

Kishwaukee Street Corridor Revitalization Plan

February 2009



In association with:
Valerie S. Kretchmer Associates, Inc. &
Gary W. Anderson and Associates



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The City of Rockford gratefully acknowledges the following for the time, energy and resources given to create the Kishwaukee Street Corridor Revitalization Plan:

Project Study Group / Technical Advisory Group (Representatives from Rockford City Staff):

Jonah Katz – Planner, Community and Economic Development Department
Ginny Gregory – Planner, Community and Economic Development Department
Wayne Dust – Planning Director, Community and Economic Development Department
Patrick Zuroske – Capital Program Manager, Public Works Department
Robert Lamb – Industrial Development Coordinator
Richard May – Commercial Development Coordinator
Reid Montgomery – Director, Community and Economic Development Department
Wendy Williams – Project Engineer, Public Works Department
Vicki Manson – Neighborhood Development Coordinator, Community and Economic Development Department
Tim Hanson – Director, Department of Public Works
Gary McIntyre – Transportation Planner, Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning (RMAP)
Jon Paul Dipla – Transportation Planner, Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning (RMAP)

City of Rockford:

Mayor Lawrence J. Morrissey
Alderman Douglas Mark, Third Ward
Alderman Leonard Jacobson, Sixth Ward
Alderman Victory Bell, Fifth Ward
Alderman Jeff Holt, Eleventh Ward
Jim Ryan, City Administrator

Consultants:

HNTB Corporation
Valerie S. Kretchmer Associates, Inc.
Gary W. Anderson & Associates

Chicago Community Development Corporation Representatives:

Steve DeBretto, Industrial Council of Nearwest Chicago (ICNC)
Pam McDonough, North Business and Industrial Council (NORBIC) and Alliance for Illinois Manufacturing
Jorge Perez, Calumet Area Industrial Commission (CAIC)
Ted Wysocki, Local Economic and Employment Development Council (LEED)



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to particularly acknowledge the Abilities Center for offering their facilities and hosting most of the significant meetings related to the development of this plan. Special additional thanks to Julie Galor for providing indispensable assistance in organizing the public meetings during the course of this project.

This plan is especially dedicated to the legacy and work of Jon Lundin (1943-2007). As President of the Abilities Center for many years, he was a tireless advocate for bringing positive change to the Kishwaukee Corridor. As a dedicated and knowledgeable historian of the City of Rockford, he also demonstrated a thorough understanding of Rockford's vibrant industrial history. Without his long-term efforts to improve the strength of the local workforce and business climate of the Kishwaukee Corridor, the momentum to complete this planning document would not have been possible. It is our hope that this corridor plan respectfully reflects Mr. Lundin's dedication to this important area of Rockford. The creation of an economically vibrant and attractive area along the Kishwaukee Corridor will serve as a fitting tribute to Mr. Lundin's entrepreneurial spirit and his devotion to the Rockford region.

We also appreciate the involvement of many community residents, business owners, and organizational representatives who participated in interviews, community forums and the Empowerment Workshop during this planning process.

For more information, please contact:

Jonah Katz
City of Rockford
Community and Economic Development Department
Rockford City Hall
425 East State Street
Rockford, IL 61104
(815) 967-6772
Jonah.Katz@rockfordil.gov



TABLE OF CONTENTS

• Introduction.....	1
• A Vision for the Kishwaukee Street Corridor.....	3
• Principle 1. Organize the Corridor as Contiguous Industrial, Commercial and Residential “Nodes” of Development	4
• Principle 2. Maintain a Strong Business Investment Environment for the Corridor	7
• Principle 3. Foster Quality Residential Conservation and Regeneration along the Corridor	12
• Principle 4. Accomodate Improved Mobility within the Corridor for all Modes of Travel	14
• Principle 5. Foster an Attractive and Well-Maintained Public Realm Throughout the Corridor	18
• Principle 6. Establish Kishwaukee Street as an Aesthetically-Pleasing “Gateway” to the City	32
• Economic Development Initiatives.....	34
• Organizational / Administrative Initiatives.....	36
• Action Strategy Matrix.....	38

Appendices:

- Appendix A: Additional Meeting Summaries
- Appendix B: Existing Conditions Analysis (Available under separate cover)
- Appendix C: Real Estate Market Assessment (Available under separate cover)

LIST OF FIGURES

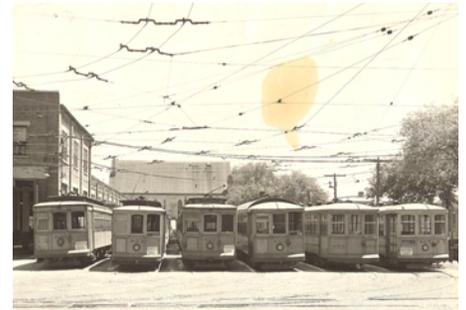
- Figure 1: Vicinity Map..... 2
- Figure 2: Future Land Use Framework..... 6
- Figure 3: Key Opportunity Area 1..... 9
- Figure 4: Key Opportunity Area 2..... 10
- Figure 5: Key Opportunity Area 3..... 11
- **Figure 6 A, B, C: Residential Infill Concepts..... 13**
- Figure 7 A & B: Mobility and Urban Design Framework..... 16
- Figure 8: Auto-Oriented Commercial Node at New Street..... 20
- Figure 9: Auto-Oriented Commercial Node at Existing Street..... 21
- Figure 10: Auto-Oriented Commercial Node - Broadway..... 22
- Figure 11: Pedestrian-Oriented Commercial Node - Broadway..... 23
- Figure 12: Arterial Street Access - 15th Avenue..... 24
- Figure 13: Residential Street Access - 16th Avenue..... 25
- Figure 14: Residential Street Access - 20th Avenue..... 26
- Figure 15: Residential Boulevard Access - 22nd Avenue..... 27
- Figure 16: Industrial Stabilization Area..... 28
- Figure 17: Industrial Access Greenway..... 29
- Figure 18: Auto-Oriented Commercial - Kishwaukee..... 30
- Figure 19: Airport Industrial Area..... 31
- Figure 20: Gateway Opportunities..... 33

Introduction

The Kishwaukee Street Corridor Revitalization Plan was initiated by the City of Rockford to establish a long-term Vision for the future of this central artery through the City, linking Downtown Rockford on the north to the Chicago Rockford International Airport on the south. Along its approximately 4.3 mile length, Kishwaukee Street exhibits a varied character that includes both large scale and small scale industrial uses, retail and commercial service businesses, and multi-family and single family residential areas. Like many streets that traverse older neighborhoods in cities such as Rockford, increasing truck traffic and overall traffic volumes have placed a heavier burden on Kishwaukee Street than it is was originally designed to accommodate. The age, scale and condition of structures along the corridor vary widely, and incompatibilities between land uses that have evolved over time are commonplace. In response to increasing traffic and aging infrastructure conditions, changing patterns of retail development that favor newer sites in outlying areas, and the evolving needs of the industrial sector, many properties along Kishwaukee Street are suffering from ongoing disinvestment. While many well maintained properties are present along the corridor, the overall perception of blighted conditions has stifled interest in reinvestment.

The Kishwaukee Street Corridor Revitalization Plan will provide a consensus-based strategy to undertake targeted public investment and foster public-private partnerships that will stabilize and enhance the corridor. The Plan is based upon the results of a community planning process, involving local stakeholders and the community at large in discussing creative solutions to stem further decline along Kishwaukee Street and foster a viable and sustainable pattern of development in the future. The Plan builds upon the findings of both the completed Existing Conditions Analysis and Real Estate Market Assessment (available as an appendix to this document) to re-imagine the future of the Kishwaukee Street Corridor.

This report establishes a Vision for the future that recognizes the historical role of the Corridor as the industrial center of Rockford while acknowledging the existing mixture of land uses, the altered nature of the global industrial market, and the current vulnerability of the existing residential neighborhoods within the Corridor. This Vision is supported by several Planning Principles which will be achieved through key redevelopment opportunities, public realm improvements, and economic development initiatives. This report concludes with a list of organizational and administrative initiatives that the City can undertake to further support the realization of this Vision. This Vision can only be achieved through the coordinated and sustained efforts of both the public and private sectors and stakeholders throughout the Corridor.



Kishwaukee Street Car Barn



National Mirror Works



Shumway Market

Photos courtesy of Midway Village & Museum Center, Rockford, Illinois



Vicinity Map

Legend

 Study Area Boundary

Figure 1



Not to Scale



February 2009

A Vision for the Kishwaukee Street Corridor

The Kishwaukee Street Corridor will be revitalized and fully reintegrated into the greater Rockford community by acknowledging its history as an industrial center bordered by thriving residential neighborhoods and building on this legacy of local employment and housing connections. The Kishwaukee Street Corridor is home to a sustained and strong industrial and employment base. The Corridor has also supported a variety of commercial uses to serve both businesses and nearby residents, while adjoining neighborhoods have supplied workforce housing to support business and industrial employment needs in the area.

While many of the physical facilities and buildings within the Corridor are older structures that have suffered from deferred maintenance, the community has rediscovered the historic principles on which the area was originally settled, which remain relevant today. Although regional trends in manufacturing and transportation have forever altered the playing field for industrial development, the Kishwaukee Street Corridor will, though emerging smaller in scale, remain a significant component of the manufacturing sector for the City. Given its urban location, in close proximity to Downtown Rockford and well-established residential neighborhoods, the Kishwaukee Street Corridor will provide a unique opportunity to foster a sustainable pattern of neighborhood development. The Kishwaukee Street Corridor will provide varied employment opportunities, stable and attractive nearby neighborhoods, and retail and service businesses that cater to local residents and employers in addition to passing traffic. It will again represent all that is best about Rockford, as a prominent regional gateway to both the Downtown and Chicago-Rockford International Airport.

The Kishwaukee area will remain an important employment and industrial area, and, as the base of industry and business expands, the adjoining residential neighborhood will begin a renaissance catalyzed by a renewed demand for workforce housing. Retail and commercial reinvestment will follow at key nodes along the corridor and will support this employment and housing resurgence. This Vision will be implemented through a combination of private and public sector initiatives and leadership. Targeted public infrastructure improvements will be coordinated to support private sector investments.

This Vision will be realized through key redevelopment opportunities, public realm improvements and economic development initiatives. These implementation efforts, as detailed in this Plan, are organized to achieve the following Planning Principles:

1. Organize the Corridor as contiguous industrial, commercial and residential “nodes” of development
2. Maintain a strong business investment environment for the Corridor
3. Foster quality residential conservation and regeneration along the Corridor
4. Accommodate improved mobility within the Corridor for all modes of travel
5. Foster an attractive and well-maintained public realm throughout the Corridor
6. Establish Kishwaukee Street as an aesthetically-pleasing “gateway” to the City



Historic Homes



Historic Manufacturing Building



Historic Rock River School



Principle 1.

Organize the Corridor as Contiguous Industrial, Commercial and Residential “Nodes” of Development

A number of different land uses currently exist within the Kishwaukee Street Corridor, including industrial, commercial, residential, mixed-use, and open space. This variety of uses is an asset, but the current physical organization of these uses does not sufficiently leverage this asset. Commercial and residential retail uses are intermingled, and have encroached on areas that have traditionally been almost exclusively industrial, resulting in some single-family homes being bordered by incompatible land uses. Incompatible uses could be buffered from one another more effectively to encourage greater consistency of character while eliminating the existing “piece-meal” appearance of some portions of the corridor.

A more “sustainable” neighborhood strategy would support the creation of a series of development “nodes” to more efficiently mix primary and supporting land uses. A variety of uses would still exist within the Corridor, but their combination and proportion would be modified in order to better complement the dominant land use and eliminate incompatible land use arrangements over time. This nodal pattern of development also encourages greater efficiency by concentrating the primary land uses within geographic clusters. This nodal or “clustering” pattern facilitates synergy among land uses. Clustered uses reduce the need for driving to multiple destinations, improve opportunities for social interaction through increased neighborhood vitality, and can encourage pedestrian-scaled activity centers.

Establishing land use nodes would also support the creation of a jobs / housing balance within the Corridor, including the construction or rehabilitation of workforce housing within walking distance of employment opportunities. This pattern would encourage residential reinvestment within the Corridor and reduce dependence on single-occupancy vehicles, which would in turn facilitate a rejuvenated streetscape and promote interaction between neighbors.

Figure 2: Future Land Use Framework depicts a future land use arrangement that builds on and clarifies existing development patterns while supporting this more nodal land use organization. A number of opportunities exist to implement nodal development patterns, including:

Residential: Existing half-block deep single-family residential parcels along Kishwaukee Street (in particular those that are affected by the IDOT reconstruction) could be transitioned to higher-density single-family or multi-family residential uses. These residential infill concepts are described more fully in subsequent sections of the Plan. Existing residential neighborhoods on the blocks surrounding Kishwaukee Street could be strengthened and stabilized through ongoing targeted public infrastructure investment combined with private sector redevelopment projects.

Industrial: Harrison Avenue runs through the heart of Rockford’s industrial core, a land use pattern that should be preserved and encouraged well into the future. Changes within the manufacturing industries have left a number of under-utilized industrial structures which can be considered for adaptive re-use or replacement in the central portion of the Corridor. In addition to transitioning and updating older structures, the City can assist existing industries through infrastructure improvements that specifically support modern industrial needs and assembling land to facilitate redevelopment for modern facilities. The larger-scale and more modern business park development pattern north of and surrounding the airport should also be maintained and enhanced over time.

Commercial: Broadway has traditionally been a commercial thoroughfare in Rockford, a pattern which is still evident today in the thriving Mid Town District that stretches east from Kishwaukee Street along Broadway. The intersection of Broadway and Kishwaukee Street is a comparatively lower intensity mix of weaker commercial uses



Examples of Successful Adaptive Re-Use
(Lake-Kinzie Corridor, Chicago)



Principle 1. {Continued}

Organize the Corridor as Contiguous Industrial, Commercial and Residential “Nodes” of Development

and vacant commercial sites. These parcels could be redeveloped to create a continuous commercial street front and links to the established Mid Town District. Additionally, several smaller nodes of commercial activity should be supported along the corridor, in a contiguous arrangement where businesses are mutually supportive of one another, with shared access and parking areas where feasible.

Downtown Mixed Use: The Downtown area is currently a successful mix of office, retail, commercial, and residential uses. While some of these uses, specifically the comparatively small residential sector, could be strengthened in the future, the Downtown remains a key destination. The northern edge of the Corridor serves as an important link to the Downtown area, a linkage which could be reinforced and improved through key traffic circulation alterations. The one-way street pairs along 2nd and 3rd Streets could be reconfigured to allow bi-directional traffic, a change which would support commercial uses along 3rd Street while preserving the residential character of 2nd Street. The potential future reconfiguration of the Whitman Street Interchange would make available approximately 8.5 acres of highly visible land for redevelopment. In addition to this potential redevelopment opportunity, the existing Midway Theater and Shumway Market (East State and 3rd Street Intersection) are strategically located as a major node within the Corridor.

Open Space: The ongoing Keith Creek Greenway reconstruction and expansion project will increase both the quantity and quality of open space within the Corridor. An expanded and improved 10th Avenue Park will be linked on the west to improved access to the Rock River waterfront through a redeveloped Nelson Park, while a golf center and soccer field will be just two of the recreational opportunities available along the banks of the Keith Creek as it stretches northeast from the park. A new administrative building at the Rock River Water Reclamation District's site at the southern end of the Corridor may also present an opportunity for public access to redeveloped open space and recreational opportunities.

