

THE CITY OF HURON, OHIO
Proceedings of the Huron City Council
Work Session of Tuesday, October 8, 2024 at 5:30pm

Call to Order

The Mayor called the Huron City Council work session to order at 5:30pm.

Roll Call

The Mayor directed the Clerk to call the roll for the meeting. The following members of Council answered present: **William Biddlecombe, Sam Artino, Mark Claus, Monty Tapp, Joe Dike, Matt Grieves and Joel Hagy.**

Old Business

None.

New Business

Waterfront Parks Plan – Presentation by OHM Advisors

Mr. Lasko said that they had also invited Planning Commission and HJRD members to this work session, and they will continue to stay engaged throughout the process. The City applied for and receive a \$35,000 grant from ODNR through their Coastal Management Assistance Grant Program. The City does have to match that, as well, to go through an exhaustive planning exercise and community engagement process that is going to be looking at four main things: (1) looking at what, if any, upgrades we want to make to the Showboat property now that the property is now legally in the hands of the City, (2) what, if anything, we may want to do to Lake Front Park to make some upgrades and further activate the space, (3) understanding that our long-term vision is ultimately to move the Service Complex, but add to that we have a growing public beach behind the Water Plant that we want to make sure people can get to safely - what, if anything, we may want to do from an improvement standpoint to the former Service Complex site, (4) how can we make connections throughout these spaces, and how do we connect those 3 spaces down to downtown, to our existing bike network, etc.

We put out an RFQ and we got 5 or 6 submissions from planning firms, and we ultimately selected OHM Advisors as the best to undertake that plan. Since then, for the past 4-6 months, OHM Advisors has been meeting with internally to come up with some very high-level conceptual plans. We are here this evening to look at those conceptual plans, and everything is on the table in terms of getting feedback from all of the stakeholders in the room tonight. After this evening, there will be a public survey and there will be a lot of other ways in which stakeholders can touch this plan. Once we get all of that feedback, we will reconvene with HJRD and the Planning Commission to look at final plans, what the implementation process looks like, and the cost of implementing the plan. With that, he turned things over to Arthur Schmidt of OHM Advisors to walk through his presentation.

Mr. Schmidt said they came to the table because they want to develop an action plan for the waterfront parks to make them a year-round waterfront city. They want to make sure there is implementation at the forefront of the strategies they are putting forward, both in the short, medium and long terms. They will be examining the existing park amenities in available to what's available parkwide. While they are looking at these 3 specific parks, they want to understand what offerings the park system provides, looking at connections to those parks and the surrounding destinations, looking at our downtown, connecting to our regional trail network, and they wanted to make sure they are engaging our residents and stakeholders

to get all of that input and provide the local context. They want to make sure that these recommendations are cost-efficient and are also in alignment with other city initiatives and improvements. They want to see things happen – they don't just want to create a plan that sits on the shelf and is there for 10+ years. They want to make sure that they have a nice spectrum of short, medium and long-term goals with each one of these.

They have been working with staff and a couple of stakeholders to understand what's there right now. They did an extensive understanding of each one of the parks and the trail networks, and they thought what better way to start thinking through ideas and start to share some of these high-level concepts? It is still early stages with all of these, but they felt better to react to something and get feedback than to ask, what is it that you want? We are trying to put each of these park concepts in a bucket to make sure it is feasible and actionable at the end of the day.

Mr. Schmidt then went through a PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which is attached hereto as Exhibit "A." Questions from Council included:

- Q: (Biddlecombe) If you go back to the Showboat property, you are showing 39 parking spaces. How many are there now?
- A: (Lasko) Not to digress too much, but the goal philosophically, from a staff perspective, to at a minimum maintain the parking on the site, helping with circulation, which is where you see the roundabout on the northern portion. During an event, you could eat into the roundabout and have pedestrians there and then add parking at Wall Street. The goal was to not just maintain, but also add and then address vehicular circulation onsite, as well, which is something we hear a lot about from folks. It is really hard to maneuver, particularly when that parking lot is full. Thirdly, without complete transforming the space, how could we activate a little bit more so it's not just this huge green lawn. Activate it in a way that has some practical ecological benefits to protect the site from weather conditions, etc.
- A: (Schmidt) The other idea was if you wanted to use that whole space for some type of event, the idea of having that additional parking off of Wall Street, while not equating to same amount of parking space, at least we are adding back some parking. As Matt was mentioning with the turnaround circle (the dropoff loop), we are showing that in that feature. We have also had discussions internally with the team that that can be a different material so that area can be closed off and used wholistically with the remaining space. We are thinking about flexibility depending on the time of day and the type of event, or whatever is happening there.
- Q: (Biddlecombe) I just know that people are always concerned about parking down there, so I wouldn't want to take anything away from that parking.
- A: (Schmidt) I think the number we have is right at the same number. The addition would be on Wall Street of what is being exposed behind the existing building.
- Q: (Artino) Are we confident in the shoring of the north point? Right now, we still have erosion.
- A: (Schmidt) That is something we are still working through. That's the honest answer, we are still working through that. Again, these are all working concepts. This is not saying this is absolutely what we are doing. Right now, that is what we think would work best. We are looking for feedback from more of the aesthetic and usability standpoint while our team continues to look through

more of the technical and constructability aspect of that that and whether the positive and/or negative impacts are from an ecological perspective.

