

City of Saline
Urban Design Plan
Envisioning the Next 20 Years

QUINN EVANS | ARCHITECTS
COOPER DESIGN INC.

May 2007



The 2005 Saline Downtown Blueprint Study, conducted by Hyatt Palma, provided a critique of the strengths and challenges of downtown Saline and made specific recommendations regarding issues which should be addressed in an updated version of the Urban Design Plan prepared and implemented by QUINN EVANS | ARCHITECTS (QE|A) and the City of Saline in the late 1980's.

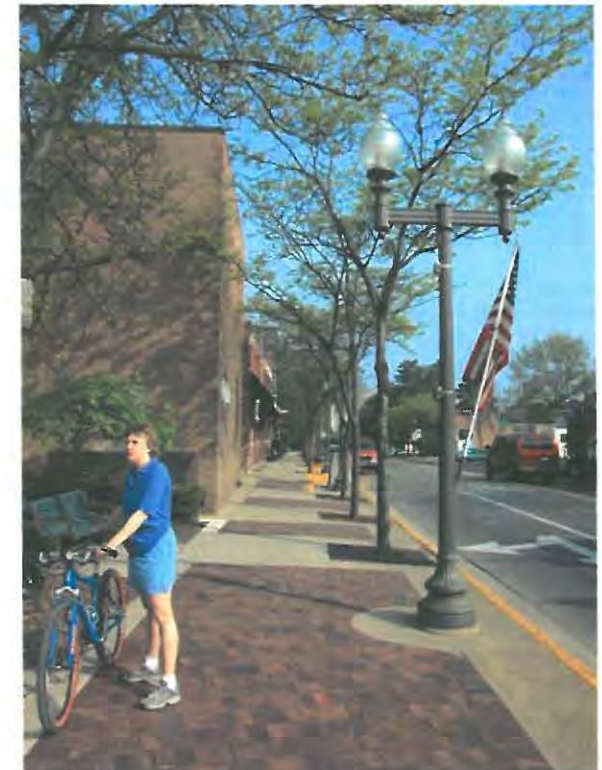
evaluated and an updated design for this pocket park is included in this report.

In addition to these two reports, design recommendations for the landscaping of Parking Lot #1 and expansion of the refuse collection enclosure in the parking lot to allow for additional capacity were presented to the City in early June 2006.



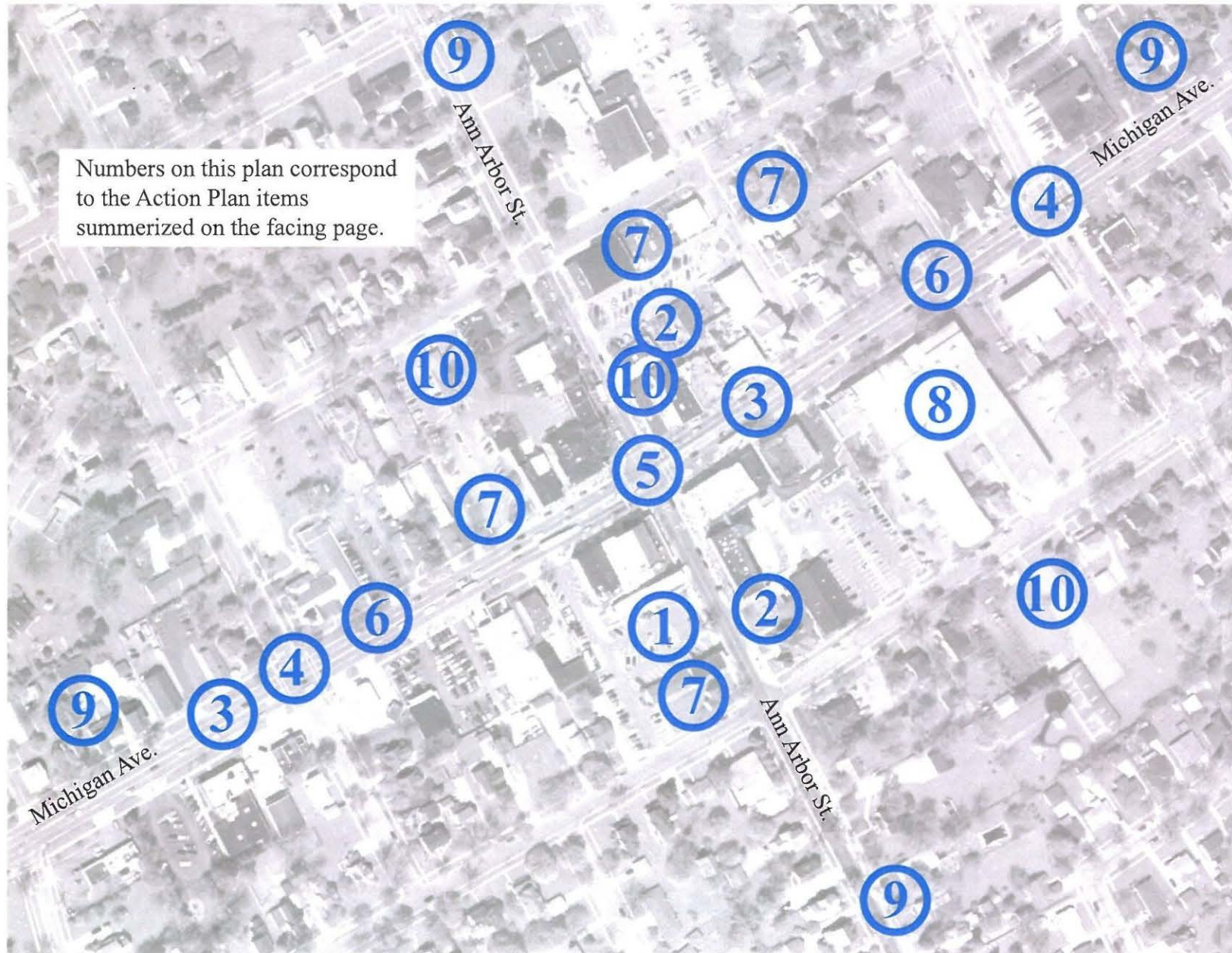
In 2006 the City of Saline contracted with QUINN EVANS | ARCHITECTS and Cooper Design to prepare an updated Urban Design Plan. This report is the second of two and addresses the needs associated with a revised long term Urban Design Plan including: development of a new downtown public park or greenspace, identification of potential sites for public art, and also planning for streetscape, parking and other public improvements to guide anticipated MDOT reconstruction of Michigan Avenue in 2013.

The first report addressed several immediate design needs the City has for the downtown area covered by the earlier Urban Design Plan. Specifically, the existing streetscape is evaluated and recommendations for improvements, repairs, and other changes to update the streetscape are presented. The conditions at Merchant Park are also



Saline Urban Design Plan 2007

Executive Summary Action Plan



Executive Summary



Saline Urban Design Plan 2007

Based on input from the public workshop, meetings with city staff, physical survey and evaluation of downtown Saline by the design team, an action plan has been created that focuses on ten recommendations for continued improvement and growth in downtown Saline.