Long-Term Opportunity Areas:

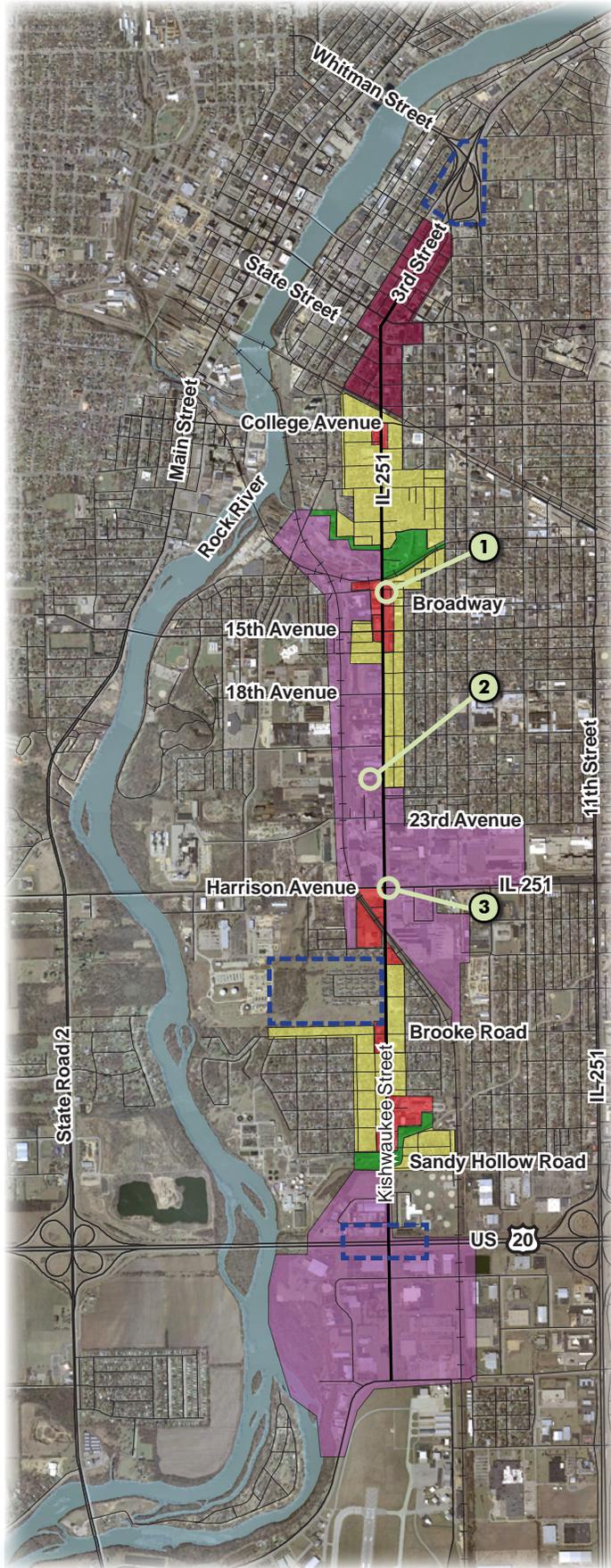
Whitman Street Interchange: As discussed above, it is estimated that up to approximately 8.5 acres of land could be redeveloped to reconnect existing residential neighborhoods on the eastern side of the Interchange with the Downtown area to the west of the Interchange.

Orton Keyes RHA Development: This Rockford Housing Authority development is in comparatively good physical condition, although crime and security concerns are issues for residents and neighbors. In order to stabilize the development for existing residents and re-knit them into the broader Corridor community, this housing site could potentially be expanded on the existing site and redeveloped as mixed-income housing. This transition could further the overall Vision of creating a favorable housing / jobs balance within the Corridor through the provision of additional affordable workforce housing opportunities.

U.S. 20 Interchange: A potential interchange location at US 20 at Kishwaukee Street interchange would provide additional access from Kishwaukee Street to the Greater Rockford Airport and the Corridor. Currently, access into the airport is provided by the US 20 / IL Rte. 2 interchange. The existing roadway infrastructure allows for adequate vehicle and heavy vehicle access to and from the Kishwaukee corridor, given current traffic volumes. The City should work with IDOT to examine whether the construction of a new interchange at this location would support future circulation and development patterns.



February 2009



Legend

- Residential
- Industrial
- Commercial
- Downtown Mixed Use
- Open Space
- Rail Road
- Long-term Opportunity Area

Key Opportunity Areas

- 1 Broadway / Buckbee Commercial Node
- 2 Blackhawk Park / Peoples Industrial Stabilization
- 3 Harrison / Kishwaukee Gateway Node

Note: Land use categories shown here are general.

Figure 2



February 2009

Principle 2.

Maintain a Strong Business Investment Environment for the Corridor

Kishwaukee Street has been a corridor of commerce and industry for much of Rockford's history. Rockford has historically supported industry clusters ranging from furniture-making and agricultural products during the early twentieth century to the metal-based and high-tech industrial applications that exist within the Corridor today. Industrial activity occurs at the south end of the Corridor adjacent to the Chicago Rockford International Airport in a larger-scale, campus-like setting, while smaller-scale industrial activity is interspersed with residential, commercial, and office uses through the central portion of the Corridor. As shown in Figure 2, these small commercial nodes are located within larger industrial land uses, but these businesses can be mutually supporting and the off-site impacts of commercial and industrial activity on the surrounding activity can be mitigated.

As the market has shifted the character of industry clusters over the decades, the structures standing along Kishwaukee Street have retained the identity of their initial inhabitants. These outdated historical structures are potential candidates for adaptive reuse opportunities, including:

- Multi-story warehouse facilities: artist workspace and showrooms
- Rock River School: CDC headquarters and/or workforce training center
- Counselor Scale Building site: industry incubator

The redevelopment of these under-utilized structures will allow modern industry and redevelopment to occur within the structural legacy of the Corridor's heavy manufacturing and industrial past.

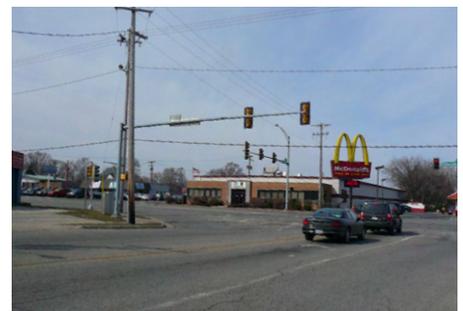
Key Opportunity Areas

The three figures that follow describe key opportunities for redevelopment that will serve to reinvigorate the Corridor in three high-profile locations, serving as a catalyst for further redevelopment. These three areas were chosen because they are highly visible and represent land use issues that are prototypical throughout the Corridor: commercial uses at Broadway and Buckbee, industrial uses between Blackhawk Park and Peoples Avenues, and a mixture of industrial and commercial uses at Kishwaukee Street's intersection with Harrison Avenue.

Key Opportunity Area 1 – Broadway / Buckbee Commercial Node

Higher intensity development and redevelopment of this commercial node would increase land use and visual linkages to the established Mid Town commercial district to the east of Kishwaukee Street along Broadway. To further encourage street activity, pedestrian connections across and along Kishwaukee Street could be strengthened in order to increase the area's pedestrian orientation. Pedestrian activity is an important aspect of this commercial node; existing on-street parking on Broadway should be maintained in order to allow effective circulation patterns while supporting existing businesses. As shown in Figure 3, curbs cuts along selected blocks of Kishwaukee Street and Broadway should be limited in order to enhance the pedestrian environment, improve building and landscaping appearances, and manage traffic circulation patterns.

The existing industrial uses indicated in Figure 3 should also be stabilized and enhanced. Also illustrated are multiple opportunities to provide planted medians, parkways, and intersection enhancements as well as landscaping improvements at privately-owned parking lots. These streetscape improvements will encourage pedestrian activity, reduce stormwater run-off, and encourage further private sector investment.



Key Opportunity Area 1



HNTB

February 2009

Principle 2. {Continued}

Maintain a Strong Business Investment Environment for the Corridor

Key Opportunity Area 2 – Blackhawk Park / Peoples Avenues Industrial Stabilization

This node is located at the heart of the Corridor’s industrial uses. In order to stabilize the existing industrial uses and ensure that the area is suitable and accessible for industrial uses into the future, the construction of a new access road on or east of the existing railroad right-of-way parallel to Kishwaukee Street should be evaluated, as indicated in [Figure 4](#). This would improve industrial access and circulation by allowing trucks and heavy machinery to diverge from the current Kishwaukee Street route onto a roadway that is designed for their operational needs. Landscape buffering along this proposed alignment and along Kishwaukee Street would serve as a visual screen and help to mitigate the impacts of industrial activity on residential areas to the east.

In order to honor the industrial history of this section of the Corridor, a “Heart of Kishwaukee Industry” monument could be erected at the southeast corner of Kishwaukee Street and Peoples/23rd Avenue. This monument would serve as a gateway to and visual indicator of the historical basis for the current industrial character of this node. A significant portion of under-utilized industrial land that sits northwest of this proposed monument could be redeveloped as a modern industrial facility, if land assembly and environmental clean-up can be facilitated by the City. The monument could reflect the proud industrial heritage of the Corridor, while the redeveloped site would demonstrate a significant commitment to continued industrial activity within the City.

Key Opportunity Area 3 – Harrison Avenue / Kishwaukee Street Gateway Node

Currently, this node exhibits a variety of industrial, commercial, institutional and residential uses that are inefficiently organized and ineffectively buffered. As shown in [Figure 5](#), alterations to traffic circulation, including consolidated and shared access points, as well as landscaping and maintenance of existing natural features, can be used to minimize conflicts between uses. Wayfinding and identifying signage can also be installed to visually cue entry into the Corridor while accurately directing visitors to their destinations.

The southwest “triangle” created by the railroad right-of-way, Kishwaukee Street, and Harrison Avenue should be assembled and redeveloped to complement adjacent existing industrial uses, while providing perimeter landscaping and shared access points. Remnant residential uses in this triangle should be removed as redevelopment occurs. The former Rockford National Furniture Company is another ideal redevelopment opportunity: this iconic remnant of Rockford’s heyday as a furniture manufacturing powerhouse could be adapted for a number of re-uses, including space for artists or start-up business incubation. Just southwest of this opportunity area sits another “triangle” of under-utilized industrial land that could be redeveloped for modern industrial uses. Attractive buffering should be installed at the northeast block to buffer the existing church property from its industrial surroundings.



Key Opportunity Area 2



Key Opportunity Area 3



Key Opportunity Area I: Broadway / Buckbee Commercial Node



Proposed Initiatives

- ① Stabilize and enhance existing commercial uses
- ② Adaptive re-use opportunity
- ③ New commercial development
- ④ New housing development
- ⑤ Stabilize and enhance existing industrial uses
- ⑥ Provide planted medians, parkways, and intersection enhancements
- ⑦ Provide private landscape improvements at new and existing parking lots
- ⑧ Consolidate curb cuts to one per block face with side street access

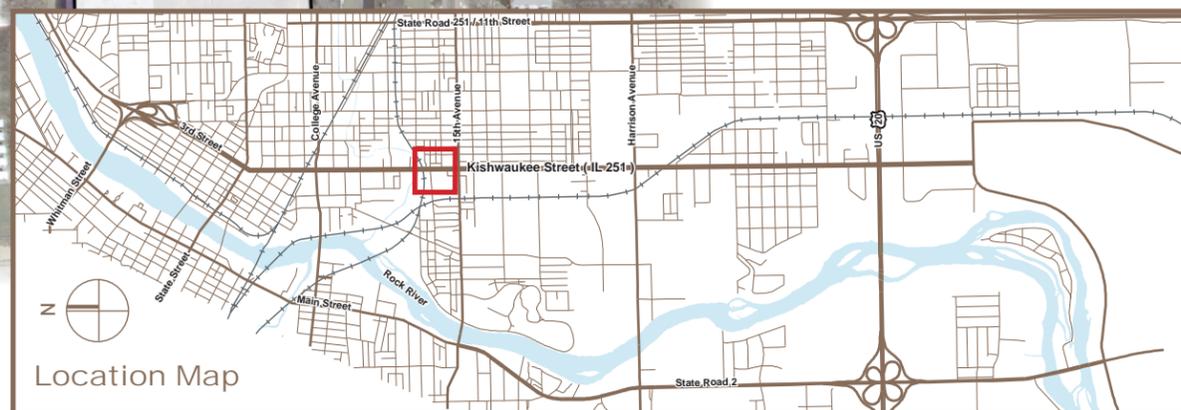


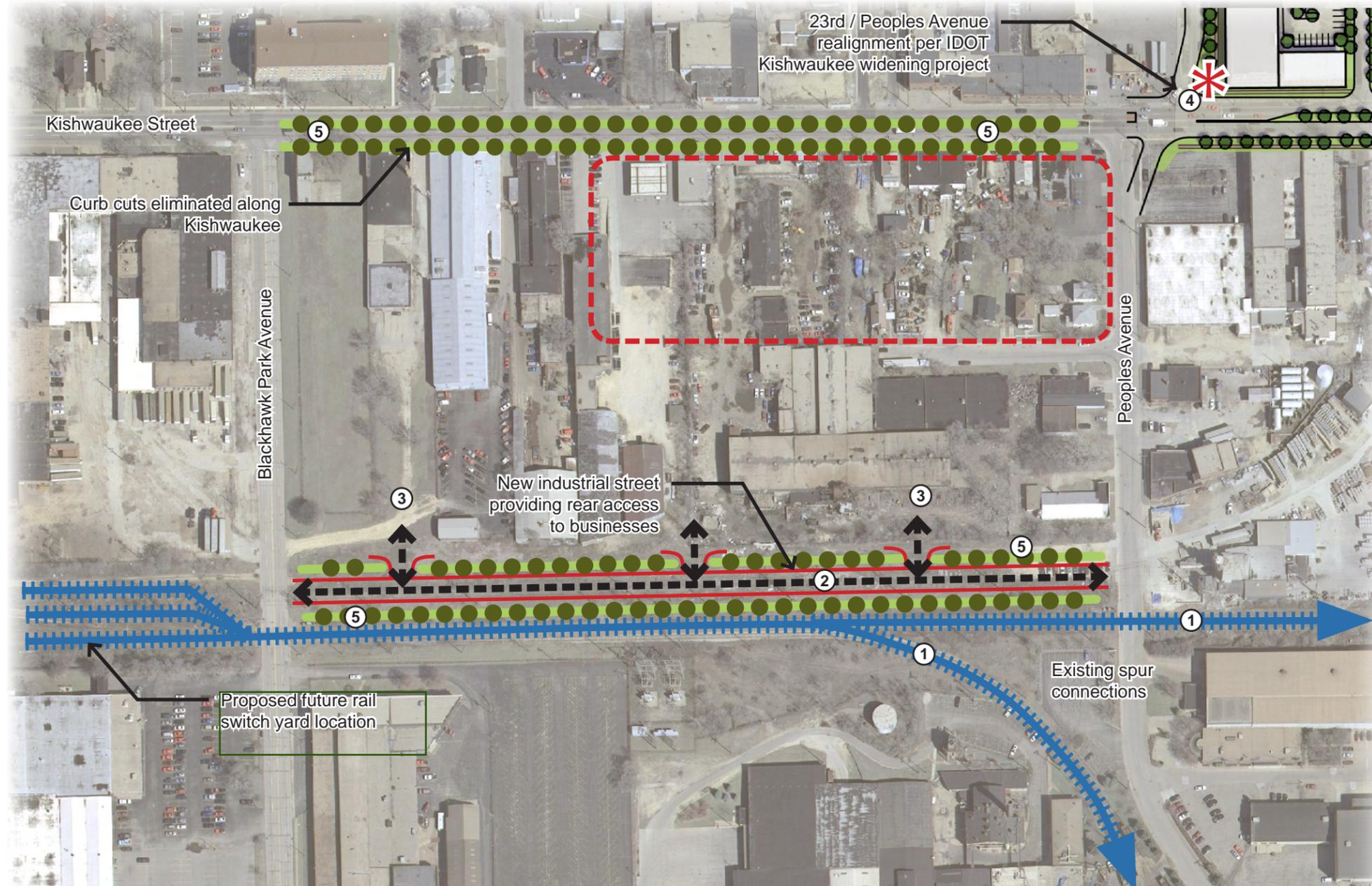
Figure 3

Scale: 1" = 200'



February 2009

Key Opportunity Area 2: Blackhawk Park / Peoples Industrial Stabilization



Proposed Initiatives

- ① Rail Lines (Generalized)
- ② Proposed New Alignment
- ③ Proposed Consolidated Industrial Access (generalized)
- ④ "Heart of Kishwaukee Industry" Monument
- ⑤ Proposed Planted Medians and Parkways (curb cuts minimized or eliminated)

