

MEMO: May 7, 2025
TO: City of Bexley, OH
RE: Planning Recommendations for the City of Bexley

This memo is provided as requested to supplement my presentation on April 23, which was recorded and is available for view. It is an attempt to quickly encapsulate my recommendations for Bexley which are given in greater detail with proper arguments in the recorded presentation. This memo is best understood in the context of that presentation, so I suggest that anyone wishing to fully consider this memo dedicate 80 minutes to watching the entire recording.

My lecture began by running through some of the many factors that make cities walkable and therefore successful. These and others are described fully in the book *Walkable City Rules* and in videos available at my firm's website: <https://www.speckdempsey.com>.

Among these factors, the ones that apply most directly to Bexley are:

The Useful Walk:

- Put more housing downtown, especially attainable housing.
- Continue investing in transit.

The Safe Walk:

- Remove unnecessary driving and turning lanes.
- Make no driving lane wider than 10 feet, and go narrower where it makes sense.
- Use freed-up street space for bike facilities and striped parking.
- Protect the curb with parked cars and street trees.
- Where on-street parking and street trees are not possible on higher-speed streets, protect the curb with ankle-high barriers.
- Eliminate curb cuts where rear alley access makes it redundant.
- Convert signals to all-way stops.
- Eliminate pushbuttons where possible.
- Continue eliminating centerlines.
- Eliminate highway-style striping configurations.
- Continue using 5-second Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPIs) at signalized intersections.
- Work to create a comprehensive, low-stress bike network.

The Comfortable Walk:

- Allow taller buildings to shape spaces.
- Avoid parking lots against thoroughfares.
- Continue planting street trees (and consider a tree adoption program).

The Interesting Walk:

- Make sticky edges through vertical articulation and variety.
- Line any future parking structures with other uses and activate their ground floors.
- Continue investing in murals on blank walls.
- Continue setting high expectations for architectural quality via the Architectural Review Board.

These more universal recommendations led me to recommend nine steps the City should take to become more walkable and successful:

1. Add striped on-street parking wherever possible.

Curb parking provides a barrier of steel between the roadway and the sidewalk that is necessary for people walking to feel fully at ease. It also compels people driving to slow down out of concern for possible conflicts with cars parking or pulling out, and enlivens city sidewalks, which are largely occupied by people walking to and from cars that have been parked a short distance from their destinations. In this way, on-street parking is essential to successful shopping districts; according to the consultant Robert Gibbs, author of *Urban Retail*, each on-street parking space in a vital shopping area generates between \$150,000 and \$200,000 in sales.

While Bexley has several streets with on-street parking, many such streets, like North Cassady Avenue, have not provided that parking with edge striping. Edge-striped parking spaces reduce speeding by giving the impression of a constricted roadway and should be a standard feature on all parked streets except in lower-density residential locations, where streets are typically unstriped other than at intersections. Furthermore, College Avenue north of Livingston Avenue should accommodate unstriped parking on its eastern side.

2. Convert signalized intersections to all-way stops.

All-way stop signs, which require people driving to approach each intersection as a negotiation, are much safer than signals. Unlike with signals, no law-abiding driver ever passes through an all-way-stop-signed intersection at more than a very low speed. Nobody tries to beat the light, there is considerable eye contact among users, and while people driving must slow down, they never have to wait for more than a few seconds to get through. Finally, people walking and biking are generally waved through first.

Bexley already has many all-way stops, but at least three additional signalized intersections within downtown should likely be converted to all-way stops:

- Cassady Avenue and Fair Avenue;
- Cassady Avenue and Maryland Avenue; and
- Roosevelt Avenue and Fair Avenue.

We recommend assessing the viability of these proposals by piloting such changes for several days and evaluating traffic flow.

3. Right-size Broad Street and eliminate its highway-style striping.

Broad Street's four- and five-lane segments beckon unsafe speeds. While every street and intersection is different, certain conservative rules of thumb can be trusted to determine how much traffic a street can handle. Most traffic engineers concur that a typical busy three-lane road, with two driving lanes flanking a center (left-hand) turn lane, handles 18,000 to 20,000 cars per day.

