



LSL Planning, Inc.
Community Planning Consultants

October 16, 2006

Honorable Mayor Cindy Bartman and the
East Grand Rapids City Commission
750 Lakeside Drive SE
East Grand Rapids, MI 49506

Dear Mayor Bartman and Members of the City Commission:

The process of amending the Gaslight Village Subarea Plan, began just over a year ago, is nearly complete. The Planning Commission has held the required public hearing and recommends approval of the final draft.

The attached final draft incorporates changes suggested by the City Commission last August when the first draft was released for review by the required reviewing agencies. I have highlighted those sections added as a result of those changes. Statements regarding adopting regulations that encourage redevelopment of nonconforming structures are included. Also added to the list of key players in two of the action items is the East Grand Rapids Public Schools, related to parking and pedestrian improvements.

LSL Planning recommends that the resolution adopting the final draft be approved by the City Commission. If there are any changes to the final draft requested by the City Commission, the draft must be sent back to the Planning Commission with a report of your requested changes. By statute, only the Planning Commission may write the Master Plan.

I will attend the City Commission on November 6 and look forward to your comments and questions.

Sincerely,

LSL PLANNING, INC.
Steven J. Van Steenhuyse, AICP
Senior Planner



CITY OF
EAST GRAND RAPIDS

750 LAKESIDE DRIVE SE • EAST GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN 49506

**RESOLUTION OF ADOPTION
GASLIGHT VILLAGE SUBAREA PLAN
AMENDMENT TO THE 1999 MASTER PLAN
EAST GRAND RAPIDS CITY COMMISSION**

WHEREAS, Act 285, Public Acts of Michigan 1931, as amended, provides for a City Planning Commission to prepare and recommend adoption of a master plan, and amendments thereto, for the physical development of the City; and,

WHEREAS, the East Grand Rapids Planning Commission has prepared an amendment to the 1999 Master Plan for East Grand Rapids related to the Gaslight Village Subarea, in compliance with Act 285; and,

WHEREAS, The East Grand Rapids City Commission has passed a resolution asserting the City Commission's right to adopt the Master Plan and all elements and amendments of that Plan, as allowed by Act 285, Public Acts of Michigan 1931, as amended; and,

WHEREAS, East Grand Rapids distributed the draft Master Plan amendment to the county board of commissioners and the planning commissions of surrounding units of government, and all other relevant agencies for review and comment in compliance with Act 285; and,

WHEREAS, the East Grand Rapids Planning Commission held a properly noticed public hearing on the draft Master Plan amendments on October 10, 2006, in accordance with the requirements of Act 285 and other applicable State statutes; and,

WHEREAS, at the public hearing held on October 10, 2006, the citizens of East Grand Rapids were afforded the opportunity to provide oral and written comments on the draft Plan amendments; and,

WHEREAS, the East Grand Rapids Planning Commission has adopted a motion by a majority vote of its membership recommending adoption of the Plan to the City Commission.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the East Grand Rapids City Commission does hereby adopt the amendments to the 1999 East Grand Rapids Master Plan, to be dated as adopted this day of November 6, 2006.

CERTIFICATION OF ADOPTION:

Offered by: Commissioner _____

Supported by: Commissioner _____

Yeas:

Nays:

Absent:

Resolution Declared Adopted By:

