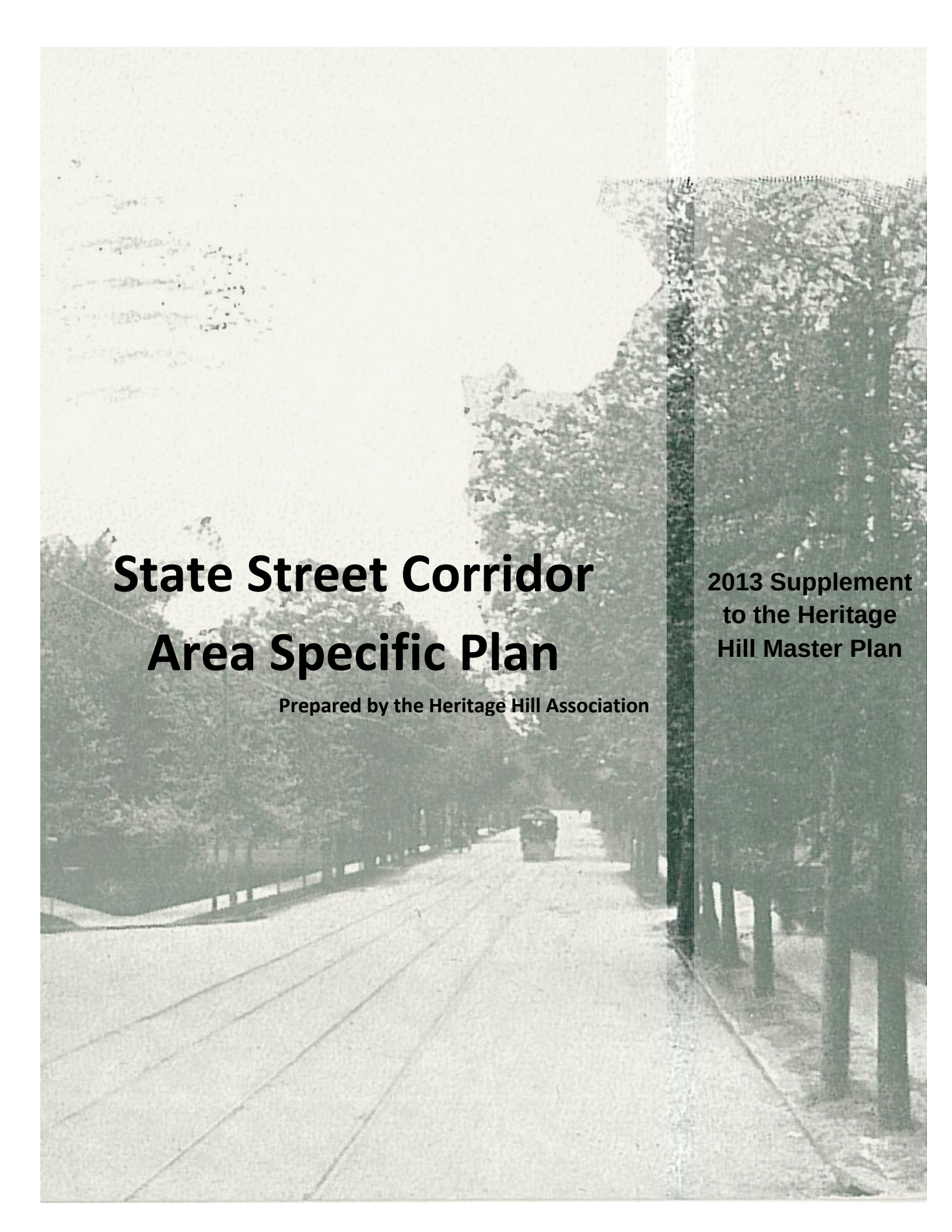




State Street Corridor Area Specific Plan

Prepared by the Heritage Hill Association

**2013 Supplement
to the Heritage
Hill Master Plan**

Letter to stakeholders

Dear State Street Corridor Stakeholders,

(Letter From Barb to go in here)

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Master Plan, City of Grand Rapids, November 2002

Zoning Ordinance, City of Grand Rapids, November 2011

Heritage Hill Master Plan, 2005

Acknowledgements:

The Heritage Hill Association gratefully acknowledges the:

Center for the Visually Impaired;

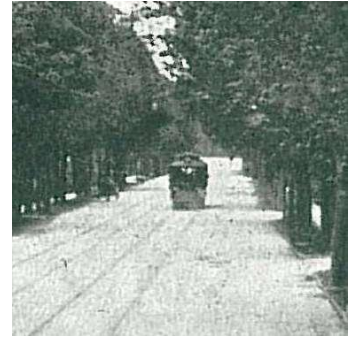
Williams & Works

Friendly Corps

Build a Better Block Re//State

Grand Rapids Community College; and

All those who attended meetings, workshops, and visioning sessions.



Acknowledgements & References

Over the past 100 years, the State Street corridor has undergone substantial changes and has lost its unifying character. Today, the combination of different architectural styles, vacant buildings, empty lots, and lack of understandable direction has only amplified the difficulties that plague building and business owners alike.

