

Smaller, Systematic Physical Solutions to Enhance the District

12. Parking Refinement. Conduct a detailed analysis of each section of parallel parking within the Business District. This includes evaluating commercial no parking zones like near the Cleaners at Grand and Wyoming. Does this have to be a full-time no parking zone? Can this 142-foot no parking zone be reduced? Can the commercial loading be served by allowing trucks to double-park, thus allowing 6 parallel parking spaces? Does the Church on Wyoming need a no parking zone in front of their building on weekdays as well as Sunday? Additionally, examine each element that causes a no parking zone, like mailboxes and fire hydrants. Where possible, overlap no parking zones and allow more parking. Another possible refinement is the apparent extra spaces in front of the post office or at 3200 Grand. The current parallel parking spaces are located some distance from alley or street entrances to allow a larger turning radius (higher speed) and to provide for unobstructed pedestrian cross walks. These two blocks have 4 metered spaces, but often cars park at the phantom non-metered space on these blocks. If cars regularly park in these phantom spaces, it must be possible to re-stripe some blocks like this to gain legitimate parking spaces. This analysis should be done with the installation of curb bump outs proposed below.

The Steering Committee agreed with this solution:

Find out if is there a special requirement for the cleaners to have a loading zone (EPA for chemicals used at site)? Investigate all no-parking sites and request change as appropriate. Request Street Dept. to repaint no-parking areas so they are clearly marked. (business comment) Emily looked into this and the EPA does not and cannot regulate things like this.

Yes, more efficient. Approach those businesses and organizations with current no parking areas and see what works for them. For example the Orpheum Dry Cleaner has been a neighborhood fixture for years and should have say in how the areas are designated. (resident comment)

The parking solution drawings implement this in some locations. The net effect of this in the increase of several parking spaces scattered throughout the district. More spaces may be possible with a detailed block-by-block assessment with a more accurate land survey of the area.



Is the “No Parking” zone necessary on weekdays in front of the church? The underutilized church parking lot is improved in the solution drawings and further described in solution #27 creating synergy among parking lots.

13. Install curb bump outs at each cross street and Grand Avenue (standard drawing will be provided later). This curb should project out into the parking lane along Grand Avenue. The side streets are narrow enough that they may not need this enhancement. This detail will increase pedestrian safety for crossing Grand, and also increase curb length along side streets, which possibly will increase parking on the side streets. Curb bump outs have been installed in downtown Clayton in several locations.

The Steering Committee agreed with this solution:

