

BRAINERD PLANNING COMMISSION

Wednesday, April 15, 2015

6:00 p.m.

City Hall Council Chambers

1. Call to Order
2. Approval/Amendment of Agenda
3. Approval of minutes of the regular meeting of March 18, 2015
4. NEW BUSINESS
 - a. Public Hearings – Conditional Use Permit and Variance – ISD 181 Riverside School located at 205 West Washington Street
 - b. Semi-Tractor Trailer Parking in Residential Areas
 - c. Residential Trash Can - Curb Side Limits
 - d. Nonconforming Fences and Fence Maintenance
5. PUBLIC FORUM – Time allocated for citizens to bring matters not on the agenda to the attention of the Planning Commission – Time limits may be imposed.
6. OLD BUSINESS
 - a. Off-Street Parking Status
7. Commissioners' Questions/Comments
8. City Planner Report
9. Adjournment

Any individual needing special accommodations please call 218/828-2309

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wednesday, March 18, 2015

Chairman Hayden Shaw called the meeting of the Brainerd Planning Commission to order at 6:01 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers.

Noted present were Commissioners Pritschet, Parks, Hayden Shaw, Norwood, Straw, and Cole. Commissioner Plantenberg was noted absent. Also present was City Planner Ostgarden.

#2 Approval/Amendment of Agenda

MOTION AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONERS NORWOOD AND PRITSCHET, DULY CARRIED, TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED.

#3 Approve minutes of the regular meeting of February 18, 2015

MOTION AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONERS NORWOOD AND PRITSCHET, DULY CARRIED, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR THE WORKSHOP AND REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 18, 2015.

#4 NEW BUSINESS

- a. Public Hearing – Zoning Text Amendment to Permit Non-Enclosed Premises (outdoor alcohol service) as a Conditional Use in B-2 (Neighborhood Business), B-3 (Central Business), B-4 (General Business) and B-6 (Washington Street Commercial) Districts and in I-1 (Light Industry) Districts**

City Planner Ostgarden stated currently outdoor facilities for dining are allowed as conditional use permits in the proposed districts but outdoor service of alcohol is currently not allowed. The public hearings are being held for proposed changes to allow non-enclosed areas for dining and/or alcohol service in restaurants and/or bars.

City Planner Ostgarden reviewed the State Statute regarding non-enclosed premises noting it only stated the space should be “compact and contiguous”. He stated instead of drafting language from scratch, he used examples from other cities to draft the proposed ordinance language.

City Planner Ostgarden reviewed the language changes and discussion/questions were received from the Commission.

The Public Hearing was opened at 6:14 pm.

No public comment was received.

The Public Hearing was closed at 6:15 pm.

Discussion was held regarding the following items:

- 30% floor area
- Size and material of the barrier

- Landscaped buffer
- Live and amplified music
- Type of surface such as non-slip surface

It was noted these are conditional use permits and changes in the types of barriers could be approved during that process.

The Commission agreed to the following:

- Keep the 30% floor area as a variance can be requested for more area. Commissioner Hayden Shaw did not agree and suggested a 50% floor area.
- Change the wording in item 11 from prohibit to deter.
- Planters be added to approved barriers and add the language of “or combination of”.
- Change the barrier size to thirty-six (36) inches.
- Remove the two (2) foot landscaped buffer.
- Change the language to “smoking in the area **if allowed by the business owner**”.
- Change the language in all the proposed districts except the B-2 District regarding music to “There shall be no amplified live music allowed in the area except in the case of a special event, which requires a permit from the City. Music shall be kept to a level that is not intrusive to surrounding property”.
- In the B-2 District change the language to read “There shall be no amplified music allowed except in the case of a special event, which requires a permit from the City. Music shall be kept to a level that is not intrusive to surrounding property”.

MOTION AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONERS NORWOOD AND PRITSCHET, DULY CARRIED, TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT TO PERMIT NON-ENCLOSED PREMISES (OUTDOOR ALCOHOL SERVICE) AS A CONDITIONAL USE IN B-2 (NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS), B-3 (CENTRAL BUSINESS), B-4 (GENERAL BUSINESS) AND B-6 (WASHINGTON STREET COMMERCIAL) DISTRICTS AND IN I-1 (LIGHT INDUSTRY) DISTRICT WITH THE LANGUAGE CHANGES.

b. Public Hearing – Zoning Map Amendments to Establish Transient Food Units Overlay Districts in the following areas:

1. West Brainerd
2. County Government Center
3. Downtown
4. Northern Pacific Center
5. Intersection of Hwys 18 and 25
6. Brainerd Industrial Park
7. Central Lakes College
8. Franklin Art Center

c. Public Hearing – and Zoning Ordinance Amendment to Add Section 515-66 TFU (Transient Food Unit) District.

The Commission agreed to hold both public hearings pertaining to Transient Food Units at the same time.

City Planner Ostgarden stated there has been a City Council approved trial period to allow food trucks to operate in the City in eight (8) different locations with specific time periods for a couple of years. The City Council has given approval to move forward with the process to allow this type of sale permanently on private property. This does not include the public right-of-way.

City Planner Ostgarden stated there will be two public hearings, the first one to consider adding a zoning district overlay zone to allow transient food units to operate in several areas in the city. The second is to consider adding a new Zoning Ordinance section called TFU (Transient Food Unit) Overlay Districts.

City Planner Ostgarden reviewed what an overlay district is noting it provides a means to incorporate various development regulations across a specified area in the City. These districts are special zones that lie on top of existing zoning categories to supplement or supersede existing regulations. The boundaries may or may not coincide with the boundaries of the underlying zone.

City Planner Ostgarden reviewed the eight (8) locations where food trucks have been allowed to operate during the trial period and noted these are the same eight (8) areas that will be added for the Transient Food Units to operate. The TFU Overlay District Map will be added as Appendix 1 and becomes part of the approved Zoning Map.

City Planner Ostgarden reviewed parts of the Minnesota Department of Health process to become a mobile food unit and noted it is a strict process. He stated there are specific sanitary requirements in order to obtain a license from the Department of Health. He reviewed the different types of permits that can be applied for from the Department of Health.

City Planner Ostgarden stated up until now we've allowed food trucks. It is being suggested to broaden the category to allow trucks, trailers, wagons, cars, seasonal temporary food stands, and seasonal permanent food stands.

City Planner Ostgarden noted the hours for all areas except downtown will be 11:00 am to 7:00pm. The downtown area will be 11:00 pm to 2:00 am. He then reviewed the proposed conditions to be added to Zoning Ordinance language.

Discussion was held regarding language as it pertains to seasonal permanent food stands.

The Public Hearing was opened at 7:09 pm.

Ms. Toni Czezok, owner of Mickey's Pizza and Subs, stated she has several questions regarding the process and the proposed language. She asked the following questions:

- Why can't the boundaries identified be changed?
- Would like to see City parks added as a location.
- What is defined as private property and is the County Government Center considered private property?
- How is the copy of the required state licenses and insurance coverage monitored?
- How is the property owner written approval monitored?
- Questioned the validity of condition fifteen.
- Questioned condition seventeen as it pertains to the fairgrounds.

Mr. Steve Zelinske, 15965 County Road 25, owner of Yesterday's Gone asked for clarification on the 300 feet and if it is from the building or the property line.

Mr. Patrick Wussow, 2018 Crestview Ln, asked about changing it from the interim use to an overlay district and the 300 feet from restaurants or bars. He stated he does not agree with extended the areas from what there was during the interim use period.

Ms. Czeczok questioned the "interim use" and if this will continue to be an interim use or will be submitted to the City Council to become permanent.

The Public Hearing was closed at 7:19 pm.

City Planner Ostgarden addressed the questions noting the following:

- The boundaries can be changed if the Commission so chooses.
- The private/public relationship can be clarified. The intent is to allow the units on property that is not the public rights-of-way.
- Copies of the state license, insurance, and property owner approval will have to be submitted yearly with the application.
- Item fifteen is in there to prevent traffic issues with people driving up to the unit as if it were a drive-thru. Sales to customers on the sidewalk language is included as it would be hard to regulate people waiting on a sidewalk to be served from the food unit.
- The language regarding the Fairgrounds was included as it is to prevent additional traffic during Fair week. Specifying that week only could be suggested.
- The 300 foot language is added because of the history of concern to allow food units to operate next to a restaurant. It is suggested the 300 feet be measured from the property line.

Commissioner Parks noted he has forwarded the letter submitted by Ms. Czeczok to the Park Board and it will be on the next Park Board agenda for discussion on allowing transient food units to operate in City parks.

City Planner Ostgarden stated an email was received today from the manager of Franklin Art Center. It stated they would like to continue to allow the Prairie Bay food truck to operate in the parking lot on various days and hours as they wish along with other vendors in the community.

City Planner Ostgarden stated this was never permitted as an interim use, it was permitted on a temporary trial basis. He stated the trial period that was approved it will now being submitted to the City Council for approval to become a permanent part of the Zoning Ordinance. He stated a license will be required every year.

Discussion was held regarding the following:

- Locations where the transient food units will be allowed to operate and the overlay districts and whether or not there will be an expansion of the areas from the trial period.
- Condition fifteen regarding sales to individuals parked or stopped in a public street or alley. Should it be allowed to have cars drive up on private property to the units?
- Concerns with not allowing units within 300 feet of a restaurant or bar and where the measurement comes from.
- How units can be allowed in City parks.

Discussion was held regarding how the Commission would like to proceed. Commissioners Norwood and Hayden Shaw feel the ordinance language is too restrictive and will not bring additional units to the City.

MOTION AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER PRITSCHET AND PARKS TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE ZONING MAP AMENDMENTS TO ESTABLISH TRANSIENT FOOD UNITS OVERLAY DISTRICTS AND THE ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT TO ADD SECTION 515-66 TFU (TRANSIENT FOOD UNIT) DISTRICT. COMMISSIONER COLE VOTED NAY.

Commissioner Hayden Shaw stated this began as a trial period and when a trial period is successful you move forward and make it permanent. She stated she does not feel the trial period was successful as it didn't bring food trucks into the City therefore she does not feel we should move forward. She stated there should be more effort and balance to help bring more food units into the City, but if it's less restrictive it should be done as another trial period first before making it permanent.

Commissioner Pritschet stated he does not feel the purpose was to attract food trucks into the City, but to allow a specific food truck to operate in the City.

Commissioner Norwood stated he would like to move forward with the motion as it is something to start with and can be amended in the future.

Commissioner Pritschet stated this is not bringing revenue into the City.

Commissioner Hayden Shaw suggested tabling this item until next month for additional discussion.

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER STRAW TO TABLE THIS ITEM UNTIL THE APRIL MEETING. THE MOTION FAILED FOR LACK OF A SECOND.

Commissioner Hayden Shaw stated she would like to see something less restrictive, but at this time is willing to vote for the motion to at least have something in the ordinance.

d. Proposed MNAPA Northwest District Planning and Zoning Workshop

City Planner Ostgarden stated he was contact regarding putting together workshops for the Northwest District of the Minnesota Chapter of the American Planning Association. He stated he asked if the Commission would be interested in having workshops put on here and would they prefer day or evening sessions.

Commissioners Pritschet and Hayden Shaw both had interest.

City Planner Ostgarden stated he will let them know there is interest and will come back to the Commission with additional information.

#5 **PUBLIC FORUM** – Time allocated for citizens to bring matters not on the agenda to the attention of the Planning Commission – Time limits may be imposed.

Mr. George Katcavage, 902 Thompson Ave, South St Paul, spoke about his experience in the transient food unit business and stated he was confused about what the Commission is trying to do with the transient food unit ordinance.

#6 **OLD BUSINESS**

NONE

#7 **Commissioners' Questions/Comments**

Commissioner Norwood stated Austin MN has recently banned the use of e-cigarettes in public spaces and suggested that may be something to look into.

City Planner Ostgarden stated he is part of the Community Leadership Team for Crow Wing Energized and one of the areas the team will be bringing up is whether or not they want to get involved in making a recommendation with things like that.

Commissioner Hayden Shaw stated the South 6th Street zoning was to be part of the workshop and asked to adjourn the April meeting to a workshop to discuss this zoning. She suggested options to be considered for the zoning and asked for the City Planner to research options and provide it to the Commission.

Commissioner Hayden Shaw stated there will be a meeting on Monday, March 23 for public input on the redesign of South 6th Street and encouraged Commissioners to attend.

It was noted the Mississippi Riverwalk will also be discussed at that meeting.

#8 **City Planner's Report**

City Planner Ostgarden stated there will be a Conditional Use Permit request from ISD 181 for the addition to the Riverside School on the April agenda.

City Planner Ostgarden stated the City Council approved fee changes for planning applications. He stated they also included ability to require escrow for projects.

#9 **Adjournment**

As there was no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Ostgarden AICP
City Planner

/lt

STAFF REPORT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION

April 10, 2015

APPLICANT/LOCATION: ISD 181 for Riverside School located at 205 West Washington Street; Brainerd, MN

PROPOSED USE: Conditional Use Permit to permit class room and office additions

CURRENT ZONING: R-3 (Multi Family) District

ADJACENT USES: East: River
South: Offices and BNSF rail line
West: Riverside School parking lot and offices.
North: Commercial

ADJACENT ZONING: North: B-4 (General Commercial) District
East: B-4 (General Commercial) District
South: B-2 (Neighborhood Business) District
West: R-3 (Multifamily) Residential and B-4 (General Commercial) District

REPORT

ISD 181 is planning two additions at Riverside School for additional classroom space. The property is located in an R-3 (Multifamily Residential) District which permits schools by conditional use permit. To construct the addition on the building's north side will require an existing water line to be relocated. This work is underway at the site.

The addition proposed for the building's west side will encroach into a setback requiring a variance for it to be constructed.

Based on B.1. above, the following are the Conditional Use Permit criteria:

A. Criteria for Granting Conditional Use Permits. In granting a Conditional Use Permit, the City Council shall consider the advice and recommendations of the Planning Commission and the effect of the proposed use upon the health, safety, morals and general welfare of occupants or surrounding lands. Among other things, the City Council shall make the following findings where applicable.

- 1. The proposed use conforms to the district and conditional use provisions and all general regulations of this Ordinance.**

The property is located in an R-3 District. Schools are permitted under Zoning Ordinance Section 515-62-6: Conditional Uses.

I. Public and private schools provided that:

1. The site accesses a major collector.
2. The site is landscaped in accordance with Section 20 of this Ordinance.
 - *See Section 20 comments below.*
3. Off-street parking is provided in accordance with Section 22 of this Ordinance.
 - *See Section 22 comments below*
4. Off-street loading and service entrances are provided as regulated by Section 23 of this Ordinance.
5. Emergency vehicle access is provided to and within the site.

Principal Building Setbacks:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Front Yard: | Thirty (30) feet |
| 2. Side Yard: | Fifteen (15) feet |
| 3. Side Yard (corner): | Twenty (20) feet |
| 4. Rear Yard: | Twenty-five (25) feet |

West Washington Street frontage is considered a street side yard on this corner lot. The addition will be 20' from the property line.

The addition on the west side of the building will encroach into the front yard setback requiring a variance to construct.

These are the only setbacks affected.

Non-Residential Uses. Impervious surface lot coverage shall not exceed fifty (50) percent of the total lot area unless otherwise allowed by a grading and drainage plan approved by the City Engineer.

The attached aerial photo identifies the School District property with the building additions. The total impervious area is estimated at 59.3%.

A grading and erosion control plan has been submitted. Since the building is over the existing parking lot, there is no increase in impervious surface.

Shoreland Management Zone Requirements

All property within 300' of the Mississippi River is subject to the land use regulations of the Shoreland Regulations.

The attached map identifies the 300' shoreland regulation limits. The proposed additions are not within the area and not subject to those requirements.

515-20-4: Green Space.

Non-Residential Site Development and Non-Residential Site Redevelopment. New developments shall designate a minimum of fifteen (15) percent of the total site area for green space.

The site well exceeds the minimum percentage.

515-20-8: Non-Residential Uses in All Zoning Districts.

General Site Landscaping. All developed portions of the site shall conform to the general landscaping requirements in Section 515-20-3 except where screening is required.

Screening. A six (6) foot high fence or landscaped screen, providing eighty (80) percent year around opacity, shall be required wherever a non-residential use abuts directly upon land zoned or used for residential purposes or is across an alley from land used or zoned for residential purposes.

The property does not abut land used or zoned for residential purposes.

515-20-9: Parking Lots.

The project will require removal of the parking lot on the building's north side. In 2012, the School District constructed the parking lot between SW 3rd Street and SW 4th Street. It provides the parking required for employees, day to day activities and comings and goings to the school.

- 2. The proposed use shall not involve any element or cause any condition that may be dangerous, injurious, or noxious to any other property or persons.**

The building additions should not involve any element or cause any condition that may be dangerous, injurious, or noxious to any other property or persons.