The purpose of this plan is to establish a unifying vision for what the State Street Corridor can look like 10 to 30 years from now, provide the goals and objectives to achieve that goal, and offer tools and suggestions to help guide it during the process. Furthermore, it is intended to act as a supplement to the existing Heritage Hill Master Plan, last updated in 2005.

In 1988, the Heritage Hill Association adopted its first written plan. This document is an update to that plan and reflects the consensus of opinions, ideals and directions of Heritage Hill residents. Its purpose is threefold:

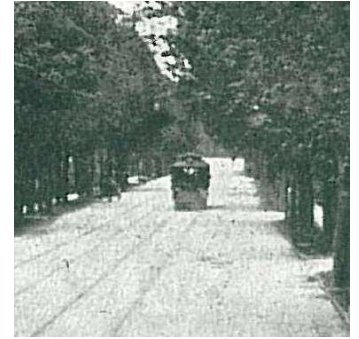
1. To set an agenda for the Heritage Hill Association and Foundation to continue their work in improving the quality of life in the neighborhood;
2. To guide decisions by City boards and departments which will directly affect the neighborhood (in conjunction with the major revision in Grand Rapids' own Master Plan);
3. To provide guidance to residents and property owners in the neighborhood who wish to improve their properties and provide for the necessities of present-day living in ways that are sensitive to the predominately residential and historic character of the district.

The original 1988 master plan and 2005 update was submitted and adopted by the City Planning Commission as a guide in making decisions that reflected the desires and interests of neighborhood residents. It has been a living document that has guided the Association's activities and been used in taking consistent positions to present to City boards and committees, nearby institutions and property

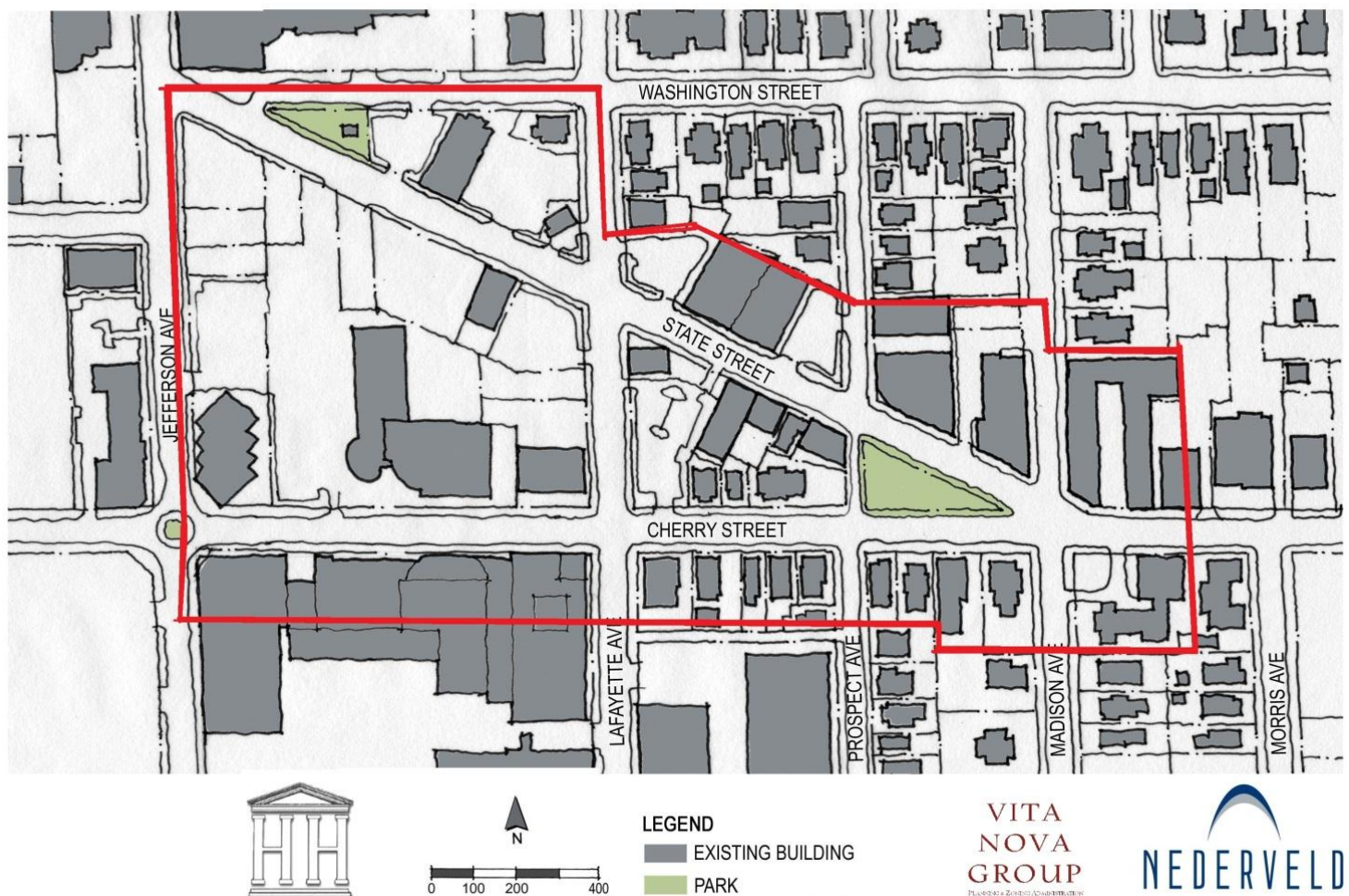


Purpose of the Plan

The State Street Corridor as described in this plan includes all the properties on both sides of State Street from Jefferson to Madison. It also includes properties fronting on Cherry from Madison to Jefferson, and those along Layette from State to Cherry. This area was chosen by the committee as it was distictively different from the rest of the neighborhood and already had a partial commerical foundation. It also is the area of greatest concern amonist the committee as it contains several vacant structures, empty lots, and is currently a crime hot spot.



