

NY5

Central Avenue and State Street Land Use & Transportation Study



Final Report

Prepared for
Capital District Transportation Committee

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Contents

I. Introduction

Background	I.1
Study Methodology	I.4
How to Use this Document	I.9

II. Issues Assessment

Introduction	II.1
Market Assessment	II.2
Historical and Existing Conditions	II.2
Policies and Techniques Assessment	II.5
Transportation	II.8
Roadway Characteristics	II.9
Traffic Characteristics	II.9
Transit Characteristics	II.10
Pedestrian and Bicycle Travel Characteristics	II.11
Other Studies	II.11
Land Use	II.13
Urban Form	II.14
Conclusion	II.18
Issues	II.18
Opportunities	II.18

III. Future Scenarios

The Alternative Future Scenarios	III.1
The Basis for the Alternatives	III.1
The Preliminary Alternative Futures	III.2
Street Design Concepts	III.3
The Alternative Futures Charrette	III.5
Detailed Studies	III.7
The Refined Alternative Futures	III.7
Assignment of Regional Growth to Corridor & Cores	III.7
Assignment of Growth in the Scenarios	III.7
Alternative Futures Evaluations	III.9
A. Land Use/Urban Design/Environment	III.9
B. Transportation	III.13
C. Quality of Life/Socio-Economic	III.22
Conclusions	III.27
The Preferred Future	III.28
How Was The Preferred Future Identified?	III.28

What is the Preferred Future Scenario?	III.30
Urban Typologies	III.32
Transportation Network	III.33
A Tour of the Preferred Future	III.38
Townsend Park - an urban mixed-use activity center	III.38
Revitalizing the “Street Car Suburb”	III.43
Swinburne Park	III.43
From the Urban to Suburban Strip	III.46
Albany Auto Row	III.46
A Vibrant Village Center	III.55
New Karner Mixed-Use Regional District	III.60
Lisha Kill - a rural separator	III.65
Mohawk Mall	III.67
The Suburbs of Schenectady	III.69
Woodlawn Plaza	III.71
Vale Neighborhood	III.78
Concluding the Tour	III.81

IV. Action Plan

Introduction	IV.1
The Corridor	IV.3
I. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) - Make Transit More Effective and Attractive	IV.3
<i>A. Anticipate BRT</i>	<i>IV.3</i>
<i>B. Integrate transit with new and existing development</i>	<i>IV.4</i>
<i>C. Locate local-serving businesses at transit stations</i>	<i>IV.5</i>
<i>D. Plan and implement street improvements to attract and support multiple modes of travel</i>	<i>IV.6</i>
<i>E. Increase investment in transit infrastructure</i>	<i>IV.7</i>
<i>F. Develop supportive transit modes</i>	<i>IV.8</i>
<i>G. Continue to pursue TDM programs with new employers</i>	<i>IV.8</i>
<i>H. Seek continued funding for BRT</i>	<i>IV.9</i>
<i>I. Market Corridor BRT service</i>	<i>IV.9</i>
II. Improve Pedestrian Environment	IV.10
<i>A. Apply traffic calming measures</i>	<i>IV.11</i>
<i>B. Other Streetscape Improvements</i>	<i>IV.14</i>
III. Improve Mobility and Accessibility for all Modes Throughout the Corridor	IV.15
<i>A. Develop and Adopt The Street Design Handbook</i>	<i>IV.15</i>
<i>B. Create a Corridor-wide Access Management Plan</i>	<i>IV.16</i>
<i>C. Create Sub-Corridor Access Management Plans</i>	<i>IV.16</i>
IV. Create a Framework for Corridor Cooperation	IV.17
<i>A. Form a stakeholder group & multi-jurisdictional work plan</i>	<i>IV.17</i>

B. Create Sub-Corridor BIDs	IV.18
C. Create a Corridor BID Association	IV.18
D. Create a Corridor identity and unified marketing effort	IV.19
E. Look and lobby for funds that support multi-jurisdictional cooperation	IV.19
V. Encourage Smart-Growth Policies Throughout the Corridor	IV.20
A. Promote compact development	IV.21
B. Help build the Regional Development Plan	IV.21
C. Create and update comprehensive plans	IV.22
VI. Revitalize Existing Development	IV.23
A. Provide and improve access to community services	IV.23
B. Continue public/private support for revitalization programs	IV.25
C. Building code reform	IV.25
VII. Maintain and Enhance the Vitality of Downtown Albany and Schenectady	IV.26
A. Upgrade downtown office stock	IV.27
B. Facilitate the development of telecommunications infrastructure	IV.27
C. Campaign for public transit with larger downtown employers	IV.28
D. Encourage co-location of complementary services/connect business-to-business	IV.28
E. Encourage further diversification of land use in the downtowns	IV.29
Urban Core	IV.30
Preferred Future at-a-glance	IV.30
I. Improve Accessibility	IV.31
A. Create mid-block pass-throughs and crosswalks	IV.31
B. Provide shuttle services	IV.32
II. Encourage Local-Serving Businesses	IV.33
A. Identify barriers for individuals or groups interested in starting a small business	IV.33
B. Provide business planning support	IV.34
III. Encourage Compact Development	IV.35
A. Support compact development of opportunity sites	IV.35
B. Facilitate land assembly	IV.35
C. Introduce more land-efficient parking policies	IV.36
D. Maximize allowable development densities	IV.37
IV. Revitalize Existing Development	IV.37
A. Provide and improve access to community services	IV.38
B. Continue public/private support for revitalization programs	IV.38
C. Revise building codes to support the reuse of existing buildings	IV.39
D. Improve housing stock	IV.39
E. Encourage a diversity of housing types	IV.40
V. Strengthen the Linkages Between the Urban Cores and the Downtowns	IV.40

A. Improve pedestrian and bicycle friendliness of Central Avenue/State Street and adjacent neighborhoods	IV.63
B. Improve transit friendliness of Central Avenue/State Street	IV.63
C. Transition land uses from Central Avenue/State Street to neighborhoods behind... ..	IV.64
D. Improve accessibility to Central Avenue/State Street from neighborhoods	IV.64
II . Stabilize Existing Neighborhoods	IV.65
A. Introduce mixed-use neighborhood centers along Central Avenue/State Street	IV.65
B. Get neighborhood residents organized, involved, and educated	IV.66
C. Monitor condition of housing.....	IV.66
D. Provide home renovation loans	IV.67
E. Improve Local Schools.....	IV.67
III. Improve Mobility in The Corridor	IV.67
A. Create dedicated transit lanes	IV.68
B. Separate local and thru-traffic	IV.68
IV. Improve Visual Character Along Corridor	IV.69
A. Underground or back-lot utilities	IV.70
B. Improve streetscaping	IV.70
C. Create signage program.....	IV.70
V. Preserve the Rural Character of the Lisha Kill Area	IV.71
A. Cluster development and preserve open space in the Lisha Kill area	IV.71
B. Pursue “outside” funding sources to implement Lisha Kill natural zone	IV.72
Regional Mixed- Use Districts	IV.73
Preferred Future at-a-glance	IV.73
I. Create Mixed-Use Centers within the Districts	IV.74
A. Utilize excess parking for initial stages of redevelopment.....	IV.74
B. Require incremental improvements that support the creation of Mixed-Use Districts	IV.75
C. Diversify and cluster uses within existing retail clusters	IV.75
D. Consolidate and intensify mixed-use development around rehabilitated shopping malls	IV.76
E. Reuse discarded “big box” retail with “back office” employment	IV.76
II. Make Route 5 a Community Street & a Regional Connector	IV.77
A. Create a boulevard configuration to separate local from through traffic	IV.77
B. Improve the streetscape on Route 5	IV.78
III. Create a pedestrian-friendly environment.....	IV.79
A. Implement pedestrian-oriented design standards and guidelines	IV.79
B. Balance automobile and pedestrian access	IV.79
V. Conclusion	V.1
How to Use this Study	V.2

Capital Budget V.2
 Introduction V.2
 Implementation Paths and Milestones V.3
 Important Milestones Along the Way V.6
 Near-Term Milestones to Sustain Momentum on the Steady Implementation Path V.6
 Additional Near-Term Milestones For the Rapid Implementation Path V.9

VI. Bibliography VI.1

VII. Appendices A.1

A. Implementation Mechanisms A.1
 Implementation Framework A.1
 Current Policy Framework A.1
 Recommended Implementation Mechanisms A.4
 1. *Regional Economic Growth* A.4
 1.1. Region A.6
 1.1.1 Regional Development Plan (RDP) A.6
 1.1.2 Regional Identity A.6
 1.2. Inter- Municipal Corridor A.7
 1.2.1 Coordinated Business Associations A.7
 1.2.2 Methods for Inter-municipal Organization A.8
 1.2.3 Geographic Information Systems (GIS) A.8
 1.3 Community or Sub-Corridor A.10
 1.3.1 Comprehensive Plan Updates A.10
 1.3.2 District Revitalization Plans A.10
 1.3.3 Financial Support for Local Planning A.10
 1.4 Subarea or Site Specific A.12
 1.4.1 Specific or Area Plans A.12
 2. *Property (Re)Development Facilitation* A.13
 2.1 Region A.14
 2.1.1 Regional "Smart Growth" Policies A.14
 2.2 Inter - Municipal/Corridor A.16
 2.2.1 Inter-jurisdictional Consistency and Cooperation A.16
 2.2.2 Route 5 Business Improvement District Association A.17
 2.2.3 Brownfield and Greyfield Development Support A.18
 2.3 Community or Sub-Corridor A.19
 2.3.1 Support of Existing BIDs A.19
 2.3.2 Creation of Sub-Corridor BIDs A.19
 2.3.3 Mitigation Fees A.19
 2.3.4 Metroplex Funding A.20
 2.3.5 Utilize and Expand Existing Community Development Programs A.20
 2.3.6 Assistance in Land Assembly A.20
 2.3.7 Industrial Development Agency (IDA) funds for Land Assembly A.22
 2.3.8 Expedited Permits and Reviews A.22
 2.3.9 Development Facilitation Using Small-Scale GEIS A.22
 2.3.10 Zoning and Building Code Reform A.23

2.3.11 Public Services and Infrastructure Investment	A.26
2.4 Subarea or Site Specific	A.27
2.4.1 Homeownership Programs	A.27
2.4.2 Housing Reinvestment Programs	A.28
2.4.3 Neighborhood Investment	A.29
2.4.4 Incentives for Reuse and Infill Development	A.29
2.4.5 Neighborhood Improvement Development Corporations (NIDC)	A.30
2.4.6 Location Efficient Mortgages	A.30
2.4.7 Development Mitigation Fees	A.31
3. <i>High Quality Site and Community Development</i>	A.32
3.1 Inter - Municipal/Corridor	A.32
3.1.1 Model Mixed-Use Transit-Oriented Policies and Programs	A.32
3.1.2 Undergrounding of Utilities	A.36
3.2 Community or Sub-Corridor	A.36
3.2.1 Pursue Funding for Lisha Kill Natural Zone	A.36
3.3 Subarea or Site Specific	A.38
3.3.1 Key Site and Subarea Specific Plans	A.38
3.3.2 Building Facade and Signage Programs	A.39
3.3.3 Code Compliance Programs	A.39
4. <i>Multi-Modal Transportation System Design</i>	A.39
4.1 Region	A.40
4.1.1 Finance Base for Regional Transportation	A.40
4.1.2 Feeder and Flexible Shuttle Transit Services	A.42
4.1.3 Regional Rail	A.43
4.1.4 New Visions Programs	A.43
4.2 Inter - Municipal/Corridor	A.43
4.2.1 NY5 Capital Improvements Program	A.43
4.2.2 Corridor Transit Improvements Through Incremental Implementation	A.44
4.2.3 Refinement of Street Cross Sections	A.44
4.3 Community or Sub-Corridor	A.45
4.3.1 Corridor-wide Guidelines and Model Techniques	A.45
4.3.2 Comprehensive Plans and Land Use Regulations	A.45
4.3.3 Adjusting Parking Requirements	A.46
4.3.4 Offer “cash out” parking subsidies	A.46
4.3.5 Include transit in traffic mitigation fees	A.47
4.4 Subarea or Site Specific	A.49
4.4.1 Capital Improvements Through Incremental Parcel (Re)Development	A.49
4.4.2 Parking Districts	A.49
4.4.3 Transit Station Joint Development	A.50
B. Model Design Guidelines and Zoning Ordinances	B.1
Mixed-Use/Transit-Oriented Development	B.1
<i>TOD Overlay</i>	B.1
<i>Creating a Mixed-Use Commercial District</i>	B.2
<i>Creating a Neighborhood Commercial District</i>	B.2
<i>Links to Maintain a Balanced Mix of Uses</i>	B.2
<i>Relation of Buildings to Streets</i>	B.3
<i>Providing Through-Block Connections</i>	B.4

Parking	B.5
<i>Reduction of Parking Supply/Demand</i>	B.5
<i>Creating a Fee-In-Lieu-of-Parking Option</i>	B.5
<i>Facilitating Pedestrian Circulation in Parking Lots</i>	B.5
<i>Reducing Visibility of Parking Lots</i>	B.6
<i>Parking Location</i>	B.6
C. Market Assessment of the Route 5 Corridor	C.1
Introduction	C.I.1
Summary and Conclusions	C.II.1
Region	C.III.1
Community	C.IV.1
Corridor	C.V.1
D. Transportation Assessment of the Route 5 Corridor	D.1
Transportation Context	D.2
Existing Conditions	D.7
Transportation Issues and Opportunities	D.15
Street Sections	D.16
E. Street Design and Transit Alignment	E.1
F. Scenario Evaluations	F.1
G. Newsletters and Survey	G.1

INTRODUCTION

1

Background

Albany, the Village of Colonie, the Town of Colonie, Niskayuna, Schenectady, and the Counties of Albany and Schenectady are connected by New York State Route 5 which consists of Central Avenue and State Street. Route 5 runs northwest from downtown Albany to downtown Schenectady passing through an historic cross section of urban forms in the United States—from 19th Century central city, to the street car suburbs of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, to the early auto-suburbs of the 1940s and '50s, to the varied suburban strip of today.

Once the Capital District's "main street," the Route 5 Corridor's vitality has been eroded over the last 50 years due to a combination of land use, transportation, social and market shifts in the Capital Region. The Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC); the Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA); the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT); and the five jurisdictions mentioned above, which depend on the Corridor, have undertaken the NY5 Corridor Land Use & Transportation Study to examine the future of land use and transportation along this 16.5 mile roadway. The Study builds from earlier efforts undertaken in the region in developing New Visions, the regional long-range transportation plan.

The NY 5 corridor between Albany and Schenectady continues to be a significant component of the Capital District's transportation and land use system. With the region's two largest urban centers at the ends of the corridor

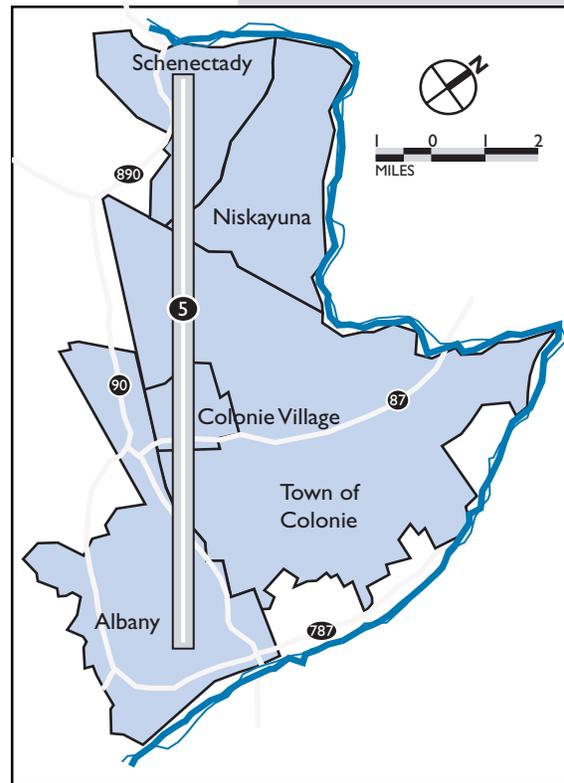


Figure 1.1: NY5 and the Corridor Communities

and the region's largest suburban complex in the middle, the Corridor is witness to both the highest arterial traffic volumes and the greatest number of transit riders in the region. The study area includes Route 5 from Lark Street in Albany to Nott Terrace in Schenectady. These endpoints were selected due to the fact that land use development and design options from Lark Street east to the Hudson River in Albany and in the downtown Schenectady section (Nott Terrace west to the Mohawk River) have been considered in other recent efforts and studies (i.e. Capitalize Albany and the recent Downtown Schenectady Master Plan).

Examination of land use and transportation concepts in the Route 5 Corridor considered the following questions:

1. What do the communities along the corridor wish to achieve in the corridor?
2. How do these desires compare with the current situation and market-based forecasts for the various segments of the corridor?
3. How can the communities both provide for an appropriate regional role for the corridor, and at the same time, recognize and preserve the character of existing residential neighborhoods?
4. How can the communities help to successfully implement CDTC's New Visions recommendations for transportation and land use?
5. Does the desired future scenario support further investigation of major transit investment (particularly if a fixed guideway such as Light Rail Transit were to be part of that scenario) in the corridor, such that CDTC should pursue a Major Investment Study (MIS) in the corridor?
6. What are the necessary steps toward achieving the desired scenario?

The importance of this study relates both to the critical role the corridor plays in the region and to the value of using the corridor as a prototype for similar work in other corridors. Site design, the need for appropriate infill development,

arterial access management for all modes, and transit service issues facing NY 5 are also present or are emerging in many other arterial corridors in the region.

The NY5 Study is unique in that it looks to land use, economic, and social solutions to the region's transportation problems as well as to more typical transportation system improvements and policies. In this way, it seeks to improve the quality of life in the Corridor and thereby, in the entire region. The goal of this study is to make recommendations which:

- maximize the effectiveness of public investment in the transportation system;
- seek to stabilize and invigorate the economy of the five Corridor Communities;
- are pedestrian and transit-friendly;
- satisfy the needs of the real estate market, automobile and service access; and,
- provide a benefit to adjacent mixed-use and residential neighborhoods, as well as mixed-use and employment districts.

The Corridor in Context of the Region

The Capital District of New York generally boasts a high quality of life in the communities which make up the region. The strength of the region is based on its stability as a center of state government, a center of higher education, its well-educated workforce, its well-defined urban and suburban areas, easy access to surrounding rural areas and natural amenities, and its tradition of transportation leadership. The NY5 Corridor, from its beginning as an Iroquois trail, has been critical to the development of the region as a life-giving artery providing jobs, neighborhoods, resources, and connectivity to the region.

The construction of the New York State Thruway and other limited access highways, and the concurrent post-war housing boom changed the Corridor from a major regional transportation link to one of the first American suburban auto "strips." The shopping centers, office and industrial parks, and recreational areas constructed in this era were all designed to incorporate convenience to the auto-user. Today, this development pattern remains evident by reflecting the desire for easy auto access, and separation of differing land uses, and low initial development costs. At the same time, these economic and social forces led to expansion of the region as a whole. First housing developments, then retail, and increasingly, jobs have been moving out from the traditional regional urban cores of Albany, Schenectady, and Troy to auto-oriented suburban areas such as the Towns of Colonie and Niskayuna and to areas in surrounding counties.

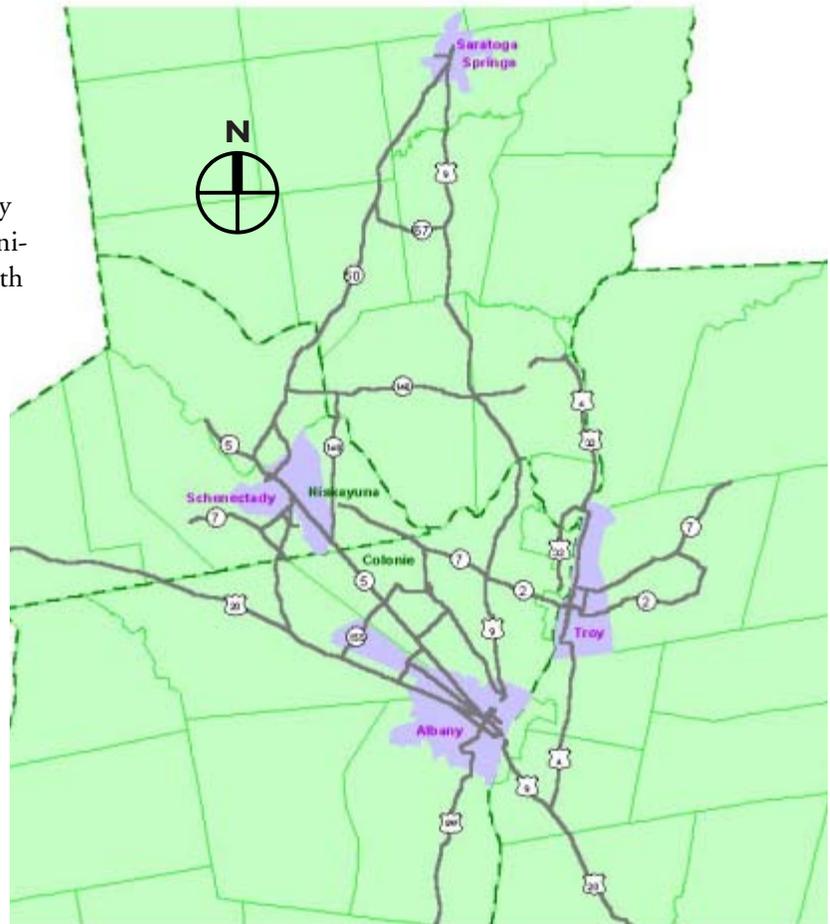


Figure 1.2: The NY5 Corridor and Similar Corridors throughout the Capital District

Yet, the Corridor is centrally located in the Capital District and has excellent access to the state and regional circulation system. While outlying suburban areas have experienced increasing growth, a significant concentration of jobs and homes are present in the Corridor. Approximately 15% of the Capital District's households and 30% of the jobs are within 1/2 mile of Route 5 within the Corridor. This is a significant concentration of jobs and housing within a region that is perceived by many to be characterized by low-density suburban and rural development. As a result, through the implementation of public policy and public investment, the Corridor has the potential to attract some key portions of development activity in the Capital District.

Study Methodology

Scoping

Prior to developing the scope of the study, initial stakeholder interviews were conducted by a CDTC volunteer to obtain input regarding interests and concerns. At this stage, it was important to determine how the study should be designed to ensure it would result in land use and transportation improvement recommendations for which there would be local support and consensus.

Next a consultant selection committee was formed from the local planning and engineering officials who approved the project scope and Request for Proposals (RFP) package. This committee participated in consultant interviews and voted to select a consultant team.

A Study Advisory Committee (SAC) was then created with representatives from: all five municipalities; NYSDOT, CDTA, CDRPC, Albany and Schenectady County Planning and County Public Works Departments, the Center for Economic Growth, Central Business Improvement District, a citizen from the Village of Colonie, and a representative from the Urban Roundtable.

Issues Assessment

The NY5 Land Use & Transportation Study formally commenced in September 1998 with an assessment of the issues facing the Corridor and its communities. The consultant team and CDTC held its first workshop in December 1998 with the Study Advisory Committee (SAC) to begin the process of existing conditions analysis. Also during this time, the Study's lead consultant met with numerous stakeholders and

public officials to gain insight into issues currently confronting the corridor communities with respect to land use, housing and commercial revitalization, and transportation.

The Corridor was divided into seven segments that fall under four development typologies that reflect the character of existing development. The Urban Core, the Urban Strip, the Suburban Strip, and the Mixed-Use District typologies formed the basis for identifying specific actions needed to address the unique issues of each typology. (See Figure I.3 on page I.5 for a map of the Corridor and its segments.) Land use and urban design, transportation, local and regional market conditions, and the existing political and regulatory framework were analyzed in order to gain an understanding of the current context of the Corridor. The findings were presented in a follow-up workshop that included CDTC, the SAC, representatives from CDTA, and other stakeholders to ensure that all project participants had a common understanding of the Corridor's existing conditions and the framework of future market conditions. This workshop was the beginning of a series of workshops that involved stakeholders from the Corridor communities in creating the future vision for the revitalization of the Corridor.

The NY5 consulting team identified key issues affecting the potential for land use, economic, and transportation investment along the Route 5 Corridor. The conclusions were developed with guidance from the two Study Advisory Committee (SAC) workshops, Market and Transportation Assessments authored by Economic & Planning Systems (EPS)¹ and Wilbur Smith Associates (WSA)², respectively, and an assessment of existing land use patterns and policies by Community Design + Architecture (CD+A)³. Both reports by EPS and WSA are included in Appendix C and D respectively.

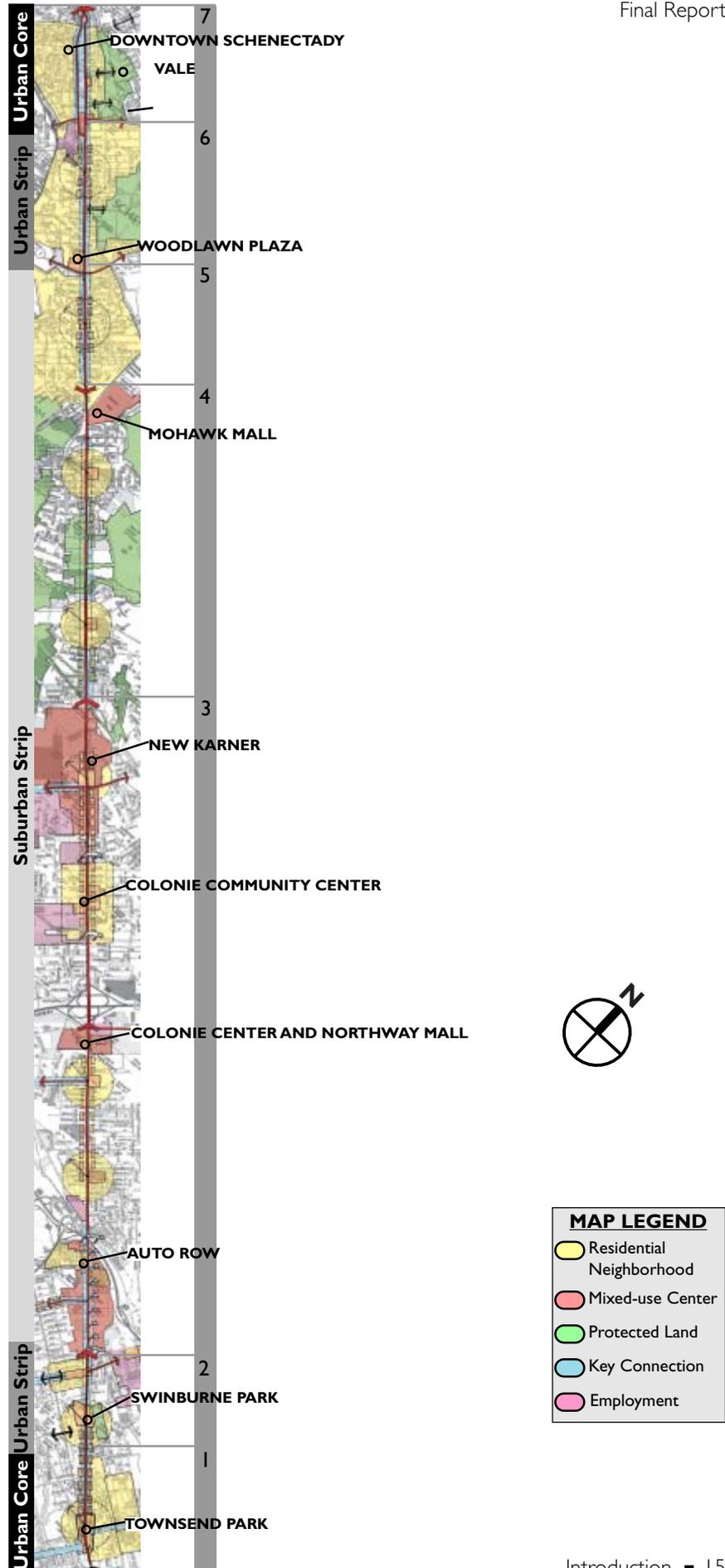


Figure 1.3: The Corridor, with Typologies and Segments

Creating the Preliminary Alternatives

Following the Issues Assessment work, the consultants prepared a set of documents to illustrate the potential for reuse within the Corridor. These included a set of three Preliminary Alternative Futures illustrating transportation and land use variations that are the cross-section of a set of transportation systems and policies, and a set of land use policies and growth scenarios. The Preliminary Alternatives were developed on-site by the consultant team. These described possible land use, transportation, and site planning alternatives, including mixed-use configurations; potential opportunity sites; and estimated supportable capacities given varying growth scenarios. The Preliminary Alternatives then formed the basis for the Alternative Futures developed in the following Alternative Futures Charette held in February 1999.

Developing the Alternative Futures

The five-day, intensive design and policy charette was held in the CDTC offices with the SAC and other Corridor stakeholders including neighborhood groups, employers, retailers, developers, public officials, and agency representatives. The Charette provided the opportunity to review the

Issues Assessment documents, initial land use and transportation concepts for the segments along the Corridor, and concepts for encouraging urban revitalization and infill/reuse along the entire Corridor. Teams made up of varying interests were formed to focus on specific issues including evaluation of the Preliminary Alternatives, street design alternatives, and transportation system alternatives; Schenectady-specific issues; urban neighborhood revitalization; and infill and reuse strategies. One important outcome of the sessions on street design and transportation system alternatives was the decision to include both Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) as well as Light Rail Transit (LRT) in future scenarios, incorporating "high-type" transit service. At the end of the five-day charette, several elected officials met to review the results of the Charette to test the political feasibility of the ideas.

The Alternative Futures Charette culminated in the creation of three Alternative Futures Scenarios for the Corridor: the Base Scenario, the Gradual Growth Scenario, and the Stimulated Growth Scenario, presented at an open house at the Town of Colonie Community Center on Central Avenue. The majority of the concepts received a supportive response. Accompanying photosimulations showing the physical change according to each Scenario were particularly useful in providing a visual explanation of each of the possible outcomes.

¹ *Final Report: Market Assessment of the Route 5 Corridor*. Economic & Planning Systems. February 1999.

² *SAC Review Draft Report: Transportation Assessment of the Route 5 Corridor*. Wilbur Smith Associates. February, 1999.

³ "NY 5 Corridor — Land Use Policies & Implementation Techniques Assessment." Memorandum from Phil Erickson, AIA, Community Design + Architecture to NY5 Study Advisory Committee. February 2, 1999.

Refining the Alternative Futures

The Alternative Futures underwent further technical development which resulted in the Refined Alternative Futures for the Corridor. This included a set of six detailed studies that illustrate the land use and transportation concepts being recommended for the urban typologies.

CD+A and EPS worked together to take the estimates for regional growth in the three Scenarios and assign that growth to the opportunity sites in the Corridor. These were summarized at the traffic analysis zone (TAZ) level and were used in the transportation assessment of the Alternatives.

CD+A reviewed the opportunity areas that had been identified in the assessment phase of the project, and estimated the development capacity of these sites, guided by the market assessment and the design and review of the urban typologies and detailed studies. These potential capacities were used to guide the assignment of regional growth in the three Scenarios.

Given these growth projections and the opportunity area supply estimates, CD+A and EPS worked together to distribute future jobs and housing to different areas along the Corridor. This distribution gave consideration to existing land use patterns, the development capacity of the opportunity areas, and market competitiveness of the sites. These issues were presented and discussed at a series of Urban Typology Workshops in late May, 1999.

Choosing the Preferred Future

In April of 2000 an Alternatives Evaluation Working Paper was produced that included an assessment of the three future scenarios. The scenarios were evaluated in three broad categories: Land Use/Urban Design/ Environmental, Transportation, and Quality of Life/Socio-Economic. Each category had a list of sub-criteria that included a definition, methodology, and findings. Depending on the scenario being evaluated (i.e. Base, Intermediate or Stimulated) various transit system configurations were assumed (e.g. Best Bus, BRT or LRT). For the Stimulated Scenario both BRT and LRT were considered, providing the opportunity to compare the evaluation results for each type of possible high-type transit system in the context of the Corridor.

Concurrently, a newsletter and more detailed web site were published along with a short survey querying residents, business owners, employees, and landowners for their reactions to the improvements developed under the Stimulated Scenario. This would expand input beyond the stakeholders that participated in developing the Alternatives, to the general public. At the same time, reaching out to the community for input helped to build a greater consensus for a future scenario. The survey returned over 670 responses indicating an overwhelmingly positive response to the detail study site photo-simulations and example improvements.

After completing the evaluation process; examining the regional economy, land use patterns and policies; and reviewing the response from the surveys, it was determined that regardless of regional growth, the planning and design strategies illustrated in the Stimulated Scenario are critical (and desirable) to achieving a land use pattern which is conducive to multi-modal accessibility within the Corridor communities. Additionally, these changes result in desired improvements in the quality of life in the Corridor. In particular, strategies emphasizing intensive mixed-use development are best suited for a "high end" transit system, such as Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). Moreover, the land use designs proposed in the Stimulated Scenario were more likely to yield real progress toward rejoining and revitalizing the Corridor communities. Such development patterns coupled with urban design recommendations can create a safe, attractive environment for all modes of transport and achieve the goals established for the Study. The transportation portion of the evaluation of the future alternative scenarios compared Light Rail Transit (LRT) to Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). Through this comparison, it became apparent that issues related primarily to cost and right-of-way constraints to constructing a fixed guideway system along the entire corridor, indicate a BRT system would be a better "fit" along Route 5 within the timeframe of the study. Hence, the land use strategies of the Stimulated Scenario were combined with the high-quality, cost-effective service of Bus Rapid Transit to form the Preferred Future Scenario.

The Preferred Future Action Plan and Implementation Paper

In order to prioritize agency and community efforts to revitalize the Corridor, Chapters *IV. Preferred Future Action Plan* and *VII. Appendix A: Implementation Mechanisms* of this report, provide an action plan and various "tools" available to advance the Preferred Future. The incremental aspect of such a process requires that focused efforts be carefully coordinated in order to minimize obstacles and maximize opportunities. The consultant team has developed implementation tools for the land use elements of the Preferred Future and worked with CDTC and CDTA staff in exploring the phased implementation of the transportation improvements and their potential to leverage the desired land use patterns. This "menu" serves as a companion piece to the Preferred Future Action Plan which gives specific recommendations according to the Urban Typologies.

How to Use this Document

This report provides a comprehensive view of the Preferred Future and the process that took place to develop the plan and subsequent implementation recommendations.

Chapter I. Introduction gives a brief description of the NY5 Study and its purpose, and describes conditions within the Corridor and its associated communities.

Chapter II. Issues Assessment offers a more in-depth description of the Corridor, its current physical, social, economic, and regulatory context as appraised through the Issues Assessment phase of the study. This chapter also gives the reader the baseline information from which the Alternatives and the eventual Preferred Future were developed, including:

- a market assessment which considers the economic condition of the Corridor contextually within the regional economy;
- a transportation assessment describing the current condition of the physical roadway and transit service running along the Corridor, as well as planned improvements and projected conditions; and,
- a land use and urban design assessment describing urban form and existing policies and programs governing development in the Corridor.

Chapter III. Future Scenarios presents a summary description of the Alternative Futures developed by the Study Advisory Committee (SAC), Corridor communities, CDTC and other agencies, and the consultant team; (as well as the detailed studies developed by the consultant team.) The process by which the Preferred Future

was defined from the Alternative Futures is described, along with the broad transportation goals and elements of the Preferred Scenario. The tour at the end of this Chapter travels along the Corridor in the "Preferred Future" progressing from the City of Albany to the City of Schenectady.

Chapter IV. Action Plan lays out a plan for implementing the goals of the Preferred Future. The actions are linked to a "menu" of potential implementation tools, presented in *Chapter V. Implementation*, that utilize the capabilities of both the public and private sectors to implement the Preferred Future.

Chapter V. Conclusion places the Corridor study back into the context of the region, emphasizing its regional relevance as a model for cooperation across county, city, town, village and property lines. The conclusion also lays out the steps which should be taken to ensure that a cohesive vision of the Preferred Future is maintained and ultimately realized.

Chapter VI. Bibliography lists sources that were utilized in the research for this project. A list of internet resources is included.

The final chapter, *Chapter VII. Appendices* is published as a separate document and includes the Working Papers published for the study, and background reports by Economic & Planning Systems and Wilbur Smith Associates. Also included are design guidelines and ordinances from municipalities across the United States, intended to serve as models for municipalities in the Corridor. Finally, copies of the newsletter and survey distributed to employers and residents along the NY5 Corridor are also included.

ISSUES ASSESSMENT

2

Introduction

The identification of opportunities and constraints within the Corridor formed the basis for the subsequent market, transportation, and land use and urban design recommendations of the Preferred Future. The Study looked at the factors which affect development within the Corridor (both regional and local). An assessment of market conditions reviewed national, state, and regional trends in order to place the economic conditions of the Corridor into perspective. In assessing transportation service and accessibility, previous studies performed by CDTC, NYSDOT, and local jurisdictions, including New Visions, the long-range regional transportation plan for the Capital District, were also analyzed. Existing land use and urban design conditions were gathered from the analyses of aerials photos, GIS mapping, interviews with local officials, and numerous on-site assessments. Current policies and regulations were also reviewed in order to appraise opportunities and constraints to the revitalization of the Corridor. More importantly input from the SAC, CDTC, NYSDOT, CDTA, local jurisdictions, and other agencies and stakeholders informed the Study with the unique perspective of those who know the Corridor intimately.

Paramount to this effort was the identification of key issues that needed to be addressed and potential opportunity sites. A variety of inputs were used to gather the needed information, including a series of existing conditions assessments' reports (Market Assessment, Transportation Assessment, Land Use and Policy Assessments), discussions among the SAC, the consultant team and others at the Issues Assessment Workshop, and information shared at separate meetings between the lead study consultant and various stakeholders. Opportunity sites were identified by a combination of qualitative site assessments, existing land use policies, and market potential for development.

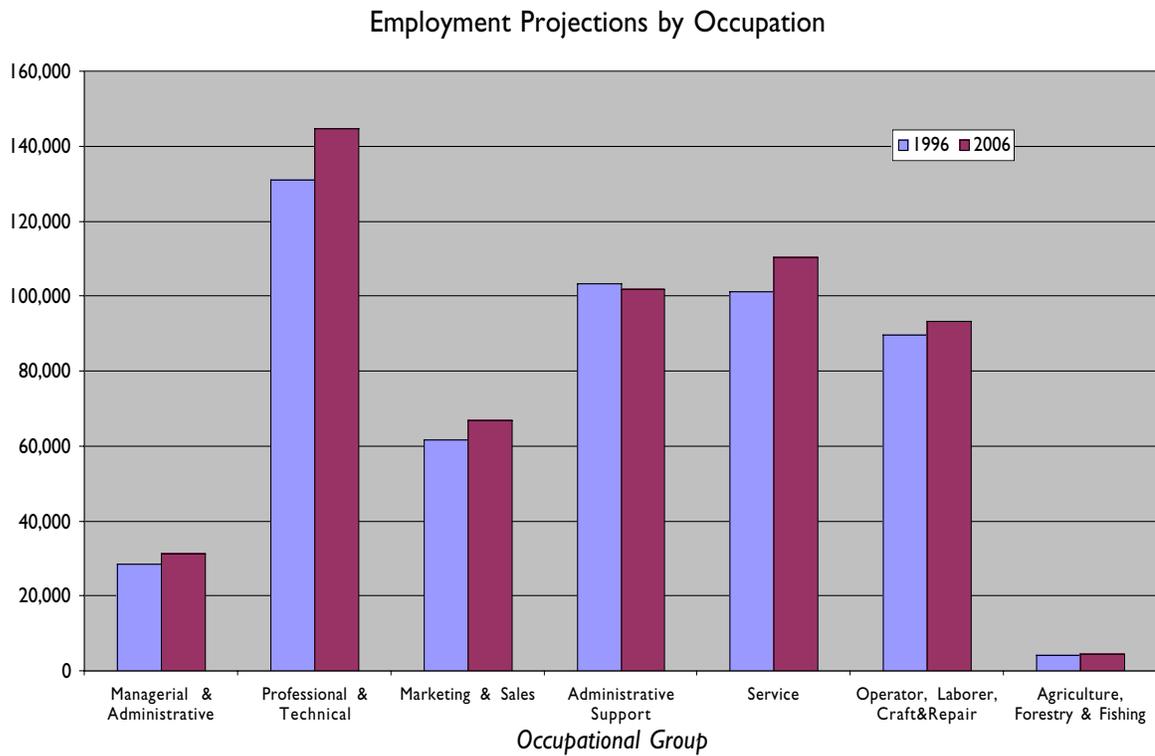


Figure II.1: Non-Agricultural Employment by Sector in the Albany-Troy MSA (1997)

Market Assessment

The market assessment conducted by Economic & Planning Systems (EPS) for this study considered the link between regional and local market conditions and feasible development options for the Corridor. The purpose of the assessment was to aid the establishment of land use and transportation policies to benefit the region, the Corridor communities, and the people who live, work and travel on the Corridor. A regional economy is complex, involving interconnected regional, community-level and corridor trends and developments. Consequently, information and data for this market assessment were analyzed at all three levels (region, community, and corridor), with linkages recognized where appropriate; recommendations are presented using this three-level analysis structure as well. The full EPS Market Assessment report can be found in Appendix C.

Historical and Existing Conditions

The construction of limited access highways and suburbs, in essence the movement toward auto-oriented development, has been a mixed blessing for the Route 5 Corridor. On the one hand commercial development such as “Auto Row,” in Albany, Colonie Center, and the New Karner area in the Village of Colonie, have provided years of solid economic activity. Yet, automobiles have also allowed for a shift in development activity to other areas in the Capital District, diminishing the economic strength and the quality of life in neighborhoods in other parts of the Corridor. Key trends which have led to the Corridor’s decline include:

- The construction of the Interstates and other arterials, permissive land use policies and planning efforts, and the availability of easily

developed vacant land have catalyzed development in suburban locations outside of the central cities and the Corridor.

- The fragmented ownership patterns and the aging of buildings along the Corridor have created impediments to reinvestment by a new generation of tenants and users.
- The low population and economic growth in the region related to industrial sector downsizing and other factors, have resulted in insufficient market support for both new suburban development and existing development on and close to the Corridor.
- The suburbanization of development has also eroded the vitality of the central cities. One of these cities, Schenectady, has also struggled due to the major layoffs by its largest employer, General Electric. This has further diminished the regional significance of the Corridor.

A total of about 430,500 persons are currently employed in the Capital Region's Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). Employment increased by 2,200 jobs per annum over the last nine years, equivalent to an annual average growth rate of 0.5 percent. A Department of Labor survey¹ of employers concerning projected labor requirements indicates an average annual employment growth rate of about 0.6 percent between 1996 and 2006. This implies the continuation of the historical trend of gradual employment growth in the region.²

The Corridor has experienced a shift from the higher paying State government and manufacturing sectors to the, on average, lower paying service sector. However, government employment

will likely continue to have an effect on Corridor land use patterns because of the state's commitment to shift jobs to the downtowns of the region. Changes in payroll drive changes in household income, which, in turn, affect household expenditures on goods and services. A continuation of the recent employment trends by sector imply a limited increase in regional payroll in the future, and, as a result, a limited increase in retail expenditures. It should be noted that EPS found that the Capital District's retail market is oversaturated due to a significantly higher presence of large shopping centers than the average region in the eastern portion of the U.S. and the U.S. as a whole. Change in employment by sector is summarized in Figure II.1.

The four-county Capital District population was slightly less than 800,000 in 2000. From 1980 to 1995 the region's population grew at an annual rate of less than 0.5 percent. The Capital District Regional Planning Commission (CDRPC) projections available at the time of the EPS report imply that regional population growth will decrease to about 0.25 percent per year for the period from 1995 - 2020. Furthermore, the region's population in 2020 is expected to be comprised of a higher percentage of people over 55 years of age (from 22% in 1995 to 28% in 2020) and a lower percentage of those under 45 years of age when compared to the present (from 66% to 58%). However, the proportion of the region's population comprised of 45 to 54 year-olds is not expected to change from its current 13%.

Other findings indicate that based on current

¹ New York State Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook — Capital Region.

² Other projections imply a lower growth rate for the Region. For example, the Bureau of Economic Analysis projected average annual employment growth of 0.18 percent for the Albany-Schenectady-Troy MSA between 1995 and 2020.

development patterns, land availability, land costs, and prevalent development practices, suburban development will continue to dominate in the absence of public policies that aid the established areas. If current policies and development trends continue, suburban residential, office and retail development will continue to weaken the vitality of the Corridor's commercial areas and residential neighborhoods.

In light of these trends, however, the region has some important assets that could be capitalized on in moving toward revitalizing the corridor including those listed below.

- High densities of population and employment are still concentrated along or close to the Corridor, and a number of neighborhoods are still strong. However, further erosion of the Corridor's vitality will continue to damage the existing neighborhoods and make revitalization more difficult.
- Albany and Schenectady have a number of assets including traditional urban forms and building types, a high level of transit service, historic districts, and other cultural amenities that have the potential to support vibrant and affordable urban neighborhoods. While these assets generate some appeal, they alone are not sufficient to maintain the vibrancy of the central cities, which in turn affects the strength of the Corridor.
- The Town and Village of Colonie have high quality and affordable neighborhoods within the Corridor. However, the neighborhoods are not well served by commercial development along the Corridor and suffer from the negative impacts of the regional traffic congestion that exists within the Corridor.
- National retail trends towards entertainment and "main street" types of shopping do not have a strong presence to date in the Capital District, although various newer entertainment venues in downtown Albany have

recently opened and plans for an entertainment district there continue. The extent to which the Corridor could take advantage of this trend is unclear, but it does indicate the potential support for some mixed-use and pedestrian-oriented nodes.

- The policy to move State workers to central city downtowns, including downtown Albany and Schenectady, will help ensure a continued daytime presence of workers. This will not, however, ensure the strength of the residential neighborhoods and the viability of after-work eating, drinking, and entertainment options that play an important role in creating downtown vitality.
- Future real estate development patterns will be affected not only by the demand for real estate generated by economic and demographic growth, but also by the amount of developable land available and the land use policies that govern its use. Of the four core counties, Saratoga and Albany offer the largest tracts of developable land, primarily in suburban locations removed from the historical locations of population and employment.

A key aspect of the market assessment was analysis of the Corridor's real estate market, land use and vacant/underutilized properties, and then identification of key revitalization opportunities. This information was then used by the consultant team in developing various potential land use elements for each segment of the corridor and the detailed study sites. The segment descriptions under the upcoming section on "Urban Form" include the land use descriptions, other relevant information from the market assessment, and a description of current roadway characteristics. Segment-specific discussions of recent lease rates, vacancies, underutilized property analysis and potential revitalization opportunities are contained in the full EPS Market Assessment report, Appendix C.

The economic analysis indicates that the communities face a market challenge in retaining commercial activity while improving residential neighborhood quality. Strong public policy action may be required to ensure economic vitality and growth in the corridor. It is unlikely that, even with strong public policy action, the Corridor will regain its former dominant role in the region's commercial economy. The economic analysis indicates that the market will not require introduction of unfamiliar, high density development. The entire range of potential future growth in the corridor can be accommodated at site densities roughly comparable to those present today (although perhaps with improved design, community cohesion and transportation interface).

Policies and Techniques Assessment

Community Design + Architecture examined the existing land use policies and implementation tools employed by the five jurisdictions which make up the Route 5 Corridor.

At the regional level, the Capital District does not have an established program of regional land use planning. However, in addition to achieving regional consensus on a multi-modal transportation policy, *New Visions*, the long range regional transportation plan examined the interrelationship between transportation and future regional growth and land use patterns, economic development, and other urban issues.

At the jurisdictional level, the communities which have very little vacant land, namely, Albany, the Village of Colonie, and Schenectady rely heavily on their zoning ordinances to guide future development. The City of Schenectady has a 1971 Comprehensive Plan which is out of date and does not reflect current economic develop-

ment strategies and state or federal policies. In this case, the lack of a comprehensive vision is integral with the lack of coordination between various programs in the community. A similar set of coordination issues face Albany as well. Recent development of a Downtown Schenectady Master Plan and various current ongoing planning studies, including the Central State Street Neighborhood Land Use and Transportation Planning Study in Schenectady, and the guidelines development effort for C-1 Neighborhood Commercial areas in Albany, should provide additional useful community planning tools.

The Town of Colonie has published a Land Use Management Program, establishing a set of goals, policies and priorities to shape the future development of the Town. Yet, the Town, like the Village of Colonie and to a lesser extent the remaining jurisdictions, relies upon zoning codes which are not sufficient to guide real-estate market forces and therefore to implement all the objectives of the Town's Land Use Management Program. In both the Town and Village of Colonie, business and commercial districts allow a broad range of land uses over an extensive land area which does not maintain and reinforce established retail centers as the primary business, personal service and shopping areas within the jurisdictions. Furthermore, maximum allowable densities, intensities of development, and fractured land use patterns do not support mass transit or encourage other alternative modes of transportation in these jurisdictions. More and better comprehensive planning is needed to dovetail real estate market forces with public policy and prevent development patterns which ultimately diminish the quality of life in the Corridor communities.

