**NORTH MAIN HURON RIVER CORRIDOR PROJECT**  
**CITY-WIDE MEETING #1**

**Date:** Wednesday, May 22, 2013  
**Time:** 6:30 – 8:30 pm  
**Location:** Ann Arbor Community Center, 625 N. Main Street  
**Attendees:**  
- **Public present:** 64; refer to Appendix A for sign-in sheet  
- **Task Force members present:** 9; Bonnie Bona, Ray Detter, Paul Ganz, Julie Grand, Cynthia Ives, Darren McKinnon, Elizabeth Riggs, David Santacroce  
- **City staff present:** 4; Sumedh Bahl; Kayla Coleman; Connie Pulcipher; Colin Smith

**Re:** City-Wide Meeting #1

To view the presentation provided at the meeting, click [here](#) (links to external website).

A summary of feedback received at the meeting is provided below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th># of references</th>
<th>Representative quote</th>
<th>Notes/ summary</th>
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</table>
| Development preferences            | 24              | “Commercial establishments bring in tax revenue and give opportunities for those who aren’t recreating to still enjoy the river.”  
|                                   |                 | “Agree that development along river be encouraged but need a riverfront zoning district first”  
|                                   |                 | "The Huron River is a living system and needs to be protected from over development.” | Numerous references both for and against development along the river.                                                                         |
| DTE site                           | 20              | “DTE site: band shell would be a good idea.”  
|                                   |                 | “Pursue a linear park on DTE site.”  
|                                   |                 | “I would like to see the entire site preserved for parkland and/or future expansion of the rail station.”  
|                                   |                 | “If possible, the City place a millage on city ballot and purchase the DTE property.” | A range of suggestions were offered for this site, preference toward parks and mixed use.                                                     |
| Main Street vehicle and pedestrian traffic | 19           | “Slower speed on N. Main is needed- it is very dangerous leaving New Center.”  
|                                   |                 | “HAWK signal installation should be a short term goal”  
|                                   |                 | “Completing the sidewalk along N. Main seems like a good idea” | Many suggestions offered, typically focused on improving pedestrian safety.                                                                     |
| Main at Depot/ Summit              | 16              | “Especially like the idea for a pedestrian crossing across Main at Depot.”  
|                                   |                 |                                                                                     | Overall support for proposed traffic flow improvements                                                                                      |
| Pedestrian crossing of railroad    | 14              | “Railroad underpasses are creepy and dangerous... I would rather risk making the illegal crossing over railroad than going through a tunnel.”  
<p>|                                   |                 | “Access from Main Street to the Border to Border trail is critical, whether by tunnel or other means. Would really like this to be a high priority and actually <em>happen.</em>” | Overall support for a safe crossing of railroad. Preference seems to tend toward bridge rather than tunnel.                                     |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced access to Bandemer Park</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>“Priority #2: Pedestrian access to Bandemer from N. Main”</td>
<td>Various comments, no profound consensus.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>“I think that the one lane bridge at Bandemer is adequate for park traffic. Gallop park also has a one lane bridge and it has more traffic than Bandemer.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>721 N Main</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>“Support for reuse of the building at 721 N. Main; support for use as an activity center to create, socialize, network”</td>
<td>Most comments focused on reuse of existing buildings.</td>
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<td>Railroad crossing at Lakeshore Dr</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>“Safety issues at Lakeshore Drive crossing; be proactive to save the crossing, need to be more aggressive.”</td>
<td>Overall support for maintaining the Lakeshore Drive crossing.</td>
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<td>Park &amp; ride lot</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>“Not in favor of park &amp; ride lot along Barton.”</td>
<td>Comments were unanimously negative toward the proposed park and ride lot.</td>
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<td>“Park and ride is not a good idea, Don't want to attract more traffic to NB entrance to M14”</td>
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<td>Roundabout</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>“I really like the idea of roundabout and I think the City could advocate for more signs to slow down, even though MDOT has final word, they are not immune from local pressure.”</td>
<td>Almost entirely positive support for roundabout</td>
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<td>Main Street visual enhancements</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>“Gardening to make the entry into town more appealing.”</td>
<td>Few comments on whether or not to invest in visual enhancements along North Main Street.</td>
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<td>“Making Main St. &quot;pretty&quot; as you fly by in your car from the highway should be the lowest priority.”</td>
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Complete meeting notes, responses from written feedback forms, feedback submitted via online forum (A2 Open City Hall), and other feedback received via email are provided below.

(NOTE: comments from meeting discussion are not a direct transcription. Documentation of meeting discussion, as provided below, has been developed from notes taken during the meeting; comments are paraphrased. Where clarification and/or response to comments were provided from task force members, City staff, or other members of the audience, they are shown in italics)

- Comments received via open meeting discussion are denoted with a black bullet point.
  - Comments received via written feedback forms are denoted with a white bullet point.
  - Comments received via online forum (A2 Open City Hall) are denoted with a black square.
  - Other comments received via email are denoted with a white square.

