



**MIDLAND CENTER CITY AUTHORITY
AGENDA
Wednesday, Sept 20, 2023, 3:00 p.m.
Midland City Hall – City Council Chambers**

1. Roll Call – Linda Barth, Jennifer Chappel, David Ginis, Joe Kozuch, Rachel Morr, Sharon Mortensen, Alex Rapanos, Chris Schloemann, Carol Stone
2. Introduction of new board member, Rachel Morr – **Kozuch**
3. Approval of Minutes from July 19, 2023 – **Kozuch**
4. Ashman-Rodd Two-Way Restoration - **Harris**
 - a. Public Comment
 - b. Resolution Consideration
5. S. Saginaw Road Streetscape Celebration – **Harris**
6. Redevelopment Liquor Licenses - **Harris**
7. Committee Reports
 - a. Governance and Sustainability Committee report – **Mortensen**
 - i. 2024 Meeting Schedule
 - ii. 2023-24 Board Structure
 - b. Physical Improvements Committee report – **Ginis**
Did not meet in September
8. Public Comments (unrelated to items on the agenda)
9. Adjourn



MIDLAND CENTER CITY AUTHORITY
Minutes of the board meeting of July 19, 2023, 3:00 p.m.
CCA Board Meeting Minutes
Midland City Hall ~ City Council Chambers

Call to Order 3:00 p.m.

Attending: Jennifer Chappel Joe Kozuch, Sharon Mortensen, Alex Rapanos, Chris Schloemann, David Ginis, Carol Stone **Absent:** Linda Barth

Kozuch presented the minutes from April 19, 2023 for approval. Chappel motioned to approve the minutes and Stone seconded the motion. Minutes were unanimously approved.

Director of Community Affairs Selina Harris provided a detailed procedural history on the Ashman – Rodd Community Conversation identifying the impact to Center City. City Council has requested feedback from the CCA. The committee will readdress and provide recommendation to City Council based on Center City businesses feedback they receive.

There were public comments made in opposition to the two-way conversion of Ashman and Rodd streets by Carol Arnosky, 518 Brookwood and; Jackie Moeller – Midland Township Resident.

Mortensen provided a report on actions of the governance and sustainability committee.

Ginis provided a report on physical Improvements committee. The committee did not meet in June.

Meeting adjourned 4:08 pm

September 13, 2023

To: Center City Authority Board

From: Selina Harris City of Midland Community Affairs Director

RE: Ashman-Rodd Two-Way Conversion Conversation

On July 10, 2023, Midland City Council directed that the Center City Authority, Downtown Development Authority, and City Planning Commission review and provide a recommendation on a proposal to restore two-way traffic on Ashman Street from Cambridge to Ann and Rodd Street from Cambridge to Main.

About the Ashman-Rodd Two-Way Conversion:

Restoration of two-way traffic on Ashman and Rodd Streets has been a subject of study and community conversation almost continuously since the one-way paired system was established in 1961.

Today, this question has particular time sensitivity. Four significant, generational investments in our streets, our business districts, and our public spaces are undergoing planning and/or design. These projects include:

- Downtown Streetscape Plan Phase 2
- Saginaw Road Streetscape Plan Phase 2
- Business Route US-10 / M-20 (Indian and Buttles Streets) reconstruction
- Riverfront Redevelopment Plan

Millions of dollars of public and private investment have already occurred in the areas served by these corridors, creating tremendous energy and momentum. Additional millions in investment will follow due to the above public projects and other private projects.

A decision now on a desired future design for these corridors is necessary to efficiently utilize the community's resources on these important projects and position these areas and Midland as a community for growth and prosperity into the future.

Documents referenced below, videos of prior meetings, and other resources related to this project can all be found on the project website:

<https://cityofmidlandmi.gov/1935/Ashman-Rodd-Corridor-Conversion>

History

In the post-war period, Midland – like most cities around Michigan and the nation – was experiencing tremendous growth in population and in vehicle traffic volumes. A 1953 annexation made Midland the 5th largest city by land area in Michigan. With that annexation, as well as extension of water services, the City rapidly sprawled beyond Saginaw Road to the north and east. Midland's population grew by 94.5% between 1950 and 1960, to 27,779 residents.

In 1958 the Midland City Planning Commission commissioned a Major Street Report. This report recommended numerous changes to traffic patterns in Midland. Among the recommendations of that

report was the creation of several one-way paired streets, including Main and Larkin; Ellsworth and Buttles; Ashman and Rodd; State and George; Patrick and Lyon; and Bay City and Austin.

The 1958 Major Street Report echoes similar reports from around the state and country during this period. Its recommendations are consistent with the philosophy of roadway design in that era, which focused primarily on traffic flow. Little consideration was given to other factors routinely considered today, such as context, multimodal access, economic development, and placemaking.

City Council ultimately approved the conversion of Ashman and Rodd Streets to one-way traffic from Cambridge Street to Downtown Midland and the conversion was finalized on October 1, 1961. During this same period, the City also made several other street changes to facilitate traffic flow, including removing on-street parking from several City streets and Ashman Circle and creating reversible traffic lanes on Washington Street, south of East Ashman, to handle commuting traffic through the Washington Street gate of Dow Chemical. It also pre-dates the establishment of the Buttles Street and Indian Street one-way pair system in 1962.

