

**TRAFFIC REVIEW ADVISORY BOARD
JANUARY 2012
AGENDA ITEMS**

NEW BUSINESS

- 1. A REQUEST TO RESTRICT PARKING ON BOTH SIDES OF WESTFIELD STREET FROM ROBIN AVENUE TO 250 FEET SOUTH OF ROBIN AVENUE. (CURRENT CONDITION: UNRESTRICTED PARKING.)**

This is a Department of Public Works request.

The Westfield Street bridge over Sawyer Creek was reconstructed in 2011. The project narrowed the driving width of the bridge deck from 40 feet to 32 feet, and the driving width of Westfield Street from 50 feet to 32 feet. Westfield Street is a collector street which, according to the current comprehensive plan, should have parking eliminated as needed in order to accommodate moving vehicle traffic. If parking is preserved on both sides of Westfield Street, it will become more difficult for vehicles to pass each other, and could create potential safety problems.

I do not believe on-street parking is extensively used in this area except perhaps for events at Red Arrow Park. Even in that case, the proposed parking change would impact only a small percentage of the parking adjacent to the park.

I recommend approval of this request.

- 2. A REQUEST FOR NO PARKING ON THE NORTH SIDE OF BABBITZ AVENUE FROM LANE STREET TO 50 FEET EAST OF LANE STREET. (CURRENT CONDITION: UNRESTRICTED PARKING.)**

This is a citizen request.

In mid-2010, the Traffic Review Advisory Board recommended the removal of parking on the south side of Babbitz Avenue, due to the exceptionally narrow width of this street (18 feet). Parking is prohibited on both sides of Lane Street, where at 15 feet the street width is even narrower. The requestor recently had an issue where two vehicles were going through this intersection at the same time, and one had to back up in order for the vehicles to safely pass.

Both of these streets are local streets with minimal traffic volumes, so the citizen's report is not likely to be common. However, if there is no concern from neighboring property owners, then this request seems perfectly reasonable to avert even these relatively infrequent occurrences.

Unless there are objections from neighboring property owners, I recommend approval of this request.

3. **A REQUEST TO ALLOW LEFT TURNS FROM MERRITT AVENUE ONTO NORTH MAIN STREET. (CURRENT CONDITION: LEFT TURNS ARE PROHIBITED.)**

This is a citizen request.

Recent traffic counts have shown that a number of vehicles make the left turn movement from westbound Merritt Avenue onto southbound North Main Street, even though there is adequate signage indicated that this is prohibited. This experience has led a couple of citizens to suggest that this left turn should be made legal.

Left turns prohibitions may be appropriate for safety or capacity reasons. From a safety perspective, westbound traffic on Merritt Avenue will normally be able to see oncoming traffic from eastbound Church Avenue, and can see pedestrians crossing Main Street. Capacity could be a concern here, as there is only one lane for traffic on westbound Merritt Avenue, and a left-turning vehicle could create a backup. Capacity will be more greatly affected if there is a large amount of pedestrian traffic crossing Main Street when Merritt Avenue vehicles wish to turn left.

To analyze the effects of allowing left turns, four scenarios were examined under existing signal timing:

- Analyze the intersection under current volumes
- Analyze the intersection assuming 10 percent of left-turning traffic shifts from adjacent intersections (Parkway Avenue and Washington Avenue) to Merritt Avenue
- Analyze the intersection assuming 50 percent of left-turning traffic shifts from adjacent intersections to Merritt Avenue
- Analyze the intersection assuming all left-turning traffic shifts from adjacent intersections to Merritt Avenue

The results of this analysis are shown for PM peak traffic in Table 1. This table shows the average delay per vehicle (in seconds) for each approach to the intersection, along with the corresponding level of service (LOS). LOS is a qualitative measure that helps to assess the relative quality of traffic operations. The level of service is assigned on an A through F scale, with A signifying free flow conditions, and F signifying a breakdown in flow. Typically, the goal is to attain a level of service of D or better.

Table 1: Estimated Delay and Level of Service (LOS) for Church/Merritt and Main under Existing Signal Timing (PM Peak Period)

	WB Merritt		EB Church		NB Main		SB Main		Total	
	Delay (sec / veh)	LOS	Delay (sec / veh)	LOS	Delay (sec / veh)	LOS	Delay (sec / veh)	LOS	Delay (sec / veh)	LOS
Existing	27	C	17	B	10	B	13	B	16	B
Existing + 10%	28	C	17	B	10	B	13	B	16	B
Existing + 50%	33	C	17	B	10	B	13	B	17	B
Existing + 100%	48	D	17	B	10	B	13	B	22	C

Increased delay for Merritt Avenue traffic may be the best reason to keep the restriction. Under the current signal timing plan, additional left-turning traffic would increase delay for westbound Merritt Avenue. Potentially, the level of service for Merritt Avenue could degrade to D, depending on how much traffic shifts from adjacent intersections to Merritt Avenue. Most likely, however, if all of the westbound left-turning traffic were to shift from adjacent intersections to Merritt Avenue, the resulting average delay would encourage vehicles to shift back to the adjacent intersection.

