

Saint Albans Downtown Master Plan Report

September 9, 2009

Prepared for:
The City of St. Albans, Vermont

Prepared by:
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1.0 Introduction and Assessment

1.1 Background

In February of 2006 the City of St. Albans and St. Albans for the Future (SAFF) completed a Market Analysis and Marketing Plan that involved five key strategies for the ongoing revitalization of downtown. These strategies included a marketing plan, a master development plan, embracing the Creative Economy, improvements to Taylor Park, and SAFF's role as the catalyst organization for these improvements.

Since the completion of the Market Analysis and Marketing Plan, SAFF, the City of St. Albans, and other public and private stakeholders have done much to implement the recommendations of the study including major improvements to Taylor Park, new events and activities designed to draw people downtown, ongoing business support and promotion, and applications for funding for major projects in the community.

One of the major themes and recommendations of the Marketing Study was for St. Albans to complete a Master Plan for downtown. The study indicated that a Master Plan could serve as a roadmap for the public and private investments that could take place in St. Albans over the coming years.

In early 2009, having secured funding for much of the Master Plan through the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development's Municipal Planning Grant program, St. Albans hired Arnett Muldrow & Associates, Ltd. of Greenville, South Carolina alongside Mahan Rykiel Associates, Ltd. of Baltimore, MD and Community Design Solutions of Columbia, SC to develop this plan.

1.2 Project Approach

Unlike traditional approaches to a master plan process where a consultant looks at the "big picture" first and then zooms into specific recommendations (sometimes without the participation of property owners in the community) the St. Albans Master Plan effort took an alternate approach by beginning with a property owners meeting attended by over fifty business and property owners from downtown. Each property owner was given the chance to have a one-on-one consultation with the master plan team of professionals.

The plan was then built from the "ground up" from these consultations. The extensive private sector interest in improvements and redevelopment opportunities helped guide the public sector improvements that will occur over the expected fifteen-year life of this plan.

1.3 Acknowledgements

This plan was the collaborative effort of many people. Special thanks goes to Karen Bresnahan, the executive director of SAFF who coordinated all of the public input meetings, the individual meetings with private property owners, and served as our "guide" through the process. Thanks also to Jane Kiser and Dominic Cloud and the rest of the staff at the City of St. Albans for their

valuable help and insight during the project. Jeffrey A. Bean, Mapmaker Photogrammetric Services of St. Albans provided us important detailed mapping data for St. Albans that became the “base” for all of the master plan drawings. The S.E. Group of Burlington was also a key contributor of information and ideas for the “Core Block” in downtown. Finally and most importantly, thanks goes to the property owners, business owners, and interested citizens of St. Albans that contributed their time, ideas, and insights into the master plan. This is your plan for the future of downtown.

1.4 Physical Assessment

The paragraphs below and the Summary Analysis diagram that follows highlight some of the key physical issues that have influenced the Master Development Plan in this report.

1.4.1 Road Network

St. Albans benefits from a clear roadway network providing direct access to the downtown area from Interstate 89 via the Interstate Access Road to Main Street. Plans are currently underway to extend the Interstate Access Road directly into Federal Street and enhance Federal Street to create a more direct connection and minimize truck traffic on Main Street. Alternative approaches to this new corridor are described in the Federal Street Corridor Study – 2005 Update, prepared by Resource Systems Group, Inc. and Cross Consulting Engineers.

The downtown core of St. Albans is defined by a modified grid network where intersecting streets often do not align. While this poses some circulation and traffic challenges, it also presents some interesting urban design benefits where vistas are terminated by views of significant architecture or open spaces, reinforcing a strong “sense-of-place”. The core itself is defined by Hudson Street to the north, Stebbins Street to the south, Federal Street to the west and the eastern boundary more or less defined by Church Street and Main Street. The historic downtown boundary roughly falls within this core area. The actual downtown boundary extends further to the north and south along Main Street and further to the West along Lake Street.

If streets were to be ranked within the core area, Main Street is clearly the most prominent street with Federal and Lake Streets following. While only one block in length, Kingman Street is also significant as it completes the “Core Block” which is defined by Main, Lake and Federal Streets. In addition, Kingman Street has an outstanding architectural quality with several prominent buildings and terminates to the east with a prominent view of Taylor Park. The western terminus at Federal Street is less significant. If an additional rail crossing is permitted, consideration should be given to extending Kingman Street to the west to create more circulation options between the west and east sides of the railroad. While not more prominent than Lake Street, Kingman should be considered for streetscape enhancements before Lake Street because enhancements here would make a more significant impact visually and in terms of function for the downtown. It is a short street that could be closed off for events without impacting downtown circulation. In addition, there is an opportunity to widen the sidewalk areas by converting the angled parking to parallel parking, provided that lost parking can be made up in a new parking public resource.

INSERT ASSESSMENT DIAGRAM HERE

1.4.2 Open Space

St. Albans has quite a few parks and open spaces throughout the city limits; however, the centerpiece is Taylor Park, which serves as the front lawn for the downtown business district as well as the historic churches along Church Street. Recent efforts have focused on cleaning up the park and making it more appealing to the community and visitors. Many stakeholders speak positively of improvements such as the limbing up of trees and the new permeable sidewalk. The tree pruning alone has opened up views and increased the sense of security for park users. Nevertheless, the park does not appear to be used as heavily as it could. As the downtown business district continues to be revitalized, additional efforts should be made to draw more activity into the park, maximizing its potential as a downtown attraction.

1.4.3 Redevelopment Opportunities

Within the well-defined core of the downtown, there are several opportunities for new infill development and redevelopment of existing structures to capitalize on the downtown location as well as the close proximity to the proposed multi-modal center along Federal Street, between Lake and Kingman Streets. In addition, there are also several opportunities to create shared parking resources that would not only support existing development but new mixed-use development as well. The most significant opportunities are within the Core Block, bounded by Main, Federal, Lake and Kingman Streets. These include the Downtown Core Site, as described in the City of St. Albans Preliminary Growth Center Application (PGCA), dated February 27, 2009 as well as several privately owned and publicly owned vacant properties. Additional opportunities exist in the block north of the Core Block (public and private surface parking areas) and the block to the south (public and private surface parking areas). These blocks not only include new infill development potential but also a significant number of private property owners and business owners who have a desire to improve their existing buildings. Another important site, diagonally adjacent to the Core Block and an important anchor to Taylor Park is the Handy's Toyota property which is also described in the PGCA. While the owner of this property may not wish to redevelop at this time, it is important to plan accordingly for this site so that when the time does come for redevelopment, it can be done in a manner appropriate to this important location.

Beyond the downtown core, there are several opportunities for redevelopment including 101 Lake Street, Handy's Lake Street, INS, J.C. Penney Plaza, Agway, Fonda, Stebbins Street Property and Federal Street Property. All of these are described in the PGCA.

1.4.4 Assessment Conclusions

The following conclusions are based on stakeholder input as well as the physical assessment outlined above. These conclusions will serve as the overall framework for the specific recommendations outlined in the next section of this report.

- **Build Upon Assets:** Downtown St. Albans contains a wealth of assets including Taylor Park, Kingman Street, Main Street, a compact core, impressive architecture, a multitude of redevelopment opportunities and a proposed multi-modal center. As downtown continues to

revitalize, it will be important to leverage these assets for additional investment in downtown and to enhance the assets themselves. Focusing on existing assets and those things that distinguish St. Albans from other communities will result in a more “genuine” downtown.

- ***Focus on the Core:*** While there are assets located throughout the City of St. Albans, it will be important to focus attention on “completing” the core area, creating a critical mass of investment in a fairly compact area. This in turn will maximize the visual impact of revitalization and set a positive tone for investment in other areas of downtown.
- ***Work Incrementally:*** Downtown revitalization is an on-going process that doesn’t happen overnight. While maintaining the big picture vision, revitalization can happen incrementally in mostly small but, occasionally, large steps. Relatively simple, yet highly visible, changes often make the most impact and are important for keeping enthusiasm and the revitalization effort alive.

1.4.5 Master Development Plan Exhibit

All of the recommendations in chapters three, four, and five of the report are coded to the Master Development Plan map on the following page. This map should be used as a reference point for all recommendations in the following three chapters.

INSERT MASTER DEVELOPMENT PLAN EXHIBIT HERE

2.0 Development, Redevelopment, and Parking

2.1 Development and Redevelopment Opportunities

While there are many development and redevelopment opportunities throughout St. Albans as identified and described in the City of St. Albans Preliminary Growth Center Application, dated February 27, 2009, some of the most significant opportunities are in the three primary downtown blocks bounded by Hudson Street to the North and Stebbins Street to the South. These opportunities are in the form of new construction (infill) on vacant lots and renovation of existing buildings. Regardless of the location, it is particularly important to seize the opportunity to reinforce the strong urban form of Downtown St. Albans and avoid suburban-style development patterns that have occurred in the past. New development should be sensitive to the historic context, locate buildings to the street edge with parking located behind and provide active uses and articulated facades along the streets. Following are specific recommendations for each area included in the Master Development Plan:

2.1.1 Downtown Core Block (Growth Center Application Site #1)

This site represents the center of St. Albans and is bounded by Main, Kingman, Lake and Federal Streets. The vision for the Downtown Core Block is to reinforce these four block faces with infill development/redevelopment and revitalization of existing properties while creating a significant structured parking resource internal to the site. This parking will support the adjacent development (including replacement of lost surface spaces) and will also serve as a public parking resource. Specific details of the development of the block include:

- ***Internal Circulation System:*** Ideally, an internal street will provide circulation around the perimeter of the parking resource allowing access to the rear of buildings as well as to the parking resource itself. Vehicular connections will link this street to Kingman, Federal and Lake Streets. The existing covered walkway will continue to serve as the pedestrian link to Main Street. The streets that comprise this internal circulation system should be designed as pedestrian-friendly urban streets with sidewalks (on the building side) street trees, ornamental lighting (free-standing or building mounted), outdoor dining areas and other sidewalk amenities where feasible. The intent is to create a dynamic pedestrian environment conducive to outdoor cafes/merchandise display areas in the rear of the buildings, which would take advantage of southern and western solar exposure. Careful attention to the aesthetics of this street system—particularly lighting—and generating active uses such as outdoor dining is important in creating an atmosphere where pedestrians feel safe getting to and from the parking resource.
- ***Parking Resource (Core Lot - #1B):*** The plan illustrates a 3-4 level parking structure that would include 300-400 parking spaces; this represents a net gain of approximately 200-300 spaces when considering the 103 spaces that exist in the lot today. The parking structure will take advantage of the existing elevation change so that the lower level of the structure will be at grade with Federal Street while the second level would be closer to the grade of the buildings along Main Street. There exists the potential to provide connection from upper floors of the structure directly to some of the upper floors of adjacent buildings. The design

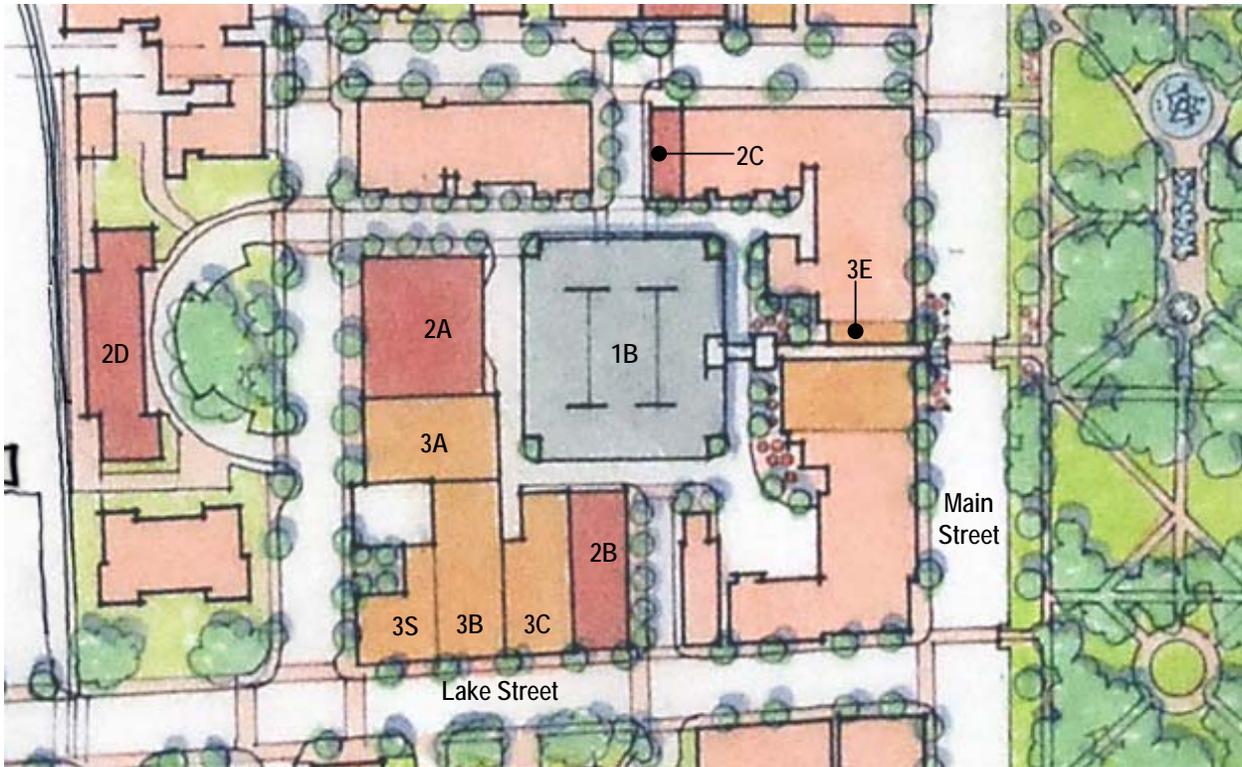
of the lower levels of the structure should make a positive contribution to the aesthetics of the pedestrian environment and could provide surfaces for public art (particularly those surfaces visible to the surrounding streets) and wall-mounted light fixtures. Because the structure is completely internal to the site, architectural treatments can be fairly modest.

- ***Alternative Parking Structure Designs (#1B):*** While the concept illustrated and described above depicts the maximum amount of development potential (and active uses) along the perimeter of this block, alternative design approaches should also be explored for the parking structure. For example, a larger (and possibly more efficient) footprint could extend either to Federal Street (in place of some or all of the infill/redevelopment shown in #2A and #3A) or to Lake Street (in place of the infill/redevelopment shown in #2B and #3C). If either of these approaches is explored, careful design attention should be given to parking structure facades exposed to either Federal or Lake Street, as shown in the photographic examples on the following page. It should be noted that with this approach, the internal circulation system of the block could only be accommodated on three sides of the structure.
- ***Kingman Street Infill Development (26 Kingman Street, #2C):*** The existing privately-owned surface parking lot on Kingman presents a great opportunity for infill development to reinforce Kingman as a dynamic street. The plan illustrates a three story building (matching height and scale of adjacent buildings) with approximately 7,000 SF of development potential. The City and property owner would need to partner on the development of this site. Parking (existing surface spaces that will be lost and additional to serve the new development) would be accommodated in the new Core Block parking structure described above. Because this new building would be adjacent to one of the connecting streets leading into the Core Lot, careful architectural attention should be given to both the north façade that faces Kingman and the west façade that would face this connecting street.
- ***Federal Street Infill Development (#2A):*** There is an opportunity for infill development along Federal Street, across from the planned multi-modal facility. The plan illustrates a three-to-four story building with approximately 45,000 SF of development potential. Parking would be accommodated in the new Core Lot. Because this is one of the larger infill opportunities downtown, there may be a desire to develop a vehicular-drop off area to serve the building. This should be located to the rear of the building off of the internal circulation system to maintain an uninterrupted sidewalk area along Federal Street. The design of this infill should be developed in context with surrounding buildings and should give special attention to the west façade facing Federal Street and the north façade facing one of the connecting streets into the Core Lot.
- ***Federal Street Redevelopment Opportunities (Napoli's Building, #3A):*** With its prominent location on Federal Street, this 8,300 SF building represents a potential redevelopment opportunity. Both options that consider reuse of the existing structure with façade improvements as well as complete redevelopment with new construction should be explored. If the site is redeveloped with new construction, the new building should consider multiple floors (3-4) and a design oriented to Federal Street and sensitive to the surrounding context of historic buildings.

- ***Federal Street Façade Enhancement Opportunity (1 Federal Street/Foundry Building - #3S):*** This building has a prominent location on the corner of Lake and Federal Streets and has recently been renovated to include a restaurant. Recommendations for façade enhancements are described under Chapter 3 of this report, Façade Improvement Program.
- ***Lake Street Infill Development (#2B):*** There is an opportunity for infill development along Lake Street in conjunction with the development of a new street that provides access from Lake Street to the new Core Block parking facility. The infill development is shown on the west side of the new street connection so that the street connection can align with access to the parking facility (described later in this section of the report) on the south side of Lake Street. The site illustrates approximately 20,000 SF of new development potential on three floors. Careful attention to architectural treatment should be given to both the south and east facades which face Lake Street and the new connecting street, respectively. This site could be developed in conjunction with 43 Lake Street if that property is to be redeveloped.
- ***Lake Street Redevelopment Opportunity (43 Lake Street, #3C):*** This 7,400 SF building represents a potential redevelopment opportunity. Both options that consider reuse of the existing structure with façade improvements as well as complete redevelopment with new construction should be explored. If the site is redeveloped with new construction, the new building should consider multiple floors (2-3). Ideally, this site would be redeveloped /coordinated with the new infill development described above.
- ***Lake Street Façade Enhancement Opportunity (45 Lake Street, #3B):*** Recommendations for façade enhancements are described under Chapter 3, Façade Improvement Program.
- ***Main Street Façade Enhancement Opportunity (24-28 North Main – Chow Bella, #3D):*** Façade enhancements are described under Chapter 3, Façade Improvement Program.
- ***Main Street Façade Enhancement Opportunity (30 North Main Eaton’s Jewelers-#3E):*** Façade enhancements are described below under Chapter 3, Façade Improvement Program.
- ***Multi-Modal Center (#2D):*** A new multi-modal center is being planned for this block on the west side of Federal Street at the existing Amtrak station. As plans are developed for this facility, careful consideration should be given to providing a sensitive design solution for this prominent location along Federal Street and adjacent to the historic Railroad Building (2 Federal Street). In addition to attractive building facades, the design solution should consider vehicular drop-off/pick-up areas, green space and attractive and comfortable pedestrian connections to adjacent streets.