- 3. The proposed use shall be sited, oriented and landscaped to produce a harmonious relationship of buildings and grounds to adjacent buildings and properties.**

There are no adjacent buildings or grounds that will be affected by the additions.

- 4. The proposed use shall produce a total visual impression and environment which is consistent with the environment of the neighborhood.**

The additions will be one story and match the height and appearance of the existing building. The buildings around the site are similar in height and appearance.

5. The proposed use shall organize vehicular access and parking to minimize traffic congestion in the neighborhood.

The parking lot between SW 3rd Street and SW 4th Street provides for the parking required for employees, day to day activities and comings and goings to the school.

In addition to meeting the day to day needs of school employees and visitors, the lot was designed and constructed to improve traffic flow for the school buses and parent pick up and drop off. The addition will not impact the ability to access the lot or change parking.

Riverside School currently has 618 students and the additional classrooms will permit 156 students (totaling 774 students and an increase of about 20%) to be added. ISD staff has stated the total increase will likely not occur in the 1st year.

The ISD provided the following drop off/pick up data:

- *Average AM vehicle count is 165 cars; average PM count is 350 cars. The 350 count means approximately 56% of the students are picked up after school. Using the same percentage with the 154 additional students brings the total after school pickup to 437.*

The City Engineer has provided the following comment on the parking lot:

The new parking lot has improved traffic flow considerably. It provides much more stacking than the pre-existing condition and separates the bus area from the parent area. I don't think the problem is the stacking, at least I don't know that anything can be done to improve it any further on that site, the problem now seems to be a combination of the volume of kids being picked up by parents instead of taking the bus and the School District's process of getting kids ready and identifying which child goes in which vehicle.

On Tuesday, April 7, 2015, the City Engineer made the following observation about traffic at the end of the school day:

- *I arrived at 2:45 – parking lot stacking lanes were filling fast*
- *2:48 – parking lot stacking lanes full – stacking spilling over onto William Street*
- *2:52 – William Street full – NB right lane starting to stack*
- *2:53 – SB lane starting to stack*
- *2:54 – vehicles starting to leave with children*
- *2:57 – NB right lane cleared – maximum stacked vehicles 5*
- *2:58 – SB left lane stacking cleared*
- *2:59 – William Street stacking cleared*

Any on-street stacking lasted 11 minutes, stacking on NW 4th Street lasted 6 minutes. Once vehicles started leaving with children, it really went very quickly and smoothly.

Following is a statement from Police Chief Corky McQuiston related to the increased traffic:

"...that is a 25% increase in enrollment. I doubt they will see a 25% increase in busing, because my experience is with the buses because of the routes, transfers and geography---none of the buses are near capacity.

I think it may be safe to assume that there would be a 25% increase in parent drop-off/pick-up. This may be one of those things we just deal with. Kind of like being in a traffic jam in the cities--just one of those facts of life.

The site has 132 parking spaces. There is 90 staff and the additions increase the potential student count 774 students. The building has no facility for performances. The Zoning Ordinance requires 131 off street parking spaces.

5. The proposed use shall preserve the objectives of this Ordinance and shall be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

The objectives of the Zoning Ordinance are:

515-1-2: Intent and Purpose.

- A. Protect the public health, safety, and general welfare of the community and its people through the establishment of minimum regulations governing development and use.
- B. This Ordinance shall divide the City into use districts and establish regulations in regard to location, erection, construction, reconstruction, alteration and use of structures and land.
- C. Protect neighborhoods.
- D. Promote orderly development and redevelopment of land for residential, commercial, industrial, recreational and public areas.
- E. Provide adequate light, air, and convenience of access to property.
- F. Prevent congestion in the public right-of-way.
- G. Prevent overcrowding of land and undue concentration of structures by regulating land, buildings, yards, and density of population.
- H. Protect and preserve the natural environment of the City.

- I. Encourage the protection of historic and aesthetic resources in the City.
- J. Conserve energy through the use of alternative energy systems and conservation through the encouragement of energy efficient structures for commercial, industrial and residential uses.
- K. Provide for compatibility of different land uses.

The additional traffic will most likely increase traffic backup and cause some additional congestion during the drop off/pick up times. This congestion is relatively brief and traffic continues to flow during those periods.

However should the argument be made that additional traffic will conflict with F. "Prevent congestion in the public right of way." following is a statement by City Engineer Jeff Hulsether related to the congestion:

"The new parking lot has improved traffic flow considerably. It provides much more stacking than the pre-existing condition and separates the bus area from the parent area."

B. Requirements for Granting Conditional Use Permits. In permitting a new conditional use or the alteration of an existing conditional use, the following requirements shall be met where applicable:

1. Fire Protection. Fire prevention and firefighting equipment acceptable to the Board of Fire Underwriters shall be readily available when any activity involving the handling or storage of flammable or explosive materials is carried on.
2. Electrical Disturbance. No activity shall cause electrical disturbance adversely affecting radio or other equipment in the vicinity.
3. Noise. Noise which is determined to be objectionable because of volume, frequency, or beat shall be muffled or otherwise controlled subject to MPCA standards. Fire sirens and related apparatus used solely for public purpose shall be exempt from this requirement.
4. Vibrations. Vibrations detectable without instruments on neighboring property in any district shall be prohibited.
5. Odors. No odorous gas or matter shall be permitted which is discernible on any adjoining lot or property.
6. Air Pollution. No pollution of air by flying ash, dust, smoke, vapors, or other substance shall be permitted which is harmful to health, animals, vegetation or other property.

7. Glare. Lighting devices which produce objectionable direct or reflected glare on adjoining properties or thoroughfares shall not be permitted.
8. Erosion. No erosion by wind or water shall be permitted which will carry objectionable substances onto neighboring properties.
8. Water Pollution. Water pollution shall be subject to the standards established by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

The addition conversion should have no adverse effect on any of these issues.

DEPARTMENT INFORMATION

Utilities

No issues.

Fire

No Issues.

Building

No issues.

Engineering

See traffic related comments in report.

Additional pick-up observation is planned but could not occur before the packet was prepared. Another observation is planned before the April 15th meeting and data from the observation will be sent as soon as it is available.

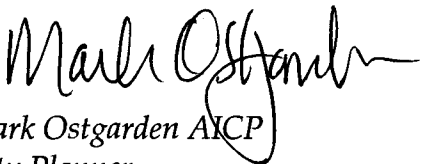
PLANNING DEPARTMENT REVIEW

The Planning Department's concern about the increased traffic and congestion are addressed by the City Engineer and Police Chief. The short term nature of the congestion creates a short term inconvenience but does not establish a condition that is detrimental to community health, safety and welfare.

PLANNING COMMISSION AND CITY COUNCIL ACTION

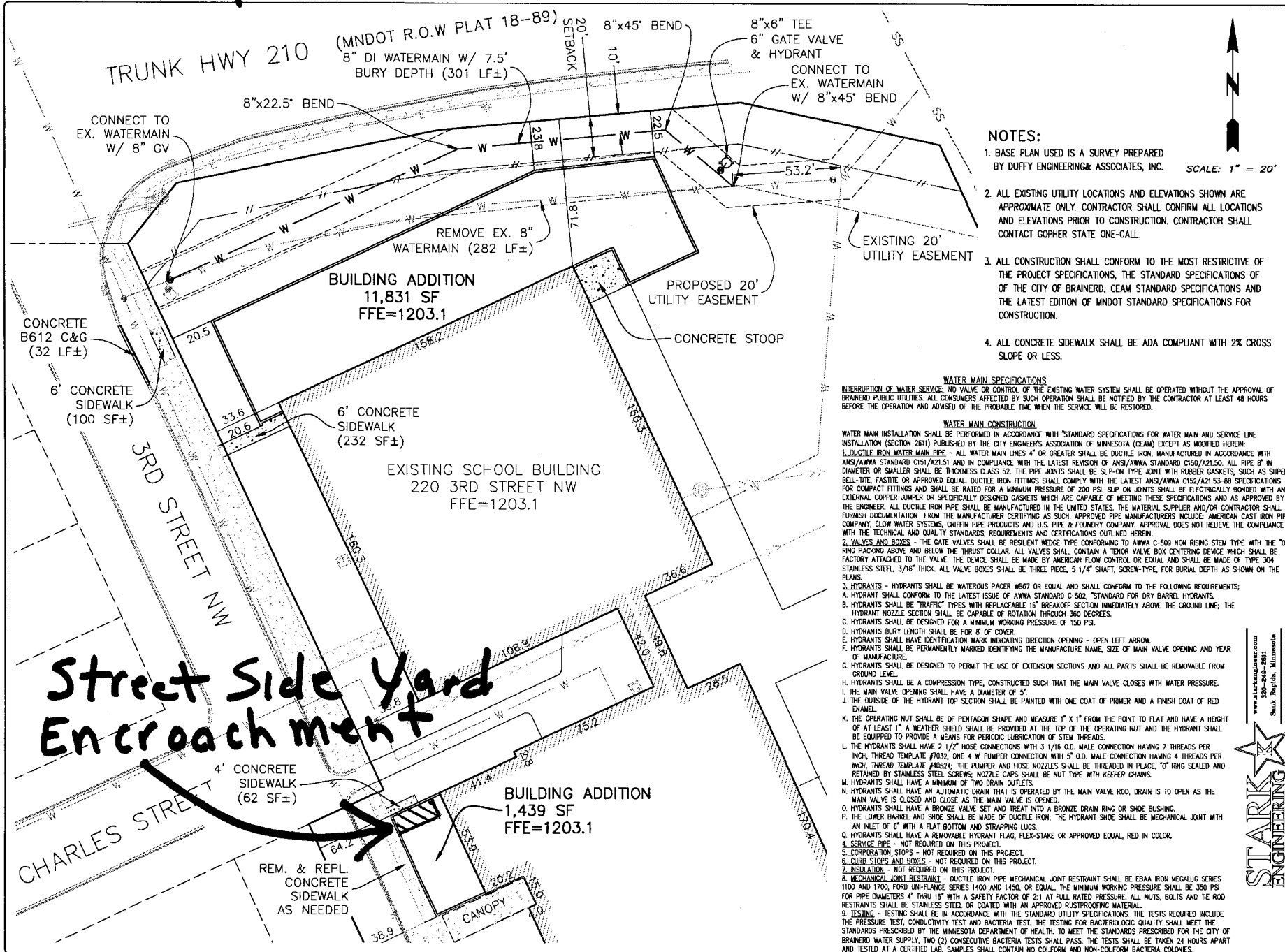
The Planning Commission can consider a recommendation on this request at its April 15, 2015 meeting and City Council consideration can occur at its April 20, 2015 meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



*Mark Ostgarden AICP
City Planner*

Proposed Additions



NOTES:

1. BASE PLAN USED IS A SURVEY PREPARED BY DUFFY ENGINEERING & ASSOCIATES, INC. SCALE: 1" = 20'
2. ALL EXISTING UTILITY LOCATIONS AND ELEVATIONS SHOWN ARE APPROXIMATE ONLY. CONTRACTOR SHALL CONFIRM ALL LOCATIONS AND ELEVATIONS PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION. CONTRACTOR SHALL CONTACT GOPHER STATE ONE-CALL.
3. ALL CONSTRUCTION SHALL CONFORM TO THE MOST RESTRICTIVE OF THE PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS, THE STANDARD SPECIFICATIONS OF THE CITY OF BRAINERD, CEAM STANDARD SPECIFICATIONS AND THE LATEST EDITION OF MNDOT STANDARD SPECIFICATIONS FOR CONSTRUCTION.
4. ALL CONCRETE SIDEWALK SHALL BE ADA COMPLIANT WITH 2% CROSS SLOPE OR LESS.

WATER MAIN SPECIFICATIONS

INTERRUPTION OF WATER SERVICE, NO WATER OR CONTROL OF THE EXISTING WATER SYSTEM SHALL BE OPERATED WITHOUT THE APPROVAL OF BRAINERD PUBLIC UTILITIES. ALL CONSUMERS AFFECTED BY SUCH OPERATION SHALL BE NOTIFIED BY THE CONTRACTOR AT LEAST 48 HOURS BEFORE THE OPERATION AND ADVISED OF THE PROBABLE TIME WHEN THE SERVICE WILL BE RESTORED.

WATER MAIN CONSTRUCTION

WATER MAIN INSTALLATION SHALL BE PERFORMED IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDARD SPECIFICATIONS FOR WATER MAIN AND SERVICE LINE INSTALLATION (SECTION 2511) PUBLISHED BY THE CITY ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION OF MINNESOTA (CEAM) EXCEPT AS MODIFIED HEREIN.

1. DUCTILE IRON WATER MAIN PIPE - ALL WATER MAIN LINES 4" OR GREATER SHALL BE DUCTILE IRON, MANUFACTURED IN ACCORDANCE WITH ANSI/AWWA STANDARD C151/A21.51 AND IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE LATEST REVISION OF ANSI/AWWA STANDARD C150/A21.50. ALL PIPE 8" IN DIAMETER OR SMALLER SHALL BE THICKNESS CLASS 52. THE PIPE JOINTS SHALL BE SLIP-ON TYPE JOINT WITH RUBBER GASKETS, SUCH AS SUPER BELL-TITE, FASTITE OR APPROVED EQUAL. DUCTILE IRON FITTINGS SHALL COMPLY WITH THE LATEST ANSI/AWWA C152/A21.53-88 SPECIFICATIONS FOR COMPACT FITTINGS AND SHALL BE RATED FOR A MINIMUM PRESSURE OF 200 PSI. SLIP ON JOINTS SHALL BE ELECTRICALLY BONDED WITH AN EXTERNAL COPPER JUMPER OR SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED GASKETS WHICH ARE CAPABLE OF WEETING THESE SPECIFICATIONS AND AS APPROVED BY THE ENGINEER. ALL DUCTILE IRON PIPE SHALL BE MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES. THE MATERIAL SUPPLIER AND/OR CONTRACTOR SHALL FURNISH DOCUMENTATION FROM THE MANUFACTURER CERTIFYING AS SUCH. APPROVED PIPE MANUFACTURERS INCLUDE: AMERICAN CAST IRON PIPE COMPANY, CLOW WATER SYSTEMS, GRITTI PIPE PRODUCTS AND U.S. PIPE & FOUNDRY COMPANY. APPROVAL DOES NOT RELIEVE THE COMPLIANCE WITH THE TECHNICAL AND QUALITY STANDARDS, REQUIREMENTS AND CERTIFICATIONS OUTLINED HEREIN.

2. VALVES AND BOXES - THE GATE VALVES SHALL BE RESILIENT WEDGE TYPE CONFORMING TO AWWA C-509 NON RISING STEM TYPE WITH THE "O" RING PACKING ABOVE AND BELOW THE THRUST COLLAR. ALL VALVES SHALL CONTAIN A TENSOR VALVE BOX CENTERING DEVICE WHICH SHALL BE FACTORY ATTACHED TO THE VALVE. THE DEVICE SHALL BE MADE BY AMERICAN FLOW CONTROL OR EQUAL AND SHALL BE MADE OF TYPE 304 STAINLESS STEEL, 3/16" THICK. ALL VALVE BOXES SHALL BE THREE PIECE, 5 1/4" SHAFT, SCREW-TYPE, FOR BURIAL DEPTH AS SHOWN ON THE PLANS.

3. HYDRANTS - HYDRANTS SHALL BE WATERLOUS PACER W67 OR EQUAL AND SHALL CONFORM TO THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS:
 A. HYDRANT SHALL CONFORM TO THE LATEST ISSUE OF AWWA STANDARD C-502, STANDARD FOR DRY BARREL HYDRANTS.
 B. HYDRANTS SHALL BE "TRAFFIC" TYPES WITH REPLACEABLE 16" BREAKOFF SECTION IMMEDIATELY ABOVE THE GROUND LINE; THE HYDRANT NOZZLE SECTION SHALL BE CAPABLE OF ROTATION THROUGH 360 DEGREES.
 C. HYDRANTS SHALL BE DESIGNED FOR A MINIMUM WORKING PRESSURE OF 150 PSI.

D. HYDRANTS BURY LENGTH SHALL BE FOR 8" OF COVER.
 E. HYDRANTS SHALL HAVE IDENTIFICATION MARK INDICATING DIRECTION OPENING - OPEN LEFT ARROW.
 F. HYDRANTS SHALL BE PERMANENTLY MARKED IDENTIFYING THE MANUFACTURE NAME, SIZE OF MAIN VALVE OPENING AND YEAR OF MANUFACTURE.

G. HYDRANTS SHALL BE DESIGNED TO PERMIT THE USE OF EXTENSION SECTIONS AND ALL PARTS SHALL BE REMOVABLE FROM GROUND LEVEL.

H. HYDRANTS SHALL BE A COMPRESSION TYPE, CONSTRUCTED SUCH THAT THE MAIN VALVE CLOSURES WITH WATER PRESSURE.
 I. THE MAIN VALVE OPENING SHALL HAVE A DIAMETER OF 5".
 J. THE OUTSIDE OF THE HYDRANT TOP SECTION SHALL BE PAINTED WITH ONE COAT OF PRIMER AND A FINISH COAT OF RED ENAMEL.

