

Town of Brighton

Monroe Avenue Corridor

Community Vision Plan

February 2011

Brighton, NY



INTRODUCTION

CHARRETTE

VISION PLAN

CONCLUSIONS

Produced by the



Town of Brighton

Monroe Avenue Corridor

Community Vision Plan



Produced by the
Rochester Regional Community Design Center

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Monroe Avenue Charrette 2010 has helped the Brighton community craft a vision for our "main street" and identified goals that will guide the transformation of this vision into reality.

I want to acknowledge the important contributions of people and organizations that were involved with charrette planning, the charrette event and the post charrette process: the dedicated Town of Brighton/Monroe Avenue Steering Committee, the Design Team, and the charrette facilitators who volunteered their time and professional skills; the Rochester Regional Community Design Center volunteers, interns and staff who guided the process skillfully; Town of Brighton staff who provided important support throughout the charrette; the Brighton Central School District, which generously opened its doors to provide a venue for the charrette event; the Brighton Chamber of Commerce and New York State Department of Transportation for their active participation in framing the plan; and the many residents and business owners who, by their direct involvement, made this effort a success.

Sandra L. Frankel
Supervisor
Town of Brighton



A great example of gateway markers at Home Acres neighborhood

In collaboration with the Brighton/Monroe Avenue Steering Committee, comprised of Brighton residents and stakeholders, the Rochester Regional Community Design Center (RRCDC) prepared this community-based Vision Plan for the Brighton/Monroe Avenue Corridor from Highland Avenue to Clover Street. This document serves to provide written and visual design plans reflecting the goals and ideas of community stakeholders for development of the Monroe Avenue Corridor.

This report incorporates ideas suggested by over 70 residents and stakeholders at the Brighton/Monroe Avenue Community Charrette held on June 5th 2010 at Brighton High School. Charrette participants produced drawings that can be found in the focus area section of this document. The resulting plans integrate these ideas as elements of good design and planning that together contribute to a healthy, viable community and inspiration for the corridor's future development. The process of creating the Vision Plan began in 2009 when the Town of Brighton contacted the RRCDC to begin working toward a charrette. Following the Brighton/Monroe Avenue Corridor Charrette, the process of creating the Vision Plan was carried out during the summer and fall of 2010.

The Brighton/Monroe Avenue Corridor Vision Plan document contains overlay base plans, each of which includes design and development recommendations for segments of Monroe Avenue that correspond to focus areas that were explored during the Brighton/Monroe Avenue Charrette. Additionally, the Vision Plan details the potential redesign of the Twelve Corners intersection and green space. The preliminary

recommendations in the plan are based on ideas and concepts which were expressed as important by community members at the charrette. These concepts include:

- Increasing vehicular and pedestrian safety through alternate traffic patterns and traffic calming as well as enhanced signage and crossings;
- Creating an environment that is both bicycle and pedestrian friendly;
- Developing a strategy for parking management;
- Respecting, reclaiming and preserving existing

historical buildings and green space.

- Promoting Economic Vibrancy and opportunity

These concepts were instrumental in developing the plans and recommendations contained in the Vision Plan. Numerous proposed improvements are detailed within. The Vision Plan will serve as a guide for the community during the comprehensive planning phase of the process.

The second part of this document, located in the Vision Plan section, was produced by the RRCDC incorporating the ideas generated during the charrette.



Two story apartment buildings at the West End of Monroe

INTRODUCTION

On Saturday, June 5, 2010, the Town of Brighton hosted the Brighton/Monroe Avenue Corridor Community Design Charrette, a community project to engage stakeholders and gather ideas that might serve as a basis for the creation of a Community Based Vision Plan. The event attracted over 70 residents and stakeholders, and over 30 local design professionals who served as facilitators.

This report chronicles the processes before and after the charrette, provides a record of the community ideas that came from the charrette and shows and describes the Vision Plan, which was developed by the Brighton Steering Committee, the Design Team, and the RRCDC based on those ideas.

RRCDC staff began compiling the Brighton/Monroe Avenue Vision Plan in the fall of 2010. This report is intended to serve as a resource for the Town of Brighton, members of the neighborhood associations as well as residents, business-owners, and other individuals and organizations intending to develop or improve properties in the Monroe Avenue Corridor. It may also serve as a resource for other citizens and communities interested in exploring how a charrette process can help them approach community development in a more inclusive manner.

The Vision Plan is a unique document and outcome of the charrette process, to be used with the Brighton Comprehensive Plan and other plans, to guide a strategic approach for the town's future.



Brighton Commons Plaza at Twelve Corners



Summit Federal Credit Union at West End of Monroe Avenue



Twelve Corners Middle School viewed from Winton Road



Historic commercial building at Twelve Corners

Monroe Avenue is a major thoroughfare for the town of Brighton as well as adjacent communities. This traffic corridor carries commuters, business owners, and local neighborhood traffic. Once a multi-modal corridor with streetcars and electrically powered trolleys, it has been reduced to a strictly vehicular traffic road, including a public bus route. On the east end of the corridor traffic volumes exceed average daily totals of 40,000 vehicles as a result of the location of entrance and exit ramps to Interstate 590.

Many of the homes developed along Monroe Avenue have been successfully adapted for



Mobil Station at Twelve Corners

business and retail uses, most having separate drives and their own parking lots which often encroach upon the sidewalk. There are challenges to maintaining a safe and inviting pedestrian environment, including proximity to the street, heavy traffic, crosswalk timing, and few, poor quality trees and landscaped areas.

Twelve Corners is a central node, having great potential as a town center. Currently the access and walkability of this area is limited due to excessive traffic from three main streets that intersect here (Monroe Avenue, Elmwood Avenue and Winton Road) and poor crossing connections.



Twelve Corners intersection



Public bench at Twelve Corners intersection

In recent years efforts have been made to enhance Brighton with banners and light posts, which are now aged and, in addition to the other signage, are inconsistent along the entire corridor, leaving people with limited "sense of place". The goal of the community members is to make Brighton and Monroe Avenue a destination with gateways defining its identity.

It is the hope of the RRCDC and others involved in the charrette process, that this report and Vision Plan will provide a cohesive approach to guide development and capitalize upon assets while addressing issues and challenges within the Town of Brighton.

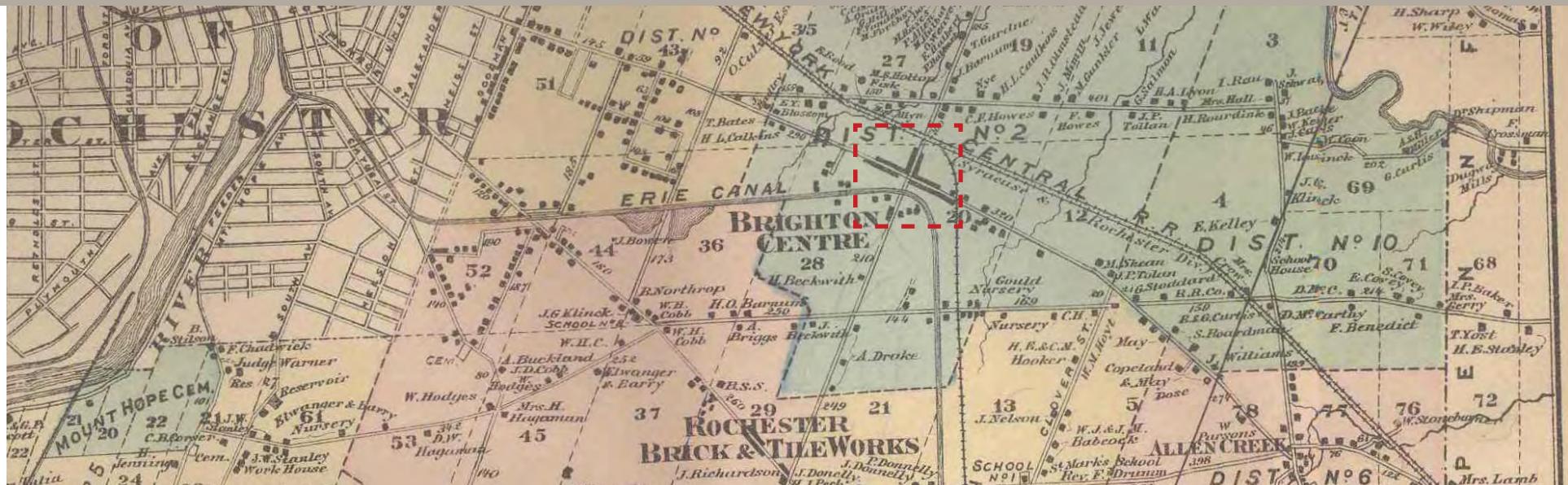


Parked cars along Monroe Ave



Typical curb cut width in the East End of Monroe Avenue

MONROE AVENUE HISTORY



1872 Map of Brighton (Brighton town center was located at the intersection of East Avenue and Winton Road) - Rochester Public Library

Legend:
— Town Center

Brighton's first residents were Native Americans, members of the Seneca tribe of the Iroquois confederacy. Their trails crossed the Genesee country, connecting Lake Ontario with the Genesee River. Settlers coming to the area after the Revolutionary War used these same trails to search out land for purchase.

Named by William Billinghurst for his home in England, Brighton stretched from the Genesee River on the west to Irondequoit Bay and Penfield on the east, from Lake Ontario on the north to the Henrietta town line. In 1814 the population of Brighton was 2,860. Nine years later, however, the village of Rochesterville outgrew its 100-acre site on the west side of the Genesee River and expanded across to the east and south, annexing 257 acres of Brighton territory and reducing the Town's population by 30%. As it emerged as a

city, Rochester continued to appropriate land from Brighton throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Monroe Avenue, one of Brighton's main corridors, has its origins in the earliest history of this area. It was named for the 5th president of the United States, James Monroe, who served two terms from 1817 to 1825. Because of its proximity to the Erie Canal, it appears that Monroe Avenue was developed earlier than the other two main routes that fanned out from the City of Rochester, East Avenue and Henrietta Road. Both of those roads remained rural and agricultural well into the nineteenth century. Monroe Avenue, in the area between the city and the canal crossing, was a more commercial corridor with shops, taverns, and businesses supplying the needs of the canal workers and travelers.

In 1856, Gideon Cobb established the Rochester Brick and Tile Company, a business that utilized the vast vein of clay that existed in central Brighton, occupying both sides of Monroe Avenue from Highland Avenue to close to the Twelve Corners. It included a factory complex, sheds, extruding machines, brick kilns, and railroad tracks as well as worker housing, in short, a huge manufacturing operation that shipped millions of bricks and drain tiles all over the U.S. and Canada. South and east of the Twelve Corners large farms extended to the Pittsford town line. Called the Rochester to Pittsford Plank Road, Monroe Avenue was a toll road, and traveling certain stretches of the road required a payment to the landowner for his maintenance of the highway.

Horses pulled farm wagons and carriages along Monroe Avenue, and later through the 1890s they pulled street cars along its route through Brighton. In 1900, Ellwanger & Barry granted a 50-acre right-of-way to the Rochester & Eastern Rapid Railway to construct an electrically powered, interurban line along the avenue extending from Rochester to Geneva via Brighton, Pittsford, and Canandaigua. The establishment of clean, convenient and regular public transportation from city to country was one of the factors that fostered the development of suburban housing developments along its path.

Brighton's housing development continued throughout the twentieth century with new people migrating from the city along the West Henrietta Road, Monroe Avenue and



Originally the Caple Tavern built in 1847- *Town of Brighton*



Leary Bros. Bar & Elmwood Hotel Circa 1900 at 12 Corners - *Town of Brighton*

Town of Brighton Monroe Avenue Corridor Community Vision Plan



Location of former Town Hall from the 1950's

East Avenue corridors. The avenue itself saw a mixture of commercial and residential building development. The early 20th century apartment houses met the needs of renters who wanted to live in Brighton and commute by streetcar to work in the city. There were also dual-purpose buildings with businesses on the first floor and apartments on the second floor.



Twelve Corners 1979 - Brighton Municipal Historian Collection



Monroe Avenue Streetcar operate from 1887-1910 - Town of Brighton



1902 PLAT MAP OF BRIGHTON

Legend:

- - - Town Center

- - - Monroe Avenue Trolley Line

This 1902 map of Brighton was published in the 1905 Lathrop & Pidgeon plat book of Monroe County. Horse-drawn street cars operated along Monroe Avenue from the city to Brighton in the 1880s through the 1890s. In 1900 Ellwanger & Barry granted a right-of-way to the Rochester & Eastern Rapid Railway to construct an interurban electric line from Rochester to Geneva. It ran along Monroe Avenue in Brighton. The dotted line on the 1902 map indicates the electric interurban line.

CHARRETTE COORDINATION AND PLANNING

Planning for the Brighton/Monroe Avenue Corridor Charrette began during the winter of 2010 and has been guided by the Brighton Steering Committee, composed of representatives from a variety of stakeholder groups working in conjunction with town staff and the RRCDC. They began meeting in February 2010, reviewed a time line and planning schedule, established the official charrette boundaries and focus areas and identified potential partners.

The Steering Committee met monthly with the RRCDC to assist in coordinating the charrette. During meetings and walking tours of the area with the RRCDC, much of the discussion and planning focused on the topics to be covered during the charrette. The steering committee defined the charrette focus areas and identified major design concerns based on an assessment of the existing assets and problem areas. The Steering Committee also helped to plan the structure of and coordinated the logistics of the event itself.

Planning and carrying out the Brighton/Monroe Avenue Corridor Charrette required many hours of intensive work on the part of the Steering Committee members. The time commitment from individuals was a necessary ingredient in the charrette process. RRCDC assembled a group of design professionals who reside in the town, who met in tandem and informed the design issues in the process.



Focus Area Group 5 at the Walkthrough

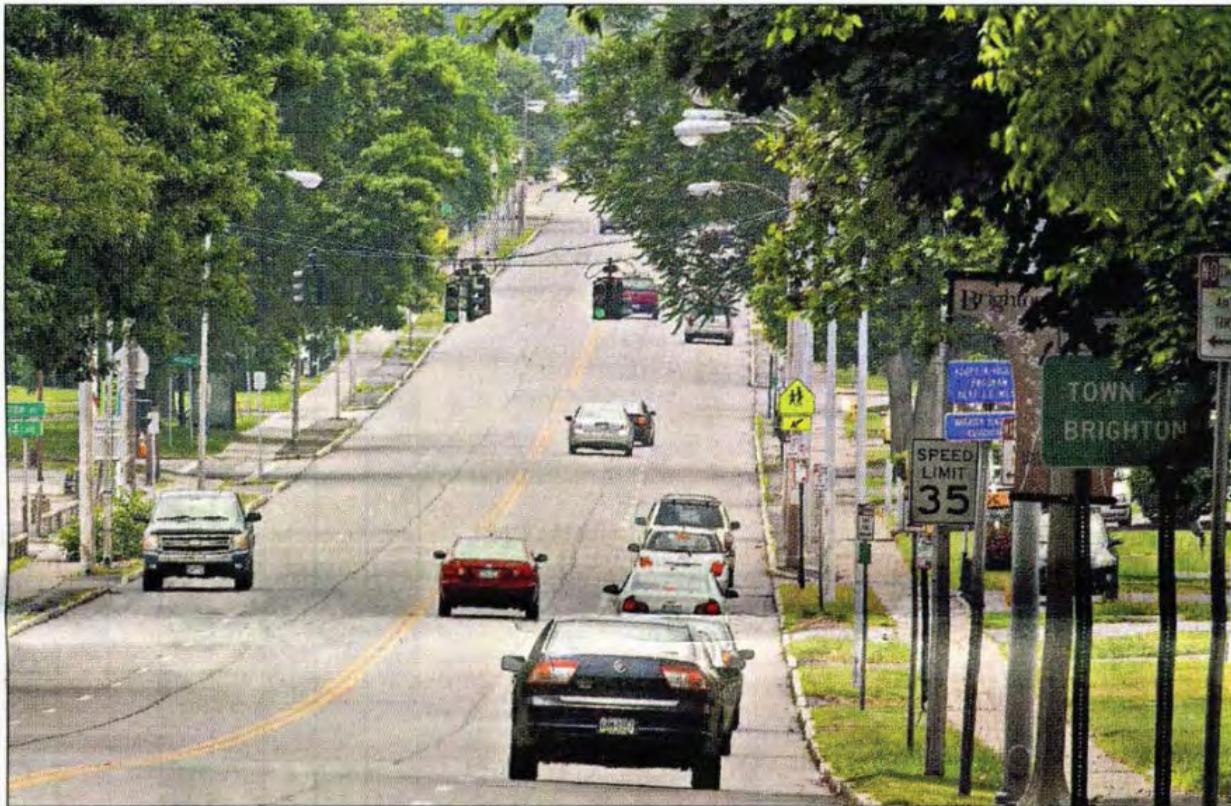


Paul Tankel talks to residents at Brighton Farmers Market



Roger Brown presents at Walkthrough

Walk and talk to point way to go on Monroe



WILL YURMAN staff photographer

People from the residential, business and architectural communities will walk along Monroe Avenue on Saturday to brainstorm ideas on how to redesign the look and function of the road.

Brighton devising future look of busy road

ASHWIN VERGHESE

STAFF WRITER

BRIGHTON — The future of Monroe Avenue could be at stake.

Should the busy commercial corridor get an invigorated town center? Improved access for pedestrians and bicyclists? More traffic-calming measures?

All of these possibilities and more are likely to be discussed at a charrette on Saturday that will bring together town leaders, business owners and residents.

“Everything is on the table,” said Town Board member Sheila Gaddis, chairperson of the charrette.

The charrette — a term for a design planning process — is scheduled to begin at Brighton High School. All community stakeholders are invited to participate.

Attendees will walk up and down the avenue and discuss ideas for improvements.

Those ideas will eventually be compiled into a report that will be used by the town in its next comprehensive plan update, Gaddis said.

“Whatever comes out of this will be a piece of that,” she said.

The charrette is Brighton’s first on Monroe since 1997, when zoning changes, new lighting and the con-

MONROE, PAGE 6A

THE CHARRETTE EVENT

The Charrette took place on Saturday, June 5, 2010 in the cafeteria of Brighton High School. The event fostered a discussion with nearly 70 neighborhood residents and stakeholders participating with the guidance of over 30 design professionals and facilitators. A great diversity was represented among the participants; ideas and input were gathered from business people, students and new and long-term residents alike.

The event began at 8:30am with several opening speakers. Introductory remarks were made by Sheila Gaddis, Chair & Town Council person and William Price, Co-Chair & Planning Board Vice-Chair. Brighton Historian, Mary Jo Lanphear shared a short history of the Monroe Avenue and Brighton area that included maps and historical

writings. Roger Brown, President of the Rochester Regional Community Design Center (RRCDC), gave a presentation and talk on principles of good design and Joni Monroe, Executive Director of the RRCDC, concluded the preliminary session with an overview of charrette day procedures.

Attendees were then dispersed into ten different assigned teams organized around predetermined focus areas for exploration during the Charrette day. Each team was comprised of at least two facilitating design professionals and several stakeholders. For an intense hour and a half the teams walked through their focus-areas, noting conditions in the field that they observed, and drafting comments and ideas that included improvements and potential changes and solutions.



Focus Group 3 discuss circulation at Twelve Corners



Participants listen to opening presentations at the June 5, 2010 Charrette



The teams returned to the cafeteria for a working lunch, and began drafting both written notes and visual renderings expressing the ideas they envisioned for their focus area. The Charrette event culminated in sharing ideas with everyone gathered while each team made a brief presentation to the entire group, explaining their proposals and solutions. Following the presentations, the RRCDC had the materials produced at the charrette scanned and transcribed the notes from each group; their recommendations are outlined in the following section.

