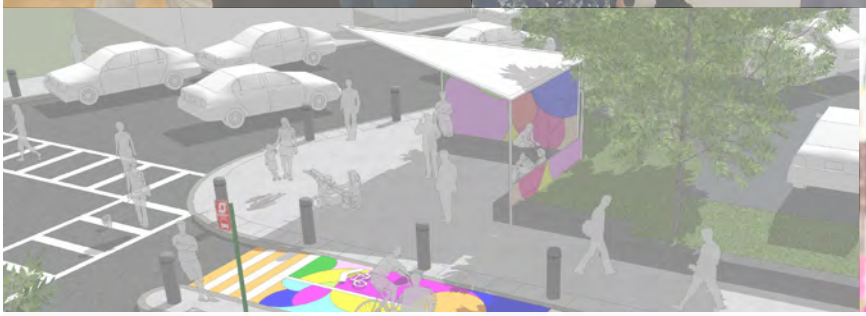
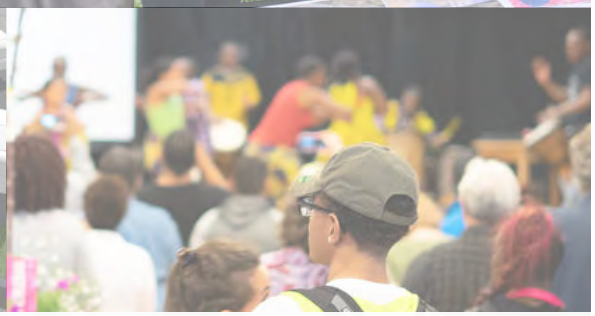
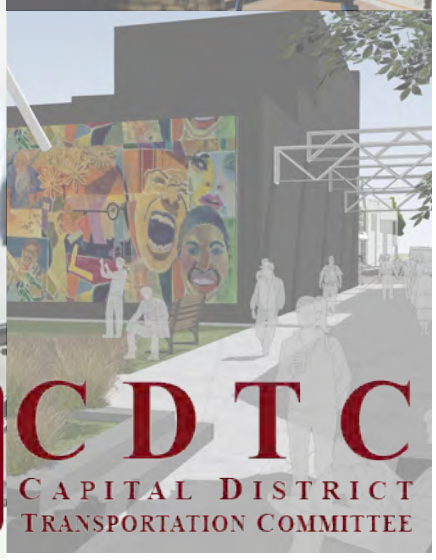




CRAIG-MAIN CONNECTION December 2019

City of Schenectady FINAL Report



CDTC

CAPITAL DISTRICT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Project Sponsors

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Carrie Ward, Transportation Planner

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Creighton Manning Engineering

Community Liaison

Johan Matthews, Mutual Design

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Long-term proposed plan at Pleasant Valley Park

Long-term proposed plan at the intersection of Main Ave, Crane St & Chrisler Ave

The long-term success of these potentially implemented projects is improved through community involvement. Organizations, trades people, or certified contractors interested in involvement, or persons who are interested in training opportunities can contact the City of Schenectady Department of Planning and Development or refer to the project website.

Visit **www.craig-main-connection.com** for project updates and information

For more information contact Kristin Diotte at the City at 518-382-5147 or craigmainconnection@gmail.com

CRAIG - MAIN CONNECTION

City of Schenectady Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy designed for the community, by the community

Recommended Project :: Craig Street

Separated two-way bicycle path - $4.37 Million (2022 Projections)

The heavily favored concept incorporates separated bicycle and pedestrian paths. This concept includes narrowing drive aisle lanes to 10.5' and providing an 8' on-street parking lane on the west side of Craig Street. A 5' minimum landscape buffer with street trees separates an 8' two-way bike path from the roadway. A 2.5' utility strip housing bollards and trash receptacles separates the pedestrian from the bicyclist, with a 4' minimum pedestrian sidewalk. Expanded sidewalk with street trees on the west side of the street would provide a wide, safe pedestrian experience.

Recommended Project :: Bridge Improvements

Separated two-way bicycle path - $1 Million (2022 Projections)

The streetscape improvements from Craig Street would extend across the bridge and connect to Pleasant Valley Park. Since street trees are not an option along the bridge, vertical elements such as bollards and improved pedestrian lighting with neighborhood banners are a great alternative for creating defensible space. More immediate and manageable improvements to the bridge could be to install community artwork on the fence to both beautify the experience and to visually buffer route 890, thereby making the pedestrian experience more comfortable.

Recommended Project :: Pleasant Valley Park

$1.2 Million (2022 Projections)

The proposed Pleasant Valley Park improvements include connections to Pleasant Valley and MLK Schools as well as the new Boys and Girls Club. Also included are a 4-court basketball facility, a park structure for picnicking, workout stations, an art wall with rotating murals by local artists, open lawn for passive play, and an integrated skate and BMX park that functions as plaza space.

Recommended Project :: Main Avenue

$43,700 (2022 Projections) Traffic Analysis recommended

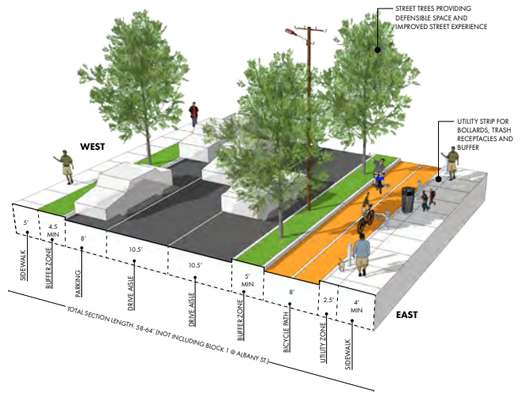
Main Avenue presents a heavier challenge in accommodating bicycle infrastructure due to its narrow width, which also makes it difficult for pedestrians and motorists. A traffic study is therefore recommended to analyze the impacts of potentially converting street(s) to one-way, with the possibility of extending the Craig Street improvements to Main Ave. When asked, the majority of participants felt that it would be worth further study of the different impacts (with additional public input).

Recommended Project :: Intersection of Crane St, Chrisler Ave & Main Ave $743,000 (2022 Projections)

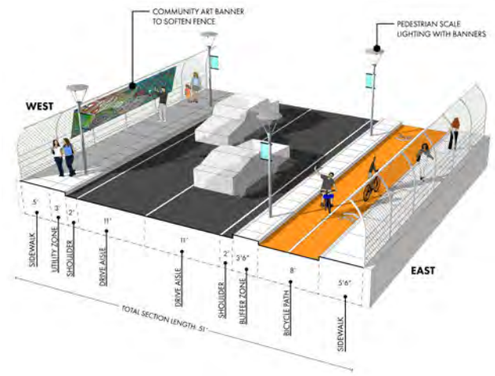
The proposed plan reduces the amount of excess pavement by extending the sidewalk connecting point between Chrisler and Crane, no longer allowing cars coming from Chrisler to U-turn onto Crane St and vice versa. This will reduce excess pavement and provide a crossing reprieve, which reduces crossing distances. Intersection bumpouts will also reduce pedestrian crossing distances while providing more space in the sidewalk zones. The concept proposes to table the intersection with a different material encouraging drivers to reduce speeds and increase alertness.

Recommended Project :: Public Art

The project proposes incorporation of public art throughout the corridor as a way to celebrate the community and inspire neighborhood pride. Opportunities include gateways, crosswalks, along the bridge, at Pleasant Valley Park, and as part of wayfinding. Groups from the community, including C.O.C.O.A. House, the Hamilton Hill Arts Center, Miracle on Craig Street, and local artists have started to collaborate on ideas for executing some ideas for implementing public art.



Proposed streetscape improvements on Craig Street



Proposed bridge improvements connecting Craig Street to Pleasant Valley Park and Main Ave.

Proposed intersection improvements at Crane St, Chrisler Ave & Main Ave

Visit **www.craig-main-connection.com** for project updates and information

For more information contact Kristin Diotte at the City at 518-382-5147 or craigmainconnection@gmail.com

CDTC

1.0 INTRODUCTION

CRAIG-MAIN CONNECTION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Craig-Main Connection is a neighborhood-based Complete Streets project that reflects the ideas and inspirations of the community to transform the Craig Street and Main Avenue Corridor into a safe, inviting and inspiring connection between residents and community points of interest. The community-led transformation of the corridor from an automobile-driven design to one that considers all travelers (including pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders) is intended to facilitate and enhance linkages between community anchors such as schools, economic centers and not-for-profit community organizations.

In addition to better physically connecting the Hamilton Hill and Mont Pleasant Neighborhoods, the project seeks to socially and culturally connect individuals and organizations with one another as part of a comprehensive effort to strengthen both neighborhoods and build momentum for positive change. The project was grounded in an extensive series of public outreach efforts and events that included a neighborhood liaison; an interactive project website; digital and paper surveys; stakeholder meetings; curbside conversations; a week-long design workshop that included a launch party, an open house, and a final presentation and discussion; open houses and attending neighborhood group meetings, and a public presentation and comment period for reviewing the final design and report.

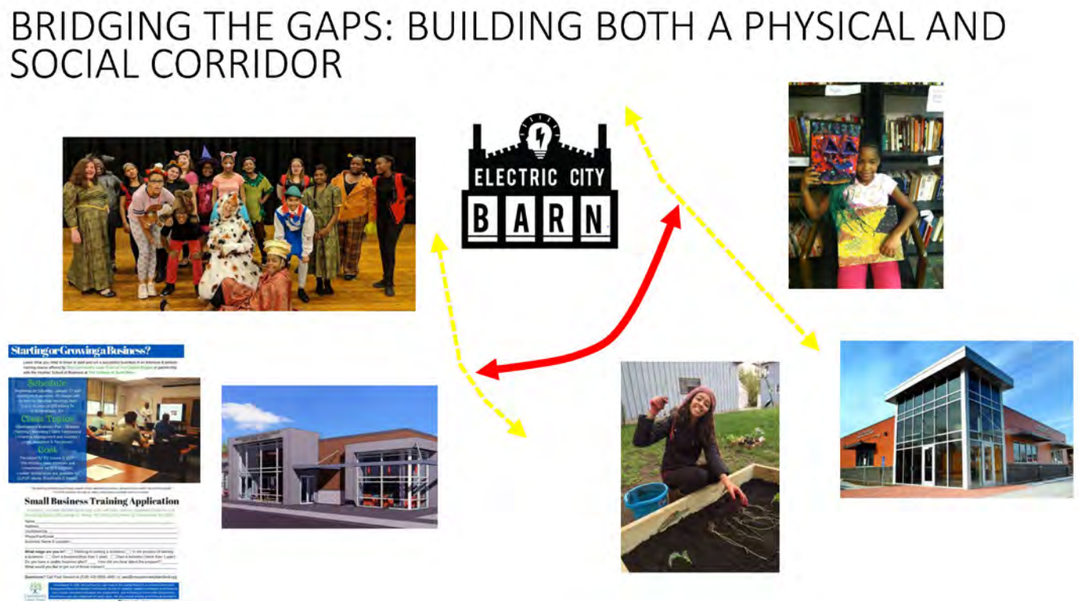


Figure 1.1: The Craig-Main Connection seeks to socially and culturally connect individuals and organizations.

Throughout the process, there was unanimous support for several key improvements:

1. Addressing issues of litter and trash
2. Calming traffic and adding crosswalks
3. Creating physical separation between automobile traffic and pedestrians and cyclists
4. Providing better transit amenities such as bus shelters and improved seating capacity
5. Utilizing local art as a way to brand the corridor, inspire neighborhood character and pride, and mitigate transportation negatives (such as the uncomfortable feeling of walking above Interstate 890)
6. Increasing green space and providing constructive activity choices for youth
7. Addressing undesirable gaps in the street wall (for example, vacant lots, large parking lots fronting on the corridor, etc.)
8. Exploring options for local labor use and job creation
9. Providing better access to needed goods and services, particularly fresh food
10. Taking advantage of opportunities to address housing needs, particularly the need for 3+ bedroom housing

Designs presented here are a reflection of the needs of the community and the shared hope for a better future that includes the current residents and their future generations. While there are many needs beyond the scope of this Complete Streets study, there are also many positive strides being made in the neighborhood. There is a belief that implementing the work proposed here could serve as a catalyst for other needed improvements.

While this project identifies a number of recommended improvements along the corridor, the five priority transportation-oriented projects include:

1. Installation of a Two-Way Cycle Track and Improved Intersections and Sidewalks on Craig Street
2. Creation of a safe and inviting pedestrian connection through Pleasant Valley Park for pedestrians coming to and from Hamilton Hill and going to the Boys and Girls Club, Mont Pleasant Middle School, or parts of the Mont Pleasant Neighborhood
3. Improving the Crane Street and Main Avenue Intersection
4. Improving the Main Avenue and Forest Road Intersection
5. Conducting a Traffic Study to better understand positive and negative implications of converting Main Avenue (and possibly Forest Road) to a one-way street and solicit additional public feedback

In an effort to be succinct, the main body of this report has been streamlined to highlight key components of the process and recommendations for this project. More detailed information about existing conditions studies, individual events and public comment, and design alternatives can be found in the Appendices.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

"The purpose of the Craig-Main Complete Streets Study is to work with the Hamilton Hill and Mont Pleasant Neighborhoods to identify a Complete Street design that will better serve the neighborhoods through creation of a safer, more efficient and more inviting corridor that takes into consideration the needs of all travelers, including pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders and motorists."

Within the study area, there are several municipal and private redevelopment initiatives that will increase density, create new transportation demands, and intensify existing bicycle and pedestrian safety concerns along the project corridor. When added to the low vehicle ownership, the access the corridor provides to local schools, and the area's proximity to neighborhood and downtown commercial districts, there is an increased need to properly accommodate alternative travel modes.

The City of Schenectady was awarded funding to work with the residents, organizations, and business owners of the Hamilton Hill and Mont Pleasant neighborhoods to address the need for improved multi-modal infrastructure. The Craig-Main Connection is envisioned as a physical and social bridge that, through streetscape and linkage improvements, will bring together and celebrate the rich cultural heritage of the Mont Pleasant and Hamilton Hill Neighborhoods, notably contributing to their bright and emerging futures. This study was funded by the City of Schenectady and the Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) through its 2018-19 Community and Transportation Linkage Planning Program. CDTC is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) carrying out federal requirements for cooperative transportation planning and programming within the metropolitan area surrounding the Albany-Schenectady and Saratoga Springs urbanized areas.

Study Area

The Hamilton Hill and Mont Pleasant neighborhoods in the City of Schenectady are ethnically and racially diverse with primarily one and two-family residential homes. The neighborhoods are bisected by Interstate-890 and are linked by the Craig Street Bridge.

Each neighborhood contains a small-scale commercial district and is in convenient proximity to the commercial downtown district. Within the study area, there are several municipal and private redevelopment initiatives that will increase density, create new transportation demands, and intensify existing bicycle and pedestrian safety concerns along the project corridor. These projects include a new Mont Pleasant Branch Public Library on Crane Street, senior and affordable housing at multiple locations on Craig Street, Electric City Barn Makers Space at the intersection of Craig Street and Emmett Street, and a new Boys and Girls Club between Pleasant Valley Elementary School and Mont Pleasant Middle School.

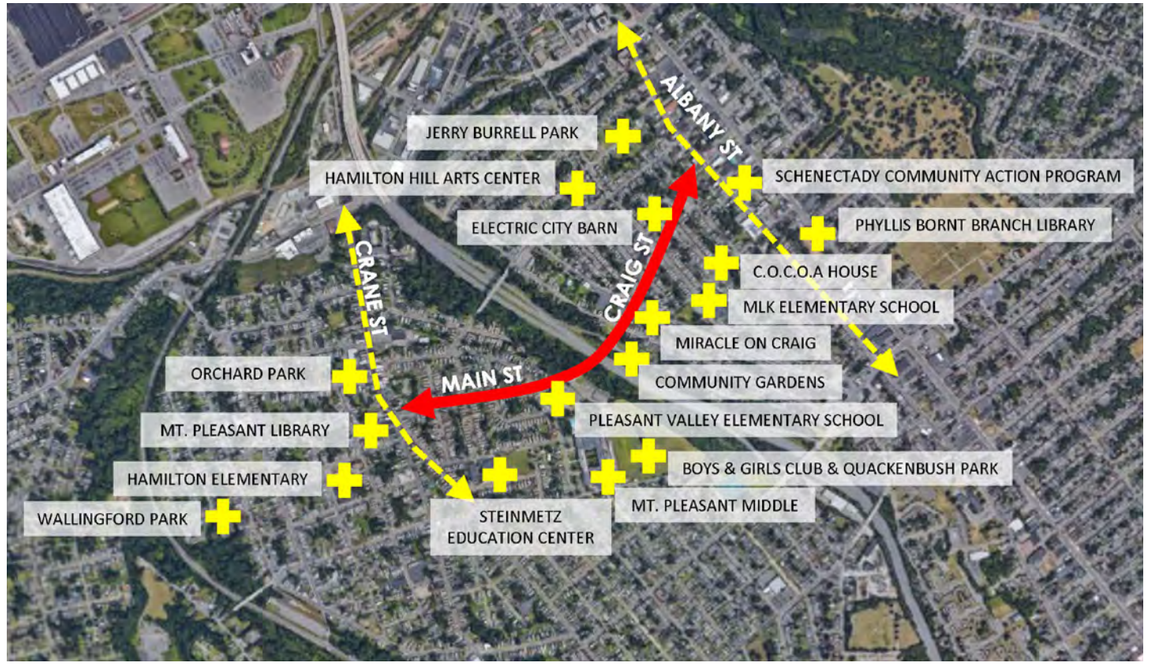


Figure 1.2: Craig - Main Complete Streets Study Area with Important Facilities and Amenities

Hamilton Hill & Mont Pleasant Neighborhood Demographics

The Craig- Main Corridor connects two distinct and diverse neighborhoods, Hamilton Hill and Mont Pleasant. Both neighborhoods are primarily residential with the major commercial corridors located on Albany Street in Hamilton Hill and along Crane Street in Mt. Pleasant. These two neighborhoods are among the most diverse in the City of Schenectady. According to the US Census Bureau's 2017 5-year American Community Survey, the Hamilton Hill neighborhood has a 69% minority population and the Mount Pleasant neighborhood has a 60% minority population.

These neighborhoods have some of the highest concentrations of poverty within the City of Schenectady. Again, according to the US Census Bureau's 2017 5 year American Community Survey, over 82.6% of residence of Hamilton Hill and 70.73% of Mt. Pleasant residence fall within HUD's definition of Low to Moderate Income households, by comparison 63% of residence city-wide falls within these guidelines. In Hamilton Hill, in census tract 210.02 45% of households and 65% of households with children fall below the federal poverty level. Within this census tract the median income is $13,580. Within census tract 209, the other major census tract in Hamilton Hill, 33.9% of households and 56% of families fall below the federal poverty the median income within this census tract is $25,154. In Mt. Pleasant, depending on the census tract, between 14.2 and 29.3% of households and between 23.9% to 42.7% of families fall below the federal poverty level. The median income of the census tracts in this neighborhood ranges from $ 28,667 to $46,678. By comparison city wide, 16% of households and 29.4% of households with children fall below the federal poverty level. City wide the average income is $43,174.

Most employment opportunities within the study area occur at small restaurants, retail, service, and convenience stores in the immediate commercial zones along the State Street/Albany Street corridor.

Challenges, including lack of transportation, poverty, illiteracy, and lack of educational attainment, are factors of limited opportunity for stable employment.

Residents of Mont Pleasant and Hamilton Hill also face challenges obtaining healthy and cost-efficient groceries. Corner stores, bodegas, and a dollar store are the only grocery sources in the neighborhood. This makes obtaining groceries (especially fresh vegetables, fruit, meats and household items) both difficult and costly for those with limited to no vehicle access.