**Issues/ areas that the task force has failed to identify:**

- Barton sidewalk gap needs to be included in the North Main improvements discussion. Brede crosswalk needed.
  - Development of Bluffs Park and access
  - Accessibility (financial, or for persons with disabilities) of recreation on this side of town. Rethink "development"! Imagine!
You've done a great job as a committee identifying lots of problem areas. Thanks for all of your work.

- I think they have the main ones.
- Yes, they are stopping too short of the holistic approach to some of the problems they have identified, for example, the sidewalk gap at the Barton - boardwalk entrance to Bandamer is not part of this, although many other access points to Bandamer are addressed. The properties outlined in the presentation as neglected maintenance and derelict with view blocking fences are active commercial properties, and have a right to exist in that location. I think that attempts to 'sanitize' this corridor with the focus on traffic and recreation related to the riverfront fails to account for the rights of those property owners. Also, there needs to be access to Bluffs and the west side of main addressed in a better way, which may be in there I don't know. I know it is difficult to work with MDOT but the idea of turning Main into 3 lanes is terrible, just fix the pot-hole strewn approach ramps and streets, please.

- The significance of natural areas in North Main Huron River Corridor were not fully discussed. For example, landscaping with native trees and plants was not mentioned during the discussion. Restoration of natural areas on city property would help educate the public about landscaping with native plants on private property.
- Significance of Argo Pond and Huron River as a migratory, refuge corridor for birds.
- It strikes me that we don't have a vibrant riverfront scene. For all of the redevelopment we love to do, we seem to have completely forgotten about the Huron River. It would be awesome to have shops and restaurants there...imagine a nice paddle up pub/restaurant....
- Yes....that having a traffic circle for M14 would be a night mare of a traffic jam.
- Many thanks to the north Main-Huron River Vision Task Force for their care, their thoughtful observation and creativity, and their openness to the voices of the wider community. Many ideas and visions well-suited to the lay of the land and to the community’s needs have surfaced, along with clarity about limiting factors – most especially MDOT’s powers. In the spirit of many of the suggestions voiced at the meeting, I urge the following also be identified: (1) The vision of a human-scale, human friendly river-front arts performance park for DTE Energy’s site that takes advantage of what is there already (a large paved area next to a large grassed area) and fully respects the floodplain position of the land at a critical bend in the river just below a dam. The paved area and floodplain location call out for becoming a tented performance area for music festivals, musical performances, plays, arts and crafts fairs, etc. and food carts vending food and drinks, with the grassy area adjoining it making excellent seating for people spreading blankets on the ground, and a children’s play area added toward the western edge of the grassy area away from the river. People could arrive by train, by bike, by foot, with no need for a parking lot. This could become a signature park for Ann Arbor setting the example of providing a premier community amenity open to all, accessible by all, and all without a parking lot. It would truly honor the spirit of the Huron River as well. (2) Co-operative community relationship building by using the building(s) at 721 North Main to provide community work for community members out of work. The building(s) there could be used to store materials and provide work area and equipment for people making improvements in the community. A beautiful example of an improvement to the community is the recent painting of the tiny building at the NE corner of Summit and North Main. Whoever did the painting and left the chalkboard question of what the tiny building is dreaming of becoming is to be much applauded. It was a magical unsung improvement that transformed overnight a blighted building into something bright and cheerful. (3) The Ann Arbor community mounting a campaign to simply start driving slower on North Main. It is my understanding that the speed limit is set at 45 mph there because MDOT recorded traffic going that speed, and in recent years MDOT decided to raise speed limits to fit the speed...
of the traffic (seems a tad on the dangerous side to me, but that is what it is). So, if we adjust our speed to 35 mph instead, doesn’t MDOT have to lower the speed limit? I was disappointed to see that no MDOT representative was present at the May 22 meeting. Thank you for this opportunity to voice my appreciation, my observations, and my recommendations. I wish us all well in improvements to the North Main-Huron River gateway to the city and Ann Arbor’s lovely meandering heart -- the Huron River.

☐ The Report is silent on the major flaw of the N. Main St. and M-14 interchange, which should be made complete by adding an on ramp from W. Huron River Drive to M-14 West, and an off ramp from M-14 East to Huronview Boulevard, with a right turn at the end of that short street onto N. Main Street to facilitate southbound traffic headed into Ann Arbor.

