

**PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES STAFF REPORT**

**For Planning Commission Meeting of May 1, 2018**

**SUBJECT: The Cottages at Barton Green Site Plan and Wetland Use Permit.  
(West side of Pontiac Trail, south of Dhu Varren Road)  
Project No. SP17-014**

**PROPOSED CITY PLANNING COMMISSION MOTION**

The Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby recommends that the Mayor and City Council approve The Cottages at Barton Green Site Plan and Development Agreement.

**PROPOSED CITY PLANNING COMMISSION MOTION**

The Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby recommends that the Mayor and City Council approve the Cottages at Barton Green Wetland Use Permit to allow filling and mitigation of 2,200 square feet of wetland and on-site mitigation.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the petition be **approved** because it complies with all applicable, local, state, and federal ordinances, standards and regulations; it will not cause a public or private nuisance; and it will not have a detrimental effect on public health, safety or welfare.

Staff also recommends **approval** of the wetland use permit because it limits disturbance to minimum necessary to reasonably accomplish the permitted use.

**STAFF REPORT**

On October 17, 2017, Planning Commission postponed this petition to provide the petitioner an opportunity to address staff comments related to traffic impacts, utility easements, and landscaping.

On March 6, 2018, Planning Commission postponed this petition to provide the petitioner an opportunity to address Planning Commission comments related to parking, housing choices, the proposed shuttle, and sustainability elements.

On April 20, 2018, Planning Commission postponed this petition to provide the petitioner an opportunity to address Planning Commission comments primarily related to transportation issues.

Below is a summary of the major issues Planning Commissioners raised at the April 20, 2018 meeting. Below each issue is the staff response. Planning Staff worked with Public Services Staff to answer each question.

- 1. What is the timing of making improvements to the Pontiac Trail/Barton Drive intersection?**

If there are identified improvements at the intersection, the scheduled construction will likely be after FY 2020. The City intends to resurface (and reconstruct portions of) Barton Drive west of Pontiac Trail in 2018. However, no major improvements are currently identified.

**2. What kind of specificity can you provide on the possible re-design of the Pontiac Trail/Barton Drive intersection? If the intersection were reconstructed incrementally, what might some of the early modifications include?**

Upon the City's request, the petitioner's transportation consultant, Midwestern Consulting, Inc., evaluated a variety of potential incremental modifications to the Barton Drive/Pontiac Trail intersection to improve safety and efficiency. MCI identified two modifications that could be achieved within the existing right-of-way. One opportunity is to convert the existing two-lane cross-section to a three lane cross-section with a center left-turn lane on Barton Drive. Another option is to convert the Barton Drive approaches from a two-lane cross-section to a left-through with a right-turn only lane. These options have yet to be evaluated by City Staff and no comprehensive analysis of alternatives has been performed by the City.

**3. What is the timing of other intersection improvement projects along the Pontiac Trail corridor?**

Intersection improvements at the "North Sky" and "The Cottages on Barton Green" development projects will take place during the construction of each of those projects. Each project will provide a center turn lane in Pontiac Trail as well as pedestrian crosswalks. There is no other planned intersection improvement project along the Pontiac Trail corridor at this time. The City is in the process of conducting a Lower Town Area Mobility Study, which will have a scope that includes the Pontiac Trail corridor. The Request for Proposal for this study is currently being advertised. The study is intended to identify future mobility needs and propose mitigation measures. Consultant team selection and funding for the study are currently scheduled for City Council consideration in August 2018.

**4. Please explain the Safe Routes to School program. How does that program impact this development project?**

The Michigan Safe Routes to School program is administered by the Federal Highway Administration to enable and encourage children to walk or bike to school and to make walking and bicycling to school safer. Communities can apply for "mini" or "major" grants to obtain funding to construct non-motorized improvements related to providing safe access to a school. Safe Routes to School is a public program that is not typically related to private development projects.

As part of the Safe Routes to School program for STEAM school, the City is intending to close sidewalk gaps on a number of streets in the STEAM neighborhood in 2019. See attached diagrams depicting locations that are currently being surveyed by City Staff for this project. This project will provide students with safer non-motorized routes to STEAM school.

