



**Deerpath Streetscape Improvement Project
Deerpath Streetscape Committee – Report & Recommendations**

The City of Lake Forest

September 3, 2020

**The City of Lake Forest
800 N. Field Drive
Lake Forest, Illinois 60045**

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Deerpath Streetscape Improvement Project

Deerpath Streetscape Adhoc Committee – Report and Recommendations

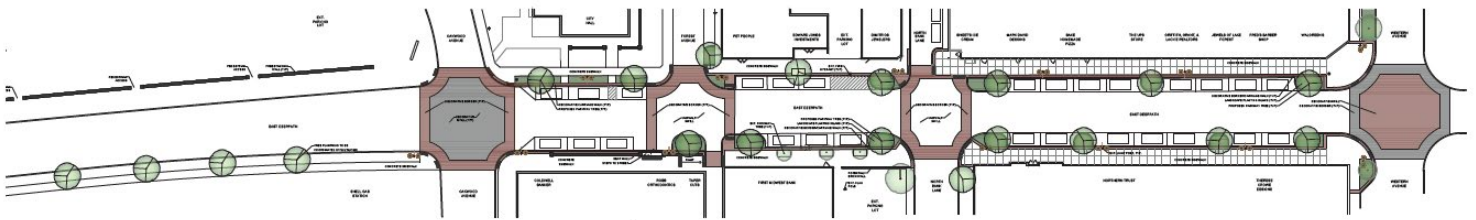
PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the work of the Deerpath Streetscape Adhoc Advisory Committee (“the Committee”) and present the Committee’s recommendations for enhancements to the Deerpath Streetscape Project.

BACKGROUND

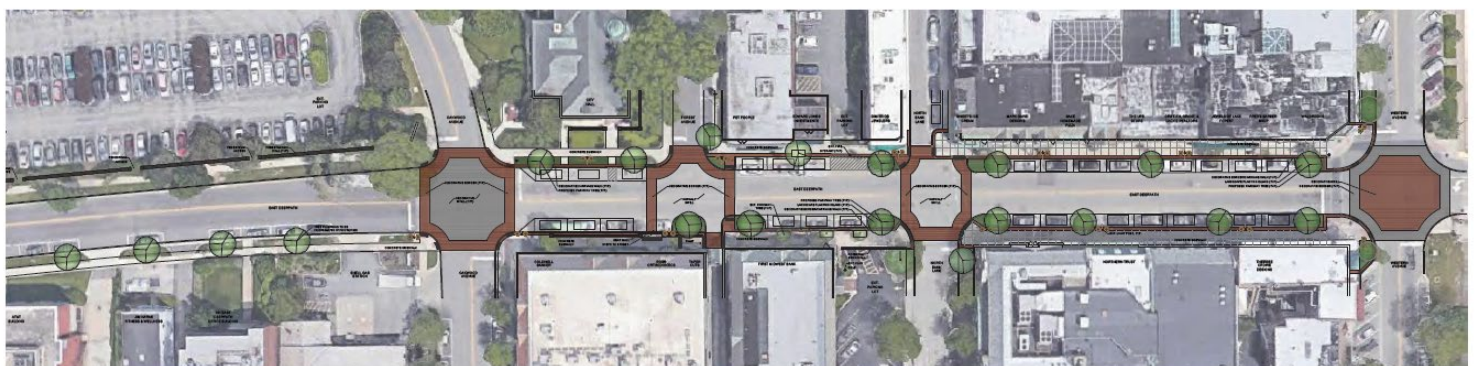
The Deerpath Streetscape Project limits are Deerpath from the Metra right-of-way just east of Western Avenue, to mid-block between Oakwood Avenue and Green Bay Road, the western edge of the commercial district.

Preliminary studies of the Deerpath Streetscape began in September of 2016. Initial concepts were developed by the City’s consultants and City staff, and presented to the Civic Beautification Committee for early input. The initial concept plans seen below, served as the starting point for the Advisory Committee’s work.



OVERALL PLAN

EXISTING PARALLEL PARKING SPACES: 39
PROPOSED PARALLEL PARKING SPACES: 27



OVERALL PLAN WITH AERIAL

The Deerpath Streetscape Adhoc Advisory Committee was formed by City Manager, Jason Wicha, in August of 2019. The Committee was charged with making recommendations to the City Manager on infrastructure, hardscape and landscape improvements to the Deerpath streetscape. The purpose of forming

the Committee was to provide a forum for representatives of various interest groups, Boards and Commissions, and the City Council to be involved in the discussion from the very beginning of the project recognizing the prominence and importance of the streetscape to the community as a whole. The Committee includes representatives from all the following groups:

- City Council
- Public Works Committee
- Building Review Board
- Civic Beautification Committee
- Chamber of Commerce
- Business/Property Owners
- Historic Preservation Commission
- Lake Forest Preservation Foundation

In lieu of presenting a plan for the Deerpath streetscape improvements to each group listed above, the Adhoc Committee was formed to facilitate collaboration between the various groups.

