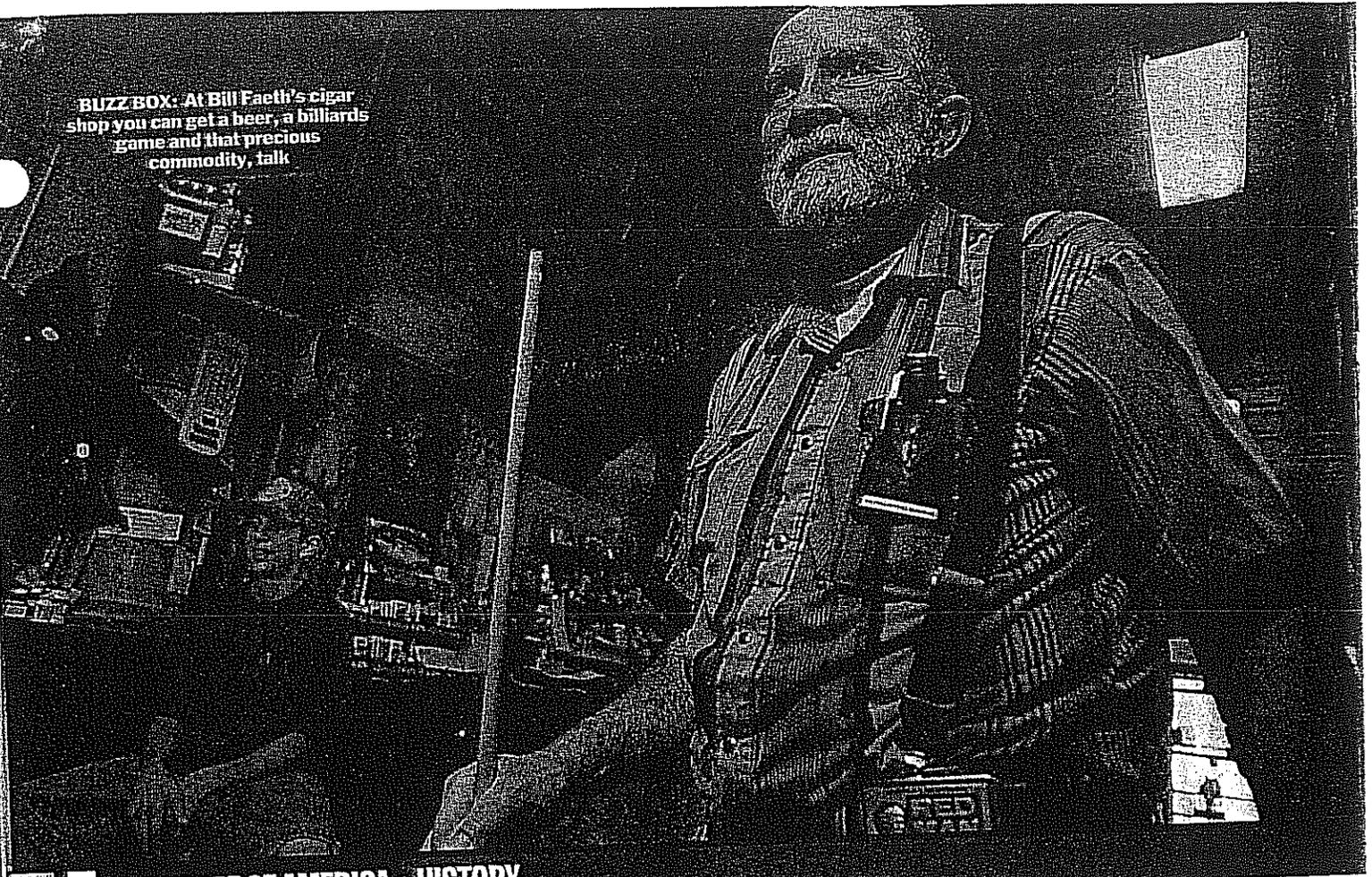
The document then offers a qualified endorsement of traffic calming, something unimaginable five years ago.