Additionally, the petitioner has agreed to provide a number of non-motorized improvements beyond what code requires including the extension of the sidewalk on the west side of Pontiac Trail beyond the limits of the project which will close a sidewalk gap, providing a public access easement to the proposed park on the west side of the site from Skydale Drive, providing trails through the park, and providing a crosswalk across Pontiac Trail. The petitioner is also providing sidewalks throughout the development project.

**5. What are the current speeds along this section of Pontiac Trail? How are speed limits determined? What are techniques that can be used to slow speeds in this location?**

The current speed limit along Pontiac Trail is 25 mph from the south end of the corridor to Manor Drive, and transitions to 30 mph from Manor Drive to Skydale Drive, and then transitions to 35 mph from Skydale Drive to Dhu Varren Road. City staff is in the process of reviewing speed limits along the Pontiac Trail corridor. Considerations of setting speed limits include surrounding development, access points, road function, road characteristics, existing operating speeds, pedestrian activity, crash history, and the Michigan Motor Vehicle Code. The City's Transportation Commission approved recommendations (18-0470) from its Speed Reduction Committee. A combination of road design, cultural change, and enforcement is more likely to be effective in lowering speeds.

**6. How does the decrease in Level of Service relate to non-motorized safety?**

There is no published result known to staff that shows a direct relationship between congestion and non-motorized traffic safety. Under congested conditions, vehicle speeds are lower than free flow, but operating behavior may also be affected by long delay and may therefore impact compliance.

**7. What is the earliest year a full Pontiac Trail/Barton Drive intersection reconstruction project could take place?**

Currently there is not a planned project to reconstruct the intersection of Barton Drive and Pontiac Trail. Incremental improvement alternatives are being evaluated within the existing right-of-way. The scope of the Lower Town Area Mobility Study also includes the intersection of Barton Drive and Pontiac Trail. Any construction will likely take place after FY 2020.

**8. When will the Pontiac Trail/Barton Drive intersection modifications be added to the CIP?**

New projects could be added to the CIP this fall. New projects are entered into the CIP every two years. Public Services will consider adding the Barton Drive/Pontiac Trail intersection to the CIP. Interim improvement alternatives are being evaluated within the existing right-of-way. The scope of the Lower Town Area Mobility Study also includes the intersection of Barton Drive and Pontiac Trail.

**9. What types of non-motorized improvements could be made to the Pontiac Trail/Barton Drive intersection?**

In response to public requests, staff recently adjusted traffic signal operations to automatically cycle pedestrian signals during school peaks. Carrying the bicycle lane on Pontiac Trail through the intersection will likely need additional right-of-way.

**10. What is the status of the Lower Town Mobility Study?**

See answer to Question 3.

One of the concerns expressed by members of the Planning Commission was the number of 6-bedroom apartments being proposed and the challenge of converting them into 3 bedroom apartments in the future. The petitioner has provided images (attached) showing how a 6 bedroom unit could be converted to a 3 bedroom unit if the owner wanted to reduce the number of 6 bedroom units.

