



# VISIONING THE SOUTH CEDAR CORRIDOR:

*A Form Based Code Study for  
the Design Lansing Comprehensive Plan*

Michigan State University

Urban and Regional Planning Practicum

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# Section 1: PROJECT GOALS



# Project Goals

Explore the potential to transform the South Cedar Corridor to follow a form-based code.

- Determine current conditions
- Create a vision through the use of case studies and build out analysis
- Project economic impacts through a tax assessment across multiple development scenarios
- Provide recommendations to the City of Lansing to ease the transition from current zoning to form based code

An aerial, isometric illustration of a city street grid. The buildings are rendered in various colors like orange, yellow, and brown, with white roofs. Green trees are scattered throughout the blocks. Small cars and trucks are visible on the streets. The overall style is clean and modern, typical of urban planning or architectural visualization.

# Section 2: BACKGROUND

# Design Lansing

- City of Lansing Comprehensive Plan
- Adopted April 9, 2012
- Focused on implementation of Form Based Code (FBC) and placemaking principles
- Corridors were chosen by citizens to be made more active pedestrian friendly

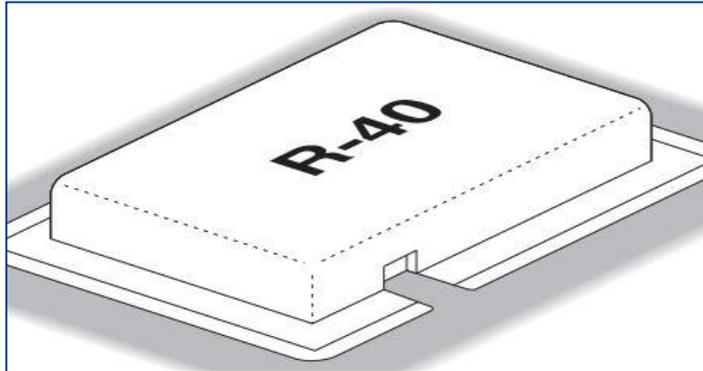


# What is Form Based Code?

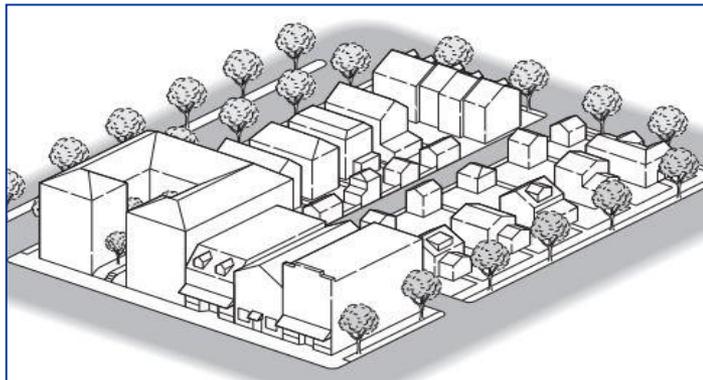
Emphasizes:

- Design standards rather than separation of uses
- Higher density, mixed-use development
- Pedestrian friendly environments

