

**Olaf Huebner
177 Saint Peters Drive
Douglas, MI 49406**

TO: Douglas City Council

DATE: September 26, 2023

RE: Centre Collective Development

To Whom It May Concern:

I have public safety concerns with the St Peters Dr. / West Shore Ct. corridor. I live across the street, well within 300ft of the proposed development. I have 3 young children in my household. Approval of the development will have impacts on safety for vehicular traffic, cyclists and pedestrians.

I request of Council that any approval of the development require:

1. A sidewalk along all road frontage along both St Peters Drive and West Shore Court, linking the development sidewalks with Ferry Street to the west and Blue Star Highway to the east, including a mid-block crossing at Blue Star Highway per the City Master Plan.
2. A city investigation into modification of the St Peters Drive & Blue Star intersection and/or other traffic calming techniques to slow vehicular traffic and congestion on St Peters Drive and West Shore Ct. (I recommend eliminating the intersection by creating a cul-de-sac or by changing the intersection to a "Y" similar to Chestnut and BSH, adding radar speed signs, speed tables, speed humps, etc.)

Current state

There is approximately 1400 feet of roadway on St Peters Drive and West Shore Ct between Blue Star Highway and Hamilton Street.

This stretch of roadway is 1 of 3 major East/West thoroughfares in Douglas west of Blue Star Highway.

Most streets in Douglas are straight without curves but this section of roadway, including the St Peters/West Shore intersection, has 5 curves/corners, reducing visibility and increasing hazards (See Figure 1).

The majority of traffic neither obeys the posted speed limit of 25mph nor stops at the three-way intersection at St Peters Drive and West Shore Court, and sometimes not at Hamilton Street either.

The intersection of St Peters Drive and Blue Star Highway is already perilous. There is a pedestrian pathway, cyclist pathway, landscaped median, and 2-way vehicular traffic.

The traffic study performed by the developer and submitted to the Planning Commission was not performed during peak tourist season.

West Shore Court makes a blind corner at the same location that it crosses over a drainage gully. There are guardrails on both sides and no shoulders on either side. When walking or cycling, there is no way to pass this stretch of roadway other than to occupy a lane of traffic.

Especially during peak tourist season, there is a steady stream of vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians walking this stretch of roadway. I have seen families and groups as large as 20 walking to the church service with children in strollers, children and elderly.

The current state is already hazardous.

Future state

On the development's roughly 650 feet of road frontage with St Peters Drive, the development will add 6 curb cuts (See Figure 2).

Five of these will be single home driveways directly onto St Peters Drive with the sixth being to the new road indirectly accessing another 14 single home driveways.

The developer seeks to add 19 homes in this phase of the project, with the addition of many more residences and commercial properties in future phases. This will add additional vehicular traffic, cyclists and pedestrians to the area.

There will be a lot more traffic entering and leaving the roadway, possibly parking along the roadway, as well as additional traffic on the roadway leading to congestion and hazards.

The developer has proposed to build a sidewalk/boardwalk along the entire road frontage of the development which constitutes approximately 875 feet of road frontage on St Peters drive and West Shore Ct. I commend the developer for including the sidewalk as an important step toward mitigating the safety hazard to allow pedestrians to traverse the entire development frontage on the safety of a sidewalk.

However, without the city taking action to connect the sidewalks beyond the development, the sidewalks will stop approximately 300 feet short of Blue Star Highway, 200 feet short of Hamilton Street, and another 400 feet from Ferry Street (See Figure 3). The city will need to take action to link the new sidewalks to other streets and pedestrian networks to create a safe and connected community.

The proposed development will address one of the safety issues under its control by adding a sidewalk but it will also add to an already hazardous condition on this stretch of roadway.

Master Plan

The following are relevant references to the Douglas Master Plan:

Housing and Neighborhoods – Community Values - pg 37

“We value parks and recreation amenities, located within close proximity to neighborhoods, and connected to those neighborhoods via bike trails and sidewalks.”

Housing and Neighborhoods – Goal 3 – Objectives 1 & 2 - pg 40

“Douglas will be a connected community through safe offstreet walking and biking facilities and through the provision and maintenance of parks and recreation facilities.”

“1. Require sidewalks for all new development within the City.”

“2. Consider a sidewalk installation and maintenance strategy for streets within ½-mile of downtown Douglas and Douglas Elementary School.”

Transportation and Mobility – Strategic Direction & Community Values - pg 58

“TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY Ensure residents and visitors are offered a safe environment that enables them to utilize a multi-modal, connected transportation network throughout the city. A well-developed plan will provide automobile, bicycle and pedestrian connectivity between activity centers and neighborhoods.”

“We value a connected community that offers transportation choices for its residents and visitors within a system of motorized and nonmotorized facilities.”