Action Plan for Downtown Saline

1. Create a covered structure in Parking Lot #4 to serve as a downtown gathering place for the Farmer's Market and many other community events.
2. Create a new public green space or plaza in the downtown.
3. Create medians in the downtown section of Michigan Ave. (between Monroe and Harris) when the street is repaved in 2013.
4. Create dedicated left turn lanes at Harris St., Lewis St., and Monroe St. to improve downtown circulation.
5. Improve crosswalks at Michigan Ave. in the downtown to make the crossing more pedestrian friendly (Lewis St., Ann Arbor St. and Harris St.).

6. Expand the formal downtown streetscape along Michigan Ave., west to Monroe Street and east to Harris Street.
7. Encourage new development within the four block core of downtown.
8. Promote-support a mixed use redevelopment of the R&B Tool site that includes a new cross street from Michigan Ave. to E. Henry Street.
9. Preserve the residential character on the edges of downtown.
10. Improve bicycle parking in the downtown.



Public Workshop Review

On November 29, 2006, approximately 35 citizens, business and property owners, city staff, and council members met to discuss future plans for downtown Saline. After a short presentation by QUINN EVANS | ARCHITECTS and Cooper Design, Inc. the large group was split into five smaller working groups. Each of these smaller groups focused on a main topic area which are noted below. After over an hour of excellent discussion, the topic groups presented their main observations, conclusions, issues to the whole group. The group presentations were recorded on large note pads. As participants left they were asked to vote for the top three issues that they had heard presented that evening by placing stickers on the note pads.

The “winning” issues that received the most votes are summarized below. A description of each topic group and a complete listing of the issues presented by each group follows.

Create a covered structure for the Farmer’s Market

Several groups mentioned that creating a covered structure over part of Parking Lot #2 where the farmer’s market is held would greatly benefit downtown as a place for downtown events and gathering. A sche-

matic level design for such a structure is part of the current Urban Design Update project.

Consider Medians in Michigan Ave.

The Urban Design Update project will prepare schematic design drawings for Michigan Avenue. These drawings will help convey to MDOT the City’s desire for how Michigan Avenue should look in the downtown and will consider the possibility of adding medians in the downtown area. MDOT is scheduled to rebuild the downtown section of Michigan Avenue in 2013.

Improve crosswalks at Michigan Ave. – Ann Arbor St.

Several groups brought up the importance of improving this crossing. The final recommendations for the Updated Urban Design Plan will include design ideas for making this crossing more pedestrian friendly.

Create left turns at Harris St., Lewis St. and Monroe St.

The Urban Design Update project will prepare schematic design drawings for Michigan Avenue. These drawings will help convey to MDOT the City’s desire for how Michigan Avenue should look in the downtown and will consider the possibility of adding left turn lanes at Harris St., Lewis St., and Monroe St. to improve downtown

circulation

Consider a Hall Street extension – a mid-block connection from Michigan Ave. to Henry St.

Several groups considered the idea of creating a street (pedestrian only or vehicular) between Michigan Ave. and Henry Street to the east of Ann Arbor St. A new street would provide a place for downtown storefronts that is not on Michigan Ave. Such a street could be developed as a pedestrian friendly shopping area with offices and residential above. This is a long term desire that would need to be incorporated into a redevelopment of the R&B site.

Improve bicycle parking

Vehicular parking was not seen to be a problem in the downtown area. However, a couple of groups noted that increased bicycle parking would be beneficial. More visible bike parking was seen as something that would be helpful to those riding downtown and as a way to present an image of the downtown as a nice ride destination.

Group 1 Pedestrian Experiences and Downtown Parks or Green Spaces

Downtown Saline is surrounded by residen-

tial housing, mostly single family homes. The people in these homes can easily walk downtown to shop, dine, and frequent the many businesses in downtown. In addition, many people arrive by car, park and then become downtown pedestrians. The streetscape improvements that were constructed 20 years ago have helped make the pedestrian experience of downtown more pleasant with wider sidewalks, street trees, lighting and benches. Several pedestrian cut through paths already exist to make it easier and nicer for people to go between businesses and parking downtown. The focus of this group tonight is to evaluate the pedestrian experience in downtown and discuss how the design of the streetscape, the existing pedestrian paths, and the potential for new parks or plaza spaces can improve the area for pedestrians.

Summary Items

What 5 changes would most improve the pedestrian experience in downtown Saline?

- 1.Improve comfort level of crossing Michigan Ave.
- 2.Correct or avoid trip hazards in streetscape paving
- 3.Create new green space – closure of Hall Street to cars, creation of Hall Street extension south of Michigan Avenue as a pedestrian connection

- 4.Expand current streetscape
- 5.Improve bicycle parking and access

Group 2

Michigan Avenue Reconstruction and Streetscape Improvements

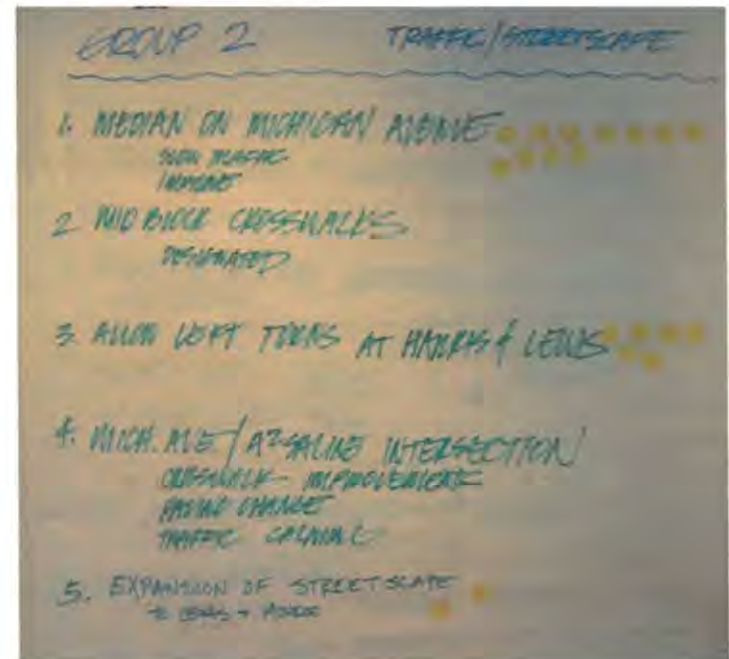
Michigan Avenue in downtown Saline is slated to be repaved by MDOT in 2013. A large part of this project is to prepare a conceptual design of any changes the city would like to see incorporated into the repaving effort. Important issues for this group to discuss include overall vehicular circulation downtown, left turn lanes, curb cuts, crosswalks and medians. The existing streetscape (brick walks, trees, benches, light poles, etc) were installed in the late 1980s. This streetscape has helped establish an identity for downtown Saline. Group 2 will discuss potential improvements to and expansion of this streetscape.