Reid Ewing is a research professor at Rutgers University and the research director of the Surface Transportation Policy Project in Washington, D.C. This article is an outgrowth of the Flexible Design Standards for Communities project, conducted by Rutgers University under contract with the New Jersey Department of Transportation.

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BUZZ BOX: At Bill Faeth's cigar shop you can get a beer, a billiards game and that precious commodity, talk



THE PULSE OF AMERICA • HISTORY

FORT MADISON, IOWA

The Battle of Do

If your town hasn't been done in by sprawl, two in Iowa show how to keep a sense of place

By STEVE LOPEZ

"More and more people are seeing that every place in America looks like every place else, and that means every place looks like no place."

—Richard Moe, president, National Trust for Historic Preservation

MR. MOE, I CAN PERSONALLY ASSURE YOU, IS ONTO something. I have been to no place. In 3½ years, my job has taken me to 40 states. Throw out the obvious exceptions—the San Franciscos and Ann Arbors, the Chicagos and Charlestons—and I can count on one hand the places I have any distinct recollection of. The rest is a low-slung, conglomerated blur of obliterated history—of forgot-

ten downtowns ringed by cake-box superstores with aircraft-carrier parking lots and terrific discounts on six-packs of socks.

If my bias isn't clear enough, let me come clean. I am the son of a bread-truck driver who taught me never to enter a restaurant or store in which I couldn't shake the hand of the owner. Only with great pain do I admit that the every place/no place that Moe speaks of—an America built in strips and spurts and without hesitation or nearly enough shame—has one thing going for it. It works. Location, value, convenience—the retail superhighway has got all that. On rare occasions, I suppose, you can even find quality and service there.

But it's not for me, and I'm reminded of this as I drive past the predictable sprawl of franchise outlets and architectural felonies along Highway 61 in Southeastern Iowa. I'm a nostalgic coot who likes the history and surprise of old friends in a chance meeting outside a building older than their combined years. I like the rumor and sass of regulars at the corner luncheonette. I'm tooling north along the great muddy Mississippi in search of these very things, and I'm not the only one looking.

Last April, in a quest to find out how any town can hold on to something special in the age of such nihilistic homogenization, I

PHOTOGRAPH BY TIME BY STEVE LISB



COFFEE CONVOCATION: At the Ivy Bake Shoppe, locals mull ways—a skate park for downtown?—to keep Fort Madison thriving

Downtown

PHOTOGRAPHS FOR TIME BY STEVE LISB

went to Boston for an education. The National Trust for Historic Preservation helps towns reclaim their heritage through its Main Street program, and most of the 1,500 communities on board sent representatives to workshops in Boston, where the opening ceremony turned into a pep rally for the resurrection of the American downtown. The room was filled with stories of vacant storefronts reopening, of hard-fought triumphs over ridiculous zoning restrictions and blockheaded indifference to architectural heritage, of seniors moving like yuppies into hip lofts above Main Street shops. "We're a discard society," Moe told me that day. "But a lot of people are now seeing the value of preserving the best of what we had."

BURLINGTON, IOWA, WAS MY DESTINATION. KENNEDY SMITH, director of the National Trust's Main Street program, said I'd find what I was looking for in this 167-year-old railroad town of about 27,000 built along the banks of the Mississippi and once known as Catfish Bend. I would eventually get there, but I got sidetracked. Eighteen miles to the south, I came upon the town of Fort Madison (pop. 11,618) and liked what I saw.

My rules on what makes a town work are nonnegotiable. Gim-

micky re-creations, especially those involving period costumes, are disqualifiers, as are any businesses beginning with the name Ye Olde. Functionality is what I look for, an authentic, practical intersection of commercial and social life, and I knew the moment I turned right on Avenue G.—Fort Madison's five-block business strip—that I was home.