Project Area



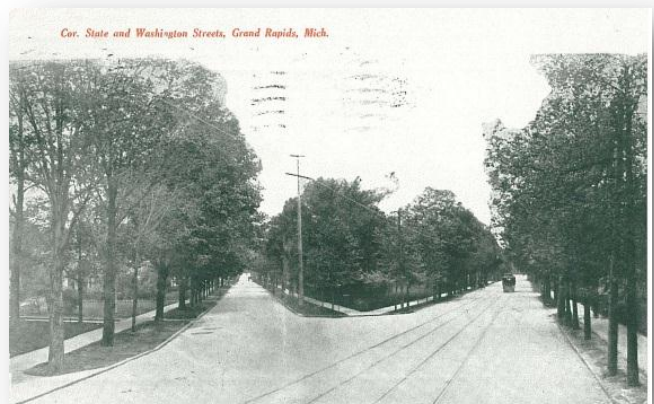
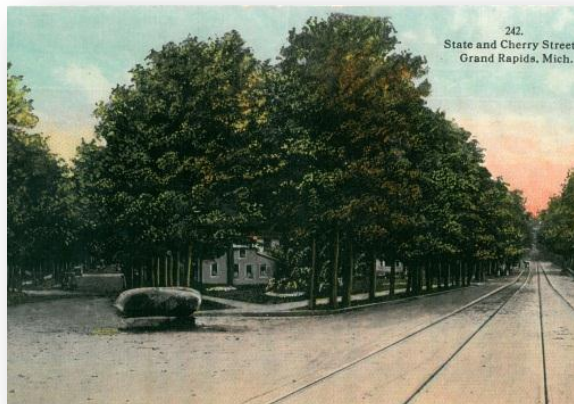
Now occupying a section of a Native American trail that lead southeast away from the river, State Street runs at an angle whereas the surrounding blocks follow a typical city street grid. As time progressed, residential development increased away from the core of the village and Canton Smith to platted Smith's Addition in August of 1849. Because the street was at an angle, it caused two triangular sections at each end to act as anchors for the street with State Street Park (now Lincoln Park) at the west end and Foster Park at the east end.



History of State Street

In the late 1800's and early 1900's, State Street was a traditional tree-lined residential street that also provided a connector between the downtown core and the outer newly developed neighborhoods. The lots ranged from 50 to 75 feet wide and most of the structures were built between the 1890's and 1920's. For many years, the Rose Street Trolley (now Cherry Street), would run along State Street to provide access to many of the uptown homes.

Because of the amount of traffic and the commercial expansion of downtown, many of the homes were either removed or modified into commercial structures after the 1920's. Many of the individual parcels were also combined to accommodate larger developments leaving little if any evidence of the streets residential past. These new business included offices, a gas station, restaurants, grocery stores, and an auto dealership. These changes brought about a drastic change to the appearance of the area as new parking lots covered properties once occupied by single family homes and tree lined streets became ribbons of concrete.



Today, out of the eleven structures that remain along State Street, only one is residential; one contains two restaurants; five are offices that produce little to no foot traffic; one large multiple story structure is completely vacant; two buildings cycle between occupied and vacant with medical or similar office uses; and one contains a limited selection grocery store. Unfortunately, the grocery store is now, and has been recognized as a negative attribute to the neighborhood as a whole because of some of the patrons who frequent the store. The indirect impact resulting from these patrons includes increased crime and vandalism in the area, pan handling, open alcohol consumption and substantial littering of State Street and nearby streets, and an overall negative and unsafe perception in the nearby neighborhood.



Current Conditions

The once majestic red brick surfacing only covers State Street from Lafayette Avenue to Madison Avenue and the large trees have been replaced with small saplings or litter filled tree pits. Many of the lots once occupied by single family homes are now covered by surface parking, or empty lots.

However, a couple of the business owners and occupants on the street, nearby neighbors, along with a very active neighborhood association, have sparked a focus on revitalizing State Street.



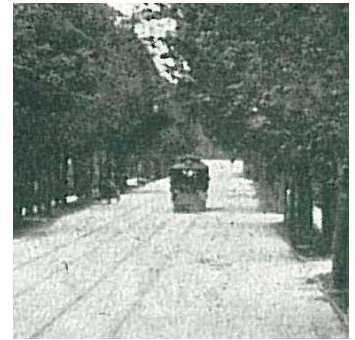
Grand Rapids Master Plan and Heritage Hill Master Plan

The City of Grand Rapids Master Plan, created in 2002, is a citizen driven document which goes beyond city-wide policies for land use to make quality and character of development a major planning consideration. The Heritage Hill Master Plan, created in 1988 and updated in 2005, provides a neighborhood wide perspective addressing a combination of preservation, traffic, land use, and policy issues.