- Q: (Hagy) This may be more of a question for Matt. I, for some reason, thought Nickel Plate was included in this.
- A: (Lasko) It was not, only because with the City having no legal control at this time because it is under leasehold interest, not that shouldn't ever do it, but at the moment we thought it was really difficult to make long-term plans on Nickel Plate with a lease that can be terminated with 30 days' notice. We are trying to fix that issue, as well, but that's why we chose to eliminate it.
- Q: (Tapp) Regarding the beach at the water plant, the parking area – is that existing open space, or is that where the service building is?
- A: (Lasko) That is with the complex being gone.
- A: (Schmidt) I should have mentioned that, yes. It is with that building being torn down. Again, we were looking at trying to keep it efficient with respect to what's going on with the filtration plant and make sure we are creating a nice buffer between the residential and what's going on at the plant.
- Q: (Claus) And lots of screening to hide the back of that plaza, which is not pretty, the residential and the plant itself.
- A: (Schmidt) Correct. That is going to take some time for that vegetation to get to a point to be most effective. Obviously, it always comes down to cost. There are different things we can do there, but we want to be smart about that. There are different strategies we can have to help with the initial screening to make sure on day one when everything is starting to be implemented, that there is some level of screening there, and work our way up to the full vision.
- Q: (Tapp) Were we still looking into that walkway for which we applied for grant funds?
- A: (Lasko) We had originally, from a safety standpoint knowing that the public was using the beach and having no way to get emergency vehicles back there, we thought about doing the multi-use path from Cleveland Road running along the east side of the plant. We ran into a challenge with the property owner of the apartment complex because we would have to go through the apartment complex. We thought he was all for that, initially, but in the end, they were not.
- Q: (Claus) I was surprised when you showed all 3 parks, that the acreage of this site is actually quite a bit more than either of the other two. You just don't see this property.
- A: (Schmidt) It is. We were surprised, too. When we were doing some of our field tours, it was becoming more and more pronounced how much space there was here. Quite honestly, we have talked about it with staff, the views there are really great and the beach is huge. It is deceptively bigger than when you are looking at an aerial versus when you are actually out there. Surprisingly to us, each time we were out there doing some field work, there were a lot of people there. Granted, it was during the summer, but there were plenty of people out there on the beach. Building on Matt's point from a health and safety standpoint, creating this multi-use path access from the Waterworks Drive and Cleveland Rd. through the space, creating the accessible access to the beach, is a very critical aspect to make sure people can get there safely. If something happens, emergency medical individuals can get back there and have access. We talked about a couple active features, such as the sand volleyball, to create something that may not be as

accessible at other parks so as to not take from other things that are existing. We wanted to add to the overall park system.

- Q: (Biddlecombe) Going back to Lake Front Park. The only comment I have there is, I like the concept, but on Ohio Street my personal opinion would be to not illuminate the parking. That's the only think that I don't like. When it comes to the pathway on Ohio Street, given that that's a historic neighborhood, I question whether the residents would appreciate the loss of the tree lawn through there.
- A: (Schmidt) We were thinking about that, too, on Ohio Street, and I know that in the sections they show it as a full cut there, but that is something we are going to continue to look at in terms of implementing some type of path there – really looking at what would need to be done in order to get that path in there at the right standard. We are showing that going all the way, but that doesn't necessarily have to be the case. Again, through the survey, is this a corridor that makes sense from a public standpoint, from a stakeholder standpoint, to create this overall connection? From an overall connectivity point, it does, but understanding that characteristics of the historic district and the residents there, that certainly may yield a different set of results for us to consider some other viewpoints while we are looking at how that can fit in there.
- Q: (Claus) This is Ohio Street looking north? So the 13 tree lawns in 4 is roughly the current?
- A: (Schmidt) Yes. It varies. With any one of these street sections, and that's what's tough with these, it ebbs and flows a little bit. Where we are showing the trees is not exactly where every tree has been planted.
- Q: (Claus) The side of the sidewalk closest to the resident's property wouldn't change. They would potentially be losing tree law, but they wouldn't be losing year. We are not encroaching on their property.
- A: (Schmidt) No. I should note that all of these are within the public right-of-way, so we are staying within our parameters. Right now, for the most part, we are seeing roughly a 4-5' sidewalk consistently along Ohio Street. What they are talking about is adding another 5-6' of some type of paved surface to create that trail. It may not necessarily be that we have to take down trees all along the way. Not every single tree is there right now in each spot. There is a little bit of summary we are doing here with this graphic to showcase this. What we are trying to get at right now is, does it make sense? If the answer is yes, it makes sense, but we have some questions, for us right now, that's good. Now we can start to dive into some of those specific questions with respect to where the trees are planted, how that ebbs and flows going from the beginning to the end of the corridor we are talking about. We can start to dig into some of those aspects.
- Q: (Claus) I love the idea of the connectivity, but... I don't know, this might be a Matt question... once we do a shared path like that, we will be taking the sidewalk. Under the current system, would that become the City's sidewalk.
- A: (Lasko) I would think anywhere we are going to put in a multi-use path, the City should have to stand behind it being city-maintained. No the same thing, but look at the Lake Shore Electric Trail as an example. I would argue that if the City is going to move forward with any shared-use path, the expectation would be that we would need a plan for long-term maintenance.