PROCESS

Throughout the process, the Committee held three meetings and one public visioning session as detailed below.

- The Committee first met September 26, 2019, to review background information and the conceptual plan that evolved from early discussions with the Civic Beautification Committee.
- On October 1, 2019, the Committee, staff and the City's consultants hosted an open house, inviting the public to join in the discussion and offer insights and ideas about the Deerpath Streetscape. Over 55 members of the public attended the event and offered input. Additional public comments were received as a follow up to the public meeting.

Following the public visioning session, City staff and the project consulting team developed a summary of all the public comments received and with that input, prepared preliminary recommendations as a framework for the Committee's deliberations.

- On November 7, 2019, the Committee met to review the public input summary and preliminary recommendations. The Committee discussed the recommendations, raised questions and requested refinements and

clarifications on some items. The Committee directed the project team to prepare a final draft report to the City Manager for Committee review and approval.

- On September 3, 2020, the Committee met to consider the draft final report. The Committee shared supportive comments and the report was approved unanimously.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Street and Curbs – Overall, the Deerpath roadway is in “failing” condition. The City recently completed a 2019 citywide pavement condition survey for which an overall street pavement score is assigned. The section of Deerpath within the project limits scored an average rating of 63.5. A satisfactory pavement rating ranges between a score of 70 – 80.

The Deerpath road is configured with a single lane of traffic each way, east and west. Parallel parking spaces are located adjacent to the curbs on both sides of the streets. There are no turn lanes or bicycle lanes. The opportunity to widen the roadway is limited by the existing buildings along the north and south sides of the street, many of which are historic.

The Deerpath roadway is curbed. The curbs are of varying heights, some lower than standard curbs and some considerably higher than standard curbs. The higher curbs create a barrier for pedestrians and impede the ability to open car doors in some areas. The curbs appear as extensions of the concrete sidewalks. The higher curbs are the result of below grade utility vaults and existing infrastructure.

Sidewalks – The existing concrete sidewalks are in fair condition. In some areas, wider than typical sidewalks are provided to support pedestrian activity. The sidewalks extend from the edge of the buildings to the curb along Deerpath, with tree wells incorporated into the sidewalk, most of which are filled in with concrete as temporary measure to mitigate hazards. Trees have not done well in the existing wells due to the shallow depth and lack of provision to retain water. In some areas, as noted above in relation to the higher curbs, utility vaults are located under the sidewalks limiting the ability to make significant alterations.

The sidewalks are well used by pedestrians. Depressed curbs and tactile panels are located at the intersections.

Street Lights – Electric street lights are located along the north and south sides of Deerpath. The light standards and acorn fixtures are consistent with street lights along Western Avenue.

To provide additional lighting with a low visual clutter impact, Corba overhead lights are located at the intersections. From a streetscape level, the lights are almost invisible. The street level acorn lights give character to the street while the Cobra lights provide increased illumination in a subtle way in this highly traveled corridor.

Traffic Flow – Deerpath is a primary traffic route into and out of the City's Central Business District, the homes in east Lake Forest, the beach, library, churches and schools. Traffic flows on Deerpath are fairly heavy particularly during morning and late afternoon peak travel times. Traffic moves slowly with vehicles entering from Forest Avenue from the north and Bank Lane from the south. In some areas, sightlines are blocked or limited for both drivers and pedestrians due to parked cars. Pedestrians frequently cross mid-block after parking.

Parking – Parallel parking spaces line both the north and south side of Deerpath. At most corners, parking spaces encroach close to the intersection limiting sightlines for drivers turning on to Deerpath from Forest Avenue or Bank Lane.

The parking spaces along Deerpath are well used by customers supporting local businesses and by employees who work in the area, although on street parking by employees is discouraged. As vehicles maneuver into parking spaces, traffic on Deerpath is sometimes slowed momentarily. Eastbound traffic on Deerpath is stopped periodically when the railroad crossing gates are activated.

Greenscape/Landscaping/Trees – Landscaping along the majority of the Deerpath Streetscape is minimal. City Hall, at the corner of Deerpath and Oakwood offers a prominent landscaped corner, a small pocket park that visually serves as an entrance to the core of the business district.

Trees, in wells in the sidewalk have not fared well, as noted above, and presently, many of the wells are void of trees, filled in with concrete.

Safety – As noted above, sightlines for both vehicles and pedestrians are limited in some areas due to the proximity of parked vehicles to the corners.

Traffic speeds are relatively slow. The frequency of accidents is low, however, pedestrian/vehicle accidents have occurred.

Overall Streetscape/Character – The historic buildings dominate the streetscape and create a distinctive Lake Forest character. Other than the green space, seasonal landscaping and seat walls on the City Hall property, the overall streetscape is visually cluttered with vehicles, both moving and parked, and devoid of any vegetation to soften the dominance of vehicles in this corridor. There is little to no visual buffer or demarcation between the pedestrians space and the areas actively used by vehicles.