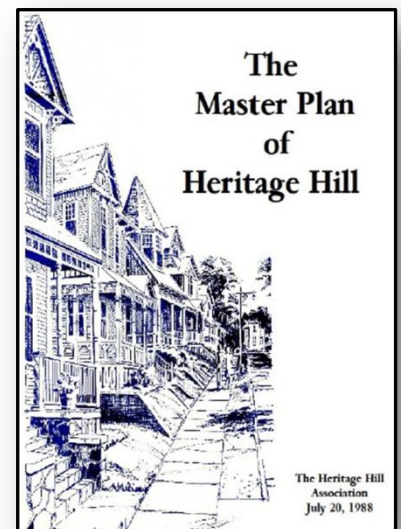
It is also important to recognize that the current zoning ordinance classifies much of the State Street Corridor as Transitional City Center or City Center and that the Future Land Use Plan of the City Master Plan lists the western part of State Street as “downtown” and the eastern part is listed as “medium density residential”. It is evident that the corridor does not conform to either of these designations and as a result, the State Street Plan refines the Future Land Use Map of the Master Plan while taking into consideration the current zoning and the neighbors’ vision for State Street.

The Heritage Hill Master Plan is even less specific as it provides goals, objectives, and policy statements which are applied across the neighborhood in an as-needed basis. However, the following policy statements to directly apply to State Street:

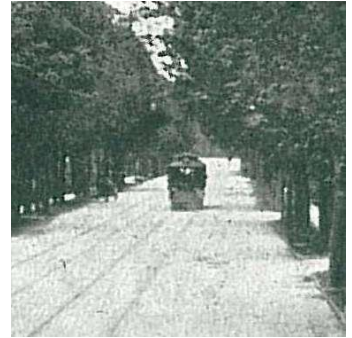
- Encourage commercial and institutional development and use within defined areas;
- Encourage the use of existing structures for the purposes for which they were built: commercial for commercial and residential for residential;
- Encourage early involvement of HH Association in planning for commercial and institutional Development;
- Educate developers of commercial and institutional properties to be sensitive to adjacent historic and/or residential structures;
- Encourage appropriate infill development on vacant parcels;
- Coordinate the preservation of existing public improvements and public buildings;



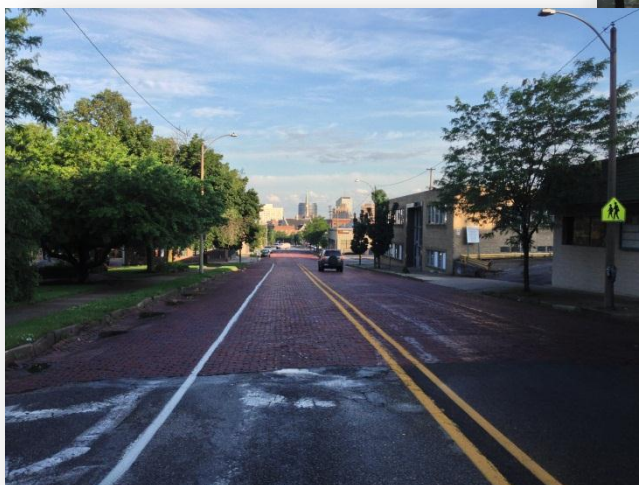
Master Plans



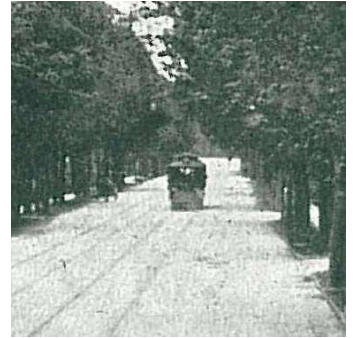
- Regulate the installation of new or replacement utilities to be buried underground;
- Establish standards for public pavements and street furniture to assure that they are compatible with the historic nature of the streetscape;
- Maintain small neighborhood parks;
- Encourage the maintenance of the exterior and grounds of commercial and institutional structures in a historically appropriate condition; and
- Increase direct public involvement in safety programs and practices



In order to be successful, it is important that this document work in conjunction with other regulating documents to provide a clear and concise overview of the intended direction. By providing specific information pertaining to the future land uses, the design of the structures, the streetscape, and a handful of policy statements pertaining to crime prevention, the City's regulatory boards and commissions will be able to make more informed decisions relating to the future of the State Street Corridor.



It is not uncommon for people to make a pros and cons list when making a decision. A similar process occurs when people make determination regarding locating a business, moving to, building, renovating, or even visiting a particular area. These are called push and pull factors. A push factor is anything that would push positive business or people out of an area. However, a pull factor is anything that would pull people into an area resulting in an improvement, either economically, structurally, or socially. It is important to note that Push/Pull factors only need to be generally perceived by interested parties and could be based on either public opinion or some type of factual information.



