

Charlevoix Downtown Alley Corridor Vision

Charlevoix, MI

Sustainable Built Environment Initiative
Final Report - January 2018



MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

School of Planning, Design
and Construction

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*All photos, unless otherwise noted, are courtesy of the MSU SPDC

Acknowledgements

Local Partners

The City of Charlevoix, the Charlevoix DDA, City Manager Mark Heydlauff and Sarah Lucas with Networks Northwest, all held vital roles in the SBEI process to examine the Alley Corridor in downtown Charlevoix.

The Michigan State University Team

Michigan State University (MSU) and the School of Planning Design and Construction (SPDC) is led by co-principal investigators Wayne Beyea and Karen Russcher, with support from Warren Rauhe, MSU Extension Educator Dean Solomon, Design Assistant Jack McDonough and Research Assistants Hunter Whitehill, Sophia Prince and Chanelle Russ.

Special Thanks

The MSU Project Team would like to express their gratitude to the various stakeholders who attended the Community Visioning Meeting, Preliminary Design Meeting, and/or provided feedback during this process to make this project possible.



School of Planning, Design
and Construction



Extension



**Networks
Northwest**
Talent / Business / Community



Introduction

Introduction

MSU Extension (MSUE) and the School of Planning, Design and Construction (SPDC) have jointly developed the Sustainable Built Environment Initiative (SBEI) to address sustainability challenges and improve the quality of life in Michigan's communities. The partnership allows for an integrated approach to solving complex community problems through the diverse expertise found within the School of Planning, Design, and Construction along with MSUE's institutes and Extension educators. The Sustainable Built Environment Initiative focuses on projects that integrate planning and design elements within a sustainability framework.

The objectives of the SBEI are to:

- Work with communities to develop sustainable planning and design ideas for local issues and opportunities
- Build consensus and generate ideas to address challenging sustainability concerns
- Act as a bridge between communities and consulting planning and design professionals



Project Overview

The City of Charlevoix requested assistance from the MSU SBEI team to develop a long range vision for the downtown Charlevoix city block bounded by Bridge Street, Park Avenue, State Street and Clinton Street. Key considerations included linkages to the surrounding area, wayfinding within the site, service and emergency access, best uses of public areas and overall beautification. With strong public support and careful planning, this project determined strategies to address these considerations, and to better complement the strengths of the area such as the Marina and Waterfront Park.

Ultimately, the community feedback focused on four themes with which to move forward: Connectivity, Functionality, Revitalization, and Beautification. With a thorough and collaborative process, the MSU team worked with the Charlevoix community to address these objectives and formulate an action plan of realistic solutions to achieve a more sustainable built environment.



Process

Visioning Sessions, Preliminary Recommendations, Final Plan Presentation, Implementation

To achieve a plan for the downtown accurately representing the interests of the community, a three-meeting input process was adopted. On June 7, 2017 the first meeting was held as a preliminary opportunity for the residents of Charlevoix to discuss what the future of the Alley Corridor area should become. Together with the help of local representatives, the meeting acted as a forum for the community leaders and citizens to make suggestions concerning safety, function, and aesthetics. The second meeting with the community members was held August 17, 2017. Its primary purpose was to present preliminary recommendations and designs for the area, and to begin receiving feedback from citizens. At the third and final meeting on November 13, 2017, the final design images and planning recommendations were presented to the public.