--- Key industrial redevelopment opportunity

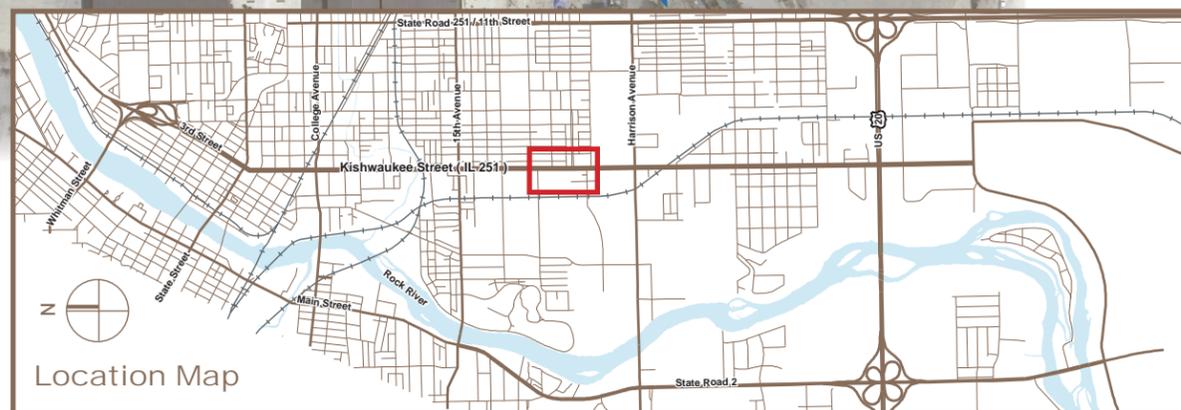
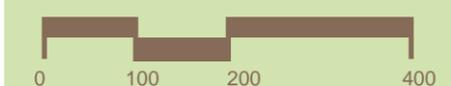
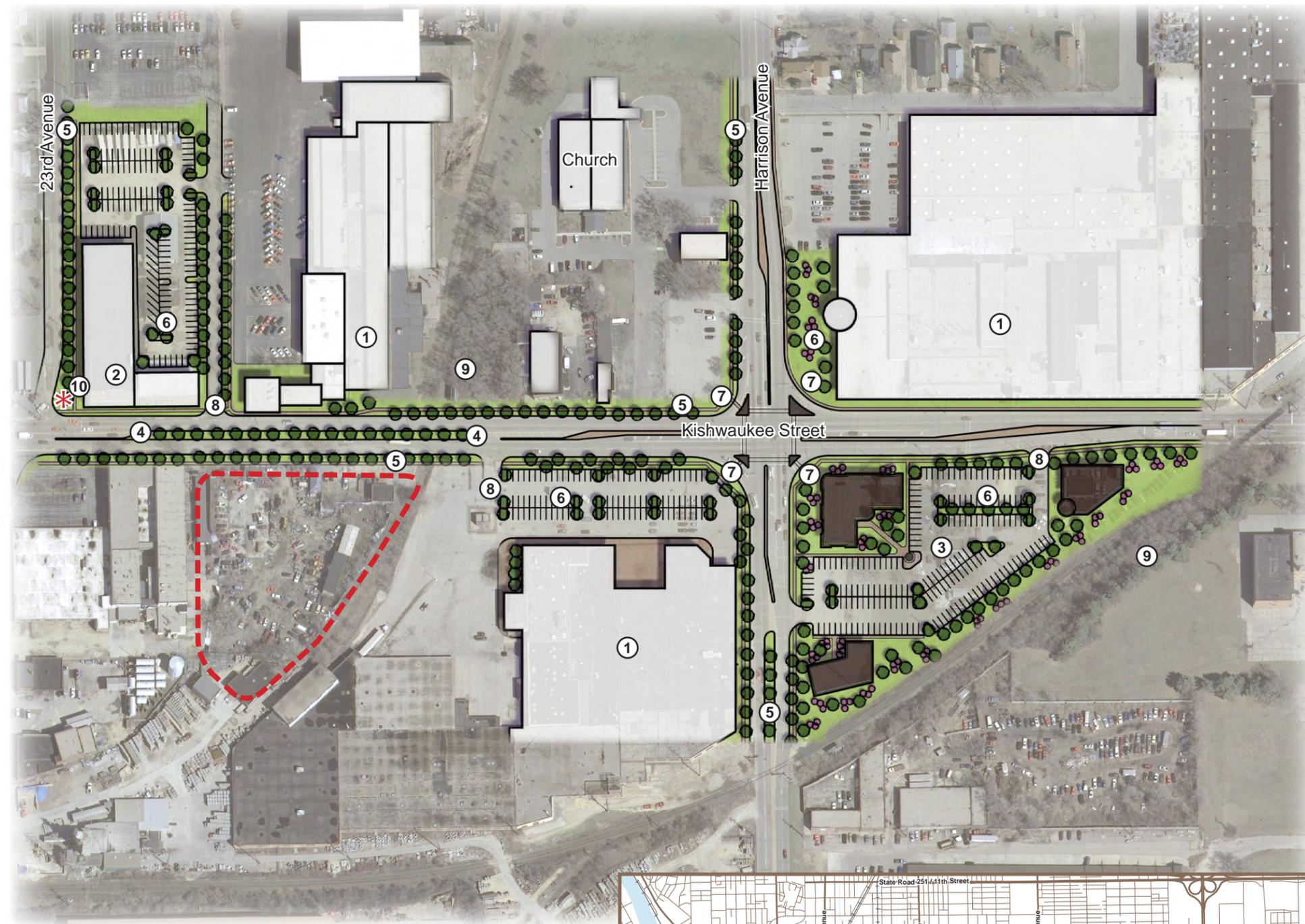


Figure 4

Scale: 1" = 200'



Key Opportunity Area 3: Harrison / Kishwaukee Gateway Node



Proposed Conditions

- ① Stabilize and enhance existing industrial uses
- ② Adaptive re-use opportunity (former Rockford National Furniture Company Building)
- ③ New commercial / office development
- ④ Provide planted median
- ⑤ Provide street trees and buffer treatments at non-industrial uses
- ⑥ Provide private landscape improvements at new and existing parking lots
- ⑦ Provide gateway identity signage
- ⑧ Consolidate and share access points
- ⑨ Protect and maintain existing natural features
- ⑩ "Heart of Kishwaukee Industry" Monument

--- Key industrial redevelopment opportunity

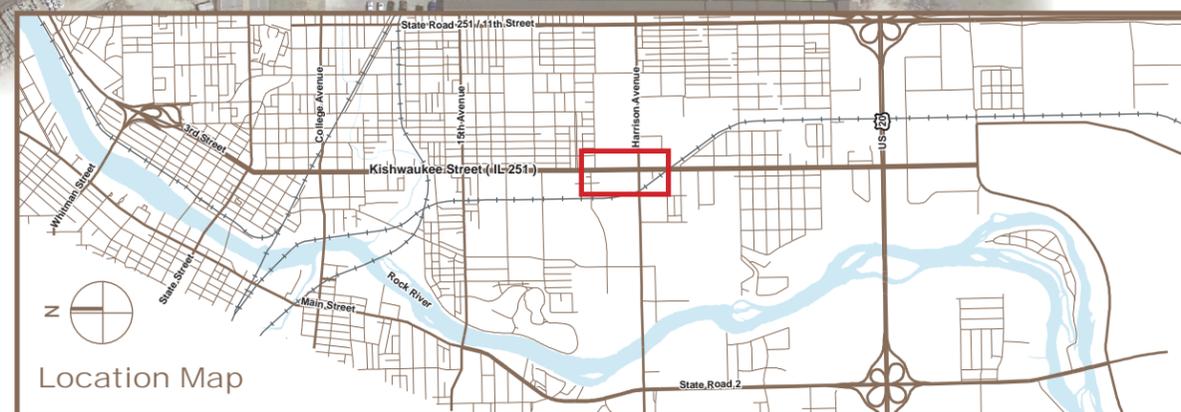
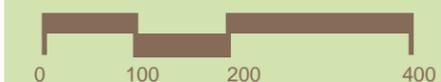


Figure 5

Scale: 1" = 200'



February 2009

Principle 3.

Foster Quality Residential Conservation and Regeneration along the Corridor

The character of the Kishwaukee Street Corridor has been most strongly influenced by the industrial uses that it has supported for over 100 years. The employees who manned these factories and offices, however, were often drawn from the residential neighborhoods that immediately surround these industrial uses. Over the decades, the linkages between Corridor residents and the adjacent industrial employers has steadily weakened. Sustained revitalization of this Corridor cannot be secured without coordinated conservation and reinvestment activities in these residential neighborhoods. A benchmark of success in these efforts will be when local employers can again draw a large segment of their workforce from the local community. The development of infill housing stock will result from, rather than be the driver of, broader change within the Corridor. Residential infill development will be a manifestation of the renewed confidence in the Corridor that will be achieved through coordinated redevelopment activities.

Private reinvestment in these homes will be catalyzed through selected public sector investment in projects that will stabilize the neighborhood, including improved lighting, maintained sidewalks, consistent street cleaning, and landscaping in the public way. Stabilization of the neighborhood can also be achieved through the creation of mixed-income developments, specifically at the Orton Keyes RHA housing site, the deconcentration and re-integration of low-income housing residents into the broader community, and increased access to local job opportunities.

Residential conditions adjacent to Kishwaukee Street have been steadily deteriorating, a pattern which can be expected to continue as traffic volume increases and front yard space in some areas is reduced by the IDOT reconstruction project. Three prototypes for residential infill development along Kishwaukee Street have been developed to depict how multi- and/or single-family attached housing can be sited to provide an effective buffer between heavy traffic on Kishwaukee Street and single-family residential neighborhoods to the east and west. These prototypes are simply concepts for accommodating residential uses within the corridor: actual site plan, site design, layout, landscaping, and access patterns would be determined in the future through a combination of community consensus and market conditions. While redeveloping an entire block face consistently is the most desirable pattern to pursue, a similar pattern could be achieved on just a portion of a block.

As shown in [Figures 6A, 6B, and 6C](#), conceptual single-family attached and multi-family housing infill development is accommodated with landscape buffers fronting on Kishwaukee Street, while vehicular access is restricted to the existing public alley. These concepts have been designed to accommodate townhouse and mid-rise housing types, functional and defensible green space, and parking facilities on typical lots that have been reduced by the IDOT Kishwaukee Street reconstruction project.



Examples of Appropriate Infill Housing Types



February 2009

Residential Infill Concepts



Legend

- New Single-Family Attached
- Multi-Family
- Open Space

Figure 6 A, B, C

Scale: 1" = 100'



February 2009

Principle 4.

Accommodate Improved Mobility within the Corridor for all Modes of Travel

The Kishwaukee Street Corridor is a major thoroughfare which must accommodate trucks, cars, buses, bicycles, and pedestrians in order to facilitate the mobility of residents, employees, and visitors. The mixture of uses, specifically the industrial uses that require heavy truck access, necessitates careful planning and management to ensure that all users can safely navigate without conflicts.

A series of street types has been defined to provide guidance in creating consistent and appropriate treatment of various segments of roadway. In particular, accommodating pedestrian movement in conjunction with major intersections that experience heavy traffic volumes and significant truck traffic must be sensitively addressed. As seen in [Figure 7a](#), the variety of land uses to be supported in the northern end of the Corridor requires that varied circulation patterns be effectively integrated to ensure the safe movement of people and goods through the Corridor. [Figure 7b](#) depicts the southern end of the Corridor, which is more consistent in its land uses and would support a more consistent traffic circulation and streetscaping pattern.

The alteration of existing traffic patterns, including the potential construction of an **interchange at U.S. 20** and the re-orientation of one-way street pairs leading to the **Whitman Street Interchange** could improve circulation patterns through redesigned access points at each end of the Corridor. Both of these potential initiatives would require significant further study. **Rail consolidation opportunities** which are currently being evaluated by the City could provide the opportunity for industrial truck access to existing businesses along rear roadways. This could reduce the necessity of heavy trucking along portions of the Kishwaukee Street Corridor. This potential initiative will require more study (including a detailed traffic impact analysis).

Because of the diversity of uses within this section of the Corridor, traffic management strategies that segregate industrial and non-industrial traffic should be implemented in a manner that doesn't negatively impact the mobility of either group. Existing industrial businesses must be allowed adequate truck movement and access to ensure uninterrupted operations. When undertaking streetscaping activities, the City should coordinate with existing businesses to ensure that medians are sited at locations that will not interfere with truck movement. As depicted previously in [Figure 4](#) a potential rear truck access route between Blackhawk Park and Peoples Avenues could re-orient industrial access away from Kishwaukee Street. All truck movements on industrial streets should be controlled and staging areas should be provided at appropriate cross-street locations in another effort to both accommodate industrial truck access while managing circulation patterns.

Non-industrial users should also have a variety of modal transportation options from which to choose when traveling to work, school, or recreation. Workforce housing within walking or biking distance of employment opportunities is the ideal model, and if possible to achieve in the Kishwaukee Street Corridor because of the proximity of existing industrial, commercial and residential uses. In order to create an environment that encourages walking or biking to work, the sidewalk network should be complete and curb cuts should be limited throughout the Corridor. Fewer



Example of Transit Enhancements



Example of Bicycle Parking

Principle 4. {Continued}

Accommodate Improved Mobility within the Corridor for all Modes of Travel

curb cuts on main arterials would encourage vehicular access from side streets in residential and commercial areas, allowing traffic to flow more smoothly with fewer interruptions along Kishwaukee Street. Cut-through traffic in residential neighborhoods could be discouraged through the implementation of limited closures at selected intersections, on a case-by-case basis with the agreement of adjacent property owners and public safety officials.

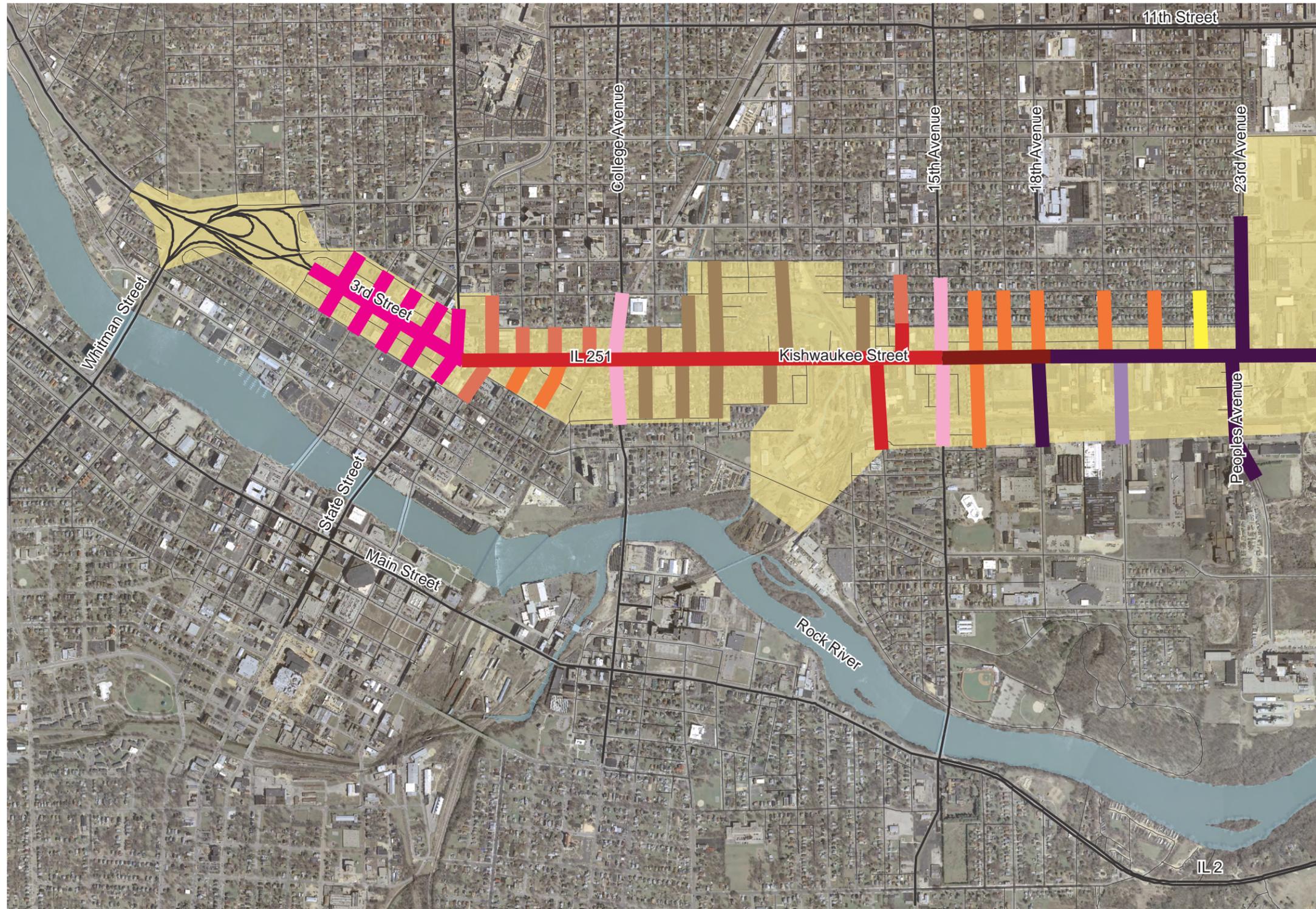
Public bus service currently operates within the Corridor, providing another modal choice. Existing bus stops should be coordinated with streetscape treatments at major intersections, including a minimum standard of a concrete pad between the sidewalk and curb, and the provision of benches, trash receptacles and free-standing signs. In addition to improving the transit-riding experience, these upgrades would improve the aesthetics of the Corridor and encourage transit ridership. These upgrades are an example of targeted public infrastructure improvements that could be used to catalyze complementary improvements undertaken by the private sector.