Push and Pull Factors

Push	Pull
Excessive Panhandling and Crime	Large Residential Density
Lack of identifying element from along street	Surrounded by a Stable Residential Neighborhood
Perceived as Unsafe	Located in a Historic District
No Tree Canopy	Increased Development from Nearby Medical Institution
Visible Damage to Street and Sidewalks	Available Occupancy
Brick Surfacing Only on Half the Street	Improving Real Estate Market
Excess Litter & Debris Along Street	Strong Neighborhood Association
Abundance of Unoccupied Storefronts	Supportive and Knowledgeable City Planning Staff
Lack of Building Maintenance in Under or Unoccupied Buildings	Natural Corridor into Downtown
Lack of Visible Pedestrian Services on the Street	Natural Corridor into Uptown and Cherry Street
Overly Regulative Historic Preservation Commission	Abundant Employment Opportunities within Walking Distance
Overabundance of Homeless People	
Inconsistent Street wall and Overabundance of Parking Lots	
Overpriced Vacant Buildings	

Goals describe the desired end result and are either geared towards eliminating push factors or increasing the number of pull factors. They are also broken into two segments, the overall goal and individual goal statements. The goal statements provide the foundational elements for implementation strategies to obtain that goal.

The overall goal for State Street is:

“Establish and maintain an attractive, safe destination with a recognizable identity and an eclectic mix of restaurants, retail, services, businesses and housing.”

GOAL STATEMENTS:

- Establish the perception and reality that State Street is clean and safe street.
- Create a business district with an eclectic mix of retail and food which caters to the residents of Heritage Hill and the surrounding institutions.
- Establish appropriate housing and commercial development fronting on State Street which can be adaptable to other uses as needed.
- Create a pedestrian and environmentally friendly streetscape that is welcoming and safe to residents and customers.
- Define and establish a distinctive State Street identity that people can rally around.
- Foster a social environment targeted to nearby residents, employers, employees, and visitors through the use of events, programs, and development.

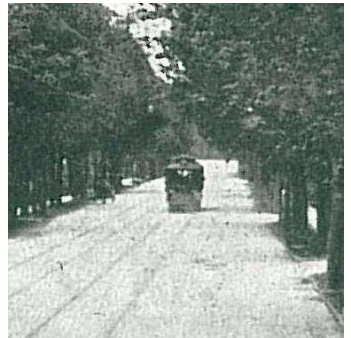


Goal Statements

Implementation strategies are the specific actions that are to be taken in anticipation of achieving the specific goal statements. Since this plan intended to be a document to provide guidance over a 5 to 30 year plan, implementation strategies are broken into immediate action, mid-range action, and long range action.

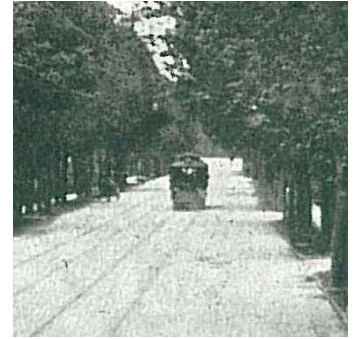
Immediate Action Implementation Strategies:

- Develop a “Safe Street Committee” of owners, residents, police and fire departments with a fine point focus on crime hot spots: The Stuyvesant Apartments, Clarks Grocery Store, vacant building at 345 State to reduce and ongoing street nuisance problems like drugs, and disorderly conduct, littering, graffiti, loitering, trespassing, and drinking in public areas.
- Acquire funding to hire a company to clean the loose refuse off of the public right of way and water vegetation for two years similar to the Downtown Development Authority areas, or encourage the expansion of the DDA to include State Street. In conjunction, install aesthetically appropriate waste cans that would be anchored to sign posts to prevent littering.
- Plant large diameter street trees with watering bags within the existing sidewalk openings with the goal of shading 100% of the curb line. Use mulch, flowers, or other ground cover to inhibit the development of weeds in this area and rain barrels to capture storm water runoff to water desired vegetation.
- Organize and host monthly events during the summer and fall months in Foster Park to enhance community pride and establish a consistent pedestrian presence in the area. The target group would be neighborhood residents, businesses, and nearby institutions. These would include family friendly movie nights, picnics, back to school events, and possible holiday specific events for Fourth of July, Halloween, and Christmas.
- Installation of decorative banners with a consistent State Street theme on light poles to establish a consistent visual element for the entire target area to both promote State Street and further establish the boundaries of the target area.



Implementation Strategies

- Explore possible partnerships with the Heritage Hill Association and Grand Rapids City Museum to install displays relating to State Street in the windows of the old City Museum at the corner of Jefferson and State Street.
- Explore possible partnerships with local businesses, non-profit organizations, neighbors, and other interested parties to host events, show informational or graphic displays, promote and encourage new development or assist in streetscape maintenance.
- Utilize vacant spaces including empty storefronts, parking lots, and alley spaces between buildings for special events.

