



## MAINTAINING NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

### PART

# 2



### *Regulatory Recommendations*

Part One identified significant features and potential issues for each of the three historic districts within the study area. This analysis helps to define potential changes that could have a negative effect on the long-term health of these three neighborhoods. Control over these changes will help provide greater certainty about the future of the historic districts and provide a stable environment for future homeowner investment. On the other hand, mandatory controls should be kept to an absolute minimum, restricted to a few possible items that could have the greatest negative impact.

## LAND USE CHANGE

- Two historic districts include borders with non-residential land uses and are vulnerable to potential expansion of these uses into a primarily residential fabric. These involve: The southern and western edges of the Michigan-Superior district between George and James Street on the south and along Michigan Street along the edge of the ShopKo property.
- The southern edge of the North Michigan historic district between William and Franklin Streets.

Possible non-residential expansions through rezoning or other use changes can make homeowners uncertain about the future nature of the neighborhood, consequently discouraging reinvestment. The plan recommends that the following provisions be adopted as mandatory requirements in the two historic districts, potentially as part of an ordinance establishing local historic districts:

### MICHIGAN-SUPERIOR

- New non-residential uses are not permitted north of James Street.
- Between George and James Street, low impact office uses may be permitted if they occupy existing houses, business identification signage does not exceed four square feet, parking requirements are satisfied with off-street facilities, and no parking is located between the front façade of the structure and the right-of-way line.
- Any conversion from residential to non-residential use is reviewed and approved by the Historic Preservation Commission for compatibility with the architecture and scale of the neighborhood.

### NORTH BROADWAY

- New non-residential uses are not permitted north of Franklin Street.
- Between Franklin and William Street, low impact, non-residential uses may be permitted if they occupy existing structures, business identification signage does not exceed four square feet, parking requirements are satisfied with off-street facilities, and no parking is located between the front façade of the structure and the right-of-way line.
- Any conversion from residential to non-residential use is reviewed and approved by the Historic Preservation Commission for compatibility with the architecture and scale of the neighborhood.

Critical items that should be the subject of specific regulation include:

#### *Land Use Change*

*Ridgeway Boulevard*

*Subdivision of Large Lots*

*Demolition*

*Architectural Compatibility*

*Street Orientation*

*Garages along Streets*

## RIDGEWAY BOULEVARD

Ridgeway Boulevard is an important image feature for all three historic districts. Widening or other projects that could compromise its character in favor of higher or faster traffic flow would have highly adverse effects on all three neighborhoods, but would have the greatest impact on the Randall Historic District. Therefore:

- Ridgeway Boulevard should be identified as a major contributing factor to the character of all three historic districts and its preservation in current configuration should be required as part of any local historic district designation.
- Ridgeway Boulevard should be maintained as a residential boulevard with a landscaped median, one through traffic lane in either direction, and parallel parking within its current curb width.

In addition, the city, in partnership with adjacent neighborhoods, should pursue a Ridgeway Boulevard enhancement program, described in Part Three.

## SUBDIVISION OF LARGE LOTS

Subdivision of large lots is a most significant issue for deep parcels along the west side of North Broadway, and has already taken place north of Franklin Street. Additional subdivision will require Planning Commission and City Council approvals, but should be subject to the following additional requirements:

- New lots created by subdividing or splitting existing lots will not increase the visual density or otherwise affect the pattern and distribution of structures with direct visual exposure to North Broadway. All new lots will be created to the rear of existing North Broadway lots.
- New lots will be served by a permanent north-south access easement or dedicated right-of-way. This easement will be connected to North Broadway with no more than one additional access point. If possible, this access point should align with existing east-west streets, specifically Ridgeway or Randall.
- The Historic Preservation Commission will review the configuration of subdivided lots and design of new buildings on such lots for consistency with the character of North Broadway and the architectural forms of the North Broadway historic district.

## DEMOLITION

Demolition of existing structures and their replacement by new houses, sometimes on large lots created by consolidation of two or more smaller lots, has been a trend in some well-located neighborhoods. In other cases, houses or other structures that could be feasibly rehabilitated or restored are demolished without pursuing alternatives. Unnecessary demolitions can begin to erode the fabric of historic neighborhoods. The city's Historic Preservation Ordinance provides for a delay in demolition of up to six months to pursue rehabilitation and reuse options. This demolition delay should be maintained as a requirement of local historic designations for any of the three historic districts.

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## ARCHITECTURAL COMPATIBILITY OF NEW CONSTRUCTION

New construction on infill sites can both damage the character and integrity of any of the three historic districts, or enhance them by creating modern adaptations of their forms and materials. The Historic Preservation Commission includes members with a variety of skills that can help to ensure that new construction on vacant lots is compatible with the existing architecture and scale of the three historic districts. The Commission should have the power to review, modify, and approve the exterior architectural design and siting of new construction on vacant lots or on lots created by demolished structures within local historic districts in the study area. The gallery of images included in this plan provides a directory of forms with precedents in the three neighborhoods.

## STREET ORIENTATION

Houses and other primary structures in all three historic districts are strongly oriented to their adjacent frontage streets. In a few cases, side entrances and unarticulated front facades demonstrate the negative visual effect of turning away from the street. Therefore:

Any new house or primary structure developed in the area's three historic districts should be oriented to its primary street, with its primary entrance facing that street and connected directly to the private sidewalk.

## GARAGES ALONG STREETS

In historic neighborhoods, street frontages should be dominated by primary living spaces rather than garages and driveways. So-called "snout houses," where garages extend in front of the primary front façade, are incompatible with the rhythm and character of residential streets in these three areas. Therefore:

Any new house or new garage construction on an existing house should be set back at least 10 feet from the line of the house's primary front façade.

The following table summarizes the applicability of each of these regulations to specific local district designations within the study area. These provisions represent the complete recommended scope of mandatory regulations, unless the scope is expanded with the agreement of a simple majority of the property owners within a locally designated district.

Regulation	Applicability to		
	North Broadway	Randall	Michigan-Superior
Land Use Change	Yes	NA	Yes
Ridgeway Boulevard Preservation	Yes	Yes	Yes
Subdivision of Large Lots	Yes	NA	NA
Demolition Delay	Yes	Yes	Yes
Architectural/Site Review of New Primary Structures	Yes	Yes	Yes
Front Street Orientation	Yes	Yes	Yes
Garage Setback	Yes	Yes	Yes
Review and Approval of Major Exterior Alterations of Existing Structures	Yes, with neighborhood approval	NA	NA

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