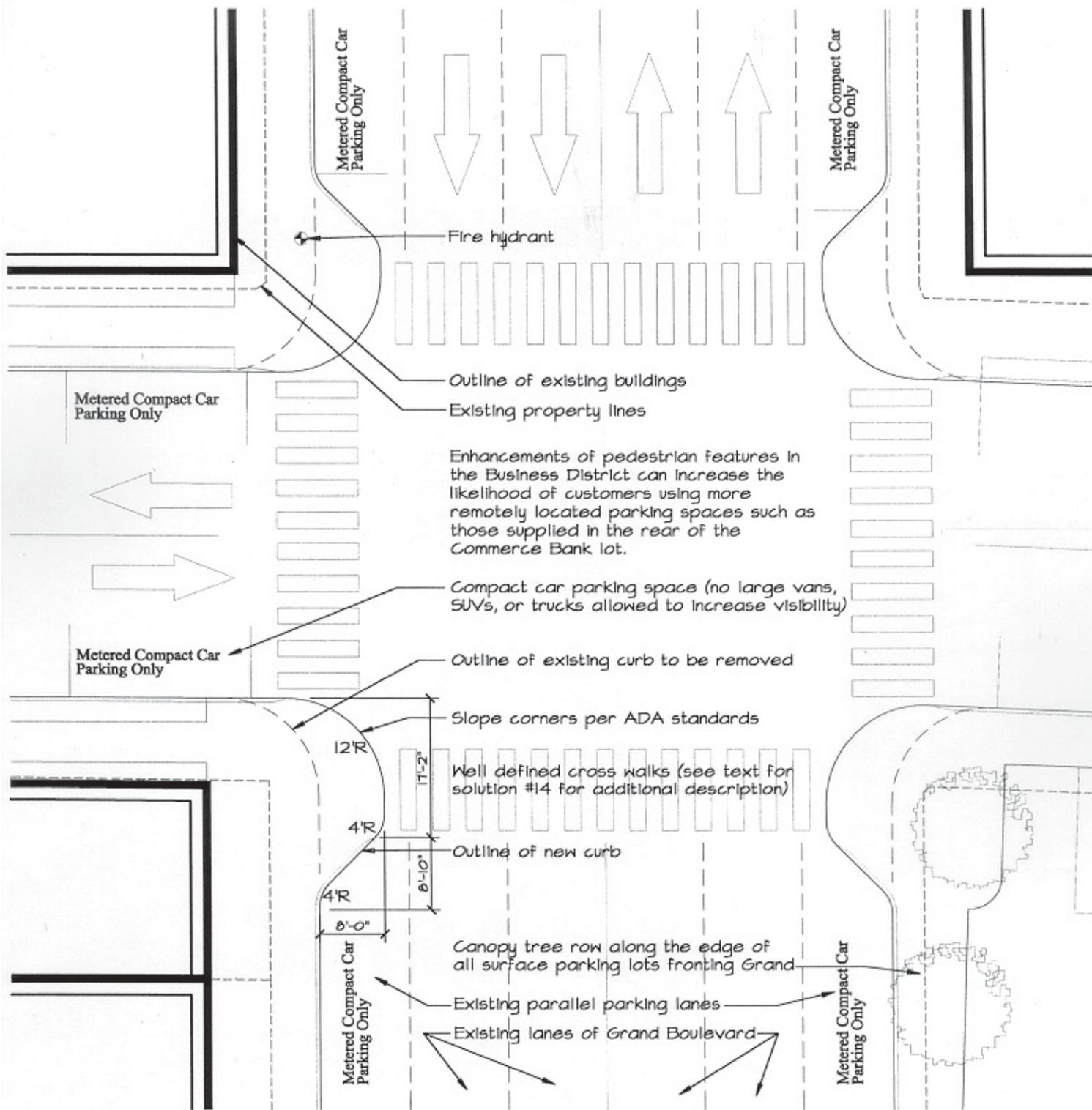
The District has previously considered curb bump-outs and similar pedestrian-friendly solutions. The District has decided not to request expansion of T-21 funds allocated to South Grand north of Arsenal to extend further south. Thus, the South Grand CID intends to make its own application for Future T-21 enhancement grants that could cover a portion of the costs of a comprehensive streetscape plan. (Steering Committee member comment)

The parking solution drawings show the addition of this detail in the plan. A larger detail drawing of this concept is also provided. The additional curb length will sometimes create a new parking space on side streets.

14. Clearly mark all pedestrian crossings, including the side street crossings within the Business District. This will enhance pedestrian safety, and could strengthen District character if designed more uniquely than the standard striping patterns. Some municipalities have used pavers (U City Loop), while others have installed colored concrete (Richmond Heights). The pavement changes are expensive solutions. A more unique approach would be to conduct an artist design competition to create street cross walk stencils that could artistically delineate cross walks in a dramatic design or pattern. The paint will need to be the durable type typically used on streets, but the shapes or patterns do not have to be solely stripes or blocks of paint. It could actually encourage pedestrian activity throughout the district.

The Steering Committee agreed with this solution with no additional comments.

The solution drawings show the addition of marked pedestrian cross walks at Juniata and Connecticut, where none currently exist. See more detailed description of this at solution #21.



Solution #13 Curb Bump Outs & #14 Marked Pedestrian Crossings

South Grand Commercial District Parking Study

including parts of the Tower Grove Heights & Tower Grove East Neighborhoods

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Sheet 11.1
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Scale: 1/16" = 1'-0"

15. Install historic street lighting throughout the district. Specific research should identify a street light fixture that satisfies required lighting level for Grand without sacrificing aesthetic quality. The existing historic fixtures have poor lighting output levels, especially on the streets. The larger cobra head light fixtures are more appropriate along highways and tend to illuminate second floor residential bedrooms. High quality historic lighting will reinforce the character of the local district while also increasing the feeling of security of residents and customers. An increased feeling of security could increase the distance that employees and customers are willing to park down residential side streets. Avoid the silly looking situation where both historic lighting and modern cobra head fixtures are installed like the Kingshighway Bridge.