## Conventional Zoning



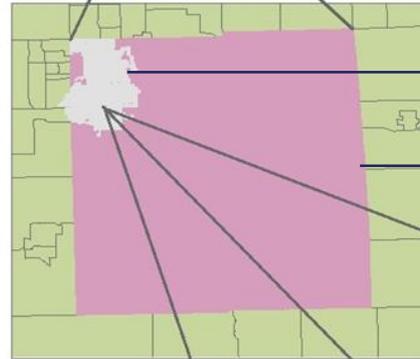
## Form Based Code Zoning



# Study Area Location within the Region



State of Michigan



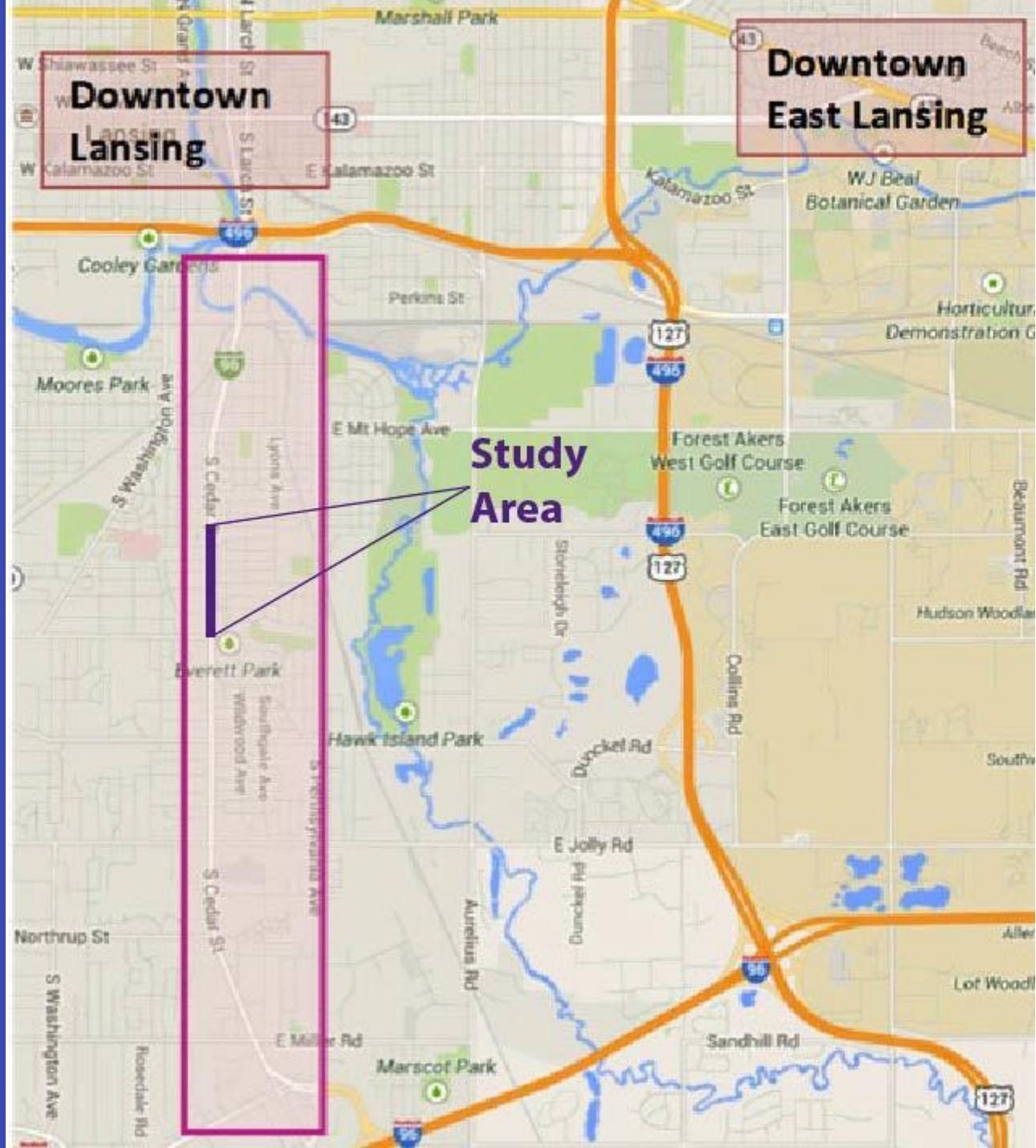
City of Lansing

Ingham County



State of  
Michigan

# Study Area Location within Lansing

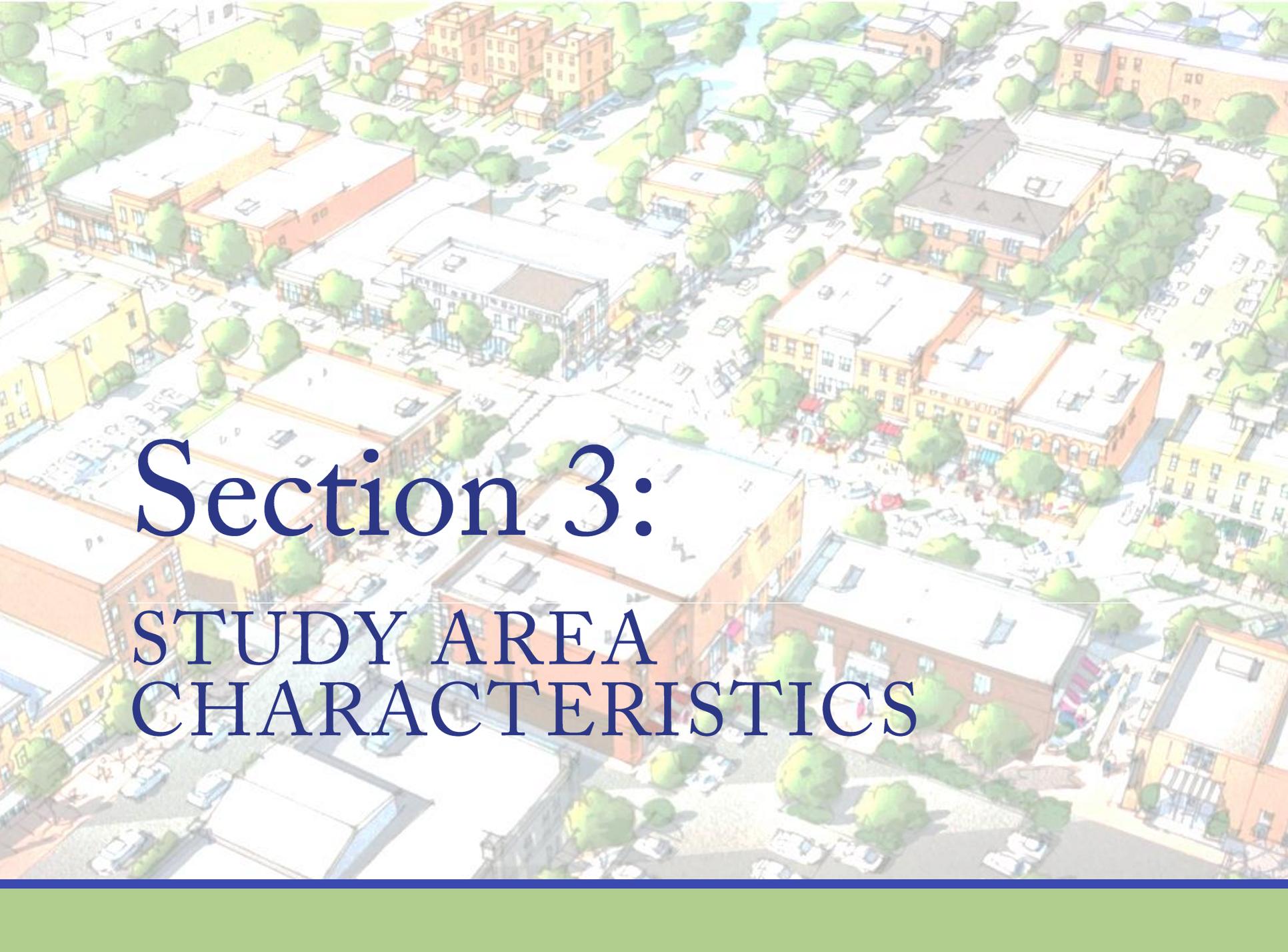


# Study Area



## Legend

- Study Area Parcels 
- Study Area Boundaries 
- South Cedar 



# Section 3:

## STUDY AREA CHARACTERISTICS

# Key Characteristics

- Business Corridor
- Dominated by auto service & sale businesses
- Medium to large parcels with deep setbacks
- Large areas dedicated to parking