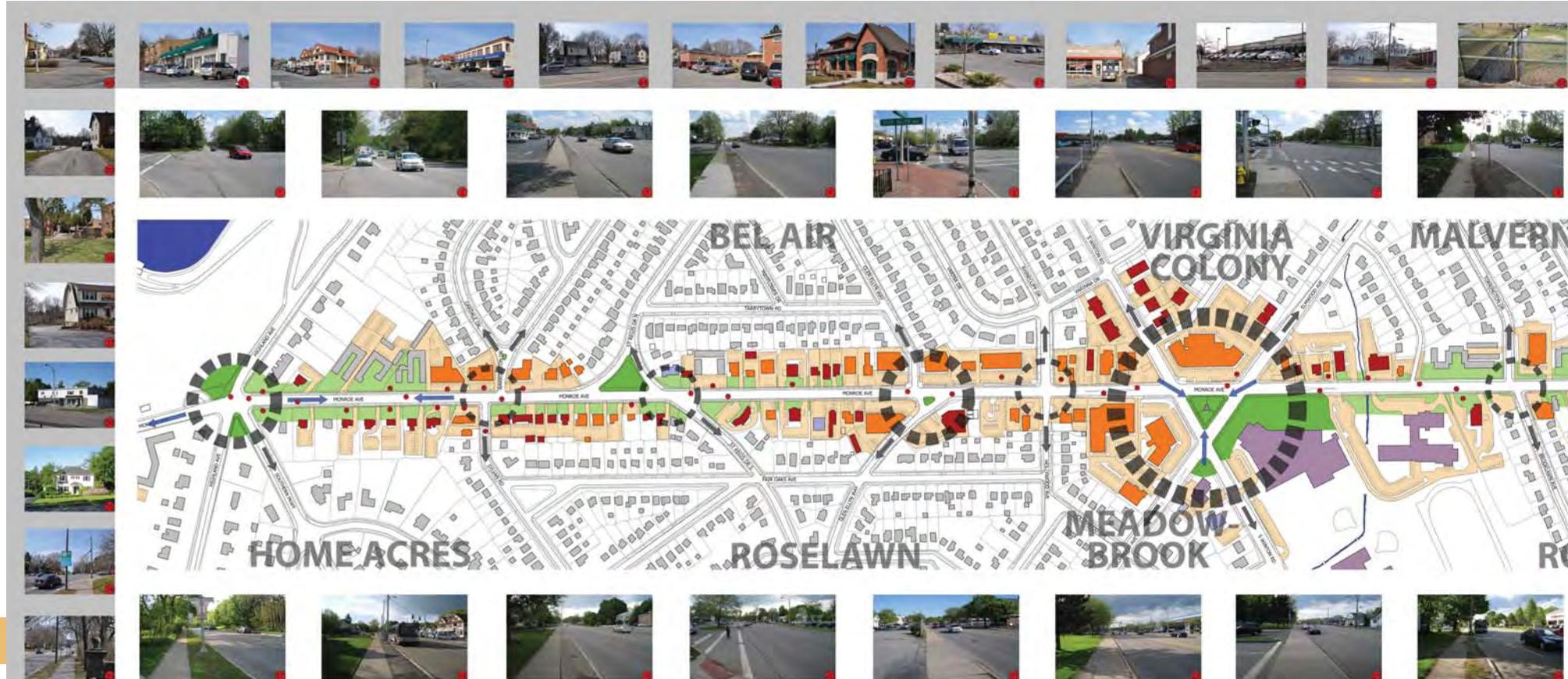


Charrette participant reviews base maps



Focus Group 1 look at the total corridor

CHARRETTE STUDY BASE MAP



BRIGHTON / MONROE AVENUE DESIGN CHARRETTE

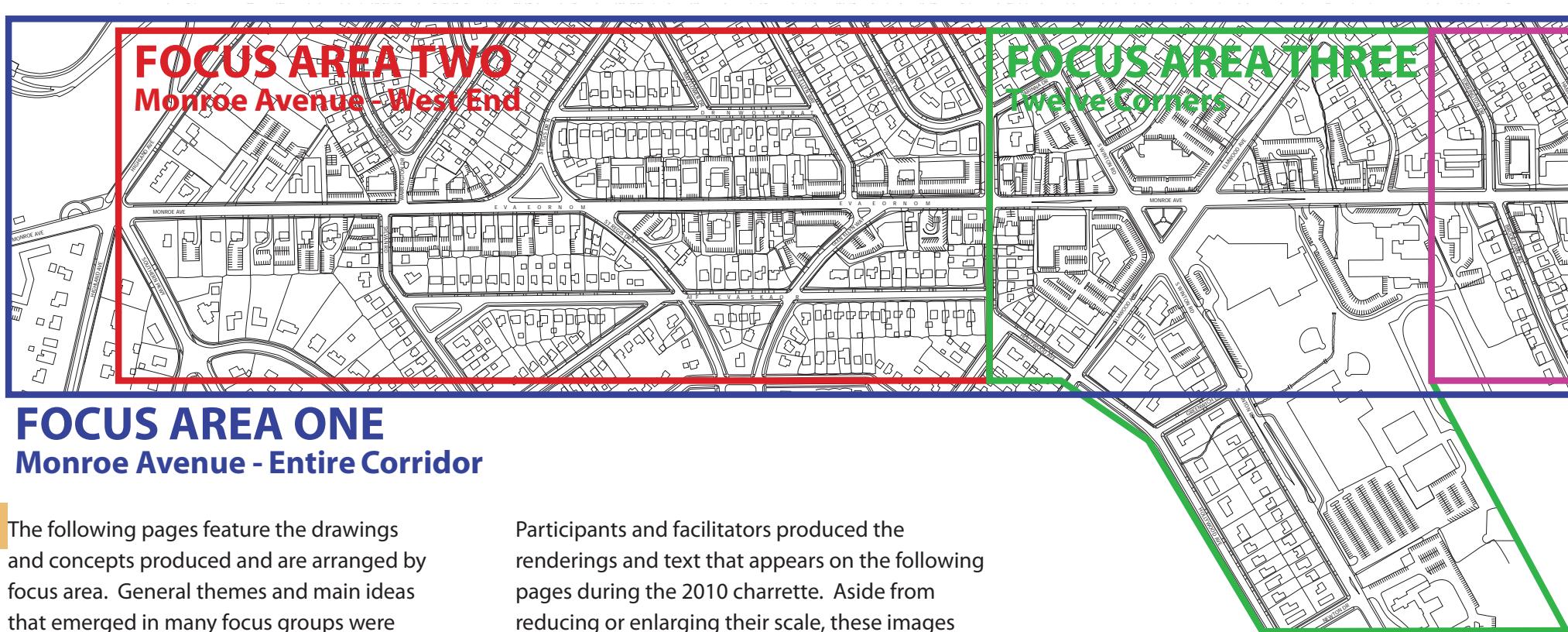


JUNE 5, 2010



FOCUS AREAS

The Town of Brighton Monroe Avenue Corridor Charrette focus areas, delineated on the map and described on the following page, were chosen by the Steering Committee prior to the event. The charrette participants broke into groups to discuss the assets and challenges for each of the areas identified.



The following pages feature the drawings and concepts produced and are arranged by focus area. General themes and main ideas that emerged in many focus groups were organized through the efforts of the Town of Brighton Steering Committee and the RRCDC. This information was developed into a set of Community Guiding Principles for Development. Specific suggestions for development are also illustrated and described.

Participants and facilitators produced the renderings and text that appears on the following pages during the 2010 charrette. Aside from reducing or enlarging their scale, these images are unchanged from their genesis during the charrette.

Focus Area One

Monroe Avenue Entire Corridor- The area includes the whole length of Monroe Avenue from the intersection at Highland Avenue to the Pittsford Town Line just east of the Clover/Monroe intersection.

Focus Area Two

Monroe Avenue West End- This area extends from the border with the City at Highland Avenue to Hollywood Avenue. Two distinct sub-areas include 1) Highland to Grinnell's Restaurant and 2) Grinnell's Restaurant to the west side of Twelve Corners.



Focus Area Three

Twelve Corners- The intersections at "Twelve Corners" and the contiguous areas that frame it including commercial, residential and school campuses.

Focus Area Four

Monroe Avenue- Mid Section- The area between Twelve Corners and Edgewood Avenue. Two distinct sub areas include 1) East Twelve Corners to Brooklawn School Zone and 2) Brooklawn Drive to Edgewood Avenue.

Focus Area Five

Monroe Avenue East End-This includes the area between Edgewood Avenue and the Pittsford border. Two distinct sub areas include 1) Edgewood Avenue to west side of Expressway and 2) West side of Expressway to Clover Street/Pittsford border.

FOCUS AREA ONE: MONROE AVENUE - ENTIRE CORRIDOR

Focus Groups 1A and 1B

Community Ideas:

Reduce curb cuts

- Lay sidewalk in front of buildings (1A)
- Enlarge pedestrian/bike zone
- Improve crosswalks and signals

Road Design

- Slow traffic
- Multimodal transportation – plan/ accommodate for
- Reduce lanes (1B)
- Take advantage of existing width (1A)
- Bus lanes

Parking Management

- Parking in back of buildings
- Public Parking
- Shared Parking (Businesses)

Green Space

- Street trees, planters
- Pocket Parks
- Uncover creek

Aesthetics, Consistent, Unique

- Furniture, Banners, Lights
- Guidelines for signage\

Unique Town Square

Preserve Historic Features

Enhance Economic Vibrancy

- Mixed Use
- Increase density by building up
- Keep/Enhance diversity of businesses

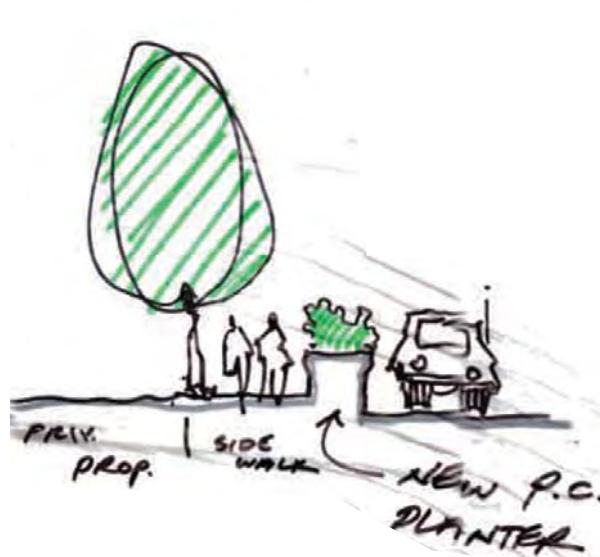


Focus Group 1 reviews their design ideas for the Total Corridor

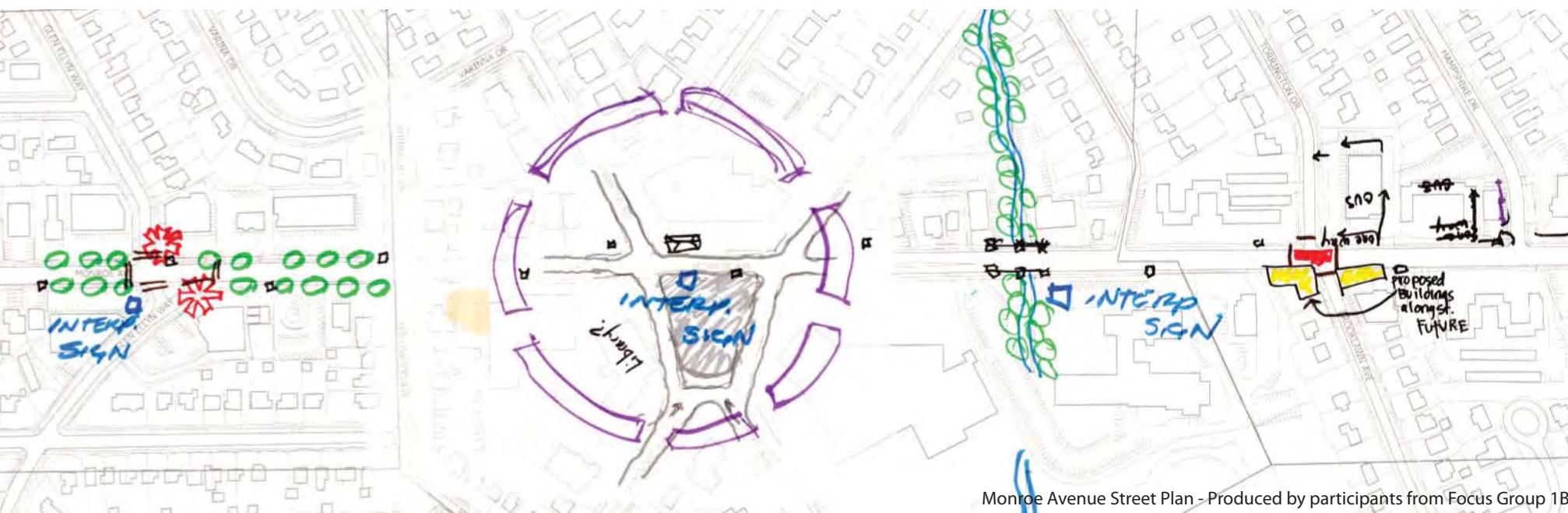




FOCUS AREA ONE



Monroe Avenue Street Section - Produced by participants from Focus Group 1B



Monroe Avenue Street Plan - Produced by participants from Focus Group 1B





FOCUS AREA ONE



Monroe Avenue Street Plan - Produced by participants from Focus Group 1B



Monroe Avenue Street Plan - Produced by participants from Focus Group 1A

FOCUS AREA TWO: MONROE AVENUE - WEST END

Focus Groups 2A and 2B

Community Ideas:

"Green" Design (2A)

Walkability

- Reduce curb cuts
- Delineate a route- separate from vehicular traffic
- Improve crosswalks and signals

Bike lanes

Green Space

- Street trees, planters
- Off street green/art spaces

Parking

- In back of buildings
- Shared access/shared parking

Alternative Transportation

- Public transit, walking, bikes, shared cars

Traffic Control (2B)

- Slow Traffic
- Alter lanes, median

Aesthetics, Consistent, Unique

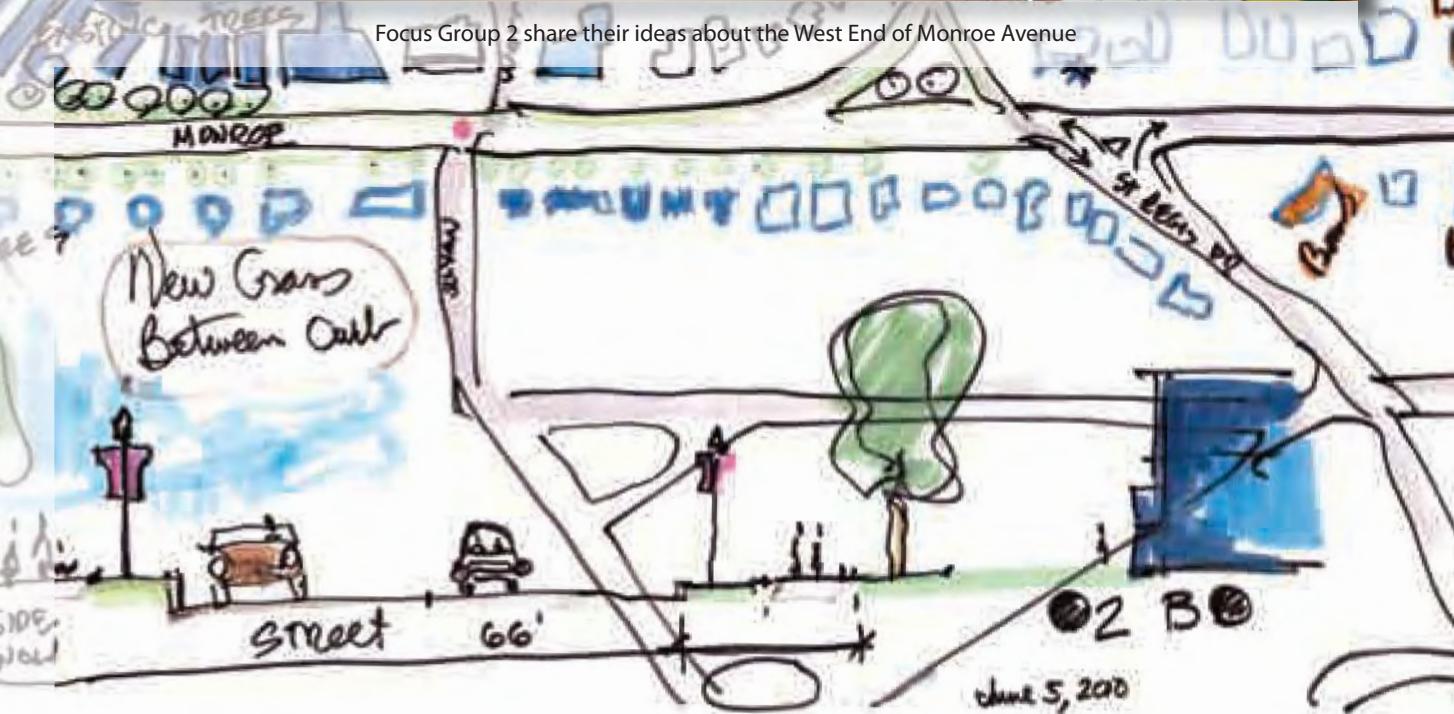
- Distinctive design guidelines
- Gateways – to town, to neighborhoods (2B)

Vibrant Commercial District (2B)

- Mixed Use
- Attractive
- Encourage business patronage/Protect residential character