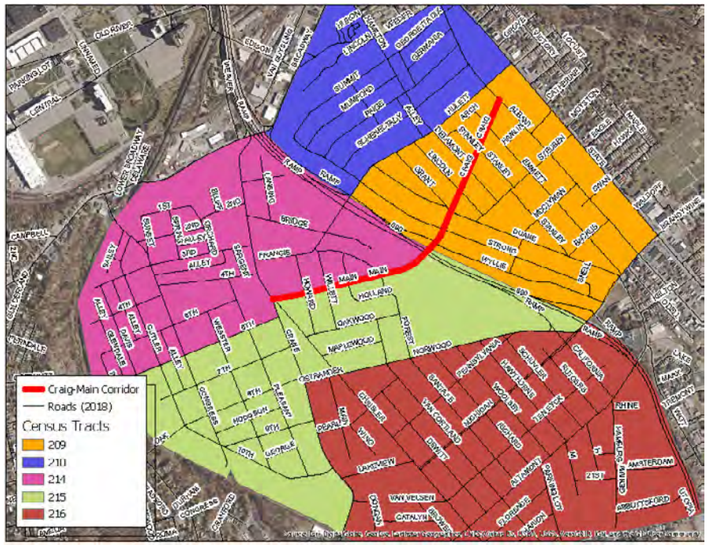


Figure 1.3: 2017 Census Tract Map

45% of Hamilton Hill Households do not have a vehicle, including 30% of households with one worker in it. 29% of household with two workers only have one vehicle. In Mt. Pleasant Census tract 214, 24% of household and 22% with one worker do not have a vehicle. 20% of workers with two workers only have one vehicle. In Census tract 215, 29% of households with two workers only have one vehicle.

These two neighborhoods have been identified by the City of Schenectady as important areas for development. Hamilton Hill has been designated as a HUD Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area. This designation will allow for additional flexibility in how the City expends its CDBG resources for housing and economic development in the neighborhood. Separately, the City has designated Mt. Pleasant for blight removal through the Mt. Pleasant Renewal Plan. This plan will allow for the City to utilize its CDBG funds for efforts

Community Stakeholders

One of the great strengths of the Hamilton Hill and Mont Pleasant Neighborhoods is the number of community activists, advocates and organizations. Throughout the project, the design team worked closely with many of these local stakeholders who generously donated their time to assist in facilitating focus group discussions, hosting events, getting the word out about the project and public events, and even providing entertainment for the Launch Party.


Stakeholder Workshop at Electric City Barn

Many local organizations focus on youth programming and will benefit from better and safer pedestrian and bicycle connectivity along the corridor. In particular, the new Boys and Girls Club being constructed in Mont Pleasant, which provides after-school-care and summer youth programming for both communities, will be much better served through the addition of pedestrian access from the Craig Street area to the site of the new building between Pleasant Valley Elementary and Mont Pleasant Middle School.



The much loved Carver Community Center on Craig Street was shut down in 2013. Residents are currently working towards raising funds to purchase and reopen the center.

One of the great strengths of the Hamilton Hill and Mont Pleasant Neighborhoods is the number of community activists, advocates and organizations. Throughout the project, the design team worked closely with many of these local stakeholders who generously donated their time to assist in facilitating focus group discussions, hosting events, getting the word out about the project and public events, and even providing financial support for outreach events.

Why Pedestrian and Bike Improvements are Important to the Corridor

Pedestrian scale, proximity to local schools, low vehicle ownership, and distance to neighborhood and downtown commercial districts contribute to the study area's high level of pedestrian and bicycle activity; however, the corridor lacks the appropriate infrastructure to properly accommodate these travel modes. Crash data provided by CDTC for the most recent 5 years concluded that 164 total crashes occurred along the approximate 1-mile corridor, 6 of which were pedestrian related and 2 of which were involving bicycles. In a survey conducted during this study, the number one request by residents was for improved sidewalks.


The Bike Fest held in 2016 drew tremendous support for creating better walking and biking infrastructure on Craig Street and provided the inspiration for this linkage study.

EXISTING CONDITIONS SUMMARY

Technical inventory of existing conditions includes a zoning study, sidewalk inventory, automobile traffic characteristics, pedestrian and bicycle traffic characteristics, public transit characteristics, crash data, and parking inventory. The design team used these methods along with field observation of the physical roadway and sidewalk conditions to prepare the existing conditions. The full existing conditions report can be found in Appendix A.

Transportation Infrastructure

Main Avenue is approximately 26 feet wide with an approximate nine-foot lane in each direction and an eight-foot wide parking lane on the north side of the street. The narrow travel lane widths result in some drivers, including passenger and transit buses, pausing to give way to on-coming traffic before proceeding. In general, Craig Street is much wider, providing a single 12-foot wide travel lane in each direction with approximate eight-foot parking lanes on either side. Both Main Avenue and Craig Street are lacking pavement markings and suffer from poor asphalt conditions. Sidewalks are present on both sides of the street on both roads, but the majority are in various states of disrepair (See Appendix A for sidewalk photo inventory).

Zoning and Land Use

Land uses in the study area are primarily residential along Craig Street and Main Avenue, with some schools and community centers being located on or near the corridor and commercial hubs at either end of the study area along Crane Street/Chrisler Avenue and Albany Street. The majority of the corridor is zoned as R-2 Two Family Residential (with the exception of one small area of R-1 Single Family Residential occurring on Main Avenue) with C-2 Mixed Use Commercial occurring at each end of the Corridor- Albany Street and Crane Street- and one small block at the northwest corner of the intersection of Craig Street and Duane Avenue. A number of urban gaps that take the form of vacant lots and parking lots occur along Craig Street, particularly at intersections and in the proximity of the Craig Street Bridge. Collectively, these gaps detract from the walkability of the corridor.

Automobile Traffic Characteristics (Speeds, Volumes & Operations)

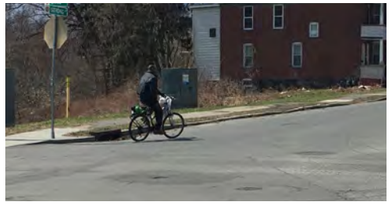
Peak travel times generally occur from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. on weekdays. This is generally earlier than the typical commuter peak period from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., and is likely due to the number of schools in the area. The data shows that the motorists are generally traveling at the posted speed limit of 30 mph, although the community noted that vehicle speeds feel higher as a pedestrian. This is likely due the poor pedestrian experience including wide drive aisles (Craig Street only), narrow buffer areas, and a lack of street trees. Speeds on Main Avenue are slightly lower than those on Craig Street, which is likely due to the narrower lanes and on-street parking.

Pedestrian Traffic Characteristics (Volumes & Operations)

The busiest crossing location is the Main Avenue/Forest Road intersection, most likely due to the heavy influence of the Pleasant Valley Elementary and Mont Pleasant Middle Schools. It is important to note that this is the only study area intersection in which pedestrians crossing the mainline outweigh those crossing the side street, indicating that people likely walk along Craig-Main until they reach Forest Road to cross. Walkability, based on the presence of sidewalks, on-street parking as a buffer, and vehicle volume and speed may be considered good by the LOS model developed by the Transportation Research Board; however, when considering the physical condition of sidewalks, the width and material of the buffer and the lack of street trees, lighting, and/or seating, the walkability experience is both difficult and uninviting.

Bicycle Traffic Characteristics (Volumes & Operations)

There is currently no bicycle infrastructure along the corridor. The data shows that bicycle activity is generally low on Main Avenue, with the majority of bicyclists in the Craig-Main corridor observed on Craig Street. This could be due to the narrow width of Main Avenue which may dissuade cyclists from riding in mixed traffic.



Bicyclist on Craig Street

Public Transit Characteristics (Routes & Ridership)

Within the approximate 1 mile long study area, there are 12 un-sheltered bus stops. Based on data provided by CDTA, the bus stop located at Main Avenue/Crane Street/Chrisler Avenue has the highest ridership within the Craig-Main corridor, followed by the Craig Street/Emmett Street stop. It is noted that the majority of boardings in the corridor occur in the eastbound direction and the majority of alightings occur in the westbound direction, indicating that passengers are likely traveling to and from downtown Schenectady.

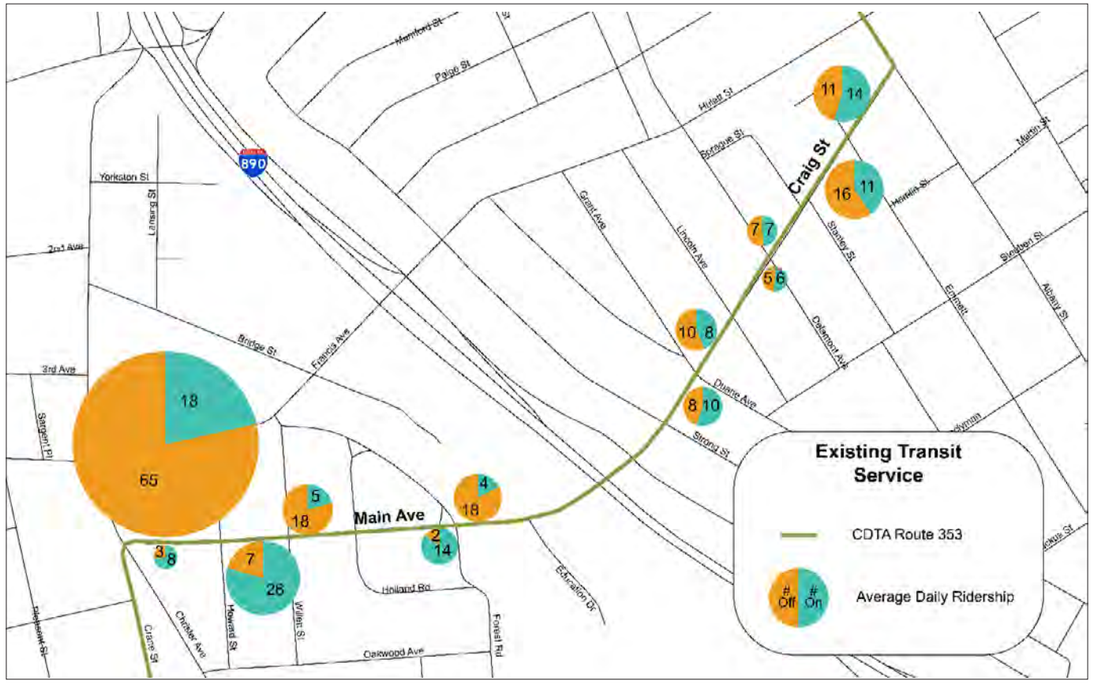


Figure 1.4- Existing Transit Service and Ridership

Crash Data

The majority (85%) of all crashes that occurred on Craig Street and Main Avenue took place at intersections. The Main Avenue/Crane Street/Chrisler Avenue intersection accounts for approximately 20% of all crashes that occurred in the study area. There is a pattern of right angle crashes at the Main Avenue/Howard Street intersection. This could be a result of limited sight distance and on-street parking. 45% of crashes along Main Ave were of an overtaking/sideswipe type. This may have been due to the narrower pavement width and presence of on-street parking.

There were five pedestrian related crashes that occurred at intersections and one pedestrian related crash that occurred mid-block. The mid-block pedestrian crash occurred between Emmett Street and Albany Street. Three of the five intersection pedestrian crashes occurred at the Main Avenue/Crane Street/Chrisler Avenue intersection, one occurred at Albany Street, and the remaining one occurred at Stanley Street. Three of the six pedestrian crashes involved injury and two were coded as non-reportable.

There were two bicycle related crashes that occurred in the study area. One occurred at the Stanley Street intersection and resulted in injury. The remaining crash occurred at the Albany Street intersection and was coded as non-reportable.

Figure 1.5 - Study Area Crashes (2013-2018)

Type	Crashes
Vehicle	156
Pedestrian	6
Bicycle	2
Total	164

Figure 1.6- Table: Summary of Crashes (December 1,2013-November 30, 2018)

Parking

The data shows that on average, 15% to 20% of the available on-street parking spaces in the corridor are utilized. Utilization does vary by block-face with parking near the Crane Street businesses and in front of Pleasant Valley Elementary School being highly utilized during the day. Blocks where residences face the street, or where amenities are present (Electric City Barn, Hillside View Apartments) appear to correlate with increased parking utilization.

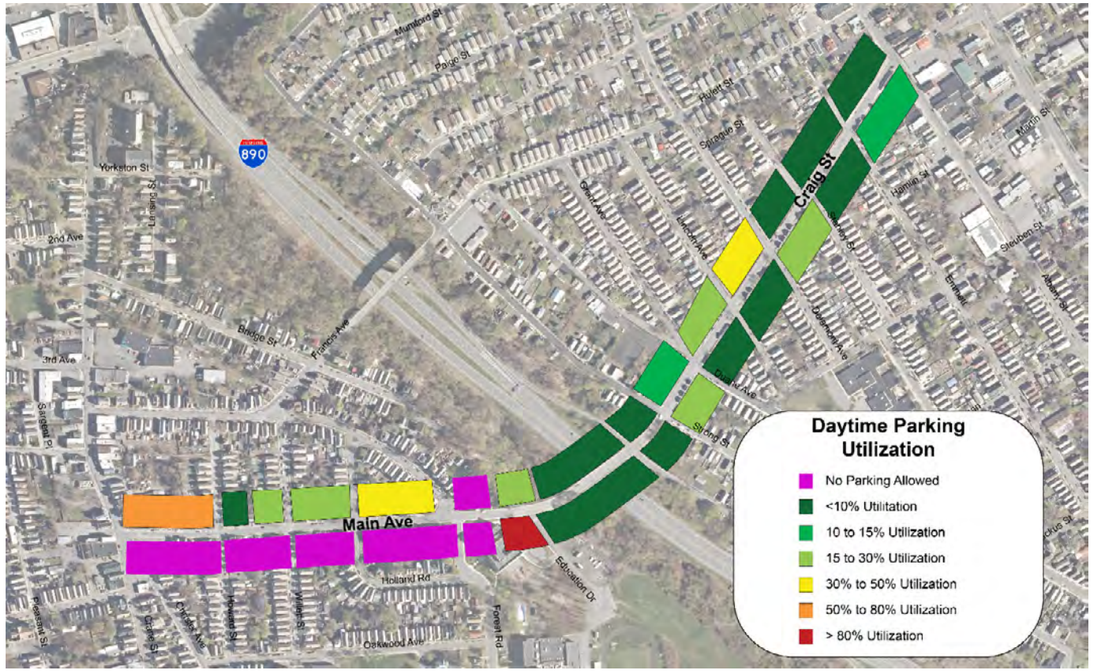


Figure 1.7- Daytime Parking Utilization Diagram

Recent Changes Along the Corridor

Several recent and ongoing municipal and private redevelopment initiatives along the corridor have raised pedestrian and bicycle safety concerns, increasing the need for Complete Streets improvements. While in some areas, increased residential density and the addition of new community spaces has increased pedestrian activity, other projects (such as the relocation and creation of a new Boys and Girls Club) have increased, in particular, the need for families and small children to be able to safely move along the corridor.

Pleasant Valley Park

Site photo: Pleasant Valley Park with construction of the new Boys and Girls Club seen in the background. While Pleasant Valley Park is currently functioning as the City's construction material and snow storage, it is area that also sees a lot of pedestrian activity as it provides the most direct connection between the Craig Street Bridge (and therefore much of the Hamilton Hill Neighborhood) and Mont Pleasant Middle School. With completion of the Boys and Girls Club, it is anticipated that pedestrian activity will continue to increase.

Left: Site photo of students climbing the guide rail to get to school. Right: Cow path made by students

Recent and Ongoing Development

Rendering of the New Boys and Girls Club currently under construction. The facilty was relocated from the Hamilton Hill Neighborhood to the nearby Mont Pleasant Neighborhood, between Mont Pleasant Middle School and Pleasant Valley Elementary School, adjacent to Quackenbush Park.

400 Craig Street, former home of the Boys and Girls Club, has been renovated to include 26 apartments and Electric City Barn (a community Makers Space).

602 Craig Street now offers new apartments for seniors.

The Community Builders is currently installing a second redevelpment project that will transform both corners of the Albany Street and Craig Street intersection. The project is largely residential apartments with one small retail space fronting on Albany Street.

Summary of Existing Documents

The City of Schenectady and the State of New York have completed several studies and reports that are useful in developing baseline information for this study. Existing resources such as the City of Schenectady Bike Infrastructure Master Plan, the NYS Pedestrian Safety Action Plan, the Smart City Report, and City of Schenectady Comprehensive Plans provided useful information on existing infrastructure, design guidelines, community goals, and revitalization strategies so that previous and on-going work could be utilized to help inform the Craig-Main Complete Streets Study. **Please refer to Appendix A for further information on existing documents and projects and how they specifically contributed to this study.**

City of Schenectady Bike Infrastructure Master Plan (August 2017)

The Bike Infrastructure Master Plan provides information on City-wide existing conditions, and prioritized bike infrastructure needs throughout the City.

City of Schenectady Comprehensive Plan 2020 (2008)

The Comprehensive Plan for the Mont Pleasant and Hamilton Hill Neighborhoods provided information on demographics and established neighborhood goals.

City of Schenectady 2017 Smart City Report (2017)

The Smart City Report outlines City-wide goals that can be implemented in construction such as smart lighting and wifi systems.

NYS Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (June 2016)

The NYS Pedestrian Safety Action Plan provides guidelines used in the design of safe pedestrian crossings.

National Grid Implementation Plan for the Smart City (October 2018)

The City is converting existing lights to LED under the Company's Lighting Tariff. The City qualifies to receive the outdoor lighting LED energy efficiency incentive approved as part of the Joint Proposal adopted in the Company's rate case.

Thriving Neighborhoods Challenge

Current projects in the project area funded by the Thriving Neighborhoods Challenge include the implementation of litter receptacles that would be painted artistically by community members. Two elements that community members expressed repeatedly throughout the Craig-Main project was the need for less trash and more community art.

Neighborhood Revitalization Strategic Area

The NRSA is occurring simultaneously with the Craig-Main Connection project and provides information on existing employers, community assets, demographic data, information gathered from public engagement, and recent investments and completed projects in the neighborhoods.

Community Builders Master Plan

Community Builders has invested heavily in the Hamilton Hill and Mont Pleasant Neighborhoods. Several future construction sites fall directly on the Craig-Main Corridor.

Capital Region Economic Development Council Strategic Plan (November 2011)

Many of the Capital Region Economic Development Council Strategic Plan goals align with those of the Craig-Main Connection project and the Hamilton Hill and Mont Pleasant neighborhood goals: Inventory and strategize vacant properties, improve affordable housing stock, promote mixed-use development, improve safety and negative perceptions, invest in creative communities, create hub for smart technologies, support non-profit organizations and community leaders.

2006- 2008 Strategic Plan for the Schenectady County Long Term Care Consortium (October 2006)

The plan identifies one of the major issues facing seniors as transportation and access to services.

The Bike Demo Fest held as part of the 2017 City of Schenectady Bike Infrastructure Master plan served as inspiration for the Craig Street Main Avenue Complete Streets Study.

The Phyllis Bornt Branch Public Library and Family Literacy Center Image Credit: *Schenectady County*

Schenectady Smart Lighting
Image Credit: *Marc Schultz of the Daily Gazette*

2.0 PROJECT APPROACH

COMPLETE STREETS DESIGN

Complete Streets design seeks to consider and balance the needs of all travelers, whether pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders or automobile users, in a way that promotes public safety and facilitates access. Typical considerations include safe intersections and crossings; buffer zones such as landscape strips, bollards and/or street trees; public transportation amenities, walkability and related infrastructure; bikability and related infrastructure; and planning for public space and urban infill.

Image Credit: NACTO Urban Street Design Guide

Image Credit: Strong Towns

Complete Streets design considers environmentally sustainable design that utilizes green infrastructure to promote clean air and water. For instance, street trees and vegetation can be included in ways that not only provide physical safety separation, but also reduce stormwater impacts, lower surrounding temperatures by providing shade and moisture, and combat air pollution.

There are many alternative design strategies for applying Complete Streets design; however, which ones are applied depends largely upon the space and resources available. Once the available space is determined, selecting which combination of techniques and components will be applied should be determined by the needs and priorities of the users. A mixture of appropriate treatments can then achieve the goals of improving appearance, utilizing green infrastructure, traffic calming, and prioritizing space for alternative transportation options.

Indianapolis Cultural Trail - Shared Multi-Use Paths offer safer options for biking and walking that are separate from vehicular traffic. Image Credit: *Nations Swell*

Bicycle Lanes, while not separate, offer safer options for those traveling by bike.
Image Credit: *Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition*

Shared Lanes are sometimes used when space is limited, but many do not feel comfortable riding in travel lanes.
Image Credit: *National Association of City Transportation Officials*

APPROACH TO THE STUDY AREA

The vision for the Craig Street Corridor is driven by the aspirations of the residents and key stakeholders of the Hamilton Hill and Mont Pleasant Neighborhoods.

Key Tasks

Public outreach was a key and underlying component throughout the project, and has already resulted in local organizations working together toward accomplishing some of the goals for community participation and implementation.