Large setbacks and  
Parking Space



Auto Dealership



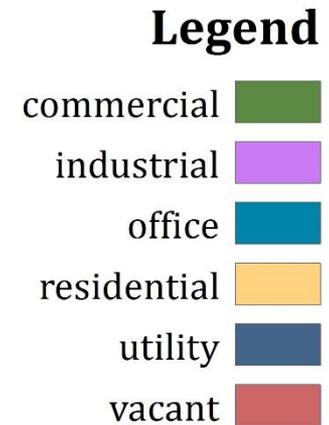
Quality Dairy and  
Rite-Aid



Music Manor

# Existing Land Use

- Consistent with existing, mainly commercial zoning
- Limited residential usage



# Vacancy Inventory

- 46 total parcels
- 67% occupied
- 13% vacant with structure
- 13% vacant no structure
- 7% partially vacant

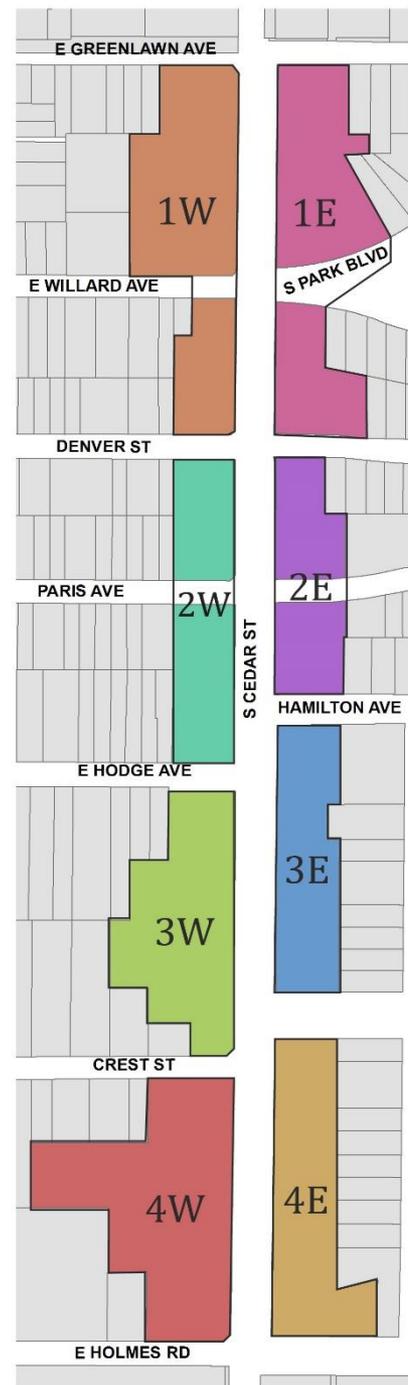


## Legend

occupied	
vacant with structure	
partially vacant with structure	
vacant no structure	