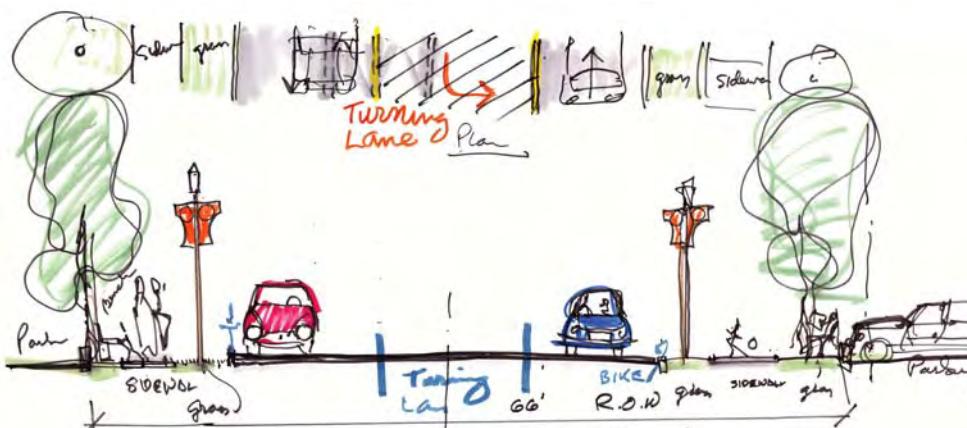


Focus Group 2 share their ideas about the West End of Monroe Avenue

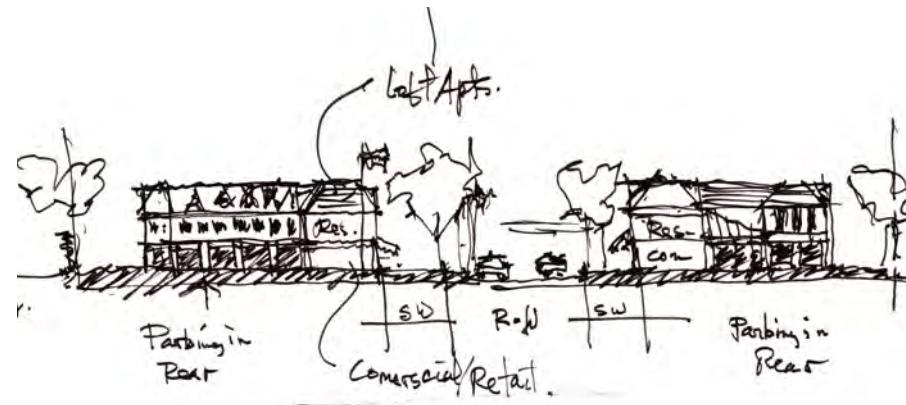




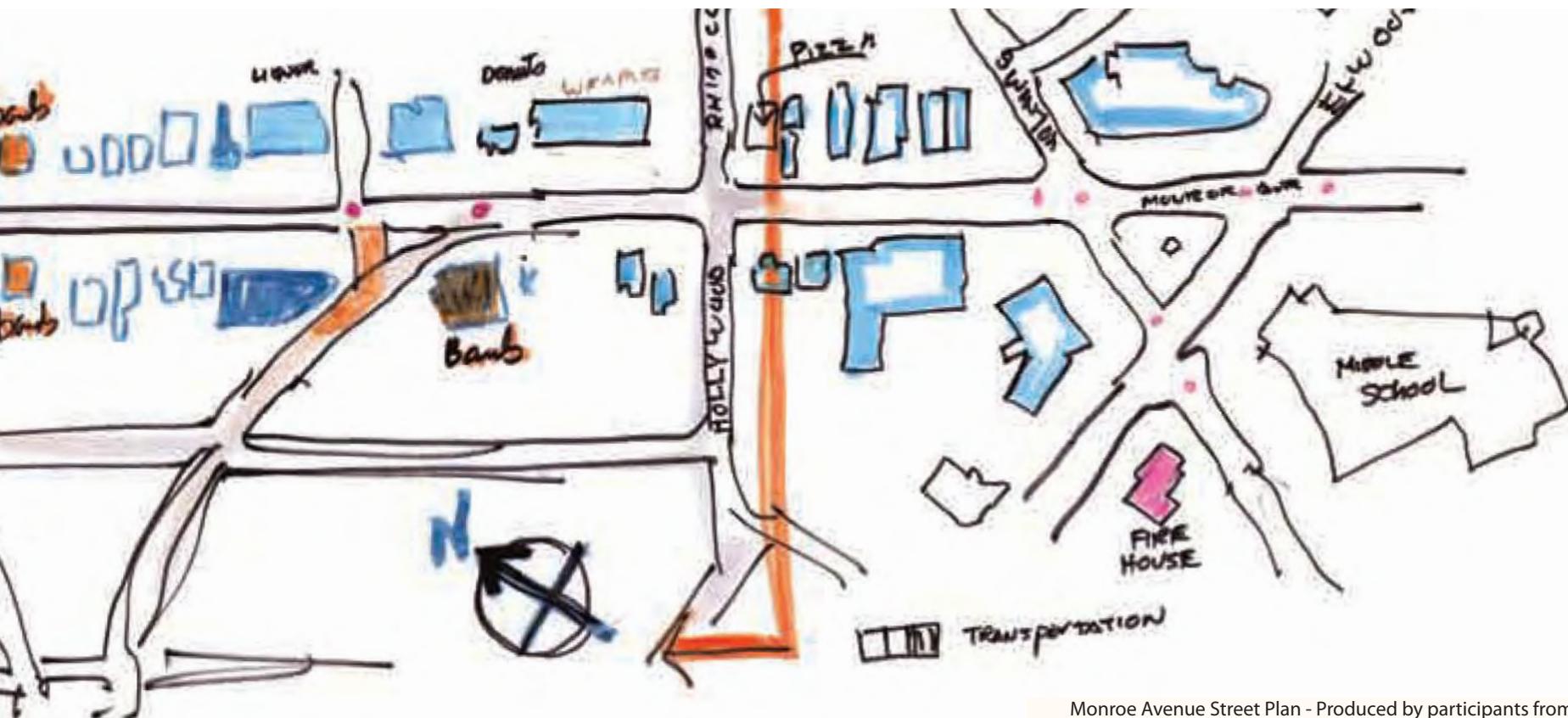
FOCUS AREA TWO



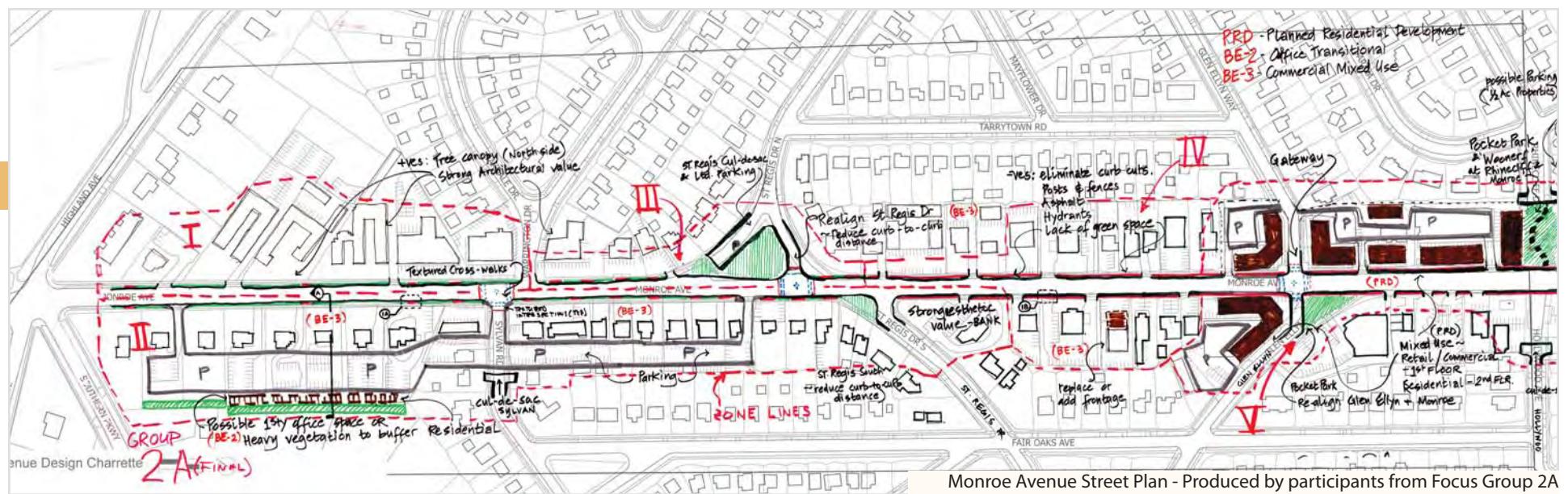
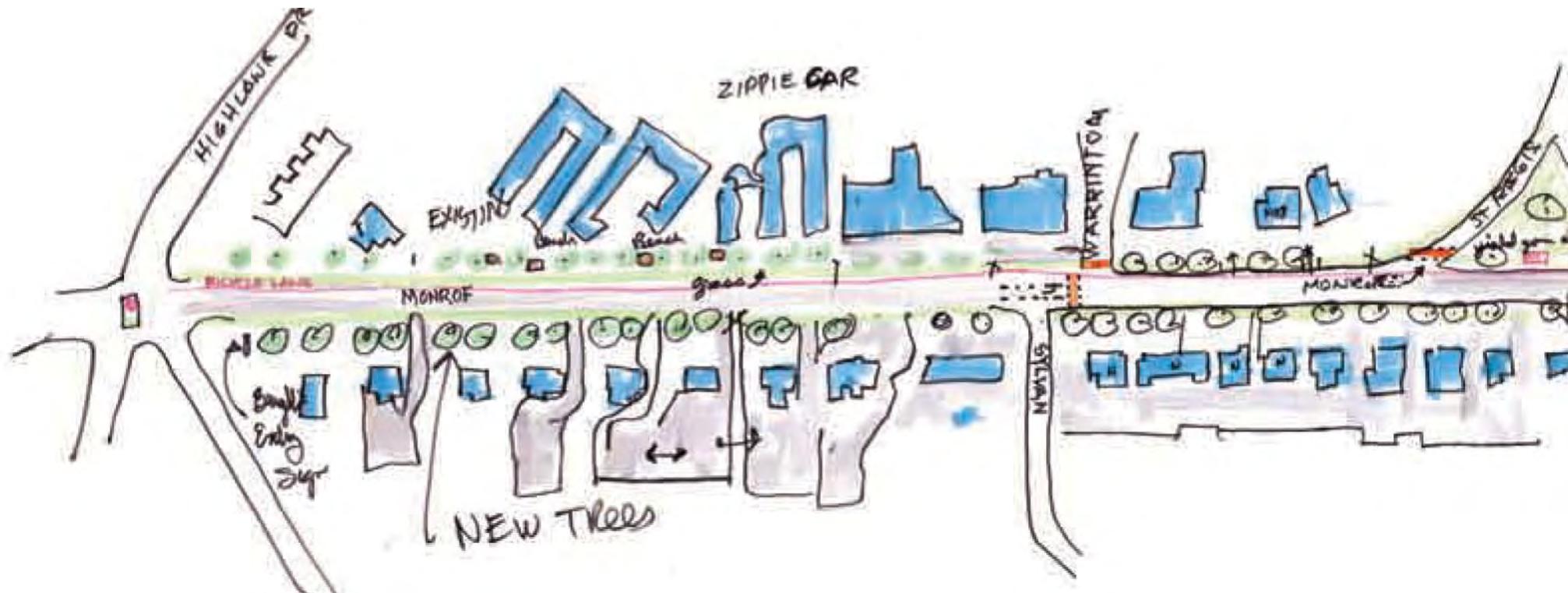
Monroe Avenue Street Section - Produced by participants from Focus Group 2B



Monroe Avenue Street Section - Produced by participants from Focus Group 2A



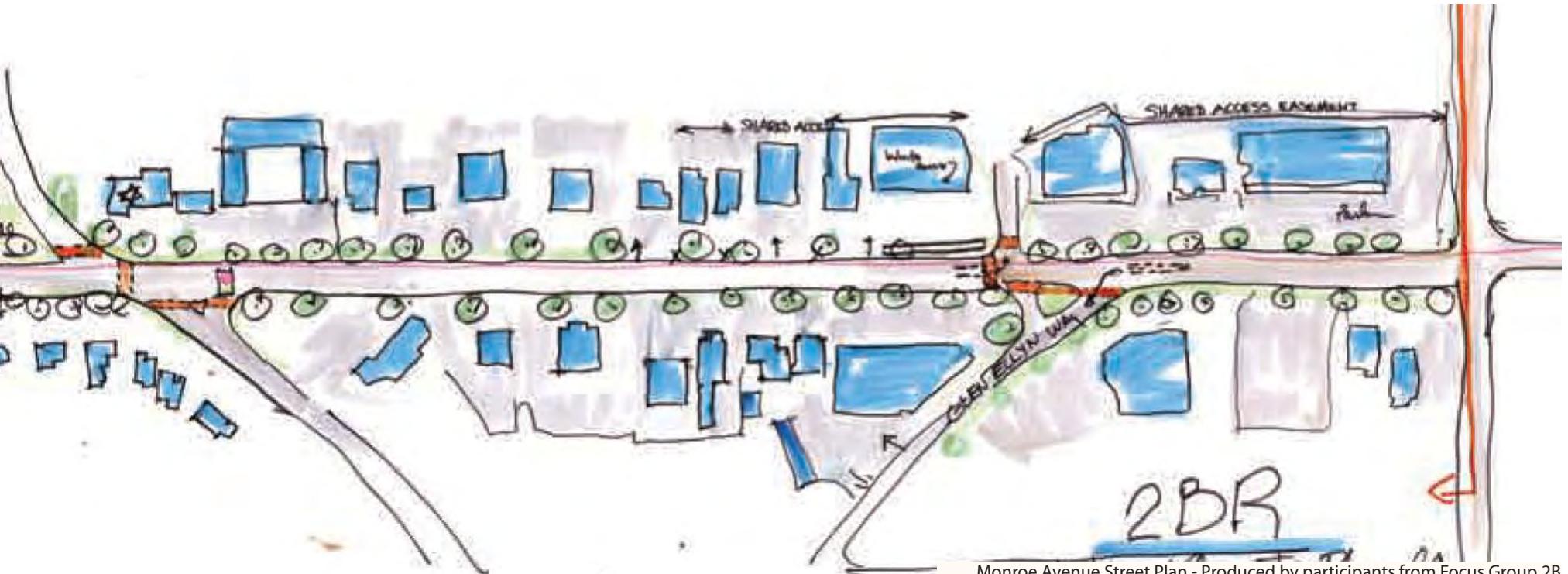
Monroe Avenue Street Plan - Produced by participants from Focus Group 2B



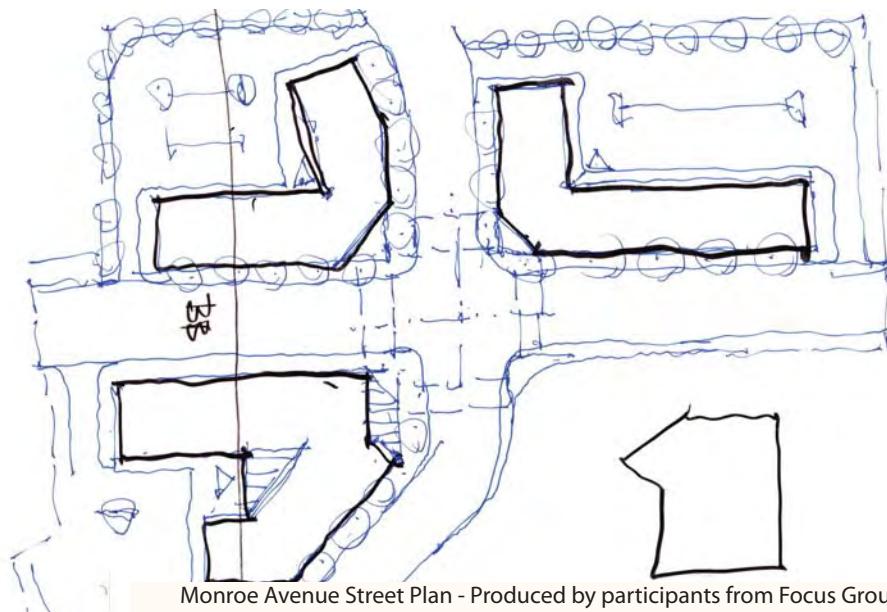
Monroe Avenue Street Plan - Produced by participants from Focus Group 2A



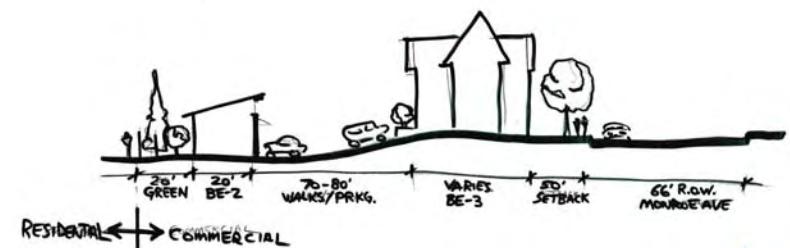
FOCUS AREA TWO



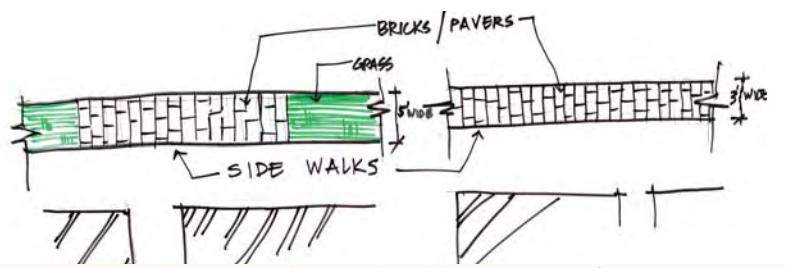
Monroe Avenue Street Plan - Produced by participants from Focus Group 2B



Monroe Avenue Street Plan - Produced by participants from Focus Group 2A



Monroe Avenue Street Section - Produced by participants from Focus Group 2A



Monroe Avenue Street Plan - Produced by participants from Focus Group 2A

FOCUS AREA THREE: TWELVE CORNERS

FOCUS GROUPS 3A AND 3B

Community Ideas:

Themes:

- Pedestrian Access
- Traffic Calming
- Bicycle Access
- Green Space
- Density/Mixed Use
- Parking Plan

Short-term Solutions:

Collaborate with Businesses, Town and DOT

Traffic Calming

- Reduce traffic lanes
- Add speed bumps
- Change speed- add "Slow Down" signs
- No left-turn from plaza

Banners

Gateway signage/archway to 12 Corners

School involvement

Middle School planting

Green space

Tree plantings along sidewalks
All green center/gardens

Consistent lighting

Pedestrian Access

Crosswalk/signals
Reduce curb cuts

Parking Plan – shared/efficient (tax incentive)

Development

Research zone code- multi-story, mixed-use
Commercial/residential Expansion



Focus Group 3 engage in a discussion during lunch

Long-term Solutions:

Relocate Monroe Avenue Development

New Skyline – Residential Density 3-4 story
apartments over existing
commercial

Consider impact of new East. Ave Wegman's
Gas Station Relocation/Enhancement

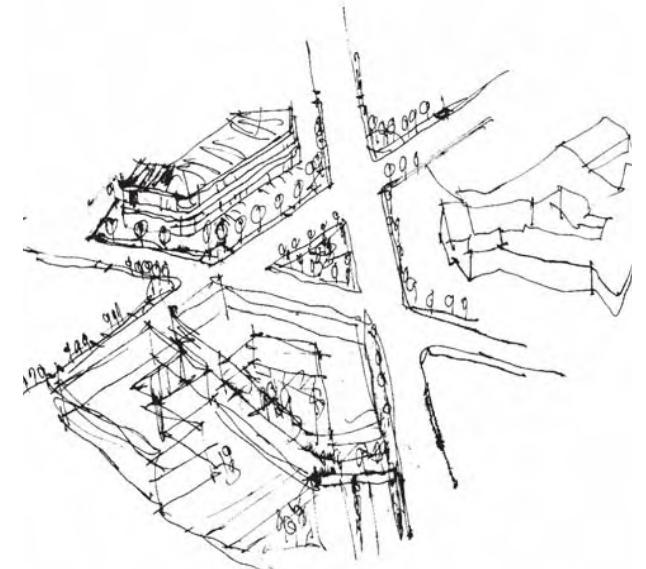
Internal green space

Parking

Underground Parking/tunnel/shops/
walkway
Reconfigure parking- shared/ reduce curb cuts

Bike lanes

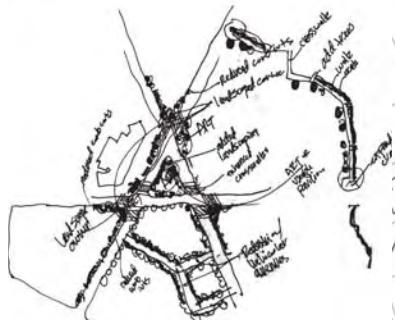
Moving sidewalk /Sidewalk relocation



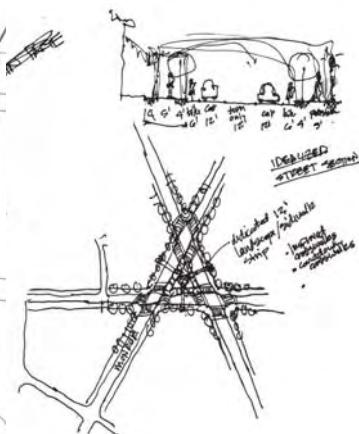
12 Corners Axonometric -
Produced by participants from Focus Group 3A



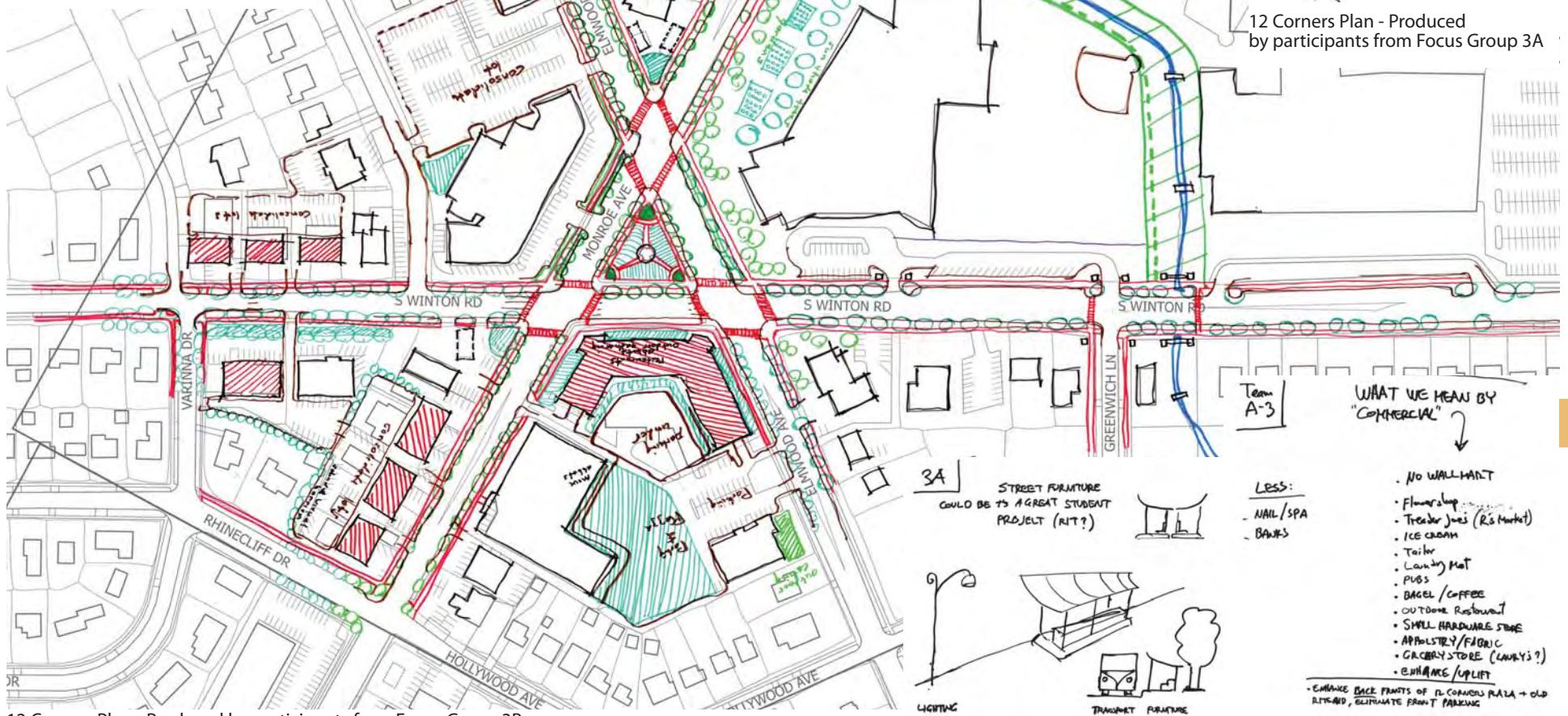
FOCUS AREA THREE



12 Corners Plan - Produced by participants from Focus Group 3A



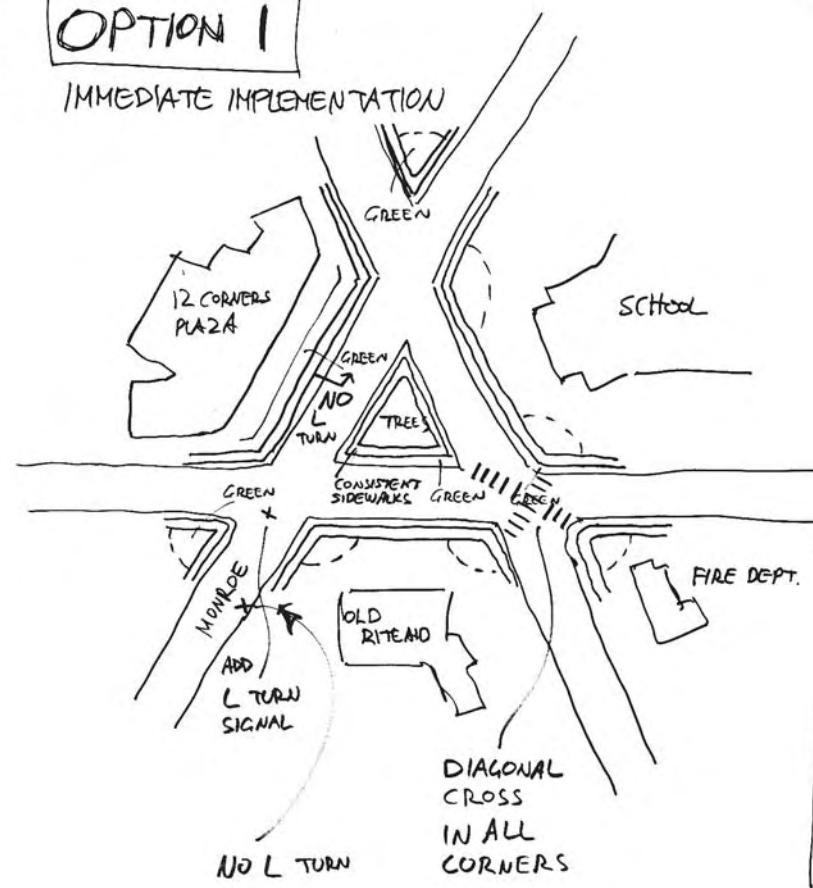
12 Corners Plan - Produced by participants from Focus Group 3A



