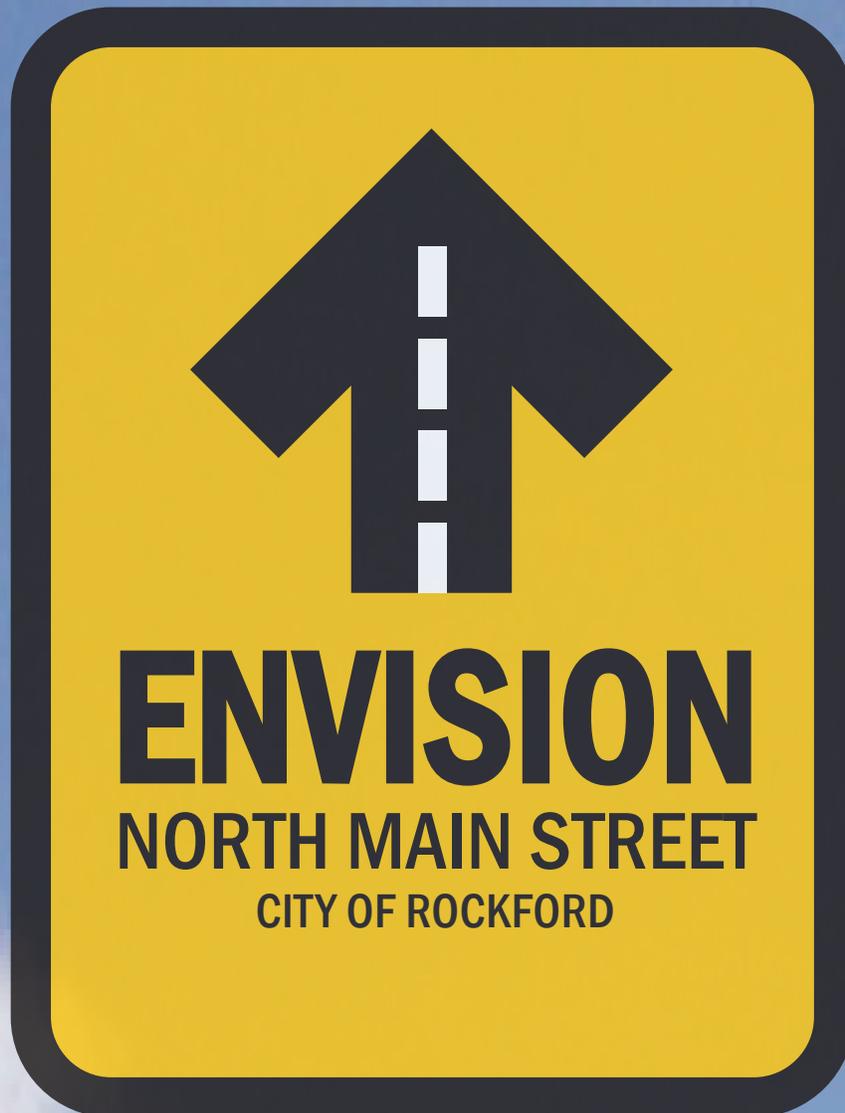


Prepared by  
Hitchcock Design Group  
in association with  
Business Districts, Inc. and  
Houseal Lavigne Associates, LLC

September 2007

# Corridor Plan



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# Executive Summary

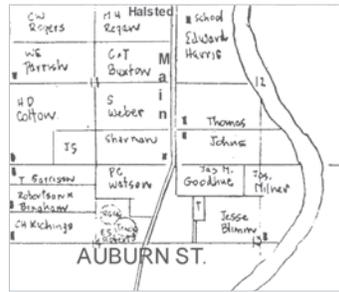
North Main Street (Illinois Route 2) has a long history of serving the Rockford community as a major conduit for business, education, recreation and shopping. Some of Rockford's earliest farms, schools and cemeteries were located along its route. Later, North Main formed the spine along which some of the City's most elegant neighborhoods and most distinguished manufacturers located. After World War Two, the roadway became a destination for shoppers attracted by many of the City's earliest automobile oriented retailers. North Main Street remains, today, one of Downtown Rockford's most important gateway corridors.

As Rockford's manufacturing base declined in the decades after World War Two, and its retail center of gravity moved eastward, the North Main began to fall below community standards even as adjoining residential neighborhoods thrived and prospered. The City's leadership recognized the importance of elevating North Main to the same level of quality as these neighborhoods. In the fall of 2006, the City launched the Envision North Main Street project under the direction of a Task Force comprised of City staff and elected officials. Hitchcock Design Group was engaged to develop a community driven plan for revitalizing the North Main Street corridor.

The Envision North Main Street Corridor Plan is the result of a collaborative process that included analyzing the existing conditions and opportunities, developing alternative improvement strategies, refining the preferred strategies and establishing an implementation action plan. Members of the project Task Force, City staff, community leaders, business owners, merchants, residents and other corridor stakeholders were instrumental in the planning process. The planning process included a community workshop to brainstorm concepts for the corridor and a public open house to solicit community feedback on alternative strategies. The result is a vision for the corridor that is unique to Rockford. The highlights of the plan's key findings and recommendation include:

- Organizing the corridor into three distinct "zones of control" that require different levels of municipal focus, resources and leadership.

The first is the *public right-of-way*. The City should work closely with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) to ensure that high quality, "context-sensitive" roadway and streetscape improvements are advanced.



Map showing property ownership along North Main Street in 1853. Note the jog in the street (at what now is Brown Avenue) that remains to this day.

There are three locations along the corridor that are especially suited to serve as mixed use *neighborhood centers*. The goal for neighborhood centers is to create environments that emphasize the comfort and safety of pedestrians.

The third zone is comprised of the *transitional areas* between the neighborhood

centers. The transitional areas provide potential locations for market-driven redevelopment that might include conventional auto-oriented retail, commercial offices, residential and/or light industrial.

- Preliminary market analysis suggests that the corridor cannot, at present, support the amount of retail currently permitted by zoning, and the limited lot sizes and low traffic volumes means the corridor will not appeal to big box retailers. However, there does appear to be a market for additional restaurants, a national drug store, small gift/accessory shops and personal care businesses in the North Main/Auburn business district.
- While a primary goal for the corridor is to create safe and attractive pedestrian environments, many of those pedestrians will arrive by automobile. Consequently, provisions for shared parking facilities are critical.
- Initiating a program of continuous infrastructure improvements (fixing gutters and sidewalks, cleaning streets and improving the existing landscape features) will also enhance the corridor's safety, appearances and overall image and identity almost immediately.
- The Corridor Plan illustrates preferred neighborhood and transitional area features and building patterns. In addition, there are development guidelines that define and articulate the preferred standards for revitalization along the corridor.

Completing the Envision North Main Street Corridor Plan is a significant accomplishment. This is just the beginning of a much longer process, though, and a great deal of hard work and enthusiastic support will be required to turn the vision into reality. By systematically implementing the recommendations over time and by working closely with the IDOT on the final design of roadway improvements, the City and corridor stakeholders can ultimately achieve the plan's vision.

# Introduction

## About the Envision North Main Street Project

As Rockford continues with plans to revitalize and enhance its core Downtown districts and its signature cultural amenities, the quality and character of the “gateway” roadways leading into Downtown become more important than ever before.

By initiating the Envision North Main Street corridor study, the City officials acted proactively to ensure that future roadway improvements and economic redevelopment opportunities align with and support the goals and aspirations of residents, property owners, business owners, public officials, the IDOT and other corridor stakeholders.

In the Fall of 2006, the City of Rockford engaged Hitchcock Design Group to develop a Corridor Plan for the North Main Street corridor. A project Task Force comprised of City staff and elected officials was created to guide and direct the planning process. The Hitchcock Design Group team, which included Business Districts, Inc. (marketplace analysis) and Houseal Lavigne Associates (zoning and land use analysis), worked closely with the project Task Force, IDOT officials and other interested stakeholders to develop a Corridor Plan that reflected the desires of the community and that met IDOT criteria for roadway improvements.

## Study Area

The study area is less than 3 miles in length and runs from just south of Main Street/Auburn Street to just north of Main Street/Riverside Boulevard. There are a variety of commercial, industrial, institutional, recreational and residential land uses throughout the corridor.

## Project Goals

The assignment had three primary goals:

### 1) Public Streets and Spaces

The City sought street and streetscape improvements within the public right-of-way that would create a safe and attractive multi-modal environment, and that would also help to generate private market economic redevelopment.

### 2) Development Regulations and Guidelines

The City sought to incorporate form-based regulations and guidelines as an overlay district into the Zoning Ordinance that is currently being rewritten. These codes will regulate building orientation, signage, lighting, landscaping and mix of businesses.

### 3) Plan and Guidelines Implementation

An important component to plan and guidelines implementation involves public participation. The City sought input from local residents, key corridor stakeholders and public officials to determine grassroots perceptions of the corridor. In addition, the City sought detailed implementation actions which could stimulate large scale redevelopment in the corridor. Finally, development guidelines were developed to ensure that quality standards will be met or exceeded.

# Opportunity Analysis

## General Scope of Work

The Envision North Main Street project included three distinct phases:

- 1) An **Opportunity Analysis** was conducted that examined resources, stakeholder interests and marketplace conditions. The Opportunity Analysis included a review of jurisdictional interests, physical conditions, stakeholder interviews and a public workshop.
- 2) Based on a conceptual framework created from the findings of the Opportunity Analysis, a number of **Alternative Strategies** were developed and analyzed. These strategies were presented to the project Task Force and corridor stakeholders, and a consensus was reached on a Preferred Strategy to advance and refine.
- 3) Under the direction of the project Task Force, the Preferred Strategy underwent a series of refinements and was formally presented to the public and elected officials. The entire planning process, including final recommendations, was then documented in the final **Corridor Plan** that will be used as a reference to guide future revitalization initiatives and street improvements.

## Stakeholder Interests Summary

Stakeholder input was an integral part of the planning process. Input was solicited in each phase of the project in a variety of ways. Below is a summary of findings from this input.

## Stakeholder Interviews

Nearly 20 individuals were interviewed during the Opportunity Analysis phase of the project. These individuals included residents, elected officials, educators, business persons, property owners, real estate professionals and developers. Key findings from these interviews included:

- Rockford's west side has a negative image; most new development has occurred east of the Rock River.
- Safety is an issue. Business owners expressed concern that prospective patrons avoid the North Main Street corridor, especially at night.
- Some stakeholders believed the corridor's worst days were over, and were optimistic about recent new developments along the corridor that included new housing, a new grocery store and new restaurants.



- The residential neighborhoods bordering the corridor are some of Rockford's most attractive and have very active neighborhood organizations.
- The corridor has a legacy as a retail destination and, though retail has declined, there are still several high quality destination restaurants such Table 13 and the Olympic Tavern.
- The overall quality of the corridor's streetscape was poor. Some locations, such as the Fulton Avenue intersection, are hazardous to motorists.
- Several stakeholders expressed frustration that the proposed Main Street/Auburn Street roundabout project and business district improvements are progressing too slowly.

### Public Workshop and Stakeholder Survey

A public workshop was held at the end of January 2007. The workshop included a presentation of the Preliminary Opportunity Analysis, during which participants were asked to complete a survey rating certain corridor characteristics on a scale of one to four. The results of the survey are as follows:

The qualities that rated the highest were (average score):

- Ease of parking (2.9)
- Ease of auto access and circulation (2.6)
- Overall driver comfort (2.4)

The qualities that rated the lowest were (average score):

- Pedestrian comfort (1.1)
- Number of family destination options (1.3)
- Appearance of the sidewalks (1.3)

Participants were then divided into teams of four to six individuals and asked to brainstorm about the changes they would like to see along the North Main Street corridor and/or the issues they felt needed the most attention. Each group was asked to post their responses on the wall in no particular order. The group was then asked to help categorize similar responses into clusters. Additional responses were then added to the clusters until all topics the group wished to put forward were exhausted.

Each individual was given three red dots and asked to vote for those clusters they felt were the most important. Participants could place all of their votes on one cluster category if they wished. The results are as follows:

- Business development 21 votes
- Streetscape improvements 15 votes
- Street improvements 15 votes
- Crime prevention 12 votes
- Jobs 6 votes
- Construct roundabout 5 votes
- Fix Fulton intersection 2 votes
- Create live/work/play environment 2 votes
- Enforce property standards 1 vote
- Improve housing 0 votes

**Survey Form Excerpt:**

**Rate North Main Street As It Exists Today**  
Please circle the number that you think best describes each quality of North Main Street.

Quality and Circulation	1	2	3	4
Automobile access/circulation	1	2	3	4
Bicycle access/circulation	1	2	3	4
Walkability	1	2	3	4
Ease of parking	1	2	3	4

**Stakeholder Survey Ratings (Scale of 1-4)**

Quality	1	2	3	4
Appearance of parking	1	2	3	4
Appearance of street and sidewalks	1	2	3	4
Pedestrian comfort	1	2	3	4
Driver comfort	1	2	3	4
Overall sense of livability	1	2	3	4
Quality of signage	1	2	3	4

**Public Presentation Slide:**

City of Rockford  
Envision North Main Street  
February 21, 2007  
**Public Presentation**

Hitchcock Design Group  
Business Districts, Inc.  
Houseal Lavigne Associates, LLC

**Preliminary Opportunity Analysis Stakeholder Interests Summary**

**Key Findings**

**Stakeholder Survey Ratings (Scale of 1-4)**

**Highest**

- Ease of Parking 2.9
- Auto access/circulation 2.6
- Driver comfort 2.4

**Lowest**

- Pedestrian comfort 1.1
- No. family destination options 1.3
- Appearance of sidewalks 1.3

**Top Priorities from Public Workshop**

- 1) Street enhancements
- 2) Streetscape enhancements
- 3) Economic development

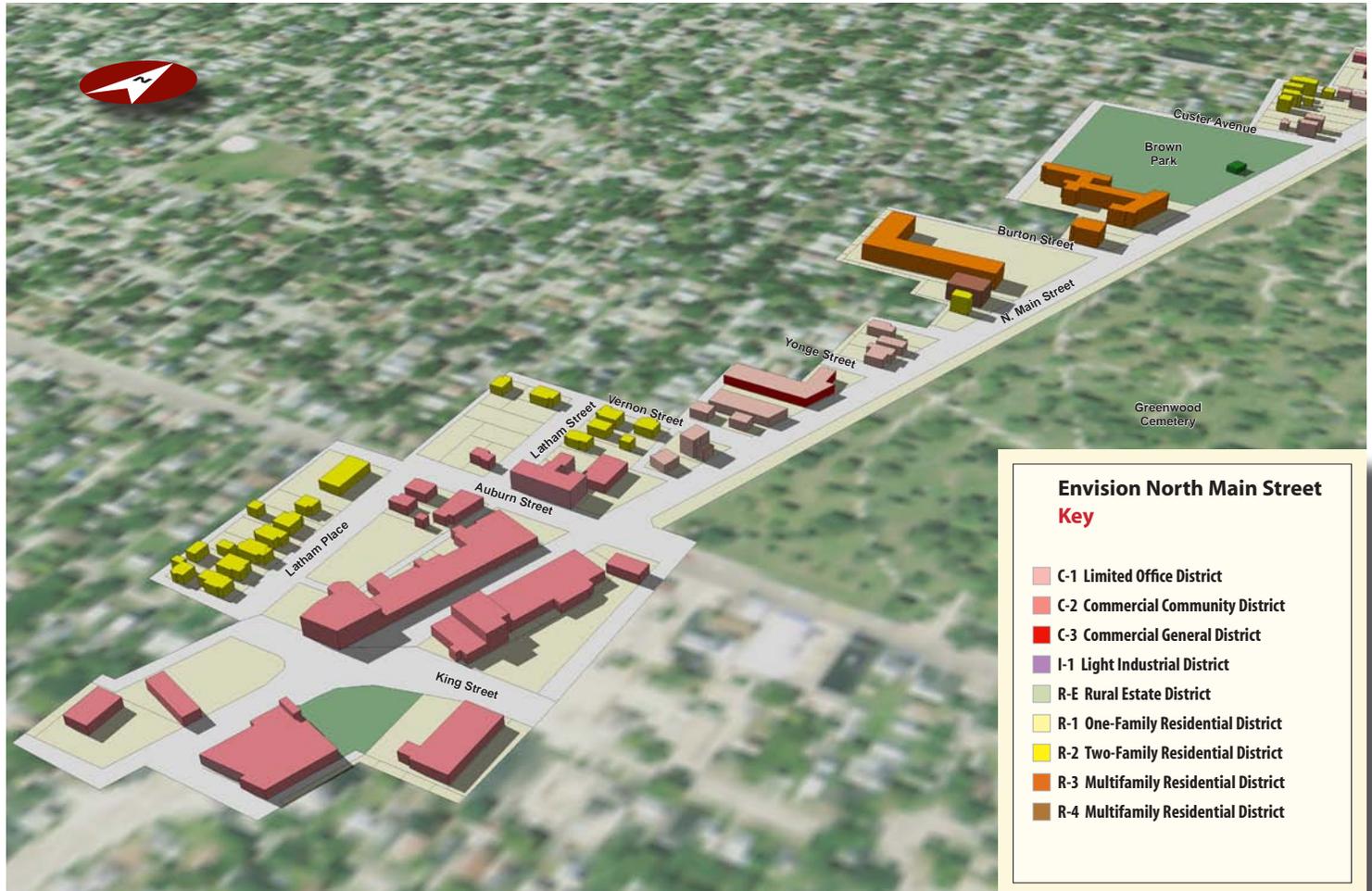
## Land Use and Zoning

### Existing Zoning and Land Use

One consistent theme that was expressed throughout the stakeholder input process was that North Main Street lacks a cohesive image. A review of zoning districts revealed that the North Main corridor includes 9 of the 12 districts categorized by the City. The variety of zoning

districts and permitted land uses—and the fact that similar land uses occur on both sides of Main Street in only a few locations—helps to explain, at least in part, why the corridor lacks a strong image and identity.

To facilitate the analysis of zoning and land use, the corridor was divided into three zones of approximately equal length.

