

Chapter Six



LOWER TOWN:

I. Description of Area

The Lower Town area lies approximately one-half mile northeast of downtown Ann Arbor. The Huron River defines its south and east boundaries, while Traver Creek and the residential neighborhoods of Broadway, Traver and Pontiac Trail lie to the north and west. The center of Lower Town is often identified by the existing commercial uses along Maiden Lane and Broadway.

II. History

Huron and Potawatomi Native American tribes lived, hunted and traveled in the city of Ann Arbor prior to European settlement in the early 19th century. Although no evidence of permanent Native American settlement in Lower Town exists, two Native-American trails were found in the area when European settlers began arriving in Ann Arbor in 1824. On March 7, 1825, settlers made the first purchase of land in Lower Town near what today are Maiden Lane and Broadway. In 1828, the first Broadway Bridge was constructed over the Huron River. The area on the north side of the bridge became known as “Lower Town” since topographically it was a low point in Ann Arbor. In 1830, Anson Brown bought the water rights and dammed the north side of the Huron River to build a flourmill. Brown named streets in the area after those in New York City such as Broadway, Wall Street and Maiden Lane. For a short period of time, businesses thrived in the area. In the years that followed, however,



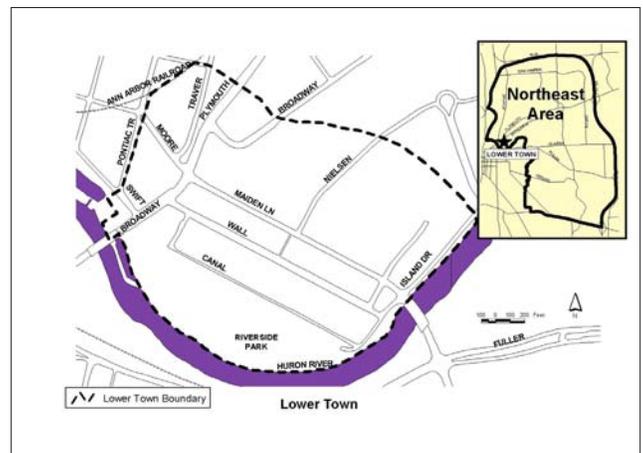
Anson Brown Building, 1001-1007 Broadway

the Lower Town commercial center began to weaken, primarily due to the train station and University of Michigan being established on the south side of the river.

Throughout the 19th century, houses were slowly erected on Broadway, Maiden Lane, Wall Street, Traver Street and Pontiac Trail. Mills along the Huron River and Traver Creek functioned until the beginning of the 20th century. After World War II, homebuilding surged in the area and some businesses returned. Some of Ann Arbor's oldest houses remain along Broadway and Pontiac Trail, while many older homes along Maiden Lane and Wall Street have been replaced with University of Michigan facilities. African-American homebuyers and renters moved to Lower Town, because it was free from deed restrictions that were common in other parts of the City. African-American residents made up a significant percentage of residents in Lower Town throughout much of the 20th century. The number of African-American residents since has declined in Lower Town, due, in part, to the loss of housing stock to University of Michigan facilities and the elimination of restrictive deeds in other parts of Ann Arbor. A Kroger grocery store opened on Broadway in the 1960s and was the center of commercial activity for Lower Town until it closed in the 1990s. In 2003, a Planned Unit Development site plan was approved for a mixed-use urban village that included multiple buildings and uses such as retail, residential, office, structured and surface parking, and public uses.

III. Background

Lower Town has unique redevelopment potential. Due to the many planning issues that face the area, it was determined that Lower Town deserved detailed analysis and its own section within the Plan. Such a section would include a discussion on the issues facing Lower Town, a vision, specific land use recommendations and design guidelines.



Lower Town Boundaries

IV. Issues Facing Lower Town

Lower Town today is a dynamic part of the city of Ann Arbor. It consists of several historic buildings, a wide variety of residential uses, various commercial buildings, three University of Michigan medical buildings, a number of large surface parking lots, an extensive amount of Huron River frontage including Riverside Park, and a street pattern that remains virtually unchanged from the mid- 19th century. Lower Town presents a number of planning opportunities and challenges.

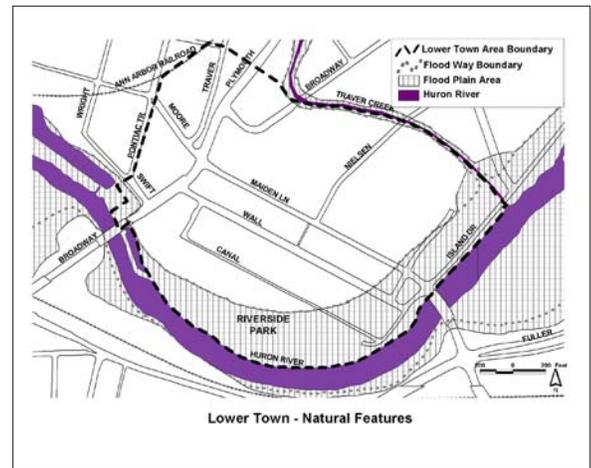
Opportunities include:

- Historic buildings.
- Close proximity to the Huron River, Traver Creek, downtown Ann Arbor, the University of Michigan's North Campus, Main Campus and Medical campus.
- Diversity of land uses including residential, commercial, office, medical, research, and parkland. Riverside Park, Plymouth Parkway Park and the Huron River Trail system.
- A variety of transportation choices including pedestrian, bicycle, bus, rail and automobile.
- Numerous vacant and underutilized sites that provide redevelopment opportunities.
- University of Michigan redevelopment.