This would take traffic pressure off the unsafe Barton Road exit and off Barton Road, and take traffic pressure off Jackson Road and off N. Maple Road and Miller Avenue. If current USDOT rules don’t allow it based on minimum spacing of exits on interstate highways, then assistance from our Congressional delegation should be sought to get a waiver from the Secretary of Transportation, who can waive the rules.

721 N. Main (#1): (11 comments)

- Support for reuse of the building at 721 N. Main; support for use as an activity center to create, socialize, network.
- Reuse of building at 721 N. Main: a community center. Music, art, garden the landscape. Give people a place.
- Don’t lose the vision of the entire greenway, North and South.
- The Greenway is important, want to connect Ann Arbor with the Border-to-Border trail.
- Did CNG fueling station contaminate 721? DTE response: No, but CNG station will be coming out. At the time that it was put in it made sense because the City Public Works facility; but now that the use of 721 N Main has changed, it doesn’t make sense to remain at that location.
- When will the sheds at 721 N. Main be taken down? (re: FEMA grant that was received) City staff response: The bid is out right now.
  - Please turn 721 N Main and the proposed park nearby into an art and music activity / community center (this was taken away when the former art space on Washington was torn down for the new YMCA.) It will bring the community together in meaningful activity and bring out people's talents and gifts.
  - Please consider re-using 721 N Main as an activity center (music, art, landscaping, imagining) for all of A2's citizens. It can be a gateway for artistic wealth and testimony to the power of art. It is affordable luxury.
  - Please turn 721 N. Main into a community activity center. Please work with non-profit 'Imagine Community' in this endeavor. Please make sure the land is not contaminated. No more high story commercial buildings please. :)
- Item #1- yes!
  - I also applaud DTE Energy for removal of the natural gas refueling station (thank you DTE!). I encourage community-building, community relationships and co-operative spirit surround the buildings at 721 North Main to help provide work for out-of-work community members to make improvements to our community.
DTE Gas site (#2 through #5 on the Huron River Corridor Map):

Pedestrian crossing of railroad (14 comments)

- Want to encourage people to get to the river. Take opportunities to improve access to the river. Need to tap into outside resources.
- Agree with almost all of these ideas; excited about the tunnel
- Washtenaw Bicycling and Walking Coalition (WBWC) priority #2: #2 is important, but in the wrong place, needs to be moved.
- Tunnel under railroad tracks is better than crossing the tracks. A bridge could work.
- As a runner in the neighborhood I would rather risk the fine for the illegal crossing than to go up and around (it is too far, a couple of miles detour to make a legal crossing is a big deal to someone who is only running a couple of miles total).
- What is the length of tunnels under the railroad berm? ~ 80ft.
- Because the Border-to-Border trail (B2B) runs along the railroad tracks- there will continue to be illegal crossings no matter how many bridges get put in.
- Railroad underpasses are creepy and dangerous. If you don’t have a lot of eyes on the site it would be dangerous and I would rather risk making the illegal crossing over railroad than going through a tunnel.
- Not excited about potential pedestrian tunnel at #10 and #2
  - #2 underpass needs to be closer to Main St. then #15 bridge isn’t necessary.
  - Priority #1: Safe Railroad crossings
  - Item #2- yes, but closer to Main street to catch that traffic from dam.
    - All sound good. Access from Main Street to the Border to Border trail is critical, whether by tunnel or other means. Would really like this to be a high priority and actually *happen.*
    - I applaud the Task Force’s ideas for pedestrian/bike bridges (much better idea than tunnels that take on a sinister feel after dark and invite flooding in low-lying areas) across the railroad tracks and North Main for improved foot and bike access to the Huron River, to DTE Energy’s river-front site, and to established pedestrian/bike trails bordering the river.

DTE Gas site (20 comments)

- DTE- think about leaving it natural park for children
- When will DTE go public with their ideas for the DTE gas site? DTE response: working on taking out structures, remediation then determining best use. Gathering ideas to determine highest and best use. We are not in a hurry to make a bad decision.
- DTE site: would like that for people of all income levels to enjoy.
- Concern about building on floodway/ floodplain- re: plan at DTE site.
- DTE site: band shell would be a good idea.
- Does potentially purchasing property in floodplain include the DTE site?
  - Looks good. If canoe/kayak livery is instead of Argo, then I don’t see it. I like #5 better than #4.
  - Could you clean it up, please, in a very innovative, progressive and environmental way. Use it as natural landscape dirt trails, heirloom plants, wildlife habitat. No commercial buildings please.
  - As for the DTE site- I hope it will be parkland and perhaps a restaurant- but not as expensive as Gandy Dancer.
  - I was disappointed that there was no timeline on at least some plan. Not even a guess? I didn't want a specific plan- just an idea on process.
  - Item #3-mixed use sounds good. Item #4- #5 is better to me. Item #5- yes to make connection.
This would be a great location for a dog park. Ann Arbor needs a downtown dog park for people without cars who live downtown (since that seems to be a demographic the City aims to attract).