Prepared by Jeff Kahan  
Reviewed by Brett Lenart  
mg/  
4/27/18

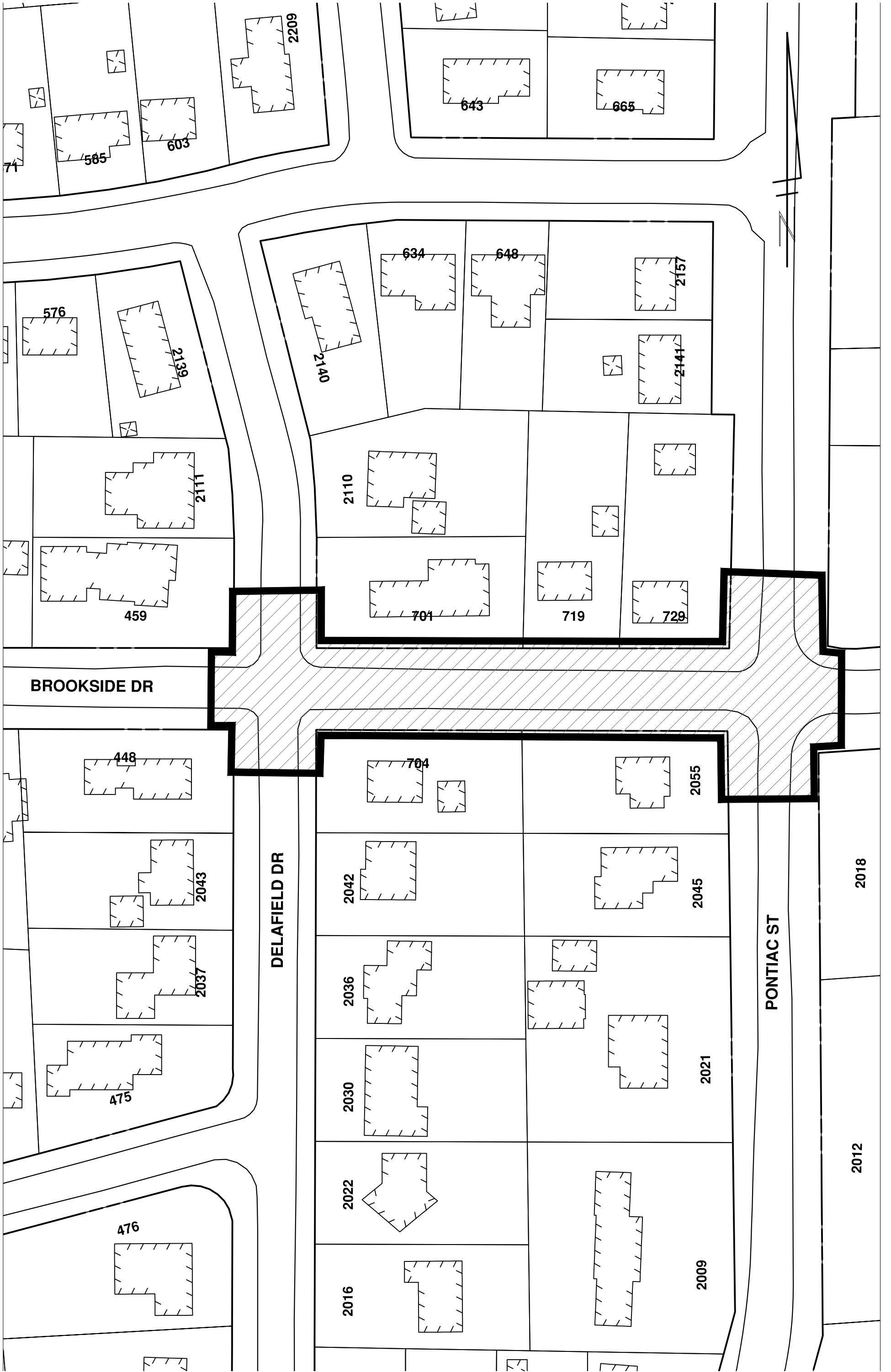
Attachments: Northside STEAM Sidewalk Gaps  
6 Bedroom Floor Plan (Original)  
3 Bedroom Floor Plan (Converted)  
[Site Plan](#)