Specifically, current zoning standards typically do not include the appropriate standards relating to building setbacks, parking requirements, provision of pedestrian connections, the number and

Table II.1: Summary of NY5 Land Use Policies and Implementation

Jurisdiction	Land Use Planning	Zoning	Districts	Maximum Densities	Design Guidelines
City of Albany	No Comprehensive Plan; On-going focus on maintenance and revitalization	Detailed and comprehensive	10 residential 3 commercial 2 industrial 4 mixed-use 2 open space	0.5 – 40 du/acre	No Design Guidelines Some discretionary review
Town of Colonie	1998 Land Use Management Program Zoning does not support some goals in Management Plan	Fine-grained for housing, flexible for commercial, relies on discretionary review Does not encourage well-defined community structure	5 SF residential 3 MF residential 1 Senior Citizen 7 commercial 1 Undeveloped	SF 1.75-2.25 du/acre MF: 6 du/acre	No Design Guidelines Some discretionary review
Village of Colonie	No Comprehensive Plan, does not help to guide real estate market forces	Reflective of small size and lack of vacant land.	4 residential 3 commercial Conservation Res. Dist. (CRD) designates environmentally sensitive areas	SF 0.4-4.5 du/acre MF 5-7 du/acre	No Design Guidelines Some discretionary review
Town of Niskayuna	1994 Comprehensive Plan used but not adopted recognizes and reinforces the hierarchy of uses within the community	Planned Unit and Planned Development Districts (PUD and PDD) provide additional flexibility in uses, parking req.s	5 residential 4 commercial 2 employment 1 land conservation 1 mixed-use	0.5-10 du/acre 0.25 FAR	Some guidelines directed at architectural design but limited in relation to urban form
City of Schenectady	1971 Comprehensive Plan, does not reflect current economic cond.s or state and federal policies On-going focus on maintenance and revitalization Metroplex Authority provides the opportunity for funding of long range visioning and capital improvements	Reflects lack of vacant land	5 residential 5 commercial 3 special purpose 1 industrial 2 recreation	SF 7 and 14 du/acre MF 16 du/acre 6.5 FAR in CBD Overlay	No Design Guidelines Some discretionary review

width of driveways, and coordinated access between parcels, resulting in auto-oriented and often pedestrian-unfriendly environments in all but the Urban Core segments of the corridor.

The level of detail and flexibility of each community's zoning ordinances varies greatly. Albany's is one of the more detailed and comprehensive in the Corridor, while the Town of Colonie relies more upon discretionary review to manage nonresidential development. Table II.1 summarizes the policy tools in place in each of the five jurisdictions.

Finally, the majority of the communities do not have urban design or architectural standards and/or guidelines to provide direction for the quality of the built environment, with the exception of some standards for historic neighborhoods and recently enacted architecturally-focused design guidelines in Niskayuna. While Niskayuna has used its Planned Development District ordinance and special review to a similar effect for the Niskayuna Square Shopping Center, this discretionary review can have inconsistent results. Comprehensive design standards and guidelines are needed to preserve and improve quality of life within these communities.

Other Tools

The Corridor communities use a variety of other policies and implementation tools to shape their communities. These range from fairly typical special permitting and site plan review to business improvement districts (BIDs). All of the Corridor communities use some type of discretionary review (site plan review, special use permitting, etc.) some more effectively than others. A major problem with discretionary review is that it is discretionary, and it relies upon the skills of staff, appointed and elected officials to ensure consistency and to strike a bargain every time a project is approved. The process and its built results can

be inconsistent and ineffective to the dismay of property owners, developers, and the public. Several communities rely on special public entities to get organized, define strategies, gather and channel funds, and implement projects. Three programs in particular stand out as potential leaders in revitalization of the Corridor:

The Metroplex Authority was established for the purpose of economic development and revitalization of the Route 5 and Route 7 corridors in Schenectady County. The Authority holds great promise in successfully attracting public and private commitments to reinvest in Schenectady, but its potential application at a city-wide level has been largely misunderstood. The legislation which created Metroplex defines its service district as a broad area of both Schenectady and Scotia (about 3 square miles), an area extending down the Route 5 Corridor to the county line with a width of 3,500 feet, and another area out Route 7 to the Schoharie County line. Yet, to date Metroplex publicity and planning efforts have focused on planning for the downtown. Furthermore, this service district excludes all property which includes a "non-multiple dwelling residence." It remains unclear to what extent the Metroplex Authority can assist in the implementation of the concepts that come out of this Study, particularly to the extent that the recommendations of this Study include revitalization of the residential neighborhoods that abut State Street.

The Central Avenue BID is currently working with a team of consultants to define programs and strategies for revitalizing Albany's portion of the Corridor, the results of this effort are documented in the AveNew 2000 report. Already the BID has had a visual impact on Central Avenue with its clean-up crews and various efforts focused on

the holiday seasons. Its role in encouraging and guiding new business locations is also proving effective. The BID can be both an organizing and implementing tool for strategies that are developed to revitalize the Corridor.

Airport and GEIS Mitigation Fees and TDM. It is also possible to provide for improvements to the transportation system using policies that reflect the impacts of development. The Town of Colonie has one of the most effective systems in the region. The Town of Colonie and the County of Albany recently conducted a Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (FGEIS) generally around the airport area. The study area for the FGEIS touches portions of Route 5 in two locations: the first around Colonie Center, and the second around the New Karner Road/Central Avenue intersection. The Findings Statement of the GEIS instituted a mechanism for the imposition of mitigation fees assessed against new development related to infrastructure needs, including transportation system improvements. Transportation projects to be partially funded by these locally generated mitigation fees include roadway improvements (such as adding turn lanes, sidewalks, and travel lanes), transportation demand management (TDM) activities and transit.

Transportation

As a principal arterial within New York State's roadway classification system, Route 5 serves a range of functions, from providing mobility between the urban centers of Albany and Schenectady, to offering accessibility to adjoining properties throughout the Corridor. The roadway also serves a wide variety of vehicle types and trip patterns including a large volume of work trips by car and transit to the traditional downtown cores, as well as numerous suburban office and retail centers; including Colonie Center, urban shopping districts and freestanding stores. As well, the Corridor provides for, and truck trips to, destinations on the Corridor and to truck terminals located in close proximity, particularly in the Town of Colonie, between Old Karner Road and Cordell Road.

The Route is characterized by multiple driveways and signalized intersections, few secondary streets and little connectivity between the commercial area and surrounding residences and community facilities. By its uncoordinated nature, the conventional pattern of development limits the ability to strategically widen roads, to modify circulation patterns or to provide turn lanes at intersections. Over time, the proliferation of individual driveways along an arterial without access control fosters a chaotic and unappealing roadside vista. Automobile congestion along Route 5 increases each year, while this intensity of development has also made Route 5 the highest demand transit corridor, by a factor of two, in the Capital Region.

Roadway Characteristics

The width of right-of-way in the Corridor is relatively constrained for its function and adjacent uses. This limits capacity expansion and alternatives for improving the multi-modal utility of the street.

Paved roadway width in the Route 5 Corridor varies between 50 feet (including on-street parking lanes) and 112 feet (including right and left turn lanes). The most typical pavement width is 62 feet, with a center left turn lane, and no on-street parking. End-to-end travel for the 16.5 mile Route 5 Corridor by private vehicle takes approximately 36 minutes during the off-peak (midday) period and approximately 40 minutes during the morning and evening peak periods. There are 61 traffic signals located within the defined Route 5 Corridor. In the Town and Village of Colonie and the Town of Niskayuna, traffic signals are located at a frequency of 1,000 to 1,500 feet.

Both the eastern and western ends of the Route 5 Corridor have on-street parking. Based on limited field observations, parking availability in both the Albany and Schenectady study segments appears to be a moderate constraint on the ability of these areas to attract and retain retail businesses. The lack of off-street parking for some residences fronting on State Street may also be a factor affecting their resale value. Off-street parking is provided by all retail and residential properties outside the urban cores, as required by local zoning ordinances. This parking appears to be generally adequate to meet existing levels of demand.

Roadway characteristics by segment are described in the section on Land Use and Urban Form that follows.



Figure II.2: Central Avenue in the Village of Colonie on a weekday afternoon

Traffic Characteristics

Corridor traffic is relatively balanced between the three peak hours - morning, midday and evening. A pronounced directionality to the traffic flow does exist in some locations, although in some places peak direction flows are equivalent in either direction. In general, the evening peak hour is the busiest of the three. Hourly, bi-directional traffic volumes range from a high of 3,000 vehicles (in both the midday and evening peak hours) in the vicinity of Colonie Center to a low 600-700 vehicles in the section of State Street west of the Route 7 Interchange. The evening peak hour is typically the most congested period in the Route 5 Corridor, with many of the high volume intersections operating at a volume/capacity ratio of 0.9 or higher. Volume/capacity ratios in this range are characterized as providing level of service D³, which is typical in heavily congested suburban corridors and in urban areas.

A lower number of accidents occur at intersections within the city portions of the Route 5 study area than within the NYSDOT-operated portions of the Corridor in the Town and Village of Colonie and the Town of Niskayuna.

³Level of Service is a method for describing the level of congestion on a road segment or intersection. A “grade” is given, like on a report card, with an “A” describing a free flowing situation and “F” describing unacceptable delay.

This is likely the result of greater traffic volumes on both Route 5 and the intersecting roadways and driveways in the non-city segments, and also due to lower traffic speeds in the urban areas.

Truck Traffic

Like any commercial corridor, NY5 also supports light and heavy truck traffic serving both as a connector to the interstate highways and as a conduit between the Corridor communities, especially Albany and Schenectady. Producers and distributors, primarily along the urban and suburban strip will benefit from clear, direct and easily managed connections to the Interstates. Street design, parking and land uses should be planned with these connections, and their importance to regional competitiveness, in mind.

Traffic along Route 5 itself, especially in the urban cores, may also be constrained by delivery activity. In Albany, alleys and sidestreets are available though not necessarily utilized for loading and unloading. In Schenectady, where few alleys for loading and unloading exist, side streets may need to be reconfigured to encourage businesses to utilize access for deliveries. Though it is not clear to what extent truck loading and unloading hinders traffic flow in the urban cores (due to entry/exit, double-parking, delivery-activity, etc.), it is expected that facilitating and encouraging the use of sidestreets and alleys, especially during peak commute hours will improve the capacity of the Route 5 Corridor.

Transit Characteristics

The Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) manages bus service for the Route 5 Corridor. Currently the only other mode of public transit that parallels the Corridor is the Amtrak connection between Albany-Rensselaer and Schenectady.

The CDTA's most heavily utilized bus route (Route 55) runs between Albany and Schenectady on NY5. April 1998 passenger counts indicate that 4,456 daily trips (one-way) are made on this route, with an additional 2,500 trips on nearby Routes 1 and 2, which travels west on Central Avenue and then northward onto Wolf Road. The CDTA indicates that seasonal increases can bring the daily ridership of Route 55 up to approximately 6,000, with peak ridership occurring during the pre-Christmas shopping season. Route 55 passengers represent more than 20 percent of total CDTA system ridership. Also, Route 55X provides limited commute express service between Albany and Schenectady during the week.

The CDTA's recent schedule modifications and the implementation of the Route 5 Traffic Signals Bus Priority Treatment Study recommendations will continue to improve transit service along the Corridor.

In addition to Route 55, most portions of State Street in Schenectady are served by CDTA bus routes 50, 53 and 62. Excluding the 55, these routes together have an average daily ridership of approximately 450 passengers.



Figure II.3: Armory Transit Center in Albany

Pedestrian and Bicycle Travel Characteristics

Pedestrian volumes are much higher in the downtown Albany portion of the Corridor, and then drop-off in the more suburban portions of the city, as well as within the Town and Village of Colonie and the Town of Niskayuna. Pedestrian activity increases towards Downtown Schenectady. For most of the Route 5 Corridor study area, pedestrian circulation is constrained due to a lack of adequate crosswalks and limited pedestrian signalization at intersections; the frequency, number and in some places the length of curb cuts; and the extensive pavement width which pedestrians must cross. Sidewalks exist on either side of Route 5 throughout the Corridor, with some breaks in continuity due to excessive curb cuts (i.e., Auto Row in Albany). The pedestrian environments could be improved by adding street parking and street trees to act as buffers between the sidewalk and the road. Recent sidewalk construction in the Village of Colonie has helped to improve pedestrian access, though again minimal separation from traffic results in a degraded pedestrian environment. Albany has consistent and adequate sidewalk access through the core, while conditions vary in Schenectady. While the pedestrian environment may not be all that it could be, sidewalk access as a whole along Route 5 is above the regional norm for major arterial roads.



Figure II.4: A good pedestrian environment

Relatively narrow traffic lanes and high traffic speeds make for a bicycle-unfriendly character along most of the Corridor. State Bike Route 5 traverses a portion of the Corridor from Brandywine Avenue west into downtown Schenectady. The majority of the bike route parallels the NY5 Corridor using Western Avenue in Albany and Route 146 in Guilderland.

Other Studies

The Albany Urban Corridor Study, has been undertaken for the Washington and Western Avenue corridors which parallel Route 5 in Albany. It has identified the low cost of parking for State employees and for SUNY staff and students as an important factor in determining the modal choice between autos and transit. The study set forth the following objectives for the Western Avenue Corridor.

- Create an efficient network of transit in the Corridor;
- Create parking solutions which alleviate current management issues;
- Establish a planning and urban design policy framework which supports an integrated approach to parking, transit and urban development;



Figure II.5: A poor pedestrian environment

- Strengthen the urban identity of the Washington and Western Avenue corridors;
- Encourage an environment which supports a balance between modes of travel; and
- Enhance the livability and character of Albany.

Some of the strategies for achieving these goals and objectives include:

- Building upon residential neighborhoods;
- Encouraging nodes of activity;
- Identifying zones of reinvestment, such as the Harriman Campus, the Crossgates Mall and the Alumnae Quad;
- Establishing community gateways; and
- Greening the Corridor.

Still other studies in the region support the movement toward improved infrastructure and frequency of service for transit along the Route 5 Corridor. Together, the studies identify the following issues in the Corridor:

- Need for improved transit amenities such as bus stops, pull outs, park and ride facilities; and,
- Improved transit centers and infrastructure and exploration of commuter rail options serving the corridor endpoints of Albany and Schenectady.

Land Use

The Corridor in the Region

The NY5 Corridor study area extends 16.5 miles in a nearly straight line from Townsend Park in Albany to Nott Terrace in Schenectady. For this entire length it is a clearly defined mixed-use commercial corridor with relatively dense residential neighborhoods or employment clusters behind the commercial strip. Approximately 15% of the Capital District's households and 30% of the jobs are within 1/2 mile of Route 5 within the Corridor. This is a significant concentration of jobs and housing within a region that is perceived by many to be characterized by low density suburban and rural development. As a result, the Corridor has the potential to attract some key portions of development activity in the Capital District.



Figure II.6: Regional Map

Urban Form

The Route 5 Corridor has been divided into seven analysis segments that reflect distinct characteristics of residential and commercial land development, as well as general roadway character – their **Urban Typology**. Four urban typologies have been identified in the Corridor: the Urban Core, the Urban Strip, the Suburban Strip, and the Regional Mixed-Use District.

The *Urban Core* includes the areas built at higher densities extending out from the downtowns of Albany and Schenectady. The majority of development in these areas is on smaller parcels with buildings fronting directly onto the street with little or no setback.

The *Urban Strip* describes the first "streetcar suburbs" or older urban neighborhoods with medium density development in Albany and Schenectady. Many buildings still front directly onto the street. Parcel size is more varied than in the Urban Core areas with some medium and larger parcels.

The *Suburban Strip* represents the largest portion of the Corridor. Parcel size is varied, but the pattern is typified by buildings setback from the street with parking in front. There is also wide variation in intensity of use, ranging from the semi-rural quality of the Corridor in areas between New Karner Road and Niskayuna to more intensive uses in some areas between New Karner Road and Wolf Road.

The final urban typology is the *Regional Mixed-Use District* represented by the Auto Row area in Albany, the Colonie Center/Northway Mall cluster, the cluster around New Karner Road with the Village Square Shopping Center, Builders Square, K-Mart, and Colonie Plaza, and the Mohawk Mall. These Regional Retail Clusters are the largest parcels in the Corridor, many are underutilized, and several of them are being revitalized.



Urban Core - Townsend Park, Albany



Urban Strip - Central State Street, Schenectady



Suburban Strip - Village of Colonie



Mixed-Use District - Colonie Center, Colonie

Figure II.7: The Urban Typologies

Segment 1 - The Urban Core *Lark Street to Quail Street in Albany*

The most urban portion of the Corridor consists mainly of two-story and higher mixed-use buildings with ground floor retail or office space with higher density residential neighborhoods to the north and south of Central Avenue. This segment has densities characteristic of older urban corridors, with a mix of retail, residential, and civic uses. Structures are generally mid and high-rise. There are numerous vacancies among the ground-floor retail and office spaces with some buildings and lots being completely vacant. The residential neighborhoods behind the mixed-use frontage have many vacant and deteriorated homes that contribute to the general malaise of the area. Some portions of the areas to the south have more investment, because of the adjacent parks and more historic and single-family character of the housing stock. In this segment, Route 5 has four travel lanes (two in each direction); a left turn lane is located at the eastbound intersection of Route 5 with Clinton Avenue. Metered on-street parking is provided on both sides of the street. There are approximately two to three curb cuts per block, with many businesses relying on curbside truck delivery and access resulting in frequent double parking.

Segment 2 - The Urban Strip *Quail Street to Watervliet Avenue in Albany*

This segment has lower intensity mixed-use buildings directly fronting Central Avenue with medium density neighborhoods on both sides of Central. Development densities drop fairly quickly as one moves west of Quail Street. Uses include a mix of retail, housing, and civic and governmental services. The majority of buildings are one and two-story, with the major exception being the apartment tower just west of Ontario Street. There are a number of vacancies among



Figure II.8: Central Avenue at Henry Johnson

the retail spaces. Existing business establishments here include neighborhood services, such as small convenience stores, hardware stores and banks, as well as an increased presence of more regional uses, such as used auto sales, specialty building supply and the Honest Weight Food Co-op. The adjacent residential neighborhoods are more vital to the south of Central Avenue while those to the north are more similar to the neighborhoods in Segment 1. Route 5 has four travel lanes (two in each direction) in this segment. There is no center left turn lane, but on-street parking is present. The number of curb cuts increases relative to the previous segment with 4 to 5 curb cuts per block on each side of the street. It is important to note that this area is home to a relatively large transit-dependent population.



Figure II.9: Central Avenue in the Village of Colonie

Segment 3 - The Suburban Strip

Watervliet Avenue to Virginia Avenue in Albany, the Town of Colonie, and the Village of Colonie

This portion of the Corridor is characterized by suburban strip development oriented towards providing more regional retail and services with mainly single-family neighborhoods on either side of Central Avenue and some industrial or R&D-flex development to the south. This is the largest segment of the Corridor. It extends from the western portion of Albany through the Village of Colonie up to Virginia Avenue where the intensity of development drops further. This segment of the Corridor is more suburban in nature, with lower densities of development and a presence of regional shopping centers and auto dealerships. The condition of the adjacent residential neighborhoods varies widely with some areas needing programs to support reinvestment in the housing stock.

Unique clusters of activity exist at Wolf Road and New Karner Road, where these perpendicular regional connections have supported development of large regional-serving retail malls and clusters of more intense employment. This corridor segment has the highest volumes of auto traffic and the greatest levels of vehicular congestion. Within this segment Route 5 assumes the alignment that characterizes much of its length between Albany and Schenectady with four travel lanes and a center left turn lane; on-street parking is absent. The presence of continuous curb cuts can be found in various sections of this segment with the overall number of curb cuts per block varying from fairly numerous to few where enclosed or larger strip mall properties are found.



Figure II.10: State Street near Chester

Segment 4 - The Suburban Strip

Virginia Avenue to Linda Lane in the Town of Colonie, Niskayuna, and Schenectady

This is the most rural portion of the Corridor with a mix of lower intensity strip development and residential uses along Central Avenue. This segment has the lowest intensity of development, consisting of a mix of suburban strip development along Central Avenue with mainly lower density single-family neighborhoods and some vacant land behind. Several areas on both sides of Central Avenue are impacted by Federal and State wetlands and floodplains. The adjacent Pine Bush lands are a constraint to development, but an asset for the area and the Capital District.



Figure II.11: Central Avenue near Lisha Kill

The Mohawk Mall and the cluster of auto uses nearby are the major exception to the more rural character of this Segment. Route 5 in this less intensively developed suburban segment has the same physical attributes as Segment 3 – four travel lanes with a center left turn lane and no on-street parking. An average of two to three curb cuts can be found per block.

Segment 5 - The Suburban Strip *Linda Lane to Laurel Avenue in Schenectady*

This is the most suburban and least intensive portion of the Corridor in Schenectady. It is characterized by strip commercial development with parking in front, similar in character to Segment 3 in Albany and Colonie, but with smaller parcels and more residential uses fronting directly onto State Street. The economic vitality of this segment is also weaker as evidenced by retail store vacancies and poorly maintained buildings. The condition of the adjacent residential neighborhoods varies. This segment has also has four travel lanes with a center left turn lane, no on-street parking and an average of 2 to 3 curb cuts per block.

Segment 6 - The Urban Strip *Laurel Avenue to Steuben Street in Schenectady*

The scale of development and character of State Street change markedly in this segment of the Corridor. Intensities of development are generally higher in this segment than in Segment 5 with more buildings coming up to the street. This segment is a similar character to Segment 2. There are very few parcels larger than a quarter acre and much of the development is residential in scale. Many one and two-family homes front onto State Street, particularly from Dartmouth to Harvard Streets and Edward to Charles Streets. Several former houses have been remodeled into



Figure II.12: State Street near Haight

apartments and/or have ground floor commercial use. This segment also shows signs of a weak real estate market, with retail store vacancies and unmaintained stores and residences. A portion of Route 5 in this segment contains the more typical suburban cross-section of four travel lanes, center left turn lane and no on-street parking. However, at Elbert Street the center turn lane ends and west of Fehr Avenue the roadway is reduced to one travel lane in each direction and on street parking is present. In some portions of this segment there are no lane markings causing some driver confusion. A TIP reconstruction project currently in the design phase for State Street between Furman St. to Fehr Ave. will result in a reconfigured cross section that has one well defined travel lane in each direction, a center left turn lane, and on street parking.

Segment 7 - The Urban Core *Steuben Street to Nott Terrace in Schenectady*

This Corridor segment has higher urban densities, similar to those in Segment 1 at the Albany end of the Corridor. Building heights are generally two to five stories, while the scale of parcelization remains relatively small. Development includes a variety of residential uses, commercial use of variable economic viability, and some vacant buildings and surface parking lots. The majority of the buildings in this seg-

ment have no setback from the right-of-way, and the right-of-way itself narrows to only about 70 feet at Nott Terrace, with one travel lane in each direction, lane widths of 10 feet in some sections and on-street parking.

Conclusion

Various key opportunities and constraints emerged from the Issues Assessment effort as described above, including:

Issues

- Reduced economic strength has been experienced along the Corridor due to suburban expansion and competition from regional retail and entertainment centers and lack of reinvestment. Small parcel size and long term ownership patterns have contributed to existing reinvestment rates in the Corridor.
- Auto-oriented development and roadway design are "unfriendly" to pedestrians and bicyclists along portions of the corridor. The existence of wide and frequent driveways deteriorates the pedestrian environment, which in turn can impact transit use.
- Traffic congestion and crash rates along some portions of the corridor are relatively high due to Route 5's relationship to other regional highways, major retail and activity centers, as well as the number of existing curb cuts. This situation occurs in part due to the dual role of the Corridor in carrying both "through" trips and local trips and is made worse by the fact that there are few secondary streets and little connectivity between the commercial area and surrounding residences and community facilities.



Figure II.13: State Street near Nott Terrace

- Constrained right-of-way width limits application of traditional improvement options for transportation system improvement.
- There is a lack of urban design or architectural standards currently in place to improve the quality of the built environment.

Opportunities

- The traditional character of the downtowns and some corridor neighborhoods that include traditional urban forms and building types, some historic districts and buildings, and other cultural amenities, have the potential to support vibrant, walkable and affordable urban neighborhoods.
- The central location of the Corridor within the Capital District contains regional retail uses supported by regional traffic.
- The existing bus transit service along the Corridor sustains the highest ridership levels in the region and is comprised of frequent and reliable service.

FUTURE SCENARIOS

3

This section of the Future Scenarios chapter gives a summary explanation of the process that culminated in the Preferred Future. The previous Issues Assessment plus subsequent input from stakeholders and the general public, formed the basis for the development of the Preferred Future. The process involved three stages which gradually refined the alternative plans into the final scenario for the future of the Corridor: the Preliminary Alternative Futures, the Alternative Futures and the Refined Alternative Futures. Accompanying these sets of plans were street sections and detailed studies which further analyzed the possible outcomes of each of the scenarios.

The Basis for the Alternatives

Over the next 15 years, approximately 34,000 jobs and 22,000 households are expected to be added to the Capital District region. This assumes consistent employment growth of approximately 0.5% per year and slightly less population growth at about 0.25% per year. Table III.1 summarizes projected regional growth for three study scenarios, base, intermediate, and stimulated.

Table III.1: Regional Growth and Capture Rates 2000-2015

Area	CDRPC (Base Year)		Base Scenario		Preferred Future			
					Intermediate Scenario		Stimulated Scenario	
	2000 HH	2000 Emp	2000-2015 HH	2000-2015 Emp	2000-2015 HH	2000-2015 Emp	2000-2015 HH	2000-2015 Emp
Regional Growth	--	--	22,285	33,950	22,580	33,950	72,200	109,350
Share of Region	Exist'g Distribution		Distribution of Future Growth Increment					
Albany Core	2.1%	14.6%	0.7%	2.7%	1.8%	9.7%	1.4%	6.0%
Corridor	11.8%	13.0%	1.7%	2.7%	8.8%	14.0%	8.6%	14.2%
Schenectady Core	2.4%	2.5%	2.0%	1.0%	3.0%	3.3%	3.0%	2.1%
TOTAL	16.3%	30.0%	2.6%	5.5%	10.8%	27.0%	10.3%	22.3%

(1) Employment under CDRPC and Urban Reinvestment scenarios assumed to be the same as under the Intermediate scenario which is based on historical employment growth.

The *Base Scenario* assumes that the Corridor will not be able to attract as much future housing development as projected in the Urban Reinvestment Scenario because of the competitiveness of outlying areas. But, the Scenario assumes that the two downtowns will be able to attract a higher proportion of future housing, because of their improved urban quality of life.

The *Intermediate Scenario* assumes that all three sub-areas of the Study Area will be able to attract a higher proportion of future employment growth, because of the regional accessibility of jobs within this area, its history as the employment center of the region, and other factors, such as the State's commitment to moving jobs to the Urban Cores.

The *Stimulated Scenario* assumes a similar distribution of future jobs and housing as the Intermediate Scenario with the exception that the downtown cores would attract a slightly smaller proportion of regional growth due to development capacity expectations in Albany and market considerations in Schenectady.

Variables which might increase regional growth rates (and consequently growth rates within the Corridor) are:

- the installation of high-speed commuter rail between Albany and Manhattan.
- a concerted effort by the public and private sectors to capitalize on the region's quality of life; and,
- ripple-effect benefits of improvements in the Corridor and application of these land use and transportation concepts in other parts of the Region.

The Preliminary Alternative Futures

Following a review of the Issues Assessment work, the consultants prepared a set of documents to illustrate the potential for reuse within the Corridor. These included a set of three Preliminary Alternative Futures illustrating transportation and land use variations that are the cross-

Table III.2: Preliminary Alternative Futures Matrix

Policy & Growth/Transportation	Existing Commitments	Next Steps "Best Bus"	High Investment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Declining Growth ■ Existing Policies & Programs 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Intermediate Growth ■ Existing Policies & Programs 	Preliminary Alternative I		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Intermediate Growth ■ Modest Community & Corridor Policies & Programs 		Preliminary Alternative II	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Stimulated Growth ■ Maximize Community & Corridor Policies & Programs ■ Modest Regional Policies & Programs 			Preliminary Alternative III
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Maximize Community, Corridor, & Regional Policies & Programs 			

section of a set of transportation systems and policies, and a set of land use policies and growth scenarios. Table III.2 illustrates the matrix of land use and transportation alternatives.

Preliminary Alternative I

This alternative would result from the implementation of current land use and transportation policies and programs, implementation of projects in the current TIP (including Intelligent Transportation Systems [ITS] improvements related to bus service), and the level of regional growth projected by the CDRPC.

Preliminary Alternative II

This alternative would see an increase in vitality throughout the Corridor, reflecting new land use policies and programs within the Corridor communities to direct an additional portion of future development to the Corridor. This increased vitality would in turn support further investment in the Corridor's transportation system resulting in more complete implementation of the "Best Bus" system.

Preliminary Alternative III

This alternative assumes a higher level of regional growth coupled with additional policies and programs in the Corridor communities to encourage future growth in the Corridor. These land use and economic improvements would in turn support, and be supported by, increased investment in the Corridor's transportation system. These improvements would most likely include a bus system with dedicated lanes in feasible locations or light rail service.

Street Design Concepts

Concerns were raised from the beginning of the Study in regards to the limited right-of-way width and the extent of curb cuts and intersections along the Corridor. The narrower right-of-way width in the urban parts of the Corridor could make it difficult to implement light rail or dedicated bus lanes while maintaining adequate on-street parking and through traffic capacity. Reuse and infill development along the Corridor could facilitate the reduction of curb cuts which would benefit both traffic and transit flow, improve bicycle safety, and help to create a better pedestrian environment.

Transitways

Designs were developed for the suburban portions of the Corridor (Segments 3 and 4) which address different transportation issues. Figure III.2 illustrates a dedicated transitway in the middle of the street for either buses or light rail vehicles. While this would facilitate movement of transit vehicles, it creates difficulties at intersections (conflicts with turning vehicles) and would require that all transit riders have to cross at least half of the street and wait in the middle of the road. Figure III.1 illustrates a built example of this condition in Long Beach, California where the MTA Blueline has been constructed down the middle of Long Beach Boulevard.



Figure III.1: Transitway in Long Beach, CA

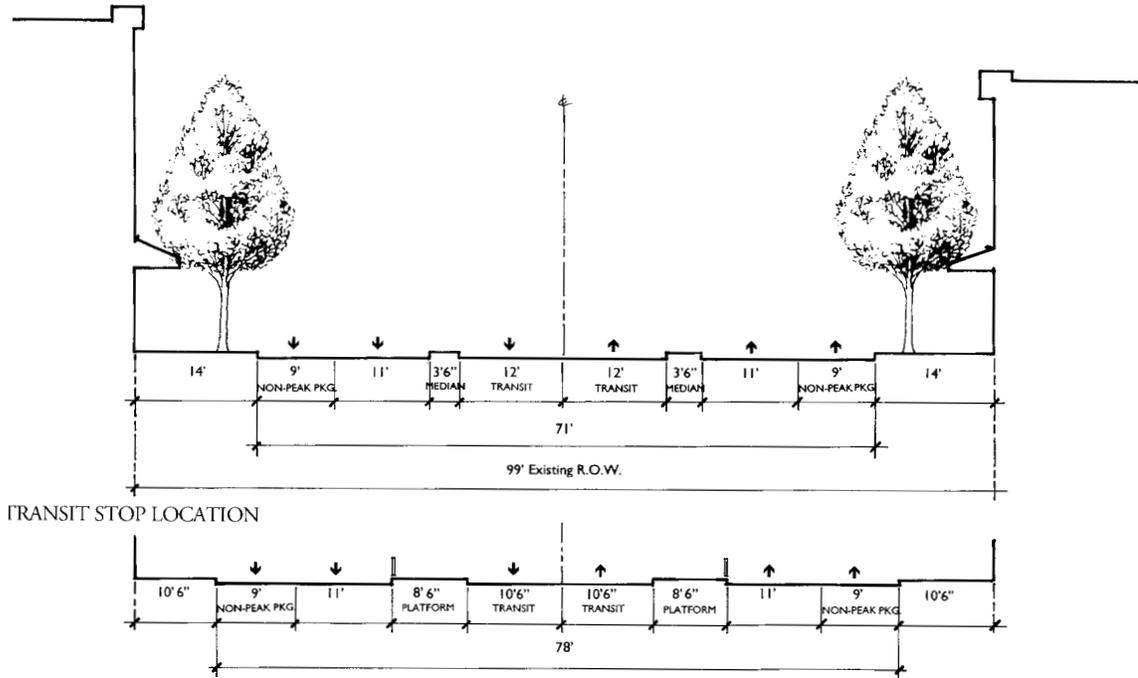


Figure III.2: Transitway in Suburban Albany and Colonie



Figure III.3: A local access lane with diagonal on-street parking

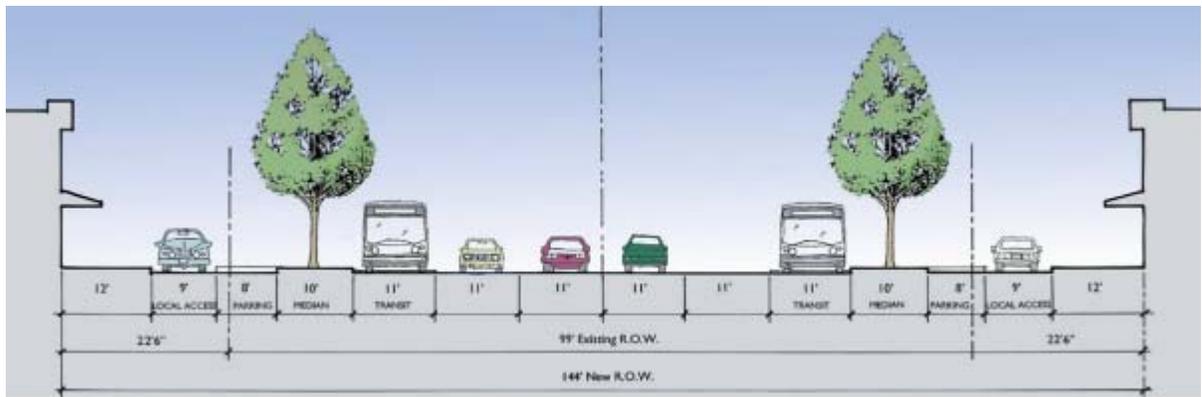


Figure III.4: Boulevard in Suburban Albany and Colonie

Boulevards

Another example of a potential street configuration in the suburban part of the Corridor is the Multi-lane Boulevard configuration with local accessways. Figure III.4 illustrates such a boulevard street configuration that could be developed on Central Avenue. Boulevards allow local traffic and bicycles to utilize a local accessway, in this case on-street parking is also provided on the accessway. Through traffic would utilize the four lanes in the middle of the roadway and would be separated by landscaped medians from the accessways as in Figure III.3. Transit, whether bus or light rail, would travel in the through lane adjacent to the median. This allows transit to be located on the median with additional widening of the right-of-way. Pull outs could be provided for transit. Studies have been undertaken recently to look at the benefits and potential problems of developing boulevard streets in the United States, with much of the work being done by Allan Jacobs who is a member of the Consulting Team.

The Alternative Futures Charette

In early February 1999, a five day design and policy charette was held in the CDTC offices with the SAC and other Corridor Stakeholders. The Alternative Futures Charette culminated in an open house at the Town of Colonie Community Center on Central Avenue. The Charette provided the opportunity to review the Issues Assessment documents and the Preliminary Alternatives, which presented initial land use and transportation concepts for the segments along the Corridor, and discuss concepts for encouraging urban revitalization and infill/reuse along the entire Corridor.

The consultants were able to do some focused team design work in the field and in a "studio" at the CDTC offices. Corridor segment maps were refined with input from stakeholders and field work by the design team. Alternative Evaluation or Policy Subgroups met to discuss focused issues, including:

Alternatives Evaluation: A technical subgroup met to discuss methodology for evaluating the land use and transportation alternatives that were being developed in the Charette.

Street Design Alternatives: A group of consultant team members; public works and planning staff; representatives from NYSDOT, CDTA, CDTC, CDRPC and the SAC, met to review the design alternatives for addressing the needs of all transportation modes. Issues discussed included lane widths, parking widths, turning conflicts, provision of dedicated transit lanes, and many other street design issues.

Transportation System Alternatives: This group consisted of a broad range of Consultant Team members who discussed the trade-offs between different types of transit service and how the alternatives could be best constructed to provide opportunity for meaningful evaluation.

Schenectady Study Meeting: The City of Schenectady requested that the consultants meet with staff and citizens of Schenectady to hear their specific transportation and neighborhood planning concerns. This meeting informed the development of the alternatives for Corridor segments in Schenectady.

Urban Neighborhood Revitalization: This group included representatives from both Albany and Schenectady, non-profit and for-profit developers, local neighborhood representatives (residents and business owners) and the SAC. Issues related to neighborhood revitalization, business

retention, and code compliance were discussed, as well as transit accessibility.

Infill and Reuse Strategies: This group included various SAC members and representatives from all parts of the Corridor, again including non-profit and for-profit developers. It focused on developing concepts for getting past the impediments to infill and reuse development such as: parcel assembly, code compliance, and identifying appropriate development prototypes.

Elected Officials Meeting: At the end of the week several elected officials were asked to attend a meeting at CDTC to see and review the results of the Charette. This provided an opportunity to test the political feasibility of the ideas that were generated. For example, the consultants reviewed concepts for the reuse of the Mohawk Mall with representatives from Niskayuna, providing them with some design concepts they could employ in their negotiations with the site's developer which were taking place at the time.



Figure III.5: NY5 Open House

Public Open House: On the Saturday following the Charette, an open house was held at the Colonie Community Center at which all of the design concepts generated during the week were presented to the public. Members of the consulting team and the Study Advisory Committee were available to review the work with citizens and directly hear their comments. The majority of the concepts that were developed received a supportive response, and encouraged the team to move forward in further development of the Alternatives.

Table III.3: Detailed Study Sites

Detailed Study Site	Urban Typology
Townsend Park West Hill Neighborhood	Urban Core
Swinburne Park	Urban Strip
Colonie Village Center	Suburban Strip
New Karner Road	Regional Mixed-Use Center
Woodlawn Plaza	Suburban Strip
Brandywine	Urban Strip
Vale Neighborhood	Urban Core

Detailed Studies

A set of six detailed studies were prepared to illustrate the land use and transportation concepts being recommended for the urban typologies. These were presented and discussed at a series of Urban Typology Workshops in late May, 1999. The detailed Studies illustrated the application of various design concepts developed during the Alternative Futures Charette such as streetscaping, building location, intensity and use. Issues and corresponding design solutions ranged from enhanced pedestrian connections, traffic calming techniques, clusters of mixed residential and commercial use to landscaped boulevard treatments. The boulevard treatments included street section designs with options for shared transit/private vehicle lanes and dedicated high-type transit lanes where existing right-of-way would allow.

The Refined Alternative Futures

Following the review of the Preliminary Alternative Futures in the Charette, the Community Structure Maps and Detailed Studies were refined.

Assignment of Regional Growth to Corridor & Cores

Community Design + Architecture and Economic and Planning Systems worked together to take the estimates for regional growth in the three Scenarios and assigned that growth to the opportunity sites in the Corridor. These were summarized at the traffic zone level and used in the transportation assessment of the Alternatives.

Opportunity Area Capacity Estimates

CD+A reviewed the opportunity areas that had been identified in the assessment phase of the project, and estimated the development capacity of these sites guided by the market assessment, and the design and review of the urban typologies and detailed studies. These potential capacities were used to guide the assignment of regional growth in the three Scenarios. Table III.4 summarizes the capacity and the land area of the opportunity areas within each of the five Corridor jurisdictions. Generally, the capacities exceed the demand, as defined by the three scenarios.

Assignment of Growth in the Scenarios

The *Base Scenario* represents existing land use and transportation policies and the future growth that is projected by the CDRPC (0.5 percent per annum in employment and 0.45 percent per annum in households).

Table III.4 Opportunity Area Capacity

Jurisdiction	Residential Units		Retail Sq. Ft.		Other Emp. Sq. Ft.		Opp. Area Acreage	
Albany	1,900	28%	328,100	19%	2,398,300	20%	308	23%
Village of Colonie	1,000	15%	250,000	15%	2,827,100	23%	239	17%
Town of Colonie	2,100	31%	510,000	30%	4,790,700	39%	562	41%
Niskayuna	600	9%	355,700	21%	585,500	5%	121	9%
Schenectady	1,200	18%	239,900	14%	1,673,700	14%	137	10%
Total Corridor	6,800	100%	1,683,700	100%	12,275,300	100%	1,367	

The *Intermediate Scenario* represents the same growth projections as the Base, but with a portion of regional growth shifted to the Corridor reflecting the adoption of new land use policies and other public policies to encourage investment and development in the Corridor.

The *Stimulated Scenario* represents the potential future if the regional growth rates are tripled; 1.5 percent per annum for employment and 1.35 percent per annum in households. It also represents additional land use policies to encourage more intensive development in portions of the Corridor.

Given these growth projections and the opportunity area supply estimates, CD+A and EPS worked together to distribute future jobs and housing to different areas along the Corridor. This distribution gave consideration to existing land use patterns, the development capacity of

the opportunity areas, and market competitiveness of the sites.

Table III.5 illustrates the change in jobs and households in the jurisdictions in the Corridor, the Corridor as a whole, and the Downtowns. It is important to note that the Urban Investment Scenario developed for New Visions assumed that employment would concentrate in the Albany core and the Schenectady portion of the Corridor. Both the Intermediate and Stimulated Scenarios developed for the NY5 Study assume that employment growth will occur in the Cores and along the Corridor, particularly in the Stimulated Scenario. This is projected to occur, because of the market advantages that would exist given the concentration of existing jobs in the area, good access to the regional transportation network, and improved accessibility resulting from transportation investment along the Corridor.

Table III.5: Change in Jobs and Households in Corridor and Cores, 2000-2015

Area	Base Scenario		Urb. Invest.		Interm. Scen.		Stimul. Scen.	
	2000-15	2000-15	2000-15	2000-15	2000-15	2000-15	2000-15	2000-15
	HH	Emp	HH	Emp	HH	Emp	HH	Emp
Jurisdiction/Corridor								
City of Albany	179	1,088	1,128	5,037	936	4,297	2,694	9,572
Village of Colonie	111	259	1,464	(753)	300	1,002	900	2,996
Town of Colonie	308	67	595	(7)	573	1,318	1,961	4,538
Niskayuna	20	47	19	52	160	268	500	1,197
City of Schenectady	(46)	400	476	1,102	479	2,280	1,396	6,052
Route 5 Corridor Total	572	1,861	3,682	5,431	2,448	9,165	7,451	24,355
Core/ Corridor								
Albany Core	162	927	301	4,206	399	3,278	1,000	6,556
Corridor	371	916	3,337	1,029	1,983	4,762	6,243	15,492
Schenectady Core	39	18	44	196	66	1,125	208	2,307
Route 5 Corridor Total	572	1,861	3,682	5,431	2,448	9,165	7,451	24,355

Alternative Futures Evaluations

Introduction

This Section summarizes the findings in the Scenario Evaluations Paper reproduced in *Appendix F: Scenario Evaluations* (note that evaluation headings have been renumbered for the purposes of this section). The evaluations include an assessment of the three future scenarios which are fully described in the previous section. The three future scenarios include: the Base Scenario, the Intermediate Scenario and the Stimulated Scenario. Each assumes a varying degree of growth and investment in the Corridor. The Study's focuses on achieving a Preferred Future (presented in section III. Preferred Future), and in order to achieve this the various options have been evaluated in three broad categories: Land Use/Urban Design/ Environment, Transportation and Quality of Life/Socio-Economic. Each category has a list of sub-criteria which generally includes a definition, methodology and findings. It should be noted that the sub-criteria topics are not necessarily unique to the category in which it is listed but also transferable across categories.

A. Land Use/ Urban Design/ Environment

1. Access to Transit

The Stimulated Scenario, incorporating the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system, provides the highest level of transit accessibility (see B.6 System Flexibility in this section). The higher level of reinvestment and land use changes will locate more people near transit and provide for a better walking environment around the transit stops. The transit system provides people with the choice of boarding express buses with less frequent stops, but with reduced travel times, or alternatively boarding local buses which provide more frequent stops

with slower travel times, but providing more uses within walking distance of the stops.

Measures of transit accessibility discussed include:

Quality of Walk Between Point of Origin/Destination and Transit

Locating complimentary land uses near transit stations and employing sensitive design techniques can effectively make transit a viable alternative for commuting as well as other trips; both of which are evident in the Detailed Study Areas.

Distance Between Stops (Size of Service Area)

In the Intermediate scenario, existing transit stops will remain with new stops added to provide a spacing of about one quarter mile in suburban locations and approximately every second block (800'-900') in urban cores. Within the Stimulated Scenario transfer stations are spaced approximately 1000' – 2000' apart in urban areas and between 2000' – 6000' in the suburban areas.

Length of Travel Times

Level of service (LOS) improves when transit is in dedicated lanes and unimpeded by other vehicular traffic. In the Stimulated Scenario BRT trips on transitways outside of the urban parts of the Corridor would achieve a LOS of B or C. In the urban cores where transit will be in the same lanes as other traffic rankings drops to a LOS of D.

Frequency of Service ("Headway")

Corridor-wide traffic flow should experience an incremental improvement due to the reduction of access points thereby improving headways. Express service will be improved in

the Intermediate Scenario, and the Stimulated Scenario will see improved headways with the use of dedicated transitways and overall system improvements.

Ease of Transfers

Both the Intermediate and Stimulated Scenarios identify locations for transfer stations, and each station would be equipped to make transfers as seamless as possible. The Stimulated Scenario would include more transfer stations and a higher level of service for transit that serves areas adjacent to Central Avenue and State Street.

2. Land Consumption Effects

There are two ways by which the Alternative Future Scenarios affect change in the use of land in the Corridor. First, the land use patterns put forth in the scenarios rely on infill development on small parcels of vacant land and parking lots, and the reuse of existing developed land. Secondly, the transportation elements of the Future Scenarios will require purchase of private land to widen certain segments of the right of way (r.o.w.).

Infill and Re-use

Corridor-wide, CD+A and EPS have identified over 1,300 acres in future opportunity areas which are likely to experience change over the next 15 years. Currently vacant land accounts for about 235 acres (18%) of the total land supply in the Corridor. Much of this vacant land, particularly in Albany and Schenectady, consists of individual lots and vacant buildings. The Village of Colonie has the largest percentage of vacant supply, consisting of several parcels over 10 acres a piece. Neither of the Future Scenarios would result in all of the potential supply being developed. The Intermediate Scenario would develop less than 20% of the supply, and the Stimulated Scenario would develop just over 50% of the supply.

It is not clear what effect either of the Future Scenarios would have on regional growth patterns, but they would have an effect on the amount of growth that would occur in different parts of the Region. The Intermediate Scenario would result in a higher proportion of regional growth locating in the Corridor; for example 11% of the household growth compared with only 2.6% expected under current land use policies. The Stimulated Scenario

Table III.6: Estimate of Land Supply and Vacant/Reuse By Scenario

	Potential Opportunity Areas			Supply Used in Future Scenario			
	Total Land (acres)	% Vacant	% Reuse	Intermediate Acres	% of Supply	Stimulated Acres	% of Supply
Albany	308	27%	73%	67.5	22%	153.5	50%
Town of Colonie	562	14%	86%	77	14%	220	39%
Village of Colonie	177	23%	77%	47	27%	127	72%
Niskayuna	121	15%	85%	29	24%	72.5	60%
Schenectady	137	18%	82%	26	19%	94	69%
Total Corridor	1,305	18%	82%	247	19%	667	51%

would result in substantially more development in the Corridor. But its increased overall growth rate assumptions would also lead to more growth in suburban and semi-rural areas of the region even though the percentage of total growth occurring in the remaining region would be lower on a percentage basis.

Widening the Right-of-Way

Additional r.o.w. that would be added to Central Avenue and State Street in order to achieve the transportation improvements as described in the two scenarios, is only required in the suburban portions of the Corridor, particularly in those areas where the multi-way boulevard design is used and when dedicated transit lanes are provided. In the Intermediate Scenario, additional acreage required would range from 1.5 to 4.4 acres; for the Stimulated Scenario, the range would be 11.5 to 22.2 acres (or an increase of 12% over the existing total area of the r.o.w.).

New Streets and Amenities

More specifically, the total land consumption of newly created or improved public right-of-ways and area takeoffs for other public areas (i.e.; parks and plazas) within the seven

Detailed Plan Areas is estimated at approximately 27 acres.

3. Land Use Capacity

Opportunity Area Capacity Estimates

CD+A reviewed the opportunity areas that had been identified during the assessment of existing conditions and future real estate market projections. An estimate of the development capacity of these sites was prepared, guided by the market assessment, and the design and review of the urban typologies and detailed studies. These potential capacities were used to guide the assignment of regional growth in the three Scenarios.

Generally, the capacities exceed the demand as defined by the three Scenarios. The Stimulated Scenario projects 6,250 new households in the Corridor, just over 90% of the identified capacity; and 15,500 new jobs, about 33% of the identified capacity.

Assignment of Growth in the Scenarios

The Base Scenario represents existing land use and transportation policies and the future growth that is projected by the CDRPC; 0.5 percent per annum in employment and 0.45

Table III.7: Range of Consumption Estimates for Public Right-of-Ways and Plazas

	Intermediate Growth		Stimulated Growth	
	Increase in R.O.W. Width (acres)		Increase in R.O.W. Width (acres)	
Segments 1 & 2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Segment 3	1.2	4.1	9.5	20.2
Segment 4	0.3	0.3	2.0	2.0
Segments 5, 6, & 7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Corridor	1.5	4.4	11.5	22.2

percent per annum in households. The Intermediate Scenario represents the same growth projections as the Base, but with a portion of regional growth shifted to the Corridor. This reflects the potential for the Corridor to "out compete" other parts of the region with the adoption of new land use policies and other public policies to encourage investment and development in the Corridor. The Stimulated Scenario represents the potential future if the regional growth rates are tripled; 1.5 percent per annum for employment and 1.35 percent per annum in households. It also represents additional land use policies to encourage more intensive development in portions of the Corridor.