- Like the idea of rentable kayak storage.
- I would like to see the entire site preserved for parkland and/or future expansion of the rail station. I know it is a private property, but the city should consider making the purchase as an investment in the future. We can always sell it later, when an agreeable and practical use, which benefits the majority of area residents, is proposed. Right now it is looking like a skinny park near the rivers edge, bumped up against a potential 10 story mixed use building. I don't see how that would benefit the neighborhood. Also, not so keen on the constant jockeying and relocating of the livery services. I thought the rapids were supposed to simplify that passage for canoeists, instead it has made it worse.

- If possible, the city place a millage on city ballot and purchase the DTE property. Adding another canoe livery there seems like a good idea. Planting native trees would help restore that area. An education board with map of Huron River watershed and a photo display of native animal and plant species found along river would enhance public experience of the river. An aquarium with native fish species would be a field trip destination.

- Would like to see plantings that are wildlife friendly.
- Great! I love the idea of a Gallup like refreshment area and a place for big, outdoor events! Nice job!
- I also applaud a representative of DTE Energy’s river-front-site planning group for being present at the May 22 city-wide meeting and listening to the Task Force’s presentation and the comments and suggestions of the Ann Arbor community that followed.

- WBWC Priority #3-- Pursue a linear park on DTE site: The creation of parkland on the DTE site, either the entire site or at least the entire portion along the river, with a multiuse trail southeast to and under the Broadway Bridge and north to the B2B Trail and a bridge across the Allen Creek outlet, will create continuity in our park system and allow community members better experience the river’s beauty.

- The Report on page 57 proposes adding “Livery Operations” at the DTE site less than 1/3rd mile from the Argo Canoe Livery. This “improvement” is the “fix” to a mistake our city leaders made when approving plans for the rapids. The Argo Rapids are Class II, according to the company that made them, and as such while it was expected canoes would use the rapids, it turned out to be impossible thanks to the design because when inexperienced canoeists first began using city owned canoes to go down the Argo Cascades the canoes got banged up and severely damaged.

So now, the city doesn’t allow their canoes to go down the Argo Cascades, and if you want to canoe the entire length of the river from Dexter Huron Metropolitan Park to Gallup Park Dam (as opposed to starting at Argo Canoe Livery only) you are required to drag the canoe a third of a mile for the length of the Argo Rapids. Personally I have the skill to get a canoe down those rapids no problem but I don't own a canoe and rent the city's every time I go, so the city's policy is just about the same as I can't transit the entire river served by the city canoe livery's in a canoe anymore. The practical result is the same. AND, with two little kids who can't help carry the canoe, the 1/3 mile portage will not work for me and my family at all. That experience of canoeing the entire river is I guess now closed off to me and my kids. Bummer!

But, rather than building yet another expensive canoe livery to fix this fiasco, why not build some steps down to the river at the head of the Argo Cascades, and set it up to make it possible so you can launch a canoe from there? It would save a lot of money and restore one of the
major recreational amenities to the residents our of town, the ability to transit the whole river from Dexter Huron Metropolitan Park to Gallup Park Dam.

In addition to the steps, why not have the city's Rec and Ed department provide paddling instruction, with real instructors, not just kids who ALMOST know how to paddle. Once paddlers achieve a certain skill level, the City could issue a "Paddling License" that allowed those paddlers to take City canoes through the "Cascades."

This would be a much more realistic fix than building and staffing a completely separate livery set-up just a few feet from the existing one. And I'm sure that improving the paddling skills of its customers would help with the City's liability as well. It could actually be priced to make a small profit and fund other needed things in the parks or canoe livery service.

Preferences toward ‘Development Activity Interacting with River Amenities’ (24 comments)

- Agree that development along river be encouraged but need a riverfront zoning district first
- Master plan? Zoning along the river; how do these fit together? If the views are gone then the river is gone.
- Support for commercial development, look into partnerships (e.g. Zingermans at Gallup Park)
- Commercial support - food carts along the river
- Get commercial businesses as a near term goal.
- Commercial establishments bring in tax revenue and give opportunities for those who aren’t recreating to still enjoy the river.
- Opportunities to extend “nightlife” along North Main.
- Place by the river- a place to dance, eat, enjoy. We need to enhance the potential to enjoy these things along the Huron River.
- Other uses, beyond outdoor recreational opportunities. Not everyone is a runner, rower, kayaker, etc.
- Rather see private land leased for commercial development than using parkland for commercial development.
- Commercial - preference for mixed use. Need to get people there. What is the zoning? Need to get people there to shop, to live, to eat.
- Picnic tables along the water
- “It is called lower-town because buildings are low, not 8-story town”
- Building heights along N. Main should be minimized. Some areas downtown are too tall.
- Not for development. Walking paths are great (dirt paths especially)
- Land along the river is sacred.
- Would want people of Ann Arbor to control the land along the river.
- Don’t want to see parkland reduced.
- Task force response: We need to get pedestrian activity in the area for the businesses to thrive. Commercial development may be a long term goal.
- City staff clarification: Most land along the river is already owned by the City, and the City has taken opportunities to purchase land along the river whenever possible.
  - No more high story commercial buildings please.
  - The Huron River is a living system and needs to be protected from over development.
  - The City should consider tax abatement for owners of private parcels which are needed for river development.
  - Access to river is important. Not in favor of commercial on river, keep it natural. Thanks.
Border to Border and Huron River Water Trails (Argo Dam through Bandemer Park; #6 through #9 on the Huron River Corridor Map):