The Steering Committee agreed with this solution:

Yes, Historic Street Lighting. Also, improve lighting on side streets (resident comments).

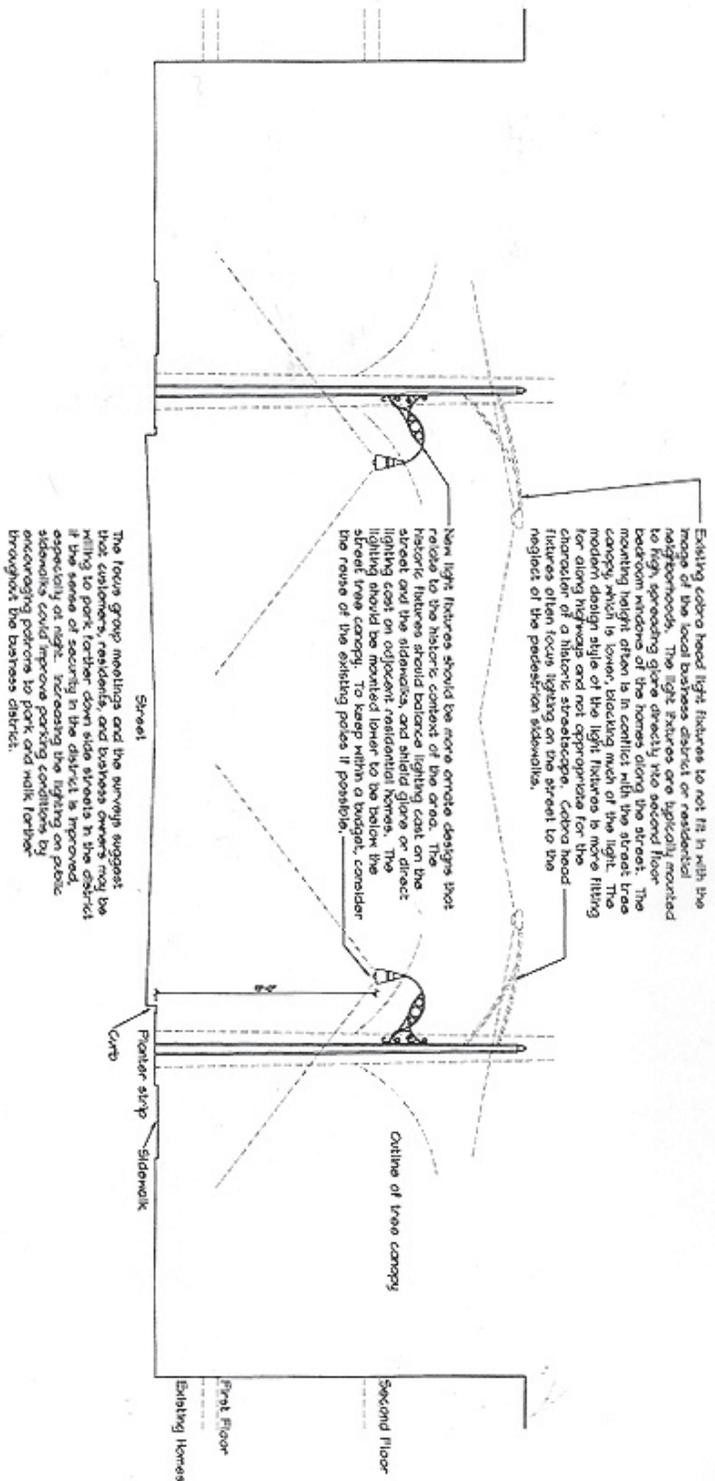
16. Systematically limb up the trees along the public sidewalks, especially around the street light fixtures. This will increase the lighting level projected down to the sidewalk and increase the feeling of security. The commercial storefronts will also be more visible. Only install trees that grow tall, and not low growing, multiple branching trees like the Bradford Pear trees along Cherokee Street. The tree limbing policy should be implemented along the side streets too, and reviewed every year. The work should be completed by an experienced arborist or landscape specialist so as to avoid poor quality workmanship. Ideally along Grand, tree limbs would eventually begin branching above the first floor store windows or wall mounted signage, creating a tree canopy to shade the sidewalk and parallel parking lane.

The Steering Committee agreed with this solution with no additional comments.

