Winooski Gateway Corridors

Winooski, Vermont

Public Design Workshop Report

for the

Form-Based Code Project

Prepared for the

Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission

and the City of Winooski

by

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with assistance from:

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and

the Residents of Winooski

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The Winooski Gateway Corridors Form-Based Code project was initiated based on the following statement of intent from the Request for Proposals:

> ***Winooski is in the process of considerable change including young professionals and young families replacing multi-generational residents and new Americans (immigrants and refugees) arriving here from numerous countries and cultures. Given these changes, we seek to develop a shared vision for the future of our community, and specifically within this project a plan and code for infill development along the Gateway Corridors and Downtown.***

The three Gateway Corridors are: East Allen Street, Main Street, and Malletts Bay Avenue.

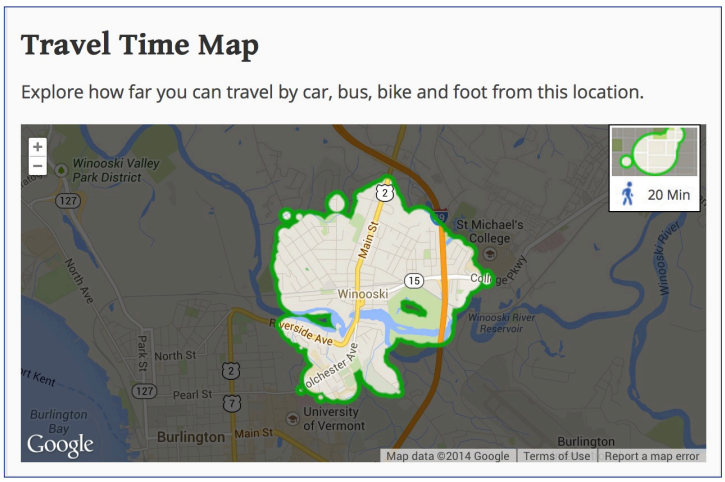
This report will provide a brief background of the project and summarizes the results of the six-day Public Participation Design Workshop that laid the foundation for the Winooski Gateway Corridors Form-Based Code.

Winooski's roots are as a Mill Town

Working with the City, the Chittenden County Regional Planning Council (CCRPC) and other stakeholders, this project seeks to preserve and enhance the unique historic character of Winooski, further encourage walkability and promote a diverse, multi-purpose community. The goal is to ensure that while Winooski is part of a regional/interconnected whole, it is distinct and wholly its own place, different from Burlington, Essex, South Burlington and Colchester.

The Winooski River, once a source of Mill power, now a luxury and aesthetic asset.

Located in Vermont's economic hub (the Champlain Valley), Winooski has a limited land mass. It is largely built-out in a desirable urban form, with many well defined neighborhoods, an existing vibrant public realm and comparatively little suburban development. The Main Street, East Allen Street and Malletts Bay Avenue corridors have valuable physical and cultural assets. The city has fostered a number of redevelopment projects and a Winooski resurgence is in progress. The establishment of a master plan and supportive development regulations for additional projects will help these pioneering efforts.



The website WalkScore.com gives Winooski a rating of 71 (on a scale of 100). The City should build on and reinforce this natural advantage and key to sustainable living, building streets that are as friendly to bicycles and pedestrians as they are to automobiles.

The demographics and environmental concerns of the 21st Century will favor good urban lifestyles. The natural and man-made advantages of Winooski can give the city a competitive edge in the region based on an urban quality of life, and its natural resources.

Context & Foundations

The City of Winooski Planning Commission is responsible for setting land use and development policies for the City, which are then adopted by the City Council. The Commission has drafted 10 General Principles.

Winooski will:

1. encourage economic growth and development through Smart Growth principles, as they are essential to the city's continued vitality. The City will allow for higher-density infill on existing lots and will ensure new developments do not adversely affect neighborhood character, strain public services, or create unsafe conditions. Infill projects will be subject to design and regulatory review.
2. create gateway districts along Routes 7, 15 and Malletts Bay Avenue. These districts will be clearly defined and enhanced via mixed-use development and through the use of symbolic features that celebrate the City's diverse cultural and historic resources and create a welcoming atmosphere. Development in gateway districts will be subject to design review.
3. support growth, density and economic development in the Central Business District. Municipal laws and ordinances will allow for development in the CBD to be as dense and as tall as possible without sacrificing a high-quality pedestrian experience. The city will adopt and implement design-review criteria in the downtown core.
4. promote businesses that are in scale with the city's neighborhoods, serve the diverse needs of Winooski residents, and act as community gathering spaces.
5. foster a range of housing options and ensure safe, well-built, well-maintained and affordable housing throughout the City.
6. encourage the preservation of its buildings on the National and State Historic Registers as well as other historically and architecturally significant features of the built environment.
7. provide a variety of transportation options through "complete streets" that take into account the needs of motorists, bicyclists, public transportation users and pedestrians of all ages and abilities. The city will encourage the use of arterial corridors and take measures to slow and reduce traffic in residential areas.
8. protect and enhance parks, the urban forest and other natural features of the urban landscape. The city will deliberately create gathering places throughout the community through the use of benches, picnic tables, and playgrounds and by prioritizing investment in neighborhood parks.
9. preserve and enhance the river corridor without negatively impacting the ecosystem. The City will adopt a holistic approach to the river's health through best storm water management practices, habitat protection and pollution controls.
10. be guided by the above Principles with the goals of building resiliency and becoming a model sustainable practice community.

Winooski is rich in history and tradition. In Downtown Winooski, the Farmer's Market and restaurants are well-known destinations. The City's small blocks provide a good framework for future development. The existing buildings are a good foundation for its future. New buildings should follow this example and use similar building materials and scale.

A compact 1.4 square miles, Winooski lends itself to being a walkable environment. It already has a strong 'sense of place' and its street and block structure is the ideal framework for the City to become the exemplary walkable/sustainable community of Vermont.

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Beginnings

The Planning Commission, with assistance from the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission, decided to pursue Form-Based Code (FBC) as the development regulation tool for the gateway districts. In late 2013 the consultant team of Ferrell Madden with Dreher Design Associates and Urban Advantage were selected to assist the City of Winooski in this effort.

Process

In the spring of 2014, the Consultant Team travelled to Winooski to gather information and gain greater understanding of the study area by meeting with staff, reviewing documents, and analyzing the urban form. This review and analysis laid the foundation for the work to follow.

In June, the Consultant Team returned to Winooski to undertake an intensive 6 day public design workshop, known as a charrette, June 13th to June 18th at the O'Brien Community Center. The team began looking in greater detail at the district—the urban design, the traffic and transportation considerations.

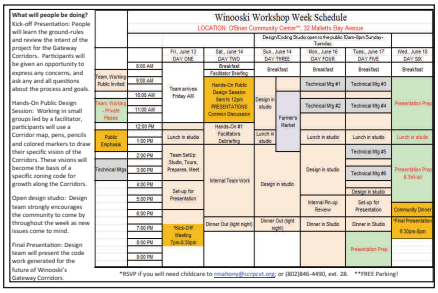
The Public Design Workshop Week

A public participation urban design charrette is an intensive community-based planning forum that brings together City residents, local stakeholders, business people, and government officials to collectively craft a plan for a designated area. An important part of the Winooski Gateways Public Workshop was public outreach. CCRPC and City staff undertook a series of actions, including: direct mailings, e-mails, Front Porch Forum posts, creating a project website, local access TV shows, local TV news segment, school newsletter articles, newspaper article, outreach to local businesses and organizations, Farmer's Market booth, and printing of banners and signs to promote the Public Design Workshop.