Challenges include:

- Vacant commercial storefronts and underutilized land.
- Increasing amounts of vehicular traffic.
- Eight streets that converge in one area.
- Lack of neighborhood and community identity
- A residential neighborhood that is gradually being converted to university uses.

- A creek that has been degraded and is largely hidden from view.
- Large surface parking lots that minimize community activity.
- Riverside Park that has limited access points.
- Potentially contaminated sites.
- The potentially contaminated Michcon site just outside of Lower Town.
- University of Michigan redevelopment.
- Neighborhood Issues



Natural features

During two public workshops, participants identified many neighborhood issues. Homes between Canal Street and Maiden Lane have slowly been acquired and removed by the University of Michigan. Since the 1980's, the University of Michigan has gradually replaced the homes with two university buildings and surface parking lots. Although three historic houses have been moved to other locations, a number of historically significant homes have been demolished.

Some residents identified the lack of community identity as a concern. What was once an active, primarily residential neighborhood has been gradually replaced by commercial and university uses that have brought a large number of surface parking lots. The surface parking lots have eliminated important elements of the urban fabric and have discouraged pedestrian activity. The lack of identity and vibrancy has turned Lower Town into a place most area residents drive past instead of regularly visit.

Another issue facing residents in Lower Town is the lack of direct pedestrian access to Riverside Park. Residents must walk to the east end of Wall Street or cross Broadway to gain access to the park. Some residents trespass on private property or walk through the University of Michigan's parking lots to access Riverside Park.

Some area residents have expressed concern about the possibility of future intensive commercial development in Lower Town and the resulting impacts on adjacent neighborhoods. Many residents have indicated a preference for retail uses that primarily serve the immediate neighborhood and do not require large amounts of surface parking and parking lot lighting. Residents along upper Broadway have expressed concern that re-development in Lower Town may increase traffic on Broadway.

Natural Features

Three major natural features exist in Lower Town. The most significant natural feature is the Huron River, which establishes the south and east boundaries of Lower Town. The Huron River provides extensive scenic and recreational opportunities. Good public views of the river exist from the Broadway Bridge, the Maiden Lane Bridge and along its banks. Recreational opportunities include fishing, canoeing, kayaking, and exploring. In addition, the Huron River Trail runs along the north side of the river and provides pedestrian and bicycle connections to points upstream and downstream of the Lower Town area and picnic tables and benches along the riverbank. The Huron River Trail is planned to eventually provide bicycle and pedestrian connections along the entire course of the Huron River through the City.

Another natural feature is Traver Creek, which defines the northern boundary of Lower Town. The creek flows through the heart of the Northeast Area before flowing through Lower Town and into the Huron River. Traver Creek historically has been degraded in this portion of its course. Industrial uses along its banks have been replaced with commercial and residential uses. A number of buildings and parking lots located along its banks limit water flow during flood events, reduce wildlife habitat

and increase storm water runoff. The lack of an adequate vegetated creek buffer also limits visual and recreational opportunities, such as a pathway along its banks. Instead, species of non-native, invasive plants that reduce ecological diversity are found along the banks of the creek.

A third major natural feature in Lower Town is the flood plain that is associated with the Huron River and Traver Creek. A number of buildings currently exist in portions of the flood plain. Most of Riverside Park lies in the Huron River flood plain.

Historic Preservation

Several historic buildings enrich Lower Town and contribute to the unique historic character of the area. They include the Anson Brown Building (ca. 1832), the Waite-Kellogg House (ca. 1838), the August Herz Building (ca. 1870), the Northside Union Church (ca. 1900), the Detroit Edison Substation (ca. 1905), and the Detroit Edison Building (ca. 1928). Additional 19th century and early 20th century homes exist at 911 and 959 Wall Street and 1024 and 1041 Maiden Lane. These homes remain from the active 19th century neighborhood that once existed between Maiden Lane and Wall Street. The neighborhood immediately north of Lower Town along Pontiac Trail contains of many historic homes and has been considered as a possible City of Ann Arbor historic district. In 2008, city council approved a new historic district for portions of Broadway, Jones Street and Traver Street.

Character, Scale and Image

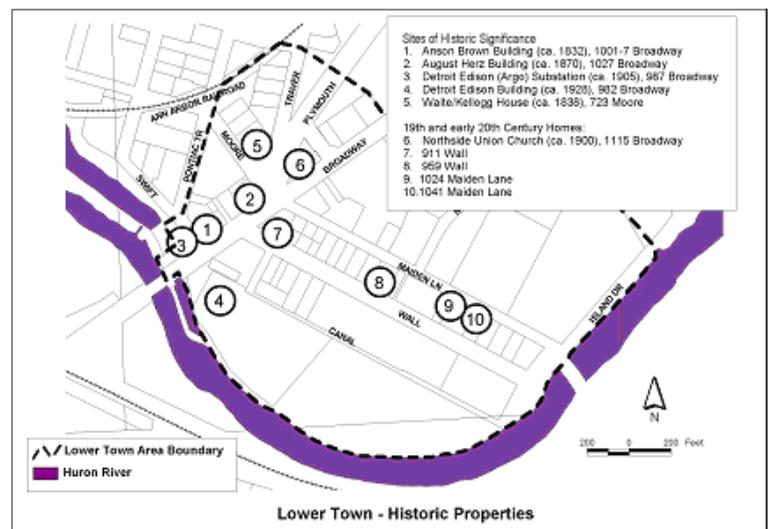
The character, scale, and image of Lower Town have changed dramatically since the area was first settled in the 1820's. Although residential areas along Broadway, Pontiac Trail and Traver Street have remained quiet neighborhoods, remaining portions of Lower Town have been transformed. Many of the historic residential buildings that existed in the early part of the 20th century have been replaced with University of Michigan buildings and parking lots. Auto-oriented commercial buildings have replaced residential homes. Many of the streets in Lower Town have become increasingly congested during peak travel periods. Lower Town is no longer easily accessible to pedestrians. Broadway is difficult for pedestrians to cross due to the width of the street and increasing amounts of traffic. The large number of surface parking lots discourages walking and contributes to the loss of a sense of neighborhood.

