

EIGHT MILE BOULEVARD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

An Affiliate of Southeast Michigan Chamber of Commerce

BUILDING COMMUNITIES ♦ BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS ♦ BUILDING YOUR BUSINESS

May 25, 2016

Dear Honorable Senators,

On behalf of the 8 Mile Chamber of Commerce, we would like to provide support of the new Senate Bill No. 953, that would allow trimming of vegetation in the median along M-102 (8 Mile Rd.). We understand that if allowed the stretch of M-102 that borders Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties only would allow billboard companies the opportunity to remove vegetation which blocks the visibility of their signs. We fully support the changes and understand that the billboard companies have been denied this opportunity for decades which has had negative effects to the vitality and the success of their business and of those businesses along M-102 for some time. It is not understandable why some billboard companies are allowed to remove vegetation and some aren't. 8 Mile Road is actually more important to businesses and therefore should be allowed to remove vegetation.

Businesses rely on their message/advertisement being seen by commuters while driving past the billboards to direct clients/customers/people to their door steps. The proposed legislation will help to create a situation where billboard companies will remove selected vegetation allowing for the advertisements in which businesses are relying on along both sides of M-102 to be viewed. The billboard companies haven't had the success they had in the past when the vegetation was younger which gave the local businesses better visibility as well. Why has Eight Mile Road been continuously omitted from previous legislation allowing for the removal and trimming of vegetation?

By allowing selective clearing of vegetation through the MDOT Vegetation Removal Authorization (VRA) permit process we are confident that the results will mutually benefit the local businesses along the corridor as well. Cities with thriving business districts rely very heavily on the public-private partnership. The Cities along M-102 have a foundation that consists of vibrant neighborhoods so therefore it is critical to ensure that the business sector meet and compliment the immediate commerce needs of the residents. In order to achieve this, we believe MDOT must play a role in support of the ideas that foster growth and expansion in the business community which includes vegetation trimming and removal and not contribute to its decline.

In the past, MDOT partnered with the Meijer and the 8 Mile Beautification group to accomplish a compromised approach to the successful development of Meijer's street scape (see attached). They did it with a combination that allowed them to keep some vegetation, remove some vegetation and plant more but, vegetation that was of the low or no maintenance variety.

Furthermore, there are a lot of trees that are partially dead, diseased or dying along M-102 that require or need removal. This is an opportunity where the billboard companies can pay for the value of the trees based on the process currently in place by MDOT and also pay for the removal and also possible replanting along M-102.

In summary, we hope this amendment will be adopted after the latest rounds of debate so we will have an opportunity to work with MDOT, the billboard companies and the 8 Mile Beautification group to undertake a plan that reaches success for everyone involved.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

John H. Johnson
President

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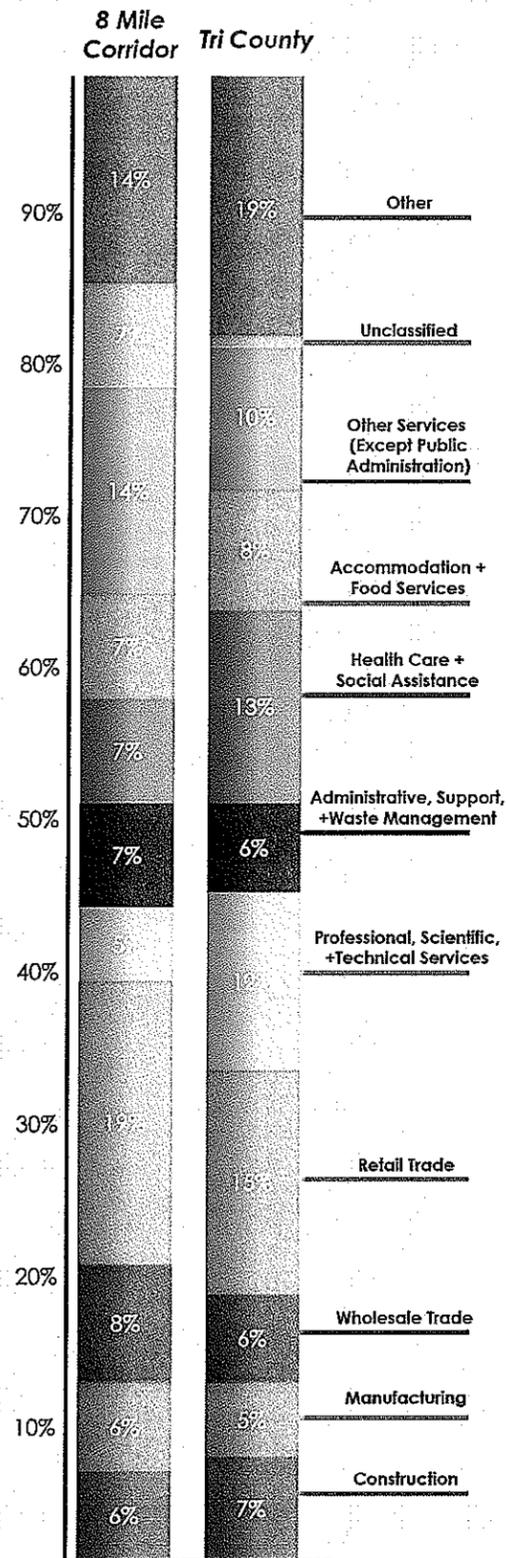
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8 Mile Profile and Demographic