Field data and citizen reports indicate that the prohibition is regularly disobeyed. Even so, a review of crash records from 2008-10 did not find any reportable crashes that resulted from a vehicle on Merritt Avenue making an illegal left turn.

The Department has long recommended removing traffic control devices when they are not necessary. This helps to support greater driver compliance at those locations where these devices are necessary. This left turn prohibition does not seem necessary at this intersection nor is it obeyed. Removal of this prohibition would be consistent with past department recommendations.

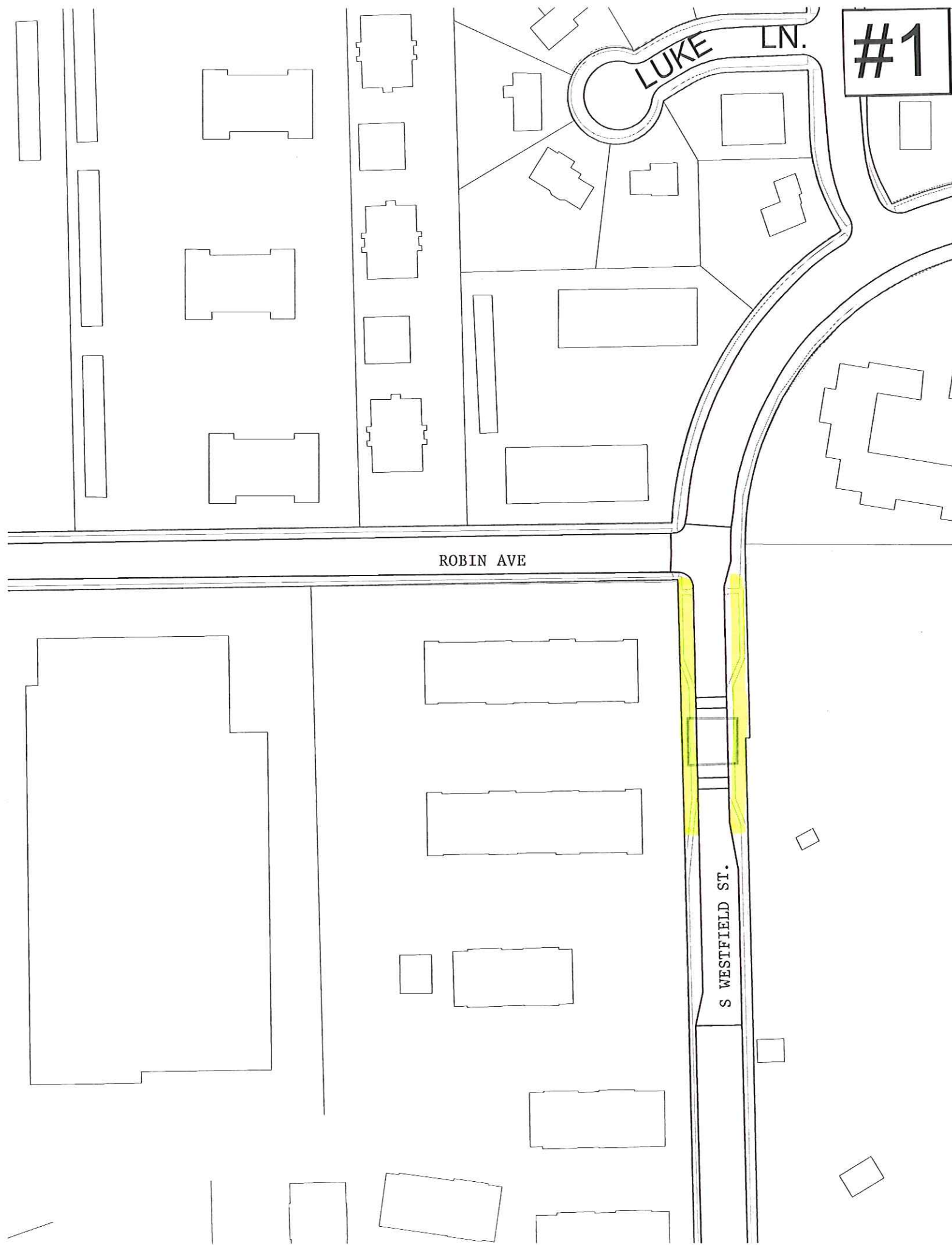
I recommend approval of this request.