Inventory & Analysis

Existing Site Conditions—Van Pelt & Hoop Skirt Alleys

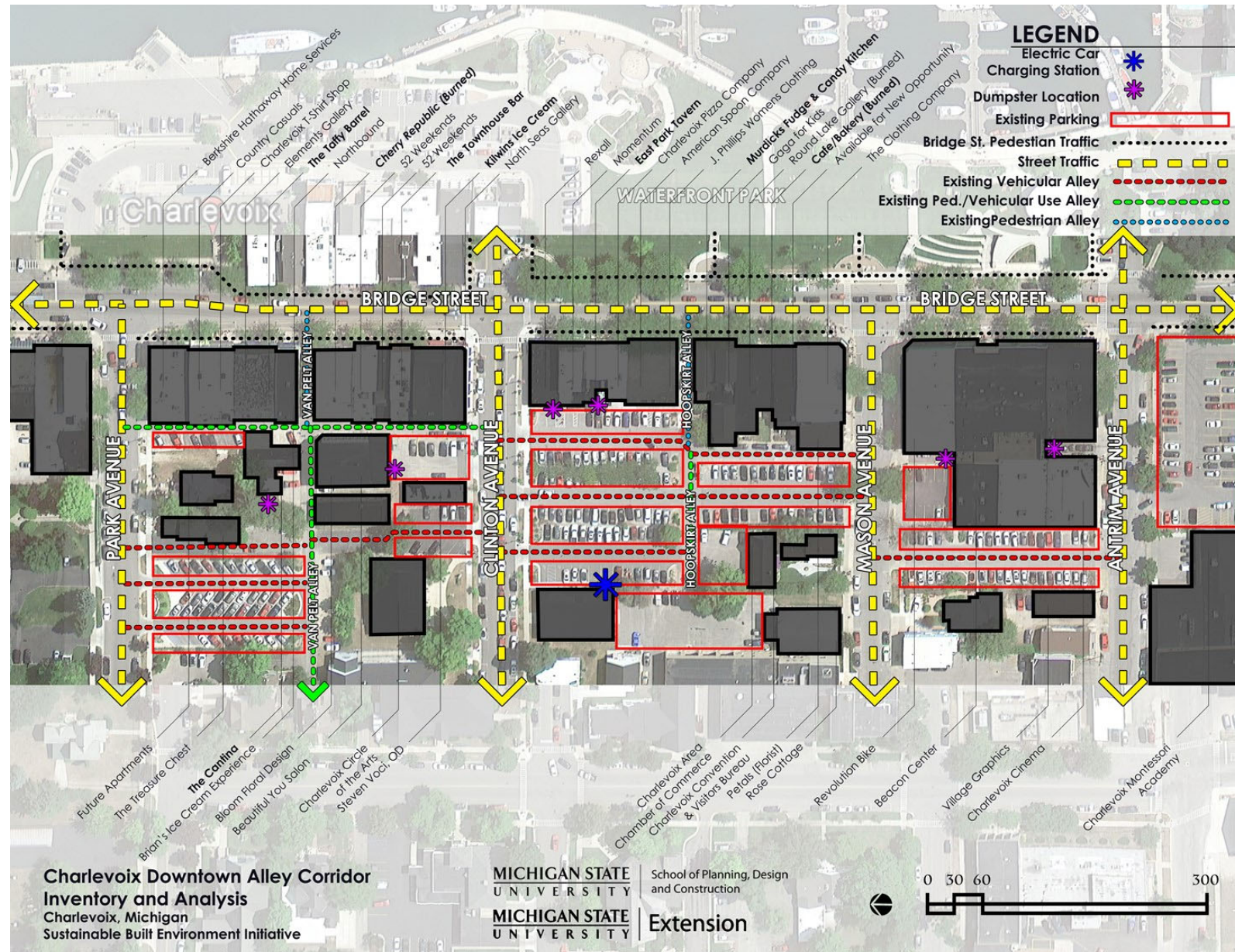


The city of Charlevoix applied to work with the MSU SBEI team to further develop their downtown area. The Van Pelt and Hoop Skirt Alleys were specific targets of revitalization potential. Both alleys originate along the main artery in their Central Business District, Bridge Street. The city felt that revitalizing the alley spaces would be the best way to expand the downtown corridor, and improve safety and aesthetics. SBEI worked to reassess this lost space and develop strategies to prevent it from continuing to be underutilized.

The trend of revitalizing alley spaces is happening in cities across the country in an effort to improve the pedestrian experience and a unique way to distill a place's character. This movement is gaining popularity as a way to breath life back into underutilized and otherwise unusable spaces.

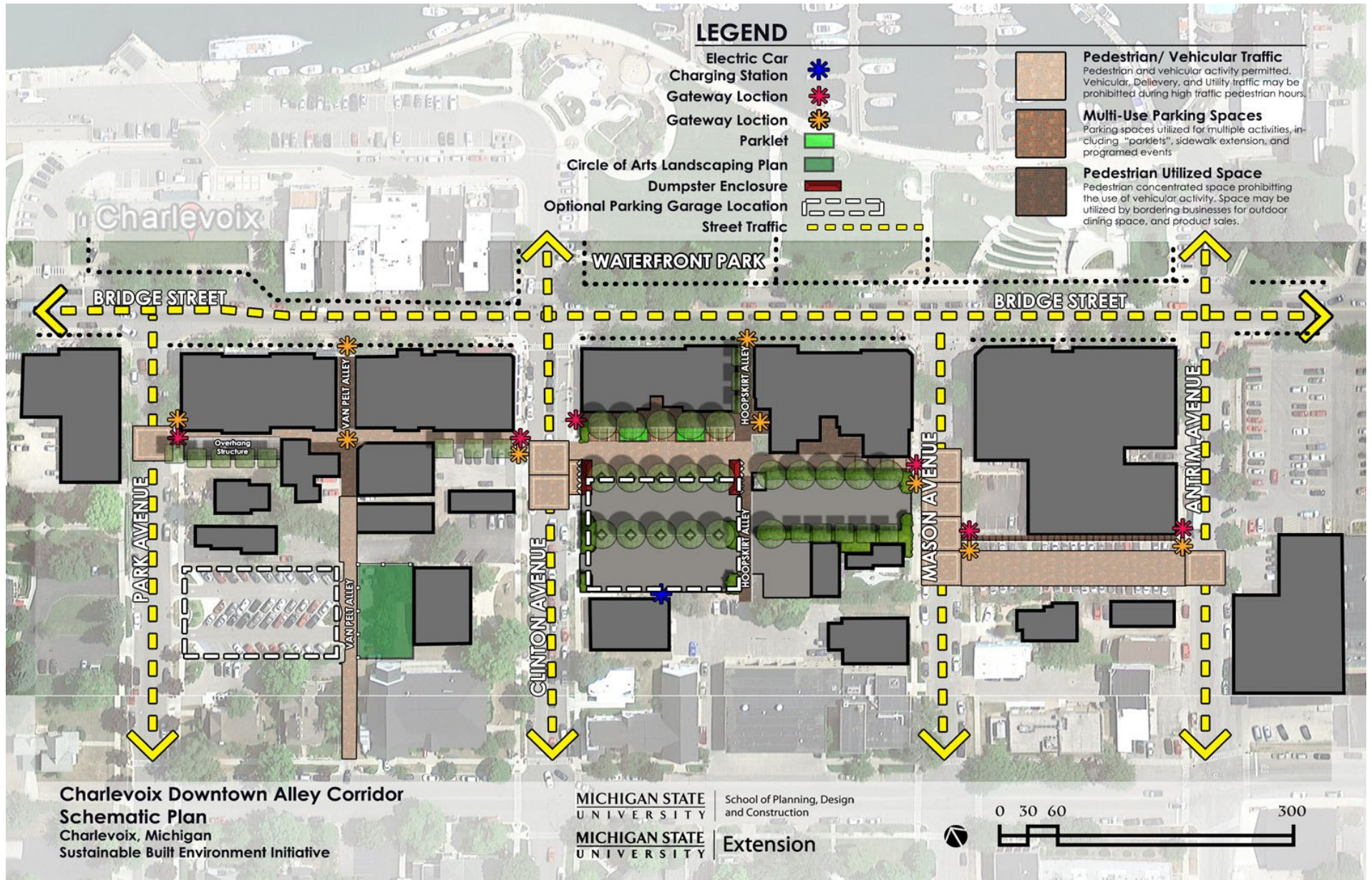
Inventory & Analysis Map

This map shows the current site, layout, tenants and traffic circulation in downtown Charlevoix.



Schematic Plan Map

This map shows the future schematic plan for downtown Charlevoix, distinguishing pavement variations, new gateways and potential locations for a future parking garage.



Delivery Map

This map shows the current delivery access through backstreets of downtown Charlevoix. There were considerations kept to ensure that revitalization of this area would not impede delivery vehicle access.