3A

OPTION 1

IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION



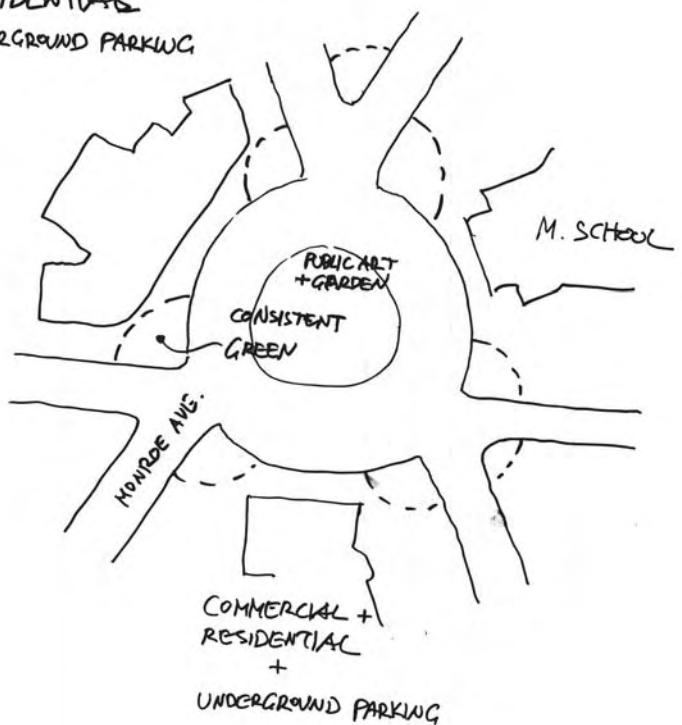
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3A

OPTION 2

5 YEARS

COMMERCIAL (STR. LEVEL)
+ RESIDENTIAL
+ UNDERGROUND PARKING

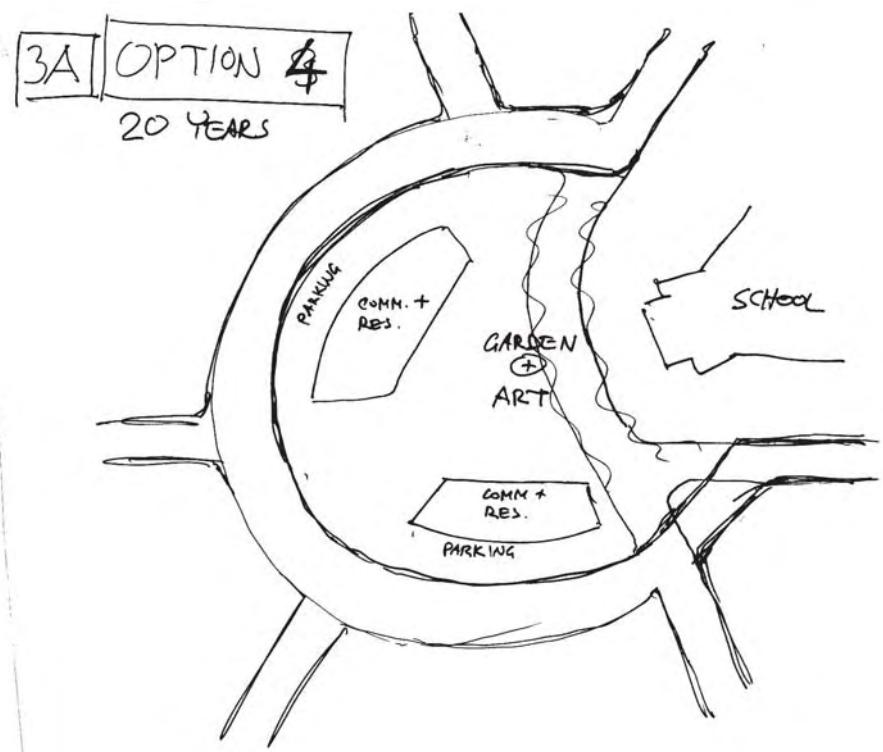
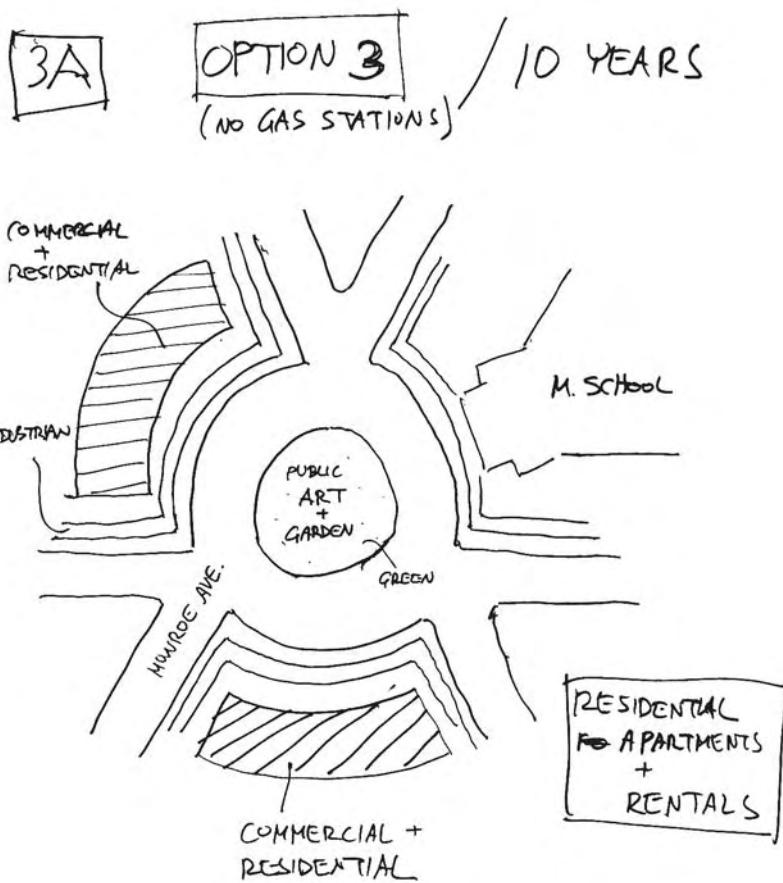


12 Corners Plan - Produced by participants from Focus Group 3A

12 Corners Plan - Produced by participants from Focus Group 3A



FOCUS AREA THREE



12 Corners Plan - Produced by participants from Focus Group 3A

12 Corners Plan - Produced by participants from Focus Group 3A

FOCUS AREA FOUR: MONROE AVENUE - MID SECTION

FOCUS GROUPS 4A AND 4B

Community ideas:

"Monroe Greenway: Thoroughfare and Destination"

Safety - People- Children!

Pedestrian Friendly

- Increased crossing opportunities- Mid-Block Crossing
- Widen sidewalks
- Separate walkers from cars
- Introduce/define crosswalks with color and texture
- Traffic calming devices
- Push to walk- countdown display
- Enclosed bus stops

Points of Interest:

- Creeks -> Parks
- Northumberland Entrance
- Allen's Creek (both sides of Monroe)

Road Issues

- Reduce speed
- Reduce back-ups going east
- Change to 3 lanes
- Turning lane
- Bicycle lane each way
- ID entries to neighborhoods
- Median green islands

Parking

- Share/consolidate parking
- In front (screened/softened)
- In back (where possible)
- Reduced curb cuts



Focus Group 4 pinpoint areas of concern at Monroe Avenue Mid Section

Development

- New -Brown Fields to multi-use buildings
- Increase Diversity- Affordable housing
- Re-Development- Use design guidelines/standards
- Mixed use

Historically respectful

- Public transit
- Bus stops
- Electric shuttle

Aesthetics

- Softer
- Underground power lines/Bury existing
- Screen rooftop HVAC
- Consistent image – awnings/ graphics
- Gateways to neighborhoods

Green Space

- More trees
- Pocket parks
- Shadier



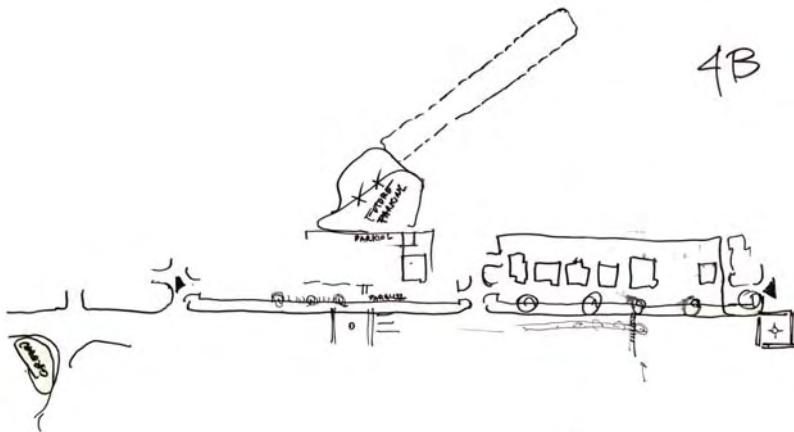
FOCUS AREA FOUR



Monroe Avenue Street Plan - Produced by participants from Focus Group 4A

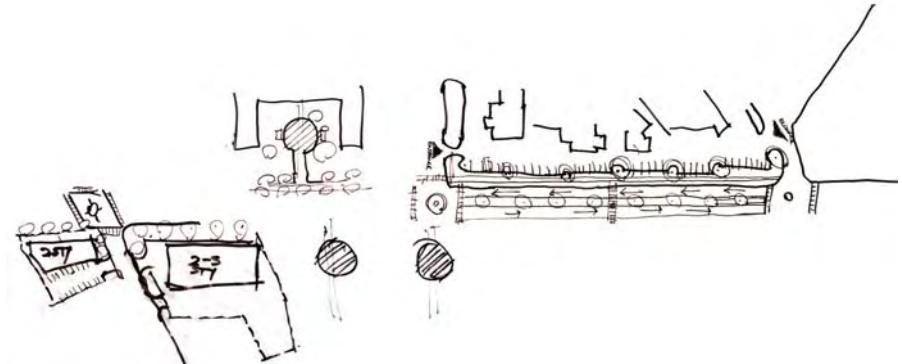


Monroe Avenue Street Plan - Produced by participants from Focus Group 4B

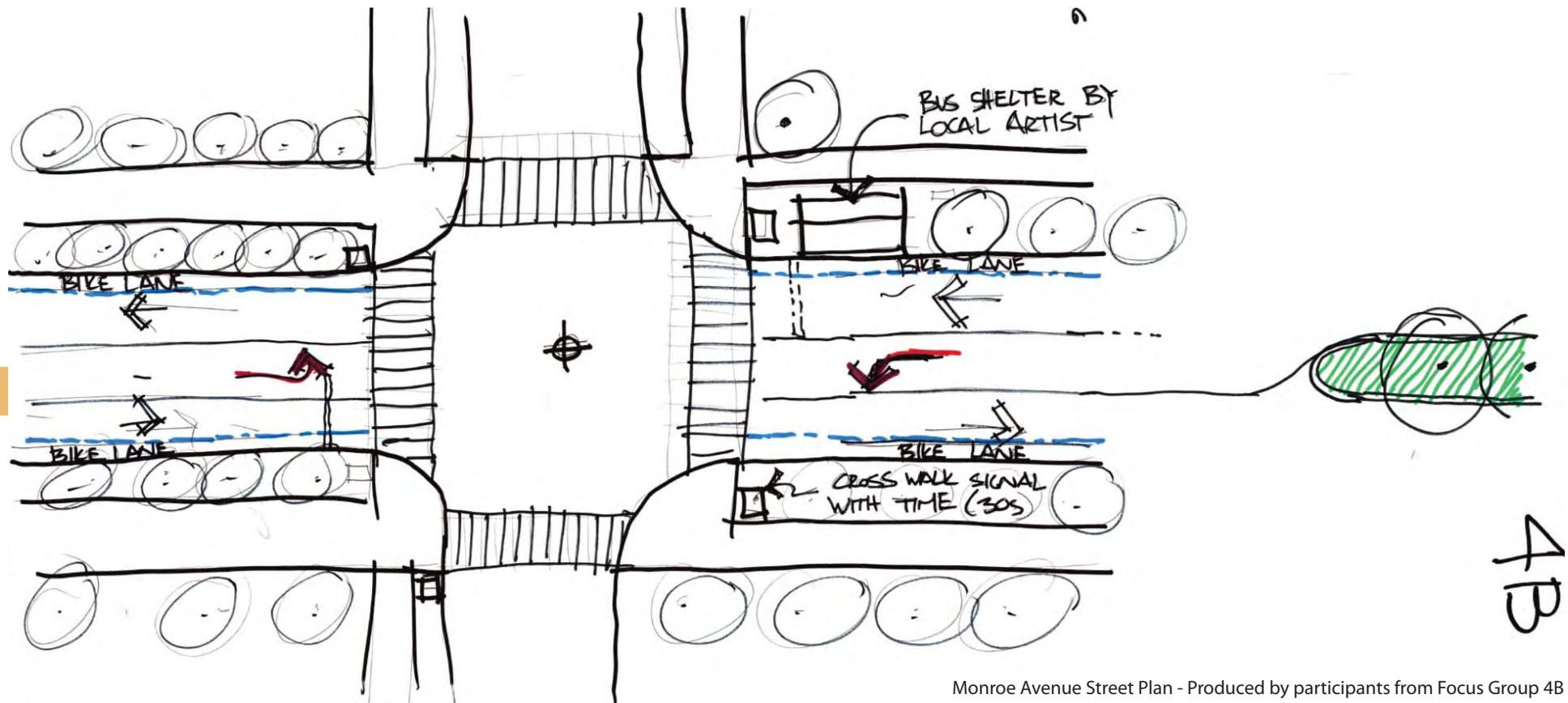


4B

Monroe Avenue Street Plan - Produced by participants from Focus Group 4B



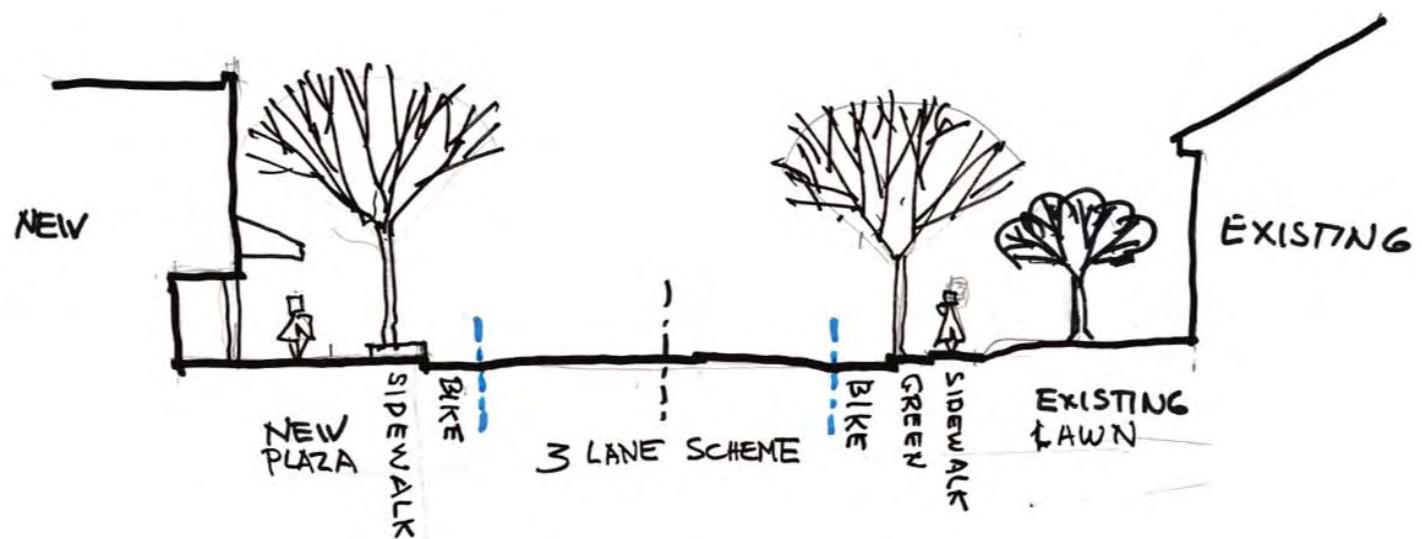
Monroe Avenue Street Plan - Produced by participants from Focus Group 4B