Center City Specifics:

In a 1961 letter to City Council the Circle Businessmen's Association (C.B.A.), which opposed the Ashman – Rodd one-way conversion, they stated: *One way streets in business areas have fallen short as satisfactory answers to the traffic problems of business districts. They may serve as short term answers but not for the long haul. A number of cities in Michigan have been caught in this trap by thinking they had solved their problems for all time by adopting one way streets.*

Accompanying that letter was a petition from the C.B.A. urging City Council to start and stop the proposed one-way system at Nelson Street, south of the Circle.

Concerns with traffic circulation in the Circle District and Downtown Midland persisted, and the areas have been studied multiple times from 1961 to the present in an effort to identify solutions that better balance the needs of businesses and through traffic.

A 1991 report on Circle/South Saginaw Road Commercial District Area Improvement Strategies also identified traffic circulation as a major issue for the Circle District. A concurrent survey of business owners in the Circle District found that difficult traffic patterns were number one on the list of major problems with the Ashman Circle area. Furthermore, the same survey found that the restoration of two-way traffic on Ashman Street was the number one suggestion for improvement to traffic patterns and Circle access. The 1991 report ultimately recommended restoring two-way traffic on Ashman Street between Cambridge and Mertz Streets.

2002 Midland Circle Area Enhancement Plan Through an extensive public process, the 2002 plan was created to identify ideas to improve the Circle Area. Among the many ideas considered, it was noted that *“revising street design issues is essential to solutions that promote both traffic safety and economic health.”* The report continued: *What was once a center of community activity is now more a place people pass through. Streets are designated as one-way, bypass routes and traffic signals have been added. Disjointed and clashing streets confuse uninitiated drivers, and access to businesses in the commercial district is difficult. Some business owners feel these cumulative layers of fixes accommodate*

those traveling someplace else, with little thought about the livelihood of those who live, work, and shop in the Circle. A Strengths – Weaknesses – Opportunities – Threats (SWOT) Analysis conducted as part of the public engagement process for the 2002 Circle Plan identified turning Ashman into a two-way street as the second most popular opportunity among participants (behind landscaping improvements). The report further states: *On a daily basis, the streets conflict with desires of people trying to get from one place to another. Drivers and pedestrians fight traffic controls built over the past thirty-five years. People should not have to work so hard to navigate the Circle, and shop owners should not rely on their customers circumventing the web of public streets to do business. There is a strong desire by the community to address past traffic changes for something more responsive to their needs.* As a result of the strong public support expressed for two-way traffic through the planning process, all three design alternatives considered – including the design ultimately identified as the preferred alternative – restored two-way traffic on Ashman and East Ashman at the Circle.

2019 Center City Redevelopment Plan In 2019, the Center City Authority (CCA) and City Council adopted the Center City Redevelopment Plan, which includes a consideration of traffic flow patterns throughout Center City including Ashman and Rodd Streets. The plan builds upon earlier studies of Ashman Circle and the Saginaw Road corridor, including the 2002 plan. The 2019 plan provided updated alternatives for roadway treatments and concluded that the vision for Center City, particularly the plan for Ashman Circle, would be feasible with Ashman and Rodd Streets in either one-way or two-way traffic configurations.

On August 29, 2023 a center city district meeting for business owners, property owners and residents were invited to attend a discussion on the Ashman-Rodd Two-Way conversion. The meeting was designed to solicit feedback from the district on issues the CCA should consider when rendering its recommendations. The meeting was available in both an on-line and in-person format.

The following persons were in attendance: Chris Schloemann (Dominos), Kevin LaDuke (Midland Area Community Foundation), Kyle Fahrner (Midland Area Community Foundation), Sam Price (Ten16 Recovery Network), Scott McNellis (LaLondes Market), Steve LaLonde (LaLondes Market), Craig Lobsinger (SueLynn Properties), Kevin Harrison (Midland Furniture Garage), Jacob Kain (City Planning Director), Joe Kozuch (Village Green), Scott Marquiss (Circle Auto Parts)

After a detailed presentation on the topic the following items were brought out in the conversation that ensued:

- Question: Why look at Rodd vs. Ashman for the bicycle route?
Answer: under modelling, it is assumed that Ashman Street will carry slightly more traffic than Rodd because of its connectivity to E. Ashman and a more direct route of regional traffic along the Ashman corridor than is found on Rodd Street. Putting marked bike lanes on a lower-traffic corridor made sense. It also leaves opportunity for more turn lanes on Ashman, more frequently without interrupting the bike lane. The land uses along the corridor – Ashman south from the Circle generates a lot more turn movements on and off Ashman. Rodd Street has more institutions – church, parks, school that are more conducive to pure driveways and give less interruption to a bicycle lane. Rodd has lower traffic flows and fewer turn movements.