Design and planning work for the project was accomplished in four stages:

1. Existing Conditions Assessment
2. Collaborative Public Outreach and Design Workshops
3. Concept Refinement with Cost Estimates
4. Final Report Development

Primary Improvement Zones

The five primary improvement zones identified within the study areas include Craig Street, the I-890 Craig Street Bridge, Pleasant Valley Park, Main Avenue, and the Crane Street and Main Avenue Intersection. Also studied along the corridor were vacant parcels providing opportunities for infill development and public space.

Each zone was established based upon its unique characteristics, including overall width of the public right-of-way, immediate surroundings and neighborhood fabric, and how it is used to connect to areas both within and outside of the neighborhood.

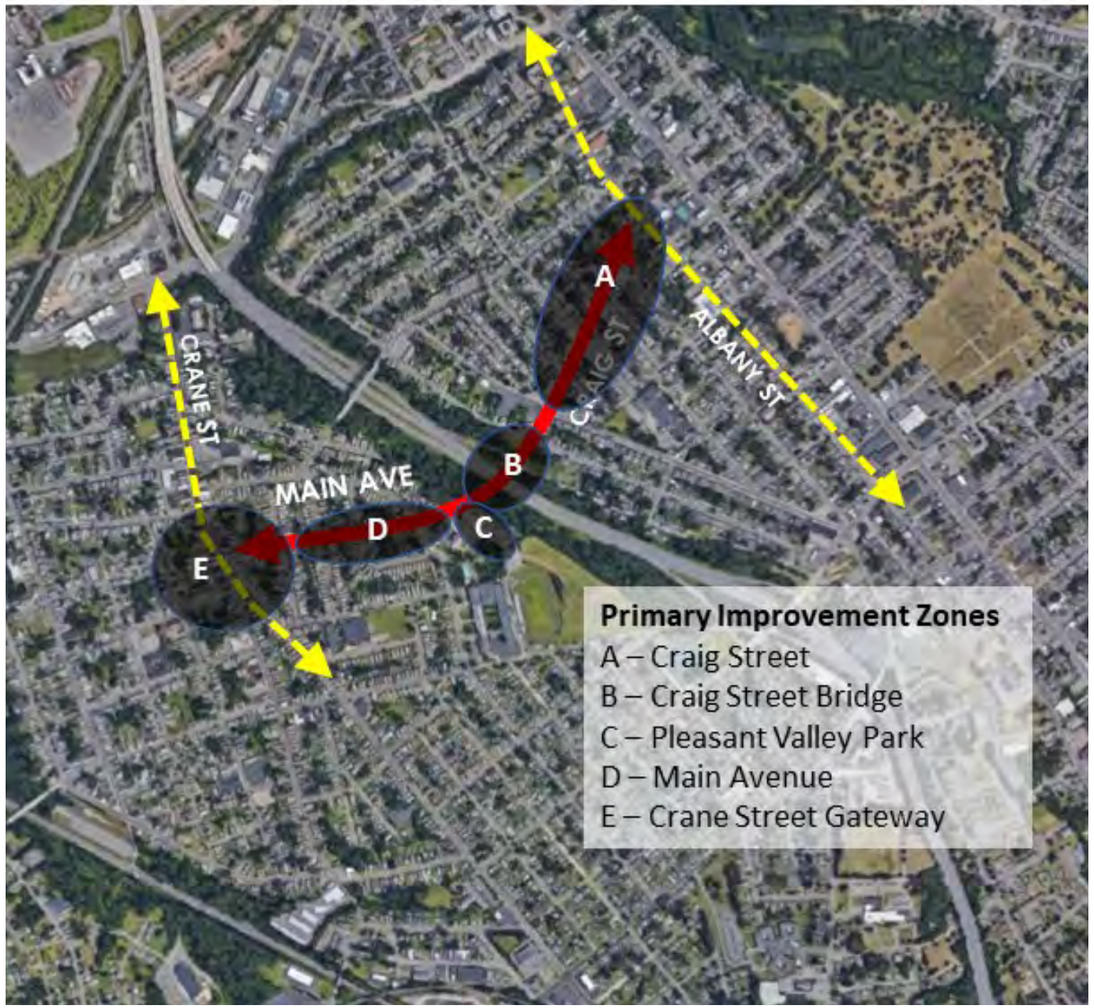


Figure 2.1- Primary Improvement Zones

PUBLIC OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

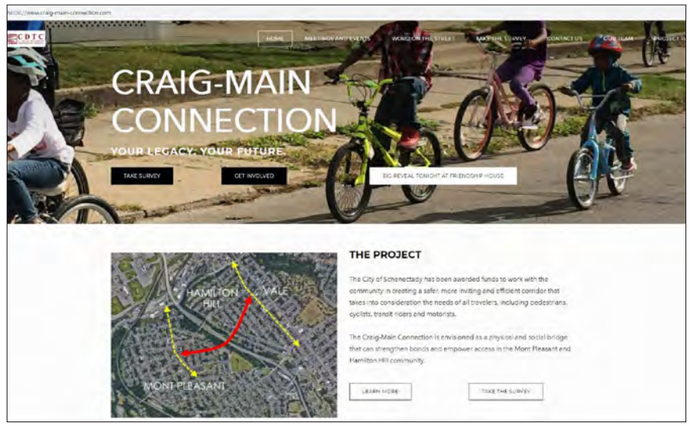
Once the Existing Conditions Assessment was underway, the project team worked closely with the community to identify what kinds of improvements are needed, how urban gaps in the neighborhoods might best be filled to better serve the community, and how to include and empower the community as part of the Craig Street-Main Avenue Complete Streets Project. The project was renamed the "Craig-Main Connection," which became a successful branding tool for building engagement and excitement around the project.

In an attempt to connect with different segments of the community and make participation easier, outreach events were held during different times of the day and evening and also at multiple locations throughout both the Hamilton Hill and Mont Pleasant Neighborhoods. The project team is grateful to the many organizations that opened up their doors to help make this project a success.

Residents, Business Owners, and Organizations were encouraged to partake in the development of the Craig-Main Connection project. The design team sought to gather information on existing conditions outside of technical analysis in order to provide practical, community driven design decisions.

Strategies and Events:

+ Website
+ Community Liaison
+Study Advisory Committee
+ Stakeholder Workshops
+ Curbside Conversations
+ Long Survey & Intercept Survey
+ Advertisements
+ Art-Based Design Workshops with Youth Groups
+ Community Project Ambassadors
+ Launch Party
+ Multi-day Design Charrette
+ Local Organization Outreach
+ Post-Charrette Open Houses
+ Final Presentation and Public Comment Period



Website

The project website, www.craig-main-connection.com contains all project updates, survey links, and project content such as meeting notes, presentations, and conceptual designs. The link to the website was shared on every flyer, survey, and advertisement.

Community Liaison

The City of Schenectady and the project team were committed to supporting resident-led community involvement initiatives in the Mont Pleasant and Hamilton Hill neighborhoods. Johan Matthews, of Mutual Design, served as the Craig-Main Connection Community Liaison. His role within the project team included reviewing material, identifying methods of outreach and engagement, advertising the project, leading discussion, assisting in website development, and conducting face-to-face discussion through focus groups and individual encounters.

Study Advisory Committee

The Study Advisory Committee (SAC) acted as the sounding board for the City of Schenectady and CDTC for this project and included active members of the community as well as members from involved and potential partner organizations. As part the project oversight, the SAC provided input on local issues, helped focus the project, assisted in public outreach, reviewed draft and final documents, and assisted in selection of key projects and priorities. SAC members are listed at the beginning of the report and all SAC meeting minutes can be found in the Appendix C.

Stakeholder Discussions

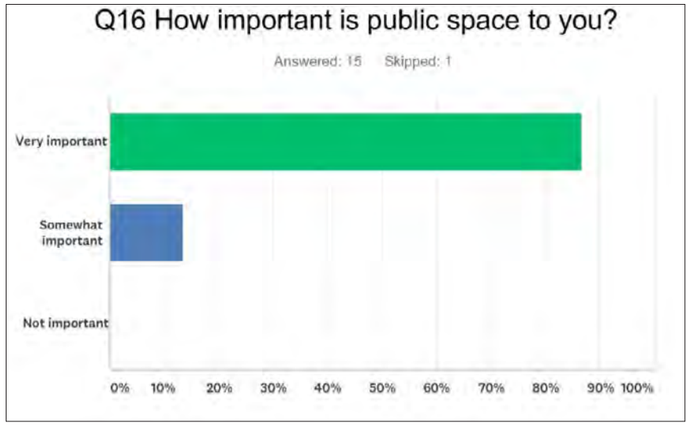
A series of stakeholder workshops were geared toward connecting stakeholder groups (e.g., Miracle on Craig, Boys and Girls Club, Businesses, Housing and Development Groups). Two meetings were held at different times (day/evening) and locations (Electric City Barn & Mont Pleasant Library) to allow for higher attendance. Workshops included focus group discussions on arts & culture, business promotion & development, housing & redevelopment, and youth programming. Refer to the appendix for meeting minutes on stakeholder discussions and presentations.

Curbside Conversations

Although meetings and events were located within the neighborhoods to make involvement accessible to as many people as possible, the design team believed there needed to be an additional layer of connecting with the community. With the help of Habitat for Humanity, an outdoor 'living room' was displayed at the corner of Education Drive and Main Avenue and again in front of the Carver Community Center. These sessions provided opportunities for authentic and passive interaction with community members to gather input and share information about the project.

Long Survey & Intercept Survey

Residents were encouraged to participate in a mobility survey which highlighted access and use of public transportation services, bicycling, walking, and private vehicle use. This survey was dispersed at key community centers such as the Mont Pleasant Library, the Phyllis Bornt Branch Library and Literacy Center, Electric City Barn, on the project website, and was emailed to a list of community stakeholders and residents. A short-survey was used at outreach events and highlighted 7 key questions based off the long survey. Results of the surveys can be found in the Appendix B.



Advertisements

Traditional methods like paper and electronic mailings, flyer's, posters and informational brochures were key tools used. Newspaper advertising was released prior to public meetings, and project-related local event. Events such as the Working Group on Girls of Schenectady created artwork to display on an advertisement banner posted along the corridor, and community ambassadors helped disperse flyer's. Local media was invited to the event.

Art-Based Design Workshops with Youth Groups: The Power of Community Art Murals

Young women with the Working Group on Girls of Schenectady learned about the project, were informed about the elements that the design team would be analyzing for improvements, and became part of the process by working with C.R.E.A.T.E. Studios to create streetscape-related artwork with project mural ideas that were then used as part of the workshop events. A couple of the young women later served as Community Ambassadors helping to hand out flyer's and surveys.

Art-Based Design Workshops with Youth Groups: Great Schenectady Treasure Hunt

The Craig-Main Connection Community Liaison, Johan Matthews of Mutual Design, led a community treasure hunt that taught kids about the history and culture of their City while creating community art. The event also included discussion and brainstorming around what improvements the kids would like to see in their neighborhood, in particular those related to streetscape improvements.

Community Project Ambassadors

Volunteers from Working Group on Girls of Schenectady, Planned Parenthood Teens Helping Teens, local schools, and local organizations, had a big part in the success of the public outreach. Volunteers helped with engagement in the field handing out flyer's and surveys, facilitating discussion and information stations at the Launch Party.

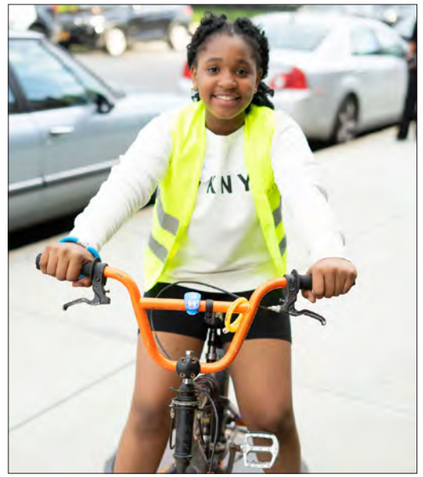
Launch Party and Multi-Day Charrette

In a 4-day design workshop, design consultants aimed to learn the goals, needs, and visions of the community. The ideas heard were presented back to the community through conceptual plans, diagrams, models, and concept images throughout the remainder of the workshop.

The workshop was kicked off with a launch party that included local food, local music and entertainment, and raffle prizes to incentivize community members to participate in information gathering stations. The event was very successful, attracting approximately 200 people and sparking a lot of enthusiasm for the project.

On Day 3 of the workshop, community members were invited to an open house to give feedback on design progress. This allowed the design team to make revisions based on community feedback in preparation for the final presentation on the evening of Day 4.

Refer to Appendix C for meeting notes and full presentations.



Local Organization Outreach

Following the charrette, City Staff, the Community Liaison and members of the project team continued to share information with local organizations about the proposed improvements for the Craig-Main Corridor. A presentation was given at the Mont Pleasant Merchants Association meeting and the project was also further discussed at a community art focus meeting between C.R.E.A.T.E. Studios, C.O.C.O.A. House and Hamilton Hill Arts Center.

Post-Charrette Open Houses

Formal and informal open houses were held in Jerry Burrell Park and the Mont Pleasant Library Branch to gather additional community input during the design refinement stage. With the exception of divided preferences for the different concepts for Main Avenue, there was unanimous support for the changes proposed in each of the other four zones.

Final Presentation & Ice Cream Social and Public Comment Period

Following completion of the draft study report, the draft was posted on the project website for public review and comment and a final meeting was helt to present study recommendations, garner feedback from the community, and continue building momentum for the project moving forward. The final meeting included a final presentation, an ice cream social with individual information stations for each project component, local announcements, and a live performance by local music artist Rell Dolo.

DESIGN ALTERNATIVES AND COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

Stakeholder workshops and the charrette Launch Party focused on identifying community priorities for making Complete Streets improvements and filling urban gaps along the corridor.

Complete Streets Strategies and Tradeoffs

People attending the Launch Party were encouraged to participate in a series of workshop stations that each focused on different areas and design alternatives for the Craig-Main Connection project.

CRAIG-MAIN CONNECTION

schedule

6:30 - 7:00 social hour

7:00 welcome

7:00 - 8:15 craig-main stations

1. Gap User Preference
2. Craig Street Option Trade - Off's
3. Intersection Improvements
4. Community Art

8:15 - 8:30 raffle draw + conclusions

next steps

Wednesday May 22 — **open house**
C.O.C.O.A House 869 Stanley St
5:30 - 7:00 pm

Thursday May 23 — **final presentation**
Friendship House 955 State St
6:00 - 8:00 pm

Visit **www.craig-main-connection.com** for project updates and to take the **SURVEY**

To help designers gauge the community's level of comfortability and willingness to use different types of bicycle infrastructure, participants ranked shared bike lanes, traditional bike lanes, shared pedestrian and bicycle paths, and separated pedestrian and bicycle paths on a scale from 1-5; 1 being most comfortable, and 5 being not comfortable at all. The results indicate that in order to incorporate successful bicycle infrastructure into the streetscape in a meaningful and useful way, the lanes need to be physically separated

Launch Party Input Stations

Figure 2.2: Results of the Launch Party Bike Infrastructure Preference Visual Survey

Gap User Preference

Using a series of visual surveys and preference charts, participants were asked to provide input on ways that urban gaps along the corridor could be filled to address community needs and improve overall quality of life. Options presented were based on needs and interests identified through surveys and during early stakeholder workshops and, rather than any specific options rising to the top, interest and need for all of the proposed options was expressed.

Identified needs for empty, underutilized or vacant parcels along Craig Street (in order of preference)

Large Family Homes (3+ Bedrooms)
Public Green Space (Parks, Playground, Skate Parks, Flexible Open Lawn, Athletic Courts)
Access to Fresh Food
Community Services (Elderly, Disabled, Homeless, Crisis Centers, Community Centers)
Living Amenities (Laundry, Daycare, Etc.)
Sheltered Bus Stops
Neighborhood Gathering Plaza
1-2 Family Homes

Ideas for Improving Crane Street and Main Avenue (in order of preference)

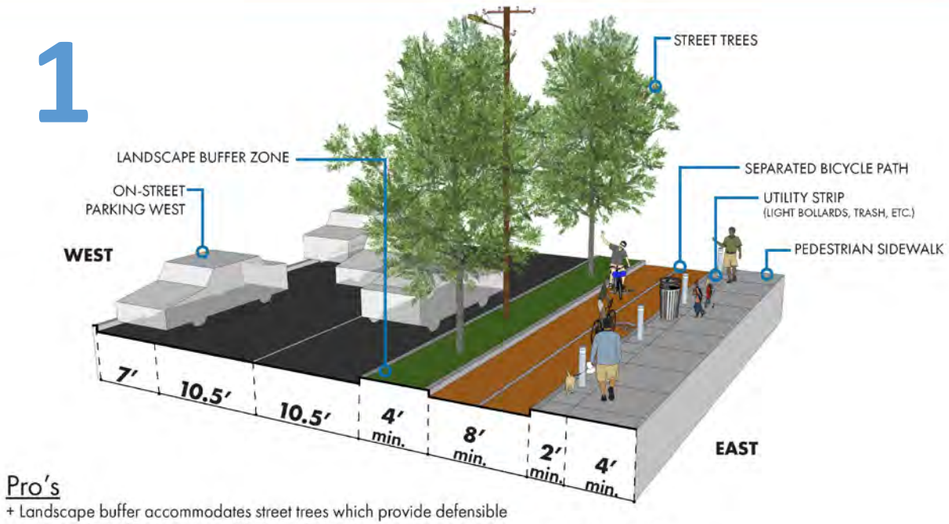
Public Green Space
Community Services (Services for Elderly, Homeless, Crisis Center, Community Center)
Access to Fresh Food
Sheltered Bus Stops
Living Amenities (Laundry, Daycare, Etc.)
Neighborhood Gathering Plaza

CRAIG STREET COMPLETE STREETS ALTERNATIVES AND TRADE-OFFS

The design team studied Craig Street using a range of alterable widths and design elements to present the community with four potential alternatives. Community members reviewed the trade-off's for each option and prioritized them from 1-4. In order to make informed choices on what options they'd most prefer, participants were asked to weigh out the benefits of each alternative with the sacrifices needed to be made in order to obtain the design.

The applicable options included: a separated multi-purpose path which removes one side of on-street parking, a shared multi-purpose sidewalk which also removes one side of on-street parking, an expanded pedestrian sidewalk which allows for both sides of parking to remain but does not accommodate bicycles, and a shared multi-purpose sidewalk that maintains both sides of on-street parking, but limits the buffer zone between the sidewalk and the roadway, thereby limiting opportunities for street trees and other streetscape amenities.