Examples of structured parking adjacent to street edge. Note active uses on the ground floor and careful articulation of façade on upper levels.



Downtown Core Block: The master plan detail above illustrates how a parking structure can be developed internally to the block allowing for redevelopment and new development along the perimeter.



Downtown Core Block: Model view of the same block. The darker (red) buildings represent new infill opportunities, the medium shaded buildings (orange) represent redevelopment/façade opportunities and the lighter shade (purple) represents structured parking.

2.1.2 Kingman-Hudson Block

This block is located to the north of the Downtown Core Block and is bounded by Kingman, Main, Federal and Hudson Streets and is bisected by Center Street as shown on the previous page. The vision for this block is to increase parking resources by coordinating with property owners to consolidate individual parking lots into a more efficient whole. In addition, there are a significant number of façade improvement opportunities in this block as well as an infill opportunity along Kingman Street. Specific details of the development of the block include:

- **Hudson Consolidated Parking Lot (#1A):** There is an opportunity for the City and adjacent property owners to work together to transform inefficient individual parking lots into a more-efficient consolidated lot. There is an opportunity to increase the number of parking spaces in this lot by approximately 20 spaces (from approximately 90 existing to 110 proposed). Individual property owners would maintain rights to the existing number of parking spaces that they currently have. The additional spaces could be shared by the property owners and the public. Another advantage to consolidating the parking is that trash dumpsters can be consolidated in one area and uniform signage can be applied throughout the lot. It will be important to consider lighting and landscaping (particularly canopy shade trees where possible) throughout the lot. In addition the final design should explore opportunities for bio-retention and/or rain garden areas to minimize storm water runoff.
- **Kingman Street Infill Development (#2E):** There is an infill development opportunity on the surface parking lot adjacent to the Peoples Trust Building (25 Kingman Street), should the property owners wish to develop this lot at some point in the future. The plan illustrates 14,000 SF of development potential on 3 floors. Existing surface parking spaces that would be lost to this development could be accommodated in the new parking structure (Core Lot, #1B) described above. If the property owner considers development of this lot, special care should be given to the architectural compatibility to the historic Peoples Trust Building.
- **11-15 Kingman Street (Guy's Unisex Building, #3G):** Investment has already occurred upgrading this building. A façade enhancement plan was not developed for this building; however, additional recommendations by the team are included in Chapter 3, Façade Improvement Program.
- **7-15 Center Street, (#3I):** Recommendations for façade enhancements are described below under Chapter 3, Façade Improvement Program.
- **60-66 North Main Street, (Deringer Building, #3H):** Significant investment has already occurred upgrading this building. A façade plan was not developed for this building; however, additional recommendations by the team are included in Chapter 3, Façade Improvement Program.
- **80 North Main Street, (Park Café, #3J):** Recommendations for façade enhancements are described below under Chapter 3 of this strategy, Façade Improvement Program.

- **96-98 North Main Street (The Belleview Building, #3K):** Recommendations for façade enhancements are described below under Chapter 3, Façade Improvement Program.
- **92-94 North Main Street (Sweet Nothings, #3L):** Recommendations for façade enhancements are described below under Chapter 3 of this strategy, Façade Improvement Program.
- **104-108 North Main Street (Welden Theater, #3M):** Recommendations for façade enhancements are described below under Chapter 3 of this strategy, Façade Improvement Program.
- **Meeting Facility/Art Facility Opportunities:** Both City Hall and 37 Kingman Street (the old courthouse) represent potential opportunities for a community meeting space, art facility, or performance hall in downtown. Both City Hall and the old Court building have flexible space that could be adapted to accommodate groups on a regular basis. These facilities (among others) should be explored for their potential use as a catalyst project to create a consistent community gathering space in downtown St. Albans.
- **Other Considerations:** There are also additional infill development opportunities along Center Street (in place of surface parking lots). However, because Kingman and Center Streets are so close together, the emphasis should be on creating infill development along Kingman Street, which offers the greater potential to become a dynamic urban street environment and significant part of the downtown environment.

2.1.3 Lake-Stebbins Block

This block is illustrated on the following page and is bounded by Lake, Main, Market and Stebbins Streets and is to the south of the Downtown Core Block. While there are minimal opportunities for infill development within this block, there is an opportunity to create another significant parking resource as described below:

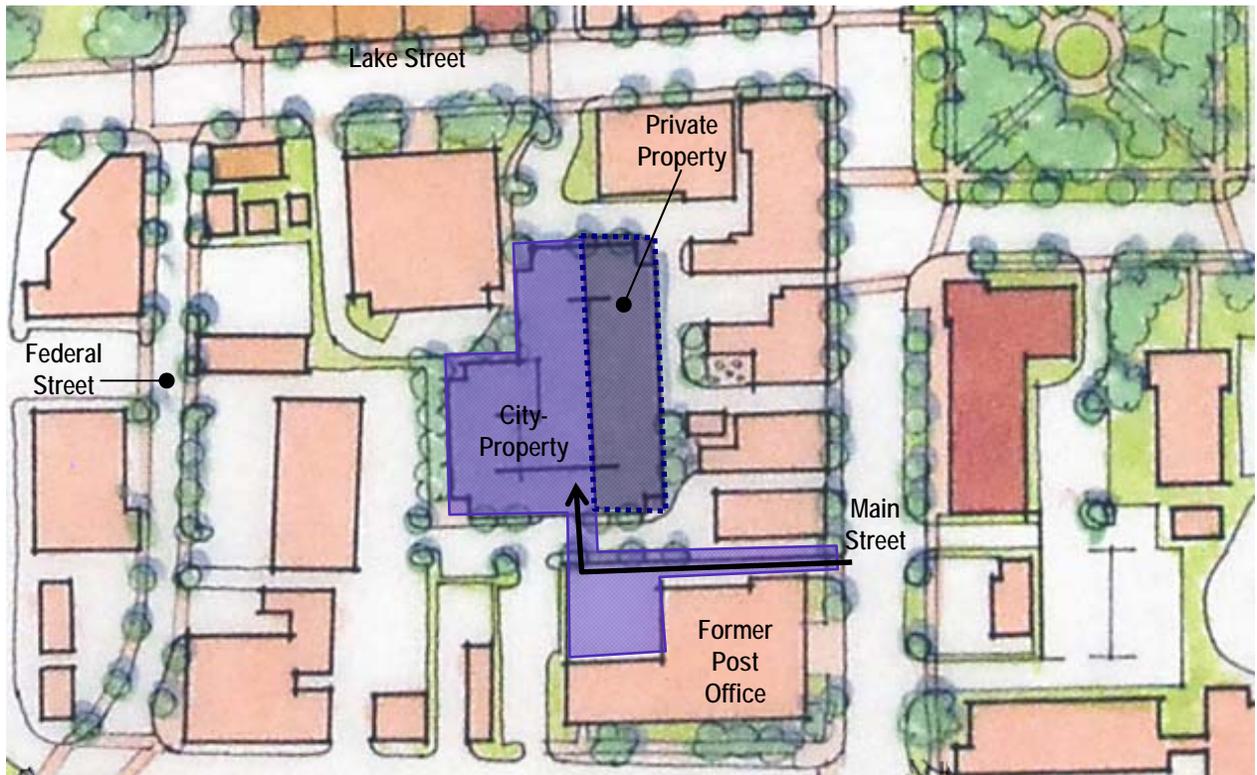
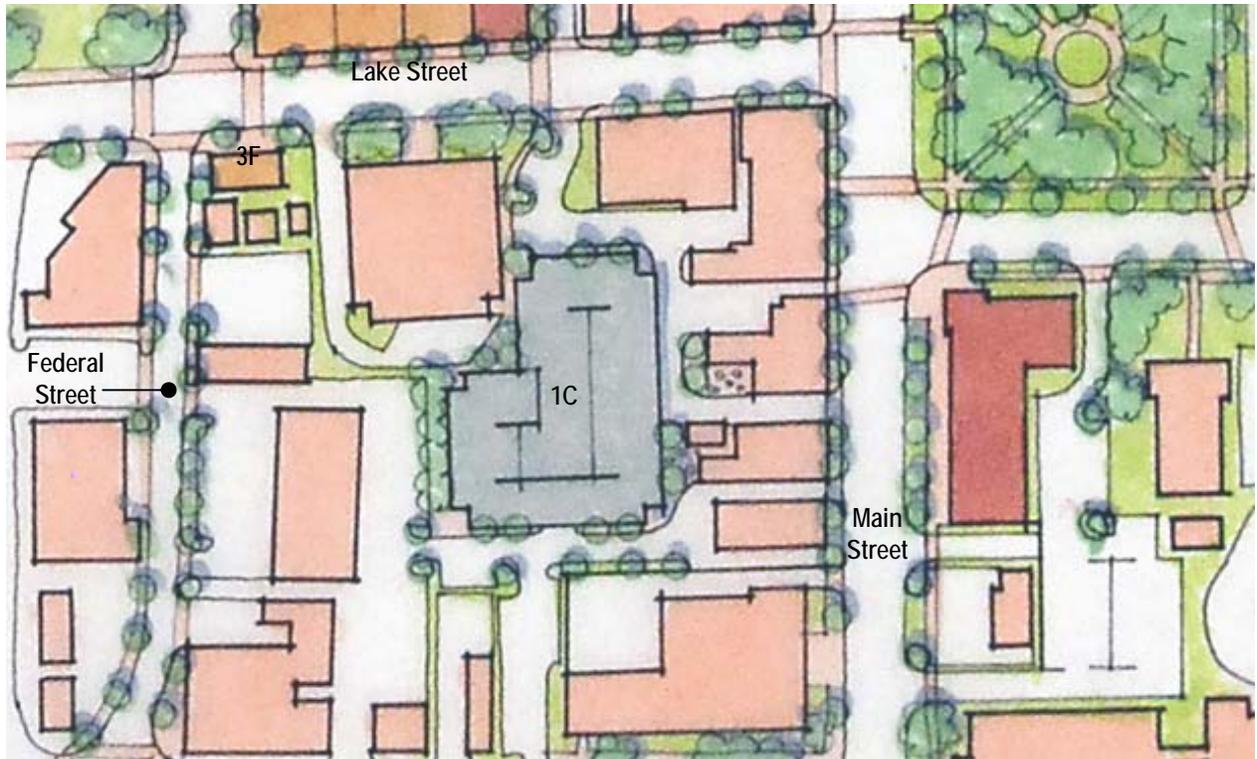
- **Lake Consolidated Lot (#1C):** There are approximately 75 parking spaces that currently exist in the City-owned surface parking lot located in this block and an additional 45 (approximate) on private property to the east of this lot (behind the buildings facing Main Street) for a total of 120. There is an opportunity for the City and private property owners to work together to create a shared parking resource in the form of a parking structure as shown on the master plan diagram. Additional parking in this area would significantly reduce some of the parking pressures resulting from the nearby BFA High School. The three-level deck shown would yield approximately 345 parking spaces, an increase of 225. As with the Core Lot described above, any lost surface parking spaces from private property would be replaced in the deck (with opportunities for additional space). The existing access drive from Lake Street could be utilized to access the structure; however, it could be realigned to correspond to the access into the Downtown Core Block on the other side of Lake Street.

There are also optional ways to approach a parking resource in this lot, if utilizing private property is not feasible. For example, two levels of parking could be accommodated on the

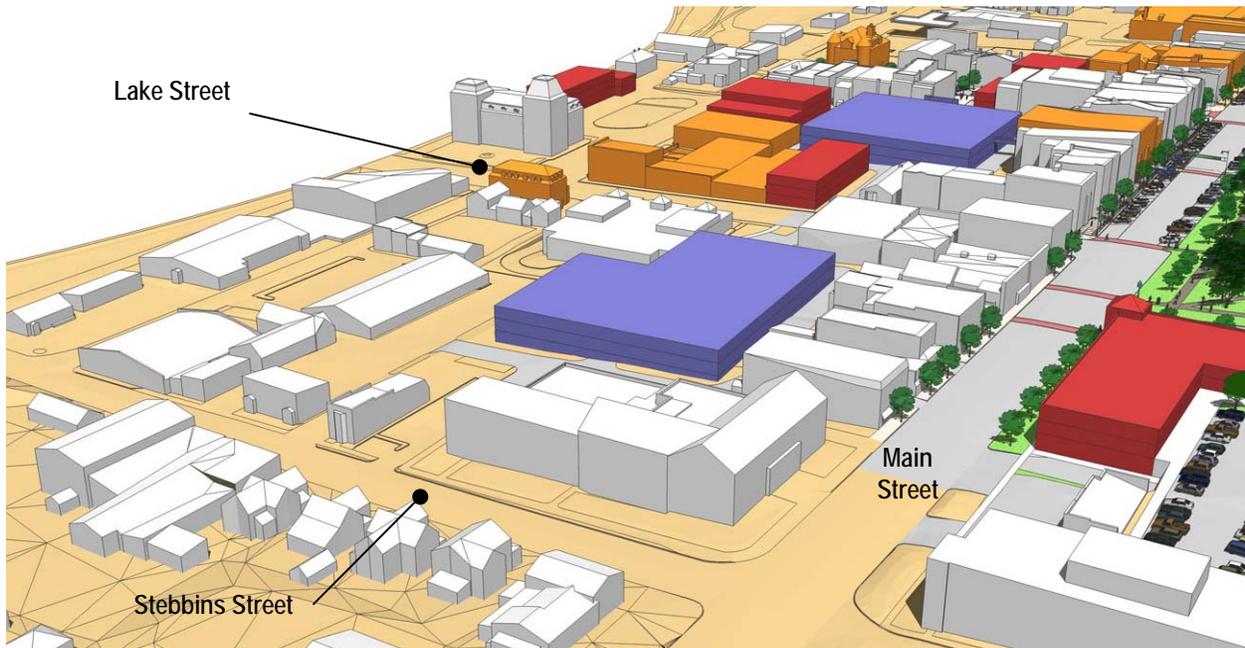
City-owned property with access to the second level via the upper level of parking associated with the former Post Office. This would essentially double the number of parking spaces in the public parking lot from 75 to 150.

As with the Core Lot described above, there are opportunities in this block to create attractive street environments for the internal streets that provide access to the parking structure. Consideration should be given to streetscape environments that include pedestrian-scaled lighting, street trees where possible and outdoor dining as appropriate.

- **58-60 Lake Street (Old St. Albans Hotel, #3F):** This building is a significant landmark for downtown and contributes greatly to the strong “sense-of-place” at the intersection of Federal and Lake Streets. Recommendations for façade enhancements are described below under Chapter 3 of this strategy, Façade Improvement Program.
- **Other Considerations:** While no other specific façade recommendations were identified for this block, there are many opportunities for enhancements to private properties. The façade enhancement recommendations described later in this strategy should be used as inspiration for additional improvements that property owners are interested in pursuing.



Lake-Stebbins Block: The master plan details shown above illustrate the potential to consolidate the City-owned and privately owned surface parking lots to create a multi-level deck with internal ramping (top). The lower illustration shows an option of how only the City-owned property could be converted into a two-level deck with access to the upper level via the former Post Office ramp. Similarly, a larger two-level deck could be constructed if the private property is utilized as well.



Lake-Stebbins Block: Aerial view illustrating the concept that would yield the maximum number of parking spaces and the most flexibility for the number of deck levels. This concept requires a partnership among the City and property owners.

2.1.4 Lake and Maple Street Development (190-198 Lake Street Handy's – Growth Center Application Site #3)

The former automobile dealership property that straddles Lake Street at Maple Street represents the largest vacant property within the designated downtown area and presents a tremendous opportunity for mixed-use development along the important Lake Street corridor. The master plan illustrates a potential development scenario, however, there are many ways that this property can be developed provided that several key planning/design objectives are followed. Most important is that there is a significant architectural presence on Lake and Maple Streets with parking located behind the buildings. The site should also consider 2-3 floors to maximize the development opportunity and the rear of the site should transition to the residential scale of the adjacent neighborhood. Specific opportunities are described below:

- **Commercial Opportunity (North Side of Lake, #2F):** The plan illustrates the potential for 30,000 SF of development on two floors. While there is flexibility in the depth of this building, the length should extend across the majority of the Lake Street frontage. The Lake and Maple Street facades should be articulated with windows and doors and contribute positively to the Lake Street corridor.