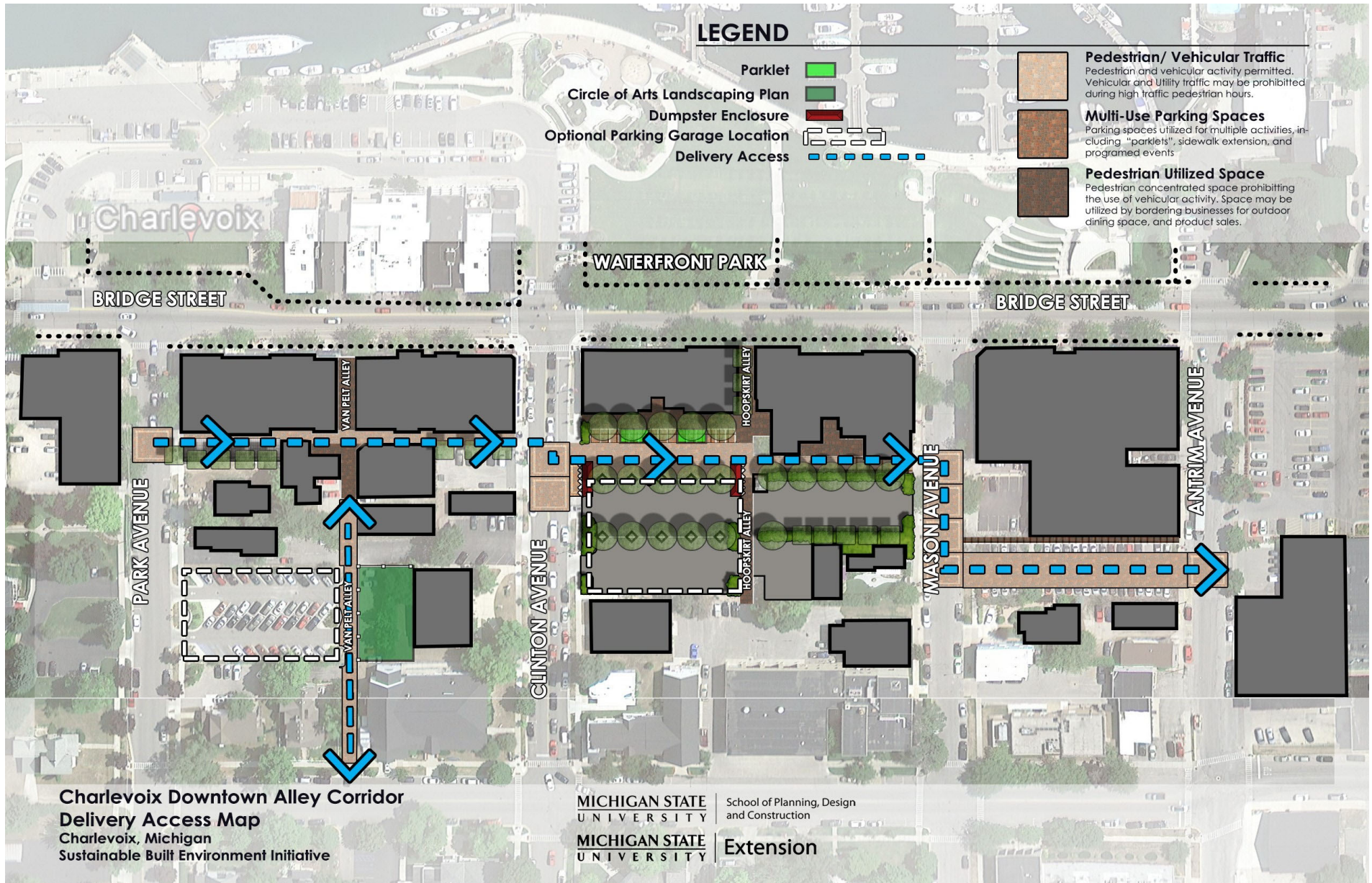
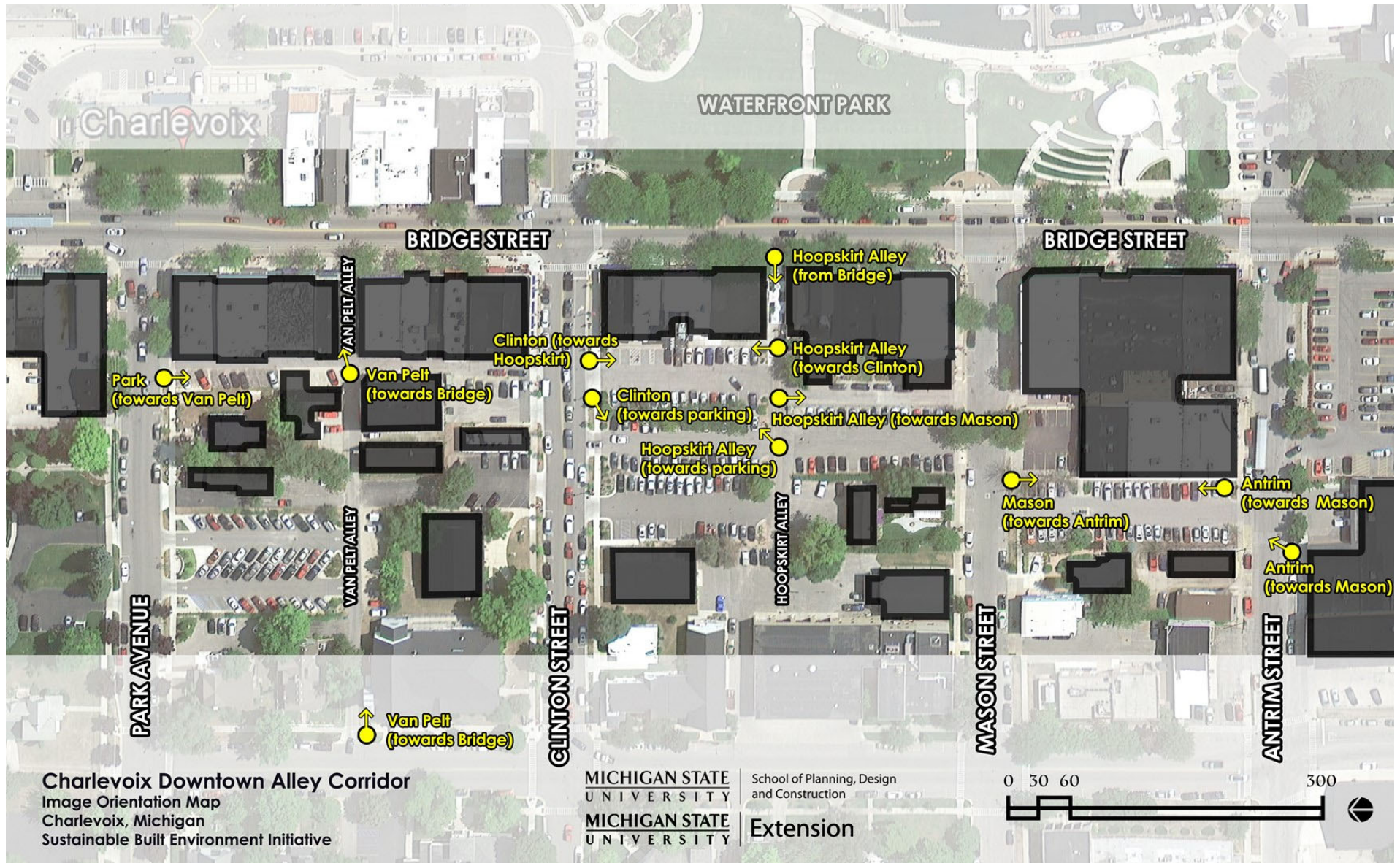


Image Orientation Map

This map shows the orientation of design imaging, which can be seen in the *Planning & Design Recommendations* Section.





