

# Chapter Ten

## M-104 Corridor Overlay

### Introduction

The M-104 corridor serves as a primary east-west thoroughfare in Crockery Township. The principal function of M-104 is to accommodate relatively high volumes of traffic and to provide a link between I-96 and the lakeshore communities to the west. It is approximately 3.25 miles of roadway between 144th Avenue and I-96.

The standards contained in the M-104 Corridor Overlay Zoning District are based upon recommendations and guidelines provided by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) "Access Management and Corridor Study" completed in 2004. Significant public input was obtained as the M-104 Overlay Zoning District was being prepared. The Study recommended adoption of a zoning ordinance amendment to implement Access Management techniques, which was completed. Access Management is accomplished using service drives, parking lot connections, and shared driveways in conjunction with driveway spacing standards. Access Management is intended to maintain a safe and efficient flow of vehicular traffic while retaining reasonable access to the property.

In addition to incorporating Access Management techniques into the zoning ordinance, a secondary goal of the Overlay Zoning District is to maintain and preserve the aesthetic quality of the corridor. Specific regulations pertaining to signage and natural feature preservation have been incorporated into the Overlay Zoning District. The standards of the Overlay Zoning District apply to the lots and parcels of land having frontage on M-104 or any parcel of land gaining access to the Corridor. The Overlay Zoning District is applicable to all uses for which site plan review and approval is required.

### Corridor Access Management and Corridor Improvement Authority

When development occurs haphazardly along a transportation corridor, the result is usually less than desirable. Unplanned development often leads to traffic congestion and the typical "strip commercial" appearance currently seen along many state and county roads. The continued use of the M-104 Corridor Overlay Zoning District utilizing access management techniques to regulate site access improvements is recommended. In addition, future corridor development will require public and private funding to improve infrastructure, remove and/or remediate blighted properties, and create a favorable investment environment. The Corridor Improvement Authority district is the ideal tool to accomplish many of these objectives. This authority was established by the Township Board in 2011 and provides the community the opportunity to guide and redevelop these areas using tax increment financing.

Many residents of Crockery Township consider Nunica the center of the Township but depend on Spring Lake, Grand Haven, Muskegon, and Grand Rapids for shopping and social experiences. Many take the view that the M-104 commercial corridor in the Township is potentially the de facto downtown but is unusable until more is offered. The issue confronting the community is how M-104 (Cleveland Street) and 112th Avenue will be developed. Currently, the Township Zoning Ordinance, and its map, indicate that frontage along these corridors will be primarily commercially developed, with some industrial development.

Along M-104, access management is achieved through a combination of appropriate site design and land use planning. From a traffic management viewpoint, concentrating similar uses is preferred over elongating and spreading the same building mass and usage over a lengthy distance. From a land use perspective, concentrating a similar mix of land uses in concentrated nodes creates economically viable and sustainable centers. It is recommended that proposed commercial nodes be limited to the following:

- 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Cleveland Street intersection:
- M-231 and M-104 intersection:
- 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue and M-104 intersection:
- 136<sup>th</sup> Avenue and M-104 intersection:
- Nunica

### **Corridor Development**

Commercial office space and retail are declining, as it has become more common for people to work from home and shop online. It is perhaps time to recognize that high-quality, low-impact, light industrial uses can be compatible with other high-end commercial and residential uses. A mixed-use commercial corridor could allow the introduction of research and development and light intensity manufacturing and assembly uses as long as specific criteria in the Zoning Ordinance are met. The Township's Zoning Ordinance could be amended to permit these types of light intensity industrial and research uses to be intermixed with more traditional commercial, residential, office, and retail categories through the use of performance standards. It should be recognized that the M-104 corridor could be an appropriate location for a broader range of economic activity than the retail and service establishments typically found within these corridors. This provides just one potential approach to help retain the viability of the M-104 corridor and at the same time expand opportunities for higher paying, knowledge-based jobs. To support existing business and improvements along the corridor it is understood that public utility expansion, and cooperation with developers, is necessary.

#### **Goals**

- Maintain and preserve the aesthetic quality of the corridor
- Maintain a safe and efficient flow of vehicular traffic while retaining reasonable access to properties
- Create a favorable environment for investment in the community
- Encourage mixed-use development

#### **Recommendations**

- Improve infrastructure, coordinating work for new development in conjunction with the Michigan Department of Transportation projects when possible
- Require development to expand sewer along the M-104 corridor and into the Village of Nunica
- Improve public water system reliability

#### **Strategies**

- Invest public funds to upgrade the public infrastructure and amenities
- Partner with private developers and grant agencies for public utility investment and improvement
- Concentrate similar uses and avoid strip development
- Ensure that the public investment in the road system is maintained