

South Main Report



City of River Falls, Wisconsin



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INTRODUCTION

It is a goal of the Comprehensive Plan to embrace all segments of the community and guide the City towards its future. Meeting the demands of growth, providing services and facilities combined with our duty to protect and enhance natural and built resources is a pressing challenge that grows with each passing year.

South Main Street is one of three distinct segments that make up the backbone of our commercial corridor. They are as follows:

- North Main Street (Quarry Road to Division Street)
- "Traditional Main Street" (North Division Street to Cascade Avenue)
- South Main Street (Cascade Avenue to Cemetery Road)

South Main Street is a busy arterial street and is a gateway to the to the central business district. There are five zoning districts identified within the South Main Street corridor R-1, R-2, R-3, B-3 and U and a variety of land uses ranging from retail commercial, office, single family /multi-family residential as well as an expanding university presence with the development of the Falcon Center complex. Currently the predominant land use in the study area is residential with approximately 26% of the study area (R-1) single family and 55% of the study area zoned multi-family (R-2 and R-3). Commercial properties (B-3) make up 8% of the study area and (U) University in the remaining 12% of the study area.



PURPOSE OF STUDY

South Main Street is a corridor in transition that faces many pressing challenges ranging from protecting the heritage of the past to meeting the demands of the future. The need to update aging infrastructure and provide for the safe movement of vehicles and pedestrians within and through the area will become more acute as time passes. The conversion and redevelopment of residential properties to more intensive commercial uses along with the growing presence of the University are issues that require careful consideration and balancing of limited resources.

The South Main Street Corridor Study will be the first step in a targeted analysis that identifies the specific needs of South Main Street from Cascade Avenue to Cemetery Road and will identify existing conditions, including positive aspects, deficiencies and

opportunities for improvements. The purpose of this study will be to lay the foundation for a coordinated plan by providing a vision and goals to guide future development and redevelopment of this key corridor. The vision set forth by the Plan Commission will also provide short term guidance for redevelopment opportunities until a plan with public input is adopted. These visions and goals will combine new ideas with relevant themes and documents found in other planning studies and will lead to specific recommendations that will become the basis for the South Main Street Corridor Plan, a planning effort that will involve the community as a whole.



EXISTING CONDITIONS

In the Appendices Section of this report are the following Existing Conditions Maps for your background reference.

- Full Corridor Map
- Map: Sub areas Map
- Sub area descriptions
- Vehicle Transportation
- Bike and Pedestrian Transportation
- Environmental/ Recreation
- Land Use
- Utilities /Community Facilities

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VISIONS & GOALS

The vision for the South Main Street corridor will represent a sensible long term view on how competing interests can find common goals. The vision is as follows.

“South Main Street will be an attractive and vibrant City corridor offering convenient access to a mix of commercial, residential and institutional uses that will facilitate safe and efficient transit through the corridor for all modes of transportation and will be easily accessible to and from adjacent neighborhoods.”

South Main Street is a linear corridor with varying land use issues as one travels from north to south. The study will help determine whether specific ideas are feasible and worth the time to advance in a formal plan. The study will provide a set of goals that will serve as an outline for developing a comprehensive plan for the South Main Street corridor. As a starting point those goals should include the following.



1. Create a zoning overlay district for the corridor that provides the regulatory tools to implement the vision and goals of this study.
2. Integrate existing land uses with a coordinated development plan that emphasizes long term redevelopment and the transitioning of inefficient and obsolete land uses out of the South Main Street corridor.
3. Focus on transportation facilities to improve connectivity through the corridor and to adjacent neighborhoods for all modes of transportation.
4. Encourage a mix of retail and services that are easily accessible to adjacent neighborhoods as well as traffic passing through the corridor.
5. Minimize or negate impacts development/redevelopment activities may have on adjacent residential neighborhoods.
6. Enhance South Main Street as an important City gateway by improving the overall aesthetics of the corridor, (lighting, landscaping, signage (wayfinding) etc.
7. Ensure that the goals of the study are compatible with the goals of the comprehensive plan.

SUB AREAS

The character of South Main Street, its land uses and associated issues change as it moves away from the downtown. For purposes of study the Plan Commission has discussed and drawn boundaries of four distinct sub areas. Each sub area focusses on specific land use issues within its boundaries. The boundaries of each of those areas are described and attached to the end of the report (Appendices). Narrative descriptions of each sub area are as follows.

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SUB AREA ONE

Area one is the largest sub area at approximately 31 acres. It is bounded on the north, south and west by natural boundaries, (Lake George and South Fork of the Kinni). Along its east boundary it is adjacent to Downtown River Falls and the University of Wisconsin River Falls.

Historically the land pattern of this area developed as single family residential. Its location close to services and the University made it an attractive location in age when the population was less mobile. Life after WWII brought major social changes which impacted growth patterns and this area was not immune to these changes. Primary occupancy by single family home ownership slowly changed. As times changed traditional families moved away for many reasons. The growth of the University and the changing life styles of students made areas adjacent to the University prime for conversion of single family homes to student rentals. This created the predominant land use pattern that exists today. Presently the majority of housing stock in this area is old and nearing the end of its useful life.

In recent years we have seen redevelopment activity. The conversion of the Foster Trailer Court and adjacent residences to the University Falls Apartment complex and redevelopment on the south side of Cascade Avenue west of State Street to duplex rentals are examples. This development pattern is focused on student housing and is a continuation of what has come before.

The above described development pattern created a sharp transition between this area and the highly dense commercial uses to the north. The development pattern was appropriate for the time in which it occurred. The City's future land use map developed in 2005 shows this area as multi-family residential (basically reflecting the overlying zoning of the area).

Times have changed, the City is growing and future development and redevelopment should integrate

mixed uses that complement its proximity to the downtown and University. The area has the potential to become a destination. Environmental amenities such as the area's proximity to Glen Park via the swinging bridge, proximity to the river, Lake George and the possibilities that may come about with the determination of the dams future, the future redevelopment possibilities for the now defunct power plant and the bicycle and pedestrian improvements being made in the area provide an attractive backdrop for the development of mixed housing (students, seniors, and working professionals at the University) and commercial uses that could serve the area and the larger community.

Sub area one is impacted by two busy streets. West Cascade Avenue is minor arterial Street and as traffic counts increase it will be used more as part of a bypass around the downtown. This will particularly impact turning movements onto State Street as motorists use the State/Vine Street connection to avoid the controlled intersection at S. Main Street and Cascade Avenue.

South Main Street is a Principal Arterial street and historically traffic counts along South Main Street have been increasing. In the early 1990's the realignment of South Main Street and Cascade Avenue took place. The realignment removed a doglegged intersection that impeded the flow of traffic. A remnant of the street is still in place and used as a city parking lot. This realignment removed several residences and created frontage along South Main Street for the University. This allowed an access point for the University perpendicular to South Main Street and subsequently the University built a parking lot to accommodate their growing needs. The realignment also created an awkward intersection with the remaining right of way for Vine Street.

