

January 27, 2006

TO: John Szerlag, City Manager

FROM: Doug Smith, Real Estate and Development Director

SUBJECT: Maple Corridor Study

As a follow up to Ted Wilson's comments regarding Maple Corridor Study I have enclosed a recent article from the Free Press and proposed timeline for the Maple Corridor Study.

## TROY | Looking down the road at Maple business

### Lawrence Tech students run study

**BY CECILIA OLECK**  
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

*January 19, 2006*

As the demand for certain businesses changes, Maple Road in Troy needs to change, too, so members of the Troy business community are turning to the experts to tell them how to do that.

In this case, the experts are students at Lawrence Technological University, based in Southfield.

Starting this week, undergraduate students at the school will take a close look at the stretch of Maple Road that runs through Troy.

They'll talk with people who own businesses there. They'll analyze city policies and how the businesses there will be affected by the changing economy. And they'll draw and build models of what they envision happening there.

It's the focus of a course taught by LTU professor Joongsub Kim.

But it's also a partnership among City of Troy officials, members of Troy's business community and the school that is meant to benefit all three -- as well as Troy residents.

"We tried to achieve a good win-win," said Michele Hodges, president of the Troy Chamber of Commerce, which represents businesses in the city. One of the changes facing businesses along the corridor is how to find new uses for old buildings, such as offices in technology parks that aren't needed any longer for that purpose, Hodges said.

The city's rules don't allow for something like a dance studio to move in there, yet that might be a good way to use such sites, she said.

The students will gain business experience and class credits from conducting the study. The business community and city will get an idea about how to best use the Maple corridor.

Troy businesses are paying for the Maple Road corridor study, Hodges said. The estimate is about \$2,500.

The effort with LTU comes as the city is beginning a different study to look at possible redevelopment along the Big Beaver corridor, and is starting a visioning process called "Troy Futures," which has residents, businesspeople and city officials coming together to plan what they would like the city to become.

The city's Downtown Development Authority is paying for the Big Beaver corridor study, which is budgeted for \$137,000.

LTU students participated in a similar project last year with the City of Southfield. They studied its City Centre.

The students responsible for the Maple Road corridor study will come up with a master plan for the area. They will look primarily at two scenarios: what will happen to the tax base along Maple Road if nothing is done there to spur and promote redevelopment, and what will happen if something is done, Hodges said.

But the city won't be required to incorporate the students' suggestions when making decisions, said Glen LeRoy, dean of the College of Architecture and Design at LTU.

It's meant to give members of the community a jumping-off point for possibilities along Maple Road, LeRoy said.

The Maple Road corridor study is expected to be completed by May and will be on display then. The Big Beaver study is expected to be completed sometime in the spring.

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## TROY CITY COUNCIL PRESENTATION 01-23-06

Last week's meeting generated questions on what was happening on the Maple Rd. project that the Chamber is working on and there was no one available to give you an update. So here I am to answer your questions.

Before you ask your questions I would like to give you a quick over view of the project and what is planned.

First, I would like to make sure you understand that this is a Troy Chamber effort for all of Troy. The effort is not an exclusive one, but an inclusive effort that is meant to help everyone in deciding what needs to be done on Maple. The Troy Chamber does not want this effort to be seen as only for the business community.

Secondly, with the help of some chamber members and the help of Lawrence Tech University and Walsh College, the study will not cost the city anything – except some staff time. The staff time is greatly appreciated. The planning commission is also playing a vital role in this effort and the chairman – Tom Strat has become one of the driving forces that is elevating the quality of the study.

The study has two parts – the Lawrence Tech part and the Walsh College part.

The LTU part is being done by a senior level design class of 11 students. They are working on potential ideas for improving Maple Rd. The definition of “improving” that we gave them was to accomplish the objective that John Szerlag gave the Chamber several months ago – stabilize and increase the tax base. To do that - Maple must become a place to live, work, and shop. For short someplace people want to be part of. To get ideas for their work, the LTU students will have a neighborhood discussion group next Monday. Then a community wide brain storming session on Feb 8<sup>th</sup> – a Wednesday- and finally a focus group session w/ developers and other experts on Feb 11<sup>th</sup>. All of this information will lead to a group of 4 or more design plans. With the help of the steering committee, the best of each design will be consolidated into a final recommendation that will be presented to the public on May 5<sup>th</sup>. The final recommendation will be published in a book format that will be given to the city and made available for any future planning effort.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> part is being done by Walsh College. Walsh is using 2 of its MBA classes to look at the future of Maple Rd. In Feb. Mar. and April a group of students in a statistics class will use existing information to predict what will happen to Maple over the next 20 years if nothing is done and current trends continue. Then in April, May, June an economics class will take the LTU recommendation and try to predict what will happen if the recommendations are adopted.