Both before and during the workshop, the team members toured the area, walking up and down each corridor, taking photographs, noting existing conditions, the current mix of land uses, natural features such as topography and wetlands, street configurations and traffic patterns. These physical characteristics will have a direct impact on both short and long term redevelopment.

The Workshop week began and ended with community gathering and discussion. On the final day, more than 100 people attended a Community Dinner followed by a Work-in-Progress presentation summarizing the efforts of the six day public design workshop and initial planning ideas.

2014-15 Gateway Corridors Project



What will people be doing?
Kick-off Presentation: People will learn the ground-rules and review the intent of the project for the Gateway Corridors. Participants will be given an opportunity to express any concerns, and ask any and all questions about the process and goals.

Hands-On Public Design Session: Working in small groups led by a facilitator, participants will use a Corridor map, pens, pencils and colored markers to draw their specific vision of the Corridors. These visions will become the basis of a specific zoning code for growth along the Corridors.

Open design studio: Design team strongly encourages the community to come by throughout the week as new issues come to mind.

Final Presentation: Design team will present the code work generated for the future of Winooski's Gateway Corridors.

Winooski Workshop Week Schedule
LOCATION: O'Brien Community Center*, 32 Malletts Bay Avenue
Design/Coding Studio open to the public 10am-6pm Sunday–Tuesday

	Fri., June 13 DAY ONE	Sat., June 14 DAY TWO	Sun. June 14 DAY THREE	Mon., June 16 DAY FOUR	Tues., June 17 DAY FIVE	Wed., June 18 DAY SIX
8:00 AM	Team arrives Friday AM	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
9:00 AM		Facilitator Briefing				
10:00 AM		Hands-On Public Design Session (ends to 12pm PRESENTATIONS Common Discussion	Design in studio	Technical Mtg #1	Technical Mtg #3	Presentation Prep
11:00 AM			Farmer's Market	Technical Mtg #2	Technical Mtg #4	
12:00 PM		Hands-On #1 Facilitators Debriefing	Lunch in studio			
1:00 PM	Lunch in studio			Lunch in studio	Lunch in studio	Lunch in studio
2:00 PM	Team Setup: Studio, Tours, Prepares, Meet	Internal Team Work	Design in studio	Design in studio	Technical Mtg #5	Presentation Prep & Set-up
3:00 PM					Technical Mtg #6	
4:00 PM	Set-up for Presentation				Design in studio	
5:00 PM				Internal Recap Review	Set-up for Presentation	Community Dinner
6:00 PM		Dinner Out (light eight)	Dinner Out (light eight)	Dinner in Studio	Dinner in Studio	Final Presentation 6:30pm-8pm
7:00 PM	Work-Off Meeting 7pm-8:30pm				Presentation Prep	
8:00 PM						
9:00 PM						

*RSVP if you will need childcare to mwhorey@ccrpcvt.org, or (802)846-4490, ext. 28. **FREE Parking!

The Public Design Workshop Week

Farmers Market Outreach

Community Dinner before the presentation

The Work-In-Progress presentation/dinner

The Public Design Workshop

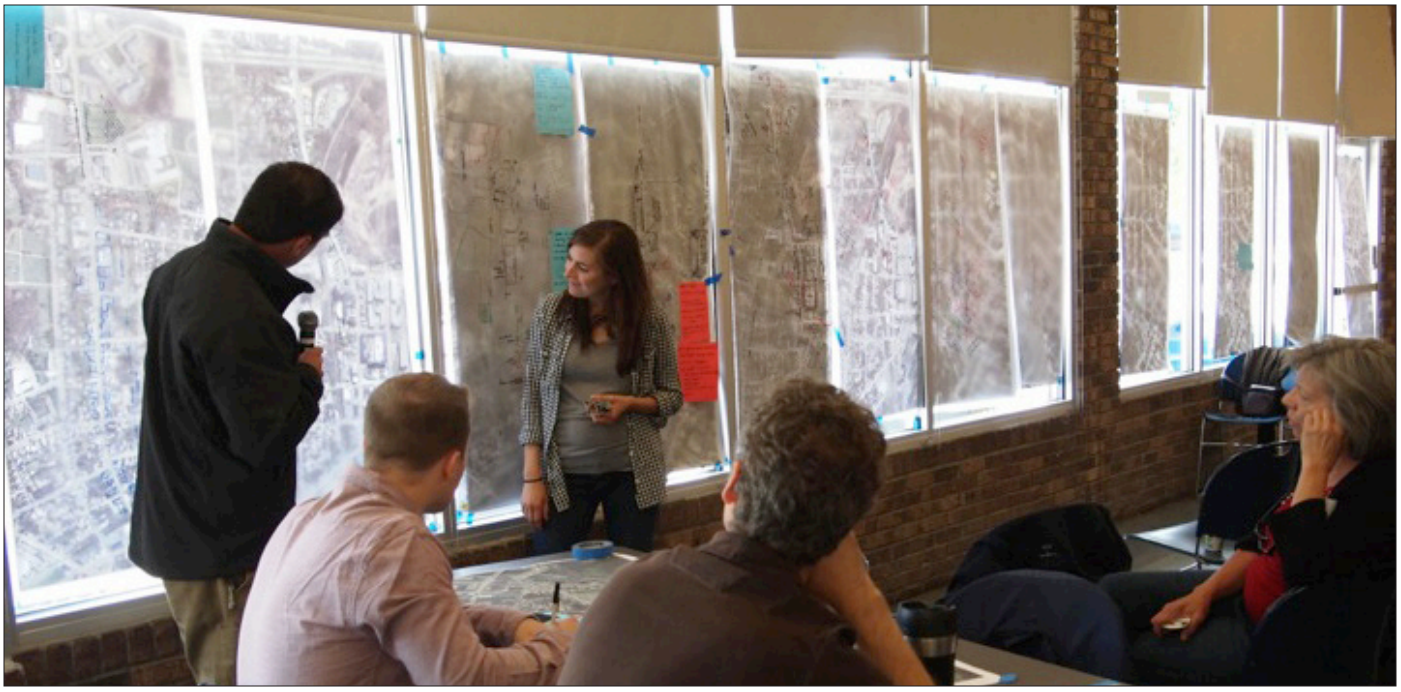
Friday Night Kick-Off
6/13/2014

Nearly 50 people gathered in the O'Brien Community Center on Friday evening for a kick-off presentation. Following welcoming remarks by Mayor Michael O'Brien, the consultant team made a presentation on the process and goals for the week ahead, the principles of good "place-making," and the basic concepts of form-based codes. The team also provided examples of good urban places—both new and old—from around the United States, to illustrate potential solutions to common redevelopment issues. Residents were then asked to describe on survey cards, in just one word, the character of each corridor as they saw it today and how they would hope to see it in the future.

