



Request for Proposals
Planning Services and Build Out Analysis
Grand Rapids, MI

Deadline:
Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. will receive proposals until March 12, 2020 (by 2pm local time)

Submit (via email) to:
Downtown Grand Rapids Inc.
Attention: Mark Miller
mmiller@downtowngr.org
29 Pearl Street NW
Suite 1
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Introduction

Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. (DGRI) and the City of Grand Rapids (City) are seeking proposals for planning services to conduct a build out analysis and district plan for publicly owned land in Downtown Grand Rapids. The project area (attached) sits on the west side of Downtown which has seen significant investment over the past 10 years. The public land, however, is predominantly surface parking lots, and DGRI and the City want to better understand the development potential to inform a future disposition strategy that will implement community goals.

Opportunity Overview

In the past decade, Downtown Grand Rapids and the City have experienced unparalleled growth, resulting in thousands of new residents, employees and visitors. In the past two years alone, Downtown saw the addition of 1,100 new residential units, 800 new hotel rooms, 300,000 sq. ft. of office, and the first downtown grocery store.

Construction is also underway for a major corporate headquarters, the second bus rapid transit (BRT) line in the State, and the second phase of the Michigan State University Research Center.

Despite this transformation, additional development opportunities exist. Further, work remains to ensure all members of the community are sharing equally in the ongoing economic success, and that important issues around affordable housing and job access are being addressed. To those important ends, DGRI and the City seek to understand how they can best leverage their assets, including real property, to drive additional growth to further strengthen the local economy and achieve community goals.

Background Information and Coordination with Other Initiatives

DGRI's work is directed by the GR Forward master plan which was developed through one of the most inclusive public engagement efforts in the City's history. GR Forward clearly defines the community's priorities for the next generation of growth in Downtown, and specifically examined growth potential of publicly owned land on the west side (attached).

- [GR Forward](#), 2015

The concepts developed during the community conversations were informed by, and helped to influence, other planning initiatives throughout the City and specifically for the westside. Below is a list of relevant resources and initiatives that offer important context specific to the project area, as well as the City.

- [City of Grand Rapids Equitable Economic Development and Mobility Plan, 2020](#)
- [Grand Rapids Bicycle Action Plan](#), 2019
- [City Strategic Plan, 2019](#)
- [Downtown Grand Rapids Streetspace Guidelines](#), 2019
- [Grand Rapids Destination Assets Study](#), 2017
- [Rose Center Fellowship Report](#), 2017
- [Grand Rapids Downtown Development Authority Development and TIF Plan](#), 2016
- [Westside TIF & Development Plan](#), 2014
- [Westside Area Specific Plan](#), 2014
- City of Grand Rapids Zoning Ordinance

Scope of Services

The successful candidate is expected provide the following deliverables, in a highly-visual format:

- Build out analysis to achieve community goals related to residential density and job creation.
- Scenario planning related to urban design and how potential build out enhances and/or creates public space, including adjacent streetspaces.
- Urban design recommendations to rebalance adjacent streetspaces as indicated in Downtown Streetspace Guidelines
- Engagement to build upon vision established in GR Forward
- Massing and height scenarios, including relationship of potential development to adjacent urban fabric
- Circulation, including accommodation of all modes: pedestrian, bike, transit, automobile, and trucks
- Implementation strategy for disposition

Proposed Project Schedule

Dates provided below are subject to change and will be refined with the successful project team.

- February 10, 2020 – RFQ Issued
- February 21, 2020 – Deadline for RFP Questions (by 5pm local time)
- February 28, 2020 – Question Responses (by 5pm local time)
- **March 12, 2020 – Proposals Due (by 2pm local time)**
- April 8, 2020 – Notice of Award
- April 15, 2020 – Commence Project
- June 19, 2020 – Submit Key Deliverables

Proposal Submittal Requirements

Submission to this request should be no longer than 10 pages, including cover and ending page. Pages may be double-sided. Page size should be 8½” x 11” in either portrait or landscape.