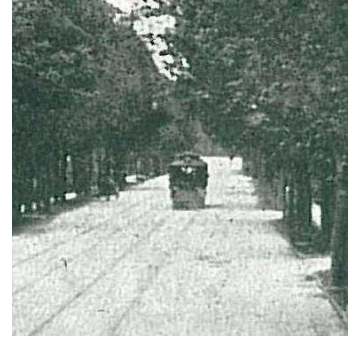


Mid-Range Implementation Strategies:

- Work with the City of Grand Rapids to repair the existing brick street surface of State Street and reinstall brick street surface between Madison Street and Jefferson Street.
- Work with the City of Grand Rapids to install mini “parklets” with seating for pedestrians and business customers.
- Work with the City of Grand Rapids to make repairs to damaged sidewalk sections and street corners to make State Street compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and accessible to everyone.
- Develop regional and national marketing plans to support existing businesses and attract redevelopment of existing structures containing pedestrian focused commercial uses including coffee shops, ice cream shops, delis, or similar activities, and residential development where appropriate.
- Work with the Boy Scouts or similar organization to construct an informational history plaque at Foster Park illustrating the history of State Street and Foster Park similar to the information plaque at Lincoln Park.
- Work with the City to construct an informational kiosk to propose upcoming neighborhood events.

Long Range Implementation Strategies:

- Redevelop marketing plan to focus on infill development with mixed use housing or pedestrian focused business including small restaurants, quality grocery store, specialty retail, or similar uses.
- Establish an ongoing process of organized meetings between potential developers, representatives of the Heritage Hill Association, and representatives of the City's Planning, Zoning, and Historic District departments to enhance cooperation, eliminate miscommunication and misunderstandings, and foster a development supportive environment.
- Construct an entry feature on both ends of State Street with key architectural or streetscape elements that can be found elsewhere on the street as a way to further establish boundaries to the area and as a way to foster civic pride.



On-Going Strategies:

- Work with the City Historic Preservation Commission, the Heritage Hill Association, Residents and other groups to preserve contributing resources such as existing structures, statues, street placement, and parks.
- Engage other organizations to create events that highlight and promote State Street.

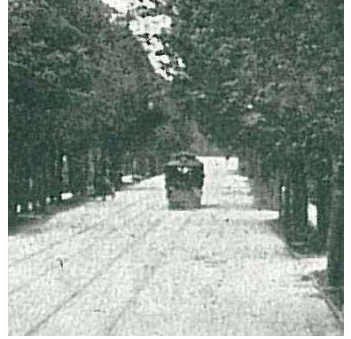


The streetscape is the most visual component of any area. As such, the State Street streetscape should be both welcoming to businesses and pedestrians, and established in a way to enhance environmental conditions within the City. To accomplish this, the installation of large caliper street trees will grow to shade the sidewalk and business reducing summer cooling bills, creating wind blocks, and mitigating storm water runoff concerns. They also clean the air, reduce noise, and enhance the perception of a safe environment.

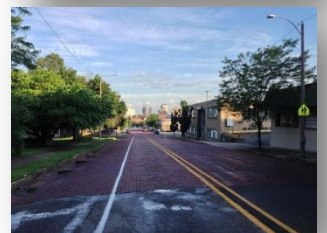
Along with an established tree canopy, a consistent brick street surface, benches, parklets, and maintained sidewalks improve the streetscape for everyone. Brick street surfacing from Jefferson Street to Madison Street is not only visually appealing it reduces the speed of traffic thus providing for a safer pedestrian experience. Benches provide a place for people to sit and enjoy their food, purchases, or just rest, and maintained sidewalks create a safe environment for wheelchairs, strollers, along with anyone just walking from building to building.

Based on these ideas, the following streetscape design ideas would be supported and encouraged:

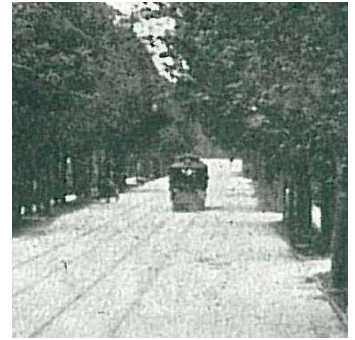
- **Installation of parklet near the intersection of State Street and Prospect Street and near the intersection of Lafayette Street;**
- **Installation of pedestrian oriented decorative street lights similar to those found elsewhere in the neighborhood**
- **Installation of large caliber shade trees between the pedestrian traveled part of sidewalk and the curb for the entire length of State Street;**
- **Maintain and reinstall brick street surface on State Street from Madison Street to Jefferson Street;**
- **Install benches near bus stop at Lafayette Street and State Street**
- **Permit outdoor seating, tables, movable planters, and similar temporary improvements in front of business in a manner that will not interfere with pedestrian traffic; and**
- **Install bike lanes.**



Streetscape Improvements



The existing commercial building infrastructure consists of an eclectic blend of designs representative of various eras of development. The existing restaurant uses are recognized by a classic single story design with large windows along the sidewalks. A former auto dealership and repair station still has many of the open showroom windows overlooking the street, but the interior is broken into multiple apartments. One structure at the corner of State and Cherry appears to have one been a gas station as it is set at an angle to the intersection and while small, provides a distinctive feature to the intersection. The remaining buildings provided limited transparency and are mostly used for offices or are vacant.