“We value safe, complete streets that accommodate multiple modes of transportation.”

“We value having a healthy community, where residents and visitors are able to walk, bike, drive and take transit.”

“We value a walkable community, with sidewalks connecting neighborhoods to the downtown, parks, schools, and beyond, to increase public safety and offer choices in mobility.”

Transportation and Mobility – Goal 1 - Community Values 2 & 4 pg 59

“Douglas will design and build safe, complete streets to offer multi-modal transportation options.”

“2. Adopt a “pedestrian-first” philosophy whereby design decisions prioritize pedestrian safety and well-being as they are the most vulnerable users of street space.”

“4. Add mid-block crossings at St. Peter’s, Union Street and Main Street.”

Request of Council

The city and developer market the walkability of this community. Our master plan is clear that sidewalks should be required for new developments to align with the community values of safe, complete streets. This development and adjacent area lies within ½-mile of downtown Douglas and Douglas Elementary School (See Figures 4&5).

The existing state of the roadway is an accident waiting to happen. Approving this development without addressing this roadway issue and linking the development sidewalk to existing pathways is negligent, exposing the public to a hazardous condition that could be avoided.

At a council meeting on July 5, 2022, when addressing community concerns about removing the large maple tree in front of city hall to accommodate a new sidewalk, I was impressed by the mayor's commitment in addressing a public safety concern on Union Street.

The mayor stated that on the street he lived on, he saw groups of pedestrians and families with baby strollers walking 3 abreast along the street and that it was a tragedy waiting to happen and he enlisted council's support to make sure it was kept from happening by ensuring the sidewalk would be built.

I ask that the mayor and members of council have the same resolve on the stretch of roadway I live on. My request is for the safety of the public as well as my 3 young children that any approval of the development require:

3. A sidewalk along all road frontage along both St Peters Drive and West Shore Court, linking the development sidewalks with Ferry Street to the west and Blue Star Highway to the east, including a mid-block crossing at Blue Star Highway per the City Master Plan.
1. A city investigation into modification of the St Peters Drive & Blue Star intersection and/or other traffic calming techniques to slow vehicular traffic and congestion on St Peters Drive and West Shore Ct. (I recommend eliminating the intersection by creating a cul-de-sac or by changing the intersection to a "Y" similar to Chestnut and BSH, adding radar speed signs, speed tables, speed humps, etc.)