- **Commercial Opportunity (South Side of Lake, #2G):** The plan illustrates the potential on this site for 8,000 SF of development on two floors. Similarly, this building should be oriented to the street edge and articulated with windows and doors.
- **Senior Housing/Assisted Living Opportunity (#2H):** The Maple Street frontage provides an opportunity for senior housing; however, this could also be additional office space. The building should be oriented to the street and articulated so that it is sensitive to the scale of the existing single-family homes on the east side of Maple Street. The plan illustrates the potential for 30,000 SF of development on two floors.
- **Residential Infill Opportunity (#2I):** The rear of the site is most suited for single-family home infill development (or residentially scaled office development) along Lasalle Street. The homes should be compatible in scale to the existing buildings along the street.
- **Surface Parking Lot:** To maximize development potential and efficiencies, parking should be shared for all uses. The plan illustrates a total of approximately 115 parking spaces on both sides of Lake Street.
- **Other Considerations:** As described above, there are many different development scenarios possible for this site. Because the site is the largest downtown, there is also an opportunity for a larger-footprint building rather than multiple footprints. If this is the case, the emphasis should be to orient the building at the corner of Lake and Maple Streets. Any surface parking immediately adjacent to Maple Street should be treated aesthetically with landscaping. Tall-canopied street trees would make the most impact.

2.1.5 Main and Fairfield Development (Handy's Toyota–Growth Center Application Site #8)

This site, prominently located on Main Street at Taylor Park is one of the most important sites in St. Albans. The existing automobile dealership is a viable business and makes a positive contribution to the downtown economy as customers support other businesses in the downtown. However, it does not represent the highest and best use for this important site within the historic district. The master plan, therefore, describes two scenarios for this property; one including enhancements to the existing property and the other including recommendations if the property owners ever wish to redevelop the property.

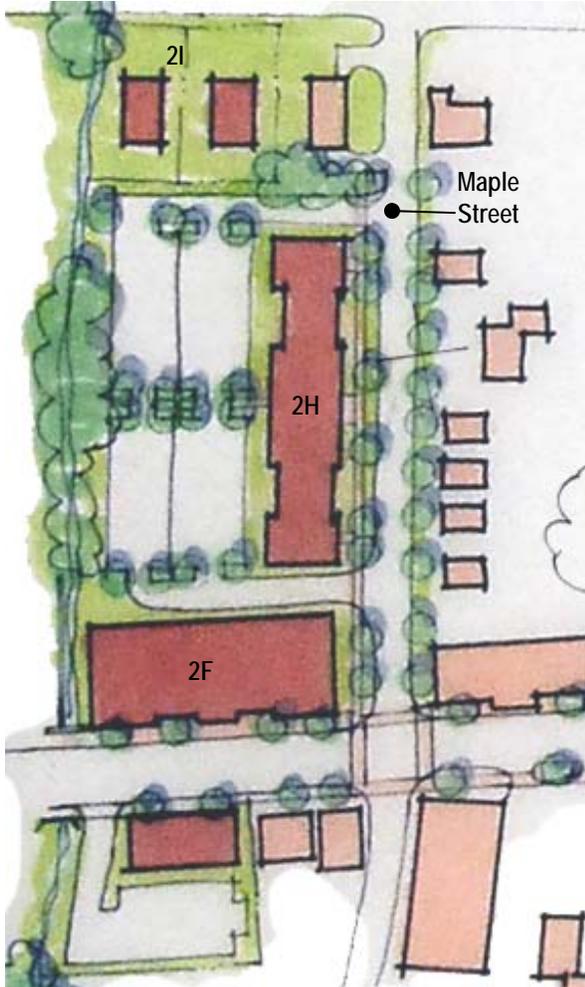
- **39 South Main Street Enhancement (Handy Toyota, #3Q):** Recommendations for façade enhancements are described below under Chapter 3 of this strategy, Façade Improvement Program. In addition to façade enhancements, the photo-renderings illustrate how landscaping can also be used to enhance the perimeter of the property.
- **39 South Main Street Mixed-Use Long-Term Opportunity (#2K):** Should the property owners wish to redevelop this property at some point in the future, the emphasis should be placed on anchoring the street corner with architecture and locating parking behind the building. The plan illustrates 42,000 SF of mixed-use development potential on 3 floors with 135 parking spaces on two levels (taking advantage of the sloped topography). Because of its prominent location on Taylor Park and Main Street, this site would be ideal for a

restaurant. Architecturally, the building should be designed to respond to both Main Street and Fairfield Street and articulated at the street corner. Because the building would be closer to the street than the adjacent Armory Building, any exposed side elevation (that faces the front lawn of the Armory) should also be given equal design consideration as the building front elevations.

- ***Other Considerations:*** As an alternative to one large building, this site could also be developed with 2-3 smaller footprint buildings. It would still be important, however, that these buildings are oriented to Main and Fairfield Streets. In addition, there is also an opportunity to consider a partnership with the property owner to the south of this site to explore a redevelopment scenario that encompasses both sites. This would maximize the development potential and site efficiencies for both property owners.

2.1.6 J.C. Penney Plaza (Growth Center Application Site #5)

The design team did not meet with this property owner and did not develop concept plans for the site as part of this master plan; however, it is a significant site for downtown. There are a number of ways to redevelop this property from complete redevelopment to partial redevelopment to renovation of the existing buildings. Regardless of the approach, the goal should be to create an architectural presence along Main Street with parking resources located to the rear of the site or internal to the site. Because of the size of the property, there is an opportunity to incorporate an open space feature. If this is done, the open space should be located on the street and surrounded by development, which could help activate the open space. An open space within the large field of parking, as shown in the City of St. Albans Preliminary Growth Center Application, is discouraged, as there would be nothing to activate it.



Lake-Maple Street Development and Main-Fairfield Development: The above views illustrate redevelopment potential for “Lake Street Handy’s” (top left) and long-term redevelopment potential for “Handy’s Toyota” (top right and bottom). The bottom view illustrates how the grade change on the site could be utilized for two levels of parking. For both sites, any redevelopment that occurs should orient buildings to the street edge with parking located behind.

2.2 Parking Opportunities

While this master plan did not include a detailed parking study and parking management study, there are some general recommendations that should be considered to facilitate continued downtown redevelopment—and new development.

2.2.1 Downtown Parking Lots

The primary strategy for parking is to develop significant shared parking resources within the downtown core. These shared resources would accommodate employee and resident parking (with permits or reserved spaces) as well as additional public parking for visitors and customers. Street parking, particularly within the downtown core should be reserved for customers and short-term visitors.

- **Primary Consolidated Lots:** As described in the previous pages of this report, the two primary opportunities for structured parking are the Core Lot (#1B) and the Lake Consolidated Lot (#1C). Another shared resource is the Hudson Consolidated Lot (#1A), also described earlier. These consolidated lots could be handled several different ways. The City of St. Albans could purchase the properties from the property owners or develop a easement/lease arrangement with property owners whereby the City would complete improvements on the lots and manage them in exchange for improved parking and maintenance. There are pros and cons to each approach.
- **Allen Street Lot (#1D):** In addition to the above resources, there is an opportunity to create a linear surface lot within the underutilized railroad right-of-way along Allen Street. The Allen Street Lot could accommodate approximately 105 parking spaces in a single bay of parking, parallel to Allen Street. In addition to the Lake Consolidated Lot, this lot would help relieve parking pressures resulting from the high school.

Because Allen Street is part of the Federal Street Corridor, the image of this frontage will be important. The parking should be set back to allow for streetscape treatment including street trees, pedestrian-scaled lighting and a sidewalk. Street trees should be high-canopied trees that will allow views into and out of the parking area. This will be important so that people feel secure using this facility.

2.2.2 Coin-Fed Meter Considerations

At this time, parking along downtown streets is rigorously enforced with time limits and seems to be effective. There has been some discussion regarding the installation of individual parking meters. If this approach is pursued, consideration should be given to the following:

- Provide two meters per post to minimize the number of poles.

- Consider locating the meter poles to the rear of the sidewalk to eliminate conflicts with snow plows. There are some indications in the sidewalks that at one time, meters were located to the rear of the sidewalk. In some cases, it may be possible to mount the meters to the adjacent building.
- Incorporate meter layout into design plans to coordinate meter locations with other street elements.

2.2.3 Multi-Space Meter Considerations

There has also been some discussion related to multi-space meters, a system that includes a pylon-like pay station, generally two per block, which accepts cash or credit cards. Some systems provide a paper receipt that parkers display on their dashboards, leaving a lot of flexibility as to which space they park in. Other systems, such as that being used by the City of Milwaukee, use a numbered-space system. While this system eliminates the paper receipt, it requires that each space be numbered. This typically has to be done on a post, especially in communities with significant snowfall, resulting in additional sidewalk “clutter.”

While a feasibility study would need to be completed to determine if multi-space meters are appropriate for St. Albans, they have been used quite successfully in other communities. Some of the advantages include convenience for customers as well as minimal street clutter. The City of Baltimore has been installing multi-space meters (EZ Park) throughout its downtown and “Main Street” commercial districts since 2004. Following are some recommendations and experiences by Peter Little, Executive Director of the Parking Authority of Baltimore City, which might help guide St. Albans if this system is explored in the future:

The primary recommendation for a community considering multi-space meters is to do the necessary groundwork, which includes the following:

- Make sure that City and State codes allow for multi-space meters and for the payment of on-street parking charges with credit/debit cards.
- Make sure that elected officials and significant stakeholders (particularly parking enforcement officials, merchants, City’s Finance Department) have bought into the concept.
- Begin small (Baltimore started with a 70 meter pilot program). This allows people to get used to the new system and its benefits and then expand. In Baltimore, different business districts are now clamoring to replace the single-space meters with the EZ Park meters after seeing the success of the initial pilot program.
- Develop a solid PR program to coincide with the introduction of the new system and build PR costs into the installation costs. A PR program might include “ambassadors” to help instruct parkers on how to use the meters during the first few weeks; brochures; press releases emphasizing the positives for customers and businesses; website with instructions for use and contact information with questions and concerns.

- Develop a good meter maintenance program.
- Develop a good meter (cash) collection program.
- Make the system as simple as possible for stakeholders and parkers.
- Make sure the RFP process for purchase and installation of the meters is as “air-tight” as possible. Be extremely cautious of the meter vendors who will be competing with each other for the business and may not be looking out for your best interests.
- Properly estimate costs. As an example of this, Baltimore’s current agreement (from 2006) is \$7,700 for purchase of the meter itself, another \$1,200-\$1,500 for installation and other associated costs such as PR. Total costs are about \$9,000 per meter based on a three-year old agreement. Approximately \$10,000 each may be a good planning assumption. Life expectancy of the meters is supposed to be 10-12 years; however, Baltimore is assuming seven years.

If the multi-space meter system is feasible for a community, there are numerous benefits. Some of these include:

- Increased parking revenues. For Baltimore, the return on Investment has been tremendous and is close to 700% on individual meters. Citywide, meter revenues have almost doubled since 2004.
- For streets with parallel parking, it is usually possible to fit 10-15% more vehicles per block face meaning more parking inventory for business patrons. Individual parking meters are generally spaced 22’ on center even though many cars do not need that much space to park.
- Multi-space meters allow cars to maximize the space available.
- Convenience of paying with coins or credit cards.
- For systems that utilize a paper receipt, parkers can move to another space with the same receipt if there is time remaining.
- The system results in fully-auditable meter revenue streams, preventing meter theft scandals that have happened in various parts of the country, typically 2 to 3 major ones a year.

While Baltimore is a much larger city than St. Albans, many small- to mid-size communities have been using the multi-space meter system. Some of these include:

- Manchester, NH (Brandy Stanley is contact and has worked with Peter Little in the past)
- Portsmouth, NH
- Ocean City, MD
- Cumberland, MD

- Boulder, CO
- Clearwater, FL
- Truckee, CA

2.2.4 Signage and Outreach Programs

With regard to St. Albans, one of the more significant challenges with parking is customer confusion as to where public parking resources are located. The signage and wayfinding recommendations developed for St. Albans will help to guide visitors to parking resources. In addition, each parking facility should display relevant information such as the lot name, hours of operation, payment methods, contact information, etc. This information should then be included in downtown maps and printed materials.

2.2.5 Safety and Aesthetics

One of the reasons many do not like to park in the public parking lots in St. Albans relates to safety concerns. The parking lots described in this master plan should be well lighted and well maintained (paving and striping). In addition, consideration should be given for surface lots to incorporate permeable paving, particularly in the areas designated for parking spaces to help minimize storm water runoff. Landscaping, and particularly large shade trees, should be incorporated wherever possible to make the lots attractive and comfortable during hot weather. Landscaping should emphasize low shrubs and groundcovers (2' or under) and high-canopied trees so as not to obstruct sightlines.



Multi-Space Meter (Paper Receipt System): These two images are from Baltimore, Maryland where multi-space meters are used throughout the City, generally two per block face. Clear signage is used to direct customers to the meters, which provide a paper receipt for display on the vehicle's dashboard.



Multi-Space Meter (Paperless System): *These two images are from Milwaukee, Wisconsin where a multi-space meter system is used in conjunction with existing meter posts. This is a paperless system that requires customers to park in a designated space.*

3.0 Façade Improvement Program

3.1 Building Enhancement Strategies

The appearance of downtown is largely determined by the condition of its buildings. Because this appearance also forms the basis of the public's overall impression of downtown, the upgrading and preservation of downtown is crucial to the continued livelihood of St. Albans. St. Albans is blessed with an abundance of historic structures, many of which are in pristine condition. However, some of these structures have been modified over time, or fallen into disrepair, to the degree that their architectural integrity has been compromised. Moreover, the appearance of a community's buildings is often one of the most indelible impressions left with a visitor or potential investor and, therefore, their appropriate enhancement is most assuredly an economic development initiative.

Numerous approaches and/or incentives exist for the appropriate enhancement of historic buildings ranging from overall façade grants, to item-specific façade grants (e.g. paint, awnings, slip cover removal, etc.), to full-blown façade master plans that take a more district wide approach to façade enhancement rather than a building-by-building approach. Moreover, these incentives may also address interior issues beyond the exterior façade of the building. Grants for sprinkler systems, by way of example, can help incent property owners to pursue upper floor housing opportunities by removing a portion of the financial barrier to those efforts.

What follows below is a summary of potential approaches, or enhancement strategies, for St. Albans that follows the suggestions noted above. Additionally, there is a section describing recommendations and benefits of a comprehensive historic preservation ethic in downtown. This section of the report concludes with summaries of the enhancements proposed for numerous properties in downtown St. Albans made during the charrette conducted in June 2009.

3.1.1 Overall Façade Grants

A facade grant program provides financial assistance for improvement projects on building facades in a designated Downtown District. The standard for design should ideally be regulated by some form of historic district design guidelines that are based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings. The intent of the grant program is to encourage appropriate revitalization to as many private properties in the Downtown District as possible.

The general goals for a façade grant program include, but are not limited to:

- To promote façade rehabilitation of commercial and mixed use buildings in the downtown area, commercial areas adjacent to the downtown, and older pedestrian business districts. □
- To preserve special characteristics of these areas by helping owners make quality building improvements that foster a sense of place and overall consistent image for an area. □
- To compliment other revitalization efforts, such as sidewalk, streetscape and landscaping improvements. □
- To promote an attractive environment for new investment and business activity

There are several components to a typical façade grant program while the details can vary widely from one community to the next. Standards components of a façade grant include, but are not limited to:

- Façade grant application
- Façade grant design guidelines
- District map outlining eligible properties for the façade grant
- Maintenance agreement

The City of Anderson, SC has formulated a straightforward façade grant program that could form the basis of the version of one executed in St. Albans. Provided below is a link to download the forms noted above as well as additional supporting documents.

www.communitydesignsolutions.com/public/AndersonSCFaçadeGrantDocs.zip

In a similar fashion, façade grant programs can be funded in myriad ways ranging from out-right grants, to a matching grant approach with matches ranging from 90/10 to 50/50 between the city and property owner, respectively, to low interest loans available for this specific purpose. The funding available to St. Albans and its Main Street program will likely dictate the approach and amounts of the grants.

3.1.2 Item-Specific Building Grants

While the above-noted overall, or general, façade grant program is typically the best approach to address myriad design-related issues on your downtown buildings, occasionally there are specific, repetitive issues that multiple buildings in your downtown face. In those instances, it makes sense to craft a grant program to target those specific issues. Additionally, some of these specific grant programs are intended to incent specific activity.

By way of example, one of the key recommendations of the 2006 market analysis and charrette was to promote market rate upper floor housing in the downtown area. One of the key impediments to this beneficial recommendation is the occupancy separation and means of egress requirements of upper floors when they include a residential component. To address this, some communities have instituted a sprinkler grant program to mitigate a portion of those costs to the property owner.

In Anoka, MN, the solution was a specified amount of money granted to the property owner based on the square footage of the building. In the case of a Main Street community in Iowa, the City installed a sprinkler main line through all the buildings in an area so that the only remaining costs to the property owner was the installation of the system and tap into the city's line.

Another issue that often faces historic downtowns is the removal of metal slipcovers that conceal the historic architecture beneath them. In the town of Conway, SC they recognized reluctance on the part of property owners to remove their metal slipcovers due to fears of what would be found underneath and the cost of the removal itself. Therefore, the City of Conway instituted a \$1,000 per building slipcover removal program to eliminate the cost of the removing and discarding the slipcover. In addition, they utilized the State of South Carolina's Main Street architect to suggest

enhancement recommendations to the underlying façade to remove that cost from the property owner as well. An example from that program is found below.

Any of these issue-specific building grants would follow the same basic methodology of the general façade grants noted above.

3.1.3 Façade Master Plan

The goal of the façade master plan is to enhance the overall appearance of downtown to maximize your historic architectural assets as a prime competitive advantage for commerce and housing within an authentic setting. However, it is imperative to recognize that enhancing the physical appearance of downtown, its open spaces, its infrastructure and its buildings is not, in and of itself, enough. Serious consideration must also be given to addressing the underlying economy of the place in terms of its business mix and retail retention and recruitment strategies. These “non-design” issues are addressed under the market analysis section of this report.

