

Dear City Council, Planning Department and Planning Commission:

Julie Ritter here weighing in on an important issue facing the north side of the City of Ann Arbor. Traffic. Glen Avenue traffic to be precise.

Last month you received a long document from the Old Fourth Ward Association that mentioned, among other things, the necessity of widening Glen in conjunction with the development of the proposed The Glen Hotel.

Widening Glen is crucial no matter what project is approved and developed for that particular parcel. The development of the parcel where the hotel is proposed is just one of several parcels on the north side of Ann Arbor in various stages of development and approval.

The City just approved the large Lower Town development on Broadway. The University has announced plans to build an additional parking structure on Wall Street to hold more than 1,000 cars. US-23 has been widened to accommodate increased traffic to and from Ann Arbor to the north. Add the train station (wherever on Depot or Fuller it ends up), the DTE property, and any further developments along the river valley and you are unleashing a torrent of potential additional traffic into the Glen Corridor.

All additional property development anywhere on the north side of Ann Arbor, even as far away as the new residential subdivision(s) on Nixon Road, adds more and more cars to this narrow, heavily traveled and already congested route.

Map #2, attached, shows all the properties in the process of approval and development and also the unknown factor of further developments in the river valley. (Attachments were originally created for another purpose: instead of making things more confused the original numbers are retained).

Glen is the major connector between Central Campus and North Campus. It is the major connector between downtown and the Medical Campus. It is a major connector between many of the North Side residential subdivisions off of Plymouth Road, and all the campus and downtown amenities. Cars, trucks, City and University busses, and ambulances from all over southeast Michigan, all as a matter of course, travel Glen.

Glen's sidewalks carry pedestrians between the North Campus, the Medical Campus and Central Campus, as well as bicycles and human and electric powered skateboards. The electric powered skateboards go right up the hill from Fuller to Huron without any problem whatsoever.

There are already times and days when Glen is almost impassable. The problem is "The Narrows" between Catherine and Huron. This narrow, two block strip of Glen is approximately 39 feet wide at its narrowest part. It has four narrow lanes. Between Catherine and Huron it has one northbound lane (toward the Hospital and North

Campus). Once past Catherine heading north there are two wide northbound lanes. The Narrows has one turning lane and two southbound lanes (into Central Campus).

When the one northbound lane of The Narrows is backed up, it also blocks traffic on Ann, Catherine and Huron. Cars trying to circulate in any direction cannot get onto or off of Glen without waiting for several traffic light cycles.

When the two southbound lanes of The Narrows are backed up, the same things occur on Ann and Catherine, and traffic backs up all the way down to Fuller or beyond.

Often, traffic is stalled in both north and southbound lanes at the same time. This happens especially at shift changes from the Medical Campus and at morning and evening rush hour, but also happens at any time during the week if there is an event either in town or on North Campus. Sometimes it's hard to tell what is causing the back up. Today (Tuesday Dec 12) traffic was at a standstill northbound all the way from Huron down the hill past Fuller at 10:30 am.

Attached are satellite images taken from Google that show, in detail, the actual roadway as Glen narrows down from 59 feet at Fuller to 39 feet on the south side of Catherine.

Overview Satellite A shows the funnel effect on Glen from Fuller up to Huron. In the several hundred feet from Fuller to Catherine, Glen narrows by 20 feet, about 30%.

The Narrowing at Catherine Satellite B clearly shows the dramatic reduction in roadbed width in the process of heading south across Catherine.

Map #1 gives a larger overview of the problem

The reason it is crucial to widen Glen from Catherine to Huron is to keep traffic flowing smoothly. If Glen is not widened, traffic will be forced to enter or leave Ann Arbor another way. There are only four other ways in or out of the north side of Ann Arbor.

North State
North Division
North Fifth
North Fourth

Unless you want to include North Main Street. And you must know how congested North Main Street is at rush hour. It often comes to a complete standstill going out of town at the end of the day. Coming into town in the morning the left lane is often backed up all the way to Lakeshore. So this is not a good option.

Attached Map #3 shows the way that traffic will be forced to flow, as Glen is more and more impassable between Catherine and Huron.