Summary Items

What 5 changes would most improve the Michigan Avenue or the streetscape in downtown

Saline?

- 1.Construct a median on Michigan Avenue to slow traffic, improve downtown experience
- 2.Create designated mid-block crosswalks
- 3.Allow left turns at Harris and Lewis
- 4.Improve crosswalk at Michigan Ave-Ann Arbor Street (change paving, traffic calming)
- 5.Expand current streetscape to Harris and Monroe.



Public Workshop Review

Group 3

Planning for Downtown Growth (commercial and residential)

Downtown Saline is a one intersection town centered at Michigan Ave. and Ann Arbor Street. Over the next twenty years, it is assumed there will be the desire for additional housing and businesses in the downtown. An Urban Design Plan can be used as a guide for the future development or redevelopment of business, retail, office, and residential sites in the downtown. This group will discuss questions related to how and where expansion of the downtown can be accommodated without compromising the existing fabric of the downtown.

Summary Items

1. Downtown Core: Encourage development within a 4 block core. Centered on Michigan Ave. – Ann Arbor Street.
2. Historic Districts: Limit Excessive District Restrictions.
3. Potential Development:
 - Consider an “extension” of Hall Street from Michigan Ave. to Henry Street
 - R&B Site
 - Car Wash Site

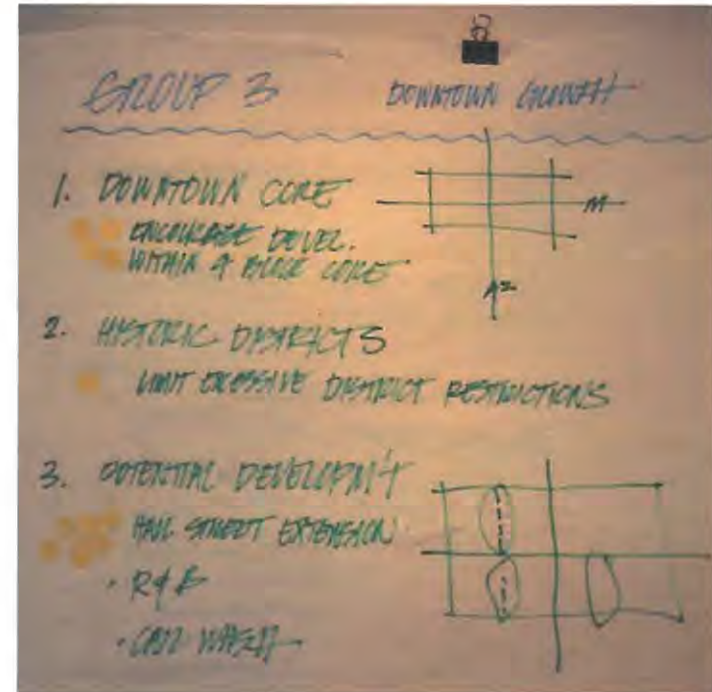
Group 4

Parking Planning in the Downtown

Parking is a hot topic for every downtown. Even the perception of parking being a difficult can hurt downtown businesses. Saline currently has 5 public parking lots in the downtown and there is on-street parking available. These lots also have centralized dumpster locations for the use of downtown businesses and residents. There is additional private parking in the downtown. This group will focus on how to improve current parking and how to plan for future increased demand for parking.

Summary Items

1. Parking is not a significant problem.
2. Plan for a dumpster in Northwest quadrant but is not an immediate need.
3. Parking lots are safe although light levels vary.
4. Consider mid-block crossing of Henry Street from Parking Lot 5 to 3.



5. Employee parking is the responsibility of business owners – ensure employees park in further out lots.
6. When more parking is needed consider reorganization of Key Bank lot and multi-level deck at parking lot 1 with first floor retail.
7. Encourage walking to downtown from Henne Park when the new park is developed.
8. Encourage bicycle parking.

Group 5

Planning for Events, Activities, the Farmer's Market

Downtown Saline is host to a variety of events and activities. The farmer's market is a weekly draw through out much of the year. Such activities bring people to the downtown for an hour or a day. It is important to the health of downtown to make sure there is the infrastructure needed to support these happenings. Creating a downtown that also encourages people to come for an activity but stay to shop, dine, etc. is important. This group will focus on what is needed to better support the events that happen downtown.

Summary Items

Summary of group discussion:

1. Listed Current Events
2. Brainstormed potential New Events
 - Music as big draw
 - Cultural Activities
3. Discussed physical improvements that could facilitate events
 - Covered structure at Farmer's Market
 - Signage Improvements

What 5 changes would make the most impact in supporting downtown events and activities?

- Structure at Farmer's Market
- Parking is adequate
- Improve signage, especially signage for events
- Plan seasonal events
- Improve communications

Recommendations

Market Plaza Concept

Recommendations:

1 Create a covered structure in Parking Lot 4 to serve as a downtown gathering place for the Farmer's Market and many other community events.

2 Create a new public green space or plaza in the downtown.

These first two recommendations are about creating a downtown gathering space for the community. Currently the Farmer's Market is held Saturday mornings in parking lot 4. Orange traffic cones are set up to create a turn around for vehicles and creating a pedestrian market on the east half of the lot. Several vendors bring their own canopies to protect their produce and themselves from rain or sun. The only park in the downtown is Merchant Park which is an L shaped connector between Parking Lot 1, Merchant Square, and Ann Arbor St. A plan for updating Merchant Park was included in the Urban Design Plan Short Term Recommendations (October 2006).

Developing a concept for a covered Farmer's Market was a goal of the City and one the citizens at the Design Workshop felt was very important. In working on the concept design, the design team realized the potential of the site to serve as both a weekly market and a daily public plaza.



The proposed Market Plaza includes a large roofed shelter running North-South along Ann Arbor St. This structure fills in the block by continuing the building line close to the sidewalk and allows for the maximum shelter space while minimizing the loss of everyday parking in the lot. The shelter would be set back just a few feet to provide a fountain and sitting area, landscaping, and benches. Public restroom facilities are included in the design at the south end of the structure.