Proposal shall be submitted digitally in PDF format to mmiller@downtowngr.org

Proposal submission shall include, at minimum:

- Summary of project understanding.
- Firm overview of lead consultant and any subconsultants proposed to work on project.
- Key team members who will work on the project, including project manager.
- A description of experience in completing work of this type, including three (3) examples of similar projects in an urban context. Include project references.
- Project approach and schedule.
- Professional fee to complete the work as described. Fees shall include all tasks and staffing necessary to complete the project as outlined above and within your submitted proposal. All reimbursable expenses shall be included in this fee.

Registration

All interested consultants are encouraged to send an email to Mark Miller (mmiller@downtowngr.org) to register their intent to respond to this RFP. All firms expressing interest will be added to an email distribution list and will be notified if additional information related to the RFP becomes available. Firms failing to register in this manner may not receive all information relevant to the preparation of their proposals.

RFP Questions

Any questions regarding the proposal may be submitted by email to Mark Miller (mmiller@downtowngr.org). Questions may be submitted up until 5pm Friday, February 21, 2020. Responses will be sent to all registered participants no later than 5pm on Friday, February 28, 2020.

Evaluation Criteria

DGRI and partners will evaluate responses to this opportunity based on the following criteria:

- Thoroughness, quality and conciseness of the submittal.
- Project understanding and approach for achieving the stated objectives.
- Related project experience and demonstration of tangible results.
- Proven understanding of 21st century city building concerns, fundamentals and opportunities.
- Professional fees and strength of project team.

###

About Downtown Grand Rapids Inc.

DGRI is the organization responsible for city building and place-management in the urban core of Grand Rapids, Michigan, the state's second largest city. Established in 2013, DGRI serves as the singular management entity for the combined operations of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), the Downtown Improvement District (DID), and the Monroe North Tax Increment Finance Authority. More details can be found at www.downtowngr.org.