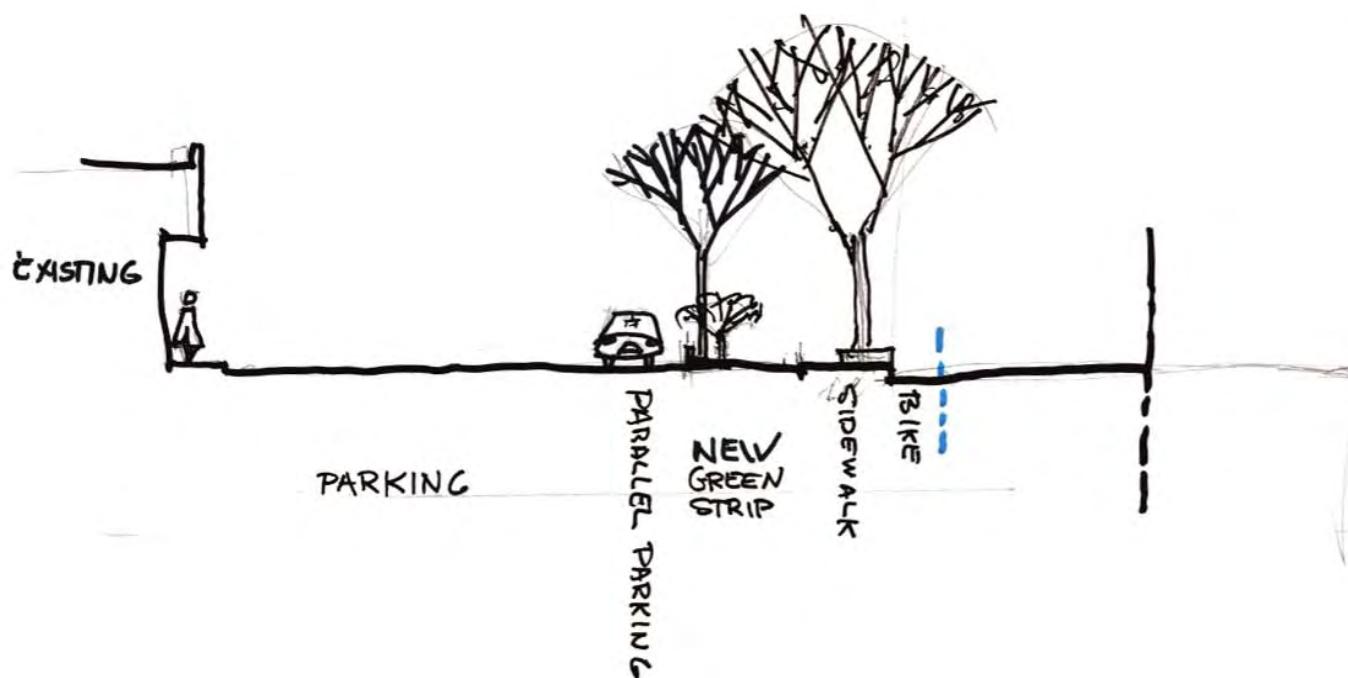
4B

Monroe Avenue Street Plan - Produced by participants from Focus Group 4B

FOCUS AREA FOUR



Monroe Avenue Street Section - Produced by participants from Focus Group 4B



Monroe Avenue Street Section - Produced by participants from Focus Group 4B

FOCUS AREA FIVE: MONROE AVENUE - EAST END

FOCUS GROUPS 5A AND 5B

Community Ideas:

"Small town feeling"

Traffic Calming

- Change curb lines
- Medians
- New traffic signals
- Visual cues -Add "pre-alert" road signs for intersections
- Reduce Speed
- Investigate by-pass opportunities (alternative routes)

Pedestrian/Bike friendly- Overall Safe

- Improve/Create crosswalks- Count down signals
- Continuous, uniform sidewalks/bikeways
- Handicap curbs
- Bike Path

Alternative modes of transportation

Safety of traffic IN/OUT of commercial properties

Gateway

- Allen's Creek
- Clover
- Allen Creek "plank bridge" (historical)

Aesthetic Improvement

- Consistent street theme
- Connected, greener, quieter, beauty
- Bus stops/benches/landscaping /lighting
- Area "identity"
- Bury power lines
- Signage/Banners
- Clean up-Green up



Focus Group 5 look at possible solutions for sprawl area at the East End of Monroe Avenue

Green Space

- Develop Allen's Creek area
- General Maintenance
- All season recreational trail
- Green medians
- Green strips, trees

Development

- Design Guidelines – architectural
- Mixed use- 2nd story
- Zoning code revisions

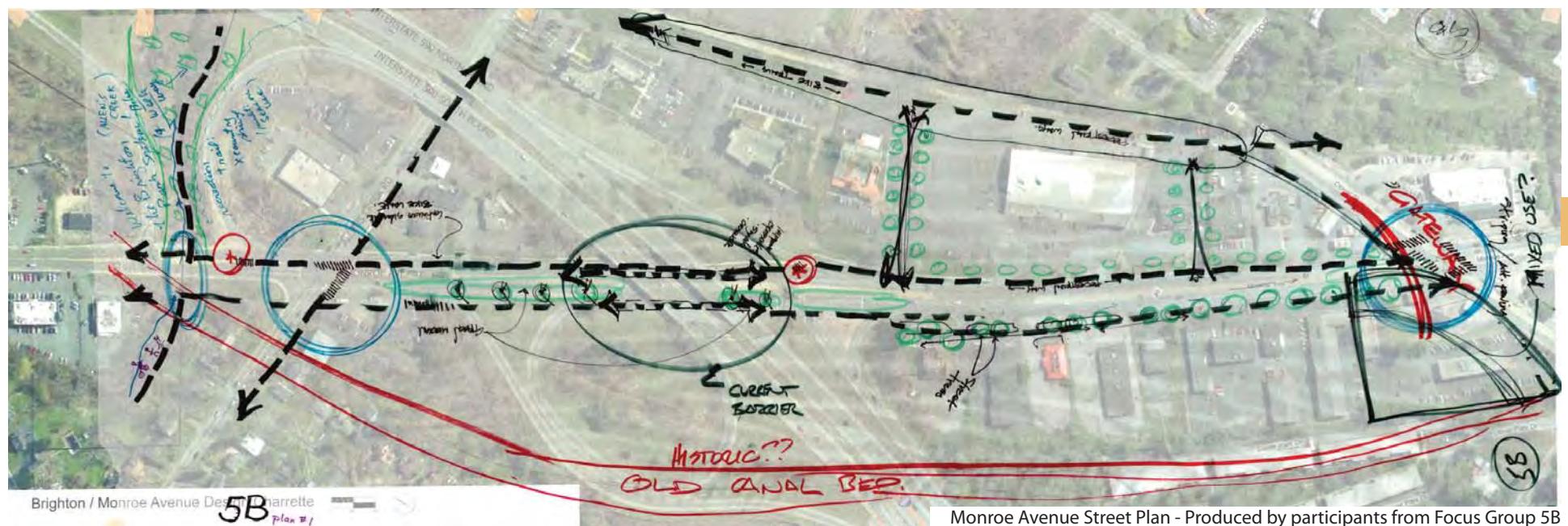
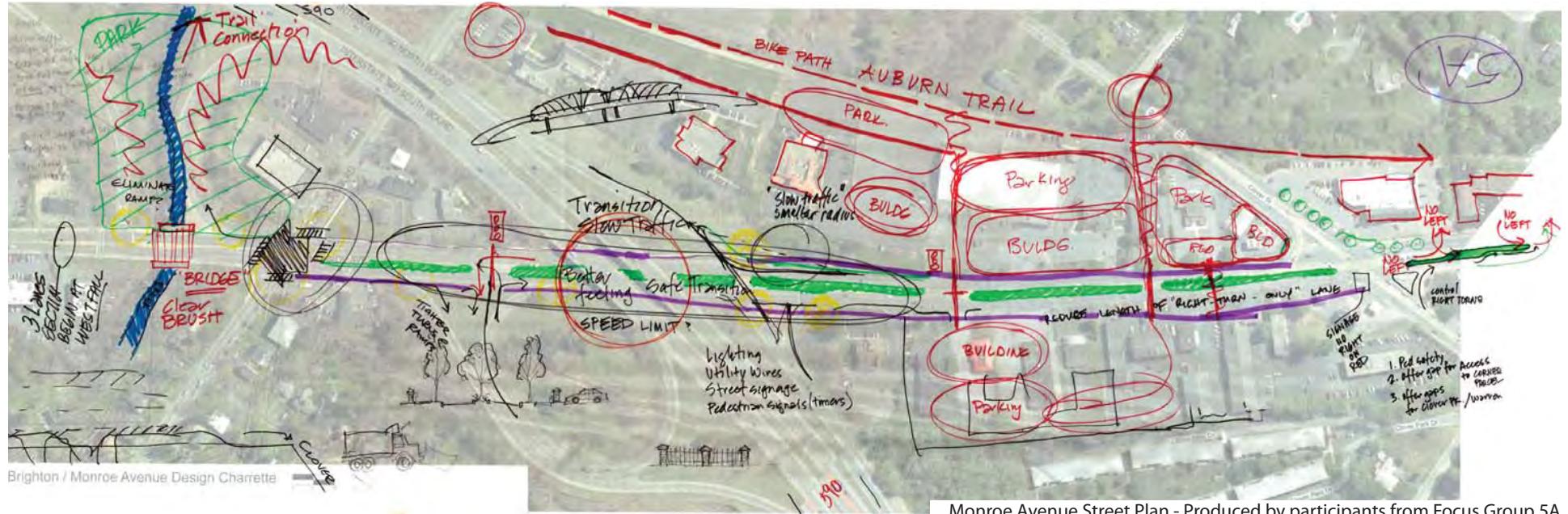
Parking/Commercial Access

- Property inventory- detailing usage/ conditions/potentials
- Combined parking
- Parking in back



Monroe Avenue Street Plan - Produced by participants from Focus Group 5B

FOCUS AREA FIVE



CHARRETTE RESULTS

The charrette brainstorming resulted in a wide array of thoughtful and creative suggestions for future development of the Town of Brighton Monroe Avenue Corridor. The collaborative effort between citizens and design professionals produced diverse insights, critiques, and suggestions regarding the corridor's public realm and built environment.

While each focus group concentrated on different physical areas of the corridor and developed unique approaches to their particular design challenges, commonalities and similar themes wove throughout many of the groups' ideas and outcomes



Focus Group 4 presents to the public at the conclusion of the charrette

Suggestions come in for Monroe Avenue

ASHWIN VERGHESE
STAFF WRITER

BRIGHTON — A charrette held Saturday to discuss Monroe Avenue resulted in suggestions to add more green space to the busy corridor, reduce traffic from four lanes to three and give storefronts a uniform aesthetic look.

The charrette — a term for a design planning process — brought together town leaders, residents, business owners and representatives of the Rochester Regional Community Design Center.

They met at Brighton High School, divided into groups and went onto the avenue to discuss improvements.

"It was pretty fantastic," said Town Board member Sheila Gaddis, who led the charrette.

More than 100 people attended the event, which Gaddis said exceeded the expectations of 60 to 90 people.

The ideas that came out of the charrette will eventually be incorporated into a report that the town will use in its next comprehensive plan update, which could be next year.

Gaddis said some of the suggestions could be accomplished fairly easily.

"I'm not the only Town Board member," she said, "and I can't guarantee that, but certainly some of the changes were rather simple," such as adding green space, getting businesses to share parking and cleaning up broken asphalt.

Another meeting to add more ideas will be held July 15 at Town Hall. □

AVERGHESE@DemocratandChronicle.com

VISION PLAN

The Brighton/Monroe Avenue Corridor Vision Plan is based on the ideas generated in the Brighton/Monroe Avenue Community Charrette held on June 5th and the feedback gathered at the subsequent Town Hall meetings held on July 27 and November 4, 2010. The goal was to create a uniform vision for the corridor that addresses the concerns of the citizens and provides an outlook into the future of Monroe Avenue. This book will provide the community with a resource that it can employ when explaining strategies, seeking funding, and encouraging investors to support development ideas. A documented Vision Plan will be a valuable tool to guide the community and to refer to when issues develop regarding planning and zoning. It serves as a planning tool and a map for short and long term project development and implementation.

While the term "plan" is used to describe aspects of the vision, it should be recognized that this is not a static document. It will take additional planning and implementation over

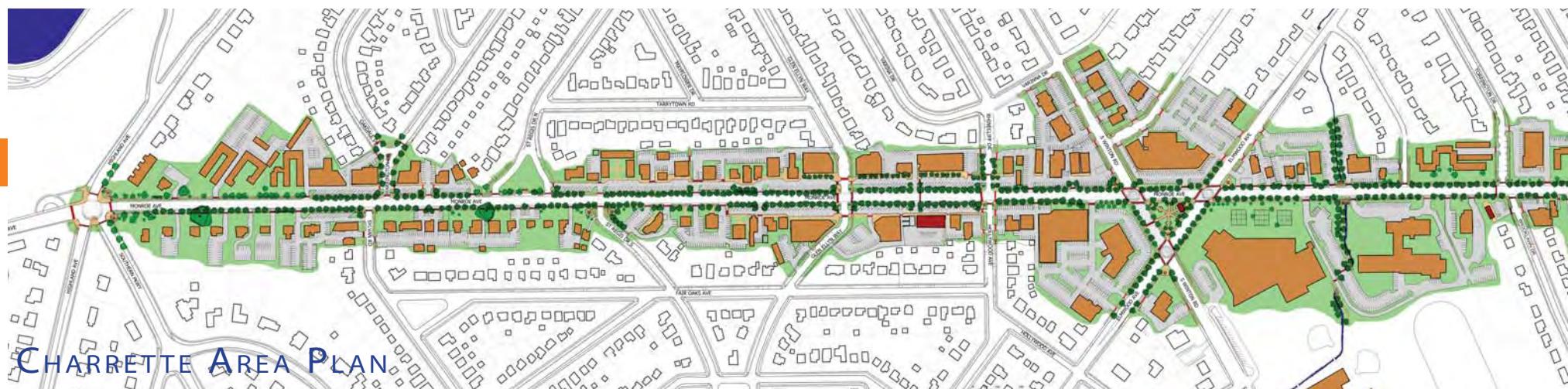
the course of ensuing years to achieve the vision generated here. From the beginning of the charrette process, idea generation and a focused direction toward improvements that could be implemented immediately were encouraged by the town and participants. During the course of time, conditions will change and new, unforeseen opportunities will arise. This document allows the flexibility to respond to these changes for the benefit of the entire community.

A recap of the charrette event was presented to the public at the Brighton Town Hall on July 27, 2010. Over 75 people attended this event where they had the opportunity to share their concerns and ideas for the Monroe Avenue corridor. Images from the charrette were displayed along with a list of the major concerns that were raised on that day. A great deal of feedback was shared and documented for further review and implementation.

After the Charrette, the ideas raised were translated into design concepts and drawn

over base maps, resulting in a Vision Plan for the Brighton/Monroe Avenue Corridor. During the first phase of post charrette work, volunteer architects residing in the town of Brighton worked with the RRCDC, on a monthly basis in consultation with the Town of Brighton Steering Committee, to refine and translate ideas raised during the charrette process. The steering committee reacted to and provided feedback about the design strategies presented to them and provided examples of past efforts and outcomes.

A draft plan for the charrette area was presented to the town's citizens on November 4, 2010. Each section of the avenue was shown using aerial photography alongside proposed improvements that illustrated the scope of the intervention. Residents were able to ask questions and provide feedback during the hour long discussion period following the presentation. These suggestions and concerns were documented and used to further refine the vision plan materials.



VISION PLAN OVERVIEW

The Vision Plan for the Brighton/Monroe Avenue Corridor is comprised of five final plans, renderings, and written descriptions provided in the following section of this report. The plans presented in this section of the report are as follows:

- Charrette Area Plan
- Plan A – West End (Highland Avenue to Hollywood Avenue)
- Plan B – Twelve Corners (Hollywood Avenue to Brooklawn Drive)
- Plan C – Mid Section (Brooklawn Drive to Edgewood Avenue)
- Plan D – East End (Edgewood Avenue to the Pittsford town boundary just east of Clover Street)

The Charrette Area Plan represents the entire Monroe Avenue corridor in the Town of Brighton extending from the City line on the west at Highland Avenue to the Pittsford line on the east and delineates the sub-area plan locations. Plans A through D present the proposed improvements for each sub-area of the corridor. The proposed improvements are color coded and a legend is provided to indicate the type of development or enhancement represented. A written summary outlines the major proposed improvements for the entire charrette area and each sub-area.

Several perspective images are used to show improvements to the street as well as one that shows the future of Twelve Corners. There are a number of images from precedents in other parts of the country that help illustrate the potential outcome and transformation of the corridor as well.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following guiding principles for development generated by the Brighton/Monroe Avenue Corridor Steering Committee provide the basis for the designs contained within the Vision Plan. A goal for the Charrette and Vision Plan was to create a plan for the future of Monroe Avenue, a major thoroughfare in the Town of Brighton. With the help of its residents and business owners and stakeholders, the town is looking forward to creating a future vision that is responsive to their desires, demands and needs.





MULTI STORY/MIXED USE BUILDINGS

CREATE A UNIFYING IDENTITY FOR THE CORRIDOR

New York State Route #31 extends east to west across the state and is known as Monroe Avenue as it runs from the Town of Pittsford to the City of Rochester and through the Town of Brighton. Creating a unifying identity for the corridor is one of the challenges in connecting the more traditional sections flanked by established residential neighborhoods that extend from the Highland Avenue boundary to the commercial area characterized by sprawl development near the freeway crossing and Clover Street. Several solutions to bridge this gap are as follows;

- Frame the pedestrian experience with a generous sidewalk separated from vehicle traffic and enhanced with landscaping treatment;
- Create regularity through a definable edge (from traditional layout at Highland Ave to suburban sprawl at Clover Street);
- Coordinate the location of available parking;
- Incorporate a Multi-way boulevard;
- Improve signage where needed.

CELEBRATE THE TOWN AS FAMILY COMMUNITY

In order to create a more connected community it is important to present opportunities for the citizens to physically interact with their environment. Along with national holidays and parades it's important to create an environment that places people in the foreground. The following steps would help achieve this goal:

- Focus on pedestrian safety through improving the pedestrian experience;
- Calm traffic utilizing the existing Right of Way and reducing the number of traffic lanes;
- Introduce bicycle lanes for transportation & recreation;
- Create mid-block crossings for pedestrians;
- Enhance Twelve Corners as a gathering space for civic activities.



ACCESS & PARKING MANAGEMENT

- Share parking in front and in back of commercial buildings;
- Plan for areas of new development, i.e. in sections between Allens Creek and Clover Street;
- Work with the Department of Transportation (DOT) in an effort to improve and update the roadway and sidewalks along the Monroe Avenue Corridor.

PROMOTE PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN RESIDENTS, BUSINESSES, GOVERNMENT, AND INSTITUTIONS

In order to achieve a coordinated vision representative of the charrette and post charrette design efforts it is crucial to be able to bring business owners together to create a better environment for commerce. At the same time government agencies including the DOT have to become participants in order to enable the vision to take shape. Several factors for success would be:



SAFETY

CREATE A SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE ENVIRONMENT

The safety of residents and especially students was the number one concern raised during the Charrette. The following are ways to create a more pedestrian-friendly environment:

- Utilize crosswalks to create more opportunities to traverse the avenue;
- Place a buffer zone between the sidewalk and through traffic, especially near schools;
- Provide bicycle lanes for the entire length of Monroe Avenue;
- Realign existing streets, resulting in a more defined green space and interface with pedestrians;
- Reduce curb cuts;
- Calm traffic by reducing lane widths where appropriate and channeling commercial traffic into parallel drives.



PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY



ECONOMIC VIBRANCY

ENHANCE THE AESTHETICS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE REALM

It was largely felt that some of the infrastructure along the boulevard was in need of upkeep and maintenance including alterations. This includes commercial storefronts and parking areas as well as the public realm consisting of sidewalks and green space. A few ideas to create improvements in the near term include:

- Reduce the number and size of curb cuts;
- Use landscaping and trees to beautify and screen parking areas from the street;
- Allow for new uses of Twelve Corners with a new configuration for Twelve Corners Park for live concerts, theater, and farm market uses;
- Improve building facades to create a more attractive streetscape;
- Move utility lines underground;
- Provide general maintenance of infrastructure.

PROMOTE ECONOMIC VIBRANCY AND OPPORTUNITY

Business will benefit if many of the community's concerns are addressed, and the resulting infrastructure changes will promote and make businesses more visible. Slowing down traffic and providing for alternative modes of transportation including pedestrian and bicycle traffic will improve not only visibility but accessibility. Some areas for improvement include the following:

- Improve accessibility to commercial spaces in order to increase visibility;
- Encourage shared parking to promote community partnerships and increase pedestrian traffic;
- Consider areas for new commercial development;
- Create a strategy for long-term zoning that will reinforce proposed changes and development;
- Preserve the history of the avenue;
- Find ways for businesses to effectively engage the street;
- Review existing zoning code to identify changes that will help businesses.



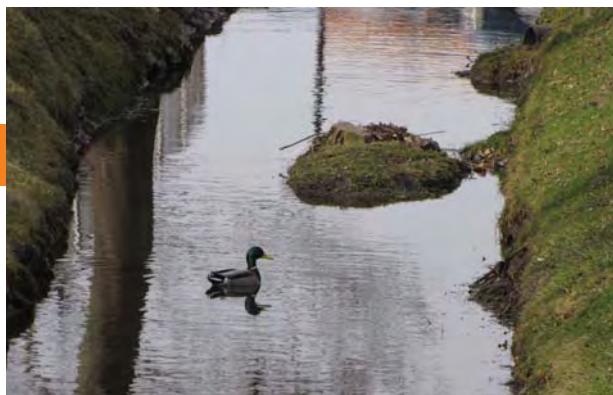
BIKE FRIENDLY



GREEN DESIGN

EMBRACE AND PROMOTE "GREEN"

Green, sustainable practices should be incorporated where possible along with an emphasis on greening the streets and sidewalks with landscaping and plantings. While planting new trees and installing planters helps beautify the area, there are also many positive side-effects for the environment. Some immediate effects are the increase in property values and economic vibrancy, as well as improved property appearance and enhanced perceptions of public safety. Some short-term steps to achieve these goals include:



GREEN SPACE

- Enhance and utilize the local resources of Buckland Creek and Allens Creek;
- Increase the number of trees along the avenue;
- Encourage best "green" practices for building and development;
- Promote public garden space including community gardens at the Middle School.