- Question: Three lane roadways are typically wider than two-lane roadway?
Answer: Curb-to-curb, Ashman and Rodd are comparable to most two-way streets like Jefferson north of the Circle where you've got two-lanes and turn lane.
- Question: Can you add a bicycle lane the way they are?
Answer: You can. Curb to curb could fit a standard five-foot bicycle lane and standard 10.5-11 foot travel lane. Most two-way streets with a bicycle lane the bike lane drops at major intersections for a left turn lane so that option exists or the bicycle lane could be maintained and left turn traffic would just have the share the lane.
- Question: Would four ways stops like downtown be evaluated?
Answer: those type of road signals have warrants. Typically it comes down to from which way is traffic approaching – usually there's a different approach to balanced traffic – all four roadways have the same approaching traffic versus heavier traffic on a main road and lighter traffic on a side road. Safety is a critical factor – history or propensity for traffic crashes.
- Question: When you talk about Level of Service does this refer to only vehicles?
Answer: Yes. This study was only to evaluate traffic flow – vehicle traffic flow. This was a prerequisite to make sure the project would not create gridlock. Ped and NM level of service is a different conversation. This tends to be more qualitative – are there street trees? A buffer between traffic? Things to walk to? Sidewalks in good condition? These can be evaluated separately.
- An increase in multimodal use of the new eight-foot wide sidewalks was noted.
- It seems that Phase II of the streetscape and changing direction on Ashman and Rodd is an awful lot to happen all at once. We'd be in favor of the changes on Rodd and Ashman if it wasn't happening at the same time Phase II of streetscape.
- Question: MDOT does US-10, Downtown has their project, Center City has its project – plus all the funding. How do you make that happen all at once?
Answer: Part of consideration would be sequencing Ashman/Rodd changes with the phasing of the various projects. The Ashman/Rodd directional traffic change could happen in a couple of days – at whatever designated time makes sense for the projects.
- Midland has an aging population and it takes longer time for that population to adapt. I see that with my business- and aging consumers. We're concerned about that. We were affected by Phase I even though it didn't happen in front of our business. Customers avoided Saginaw Road during Phase I because of construction.
Response: the reality is if these streets were to become two-way traffic they would essentially still operate like every street other street In Midland but Buttles and Indian. If your preference is to drive down Ashman to get to downtown – you can still do that. If you like to take Rodd Street from downtown to Saginaw Road, you can still do that. Nothing changes except for our ability to drive in three different lanes on Ashman and Rodd like you do today. It's a common concern and is similar to another two-way conversion project worked on in another town only the concern was for college students who don't know how to drive, they are new to our community and when we change we are going to have a bunch of accidents. The reality was college kids came back the next fall and never even remembered it was one-way to begin with.
- If we hold back on change because we are nervous that the elder population will be confused, then we are catering to one population and not growing. We need to make decisions that are best for our community in the long term. For the future. And know there will be growing pains any way you look at it. How can we minimize the pain and still make it successful.

- I wouldn't put my business on a one-way street. For me, personally. You open up the opportunity for people to access your business going both ways on a two-way street. Rarely do you see a business in your rearview mirror and figure out how to get back to it. You just don't do it. If you have a two-way street for a business to move into, it's more attractive.
- GPS has removed the difficulty of wayfinding. My business on the Circle suffers from people trying to find us. But they do find us. An impulse business would be different.
- We're spending a lot of money for questionable results.
- Speaking to livability and the emotional connections people feel to their community. I live downtown and walk to Center City to work two to three times a week. I would not live in Midland if I wasn't able to find a space for walkability – where I can walk to local businesses and get to them in an easier manner. When we talk about a conversion to two-way traffic – by increasing that multi-model transportation you are opening up that level of service beyond just vehicles – you're opening it to people walking, riding bikes, development that is more easily accessible that's providing more spaces for people to have communities that are tighter. A grocery store I could walk to would be wonderful. If we are encouraging more development in these areas by making them more attractive to businesses – I think we are making a huge impact on residents and sticking to a core value of development and retention of young professionals and talent. That's an emotional decision without a quantitative fact behind it. I made a decision to live in Midland based on feeling.
- Our population is not going up, it's going down. What is going to attract young people to come to this town? Livability. The aging population is going to continue to age and they tend to stop buying. That doesn't help my business. If we're not attracting young people to our community, we're in trouble. There are three large entities building in Center City in the near future that are going to change the dynamics on Saginaw Road. That's because of what we've just done. And what we're doing next. Saginaw Road hasn't been touched since the 70s. We had six different light pole designs in this district. We have to do something to attract people.
- I saw people out walking at 9 pm. We lit the sidewalks. Safety and walkability. Lit sidewalks make a difference.
- Making it easy to get around town. If someone is deciding to move to Midland or not, they are going to come visit. They are going to make a decision pretty quickly whether it's easy to get around or not. That's something that lead people to say "it's not hard to get around this town" – it's no longer going to be a negative. We want to make it easy for people visiting Midland to get around, too.
- My biggest concern is keeping traffic easily moving from the Circle north to Jefferson. Are there any changes – any unintended consequences – that cause people to avoid the Circle? My concern is cutting Jefferson off at the Circle and cutting traffic that travels through the Circle. If you make Rodd two-way – people don't have to travel through the Circle to access Ashman to go downtown anymore.
- Converting the one-way street does not mean that we have to do one thing or the other at the Circle – forcing us to take a direction one way or another on the plans for the Circle. The two proposals being considered are concepts only. I support whatever the City wants to do with Ashman and Rodd – but I don't want to see it affect Jefferson north of the Circle.
- Biggest challenge is the misinformation that it's a \$3.7 million project when it's actually only \$500,000.