A young boy on his mother's hand stepped brightly out of Jo-Lynn Shoe Shoppe—with a springy gait that said his whole world had changed simply because he had been reshod. They turned left and headed for Lampe Drugs, a family operation since 1940. Across the street at Faeth's, the third, fourth and fifth generations of the Faeth family catered to customers in a cigar shop where you can sip a cold Pabst for a buck, buy a box of shotgun shells, find out where the catfish are jumping, play a game of billiards or drop the kids off for a soda and know they're safer than if you'd tied them to a tree. Just up Avenue G., Patty Tucker, a 66-year-old widow who moved down off the bluffs and into an incredible loft above the old bank building four years ago, is peering from her window to see if her girlfriends at the Ivy Bake Shoppe can use an extra hand with the lunch crowd.

So what's Fort Madison's secret? A healthy economy for one thing, with blue- and white-color jobs at Sheaffer pens, Dupont, Dial, Wabash National and a state prison. A sweet, leafy residential area within walking distance of downtown and the riverfront park, for another. And Fort Madison has the dumb luck of being too small to attract the kind of super discount stores that work like neutron bombs on downtowns, leaving the buildings standing but destroying all life forms.

But even at that, nearly 30% of the storefronts are empty. A lot of people are willing to drive half an hour north to the mall and strip stores near Burlington, and a proposed highway bypass will

THE PULSE OF AMERICA • HISTORY

route traffic around Fort Madison. So the true secret of the town's success, then, can be found every Thursday morning at the sinfully addictive Ivy Bake Shoppe, where Martha Wolf and Susan Welch Saunders' blackberry scones make the sorry impostors at a certain ubiquitous coffee-house chain taste like clay pigeons, and where a juiced-up group of local retailers and other die-hards plot strategies for the town, not just for it to survive but to prosper.