The covered area would be screened from the parking lot by landscaping and a low fence. While there would not be any back in spaces for market day vendors, there would be loading areas for them to use in setting up



*Photographs of the Farmer's Market in Saline.
QE|A*

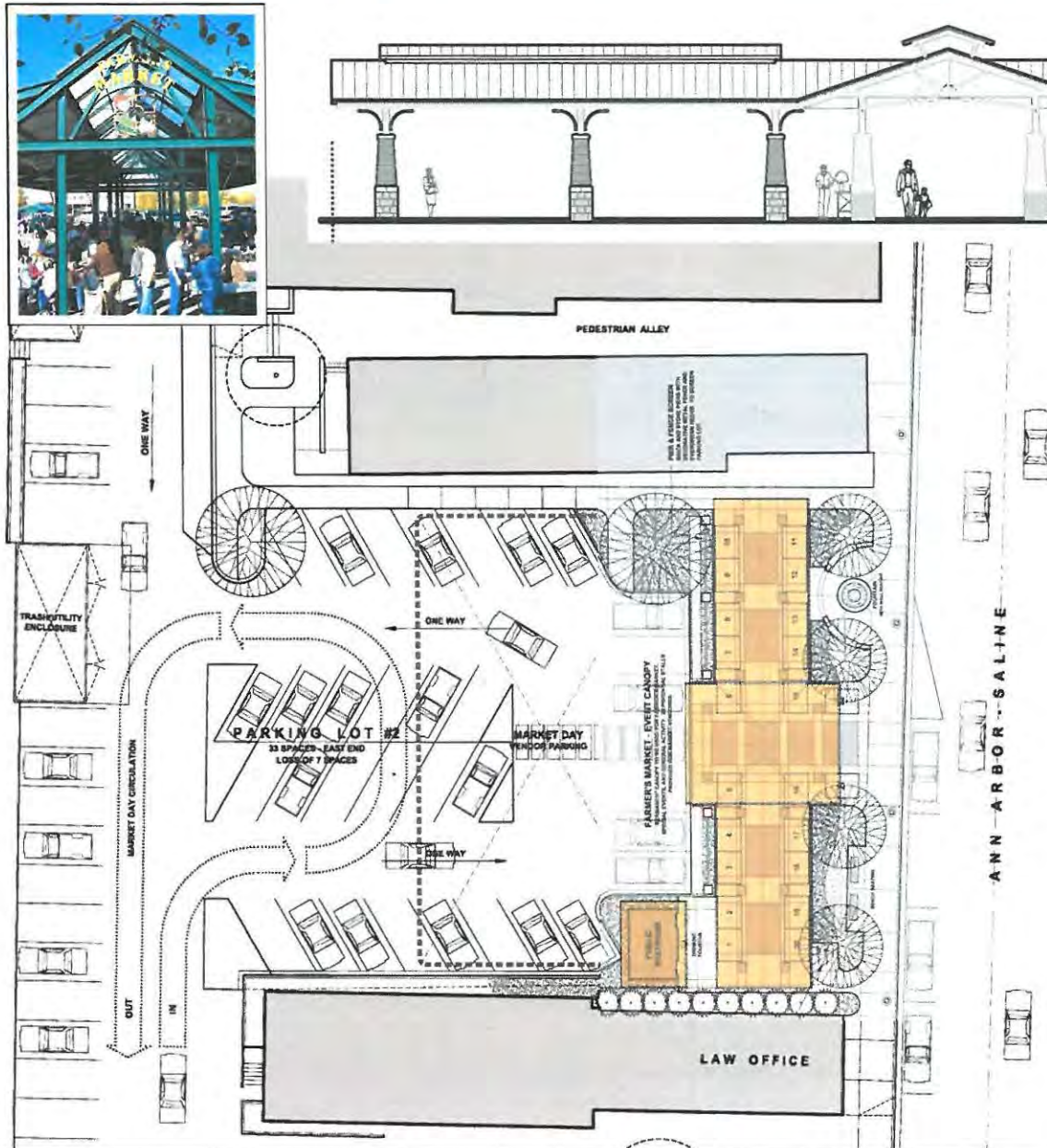


table space under the shelter. Separating the structure from the parking will allow it to be used for many more events during the year.

The structure is designed with a vented roof to allow for natural ventilation and to allow for more natural light underneath. Photovoltaics could be incorporated into the roofing to generate some of the power needs. The concept design also shows a location for public rest rooms and for bicycle parking on the south end of site.

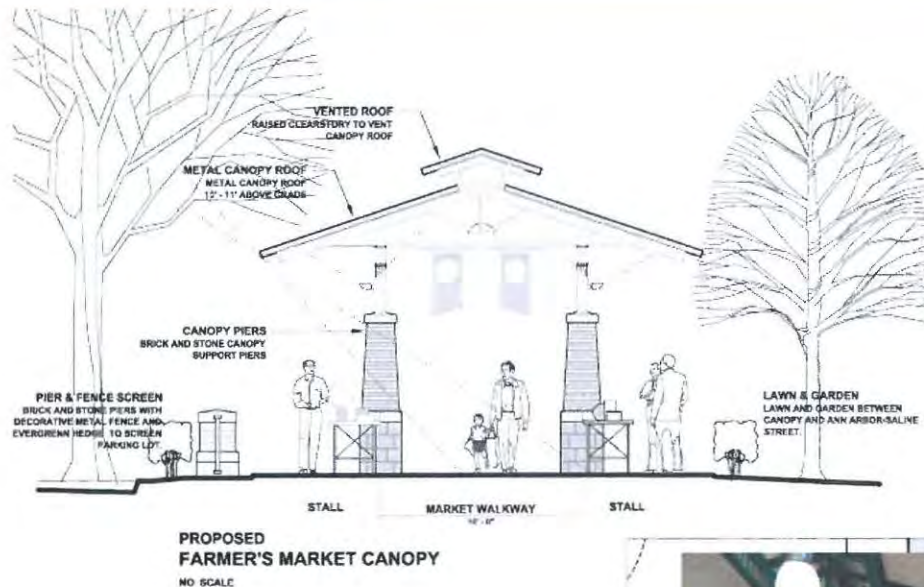
Other uses envisioned for the site include:

- Concerts
- Art Shows
- Christmas Market
- Public Picnic
- Children's events

Plan and elevation of Market Plaza Concept by Cooper Design, Inc. Photograph of the market in Walla, Washington.

Recommendations

Market Plaza Concept



Elevation of Market Plaza Concept by Cooper Design, Inc. Photograph of Findlay Market in Cincinnati, OH, at left, and Eastern Market in Washington, DC, above.

The proposed shelter design has 20 table spaces for vendors and up to an additional 17 spaces in the parking lot could be used by vendors.

The diagrams on the next page show how a successful market could expand over time. The first diagram shows a typical market day layout with vendor tables in yellow and pedestrian path shown in dashed blue. When proposed parking is added east of the current lot, the vendor area in the lot could be increased as shown in the second diagram. The final plan illustrates the potential to construct a second shelter down the center of the lot perpendicular to the first, if the market is so successful and there is the desire to trade everyday parking for additional covered market spaces.