Community Input

Community Input

Meeting One: Community Visioning

The citizens of Charlevoix first met with the MSU team at a community visioning session on June 7, 2017, first to assess the alley, and then at the Charlevoix Public Library. The MSU faculty presented an overview of the SBEI process, the existing conditions of the corridor, and provided a map of the project site. Worksheets were handed out with three different question prompts including:

- What are you proud about for the project site and the immediate area?
- What are you sorry about for the project site and the immediate area?
- What would you like to see as you float over the site in a hot air balloon 15 years from now?

Charlevoix citizens had concerns mainly regarding underutilized and unmaintained alleys, and the challenges of safe and appealing pedestrian areas.



Visioning Input Summary

What are you proud about the project site and immediate area?



What are you sorry about for the project site and immediate area?



What would you like to see as you float over the site in a hot air balloon in 15 years?



Community Input

Meeting Two: Design Input & Summary

The citizens of Charlevoix contributed valuable input on the preliminary designs and recommendations for the Downtown Alley Corridor Vision. On August 17, 2017 MSU hosted a second meeting again at the Charlevoix Public Library. Design options and imaging surrounding those designs were presented. There were worksheets provided with a few question prompts including:

- What do you like about the designs presented today?
- What do you dislike about the designs presented today?
- What improvements/additions would you like to see regarding the designs presented today?

Charlevoix citizens responded to the designs with mostly feedback concerning underutilized space and different opportunities for revitalization.

What do you like about the designs presented?

- * The designs bring an inviting modern feel without sacrificing the unique character of Charlevoix
- * Improvements to the back side of Bridge St. retail
- * Creative use of lighting
- * Design images exceeded expectations
- * Paving, benches, plantings, outdoor dining areas
- * Community feedback was translated well into the design
- * Nice dumpster screening
- * Effective presentation and descriptive graphics

What do you dislike about the designs presented?

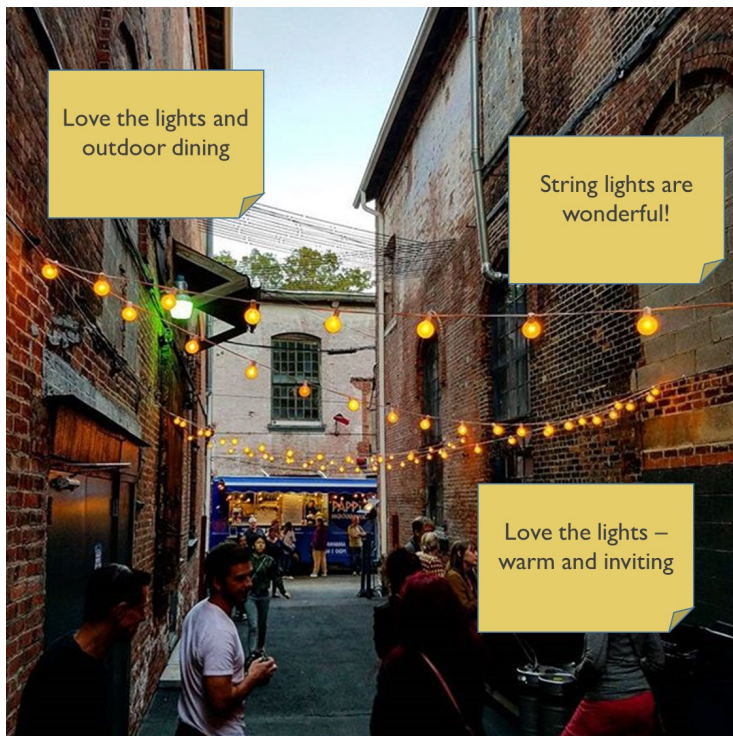
- * East Park and Marina lack inclusion in the designs
- * Pedestrian and vehicular system from Clinton to Antrim, from Park

What improvements or additions would you like to see regarding the designs presented?

- * A new mixed-use parking structure/ building should be considered
- * More design rationale
- * Wayfinding signage to city buildings (library, city hall, parking)
- * Widen Bridge St. and eliminate parking
- * More design thought needed in the crossovers from alleys to side streets
- * Create a Northern MI or water theme to incorporate into the designs
- * Enhance Bridge St./East Park/ Marina (all the “Jewel” of Charlevoix)

Community Visioning Feedback Examples

Community members responded to character images of other cities by adding their feedback directly onto the images with sticky notes. The images help the SBEI team hone in on the preferences of Charlevoix's vision for their city.





Design Input

Feedback Examples

Community members used the same method to engage with the design renderings of scenes from the project site.





Design Considerations

Design Considerations

Connectivity

- * Maintain the convenience and connectivity to the shops on Bridge Street
- * Enhance the paving to help wayfinding and encourage use for walking and biking
- * Connect Library and Art Gallery to the alleys by adding access and seating areas
- * Provide visual links to tie the alley corridor to the waterfront marina

Revitalization

- * Encourage renovation and revitalization of the back side of businesses to enhance the corridor space
- * Maintain the charming historic vernacular architectural style of Charlevoix
- * Encourage new and unique business by providing alternatives behind Bridge Street
- * Add rear shop entrances to provide alternative access to buildings and update or repair building facades

Functionality

- * Maintain parking numbers and add possible parking garage
- * Provide alternative screening for dumpsters and utility boxes
- * Provide spaces for dining, gathering and outdoor seating
- * Provide outdoor spaces to encourage family and kid friendly activity areas
- * Prioritize the space for pedestrians and bicycles as well as deliveries and emergency vehicle access

Beautification

- * Add trees to help green/soften the space as well as provide shade
- * Encourage charming signage to create a theme for the alley corridor
- * Provide more lighting in alley for aesthetic appeal as well as safety
- * Add more colorful plantings and green rooftop spaces
- * Utilize a paving design, outdoor furnishings, and lighting to make a cohesive streetscape
- * Add cultural or artistic elements to provide points of interest along the alley corridor



Planning & Design Recommendations

Design, Policy, and Implementation Recommendations

In order to move forward and execute the planning and design considerations, there are a number of recommendations that can be implemented. These recommendations are framed within four key themes that are aimed at addressing the needs of the vitality and draw of downtown Charlevoix. The four themes are Connectivity, Revitalization, Functionality and Beautification. Design, Policy and Implementation Recommendations have been developed for each.