- Question: turn lanes on Ashman – would they be all the way into downtown?
Answer: typically turn lanes have warrants – like stop lights. We'd look at the expected number of turns to determine if a turn lane is necessary. Jefferson north of the Circle, for instance. You have turn lanes at St. Andrews, but not every intersection as you head north because the volumes don't warrant it. I would expect the likelihood of turn lanes would be highest at signalized intersections along Ashman and probably from the Circle south to Nickels because of the volume in and out of turn lane.
- A downfall I hear from people who are neutral is that traffic would get backed up if you don't have a turn lane.
Response: The volume of traffic on these corridors is very low. The design of the street creates a perception that traffic volumes are higher. These streets have significantly less traffic than other two-way streets in Midland. Jefferson traffic volume is much higher than Ashman and Rodd.
- What does the Circle gain from two-way on Ashman and Rodd
Response: my business is a delivery business we're on the road every day, thousands of times and it's going to make my access to downtown way easier; will open up all my avenues.
GPS is important – but sometimes we still have to give in person directions, or over the phone and it's a pain. That's why I'm for it – open up all my corridors; make my deliveries easier and quicker.
- The Circle is always going to be a problem. The fact that the city is oriented on an angle is always going to be a problem. There is no fixing those things. There are a million ways that make the Circle district difficult to access and you have one way difficulty that is not needed. Why not remove that barrier. You can't fix the other things. You can lean into them and make it a place people want to come to – but you can make it easier to get there.

The most recent study of this initiative and conversations with the community are being completed and in October Midland City Council will render a final decision on the direction of this discussion.

Per City Council's direction, the CCA has been asked to review of this initiative and provide its recommendation to city council.

There are two key items of concern for the CCA:

1. The impact that the one-way configuration of Ashman and Rodd has on the Center City business district in its current configuration and the benefits and disadvantages of changing to a two-way configuration and;
2. Impact or direction to be considered about this issue and its effect on Phase II of the Center City Redevelopment Plan.

Attached for your consideration is the CCA resolution of support which can be approved or rejected.

Also attached are four letters received by the CCA in regard to this matter.

Additional background, studies and information can be found on the following pages and online at <https://cityofmidlandmi.gov/1935/Ashman-Rodd-Corridor-Conversion>

Additional Information on the Ashman Rodd Conversion:

Downtown:

1988 Midland Downtown Plan noted that “ease of movement and orientation within the downtown area are complicated by the one-way movement patterns which overlie the traditional street grid.”

2016 Downtown Streetscape Plan In 2016, the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and City Council adopted a Downtown Streetscape Plan that created a new vision for our Downtown streets. The plan also included significant public engagement with an emphasis on downtown businesses and property owners. The plan has been partially realized through the new Main Street streetscape, which was implemented in 2017. The plan also included a recommendation to restore Ashman and Rodd Streets to two-way traffic within the downtown district. This recommendation was supported by professional traffic modeling that concluded that the current traffic level of service would be adequately maintained if two-way traffic was restored on both streets. The two-way restoration was further identified as a desired placemaking and economic development strategy for several reasons, including:

- Making it easier for visitors to access downtown from Indian and Buttles Streets;
- Improving safety by addressing current issues with wrong way traffic on downtown streets;
- Helping motorists more easily navigate downtown streets;
- Supporting economic development by increasing business visibility and access; and
- Increasing the visibility and use of the Larkin Parking Ramp.

2023 Riverfront Redevelopment Plan Most recently, the DDA and City Council adopted a Riverfront Redevelopment Plan in June 2023. This plan was developed with the understanding that the restoration of two-way traffic on Ashman and Rodd Streets was under consideration. Preliminary concepts developed through that process are compatible with and would benefit from the two-way restoration of Ashman and Rodd Streets.

A second phase to this riverfront redevelopment could include the pedestrianization of McDonald Street from Ann Street to Main Street, creating the pedestrian linkage from the riverfront to shopping district that the DDA has pursued for many years. A compatible project currently being explored would also pedestrianize McDonald Street north of Main Street to add a restroom facility and respite area at McDonald and Main Street. Both of these project would be more successful and benefit greatly by having two way traffic on both Ashman and Rodd.

It is useful to note that Rodd Street currently carries two-way traffic from Ann Street to Main Street.

The 2006 Master Plan – which, as amended, is the current City’s Master Plan – includes a recommendation related to the Ashman and Rodd one-way pairs. That recommendation, contained in Chapter 8 – Implementation, states that the City should periodically evaluate the impacts of returning both of these streets to two-way operation and carefully weigh the potential advantages and disadvantages of doing so.

2018 Midtown Design Charrette In December 2018, the Planning Department conducted a Midtown Design Charrette for business owners, residents, and other property owners located along Ashman and Rodd Streets between Downtown and Center City. More than 30 residents and business owners of the Midtown neighborhood attended this event. While the event covered a number of neighborhood-specific topics, concerns with safety, speed, and access disadvantages with the current design of Ashman and Rodd Streets were voiced by those in attendance.