K. THE OPERATING NUT SHALL BE OF PENTAGON SHAPE AND MEASURE 1" X 1" FROM THE POINT TO FLAT AND HAVE A HEIGHT OF AT LEAST 1". A WEATHER SHIELD SHALL BE PROVIDED AT THE TOP OF THE OPERATING NUT AND THE HYDRANT SHALL BE EQUIPPED TO PROVIDE A MEANS FOR PERIODIC LUBRICATION OF STEM THREADS.

L. THE HYDRANTS SHALL HAVE 2 1/2" HOSE CONNECTIONS WITH 3 1/16 O.D. MALE CONNECTION HAVING 7 THREADS PER INCH, THREAD TEMPLATE #7032, ONE 4" W PUMPER CONNECTION WITH 57 O.D. MALE CONNECTION HAVING 4 THREADS PER INCH, THREAD TEMPLATE #4524. THE PUMPER AND HOSE NOZZLES SHALL BE THREADED IN PLACE, "O" RING SEALED AND RETAINED BY STAINLESS STEEL SCREWS; NOZZLE CAPS SHALL BE NUT TYPE WITH KEEPER CHAINS.

M. HYDRANTS SHALL HAVE A MINIMUM OF TWO DRAIN OUTLETS.

N. HYDRANTS SHALL HAVE AN AUTOMATIC DRAIN THAT IS OPERATED BY THE MAIN VALVE ROD, DRAIN IS TO OPEN AS THE MAIN VALVE IS CLOSED AND CLOSE AS THE MAIN VALVE IS OPENED.

O. HYDRANTS SHALL HAVE A BRONZE VALVE SET AND TREAT INTO A BRONZE DRAIN RING OR SHOE BUSHING.
 P. THE LOWER BARREL AND SHOE SHALL BE MADE OF DUCTILE IRON; THE HYDRANT SHOE SHALL BE MECHANICAL JOINT WITH AN INLET OF 6" WITH A FLAT BOTTOM AND STRAPPING LUGS.

Q. HYDRANTS SHALL HAVE A REMOVABLE HYDRANT FLAG, FLEX-STAKE OR APPROVED EQUAL, RED IN COLOR.

4. SERVICE PIPE - NOT REQUIRED ON THIS PROJECT.

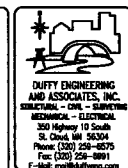
5. CORPORATION STOPS - NOT REQUIRED ON THIS PROJECT.

6. CURB STOPS AND BOXES - NOT REQUIRED ON THIS PROJECT.

7. INSULATION - NOT REQUIRED ON THIS PROJECT.

8. MECHANICAL JOINT RESTRAINT - DUCTILE IRON PIPE MECHANICAL JOINT RESTRAINT SHALL BE EBAA IRON MEGALUG SERIES 1100 AND 1700, FORD UNI-FLANGE SERIES 1400 AND 1450, OR EQUAL. THE MINIMUM WORKING PRESSURE SHALL BE 350 PSI FOR PIPE DIAMETERS 4" THRU 16" WITH A SAFETY FACTOR OF 2:1 AT FULL RATED PRESSURE. ALL NUTS, BOLTS AND THE ROD RESTRAINTS SHALL BE STAINLESS STEEL OR COATED WITH AN APPROVED RUSTPROOFING MATERIAL.

9. TESTING - TESTING SHALL BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE STANDARD UTILITY SPECIFICATIONS. THE TESTS REQUIRED INCLUDE THE PRESSURE TEST, CONDUCTIVITY TEST AND BACTERIA TEST. THE TESTING FOR BACTERIOLOGIC QUALITY SHALL MEET THE STANDARDS PRESCRIBED BY THE MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH. TO MEET THE STANDARDS PRESCRIBED FOR THE CITY OF BRAINERD WATER SUPPLY, TWO (2) CONSECUTIVE BACTERIA TESTS SHALL PASS. THE TESTS SHALL BE TAKEN 24 HOURS APART AND TESTED AT A CERTIFIED LAB. SAMPLES SHALL CONTAIN NO COLIFORM AND NON-COLIFORM BACTERIA COLONIES.



I hereby certify that this plan, specification or report was prepared by me or under my direct supervision and that I am a duly Licensed Engineer under the laws of the State of Minnesota.

4/1/15
20093
 Date License No.

REVISIONS	No.	Date	By	Check	Describe
	1	3/27/15	J. J. J.		ADD CONSTRUCTION NOTES
	2	4/1/15	J. J. J.		PER CITY REVIEW

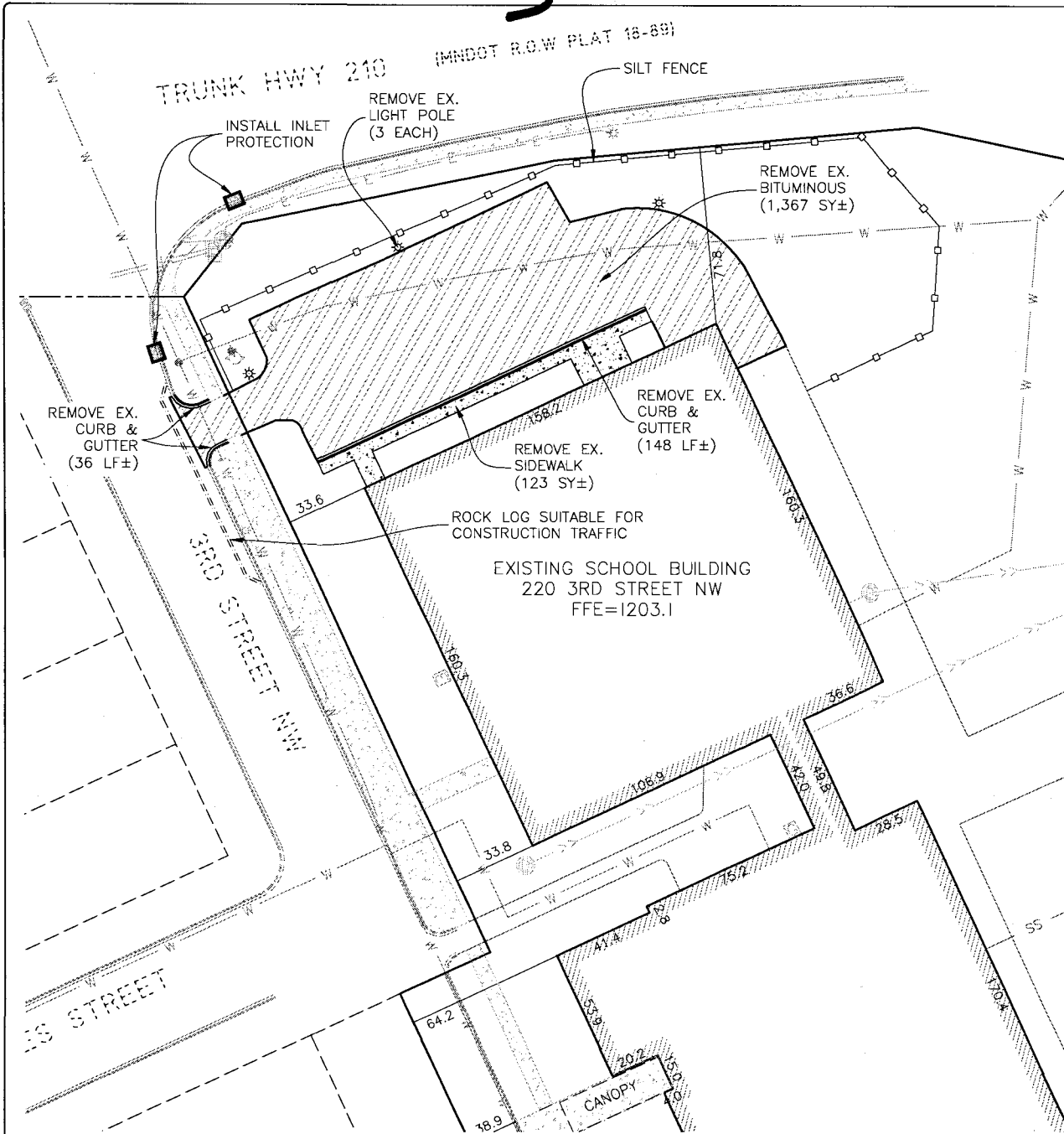
SITE AND UTILITY PLAN

**RIVERSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
 BUILDING ADDITIONS
 220 3RD STREET NW
 BRAINERD, MINNESOTA**

Project No.: 15-111
 Drawn by: WGS
 Checked by: WGS
C1 of 2

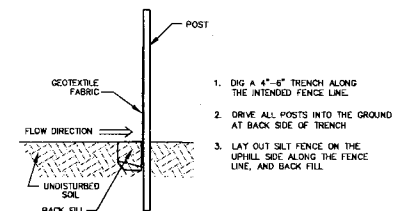


Existing Conditions

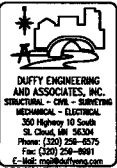


NOTES:

1. BASE PLAN USED IS A SURVEY PREPARED BY DUFFY ENGINEERING & ASSOCIATES, INC.
2. ALL EXISTING UTILITY LOCATIONS AND ELEVATIONS SHOWN ARE APPROXIMATE ONLY. CONTRACTOR SHALL CONFIRM ALL LOCATIONS AND ELEVATIONS PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION. CONTRACTOR SHALL CONTACT GOPHER STATE ONE-CALL.
3. ALL CONSTRUCTION SHALL CONFORM TO THE MOST RESTRICTIVE OF THE PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS, THE STANDARD SPECIFICATIONS OF THE CITY OF BRAINERD AND THE LATEST EDITION OF MNDOT STANDARD SPECIFICATIONS FOR CONSTRUCTION.
4. THE FOLLOWING SEQUENCE SHALL BE FOLLOWED FOR THE EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL DURING THE SITE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS:
 - A. INSTALL SILT FENCE, INLET PROTECTION AND ROCK LOGS AS SHOWN ON THE PLANS.
 - B. PERFORM SITE REMOVALS, GRADING, EXCAVATION AND EMBANKMENT. MULCH ALL DISTURBED AREAS OUTSIDE OF PROPOSED PAVEMENT AND BUILDING AREAS WITHIN 72 HOURS OF THIS WORK.
 - C. INSTALL CONCRETE CURB & GUTTER, SIDEWALK AND BUILDING.
 - D. BACKFILL BEHIND CURB & GUTTER AND RESTORE GREEN AREAS PER LANDSCAPE PLAN.
 - E. INSPECT EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL DEVICES AFTER EVERY 1/4" RAINFALL EVENT. CLEAN AND MAINTAIN THESE DEVICES AS NEEDED.



TYPICAL SILT FENCE INSTALLATION
NO SCALE



I hereby certify that this plan, specification or report was prepared by me or under my direct supervision and that I am a duly Licensed Engineer under the laws of the state of Minnesota.
 Date: 3/26/15
 License No. 28083

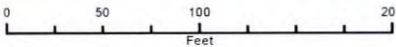
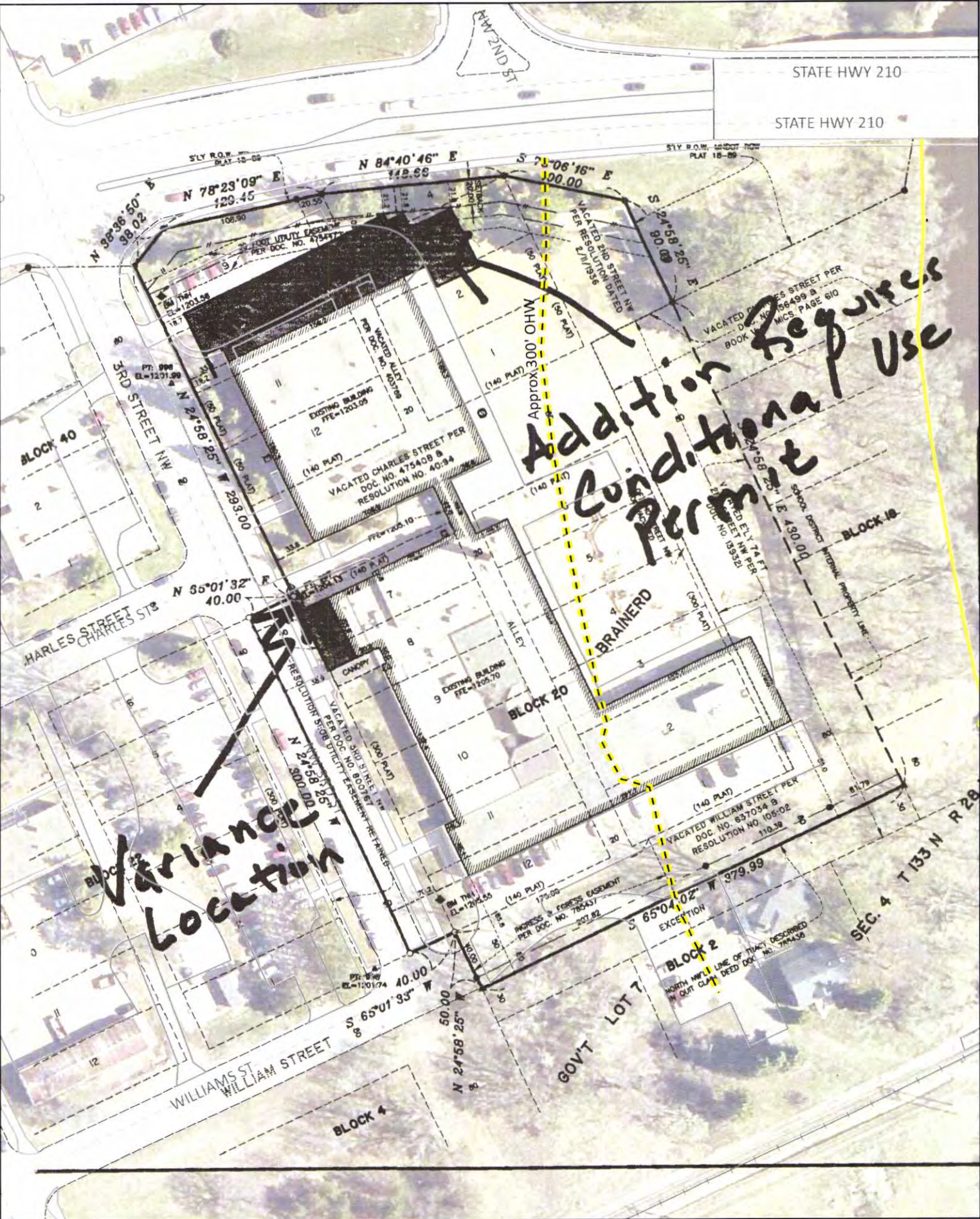
REVISIONS:	DATE	BY	CHKD

DEMOLITION & EROSION CONTROL PLAN



RIVERSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
 BUILDING ADDITIONS
 220 3RD STREET NW
 BRAINERD, MINNESOTA

Project No.: 15-111
 Drawn by: MDS
 Checked by: MDS



This map is intended for reference purposes only and is not a legally recorded map nor survey. The City of Brainerd shall not be liable for any damages or claims that arise due to accuracy, availability, use, or misuse of the information herein pursuant to MN Statutes 466.03 Subd 21.





The Brainerd Public Schools faces significant and growing facility challenges. Many of the immediate challenges exist at the elementary level and are due to a combination of several factors that have occurred over the last several years. Increased programming needs, an increase in kindergarten enrollment, and the development of ongoing state and federal mandates are some of the reasons. These changing needs combined with the age of the district physical plants, present real challenges for our school community. While we are just beginning a much needed process of creating a long range strategic plan for our facilities that will help guide our decisions on future investment, we are simultaneously faced with addressing serious and imminent needs to ensure students are provided an optimal learning environment.

While all of our elementary schools are faced with a lack of any excess capacity, two schools in particular have significant and immediate challenges regarding space limitations. Riverside School has realized an increase in programming and a slight increase in enrollment. The combination of these two factors has forced the school to carve teaching spaces out of areas typically not utilized for instructional space. Currently, students are being taught reading and being provided reading interventions in a shower room in a locker room area off of the gymnasium. Additionally, students are being assessed for reading skills and performance in sick-bay areas and in an air-handling space in the building. Some of these areas (locker room and air handling space) were previously designated as storage space.

For the above stated reasons, Brainerd Public schools respectfully requests the City of Brainerd consider and approve our enclosed application for a Conditional Use Permit to construct 2 additions to Riverside School.

To relieve some of this short term crowding, we would like approval for the following:

Construction of a 1,400 square foot addition to the front of the current office area at Riverside. This created space that will allow individualized instructional areas to be moved into more appropriate spaces and create a safe and secure entry point for the school.

