



Au Gres Charrette Final Report 2015



Sustainable Small Harbors Project

Au Gres Charrette Final Report

PROJECT GOAL

To identify the key barriers to small harbor economic, social and environmental sustainability and provide a toolkit to help small harbor managers create more stability in their communities.

MI Sea Grant

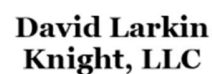
Sustainable Harbor Design Charrette
August-November 2015



Au Gres Charrette Final Report 2015

Acknowledgements

This report is a result of work sponsored by the Michigan Sea Grant College Program, project number R/CCD-33, under NA14OAR4170070, from NOAA National Sea Grant, U.S. Department of Commerce and funds from the State of Michigan. The report authors would like to acknowledge the efforts of all project partners and the committed municipal leaders, staff, and citizens for the contributions to this product.





Au Gres Charrette Final Report 2015

Contents

Acknowledgements	2
List of Figures	4
List of Tables	5
1.0 Two-Page Executive Summary of Entire Process	6
2.0 Design Alternatives Overview	9
2.1 Design Alternative 1: Pure Au Gres	10
2.2 Design Alternative 2: Family-Oriented Public Space.....	13
2.3 Design Alternative 3: Mixed-Use Development	16
2.4 City Park Development Option	19
2.5 Breakwater Development Option.....	20
3.0 Preferred Alternative – Au Gres 2035	24
3.1 Au Gres City Park	27
3.2 Au Gres Mooring Facility	28
3.3 Breakwater Improvements	31
4.0 Connectivity	35
4.1 Signage	40



Au Gres Charrette Final Report 2015

List of Figures

Figure 1 - Alternative 1 Presentation Board	11
Figure 2 - Alternative 1 Community Vote	12
Figure 3 - Alternative 2 Presentation Board	14
Figure 4 - Alternative 2 Community Vote	15
Figure 5 - Alternative 3 Presentation Board	17
Figure 6 - Alternative 3 Community Vote	18
Figure 7 - Camping Cabins and Improved River Access at City Park	19
Figure 8 - Breakwater Developments.....	21
Figure 9 - Pavilion and Pocket Beach.....	22
Figure 10 - Breakwaters Improvements Public Votes	23
Figure 11 - Au Gres Design Areas	25
Figure 12 - Preferred Alternative Final Plan of City Park and Downtown	26
Figure 13 - Mini Cabins Plan.....	27
Figure 14 - Mini Cabin at Ludington State Park (www.mymichigantrips.com).....	27
Figure 15 - Mooring Facility Redevelopment Cross Sections.....	28
Figure 16 - US-23 and Au Gres Mooring Facility Before and After.....	29
Figure 17 - Au Gres Mooring Facility Waterfront Before and After	30
Figure 18 - Point Lookout Development.....	32
Figure 19 - Pocket Beach Before and After.....	33
Figure 20 - Fishing Access along Breakwater Before and After	34
Figure 21 - Connectivity Diagram	36
Figure 22 - Complete Street Diagram	37
Figure 23 - Public Voting on US-23 Roadway Designs	38
Figure 24 - Existing Street Section of US-23.....	39
Figure 25 - Preferred Street Section by Au Gres Community for US-23.....	39
Figure 26 - Potential City Park Sign Improvement (before – no signage; after – sample sign)	40
Figure 27 - Potential Disc Golf Sign Improvement (before - minimal signage; after - two sample signs) ..	41
Figure 28 - Good Placemaking and City Definition.....	43



**Au Gres Charrette Final Report
2015**

List of Tables

Table 1 - Au Gres Design Charrette Schedule 8

Table 2 - Alternative 1 Content Matrix..... 10

Table 3 - Alternative 2 Content Matrix..... 13

Table 4 - Alternative 3 Content Matrix..... 16

Table 5 - Breakwater Content Matrix..... 20

Table 6 - Preferred Alternative Content Matrix..... 24



Au Gres Charrette Final Report 2015

1.0 Two-Page Executive Summary of Entire Process

Administered by the state, county, and local units of government, there are over 80 small public harbors and marinas throughout the State of Michigan. These harbors are a critical component of the state's blue economy with impacts from Great Lakes recreational boating in the billions of dollars. Unfortunately, a decade-long trend of lower water levels, at least temporarily reversed in 2014, combined with increasingly severe economic constraints have resulted in strained local economies. Most significantly, state and federal funding for public harbors maintenance is increasingly limited. Accordingly, by 2015, public harbors will be required to develop five-year master plans in order to receive financial support from the Waterways Commission of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR). Therefore, research is needed to inform both the development and the content of these plans as harbors seek a more sustainable future.

The *Sustainable Small Harbor Management Strategy* project (scheduled to conclude by summer of 2016) entails developing a strategy for small harbors to become economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable. A key feature includes documenting the value these small harbors provide to various stakeholders including boaters, anglers, property owners, and businesses and identifying potential revenue streams for the future. Project findings will inform the development of a toolkit of best practices, resources, and funding opportunities to support small harbor planning.

The research is being conducted by Lawrence Technological University, Environmental Consulting & Technology, Inc., David Knight LLC, and Veritas Economic Consulting along with representatives of government agencies who are sponsoring the project. Funding for the project is coming from a unique collaboration of agencies including Michigan Sea Grant (MSG), Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) Office of the Great Lakes (OGL), and Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA). Finally, a state-wide Advisory Board has been engaged to guide the project and reviewing/summarizing documents that pertain to challenges small harbors face. The Advisory Board is comprised of key partners and stakeholders including policy makers, managers, harbor masters, industry representatives and lobbying organizations that deal with this topic. As such, there is a tremendous amount of experience and organizational capacity being applied to this problem.

Communities were selected on a criteria system that included diverse location, the harbor type (small shallow draft), harbor position relative to the community type (suburban, city, downtown), population size, current organizational capacity, and economic condition.



Au Gres Charrette Final Report 2015

Au Gres was selected as one of four case study communities. In support of the process, information gathered and analyzed for Au Gres included:

- Organizational and leadership charts of the community
- Marina statistics such as boats berthed, launched, demand, etc.
- Employment data and other related census data
- Master planning efforts (existing or in progress) or special assessment districts
- Zoning for harbor and downtown/adjacent land areas
- Existence of community foundations who could provide financial support for future efforts
- Any recent planning or improvement grants received
- Specific challenges Au Gres is experiencing (regulation, policy, laws, water levels, maintenance, etc.)
- Existing tourist information (flyers, magazines, etc.) and existing tourist way finding signage
- Aerial photograph/maps

Developing a vision for a sustainable harbor requires input from a wide range of stakeholders, including landowners, waterfront users, planning officials and local citizens. As such, the project team engaged the Au Gres community in a community visioning exercise to identify opportunities to secure the economic, social and environmental sustainability of public waterfront facilities. The team followed the National Charrette Institute (NCI) Charrette System™ for this phase of the project. The NCI Charrette is an iterative rapid design process involving public interaction. The project team hosted an initial meeting on August 25. Those who attend the initial meeting weighed in on the future of Au Gres' waterfront and identified assets linked to existing and potential public waterfront facilities. A three-day public planning meeting or "community design charrette" to garner feedback, develop ideas and create a sustainable vision for Au Gres's waterfront was conducted September 24 to 26 (Table 1). In the community design charrette participants assessed and prioritized design and planning options. Community participation included public sessions and technical meetings with key constituents. The meetings resulted in three alternatives for the public waterfront as an asset to the community. Those alternatives were further refined into a preferred alternative that represents the vision for Au Gres in 2035. The project team compiled community input to develop a harbor sustainability plan specific to Au Gres. The final vision, as well as the process for development, for Au Gres is documented in this report and was presented to City Council on 12/1/15.

The goal of the community engagement portion of the project is to facilitate regular stakeholder involvement and feedback which builds trust in the process and builds support for implementation. This allows the project team to quickly gain consensus and reduce the time to implement a sustainability plan. The meetings in the four case study communities will inform the toolkit which provides a roadmap for other communities to engage in a similar



Au Gres Charrette Final Report 2015

process. Inform the toolkit which provides a roadmap for other communities to engage in a similar process.

Table 1 - Au Gres Design Charrette Schedule

	Thursday, 9/24	Friday, 9/25	Saturday, 9/26
9:00 a.m.		Debrief on night meeting	Finalization of alternatives
10:00	<i>(Travel and lunch on your own)</i>	Refine vision	Pin Up/Team meeting
11:00		Team Pin Up	Production of preferred plan
12:00 p.m.		Develop alternatives	
1:00			Final check with stakeholder team
2:00	Team arrives; set up studio	Develop alternatives	Technical meeting: Historical Society
3:00	Meet with stakeholder team to present results of preliminary meeting (2/5) and base data		Technical meeting: Parks & Rec with Water Trail representatives
4:00	Set up for evening	Set up for Open House	"Work in Progress" Session for Au Gres Waterfront (4:00 - 6:00) (final work in progress presentation)
5:00	Facilitator briefing		
6:30	Public Input Workshop (6:30-8:30) (vision preference green red and route identification)	Open House: Selecting a Preferred Vision (6:30-8:30) (preferred vision, alternative preference)	Break down studio
8:00		Preferred concepts synthesis	
9:00 p.m.	Close for day	Close for day	
Legend: Grey = public meeting; Yellow = Stakeholder team meeting; Orange: technical meetings			



Au Gres Charrette Final Report 2015

2.0 Design Alternatives Overview

Each alternative was “driven” by a unique harbor/waterfront edge feature and developed/evaluated on four additional criteria (Land-Use, Connectivity, Economic Development, and Natural Systems) as represented in the Alternative Content Matrix. The Alternative Content Matrix was completed as part of the charrette process to succinctly disseminate the unique, but parallel alternative concept plans. All three plans focused on the Au Gres Mooring Facility which is located in a key parcel which borders US 23 and the Au Gres River. The Mooring Facility was initially developed in partnership with the State of Michigan and the Waterways Commission.