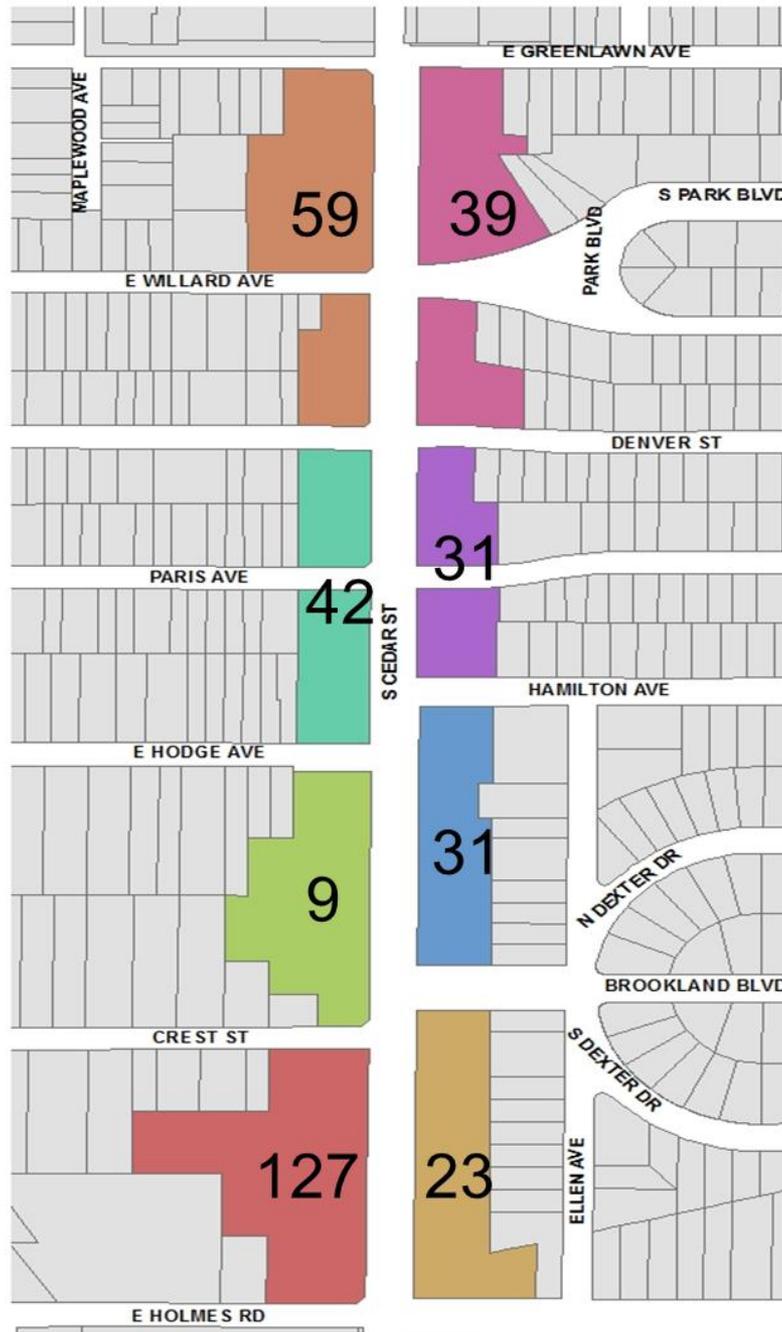
# Units of Analysis

- Established by the practicum team to have comparable frontage lengths along South Cedar
- To better manage and compare data across the study area



# Parking Inventory

- Parking spaces counted by block
- 361 Total Spaces
- Auto sales lots were not included in the count



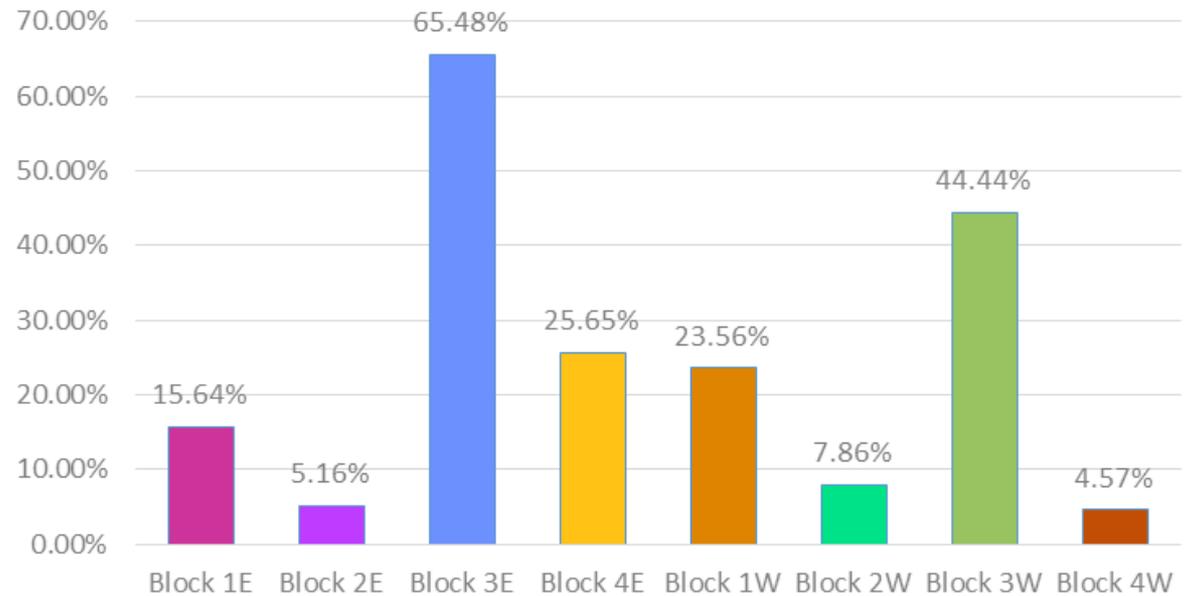
## Legend

- Block 1E
- Block 1W
- Block 2E
- Block 2W
- Block 3E
- Block 3W
- Block 4E
- Block 4W

# Parking Usage Study

- Performed to understand the potential to reduce parking coverage to match form based code standards

Average Parking Usage by Block



# Transportation

- Auto-oriented state trunkline
- Controlled by Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT)
- High traffic from 8 AM to 8 PM, characteristic of a Business Corridor



Intersection of South Cedar Street and Holmes Road

# Public Transit

- Serviced by Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA) Route 5
- Route 5 ridership has increased over the past five years