CONCEPTS EXPLORED – OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The Advisory Group discussed many concepts raised by members of the Committee and public. Concepts raised throughout the process are summarized below. Each concept was explored and the concepts formed the basis for the final recommendation presented in the next section of this report. A summary of all the comments received is attached to this report as Exhibit B.

Narrowing Sidewalks – In the initial discussion of the Committee, consideration was given to narrowing the sidewalks within the project area. At the Public Visioning Session, there was a comment board dedicated to sidewalks and their walkability. Generally, comments received supported maintaining the current width of the sidewalks. Narrowing the sidewalks does not support or enhance the pedestrian experience and presented some challenges from an infrastructure perspective.

Modifications to Parking – The Committee explored many different concepts for parking within the project area. At the Public Visioning Session, mixed comments about parking were received. The Committee recognized the importance of improving pedestrian and vehicular safety and determined that eliminating parking spaces close to street corners is important to improve sightlines and pedestrian safety.

Addition of Bike Lanes – The Committee reviewed the concept of adding bike lanes to Deerpath and the potential impacts of doing so. At the Public Visioning Session, opinions were mixed about adding bike lanes to the project area. The Committee reviewed bike path options however, each option required dedicated space loss of parking spaces and raised overall safety concerns.

Creation of Bioswales – Overall, the concept of incorporating green infrastructure into the project was a focus of discussion by the Committee and was supported by those at the Public Visioning Session. Many different types of green infrastructure were explored including the creation of bioswales. Ultimately, the Committee acknowledged that within the limits of this particular project, incorporating green hardscape materials and sustainable tree wells provided the most reasonable and achievable green initiatives along this already built out corridor.

Creation of a Median – There were preliminary Committee discussions about creating a median that supports green infrastructure down the center of Deerpath within the project area. At the Public Visioning Session, there was an opportunity for attendees to provide comments on this topic. This concept did not receive public support. The project consultant team also shared that the limited space on Deerpath creates significant challenges in attempting to incorporate a median within the project limits.

RECOMMENDATIONS – ACTION STEPS

All recommendations below are illustrated visually on the graphics in Exhibit A.

1. Increase Plantings & Plant Trees

- a. Plant trees along the streetscape.
 - i. Install sustainable tree wells as detailed on Exhibit A to increase the survival rate of trees, promote growth and to a limited extent, capture and retain stormwater.
- b. In the future, as areas are redeveloped, consider requiring increased building setbacks from corner property lots. Enhance these areas with native, low maintenance plantings and, as appropriate, benches, public art or other amenities in keeping with the character of the streetscape. Create a series of small green spaces similar to the green space at City Hall on the northeast corner of Deerpath and Oakwood. Create a sense of place, provide visual relief, and add small gathering areas along the streetscape in the opportunity areas identified in Exhibit C.
- c. Develop a plan and timeline for replacement of the landscaping along the Deerpath streetscape along the south edge of the City parking lot located on the northwest corner of Deerpath and

Oakwood Avenue. Durable, low maintenance plantings should be a high priority.

2. Renew Infrastructure

- a. Repair or replace deteriorating sidewalks, create a consistent high quality look for sidewalks along the streetscape. Attention should be paid to consistency in pavement color and texture, avoiding a patched look.
- b. Develop a plan for regular inspection and repair of the sidewalks recognizing that they receive heavy public use and are located on a prominent streetscape.
- c. Install decorative pavement treatments in limited areas with a priority on consistency with the historic character of the streetscape, durability, and pedestrian safety. Avoid hardscape that will create uneven walking surfaces. Recommended hardscape materials include: concrete with brick paver borders, clay pavers with tight jointings for even surfaces, permeable pavers, decorative curbing.
- d. Repave Deerpath within the project limits.
- e. Consider relocating streetlights to achieve more consistent spacing between the streetlights. Retain fixtures that are consistent with existing light fixtures in the Central Business District.

3. Improve Pedestrian Safety

- a. Enhance the safety of cross walks by improving visibility and adding interest along the street with landscaping to help slow traffic.
- b. Remove a limited number of parking spaces to improve sightlines at the corners.
- c. Select hardscape with careful attention to limiting trip and fall hazards and uneven or slick surfaces.

4. Incorporate Green Infrastructure & Other Practical Sustainability Concepts

- a. Utilize tree wells or tree trenches to support the viability of trees and if practicable, to accept and retain a limited amount of stormwater.
- b. Consider opportunities to use permeable hardscape materials in appropriate areas (walkway areas and/or parking spaces) with

attention to durability and pedestrian safety such as those described in Exhibit D.

- c. Native, sustainable plants should be a priority. Durability, resistance to salt and minimizing the need for irrigation should all be considered in selecting plant materials.
- d. Energy efficient lighting should be utilized or planned for in the future.
- e. Opportunities for recycling should be incorporated into the project to the extent possible: during demolition materials removed should be repurposed, recycling receptacles in keeping with the streetscape character should be installed in limited areas.