This will result in a need to accommodate this “work around” traffic by widening the other north-south streets. Widening North State Street will bring traffic directly into the already congested South State Street corridor from Huron to south of Packard. North Fifth is already in the process of being narrowed and slowed to protect the safety of the variety of users. North Fourth Avenue also goes through a residential district, borders Kerrytown and the Farmers Market, and then crosses Huron into the downtown business district. How would widening North Fourth Avenue be helpful?

The only viable, long-term solution is widening Glen between Catherine and Huron.

A Note on Two Way Streets:

Some have suggested taking the many one-way streets in the Old Fourth Ward Historic District and making them two-way. This will solve nothing, and will create even more problems.

Right now the Old Fourth Ward has slow traffic and much needed on-street parking. There are also bike lanes on the many of the streets. One-way streets are the safest streets for pedestrians and bicyclists. Making these streets two-way will eliminate most, if not all, of the on-street parking, many of the bike lanes, and will increase dangers to pedestrians, bicyclists and the many skateboarders in the neighborhood.

North Ingalls is the major pedestrian thoroughfare between Central Campus and the new Nursing School at the north end of Ingalls. The North Ingalls Building also houses many University staff that regularly walk and bike through the neighborhood. Residents and employees also walk to and from Kerrytown and North Fourth Avenue, and down to the many parks along the Huron River. This is a very heavily pedestrian part of town.

The Old Fourth Ward Historic District is situated between the Nursing School, and North Ingalls Building, the Medical Campus, Central Campus, Downtown, Kerrytown and the Huron River to the north. One can make the case that the Old Fourth Ward is surrounded by some of the most distinctive and attractive features of Ann Arbor. Because of its unique location in the center of all these intensely used elements, it is arguably the most heavily pedestrian neighborhood in the City. Residents, students, employees and administrative staff from both the hospital and the university regularly walk, bike or skateboard through the neighborhood in all directions and at all times of day and night. There are even midnight skateboard races down the steep hill on Catherine, going all the way down Glen to Fuller.

Two-way streets would not be an improvement or a benefit, and in fact would create many more hazards.

Map #5 shows the current pattern of one-way streets in the Old Fourth Ward.

In Summary:

In 2007 the City passed the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan. [https://www.a2gov.org/departments/planning/Documents/721%20N%20Main/AA NoMo MasterPlan_2007.pdf](https://www.a2gov.org/departments/planning/Documents/721%20N%20Main/AA%20NoMo%20MasterPlan_2007.pdf) On page 105, is a General Policy Statement that includes Item 3.1, Accommodating Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel.

The Study was updated in 2013 <https://www.a2gov.org/Documents/Ann%20Arbor%20NTP%20Update%202013.pdf> and, again on page 105 of the update: “By adopting this policy through a City Council resolution, the City of Ann Arbor would unambiguously endorse and define its support for non-motorized transportation.”

The Old Fourth Ward is an exemplar of the policies and plans contained in these documents, and in the spirit of the entire initiative. Other neighborhoods in Ann Arbor would be very happy to enjoy the wealth of pedestrian and bicycle traffic that exists very safely in the Old Fourth Ward. They should be encouraged to do so!

The vibrant diversity that is a hallmark of the Old Fourth Ward springs in part from the many small, human interactions that arise naturally based on quiet, one way streets and a great deal of pedestrian traffic.

In the Old Fourth Ward, neighbors greet neighbors sitting on their porches in the summer. People greet their friends walking to or from the store, a restaurant, a concert or a lecture. Students in the Inter-Cooperative Council houses sit on their porches in the evening playing music and greeting passers-by in a friendly way. Families with children are celebrated and the children’s progress through life is part of the larger conversation that knits together our wonderful neighborhood.

Employees of the University and the Medical Campus all have their favorite ways to walk through the neighborhood and favorite places to congregate outside during good weather.

Students from the School of Art and the School of Music are very happy to find a place to live in the Old Fourth Ward, along with medical students, dental students, faculty and staff from all of these places and more.

So please widen Glen to make it a viable commercial corridor. Keep the ever-increasing traffic out of the Old Fourth Ward. Retain the one-way streets and continue to provide the old, original human scale of Ann Arbor for everyone to enjoy.

Respectfully,

Julie Ritter

PS Holiday greetings to all! Best wishes for a safe and joyful season of family, friends and sharing the good things in life.