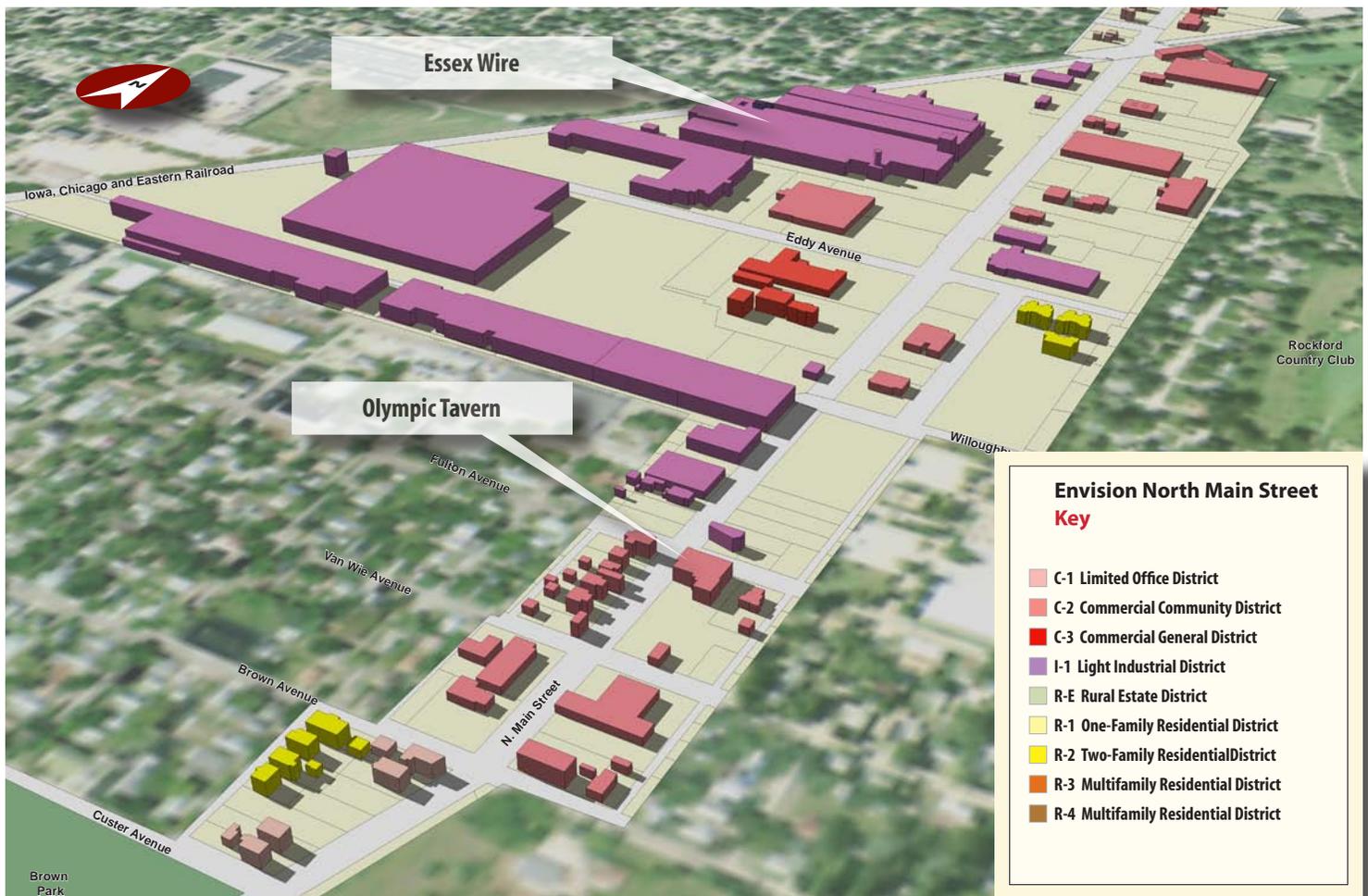


### South Zone

#### South Zone

The southern zone between Reynolds Street and Brown Avenue includes the Main/Auburn business district south of Auburn. This district has several of the corridor's most notable destination restaurants, including Der Rathskeller, Altamore's Ristorante and Table 13.

North of Auburn, the east side of the street is dominated by Greenwood Cemetery, while the west side of the street features a multi-unit residential building just south of Brown Park and transitional uses in small commercial structures.



**Middle Zone**

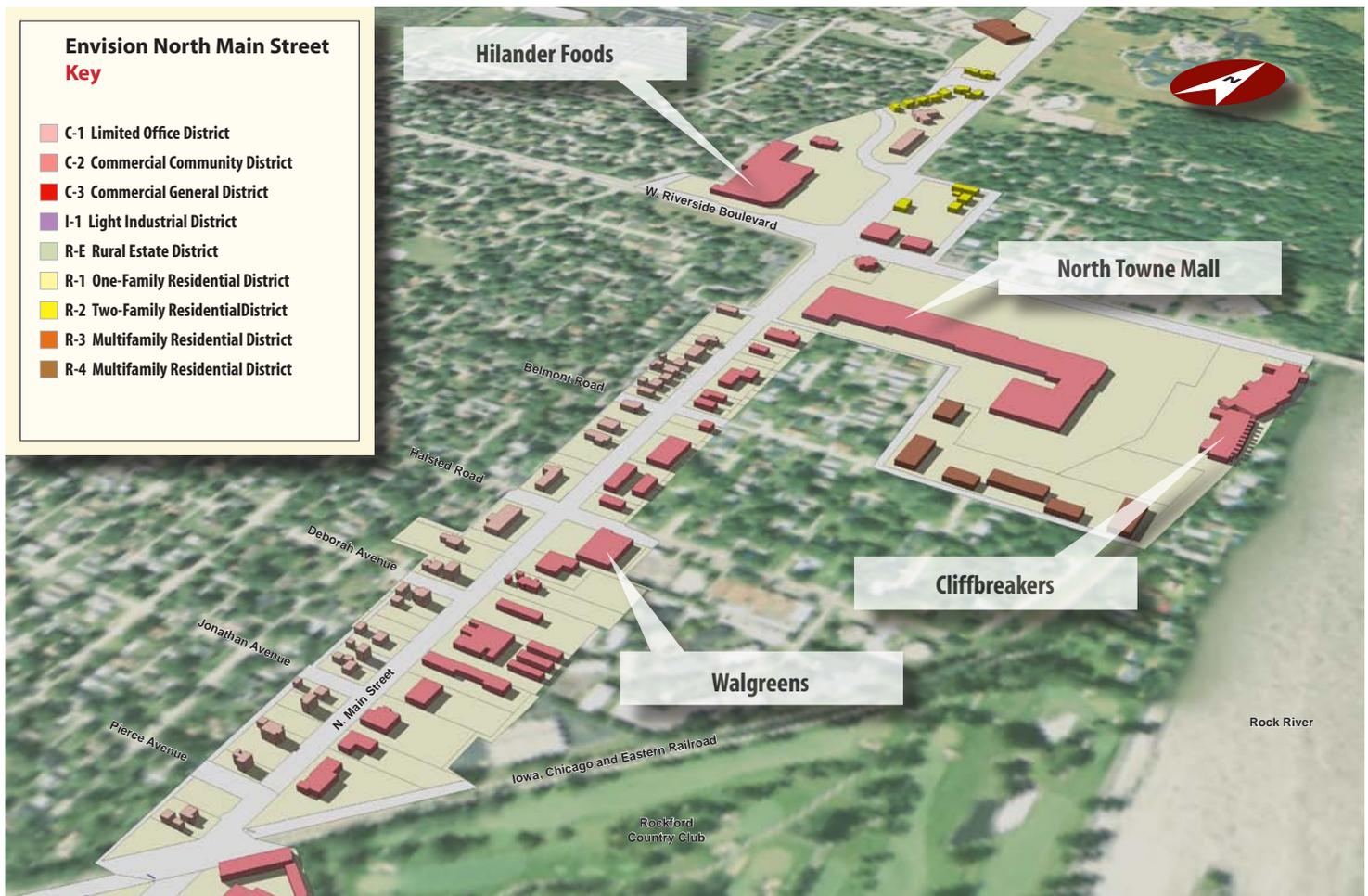
**Middle Zone**

The middle zone between Brown Avenue and the Iowa, Chicago and Eastern Railroad (I.C.E.) crossing includes a mix of retail, commercial and industrial uses. Between Brown and Fulton Avenues are a number small retailers and other commercial uses. This portion of the corridor has a small town, main street character, and includes the landmark Olympic Tavern on the southeast corner of Main and Fulton.

North of Fulton Avenue, the roadway takes on a more suburban character. The west side of the street features small industrial uses and the Village Green Home and Garden Center at Main and Eddy. A new grocery store, Sun View Market, has opened at the site of the former

Eagle Foods on the west side of North Main just north of Eddy. The former Essex Wire facility north of the Sun View Market is by far the largest vacant structure along the North Main Street corridor. The City is currently working with a potential new owner for the site.

The east side of North Main Street between Fulton Avenue and the I.C.E. Railroad tracks is a mix of retail in older structures, professional offices and vacant parcels. New townhomes have recently been constructed at the site of the former K-Mart north of Ford Avenue. North of the townhomes is an older strip mall that has a Goodwill, the Spectrum School and the North Annex, a Winnebago County health clinic.



## North Zone

### North Zone

The north zone that begins north of the I.C.E. tracks and stretches to the end of the study area north of Riverside Boulevard has a decidedly suburban character.

Between the tracks and the North Towne Mall on the east side of North Main Street are a variety of retail and service businesses. Many of these businesses operate out of older structures. The variations in the size and graphic treatments of the signage in this section are especially discordant.

On the west side of North Main between the tracks and Halsted Road are a variety of transitional uses in what were once single family residences. A number of these former residences are in relatively poor condition. North of Halsted Road are single family residences and professional offices in newer structures. The North Towne Mall at the southeast corner of North Main and West Riverside Boulevard is an older mall that has been renovated.

North Towne is home to a variety of small businesses that target the mid- to low-income marketplace. A new McDonalds in an outbuilding on the edge of North Towne's parking lot along West Riverside Boulevard has been successful at increasing retail activity at the mall. Cliffbreakers, a destination restaurant and banquet facility is located on the Rock River just south of the Riverside Boulevard bridge and immediately east of the North Towne Mall.

On the northwest corner of North Main and West Riverside is another strip mall that features a Hilander grocery store, a CVS Pharmacy, a Dollar General store and several wireless phone service merchants, among other businesses. North of this strip mall are several institutions and single family residences, and farm land. In this stretch, North Main quickly transitions to a rural highway with wider travel lanes, higher traffic speeds and median strip. Buildings are generally set back from the roadway much greater distances than those south of the North Main/West Riverside intersection.

## Access and Circulation



The right-of-way width of North Main Street varies from approximately 66 feet to 80 feet. The narrowest width occurs at Greenwood Cemetery north of Auburn Street (above).

### Jurisdiction and Right-of-way

Development within the study area is regulated by the City of Rockford. IDOT has jurisdiction over improvements and access to North Main Street.

North Main Street between Downtown and Riverside Boulevard is a designated local truck route. Halsted Road (west of North Main) and Fulton Avenue (east of North Main) are also local truck routes. North of Riverside, North Main is an Illinois Class II truck route.

The existing North Main Street right-of-way varies in width from approximately 66 feet to 80 feet and is controlled by IDOT. The right-of-way widths widen to over 100 feet north of River Bluff Boulevard.

Typical IDOT roadway enhancements to improve mobility and safety—including multiple 12 foot travel lanes, 2 foot gutter pans and 18 foot medians with center turn lanes, all within a 90-foot right-of-way—would likely require property acquisitions. Other roadway improvements may also require acquisitions. For example, if the degree of angle that North Main Street takes at the Brown Street intersection were reduced, it would likely have an impact on the properties located on the west side of North Main south of Brown. Other approaches to improving North Main Street could require less right-of-way, hence fewer acquisitions.



North Main Street's roadway surface is, generally, in poor condition.

Similarly, the right-of-way of some cross streets might need to be expanded in order to add left turn lanes or increase the roadway width to better accommodate the needs of trucks. This would most likely occur in the manufacturing district between Fulton Avenue and the railroad tracks.

### Roadway Conditions

Although community stakeholders rated access and circulation as among the corridor's strongest features, the roadway's surface conditions are generally poor throughout corridor. This is especially true in the vicinity of the I.C.E. Railroad crossing.

Several stakeholders identified the Main/Fulton intersection as particularly hazardous due to the absence of left turn lanes. Stakeholders also identified the portion of the roadway adjacent to Greenwood Cemetery as being difficult to navigate in heavy traffic conditions due to the relatively narrow widths of the traffic lanes.



Existing medians and center turn lanes begin at River Bluff Boulevard and extend to the northern boundary of the study area.

**Medians**

The only existing medians are located in the northern quarter of the study area. Unplanted medians with center turn lanes begin at River Bluff Boulevard adjacent to North Towne Mall and extend north through the West Riverside Boulevard intersection to the northern boundary of the study area.

**Railroad Crossings**

The I.C.E. crosses at grade north of the vacant Essex Wire facility. Stakeholders observed that freight trains cross North Main Street infrequently and present only a very minor inconvenience to motorists.



The vista south of West Riverside Boulevard encompasses the entire corridor all the way south to Willoughby Avenue.

**View Corridors**

View corridors are important urban assets that can influence overall perceptions of a given location’s image and identity. The North Main Street study area includes two important view corridors.

The first is the view corridor between the I.C.E. tracks and the crest of the ridge north of West Riverside Boulevard. Currently, utility poles that lean in different directions, cluttered signage, untended parkways and deteriorating curbs/sidewalks—combined with obsolete and vacant structures—project an image of blight and disinvestment.

The view corridor between Auburn Street and Brown Avenue is not as bleak, due in part to better maintained properties and the natural features within Brown Park and Greenwood Cemetery. However, improvements to key properties within the view corridor, such as those on the northeast corner of the North Main/Brown intersection that form a terminating vista when traveling north on Main Street , would greatly enhance the image of this portion of the study area.



The quality of the sidewalks along the corridor ranges from good to very poor. This section of sidewalk on the west side of North Main just south of the Van Wie Avenue intersection is badly deteriorated.

### Sidewalks and Pathways

The Rock River Recreational Path enters the study area from the east via the Riverside Boulevard bridge. The I.C.E. Railroad right-of-way has been identified in the Rockford 2020 Plan as a proposed public pathway that would link west side neighborhoods to the Rock River Recreational Path.

Although North Main Street is not a designated bicycle route, it is crossed by two bicycle routes identified by the Rockford Area Transportation Study's Long-range Transportation Plan. The first is Fulton Avenue, which is a designated route between Huffman Boulevard and Harlem Boulevard. River Bluff Boulevard is also designated as a bicycle route between Huffman and North Main. This route continues along the North Towne Mall service drive and links to the Rock River Recreation Path immediately west of the Rock River bridge.

While there are sidewalks along both sides of North Main throughout most of the corridor, the quality of these sidewalks varies considerably from good to very poor. This is also true of the pedestrian experience along North Main. From the Main Auburn business district to Fulton Avenue, the sidewalks are in relatively good shape. Even though there is no on-street parking and very little parkway space between sidewalks and curbs, pedestrians can move fairly comfortably because the narrower roadway widths tend to make traffic move at slower speeds. North of Fulton Avenue, however, vehicular speeds increase considerably as traffic lanes widen.



Commercial signage along the North Main corridor is generally of a low quality and detracts from corridor's image and identity. The blocks just south of the Halsted Road intersection have an especially cluttered appearance.

Faster traffic and the curb cuts of auto oriented commercial businesses makes pedestrian movement much more challenging.

### Signage

Commercial signs along the corridor are of generally low quality. The cluttered, uneven quality of the commercial signage—in combination with overhead utilities and blighted properties—reinforces negative perceptions of the corridor.

Currently, there are no special decorative gateway features or street signs within the corridor. There is some generic directional signage that identifies and directs visitors to Downtown cultural attractions. EIGERlabs is identified in small directional signs north and south of the North Main/Fulton Street intersection.

There is a decorative North End Square Neighborhood identification sign located in Brown Park. In addition, there is a small decorative sign identifying the Edgewood Neighborhood just north of the Greenwood Cemetery.

### Transit

The Rockford Mass Transit District's North Main Number 4 bus runs a loop that starts at the Downtown Transfer Center and has scheduled stops at Auburn Street, Fulton (outbound only), North Towne Mall (outbound only), River Bluff (outbound only), the Juvenile Center and Singer (inbound only).

## Open Space, Utilities and Other Features



The Civil War monument (above) at the North Main/Auburn intersection is adjacent to St. James and St. Mary's Cemetery.



Street lights throughout much of the corridor are cobra head fixtures attached to wooden overhead utility poles.

### Parks and Open Space

Brown Park (approximately five acres) is the only public park within the study area. Greenwood Cemetery and St. James and St. Mary's Cemetery (approximately 90 acres combined) are immediately adjacent to the study area between Auburn Street and Brown Avenue. The Rockford Country Club is a privately owned facility (approximately 130 acres) between North Main Street and the Rock River that also borders the study area.

There is a small pocket park at the south of Myott Avenue immediately east of the North Main intersection that has public seating, and there are picnic benches in a Brown Park pavilion adjacent to Main Street.

### Lighting and Other Streetscape Elements

The lighting between Reynolds Street and West Riverside Boulevard consists primarily of cobra head lights attached to wooden utility poles. There are several decorative street lights in the Main/Auburn businesses district between Myott and Auburn. Some of the parking lots along North Main Street are illuminated by private businesses.

There are bus shelters on the west side of North Main Street at the North Main/Eddy Avenue and the North Main/Halsted Road intersections. There is a small wooden bench outside of the Goodwill shop across from the vacant Essex Wire facility.



Overhead utilities line both sides of North Main Street in the vicinity of the Fulton Avenue intersection.



Overhead utility lines are on the west side of North Main in the portion of the roadway that is immediately north of the Auburn Street intersection.

### **Overhead and Underground Utilities**

Except for a two block stretch between Reynolds and Auburn Streets where the Main/Auburn business district is located, overhead utilities are highly visible along the entire length of the corridor. North of the Main/Auburn business district and opposite Greenwood Cemetery, the utility lines are confined to the west side of the roadway. The visual impact of the utilities is perhaps the greatest in the blocks immediately north and south of Fulton Avenue where they line both sides of the street. North of the I.C.E. tracks, most overhead utilities are located once again on the west side of North Main.

Underground utilities, including water, storm sewer, sanitary sewer, electric, gas and communications, exist throughout the public right-of-way. The location of these utilities could have significant impact on the design of roadway enhancements and/or infill redevelopment that occurs along the length of the corridor. Understanding the specific locations of utilities will be required in the design and construction phases of future enhancement projects, and concepts will have to be adjusted accordingly.

### **Hydrology (Swales and Drainage)**

There are no wetlands, floodplains or environmentally sensitive natural areas immediately adjacent to North Main Street. Storm water management will need to be addressed for any future roadway enhancements and/or infill redevelopment that occurs along the corridor. Water and sewer enhancements will have to meet the standards and requirements of IDOT and the City's Department of Public Works.



The North Main and Auburn Street tax increment financing (TIF) district is one of two TIF districts located within the study area.



North Main and Eddy TIF district has properties on both sides of North Main Street, including the site of the now-demolished Kmart north of Willoughby Avenue.

**Finances**

Tax increment financing is a financial tool that cities in Illinois can use to spur redevelopment in declining areas. When a city such as Rockford creates a TIF district, it first determines the assessed valuation of all the property within the district. Then, as that valuation increases as a result of redevelopment or completely new development, any property taxes attributable to that increase in valuation are “captured” and spent within the district. These funds—the increment—can be spent for physical improvements and related costs, such as street improvements, buying land, demolishing buildings, financing costs and so forth.\*

There are two tax increment financing (TIF) districts located within the study area (see the study area map on page 3). The North Main and Auburn Street TIF includes the business district south of the Auburn Street intersection and a mix of other residential and commercial uses of varying levels of quality.

The North Main and Eddy Avenue TIF includes the properties east and west of North Main from Fulton Avenue to approximately one-half block north of Eddy Avenue. Most of the structures within the TIF were built between 1920 and 1940. Redevelopment activities within the TIF include Pinos on Main restaurant at the northeast corner of North Main and Willoughby Avenue, the InnovMed facility immediately north of Pinos and the Hudson Place residences at the site of the former Kmart north of Willoughby Avenue.

The Rockford Local Development Corporation (RLDC) now provides gap financial assistance to businesses and industries locating or expanding in the City of Rockford. However, funds are limited and allocations are made on a first-come, first serve basis.

\*From *Rockford’s 2020 Plan: Entering the 21st Century*

# Marketplace Analysis

## Demographic Profile

A market analysis was conducted to better understand the economic dynamics that may be having an impact on businesses within the corridor. The table below highlights

the profile of the residential population close to the intersection of North Main with Auburn and West Riverside Boulevard. The one-half mile radius identifies the population that could be pedestrian customers and the 5-minute area identifies people who could conveniently drive to these areas for shopping.