Construction of 7 classrooms at the north end of Riverside school along the current exterior of the gym using the same design and construction materials as was used in the original building. The size of this addition will be 11,178 square feet.

Parking:

The District has recently completed a parking lot and bus loading/unloading addition that has created 107 new parking spaces to Riverside school. With the 25 existing spaces, we presently have 132 parking spaces. We presently fit within the parking ordinance section DD.

Timeline:

It is imperative that we begin the project at the earliest available date for completion prior to the start of school this coming fall. We must be complete by the 3rd week of August, 2015.

Variance:

NOTICE OF HEARING

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Notice is hereby given that Independent School District #181, 804 Oak Street, Brainerd, MN 56401 has applied for a conditional use permit to construct two additions to a public school in an R-3 (High Density Residential) District at 205 W Washington Street (Riverside School). The application also includes a request for a front yard setback variance from Zoning Ordinance Section 515-57-7 (B) subsections 1.

The property is located in an R-3 (High Density Residential) District and Zoning Ordinance Section 515-57-5.A. specifies public and private schools are permitted by Conditional Use Permit in an R-3 District.

The application includes a variance request from Zoning Ordinance Section 515-57-7. B. 1. Principal Building Setbacks – Front Yard to permit an addition to have a thirteen (13) foot setback when a thirty (30) foot setback is required.

The property is described as follows:

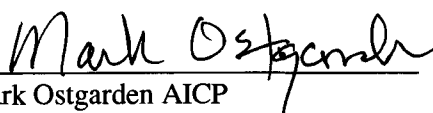
*Lots 1 thru 12 inclusive Block 38 ex Hwy subject to an easement of record, West Brainerd
PID #09198038001Z009
Section 4 Township 133 Range 28*

Notice is further given that the Planning Commission of the City of Brainerd will meet in the Brainerd City Hall Council Chambers, 501 Laurel Street, at 6:00 p.m., Wednesday, April 15, 2015 to consider the request for the Conditional Use Permit and Variances.

A copy of the application is on file for review at the City Planning Department, 501 Laurel Street.

Any individual needing special accommodations please call (218) 828-2309.

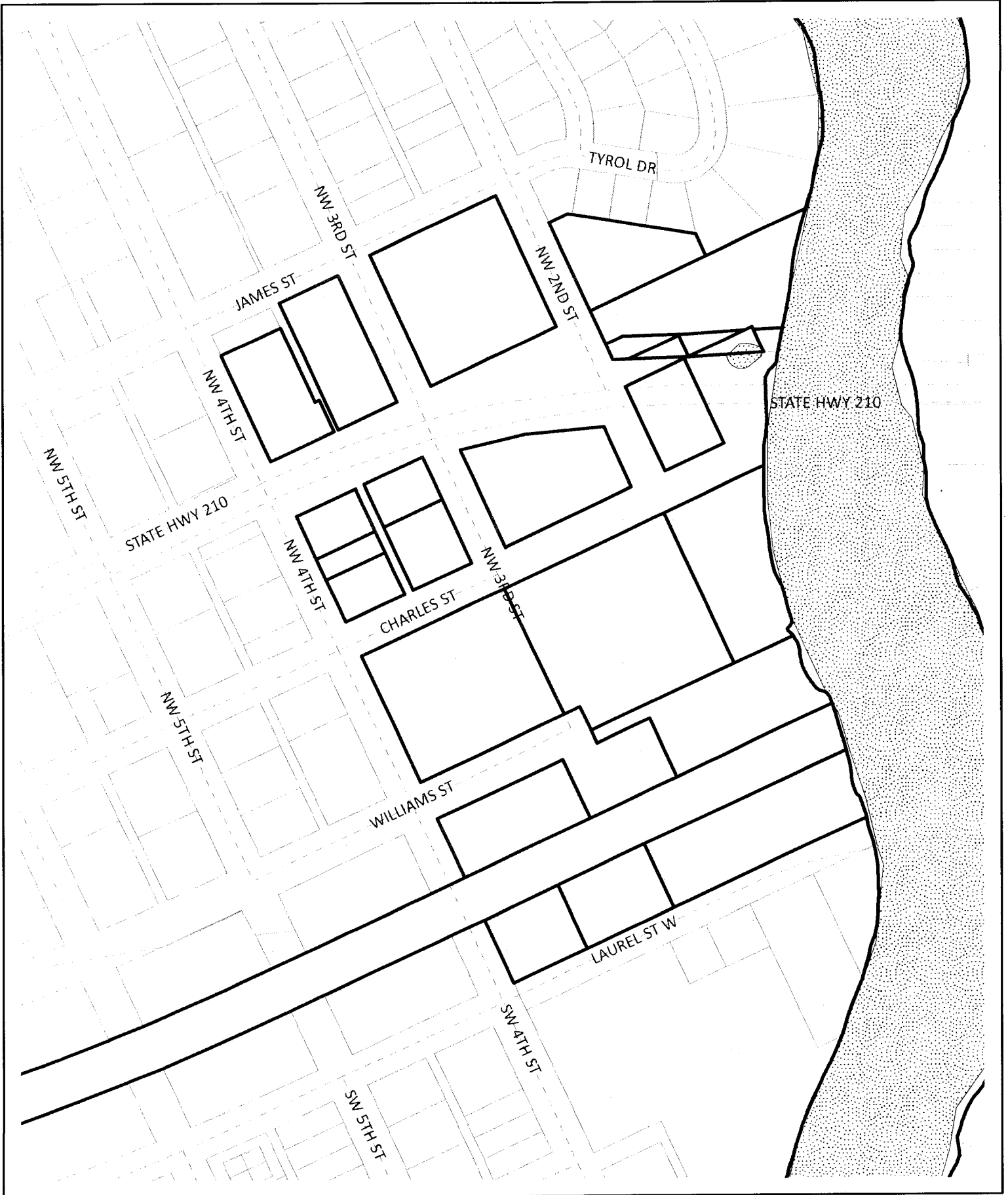
Dated this 1st day of April, 2015


Mark Ostgarden AICP
City Planner

Publication date: April 3, 2015

Mailing List - CUP_Variance 205 W Washington

APPRCL	TXNAME	TXADR1	TXADR2	TXADR3	PHYSADDR
091980020010009	ADVENTURE PROPERTIES LLC	110 3RD ST NW	BRAINERD, MN 56401		110 NW 3RD ST
091980020010009	ADVENTURE PROPERTIES LLC	110 3RD ST NW	BRAINERD, MN 56401		110 NW 3RD ST
04R000000030009	BURLINGTON NORTHERN SANTA FE RR CO	P O BOX 961089	FORT WORTH, TX 76161		
091980030018009	CCRH LLC	12394 CAMWOOD TRL	BAXTER, MN 56425		
09198036003X009	GUSTAFSON PROPERTIES OF BRD LLC	304 EAST RIVER RD SUITE 2	BRAINERD, MN 56401		
091970009010009	GUSTAFSON PROPERTIES OF BRD LLC	304 EAST RIVER RD SUITE 2	BRAINERD, MN 56401		
09198056001Y009	GUSTAFSON PROPERTIES OF BRD LLC	304 EAST RIVER RD SUITE 2	BRAINERD, MN 56401		TYROL DR
091980180000009	IND SCHOOL DIST, # 181	804 OAK ST	BRAINERD, MN 56401		
09198020001Z009	IND SCHOOL DIST, # 181	804 OAK ST	BRAINERD, MN 56401		RIVERSIDE SCH
09198022000Z009	IND SCHOOL DIST, # 181	804 OAK ST	BRAINERD, MN 56401		
09198038001Z009	IND SCHOOL DIST, # 181	804 OAK ST	BRAINERD, MN 56401		205 W WASHINGTON ST
09198001001A009	KRRC INVESTMENTS, LLP	PO BOX 327	BRAINERD, MN 56401		
09198003001A009	KRRC INVESTMENTS, LLP	PO BOX 327	BRAINERD, MN 56401		310 W LAUREL ST
09198040001Z009	KUMMET, LLOYD G	C/O RICHARD KUMMET	1820 S 8TH ST	BRAINERD, MN 56401	309 3RD ST NW
091980400110009	LAVALLE, DENNIS W & JULIE A	12096 SCENIC RIVER DR	BAXTER, MN 56425		314 CHARLES ST
09198036001Z009	STATE OF MINNESOTA DEPT OF TRANS	395 JOHN IRELAND BLVD	MAILSTOP 631 (DP)	ST PAUL MN 55155	
09198040008Z009	TT OF BRAINERD LLC	13754 TWO MILE RD	BRAINERD, MN 56401		305 W WASHINGTON ST
091980400100009	TT OF BRAINERD LLC	13754 TWO MILE RD	BRAINERD, MN 56401		
09198040004Z009	LAND & LEASE DEVELOPMENT LLC	24226 LONE PINE RD	HINCKLEY MN 55037		303 W WASHINGTON ST
09198058001Z009	WALGREEN COMPANY	PO BOX 1159	DEERFIELD, IL 60015		324 W WASHINGTON ST
09198058001Z009	WALGREEN COMPANY	PO BOX 1159	DEERFIELD, IL 60015		324 W WASHINGTON ST



0 190 380 Feet

0 0.04 0.08 Miles



City Planning Department

City Hall - 501 Laurel Street
Brainerd, MN 56401
218-828-2309/Fax 218-828-2316
www.ci.brainerd.mn.us

Permit Receipt #	2015-00010
Check #	138144
Date Paid:	3/30/15

CONDITIONAL USE/REZONING/VARIANCE APPLICATION

NATURE OF REQUEST (please check)

CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT

(\$190.00)

REZONING

(\$250.00)

VARIANCE

(\$220.00)

PROPERTY ADDRESS: RIVER SIDE SCHOOL, 220 N.W. 3RD ST.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Lot(s): _____ Block: _____ Addition: (SEE ATTACHMENT)
(attach description if lengthy) (legal address 205 N Washington St)

Property Owner Name: ISD # 181, BRAINERD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Street Address: 804 OAK STREET City: BRAINERD State: MN Zip Code 56401

Phone Number: 218-454-6900 Fax: 218-454-6901 E-mail: EARL.WOLLEAT@ISD181.ORG

Applicant Name: (If different than Property Owner) _____

Street Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone Number: _____ Fax: _____ E-mail: _____

Description of Request: SEE ATTACHED DESCRIPTION

x [Signature]
Property Owner Signature

3/24/15
Date

x ISD 181 Steve Lund Director of Business Services
(Please print name)

[Signature]
Applicant Signature

3/24/15
Date

EARL R. WOLLEAT
(Please print name)

(OVER)

AGENCY REVIEW CHECKLIST

Your request may require review by one or more of the agencies listed below. The City of Brainerd will determine which agencies will need to review your application and provide that agency with the notice of public hearing regarding your application:

☒ **BRAINERD FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Attn: Kevin Stunek, Fire Chief; 23 Laurel St; Brainerd, MN 56401; 218-828-2312; kstunek@ci.brainerd.mn.us

☒ **BRAINERD POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Attn: .. Corky McQuiston, 225 East River Road; Brainerd, MN 56401; 218-829-2805; corky.mcquiston@ci.brainerd.mn.us

☒ **BRAINERD PUBLIC UTILITIES**

Attn: Scott Magnuson, Supt.; P.O. Box 373; Brainerd, MN 56401; 218-829-8726; smagnuson@bpu.org

☒ **BWSR (MN Board of Water and Soil Resources)**

Attn: John Overland; 1601 Minnesota Dr; Brainerd, MN 56401; 218-828-2383; john.overland@state.mn.us

☐ **CROW WING COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT**

Attn: Tim Bray, County Engineer; 16589 County Rd 142; Brainerd, MN 56401; 218-824-1110/FAX 218-824-1111 tim.bray@crowwing.us

☐ **CROW WING COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

Attn: Melissa Barrick; 322 Laurel St-Ste. 13; Brainerd, MN 56401; 218-828-6197/FAX 828-6095 melissa.barrick@crowwingswcd.us

☐ **CROW WING COUNTY SURVEYOR'S OFFICE**

Attn: Mark Liedl; 322 Laurel St Ste 14.; Brainerd, MN 56401; 218-824-1124/FAX 824-1126; mark.liedl@crowwing.us

☐ **HRA**

Attn: Jennifer Bergman; 324 E. River Rd.; Brainerd, MN 56401; 218-828-3705/FAX 828-8817; jennifer@brainerdhra.org

☒ **MISSISSIPPI HEADWATERS BOARD**

322 Laurel Street Ste 5; Brainerd, MN 56401; 218-824-1307/FAX 824-1104 mhb@mississippiheadwaters.org

☒ **MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

Attn: Mary Safgren; 7694 Industrial Park Rd.; Baxter, MN 56425; 218-828-5700; mary.safgren@state.mn.us

☒ **MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES**

Attn: Wade Miller; 1601 Minnesota Dr.; Brainerd, MN 56401; 218-828-2605/FAX 828-6043; wade.miller@state.mn.us

☐ **MINNESOTA POLLUTION CONTROL AGENCY**

Attn: Reed Larson; 7678 College Rd-Ste. 105; Baxter, MN 56425; 218-828-2492/FAX 828-2594 Reed.Larson@state.mn.us

☐ **U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS**

Attn: Jeff Koshak; 8896 E. Gull Lake Dr.; Brainerd, MN 56401; 218-829-8402

STAFF REPORT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION

April 10, 2015

APPLICANT/LOCATION: ISD 181 for Riverside School located at 205 West Washington Street; Brainerd, MN

PROPOSED USE: Variance to permit an office space addition that will encroach into the street side yard setback

CURRENT ZONING: R-3 (Multi Family) District

ADJACENT USES: East: River
South: Offices and BNSF rail line
West: Riverside School parking lot and offices.
North: Commercial

ADJACENT ZONING: North: B-4 (General Commercial) District
East: B-4 (General Commercial) District
South: B-2 (Neighborhood Business) District
West: R-3 (Multifamily) Residential and B-4 (General Commercial) District

REPORT

ISD 181 is planning two additions at Riverside School. The north side addition will provide space for seven classrooms and the building's west side addition will provide additional office space. The property is located in an R-3 (Multifamily Residential) District which permits schools by conditional use permit. To construct the addition on the building's north side will require an existing water line to be relocated. This work is underway at the site.

The addition proposed for the building's west side will encroach into a setback requiring a variance for it to be constructed.

Following is Zoning Ordinance Section 515-57-7 B.: Minimum Lot Area and Setback Requirements:

Principal Building Setbacks:

1. Front Yard: Thirty (30) feet
2. Side Yard: Fifteen (15) feet
3. Side Yard (corner): **Twenty (20) feet**
4. Rear Yard: Twenty-five (25) feet

CRITERIA FOR GRANTING VARIANCES

A. Variances shall only be permitted:

When they are in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the ordinance. Following is the Intent and Purpose section of the Zoning Ordinance:

- A. *Protect the public health, safety, and general welfare of the community and its people through the establishment of minimum regulations governing development and use.*
- B. *This Ordinance shall divide the City into use districts and establish regulations in regard to location, erection, construction, reconstruction, alteration and use of structures and land.*
- C. *Protect neighborhoods.*
- D. *Promote orderly development and redevelopment of land for residential, commercial, industrial, recreational and public areas.*
- E. *Provide adequate light, air, and convenience of access to property.*
- F. *Prevent congestion in the public right-of-way.*
- G. *Prevent overcrowding of land and undue concentration of structures by regulating land, buildings, yards, and density of population.*
- H. *Protect and preserve the natural environment of the City.*
- I. *Encourage the protection of historic and aesthetic resources in the City.*
- J. *Conserve energy through the use of alternative energy systems and conservation through the encouragement of energy efficient structures for commercial, industrial and residential uses.*
- K. *Provide for compatibility of different land uses.*
- L. *Provide for administration of this Ordinance.*
- M. *Provide for amendments.*
- N. *Prescribe penalties for violation of such regulations.*
- O. *To define powers and duties of the City staff, the Planning Commission, the City Council and the Board of Zoning Appeals in relation to the Zoning Ordinance.*

The encroachment is a minimal area and should not adversely affect any of the above listed general purposes and intent criteria of the Zoning Ordinance.

When the variance is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

B. Subdivision 4. "Practical Difficulties", as used in connection with the granting of a variance means that:

- I. *The property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by the Zoning Ordinance; The addition will permit the school to have needed office space.*

II. The plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner;

There is nothing unique about the property.

III. The variance, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the locality.

The proposed addition is approximately 1,180 square feet. The attached drawing illustrates that 180 sf of the addition will encroach into the street side yard setback. The small area should not alter the essential character of the neighborhood.

Economic considerations alone do not constitute practical difficulties. Practical difficulties include, but are not limited to, inadequate access to direct sunlight for solar energy systems.

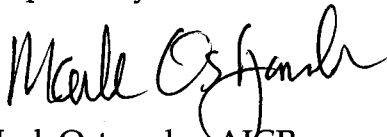
PLANNING DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

The encroachment is minimal and should have no impact on the neighborhood.