- Q: (Claus) Some of the tighter spots, such as on Cleveland Rd. where you showed the sharrow condition, right now there is only a sidewalk on one side. Would the other side be getting into obtaining easements?
- A: (Schmidt) That's the problem with Cleveland Road, there are so many other variables. However, from a regional perspective, it is the right kind of corridor to be talking about a connection to get east and west – not only to get west to other communities, but also within the community of Huron, itself, and the nature of this downtown and Old Plat neighborhood. It makes a lot of sense to be that east-west connector bringing you into Main Street and into the downtown. There are a lot of different evaluations that our team did with not just the streets that we were showing, but some of the other streets. These were the ones that ultimately got to the top of the list of – we feel we have flexibility; we feel we have room to make some alterations and to make some safe connections. Cleveland Road, not to keep picking on it, but it is probably the one exception to it because of the lack of space and lack of consistent space from beginning to end. As you start to get closer into downtown and getting closer to Main Street, we have a little bit more room that you can make some reasonable decisions with to make a safe connection path. That is one aspect of the survey that we are going to be very interested to hear about. I know there were some questions in past comprehensive studies and in the action plan that talked about active transportation and people's comfort level. We have that question again in this survey, asking what people's comfort level in terms are if they run, if they walk, if they bike. What is that comfort level, what type of facility to they typically want to be on? We want to see if any of that has changed from past planning processes. As people get more accustomed to it, both drivers and cyclists, people's comfort levels improve overall. That question and response may help us understand a little bit more what we can do with Cleveland Road in that section.
- Q: (Artino) We need to do something on Cleveland Road, but I understand it has been an issue for a long time. It would be nice to have something there so people aren't walking in the street.
- A: (Tapp) It is the ideal pathway, but the hardest one.
- A: (Claus) It wasn't that long ago that we didn't even have the sidewalk.
- A: (Schmidt) The other thing I wanted to mention about the complexity of this is that, trying to take into account the cost aspect of this and the implementation of it, we are trying to think very reasonably about what we can do in the interim, and maybe this is one of the situations where we can say, here is the interim strategy we can do, and maybe it's something we look into because you have a little bit of a wider travel lane that is there, look at something this is a bit more comprehensive. Obviously, that goes into raising the dollars and cents to it. Maybe we can even look into other funding sources to make all of the things happen to do something a bit more transformative. We are still kind of talking as a project team to try to understand. We are hoping that through the survey, it will give a little more clarity of if we are really on the right path – this is really the one we should be the one we are looking at. It seems to be that way, but we want to confirm that with residents, community members and stakeholders.

Mr. Lasko reiterated one of the final slides in the presentation. OHM is going to kick off their public outreach process and public comment process. There is a survey that will be available to everyone and ultimately, as we did with the Main Street study, we will compile all of that data and use that to inform refinements to the plan, and then also call another joint work session of all the legislative bodies that were invited this evening, for final feedback. With that, as we typically do, we have cost estimates tied to some of these improvements, as well, which is part of final process. We really view this as just the

beginning of a process, because I think community members, and even myself, do better responding to a visual versus coming up with my own ideas. I am glad we have something that is a balance between super simple and outside the box that gives people something to respond to and gets them thinking. I really appreciate everyone's time and initial feedback so far. We've still got a ways to go and I really view this as the kickoff of the public process.

Adjournment


Motion by Mr. Biddlecombe to adjourn the work session.

The Mayor asked if there were any questions on the motion. There being none, the Mayor directed the Clerk to call the roll on the motion. Members of Council voted as follows:

YEAS: Biddlecombe, Artino, Claus, Tapp, Dike, Grieves, Hagy (7)

NAYS: None (0)

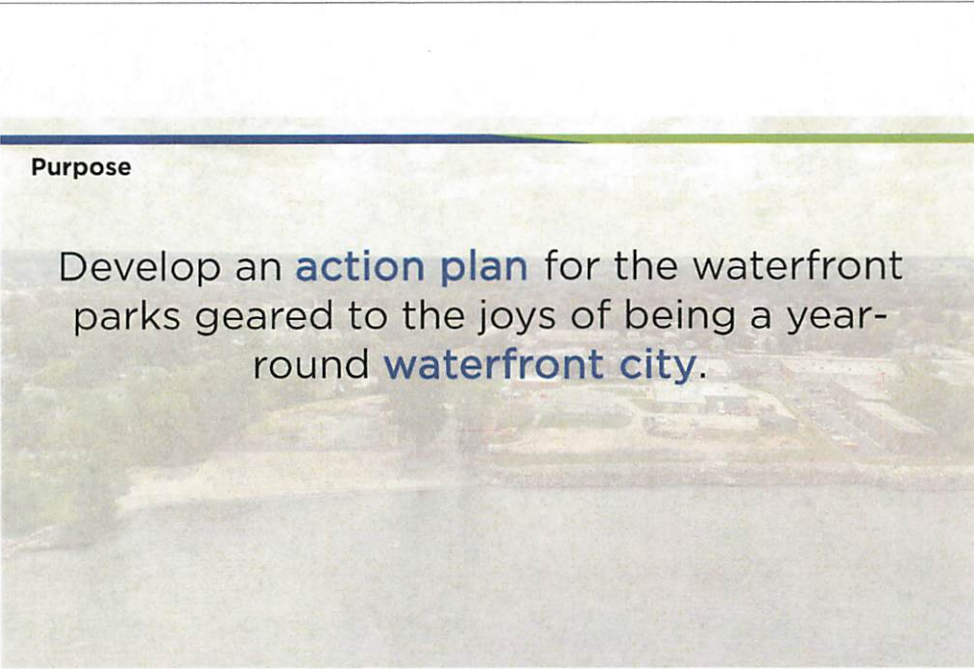
There being a majority in favor of the motion, the Council work session of October 8, 2024 was adjourned at 6:16pm.



Terri S. Welkener, Clerk of Council
(prepared from audio recording)