This is the first time that these 2 schools have worked together on such a project and they seem to be very excited about the collaboration. I would like to make sure that everyone is aware of the meeting on Feb. 8<sup>th</sup>. It will be at the Community Center from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. The LTU students will present their initial site inventories and analysis. They will be looking for

feedback and ideas from all of the residents and community leaders. Supporting their effort by a strong attendance is very important.

As we put the final detail on the May 5<sup>th</sup> exhibition of the recommendations, we will let you know the when and where.

Now, before you ask any questions on the Chamber's project on Maple Rd, I have a question of you. With the work being done on Big Beaver, by the Futuring Committee, and on Maple, are you going to put money in the July '06 budget to start the Master Land Use Plan process? A lot of time will be lost if that process does not get financing until July '07.

Ted Wilson  
Chairman of the Economic Development Committee  
Troy Chamber of Commerce

**MAPLE ROAD STUDY PROJECT**  
Spring 2006 / The Detroit Studio / Lawrence Technological University

**Proposed Semester Schedule (subject to change)**

(\* denotes important key events that require the steering committee's participation)

\*Meeting with the President of Troy Chamber of Commerce  
Agenda: review of the proposed semester schedule  
**Date/time: January 9 afternoon (tentative) – to be discussed**  
Location: TBA

**Week 1 (1/16):**

Beginning of the Spring 2006 semester  
**Monday, January 16**

\*A guided site tour  
Agenda: A site tour of Maple Road and its vicinity  
**Wednesday, January 18, 1pm-230pm.**  
Location: TBA

**Week 2 (1/23):**

\*First meeting between students and the steering committee (e.g., the Chamber's group)  
Agenda: project goals, expectations, and other key issues  
**Monday, January 23, 2pm-330pm**  
Location: The Detroit Studio

**Week 3 (1/30):**

Meeting with community representatives  
Agenda: understanding neighborhood perspectives, issues, concerns, and expectations and getting their inputs  
**Monday, January 30, 1pm**  
Location: Troy Chamber of Commerce

**Week 4 (2/6):**

\*Project kick off and introduction to community:  
Presentation of the outcomes of site inventory and analysis  
**Wednesday, February 8, 2pm-5pm**  
Location: Troy Community Center  
Items to cover:  
(1) local and regional analyses, (2) zoning and other local requirements, (3) urban precedent studies, (4) urban challenges and opportunities, (5) urban goals, and (6) analyses of selected sites

\*Meeting with the steering committee  
Agenda: community design workshop, focus groups, survey  
**Wednesday, February 8, 5pm-6pm**  
Location: same as above

\*Community planning/design workshop  
Agenda: students team up with the steering committee members and other stakeholders to brainstorm planning/design ideas  
**Saturday, February 11, 930am-130pm**  
Location: To Be Announced

**Week 5 (2/13):**

\*Focus group sessions  
Agenda: experts invited to the studio for short focus sessions on key topics concerning the project  
**Monday, February 13, 1pm-5pm**  
Location: The Detroit Studio

Distribution of survey questionnaire on the project site and its surrounding areas by students

**Saturday, February 18, 10am-12noon**

**Week 6 (2/20):**

Students develop preliminary master plans

**Week 7 (2/27):**

\*Progress review

Agenda: Review of preliminary master plans with the steering committee and other stakeholders

**Wednesday, March 1, 1pm-5pm**

Location: The Detroit Studio

**Week 8 (3/6):**

Students improve master plans

**Week 9: *Mid-semester break (March 13-17)***

**Week 10 (3/20):**

\*Final master plans

Presentation of master plans to the steering committee and other stakeholders

**Wednesday, March 22, 1pm-3pm**

Location: The Detroit Studio

\*Meeting with the steering committee

Agenda: Integration of master plans

**Wednesday, March 22, 3pm-4pm**

Location: The Detroit Studio

**Week 11(3/27):**

Students integrate master plans

**Week 12 (4/3):**

\*Integrated master plan

Presentation of an integrated master plan to the steering committee and other stakeholders

**Monday, April 3, 2pm-4pm**

Location: The Detroit Studio

\*Meeting with the steering committee

Agenda: selection of focus sites

**Monday, April 3, 4pm-5pm**

Location: The Detroit Studio

**Week 13 (4/10):**

Students develop preliminary urban design plans of focus sites

**Week 14 (4/17):**

\*Progress review

Agenda: Review of preliminary urban design plans of focus sites with the steering committee and other stakeholders

**Wednesday, April 19, 1pm-5pm**

Location: The Detroit Studio

**Week 15 (4/24):**

Students improve urban design plans of focus sites

**Week 16 (5/1 or 5/8): To be determined**

\*Final presentation

Agenda: presentation of final urban design plans of focus sites to the steering committee and other stakeholders

**Wednesday, May 3 (or May 10), 1pm-6pm**

Location: The Detroit Studio

\*Public reception and exhibition of the project

**Friday, May 5 (or May 12), 4pm-630pm**