PLANNING COMMISSION AND CITY COUNCIL ACTION

The Planning Commission can consider a recommendation at the April 15, 2015 meeting and the City Council would receive the recommendation for consideration at its April 20, 2015 meeting.

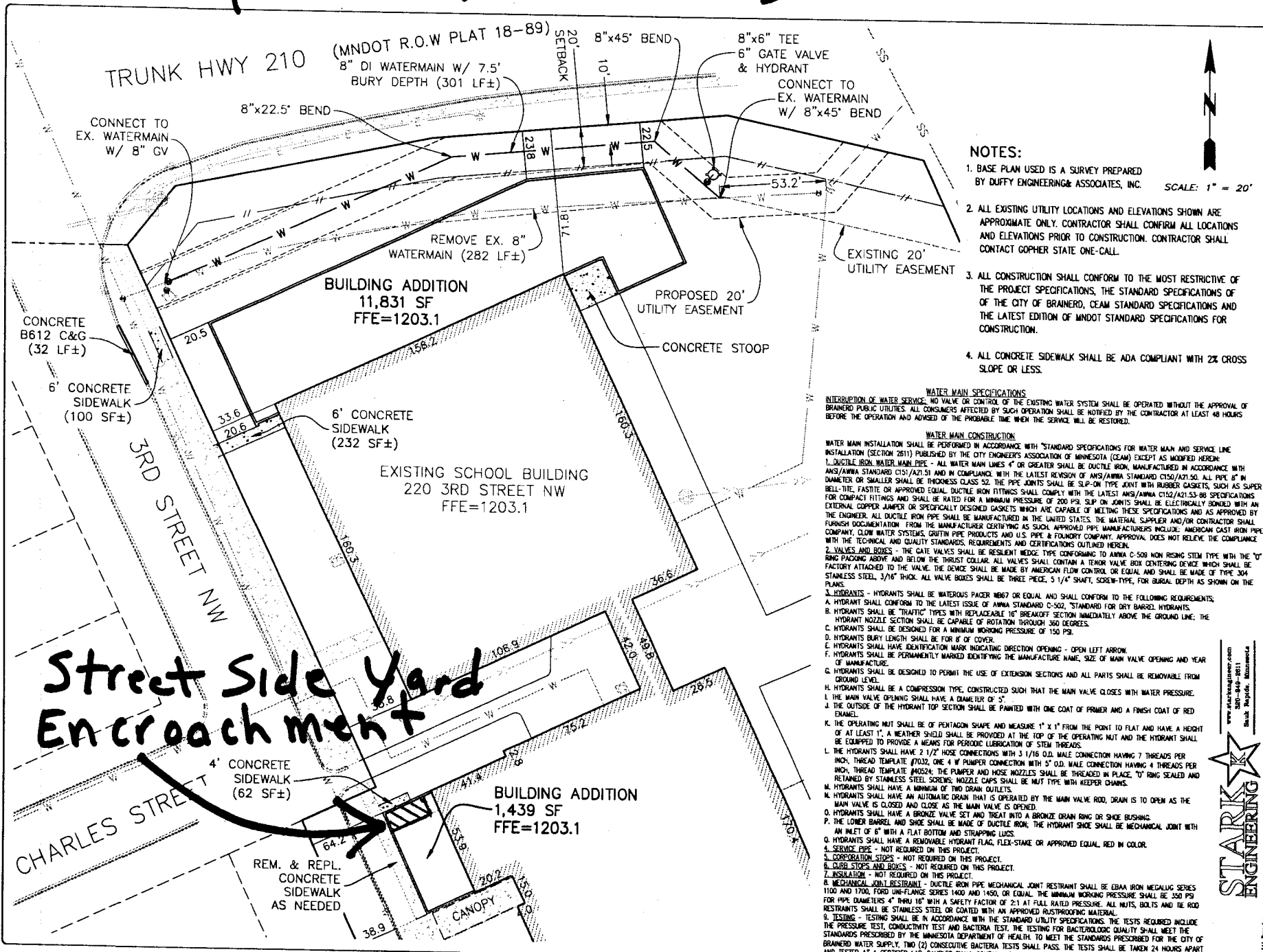
Respectfully submitted,



Mark Ostgarden AICP
City Planner

We also respectfully request a set back variance of 10 feet for the northwest corner of the front office addition to match the existing building office area. This variance would not induce a hardship to the general public, and it does not affect our accessibility or the safety and security to our building. It will match up to the end of our portion of NW 3RD street that was vacated to the District previously.

Proposed Additions



NOTES:

1. BASE PLAN USED IS A SURVEY PREPARED BY DUFFY ENGINEERING & ASSOCIATES, INC. SCALE: 1" = 20'
2. ALL EXISTING UTILITY LOCATIONS AND ELEVATIONS SHOWN ARE APPROXIMATE ONLY. CONTRACTOR SHALL CONFIRM ALL LOCATIONS AND ELEVATIONS PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION. CONTRACTOR SHALL CONTACT GOPHER STATE ONE-CALL.
3. ALL CONSTRUCTION SHALL CONFORM TO THE MOST RESTRICTIVE OF THE PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS, THE STANDARD SPECIFICATIONS OF THE CITY OF BRAINERD, CEAM STANDARD SPECIFICATIONS AND THE LATEST EDITION OF MNDOT STANDARD SPECIFICATIONS FOR CONSTRUCTION.
4. ALL CONCRETE SIDEWALK SHALL BE ADA COMPLIANT WITH 2% CROSS SLOPE OR LESS.

WATER MAIN SPECIFICATIONS

INTERRUPTION OF WATER SERVICE. NO VALVE OR CONTROL OF THE EXISTING WATER SYSTEM SHALL BE OPERATED WITHOUT THE APPROVAL OF BRAINERD PUBLIC UTILITIES. ALL CONSUMERS AFFECTED BY SUCH OPERATION SHALL BE NOTIFIED BY THE CONTRACTOR AT LEAST 48 HOURS BEFORE THE OPERATION AND ADVISED OF THE PROBABLE TIME WHEN THE SERVICE WILL BE RESTORED.

WATER MAIN CONSTRUCTION

WATER MAIN INSTALLATION SHALL BE PERFORMED IN ACCORDANCE WITH "STANDARD SPECIFICATIONS FOR WATER MAIN AND SERVICE LINE INSTALLATION (SECTION 2611) PUBLISHED BY THE CITY ENGINEER'S ASSOCIATION OF MINNESOTA (CEAM) EXCEPT AS MODIFIED HEREIN:
 1. DUCTILE IRON WATER MAIN PIPE - ALL WATER MAIN LINES 4" OR GREATER SHALL BE DUCTILE IRON, MANUFACTURED IN ACCORDANCE WITH ANS/AWWA STANDARD C150/A21.50. ALL PIPE 8" IN DIAMETER OR SMALLER SHALL BE IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE LATEST REVISION OF ANS/AWWA STANDARD C150/A21.50. ALL PIPE 8" IN DIAMETER OR SMALLER SHALL BE BELL-TITE, FASTTIE OR APPROVED EQUAL. DUCTILE IRON FITTINGS SHALL COMPLY WITH THE LATEST ANS/AWWA C152/A21.53-80 SPECIFICATIONS FOR COMPACT FITTINGS AND SHALL BE RATED FOR A MINIMUM PRESSURE OF 200 PSI. SLIP-ON JOINTS SHALL BE ELECTRICALLY BONDED WITH AN EXTERNAL COPPER JUMPER OR SPECIALLY DESIGNED GASKETS WHICH ARE CAPABLE OF MEETING THESE SPECIFICATIONS AND AS APPROVED BY THE ENGINEER. ALL DUCTILE IRON PIPE SHALL BE MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES. THE MATERIAL SUPPLIER AND/OR CONTRACTOR SHALL FURNISH DOCUMENTATION FROM THE MANUFACTURER CERTIFYING AS SUCH. APPROVED PIPE MANUFACTURERS INCLUDE: AMERICAN CAST IRON PIPE COMPANY, CLOW WATER SYSTEMS, GRUNN PIPE PRODUCTS AND U.S. PIPE & FOUNDRY COMPANY. APPROVAL DOES NOT RELIEVE THE COMPLIANCE WITH THE TECHNICAL AND QUALITY STANDARDS, REQUIREMENTS AND CERTIFICATIONS OUTLINED HEREIN.

2. VALVES AND BOXES - THE GATE VALVES SHALL BE RESILIENT WEDGE TYPE CONFORMING TO ANS/A21.50 NON-RISING STEM TYPE WITH THE "O" RING PACKING ABOVE AND BELOW THE THRUST COLLAR. ALL VALVES SHALL CONTAIN A TENDON VALVE BOX CENTERING DEVICE WHICH SHALL BE FACTORY ATTACHED TO THE VALVE. THE DEVICE SHALL BE MADE BY AMERICAN FLOW CONTROL OR EQUAL AND SHALL BE MADE OF TYPE 304 STAINLESS STEEL, 3/16" THICK. ALL VALVE BOXES SHALL BE THREE PIECE, 5 1/4" SHIRT, SCREW-TYPE, FOR BURIAL DEPTH AS SHOWN ON THE PLANS.

3. HYDRANTS - HYDRANTS SHALL BE WATERLOUS PAGER 1867 OR EQUAL AND SHALL CONFORM TO THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS:

A. HYDRANT SHALL CONFORM TO THE LATEST ISSUE OF ANS/A21.50, "STANDARD FOR DRY BARREL HYDRANTS."
 B. HYDRANTS SHALL BE "TRAFFIC" TYPES WITH REPLACEABLE 1" BREAKOFF SECTION IMMEDIATELY ABOVE THE GROUND LINE. THE HYDRANT NOZZLE SECTION SHALL BE CAPABLE OF ROTATION THROUGH 360 DEGREES.
 C. HYDRANTS SHALL BE DESIGNED FOR A MINIMUM WORKING PRESSURE OF 150 PSI.

D. HYDRANTS BURY LENGTH SHALL BE FOR 8" OF COVER.

E. HYDRANTS SHALL HAVE IDENTIFICATION MARK INDICATING DIRECTION OPENING - OPEN LEFT ARROW.
 F. HYDRANTS SHALL BE PERMANENTLY MARKED IDENTIFYING THE MANUFACTURE NAME, SIZE OF MAIN VALVE OPENING AND YEAR OF MANUFACTURE.

G. HYDRANTS SHALL BE DESIGNED TO PERMIT THE USE OF EXTENSION SECTIONS AND ALL PARTS SHALL BE REMOVABLE FROM GROUND LEVEL.

H. HYDRANTS SHALL BE A COMPRESSION TYPE, CONSTRUCTED SUCH THAT THE MAIN VALVE CLOSERS WITH WATER PRESSURE. THE MAIN VALVE OPENING SHALL HAVE A DIAMETER OF 5".

I. THE OUTSIDE OF THE HYDRANT TOP SECTION SHALL BE PAINTED WITH ONE COAT OF PRIMER AND A FINISH COAT OF RED ENAMEL.

K. THE OPERATING NUT SHALL BE OF PENTAGON SHAPE AND MEASURE 1" X 1" FROM THE POINT TO FLAT AND HAVE A HEIGHT OF AT LEAST 1". A WEATHER SHIELD SHALL BE PROVIDED AT THE TOP OF THE OPERATING NUT AND THE HYDRANT SHALL BE EQUIPPED TO PROVIDE A MEANS FOR PERIODIC LUBRICATION OF STEW THREADS.

L. THE HYDRANTS SHALL HAVE 2 1/2" HOSE CONNECTIONS WITH 3 1/16 O.D. MALE CONNECTION HAVING 7 THREADS PER INCH. THREAD TEMPLATE #7032, ONE 4" PUMPER CONNECTION WITH 5" O.D. MALE CONNECTION HAVING 4 THREADS PER INCH. THREAD TEMPLATE #7032. THE PUMPER AND HOSE NOZZLES SHALL BE THREADED IN PLACE, "O" RING SEALED AND RETAINED BY STAINLESS STEEL SCREWS. NOZZLE CAPS SHALL BE NUT TYPE WITH KEEPER CHAINS.

M. HYDRANTS SHALL HAVE A MINIMUM OF TWO DRAIN OUTLETS.
 N. HYDRANTS SHALL HAVE AN AUTOMATIC DRAIN THAT IS OPERATED BY THE MAIN VALVE ROD, DRAIN IS TO OPEN AS THE MAIN VALVE IS CLOSED AND CLOSE AS THE MAIN VALVE IS OPENED.

O. HYDRANTS SHALL HAVE A BRONZE VALVE SET AND TREAT TO A BRONZE DRAIN RING OR SLOE BUSHING.
 P. THE LOWER BARREL AND SLOE SHALL BE MADE OF DUCTILE IRON. THE HYDRANT SLOE SHALL BE MECHANICAL JOINT WITH AN INLET OF 6" WITH A FLAT BOTTOM AND STRAPPING LUGS.

Q. HYDRANTS SHALL HAVE A REMOVABLE HYDRANT FLAG, FLEX-STATE OR APPROVED EQUAL, RED IN COLOR.

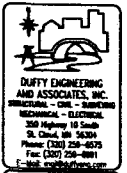
4. SERVICE PIPE - NOT REQUIRED ON THIS PROJECT.

5. COOPERATION STOPS - NOT REQUIRED ON THIS PROJECT.

6. CURB STOPS AND BOXES - NOT REQUIRED ON THIS PROJECT.

7. INSULATION - NOT REQUIRED ON THIS PROJECT.
 8. MECHANICAL JOINT RESTRAINT - DUCTILE IRON PIPE MECHANICAL JOINT RESTRAINT SHALL BE EBAA IRON MECHANICAL SERIES 1100 AND 1700, FORD UN-FLANGE SERIES 1400 AND 1450, OR EQUAL. THE MINIMUM WORKING PRESSURE SHALL BE 350 PSI FOR PIPE DIAMETERS 4" THRU 16" WITH A SAFETY FACTOR OF 2:1 AT FULL RATED PRESSURE. ALL NUTS, BOLTS AND BE RCD RESTRAINTS SHALL BE STAINLESS STEEL OR COATED WITH AN APPROVED RUSTPROOFING MATERIAL.

9. TESTING - TESTING SHALL BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE STANDARD UTILITY SPECIFICATIONS. TESTS REQUIRED INCLUDE THE PRESSURE TEST, CONDUCTIVITY TEST AND BACTERIA TEST. THE TESTING FOR BACTERIOLOGIC QUALITY SHALL MEET THE STANDARDS PRESCRIBED BY THE MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH. TO MEET THE STANDARDS PRESCRIBED FOR THE CITY OF BRAINERD WATER SUPPLY, TWO (2) CONSECUTIVE BACTERIA TESTS SHALL PASS. THE TESTS SHALL BE TAKEN 24 HOURS APART AND TESTED AT A CERTIFIED LAB. SAMPLES SHALL CONTAIN NO COLIFORM AND NON-COLIFORM BACTERIA COLONIES.



I hereby certify that this plan, specification or report was prepared by me or under my direct supervision and that I am a duly Licensed Engineer under the laws of the state of Minnesota.

[Signature]
 4/2/15 20063
 Date License No.

REVISIONS	DATE	BY	DESCRIPTION
1	4/2/15	JL	ISSUE FOR PERMIT
2	4/2/15	JL	PER CITY REVIEW

SITE AND UTILITY PLAN

RIVERSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
 BUILDING ADDITIONS
 220 3RD STREET NW
 BRAINERD, MINNESOTA

Project No.: 15-111
 Drawn by: JKL
 Checked by: JKL
 C1 2

MEMO

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Mark Ostgarden, City Planner 

DATE: April 9, 2015

RE: Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment – Semi Tractor Trailer Parking in Residential Zoning Districts

Parking semi-tractor trailers in residential zoning districts is not permitted. The Zoning Ordinance specifies that commercial vehicles cannot be parked on private property. Another section of the City Code specifies they cannot be parked on a city street.

Over the years we have received complaints and observed semi tractors with and without a trailer parked in residential areas. Vehicle owners have been cited for a City Code violation. We have been able to get the vehicle removed; however, the most recent citation resulted in a \$400 fine.

A question has been raised whether semi-tractor trailers should be allowed to park on private property in residential areas. This is on the April 15, 2015 Planning Commission agenda for discussion.

Attached are photos of this type of vehicle parked in residential areas.



Capital Business

Managing millennials: Separating myths from reality

By Jean Martin and Eugene Burke January 25

Organizations around the world have their recruiting sights focused on millennials, and with good reason. The demographic, defined as people born between 1980 and the early 2000s, is rapidly entering the workforce and quickly accelerating into leadership roles. As organizations plan for the future of their workforce, millennials will be a key component.

The competition to attract and recruit this generation is stiff. Although millennials participate in the same number of job interviews as candidates from other generations, they receive 12.5 percent more offers. Organizations are using a variety of tactics to attract, recruit and retain millennials, but a number of prevailing myths about the generation create confusion. So how can they separate myths from reality?