The event concluded with attendees asking questions, raising issues and concerns, and elaborating on their hopes for the future of the corridors.

Saturday Morning Hands-On Work Session

On Saturday morning, June 14, residents showed up ready to roll up their sleeves and get to work. They split into groups of 6 to 8, assisted by a facilitator, to "draw" the future for each corridor. The groups worked on large maps of each corridor, identifying landmarks and features, problems, issues, and targets of opportunity for redevelopment. They drew diagrams and sketches to convey the character they would like to see in the future.



To conclude the hands-on session, a spokesperson from each group presented each table's main ideas (and drawings) to the entire audience. There was considerable consistency from group to group.

Consistent Themes:

- Improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, especially "safe routes to school"
- Have street trees
- Make sure new development "fits in"
- Promote mixed-use in key areas
- Protect Winooski's diversity and affordable housing

During the hands-on sessions, the consultant team (and CCRPC and City staff) took notes, and asked questions. The information, ideas and issues gathered provided the foundation for the consultants to build on in the following week.

The following pages highlight the residents' table drawings for each corridor.

The Residents Speak: East Allen Street

The Table Drawings: *What you told us*

Resident concerns

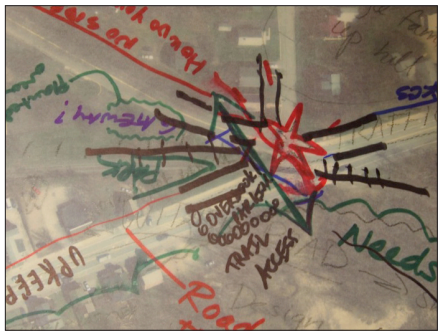
speeding cars and insufficient pedestrian and bicycle accommodations. The confusing intersection and merge movements at Hood's Crossing were cited as problems also.

Resident aspirations

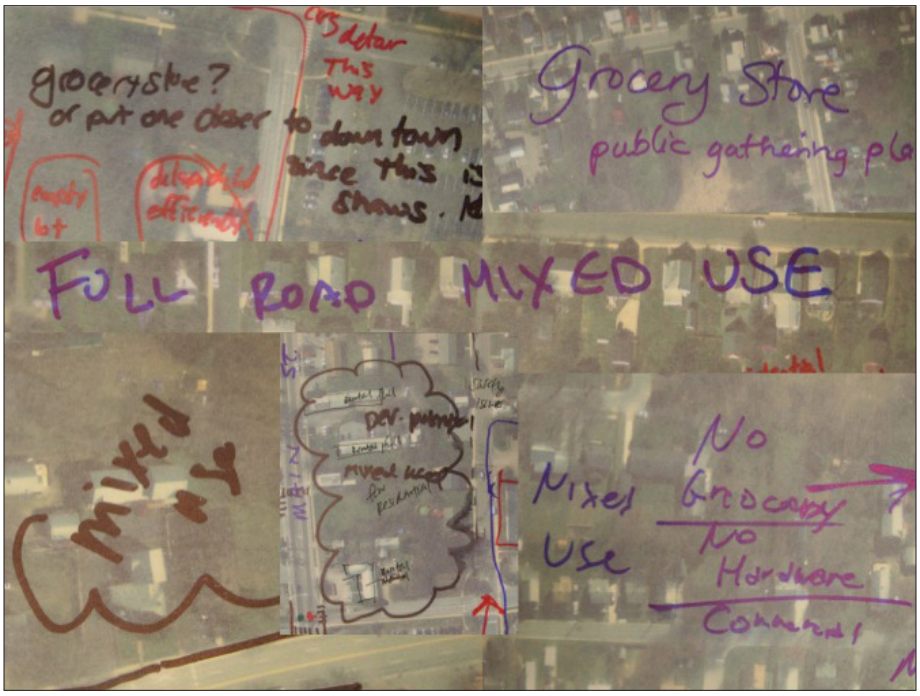
safer pedestrian and bicycle ways, street trees, and increased walkability through out the corridor. Better access to the Casavant Nature area and a better pedestrian connection to St. Michaels College.

The western end of the corridor was seen as an extension of the Downtown and appropriate for a more intense mixed-use character. The sections eastward from Hoods Crossing (Hood/Spring/East Allen intersection) to approximately Manseau St., were seen as residential, with some ambiguity about where the character transitions to freeway-commerce close to Exit 15 on I-89.

East Allen at Abenaki, 2014



Resident Comments: ***"safer bus stops" "Slower traffic" "upkeep" "affordable housing" "better access" (to Casavant natural area) "trees" "gateway" "river access" "St. Michaels pathway" "bike access"***



Resident concerns
automobile dominance and inadequate pedestrian and bicycle accommodations. Many said the intersection at Spring Street was a problem for automobile, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic.

Resident aspirations
walkable streets: safe pedestrian and bicycle ways, street trees, and a grocery store on Main. "Safe routes to schools" was heard often. Participants mentioned the current scale and mixed-use character of Main Street, especially the affordable restaurants, as valued qualities.

Resident Comments:
"Grocery Store" "Street Trees" "mixed-use" "Safe Routes to School" "gateway" "affordable housing" "public gathering places" "bicycle paths" "more destinations on Main Street"

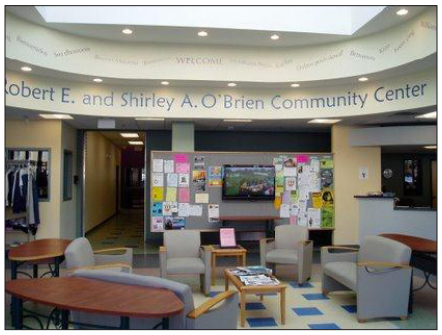
The Residents Speak: Malletts Bay Avenue

Resident concerns
inadequate pedestrian and bicycle accommodations and code enforcement. The intersection at Union Street was cited as difficult for bicycle and pedestrian traffic.

Resident aspirations
walkable streets: improved pedestrian and bicycle ways (including direct "safe routes to schools"), street trees, an international grocery store, an increased "arts" presence,and a community garden. The Union Street intersection area was seen as the neighborhood center but in need of rejuvenation.

Resident Comments:
"sidewalks w/bump-outs"
"Slow down (traffic)" "trees"
"upkeep" "gateway"
"community garden" "better connection to Downtown"
"more arts activities"
"bicycle corridor"

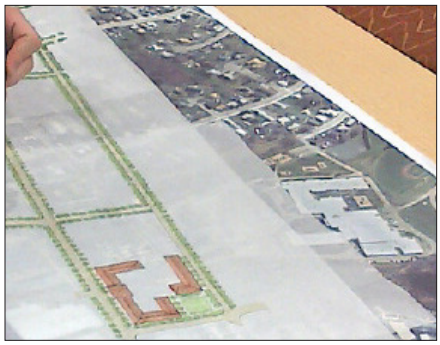
On Site Design Studio



During the week of June 13 through June 18, the consultant team worked in a studio at the O'Brien Community Center to begin testing the design concepts presented by the residents at the hands-on public session against the physical, economic and political realities of Winooski. The consultants, used their urban design and planning expertise as well as the knowledge gained through document review and by site analysis touring the study area, to hone the Residents Vision Plans.

