

# VILLAGE OF NORTH SYRACUSE

## Village Center Master Plan 2025



**Prepared for:**

Village of North Syracuse  
North Syracuse, New York

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# Introduction

*The Village of North Syracuse's Village Center is located along US Route 11, partially located within the Town of Clay and partially within the Town of Cicero. The zoning boundaries of the village center are defined as the C-3 District in the Village's zoning ordinance and are illustrated on page 3.*

While there are numerous businesses in the Village of North Syracuse Village Center, there is very little to draw the attention of a passing motorist, either traveling south from the heavily populated Northern suburbs or traveling north from the City of Syracuse. A combination of heavy traffic volumes and the lack of a village-like atmosphere result in a underutilized business district. The framework exists—a thriving mix of businesses within walking distance, sufficient parking, a dense and close-knit surrounding community—but the infrastructure sets a different tone, with holes in the street front, vacant lots, insufficient signage, and general discontinuity within the architecture and streetscape. While there is a strong desire to create a more distinct village center, the design strategy to do so, is missing.

This Village Center Plan creates a clearly documented vision for the future of the Village Center that *sets the stage* for funding strategies, capitol improvement programming, new development, and retention/attraction of area businesses and residents. The Village Center Plan provides a framework for which to base future redevelopment and development plans. The primary goal of this Master Plan is to define how the Village Center can become a distinct place that is *"a vibrant social gathering place that provides centralized government services, entertaining venues, civic spaces, and a wide variety of mixed-use*

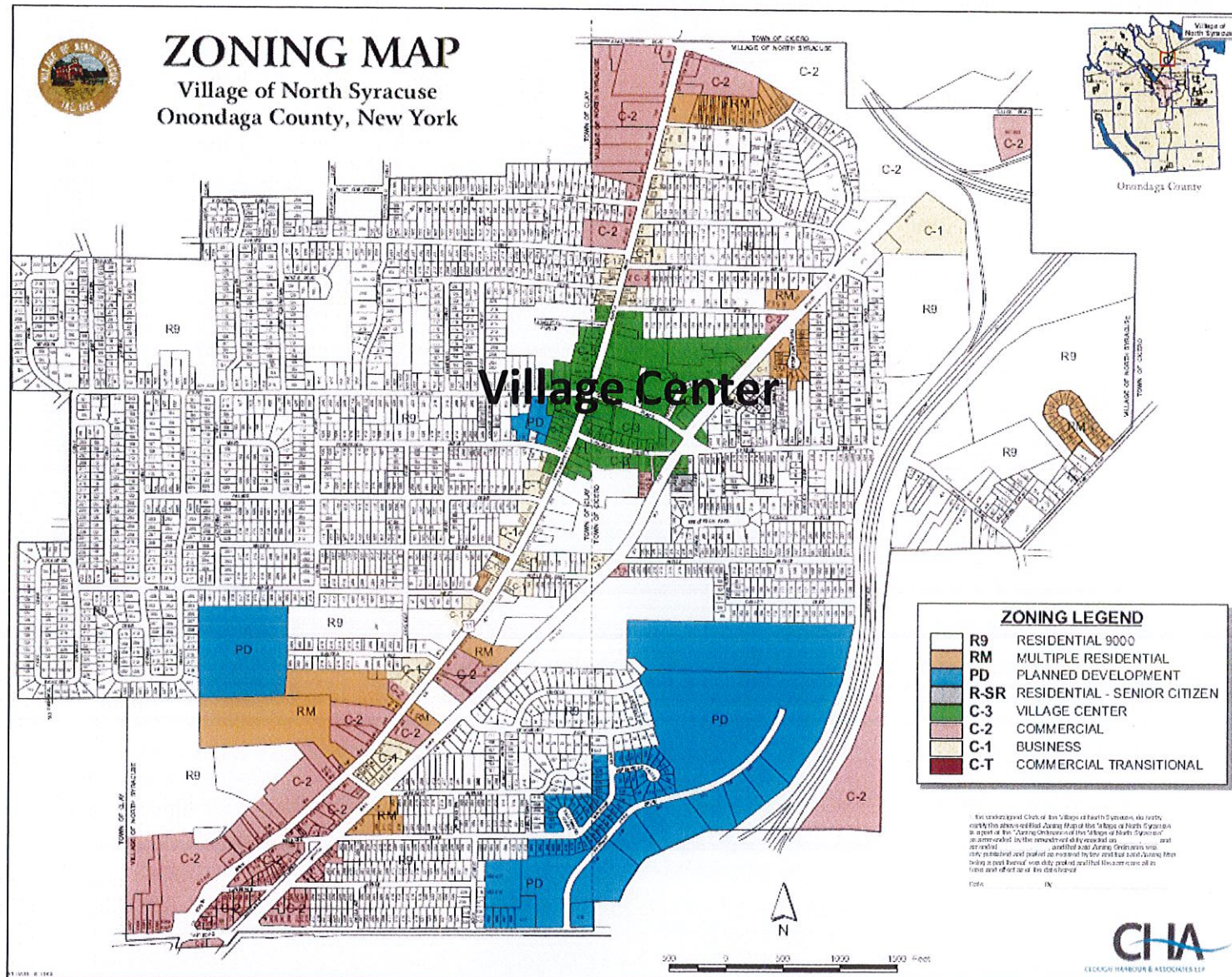
*residential above retail shopping opportunities all within a pedestrian-friendly environment."*