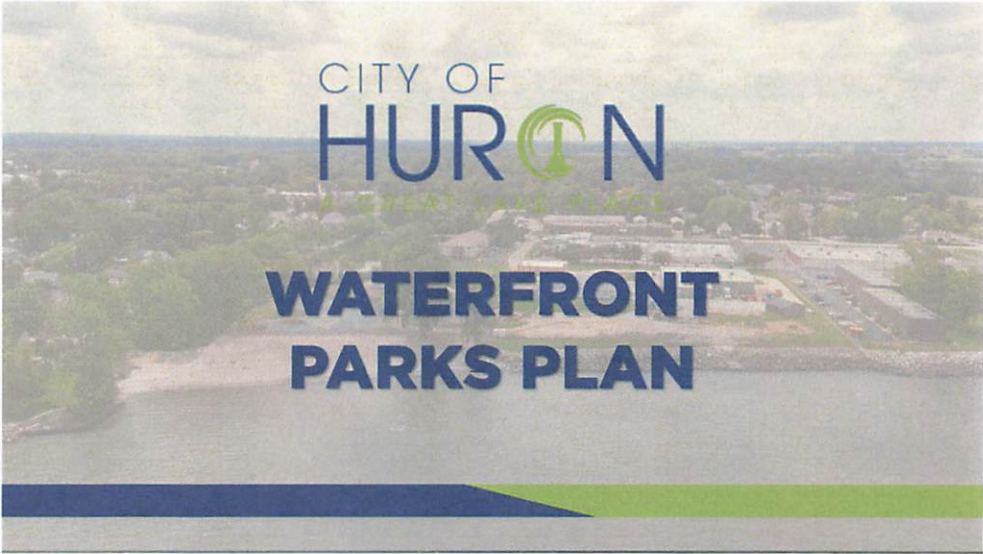
28 JAN 2025

Adopted: _____




Purpose

Develop an **action plan** for the waterfront parks geared to the joys of being a year-round **waterfront city**.



CITY OF
HURON
A GREAT LAKE PLACE

WATERFRONT PARKS PLAN

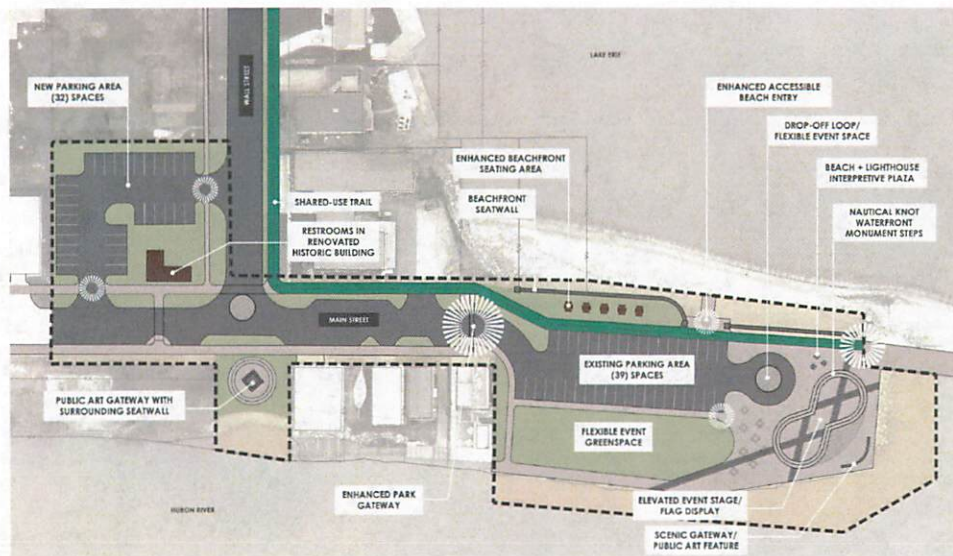
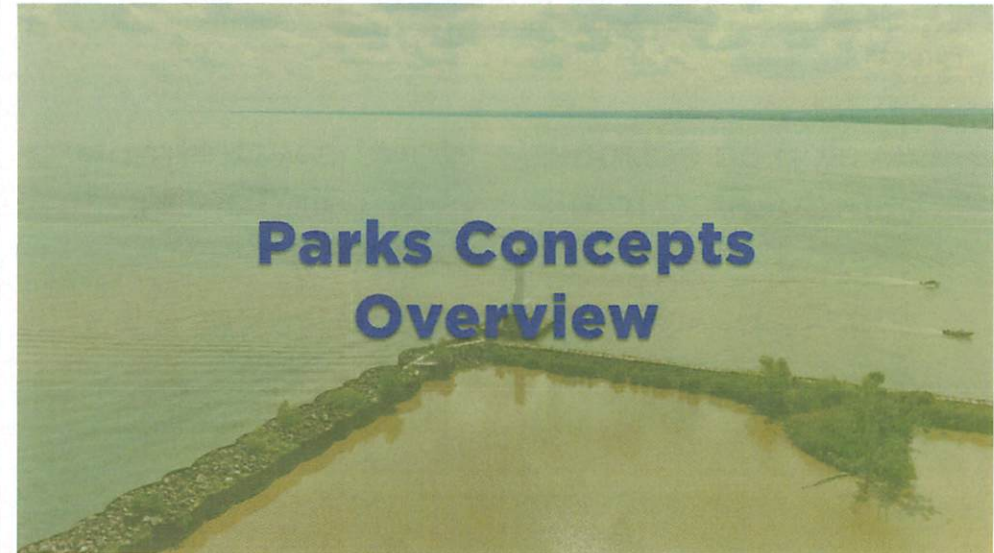
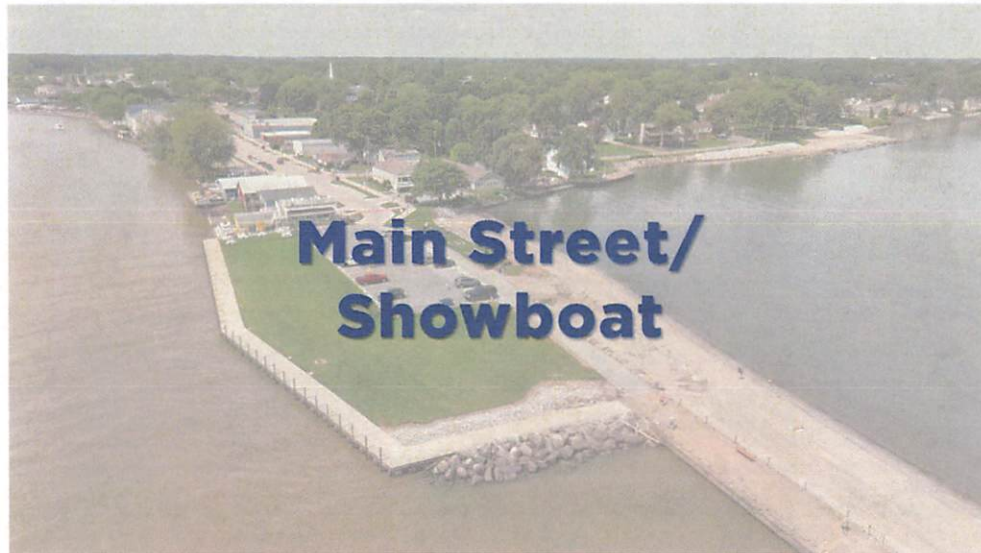


