

10/01/2025

Building Board of Appeals

David Arnsdorf, *Board Member*
Kevin Cox, *Board Member*
Paul Darling, *Board Member*

Hugh Flack, *Board Member*
Robert Hart, *Board Member*

City of Ann Arbor
Guy C. Larcom City Hall
301 E. Huron 1st Floor
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

RE: **CVLP25-0013** Exception Request

Dear Board Members,

We are petitioning for a Motion and Approval to grant relief from **IFC 507.5.1.1** requiring installation of fire hydrant within 100' radius of any newly installed FDC, for the following reasons:

1. IFC 507.5.1.1 allows for an exception¹:
 - a. The distance **shall be permitted to exceed 100 feet where approved by the fire code official.**
 - b. Our existing historic building, and our existing R-3 Occupancy Use group already meets radius distance to hydrant².
2. Existing Hydrants in close proximity:
 - a. Multiple existing hydrants within close proximity but outside the IFC required 100' radius provide adequate existing hose connection points. Specifically the **existing hydrant 167' north of our building** (northwest intersection of N. University and State Street) would not require any hose crossing a street (or apparatus Fire Lane)³.
3. Undue Burden of Financial Hardship:
 - a. The cost to provide the new hydrant, water-main tie-ins, valves, associated concrete repairs and City fees (totaling **\$441,300** (refer to *AppendixB Undue Financial Hardship*), a cost of **86% of our total \$515,618 construction budget** is an economic limitation. Such a cost is exceedingly high and is not only an undue burden based on percentage, but also would halt the entire project, precipitate a breaking of contract and correlated loss of income (an addition of even more financial burden) from lost Tenancies. Similar relief was granted in November 2024 by the State of Michigan BFD Board for this same project for similar percentage burden.

¹ **IFC 507.5.1.1 Hydrant for standpipe systems.**

Buildings equipped with a standpipe system installed in accordance with Section 905 shall have a fire hydrant within 100 feet (30 m) 480 mm) of the fire department connections.

Exception: The distance shall be permitted to exceed 100 feet (30 m) 480 mm) where approved by the fire code official.

² **IFC 507.5.1 Where required.**

Where a portion of the facility or building hereafter constructed or moved into or within the jurisdiction is more than 400 feet (122 m) from a hydrant on a fire apparatus access road, as measured by an approved route around the exterior of the facility or building, on-site fire hydrants and mains shall be provided where required by the fire code official.

Exceptions:

1. For Group R-3 and Group U occupancies, the distance requirement shall be 600 feet (183 m).

³ **IFC 912.2** *With respect to hydrants, driveways, buildings and landscaping, fire department connections shall be so located that fire apparatus and hose connected to supply the system will not obstruct access to the building for other fire apparatus*



- b. Utilizing this existing hydrant would mean much less disruption/disturbance of the State Street right-of-way outside. This minimizes work withing the State Street "Street Cuts" moratorium⁴, and we still are providing our sprinkler system FDC at a historic building that hasn't had one (making it much safer).
- 4. Existing Historic Building
 - a. Civil project permit **CVLP25-0013** and associated drawings was submitted via STREAM to gain approval for a water-main tie-in to support a new sprinkler system as part of our current historic-suite renovation of 336 S. State, third floor (MESA25-0084 and BLDGC23-0070 respectively). Civil Engineer GES LLC **provided a variance exception request** as part of that STREAM application (refer to *AppendixA Variance Request Letter*)
 - b. This location, built from 1897-1910 is part of the *State Street Historic District*. **IFC 102.6 Historic Buildings**⁵ and **IFC 1103.1.1 Historic Buildings**⁶ provisions are not mandatory for existing historic structures provided the project adheres to fire protection plan requirements of NFPA 914⁷. Since no change of Occupancy nor Occupancy Classification has occurred, we hold that no fire suppression nor alarm system should be expressly required. However, in an attempt to improve safety of the building the Owner has already agreed to install a suppression and alarm system, which comes at a cost of over \$250k. Requiring even more additional costs beyond that good-faith action of the Owner, especially when these other upgrades are considered, is further evidence of an undue economic burden.

We're confident and hopeful as we **petition the Board for relief of IFC 507.5.1.1** requirements of a new hydrant within 100' radius, allowing existing proximity hydrants to satisfy requirements, and ensuring we can finalize our new fire sprinkler system to make our historic suite safer than existing conditions.

Sincerely,



Caleb Marquard
Architect III

⁴ **Title IV, Chapter 47, Section 4:13 of the City Code** prohibits excavations "in or under a paved street...within a period of 3 years after the completion of any paving or resurfacing thereof." In addition, **Article 1, Section XIX, Street Cuts, Table A**, of the 2025 *Public Services Standard Specifications* extends the moratorium such as South State Street, to 7 years

⁵ **IFC 102.6 Historic buildings.** *The provisions of this code relating to the construction, alteration, repair, enlargement, restoration, relocation or moving of buildings or structures shall not be mandatory for existing buildings or structures identified and classified by the state or local jurisdiction as historic buildings when where such buildings or structures do not constitute a distinct hazard to life or property. Fire protection in designated historic buildings and structures shall be provided in accordance with an approved fire protection plan. plan as required in Section 1103.1.1.*

⁶ **IFC 1103.1.1 Historic buildings.** *Facilities designated as historic buildings shall develop a fire protection plan in accordance with NFPA 914. The fire protection plans shall comply with the maintenance and availability provisions in Sections 404.3 and 404.4.*

⁷ **NFPA914_404.5 404.4 Availability.** *Fire safety and evacuation plans shall be available in the workplace for reference and review by employees, and copies shall be furnished to the fire code official for review upon request.*



5711 SOUTH ASHFORD WAY
YPSILANTI, MI 48197
PHONE: 734-272-9763
E-MAIL: ges734@gmail.com

8/26/2025

To: City of Ann Arbor
Engineering Services Division
301 E. Huron Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Subject: Variance Request – Fire Hydrant Installation Requirement
Project Address: 336 S S state Street