The studio was open to the public each day, enabling stake-holders and other interested residents to drop by and see how the master planning process was progressing and to bring in new ideas for the team to consider. During the course of the week, the studio was visited by more than 35 individuals. The visitors represented a variety of groups, from neighbors to local business people, CCRPC or City staff to Planning and or Steering Committee members, to property owners and other stakeholders, including Nepalese from Bhutan.

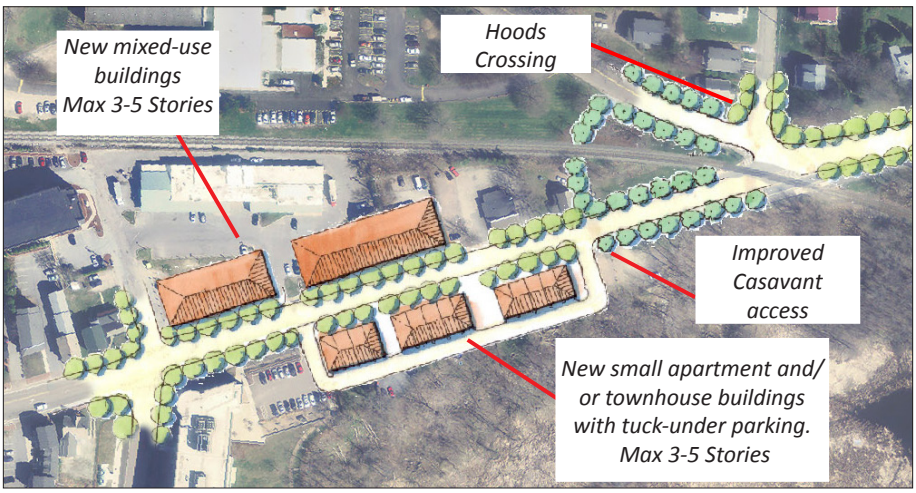
The consultant team met with stakeholder groups and technical specialists throughout the week: gathering information and testing ideas in the specific context, and refining the residents' vision for the corridors and the way in which the corridors connect to downtown. These meetings included: public works, state highway (VTrans) and transportation engineers and planners, public safety, neighborhood associations, church groups, business associations, business owners, bike/ped advocates, real estate developers, landowners, arts and cultural groups, and city commissions, and utility representatives. The knowledge gained during these meetings was incorporated into the overall master planning process.



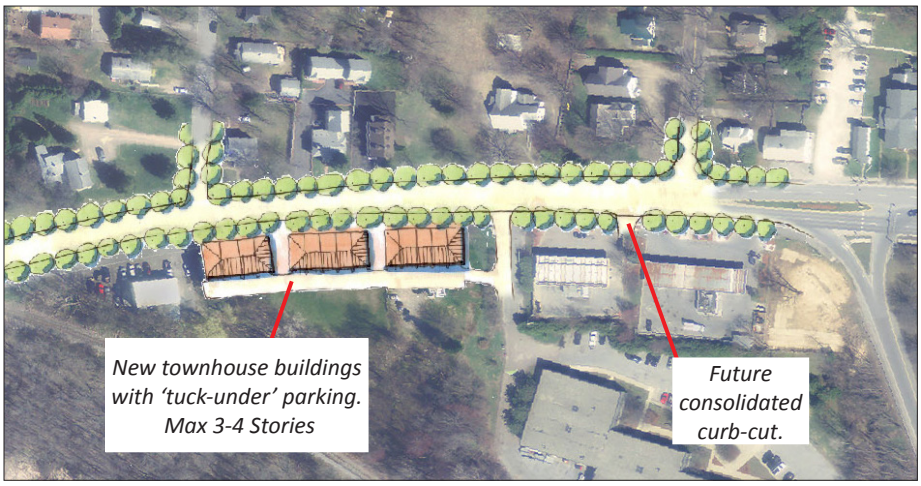
The consultant team worked to refine the residents' vision while addressing the physical, economic, and political realities. By the end of the week, the team had produced a conceptual master plan for the corridors. These are Illustrative Plans that represent one scenario of the way in which redevelopment might take place under a new Master Plan and Form-Based Code. (This is presented in greater detail in the following sections of this report.)

The Vision: East Allen Street

Vision Plan: East Allen Street corridor, with potential mixed-use redevelopment at the Abenaki Way intersection and residential infill near Mauseau Street.



Vision Plan: Hoods Crossing as a gateway with a perimeter planting of American Plane Trees



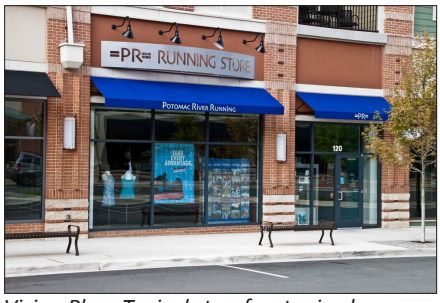
The East Allen Vision Plan calls for multi-story mixed-use, residential, or office buildings with heights ranging from 2 to 5 (western half) and 2 to 4 (eastern half). Street Trees, wide sidewalks and a raised bicycle track are added to make East Allen a complete urban environment.

East Allen Street is a Winooski gateway, leading in from Exit 15 on I-89.

The Vision Plan includes mixed-use buildings on the west as an extension of the downtown. (The Beverage Warehouse site could be an early project.) The eastern end is residential until close to I-89 where freeway commerce uses are appropriate. Traffic calming is crucial to the walkability of all of East Allen.

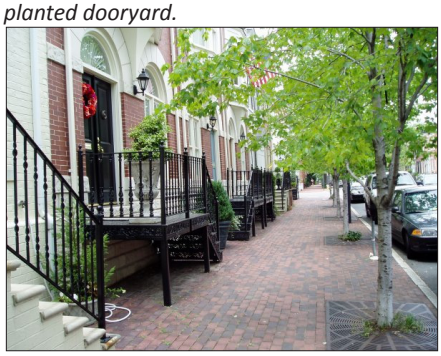
Hoods Crossing is reinforced as a "gateway" into downtown with a strong landscape design of perimeter street trees that will mark entry into Winooski and the Casavant Natural Area. This scheme maintains and perhaps expands the current flower plantings in the triangle.

Example: Townhouses with 'tuck-under' rear parking and fronts on East Allen.