Based on these ideas, the following Commercial and Office Development design and use policies would be supported and encouraged:

- **Use architectural cues found on other structures on State Street for new infill construction;**
- **Be between no more than four stories in height;**
- **Have a flat or low pitched roof with a parapet facing the street frontage;**
- **Have off street parking in the back of the proposed structure or off site;**
- **Be constructed within five feet of the front property line and zero side line on one side;**
- **Limit first floor uses to retail, restaurant, or similar pedestrian based use;**
- **Encourage mixed use developments with upper floors occupied by office or residential use;**
- **Have direct sidewalk level, front façade access; and**
- **Meet all applicable Historic District requirements.**

Commercial, Office, and Mixed Use Development



Currently, only one structure is used for residential purposes, however as trends for housing close to downtown increase, several of the areas at the east end of State Street and along the adjacent streets currently occupied by parking lots are suited for townhouses or similar designs. The structures that front onto State Street should be designed so they can later transition into commercial structures or even live work units with a commercial activity on the ground floor and residential on the upper floors.



An increase in the residential population along State Street will boost need for additional eating and retail amenities, and can also provide housing in close proximity to major employment centers including St. Mary's Hospital and several medical office buildings within and close to the project boundary areas.

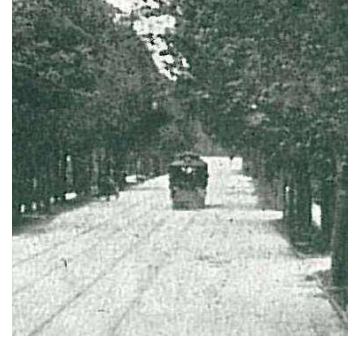
Infill residential development within the project area should meet the following:

- **Have brick or similar exterior façade materials found elsewhere on State Street or clapboard siding if on the adjacent streets;**
- **Be constructed to permit first floor conversion into a commercial site to establish a live/work structure for structures that front onto State Street;**
- **Be between two and three stories in height;**
- **Have a gable roof;**
- **Have off street parking in the back of the proposed structure or off site;**
- **Be constructed within ten feet of the front property line; and**
- **Meet all applicable Historic District requirements.**