To Whom it May Concern:

On behalf of my client, I respectfully submit this request for a variance from the requirement to install a new fire hydrant at the above-referenced property. The proposed development is located approximately within 130 ft, 160 and 170 ft from existing fire hydrants as shown on the attached sketches. Based on our site evaluation, it is our opinion that the existing hydrant infrastructure provides adequate coverage and access for emergency response, and the installation of an additional hydrant would present the following practical difficulties

- Infrastructure Constraints: The site lacks immediate access to a public water main at the required location, and extending service would require significant excavation across public right-of-way, impacting traffic and utilities.
- Alternative Fire Protection Measures: The structure will be equipped with a compliant fire suppression system, a proposed 4" dedicated fire suppression line, fire-rated construction materials which mitigate fire risk and enhance safety.
- Public Safety Impact: the absence of a new hydrant will not compromise fire department operations or public safety

We believe this request meets the criteria for variance consideration, including demonstration of practical difficulty and preservation of public safety.

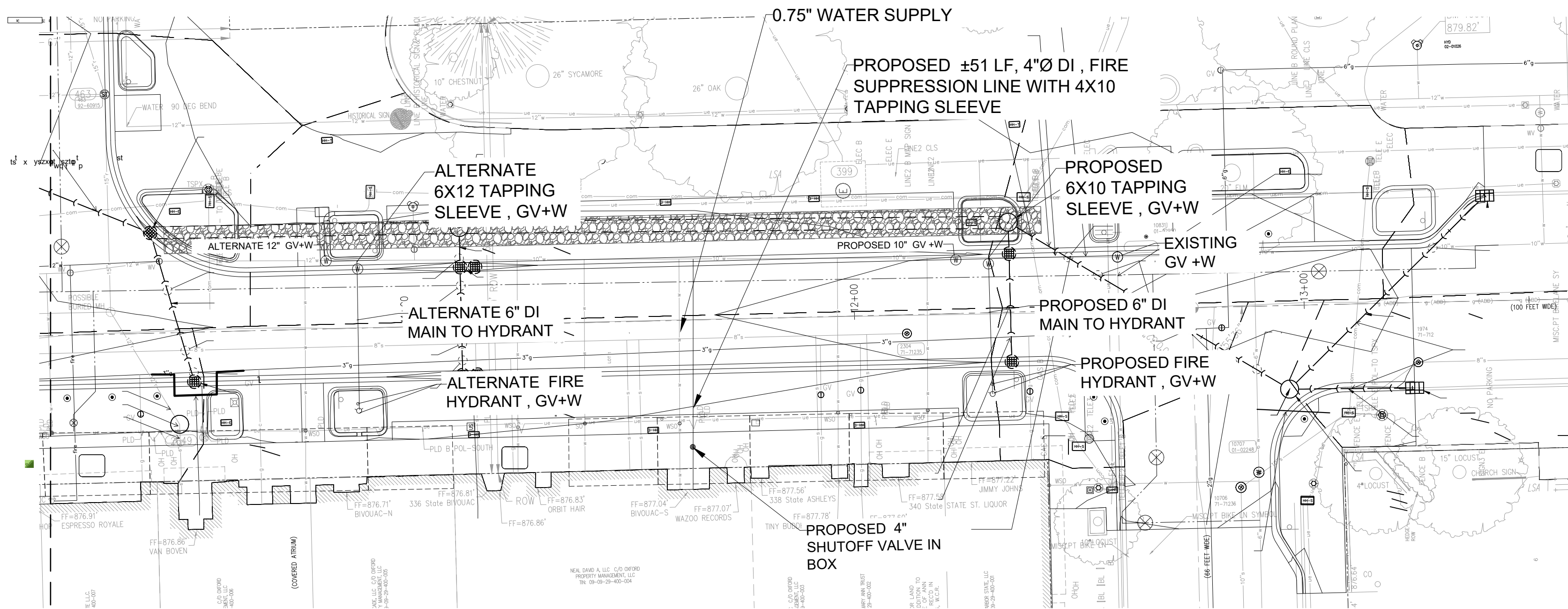
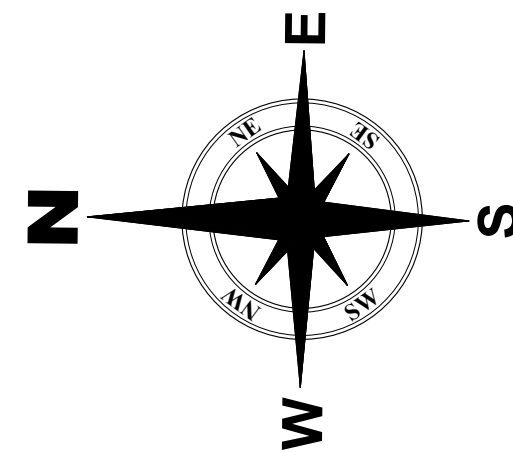
Enclosed please find sketches showing existing hydrant locations and proposed development.

We appreciate your time and consideration of this request. Should you require additional documentation or clarification, please let us know.

Respectfully,

GES-LLC

Majed Ghussaini, P.E.