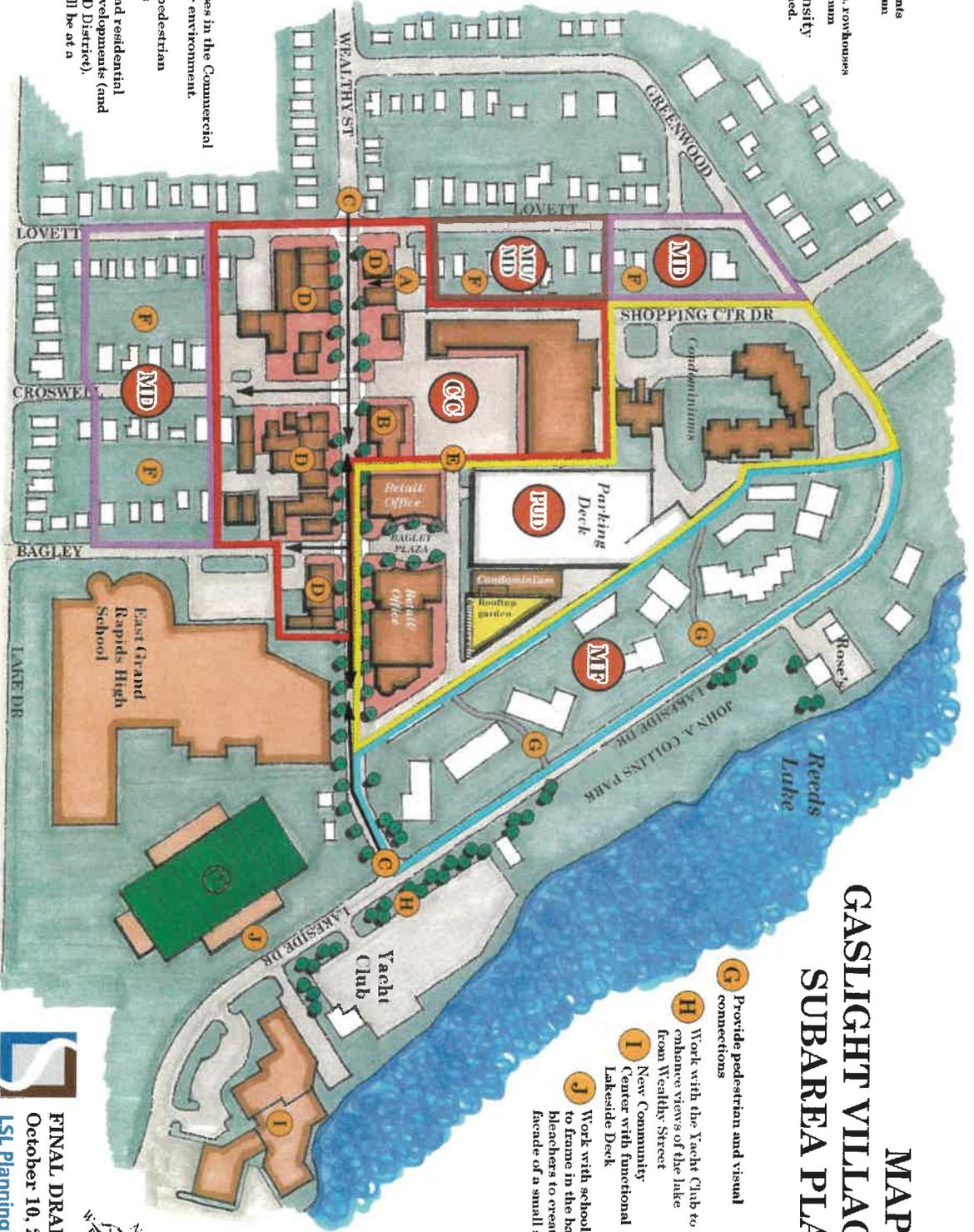
Mayor

City Clerk

November 6, 2006
Date of Adoption

Overlay Districts

- CC Commercial Core**
Uses: Retail, offices, services, restaurants
Bldg. Height: 2 stories; 28 feet maximum
- MD Mixed Density**
Uses: Single family detached, duplexes, rowhouses
Bldg. Height: 2.5 stories; 33 feet maximum
- MU/MD Mixed Use/Mixed Density**
Residential Uses: Single family detached, duplexes, rowhouses
Retail and Office: Low intensity, "boutiques," and small offices. No food or drink businesses. Parking for retail must be provided. At least one residential unit in each building. Residential character must be maintained.
Bldg. Height: 2.5 stories (33 feet)
- MF Multiple Family**
Uses: Apartments, condominiums
Bldg. Height: 2 stories (33 feet)
Designed with open space; avoid "wall" of buildings on Lakeside Dr.
- PUD Redevelopment PUD**
Development shall be in accordance with approved Planned Unit Development agreement.
- A Potential Storefront Infill**
- B New Infill building**
- C New Wealthy Street Street-scapes. Expand into new commercial areas and continue theme onto private developments.**
- D Promote upper story residential uses in the Commercial Core to create a mixed use, 24-hour environment.**
- E Continue to pursue vehicular and pedestrian connections between adjacent uses**
- F Provide shared parking areas behind residential structures for multiple dwelling developments and small scale businesses in the MU/MD Districts). Lots shall be screened; lighting shall be at a pedestrian scale.**



MAP 4: GASLIGHT VILLAGE SUBAREA PLAN

- G** Provide pedestrian and visual connections
- H** Work with the Yacht Club to enhance views of the lake from Wealthy Street
- I** New Community Center with functional Lakeside Deck
- J** Work with school officials to frame in the back of the bleachers to create the facade of a small stadium



FINAL DRAFT
October 10, 2006
LSL Planning, Inc.



Chapter 3: Action Plan¹

GASLIGHT VILLAGE

Observation:

Gaslight Village is located in the heart of East Grand Rapids and is the only significant business district within the city. It is anchored by the East Grand Rapids Community Center, East Grand Rapids High School, Collins Park and Reeds Lake. All of these elements and recent significant changes to development in the Village exert different pressures, thus playing an important role in its future evolution.

Findings:

- The Gaslight Village is considered to be the “downtown” and commercial center of East Grand Rapids, and is sentimental to many of the area residents.
- The community wishes to maintain Gaslight Village as a small-scale district primarily serving area residents.
- There is a diversity of business types in the Village that meet daily needs of residents.
- The new streetscape improvements have gone a long way toward further creating a sense of place for Gaslight Village.