	0.5 Miles: Auburn Street	5 Minutes: Auburn Street	0.5 Miles: West Riverside Blvd	5 Minutes: West Riverside Blvd
<b>Population 2006</b>				
Population	4,890	24,731	2,818	23,117
Households	1,923	10,166	1,032	9,618
Population Density	6,226	4,196	3,588	2,851
Total Population Median Age	33.0	35.1	47.1	39.0
<b>Household Income 2006</b>				
Median Household Income	\$45,642	\$40,520	\$39,235	\$42,102
Household Average Income	\$52,714	\$52,405	\$50,430	\$50,382
<b>Business Summary 2006</b>				
Total Employees	769	13,849	1,653	11,586
Total Establishments	114	1,180	143	995
<b>Consumer Expenditure 2006</b>				
Total Retail Expenditure	\$38,191,021	\$201,590,742	\$20,106,808	\$186,726,639
Grocery Stores	\$6,986,706	\$36,798,019	\$3,672,528	\$34,295,252
Full Service Restaurants	\$2,181,692	\$11,482,448	\$1,139,160	\$10,610,743
Limited Service Restaurants	\$2,177,348	\$11,447,855	\$1,136,916	\$10,597,576
<b>Housing Units 2006</b>				
% Owner Occupied Units	61.79%	55.47%	54.39%	62.62%

Demographic data ©2006 by Experian/Applied Geographic Solutions.

Although incomes in this neighborhood are slightly below national and Rockford averages, the relatively high density means that the total spending power is high enough to support modest commercial clusters at the Auburn Street and West Riverside Boulevard intersections.

At Auburn, pedestrians will be frequent customers but those who arrive via automobile will provide the major support for the business cluster. At West Riverside there are fewer nearby pedestrians and, consequently, the success of the businesses is even less dependent on pedestrians and more dependent on automobiles.

Preliminary market analysis suggests that the corridor cannot, at present, support the amount of retail currently permitted by zoning, and the limited lot sizes and low traffic volumes means the corridor will not appeal to big box retailers. However, there does appear to be a market for additional restaurants, a national drug store, small gift/accessory shops and personal care businesses (hair salons, dry cleaners) in the North Main/Auburn business district.

While a primary goal for the corridor is to create safe and attractive pedestrian environments, many of those pedestrians will arrive by automobile. Consequently, provisions for shared parking facilities are critical.

Initiating a program of continuous infrastructure improvements (fixing gutters and sidewalks, cleaning streets and improving the existing landscape features) will also enhance the corridor's safety, appearances and overall image and identity almost immediately.

The City could also play a leading role in helping to eliminate blight along the corridor by enforcing codes. The City might also consider systematically purchasing, clearing and then land banking obsolete or vacant properties within TIF districts to support specific projects that would result in a positive increment for the TIF. In addition, assembling contiguous parcels within TIF districts would help the City attract investors who require larger sites for their developments (*Note: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds—the City's usual source of funds for demolitions—can be used only in block grant eligible census tracts*).



# Conceptual Framework

Based on the findings from the Opportunity Analysis, the Task Force established key principles to guide the development of alternative revitalization strategies. Successful revitalization strategies for the North Main Street corridor must be:

## *Respectful*

Revitalization strategies must respect the needs of the corridor stakeholders, including neighbors, property owners, business owners, pedestrians, motorists and public officials.

## *Contextual*

Revitalization strategies must address the existing physical context of the various subdistricts within the corridor in an appropriate manner.

## *Sustainable*

Revitalization strategies must be sustainable economically, environmentally, socially and culturally.

## *Systematic*

Revitalization strategies must be easy to understand and communicate. They must also be reasonable to fund, implement and manage.

## **Different Places, Different Spaces**

Roadways that are the focus of corridor planning studies typically traverse a range of land uses. As noted on page 7, 9 of the 12 total Zoning Districts categorized by the City appear within the North Main project study area. At the most basic level, alternative revitalization strategies would have to acknowledge that the corridor is a collection of different places that require different spaces tailored to specific uses at specific locations.

Based on the realities of the marketplace identified in the Opportunity Analysis, input from corridor stakeholders and the knowledge that the City does not have unlimited resources to facilitate improvements, a conceptual framework was developed that identified three distinct “zones of control” throughout the corridor. Each of the three zones requires a different level of municipal focus, resources and leadership.

## *1) Public Right-of-Way*

Roadway and streetscape improvements made within the right-of-way have the potential to dramatically enhance and unify the image and identity of the entire corridor.

The City’s top priority should be to work closely with IDOT on the final design of the improvements to ensure that high-quality, “context sensitive”<sup>\*</sup> solutions are advanced. The final design should respect adjacent land uses, provide pedestrian friendly enhancements, help to attract private market investment and meet IDOT’s requirements for safety and mobility.

In addition, the City should maintain the momentum for the Corridor Plan during the time it will take to approve the final design and start construction by focussing on interim improvements within the right-of-way that enhance pedestrian comfort and safety and improve the corridor’s overall appearance.

IDOT defines “context sensitive” as “*an interdisciplinary approach that seeks effective, multimodal transportation solutions by working with stakeholders to develop, build and maintain cost-effective transportation facilities which fit into and reflect the project’s surrounds—its ‘context’.*”<sup>\*</sup>

<sup>\*</sup>From the IDOT’s publication *Context Sensitive Solutions: Detailed Guidelines for Practice*

## *2) Neighborhood Centers*

There are three locations along the corridor that are especially suited to serve as focal points for pedestrian-friendly, mixed use neighborhood centers. These locations are adjacent to residential blocks that are organized into a classic urban grid system of streets and alleys. The street grid provides strong east-west connections to the homes in the surrounding neighborhoods, many of which are within a comfortable 5-10 minute walk from North Main.

The goal for neighborhood centers is to create environments that emphasize the comfort and safety of pedestrians. Neighborhood centers must also, of course, accommodate the needs of motorists in order to attract customers. However, by building to the sidewalk line, locating parking behind buildings and making sure storefronts are highly “permeable” (easy to see in and out of), neighborhood centers can provide lively, attractive places to live, work, play and shop that are distinctly different from conventional shopping centers.

Neighborhood centers have the potential to strongly influence the corridor's overall image and identity. The City should play an especially active role in leading revitalization initiatives within neighborhood centers. These initiatives might include the acquisition of vacant or blighted properties and assembling them into larger redevelopment blocks, supporting public/private redevelopment partnerships to help create especially desirable redevelopment and offering an accelerated entitlement process and other incentives to attract private market investors.

The first neighborhood center location is in the southern portion of the study area that includes the Main/Auburn business district. Main/Auburn is a long established commercial district with a "main street" character and ambiance. Previous plans for the business district included a market study that suggested the area might be able to support approximately 50,000 square feet of stores, restaurants and services. Redevelopment could be anchored by a new drug store, 5 to 7 restaurants and 8-15 stores.

The plans also recommended a roundabout for the Main/Auburn intersection to improve traffic flow and strengthen the district's image and identity. The roundabout is now in the design phase of development. The City should move aggressively to inform business owners, property owners, residents and other Main/Auburn stakeholders what the right-of-way requirements will be as soon as they are known so that business district improvements can move forward as quickly as possible.

The second potential location for a neighborhood center is in the blocks around the Main/Fulton intersection. Like Main/Auburn, this district also has an established mix of retail, commercial and residential uses. Generally, these are located in older commercial buildings and, in some cases, former residences. While some structures are sited in a pedestrian-friendly manner (fronting on the sidewalks) other businesses are more automobile-oriented with parking in front of buildings. The Olympic Tavern provides an important anchor for this Main/Fulton neighborhood center.

The third location—the blocks surrounding the Main/Halsted Road intersection—currently has a decidedly automobile oriented, suburban character. Current traffic speeds and movements inhibit pedestrian movement and comfort. However, with the local street network providing strong pedestrian connections to the surrounding residential neighborhoods, the Main/Halsted intersection has the potential to be transformed, over time, into a pedestrian friendly neighborhood center with a distinctly urban character and identity.

### *3) Transitional Areas*

The remaining portions of the corridor have been identified as "transitional areas." Transitional areas provide potential locations for market-driven redevelopment that might include conventional auto-oriented retail, commercial offices, residential and/or light industrial. Because redevelopment is market driven, the City can take a less active role in leading revitalization activities and, instead, use zoning and guidelines to control the content and quality of redevelopment.

However, the City's investment in right-of-way improvements will have many immediate and beneficial impacts on the transitional areas. In addition, the City might consider undertaking a program of strategic property acquisition and assembly. Purchasing vacant parcels and/or those that have blighted structures, clearing them and then land banking them will provide the City with additional leverage to guide the most desirable North Main Street redevelopment projects towards neighborhood centers. Purchasing contiguous parcels will create more attractive redevelopment sites for investors. City-owned properties might also be converted to park space at some future point in time to provide nearby residential neighborhoods with additional green space.

# Revitalization Strategies

Improving the North Main Street corridor will require a long-term public/private partnership between the various public jurisdictions, private property owners and other stakeholders who have an interest in the corridor. Through a program of continuous improvement that emphasizes high quality roadway improvements, streetscape enhancements and infill redevelopment, the character and identity of this important Downtown gateway corridor can be changed dramatically for the better.

It is important to note that potential infill redevelopment sites will in many instances be determined by IDOT's final roadway design and right-of-way requirements. With the exception of newer developments and a few notable corridor landmarks like the Olympic Tavern, Village Green Home and Garden Center and the Main/Auburn business district's "main street" storefronts, nearly every existing property along the corridor could be a potential candidate for market driven redevelopment.

Some improvements for specific locations within the corridor will be made in conjunction with IDOT's roadway improvements. These will require a longer timeframe based on IDOT's processes and are shown in red on the pages that follow (*Note: Among the recommended long-term improvements are new landscaping features that would be provided by IDOT/City of Rockford at the time that roadway improvement are made. Property owners would be required to maintain landscape enhancements made on private frontages*).

There a number of short-term improvements related to specific segments within the corridor that can be made almost immediately. These are shown in green on the following pages.

There are also short-term improvements that apply to the entire corridor that can be made immediately. These include:

## *Revitalize, Recruit and Promote Infill Redevelopment*

Determine right-of-way requirements as quickly as possible, and then promote the rehab/redevelopment of properties and actively recruit new businesses.

## *Interim Repairs and Maintenance*

Perform interim repairs to badly deteriorated curbs, gutters and sidewalks. Make sure landscape features are kept trim and neat. Keep sidewalks and streets swept and remove snow from the sidewalks in winter to enhance pedestrian mobility.

## *Consolidate Curb Cuts, Promote Shared Parking*

Consolidating curb cuts enhances pedestrian safety and comfort while also improving vehicular movement. Shared parking facilities allow for more efficient land uses by reducing the amount of space needed for off-street parking. This is especially critical in the neighborhood centers where the amount of land available for redevelopment is limited.

## *Purchase Blighted Properties*

Purchase blighted properties within TIF districts and support redevelopment that would result in a positive increment for the TIF districts. Purchase and assemble contiguous properties for redevelopment if necessary.

## *Brand Neighborhood Centers and Add Gateway Features*

Create branding and identity programs to help differentiate and market neighborhood centers. Add signage and/ or other gateway features to clearly identify neighborhood centers and their boundaries.

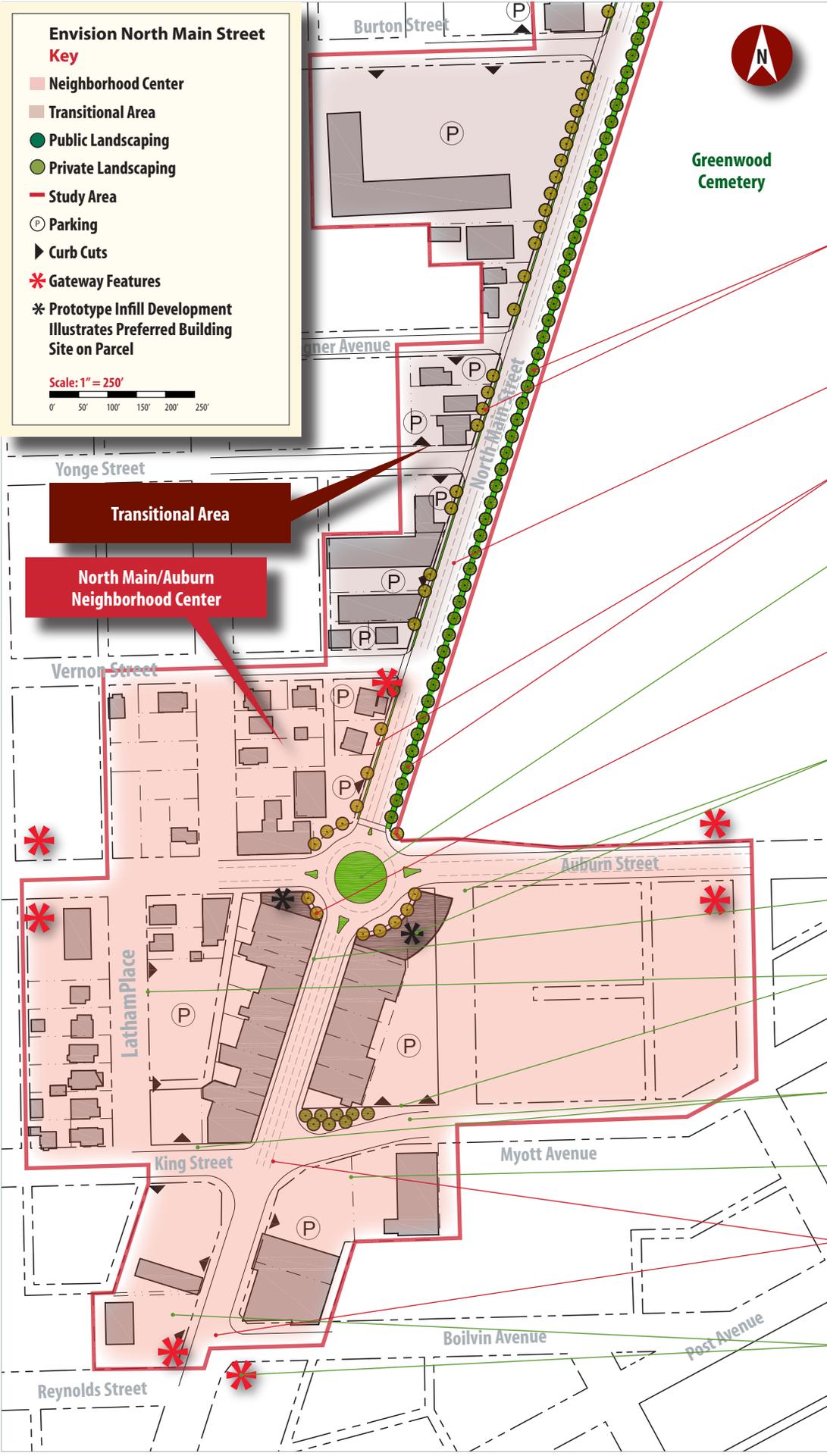
## *Screen and Landscape Parking Lots*

Add fencing and/or landscaping to screen existing parking lots. Add landscaping to large parking surfaces to improve stormwater runoff and enhance the corridor's image and identity.

## *Improve Signage Codes*

Revise sign codes to eliminate pole signs and improve the overall appearances of signs.

Although roadway, right-of-way widths and building setbacks will vary throughout the corridor, there are common elements that roadway improvements and infill redevelopment should strive to include throughout the corridor. These common elements are illustrated in cross section drawings and aerial perspectives on pages 32-35.



Note: Recommendations that can be implemented in the short term are shown in green. Those that will require a longer timeframe are in red.

**Enhance Streetscaping**  
City adds trees and other streetscape features (dark green) and promotes private sector landscaping (light green)..

**Increase Widths of Traffic Lanes**  
Widen traffic lanes from 10' to 11'.

**Add Bus Pull-ins**  
Find locations for bus pull-ins north of Auburn Street.

**Roundabout**  
Update public on the roundabout schedule and design once the final design has been completed.

**Add Premium Streetscaping\***  
Use high quality landscaping, hardscaping and streetscaping materials to enhance pedestrian comfort and promote North Main/Auburn's image and identity.

**Promote Pedestrian Friendly Infill Redevelopment**  
Promote infill redevelopment within the North Main/Auburn neighborhood center built to the sidewalk line with parking behind buildings. Access parking lots through side streets and/or alleys whenever possible.

**Paint Overhead Utility Poles/Add Flowers**  
Paint metal light poles black. Add hanging baskets and sidewalk planters with seasonal flowers.

**Screen and Landscape Parking Lots**  
Add fencing and/or landscaping to screen parking lots. Add landscaping to large parking surfaces to slow stormwater runoff and enhance North Main/Auburn's image and identity.

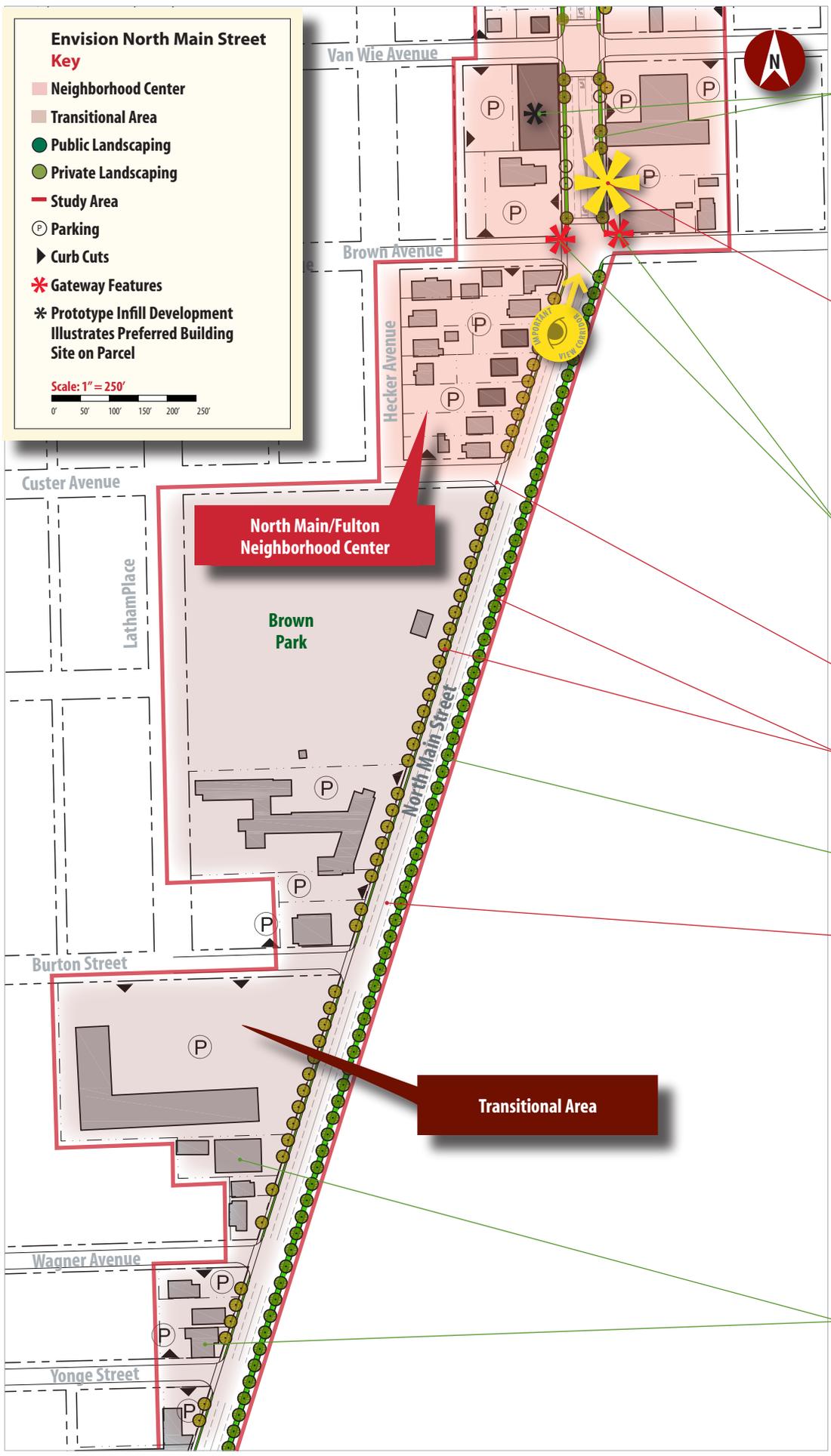
**Improve Parking Signage**  
Improve/increase public parking lot identification and directional signage.