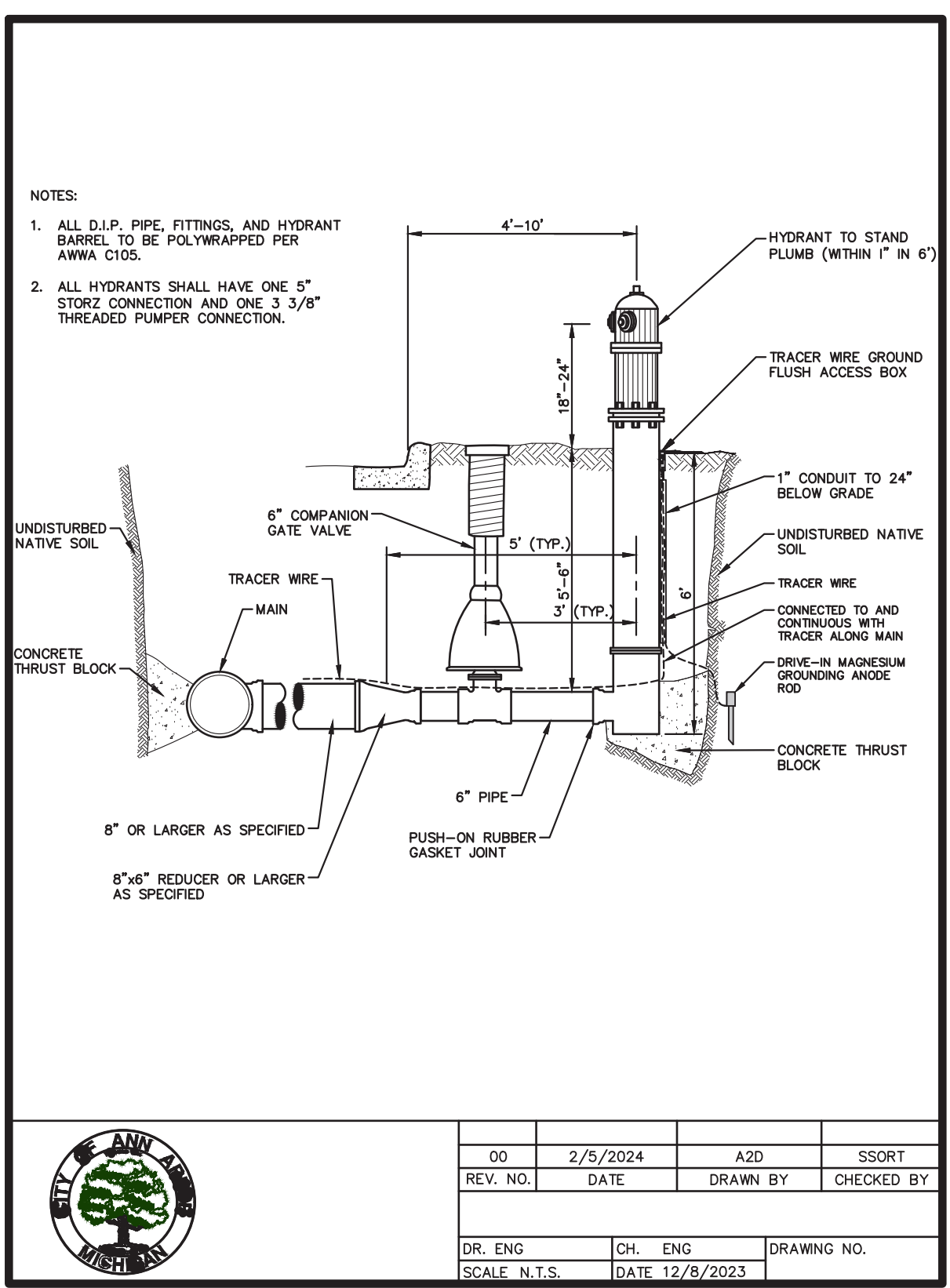
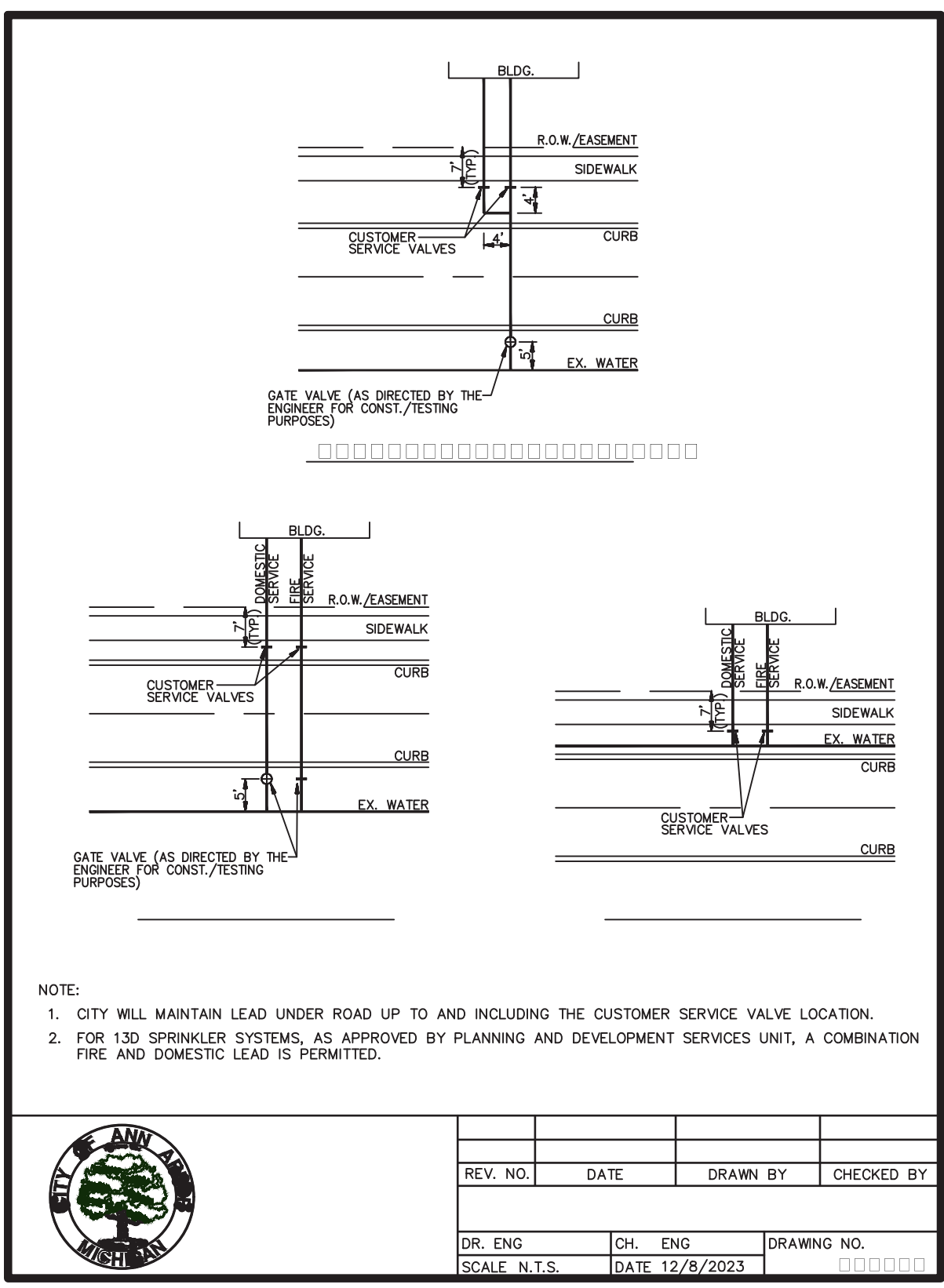