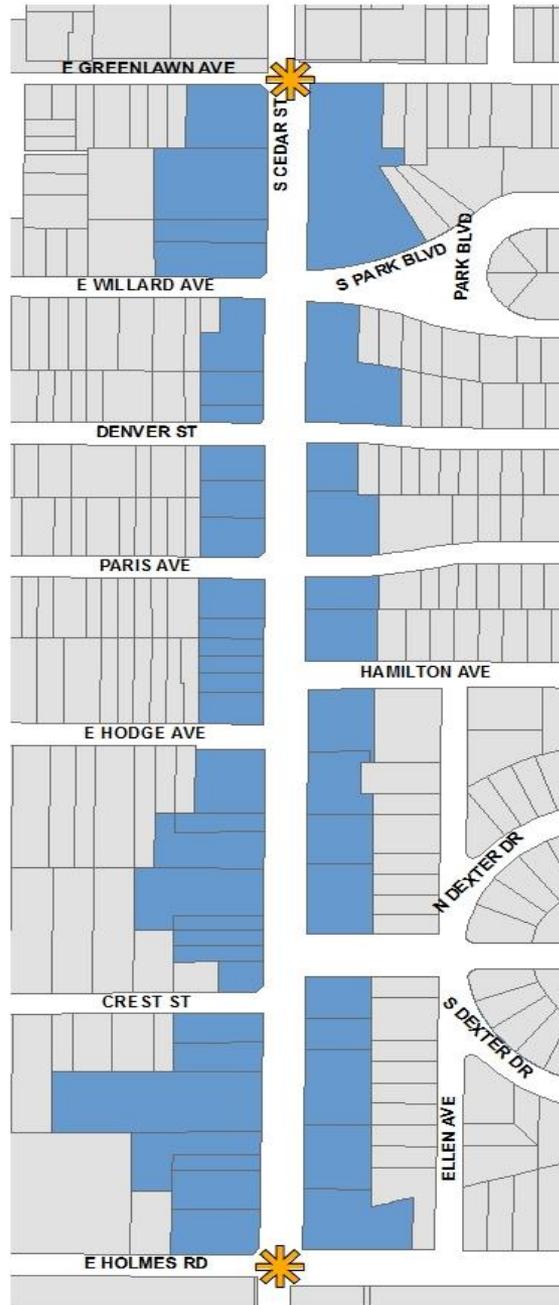
Study Area CATA Bus Stops

**Table 2.8--CATA Route 5 Ridership, 2009-2013**

Fiscal Year	Riders	% Change
<b>2009</b>	588,618	
<b>2010</b>	612,757	4.1%
<b>2011</b>	654,100	6.7%
<b>2012</b>	713,580	9.1%
<b>2013</b>	731,208	2.5%

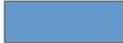
# Alternative Transportation

- Only two crosswalks, one at Greenlawn Ave. and the other at Holmes Rd.
- Sidewalks present but lack barriers between pedestrians and automobiles



Study Area Sidewalk

## Legend

- crosswalks 
- study area parcels 



# Section 4:

EXPLORING FORM BASED CODE-  
CASE STUDIES

Zoning	Business Corridor (Existing)	Urban Mixed-Use Corridor (Proposed Zoning)	Activity Corridor (Proposed Street Typology)	General Urban (Form Based Code Model)
<b>Block &amp; Lot Width</b>	Medium Block sizes, Lot sizes vary from small to large	To be determined by City of Lansing	N/A	Walkable blocks, predominately in a grid.
<b>Street Characteristics</b>	Multiple driveway curb cuts, medium to large parking lots, little/no parking screening	Shared driveways and cross-access easements along the rear property line	3-5 lanes or 2-4 lane boulevard. Center turn lanes, center lane median, crosswalk bump-outs, on-street parking	All right-of-way have curb, sidewalk, and on-street parking.
<b>Building Height</b>	1 story	2-4 stories	N/A	1-3 stories
<b>Building Siting</b>	Variable	Front setbacks 0-15ft	Buildings built close to the right of way edge and oriented toward the street.	Little to no setbacks for commercial. Some setback for residential
<b>Building Coverage</b>	N/A	80% Maximum coverage	N/A	40-95% for commercial & 30-75% for residential
<b>Coverage of Front Property Line</b>	Variable	To be determined by City of Lansing	May include parallel, angle or reverse-angle on-street parking spaces. Off-street parking should be provided in the rear.	50-100% for commercial
<b>Use</b>	Commercial/Office	Retail, personal services, office, live-work, and selected light industrial with special approval	Provide access to entertainment, businesses, and employment for motorists, transit users, and pedestrians	Commercial & Residential - single & multiple-family

# Case Studies

## Cincinnati, Ohio

- Example of citywide form based code
- Development meets Lansing's goals for retail and entertainment activity
- Consideration: Cincinnati had existing infrastructure to be preserved



Mixed-Use Corridor

# Case Studies

## Birmingham, Michigan

- Example of an overlay form based code
- Demonstrates pedestrian friendly corridors
- Consideration: Development targets a different demographic than goals of Design Lansing

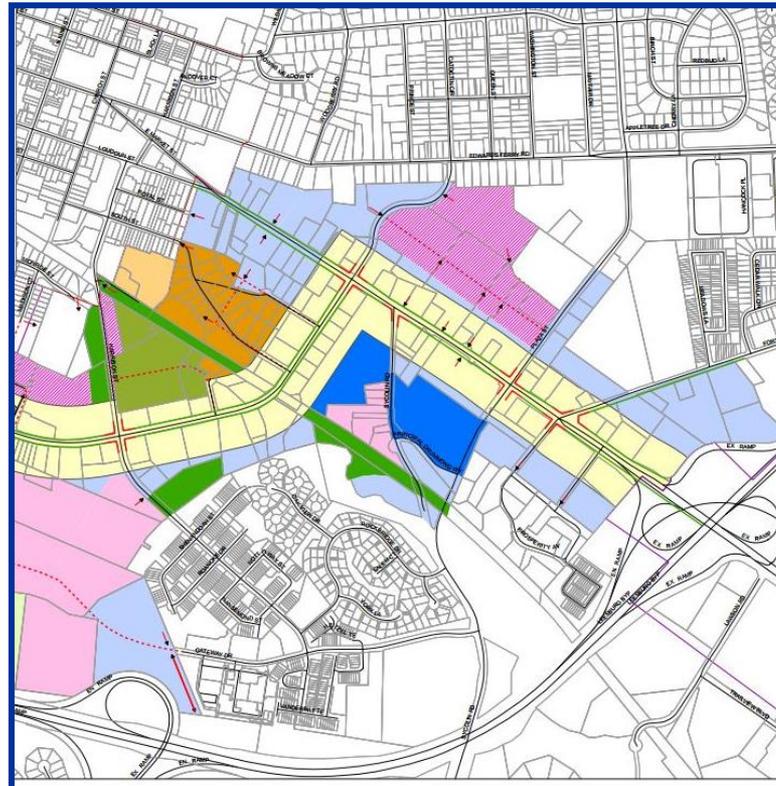


Triangle District

# Case Studies

## Leesburg, Virginia

- Example of an overlay district
- Demonstrates potential of form based code beyond the corridor
- Consideration: Leesburg experienced population growth and is more affluent than Lansing