Procedural History

The various planning activities involving Ashman and Rodd Streets in recent years – including decision making regarding the future design of Indian and Buttles Streets – has informed subsequent actions by City Council to complete a holistic review of the potential two-way restoration.

This review most recently began in January 2022, when City Council provided general direction to staff to prepare a Request for Proposal (RFP) to analyze the traffic flow impacts of restoring two-way traffic to Ashman and Rodd Streets during their strategic planning retreat. That RFP was authorized for release by City Council on February 28, 2022.

On May 23, 2022, City Council authorized the selection of OHM Advisors for that project, to include analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of all road options. City Council received the OHM report on December 19, 2022 and at the same meeting authorized staff to issue the RFP to complete the corridor study, provide for public engagement, and develop design recommendations for the restoration of two-way traffic.

PM Blough, Inc. was selected to assist with that process, and the outcomes of that process were first presented to City Council on June 12, 2023.

Capacity Analysis Results

In 2022, OHM Advisors was hired by the City to evaluate the potential benefits and costs to restore two-way traffic to Ashman and Rodd Streets. The study is focused on traffic impacts, specifically vehicle level of service (LOS), a measure of operating conditions including speed, travel time, and delay.

Level of service is generally rated A through D, with LOS D considered acceptable in urban settings such as the study area. The study considered four design scenarios:

- One-way traffic (existing conditions)
- Two-way traffic with center left turn lane
- Two-way traffic without center left turn lane (extra curb-to-curb width available for multimodal facility, on-street parking, or other purpose)
- Two-way traffic combination – center left turn lane on Ashman but not on Rodd

The study found that there is a comparable level of service in the study area along both Ashman and Rodd Streets when comparing all four design scenarios. Existing delay at the intersection of Ashman and Saginaw is redistributed in each of the design scenarios with delay in all scenarios largely similar to existing conditions. At some locations, level of service improves under two-way restoration; at Ashman and Carpenter, for example, level of service improves from D to C. Rodd Street operates at a level of service C or better under all scenarios.

The study also provides a brief and generalized overview of other considerations relevant to a potential two-way restoration. The study notes that, consistent with the capacity analysis findings summarized above, restoration of two-way traffic on Ashman and Rodd Streets does not create any roadway capacity issues.

The study further notes that two-way restorations typically result in lower traffic speeds, which is an important factor in roadway safety.

Importantly, the study notes that two-way restorations can improve system navigation by providing more direct routes to destinations. System navigation is critical to economic development of commercial areas and can make the community more welcoming to visitors and new residents as well as provide long-time residents with improved access to community amenities.

The study notes that two-way traffic creates more potential conflict points when compared with the limited turn movements permitted under one-way traffic conditions; however, these additional conflicts are often offset by reductions in speed.

Two-way restorations can provide for and are often pursued in order to:

- increase non-motorized safety by providing opportunity to reallocate curb-to-curb width from motorized to non-motorized use, which was explored in two of the scenarios studied;
- modify emergency and maintenance routes, generally providing more direct and flexible access;
- provide significantly more access for the approximately 225 parcels that take direct access from the corridors, including approximately 125 residences and over 100 businesses and civic institutions. These numbers do not include the hundreds of additional homes and businesses in Downtown, Midtown, and Center City that could benefit from enhanced access and visibility resulting from a two-way restoration.;

COST

The study includes an engineering estimate of the total cost of the two-way restoration scenarios. This estimate, \$3.7 million, includes no detailed breakdown. There are several contextual factors which lead staff to believe this cost estimate is not representative of likely actual costs:

- Much of the project cost would be absorbed into three pending roadway projects: Phase 2 of the Saginaw Road streetscape project (north of Dartmouth); implementation of the next phase of the Downtown Streetscape Plan; and MDOT's reconstruction of Business Route US-10. For instance, six of the eleven existing signalized intersections along the corridors would likely be reconstructed as part of the Saginaw Road or BR-10 projects.
- Future design steps would include evaluating the remaining five signalized intersections to determine if signal warrants continue to exist. There is the potential for significant project cost reduction and ongoing maintenance cost reduction through the removal of one or more existing traffic signals along Ashman and/or Rodd Street.
- The existing right-turn slip lane from Rodd to Jefferson and from Cambridge to E. Ashman, and the contraflow slip lane from Jefferson to Nickels Street are shown for removal. These removals are not essential to the restoration and could be removed from the project in order to reduce costs.

The City Engineering Department reviewed the project and found that the expected additional costs for the restoration of two-way traffic on Ashman and Rodd Streets would be less than \$500,000. These

costs represent approximately 1% of the City's current six-year budget for major street projects contained in the adopted 2023-2028 Capital Improvement Plan. The additional costs include striping, signage, and traffic signal modifications between Indian Street and Saginaw Road, with other costs already included in the estimated budgets for the Saginaw Road streetscape project, BR-10 reconstruction, and Downtown streetscape project, all of which are expected to occur regardless of City

Corridor Conversations

Following receipt of the OHM report in December 2022, City Council directed staff to provide opportunities for Midlanders to learn more about the potential restoration and provide feedback. PM Blough, Inc. was hired to assist with the public input period and create conceptual renderings depicting each street with two-way traffic. The concept renderings generally showed left-turn lanes provided at major intersections with on-street parking provided in other areas and bicycle traffic sharing the travel lane with vehicle traffic, a hybrid of the concepts analyzed by OHM. The public was invited to participate in this project in the following ways:

- Five community conversation open houses were held on April 18, 19, and 20 at the Law Enforcement Center and the Northwood Idea Center. These events included several exhibits and handouts to provide context for the project and answer common questions, copies of which are included in the final community conversation report. An estimated 150 people attended the sessions.
- An E-CityHall community-wide survey was open from May 2 to May 10. Survey participants submitted a total of 213 comments. • The Midland Business Alliance hosted a virtual "Issues & Answers" event on May 10 which was free and open to the general public. Approximately 20 community members participated in the virtual session. A final report of the community conversation process, including the E-CityHall survey results, was prepared and presented to City Council in June and July, 2023. Among the hundreds of questions and comments provided certain themes emerged. These themes include:
 - The origin and rationale for the proposed project.
 - Non-motorized transportation facilities.
 - Traffic flow impacts.
 - Construction impacts, project timing, and phasing.
 - Public service impacts, including emergency response and solid waste collection.
 - Traffic safety.
 - The relationship of this project with other projects, including Phase II of the Saginaw Road Streetscape, reconstruction of Business Route US-10, updates to the Downtown Streetscape on Ashman and Rodd Streets, and the Riverfront Redevelopment Plan.
 - Next steps. Many of the items above were addressed at length through the materials provided at the open houses and through the survey, as well as through conversations between staff, the engagement consultant, and participants. The materials provided are included in the Community Conversations Report.

Alternatives Considered

Studies from the 1960s to the present have primarily focused on restoring two-way traffic to Ashman and Rodd Streets since the circulation limitations created by the one-way traffic pattern were a major concern of business owners at each end of the corridors. Many studies have considered these issues in isolation, recommending restoration only in the respective area of study – such as the 2002 Circle Plan

and the 2016 Downtown Streetscape Plan. The current process has been undertaken with the intent of looking at the streets holistically, from Cambridge Street to the riverfront, for the first time since the 1958 Major Streets Plan first recommended the one-way conversion. As noted previously, the OHM study considered four design alternatives, each inclusive of the entire corridor.

The renderings produced for the Corridor Conversations public engagement process blended the alternatives by providing intermittent turn lanes at major intersections and shared bicycle lanes on both Ashman and Rodd Street.

Due to significant public comments regarding a desire for dedicated bicycle facilities on at least one of the two streets, staff would recommend that if two-way restoration is approved that dedicated bicycle lanes be provided on Rodd Street. Cross-sections depicting the proposed design have been prepared accordingly and are on the project webpage. It is still possible to consider additional alternatives to the designs. For instance, restoration of two-way traffic south of Indian Street, or north of Nelson Street, could address specific circulation concerns in those areas while retaining one-way traffic flow on the remainder of the corridor. The excess capacity on each street could also be repurposed for on-street parking, a dedicated or protected bicycle facility, or another purpose. These scenarios have not been analyzed, largely because the potential circulation benefits of two-way restoration have been the major focus of discussions about the streets for over 50 years.

Additional background, survey and workshops, studies cited and information can be found online at <https://cityofmidlandmi.gov/1935/Ashman-Rodd-Corridor-Conversion>

WHEREAS, Ashman and Rodd Streets are currently main thoroughfares out of and into the Center City and located on the northern-most boundary of the Center City business district; and

WHEREAS, since the conversion of Ashman and Rodd Streets from their original two-way traffic profile to one-way directional streets in 1961, ongoing conversations including studies in 1991 and 2002 continue to express the benefits that restoration of the two-way traffic profile would have for Center City;

WHEREAS, the transition of Ashman and Rodd from one-way to two-way traffic is an opportunity to improve traffic flow into and out of the Center City business district by adding additional access points to Saginaw Road; and

WHEREAS, the 2018 MKSK Center City Redevelopment Plan provides alternatives for improvements at the Circle that work in either a one-way or two-way configuration for Ashman and Rodd Streets; and

WHEREAS, the Center City Authority (CCA) recognizes the following benefits of two-way traffic restoration on Ashman and Rodd streets to include: removal of confusing one-way streets that make it more difficult for visitors to our district, addressing safety issues of vehicles going the wrong way on these streets, and establishing consistency with business-friendly street design practices; and

WHEREAS, Midland City Council will soon consider final action on the restoration of Ashman and Rodd Streets to two-way traffic patterns thus giving Center City the information it needs to proceed with Phase II of the Center City Redevelopment Plan; now therefore

RESOLVED, the Center City Authority hereby expresses its support for the restoration of two-way traffic on Ashman and Rodd Streets from Saginaw Road to Ann Street recognizing the safety, access and business-friendly benefits to the Center City business district.

Presented to the Center City Authority Board on September 20, 2023

Motion made by:

Motion supported by:

Yeas:

Nays:

Absent:

Abstain:

Vote:

From: [Amy Waier](#)
To: [Harris, Selina](#)
Subject: Conversion of Ashman/Rodd into two-way streets
Date: Thursday, August 17, 2023 11:17:27 AM

Caution: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Ms. Tisdale,

We are contacting you in regards to the conversion of Ashman and Rodd into two-way streets. We are hoping that you take into consideration the private citizens that live on these streets since we make up the majority of the people that will be affected by a change. We are strongly opposed to changing both Ashman and Rodd into two-way streets.