SUB AREA TWO

Sub area two is the second largest sub area at approximately 29 acres. It is bounded on the north, by the South Fork of the Kinni, on the west by Glen Park and single family residential, on the south by commercial development and UWRF, and along its east boundary by multi-family residential and the UWRF.

The principal development pattern along South Main Street in this area is residential. The development pattern over the years has been similar to that of sub area 1. Over the years as traffic counts built along with traffic noise, access to South Main Street became more difficult and made South Main Street undesirable for single family uses. Subsequently the land use pattern changed to multi-family rental. This increase in density has contributed to the slow degradation of the corridor. We may see in the future consolidation of properties for the development of multifamily apartments as the current zoning pattern would allow this. A continuation of the current land use pattern is not in the best interest of the future development of the City. A mixed use development pattern is more desirable as South Main Street has the key element of location. It is an entrance to and part of the commercial corridor of the City and generates sufficient traffic to support mixed uses.

Access to South Main Street from redeveloped uses will increase turning movements onto South Main Street and is not a safe option for motorist and pedestrians. State Street runs parallel to South Main Street from Park Street to Foster Street. A reconfigured connection from South Main Street to State Street could be used as bypass around sub area two. Redeveloped properties on the west side of South Main Street could be accesses from State Street. It

would also be an option for local traffic infiltrating back into the adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Other opportunities that exist to increase traffic safety and improve traffic flow by realigning and eliminating access points. In sub area two the potential exists for the following:

1. Close East Park Street
2. Realign Broadway Street to align with Church Street
3. Extend Foster Street East to connect to Sycamore Street and the University.

The McEwen property lies within this sub area, is currently for sale and will most likely be developed in the near term future. Future access to and from South Main Street will be from Broadway Street and how access to South Main Street is configured will soon be of major concern. How this area develops could be a model and nucleus for further redevelopment in sub area two.

At a future point an increase in traffic increases the need for additional right of way to accommodate traffic movement. Additional future right of way will need to be taken into account for future redevelopment. This additional right of way will create an opportunity to redevelop pedestrian walkways, including landscaping, lighting and other amenities in this sub area as well as others.

SUB AREA THREE

Sub area three is the third largest sub area at approximately 17+ acres. It is bounded on the north by Foster Street, on the south by the south property line of 1300 South Main street (River Falls Hotel) on the west side by multi-family and single family development and along its east boundary by multi-family residential and the UWRF.

The principal development pattern along South Main Street in this area is commercial.

The Copper Kettle Restaurant and the River Falls Motel predated annexation. A grocery store and convenience store followed in the 1980s (now currently occupied by Hometown Liquors and Dick's Market). A day care center and corporate offices for Dick's developed at the corner of West Johnson and South Main Street in the 1990's (currently occupied by "Our Neighbor's Place"). In 1990 the Southside Plaza opened between Dick's Market and the Copper Kettle. In 2007 Kwik Trip opened a gas and convenience store on the east side of South Main Street.

The zoning in this area is (B3) Highway Commercial and is in harmony with the current land use pattern. This area of South Main Street functions as a neighborhood commercial center serving the south side residential area. The grocery store and restaurant serves the larger community and has been successful over the years. Southside Plaza opened in 1990 and has seen numerous tenants and has struggled over the years. This area specifically is in need of redevelopment. The two convenience stores (Hometown Liquors and Kwik Trip) have been successful and are the two main filling stations on the south side of the City. Further to the south and across from the River Falls Motel site is private property that is zoned commercial with a home and a garage that in the past was used for a business but is now currently vacant.

In the early 2000's traffic control lights were installed at South Main Street and Foster. This is a principle

ingress/egress point for residential development to the west. Access to this area has also improved with the realignment of the main opening to Dick's and South Side Plaza. The opening is now directly aligned opposite to the entrance to the new UWRF HHP complex. The University has also made traffic circulation improvements on site which will lessen congestion during peak times (athletic events, graduation, etc.) by directing traffic to an outlet on 6th Street.

A private service drive parallels South Main Street and provides access to adjacent businesses. The access road has an inadequate alignment with East Johnson Street causing traffic that flows from Dick's Market to flow awkwardly to West Johnson Street. This causes poor turning movements onto West Johnson and conflicts with cars entering into Hometown Liquors. West Johnson Street does not align with East Johnson Street and a future realignment of West Johnson will help improve traffic flow to and from this commercial rear from the south and should be considered in future planning.

Pedestrian Access currently exists on both sides of South Main Street. On the West side of South Main Street the sidewalk is a pavement remnant of a previously vacated Street. It ends at the intersection with West Johnson Street.

Overall the development pattern in Sub Area Three is set. Redevelopment of existing underutilized buildings and parcels will occur over time. Vehicular and pedestrian access improvements will be important factors in this area of the corridor. Aesthetically the opportunity exists to compliment the improvements that are being made by the University on the east side of South Main Street with the use of landscaping, lighting improved pedestrian access and other amenities.

SUB AREA FOUR

Sub area four is the smallest of the four sub areas at approximately 7 acres. It is bounded on the north by the south property line of 1300 South Main Street (River Falls Hotel) on the west side by single family residential development, on the east by single family residential development. The south Main Street Corridor study area terminates at the south boundary as it intersects with Cemetery Road.

The principal development pattern along South Main Street in this area is residential. The corridor becomes very narrow in this area as the west side of the corridor terminates at the right of way line for South Main Street. Access to South Main Street for residential uses affects one property on the west side of South Main Street as all other properties on this side of the street back up to the right of way or have access from Hamilton Street. On the east side of the street there is a mix of single family and multi-family uses that are one lot deep that have driveway access to South Main Street. There are no other alternate access points available to them.

The major issues for consideration are continuation of the sidewalk on the west side of South Main Street until it intersects West Cemetery Road and closing access to Hamilton Drive. Closing Hamilton Drive intersection would require careful study and input from the neighborhood. Hamilton Drive intersection is located at a high point along South Main Street. As traffic counts build, turning movements and traffic flow may become more hazardous. Traffic from Hamilton Drive and the Washington Street neighborhood can be directed south back through the neighborhood to the Cemetery Road intersection with South Main Street. The merits and/or other alternatives should be considered at the appropriate time.

SWOT ANALYSIS

SWOT analysis is an acronym for *strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats*—and is a structured planning method that evaluates those four elements of a project. A SWOT analysis can be carried out for a product, place, industry, or person; in our case a place (South Main Street Corridor). It involves specifying the objective of the project and identifying the internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to achieve that objective. The degree to which the internal environment matches with the external environment is expressed by the concept of strategic fit.

- **Strengths:** characteristics that give it an advantage over others
- **Weaknesses:** characteristics that place it at a disadvantage relative to others
- **Opportunities:** elements that could be exploited to its advantage
- **Threats:** elements in the environment that could cause trouble

The knowledge and familiarity of the Plan Commission through review and discussion of sub areas was applied to a SWOT analyses for the South Main Street Corridor.



STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES

STRENGTHS

- Center Turn Lane
- Retaining Ponds
- Existing City Storm Water Management
- Access to Glen Park
- Large redevelopment opportunities, McEwen, RF Motel, Southside Plaza
- UWRF redevelopment of sports complex
- Strong north/ south corridor
- Cemetery Road provides opportunity to bypass South Main
- Direct access to downtown
- Mature trees
- Property available for redevelopment
- Rental vs owner dwellings easier to change in the future
- High Density



WEAKNESSES

- Street alignment (Johnson –Church- Broadway
- Sidewalk across Bridge too narrow
- Sidewalks uneven
- Narrow sidewalks
- No sidewalk west side from Johnson to Jefferson St
- Foster to Johnson weird frontage road and walkway
- No Trail access to Lake George/ River Corridor
- Multiple property owners
- Suburban style feel
- Lack of ownership investment of both residential & commercial
- Lack of sufficient right of way to accommodate bike and pedestrian uses
- High traffic volume
- Bike lane is just striped
- Older trees
- Lack of retail
- Lack of zoning for future planning
- Need for Adequate parking for existing uses
- Water and utility infrastructure needs attention
- No gathering places

OPPORTUNITIES

OPPORTUNITIES

- Church and Broadway Street realignment with redevelopment of McEwen Property
- Reduce number of access points off South Main Street
- Improve aesthetics
- Opportunity with UWRF trail system
- Storm water management and storm water drainage
- Place trash cans and benches in key areas
- Higher quality student housing
- Mixed use development
- Increased traffic counts to support retail/commercial
- Bury overhead lines and three phase powerlines (West side)
- Replace overhead light (cobra heads) with attractive lighting elements
- Add pedestrian lighting
- Current road condition allows time for proper planning
- Retail visibility
- Create good crosswalk at intersections for crossing
- Redirect traffic to State Street
- Study pedestrian enhancements to access UWRF
- Bike Pedestrian amenities, “watering hole” and rest area
- Improve “green” of corridor

- Increase landscaping
- Commercial properties around Dick’s – room to redevelop
- Play off Falcon Center

THREATS

- Uncontrolled redevelopment
- Seasonal access to UWRF softball fields
- Traffic volumes
- Increased MPH speed
- Increased traffic to redeveloped Glen Park
- No current development guidelines
- Lack of Planning
- New development may increase hard impervious surfaces
- Incompatible prior development
- Dark- poor light design



RECOMMENDATIONS – OVERALL CORRIDOR

South Main Street, the Central Business District, and North Main Street are three distinct sections of the Main Street Corridor that runs north and south through the City. The experience one feels on South Main Street is different from the other two sections. It is not a dense commercial district where shopping is enhanced by ease of access and close proximity of business to one another, nor has it developed into a district heavily dependent on transient trade and traffic. It still has the feel of a neighborhood commercial and residential district. The opportunity exists to develop design guidelines to protect and preserve and enhance the best elements of the corridor and guide future development to be compatible with this goal.

- Integral to the South Main Street Corridor is the future redevelopment of the public right of way. It is the main element that will impact the corridor and how adjacent uses will be developed/redeveloped in the future. How the corridor is redesigned will depend on available right of way width and in some areas additional right of way will need to be acquired. In the Appendices Section of this report are four examples of right of way cross sections labeled A, B, C, and D. All four of these cross sections provide for separate pedestrian and bike facilities, north/south vehicular lanes and boulevards on each side of the street. The differences are as follows:

Cross Section A – center turn lane and parking on west side of right of way

Cross Section B – no center turn lane and parking on east side of right of way

Cross Section C – center turn lane and no parking on either side of right of way

Cross Section D – landscaped median and no parking on either side of right of way

These conceptual layouts would be integrated into a redeveloped right of way and designed to blend and fit with adjacent land uses and street intersections. This changing streetscape will be functional, aesthetic and will force vehicles to slow down and will have a calming effect on traffic creating a safer interface between vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists.

The elements described below impact the organization and flow of the public right of way and should be carefully considered in the future redesign plans for the corridor. Design guidelines should address at a minimum the follow topics.

- **Pedestrian and bicycle access**, separate or shared-use paths provides transportation links, recreation, and outdoor fitness opportunities for a variety of users, including bicyclists and pedestrians. The separation from motor vehicles provided by separate or shared-use paths reduces the risk of some crash types; careful design is required to ensure safe roadway and driveway crossings and safe interactions among the different path users. Separate or shared-use paths should complement to the roadway; they are not a substitute for providing access on streets.

RECOMMENDATIONS – OVERALL CORRIDOR

- **Traffic design and traffic calming** Consider design and management strategies that aim to balance traffic on streets with other uses. Streets should help create and preserve a sense of place that their purpose is for people to walk, stroll, look, gaze, meet, play, shop and even work alongside cars – but not dominated by them. They include techniques designed to lessen the impact of motor vehicle traffic by slowing it down, or literally “calming” it. This helps build human-scale places and an environment friendly to people on foot.
- **Standards for lighting, benches and receptacles** A well-designed streetscape provides a range of benefits for all pedestrians, including people with disabilities. Streetscape design elements should ensure that the materials, dimensions and design elements meet safety and accessibility requirements, are aesthetic, practical and complimentary to its surroundings. Improvements must meet state and national safety and access standards for streetscape design.
- **Pavement and walkway, design standards** when determining sidewalk and walkway dimensions, consider characteristics of pedestrians using the facility, surrounding land uses, pedestrian volumes, roadside environment, available space within right of way, location of existing utilities, poles and structures, traffic characteristics, additional space that may be needed for landscape, trees and furnishings.
- **Landscaping elements to soften surroundings** The design and organization of outdoor public spaces are interconnected by landscape elements. The future redesign of the South Main

Street corridor should include the elements of unity, scale, balance, simplicity, variety, emphasis, and sequence as they apply to line, form, texture, and color.

RECOMMENDATIONS – OVERALL CORRIDOR

- **Screening of Parking** Automobiles are so much a part of everyday life that space needs to be made for them wherever people live, work, and play. New parking facilities should be designed to be attractive, compatible additions to the corridor. In general, a new parking facility should remain subordinate to the street scene. The following suggested guidelines address how parking can be adequate, convenient but unobtrusive.

1. Reduce the scale of parking lots.
2. Site a portion of parking out of view. Generally, site a minimum of 20-40 percent of parking to the rear and sides of buildings.
3. Accommodate pedestrian needs around parking areas.
4. Where a parking lot abuts a public sidewalk, provide a visual buffer.

The elements described below impact site planning considerations for buildings and structures on adjacent properties and should be carefully considered in the future redesign plans for the corridor. Design guidelines should address at a minimum the following topics.

- **Architectural style and treatments for future buildings and remodeling projects.** To perpetuate the unique building character of the City, development should generally employ building types that are sympathetic to the traditional architectural vocabulary of the area in their massing and external materials.

