

I-75 Business Loop Recommendations

Public Response from 1/9/07 Meeting

Goal 1: Preserve, Enhance, and Promote the I-75 Business Loop Victorian Landscape

Recommendation A: Pursue National and State Recognition for the downtown historic features

Stress historic area of West Branch

I like these ideas – history attracts visitors....history and art

History is a product that can be coordinated with area businesses

Strategy 1: Perform a Historic Features survey

Not like the art fair, more hands on. Could we encourage an “artisan fair” (historical) with demonstration on how they do their crafts. During County Fair time.

Strategy 2: Become Certified Local Governments

Strategy 3: Seek National Register status on significant properties

We have lots of history, let's promote it!

Strategy 4: Promote stronger participation in the Michigan Historical Markers program

Recommendation B: Continue to develop a business community that supports the Victorian theme

Strategy 1: Create an educational outreach program

Some of the outreach programs could be facilitated by Chamber of Commerce

Strategy 2: Create incentive programs

Recommendation C: Encourage new development to uphold a Victorian “feel”

Strategy 1: Develop a set of design guidelines

Strategy 2: Adopt a form based zoning overlay along the Loop

Recommendation D: Include traditional downtown and beautification features along the entire Loop to help promote a unified Victorian identity

Strategy 1: Install sidewalks along the entire corridor

Pedestrian areas are essential!! Keep things natural.

Use the history of the community via photo panels/streetscape teaching history to pedestrian traffic

Need to include bike paths all along the corridor – safe paths, not immediately adjacent to the road

I like the idea of creating an “active” area by creating bike paths and promoting more “wheeled” activities for residents as well as visitors (Traverse City example)

Finish walk/bike path that ends at 55 and Business Loop light to go out to Exit 212

Strategy 2: Continue thematic lampposts along the entire corridor

Strategy 3: Implement a “bus-trolley” service

Joint purchase with West Branch, West Branch Township, and Ogemaw Township

Great idea! Must have joint cooperation

Strategy 4: Install gazebos for pedestrian resting points or trolley stops

Sidewalks with gazebos the entire Loop, great

Restrooms too

Need a seat

Strategy 5: Install flower beds along the corridor

Inmates can help

Recommendation E: Market the area’s Victorian identity

Strategy: Install gateway and way-finding signs

*Outlet mall take Victorian theme
Started in 2004 and more to come*

*Coordinate wayfinding with walking tours
Horse wagon rides for the area*

Great

Put utilities underground

Use all of our history to enhance visitor and local resident experiences

Other Notes

Get a “marketing plan.” Contact potential business to relocate here.

Where’s the lumberjacks?

*We need more places for those ages 18 – 35 to spend time or have as entertainment.
Yes!!*

*Something for family recreation. Affordable.
Yes!!*

Chose more attractive and hardy types of flowers.

Make West Branch the start point for ghost town tours.

Signs for where to park downtown is needed to help visitors.

*Retail is fine, but I’d still like to see manufacturing facilities to keep our children here in
this great community!*

Can we make the fall quilt show more visible?

We need another park, maybe at old Evans factory?

Goal 2: Control non-point source pollution along the I-75 Business Loop

Recommendation A: Develop policies and programs to improve storm water management

Strategy 1: Draft and Implement a Storm Water Ordinance in the City of West Branch, West Branch Township, Ogemaw Township *

Strategy 2: Designate a storm water agent/permits officer to oversee the area's storm water system, perhaps through the development of an area wide Storm Water Authority *

Strategy 3: Implement a municipal storm water maintenance program (street sweeping, catch basin, sump cleaning, etc.)*

Strategy 4: Change municipal codes to reduce parking lot requirements, stall dimensions, and promote shared parking lots

Reduce stall dimensions? It's a challenge now to park a mini-van. I agree!

Strategy 5: Implement a public education program*

Recommendation B: Apply techniques for storm water treatment on publicly owned lands.

Strategy 1: Install rain gardens along the Business Loop*

I think there is a spot for a rain garden next to St. Joseph school. We would like to do one. Call the principal 345-0220

Landscaping utilizing storm water run off. Yes – educate the public!