Market Plaza Concept

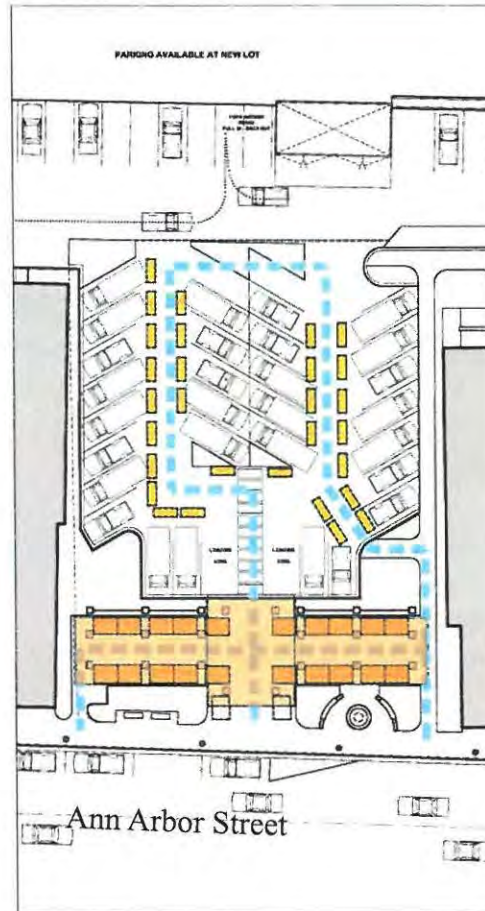
CONCEPT - CIRCULATION DIAGRAM

20 Shelter spaces
+ Market Manager & Master Gardeners
17 Truck spaces, not covered



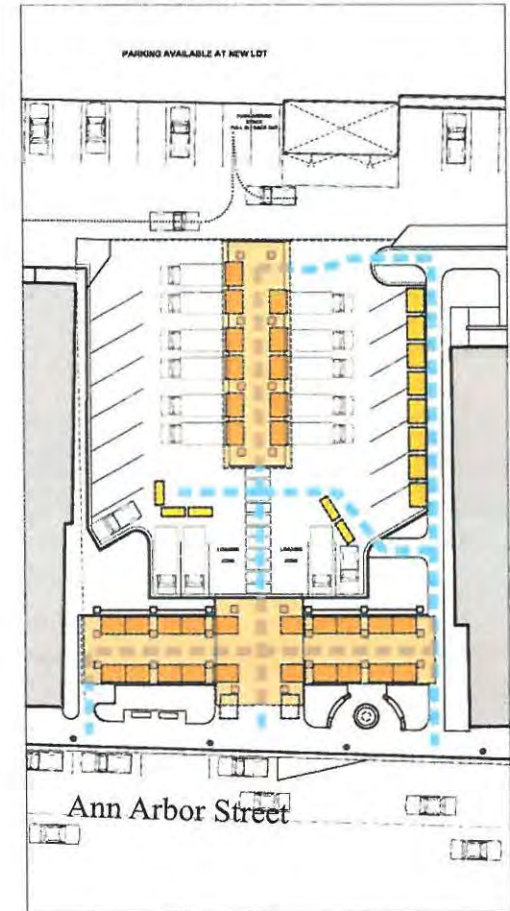
2012 EXPANSION - CIRCULATION DIAGRAM

20 Shelter spaces
+ Market Manager & Master Gardeners
29 Truck spaces, not covered



2018 EXPANSION- CIRCULATION DIAGRAM

20 Shelter spaces
+ Market Manager & Master Gardeners
11 Truck spaces in second shelter
8 Table spaces, not covered
5 Truck spaces, not covered



Recommendations

Recommendations three through six focus on improvements to Michigan Avenue from Harris Street to Monroe Street.

Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) plans to reconstruct the entire stretch of Michigan Avenue through downtown in 2013. The City has recognized the need to have their own concept plan for the street in place early to help inform MDOT's planning process and insure changes that will benefit the community are included. An initial review with MDOT engineers was very favorable towards the general concepts described below.

Michigan Avenue is a highly traveled roadway in the downtown Saline area. Merchants and citizens complain particularly about the speed of the traffic, the associated noise, and pedestrian safety in the downtown area. Michigan Avenue is perceived as a dangerous divide, separating the two halves of downtown Saline: the North and South sides.

The traffic appears to regularly exceed the posted speed limit. The speed of truck traffic is particularly daunting. If they catch the green light just right, trucks barrel through the intersection above the posted speed limit. Uptown pedestrians continually express

serious reservations about crossing Michigan Avenue in the uptown area.

Merchants and building owners complain about the dust, dirt, and noise disturbing their business. Many feel that pedestrians will forgo visits to their businesses if it means crossing Michigan Avenue. In addition, residents are especially concerned about their children crossing Michigan Avenue making access to parts of downtown off limits for many children.

Parallel parking is provided on Michigan Avenue in the first block east of Ann Arbor St.. This parking is a must for adjacent businesses, however, given the speeds on Michigan, too daunting for some.

In addition to traffic speed and pedestrian safety, the City is concerned about certain turning movements. Left turns from Michigan onto Harris, eastbound, are prohibited. This is most likely due to the lack of a dedicated left turn lane and potential stacking problems. The Saline City Hall complex, including the police and fire station, are located in this first block of Harris north of

Michigan Avenue Improvements

Michigan. Eastbound travelers cannot make this turn and must either select another route ahead of time or pass their destination and double back.

A left turn from Michigan onto Hall Street, eastbound, is allowed. Unfortunately, there is no dedicated turn lane there, and given its close proximity to the Ann Arbor St. intersection, this is a dangerous turning movement.

The following recommendations have been developed to address these current problems by making downtown Saline stand out as a unique destination along Michigan Avenue that is a comfortable place to explore whether you arrive by car or bicycle or on foot.