Launch Party Input Stations



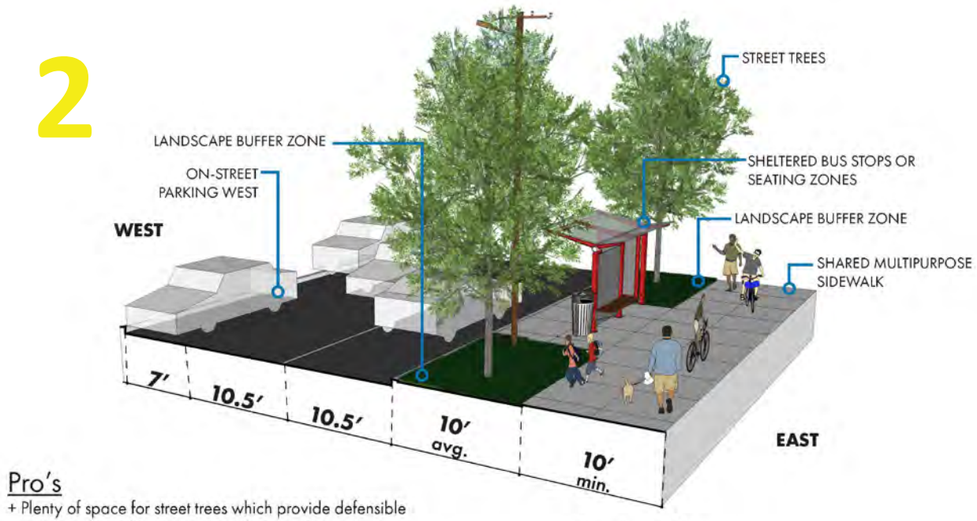
Pro's

+ Landscape buffer accommodates street trees which provide defensible space, calm traffic, improve aesthetic and experience
+ Pedestrians and Bicyclists Separated
+ Utility strip allows for some amenities (trash, bollards, etc.)
+ Provides continuous bike connection along Craig Street with links to MLK School, Pleasant Valley School, Quackenbush Park, and the future Boy's and Girls Club
+ Reduced asphalt zone calms vehicular speeds
+ Wide path could be plowed in winter for pedestrians
+ Differentiating and bright/artistic colored bike path
+ Flexibility in design

Trade Offs

- Loss of parking could inconvenience homes lacking driveway
- Could not be applied on first block at Albany Street
- Landscape strip width minimized to accommodate separate bike lane

Figure 2.3: Craig Street Option 1: On Street Parking West and Two-Way Cycle Track and Sidewalk East



Pro's

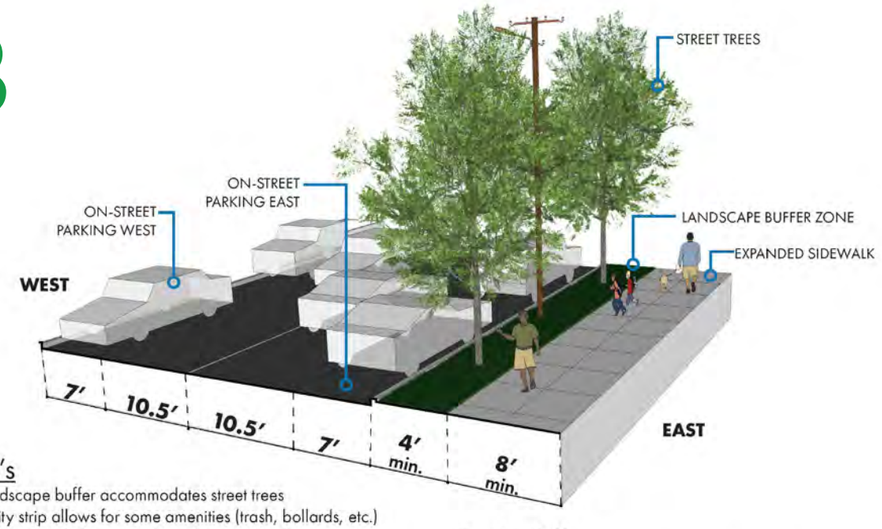
+ Plenty of space for street trees which provide defensible space, calm traffic, improve aesthetic and experience
+ Landscape zone is maximized
+ Wide landscape zone allows for small civic zones (sheltered bus stops, benches, trash receptacles)
+ Reduced asphalt zone calms vehicular speeds
+ Path could be plowed in winter for pedestrians
+ Path is wide enough for bikes and pedestrians
+ Flexibility in design

Trade Offs

- Loss of parking could inconvenience homes lacking driveway
- Landscape buffer zone could not be applied on first block at Albany Street
- Bicyclist and Pedestrians are mixed

Figure 2.4: Craig Street Option 2: On Street Parking West and Multi-Use Trail East

3

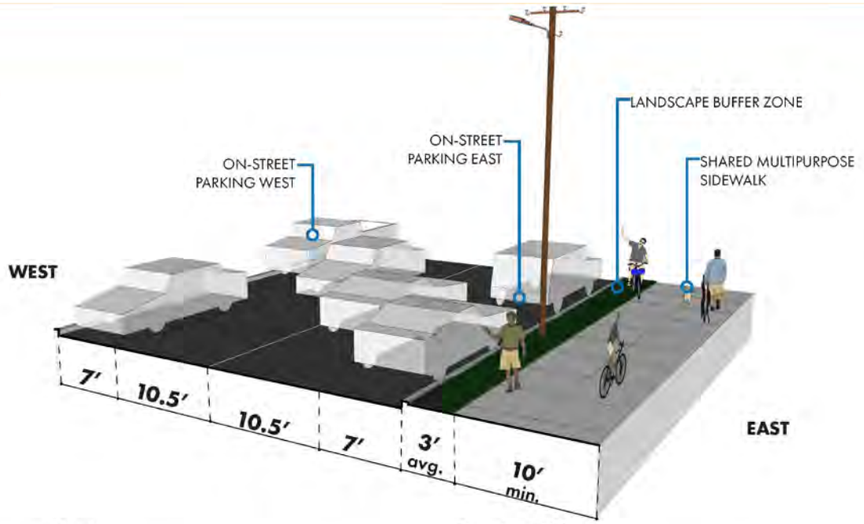


Pro's
+ Landscape buffer accommodates street trees
+ Utility strip allows for some amenities (trash, bollards, etc.)
+ Reduced asphalt zone calms vehicular speeds
+ Wide path could be plowed in winter for pedestrians
+ Differentiating and bright/artistic colored bike path
+ Sidewalk to accommodate children bicyclists
+ Flexibility in design

Trade Offs
- Could not be applied on first block on Albany Street
- Minimal Flexibility in Design

Figure 2.5: Craig Street Option 3: On Street Parking East and West with Improved Sidewalks

4



Pro's
+ Parking on both sides could add a layer to buffer pedestrians & bicyclists
+ Wide path could be plowed in winter for pedestrians

Trade Offs
- Landscape buffer does not consistently accommodate street trees
- Lack of street trees will not improve streetscape experience
- Amenities (sheltered bus stop, seating, etc.) limited to bump-out areas
- Minimal Flexibility in Design

Figure 2.6: Craig Street Option 4: On Street Parking East and West with Multi-Use Trail East

Despite losing parking on one side of the street, the results of the visual survey suggest that accommodating both bicyclists and pedestrians with either a separated bike lane or a shared multipurpose sidewalk would bring the most value to the community.

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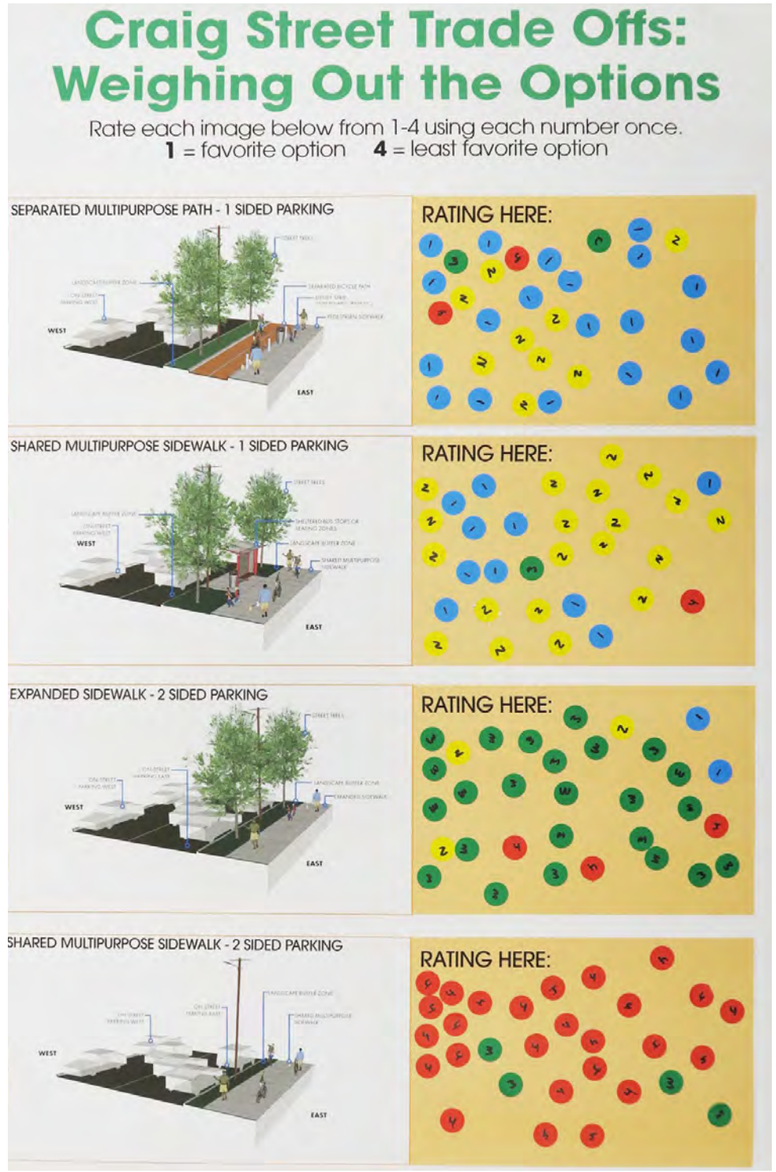


Figure 2.7: Results of the Craig Street Station show a clear preference for separated bike and pedestrian infrastructure.

PLEASANT VALLEY PARK PRIORITIES

The City-owned parcel located between the Craig Street Bridge and Pleasant Valley Elementary School, Mont Pleasant Middle School and the new Boys and Girls Club, Pleasant Valley Park is currently used for construction staging and storage, snow dumping and a place for receiving construction fill. Located at the center of so many key destinations, it has the potential to provide a much needed, safe and inviting connection for students and community members going to and from the Hamilton Hill Neighborhood. Given its key location, it also has the potential to provide constructive activities for youth, a need expressed repeatedly during stakeholder workshops and discussions.

Participants at the Launch Party were asked to respond to ideas for new programming. There was especially strong support for new basketball courts given the recent loss of two outdoor courts as part of new developments- one in Hamilton Hill and one in Mont Pleasant.

Programming Ideas for Pleasant Valley Park

Splash Pads
Walking Paths
Quiet Gathering Space
Basketball Courts
Skate / BMX Park
Pull-Up Park
Sculpture Park
Dog Park

Community members respond to ideas for creating new parks along the Craig-Main Corridor

Basketball Courts with Community-Installed Murals
Image Credit: Project Backboard

Pocket Park Concept Image
Image Credit: Chicago Athlete Magazine

COMMUNITY GENERATED PUBLIC ART

The notion of incorporating public art throughout the corridor as a way to celebrate the community and inspire neighborhood pride was heavily supported throughout the project, including at stakeholder workshops, youth events and during the charrette. Incorporating art at crosswalks and along the bridge were especially popular ideas and some groups from the community, including C.O.C.O.A. House, the Hamilton Hill Arts Center, Miracle on Craig Street, and local artists such as the art teacher from Mont Pleasant Middle School, have already started to collaborate on ideas for executing some of the ideas for public art that came out of the design charrette.

Students and members of the community created art murals as part of multiple events including two youth workshops and the Launch Party.

MAIN AVE STREETSCAPE TRADEOFFS

Main Avenue presents a heavier challenge in accommodating bicycle infrastructure due to its narrow width. After receiving such strong support at the Launch Party for the separated bike lanes on Craig Street, the project team explored what it would take to extend the bicycle connections proposed on Craig Street into Mont Pleasant and to Crane Street. Main Street is only 26' from face of curb, to face of curb along most of the street. With 10.5' drive aisles, that provides only 5' for one-sided on-street parking. The minimum is 7 feet for on-street parking with 8 feet being more appropriate in snow-prone regions. Typically, on-street parking would therefore not be allowed for the majority of Main Avenue. The first design concept proposed converting Main Ave into a one-way street heading east toward the DOT bridge from Crane Street to Forest Road. This would provide enough space for an 11 foot one-way drive aisle, but would eliminate parking between Crane Street and Holland Road. A paved utility buffer with bollards, an 8 foot bicycle path, and separated sidewalk would connect the Craig Street bicycle/pedestrian path to Crane Street. Given the loss of all on-street parking on Main Ave, in order to accommodate the continuation of the Craig-Main Connection, the design team explored another option. The second option explores converting both Main Avenue (in order to provide safer on-street parking) and Forest Road into one-way streets with Forest Road losing on-street parking on one of its sides in order to accommodate an 8 foot bicycle lane, 4 foot minimum sidewalks, and a landscape buffer with street trees. Main Avenue would include one sided on-street parking and an improved pedestrian zone.

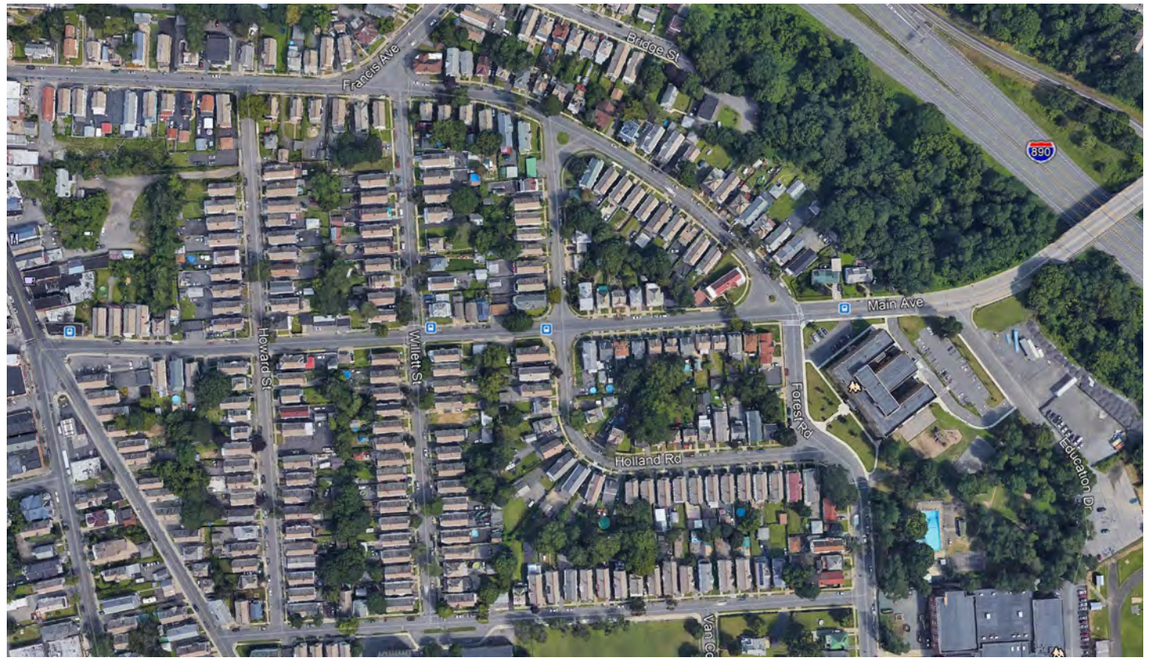
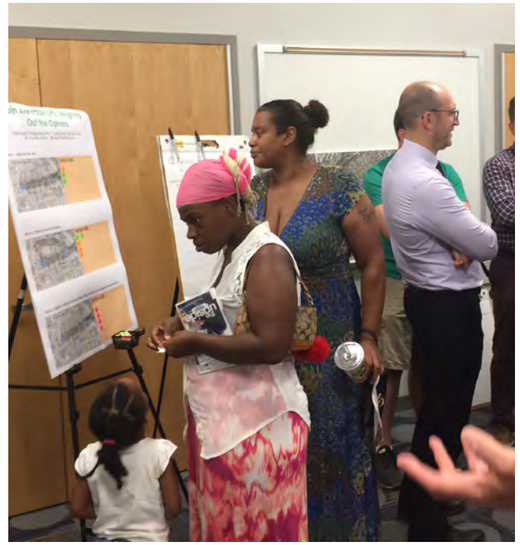


Figure 2.8: Aerial map of Main Avenue from the Craig Street DOT bridge to Crane Street

Sidewalk encroachment from parked cars is a frequent occurrence as a result of the narrow road width.

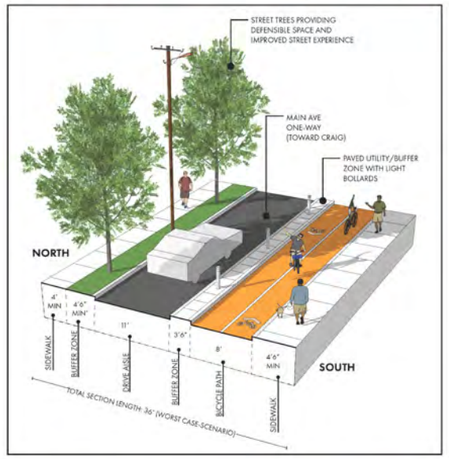
POST-CHARRETTE PUBLIC INPUT

Because the ideas for the Main Avenue portion of the corridor were developed later in the charrette and the team was unable to get much feedback from local residents, three options for trade-offs for implementing Complete Streets principles were presented at a post-charrette open house. With a much narrower width than Craig Street, changes to Main Avenue require greater trade-offs and bigger changes.

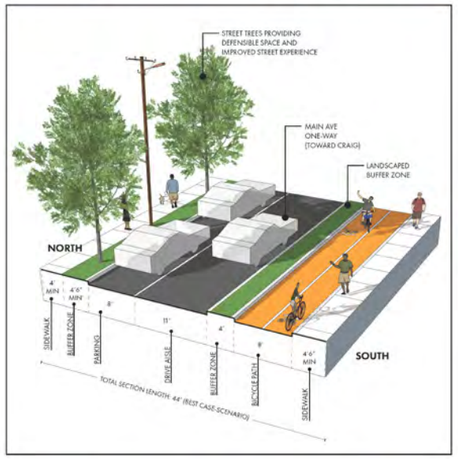


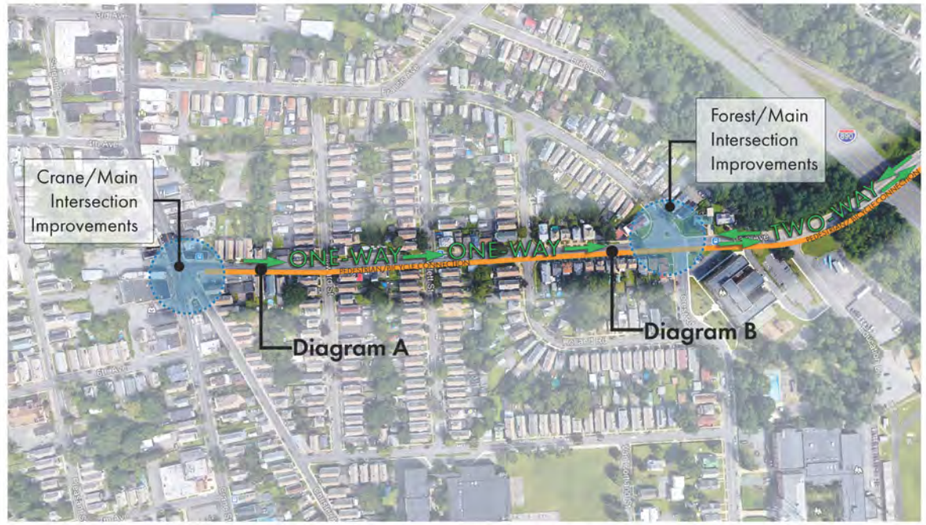
Main Ave Connection Trade-Offs
Option 1 : Main Ave One-Way with Connection

OPTION 1 - DIAGRAM A:
MAIN AVE ONE - WAY 36' BLOCK (Crane-Holland)



OPTION 1- DIAGRAM B:
MAIN AVE ONE - WAY 44' BLOCK (Holland-Forest)





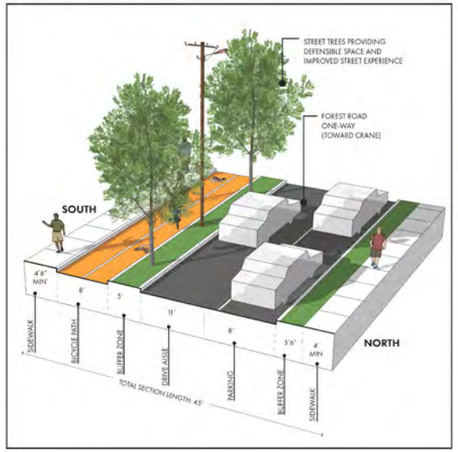
Pro's
+ Connects Albany Street neighborhood commercial district to Crane Street neighborhood district
+ Intersection improvements on Forest/Main
+ Direct continued bike/ped connection along corridor
+ Most houses along Main Ave front on side streets (Limited driveway transitions)

Trade Offs
- Main Ave becomes one-way
- Main Ave loses on-street parking from Crane Ave to Holland Rd
- Possible increase in traffic to adjacent roads

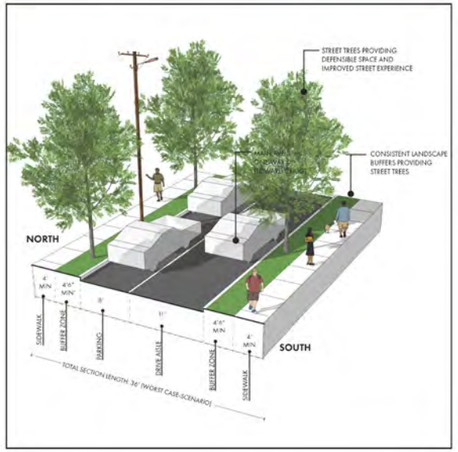
Figure 2.9: Main Avenue Option 1: Main Avenue One-Way with Connection