THERE ARE CURRENTLY 1,868 BUSINESSES ON 8 MILE. BY LOOKING AT THE DIAGRAM, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE BUSINESSES ON 8 MILE SERVE A DIVERSE CUSTOMER BASE.

THE CORRIDOR'S IMPORTANCE TO RESIDENTIAL USE IS SHOWN BY A POPULATION DENSITY MORE THAN TWICE THE LEVEL OF THE TRI-COUNTY AREA. THIS HIGH POPULATION DENSITY LEADS TO HIGH INCOME DENSITY. ALTHOUGH THERE IS A LOWER MEDIAN INCOME ALONG THE CORRIDOR THAN IN THE TRI-COUNTY AREA, THE HIGHER POPULATION DENSITY MEANS THERE IS AN OVERALL GREATER PURCHASING POWER ALONG THE CORRIDOR.

	7 MILE - 9 MILE	TRI-COUNTY
RESIDENTIAL	49.3%	45.6%
COMMERCIAL	8.3%	4.9%
INDUSTRIAL	8.1%	6.7%
OTHER	34.4%	42.8%

	7 MILE - 9 MILE	TRI-COUNTY
POPULATION DENSITY [PEOPLE / ACRE]	14.2	6.2
POPULATION THAT IS WHITE	38.1%	62.3%
POPULATION THAT IS AFRICAN AMERICAN	56.7%	31.3%
POPULATION THAT IS ANOTHER RACE	5.2%	6.6%
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME	\$42,097	\$54,027
INCOME DENSITY [PER SQUARE MILE]	\$16.4	\$09.3

Source: Geographic Research, Inc. "Dun & Bradstreet U.S. Company Database. 8 Mile Business Master List." 2013. Accessed February 8, 2013. <http://www.simplymap.com>

Source: 2006-2011 American Community Survey Michigan/prepared by the U.S. Census Bureau, 2012. Accessed February 18, 2013. <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>

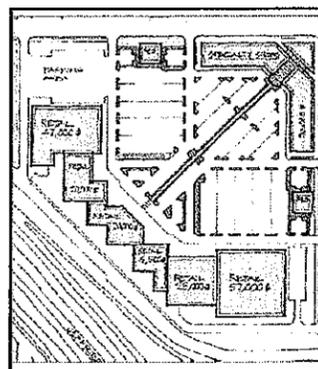
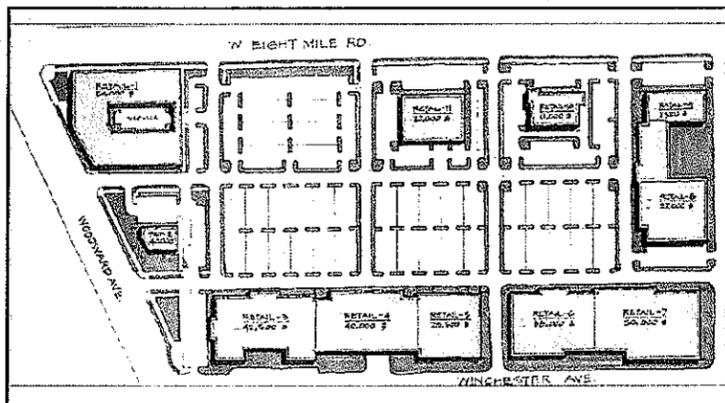
Source: Southeast Michigan Council of Government (SEMCOG) "Land Use Data." 2008. Accessed through University of Michigan SAND Lab.