- The new mixed-use Planned Unit Development will provide much desired commercial establishments to strengthen the vitality of the district and provide a beneficial residential presence in the Village.
- Additional design guidance is needed to ensure that new development projects, redevelopments, and expansions are compatible with the existing character of the Village.
- More specific guidance is needed for use of sites immediately adjoining the Village so the city is prepared to respond to potential development pressures in these areas.

¹ This Master Plan Amendment was adopted by the East Grand Rapids City Commission on , 2006 and replaces pages 49-54 of the *City of East Grand Rapids Master Plan – A Vision for the New Millennium*, originally adopted November 9, 1999.

ACTION 1:

Develop specific regulations for development and redevelopment projects in Gaslight Village that address the key aspects of site design including land use, building height and mass, signs, and parking.

- Allowable land uses and building height and mass should reflect the categories described as part of the concept plan. Building heights should be controlled by approved Planned Unit Developments and the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance, as shown on the Gaslight Village subarea concept plan.
- Business sign regulations should promote a pedestrian oriented environment and should be defined as much by the streetscape and building design as by marketing demands.
- Parking regulations are needed to ensure adequate parking is provided off the street and on private property at a rate that considers pedestrian activity, cross-use of sites, differences in peak parking demand and limited available land area.
- A parking study should be commissioned after redevelopment within the Village is complete, to evaluate the use and supply of parking spaces and to make recommendations for providing parking spaces and changes to parking regulations.
- Zoning requirements should allow for and encourage redevelopment of nonconforming lots and uses adjacent to the commercial areas.
- Incorporate new sign, parking, site development and redevelopment requirements into the zoning ordinance in a manner that is exclusive to Gaslight Village.
- Provide specific design recommendations that serve as a guide for property owners seeking to develop or redevelop properties within the Village.

Key Players: City Commission, Planning Commission, East Grand Rapids Public Schools, Gaslight Village Property Owners and Merchants Association

ACTION 2:

Encourage the development of Gaslight Village as a residential-commercial mixed-use district, with the understanding that a residential presence will ensure managed development and activity in the Village that will respect the surrounding neighborhoods.