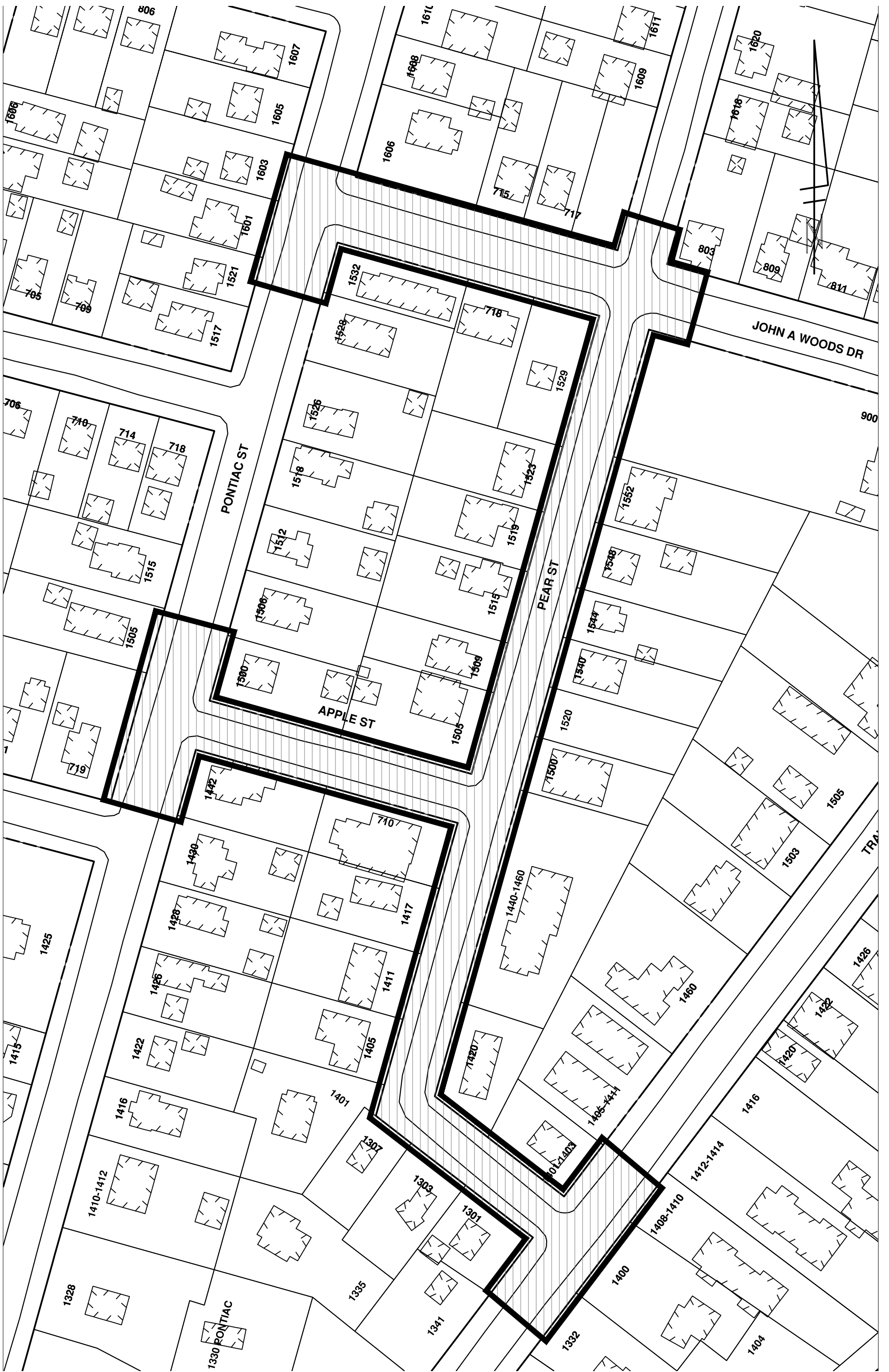
c: Petitioner: Trinitas Development, LLC  
201 Main Street, Suite 1000  
Lafayette, IN 47901

Petitioner's Agents: Scott Betzoldt  
Midwestern Consulting, LLC  
3815 Plaza Drive  
Ann Arbor, MI 48108