Au Gres Charrette Final Report 2015

2.1 Design Alternative 1: Pure Au Gres

Design Alternative 1 was generated by bringing natural systems back into downtown Au Gres to celebrate the natural features of the region. Table 2 lists the main aspects of this design and Figure 1 is the display board from community voting. Natural systems are pulled into the site by a green infrastructure stormwater treatment system, shallow water wetlands, and native plantings on Au Gres Mooring Facility. The green infrastructure uses plants and soil to absorb and filter runoff instead of direct discharge into the river. The site is designed to celebrate the natural systems and activities of the region. A lookout tower for bird viewing doubles as a location for tourist information and a focal point of the community.

Table 2 - Alternative 1 Content Matrix

Alternative 1: Pure Au Gres	
Harbor/Waterfront Edge Driver	Natural experience of downtown
Land-use	Natural Systems Cabin Camping Viewing Tower
Connectivity	Complete Streets Downtown
Economic Development	Mini Cabin Rental Promoting Fishing, Boating, and Hunting in Region Increased Downtown Spending Kayak and Paddleboard Rentals
Natural Systems	Wetlands, Stormwater Treatment Lagoon, Trees, Native Plantings
Engineering Consideration	Road improvements near entrance Viewing tower (Foundation, Structure, Lighting) Major underground infrastructure removed from the site Major reconfiguration of marina and harbor front edge with significant dredging and earth movement IT/Cable/Electrical/Water improvements to site Reconfiguration of US-23 and Intersection Improvements Minor Underground Infrastructure Improvements (water, sanitary sewer, storm sewer) to Site

Figure 1 - Alternative 1 Presentation Board



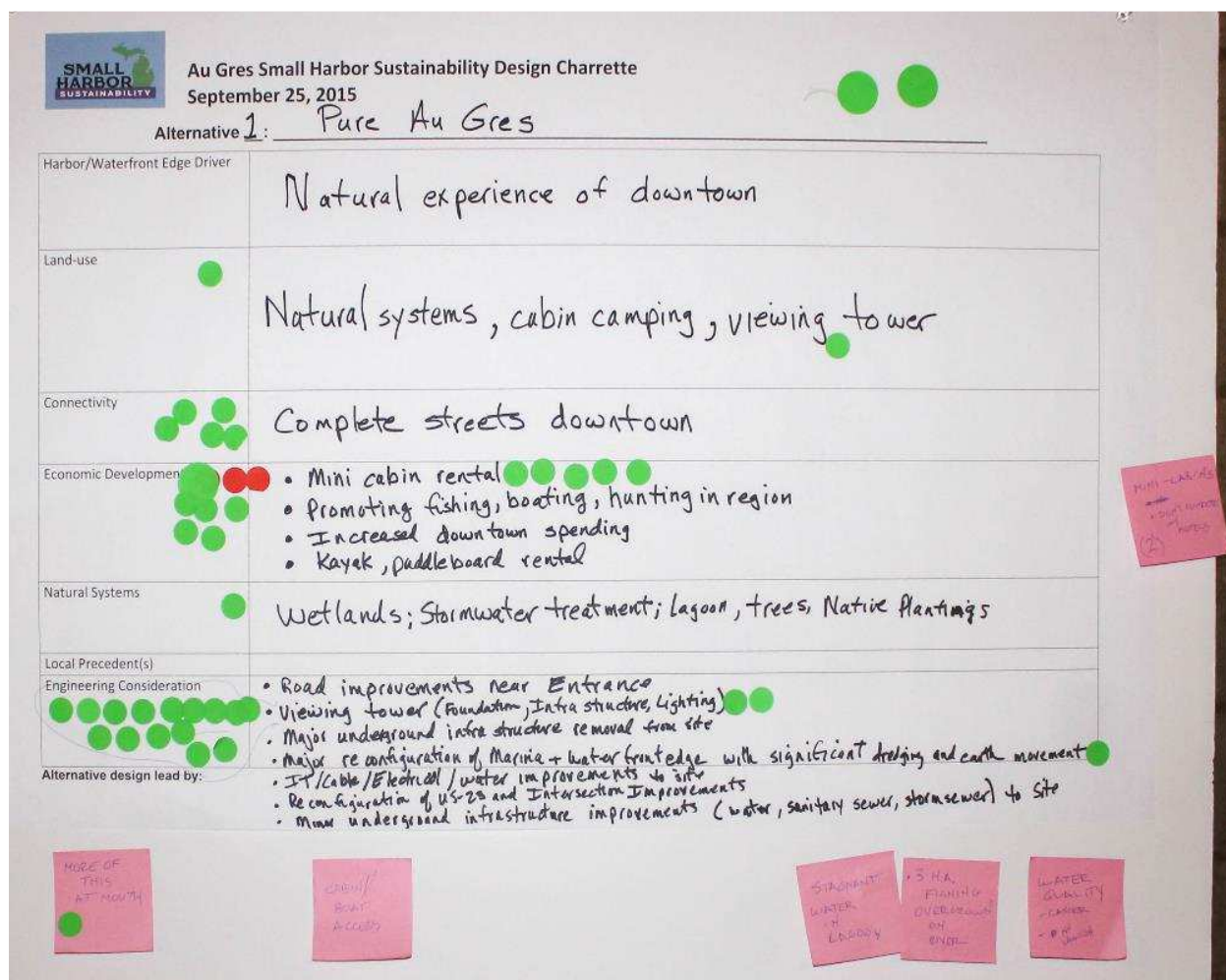


Au Gres Charrette Final Report 2015

Alternative 1 received two overall approval votes (large green dots) and two rejection vote (small red dots) by community members on the second night of the charrette. The two red dot votes were against adding mini-cabin rentals because they may compete with local hotels. The voting is shown in Figure 2 with overall votes on the top right corner and votes for individual elements within the table. Oral feedback during the public input session included:

- More of this at mouth (of the river)
- Cabins should have boat access
- Water in the lagoon will become stagnant
- Fishing overgrown on river
- No Lagoon, water quality problems in river (Cancer from agricultural runoff)

Figure 2 - Alternative 1 Community Vote





Au Gres Charrette Final Report 2015

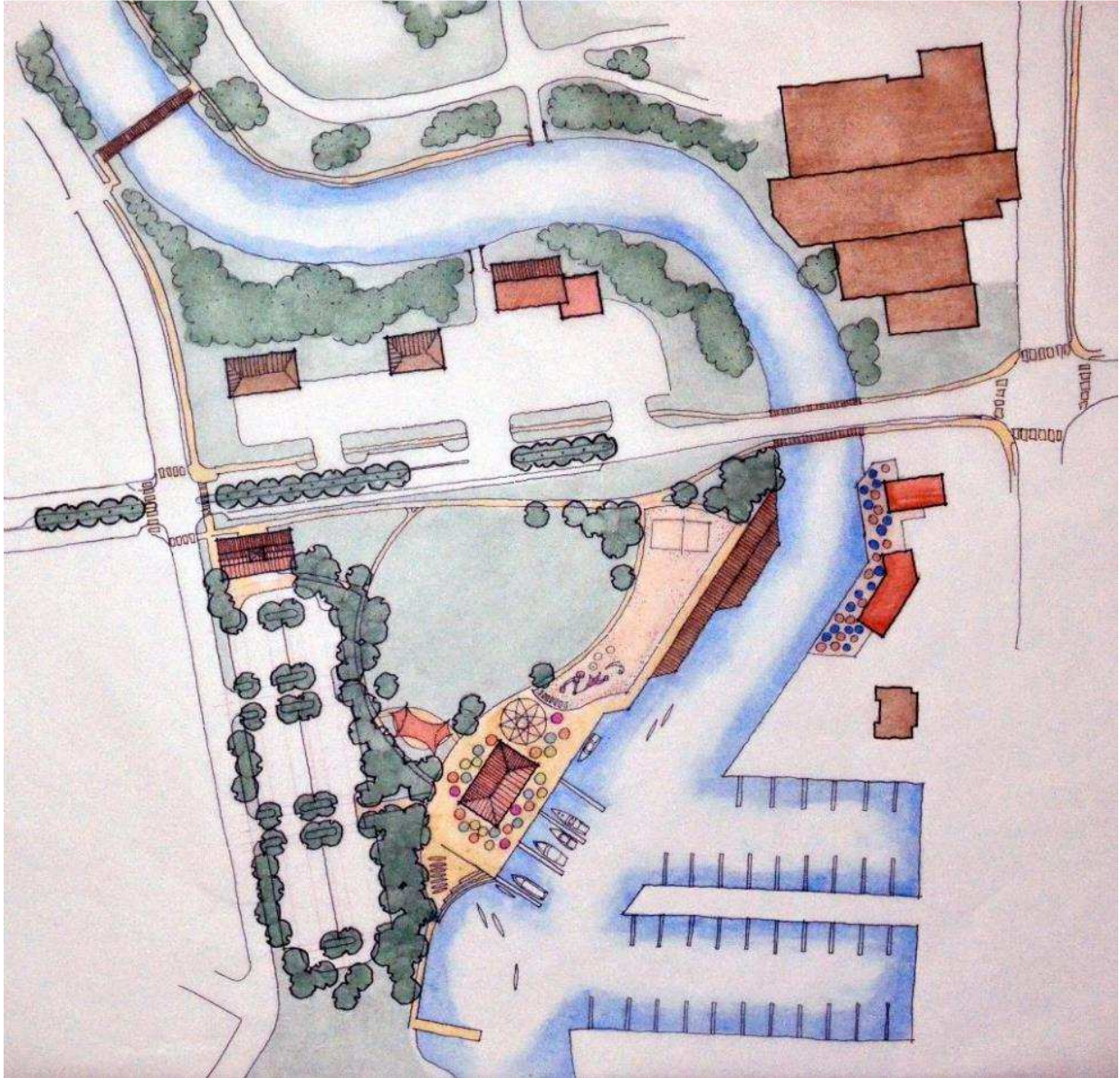
2.2 Design Alternative 2: Family-Oriented Public Space

Alternative 2 design was driven by adding family oriented activity spaces on the Au Gres Mooring Facility to augment current Au Gres recreational activities such as fishing and hunting. Table 3 lists the main aspects of this design and Figure 3 is the display board from community voting.