- Focus the majority of non-residential development to the Commercial Core along Wealthy Street.
- Integrate more residential uses above the existing commercial frontages within the Commercial Core and where Mixed Use/Mixed Density is planned along the east side of Lovett north of Wealthy.
- Consider higher density residential uses such as townhouses and multiple family units along the east side of Lovett at Greenwood Avenue.
- Support continued multiple family use of the existing condominium/apartment properties along Lakeside Drive for multiple family units, but encourage redevelopment with buildings designed to match the village character of the neighborhood, provide diversity in building design, site design and building mass, and preserve open space, views, and pedestrian connections to Reeds Lake.

Key Players: City Commission, Planning Commission, City Services Department

ACTION 3:

Enhance the pedestrian environment of the Village.

- Develop a pedestrian-scale wayfinding system, with maps and directional signage. Local merchants can participate by providing nameplates and directional signs integrated into the wayfinding system
- Develop a continuous pedestrian system with directional signs that will tie into the Reeds Lake pathway.
- Continue to promote new streetscape and crosswalk improvements to support the pedestrian environment, consistent with the current theme of amenities.
- Consider the needs of the pedestrian with internal site design elements that replicate the existing streetscape theme.
- Consider implementation of traffic calming measures to ensure motorist and pedestrian safety.

Key Players: City Commission, Planning Commission, City Traffic Engineer, City Services Director, East Grand Rapids Public Schools, Gaslight Village Property Owners and Merchant's Association.

ACTION 4:

Improve the visual and physical connection between Gaslight Village and Reeds Lake at the intersection of Wealthy Street and Lakeside Drive.

- Short term: The city and the Yacht Club should work together to develop a unified landscape plan that will result in a desirable terminus and welcoming connection.

Key Players: City Commission, Planning Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, City Services Director, Gaslight Village Property Owners and Merchant's Association, Grand Rapids Yacht Club.

ACTION 5:

Develop a marketing strategy for Gaslight Village that outlines the future for the district, with respect to potential merchants, types of uses and location.

- Complete a comprehensive market study of current and planned uses in Gaslight Village to highlight market strengths and provide a strategy to attract new businesses that can thrive within the Village.
- Develop a marketing program to draw special events and festivals to Gaslight Village.
- Establish a program to encourage an appropriate variety of shops and services to locate in Gaslight Village.
- Consider economic development tools available, such as a Principal Shopping District, to generate revenue and provide a consistent team to guide implementation.

Key Players: City Commission, Planning Commission, Gaslight Village Merchants Association

Chapter 6: Subarea Plans¹

GASLIGHT VILLAGE

Gaslight Village is located in the heart of East Grand Rapids and is the only business district within the city. It is anchored by the East Grand Rapids Community Center, the East Grand Rapids High School, John A. Collins Park and Reeds Lake. Residential uses surround the district.

Since 1999, when the first Gaslight Village Subarea Plan was adopted, there have been a number of significant changes. The Jacobson's department store closed in 2002 after many years of business. After two years sitting vacant, the property was purchased by a local commercial developer, who proposed a large mixed-use project including commercial, office, and residential uses. This recently-approved Jade Pig Ventures Planned Unit Development (PUD) is located on 8.6 acres, including the former Jacobson's site and the Ramona Medical Arts Building site on Greenwood Avenue.



East Grand Rapids
gaslight redevelopment

Jade Pig Redevelopment Plan - Rowland Design, Inc.

A complementary mixture of uses will be contained in two retail buildings, a mixed retail/condominium building, and three condominium buildings ranging from four to seven stories in height. The project includes nearly 100,000 sq. ft. of retail/service/ restaurant space and office area, with associated parking decks and subsurface parking lots (including the deck that formerly served Jacobson's). The retail area is centered on Wealthy Street, forming a retail "street wall" on the north side of the street, and will include a historic bank façade rescued from a demolished building. The project also includes significant landscaping, lighting, and an outdoor plaza and water feature that will be a northern extension of Bagley Street.