Despite the proximity of the Corridor to the Rock River waterfront, existing access to this natural asset is limited. The Keith Creek Greenway expansion project will enhance access at the northern end of the Corridor. All streetscape and mobility enhancements being considered in the study area should be coordinated with existing plans for bike route installation city-wide.



HNTB

February 2009



- Auto-Oriented Commercial Node (Reconstructed Street)
- Auto-Oriented Commercial Node (Existing Street)
- Pedestrian-Oriented Commercial Node
- Residential Stabilization Area
- Downtown Mixed-Use Area
- Arterial Street Access
- Residential Street Access
- Residential Boulevard Access
- Industrial Stabilization Area
- Industrial Access Greenway
- Airport Industrial Area

Note: See Typical Plans, Typical Sections, and Plan Studies for details on locations referenced on Streetscape & Character Overlay. Refer to Land Use Framework for key to land uses.

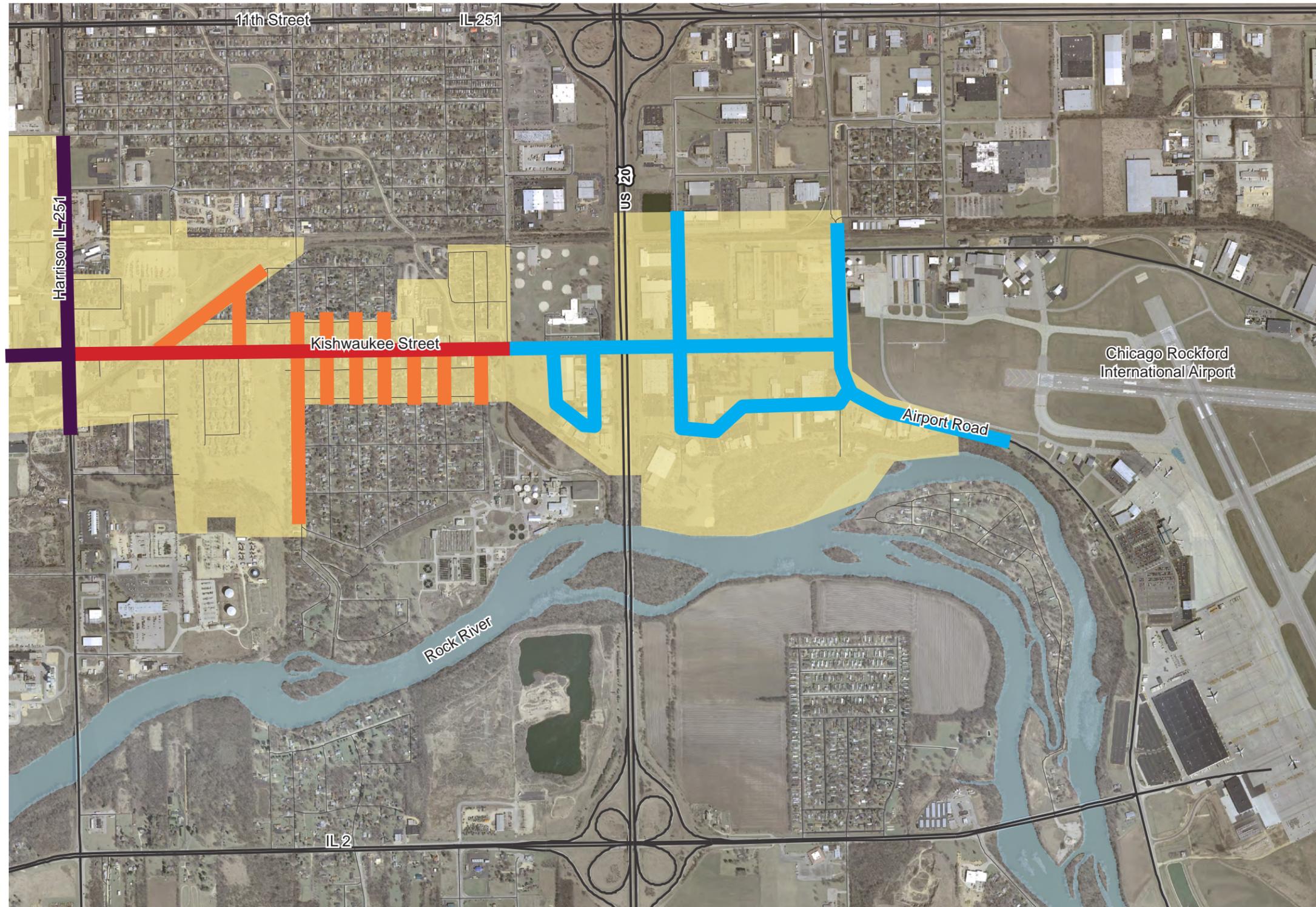
Figure 7A



Not to Scale



February 2009



- Auto-Oriented Commercial Node (Existing Street)
- Residential Street Access
- Industrial Stabilization Area
- Airport Industrial Area

Note: See Typical Plans, Typical Sections, and Plan Studies for details on locations referenced on Streetscape & Character Overlay. Refer to Land Use Framework for key to land uses.

Figure 7B



Not to Scale



February 2009

Principle 5.

Foster an Attractive and Well-Maintained Public Realm Throughout the Corridor

As depicted in [Figures 7a and 7b](#), the urban design character of various segments of the Corridor should respond to adjacent land uses, mobility needs, and existing access patterns. In [Figures 7a and 7b](#), proposed conditions at key streets and intersections along the corridor are highlighted. While each of these prototypical design solutions are depicted and described in detail in [Figures 8 through 18](#) that follow, the following summaries briefly describe the streetscape character areas and conditions:

Auto-Oriented Commercial Node at Existing Street and Auto-Oriented Commercial Node at Reconstructed Street: The existing commercial areas within the Corridor tend to favor vehicular traffic at the expense of pedestrians and bicyclists. These areas are characterized by degraded existing sidewalks, underutilized parkways, and inadequate landscape buffering. In order to support the proposed nodal patterns of development, increased landscape buffering and substantial sidewalk upgrades would contribute to an improved pedestrian environment in designated nodes. A balanced auto and pedestrian environment will encourage the streetscape vitality that is desirable for commercial redevelopment.

Pedestrian-Oriented Commercial Node: This street type currently occurs in the established Mid Town District on Broadway. As commercial redevelopment occurs and extends this District west towards Kishwaukee Street, buildings should be placed at the front lot line and amenities installed to favor the pedestrian.

Downtown Mixed-Use Area

The northern portion of the study area currently supports a successful mixture of office, retail, commercial, and residential uses and serves as a key link to the Downtown. The current one-way pair street configuration routes southbound traffic through a residential neighborhood and encourages high rates of speed for northbound traffic as it approaches the Downtown area. If 3rd Street were reconfigured in a bi-directional pattern, traffic speeds would better support the mixed uses in the area, and the character of the residential side streets would benefit from a reduction in through traffic. While the sidewalks in this area are comparatively well-maintained, increased landscape buffering, street lighting, and the use of gateway banners would help to visually cue the transition into and out of the downtown.

Residential Stabilization Area

These areas have existing residential uses that would benefit from investment in infrastructure upgrades, including sidewalk connections, landscaping, and street lights, that would be designed to encourage pedestrian activity. This public sector investment could be leveraged to catalyze reinvestment by individual property owners, which could function to stabilize existing residential uses and potentially increase property values. Reduced turning radii at intersections with Kishwaukee Street would provide visual cues to indicate the transition from auto-oriented commercial uses on Kishwaukee to a predominantly residential character on the side streets.

Arterial Street Access: This cross-street type is characterized by heavy traffic volume and turning movements associated with existing land uses, including commercial, which require an enhanced pedestrian environment. Medians and landscape buffering could aesthetically enhance the environment in a manner that does not interfere with existing auto traffic, but improves the pedestrian experience.



Example of Median Treatment



Example of Multi-Use Greenway



Principle 5. {Continued}

Foster an Attractive and Well-Maintained Public Realm Throughout the Corridor

Residential Street Access and Residential Boulevard Access: Residential streets typically have no industrial truck traffic, support comparatively light auto traffic volumes, and are more pedestrian-oriented in function. Increased landscape buffering and reduced turning radii would respond to and support these characteristics by visually reducing the roadway to a pedestrian-friendly scale and discouraging non-residential traffic.

Industrial Stabilization Area and Industrial Access Greenway: Industrial streets are typically oriented for vehicular traffic without adequate landscaping, buffering or pedestrian amenities. Truck access and mobility is the primary purpose of these routes, accommodated through consolidated access points and truck staging areas. Pedestrians should also be safely accommodated, however, with sidewalks, parkways, and landscaping buffers. Minimizing and coordinating curbs cuts will mitigate potential conflicts.

Airport Industrial Area: This area, with its campus-like industrial uses, encourages vehicular traffic through the absence of sidewalks. The construction of a multi-use path system, in combination with the planting of landscaping buffers along Kishwaukee Street, would enhance the pedestrian environment and encourage pedestrian and bicyclist activity.

The preceding street types, depicted in greater detail in Figures 8 through 18, employ the following general design solutions to enhance existing assets, mitigate existing challenges, and encourage functional and safe traffic circulation patterns. These design solutions can be divided into three categories: infrastructure investment, traffic circulation management, and visual identification.

Infrastructure Investments: Investments in sidewalks, lighting, and curbs and gutters will improve the pedestrian environment, catalyze private investment, and enhance the aesthetics of the Corridor. Public sector investment in these amenities will signal a commitment on the part of the City to investment and redevelopment within the Corridor. People are more likely to walk if in an environment with upgraded sidewalks, landscape buffering from the adjacent roadway, and pedestrian-scale lighting and signage. Parkway treatments, including trees and stormwater-interception planters at cross-streets, can function to both enhance the pedestrian environment while reducing stormwater runoff.

Traffic Circulation Management: As discussed previously, the variety of land uses within the Corridor necessitates careful planning to manage the interaction of their associated traffic. Through limited and shared curb cuts to access parking and loading areas, traffic circulation patterns can be improved to minimize disruption onto adjacent roadways. The use of medians and reduced turning radii at intersections which are not used by industrial trucking can function to reduce the perceived scale of the roadway and improve the pedestrian environment.

Visual Identification: “Branding” the corridor through a consistent visual identity would be an effective tool for reinforcing the idea of the Corridor as a destination rather than merely a passageway. This should be achieved through a coordinated landscaping palette and street lighting, consistent street furniture and trash receptacles at commercial nodes, as well as signage and wayfinding markers throughout the Corridor. The City should also reach out to private business owners whose facilities have a significant visual impact in the Corridor, including the owners of the scrap metal yard across from the 10th Avenue Park, to discuss the possibility of upgrading business facades and fencing.



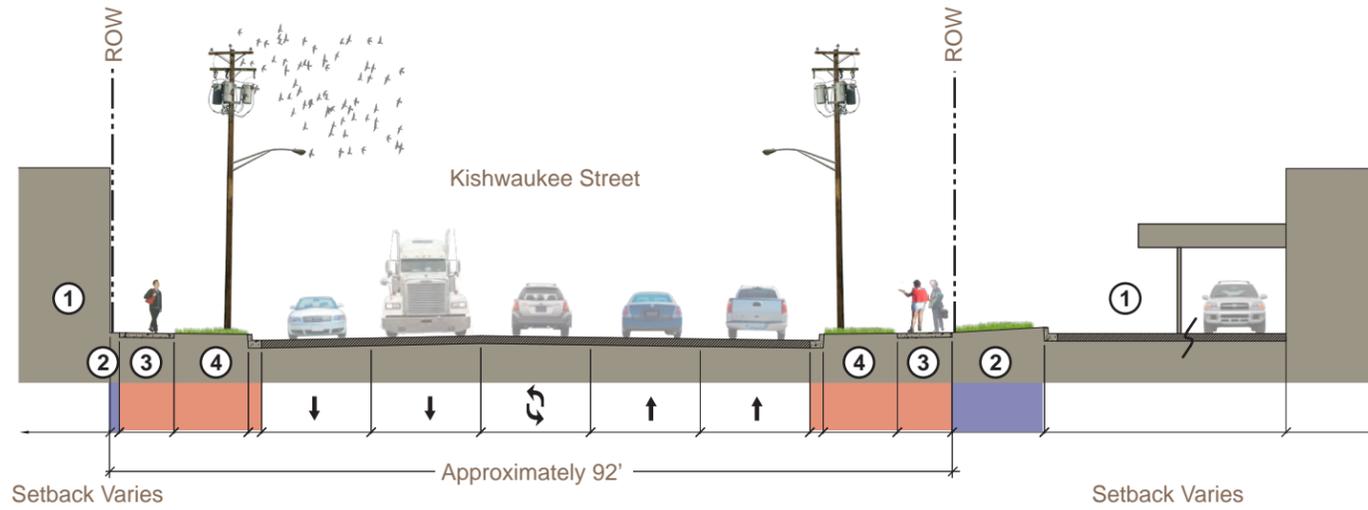
Example of Streetscape Enhancements for the Airport Industrial Area



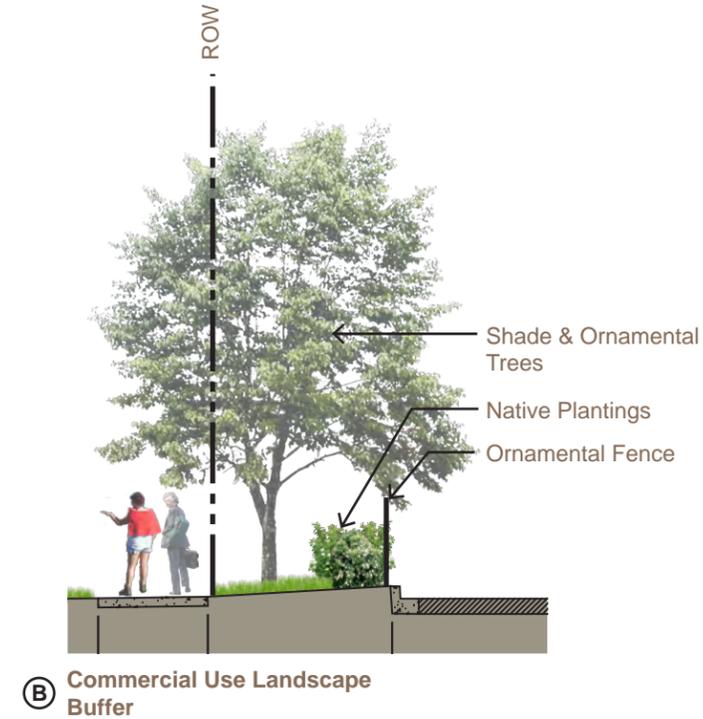
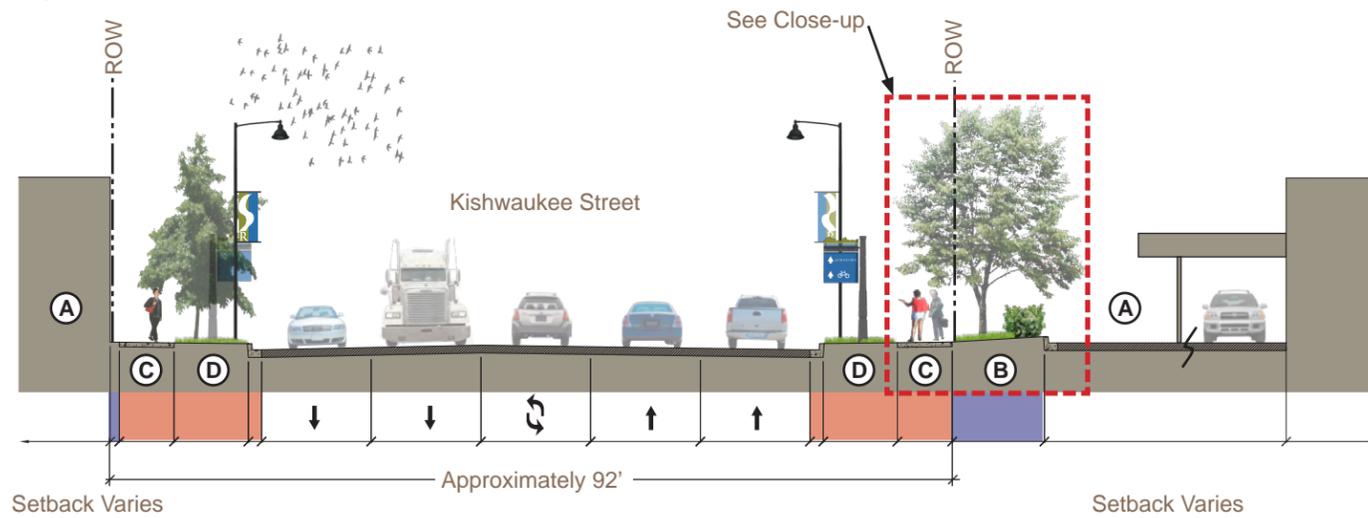
Elite Motors (3036 Kishwaukee Street) has provided attractive landscaping and signage.