ODOT Traffic counts collected on March 3, 2025, depict that Broad Street carried 17,042 vehicles, well under the 18,000 to 20,000 threshold. Segment-specific counts reflect such volumes: daily counts sum to 14,484 between Park Drive and Preston Road and 15,662 between S Roosevelt Avenue and S Merkle Road. Historical data also indicates that traffic volumes on Broad Street have steadily decreased since 2013, likely due to pandemic-induced shifts to remote work and therefore, fewer commuters on the road.

Such volumes suggest Broad Street does not require four or five lanes to meet demand. This surplus roadway poses a valuable opportunity to repurpose the outer lanes as protected bike lanes. Doing so would not only calm traffic but also extend the recently installed protected bike lanes on the Columbus side of Broad Street to Bexley.

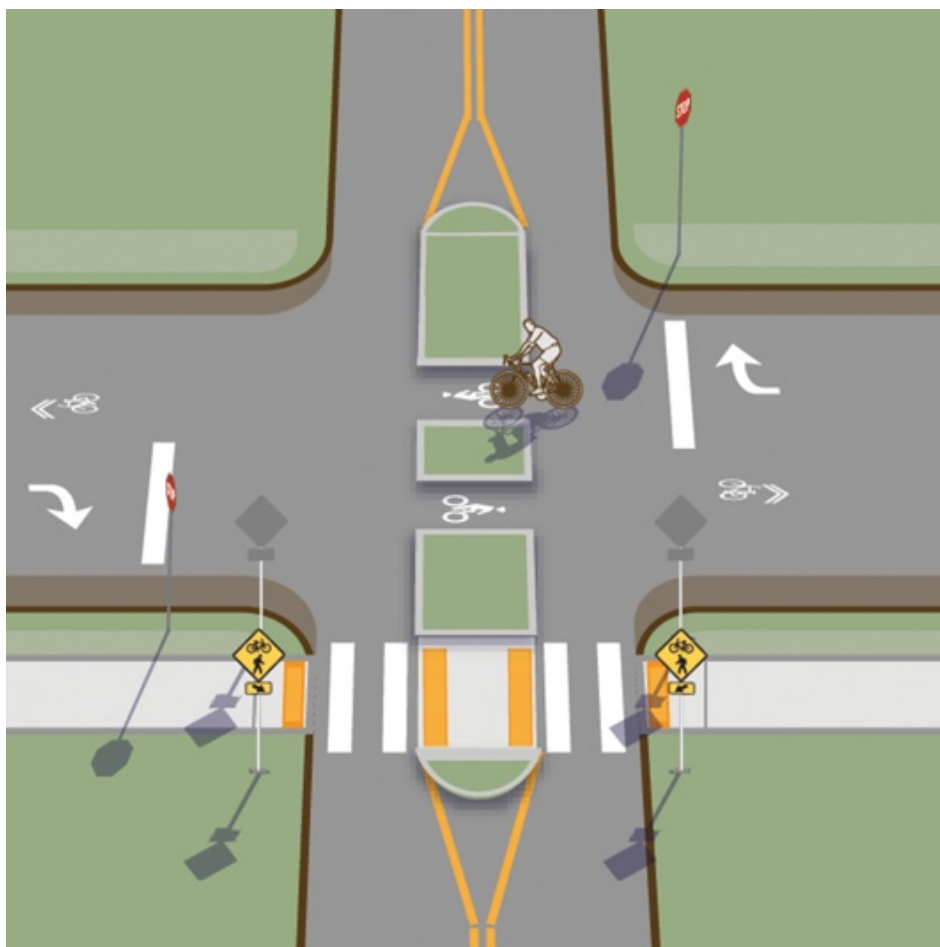
In addition, Broad Street has at least one section with highway-style gore striping rather than a median. While some residents have opposed median installation, citing the need for driveway access, the safety benefits of replacing highway-style striping, which encourages highway-style speeds, with tree-lined medians should outweigh such concerns. It is worth noting that streets with such medians also yield higher property values.