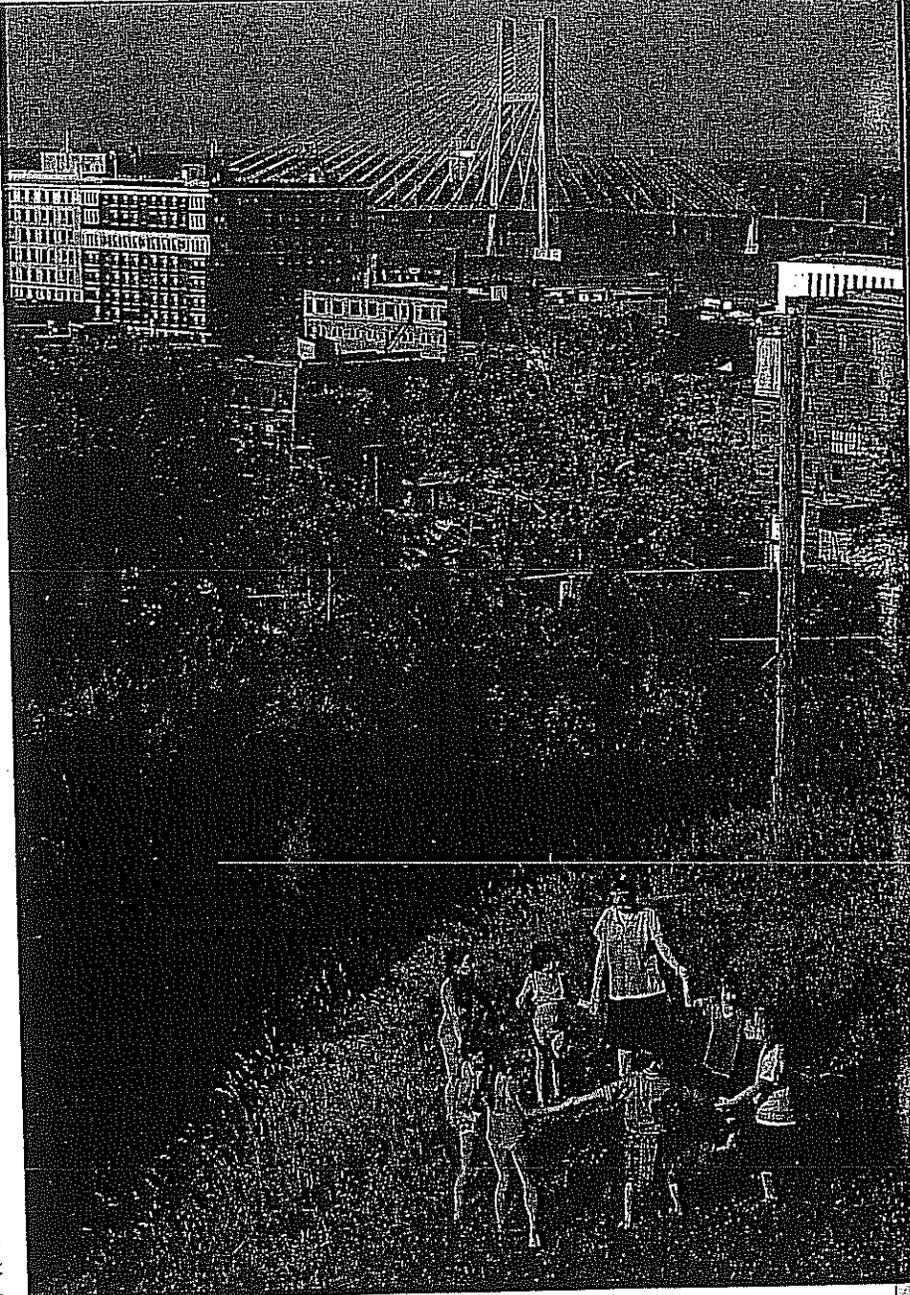
"It takes constant vigilance," says Skip Young, 39, who runs the jewelry store founded by his late grandfather Dana Bushong, who was famous around here for being the man who engraved names on Sheaffer pens. Skip's wife Michele, 37, headed up the local Main Street program for two years, serving as the lieutenant who passed on the National Trust's decades of know-how regarding renovation, business loans, retail niches and the marketing of downtown. "We're not where we want to be yet, but in the 15 years I've lived here, it's got a little better each year. You should see the droves that come in for our trick or treat on Avenue G., and the lighted Christmas parade brings tons of people."

It's the kind of place where, when I left to go check out Burlington, Wolf and Saunders, 50 and 59, dropped some scones into a care package for my trip. Burlington has tougher challenges than Fort Madison. The much bigger, grittier downtown was built for the industrial railroad hub that Burlington once was, and big, boxy buildings sit vacant now. But just as in Fort Madison, there is something worth saving here, where neighborhoods sweep up gracefully from the banks of the Mississippi to form an amphitheater with terrific views of downtown and the bridge that spokes majestically across the river to Illinois.

On Jefferson, the local main street, Weird Harold's Records survives because Dan Bessine, 52, has found a niche the chains can't match. He sells vinyl records on the Internet (find him at *Weirdharolds.com*). At Valley and Third, the Hotel Burlington reopened as a senior-housing complex this year after sitting vacant for 20 years. And Schramm's department store, which closed five years ago after 150 years of operation, is reopening piece by piece, as a restaurant, small shops and loft apartments.

John and Susan Randolph, 68 and 61, who owned Schramm's, live in one of those apartments, which means they've never left the office. Their next-door neighbors and pals are Pam and Greg Jochims, 26 and 28. Greg runs a haberdashery; Pam runs the Main Street program. Every evening at 6, the Randolphs and Jochims meet on the sidewalk in front of their downtown homes for cocktail hour.