Saline Urban Design Plan 2007

Michigan Avenue Improvements

Recommendations

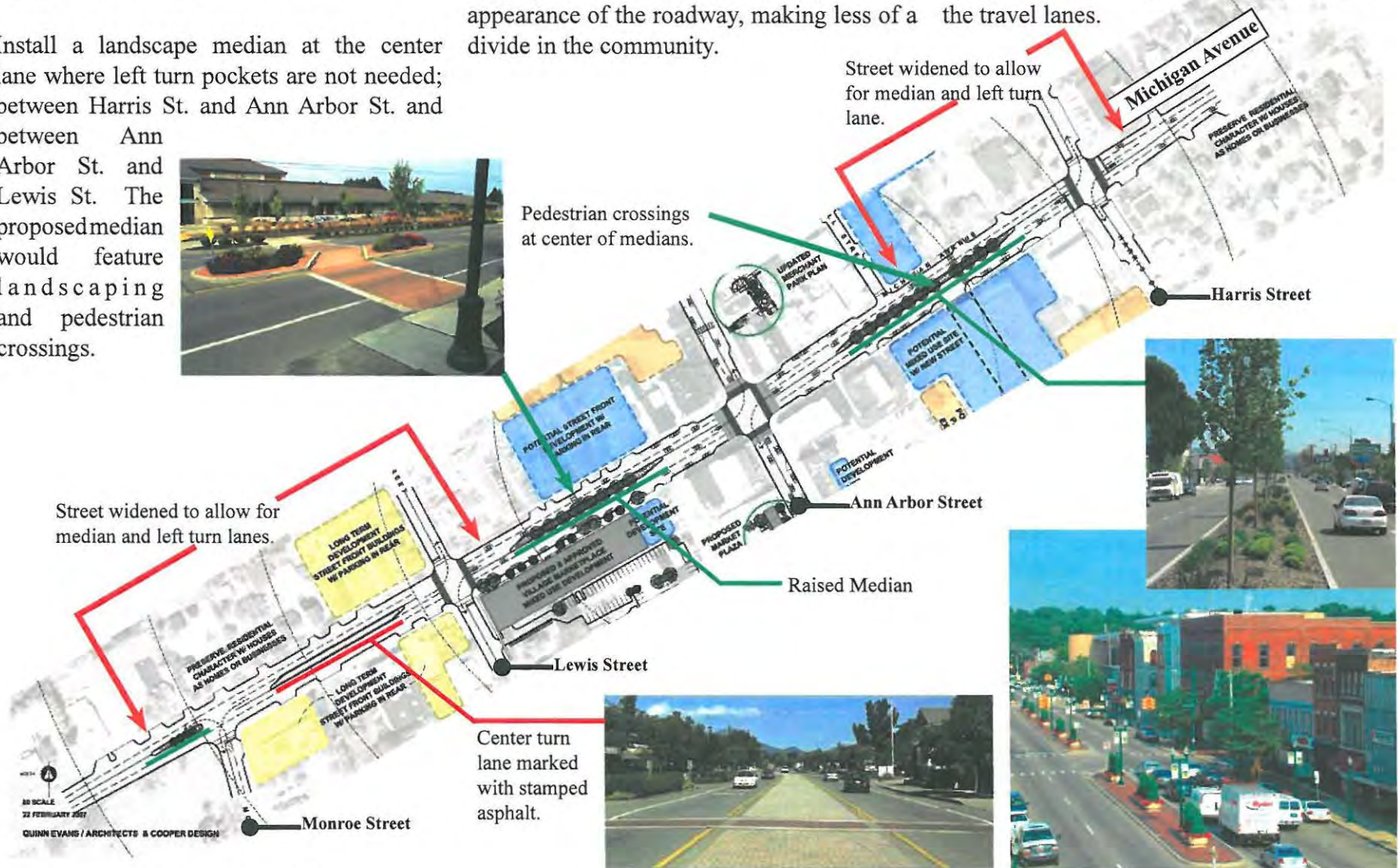
Recommendation:

3 Create medians in the downtown section of Michigan Avenue between Monroe Street and Harris Street.

Install a landscape median at the center lane where left turn pockets are not needed; between Harris St. and Ann Arbor St. and between Ann Arbor St. and Lewis St. The proposed median would feature landscaping and pedestrian crossings.

Such a median will calm traffic by reducing the 'perceived' road width, will signal to drivers that they have entered a pedestrian friendly downtown, and will improve the appearance of the roadway, making less of a divide in the community.

Between Ann Arbor and Lewis where many businesses depend on left turn traffic, the center turn lane can be constructed of stamped, colored asphalt to separate it from the travel lanes.



Recommendations

Michigan Avenue Improvements

Recommendation:

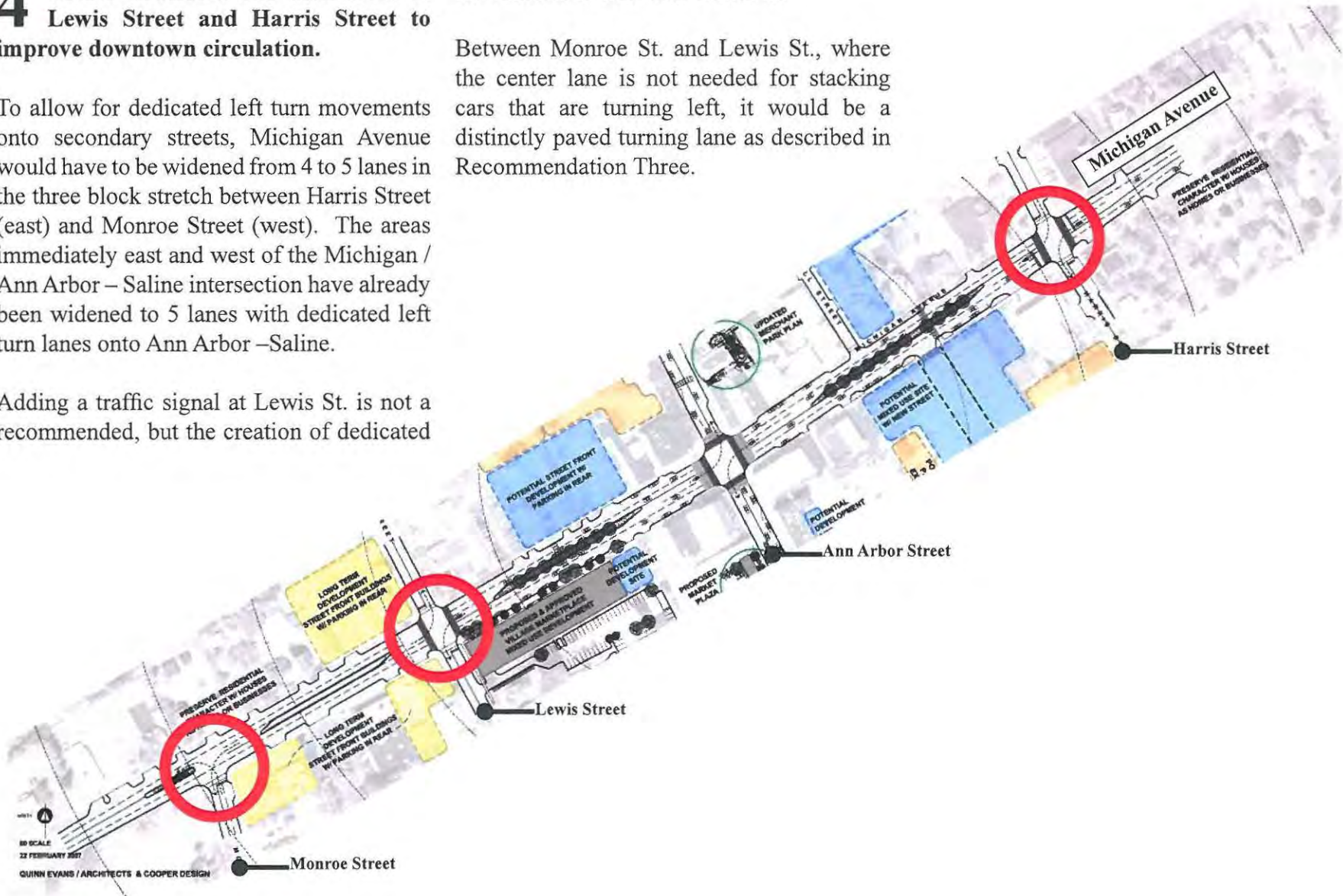
4 Create dedicated left turn lanes at Lewis Street and Harris Street to improve downtown circulation.