The three Futures Scenarios are compared with the Urban Reinvestment Scenario developed as part of the New Visions Study. Under these conditions, the Intermediate Scenario assumes that the Corridor will not be able to attract as much future housing development as projected in the Urban Reinvestment Scenario, but assumes that the two downtowns will be able to attract a higher proportion of future housing. Regionally, the Scenario assumes that all three subareas of the Study Area will be able to attract a higher proportion of future employment growth. The Stimulated Scenario assumes a similar distribution of future jobs and housing as the Intermediate Scenario with the exception that the downtown cores would attract a slightly smaller proportion of regional growth.

4. Open Space

An underlying goal in concentrating development along an existing corridor such as NY5 is not only to make transit a viable alternative but to limit or slow development into the surrounding natural resources and agricultural lands. Corridor-wide, this can be simply termed as "development in landscape" and in both alternative growth scenarios, enhance-

ment to significant natural resources is made to maximize the "green" character along the Corridor. This is particularly the case in the portion of the Corridor around Lisha Kill.

On the scale of the Detailed Site Areas, it would be the reverse approach that is evaluated, namely the quality of the "landscape in development." In this condition, open space is integrated into the community in both Scenarios with an emphasis on the quality and location of the space rather than its size. All of the Detailed Site Areas include enhancement of the landscape, ranging from the creation of new parks as gathering places in the community to improvements to street and neighborhood landscaping.

5. Environmental Effects

Generally, negative effects on the environment are reduced and positive effects increase, on a proportional basis, as you move from the Base Scenario to the Intermediate Scenario and finally to the Stimulated Scenario.

Air Quality

Auto Use. The proposed improvements to the transit system and changed land use patterns will allow people to use their automobiles less and opt for taking transit, bicycling, or walking.

Transit Use. As the Alternative Scenarios are implemented improved "cleaner" technologies will help to reduce bus pollution associated with higher transit use.

Noise Impacts

The noise of vehicles traveling along Route 5 has a direct and negative effect on the environment. Vehicle numbers are not expected to be reduced to any noticeable extent in any of the Scenarios, but the number of buses travelling along the Corridor will increase. Improved engine technology can reduce this potential

impact. For those occupying buildings that directly abut the street the noise from the street is a factor that will be considered as they choose to live and work in the Corridor. Building and street design can mitigate noise to some degree, but some additional noise is one of the "trade-offs" of urban living.

Water Quality and Hydrology

Motor Vehicle Impacts. Oil leaks, fuel spills and leaks, and leaks from other vehicle fluids are a major contributor to water pollution. The Alternative Scenarios will reduce the impacts from motor vehicles by encouraging alternative forms of transportation which allows people to drive their cars less. Recommended parking lot designs can also provide opportunities to filter run-off before it enters the regional drainage system.

Development Pattern Impacts. The Alternative Scenarios will result in a more compact development pattern in the Corridor and encourage more efficient land use patterns throughout the region, thereby securing open space and reducing impervious areas which can have a positive effect on water quality and hydrology.

Reuse Benefits. The clean-up and reuse of groundwater contaminated sites will improve overall water quality.

Land Utilization

The land use patterns and implementation strategies that are being developed for this Study will identify public policies that encourage reuse and redevelopment, and off-set the potentially higher site and building development costs of reuse. Ultimately the policies will support more efficient use of the land.

B. Transportation

The transportation impacts were evaluated for automobile traffic and congestion, transit ridership and service quality, pedestrian and bicycle access, safety, access management and system flexibility. Five different scenarios were evaluated from the perspective of transportation impacts. Each scenario includes a combination of a land use/growth scenario and a transportation policy.

1. **Baseline Conditions Scenario** – This scenario represents the minimum accomplishment in the Route 5 Corridor, and serves as a point of comparison with the other scenarios.
2. **New Visions Reference Scenario** – This scenario assumes a continuation of existing New Visions commitments and CDRPC forecasts, similar to the Baseline. But unlike the Baseline, New Visions progress in TDM and related actions is assumed, which results in a 15% across the board reduction in trips.
3. **Intermediate / New Visions Scenario** – This scenario assumes the New Visions Transportation Plan with “intermediate” urban reinvestment in the Route 5 Corridor, and would include “stepped up” transportation system design.
4. **Intermediate / Full Implementation Scenario** - This scenario would also include the intermediate scenario described in Scenario 3, plus a “high-type” transit investment (i.e. light rail or dedicated busway - [Bus Rapid Transit]).
5. **Stimulated Scenario** - The Stimulated Scenario assumes average annual growth rates for the whole region would be three times higher than for

the Baseline or Intermediate Scenario, and assumes the “high-type” investment in transit investment.

Service Description

Baseline and New Visions: Transit service under these scenarios represents additional, continuous, incremental improvements to existing service. The New Visions Scenario also reflects a transit service benefit from land use redesign that makes access to transit service more manageable.

“**New Visions+**”: In conjunction with the New Visions and Intermediate land use Scenarios, a “New Visions +” transit design is also possible. The New Visions + service represents further incremental improvements over that described above.

High End Transit with Dedicated Lanes:

Under the Intermediate and Stimulated Scenarios, which increase activity levels in the corridor, a “high end” transit scenario (LRT or BRT although the BRT has flexibility advantages) may also be appropriate. The high end service could also be accompanied by high end express service.

6. System Flexibility

“Flexibility” has a dual meaning; it relates to both a user’s degree of choice in mode of transportation and the adaptability of a particular transit system (BRT vs. LRT) over time and to r.o.w. restrictions.

Choice

For the Scenario evaluation purposes, all modes of transit are examined: auto, public transit, bicycling and walking. The Future Scenarios sought to improve the overall conditions for all these modes, but focused on improving non-auto means in order to make them a more attractive choice, leveling the playing field in terms of convenience.

Transit System Flexibility – BRT vs. LRT

Through the process of evaluating the Future Scenarios it has been determined that a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system is more appropriate than a Light Rail Transit (LRT) system for transit service in the Corridor. A BRT system works better in the route 5 Corridor for a number of reasons including:

- Overall system cost is lower than LRT for the quality of service and capacity offered. The Route 5 Corridor is not now and is not planned to be built out to such a high density as to require the additional capacity benefits of LRT.
- BRT does not require a fully dedicated right-of-way for its entire length. In areas where traffic flows freely BRT buses could share the street with general traffic with no loss of speed or efficiency. Light rail on the other hand required the construction of new track for its entire length regardless of traffic conditions.
- Lower cost BRT buses can take advantage of developments in technology and style more frequently than higher cost Light Rail Vehicles (LRVs).
- Vehicles can be “cascaded” to other services in the needs of the BRT service change. For instance, BRT could be introduced with standard 40 foot buses and then converted to articulated buses as ridership grows. The standard buses could then be used on regular routes.
- Bus Rapid Transit allows the same vehicle to provide a rapid transit service for part of its trip and then continue on public streets or highways into residential areas or to major off-line traffic generators. This avoids the need for transfers from feeder routes to trunklines.
- Ability to add and relocate transit stops and stations as required with less modification to the street.

- A BRT system could complement a commuter rail system between Schenectady and Albany through the construction of transfer stations where BRT and commuter rail intersect (Downtown Schenectady, near the Albany/Colonie line, Downtown Albany).

7. Vehicular Volumes

The purpose of the traffic impacts analysis was to determine if more intense development along the Corridor and various transit strategies would result in an automobile traffic pattern that was feasible and acceptable.

The traffic modeling summarized in Table III.8 indicates that the traffic volumes resulting from the Intermediate Scenario are similar to the volumes that are forecast for the New Visions Reference Scenario. It can be assumed that a high type transit investment could reduce the auto traffic modestly. However, auto traffic volumes would generally be no worse because of the Intermediate Scenario, with or without a high type transit investment. The modeling work indicates that the Stimulated Scenario would result in higher traffic volumes than the Intermediate Scenario. However, the Stimulated Scenario volumes would be generally comparable to the Baseline Scenario. Although the Stimulated Scenario represents a higher auto growth scenario in the Corridor, it is a level of traffic growth that could be managed.

Table III.8 also indicates the one hour maximum acceptable link capacities at representative locations. Under all Scenarios, link volumes would be less than existing link capacities. However, implementation of dedicated transit lanes would result in off peak direction capacities of 1000 in urban Albany, suburban Schenectady, and urban Schenectady. These reduced capacities would result from making the off peak direction auto lanes available for parking. There would be some locations where the off peak direction volumes would exceed the link capacities.

8. Congestion

The results of this evaluation are summarized in Table III.9. "Excess Vehicle Hours of Delay" represents the delay that would occur at unacceptable congestion levels (level of service "E" or "F"). The results indicate that congestion under the New Visions Reference Scenario and the Intermediate Scenario would be less than year 2000 levels; and congestion under the Baseline Conditions and Stimulated Scenario would be greater than year 2000 levels. However, the New Visions Reference Scenario, the Intermediate Scenario, and the Stimulated Scenario would all be better than the 2015 Baseline Scenario with respect to congestion. The impacts of transit investments were not directly modeled although, based on the findings of the Fixed Guideway Transit Investigation, it would be reasonable to assume that the overall congestion benefits of transit investment would be modest

9. Access Control

The Corridor must serve the role of a regional arterial while also providing for the local access needs of adjacent land uses. Two types of conflicts are inherent in this dual purpose role. The first type of conflict is from a quality of life perspective concerning the intrusion of through traffic into residential neighborhoods. The second type involves excess curb cuts, with the resulting driveway turn movements interrupting traffic flow. Some form of access control is needed to ensure a balance between smooth flow of traffic, increased pedestrian safety and improved on-street parking opportunities. The Detailed Study Areas have been evaluated in relation to the aforementioned conflicts and design mitigation techniques employed. Each Detailed Study Area and their respective street sections illustrate at least one of the following techniques in access control:

- boulevards separating through traffic from local access traffic in parallel accessways

Table III.8: Route 5 Auto Traffic Volumes Under Different Scenarios

Route 5: Selected Locations			One Hour Maximum Acceptable Link Capacity (LOS D/E)	PM Peak Hour 1990 Volumes	2015 PM Peak Hour Volumes			
					Baseline Conditions Scenario	New Visions Reference Scenario	Inter- mediate Growth Scenario	Stimulated Growth Scenario
From	To							
Eagle Street	Lark Street	WB	2500	870	1240	1100	1070	1160
		EB	2500	610	680	660	680	710
Henry Johnson Boulevard	North Lake Street	WB	2500	750	980	790	890	940
		EB	2500	750	980	820	950	930
Watervliet Avenue	Everett Road	WB	2500	1980	2250	2020	2060	2220
		EB	2500	1620	1710	1540	1600	1700
Osborne Road	Fuller Road	WB	2800	1330	1820	1590	1640	1820
		EB	2800	1380	1780	1540	1640	1760
Fuller Road	Wolf Road	WB	2800	1670	2140	1880	1930	2150
		EB	2800	1500	1740	1590	1620	1760
Lincoln Avenue	Nicholas Drive	WB	2800	1770	2230	1630	1730	2250
		EB	2800	2080	2550	2210	2310	2670
Vly Road	New Karner Road	WB	2800	1640	2130	1670	1730	2190
		EB	2800	1310	1650	1380	1410	1710
Lisha Kill Road	Mather Avenue	WB	2800	1200	1770	1500	1490	1840
		EB	2800	800	1150	1000	1020	1240
Balltown Road	Linda Lane	WB	2500	930	1270	1190	1200	1280
		EB	2500	710	960	870	860	950
Fenwick Avenue	Route 7	WB	2500	900	1320	1170	1180	1310
		EB	2500	590	930	780	790	860
McClellan Street	Brandywine Avenue	WB	2500	745	1050	790	850	1040
		EB	2500	870	1210	970	960	1132
Close Street	Nott Terrace	WB	2500	350	500	390	420	480
		EB	2500	200	560	490	530	570

Table III.9 Excess Vehicle Hours of Delay

	1990	2000	2015 Baseline Conditions Scenario	2015 New Visions Reference Scenario	2015 Inter- Mediate Growth Scenario	2015 Stimulated Growth Scenario
Route 5 Corridor PM Peak Hour Excess Vehicle Hours of Delay	93	229	257	113	118	246
Route 5 Corridor PM Peak Hour Excess Vehicle Hours of Delay per 1000 Miles Traveled	2.1	4.2	4.3	2.2	2.3	4.2
Average Speed (miles per hour) in the PM Peak Hour	24	22	21	24	24	21

with the result of greatly reducing number of curb cuts and left hand turns;

- shared parking and driveways, interconnected parking lots reducing need for curb cuts;
- one way entries into neighborhoods, gateways;
- one way couplets (i.e. parallel one way streets within about one block of each other); and,
- left turning restrictions.

Colonie Village: The reduction of curb cuts in this segment from twenty to only three improves the Arterial-Land Access Conflict Index from an "E" rating to a "B" rating for present traffic volume and a "C" rating for projected volumes in 2015.

Swinburne Park: The reduction of curb cuts in this segment from sixteen to six improves the Arterial-Land Access Conflict Index from an "E - F" rating to a "D" rating for present traffic volume and for projected volumes in 2015.

10. Generalized Costs

This section reviews the potential costs for the transportation improvements which are recommended in the Alternative Scenarios by using some rough costs and cost comparisons to similar transportation improvements that have been made around the country.

The extent of roadway improvements varies widely across the three Scenarios. In the Base Scenario, relatively little change would occur with the exception of on going or planned improvements along the Corridor. In the Intermediate Scenario, more extensive streetscape improvements are projected to improve the environment for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders. The cost of rebuilding a quarter mile section of Central

Avenue in Downtown Albany to become street section type 1 would be about \$1.5 million, while the cost of building a quarter mile of a multi-lane boulevard, street section type 3A, would be about \$3.25 million. The cost of implementing these improvements could be included with transit upgrades in some cases which could make some additional (competitive) state or federal funds available. The cost of the street improvements for the Stimulated Scenario could be significantly higher, particularly if light rail is implemented. Table III.10 illustrates the cost differences between LRT and BRT systems nationwide. As can be seen, the costs for bus rapid transit systems are typically much lower than the costs for light rail.

If a major transit investment is made in the Corridor to develop a BRT or LRT system, it is likely that many of the other recommended transportation and streetscape improvements could be funded along with the transit system. A complete and cost-effective package of transportation improvements accompanied with appropriate land use policies and projects could compete more effectively for state and federal funding.

The 1997 *New Visions* plan does not identify a particular set of actions for the NY 5 corridor. However, the plan does call for an aggressive pace of urban arterial rehabilitation, improvements to pedestrian and bicycle accommodations, ITS investment and restructured transit routes with additional feeder services. The NY 5 Corridor's share of the 20-year New Visions regional budget for the capital cost of these items is approximately \$40 - \$45 M, addressing improvements in most, but not all, segments. The recently updated *New Visions* plan, *New Visions 2021* increased this amount to \$122 M.

The transportation system capital cost for moving beyond the New Visions elements

toward an alternative that incorporates BRT may cost an additional \$75 M. The components of the incremental cost of the NY 5 preferred concept are utility undergrounding (\$34 M), bus rapid transit vehicles and stations (\$25 M), multi-way boulevards in limited locations (\$26 M) and other amenities and features (\$20 M for lighting, relocated site access and turning movements to allow limited bus lanes, etc.) The BRT transit cost estimates compare to previous NY 5 light rail transit (LRT) estimates of nearly \$400 M in capital expenses developed under the Fixed Guideway Study.

II. Mode Share

For the purposes of the evaluation of the NY 5 concept scenarios, transit usage is derived from detailed estimates made for various transit and land use scenarios during CDTC's Fixed Guideway Transit Investigation of 1995. At the lower end, continued incremental implementation of New Visions' transportation actions should increase transit trips by 5-10% over the Baseline Scenario. At the regional

scale, total transit usage is estimated to be approximately 1.8% of all peak hour person trips. At the upper end, under the Stimulated Scenario, transit ridership could increase by as much as 60% to approximately 2.8% of all peak hour person trips. Other NY 5 Scenarios can be expected to fall in between these lower and upper bounds for transit ridership and mode share. It is likely that mode share for the Intermediate Scenario will be less, but close to, the mode share under the Stimulated Scenario if the high-end transit service and parking costs are in place. For trips contained entirely within the Corridor (that is between two traffic analysis zones both located along NY5), transit usage differs less dramatically across alternative Scenarios. Using the results of the Fixed Guideway Transit Investigation work, transit usage is estimated at approximately 9-10% of peak hour trips for the Baseline Scenario (New Visions would be slightly higher). For the Stimulated Growth Scenario, mode share increases to nearly 15% for internal Corridor trips. This expected increase of approximately 60% in transit ridership within the Corridor would be consistent with increases experienced

Table III.10: Major Transit System Capital Costs (in millions of year 2000 dollars per mile)

System	Length in Miles	Cost per Mile
Light Rail Systems		
Sacramento	18.3	\$13.0
Santa Clara	20.0	\$25.2
San Diego	20.8	\$18.3
Portland	15.2	\$30.0
CDTC <i>New Visions</i>	17.0	\$23.2
Bus Rapid Transit Systems		
Cleveland – electric trolley bus	10.0	\$26.6
Orlando – downtown circulator	2.3	\$9.3
Hartford – dedicated busway	9.0	\$8.6
Eugene – busway in arterial	8.0	\$6.0
Santa Clara – Next Bus System	27.0	\$1.2
Alameda County – Next Bus System	16.0	\$1.8

Table III.11 Estimated Transit Ridership

Fixed Guideway Scenario	NY5 Scenario		Regional Daily Ridership
LRT w/ urban revitalization	Stimulated w/ high-end transit		65,000 – 80,000
	Intermediate w/high-end transit		60,000 – 70,000
Free fare bus system			55,000 – 65,000
	Intermediate w/incremental transit		50,000 – 55,000
Null with stable service	New Visions	Baseline	45,000 – 50,000
Null with falling demand			40,000 – 45,000

elsewhere where high-end transit such as BRT has been introduced.

An approximate representation of where the various Scenarios fall within the range of transit ridership is shown in Table III.11, relative to the detailed results from the Fixed Guideway Transit Investigation.

12. Vehicle Miles Traveled

The results of the VMT analysis are consistent with the traffic volumes considered in the Corridor. The Baseline Scenario results in the highest VMT, followed closely by the Stimulated Scenario. The New Visions Scenario and

the Intermediate Scenario are comparable, but significantly less than the Baseline Scenario. The impacts of transit investment on VMT were not directly modeled for these scenarios. The Fixed Guideway Transit Investigation found that a high type transit investment in the Corridor, in combination with measures to encourage transit, would result in reductions in VMT.

13. Transit Service Availability/Schedule Adherence

Transit accessibility and service quality under these various service designs can be evaluated using the recent Transportation Research Board Transit Capacity and Quality of Service

Table III.12 Transit Level-of-Service

	Current	New Visions	New Visions +	High End Bus	High End LRT
Service Frequency LOS	A (East) B (West)	A (East) A or B (West)	A	A	A or B
Hours of Service LOS	A (East) B (West)	A or B	A	A	A
Service Coverage LOS	C	B	A	A	A
Passenger Load LOS at peak load point	D	D (C with some articulated bus)	D (B with all articulated bus)	C (with all articulated bus)	E (C with two-car operation)
Headway Adherence LOS	D or E	D or E	D or E	C	C
Transit/Auto Travel Time LOS	C or D	C	C	B	B

Manual. Quality of service is considered using several "Level of Service" criteria in Table III.12.

14. System Capacity

Transit system capacity under any Scenario does not approach the status of crisis. Consideration of separate lanes or rights-of-way is therefore less a consideration for the purpose of capacity as it is for travel time and reliability. For the Intermediate or Stimulated Scenarios, bus service along the Corridor at a five-minute frequency would produce a peak-hour, peak direction capacity (including standing room) of about 700 persons; a three-minute headway would produce a peak-hour, peak direction capacity of about 1,200 persons. Use of articulated buses with increased capacity would be sufficient at the highest ridership levels. Similarly, light rail transit vehicles in one-car configuration (with a capacity of up to 200 persons) would be able to handle the estimated 2015 peak direction demand with headways of ten minutes or less.

15. Quality of the Trip

In this section, the transit use patterns of two "typical" (fictitious) residents of the Corridor are described: Ms. Smith is a commuter who travels daily from her home in the Village of Colonie to her workplace in Downtown Albany. Mr. Washington lives with his wife and two teenage children in the Vale neighborhood in Schenectady. Each narrative is divided into three parts: the journey under current conditions, under the Intermediate Scenario and under the Stimulated Scenario. The narratives describe changes in transit service, streetscape and land use – three major factors that effect the quality of a trip. These narratives can be found in the Alternative Scenarios Evaluations paper in Appendix F.

16. Safety

National data have shown that as the number of access points (driveways and intersections) increases per mile, the crash rate also typically increases. The Route 5 Corridor ranks near the top for arterial streets in terms of driveway-related vehicle collisions according to CDTC's Driveway Study completed in 1995. An examination of updated crash data for the 3 year period from 1996 to 1998 obtained from NYSDOT corresponding to the 7 corridor study segments, indicates that there was an annual average number of crashes of 1,058 along the section of Route 5 from Lark Street in Albany to Nott Terrace in Schenectady. Segments with numerous curb cuts have a higher percentage of crashes occurring "midblock" versus those that occur at intersections, further validating the findings of the 1995 driveway study.

To estimate the safety benefit of a proposed roadway improvement, the number of crashes that would potentially be avoided due to that improvement are compared to the average cost per crash to arrive at an estimate of savings. By managing vehicle access along the corridor and improving the roadway to reduce the number of conflict points between vehicles, crashes should be reduced. The NYSDOT Traffic Engineering and Safety Division issues a periodic listing of roadway improvements or "countermeasures" and their relative "crash reduction factors." According to this countermeasures list, improving a roadway by installing a raised median should result in a twenty percent (20%) reduction in all crashes, with rear end and left turn collisions reduced by 32% and 44%, respectively. While there is no specific NYSDOT crash reduction factor related to consolidating driveways or other techniques (except for installation of a median barrier), the NYSDOT 1995/1996 Five Year Program included an estimate of a 26 percent reduction in crashes at locations where arterial management techniques are applied; tech-

niques include an array of actions including consolidating driveways, interconnecting parking lots, installation of frontage roads, etc. Each Future Scenario includes provision for use of these techniques along the Corridor, with certain street sections also including installation of a raised median and separating local from through traffic.

For the purposes of this evaluation an expected 20% reduction in future overall crashes has been applied. Assuming then that the average annual number of crashes of 1,058 cited above was reduced by 20%, and that the average crash cost (averaged across all crash types) for urban, suburban and village locations is equal to \$46,100 (according to NYSDOT Traffic Engineering and Safety Division, January 1996) an annual savings of approximately \$9,755,000 can be estimated. Benefits to pedestrian, bicycle and transit safety will be realized as well from a reduction in conflict points with and between vehicles and better overall managed and defined access along the corridor.

In conclusion, the proposed street section designs and Detailed Study site plans under each of the possible future scenarios contain elements which will better manage vehicle access and enhance bicycle and pedestrian accommodation.

17 – 21. Pedestrian Circulation

Detailed Study Area within each typology was evaluated for both Scenarios in terms of:

17. Building Frontages

Providing the pedestrian with the maximum exposure to "active" building facades (i.e. windows and doors) to increase visual interest and sense of security. Depending on detailed site area, building frontages increase in a range

from 1% to 17% in the Intermediate Scenario and 10% to 30% in the Stimulated Scenario.

18. Connection to Transit, Services, and Community Amenities

Creating an ease of access between transit stops and surrounding neighborhood. Each Scenario demonstrates a deliberate attempt to create "interconnectivity." Given the higher level of new development in the Stimulated Scenario, it achieves the most improvement in connectivity.

19. Connection to Building Entries

The degree to which a building entry is linked to a pedestrian path. Each Scenario demonstrates this technique effectively. Again, the extent of redevelopment in the Stimulated Scenario maximizes the improvement in pedestrian access to building entries.

20. Sidewalk Design

Designing sidewalks to accommodate a variety of pedestrian activities. Sidewalk widths in the Detailed Site Areas for each Scenario have a minimum width of eight feet but an overall average width of 12' to 15'.

21. "Crossability" – Pedestrian Friendliness of Intersections

Maximizing the number of street crossings is an effective means of turning an important corridor into a community "spine" or "link," rather than a "divider." Also, minimizing the width of crossing with "bulb-outs" or other means and providing "pedestrian refuge areas" on medians can make a crossing safer. All Detailed Study sites illustrate such improvements.

22. Bicycle Accessibility

Currently there is little or no provision for bicycle circulation along the Corridor. Within each corridor segment, the design team endeavored to create a safe cycling environment in order to promote cycling as an alternate means of transportation. Spatial constraints within the more dense urban core segments entailed the creation of bicycle routes on parallel streets.

C. Quality of Life/Socio-Economic

23. Access to Local Services

The combination of recommended land use and transportation improvements included in the Alternative Scenarios will improve access to local services for those who live and work in the Corridor. These include the recommendation for continued and strengthened community commitment, especially in the suburban communities, to providing and expanding pedestrian access (sidewalks) from surrounding streets and land uses in and adjacent to the Corridor. In the Base Scenario approximately 30% of new residents and 40% of new workers will be within convenient walking distance of local services. In the Intermediate Scenario about 50% of new residents and workers would be within walking distance of local services. This increases to about 65% in the Stimulated Scenario.

The Detailed Study for the Vale Neighborhood provides a good example of these differences. In its existing condition, there may be a small corner store within walking distance of Mynderse Street and this will not likely change in the Base Scenario. In the Intermediate Scenario, there may not be new local services at the intersection, but improvements to the transit system and development of local services along State Street, at the Central Schenectady Neighborhood Detail Study, will provide more convenient choices in local services. Ultimately,

in the Stimulated Scenario, the extent of new investment in the neighborhood could support local services at the corner of Mynderse and State Streets.

24. Neighborhood Identity

Neighborhood Identity refers to the ability for a resident or visitor to distinguish the neighborhood they are in from any other. For each Detailed Site Area the Design Team identified and capitalized upon the predominant positive characteristics of each neighborhood. Criteria included:

- predominant land use and provision of a balanced land use mix;
- architectural and landscape character;
- dominant demographics;
- presence of neighborhood/community/regional amenities;
- definable edges/gateways; and
- regional land use and transportation context.

Detailed Study Examples:

Townsend Park/West Hill Neighborhood

The Townsend Park/West Hill Neighborhood Detailed Study Area is the most urban neighborhood along the entire Corridor. The neighborhood is typified by a three or more story street wall interrupted by surface parking lots. The Team's intent was to maintain the urban quality by filling in the street wall while allowing mid-block pedestrian path-throughs, and consolidating the parking into more central locations that are screened from the street by buildings or landscaping. Both of the Intermediate and Stimulated Scenarios implement these concepts, and in fact several of these concepts are being or will be implemented by the Central Avenue BID and the City of Albany as existing policy strategies. But the policies that would support further reinvestment in the community as part of the

Alternative Futures would accelerate and add to the positive changes that are already occurring.

Swinburne Park

The design of the Detailed Plan combines these two aspects by creating a pedestrian link (between the park and residential neighborhood) through a warehouse-style retail district. Existing buildings are retained and additional infill building of the same ilk are proposed. It is envisioned that the new buildings would be of a similar industrial aesthetic to those existing. This is a unique area in the Corridor where the potential for change under existing policies may exceed the expectations of the Design Team. Since this design was completed development interest in this area could lead to more change than is represented in the drawings. Both Scenarios could improve upon the quality and extent to which this future development would contribute to the positive identity of the community through the creation of design standards and guidelines.

Colonie Village Center

The creation of a neighborhood identity for the Colonie Village Center is reliant upon the presence of the existing community center. The proposed change in uses would further support the idea of this becoming a more concentrated, identifiable village center. The redesign of the transportation infrastructure can also improve community identity. The Stimulated Scenario would rebuild Central Avenue as a "multi-lane boulevard" locating through traffic in the central lanes and provide a parallel but separated local accessway. The local accessways create a more pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly environment along the street edge. This allows new and existing development to front directly onto the street. The edge of the street can become a public place where residents from the adjacent neighborhoods can walk to shops, cafes, and meet their neighbors.

New Karner Regional Mixed-Use District

The New Karner Road area's current identity is that of an auto-oriented commercial district including an underutilized shopping center. Located at an important regional intersection and the geographic midpoint of the Corridor, the site remains appropriate for regional-serving uses in addition to a new transit-oriented community. Proposed uses would include two to three story mixed-use buildings fronting the streets, apartment buildings, single family homes, a community center, hotel and employment uses (some of which could be located in a renovated K-Mart store). The proposed street system within the larger district links the various neighborhoods, shopping and employment areas together into an integrated mixed-use district. Under the Intermediate Scenario it is likely that only portions of the mixed-use district would get built. Increased investment in transit and the changing character of Central Avenue for its entire length would encourage the development of the mixed-use buildings up to the street in at least some locations. Full build-out of the area would likely only occur with the combination of changed land use policies and increased regional growth and transit investment that are part of the Stimulated Scenario.

Woodlawn Plaza

As with the New Karner District, the geographical location of this area is its most identifiable attribute. With continued growth in the Corridor, a future regional transit route is possible along The Crosstown intersecting at this point. This would put Woodlawn Plaza Mall in a prime location for a mixed use neighborhood and a concentration of office employment uses. Within the Intermediate Scenario this could be achieved by infilling the existing mall parking lot with a small green and three mixed-use buildings with ground floor retail and office above. In the Stimulated Scenario similar development would extend to the north side of State Street. The mall is woven

back into the neighborhood by reintroducing a street (an extension of Lawnwood Avenue) and, with the mall removed, lining Albany Street and Laurel Avenue with new single-family residential homes. This re-establishes the neighborhood back into the mall site.

Vale Neighborhood

Attention in the Vale Neighborhood has been paid to maintaining and securing the residential identity of the neighborhood through the design of attractive traffic-calming measures. Designating one-way streets, narrowing entries into the neighborhood, and marking entries with monuments helps to define the boundary between the commercial uses on the street and the neighborhood behind. The plan enhances the presence of the Vale Park within the neighborhood by the creation of a link between the park and State Street. The revitalization of land use in the area creates the opportunity to provide community serving commercial and service uses, as well as opportunities for housing that serves the diverse community. This could include senior housing with different levels of care. Current uses such as the motels, which are deemed as neighborhood nuisances, are proposed to be converted to more community-serving uses under the Intermediate Scenario and fully replaced by new buildings in the Stimulated Scenario.

25. Social Equity

Increased Access

The Alternative Scenarios create a land use pattern and improve the transportation system making it easier for those without access to an automobile to move about the Corridor and the region. Providing alternatives to the automobile as the primary mode of transportation improves access to employment, education, retail and services, recreation, and social activities for all residents in the Corridor and the communities around it, particularly for those who do not have access to an automo-

bile. This group includes those who cannot afford to own a car, seniors, youths and children, and those with physical and other disabilities.

Decreasing Cost of Transportation

Providing better access to transit, walking, and bicycling, as well as making automobile use more efficient, allowing people to spend more of their income on housing costs, education, entertainment, or savings.

A national "home loan experiment" recognizes these benefits to households. Location Efficient Mortgages (LEMs) are mortgages that reflect the household cost savings of living in a neighborhood that provides good access to services and transit, thereby reducing household transportation costs. The program is sponsored by a combination of federal agencies and grant foundations.

Improved Safety

Transit is relatively safer than automobile travel. Street design improvements proposed in the Alternative Futures will also improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists. Improved access controls for properties adjacent to Route 5 (i.e. reducing curb cuts) will improve safety for all transportation types; this is discussed in more detail in B.16 *Safety*.

26. Security

The perceived level of security has a bearing on the level of investment made in a community and the quality of life. For each Futures Scenario, design and zoning initiatives have been employed to put as many "eyes upon the street" as possible, thereby dissuading illicit activities.

27. Housing Diversity/Affordability

There are three basic types of homes that would be created in the Intermediate and

Stimulated Scenarios, with the Stimulated Scenario having more medium density homes than the Intermediate:

New and revitalized two-family and single-family homes: The Alternative Scenarios propose a set of land use and transportation policies and investments that can make these neighborhoods more attractive to a variety of people looking for an alternative to living in the suburbs. At the same time, programs must be present to encourage homeownership and investment in rental stock to provide better quality homes for lower income people.

New medium density row houses: The Capital District already has some neighborhoods with historic row houses and opportunities exist to develop neighborhoods with new row houses which are attractive to certain segments of the population.

New and revitalized multi-family apartments or condominiums: Apartments and condominiums integrated into neighborhoods or mixed-use development can provide more affordability than row houses and can also meet other needs of seniors and students.

28. Neighborhood Through Traffic

The traffic analysis prepared by CDTC indicates that under the Intermediate Scenario, through traffic would not significantly increase in the adjacent neighborhoods. Any transit improvement that is made in the corridor can be expected to relieve traffic levels in adjacent neighborhoods modestly. The higher growth in the Stimulated Scenario would not be limited to the Route 5 Corridor, but would occur throughout the region. Therefore, higher traffic levels would not be the result of actions in the Route 5 Corridor, but of sustained actions by the region to encourage economic growth. Investments in site design and transit would not cause such growth, but rather

would provide a way to manage such growth in the Corridor if it occurred. Overall, improved transit, pedestrian and bicycle connections would provide alternatives to driving through the neighborhoods, and would help to calm traffic traveling through neighborhoods.

29. Parking Location/Availability

The Futures Scenarios recognized the importance of ample and conveniently located parking facilities in enhancing the economic viability of retail within the Corridor. Similar to pedestrian circulation, a representative Detailed Site Area for each typology was evaluated. Criteria includes:

Maximizing On-Street Parking: Maximizing on-street parking benefits include: increasing parking availability near a driver's destination; improving land use efficiency by reducing the amount of land given over to off-street parking; effectively narrowing the street; signaling to the drivers to slow down; and, providing a protective barrier between traffic and pedestrians.

Reducing Street-Facing Parking Lots: Locating parking in the rear of sites can reduce the "perception" of auto dependency and promote an attractive and comfortable pedestrian realm.

Promoting Shared Parking: Encouraging mixed-use developments that have peak parking demands at different times effectively reduces parking demand.

Interconnectivity: The interconnectivity between parking areas is important to maximize the utility of shared parking. Benefits include reducing the need for curb cuts along arterials thereby reducing congestion, and allowing drivers and pedestrians to cross property lines without returning to the street thereby allowing for "trip linking."

30. Economic Cost

CDTC has pioneered the use of a fuller incorporation into transportation analysis of the external costs of transportation. These costs include the costs borne by individuals or society at large for water quality damage, waste disposal, air pollution and climate change, land consumed for necessary parking spaces and so forth. From previous work in the New Visions Fixed Guideway Transit Investigation, the following conclusions can be drawn about the various NY 5 land use and transportation concepts.

1. The vast majority of expected monetary costs of the transportation, consistent with the current case or the "Null" or Baseline Scenario, will be borne by private individuals and firms, for example, provision and operation of vehicles, and provision of parking spaces is predominantly a user expense.
2. Scenarios which focus on transit investment and services alone, without changing the form or location of development (land use), can be expected to increase overall monetary costs of the transportation system. That is, the environmental and safety benefits of the increased usage of the transit system will be insufficient to cover the public cost of providing and operating the service. (Such service may still be warranted for purposes of equity, access to jobs and other criteria.)
3. Scenarios which achieve changes in the form and location of development will be sufficient to cover the costs of appropriate transit service improvements through other societal benefits. Land use changes to match New Visions requirements would be sufficient to support the modest New Visions transportation investments. Based on work performed for the Fixed Guideway Transit Investigation, the more substantial Stimulated Growth Scenario with High End transit (even light rail) would produce

savings in personal vehicle ownership and operation, parking, accidents, congestion costs to businesses, pollution, energy consumption and water quality. These savings in aggregate would offset the public cost of constructing and operating the service.

Conclusions

The results of the evaluations indicate the Stimulated Scenario with the "high type" investment in transit – specifically Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) provides the highest level of benefits.

Although it is not expected that regional growth will itself be at an accelerated level, the land use patterns in the Stimulated Scenario, along with sensitive urban design recommendations, will create a safe, attractive environment for a variety of housing and business types. Revitalizing blighted neighborhoods, or intensifying the use of underutilized areas provide increased choices in housing, job opportunities and local services. In turn, it would be expected that the overall security of the respective community would be improved which itself would foster continued revitalization. Finally, the land use and urban design policies will enable Central Avenue and State Street to become a community amenity and more effectively connect the Corridor with the surrounding neighborhoods.

In addition, the development patterns are complementary to all modes of transport. Roadway improvements recommended such as dedicated transitways and access controls in the Stimulated Scenario allow for the revitalization and intensification of land use without worsening congestion. In fact, improvements would be expected to relieve congestion thereby improving the overall quality of the trip for auto and transit users. Specific to transit, an important finding is that the overall flexibility of a BRT system makes it the more viable option than LRT along a corridor with such varying conditions. Pedestrian and bicycle safety and comfort has been given due consideration in roadway, sidewalk and urban design improvements making them also more viable modes.

The Preferred Future

This section of the Future Scenarios describes how the planning effort put into the *NY5 Land Use & Transportation Study* determined the Preferred Scenario, and then describes the land use and transportation goals and elements of the Preferred Scenario.

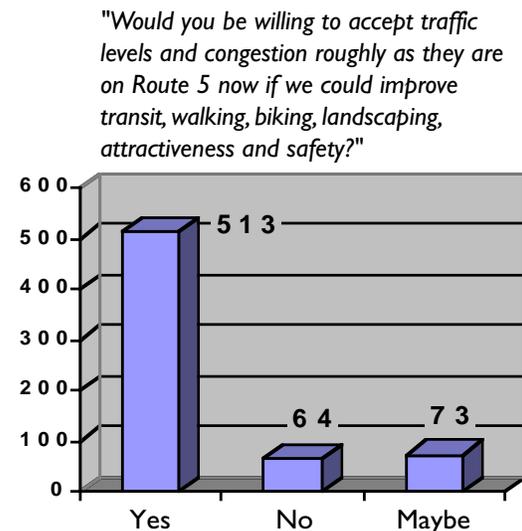
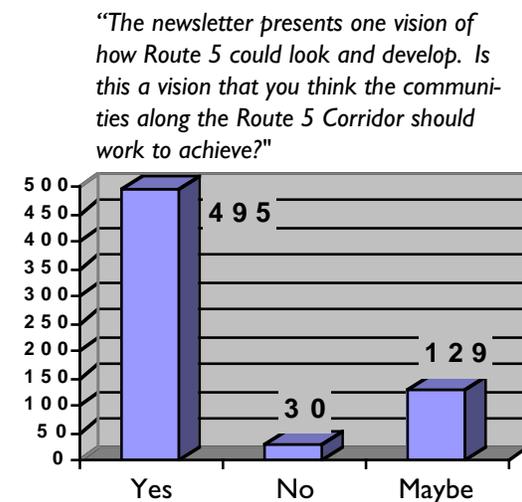
How Was The Preferred Future Identified?

In April of 2000 an Alternatives Evaluation Working Paper was produced that included an assessment of the three future scenarios discussed in the previous section on the “Refined Alternative Futures” and described more fully in the Alternatives Futures Working Paper (March, 2000). The three future alternatives were based on the Base, Intermediate and Stimulated growth scenarios with each assuming a varying degree of growth in the Corridor and varying assumptions about the type of future transit that would be available along the Corridor.

The scenarios were evaluated in three broad categories: Land Use/Urban Design/ Environmental, Transportation, and Quality of Life/Socio-Economic. Each category had a list of sub-criteria that included a definition, methodology, and findings.

Concurrently, a newsletter and more detailed web site were published along with a short survey querying residents, business owners, employees, and land owners for their reactions to the improvements developed under the Stimulated Scenario. The survey returned 673 responses indicating an overwhelmingly positive response to the detail study photosimulations and example improvements.

Figure III.6: Corridor Survey Results.
(shown in actual numbers)



After completing the evaluation process, examining the regional economy, land use patterns and policies, and reviewing the response from the surveys, it was determined that regardless of regional growth, the planning and design strategies illustrated in the Stimulated Scenario are critical (and desirable) to achieving a land use pattern which is conducive to multi-modal accessibility within the Corridor communities. Additionally, these changes result in desired improvements in the quality of life in the Corridor. In particular, strategies emphasizing mixed-use development are best suited for a “high end” transit system such as Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). Moreover, the land use designs proposed in the Stimulated Scenario were more likely to yield real progress toward rejoining and revitalizing the Corridor communities. Such development patterns coupled with urban design recommendations can create a safe, attractive environment for all modes of transport and achieve the goals established for the Study. Hence, the land use strategies of the Stimulated Scenario have been combined with the high-quality, cost-effective service of Bus Rapid Transit to form the Preferred Future Scenario.



Figure III.7: This newsletter was distributed to over 10,000 residents, businesses, and property owners in the Corridor.

What is the Preferred Future Scenario?

The Preferred Future seeks to stimulate revitalization of Corridor communities and to support continued investment in the Corridor's transportation system. A revitalized corridor includes redevelopment of sites and implies maximizing utility of land in the Corridor.

For developed land parcels means ensuring that parcels are being used efficiently and that they are generating wealth for the local economy. Land uses which work in concert with each other help to synergize economic vitality. Strong transportation provisions, pedestrian networks, vibrant urban neighborhoods, and infrastructure improvements also fuel the revitalization of neighborhoods. It is critical that Central Avenue and State Street be reconnected—economically, spatially, and socially—to the neighborhoods which make up the Corridor. Vacant or underutilized parcels along the Corridor create opportunities for infill development or reuse of buildings to support these goals. This re-intensification of land use also creates open space opportunities both for the creation of parks as civic and recreational open space, and the preservation of sensitive habitats.

The Preferred Scenario would provide Corridor users with more choice in transportation (transit, walking, and bicycling, as well as driving), places to live, places to work, and places to shop. Under this Preferred Scenario redevelopment at key points along the Corridor works together with roadway improvements to increase economic activity while improving local and regional access and minimizing future congestion. A Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system would bring high-quality rail-like service to the corridor with lower capital and operating costs when compared to light-rail. Bus Rapid Transit would also function better within the Corridor's existing built environment. By its design BRT would provide the flexibility to address limited street widths in urbanized areas of Albany and Schenectady, and would allow buses from "outside" the Corridor to directly access the BRT's Stations. Under the Preferred Future vacant and underutilized parcels located in optimum locations around transit stations would be reconfigured to optimize development potential. The surrounding land use and transportation improvements along with revitalization efforts in their downtown cores would ensure that Albany and Schenectady continue to lend stability to the region and the Corridor. Key sites in Colonie and Niskayuna would provide opportunities for creating Regional Mixed-Use Districts with regional retail and opportunities for employment uses and residential neighborhoods. Central Avenue and State Street neighborhoods in all Corridor Communities offer safe, high-quality housing along the Corridor.

Achievement of roadway improvements that incorporate reduced curb cuts, dedicated transit ways and other systems under the Preferred Future would improve the flow of traffic and

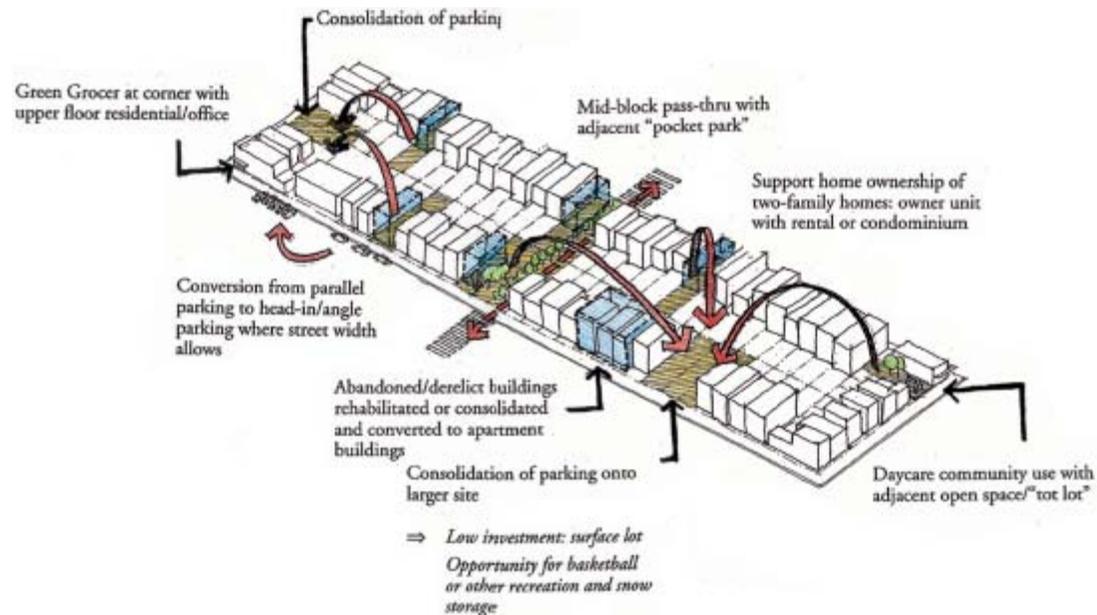


Figure III.8: Reorganize and revitalize underutilized lots and buildings

allow bus service to be less affected by traffic congestion. Site configuration recommendations, such as interconnected parking lots would also help to reduce street congestion. Roadway improvements would be balanced with the pedestrian's need for effective crosswalks, and links between transit and surrounding neighborhoods that better connect the Corridor to the community. Bicycle improvements on Route 5 or parallel roads would allow bicycling to become a more viable mode of transportation.

The Preferred Future envisions buildings fronting directly onto the street with comfortable sidewalks and pedestrian areas that would increase foot traffic in retail areas, make the neighborhoods more livable, and make community centers more accessible. Increased pedestrian activity, and windows and building entries fronting directly onto the street would create a community-oriented quality and natural citizens' surveillance.

Most critically, the Preferred Future Scenario presents a unified vision that can be supported by each of the jurisdictions along the Corridor and thereby promises to reconnect the Corridor to the communities which depend on it, and to reinforce the communities' connection to each other.

The four broad objectives of the Preferred Future are:

- Encourage growth of the regional and Corridor economy;
- Facilitate commercial and neighborhood investment and reinvestment;
- Encourage high quality development; and,
- Support all modes of travel in the Corridor.

These broad objectives are reflected in the Preferred Future Action Plan in the next chapter.

Urban Typologies

Four urban typologies have been identified in the Corridor: the Urban Core, the Urban Strip, the Suburban Strip, and the Regional Mixed-Use District.

The *Urban Core* includes the areas built at higher densities extending out from the downtowns of Albany and Schenectady. The majority of development in these areas is on smaller parcels with buildings fronting directly onto the street with little or no setback.

The *Urban Strip* describes the first “streetcar suburbs” or older urban neighborhoods with medium density development in Albany and Schenectady. Many buildings still front directly onto the street. Parcel size is more varied than in the Urban Core areas with some medium and larger parcels.

The *Suburban Strip* represents the largest portion of the Corridor. Parcel size is varied, but the pattern is typified by buildings setback from the street with parking in front. There is also wide variation in intensity of use, ranging from the semi-rural quality of the Corridor in areas between New Karner Road and Niskayuna to more intensive uses in some areas between New Karner Road and Wolf Road.

The final urban typology is the *Regional Mixed-Use District* represented by the Auto Row area in Albany, the Colonie Center/Northway Mall cluster, the cluster around New Karner Road with the Village Square Shopping Center, Builders Square, K-Mart, and Colonie Plaza, and the Mohawk Mall. These Regional Retail Clusters are the largest parcels in the Corridor, many are underutilized, and several of them are being revitalized.



Urban Core - Townsend Park, Albany



Urban Strip - Central State Street, Schenectady



Suburban Strip - Village of Colonie



Mixed-Use District - Colonie Center, Colonie

Figure III.9: The Urban Typologies

Transportation Network

Transportation improvements in the Preferred Future will balance all modes of transportation through the Corridor, which includes Central Avenue and State Street as well as the neighborhood and regional street networks which connect to it. These improvements will also work with the potential land use improvements described in the Preferred Future to better balance regional and local traffic.

Five street design “treatments” have been developed for the various segments of the Corridor. These treatments are defined further in the *NY5 Street Design Manual* which has been produced as part of this study. Maps illustrating land use and transportation improvements are presented in the “tour” of the Preferred Future which follows. Notations on the left-hand side of the Corridor segment maps indicate a street design treatment for that portion of the Corridor (see Figure III.28 for an example). *Appendix E Street Designs and Transit Alignment* summarizes these treatments’ characteristics. Plan and section drawings also appear throughout the tour of the Corridor which follows after this description of the transportation system.

The following sections summarize the key improvements which would create a more balanced transportation system in the Corridor.