Vision Plan: Typical storefront mixed-use west of Hood Street

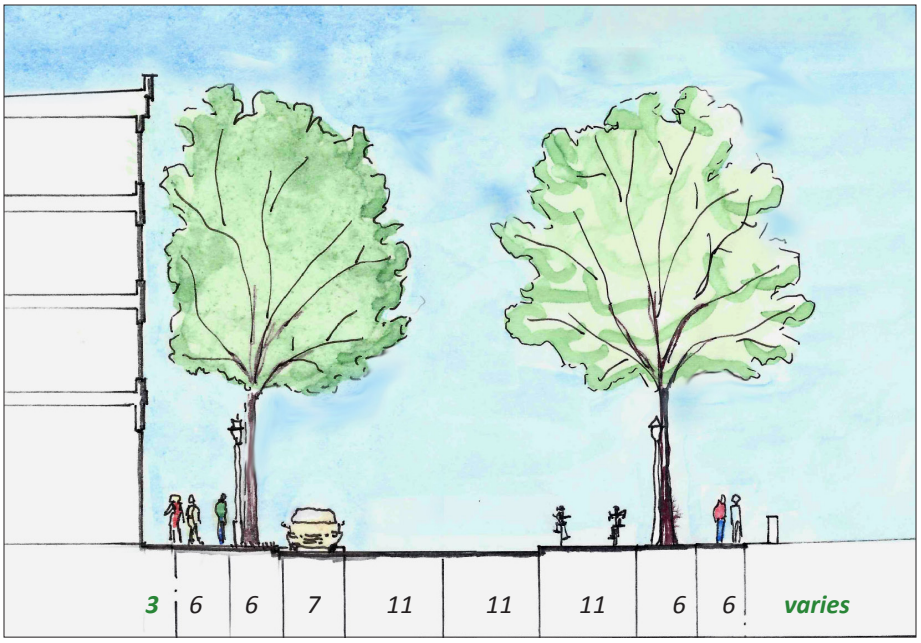
Vision Plan: Small apartment building with planted dooryard.



Vision Plan: Townhouses with a paved dooryard.

Vision Plan: Townhouse/duplex with stoops

Vision Plan: Townhouses with front porches



East Allen Street, view looking east from Abenaki Way

Vision Plan for East Allen Street with two 11 foot travel lanes. The north side has a 7 foot on-street parking lane, a 6 foot tree lawn, 6 foot clear sidewalk, and an additional (typically) 3 foot "dooryard" between the sidewalk and the building façade. The south side has an 11 foot raised two-way bicycle track in place of the parking lane.

Vision Plan: Townhouses with stoops

Residents were positive about 'good' new development in Winooski, albeit with a strong 'sense of place'.

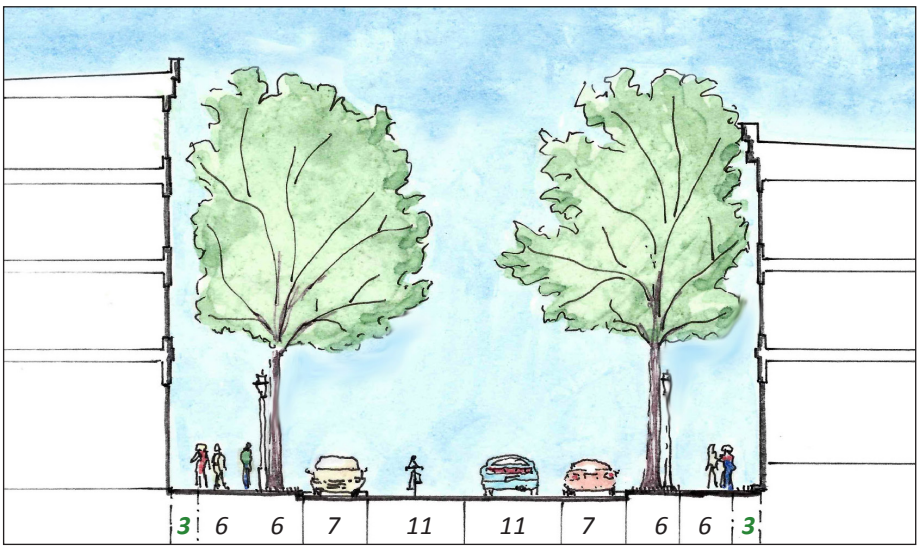
Potential types of buildings under the new code along East Allen Street.

One option for re-routing and calming the Hood's Crossing intersection, replacing the high-speed cross-merging movements with a new "T" intersection (signalized)

The Vision: Main Street

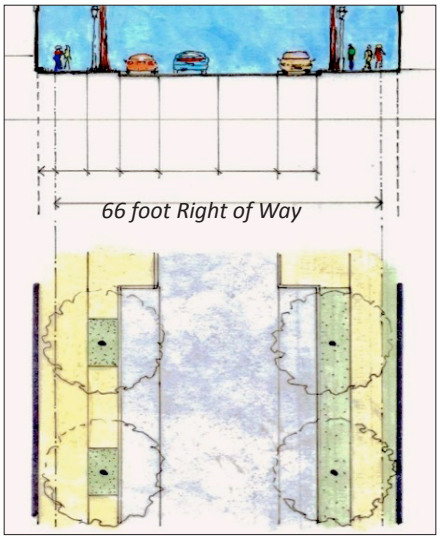
Vision Plan: Main Street, showing potential mixed-use redevelopment along Main between Spring and LaFontain, with a grocery at Stevens, new mixed-use buildings east across Main, and mixed-use and/or hotel redevelopment at Tigan Street.

Vision Plan: A two-way raised bicycle track (in red) on Weaver assists in "safe routes to school" and a "sharrow" in the downhill travel lane on Main (shared bicycle and auto, shown in orange).



Vision Plan for Main Street includes two 11 foot travel lanes, 7 foot parking lanes, 6 foot street tree lawns, 6 foot clear sidewalks, and 3 foot (typical) "dooryards" in front of building façades. The downhill/southbound lane would be a "sharrow"—a shared bicycle/automobile lane.

Main Street is the primary north/south corridor and the Gateway into town from exit 16 on I-89. It currently has a mixed character of residential, retail, and commercial functions.

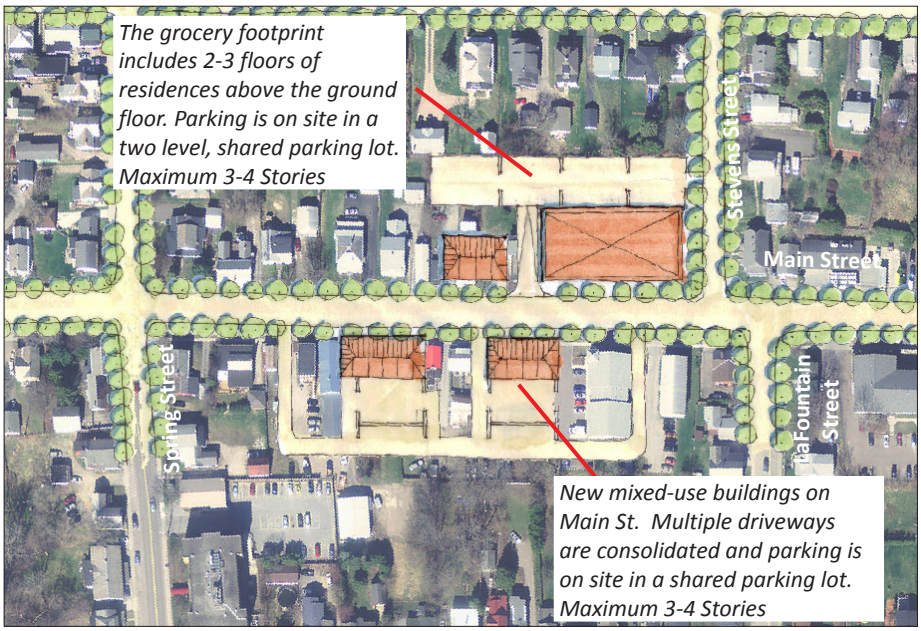


The Pedestrian Realm

Where desired due to high pedestrian traffic, the tree lawn and the dooryard may be paved (as shown above left). This would provide as much as 15 feet of pedestrian area along mixed-use sections of Main. This improvement in walkability will raise the value of Main Street properties and attract reinvestment.