Several communities in South Carolina, Mississippi and Virginia have pursued grant funding that has helped underwrite a “façade master plan.” Unlike a traditional facade grant program, this is a comprehensive rehabilitation of many downtown buildings at once. The property owner gives the City a temporary easement (usually five years) on the facade of their building allowing the local government to spend funds on its improvement. In exchange for this temporary easement, the grant funds will pay for the facade improvements. The advantages of this type of program are that it allows for a single source of project management, a single source of design, and a single source for construction. However, the biggest advantage to this approach is the ability for a downtown district to receive an overall appearance facelift in a remarkably short amount of time. Moreover, when used in conjunction with a grant source like the South Carolina Department of Commerce’s (DOC) Opportunity Grant or CDBG grant, the facade enhancements are realized with no costs to the building owner or tenant. If funding sources such as SC DOC’s Rural Infrastructure Fund (RIF) grants are used, then a nominal 10% match is required.

Benefits of the Façade Master Plan approach: The single source of project management streamlines the project and removes the burden of façade enhancement from each individual property owner. The single source of design, used in conjunction with the Main Street Program’s Design Committee, ensures that all façade enhancements are sympathetic to the historic architectural heritage of their place. The single source of construction allows for dramatic cost savings since the contractor purchases all construction supplies for the entire enhancement project, rather than each property owner having to buy their own sign, door, windows, paint, awnings, etc. However, the biggest advantage to this approach is the ability for a downtown district to receive an overall appearance facelift in a remarkably short amount of time. Moreover, when used in conjunction with a grant source like federal CDBG funds, an individual state’s department of commerce grants, or other federal, state, or local funding sources, the facade enhancements are realized with no costs to the building owner or tenant. If the funding and/or grant source requires a match from the property owner, the enhancements are still realized with nominal investment on their part that is far less than if they improved their façade on their own using solely private sector funds.

Implementation Process:

- Apply for and receive grant funding for design and construction.
- Develop guidelines for the administration of the grant funds.
- Solicit RFQ for design professionals to develop the facade enhancement designs.
- Negotiate and hire design professional.
- Interview each property owner/tenant to ascertain appropriate enhancement approach.
- Design professional develops renderings and technical recommendations for each facade.
- Administrative party and design professional develop specifications and bid documents.
- Prospective contractors pre-qualified.
- Bid package submitted to pre-qualified contractors.
- Negotiate with and hire low bidder.
- Construction commences with oversight by administrative party and design professional.
- Punch list and project close out.

Budgetary Considerations:

- Design & Project Management: \$1,000 - \$1,500/façade
- Construction Allowance: \$5,000 - 10,000/facade
- Scope: To be determined by the local government. Generally speaking, include at least 20 facades, but consider executing 40-80 so that the improvements can affect entire blocks of downtown structures.
- Total: As determined/multiplied by the number of facades being considered against the budget estimates noted above.
- Schedule: Begin phase one immediately upon receipt of grant or private funding.
- Responsible Party: Local government or downtown revitalization agency, ideally Main Street.
- Funding Source Design: CDBG, USDA Rural Development, local bank consortium funds/low-interest loans, fund raising, private sector investment, local government budget.
- Funding Source Construction: CDBG, USDA Rural Development, local bank consortium funds/low-interest loans, fund raising, private sector investment, local government budget, and foundation grant funding.

Resources for Implementation

Community Design Solutions has compiled a number of documents to aid a community in the execution of a façade master plan. The first link noted below is an archive file containing the following documents:

A: Sample Façade Master Plan Description Brief (to explain the project to the public; use in whole or in part; feel free to insert your logo in place of CDS logo)

B: Sample Promotional Letters (to recruit property owners/tenants to participate in the project)

C: Sample Rules of Procedure for the Advisory Committee (to establish the ground rules for the process from Pound, VA)

D: Sample Façade Grant Application Form (to be used to submit to a grant/funding agency from Gulfport, MS; could also be used as a Project Description Brief)

E: Sample Property Owner Application (to participate in the Façade Master Plan from Gulfport, MS; must eventually be accompanied by an executed façade easement)

F: Sample Specifications (to establish a standard of care during construction from Whitmire, SC; edited to provide you with convenient fill-in-the-blanks with your city's name) Note: this is a SIMPLE set of specifications for a primarily "paint and awning" master plan. If you plan is more complicated and expensive, a more detailed set of specifications may be in order.

G: Sample Façade Easement (to enable local government to spend money on private property from Union, SC; edited to provide you with convenient fill-in-the-blanks with your city's name)

H: Sample Façade Design Form (to enable the designer to record the owner interview process from Mississippi Gulf Coast Resource Team planning work)

I: Sample Façade Design Packages (to illustrate the variety of ways to document proposed enhancements)

- I-1 Sketch-oriented approach from Cheraw, SC
- I-2 Photo-rendered approach from Pound, VA
- I-3 Photo-rendered approach from Saluda, SC
- I-4 AutoCAD approach from Gulfport, MS (Note: this package also includes another, more detailed, set of sample specifications)
- I-5 AutoCAD approach from Gulfport, MS
- I-6 AutoCAD approach from Gulfport, MS

J: Sample Request for Qualifications (to ascertain the relative ability of a design firm to provide appropriate design services for the project from West Columbia, SC)

K: Sample Façade Master Plan Explanation (a simpler, shorter version of "A" above from Pound, VA)

L: Sample Design Approval Form (to have Owner sign off on the final bid package and set appropriate expectations prior to receipt of construction bids)

The link to download the archive file of the façade master plan documents noted above is:
www.communitydesignsolutions.com/public/fmpdocs.zip

The below-noted link provides important documents to apply for and fund a façade master plan using CDBG funds. These documents are provided courtesy of the Rome, GA Main Street program under the direction of Ann Arnold, Director of Downtown Development.
www.communitydesignsolutions.com/public/RomeGA-CDBG.zip

3.2 Property Specific Recommendations

Photo-rendered recommendations were prepared for the below-noted properties during the master plan charrette conducted in June 2009. Noted on the following pages are summaries of the recommendations as presented during the final presentation of the charrette, followed by before and after images. The before and after images can also be viewed in the final presentation PowerPoint show available for download via the following link:

<http://www.arnetmuldrow.com//stalbanwork.ppt>

- **30 North Main Street, Eaton's Jewelers (#3E), Jeff & Vicki Eaton:** Eaton's Jewelers represents a classic discussion facing preservation-sympathetic communities at the moment: what do you do with a historic building that has received a mid-century alteration that has now achieved its own historical significance? The best answer available at the moment is to make the historic portion of the building as appropriate to its period as possible, and likewise, make the mid-century alteration as appropriate a contemporary feature as well.

This is the approach we took on this building. We repainted the upper façade with a deep brick red color with tan accent color to highlight the architectural details of the building that are currently unnoticed due to the monolithic color scheme. On the lower portion of the façade we proposed removing the inappropriate shingled canopy and replacing it with an aluminum canopy appropriate for the mid-century alteration. We kept the sign panel that is a perfect mid-century storefront sign panel and using its color scheme (black with silver accents) painted the storefront level brick a deep, charcoal gray to match. These recommendations result in an appropriate late-1800's approach to the upper façade and an appropriate mid-century enhancement to the storefront level.



Eaton's Jewelers 30 North Main Street Before and After

- **7-15 Center Street (#3-I), Evelyn Martin:** These three buildings barely share anything in common, yet the overall design goal was to unify their appearance. Therefore, a triadic (three colors, equidistant on the color wheel) color scheme featuring red, green and yellow was utilized. We chose to leave the upper façade of the far right building unpainted, but painted the brick at the storefront level to match the brick above. The addition of green awnings and painting the remaining doors green serve to provide both a perfect complement (colors opposite each other on the color wheel) to the red brick and give them a relationship to the building in the middle.

The building in the middle was painted green to relate to the building at the right. Moreover, the storefront level was painted green to unify the entire building in a monochromatic (all colors are derivative of one color) scheme. Finally, the addition of trim and corner boards provides an appropriate way to finish off the lap siding and achieve an accent color.

The building on the left features the brightest color of the triad in yellow. This choice was due to the proposed use as an art studio or gallery and the typical nature of those uses to utilize flamboyant colors. Similar to the building in the middle, the addition of trim and corner boards provides an appropriate way to finish off the lap siding and achieve an accent color. A projecting sign is utilized since there was no room for a panel sign on the upper façade.



7-15 Center Street Before



7-15 Center Street After

- **45 Lake Street, Mike Blouin:** The recommendations for this building were made in two forms or stages. The first approach merely paints the existing building materials and works within the constraints imposed by interior alterations that compromise the symmetry of the windows and doors. It also features the addition of canvas awnings, gooseneck light fixtures, and flower window boxes to “dress up” the façade to have a more traditional appearance.

The second approach, or phase, assumes the interior alterations (bathrooms against the front façade forcing the window openings to be blocked off) would be addressed so that the façade could go back to its more balanced appearance. Moreover, this also would allow for a more contemporary approach which seems appropriate since there is little, to no, historic

architectural character of fabric to the building as it exists today. That being said, the same paint scheme in phase one could also be used in phase two if a more traditional style was preferred.



45 Lake Street (Before)



45 Lake Street (After – Option A. Traditional)



45 Lake Street (After – Option B. Contemporary)

- **80 North Main Street, Park Café (#3J), Mike Blouin:** At some point in time an inappropriate transom panel consisting of tile over concrete/stucco parge was installed. This panel concealed both the transom glass portion of the storefront as well as the brick sign panel area. Moreover, at some point most, but not all, of the mosaic tile was removed and in the areas where it was removed, entirely inappropriate diagonal wood siding was installed. However, the removal of this panel would prove very difficult and expensive so our recommendations demonstrate the reuse of this panel in a more sympathetic manner. Namely, the lower portion—traditionally the location of the transom glass—was covered with canvas awnings. The upper portion—traditionally the location of the storefront sign panel—was panelized with trim to create the illusion of a sign panel that receives the signage for the two business located within.
- **96-98 North Main Street, The Belleview Building (#3K), Marianne Gamache:** Historically, this building featured a classic white/off-white stucco (almost gray) color scheme in a simple Federal style. However, over the years a number of detrimental alterations have been made including installing inappropriate brick infill at the lower storefront level, the installation of false Colonial window hoods, the installation of fake, vinyl shutters, and the installation of a Subway sign that extends over the pilasters of the building.

Our recommendations sought to work with the existing building materials while returning the building closer to its original historic appearance. First the brick was painted to match the stucco. Next, the shutters were removed, the Subway sign was constrained within the piers of the building, the fake colonial window hoods were removed and black canvas awnings were placed in that area. Additionally, a gray and white color scheme was applied to the building similar to the scheme shown in historic post cards of this building. Finally, two columns and an open transom were installed at the recessed entry of the building.

- **24-28 North Main Street, Chow Bella (#3D), Connie Warden:** The goal of this enhancement was to freshen the color scheme of the restaurant’s storefront. To compliment the brick, a dominant green color was selected with gold accents. The doors are re-stained and a classic black canvas awning with natural trim was selected. Additionally, it was proposed that the trashcan and post office receptacle be relocated to the mid-block near the covered walkway. It is also suggested that Maple City Cards and Candy adopt a similar approach to Chow Bella to unify the entire storefront level of this building.



80 North Main Street (Before)



80 North Main Street (After – Option 1)



80 North Main Street (After – Option 2)



96-98 North Main Street (Before)



96-98 North Main Street (After)



24-28 North Main Street (Before)



24-28 North Main Street (After)



24-28 North Main Street (After, With Adjacent Building Enhancements)

- **81 North Main Street, Howard’s Flower Shop (#3O), Vicki Preseau:** Believe it or not, this building was historically a low Victorian commercial building with traditional storefront and classic upper floor windows. However, at some point in time it was completely made over to look like the faux-Federal/Georgian building it is today. While our strong preference would be to see the building restored to its authentic style, it was determined to show recommendations to enhance the appearance of the building in its current style/condition. Therefore, a triadic color scheme that picks up on the colors used in the business’ sign with a dominant green field color, with tan (off-white with a lot of yellow) trim and rust-red accents. This paint scheme draws out the architectural detailing that exists on the building currently but is concealed due to the all white color scheme.
- **1 Federal Street, One Federal (#3S), Mark Ledoux & Cheryl Boissoneau:** A wonderful restaurant has recently occupied this building, site of the historic St. Albans Foundry and Implement Company. Many attractive enhancements had been made to the building—particularly on the interior—yet there remained a desire for a more complimentary approach to the exterior enhancements. On both the front and side facades it was recommended to paint the metal siding a darker shade of tan/coffee to unify it with the tone of brick below. Additionally, it was recommended to repair all of the upper façade windows. On the lower level it was suggested to replace the tan transom panels with glass to match that used in the interior dining room. Finally, it was recommended to replace all the doors with more historically appropriate full-light glass doors.
- **39 South Main Street, Handy Toyota (#3Q), Karen Luneau:** This property is essentially comprised of three separate buildings that do not currently relate to one another as a comprehensive whole. The biggest culprit is the front office area that has a residential style shingled roof on a commercial building with unpainted brick while the other two feature painted buildings in accordance with Toyota’s franchise colors. Therefore, in phase 1 we simply wanted to use paint to unify the three properties. All of them are painted white, but now include a red wainscot base with gray/silver and red accent stripes at strategic locations on the buildings to correspond with trims, copings, signage, etc. In phase 2 it is suggested that the residential canopy be removed from the office portion and in its place install a more contemporary, automotive style canopy to coordinate with the use of the facility. In phase 3, recommended lighting, traffic signal, and street tree improvements complement the work of the previous phases and create an eye-catching, unified streetscape.



81 North Main Street (Before)



81 North Main Street (After)



1 Federal Street – Federal Street Façade (Before)



1 Federal Street – Federal Street Façade (After)



1 Federal Street – Lake Street Facade (Before)



1 Federal Street – Lake Street Façade (After)



39 South Main Street (Before)



39 South Main Street (After – Phase I)



39 South Main Street (After – Phase II)



39 South Main Street (After – Phase III)

104-108 North Main Street, Welden Theater (#3M), Marianne Gamache

Few downtowns can boast having a cinema with multiple screens. The Welden Theater is a tremendous asset to downtown St. Albans. However, at some point in the past, the lower storefront was completely removed, along with the original art deco marquee. While it is conceivable, and preferred if money were not object, to replace the current arched stucco system with the original storefront, it is not likely. Therefore, the approach taken was to install a replication marquee and integrate it within the stucco system to the greatest degree possible as shown in the photo rendering.

92-94 North Main Street, Sweet Nothings (#3L), Dick Bombard

This scheme simply shows the recession of the door leading to the upper floor to allow for the insertion of an additional step so that the grade change between the sidewalk and floor is not too great. Additionally, an awning to match the Sweet Nothings awning is proposed over the doorway to the second floor to unify the entire lower façade.

65 Main Street, Jeff's Maine Seafood (#3P), Pete McMahon

This building is simply beautiful. All that is required is a thorough cleaning, repair and replacement of deteriorating materials, and the repainting of the façade and trims in the current paint scheme.

58-60 Lake Street (#3F), Old St. Alban's Hotel

This building is simply stunning and affords significant redevelopment opportunity. The primary recommendations are simply to repair the roofs, windows, trims, balusters and columns. Additionally, repaint the façade utilizing the current color scheme. And finally, to install the historic sign panel as shown.

11-15 Kingman Street (#3G), Guys Unisex Salon (No Façade Rendering)

The owner of this building recently finished improvements/painting the storefront level of the building. These improvements reflect recommendations the design team would have made, therefore, additional enhancements at this time are not necessary.

60-66 North Main Street (#3H), Derringer Building (No Façade Rendering)

The owner of this complex of buildings recently completed significant investment in replacement windows. One recommendation for the owner to consider in the future is to install a continuous blue canvas awning to allude to their occupation of the storefront level of both buildings.



*104-108 North Main Street
(Before)*



104-108 North Main Street (After)



58-60 Lake Street (Before)



58-60 Lake Street (After)

4.0 Streetscape Enhancements

Streetscapes represent, perhaps, the most important open space within a downtown setting. There are several opportunities to enhance the streetscape environment in St. Albans. Because of costs associated with these projects, the streetscape improvements will need to be done in phases. While detail designs will need to be developed for each of these streetscapes, the master plan illustrates overall concepts to consider. Generally, the streetscapes may include scored concrete paving, street trees (with expanded tree pits and root zones), ornamental lighting, furniture (benches, trash receptacles, tree bollards), flower pots and outdoor dining areas. In addition, it is important to include bicycle racks to accommodate bike parking and to encourage bicycle use. This follows on with the recommendations of designing for bicycle lanes along the Federal Street corridor, as described in the *Federal Street Corridor Study – 2005 Update. Preliminary Estimates of Probable Construction Costs are included in Appendix A of this report.*

Following is a description of the most significant streetscape projects for St. Albans:

4.1 Main Street (#4A and #4B)

Streetscape enhancements for Main Street should be considered from Lower Welden Street to Brainerd Street, however, this overall project can be divided into logical phases. The initial phase (#4A) should focus on the Downtown Core Block and Taylor Park frontages to create a “sense of completeness” for the heart of downtown and build on investments occurring in the park and in businesses along Main Street. Logical project limits are between Fairfield and Hudson Streets, however, Center Street could be the northern limit, depending on budget limitations. Later phases (#4B) would include the stretch from Hudson (or Center) to Brainerd and from Fairfield to Lower Welden.