4. Modify the Calm Corridors Project to create true bike boulevards on Cassingham Road, Fair Avenue, and Remington Road.

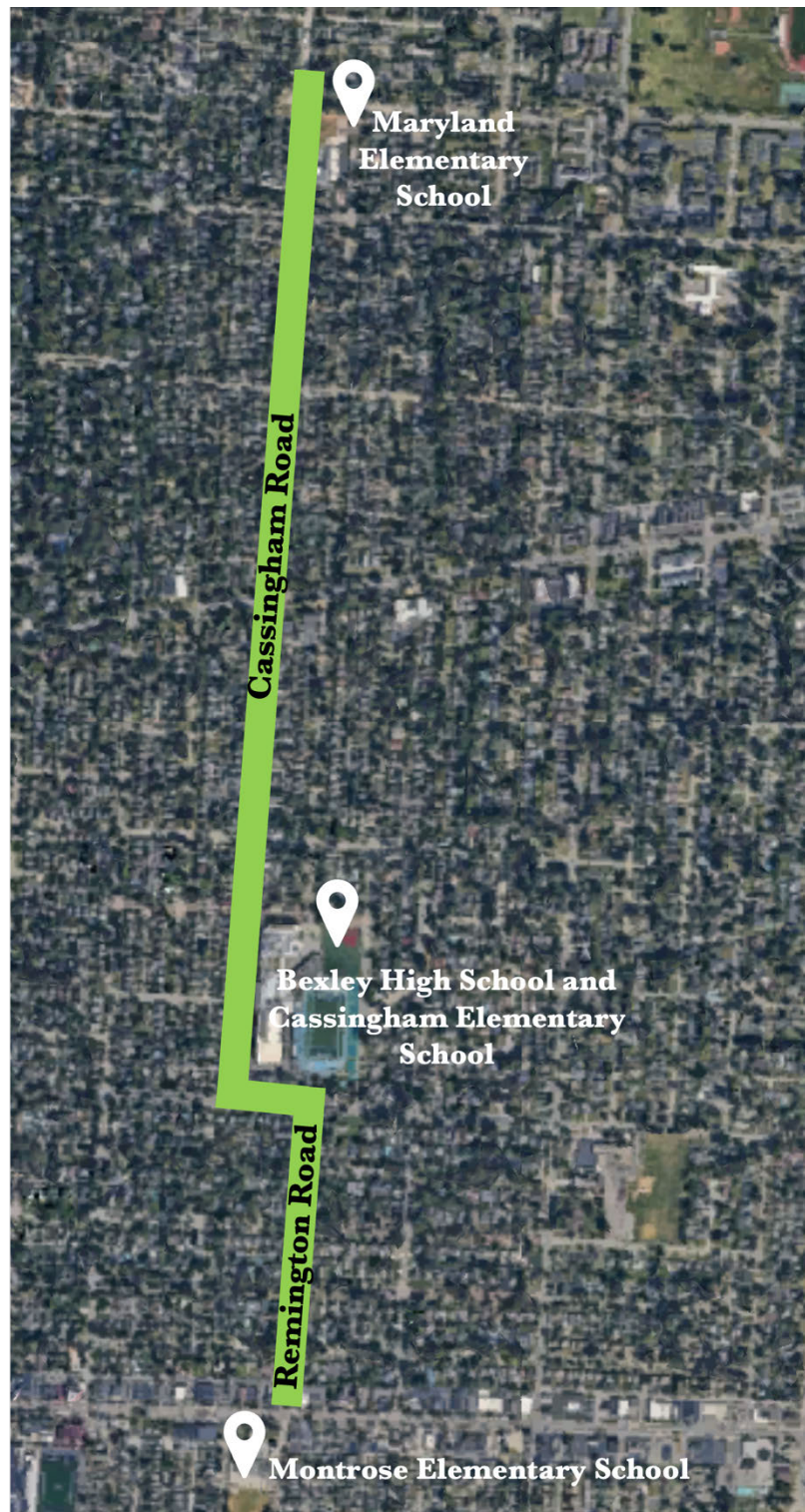
The north-south connection between Bexley's three elementary schools on Cassingham and Remington Roads holds great opportunity for traffic-calming infrastructure. The Calm Corridors Project has already leveraged such potential by recommending raised intersections at key intersections and protected bike facilities along the route.

Building on this momentum, we propose designating Cassingham Road, Fair Avenue, and Remington Road as true bike boulevards: streets prioritized for pedestrian and cyclist traffic with limited access for vehicle throughput. Given Bexley's well-connected street grid, Cassingham and Remington are not essential for regional traffic and can instead function as a low-stress community paths for Bexley's students and their families. Upcoming utilities work on

Remington Road uniquely positions the City to further redesign the street as a shared street with trees planted in chicanes, as is practiced in Upper Arlington.



