CITY OF ELKHART

JACKSON BOULEVARD
A SIGNATURE STREET

Converting a Former Highway into a Walkable Urban Environment

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ELKHART RIVER DISTRICT

BEGINNING IN 2015, CONSIDERATION FOR THREE SIGNIFICANT REDEVELOPMENT PROJECTS BEGAN.

- Elkhart Health Fitness and Aquatic Center
- Stonewater at the Riverwalk
- River Edge Landing
CITY OF ELKHART RIVER DISTRICT REDEVELOPMENT HISTORY

Development of Site Began in 1880's as the Industrial/Manufacturing Center for the City
CITY OF ELKHART RIVER DISTRICT REDEVELOPMENT HISTORY

Redevelopment of the District occurred in 1950's as a Suburban Style Commercial and Industrial Zone
Original construction of East Jackson Blvd. predates the City Engineer’s office, which was established in 1913.

Sanitary sewers outside of downtown were first installed between 1903 and 1918.

Prior to being US Highway 20, Jackson Blvd. was Vistula Road.

US Highway 20 was established in 1926.

Replaced by the St. Joseph Valley Parkway in 1993.

INDOT officially transferred right-of-way to the City of Elkhart, in 1998.
A River District Implementation Team (a public-private partnership) was created.
Building on the River District’s Principles, nine major recommendations were developed. Some are small items immediately implementable in the short-term while others are large long-term objectives. More detail is provided on the following pages.

1. Leverage three major investments
2. Make Jackson Boulevard a signature street
3. Strengthen the supportive street network
4. Create exceptional access to waterways
5. Facilitate strategic housing choices
6. Create a strong branding initiative
7. Prepare appropriate development regulations
8. Provide internal greenspaces
9. Allow for and encourage creative place making
LEVERAGE MAJOR INVESTMENTS.

Building upon the success of proximate prolific projects, the area should leverage the development focus. The Elkhart Health, Fitness and Aquatic Center (A) and potential ice sports facility (B) will provide event based surges of spending and area visitors. While a redeveloped Martin’s Super Market (C) and Foundry (D) residential development will bring sustained populations and investment. Maximizing this potential through public and private partnerships, such as a parking garage (E) will be important in the development of this unique and exciting neighborhood. As the District grows there will be other large scale investments, this document provides the framework to capitalize on those opportunities when they surface while maintaining the desired integrity of the area.
MAKING JACKSON BOULEVARD A SIGNATURE STREET

Serving as the main driver behind development, Jackson Boulevard will be transformed into a corridor that attracts private development, visitors, and new residents. This will be a street for every person and every mode of travel. A complete street will provide adequate pedestrian amenities and afford cyclists a safe avenue for travel. Design focus will be directed towards user experience as opposed to maximizing vehicular access. Jackson Boulevard will provide street parking and streetscape vegetation which serves as a buffer between vehicles, adding to pedestrian and cyclist safety. The final design of Jackson will fit within the greater Elkhart transportation network. The graphic shown is an example of how the proposed street will function.
DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER

Building form and character are depicted in the rendering below. This provides a framework of development following the River District’s principles and recommendations.

**Long term vision.**

It is important to keep in mind that this plan is a 20 year vision for the River District. Existing tenants are not being forced to vacate. As development occurs or when redevelopment takes place, it is critical that the principles set forth in this plan are held in place. These changes will not take place over night, but as the River District transforms, this Revitalization Plan gives property owners, developers and city officials a set of guidelines to ensure the District becomes what stakeholders and community leaders envisioned. These guidelines will include buildings fronting on major streets with parking as a secondary use giving prominence to pedestrians. Vertically mixing uses to accommodate different uses on the ground floor adds functionality to the District.

**Buildings engage the street and river.**

Buildings and streets should be designed towards pedestrians as opposed to vehicular thru-traffic. An engaged streetscape slows traffic and creates a more walkable environment. Buildings framing the street enclose the space and inherently create a more walkable neighborhood. When applicable buildings should engage the river, providing access.

**Signature street.**

Jackson Boulevard will be transformed to be the primary location for initial development. This redesigned street features medians and reduced traffic lanes with on-street parking.

**Masked parking.**

Surface parking lots are placed behind buildings to reduce the amount seen from the major road network. This combined with fewer curb cuts in each city block helps to reduce congestion and wayfinding.
The current road network heavily favors vehicular traffic with an inefficient secondary road network. The proposed network, with an emphasis on Jackson Boulevard, should serve to move people in and thru the district in a pedestrian friendly manner utilizing multiple modes of transport.

**Over designed transportation.**
Jackson Boulevard provides the main thoroughfare in the River District. The Boulevard is busy, with over 11,000 average annual daily vehicles, but the current four lanes are excessive and deter pedestrian interaction.

**Disorganized network.**
The supporting, secondary street network lacks the structure necessary for efficient accessibility and circulation. Due to the shape of the peninsula, Elkhart Avenue cuts diagonally across the planning area creating awkward and inefficient intersections and block shapes.

**Success of RiverWalk.**
Connecting the amenities of Main Street to the area is the pedestrian scaled and designed path. It is successful in providing engagement points to the waterways and local attractions such as Nibco Water and Ice Park.
Planning Team asked the City to conduct a Road Diet Analysis

The Study Showed:

- Reducing from a four-lane cross section to a three-lane cross section, would provide same level of service
- New drive lane width are 10’-6” to reduce speeds and improve safety
- 8’ wide parallel parking spaces
- 15’ wide sidewalks

**Visioning Plan 2016**

- City Staff prepared Jackson Boulevard Construction Documents and administered construction inspection
- District Design Principles for Jackson Boulevard Road Diet developed during planning efforts
- Based on design principles making this District a walkable community, commercial truck traffic routes were reconfigured
- Jackson Boulevard design was refined and reviewed by the River District Implementation Team
- City of Elkhart and RDIT presented finding and design to City Administration, Staff and Community
RIVER DISTRICT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
2017-2018
DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER

- Jackson Boulevard Convert to Tree Lined Three-Lane Boulevard Road Section
- On-Street Parking
- New Buildings to Engage the Street with Parking in the Rear of Buildings
- Wide Pedestrian Walkways and Crossings
RIVER DISTRICT
EXISTING CONDITIONS
JACKSON BOULEVARD BEFORE CONSTRUCTION
JACKSON BOULEVARD UTILITIES

- Jackson Boulevard runs through old industrial area.

- Many times, when undertaking a project such as the River District, you will find a significant number of old utility pipes, castings and fittings than you can imagine.

- During construction steam lines, raceway walls, clay telephone conduits, and more. Since these findings were unexpected, we needed to figure out on the fly how to protect and work around them.
Many motorists don’t like to drive slowly.

Motorists face distractions of various types while driving in urban areas.

Driving on a four-lane highway can take less mental concentration.

The goal of the project was two-fold; reduce travel speeds from 40 mph to 20 mph, and to make drivers more aware of conditions around them.

With these goals in mind, when the River District is filled with people, drivers will be aware of them, and take caution in their presence.
QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

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THANK YOU!