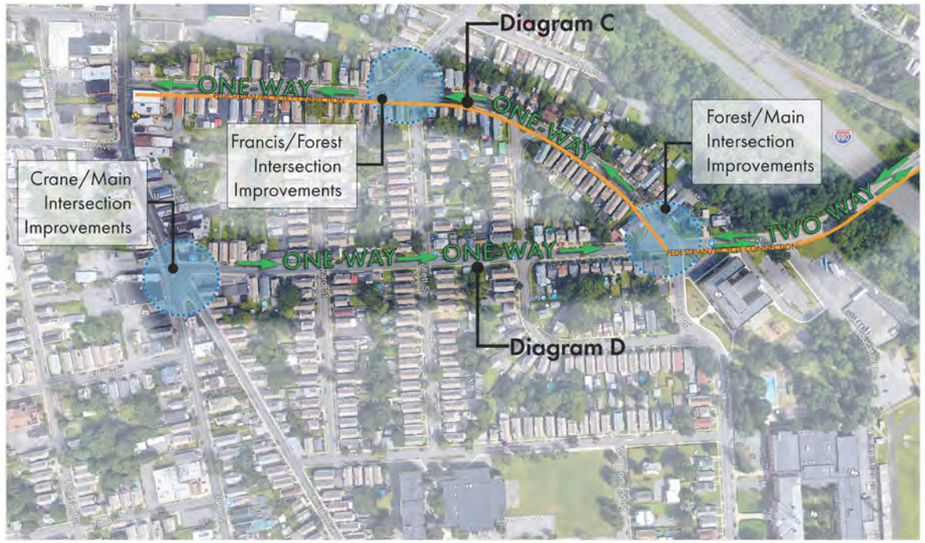
Main Ave Connection Trade-Offs
Option 2: Main Ave & Forest Rd one-way

OPTION 2 - DIAGRAM C:
FOREST AVE ONE-WAY WITH CONNECTION



OPTION 2 - DIAGRAM D:
MAIN AVE ONE-WAY WITH PEDESTRIAN SIDEWALK





Pro's
+ Connects Albany Street neighborhood commercial district to Crane Street neighborhood district
+ Forest Road width allows more flexibility
+ Intersection improvements on Francis/Forest and Forest/Main
+ Main Ave to maintain on-street parking

Trade Offs
- Forest Road and Main Ave become one-way
- Forest Road limited to one side of on-street parking
- Bike/ped connection not along direct corridor
- More houses front along Forest Road (More driveway transitions)
- Possible increase in traffic to adjacent roads

Figure 2.10: Main Avenue Option 2: Main Avenue and Forest Road One-way with Connection on Forest Road

Main Ave Connection Trade-Offs

Option 3: Improve Main Ave Existing Conditions

OPTION 3 - DIAGRAM E:
MAIN AVE PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS

CONCEPT IMAGE
BUMP OUTS

Pro's
+ Two-way traffic to remain
+ Implement street trees where possible
+ Improved sidewalks
+ Main Ave to maintain on-street parking
+ Intersection Improvements

Trade Offs
- No direct bicycle connection
- Few opportunities for street trees
- On-street parking lane very narrow

Figure 2.11: Main Avenue Option 3: Improve Main Avenue Existing Conditions

MAIN AVENUE PRIORITIES

Mixed Opinions

Unlike Craig Street, which received unanimous support for separated bike lanes, preferences for the different options for Main Avenue were much more divided. While some gravitated toward the walking, biking and traffic calming benefits that could come from converting Main Avenue to a one way street, others were concerned about losing the ability to drive in both directions, the ability to park on Main Avenue, and the possibility of added traffic congestion, particularly during school drop-off and pickup times.

Further Study and Public Input Needed

When asked the majority of participants felt that it would be worth further study and agreed that a detailed study of the different impacts (with additional public input) would be necessary before making any major changes to Main Avenue.

Intersection Improvements

Support for addressing pedestrian and vehicular conflicts at the intersection of Main Avenue and Crane Street was unanimous, as was a strong desire to improve the intersections along Main Avenue, which many felt were confusing and chaotic, in particular, the intersection of Forest Road and Main Avenue.

3.0 DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

CRAIG STREET STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

Four different concepts were prepared for Craig Street, which received the worst Bicycle Level of Service (BLOS) ratings along the corridor. Of the four concepts explored (See Chapter 2, Design Alternatives and Community Priorities), the heavily favored concept incorporates separated bicycle and pedestrian paths. This concept includes narrowing drive aisle lanes to 10.5 feet and providing an 8 foot on-street parking lane on the west side of Craig Street. A 5 foot minimum landscape buffer with street trees separates an 8 foot two-way bike path from the roadway. A 2.5 foot utility strip housing bollards and trash receptacles separates the pedestrian from the bicyclist, with a 4' minimum pedestrian sidewalk. Expanded sidewalk with street trees on the west side of the street would provide a wide, safe pedestrian experience. Intersection bump-outs delineating-on-street parking would decrease crossing distances, slow traffic, and provide increased space for side amenities and bus shelters. Due to the narrow width of the first block from Albany Street, the bike path is not continued. For this block, on-street parking is proposed on both sides of the street with improved sidewalks, street trees and gateway signage. In this preferred concept, the Craig Street separated multi-purpose path improvements connect from Emmett Street to Pleasant Valley Elementary School. A list of additional recommendations specific to intersections can be found at the end of this section.

Additional improvements proposed include:
+ Sheltered bus stops at Electric City Barn, Delamont Avenue, and the corner of Emmett Street (which would also visually mitigate and underutilized corner of a large corner parking lot) - it should be noted that warrants for shelters are 25 boardings per day, and in some cases, nearby stops or redundant stops are eliminated to increase ridership at shelter locations
+ A pocket park at the western corner of Stanley Street and Craig Street, providing an open and visible seating space.
+ A park on the eastern corner of Lincoln Ave and Craig Street to work in hand with the Carver Community Center, should it reopen, providing an open and visible seating plaza and a neighborhood splash pad.
+ A City-owned parcel at the western corner of Strong Street is positioned across from existing community gardens. A proposed foraging pocket park with fruit trees, an edible landscape plan, and cut flowers is proposed to serve as a community gateway working with the community gardens.
+ Opportunities for housing infill on the west side of the street on the block between Lincoln and Duane Avenue and on the block between Duane Ave and Strong Street.

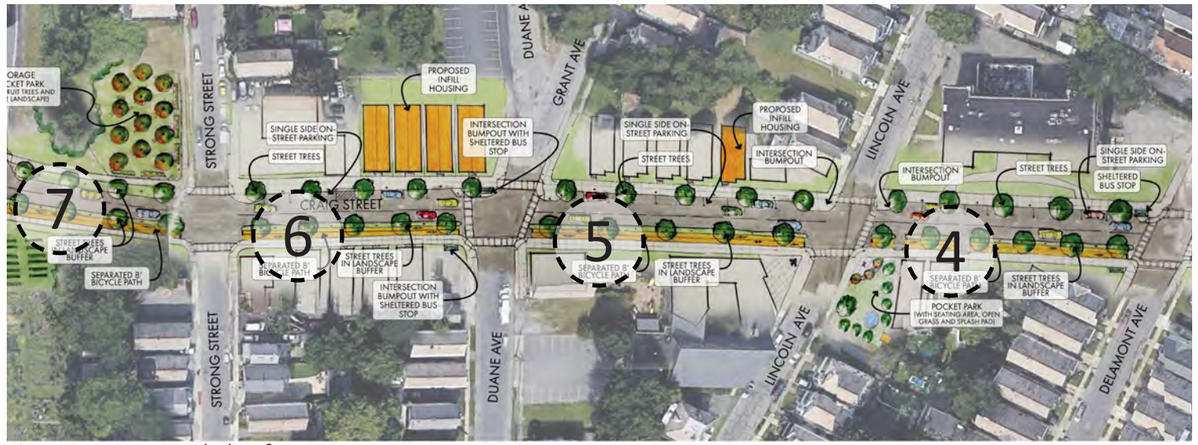


Figure 3.1 Proposed Plan for Craig Street

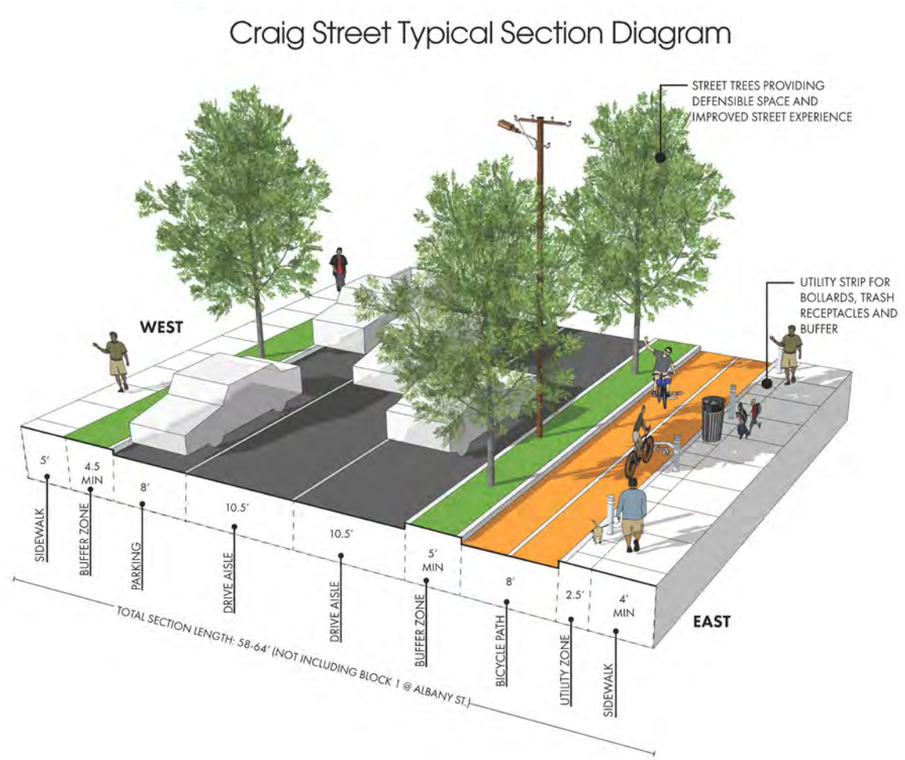
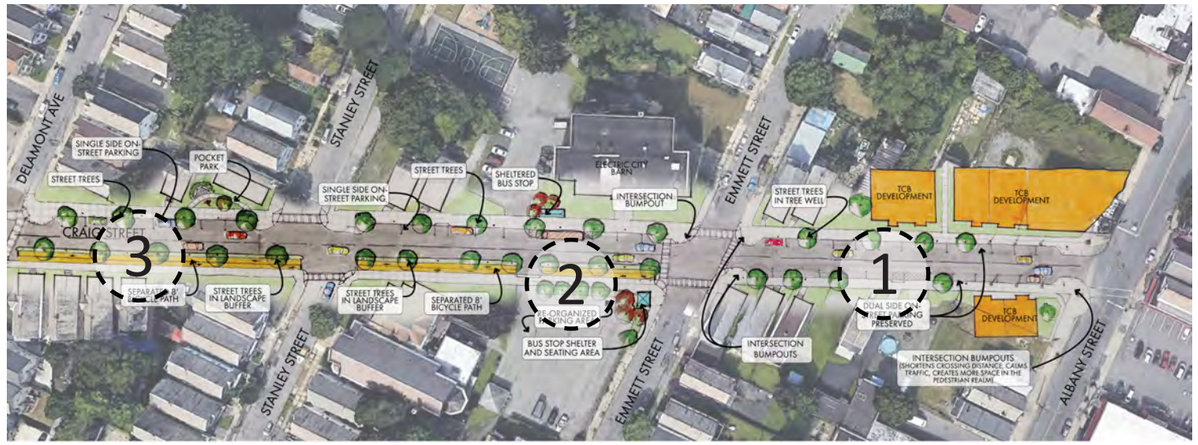


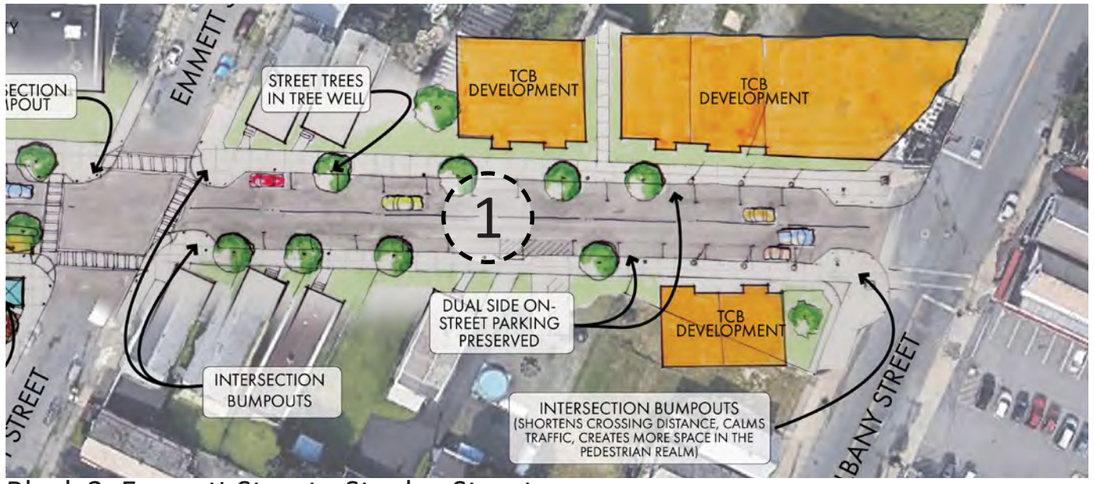
Figure 3.2: Preferred Cross-Section for Craig Street
(Option 1- On Street Parking West and Two-Way Cylce Track and Sidewalk East)

While the majority of Craig Street demonstrates the necessary width to implement the preferred cross-section, the block between Albany Street and Emmett Street is not wide enough and therefore utilized a different cross-section.

Cross-sections for Option 2 (On Street Parking West and Multi-Use Trail East) and Option 3 (On Street Parking East and West with Improved Sidewalks) can be found in Chapter 2 under Design Alternatives and Community Priorities.



Block 1: Albany Street - Emmett Street



Block 2: Emmett Street - Stanley Street

Block 3: Stanley Street - Delamont Ave

Gateway signage concept image
Image Credit: Roosevelt Road Gateway Concept by Site Design Group

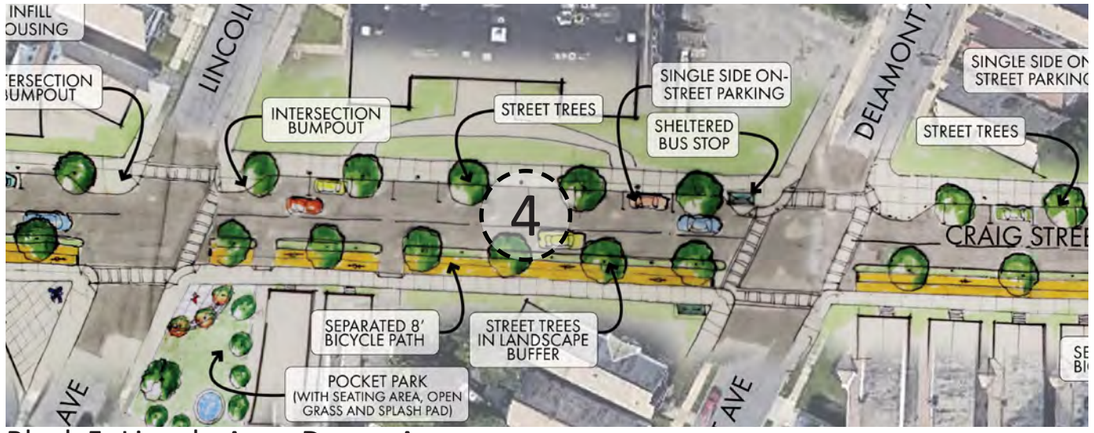
Before: photo of Emmett + Craig

Proposed: Sheltered bus stop plaza (Emmett + Craig)

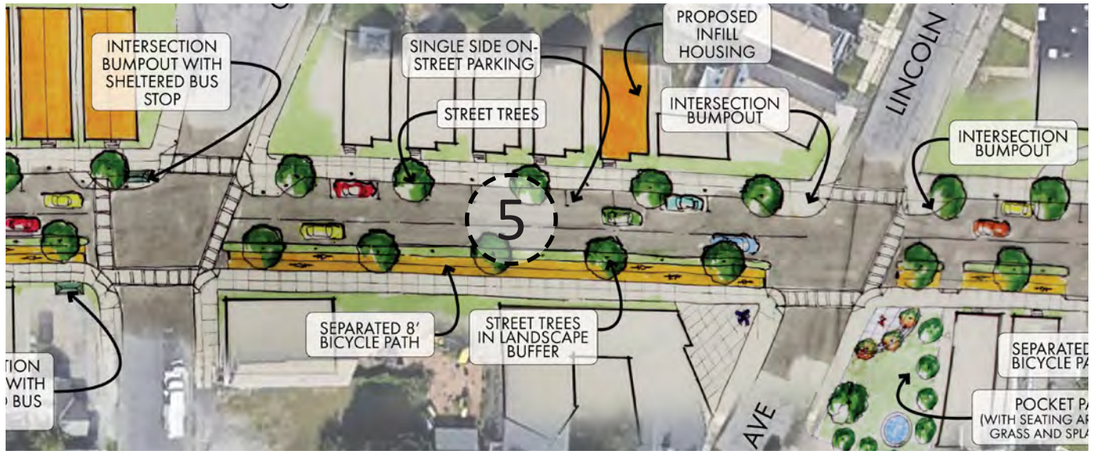
Pocket park concept image
Image Credit: The Torontoist

Pocket park concept image
Image Credit: New Castle University

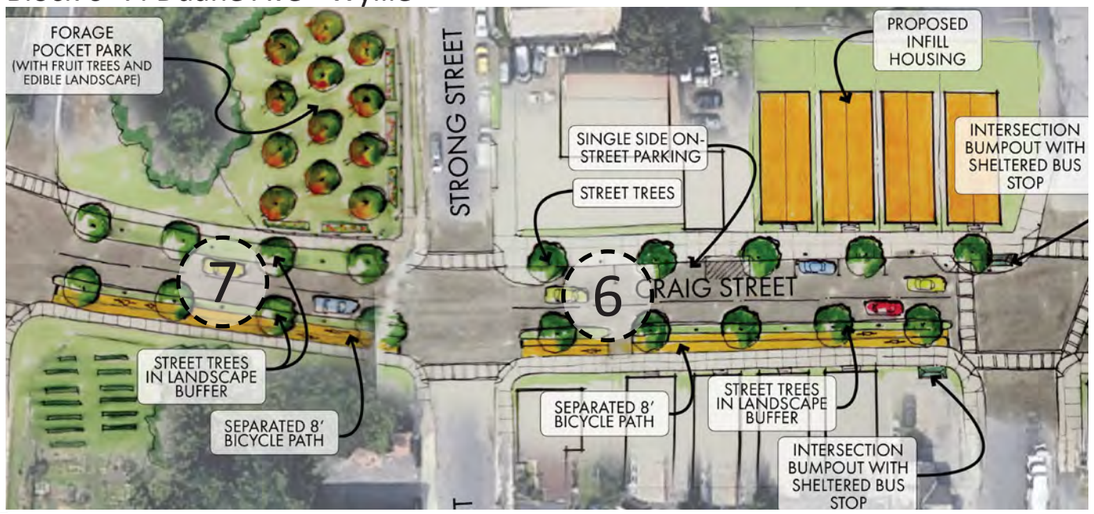
Block 4: Delamont Ave - Lincoln Ave



Block 5: Lincoln Ave - Duane Ave



Block 6 -7: Duane Ave - Wyllie



Before: photo of Lincoln + Craig

Splash pad concept Image
Image Credit: LandArt Studio Tribute Park

Separated multipurpose path concept image of Connective Corridor Syracuse, NY
Image Credit: Barton & Loguidice

Site photo of foraging pocket park location

Public orchard concept image
Image Credit: The Forks Public Orchard

BRIDGE IMPROVEMENTS

While the NYS DOT bridge physically connects the Mont Pleasant and Hamilton Hill neighborhoods, its vast, and uninviting, vehicle-oriented characteristics make it a divider and obstacle for pedestrians and bicyclists. The bridge is heavily used by youth walking or biking from Hamilton Hill to school and after-school programs. The bridge was a repetitive theme for improvement voiced by the community. Community members, young and old, noted that the sidewalks are much too narrow, that lighting is poor, and that the hectic and loud Interstate 890 below is overwhelming when not tempered by the tall and dull chain-link fence that physically buffers the pedestrian from the daunting noise and drop below. Since street trees are not an option along the bridge, vertical elements such as bollards and improved pedestrian lighting with neighborhood banners are a great alternative for creating defensible space. Aside from the continuation of streetscape improvements extending from Craig Street across the bridge to Pleasant Valley Park and Pleasant Valley Elementary School, more immediate and manageable improvements to the bridge could be to install community artwork on the fence to both beautify the experience and to visually buffer Interstate 890.