Commercial Areas

The primary commercial areas of Lower Town consist of Broadway between Pontiac Trail and Traver Creek, and commercial uses along Maiden Lane between Broadway and Nielsen Court. The commercial areas are characterized by small retail operations, vacant commercial buildings, and large surface parking lots. Some stores have struggled to succeed in this disjointed district. Most of the commercial businesses are designed with extensive amounts of surface parking lots but many of the lots are underutilized.

University of Michigan

The University of Michigan acquired the first of its Lower Town properties in 1967, when a private residential facility on Wall Street was purchased for use by the Turner Clinic for Geriatric Medicine. The University of Michigan subsequently constructed an addition to the clinic in 1976 and the Kellogg Eye Center in



1985. The Turner Clinic has since relocated to the main Medical Center campus and the Kellogg Eye Center now occupies the facility. The University also acquired a vacated hotel at Broadway and Wall Street and converted it to a psychiatric outpatient clinic in the 1980's. The University has removed numerous old homes between Canal Street and Maiden Lane. Most have been replaced with surface parking lots to serve the university medical facilities in the area.

Transportation

Lower Town is faced with unique transportation issues. Eight streets converge on Broadway in Lower Town. Broadway was re-configured in the early 1980's to enter Plymouth Road with a T-intersection. An increasing number of vehicular trips through the area has resulted in peak period congestion along Broadway and Plymouth Road. Many vehicles travel through Lower Town on their way to and from downtown Ann Arbor, employment centers along Plymouth Road, the US-23/Plymouth Road interchange, the University of Michigan Medical Center and Central Campus. The Broadway Bridges (two spans over the railroad tracks and the Huron River) were reconstructed between 2003-2005.

A lack of mid-block connections between Maiden Lane and Canal Street discourages convenient pedestrian and bicycle access to the Huron River and University of Michigan facilities. A lack of a sidewalk on Maiden Lane also discourages pedestrian access in the area. Bus service along Broadway, Maiden Lane and Pontiac Trail is sometimes inconsistent.

Various private and public organizations have expressed an interest in establishing commuter rail service between Detroit and Lansing. This rail service could provide stops in Ann Arbor at the Amtrak railroad station located near Lower Town. If this proposal becomes a reality, the land use recommendations of this plan should be revisited to determine if additional development intensities should be allowed.

Utilities

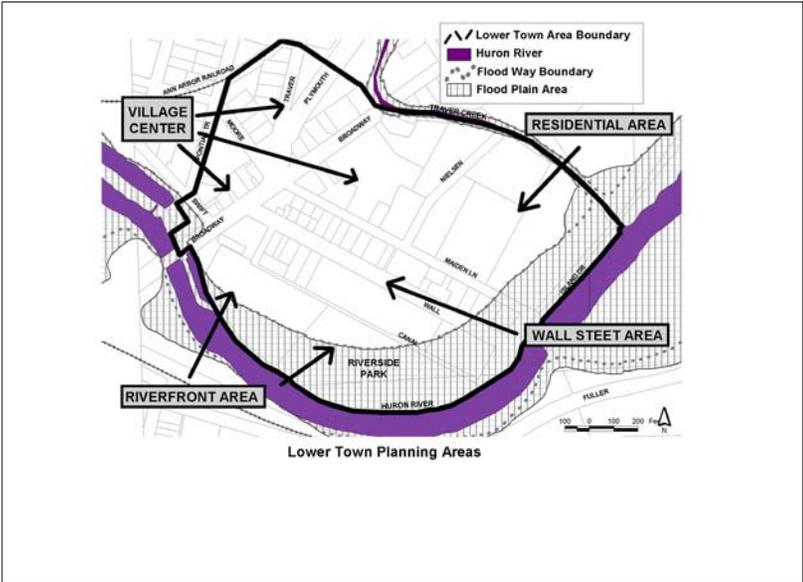
Lower Town is served by City of Ann Arbor water, sanitary sewer and storm sewer services. It receives electrical, natural gas and telephone service from private utility companies. Existing above ground utility wires are unsightly, detracting from the visual appearance of Lower Town. The sanitary sewer service that serves the area was sized to accommodate low density, residential uses. Any major development of University of Michigan properties or private development may require updated sanitary sewer mains. In 2001, Lower Town received a new water line underneath the Huron River. The new line will allow the water tower on Plymouth Road to be raised without significantly increasing water pressure in Lower Town.

V. A Vision for Lower Town

Lower Town will be a dynamic, vibrant and beautiful pedestrian-oriented urban village where people will enjoy living, working, shopping, playing and walking. It will be a place where the unique historic character of the area is reflected in the preservation of historic buildings and the design of new buildings. It will be a community where a mixture of natural areas and residential, office, commercial, recreational and educational uses will be encouraged. Diverse housing opportunities will exist for people of all income levels. People will have many choices of transportation, including safe and convenient walking paths, bicycle routes, mass transit and rail travel. The Huron River and Traver Creek will be protected and provide recreational opportunities. University facilities will be developed in a manner that encourages pedestrian activity, complements the historic character of the area, provides access to the Huron River, offers attractive public open spaces, is well integrated with surrounding uses and contributes to the vitality of Lower Town.