A median that prohibits cut-through car traffic while allowing micromobility is a key feature of a proper bike boulevard.



The modified Calm Corridor.

5. Do not install speed limit signage on Drexel Avenue.

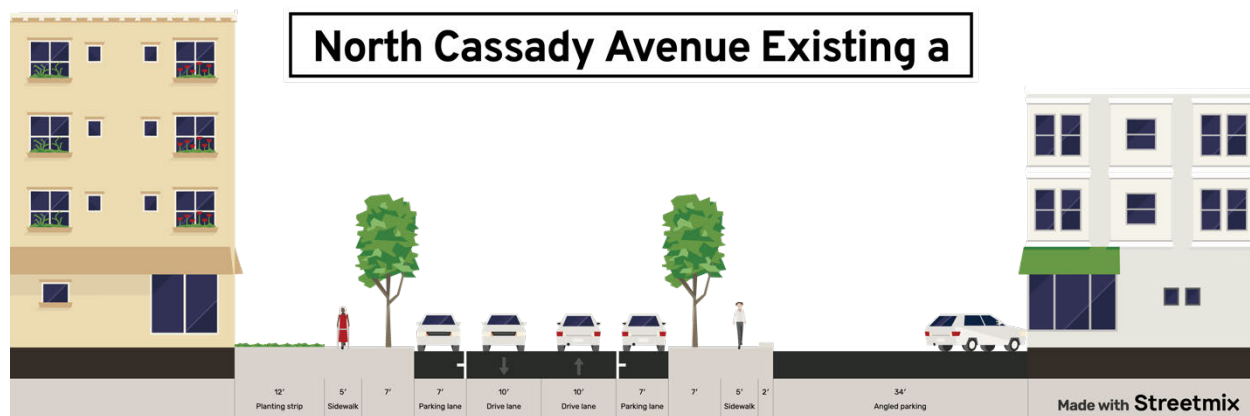
Drexel Avenue’s recent redesign, the “Drexel Diet,” is an impressive example of how traffic-calming infrastructure can produce a safer street. Installing speed limit signage on Drexel could well encourage speeds higher than appropriate to the street’s new design.

6. Design the Main Street BRT station around street trees if possible.

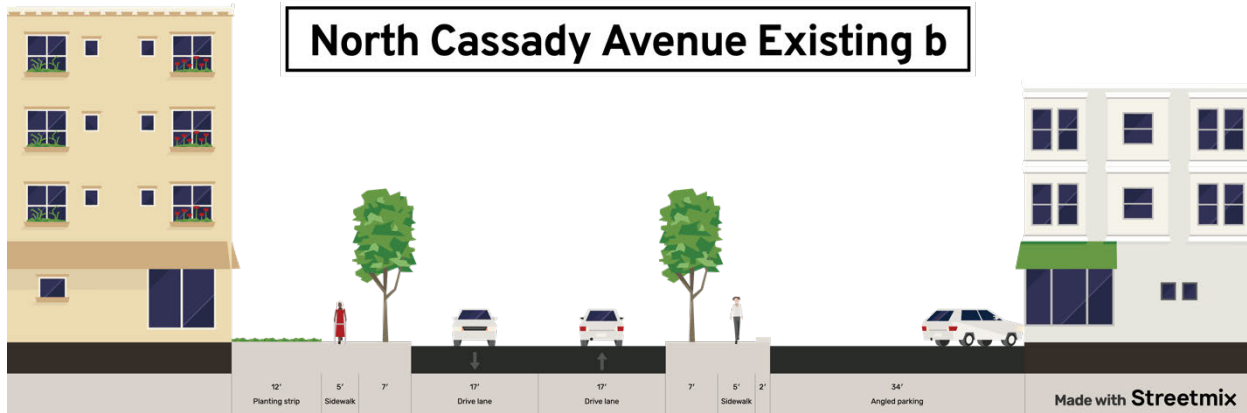
Bexley’s forthcoming BRT station stands as a transformative investment in transit with long-term benefits for the Greater Columbus region. Designing this station, therefore, necessitates thoughtful planning, especially with regard to the beautiful street trees that define Bexley’s character and might be susceptible to removal. These trees can likely be preserved through a sensitive design. As the first US city to obtain arboretum accreditation, Bexley takes its responsibility for maintaining its trees seriously and should endeavor to maintain this commitment in the planning and execution of its BRT station.