1. All new construction shall generally conform in street orientation, massing, lot width and setbacks to adjacent existing and proposed struc-

tures.

2. Project elements like mechanical equipment, electrical and telephone lines, utility meters, storage areas, trash enclosures, transformers, generators and similar features or other utility hardware on roof, ground, or buildings shall be screened from public view of the façade with materials similar to the structure. Ground mounted mechanical equipment shall be located to the rear or side yard and screened from off-site view. Roof-mounted mechanical equipment shall be screened from off-site view by a parapet wall and shall not be visible from the street.
3. Loading and service delivery areas shall be located to the rear or side yard away from the primary street frontage.
4. Canopies and awnings shall be canvas or similar material and shall be permitted to encroach over a sidewalk to within two feet of a public street curb and may be illuminated by external lighting only.
5. Open decks, patios, and steps are permitted with rear and side yards and may encroach into required setback to within 5 feet of all property lines.
6. Colors should be used to create coordinated color schemes for buildings. Employ color schemes that are simple in character with one base color that should be muted and only one or two accent colors. Reserve the use of bright colors for accents only.

RECOMMENDATIONS – OVERALL CORRIDOR

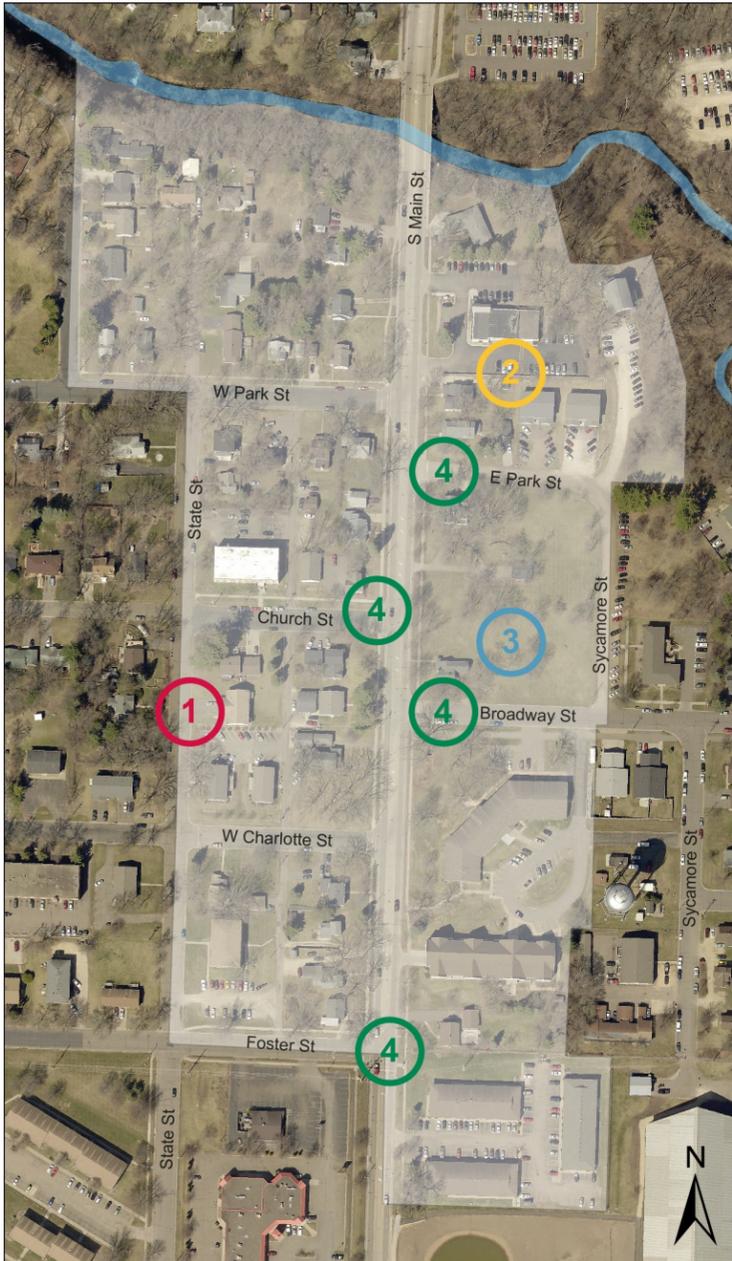
- **Building setbacks**, all new construction shall generally conform in street orientation, massing, lot width and setbacks.
1. Maintain the line of building fronts in a block. The front yard setback of a new building should match the established range of adjacent buildings. Where setbacks are uniform, the new building should be placed in general alignment with its neighbors. In those areas where setbacks vary, new buildings should be placed within 10 feet of the average setback along the block.
 2. 2. Orient the front of the building to the street and clearly identify the front door.
- **Building scale, widths and facades** Human scale is the proportional relationship of buildings and spaces to people. The dimensions of building height and width, street width, streetscape elements, building setback, and other elements should be planned so that they establish a comfortable realm for people to move around in and interact in.
1. Front elevations facing the street and overall massing shall be pedestrian in scale.
 2. Adjacent buildings shall be architecturally compatible through similar silhouettes, spacing between facades, setbacks, proportions, treatments, exterior materials, scale, massing, and/or architectural style.
 3. The Primary Entrance shall be both architecturally and functionally designed on the front façade of the building facing the primary public street. Such entrances shall be designed to convey their prominence on the fronting façade.



Sub Area One Recommendations

- ① The area has the potential to become a destination. Future redevelopment should integrate mixed uses that complement its proximity to the downtown and University. Good design includes making land uses attractive to both young and mature people. Mixed uses should appeal to others than just the student population; should include seniors and professionals.
- ② The intersection of Vine Street and South Main in relation to its proximity to Cascade Avenue is of concern specifically for pedestrian and vehicular movement and requires further study.
- ③ Connectivity to sub area two via South Fork Bridge Pedestrian walkway is too narrow (proximity of vehicles to pedestrians is too close). Preserving future access to the River corridor for pedestrian and bicycle pathways should be part of future land use development decisions in this area.

Sub Area Two Recommendations



1 A better connection of State Street to South Main Street should be studied. There is potential to use State Street as a back feeder for traffic flow especially to businesses for easier access to customer parking.