While each street in the downtown will require different design solutions, the streetscape for Main Street should set the standard for other streetscape improvements in terms of quality and establishing standards for lighting, street furniture and tree planting techniques. Design recommendations include:

- **Removal of Overhead Utility Lines:** St. Albans is fortunate that most of the overhead utility lines are to the rear of the buildings along Main Street and only minor lines exist overhead in the front along some segments of the street. Burying these overhead lines on both sides of Main Street as part of the enhancement project would make a significant positive impact on the image of both Main Street and Taylor Park.
- **Concrete Paving:** Scored concrete paving is the most practical paving surface for the sidewalks and can be quite attractive if careful attention is given to the scoring pattern. Generally, there should be score lines along the length of the sidewalk that define a “building zone,” a “walkway zone” an “amenity zone” and a “utility zone.” Cross score lines would then divide the pavement into smaller modules. One way to add subtle variety is to utilize a different concrete texture, such as exposed aggregate,

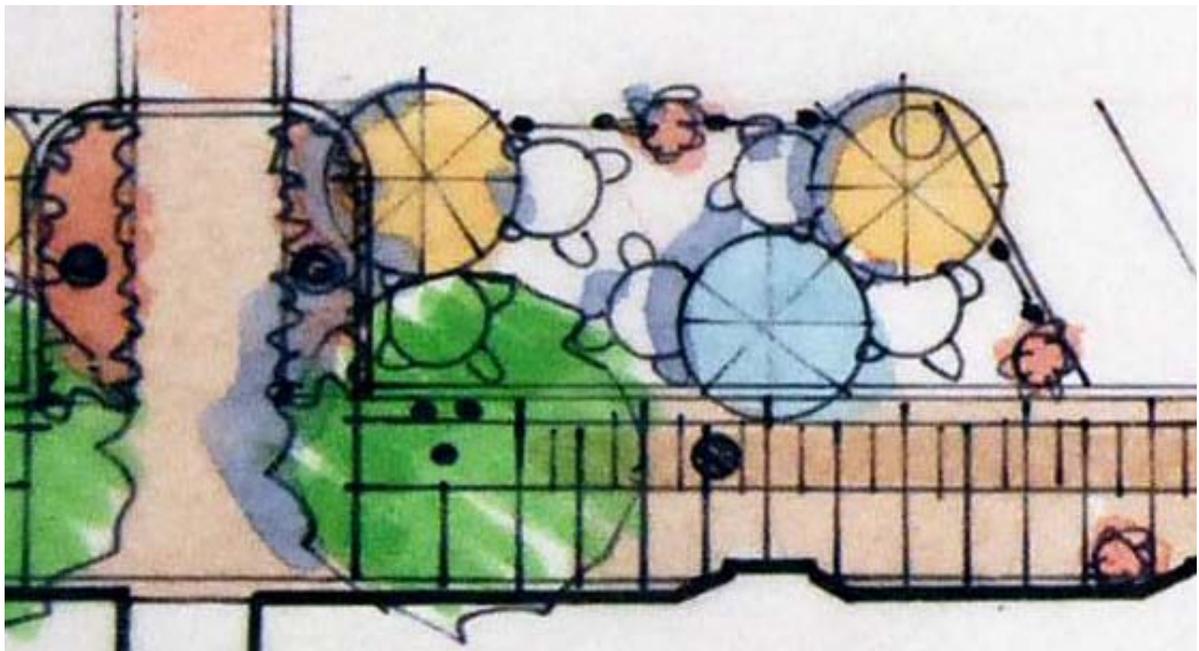
within the amenity zone where the tree pits are located. This zone could also be the zone where pavers are used if there is a desire to include them in the streetscape. The utility zone is a narrow band between the curb and street trees where electric lines (for lights), the existing overhead utility lines and other cables could be located.

- **Potential Permeable Paving in Parking Zone:** There has been quite a bit of interest in incorporating permeable paving into the streetscape area. While this may be difficult on the sidewalks, there is the possibility to consider it within the parking areas along Main Street. Not only would this minimize storm water runoff, but it would also visually reduce the width of the roadway by defining three distinct zones. This appearance is actually evident in historic photographs of Main Street, most likely due to the travel lanes being paved more regularly than the parking zones.
- **Temporary Expanded Sidewalk Areas:** There is a desire to accommodate more outdoor dining areas for restaurants which not only provide options for restaurant patrons but also provides highly visible activity on the sidewalk. Because of the short summers, it does not make sense to construct permanent sidewalk expansion areas, however, there is the opportunity to “rope off” a few parking spaces at various locations along Main Street and utilize these for outdoor tables. These areas could be defined by flower pots and a simple ornamental bollard and chain system. In the colder months, the spaces would revert back to parking. The master plan illustrates a few areas where this concept might work. The real advantage is that it is a flexible system that can be relocated along different areas of Main Street. While the parking zone is fairly level and would be able to accommodate chairs and tables, long-term consideration might be given to creating a modular decking system that could be easily installed (and removed) to bring the dining area up to sidewalk level.
- **Street Trees:** Street trees are an important element within the streetscape as they help to provide scale and, more importantly, shade which creates a more comfortable pedestrian environment. It is important not to “wall off” great architecture with too many trees, however. It is also important to provide trees with the best growing environment as possible. The plan illustrates tree wells that are approximately 4’ x 8’ with extended root zones underneath as described below. In terms of species diversification, the recommendation is to provide a variety of tree types but within an organized pattern as shown on the diagram below. For example, one type of tree could be used to anchor street corners and a different type could be used between street intersections. Recommended species suitable for urban conditions and the climate in St. Albans include Thornless Honey Locust, Northern Red Oak and Liberty Elm.
- **Extended Root Zones:** The use of extended soil panels beneath the sidewalk is recommended to establish a better growing environment for the trees. One system that allows this is the “Silva Cell” by Deeproot as shown below. The ideal condition is to extend this system along the entire amenity zone connecting tree wells. This may be cost prohibitive, however, so an alternate solution would be to use it to increase the growing area of each tree pit.

- **Tree Bollards:** Because of the use of angled parking along Main Street, street trees are often damaged by cars as they pull to close to the tree or even into the tree. Ornamental black metal bollards should be considered at each tree to provide a barrier between the cars and the trees.
- **Ornamental Lighting:** Pedestrian-scaled ornamental lighting should be provided along the streets to match the historic lights that were once used extensively in St. Albans as shown below. There are a number of manufacturers who produce standard designs similar to the historic fixture. The preferred fixture should be selected during the detail design phase. Black poles and globe coverings are recommended.
- **Mast Arms for Signals:** Streetscape improvements should consider replacing traffic signals with standardized mast arms that are black in color to match street lights and other street furniture.
- **Banner Poles:** 25-30' high poles (black) should be erected midway along Main Street to allow hanging event/festival banners across Main Street.
- **Flower Pots:** A flower pot program may also be considered for the amenity strip, utilizing a standard pot design. The pots could also be used to help define the temporary seating areas described earlier.
- **Benches:** A standard bench design should be used for streetscapes. Benches should be limited to high traffic areas such as near street crossings and intersections. A black bench with recycled plastic timbers is recommended such as the Victor Stanley Classic Series Bench.
- **Trash Receptacles:** Trash receptacles that are compatible to the bench standards should also be selected such as Victor Stanley Steelsites Trashcan.
- **Bike Racks:** Bicycle accommodations should be provided throughout the downtown. Rather than bulky bike racks, individual loops provide more flexibility and can be provided in a variety of locations. They should be compatible with the other site furniture in color and design, such as the Victor Stanley Prairie Sites Series.
- **Wayfinding Signage:** The streetscape should incorporate wayfinding signage directing both vehicular and pedestrian traffic to attractions and parking resources. Signage designs utilizing St. Albans' "brand" were developed as part of the February 20, 2006 *Market Analysis and Marketing Plan for St. Albans*. Some are pictured on the following pages.



Main Street Streetscape: Consideration may be given to providing permeable or stamped paving (if permitted by State Highway Department) in parking zone along Main Street as shown in photo (top left). Photo (top right) illustrates simple but elegant streetscape design with a “building zone”, “walkway zone” and “amenity zone.”



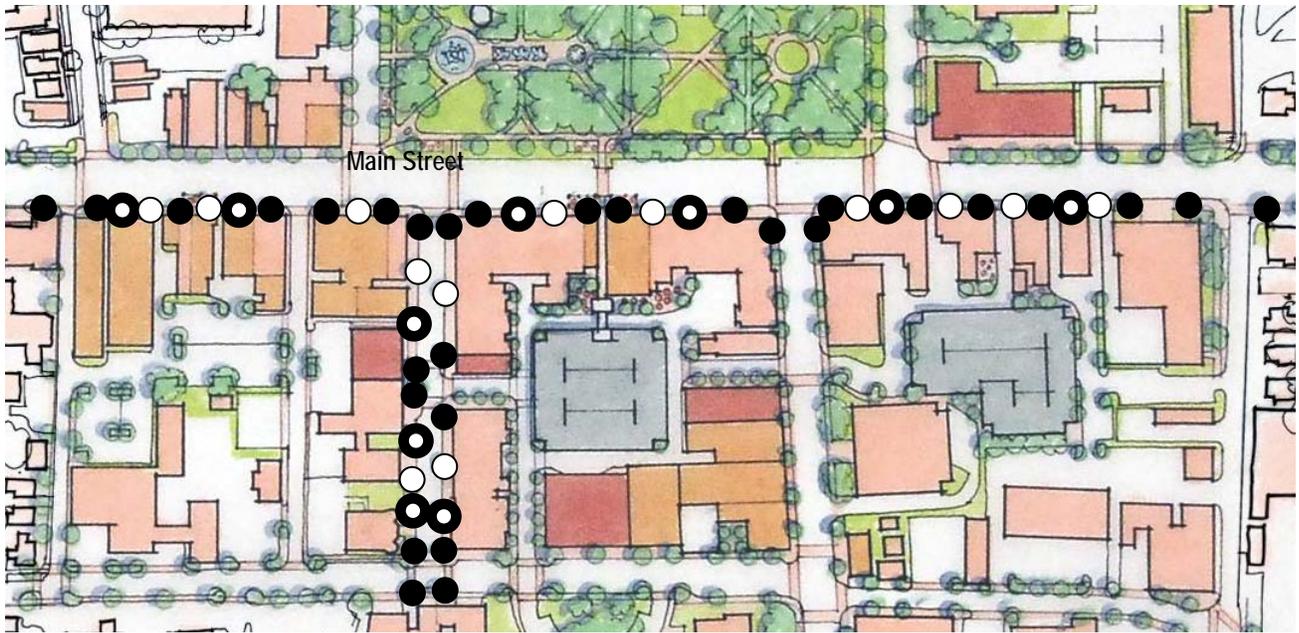
Main Street Streetscape: Drawing above illustrates the potential scoring pattern for the sidewalk and how seasonal seating areas could occur in place of some parking spaces.



Main Street Streetscape: View showing extended tree planters and extended root areas in “amenity zone”. View also illustrates the use of bollards to protect trees and the use of parking spaces for seasonal outdoor dining.



Main Street Streetscape: Aerial view showing seasonal outdoor dining areas adjacent to central crosswalk area. View also illustrates potential for overhead event banner.

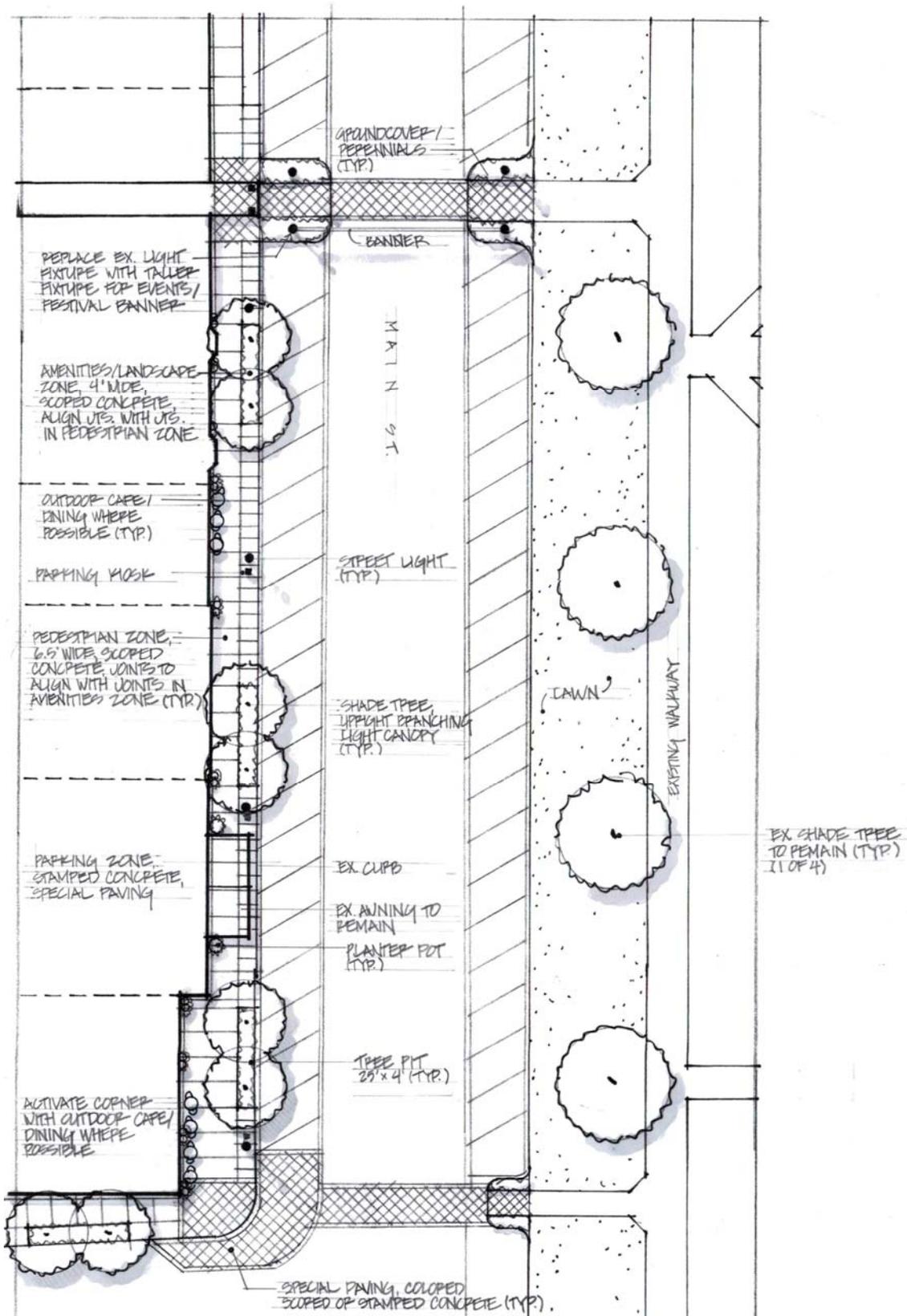


Street Tree Diversity: Diagram illustrates how a diversity of tree species can be accommodated while maintaining an overall organization. The same tree species could be used to flank important buildings and intersections with different species used in between.

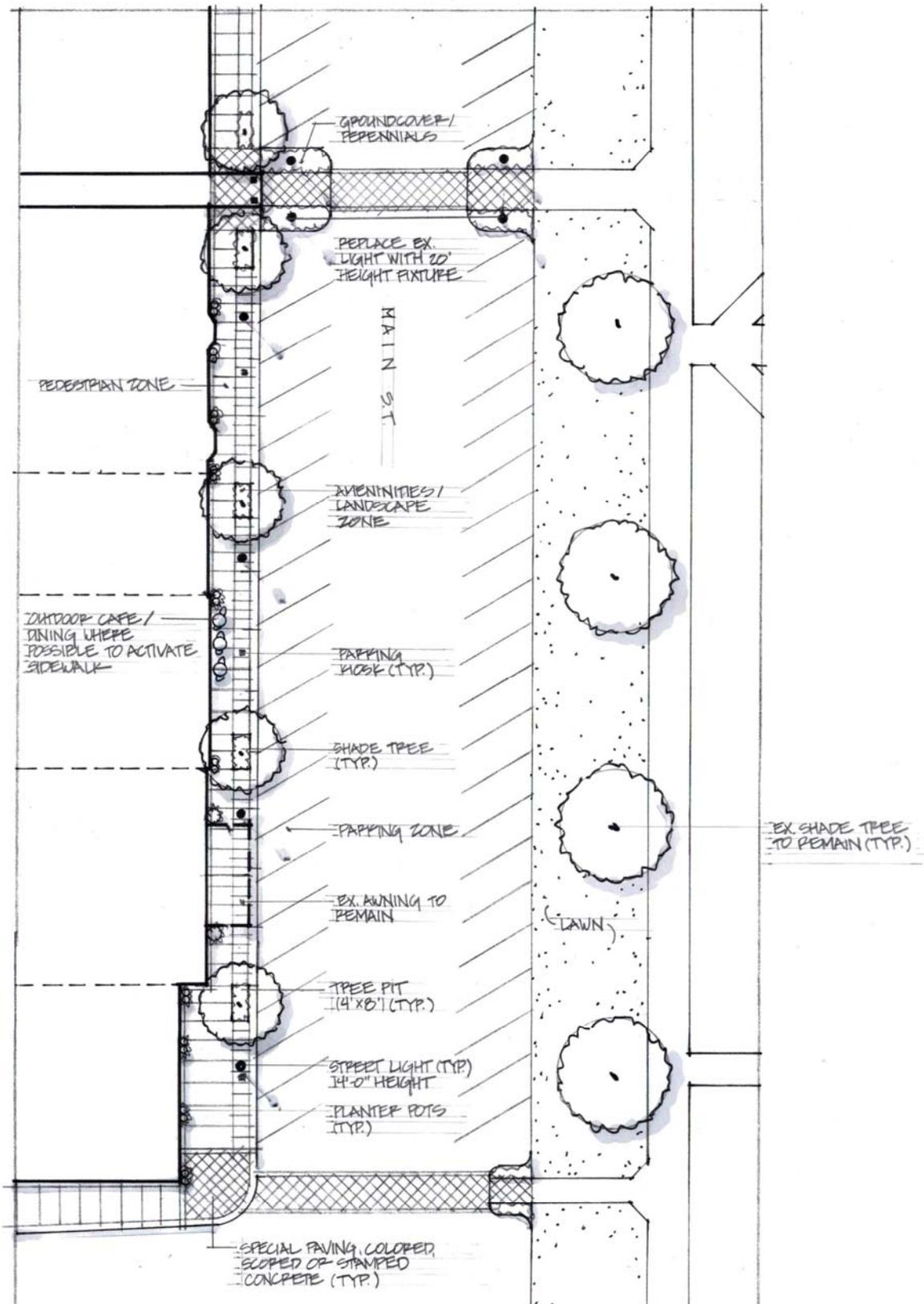


Extended Root Zones: The diagrams above illustrate the use of extended root zones using “Silva Cells” by Deep Root which support compacted soil (and paving) while allowing for soil medium and root growth to extend underneath the sidewalk.