I am unabashedly partial to a town where gin and tonics are available on the street, and even more partial when I'm invited to the party. I can't say what downtown Fort Madison or Burlington will look like in 10 years, or in 25, but I drank to their future, and to the future of every community that stands up to



CIRCLE OF LIFE: In Burlington, where some vacant stores and buildings have been coming back to life, kids play on a rise overlooking the river

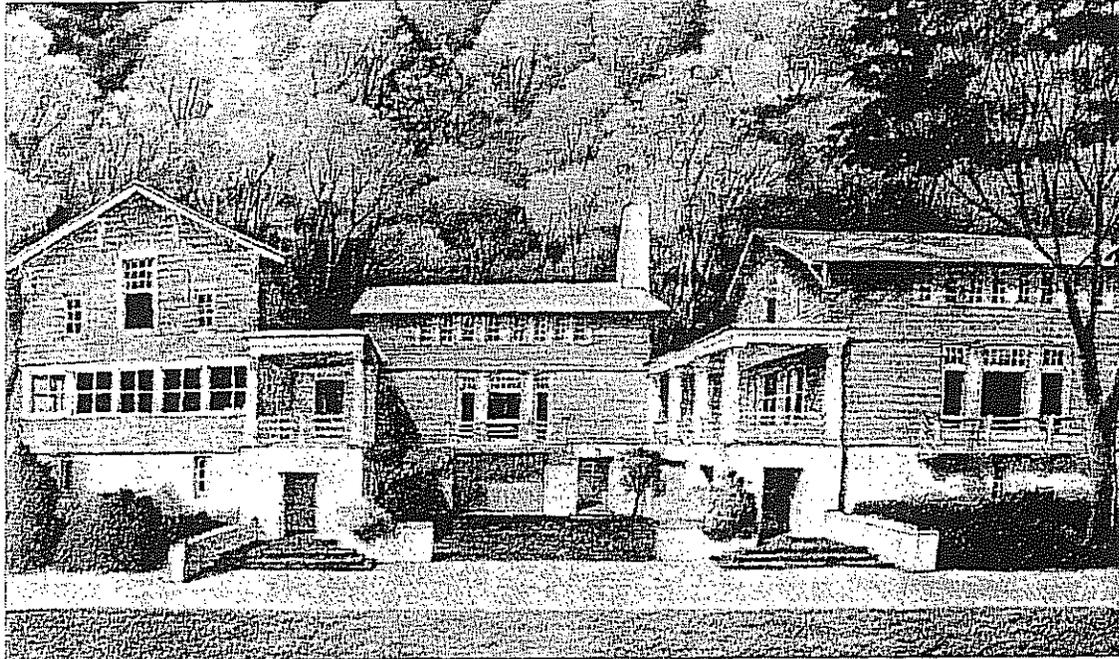
the steamroller. There is some evidence that as the work force becomes more flexible, more of the people who can work from home are choosing downtowns. Ground-floor and second-floor occupancy rates were up in Main Street towns in 1999, and retail sales jumped 65%.

One day in Fort Madison, while rehabbing a storefront, a workman peeled back an atrocious-looking aluminum façade and found carved wooden columns and stained-glass windows beneath. Several townsfolk heard the news and strolled over to celebrate the discovery of the buried treasure. Later in the day, there was a buzz at the Ivy Bake Shoppe, and upstairs, in Martha Wolf's sprawling Early American loft, the view of the Mississippi, which widens to nearly a mile beneath the old swing-span bridge, was stunning. ■

I drank to the future of Fort Madison and Burlington, and to the future of every community that stands up to the steamroller

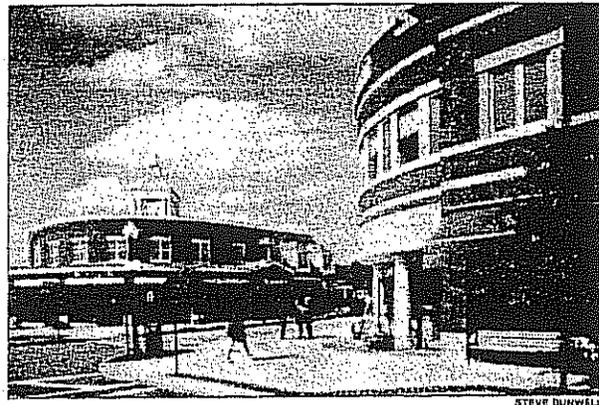
REAL ESTATE

CHARLES BARRETT AND MANUEL FERNANDEZ-NOVAL



Left: Proposed new town of Bamberton, British Columbia, includes detached houses grouped around shared parking courts; style recalls American Arts and Crafts movement.