Pedestrian

Traffic calming techniques will be applied to the streets which connect the Corridor with adjacent neighborhoods. Pedestrian amenities such as street trees, benches, waste receptacles, special paving and bollards will improve the pedestrian environment to encourage walking as a legitimate mode of transportation. Pedestrian-friendly infrastructure will also serve to catalyze redevelopment in key areas which in turn will provide a

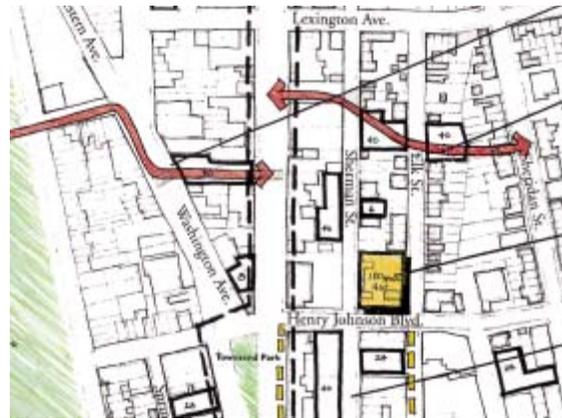


Figure III.10: Provide mid-block pass throughs to connect neighborhoods through the long blocks along Central Ave.

mix of land uses supportive of walking. The pedestrian environment will also be improved in suburban portions of the Corridor by bringing buildings and shop windows up to the sidewalk. In the more urban portions of the Corridor, redevelopment will attempt to recreate a more “fine-grained” pedestrian network with accessways between uses and between Central Avenue/State Street and the adjacent neighborhoods. These accessways will be complemented by mid-block crossings to better connect the “sides” of the Corridor.

Bicycles

Bicycling is an important, yet often ignored, transportation option for many in the Capital Region. In the urban portions of the Corridor, dedicated bicycle lanes are provided for cyclists. In the suburban portions of the Corridor a combination of bicycle lanes, separated bicycle paths, or slower and safer parallel local access lanes provide for bicycle access. Where this is not possible, parallel routes will be created for cyclists to safely travel through the Corridor, such as Clinton Avenue in Albany or Albany Street in Schenectady. Bicycle racks will be provided at key locations in the Corridor, such as transit stops, village and neighborhood retail, schools, and retail centers.

Public transportation



Figure III.11: A working demonstration of bus time integration with wireless handheld devices for Metro in Seattle, Washington.

As discussed in the Scenario Evaluations section of this chapter, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) was selected over light rail for its inherent flexibility and more easily justified cost. Bus Rapid Transit uses increased investment in technology, equipment, stations, operations and marketing to rival the quality of service of higher investment light rail systems while remaining more flexible and less costly than rail systems. Bus Rapid Transit is particularly well-suited for the Corridor because of its ability to maneuver through a constrained right of way. The Corridor’s BRT system would include the following key features:

Electronic rider information system uses Global Positioning System (GPS) technology to provide passengers with “real time” bus arrival information at stations and through other tools such as touch-tone phones, the web, and wireless handheld devices.

Bus signal preference and preemption. Preferential treatment of buses at intersections can involve the extension of green time or actuation of the green light at signalized intersections upon detection of an approaching bus. This system can be combined with the GPS used for the rider information system to give buses more or less priority depending on schedule adherence. A portion of these improvements are currently being made in the Corridor as part of the Intelligent Transporta-



Figure III.13: Bus manufacturers such as Irisbus (Renault/Iveco) are releasing new models specifically designed for BRT systems.

tion System (ITS) project which automates light timing along the Corridor to more efficiently move traffic during varying traffic conditions.

Dedicated-lanes in certain segments of the Corridor will reduce automobile and bus traffic conflicts allowing buses to keep on schedule during peak traffic hours.

“Queue-jumper” lanes. A “bus only” lane at boarding platforms on the near-side of signalized intersections allows buses, upon completion of boarding, to receive a transit-only green light in advance of the automobile signal. This allows buses to keep on schedule at congested intersections.



Figure III.12: This ticket vending machine would be appropriately scaled for the BRT stations

Curitiba, Brazil: The Birthplace of BRT

Many cities in the United States are looking to Light Rail to make their cities more liveable. However, the attractiveness of (re)turning to rail-based transit has more to do with integrated transportation and land use planning that goes with it than the actual rail infrastructure.



The Federal Transit Administration has been studying "Bus Rapid Transit" as corellary to Light Rail Transit. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) applies the same transportation and land use policies toward a bus-based system. BRT provides light rail service with greater flexibility and at a fraction of the capital and operating costs,



Many cities in the US are implementing Bus Rapid Transit systems and are looking toward Curitiba, Brazil as the model of BRT and liveability. Curitiba buses run frequently - some as often as every 90 seconds -- and reliably, commuters ride them in great numbers, and the stations are convenient, well-designed, comfortable, and attractive. Curitiba has one of the most heavily used, yet low-cost, transit systems in the world. It offers many of the features of a subway system -- vehicle movements unimpeded by

traffic signals and congestion, fare collection prior to boarding, quick passenger loading and unloading -- but it is above ground and visible. Even with one automobile for every three people, one of the highest automobile ownership rates in Brazil, and with a significantly higher per capita income than the national average, around 70 percent of Curitiba's commuters use transit daily to travel to work. Greater Curitiba with its 2.2 million inhabitants enjoys congestion-free streets and pollution-free air.

Fast-boarding. Conventional on-board collection of fares slows the boarding process. A self-service or “proof of payment” system would allow for boarding through all doors of a stopped bus, but poses significant enforcement challenges.

Prepaid “smart cards” providing for automated fare collection would speed fare transactions, but would require that boarding remain restricted to the front door of the bus. Smart card technology may also include contactless “proximity cards” allowing fares to be deducted without physical contact with the card reader.

Easier Boarding. Another impediment to reducing boarding time is the height difference between ground level and conventional buses, as most passengers are required to climb several steps, and passengers using wheelchairs can enter the bus only with the assistance of lift equipment, the operation of which is time-consuming. Low-floor busses possibly combined with slightly higher curbs could provide for level boarding, making boarding both faster and easier for all passengers.

“High-end” buses would be clean, quiet, comfortable and air-conditioned. BRT buses will



Figure III.14: An Electronic Rider Information Board in Germany

feature many of the amenities found on light rail vehicles, such as wider aisles, larger windows, and well-lit interiors. Several bus manufacturers are now producing models designed for BRT applications.

Timed connections would be provided to shuttle service serving popular destinations such as Union College, SUNY-Albany and the airport at comfortable transfer facilities. The BRT will also be able to connect to potential



Figure: III.15: The interior of the Crystalis BRT bus, manufactured by Irisbus.

commuter rail stations in Albany and Schenectady.

Improved Shelters would provide larger enclosed heated spaces, with 360-degree visibility for safety. Bicycle racks or lockers would be provided at some stations, and bicycle racks would be available on all BRT busses. A built-in security and customer service phone would connect customers directly with CDTA. Rider information kiosks will provide “real-time” bus information and announcements. In some locations, shelters will also include automated vending as well as kiosks for micro-format retail such as sales of newspapers, coffee, flowers, etc.

In addition to the BRT improvements Transit Demand Management programs will continue to be pursued to boost ridership and express bus service serving the downtowns would continue to operate.

Automobile

The automobile will continue to be the dominant mode of transportation in the Corridor. Other transportation system enhancements discussed above should mitigate the effects of intensified land use along the Corridor on traffic accessibility and mobility. Reduced curb-cuts and improved off-street connections between uses and parking lots will improve traffic safety and decrease the amount of local traffic that uses the arterial street.

Creating a multi-way boulevard in some sections of the Corridor will separate through traffic from local traffic. Also, traffic calming along streets parallel to Central Avenue and State Street will encourage use for local traffic and discourage through traffic.



Figure III.16: A Rider Information Kiosk at Nott Terrace combines both printed and electronic information

A Tour of the Preferred Future

In order to give you an idea of the land use and transportation changes that are proposed in the Preferred Future for the Corridor this section of the Future Scenarios Chapter takes you on a tour, in the future, from downtown Albany at the east end of the Corridor to downtown Schenectady on the western end of the Corridor. Along the way, you will see and be told about the land use and transportation improvements directly on Central Avenue and State Street, and also get an understanding of the changes that are expected in the neighborhoods and retail or employment centers along the way, as well as the programs and decisions that will need to be made to achieve the Preferred Future. So, imagine it's the year 2015 ...

Townsend Park - an urban mixed-use activity center

We start the tour walking up Central Avenue from the Armory Transfer Station at Central and Lark. It's now



Figure III.17: Townsend Park Tech Center, source: AveNew 2000



Figure III.18: Retail around Townsend Park



Figure III.19: Existing Armory Bus Station



Figure III.20 Planned BRT in Eugene, OR



Figure III.21: Existing neighborhood dominated by “two-family” homes

a major hub in the BRT system on Route 5, providing connections to north-south cross-town routes, SUNY out on Western, and with the downtown shuttle service. At lunch times during the week, the area is bustling with state office workers and others who have come to eat lunch at the restaurants around Townsend Park and on Lark Street and to shop at the various ethnic and specialty shops in the area. The technology center has recently opened and is providing both education for residents in the surrounding neighbor-

hoods, as well as incubator space for start-up high-tech businesses. The City of Albany and the Central Avenue BID are also working together on the “C-1 Neighborhood Revitalization Program” which uses economic development strategies and capital improvements to increase business, jobs, home ownership, and property values.

The classes at the tech center are only one element of the broad efforts that have been taking place in the West Hill neighborhood and other neighborhoods around Townsend Park to make them more attractive to residents and to provide opportunities for existing residents to stabilize their lives and become homeowners. The combined efforts of public agencies, non-profits, and new employers have also begun to make a difference.

Many of the underused surface parking areas, vacant lots, and “bombed-out” buildings in the neighborhoods have been replaced with a combination of new homes and civic buildings, small parks and playgrounds, mid-block pass-throughs, and monitored shared parking lots for area residents and businesses. Efforts are being put into the



Figure III.22 Infill with parks, new homes, and civic buildings



stabilization and improvement of the residential neighborhoods. Vacant lots are being infilled with new homes and apartments to diversify the type of homes that are available in the neighborhood. Programs are supporting existing residents becoming homeowners and providing them with loans and grants to improve homes and in some cases convert them from two-family into single-family homes.

Maintaining the urban character of the area has necessitated addressing the issue of surface parking lots. One possible future site (at Henry Johnson Boulevard and Elk Street) has been identified as appropriate for building a multi-story parking garage because revitalization has been so successful that additional parking is needed and the demand for land is high enough to support the elimination of some surface parking lots in the area. Before making a decision on a multi-story parking garage, it will be important to undertake a parking study of the Townsend Park area to more completely understand area wide parking demand and supply. Can the existing on and off-street parking be used more efficiently? A lower investment alternative to a parking structure would be

consolidating surface parking into a limited number of sites that would be attractively landscaped and perhaps part of a mid-block connector. This approach to parking would allow parcels currently used for surface parking to be used for infill development, thereby reinforcing the street wall, which would fit in well with how the area has been revitalizing.

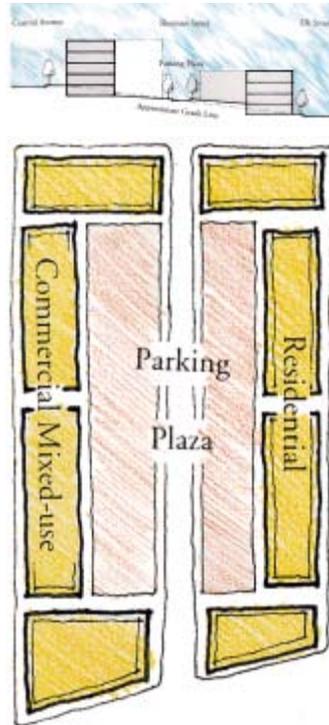


Figure III.23: Parking "Plaza"

Figure III.23 illustrates the concept of a "parking plaza" along Sherman Street that runs parallel to Central Avenue. The plaza would essentially be a courtyard surrounded by residential and commercial mixed-use buildings with vehicular access along Sherman. Pedestrian connections would be ample and, due to grade change, would include stairs and ramping.

The revitalization of the mixed-use and commercial uses along Central Avenue and the neighborhoods behind has been accompanied by improvements to the streets to make the area more pedestrian-friendly and accessible to transit. Now



Existing Condition

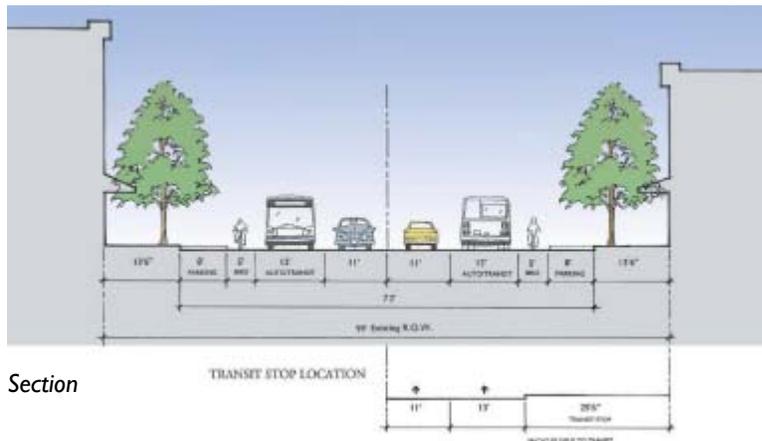


Possible Improvements

Figure III.24: New mid-block crosswalk and transit station, Albany



Plan



Section

Figure III.25 Redesigned Central Avenue in the Urban Core and Urban Strip, Albany.

you have the choice of comfortably riding your bicycle to work, because of the bike lanes along Central Avenue. The buses can stop more easily, because of the curb "bulbs-out" into the parking lane at intersections. This also makes it easier to cross the street as a pedestrian, because the distance has been reduced. You have noticed that more cars seem to be traveling at the speed limit these days. The combination of more activity in the area and the mid-block signalized pedestrian crossings seem to have been effective in "calming" the traffic.

The area from Townsend Park to Henry Johnson Boulevard has seen the most revitalization. The transfer station at Henry Johnson is almost as busy as the Armory Station because this is where people can transfer to buses that head north to Troy and express buses that go out to I-90 and the Thruway to Schenectady. Up to Quail Street, the density and form of existing buildings has provided opportunities for mixed-use buildings with retail and service uses on the ground floor: new clothing stores, restaurants, professional offices, and other uses that serve both the





Figure III.26: McDonald's between Ontario and Quail an infill opportunity

neighborhoods and people who come to work and shop in the area. The upper stories of the buildings are still being retrofitted and improved for new offices and apartments. The cost of bringing the buildings up to codes is still an issue that requires more efforts in revising codes and providing incentives to developers. The activity is reminiscent of the time when streetcars ran on Central Avenue. The frequency and convenience of the BRT system has similarities to the old streetcars as well.



There is a new cluster of activity at the intersection with Robin Street where a BRT station is located to provide the most direct access to the SUNY Downtown campus and Washington Park beyond. The Central BID and the City have begun construction of street improvements along Robin which make it a center of activity in this Subdistrict that is becoming populated by



Figure III.27: A BRT station at Quail Street in 2000 (inset) and in the future (main)

students living in apartments above the shops on the street.

Revitalizing the “Street Car Suburb”

Around Quail Street the scale of the buildings drops down as we enter the Urban Strip. Smaller scale infill and reuse is occurring here which serves the surrounding neighborhood and some of the arts and theater activity that is starting up around the Quail Street intersection.

The next BRT station is the Swinburne Station where there is a lot of activity that has come about to complement the regional attraction of some of the older uses in the area.



Figure III.28: Honest Weight Co-op



Figure III.29: Existing gap/future plaza & infill

Swinburne Park - neighborhood center and regional shopping

The Swinburne Park Station Area has the initial neighborhood structure that supports enhancement of the area. The area is currently surrounded by several residential neighborhoods, Albany High School and the College of St. Rose to the south, and Swinburne Park to the north which has a variety of recreational facilities.

Within the immediate station area, there is the "Votec" vocational school, a police station, the successful Honest Weight Co-op market, and a cluster of specialty building supply stores (Nation Supply Kitchen & Bath and Hudson Valley Tile).

Much of the land directly to the south of the buildings fronting onto Central Avenue was underutilized or vacant. Now some of the vacant land has been reorganized into shared surface parking lots with pedestrian paths connecting through to the high school and the neighborhood. Where street front parking is necessary (such as the entrance to the Votec and the police station), street wall definition has been created with landscape elements. Other sites have been infilled with new mixed-use buildings, see Figure III.22. The corner of Manning and Central is the site for a future "Empire State Market" which showcases produce and products manufactured in New York; the Central Avenue BID is working to organize this anchor use.



Figure III.30 Empire State Market





Figure III.31: Swinburne Park Infill and Shared Parking Strategy

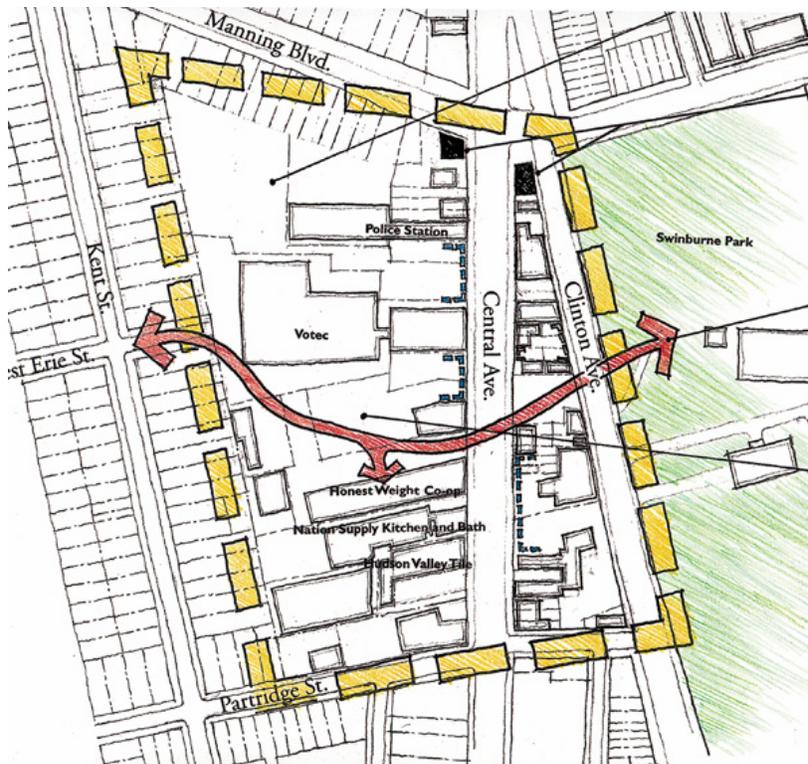


Figure III.32: Swinburne Park Station Area

Given the size of the southern block, some connections through the block have been formalized with landscaping, special paving, and lighting. This link has been used informally by residents, high school students, and police cars. Now it is better defined and safer.

The new transit stop is located at a mid-block crosswalk just east of the Votec. On the north side of Central Avenue there had been several vacant lots and surface parking lots, see Figure III.23. These have been redeveloped into new mixed-use buildings and a new plaza connecting Central with the Park. The side of the buildings that front onto Central tend to have ground floor retail space with offices above while those that front onto Clinton have ground floor offices or residential with apartments above that take advantage of views into the park.

The intersection of Manning, Clinton, and Central has been reorganized to create a bigger park space in front of the homes on the north side of the street and the rental car lot at the "flat-iron" corner of Clinton and Central is being looked at for redevelopment as a new restaurant or civic building.

Central Avenue itself has street improvements similar to those extending all the way from Townsend Park with "bulb-outs" at pedestrian crossings and transit stops, new street trees, benches, and transit stops. The transit stops are smaller versions of the old stop at the Armory at Lark Street with "next bus" arrival signs and other amenities (See Figure III.16).



Existing condition with surface parking lot



Future Condition with mixed-use building and transit plaza
Figure III.33: Swinburne Park Station



From the Urban to Suburban Strip

From Swinburne Park to Watervliet Avenue, the urban character of the Corridor begins to shift from the Urban Strip with one and two story buildings fronting up to the street to a pattern of mainly one-story buildings set back further from the street. The character of the street begins to change, giving it a more "suburban feel".

On the southern side of Central Avenue, North Allen extends as a small neighborhood commercial street to Manning Boulevard. The residential neighborhood along North Allen has continued to see commercial reinvestment along with improvements brought about by the C-1 Program.

The "two family" homes on the south side of Central going up to King Avenue have continued to convert to office and commercial use, because of their isolated location on the street.

Albany Auto Row

We are now entering an area that has experienced a lot of change and will likely continue to experience change into the future: the Albany Auto Row (or Miracle Mile) Regional Mixed-Use District. This area has long been dominated by auto dealers and a variety of regional and neighborhood retail and auto service uses. Everett Road provides a good connection to I-90 which supports these uses. Recently new complementary retail uses and new office uses have moved into the area to take advantage of the area's identity and regional access. The BRT system has helped make the area more attractive to employers. The City of Albany's efforts to redevelop the old State Office Campus have also been a catalyst to the area.



Figure III.34: Park & "flat iron" site at Clinton and Central



Figure III.35: Swinburne Station Street Improvements



Figure III.36: Row houses in the North Allen Neighborhood



Figure III.37: Between King and North Allen

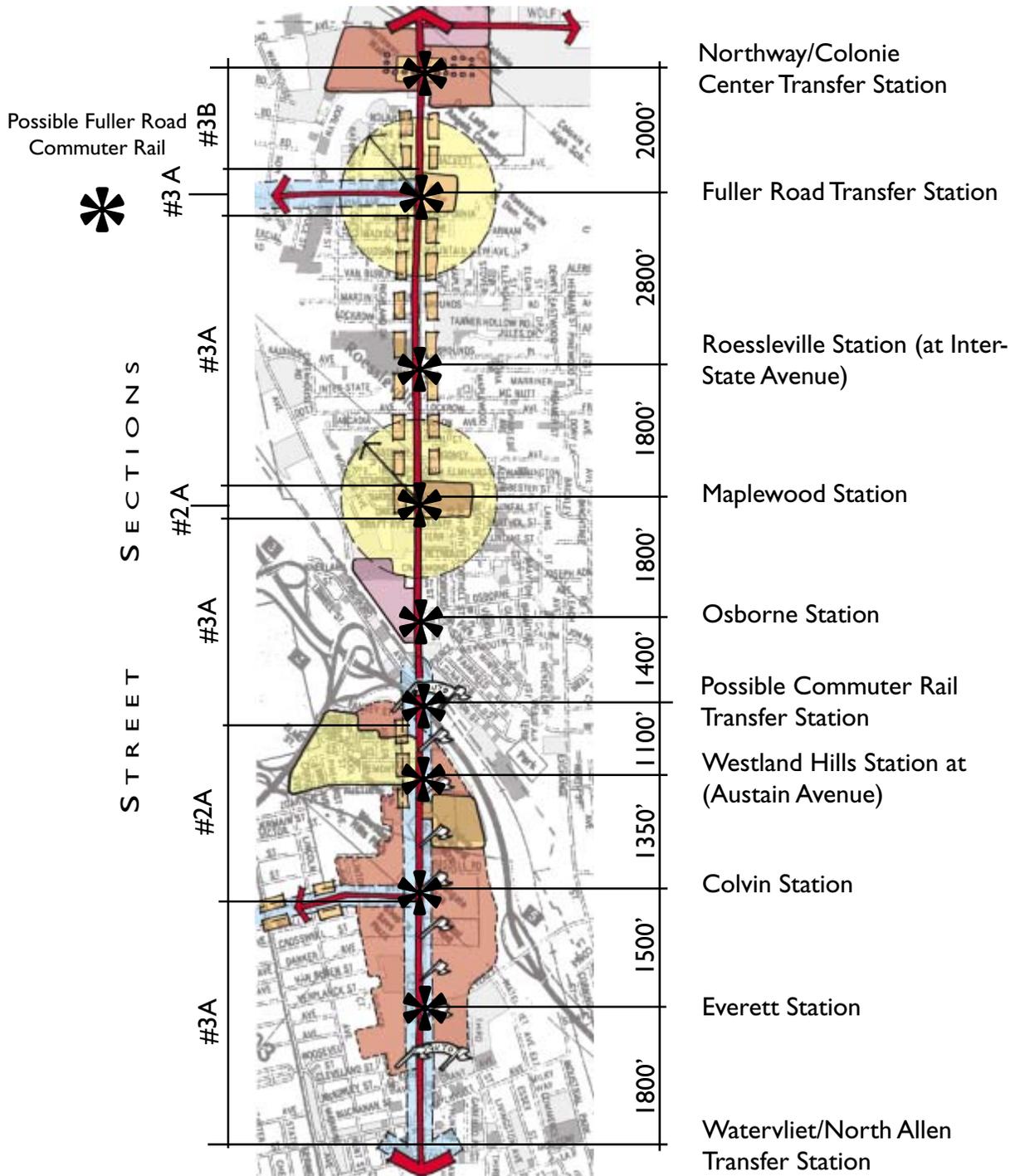
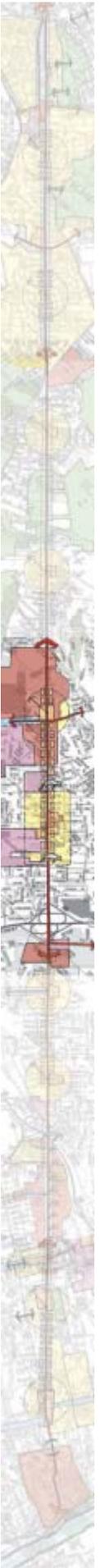
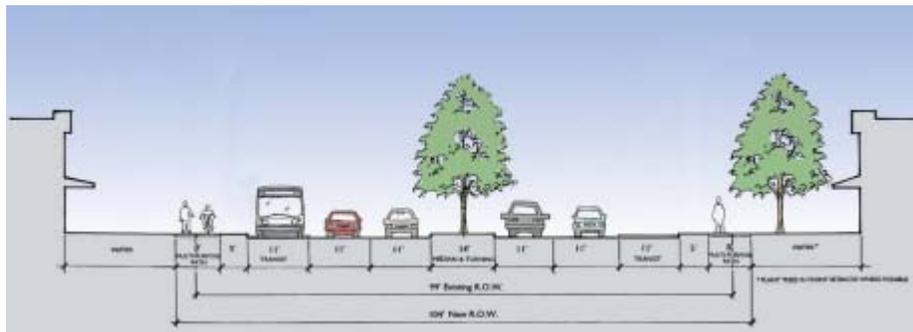


Figure III.38: Preferred Future: Suburban Strip in Albany and Town of Colonie





Plan



Section

Figure III.39: Redesigned Central Avenue for the majority of the street between Watervliet in Albany to Shirley Drive in Schenectady.

The Central BID is working with the City and property owners on the north side of Central to redevelop the area between Everett and Grant Avenues behind the OTC. The relatively large vacant and underutilized area has potential for reorganized auto sales, complementary retail and service uses, office space, and given the depth of the site, some residential development.

Urban Design and Streetscape Character

The character of the area has also changed quite a lot with new sidewalks and street trees. Some portions of the overhead utility wires are being put underground as the street is improved and new development occurs. For much of Auto Row and the suburban areas to the west, dedicated bus lanes

are located along the curb to allow buses to move more freely; people are allowed to make right turns from these lanes as well, and the idea of using them as carpool lanes is also being considered. In locations with more active uses along the side of the street, developers are being given the option of creating "multi-way boulevards" that separate local and through traffic; these will be looked at in greater detail when we get to the Colonie Village Center further to the east.

An effort is also being made into redesigning the display of autos that are for sale so that they are more of an integral part of the streetscape. Display stands and lighting are integrated with the landscape along the sidewalk. Commercial signage in the area has more neon and a scale that relates to the auto traffic on the street. But these elements are balanced with the sidewalk improvements, reductions in curb cuts, and other improvements to reduce potential conflicts between pedestrians and traffic.

The intersection of Everette Road and Central Avenue has long been a problem for pedestrians. The crosswalks have been improved to include warning lights imbedded in the pavement so that traffic knows that pedestrians may be in the crosswalk, see Figure III.43. Additional lighted signage also reminds people making right turns about pedestrians in the crosswalk.

Neighborhood Stabilization

Investment in Auto Row and the redevelopment of the State Office Campus have provided impetus for increasing property values in the Westland Hills Neighborhood. The efforts to encourage existing property owners to maintain their properties, and providing loans to first time buyers has helped to stabilize the neighborhood. Similar efforts are underway in the residential neighborhoods in the Town and Village of Colonie. The goal is to stabilize and improve the conditions in the neighborhoods before serious



Figure III.40 Existing Curb Cut on Auto Row



Figure III.41: Existing Streetscape on Auto Row

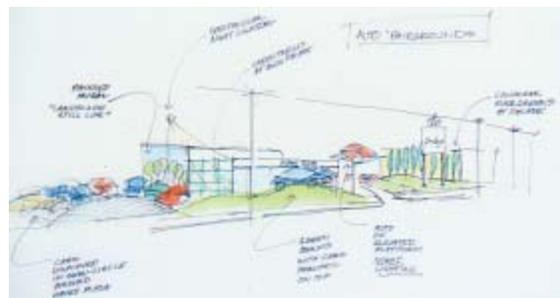
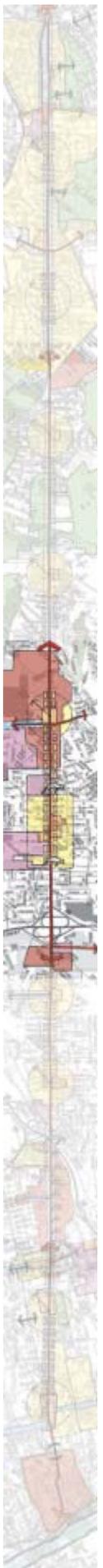


Figure III.42 Redesigned Car Sales Display on Auto Row



Figure III.43: "In roadway" pedestrian warning lights



decline and disinvestment occurs. The renewed commitment to area schools has been helpful in these efforts.

Improving “The Strip”

The I-90 overcrossing creates a gateway between the Auto Row/Miracle Mile District to the beginnings of the strip of mainly commercial development that extends up to New Karner Road in Colonie. The character and use of the road begins to change in this area, but improvements are still being made to the landscape of the street and provisions for bicycles and pedestrians. As development is occurring, new buildings are being oriented to the street with parking behind. Curb cuts are being reduced by inter-connecting the parking lots behind different buildings, allowing people to circulate between properties without coming out onto Central Avenue.

One of the more exciting changes that is happening along this part of the Corridor is the development of one of the first mixed-use neighborhood centers at Fuller Road. The center at the Maplewood Station is expected to start construction soon.

Creating Mixed-Use Neighborhood Centers

There was a significant area of vacant land behind some commercial properties on the north side of Central Avenue at Fuller Road that provided an opportunity for the development of a mixed-use neighborhood center. The Fuller Road Transfer Station is the location of the important link between the NY5 BRT and the shuttle service to the SUNY campus and employment areas to the south. Both these transit riders and the people living in the surrounding neighborhood, including the residents of the



Figures III.44 & 45: Fuller Road Station Area Infill Site



Figure III.46: Senior Housing Near Fuller

Aggie Village

A Mixed-Use Neighborhood Case Study

Aggie Village is a mixed-use, single family development in Davis, California that provides housing for the faculty of the University. “Grad flats” located behind the main homes create opportunities for at-home offices and rental units. To the east of the neighborhood, a mixed-use center provides a transition to Downtown Davis.



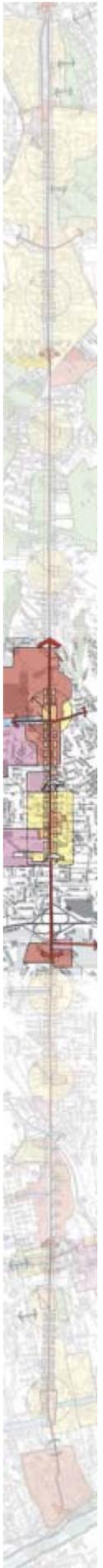
The site was originally vacant land, bordered by Downtown Davis and the University campus. The development provides a once-missing link between downtown and the Campus. The site utilizes slightly higher densities than the surrounding neighborhoods, but ample street trees, porches, and narrow streets all serve to give Aggie Village a traditional feeling.

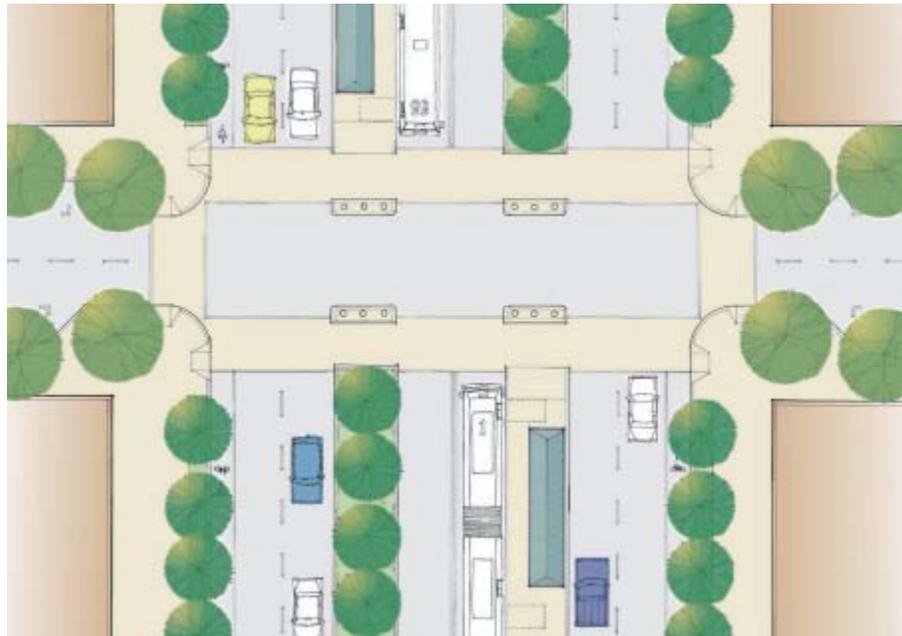


The Retail Center features several restaurants and retail shops, and is anchored by a Borders Books. A grassy pedestrian plaza and integrated bicycle paths both aid in encouraging pedestrian and bicycle traffic. Parking is shifted to the rear of the center, with pedestrian links to the neighborhood and arboretum beyond. Despite public access through the neighborhood, privacy for the residents is created through landscaping and house orientation, with backyards facing the center.

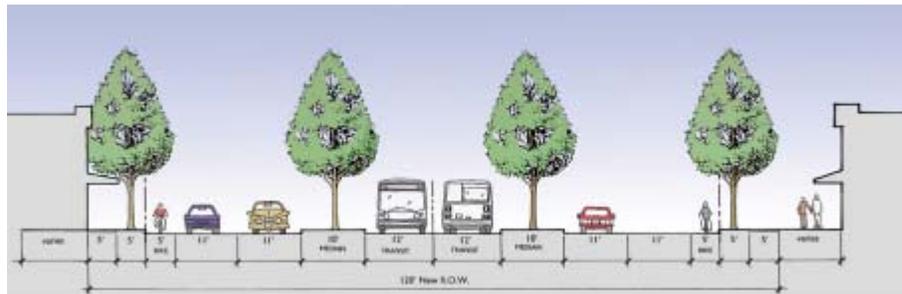


The center is both convenient and unobtrusive, and is a popular gathering spot for both residents and students.





Plan



Section

Figure III.47 Redesigned Central Avenue from Fuller Road to Lincoln in Town of Colonie and Village of Colonie.

adjacent senior housing tower, use the retail services in the center. When we get to Woodlawn Plaza in Schenectady, there are images of what a mixed-use center could look like. Also, see the case study on the facing page for a description of a mixed-use infill development next to a college campus in Davis, California.

Now that this center is underway, it will help provide a local example of station area development that will encourage the creation of other neighborhood centers along the Corridor.

Expediting Transit Service

The station at Fuller Road is also important, because it is here that the bus lanes move to the middle of the road to take us through the heavily trafficked portions of Central Avenue around the Northway Mall, Colonie Center, Wolf Road, and the Northway Interchange. Moving the BRT to the middle of the road helps to facilitate the high volume of right turns off of Central in this area. Bicycle lanes are provided along the curb as part of the continuous bicycle circulation in the Corridor. A planter strip and trees separate

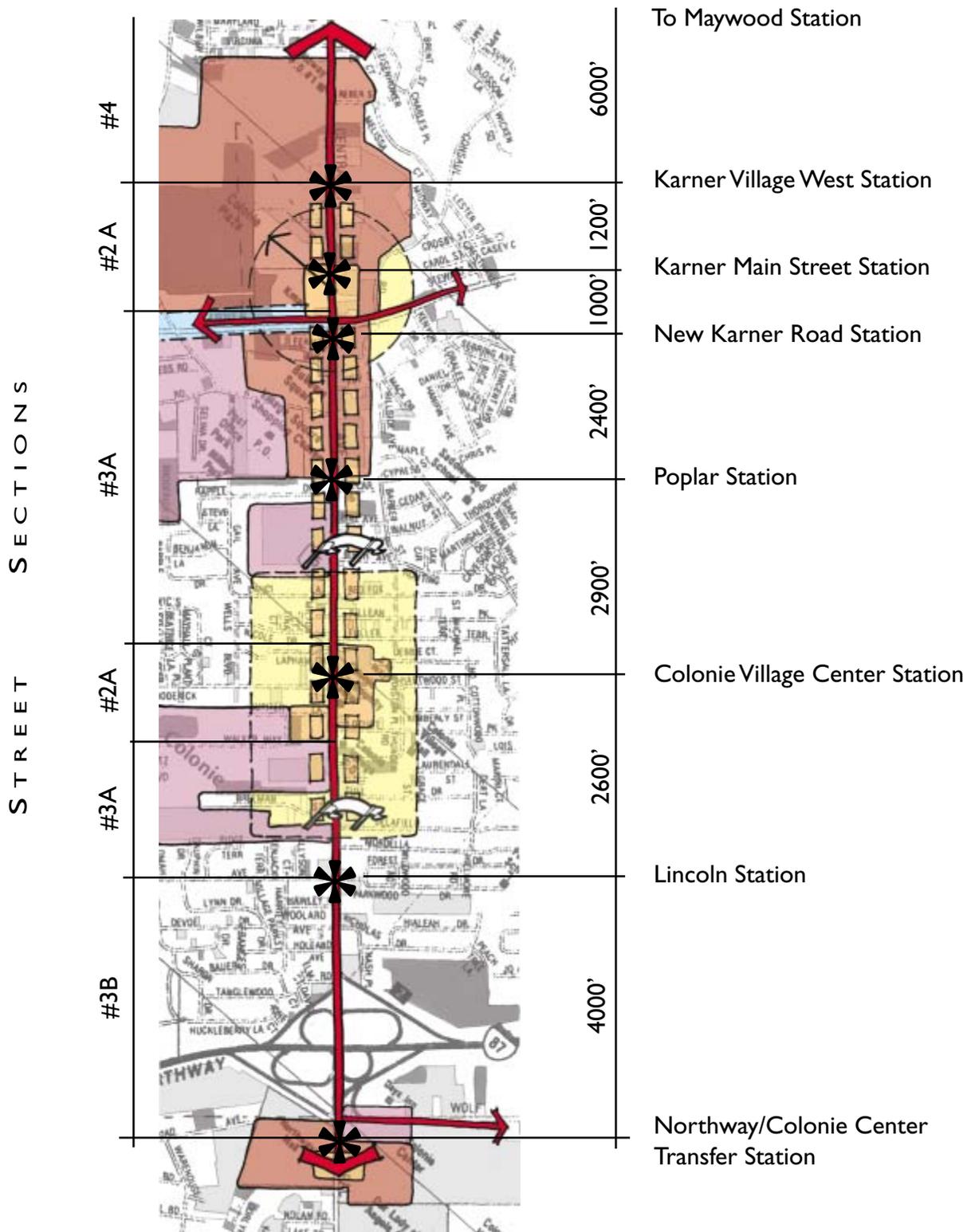
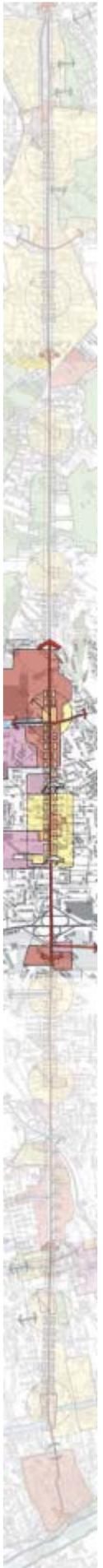


Figure III.48: Preferred Future: Suburban Strip in Village and Town of Colonie



pedestrians from the traffic on the street. New development is encouraged to come up to the sidewalk, and where parking lots do come up to the sidewalk they are separated from the sidewalk by hedges or other buffers.

Northway Mall and Colonie Center Mall

It has been a few years since the Northway Mall was redeveloped. Given the continuous ebbs and flows of the retail industry, some of the stores have changed owners and retailing "format." Consequently, there is some consideration of redeveloping some of the site. Also, changes have continued to occur at the Colonie Center Mall, and demand for office and retail space on Wolf Road has continued to grow.

Some discussions are beginning around the idea of developing some of the mall sites as a mixed-use district linking the malls with the BRT transfer station in the middle of Central Avenue. The concept is similar to what has been happening around New Karner Road which is further west on our tour.



Figure III.49: Existing street design & traffic in Colonie



Figure III.50: Colonie Near Northway



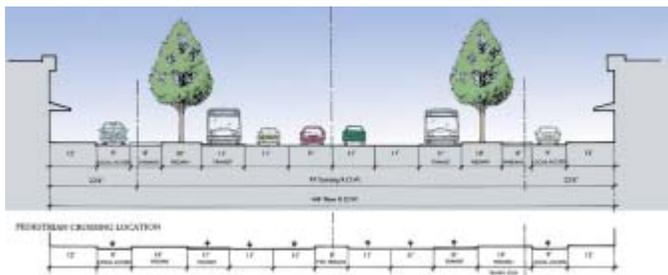
Figure III.51: Parking Lot at Northway Mall

A Vibrant Village Center

We are now entering into the Village of Colonie. Up to about Mordella Street the opportunities for new development are fairly similar to the majority of the Suburban Strip west of the Northway with limited and dispersed opportunities for reuse and infill development. Moving west on Central Avenue, there are several properties on both sides of the street that have potential for reuse.



Plan



Section



Existing Condition



New Improvements

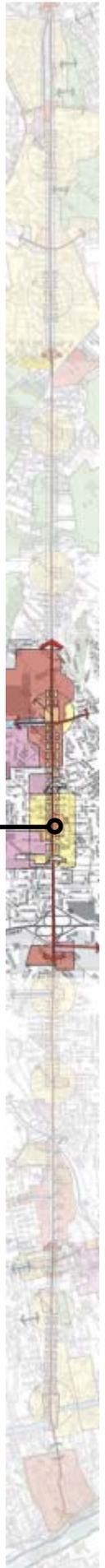


Figure III.52: Redesigned Central Avenue from Fuller Road to Lincoln in Town of Colonie and Village of Colonie and existing and photosimulation views of a multi-way boulevard at Colonie Village Center.

Providing for Regional and Local Traffic

Given that this part of the Corridor has the highest traffic levels, there is a need to provide for large amounts of through traffic while also creating safe access for local traffic to shopping and jobs along the street and into the neighborhoods behind. There is also a need to establish areas around the BRT transit stops that are pedestrian and bicycle-friendly in order to give a high level of access for transit riders. A solution to this problem would be to develop what is called a "multi-way boulevard." This is a street with "through" traffic lanes in the middle and "local access" lanes on the sides with a planted median in between. In the case of multi-way boulevards along Central Avenue and State Street, it has also created the opportunity to site transit stops on the median separating the local and through traffic. The through lanes next to the median are designated for buses and people making right turns. This allows the buses to operate very efficiently, because they do not need to turn into a pull out. Transit riders can move very safely down the median at the transit stop to get to a signalized intersection.

Bicyclists share the local access lane with the slower moving local traffic. The landscaped median, the local access lane and parallel or diagonal parking along it provide a separation from the faster moving traffic so that the sidewalk is a comfortable environment for strolling and shopping.

Depending upon the land uses and redevelopment opportunities along the street, the multi-way boulevard can have local access lanes on both sides of the street or just one side of the street. The local access lanes can also be phased in over time on different sides of the street. The local access lane may not be needed when there are no pedestrian-oriented uses along the street.



Figure III.53: Built examples of Multi-way boulevards



Potential Initial Phase

Later Phase of Development

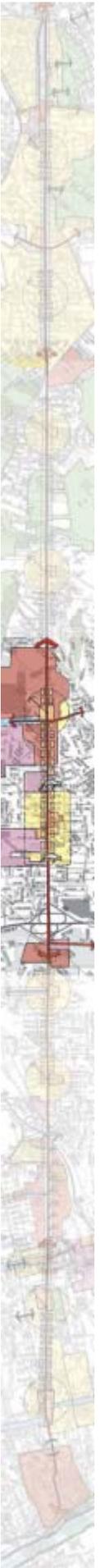
Figure III.54: Implementation of the Colonie Village Center

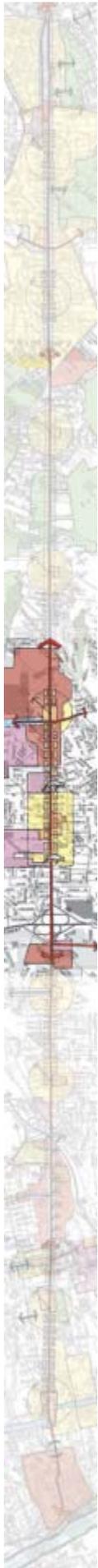
Enhancing Existing Community Features

The Colonie Community Center on the north side of Central Avenue provides a unique opportunity to anchor a vibrant Village Center. Figure III.54 illustrates how the Center can be phased into development. In the early phase, a median is installed at the east and west ends of the Center to define a "gateway" distinguishing it from the rest of the street. The local access lane is constructed in front of the Community Center. The parking lot in front of the Community Center is converted into a village green, providing a civic gathering place as the "heart" of the Village Center. A central walkway and plaza

connects the village green across the local access lane to the westbound transit stop. Cars turn into the access lane and can park along the village green or continue into the Community Center site and park along the streets or in parking lots to the east and west of the Center. The scale of the parking lots is "broken down" by retaining the existing mature trees on the property.

Ultimately, the Preferred Future Scenario envisions the development of the multi-lane boulevard along this entire segment of Central Avenue. The planted central median is also continued and, where necessary, includes a left turn lane. The side median is interrupted at the





Existing Community Center



New multi-way boulevard and village green

Figure III.55: The Colonie Village Center

corner of Broderick Street due to the relatively small setback of the existing medical offices.

Infill development around the transit station and village green is occurring incrementally. A new building to the west of the site contains 36,000 square feet in a two story development, that fronts onto the street with retail on the ground floor. A cafe also fronts onto to the west side of the village green. Parking for the development is connected and shared with the community center's parking lot. The other major redevelopment site is the car dealership further west. The Preferred Future Scenario would see the dealership remain but with an 11,000 square feet expansion. An additional 24,000 square feet of retail and entertainment uses would be included along the side of the parcel fronting Central Avenue. Car storage is moved to the rear of the lot, but the dealership building is extended up to Central Avenue providing greater visibility for the establishment and car display inside the showroom. This parcel also extends back to the residential street.



Figure III.56: The Colonie Village Center



Existing Condition

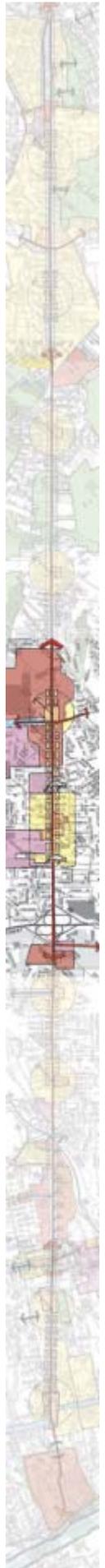


New Improvements

Figure III.57: Dedicated transit lanes and BRT Station in middle of Central Avenue just north of Fuller Road.

Pedestrian linkages with the neighborhood to the north are also established from Winston Place and Southwest Way along a pedestrian path through the parking lot. Sidewalks have also been improved along Locust Park Street and Fuller Terrace. The team has identified this as a location for a pedestrian connector between the adjacent neighborhood and the civic and commercial services in the village center. At the western end of the new Village Center, on the south side of Central, there is another significant infill site between Lanci Lane and Rapple Drive that provides an opportunity for an employment or residential complement to the Village Center.

Continuing west, we come to the cluster of regional retail development around New Karner Road which, like the Northway Mall and Colonie Center, has the potential to become a vibrant mixed-use neighborhood along the Corridor.



New Karner Mixed-Use Regional District

The area around the intersection of New Karner Road and Central Avenue creates one of a few opportunities along the Corridor for major reuse and redevelopment of an area into a comprehensive Mixed-use District. The other potential Mixed-use Districts are similar in their existing use, regional retail, but smaller in size and are not divided into as many parcels. The concept plan to the right was prepared for the area to the west of New Karner Road, but properties to the east are also likely to change over time.

The area to the east of New Karner Road includes, the Village Square Shopping Center which has had vacant space off and on over the years. The potential for some office space within the Center could be explored. The Builder's Square store is yet another example of the ever-changing conditions in national retailing, both in terms of retail businesses and in terms of retailing formats. Some of the properties to the north of these two shopping centers also have the potential to see change in the future, some of which could involve a mix of uses to complement the larger scale development that could occur to the west.



Figure III.58: Eastern employment area



Figure III.59: Build-out concept for Mixed-use Center to the west of New Karner Road

To the west of New Karner Road, the K-Mart building would be reused for "back-office" employment taking advantage of the large size of the building and the ample parking. In fact, employment parking could be developed to the south of the building, because it does not require the "visibility" of retail parking towards Central Avenue. This allows the retail parking in front of the K-Mart to be infilled with additional office and retail buildings. The properties to the north could also be developed with office buildings to complement the reuse of the K-Mart and other employment areas to the north and south along New Karner Road.