VI. Land Use Recommendations and Design Guidelines

Integrating the various land use elements of Lower Town is a fundamental goal of this plan to achieve the Lower Town vision. For the purposes of making specific land use and design guideline recommendations, Lower Town has been divided into four planning areas. These areas include:



Map: Lower Town Planning Areas

The Riverfront Area – the portion of Lower Town that fronts the Huron River.

The Village Center – the portion of Lower Town that has been used primarily for commercial uses.

The Wall Street Area – The portion of Lower Town with a high percentage of land owned by the University of Michigan.

The Residential Area – the portion of Lower Town that is primarily residential in nature.

Riverfront Area

Description

The Riverfront District consists of properties fronting the Huron River between the Broadway and Maiden Lane Bridges. Properties include the 5-acre DTE Ann Arbor Service Center, which includes the historic Detroit Edison Building, Riverside Park (9.8 acres) and Riverside Park Place Condominiums, an 11-story, 60-unit condominium building on approximately 2 acres.

Unique Characteristics

The Riverfront Area of Lower Town fronts over 2000 feet of the Huron River and includes Riverside Park. The park contains river frontage, ball fields, playground equipment, the Border to Border bike trail, a gravel parking lot and picnic tables and benches. The Riverfront Area is a low point in the Huron River watershed and is opposite a significant land rise south of the river. The Riverfront also includes the Detroit Edison Building (982 Broadway, ca. 1928), a local Individual Historic Property. The 11-story Riverside Park Place Condominiums, one of the tallest buildings in Lower Town, is also part of the Riverfront area. The Broadway Bridges, the main pedestrian and vehicular connection to downtown, is located on the north side of the Riverfront Area. Significant portions of the Riverfront Area are within the 100-year flood plain and flood way.

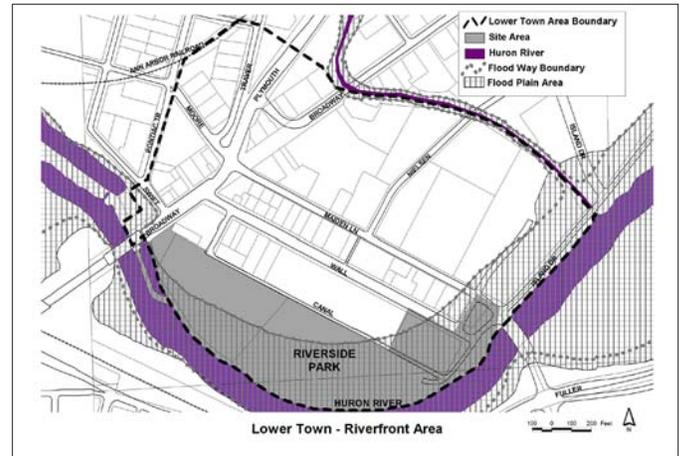
Land Use Recommendations/Design Guidelines

DTE Site - No new buildings should be allowed in the Huron River flood plain/flood way that negatively impact flood storage capacity.

The historic Detroit Edison Building should be preserved to help maintain the historic integrity of Lower Town. Restaurant, entertainment, residential, office, recreational and/or combination of these

uses are appropriate for the building. Off-street parking for the Detroit Edison Building should be located away from the Huron River to minimize environmental and visual impacts. The mixture of uses in the building should share parking facilities to minimize the amount of imperviousness. The original exterior brick walls should be preserved to protect the historic character of the building. This historic structure will provide a unique opportunity to enhance the vitality of the area and help draw people to the Huron River. Further expansion of the industrial uses are not appropriate for this site.

Residential uses are appropriate for the remainder of the DTE site that is located outside of the floodplain. The existing warehouse on the DTE site is not an appropriate use for this riverfront site. Appropriate uses include low (2-4 stories) and/or mid-rise (5-8 stories) townhouses and apartments. Parking should be underneath the units to minimize imperviousness. The site can accommodate higher residential densities due to its proximity to transit corridors, employment centers, parks and commercial centers. Future residents will contribute to the vitality of the area by patronizing retail shops, walking to services and employment centers, and enjoying the park. Brick should be used as the primary exterior building material to complement the historic character of the Detroit Edison Building. Additional design guidelines are described later in this chapter.



Riverfront Area

A land swap should be considered to exchange the portion of the Edison property that is within the floodplain with the portion of Riverside Park adjacent to the DTE site that is outside of the floodplain. The City would acquire critical riverfront parkland while DTE would acquire a portion of land away from the river for residential uses. If such a land exchange occurs, public pedestrian access should be provided through the center of the site to allow direct pedestrian connections from the Wall Street Area to Riverside Park.

Recreational uses, such as play grounds, picnic areas and benches are appropriate in the floodplain portion of the Edison site. The banks of the Huron River should be protected from erosion. Non-native, invasive vegetation should be replaced with native vegetation.

Public pedestrian access also should be provided at the west side of the Edison site to allow public access to Riverside Park from Canal Street. Non-motorized paths should be provided from the Edison site to surrounding areas, including Riverside Park, Broadway, the University of Michigan facilities, and the Village Center, to encourage pedestrian access (see Access diagram below). Vehicular access to the Detroit Edison Site should be provided from Canal Street to minimize traffic conflicts on Broadway. Public access along the Huron River frontage should always be provided.