Understanding the millennial generation and their preferences is key to managing performance and engagement. We have studied more than 10,000 millennials' habits and workforce expectations and have uncovered some surprises.

Myth No. 1: Millennials place high value on social media

Reality: Millennials use social media, but they do not trust it as much as other sources.

The truth is that while millennials are more likely than any generation before them to use social media to learn about organizations, less than a third trust the information they receive through social channels. Organizations should use social media to address candidates, but avoid overestimating it. Job seekers across all generations place the most trust in friends and family when looking for jobs, so traditional channels such as referral programs are still decisive factors.

Myth No. 2: Millennials are motivated by money

Reality: Money matters, but not as much as opportunity.

Actually, our data reveals Millennials are not as motivated by money as older generations. Instead they put top priority on opportunities to develop and grow, demonstrate the talents they have and progress throughout the company. They are 1.5 times more likely than other staff to list “future career opportunity” as a top attribute for a new job. By emphasizing the potential to learn quickly and make an impact, organizations can appeal more to millennials.

Myth No. 3: Millennials would rather collaborate than compete

Reality: Millennials are the most competitive generation.

Fifty-eight percent of millennials admit to comparing their performance to peers versus 48 percent of workers in other generations. To appeal to millennials’ competitive nature, organizations should not only consider building out bigger reward and recognition programs, but also create opportunities that make millennials’ impact more visible and allow them to distinguish themselves from others.

Myth No. 4: Millennials rely on their peers to get work done

Reality: Millennials are less trusting of their peers and many prefer to “go it alone.”

Surprisingly, millennials do not trust peer input at work. Thirty-seven percent only trust themselves to accurately complete a work assignment, while just 26 percent of non-millennials feel this way. However, millennials are nearly as connected to their co-workers as other generations. More than one third of both millennials and non-millennials admit that they have close personal relationships with co-workers. To help employees build relationships and encourage partnership, organizations should emphasize the value of peer input and enable all employees to see the full effects of collaboration.

Myth No. 5: Millennials want to jump from organization to organization

Reality: Millennials want different experiences, not necessarily different organizations

In reality, millennials want to “experience hop” rather than “organization hop.” It’s true that more millennials are looking for jobs than those of other generations – more than half are looking externally for career opportunities, versus 37 percent of Gen Xers and 18 percent of Boomers. However, 53 percent of millennials – nearly the same as other generations – believe that internal job opportunities are desirable. Organizations can more successfully retain millennials by offering diverse career opportunities and clarifying the benefits of diverse moves within their organization.

With all of the buzz around millennials, it can be tough to separate myth from reality. However, by having a better understanding about how millennials – and other generations – think about their work and what expectations they have about their careers, organizations can get more from this very talented generation.

Jean Martin is CEB’s talent solutions architect. Eugene Burke is CEB’s chief science and analytics officer.



NEXT ECONOMY

Why Are Developers Still Building Sprawl?

Boomers and Millennials say they want to live in compact, walkable developments, but builders are putting their money into suburban McMansions.

ALANA SEMUELS |  @AlanaSemuels | Feb 24, 2015 |  205 Comments



Shutterstock

LAS VEGAS—A decade ago, home builders put up thousands of new spacious stucco homes in the desert here, with marble countertops, ample square footage, and walk-in kitchen cupboards.

Then the recession hit, the values of these homes plummeted, and economists talked of the overbuilding of Las Vegas.

The homes being built here look very similar to the ones built during the boom.

Now, though, developers are building once again, on projects derailed during the recession, including master-planned communities such as the 1,700-acre Skye Canyon, the 2,700-acre Park Highlands, the 1,900-acre Inspirada, and 555 acres of luxury living in an area called Summerlin.

The homes being built here and in many cities across the country look very similar to the ones built during the boom. Some, in fact, are even bigger. The average single-family home built in 2013 was 2,598 square feet, 80 feet larger than the average single-family house built in 2008, and 843 feet larger than homes built in 1978, according to Census Bureau data.

Here in Vegas, many of the new homes going up are two-story tan stucco with garages that fit two cars and look pretty similar to the house next door. Others, like those planned for the development Ascaya, which bills itself as "a new level of luxury in Las Vegas," and sold one lot last year for \$1 million, are even bigger.

"Vegas is about as homogeneous in our housing stock as any city you'll ever be in," Michael Montandon, the longtime mayor of North Las Vegas, who now works for a building company, told me. "Ninety-nine percent of the residences are two-story frame and stucco buildings."

the **NEXT
ECONOMY**

A Joint Project of
The Atlantic and
National Journal to
Explore an Uncertain
New Era.

It may be surprising to hear that so little has changed in the homebuilding industry since the recession, especially in Las Vegas, one of the epicenters of the housing bust. After all, low gas prices aside, surveys suggest that both Boomers and younger generations are interested in living in more urban places where they don't have to spend so much time in the car getting to and from work. They also don't mind smaller homes, especially if they're close to public transit or retail or restaurants. And studies have shown that sprawl has negative health impacts: People who live in far-out suburbs

walk less, eat more, and exercise less than those who live in urban environments.

Urban planners and "smart growth" advocates argue that builders should eschew the practice of buying empty land further and further out and building on it, and should instead build more compact, walkable communities near public transit, rehabbing existing land to fit new projects. Doing so is important for the environment, they say, and will save valuable resources and money in the long run.

"Is there still a market for this, do people still really want to live there, and to the extent that's true, is this a sensible development project for private sector to be continuing to produce?" asks Stockton Williams, the executive director of the ULI Terwilliger Center for Housing at the Urban Land Institute, about master-planned communities in the suburbs.



Building at Inspirada, in Henderson, Nevada. (Alana Semuels)

The other question we should be asking, Williams says, is whether these types of development impose big costs on taxpayers who must foot the bill to provide resources to far-flung developments. For example, one report calculated that in Teton County, Idaho, cars driving to subdivisions on roads

built in unincorporated areas cost the county \$8.30 per mile in upkeep. Suburban development demands more water, roads, and services the farther out it spreads.

"What are the real infrastructure demands of these more spread out, suburban-style communities, whether they're more planned and slightly more urban or not, and can cities continue to afford to invest in them?" he asks.

Building more walkable communities could also help jump-start a housing market that's been slow to recover, some urban planners believe. Homebuyers want something new, they say, but builders aren't listening, and keep building more sprawl.

"I think that the building industry has been incredibly resilient at resisting change," Chris Leinberger, a land-use strategist who is also a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. "It's somewhat akin to carriage makers not wanting to shift to making cars."

Changing the way we build homes has proven challenging.

It's not just urban planners who think developers should be thinking more sustainably. The United Nations, in 1992, got 178 countries (including the U.S.) to sign onto [Agenda 21](#), pledging to promote sustainable development, investment in infrastructure, and the rehabbing of old buildings, among other things.

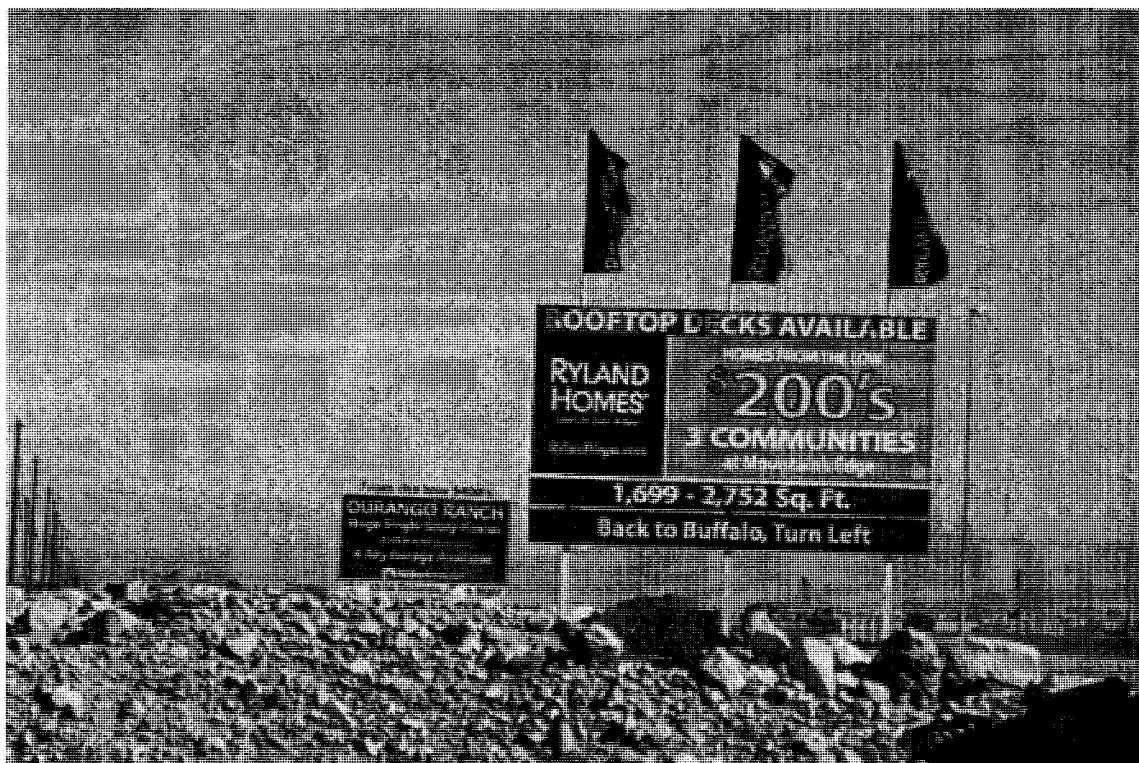
But changing the way we build homes has proven challenging. That's in part because redoing plans for already-approved developments is costly and difficult. But it's also because builders argue with the idea that homebuyers want compact, walkable developments. Americans want space, they say, and they want backyards and private patios and big closets and places to park their big cars.

"Some of the home builders couldn't sell the houses we originally wanted them to sell," Steve van Gorp, a Las Vegas development consultant who is a member of the Congress for New Urbanism, told me. "The market wouldn't bear it—people just wanted to have traditional single-family houses out here."

In some parts of the country, there's been a rallying call against sustainable development. A group, influenced by the Tea Party, formed a group called Resist 21, which pushes back against the U.N.'s Agenda 21, calling it "the strategy that seeks to transform America from the land of the free to the land of a collective."

The Republican Party adopted a platform that "exposed" Agenda 21 at its 2012 Convention, pledging to inform state and local governments around the country about the "underlying harmful implications of implementation of United Nations Agenda 21 destructive strategies for 'sustainable development'."

"Exposing" sustainable development might seem laughable, but it points to a growing divide about how different people think Americans want to live in the future. Do they want to continue to live in spread-out, single-family homes with lawns and garages and spare bedrooms? Or do they want smaller, compact houses where they can easily hop on a train or walk to the coffee shop, without even needing a garage, or a car to park in it?



(Alana Semuels)

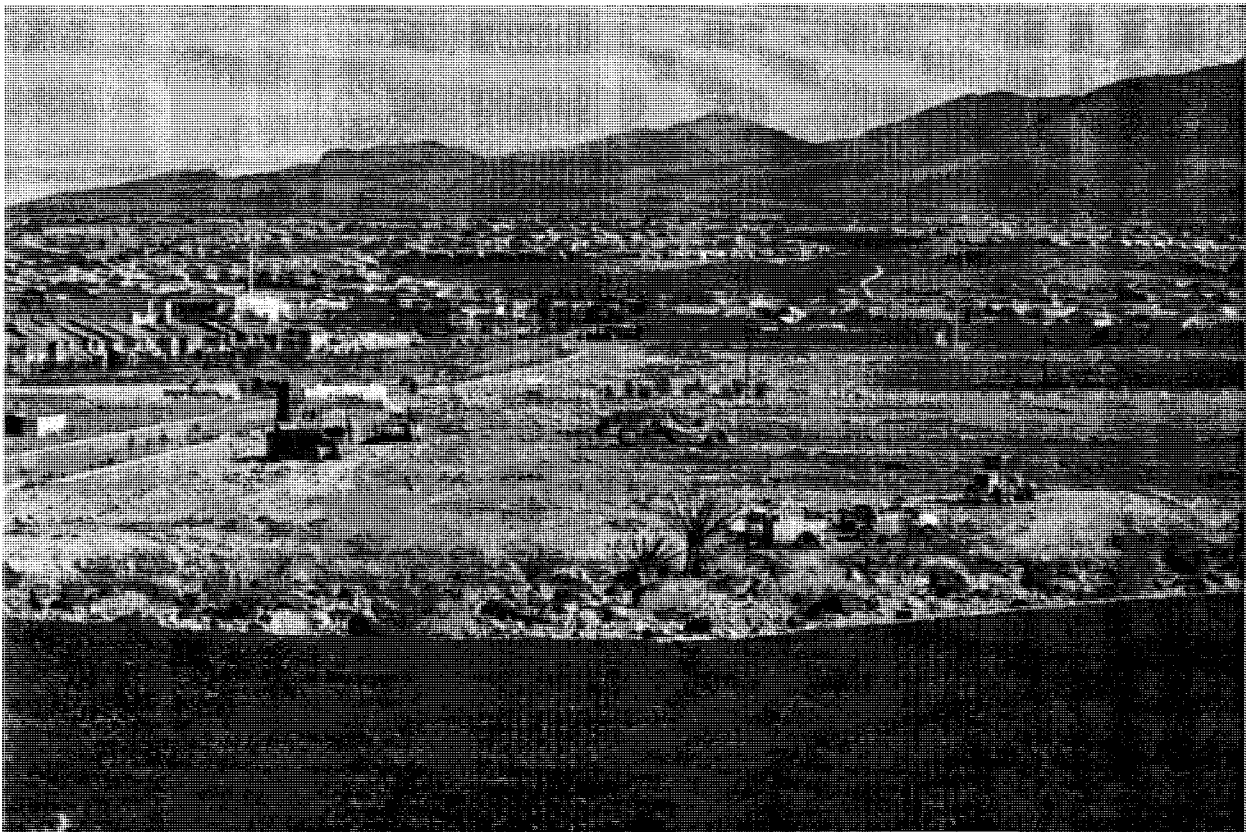
Which side is right could very well determine whether the rows and rows of homes going up in Las Vegas are a worrying sign of another crash yet to come, or a positive sign that the economy is coming back, and with it, the traditional vision of the American dream.

* * *

To get to Inspirada, a master-planned community about 20 miles south of Las Vegas, get off the I-15 and drive for about 10 minutes across barren desert dotted with shrubs and telephone poles. There's not much around, save dirt and a few billboards.

Crest a hill, though, and the desert gives way to homes. Thousands of them. There are homes that have just been completed, homes where the foundation is just now being erected, homes that are planned and sold but not yet built.

Inspirada opened in 2007, and developers initially planned for 8,500 houses, a casino, parks, and walking trails. But the lenders forced the project into bankruptcy in 2011, and building was halted, with only 1,350 homes constructed. Building is now starting again, though some of the project's original developers have gone out of business.



Construction on Inspirada from a viewing platform atop a hill (Alana Semuels)

Klif Andrews, president of the Nevada division at Pardee Homes, showed me around a few of the models in Pardee's Solano development, which is part of Inspirada.

Even the smallest home could probably fit my not-so-tiny New York apartment ten times over. The first home had a walk-in cupboard, a five-burner cook stove, granite slab countertops, and a double sliding door that led out onto a covered patio. Another model had a separate suite for a mother-in-law, with a putting green out back. The homes, which range from 2,000 to 4,000 square feet, were going for \$300,000 to \$500,000. They feel like something out of a magazine.

"These are our standard appliances," Andrews told me, running his hand across a granite countertop of a model home. "We weren't offering this level of finish as a standard before, but now this is what the market likes to see."

Before means a decade ago, in 2005, when Pardee and other builders in Las Vegas were pulling permits for 30,000 new homes a year, right before the crash (they're now up to about 7,000 a year). But when I asked what, if anything, was different from the homes built a decade ago, Andrews talked

about home layout: Buyers now want covered patios for outdoor living, less-formal dining rooms, lots of space for entertaining. They do not want smaller homes, he said.

"For us, we're building 1,800 to 4,800 square feet, and that's identical to what it was 10 years ago," he said.



A Pardee Home interior in Inspirada (Pardee Homes)

Andrews knows this, he says, because builders tried to introduce sustainable development to Las Vegas when they build Inspirada. It was initially planned as a walkable, mixed-use community, adhering to many of the principles of new urbanism. Builders constructed some compact homes with garages in the back—a key new-urbanist principle. They put a big, public park in the middle, with a swimming pool and dog park, so residents could walk and interact with each other. They had plans to build coffee shops and other retail within the community.

"As a home builder, you get to know very much what buyers want. They pay you for things, or they don't."

But, Andrews says, nobody wanted those homes. Or at least, builders couldn't sell them.

"As a home builder, you get to know very much what buyers want," he told me. "They pay you for things, or they don't."