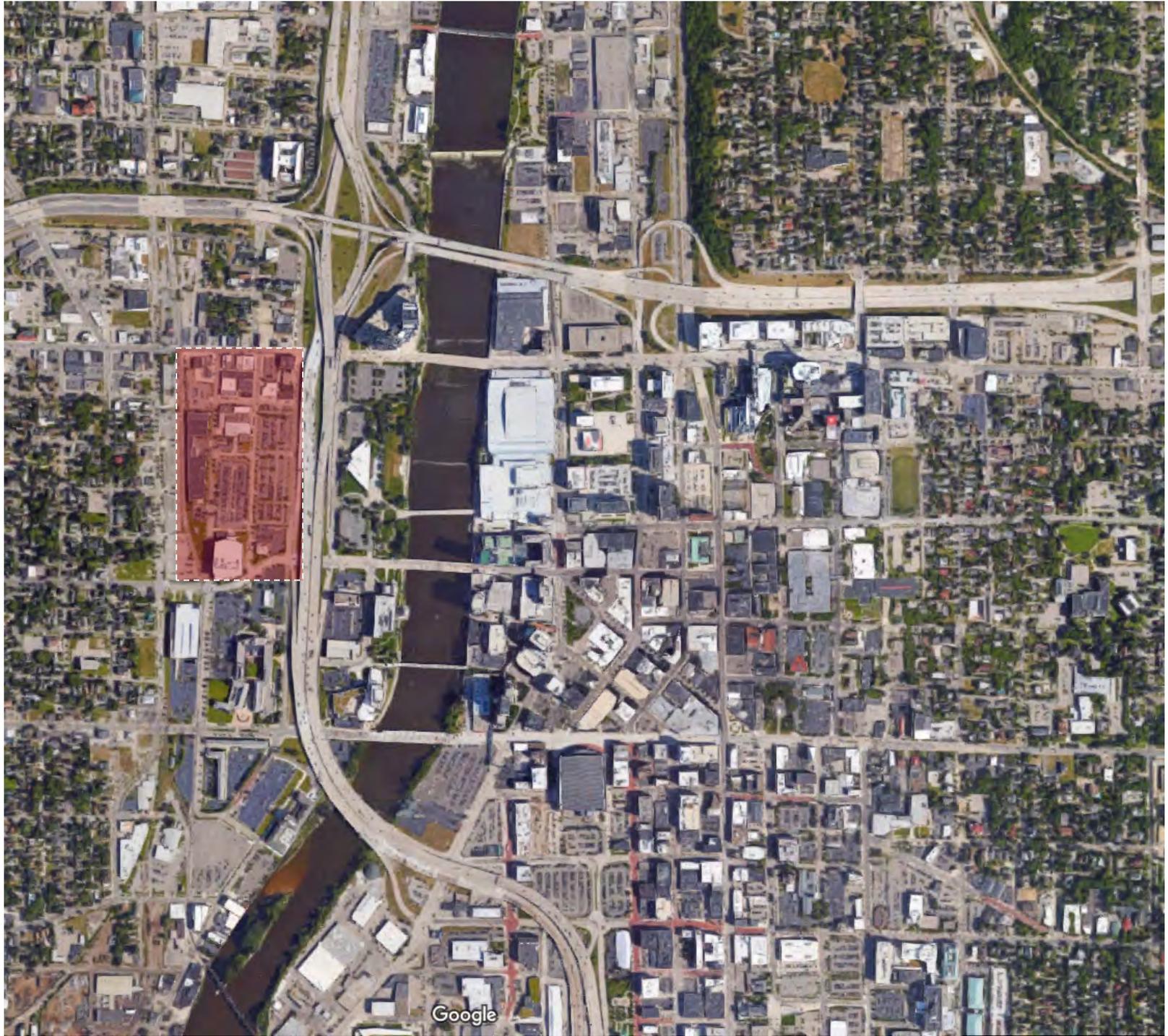
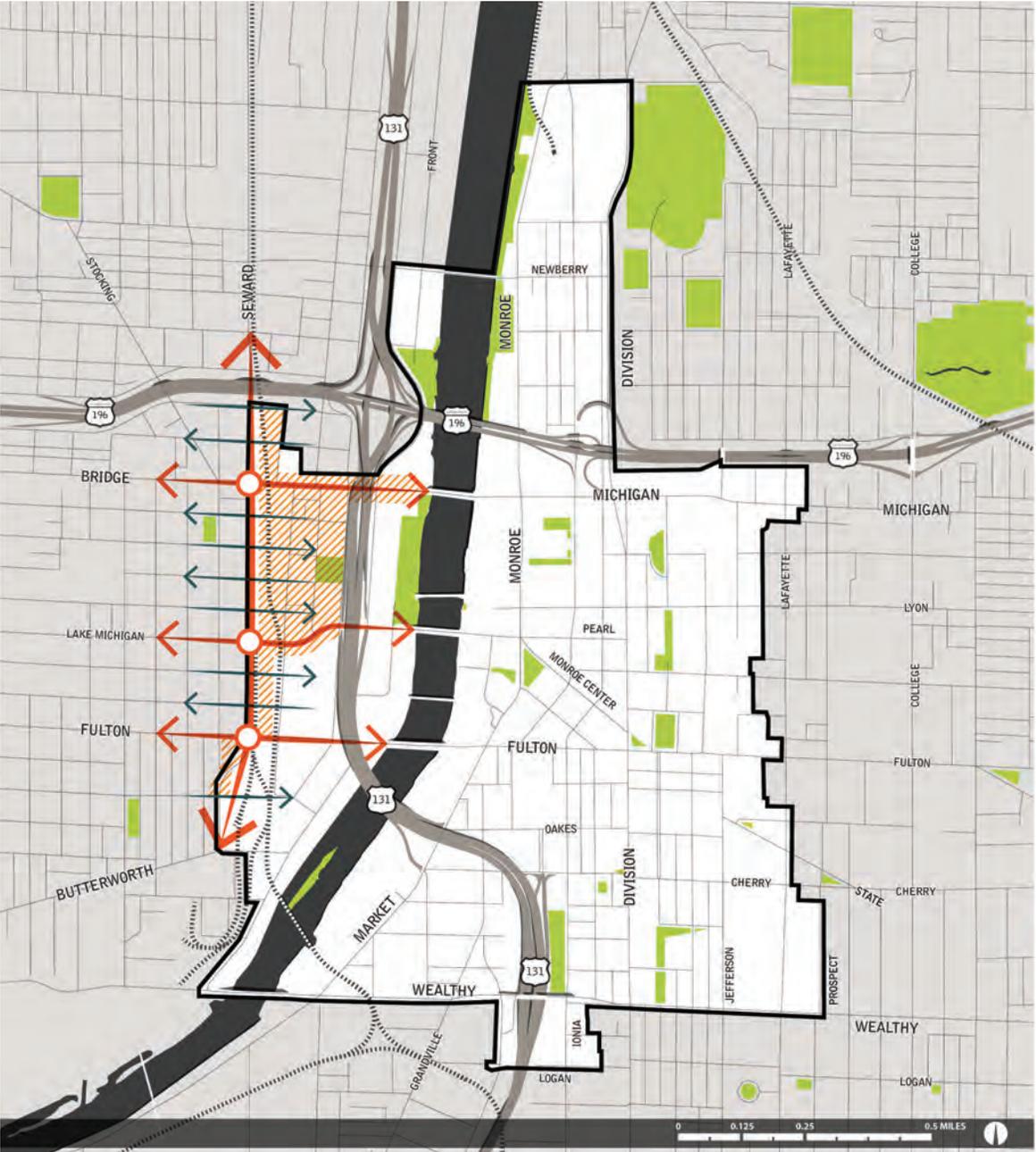