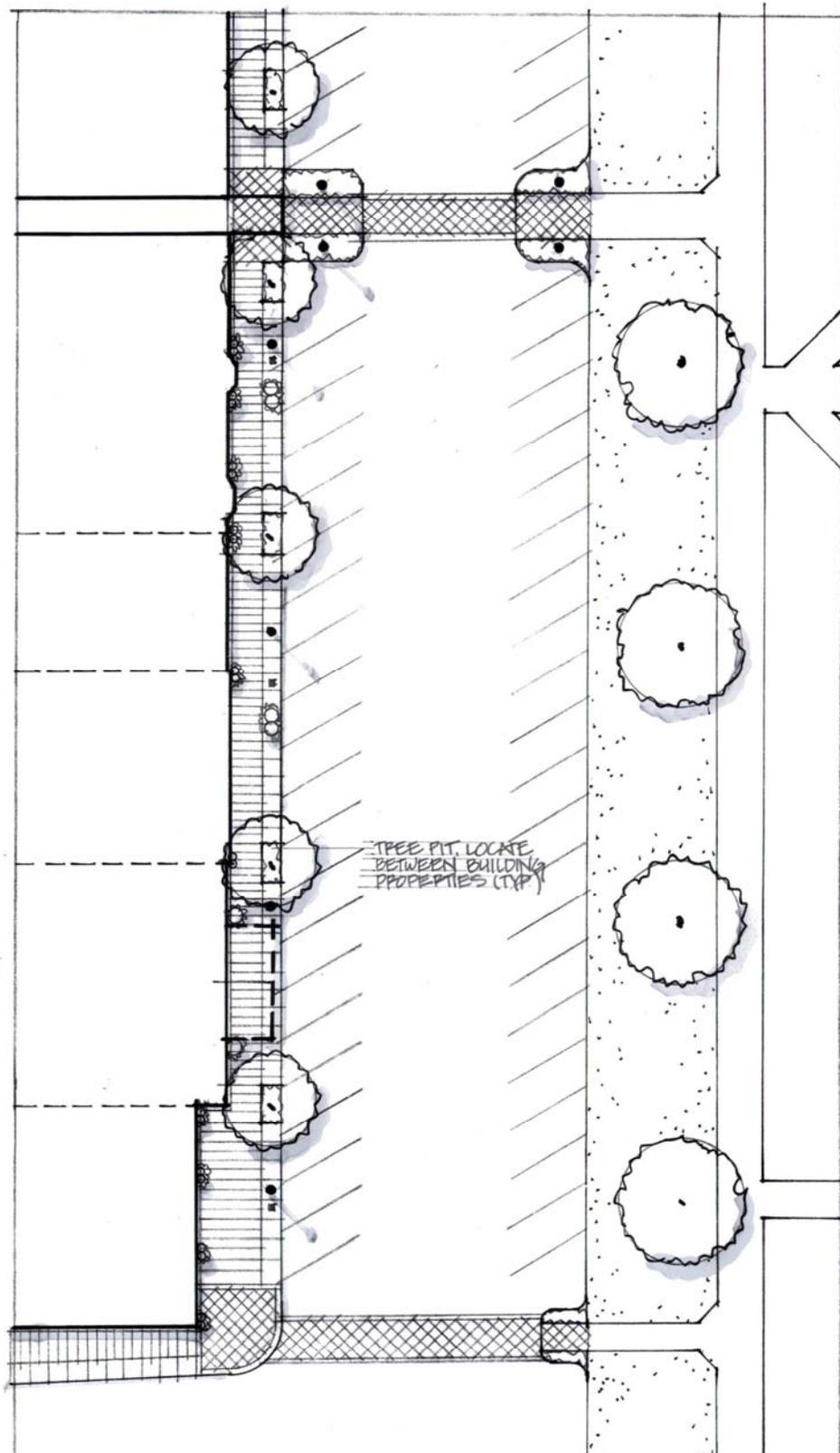
The plans and sections on the following pages of this report illustrate alternative concepts that were developed as part of the planning charrette. These concepts illustrate how the streetscape design might explore different solutions in terms of tree placement and sidewalk scoring. As the streetscape project becomes a reality, all of the approaches identified should be given consideration.



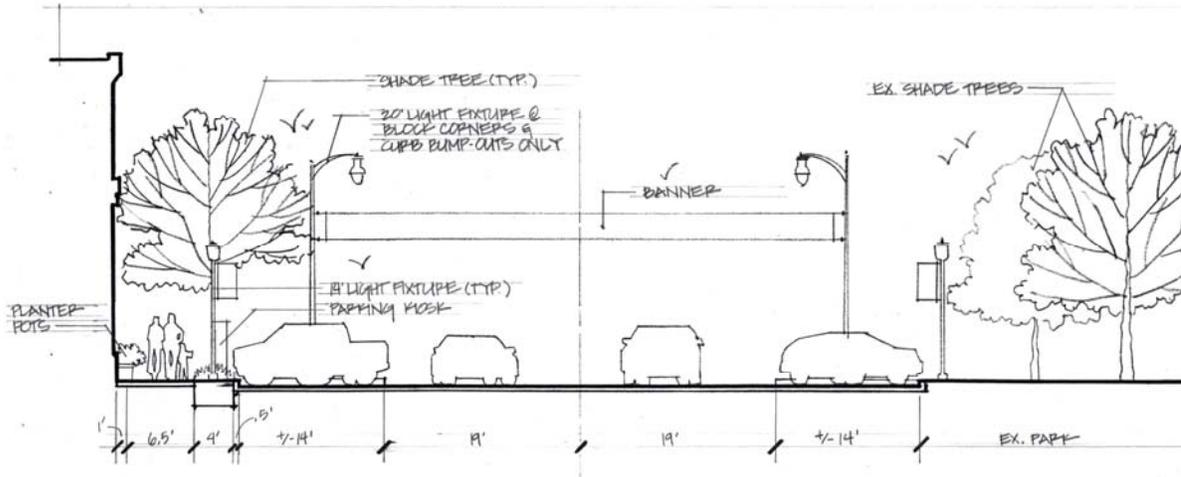
Concept A: Plan view showing oversized tree planters with 2 shade trees grouped together. Concept also illustrates potential to distinguish angled parking zone with different asphalt texture.



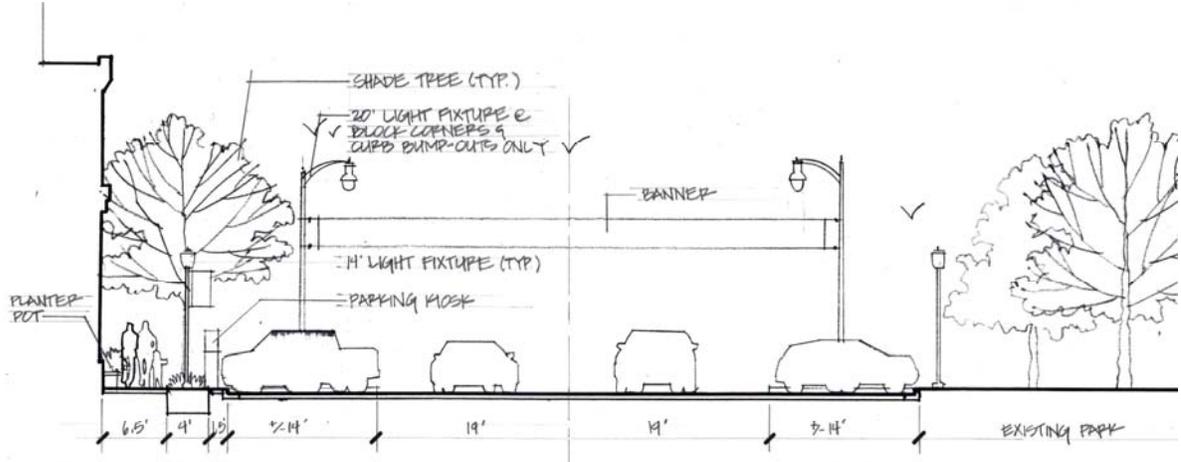
Concept B: Plan view showing regularly spaced tree pits set 18" back from curb to allow for "utility zone."



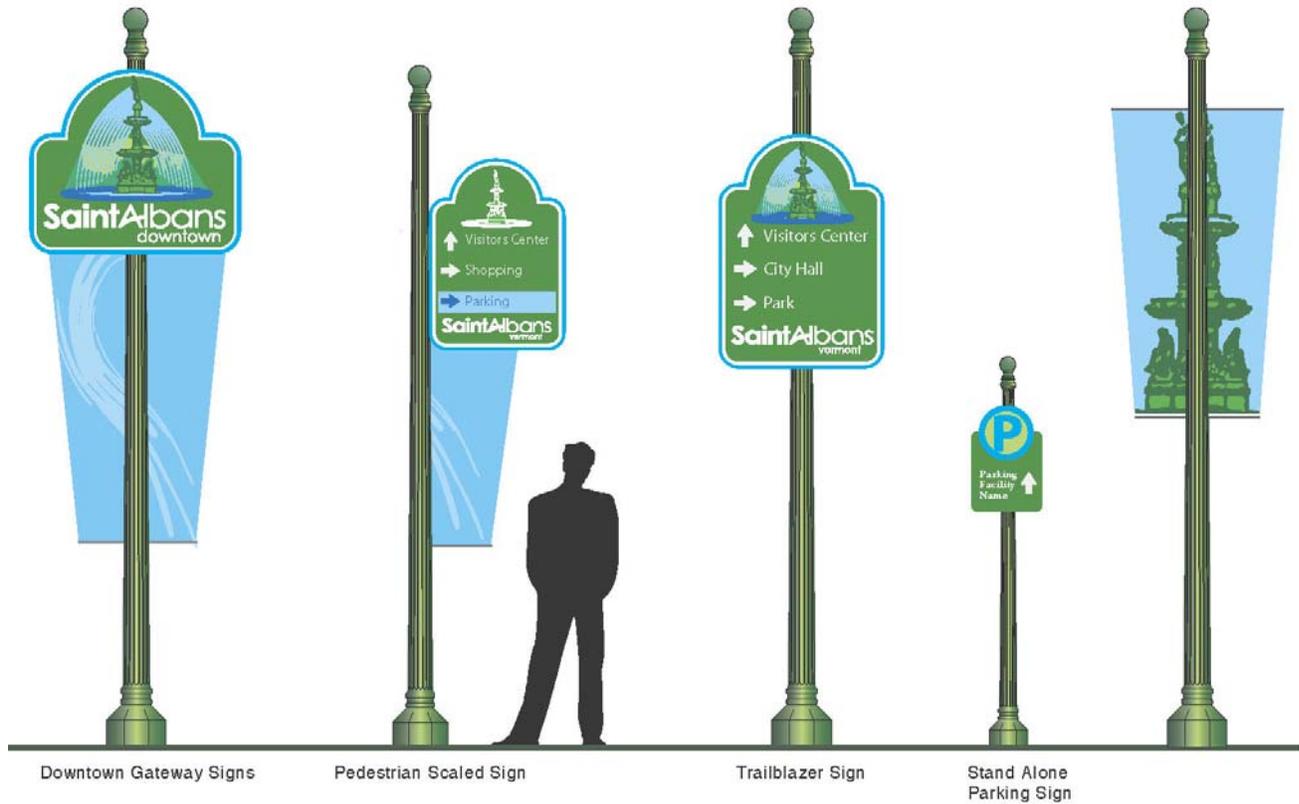
Concept C: Plan view showing tree pits located at curb line but spaced at building property lines (to frame storefronts) as opposed to a regular spacing.



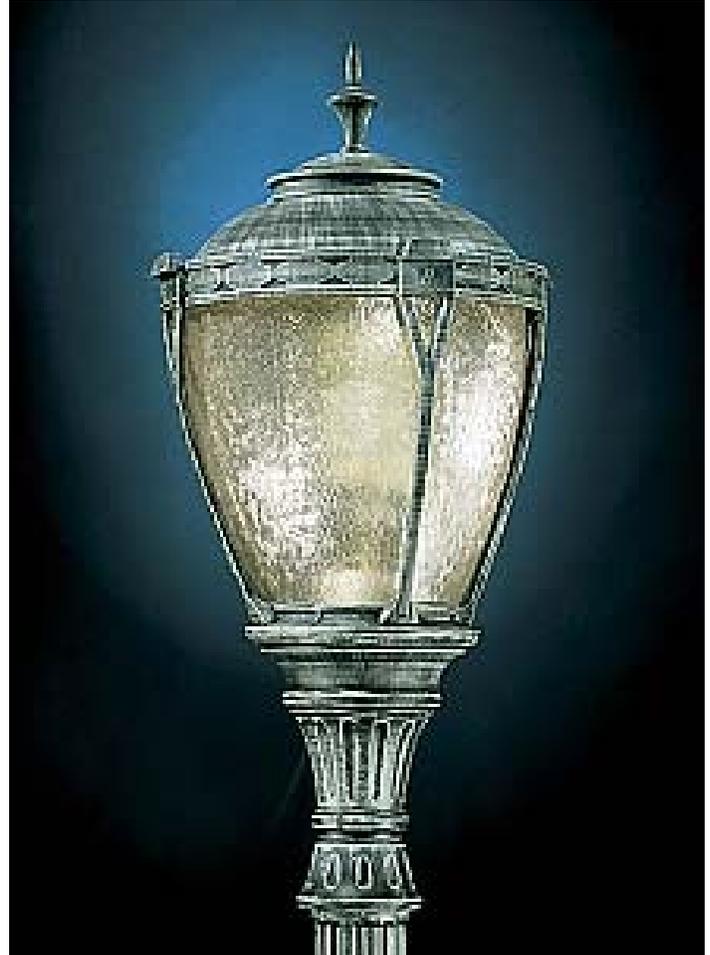
Concepts A and C Section: Illustrates 1' "building zone" scoreline adjacent to building and tree planter adjacent to curb line.



Concept B Section: Illustrates no "building zone" score line but includes 18" "utility zone" with tree planter set back from curb.



Wayfinding Signage: Examples of the wayfinding signage concepts developed as part of the Market Analysis and Marketing Plan for St. Albans (top). The bottom model view shows how the signage can be incorporated into the Main Street streetscape design.



Ornamental Lighting: *St. Albans at one time had ornamental lighting along its downtown streets as shown in the historic photograph (top left). Numerous manufacturers have standard light fixtures that are a close match, as shown above (top center and top right) by the manufacturer Sternberg.*



Site Furniture: *The above illustrated site furnishings represent the style that should be considered for St. Albans. The bench is the Classic Series C-138 Bench (Wood or recycled plastic timbers). The bike rack is the Prairie Sites Series and the trash can is the Steelsites Series NSDC-36. All are manufactured by Victor Stanley.*

4.2 Kingman Street (#4C)

After Main Street, the Kingman Street streetscape should be the next priority as it borders the Core Block and contains a number of infill and redevelopment opportunities. Kingman Street also has a comfortable scale and a strong “sense of place” because of its short length (one block) and the distinctive architecture defining each side of the street. This street would be an ideal “festival” or “event” street. The streetscape improvements for it should utilize the same lighting, street furniture, tree diversity and paving concepts described for Main Street. In addition, however, consideration should be given to widening the sidewalk areas to allow for more pedestrian space, tree planting and outdoor dining opportunities in the future. This can be accomplished by replacing the angled parking with parallel parking and using “curb extensions” at the intersections. While this will result in fewer on-street parking spaces, the loss can be accommodated by the new parking structure in the Core Block. The minor overhead utility lines along some stretches of Kingman Street should also be buried as part of the streetscape enhancement project.

4.3 Lake Street (#4E and #4F)

Lake Street is an important street as it is the primary link to the waterfront and an extension of the commercial district to the west. Streetscape improvements here could be phased, with the section between Main and Federal Streets being the higher priority. Streetscape improvements here should utilize the same elements and materials described for Main Street, however, narrower sidewalks in many areas may limit the ability for street tree planting. Similar to Main and Kingman Streets, the overhead utilities are fairly minor along Lake Street and should be buried as part of any enhancement projects.