8

MILE
BOULEVARD
ASSOCIATION

EIGHT MILE
BOULEVARD
DESIGN
GUIDELINES

DRAFT



Section 22. Landscape Design

Landscape gives a lasting and often permanent impression of the quality of development. Landscaping provides visual appeal and environmental comfort. It improves both the appearance and value of property and instills confidence and pride in the neighborhoods. Trees, if appropriately located, provide necessary shade and wind-break, and help create an attractive, pedestrian-friendly built environment. Landscape design involves a variety of elements that include both soft and hard surfaces, water, screening, fencing and lighting. Soft surfaces refer to live planting including trees, shrubs, grass and ground cover. Hard surfaces refer to non-live elements such as paved areas, stone, screening and edges.

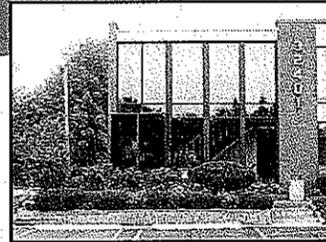
Objective

- To provide attractive settings that promote comfort and livability

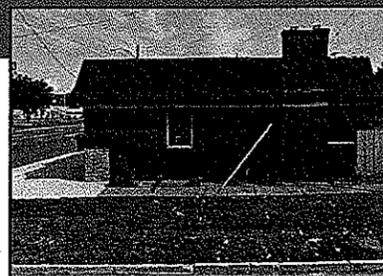
Guidelines

- Create landscape design that is integral with the overall appearance and function of the development
- Incorporate landscaping with architectural features to screen loading/trash areas, meters, other utilities
- Integrate special landscape features, such as seating area or a fountain to complement the development
- Maintain plant materials to preserve the quality of landscaping along public right-of-way
- Provide mechanical irrigation system to ensure landscaping maintenance
- Use architectural landscape lighting to heighten the effect of right-of-way trees and other special features
- Capture and reuse rainwater for irrigation in lieu of potable water
- Provide planting, trees, and shrub to soften hard surfaces of pavement and building facades and to link the development to the existing network of streets and adjacent developments
- Coordinate planting materials with building façade design and commercial signage for visibility
- Screen the back of commercial uses with planting materials and/or other landscaping buffer
- Protect edges of landscape areas from vehicle aisles, parking and circulation areas by raised curbs or other hard surface treatment

Recommended



Not Recommended



Section 23. Streetscape & Open Space

The public realm is the primary reason for all urban design efforts in any area of the city. It is in the public realm that both public and private developments can make their civic-minded gestures in the form of physical improvements. Pedestrian comfort, street design, visual accesses to views and vistas, parks and open spaces, street accessibility and safety, and streetscape enhancement determine the perceptions of a street space. Streetscape refers to the physical and visual qualities of street space. Street furnishings such as streetlights, benches, trees, tree wells, pavements, wastebaskets, newspaper boxes, banners, way-finding signage, bus shelters and kiosks provide physical amenities to the street space. View corridors, scenic landmarks and gateways are also visual amenities of streets' space that enhance the viewer's experience of the built environment and should be considered in the street space design.

Objective

- To create attractive, pleasant, safe and efficient commercial street space that accommodate pedestrians, automobiles public transit and still provides a sense of community space

Guidelines

- Where applicable and appropriate, create a sense of distinctive commercial district by incorporating a palette of coordinated streetscape furnishing elements including but not limited to the following:
 - * Appropriate street trees, planting beds and hanging planters
 - * Distinctive pavement material, pattern and texture
 - * Benches, wastebaskets, bike racks, news racks, pedestrian light poles and clocks
 - * Coordinated tree well grating and seasonal tree lighting
 - * Directional information such as information kiosk and wayfinding elements
 - * Street pavement crossing marking with color and textures using wide stripping
 - * Bus stops and other transit shelters
- Coordinate right-of-way improvements such as those listed in above with local Department of Public Works (DPW)
- When possible, link open spaces to complement the public realm in terms of physical qualities, amenities and connectivity to serve the pedestrian environment
- Enhance the overall network of open spaces within the neighborhood district
- Delegate median space and other suitable rights-of-way to future mass transit easements
- Promote street designs that support and coordinate multi-modal transportation of mass transit, bicycles, carpooling and pedestrian
- Improve the surroundings of bus shelters and bus stops through landscaping, beautifications and maintenance
- Encourage the planning, design and implementation of a bike lane into selected thoroughfares
- Locate utilities and communication lines underground to reduce visual clutter