FIG 2.14: Diagram of Westside development opportunities



The opportunity is to encourage development that helps transition the Westside toward the River and Downtown. New infill development is proposed along Seward with higher densities focused east of the rail line near US 131.

- ↔ MAJOR CONNECTION
- ↔ SECONDARY CONNECTION
- POTENTIAL PARK SPACE / DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY
- DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY

FIG 2.15: Westside Considerations

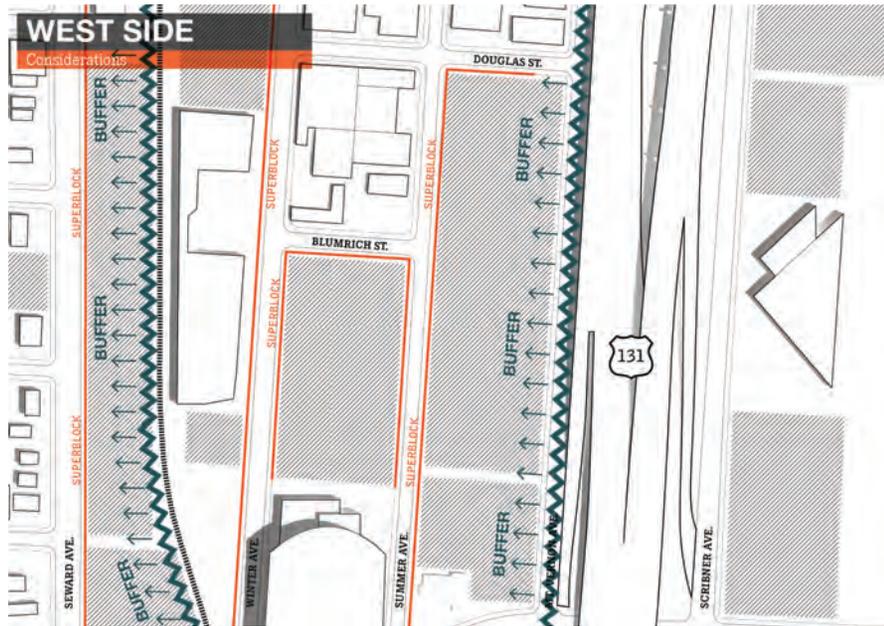
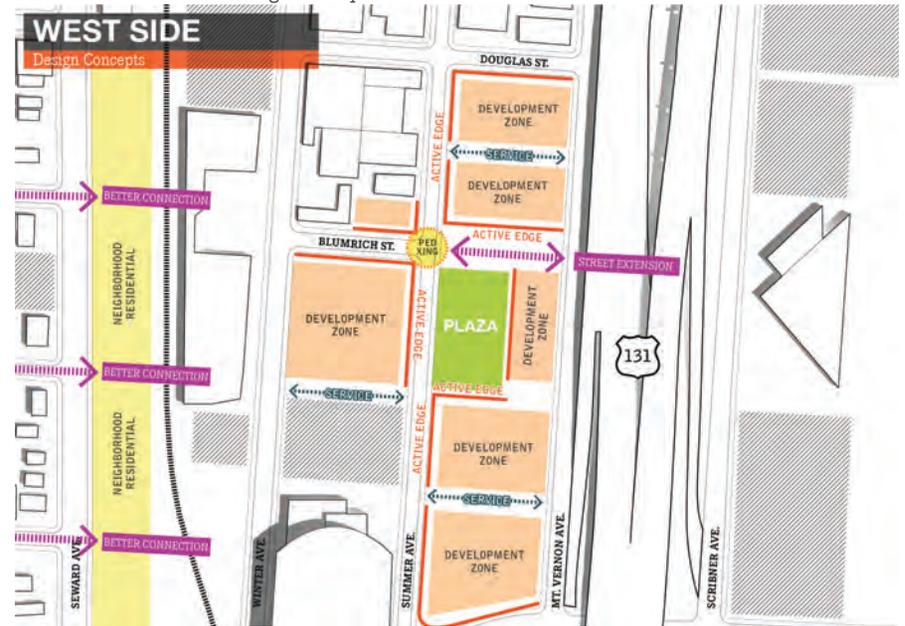