4.4 Federal Street (#4G)

As the Federal Street project moves forward, streetscape enhancements for it should be compatible with those described above (ornamental lighting, street furnishings, tree plantings, way-finding, etc.) so that there is a common identity for the downtown area. Obviously, unique challenges for this important corridor will dictate the application of these standards.

While there are many factors determining the ultimate alignment of Federal Street, Alternative 1 at Lake Street (Traffic Signal Aligned with Catherine Street) as outlined in the *Federal Street Corridor Study-2005 Update* is the least disruptive to the downtown and appears to be the most pedestrian-friendly.



Kingman Street Streetscape: Two views showing streetscape enhancements for Kingman Street. Angled parking is replaced with parallel parking to allow for sidewalk widening. Lost parking is accommodated in the new parking structures.

5.0 *Taylor Park Improvements*

Taylor Park is a remarkable urban open space that truly represents the centerpiece of St. Albans. In recent years, the City of St. Albans and many stakeholders have been giving more attention to the park and have made impressive progress in improving the image and function of the park. Numerous stakeholders spoke highly of the recent park improvements that include the new demonstration permeable walkway, tree pruning and replacement program and attention to the fountain to name a few.

While the downtown master plan effort did not focus specifically on the park, it is important to identify a few key recommendations that can be incorporated into on-going park improvement efforts to continue strengthening this open space resource. A diagram of the park is included on the following page as well as in the Master Development Plan. Some specific recommendations for Taylor Park are described below:

5.1 Design Considerations

5.1.1 *Open View Corridors (#5A)*

The City and key park stakeholders currently have a tree placement strategy in place which is well thought out. The strategy calls for the following:

- **Tree Removal:** Dead or trees in very poor condition will continue to be removed. For trees located between Main Street and the fountain and between Main Street and the Civil War memorial that are scheduled to be removed, they will not be replaced in the same location so as to maintain views to these important park features.
- **Tree Planting:** Similarly, any new trees that are proposed will be planted so that view corridors to the fountain and monument will be maintained. Consideration might be given to allowing some trees to encroach on these areas, provided they are high canopied shade trees that would allow for views underneath the canopies.
- **Tree Species:** The majority of trees planted in the park (not just in front of the fountain or the memorial) should be high canopied shade trees as they allow for unobstructed sightlines into and out of the park (and to the historic churches along Church Street). Visibility is an important consideration for the viability of the park as there is an enhanced sense of safety (and comfort) for people if sightlines are maintained. In addition, greater visibility also makes it less desirable for people to engage in the wrong type of activity. Small ornamental trees tend to obscure sightlines and should, therefore, be used sparingly, if at all. In fact, historic photographs of the park reveal that the tree cover was predominantly high-canopied shade trees (mostly Elms) in the past. Because of the problems with Elms (and potential problems with using just one tree species) the City is correct in trying to achieve species diversity throughout the park.
- **Tree Pruning:** In addition to planting trees in the correct locations, existing trees can continue to be pruned to raise the canopies and enhance sightlines. The City has already done a commendable job in raising these canopies and opening visibility into the park.

5.1.2 *Splash Pad (#5B)*

Consideration is being given to converting the existing reflecting pool into a splash pad. This is an excellent proposal as it will help draw people, particularly young children, into the park and activate the park more. People are generally attracted to where other people are so any additional activity will be a positive addition to the park. This also supports the safety of the park and perceived safety. The more positive activity that occurs, the less desirable the park is for unwanted activities.

Because St. Albans experiences long winters, consideration should be given to working with local artists to develop an ornamental grate or paving pattern so that the splash pad has an aesthetic quality when the water is turned off.

5.1.3 *Future Gathering Area (#5C)*

The south end of Taylor Park has always lacked a significant gathering area or “node” such as the space associated with the fountain at the north end. Consideration should be given to establishing a gathering space to “anchor” the southern end of the park as shown on the diagram if permitted because of the historic nature of the park. This space could be designed to appeal to St. Albans’ youth and the design could engage students from the high school and help activate this part of the park.

5.1.4 *Outdoor Dining (#5D)*

The availability of food is one of the most important factors in activating a park and creating a vibrant urban open space. Because of Taylor Park’s location along Main Street, the park can benefit from its proximity to the numerous restaurants that exist downtown. In addition, there is an opportunity to capitalize on the park to provide additional outdoor dining options for downtown. Consideration should be given to providing portable tables and chairs in park areas close to Main Street, particularly the northwest corner and near the mid-block crossing of Main Street. If the Handy’s Toyota site is ever converted to mixed-use development in the future (#2K), the southwest corner of Taylor Park would also be a potential location for portable tables and chairs. The advantage of portable chairs and tables is that people can move them around to be in the sun or shade, alone or in groups. If there is concern with theft, they can be chained together over night. The City and merchants/restaurant owners could establish a partnership to coordinate the logistics for the management of the outdoor tables and chairs, with the program starting small and growing if successful.

Columbus, Mississippi has a very successful program for utilizing outdoor seating in an otherwise little-used courtyard park. During noontime concerts in the park, a different restaurant each week gets to sell ready-made sandwiches or salads which they bring in coolers from their restaurants. The program has been so successful that each year, restaurants all compete for the first concert. In the evenings, servers from nearby restaurants visit the park (during evening concerts) to take advance orders for patrons who then visit the restaurant after the concert.

5.1.5 *Accessible Entrance (#5E)*

The City currently has plans to provide an accessible ramp along the west side of the park, on Church Street, where there is a steep gradient between the street and the park. This is a good idea and will

make the park more accessible to people who cannot navigate steps. As this project is developed, consideration should be given to a thoughtful design that appears to be a coherent part of the park. The areas around the ramp could provide opportunities for accent plantings and flower beds to demarcate this as an important park entrance.

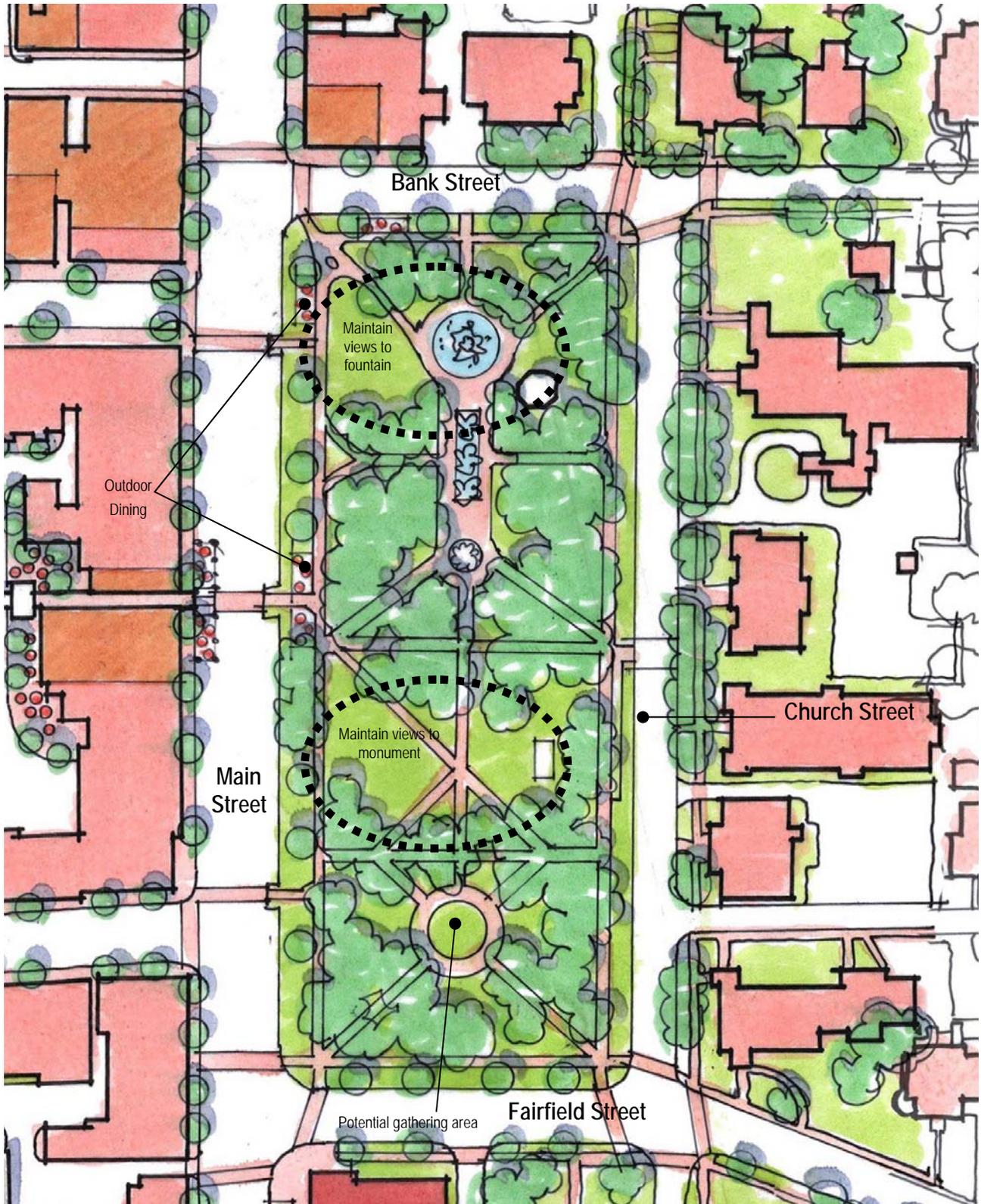
5.1.6 Memorial Program

Parks, as well as campuses and other institutional grounds, can often suffer from being receiving grounds for countless monuments, memorials, and commemorative planting if no guidelines are in place for accommodating them. While the park stewards do seem to control what is placed in the park, consideration should be given to formalizing a “memorial program” that identifies specific locations for potential future memorials or monuments. This program could also provide guidelines for appropriate scale of memorials and monuments as well as acceptable plant species that might be utilized. As various interest groups or individuals come forward with a request for a memorial planting or feature, they can then be guided to the appropriate location with appropriate design parameters.

5.2 Taylor Park Master Plan

Clearly, there are a lot of good efforts occurring that are enhancing Taylor Park as the centerpiece for St. Albans, however, there does not appear to be any documentation of what future enhancements are or where they are located. Consideration should be given to developing a stakeholder-based master plan for Taylor Park that documents the activities described above and provides a long-range plan with additional incremental enhancement projects. The master plan could include capital improvement projects (both small, “easy” projects and larger complex projects) along with implementation responsibilities and budgets. The master plan could serve as a consistent guideline for the protection and enhancement of the park as City leadership and park stewards change over time.





Taylor Park: Tree planting should emphasize high-canopied shade trees that don't obstruct views, particularly to the Civil War Monument and the fountain. There is an opportunity to create a focal point/gathering area at the south end of the park as well as to take advantage of the park setting for seasonal outdoor dining in the areas closest to restaurants.

6.0 Implementation Strategy

Implementing a plan of this nature takes creativity, nimbleness, and time. More importantly, it involves a strategic partnership between the public and the private sectors. This chapter of the report will identify and explain the potential sources of funds that might be available to implement the plan. These include grants, tax credits, and specific resources available to St. Albans. These sources will be matched to projects for public sector improvements (streets, parking, sidewalks), property owner improvements, business owner improvements, and potential funding for project investors that might be interested in new projects in St. Albans.

The chapter concludes with a funding scenario for the improvements identified in the plan. The scenario presents potential funding amounts, sources, and prioritization of projects. The scenario should be used as a guide as funding sources change, priorities shift, and opportunities present themselves that might not have been contemplated during the master plan process.

6.1 Potential Funding Sources

6.1.1 Grants

The following list is not designed to be exhaustive but rather to provide insight into some of the grant funds that might be assembled to implement various recommendations of this master plan. Most but not all grant programs will go toward public sector projects. Additional details on each of these grant programs can be found on website links at the end of each description.

Urban and Community Forestry Trees for Local Communities (TLC) Grants. These grants are currently suspended for 2009. However, in the past Vermont has offered grants to support local urban and community forestry projects. These grants have included planting programs in urban areas and have been awarded in amounts up to \$4,000. If reinstated, these grants could fund street trees in the streetscape improvement project for downtown. www.vtfpr.org

EPA Stormwater Grant. The EPA and the Vermont DEC both offer limited grants to communities seeking to improve stormwater runoff issues in urban areas. This grant might be used to assist in sensitive stormwater planning and improvements in the streetscape work for downtown. www.epa.gov <http://www.vtwaterquality.org/>

USDA Rural Development Grants. The USDA Rural Development offers a number of grant programs that can support economic development and community facilities in rural communities. These grants have funded both feasibility studies for projects as well as capital expenditures for projects found to be feasible. For St. Albans, these grants might be used to explore the scope and feasibility of some sort of community meeting facility in downtown as mentioned in chapter three of this report. The economic development grants could also be used by private sector enterprises seeking to locate in downtown St. Albans. www.rurdev.usda.gov/

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). Traditionally used for housing, these HUD grants can be dedicated to economic development projects that eliminate slum and blight and/or benefit people with low to moderate incomes. Grants are available for planning and for capital

improvement projects. Funds for this program are administered through the Vermont Community Development Program. www.dhca.state.vt.us

Certified Local Government Grants. These grants focus on historic preservation and can be used a number of ways including downtown planning, public education, and building feasibility studies. St. Albans is a Certified Local Government and may apply through the Division for Historic Preservation at www.historicvermont.org.

Preservation Trust of Vermont. The Preservation Trust of Vermont offers a host of grant programs ranging from assistance with building condition assessments to rehabilitation grants. From time to time, the Preservation Trust of Vermont has also been able to assemble special grant programs targeted for particular community needs. www.ptvermont.org

Transportation and Street Related Grants. The Vermont Agency of Transportation offers a number of grant opportunities including downtown oriented grants, transportation enhancement funds, and safe routes to school grants for infrastructure improvements. These grants might be specifically used in the school area to improve sidewalks, bike facilities, pedestrian signals, signs, pavement markings, traffic calming and other improvements. www.aot.state.vt.us
www.saferoutesinfo.org

Preserve America. St. Albans has been declared a Preserve America community. This is a partnership of federal and non-profit groups to bring recognition, enhanced community visibility and pride to communities. As a declared community St. Albans is eligible for federal grants that could focus on promoting heritage resources such as downtown. www.preserveamerica.gov

Downtown Transportation Fund Grants. These grants are available to finance transportation-related capital improvements in support of economic development. www.historicvermont.org/programs/dtfguide.pdf

6.1.2 Tax Credits

As with the grant programs, the following list is not designed to be exhaustive but rather provide a synopsis of the funding available to offset expenses in rehabilitating buildings in downtown. The Vermont Division of Historic Preservation has an excellent synopsis of each of the tax credits listed below on their website at www.historicvermont.org.

Accessibility Tax Credit State and Federal. Both Vermont and the Federal Government offer Accessibility Tax Credits to help offset the expenses of renovating buildings to allow accessibility by the disabled.

Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit and Vermont Historic Buildings Tax Credit. The Federal Government offers a 20% tax credit for the substantial renovation of National Register Listed, eligible, or district contributing properties. The renovation must be for an income producing use. The state of Vermont offers a piggyback program in the form of a 10% State Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit.

State Façade Tax Credit. Buildings built before 1983 that do not qualify for the Federal and State programs may qualify for a separate 25% Vermont state tax credit exclusively for Façade improvements.

State Code Improvement Tax Credit. This 50% credit applies to the costs of bringing a building into compliance with state building codes, to remove hazardous materials, or to redevelop a contaminated property. These credits are available for hazardous material removal, elevators, sprinkler systems, and assistance with redeveloping hazardous properties. It can be combined with the credits mentioned above.

New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC). This program enables taxpayers to receive credits against federal income taxes for making up to \$15 billion in investments in designated Community Development Entities (CDEs). NMTCs are allocated annually to CDEs under a competitive process. The CDEs sell the tax credits to investors in exchange for stock or a capital interest in the CDEs. To qualify as a CDE, an organization must have a mission of serving, or providing investment capital for, low-income persons or low-income communities. The rules for how the CDE serves low-income populations have several parameters and the NMTC needs to be explored on a case-by-case basis. Vermont Rural Ventures received \$30 million in NMTCs to allocate for housing and economic development projects throughout the state (at www.vhfa.org). Information on these programs can be found at the Community Development Institutions Fund of the Federal Government at the following website: www.cfifund.gov.

6.1.3 Local Sources of Funds

Perhaps the most encouraging aspect of this master plan is that St. Albans is already poised with funds to launch into implementation of the project. These funds coupled with additional techniques outlined below are likely to be the earliest sources of success in the revitalization process for downtown.

\$380,000 allocation for Streetscape. St. Albans was the recipient of a federal allocation for streetscape improvements in downtown. This allocation will allow the City to springboard a phase one implementation of streetscape improvements.

Tax Increment Financing District. Vermont Statute §1893 authorizes the creation of Tax Increment Financing districts to provide a financing technique to fund infrastructure improvements in communities. Tax increment financing (TIF) is an innovative tool used by cities and counties to help pay for various public improvements within a redevelopment area. The Vermont Economic Progress Council must approve TIFs in the state and there is a thorough set of standards and requirements set forth in the code.

The Vermont Department of Economic Development provides a concise definition of TIF in the state on its website, “Governmental bodies that draw taxes from the identified area agree to the development, draw the TIF district around the area, and freeze its tax base. The taxes on the frozen base continue to go to the taxing authorities. Infrastructure improvements are made and private developers, enticed by the improved infrastructure, build within the District. The property tax revenues that were flat or declining now increase. This rise, or tax increment, is captured and set

aside to help retire the debt that funded the public infrastructure improvements, for a specified length of time. Once the debt is retired, the higher taxes revert to the taxing authorities.”