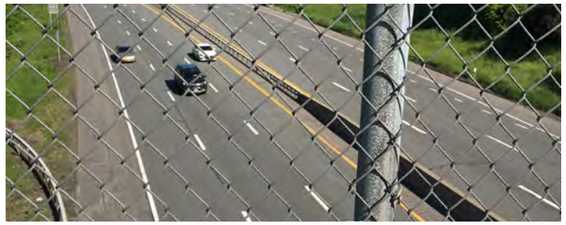


Image looking over DOT Bridge

Image of DOT bridge existing condition

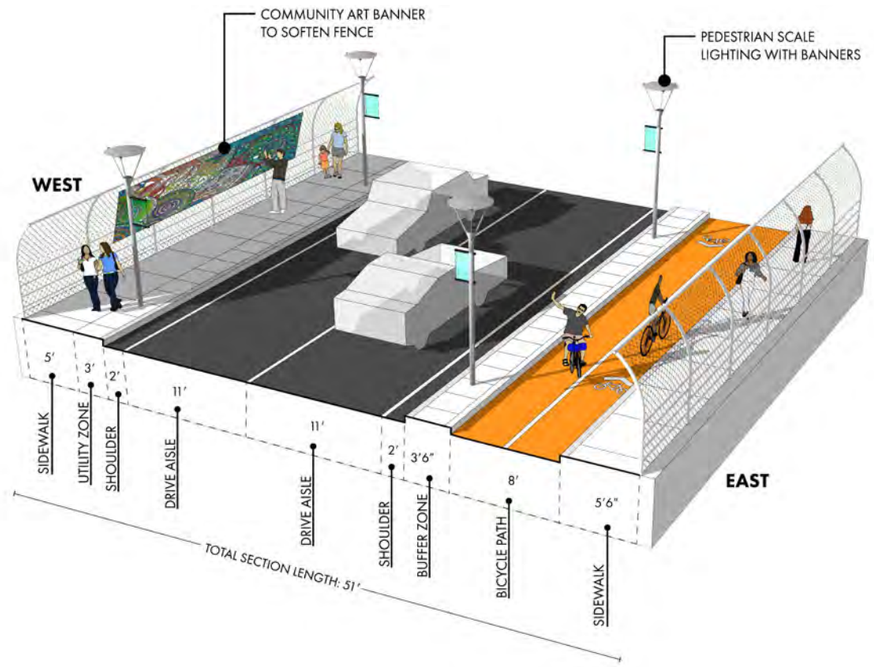


Figure 3.3: The Proposed Bridge Streetscape Improvements Cross-Section includes narrowing drive aisles, widening sidewalks, adding a separated bike path, incorporating better lighting, and community art along the fence.

According to the most recent bridge inspection and inventory report for Craig Street over I-890 (BIN 1049960), the deck is in fair condition. The estimates for this work are therefore based on working with the existing deck and not completing a full deck replacement with bridge rehabilitation, which would cost approximately $4.2M.

The following assumptions are included in the bridge design and estimate:

- The existing sidewalks will be mostly retained, but a 1ft strip would be removed from each to allow an extension of the left sidewalk and replacement of the existing curb on the right sidewalk.
- The vehicle lanes and bike lanes will receive an asphalt wearing surface.
- Smart Lighting on the bridge is included in the estimate.
- Work Zone Traffic Control is included in this estimate
- No bridge rehabilitation work is included (such as railing upgrades, joint replacement, bearing replacement, beam painting, etc)

Based upon discussions with the City and CDTC, as well as preliminary discussions with NYSDOT planners, it may be possible to install art panels in a relatively short time frame. Striping the bridge as a preliminary phase to accomplish some of the other project goals for the bridge may also be a less expensive and quicker temporary solution that could be implemented in a shorter time frame.

Bridge concept image
Image Credit: Lehigh Valley Live

Bridge concept image
Image Credit: NACTO

Bridge art concept image
Image Credit: SWA Group Houston's Gateway Art Bridges

PLEASANT VALLEY PARK

Figure 3.4: The Proposed Pleasant Valley Park Concept Plan includes connections to Pleasant Valley and MLK Schools, the new Boys and Girls Club, 4-court basketball, a park structure for picnicking, workout stations, an art wall with rotating mural by local artists, open green for passive play, and an integrated skate and BMX park that functions as plaza space while not in use.

Given the existing and increased need for this connection, if funding is available, breaking the project into two phases could allow for installation of some of the key pedestrian safety features such as the multi-use trail to the crosswalk connecting to Pleasant Valley Elementary, the conversion of construction and snow storage space to open greenspace and the addition of a fence separating the park from the road. Other proposed recreation amenities could then be added as part of a later phase as funding becomes available.

Skate park concept image showing how skate parks can also provide spaces for other types of both passive and active recreation
Image Credit: Janne Saario Landscape Architecture

Skate park concept image
Image Credit: Spa Skate Parks

Project Backboard Founder Dan Peterson works closely with communities on installing community driven art on basketball courts as a way of re-activating parks and building community.
Image Credit: VoyageLA

MAIN AVENUE STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

Further Study and Public Input

As part of this study, three alternatives were developed for Main Avenue. As described in the section on process and public outreach, preferences for the different options for Main Avenue were largely divided with strong convictions for why one or another would be better. While some gravitated toward the walking, biking and traffic calming benefits that could come from converting Main Avenue to a one way street, others were concerned about losing the ability to drive in both directions, the ability to park on Main Avenue, and the possibility of added traffic congestion, particularly during school drop-off and pickup times.

It is therefore the recommendation of this study that a traffic study (including public outreach) be conducted to understand and compare and contrast the positive and negative benefits that might come from converting Main Avenue (and possibly Forest Avenue) to a one way street while also potentially adding either a separated two-way cycle track or a multi-use path.

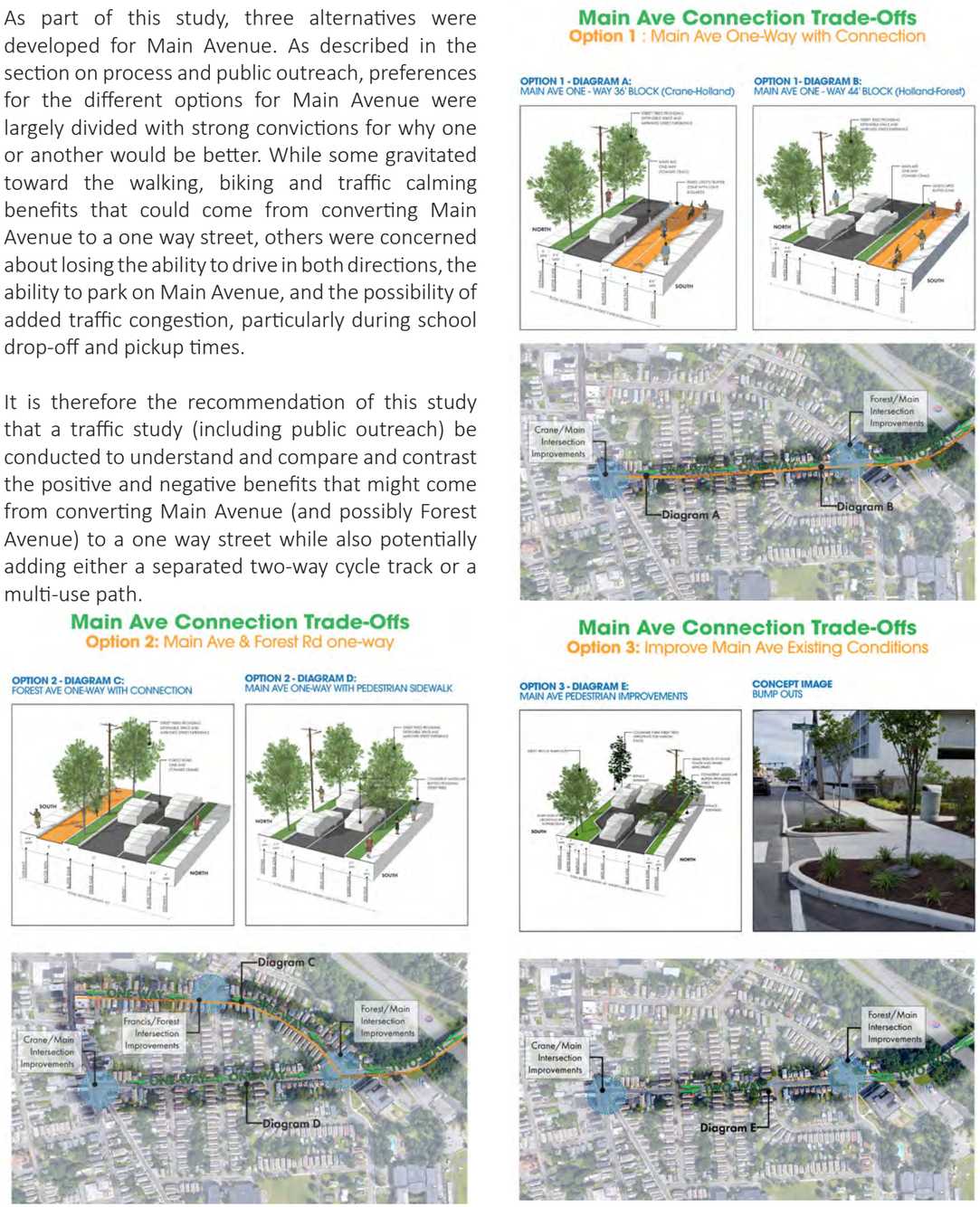


Figure 3.5: Main Avenue Connection Options- See Figures 2,9, 2.10, and 2.11 for Larger Images.

INTERSECTION-SPECIFIC IMPROVEMENTS

Existing conditions findings and public input confirmed that the intersections along the corridor would benefit from both physical and technical safety improvements. Specific recommendations are shown in Figure 3.6 below.

Intersection	Recommendations
Craig Street / Albany Street	• Curb Bump Outs (Craig Street Only) • Stripe crosswalk and add pedestrian signal on north leg • Add countdown timers
Craig Street / Emmet Street	• Curb bump outs (all but SE corner) • Add pedestrian signals and crosswalks on all approaches • New cabinet, possibly new signal poles, signal heads, detection
Craig Street / Stanley Street	• Curb bump outs (west side only) • Stripe crosswalks across Stanley Street
Craig Street / Delamont Avenue	• Curb bump outs (north side) • Add crosswalks and ped signals on all approaches • New cabinet, poles, detection, signal heads
Craig Street / Lincoln Avenue	• Curb bump outs(north side) • Striped crosswalks on all approaches
Craig Street / Duane Avenue	• Curb bump outs (north side) • Ped signals and crosswalks all approaches
Craig Street / Strong Street	• Curb bump out (NW corner only) • Stripe crosswalks across Strong Street
Main Avenue / Forest Road	• North leg improvements • Stripe crosswalks on north and west legs
Main Avenue / Crane Street / Christler Avenue	• Raised intersection • Point extension • Crosswalks and pedestrian signals on all approaches

Figure 3.6: Intersection Improvements

MAIN AND FOREST INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

The intersection of Main Avenue and Forest Road was consistently described as a confusing and difficult intersection throughout the public outreach, which was further reinforced by the number of accidents recorded at this location (eleven in a five year period). Drivers described it as difficult to navigate and pedestrians noted that it was particularly difficult to cross, especially during school drop-off and pick-up times.

The study recommends significantly reducing the amount of roadway, eliminating the circular island altogether and instead creating additional green space and a small corner plaza. This would help to calm traffic, eliminate confusion about which way to go, prevent dangerous turn-arounds in the intersection, and greatly shorten pedestrian crossings. While the road should be able to be significantly minimized in this location, turning movements should be studied closely prior to executing any final design.

The large amount of pavement at the Main Avenue and Forest Road creates added confusion and makes pedestrian crossings very long.

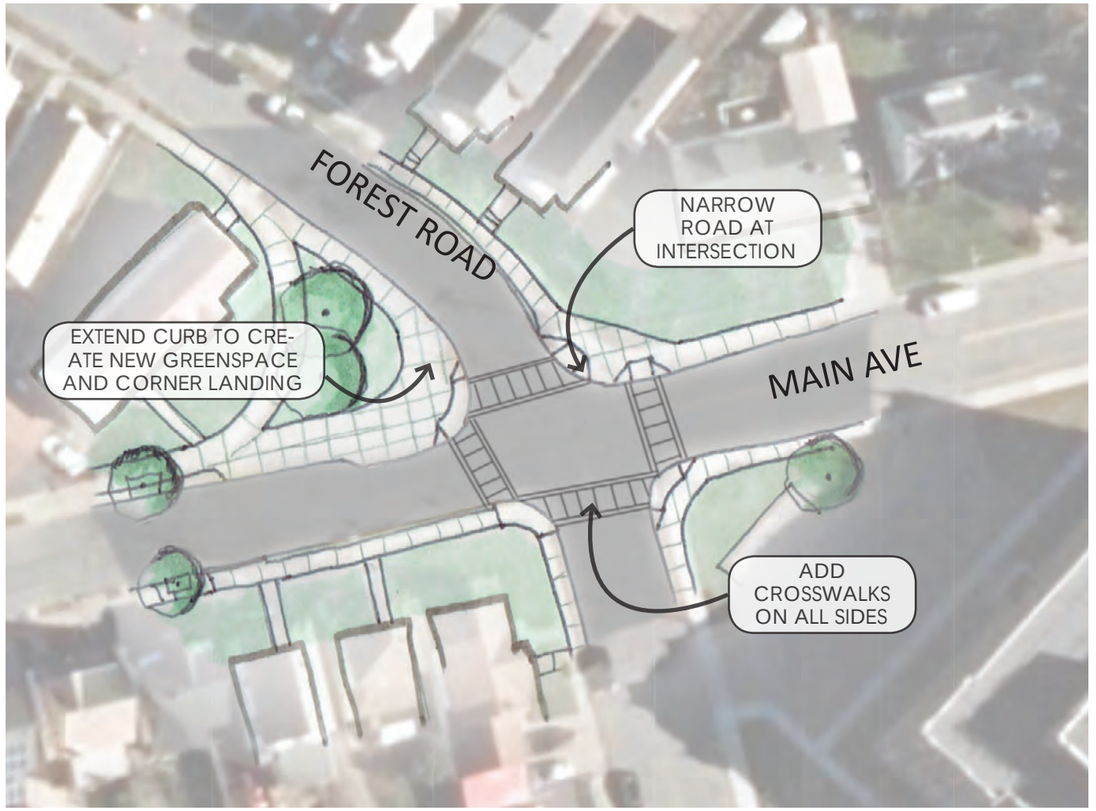


Figure 3.7: Proposed Forest Road and Main Avenue Intersection Improvements include eliminating the circle and significantly reducing pavement to create a more standard road width with much shorter crossing distances and crosswalks on all sides. Applying these improvement would make this intersection safer for children walking to schools as well as other pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicle users.

CRANE STREET AND MAIN AVENUE INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

The Crane Street commercial hub suffers from poor pedestrian conditions such as long crossing distances, excess pavement, lack of defensible space, gaps in the urban fabric, high traffic volumes, and the hectic convergence of four roads at odd angles. The design team proposed to reduce the amount of excess pavement by extending the sidewalk connecting point between Chrisler and Crane, no longer allowing cars coming from Chrisler to U-turn onto Crane Ave and vice versa. This will reduce excess pavement and provide a crossing reprieve, which reduces crossing distances. Bumpouts will also reduce the crossing distances, making for a safer pedestrian experience. The concept proposes to table the intersection with a different material encouraging drivers to reduce speeds and increase alertness. Potential infill development would fill the gaps between storefronts along Crane Street. Public and commercial parking lots will fill the back of the storefront and provide strong, lit pedestrian connections to the front of the businesses. The existing parking on the corner of Main Ave and Chrisler Ave will be relocated to the parking lots behind Crane Street and be converted into a pocket park with a unique sheltered bus stop.

Figure 3.8: The Crane and Main Intersection occurs at the convergence of four streets. The intersection has been described as hectic and dangerous.

Site photo left: pedestrian walks from point of gas station to Corner of Crane and Main. Site photo right: Crane Street looking toward point

Figure 3.9: Proposed Crane and Main Intersection Improvements Plan Showing Proposed Infill Development

Figure 3.10: Proposed Crane and Main Intersection Improvements: Birdseye Showing Raised Intersection, Point Extension, and Pocket Park

Before: Birdseye of intersection

Raised intersection with bumpouts concept diagram
Image Credit: National Association of City Transportation Officials

Raised intersection concept image
Image Credit: Research Gate

Figure 3.11: Proposed Intersection Improvements: The Chrisler/Crane Convergence Point Extension reduces excess pavement and crossing distances.

Figure 3.12: The Convergence of Chrisler Ave into Crane Street creates a point in the sidewalk. Currently, there is ambiguous pavement allowing cars from Crane to turn right around the point onto Crane Street creating dangerous traffic conditions. New designs for the intersection propose limiting the ability to turn onto Chrisler from Crane and to extend the point to reduce pedestrian crossing distances.