Planning & Design Themes:

Connectivity

Revitalization

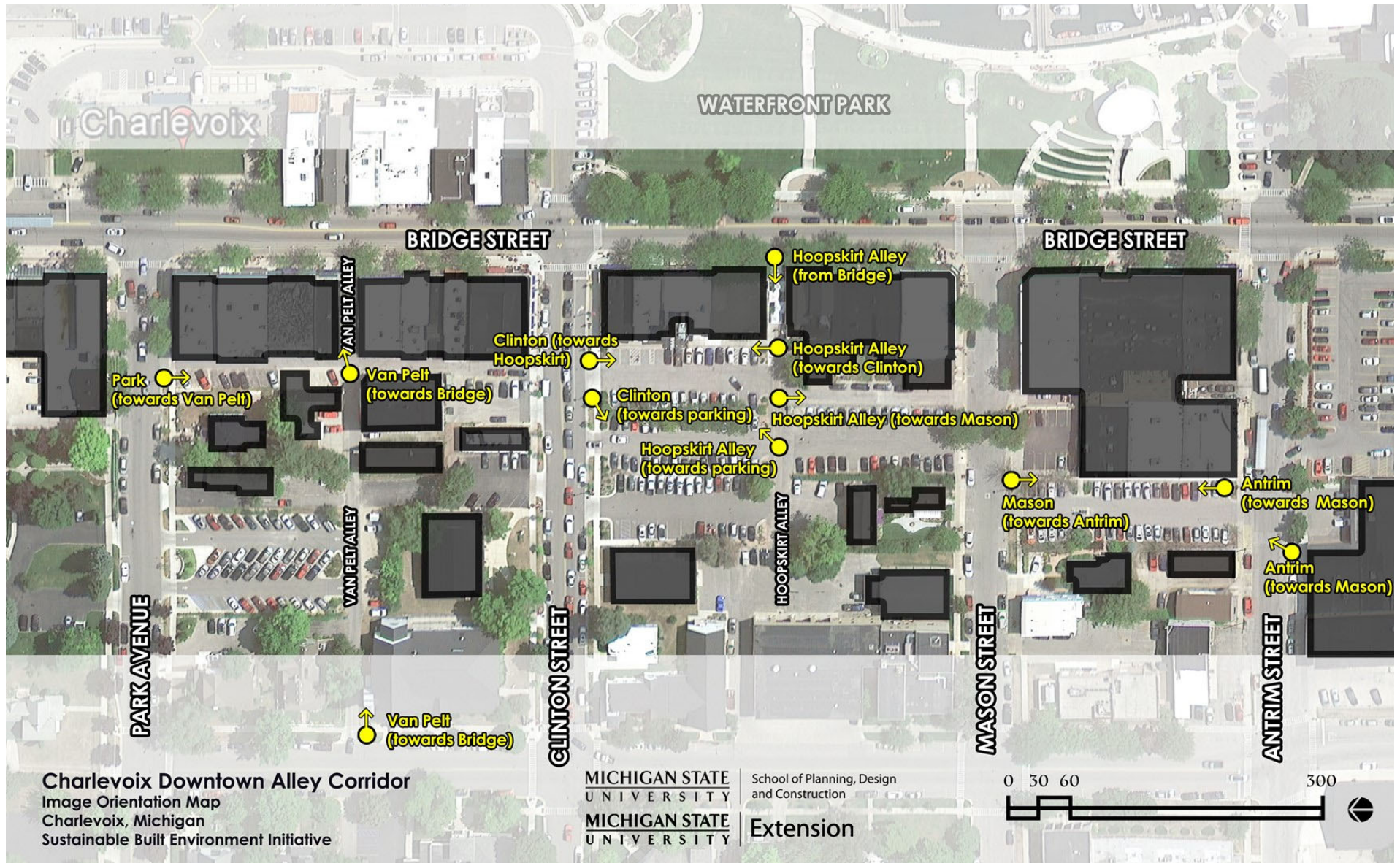
Functionality

Beautification

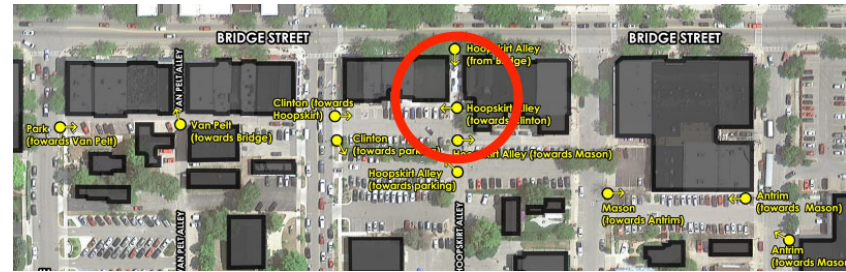


Image Orientation Map

This map shows the orientation of design imaging found on the following pages.



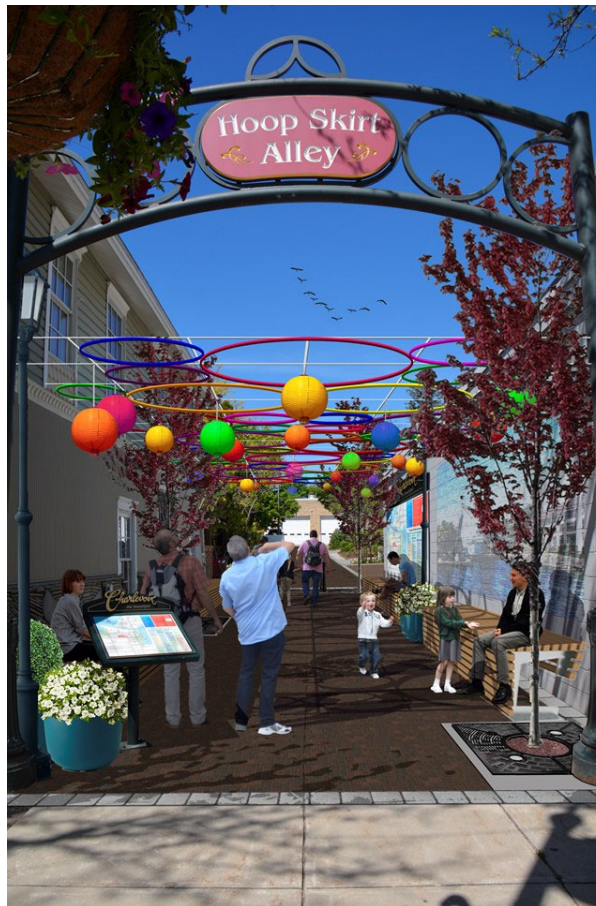
Connectivity



Before:



After:

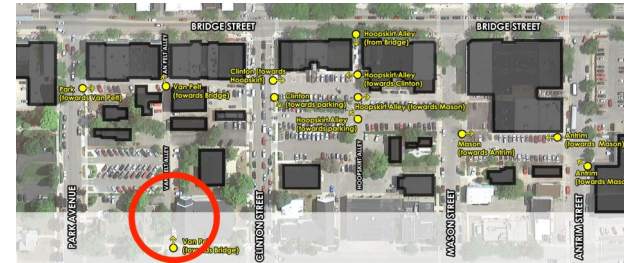
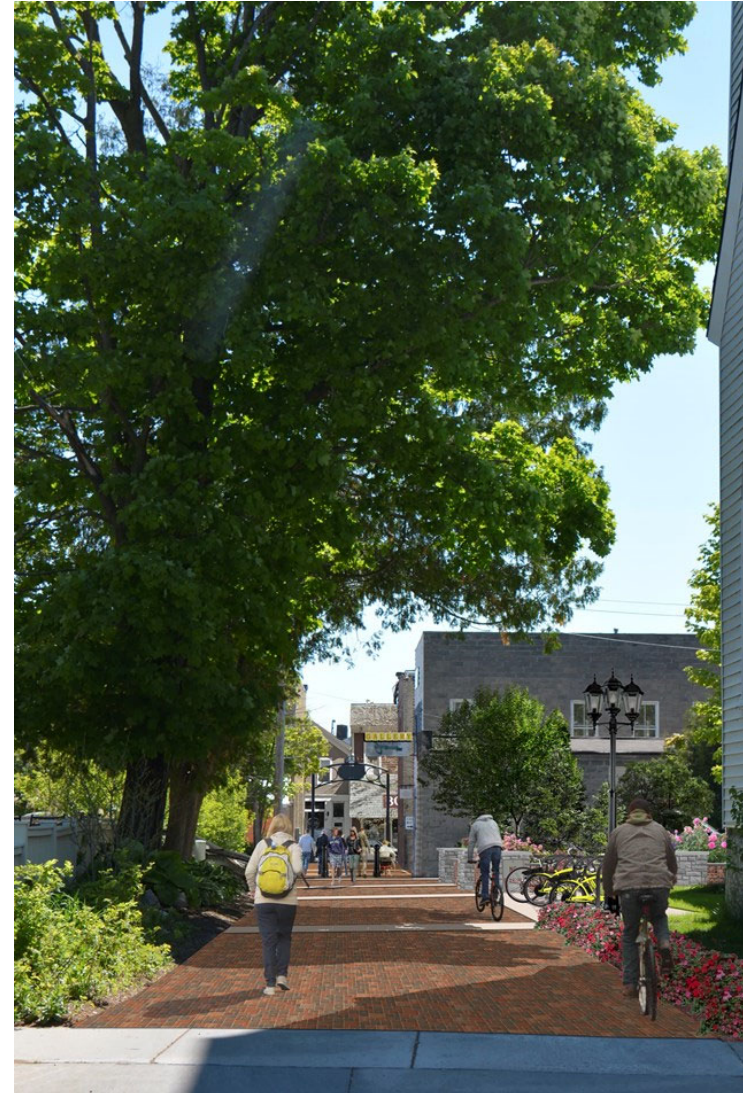


Connectivity

Before:



After:



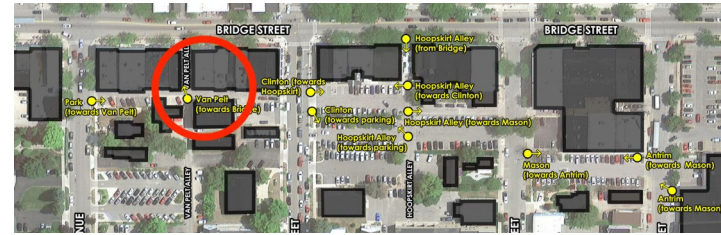
Connectivity

Design Considerations	Recommendation	Action Step
Provide visual links to tie the alley corridor to the water front marina area	Prioritize this connectivity in the Design Committee's "Wayfinding Signage" Project	Tie the existing downtown bike networking into waterfront/marina area, and The Boyne City to Charlevoix Non-motorized Trail
Connect Library and Art Gallery to the alleys by adding access and seating areas	Encourage foot traffic and connectivity through alleys by increasing visibility of pedestrian routes between anchor locations	Incorporate maps of downtown walking routes as part of wayfinding signage, in addition to added public furniture
Maintain the convenience and connectivity to the shops on Bridge Street	Provide safe and inviting spaces for a wide range of pedestrian needs	Adopt a Complete Streets ordinance, as included in the Master Plan, to allow for safe travel for those walking, bicycling, driving cars, or conducting business

Sustainability Tip: Moving toward Complete Streets will reduce auto-dependence and air/noise pollution, and encourage activity that will lead to healthier lifestyles.

Planning & Design Recommendations

Revitalization



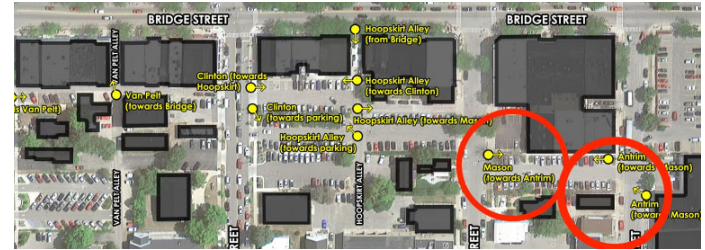
Before:



After:



Revitalization



Before:



After:



Revitalization

Design Considerations	Recommendation	Action Step
Encourage renovation and revitalization of the back side of businesses to enhance corridor space	Seek funding and grants related to façade restoration and placemaking	Continue funding through the DDA's Façade Incentive Grant Program Register key points of interest as features on Google Maps.
Add rear shop entrances to provide alternate access to buildings and update or repair building facades	Explore ways to incentivize business by encouraging business-friendly policy	Explore the option to update parking requirement for waived downtown parking (Section 5.93) to include businesses along alleys originating on Bridge Street
Maintain the charming historic vernacular architectural style of Charlevoix	Continue work of the Design Committee to develop community design guidelines	Develop community design guidelines as a step toward a larger policy implementation such as Form-Based Code, to protect and promote unique Charlevoix "look" and innovative architecture where appropriate
Encourage new and unique business by providing alternatives	Focus efforts on Alley by creating space for new and expanding businesses	Take advantage of the Crowdfunding Law to attract and support entrepreneurs to locate businesses in the Alley and downtown as whole

Sustainability Tip: Good design incorporates sustainability elements that will promote an economically and environmentally resilient city by better equipping cities to adjust to globalization and climate change.

