

WESTMINSTER TOWN CENTER

Townscape and Streetscape Improvements

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

October 20, 2014

Prepared for
The Town of Westminster

Prepared by
The Cecil Group



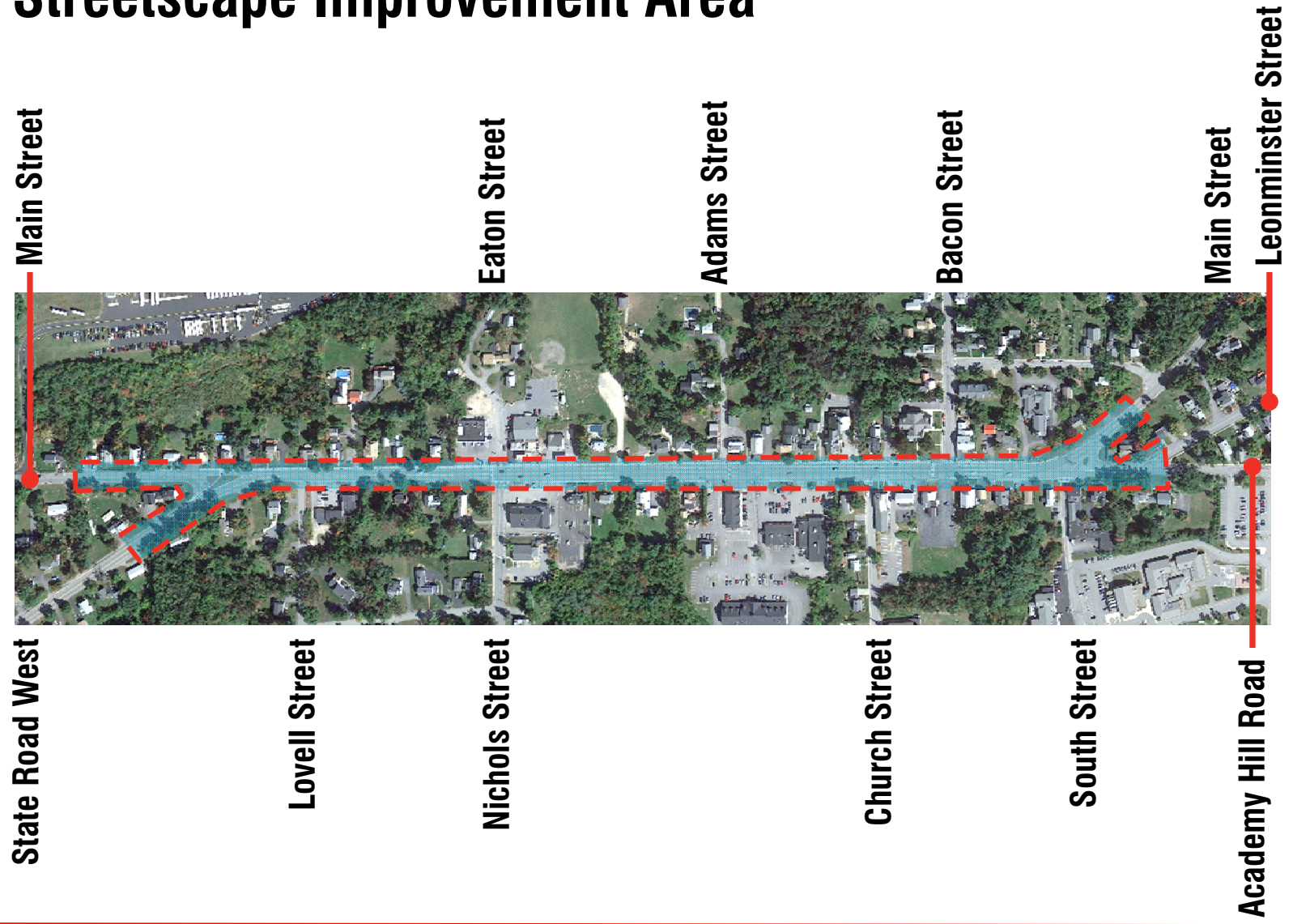
Funding for this project has been provided by the Downtown Initiative,
Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development



Topics

- Design Charrette Results
- Town Center Streetscape
- Design Guidelines and Zoning
- Underground Utilities
- Roadway Ownership
- Next Steps
- Question and Answers

Streetscape Improvement Area



Design Charrette Results

Results

- Sidewalks
- Streetscape
- Signage
- Zoning

Element	Red Dots
Create zoning for empty nester housing	6
Create mixed use zoning	6
Preserve cracker factory	6
Install traffic calming features at intersections	5
Place utilities underground	5
Reduce the amount of curb cuts	4
Encourage upscale housing, farmers market, arts, local food business, and commercial kitchen	4
Install way finding signs for community resources	4
Remove old/abandoned signs	3
Plant street trees	3
Incorporate sustainable landscape features	3
Create town parking lot	3
Create zoning for higher density	3
Create angled parking on Main St.	2
Install bike lanes	2
Disposition of old town hall	2
Extend anchor of village to Senior Center and Academy Hill	2
Construct sidewalk from Nichols St. to Westminster Café	2
Install signage and landscaping at entrances to downtown	2
Slow traffic	2
Install a community events signs	2
Construct brick sidewalks	1
Place buildings closer to the street and parking behind them	1
Implement classic New England design standards	1
Install granite curbs	1

Element	Red Dots
Construct green buffer strip along sidewalk	1
Implement guidelines for consistent business signage	1
Construct hardscape crosswalks	1
Take over Jurisdiction of main street	1
Advocate for MART bus route	1
Install crosswalks between Nichols St. and Lovell St.	1
Reduce spot zoning in downtown	1
Create on-street parking in selected areas	1
Remove mailboxes from sidewalks	1
Construct sidewalks on both sides of Main Street	1
Place public trash and recycling barrels on sidewalks	1
Widen sidewalks/narrow roads	1
Encourage more wood post and panel signs	1
Place benches along Main St.	0
Encourage design guidelines for fencing and signs	0
Eliminate future drive-thrus	0
Place gas lamp street lights with flags	0
Improve and increase the number of crosswalks	0
Improve drainage at Nichols St. Intersection with Main Street	0
Improve relationship with Wachusett mountain	0
Improve West Main St. intersection	0
Improve flow and safety at Cumberland farms intersection	0
Enhance landscaping for existing commercial properties	0
Prohibit larger vehicles	0
More visible historic building signage	0
Create off-street walking path from school area into town	0
Prohibit satellite dishes	0
There are too many white buildings	0
Create traffic signals at Nichols St.	0