RECLAIM, ENHANCE, PRESERVE NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES AND CONTEXT

Brighton has a preponderance of natural and historic resources that should be celebrated and recognized. In addition to the two creeks which once served the fertile farming community and helped establish the town, there are buildings that should be preserved and highlighted. Today these resources are often neglected and forgotten. Opportunities for improvement include:

- Utilize existing natural resources such as the creeks and green spaces, providing access and improved landscaping and maintenance;
- Allow for greater use or resources through pathways, trails, and routes of circulation;
- Identify important landmarks and vistas;
- Recognize and celebrate historic buildings and sites using maps, signage and other markers.

RECOGNIZE AND SUPPORT THE DIVERSITY OF THE COMMUNITY

Many residences, now converted into commercial uses, have lost their relevance and historic character through a series of transformations over the years. The proximity of residential neighborhoods to the commercial edge lacks a distinct transition. The following will help invigorate the neighborhoods and commercial areas well:

- Utilize historically significant buildings to inform and provide context for the design standards for new and existing buildings;
- Integrate and highlight neighborhoods using gateways and improved access;
- Encourage mixed-use development.



ENHANCE TOWN CENTER



ALTER TRAFFIC PATTERNS

CREATE MAJOR AND MINOR GATEWAYS THAT PROMOTE THE IDENTITY OF THE TOWN AND ITS NEIGHBORHOODS

12 distinct neighborhood communities exist along the Brighton/Monroe Avenue Corridor. Each has a unique feel and often underdeveloped signage or landmarks that define where they start and end. These ideas will help define and create landmarks for the town:



HISTORIC PRESERVATION



MULTIMOBILE/ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORT

- Design a variety of gateway markers that will make each neighborhood unique and identifiable;
- Place public sculpture at gateways where streets are realigned;
- Focus on defining the future of the Twelve Corners Park.

COMMON THEMES



GATEWAYS



SHARED PARKING

COLOR LEGEND

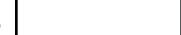
EXISTING BUILDINGS



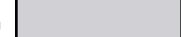
PROPOSED BUILDINGS



ROADS

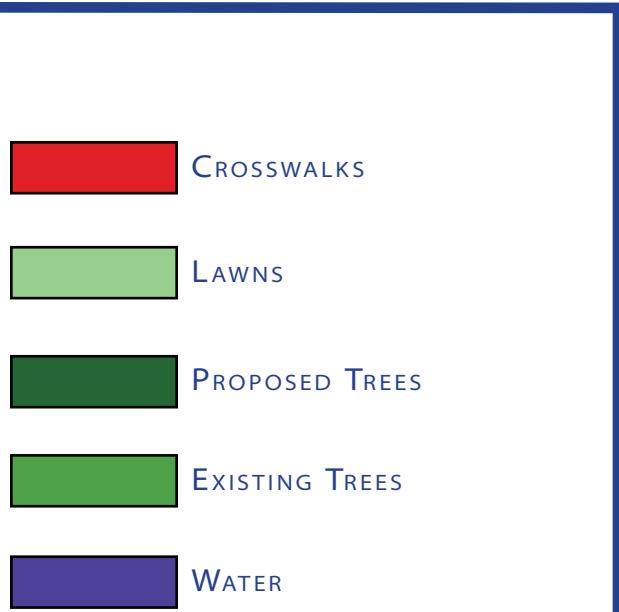


PARKING

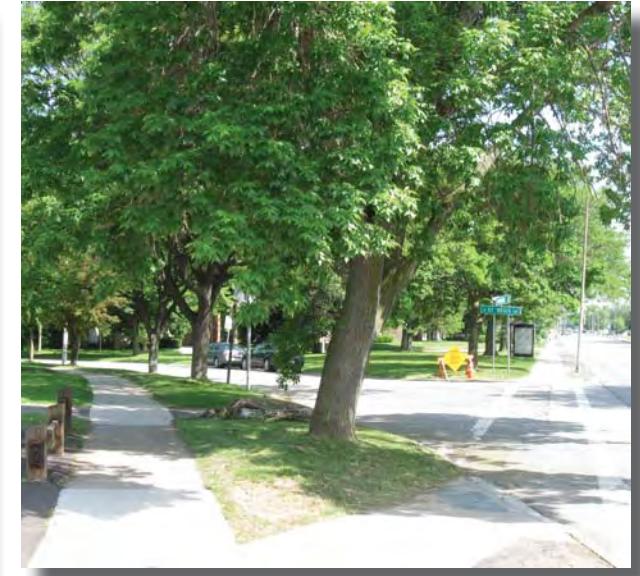


SIDEWALKS





IMPROVED CROSSWALKS

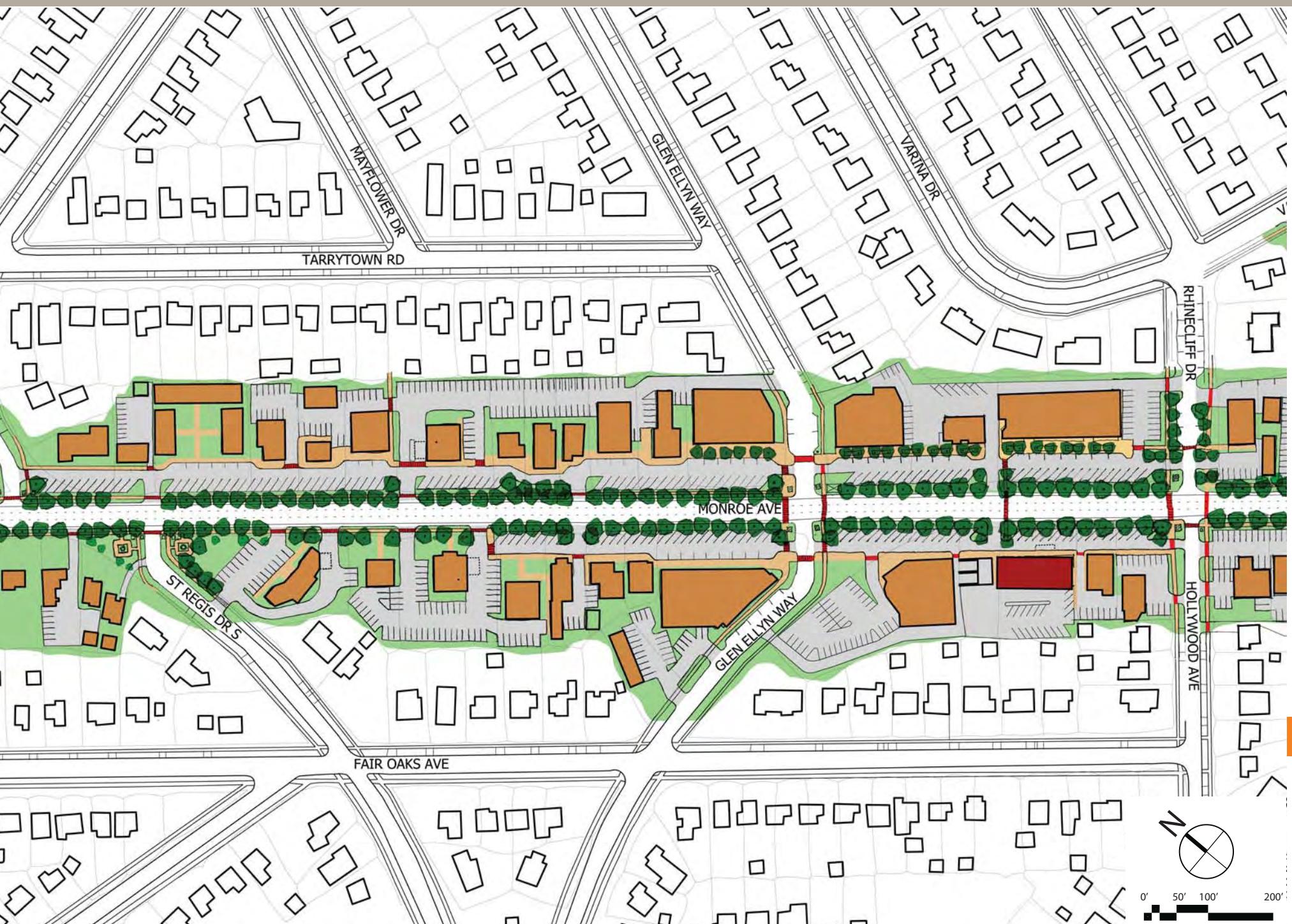


STREET TREES



PLAN A: MONROE AVENUE - WEST END





EXISTING CONDITIONS - The western end of Monroe Avenue begins at the City of Rochester near Highland Avenue. Cobb's Hill Park and Reservoir serve as the defining landmarks on the City's edge. At this intersection the road widens to four lanes from two and vehicular speed increases as a result. The area from Highland Avenue to Sylvan Road is characterized by commercial offices located in former residences to the south with parking in the back and ample green space at the street. On the north side there are several apartment buildings, that are architecturally handsome, with green space at the street and parking in the back. This stretch is a great example of how street trees can beautify the streetscape and give character to their surroundings. The character of the avenue changes to almost exclusively commercial buildings housing retail as well as restaurants and cafés for the remainder of the area in Plan A. Parking lots in front of buildings with their individual curb cuts become the norm. Street



CREATE PARKING & ACCESS STRATEGIES

trees are almost nonexistent except for a few gateway areas such as St. Regis Drive North and South.

VISION FOR MONROE AVENUE - WEST END

Charrette participants and the Steering Committee envisioned the following:

- Provide for pedestrian, vehicular, and bicycle safety;
- Improve sidewalks and crossings;
- Provide tree lawns that serve as green buffer;
- Enhance commercial districts by providing cohesion;
- Develop primary and secondary gateways;
- Maintain and strengthen authenticity and historic character by upgrading appearance of existing buildings;
- Improve circulation;
- Beautify parking areas with attention to screening, fencing, landscaping, signage and materials in general;
- Create a parking strategy;
- Improve street lights and streetscape;
- Mitigate hardscaping.

MULTI-WAY BOULEVARD – A concept that combines vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic along with public transportation in a reorganized more efficient circulation pattern, while making the boulevard safer overall. Traditionally a multi-way boulevard consists of a central traffic carrying roadway, flanked by slower local access side lanes with parking, which are separated from the central roadway by landscaped medians. Sidewalks are provided between the side lanes and the buildings.

Currently pedestrians are walking between moving traffic and parked cars rather than between parked cars and the buildings. This is a very dangerous condition that can only be alleviated when sidewalks are moved closer to the buildings, so that there are no parked cars between pedestrians and the building. The multi-way boulevard solution addresses these concerns.

The plan retains the current 40 foot curb to curb dimension for the central roadway, in order to accommodate future improved transit. The flanking medians are 12 feet wide, but that dimension could be varied. Due to the variations in building setbacks, we showed two different side lane designs: one has angled parking (18 feet wide) with a twelve foot travel lane; the other has an eight foot parallel parking lane adjacent to the buildings. Sidewalk widths vary widely due to the inconsistency of the existing building setbacks. If a build-to line is adopted, over time as new buildings are constructed, the sidewalk widths would become more consistent. Ideally



RE-ALIGN STREETS

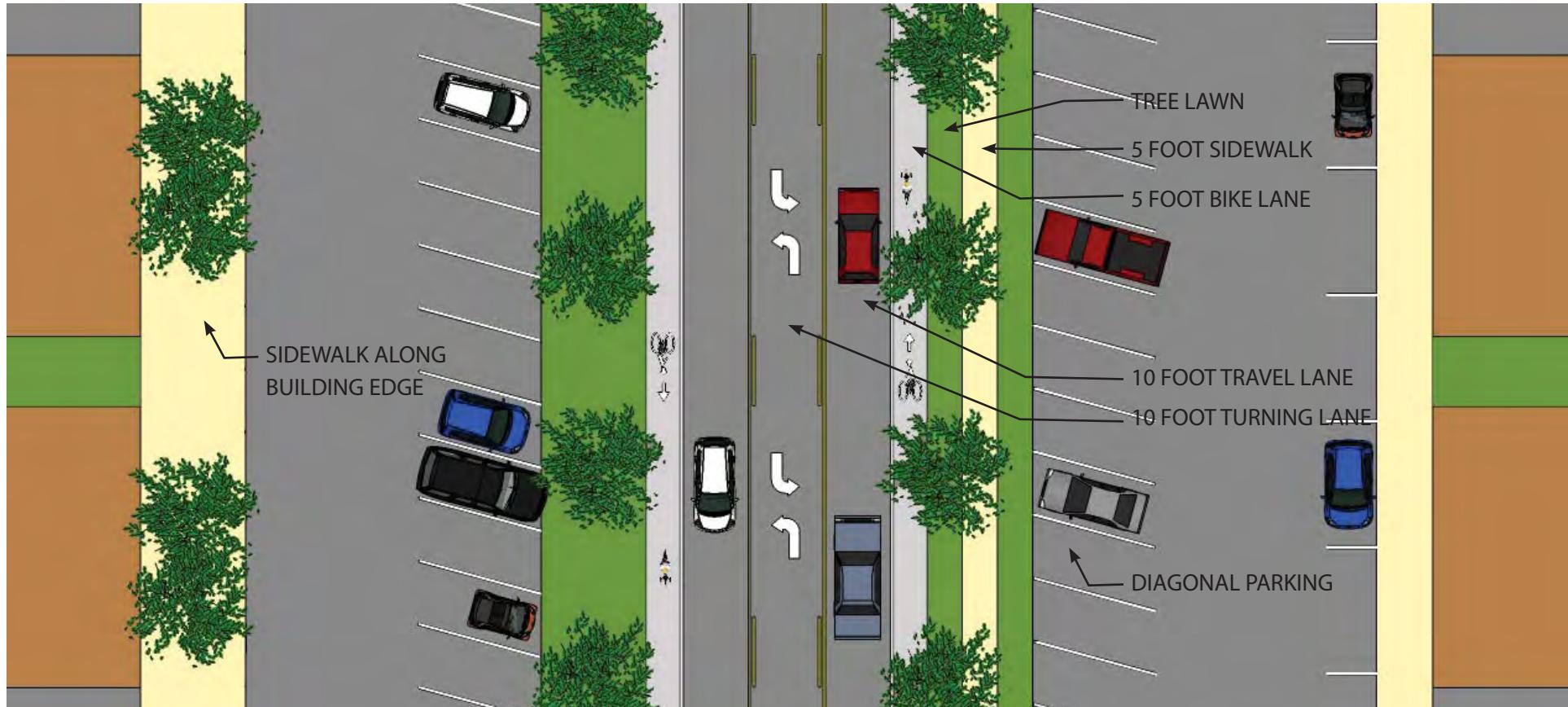
the sidewalks should be 20 feet or more in width in areas adjacent to buildings. In the plan, some locations greatly exceed twenty feet, while others widths are much narrower.

Our multi-way diagram shows most of the variations that exist along the corridor. The four lane street has been reconfigured from Highland Avenue to Edgewood Avenue to consist of two five foot bike lanes at either edge, two ten foot travel lanes (one in each direction), and a dedicated central turning lane. While the Multi-way Boulevard is one way to address concerns, it is not necessarily the only way.

PROVIDE A TREE LAWN - The tree lawn serves as an important visual and physical buffer between vehicular traffic and the pedestrian realm, while at the same time beautifying the corridor. In most cases the proposed trees are shown on the roadside edge of the boulevard as this is a proven traffic calming technique as well as providing a physical barrier between the pedestrians and motorists. There are a few examples where existing tree lawns are on the building side of the sidewalk and in those cases it should be maintained.

RE-ALIGN STREETS – In many cases neighborhood streets are laid out in an organic way where the streets wind around creating central islands which are then bisected by other streets. This becomes problematic when the streets intersect with Monroe Avenue as it is usually at an angle or in some cases forms two separate streets that channel traffic in either direction. Re-aligning these streets has many advantages. First and foremost is when the streets intersect at a ninety degree angle this creates a shorter distance for the pedestrian to go in order to get across. At the same time this increases pedestrian and vehicular visibility as the driver can see traffic from both directions. The

MULTI-WAY BOULEVARD SCHEMATIC SCHEME





BEFORE

It's easy to notice the large amount of curb cuts and the lack of street trees



PROPOSED MULTI-WAY BOULEVARD

The corridor is transformed by utilizing parallel drives with shared parking, street trees, and re-striped boulevard.



BEFORE

The swooping entrances of St. Regis create extremely long crosswalks and reduced visibility for vehicular traffic.



PROPOSED RE-ALIGNED STREETS

By reducing the width of the St. Regis Street entrance, green space is recaptured and utilized for gateway markers.

result of re-aligning streets is that often green space can be reclaimed and potentially used as public space where gateway markers can be created.

CREATE PARKING/ACCESS STRATEGIES

One of the most important factors in making the multi-way boulevard a reality is the cooperation between business owners. Shared parking is a very important factor in creating a uniform vision for the boulevard. Curb cuts would be reduced and travel lanes provided off of the main street to service the businesses along the way. A concerted effort will need to take place to educate business owners about the benefits of this strategy for increasing their visibility as well as improving the infrastructure for the community in which they provide their services.

RE-POSITION SIDEWALKS – In the multi-way boulevard scenario the sidewalk is located at the building edge. This is the safest place for the pedestrian pathway as it is no longer between parked cars and traffic, but between buildings and parking. This situation works best when the buildings are somewhat aligned, and is proposed for the majority of the boulevard between St. Regis Drive South and Hollywood Avenue. When it is not possible to implement this sidewalk strategy it is recommended that sidewalks be located no less than five feet from the edge of roadway or end at the right-of-way, whichever provides the greatest distance from the roadway. The planting of street trees is recommended between sidewalk and roadway as this provides an additional buffer between pedestrians and vehicular traffic.



BEFORE

The potential of aligning Glen Ellyn Way would make for much safer crosswalks and significantly reduce the amount of pavement.



PROPOSED SHARED PARKING & RE-ALIGNED STREETS

The multi-way boulevard depends shared parking in order to allow for parallel lanes of travel.



PROPOSED RE-POSITIONED SIDEWALK

Placing the sidewalk at the buildings edge allows for a more pedestrian friendly and community oriented approach.

PLAN B: TWELVE CORNERS





GREEN SPACE



NATURAL RESOURCES



FAMILY COMMUNITY

EXISTING CONDITIONS – The town center is defined by a central triangular island resulting from the intersection of three separate streets (Monroe Avenue, Winton Road, and Elmwood Avenue) forming 12 corners. This area has a high density of commercial activity. It consists primarily of single story structures used for restaurants, cafés, and bakeries. A significant amount of commercial office space is located in buildings adjacent to the center. Two gas stations occupy the corners of Winton Road and Elmwood Avenue and flank Twelve Corners Plaza on either side. The other corners are occupied by the Twelve Corners Middle School, the Brighton Fire Station, and a vacant 11,000 square foot retail space that once housed Rite Aid Pharmacy.

VISION FOR MONROE AVENUE – TWELVE CORNERS

Charrette participants and the Steering Committee envisioned the following:

- Create a strong urban village center;
- Improve environment for pedestrians;
- Provide cohesion for commercial districts;
- Promote the installation of public art;
- Accommodate and encourage gathering areas;
- Provide traffic calming measures and improved crossings;
- Provide pedestrian and bicycle access and safety;
- Develop green spaces;
- Improve lighting and signage;
- Explore opportunities for access and use of school campus.

FAMILY COMMUNITY – In order to create a cohesive and well defined town image it is important to engage the community. The users and residents will ultimately have the most influence when it comes to the success of a revitalization effort. At the same time gathering spaces need to be created in such a way as to give purpose to their existence through active use by residents.