**Renovate North End Commons Park**  
Improve landscaping and pedestrian friendly features.

**Enhance Crosswalks**  
Intersections throughout the North Main/ Auburn neighborhood center should be designed with wide, well marked pedestrian crosswalks using premium materials.

**Brand the North Main/Auburn Neighborhood Center and Add Gateway Features**  
Create a branding program with a distinct identity to help market the North Main/Auburn neighborhood center. Use gateway features to identify the neighborhood center and its boundaries.

\*Private property owners would be required to maintain landscaping enhancements provided by IDOT/City of Rockford.



Note: Recommendations that can be implemented in the short term are shown in green. Those that will require a longer timeframe are in red.

**Promote Pedestrian Friendly Infill Redevelopment, Screen Parking**  
Promote infill redevelopment within the North Main/Fulton neighborhood center built to the sidewalk line with parking behind buildings. Access parking lots through side streets and/or alleys whenever possible. Add fencing and/or landscaping to screen parking lots throughout the neighborhood center. Add landscaping to large parking surfaces to improve stormwater runoff and enhance North Main/Fulton's image and identity.

**Enhance View Corridor**  
The northeast corner of North Main and Brown Avenue is the terminus of a view corridor that starts at the North Main/Auburn intersection. The City should promote the long term redevelopment of the properties at this corner. Redevelopment at this highly visible location should include a signature architectural feature that serves as a gateway to the North Main/Fulton neighborhood center and that enhances the image and identity of the entire corridor.

**Brand North Main/Fulton Neighborhood Center and Add Gateway Features**  
Create a branding program with a distinct identity to help market the North Main/Fulton neighborhood center. Use gateway features to identify the neighborhood center and its boundaries.

**Enhance Crosswalks**  
Crosswalks throughout the corridor should be well marked to promote pedestrian safety and comfort.

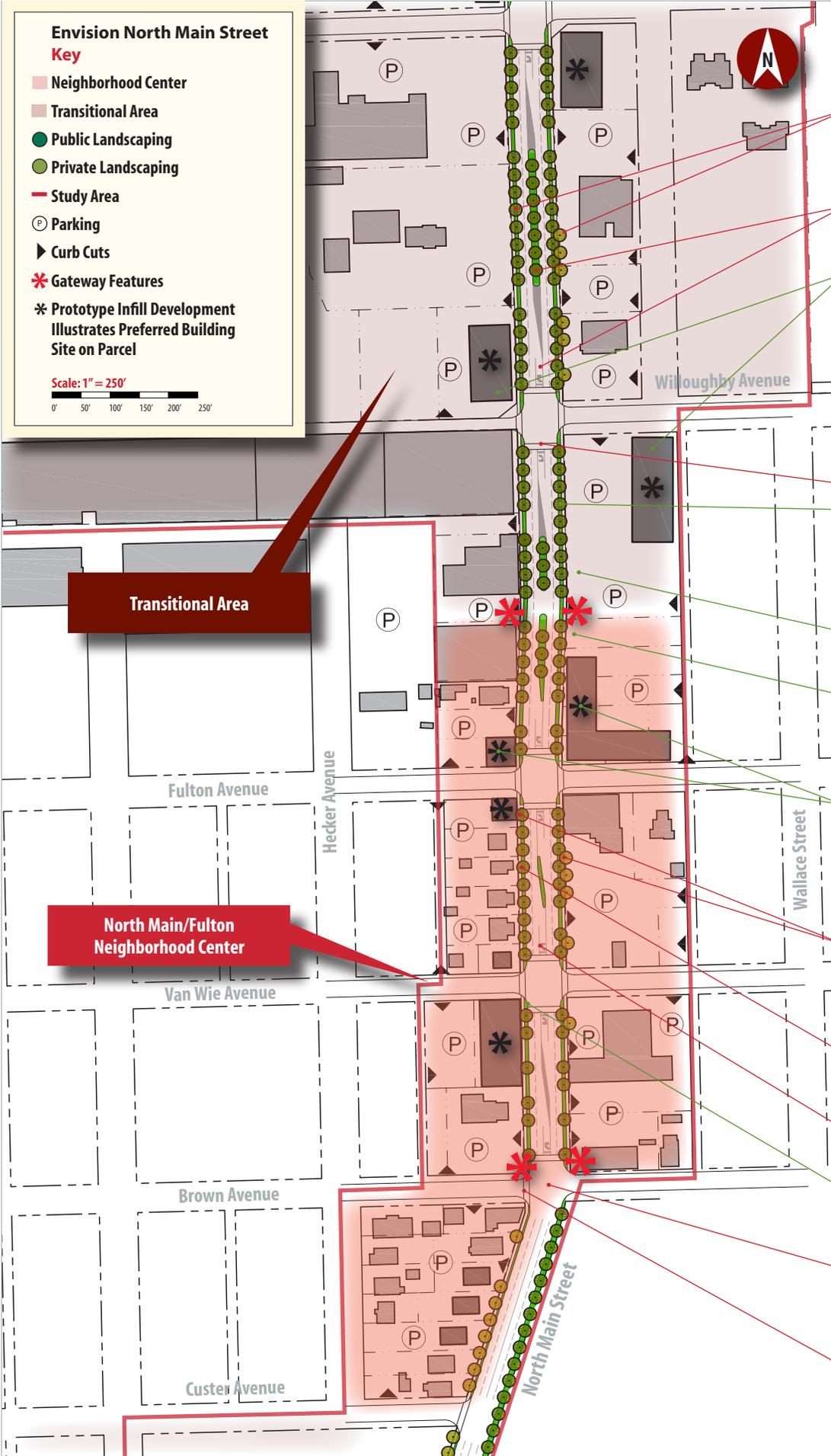
**Enhance Streetscaping\***  
Add trees and other streetscape features (dark green) and promote private sector landscaping (light green).

**Screen Cemeteries**  
Plant vines and/or hedges along existing fence to screen the cemeteries.

**Increase Widths of Traffic Lanes**  
Widen traffic lanes to 11' between Auburn Street and Brown Avenue.

**Promote Pedestrian Friendly Infill Redevelopment**  
Promote infill development within the transitional area. Structures built to the sidewalk line with parking located behind buildings are preferred. However, parking in front or on the side is acceptable, but must be screened with high quality fencing or landscaping.

\*Private property owners would be required to maintain landscaping enhancements provided by IDOT/City of Rockford.



**Note:** Recommendations that can be implemented in the short term are shown in green. Those that will require a longer timeframe are in red.

**Enhance Streetscaping**  
City adds trees and other streetscape features (dark green) and promotes private sector landscaping (light green).

**Add Left Turn Lanes and Planted Medians**  
Planted medians enhance the image and identity of the corridor.

**Promote Pedestrian Friendly Infill Redevelopment**  
Promote infill development within the transitional area. Structures built to the sidewalk line with parking located behind buildings are preferred. However, parking in front or on the side is acceptable, but must be screened with high quality fencing or landscaping.

**Enhance Crosswalks**  
Crosswalks throughout the transitional area should be well marked to promote pedestrian safety and comfort.

**Screen and Landscape Parking Lots**  
Add fencing and/or landscaping to screen parking lots. Encourage property owners to add landscaping to large parking surfaces that will slow stormwater runoff and enhance corridor's image and identity.

**Add Sidewalks**  
Add sidewalks to enhance pedestrian safety and movement.

**Brand North Main/Fulton Neighborhood Center and Add Gateway Features**  
Create a branding program and distinct logo to help market Main/Fulton neighborhood center. Use gateway signage to clearly delineate district edges.

**Promote Pedestrian Friendly Infill Redevelopment**  
Promote infill redevelopment within the North Main/Fulton neighborhood center built to the sidewalk line with parking behind buildings. Access parking lots through side streets and/or alleys whenever possible.

**Add Premium Streetscaping\***  
Use high quality landscaping, hardscaping and streetscaping materials to enhance pedestrian comfort and promote North Main/Fulton's image and identity.

**Add Bus Pull-ins**  
Find locations for bus pull-ins to north and south of Fulton Avenue.

**11' Traffic Lanes**  
Widen or reduce traffic lanes to 11', as necessary.

**Paint Overhead Utility Poles/Add Flowers**  
Paint metal light poles black. Add hanging baskets and sidewalk planters with seasonal flowers.

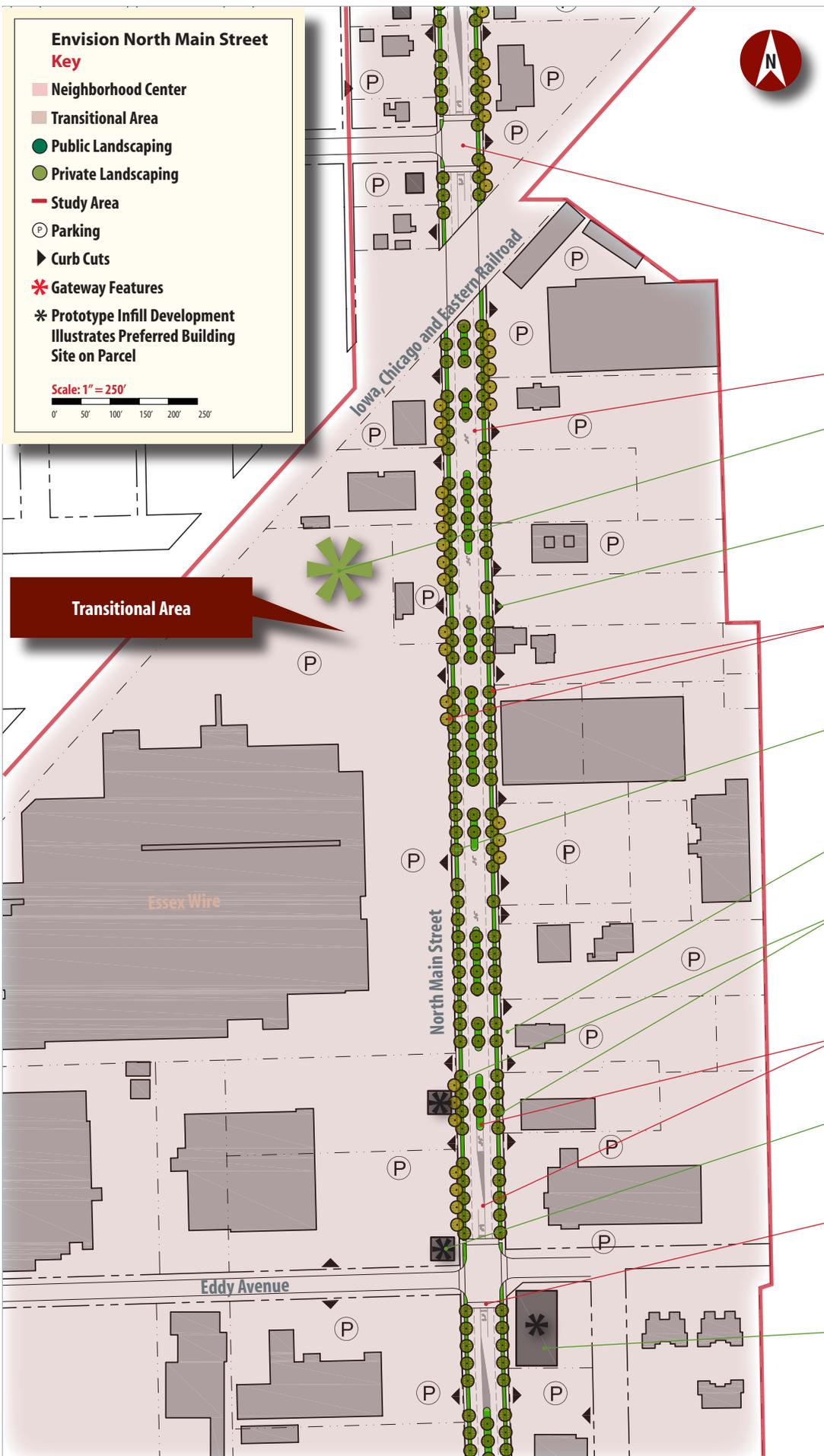
**Improve North Main/Brown Intersection**  
IDOT has identified the North Main Street/Brown Avenue intersection as a candidate for improvements that will enhance safety.

**Enhance Crosswalks**  
Intersections throughout the North Main/ Auburn neighborhood center should be designed with wide, well marked pedestrian crosswalks using premium materials.

**Transitional Area**

**North Main/Fulton Neighborhood Center**

\*Private property owners would be required to maintain landscaping enhancements provided by IDOT/City of Rockford.



Note: Recommendations that can be implemented in the short term are shown in green. Those that will require a longer timeframe are in red.

**Intersection Improvements**  
Develop alternatives for improving motorist and pedestrian safety at the North Main Street/Country Club Beach Road intersection.

**11' Traffic Lanes**  
Widen or reduce traffic lanes to 11', as necessary.

**Create a Public Park or Open Space**  
Acquire and convert properties in the vicinity of the I.C.E. Railroad right-of-way into a public park or open space.

**Consolidate Curb Cuts**  
Consolidate curb cuts and support shared parking wherever feasible.

**Enhance Streetscaping\***  
Adds trees and other streetscape features (dark green) and promote private sector landscaping (light green).

**Improve Essex Fencing**  
Encourage property owner to replace chain link fence with higher quality fencing or repair existing fence and paint it black. In addition, encourage property owners to add/upgrade landscape features.

**Add Sidewalks**  
Add sidewalks/curbs to enhance pedestrian safety and movement.

**Screen and Landscape Parking Lots**  
Add fencing and/or landscaping to screen parking lots. Encourage property owners to add landscaping to large parking surfaces that will slow stormwater runoff and enhance corridor's image and identity.

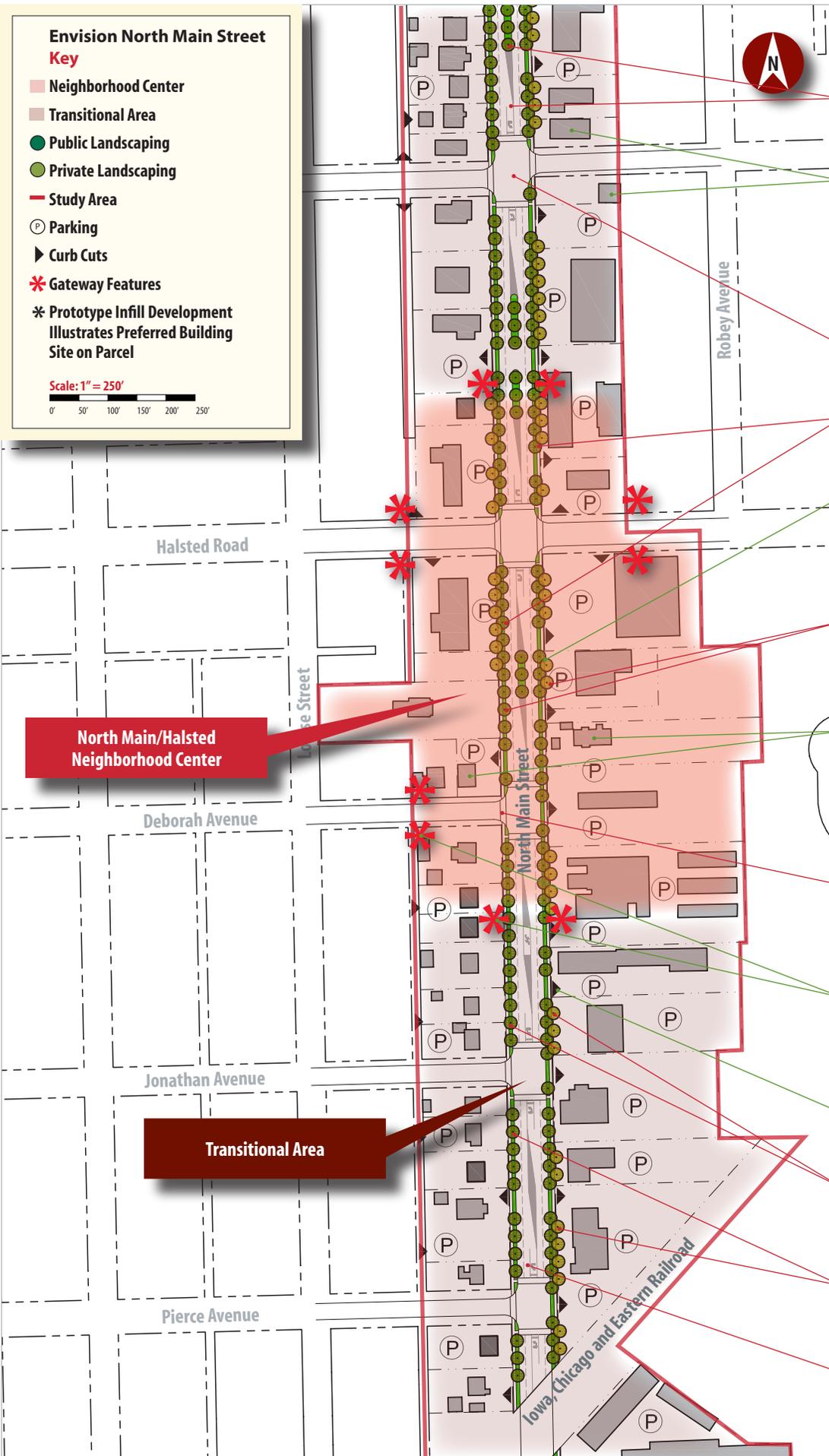
**Add Left Turn Lanes and Planted Medians**  
Planted medians enhance the image and identity of the corridor.

**New Out-buildings**  
New out-buildings in the existing Sun View Market parking lot will help to screen parking the lot and define the street edge.

**Enhance Crosswalks**  
Crosswalks throughout the transitional area should be well marked to promote pedestrian safety and comfort.

**Promote Pedestrian Friendly Infill Redevelopment**  
Promote infill development within the transitional area. Structures built to the sidewalk line with parking located behind buildings are preferred. However, parking in front or on the side is acceptable, but must be screened with high quality fencing or landscaping.

\*Private property owners would be required to maintain landscaping enhancements provided by IDOT/City of Rockford.



**Envision North Main Street Key**

- Neighborhood Center
- Transitional Area
- Public Landscaping
- Private Landscaping
- Study Area
- Ⓟ Parking
- ▶ Curb Cuts
- \* Gateway Features
- \* Prototype Infill Development Illustrates Preferred Building Site on Parcel

Scale: 1" = 250'

0' 50' 100' 150' 200' 250'

**Note: Recommendations that can be implemented in the short term are shown in green. Those that will require a longer timeframe are in red.**

**Add Left Turn Lanes and Planted Medians**  
Planted medians enhance the image and identity of the corridor.

**Promote Pedestrian Friendly Infill Redevelopment**  
Promote infill development within the transitional area. Structures built to the sidewalk line with parking located behind buildings are preferred. However, parking in front or on the side is acceptable, but must be screened with high quality fencing or landscaping.