THE NEW URBANISM



Above: Main intersection of Mashpee Commons, Cape Cod, Mass., featuring masonry bank buildings, is redo of tired 1960s shopping center (at left)

A group of thinkers envisions the community of the future as a people-oriented place

By Bradley Innes
SPECIAL TO THE EXAMINER

LIVING IN THE BAY AREA

olution in urban design.

I don't mean telesis as in the phone company. I mean the original Telesis, a loose-knit cadre of Bay Area architects, designers and landscape architects who were also enamored with the definition

of the term: "progress intelligently planned." The original Telesis came together in the pre-World War II days, long before urban planning and design were fodder for slick four-color magazines. Idealistic, mostly young and definitely intellectuals, the members of this unusual association shared the desire to leave their mark on the Bay Area built environment.

In 1940 the group helped launch the area's reputation as an emerging center of environmental design and urban planning with a major exhibit called "Space for Living" at the San Francisco Museum of Art. The exhibit showed how the Bay re-



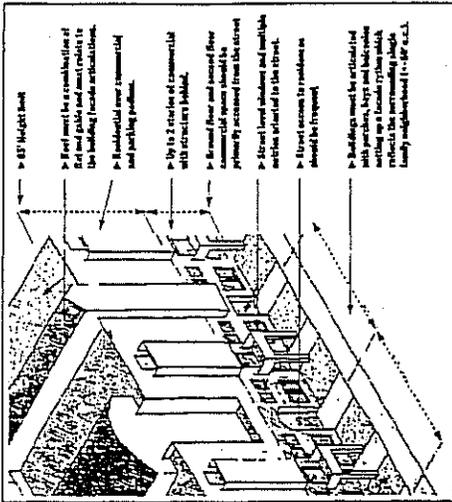
gion could grow into a livable and friendly urban setting.

"We were not imbued with saving the world at large," wrote Telesis member and noted architect Francis Violic 40 years later. "Rather it was the Bay Area that turned us on."

As borne out by their later accomplishments, the Telesis members were a promising and precocious group. T.J. Kent went on to found the UC-Berkeley Department of City and Regional Planning and to serve as an innovative planning director for San Francisco in the late '40s. James McCarthy also did a stint as The City's planning director in the late '50s and early '60s.

Industrial designer Walter Lander — whose firm more than 40 years later bestowed the name "Telesis" upon Pacific Bell — built a firm serving corporate clients worldwide. Francis Violic, Corwin Moline and Garrett Eckho, among others, became professors at UC-Berkeley and won many international awards for their work in urban design.

These innovators influenced design and planning principles throughout the nation. Here at [See LIVING, E-7]



- If feet meet for a combined use of retail and public use, it creates a vibrant, lively street scene.
- If residential use, commercial and parking are combined.
- If it is a mixture of commercial and residential use.
- If ground floor and second floor commercial spaces should be primary to ground floor and street level.
- If street level sidewalks and multiple levels are used to the street.
- If street corners to residential use are frequent.
- If buildings meet for vertical and horizontal use, they create a vibrant, lively street scene.
- If a mixture of commercial and residential use.

Katz's book, have snubbed the "neo-trad" description because they "didn't want it to be about said Katz. But they still draw heavily on traditional models.

"New Urbanism represents a re-discovery of planning and architectural traditions that have slipped some of the most livable, memorable communities in America — Boston's Back Bay, Charleston, South Carolina, Seattle's Capitol Hill and Philadelphia's Germantown," writes urban planning writer Todd W. Bressi in a chapter of Katz's book, "Planning the American Dream."