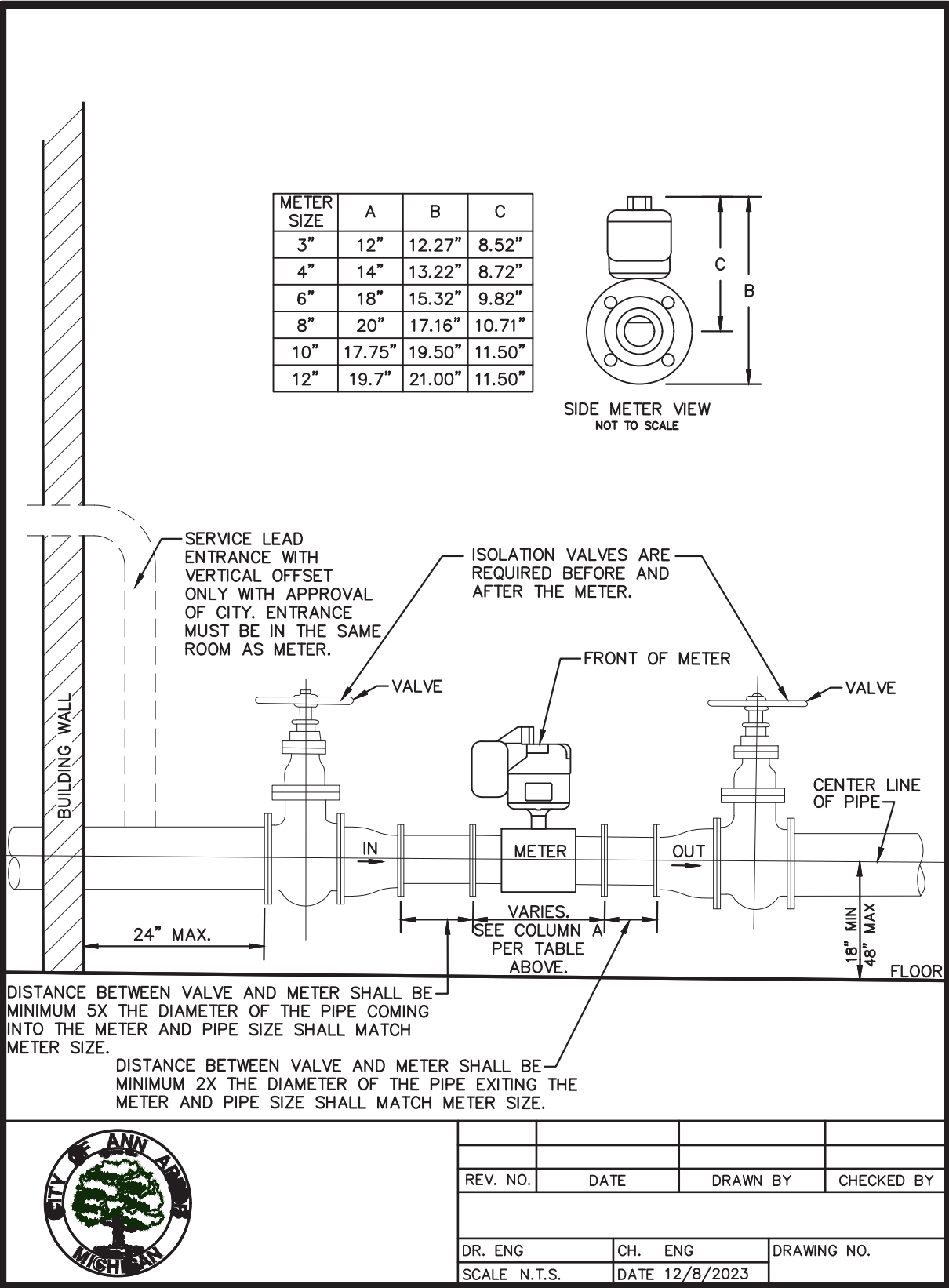
PROJECT NOTES