DTE also owns the old Michcon site on the south side of Huron River, immediately upstream from Lower Town. The Michcon site can provide an important land use connection between Lower Town, the railroad and downtown Ann Arbor. As a contaminated site, new development may be eligible for brownfield funding incentives. The site has also been suggested as a potential stop for the proposed Lansing to Detroit commuter rail line. A Planned Unit Development should be proposed as part of any redevelopment plan.

Access to Riverside Park - Riverside Park was acquired by the City of Ann Arbor in the late 1920's. Public pedestrian and bicycle access points to Riverside Park should be provided from at least the following places: a) the future pedestrian bridge over the Huron River near Broadway Bridge

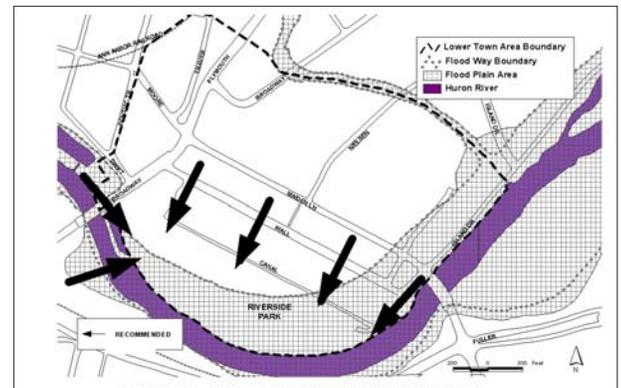
connecting to Broadway Park, b) from the Huron River Trail under Broadway Bridge, c) through the Detroit Edison site where Canal Street turns toward Wall Street, d) from the University District at two access points, and e) from the Huron River Trail near Wall Street. Access points should be clearly identified, well landscaped, properly lighted, and designed to encourage pedestrian access to the Riverside Park. Canoe/kayak access should be provided along the Huron River near the Detroit Edison Building to encourage marine access to Lower Town.

Recommended Pedestrian Access Locations

Riverside Park should be improved and provide a variety of recreational opportunities for area residents, employees and visitors. New play equipment, benches, picnic tables, landscaping, parking lot improvements and shoreline erosion control measures should be provided. Park activities should be programmed to contribute to the vitality and safety of the park.

Riverside Park Place Condominiums

Residential uses are appropriate in this location. Riverside Park Place Condominiums should have direct pedestrian access to Riverside Park and the surrounding neighborhood.



Pedestrian Access Locations

Village Center

Description

The Village Center includes commercial buildings along Broadway, the vacant Kroger/CVS store, individual commercial buildings, strip commercial centers, industrial buildings, and residential uses on the west side of Nielsen Court.

Unique Characteristics

A number of historic properties exist in the Village Center including:

- Anson Brown Building (1001-7 Broadway, ca. 1832)
- Waite/Kellogg House (723 Moore St., ca. 1838)
- August Herz Building (1027 Broadway, ca. 1870)
- Detroit Edison Argo Substation (982 Broadway, ca. 1905)
- Northside Union Church (1115 Broadway, ca. 1900)
- 911 Wall Street

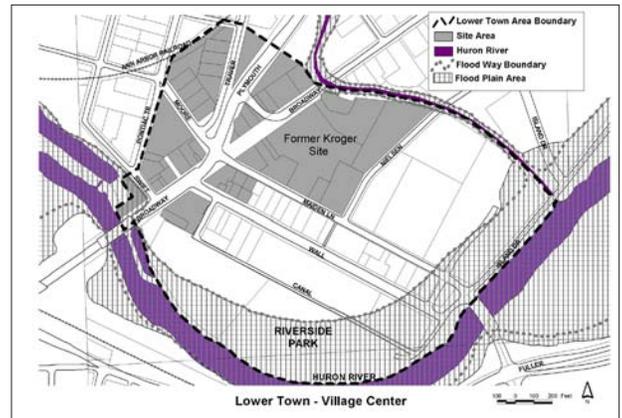
The portion of Broadway between the Huron River and Maiden Lane was the location of the original Lower Town business district, which was established in the early 19th century. The Anson Brown Building is the oldest commercial building in Ann Arbor. The Village Center is also within close proximity to historic residential neighborhoods along Broadway, Pontiac Trail and Traver Street. The Village Center includes a variety of locally oriented retail uses. Eight streets converge in the Village Center and a large amount of through traffic travels along Broadway/Plymouth Road.

The Village Center is close to the old Michcon site, the Amtrak Railroad Station and the proposed Lansing-Detroit commuter rail stop. Traver Creek is located on the north side of the Village Center.

Land Use Recommendations/Design Guidelines

Historic Buildings - Historic buildings should be preserved, including the Anson Brown Building, the August Herz Building, the Detroit Edison Argo Substation, the Waite/Kellogg House, 911 Wall Street and the Northside Union Church with the former parsonage next door. The Greek Revival house at 911 Wall Street should be preserved and restored; if no appropriate use can be found for the house, it should be moved to another site. Preserving these historic buildings will help maintain the unique historic character of Lower Town.

Old Lower Town Business District - The portion of Broadway between the Huron River and Maiden Lane was the location of the original Lower Town business district that was established in the 1820's and 1830's. Appropriate uses in this district include street level retail and upper floors of residential, office, and university uses. Buildings fronting Broadway should be limited to the approximate height of the Anson Brown Building (three to four stories). The front of new buildings should be located at the sidewalk along Broadway to encourage pedestrian access and be consistent with the historic building patterns of this portion of Lower Town. Parking should be at the rear or underneath new buildings. Main pedestrian entrances should be on Broadway. The design of future development should complement the historic character of this part of Ann Arbor and help create a more vibrant and pedestrian friendly environment. Streetscape improvements also should be provided, including additional landscaping, lighting and pedestrian amenities. To improve the pedestrian and business environment and better link this area with the Village Center, traffic calming alternatives, such as providing on-street parking along Broadway, should be explored. Additional design guidelines for Lower Town are described later in this chapter.