The buildings that would eventually front onto Central will have ground floor uses with some retail, but always with windows fronting onto the street. The multi-way boulevard street design will also be appropriate for most of the street within the Mixed-use District.



Existing Conditions



New street improvements: pedestrian crosswalks, street trees, and “Best Bus” transit station.
 Figure III.60: Entry to Price Choppers & Colonie Plaza Shopping Center

Early improvements to the streetscape and transit stop at the entry to the Price Choppers and Colonie Plaza Shopping Center create an anchor for future development of the District. These improvements were needed because the crossing was so unsafe in the past. Figure III. 61 illustrates the issues that used to face pedestrians everyday in this part of the Corridor before the improvements were made. These women had just gotten off of a bus and were having to stop traffic so they could cross the street to get to a shopping center. Now the transit stops in the area are located where safe crossings have been developed for pedestrians. The use of a multi-way boulevard street design, see the earlier Colonie Village Center discussion, in this area also helps create a stronger and safer pedestrian environment.



Figure III.61: Pedestrians crossing Central Avenue in 1999

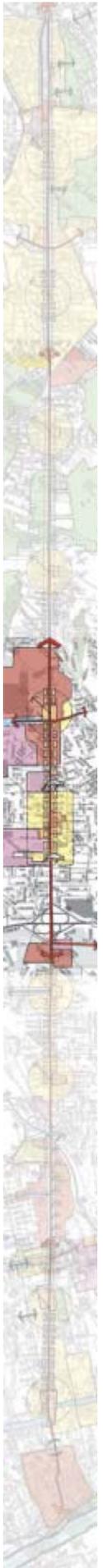




Figure III.62: Over time mixed-use buildings will infill underutilized parking lots and replace small retail buildings

As we continue our Tour of the Preferred Future in the Year 2015, it is apparent that as the economics of the Corridor have changed over time, it is expected that new development has infilled parking lots and replaced small single-use retail buildings to create a new "main street" connecting the transit station and Central Avenue to the Price Choppers grocery store to the south. The south end of the main street now includes a small village green with mixed-use buildings clustered around it. A street parallel to Central Avenue connects the village green and Price Choppers west to a new residential neighborhood and employment center.

As discussed earlier in the tour, large shopping malls can be configured incrementally overtime. The first step is to configure parking lots so that the major circulation ways are located so that

they can become streets that define buildable blocks for future mixed-use development. The access ways should also include sidewalks for pedestrians. Then new buildings can be "infilled" into the parking lots to define the street frontages. As discussed above, the more visible and important "streets," such as the new "main street" would be developed first to establish the character of the new district.

New Neighborhoods

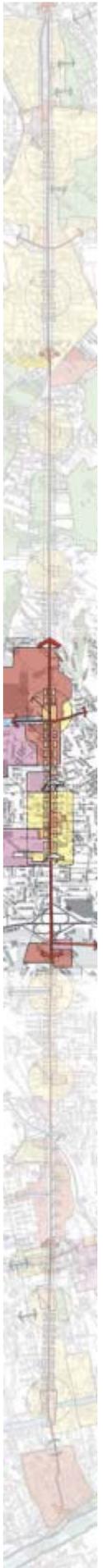
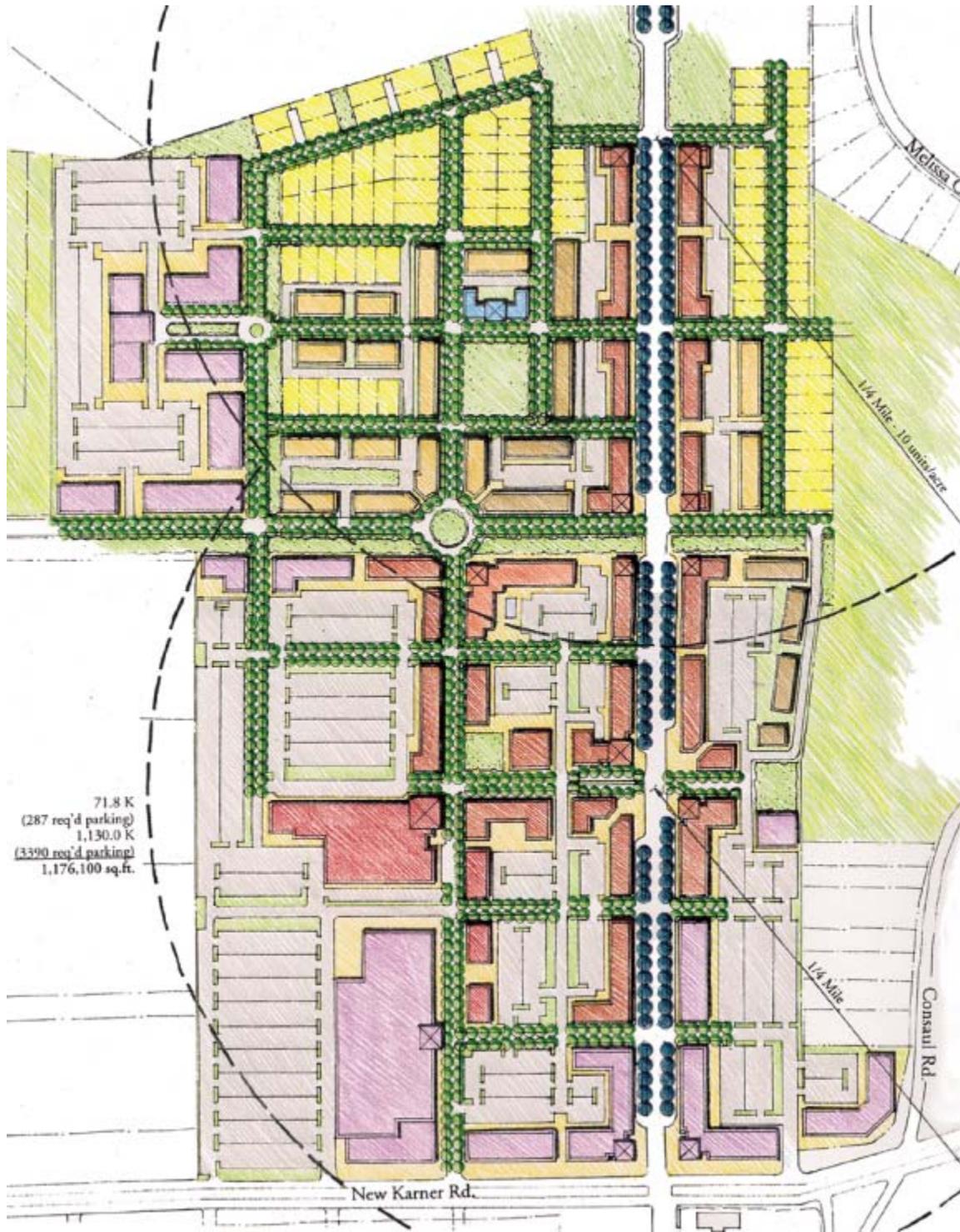
A major road, with an adjacent linear park, bisects the district connecting Central Avenue with Albany Street to the south. Along this street a roundabout park would serve as a focus for retail and residential uses including a hotel. West of this is a village green in the new residential neighborhood which is fronted by a small civic building (i.e. day care center, community center, or religious facility).



Figure III.63: Mixed-use "Main Street" leading from transit



Figure III.64: New residential neighborhood and employment center



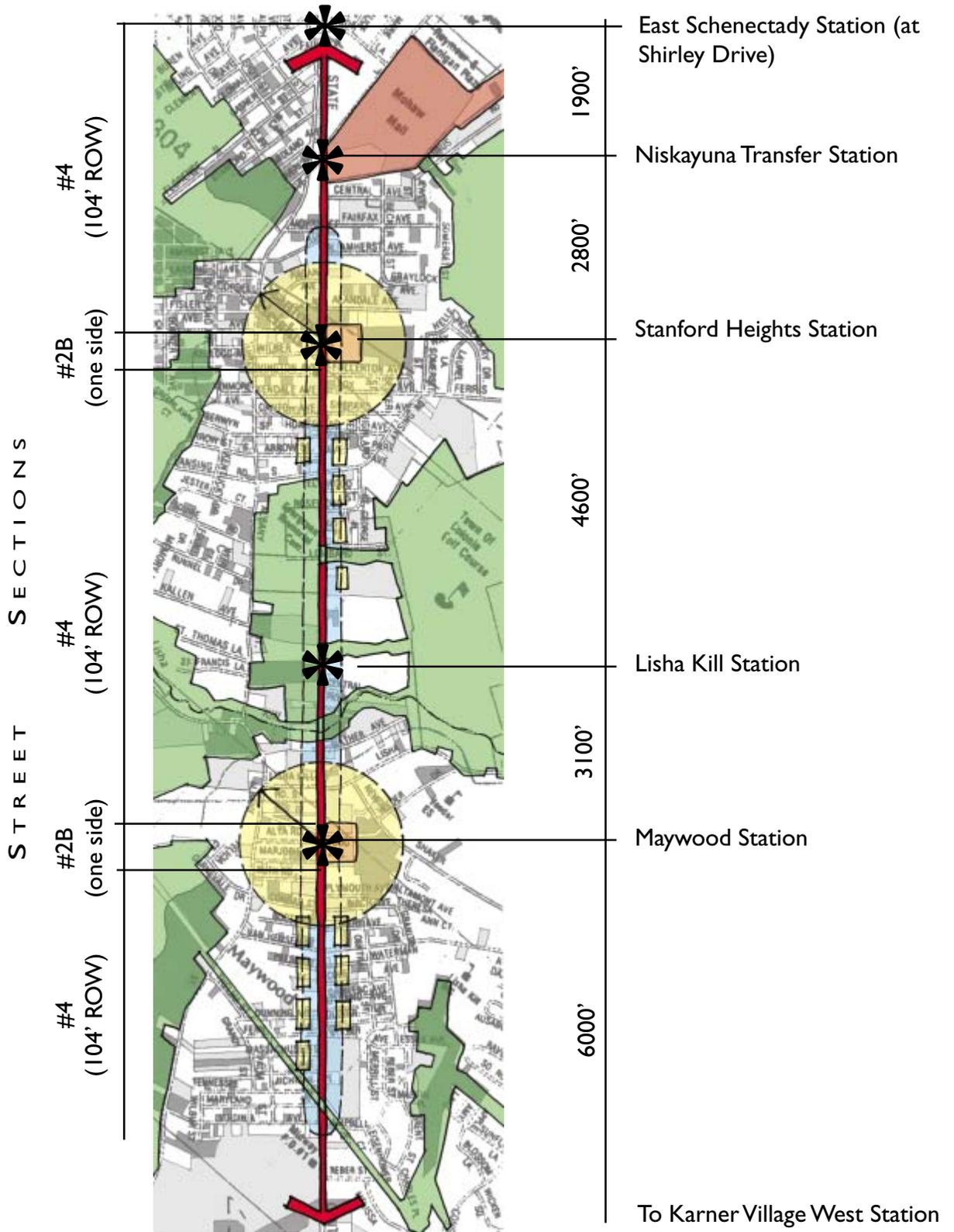
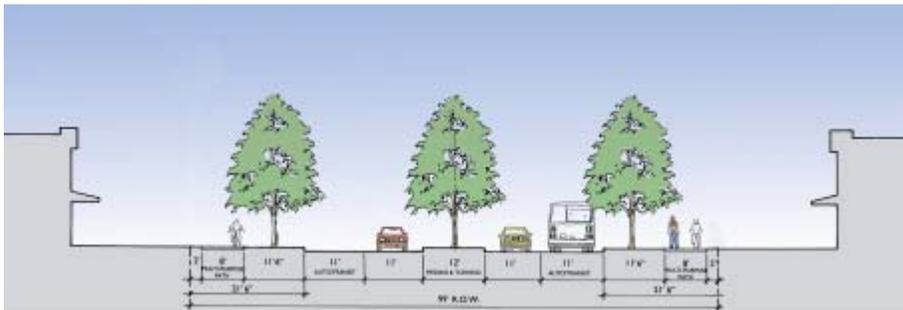


Figure III.65: Preferred Future: Suburban Strip in Towns of Colonie and Niskayuna



Plan



Section

Figure III.66: Redesigned Central Avenue and State Street in the more rural areas of the Corridor

Lisha Kill - a rural separator

As we leave the evolving mixed-use district around New Karner Road, the character of the Corridor changes significantly as density of development decreases and the Corridor takes on a more rural character. While there is development within this part of the Corridor, it is not very concentrated or dense, with the exception of the cluster of auto dealers around the county line. Thus, this area establishes a "break" in the

urban pattern of development connecting this character by clustering new development around transit stops that are in the existing clustered neighborhoods, Maywood and Stanford Heights. The stations are located next to sites that have more opportunity for change. They have the potential to be mixed-use neighborhood centers like the one at Fuller Road, but lower-intensity.





Existing Condition
Figure III.67: Transit stop at Lisha Kill



New Improvements

The roadway itself would also take on a different character in this part of the Corridor. The BRT would run in a mixed-flow lane along the curb. The lower traffic flows found here do not require a dedicated transit lane. A tree lined median and wider landscaped verges support the more rural character of the area. Multi-purpose paths on both sides of the street allow for both pedestrians and bicycles.

Within the neighborhood centers local access lanes could be developed on the side or sides of the road where new development can support a more pedestrian-oriented environment.

Figure III.67 illustrates the Lisha Kill Station, where a shelter is provided with a "Next Bus" information board. It is also possible to provide facilities for people who would be using the



Figure III.68: Mohawk Mall reuse concepts



Lisha Kill trail out to the Mohawk River. This could include restrooms, a drinking fountain, and a kiosk providing information about the regional trails system.

Clustering Development to support a "Natural Zone"

The potential exists in this area to support the creation and preservation of a natural landscape zone, including wildlife corridors along Lisha Kill and connecting other open spaces on either side of Central Avenue/State Street. This concept will require coordinated public and private efforts. Key parcels would need to be purchased by either public entities or private land trusts. Efforts can also be put toward educating landowners and residents about the potential to use native species in landscaping and to develop private open space to support the movement of wildlife. The combination of clustering new development around the transit stations, and preserving and enhancing open space creates a unique identity for this part of the Corridor.

Mohawk Mall - a potential Mixed-use District

The next transit station to the west is a major transfer station that provides a connection to transit that serves Niskayuna's residential neighborhoods and important GE and other employment centers. The transfer station also has the potential to be a transit anchor for another Mixed-use District that can be developed within the Mohawk Mall and adjacent properties.

The potential for reuse of the Mohawk Mall is similar to that of the Northway Mall which we passed earlier in the tour of the Preferred Future. Similar to Northway Mall, Mohawk Mall was redeveloped around the year 2001 to include a variety of new retail uses in the "formats" (e.g.; size of store, mix of merchandise, marketing concept, etc.) to meet the needs of the retail market. But future trends indicate that retailing formats will continue to change, and likely at a faster rate than we have experienced in the past. So, it is likely that the mall site will be redeveloped again within the next 5 to 10 years.

The Preferred Future suggests that the reuse of these major sites along the Corridor needs to consider and plan for future reuse. This can occur by organizing new buildings, redesigned parking lots, and site circulation to establish a system of "streets and blocks" that will organize future redevelopment of the site into a Mixed-use District. These concepts are defined more fully in the previous discussion of the New Karner Road Mixed-use District.



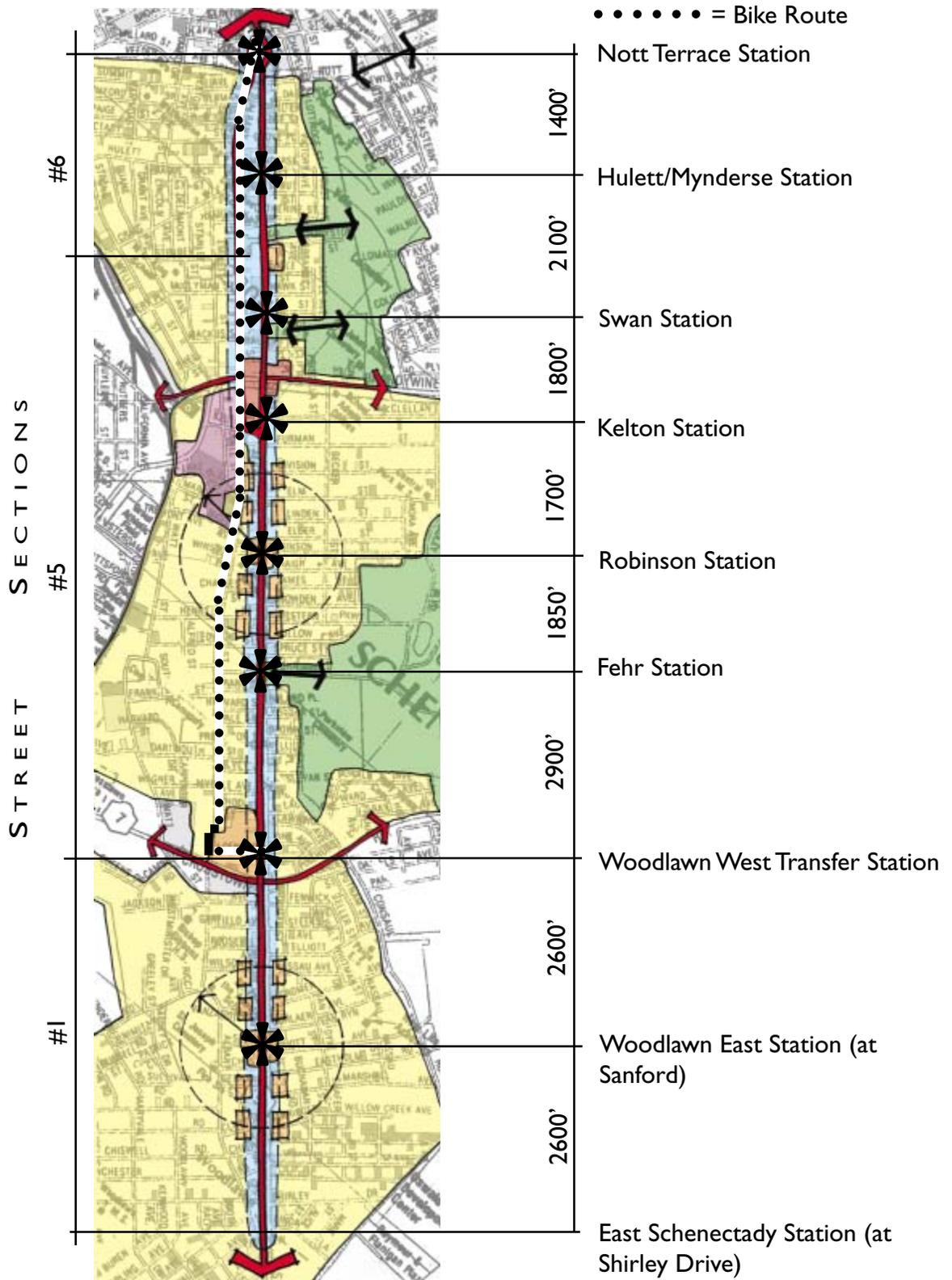


Figure III.69: Preferred Future: Suburban Strip, Urban Strip and Urban Core in Schenectady



Figure III.70: Entry to Schenectady



Figure III.71: Suburban Corridor in Schenectady

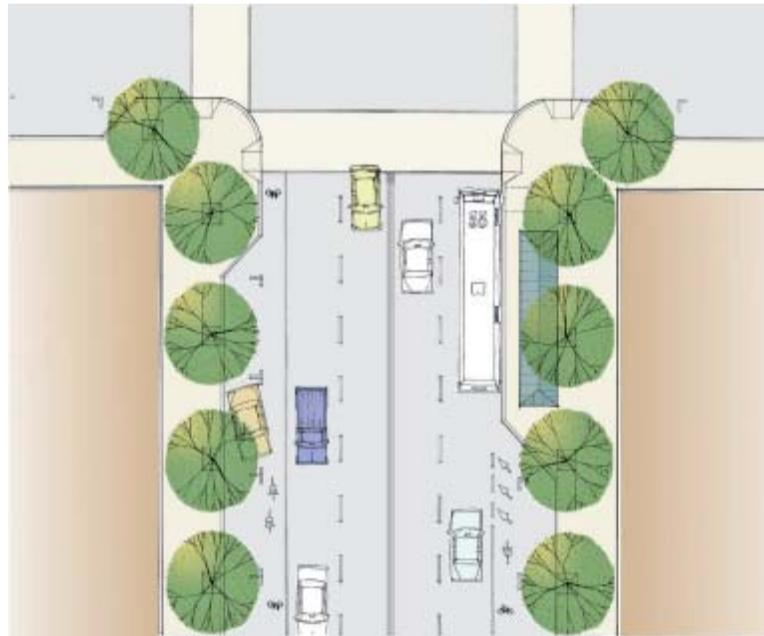
The Suburbs of Schenectady

As we enter Schenectady on our tour, we leave the rural character of the Lisha Kill area and the potential intensity of the Mohawk Mall Mixed-use District, and re-enter the suburbs of the Corridor. From this point west we experience a pattern of settlement that is similar to that in the Town and Village of Colonie, and the City of Albany. Again, we experience the history of urban and suburban form in the United States, but this time in reverse. From the suburban patterns of the 1990s into the early auto-oriented suburbs of the '40s and '50s to the streetcar suburbs of the '30s and earlier and finally into the older urban core of the 1800's. There is also a similar history of decline to many of these areas. In some locations the decline has been more intense than in Albany, because of the more significant loss of jobs and working population in Schenectady.

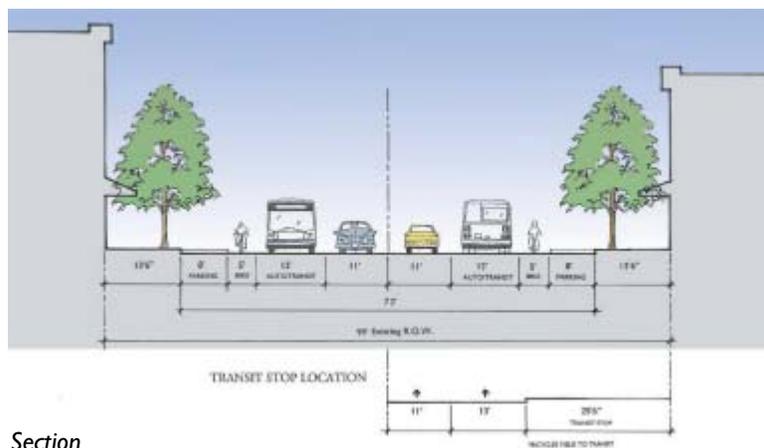


Figure III.72: Schenectady Neighborhoods





Plan



Section

Figure III.73: Redesigned State Street from the Woodlawn West Transfer Station to the East Schenectady Station.

Yet there are significant opportunities in Schenectady, and there are several well established neighborhoods within Schenectady's part of the Corridor. The City and County, and the residents of the neighborhoods have also been putting substantial efforts into stabilizing and improving the Corridor's retail and commercial uses, and residential neighborhoods.

Until we reach the Crosstown, the potential for new development is on a relatively small-scale with new nodes of neighborhood serving commercial use in mixed-use neighborhood centers around the transit stations at Shirley Drive and Sanford. Development around the station at Sanford could be started relatively quickly, because of the vacant and underutilized parcels within proximity of the public library.



Figure III.74: Existing Woodlawn Plaza Area



Figure III.77: Existing frontage on State Street

The current car dealership lot could be redeveloped with a village green that would be fronted by the adjacent library and a new mixed-use building on the lot.

State Street in this area up to the redevelopment around Woodlawn Center has the same street design as that in the Urban Core and Strip in Albany, see Figure III.25. This provides for transit in a shared curb lane, bicycle lanes, and transit stops and shelters on curb "bulb-outs."



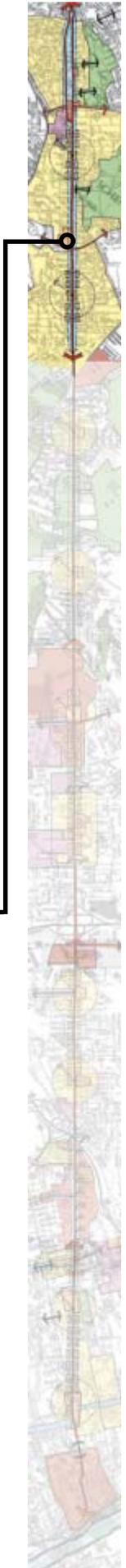
Figure III.75: Woodlawn "Incremental" Reuse and Infill

Woodlawn Plaza - a mixed-use neighborhood center

Woodlawn Plaza is a significant opportunity site for several reasons. First, it is a relatively large underutilized property and several properties around it are also under-utilized. Second, a BRT station here will have access to potential high frequency bus service on the Crosstown which could provide more direct access from this area to the airport and link to downtown Troy. Finally, redevelopment of the old shopping center can provide the opportunity to re-establish the neighborhood around it which was significantly disrupted by its development. The western side of the mall buildings creates a huge blank wall on School Street which would otherwise be a nicely scaled residential street, and the back of the anchor building and a surface parking lot front directly onto Albany Street.



Figure III.76: Woodlawn "Complete" Redevelopment



There are two ways to reuse the shopping center, which could be phases in its redevelopment. The first is an approach that reuses the major structures for office use, similar to the existing use of portions of the building for a medical clinic. The existing parking lot would then be over-sized and could be infilled with mixed-use buildings and a village green fronting onto State Street and the new transit station. A total of over 100,000 square feet of new development could be accommodated.

The other approach to reuse of the shopping center is to remove all of the existing buildings on site. This could either be a later phase which follows on the infill of the parking lot or a more aggressive near term reuse of the property. This option introduces a new connector street (believed to be in the location of the vacated Lawnwood Avenue right-of-way) between State

Street and Albany Street. Under this future vision for this area, this new street is lined with 73,000 square feet of commercial space and 50 residential units in two and three story mixed-use buildings. Retail uses would be located on the ground floors of the developments fronting State Street and the village green. Sixteen single family lots are created fronting School Street and Albany Street to re-integrate the site with the neighborhood.

In addition to the shopping center site itself other reuse sites exist across State Street, 107,000 square feet of new mixed-use retail and office development is proposed in the three blocks between the Crosstown and Laurel Avenue. The siting takes advantage of the proximity to the potential regional transit hub and regional access provided by State Street and the Crosstown.



Existing Conditions



Infill of Parking Lot Fronting State Street with mixed-use buildings, village green, and BRT transfer station

Figure III.78: Entry to Woodlawn Shopping Center

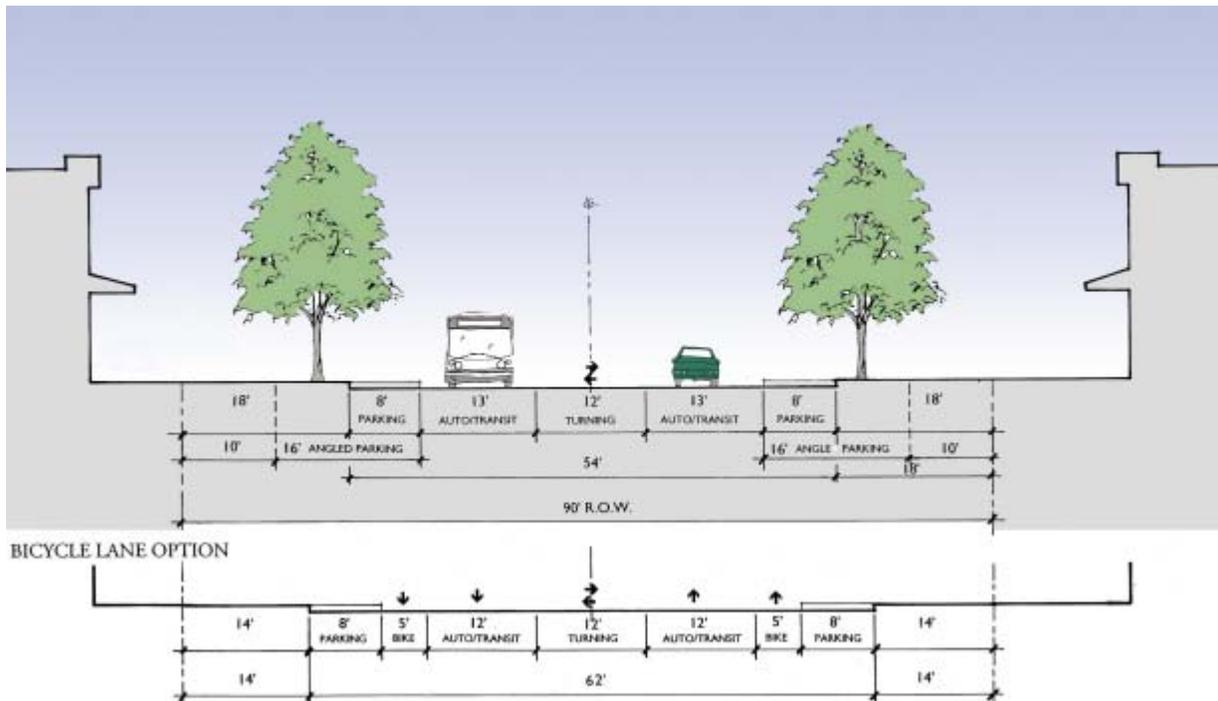


Figure III.79: Section view of a mixed-flow transit street configuration

Streetscape and Circulation

From the Crosstown further west into downtown Schenectady there are portions of the State Street right-of-way that are narrower than the more "standard" 99 foot width. This creates some design challenges that are addressed through a different approach to multi-modal circulation. The major difference is that the bicycle route shifts from State Street south to Albany Street. Albany Street is typically one short block to the south and provides enough right-of-way width for the development of bicycle lanes on both sides of the street.

Traffic levels are low enough in this part of the Corridor to allow a 3-lane cross section with the BRT system sharing a single lane in each direction with a continuous left-turn lane in the middle of the street. The turn lane will allow some traffic to move around buses that are stopped at stations to load and unload passengers. Parallel on-street parking is typically provided on

both sides of the street, and in areas with more retail activity it would be possible to build diagonal parking. This roadway section then allows wide areas, up to 18 feet, for sidewalks and planting strips. The design of the pedestrian area depends upon adjacent use: in mixed-use areas the majority of the area would be sidewalk space while in residential areas there is a wide landscape strip.

This roadway design allows a high level of flexibility to address the variable right-of-way conditions in this part of the Corridor. Where possible, the street section design used to the east in Schenectady could be utilized here, see Figure III.73.

Continuing west we enter the Central State Street Neighborhood. This is one of the more active neighborhoods in the City with a variety of publicly and privately sponsored efforts in





Figure III.79: Central State Street Design Workshop Concepts



place to provide necessary community services, economic revitalization, and general improvements to neighborhood quality of life. The Preferred Future recommends improvements ranging from further enhancement of the streetscape on State Street (the City already redesigned the roadway and installed streetscaping improvements from Fehr Avenue to Furman Streets) to working with St. Clare’s hospital to start a home loan program for employees similar to Union College’s efforts to improve and stabilize residential neighborhoods around their campus.

Neighborhood Circulation and Gateways

There are several opportunities to create strong connections between State Street and adjacent regional attractions in the area, Central Park and St. Clare’s Hospital. At the same time the quality of neighborhood streets should be maintained and enhanced. The Fehr Avenue transit station and the on-going improvements to State Street around

Fehr create the opportunity to establish this area as a gateway to both the neighborhood’s portion of State Street and to Central Park. From Fehr to Brandywine opportunities exist for small-scale and “medium-scale” mixed-use infill and reuse of properties and buildings. The next major node of activity would occur around a transit station at Robinson Street where there is an opportunity to develop a mixed-use neighborhood center similar to those discussed earlier.

The neighborhoods between this point and Brandywine provide some opportunities for both reinvestment in the housing stock, as well as for local serving retail and employment uses. Several local serving businesses already exist along Becker Street (the restaurant at Furman and the corner grocery at Division). As linkages are created between the hospital and State Street and the neighborhood, there should be additional opportunities to use Becker as a local shopping street.

While additional activity and investment continue to be needed in the future to stabilize and improve the residential neighborhood, this



Figure III.80: Central Schenectady Conceptual Plan



Figure III.81 Single-family homes along State Street

may bring increased traffic impacts. Traffic calming, and establishing both the primary character and function for neighborhood streets, were important considerations in the preparation of a more detailed plan for the neighborhood undertaken by the City and CDTC in conjunction with the State Street Reconstruction project from Fehr to Furman, during 2001. It will also be important to establish a primary "character" and function for the streets in the neighborhood. Under the Preferred Scenario, Fehr Ave. serves as a gateway to Central Park and Becker is a local "main street." McClellan St. serves as a major connection to St. Clare's, and Division provides a secondary connection. Elm Street can serve as a secondary connection with Central Park with a focus towards providing pedestrian and bicycle access; park-like landscaping including benches could be provided along the street. Furman and



the other streets would primarily serve as local residential streets and have the highest level of traffic calming. Traffic calming techniques were explored in more detail in the development of concepts for the Vale Neighborhood, which is discussed later in this section.

A Neighborhood Supermarket

There are two sites near the intersection with Brandywine that have the potential to be developed with a neighborhood supermarket. Which-ever site is not developed for the supermarket could be appropriate for a small mixed-use development with a focus on providing employment opportunities for neighborhood residents. These areas are more appropriate for these uses because of their closer access to the regional circulation network via Brandywine.



Figure III.82: Neighborhood Supermarket Alternatives



Figure III.83: Standard Grocery Store Shopping Center - parking lot fronting onto State Steet



Figure III.84: Preferred Scenario Grocery Store Shopping Center - retail shops fronting onto State Steet

The first site is on the southwest corner of Brandywine Avenue and State Street. The second site is adjacent to the east of the existing Rite Aid drugstore. A new neighborhood supermarket of about 30,000 square feet would anchor the neighborhood shopping center. A 10,000 square foot drug store could also be developed. In any case 30,000 square feet of liner shops would be located between the street and the parking lot to provide pedestrian amenity along the street. The pedestrian pass-throughs connecting McClellan and Albany Streets would be attractively landscaped.

Moving west from the Central State Street Neighborhood we enter the most urban part of the Corridor in Schenectady, the Vale Neighborhood.



Figure III.85: Vale Neighborhood Residential Street



Vale Neighborhood

The Preferred Future for the Vale Neighborhood addresses neighborhood revitalization creating opportunities for neighborhood residents to "take back" their neighborhood and improve their quality of life. The current condition of the neighborhood had been marginalized by criminal activity (drug dealing and prostitution) and disinvestment in the housing stock by absentee landlords. Now after implementing recommendations under the Preferred Future, traffic calming techniques and redevelopment of key sites serve to dissuade the criminal activity. Improvements have also made for a more attractive environment for the residents, fostering a greater sense of neighborhood identity and surveillance.

Targeted Infill Development

The surface parking lot and hotels around Moyston Street provide a site to develop community services, new residences, and a variety of commercial uses. The two alternatives in Figure III.88 illustrate possible redevelopment scenarios. The major difference in the two is the "anchor" use. In one alternative a community center would be developed which could include classroom space and a multi-use room that could be used for organized sports. The other alternative illustrates that an over 20,000 square foot grocery store can be accommodated on the site.

The two street front buildings would include ground floor retail commercial space and offices or apartments are above.

In all future cases, the buildings that front onto State Street have active uses on the ground floor with windows providing a visual connection between activity on the street and within the buildings. This provides "eyes on the street" and enhances neighborhood security. Additionally, the mix of uses provided creates activity throughout

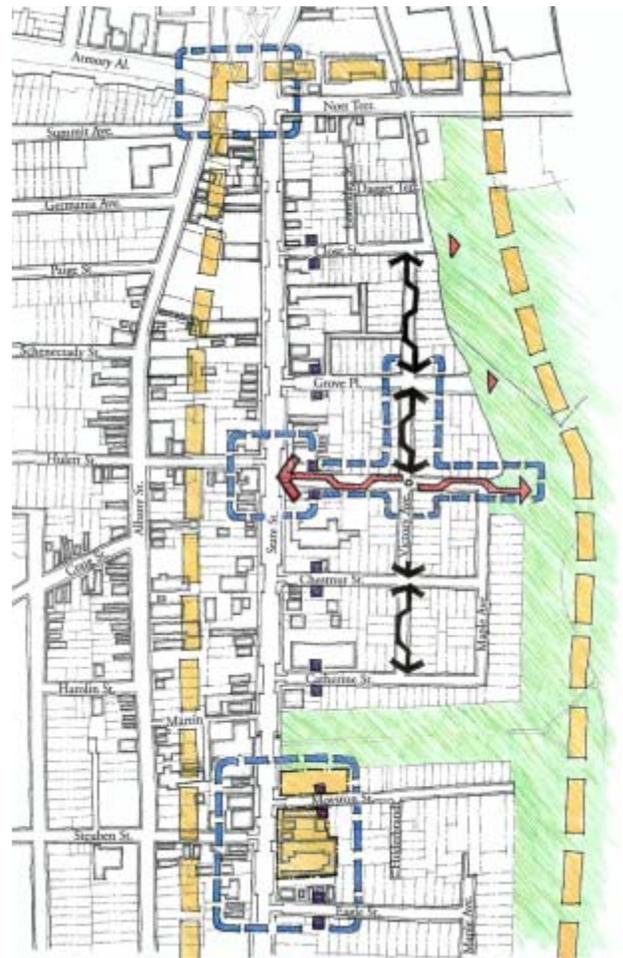


Figure III.87: Vale Neighborhood Conceptual Diagram



Figure III.88: State Street in Vale Neighborhood

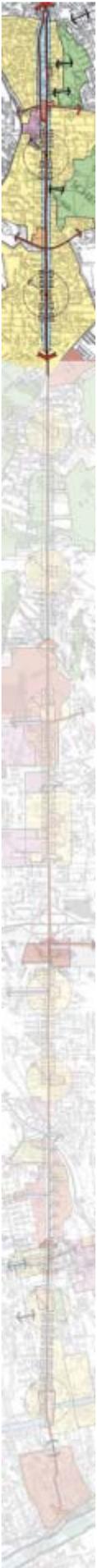


Figure III.88: Vale Neighborhood - Motel Site Redevelopment



Figure III.89: Examples of traffic calming on Mynderse Street and Victory Avenue





Existing Condition



After installation of street improvements



After mixed-use infill development

Figure III.90: Creating a neighborhood center at intersection of Mynderse Street

the week at different times of the day, which also improves safety. The building back along Moyston would provide a site for additional housing, such as apartments for seniors or transitional housing for single-mothers or the homeless.

These illustrations also show the potential for developing diagonal parking along State Street to support ground level retail and to calm traffic.

Traffic Calming

Potential traffic calming measures include: chicanes, diverters, bulb-outs and trees planted in the street. A system of one way streets with neck-down gateways is proposed to control the speed of traffic entering the neighborhood and to discourage non-residential traffic.

Mynderse Street east of Victory Avenue is designed as a pedestrian and bicycle access point to Vale Park. At the other end of Mynderse Street at State Street new development can create the mixed-use neighborhood center for Vale.

A Neighborhood Center

As is illustrated in Figure III.90, the installation of street improvements can make a big start towards improving the quality of life in the neighborhood. This public investment can help to encourage follow-on private investment in infill development. Here it is illustrated with small two-story buildings with ground floor neighborhood-serving commercial uses like a dry cleaner and bakery which will help to create a community gathering place here. Offices or apartments above help to diversify uses in the neighborhood. This intersection would also be the location of a new transit station for the BRT system.

State Street Redesign

This is the section of Route 5 with the most constrained cross-section where the right-of-way is only about 70 feet wide. The proposed street section is very similar to what exists today, see Figure III.78. In this case, each side of the street would have a 12 foot wide sidewalk with street trees. Parallel parking would be located on each side of the street with curb "bulb-outs" at pedestrian crossings and transit stops. New pedestrian-scaled street lighting, garbage cans, benches, and other amenities would also be installed.

Concluding the Tour

As can be seen from the tour of the Preferred Future there is the potential for an exciting future for the Corridor. A variety of challenges must be met and overcome to achieve the Preferred Future, but through this planning process there has been great evidence that the Corridor Communities are up to the challenge. Positive changes are already occurring in the Corridor with investment in the bus system, and private and public entities creating plans and building new projects that achieve the vision of the Preferred Future.





Figure III.91: Nott Terrace in the year 2000



Figure III.92: A new BRT station at Nott Terrace

ACTION PLAN 4

Introduction

This chapter lays out an action plan for implementing the goals of the Preferred Future. The implementation actions set forth in this chapter are linked with a "menu" of potential implementation tools described in *Appendix A: Implementation*, which discusses the tools in greater detail. As a corollary to this detailed action plan, *Chapter V. Conclusions* presents a broader strategic overview of how the Preferred Future will be implemented and funded over the next 25 years.

The NY5 Land Use and Transportation Study has examined a complex spectrum of issues from a regional market analysis, to transportation assessment, to land use and streetscape design issues across 2 counties; 5 municipalities; 16.5 miles of roadway with varied right-of-way width, traffic, and land uses; and over 75 Traffic Analysis Zones. Understandably, the "solutions" for bettering the Corridor are equally complex. This chapter organizes these solutions so that they are accessible to those who will implement the change: public officials, land use and transportation planners, non-governmental organizations, regional municipal planning organizations, developers, and the people who live and work in the Corridor from hereon referred to as Corridor stakeholders. The following describes the structure which has been designed to make the interconnected solutions easily accessible. Please also refer to Figure IV.1 for a visual explanation of the structure.

The Study identified seven geographic segments within the five communities located along the Corridor. The seven segments were further classified as being characterized by one or more of four urban



Figure IV.1: Structure of this chapter

typologies including, Urban Core, Urban Strip, Suburban Strip, and Regional Mixed-Use Districts. *Chapter I. Introduction* presented a map explaining how the Corridor is divided into these segments and typologies on page I.5. This chapter organizes the recommendations of the Preferred Future around the four urban typologies. Corridor stakeholders seeking to implement the Preferred Future should identify the typologies in their area and reference the appropriate section for a discussion of the targeted improvement strategies for that typology. Corridor stakeholders should also reference two other sections to obtain further insight into implementation strategies: First, the final section of *Chapter III. Future Scenarios* provides a "tour" down the Corridor describing the transportation and land use elements of the Preferred Scenario. Second, in the following section, *The Corridor*, describes an overarching set of goals and actions that are applicable to the future of the entire Corridor.

Within the typological discussions that follow the Corridor-wide goals and actions, future goals are identified, followed by a series of recommended actions for achieving the goal (see Figure IV.2). Following each action is a table of implementation measures which should be taken in order to accomplish the action. An "icon" in the first column of the table indicates whether the implementation measure is for "Immediate Action" (⚡) or will require a more sustained long-term effort (🕒). ⚡ measures will yield a more immediate "return on investment" while (🕒) measures are critical to achieving the Preferred Future, yet require a concerted effort over time.

The second column in the implementation table indicates the type of implementations measure:

policy, program, investment (both public and private) or organizational change. The column to the right of the measure references the relevant implementation tools as they are numbered in Appendix A on Implementation. The last column lists those Corridor stakeholders, such as cities, counties, non-governmental organizations, regional authorities, etc., who will be responsible for executing the implementation measure. Please note that throughout this chapter, when referring to the cities of Albany and Schenectady only their common name will be used (i.e. "Albany"). Counties will be identified using the full county name (i.e. Albany County). When the broader term of "jurisdictions" is used, it is referring to the municipalities of Albany, Schenectady, Colonie Town and Village, and the Town of Niskayuna.

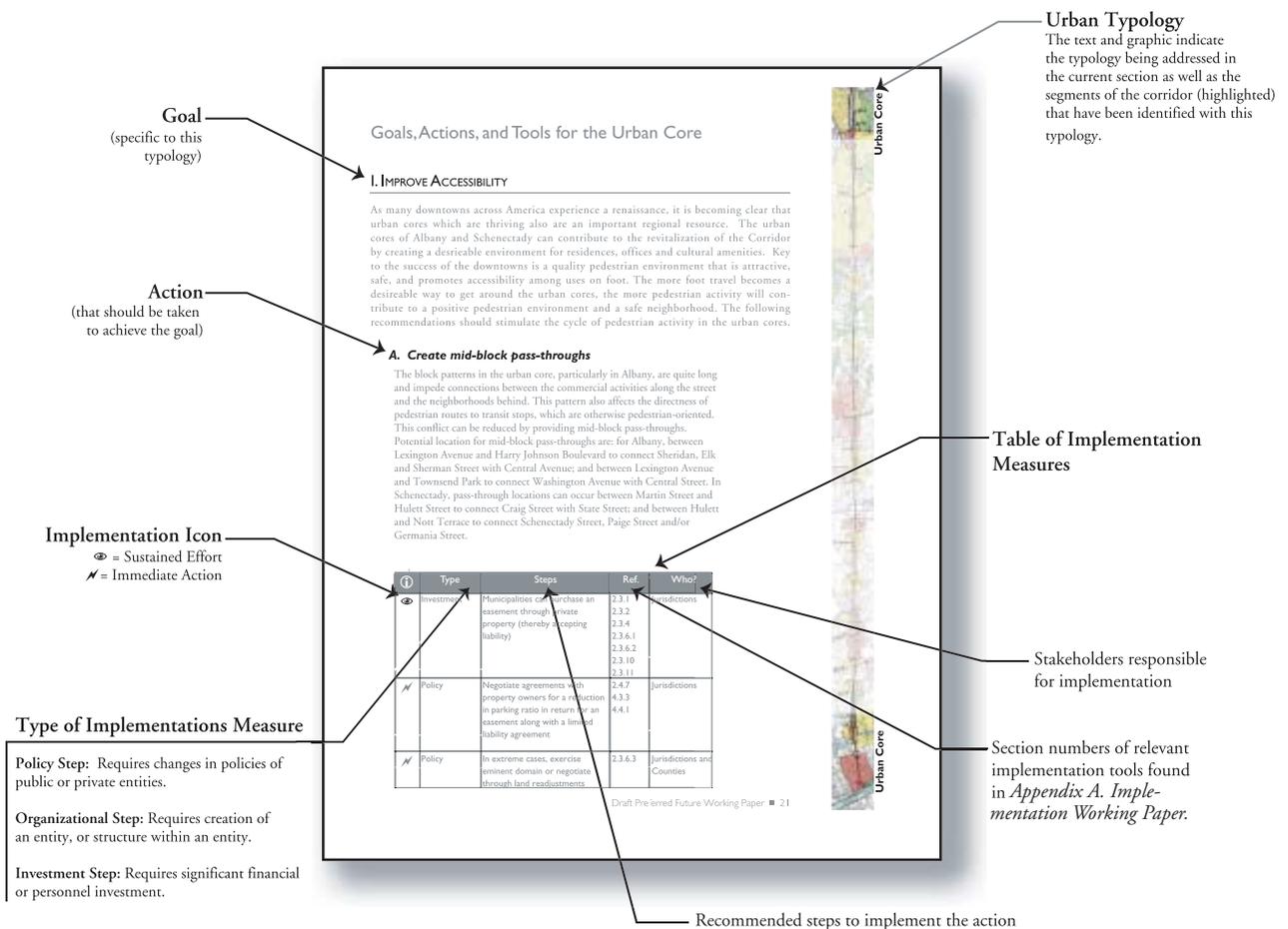


Figure IV.2: How to read the Preferred Future Action Plan

The Corridor

Several Transportation and Land Use improvements should be made *throughout* the Corridor. The fundamental changes which are discussed here apply to neighborhoods and jurisdictions throughout the Corridor. Some are examined more closely in the typological discussions which follow this section. Some of the improvements discussed here may, however, need to be implemented at a local level.

I. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) - Make Transit More Effective and Attractive

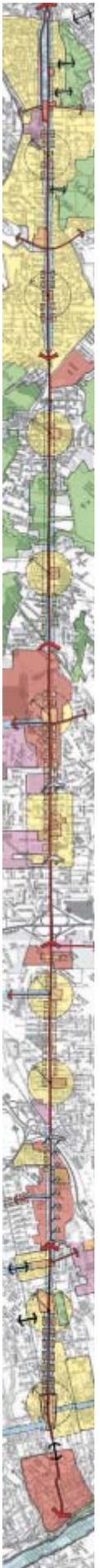
Improving the image of transit in the Corridor will contribute to the quality of life by increasing the viability of transit as an alternative to the automobile. The primary effect is to make transit more accessible to more people, while the secondary effects include decreased congestion, improved circulation, and increased ridership on the Capital District Transportation Authority's (CDTA) Routes 55, 55X and I. Transit should achieve a presence in the Corridor which naturally ties in with the Corridor's image. CDTA will play an important role in continuing to market transit to its potential riders, while land use decisions and street designs work to integrate transit into the Corridor. The objective is to boost ridership, decrease auto-dependency and provide a visual affirmation of the role of transit and the beginning of improvements in the Corridor.

Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) technologies and low-floor buses already implemented in the Corridor should evolve into a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system which will provide the quality of service associated with Light Rail Transit, at lower operating and capital costs and with more system flexibility. In the typology-specific sections that follow, this Corridor-wide discussion of BRT lanes, stops, and stations has been integrated into street designs and detailed studies. Whether implemented in a "fast track" fashion or incrementally over a longer period of time, the region will work toward creation of a BRT system along the Route 5 Corridor under the Preferred Future.

A. Anticipate BRT

CDTA and corridor communities will need to plan with BRT in mind. Considerations to be taken into account include:

- incremental roadway improvements should take the street sections proposed here into account so they do not conflict with the long-term BRT objectives; traffic signal upgrades should be compatible with signal advance/delay technology;
- bus stops and station shelters should be designed to accommodate low-floor buses, automated ticket sales machines, electronic rider information boards, and potential fare collection gates and pre-boarding waiting areas.