FIG 2.16: Westside Design Concepts



GR Forward took a 3-step approach to combat these challenges. The first is to address the transition from the Westside to Downtown particularly between Lexington and Seward. In accordance with the West Fulton Area-Specific Plan, this area should provide a range of housing types that help to transition the single-family Westside community to higher densities in Downtown. The range of housing include potential micro-units, attached and stacked neighborhood-scaled attached housing

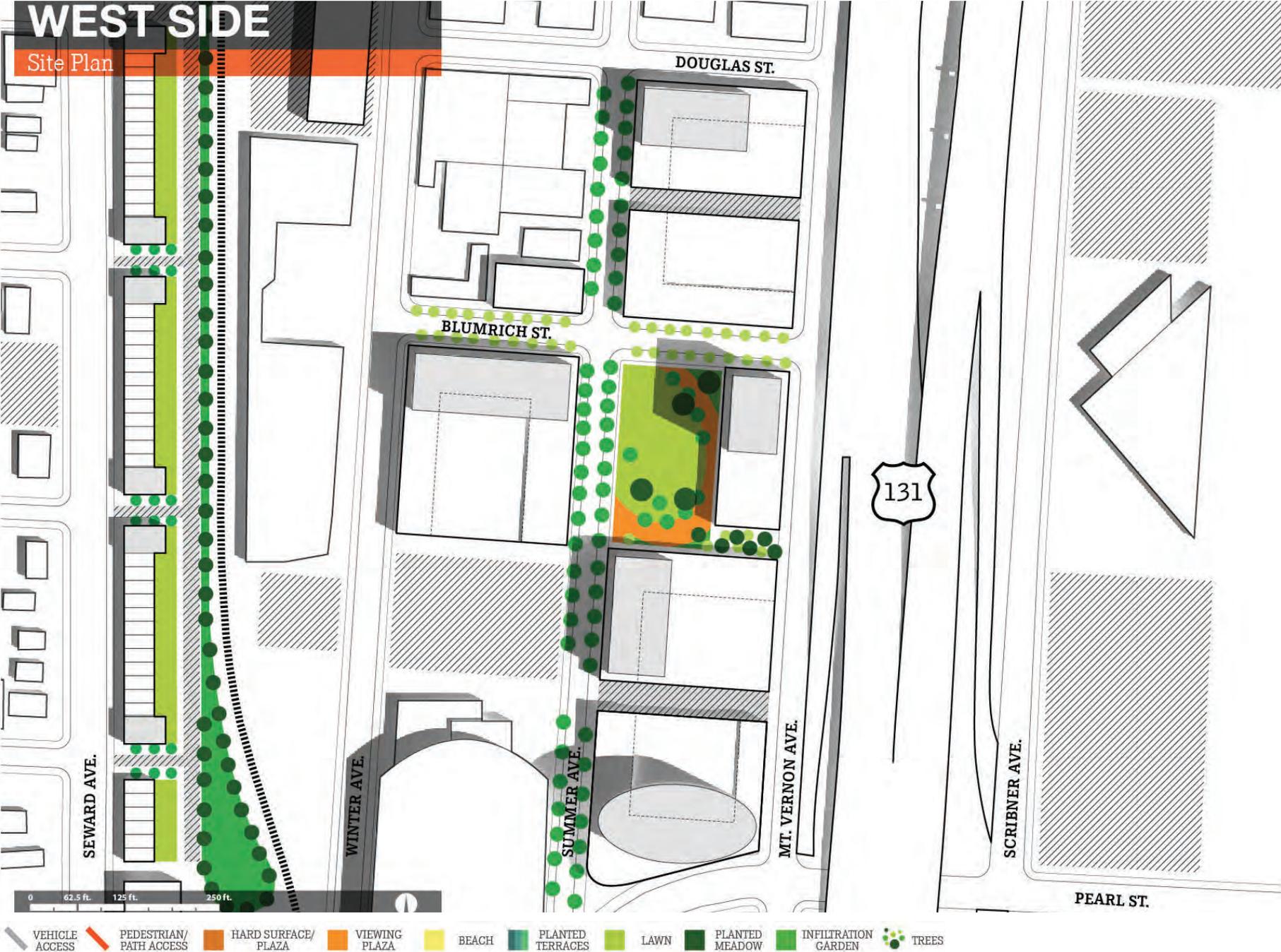
and multi-family apartments. This approach is reflective of recent and proposed/approved developments in the area.