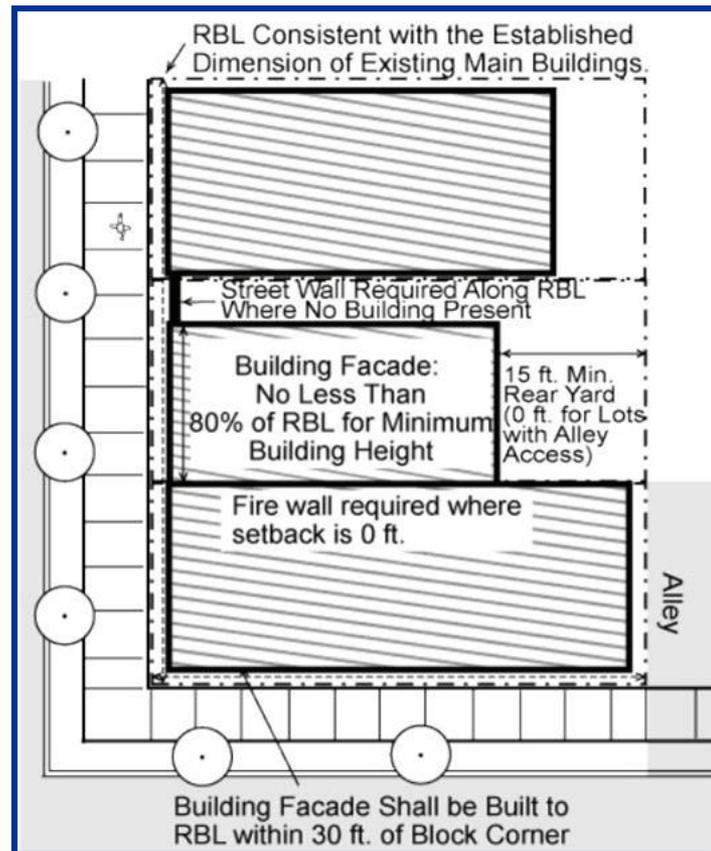


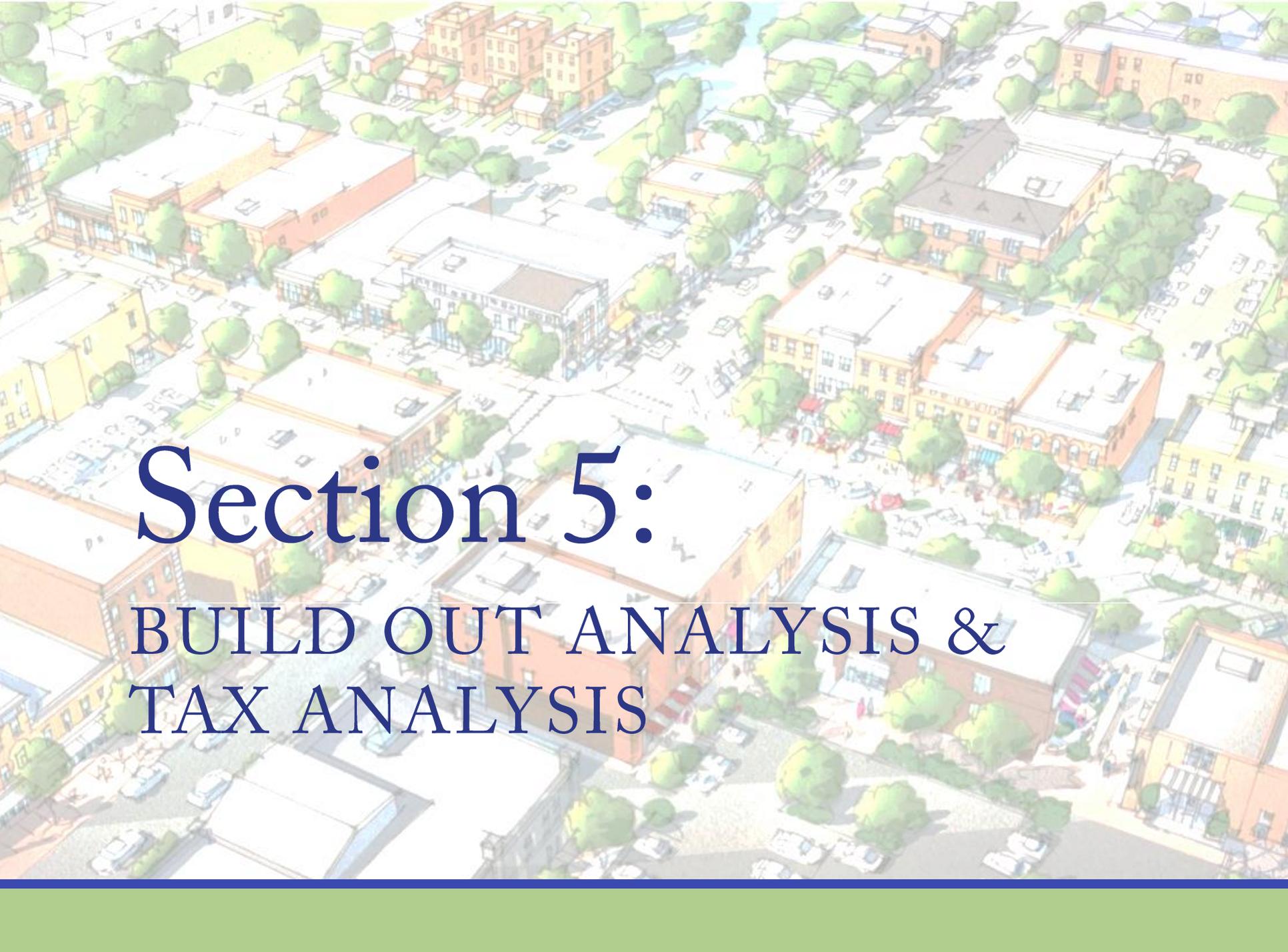
Crescent District

# Case Studies

## Grandville, Michigan

- Example of hybrid zoning
- Prioritizes areas of the city for form based code
- Plan includes detailed development requirements
- Conversation: Grandville has long standing programs that help finance development.