**Railroad crossing at Lakeshore Dr** (9 comments)
- Safety issues at Lakeshore Drive crossing; be proactive to save the crossing, need to be more aggressive.
- Possibility of gates at the railroad crossing?
- High speed rail- can't make curve on current tracks at high speed.
- There are consequences of high speed rail.
- At Lakeshore Drive tracks may be blocked. Not a simple matter. It is a railroad yard.
- What is the timeframe for high speed rail implementation? Task force response: It looks like the railroad is working on improvements to the tracks, but we don’t know the exact timeframe for high speed rail implementation.
- Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers: Most work will be done this year for the high-speed rail. Battle Creek to Dearborn in 2014. Can’t go 110mph around the curves of the current track, but they will be going faster.
  - Item #6- yes- important to do!
    - I applaud the Task Force’s support for keeping the signaled railroad light.

**Park & Ride Lot** (8 comments)
- Not in favor of park & ride lot along Barton.
- Park & ride lot is a bad idea. Not going to make a big impact on traffic and it’s a wetland area.
- Move park and ride lot farther out, e.g. the rest area off of Northbound U.S. 23 (Whitmore Lake Rd. area); or is there already one in that location?
  - #8 Park and ride is not a good idea, Don’t want to attract more traffic to NB entrance to M14
  - I agree that the park and ride site is too close to town and in a dangerous location. It can be sited further north.
  - Item #8-no, don't attract more cars.
    - I think that site #8 on the map is too small to be developed as a park and ride lot. Also there is a small stream in that area that empties into the Huron River. A rough trail through the area is used by bikers and dog walkers. Perhaps that trail could be better maintained with some fill but not paved.
    - Not so keen on dedicating lots of land to a park and ride lot.

**Enhanced access to Bandemer Park** (12 comments)
- Washtenaw Bicycling and Walking Coalition (WBWC) priority #4: need the strip along the river to connect to the Border-to-Border trail.
  - All your ideas here are very good. Especially like the tunnel under the tracks at the top of Bandemer.
  - MDOT will allow a bridge or tunnel over the tracks, but not a gated crossing? That makes no sense.
  - Priority #2: Pedestrian access to Bandemer from N. Main
  - Item #9-No, very little traffic there do only if #6 fails.
    - Again, a link from the trail to the north end of the park to Huron River Drive is vital. Glad it’s on the list, but I feel like "long term goal" means "not in our lifetime." And this one in particular seems like it shouldn't be that difficult or expensive. Also I would like to note, if we can achieve
this, and also the access from Main Street near Argo Dam (both of which are needed regardless), then it seems to me the path along Main Street becomes unnecessary. People could just use the trail, which would be a much better experience.

- The river loop works pretty well right now, it would be great to consider some ped crossings up/down onto main near the Argo Dam, although a tunnel doesn’t seem like the best solution. The ped tunnel under the M14 Barton exchange is basically a sewer you can walk through. How about bridges?
- I think that the one lane bridge at Bandemer is adequate for park traffic. Gallop park also has a one lane bridge and it has more traffic than Bandemer.
- I like the idea of improving the pedestrian corridor and separating it visually and acoustically from the RR tracks and the traffic on N main. Underground tracks crossing sounds good.
- Path along Main Street, yes!
- I applaud the Task Force’s ideas for: (1) pedestrian/bike bridges across the railroad tracks and North Main for improved foot and bike access to the Huron River, to DTE Energy’s river-front site, and to established pedestrian/bike trails bordering the river; (2) slowing motorized traffic and extending sidewalks on North Main to improve foot and bike access to the Huron River and to the first leg of the Ann Arbor Greenway – 721 North Main – thus making pedestrian and bike access to Ann Arbor’s downtown much more feasible.