Systems Planning  
Project Management  
Project No. SP17-014







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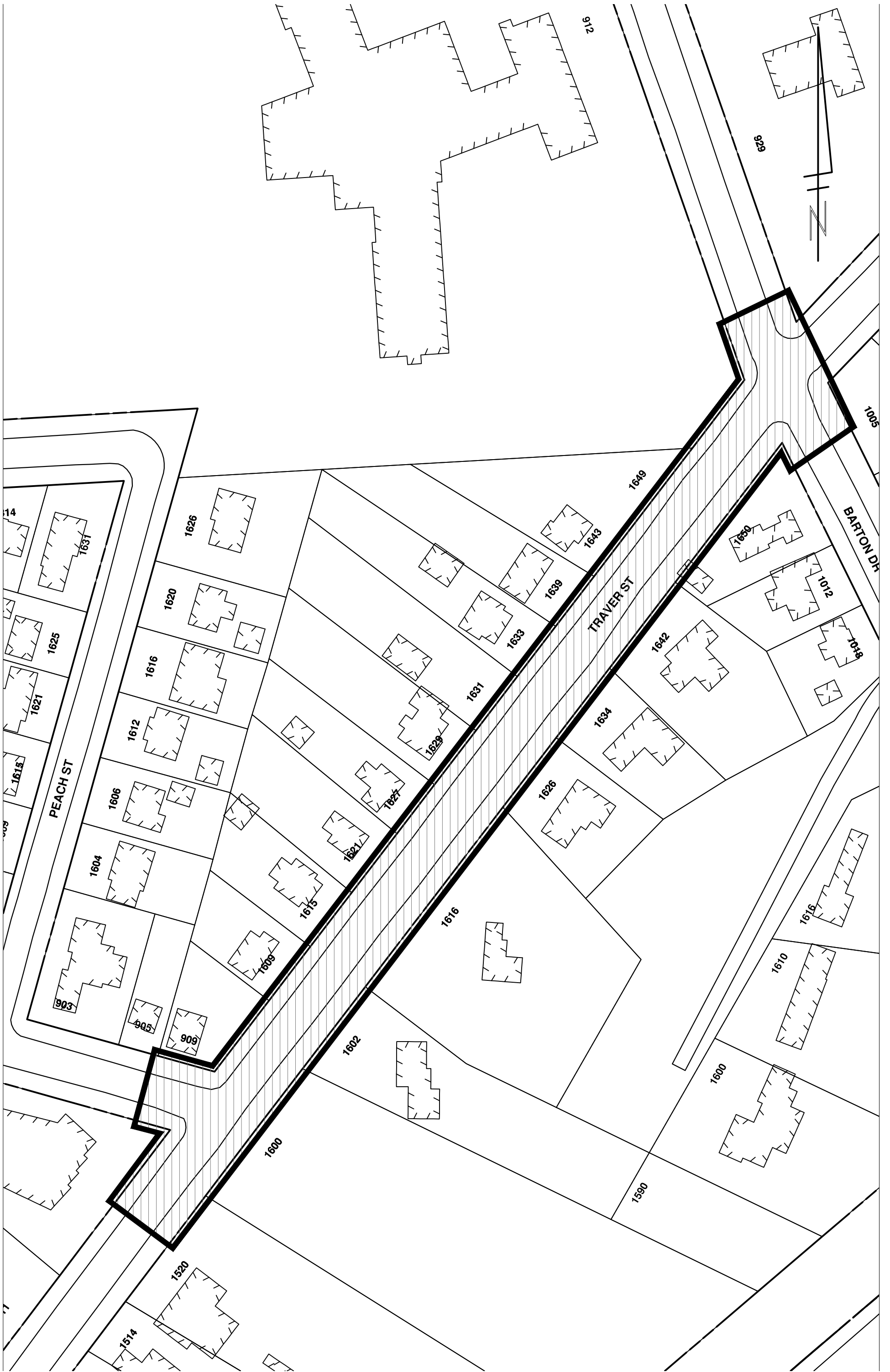
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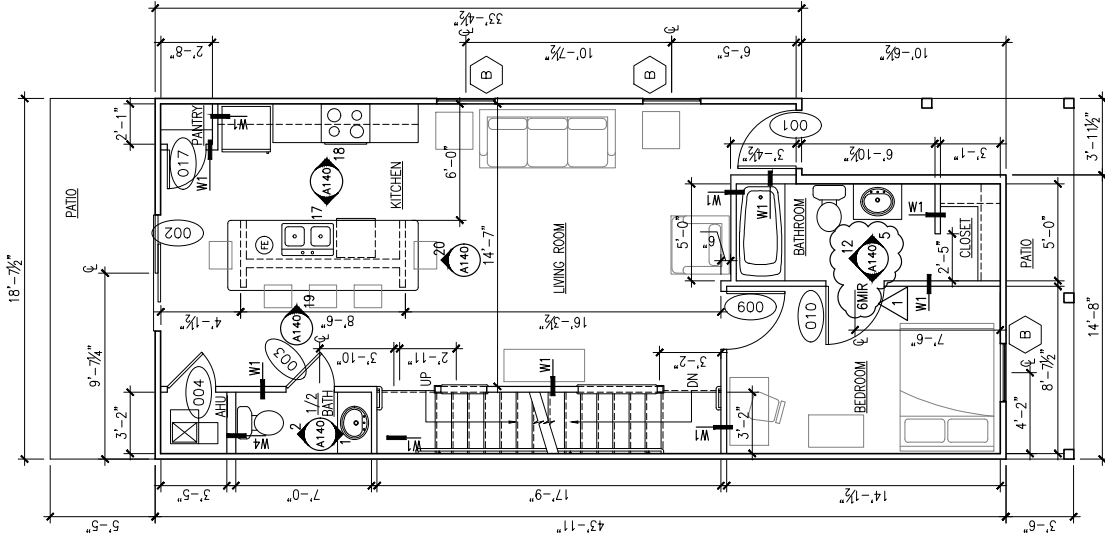