The City has also been aggressively implementing comprehensive streetscape improvements along Wealthy Street and redeveloping its City Hall and Library into a new Community Center, in accordance with the previous plan. A new development proposal for the D&W Shopping Center could involve renovation

¹ This Master Plan Amendment was adopted by the East Grand Rapids City Commission on , 2006 and replaces pages 76-87 of the *City of East Grand Rapids Master Plan – A Vision for the New Millennium*, originally adopted November 9, 1999, and is accompanied by a new *Map 4: Gaslight Village Subarea Plan*.

of the existing building and construction of new commercial space at the street front.

All of these elements exert different pressures on the Village, thus playing an important role in its future evolution. The concept plan and supportive text describes detailed design and land use recommendations, which will ensure a successful future for the Village without compromising its quiet charm and function as a gathering place for city residents.

Streetscape

As recommended in the previous subarea plan, the city has prepared and implemented a comprehensive streetscape project that has significantly contributed to the character and pedestrian environment of Gaslight Village.



Streetscape Plan - M C Smith & Associates

Improvements include a sub-pavement snow-melt system under the sidewalks, street reconstruction, brick pavers at key focal points, landscaping, crosswalks, street furniture, and new street lighting including authentic gas lights. The streetscape improvements extend along both sides of Wealthy Street from Lakeside Drive to Lovett Street. Some of the streetscape extends down the side streets of Lovett, Crosswell and Bagley where

there are existing businesses. In addition, the intersection of Wealthy Street and Lakeside Drive has been re-aligned and enhanced to create a dramatic entrance into the Village from the east. Another supporting project was completed by the School District. The plaza between the pool expansion and the football stadium, with its arched entryway, presents an inviting transition between the Village and the school campus.

The city should continue the momentum of this successful project by planning extensions of the streetscape as new business areas develop. Future private development should carry the theme onto sidewalks and traffic lanes that serve the private lots.

Public Signage System: A coordinated signage system that includes way finding, directional signs, street signs, stop signs, and other markers in the Village, should also be incorporated into the streetscape, as well as along main thoroughfares outside of Gaslight Village to direct shoppers to the district. This is an attractive way to capture the image of Gaslight Village while clearly conveying it is a comfortable place to shop and dine for motorists and pedestrian alike. Text and



directional arrows should be at a size appropriate for visibility in moving traffic and should be compatible with the existing Village signs and logo.

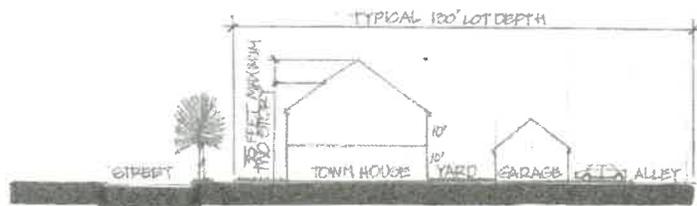
Land Use Concept

In response to the significant changes in land use and buildings in Gaslight Village over the past few years, a new concept plan has been developed for the area. This plan is illustrated on **Map 4**. The concept plan is divided into the following described categories. The intended uses, scale, and character of development within each of these individual areas work together to offer a viable Village center area that protects the high quality residential character of the community.

Commercial Core: The Commercial Core is located along the frontage of Wealthy Street between Lovett and just east of Bagley Street. In addition to existing businesses, new uses promoted within the Commercial Core include retail, personal services, restaurants, coffee shops, pharmacies, and other commercial establishments that meet the daily needs of residents. Currently there is a mixture of one and two story buildings, with various uses above the first floor, including offices and storage. To create a “24-hour” presence in the Village, residential uses above the commercial storefronts are encouraged, along with offices.