Those qualities include a small-town retail center where people can walk home from shop to shop and even walk home from the commercial nexus to their high-density homes nearby. The new urbanism doesn't entirely dismiss the car, but the center of what development looks like and how it is built. Instead, the pedestrian drives the scale and look of the new urbanism.

New urbanism, according to Katz's book, shouldn't be confined to discussing central cities or boutique neighborhoods like Palo Alto, Napa Valley or Rockledge. Indeed, Katz says that the concept "begins with the notion that urbanism started with the rural hamlet."

"A single neighborhood standing free in the landscape is a village and the fundamental organizing elements of the New Urbanism are (a collection of) neighborhoods," write Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk. "Neighborhoods are the urbanized areas with a balanced mix of human activity." The two New Jersey architects have been in the forefront of the New Urbanism movement.

Several of their projects are in the book, including the Bamberton plan and the refinement of the

Book chronicles "New Urbanism"

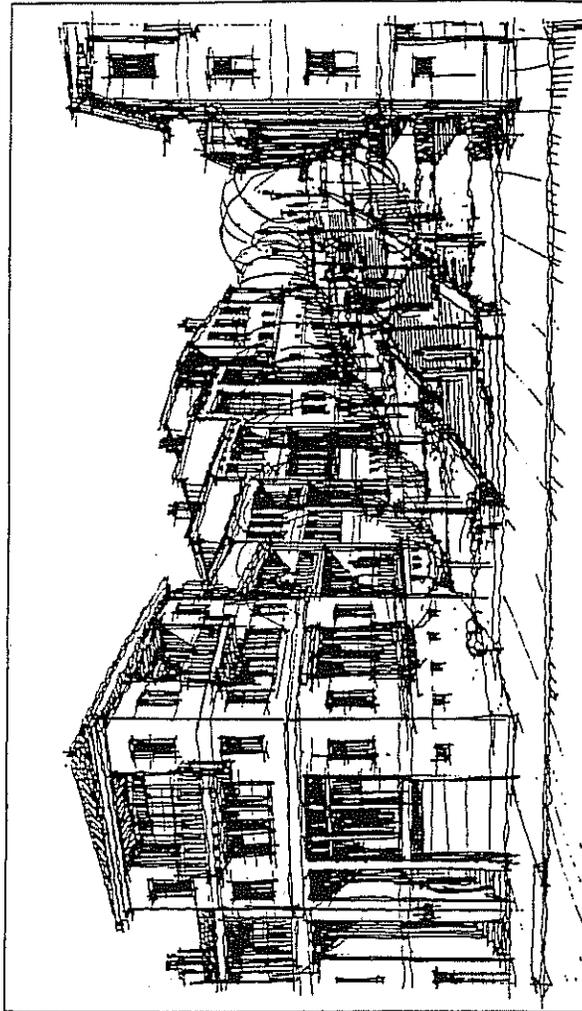
home they brought us more livable communities, more effective zoning and planning rules, better looking buildings and more attractive homes. They led a revolution that made planning a fundamental part of the mandate of local government.

Today, a new group of urban designers and town planners is embarking on another revolution in how we plan and build communities. That's what Katz's new book, "The New Urbanism, Toward an Architecture of Community" (McGraw Hill Inc., New York, 1984) is about.