Existing Conditions



Proposed Conditions



Auto-Oriented Commercial Node at New Street - Kishwaukee South of 15th Avenue

Existing Conditions

- ① Auto-oriented commercial
- ② Inadequate buffer
- ③ Degraded existing sidewalk
- ④ Underutilized parkway

Proposed Conditions

- Ⓐ Auto-oriented commercial
- Ⓑ Landscape buffer
- Ⓒ Updated sidewalk
- Ⓓ Updated parkway

Project Areas*

- Public Improvement Area
- Private Improvement Area

*Corridor alignment to be updated by IDOT

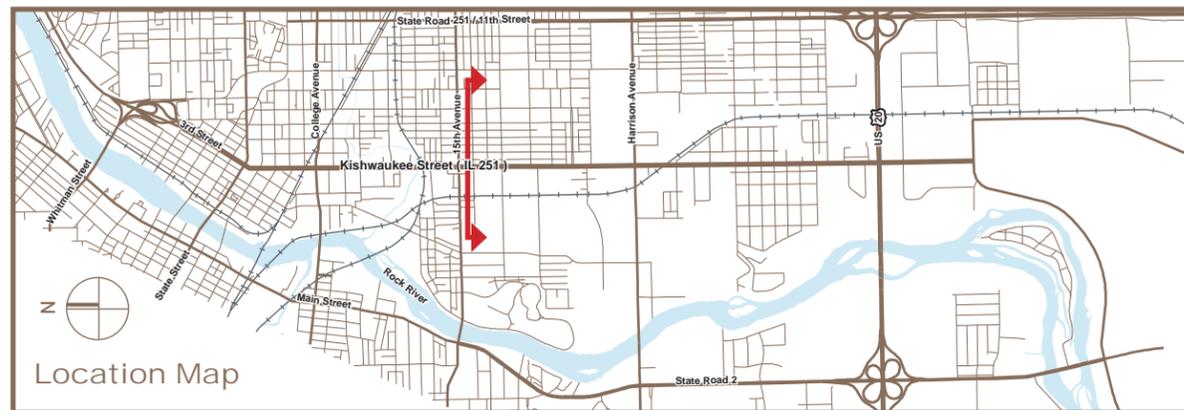
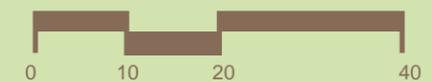
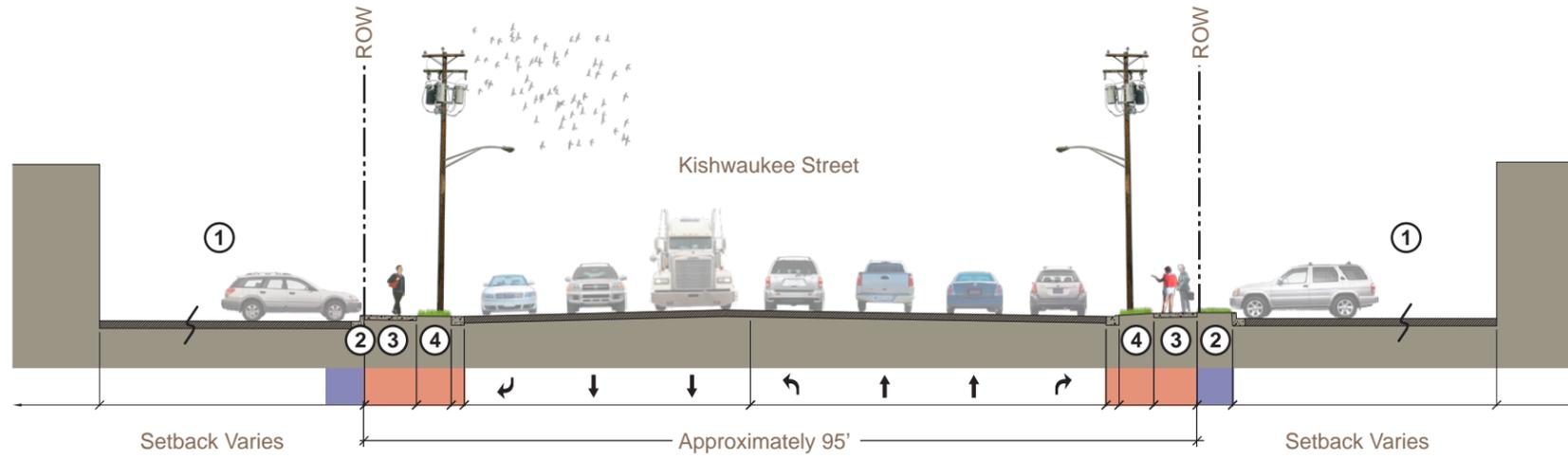


Figure 8

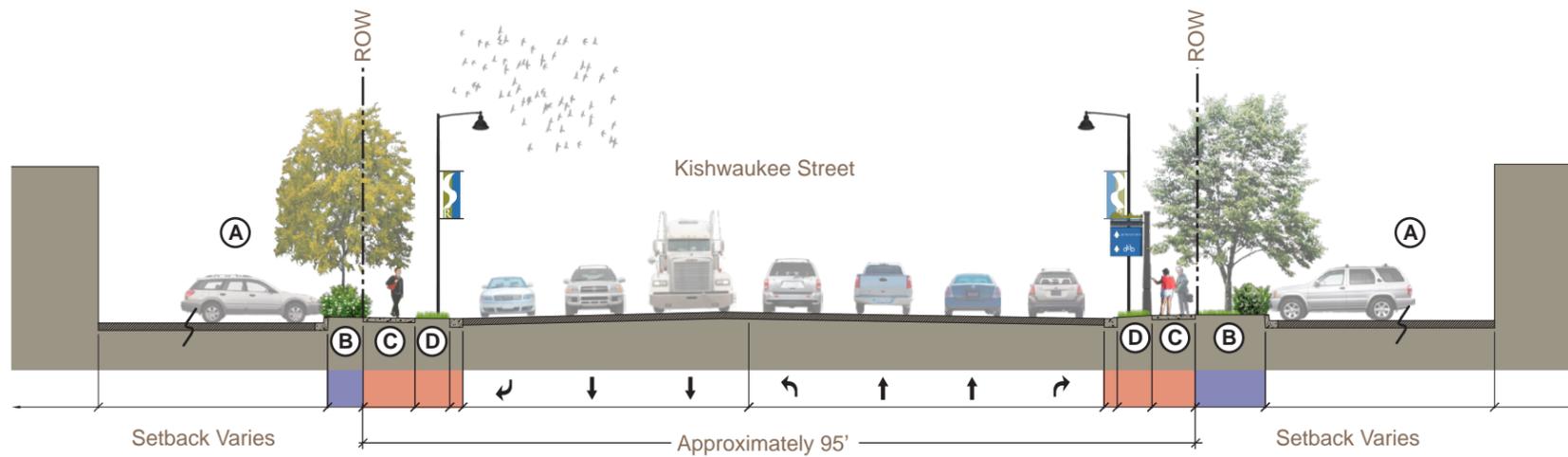
Scale: 1" = 20'



Existing Conditions



Proposed Conditions



Auto-Oriented Commercial Node at Existing Street - Kishwaukee North of 15th Avenue

Existing Conditions

- ① Auto-oriented commercial
- ② Inadequate buffer
- ③ Degraded existing sidewalk
- ④ Underutilized parkway

Proposed Conditions

- Ⓐ Auto-oriented commercial
- Ⓑ Landscape buffer
- Ⓒ Updated sidewalk
- Ⓓ Updated parkway

Project Areas*

- Public Improvement Area
- Private Improvement Area

*Corridor alignment to remain as existing

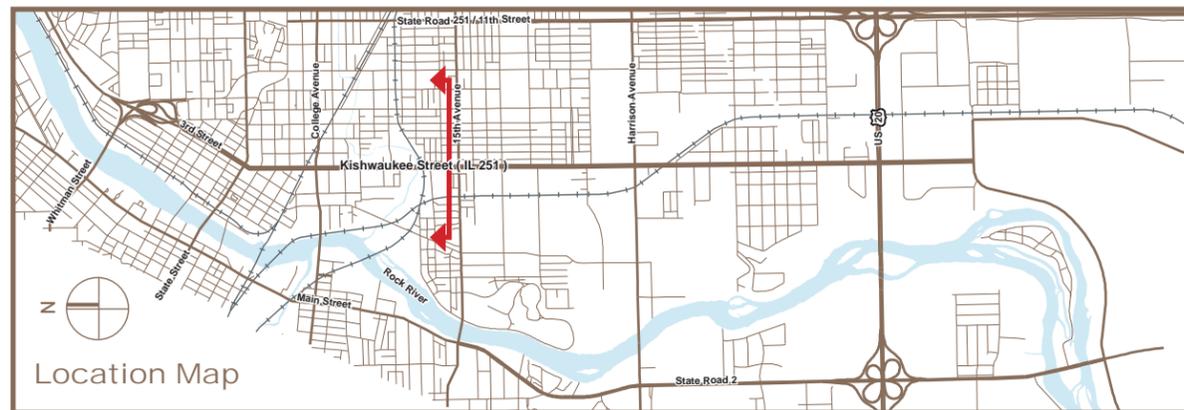
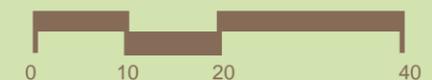
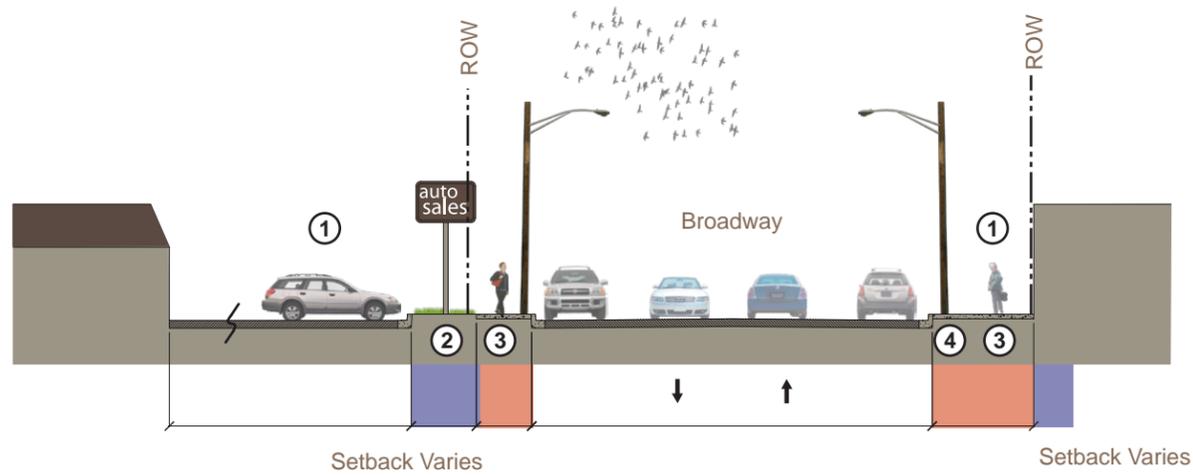


Figure 9

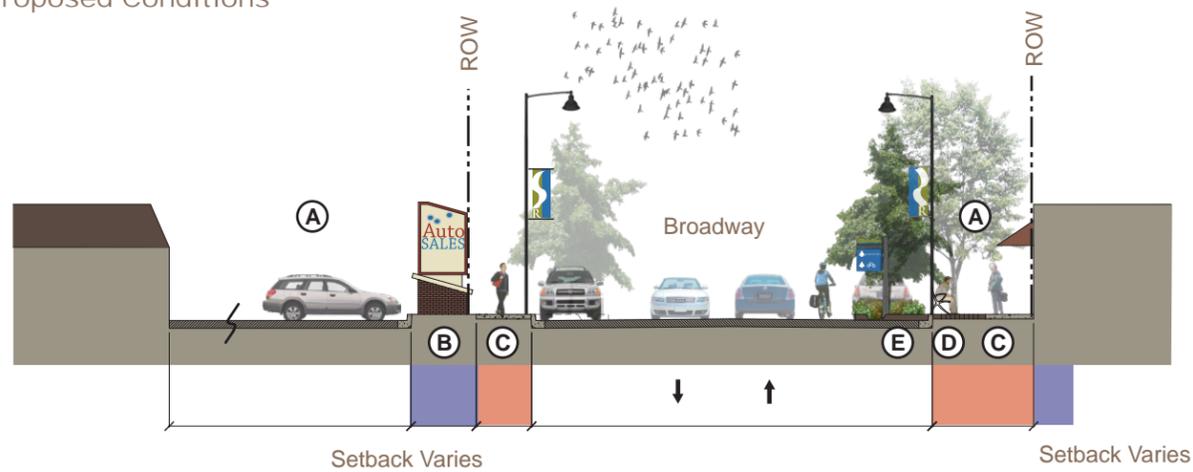
Scale: 1" = 20'



Existing Conditions



Proposed Conditions



Auto-Oriented Commercial Node -
Broadway

Existing Conditions

- ① Auto-oriented commercial
- ② Inadequate buffer
- ③ Degraded existing sidewalk
- ④ Underutilized parkway

Proposed Conditions

- Ⓐ Auto-oriented commercial
- Ⓑ Landscape buffer with monument signage
- Ⓒ Updated sidewalk
- Ⓓ Updated parkway
- Ⓔ Stormwater intercepting curb extension

Project Areas*

- Public Improvement Area
- Private Improvement Area

*Corridor alignment to remain as existing

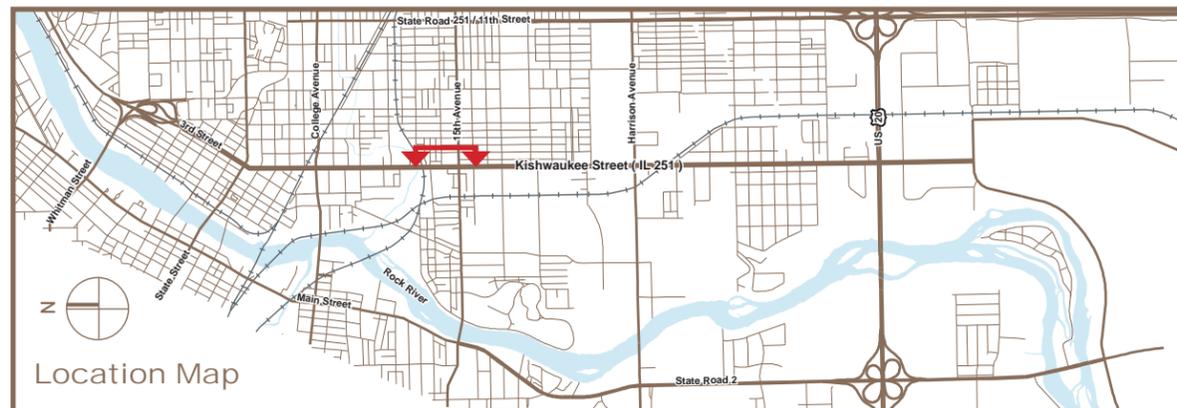
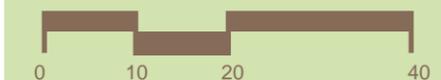
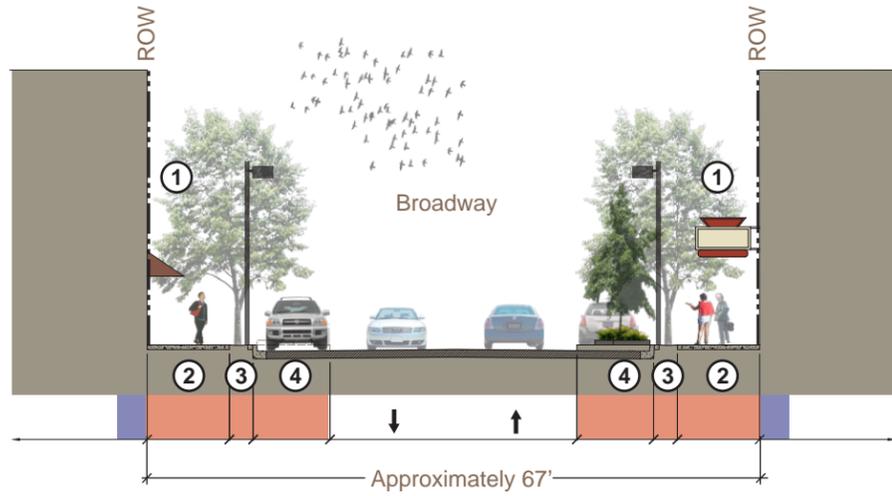