Table 3 - Alternative 2 Content Matrix

Alternative 2: Family-Oriented Public Space	
Harbor/Waterfront Edge Driver	Family Oriented Public Space Along the River
Land-use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boardwalk, Upland Riverfront Beach, Splash Pad • Restaurant & Concessions • Kayak Landing & Water Taxi Slip • Visitor Center • Au Gres Commons & Band Shell • Improved Waterfront Retail Across River
Connectivity	Walking and Bikes, Kayaks, Motor Boats
Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vendor for Kayak/Paddle Board Rental • Concessions • Downtown Spending • Minimal Increased Tax Base
Natural Systems	Tree Planting
Engineering Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconfiguration of Park • Boardwalk and Creation of Beach Area • Major Reconfiguration of Marina and Waterfront Edge • Reconfiguration of US-23 and Intersection Improvements • Minor Underground Infrastructure Improvements (Water, Sanitary Sewer, Stormwater) to Site • IT/Cable/Electrical Improvements

Figure 3 - Alternative 2 Presentation Board





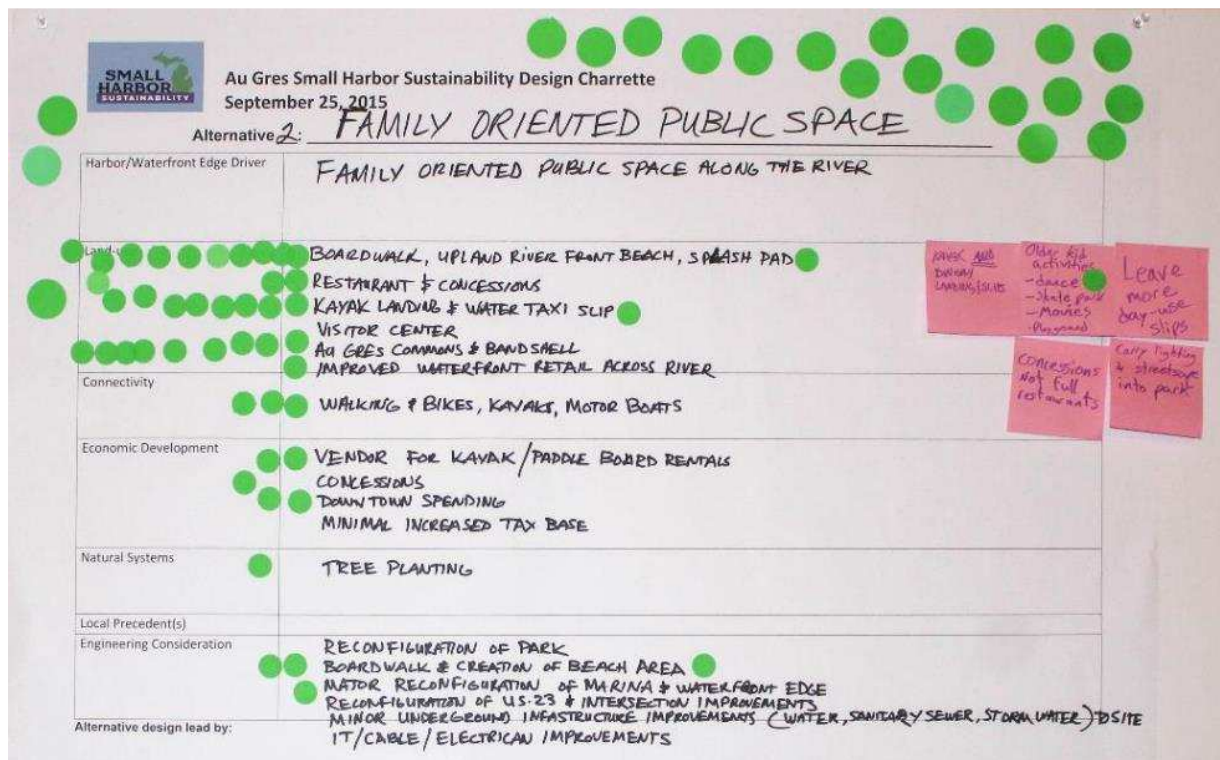
Au Gres Charrette Final Report 2015

Alternative 2 received 20 overall approval votes (large green dots) and no rejection votes (small red dots) by community members on the second night of the charrette. This design had the largest number of large green dots and no negative votes. The voting is shown in Figure 4 with overall votes on the top left corner and votes for individual elements within the table.

Oral feedback during the public input session included:

- [Need] Kayak and Dingy landing slips
- Make sure there are activities for older kids, like dances, skate park, movies, playground
- Leave more slips for day-use
- Concessions not full restaurants in park
- Carry lighting and streetscape into the park from the rest of town

Figure 4 - Alternative 2 Community Vote





Au Gres Charrette Final Report 2015

2.3 Design Alternative 3: Mixed-Use Development

The third alternative includes developing the Au Gres Mooring Facility into a publically accessible mixed-use development. Table 4 lists the main aspects of this design and Figure 5 is the display board from community voting.

Table 4 - Alternative 3 Content Matrix

Alternative 3: Mixed-Use Development	
Harbor/Waterfront Edge Driver	Mixed-use Development; Privatized and Public Edge
Land-use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two- and Three- Story Mixed-Use Development • Town Green • Public Boardwalk Along Water
Connectivity	"Complete" Street, Paddle Trail
Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased Tax Base • Increased Downtown Spending
Natural Systems	Tree planting, Green Infrastructure treatment of stormwater
Engineering Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major Underground Infrastructure Removal From Site • IT/Cable/Electrical/Water Improvements to site • Major Reconfiguration of US-23 and Intersection Improvements • Major Road and Access Road Improvements and Parking Improvements • Major Underground Infrastructure Improvements (Water, Sanitary Sewer, Storm Sewer) to Site

Figure 5 - Alternative 3 Presentation Board

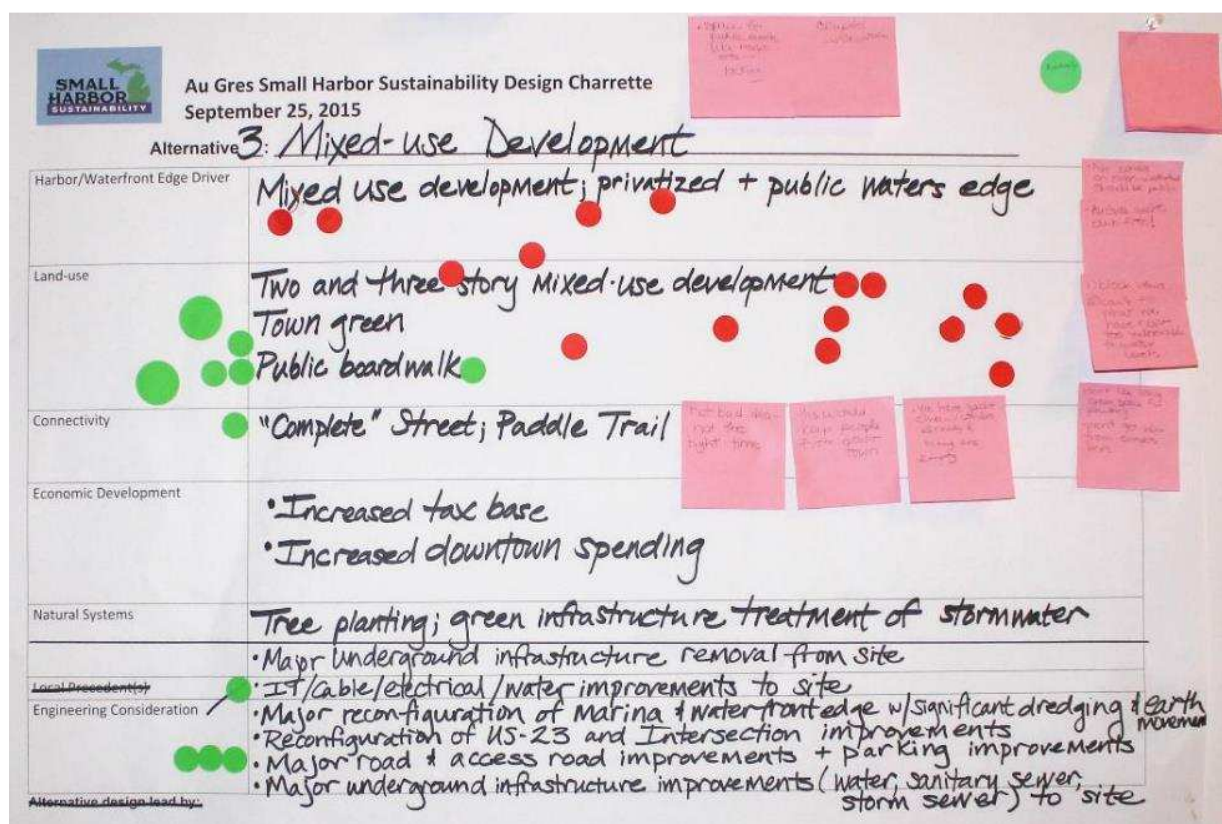


Au Gres Charrette Final Report 2015

Alternative 3 received three overall approval votes (large green dots) and sixteen rejection votes (small red dots) by community members. Overall comments explained the idea was good, but Au Gres is not ready for this type of development (in the near term). The voting is shown in Figure 6 with overall votes on the top right corner and votes for individual elements within the table. Oral feedback during the public input session included:

- Not a bad idea – but not the right time
- This would keep people from the downtown
- We have a yacht club with condos already and many are empty
- Don't like losing green space for parking
- Won't get value from condos here
- Should be a public place
- Au Gres yacht club first
- Will block views
- Can't fill what we have now, too vulnerable to low water levels
- Space for public events like music etc. – lacking
- Would compete with downtown

Figure 6 - Alternative 3 Community Vote

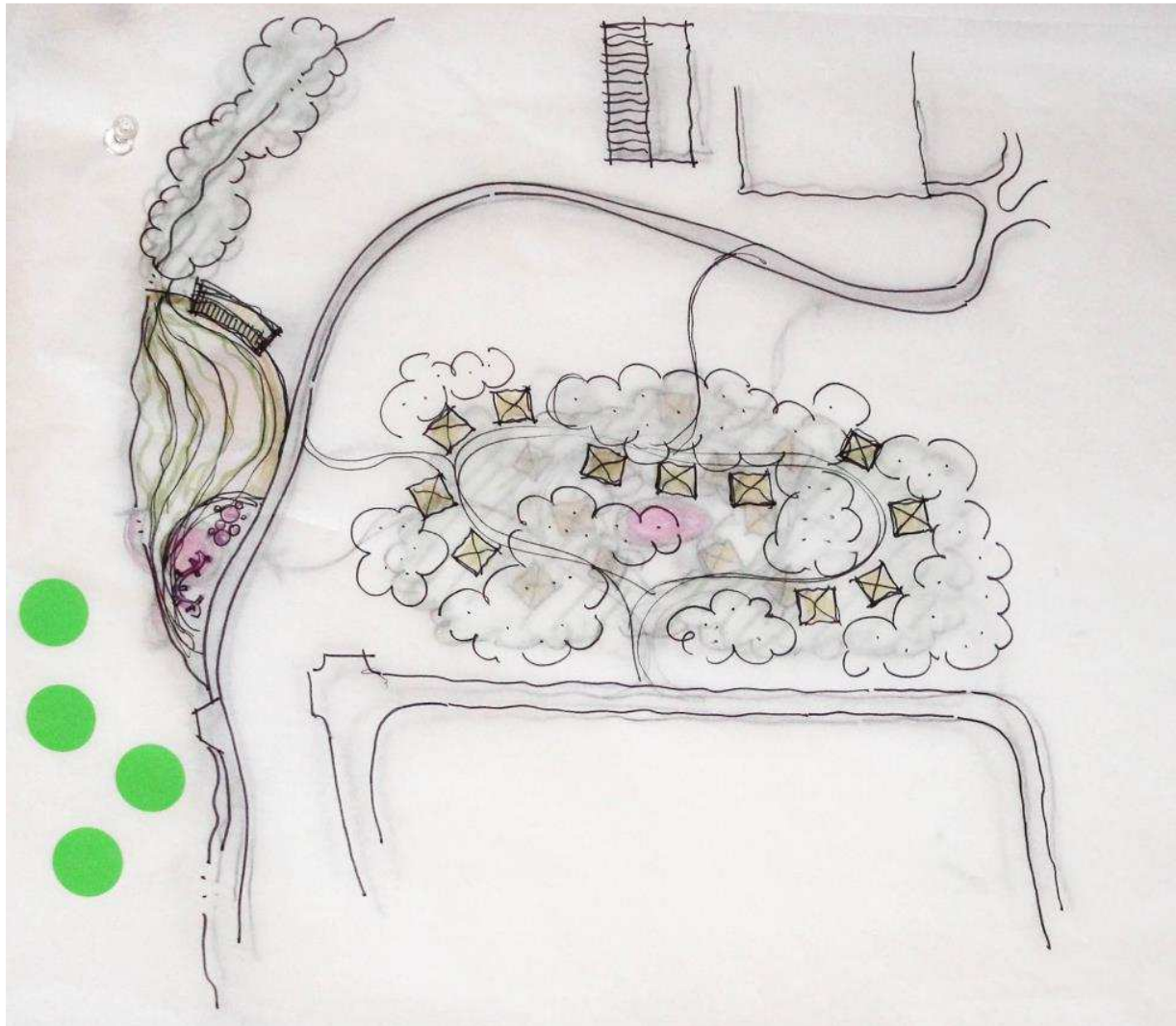


Au Gres Charrette Final Report 2015

2.4 City Park Development Option

The public also voted and shared their opinions on the design of an open area in City Park. The design includes improved river access with steps down to the river and an inland beach. There are also small camping cabins for rent as part of the city campground. Figure 7 is the display board from community voting. This option received four large green dot votes.

Figure 7 - Camping Cabins and Improved River Access at City Park





Au Gres Charrette Final Report 2015

2.5 Breakwater Development Option

The design team also generated a design of the breakwater compiled from community comments. During the second night of the charrette the public voted on the breakwater ideas. Table 5 lists the main aspects of this design and Figure 8 and Figure 9 are the display boards from community voting.

Table 5 - Breakwater Content Matrix

Breakwater Development	
Harbor/Waterfront Edge Driver	Active Waterfront; Privatized and Public Water's Edge Access Improvements
Land-use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Edge – Fishing, Swimming, Biking
Connectivity	"Complete" Main Street, Paddle Trail
Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased Tourism Rental Fees and Concessions
Natural Systems	Naturalized Shoreline; Invasive Species Control
Engineering Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Water Access and Viewing Platform Bike Path Handicap Accessible Fishing Pier, Playground, and Pavilion "Pocket Beach" Minor Road Improvements to Marina