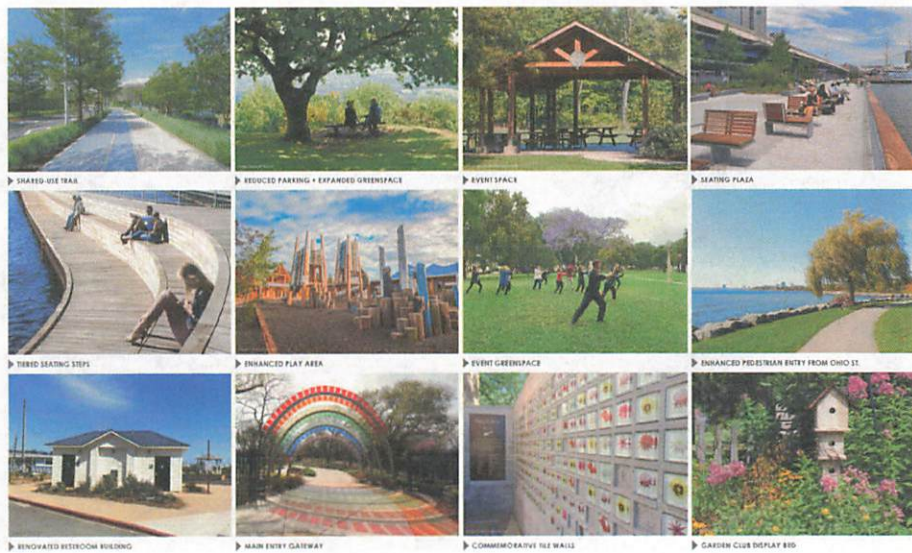
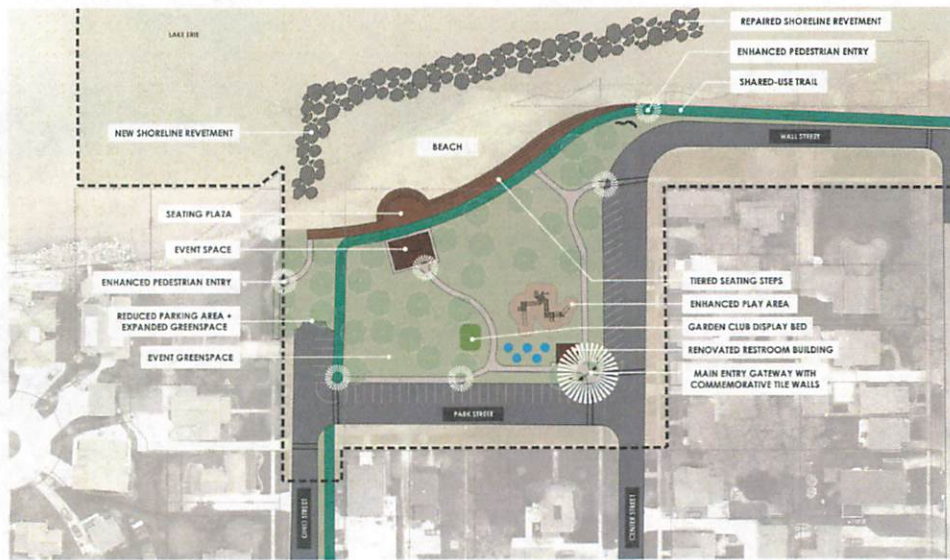
Objectives

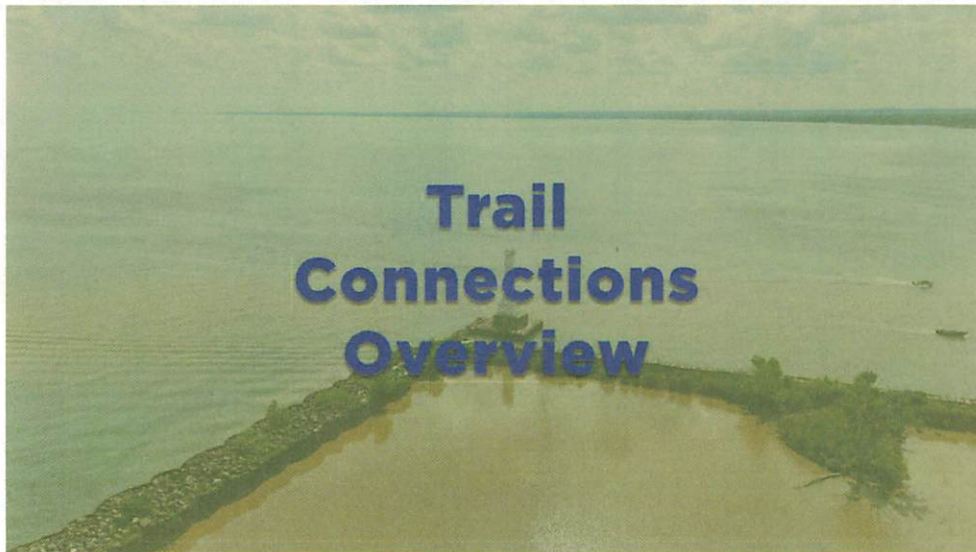
- Examine existing **park amenities** in relation to system-wide current park offerings.
- Explore **connections** to the parks and surrounding destinations through multi-use paths.
- Engage residents and stakeholders to **provide input** and **local context**.
- Ensure recommendations are **cost-efficient** and **align** with other city initiatives and improvements.