Strategy 2: Install mechanical removal devices, such as hydrodynamic separators, on drain systems to help remove sediments and pollution *

Who cleans these out?

Strategy 4: Use porous pavement on low-volume public parking lots

Porous pavement in an area with Michigan's freeze/thaw cycle? I-75 north of Grayling used it and blew apart.

Recommendation C: Work with developers and existing businesses to improve storm water management

Strategy 1: Develop an education program on storm water standards in the community

Strategy 2: Develop and implement an incentive program

How can we improve storm runoff but keep the solution looking good? This one may work, but does not look good (this comment refers to the picture the retention pond outside of a big box store)

Goal 3: Increase the Number of Visitors to all Businesses along the I-75 Business Loop

Recommendation A: Add to Current Marketing Efforts

Strategy 1: Improve Signage*

Reduce and control signage

Signage control and promote Victorian design

Strategy 2: Advertise golf as a primary community asset*

Along with golf, state forest trails, cross country skiing, hiking, other winter sporting opportunities.

Recommendation B: Improve Mobility along the Corridor

Strategy 1: Apply access management techniques*

Strategy 2: Establish a trailway system along the Loop*

Bike trail (use old railroad track)

Tie local history on a county wide basis to “trails” that can be used for fitness and tourism as well as education

Could the old industrial park be utilized as a family fun area?

*Establish bicycle paths along roadside and start an annual bike tour.
Yes!!*

Bluegrass festival in Irons Park

Bicycle paths are great idea...but not necessarily next to or along the road, Get away from traffic and enjoy the “up-north” felling.

Strategy 3: Commission studies on congestion heavy areas*

*I strongly disagree (this statement is made in response to roadway being deemed safe).
Check to police accident reports on Glen's/Brain's driveways. I have had several close calls by people driving in the turn lane.*

Maybe not specifically “safety” issues, but there are times when it's very time-consuming and frustrating to try to turn left

*Traffic area in front of Glen's/Fruit market could use a s top light.
Yes!*

Great ideas on goal II, but (maybe I missed it) where does funding come from?

Recommendation C: Promote and Support a Cohesive Corridor Business Community

Strategy 1: Implement a workshop program

Strategy 2: Continue to engage business owners in planning and implementation processes

Strategy 3: Establish a “Businesses of the Business Loop” Website

Maybe through the Chamber?

Excellent idea to do co-op marketing with all parties participating equally.

Recommendation D: Upkeep and Improve Aesthetic Appeal along the Loop

Strategy 1: Implement a “Corridor Keeper” Program

Strategy 2: Include traditional downtown and beautification features along the entire Loop to help promote a unified Victorian identity

Strategy 3: Retain open and wooded spaces along the loop to maintain an “up north” feel*

Green space should be promoted with every business

Yes – keep the “up-north” feel. It would be a shame to “pave paradise and put up a parking lot”

But please light up the area from Wal-Mart through Fairview road. Too dark.

Like the ideas of resting areas along full length of loop walkway.

Recommendation E: Expand Consumer Choices and Convenience

Strategy 1: Increase Choices of Diverse, Quality Cuisine*

Dinner theater (culture)

Very much in need

Strategy 2: Attract Several Brand Identities Downtown*

Strategy 3: Increase business hours to seven days a week*

People can't buy or shop if stores are not open during convenient hours for them

Signs between West Branch and 215 needs to uniform. Also keep Victorian them on this strip

Strategy 4: Cluster certain industries that would benefit from Grouping and being situated along the Loop*

Effort needed to establish more businesses at 215 Exist and avoid "overdevelopment" at Exit 212 – pull business to west.

Other Notes

What or how are we doing in the area of attracting industry to our area? As we have lost some is there any thing on the horizon to bring others in?

Retail shopping village similar to one in Frankenmuth and Mackinaw City

Olive Garden

Red Lobster

Supper club with dancing

Lumber Jack needs to be friendlier