7. Redesign North Cassady Avenue.

From the 420 North Cassady Avenue redevelopment site to the potential shared-use path along its western edge, North Cassady Avenue presents great promise for a more walkable future. Currently, many sections of North Cassady feature two 10-foot driving lanes flanked by 7-foot parking lanes. That said, many such parking lanes have faded striping and are poorly utilized, giving the illusion of a North Cassady with two 17-foot driving lanes.

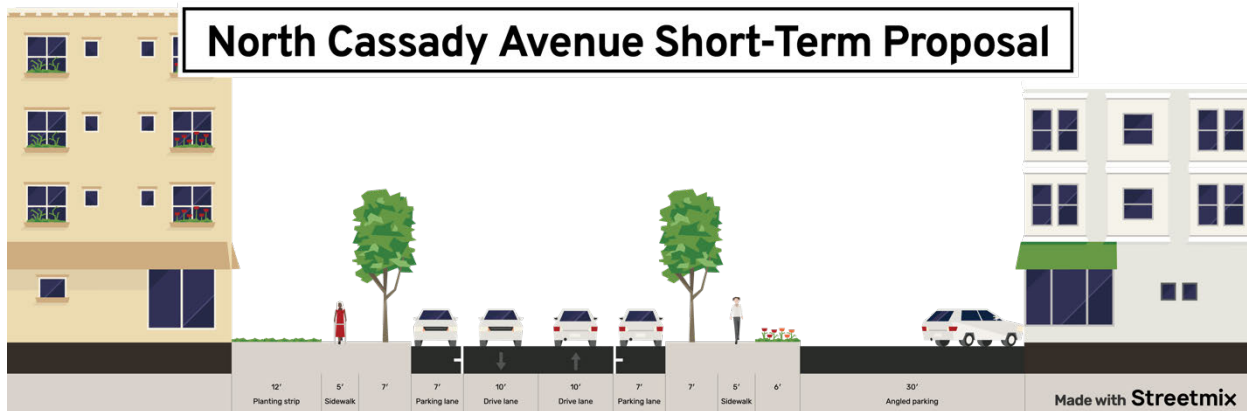


North Cassady Avenue’s existing condition where parking striping is visible.



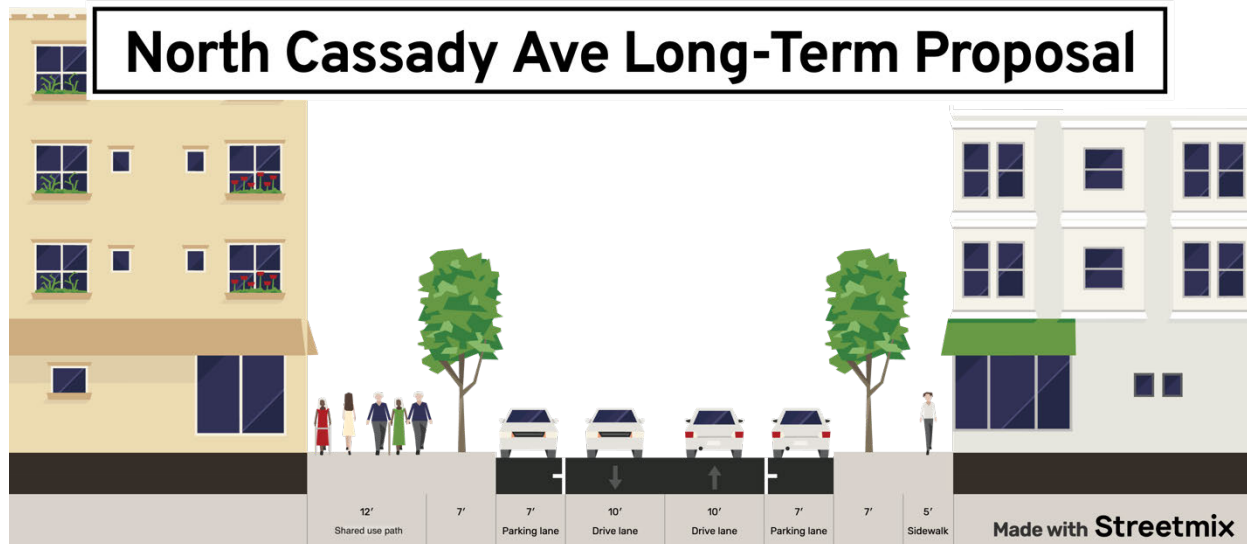
Unstriped parking gives the illusion of two 17-foot driving lanes on North Cassady Avenue.