Redevelopment PUD: The Redevelopment PUD is the Jade Pig Ventures project, which has been approved and is currently under construction. As noted, the project is a mixed use redevelopment of the medical center and Jacobson’s site that includes residential, commercial, and office uses. The first phase is underway that includes commercial uses along Wealthy Street. The buildings range in height from two stories for the commercial storefronts on Wealthy Street to four and seven stories for the condominium buildings.

Mixed Density Residential: A strong residential presence in and around the Village will set boundaries and limit activity that will respect the surrounding neighborhoods. This will also strengthen an environment where people live, work and recreate. To ensure this residential presence, there are two mixed-density residential areas designated within the Gaslight Village Subarea plan. These areas include residential properties along the east side of Lovett Street at Greenwood and south of the businesses on Wealthy Street. The vision for these areas is to support continued use as small lot single family homes, but also to accommodate duplexes, attached townhouses, or multiple family units. **Zoning regulations to encourage redevelopment**



Two-Story Townhouse Concept, with garage in rear

ment of nonconforming structures and/or lots should be adopted. Wherever possible, shared parking in the rear yard areas should be encouraged, to keep yards, porches and other semi-public areas oriented to the sidewalks and streets.

Mixed Use/Mixed Density: A transitional area that already offers a mix of residential densities should be designated to promote the unique mixed-use character of Gaslight Village. This area is located on the east side of Lovett Street north of Wealthy Street. To promote the desired transition, low intensity office and “boutique” retail uses would be allowed, along with mixed-density residential uses. These business uses would only be allowed if incorporated into structures that also contain residential uses. New structures would be designed with a residential appearance, and signs would be kept small, in keeping with the low-intensity nature of the businesses. Zoning regulations designed to permit mixed use and mixed density can help to encourage the redevelopment of several nonconforming structures and/or lots within this area.

Parking areas can be created to serve the businesses in the rear yard areas. To provide easy access and prevent excessive curb cuts, adjoining businesses should share parking lots with cross access easements. Parking lots should be landscaped and lighting kept at a pedestrian scale, in keeping with the desired residential character.

Allowed residential uses could include small lot single family, duplex units, rowhouses, and multiple family units. Proper transition to adjacent single family uses must also be accommodated through landscape buffers, or decorative fences or walls.

Multiple Family: The Multiple Family area is the existing apartment and condominium development along Lakeside Drive. While it is likely the existing neighborhood will remain for the foreseeable future, if a redevelopment opportunity presents itself in the future, a project of similar density is appropriate with a maximum height of two stories (not to exceed 35 feet in height). New developments in this area should be designed to be consistent with the village character of this neighborhood and should employ diversity in the articulation and massing of buildings, while avoiding creation of a “wall” of multiple family buildings along the street. Views to Reeds Lake from multiple locations within the Village should be preserved, and new pedestrian walkways and visual connections to Reeds Lake from the Core Commercial and Redevelopment PUD areas should be provided. In order to improve pedestrian safety, locations for crosswalks on Lakeside Drive should be considered as part of any redevelopment plan.

Business Signs

While emphasis on land uses and buildings are the focal point of defining the image and character of Gaslight Village, quality business signs can be a positive reflection of the area. Alternatively, poor business signs can degrade the character of an otherwise unique and attractive village center. Therefore, sign regulations are recommended that apply specifically to uses in Gaslight Village. These regulations should accomplish the following objectives:

- Provide guidance for signs that is not too restrictive for businesses in the Village.
 - Promote consistency and variety amongst business signs that reflect the character of the Village.
 - Limit the number of signs allowable per businesses to avoid clutter along the streetscape and to ensure buildings and windows are the focal point.
 - Control the size and location in a manner that promotes a pedestrian scale.
 - Provide guidelines for sign materials, lighting, and other details that will differentiate a Gaslight Village business from typical suburban shopping areas.
- 
- Encourage use of pedestrian oriented signs typical of a village center setting such as awnings, projecting signs and sandwich board signs.