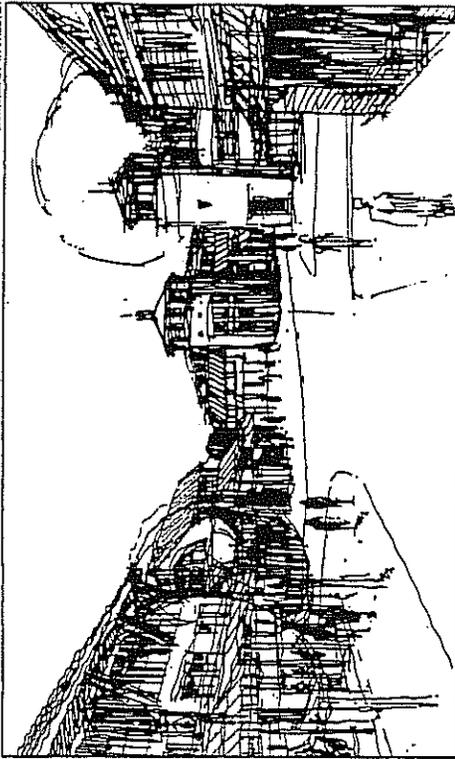
The book is comprised of project descriptions and essays by architects who share common notions on how to address the ills of suburban sprawl with a return to a cherished American icon: that of a compact, close-knit community," writes Katz, a San Francisco real estate market consultant. This is the first book for Katz, who works with developers and community organizations.

This new group doesn't meet in a club-like setting and they haven't given themselves a catchy name. But they too are changing how our communities are built. Early in the late 1980s and early 1990s, their work was referred to as "neo-traditional" planning because so many of their urban designs harkened back to the small-town, village-like scheme that brought us main streets, front porches, storefront retail and sidewalks.

Bay Area influences
But architects like Bay Area-based Peter Calhoun and Daniel Solomon, two of the pioneers in this movement and prominent in



DRAWINGS BY TIM JORDAN



Top left, Proposed mixed-use transformation of Jackson-Taylor neighborhood in San Jose has comprehensive guidelines for commercial and residential space. Above, design of Communications Hill in San Jose calls for traditional grid plan instead of curved streets. Scheme for downtown Hayward near its BART station includes a new civic center.

Mashpoo Commons downtown and surrounding village plan. All of the new urbanists seem to agree that that neighborhood forms should take — a mix of dwellings, workplaces, shops, civic buildings and parks.

Precis measurements
Plus, as Duany and Plater-Zyberk write, it must have "a center and an edge; must be a quarter mile from center to edge and must have interconnecting streets."

The new urbanism also rejects an "architecture of excessive self-expression, buildings conceived as solely private, self-referential objects incapable of generating the public realm," writes Los Angeles-based architect Elizabeth Meule and Suzanne Polyzoides.

The book includes drawings and plans for 25 different communities from Montreal's Cité Internationale to the downtown Hayward plan that San Francisco's Solomon designed.

Solomon's scheme for the downtown area near the BART station calls for a village-like plan that would replace the hedgepodge of mid-rise and commercial uses that now blot this part of Hayward!

writing ordinances that require more pedestrian access, more mixed-use projects and grid abstract patterns. They are also encouraging private developers to adopt these concepts.

Some critics question whether new urbanism concepts aren't just another fad that doesn't go deeper than design changes: add front porches to houses, boutique fronts to shopping malls and main streets. And it's too soon to know how successful these ideas really will be in terms of accomplishing their goals of more livable communities.

But the ideas do hold the promise of changing how we get around, how we live and how we shop.

from the city. Calhoun's master plan for the Jackson-Taylor neighborhood in San Jose, originally a food-processing center, is another project in the book.

The book "New Urbanism" doesn't shed new light, it includes new projects or discover new designers contributing to the movement. But its value can be found in the book's succinct style and well thought-out graphic display with the pioneers themselves defining this metamorphosis in town planning.

Plus, it shows that like the ideas of Telene, the new urbanists and their designs are here to stay. Already, cities all over California are adopting the concepts. They are

and fail to give it a very attractive identity at this important transit hub.

Another Solomon plan highlighted in the Katz book is San Jose's Communication Hill plan, which calls for a stepped up and compact development pattern, reminiscent of San Francisco. The proposal describes a "gritiron" town plan with buildings located just 10 minutes from downtown San Jose.

Also in the Katz book is Calhoun's South Brentwood Village plan in Contra Costa County, which envisions an extension of new undeveloped parts of Brentwood that is still awaiting approval