An aerial, isometric illustration of a city street scene. The scene shows a grid of streets with various buildings, including multi-story brick structures and smaller commercial buildings. There are numerous green trees scattered throughout the blocks, and several cars are visible on the roads. The overall style is clean and modern, with a focus on urban planning and architecture.

# Section 5:

## BUILD OUT ANALYSIS & TAX ANALYSIS

# Build Out Analysis

- Projected using form based code standards of 40% and 80% building coverage

**40% Building Coverage**

328,378.32 sq. ft.

**80% Building Coverage**

656,756.64 sq. ft.

**X 2 stories**

656756.64 sq. ft.

1,313,513.28 sq. ft.

OR

**X 3 stories**

985,134.96 sq. ft.

1,970,269.92 sq. ft.



# Tax Analysis

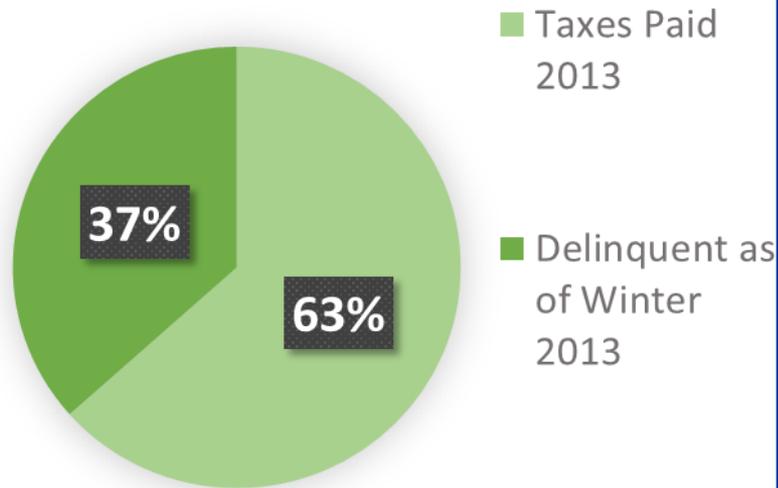
- Block 1W and 1E generates the most tax revenue
- The two most common tax rates in the study areas are non-homestead (NH) and commercial personal (CPP)

## Tax Revenue by Block, 2013

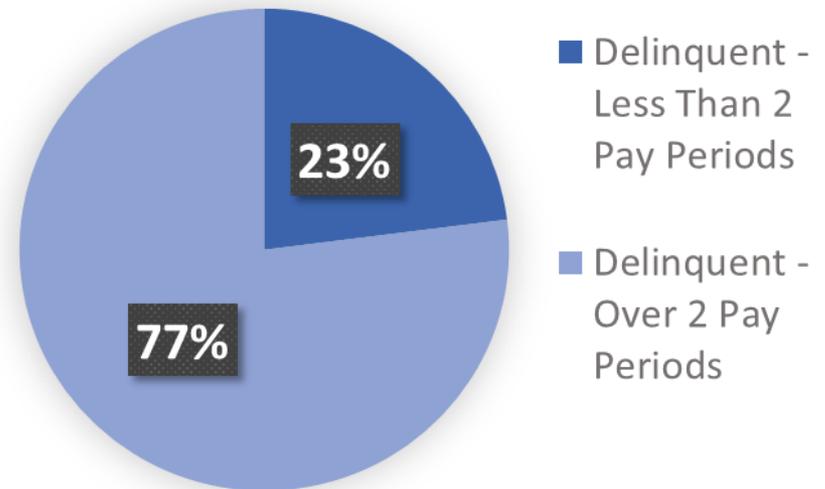


# Tax Analysis

## Tax Status of All Listed Properties



## Delinquent Properties

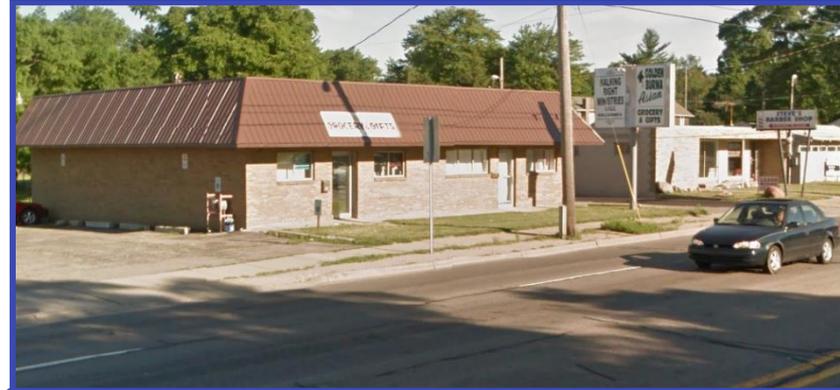




**Section 6:**  
**ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN**

# Illustrative Plan

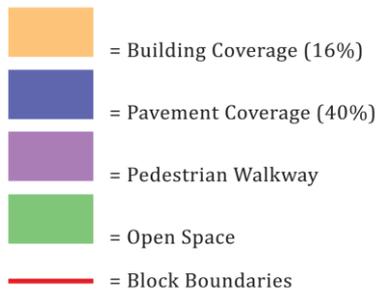
- Block 4W was selected based on high exposure at the Holmes and S. Cedar intersection and potential for future development