For instance, there may be a vacant property within a TIF district which generates \$X amount of taxes every year. When this property is developed, its tax value would naturally be greater due to the improvements (\$X for the land prior to being built upon plus \$Y for the improvement). In this overly simplified example, each taxing agency would continue to receive taxes based on the original \$X. However, the taxes resulting from the increase in tax value, or \$Y, would be placed into a special fund and used to issue TIF bonds and pay for redevelopment projects. St. Albans is in an ideal situation to create a Tax Increment District. The downtown area is in need of public sector improvements that will foster development activity in the downtown. The Vermont Department of Economic Development has a complete description of the process for creating a TIF district in the state at the following website: economicdevelopment.vermont.gov

Act 250 Settlement. The proposed settlement from Act 250 on the Wal-Mart development in St. Albans Town could provide the City of St. Albans up to \$750,000 for improvements in downtown. This settlement is perhaps the least restricted funding option available to the community and as such should be used as a “gap financing” technique to leverage other funding opportunities.

Direct Allocation of Funds. Of course, St. Albans can pursue a series of efforts to allocate funds directly to enhancing the economic prosperity of the community. Cities in America (and St. Albans is no exception) are facing challenges as populations decline, investment migrates to suburban locations, and industries close within city limits. Many cities have made deliberate decisions to consolidate services and reallocate funding to create economic development redevelopment within city limits to stem this trend of disinvestment. St. Albans can explore options to directly allocate funds as an investment in the future tax base of the community.

Disposition of Public Property. Perhaps one of the most under-rated methods of infusing investment in a community is the creative disposition of strategic publicly owned properties. St. Albans has a number of publicly owned parking lots, a former industrial site, and a scattering of other public properties that might be ideally suited for future redevelopment. The Development/Redevelopment/Parking Opportunities section of this report (Chapter 3) indicates options for the reuse of many of these sites. Others such as the Fonda/Solo Paper site could be used as redevelopment or as land swaps with other property owners. St. Albans should be poised to provide these sites as incentives for private investment through public private partnerships, creative financing, creative sales terms, and other options.

6.2 Potential Funding Scenario

As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, this is a funding scenario designed to take the opportunities outlined above and create a prioritized strategy for launching the master plan. Again, these priorities and funding sources should be flexible and the listing of funding options is in no way exhaustive.

Priority One Project: Streetscape Improvements to Main Street. The focus of this project should be in the downtown core block with Taylor Park frontages with potential expansion to Brainerd and

Welden Streets. This should be the initial phase of a public infrastructure project. This project should be funded with the following sources:

- Streetscape allocation \$380,000
- DT Transportation Fund \$75,000
- Community Forestry Grant if available
- EPA Stormwater Funds if available
- Act 250 Settlement if needed

Priority Two Project: Create a Façade Improvement program. While the streetscape project is being implemented to improve the public sector, an incentive should be given to private property owners to improve their buildings in accordance with the suggestions of Chapter 4. There are several potential ways to capitalize such a program:

- Both the USDA and CDBG funds have been used to create a façade improvement program. St. Albans should pursue \$200,000 from these sources to capitalize a façade program.
- In addition, St. Albans should market the Tax Credits outlined above as companion funding sources directly to the property owners.
- If needed, the Act 250 settlement could allocate gap funds to capitalize the façade program.

Priority Three Project: Redevelop the Core Site. The Core Site in downtown St. Albans is perhaps the most talked about property in downtown. It is large, has multiple access points, and has the potential to include adjacent undeveloped or underdeveloped properties. The recommendations in Chapter 3 show how this site might develop using parking, new buildings, and an internal circulation pattern. This site will require a public private partnership between the City of St. Albans and a developer. As such it is an ideal candidate for the following:

- Tax Increment Financing district. This is perhaps one of the most “textbook” examples of a potential TIF project in any community – a publicly owned site ideally suited for redevelopment *but for* the lack of infrastructure to support redevelopment on the site, poor connections to the street, in adequate parking to support new development, and lack of investment to encourage a solely private sector initiated project.
- New Markets Tax Credits and other potential incentives could be leveraged on this redevelopment site as well.
- Again, if needed the Act 250 funds might go toward gap financing or security for funding on this project.

Priority Four Project: Develop a capital fund to encourage investment in the community. One of the major obstacles to development in communities is a lack of *flexible* capital. St. Albans should consider a self financed revolving fund, loan guarantee fund, or similar mechanism to foster investment in downtown. A minimum of \$500,000 should be considered. There are three major ways to capitalize such a fund in St. Albans:

- When publicly owned property is sold, that money could be funneled into a fund for economic development in the community.
- USDA Rural Development funds offer a chance to capitalize such a revolving fund.
- Perhaps the best use for the Act 250 funds (provided they aren’t used up in the prior three projects) is to help capitalize such a fund.

Priority Five Project: Wayfinding signs. These signs will to direct visitors to downtown and once downtown to parking venues. These signs are critical to instill community pride, direct visitors to downtown, and enhance the visual appearance of St. Albans.

- Preserve America will allocate up to \$200,000 for projects in communities.

Priority Six Project: Pursue an arts/meeting facility as a catalyst to encourage private sector investment and bring people downtown. There is considerable discussion in the community about a potential meeting center, arts facility, or related catalyst project in downtown. Chapter 3 of this report presents a number of sites that might be considered for such a project. This plan does not attempt to zoom in on a particular site because additional due diligence is necessary to understand the scope of the facility and the feasibility of funding such a project. Fortunately, there are a couple of sources that might be ideal to fund a feasibility study for the project:

- USDA Rural Development specifically funds feasibility studies for community meeting facilities.
- Foundation funds are more frequently available for arts, education, and community related facilities. These could be pursued to further study sites particularly if the sites are in historic buildings.

Conclusion

This list of projects identifies above encompasses and can encourage many additional potential renovations, investments, and improvements to downtown St. Albans. The community is poised for incredible success as it looks to the future. This plan aspires to provide a roadmap for this success. This plan is flexible, fundable, and realistic. This plan coupled with the aspirations of many St. Albans residents, business owners, property owners, and potential investors will yield rich dividends for downtown for years to come.

7.0 Appendix A: Preliminary Estimate of Probable Construction Costs

Phase	Description	Length	Cost/LF	Total Cost
Main Street				
4A:	Fairfield to Hudson West Side (Full Streetscape)	1,120 LF	\$800-1,250	\$896-\$1,400K
	<i>Probable Unit Costs for Specific Elements</i>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Full Width Concrete Sidewalks (14,000 SF @\$8/SF = \$112,000) ▪ Special Paving at Tree Pit (800 SF @ \$12/SF = \$9,600) ▪ Silva Cells at Tree Pit (25 Pits @ \$2,000/Pit = \$50,000) ▪ Ornamental Lights (18 @ \$5,000/EA = \$90,000) ▪ Benches (10 @ \$1,000/EA = \$10,000) ▪ Trash Receptacles (8 @\$800/EA = \$6,400) ▪ Street Trees (25 @\$500/EA = \$12,500) ▪ Signal Mast Arms (\$150,000/Intersection) (1 Set at Lake) 			
	<i>Other Considerations</i>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pavement Treatment of Parking Spaces ▪ Underground Overhead Utilities ▪ Construction Staging ▪ Mobilization/Sediment Control ▪ Demolition ▪ Drainage Inlets/Structures 			
	Fairfield to Hudson East Side (Full Streetscape)	400 LF	\$800-1,250	\$320- 500K
	<i>Probable Unit Costs for Specific Elements</i>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Full Width Concrete Sidewalks (4,800 SF @\$8/SF = \$38,400) ▪ Special Paving at Tree Pit (256 SF @ \$12/SF = \$3,072) ▪ Silva Cells at Tree Pit (8 Pits @ \$2,000/Pit = \$16,000) ▪ Ornamental Lights (6 @ \$5,000/EA = \$30,000) ▪ Benches (2 @ \$1,000/EA = \$2,000) ▪ Trash Receptacles (2 @\$800/EA = \$1,600) ▪ Street Trees (8 @\$500/EA = \$4,000) ▪ Signal Mast Arms – 1 Set at Fairfield (\$150,000/Intersection) 			
	<i>Other Considerations</i>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pavement Treatment of Parking Spaces ▪ Underground Overhead Utilities ▪ Construction Staging ▪ Mobilization/Sediment Control ▪ Drainage Inlets/Structures 			
	Fairfield to Hudson East Side (Reduced Streetscape in front of Park)	720 LF	\$75-100	\$54 -72K
	<i>Probable Unit Costs for Specific Elements</i>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pavement Treatment of Parking Spaces ▪ Misc. Pavement Connections (1,800 SF @ \$8/SF = \$14,400) ▪ Ornamental Lights (11@ \$5000/EA = \$55,000) ▪ Trees (5 @ \$500/EA = \$2,500) 			
	<i>Other Considerations</i>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Utilities ▪ Construction Staging ▪ Drainage Inlets/Structures 			
Subtotal 4A				\$1.27 – 1.97 M
Subtotal of Specific Elements for 4A				
Concrete Sidewalks/Pavement	\$164,800			
Special Paving at Tree Pit	\$ 12,700			
Silva Cells at Tree Pit	\$ 82,000			
Ornamental Lights	\$175,000			
Benches	\$ 14,000			
Trash Receptacles	\$ 9,600			
Street Trees	\$ 19,000			
Signal Mast Arms	\$300,000			

Phase	Description	Length	Cost/LF	Total Cost
Main Street (Continued)				
4B:	Fairfield to Lower Welden Both Sides (Full Streetscape)	500 LF	\$800-1,250	\$400-625K
	<i>Probable Unit Costs for Specific Elements</i>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Full Width Concrete Sidewalks (6,000 SF @\$8/SF = \$48,000) ▪ Special Paving at Tree Pit (380 SF @ \$12/SF = \$4,560) ▪ Silva Cells at Tree Pit (12 Pits @ \$2,000/Pit = \$24,000) ▪ Ornamental Lights (12 @ \$5,000/EA = \$60,000) ▪ Benches (5 @ \$1,000/EA = \$5,000) ▪ Trash Receptacles (4 @\$800/EA = \$3,200) ▪ Street Trees (12 @\$500/EA = \$6,000) ▪ Signal Mast Arms (\$150,000/Intersection) (1 Set at Lower Weldon) 			
	<i>Other Considerations</i>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pavement Treatment of Parking Spaces ▪ Underground Overhead Utilities ▪ Construction Staging ▪ Mobilization/Sediment Control ▪ Demolition ▪ Drainage Inlets/Structures 			
	Fairfield to Lower Welden Both Sides (Reduced Streetscape)	2,210 LF	\$150-200	\$332-442K
	<i>Probable Unit Costs for Specific Elements</i>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Concrete Sidewalks –Average 5’ Width (11,500 SF @ \$5/SF=\$57,500) ▪ Street Trees (30 @ \$500/EA = \$15,000) ▪ Ornamental Lights (36 @\$5,000/EA = \$180,000) 			
	<i>Other Considerations</i>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Underground Overhead Utilities ▪ Construction Staging ▪ Mobilization/Sediment Control ▪ Demolition ▪ Drainage Inlets/Structures 			
	Hudson to Brainerd Both Sides (Full Streetscape-Assumes Redevelopment Of Penney’s Site)	1,200 LF	\$800-1,250	\$960-1,500K
	<i>Probable Unit Costs for Specific Elements</i>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Full Width Concrete Sidewalks (14,400 SF @\$8/SF = \$115,200) ▪ Special Paving at Tree Pit (640 SF @ \$12/SF = \$7,680) ▪ Silva Cells at Tree Pit (20 Pits @ \$2,000/Pit = \$40,000) ▪ Ornamental Lights (20 @ \$5,000/EA = \$100,000) ▪ Benches (6@ \$1,000/EA = \$6,000) ▪ Trash Receptacles (10 @\$800/EA = \$8,000) ▪ Street Trees (20 @\$500/EA = \$10,000) 			
	<i>Other Considerations</i>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pavement Treatment of Parking Spaces ▪ Underground Overhead Utilities ▪ Construction Staging ▪ Mobilization/Sediment Control ▪ Demolition ▪ Drainage Inlets/Structures 			
	Hudson to Brainerd Both Sides (Reduced Streetscape)	930 LF	\$150-200	\$139 – 186K
	<i>Probable Unit Costs for Specific Elements</i>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 5’ Concrete Sidewalk (4,600 SF @ \$5/SF = \$23,000) ▪ Street Trees (15 @\$500/EA = \$7,500) ▪ Ornamental Lights (15 @ \$5,000/EA = \$75,000) 			

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Phase	Description	Length	Cost/LF	Total Cost
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Other Considerations

- Mast Arms
- Underground Overhead Utilities
- Construction Staging
- Mobilization/Sediment Control
- Demolition
- Drainage Inlets/Structures

Subtotal 4B

\$1.8 – 2.75 M

Subtotal of Specific Elements for 4B

Concrete Sidewalks	\$243,700
Special Paving at Tree Pit	\$ 19,900
Silva Cells at Tree Pit	\$ 64,000
Ornamental Lights	\$415,000
Benches	\$ 11,000
Trash Receptacles	\$ 11,200
Street Trees	\$ 38,500
Signal Mast Arms	\$150,000

Total Main Street (4A and 4B)

\$3.07 – 4.72 M

Kingman Street

4C: Main to Federal Both Sides (Full Streetscape)

1000 LF

\$1,000-1,300

\$1,000 –1,300K

Probable Unit Costs for Specific Elements

- New Curb and Gutter (1,200 LF @ \$25/LF= \$30,000)
- Full Width Concrete Sidewalks (15,000 SF @ \$8/SF = \$120,000)
- Special Paving at Tree Pit (520 SF @ \$12/SF = \$6,200)
- Silva Cells at Tree Pit (20 Pits @ \$2,000/Pit = \$40,000)
- Ornamental Lights (16 @ \$5,000/EA = \$80,000)
- Benches (12 @ \$1,000/EA = \$12,000)
- Trash Receptacles (8 @ \$800/EA = \$6,400)
- Street Trees (20 @ \$500/EA = \$10,000)

Other Considerations

- Underground Overhead Utilities
- Construction Staging/Mobilization/Sediment Control
- Demolition
- New Roadway Pavement/ Drainage Inlets/Structures

Subtotal Kingman

\$1 – 1.3 M

Subtotal of Specific Elements for Kingman (4C)

Curb/Gutter	\$ 30,000
Concrete Sidewalks	\$120,000
Special Paving at Tree Pit	\$ 6,200
Silva Cells at Tree Pit	\$ 40,000
Ornamental Lights	\$ 80,000
Benches	\$ 12,000
Trash Receptacles	\$ 6,400
Street Trees	\$ 10,000

Phase	Description	Length	Cost/LF	Total Cost
Lake Street				
4E:	Main to Federal Both Sides	1,100 LF	\$600-1,000	\$660-1,100K
	<i>Probable Unit Costs for Specific Elements</i>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Full Width Concrete Sidewalks (11,000 SF @\$8/SF = \$88,000) ▪ Special Paving at Tree Pit (400 SF @ \$12/SF = \$4,800) ▪ Silva Cells at Tree Pit (13 Pits @ \$2,000/Pit = \$26,000) ▪ Ornamental Lights (18 @ \$5,000/EA = \$90,000) ▪ Benches (4@ \$1,000/EA = \$4,000) ▪ Trash Receptacles (4 @\$800/EA = \$3,200) ▪ Street Trees (13 @\$500/EA = \$6,500) 			
	<i>Other Considerations</i>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interface with Roundabout/Federal Street Improvements ▪ Underground Overhead Utilities ▪ Construction Staging/Mobilization/Sediment Control ▪ Drainage Inlets/Structures 			
4F:	Federal to Spruce (Both Sides)	2,800 LF	\$600-1,000	\$1,680-2,800K
	<i>Probable Unit Costs for Specific Elements</i>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Full Width Concrete Sidewalks 28,000 SF @\$8/SF = \$224,000) ▪ Concrete "Aprons"/Crosswalks at Curb Cuts (10,000 SF @ \$10/SF= \$100,000) ▪ Ornamental Lights (46 @ \$5,000/EA = \$230,000) ▪ Benches (10@ \$1,000/EA = \$10,000) ▪ Trash Receptacles (16 @\$800/EA = \$12,800) ▪ Street Trees (40 @\$500/EA = \$20,000) 			
	<i>Other Considerations</i>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Underground Overhead Utilities ▪ Construction Staging/Mobilization/Sediment Control ▪ Drainage Inlets/Structures ▪ Potential Mast Arms for any New Signals 			
Subtotal Lake				\$2.3 – 3.9 M
	<i>Subtotal of Specific Elements for Lake (4E and 4F)</i>			
	Concrete Sidewalks	\$312,000		
	Special Paving at Tree Pit	\$ 4,800		
	Silva Cells at Tree Pit	\$ 26,600		
	Ornamental Lights	\$320,000		
	Benches	\$ 14,000		
	Trash Receptacles	\$ 16,000		
	Street Trees	\$ 26,500		
Grand Total (Main, Kingman and Lake)				\$6.37 – 9.92 M

Note: The preliminary estimates of probable construction costs are based on master plan level design concepts and documents and on comparable streetscape construction costs in other communities. Detailed cost estimates based on detailed surveys of existing conditions and plans will need to be prepared as part of the design project.

Preliminary Estimate of Probable Construction Cost prepared by Mahan Rykiel Associates, Inc., September 9, 2009