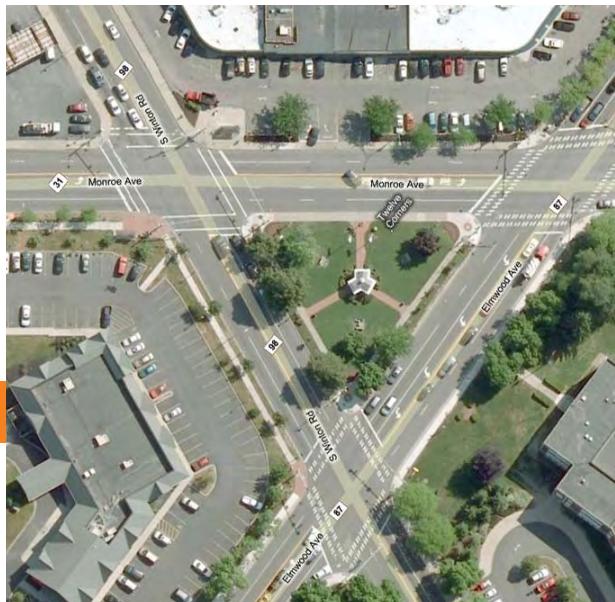
GREEN SPACE – Twelve Corners Park is a 17,000 square foot island, a park that is formed by the Twelve Corners intersection. It is an area that is very prominent, but significantly underutilized by the public. The proposed Twelve Corners Park would provide ample and designated areas at the street corners for the installation of public art. A covered outdoor stage would be placed at the Monroe and Elmwood Avenue corner for use for summer



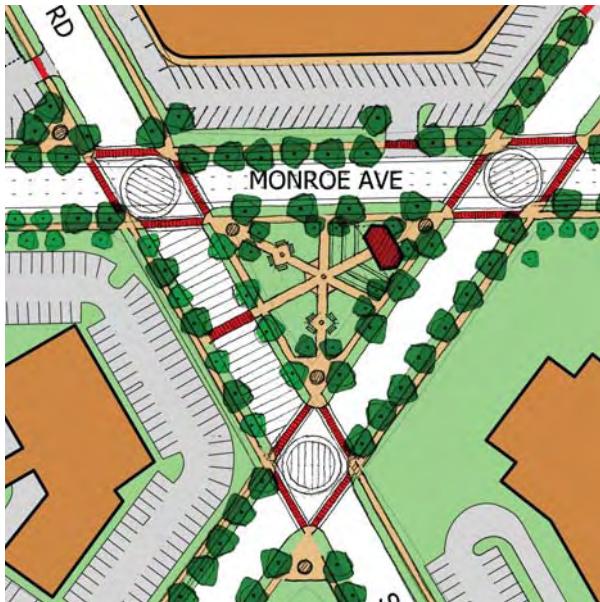
The demand for parking in the area during the afternoon and weekends is at its peak.



Organized parking behind buildings will increase the parking capacity in the 12 Corners area.



The existing park remains largely underutilized due to its access points not aligned with the corner crosswalks.



Replacing the gazebo with a band stand will open up the park for a larger variety of uses in the community.

concerts, theater, and other public events. The street area of Winton Road between Monroe and Elmwood Avenue would be closed off during these events by the use of temporary bollards, which would allow greater pedestrian access and increase the size of the public space significantly. The use of a new decorative paving pattern embellishing this area would also aid in strengthening the visual and physical connection between the park and green space on the opposite side of Winton Road. This area could also be used for the weekly Farmers' Market that currently takes place in parking lots adjacent to the High School and out of view from the rest of the community. Elmwood Avenue could also be closed off and used for town events.

Currently the street section of Monroe Avenue is ten feet wider at Twelve Corners than the areas east and west of it. The proposed multi-way configuration allows the street width to be reduced to a 40 foot curb to curb dimension coinciding with the adjacent areas of the plan. This narrowing of the street would allow for a more generous buffer zone between sidewalk and roadway. At the moment there is no buffer for the sidewalk next to the Middle School. This creates a very dangerous environment for students especially during their walk between school and home. Another added benefit to narrowing the street in this area is that it will increase the size of Twelve Corners Park.

NATURAL RESOURCES – Buckland Creek is one of the most important natural resources in the Town of Brighton. Its existence has influenced the way the town has developed and



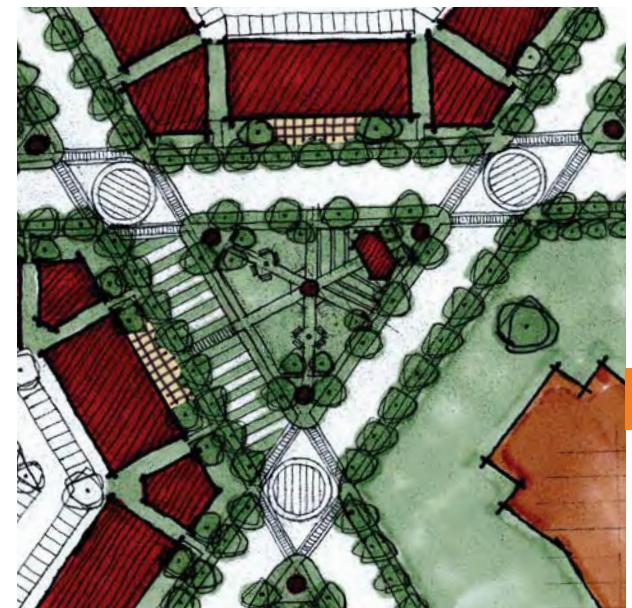
FUTURE VISION OF 12 CORNERS-
This map depicts the potential
redevelopment of 12 corners over
the next 10-20 years.

its namesake is of great historical significance to the town as well. Today the creek is almost invisible from the street as a significant portion of it, on the schools' campus side, is largely paved over for the use of a faculty parking lot. The other side is covered with considerable overgrowth of vegetation, which makes the creek inaccessible. The Vision Plan proposes to adequately mark the connection of sidewalk and the headwall with an ample space to repose and view the waterway. A path is created that follows the creek through the school campus and the parking area and the creek is adjusted so that it is exposed earlier and the pedestrian path can continue through.

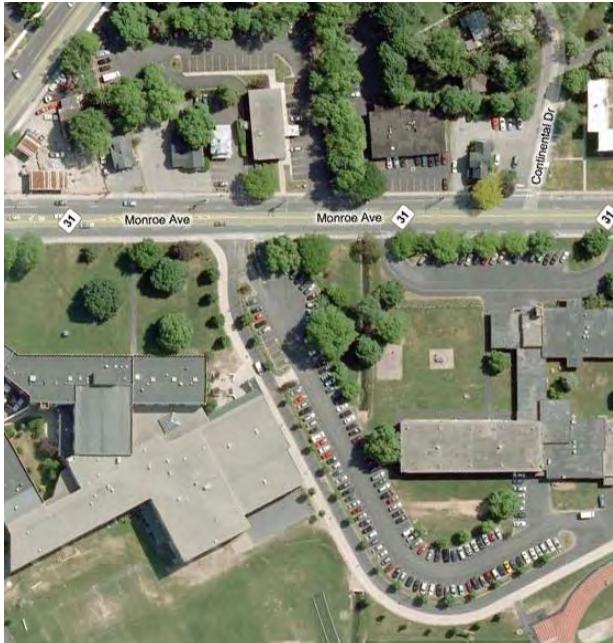
RE-ORGANIZE PARKING – The number one challenge for accessing the Twelve Corners area has been that of finding parking and navigating through the various parking lots. A thorough effort has been made to look for areas where adjacent parking lots can be combined to increase the number of spaces as well as improve circulation. An example of this is the plan for the area behind the Twelve Corners Plaza.

On-street parking has been added in some areas in order to allow for sidewalks to pass through on the building side of the parking and not between parked cars and the roadway. This helps remedy the current condition of cars parked perpendicular to the street with no sidewalk for pedestrians to pass safely.

FUTURE OF TWELVE CORNERS – A map has been drawn to depict a longer term vision for the future of Twelve Corners, possibly ten to twenty years from now. As the town center, three to four story multi-use buildings have been proposed with commercial and retail at the ground level, residences above, and tenant parking underground. This plan helps define the area as a prominent, dense center taking advantage of its central location and configuration. Buildings are set back from the street in order to provide areas for outdoor eating. New buildings are proposed for the corners where the gas stations are currently located, only they are positioned closer to the intersection in order to help unify and provide cohesion to the area. All commercial parking is reorganized and located behind buildings.



12 CORNERS PARK – A view of 12 Corners park with an increase in building density as the result of new development.



BEFORE

Once an integral part of the community, Buckland Creek is paved over to accommodate the middle school parking lot.



PROPOSED BUCKLAND CREEK REVITALIZATION

Creating vistas at Monroe Avenue as well as rerouting the creek through the parking lot bring focus back to the natural resource.

PLAN C: MONROE AVENUE - MID SECTION







STREET TREES

EXISTING CONDITIONS – The area between Brooklawn Drive and Edgewood Avenue is similar in character to the west end of Monroe Avenue featured in Plan A and the Twelve Corners area featured in Plan B. The area closest to Brooklawn Drive has several un-notable brick clad apartment buildings with large areas of green frontage. Moving towards the east there is a mixture of commercial buildings built over the past 50 years that have no cohesive style or alignment with the street. Setbacks vary from 50 feet to over 100 feet to Northumberland Road. Between Monroe Parkway and Edgewood Avenue the buildings on the north side of the street are a mixture of homes, converted for commercial use, interspersed with one- story commercial buildings. Building facades in this section are fairly well aligned with each other all the way to Meadow Drive.

VISION FOR MONROE AVENUE – MID SECTION

Charrette participants and the Steering Committee envisioned the following:

- Provide for a pedestrian and bicycle friendly area;
- Improve sidewalks and crossings;
- Provide improved tree lawns, green buffer;
- Enhance and provide cohesion to commercial districts;
- Develop primary and secondary gateways;
- Maintain and strengthen authenticity and historic character;
- Improve circulation;
- Create a parking strategy;
- Provide a safe environment for all modes of transportation;
- Improve street lights and streetscape;
- Develop green spaces;
- Utilize natural resources;
- Mitigate hardscaping;
- Upgrade the physical appearance of buildings and their grounds.

STREET TREES – One of the nicest areas of street tree plantings occurs along Monroe Ave between Sunset Drive and Monroe Parkway on the north and between Northumberland Road and Roosevelt Road on the south. (Unfortunately this area is predominantly paved from curb to storefront.) Street trees would not only beautify the corridor, but provide cohesion as well as help slow down traffic speed.



GREEN EDGE

REDUCE CURB CUTS – There is an inordinate amount of paving along this section of Monroe Avenue. The area between Monroe Parkway and Elwell Drive is almost entirely paved over. The multi-way boulevard scenario helps resolve these issues by placing the sidewalk at the building edge, which works very well as the buildings are closely aligned. A parallel access road runs in one direction between the sidewalk and diagonally parked cars. A green buffer with street trees occurs between the parked cars and Monroe Avenue edge.

ON-STREET PARKING – Where residential streets meet the commercial edge of Monroe Avenue there are numerous examples where cars are parked perpendicular to the street edge. This often times leaves the pedestrian no other option, but to walk in the street in order to get through. Utilizing on-street (parallel parking) along the residential streets at the commercial edge would help resolve this issue. Parked cars also provide the benefit of reducing traffic speed.



BEFORE

A lack of clearly defined sidewalks on side streets creates a potentially dangerous situation for pedestrians.



RE-ALIGN STREETS

acknowledge these entrances along Monroe Avenue. Northumberland Road is a great example of an opportunity to realign a street with the added benefit of creating a significantly sized public space where gateway markers could be placed.

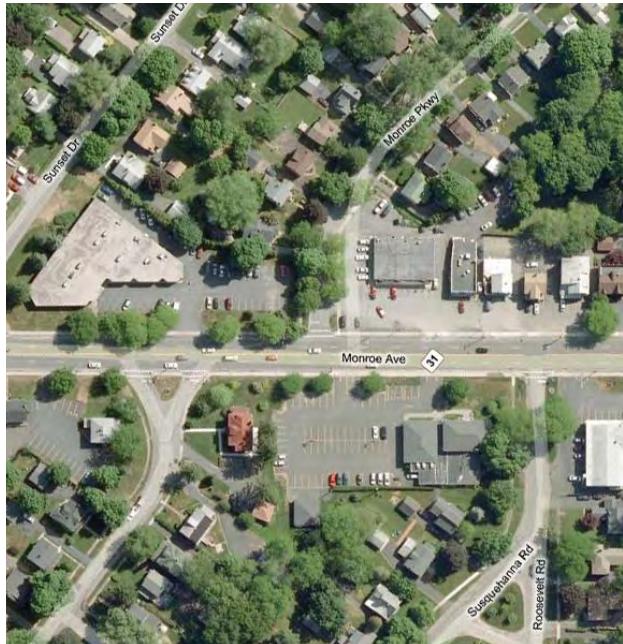


ON STREET PARKING & CROSSWALKS

Parking on side streets allows the pedestrian to walk on a clearly defined sidewalk between buildings and parked cars.



REDUCE CURB CUTS



BEFORE

Northumberland Road's swooping entrances create unsafe intersections with low visibility for vehicles.



GATEWAYS & RE-ALIGNING STREETS

Once the street is re-aligned green areas are re-captured for use as public space where gateway markers can be placed.

PLAN D: MONROE AVENUE - EAST END





EXISTING CONDITIONS – The east end of Monroe Avenue extends from Edgewood Avenue to the Town of Pittsford border just past Clover Street. This section has the largest volume of traffic: over 40,000 cars per day. This is due in large part to the location of Interstate Route #590 and its multiple entrance and exit ramps. The majority of this traffic is coming from areas south and East of Clover Street as this is the nearest location to the Interstate for the Town of Pittsford. This situation causes traffic speed to increase to well over 40 miles per hour, as vehicles do not have to yield, and are provided with separate on and off ramps that begin and end well before and after the Interstate. In order to accommodate this volume of traffic flow, the street is widened to five lanes with a center turning lane from the Interstate to Clover Street. This increases the roadway to over 80 feet from the 40 feet width of the corridor west of Allens Creek Road. This area is the most difficult and dangerous for pedestrians



TRAFFIC AT EAST END

to navigate. There are no sidewalks as the right-of-way ends at the edge of roadway and private property. This entire area is one of commercial sprawl, where the scale changes and there are vast parking lots. Green space is almost non-existent except for a few trees and un-kept grassy areas between buildings and parking lots.

In a recent article from the Democrat & Chronicle newspaper, by Sruthi Gottipati on November 26, 2010, the heading read "Traffic accidents plague Brighton section of Monroe Avenue". The article refers to this area as a "perilous stretch" from Allens Creek to Clover Street, where there have been 522 traffic accidents between January 2005 to August 2010. Apparently this is more than a hundred times the Monroe County average of 1.5 crashes per mile. Every business along this stretch has its own curb cut and often times vehicles attempt to cross three lanes of traffic in order to make a left turn. The large number of vehicles traveling through this area coupled with excessive traffic speeds lead to a dangerous scenario. A traffic study is currently in progress by the Department of Transportation and will likely conclude in the next few months.

The Erie Canal once ran through here and into Allens Creek just south of Monroe Avenue and provided the water supply to a number of area farms that helped establish the Town of Brighton. Now this history is imperceptible as the creek runs between the on and off ramps of the east section of the Interstate to the north and disappears through an overgrowth of trees and shrubs to the south.

VISION FOR MONROE AVENUE – EAST END

Charrette participants and the Steering Committee envisioned the following:

- Provide for a pedestrian and bicycle friendly area;
- Improve sidewalks and crossings;
- Provide improved tree lawns and green buffer;
- Enhance commercial districts and provide cohesion;
- Establish area as a recognizable major gateway to the Town of Brighton;
- Improve circulation;
- Create a parking strategy;
- Provide a safe environment for all modes of transportation;
- Improve street lights, overhead utilities, and improved streetscape;
- Develop green spaces;
- Mitigate hardscaping.

PLANTED MEDIAN – The Vision Plan proposes a raised planted median dividing east and west bound lanes of traffic. This would be lined with trees and divided for designated turning areas. The multi-way boulevard scenario changes in this area to four lanes of traffic (two in each direction), a planted median in the center, and the bicycle lanes continue at the edge of the roadway. A green buffer area with street trees would then separate the sidewalks from the roadway. The planting of these trees alone, would significantly transform this area into the major gateway it aspires to be.



BEFORE - Heavy traffic, excessive speeds, and lack of sidewalks create an environment free of pedestrians. This effects the community and the economy of this strip of Monroe Avenue.



PLANNING FOR FUTURE GROWTH - The multi-way boulevard with bike lanes, planted median, sidewalks, and re-organized parking will help re-define the area and promote future development.

REDEVELOPMENT – It is important to plan for the future by creating a plan that supports the type of growth the community desires. Reorganizing parking and traffic flow allows for potential parallel streets to be created and opportunities for new development and redevelopment. This is important to help provide density for the area in order to attain an appropriate scale of development.

REDUCE CURB CUTS – In order to increase commercial activity in this area business owners would benefit from shared parking and linking them together. The Vision Plan reduces the curb cuts in this area by half, creating shared entrances with parallel side streets on both sides of Monroe Avenue to service the needs of the customers and business owners.

CROSSWALKS – A key solution that remedies and reduces the number of curb cuts is the proposed intersection located where Clover Lanes and Friendly's meet Monroe Avenue. This will allow vehicles a safe way to navigate from either side of the street as well as providing clearly marked crosswalks for pedestrians. Currently the only area where one can cross the street is at the intersection of Monroe Avenue and Clover Street. The Vision Plan proposes three new crosswalks across this portion of the street and clearly marked crosswalks at all other curb cuts.



BEFORE

Currently an environment with excessive paving where rates of vehicular accidents greatly exceed county averages.



BEFORE

With no mid-block crossings, sidewalks, or bike lanes, this area becomes impassable for some modes of transportation.



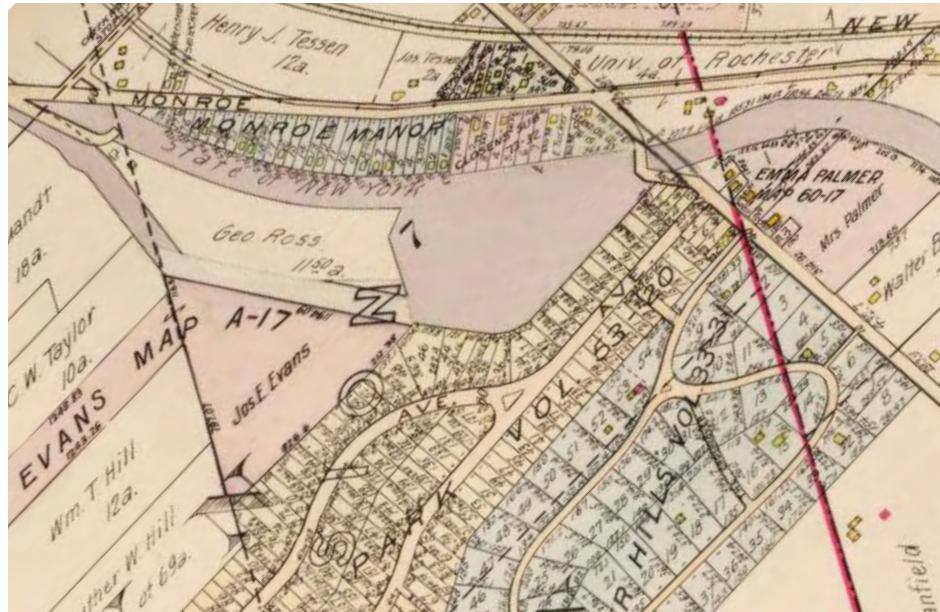
NEW CROSSWALKS & REDUCED CURB CUTS

An environment that encourages pedestrian traffic will help revitalize the area.



PEDESTRIAN, BICYCLIST, & MOTORIST SAFETY

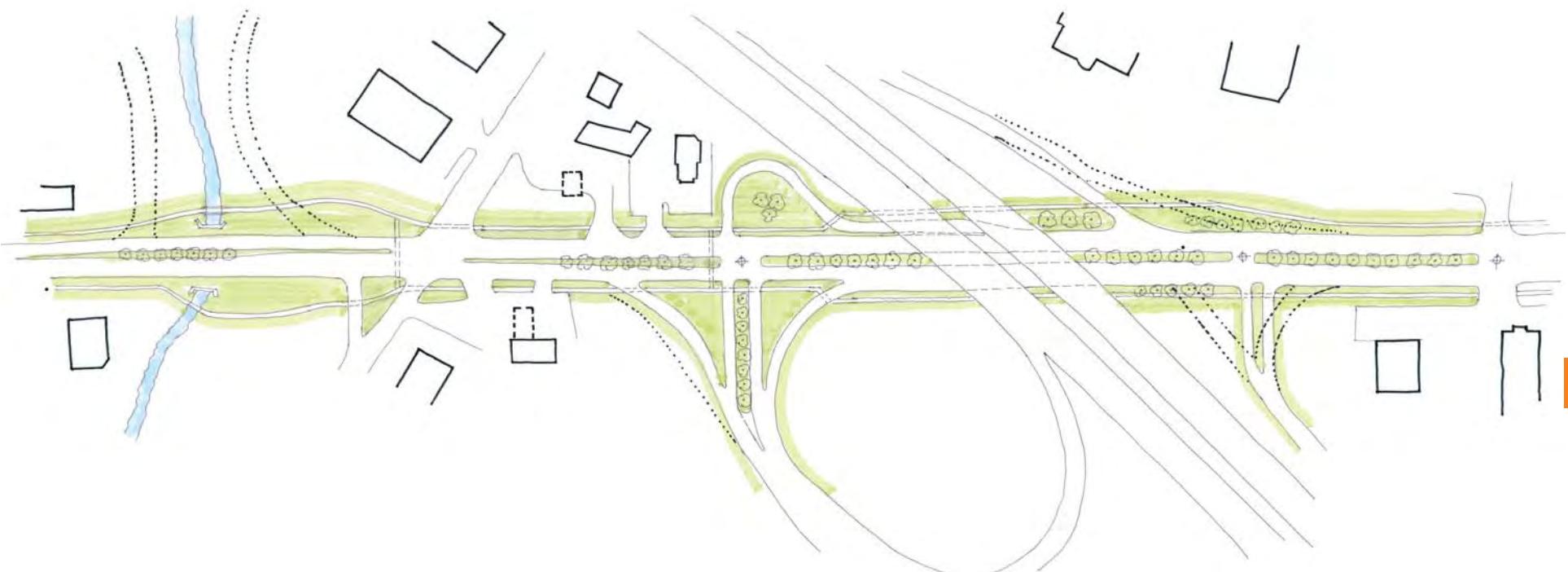
A planted median allows the pedestrian to travel a shorter distance while crossing the street. Street trees aid in reducing traffic speeds.