**Enhance Crosswalks**  
Crosswalks in transitional area should be well marked to promote pedestrian safety and comfort.

**Add Bus Pull-ins**  
Find locations for bus pull-ins north and south of Halsted Road.

**Screen and Landscape Parking Lots**  
Add fencing and/or landscaping to screen parking lots. Encourage property owners to add landscaping to large parking surfaces that will improve stormwater runoff and enhance corridor's image and identity.

**Add Premium Streetscaping\***  
Use high quality landscaping, hardscaping and streetscaping materials to enhance pedestrian comfort and promote North Main/Halsted's image and identity.

**Promote Pedestrian Friendly Infill Redevelopment**  
Promote infill redevelopment within the North Main/Halsted neighborhood center built to the sidewalk line with parking behind buildings. Access parking lots through side streets and/or alleys whenever possible.

**Enhance Crosswalks**  
Intersections throughout the North Main/ Halsted neighborhood center should be designed with wide, well marked pedestrian crosswalks using premium materials.

**Brand North Main/Halsted Neighborhood Center and Add Gateway Features**  
Create a branding program and distinct logo to help market Main/Halsted neighborhood center. Use gateway signage to clearly delineate district edges.

**Consolidate Curb Cuts**  
Consolidate curb cuts and support shared parking wherever feasible.

**Enhance Streetscaping**  
City adds trees and other streetscape features (dark green) and promotes private sector landscaping (light green).

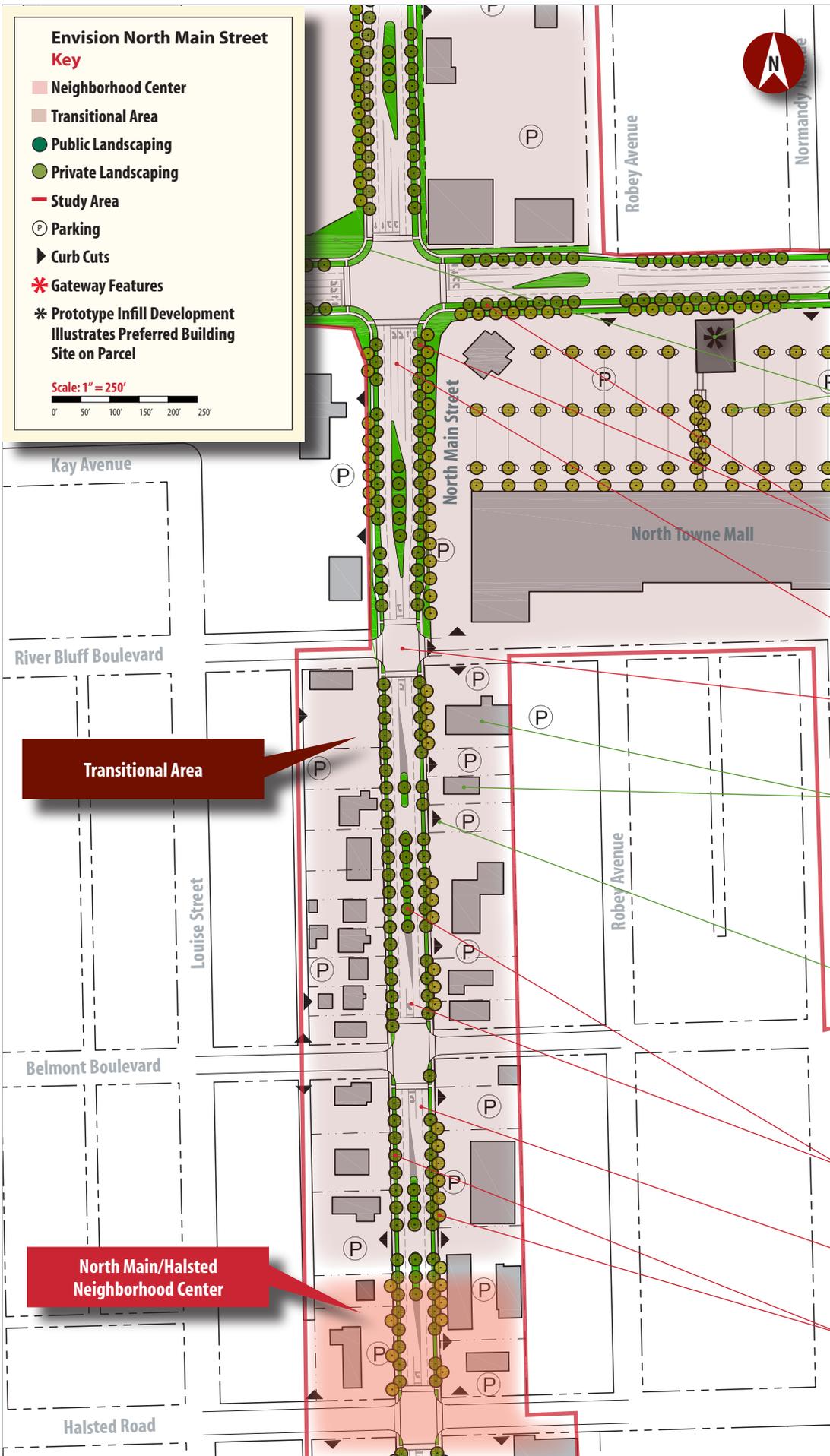
**Enhance Crosswalks**  
Crosswalks throughout the transitional area should be well marked to promote pedestrian safety and comfort.

**11' Traffic Lanes**  
Widen or reduce traffic lanes to 11', as necessary.

**North Main/Halsted Neighborhood Center**

**Transitional Area**

\*Private property owners would be required to maintain landscaping enhancements provided by IDOT/City of Rockford.



**Envision North Main Street Key**

- Neighborhood Center
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- \* Prototype Infill Development Illustrates Preferred Building Site on Parcel

Scale: 1" = 250'

0' 50' 100' 150' 200' 250'

Note: Recommendations that can be implemented in the short term are shown in green. Those that will require a longer timeframe are in red.

**New Out-buildings**  
New out-buildings in the existing North Towne Mall parking lot will help to screen the parking lot and

**Screen and Landscape Parking Lots**  
Add fencing and/or landscaping to screen parking North Towne Mall parking lot. Encourage mall management to add landscaping to parking lot that will slow stormwater runoff and enhance corridor's image and identity.

**Premium Streetscaping\***  
Premium streetscapes along North Main and Riverside Boulevard will enhance both corridor's image and identity.

**Add Dual Left Turn Lanes**  
Add dual left turn lanes in all directions at the North Main/Riverside Boulevard intersection.

**Enhance Crosswalks**  
Crosswalks throughout the transitional area should be well marked to promote pedestrian safety and comfort.

**Promote Pedestrian Friendly Infill Redevelopment**  
Promote infill development within the transitional area. Structures built to the sidewalk line with parking located behind buildings are preferred. However, parking in front or on the side is acceptable, but must be screened with high quality fencing or landscaping.

**Consolidate Curb Cuts**  
Consolidate curb cuts and support shared parking wherever feasible.

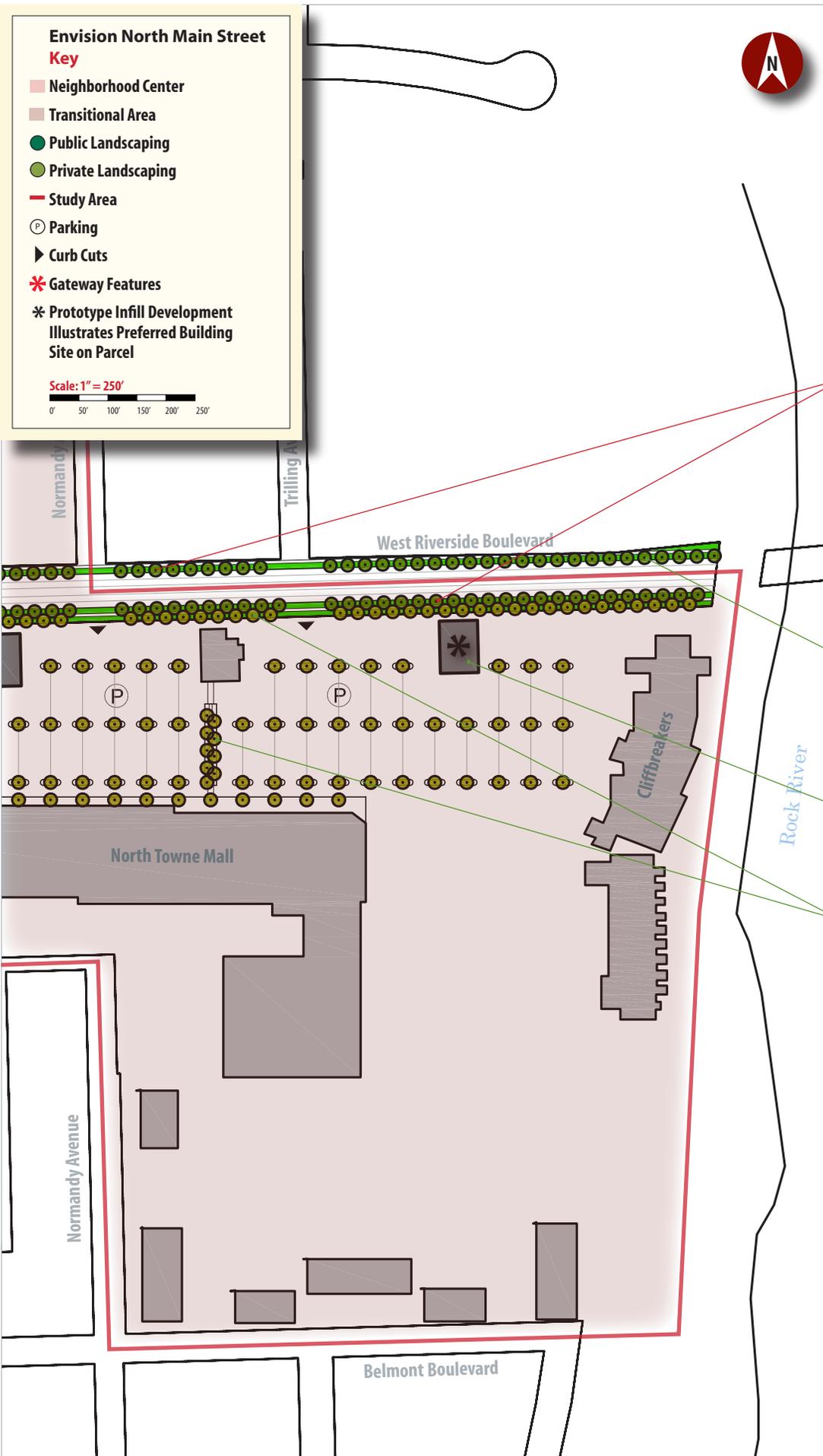
**Add Left Turn Lanes and Planted Medians**  
Planted medians enhance the image and identity of the corridor.

**11' Traffic Lanes**  
Widen or reduce traffic lanes to 11', as necessary.

**Enhance Streetscaping**  
City adds trees and other streetscape features (dark green) and promotes private sector landscaping (light green).

**Transitional Area**

**North Main/Halsted Neighborhood Center**



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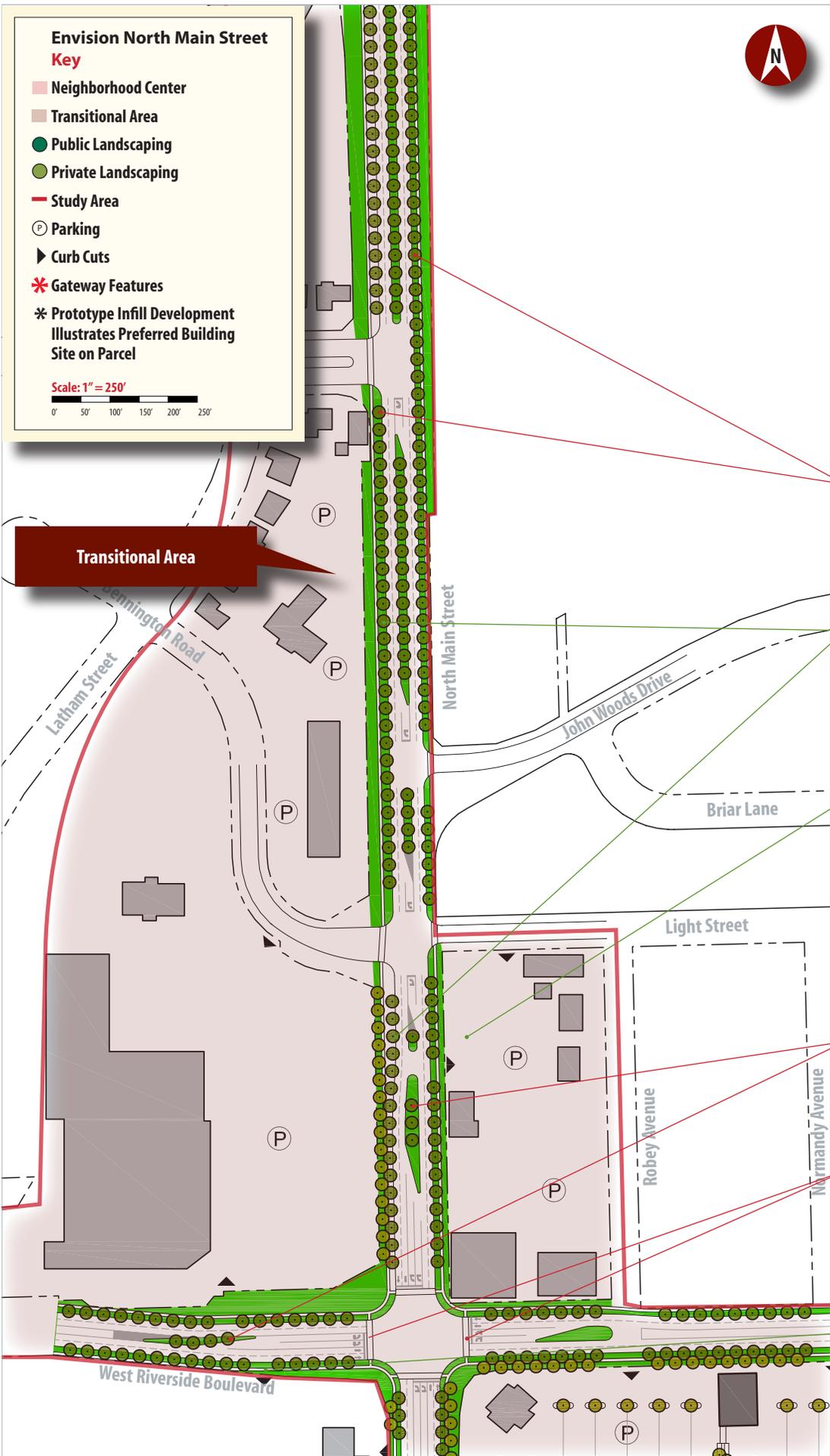
**Premium Streetscaping\***  
Premium streetscapes along West Riverside Boulevard will enhance both corridor's image and identity.

**Add High Quality Directional Signs**  
Place high quality directional signs adjacent to the west-bound traffic lanes on the west side of the Rock River bridge to identify locations/direction of important Downtown cultural attractions.

**New Out-buildings**  
New out-buildings in the existing North Towne Mall parking lot will help to screen the parking lot and define the street edge.

**Screen and Landscape Parking Lots**  
Add fencing and/or landscaping to screen parking North Towne Mall parking lot. Encourage mall management to add landscaping to parking lot that will slow stormwater runoff and enhance corridor's image and identity.

\*Private property owners would be required to maintain landscaping enhancements provided by IDOT/City of Rockford.



Note: Recommendations that can be implemented in the short term are shown in green. Those that will require a longer timeframe are in red.

**Transitional Area**

**Enhance Streetscaping\***  
Add trees and other streetscape features (dark green) and promote private sector landscaping (light green).

**Screen and Landscape Parking Lots**  
Add fencing and/or landscaping to screen parking lot. Encourage mall management to add landscaping to parking lot that will slow stormwater runoff and enhance corridor's image and identity.

**Promote Pedestrian Friendly Infill Redevelopment**  
Promote infill development within the transitional area. Structures built to the sidewalk line with parking located behind buildings are preferred. However, parking in front or on the side is acceptable, but must be screened with high quality fencing or landscaping.

**Add Planted Medians**  
Planted medians enhance the image and identity of the corridor.

**Enhance Crosswalks**  
Crosswalks in transitional zones should be well marked to promote pedestrian safety and comfort. The North Main/West Riverside intersection should receive premium streetscaping upgrades to emphasize its special status as a "gateway intersection."

**Add High Quality Directional Signs**  
Place high quality directional signs adjacent to the east-bound traffic lanes of West Riverside Boulevard just west of the North Main Street intersection to identify locations/direction of important Downtown cultural attractions.

\*Private property owners would be required to maintain landscaping enhancements provided by IDOT/City of Rockford.

**Envision North Main Street**

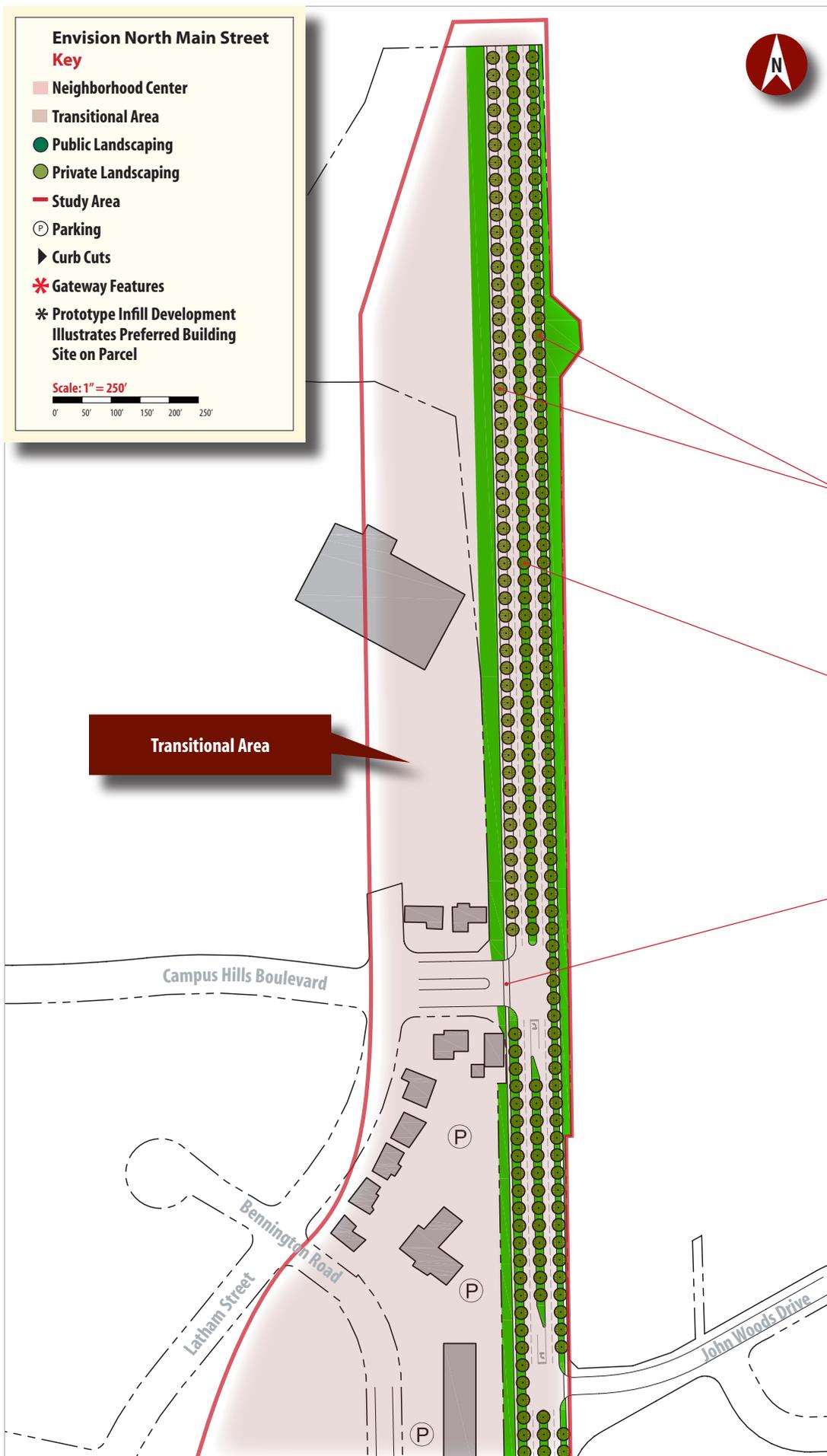
**Key**

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- Transitional Area
- Public Landscaping
- Private Landscaping
- Study Area
- P Parking
- Curb Cuts
- \* Gateway Features
- \* Prototype Infill Development  
Illustrates Preferred Building Site on Parcel

Scale: 1" = 250'



Note: Recommendations that can be implemented in the short term are shown in green. Those that will require a longer timeframe are in red.