The construction covered by these plans shall conform to the City of Ann Arbor Public Services Standard Specifications

1. The omission of any standard details does not relieve the contractors of their obligation to construction in complete accordance with the Public Services Standard Specifications
2. Use of line stops is required where existing water mains cannot be sufficiently isolated to complete the work. The cost of any line stop installation is the responsibility of the developer and/or contractor
3. Any existing water main that is exposed as part of the a new connection to the main may require anodes to be installed prior to backfilling. Engineering will determine if anodes will be required after existing water main(s) are exposed. The cost of anodes and installation is the responsibility of the developer/contractor
4. Pavement markings disturbed due to pavement cuts or construction related activities shall be replaced as directed by Engineering. Replacement during construction of the project may be considered temporary, with final pavement marking restoration to occur at the end of the project
5. The contractor shall take all necessary precautions to protect the existing public road pavement. Damage to the public road pavement during the construction may necessitate milling and repaving of the damaged area prior to the Certificate of Occupancy
6. Contractor to replace concrete slab that is cut into from joint to joint as directed by the City.

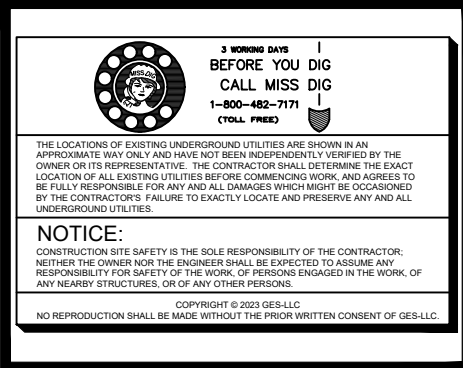
LEGEND

●	IRON
✱	LIGHT POLE
○	SANITARY MANHOLE
—824—	CONTOUR LINE
—S—	SANITARY LINE
—W—	WATER LINE
—G—	GAS LINE
⊕	PROP. FIRE HYDRANT
□	NEW ISOLATION VALVE
□	WATER VALVE



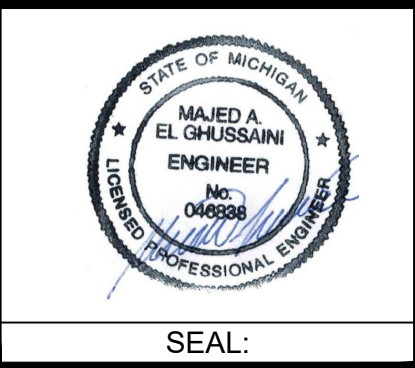
DATE	REVISIONS	BY
5/11/25	SUBMITTAL	M.G.
8/4/25	ADDED FIRE HYD	M.G.