Figure 10

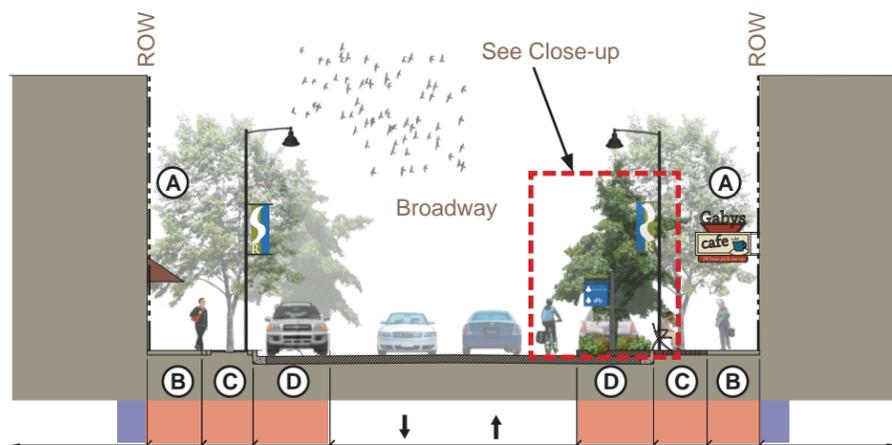
Scale: 1" = 20'



Existing Conditions



Proposed Conditions



Stormwater Management & Beautification



D Water Intercepting Curb-Extension



Stormwater Interception Planter



Close-up Demonstrating Water Flow

Images from City of Portland Oregon - 12th Ave. Green Street Project

Pedestrian-Oriented Commercial Node - Broadway

Existing Conditions

- ① Pedestrian-oriented commercial
- ② Degraded existing sidewalk
- ③ Underutilized parkway
- ④ Underutilized curb extensions

Proposed Conditions

- Ⓐ Pedestrian-oriented commercial
- Ⓑ Updated sidewalk
- Ⓒ Updated parkway
- Ⓓ Stormwater intercepting curb extension

Project Areas*

- Public Improvement Area
- Private Improvement Area

*Corridor alignment to remain as existing



Figure 11

Scale: 1" = 20'



February 2009

Arterial Street Access - 15th Avenue

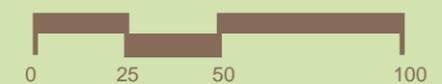
Proposed Conditions

- ① Provide medians
- ② Enhance pedestrian safety
- ③ Provide parkway trees
- ④ Private landscape buffer improvements
- ⑤ Manage access to adjacent residential streets
- ⑥ Provide wayfinding to Mid Town District at intersections with Kishwaukee Street



Figure 12

Scale: 1" = 50'



February 2009

Residential Street Access - 16th Avenue

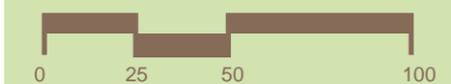
Proposed Conditions

- ① Stormwater management landscape area
- ② Provide reduced radii for increased pedestrian safety and as visual indicator of residential uses
- ③ Provide parkway trees
- ④ Private landscape buffer improvements



Figure 13

Scale: 1" = 50'



February 2009

Residential Street Access - 20th Avenue

Proposed Conditions

- ① Provide planted median
- ② Provide reduced radii at residential intersections for pedestrian safety
- ③ Provide parkway trees
- ④ Private landscape buffer improvements



Figure 14

Scale: 1" = 40'



February 2009

Residential Boulevard Access - 22nd Avenue

Proposed Conditions

- ① Enhance existing neighborhood entry
- ② Consolidate driveways
- ③ Provide parkway trees
- ④ Private landscape improvements



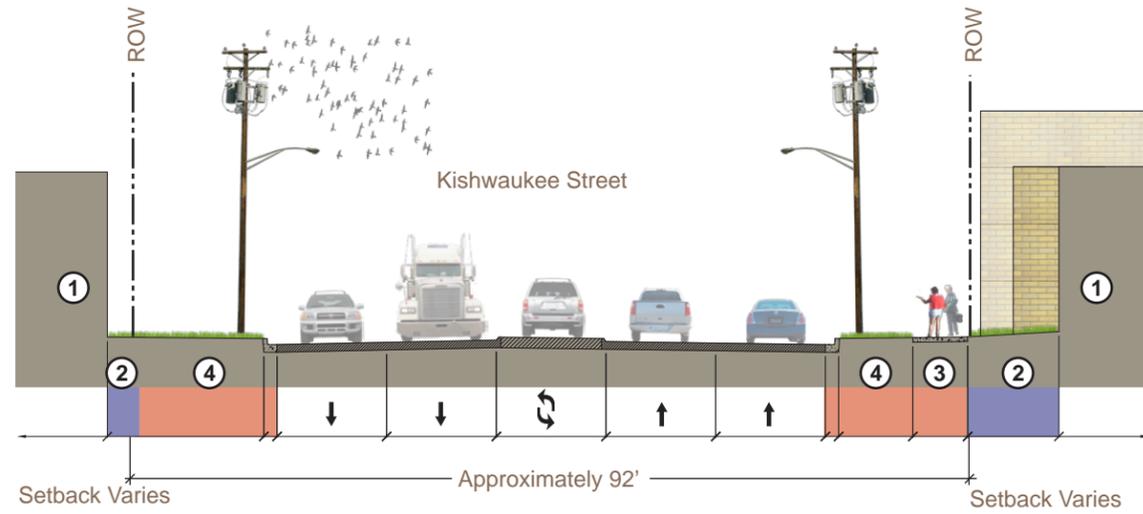
Figure 15

Scale: 1" = 40'

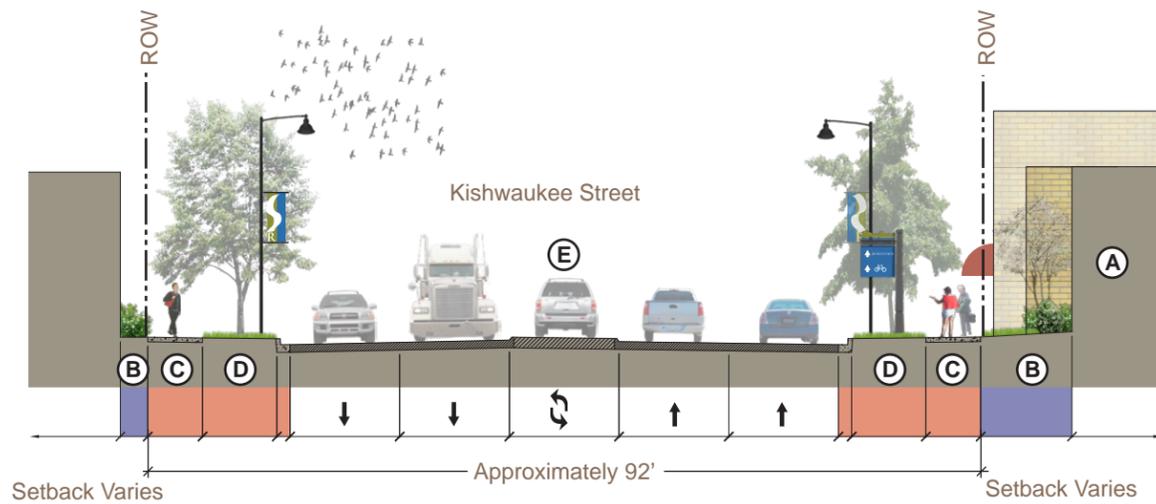


February 2009

Existing Conditions



Proposed Conditions



Industrial Stabilization Area - Kishwaukee North of Harrison Ave.

Existing Conditions

- ① Auto-oriented commercial / industrial
- ② Inadequate buffer
- ③ Degraded existing sidewalk
- ④ Underutilized parkway

Proposed Conditions

- Ⓐ Auto-oriented commercial / industrial
- Ⓑ Landscape buffer
- Ⓒ Updated sidewalk
- Ⓓ Updated parkway
- Ⓔ Add planted median in select areas by consolidating site access points

Project Areas*

- Public Improvement Area
- Private Improvement Area

*Corridor alignment to be updated by IDOT

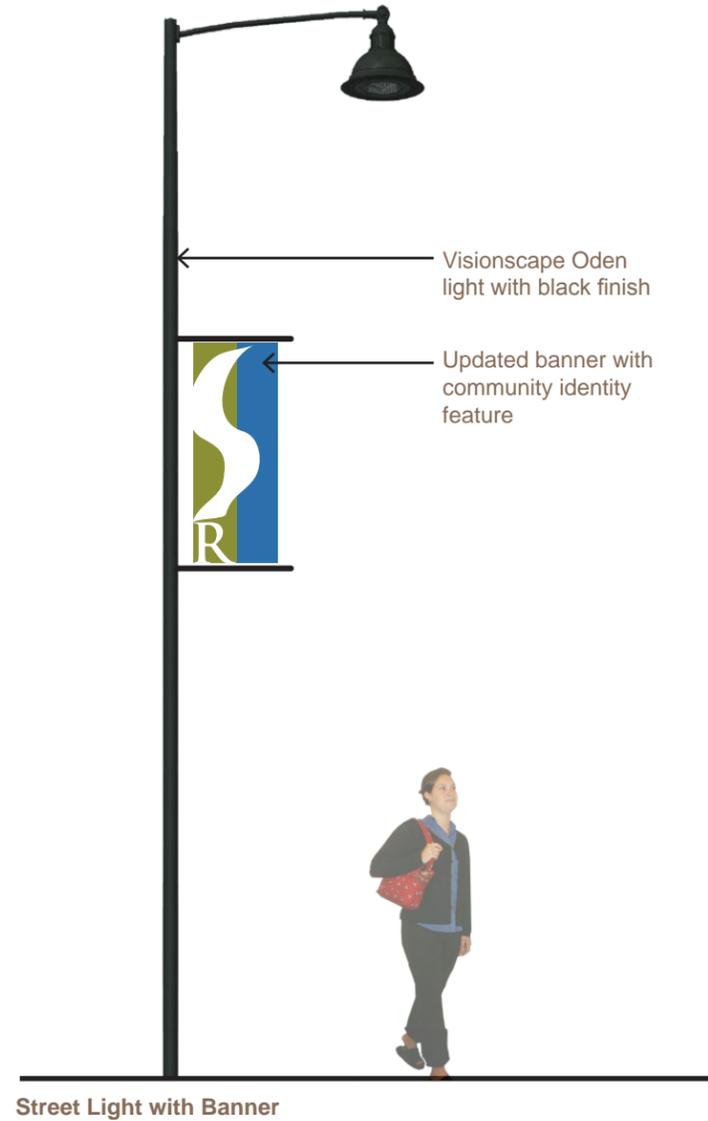


Figure 16

Scale: 1" = 20'



Industrial Access Greenway - Blackhawk Park Avenue

Proposed Conditions

- ① Provide planted median
- ② Enhance pedestrian safety and access
- ③ Provide street trees
- ④ Private landscape buffer improvements
- ⑤ Accomodate truck traffic and staging
- ⑥ Sustainable stormwater management

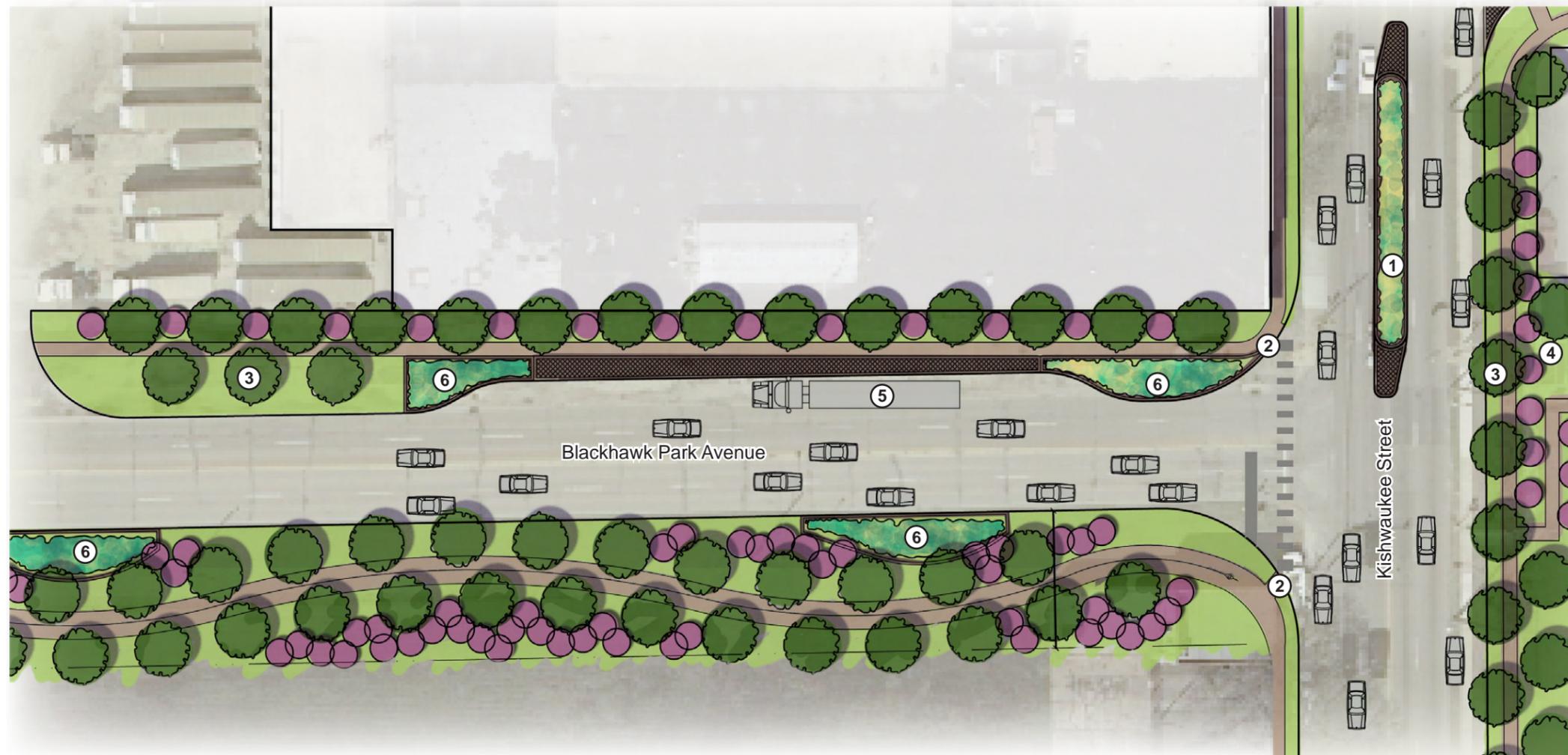
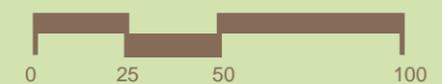


Figure 17

Scale: 1" = 50'



Auto-Oriented Commercial Area - Kishwaukee North of Sandy Hollow

Proposed Conditions

- ① Provide continuous sidewalk; possible multi-use path along Kishwaukee Street
- ② Provide street trees
- ③ Private landscape buffer improvements

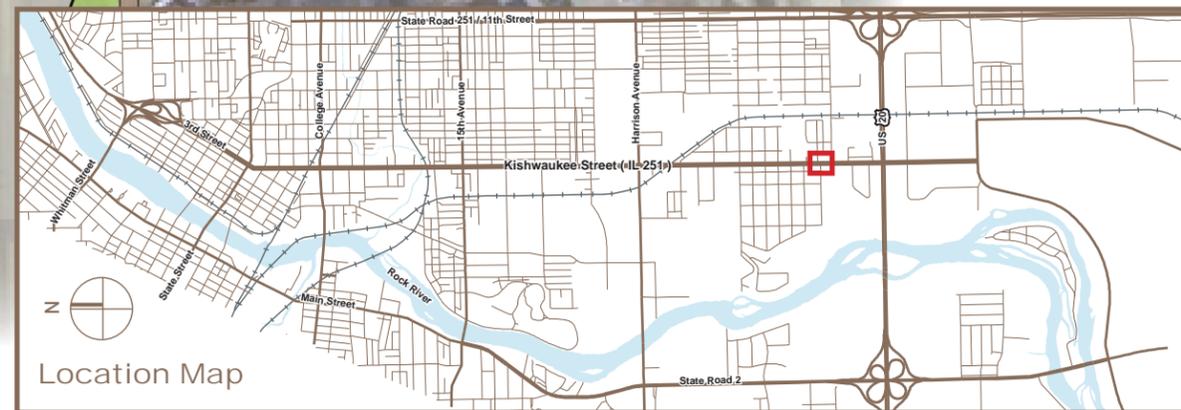


Figure 18

Scale: 1" = 50'

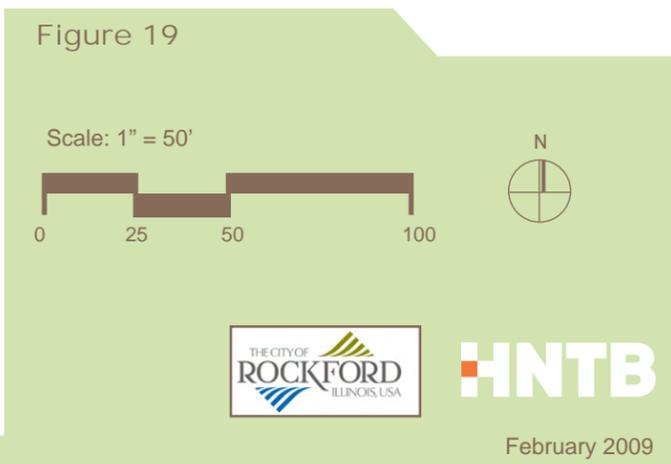


February 2009

Airport Industrial Area - Kishwaukee South of US 20

Proposed Conditions

- ① Provide continuous sidewalk; possible multi-use path along Kishwaukee Street
- ② Provide street trees
- ③ Private landscape buffer improvements



Principle 6.