- WBWC Priority #1a -- Northern underpass: Create a legal pedestrian/bicycle connection between Bandemer Park and Huron River Drive, extending the Border-to-Border Trail and allowing access to Barton Parks, Huron River Drive.
  Preferred method: Underpass (open-style if possible) beneath Amtrak line.
  Possible alternatives:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Alternative</th>
<th>Drawbacks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Follow Barton Shore Drive and cross Barton Dam.</td>
<td>Doesn’t directly link parks and Huron River Drive. Land not currently controlled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow north side of railroad to Barton Dam.</td>
<td>Doesn’t directly link parks and Huron River Drive. Land not currently controlled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build bridge over railroad.</td>
<td>Would require ~500-foot ramps on both sides.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go under railroad at river bridge.</td>
<td>Tight clearance. Long boardwalks required. Circuitous.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross railroad at Lake Shore Drive and extend Main Street sidewalk under M-14.</td>
<td>Doesn’t directly link parks and Huron River Drive. Unpleasant and treacherous route along Main. Railroad crossing may be lost</td>
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Other
- Can’t fish in Argo now because of rowing.
  - More native plants. No more high-story commercial buildings, please.
  - Make sure there are cafes and fine dining restaurants if at all possible.
  - Item #7 low priority
  - (1) Cyclists often go through here too fast now that the usage has increased and this whole area is packed in the summer (2) kayak/ canoe storage lockers would be AMAZING. I would pay for that, too, in an annual fee of some kind.
North Main Street (Huron River Dr. to the railroad overpass; #10 through #14 on the Huron River Corridor Map):

Miscellaneous Main Street vehicle and pedestrian traffic (19 comments)
- Slower speed on N. Main is needed- it is very dangerous leaving New Center.
- Crosswalks needed North of Depot- but we need a sidewalk first... which comes first?
- HAWK signal installation should be a short term goal (could use rapid flashing beacon as an alternative, less expensive).
- Bluffs- very dangerous. If you are going to have a park there needs to be a safe entrance/ exit.
- Note: speed and location of crosswalks is determined by the State.
- Washtenaw Bicycling and Walking Coalition (WBWC) priority #1: #10 is most important; Prefer underpass rather than tunnel
- Washtenaw Bicycling and Walking Coalition (WBWC) priority #3: #11 Extend main street sidewalk under M14 bridge.
- North Main should be reduced in width or other speed reduction measures, such as the roundabout at the M14/Huron River Dr intersection. This is necessary to make pedestrians feel safer there. Also, sidewalks need to be moved away from the streets edge to better separate cars and peds.
- Please do NOT reduce the lanes on N Main St. Need for 5 lanes of traffic to make life bearable.
- Please focus on pedestrian and bike traffic, and development will be an easy sell.
- Item #10-yes, yes- please.
- Item #11-yes, great idea!
- Item #13-yes, but sidewalk improvements for Bluffs Park first.
- Item #14- yes.
- Need to work with Railroad to get a crossing onto Huron River Drive, which will go a long way toward eliminating bike traffic on N Main. Fixing the sidewalks on the east side of Main would be a big help.
- Completing the sidewalk along N. Main seems like a good idea. Widening the Main St. right of way might help relieve some traffic congestion. Building an elevated pedestrian walkway over Main St at Lakeshore would remove pedestrians from traffic.
- Yes! That sidewalk is horrible. Some friends and I were walking back to my house from an event further north on Main and practically had to hold hands to make sure we made it okay (it was dark).
- WBWC Priority #2 -- Improve & preserve pedestrian access along the corridor: Although sidewalks along both sides of North Main Street clearly have merit, in the short-term the following pedestrian improvements are critical along the corridor:
  - Repair, extend, and if possible, widen the sidewalk along the east side of North Main Street from Depot to M14. Enhance the pedestrian experience through landscaping and pedestrian friendly streetscapes.
  - Improve pedestrian crossings at Depot/North Main Street and at the Bluffs Park through the use of signalized crossings and pedestrian actuated signals.
  - Install an auto/pedestrian/bike gate for at-grade railroad crossings on Lakeshore Road to preserve the one legal crossing onto the Border to Border Trail from North Main Street.
  - Extend the sidewalk north under M14 to Huron River Drive. If the construction of the two underpasses listed above should be delayed, the sidewalk extension and improvements provide interim relief for pedestrians and off-road bicyclists who want to travel to parks along this corridor and to Huron River Drive.
WBWC Priority #3-- Improve the bicycling experience and safety: Although bike lanes would be ideal along this corridor, geography along the corridor makes it difficult to realize this goal. A number of types of bicyclists traverse this area daily, from youth cyclists accessing the rowing clubs to road cyclists accessing Huron River Drive to everyday commuter cyclists trying to access their workplaces along the corridor. Meeting the needs of each user group requires a variety of solutions.