DATE	REVISIONS	BY



DESIGN BY:	D.H.
CHECKED BY:	M.G.
APPROVED BY:	M.G.
COPYRIGHT 2025	GES-LLC

DR. ENG.	CH. ENG.	DRAWING NO.
SCALE: N.T.S.	DATE: 12/8/2023	



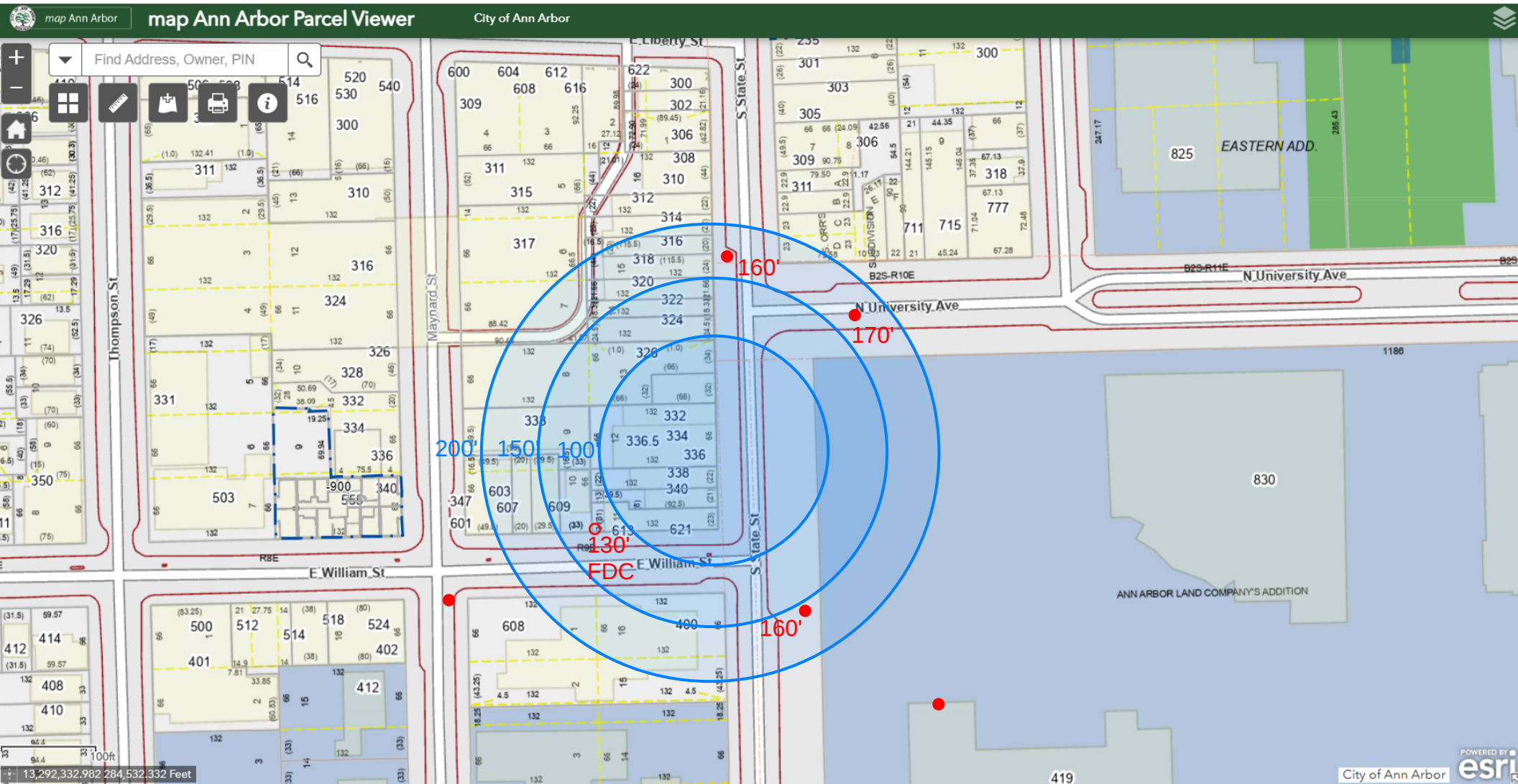
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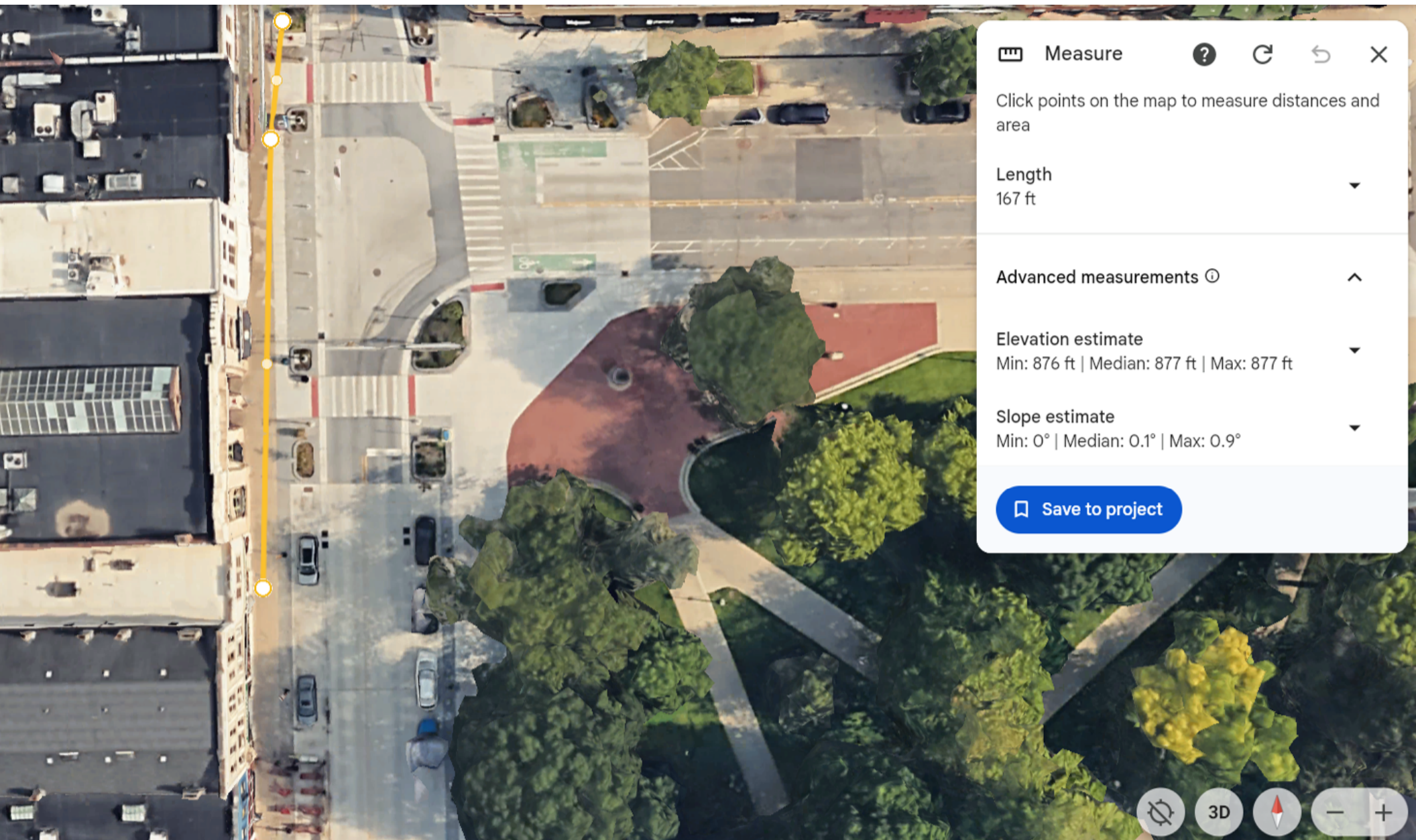
**336 S. STATE STREET
ANN ARBOR, MI 48103**