The Corridor

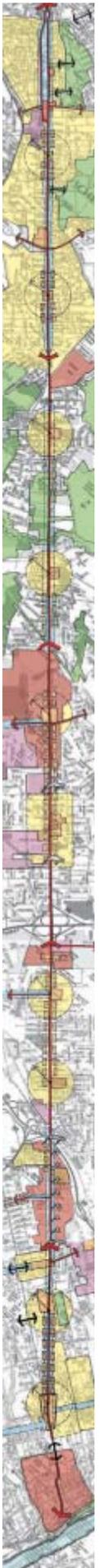


①	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Investment	Upgrade traffic signals to be compatible with signal advance/delay technology	2.3.11 4.1.1 4.1.4 4.2.1	NYSDOT, CDTA, NYSP, Jurisdictions
⚡	Investment	Bus stops and station shelters should be designed to accommodate low-floor buses, automated ticket sale machines, electronic rider information boards, and potentially fare collection gates and pre-boarding waiting areas	2.3.11 4.1.1 4.1.4 4.2.1 4.2.2	CDTA, Jurisdictions
👁️	Investment	Incremental roadway improvements should take the street sections developed in the street design guidebook into account	1.2.1 2.2.1 2.2.2 2.3.1 2.3.2 2.3.11 3.3.1 4.1.1 4.1.4 4.2.1 4.2.2 4.2.3	NYSDOT, CDTC, CDTA, Jurisdictions

B. Integrate transit with new and existing development

The recommendations developed as part of the Preferred Future are designed to encourage the integration of land use and transit objectives. Approaches such as clustering of development near transit stations, encouraging compact development patterns and infill, and designing buildings to create an environment which is supportive of pedestrians are aimed at making the Corridor more accessible to more people. In addition to the following implementation measures also see *V.A. Promote Compact Development* in this section.

①	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Policy	Site and design uses and buildings to create an environment which is supportive of pedestrians and transit use (e.g. orient main entries to Corridor, active shop windows, continuous building walls)	1.3.1 1.3.2 1.3.3 2.3.3 2.3.6.2 2.3.8 2.3.9 2.3.10.1 2.3.10.2 3.1.1 3.3.1 4.2.1.1 4.3.2	Jurisdictions, Developers, BID Association, Sub-Corridor BIDs
👁️	Policy	Encourage compact development patterns and infill	1.1.1 1.2.3 1.3.1 1.3.2 1.3.3 2.1.1 2.2.1 2.2.3 2.3.3 2.3.4 2.3.6.1 2.3.6.2 2.3.6.3 2.4.4 3.1.1 3.2.1 3.3.1 4.2.3 4.3.2 4.3.3 4.3.4 4.4.1 4.4.2	Metrolplex, Jurisdictions, Counties, BID Associations, Sub-Corridor BIDs, Non-Profit Land Conservancy
👁️	Policy	Cluster new development near transit stations	1.2.2 1.2.3 1.3.1 2.2.1 2.3.6.1 2.3.6.2 2.3.6.3 2.3.8 2.3.10.1 3.1.1 3.3.1 4.3.3 4.3.4	CDTA, Jurisdictions



The Corridor

C. Locate local-serving businesses at transit stations

Local services are often also desired by transit riders (small grocery, dry cleaner, deli, coffee shop, etc.). Transit stations are natural gathering points and will attract more foot traffic for businesses. Auto-oriented services can be further away from transit stations, because they are a destination in and of themselves and will generally require that people drive to effectively use them.

Strategies to attract businesses to transit stations will require planning and funding of capital improvements and other incentives to encourage entrepreneurs to invest in these areas. Creating Specific or Area plans can provide the

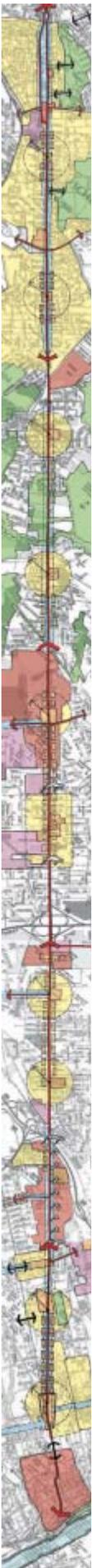
vision for physical improvements and phasing plans to target efforts. Investors and potential businesses may be encouraged by such planning activity in these areas. These planning efforts can be moved towards implementation by BIDs taking an active role in educating land and business owners about the opportunities presented by transit stations. BIDs can also “steer” appropriate businesses to station areas.

Furthermore, jurisdictions and CDTA can aggressively seek joint development opportunities that will facilitate development around transit stations. At the same time, cities should be supportive of efforts by individual property owners and businesses.

①	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
👁️	Policy	Direct appropriate businesses to station areas	1.1.1 1.2.3 1.3.1 1.3.2 1.4.1 2.2.1 2.3.3 2.3.8 3.1.1 3.3.1	BIDS, Jurisdictions
👁️	Education	Communicate the potential of transit access for supporting businesses	2.2.2 2.3.1 2.3.2 4.2.2 4.4.3	CDTC, CDTA, BIDs, Jurisdictions
👁️	Policy	Direct community development funds and infrastructure improvements to target station areas	1.3.1 1.3.2 1.3.3 1.4.1 2.3.4 2.3.5 2.4.3 2.3.1.1 2.4.4 4.1.1 4.2.2 4.4.3	CDTC, CDTA, Jurisdictions, Counties
👁️	Organizational	Encourage initiatives by small businesses to form informal associations organized around station areas (I.e. a display at the station could promote the station area and its businesses: " Welcome to the Townsend Park...")	2.3.4 2.3.5 2.3.1.1 2.4.3 3.4.2	CDTC, CDTA, BIDs, Jurisdictions, Businesses

D. Plan and implement street improvements to attract and support multiple modes of travel

In order to “level the playing field,” improvements should cater to the needs of all users in the Corridor. Accommodating the automobile should not occur at the expense of pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users. Invariably, all users will become pedestrians, as they exit their cars through a parking lot to reach several destinations, as they get off their bicycles to reach a shop, or as they walk to and from the bus stop. The pedestrian realm, therefore, should become an “indica-

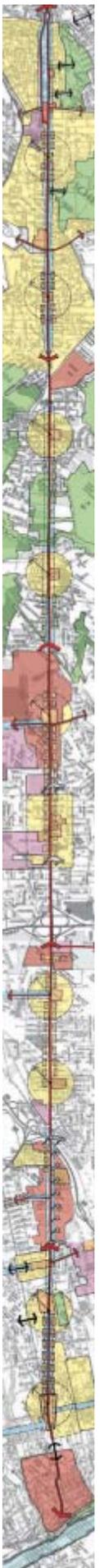


tor” to a good street. Sidewalks should be comfortable to walk on, with shade to provide protection from the hot sun in the summer. Driveways should be kept to a minimum in order to reduce conflicts between cars, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Ample seating and trash receptacles will allow users to rest and mingle, and prevent the area from gathering too much litter. Street design elements can also be selected to provide an identity to particular areas along the Corridor.

①	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Investment	Implement improvements that provide a strong regional identity for the Corridor, and to distinguish activity areas along the corridor	1.1.2 1.2.1 1.2.3 1.3.1 2.2.1 2.2.2 2.3.1 2.3.2 2.4.4 3.3.1 4.3.2	Jurisdictions, Counties, CDTA
⚡	Investment	Simplify above-ground street infrastructure in order to create an environment that is visually "readable" to all users (e.g. coordinate and simplify signage, reduce clutter, and streamline designs)	1.1.2 1.2.1 1.2.3 1.3.1 2.2.2 2.4.3 3.1.2 3.3.2 4.1.1 4.2.2 4.3.1	Jurisdictions, CDTA, BID Association, Sub-Corridor BIDs
⚡	Investment	Streamline movement for all modes of travel and minimize conflict, particularly for pedestrians	2.3.1 2.3.2 3.1.1 3.3.1 4.2.1.1 4.2.1.2 4.2.3 4.3.1	NYSDOT, CDTA, Jurisdictions

E. Increase investment in transit infrastructure

Infrastructure improvements to transit stops and locations will help to increase the presence of transit in the Corridor and the quality of service offered by CDTA. At a minimum, improvements should include safer, more attractive and integrated transit stops as well as new “stations” similar to the Armory in Albany which facilitate transfers and serve as customer service points for CDTA. Technology such as the Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) already introduced by CDTA should be utilized to further improve the customer-orientation of service. Technologies include electronic information boards to let riders know when the next bus is coming and that it is on schedule. Ticket machines can reduce boarding times by allowing riders to get their ticket or transfer before boarding. The combination of low-floor buses and slightly raised curbs can allow people (even those in wheelchairs) to go straight into the bus. All of these investments improve the efficiency and the experience of riding transit.



The Corridor



①	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Policy	Plan for infrastructure improvements at bus stops making sure that amenities are comfortable and attractive to riders	2.3.11 2.4.3 4.1.1 4.2.3	CDTA
👁️	Policy and Program	Prepare designs and prioritize new transit "stations" at key points along the Corridor	1.1.1 1.2.3 1.3.1 1.4.1 2.2.1 2.3.10.1 2.3.11 2.4.3 3.1.1 3.3.1 4.1.1	CDTC, CDTA, Jurisdictions

F. Develop supportive transit modes

Bus Rapid Transit will depend on the support of other modes of transit to increase its service area and thereby boost ridership to levels which will ensure the expansion of high-quality service. CDTA should help organize and fund public and private feeder shuttles similar to the ShuttleBug and ShuttleBee service in order to connect adjacent neighborhoods and employment centers with the Corridor. Examples include shuttle service to the Albany SUNY Campus from a Fuller Road Transfer Station and service to employment centers along New Karner Road. CDTA should also continue to support and work closely with its subsidiary Access Transit Services, Inc. to be aware of any disconnects which are discouraging persons with disabilities from using the BRT system.

①	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
👁️	Policy and Investment	Study possible gaps in service to expand the service area and provide easy connection to buses along the Corridor	4.1.1 4.2.2	CDTA, CDTC
👁️	Investment	Provide funding for expansion of shuttle service in co-ordination with BRT implementation	4.1.1 4.1.2 4.2.2	CDTA

G. Continue to pursue TDM programs with new employers

New employment anticipated as part of the Preferred Future in the regional mixed-use areas, downtowns and New Karner Road area should be immediately introduced to Transit Demand Management programs such as the Swiper Program. Smaller employers should be encouraged to take advantage of employment clustering by offering TDM programs to employees of one site with many smaller companies. These smaller companies should receive the same level of incentives as larger employers.

	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
	Organizational	Offer easily implementable programs catered to smaller employers clustered in an area to encourage their employees to take part in these programs	2.3.1 2.3.2 2.3.1.1 4.1.1	CDTA, CDTC
	Policy	Provide development incentives in exchange for or to encourage employer TDM programs	2.3.3 2.3.6.1 2.3.6.2 2.3.6.3 2.3.7 2.3.8 2.3.9 4.3.3	Jurisdictions

H. Seek continued funding for BRT

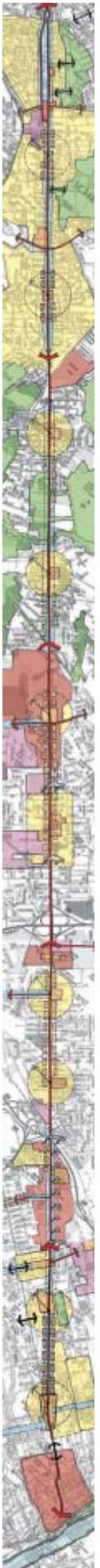
CDTA should continue to seek funding from the FTA, the State, local jurisdictions, and other sources for the development of its Best Bus program to expand and improve the service to reach Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) standards.

	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
	Investment	Seek funding from FTA and other public sources	4.1.1	CDTA, CDTC
	Policy	Seek alternative funding sources integrating them into new facilities (e.g. advertising displays, "art boards")	1.2.1 2.2.2 2.3.1 2.3.2	CDTA
	Policy	Bring in added lease revenue by integrating commercial uses at transit stations that cater to pedestrians and transit riders	2.1.1 2.3.10.1 3.1.1 4.3.2 4.4.3	CDTA, Jurisdictions, Developers

I. Market Corridor BRT service

CDTA’s “Ride the Dotted Line” program and the various “Shuttle” programs are an excellent model for developing a Corridor-specific marketing campaign which “brands” the literature, busses, and shelters in a unified campaign. CDTA should expand upon this comprehensive marketing effort to contribute to the development of a Corridor-identity. Such an effort also encourages potential riders to distinguish the NY5 BRT Routes from “standard” bus service.

	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
	Organizational	Form a transit information clearinghouse	4.1.1	CDTA, CDTC
	Investment	Expand the "Ride the Dotted Line" program with themed service brochures, buses, etc.	4.2.2	CDTA



The Corridor

II. Improve The Pedestrian Environment

Concepts presented in the newsletter distributed in the spring and summer of 2000 included ideas on improvements to the pedestrian environment along Route 5. Numerous survey respondents expressed concern over the existing pedestrian accommodations on the Corridor as evidenced by some of their comments. Below are a select few of the over 110 individual respondents' comments related to Route 5's current pedestrian environment. (Over 25% of all respondents providing written comments).

"Living on Mordella Rd, a very busy street with no sidewalks, makes this new vision a good idea. Crossing streets, particularly Route 5 is very dangerous."

"In the foreseeable future - it will be good for the community - especially for pedestrian traffic crossing Central Ave. Crossing now is a nightmare especially for the elderly and the handicapped and people who can't walk fast. Bicyclists would also benefit."

"It is critical for our cities to survive that streets be made pedestrian friendly."

"The biggest problem facing Route 5 is for pedestrian traffic. It is dangerous and almost impossible to cross Central Ave."

"I like the idea of redeveloping the Avenue with a friendlier "feel" for pedestrian and bus commuters. Currently it is not an attractive environment and is really a challenge to walk."

"The only way to improve downtown Schenectady is to increase pedestrian traffic and bring back shops and cafes."

Improving the Corridor's pedestrian environment requires relatively minimal input and yet provides a synergistic string of benefits:

Improved Perceived And Real Pedestrian Safety: A more active pedestrian environment, including active uses fronting the street, improved lighting, improved visibility of street-level activity and a more human-scale environment decrease opportunistic crime while improving the perceived and real safety of an area.

Improved "Sociability" Of The Street: Streets account for the greatest square footage of public space in most communities. In the Corridor, neighborhoods and districts whose streets are places for people, not only cars, can reclaim their public realm.

Improved Quality of Life: Streets which are calm, attractive, and safe not only become pedestrian-friendly, they become pedestrian destinations which contribute to the attractiveness of real estate and can help to spur economic development.



Indirect benefits: Making a pedestrian-friendly street also opens the door for street designs which serve multiple functions and do more than just carry traffic. For example, chicanes which may be appropriate on some streets in surrounding neighborhoods or districts can be used not only as a means of calming traffic, but also for snow storage during winter road clearing.

Decreased Dependence on the Automobile: Automobile dependence is a vicious cycle wherein the more cars are used to get around, the more infrastructure is needed to accommodate them and the more infrastructure is designed around cars, the more people need cars to get around.

Improves the Quality of All Trips: The beginning and end of every trip we take is a pedestrian trip, so an improved pedestrian environment increases the quality of all trips.

A. Apply traffic calming measures

Traffic in much of the Corridor is un-pedestrian in velocity and scale. Traffic calming measures help to replace auto-dominance with pedestrian-equivalence by making streets, which are necessarily shared by pedestrians, bicycles and cars, safer and less intimidating for pedestrians. Along Central Avenue and State Street, traffic in the urban portions of the Corridor can be "calmed" by utilizing narrower lanes, providing on-street parking, and appropriate pedestrian signalization. In the more suburban parts of the Corridor, through traffic can be separated from local traffic by creating "multi-way" boulevards. The following are traffic calming measures which can be applied in neighborhoods and districts along the Corridor. Some are applicable to Route 5 itself while others are best suited to streets within surrounding neighborhoods and districts where appropriate:

Narrow Streets: A basic way to introduce "pedestrian-equivalence" is to reduce the area of the street which is dedicated to through traffic. By doing this, the perception of a narrower

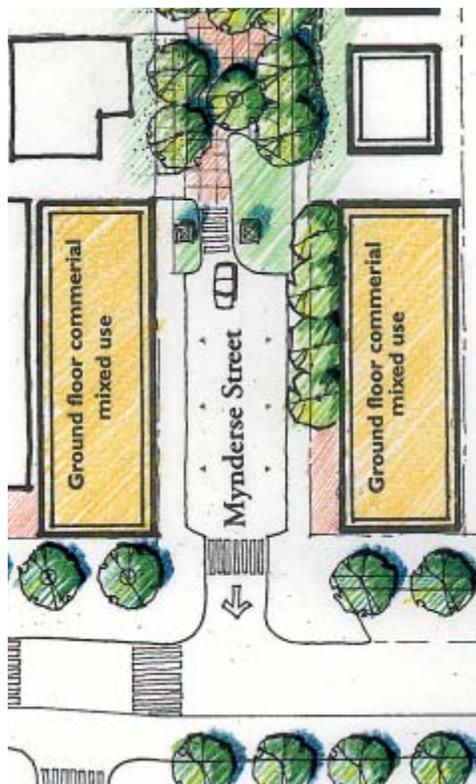
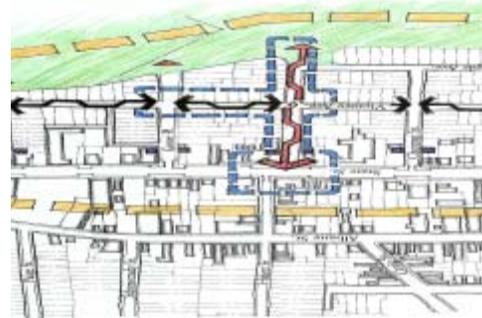
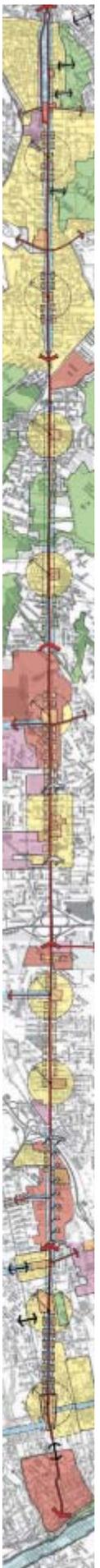


Figure IV.3: Neighborhood Gateway in Vale Neighborhood, Schenectacy



The Corridor

streets, prompts drivers to decrease their level of risk by dropping their speed. With the additional margin for error in a wider traffic lane, drivers will increase their speeds to maintain the same level of risk. Methods for decreasing the perceived width of a street include visually distinguishing the streets uses by separating traffic lanes from parking lanes, and parking lanes from pedestrian traffic using grade changes, changes in paving, bollards, furnishings, striping and landscaping. These elements help to organize the public space on the street while allowing the uses to coexist.

Shorten Turning Radii Around Corners: Corners designed with longer turning radii (20 feet or more), or “soft” corners allow drivers to turn a corner faster and less carefully, whereas a shorter radius forces a driver to come to a near stop and to check the intersection more carefully for automobile and pedestrian traffic.

Vertical Deflectors: Vertical deflectors include speed bumps, dips and tables which intermittently raise or lower the grade of the roadway so as to force drivers to decrease their speed as they negotiate the grade change. Speed

The Corridor

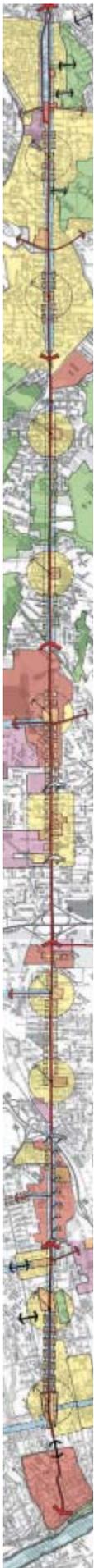


Figure IV.4: Potential Traffic-calming Elements, Vale Neighborhood, Schenectady

tables are raised areas of asphalt which are generally long enough to allow the front and rear wheels of the vehicle to make the grade change before returning to the normal grade. Speed tables can help to define pedestrian crossings and can accommodate snow removal better than speed bumps.

Chicanes: Chicanes can be considered “lateral deflectors.” Chicanes prevent drivers from taking a “straight shot” down the street by forcing them to negotiate “off-sets” along the right of way. Chicanes also provide the opportunity to design landscaping and furnishings into a generally less “linear” pedestrian environment. These landscaped areas also provide opportunities for environmental alternatives for handling storm water and snow storage.

Bulbouts: Bulbouts (also called neckdowns) narrow the distance across a street at pedestrian crossings by bringing the curb out into the parking lane. The psychological effect for drivers is similar to narrowing streets, while pedestrians are less vulnerable as they cross a shorter distance.

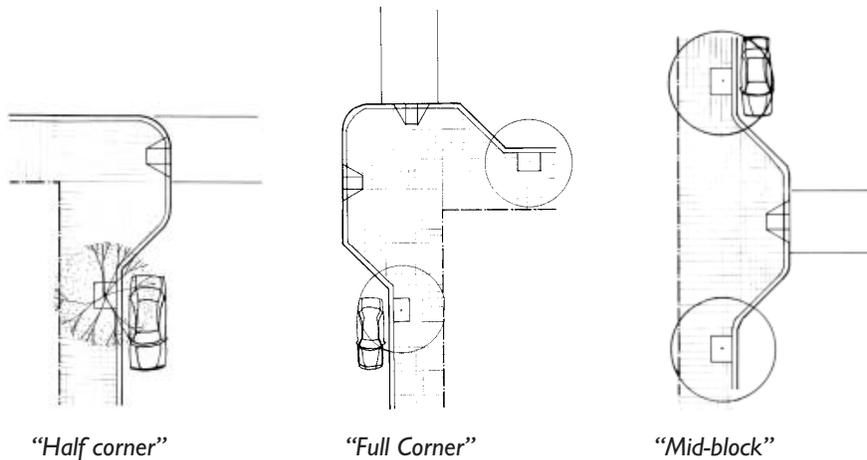
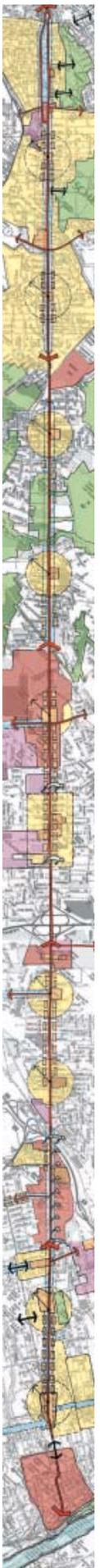


Figure IV.5: Bulb-outs

Angled Parking: Angled parking increases the buffer between the sidewalk and the street, while forcing drivers to be more careful when backing out of a parking stall.

i	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Policy	Create a comprehensive plan to ensure that traffic calming measures are suitable and appropriate for each location	1.3.3 3.3.1 4.1.1 4.2.3 4.3.2	NYSDOT, Jurisdictions, CDTA, CDTC
👁️	Investment	Narrow streets and travel lanes according to street sections developed in this study	2.3.10.1 3.3.1 4.2.3 4.3.2	NYSDOT, Jurisdictions, CDTA, CDTC





B. Other Streetscape Improvements

Many of the traffic calming methods described above provide added benefits such as providing a defining look and feel to a street or neighborhood, creating opportunities for public space, additional parking, and landscaping. Additional streetscaping improvements, described below, can also help a neighborhood begin to distinguish itself and to reclaim its streets. These streetscape improvements should be designed and selected to support the identity of the streets' neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Access Management: In some streets such Mynderse in Schenectady's Vale Neighborhood, cars and pedestrians can coexist if the volume of cars is limited. Rather than gating off neighborhood streets from State Street or Central Avenue, streets can be made one-way in or out and can be necked-down with gateway elements which also reinforce neighborhood identity.

Improved Commercial Signage: Commercial signage provides visual diversity to the streetscape, however, too much and too varied signage can quickly devolve into "sign pollution." A commercial signage program can allow for the diversity of private stores, while ensuring that total visual impact of signs does not destroy the street environment. Signs should be pedestrian in scale and incorporated into architectural elements, such as awnings, arcades, display windows, tower elements, eaves or placards. Signs should not be allowed above the eaves of the roofs as is typical of many auto-oriented settings, which require larger signs to attract the attention of fast-moving traffic. Backlit signs should be prohibited. In-window signage should also be regulated and minimized so as to preserve transparency at the street level. Signs should complement the architectural character of the building by coordinating their design, material and color with the design of the building. In some commercial districts, such as Auto Row in Albany, neon signs can complement the activities in the district.

Improved Street Lighting: Perceived and actual pedestrian safety can be improved in neighborhoods by improving lighting. Sidewalks, pathways and plazas and parking areas should be well illuminated in order to create an environment that is safe for evening activity. Light standards should not exceed a height of 10 feet when adjacent to a public street or pedestrian path. Bollards, path lights and uplights can also provide low lighting to illuminate pathways and landscaping. Light fixtures should be selected to echo the character of the neighborhood or commercial district.

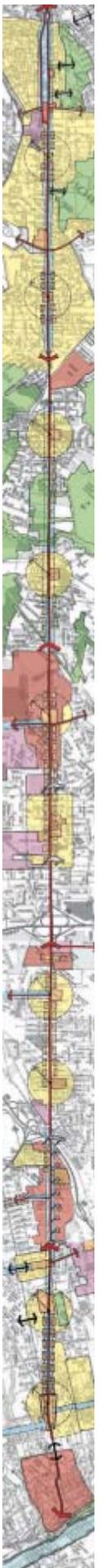
i	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Program	Create a capital improvements program that addresses pedestrian and bicycle safety and comfort	1.3.3 2.3.1.1 3.3.1 4.1.1 4.1.4 4.2.1.1 4.2.1.2 4.2.3 4.3.1 4.3.2	NYSDOT, CDTC, Jurisdictions
⚡	Investment	Widen sidewalks to enlarge the pedestrian public realm and allow businesses to expand their activities	1.3.2 1.3.3 2.3.10.1 2.3.1.1 3.3.1 4.1.4 4.2.1.1 4.2.3 4.3.2	CDTC, Jurisdictions
⚡	Policy	Ensure that the individual identity of each neighborhood is enhanced through the improvements	1.1.2 1.3.2 1.3.3 1.4.1 2.3.1 2.3.2 2.3.8 2.3.1.1 3.3.1 3.3.2	Jurisdictions, BID Association, Sub-CorridorBIDs

III. Improve Mobility And Accessibility For All Modes (Motor Vehicle, Bicycle, And Pedestrian) Throughout The Corridor

A. Develop and Adopt The Street Design Handbook

Improving the Corridor to better serve all modes of travel including motor vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles is important along its entire length. It is critical to recognize that the types and extent of improvements will vary from typology to typology and segment to segment. The street design handbook has been developed to address issues of pedestrian and bicycle friendliness, motor vehicle traffic flow and access, and transit flow and access. The handbook provides stakeholders and others involved in street redesign projects with a clear and common understanding of how the concepts developed as part of this study can be translated into tangible, physical changes to the roadway and its streetscape. The handbook will be developed through cooperative effort relying on an Engineering Committee comprised of representatives from each of the jurisdictions, NYSDOT, CDTA and CDTC, among others.

i	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Organizational	Adopt the Street Design Handbook	4.2.3	CDTC, CDTA, NYSDOT, Jurisdictions



The Corridor



B. Create a Corridor-wide Access Management Plan

Central Avenue and State Street’s primary role is that of a regional and local transportation route. The degree to which Central Avenue/State Street is successful in fulfilling its secondary (but important) role as a community street, is tied to how successful it is in managing local and regional traffic. A Corridor-wide access management plan should be created in conjunction with implementing the street designs proposed in the NY5 Street Design Handbook and the technical guidelines established in the New Visions study to ensure that the need for access and an interconnected street pattern is balanced with the need for efficient and safe through-access along Central Avenue and State Street. A Corridor-wide access management plan should be developed so that it can be adopted and implemented at a sub-corridor level. In addition, the access management plan should incorporate the guidelines, as refined in the street design booklet for future improvements. These guidelines should include not only State Street and Central Avenue but also the streets connecting the neighborhoods along the Corridor to Central Avenue and State Street. NYSDOT's Corridor Management Group should be enlisted to assist with development of a Route 5 Access Management Plan, taking advantage of the experience they've gained in developing and implementing such plans in other areas of New York State.

i	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Organizational	Ensure that all jurisdictions take part in this process to create a plan that addresses the entire Corridor	1.2.3 1.3.3 2.2.1 2.2.2 4.1.1 4.2.1.1 4.2.1.2 4.3.1	CDTC, NYSDOT, CDTA, Jurisdictions, Counties
⚡	Program	Create design guidelines to guide the implementation of streetscape improvements	1.1.2 1.3.2 2.2.1 4.1.1 4.3.1	CDTC, CDTA, Jurisdictions

C. Create Sub-Corridor Access Management Plans

Because changes in roadway configuration are likely to be implemented at the jurisdictional level, jurisdictions should work with CDTC and NYSDOT to create and adopt access management plans which are based on the Corridor-wide Access Management Plan. As with the overall Corridor Access Management Plan, constructive involvement of corridor property owners and stakeholder groups will be imperative in developing a realistic and implementable plan.

i	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Investment	Integrate the Access Management Plan with the street sections developed in this report	1.3.3 4.1.1 4.1.4 4.2.1.1 4.2.1.2 4.2.3	CDTC, CDTA, Jurisdictions, Counties, NYSDOT
⚡	Program	Create design guidelines to guide the implementation of streetscape improvements	1.3.2 4.1.1 4.3.1	CDTC, CDTA, Jurisdictions

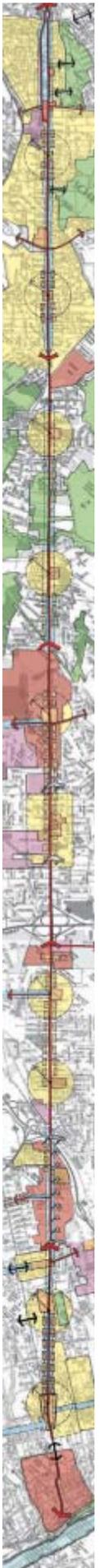
IV. Create a Framework for Corridor Cooperation

Ideally, a Corridor-wide Business Improvement District (BID) would be created to coordinate business improvements and development in the Corridor while advocating for national, state and regional funding for improvements. However, state and federal economic development programs are not currently oriented towards a multi-jurisdictional approach. Stakeholders should look and lobby for federal and state economic development funds that support multi-jurisdictional cooperation. In the meantime, sub-corridor BIDs should be created and then organized into an association of BIDs in the Corridor. A Corridor BID Association will possess the coordinated approach of a Corridor-wide BID, while still allowing the sub-BIDs to compete for state and federal funds. Should support for multi-jurisdictional cooperation improve and the proper organizational authority be created, the BID Association could evolve into a Corridor-wide BID.

A. Form a Route 5 stakeholder group and Create a multi-jurisdictional work plan

Building off the cooperation among the corridor communities, counties, NYSDOT, CDTA, and CDTC in coming together to complete this study, continue this commitment to cooperation and coordination by forming a Route 5 stakeholder group or "Route 5 Coalition" modeled after the REVEST working group. This group would serve as a constant and mutual support mechanism and information-sharing forum as the individual communities, agencies and other stakeholder groups work toward implementation of the Study's recommended actions.

The next step for creating a continuing framework of cooperation among the corridor communities will be to come up with a work plan which will identify the common goals of the corridor and lay the groundwork for each community to set up a sub-Corridor BID. This work plan should use this report to articulate a vision for the Corridor and to define the steps for achieving the vision. The work plan should also clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the sub-BIDs to the BID Association. Once the sub-corridor BIDs have been created (see *Action B Create Sub-Corridor BIDs*, next), they may then choose to enter into a formal or informal agreement binding them to this work plan.



The Corridor



ⓘ	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Organizational	Create a forum for discussion and creation of the workplan	1.2.1 1.2.3 2.2.1 2.2.2 2.3.1 2.3.2 4.2.1	CDTC, Jurisdictions, Counties
⚡	Investment	Hire consultants that can assist in consensus building and work plan formulation	1.2.1 1.2.3 1.3.3 2.2.1 2.2.2 2.3.1 2.3.2 2.3.4	CDTC, Jurisdictions, Counties

B. Create Sub-Corridor BIDs

In tandem with the creation of a work plan, the five jurisdictions along the Corridor should establish BIDs along the portion of the Corridor which falls under their jurisdiction. Each Sub-Corridor BID should encompass (at a minimum) the 1/2 mile area on either side of the Corridor which has been designated in this Study. The geographical definitions of the Sub-Corridor BIDs should leave no gaps between jurisdictions, so that improvements can potentially be seamless between the Sub-Corridor BIDs. The structure of the BIDs should be established to anticipate multi-jurisdictional cooperation, at least informally and potentially formally in the long run (see *Action C. Create BID Associations*, next). Establishing the BIDs in tandem with the establishment of the work plan will hopefully streamline the process within each community by sharing similar documentation and will allow for the work plan to be modified to reflect the reality of the Sub-Corridor BIDs capabilities and constraints.

ⓘ	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Organizational	Engage the community in the creation of Sub-corridor BIDs	1.3.3 2.3.1 2.3.2 2.3.5	Jurisdictions, Chambers of Commerce, Property Owners, Businesses
⚡	Investment	Create a consultant database to provide sources for assistance with legal and organizational matters	1.3.3	Jurisdictions, Chambers of Commerce
👁️	Organizational	Assist in BID startup and provide the proper legal and support mechanisms for their continued operation	1.3.3 2.3.1 2.3.2 2.3.5 4.4.2	Jurisdictions, Chambers of Commerce, Property Owners, Businesses

C. Create a Corridor BID Association

Once a work plan has been written and the Sub-BIDs established, the sub-BIDs may enter in an cooperative association which is charged with coordinating these BIDs in an effort to achieve the long-term vision set forth in the paper and in the work plan. CDTC could be a "parent" to this group and would

provide the transportation focus. As mentioned earlier, sub-BIDs would either be formally or informally bound to the association, possibly establishing a form of governance that requires sub-Corridor improvement to be approved by the BID. Even without such formal structures, the BID Association will serve an important role in coordinating a vision for the Corridor.

i	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
👁️	Policy	Assist in BID Association startup and provide the proper legal and support mechanisms for their continued operation	1.3.3 2.3.1 2.3.2 2.3.5 4.4.2	Jurisdictions, Sub-Corridor BIDs Chambers of Commerce, Property owners, Businesses

D. Create a Corridor identity and unified marketing effort

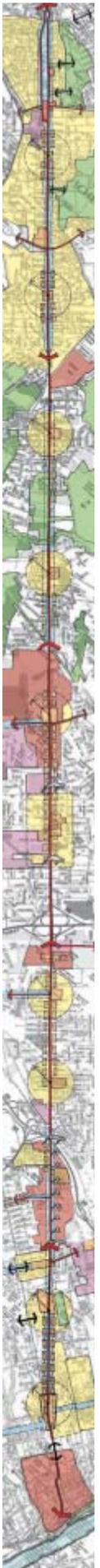
The Corridor BID Association would also lend itself to developing a marketing approach for the Corridor. This marketing effort should focus on NY5’s value as an important transportation corridor in the region as well as a community street which contributes to quality of life in the region.

i	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Policy	Ensure that the identity for the Corridor is derived from elements of the Corridor (history, architectural character, natural features, etc.)	1.1.2 1.2.1 1.3.2 1.3.3 2.2.2 2.3.1 2.3.2 2.3.10.2 2.4.2 3.3.1	Jurisdictions, BID Associations, Sub-Corridor BIDs

E. Look and lobby for funds that support multi-jurisdictional cooperation

Though the BID Association will not be directly receiving funds for specific improvements, it should be on the lookout for funds that support the operation and research of multi-jurisdictional associations. In addition, the BID Association can search and advocate for opportunities to fund a multi-jurisdictional BID (i.e. a Corridor BID).

i	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
👁️	Investment	Look and lobby for funds that support multi-jurisdictional cooperation	1.2.1 1.3.3 2.2.2 2.3.1 2.3.2 3.2.1	CDTC, CDRPC, Jurisdictions, Counties



The Corridor

V. Encourage Smart-Growth Policies Throughout the Corridor

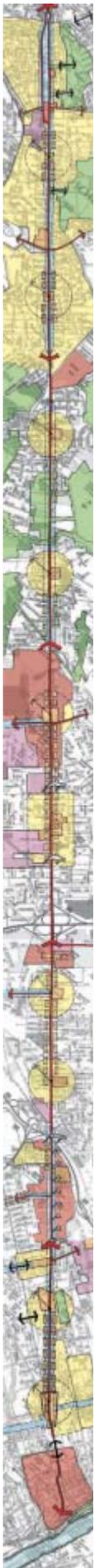
The intention of a Corridor-wide planning effort such as the NY5 Study is to encourage stakeholders to think about the Corridor as a connected system. Intensifying development in one jurisdiction may make open space accessible in another. Clustering a type of regional use in one jurisdiction allows for the development of another cluster elsewhere in the Corridor. While Smart Growth policies may need to be addressed locally, it is critical that the stakeholders in the Corridor formalize a method for discussing growth issues in the context of each jurisdiction, the entire Corridor, and the Capital District Region.

A major tenet of “Smart Growth” is the efficient use of land through infill and reuse of vacant and underutilized land. The Preferred Future has identified vacant and underutilized land throughout the entire Corridor. Table IV.1. *Preferred Scenario Land Use Capacity and Utilization* summarizes the land use capacity identified in the “opportunity areas” which total over 1,300 acres in the entire Corridor. Over 80% of this capacity is on sites that are currently developed that could be reused. Land within the Town of Colonie accounts for just over 40% of this capacity. Depending upon the regional growth rate and the land use policies adopted by the Corridor communities this Study estimates that between 20 and 50% of this capacity could be developed over the next 15 years.

Table IV.1: Preferred Scenario Land Use Capacity and Utilization

	Potential Opportunity Areas			Supply Used in Future Scenario			
	Total Land (acres)	% Vacant	% Reuse	Intermediate Acres	% of Supply	Stimulated Acres	% of Supply
Albany	308	27%	73%	67.5	22%	153.5	50%
Town of Colonie	562	14%	86%	77	14%	220	39%
Village of Colonie	177	23%	77%	47	27%	127	72%
Niskayuna	121	15%	85%	29	24%	72.5	60%
Schenectady	137	18%	82%	26	19%	94	69%
Total Corridor	1,305	18%	82%	247	19%	667	51%

Many of the implementation measures included in this plan are related to this issue. The following are some specific, overarching policies and programs that are needed to move forward in encouraging infill and reuse development.



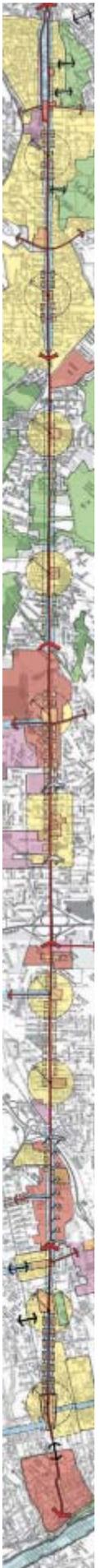
A. Promote compact development

Small efforts on behalf of the Corridor stakeholders can help to “spread the word” about the connections between compact development, effective transportation, economic vitality, and quality of life. Without taking an anti-growth stance it is possible to convey fundamental land use concepts to decision-makers, developers and the general public through press releases, community-awareness opportunities such as newsletters and events, or simply through word of mouth.

i	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Policy Programs	Develop design guidelines addressing site planning, building design, and landscape design	1.1.2 1.2.3 1.3.1 1.3.2 1.3.3 2.3.10.1 2.3.10.2 3.3.1	Jurisdictions
⚡	Policy	Modify zoning ordinances to encourage compact development	1.3.1 1.3.3 2.3.10.1 2.3.10.3 3.1.1 3.3.1 4.3.2 4.3.3 4.3.4	Jurisdictions
⚡	Program	Provide incentives for compact development	2.3.3 2.3.6.1 2.3.6.2 2.3.6.3 2.3.8 2.3.9 2.4.4 4.3.3 4.4.3	Jurisdictions, CDTC, CDTA

B. Help build the Regional Development Plan

The current update to the *New Visions* plan recommends that a Regional Development Plan (RDP) be prepared in a cooperative effort amongst the Capital Region’s stakeholders. The RDP is a document that was previously adopted in 1978, but which has not been utilized in the recent past. It creates an opportunity for the 70+ municipalities in the region to coordinate their land use and economic development strategies to more efficiently shape the Region and utilize the transportation system. The RDP process would allow each municipality to more clearly understand its relationship to the other municipalities in the Region, and allow them to reach agreement on how their land use and economic policies could complement one another. This could then lead to a more economically competitive region, and improve the economic strength and sustainability of each municipality.



The Corridor



Over the past several years, both CDTC's and CDRPC's efforts have laid down a solid foundation for an update to the RDP. Toward that end in 2001-2002, CDTC and CDRPC will jointly pursue a new initiative to develop "New Visions for a Quality Region". This initiative will build from and expand the New Visions 2030 effort's planned "Visioning" Task Force into the regional relationships between local development (its form and local orientation) and regional system issues (notably transportation). This effort will integrate several other work efforts including CDTC's *New Visions* update work; CDRPC's GIS, Regional Profile, Suburban Development Review and Urban Development Review work; CDTC's Linkage Program and other community-based efforts to reorganize local development patterns to foster a "sense of place", livability, economic health and transportation efficiency; and work by the Governor's task force on Quality Communities, and the products of that statewide effort.

The RDP would also create the opportunity to identify other corridors in the region that could benefit from a planning process and a plan similar to that which has been developed here for the Route 5 Corridor.

As part of this effort, Corridor Communities could take the lead in supporting the Urban Service Area for the Capital District, which is included in the New Visions Plan. Using transportation investments as a way to support urban reinvestment and infill development provides tremendous advantages. The New Visions Plan calls for encouraging residential and commercial development to locate in the Urban Service Area using transportation investments.

The Corridor BID Association discussed earlier in this section is ideally positioned to represent the needs and objectives of the Corridor in the Regional Development Plan process in addition to the seven jurisdictions along the Corridor.

i	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
👁️	Organizational	Create a forum to provide on-going, long-term support to oversee creation and implementation of the RDP	1.1.1 1.2.1 1.2.3 1.2.4 1.3.3 2.1.1	CDRPC, CDTC, Counties, Jurisdictions
👁️	Policy	As part of the RDP each jurisdiction should adopt an Urban Service Area	1.1.1 1.2.3 1.3.3 2.1.1	CDRPC, Counties, Jurisdictions

C. Create and update comprehensive plans

Of the five jurisdictions which touch the NY5 Corridor, only two, Niskayuna (adopted in 1994) and Schenectady (adopted in 1971) have Comprehensive Plans. The Town of Colonie has a similar document, the Land Use Management Program, which was updated in 1988. While each jurisdiction along the corridor has developed more recent area-specific strategic plans (for example, Schenectady's Downtown Master Plan, and Albany's Capitalize Albany plan),

undertaking an overall comprehensive or municipality wide master planning effort can have farther reaching benefits than and can act in support of area-specific or strategic plans.

Niskayuna and Schenectady need to update their existing master plan documents and the jurisdictions which have not yet adopted a Comprehensive Plan, namely Albany, The Village of Colonie and The Town of Colonie, need to create and adopt them. A comprehensive plan is most useful when it is regarded as a "living document" which both guides the long-term vision for the community and creates the opportunity for the plan to adjust to changes in economies, development climates, technologies and demographics. Where appropriate, a comprehensive plan should make site-specific recommendations (i.e. specific plans), which, by virtue of being adopted as part of the comprehensive plan, will have legal basis for implementation. The recommendations included in this study's report should be reflected wherever possible in the comprehensive plans.

①	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
👁️	Policy	Integrate the goals and actions of the Preferred Future and RDP in the Comprehensive Plans	1.1.1 1.3.1	Jurisdictions
👁️	Policy	Ensure the completion of Comprehensive Plans by agreeing upon timelines for completion	1.2.3 2.2.1	CDRPC, Counties, Jurisdictions

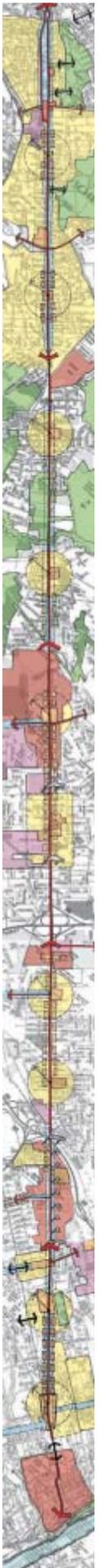
VI.Revitalize Existing Development

As discussed in previous sections of this report, even through many land use and demographic changes in recent decades, the NY5 corridor has remained an active commercial area, one of the most heavily traveled surface arterials and the strongest transit corridor in the region. Its mix of residential, office and retail development and the presence of residential and employment anchors at either end provide for a two-direction travel dynamic that is rare in metropolitan areas of the Capital District's size. The need to revitalize existing development was a recurring theme throughout numerous discussions that took place during the Alternative Futures Charette sessions, the Urban Typology Workshops, public meetings and in written comments received in response to the newsletter survey.

A. Provide and improve access to community services

Community services are important for stabilizing and supporting the revitalization of the existing neighborhoods along the Corridor. Services are needed to support businesses and families within the neighborhoods, and high quality services, particularly parks and schools, will make the area attractive to new residents and businesses.

The location and area of service for community services must provide for a high



The Corridor



level of accessibility by all modes of travel. Albany and Schenectady should encourage the development of organizations providing social and recreational services to neighborhoods. Development of such community centers should be in locations which provide safe and optimal access to transit, residential neighborhoods, and complementary uses.

In several locations along the Corridor, vacant or underutilized buildings whose uses are no longer profitable provide opportunities for cost-effective renovation into community centers. Beyond monetary savings, the benefits of "recycling" buildings illustrate a reinvestment in the community while still appreciating the neighborhood's history.

A community center's physical connection with its neighborhood models its connection to the people it serves. Streetscape improvements can help to define this connection by extending consistent furnishing, lighting, and paving as "arms" into the residential neighborhoods. This not only encourages pedestrian access, but also reinforces that service's role in the community, presenting an inviting, human-oriented interface with the community.

i	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
👁️	Policy	Support existing and new organizations that provide social and recreational services to neighborhoods	2.3.5 2.3.11 2.4.5	Jurisdictions, Neighborhood Associations
⚡	Investment	Provide or locate funding for these organizations, facilitate funding acquisition, and advertise services provided by these organizations	2.3.5 2.3.11 2.4.1 2.4.2 2.4.5 2.4.6 3.4.2	Jurisdictions, Neighborhood Associations, Sub-Corridor BIDs
⚡	Investment	Modify code requirements to facilitate the renovation of existing buildings for such uses taking advantage of significant or historic to give the community strongly identifiable centers	1.3.2 2.3.3 2.3.8 2.3.10.1 2.3.10.2 2.4.4 3.4.1 3.4.2 3.4.3 4.3.3 4.4.1	Jurisdictions
⚡	Investment	Improve access to these services by upgrading streetscapes and providing amenities	1.3.2 1.3.3 2.4.3 3.2.2 4.2.1.1 4.2.3 4.3.3 4.4.1	BID Association, Sub-Corridor BIDs
👁️	Policy	Locate their facilities close to transit, residential neighborhoods, and complementary uses	1.3.2 2.3.8 2.4.4 3.3.1 3.4.1 4.3.2	Jurisdictions, CDTA

B. Continue public/private support for revitalization programs

As mentioned in the Governor's Quality Communities Task Force report, "Revitalization efforts pay off in reduced unemployment, higher property values and new investment. Concentrating compatible development in traditional commercial areas makes better use of public investment in infrastructure and existing building stock to lower the cost of government. Economic rebirth can and often does contribute to environmental protection. ... revitalization tends to reduce development pressure on open spaces. Valuable resources like wetlands, forests and farms are less likely to be lost to sprawl. A strong commercial core also improves a community's capacity to address social issues like housing, crime and education." (pg. 37, Quality Communities Interagency Task Force Report, January 2001)

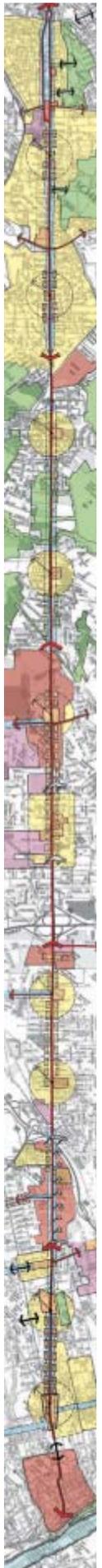
It is important that corridor stakeholders are aware of and positioned to take advantage of state supported revitalization efforts so that these can be leveraged with those occurring along the corridor.

i	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
👁	Organizational	Monitor the implementation of recommendations made in Governor's Quality Communities January 2001 Task Force report and be positioned to take advantage of funding and technical assistance initiatives to foster revitalization in the corridor communities		CDTC, Jurisdictions, BID Association

C. Building code reform

During the Alternative Futures Charette problems typically encountered in redeveloping existing buildings was highlighted as both a concern to private property owners and developers and municipal officials. An identified barrier to productive reuse are the requirements of current building codes. As currently enacted, these codes can often make the cost of renovating existing building stock prohibitive. Such codes often prohibit mixing uses like retail and residential in wood frame buildings, or make it difficult and expensive to convert space above stores for residential units due to requirements for more costly building materials (e.g. masonry walls) where less expensive materials would suffice. Disabled access requirements can also make building reuse prohibitively expensive – elevator and maneuvering requirements often do not fit within historic building structures.