5. Maintain & Enhance the Pedestrian Experience

- a. Retain the wide sidewalks.
- b. Consider an alternate hardscape material to increase the visibility of crosswalks with attention to durability, safety and compatibility with the character of the streetscape.
- c. In areas with appropriate space, consider street furniture (trash cans, benches) or public art in a manner consistent with the character of the streetscape and historic district.
- d. Avoid clutter, showcase the significant historic buildings, trees, and green space area.

6. Retain Parallel Parking on Both Sides of the Street

- a. Design spaces to be easy to use with space to maneuver.
- b. Remove a limited number of parking spaces to improve sightlines at the corners.

Note: Diagonal parking was explored on Deerpath, but due to space constraints and the need to significantly reduce travel lane widths, it was not considered to be a viable option (Exhibit E).

7. Direct Bicycles to Alternate Routes

- a. The limited space and the volume of vehicular and pedestrian traffic on Deerpath limit opportunities for the addition of safe and efficient bike lanes on the street.

- b. The Lake Forest 2013 Bike Master Plan recommends Onwentsia to Ahwahnee to Deerpath as an east/west bicycle route. The map from the Bike Master Plan depicting this recommended route is included as Exhibit F.

8. Highlight Building Architecture & Storefront Windows

- a. Avoid landscaping that obscures storefront windows, building entrances and architectural features and details.
- b. Trees wells or trenches should be located with sensitivity to building entrances, storefront windows and architectural elements. Tree species should be selected to, over time, achieve canopies that are above storefront windows or columnar in nature.
- c. Encourage businesses and property owners to provide low seasonal planters adjacent to the storefront walls to add seasonal color.

9. Maintain Deerpath as a Primary Vehicle Thoroughfare to and through the Central Business District

- a. Facilitate traffic movement recognizing that Deerpath is one of a very limited number of east/west streets.

10. Add Seasonal Color to the Streetscape

- a. Consider limited hanging baskets or unified planters to define the edge of the pedestrian area and create a visual separation between the vehicle and pedestrian areas.
- b. Consider bulk purchase of planters that could be offered to business and property owners along Deerpath to plant and maintain seasonally.

LONGER TERM CONSIDERATIONS

The following ideas are offered for consideration as part of the Comprehensive Plan Update.

- 1. Study viability and benefits of reconfiguring Forest Avenue and Bank Lane as one-way streets to eliminate vehicles entering Deerpath between Oakwood Avenue and Western Avenue.**

- a. Forest Avenue – one-way north from Deerpath.
- b. Bank Lane – one-way south from Deerpath.

2. Explore Parking Opportunities

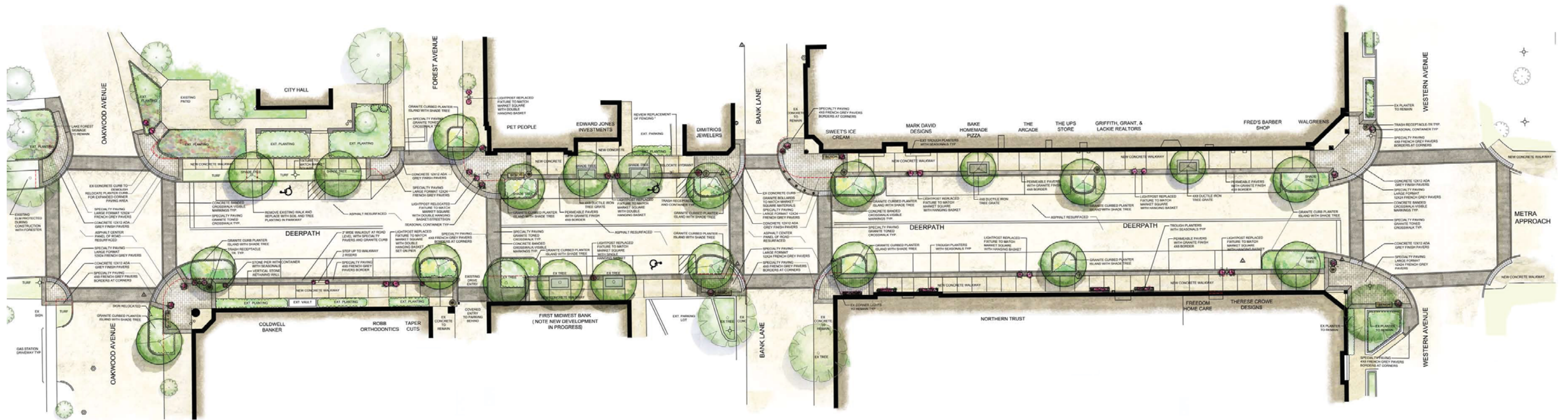
- a. Diagonal parking on Bank Lane, south of Deerpath.
- b. Diagonal parking on the east side of Western Avenue, south of Deerpath.
- c. Designated areas for deliveries.