Residential Development

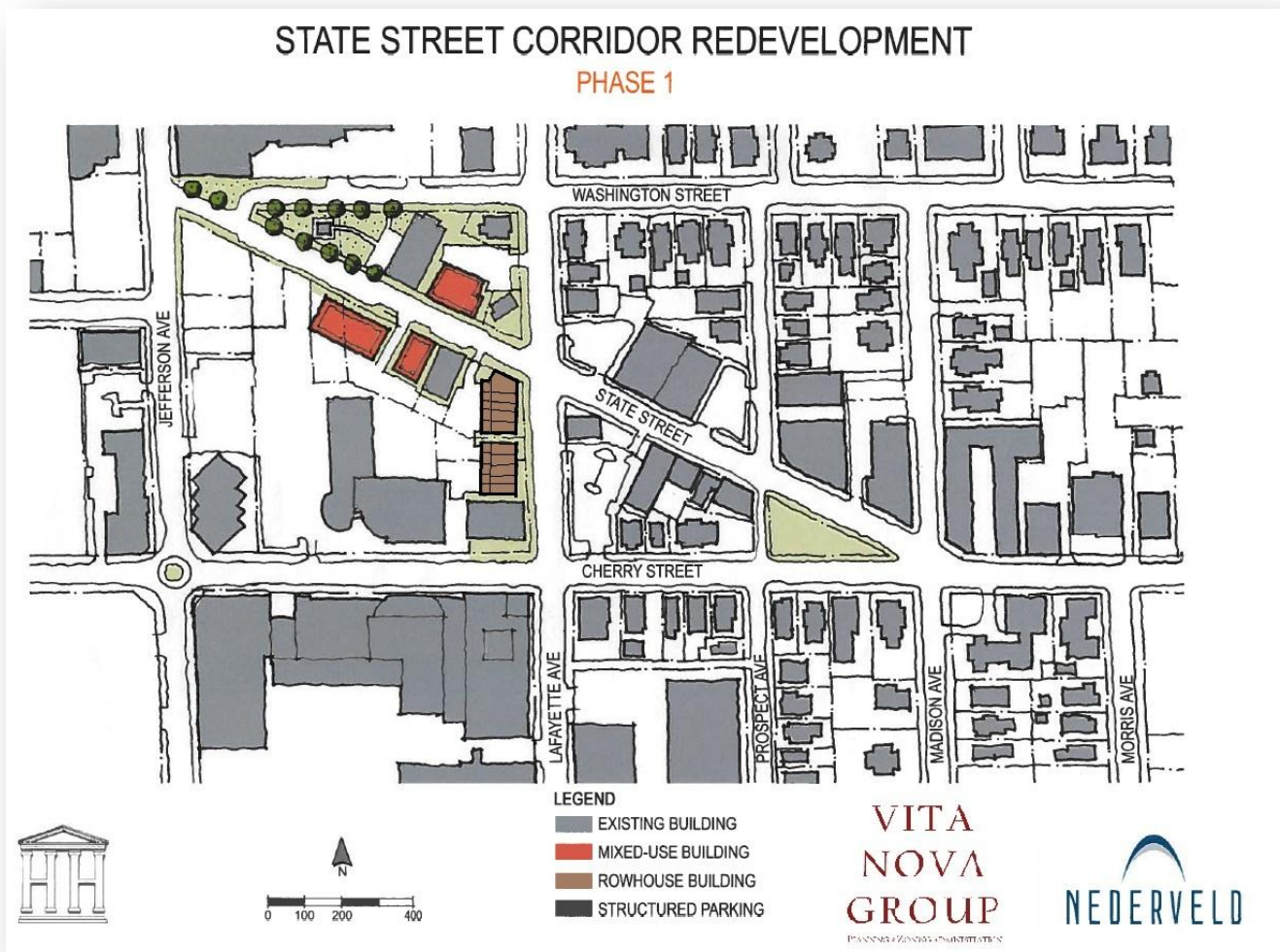


Not all uses would be appropriate in all locations. Therefore, the primary focus for commercial mixed use development would be along State Street. Areas along Cherry Street, between Madison and Lafayette are, and should stay, residential. Lafayette between State Street and Cherry Street would be best focused on higher density residential. However, there is the reality that the frontage on State Street would need to transition into commercial.



Furthermore, the reality of redevelopment for a corridor such as State Street is that not everything happens all at once. Therefore a phased approach would be the most appropriate. Phase 1, illustrated below, would encourage the infill development of existing vacant sites, primarily between Lafayette Street and Jefferson Street. This approach would add both residential occupancy along Lafayette Street, and establish a street-wall on State Street.

Future Land Use Maps



Phase 2 of the redevelopment plan would include the additional development of St. Mary's Hospital, now Mercy Health System. This includes a multiple level structured parking garage and further mixed use infill development along State Street from Lafayette Street to Jefferson Street. This would help solidify the anchor points at both ends of State Street, firm up the street walls, and provide a combination of residential, office, and retail opportunities along the corridor.



This would also allow opportunities for shared parking between Mercy Health System and the buildings that have frontage on State Street.

STATE STREET CORRIDOR REDEVELOPMENT

PHASE 2



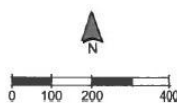
LEGEND

- EXISTING BUILDING
- MIXED-USE BUILDING
- ROWHOUSE BUILDING
- STRUCTURED PARKING

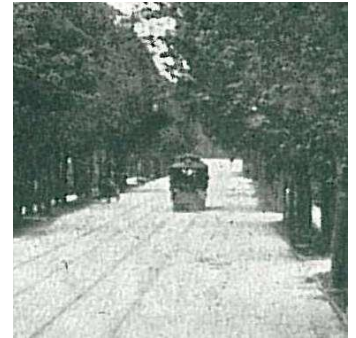
VITA
NOVA
GROUP

PLANNING & DESIGN CONSULTANTS

NEDERVELD



Phase 3 of the development would include the infill development of the areas between Lafayette Street and Madison Street, including the street corners and a total redevelopment of the buildings across from Foster Park. Each of the structures that front on State Street should maintain a retail/restaurant or similar pedestrian oriented use, with offices or residential on the upper floors.



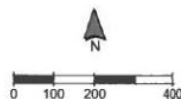
With the additional commercial space, additional townhouse residential development on Madison Street would increase the residential occupancy and vibrancy of the corridor. It would additionally provide a transition into the traditional residential structures found on the adjacent streets.

STATE STREET CORRIDOR REDEVELOPMENT

PHASE 3



ILLUSTRATIVE CONCEPT MASTER PLAN



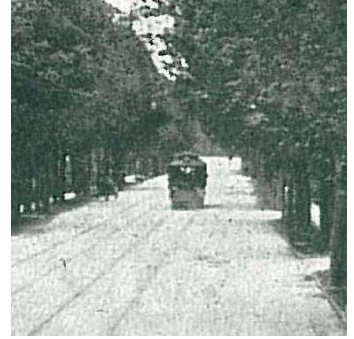
LEGEND

- EXISTING BUILDING
- MIXED-USE BUILDING
- ROWHOUSE BUILDING
- STRUCTURED PARKING

**VITA
NOVA
GROUP**
PLANNING & ARCHITECTURE



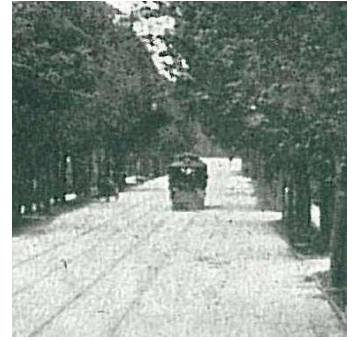
Over the past 150 years State Street has undergone substantial changes, from a Native American trail leading away from the river, to a tree lined residential street with grand single family homes, to a commercial corridor with auto dealerships, gas stations, and office, to what we see today. Corridors such as this are always changing and evolving to address the needs of the neighbors and in response to social and economic changes. Care needs to be taken to build off of the good foundations of the past while still addressing the negative impacts that currently prevent new development. Additionally, with a strong emphasis on environmental conservation found throughout the City, improvements should be done in a manner that will prevent negative ecological impacts. Finally the historic cues of the past should be preserved as an indication of what State Street once was and new development should be shaped, planned, and designed to address current needs, desires, and intentions. This will shape State Street into a vibrant and interactive neighborhood corridor for future generations.



Conclusion

Appendices:

Stakeholder Committee Members: (Need to get list from Barb)



Insert 2005 Heritage Hill Master Plan Update