Establish Kishwaukee Street as an Aesthetically-Pleasing “Gateway” to the City

In addition to overall efforts to foster high-quality redevelopment throughout the Corridor, streetscape upgrades at key “gateway” entry points to the Corridor will have a strong visual impact. These streetscaping upgrades will function to establish a “brand” identity for the Corridor as well as providing wayfinding signage to the Downtown and Chicago Rockford International Airport. These gateways, depicted in [Figure 19: Gateway Opportunities](#), include:

First priority:

- Broadway and Kishwaukee Street (Mid Town Gateway)
- “Heart of Kishwaukee Industry” monument (Kishwaukee Street / 23rd Avenue)
- Harrison Avenue and Kishwaukee Street

In conjunction with redevelopment at key opportunity areas, “branding” elements should be incorporated into streetscape and intersection treatments. In addition to a monument at 23rd Avenue, signage at both Harrison Avenue and Broadway is a priority.

Second priority:

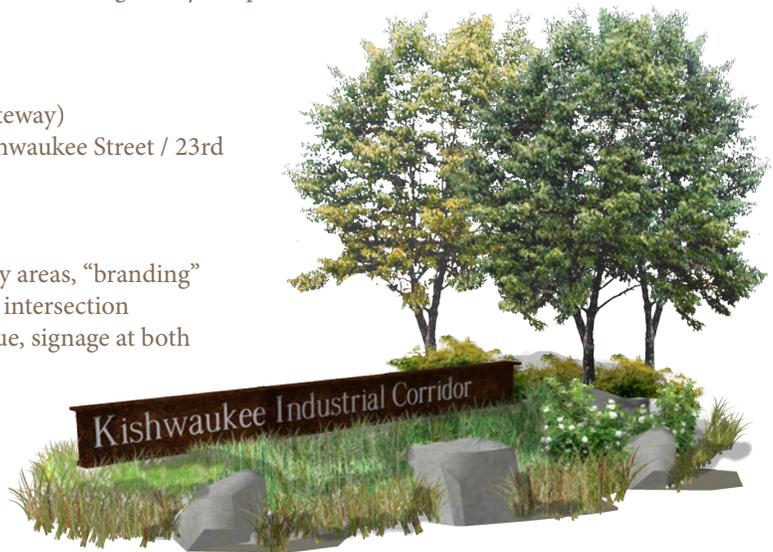
- Haight Village between 5th / College Avenue
- Keith Creek Greenway / railroad crossing
- Sandy Hollow Road / Kishwaukee Street

These potential improvements, though not in designated opportunity areas, would provide impact in the Corridor. Improvements could be coordinated with open space enhancements in cooperation with the Park District or other partners.

Third priority:

- Whitman Street Interchange
- Downtown intersections, including State and 3rd Street
- 15th Avenue at the Rock River crossing

As longer-term and broader initiatives move forward, including Downtown and riverfront enhancements and a potential reconfiguration of the Whitman Street Interchange, opportunities exist to identify and guide visitors to the Kishwaukee Street Corridor.

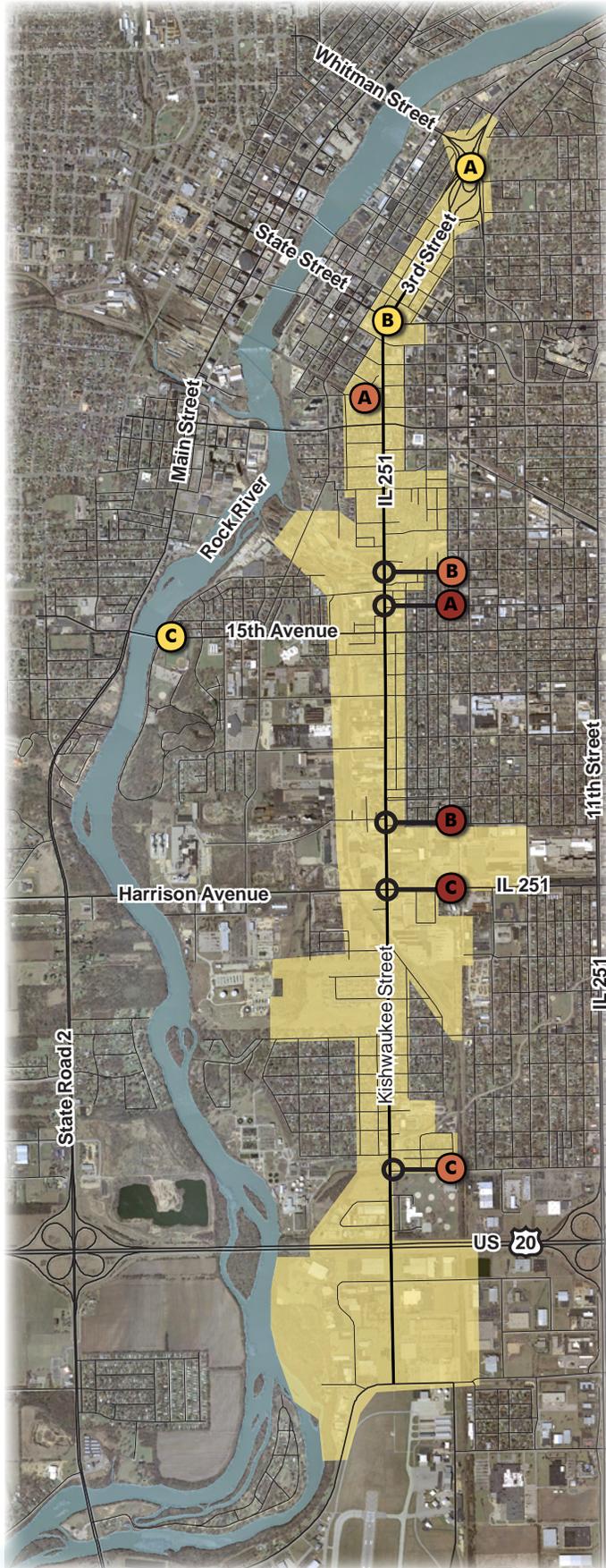


Potential Corner Gateway Feature at Harrison and Kishwaukee



HNTB

February 2009



First Priority:

- A** Broadway/ Kishwaukee Street (Mid Town Gateway)
- B** "Heart of Kishwaukee Industry" Monument
- C** Harrison Avenue / Kishwaukee Street

Second Priority:

- A** Haight Village Pocket Park
- B** Keith Creek Greenway / Railroad Crossing
- C** Sandy Hollow Road / Kishwaukee Street

Third Priority:

- A** Whitman Street Interchange
- B** Downtown Intersections, Including State and 3rd Street
- C** 15th Avenue at Rock River Crossing

Figure 20



February 2009

Economic Development Initiatives

Rockford has incurred a steep opportunity cost through past policies that did not effectively capitalize on *existing* industrial assets. The City can, however, now catalyze private investment and support broader economic development through targeted public support of economic development initiatives in the Kishwaukee Street Corridor, encouraging industrial reinvestment in concert with new industrial investment in other target areas.

Recommended opportunities for the creation and implementation of economic development initiatives are related to the land use framework and key opportunity areas, establishing mechanisms to support positive change and reverse the endemic under-valuation of properties in and around the Corridor. “Seeding” these efforts will stabilize the area and catalyze further private investment in the long term by ensuring a stable investment environment.

The recommended economic development initiatives can be broadly grouped into three categories: redevelopment assistance, business development assistance, and access to energy / environmental resources.

Redevelopment Assistance

The City is uniquely positioned to provide redevelopment assistance to new and existing businesses through its powers of blight clearance and land assembly. Developers face a number of obstacles when attempting infill development in established cities like Rockford: irregular parcel sizes, multiple land owners, and incomplete property records can combine to derail redevelopment projects. The City can, however, work with the development community to assistance with land assembly and site preparation so that redevelopable land is “packaged” and available to interested developers. Returning these under-utilized parcels to the tax rolls will increase property tax revenue. The City may consider developing a land bank of properties within the Corridor that can be packaged for developers when market conditions support their sale. This level of planning will prevent piece-meal redevelopment and ensure that a coherent redevelopment vision for the Corridor is achieved.

Because of the Corridor’s history of heavy industry activity, brownfield remediation is an issue for many properties. The City is currently working with multiple levels of government and undergoing the application process to receive Federal funding to clean these sites. This Federal funding could be leveraged to spur the redevelopment of these sites, which could catalyze redevelopment on adjacent underutilized sites, as well as improving the environment of these abutting properties. The City should remain active in pursuit of this Federal funding, as well as explore other avenues of environmental remediation funding from the state or regional level.

While some aspects of the Corridor’s industrial history require remediation, another legacy of heavy industry and manufacturing leaves the Corridor with an asset: unique and historic multi-story warehouses. These structures provide an opportunity for redevelopment and reuse that is distinctive to the Corridor. The City should consider coordinating with these building owners to ensure that any future redevelopment retains the structural and visual integrity of these buildings. Because upkeep and maintenance costs of older structures are often a burden on property owners, the City may consider establishing an Industrial Corridor Legacy Fund that provides matching grants to property owners who work with the City to redevelop these buildings in a historically-sensitive manner.



HNTB

February 2009

Business Development Assistance

Investments in the physical infrastructure of the Corridor must be complemented by investment in local businesses and human capital. This is a long-term, strategic effort that must include active participation on the part of the City, local businesses, community-based organizations, schools, and residents. This strategy should include two approaches: business retention and outreach to stabilize existing businesses and long-term capacity building to ensure the sustained future growth of the local economy.

Efforts are currently underway to improve communication among existing businesses within the Corridor and coordination among these businesses and the City. These efforts are being catalyzed through the City's organization of a Kishwaukee Street Corridor Roundtable series of meetings. These meetings are designed to provide outreach and guidance to Corridor businesses and residents who are interested in creating a group whose mission is to advocate on behalf of Corridor businesses. Depending on the final structure of this group, it could become a forum for businesses to become more involved in the community, serve as a coordination point to address Corridor-wide concerns, and increase stakeholder awareness of and involvement in the Corridor revitalization efforts.

Additional business retention strategies could include the distribution of annual or bi-annual surveys to gauge satisfaction with the business climate of the Corridor. The results of the survey could be evaluated at a Corridor-wide stakeholder meeting, and strategies could be discussed for addressing outstanding concerns. Additional coordination could occur within existing industry clusters to efficiently address both industry-specific concerns and more general business issues, like expansion and relocation assistance.

In addition to addressing the needs of existing businesses and community stakeholders, the City can assist the Corridor in long-term capacity building through the creation of public-private partnerships to address key opportunity areas. The sustained revitalization of the Corridor will be achieved through the sustained participation of all of its stakeholders, including businesses and nearby residents. As the City looks to promote the jobs / housing balance within the Corridor, private businesses can become involved through the active recruitment and training of neighborhood residents. The City should consider the creation of a program to facilitate workforce development training in either a coordination role or working with regional and state partners.

The City should also encourage the continued and expanded use of the successful Chicago Rockford International Airport's Foreign Trade Zone. This program provides the region, including the Corridor, with a competitive advantage that should continue to be leveraged into the future.

Energy / Environmental Resources

As modern industry has evolved, so has its reliance on traditional forms of energy sources. Older structures and facilities within the Corridor are often not able to support modern industrial functions, which puts the Corridor at a competitive disadvantage with regional greenfield industrial development sites. The City should work with property owners and energy suppliers to ensure that infrastructure and telecommunications upgrades, including the use of renewable energy sources, are undertaken within existing structures.

The City may also want to consider offering educational resources and financial incentives for the use of sustainable or "green" building techniques. These techniques



HNTB

February 2009

Economic Development Initiatives { Continued }

could include permeable pavements, rooftop gardens, stormwater barrels, landscaping with indigenous plantings, stormwater management through swales, and numerous other options. Residential and business owners who choose to utilize these construction techniques should be eligible for streamlined permitting, fee waivers, or grant assistance.

Organizational / Administrative Initiatives

The City can leverage its role as administrator and regulator to facilitate the revitalization of the Kishwaukee Street Corridor. Through intensive coordination efforts with Corridor stakeholders, the City can modify existing regulations and policies to improve communication, remove obstacles to private investment, and guide redevelopment efforts. Some opportunities for regulatory and policy modifications include:

Regulatory modifications and incentives

Zoning amendments

The City should review its zoning code to determine the degree to which existing zoning classifications within the Corridor complement the existing land uses, and whether amendments could be made to increase the opportunity for redevelopment of under-utilized parcels.

Streamlined review process

Based on feedback from existing businesses, the City may want to consider offering streamlined permitting application and reviews for projects in the Corridor that meet certain eligibility criteria. These criteria could be based on the project's compatibility with established planning principles for the area, participation in a workforce development program, or use of green building materials, or any number of other policy goals that the City may want to promote.

Development standards

The City should consider ensuring that development standards for key high-visibility elements of the built environment within the Corridor, including signage, surface parking lots, and landscaping, meet acceptable standards of aesthetics and functionality. Compliance with these standards should be a condition of City assistance.

Code enforcement

Existing businesses have expressed concerns that code enforcement within the Corridor is inconsistent. Any regulatory power held by the City that can be exercised to encourage stability within the business environment should be immediately undertaken.



Policy modifications and incentives

Ongoing contact with existing businesses

While this concept was already discussed in the “Economic Development Incentives” section of this report, its importance cannot be overstated. Businesses within the Corridor have expressed a sense of disconnection with other businesses and the City. Businesses that do not feel invested within the Corridor may be more easily persuaded to relocate outside of the Corridor or simply make minimal investments to their existing businesses. The creation of a mechanism to share information and monitor and address business concerns would improve connectivity and encourage the active participation of existing businesses within the economic and social ecosystem of the Corridor.

TIF or BID designations at key opportunity areas

The City has already created a number of TIF districts, but has not yet established a TIF that is targeted to improve the Kishwaukee Street Corridor. The creation of a TIF or BID within the Corridor would provide a mechanism to fund the infrastructure investments that are key to spurring private sector redevelopment, in particular at key opportunity areas.

Improvement grants and loans at key existing structures

Because of the age of many of the iconic structures within the Corridor, their maintenance and upkeep may become a financial burden to property owners. The City, then, should consider the creation of improvement loans and grants in order to provide financial support for the upkeep of these historic structures and improve the aesthetics of the Corridor while maintaining its unique character.