Such lanes should be striped, but we recommend a more robust redesign near the intersection with Delmar Drive. Here, altering the 60-degree angled parking that serves Green Meadows Schoolhouse and adjacent entities to 45 degrees would allow for less asphalt, freeing up space for six feet of landscaping between the sidewalk and angled parking. No trees are recommended for this area only because this plan is seen as temporary.



A short-term proposal shifts angled parking to 45 degrees and removes a two-foot curb, making space for landscaping between the sidewalk and angled parking.

In the long term, in addition to the installation of a planned 12-foot shared-use path to the west (preserving existing trees), we propose constructing a new building that replaces the surface parking lot and fronts the sidewalk, as surface parking lots detract from walkability and desirability.



A long-term proposal includes a 12-foot shared-use path and a new building that fronts the sidewalk.

The design for 420 North Cassady Avenue should also be modified to:

- Remove the centerline on North Cassady;
- Relocate tree pits to the curb to allow for wider sidewalks;
- Eliminate the sharrows on the shared-use path; and
- Add a flank of parking on the street, as North Cassady's 34-foot right-of-way can accommodate two 10-foot driving lanes and two 7-foot parking lanes.

8. Redesign the preliminary vision for 2761 E. Main Street.

2751 E. Main Street is Bexley's optimal "Eastern Gateway" redevelopment site, and the City is rightly considering design options proactively. We propose an enhanced plan that preserves two great trees and rotates the building and parking. While a difficult feat, acquiring the parking lot due east of this site would allow for this relocation of parking to the site's southern portion—concealed behind the building—which not only improves the development's visual appeal but also increases parking capacity from 16 to more than 25 spaces.



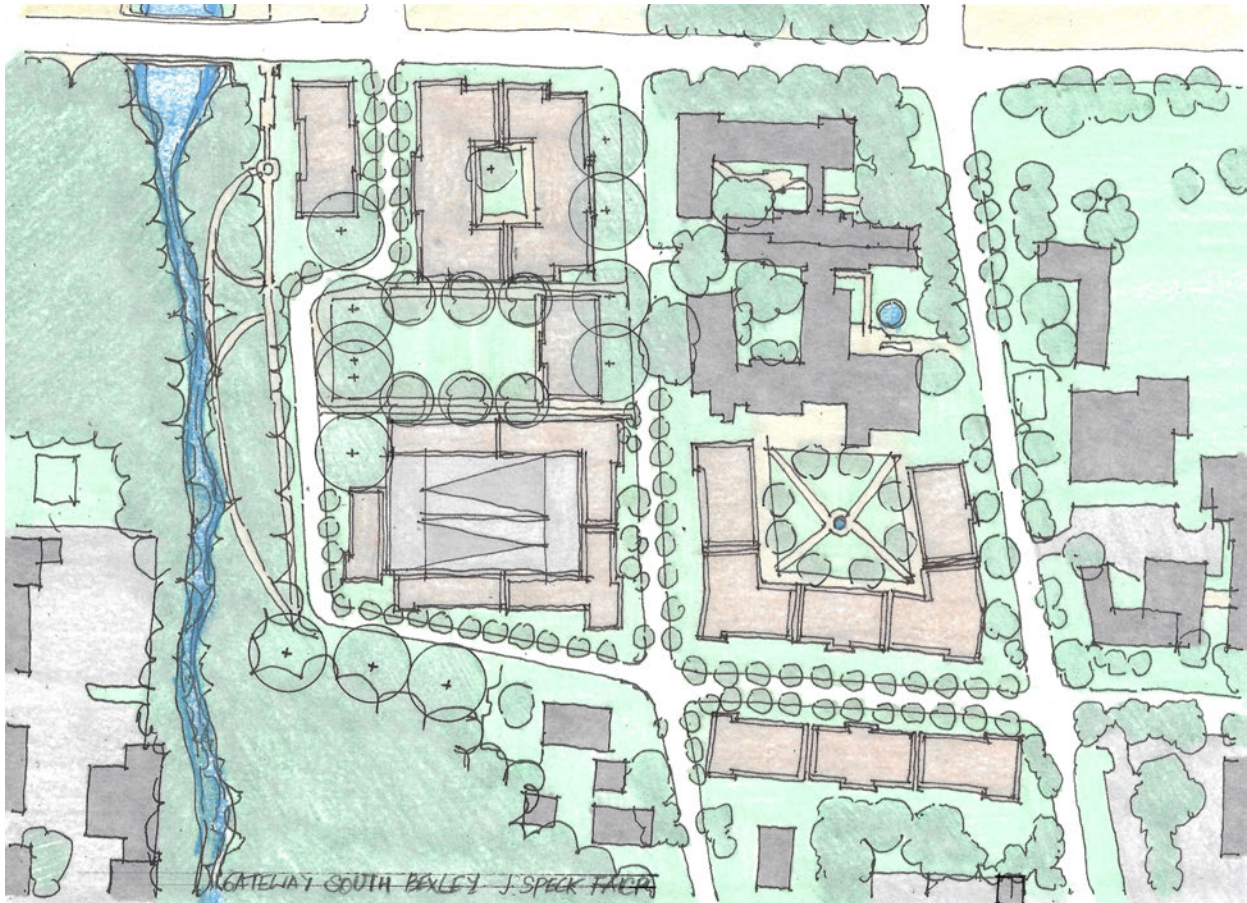
A new scheme for 2761 E. Main Street preserves street trees, rotates the building and its parking, and increases parking capacity.