Parking and Vehicular Circulation

Gaslight Village merchants have frequently cited parking as a problem. Except for on-street parking spaces and a small lot on the west side of Croswell Street, there are no public parking areas. Parking lots and lot entrances throughout Gaslight Village are not prominently identified and there are concerns about the balance of promoting a pedestrian-oriented village center at the same time ensuring reasonable accommodation for parking.

The wayfinding signage system recommended in the previous section will significantly improve circulation and access to parking areas for visitors. Current design plans for the Jade Pig project and the redevelopment of the D&W site will improve on-site circulation of parking areas through planned cross-access driveways and well-defined, properly sized driving aisles. As these simple improvements are implemented in the near future, the city will see many of the past problems disappear. With future projects, every effort should

be made to improve efficiency by connecting off-street parking lots, particularly in rear yards where space is already limited.

As Gaslight Village seems to be experiencing a chain reaction of development and redevelopment, the more pressing concern is adequate parking. Currently, little can be done by the city to accommodate parking due to lack of land ownership. To assist in meeting parking demands, the city can continue to explore opportunities for on-street parking. For the time being, however, the burden will rest on private landowners to provide parking.

The city provides parking regulations that are required for all developments, redevelopments, and expansions. Existing regulations, however, are more suited to suburban sites and are not reasonable or feasible for the small sites in the Village and its pedestrian-oriented character. Therefore, new parking provisions are needed. The requirements should be less demanding in terms of the number of spaces required, and should focus more on typical daily use instead of peak demand. The new requirements should also account for cross-use between sites and businesses, because many patrons will park in one lot and walk to several destinations during the same trip.

Connections to the Lakefront

The lakefront is a prime asset in the community that attracts residents as well as non-residents for serenity and enjoyment of the water. However, public access is not as strong as it should be. Currently, the waterfront area, John A. Collins Park, the Yacht Club, and the new Community Center areas are disconnected from each other and from the Wealthy Street business district. Redevelopment of the Community Center complex will greatly improve this situation because it incorporates waterfront elements and truly captures the beauty of Reeds Lake. In addition, the new, expanded and more functional lakeside deck offers a place for residents to gather for events that are linked to Gaslight Village.

Due to overgrown landscaping and fencing, the Yacht Club does not present a solid visual terminus to Wealthy Street at Lakeside Drive and hinders transition and connections both physically and visually. In the short term, the city and the Yacht Club should work together to develop a unified landscape plan that will be more in keeping with the intersection improvements installed with the streetscape upgrades.

Marketing

Outside of the planning process, Gaslight Village has not established a vision for the future and thus, a unified "branding" strategy has not been defined. The diversity of retail tenants results in the appearance of a "piecemeal" village. Generally, there is a growing migration of shoppers from smaller districts

such as Gaslight Village and Eastown to the ubiquitous strip centers and malls such as those on 28th Street. The Gaslight Village Merchants Association, in conjunction with the city, should retain the services of a professional marketing consultant in an effort to stem this migration and attract more shoppers to the Village.

A business expansion and retention program should be developed for Gaslight Village, based on the results of the marketing study. This program should provide support to current merchants with respect to promotion development, interior and exterior improvements and financial advice. Assistance in attracting new merchants to locate in Gaslight Village should also be provided.

A marketing program designed to attract special events and festivals to Gaslight Village should also be initiated. The amusement park and recreation uses of the past provide an opportunity to draw on the historical nature of the district, while stimulating pedestrian and customer traffic. This program should also draw on the many positive changes to Gaslight Village to attract new customers and visitors.

A useful mechanism to organize and accomplish these marketing tasks may be through establishment of a Principal Shopping District (PSD). A PSD uses special assessment revenues from the businesses for marketing, maintenance, and other small scale projects. Such an approach does not affect property tax revenues to the City or to other taxing jurisdictions.

In order to implement these recommendations, the merchants, through the Gaslight Village Merchants Association or other organization, should take a lead role in partnership with the City.