The second recommendation is to improve the connections to the River and the Downtown core from the Westside. This can be accomplished by the development of new buildings [with ground floor commercial use] on major east-west streets including Bridge Street, Lake Michigan Drive, and Fulton Street. Bridge Street currently serves

as the primary commercial corridor for the neighborhood and the redevelopment of nearby parking lots will serve to create additional demand for new commercial uses. Although Lake Michigan and Fulton are comprised of larger institutional and commercial uses as well as parking lots, there are some opportunities for new development that would help to fill in some of the gaps between the near Westside and the River.

The conceptual plan for DDA-owned properties includes a mix of housing types and a new park [near Westside park] to serve as a gathering space for new and existing residents.

FIG 2.17: Westside Site Plan





Bridge Street Commercial Corridor on the Westside

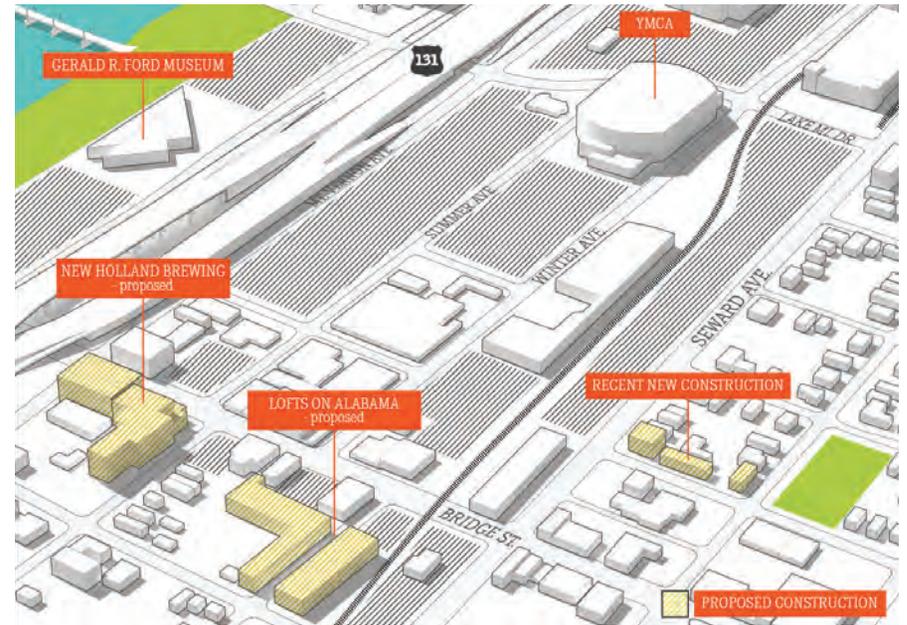


FIG 2.18: Westside Existing

Finally, the large parking lots bounded by Douglas, Mt Vernon, Lake Michigan Drive, and Winter Ave provide a unique opportunity to create a new neighborhood within the near Westside. The proposal is to extend Blumrich Street to Mt. Vernon to break the current “superblock” into a more suitable neighborhood scale. The site plan includes a new plaza south of the extended Blumrich Street that will serve as a gathering space for the neighborhood.