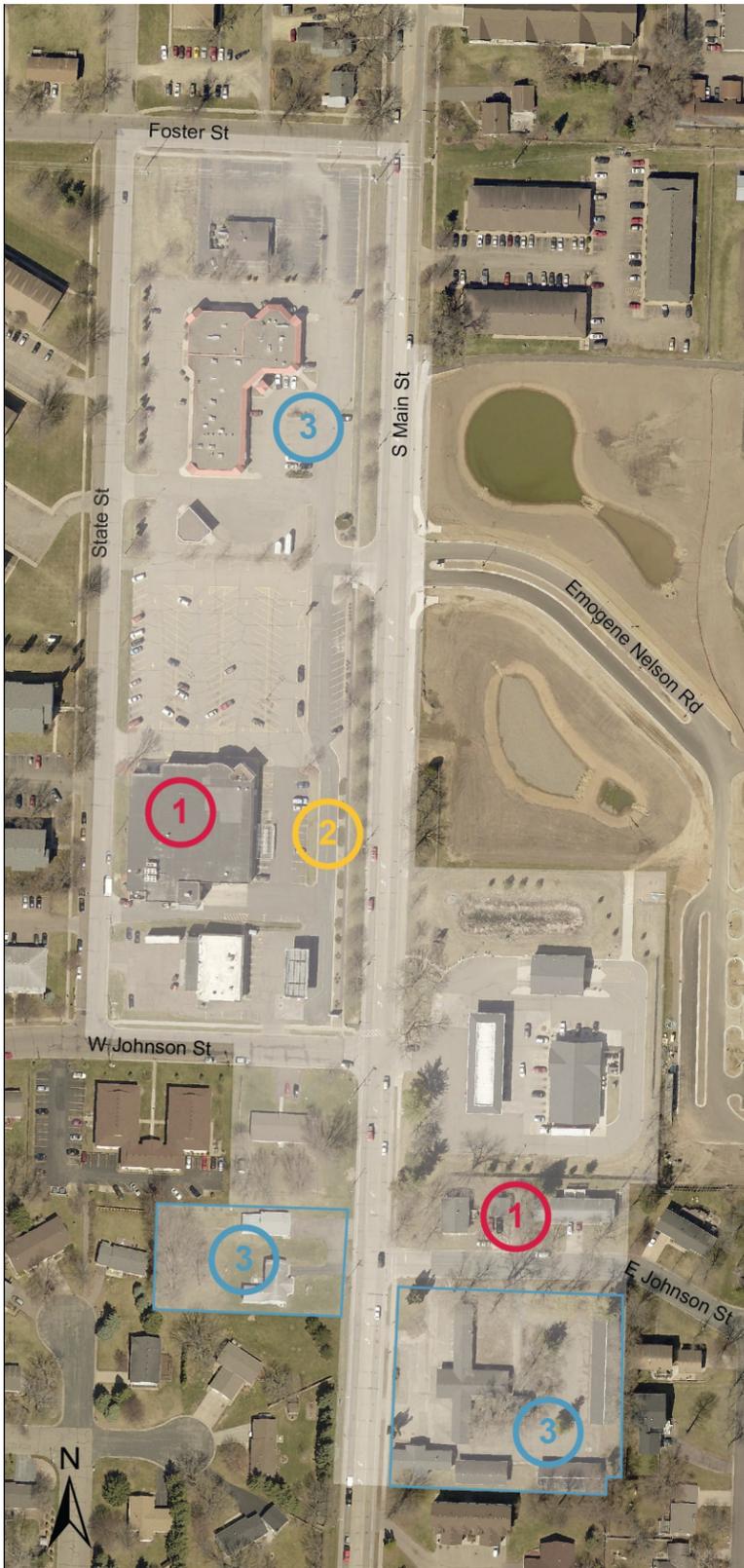
2 The current development pattern in this area is residential (single family rental). Future consolidation of properties for the development of stand-alone lower density multifamily development is not in the best interest of the City. A mixed use development pattern that includes housing and commercial should be encouraged to take advantage of the corridor's key element of location.

3 The McEwen property (figure 1) offers the opportunity to shape the future of this area of South Main Street. A mixed use development should be encouraged as a model and nucleus for further redevelopment of the area.

4 Turning movements are a concern in this area. Opportunities exist to increase traffic safety and improve traffic flow by realigning and eliminating access points. The following changes are recommended:

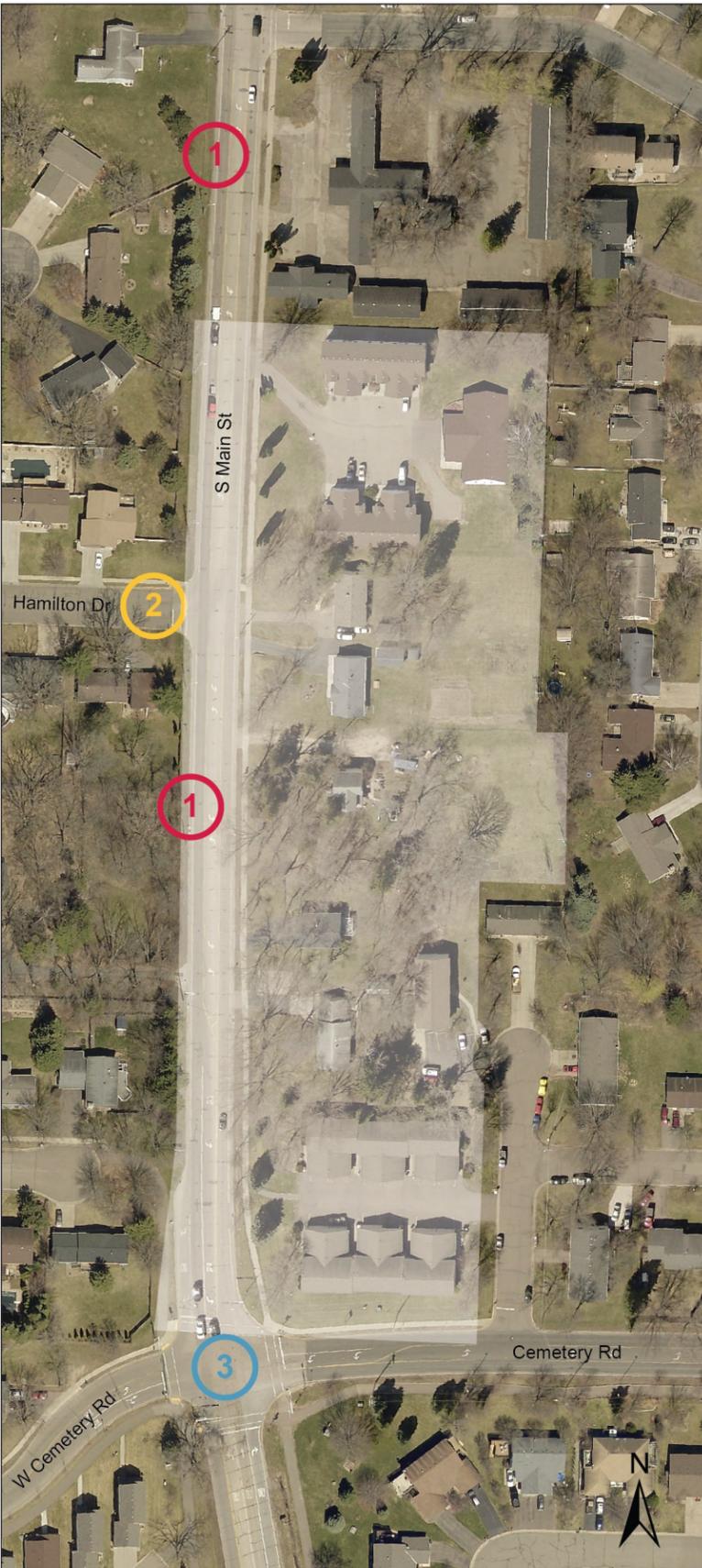
- Close East Park Street
- Realign Broadway street to align with Church Street
- Extend Foster Street to connect to Sycamore Street and the University





Sub Area Three Recommendations

- ① The current development pattern in this area is commercial and functions with both neighborhood and community commercial uses. The current (B-3) zoning is in harmony with this development pattern. Efforts should be made to promote higher density commercial in this area.
- ② The access road paralleling South Main Street from Foster Street to West Johnson has poor turning movements onto West Johnson and should be eliminated.
- ③ The area has experienced change in recent years with development of Kwik Trip and UWRF Falcon Center (currently under construction). The Southside Plaza, River Falls Motel and the Fern property offer opportunities and are properties that can shape further development of this area. Efforts should be made to guide appropriate land uses for these properties, i.e., mixed use and compact commercial.