PROPOSED 4" DI FIRE SUPPRESSION LINE

SCALE:
0 2 4
GRAPHIC SCALE 1"= 20'
PROJECT No.: **25-228**
SHEET No.: **C-1**







Measure ? ↺ ↻ ✕

Click points on the map to measure distances and area

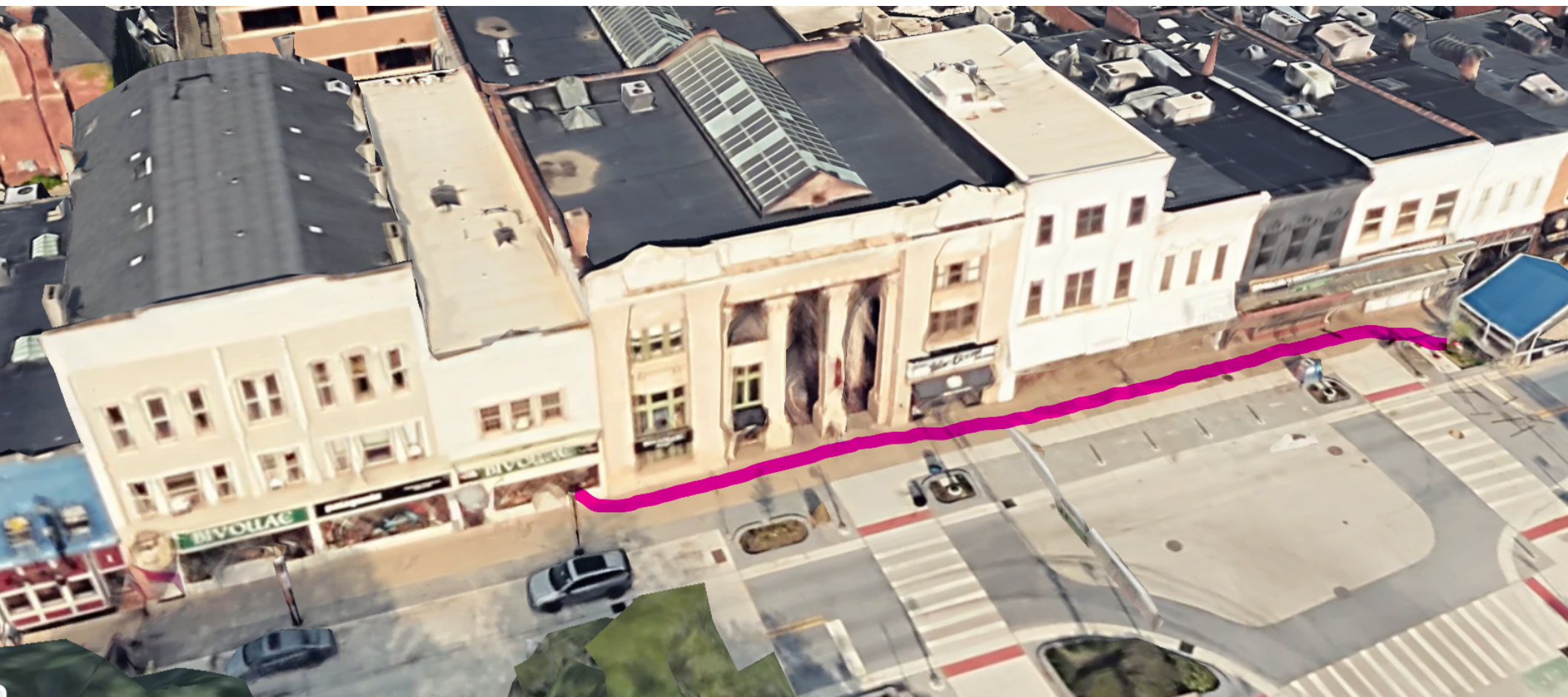
Length ▼
167 ft

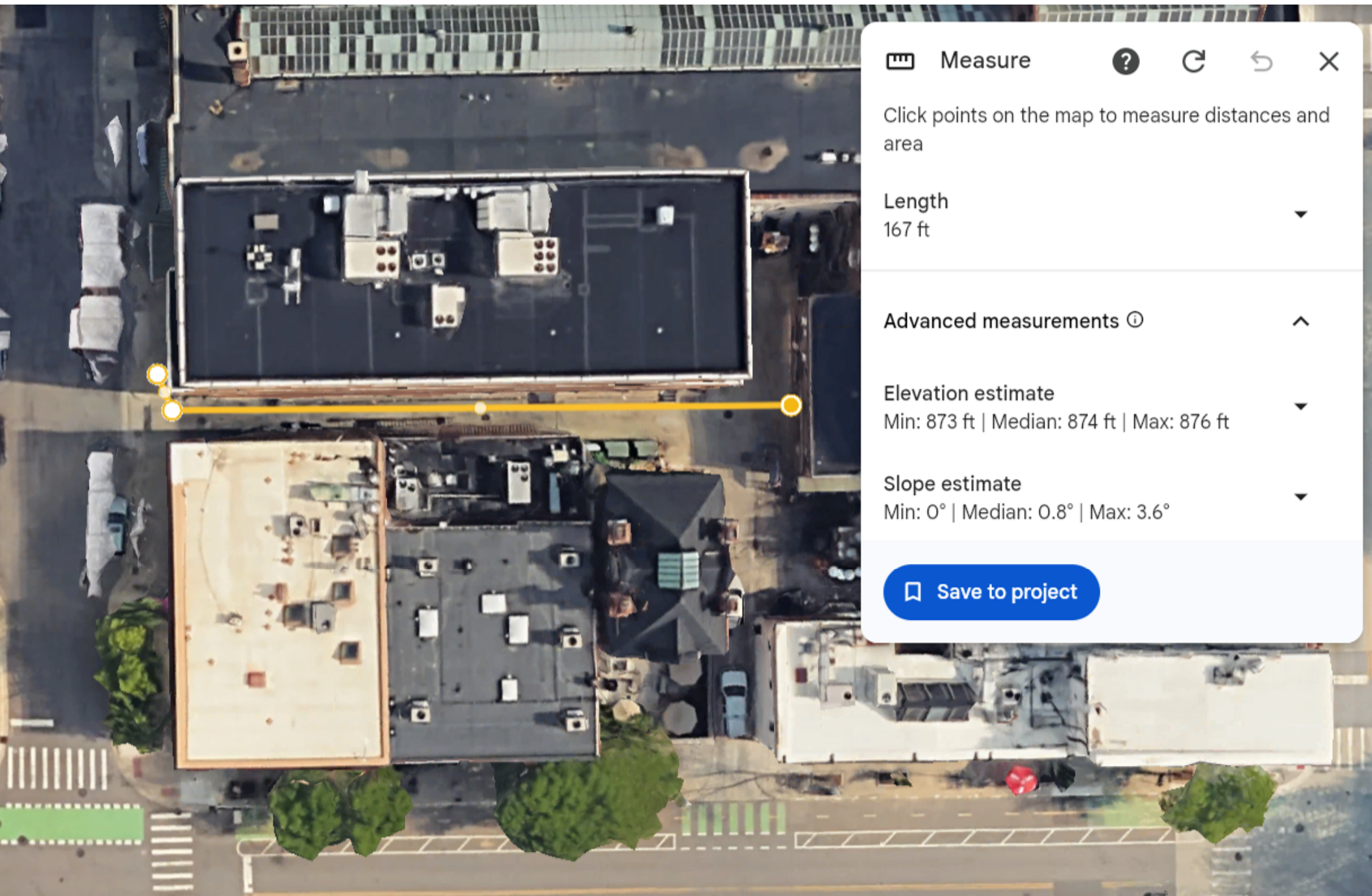
Advanced measurements ⓘ ^

Elevation estimate ▼
Min: 876 ft | Median: 877 ft | Max: 877 ft

Slope estimate ▼
Min: 0° | Median: 0.1° | Max: 0.9°

[Save to project](#)