Design Charrette Results

Proposed Vignettes : *South Street Intersection*



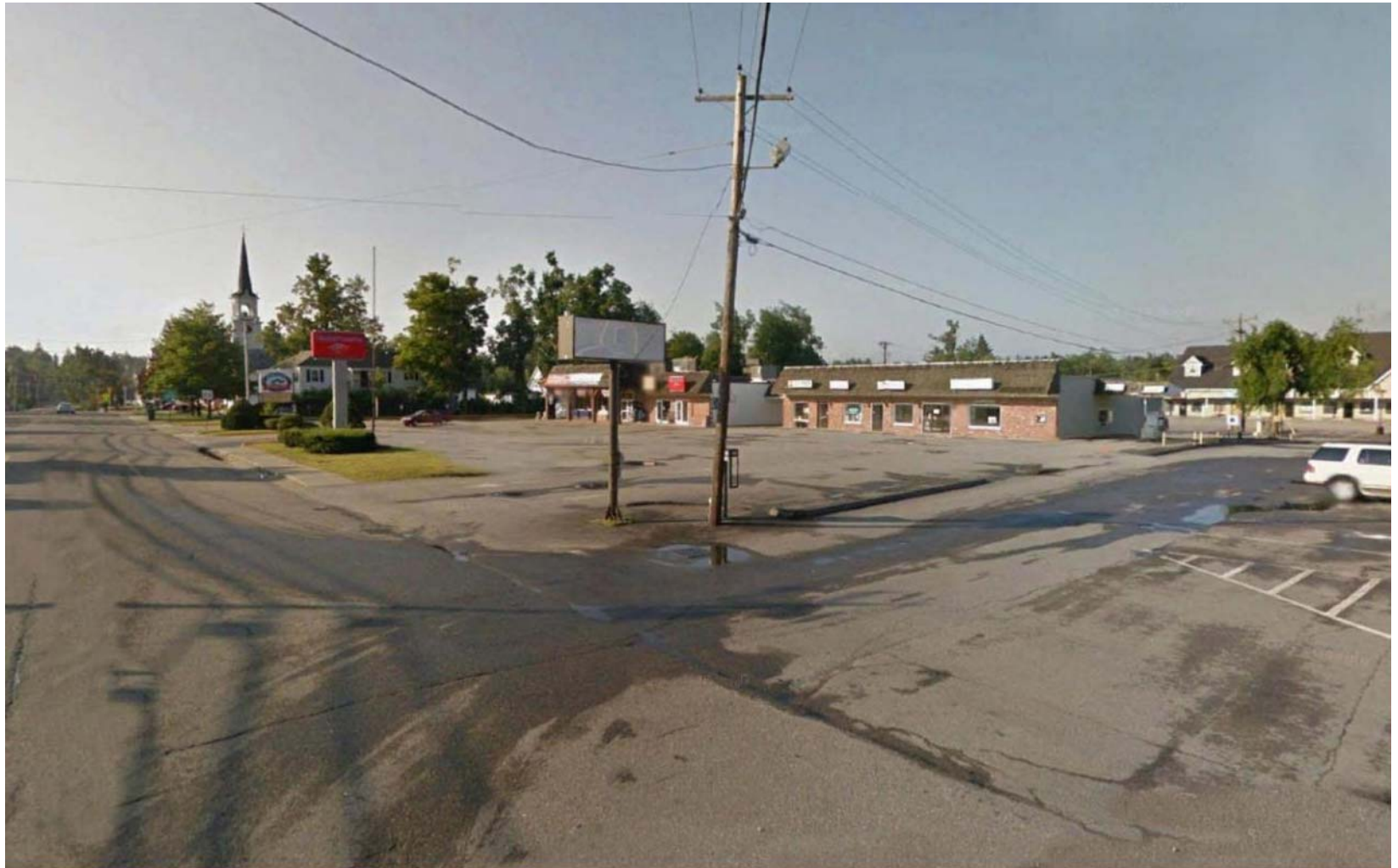
Design Charrette Results

Proposed Vignettes : *South Street Intersection*



Design Charrette Results

Proposed Vignettes : *Vincent's Plaza*



Design Charrette Results

Proposed Vignettes : *Vincent's Plaza*



Design Charrette Results

Proposed Vignettes : *Federal Credit Union Plaza*



Design Charrette Results

Proposed Vignettes : *Federal Credit Union Plaza*



Design Charrette Results

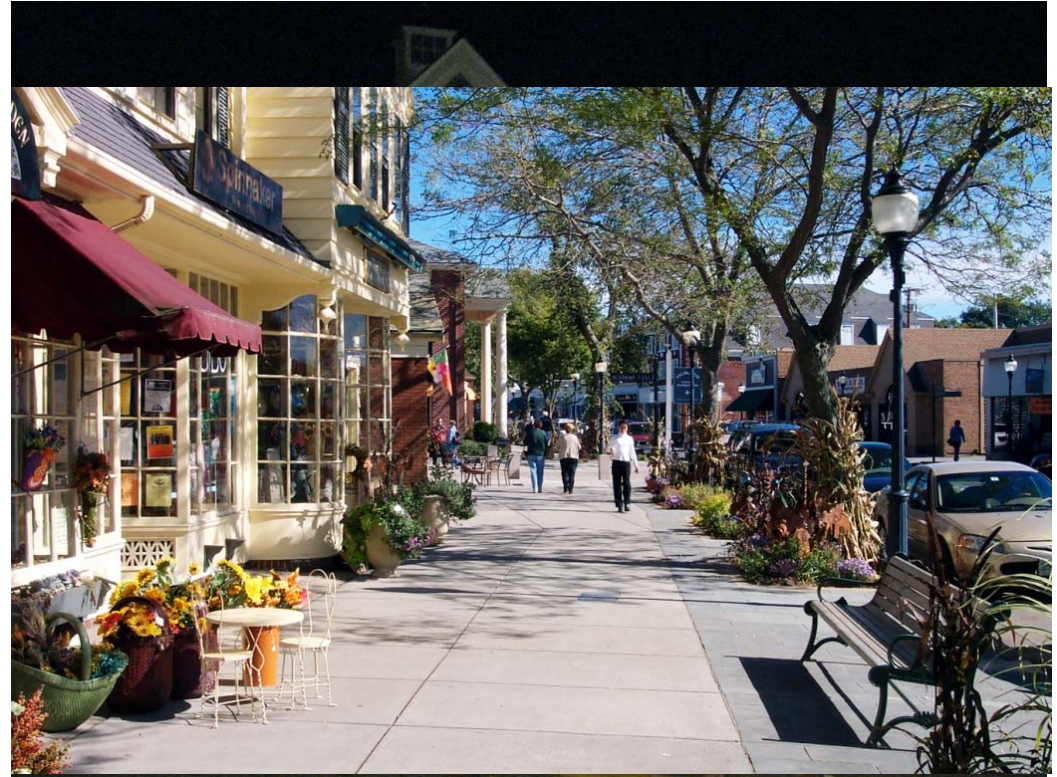
Proposed Vignettes : *Federal Credit Union Plaza*