**Enhance Streetscaping\***

Add trees and other streetscape features (dark green) and promote private sector landscaping (light green).

**Add Planted Medians**

Planted medians enhance the image and identity of the corridor.

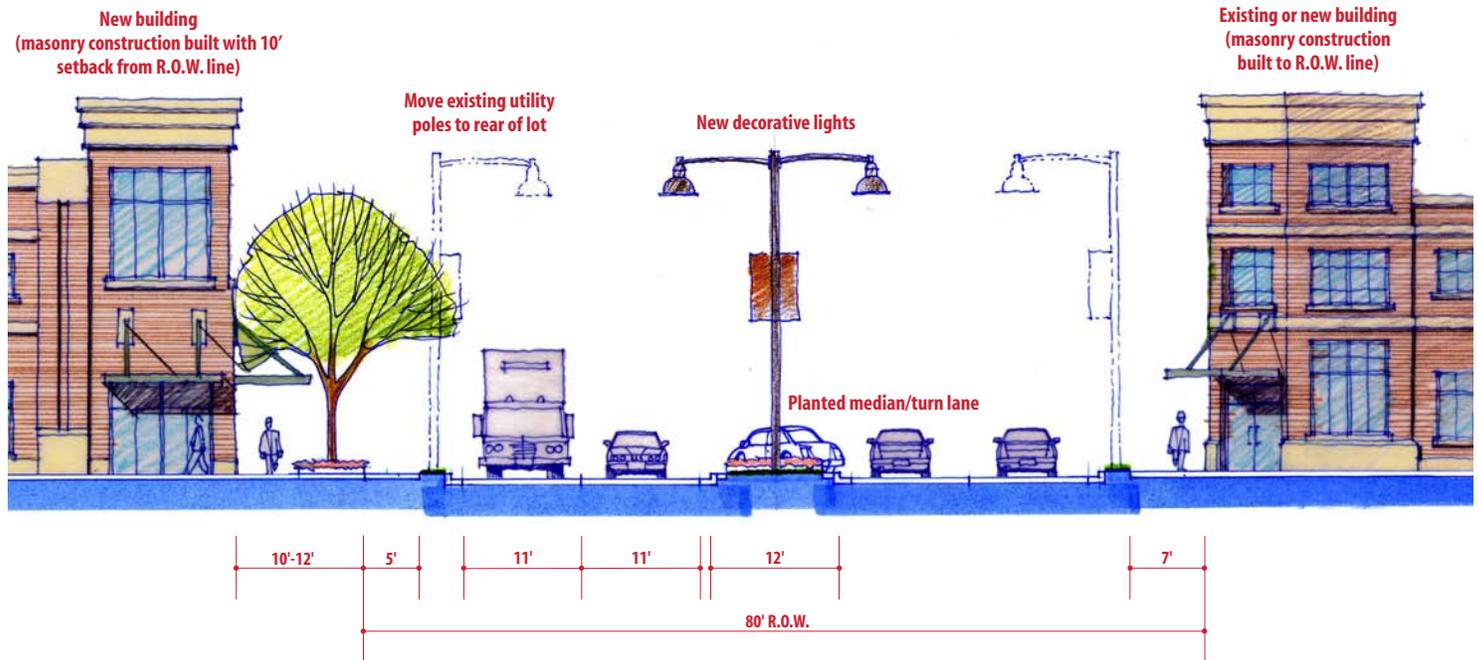
**Enhance Crosswalks**

Crosswalks in transitional zones should be well marked to promote pedestrian safety and comfort.

**Transitional Area**

\*Private property owners would be required to maintain landscaping enhancements provided by IDOT/City of Rockford.

# Typical Neighborhood Center Features



The overall goal for neighborhood centers is to create lively business districts that emphasize pedestrian comfort and safety.

The rendering above illustrates key features of a typical revitalized neighborhood center. These include continuous storefronts of masonry construction built to the sidewalk line, parking and utility lines located behind buildings, street trees, decorative lighting, planted medians (where feasible) and/or left turn lanes.

Another key feature is 11' travel lanes. IDOT typically uses 12' travel lanes as their standard, but has indicated they will consider using 11' lanes in the final roadway design of North Main Street. The narrower traffic lanes favor pedestrians by reducing the widths of cross walks and by providing more space for landscaping and other sidewalk amenities like benches. Narrower lanes also tend to reduce traffic speeds, an especially important consideration on North Main. 11' lanes may also reduce the amount of R.O.W. that has to be acquired in order to accommodate roadway improvements.

The space available for landscaping will vary from location and within neighborhood centers. The goal is

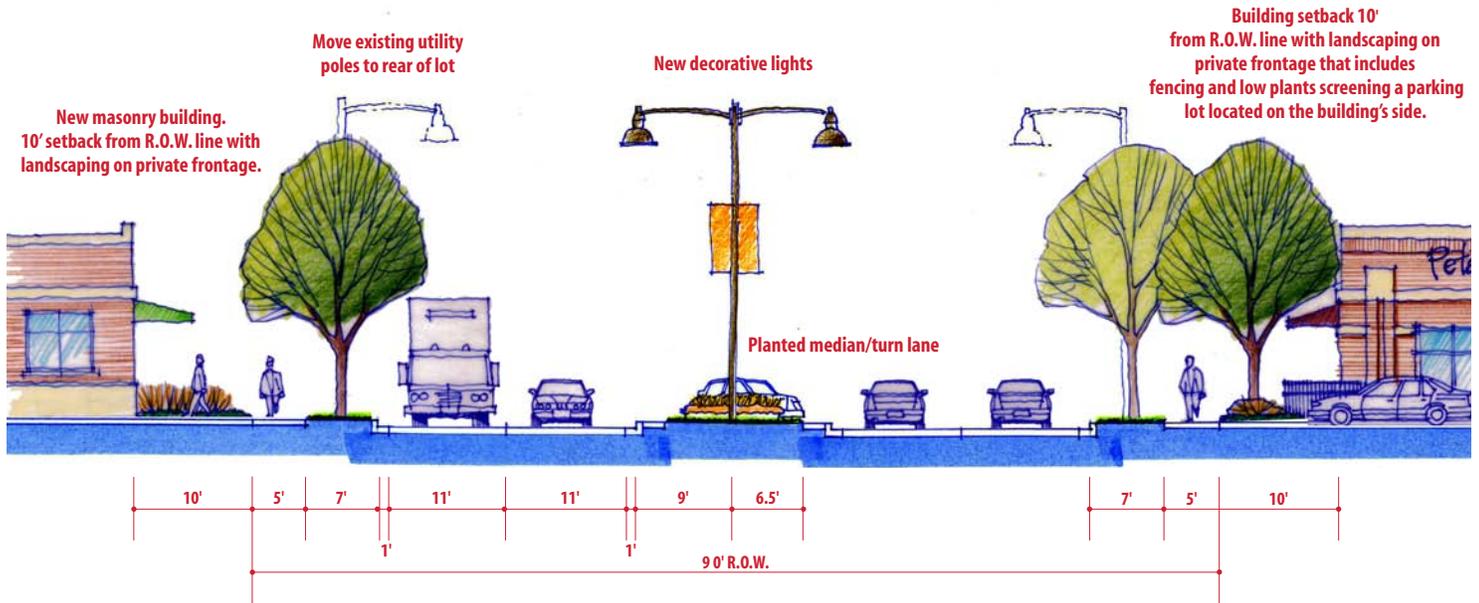
to have landscape features on at least one side of North Main Street within the neighborhood centers and on both sides whenever possible.

In instances where landscaping cannot occur within the R.O.W., the City should encourage property owners of redeveloping sites to set buildings back from the R.O.W. (up to a 12' maximum) to provide the space for wider sidewalks, trees and other landscape features (this is illustrated in the left portion of the cross section above). IDOT has indicated they will plant trees for private frontages in instances where the R.O.W. cannot accommodate landscaping features. In such instances, businesses will likely be required to maintain the trees.

The cross section above demonstrates some of the amenities based on an 80' right-of-way (R.O.W.). The R.O.W. includes four 11' travel lanes and a 12' planted median/left turn lane. On the left side of the street, infill redevelopment is set back 10'-12' from the R.O.W. to provide room for a raised planter that includes trees.

The right side of the street reflects a condition where an existing building (built to the sidewalk line) has been rehabbed. There is room for a 7' sidewalk, but not for trees.

# Typical Transitional Area Features



The overall goal for revitalized transitional areas is to create pedestrian friendly environments that also provide convenient access and parking for motorists.

Similar to neighborhood centers, the preferred approach would feature continuous storefronts of masonry construction built to the sidewalk line, parking and utility lines located behind buildings, street trees, decorative lighting, planted medians (where feasible) and/or left turn lanes. However, it is also acceptable to provide parking in the front or the sides of building. In such instances, the parking must be screened from view with high quality fencing, hardscaping materials and/or landscaping features.

It is also acceptable to set buildings back from the sidewalk line up to a maximum of 12' in order to accommodate outdoor seating or to provide additional landscaping features. The rendering above is an example of this approach.

The cross section is based on a 90' R.O.W. and includes four 11' traffic lanes, a 18' planted median/left turn lane, two 7' planting strips between the curbs and the sidewalks and 5' sidewalks on both sides of North Main Street.

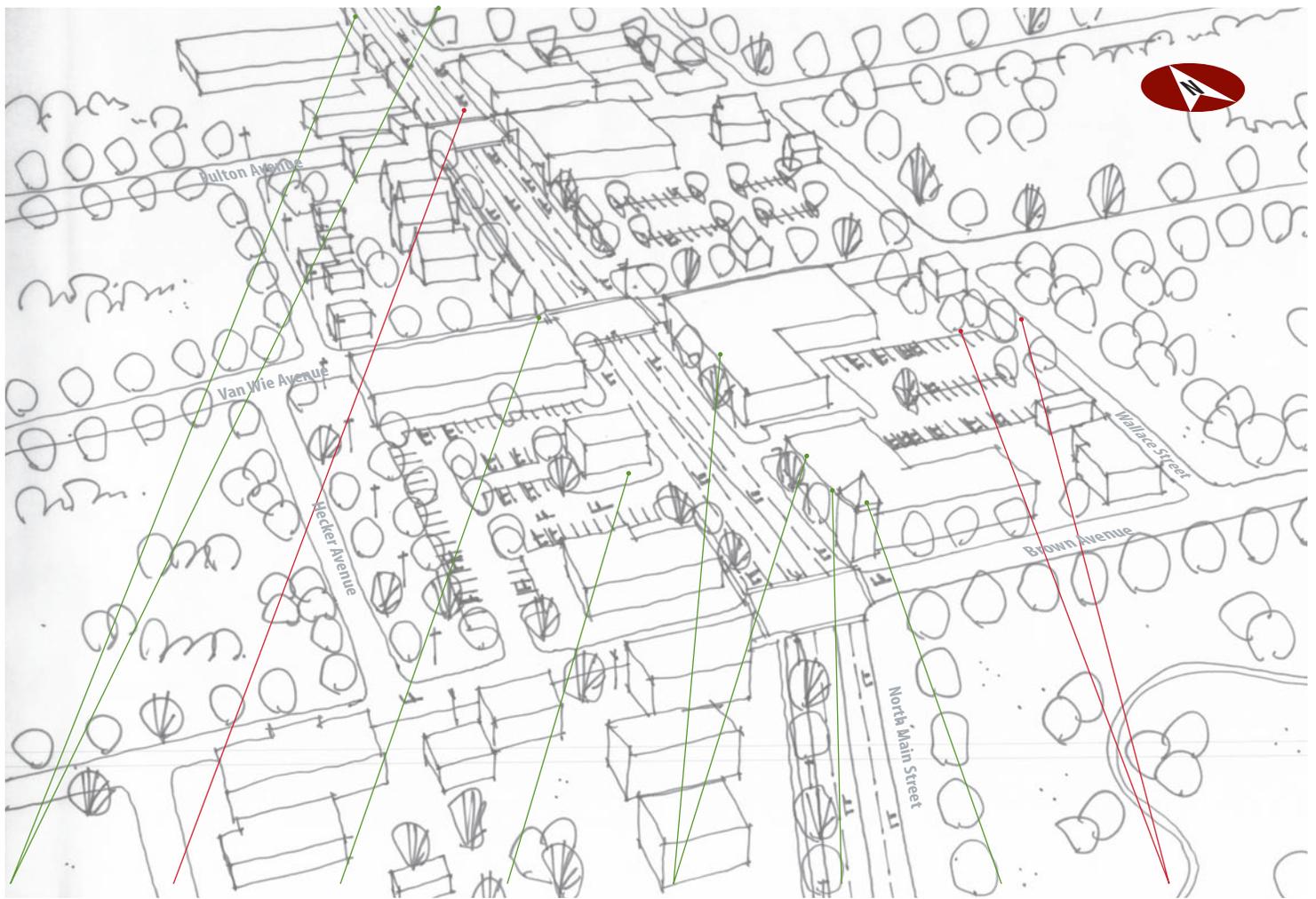
In this scenario, trees are planted in the parkways that lie within the R.O.W. However, additional landscaping features are located on private frontage in the setback areas between the sidewalk line and the building façades. In the example above, the setback is 10'. Note that parking is located behind the building on the left and at the side of the building on the right, with fencing and landscaping that screens the lot from North Main Street.

# Typical Neighborhood Center Building Patterns

The perspective rendering below illustrates the desired building pattern for neighborhood centers. The primary objective is to create a classic urban street that provides a safe, comfortable and interesting pedestrian environment while still accommodating the needs of motorists. As per the cross section on page 32, buildings should be built to the sidewalk line or include setbacks that provide

additional space for landscaping features. Parking should be located behind buildings or, if absolutely necessary, on the sides of buildings. No less than 70% of a front facade's ground floor should consist of windows. For more information, see the Development Guidelines for neighborhood centers that begin on page 40 for additional information.

**Note:** Recommendations that can be implemented in the short term are shown in green. Those that will require a longer timeframe are in red.



## **Add Gateway Features**

High quality gateway features such as columns, pylons or sculpted artworks enhance the image and identities of neighborhood centers.

## **Enhance Crosswalks**

Intersections within neighborhood centers should be designed with wide, well marked pedestrian crosswalks using premium materials.

## **Building Heights**

The maximum height of principle structures is 2-½ stories (35'). As a bonus to developers who meet the intent of the Development Guidelines, the maximum height can be increased to 4-½ stories (45').

## **Screen Parking Lots**

Locating parking behind buildings is strongly preferred for neighborhood centers. Parking that is located on the sides of buildings must be screened by high quality fencing, hardscaping materials and/or landscaping features. Parking located in front of existing buildings should be screened in a similar manner.

## **Setbacks**

Build to the sidewalk line and/or provide setbacks to create adequate space for landscaping features (the maximum setback is 12').

## **Create Permeable Building Fronts**

Buildings with large display windows that reveal inside activities make streets more interesting to pedestrians. No less than 70% of a front facade's surface should consist of windows.

## **Make Corners Special**

Corner buildings should include distinctive architectural detailing to accentuate their special location in the overall streetwall.

## **Place Parking Lots Behind Buildings**

Parking lots of redeveloped properties should be located behind buildings and accessed from side streets or alleys whenever possible.

# Typical Transitional Area Building Patterns

Transitional areas should be safe and comfortable for pedestrians, but also convenient for motorists. Similar to neighborhood centers, the preferred building pattern is for structures to be built to the R.O.W./sidewalk line, with parking located behind or to the sides of buildings. However, contemporary convenience retailers almost always prefer parking in front of buildings, and this is

acceptable in transitional zones provided the lots are screened with high quality landscaping and/or hardscaping materials and the parking surfaces themselves include planted islands. See the Development Guidelines for transitional areas on that begin on page 53 for additional information.

**Note: Recommendations that can be implemented in the short term are shown in green. Those that will require a longer timeframe are in red.**



**Enhance Crosswalks**  
Intersections within transitional areas should be designed with wide, well marked pedestrian crosswalks.

**Promote "Good Edges"**  
To provide the overall image and identity of the corridor, provide incentives for existing businesses to upgrade the quality of their existing landscaping features.

**Building Heights**  
The maximum height of principle structures is 2-½ stories (35'). As a bonus to developers who meet the intent of the Development Guidelines, the maximum height can be increased to 4-½ stories (45').

**Add Planted Medians**  
Incorporate planted medians and/or left turn lanes into the roadway design whenever feasible.

**Place Parking Lots Behind Buildings**  
Locating parking behind building is preferred. However, parking can also be located in the front or on the sides of buildings. In such instances, parking must be screened by high quality fencing, hardscaping materials and/or landscaping

**Setbacks**  
Structures that are built to or set slightly back from the sidewalk line are preferred. However, structures can be set back further if parking is located in front. In such cases, parking lots must be screened with high quality fencing, hardscaping materials and/or landscaping features.

**Maintain/Extend Existing Street Pattern**  
Maintain historic street grid and overall pattern of development to the fullest extent possible. New streets should match the quality and character of the existing street grid system (no cul de sacs).

**Minimize Curb Cuts, Promote Shared Parking**  
Minimize the number of curb cuts by promoting shared parking facilities that have shared access.

# Implementation Strategies

## Process

Because roadway improvements and streetscape enhancements will involve multiple jurisdictions over a number of years, it is especially important to understand the roles that the key project stakeholders—IDOT and the City of Rockford—will play in the plan implementation process.

### IDOT's Role

North Main Street's status as a designated State highway (Illinois Route 2) means IDOT has jurisdiction over the final roadway design and streetscape enhancements within the R.O.W. From IDOT's website:

*"Each year, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) develops a multi-year highway program which the governor presents to the General Assembly for approval. The program specifies improvements IDOT intends to make on the state highway system over a five-year period. The complexity of individual improvements will determine the amount of time a project remains 'in the stream' from conceptualization to the beginning of construction.*

*The funded highway project process can involve as many as 55 steps and take many years to finish... Rehabilitating a highway may take up to five years, or more. Completion of a project is dependent upon reviews by various federal, state and local governmental agencies, as well as public and private organizations, with which IDOT cooperates to complete various work phases... IDOT plans, designs, and constructs projects in three phases. Phase I is the preliminary design and environmental study of the project, Phase II is the preparation of the final design and construction bid documents, and Phase III is the actual construction of the project."*

Rockford officials and the consultant team met with IDOT officials on March 29, 2007 to review and gather feedback on the alternative strategies developed for this project (a summary of the meeting is including in Appendix A of this document)... IDOT is in general agreement with the recommendations included in this report and has advised that more study will be needed in order to determine the final design requirements for items such as R.O.W. widths, intersection improvements, travel lane widths, the location of streetscaping features, landscaping and

other design details. For some roadway improvements—like those that will increase the safety of intersections such as North Main Street/Brown Avenue—several options may be developed and evaluated.