Best Regards,



Olaf Huebner

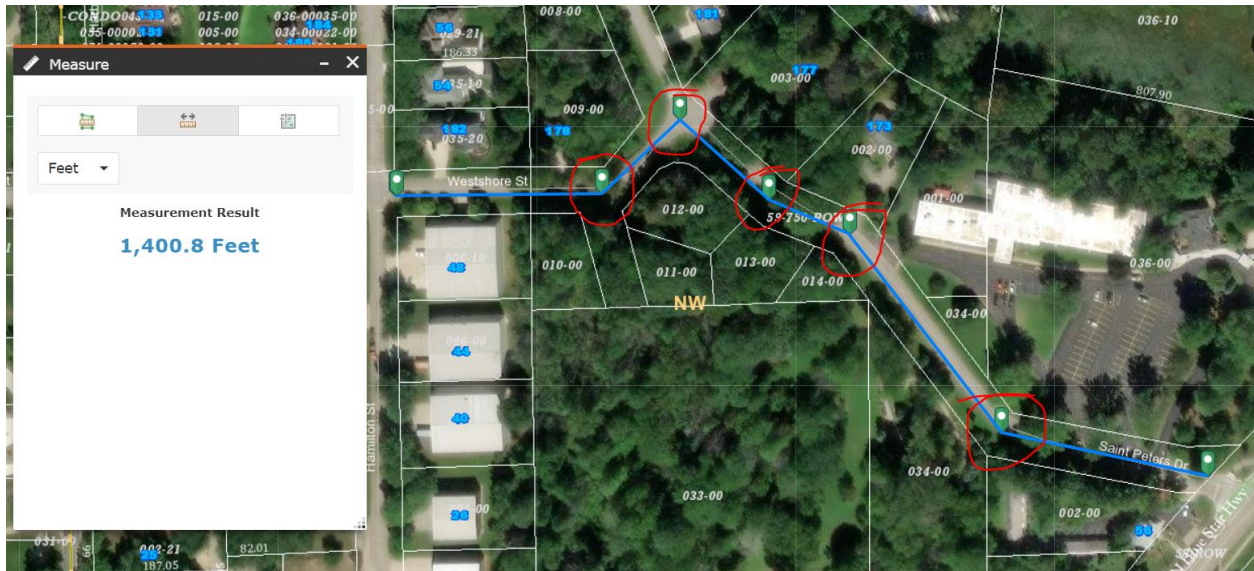


Figure 1: 1400ft of Roadway between BSH and Hamilton St with 5 curves/corners

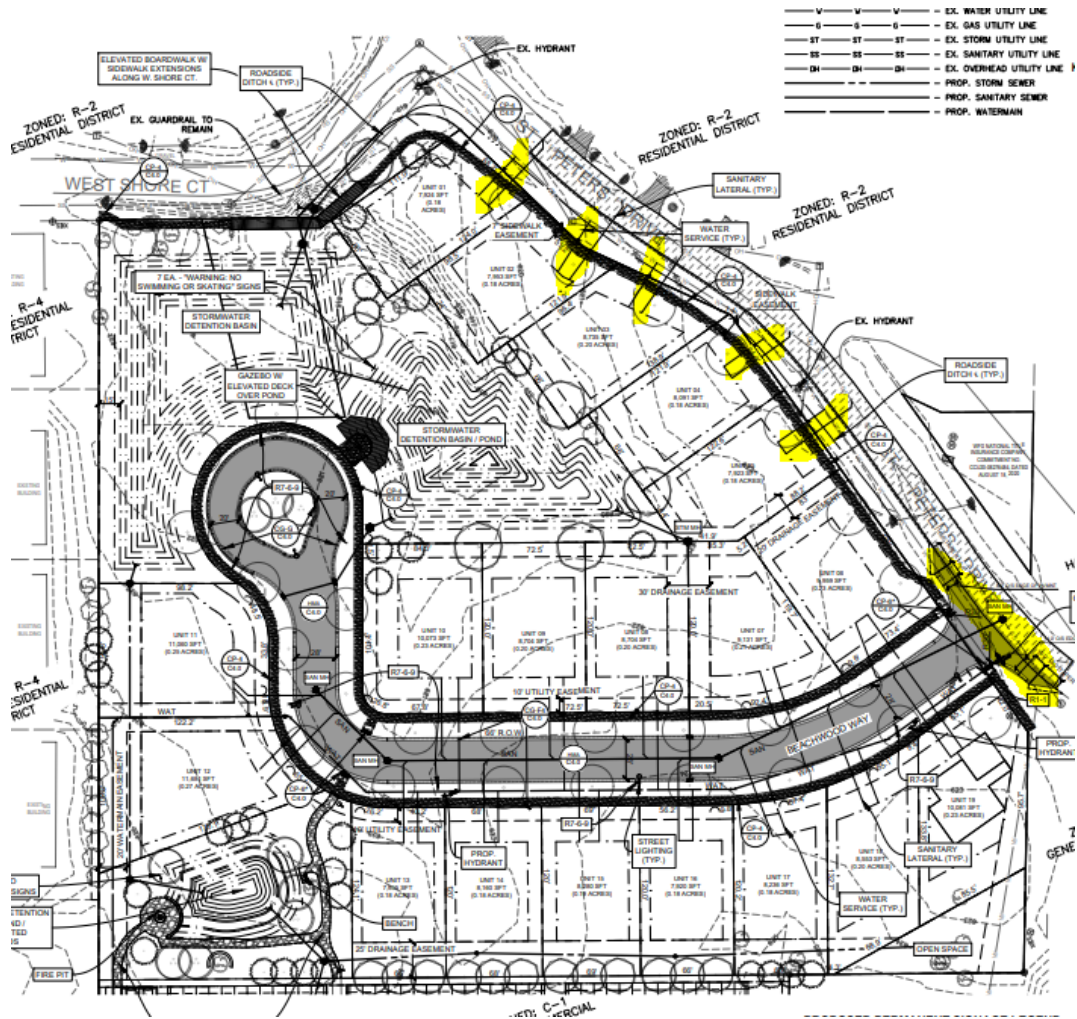


Figure 2: In Yellow: 6 curb cuts (5 driveways, 1 roadway to 14 more driveways)



Figure 3: In Blue: 875 feet of sidewalk/boardwalk the developer proposes to build

In Red: 900 feet of sidewalk the city would need to build to link the sidewalk with other pathway