Streetscape Improvements

Principles of Design

- Continuity and connectivity
- Complement to the context
- Sociable environment
- Interest and variety
- Quality and care
- Accessibility
- Safety and security
- Seasonality
- Diurnality



Streetscape Improvements

Elements in Design : *Complete Streets*



Streetscape Improvements

Elements in Design : *Comfortable Pedestrian Environment*



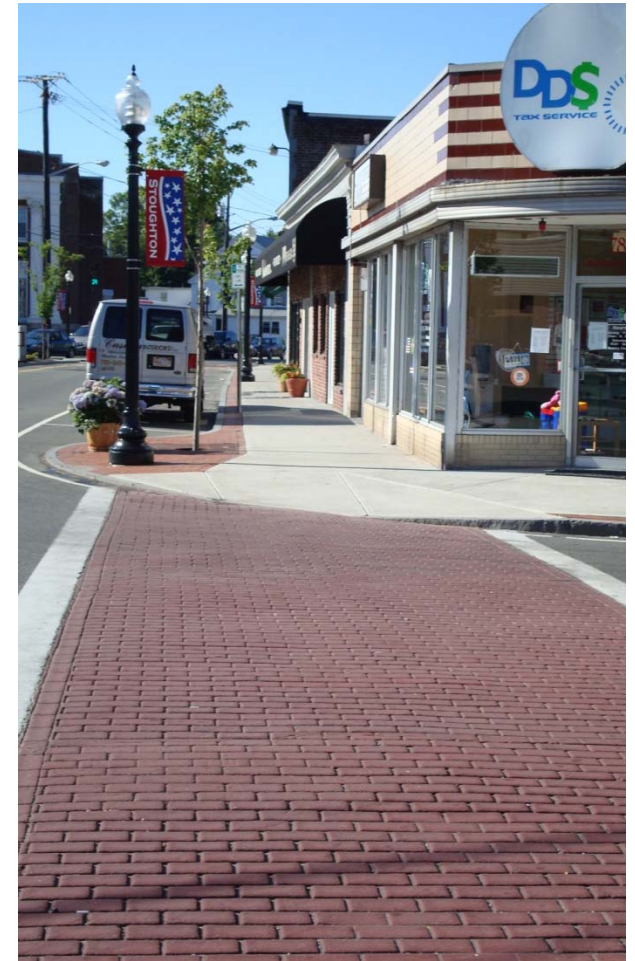
Streetscape Improvements

Elements in Design : *Comfortable Pedestrian Environment*



Streetscape Improvements

Elements in Design : *Comfortable Pedestrian Environment*



Streetscape Improvements

Elements in Design : *Traffic Calming*



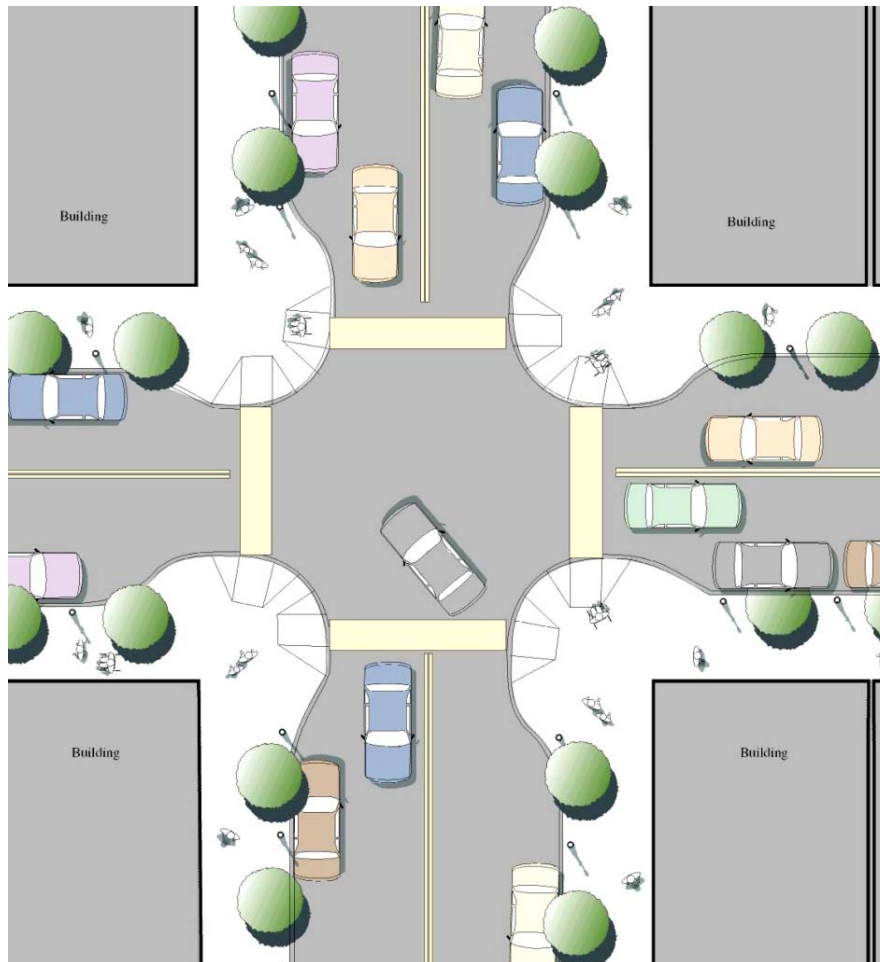