Main at Stevens, 2014 view south,

Vision Plan: A potential grocery under the new code at the corner of Main and Stevens



Parking for this hypothetical new grocery building is accessed from Main and Stevens. New developments on Main St would share parking access and combine/reduce curb cuts, for an improved walking environment.

An urban grocery being built in Newport VT

Main Street 2014

Vision Plan: Main Street's potential: wide sidewalks, shopfronts and street trees

Residents want to retain the scale and variety of Main Street offerings.

The Vision: Main Street

Vision Plan: New mixed-use buildings on Main St. and Tigan. The building(s) wrap the perimeter of the lot and engage the streets and the park. Multiple driveways are consolidated and parking is on site in a shared parking lot. Maximum 3-5 Stories

Typical urban building with flexible uses.

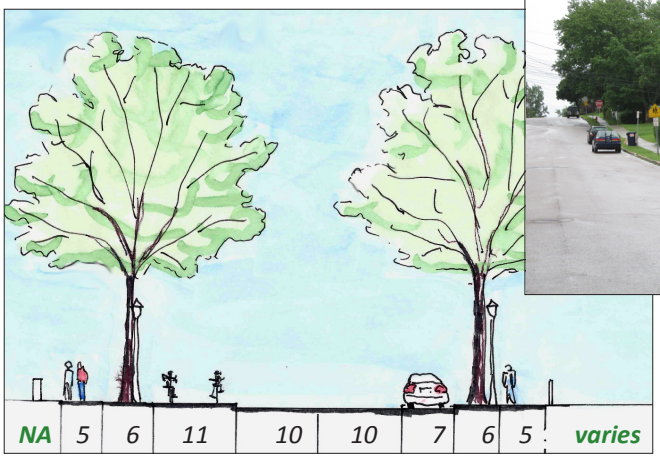
Parking is behind the buildings, within the block.

Vision Plan: Townhouses with stoops

A slight increase in the dooryard area depth can create a place for sidewalk dining

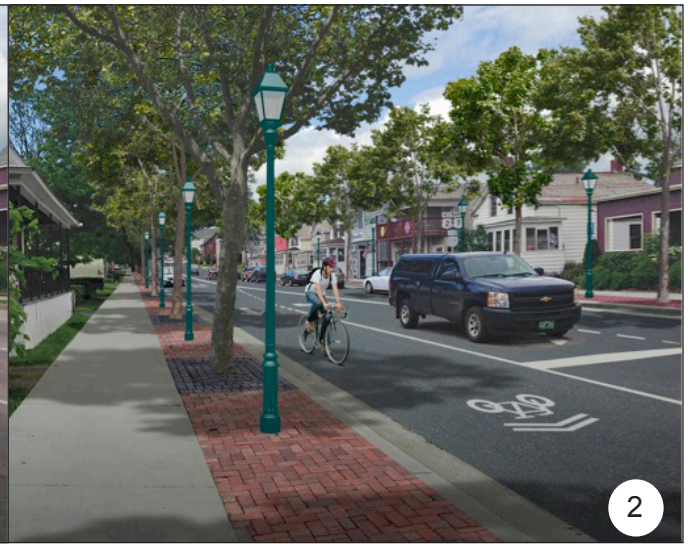
Not all of Main Street needs to have retail storefronts -- townhouses and small apartments are appropriate in some areas.

The full solution for bicycle traffic and "safe routes to school" involves Weaver Street: a raised two-way bicycle track on the west side of Weaver Street (for all ages and bicycling experience levels), two 10 foot travel lanes and a 7 foot east-side parking lane. A 6 foot tree lawn and 5 foot sidewalks would be on both sides of the street. No changes to the character of Weaver St. are considered south of Bellevue.

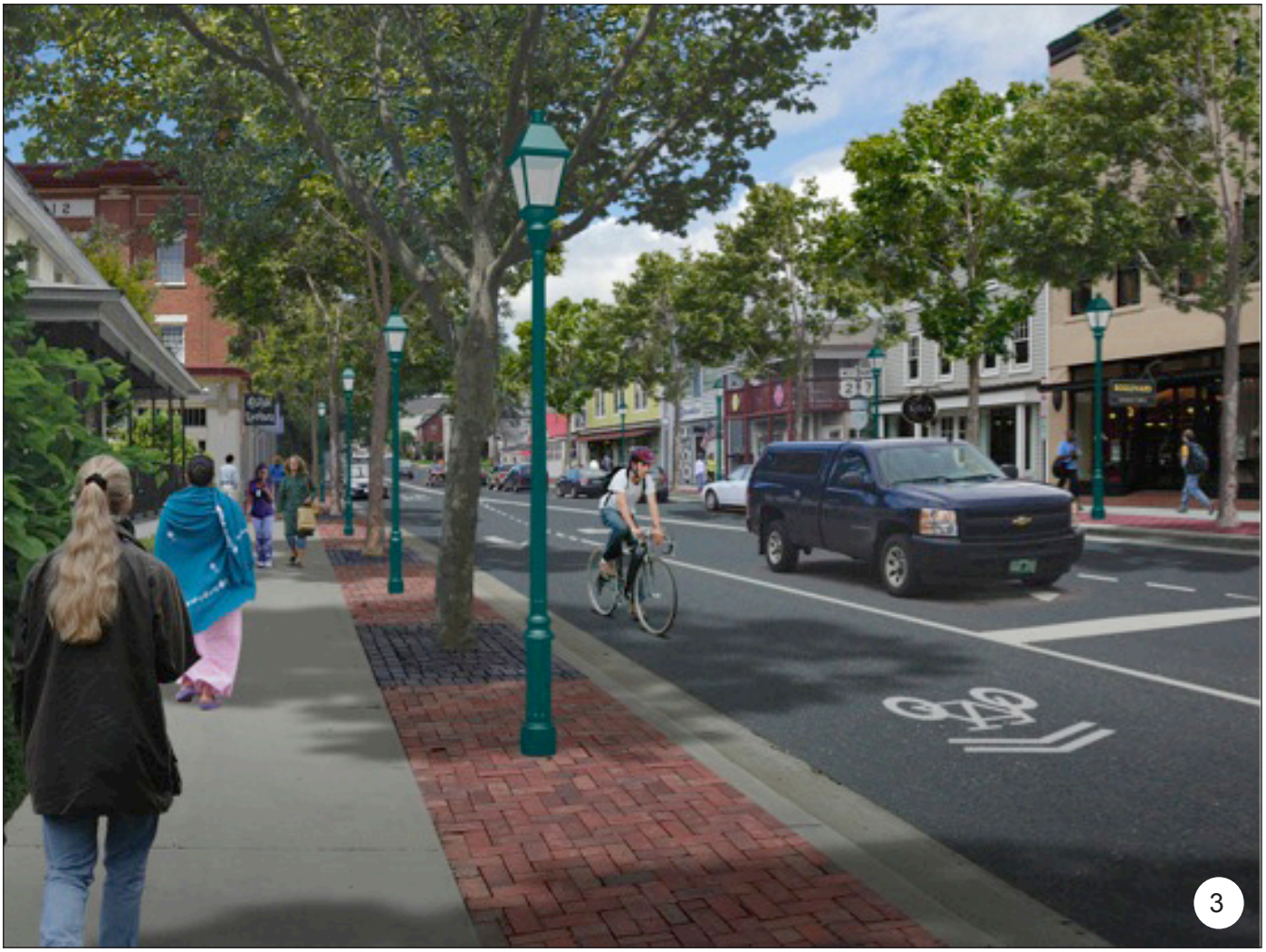


Weaver St. 2014, houses on the right; cemetery, church and convent on the left.