17. Install standardized signage to public parking lots. The signage and street lighting should be similar in character to reinforce the area as an identifiable district or destination. Just look what the brick pylons have done for helping to identify the edges of St. Louis University. For the near term, provide public parking signage directing Business District customers to use the large Commerce Bank parking lot. Liability issues should be resolved in a similar fashion.

The Steering Committee agreed with this solution with no additional comments.

The implementation of this implies the purchase of the remaining unused land from Commerce Bank for use as a public parking lot. This could also include the construction of a new mixed-use building just south of the new Commerce Bank building, with a private parking lot located behind this new infill building. The parking solution drawings show two variations of this solution. One solution shows a joint City/developer project where some of the parking spaces on the outer edges of the lot are public metered spaces; the parking spaces to the center of the lot are for the businesses on this block. Clearly the liability and ownership details are more complex with the mixture of parking lot operations, and signage would be necessary to identify the separate uses.



Existing column head light fixtures to not fit in with the image of the local business district or residential neighborhoods. The light fixtures are typically mounted to high, spreading globe directly into second floor bedroom windows of the homes along the street. The mounting height often is in conflict with the street tree canopy, which is lower, blocking much of the light. The modern design style of the light fixtures is more fitting for dining neighborhoods and not appropriate for the historic character of the business district. The light fixtures often cause lighting on the street to be the neglect of the pedestrian sidewalks.

New light fixtures should be more ornate designs that relate to the historic context of the area. The historic fixtures should balance lighting cast on the street and the sidewalks, and shield glare or direct lighting cast on adjacent residential homes. The lighting poles should be made of materials that are more fitting for the historic character. If possible, consider the reuse of the existing poles if possible.

The focus group meetings and the surveys suggest that customers, residents, and business owners may be willing to pay for better lighting. If the street lighting is improved, it could improve parking conditions by encouraging visitors to park and walk further throughout the business district.

Solution #15 Street Lighting & #16 Limb Up Street Trees

South Grand Commercial District Parking Study

including parts of the Tower Grove Heights & Tower Grove East Neighborhoods

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Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"

18. Change Hartford and Juniata east of Grand back to two-way streets as residents suggested at various times during the parking study process. This change would increase opportunities to access the existing large parking lots behind Commerce Bank.

The Steering Committee agreed with this solution:

Change one-way direction on Hartford and Juniata to two-way – Original change was made in response to nearby resident’s complaints about traffic and accidents involving cars arriving at or leaving Commerce Bank and Roosevelt High School. Any change should be dependent upon residents, the ingress-egress pattern at the new Commerce, the overall traffic flow and safety. (business comment)

The parking solution drawings show this change. Resident comments at Focus Group meetings were in favor of this change. A simple survey of the residents on these two blocks could document the popularity of this suggestion. This change works with the new Commerce Bank site plan. Simplicity in getting around the district is a key component of making it easy to find a parking place.

19. Implement the “Tan My” parking solution on side streets where possible. This solution currently exists at the Tan My Restaurant at the corner of Grand and Humphrey, where six 90 degree angled parking spaces are provided in place of the standard 2 parallel spaces along the curb. This type of additional parking is possible only on side streets where there is a larger side plaza along the commercial buildings. Three of the corners at Grand and Wyoming have these side plazas, one of which is the post office (where people illegally parking on the concrete paved plaza area even though it has a no parking sign – see map).

The Steering Committee disagreed with this solution, based on the following comments:

This is very dangerous to pedestrians; poor aesthetics; eliminates potential use of area as outdoor seating for restaurants. (Prime example is the plaza on the SE corner of Grand and Wyoming recently improved as patio seating.) (business comment)

No. This is a poor solution. It requires backing out over the sidewalk and is a dangerous and unattractive solution (Steering Committee member comment)

Do not want to encourage side parking ala “Tan My” which would cut down on areas for side gardens and dining. (resident comment)

The parking solution drawings show the implementation of this solution at the northeast corner of Wyoming and Grand, fronting the Post Office. Nine metered parking spaces are created where there was formerly two metered parallel parking spaces. The meters could be short-term parking (30 minutes) to allow faster turn over to allow better access at the post office. Individual property owners should be allowed to determine how this portion of their lot would be used. Details of aesthetic guidelines could be developed to further regulate the design of side plaza parking.