3. Revisit the “Pedestrian Spine” concept for Bank Lane as discussed in earlier studies.

- a. Consider infrastructure and amenities that support businesses and invite and accommodate special events, create seasonal gathering areas and encourage increased daily pedestrian activity.

4. As City owned parking lots are due for resurfacing, consider redesign of the parking lots to incorporate sustainable features, pedestrian walkways and durable, native plantings.

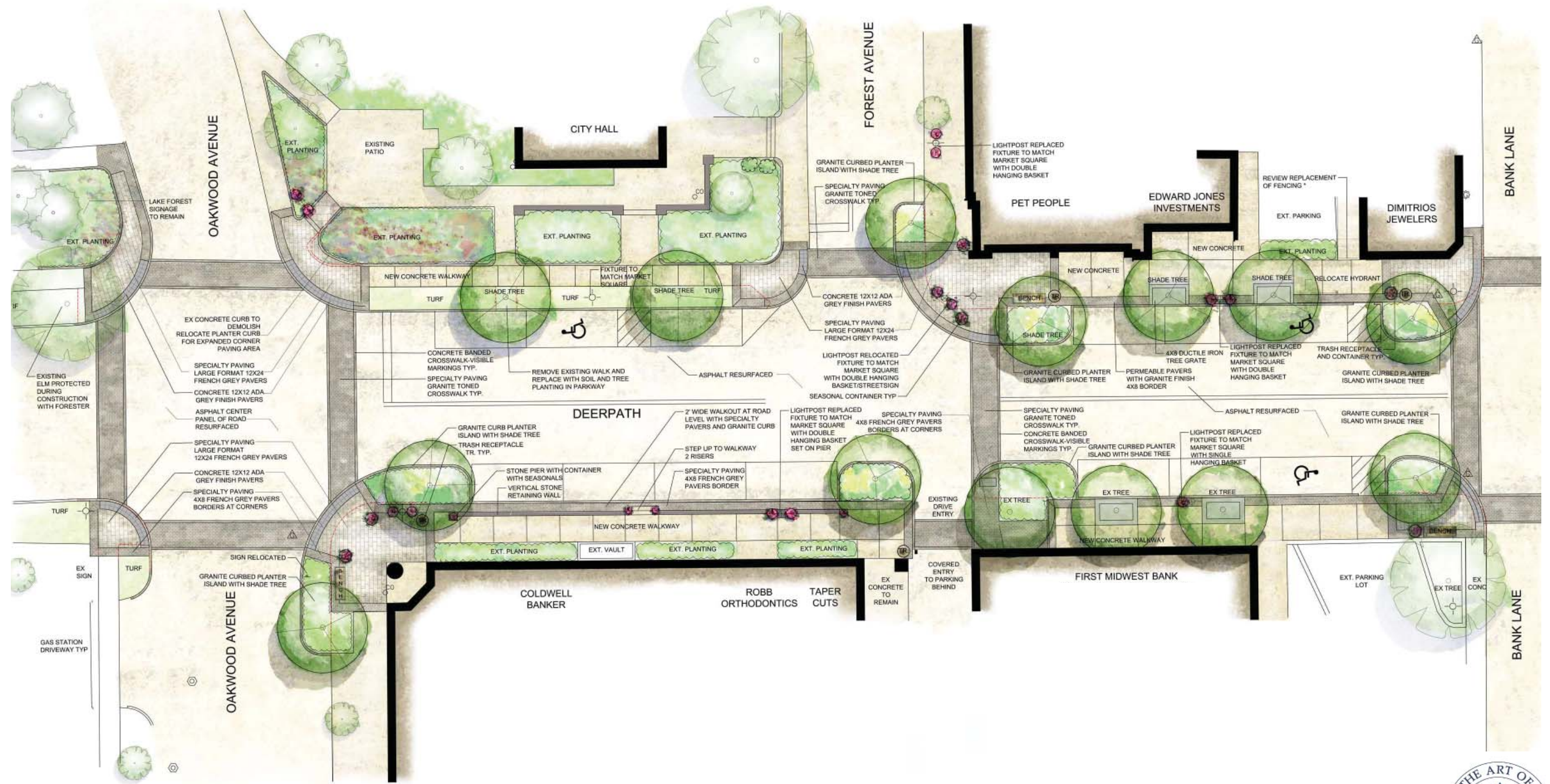
EXHIBIT A



DEERPETH STREETScape: DESIGN PLAN OVERALL STREETScape-OAKWOOD TO WESTERN AVENUE



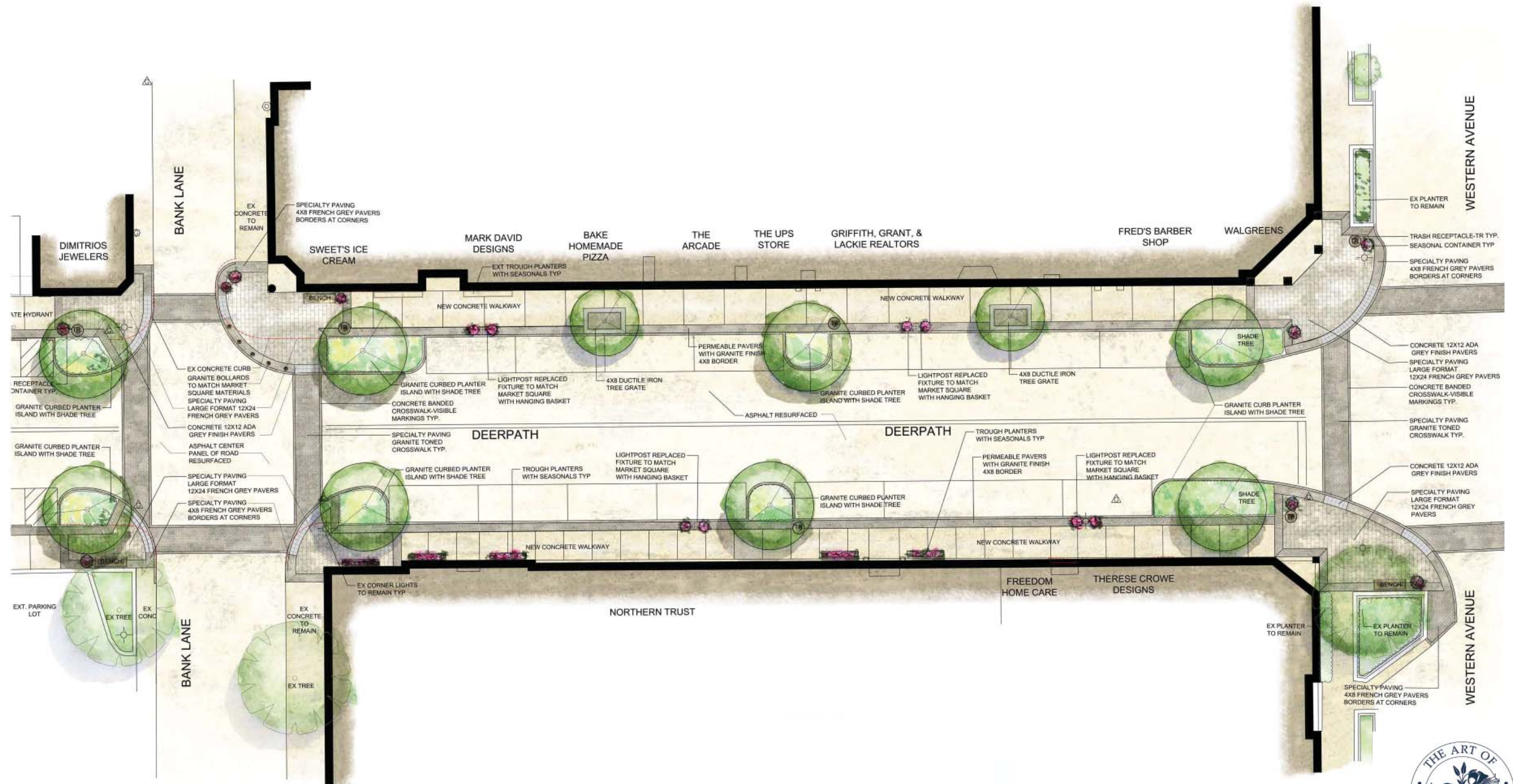
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DEERPARK STREETSCAPE: DESIGN PLAN FROM OAKWOOD AVENUE TO BANK LANE



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DEERPETH STREETScape: PLAN FROM BANK LANE TO WESTERN AVENUE