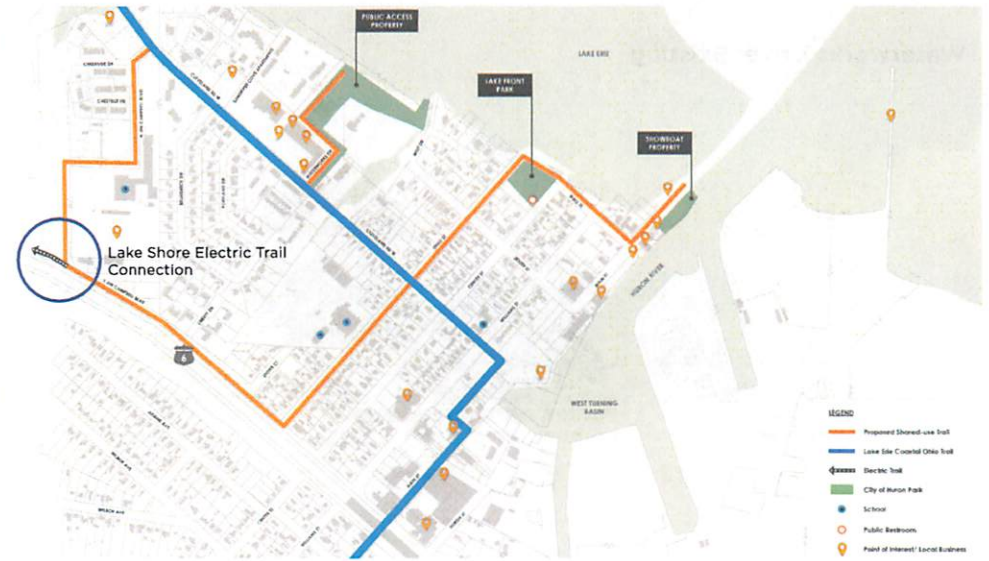
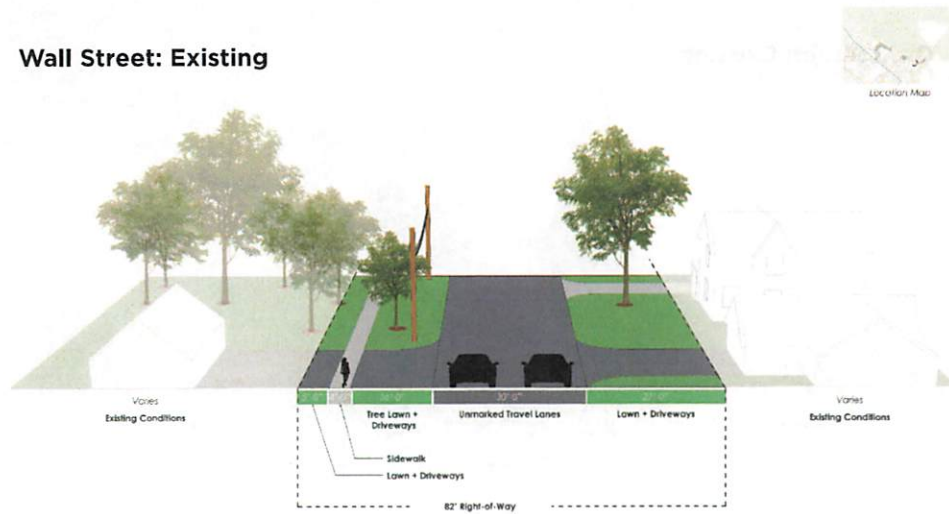
PROJECT OVERVIEW