Village Center

Corner of Pontiac Trail and Moore Street - The property on the corner of Pontiac Trail and Moore Street (currently occupied by an apartment building) is appropriate for residential, office and research uses. If redeveloped, setbacks should be near but not at the sidewalk to encourage pedestrian access and landscaping opportunities. Parking should be provided underneath buildings to use land efficiently and minimize imperviousness. The site slopes down toward Broadway. Building height should not exceed 3 stories at the northern portion of the site and should not exceed 4 stories at the southern end of the site. Minimizing building height will reduce visual impacts on the surrounding residential area. Additional design guidelines are described later in this chapter.

The Former Kroger Site - The former Kroger site (located south of Broadway, east of Maiden Lane) and surrounding properties are appropriate for a low rise (2-4 stories) to mid-rise (5-8 stories), mixed-use urban village. A redeveloped village center should consist of a mixture of residential, office, retail, and public land uses. Residential uses such as townhouses and apartments are appropriate. Neighborhood retail uses will provide an opportunity for area residents to walk to nearby services and minimize the need for off-street parking. Small professional offices will provide opportunities for area residents to walk to work and provide mid-day customers for retailers. Only residential uses are recommended near Traver Creek to minimize the impacts of non-residential uses on the neighbors north of the creek. The height of new residential buildings near Traver Creek should not exceed 4 stories in height to minimize visual impacts to adjoining neighbors. Most new buildings in the remaining portion of the village center should be between 3 and 5 stories in height with some buildings as tall as 8 stories. Taller buildings should be slender instead of massive to minimize their visual impact. Buildings that exceed 5 stories in height should have a building scale that is generally consistent with three buildings in downtown Ann Arbor that function as community focal points.

Those buildings include the Washington Square Building (200 E. Washington St.), the First National Building (201 S. Main St.), and the Glazier Building (100 S. Main St.). If portions of buildings exceed five stories in height, the taller portions should also have a building scale similar to these downtown buildings. Taller buildings should provide a strong emphasis on an attractive appearance since they will be more visible. Building materials such as brick and stone can enhance the appearance of taller buildings and convey a sense of permanence. The height allowed for mid-rise buildings can encourage redevelopment opportunities while not exceeding the height of the two existing mid-rise buildings in Lower Town. A Planned Unit Development should be a part of any major development proposal in the Village Center.

Village Center Design Guidelines – the following specific elements should be included in a design for the village center:

- Buildings located at or near sidewalks to encourage pedestrian access.
- Ground floor retail for some buildings to provide necessary services and promote vitality.
- Public plazas and/or village greens to encourage a sense of neighborhood and provide places to relax.
- Parking that is provided in on-street locations or underneath or behind new buildings to minimize imperviousness and encourage pedestrian access. Off-street surface parking should be minimized and include shared parking arrangements.
- Sidewalks that can accommodate outdoor seating to enhance a pedestrian atmosphere.
- Direct pedestrian and bicycle connections to surrounding neighborhoods, downtown Ann Arbor, the Huron River and University of Michigan facilities.
- Vehicular access should be provided from Maiden Lane, Broadway and Nielsen Ct.
- Restoration of Traver Creek with a pedestrian path provided along the length.
- Extensive landscaping should be installed to provide shade and beauty.
- Design measures that minimize the amount of vehicular traffic on upper Broadway.
- Public art and benches to add elements of beauty and comfort.
- Appropriate lighting of public areas.
- Additional design guidelines are described on page 18 of this chapter.

Wall Street Area

Description

The Wall Street Area consists of the area between Maiden Lane and Canal Street east of Broadway. The University of Michigan (U of M) has acquired approximately eight acres of land between Maiden Lane and Canal Street since the 1960's. Two U of M facilities, the Kellogg Eye Center and the Riverview Building (a psychiatric outpatient clinic), are located between Wall Street and Canal Street. The U of M has constructed surface parking lots between Wall Street and Maiden Lane. A number of private historic homes and small 20th century apartments buildings exist between Wall Street and Maiden Lane. A six-unit townhouse building was completed in 2004 between Wall and Canal streets.

Unique Characteristics

Throughout the 19th and early 20th century, this portion of Lower Town was developed primarily as a single-family neighborhood. Many of the homes were purchased and removed by the University of Michigan since the 1980's. Three historic homes remain in the Wall Street Corridor. They include: 959 Wall Street, 1041 Wall Street and 1024 Maiden Lane.

University of Michigan facilities are associated with the Medical Center. This portion of the University's campus is a central area of Lower Town and is surrounded by the other Lower Town planning areas. Maiden Lane is the primary east-west traffic artery in the Lower Town Area. The Maiden Lane Bridge, the main pedestrian and vehicular connection to the University of Michigan

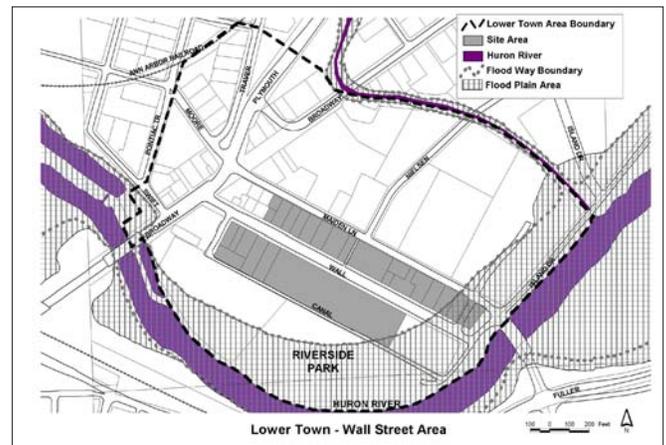
Hospital and Central Campus, is located on the east side of the Wall Street Area.