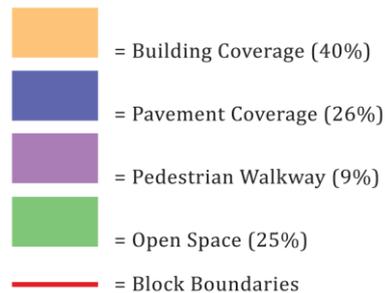
# Illustrative Plan



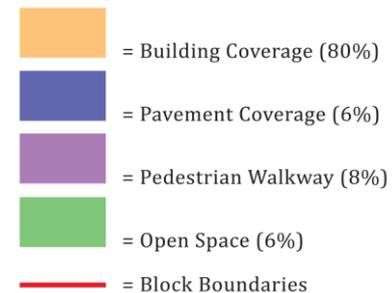
Existing Coverage



40% Building Coverage



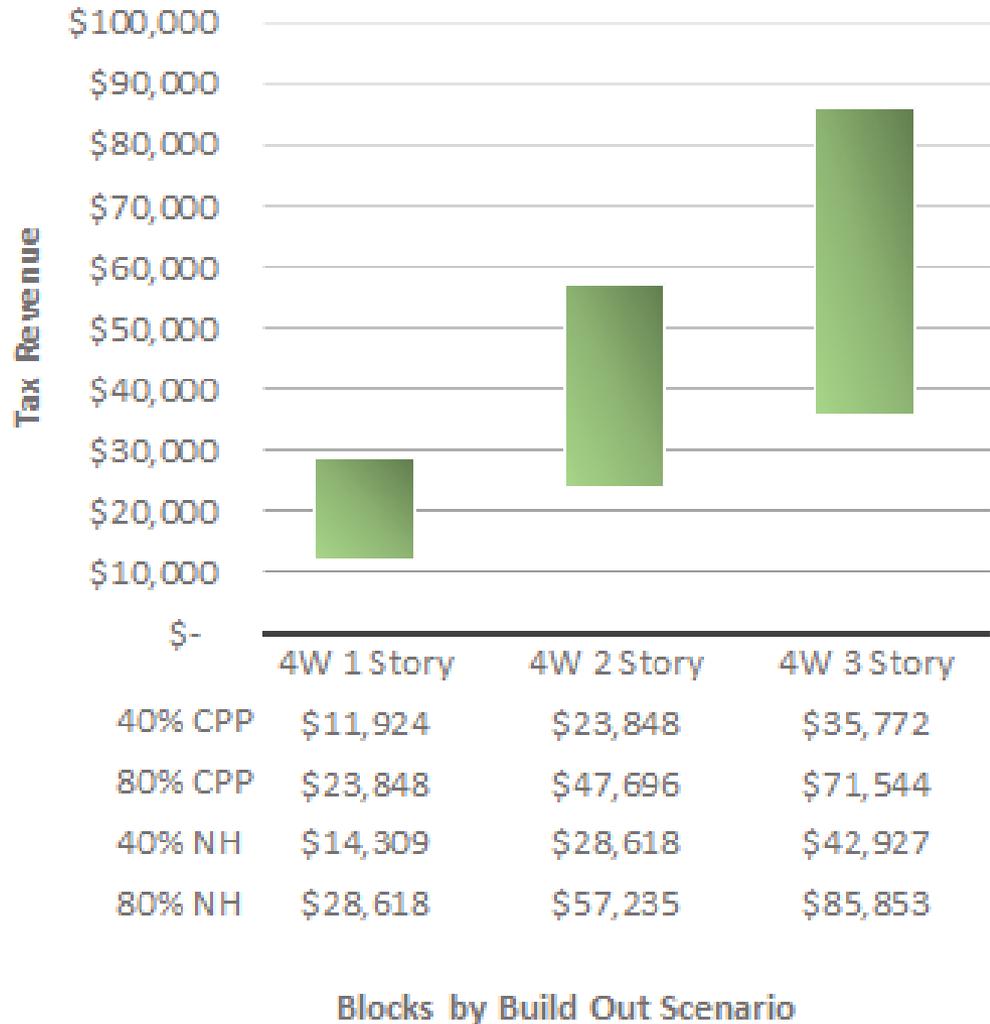
80% Building Coverage



# Illustrative Plan

- Projections based on 40% and 80% build out, for 1, 2 and 3 story development scenarios
- Non-homestead (NH) and commercial personal (CPP) tax rates

Property Tax Revenue Projections- Block 4W





# Section 7: RECOMMENDATIONS

## Short-Term

### Transportation

- Walkability Study
- Ridership Study by Capital Area Transit Authority (CATA)
- Conversations with MDOT about potential for changes along the trunk line

### Financial Impact

- Market Study
- Pursue Programs that Incentivize Investment
- Establish a Corridor Improvement Authority

# Long Term

## Build Out

- Increase Building Coverage
- Reduce Parking; Reorganize Parking
- Encourage Infill Development
- Partner with Ingham County Land Bank

# Final

## Final Recommendations

- Postpone adoption of form based code within the study area. Meanwhile:
  - Explore other locations stated in Design Lansing for adoption
  - Allow time to establish programs and for programs to mature before development
  - Perform studies from previous recommendations to help identify characteristics that can be better prepared for form based code adoption

# Thank You.

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