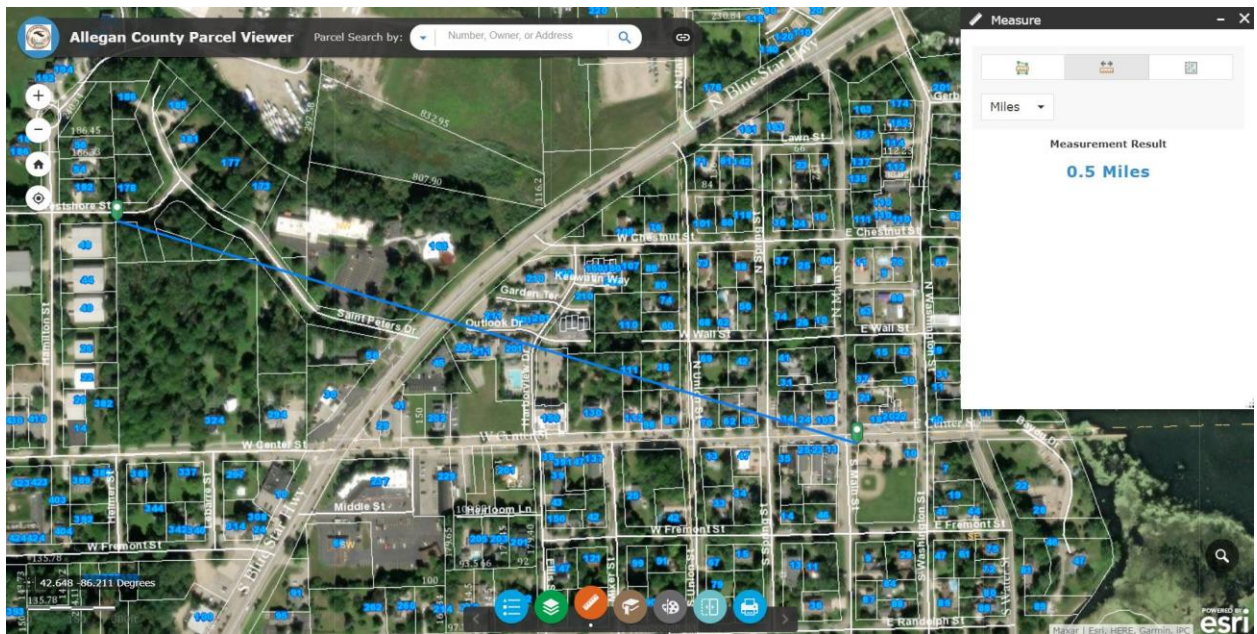


Figure 4: 0.5 mile distance from northwestern corner of development to Beery Field

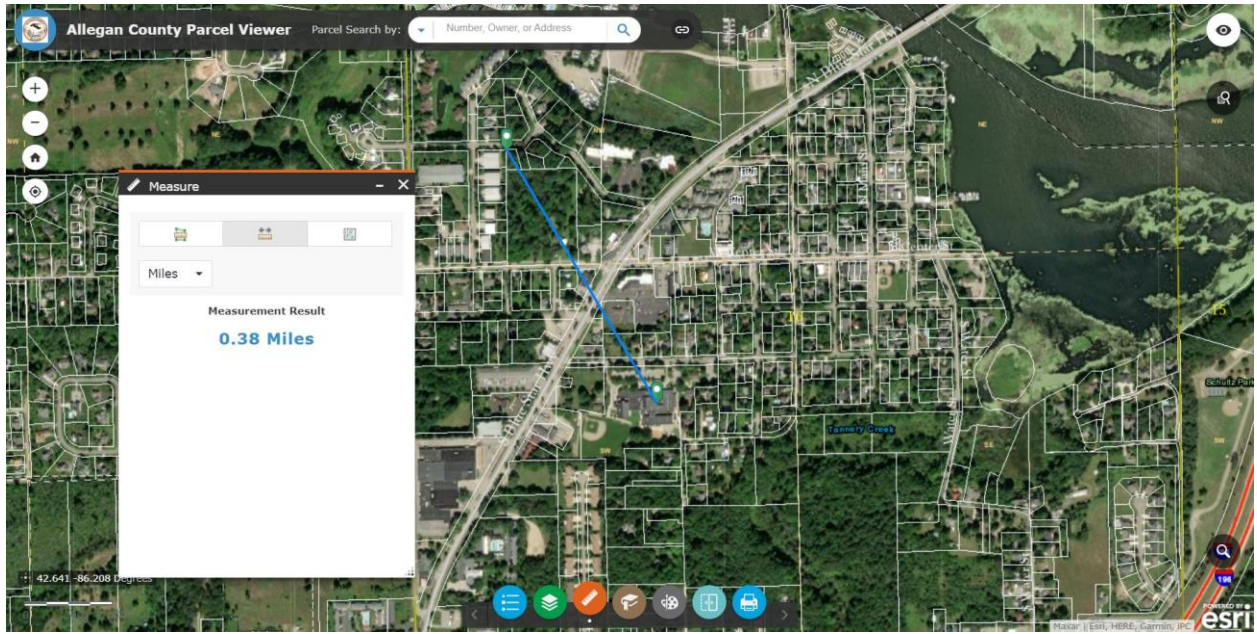


Figure 5: 0.38 mile distance from northwestern corner of development to Douglas Elementary School