My husband and I have been home owners living in the same house on Ashman for the last 30 years. We have talked with many of our neighbors on Ashman and they feel the same as we do about not changing our street to two-way traffic. The reasons for our opposition are the following:

Cost: The amount of money that is being discussed seems like a waste of funds – no matter where the money is coming from - to change roadways that are currently functioning just fine. Being tax payers, we would like to see our money spent wisely and believe there other, more critical issues that the city could be addressing instead of changing these roads – namely sewer systems, flooding.

Accessibility: We have read many articles about the city discussing how to get people to access downtown. If you change Ashman and Rodd from one-way to two-way, any scenario will remove a lane of traffic. You will go from three lanes going into downtown to two lanes. This change doesn't fit into what the city has said is important to them.

Confusion: With modern GPS available, it seems like a veiled reason to change these roadways. Yes, one-ways can seem confusing when you are first driving on them. Luckily, Midland is small enough that you can simply and easily proceed around the block. If the city is concerned about one-way roads, why aren't they discussing the need to change Buttles and Indian as well?

Safety: We have heard the argument that two-way traffic would stop people from going over the speed limit. The problem is that Ashman is a straight-away from Eastlawn to Carpenter with no signals to stop anyone from speeding. Changing to two-ways will only give people a reason to speed in both directions which would be a greater safety concern to the home owners. Also, it is difficult enough to back out of a driveway onto a major one-way. Making Ashman two-way would make this even more difficult. To understand this, we would suggest that anyone try to back out of a driveway on Eastman, East Ashman, Sugnet, etc.

We appreciate you taking our thoughts into consideration in this matter and we hope that you will share this with the rest of the City Center Authority Board.

Sincerely,
Amy and Steve Waier
2020 Ashman Street

Harris, Selina

Subject: FW: Take park in Ashman/Rodd Conversation at Center City Authority Board Meeting

From: Pop-Pop's Gourmet Treats [mailto:custsvc@pop-popsgt.com]
Sent: Tuesday, July 18, 2023 1:58 PM
To: Harris, Selina <sharris@midland-mi.org>
Subject: Re: Take park in Ashman/Rodd Conversation at Center City Authority Board Meeting

Thank you, Selina, for the invitation to be part of the conversation about the Rodd/Ashman proposed changes.

We have taken the opportunities to express our views regarding the proposal through surveys and other online questionnaires. As residents and business owners living and working in that direct area, this is a major concern to us. We're concerned that our opinions don't matter.

We are not in favor of this change. While the roads may have been two-way streets years ago, many changes of population, businesses, and traffic styles have occurred over the past 50+ years.

We would prefer that funds being designated to the Rodd/Ashman street changes be directed to a regular route bus system. Dial-a-Ride does bring in money for the City, but it's an unfair system; it punishes people. Riders use it out of necessity only. We have voiced our opinions about that subject, as well. One small bus model to review would be the bus system CATA has set up for Michigan State University. It has nine routes that run 24/7. It's very effective cost-wise and reliable.

Again, thank you for the invite to be part of the opinion process.

Best regards,

Gene and Patricia McFarland

Pop-Pop's Gourmet Popcorn

Gene & Patricia McFarland, Owners
136 Ashman Circle, Midland, MI 48640
989-486-9601 • custsvc@pop-popsgt.com
poppopsgourmettreats.com

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From: [Luke Synnestvedt](#)
To: [Harris, Selina](#)
Cc: [Soler, Tim](#); [Donker, Maureen](#); [Arnosky, Steve](#); [Brown Wilhelm, Diane](#); [Wazbinski, Marty](#)
Subject: Two-Way Conversion Public Comments to Consider
Date: Wednesday, July 19, 2023 11:42:50 AM

Caution: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello Midland CCA (and City Council Members CC'ed),

My name is Luke Synnestvedt, a Midland resident at 4306 Stonegate Dr. I attended the last City Council meeting and spoke during the presentation on the two-way conversion effort for Rodd and Ashman. I wanted to provide more data on public opinions for the council to consider.

The below represents brief, ad hoc conversations I've had with ~10 additional community members from our local mountain biking and cycling communities. They also relayed that their spouses/friends felt similarly, but that's 2 layers of hearsay so take it for what you will. This is the synthesis of the opinions I heard:

1. Most could not effectively articulate the proposed cost of the two way conversion (est. \$500,000 vs. the total \$3.7M cost for the totality of the Ash and Rodman renewal)
2. No one voiced support of the conversion.
3. Roughly 75% stated they thought it was wasteful, but 25% were more or less indifferent.
4. Several people felt that this was a handout to the businesses in Center City and were upset because:
 - Midland has already invested a large amount of money in rejuvenating that district (with the landscaping efforts on Saginaw)
 - Residents felt that the businesses in this area knew that the retail space was less-than-optimal and should not receive continued indirect subsidies for those properties
5. **All** participants felt that removing the 6 way intersection on Saginaw was a significantly better use of their money and more directly achieved the objectives of increasing traffic to Center City.