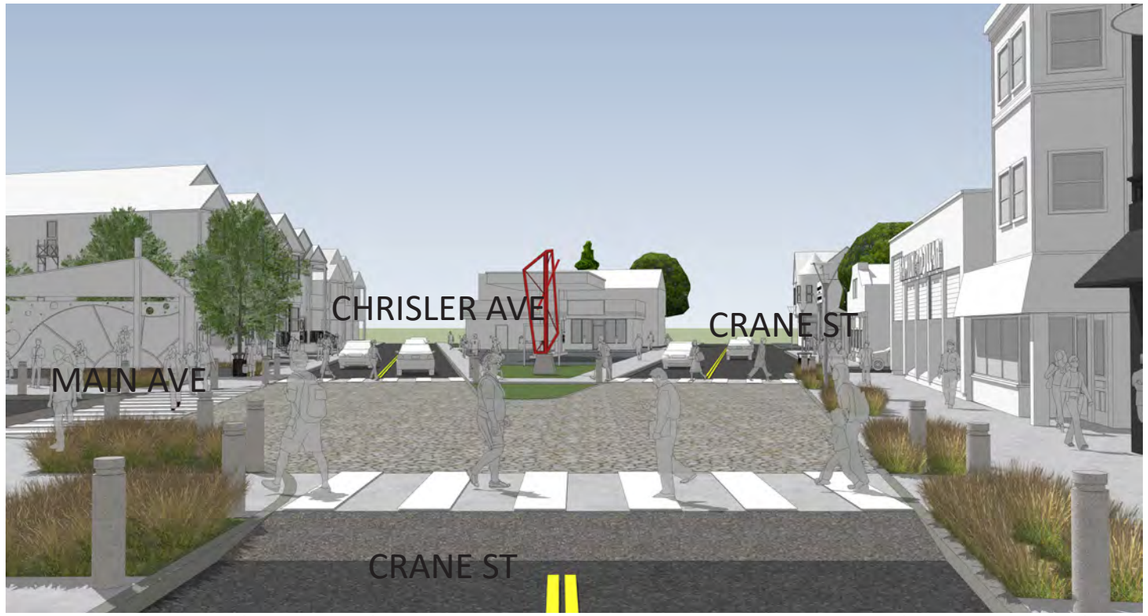
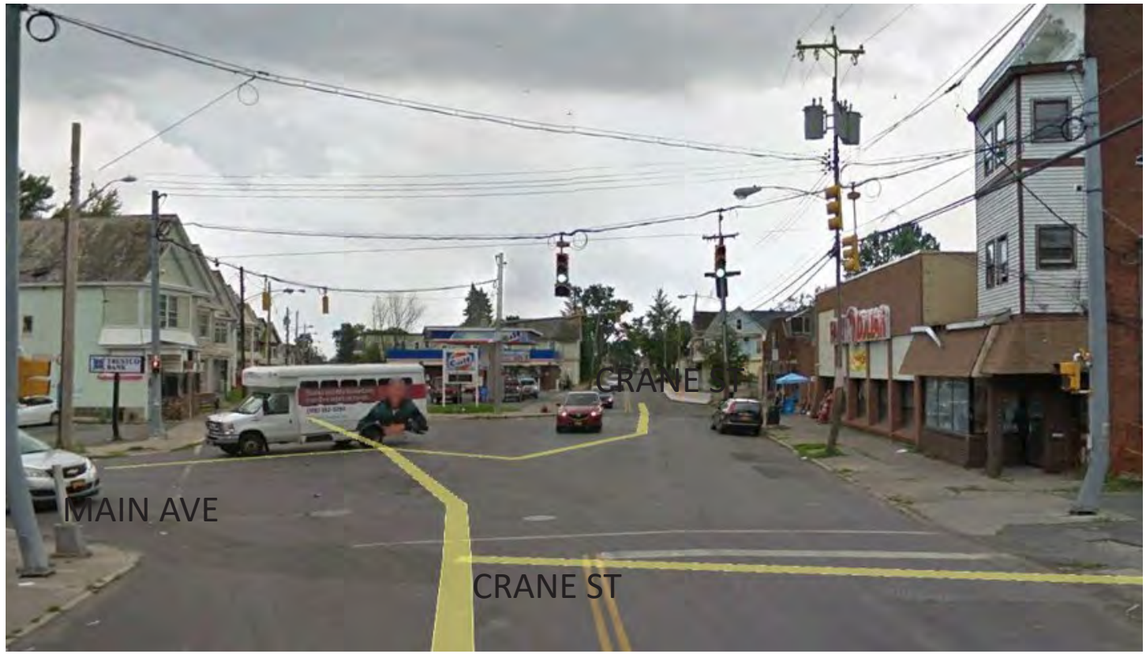


Figure 3.13: Proposed Crane and Main Intersection Improvements: Intersection bumpouts, raised intersections, and vertical elements create shorter crossing distances and safer conditions

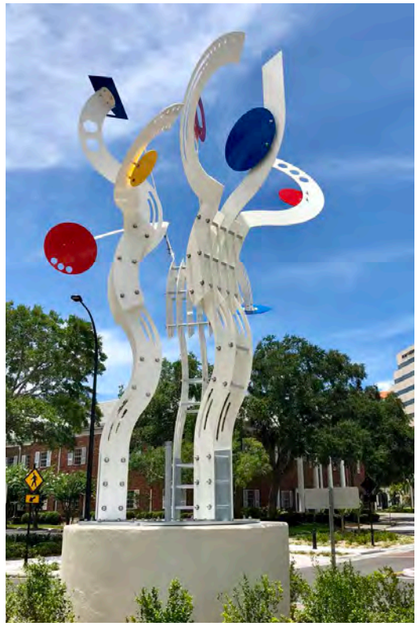


Before: Crane Street looking toward Chrisler and Crane convergence point

Painted intersection bump-out concept image
Image Credit: Southern Nevada Strong

Vertical elements concept image
Image Credit: City of Tempe

Vertical element concept image
Image Credit: LandscapeOnline



Vertical element concept image
Image Credit: ReadCarlos

Bus stop concept image
Image Credit: Canopy Ideas

Figure 3.14: Proposed Crane and Main Intersection Improvements: Sheltered bus station pocket park at the corner of Main Ave and Crane St

Before: Main Ave looking toward intersection

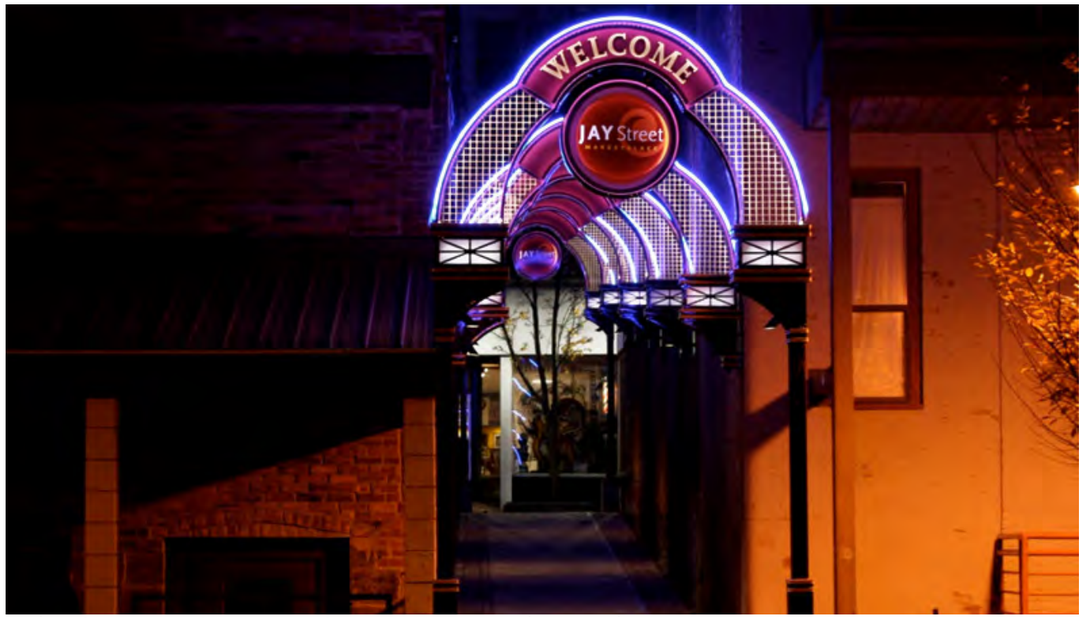
Figure 3.15: Proposed Crane and Main Intersection Improvements: Sheltered bus station pocket park at the corner of Main Ave and Crane St

Pocket park concept image
Image Credit: Starr Whitehouse

Figure 3.16: Proposed Crane and Main Intersection Improvements: Plaza and Pedestrian Connection from Proposed Consolidated Public Parking Lot to Crane Street

Before: Rear of vacant parcels along Crane Street

Street art concept image
Image Credit: Buenos Ares Street Art



Pedestrian connection concept image-Jay Street, Schenectady.
Image Credit: TW&A Construction Management

4.0 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

PRIORITY PROJECT MATRIX

IMPLEMENTATION AND PHASING

Recommendations for priority projects are shown in Figure 4.1. Highest priority projects are shown in light green, while alternative designs and second phases (whereby projects may require a more lengthy approval and funding process) are shown in white.

Potential projects for vacant and/or underutilized parcels that could be accomplished a partnership or by groups other than the City of Schenectady are shown at the bottom.

Anticipated time frames are as follows:
Short Term: 1-2 years
Medium Term: 2-4 years
Long Term: 5+ years

PROJECTS	DESCRIPTION	PRIORITY & TIME FRAME	REPORT PAGE #	ESTIMATED COST (2019 Dollars)	COST ESTIMATE PAGE #
Craig Street Streetscape Improvements					
Option 1 (Preferred): On Street Parking West and Two-Way Cycle Track and Sidewalk East	Improve street to include milling and repaving, replacing on-street parking on the east side with a separated two-way cycle track and sidewalk, maintaining on-street parking on the west and improving sidewalks, and the addition of bus shelters at key stops	Medium Term	2.16, 3.1-3.6	$4 million	D2-D-7
Option 2: On Street Parking West and Multi-Use Trail East	Improve street to include milling and repaving, replacing on-street parking on the east side with a multi-use trail, maintaining on-street parking on the west and improving sidewalks, and the addition of bus shelters at key stops	-	2.16	$3.60 million	D11-D16
Option 3: On Street Parking East and West with Improved Sidewalks	Improve street to include milling and repaving, maintaining on-street parking and improving sidewalks on the east and west and adding bus shelters at key stops	-	2.17	$3.63 million	D19-D24
Craig Street Bridge					
Community Art Panels	Work with local artists and organizations to create banners / art panels for hanging on the inside of the Craig Street Bridge fence	Short Term	3.7-3.8	Banners can be printed locally for approx. $5/ LF. Art work should be created by or in collaboration with local organizations and artists. Refer to the funding recommendations for grant opportunities.	D7, D16, D24
Option 1: Improved Sidewalk West and Separated Two-Way Cycle Track and Improved Sidewalk East	Improve bridge to include a separated two-way cycle track and sidewalk on the east side and a wider sidewalk on the west side and the addition of smart lighting to both sides	Medium Term	2.16, 3.7-3.8	$950,000	D7
Option 2: Improved Sidewalk West and Multi-Use Trail East	Improve bridge to include a separated multi-use trail on the east side and a wider sidewalk on the west side and the addition of smart lighting to both sides	-	2.16	$765,000	D16
Option 3: Improved Sidewalks	Improve bridge to include wider sidewalks on both sides and the addition of smart lighting to both sides	-	2.17	$765,000	D24

Figure 4.1: Priority Project Matrix Showing Prioritization and Time Frame

PROJECTS	DESCRIPTION	PRIORITY & TIME FRAME	REPORT PAGE #	ESTIMATED COST (2019 Dollars)	COST ESTIMATE PAGE #
Pleasant Valley Park					
Phase 1: Install Sidewalks, Open Green Space with Trees and Fence Only	Improve park to remove construction storage material and include a multi-use trail connection to Mont Pleasant Middle School, the Boys and Girls Club, and Mont Pleasant Middle School, along with green space, shade trees and fencing to separate the park from the adjacent roads	Short Term	3.9-3.10	$410,000	D29-D30
Phase 2: Park Amenities	Improve park to include seating areas, a shelter and grilling areas, a basketball court, a skate / BMX park that can double as an informal gathering area for passive and active recreation, an art mural wall, and a pull-up park.	Medium Term	3.9-3.10	$663,000	D29-D30
Main Avenue (from Education Drive to Crane Street)					
Recommendation: Traffic Study to Evaluate Options and Solicit Public Input for Final Recommendation	Conduct a traffic study to evaluate the positive and negative impacts of converting Main Avenue and/or Forest Road to one way streets with the possibility of introducing a separated two-way cycle track on Main Avenue and seek additional public input as part of study	Medium Term	2.21-2.26, 3.11	$40,000	-
Main and Forest Intersection	Improve intersection to include elimination of circle, reduction of pavement, and shorter crosswalks.	Medium Term	3.13-3.14	$310,000	D24
Option 1: Main Avenue One Way with Two-Way Cycle Track	Convert Main Avenue to a one way street and improve to include milling and repaving, eliminating on-street parking in sections that are too narrow, adding a separated two-way cycle track and sidewalk on the east, and improving sidewalks on the west	Long Term	2.23	$2.35 million	D2, D7-D10
Option 2: Main Avenue One Way with Multi-Use Trail	Convert Main Avenue to a one way street and improve to include milling and repaving, eliminating on-street parking in sections that are too narrow, adding a multi-use trail on the east, and improving sidewalks on the west	-	2.24	$1.9 million	D11, D16-D18
Option 3: Main Avenue Two Way with Improved Intersections and Sidewalks	Improve street to include milling and repaving, improving sidewalks and adding street trees where possible, and adding bumpouts at intersections	-	2.25	$1.70 million	D19, D24-D26
Crane Street, Chrisler Avenue, and Main Avenue Intersection Improvements					
Crane Street, Chrisler Avenue, and Main Avenue Intersection Improvements	Improve intersection to include a speed table, reduced pavement, shorter crosswalks with pedestrian refuges and opportunities for a gateway sculpture	Medium Term	3.15-3.26	$680,000	D27-D28
Underutilized Parcel Development - Projects that could be done by City, Capital Region Land Bank, Private Partners and/or Others					
Infill Housing, particularly 3+ bedroom units	There are several vacant and/or underutilized parcels along Craig Street that could be used toward addressing the need for affordable, particularly units with 3 or more bedrooms.	Medium - Long Term	2.14, 3.1-3.6, 3.15-3.26	-	-
Lincoln and Craig Pocket Park with Splash Pad	Create a pocket park across from the Carver Community Center site that would a fenced green space for playing and a neighborhood splash pad.	Medium - Long Term	2.14, 3.5-3.6	-	-
Urban Orchard / Cut Flower Farm	Work in conjunction with a neighborhood organization such as the Capital Roots Community Gardens or Miracle on Craig Street to create an urban orchard and/or cut flower garden that could add visual interest to the neighborhood while providing sources of food and income.	Medium - Long Term	2.14, 3.5-3.6	-	-
Mixed Use Infill Development in the Crane and Main Intersection Area	There are several vacant and/or underutilized lots near the Crane and Main Intersection that could be developed to include mixed use development.	Medium - Long Term	2.14, 3.15-3.26	-	-
Pocket Park with Bus Shelter at Crane and Main Intersection Area	Create a pocket park near the intersection of Crane and Main to include a bus shelter, shared green space, and public art.	Medium - Long Term	2.14, 3.15-3.26	-	-
Public Art and Neighborhood Pride Projects	Incorporate public art into the Corridor through the use of decorative crosswalks, art panels on the bridge, wayfinding and murals. While some of these components can and should be included in the City projects above, the art portion of the projects can be done in partnership with local organizations and residents and may have additional funding opportunities.	Short Term	2.14, Chapter 3	-	-

Figure 4.1, Continued: Priority Project Matrix Showing Prioritization and Time Frame

FUNDING AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

INTRODUCTION

This description of potential funding augments and summarizes resources identified in the CDTC Linkage Studies for City of Schenectady projects Schenectady Gateway Plaza Implementation Plan (2012) and Urban Bike Infrastructure Master Plan (2017).

The Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) is the Capital Region's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) which, by federal law, is designated by the governor for every urban area with at least 50,000 residents. CDTC receives both federal funding and funding from the NYS DOT and is able to assist municipalities with transportation and urban planning projects.

In addition to resources through NYS DOT, an important grant source for communities within New York State is the New York State Consolidated Funding Application (CFA). This application opens up opportunities for projects to be eligible for a number of grant opportunities. A large number of these grants require a combination of grant funds and matching funds to be used for projects. Its important to note that many of these programs have caps on individual; awards and some proposed projects will need to be phased. See for the resource catalogue. https://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2019-04/2019ResourcesAvailableGuide_0.pdf

The City has organizations and partners in the region who regularly support neighborhood investments including the Schenectady Metroplex Development Authority (Metroplex), the Land Bank and Community Loan Fund of the Capital Region. They have partnerships with a variety of private developers and nonprofit developers including Better Neighborhoods, Community Builders and Habitat for Humanity, among others.

In addition, community-based resources can implement smaller projects over the short term to build momentum. Local resources are a great way to implement a range of recommendations, especially low-cost facilities, such as parklets or temporary improvements, or programs that may be volunteer led. Local resources can come in the form of funds, volunteer hours, or materials. Sources of local resources may include local foundation grants and fund-raisers, activist groups, businesses and employers, developers, community groups and interested individuals.

Including the Local Community

The Craig-Main Connection is intended to be a neighborhood revitalization project and community involvement throughout the process is therefore critical. Public engagement has been an underlying principle in developing these recommendations and the Community is excited to participate and wants to be included in the implementation. Potential opportunities for future engagement of the community include:

- Hiring neighborhood liaisons to assist in public outreach during the construction documents phase and construction phases
- Utilizing local contractors and the local workforce as part of the physical implementation
- Contributing to the public art proposed as part of the process
- Employing local organizations and/or individuals to assist with aspects of general maintenance and upkeep

Incorporating ways to encourage and facilitate community participation should be considered when preparing for implementation and thinking about how the project will be bid. Identify strategies that work within the regulations of the various funding sources and providing assistance to interested participants and potential bidders will be a key component in maximizing local opportunities for participation.

CITY OF SCHENECTADY WORKFORCE INITIATIVE AND TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM - In 2018, the City of Schenectady partnered with the SUNY College and Career Counseling Center to offer a free Craft Skills Job Training Program for income-qualified residents at SUNY Schenectady's College & Career Counseling Center (SUNY CCCC), as well as a Construction Management Training and Business Development course for local MWBE firms at the New York State Association of General Contractors (AGC). The Craft Skills Job Training Program is a free 125-hour course at SUNY CCCC open to income-qualified residents which upon completion provides students with their OSHA 10, OSHA 30, and NCCER certifications. The six-month Construction Management Training Program for small and emerging MWBE firms is taught by industry leaders and covers topics such as business and project management, accounting, insurance, estimating, and field operations. The program is overseen by the City's Affirmative Action Officer, who is also a great resource for contractors looking to engage and utilize the local workforce.

Local Funding Partners Addressing Many Projects

SCHENECTADY METROPLEX DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY - METROPLEX enhances the long-term economic vitality and quality of life in Schenectady by cooperative, purposeful actions and investments within the Metroplex service area with particular emphasis on downtown Schenectady. Metroplex funds and administers a range of projects and investments in community and economic development. Recent projects in the City include multiple investments downtown as well as Live in Schenectady, Yates Village Rehabilitation, Renaissance Square, Elmer Avenue School, Capital Region Land Bank property demolitions and redevelopment, Tribute Park, the former Bank at Union and Van Vranken , New Crane Street Library New Boys/Girls Club, Upper Union streetscape and facades, Crane Street Commercial corridor facades and home sales of city owned property.

CAPITAL REGION LAND BANK - The mission of the Capital Region Land Bank is to strengthen neighborhoods by mitigating blight by acquiring properties that are tax delinquent, foreclosed, vacant, abandoned, distressed, or would otherwise be consistent with municipally created and/or approved redevelopment plans. The core focus of the Land Bank is to protect and strengthen existing residential and mixed-use neighborhoods. It identified and addresses environmental factors and blighting influences on a neighborhood such as condemned, burned and otherwise unsalvageable buildings, abandoned cars, trash and debris. The organization works with cross-regional and local municipal governments to assure enforcement of property maintenance standards and the development of affordable housing and commercial activity which will foster enhanced economic development.

THE COMMUNITY LOAN FUND FOR THE CAPITAL REGION - The Loan Fund makes low-cost flexible loans to social and micro-entrepreneurs, and by providing training and technical assistance services to support the lending activities. Loans are available up to $500,000 for nonprofit community development organizations that provide affordable housing, human services or help revitalize their communities. Loans to small businesses and micro enterprises owned by women, minorities or low-income people of up to $25,000 are available for start-up businesses and up to $50,000 for expansion of existing businesses. Loans to low and moderate-income borrowers of up to $120,000 are available to purchase a home and up to $20,000 for eligible home repairs. Energy efficiency loans are available to both nonprofits and small businesses, saving

energy costs and the environment. This program is offered in partnership with NYSERDA – when resources allow. Participation loans with many areas banks and credit unions are available, to both nonprofits and small businesses, for projects that exceed our loan limits. The Community Loan Fund can help package appropriate financing.

THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FOR THE GREATER CAPITAL REGION - The Community Foundation for the Greater Capital Region grants funds from nearly 400 different charitable funds and many different channels. In 2018, the Community Foundation distributed more than $14 million in grants to nearly 1,300 nonprofit organizations and programs, and in scholarship awards to local students. The Community Foundation manages several funds that award grants through a competitive process and others that provide direct assistance.

LOCAL FOUNDATIONS - There are numerous local foundations and grant opportunities that frequently fund public art and public space projects. Organizations include the Broughton Foundation, the Carlilian Foundation, the Little Family Foundation, the Schenectady Foundation, and the Wright Family Foundation.

STREETS, STREETSCAPING, TRAILS AND BRIDGES

PROPOSED PROJECTS

Streets and Intersections
- Craig Street (Albany Street to Education Drive)
- Craig Street Bridge
- Pleasant Valley Park
- Main Avenue (From Education Drive to Crane Street)
- Main and Crane Intersection

Traffic Study
- Main Avenue (From Education Drive To Crane Street) Conduct a traffic study to evaluate the positive and negative impacts of converting Main Avenue and/or Forest Road top one-way streets

Trails
Trail projects include a multi-use trail connection to Pleasant Valley Elementary, the Boys and Girls Club, and Mont Pleasant Middle School
- Pleasant Valley Park

Cycle Track
- Craig Street (Albany Street To Education Drive)
- Craig Street Bridge

Potential Funding Sources

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM - The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a short-range program of transportation projects, developed by CDTC, to be implemented with federal transportation funds. Projects programmed on the TIP are products of the planning process and support the goals identified in the Regional Long Range Transportation Plan, New Visions 2040. The current TIP includes federal transportation projects funded from October 1st 2019 through September 30th, 2024. The five-year program of projects is typically updated by CDTC every 2-3 years. If funding for additional projects is available

at the time of the next TIP update, the City of Schenectady should apply for project funding.