The plan is compiled in four parts:

- **Master Plan Goals and Objectives**—This section provides an overview of the Village Master Plan through general goals developed in the planning process and specific objectives of how to achieve them.
- **Issues and Opportunities**— This section provides a detailed account of existing conditions within the Village Center, and outlines the Center's strengths and weaknesses.
- **Redevelopment Plan**— After thorough assessment and evaluation of the issues and opportunities, this section presents land use recommendations, planning and design concepts, and a proposal for individual village sectors.
- **Implementation**— This section highlights how the village redevelopment plan can be achieved, including actions needed to be taken, the parties who should be responsible, a budget, and a timeframe.



VILLAGE OF NORTH SYRACUSE: Study Area Boundary





# A New Vision

*The purpose of this Master Plan is to provide a framework for evaluating future development and redevelopment proposals within a geographic boundary identified as the Village Center. This plan includes a long term vision for the Village Center along with land use and urban design recommendations to reach that vision.*

**The following principles were written to guide the development of the Master Plan:**

1. Provide the Village of North Syracuse with an attractive, unique Central Business District that is inviting to Village residents and those traveling through the region.
2. Maintain a balanced retail environment and shopping experience consisting of small independent shops, retailers, and restaurants.
3. Provide efficient, effective, and safe transportation, transit connections, and pedestrian linkages.
4. Provide for continued streetscape improvements and additions through a coordinated plan.
5. Promote and support on-going property owner reinvestment in Village Center properties.
6. Develop a regulatory framework and process that provides a clear definition of the Village's vision and creates predictability in the development process.
7. Create a plan that serves as a basis for future funding applications as it defines distinct goals and actions for a phased implementation of goals.



Goettel Park



# Goals & Objectives

*The following overarching goals represent the “big picture” guidelines as derived from the planning process, while the objectives are more specific elements that the Master Plan has addressed.*

## Goal: Land Use & Zoning

Attract a range of sustainable land uses to achieve a critical mass of market activity that will support existing and future businesses in the Village Center within a charming and walkable atmosphere.

### Objectives:

- Promote development/redevelopment of vacant and underutilized properties within the Village Center.
- Create the formation of a continuous first floor retail frontage along Main Street throughout the Village Center with second floor residential uses.
- Encourage a variety of boutique shops and restaurants with outdoor cafes, book stores, clothing stores, antique shops etc. that provide an active street life day and night.

## Goal: Market Position, Promotion, and Support

Create a vibrant and economically sustainable Village Center that serves the needs of area residents, business owners, employees and visitors.

### Objectives:

- Use the Village Center Master Plan as a key economic development tool to guide redevelopment.
- Increase the Village Center’s recognition as a desirable opportunity to live, shop and recreate.
- Create a distinct identity and brand for the Village Center.
- Promote a mixed-use commercial environment that supports current and future business needs and growth.