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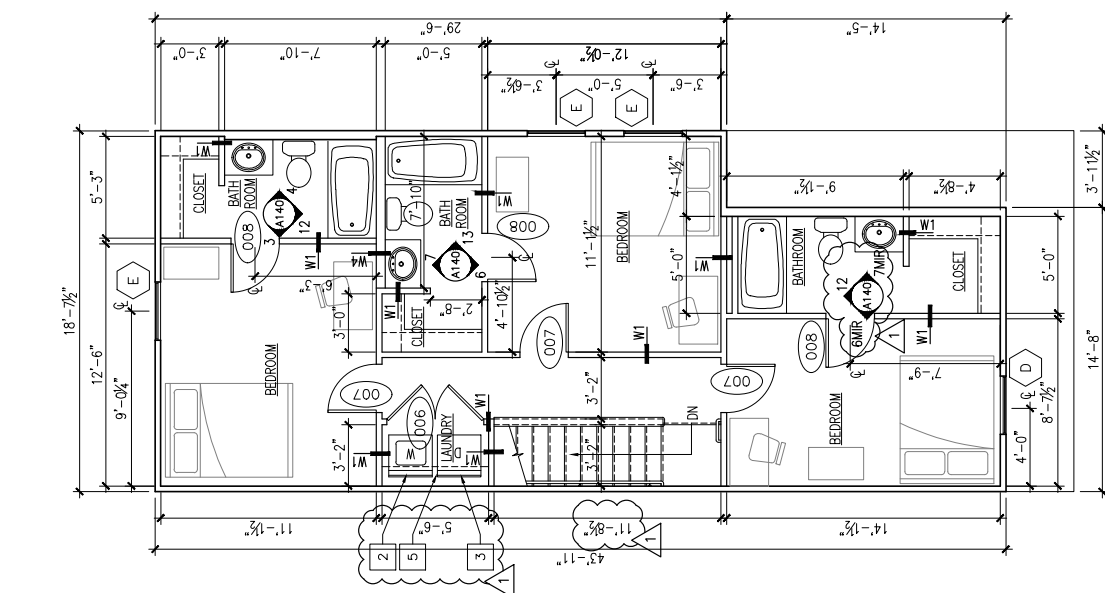
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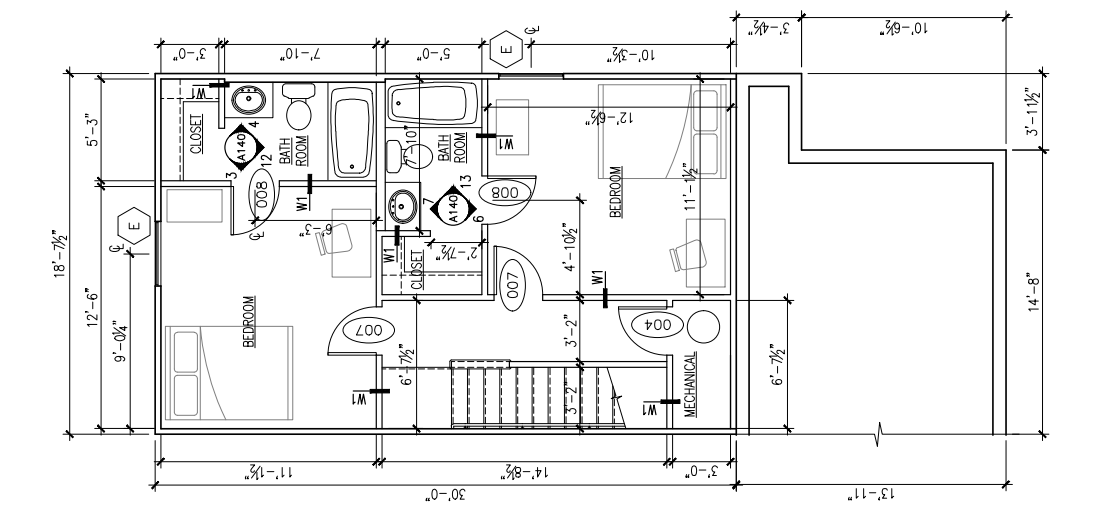