Streetscape Improvements

Elements in Design : *Traffic Calming*



Streetscape Improvements

Elements in Design : *Traffic Calming*



Streetscape Improvements

Elements in Design : *Placemaking*



Streetscape Improvements

Elements in Design : *Placemaking*



Streetscape Improvements

Elements in Design : *Sociable Environments*



Streetscape Improvements

Elements in Design : *Sociable Environments*



Streetscape Improvements

Elements in Design : *Sustainable / Green*



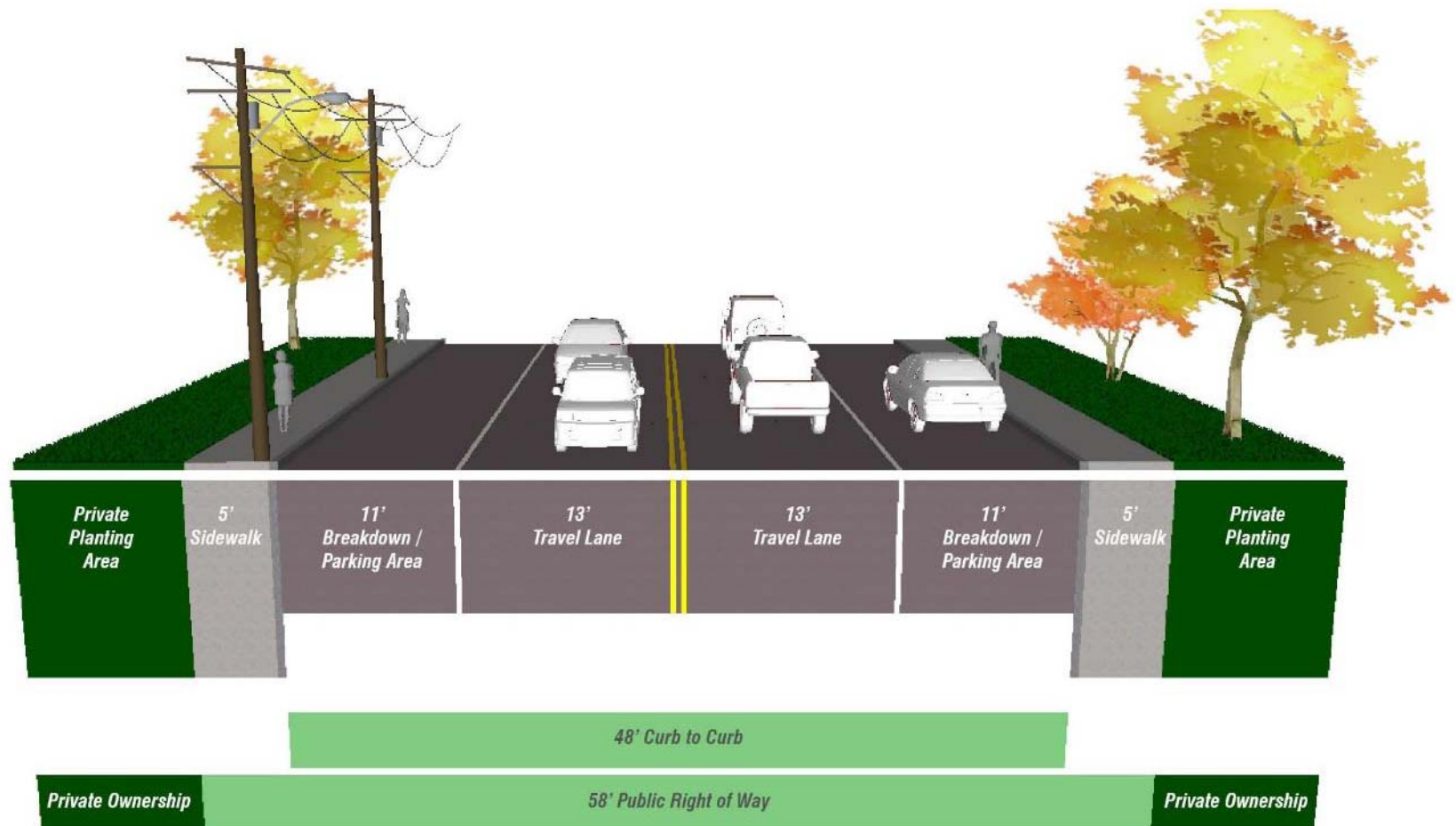
Streetscape Improvements

Elements in Design : *Sustainable / Green*



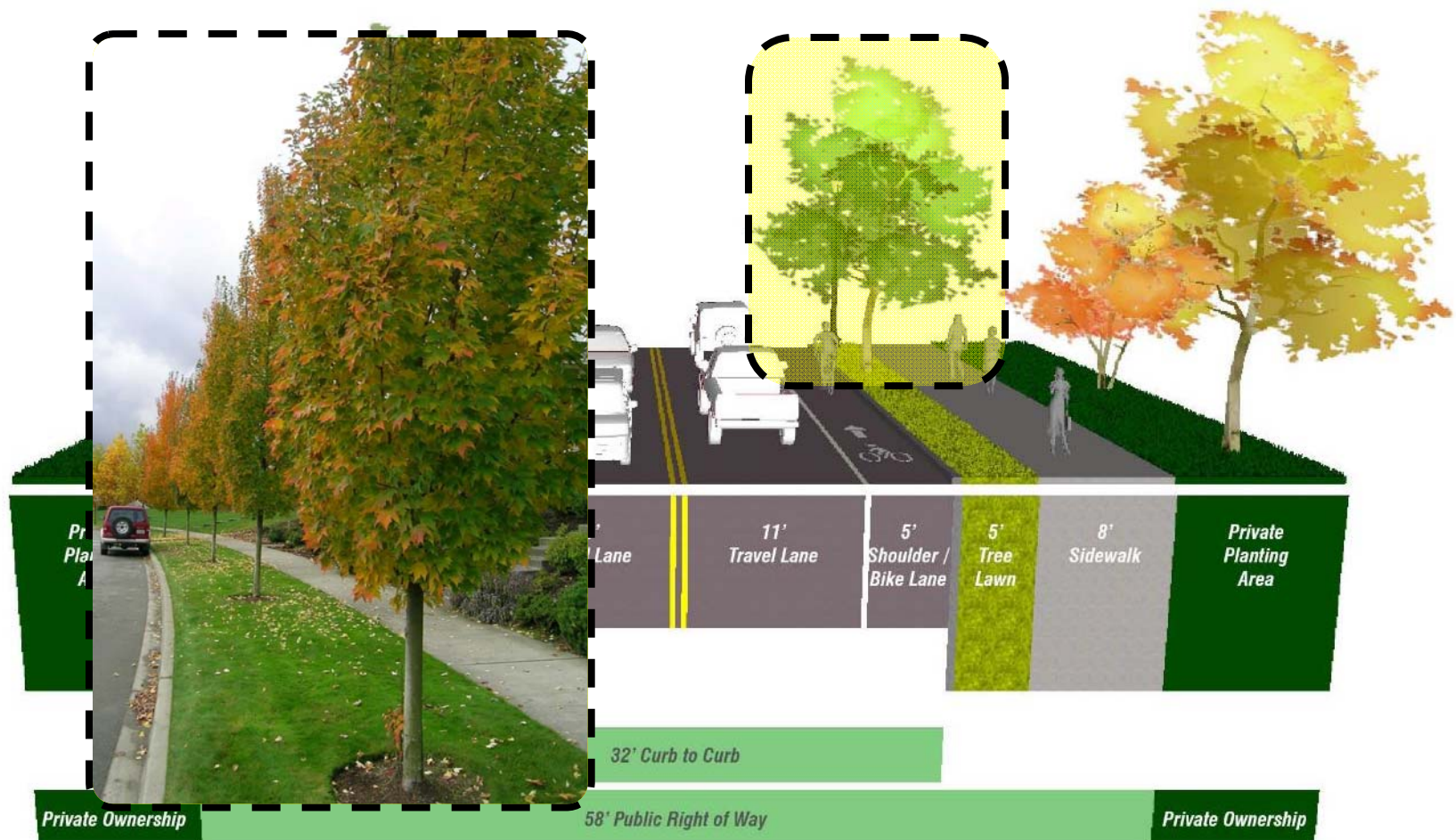
Streetscape Improvements

Existing Conditions



Streetscape Improvements