Public safety patrols

Public safety is another concern that has been voiced by both businesses and residents. If employees and residents do not feel safe within their community, they are less likely to invest in homes and businesses and engage in social interaction. Without financial investment and personal involvement from stakeholders, it will be difficult to sustain Corridor revitalization efforts. The City may consider increasing police patrols within the area, or local community groups may consider organizing safety patrols to increase the numbers of “eyes on the street” to discourage criminal activity.

Coordination with ongoing bicycle access improvements and open space improvements

In order to support a multi-modal character for the Corridor, the City should coordinate Corridor efforts with ongoing bicycle access improvements and open space enhancements to ensure that the highest levels of coordination are achieved.



KISHWAUKEE STREET CORRIDOR REVITALIZATION PLAN ACTION STRATEGY MATRIX						
	Action	Implementation: Number of Years			Organization(s)	Potential Funding Sources
		1 to 2	3 to 4	5+		
PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES						
Land Use and Redevelopment	Purchase and stabilize key structures for future adaptive re-use, including, but not limited to, the Rock River School, Counselor Scale building, and Rockford National Furniture Manufacturing Building	✓			CDC(s), City	TIF / BID , private sources, RLDC (Rockford Local Development Corporation), historic preservation tax credits
	Undertake land assembly and remediation to facilitate redevelopment, with a focus on key opportunity areas (brownfields)	✓			City, US EPA (Environmental Protection Agency), IL EPA, RAEDC (Rockford Area Economic Development Council), Trust for Public Land, CDC(s)	Illinois Municipal Brownfields Redevelopment Grant Program, TIF / BID (Tax Increment Finance District / Business Improvement District), RLDC
	Infrastructure improvements to support modern industrial needs	✓	✓	✓	City, utility providers, RAEDC	TIF / BID, CDBG (Community Development Block Grant)
	Redevelop Orton Keyes RHA site as mixed-income residential development			✓	RHA (Rockford Housing Authority), US HUD (US Department of Housing and Urban Development), NHS (Neighborhood Housing Services), private sector developers, City	HUD, NHS, private sector
Access and Infrastructure	Strengthen pedestrian connections along and across Kishwaukee Street	✓			City, Rockford Park District, IDOT (Illinois Department of Transportation), CDC	Transportation, Community, and System Preservation Program (FHWA: Federal Highway Administration), Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program, Safe Routes to School
	Provide planted medians, parkways, landscape buffering, sidewalks, and intersection enhancements that complement circulation patterns and provide buffering	✓	✓	✓	CDC(s), City, IDOT, RAEDC, RMAP (Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning)	Illinois Green Streets Program, TIF / BID, CDBG
	Coordinate streetscape and mobility improvements with existing plans for bike route installation and open space improvements	✓	✓	✓	CDC(s), City, Rockford Park District, IDOT, IL DNR (Illinois Department of Natural Resources), RMAP	Transportation, Community, and System Preservation Program (FHWA), Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development Program (OSLAD) and Land and Water Conservation Fund (IL), Safe Routes to School
	Install wayfinding and identifying signage		✓		City, IDOT, RAEDC	TIF / BID
	Evaluate reconstruction of Whitman Street Interchange		✓		City, CDC(s), IDOT, RMAP	City 5-Year CIP (Capital Improvement Plan), IDOT planning funds
	Evaluate possibility of rail consolidation		✓		City, FRA (Federal Railroad Administration), IDOT, RMAP	IDOT - (OP & P) Office of Planning and Programming planning funds
	Reconfigure one-way street pairs along 2nd and 3rd Streets to allow bi-directional traffic flow		✓		RMAP, City, IDOT	IDOT - OP & P planning funds, City 5-Year CIP
	Improve industrial traffic circulation through the provision of staging areas for trucks on industrial side streets		✓		RMAP, City, IDOT	ITEP (Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program), TIF / BID
	Discourage cut-through traffic in residential neighborhoods through limited closures at select intersections		✓		RMAP, City, IDOT	TIF / BID, City 5-Year CIP
	Coordinate bus stops with streetscape improvements, including a minimum standard of a concrete pad between the sidewalk and curb, benches, trash receptacles, and free-standing signs		✓		RMTD (Rockford Mass Transit District), CDC, City, IDOT	Transportation, Community, and System Preservation Program (FHWA)
	Construct a multi-use path system in the Airport industrial area		✓		Rockford Park District, City, Winnebago County, IDOT, RMAP	Transportation, Community, and System Preservation Program (FHWA), ITEP
	Stabilize adjacent residential uses through investments in improved lighting, maintained sidewalks, consistent street cleaning, and landscaping of the public way		✓	✓	City, neighborhood organizations, CDCs	ITEP, TIF / BID, CDBG, City 5-Year CIP
	Evaluate construction of an interchange at Kishwaukee Street and U.S. 20			✓	City, RMAP, IDOT, FHWA (Federal Highway Administration)	City 5-Year CIP
	Limit curb cuts and consolidate access points, as opportunities arise, including the construction of a new road on or east of railroad right-of-way for industrial access	✓	✓	✓	City, IDOT, RMAP	ITEP, TIF / BID, Truck Access Route Program (IDOT)
Urban Design	Erect "Heart of Kishwaukee Industry" monument on southeast corner of Kishwaukee Street and Peoples / 23rd Avenue	✓			CDC(s), local arts organizations, Rockford Area Arts Council, City, RAEDC	TIF / BID, private donations
	Undertake streetscape upgrades at key "gateway" entry points to the Corridor	✓			City, CDC(s), IDOT, RAEDC, Rockford Chamber of Commerce	Illinois Green Streets Program, TIF / BID, private donations
	Upgrade facades of businesses fronting Kishwaukee Street	✓	✓		CDC(s), City, RAEDC, Rockford Chamber of Commerce, local banks	TIF / BID
	Create a "brand" for the Corridor through use of a consistent landscape palette and lighting fixtures, street furniture, and trash receptacles	✓	✓	✓	City, CDC(s), IDOT, RAEDC, Rockford Chamber of Commerce	Illinois Green Streets Program, private investment, ITEP, TIF / BID

Action Strategy
Matrix



KISHWAUKEE STREET CORRIDOR REVITALIZATION PLAN ACTION STRATEGY MATRIX

	Action	Implementation: Number of Years			Organization(s)	Potential Funding Sources
		1 to 2	3 to 4	5+		
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES						
Redevelopment Assistance	Develop a land bank of properties for preparation and sale to developers during favorable market conditions; issue RFPs as appropriate	✓			CDC(s), Trust for Public Land, RAEDC, local bank(s), City technical support	TIF / BID, private investment
	Establish a "planned manufacturing district" to stabilize zoning and work with investment groups to hold properties	✓	✓	✓	City, CDC(s), private developers	n/a
	Actively pursue federal, state, and regional brownfield remediation funding	✓			City, US EPA, IL EPA, RAEDC, CDC(s)	Illinois Municipal Brownfields Redevelopment Grant Program
	Coordinate with property owners to maintain structural and architectural integrity of historic manufacturing buildings	✓			CDC(s), City, RAEDC, Rockford Chamber of Commerce, IHPA	TIF / BID
	Establish an Industrial Corridor Legacy Fund to provide matching grants or loans to property owners for historically-sensitive structure redevelopment		✓		CDC(s), local bank(s), City, RAEDC, Rockford Chamber of Commerce, IHPA	TIF / BID
Business Development	Continue communication and organization activities of the Kishwaukee Street Corridor Roundtable, ultimately creating an independent non-profit entity	✓			City, CDC(s), RAEDC, Rockford Chamber of Commerce, Abilities Center, CDC(s)	n/a
	Continue to market the Airport's Foreign Trade Zone	✓	✓	✓	City, RAEDC, Chicago Rockford International Airport, Rockford Chamber of Commerce	n/a
	Distribute annual or bi-annual surveys to Corridor business to gauge satisfaction with the business climate	✓			CDC(s), RAEDC, Rockford Chamber of Commerce, Abilities Center, City	n/a
	Assess results of business surveys at Corridor-wide stakeholder meeting and develop response strategies	✓			CDC(s), RAEDC, Rockford Chamber of Commerce, Abilities Center, City	n/a
	Encourage communication within industry clusters	✓			CDC(s), RAEDC, Rockford Chamber of Commerce, Abilities Center, City	n/a
	Facilitate workforce development training for Corridor businesses	✓	✓	✓	Abilities Center, CDC(s), City, DCEO (Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity), RAEDC, Rockford Chamber of Commerce, Rock Valley College	Job Training and Economic Development Grant Program (DCEO), Transportation, Community, and System Preservation Program (FHWA), IL Department of Commerce and Community Affairs: Industrial Training Program
	Create an industrial / manufacturing incubator to facilitate business development	✓	✓	✓	CDC(s), City, RAEDC, Rockford Chamber of Commerce	Illinois Small Business Development Center (DCEO), Illinois Development Finance Authority: Industrial Revenue Bonds, Digital Divide (DCEO), tenant rents
	Institutional investment in community anchors, which could include a charter school, police precinct, and library branch	✓	✓	✓	City, CDC(s), Rockford Police Department, Rockford Public Library, Rockford Public Schools	City, Rockford Public School District
	Create multi-disciplinary team within the City, County, and other agencies to lobby and support the Corridor revitalization agenda	✓	✓	✓	City, CDC(s), Winnebago County	n/a
	Actively recruit and train neighborhood residents for employment within the Corridor		✓	✓	Abilities Center, CDC(s), City, DCEO, RAEDC, Rockford Chamber of Commerce	Job Training and Economic Development Grant Program (DCEO), Transportation, Community, and System Preservation Program (FHWA)
Energy / Environmental Resources	Offer educational resources for the use of "green" strategies	✓			GREEN (Greater Rockford Environmental and Educational Network), US EPA, City	n/a
	Provide streamlined permitting, fee waivers, or grant assistance to residential and business owners who utilize "green" strategies		✓		City, GREEN	TIF / BID
	Pursue infrastructure and telecommunications upgrades, including the use of renewable energy		✓		City, utility providers, RAEDC, GREEN	TIF / BID

ORGANIZATIONAL / ADMINISTRATIVE INITIATIVES

Zoning amendments	Review the zoning code to determine the degree to which existing zoning classifications within the Corridor complement the existing land uses, pursue amendments to encourage redevelopment of under-utilized parcels	✓			City	n/a
Development standards	Enforce high standards for key high-visibility elements within the built environment of the Corridor, with compliance a condition of City assistance	✓			City	n/a
TIF or BID designations at key opportunity areas	Create one or more TIFs or BIDs to provide a funding mechanism for infrastructure improvements, with a focus on key opportunity areas	✓			City, CDC(s), RAEDC, Rockford Chamber of Commerce	n/a
Streamlined review process	Offer streamlined review and permitting for projects that meet pre-determined eligibility criteria which support broad policy goals	✓			City	n/a
Code enforcement	Consistently enforce the City's codes	✓	✓	✓	City	n/a
Public safety patrols	Increase police and / or community patrols to discourage criminal activity, neighborhoods working with the City on identification and support	✓	✓	✓	Weed and Seed Committee, Rockford Police Department, CDC(s), local neighborhood associations	n/a

Action Strategy Matrix



Appendix A: Additional Meeting Summaries

Appendix A: Additional Meeting Summaries

Summary of Meetings with the Illinois Department of Transportation and the Rockford Mass Transit District

In order to ensure that all relevant stakeholders had an opportunity to review and comment on the complete draft of the Kishwaukee Street Corridor Revitalization Plan, the City of Rockford and the consultant team reached out to the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and the Rockford Mass Transit District (RMTD) to solicit their feedback. These meetings were in addition to extensive stakeholder outreach that had occurred over the previous several months. Following two meetings in which the plan was presented to both IDOT and RMTD, each of the respective groups provided comments, which are summarized below.

Illinois Department of Transportation (September 22, 2008)

Following a presentation made to relevant staff at IDOT's Dixon, IL District 2 offices, the consultant team and the City received a memo from IDOT which suggested the completion of a traffic capacity study in the Corridor.

Traffic Capacity Study

IDOT believes that the Kishwaukee Street Corridor Revitalization Plan may require modification, depending on projected traffic volumes within the Corridor and the capacity of the Corridor to accommodate it. It is IDOT's suggestion that this traffic capacity analysis includes a discussion of projected traffic at both the Whitman Street Interchange and the proposed Kishwaukee Street / US 20 interchange.

Rockford Mass Transit District (December 18, 2008)

Following a presentation made to relevant staff at RMTD's Rockford, IL offices, the consultant team and City received a list of comments regarding the future operation of transit in the Corridor within the context of the Plan recommendations.

Street Reconfiguration

The RMTD is supportive of two street reconfiguration ideas outlined in the Plan: the realignment of 15th Avenue and Broadway with Kishwaukee and the conversion of 2nd and 3rd Street from one-way pairs to bi-directional traffic. RMTD feels both of these projects would improve both safety and accessibility.

Bus Stop and Shelter Enhancements

The RMTD also supports any opportunity to work with the City on enhancing transit stop and shelter areas, and specifically mentions that the enhancement of Keith Creek-area transit stops would improve mobility, green space, and ridership levels.

Land Use Plan

The RMTD also supports the land use plan, as outlined in the report, because the incorporation of pedestrian-friendly development patterns are expected to enhance both the neighborhood and RMTD service.

Bus Access Along Kishwaukee Street

Finally, while the RMTD supports the reduction and/or separation of truck traffic through certain portions of the Corridor, as outlined in the Plan, the RMTD would like to ensure that bus travel would be excluded from consideration. RMTD affirmed the importance of access to the length of Kishwaukee Street as vital to its operations.

Summary of Kishwaukee Empowerment Group Roundtables

(April 2008-Present)

As the result of a discouraging market analysis commissioned for this Corridor, a major theme of the Kishwaukee Corridor Revitalization Plan is to promote efforts of businesses and other Corridor stakeholders to organize and advocate for initiatives and projects that would attract investment into the Corridor planning area. This organizing process began with a successful Empowerment Workshop held in April of 2008 that was attended by over 50 people. This workshop featured guest speakers



HNTB

February 2009

Appendix A: Additional Meeting Summaries

from Chicago-based industrial coalitions and Community Development Corporations (CDCs) that have successfully revitalized urban industrial areas into vibrant business incubators and sites for innovative job-creating companies. Building on the ideas presented at the Empowerment Workshop, the City of Rockford, along with representatives across the Corridor, have been participating in monthly roundtable meetings. These meetings are meant to share information, continue the discussion of the Revitalization Plan document, and to identify and develop a Corridor advocacy group that functions as an equal partner with the City and other organizations in implementing and supporting the Kishwaukee Revitalization Plan.

Representatives from the City of Rockford's Department of Public Works, the Rockford Police Department, the Rockford Area Economic Development Council (RAEDC), and others have presented at these monthly roundtable meetings of the new "Kishwaukee Empowerment Group."

Major concerns discussed at these meetings include:

- Crime,
- Blight,
- Unattractive property uses,
- Shortage of space for business expansion,
- Major roadwork and the disruption of access and business traffic,
- Skilled workforce needs, and
- Finding the resources to hire a full-time or part-time organizing director of the Kishwaukee Empowerment Group.

Many of these concerns are addressed in the implementation table of this Revitalization Plan, but addressing these complex issues require a robust, active, organized stakeholder coalition representing the full range of interests in the Kishwaukee Corridor.

The City of Rockford will support the continued efforts of the Kishwaukee Empowerment Group through the following activities:

- Continue to hold monthly roundtable meetings, bringing speakers and government agencies whose activities are relevant to the revitalization of the Kishwaukee Corridor.
- Work with stakeholders to organize and support mixers, forums, and a variety of social events to bring Corridor businesses and residents together.
- Present and participate in other neighborhood organizations that exist in the corridor, including Haight Village, ORCHiD, and the Kishwaukee Weed and Seed District, and always look for opportunities for the Kishwaukee Empowerment Group to collaborate with these organizations to host events.
- Work with the Neighborhood Network to support neighborhood planning efforts for residential areas that are part of the corridor.
- Target existing Federal programs to support the rehabilitation of blighted areas in the Corridor. As a recent example, the City of Rockford's Housing Division has identified a Kishwaukee Program Area that will target Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for rehabilitation work, as well as acquisition and demolition, of blighted residential properties in the Corridor planning area.
- Additional outreach will also be done in the form of individual stakeholder interviews to allow every major business that is interested to discuss the breadth of their concerns about the Corridor with a member of the City of Rockford's planning staff. Notes from these interviews will be used to identify future organizing initiatives and open additional levels of dialogue between major Corridor stakeholders.



HNTB

February 2009

Appendix B: Existing Conditions Analysis

Appendix C: Real Estate Market Assessment