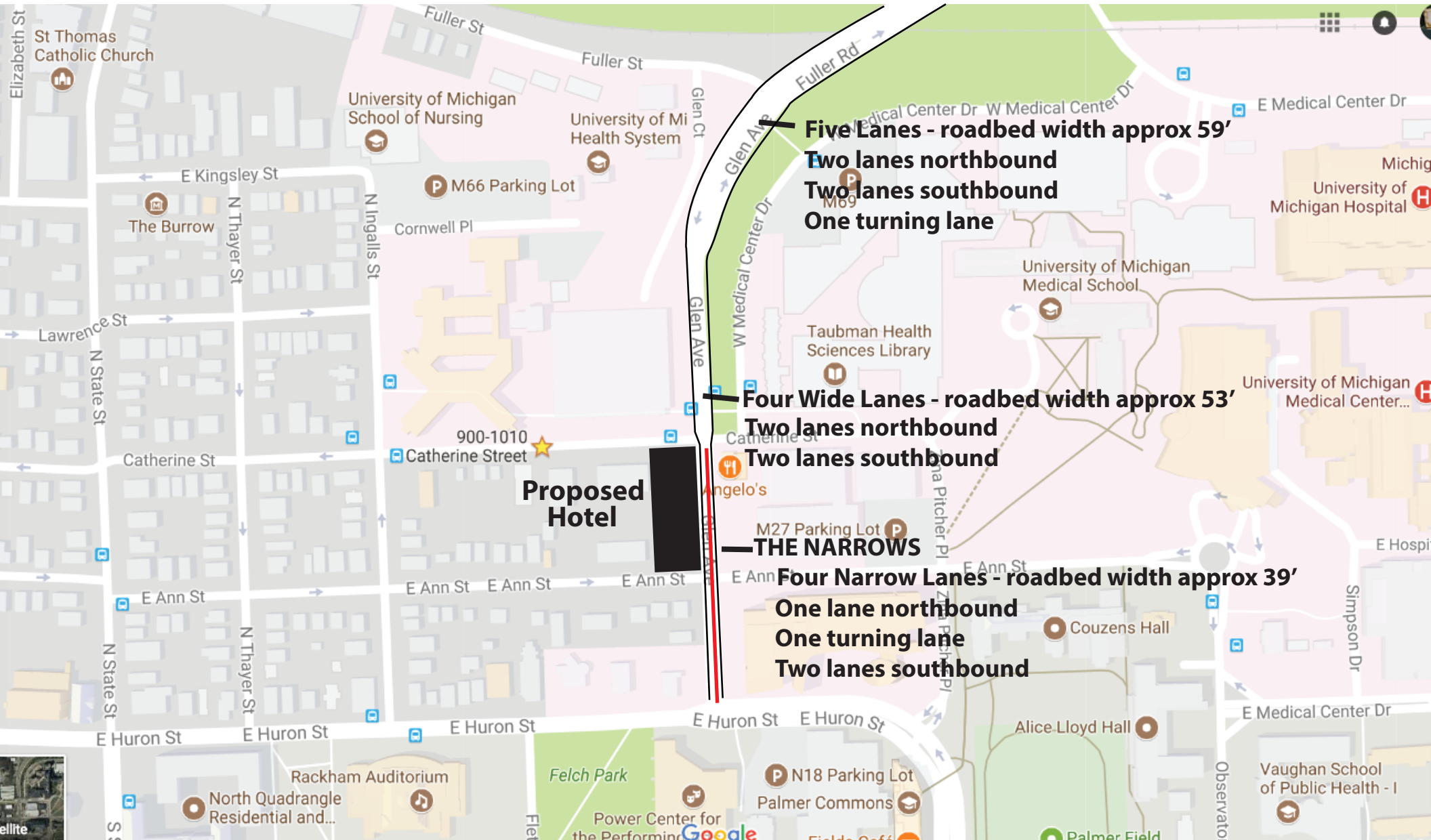
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Have the courage to make your life a blessing - The Siddur