Elements: *Landscape*



Streetscape Improvements

Elements: *Lighting / Signage*



Streetscape Improvements

Elements: *Amenities*



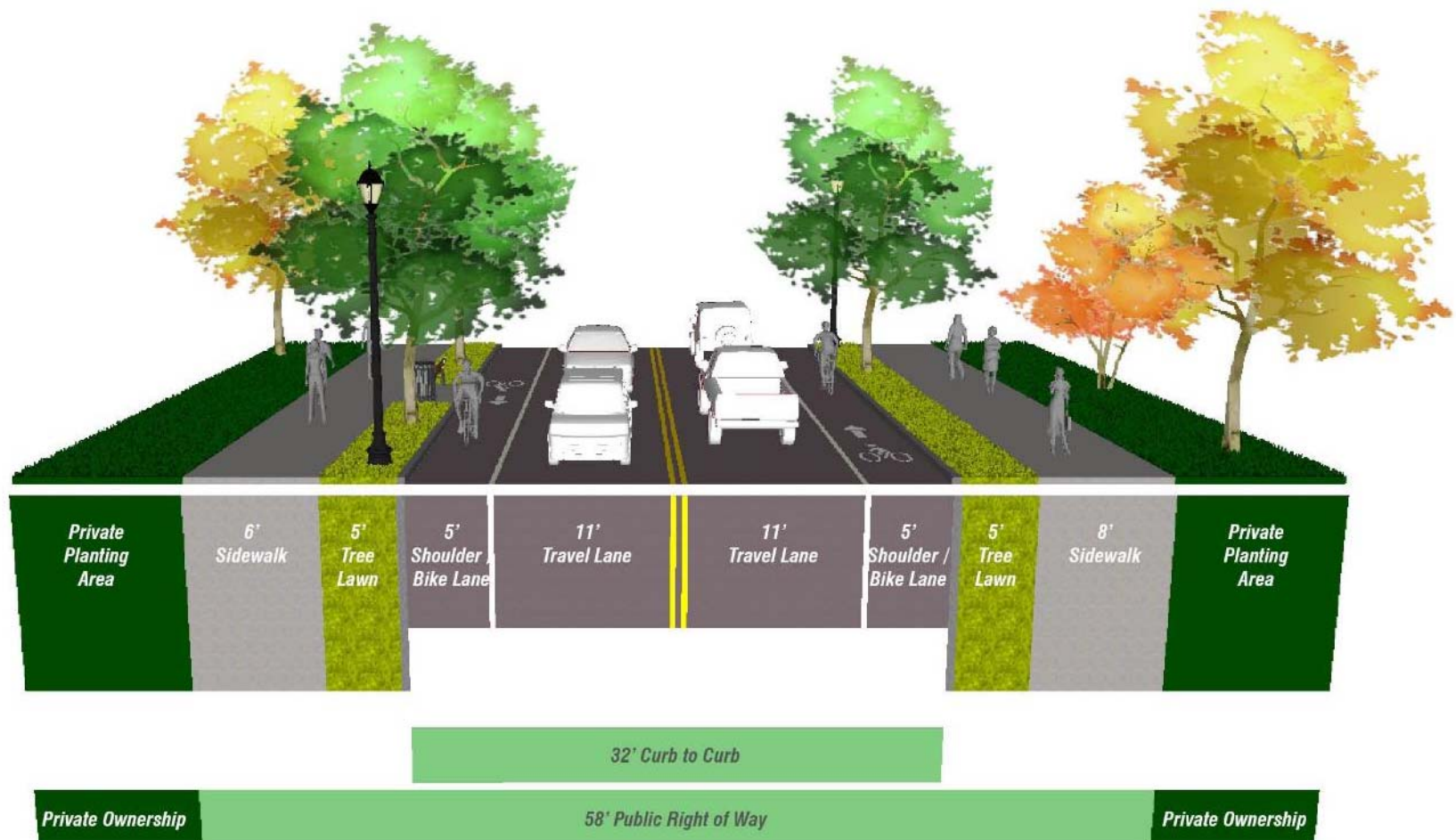
Streetscape Improvements

Elements: *Crosswalks*



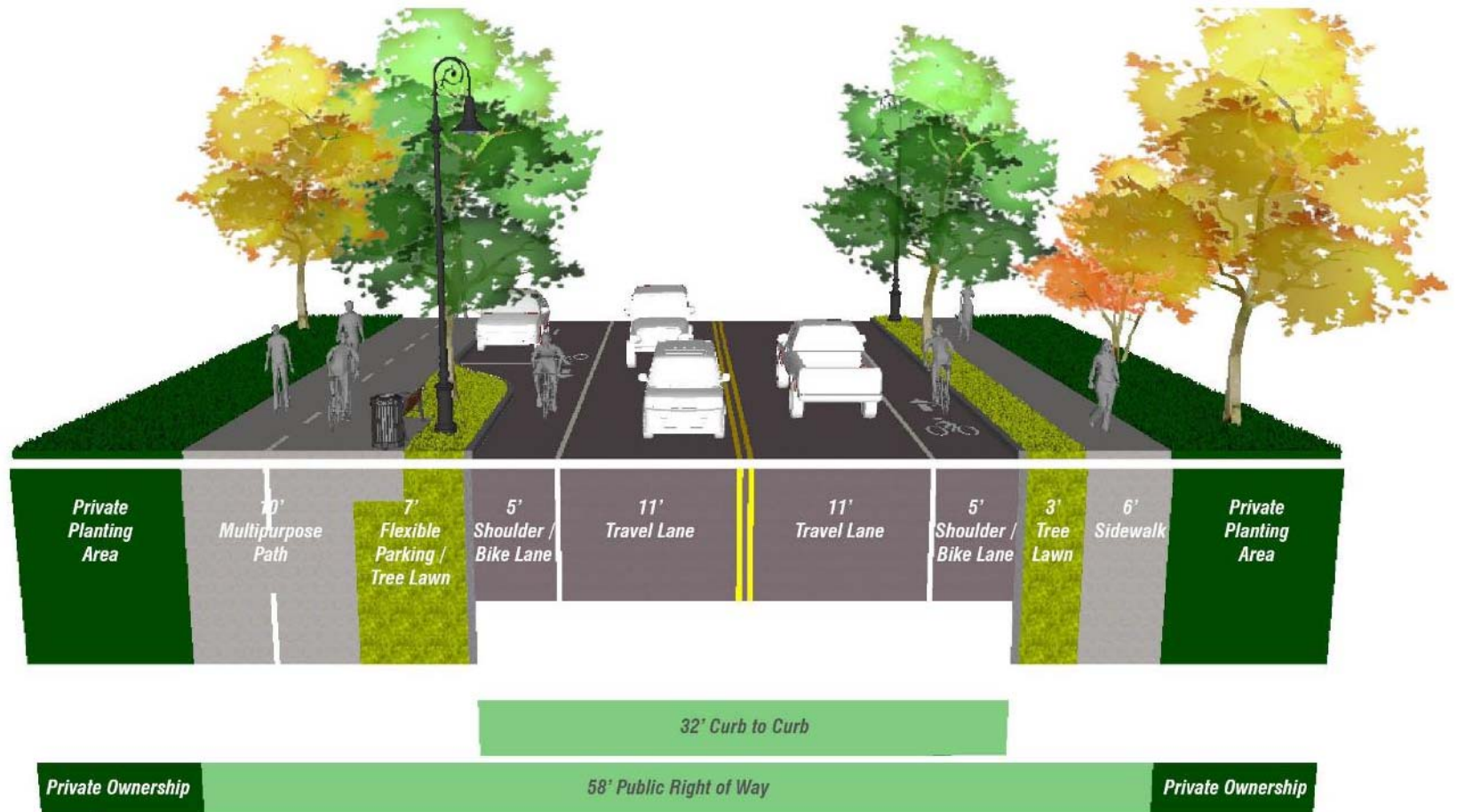
Streetscape Improvements

Section Alternatives: *Equal Redistribution*



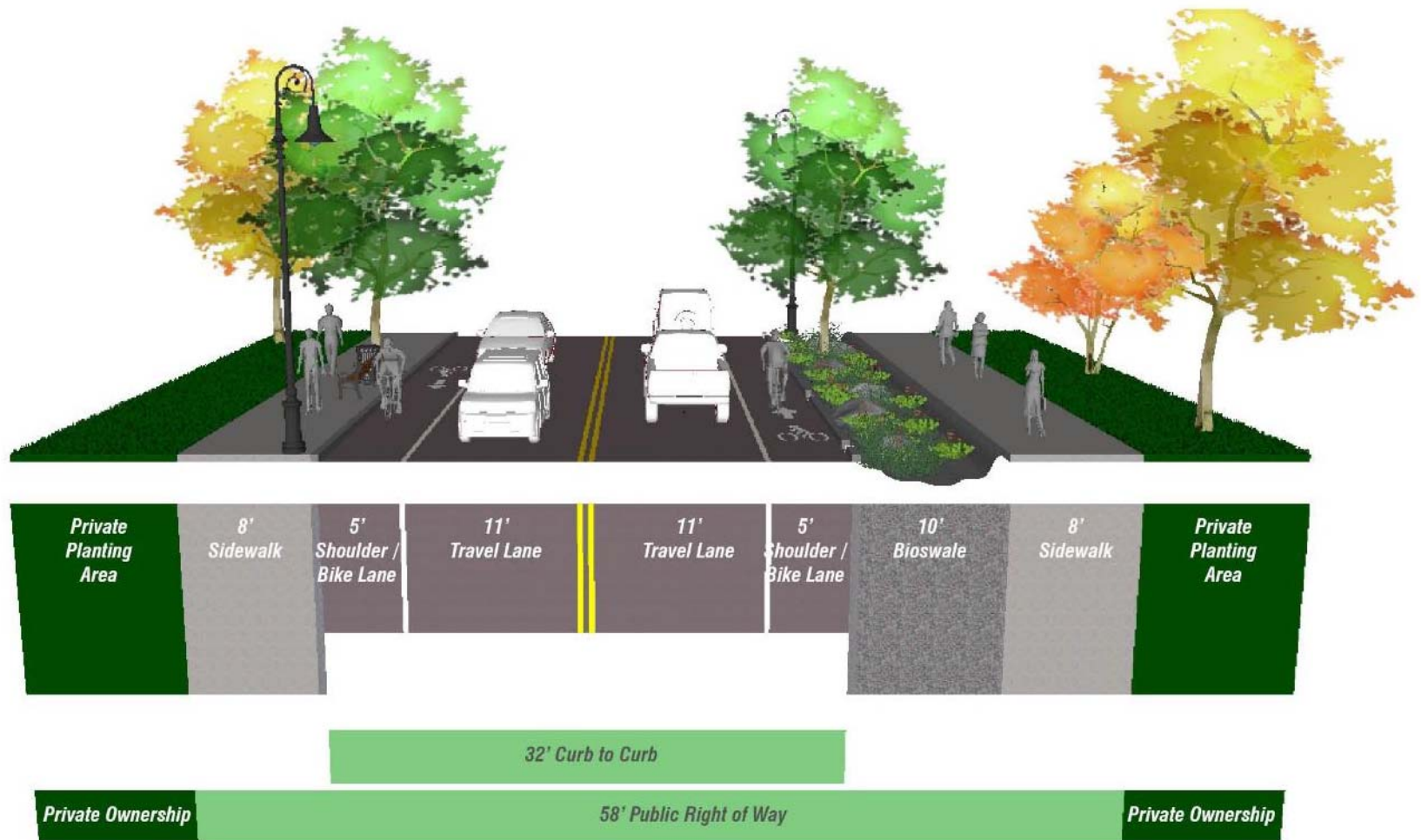
Streetscape Improvements

Section Alternatives: *Recreational*



Streetscape Improvements

Section Alternatives: *Sustainable*

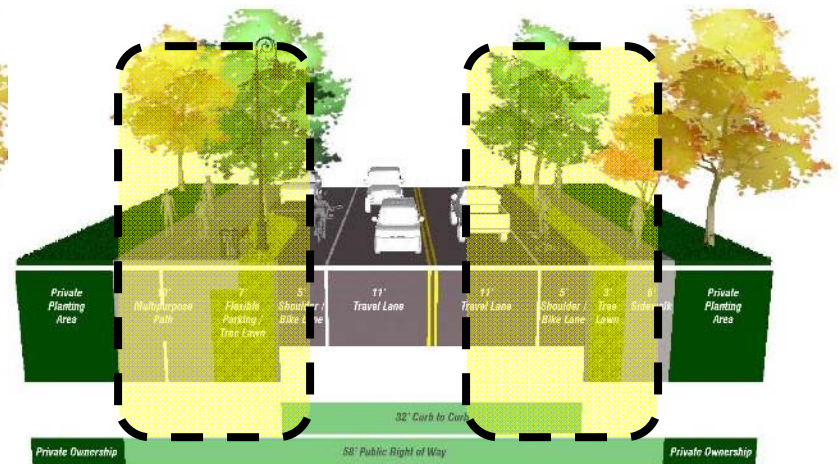
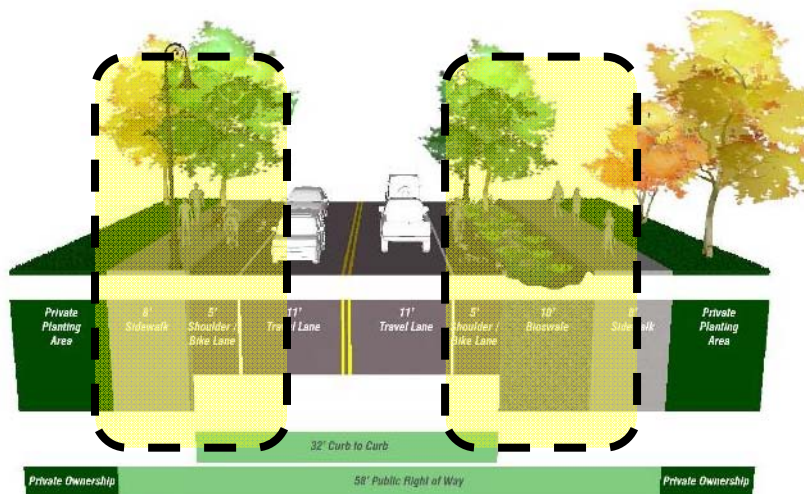
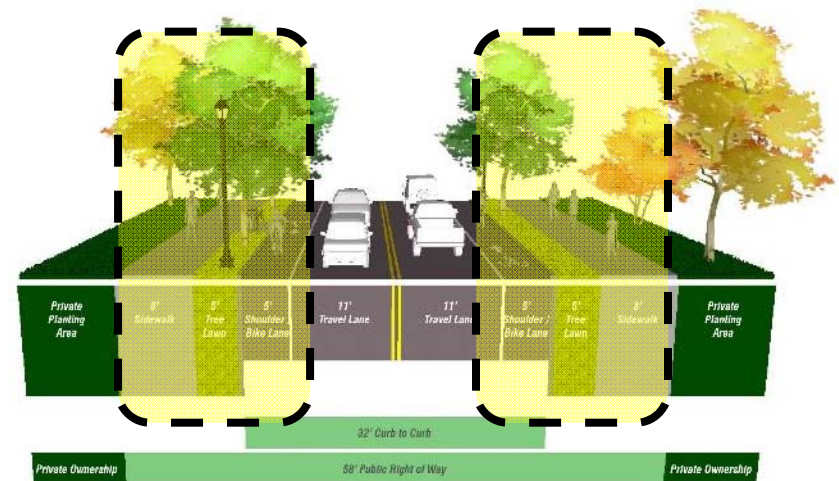


Streetscape Improvements

Preliminary Elements: *Alternatives*