9. Redevelop the South Gateway site.

572 E Main, or Bexley’s “South Gateway,” is Bexley’s prime opportunity for redevelopment; its proximity to the creek, mature trees, and size offer tremendous promise for a development that will enliven downtown.

To create a proposed scheme for this site, we first identified mature trees that should be maintained in any development outcome. Next, understanding that creating density for a residential building hinges on structuring surface parking, we drew a central structured parking lot hidden by a 4-to-5-story single-loaded residential building. To the north of the building, we took advantage of the site’s natural amenities by positioning a central green space that connects seamlessly to the creek and benefits from the surrounding trees. This green serves as the focal point for a meandering, low-speed street system that dodges the trees and public spaces. These streets are designed with tight corners, rather than swooping geometries, to discourage speeding. We have also kept Sheridan Avenue as a vehicular street, as intersection density is a powerful correlator to walkability. Closing Sheridan would hinder connectivity and result in a less

walkable block network. To complete the plan, we lined the streets with strong edges to cultivate outdoor living rooms throughout the site.



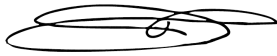
A potential outcome for the South Gateway site.

The process that could lead to the aforementioned outcome would entail the formulation of a regulating plan, in addition to an illustration plan. While an illustration plan renders a single aspirational vision for a site, a regulating plan controls elements that should be unchanged, regardless of the exact development outcome. Such aspects range from the design of the streets to building edges to tree locations to curb radii to areas in which retail should be required, optional, and prohibited (not to restrict retail, but to place retail where it thrives, in proximity to retail). Accounting for inevitable market changes that often prohibit illustration plans from materializing, regulating plans do not pre-determine building heights, density, or even type. Thus, regulating plans critically equip plans with real implementation potential; any proposal for the South Gateway should include such a document.

The above nine measures are provided with an expectation that they will add considerably to the desirability of Bexley as a place to live, work, shop, and recreate. In so doing, they will add to the value of real estate, which may threaten to displace lower-income residents who have every right to stay. For that reason, the City should pursue strategies to stem displacement. Some of these are discussed in Rule 14 of *Walkable City Rules*.

I hope that this memo is received favorably by the City of Bexley, and I hope to visit again soon.

Sincerely yours,



Jeff Speck
FAICP, FCNU, LEED-AP, Honorary ASLA