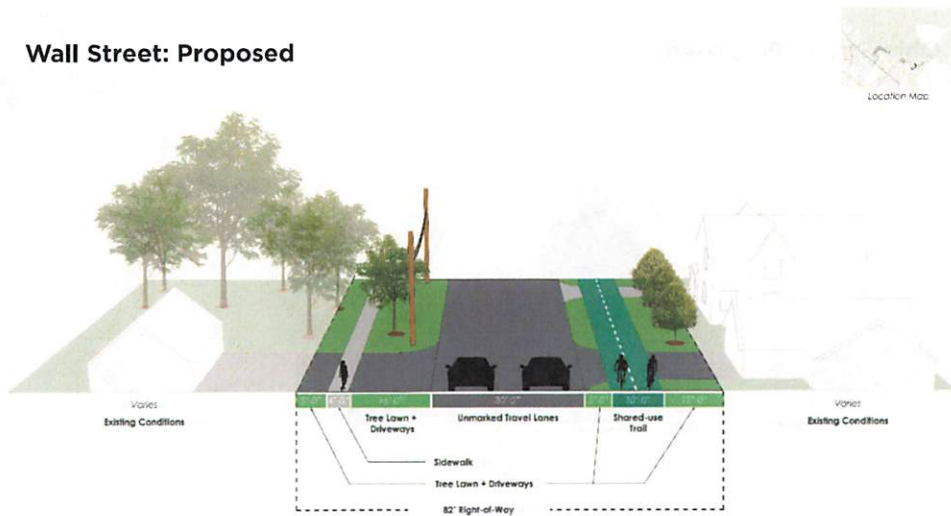




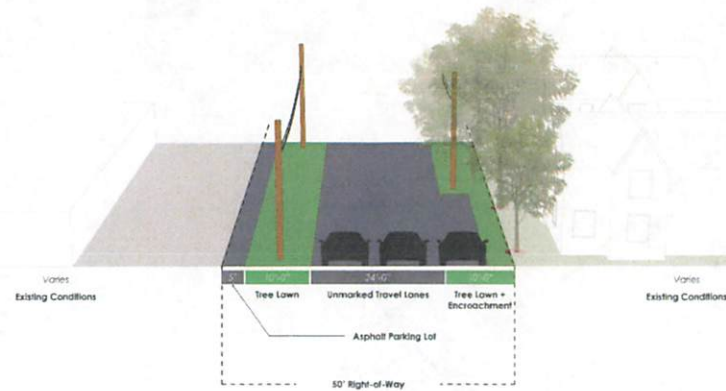
Wall Street: Existing



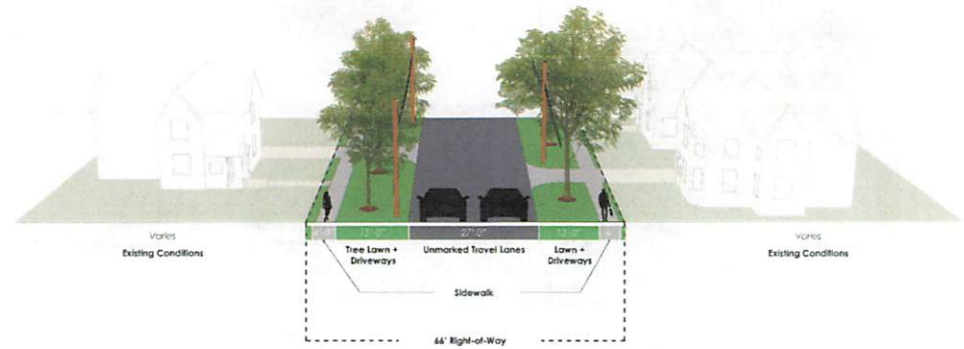
Wall Street: Proposed



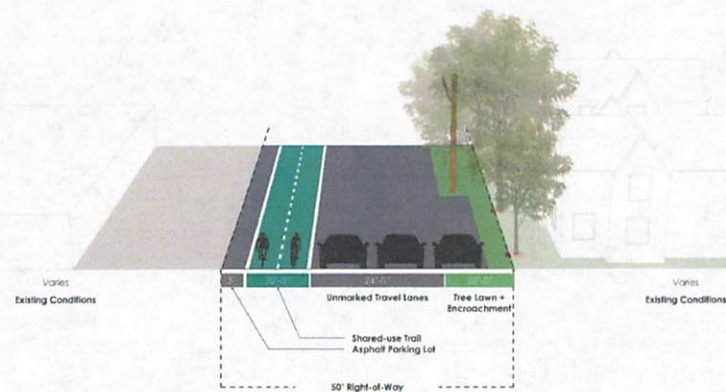
Waterworks Drive: Existing



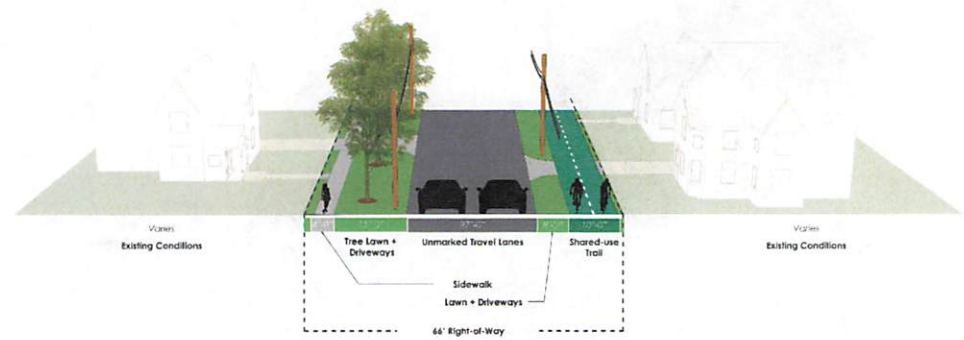
Ohio Street: Existing



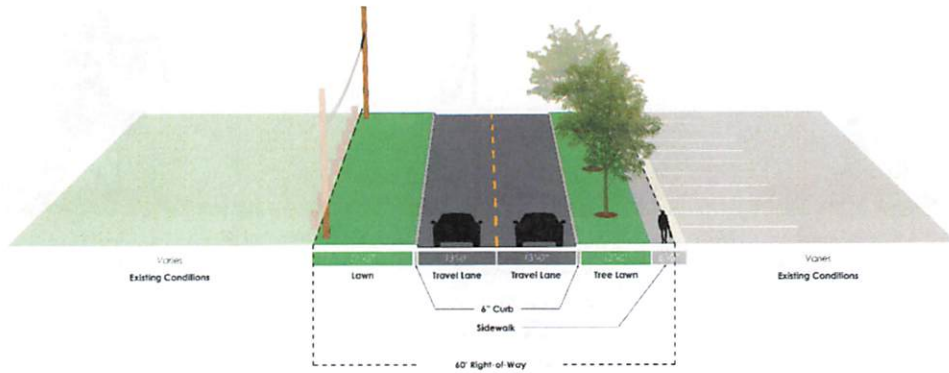
Waterworks Drive: Proposed



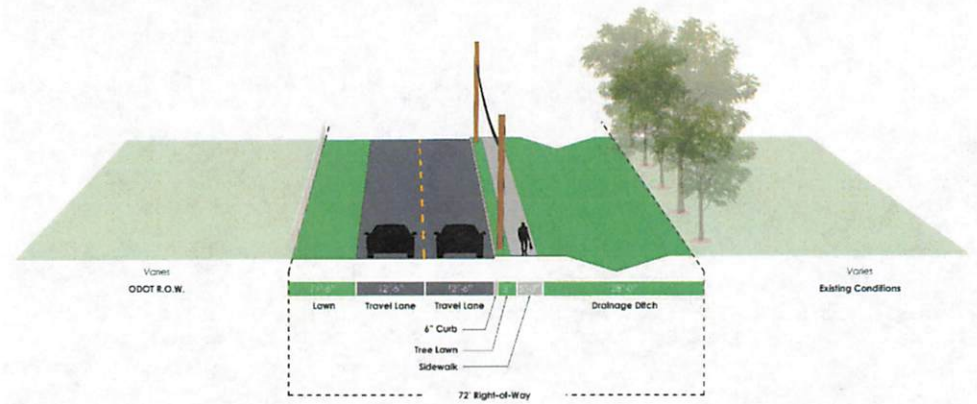
Ohio Street: Proposed



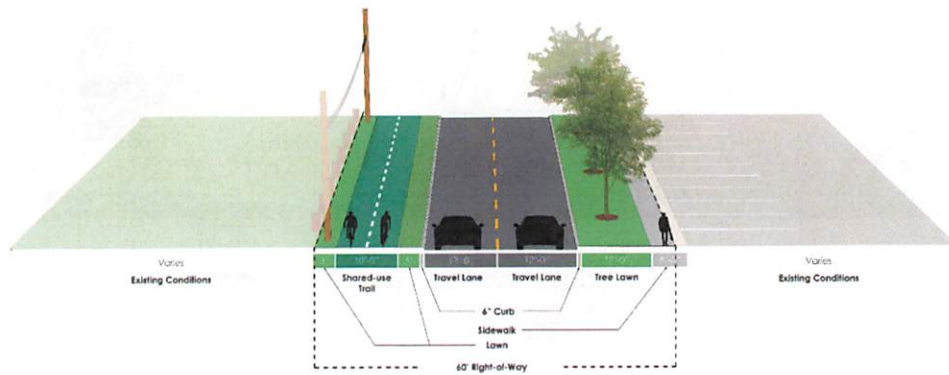
North Jim Campbell: Existing



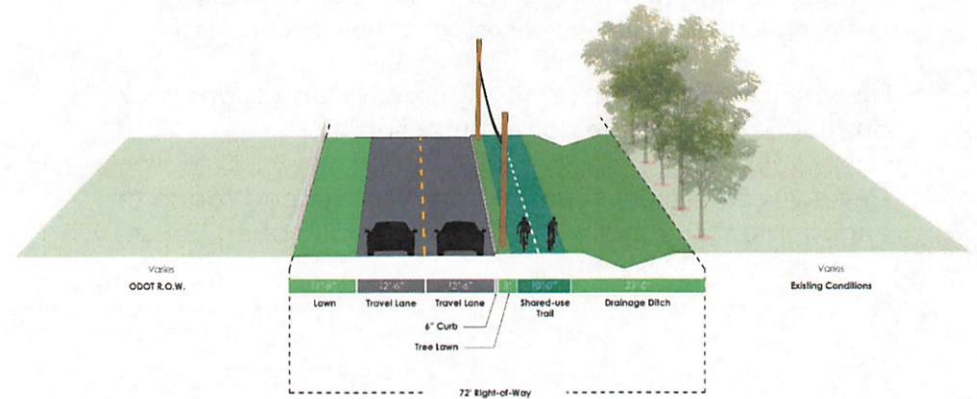
South Jim Campbell: Existing



North Jim Campbell: Proposed

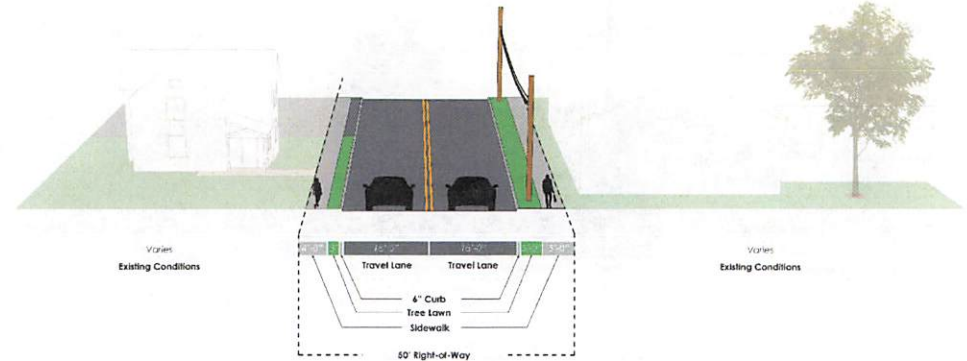