What to take away from these preliminary alternatives?

- Existing conditions allow for ~16' of flexible streetscape space



Streetscape Improvements

Access Management: *Diagramming*



Streetscape Improvements

Access Management: *Existing Conditions*



Streetscape Improvements

Access Management: *Proposed Conditions*

- Curb Cut Reduction (5 to 3)
- Increased Parking Efficiency (55 to 73)



Streetscape Improvements

Parking Management: *Diagramming*



-  Potential Roadway Reallocation
-  Intersection Realignment
(Potential - Solid Outline/
Existing - Dashed Outline)
-  Reallocated Private Property
(Parking to Open Space)
-  Reorganized Private Parking
-  Parking / Sidewalk Treatment
-  On-Street Parking to Remain
-  Crosswalk Removed
-  Proposed Crosswalk
-  Crosswalk to Remain
-  Curb Cut Removed
-  Curb Cut to Remain
-  Proposed Landscape Treatment

Streetscape Improvements

Parking Management: *Existing*



Streetscape Improvements

Parking Management: *Proposed*



Streetscape Improvements

Road Realignment: *Diagramming*



- Potential Roadway Reallocation
- Intersection Realignment
(Potential - Solid Outline/
Existing - Dashed Outline)
- Reallocated Private Property
(Parking to Open Space)
- Reorganized Private Parking
- Parking / Sidewalk Treatment
- On-Street Parking to Remain
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- Crosswalk to Remain
- Curb Cut Removed
- Curb Cut to Remain
- Proposed Landscape Treatment