Planning & Design Recommendations

Functionality



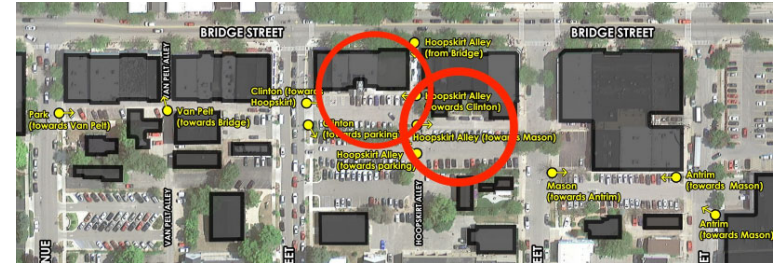
Before:



After:



Functionality



Before:



After:





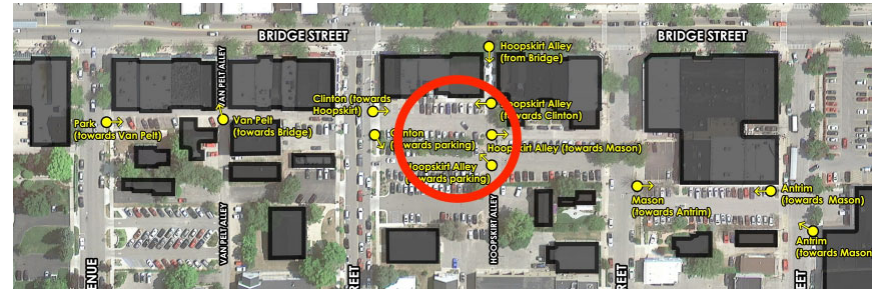
Functionality

Design Considerations	Recommendation	Action Step
Prioritize space for pedestrians and bicycles, as well as deliveries and emergency vehicle access	Further encourage multimodal transportation	Explore funding for bike amenities available through Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grants
Provide outdoor spaces to encourage family friendly areas	Utilize lighting and public furniture to attract and anchor a variety of ages and sizes of groups	Consider addition of public furniture such as picnic tables and chess tables that encourage organic interaction among public
Provide spaces for dining, gather and outdoor seating	Explore ways to incentivize outdoor activity by implementing business-friendly policy	Although outdoor dining is permitted in the CBD, amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow for special licensing (temporary or permanent) for outdoor dining on sidewalks
Provide alternative screening for dumpsters and utility boxes	Use Zoning Ordinance to improve waste aesthetics	Update Zoning Ordinance dumpster screen section to include more prescriptive requirements

Sustainability Tip: Community composting may be a further step toward sustainability in addition to existing waste disposal and recycling programs.

Planning & Design Recommendations

Beautification



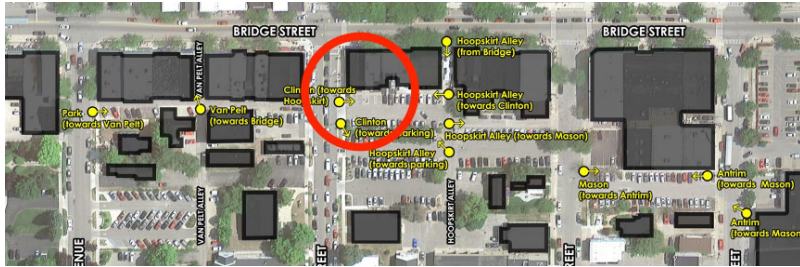
Before:



After:



Beautification



Before:



After:



Beautification

Design Considerations	Recommendation	Action Step
Add trees and vegetation to help soften the space and provide shade	Add more colorful plantings and green rooftop spaces	Update Zoning Ordinance to include intent of trees and vegetation in the Central Business District (CBD)
Design charming signage to create theme for alley corridor	Activate a shared project between the Design and Economic Vitality committees of the DDA to brainstorm identity/theme of Charlevoix alleys	Incorporate alley identity into Charlevoix brand and identity
Create a sense of place within Alleys	Provide lighting for aesthetic appeal and safety Utilize paving design, outdoor furnishings and light to create sense of cohesive streetscape	Develop ordinance specific to alley spaces concerning safety and aesthetic features
Add cultural or artistic elements to provide points of interest along alley corridor	Work with the Promotions Committee to use alleys as temporary art galleries or museum-like exhibition spaces to learn about cultural history of Charlevoix	Apply for MEDC's Michigan Council for Art and Affairs Grant to help fund the continued promotion of arts and Culture in Charlevoix

Sustainability Tip: Street trees and vegetation are a simple way to improve aesthetic, slow vehicle traffic, reduce the urban heat index, and support urban wildlife.

Planning & Design Recommendations



Appendix

Appendix A: Meeting One Raw Visioning Input

What are you proud of about the project site and immediate area?	Total Responses
MARINA/WATERFRONT/VIEW	24
INVITING CHARM AND CHARACTER	20
MIXED USE/UNIQUE STORES	19
CONVENIENCE/ DENSITY	18
POSITIVE ENERGY AND POTENTIAL	17
LANDSCAPING/TREES/FLOWERS	14
ALLEY IS AN ALTERNATE ROUTE	11
WALKABILITY	10
ENERGY AND EVENT-GATHERING	7
HERITAGE/HISTORIC LOOK	7
ALLEY AND SIGNAGE	5
BIKE ACCESS IN ALLEY	5
BUSINESS EXPANSION	3
LIBRARY	4
PARKS	2
REXALL MURAL	2
FREE PARKING	2

Appendix A: Meeting One Raw Visioning Input

What are you sorry about the project site?	Total Responses
UNDERUTILIZED, UNINVITING ALLEYS/REAR SHOP ENTRANCES	31
RELOCATE PARKING AND TRAFFIC FROM BRIDGE ST	20
VERY LITTLE TREE CANOPY/LANDSCAPE	13
UNMAINTAINED SAFETY HAZARDS, FEW ADA STANDARDS	13
DELIVERY TRUCKS, EMERGENCY VEHICLES IN ALLEY	11
POOR LIGHTING	10
CIRCULATION/CONTINUITY	10
DUMPSTERS AND MISHANDLED TRASH BINS/UTILITY BOXES	9
SNOW REMOVAL/NO HEATED SIDEWALKS	7
DAMAGED, OUTDATED BUILDINGS	7
NOT ENOUGH YEAR-ROUND STORE	6
UNSAFE BIKING/WALKING	6
NO PLANNING, SITE PLAN REVIEW, OR TRAFFIC/SAFETY STUDY	5
END DESTINATION OF ALLEYS	5
NOTHING SPECIAL HAPPENING OFF OF MAIN STRIP	4