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Landscape Design, Inc



CRAIG BERGMANN
Landscape Design, Inc

DEERPATH STREETSCAPE: SKETCHES OF DESIGN INTENT



DEERPATH STREETScape: SKETCHES OF DESIGN INTENT



CRAIG BERGMANN
Landscape Design, Inc



DEERPATH STREETSCAPE: SKETCHES OF DESIGN INTENT SWEETS CORNER



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MARKET SQUARE LAKE FOREST

DEERPATH STREETSCAPE: STREETLIGHT DESIGN CONCEPT WITH HANGING BASKET



CRAIG BERGMANN
Landscape Design, Inc

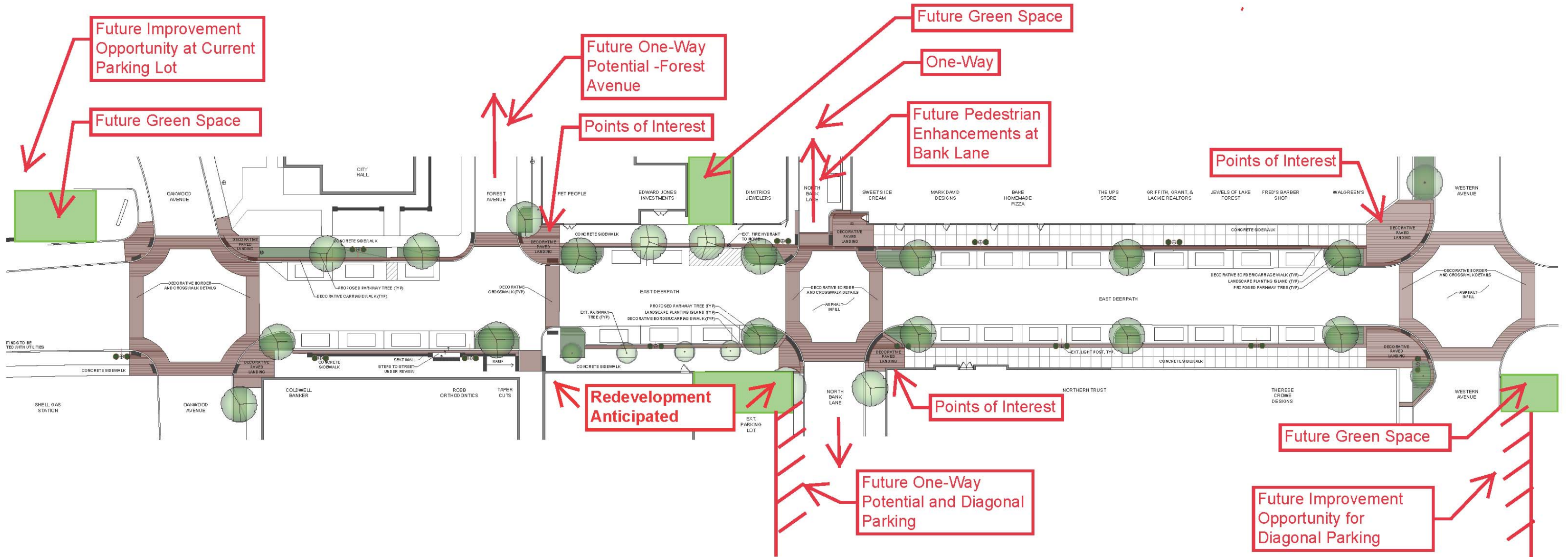
EXHIBIT B

Summary of Comments

Comment Category	Red Dot Exercise Totals	Total Supporting Comments	Total Unsupportive Comments	Summarized Comments & Notes
Increase Plantings & Open Space	31	14	0	<u>Supporting</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate native plantings and the appropriate plant material Incorporate flowers and other greenery Install hanging baskets on light posts
Sustainability & Green Infrastructure	30	4	0	<u>Supporting</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project should be aligned with the City's Sustainability Plan Incorporate permeable surfaces
Streetscape Should Look Like LF	29	0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These comments all fit into other comment categories
Plant Trees	28	5	1	<u>Supporting</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plant only appropriate trees Plant Gingko trees <u>Unsupportive</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not plant trees, they will not survive due to salt usage on Deerpath
Improve Pedestrian Safety	18	9	0	<u>Supporting</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add sidewalk bump outs to highlight crosswalks Have crossing guards manage the crosswalks Install raised table intersections Improve the winter season walkability by ensuring the area can be more easily snow plowed
Reduce Traffic Congestion	17	1	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At specific times Deerpath is constantly backing up
Provide Pedestrian Amenities	17	3	0	<u>Supporting</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Install park-let hangout areas Install benches Install café tables
Crosswalks with Decorative Hardscapes	16	2	2	<u>Supporting</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please use granite block edging for roads <u>Unsupportive</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decorative bricks/pavers can be tripping hazards if installed incorrectly or if they are not maintained

Comment Category	Red Dot Exercise Totals	Total Supporting Comments	Total Unsupportive Comments	Supporting / Unsupportive Comment & Notes
Bike Paths	15	10	2	<u>Supporting</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bike path connectivity Biking signage & etiquette <u>Unsupportive</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comments did not list specific reason
More Convenient Parking	13	7	4	<u>Supporting</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More parking options Install underground parking garage <u>Unsupportive</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminate parking on Deerpath <u>Other</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limit employee parking Install diagonal parking Limit parking time on Deerpath to 15 minutes
Repair Sidewalks	12	3	0	<u>Supporting</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sidewalks are too narrow, need to be widen
Improve Visibility at Corners	11	0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No comments received outside of input from red dot exercise
Color & Art	8	8	0	<u>Supporting</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use decorative community event paper to cover vacant storefronts Install flag pole holes so that special flags can be featured for different occasions Improve community event signage Install welcoming banners (special events)
Create a Median	0	0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No additional public comment received
Street Lighting	N/A	5	0	<u>Supporting</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure uniformity of lighting Install string type lights Install lights similar to Market Square
Building Architecture	N/A	4	0	<u>Supporting</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any installed plant material should showcase building architecture Do not hide northern trust with trees and other plant material
Other	N/A	N/A	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project is in good hands with Craig Bergmann Landscape Design There should not be any major changes made to the area More focus on stormwater projects & street repairs and less focus on the Deerpath Streetscape Project and other projects