South Jim Campbell: Proposed



Next Steps

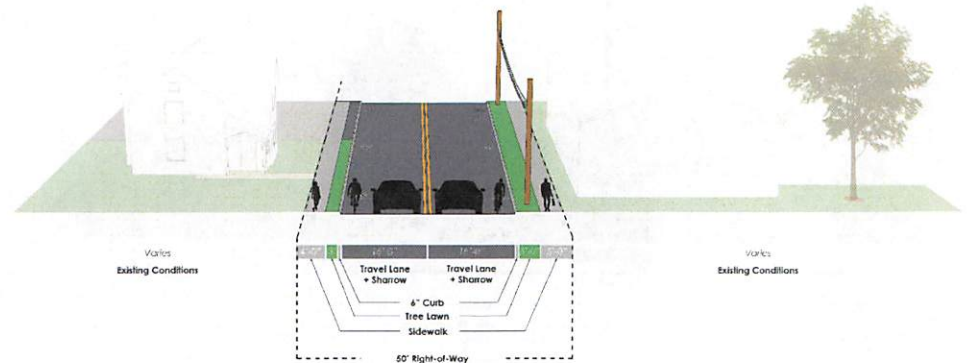
Cleveland Road: Existing



Next Steps: Overview

- Launch community survey (October 9th – October 31st)
 - Park priorities, trail preferences, what should come first?
- Update park concepts, trail alignments, and types based on feedback from the community survey.
- Review with project team; Prepare for second round of engagement (council work session, public open house)

Cleveland Road: Proposed



Community Survey

- Launch community survey (October 9th - October 31st)
- Park priorities, trail preferences, what should come first?



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