Appendix A: Meeting One Raw Visioning Input

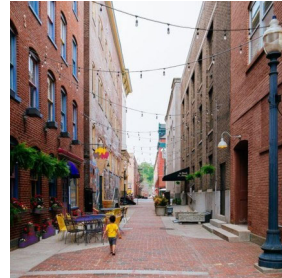
What would you like to see as you float over the site in a hot air balloon 15 years from now?	Total Responses
GREEN SPACE/FLOWERS/TREES/CANOPY	29
PRIORITY ON PEDESTRIANS AND BIKES, NOT VEHICLES	23
GREENROOF/SOLAR PANELS/ROOFTOP GARDENS/ACTIVITY	17
ENHANCED/STRING LIGHTING	15
MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT	14
SECOND MAIN STREET/SIDE STREET ACTIVITY/VIBRANT ALLEY	12
OUTDOOR DINING/SEATING OPPORTUNITIES	12
CENTRALIZED PARKING STRUCTURE	11
COHESIVE STREETScape/LANDSCAPE EXPERIENCE	10
MUSIC/DANCING/CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC ELEMENTS	10
YEAR-ROUND VITALITY	9
CONFERENCE/GATHERING SPACE	7
RENOVATED BUILDINGS AND COHESIVE ARCHITECTURE	6
CLEAN/DUMPSTER SCREENING/CLEAR OF OVERHEAD UTILITIES	5
FAMILY/KID-FRIENDLY EVENTS	4
TROLLEY/PEOPLE MOVER	4
LARGER MARINA	3
FEWER DELIVERY TRUCKS	3

Appendix B: Meeting Two, Raw Character Image Feedback



Cool overhead elements (1)

Pedestrian-only space is great (1)



Pavers are great for directional movement (3)

⇒ “...need equipment that will not harm [in] snow removal”

Lighting is a needed element in alleys (2)



Nice open space for deliveries (1)

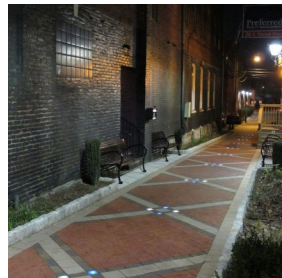


Permeable pavers is a great idea (snow removal?) (2)



Outdoor activity for all ages should be encouraged(2)

Great for kids(3)



Smart combination of light and pavers (3)



Nice street signage (1)



Nice artistic wall element (3)

⇒ “who chooses [the art]?”

Appendix B: Meeting Two, Raw Character Image Feedback



Efficient, beautiful, multi-faceted space (4)

⇒ “need more of this”



Great family entertainment (1)



Great alley idea (1)



Nice, simple kids activity (1)



How to accomplish snow removal (1)

Paving connects town (1)



Brings vitality through winter (3)

Inviting (1)

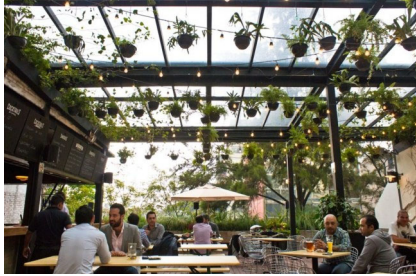


Good idea for Charlevoix (1)



Unkempt example of greenery (1)

Appendix B: Meeting Two, Raw Character Image Feedback



Good use of plants (2)



String lights are warm and welcoming (4)

Outdoor dining (1)



Good mix of bike parking and art, encourages bicyclists to park and shop (5)

⇒ “[Saves space for pedestrians but is a less effective bike rack]”



Nice use of green wall (2)



Efficient snow removal and good with pavers (2)

Appendix C: Meeting Two, Raw Design Images Feedback



Time or retractable bollard for safety, deliveries and EMS (3)
Love the design concept (3)
Transparent parking awnings (3)
⇒ “if considered... should be able to take a snow load”

Wayfinding signage is great (2)
⇒ “name the alley after May Feindt (first female surveyor in Michigan)
Nautical Element in the road (3)



Add bike parking (1)
Landscape and hardscape connects Van Pelt to Clinton St (1)



Great spot for outdoor dining (2)
Enhance pavement of parking lot (3)
Make this parking into a park/ pathway if parking structure is built (2)



Beams and lighting are warm, inviting overhead element (5)
Good character (1)
Bollards are great. Retractable? (2)
EMS and delivery access needs to be addressed (2)

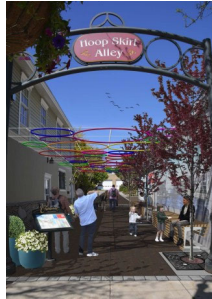
Paving, trees, and other design elements enhance connectivity (3)
Show examples of seasonal design changes (2)



Make charging for electric cars (1)
More green (1)
Great solution to parking issues (6)
⇒ “parking needed for Winter”
Ensure architecture matches Charlevoix (2)

Make structure 4 floors, could add a level underground to accomplish (4)
First floor retail desired (4)
⇒ “on the street side, have low income housing for restaurant staff”

Appendix C: Meeting Two, Raw Design Images Feedback



Overhead hoops for Hoop Skirt Alley is a great idea (8)

⇒ “I like the concept of seasonally changing themes”

Add lighting (4)

Keep developing new landscape (2)

Keep developing site furniture (benches, bike racks) (2)

Tree planters take too much space, plant in ground (2)

Wayfinding signage is good (1)



Unified paving theme facilitates connectivity (3)

Lively, inviting (2)

Love the outdoor patios (1)

Love the landscaping (1)



Great consolidation and screening of dumpsters (5)

⇒ “add recycling bins for businesses?”

Good use of central space (1)



Pavers are great (1)

Needs wayfinding signage to city buildings (library, city hall, parking) (1)



No bare walls – maybe art, community-related functionalities (3)

Much safer for pedestrians (1)

Eliminate the eastern row of parking (too narrow) (1)



Design is inviting and welcoming (3)

Great idea to make rear entrances (1)



Great example of rear shop entrances (4)

⇒ “These add dimension to the city (we are not just Bridge St.)”

Love the design elements 1

Pavers are enhancing the pedestrian experience (2)

Narrow space, consider eliminating most of this parking (1)

Currently embarrassing (1)