View looking north, just above Spring Street. Wide lanes, narrow sidewalks, poor street trees.

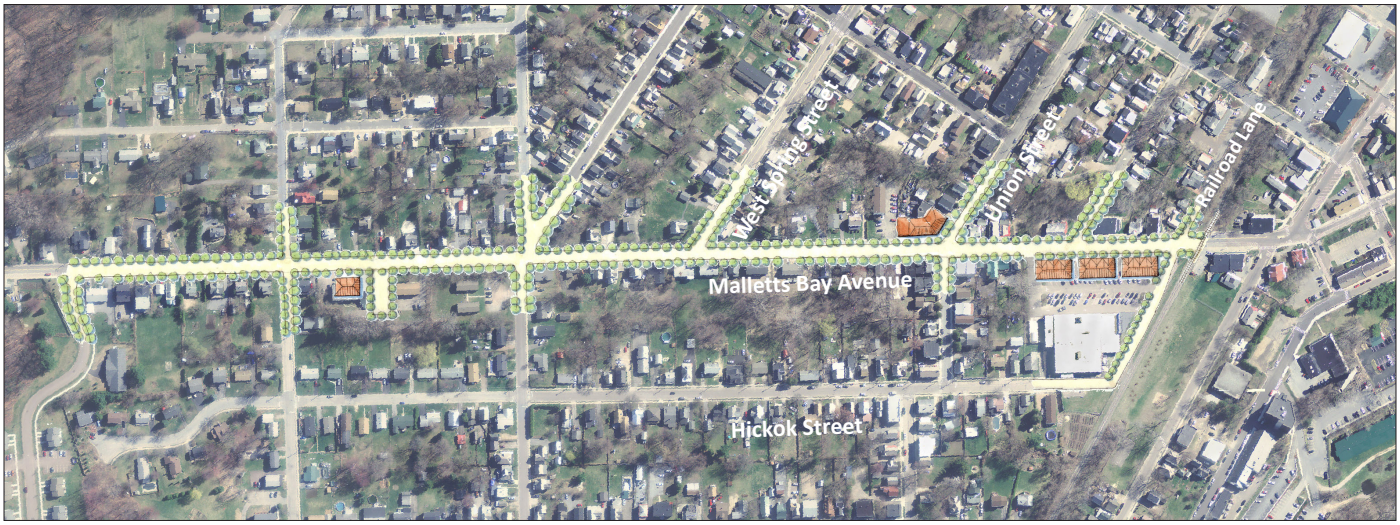


Same view with public infrastructure investments: proper travel lane widths, wide sidewalks, and unifying street trees and lights.



Vision Plan: Main Street reclaimed as a comfortable public realm and excellent place for living, working, shopping and dining. The sense of enclosure provided by the buildings and street trees allows the people and businesses that inhabit it to make it their own and will identify this place as uniquely Winooski.

The Vision: Malletts Bay Avenue



Vision Plan: Malletts Bay Avenue Corridor: street trees, wide sidewalks and bicycle lanes. Mixed-use at Union and east, residential to the west.

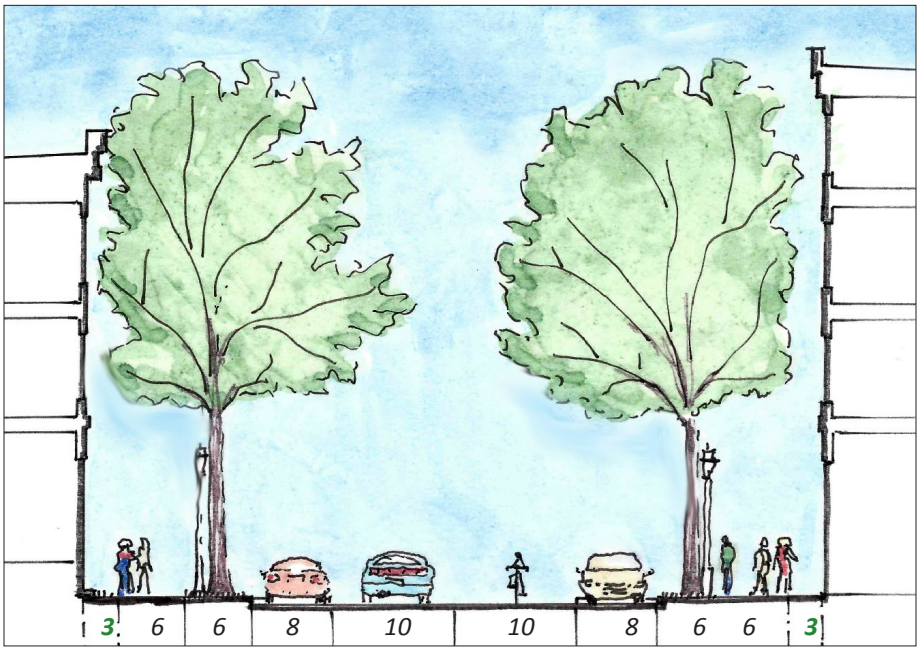
Malletts Bay Avenue is the central corridor for revitalizing neighborhoods on the west side of Winooski. Its character is detached residential leading in from Colchester almost to Union, where it becomes small scale mixed-use.

To promote a neighborhood business setting as a gathering space, a building on west Malletts Bay Avenue is shown at the sidewalk with a formal parking/gathering space at its side. We show it here defined by perimeter shade trees.

New mixed-use and/or apartment buildings on the O'Brien Community Center property fronts onto Malletts Bay Avenue. Parking is underneath the new buildings, taking advantage of the change in grade down to the Community Center parking lot. Maximum 3-5 Stories

A simple storefront, retail or office

The street-space includes two 10 foot travel lanes, 8 foot parking lanes (east of Union and on the north side, this would be replaced by the raised bicycle track), 6 foot tree lawns, 6 foot clear sidewalks, and an additional (typically) 3 foot "dooryard" to the building façades.



The vision deals with bicycle transportation in 2 ways: west of Union, through the primarily residential area, a raised two-way bicycle track on the north side of Malletts Bay Avenue (to provide for all age and bicycling experience levels), and through the neighborhood center section, west to Weaver St., "sharrows" (shared bicycle and auto traffic) into the Downtown.