#1

LUKE LN.

ROBIN AVE

S WESTFIELD ST.



#2



ROSALIA

WAUGOO

OTTER

RAHR

AVE.

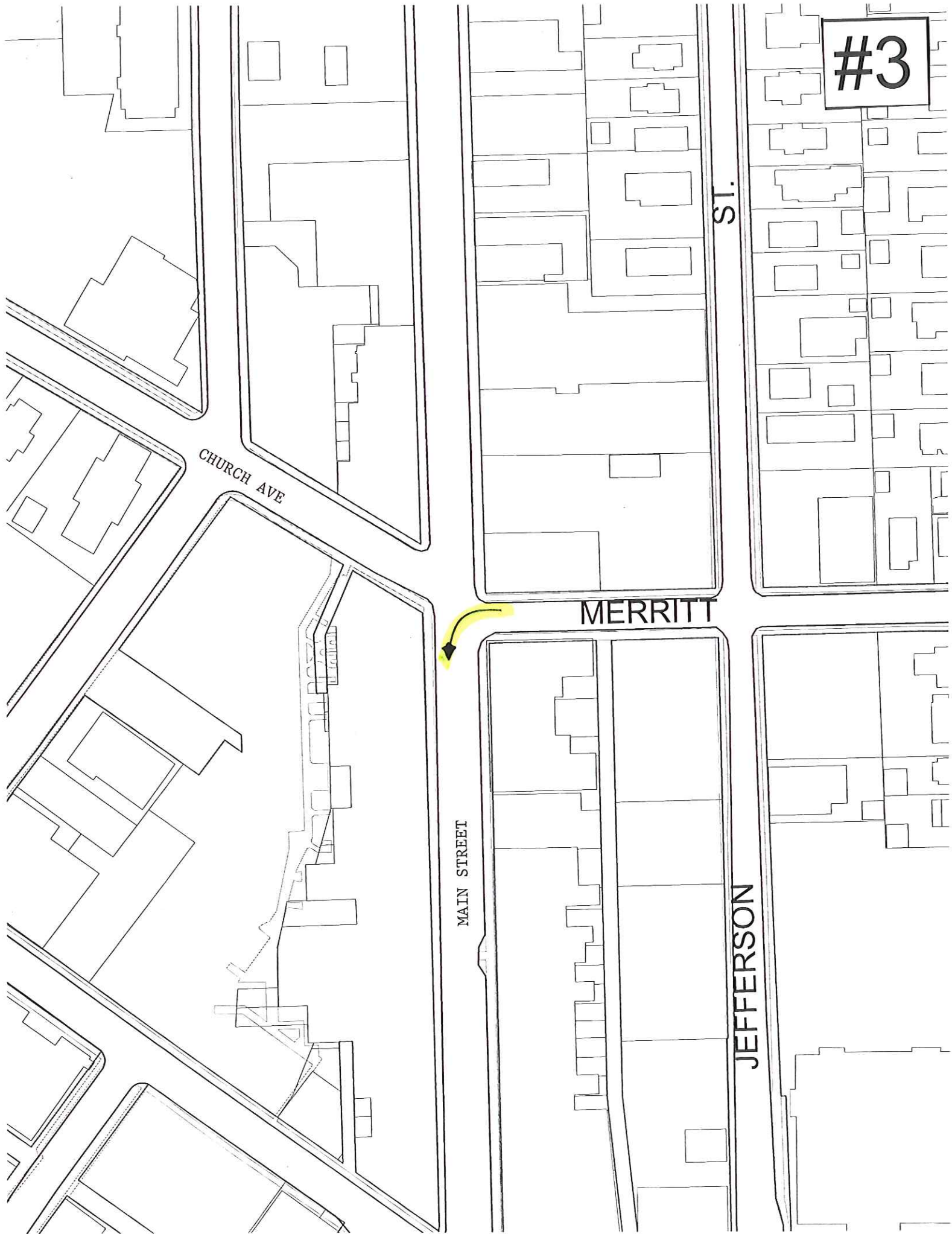
BABBITZ

LANE ST.

ST.

SWEET

#3



CHURCH AVE

ST.

MERRITT

MAIN STREET

JEFFERSON