### City's Role

IDOT's final roadway design and construction may be years in the making. In fact, a key concept that corridor stakeholders will have to embrace and promote is that North Main Street revitalization will likely be realized only through a program of incremental but continuous improvements over many years. However, there are a number of revitalization strategies that the City can begin implementing in the near term future. Not all of these will be completed quickly. The implementation strategies that follow are a series of logical steps that will help to create and sustain the momentum for positive change throughout the corridor.

There are some strategies that the City should actively lead and manage to help stimulate private-sector investment and sustain revitalization momentum:

#### *Design and Management of Infrastructure Improvements*

First and foremost, the City must work closely with IDOT to ensure that the roadway design and streetscape enhancements meet or exceed stakeholders' expectations for this important Downtown gateway corridor.

#### *Property Acquisition and Maintenance*

While the most significant roadway and streetscape improvements are years away, the City can play an active role in making the corridor a more attractive and pedestrian friendly environment almost immediately.

The City should enforce code regulations to make sure privately owned properties meet requirements and initiate an aggressive program to make interim repairs to deteriorating curbs, gutters and sidewalks throughout the corridor. The City should also make sure that landscape features are regularly maintained and streets and sidewalks kept clear of litter and debris. In addition, snow should be removed from sidewalks in the winter to facilitate pedestrian movement.

Another activity for which project stakeholders voiced strong support is for the City to take a leadership position in the acquisition of blighted properties. The City should promote the rehab of commercially viable structures. If properties are within TIF districts, the City might also consider purchasing and demolishing obsolete buildings, and/or assembling contiguous parcels if redevelopment will result in a positive increment for the TIF. Demolished properties might be converted to parks at some point in the future to provide new recreational amenities.

*Note: To help fund the planning, acquisitions and/or other property improvements, the City might consider designating areas within the corridors as a Business Districts, as authorized by the Municipal Code of Illinois. The City might also consider creating Special Service Areas (SSA) to help fund capital improvements.*

The following Implementation Action Plan describes additional tasks the City can lead or take an active role in supporting.

### Implementation Action Plan

A systematic series of actions is recommended to guide plan implementation. Many of these activities can be accomplished within the next six months.

#### Public Policy

- 1) Adopt the Corridor Plan as public policy by September 2007.
- 2) Continue to identify, prioritize and establish a timeframe for capital (public improvement) projects.
- 3) Explore alternative strategies for developer participation in designing, financing and constructing public improvements.
- 4) Identify funding sources for public improvement and maintenance projects that only the City can initiate and support. Consider creating new Tax Increment Finance (TIF) districts or expanding existing districts to include all the locations identified as neighborhood centers.
- 5) Confirm the entitlement and development procedures for priority opportunities in order to promote confidence in the City's commitment and timing.
- 6) Explore other incentives to attract private market investors such as reducing or eliminating connection, permit and review fees for projects that meet the objectives of the Corridor Plan. Consider tax and other incentives and that target smaller retailers who do not have the financial resources of national chain franchises. Promote State and local programs that provide grants and loans for eligible businesses.

- 7) Modify codes and regulations as necessary (including the creation of an overlay district for the entire North Main Street study area) to align with the recommendations of the Corridor Plan. Refine development guidelines and adopt additional design standards as necessary for neighborhood center and transitional area redevelopment that are consistent with the Corridor Plan.

#### Organization

Successful commercial districts are characterized by one attribute—partnership among all the major stakeholders within the district. These stakeholders must represent both private and public sectors. Strong public/private partnerships ensure the efficient use of available resources and create a forum where the tensions of the various perspectives can be resolved through discussion and compromise.

Currently, the North End Commons Business Association, which focuses on the area around the Main/Auburn business district, is the only formal business organization that exists within the study area. In addition, there are four North End neighborhood organizations that play active roles in North Main Street activities south of Ford/Willoughby Avenues.

To help facilitate implementation of the North Main Street Corridor Plan, it is recommended that the City work with stakeholders to form a citizen-led 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(6) organization that represents the interests of the entire corridor. Such an organization can play an invaluable role in promoting and communicating revitalization activities within the corridor. Strategies for this organization include the following:

#### *Establish a Management Strategy that Supports Effective Plan Implementation*

- 1) Determine who speaks for the task force and create regular media contacts for that person.
- 2) Provide regular updates of plan implementation progress to merchants and property owners.
- 3) Maintain focus on the corridor by highlighting and promoting unique and new businesses.
- 4) Discuss potential use and roles of a community development organization and a master developer.

- 5) Carefully design public/private investment opportunities to capture key sites and key constituencies of participating partners.
- 6) Monitor and evaluate progress and participants every six months.
- 7) Revise organizational strategies as necessary to improve results.

#### *Capitalize on Existing Corridor Activity Generators*

- 1) Communicate openly and regularly with restaurant owners, North End neighborhood organizations, the North End Commons Business Association, North Towne Mall, EIGERlab and other major employers within the corridor.
- 2) Report to the task force on results and opportunities.

#### **New Development**

- 1) Facilitate the land acquisition, parcel assembly and development of projects that are partially or wholly owned by the City.
- 2) Identify existing property owner interests in undertaking revitalization identified in the Corridor Plan.
- 3) Identify prospective tenants' site requirements for locating to the North Main Street corridor.
- 4) Where a match between a property owner and a tenant interest exists, develop public/private partnerships that maximize project speed-to-market and private investment in revitalization projects.
- 2) The City might also sponsor a review of development options for corridor with real estate brokers from outside the area and then conduct follow-up meetings as necessary.

#### **Reuse and Redevelopment**

A major challenge for the North Main Street corridor is to facilitate change without harming the quality and character of adjoining residential neighborhoods. Part of this challenge is recognizing that while market forces greatly influence business owner and real estate developer successes, the qualities of business appearance and operations are at least equally important. Balancing best operating practices and market realities with community desires will ultimately determine North Main Street's overall strength.

Linkages with the local commercial real estate community will be important to the corridor's future. Local real estate brokers are very aware of North Main Street's existing strengths and weaknesses. Ongoing conversations between local merchants, property owners and local retail brokers can help identify other tenants suitable for North Main Street, creating an informal referral network.

Business owners operating at three or more locations within the Rockford and/or Chicago markets represent likely recruitment prospects. These owners are experienced in expanding their business and have the financial capacity to purchase a building, should that be an element of any expansion decision. They also attract new customers familiar with their brand name.

#### *Improve the Quality of Existing Businesses*

- 1) Reach consensus on best practice standards, including cleanliness, inventory turn, customer friendly hours, business plan updates, marketing and advertising, technologies and other relevant practices.
- 2) Create a certification program to identify stores using the best practices.
- 3) Create a mentoring program through which certified business owners assist in new and improving businesses.

#### *Improve the Building Stock Along the Corridor*

- 1) Identify property owners who could benefit from an architectural improvement program and other incentives.
- 2) Meet with property owners to determine
  - future plans for their property.
  - financial capacity.
  - tenancing options (can restaurants with ventilation be accommodated, etc.).
  - matches between building improvement needs and existing programs.
- 3) Create a budget to fund public partnerships for improvements to historic buildings and to lobby quickly for budgeting and funding.
- 4) Research and identify quality revitalization projects completed in the Rockford area and the Chicago metropolitan region. Contact/recruit quality buyers/developers with experience in revitalization.

#### *Attract New Stores, Restaurants and Employers*

- 1) Develop succession planning support that helps business owners realize a profit as they retire or transition into new endeavors.

- 2) Identify a business prospect list and
  - distribute a “Business Prospect Tracking Form” to all businesses.
  - contact recommended retailers and restaurateurs.
  - target and list interested prospects.
  - distribute target list to all property owners.
  - repeat every six months.
- 3) Develop a cotenancy strategy that uses streetscaping and landscaping to create optimal store, restaurant and office locations.
- 4) Gain visibility by participating in regional International Council of Shopping Center (ICSC) events.
- 5) Develop relationships with regional commercial brokers.

#### *Reach Out to Potential Employers*

- 1) Interview commercial brokers and current tenants in existing buildings.
- 2) Identify trends, most important amenities, employee availability, marketing channels and other tenant sources important to employers.
- 3) Report to the task force on employer attraction strategy.

#### **Promotion**

- 1) Create a communications strategy that highlights North Main Street’s amenities.
- 2) The following hierarchy of media expenditure is recommended:
  - Public relations placements in media throughout the Rockford and Chicago region.
  - Direct contact with existing customers through email and direct mail.
  - Paid newspaper advertising.
- 3) Evaluate the current roster of special events along the corridor to determine how revitalization initiatives can be showcased, promoted and/or used to attract new visitors.
- 4) Actively and appropriately communicate the Corridor Plan and related strategies to public officials, property owners, real estate developers and brokers and the public.
- 5) Annually evaluate and update the work plan and report to appropriate constituencies.

# Development Guidelines

The following development guidelines have been prepared to define and articulate the preferred standards for revitalization initiatives within the North Main Street corridor. Development and redevelopment projects should conform to the City of Rockford Zoning Ordinance, except as described in these guidelines. In addition, all projects should conform to the adopted/state codes enforced by the City's Building and Fire Departments (a complete list is available at <http://ci.rockford.il.us/government/building/index.cfm?section=amendments&id=189>).

## Land Use and Density

### Neighborhood Centers and Transitional Areas

- Retail (a variety of neighborhood-oriented uses).
- Mixed use (retail/office, retail/office/condominium, retail/condominium or retail/rental apartments).
- Non-retail commercial (office, light industrial).
- Residential (condominiums and rental apartments—800 s.f. minimum).
- Medium density (20-25 units per acre), no single family houses.
- Development variations, including but not limited to lot areas, widths and required yards, may be granted to create zero lot lines units, unit lots or other needs to facilitate sales.

## Height, Setback and Orientation

### Neighborhood Centers and Transitional Areas

- Maximum height of principle buildings is 2½ stories (35'). As a bonus for developments that meet the development guidelines, building height can be increased to 4 stories (45').

### Neighborhood Centers Only

- Orient building façades and entries towards streets.
- Corner buildings should take advantage of their location by angling or articulating their entry architecturally to serve as neighborhood center gateways and/or to accentuate corner locations.
- Large buildings housing small businesses should have architecturally sub-divided façades to create a pedestrian scale frontage.
- Maintaining a continuous street frontage (providing breaks only for pedestrian access or plazas) is preferred.



Mixed use (retail/office/condominium). Building height of 4 stories reflects bonus for meeting development guidelines.

*Note: A mixed use structure with this form and scale may be viable at a neighborhood center location such as the southwest corner of North Main Street and Van Wie Avenue, as identified on page 25).*



Mixed use (retail/office). Building height of 3 stories reflects bonus for meeting development guidelines.



Condominiums. Building height of 4 stories reflects bonus for meeting development guidelines.



Corner buildings should articulate their entries architecturally.

*Note: A commercial structure with this form, scale and articulated corner design may be viable at a neighborhood center location such as the northeast corner of North Main Street and Fulton Avenue, as identified on page 25.*

### *Recommended Setbacks*

- Front: Continuous storefronts built to the sidewalk line with parking located behind buildings is strongly preferred for neighborhood centers. Parking on the sides of buildings is acceptable if conditions do not allow parking behind buildings. In instances where landscaping cannot be accommodated in the frontage R.O.W., a 12' maximum setback is acceptable to accommodate landscaping and/or outdoor seating.
- Side: 0' minimum setback from sidewalk line or adjacent structure is preferred to create a continuous wall of storefront; 24' maximum setback is acceptable for outdoor seating or landscaping.
- Rear: 3' minimum setback to the rear of property or 15' from the alley center line.



Continuous storefront built to the sidewalk line with parking located behind buildings is strongly preferred for neighborhood centers.

### **Transitional Areas Only**

#### *Recommended Setbacks*

- Front: Similar to neighborhood centers, continuous storefronts built to the sidewalk line with building façades oriented towards the street are preferred for transitional areas. However, parking in front or on the sides of buildings is acceptable to accommodate the needs of motorists and convenience retailers. In instances where landscaping cannot be accommodated in the frontage R.O.W., a 12' maximum setback is preferred to accommodate landscaping and/or outdoor seating. Deeper setbacks to accommodate parking in front are also acceptable, but parking must be screened by high quality fencing, hardscaping materials or other landscape features.
- Side: 0' minimum setback for commercial buildings is preferred to create a continuous wall of storefronts. Deeper setbacks to accommodate parking or outdoor seating on the side are acceptable, but must be screened by high quality fencing, hardscaping materials or other landscaping features. 10' minimum setback for residential buildings or mixed use buildings that include residential. Setback areas must include landscaping features.
- Rear: 3' minimum to rear of property or 15' from alley center line.



Continuous storefronts built to the sidewalk line with façades oriented towards the street is preferred in transitional areas. Parking on the side or behind buildings is also acceptable for convenience retailers.



Screen parking lots from view with high quality fencing, hardscaping materials and/or landscaping features.



Side setbacks to accommodate parking or outdoor seating are acceptable in transitional areas, but must be screened with high quality fencing, hardscaping materials and/or landscape features.

## **Buildings**

### **Neighborhood Centers and Transitional Areas**

#### *Size and Massing*

- A variety of sizes and massing is encouraged within the overall pattern of development.



A variety of sizes and massing is encouraged within the overall pattern of development.



Building façades should exhibit a base, middle and top.

#### *Façade Proportions*

- The building façade should exhibit a base, middle and top.

## Character

- Buildings that are not part of a continuous streetwall should be well designed on all 4 sides. Subdivide large facades vertically with windows, columns and other architectural features. Ornamentation should be an integral part of the overall design concept. Applied decorative elements are discouraged.

## Materials and Systems

- Front façades with utilize brick, stone and/or stucco as their primary material are strongly preferred. EIFS and/or corrugated metal façades are discouraged.
- Accent features, including columns, balusters, railings, cornices, bays and dormers, are encouraged and may be painted or stained wood.
- Foundations are to be cast-in-place concrete.
- Exterior wall construction is encouraged to be masonry, architectural precast, natural stone, cast stone, glass or a combination of these materials.
- Building structures are to be cast-in-place concrete, precast concrete, steel framed, light gauge steel frame or masonry bearing wall construction.
- Materials should be of a durable and low maintenance quality that maintains value over time.
- Extensive use of the same materials utilizing changes in texture, shape or color is preferred to a larger palette of different materials.
- Front door stoops, porches, bay windows and balconies shall be allowed to encroach within front or side yards.
- Roofs may be pitched or flat enclosed by parapets. Roofs are encouraged to have a pitch of 4:12 or greater.
- Windows facing the street should be clear glass and may consist of horizontal bands divided by vertical banks. No less than 70% of front façades's ground floor should consist of windows.
- Windows may be either operable units within masonry openings or curtain wall type systems of a scale similar to proportions used in the surrounding context.
- Mechanical systems and equipment shall either be fully integrated into a building structure using the same high quality materials that are used for the primary building (masonry preferred) or fully screened within rooftop enclosures. Thru-wall or window air conditioning units are not acceptable.
- Buildings are to be protected by fire suppression systems.
- Developers should be encouraged to design buildings to a standard consistent with Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification. However, pursuing certification should be left to the developer's discretion.



Ornamentation should be limited and characteristic of the local architectural style. Accent features such as columns, bays and dormers are encouraged.



Buildings that are not part of a continuous streetwall should be well designed on all 4 sides.



Subdivide large facades vertically with windows, columns and other architectural features.



Masonry, architectural precast, natural stone, glass or a combination of these materials is recommended.



Extensive use of the same material utilizing changes in texture, shape or color is preferred to a larger palette of different materials.



Front façades should utilize brick, stone and/or stucco as the primary material.



Roofs may be pitched or flat enclosed by parapets .



Windows facing the street should be clear glass and may consist of horizontal bands divided by vertical banks. No less than 70% of front façades's ground floor should consist of windows.

## Streets

### Neighborhood Centers and Transitional Areas

Streets are the backbone of neighborhood centers, providing access and convenient parking for vehicles and direct links to activities and destinations for pedestrians. Streetscape and landscape features are an integral part of a quality street environment and should provide a high level of comfort for pedestrians and shoppers, buffer them from traffic and unsightly views, provide places to sit and gather and include well lit, safe areas to accommodate pedestrian circulation. The following guidelines are recommended for all public streets, except as prohibited by other regulating jurisdictions.

- Streetscape features should help to unify the overall appearance of streets.
- Widths of roadways should be minimized to calm traffic and reduce the lengths of pedestrian crosswalks. Through lanes should have a maximum 11' width.
- Major intersections should be designed with wide, well marked pedestrian crosswalks.
- Sidewalks should provide for comfortable, continuous access through neighborhood centers.
- Whenever possible, sidewalks in neighborhood centers should allow for pedestrian movement with an 8' minimum through-route from the back of the curb to the building face.
- All streets shall provide barrier free access as outlined in the Illinois Accessibility Code.
- Seating areas should be provided. Restaurants should be encouraged to provide outdoor seating.
- Pedestrian scale ornamental lighting should be used to replace taller, vehicular lighting while still maintaining safe roadway lighting levels.
- Public utilities poles should be buried or moved to the rear of properties whenever possible.
- In certain accent areas, a small scale, non-slip paving unit should be used, such brick, granite, concrete paver or stamped concrete.
- The City should develop streetscape standards for neighborhood centers. As the first phase streetscape is being designed, allow that process to set standards for finishes, materials, signage and plants so that decisions are based on real work situations instead of as a "package" that then needs to be applied to various parcels without regard to site conditions.



Major intersections should have wide, well-marked pedestrian crosswalks.



Sidewalks should provide comfortable, continuous access throughout the neighborhood centers.



Retail core area sidewalks should allow pedestrian movement from the back of the curb to the building face with an 8' minimum through-route along buildings.



Restaurants should be encouraged to provide sidewalk dining.



Pedestrian-scaled ornamental lighting should be used.



Small-scale, non-slip paving should be used in accent areas.

## Neighborhood Centers

- Create gateways either in conjunction with private developments or as a part of a coordinated public improvement program at the entrances into neighborhood centers.

## Motorist and Pedestrian Access

### Neighborhood Centers and Transitional Areas

- Maintain and enhance the established street grid system whenever possible.
- Parking lots located behind businesses should be accessed from side streets or alleys.
- Consolidate entry points and driveways to serve multiple developments while minimizing traffic congestion and pedestrian conflicts.
- Provide convenient pedestrian access from public sidewalks to primary building entries.
- Pedestrian access markings and ground plane materials are to take precedence at vehicular crossings.

## Parking—General

### Neighborhood Centers and Transitional Areas

- Provide access from side streets or alleys whenever possible.
- Include pedestrian friendly features such sidewalks and well marked pedestrian crosswalks in parking facilities regardless of location.
- Clearly identify parking facilities with attractive signage.
- All parking is to be barrier free.
- Parking areas are to be well lit for pedestrian safety.
- Materials and systems with a 20-year lifespan should be used.
- Screen all surface parking facilities from view with high quality fencing, hardscaping materials and/or landscaping features.

### Number of Spaces

- Property owners should be encouraged to share parking facilities whenever feasible.
- Condominiums: 2 spaces per unit, structured above or below grade (easily accessible to units).
- Retail/Office: Shared off-street parking requirements will be negotiated with the City of Rockford. Adjacent on-street parking will also count towards retail/office requirements.



Clearly identify parking facilities with attractive signage



All parking is to be barrier free.



Screen all parking facilities from view with high quality fencing, hardscaping materials and/or other landscaping features.