The Narrows On Glen: Between Huron and Catherine

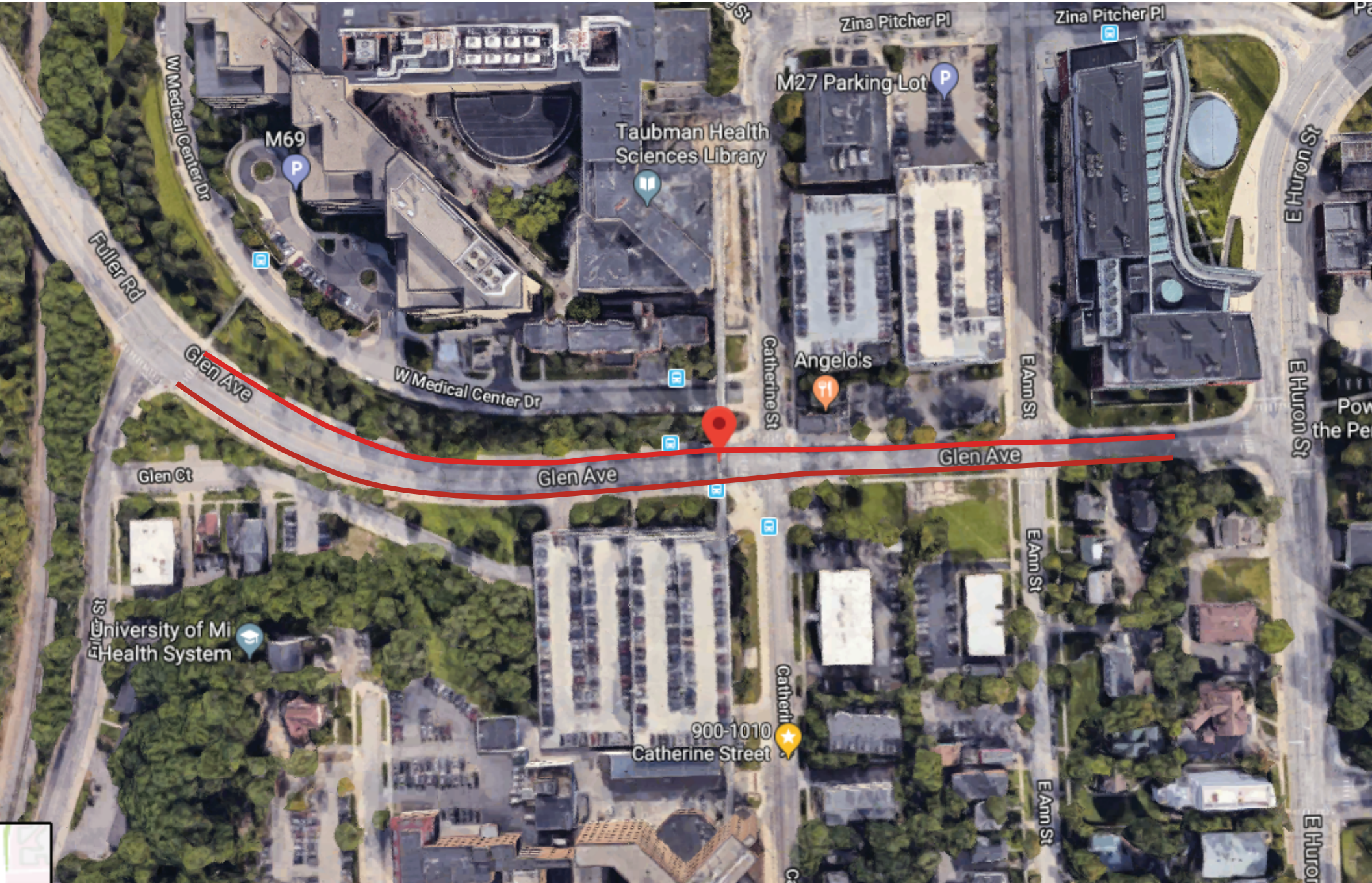
Map #1





Overview Glen Funnel

Map #6





Proposed Developments on the North Side as of 11/2017

Map #2

All Adding to Traffic Congestion on Glen and the North Side of Ann Arbor





INTO AND OUT OF DOWNTOWN FROM THE NORTH Why Glen Needs To Be Widened



Map #3



When the Glen Narrows are impassable, traffic goes into the neighborhood

Proposed Hotel

No Left Turn North X

Huron



Old Fourth Ward One Way Streets

Map #5