Section 23. Streetscape & Open Space

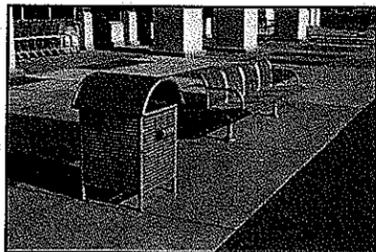
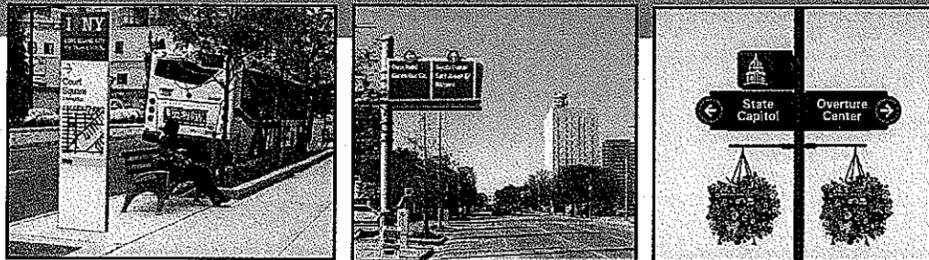
Guidelines (continued)

- Develop an information wayfinding system for motorists and pedestrian, including mass transit users without cluttering public rights-of-way (e.g. public sidewalk and medians)
- Use less obtrusive and low profile wayfinding elements that visually complement the street space rather than intrude on it or distract from it
- Provide low landscaping treatment to screen the base of existing major overhead communication and utility lines such as those located within road medians
- Where possible and practical within the median, use landscape design to provide a unifying corridor treatment
- Use continuous sculpted green edge along the road sidewalk and including streetscape elements to provide a unifying treatment for the corridor

Recommended

Well-coordinated and concise wayfinding elements can unify a corridor aesthetically and create a sense of common identity.

Pedestrian amenities like benches and landscaped pathways add visual interest, safety and cleanliness.



On Eight Mile

The Eight Mile Boulevard Association maintains 36 perennial gardens in the Eight Mile medians.

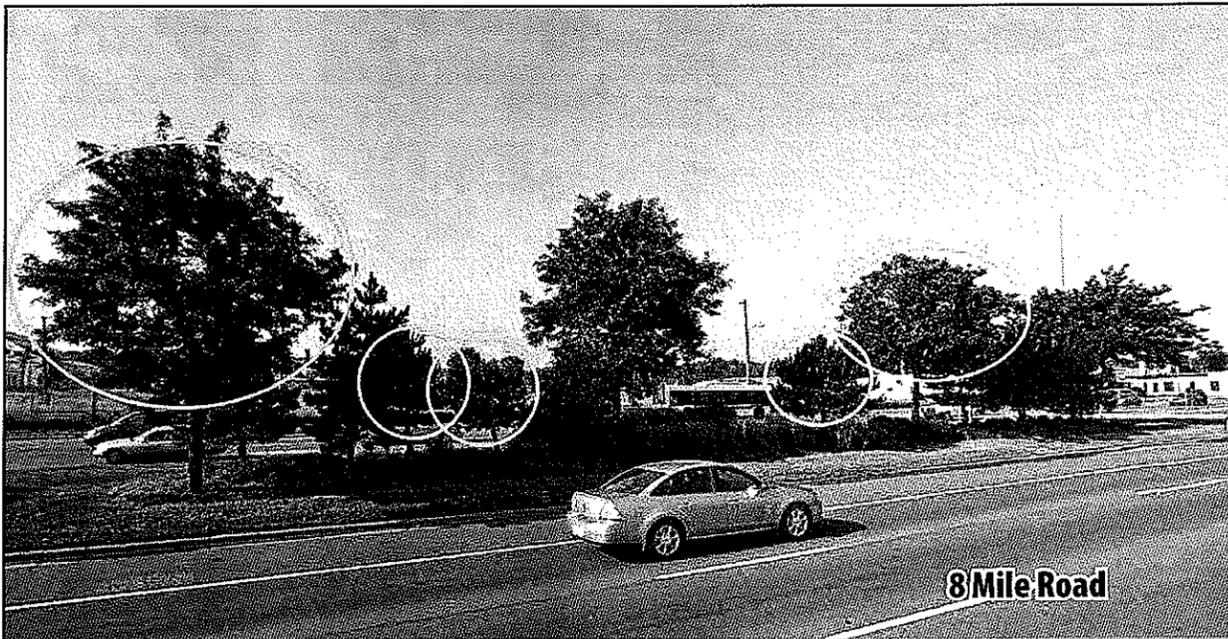
The gardens feature community identification signage and landscape clusters to add seasonal color and visual interest along the entire corridor.