Measure



Click points on the map to measure distances and area

Length

167 ft



Advanced measurements ⓘ



Elevation estimate

Min: 873 ft | Median: 874 ft | Max: 876 ft

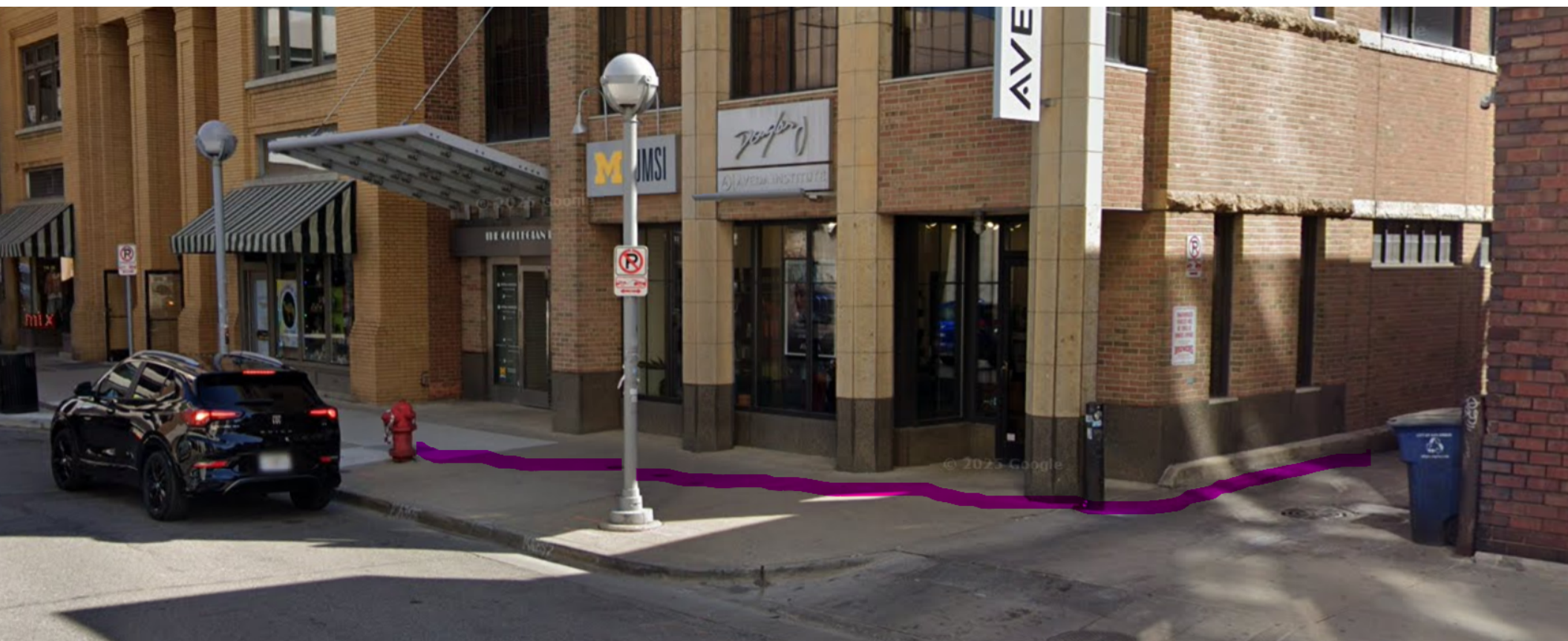


Slope estimate

Min: 0° | Median: 0.8° | Max: 3.6°



Save to project





Requesting a Variance to the 100' hydrant radius requirement of new FDC connection (fire suppression riser feed only). Providing supplemental hydrant, associated State Street demo/concrete, tap fees and shut-downs create undue financial hardship of greater than 85% construction costs.

\$441,300 per 08/07/2025 quotes, which is 86% of \$515,618 construction costs and constitutes undue financial hardship

From: Josh Meininger <josh@falconfire.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 7, 2025 10:50 AM
To: Steve Stedman <sstedman@oxfordcompanies.com>
Subject: 336 S. State St. Cost breakdown

[**WARNING: Sent from a Non-Oxford email! Verify the sender's email address.**]

Steve,

Please see the possible costs associated with the new hydrant and the base bid

Base bid:

\$78,000.00 city reclamation, plan review, tap fees, lane closure permitting, inspections, testing.

\$115,000.00 concrete removal, excavation, tap, running pipe, testing, flushing, fill, base, concrete repair from joint to joint

\$8,300.00 Engineering costs

Additional hydrant:

AppendixB Undue Financial Hardship

Estimated to be with in \$65,000-75,000.00 range for 2nd water reclamation fee, tap fee, inspection and testing. The water reclamation fee is a big chunk of this. Off memory it was \$45,000.00-50,000.00. Waiting for engineering to answer my email. Water department or engineering will not give prices of fees over the phone I was told. The water department was unsure if there would be 2 reclamation fees but they said there would be 2 tap fees for sure.

Still waiting on a cost from the excavator but verbally he said the cost will be close to double because its now 2 taps and 2 sections of concrete, essentially doing double the work plan on \$100,000.00-115,000.00

Engineering costs: Unknown. It was a revision so I can't imagine Majed will charge much if anything over base bid

Thanks,

Josh Meininger

We Moved! Please note our new address.

Falcon Fire Protection

6151 Ann Arbor Rd.
Jackson, MI 49201

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Cell: (517)262-8584
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