Sub Area Four Recommendations

① A pedestrian walkway does not exist along the West side of South Main Street from West Johnson to West Cemetery Road. The sidewalk should be extended in this area as a part of future reconstruction of South Main Street. This may require the acquisition of right of way or easements to provide sufficient setback of the sidewalk to the curb and roadway.

② Hamilton drive is located at a high point at its intersection with South Main Street. Closing and redirecting traffic at the Hamilton Drive intersection should be studied. Traffic from Hamilton Drive and the Washington Street neighborhood can be redirected to the Cemetery Road/ South Main Street intersection.

③ South Main Street south of the stoplights to County Road FF is tentatively scheduled for reconstruction around 2021. This offers the Plan Commission the opportunity to set the tone for the aesthetics (lighting, landscaping, pedestrian walkways, etc.). The Plan Commission should take the lead as this design and reconstruction project will set the tone for the elements that will be incorporated into the future reconstruction of the South Main Street Corridor.

SPECIFIC REDEVELOPMENT AREAS

McEWEN PROPERTY

The McEwen property is one of the largest redevelopment parcels in the City. It holds the potential to significantly affect the development around it. Key issues to consider are the following:

- Property consolidation. Parceling off of property has already taken place and should be discouraged. An example of this is the two twin homes have been developed on former McEwen property that was sold to a developer in the last five years.
- Access to the property. Realignment with of Broadway Street to align with Church Street will eliminate conflicts with turning movements and make access to the property safer for vehicles and pedestrians.
- Redevelopment of adjacent properties. Encourage the redevelopment of adjacent properties as part of a unified development. Properties at 660 and 664 South Main Street have the potential to be consolidated and redeveloped with access through a redeveloped McEwen property to Sycamore Street.
- Include 706 Sycamore Street in future planning decisions for McEwen Property.
- Vacate unnecessary right of way. East Park Street can be vacated. Access for twin homes at 668-669 East Park Street is planned to go through Sycamore Street cul de sac.
- Access for Fraternity at 650 Sycamore Street will come off of future Sycamore Street cul de sac.
- Undeveloped right of way should be vacated as part of a redevelopment plan for the property.

McEwen property offers the opportunity for mixed used development. It is well situated and offers the opportunity to develop and enhance easy pedestrian

access to adjacent amenities.

- The central business district is within safe and easy walking distance.
- The central campus of UWRF and the soon to be completed UWRF Falcon Center.
- Senior Housing (Oak Park and Wind Mill Place)
- Grocery and gas/convenience store services.
- Dental Clinic
- Restaurants



SPECIFIC REDEVELOPMENT AREAS

II. SOUTHSIDE PLAZA

The Southside Plaza is located at 1025 South Main Street. It was constructed in 1989-90 and opened for business in mid-1990. Over the years it has been home to numerous businesses that have come and gone. A convenience store and gas station was the anchor tenant until it closed around 2007. The tanks have been removed and an abandoned car wash still remains. The main tenants are a Chinese restaurant, a laundromat, and a pizza parlor and hair dresser. It is a concrete block building that is poorly sited and is now dated and in need of repairs and updating.

The most important thing it has is location. It is situated between The Copper Kettle restaurant and Dick's Fresh Market; both generate commercial traffic from the community at large. It is also located across from the New Falcon Center, a use that will generate traffic from ongoing university events.

It may not be cost effective for a developer to rehabilitate the structure. Future redevelopment of the site should consider razing and new construction. The service road and pathway that run in front of it are remnants of a vacated street. The pathway is narrow and receives little use. The site in partnership with a forward looking developer has the potential for redevelopment and may be a good candidate for a tax incremental finance district. This would give the City the opportunity to use TID funds to improve public facilities adjacent to and near the site.

III. RIVER FALLS MOTEL

The River Falls Motel was built in the 1964 and was annexed to the City in the 1970's. River Falls Motel struggled to compete and steadily declined since the turn of the century. Marginal maintenance kept it in use and around 2010 it closed its doors. It was subsequently sold to a local developer who planned to slowly rehab it for multi-family rental; however in 2015 the developer passed away before plans to renovate and redevelop the property started. The prop-

erty is currently for sale and the City has been working with the owner's heirs to help coordinate razing of the buildings.

The city would prefer to see a mixed use of the site. Interest by developers for the site has been mainly redevelopment for student apartments. The site is separate from the commercial activity around Dick's and the Southside Plaza making marketing for redevelopment for commercial use difficult. The City's goal should be to make sure the adjacent single family residential neighborhood to the east is not impacted by redevelopment and that turning movement's on and off the site are from East Johnson Street.