Au Gres Charrette Final Report 2015

Figure 8 - Breakwater Developments

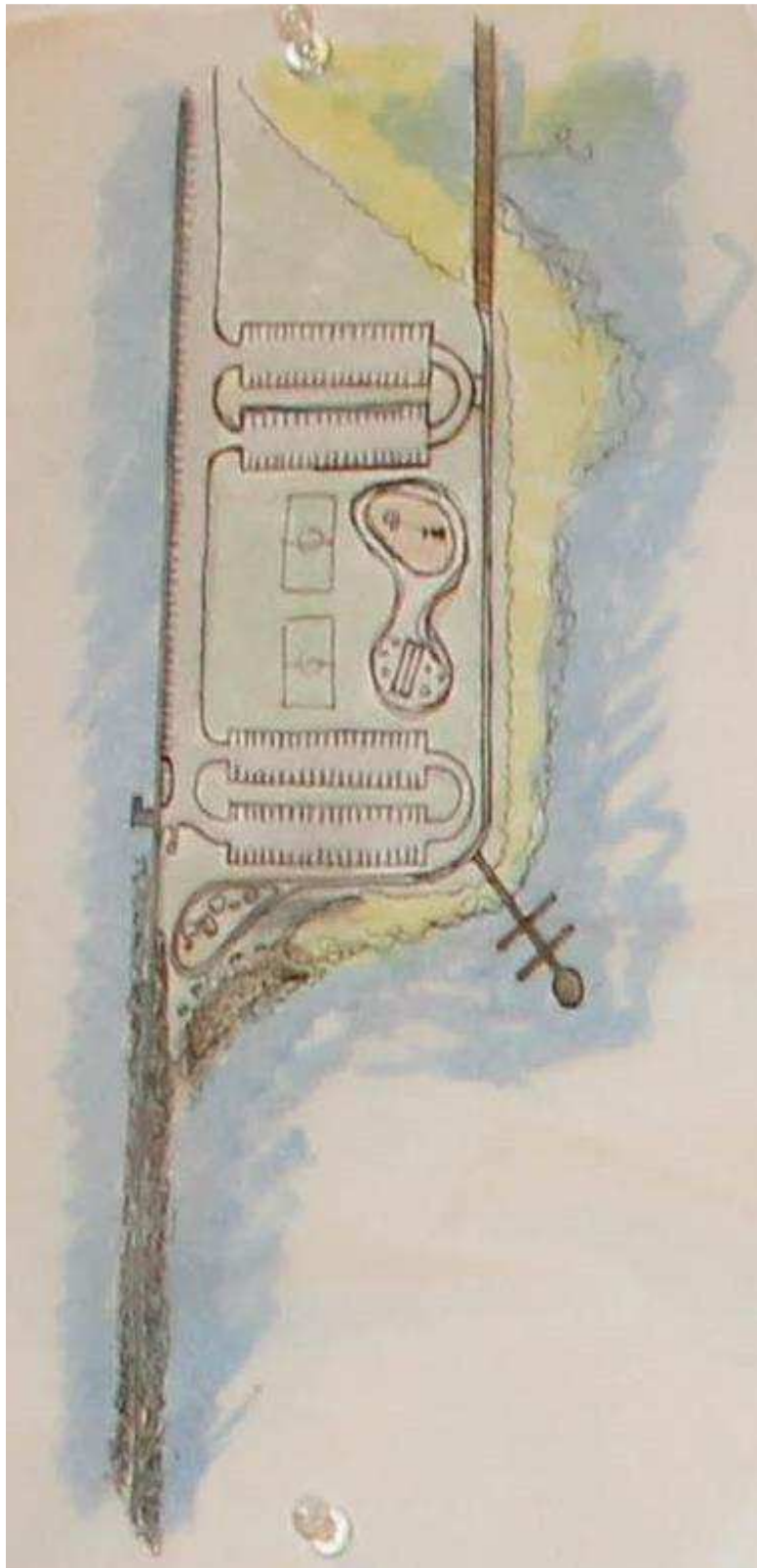
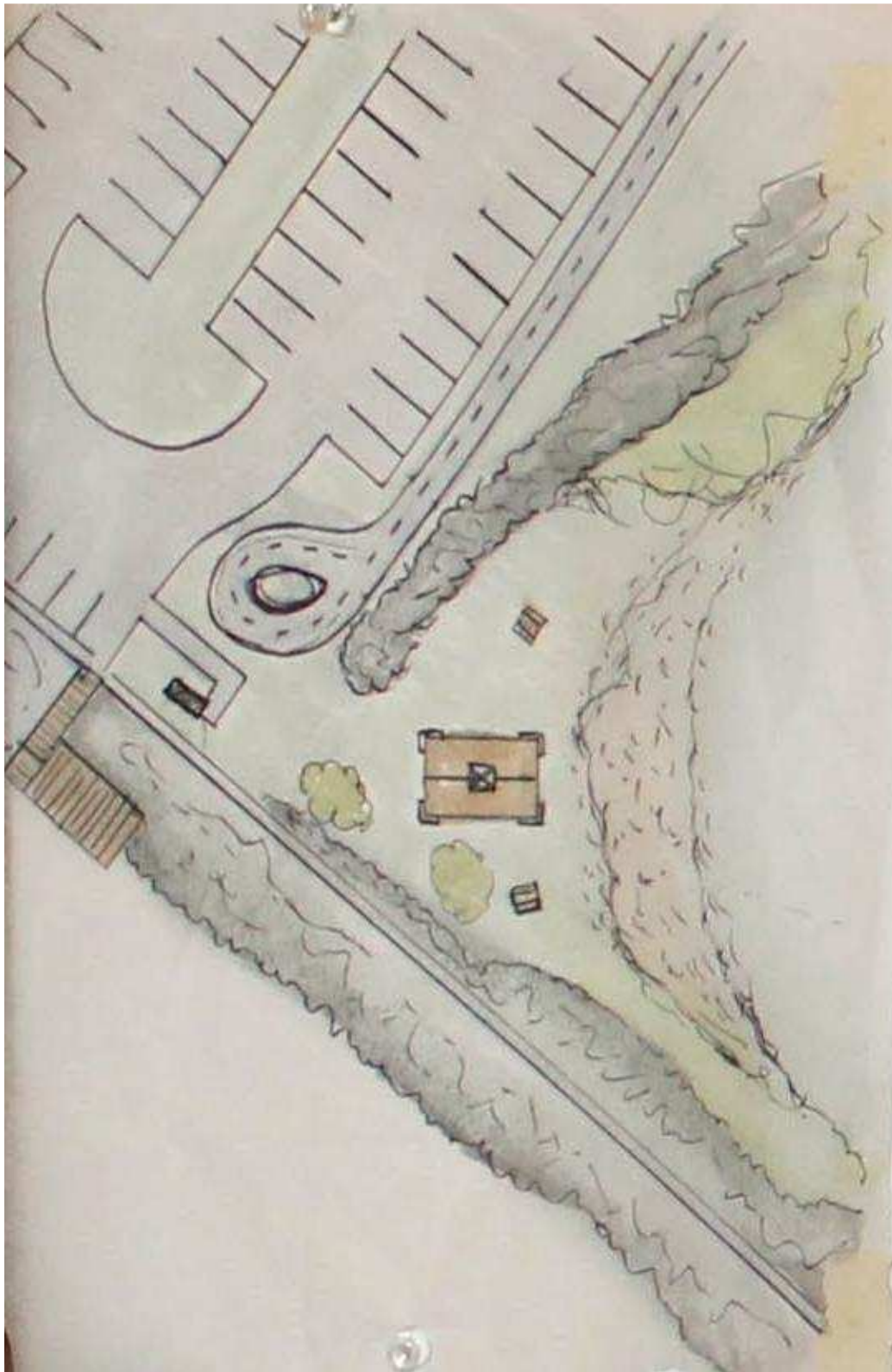


Figure 9 - Pavilion and Pocket Beach

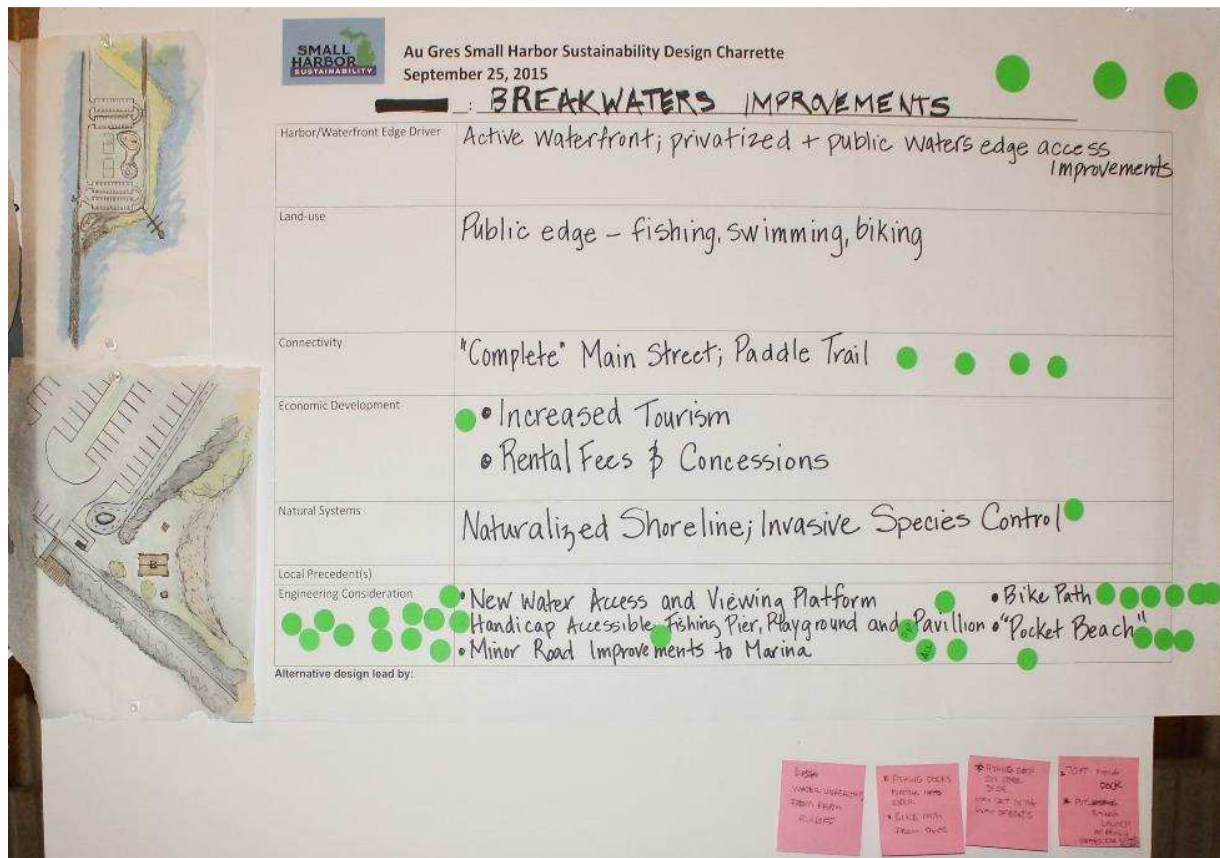


Au Gres Charrette Final Report 2015

The Breakwater Development options were not considered as one of the three design alternatives, since it augments all three, but the community voted and provided comments. It received three overall approval votes (large green dots) and no rejection votes (small red dots) by community members. The voting is shown in Figure 10 with overall votes on the top right corner and votes for individual elements within the table.

- Water is unhealthy from farm runoff
- Make fishing docks further into river
- [Connect] Bike path from Tawas
- Fishing Dock on other side because it may get into the way of boaters
- [Want] 70 foot fishing dock
- Put kayak launch at beach

Figure 10 - Breakwaters Improvements Public Votes



Au Gres Small Harbor Sustainability Design Charrette September 25, 2015	
BREAKWATERS IMPROVEMENTS	
Harbor/Waterfront Edge Driver:	Active Waterfront; privatized + public waters edge access improvements
Land-use	Public edge - fishing, swimming, biking
Connectivity	"Complete" Main Street; Paddle Trail
Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased Tourism • Rental Fees & Concessions
Natural Systems	Naturalized Shoreline; Invasive Species Control
Local Precedents	
Engineering Consideration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Water Access and Viewing Platform • Handicap Accessible Fishing Pier, Playground and Pavillion • Bike Path • "Pocket Beach" • Minor Road Improvements to Marina
Alternative design lead by:	

Sticky notes:

- 70' fishing dock
- 70' fishing dock
- 70' fishing dock
- 70' fishing dock



Au Gres Charrette Final Report 2015

3.0 Preferred Alternative – Au Gres 2035

“Au Gres 2035” represents a shared future vision of the community based on the design charrette process. Alternative 2 had majority of community approval votes, so the preferred alternative was based off Alternative 2 with small aspects of Alternative 1 and 3 included. The final design includes the items in Table 6 and is outlined in Figure 11. Both the breakwater improvements and city park improvements were incorporated because they received positive feedback.