These improvements should serve to support GVSU’s ongoing campus investments. Once complete, these actions would serve to provide space for new residents, workers, and businesses, while forging much needed connections between the Westside and the River.

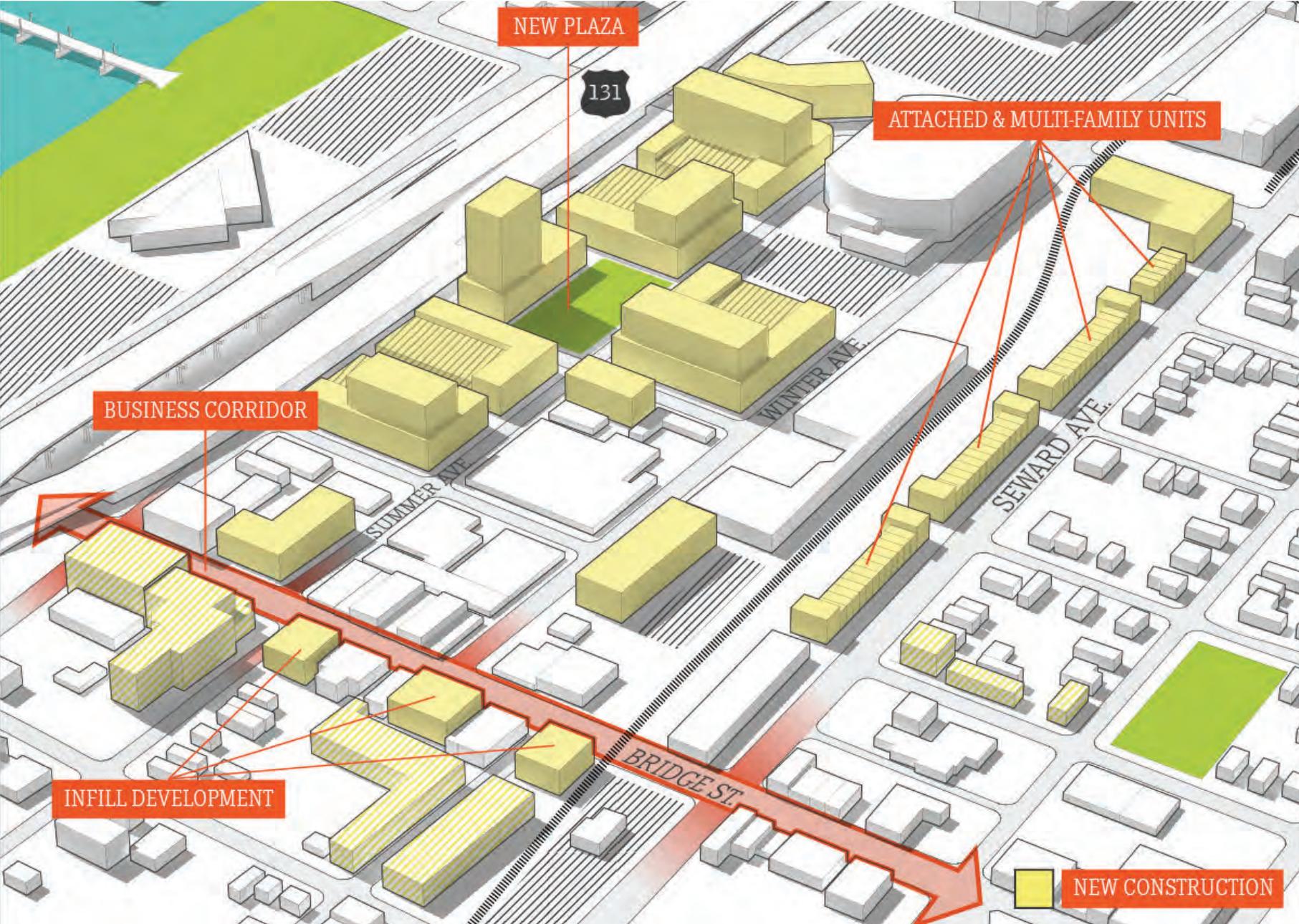


FIG 2.19: Westside Proposed