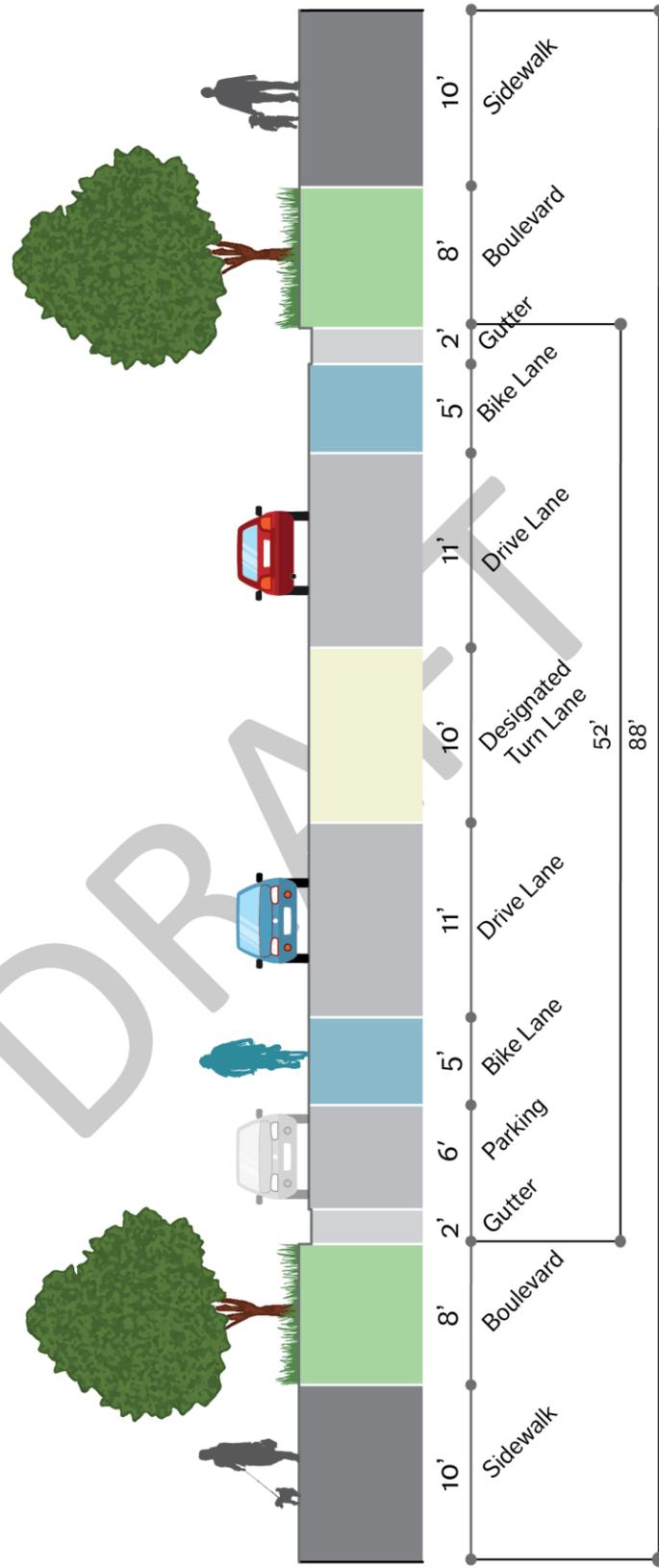
SUMMARY

“Change is the only constant in life” (Heraclitus, circa 400 BC). The physical development and conservation of the City of River Falls, lies at the heart of the community’s decision making. Change will always be with us so we need to plan for it, embrace it, and conserve the best of the past as we look to the future. South Main Street, with the passage of time has changed from a rural highway extending into the heart of the City to a busy arterial street with land uses evolving from single family homes close to the main thoroughfare to interspersed nodes of commercial activity and a growing University presence. South Main Street will continue to change as it has in the past, but is approaching a pivotal point in its history. The infrastructure and adjacent land uses are aging and land use patterns are evolving. In the coming years the City will be reinvesting in the infrastructure of this corridor. Now is the time for the community and its decision makers to pause and study the make-up and of this vital arterial street and its current development pattern and plan for its future.

The discussion that takes place in the following study is the first step in the process that will lead to a plan that with the input of the community will consider alternatives and provide written guidance to promote community character, sustainable growth, balanced transportation alternatives, an urban form that encourages sensitive/compatible infill development and redevelopment, and enhances the quality of life and the aesthetic values of our community.