Land Use Recommendations/Design Guidelines

Historic Properties - The three historic homes should not be demolished. If the homes remain, they should be restored. If no appropriate use can be found for them, they should be relocated to other sites to preserve their historical importance.

Land Use and Design Issues - University, residential and mixed uses are recommended in the Wall Street Area. Appropriate uses include medical facilities, libraries, research and computer buildings, classrooms, offices, recreational centers, structured parking and housing including University housing such as married, family or graduate housing. Mixed-use buildings and public/private partnerships are encouraged. New university buildings and outdoor spaces should use design themes that complement the historic nature of Lower Town. Design clues should come from central campus where classical and modern buildings blend well together and public open space connects buildings and provides places to enjoy the surrounding beauty. Buildings should be designed to enhance visual and pedestrian interaction to the surrounding area. Most buildings should generally vary in height from 3 to 5 stories with a few as high as 8 stories. Buildings should face the street and have entryways near public sidewalks along Maiden Lane and Wall Street to encourage pedestrian access. Loading areas should be consolidated. Additional design guidelines are described later in this chapter.

Landscaping could include trees, shrubs and flowerbeds. Building materials, mass and scale should complement the historic and pedestrian nature of Lower Town. The stark white facades of the buildings on the main medical center campus and illustrated by the Kellogg Eye Center are inappropriate for new University buildings in the historic Lower Town area. University buildings should be compatible with the architectural context of Lower Town and include design elements such as individual windows on all sides of buildings, instead of horizontal bands of glass, and materials that convey permanence such as stone, brick and terra cotta.



Wall Street Area

Access - Extensive public pedestrian and bicycle facilities should be provided throughout the Wall Street area. Public pedestrian and bicycle access should be provided between Maiden Lane and Riverside Park in at least four locations to provide area residents and University staff and visitors with direct access to Riverside Park (see Access Diagram on page 11). The pedestrian access points should be easily identified, attractively landscaped and well lighted. Public plazas, benches, fountains, sculpture, and extensive landscaping should be provided throughout the area to encourage more vibrant outdoor activity and provide pedestrian linkage between buildings.

Residential Area

Description

The Residential Area is located between Traver Creek, the Huron River, Maiden Lane and Nielsen Court. It consists of two low-rise apartment communities and one townhouse community and includes approximately 250 dwelling units. No historic properties or vacant land exist in the Residential Area. The area was farmed throughout the 19th and early 20th century.

Unique Characteristics

The Residential Area is adjacent to the Huron River and Island Park (a City of Ann Arbor park) to the east and Traver Creek to the north. It is also in close proximity to the University of Michigan Medical Center and the University of Michigan facilities in Lower Town, and is adjacent to the Village Center. The Residential Area includes a mixture of owners and renters, students and non-students and homes with a variety of housing costs. This area has a number of housing units that are convenient to students and people affiliated with the University of Michigan Medical Center.

Land Use Recommendations/Design Guidelines

Residential uses are appropriate in this location. A variety of housing opportunities is encouraged, including affordable homes to maintain residential diversity in Lower Town. New buildings should not exceed four stories in height. Future redevelopment should enhance the natural condition of Traver Creek and minimize storm water runoff. Traver Creek should be protected and enhanced by stabilizing stream banks, removing invasive vegetation and planting native vegetation. Public pedestrian paths should be provided along Traver Creek to provide a recreational amenity to areas residents and provide a pedestrian connection between the Village Center and the Huron River. Pedestrian access should be encouraged to surrounding areas. Additional design guidelines are described below.

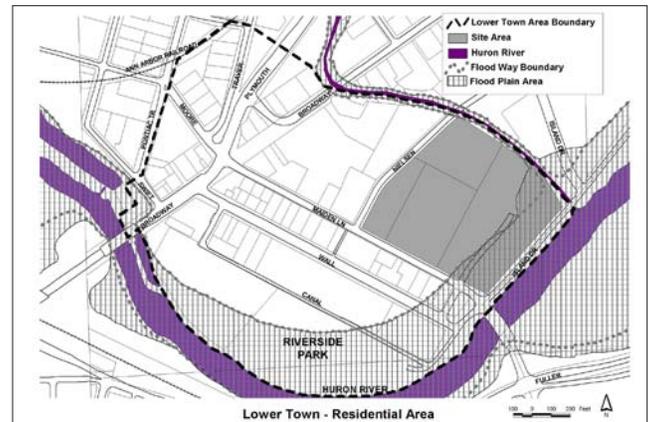
Design Guidelines Throughout Lower Town

The following design elements should be incorporated throughout Lower Town to create a cohesive area and to better link it to surrounding uses. Development petitions should include street level elevations of the proposed project that helps illustrate how the plan meets the design guidelines for Lower Town.