So when Pardee came in and took over a part of the development in 2009, it asked the city for permission to revert back to more traditional homes.

"The original Inspirada design was very neo-traditional, we were required to build smaller houses, with more front-facing architecture," he said. "But we went back during the recession and said 'Hey, city, this doesn't really work that well, buyers prefer something else, can we do it more conventional?'"

The city agreed to let Pardee and the other builders abandon the new urbanist plans, though developers kept the park in the middle. Andrews calls it a happy hybrid of suburbanism and new urbanism, but planners might disagree: There's little that's walkable in Inspirada, except for the parks. Still, builders in Las Vegas say the area is one of the most compact in the country—bounded in by mountains and federal land, so developers can't sprawl too much.

Whether the failure of Inspirada as a new-urbanist community can really be attributed to buyers' lack of interest is difficult to parse. After all, the community opened in 2007, right when the economy was tanking. It's possible buyers didn't purchase homes there because they weren't purchasing homes anywhere.

But builders don't seem interested in trying again. The Las Vegas communities that stalled during the recession and are now being started again seem more focused on luxury and space than on walkability and transit. Homes in Ascaya, the luxury development going up in the hills above Henderson, must be 4,500

square feet or more, according to development guidelines. Howard Hughes Corporation recently announced plans to build a 555-acre, high-end community that it says will offer an "unparalleled luxury living experience." And a 9,000-home master-planned community north of Las Vegas called Skye Canyon has found builders, with models—some costing as much as \$600,000—ready in the fall.

It's not just Las Vegas, either. I visited the Atlanta region back in December, stopping by a city called Covington, about 40 miles outside of Atlanta, to report on an attempt to save a failed subdivision. Covington has a mix of homes in various communities, including a new-urbanist mixed-use development called Clark's Grove, that has front porches close to the sidewalk and lanes in the rear. The Clark's Grove section of town was lovely: many of the homes have porches that look out onto the tree-lined streets. There was a second phase planned for Clark's Grove, and builders even put in the streets and lots—but then stopped in 2009 as the recession began. The second phase of Clark's Grove is still on hold.



Homes in Clark's Grove (Alana Semuels)

But there is building going on in Covington, where construction workers are quickly erecting large single-family homes on big lots on a golf-course development a little farther out from the town center.

It was a surprise to Vinson, who had thought there would be demand for places like Clark's Grove, not for the stalled, golf-course development.

"I thought there was a change in homebuyer expectations and attitudes, and that they were going to be looking for a slightly-smaller house in a neighborhood that has all the components of a true neighborhood," he told me, driving past the wooden frames and hammering of the homes going up on the golf course. "But the golf-course subdivision is the one coming back first."

The South, like many regions of the country, seems to be buying big. In 2013, 37 percent of new single-family homes sold had three or more bathrooms, compared to just 25 percent in 2005, according to Census data. And in 2013, the last year for which there is data available, 9 percent of homes sold were 4,000 square feet or more, the highest percentage in recent decades. In the South, 11 percent of homes sold were 4,000 square feet or bigger.

When I asked Vinson if the activity in the golf-course development meant people hadn't learned anything since the recession, he replied that builders were merely returning to normal.

"The big guys just see it as, 'Yeah, we had our pause, and now we're going to go back to what we were doing before.'"

Builders say that's because they know what people want. Studies may show that the younger generation wants small, compact, transit-accessible housing now, Andrews of Pardee, says. But once they decide to have kids and dogs, they'll want the traditional suburban home with more space.

"Sure, there are people who live downtown forever, but when they say, 'I want to have a kid or two,' or, 'Gee, my girlfriend wants to move in together and we want to have a house,' they'll move to the suburbs, he said.

Emily Ellis-Santana and Freddy Santana, both 32, may be a case in point. Though they currently live in downtown Las Vegas, renting a 1,500-square-foot house from the 1940s, they recently bought a traditional stucco 2,700 square foot, four-bedroom home, in Inspirada, for \$415,000.

"We were once those loft-style kids, but now we've grown out of that, we want to be adults," Ellis-Santana, who is pregnant with the couple's first child, told me. "We wanted a place we could take our kids out to the park and run around, and not have to get in a car and drive to the park."



Emily Ellis-Santana and Freddy Santana
(Pardee Homes)

Ellis-Santana admits the couple wouldn't seem to be the type who would go for a home in Inspirada: They both wear black most of the time, he has long hair and is from New York City and she lived for a long time in downtown Los Angeles.

But the couple visited the development on a lark one day, and said it had a *Truman Show* feel, of a picture-perfect American suburb where people were walking their dogs, pushing their strollers, and smiling.

"We kind of wanted a neighborhood that was Americana/ *Truman Show*," she told me.

Some people might shudder at the thought—after all, Jim Carrey's character in the film, Truman Burbank, becomes desperate to escape the master-planned bubble where he lives. But the couple liked the amenities of the house—being able to unlock their door wirelessly, having a courtyard inside their house, having a touch-screen sink. Yes, the outside is stucco and looks similar to many other houses on the block, but the inside, Ellis-Santana says, they can make their own. She says she wouldn't mind having a more modern exterior to the house, but her husband, she says, wouldn't change a thing.

Examples like this are proof to Andrews that you can't tell homebuyers what they want.

"A whole bunch of that is social engineering—you're telling people that you need to have more public space, but people say, 'I still want the private spaces for my dog and my baby, but I love the public space,' he said. "That's where the

free market gets involved with social engineering and says, wait a minute, hey, I'm interested in what I can sell."

* * *

There is, of course, another way to look at the home-buying habits of Millennials, and of Americans in general, after the recession. That is: Many of them are not buying, because they're not interested in the homes that are being built. If the builders in Vegas had tried harder to stick to new-urbanist principles—maybe putting in restaurants and retail and other things to walk to—perhaps they'd be selling more homes.

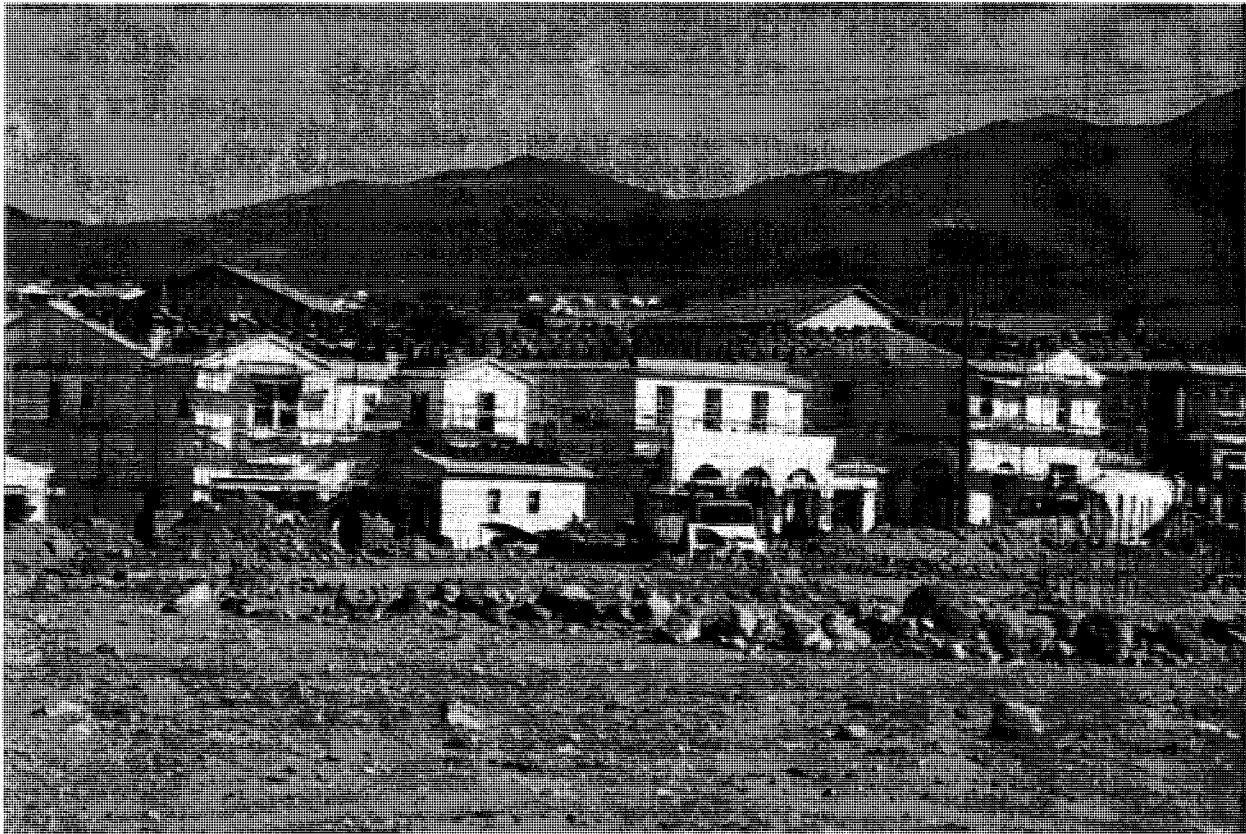
That's the belief of Chris Leinberger, who has some disdain for the business model that home builders are still trying to use.

"The home builders for 56 years made a lot of money by going out to the fringe and buying farmland and subdividing it," Leinberger told me. "That formula now has to change."

After all, the homeownership rate is at its lowest levels in more than two decades, according to Census Bureau data. Many economists believe that in the aftermath of the recession, developers should be building 1.5 million homes a year—but they're building less than half of that.

Some economists say that's because of tight credit standards and lower wages. But Leinberger says it's because home builders aren't building the type of affordable, compact units that Millennials want.

"There's too many McMansions out there, for one thing," he told me. "And then a lot of it is the product doesn't exist that they want to buy."



Homes going up in Inspirada (Alana Semuels)

It's not just Leinberger who thinks that some builders are investing in the wrong product. John Burns, a real-estate consultant, visited thousands of communities all over the country in 2014. Those visits, coupled with slower sales of master-planned communities, made him conclude, in an email newsletter, that "the land development and homebuilding industries need to shift their mix of communities to target a different mix of buyers than the traditional mix." There needs to be less "move-up" housing, since traditional "move-up" buyers aren't interested, more housing for retirees that's close to entertainment, and more luxury housing, he wrote.

"If I wanted urban, I would have purchased urban. I wanted suburban, and bought that."

Of course, it's not simple for companies to change the types of homes they've been building for decades and start something new. Much of the land that they're holding is out on the fringes and would be hard to make walkable. Building bigger homes is cheaper than building smaller ones—developers can make a wall a few feet longer, and give buyers more square feet without costing themselves anything. Smaller homes, though, cost about the same to build, and because they're smaller, cost buyers more per square foot.

And making homes walkable to transit centers requires more investment in mass transit, which hasn't been a big priority for state and local governments in the aftermath of the recession, Leinberger said. And the federal Highway Trust Fund has long prioritized funding for highways and roads over mass-transit projects.

Building some of these developments requires rezoning, which can be difficult to do, especially since it sometimes requires putting in alleys. And attempts to create smart-growth communities often meet loud opposition from neighbors who are used to a more traditional type of community. Even an attempt to put sidewalks into one Minneapolis suburb was nixed by residents who complained about the city taking away their private space.

"If I wanted urban, I would have purchased urban. I wanted suburban, and bought that," one resident told the Minneapolis Star-Tribune.

* * *

There are communities that have successfully made the shift to building more compact, walkable developments, even in the most unlikely places. Some of the most excessive sprawl during the housing boom, for instance, occurred in the inland areas of Northern California, places like Brentwood, Antioch, Vacaville. But those areas are now rethinking what kind of building they want to allow, and what kind they don't.

"There was, up until 2008, a profound overbuilding of single-family homes," Jeremy Madsen, with the Greenbelt Alliance, a Bay Area smart-growth group, told me. "The 'drive 'til you qualify' syndrome ran rampant in the Bay Area."

Now, many of these developments are half empty or unfinished, waiting for demand to come back—if it ever will. But cities in the Bay Area are starting to

put in urban-growth boundaries, which prevent building from happening outside of that area. Voters handily defeated a proposal to allow developers to build on Doolan Canyon, an open space outside of the city of Dublin's urban-growth boundary. In the city of Windsor, in Sonoma County, a new-urbanist developer decided to create a downtown and built a mixed-use combination of offices, retail, and homes near a transit station. And a planning commission in Stockton, another epicenter of the housing boom and bust, recently said no to developers who wanted approval to build 2,000 homes on what is currently farmland, the first-time observers could remember the commission doing so.

Even San Jose, once considered just a giant suburb of San Francisco, has shifted its mentality, Madsen said. The city's newest general plan, adopted in 2011, emphasizes 'smart growth' and called for the growth of 'urban villages' located along current and future transit lines. It promotes infill development rather than sprawling out to open lands, aims to reduce the number of trips that have to be made by car, and rethinks street design to encourage walking and biking.

"I think we've moved into a different era in the Bay Area in term of how we're going to grow in the future," Madsen told me. "The consumer preference side of things appears to be changing."

But, he said, even though leaders and consumers might be on the same page, it isn't going to be easy, since a lot of the zoning and building layouts are from the old era.

"There's going to be a major challenge when it comes to implementing this shift, but there's a critical mass of opinion and market direction to get it going," he said.

Just as America is divided politically, it could become a more divided country in the way its residents live.

It's easy to dismiss the Bay Area's plans as another California anomaly. But California often leads the rest of the country when it comes to adopting environmentally-friendly policies that are sustainable for the long term.

Other areas may continue to eschew 'smart growth,' and just as America is divided politically, it could become a more divided country in the way its residents live. People in cities such as Washington D.C., Boston, and Seattle, will want more walkable developments, while consumers in what Leinberger calls "the laggards," including Phoenix, Dallas, and Las Vegas, will continue to live in sprawling suburbs.

But it's also possible that Boomers and Millennials in the laggard cities will come around. After all, even in Las Vegas and Atlanta, some builders are starting to shift their mentality. Zappos founder Tony Hsieh has poured \$350 million into downtown Las Vegas, creating a shopping center built from shipping containers, mixed-use residential development, and a host of walkable amenities like a donut shop and a bookstore. And in Atlanta, a developer is in the midst of converting a former Sears building near downtown to a mixed-use community of apartments, restaurants, and retail.

Not everyone will want to live in downtown environments like these. But if they're appealing to consumers, they could motivate a whole new segment of buying, even in cities such as Las Vegas and Atlanta. If consumers come around to "smart growth" in those areas, perhaps builders will too.

(Top image via [Laura Glickstein/Shutterstock.com](#))

This post originally appeared on [The Atlantic](#).

About the Author



Alana Semuels is a staff writer at *The Atlantic*. She was previously a national correspondent for the *Los Angeles Times*.

ALL POSTS | [@AlanaSemuels](#)



Why 12-Foot Traffic Lanes Are Disastrous for Safety and Must Be Replaced Now

Let's make "10 not 12!" a new mantra for saving our cities and towns.

JEFF SPECK |  @JeffSpeckAICP | Oct 6, 2014 |  616 Comments



When state DOTs bring streets through cities, they apply highway standards (above, Okeechobee Boulevard in West Palm Beach, Florida). (Screenshot via Google Maps)

A friend of mine heads an office in the White House. I never see him anymore, except at the occasional black tie design dinner, where he is always good for a couple of gin and tonics as the crowd disperses. At the last such event, he asked me a question. Or maybe he didn't. But I answered it.

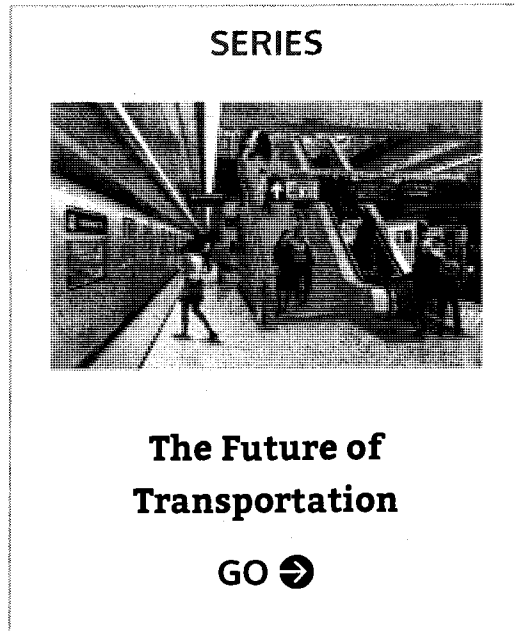
"What's the number one most important thing that we have to fight for?" I said.

"You mean, besides corporations being people and money being speech?"

"Besides that."

"Well that's easy: 10-foot lanes instead of 12-foot lanes."

"Explain."



And so I did, brilliantly. So brilliantly that the White House issued an Executive Order the very next day. Or so I imagined; such is the power of gin.