Erie Canal 1924 - Rochester Public Library



Overlay of current conditions and Erie Canal circa 1924 between Allens Creek & Clover Street



590 INTERSTATE RAMPS - A drawing of the proposed redesign of the entrance and exit ramps for the 590 Interstate, consolidates the ramps closer to the Interstate. Dashed areas indicate former ramps that are relocated. This will allow the town to re-capture additional public land around Allens Creek for the development of a future park with nature trails.

PRECEDENTS – MULTI-WAY BOULEVARD

EUCLID AVENUE - LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY

The purpose of the Euclid Avenue redesign project was to increase motor vehicle and pedestrian safety and decrease traffic congestion. The avenue accommodates 20,000 vehicles as its average daily traffic, serving as a route between downtown, the University of Kentucky campus, and residential neighborhoods, with a mix of residential and retail use along the corridor. The surrounding city has a total population of approximately 300,000 people.

Financial support for this project was provided by the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC), which had originally designated the funds to resurface the road. The initial intent (as expressed by the KYTC) was to solve congestion issues by adding a turning lane to the four lane road after reducing the lanes to create the necessary space. However, successful appeal by community members, local organizations, and the city government revealed a new idea that reflected the desire for what could be achieved after the resurfacing of the road; it was this vision that finally came to fruition. Citizen meetings produced input that eventually led to revised plans for the street. The Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government showed support for these new ideas, in particular the inclusion of bicycle lanes, cited as a key factor in the success of the street's redesign.

Four lanes were reduced to three (two lanes with a center turning lane). This configuration increases pedestrian/bicyclist buffering as well as visibility for motor vehicle operators.

Preparing the road began in April 2000; total renovation was completed by August 2000, the final road work taking about a month's time to complete. The restriped area is .8 miles in length; the total cost of the project came to \$165,335. The project successfully managed to mitigate traffic congestion while increasing safety for travelers of a variety of modes. Turning lanes enhanced accessibility to surrounding businesses.



Above) Commercial strip along Euclid Ave. prior to resurfacing in 2000; unsafe pedestrian conditions bordering businesses. *Source: ContextSensitiveSolutions.org Case Study #15*

(Below) The same section of Euclid Ave. after "road diet" completion in August 2000.

Source: ContextSensitiveSolutions.org Case Study #15



CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA

The city of Charlotte, North Carolina has adopted what they call Urban Street Design Guidelines, intended to create "complete streets" enabling different mode of transportation and to promote "context sensitive solutions." Since its implementation, several projects have been completed reflecting these important design principles. Detailed below are two projects resembling portions of the vision for Monroe Ave.

STONEWALL ST. - CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA

In conjunction with private redevelopment of an adjacent mall, the highway ramps joining Stonewall St. and I-277 were reconfigured to create a safer environment for pedestrians as well as safer traffic flow. A turning lane was added in addition to a tree-lined median and buffer between the street and sidewalk. Crosswalks were added and the ramps were reshaped to enable this. In portions, bicycle lanes were added.



(Top Left) Stonewall St. and I-277 intersection prior to reconfiguration and (Top Right and Right) Stonewall St. and I-277 intersection after reconfiguration. *Source: Charlotte Department of Transportation*

(Bottom Left) East Blvd. prior to restriping and (Bottom Right) East Blvd. after lane reduction and addition of median. *Source: Charlotte Department of Transportation*



EAST BOULEVARD - CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA

With a 20,000 average daily traffic count, East Blvd. transformed from a four lane road to a three lane road to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety as well as motor vehicle safety through the addition of turning lanes. Tree-lined strips and bicycle lanes act as a buffer between sidewalk traffic and street traffic. Mid-block crossings were added with plantings in the median and a place for pedestrians to wait safely for vehicles to pass.



PRECEDENTS – STREET GREENING INITIATIVES

EXAMPLES OF STREET GREENING INITIATIVES

The following cases of street greening may serve as examples as Brighton moves forward in realizing a greener Monroe Avenue Corridor. Street trees and plantings improve both the aesthetics and the safety of streets; they also appreciate in value as they age. The projects detailed below align with Brighton's guiding principle of reclaiming and preserving green space, based on the results of the Charrette.

WEST STREET – INDIANAPOLIS, IN

The gateway to Indianapolis, an area stretching between I-70 and I-65 surrounding downtown, has undergone two major greening projects in the past decade. These aimed to create a more welcoming entry to the city, provide environmentally friendly and low-maintenance landscaping, and to increase pedestrian safety. In 1999 a federal grant funded the West Street Landscaping Project with the help of the City of Indianapolis and several private corporate donors. Upward of 1,000 trees were planted with funds designated for their upkeep over a 2.3 miles area. This large-scale project won several awards, including the National Arbor Day award. A decade later, Eli Lilly and Company in conjunction with the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) and "Keep Indianapolis Beautiful" (KIB) continued the beautification of the area between 1-70 and 1-65 (along West Street and several other junctures) on October 7th, 2010. Funding was provided by the Eli Lilly and Company matched by Federal Highway



Trees from the 1999 planting along West St. beautify the median and create buffering. *Source: <http://hoosiergardener.com/>*

Administration (FHWA) using a Transportation Enhancement Grant. The project was entitled "A Greener Welcome," intended to establish a more beautiful gateway to the city through landscape enhancements of highway exit ramps. The resulting landscape reduced the amount of land that needed mowing and other maintenance by 17 acres, lowering costs and energy usage. There were 8,500 hundred volunteers participating in the one-day project and 73,000 trees, shrubs, and flowers were planted. Public art was also tied into this second project.



Landscape from "A Greener Welcome" project reduces landscape maintenance and makes the entry to the city more welcoming. *Source: <http://hoosiergardener.com/>*

OLYMPIA, WA

In accordance with their Master Street Tree Plan 2001-2011, the City of Olympia has planted hundreds of street trees over the past decade. After adoption of the Master Plan, the "NeighborWoods Program" was founded, providing trees and information about street tree plantings to Olympia businesses and residents. Olympia has won the title of "Tree city USA" and recognition for their urban forestry program from the state of Washington. Trees have been planted on medians, buffering sidewalks, behind sidewalks, and on islands and bump-outs.



Street tree examples in Olympia, WA adjacent to sidewalks and lining medians. *Source: <http://www.ci.olympia.wa.us>*



Street tree examples in Olympia, WA
Source: <http://www.ci.olympia.wa.us>



Street tree examples in Olympia, WA
Source: <http://www.ci.olympia.wa.us>

PRECEDENTS – BICYCLE CULTURE

The proposed bike lanes are one component of a design developed by the RRCDC to address concerns of the community raised during the charrette process and subsequent meetings with the public and the Town of Brighton Steering Committee. Many cities have devoted attention to their bicycle facilities as a means of creating a human-scaled built environment (e.g. Portland, OR, Minneapolis, MN, Madison, WI) and have witnessed as great as a 30% increase in ridership within one year of installing bike lanes. While the benefits of active transportation modes are obvious – reduced traffic, pollution and energy consumption, and an increase in health and quality of life – the less obvious benefits to economic development and mobility for non-drivers are real and significant. Increases in commercial activity and real estate values along corridors with new bike lanes have been witnessed across the country as neighborhoods gain easy access to businesses and the 33% of

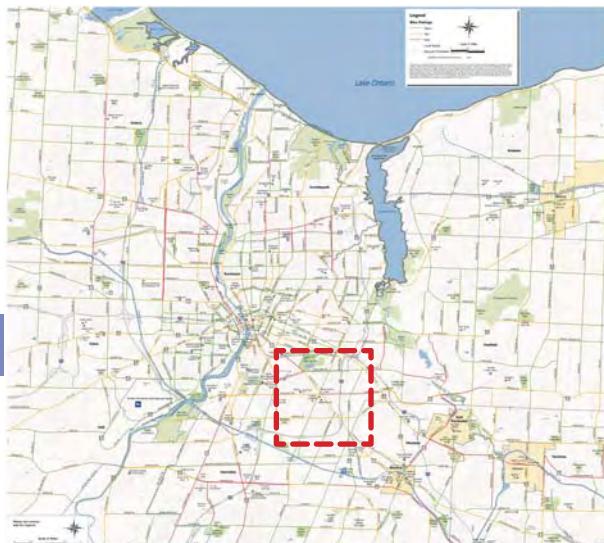
the population that are non-drivers (whether due to age, ability, or choice) are provided with safe routes from home to businesses, schools, and recreation. Bike lanes have the added benefit of enhancing the street-scape by creating an additional buffer between motor-vehicle traffic and pedestrians as well as increasing the safety of all users of the corridor by regularizing the

behavior of cyclists and motorists and reducing points of conflict.

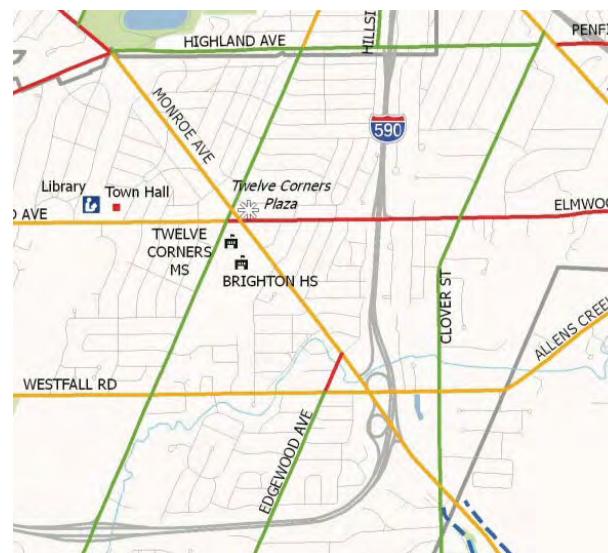
The installation of bicycle facilities on Monroe Avenue through the Town of Brighton will provide numerous benefits to the community in terms of health, the environment, and aesthetics. For cyclists, the bike lanes on Monroe Avenue will provide a much needed link to other heavily bike-trafficked roads and thereby give commuters, recreational cyclists, and those of non-driving age (both young and old) safe access to multiple destinations. The adjacent map highlights roads within the Towns of Brighton and Pittsford and the City of Rochester that see significant bicycle traffic (many with planned bicycle facilities) as well as highly popular existing and proposed multi-use trails. In this image, it is clear to see that Monroe Avenue is a glaring gap in the network and ridership is relatively low at present due to the unsafe conditions.



Bicyclists heading into Portland, OR - Source: streetsblog.org



Greater Rochester Area Bike Map - Source: www.gtcmpo.org



Monroe Avenue Bike Map - Source: www.gtcmpo.org



Bicyclists in Copenhagen, DE - Source: streetsblog.org

BEFORE



Over 40,000 cars per day travel this stretch of Monroe Avenue between Interstate 590 and Clover Street.



PROPOSED



A reduced number of traffic lanes, new bike lanes, planted medians, and sidewalks will help transform and define an enhanced public realm for the Town of Brighton.

BEFORE



One example of the several streets that might be considered for realignment in order to create safer intersections for pedestrians and vehicles.



PROPOSED



Areas formerly paved can be used as public space.

PERSPECTIVES

BEFORE



Minimizing the number of curb-cuts and reducing the number of vehicular traffic lanes will create for a safer environment for both pedestrians and vehicles.

BEFORE



Monroe Avenue transitions from 4 lanes to 6 between Allens Creek Road and Clover Street in order to accommodate the on & off ramps of Interstate 590.

PROPOSED



A proposed section of Monroe Avenue with street trees, a green buffer area between sidewalk and roadway as well as screening from parked cars.

PROPOSED



By eliminating the on & off ramps for Interstate 590 the road could be reduced to 4 lanes with a planted median, as well as bike lanes and new sidewalks.

BEFORE



Less than a block from Twelve Corners there is no buffer between roadway and sidewalk.

PROPOSED



Street trees separating the sidewalk from the roadway along with the added buffer of the bike lane create a pedestrian-friendly environment.

BEFORE



Many neighborhoods exist along Monroe Avenue that could be enhanced by having gateway markers in addition to street signs.

PROPOSED



A view of a possible gateway solution that could help define and add character to the neighborhoods along Monroe Avenue.

NEXT STEPS

The creation of the Brighton/Monroe Avenue Vision Plan document is a positive step toward improving and enhancing the Monroe Avenue corridor, and will benefit the community and the region. The Brighton Steering Committee and interested residents will next be involved with prioritizing the ideas in the vision into projects and initiatives, stating goals, objectives and using them as a guide to devise strategies to bring them to fruition. This plan will be used in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan which is being updated this year. Interested stakeholders will work with community members, form partnerships and collaborations, and plan strategically how to implement various ideas from the Vision Plan.

One of the next steps to be embarked upon is to develop an action plan for implementation. Aspects of this plan may include:

- Prioritizing potential projects;
- Determining costs of improvements;
- Identifying potential funding sources;
- Establishing and cultivating partnerships;
- Creating a timeline for achieving the prioritized elements (short-term 1-2years; medium-term 3-5 years; long-term 5-8years);
- Identifying opportunities for community engagement including youth, to be involved in neighborhood improvement;
- Developing committees and action items for each to work on.

During the upcoming Implementation Phase, the Brighton Charrette Steering Committee, interested citizens and other stakeholders have an opportunity to engage in a process for transforming the Monroe Avenue Corridor, making the vision plan a reality. The following section of the report provides recommendations from RRCDC about how this process can be carried out. The implementation phase is less straightforward than the charrette process but can be approached in a similar manner. Strategic planning, engaging community member, and forming partnerships and collaborations will be necessary ingredients to accomplish goals, major or minor. The actual outcomes of the implementation process will depend on priorities set by the community in response to the vision plan and in subsequent work during the comprehensive planning process. An overall outline might be organized around the guiding principles for development created during the vision planning process and contained in this document.

A major goal in this next phase is to capitalize upon the enthusiasm, energy and focus created during the charrette and vision planning process. Extending public participation into the planning and implementation phase will help achieve this goal. Community members should be encouraged to act on the ideas they generated and to invest in the Monroe Avenue Corridor's revitalization and enhancement. Community members can be engaged through public meetings, workshops, and presentations.

The Town of Brighton website (<http://www.townofbrighton.org/charrette>), e-mail, and local newspapers or newsletters can be used to communicate information and updates about the planning and implementation process. Residents should have many opportunities in many ways to provide input or to become engaged actively in a subcommittee to contribute to the design of the public realm and to help shape their community's future.

Central to the implementation process will be the partnerships and collaborations necessary for realizing the plan. Cultivating these relationships and creating a climate that encourages cooperation will be crucial to success. This role can be played by the Town, neighborhood and business associations, the steering committee and other interested community stakeholders. Engaging public, private and non-profit interests will help bring a variety of resources to the table that are necessary for implementing the vision plan. In addition, many of the proposals will involve public improvements to infrastructure at multi-levels of government (town, state, county, federal) involvement, especially to streets and sidewalks. A strategy will need to be devised to garner the support of the public sector agencies involved in order to implement portions of the vision plan. Further plans and studies will be needed as implementation efforts go forward.

The Steering Committee was integral in planning and carrying out the charrette. They also provided the guidance for developing the Vision

Plan. Their central role in the implementation phase will be equally important. They should help guide the strategic planning activities, providing cohesiveness to the revitalization and redevelopment process. They could also be effective and play a key role in engaging the partners required to bring life to projects and encourage involvement from neighborhood residents, businesses and property owners. In addition to the continuing participation by members of the Steering Committee, the RRCDC recommends that the following activities be undertaken to initiate implementing the vision plan:

- Organize and classify the ideas into groupings according to category of project, program and initiative and then prioritize them. Follow up by identifying the process and parties necessary to achieve each desired goal. Finally, develop and implement strategies for bringing the necessary parties together.
- Evaluate current conditions in light of the proposed changes. Identify and leverage existing programs or projects to help realize vision plan ideas. Develop strategies to enforce existing regulations. Start by providing incentives. Build on assets to address challenges.
- Devise strategies to engage public agencies involved in implementing portions of the plan over time. This is necessary because many of the improvements shown in the vision plan take place in public spaces. Some projects may be implemented as part

of the normal capital improvement process, while others may require extensive lobbying to come to fruition. The Steering Committee should make an effort to assemble an advisory group comprised of local and state officials and others who can help jumpstart this process.

- Combine public realm improvements with private investment. The quality of the design of projects and their context should be considered.
- Engage residents, business owners and property owners to begin addressing public safety concerns contributing to the quality of pedestrian use, vehicle circulation and parking issues.

safety study of Monroe Avenue near Route 590;

- Establish partnerships between local groups interested in creating or expanding community gardens and other enhancements that might be expedited right away.

Additional activities may be identified by the Steering Committee as other opportunities arise in the future.

RRCDC will be able to assist the Steering Committee as it embarks upon the development of an action plan to help begin realizing the vision. It can provide guidance to:

- Identify and prioritize projects into goals, objectives and action items;
- Assist with the development of partnerships with other organizations;
- Help coordinate work with the other redevelopment activities taking place in and around the charrette area such as the current

SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

The Brighton/Monroe Avenue Vision Plan document and accompanying physical plans created for Monroe Avenue in response to ideas gathered and expressed during the charrette process will be used in conjunction with a comprehensive planning effort to be carried forth by the Town of Brighton and its citizens and stakeholders during the coming year, beginning in 2011. The decision to participate in a community charrette to gather ideas for the future of this key corridor was a logical first step in the Town's effort to update its Comprehensive Plan. The Brighton/Monroe Avenue Vision Plan as a record of community ideas, concerns and identification of issues is part of a course of action to help identify and take steps toward setting, prioritizing and achieving goals for the corridor and the Town. This document is meant to be a guide to the community as it proceeds to plan for new development and in its revitalization and re-development efforts.

The charrette and visioning process can serve as a model for future planning for projects in areas contiguous to the charrette boundaries and throughout the town. The long-term effects of this initial process can be to continue the strong community involvement engendered by the charrette for the benefit of future planning and development efforts that will include exploring grant sources and funding opportunities. Empowering citizens to be engaged and encouraging them to be good stewards of the community, continuing to educate and inform about thoughtful design and planning approaches will only benefit the town,

its residents, businesses and stakeholders going forward.

- All photos & illustrations are property of RRRCD unless otherwise noted.
- All aerial photography images from www.bing.com

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ABOUT RRCDC

The Rochester Regional Community Design Center (RRCDC) is a non-profit organization promoting healthy, sustainable communities by encouraging quality design of the built environment and thoughtful use of built and natural resources. We do this by providing technical assistance and access to educational and training opportunities that increase awareness about the built environment, the impact of design and the importance of good urban planning. By actively engaging through partnerships in city and regional initiatives that include guiding communities in creating vision plans and encouraging community involvement in planning and developing processes, RRCDC plays a critical role as an advocate for good design in the Greater Rochester Region.

One of the most effective means of civic engagement is the community design charrette, an intensive, participatory planning process that brings together a variety of community stakeholders to observe and share ideas about their community. Together they produce tangible steps toward achieving neighborhood consensus for a community vision. As facilitator, we work with a steering committee of neighborhood representatives to plan the charrette, provide design professionals at the event to help translate citizens' ideas into physical drawings, and follow through with those initial ideas to create a final set of plans and recommendations for the community.

Since we began our work as the AIA Rochester Urban Design Committee (UDC) in 1998, the group has facilitated over twenty community design charrettes, including the Center City Charrette that resulted in a community-based vision for Rochester's downtown and was a starting point for the 2007 Downtown Charrette. Other design charrettes facilitated by the RRCDC include the University Avenue Charrette that resulted in construction of the award-winning ARTWalk project. In 2004, we officially incorporated as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and continue to serve our region.