The NYS Legislature and the NYS Department of State have been confronting this issue which impedes revitalization efforts in many communities across New York State. New legislation and a Department of State rehaul of the current NY State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code with the family of International Codes are expected within the next year. These reforms are designed to include provisions to assist developers in cost effective rehabilitation of existing



The Corridor

buildings. Corridor communities should review their building and related codes and update them to reflect these changes.

①	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
👁️	Organizational	Monitor the adoption of State legislation on building code reform and its relationship to the NYS Department of State's overhaul of the NYS Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code.		CDTC, Jurisdictions, BID Association
⚡	Organizational	Review and analyze municipal codes and work to enact changes as needed to promote reuse and revitalization.		Jurisdictions, BID Association

VII. Maintain and Enhance the Vitality of Downtown Albany and Schenectady

Despite growth outside of the downtowns, the Urban Cores of Albany and Schenectady possess the majority of the economic "ballast" for the Corridor. Consequently it is important that downtown employment remain stable and that jobs are added in coming years. The downtowns have faced and continue to face a significant amount

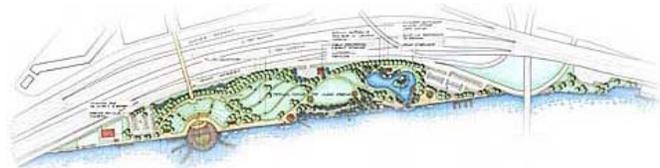


Figure IV. 6: Downtown Albany Waterfront Redevelopment Plan

of competition from the more suburban areas in the form of office campuses, and R&D and flex office space. Likewise the urban cores have suffered from a retailer exodus due to the rising success of regional malls and other suburban centers. The consultants' study shows that the majority of demand exists in Class A office space. The continued importance of the downtowns as major employment centers relies upon the creation of a more vibrant environment in the downtowns. The downtowns can compete with suburban office parks by providing the services, retail activity, entertainment opportunities, and the ability to live and work within the downtown. The downtowns should attempt to compete for this market while marketing the downtown to employers based on the following assets:

- a sophisticated business climate with premier office space;
- walking access to a variety of uses, including business services and entertainment;
- prime access to high quality transit; and,
- the availability of state-of-the art telecommunications infrastructure.

These assets can be supported and strengthened by the following actions.



A. Upgrade downtown office stock

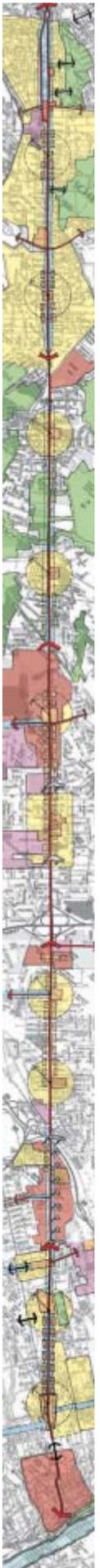
Provide financial assistance and incentives to property managers and owners looking to upgrade buildings. In conjunction with other objectives outlined in this study, the cities may use this opportunity to encourage owners to provide ground-floor retail where it does not already exist, and where it is viable.

i	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
👁️	Investment	Advertise opportunities within the downtown via a GIS/web system and other avenues to reach potential investors and entrepreneurs	1.2.4 2.3.1 2.3.2 2.4.5	BID Association, Sub-Corridor BIDs, Chambers of Commerce, Jurisdictions
👁️	Policy	Provide financial assistance and incentives to property managers and owners looking to upgrade buildings or redevelop sites	2.2.3 2.3.3 2.3.6.1 2.3.6.2 2.3.6.3 2.3.7 2.3.8 2.3.9 2.3.10.1 2.3.10.2 2.4.4 3.4.2 3.4.3 4.3.3	Jurisdictions

B. Facilitate the development of telecommunications infrastructure

Regardless of whether or not the downtowns identify themselves as hi-tech, most small, medium and large companies are looking for improved telecommunications options, including high-speed internet access. The development of this infrastructure may require that fiber optic networks be installed downtown where they do not already exist. These networks will encourage telecommunications providers to support the downtown markets with inexpensive high-speed data and voice communication. The cities should identify a telecommunications developer and work with them to provide access to these lines from all downtown properties.

i	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
👁️	Policy	Encourage or provide incentives for telecommunications companies to upgrade the technological infrastructure within the downtown	2.3.11 2.4.3 3.2.2	Metroplex, Jurisdictions, Counties
👁️	Policy	Coordinate telecommunications infrastructure upgrades with other capital improvements or maintenance of public infrastructure and/or provide the necessary conduits for housing fiber optic networks	2.3.11 2.4.3 3.2.3 3.4.1	CDTA, CDTC, Jurisdictions



The Corridor



C. Campaign for public transit with larger downtown employers

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs can be especially effective in the downtowns where larger concentrations of employment can be found. Increased revenue from the fare box as a result of these programs can be used to support system improvements elsewhere along the Corridor, to incite transit use where employment destinations cannot be as easily pin-pointed.

In conjunction with TDM programs, reducing parking requirements and even setting parking maximums within the downtowns will discourage the practice of providing ample free parking to employees supporting the use of public transit. The cities should work with employers to figure out the trade-offs necessary when reducing parking. On the one hand, employers can reduce "wasted" space and development costs by reducing the amount of parking they need to provide, on the other, the employer will be required to administer or coordinate a program that facilitates public transit usage amongst its employees. Cities could ease this burden on employers by having a publicly administered, efficient, and well-advertised transit coordination program. Checking automobile congestion in the downtowns will also serve to improve the attractiveness of the downtowns to businesses and residents.

	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
	Investment	Work with zoning codes and administrators to reduce the parking requirements within the downtown	2.3.10.1 4.3.3 4.3.4	Jurisdictions

D. Encourage co-location of complementary services and connect business-to-business services

The Albany and Schenectady Chambers of Commerce should develop a geographically-based on-line business locator for members and non-members. These databases could be printed annually as a local business-to-business, block-by-block directory. This will contribute to the overall location efficiency of the downtowns while potentially reducing some traffic through the Corridor.

	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
	Policy	Use GIS to track and encourage development of districts with complimentary uses	1.2.4 1.3.2 1.3.3 2.3.2 3.1.1	Sub-Corridor BIDs, Chambers of Commerce, Jurisdictions, CDTC
	Investment	Print a business-to-business directory organized geographically	1.2.4 2.3.2 3.1.1	Sub-Corridor BIDs, Chambers of Commerce, Jurisdictions
	Investment	Consider making GIS database of SIC codes available on-line for businesses to search geographically for nearby services.	1.2.4 1.3.3	Sub-Corridor BIDs, Chambers of Commerce, Jurisdictions

E. Encourage further diversification of land use in the downtowns

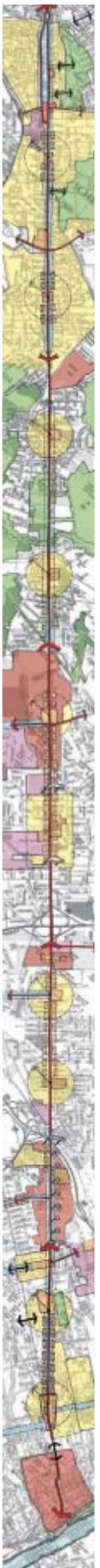
Both Albany and Schenectady have been focusing significant efforts on increasing office uses in their downtowns, particularly working with the state to relocate office uses into the downtowns. Private efforts are also being developed with a focus on the potential for hi-tech development in the region, such as the E-Comm2 project in downtown Albany.

Both cities have also been working on transportation, entertainment, and recreation/open space improvement plans. Without this further diversification of use within the downtowns, they will continue to be "ghost towns" in the evening and on weekends. Both downtowns have a major entertainment facility that is a draw within the region. But there is not the frequency of use to support the variety of other entertainment, dining, and retailing uses to keep many workers or draw other people from throughout the region on a sustained basis. Both cities are focusing efforts and increasing use of these facilities and developing supporting uses. The entertainment anchors of both downtowns are their historic theaters, Proctor's in Schenectady, and the Palace in Albany. Major renovations and/or expansions are being considered for both of these theaters. The Pepsi Arena in Albany is also a major attraction in Albany's downtown.

Schenectady has been preparing plans for a major investment in transportation infrastructure paired with a mixed-use development, the Western Gateway Transportation Center.

Downtown Albany continues to move forward with plans to renovate their waterfront to take advantage of this major amenity.

Additional effort should be put into improving the downtowns for residential uses. Developing residential uses will support retailing and entertainment uses, and correspondingly retail and entertainment uses will make the downtowns more attractive to residents. Effort should also be put into stabilizing the neighborhoods around the downtowns, including those along the Corridor.



The Corridor

i	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Organizational	Coordinate efforts between the various Corridor BIDs and Downtown BIDs	1.2.1 2.2.2 2.3.1 2.3.2 2.3.5	BID Associations, Sub-Corridor BIDs, Downtown Albany BID, Potential Schenectady BID
👁️	Policy Programs	Continue efforts to increase market rate and affordable housing within the downtowns	2.1.1 2.3.4 2.3.10 2.4.3 2.4.5 2.4.6 3.1.1	Jurisdictions, Neighborhood Associations, Developers

Urban Strip

The *Urban Strip* typology describes the first “street-car suburbs” or older urban neighborhoods with medium-density development. Many buildings still front directly onto the street, but they generally have fewer stories than buildings in the urban core. Parcel size is more varied than in the urban core areas with some medium and larger parcels.



Figure IV.9: State Street near Haight in Schenectady

Preferred Future at-a-glance

Applicable to Segments:	2 (Quail St-Watervliet Ave) and 6 (Laurel Ave-Steuben St)
Applicable to Jurisdictions:	Albany and Schenectady
Land Use Change:	Intensify development using infill strategies and by creating neighborhood centers
Transportation Improvements:	In addition to Corridor-wide BRT improvements, incorporate transit connections into pedestrian spaces with attractive and strategically located bus shelters; improve streetscape, lighting and pedestrian crossings; create parking districts and shared parking.
Street Design:	Mixed-flow with parallel bike route, street configurations 1 and 4
Applicable Detail Study:	Woodlawn Plaza and Swinburne Park
Vision Summary:	Central Avenue and State Street will be better defined by using infill development strategies and by bringing buildings up to the sidewalks and corners. Mixed-use centers with strong connections to adjacent neighborhoods will replace underutilized land and stagnant strip malls. Parking district and shared parking will ensure that land devoted to parking is best utilized, freeing up some lots for infill development or civic open space. Some aspects of the streets and pedestrian-paths will be formalized with furnishings, plazas, and landscaping.
Key Implementation Measures:	Coordinated Business Associations (1.2.1); Specific or Area Revitalization Plans (1.4.1); Brownfield and Greyfield Development Support (2.2.3); Support of Existing BIDs (2.3.1); Creation of Sub-Corridor BIDs (2.3.2); Mitigation Fees (2.3.3); Metroplex Funding (2.3.4); Assistance in Land Assembly (2.3.6); Zoning and Building Code Reform (2.3.10); various neighborhood and home ownership measures (2.4.1, 2.4.2, 2.4.3 and 2.4.4); Model Mixed-Use Transit-Oriented Policies and Programs (3.1.1); Building Facade and Signage Programs (3.3.2); Access Management Plan (4.2.1.1); various parking programs (4.3.3, 4.3.4, and 4.4.2); and Transit Station Joint Development (4.4.3).



I. Make Central Avenue/State Street a Community Street

The Urban Strip along Central Avenue/State Street Corridor has the potential to become a community street scaled to and serving the neighborhoods along it. The Corridor therefore has a dual role in being local- and region-serving. Achieving a balance between these roles is paramount in preventing the street from becoming a barrier dividing the Corridor communities. Furthermore, the street designs developed for the segments within the Urban Strip are designed to achieve a balance between the needs of pedestrians, transit, bicyclists, motor vehicles, and on-street parking within a limited right-of-way width.

A. Integrate transit with neighborhoods

For transit to be most effective within the Corridor, complementary land uses must be established in areas that will best serve the majority of residents and workers. Stops and stations must be accessible and within a reasonable walk of origins and destinations. Neighborhood shuttles linking with Corridor transit can serve neighborhoods and employment centers beyond.

①	Type	Measure	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Organizational	CDTA to work with local jurisdictions and property owners to refine transfer stations and other transit facilities along the Corridor	3.2.1 4.1.1 4.1.2 4.2.1 4.2.2 4.4.3	CDTA, Jurisdictions

B. Improve pedestrian and bicycle friendliness of Central Avenue/State Street and adjacent neighborhoods

Pedestrian friendliness is essential to the notion of supplanting "auto dominance" with "pedestrian equivalence." It is achievable through a combination of strategies including: traffic calming, off-street parking consolidation, improved streetscaping (including pedestrian amenities like seating and lighting), and ample pedestrian crossings. Many of the traffic calming features discussed in the Corridor section can be applied to the streets connecting neighborhoods to the Corridor as well as the Corridor itself. The following are some additional measures which will improve the pedestrian environment in the Urban Strip.

Urban Strip

Urban Strip

	Type	Measure	Ref.	Who?
	Policy Investment	Coordinate Undergrounding of utilities with building, streetscape, and infrastructure improvements	3.2.2	Jurisdictions, CDTC, Nigara Mohawk Power
	Organizational	Support Central Avenue BID, create "Sub-corridor BIDs" and Neighborhood Improvement Development Corporations	2.2.2 2.3.1 2.4.5	Central Ave BID, BID Association, Sub-Corridor BIDs, NIDCs, CDTC, Jurisdictions
	Policy	Complete Central State St. Land Use & Transportation study and implement recommendations		Schenectady cities and counties, CDTC, CDTA, Central State St Neighb. Assoc.
	Policy	Adopt Street Design Booklet	4.2.3	CDTC, CDTA, NYSDOT, Jurisdictions

C. Reduce the impact of off-street parking on the pedestrian environment

Several locations within the Urban Strip provide opportunities to improve or remove off-street parking that currently overwhelms the pedestrian environment. Consolidated parking facilities could reduce on-site parking requirements for individual parking owners. Consolidating parking also reduces the amount of curb cuts and creates a more continuous streetwall by eliminating the need for street-facing parking lots on individual parcels. Facilities should be within a reasonable distance of the uses they are serving.

This is the situation currently in the neighborhoods within the Urban Strip, where each use has its individual parking accommodated on-site, creating scattered parking lots that interrupt the street wall. The numerous curb cuts required to access these individual parking lots reduce the number of on-street parking stalls and can prove to be a hazard to pedestrians by increasing potential conflict points where driveways meet sidewalks.

Consolidated parking can include a shared lot in the rear of buildings within a block, with one entrance and one exit (preferably using an existing lane). The lot would be comprised of portions of each individual parcel.

①	Type	Measure	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Policy	Create parking districts	4.4.2 4.3.2	Sub-Corridor BIDs, Developers
⚡	Policy	Institute a parking-in-lieu fee program	2.3.2 2.2.4 2.3.1 2.4.5	Jurisdictions
⚡	Policy	Lower parking requirements where possible	4.3.3	Jurisdictions
⚡	Policy	Create and adopt maximum parking ratios	4.3.4	Jurisdictions
⚡	Policy	Allow shared parking to count toward minimum parking ratios	4.3.3	Jurisdictions

D. Encourage a balance of local and regional uses

It is unlikely that a neighborhood commercial center with a variety and quality of merchandise and services can be fully supported solely by the existing neighborhoods in the urban strips. Higher-quality neighborhood commercial development can be encouraged by two methods. First, these developments should be located in places with good regional access, such as the intersection of State Street with Route 7 in Schenectady. Improvements to the transit service along the Corridor also support increased regional access. Secondly, the efforts to make the urban strip neighborhoods mixed-income neighborhoods will improve local "purchasing power" and thereby encourage higher quality retail and services. Pursuing both of these strategies can help a neighborhood ride the ebbs and flows of the economy better than a neighborhood center catering only to the local market.

At the same time, supporting local businesses will complement regional opportunities as well as support local needs. Small local businesses add to the variety and character of services that are available, helping to distinguish the shopping experience in the Corridor from more standard "chain" shopping areas. Supporting local businesses also creates opportunities for improving the income of local residents, as business owners and employees.



Urban Strip

	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
	Policy	Create tax incentive programs for small business incubators	2.1.1	Metroplex, Sub-Corridor BIDs, Jurisdictions, Counties
	Organizational	Develop small business support programs	1.2.1 2.2.2 2.3.1 2.3.2 2.3.5 2.4.5	Sub-Corridor BIDs
	Investment	Create or support existing City/Junior College Programs for small business owners	1.2.1 2.2.2 2.3.1 2.3.2 2.4.5	Sub-Corridor BIDs, Jurisdictions
	Policy	Create Specific Plans or District Revitalization Plans (with appropriate design guidelines) for important sites which support a mix of regional and local uses. Incorporate these plans into a jurisdiction's comprehensive Plan or zoning ordinance	1.3.2 4.2.1.1 3.4.1	Jurisdictions, Developers
	Organizational	Explore public/private partnerships for implementing mixed-use commercial and residential revitalization	2.2.2 2.3.4	Jurisdictions, Counties
	Organizational	Work cooperatively with other jurisdictions for the benefit of the Corridor in the regional context	1.2.3 2.2.1	Jurisdictions, BID Associations

E. Redevelop key parcels into mixed-use neighborhood centers

Identifying and developing neighborhood centers that provide goods and services for the local area forms both an identity for the neighborhood and creates an activity center that connects the street with adjacent neighborhoods. Centers should be well located and easily accessible from all points in the neighborhood they are serving. Centers should also coincide with transit stations along Central Avenue and State Street. Potential locations have been identified in the Preferred Scenario such as Woodlawn Plaza in Schenectady and the Swinburne Park area in Albany.

	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
	Policy	Prepare site-specific or area plans at key areas such as Woodlawn Plaza and Swinburne Park (see Detailed Studies)	1.4.1 2.3.9 3.3.1 1.3	Sub-Corridor BIDs, Jurisdictions, NIDCs, Economic Development Departments
	Investment	Aggregate parcels for appropriately-scaled development	2.3.6 2.3.7	Sub-corridor BIDs, Developers, Land Trusts
	Program Investment	Partner public entities and private developers interested in mixed-use development projects	2.4.4 2.4.5 2.3	Sub-Corridor BIDs, Developers

Urban Strip

II. Stabilize and Revitalize Existing Neighborhoods

Concentrating redevelopment efforts in existing neighborhoods conserves economic investment (i.e. infrastructure costs) and retains the existing social fabric.

A. Encourage a mix of uses in urban strip neighborhoods

Some residential neighborhoods of the Urban Strip lack a mix of local-serving uses. A mix of uses not only helps to revitalize an area by creating jobs and providing 24-hour activity, but it can also make an area more attractive to new residents. Furthermore, it allows more errands to be accommodated on foot reducing vehicle trips. Streetcar Suburbs such as those found within the Urban Strip typology were typically developed in a manner that was still pedestrian-friendly. Continuous sidewalks, and smaller blocks and lot sizes create shorter distances that are more comfortable to walk; an ideal environment for locating local-serving uses near residences.

①	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Policy	Modify zoning codes where needed, to allow for mixed-use development within the Urban Core neighborhoods to specifically support neighborhood serving retail and services	1.3.3 2.4.3 2.3.10.1	Jurisdictions
⚡	Policy	Adapt zoning in residential neighborhoods to allow retail at key intersections	2.3.10	Jurisdictions
⚡	Program	Actively pursue retail opportunities in neighborhoods	2.4.5	Neighborhood Associations, Sub-Corridor BIDs
⚡	Program	Encourage neighborhood supporting uses to locate in the neighborhoods	1.2.1 1.3.2 2.2.2 2.3.1 2.3.2 2.3.3 2.3.5 2.3.8 2.4.4 2.4.5 3.3.2 3.3.3	Sub-corridor BIDs, Neighborhood Associations, Jurisdictions
⚡	Program	Promote use of local retail and services among residents	2.4.5 3.3.2	Neighborhood Associations, Jurisdictions, Sub-Corridor BIDs
👁️	Organizational	Connect potential mixed-use developers with mixed-use financiers	2.3.1 2.3.2 2.4.5	Sub-Corridor BIDs



B. Improve housing stock

Improving the housing stock within the Urban Strip neighborhoods supports the other implementation measures that seek to improve the economy in the Urban Strip. If developed and implemented carefully, the housing stock can be improved without displacing existing residents while at the same time increasing the diversity of residents

Maintaining and improving the existing housing stock can be achieved through programs that promote home ownership and make available monies for maintenance and renovations.

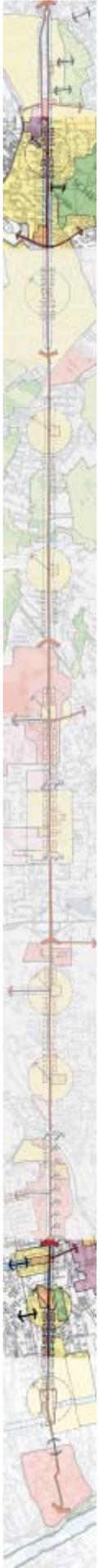
i	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Policy	Reform building codes	3.3.3	Jurisdictions
⚡	Program	Connect residents with home renovations assistance	2.4.2	NIDCs, Jurisdictions, Sub-Corridor BIDs
👁️	Policy	Develop and promote homeownership programs	2.4.1	NIDCs, Jurisdictions, Housing Authorities, Counties, Sub-Corridor BIDs
👁️	Organizational	Create and support Neighborhood Investment Corporations and Neighborhood Improvement Development Corporations	2.4.5	Jurisdictions

C. Encourage a diversity of housing types and prices

A diversity of housing prices within a neighborhood translates to a diversity of incomes. This can help a neighborhood ride the ebbs and flows of a local economy better than a neighborhood catering to a single market niche (i.e. predominantly "two-family" stacked flat neighborhoods). A diversity of housing types can also adapt to the changing needs of local residents during their lifetime, enabling them to stay within the community.

Urban Strip

Urban Strip





	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
	Policy	Develop innovative zoning ordinances to facilitate varying lot sizes, rental units, in-law units, and live/work units	2.3.10 2.4.6	Jurisdictions
	Policy	Ensure that zoning encourages a diversity of housing types and home prices	2.3.10	Jurisdictions
	Policy	Encourage neighboring services to support higher and lower-income residents	2.4.5 2.3	NIDCs, Sub-Corridor BIDs, Housing Authority
	Policy Investment	Improve neighborhood schools to make neighborhoods more attractive for families	1.2.2 1.3.2 2.1.1 2.4.3	School Districts, NY State, Jurisdictions
	Investment	Educate real estate brokers on the benefits of mixed-income neighborhoods and provide marketing materials for neighborhoods	2.3.1 2.3.2 2.4.3 2.4.5	NIDCs, Sub-Corridor BIDs
	Policy	Encourage residential developers to pursue mixed-income configurations	2.4.6 2.4.5	NIDCs, Counties, Sub-Corridor BIDs, Developers

D. Provide first-time home ownership and home renovation loans

The older neighborhoods of the Urban Strip are an ideal market for first-time home buyers. The cities should enhance existing programs for rehabilitation loans and should encourage local home ownership. Increasing home ownership in urban strip neighborhoods can stabilize them and renew investment in the existing housing stock.

	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
	Investment	Take advantage of state and federal funding and programs that facilitate home-ownership and renovation	2.3.5 2.4.1 2.4.2 2.4.4 2.4.5 2.4.6	Jurisdictions, Housing Authorities
	Organizational	Create program to administer low-interest loans and/or grants	2.3.5 2.4.5	Jurisdictions
	Organizational	Work with interested employers to begin loan programs to retain and attract employees	2.3.3 2.4.1 2.4.2 2.4.4 2.4.6	Employers, Jurisdictions, Counties

E. Improve Local Schools

Improving the quality of local schools supports the goals of creating mixed-income neighborhoods, increasing home ownership, and improving the economic conditions for existing households. Similar to other programs for reinvigorating neighborhoods, the relationship between the quality of neighborhoods and the quality of schools is symbiotic. Leadership and commitment needs to be exhibited by the cities and school districts to improve the quality of urban neighborhood schools.

Urban Strip

i	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
ey	Policy	Implement Smart Growth policies to reinvest monies into existing schools rather than into the construction of new schools	1.3.1 1.3.3 2.1.1 4.3.2	School Districts, Jurisdictions, Counties

III. Encourage Compact Development

Although the urban strip neighborhoods along the Corridor are often characterized by auto-oriented development, they also contain medium-density development harking back to their origins as Streetcar Suburbs. This characteristic allows them to support more compact development than post-war suburban communities, though compact development may not necessarily mean high-density. Compact development is essential to create vitality and variety in a neighborhood, and to foster pedestrian- and transit-friendliness.

A. Support compact development of opportunity sites

A major goal of the Preferred Future is to create a land use pattern that supports increased access, particularly transit ridership, within the Corridor. A compact and mixed-use land use pattern is needed to achieve this goal. The existing urban form, buildings and general streetscape, in the Urban Strip can support the required compact land use pattern. Much like policies for the Urban Core, there are some disconnects between the goals of supporting compact development and existing policies and development practices. Jurisdictions and other organizations need to provide coordinated support of compact development within the Urban Strip. Refer to the Corridor section of this chapter for specific action recommendations, see *Action V.A. Promote Compact Development*.

B. Facilitate land assembly

The larger lot sizes in the Urban Strip will make redevelopment of parcels easier than in the Urban Core, although some types of development, such as offices and grocery stores, may still require the consolidation of parcels.

i	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
ey	Investment	Work with landowners to assemble properties in targeted areas	1.3.1 1.3.2 1.3.3 2.3.6.1 2.3.6.2 2.3.6.3 2.3.9 2.4.4 3.3.1 3.4.1 4.2.1.1 4.2.3	BID Association, Sub-Corridor BIDs, Jurisdictions, Counties, Metroplex

Urban Strip



C. Introduce more land-efficient parking policies

The pattern of scattered parking lots typical of development in the Urban Strip can be consolidated over time as redevelopment happens. In order to successfully implement compact development, jurisdictions will need to create and actively support policies, programs, and regulations that consolidate parking lots. In areas where denser commercial development is called for by the Preferred Future, it is possible to form public/private partnerships where the jurisdictions can encourage development by assisting in the construction of aggregate parking facilities (i.e. structured parking).

There are various methods which can minimize the amount of underutilized land devoted to parking and maximize the amount of land available for buildings and open space. Examples of "consolidated" lots can be found in Albany. The *AveNew 2000* Study is examining how they can be enhanced.

①	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Policy	Albany and Schenectady to adjust parking requirements to account for shared parking in mixed-use areas, and allow on-street parking to count towards minimum ratios	2.3.3 2.3.10.1 2.4.4 3.2.1 4.2.1.1 4.2.3 4.3.3 4.3.4	Jurisdictions
⚡	Policy	Set maximum parking ratios in the context of adjacent land uses	2.3.10.1 4.3.3 4.3.4	Jurisdictions
👁️	Policy	Institute a parking-in-lieu fee program to fund creation of consolidated parking facilities	2.3.3 2.3.10.1 4.3.3	BID Association, Sub-Corridor BIDs, Jurisdictions
👁️	Policy	Create or expand consolidated parking districts (lots or structures) thereby reducing the cost of parking provision for future development	2.3.1 2.3.2 2.3.3 2.3.10.1 2.3.11 2.4.3 2.4.4 4.3.3 4.4.2	BID Association, Sub-Corridor BIDs, Jurisdictions

D. Maximize allowable development densities

To create compact development, land utilization must be maximized to the fullest extent possible. Care must be taken so that intensities of new land use complement the existing development in the urban strips, as well as meet the needs for the creation of a vibrant mixed-use district. Intensities can be too high, such as the residential towers that exist along Central Avenue in Albany, or too low, such as some of the chain fast food and drug store developments that exist at various locations within the urban strips in both Albany and Schenectady.

The cities, property owners, businesses, and neighbors should undertake a planning process to define the desired futures for the urban strips and develop the regulatory mechanisms and implementation measures, many of which are discussed here, to achieve the vision. The *AveNew 2000* planning effort represents the beginnings of this process for Albany. The discussions taking place in Schenectady, in conjunction with the Central State Street Reconstruction project, could be the beginnings of similar efforts there.

i	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Investment	Create Transit Overlay Zoning on sites around transit stations that restrict non-complementary land uses and require minimum densities. (Appendix A)	1.1.1 1.2.3 1.3.1 1.4.1 2.1.1 2.3.10.1 3.1.1	CDTA, Jurisdictions
👁️	Policy	Establish a range of both minimum and maximum densities that will provide flexibility in design and for market responsiveness	1.3.1 2.3.10.1 3.4.1 4.3.2	Jurisdictions
👁️	Policy	Offer incentives to developers such as density bonuses, impact fee waivers or reductions, or fast track permitting in exchange for desired densities	2.3.3 2.3.8 2.3.9	Jurisdictions

IV. Catalyze the (Re)Development of Neighborhood Centers

Existing clusters of retail commercial use, whether informal (e.g. the building suppliers and Co-op next to Swinburne Park) or in neighborhood shopping centers (e.g. Woodlawn Plaza), provide a unique opportunity for creating centers of activity within the urban strips. Clusters that are currently underutilized, like Woodlawn, provide the opportunity to create new mixed-use centers that can create retail, service, employment, and housing opportunities within neighborhoods. Clusters similar to those near Swinburne Park provide the opportunity to strengthen uses that have a regional draw while creating a mix of uses that also serve the local community

A. Increase diversity of uses

Creating vitality is a key goal in the Preferred Future. An important component to achieve this is assuring there are a mix of uses that create round-the-clock activity and support the daily functions of residents from adjacent neighborhoods. Land uses must be compatible and should mutually support each other. They should also be within a safe and convenient walking distance from one another and transit stations. Diversifying land uses also diversifies the job base making a community less dependent on a single major employer.



📍	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Policy	Make infill sites shovel-ready	2.2.3 2.3.8 2.3.11 2.4.4	Jurisdictions, Counties
⚡	Policy	Provide development incentives for Infill	2.4.4	NIDCs, Jurisdictions, Counties, BIDs
⚡	Policy	Identify and contact/pursue businesses which are well-sized for infill (i.e. small businesses)	2.2.2 2.3	Jurisdictions, Counties
👁️	Investment	Pursue land readjustment at sites where parcel configurations prevent the development of underutilized land	2.3.6 2.3.7	Jurisdictions

B. Encourage reuse and redevelopment for retail, office, and residential centers

Depending upon their location, underutilized or vacant commercial property such as shopping centers and malls provide opportune locations for the development of mixed-use neighborhood centers. These sites are generally under one ownership (precluding the necessity for negotiating with several property-owners), are generally well-served with existing infrastructure, and provide existing structures that may be adaptable to other uses.

📍	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Investment	Address minor impediments that discourage companies from locating at a reusable site (for example, a mall that is to be converted to office could be wired with phone and LAN)	1.3.2 2.2.2 2.3.1 2.3.2 2.3.4 2.3.11 2.4.4 3.3.2 3.3.3	Sub-Corridor BIDs, NIHC, Jurisdictions
⚡	Investment	Contact re-developers about opportunities (or issue RFPs for redevelopment)	1.2.1 1.3.3 2.2.2 2.3.1 2.3.2 2.4.4	Sub-Corridor BIDs, NIHC, Jurisdictions
👁️	Organizational	Develop District Revitalization Plans for Corridor communities	1.3.2	Jurisdictions
👁️	Organizational	Explore public/private partnerships for implementing mixed-use commercial and residential revitalization	2.4.4 2.4.5 2.3	Jurisdictions, Developers
👁️	Policy	Support new uses by “pre-approving” development through creating specific or area plans (with appropriate design guidelines) for key sites. Incorporate these plans into a jurisdiction’s comprehensive Plan or zoning ordinance	1.4.1 3.3.1	Jurisdictions

V. Improve the Pedestrian Environment

The general issues associated with improving the pedestrian environment are discussed in the Corridor section of this chapter. Improving the pedestrian environment is also discussed in the Urban Core section *VII. Improve the Pedestrian Environment* and in Action I.B of this section of the Urban Strip. Additional actions could include the following.

A. Allow outdoor cafe seating

Allowing and encouraging outdoor seating at restaurants and cafes is perhaps the best way to merge the public and private realms and to encourage streetlife in mixed-use areas. A minimum of five feet of pedestrian sidewalk clearance must be maintained for disabled access, however provisions for outdoor seating can be integrated into the street designs proposed for the Preferred Future. Restaurants or cafes at corners are advantageous locations for outdoor seating. The "bulb-outs" at intersections provide significantly wider sidewalk space and sidewalks on side streets can provide a quieter atmosphere. In addition, corners are known as "high visibility" places as they attract pedestrians from all parts of the intersection and give drivers an extended view of the use as they stop or slow at the intersection. Pedestrian pass-throughs can also provide needed space for outdoor seating. Jurisdictions should be proactive in working with restaurants and cafes to find opportunities to maximize outdoor seating.

i	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Investment	Where possible, widen sidewalks to create comfortable and ample room for outdoor seating and dining	1.3.2 2.3.1 2.3.2 2.3.10.1 2.3.11 2.4.3 3.4.1 4.1.1 4.2.2 4.2.3 4.4.1	BID Association, Sub-Corridor BID, Jurisdictions
⚡	Investment	Install amenities to create a comfortable, lively and interesting pedestrian realm along streets	2.3.1 2.3.2 2.3.11 2.4.3 4.2.1.1 4.2.5	BID Association, Sub-Corridor BIDs, Jurisdictions
👁️	Policy	Encourage on-street parking to create a buffer to users of the space	2.3.1 2.3.2 2.3.10.1 2.3.11 2.4.3 2.4.4 2.4.7 4.2.1.1 4.2.3 4.3.3	Jurisdictions
👁️	Policy	Modify zoning codes to allow businesses to expand their dining facilities into sidewalks	2.3.10.1	Jurisdictions



B. Improve street crossings

Many of the traffic calming methods discussed earlier provide for improved pedestrian crossings. Street crossings, including crossings at intersections and mid-block crossings, can be implemented incrementally. At a minimum, crosswalks should be clearly marked with reflective paint, and curb cuts for disabled access must be provided. Additional improvements include:

Signage: Signs marking crosswalks provide an added alert to drivers. In some cases, signs can be provided to remind drivers to watch for pedestrians while making a turn.

Special paving: special paving, textured or colored concrete, communicates to drivers and pedestrians that the crosswalk is a pedestrian domain. Special paving can also help create an identity for a district or neighborhood.

Crosswalk Warning Lights: Several communities in the United States have installed "flashing crosswalks" at key pedestrian crossings, especially mid-block crossings. Pedestrians push a button for a crosswalk signal. Overhead caution lights flash to indicate that the crosswalk is active while extra-bright lights embedded in the paving also flash along the crosswalk warning drivers that a pedestrian is in the crosswalk.

i	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
👁️	Investment	Provide signalization at crossings	2.3.1 2.3.2 2.3.11 2.4.3 4.2.1.1 4.2.6	BID Association, Sub-Corridor BIDs, Jurisdictions
👁️	Investment	Narrow crossing where possible by installing bulb-outs	2.3.1 2.3.2 2.3.11 2.4.3 4.2.1.1 4.2.3	BID Association, Sub-Corridor BIDs, Jurisdictions
👁️	Investment	Provide median islands and allow pedestrians a safe shelter when roadways are wide	2.3.1 2.3.2 2.3.11 2.4.3 4.2.1.1 4.2.4	BID Association, Sub-Corridor BIDs, Jurisdictions
👁️	Investment	Install textured paving and/or signage to clearly mark crosswalks	2.3.1 2.3.2 2.3.11 2.4.3 4.2.1.1 4.2.5	BID Association, Sub-Corridor BIDs, Jurisdictions

Suburban Strip

The Suburban Strip typology represents the largest portion of the Corridor. Parcel size is varied, but the pattern is typified by buildings setback from the street with parking in front. There is also wide variation in intensity of use, ranging from the undeveloped or semi-rural in quality in Corridor areas between New Karner Road and Niskayuna, to more intensive uses in some areas between New Karner Road and Fuller Road.

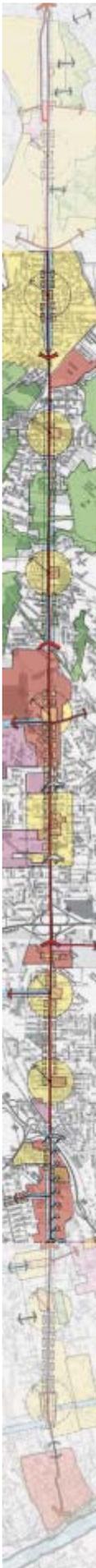


Figure IV.10: Central Avenue in the Village of Colonie

Preferred Future at-a-glance

Applicable to Segments:	3 through 5 (from Watervliet Ave west to Laurel Ave)
Applicable to Jurisdictions:	Albany, Town of Colonie, Village of Colonie, Niskayuna and Schenectady
Land Use Change:	Preserve natural areas and open space; intensify development at some regional- and local-serving nodes; reuse some larger parcels and mixed-use districts; enhance residential neighborhoods; site buildings closer to street frontage by moving parking lots to the rear and side, and encouraging shared interconnected parking lots to reduce paved areas.
Transportation Improvements:	In addition to Corridor-wide BRT improvements, separate local and regional traffic with multi-way boulevards at mixed-use nodes, create pedestrian zones around local lanes with visual connections to transit stops.
Street Design:	Mixed flow transit, dedicated transit lanes, or multi-way boulevard, depending on location, street configurations 1 through 4
Applicable Detail Study:	Colonie Community Center
Vision Summary:	Infill and reuse intensify uses in developed areas. Preserve rural character between New Karner and Niskayuna by clustering development and protecting open space. Integrate automobile and pedestrian access. Pedestrian and bicycle safety will be improved. Industrial areas will be revitalized with improved transit access.
Key Implementation Measures:	Regional Identity (1.1.2); Coordinated Business Associations (1.2.1); Methods of Inter-municipal Organization (1.2.4); Specific or Area Revitalization Plans (1.4.1); Brownfield and Greyfield Development Support (2.2.3); Zoning and Building Code Reform (2.3.10); Housing Reinvestment Programs (2.4.2); Model Mixed-use Transit-oriented Policies and Programs (3.1.1); Grant Funding for Lisha Kill Natural Zone (3.2.1); Feeder and Flexible Shuttle Transit Services (4.1.2); NY5 Capital Improvements Program (4.2.1); Refinement of Street Cross Sections (4.2.3); and Adjusting Parking Requirements (4.3.3).

Suburban Strip



I. Make Central Avenue/State Street A Community Street

A. Improve pedestrian and bicycle friendliness of Central Avenue/State Street and adjacent neighborhoods

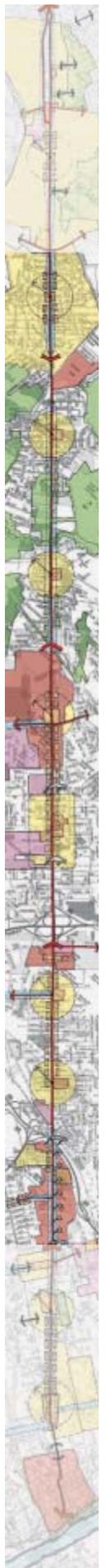
Even in the relatively low-density Suburban Strip, accommodations must be made for the pedestrian and bicyclist, especially in terms of accessibility to transit facilities. Controlled crosswalks should be located at transit stops, as well as other destinations such as shopping and employment areas, community centers, schools, parks, etc.

Where the right-of-way is restricted by either width or traffic volumes, multi-use paths can be created along the street to be shared by pedestrians and cyclists. Many of the traffic calming features and other pedestrian and bicycle improvements discussed in *Goal II. Improve Pedestrian Environment* of The Corridor section are applicable to the Suburban Strip. Below are some measures that are particularly important in the Suburban Strip.

i	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Policy Program Investment	Design and implement Access Management Program, consolidate curb cuts	4.2.1.1	Jurisdictions, CDTC, NYSDOT
👁️	Policy Investment	Coordinate and implement undergrounding of utilities	3.2.2	Jurisdictions, CDTC, Nigara Mohawk Power
👁️	Policy	Require pedestrian circulation from the street through parking lots to building entrances	2.3.10 3.1.1 3.3.1 4.3.1	Jurisdictions
👁️	Policy	Improve street definition and character through zoning code reform requiring buildings to front the street station areas	4.4.1 3.3.1 3.3.2	Jurisdictions
⚡	Policy	table "Develop and Adopt a Street Design Guidebook	4.2.3	CDTC, CDTA, NYSDOT and Jurisdictions

B. Improve transit friendliness of Central Avenue/State Street

Complementary land uses must exist around transit stations in order to make them more accessible to riders. Nodes around these stations will create a hierarchy of uses along what is currently a relatively continuous strip of auto-oriented development.



①	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Policy	Utilize transit overlay zoning for station areas to prohibit non-complementary land uses and require special design guidelines	2.3.10 3.1.1	Jurisdictions, CDTA

C. Transition land uses from Central Avenue/State Street to neighborhoods behind

Within the Suburban Strip, auto-oriented uses (including drive-thru services) are appropriate but not within designated "pedestrian zones" around transit stops and stations. Outside pedestrian zones, land uses should be sensitively transitioned between the arterial and adjacent residential neighborhoods to mitigate the impact of higher traffic volumes and noise.

①	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Policy	Provide appropriate zoning to transition from activity on Central Avenue and State Street into the neighborhoods behind	2.3.10	Jurisdictions

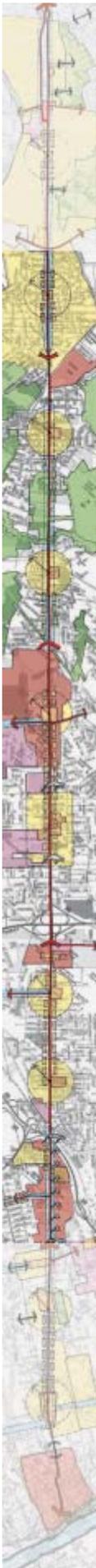
D. Improve accessibility to Central Avenue/State Street from neighborhoods

Large, commercially-zoned parcels and limited cross-streets along the suburban strip of Central Avenue/State Street are currently an impediment to pedestrians and bicyclists attempting to access services on the street from residential neighborhoods behind. Provisions should be made to maximize physical access to the street through the use of pedestrian easements and improvements to cross streets.

It is important to recognize that pedestrian access first requires a pedestrian path or sidewalk. Many of the neighborhoods along the Suburban Strip do not provide separated pedestrian/bike access, so residents must walk/ride within the roadway which is often unsafe. Then, it is important that pedestrian access is as direct as possible. Research conducted by Anne Vernez Moudon at the University of Washington in Seattle compared two neighborhoods – one with an interconnected street pattern and one without. What she found was that in the connected system, actual walking distances were 1.29 times the length of straight-line distances, and in the unconnected system, walking distances were 1.6 times the length of straight-line distances. The study does not, however, take into account the quality of the walk. The unconnected system generally forces pedestrians onto arterial streets to reach their destination, which are often not made to comfortably accommodate them.

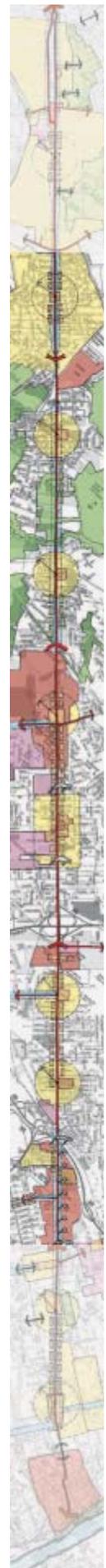
A method for assuring a comfortable walking distance is to establish a block length standard requiring that blocks be no longer than 300 to 500 feet in

Suburban Strip



length between intersecting streets. Mid-block, pedestrian pass-throughs can also be required more frequently, although their use should be limited, because they are not as safe for pedestrians as streets lined with active residential and commercial uses.

i	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Policy	Prohibit the consolidation of blocks without provision of easements or new streets	2.3.10	Jurisdictions
⚡	Policy	Require new development within 1/2 mile of the Corridor to provide pedestrian connections to State Street and Central Avenue which are no longer than 1.5 times the straight-line distance from the point of departure to the Corridor	2.3.10	Jurisdictions
⚡	Investment	Identify opportunities for restoring rights-of-way through consolidated blocks and use land adjustment techniques to acquire pedestrian right-of-ways or easements	2.3.6	Jurisdictions
⚡	Investment	Identify opportunities for mid-block pedestrian pass through and use land adjustment techniques to acquire pedestrian right-of ways or easements	4.4.1	Jurisdictions



Suburban Strip

II . Stabilize Existing Neighborhoods

As discussed in The Corridor section, the existing neighborhoods along the Corridor are one of its most important assets. In the Urban Core and Urban Strip portions of the Corridor the major concern is the condition of the housing stock in the neighborhoods and the predominance of "two-family" homes. The decline in these neighborhoods is relatively obvious, while neighborhoods in the Suburban Strip are generally not experiencing obvious decline.

Still, a concerted effort should be made towards stabilizing the residential neighborhoods in the Suburban Strip.

A. Introduce mixed-use neighborhood centers along Central Avenue/ State Street

Mixed-use neighborhood centers create concentrated nodes of development along the Corridor. This is in contrast to the more typical linear development patterns associated with Suburban Strips. Zoning within the Suburban Strip needs to be adjusted to more specifically define the location of particular uses in

order to support the creation of mixed-use nodes. Areas outside the nodes should not be zoned to allow uses that are desired in the neighborhood centers.

	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
	Policy	Zone areas outside the neighborhood centers to not allow the uses that are desired in the centers	2.3.10	Jurisdictions
	Policy	Provide appropriate zoning for mixed-use neighborhood centers	1.4.1 2.3.8 2.3.10	Jurisdictions

B. Get neighborhood residents organized, involved, and educated

Many of the neighborhoods within the Suburban Strip have neighborhood associations, but they do not have a strong history in organizing around the issues outlined in this section of the report - stabilizing neighborhoods, and improving connections with the commercial uses along the street. An effort needs to be put towards organizing and educating residents around these issues.

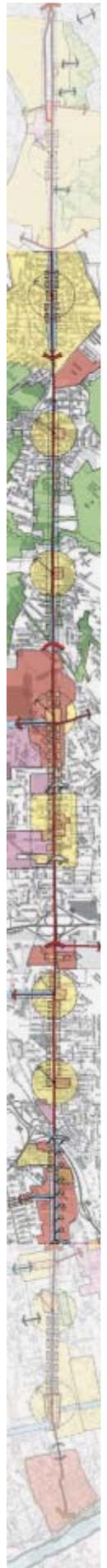
	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
	Organizational	Strengthen existing neighborhood associations	2.4.5.	Neighborhood Associations
	Organizational	Create neighborhood associations where they do not exist	2.4.5	Jurisdictions, Neighborhood Associations
	Organizational	Connect Suburban Strip neighborhood associations with other Urban Core and Urban Strip neighborhoods to share perspectives on addressing neighborhood decline and share information and think regionally through seminars, "brown bag" lunches, newsletters, etc.	1.2.3 2.2.1 2.2.2	Neighborhood Associations, BID Association

C. Monitor condition of housing

The condition of housing in a neighborhood is a prime indicator of the stability and quality of the neighborhood. Jurisdictions along the Suburban Strip need to establish a program to monitor housing conditions in Corridor Neighborhoods. As discussed in the following action, the monitoring program needs to be coupled with programs and investment to support existing households so they can maintain and renovate their homes.

Suburban Strip





Suburban Strip

i	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Program	Monitor the quality and code compliance of homes in Corridor neighborhoods	3.3.3	Jurisdictions, Neighborhood Associations

D. Provide home renovation loans

Jurisdictions in the Suburban Strip should enhance existing programs or create new programs to provide residents with rehabilitation loans. This will encourage homeowners to maintain and improve the quality of housing in the Corridor.

i	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Program	Create program to educate homeowners and provide them loans or grants for home improvement and renovation	2.3.5 2.4.2 2.4.5	Jurisdictions, Neighborhood Associations

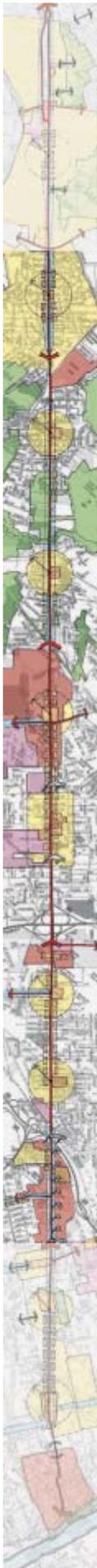
E. Improve Local Schools

Improving the quality of local schools supports the goal of maintaining the quality of neighborhoods in the Suburban Strip. One reason some families have left portions of the Corridor is the perception of the quality of schools within some of the neighborhoods. Similar to other programs for reinvigorating neighborhoods, the relationship between the quality of neighborhoods and the quality of schools is symbiotic. Continued leadership and commitment is needed by the cities and school districts to improve the quality of urban neighborhood schools.

i	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
👁️	Policy	Implement Smart Growth policies to reinvest into existing schools rather than into the construction of new schools	1.3.1 1.3.3 2.1.1 4.3.2	School Districts, Jurisdictions, Counties

III. Improve Mobility And Accessibility In The Corridor

The Suburban Strip contains the portions of the Corridor with the highest traffic volumes. A variety of policies, programs, and investments are needed to successfully improve mobility in the Corridor. This can be achieved through the refinement and implementation of the transportation and land use recommendations of the Preferred Scenario. The following actions are particularly important for improving mobility and accessibility in the Suburban Strip portion of the Corridor.