Even with No Parking signs, the Post Office side plaza often contains illegally parked cars

Also, the district should not work toward a mono-use functioning of tenants. It is in the best interest of the district to pursue a mixed-use development pattern with a variety of parking needs. A post office is a very desirable anchor tenant to a local business district. All restaurants with all patio seating will only serve to increase the peak demands for parking during the lunch or dinner rush.

The “very dangerous” comment overstates the situation. For the post office parking, the solution drawings create a sidewalk between the front of the parking spaces and the wall of the building. No backing out over a sidewalk is required. If pedestrians choose to walk behind the cars it will be no different than the millions of pedestrians that walk down the drive-aisles of typical suburban parking lots every day. For the post office, outdoor seating is not needed, and there is no garden here. Customers park on the paved pedestrian plazas every day in the district.



Tan My could improve the sidewalk configuration by locating the pedestrian route between the building and the cars. Adding trees would help too.



20. Allow only 2 curb cuts for corner properties like Amoco and Phillips Food Mart (they now have 3 or 4). One entry on Grand and one on the side street should be adequate. Removing the curb cuts closest to the intersection could create 1 or 2 more parking spaces along the curb and several more spaces on each of these properties.

The Steering Committee agreed with this solution incorporating the following comment:

Decrease curb cuts for corner gas stations – Check EPA and safety requirements for ingress-egress at gas stations. If allowed, treatment at each site could be to eliminate one of the two Grand driveways and widen remaining drives to allow use by two cars moving in and out. (business comment) Emily looked into this – same answer as loading zone for dry cleaners.

This may be difficult to implement since this type of change is usually dependent upon implementation when the property owner applies for a building permit for some type of work on the site. The height and location of the canopy above the gas pumps will also restrict how the refueling truck enters and exits the site. This solution is shown on the parking solution drawings, but should be considered for long-term implementation over time. Note that this curb cut removal is standard policy for the St. Louis County Highway Department and MODOT for corner sites fronting on their controlled right-of-ways.

21. Remove the stop light and pedestrian cross walk at the mid-block location in front of Jay’s International. This existing design is an auto-oriented strategy to theoretically speed cars through the district by removing the need for stoplights at Juniata and at Connecticut. If lights are synchronized properly, adding lights at these two intersections will increase pedestrian’s ability to get safely across Grand. Then, customers may be more apt to use the large parking lot accessed off of Juniata. Grand Boulevard in the Business District should favor pedestrians using the district and not traffic speed of drivers cutting through the district. Downtown Kirkwood best exemplifies this principle, where Lindbergh Boulevard transitions from a highway road design north of Manchester Road only to become a 2-lane street with parallel parking within the Kirkwood Business district.

The Steering Committee disagreed with this solution, stating:

Many attested to using this crosswalk often. Perhaps instead of removing it, we could add curb bump outs here as well.

South Grand stoplights have been synchronized (reportedly by the City and State) if drivers go 30-35 mph. Removal of any light signals would have to be carefully undertaken due to emissions standards, which prevent certain changes such as removals or additions of traffic signals. This has been attempted in the past, once on S. Grand, and once on McCausland (my personal experience) and on both occasions the State told us that it would result in rescinding of the funds that had been allocated to street traffic flow due to their emissions and other complicated formulas of traffic expectations and environmental concerns. I believe it also had a federal guideline prohibition (Steering Committee member comment)

This solution is shown in the drawings to be implemented over time. A first step would be to clearly designate the pedestrian crosswalks at Juniata and Connecticut where none currently exist (no stoplights installed). With further research into the highway department requirements, the district should work to eliminate the mid-block cross walk in favor of adding synchronized lights installed at the Juniata and Connecticut intersections.

It is likely that many pedestrians use the existing mid-block crosswalk because there are no other pedestrian crosswalks for the three blocks between Hartford and Wyoming. The safety and ease in which a pedestrian can get across Grand will increase the desirability of the large parking lots located in the eastern half of the district. The current design for cross walk lights is not very pedestrian friendly. If there is an EPA formula that is sensitive to the addition of a single stoplight, the City could easily evaluate where else is the City an unneeded stoplight may be removed. Synchronization of these new lights should lessen the problems created by the addition of a single stoplight. Solution #14 provides additional description on cross walk design.