- A public/private partnership utilizing a multi-story parking facility is acceptable to offset on-site residential and surrounding retail/office requirements.
- Up to 15% of spaces may be reduced size for smaller cars.

### Neighborhood Centers Only

- Essential ingredients of pedestrian friendly retail environments are continuous storefronts built to the sidewalk line. Locating parking facilities in safe and efficient areas behind buildings is strongly preferred for neighborhood centers. Locate parking on the sides of buildings only if site conditions or access issues prohibit parking behind buildings.

### Transitional Areas Only

- Similar to neighborhood centers, continuous storefronts built to the sidewalk line with parking facilities located behind buildings is preferred. However, parking located in safe and efficient areas on the sides or in front of buildings is also acceptable to accommodate the needs of motorists and convenience retailers.

## Parking–Off-street

### Neighborhood Centers and Transitional Areas

- Off-street parking must accommodate both public and private parking requirements for businesses and residences (in many instances, such as residential redevelopment, the market may not support projects that do not include sufficient off-street parking). Some allowances may be given to retailers in locations where on-street “convenience” parking is available in sufficient quantities.
- Locate parking facilities in safe, efficient areas that allow for comfortable pedestrian ingress/egress and that do not disrupt the scale and character of surrounding buildings.
- Screen all surface parking facilities from view with high quality fencing, hardscaping materials and/or landscaping features.
- Break up large expanses of parking surface with planted islands every 10 spaces or where rows of parking abut drive lanes.

### Neighborhood Centers Only

- Shared off-street public parking in neighborhood centers is essential to allow medium density development to occur in the most desirable locations. Create centralized public parking facilities located behind buildings wherever feasible. In addition, centralize the access to parking facilities to the fullest extent possible.



Create and centralize public parking facilities wherever feasible.



Break large expanses of parking with planted islands.

## Transitional Areas Only

- Parking lots located behind buildings are preferred. However, in order to accommodate the needs of convenience retailers and motorists, parking located in safe and efficient areas on the sides or in front of buildings is also acceptable.
- Consolidate entry points and driveways to serve multiple developments while minimizing traffic congestion and pedestrian conflicts.

## Parking—On-street

### Neighborhood Centers Only

- Where appropriate, side streets should be designed to allow for angled parking.

## Loading and Service

### Neighborhood Centers and Transitional Areas

- Reduce service and loading hours to non-peak times of day.
- Fully integrate screens for service areas and dumpsters into a building structures using the same high quality materials that are used for the primary building (masonry is preferred). Or, fully screen service areas and dumpsters from view using high quality fencing, hardscaping materials and/or landscaping features that are complimentary to the primary building and adjacent properties.

### Neighborhood Centers Only

- Loading berths may be permitted on-street when necessary.



On-street parking allows quick, convenient access to businesses.



Streets in front of residences should be designed to allow parallel parking.



Reduce service and loading hours to non-peak times of day.



When necessary, loading berths may be permitted on-street.



Fully integrate screens for service areas and dumpsters into a building structure or screen them from view with high quality fencing, hardscaping materials and/or landscaping features.

## Open Space and Landscaping

### Neighborhood Centers and Transitional Areas

#### *Scale, Location and Organization*

- Provide substantial, usable community open space for formal or informal gatherings. Open space includes parks, plazas, squares, memorials and gardens, and may include outdoor dining areas that are readily available to the general public.
- Provide distinctive features to serve as focal points of the community space.
- Sidewalks should provide comfortable, continuous access. Use an 8' minimum width whenever possible.
- Use high quality hardscaping and landscaping materials consistent with those used in other areas within the neighborhood centers.



Provide substantial usable community open space.



Sidewalks should be attractive and provide comfortable, continuous access.



Provide well lit, safe areas to accommodate pedestrian activities.



Utilize high quality hardscape materials consistent with those used in other areas within neighborhood centers.

#### *Landscaping*

- Utilize consistent landscaping and hardscaping materials throughout and coordinate with adjacent streetscape materials.
- Provide foundation and accent plantings in open space areas.
- Screen private property or undesirable locations from pedestrian areas with high quality fencing, hardscaping materials and/or landscaping features.

#### *Lighting*

- Provide well lit, safe areas to accommodate pedestrian circulation.
- Minimize glare or spill over to adjacent properties. No wall mounted flood lights may be used on building façades.
- Accenting lighting on architectural features is recommended.

## Wayfinding and Signage

### Neighborhood Centers and Transitional Areas

- Business signage should be sufficient to identify the business name without dominating the architecture.
- Integrating primary identification signs into building structures using high quality, internally illuminated and individual letters mounted flat onto a background surface (or pinned slightly off of the surface) is preferred. Individual letters with backwash lighting that casts letterforms in silhouette and individual letters that are externally illuminated are also acceptable.
- Free standing business signs should be monument signs. Pole signs are not allowed. At locations with multiple signs, the monument signs should be consistent in both size, materials and position at each location.
- Provide identity signage for neighborhood centers at major “gateway” intersections, and directional signage at locations inside and outside the North Main Street corridor that identify significant Rockford destinations.
- Provide distinctive, well-crafted wayfinding signage for public areas.



Business signage should not dominate the building's architecture.



Provide distinct, well-crafted wayfinding signage for all public parking areas.



Integrating primary identification signs into building structures using high quality, internally illuminated and individual letters mounted flat onto a background surface (or pinned slightly off of the surface) is preferred. Individual letters with backwash lighting that casts letterforms in silhouette and individual letters that are externally illuminated are also acceptable



Free standing business signs should be consistent in both size, materials, and position on each parcel. Monument signs are encouraged and poles signs are not allowed. Monument style structures are strongly preferred for identification signs.

## Storm Water Management

### Neighborhood Centers and Transitional Areas

The City of Rockford's Stormwater Section is responsible for the administration of the design standards for the City's storm drainage systems, improving water quality in the City's thirteen watershed basins and reviewing development plans to ensure that all new construction within the City adheres to the design standards for stormwater and flood control. The Section is also responsible for master planning for each of the City's watershed basins and the design and construction of stormwater capital improvement projects. Most of the North Main Street study area falls within the North Main watershed. A smaller portion between Deborah Avenue and Campus Hills Boulevard is within the Kent Creek watershed.

The City has stormwater management standards for new developments and will be creating new standards for redevelopment on existing properties. In the interim, the following guidelines are recommended for stormwater management on existing properties:

- Provide shared storm water management facilities for larger developments and/or neighborhood centers rather than relying on individual parcels to mitigate only their own storm water.
- Utilize, where applicable, bioswales and filtration systems in larger developments and parking areas, allowing the water to be treated and temporarily stored on-site in smaller detention basins (the City will require maintenance agreements for these systems if they contain part of the storage).
- For smaller scale projects, seek alternative methods for storm water entrapment and release (such as underground detention that does not require pumping) that support dense, compact development and eliminate the need for retention/detention ponds.
- Where possible, use storm water as a feature or focal point in a development.
- Utilize green roof technologies to reduce the amount of water running off roofs.
- Support the use of “green alleys” (alleys that feature a variety of sustainable techniques, including green roofs, rain gardens and permeable pavers) where feasible.
- The City can utilize storm water management as an incentive for smaller development projects by providing a shared basin for which developers pay a pro-rata share of the cost.
- Landscape sites with high quality landscape materials consistent with the quality of materials in other areas to provide clear views into and out of the area, minimizing potential safety problems.
- Implement alternative storage methods as required.



Promote the use of sustainable design practices such as bioswales and planting strips.



An underground storm water management system is appropriate for urban areas.



Green roofs are recommended to help reduce storm water runoff.

## Phased Construction

- Even though a project will likely develop in phases, it is important that the design of each phase stand alone architecturally.
- A development should present a unified image when all phases have been completed.
- Phasing should be designed to create a minimum marketing mass and have adequate infrastructure to be self-supporting.
- Construction of subsequent phases must not impact the quality of life of earlier phases.

# Zoning Strategy

The Envision North Main Street Corridor Plan sets forth policies regarding land use within the corridor and establishes development guidelines for the quality, character and intensity of new development and redevelopment within the corridor.

The Plan's policies and guidelines will be significantly strengthened if an overlay district is established for the entire North Main Street study area and a new Neighborhood Center (NC) zoning district is created for the three neighborhood centers identified in the Plan.

The Envision North Main Street Corridor Plan sets forth policies regarding land use within the corridor and establishes development guidelines for the quality, character and intensity of new development and redevelopment within the corridor.

# Appendix A: IDOT Meeting Summary



**Hitchcock  
Design Group**

Creating Better Places®

## Meeting Summary

**Date:** March 29, 2007  
**Time:** 1:30 p.m.  
**Location:** Rockford City Hall  
**Attendees:** Patrick Zuroske, Ginny Gregory and Reid Montgomery, City of Rockford  
Charles Smith, Hanson Professional Services  
Masood Ahmad and Ron Heck, Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)  
Carl Wohlt and Craig Farnsworth, Hitchcock Design Group (HDG)  
**RE:** Envision North Main Street  
**Project No.:** 03-0675-004-03-03

**Purpose of meeting:** Review alternative strategies with IDOT officials

### Items discussed:

1. IDOT will have to reproduce the Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) public interface process using their standard format as the North Main Street design process moves forward.
2. Moving the project from IDOT's capital program to its regular programming will require a lobbying effort by Rockford leadership.
3. The center lane brick pavers used on Illinois Route 251 in Loves Park project might be useful reference for North Main Street.
4. IDOT supports efforts to reduce curb cuts in general, but are less enthusiastic about shared entrances because of potential conflicts between property owners and liability issues.
  - Maximum commercial entrance width is 35'
  - Minimum commercial widths are 30'-35'
  - Maximum residential widths are 24'
  - Minimum residential widths are 12'-24'
5. Flag/gutter pan widths are determined by drainage needs; narrowing pan widths may require lane width to increase in order to accommodate storage/drainage needs and vice versa.
6. The standard IDOT raceway is 3'; IDOT does not generally support landscaping within a 3' raceway, but may consider allowing this as a context sensitive solution;
7. If raceway width increases to provide additional space for landscaping elements, then IDOT would ask the City to help finance Rights-of-Way land acquisitions.
8. As an alternative approach to landscaping, IDOT has acquired an easement from property owners and agreed to plant trees if the owners will maintain them.
9. IDOT standard bi-directional turn lanes are 14', but 12' has been done.
10. Right turn lanes become necessary when right turn traffic volumes reach 100 vehicles/hour; Dual turn lanes when traffic volumes reach 300 vehicles/hour
11. Northbound and southbound right turn lanes will be needed on North Main Street at the Riverside Boulevard intersection.
12. Southbound North Main Street will require a right turn lane north of the Halsted Road intersection. Eastbound Halsted Road will require a right turn lane west of the North Main Street intersection.
13. Several options should be considered at the North Main Street/Brown Avenue intersection:

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221 West Jefferson Avenue Naperville, Illinois 60540 T 630.961.1787 F 630.961.9925 www.hitchcockdesigngroup.com

# Appendix A: IDOT Meeting Summary, *continued*

- A signalized intersection will require the angle of North Main south of Brown to be modified to provide proper site lines; this roadway realignment may require the demolition of homes on the west side of Main between Brown and Custer Avenues.
  - Converting the intersection to “right in, right out” is another option.
  - The “right in, right out” option may require a raised median at the intersection to prevent vehicles on Brown Avenue from cutting across North Main Street.
14. The east-west streets between Auburn Street and Brown Avenue (that dead-end into Greenwood Cemetery) have deficient angles at their respective Main Street intersections. The minimum angle should be 75 degrees. However, current land uses such as Brown Park may restrict IDOT’s ability to modify these angles. This will have to be resolved in the final roadway design.
  15. The North Main/Van Wie intersection might also be a candidate for a right in, right out intersection.
  16. The Rockford Mass Transit District (RMTD) bus route #4 *North Main* has designated outbound stops at Auburn, Fulton, North Towne Mall and River Bluff Boulevard, and inbound stops at Singer and Auburn within the project study area. However, RMTD buses will stop at every block requested by commuters along the route.
    - HDG will investigate adding 50’ bus pull-in areas on North Main south of the Halsted and Fulton intersections for inbound buses and north of those same intersections for outbound buses.
    - HDG will also investigate the possibility of locating pull-in areas at the North Main/Auburn intersection, though options will likely be more limited because of existing land uses and rights-of-way widths.
    - Mr. Zuroske asked that the alternative strategies be reviewed by Dennis Hendricks of the RMTD before the next public presentation.
  17. Charles Smith reported his firm is at work refining the design for the North Main/Auburn roundabout and should be able to provide a workable footprint to HDG before the end of the Envision North Main Street project concludes.

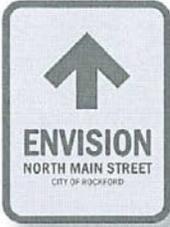
cc: Attendees  
Rick Hitchcock and Matt Nelson, Hitchcock Design Group

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# Appendix B:

## January 31, 2007 Public Workshop Sign-in Sheet

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### Public Workshop Sign-In Sheet

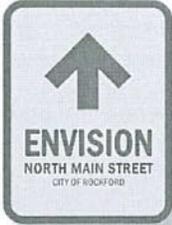
Date: January 31, 2007  
Time: 6:30 pm  
Location: West View School, 1720 Halsted Road  
RE: Envision North Main Street

Name	Address	Telephone Number	Email (for copy of mtg. summary)
Masoud Ahmad	819 Depot Ave Dixon, IL	(815) 284-5510	
Mark Nardin	819 Depot Ave Dixon, IL	(815) 284-5460	
Bon Heck	819 Depot Ave Dixon IL	815-284-5951	
Paula Knapik	3519 N. MAIN ST	877.2419	
Michael Buehl	1307 14th Ave	282.5027	mjkkdick@aol.com
Rabhan	425 E. State St.	967-6729	
Todd Calvert	425 E. State St	967-6769	
Janie Zimmerman	PO Box 15482, L.P.	61132	dianetimmesman@peoplepc.com
Hinda Antree	The Kitt & Clovers, 1414 N. Main St	Rockford IL 61103	
Bell and Loretta Peterson	717 N. St	962-8357	petyanmeuse@espeglobal.net
WAYNE SPTZ	1131 NORTH ME	962-3346	sp1720v001@insight bb.com
Letty J. Franke	3224 Edgewood Ter	962-0129	
Cynthia Lozano	2432 N. Main St JRCustomCycles	(815) 713-1201	JRCustomcycles@yahoo.com
Jim & Cathie Zygmanski		968-2763	
Larry L. L.		815-367-8390	
Ted Perrone		965-1401	
Sally Mark	1526 Hartem Blvd	962-2058	saldugmark@ameritech.net

# Appendix B:

## January 31, 2007 Public Workshop Sign-in Sheet

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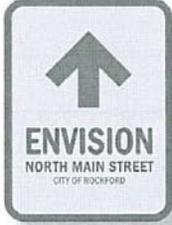
### Public Workshop Sign-In Sheet

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Time: 6:30 pm  
Location: West View School, 1720 Halsted Road  
RE: Envision North Main Street

Name	Address	Telephone Number	Email (for copy of mtg. summary)
Adolph & Bev Wacker	3209 N. Main St.	815 877-4020	Wesk82@hotmail.com
Wayne Rust	City of Rockford	815-957-5434	
Brenda Crowens	3516 N Main St.	636 2580	
<b>Michael Elio</b>	<b>1401 Woodcreek Bend</b>	<b>282 3033</b>	
Tim Hansen	2619 Edson (William Charles)		
Kim Corbett	3321 N. Main St.		NickelWorld@shoglobal.net
David Cook	RRWRD		
Bill Keefe	3231 N. MAIN ST	815 519 2900	TRKEEF1@Yahoo.com
Ald. Mack			
Ald. Beck			
Janine Dabson	1416 N. Main St	943-7955	
Joy Chiarelli		742-0977	
Alberto Altamirano	1432 N. Main St		
Dave Winters	13002 Harrison Rd Shiloh, IL	610 79 (State Rep.)	
Patrick Zurawski	City of Rockford 425 E. State St., Rockford, IL	61104	
John Tardance	1307 NATIONAL	Rockford	61103
Kurt Wirth	1704 N. MAIN		61103

# Appendix B: January 31, 2007 Public Workshop Sign-in Sheet

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## Public Workshop Sign-In Sheet

Date: January 31, 2007  
Time: 6:30 pm  
Location: West View School, 1720 Halsted Road  
RE: Envision North Main Street

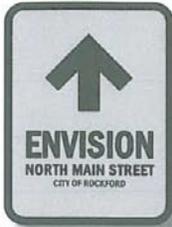
Name                      Address                      Telephone Number                      Email (for copy of mtg. summary)

*Rick Ayay City of Rockford 967-6939*

Blank lines for sign-in entries.

# Appendix C: February 21, 2007 Public Open House Sign-in Sheet

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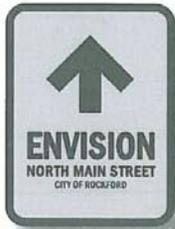
## Sign-In Sheet

Date: February 21, 2007  
 Time: 4:00 pm  
 Location: EIGERlab, 605 Fulton Avenue  
 RE: Envision North Main Street

Name	Address	Telephone Number	Email (for copy of mtg. summary)
JIM POWERS	1501 CUSTER 61103	815-968-1395	JHP8916@HOTMAIL.COM
JUDY DIEHL	1307 KAY AVE 61103	815-282-6027	MJKICDIEHL@AOL.COM
MICHAEL B DIEHL	"	"	"
PAULA KNAPIK	3519 N. MAIN	877-2419	pknapik@hotmail.com
LARRY LEE	3520 N. MAIN	387-8390	LARRY.LEE@MOJICINRO.ORG
JOE CAPONE	1828 OXFORD ST	962-8630	Joe.BouRox@uslight66.com
JESSICA SALISBURY	2640 N. MAIN	877-7027	JESS1021@aol.com
PERRY ANDREWS	4792 SKYWAY	654-7876	
BILL KEERTI	3231 N. MAIN ST	815-519-2900	
BRAD LUKER	140 MAIN ST	815-999-2525	
DON AHE	3007 N. MAIN ST.	815-877-3093	
Josephine m Deery	1035 7th and	968-8013	JudyDeery@AOL.com
Steve & Carol Souza	2430 NO. MAIN	815-399-5200	PUREFLOW@TDS.net
Chip Williams	2501 N. Main St.	815-218-4518	cwilliams@vtrta.com
Joe Geraghty	3128 N. Main	282-6100	dealeralliance@telus.net
DOUG MARK	1526 Harlem Blvd	962-2058	
Tim Hansen	2619 Edson	963-7484	Thansen@williamcharles.com

# Appendix C: February 21, 2007 Public Open House Sign-in Sheet

Page 2



## Sign-In Sheet

**Date:** February 21, 2007  
**Time:** 4:00 pm  
**Location:** EIGERlab, 605 Fulton Avenue  
**RE:** Envision North Main Street

Name	Address	Telephone Number	Email (for copy of mtg. summary)
Patrick Zuroscie	425 E. State, Rigel, IL	987-5570	patrick.zuroscie@cityofrockford.il.us
Ginny Gregory	425 E State	987-5618	ginny.gregory@ci.rockford.il.us
Aune Stort	Circles of Learning	2907 N Main	636-3820 circles@tds.net
BILL TIMM	1711 CARNEY	962 7592	
DOC SLAFKOSKY	107 N. MAIN	968-0129	
Tom Charvelli		9624413-395-8354	
Bob Schaper	RRSTAR	987-1410	bschaper@RRSTAR.com
JOHN BECK	2004 CUMBERLAND		com
Alberto Altomare	1432 N. MAIN ST	283 3000	
Susan Fotello	2327 N. Main St	962-8758	