Table 6 - Preferred Alternative Content Matrix

Preferred Alternative	
Harbor/Waterfront Edge Driver	Family-oriented Public Space Along the River, Breakwater Improvements, and City Park Cabins
Land-use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boardwalk, Upland Riverfront Beach, Splash Pad • Restaurant & Concessions • Kayak Landing & Water Taxi Slip • Visitor Center • Au Gres Commons & Band Shell • Improved Waterfront Retail Across River • Cabins in City Park for Rental • Playground, Fishing Platforms, Pocket Beach, Pavilion, Kayak Launch at Breakwater
Connectivity	Walking and Bike trails/lanes, Kayak water trail, Motor Boats
Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vendor for Kayak/Paddle Board Rental • Concessions • Downtown Spending • Minimal Increased Tax Base • Pavilion Rental • Rock Climbing Wall and other Fee-based Recreation
Natural Systems	Tree Planting, Green Infrastructure in City Park
Engineering Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconfiguration of Park • Boardwalk and Creation of Beach Area • Major Reconfiguration of Marina and Waterfront Edge • Reconfiguration of US-23 and Intersection Improvements • Minor Underground Infrastructure Improvements (Water, Sanitary Sewer, Stormwater) to Site • IT/Cable/Electrical Improvements

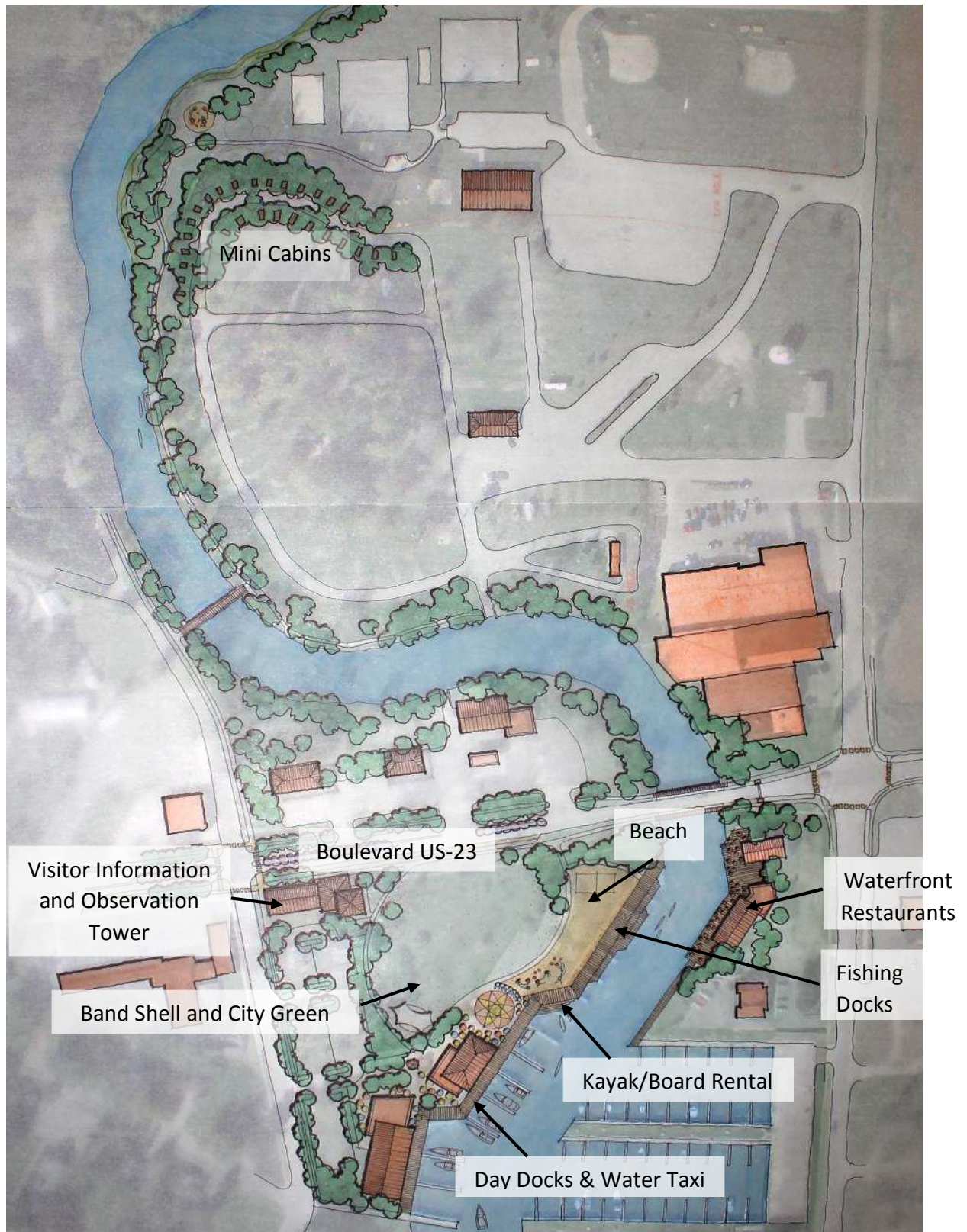
City Park and Campground

Downtown, US-23, and Mooring Facility

Breakwater and Boat Launch

Au Gres Charrette Final Report 2015

Figure 12 - Preferred Alternative Final Plan of City Park and Downtown



Au Gres Charrette Final Report 2015

3.1 Au Gres City Park

Park improvements were designed for the north end of Au Gres City Park and Campground. The park has one playground that is surrounded by campsites, but adding a second playground allows separation of the campground from the public. Shoreline access along the north end was improved by softening the edge of the river with stone and steps rather than sheet piling. Mini-cabins were added in the design to the City Park for rentals as part of the campground. The cabins provide another option of accommodation for visitors in Au Gres.

Figure 13 - Mini Cabins Plan



Figure 14 - Mini Cabin at Ludington State Park (www.mymichigantrips.com)

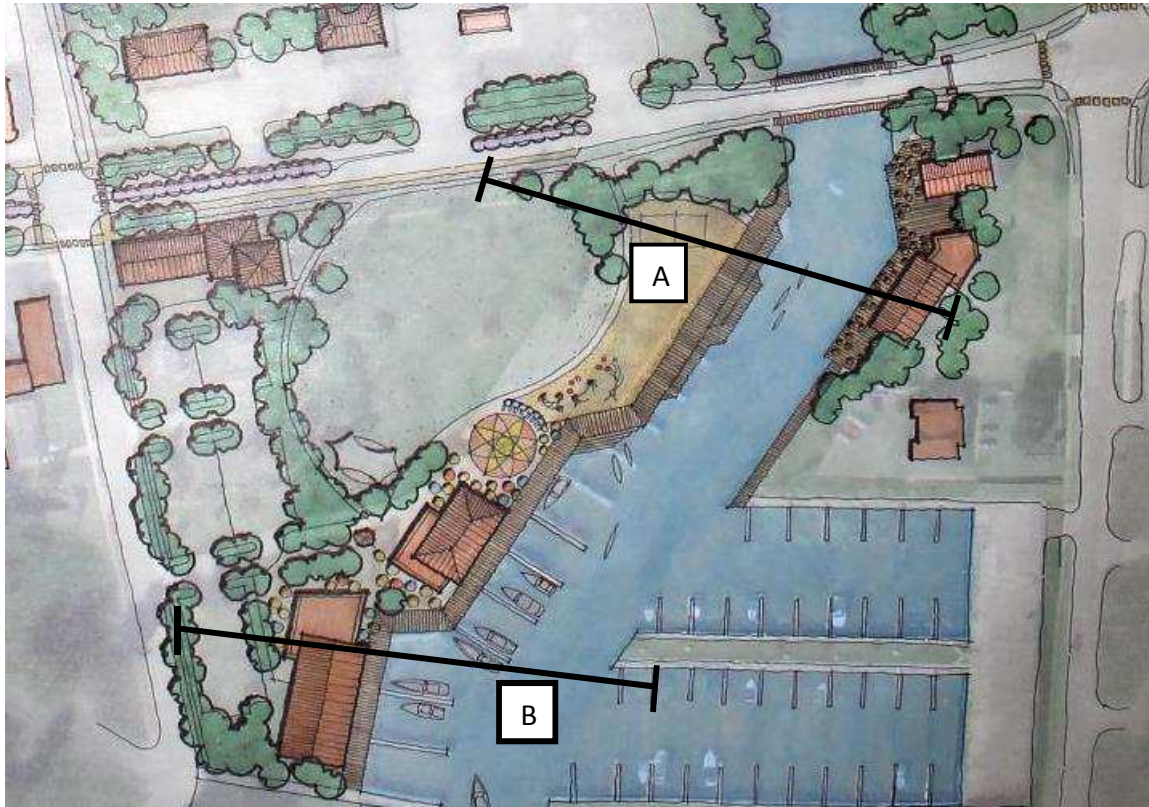


Au Gres Charrette Final Report 2015

3.2 Au Gres Mooring Facility

Final design of the Au Gres Mooring Facility includes a band shell with a city green leading down to a beach area. The beach is separated from the water by fishing docks that step down to the water's edge. Figure 15 shows two cross sections of the Au Gres Mooring Facility and river.

Figure 15 - Mooring Facility Redevelopment Cross Sections



Cross Section A



Cross Section B



Au Gres Charrette Final Report 2015

The design includes redevelopment that will be highly visible from US-23, intended to capture the interest of those passing through Au Gres. The artistic rendering of the view from US-23 is in Figure 16. The rendering shows the Visitor Information Center and Lookout Tower which also is a rock climbing wall on one side. Looking farther into the park, the beach area and city green for the band shell are visible. US-23 is reduced to one lane in each direction with parallel parking along the sides and a boulevard center. The preferred US-23 design is discussed more in Section 4.0 Connectivity.