To allow for dedicated left turn movements onto secondary streets, Michigan Avenue would have to be widened from 4 to 5 lanes in the three block stretch between Harris Street (east) and Monroe Street (west). The areas immediately east and west of the Michigan / Ann Arbor – Saline intersection have already been widened to 5 lanes with dedicated left turn lanes onto Ann Arbor – Saline.

Adding a traffic signal at Lewis St. is not a recommended, but the creation of dedicated

left turn lanes will make it safer and easier for vehicles to turn onto Lewis St.

Between Monroe St. and Lewis St., where the center lane is not needed for stacking cars that are turning left, it would be a distinctly paved turning lane as described in Recommendation Three.



Michigan Avenue Improvements

Recommendations

Recommendation:

5 Improve crosswalks at Michigan Avenue in the downtown to make the crossings more pedestrian friendly.

Adding stamped, colored paving at the intersections with Harris St., Ann Arbor St., and Lewis St. will emphasize the pedestrian crossings. This type of paving also serves as a gentle rumble strip which puts drivers on notice that they are in a downtown pedestrian area.

Improving all three intersections will give the sense of a larger downtown and promote pedestrian circulation along one side of Michigan Ave. crossing and then along the other.

Countdown pedestrian signals have been installed at Michigan Avenue and these should be added at Harris St. when other improvements are made.



Recommendation:

6 Expand the formal downtown streetscape along Michigan Avenue west to Monroe Street and east to Harris Street.

Maintain the present curb alignment, on-street parking, and streetscape amenities east and west of the Ann Arbor St. intersection and expand streetscape improvements both eastward and westward. As new developments occur along Michigan Avenue (like the proposed 'Villages' project), provide on-street-parallel parking and more intensive streetscape amenities.



Recommendation:

7 Encourage new development within the five block core of downtown.

The downtown core depends upon a having critical mass of business activities to bring people to the downtown where they can do several things with a single trip (shop, dine, get a haircut, go to the bank, etc.). To strengthen the existing downtown it is important that new development not spread the downtown out along Michigan Ave. but for sites to be found within the five block core marked in red on the diagram.

The blue areas on the diagram represent areas where the lots are empty or under utilized and therefore at candidates for development.

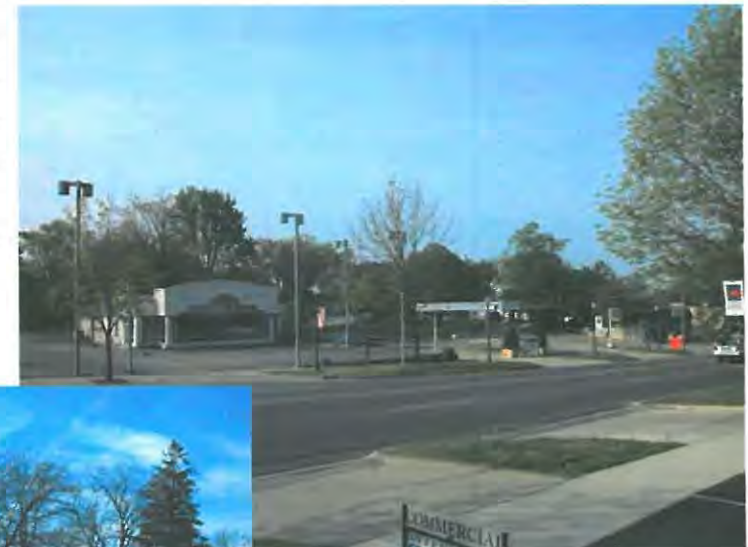
The orange blocks are areas where there is the potential to expand parking.

The yellow blocks are sites to consider if there is pressure for more development, after the within the core area are fully developed.

The red blocks mark areas where there is potential for multi-family, row house or condominium type development that serves as a buffer between the commercial area and the single family homes and also brings more residences close to the downtown.

For all these sites, it is important that they be developed in a traditional downtown model with storefronts at the sidewalk line and parking at the sides and rear. Parking lots that do face streets, need to be landscaped to continue the building line and screen the cars from pedestrians and neighboring properties.

Union School can be an important anchor for the downtown. The site has the potential to become a community cultural arts center hosting events, classes, workshops, etc. that draw people to the downtown.



Development sites on Michigan Avenue west of Ann Arbor St. North side at left, South side above. A three story mixed use development has been approved for the site shown above. QE|A

Recommendation:

8 Promote and support a mixed use redevelopment of the R&B Tool site that includes a new cross street from Michigan Avenue to East Henry Street.

A development concept was prepared for the R&B Tool site to explore how this large under utilized site might be redeveloped. This plan was not done in collaboration with the owner of this site but purely as an exercise in urban design.

Downtown Saline is defined by three “super” blocks to the northwest, southwest, and southeast of the Michigan Ave. - Ann Arbor St. intersection. Only the northeast quadrant is split by the one block long Hall Street. The problem with such super blocks is that they provide approximately 25% less storefront



sites than a similar block which is bisected by a street. Super blocks also hinder both vehicular and pedestrian circulation.

Recommendation number 7 is to encourage development in the four block area, however this is difficult as the potential development sites are along Michigan Avenue which, due to traffic volume and speeds, is not a pedestrian friendly shopping street. The potential for creating a new street to bisect the southeast block of downtown is the driving force behind the concept at right. A new street will improve vehicular circulation, provide new storefronts in downtown, and provide a quieter, pedestrian friendly shopping street.

The plan shows the potential for two new buildings that are 2 or 3 storeys high. The blue floor plan on the left shows how the building might be broken up into smaller

Rendering of a new traditional downtown style two storey commercial building. QE|A

Rendering of a new traditional downtown style two storey commercial building. QE|A