Improved access to the Border to Border Trail, sidewalk improvements, and enhanced pedestrian crossings will meet the needs of youth cyclists, cyclists who wish to access the Border to Border Trail and those wishing to access the numerous mountain biking trails in the area. However, to meet the needs of the needs of road cyclists and bike commuters along the corridor, the following improvements are necessary in the short-term:
- Repave North Main Street and mark right lane with sharrows. The street is currently treacherous and filled with potholes, MDOT needs to repave this road soon and recognize that its maintenance needs may be more frequent than other MDOT roads to protect the cyclists that travel this roadway.
- Reduce the speed limit to 35mph and enforce lower speeds. Reductions in speeds will benefit all users, including drivers who must exit driveways along North Main Street. However, they are critical to bicyclists who travel along this corridor, particularly those traveling south bound where no sidewalks are present and speeds are dangerously high, with many motorists traveling at speeds greater than 45mph.

Roundabout (7 comments)
- Roundabout with ample warning would slow people down. Yay to the roundabout.
- Regarding traffic patterns at #12: wonderful idea, there are variant needs of people in cars, it is a complicated intersection.
  - I really like the idea of roundabout and I think the City could advocate for more signs to slow down, even though MDOT has final word, they are not immune from local pressure.
  - Yes! To #12 roundabout, it would: (1) slow Southbound traffic off the M14 (2) allow access to and egress from Huron River Dr. (3) filter Northbound traffic as it enters M14
  - Roundabout please
  - Item #12-yes, wonderful slows southbound traffic, allows Huron River Drive.

Further exploration of a roundabout at the entrance to M14 is warranted since it could reduce speeds, allow for easier turning movements onto/off of Huron River Drive, and provide for transit routes along North Main Street.

Main Street Visual Enhancements (4 comments)
- N. Main is an ugly entry; most of the land is private. Think about working with the private property owners to improve appearance.
- Gardening to make the entry into town more appealing.
- More native plants, no more high-story commercial buildings please.
  - Making Main St. "pretty" as you fly by in your car from the highway should be the lowest priority. Adding vegetation and fixing sidewalks/ crossings will bring people and those properties will be sold or redeveloped.

Other
- All sounds good.
- All good.
Main at Depot/ Summit (#15 through #16 on the Huron River Corridor Map): (16 comments)

- Support for most of the concepts for traffic flow.
  - No to #15, Yes to #16. Thanks.
  - Could you consider running a 3rd lane on the right of Main St. as it approaches Depot from the North, then taking that traffic (to the hospital) up and over Main St. on a bridge? (I know the area is thick with buildings, but there must be some solution).
  - Make the owner of abandoned gas station at Main between depot and summit fix it up or tear it down.
  - Wider sidewalk, railing, or other "separator" between traffic and pedestrians will increase walkability. For example, there are trees and other separators along the sidewalk downtown; these work well to make pedestrians feel safe.
  - Item #15- No, too elaborate, see #2 comment.
  - Item #16- yes.
  - (1) If tunnels are deemed to be the answer, then lighting is VERY important. Someone at the meeting mentioned female safety in the tunnels, and that is a real concern. Any park in the City has a homeless presence, and most of them are nice/ friendly but there are exceptions. Lighting would need to be very good. (2) For a tunnel analysis/comparison, see Chicago. All the neighborhoods have tunnels under Lakeshore Drive to get to the City-long waterfront. Hyde Park/ 53rd St. tunnel would be one to look at. I used to walk under that one every day, and at times, it wasn’t so safe.
  - Especially like the idea for a pedestrian crossing across Main at Depot.
  - Needs better crosswalks, and I hope that the houses being torn down as part of the failed Near North project are landscaped out to be a green space until appropriate development is approved for the site. That will take some visual pressure off that intersection.
  - MDOT makes all final decisions in this area. Perhaps mass transit (AATA) from downtown and the hospital out to park and ride lots at N. Territorial Rd. would alleviate some congestion. I think that is the area with the privately owned building. I think that the city should purchase that building and make necessary improvements so that it could be used as a community center for creative arts that was open to all interested residents. And landscape with native trees and plants.
  - Glad you are engaging the issue. All of the suggestions sound like improvements. As a "Tree City" I would hope the natural vegetation and landscaping will be paramount concerns.
  - We live on Depot St, so this is very important. Of all of the times that I have crossed the street across Depot (at Main), I have almost been hit a number of times. I’ve actually given up and now I just go up the street until I’m right in front of my house, wait until traffic clears and then cross there. I’m a little concerned about the city buying up property. Do you mean our houses? My house has been here for 120 years; it isn’t going anywhere and I would like for it to remain a private residence long after I’m gone.
  - I applaud the Task Force’s ideas for pedestrian/bike bridges for improved foot and bike access to 721 North Main, the first leg of the Ann Arbor Greenway, thus making pedestrian and bike access to Ann Arbor’s downtown much more feasible.
  - WBWC Priority #1b -- Southern underpass: Develop a legal pedestrian/bicycle connection from the Main/Depot area, crossing Amtrak line to Border-to-Border Trail.
    Preferred method: Underpass (open-style if possible) beneath Amtrak line, as part of a project that also provides flood relief. (If the underpass is built east of the Allen Creek outlet, a bridge over that outlet will be needed to connect to the B2B Trail, but that bridge will be needed eventually anyway; see #4 below.)
Possible alternative: High bridge over Amtrak line near Ann Arbor Railroad bridge. Access to an underpass must be from near the Main/Depot intersection. Access from near Fifth Avenue, as one proposal suggested, would be ill-advised; people coming from near Main may continue to make the surface railroad crossings that the underpass seeks to obviate. Moreover, the Broadway Bridge crosses the railroad one block east of Fifth, and people can descend from the bridge on either side of the river.