Streetscape Improvements

Road Realignment: *Existing Conditions*



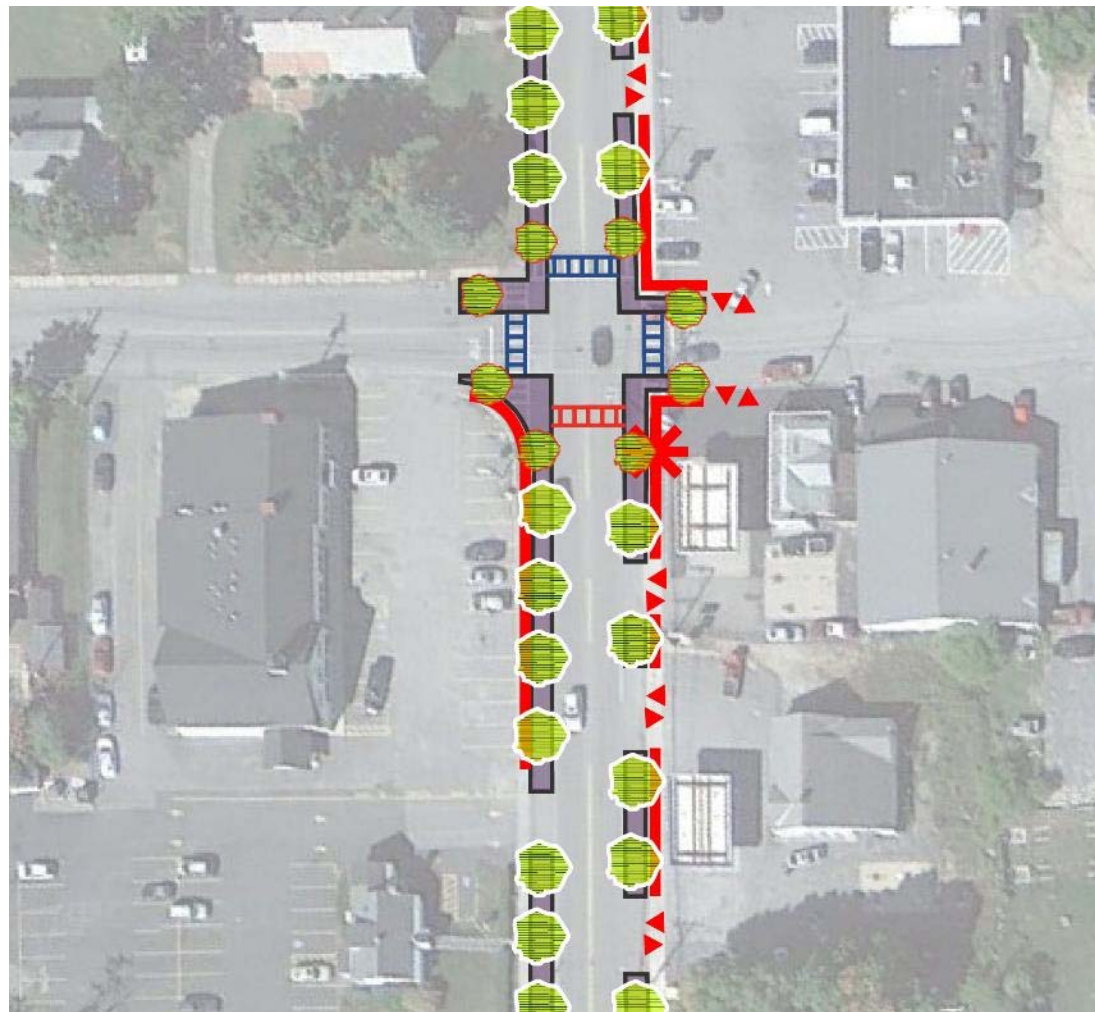
Streetscape Improvements

Road Realignment: *Proposed*



Streetscape Improvements

Landscape Buffers: *Diagramming*



-  Potential Roadway Reallocation
-  Intersection Realignment
(Potential - Solid Outline/
Existing - Dashed Outline)
-  Reallocated Private Property
(Parking to Open Space)
-  Reorganized Private Parking
-  Parking / Sidewalk Treatment
-  On-Street Parking to Remain
-  Crosswalk Removed
-  Proposed Crosswalk
-  Crosswalk to Remain
-  Curb Cut Removed
-  Curb Cut to Remain
-  Proposed Landscape Treatment

Streetscape Improvements

Cost Analysis

	Low cost range	Median cost	High cost range
Streetscape segments			
Construction costs	\$250	\$450	\$650
Soft Costs percent	8.0%	8.5%	9.0%
Total Cost	\$270	\$488	\$709
Enhanced intersections			
Construction costs	\$400	\$600	\$800
Soft Costs percent	10.0%	10.5%	11.0%
Total Cost	\$440	\$663	\$888
Major intersections			
Construction costs	\$1,100	\$1,300	\$1,500
Soft Costs percent	12.0%	13.0%	14.0%
Total Cost	\$1,232	\$1,469	\$1,710

Components	Linear feet	Range of project costs*			Range of project costs*		
		Low cost range	Median cost	High cost range	Low cost range	Median cost	High cost range
Major Streetscape Segments	3900	\$270	\$488	\$709	\$1,053,000	\$1,904,175	\$2,763,150
Enhanced intersections	200	\$440	\$663	\$888	\$88,000	\$132,600	\$177,600
Major intersections	300	\$1,232	\$1,469	\$1,710	\$369,600	\$440,700	\$513,000
Totals	4400				\$1,510,600	\$2,477,475	\$3,453,750

* Does not include the cost of underground utilities



Streetscape Improvements

Funding Sources

- MassWorks Infrastructure Grant Program
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- Chapter 90 Roadway Improvement Funds
- Special State allocations
- Federal transportation enhancement programs
- Special Federal allocations
- Town bonding and expenditures



Design Guidelines and Zoning

Existing Design Guidelines in Westminister

- Design review by Planning Board under Site Plan Review
 - Criteria for Approval within Zoning Bylaw for Site Plan Review
 - *Site Plan Rules and Regulations* (2005): Section III: Design Guidelines
- Criteria for review rely on general language
 - *Harmony with, adequate for, integrate into*
- Design Guidelines also rely on general language; few specific dimensional standards
 - Example: *Sidewalks are encouraged* not *Sidewalks shall have a minimum width of 4 feet*



Design Guidelines and Zoning

Types of Design Guidelines and Standards

- Grant funding or loan criteria
- Zoning by-laws and ordinances
- Special permit criteria
- **Site plan review criteria**
- Historic district criteria
- Redevelopment district criteria (urban renewal)
- Chapter 40R design standards
- Private sector guidelines and standards (large development)
- Informational and inspirational guidelines



Design Guidelines and Zoning

Outline for Design Guidelines

- Purposes
- Definitions
- Applicability and Applications
- Standards: Architectural Elements
- Standards: Site Elements
- Standards: Special Criteria and Performance Standards [e.g. sustainable design, public art, transportation, lighting, preservation]
- Design Review Process
- Criteria for Decisions



Design Guidelines and Zoning

Elements to Consider

- Architecture
- Signs
- Streets
- Infrastructure
- Parking
- Lighting/Building and Site
- Natural Features
- Landscape
- Sustainable Design/Site



Design Guidelines and Zoning

Case Study: Concord

- Design Guidelines are advisory for all projects within specific districts
- Additional criteria required for Site Plan Review
- Town staff prepares preliminary review of conformance prior to application and reports to Planning Board or Zoning Board of Appeals with recommendations after application submitted
- Three projects completed since 2011
 - Process has been successful for Site Plan Review
 - Applicants have used guidelines to understand review criteria
- Process has not been successful for projects not eligible for Site Plan Review
 - Applicants able to ignore design guidelines when applying for building permit



Design Guidelines and Zoning

Case Study: Dedham

- Design Review Advisory Board
 - Reviews all new construction and signage, additions and alterations within certain districts
- Recommendations made to Planning Board or other body
- DRB review before submission and/or after application
- Uses applicable “design guidelines”
 - No reference to a specific set of guidelines
- *Design Bulletin* and *Design Manual for Building Improvement*
 - On Town’s website
 - Neither document is a regulatory standard
- Town planning to further integrate guidelines into sign bylaw
- May move to design standards in the future



Design Guidelines and Zoning

Recommendations

- Add specific dimensional standards to zoning regulations
- Create written Design Guidelines that are advisory
- Identify trigger event
 - Site Plan Review
 - Any development in a specific area
- Develop clear submittal requirements
- Create Design Review Board; appoint design professionals (architect, landscape architect, planner)



Design Guidelines and Zoning

Other Resources

[Smart Growth America : Rural Areas and Small Towns](#)

[Putting Smart Growth to Work in Rural Communities](#)

[Implementing Complete Street : Rural Communities and Small Towns](#)

[Active Transportation in Rural America](#)

[Greenway Guides](#)



Underground Utilities

Constraints

- Proposed utilities would have to be separated into stand alone infrastructure / conduit
- Connections to development must be “rewired”. Varies between job but could be \$5-10K / building
- Utility providers are somewhat resistant and can charge non market prices

Opportunities

- Re-routing utility infrastructure to behind the development on Main Street

Funding Sources

- Local Bonding
- Grants
- Federal Funding
- Municipal Funding



MassDOT and Main Street/Route 2A

Roadway: Transfer of Jurisdiction

- MassDOT will work with communities to transfer jurisdiction
 - Some exceptions
 - Road will remain a state numbered road
- MassDOT prefers to transfer roads in good condition
 - May contribute funding to repairs/upgrades prior to transfer
 - *Washington Street in Dedham*
 - Highway design standards depend on funding source(s)
 - *MassWorks – some leeway in the design (bike lanes, road widths)*
 - *Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) – state standards*
- After transfer, local authority responsible for maintenance and upgrades
 - State numbered roads still eligible for state and federal funds

October 20, 2014

Town of Westminster

TOWN CENTER STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