APPENDICES

Cross Section A – center turn lane and parking on west side of right of way

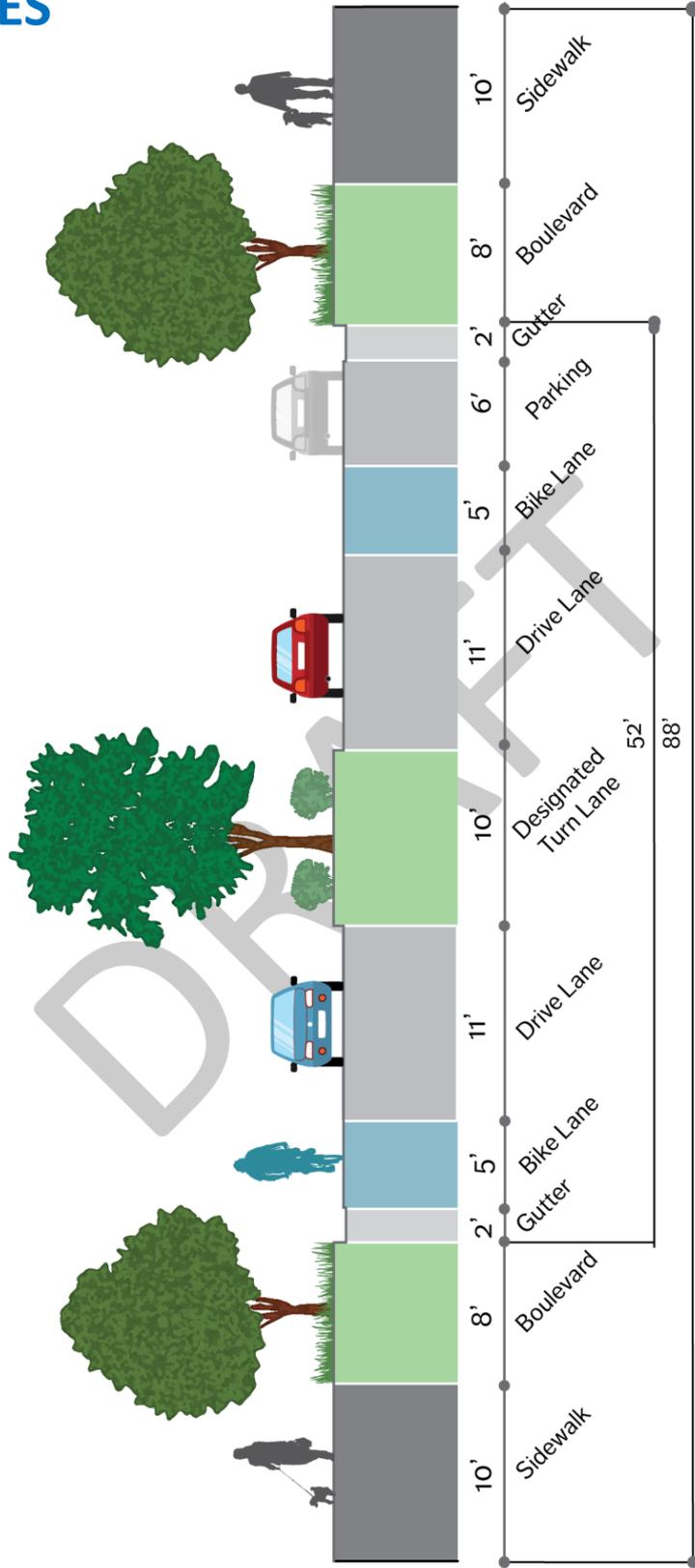


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1:10' Scale

APPENDICES

Cross Section B – no center turn lane and parking on east side of right of way

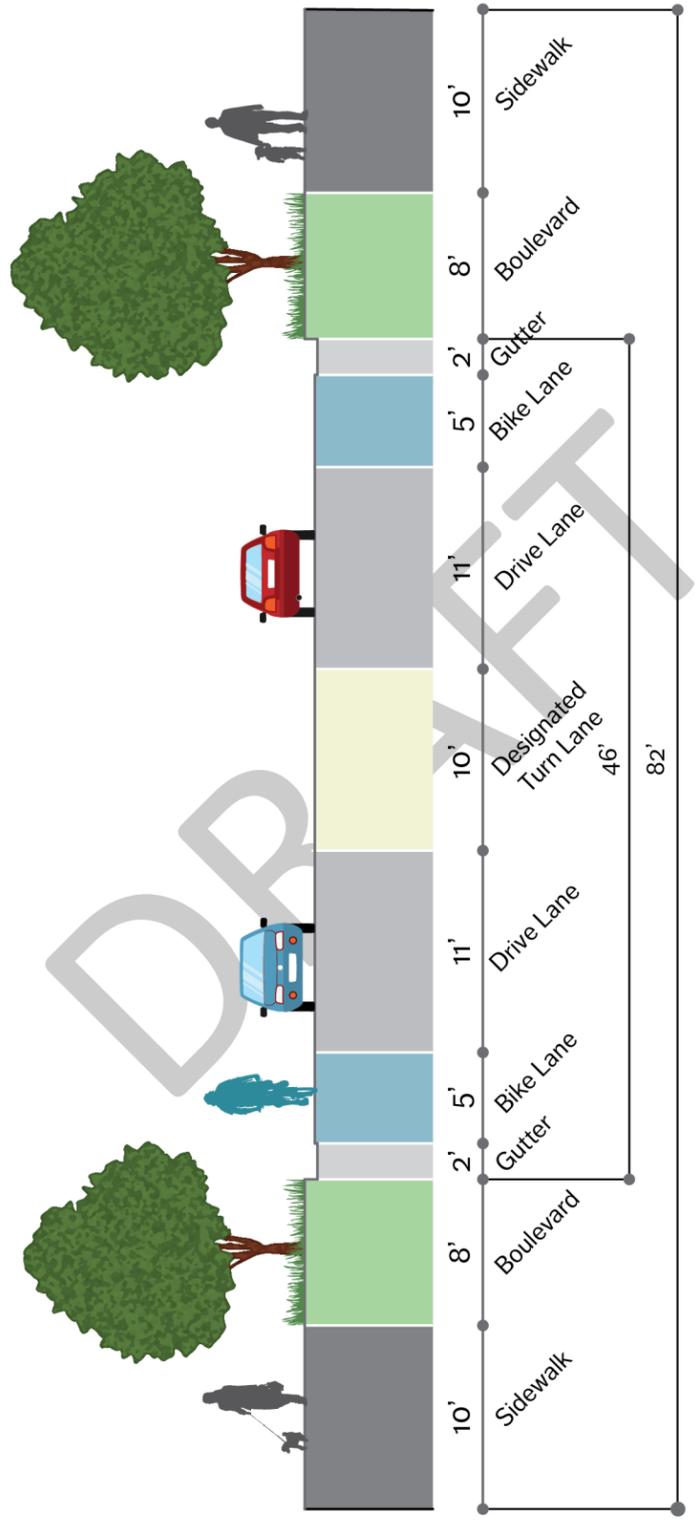


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APPENDICES

Cross Section C – center turn lane and no parking on either side of right of way

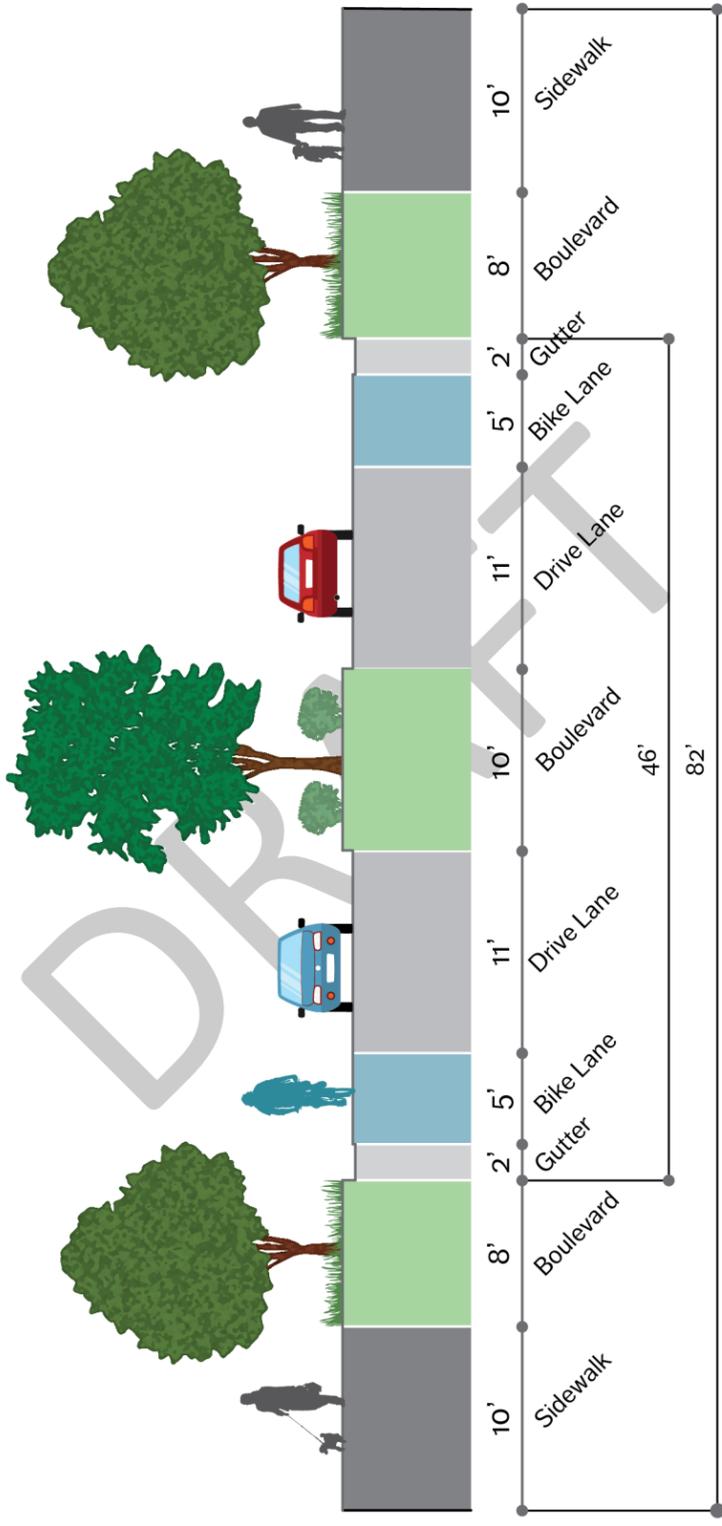


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APPENDICES

Cross Section D – landscaped median and no parking on either side of right of way



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