Sobered by my now palpable failure, I have steeled myself for the task of explaining here, in a manner that can never be disputed or ignored, why the single best thing we can do for the health, wealth, and integrity of this great nation is to forbid the construction, ever again, of any traffic lane wider than 10 feet.

(Before beginning, let me thank the traffic engineers Paul Moore and Theodore Petritsch, who taught me most of this stuff. Yes, there are some good ones out there. This article borrows heavily from an article by Petritsch, "[The Influence of Lane Widths on Safety and Capacity: A Summary of the Latest Findings.](#)")

A little background: First, we are talking only about high-volume streets here. Neighborhood streets can have much narrower lanes. The classic American residential street has a 12-foot lane that handles traffic *in two directions*. And many busy streets in my hometown of Washington, D.C., have eight-foot lanes that function wonderfully. These are as safe and efficient as they are illegal in most of the United States, and we New Urbanists have written about them plenty before, and built more than a few. But what concerns us here are downtown streets, suburban arterials and collectors, and those other streets that are expected to handle a good amount of traffic, and are thus subject to the mandate of free flow.

Second, you should know that these streets used to be made up of 10-foot lanes. Many of them still exist, especially in older cities, where there is no room for anything larger. The success of these streets has had little impact on the traffic-engineering establishment, which, over the decades, has pushed the standard upward, almost nationwide, first to 11 feet, and then to 12. Now, in almost every place I work, I find that certain streets are held to a 12-foot standard, if not by the city, then by a state or a county department of transportation.

States and counties believe that wider lanes are safer. And in this belief, they are dead wrong.

In some cases, a state or county controls only a small number of downtown streets. In other cases, they control them all. In a typical city, like Cedar Rapids or Fort Lauderdale, the most important street or streets downtown are owned by the state. In Boise, every single downtown street is owned by the Ada County Highway District, an organization that, if it won't relinquish its streets to the city, should at least feel obliged to change its name. And states and counties almost always apply a 12-foot standard.

Why do they do this? Because they believe that wider lanes are safer. And in this belief, they are dead wrong. Or, to be more accurate, they are wrong, and thousands of Americans are dead.

They are wrong because of a fundamental error that underlies the practice of traffic engineering—and many other disciplines—an outright refusal to acknowledge that human behavior is impacted by its environment. This error applies to traffic planning, as state DOTs widen highways to reduce congestion, in complete ignorance of all the data proving that new lanes will be clogged by the new drivers that they invite. And it applies to safety planning, as traffic engineers, designing for the drunk who's texting at midnight, widen our city streets so that the things that drivers might hit are further away.

The logic is simple enough, and makes reasonable sense when applied to the design of high-speed roads. Think about your behavior when you enter a highway. If you are like me, you take note of the posted speed limit, set your cruise control for 5 m.p.h. above that limit, and you're good to go. We do this because we know that we will encounter a consistent environment free of impediments to high-speed travel. Traffic engineers know that we will behave this way, and that is why they design highways for speeds well above their posted speed limits.

Unfortunately, trained to expect this sort of behavior, highway engineers apply the same logic to the design of city streets, where people behave in an entirely different way. On city streets, most drivers ignore posted speed limits, and instead drive the speed at which they feel safe. That speed is set by the cues provided by the environment. Are there other cars near me? Is an intersection approaching? Can I see around that corner? Are there trees and buildings near the road? Are there people walking or biking nearby? And: How wide is my lane?

When lanes are built too wide, pedestrians are forced to walk further across streets on which cars are moving too fast and bikes don't fit.

All of these factors matter, and others, too. The simplest one to discuss, and probably the most impactful, is lane width. When lanes are built too wide, many bad things happen. In a sentence: pedestrians are forced to walk further across streets on which cars are moving too fast and bikes don't fit.

In the paragraphs that follow, I will lay out the evidence against 12-foot lanes, evidence compiled by traffic engineers, for traffic engineers. When presented with this evidence, DOT officials will face a mandate: provide conflicting evidence, or give in. In over a year of searching for conflicting evidence, I have

failed to find any. The closest I came was the following conversation, with a DOT district commissioner in a western state, which I recorded faithfully within moments of it taking place:

"Yeah, you've got your studies that say that 10-foot lanes are safer than 12-foot lanes. But I've got a pile of studies *this* high," he insisted, waving at his hip, "that say the opposite."

"Wonderful," I said. "May I see them?"

"No. They're from the early days. I threw them out."

Emboldened by that exchange, I will again present the evidence at hand. First, we will investigate what the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials *Green Book*, the traffic engineers' bible, has to say on the subject. Then we will review the very few studies that compare crash statistics and driver speeds on lanes of different widths. These will allow us to draw some clear conclusions about safety.

Consulting the Green Book

For traffic engineers, AASHTO is the keeper of the flame. Its "Green Book," the *Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets*, is the primary source for determining whether a road design is an accepted practice. As such, it is useful in protecting engineers against lawsuits; if something is in the *Green Book*, it's "safe."

Given the protection it affords, nobody questions the *Green Book*. Never mind that very little of it is evidence-based, and that there are no footnotes justifying its pronouncements. I mean, does the Bible have footnotes?

Whether or not it reflects reality, the *Green Book's* position on lane widths is more than relevant, since the engineers need its blessing to modify a standard. Theodore Petritsch relates this position as follows:

For rural and urban arterials, lane widths may vary from 10 to 12 feet. 12-foot lanes should be used where practical on higher-speed, free-flowing, principal arterials. However, under interrupted-flow

(signalized) conditions operating at lower speeds (35 MPH or less), narrower lane widths are normally quite adequate and have some advantages.

Here, the takeaway is clear: AASHTO says that 10-foot lanes are just fine—for what it's worth.

The Studies: Rare but Conclusive

A number of studies have been completed that blame wider lanes for an epidemic of vehicular carnage. One of them, presented by Rutgers professor Robert Noland at the 80th annual meeting of the Transportation Research Board, determined that increased lane widths could be blamed for approximately 900 additional traffic fatalities per year. Unfortunately, Noland is a mere Ph.D. and not a practicing engineer. His evidence apparently didn't mean squat to the TRB. If you don't have short-sleeved white shirt and a pocket protector, you may as well stay home.

Happily, it turns out that engineers have conducted studies of their own. Two of these deserve our rapt attention. The first study, called "Effective Utilization of Street Width on Urban Arterials," was completed by the TRB itself. It found the following:

... all projects evaluated during the course of the study that consisted of lane widths exclusively of 10 feet or more [rather than 12 feet] resulted in accident rates that were either reduced or unchanged.

So far so good. A second study, called "Relationship of Lane Width to Safety for Urban and Suburban Arterials," was conducted by the conservative Midwest Research Center. Comparing 10- to 11-foot lanes to 12-foot lanes, it found:

A safety evaluation of lane widths for arterial roadway segments found no indication, except in limited cases, that the use of narrower lanes increases crash frequencies. The lane widths in the analyses conducted were generally either not statistically significant or indicated that narrower lanes were associated with lower rather than higher crash frequencies.

It is clear, then, that at the very least, 10-foot lanes cause no more accidents than 12-foot lanes, and may cause fewer. But what about the severity of these accidents, a subject on which these studies appear to be mute?

Here we can make use of another study and some common sense. We all know that people drive faster in wider lanes, but we need the engineers to say it. Fortunately, the Texas Transportation Institute, as old-school as they come, has done just that. They state:

On suburban arterial straight sections away from a traffic signal, higher speeds should be expected with greater lane widths.

Granted, this study covers only one type of road, but there is no reason to expect opposite results on, for example, straight urban roads. The same logic would apply, although perhaps less dramatically: people drive faster when they have less fear of veering off track, so wider lanes invite higher speeds.

A pedestrian hit by a car traveling 30 m.p.h. is between seven and nine times as likely to be killed as one hit by a car traveling 20 m.p.h.

To conclude this radical thought experiment, we need to confirm another commonsense assumption, that higher-speed crashes cause more injuries and deaths than lower-speed crashes. This has been amply demonstrated to apply to all road users, especially pedestrians. According to a broad collection of studies, a pedestrian hit by a car traveling 30 m.p.h. at the time of impact is between seven and nine times as likely to be killed as one hit by a car traveling 20 m.p.h. This tremendously sharp upward fatality curve means that, at urban motoring speeds, every single mile per hour counts.

All of the above data, studies, and pronouncements, collected and disseminated by the mainstream traffic engineering establishment, point to the following conclusion: 10-foot lanes cause no more accidents than 12-foot lanes, and they may cause fewer. These accidents can be expected to be slower, and thus less deadly. Therefore, 10-foot lanes are safer than 12-foot lanes.

Protecting Capacity

Before finishing, we need to investigate the carrying capacity of different width lanes, since traffic volume remains a legitimate concern. If safety were the only goal of traffic planning, all streets would be one-lane wide—or better yet, zero lanes wide. The fact that they are not means that we, as a society, are more than willing to sacrifice lives for automobility. So, what's the data?

Here, as again reported by Petritsch, a thorough literature search conducted by the Florida DOT yielded these findings:

The measured saturation flow rates are similar for lane widths between 10 feet and 12 feet. ... Thus, so long as all other geometric and traffic signalization conditions remain constant, there is no measurable decrease in urban street capacity when through lane widths are narrowed from 12 feet to 10 feet.

It is striking to hear this news from FDOT, the agency that may preside over the greatest pedestrian massacre in U.S. history. Four out of the five deadliest American cities for walking are currently in Florida. This is by design: in no

other state has the DOT had such a powerful influence on the design of urban streets.

Pointing Fingers

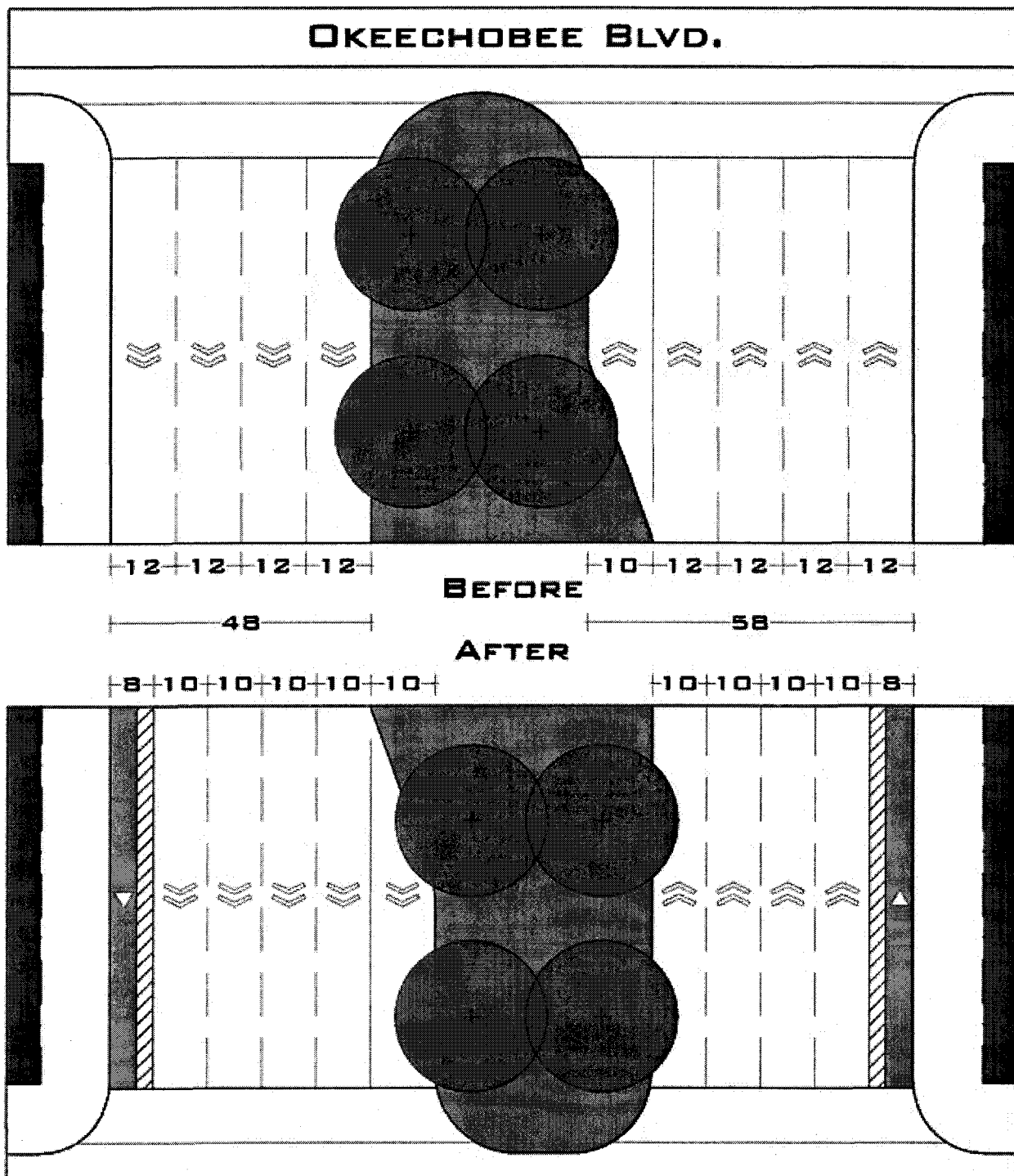
Alarmed by its horrifying safety ranking—and the barrage of resulting bad publicity—FDOT has taken bold measures to improve pedestrian safety. It released just last year a 44-page *Florida Pedestrian and Bicycle Strategic Safety Plan*. Unfortunately, while this document talks plenty about such things as driver, cyclist, and pedestrian education, only two of its pages deal remotely with the real culprit, traffic engineering. Here, we are told that FDOT intends to "implement pedestrian and bicycle best practices," a phrase that is fairly meaningless without further definition.

To its credit, the plan advocates for the application of a "complete streets" policy to benefit cyclists and pedestrians. But such policies, as we have learned, make sure that some streets include bike lanes and sidewalks, but rarely require the dimensional properties that make them safe. Nowhere in the entire *Strategic Safety Plan* are lane widths discussed, or any other design feature of the roadway that might encourage deadly speeds.

In fact, you can learn all you need to know about this effort by glancing at the cover of the report, which is stamped with the project motto: "Alert Today, Alive Tomorrow." Think about that statement, and what it implies. In an encounter between a car and a pedestrian, whose life is at risk? Who, then, is expected to reform her behavior? Certainly not the driver—and most certainly not any engineers who endanger their populations with 12-foot lanes.

A Test Case

I believe that FDOT—and every DOT—is capable of reform, but experience suggests that this will only happen when enough people make a stink. In Florida, we will be able to gauge the DOT's willingness to enter the reality-based community by how it responds to a proposal recently made to restripe Okeechobee Boulevard, a deadly state highway that cuts through downtown West Palm Beach. Its nine lanes separate the Palm Beach County Convention Center from everything that conventioners walk to, and are a nightmare to walk across or beside. These lanes, of course, are 12 feet wide.



Before and after drawings for Okeechobee Boulevard in West Palm Beach, Florida, show how narrowing 12-foot lanes to 10 feet creates ample room for protected bike lanes. (Image: Speck & Associates LLC)

What would happen if these lanes were reduced to 10-feet wide, as proposed? Three things. First, cars would drive more cautiously. Second, there would be roughly eight feet available on each side of the street for creating protected cycle lanes, buffered by solid curbs. Third, the presence of these bike lanes would make the sidewalks safer to walk along. All in all, an easy, relatively inexpensive win-win-win that DOT could fund tomorrow.

But will they? Only if they are capable of reform. Let's find out. The agency's bike and pedestrian coordinator, Billy Hattaway, is one of the good ones. But does he have the power to move FDOT to a 10-foot standard?

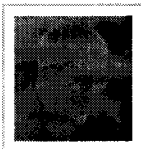
Moving beyond Florida, the task is clear. Our lives are currently being put at risk daily by fifty state DOTs and hundreds of county road commissions who mistakenly believe that high-speed street standards make our cities and towns safer. In my most considered opinion, these agencies have blood on their hands, and more than a little. There are many standards that they need to change, but the easiest and most important is probably the 12-foot lane. Armed with the facts, we can force this change. But only if we do it together.

It's time to push this discussion to its logical conclusion. Until conflicting evidence can be mustered, the burden of proof now rests with the DOTs. Until they can document otherwise, every urban 12-foot lane that is not narrowed to 10 feet represents a form of criminal negligence; every injury and death, perhaps avoidable, not avoided—by choice.

In the meantime, I welcome evidence to the contrary. We've shown them our studies; now let them show us theirs. Unless, of course, they've thrown them out.

This article is part of 'The Future of Transportation,' a CityLab series made possible with support from The Rockefeller Foundation.

About the Author



Jeff Speck, AICP, LEED-AP, CNU-A, Honorary ASLA, is a city planner and writer based in Washington, D.C. His recent book, *Walkable City: How Downtown Can Save America, One Step at a Time*, was the best-selling urban planning title of 2013.

ALL POSTS |  @JeffSpeckAICP