EXHIBIT C



DEERPETH STREETScape: RECAP OF COMMITTEE COMMENTS FOR FUTURE IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES



CRAIG BERGMANN
Landscape Design, Inc

EXHIBIT D

Tree Trenches & Permeable Pavers



Permeable Parking with Silva Cell Tree Trenches

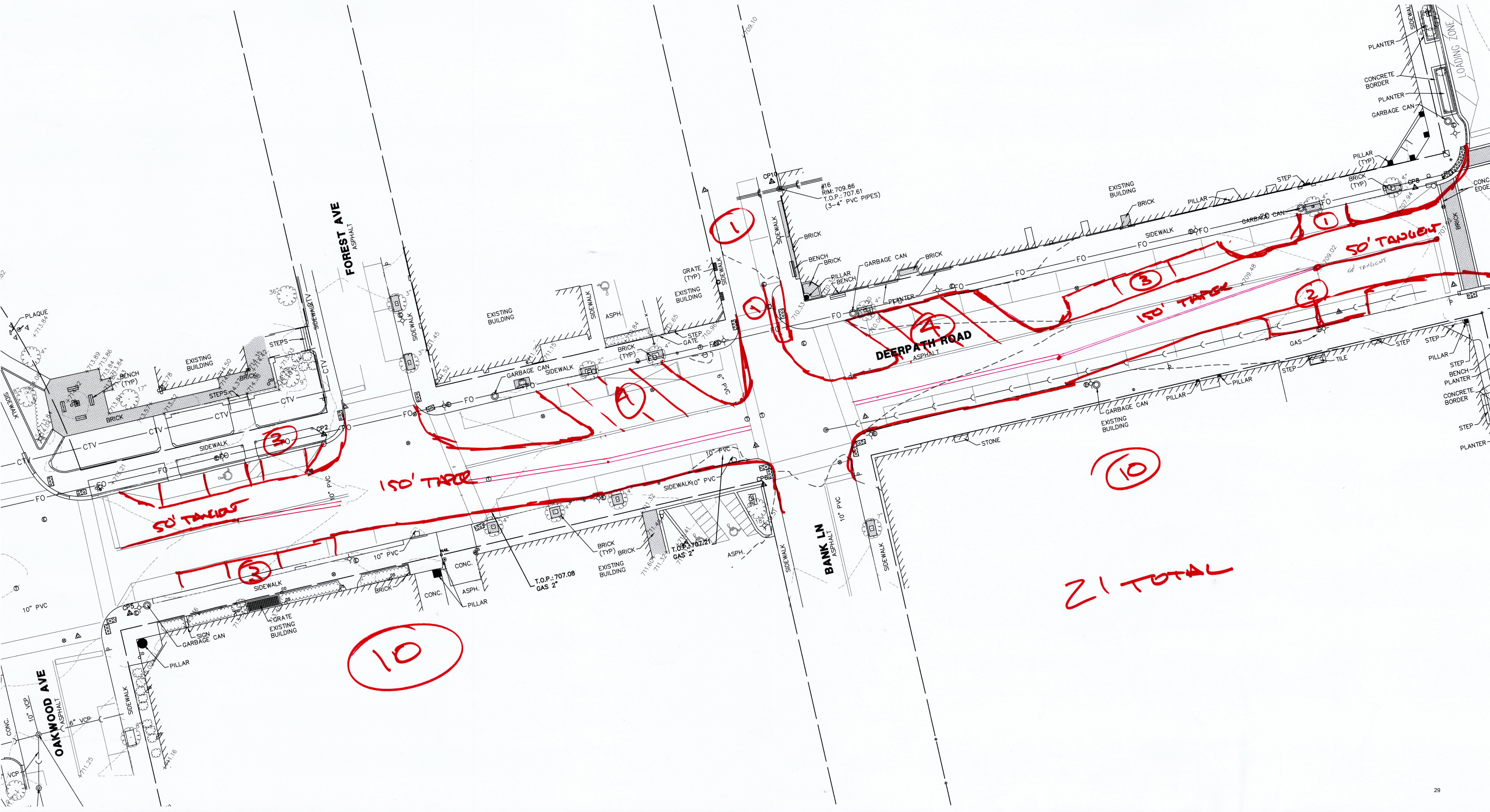


Permeable Sidewalks with Silva Cell Tree Trenches



EXHIBIT E

The required lane shift taper would be 300' - effectively tapering in and out of the lane shift would require the entire length of the project, which is less than 600' between the stop bars at Oakwood and Western Ave.



1/220'
 SPEED LIMIT = 25
 DESIGN SPEED = 30

10
 10
 1
 2
 3
 4
 50' TAPER
 150' TAPER
 50' TAPER
 Z1 TOTAL

EXHIBIT F

FIGURE 9: PROPOSED BICYCLE NETWORK