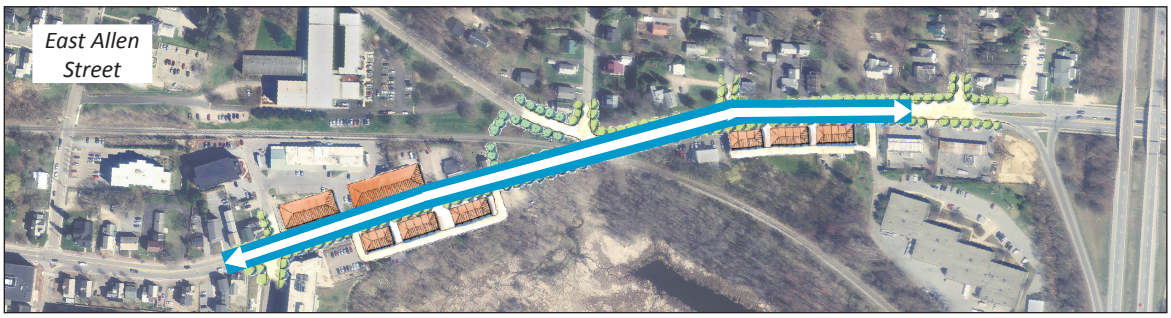
Vision Plan: A mixed-use building at Union and Malletts Bay Avenue.
Parking is behind the new building.
Maximum 3-4 Stories

Visualizing Change: A New Malletts Bay Avenue

1. 2014 view looking east down Mallets Bay Avenue toward the railroad tracks
2. New investments in public infrastructure.
3. Infill development. Development of a residential building on the O'Brien Community Center Property.
4. More development, fostered by the public investment
5. Options: residential building described in 3 above depicted now as mixed-use.

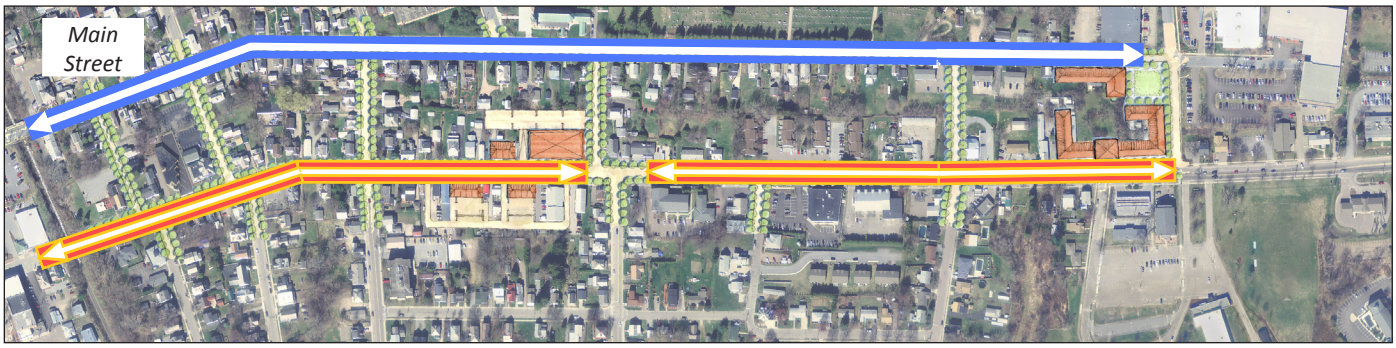
Vision Plan: Eastern Malletts Bay Avenue with narrow, shared bicycle/Auto travel lanes, wide sidewalks, street trees. A thriving center for a diverse neighborhood.

The Vision: Street-Space and Transportation



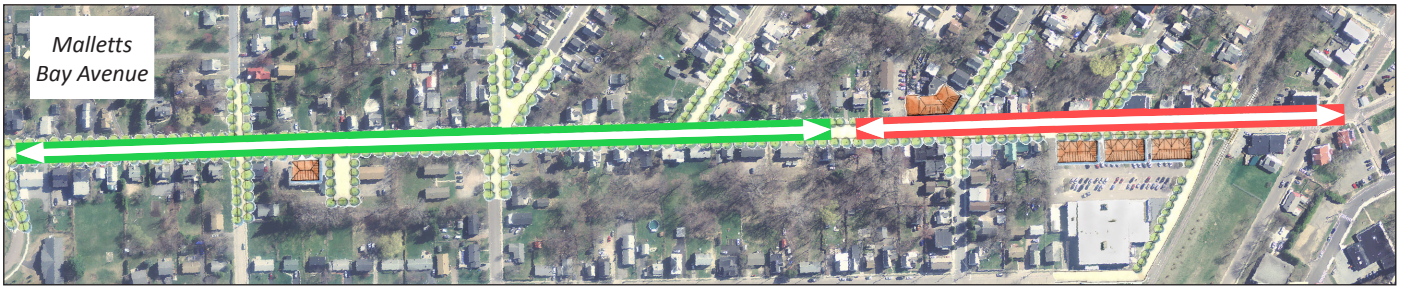
These diagrams and the street sections reflect the basic vision of the Public Design Workshop.

11ft two-way raised bike lane south side, 8ft parking lane north side, two 11ft travel lanes, two 6ft tree lawns, two 5ft sidewalks, two 3-8ft dooryards *typical*



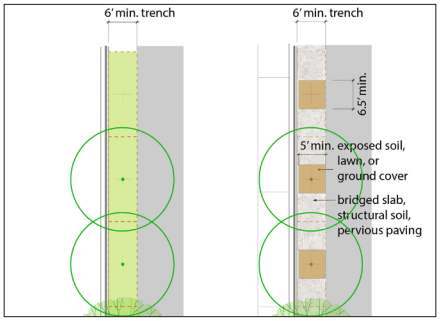
Main St.: 11ft southward/downhill 'sharrow' lane, 11ft northward auto lane, two 7ft parking lanes, two 6ft tree lawns, two 6ft sidewalks, two 3ft dooryards *typical*

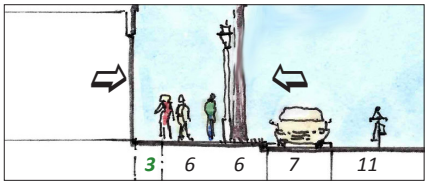
Weaver St.: 10ft two-way raised bike lane west side, 8ft parking lane east side, two 10ft travel lanes, two 6ft tree lawns, two 5ft sidewalks, 3-8+ft dooryards *typical*



two 10ft sharrow lanes, two 8ft parking lanes, two 6ft tree lawns, two 6ft sidewalks, two 3ft dooryards *typical*

11ft two-way raised bike lane north side, 8ft parking lane south side, two 10ft travel lanes, two 6ft tree lawns, two 5ft sidewalks, two 3-8ft dooryards *typical*





Flexible Pedestrian Area Can respond to and fit the pedestrian intensity.

Where desired due to high pedestrian traffic, the area between the curb and the sidewalk may be appropriately paved. This allows for as much as 15 feet of pedestrian area from curb to building.