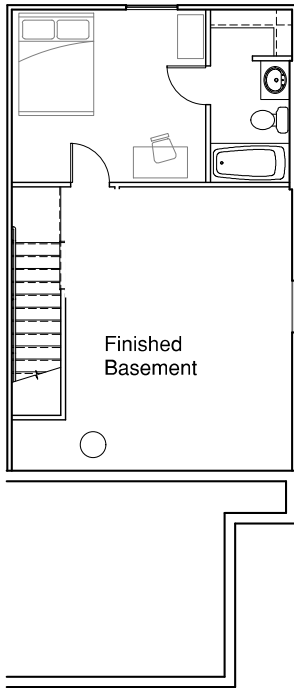
7 UNIT F1 FIRST FLOOR  
 A121 SCALE: 3/16"=1'-0" 776 S.F.



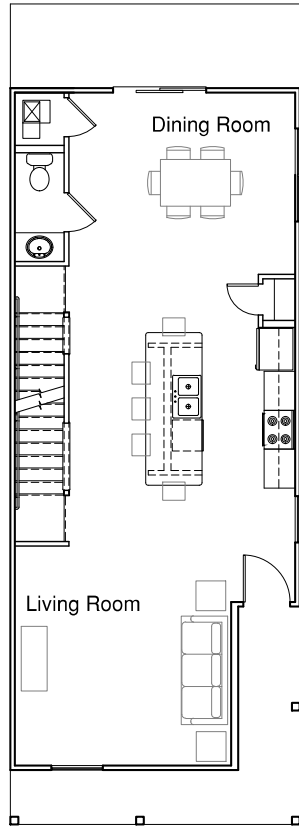
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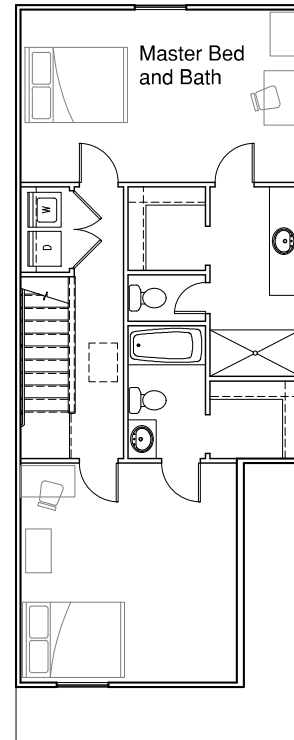
6 UNIT F1 BASEMENT FLOOR  
 A121 SCALE: 3/16"=1'-0" 559 S.F.



3 BASEMENT PLAN  
 ##### SCALE: 1/8"=1'-0"



2 FIRST FLOOR PLAN  
 ##### SCALE: 1/8"=1'-0"



1 SECOND FLOOR PLAN  
 ##### SCALE: 1/8"=1'-0"

Trinitas

Converted F1  
 Unit

April 25, 2018

Floor Plan

Schematic Design

Architect:

KJG Architecture, Inc.  
 527 Sagamore Parkway W., Suite 101  
 West Lafayette, Indiana 47906  
 Office: 765.497.4598 Fax: 765.497.4599

