

Visioning the South Cedar Corridor:

A Form Based Code Study for the Design Lansing Comprehensive Plan

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Introduction

In 2007, the City of Lansing, Michigan adopted the Design Lansing Comprehensive Plan, calling for the establishment of a citywide form based code (FBC). As part of this process, the practicum team was asked by Bill Rieske, Assistant Planning Manager for Lansing, to create a report illustrating potential impacts of FBC along part of South Cedar Street.



Corridor Characteristics

While Design Lansing was being created, public participation indicated that corridors were the areas that residents would most like to see transformed to more active, pedestrian friendly development. For this reason, the study area was established as a 1/2 mile stretch along the South Cedar Corridor, between Greenlawn Avenue and Holmes Road.



Existing Land Use, Spring 2014
(collected in an inventory by the practicum team)

Key Characteristics:

- Medium to Large Parcels
- Deep Setbacks
- Large Areas Devoted to Parking
- Currently Defined as a Business Corridor
- Many Auto-Oriented Uses (car dealerships, etc.)
- Auto Oriented (Business Route I-96)



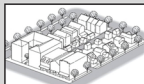
Applying Form Based Code

Principles of Form Based Code



How Does Traditional Zoning Define a One-Block Parcel:

- Density
- Use
- Floor-area ratio (FAR)
- Setbacks
- Parking requirements
- Maximum building height
- Which land uses are permitted in which locations



How Does Form Based Code Define a One-Block Parcel:

- Street and building types
- Build-to lines
- Number of floors
- % of built site frontage
- Design guidelines address what the desired look, feel, and character of a place should be



Existing S. Cedar Conditions



Illustrating Form Based Code in the Study Area

Illustrations were created for the southwest section of the study area to demonstrate how the corridor may appear if FBC principles were implemented. This section was selected because of its high exposure, and great potential for development. These images were created based on FBC standards, such as decreased setbacks, higher density, decreased parking coverage, greater building frontage and increased pedestrian accessibility.



- Existing Coverage
- = Building Coverage (16%)
 - = Pavement Coverage (40%)
 - = Pedestrian Walkway
 - = Open Space (25%)
 - = Block Boundaries



- 40% Building Coverage
- = Building Coverage (40%)
 - = Pavement Coverage (26%)
 - = Pedestrian Walkway (9%)
 - = Open Space (25%)
 - = Block Boundaries



- 80% Building Coverage
- = Building Coverage (80%)
 - = Pavement Coverage (6%)
 - = Pedestrian Walkway (8%)
 - = Open Space (6%)
 - = Block Boundaries

- Existing Coverage:
- Low percent building coverage and frontage
 - High pavement coverage
 - Limited pedestrian access, complicated by large setbacks and space between buildings
 - No formal, maintained open space

- 40% Building Coverage
- Increased building coverage
 - Parking decreased and moved to rear to not interfere with pedestrian activity
 - Increased pedestrian access and open space throughout
 - Smaller setbacks

- 80% Building Coverage
- Maximized building coverage
 - Minimized parking and pavement coverage enabled by shared parking throughout corridor
 - Increased pedestrian access and open space throughout
 - Little to no setbacks

Tax Analysis

The following chart displays the results of calculations that were performed to assess the potential future tax revenue for southwest block based on the build out analysis. The current tax revenue of this block is **\$35,706.00**. The future revenue for this block as assessed based on non-homestead (NH) and commercial personal (CPP) property tax rates.

Potential Tax Revenue for Southwest Section-

	40% CPP	80% CPP	40% NH	80% NH
1 Story	\$10,175	\$20,351	\$12,083	\$24,166
2 Story	\$20,351	\$40,701	\$24,166	\$48,332
3 Story	\$30,526	\$61,052	\$36,249	\$72,499

Recommendations

The South Cedar Corridor plays a vital role in servicing both Lansing residents and the many travelers that utilize it for the linkage it provides to other routes in the city and region. Based on extensive research, data collection, and analysis, the practicum team developed the following recommendations.

Public Transit

- City conducts a ridership study to better ascertain travel patterns and commuter usage of Route 5.

Walkability/Alternative Transportation

- City performs walkability and alternative transportation infrastructure survey to better understand the potential for pedestrian accessibility.
- City initiates discussions with MDOT to establish framework for form-based code implementation options.

Financing

- In order to tackle vacancy issues contributing to this distress, the City promotes programs that incentivize investment, while preserving any existing form based code features.
- City considers establishing a corridor improvement authority, specifically for the S. Cedar Corridor, comprised of business owners and other local stakeholders.

Build Out Potential

- City drafts development plan that further analyzes parking coverage along S. Cedar and parcels that should be prioritized for potential infill in the future.
- City collaborates with Ingham County Land Bank in securing parcels over time to ensure future development aligns with form based code while preserving existing features.

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