☐ Not mentioned in this article but the Report on page 78 recommends reconfiguring the existing turning lanes between Depot Street and N. Main St., the major connector between the U-M Health System Complex and N. Main St. in several ways. That’s good, but I believe both roads needs widening to add at least one additional turning lane on each road to facilitate the traffic especially at rush hour during shift changes. At a minimum, additional turning lanes are needed to be added to facilitate traffic flowing from Depot turning right onto N. Main St. and from N. Main St. turning left onto Fuller. To pretend that Depot ought to remain two lanes and N. Main four lanes and fives lanes at this key intersection into the indefinite future is illogical.

N. Main is five lanes at the intersection, but the middle turning lane is very short and has room for maybe only five or six cars waiting to turn, so at rush hour it is completely insufficient frequently causing stopped traffic to clog the road for those headed south on N. Main into downtown. This turning lane needs to be really, really long, meaning the road needs widening for the length of that turning lane.

Similarly, the additional turning lane I propose to be added from Depot turning right onto N. Main to facilitate the rush hour traffic from U-M Health Center needs to be really, really long, too, and the road needs widening for the length of that turning lane.

Other Comments:

- Washtenaw Bicycling and Walking Coalition (WBWC) interested in partnership with the task force
- Great Work!
- Very excited about the task force recommendations
- Thank you task force!
- Nice work by the task force!
- Rubberized asphalt is easy to run on.
- Preference for dirt trails, paved trails we have currently are too hard to use (hard on the body to run on pavement and also too hilly).
- Where is the money coming from? How many years will it take to fundraise for these plans?
  Task force response: we understand that there are fiscal constraints but this is a vision.
- Some concern about how certain ideas are grouped as long term vs. short term.
  ☐ A repeat meeting with MDOT representatives would be great idea. They need to hear our feedback!
  ☐ Thank you task force for your good work!
  ☐ Almost all the ideas are excellent; I hope they are implemented.
- In the final report, please develop a list of both short-term and long-term recommendations to improve transportation/access along this corridor. This list should address deficiencies present in corridor for walkers, bikers, transit users, and motorists. Please define which governmental unit, the City and MDOT, holds responsibility for making the improvement, as well as potential opportunities to collaborate (e.g. B2B Trail (County); DTE site (private/public partnership) to address a deficiency. Many of the ideas presented by the Task Force are long-term, costly public
investments which should be explored and actively pursued, but the short-term improvements should be prioritized and given greater emphasis in the final report.

- In order to address the Council’s charge to address congestion, more serious consideration will need to be given to improving transit along this corridor. Transit routes will likely need to be extended along this route, a variety of park and ride sites explored and evaluated, and mass transit will need to be extended to other communities in the region.

- Final report should address how trail enhancements relate/enhance connectivity to the trail system on the north/east side of the Huron River.

**Appendix A: Sign in Sheets**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alexandra Hoffman</td>
<td>Nancy Taylor</td>
<td>Martha Hill</td>
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<td>Davis Aeson</td>
<td>Gwen Nystuen</td>
<td>Pat Pooley</td>
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<td>Beverly Chering</td>
<td>John Nystuen</td>
<td>Cassandra James</td>
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<td>Freda Hersch</td>
<td>Pete Vincent</td>
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<td>Aimee Blythe</td>
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<td>BONNIE BONNA</td>
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<td>Zach Gaines</td>
<td>ALAN HABER</td>
<td>Sam &amp; Bob Swain</td>
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<td>Ryan Stanton</td>
<td>Preston - Audie</td>
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North Main Huron River Corridor Project
City-Wide Meeting #1
Meeting Summary
Wednesday, May 22, 2013