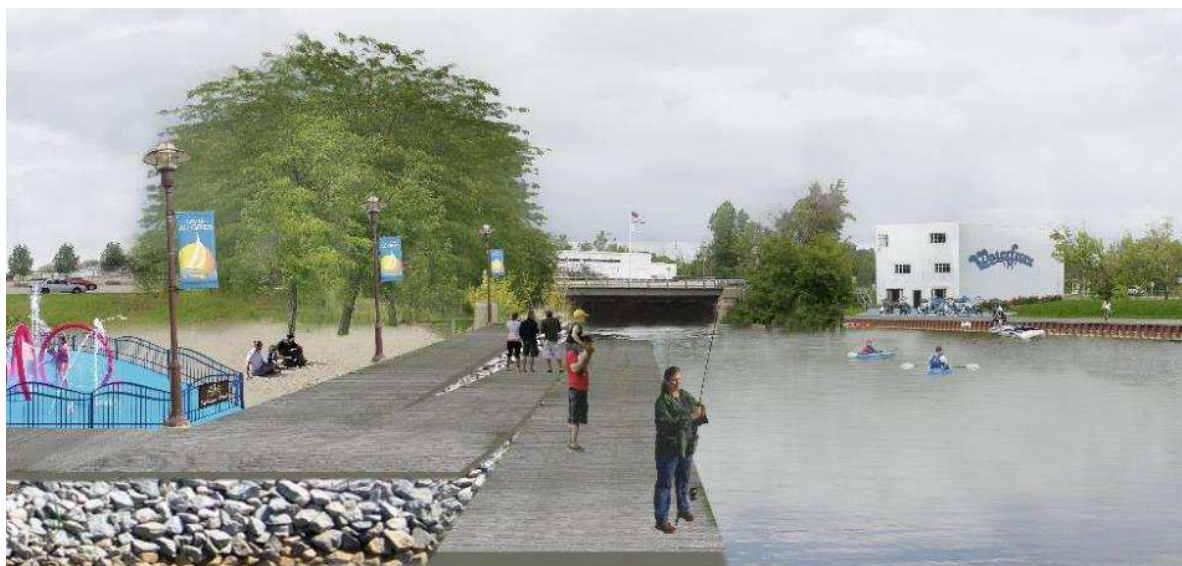
Figure 16 - US-23 and Au Gres Mooring Facility Before and After



Au Gres Charrette Final Report 2015

Figure 17 shows a new Au Gres Mooring Facility wooden boardwalk and docks which replace the current mooring docks and concrete walkways. Adjacent to the docks are the beach and splash pad. The lighting and signage used in the downtown was continued into the park and along the boardwalk running between the beach and new docks. Across the river from the Au Gres Mooring Facility an existing building is repurposed as a waterfront restaurant.

Figure 17 - Au Gres Mooring Facility Waterfront Before and After



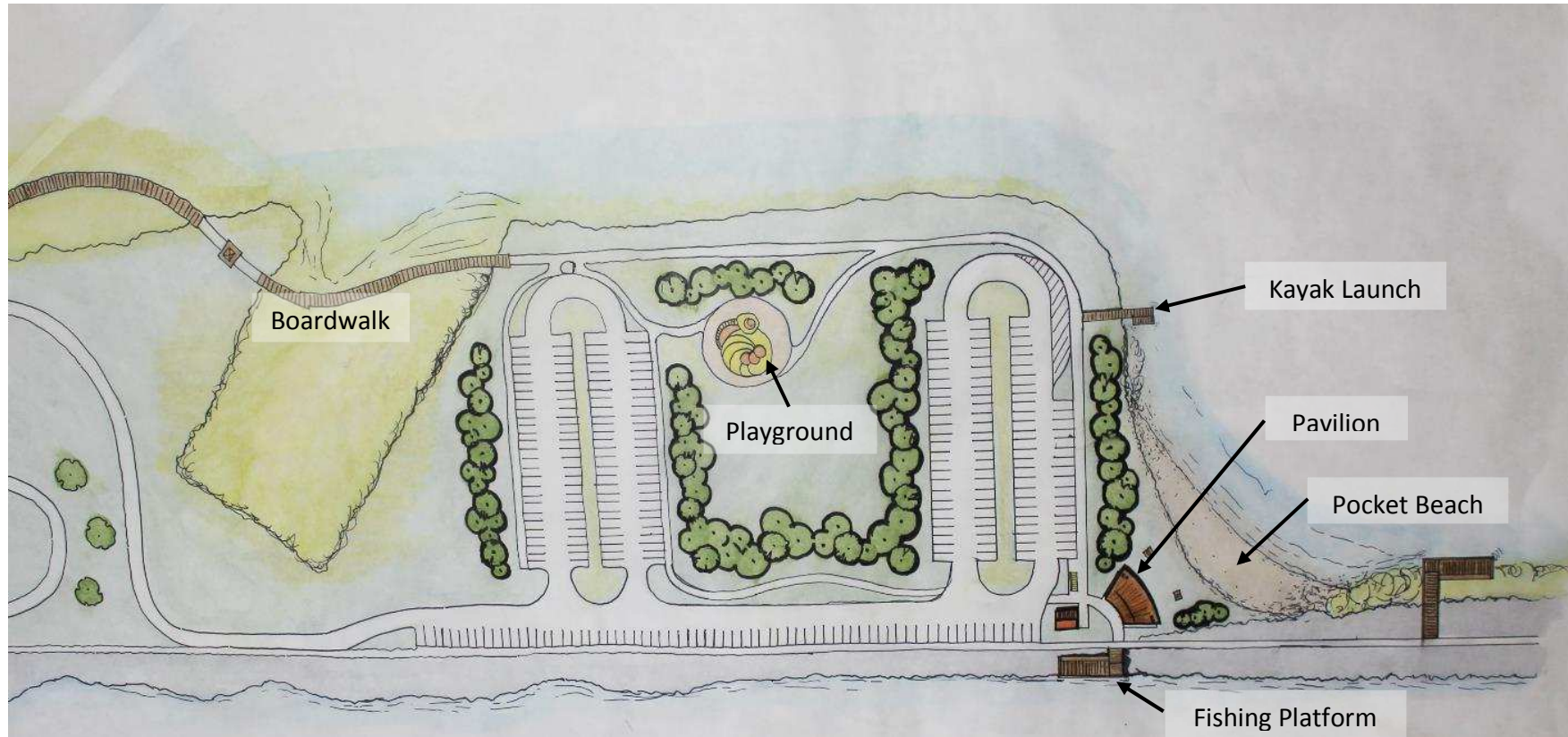


Au Gres Charrette Final Report 2015

3.3 Breakwater Improvements

Figure 18 illustrates all of the improvements designed for the breakwater. The final design includes a boardwalk, playground, pavilion, pocket beach, kayak launch, and fishing platforms. The boardwalk through part of the wetlands is for bird observation and walking. Design of the breakwater area increases or enhances recreational activities that occur here. This design includes adding playground for children along with a pocket beach in the only area protected from erosional waves.

Figure 18 - Point Lookout Development



Au Gres Charrette Final Report 2015

The pocket beach area is located in a protected corner which is currently overgrown with invasive phragmites. This area has shallow water and sandy soils and also hosts a proposed kayak launch.

Figure 19 - Pocket Beach Before and After



Fishing platforms improve accessibility to the water's edge. The steep rock shoreline is covered by handicap accessible platforms that extend out over the water.

Figure 20 - Fishing Access along Breakwater Before and After





Au Gres Charrette Final Report 2015

4.0 Connectivity

The final section of this report consider connectivity as a key feature for a sustainable community and connections via car, bike, walking, and boating are all important within Au Gres. Connections already exist between the city and the boat launch for pedestrians and vehicular traffic. Figure 21 illustrates some of the existing connections as well as proposed connections. Bike connections to regional trails as well as documenting local routes are shown in Figure 21. Future connections to the Iron Belle Trail along US-23 would tie Au Gres to surrounding communities on US-23 by bike trail. Designated biking trails add a family friendly activity within the community.

The river is a connection opportunity for kayaking and shallow draft boats. The section of river from the mouth to Au Gres City Park should be marked and marketed as an extension of the Arenac Blue Water Trail and Saginaw Bay Blue Water Trail initiatives. The City Park rents kayaks and has a kayak launch. Additional launches or stopping points along the river would increase accessibility even though it is majorly lined with private property.

In the center of the city, US-23 is the main connection to other communities. The roadway also acts as a barrier for pedestrians between the North and South sides of the road. The diagram in Figure 22 shows suggested crosswalk locations and boulevard changes to US-23.