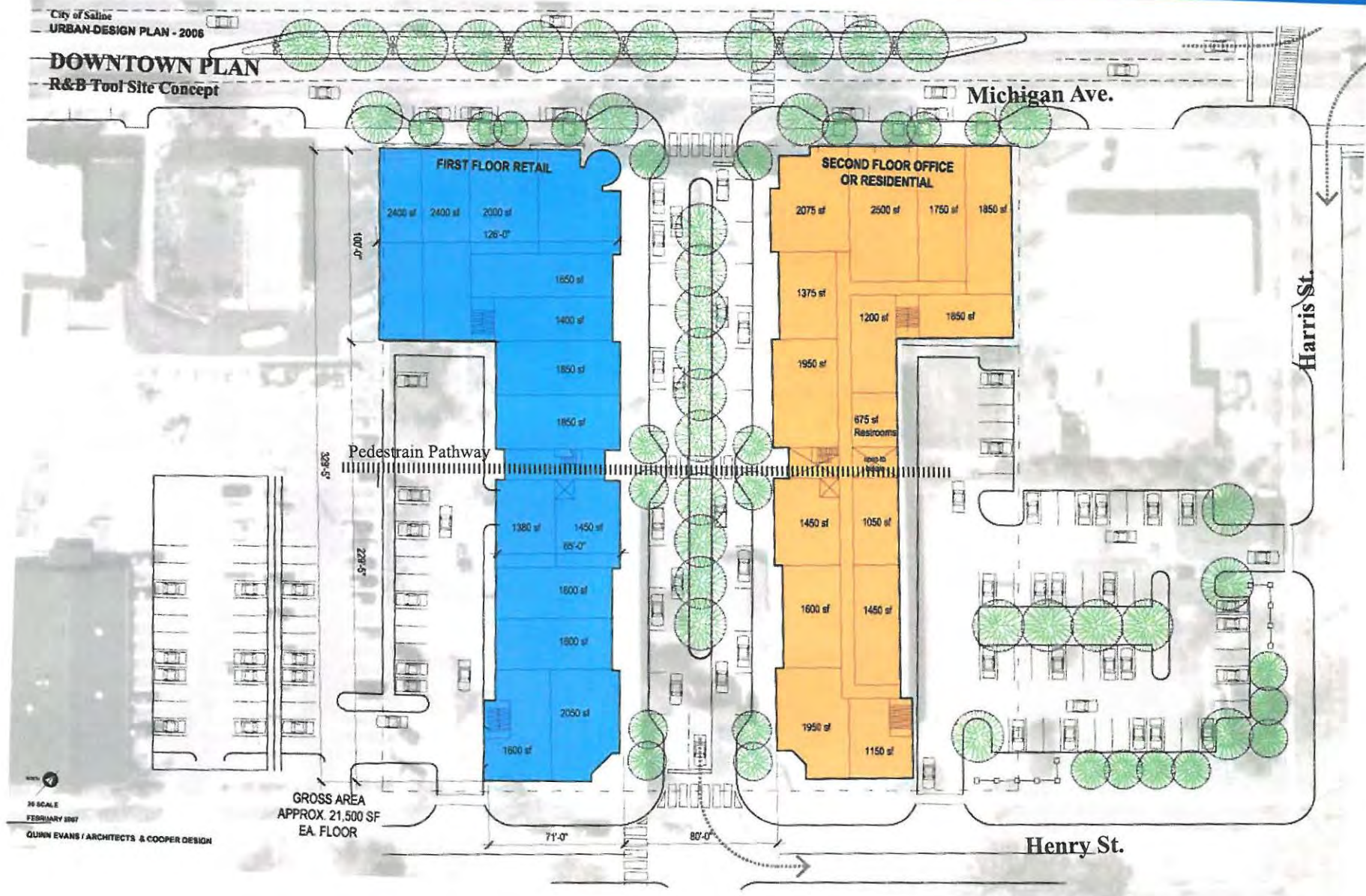
leasable retail shops. The orange floor plan on the right show a possible configuration for the upper floors with a center hall and units that could be office or residential in use.

The new street connecting Michigan Ave. and Henry provides on street parking, provides storefronts on a quiet pedestrian friendly street. Such a street could also be easily closed giving Saline a place to hold street fair type events.

New mixed use development is in part driven by how parking for the stores, offices, residences can be accommodated. This development concept looked at on street parking, locating parking under the structures, to lots to the east, and enlarging the lot across Henry Street. However, to meet current parking code more parking would need to be found.

Development Potential

Recommendations



Recommendations

Recommendation:

9 Preserve the residential character on the edges of downtown.

The entry to downtown Saline is marked on all four sides by a single family residential pattern of houses. Many of these residences along Michigan Avenue have long been altered and now serve as offices or other businesses. Along Ann Arbor Street, the majority are still owner occupied houses. It is this pattern of individual small scale buildings with porches, front yards, sidewalks, and a deep lawn extension that creates the character of a small, Midwest town and reinforces a traditional downtown of two and three storey commercial buildings.

Currently the many of the residences north of downtown along Ann Arbor Street are included in two historic districts. And community members are working towards creating an additional historic district which would include many of the residences south of downtown on Ann Arbor Street.

The residences which now serve as businesses along Michigan Avenue are also important in preserving the character of Saline. Protecting this character at the edges of downtown supports a dense active downtown business district. This residential



Ann Arbor Street, north of downtown. Photo by QE|A.

character helps separate and distinguish the downtown from other commercial developments along Michigan Avenue, especially to the east.

The key to preserving these edges is to make sure enough real estate is available at the center for redevelopment. The urban plan outlined above makes development within the four quadrants downtown a priority and indicates a few other redevelopment opportunity sites beyond this area.

North side of Michigan Ave., between Lewis St. and Monroe St. Photo by QE|A.



Recommendation:

10 Improve bicycle parking in the downtown.

Automobile parking downtown was not identified at the Design Workshop as a problem. The group consensus was that there is enough capacity in the existing lots to support the current businesses and those that might open in currently vacant offices or storefronts.

Bicycle Parking

However, improved and more visible bicycle parking was seen as a priority by those at the Design Workshop. More visible bicycle parking would help encourage visitors to think of Saline as a destination point for bicycle riders from outside Saline, thereby bringing more potential customers to the downtown. It was also thought that encouraging healthy activities such as biking would be good for the health of the community.

Future Vehicular Parking

The City of Saline has already acted on this recommendation and four bright, sculptural bicycle racks will soon be installed downtown. Any future parking lot expansions or developments downtown should consider how to incorporate bicycle parking.

If in the future there is pressure to expand parking a few options have been identified. Reorganizing the parking in the Northwest quadrant is one option. Currently there is a mix of public and private spaces split up by an older drive-thru bank structure. Enlarging the public lot by the water tower on the South side of Henry Street could accommodate more vehicles, especially if the R&B Tool site is redeveloped. Additionally, Design Workshop participants noted that if the demand for a parking structure arose, they would initially recommend building something where the existing Parking Lot 1 is and include retail at the first floor.

Signage for the existing lots was brought up at the Design Workshop as something that should be improved. The city is currently installing new signage that will direct people to the existing lots downtown.

Five Dero bicycle racks similar to red bicycle shown below will be installed in downtown Saline. Photo from Dero.



Legend

-  Park or Community Sites
-  Development Sites
-  Long Range Development Sites
-  Parking Sites
-  Multifamily Housing Sites

Key features of plan include:

- Landscaped Medians on Michigan Ave.
- Left Turn Lanes at Harris St., Lewis St., and Monroe St. from Michigan Ave.
- Improved intersections on Michigan Ave. at Harris St., Ann Arbor St. and Lewis St.
- Market Plaza Shelter
- Updated Merchant Park
- Concentration of development within five block center of downtown.
- Potential R&B Tool Site Development
- Preservation of Residential Character at edges of the downtown.

City of Saline
URBAN DESIGN PLAN - 2006

DOWNTOWN - OVERALL PLAN