NYS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION - NYS DOT - NYSDOT administers a range of state and federal programs that can help municipalities and can advance many of these projects. Programs related to bridges include Bridge Preservation Grants and Bridge Corrective Measures Grants. The initial step in accessing these programs is a bridge assessment by NYS DOT which the City can request. The agency also administers The BRIDGE NY program which is open to all municipal owners of bridges and culverts. Projects will be awarded through a competitive process and will support all phases of project development. Projects selected for funding under the BRIDGE NY Initiative will be evaluated based on the resiliency of the structure, including such factors as hydraulic vulnerability and structural resiliency; the significance and importance of the bridge including traffic volumes, detour considerations, number and types of businesses served and impacts on commerce; and the current bridge and culvert structural conditions.

CONSOLIDATED LOCAL STREET AND HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CHIPS) - A New York State-funded program administered through the NYSDOT, CHIPS assists communities in financing the construction, reconstruction, or improvement of local highways, bridges, highway-railroad crossings, and other local facilities. Eligible CHIPS projects include: bike lanes, wide curb lanes, shoulder improvements, roundabouts, new signs, traffic signal installation or upgrade, traffic calming installations and multi-use divided highways.

TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM - The Federal Highway Administration's Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) consolidates two previously separate federal funding programs:
- Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP)
- Recreational Trails Program (RTP) – See Parks and Trails

The program is a set-aside for the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG). This program provides support for a variety of alternative transportation projects including multi modal resources, pedestrian and bike amenities, trails program, school connections and planning, designing, or constructing roadways within the right-of way of former Interstate routes or other rights of way. Programs falling under TAP include (see parks and trails section for description of Recreational Trails Program)

- Safe Routes to School projects funded through the TAP promote safe, healthy alternatives to riding the bus or being driven to school. Emphasis is on encouraging and enabling children to walk and/or bicycle to school safely.

NYS PEDESTRIAN SAFETY ACTION PLAN IMPLEMEMTATION - This project is Phase Two of New York's first comprehensive pedestrian safety action plan. This five-year, multi-agency initiative provides New York State Department of Transportations' Region One (Albany, Essex, Greene, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Warren, and Washington Counties) with $3.2 million to improve safety for pedestrians through infrastructure improvements, public education efforts, and increased law enforcement efforts. The New York State Department of Health and the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee are partners with NYSDOT in this initiative.

NYS DEC THE CLIMATE SMART COMMUNITIES (CSC) GRANT PROGRAM was established in 2016 to provide 50/50 matching grants to cities, towns, villages and counties of the State of New York and boroughs of New York City for eligible climate adaptation and mitigation projects. Funds are available for two broad categories. The program supports implementation projects related to climate change adaptation and the reduction of greenhouse gases outside the power sector (transportation, methane and refrigerants). Their mitigation implementation projects reduce the need for single occupancy vehicle trips for daily needs will reduce GHG

emissions. Reduction of VMT projects include, but are not limited to the following:

- Construction of on-road or off-road facilities for non-motorized forms of transportation to facilitate access to daily, non-recreational transportation needs and/or commutes.
- Implementation of transit improvements that have the potential to substantially increase ridership or access to daily needs, and/or increase commuting by mass transit.

NYS DEC COMMUNITY IMPACT GRANT - Community Impact Grants provide community-based organizations with funding for projects that address various environmental and public health concerns that disproportionately affect low-income and minority communities. Those environmental problems include a large number of regulated facilities; contaminated sites; noise, air and water pollution; health problems and lack of green space and waterfront access. These grants have helped communities generate data through community-based science and have helped to engage residents in addressing and understanding the challenges and opportunities for improving community health, safety, and sustainability. Currently, $4.3 million is available to help eligible community-based organizations. Eligible organizations are those located in the affected community, serving the residents of an area equal to or smaller than a town or city outside of New York City, or an area equal to or smaller than one of the five boroughs within New York City.

TRANSIT

PROPOSED PROJECTS

Transit – Add Bus Shelters

- Craig Street (Albany Street To Education Drive)
- Underutilized Parcel Development - Pocket Park with Bus Shelter at Crane and Main Intersection Area

Potential Funding Sources

CDTA TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS - Additional bus stops or transit improvements need to be planned with CDTA. The Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) was created in 1970 by the New York State Legislature, as a public benefit corporation, to provide regional transportation services by rail, bus, water and air. Today's CDTA is the premier mobility provider in the Capital Region, providing regular route bus service, shuttle systems and paratransit services. Federal funding sources for CDTA Capital Improvement projects include the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) / Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) (Administered by NYSDOT) and BUILD (formerly TIGER). State funding sources include the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) and the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). For smaller projects, CDTA often pursues funding through CDTC's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

PARKS

PROPOSED PROJECTS

A variety of park and recreation projects have been identified to add, redesign and maintain neighborhood parks, including a basketball court and skate and BMX track, amenities, trails, connectors and safety fencing.

- Pleasant Valley Park
- Underutilized Parcel Development: Urban Orchard / Cut Flower Farm

Potential Funding Sources

In addition, the Safe Routes to School Program described earlier may be a source of support.

THE RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM (RTP) provides funds to the States to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both nonmotorized and motorized recreational trail uses. The RTP is an assistance program of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). In New York State, the RTP is administered by the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). Its grants provide up to 80 percent of the total project cost. Projects must be accessible to the public or be a portion of an identified trail project which, when completed, will be legally and physically accessible to the public. The funding may be used for development and maintenance of recreational trails or trail related facilities for both motorized and non-motorized recreational trail uses including for walking, bicycling, and in-line skating. The funds are available for both paved and unpaved trail facilities and can be used for:

- Maintenance and restoration of existing trails
- Purchase and lease of trail construction and maintenance equipment
- Construction of new trails, including unpaved trails
- Acquisition or easements of property for trails
- State administrative costs related to this program
- Operation and education programs to promote safety and environmental protection related to trails (limited to five percent of state's funds)

OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION - Parks Development – Available through the Consolidated Funding Application process, OPRHP EPF Parks, Preservation and Heritage grant funding is available for the acquisition, planning, development, and improvement of parks, historic properties, and heritage areas located within the physical boundaries of the State of New York. Grants can fund up to 50% of the total eligible project cost; up to 75% if the project is located in a high-poverty area. Grant awards are capped at $600,000. If the total project cost is greater than $4,000,000, up to $1,000,000 may be requested.

LOCAL FOUNDATIONS - There are numerous local foundations and grant opportunities that frequently fund public art and public space projects. Organizations include the Broughton Foundation, the Carlilian Foundation, the Little Family Foundation, the Schenectady Foundation, and the Wright Family Foundation.

RETREE SCHENECTADY - There may be monies available for trees through an Urban Forestry grant. ReTree Schenectady, a local 501c3 organization, works closely with the City of Schenectady to facilitate tree planting in City parks and on City streets. The organization has a successful track record of obtaining grants from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) for planting trees in the City.

NYS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH - PREVENTATIVE HEALTH AND HEALTH SERVICES (PHHS) BLOCK GRANT - The PHHS Block Grant provides funding for health problems in New York State. This may range from tuberculosis to adult physical activity. This funding source may be used for the implementation of plans, programs, and policies that will increase adult physical activity including parks and trails with active components

NEW YORK STATE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (NYSERDA) Cleaner, Greener Communities: This program was announced by Governor Cuomo in his 2011 State of the State address. It builds on the Climate Smart Communities program, providing enhanced support for development and implementation of regional sustainability plans to help ensure that the State's ongoing and substantial investments in infrastructure help to move communities and New York as a whole toward a more environmentally sustainable future.

The program encourages communities to use public-private partnerships and emphasizes activities such as revitalizing urban areas through smart growth, creating green jobs, building green infrastructure, and strengthening environmental justice and protection. The program will have two primary components: (1) development of, and updating to, regional sustainable growth plans; and (2) implementation of the sustainability plans. Projects that have garnered community buy-in, as well as those that include public-private partnerships, will be encouraged.

SMART LIGHTING

PROPOSED PROJECTS

Add smart lighting as part of these projects:
- Craig Street (Albany Street To Education Drive)
- Craig Street Bridge
- Main Avenue (Education Drive to Crane Street)
- Main and Crane Intersection

Potential Funding Sources

THE NY POWER AUTHORITY'S SMART CITY LIGHT NY TECHNOLOGY GRANT PROGRAM – This is NYPA's newest addition to Smart Street Lighting NY. By converting existing streetlight systems to energy-efficient LED, municipalities are able to save taxpayer dollars, provide better lighting to their community, reduce energy use and subsequently decrease a community's impact on the environment. Benefits of this service to municipalities:
- Customer has one point of contact throughout all phases of the project
- Full turnkey service, including: lighting audit; engineering and design; bidding and procurement; construction management; and environmental services
- NYPA provides low rate financing for qualified customers, including the option to finance the purchase of the system as part of the project
- Municipality is able to realize both energy and maintenance savings
- Option to bundle streetlight conversion project with other energy efficiency projects

Communities can utilize street light infrastructure in an entirely new way to improve public services and operational efficiency by incorporating Smart City Technology to collect information and empower communities to make data driven decisions. This cutting edge technology is completely customizable to help communities solve current challenges they are facing, below are examples of the technology that can be deployed:
- Public safety: video analytics, noise and motion monitoring, gunshot detection
- Environmental: air quality, ice and snow detection, sewer and storm water monitoring, weather detection
- Transportation: traffic optimization, traffic monitoring, parking management
- Connectivity: digital kiosks, connected vehicles, smart phone applications

In addition, NYPA's Smart Street Lighting NY O&M service offering (to be available soon) will provide municipalities:
- A complete turn-key solution for the conversion and maintenance of their street light system
- Essential maintenance to keep the street light system in proper working order for safety and public benefits; addressing aging infrastructure, weather events, traffic accidents, and defects

- This program offers complete end-to-end coverage of the street light system for each municipality

NATIONAL GRID GRANT OPPORTUNITIES - National Grid Economic Development offers grant assistance for many different phases of economic development and community revitalization projects. National Grid may be able to help with staff assistance and resources from their Public Service Commission approved Economic Development Plan. The plan maintains a strong focus on site development, urban revitalization, strategic marketing, and facilitating customer growth through infrastructure assistance, energy efficiency and productivity improvement. The plan also reflects an increasing emphasis on sustainable development, the efficient use (and re-use) of existing energy infrastructure, and the strategic deployment of renewable generation technologies. These grants could be explored for assisting with relocation of existing utility poles and infrastructure, and installation of energy efficient site lighting.

ARTS

PROPOSED PROJECTS

Add Public Art Including a mural at Pleasant Valley Park, the Craig Street Bridge, Craig and Main Avenue intersections, the Main / Crane / Chrisler intersection, and as part of corridor wayfinding
- Pleasant Valley Park
- Craig Street Bridge
- Main Avenue Intersection
- Corridor Wayfinding

Potential Funding Sources

NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS - Available through the Consolidated Funding Application process, NYSCA funding can be used to engage in creative place making projects which bring together partners from the public, private, non-profit sectors along with community members to strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, city, or region around arts and cultural activities. Funding can be used to assist in creating the performance platform, for the amphitheater, or for signage. This is a 50/50 matching program with a minimum grant request of $50,000.

NYS OPRHP HERITAGE AREA PROGRAM FUNDING- Due to the many layers of history on the park site and plans to celebrate the history of the site and the City through a series of interpretive elements along the main pedestrian axis, it is recommended that the City pursue possible opportunities for funding from OPRHP.

LOCAL FOUNDATIONS - There are numerous local foundations and grant opportunities that frequently fund public art and public space projects. Organizations include the Broughton Foundation, the Carlilian Foundation, the Little Family Foundation, the Schenectady Foundation, and the Wright Family Foundation. In particular, the Schenectady's Thriving Neighborhood Challenge is a new initiative designed to give residents a voice and resources needed to become involved in the revitalization of their own communities.

LOCAL BUSINESSES AND SPONSORS - The series of sculptures along the main pedestrian axis creates a series of sponsorship opportunities within the park. An annual sculpture competition that would showcase multiple sculptures for a six month time frame with funding to purchase and permanently install the winning sculpture could be a creative approach to implementing the sculptural components of the park. Sculptures could also serve as sponsorship opportunities for local businesses such as General Electric and Price Chopper.

INFILL DEVELOPMENT

PROPOSED PROJECTS

Housing
- Underutilized Parcel Development, particularly 3+ bedroom units

Commercial Infill
- Underutilized Parcel Development Mixed Use Infill Development in the Crane and Main Intersection Area

Potential Funding Sources

NEW YORK MAIN STREET PROGRAM - Available through the Consolidated Funding Application process, the New York Main Street (NYMS) Program was created by the New York State Housing Trust Fund Corporation (HTFC) in 2004 to provide resources for the purpose of assisting New York's communities with Main Street and downtown revitalization efforts. NYMS endeavors to stimulate reinvestment in properties located within mixed-use commercial districts and adjacent neighborhoods by providing resources with the goal of establishing sustainable downtown and neighborhood revitalization and investing in projects that provide economic development and housing opportunities. Should the City apply for funds for façade renovations on buildings along State Street or South Church Street, up to $15,000 can be used for streetscape or landscape enhancements associated with this project.

NYS HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMS - THE HOUSING TRUST FUND CORPORATION (HTFC), is an umbrella entity that administers a range of programs under a Unified Funding Process which, among other programs includes:

- The **LOW-INCOME HOUSING TRUST FUND PROGRAM ("HTF Program")** provides payments, grants, and loans to eligible applicants to develop and complete housing projects for occupancy by persons of low income in eligible areas. The HTF Program was established under Article 18 of the Private Housing Financing Law (PHFL) and is administered by Housing Trust Fund Corporation (HTFC)
- **The HOUSING DEVELOPMENT FUND (HDF)** is a revolving loan fund to provide construction loans to eligible applicants who will construct or rehabilitate housing projects for low-income households.
- The **Low-Income Housing Credit Program (State and Federal Programs available)** involves the allocation of a federal tax credit which provides a dollar-for-dollar reduction in federal income tax liability for eligible applicants/owners who develop qualified low income rental housing projects.

THE NEW YORK STATE AFFORDABLE HOUSING CORPORATION (AHC) creates homeownership opportunities for low- and moderate-income families by providing grants to governmental, not-for-profit and charitable organizations to help subsidize the cost of newly constructed houses and the renovation of existing housing. AHC's Affordable Home Ownership Development Program (AHOD Program) provides grants to governmental, not-for-profit and charitable groups to promote home ownership among families of low and moderate income for whom there are few affordable home ownership alternatives in the private market. It also focuses on stimulating preservation of New York communities

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM - As an entitlement community, the City of Schenectady receives funds directly from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Annual funds are expended according to the City's Adopted 5-year Consolidated Action Plan. While not specifically called for in the Action Plan, as park development and transportation infrastructure projects are a federally allowable expense through the CDBG program, the City can amend its plan to include public infrastructure projects that enhance economic development opportunities.

MIXED USE/COMMERCIAL INFILL

In addition, please see earlier information about:
- Schenectady Metroplex Development Authority
- Capital Region Land Bank
- The Community Loan Fund For The Capital Region.
- The Community Foundation For The Greater Capital Region

MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT - With the building of the Student Housing, the enhanced connection to the Downtown, the improvements to Erie Boulevard, and future improvements to Lower State Street and Washington Avenue, as well as the creation of a gateway park; it is anticipated that there will be greater market demand for mixed use infill in the immediate area of the park. Opportunities for working with a developer to build the mixed use buildings and contribute to funding portions of Phase 2 of the park should be explored by the City and Metroplex.

EMPIRE STATE DEVELOPMENT GRANT FUNDS – Available through the Consolidated Funding Application process, ESD provides funds for Infrastructure Investments. Through a highly competitive and job creating process, funds may be used to finance infrastructure investments in order to attract new businesses and expand existing businesses, thereby fostering further investment. Infrastructure investments are capital expenditures for infrastructure including transportation, water and sewer, communication, and energy generation and distribution. Infrastructure also includes the construction of parking garages. While the plans for the Gateway Park do not call for a parking garage, they do plan for creation of public parking behind the proposed urban infill.

PLANNING AND DESIGNING WITH MAINTENANCE IN MIND

Durability, longevity, and maintenance were imperative considerations for the success of the proposed streetscape improvements along Craig Street and Main Avenue. Upon construction implementation, a strategy should be created that defines a funding source, and desired entities responsible for designated maintenance tasks. Responsibilities may be delegated between the City staff, property owners, and volunteers or a private contractor. The project area could benefit from cultivating student groups, seniors, or others to plant and maintain landscape areas, administer arts programs and special events. Potential costs for maintenance may include changing banners or public art, litter and trash removal, snow removal, touch-up painting, holiday decorations, watering, paving repair, pruning of plant materials, flower planting and other tasks. The maintenance costs generally increase as the streetscape ages and weathers.

Principles for a Maintainable Streetscape

- Consistency- Streetscape elements, including street trees, street lights, sidewalk paving, pavement striping and street furniture, can improve the aesthetic quality and contribute to the economic vitality of these corridors and the overall promotion and use of the streetscape. Keeping a consistency among these elements will improve maintenance coordination.
- Simplicity – Streetscape elements should be designed to minimize maintenance costs. This includes materials and selections and applications of street trees, benches, lighting, bollards, trash receptacles, and bus shelters. Elements should not obstruct views, paths of travel, or contribute to debris.
- Prevention – Recent advancements in design, such as structural soils that can prevent sidewalk heaving around street trees should be included in the design and construction.
- Durability – Implemented streetscape improvements should include the use of structurally sound and long lasting materials for each streetscape element.
- Technology – Include Smart City improvements that will minimize maintenance and expand corridor improvements.
- Responsibility – Upon implementation, a designated entity will take ownership of maintenance tasks.
- Standardization- Streetscape elements should be readily available for replacement or repair purposes and should be easily maintainable.
- Community Ownership – Place attachment through experience. Involve community members in implementation, clean-up, decisions in order to develop a sense of place attachment and ownership through experience.

Maintenance Elements

Graffiti prevention & cleaning
Landscape and tree trimming
Lighting
Sidewalks
Street furnishings
Trash pick-up
Street surface painting
Snow removal

Image: The Times Union

Standard Sidewalks

- Repair when damaged to City Code; clean as needed
- Recommended Entities Responsible: Currently it is the owners' responsibility to repair and remove snow from sidewalks

Bicycle Path Paving

- Repair when damaged to City Code; clean as needed
- Recommended Entities Responsible: City of Schenectady to repair and plow bicycle path with small plow (8' clearance)

Crosswalk, bike path, bus stop painting

- Reapply every 5-10 years
- Limiting cycle track painting to areas near intersections and not the entire width will reduce painting needs and cost
- Recommended Entities Responsible: City of Schenectady

Lighting

- Remove graffiti, repaint as needed
- Recommended Entities Responsible: City of Schenectady

Street Furnishings (benches, trash receptacles, bollards, bus shelters)

- Remove graffiti, repaint as needed
- Recommended Entities Responsible: City of Schenectady, local volunteers/neighborhood committees

Landscape

- Prune Trees for clearance
- Cut grass and reseed when needed
- Spring clean-up
- Tree Well/Grates to be weeded, removed of litter, grate openings widened when necessary
- Recommended Entities Responsible: Volunteers or homeowners to maintain landscape. City to consider developing City-wide Tree maintenance plan with private contractor
- Suggested tree use:
  Small trees under utilities- Japanese Tree Lilac, Eastern Redbud, Washington Hawthorn,
  Columnar Trees- Columnar Armstrong Maple, Crimson Spire Oak, 'Halka' Little Leaf Linden
  Large Vase Shaped Streetscape Trees- Zelkova, Thornless Honeylocust, Little Leaf Linden


Japanese Tree Lilac
Image: University of Nebraska-Lincoln


Columnar Armstrong Maple
Image: Urban Forestry Nursery


Village Green Zelkova
Image: Oakland Nursery