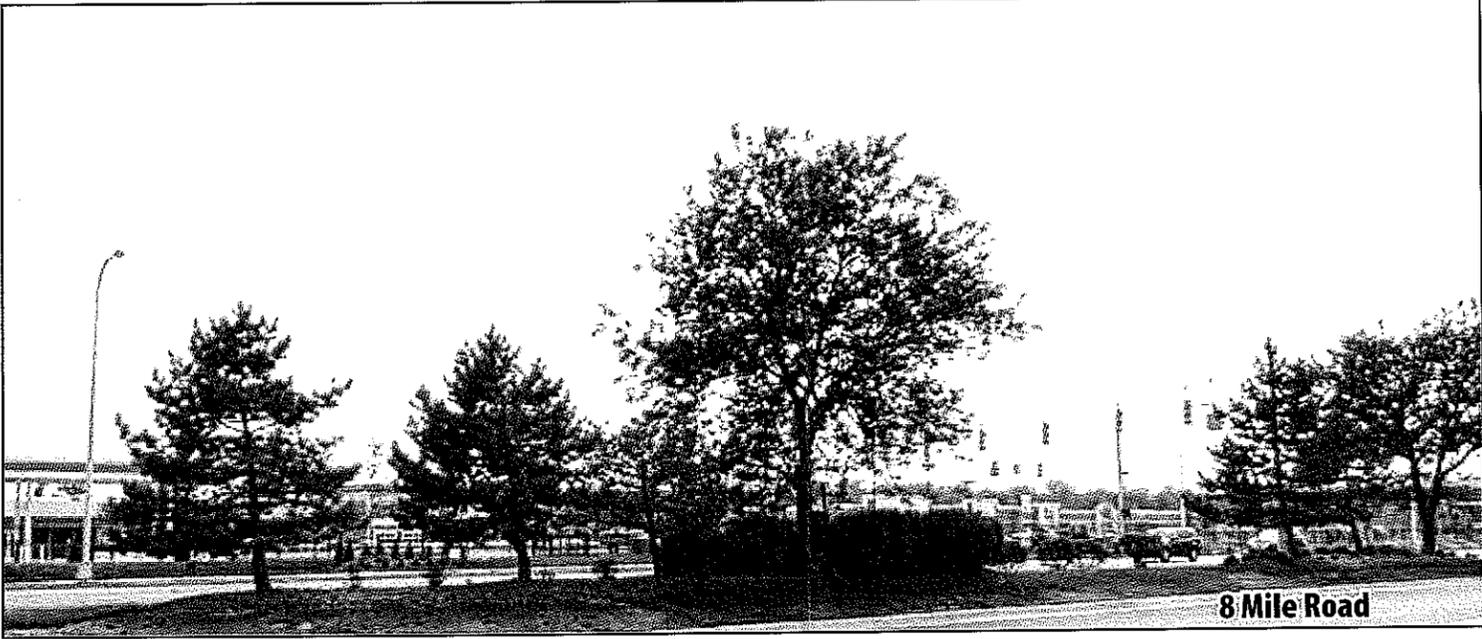
New Meijer Development

West Bound 8 Mile Road Just Before Woodward

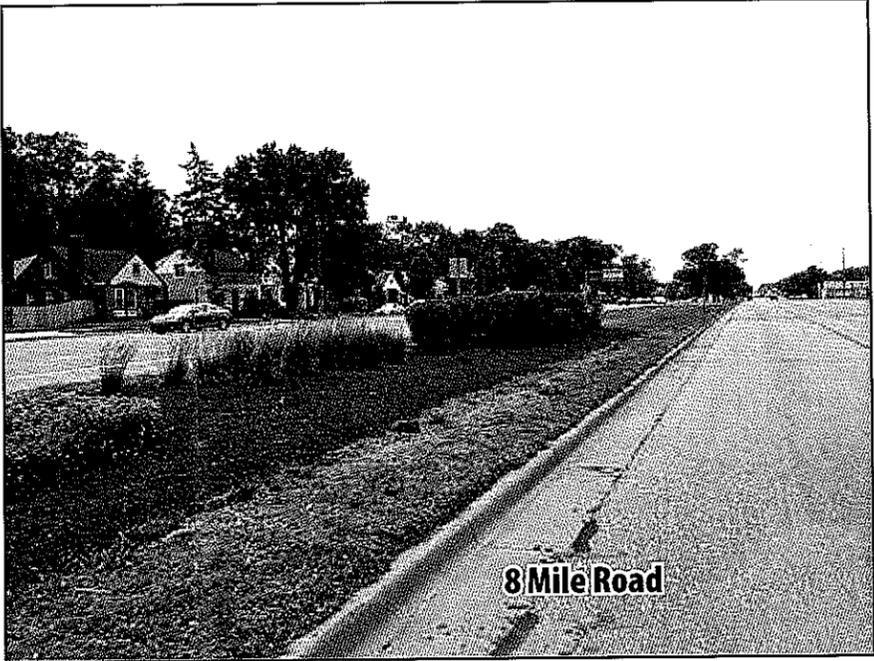
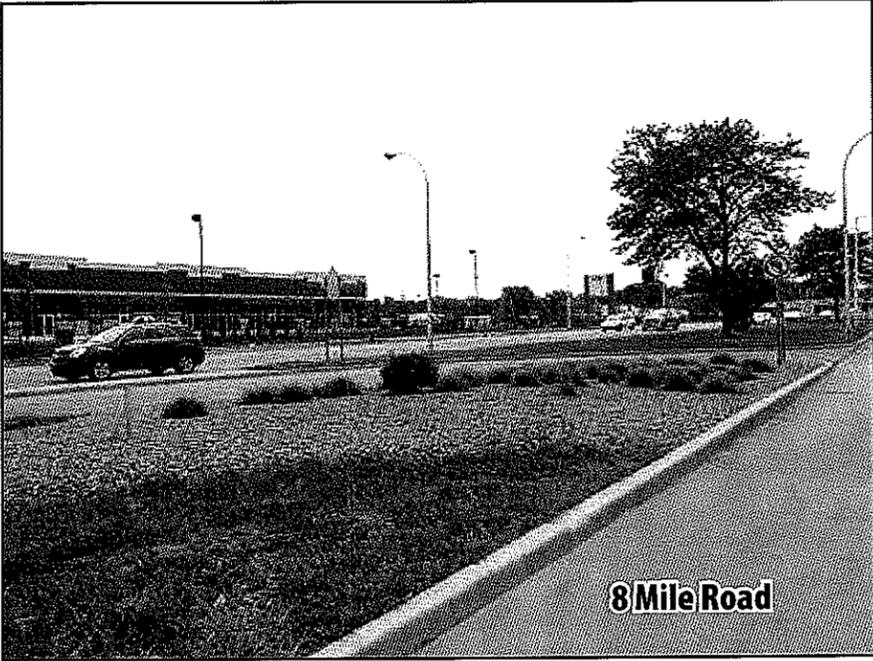
Please note that the top 2 photos are taken from the far right lane which provides the greatest billboard visibility. Traditional commuter viewing would normally be seen from the center or left lanes where visibility is decreased even more when trees are present.



These trees have been removed for Meijer and the entire Commercial Site - June 2009



Meijer Commercial Site after Trees have been removed – June 2013



Existing Landscape Designs adjacent to Meijer – June 2013