A. Create dedicated transit lanes

Providing dedicated transit lanes in the most congested parts of the Corridor will improve the flow of both transit and general traffic by restricting conflicts between the two. Improved flow means more dependable and efficient transit service that attracts increased ridership.

①	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Program Investment	Review and refine street plans and cross-sections presented in the Preferred Scenario and develop a plan for implementation	4.2.3 4.2.2	CDTC, NYSDOT, CDTA, Jurisdictions
⚡	Investment	Seek funding for improvements	4.1.1	CDTC, NYSDOT, CDTA, Jurisdictions

B. Separate local and thru-traffic

Conflicts occur between local and thru-traffic, impeding both mobility and accessibility to properties along the Corridor and its side streets. One method for reducing these potential conflicts is to reduce the number of curb cuts and provide connections between parking lots so that some local traffic does not need to use Central Avenue or State Street. Access Management, for all modes (motor vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian) throughout the corridor, is discussed in more detail in *Goal III. Improve Mobility and Accessibility in the Corridor* of The Corridor section of this chapter. Another method to improve the flow of traffic in this section is to reconfigure the roadway into a multi-way boulevard which physically separates local and thru-traffic. Within the Suburban Strip this road configuration should be used in community commercial centers where local traffic is generally concentrated.



Existing Condition



New Street Improvements

Figure IV.11: Multi-way Boulevard on Central Avenue in the Village of Colonie



Existing Condition



New Street Improvements

Figure IV.12: Dedicated transit lanes on Central Avenue near Fuller Road

i	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Program Investment	Review and plan for the potential to implement multi-way boulevards where indicated in the Preferred Scenario	4.2.3	CDTC, NYSDOT, Jurisdictions, CDTA
⚡	Investment	Seek funding for planning and improvements	4.1.1 3.2.1.2	CDTC, NYSDOT, Jurisdictions

IV. Improve Visual Character Along The Corridor

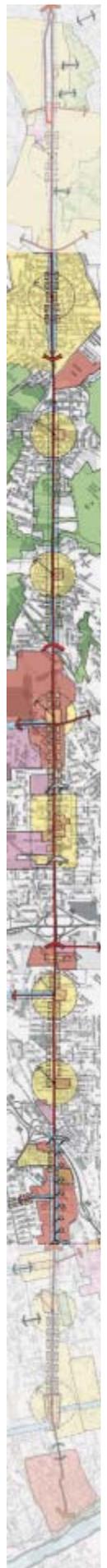
The Suburban Strip constitutes the largest portion of the NY5 Corridor and has the least pedestrian- and transit-friendly character. Many of the developments in this segment of the Corridor are of relatively low-cost construction. The combination of street signage for the myriad curb cuts and the variety of commercial signage create a haphazard quality to the area. The recommended actions below seek to improve aesthetics along the Corridor, also see Actions II.B and III.B under the Regional Mixed Use Districts section found later in this chapter.



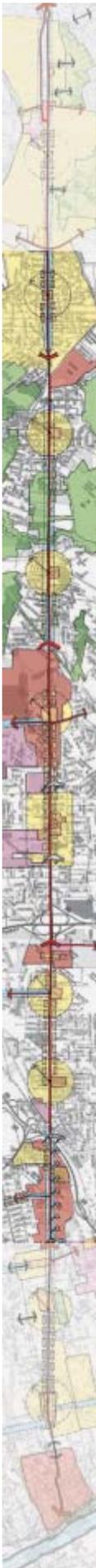
Figure IV.13: Signage can be integrated into the architecture of a place.



Figure IV.14: Central Avenue near Lisha Kill



Suburban Strip



A. Underground or back-lot utilities

Visual "clutter" is created by utility poles and lines along NY5. This can be alleviated by either undergrounding or "back-lotting" (running utilities along the rear of a street-facing lot rather than along the street itself) of the utilities. Removing the utility poles from the street frontage also improves pedestrian access.

	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
	Organizational	Work with Niagara Mohawk Power to anticipate above-ground infrastructure improvements which could coincide with relocation of utility lines	3.1.2	Nigara Mohawk Power, CDTC, NYSDOT, Jurisdictions

B. Improve streetscaping

Improvements to the street such as the installation of sidewalks, paths, planting, and lighting add greatly to the overall attractiveness of the street.

	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
	Policy Investment	Develop sidewalk master plans and urban design guidelines which include trees, landscaping, furnishing and lighting recommendations. Combine implementation of improvements with roadway improvements	4.3.1 4.2.2	Jurisdictions, CDTC, NYSDOT

C. Create signage program

As mentioned earlier, there is also a great amount of visual clutter from the commercial signage in the Corridor. While signage is important to the viability, quality, and safety of the Corridor, quantity and quality should be controlled to create an environment that is more supportive of mixed-use. This is particularly true in the planned neighborhood centers and pedestrian-oriented development areas around the future transit stops. On a more positive side, well designed, visually attractive signage can add to the character of a place if well coordinated and planned.

	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
	Policy	Establish sign design guidelines	3.3.2	Jurisdictions
	Program Investment	Promote and provide support for implementing signage program	3.3.2	Jurisdictions, BID Associations, Sub-Corridor BID

V. Preserve The Rural Character Of The Lisha Kill Area

The rural character that exists in portions of the Suburban Strip around the Lisha Kill "Natural Zone" should be preserved and enhanced. It can serve both as an environmental resource and an environmental reminder of the juxtaposition of urban and rural areas in the region. Open space can also be used to define edges between neighboring communities.

A. Cluster development and preserve open space in the Lisha Kill area

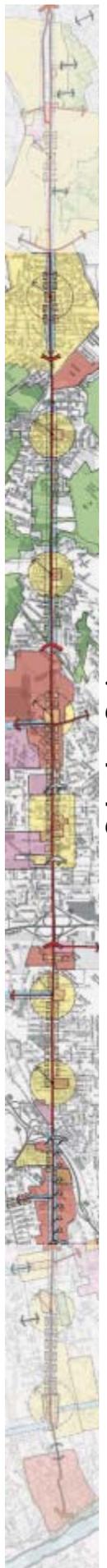
Clustering residential development around neighborhood centers at transit stops in this portion of the Corridor will improve access to transit while creating the opportunity to protect and enhance the open space and valuable environmental features in the area.



Figure IV.15: Existing Condition



Figure IV.16: Potential "Natural Zone"



The clustering of new development is only part of the strategy. Valued natural features and open space in the area should also be preserved by public or private purchase of the land or development rights. This should be a coordinated effort by environmental advocates and non-profits, the Town of Colonie, and Albany County.

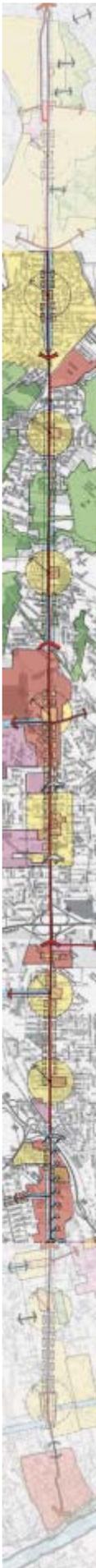
i	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Policy	Prepare Area Plan and "small scale" GEIS to allow and provide incentives for clustered development in the Lisha Kill area	2.3.3 2.3.6 2.3.9 3.3.1	Jurisdictions, Property Owners, Developers, State, Federal

B. Pursue "outside" funding sources to implement Lisha Kill Natural Zone

The combination of transportation, land use, and environmental policy objectives which come together in this area of the Corridor, create a unique opportunity for attracting funding from non-profit organizations and foundations to implement the open space and natural preservation goals for this area. The different Corridor stakeholders, in a coordinated effort with property owners and local non-profit organizations, should pursue funding to implement the natural zone.

i	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Program Investment	Pursue funding for further detailed planning and preparation of the "small-scale" GEIS for the Lisha Kill Area	1.3.3 2.3.4 3.2.1 4.2.1	Jurisdictions, Property Owners, Local Advocates
⚡	Program Investment	Pursue funding for implementation of the Lisha Kill Area	1.3.3.1 2.3.4 2.3.6 4.2.1	Jurisdictions, Property Owners, Local Advocates

Suburban Strip



Regional Mixed- Use Districts

The clusters of regional retail in the Corridor provide unique opportunities and challenges for creating a more pedestrian- and transit-friendly corridor. The Regional Mixed-Use Districts include: the Auto Row area in Albany from Grant Avenue/King Avenue to the I-90 over crossing; the Colonie Center/Northway Mall cluster; the cluster around New Karner Road with the Village Square Shopping Center, Builders Square, K-Mart, and Colonie Plaza; and the Mohawk Mall in Niskayuna. The districts are the largest parcels in the Corridor, many are underutilized, and several of them are currently being revitalized.



Figure IV.17: The New Karner mixed-use district integrates regional- and local-serving uses

Preferred Future at-a-glance

Applicable to Segment:	Portions of segments 3 and 4 (Watervliet Ave. to Linda Lane)
Applicable to Jurisdictions:	City of Albany, Village of Colonie, Town of Colonie, and Town of Niskayuna.
Land Use Change:	Allow a mix of uses, potential for some “back office” employment centers and residential development, site buildings closer to sidewalks with parking lots behind buildings
Transportation Improvements:	BRT improvements, provide transfer stations for other CDTA routes, apply multi-way boulevard treatment to Central Avenue/State Street as appropriate.
Street Design:	Multi-way boulevard at key locations, street configurations 3A, 3B, 4A, 4B, and 5.
Applicable Detail Study:	New Karner Road Mixed-Use District.
Vision Summary:	Large, underutilized parcels and buildings will be redeveloped to accommodate changing retail formats and eventually mixed-use clusters, including “main street” retail, residential uses, and office/employment uses. Redesigning of sites to accommodate pedestrians and bicycles as well as cars. Create linkages to transit stops and transfer stations.
Key Implementation Measures:	Regional Development Plan (1.1.1); Specific or Area Revitalization Plans (1.4.1); Inter-jurisdictional Consistency and Cooperation (2.2.1); Brownfield and Greyfield Development Support (2.2.3); (2.3.2); Assistance in Land Assembly (2.3.6); Zoning and Building Code Reforms (2.3.10); Model Mixed-Use Transit-Oriented Policies and Programs (3.1.2); and Adjusting Parking Requirements (4.3.3).



Regional Mixed-Use Districts



Intermittently along the NY5 Corridor, within both the Suburban Strip typological areas, are the Corridor's largest parcels, many of which are underutilized regional retail malls or clusters of retail centers. These provide major opportunities for mixed-use development. Some of these opportunity sites are in the process of revitalization, mainly into new retailing formats. Unfortunately, while the new retailing formats may be successful in the near term, it is likely that many of the new businesses will need to be redeveloped in the future. Retail formats are changing more and more quickly, as retailers go out of business, form new partnerships, and face an uncertain challenge from internet based "e-tailers." In addition, the redevelopment of these sites is not taking into account the need to "retool" these sites in the future. A major element of the Mixed-Use District concepts is to plan for incremental change in these areas of the Corridor. For example, the parking lots in the redeveloped retail centers can be designed so that the major drive lanes can become the internal street system for the future Mixed-Use District.

Regional Mixed-Use Districts will be characterized by compact, mixed-use development of retail, employment, services, entertainment, apartments, and single-family homes that are readily accessible by transit and pedestrian-friendly, yet provide for automobile access that is required for the success of the major retail establishments. The sites that have been identified as Mixed-Use Regional Districts in the Preferred Future include: Albany's Auto Row district from King Avenue to the I-90 overpass, Colonie Center/Northway Mall cluster in the Town of Colonie, Mohawk Mall in Niskayuna, and the retail cluster around New Karner Road in the Town and Village of Colonie, which has been developed as one of the Detailed Study Sites.

The Regional Mixed-Use Districts share many of the same goals as the other typologies but have unique challenges and opportunities. Whereas in the other typologies there has been a distinct "structure" to use as a framework for reuse or infill development, the Regional Mixed-Use Districts by nature of their development patterns can be seen much more as "clean slates" in which to introduce a smaller-scale development pattern. These areas would be considered "greyfield" sites, meaning land has already been developed and serviced by infrastructure as opposed to "green field" sites with little or no history of development on them or "brownfield" sites which are typified as reuse of industrial sites with a high level of contamination.

I. Create Mixed-Use Centers within the Districts

A Utilize excess parking for initial stages of redevelopment

Many of the Mixed-Use District sites currently have an excess of parking. Parking lots provide the opportunity to begin organizing the sites into a system of streets and blocks. Small "street front" mixed-use buildings can infill underutilized parking and begin to establish a pedestrian-friendly environment, linking from Central Avenue or State Street back to existing "big box" or "strip" retailing that is still viable.

①	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Policy	Adopt parking requirements that are based upon real parking demands, and take into account such factors as: access to transit, shared parking, and trip linking	1.3.2 4.3.3 4.3.4	Developers, Jurisdictions, CDTA, Major employers, Retailers
👁️	Organizational	Economic development departments, BIDs, and other organizations can help facilitate reuse by identifying land uses, and developers and businesses that would build and occupy mixed-use buildings	1.3.2 2.2.3 2.3.4 2.4.4 2.3.9 3.3.1	Jurisdictions, Counties, BID Association, Sub-Corridor BIDs, Developers

B. Require incremental improvements that support the creation of Mixed-Use Districts

While it may be difficult to achieve a complete conversion of all of these opportunity sites into Mixed-Use Districts, Corridor communities can require incremental improvements as sites are "reformatted" for new retail uses. As proposals for the reuse of these retail centers come forward, communities can require a set of improvements that begins to create a street and block pattern that will support future mixed-use development of the site.

①	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Policy	Establish design review and site development requirements for Mixed-Use Districts that require pedestrian improvements and transit access, and that begin to establish a system of streets and blocks within the site	1.3.2 2.3.3 2.3.10 2.3.9 3.1.1 3.3.1 4.4.1 4.4.3	Jurisdictions, CDTC
⚡	Investment	Require incremental improvements that support the creation of a Mixed-Use Center	1.3.2 2.3.3 3.1.1 3.3.1 4.4.1	Jurisdictions
👁️	Program	Educate land owners, developers, and businesses about the long-term potential of their properties	2.2.3 2.4.4 3.1.1	Jurisdictions, BID Association, Sub-Corridor BIDs

C. Diversify and cluster uses within existing retail clusters

In a location such as Albany's Auto Row where viable retail uses exist, emphasis should be on clustering complementary uses (e.g.; vehicle sales and service), and diversifying with complementary uses to create a Mixed-Use District. The broader base not only stabilizes the District economically, but also adds to its vitality. Entertainment uses such as restaurants are most appropriate.

①	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Program	Negotiate agreements between jurisdictions to cluster specific uses within the Districts	1.2.2 1.2.3 2.2.1 2.2.2	Jurisdictions, BID Association, Sub-Corridor BIDs
⚡	Policy	Zoning reform to provide better direction in creating a complimentary mix of uses	1.3.2 2.3.10 3.3.1	Jurisdictions



Regional Mixed-Use Districts

D. Consolidate and intensify mixed-use development around rehabilitated shopping malls

While some of the potential Mixed-Use Districts identified in the Preferred Future are primarily regional shopping centers, some of them are clusters of regional retail with other uses that will require cooperative planning amongst diverse property owners.

The transit facility within the Districts can serve as a focus for development. Linkages between the transit facilities and the anchor uses to the surrounding properties should be created incrementally. In some cases, land assembly through development agreements or land purchases may be necessary to create the desired Mixed-Use District design.

ⓘ	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Policy	Utilize overlay zoning around transit facilities to protect these key locations from inappropriate development	1.3.1 2.3.10 3.1.1	Jurisdictions
👁️	Policy Program Investment	Explore options for joint public/private development and development agreements amongst private property owners.	2.3.1 2.3.2 2.3.6 3.1.1 4.4.3	CDTA, Jurisdictions, Sub-Corridor BIDs, Property Owners
👁️	Policy	Create Specific or Area Plans with specific guidelines and standards for development.	1.3.1 2.3.10 3.3.1	Jurisdictions, Developers, Property Owners
👁️	Policy Program	Undertake a GEIS to expedite development	2.3.9	Jurisdictions, Counties, State
👁️	Program	Create parking districts to utilize parking more efficiently	4.4.2	Jurisdictions, Property Owners, Businesses
👁️	Policy	Rezone other areas of commercial use along the Corridor to concentrate at Regional Mixed-Use Centers	1.1.1 1.2.3 2.2.1 2.2.2 2.3.9 2.3.10	Jurisdictions

E. Reuse discarded “big box” retail with “back office” and other employment

The existing structures in regional malls are essentially large shells that can be adapted to serve a variety of other uses, if their continued use for retail is not supported by market conditions. One potential use of the "flex space" is to house the "back office" activities of larger companies (activities such as data processing that are not required to be at a company's headquarters). Old mall buildings have also been reused for hi-tech research and manufacturing uses, as well as medical uses. Parking ratios for these uses are generally lower than for retail uses, and can be further reduced given the proximity to high-quality transit services as the BRT system is implemented. The excess parking area would become the site for mixed-use development.

Regional Mixed-Use Districts



i	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
👁️	Program Investment	Economic development departments, BIDs, and other organizations can aggressively market site and recruit potential businesses for back-office and other types of reuse	1.2.4 2.2.1 2.2.2 2.3.2 2.3.5	Jurisdictions, BID Associations, Sub-Corridor BIDs, Chambers of Commerce
👁️	Policy Investment	Provide incentives for re-use	1.2.2 2.2.3 2.3.4 2.3.8 2.3.9 2.3.11 4.2.1 4.4.3	CDTC, CDTA, Jurisdictions
👁️	Policy Investment	Provide complementary retail and service uses within the Mixed-Use District (restaurants, dry cleaners, recreational uses, business support services, etc.)	2.2.1 2.3.9 2.3.10 3.3.1	Jurisdictions, Developers, Property Owners

II. Make Route 5 a Community Street & a Regional Connector

Focusing development in the Regional Mixed-Use Districts provides a challenge in designing Route 5 due to the existing volume of regional traffic present within and near the Mixed-Use Districts and the increase in local access needs brought about by the mix of uses within the Districts. Despite the considerable pressure on Corridor capacity it is still possible to make Central Avenue and State Street a community-serving street in these areas

A. Create a boulevard configuration to separate local from through traffic

A multi-way boulevard specifically addresses the issues facing Central Avenue and State Street within the Regional Mixed-Use Districts by effectively separating local traffic from through traffic. Local streets are accessed from the local access lane in the boulevard, while major collector streets have direct intersections with Route 5. This minimizes interference to traffic flow along Route 5. The local access lanes provide additional on-street parking for street-facing businesses, a buffer between those businesses and faster-moving through traffic, opportunities for increased landscaping and improved pedestrian crossing because the medians can be used as "refuge" areas while crossing Route 5, creating a street environment that supports pedestrians, bicyclists, and improved transit access.



Regional Mixed-Use Districts



i	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Policy Organizational	Work together to establish standards for multi-way boulevards	4.2.1 4.2.2 4.2.3 4.3.1	NYSDOT, CDTC, CDTA, Jurisdictions
👁️	Program	Identify locations for the multi-way boulevard treatment through a participatory planning process	4.2.1 4.2.2 4.2.3 4.3.2	NYSDOT, CDTC, CDTA, Jurisdictions, Property Owners, Businesses
👁️	Investment	Find funding for roadway improvements	1.3.3 2.3.4 2.3.6 3.1.2 4.1.1 4.2.1 4.2.2 4.4.1 4.4.3	Jurisdictions, CDTC, CDTA, NYSDOT

B. Improve the streetscape on Route 5

Streetscape improvements along Central Avenue and State Street in the Mixed-Use Regional Districts will have an emphasis on buffering adjacent uses from the impacts of regional traffic, and providing safe and attractive transit, bicycle, and pedestrian access. The creation of multi-way boulevards begins to address this issue, as discussed above. But this major transportation investment must be accompanied by public and private investment in smaller-scale streetscape improvements, including the provision of: street trees, pedestrian-scaled street lighting, benches and trash receptacles along Central Avenue and State Street. Safe and well-defined pedestrian crossings will also be needed. These improvements along the street must also be complemented with pedestrian access from Central Avenue and State Street into the Districts’ street system and connected to the variety of uses in the Districts.

i	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Investment	Identify and design streetscape improvements along with major circulation improvements to Central Avenue and State Street	4.1.1 4.1.4 4.2.1 4.2.2 4.2.3 4.4.1	Jurisdictions, NYSDOT, CDTC, CDTA
⚡	Organizational	Integrate identified improvements into local and regional capital improvement project lists	4.1.1 4.1.4 4.2.1	NYSDOT, CDTC, Jurisdictions
⚡	Policy	Require new development to integrate and construct streetscape improvements as a condition of approval	2.3.9 3.1.2 4.2.1 4.2.2 4.4.3	Jurisdictions, CDTA, Developers



Existing Condition



New Street Improvements

Figure IV.18: Even minimal interventions, such as implementing streetscape improvements, can create a better visual environment at the New Karner Road Regional Mixed-Use District

III. Create a pedestrian-friendly environment

Strategies to achieve pedestrian- and transit-friendly development are similar here as in the previous typologies (i.e. street-facing buildings, parking in rear, pedestrian amenities, interconnected circulation system, etc.), although efforts will generally be focused on developing from scratch rather than the retrofitting and infilling of uses.

A. Implement pedestrian-oriented design standards and guidelines

A focus on improving the pedestrian environment must be maintained through the area planning process for each Mixed-use District, and carried through in the preparation of design standards and guidelines that will result from the Area Plan. Incentives should be put into place to encourage developers to construct projects that achieve the design guidelines.

i	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
👁️	Policy	Establish and adopt pedestrian-oriented design guidelines as part of the planning process for the Mixed-use Districts	1.3.1 2.2.1 2.3.10 3.1.1 3.3.1 4.3.2	Jurisdictions
👁️	Program	Use pedestrian oriented-design guidelines in design review process	2.3.3 2.3.8 2.3.10 3.3.2 3.3.3	Jurisdictions

B. Balance automobile and pedestrian access

The area plans and design standards and guidelines that are prepared to shape the implementation of the Mixed-use Districts must recognize the need to maintain a good level of auto accessibility to the Districts. Driving is likely to remain the major transportation mode for most residents of the Capital District into the foreseeable future. Also, the retail and employment uses within the Mixed-use Districts will require truck access.



Regional Mixed-Use Districts

The techniques that are discussed throughout this Report have indicated methods for balancing the needs of autos, pedestrians, and bicyclists to provide people with transportation choices, rather than the existing auto-dominated environment that currently exists in the areas of the Corridor that have the potential to become Mixed-use Districts.

i	Type	Steps	Ref.	Who?
⚡	Policy Program	Encourage developers and businesses to provide points of exit/entry facing both parking lots and sidewalks	2.3.2 3.3.1 3.3.2 3.3.3	Jurisdictions, Sub-Corridor BIDs, Developers, Businesses
⚡	Policy	Design sites so that buildings front the street and pedestrian areas, placing parking lots "behind" buildings	2.3.3 2.3.10 3.3.2 4.3.2 4.4.3	Developers, Jurisdictions
⚡	Policy	Encourage shared parking configurations by adjusting parking requirements	4.3.3 4.3.4 4.4.2	Jurisdictions
👁️	Policy Investments	Create on-street parking and allow spaces to count toward parking requirements	4.2.3 4.3.3 4.4.2	Jurisdictions, NYSDOT, CDTC
👁️	Program	Cluster pedestrian-oriented uses to make them more convenient for both regional and local users	2.3.10 3.1.1 3.3.1	Jurisdictions, Developers, Sub-Corridor BIDs, Businesses

Regional Mixed-Use Districts



CONCLUSION 5

The future of the Route 5 Corridor holds much promise. To achieve the Preferred Future, the Corridor Communities will have to face and overcome many challenges as well. This study has successfully concluded a planning process that has established an initial vision for the future of the Corridor. This vision - the Preferred Future - is only a starting point. It is now incumbent upon the variety of Corridor Stakeholders from NYSDOT to the residents of the Vale Neighborhood in Schenectady to take the Preferred Future and the Action Plan as defined here, and implement it and continue to refine it.

New Visions, the Capital District's regional transportation plan, calls for a regional development plan which builds on the interconnection between quality of life and economic growth, seeing the two as complements rather than contradictions. The plan makes it clear that balanced growth cannot be achieved without regional cooperation. To this end, this study acknowledges the role of the region's Corridors as a focus for high-quality development and transportation that link the region's communities together. The essence of the *NY5 Study* recommendations echoes the need for cooperation across city, county, and property lines in order to enhance the greater quality of life along the Corridor. The *NY5 Study* process and hopefully its results will serve as a model for the other Corridors in the region as well as for regional cooperation in general.

How to Use this Study

The results of this Study should be used by Corridor Stakeholders as an initial vision for the future and a guide for achieving this future. The Study can also be used as an educational tool. The complexities of the Preferred Scenario and the implementation recommendations require that a consensus be maintained. Without broad support the implementation of the Preferred Future will be all the more difficult. The first four chapters of this report, and the presentation tools that have been prepared along with the report, provide important educational tools. These should be used in continuing outreach to Corridor Stakeholders so that they understand the goals and the vision of the Preferred Future.

The Preferred Future Action Plan is the “guide-book” for implementing the desired future. Cooperation is at the heart of the Action Plan. This chapter is designed to be equally meaningful to all stakeholders, orienting users with steps which must be taken within their domain to accomplish and participate in the Preferred Future. The Action Plan integrates the actions of all stakeholders into the broader actions that need to be undertaken to achieve the Preferred Future. Stakeholders will have to be creative, open-minded, and ready to think regionally and act locally. Above all this document will challenge stakeholders to operate “outside of the box” of their everyday interests.

This Report should also be used as a “living document.” The Preferred Future will be refined throughout the implementation process as policies, programs, and designs discussed here are carried forward into reality. Refinements will occur at a broad level with the implementation of the BRT system, and with revisions to communities’ comprehensive plans, as well as at the detailed level with the design and construction of streetscape improvements and new development on private properties.

The Corridor Communities will need to refer back to the document periodically to see that the individual actions that are occurring are in fact moving the Corridor towards the Preferred Future.

Capital Budget

Introduction

Attaining the Preferred Future will require steady and constructive investment by both private and public sectors. Substantial funds will be required from both sectors to achieve the goals of the Capitalize Albany initiative in downtown Albany and the City of Schenectady’s downtown master plan. (The full buildout of the Western Gateway Intermodal Center, including the private office building, is estimated to cost \$30 M alone, for example.) Regular and recurring redevelopment of existing commercial sites over the coming years will total hundreds of millions of dollars of capital investment prior to full implementation of the Corridor plan.

From this perspective, the requirements for highway and transit infrastructure appear large, but within reason. There is a significant opportunity to implement aspects of the Preferred Future in conjunction with routine highway rehabilitation, making the incremental cost of the Corridor plan more manageable. Further, the Preferred Future’s commitment to Bus Rapid Transit makes implementation of a “high-end” transit system immediately feasible, with completion over time at varying paces depending upon available funding.

The total capital cost of the highway and transit system recommendations of the Preferred Future for the Corridor is slightly in excess of \$200 M. This can be divided roughly as shown in Table V.1.

Table V.I: Components of Capital Budget*

Component	Full Cost	Current TIP
Highway Rehab and Enhancement	\$ 104 M	\$ 25 M
Bus Rapid Transit	\$ 25 M	\$ 12 M
Boulevard	\$ 25 M	\$ 0 M
Utilities	\$ 33 M	\$ 0 M
Signals, other	\$ 20 M	\$ 4 M
TOTAL	\$ 207 M	\$ 41 M

*"Current TIP" reflects 1999-01 Committed Column and 2001-06 Program

Implementation Paths and Milestones

Alternative Paths to Implementation

The public and private stakeholders with direct influence on the future of the NY5 Corridor have expressed interest in and support for the Preferred Future scenario. The implementation actions (what needs to happen) and implementation mechanisms (how it can be accomplished) have been outlined in *Chapter IV Action Plan* and in *Appendix A Implementation*. The remaining question is to determine the level of commitment to implementation. How serious about implementation are the elected and appointed officials in the communities along the Corridor? What priority does the NY5 Corridor have within the regional transportation plan? Among CDTA's various responsibilities? How likely is it that property owners will see the benefit of a collaborative Corridor redevelopment program? Will regional efforts provide sufficient growth to support revitalization of the Corridor?

The answer to these and similar questions will dictate the appropriate strategy and timetable for implementation of the Preferred Future. Characteristics of three possible paths to implementation are described below:

1. Nominal Support Path: Elected and appointed officials perceive modest interest in the Preferred Future from the broad community, largely insufficient to support the difficult work of

regulatory changes, Corridor promotion or property assembly. Minor pieces of the preferred land use future are obtained through irregular efforts to negotiate with developers to obtain modest alterations to development proposals. Transportation system features are enhanced in the Corridor as funds permit, in conjunction with projects initiated for infrastructure rehab or traffic safety purposes. A first generation of signal upgrades and modest implementation of bus transit improvements is put in place quickly, but support from communities is insufficient to sustain the effort. Economic development agencies and private property owners respond primarily to near-term market forces and national trends in development styles with minimal interaction with specific Corridor goals or plans. Failure to witness steady progress diminishes the value and credibility of the Corridor plan and aspirations for continuous transit and streetscape improvements diminish over time. Only disconnected portions of the preferred transportation future are in place after twenty years and most opportunities to achieve key land use future components are missed because of limited policy commitment and implementation difficulty. *Accompanying regional economic "temperature": cool to warm. Corridor economic temperature: cool -- and cooling further.*

2. Steady Progress Path: Elected and appointed officials perceive strong support from the broad community for the Preferred Future. The action plan in Chapter IV is often referenced by officials, planners, developers and community

groups. Transportation agencies and other parties commit to implementation of the Preferred Future and treat the Corridor as a regional priority (among other priorities). Transportation system projects are designed and carried out in a manner consistent with the Preferred Future, following a long-range schedule that fits available resources. Economic development agencies recognize Corridor goals and plans and adjust actions to fit. Private property owners engage effectively with each other and with governmental officials and agencies to leverage public infrastructure investment to encourage private redevelopment investment. Municipalities explore and steadily adopt regulatory modifications to encourage private investment of a type that moves the Corridor toward the Preferred Future. Related downtown development in Schenectady and Albany steadily grows economic bases for the Corridor market. Neighborhood and business improvement districts modestly "spruce up" sections of the Corridor. Bus Rapid Transit deployment occurs incrementally with a first generation in the next five years leading to a greater deployment of features over ten or more years. Implementation of much, but not all, of the identified highway / streetscape system features is reached after twenty years based on the street design booklet which has been adopted by most jurisdictions. Significant land use change is evident after twenty years, but full implementation of the preferred land use future is prevented partly by modest levels of regional economic growth and partly by the many long-lived

redevelopment activities that occur before communities adopt new regulatory mechanisms. Utility relocation/undergrounding proves to be challenging and its implementation lags behind other features. *Accompanying regional economic temperature: warm. Corridor economic temperature: warm.*

3. Accelerated Implementation Path. Elected and appointed officials perceive strong support for rapid implementation of the Preferred Future. They work in concert to articulate the value of the Preferred Future to their communities and to the region. The Action Plan becomes a well-used document and sits on the desk of all elected officials, stakeholders and community groups. Transportation agencies and other parties assign a high priority to the Corridor and assist local officials' efforts to articulate the need. Local officials and transportation agencies secure supplemental public funding from local, state and/or federal sources to permit implementation of Bus Rapid Transit and other transit, highway and streetscape improvements in a concentrated time period (ten years); changes in succeeding years require less funding. Municipalities explore and quickly adopt many recommended implementation mechanisms from the NY5 study to assist in property assemblage, site design and community layout. Private property owners engage effectively with each other on a Corridor level and with governmental officials and agencies to leverage public infrastructure investment to encourage private redevelopment investment.

Table V.2: Alternative Implementation Paths and the Current Situation

	Nominal Support Path	Steady Progress Path	Rapid Implementation Path	Current Situation
Perceived public support	modest	strong	very strong	modest
Annual transportation system investment level	slowing over time	large	very large	large
Rate of regulatory revision	slow	steady	rapid	slow
Pace of downtown development	slowing	steady	rapid	steady
Influence on site design	occasional	regular	nearly always	occasional
Ability to assemble property	weak	modest	strong	weak

Regional economic marketing efforts and external events succeed in projecting a positive, attractive image to the nation and the world; sufficient economic growth provides for much redevelopment activity along the Corridor, largely achieving the land use future within ten or so years. *Accompanying regional economic temperature: hot. Corridor economic temperature: warm—and heating up.*

The characteristics of the three alternative implementation paths are shown in Table V.2, and compared to the current situation. It is critical for all stakeholders to recognize that the timetable for implementation will directly reflect community support and commitment to the Preferred Future.

Comparing the current situation to the characteristics of the three implementation paths provides

substantial encouragement regarding implementation. *Stakeholders today appear to be seeking the steady progress path with interest in exploring the rapid implementation path.* However, continued progress on this path is not assured by current activities; continuing commitment and hard work will be required to sustain the steady improvements.

Rapid implementation will not occur without substantial effort that turns up the regional and Corridor economic and political "temperature" a notch from that evident today. Unless such effort is deemed feasible and appropriate, the more modest steady progress expectations and timetable should reflect the maximum reasonable expectations for the Corridor.

Relative to the projected capital budget for highway and transit improvements, the three

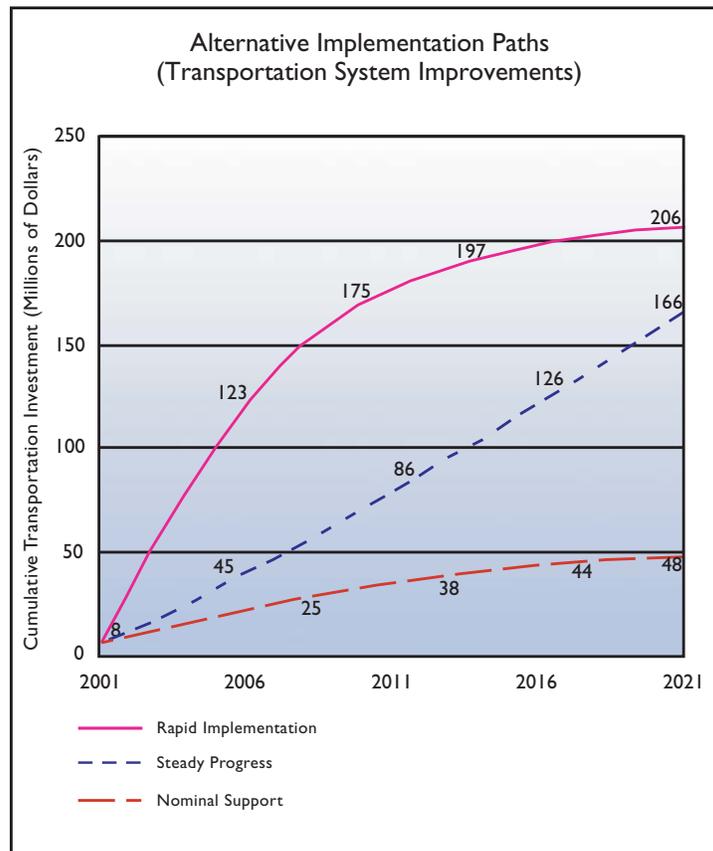


Figure V.1 Alternative Implementation Paths

paths differ significantly regarding the pace of investment. Figure V.1 reflects the likely buildout of highway, transit and utility projects over the coming 20 years. As described above, the rapid implementation path achieves the majority of needed investment within ten years; in contrast the nominal support path reflects diminishing momentum and declining rates of investment after the initial wave of efforts. Funding shown in the 2001-06 TIP, if sustained, would be consistent with the steady progress implementation path.

Important Milestones Along the Way

The action plan describes the "what" and the "who" of the wide range of actions required to achieve the Preferred Future. The Implementation Mechanisms appendix provides a menu of the "how". The pace of change, the ability to continuously refine the action plan, and momentum toward full implementation will be measured by the timeliness and effectiveness with which key milestones are reached.

The following milestones appear to be the most strategic, the most catalytic. Success in reaching each of these milestones will breed further success; failure to reach success will diminish prospects for further success. There are a number of milestones which must be reached in the next few years (certainly within a five year period) in order to maintain momentum on the Steady Progress implementation path. Additional milestones must also be reached in short order (again, within five years) if the Rapid Implementation Path is to be attained. Failure to reach these elements over a lengthy period of time will increasingly push the Corridor toward the nominal support path of minimal levels of implementation.

Near-Term Milestones to Sustain Momentum on the Steady Progress Implementation Path

1. Local Community Buy-In

Community support, in the form of the expressed interest of residents, businesses and property owners, is necessary to sustain steady progress. Support must translate into commitment by elected officials to actively pursue the opportunities present in the Corridor. Buy-in implies a willingness to communicate the aspects of the Preferred Future to potential developers. It also refers to a willingness to seek implementation of the Preferred Future through each site review, zoning appeal and repaving project in the Corridor. Full community buy-in will be reflected in the plans and priorities of Albany and Schenectady counties; the cities of Albany and Schenectady; the towns of Colonie and Niskayuna; the village of Colonie; the Metroplex Authority; and local Industrial Development Agencies and other economic development agencies.

2. Official Endorsement of the Preferred Future and the Action Plan

It is important that each affected public entity state commitment to implementation. This can be accomplished through CDTC's adoption of the products of the plan and through comparable endorsement by CDTA and each of the municipalities along the Corridor. This effort will provide stature to the collective effort.

3. Business Improvement District Success

Continued progress is also dependent upon visible and celebrated success of cooperative, grass roots business efforts. The benefits of public-private cooperation, in terms of real-world

success (business attraction and retention, aesthetics, business activity, infrastructure enhancements) must be sufficient to reinforce cooperative practices.

4. Neighborhood Association Success

Likewise, the many grass roots neighborhood efforts must witness success in their efforts to enhance livability, property value, quality of the housing stock, security and attractiveness in neighborhoods along the Corridor. As with the business community, public-private cooperation is critical for neighborhood leaders to see change and be encouraged to continue the often-difficult volunteer work.

5. Downtown Investment

Action plan elements such as upgrading downtown office stock, enhancing telecommunications infrastructure and succeeding with transformational investments are critical to the steady progress implementation path. The City of Albany recently announced that the total of downtown construction investment since 1994 totals one billion dollars; the City of Schenectady has budgeted funds along with Metroplex to fully fund the Western Gateway Intermodal Center to complement the NYSDOT and MVP building projects to anchor downtown Schenectady. Work on streetscaping, site design and Bus Rapid Transit, for example, will not continue indefinitely without evidence of steady rejuvenation of the two downtown cores at each end of the Corridor.

6. Initial ITS Success

Much of the transportation strategy in the Preferred Future depends upon the ability of those operating the highway system to effectively manage traffic in a manner that encourages pedestrian and bicycle traffic, accommodates side street and property access, and meets truck traffic demands. The near-term overhaul of 72 signal-

ized intersections into state-of-the-art computer signals with centralized control will be a pivotal investment in the Corridor's future. Public perception of success will increase the credibility of the Preferred Future's expectation that Corridor revitalization can be accommodated without significant increases in congestion. Public perception of failure of the signal project will diminish hopes and desires for the Corridor.

7. Initial Transit Success

Similarly, successful completion of commitments by CDTA to implement portions of the Preferred Future by "growing" a Bus Rapid Transit system in the Corridor is pivotal to the prospects of full implementation over time. If CDTA is able to effectively differentiate the BRT service from other service as a new "brand" of bus service and witness both public support and ridership gains, then the ability to further grow the BRT service into that envisioned in the Preferred Future is realistic. Further BRT development after five years is less likely if initial work is characterized by difficulty in implementing the service (excessive cost, difficulty acquiring property for stations, ineffectiveness of signal priority features) or lack of sufficient public response to the investment.

8. Initial Streetscape Success

CDTC's 2001-06 Transportation Improvement Program reflects substantial federal, state and local funding to implement the preferred street / streetscape designs in several sections of the Corridor. Critical among them is Central Avenue from Everett Rd. to the Colonie town line and State Street in downtown Schenectady. These important sections will demonstrate both the commitment and capability of municipalities in implementing the preferred plan. The Central Avenue project is a heavily-traveled Corridor with a pressing need for better pedestrian, transit and bicycle treatment; curb cut control and structured property access; and improved aesthetics. The

ability of the City of Albany to work with all affected parties and make difficult choices among competing objectives (including ever-present concerns about traffic flow) will set the foundation for further work. Similarly, the State Street Streetscape project (funding approximately half with federal funds and half with Metroplex and city funds) is a prototype for urban core work.

9. Zoning and Regulatory Changes

The steady progress path does not rely solely on transportation system improvements. Implementation of the Preferred Future also heavily depends upon municipal efforts to better prepare for and process development proposals. Numerous changes to zoning laws, building codes and other regulatory devices are required in order to permit and encourage mixed-use development, streetfront development, shared driveways and parking areas. Until such changes are made, most new private land use investments are likely to reinforce existing isolated, auto-dominant styles of development and delay implementation of the Preferred Future.

10. Improved Prospects for the Regional Economy

Steady implementation progress over many years is dependent upon improved prospects for the region. Without a change to the region's long-term pattern of out-migration of 18 to 34 year-olds, physical improvements in the Corridor will not generate sufficient economic vitality to maintain momentum. Regional efforts to attract and retain employment opportunities for qualified young people must succeed for momentum to be sustained on the steady progress path for more than a few years.

11. Continued Transportation Funding to the Region

CDTC's New Visions 2021 plan reinforces a regional commitment to economic development

and urban revitalization projects, to bicycle and pedestrian improvements, to BRT deployment, and to both state and local highway system renewal. This commitment is predicated upon continued (and modestly-growing) levels of federal, state and local funding. Future funding is at risk at all levels. Federal funding is dependent upon the reauthorization in 2003 of the federal TEA-21 transportation program taking a form that is similar to that of TEA-21: flexible, appropriately-scaled, and reflective of many kinds of transportation needs. Alternative forms of the federal program include features such as a turnback of taxing authority to the states, a focus primarily on the Interstate system, and a shift of authorizations away from New York and other transit-dependent states. None of these features would support steady progress with the Corridor plan. Likewise, the failure of the state transportation bond referendum last November has created a sizeable funding gap in CDTC's long-range budget. The gap must be closed in order to sustain the New Visions commitments. Finally, local funding is under pressure from the desire to reduce property tax burdens. Yet a continued and sizeable commitment of local funding to key implementation actions is essential to maintain steady progress.

12. Continued State Policy on Urban Revitalization

The Governor has used state employment as a catalyst for downtown revitalization. This is seen clearly in downtown Albany, but is also evident in the NYSDOT building in Schenectady. Continued focus on this policy is necessary to maintain momentum and contribute to the market for enhanced transit services and both commercial and residential renewal in both cities and along the length of the Corridor.

Additional Near-Term Milestones For the Rapid Implementation Path

1. Regional Community Buy-In

The step up from steady progress to rapid implementation requires a regional buy-in, otherwise Corridor promotional efforts will appear to compete head-on with those in other areas. The buy-in must go beyond that reflected in the New Visions 2021 plan. It must build upon the concept that reinvestment in the NY5 Corridor is a win-win scenario for all corners of the Capital District—it improves the efficiency and image of the region while significantly assisting with jobs access and other social issues. It does not diminish the competitiveness of other areas of the region; it merely avoids over-development of greenfields and further decay of the traditional regional center. Much as the improvement of the Albany International Airport has reflected favorably on the image of the entire region, so too the renaissance of older downtowns and revitalization of the NY5 Corridor will reflect well upon the region's ability to preserve and reuse resources and grow intelligently. The regional buy-in must become part of the policies, priorities and programs of state and county agencies and regional economic groups.

2. Development Community Buy-In

Full and rapid success with the land use portion of the Preferred Future is dependent upon willing and creative buy-in from private developers. The rapid implementation path requires a complementary relationship between municipalities and developers, one in which private developers recognize the economic feasibility associated with new types and layouts of development shown in the NY5 Preferred Future. To a certain extent, steady implementation progress and concerted community efforts to revise comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances may create a critical mass sufficient to draw more creative and "risky" development concepts to the Corridor.

3. Corridor Identity and Coordination

This element has two significant components: business identification of the Corridor as a whole and elected officials' recognition of the need to work in concert on common Corridor issues. On the business side, success with BID efforts in the near future can lead to coordinated marketing and joint efforts of multiple BIDs (even if it does not lead to the creation of not a Corridor-wide BID). With regard to municipal coordination, monitoring mutual successes through a continued Corridor coalition may lead to joint efforts to define design guidelines or seek supplemental transportation, brownfield redevelopment or other public funding. The culmination of coordinated activities is the recognition of the Corridor as a substantial entity with broad visibility and economic and political weight. Such recognition must occur as a prerequisite in order for the rapid implementation path to become a reality.

4. Supplemental Funding

Figure V.1 reflects the near-term funding expenditures required solely for transportation infrastructure for the rapid implementation path. Implementation over the next ten years in the rapid implementation path would be double that of the steady progress path, totaling approximately \$175 M. This pace of investment cannot be achieved within existing resources or modest increments to them. This pace of investment requires substantial access to supplemental funding dedicated to the BRT, boulevard, streetscape and other features of the Preferred Future. Such a significant amount of supplemental funding (nearly \$90 M) would be possible only through concerted efforts of elected officials and other community leaders. While the target funding amount is substantial, it can be contrasted with other "transformational" investments including the Albany International Airport's \$225 M capital program for the coming five years and potential improvements in the Northway Corridor or redesigning I-787 -- either of which would be measured in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

Table V.3: Milestones

Near-Term Milestones to Sustain Momentum on the Steady Progress Implementation Path	
1.	Local Community Buy-In
2.	Official Endorsement of the Preferred Future and the Action Plan
3.	Business Improvement District Success
4.	Neighborhood Association Success
5.	Downtown Investment
6.	Initial ITS Success
7.	Initial Transit Success
8.	Initial Streetscape Success
9.	Zoning and Regulatory Changes
10.	Improved Prospects for the Regional Economy
11.	Continued Transportation Funding to the Region
12.	Continued State Policy on Urban Revitalization
Additional Near-Term Milestones For the Rapid Implementation Path	
1.	Regional Community Buy-In
2.	Development Community Buy-In
3.	Corridor-level Identity and Coordinated Promotion
4.	Supplemental Funding
5.	External Events that Heat Up the Regional Economy
6.	TDM and Parking Management Changes
7.	Adoption of Property Assembly Tools
8.	Pursuit of Boulevard and Transit Lane Elements

Sources of the substantial supplemental funding would include: federal earmarks, state earmarks, Federal Transit Administration "bus discretionary" funds and further Metroplex funding. Each of these sources requires persistence.

5. External Events that Heat Up the Regional Economy

Full implementation of the Preferred Future, particularly on the redevelopment side, is dependent upon the pace of economic growth in the region. As noted earlier, the rapid implementa-

tion path is consistent with a "hot" regional economy. Community preparation (through rezoning and other actions) and steady progress on transportation system implementation can result in rapid implementation of the full plan when economic activity in the region heats up. Beyond regional marketing, it is likely that external events such as energy, labor, mobility, environmental or water constraints in current boom areas will be precipitating factors in the national economy "re-discovering" the Capital District. Such events constitute an additional milestone on the rapid implementation path.

6. TDM and Parking Management Changes

Full implementation of the Preferred Future, including appropriate use of land and successful traffic management, will require local attainment of integrated demand management and parking management. This milestone is most critical for downtown Albany in order to avoid creation of parking structures at \$20,000 per space for each new employee, but is also critical in downtown Schenectady in order to minimize the size of parking areas and to maintain streetfront integrity. Full BRT deployment will not be politically feasible nor effective without first succeeding in actions that engage employers in transit pass purchases and change current worker expectations for low-cost, convenient downtown parking.

7. Adoption of Property Assembly Tools

The scale of land use change reflected in the Preferred Future may require effective public mechanisms for property assembly. Much of the current economic under-utilization of commercial and industrial-zoned property along the Corridor can be attributed to the (a) difficulty of assembly multiple parcels to create a sufficiently-sized site for an economic return on the investment and (b) the ease of acquiring single-owner or undeveloped greenfields in other communities. Revitalization of the Corridor to its full market potential will be made possible if property assembly tools are in place. Accomplishing adoption of effective tools is a major milestone on the rapid implementation path.

8. Pursuit of Boulevard and Transit Lane Elements

Among the most difficult elements of the transportation system recommendations for the Corridor are those that shift traffic patterns and/or require substantial land acquisition. The boulevard (with local access roads) concept for

the village of Colonie is one such difficult proposition. Movement within a few years to refine the concept and determine public support will constitute a milestone on the rapid implementation path. Rapid implementation of the full plan will not be possible without stepwise progress on this challenging aspect. Similarly, negotiations over use of the median and curb lanes for bus-only use must produce agreement in the near term to permit physical construction of infrastructure to support the change within the ten-year period. Success with defining the bus-only lane system is thus a near-term key milestone along the rapid implementation path.

Upon reaching these milestones, pause should be taken to celebrate, evaluate and rally around the progress made. Each milestone should serve to build momentum for the next. In this way the first milestones are the most critical, indicating a serious Corridor-wide commitment to moving forward with the Preferred Future.

The difficult task of identifying a Preferred Future has been accomplished. The stakeholders in the NY5 Corridor are now charged with implementing and nurturing this vision. With sustained effort the NY5 Corridor will serve as a model for regional growth in this new century.

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