Building Height

Buildings that front Traver Creek should be no more than four stories in height to minimize visual impacts to adjoining areas and contain residential uses. Building height exceeding five stories in other areas of Lower Town should be constructed as follows:

- Built more slender than massive and more vertical than horizontal to minimize visual and wind impacts. Buildings in downtown Ann Arbor such as the Washington Square Building (200 E. Washington St.), the First National Building (201 S. Main St.), and the Glazier Building (100 S. Main St.) should provide design clues for height, massing and materials.
- Designed to be an attractive community focal point.
- Constructed with materials such as stone, brick and terra cotta because of their durability and to create the appearance of permanence
- Incorporate a residential component and, if possible, ground floor retail to increase the mixture of uses, minimize the need for automobile trips, and encourage pedestrian access.



Residential area

Traver Creek

Traver Creek should be protected, restored where appropriate and enhanced. Stream banks should be stabilized, invasive vegetation should be removed, and native vegetation planted that enhances the view of the creek. Public pedestrian paths should be provided along the Creek to provide an amenity to area residents and improve pedestrian connections between the Village Center the Huron River.

Transportation Analysis

Transportation facilities should be regularly evaluated to determine if changes are necessary to correspond with the emerging residential, business and employment needs of Lower Town. The City's Transportation Plan (2009) makes recommendations for improving transportation facilities and opportunities in the area. Pedestrian, bicycle and transit access should be of primary importance for any transportation improvement or development project.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

Pedestrian facilities, such as improved street intersection crossings, mid-block street crossings, new street lighting and wider sidewalks should be provided to encourage pedestrian access and enhance a sense of place. Drive-through facilities that discourage pedestrian access should not be allowed. On-street parking should be allowed on both sides of Broadway to provide parking opportunities for retail stores and buffer pedestrians from street traffic. Bicycle facilities, such as bicycle lanes, bicycle parking facilities, shared use facilities (bicycle/pedestrian paths), and improved signage should be provided throughout Lower Town, where appropriate, to encourage bicycle access.

Parking Facilities

Parking facilities for motor vehicles should be provided under buildings or in parking structures to use land more efficiently. Parking facilities should be well integrated with surrounding buildings and pedestrian areas. The parking structures should be extensively landscaped and use design elements that enhance their appearance.

Design Amenities, Elements and Materials

Welcome signs, colorful flags, historic markers, additional landscaping and pedestrian scale streetlights should be provided to welcome visitors to the Village Center and help identify Lower Town as a special place.

Building entryways should be clearly delineated. Retail uses should be located at or near public sidewalks instead of recessed in an arcade. Although tinted glass is acceptable, dark or reflective glass is discouraged.

The use of historic building materials such as brick, stone, wood and terra cotta is encouraged to compliment the historic integrity of Lower Town and provide the appearance of permanence. Siding materials such as vinyl and aluminum should be minimized. Individual windows with historic dimensions should be provided. Windows made of continuous horizontal bands of glass are discouraged.

Landscaping, Lighting and Signage

Street trees should be installed along streets in Lower Town to provide shade for pedestrians and

improve the appearance of streetscapes. Landscaping buffers should be provided around any surface parking lot. Additional native vegetation should be provided in appropriate areas in Riverside Park and along Traver Creek. Parking lot lighting should be provided in such a way as to minimize the amount of light that shines off site. Signs should be provided to describe the history of the area.

Underground Utilities

New development projects should bury utility lines, such as electrical, phone and television, underground. Existing above ground wires should be buried.

VII. Implementation

A number of tools are available to implement the land use recommendations and design guidelines for Lower Town. Infrastructure funding mechanisms, zoning and design review are some of the tools available to City departments, the Planning Commission, and City Council to help achieve the vision for Lower Town.

University of Michigan – City of Ann Arbor Relationship

A primary approach to implementing many of the Plan's recommendations is for the University of Michigan and City of Ann Arbor to establish a true working relationship on development, transportation, access and utility issues facing the Lower Town area and seek out cooperative opportunities for private involvement. Coordinated development projects would benefit both the University and the City. Shared parking arrangements could be particularly mutually beneficial. The University and City should meet regularly to discuss future development issues facing Lower Town. The University should invite City representatives to participate in the planning process for University development in Lower Town. The City should continue to include University representatives in future planning efforts for Lower Town. Successful interaction between the University of Michigan and City of Ann Arbor can result in a well-designed, vibrant urban village that benefits all.

Zoning

The Planning Commission should initiate a rezoning study of Lower Town to determine if rezoning portions of the area would help meet the goals and objectives of this plan. Some of the existing zoning districts are not consistent with the land use recommendations and design guidelines for Lower Town. For example, the C3 zone requires a 40-foot front setback, which is inconsistent with the recommendation to encourage pedestrian access. Rezoning some parcels may encourage redevelopment that will help achieve the vision for Lower Town. The Planning Commission should evaluate the feasibility of establishing new zoning districts that would be consistent with the Lower Town Land Use Recommendations and Design Guidelines. Prior to the adoption of new zoning districts, Planned Unit Developments (PUD's) would allow developers the design flexibility to meet the objectives of this plan. Developers are encouraged to propose PUD's that are consistent with the Lower Town Land Use Recommendations and Design Guidelines.

Design Review

The Planning Department and Planning Commission should refer to the Lower Town Land Use Recommendations and Design Guidelines of this Chapter when reviewing proposed development projects in Lower Town and should consider codifying them. The recommendations and guidelines will help future decision makers ensure that the vision of Lower Town is achieved.

Infrastructure Funding

The Planning Commission and City Council should evaluate the feasibility of establishing a Tax Increment Financing District or other financing mechanism for Lower Town. Such a district could reinvest tax revenue into infrastructure such as streetscapes, utilities, parking and transportation improvements. The City has become part of the Washtenaw County Brownfield Authority to enable owners of sites which may be eligible for brownfield funding to qualify for funding that would assist with clean-up and infrastructure improvements.