Personally, I still think the \$500,000 to complete the conversion is somewhat negligible and that the community is overly focused on this atomic issue. I do, however, echo the sentiment that we already invested significantly in that region (with the Saginaw Rd. renovations), and it feels like we are continuing to invest in that region at the expense of other opportunities.

If the Midland Business Alliance wants to increase traffic to that area, I think they also should be responsible for implementing more creative solutions (such as installing chargers for EVs to increase foot traffic for motorists travelling through Midland county).

I also echo that I would like to see the city focus on removing the 6 way intersection as the key strategic priority for our roads. Regardless, I do not have a strong opinion on the 2 way conversion itself.

Thanks,

Luke Synnestvedt

--

Luke Synnestvedt

Cloud Security Architect - Gaming & Fitness Enthusiast

Mobile: 2152806032

Wellington

GERI HORSLEY, OWNER

July 21, 2023

LAURIE KRAMER, SALES MGR.

1900 K SOUTH SAGINAW RD. MIDLAND, MI 48640

PHONE: (989) 631-5270 • FAX: (989) 631-5731

Maureen,

As business owners in Center City, we strongly suggest the conversion of both Rodd Street and Ashman to two-way traffic flow, as it was originally intended.

Regards,

Gerri Horsley & Laurie Kramer



MOVADO

TUMI

Landmark Collection

Harris, Selina

Subject: FW: Rodd and Ashman

-----Original Message-----

From: Meg <megharding@aol.com>

Sent: Monday, July 24, 2023 1:23 PM

To: Sharon Mortensen <sharonmortensen@yahoo.com>; Sharon Mortensen <sharonmortensen2905@gmail.com>; Mortensen, Sharon <smortensen@midlandfoundation.org>

Cc: Meg Harding <megharding@aol.com>

Subject: Rodd and Ashman

Hi Sharon,

I noticed in the newspaper that you serve on one of the committees which will be looking at the possible conversion of Rodd and Ashman Streets back to two-way streets. I was living in Midland when they were changed to one-way streets in the early 1960s and I understood why back then. And I thought it made sense.

I have thought a lot about this change since I first read about it several months ago. At first I couldn't understand why the City was even looking at it. But I have come to believe that converting the streets back to two-way would be good for Midland. I think it would give us more of a sense of community. I think it would be safer for those living on these two streets, as traffic would move more slowly, and there would be less noise. I also think it would make it easier for those living on Rodd and Ashman to leave their homes as needed.

I would like to see both streets two-way, with a dedicated bike lane which is painted red, yellow, or green. We've seen this in many cities in the world where the bike lane is painted red or green and it really alerts the drivers to the cyclists. I imagine there is a paint which could be used which would not be slippery.

Has a door-to-door survey been done of all the businesses and residences along those two streets to understand what works best for them?

I wanted to share my thoughts with you. Thank you,

Meg



**Center City Authority
Governance & Sustainability Committee Meeting
Tuesday, September 12, 2023 ~ 2 p.m.
Midland City Hall ~ Conference Room B**

In attendance: Joe Kozuch, Scott Marquiss, Carol Stone

Absent: Ajay Middha, Sharon Mortensen

August 8 Governance and Sustainability Committee minutes were presented for approval. Marquiss moved approval. Seconded by Stone. Minutes were approved.

Harris shared that Rachel Morr was appointed to the vacancy on the CCA board at the Sept. 11 City Council meeting.

Harris provided an update on Streetscape construction. All but a few Consumers light poles have been removed. Isabella will be called back to remove the light pole bases. City crews are working on cleaning up the Dartmouth/Saginaw Road work before the celebration event.

Streetscape celebration event scheduled for 9/21. Reviewed logistics and planning for the event.

Discussed next steps for Phase II of the Center City Redevelopment Plan. Ashman-Rodd conversation should be finalized at City Council on October 23. November would be a good time to begin crafting a path forward for Phase II discussions. Harris will work to get synchro modelling in a viewable form.

Discussed pushing the October Long Range Strategic Planning session to November in order to accommodate outcome of Ashman-Rodd two-way conversation.

Reviewed draft agenda for the CCA Board meeting scheduled for September 20.

Meeting adjourned 2:50 pm

2024 – Proposed CCA Board Meeting Calendar

***3rd Wednesday of each month,
3 pm City Hall Council Chambers***

January 17

February 21

March 20

April 17

May 15

June 19

July 17

August 21

September 18

October 16 (Strategic Planning Session)

November 20

December 18

2023 CCA Board Structure

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Business</u>	<u>Committee(s)</u>
Chair Joe Kozuch	Business/Property Owner	Village Green	Governance & Sustainability, Physical Improvements
Vice Chair Jennifer Chappel	District Business	Habitat for Humanity	Marketing
Linda Barth	District Resident	Coldwell Banker	Marketing
David Ginis	Business/Property Owner	Ginis Goldsmiths	Physical Improvements
Rachel Morr	Citizen-at-Large	DuPont	
Sharon Mortensen	District Business	Midland Area Community Foundation	Governance & Sustainability
Alex Rapanos	Business/Property Owner	Midland Towne Plaza	Physical Improvements
Chris Schloemann	Business Owner	Dominos	Marketing
Carol Stone	City Manager Appointee	City of Midland	Governance & Sustainability