Figure 21 - Connectivity Diagram

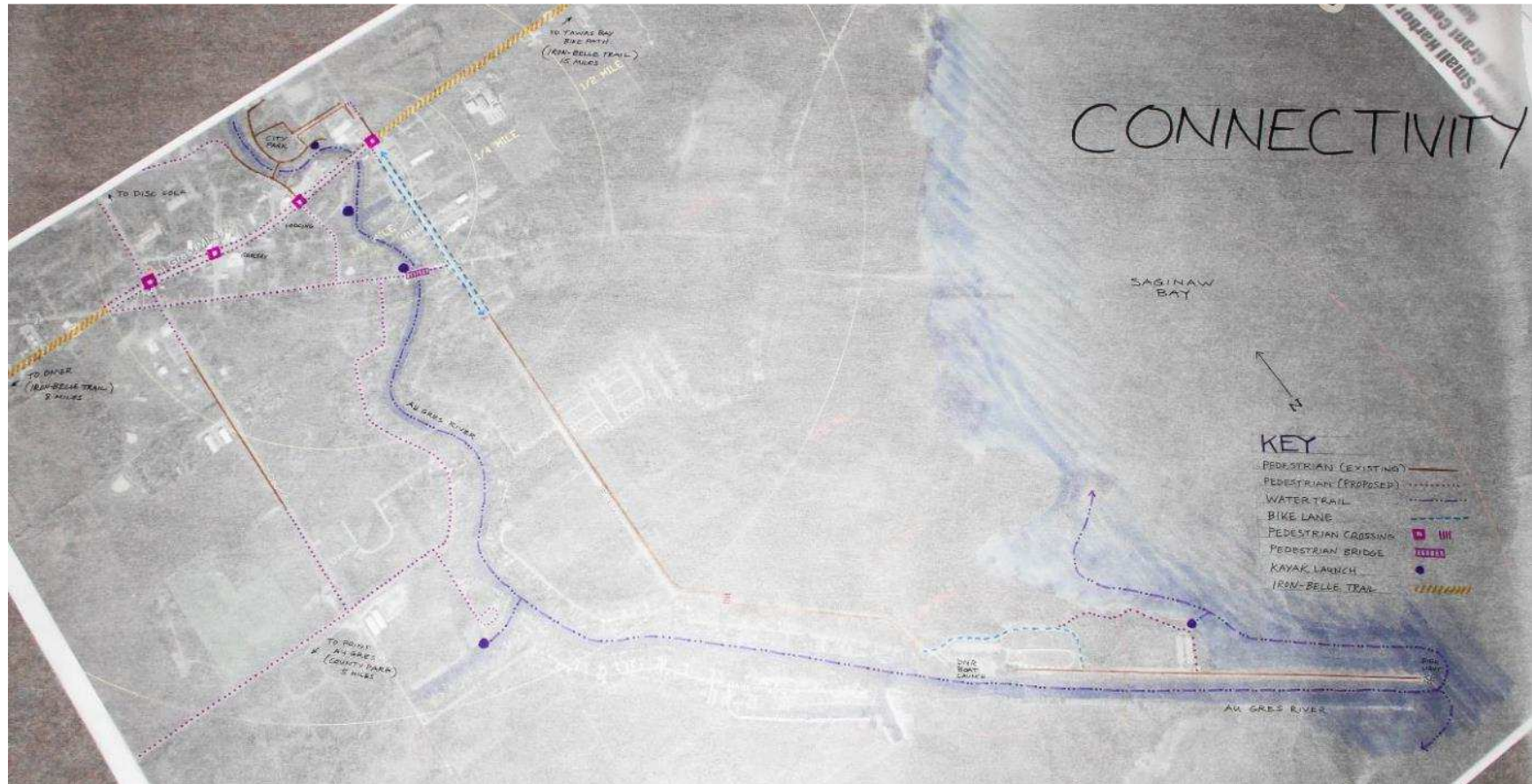
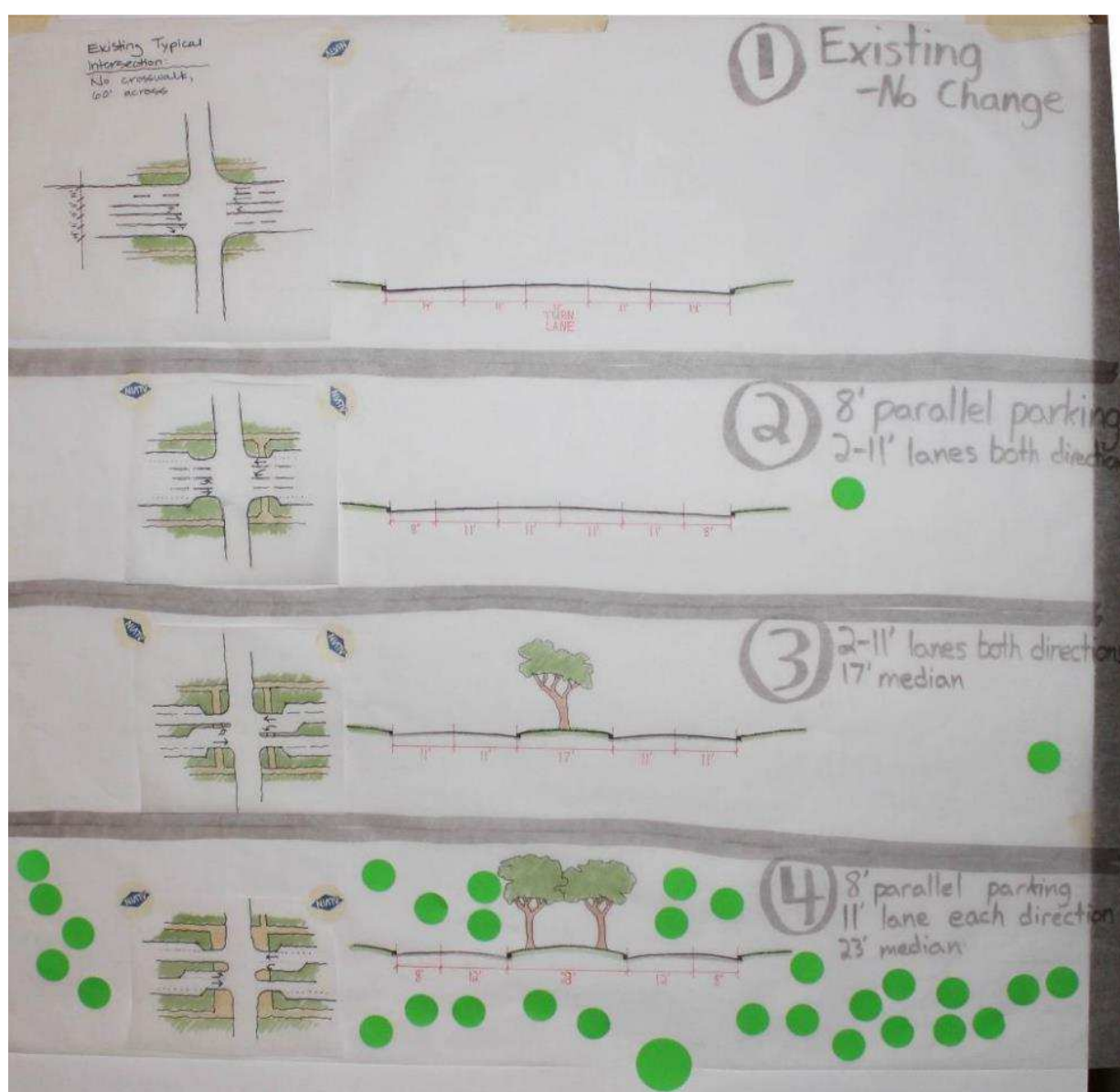


Figure 22 - Complete Street Diagram



Figure 23 - Public Voting on US-23 Roadway Designs



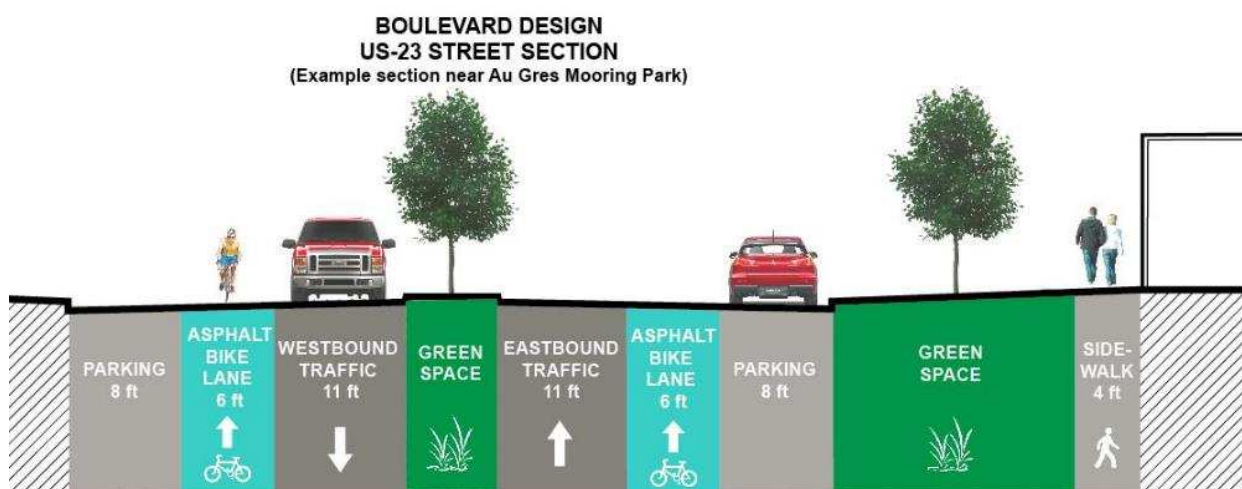
Au Gres Charrette Final Report 2015

The existing street section is shown in Figure 24 with three 11 foot lanes and two 14 foot lanes. The preferred street design from public voting and discussion is shown in Figure 25. The reduction of pavement in the center reduces the amount of stormwater runoff from the roadway. Boulevard layout with only one lane of traffic in each direction and crosswalks increases safety for crossing pedestrians. The preferred design includes bike lanes along the roadway to connect with the Tawas bike path with the statewide Iron Belle trail from Iron Mountain to Belle Isle. The overall width of the roadway is not changed and the design allows for safer pedestrian crossing.

Figure 24 - Existing Street Section of US-23



Figure 25 - Preferred Street Section by Au Gres Community for US-23



4.1 Signage

Increased and more consistent signage in Au Gres will help define the city for those passing through. Many assets in the community currently go unnoticed by drivers along US-23. Many places have signage at the location, but little or no signage on US-23. Important community places including the Library, City Park and Campground, and disc golf course could use better directional signage.

Figure 26 - Potential City Park Sign Improvement (before – no signage; after – sample sign)



Figure 27 - Potential Disc Golf Sign Improvement (before - minimal signage; after - two sample signs)





Au Gres Charrette Final Report 2015

A “Welcome to Au Gres” banner with the city emblem at both sides of the city limits on US-23 would help define the city. Banners and streetlights, like those in Figure 28, along some areas of the downtown already provide a good template for placemaking and defining within the city of Au Gres. Expanding on this idea and incorporating signage to parks and attractions nearby help to show drivers passing through that they are in a city with activities to offer.

Figure 28 - Good Placemaking and City Definition