## Goal: Transportation, Traffic, and Parking

Maximize and improve pedestrian and vehicular circulation by coordinating traffic circulation, creating parking efficiency, while establishing safer and more efficient pedestrian and bicycle linkages.

### Objectives:

- Provide continuous, improved streetscape and sidewalk connections on both sides of Main Street and between the old and new sections of the Village Center.
- Maintain safe levels of service on all Village Center streets and at key intersections.
- Create safer pedestrian and bicycle crossings at Main Street intersections.
- Develop a shared parking strategy for visitors, existing and new businesses, and residential development.
- Identify traffic management improvements to support new development capacities.

## Goal: Urban Design

Enhance the aesthetics of the Village Center setting through improvements to the streetscape, building infill and façade rehabilitation.

### Objectives:

- Create a distinct design palette that is reflected in building and street signage, facades, and streetscape amenities i.e. street furniture, plantings, and lot configuration.



# Issues & Opportunities

*Recent efforts made by North Syracuse to strengthen the Village Center—such as introducing senior housing, an urban park, and a new public library—serve to create an ideal setting for a more productive and active Village Center. There are however a variety of issues the Village faces that should be addressed before additional progress can be made.*

## I. Land Use & Zoning

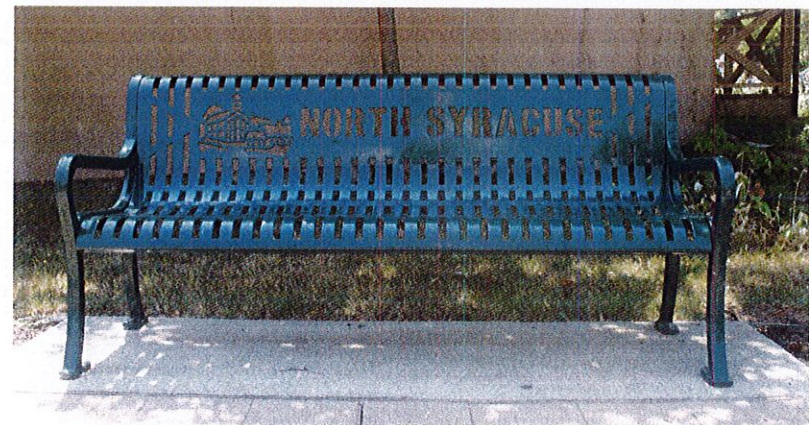
The Village of North Syracuse, located in the northern region of Onondaga County, is primarily developed as a residential community. Its Village Center, bisected by US Route 11, hosts a variety of land uses including both single and multi-family residential use, professional services such as a bank, medical care, municipal facilities, commercial and retail businesses, a gas station, dining, and public parking. With diverse land uses already established, the Village Center has a solid foundation to move forward, however, some inconsistencies must be confronted in order to develop the holistic “Village Center” vision.

Under consideration is the issue that the Village Center consists of two segments with very different characters and little interface between the two. The historic boundaries of the Village Center as identified on the “Land Use Map” (Page 7) as Sectors 1, 2, and 3 are referred to as the “old” Village Center and are comprised of the blocks on Main Street between Fergerson Ave. and Chestnut Street/Centerville Place. The area identified as Sector 4 is also considered part of the old Village Center. The old Village Center is rich with small commercial businesses, professional services, and a church with ancillary facilities.

The area north of Centerville Place, developed over the past 10 years referred to in this document as the “new” Village Center, in-

cludes a community center, a library, multi-family residential homes, and professional services. Creating more of a visual and physical connection between these areas should be investigated allowing for improved vehicular and pedestrian circulation and promoting a more cohesive village atmosphere. In addition, this connection would allow for an improved synergy between the residents and visitors of the “new” Village Center and the commercial uses of the “old” Village Center.

Over the years, vacant and under-developed lots have accumulated, which is considered both problematic and as an opportunity. Three vacant lots/buildings located along Main Street (Route 11) south of Centerville Place are ripe for redevelopment if marketed properly. The residential properties located at the eastern end of Church





## Village Center Land Use

### Village Sectors

1. Fergerson Ave.—Chestnut St.
2. Church St.—Centerville Pl.
3. Church St. & Baum Ave.
4. Chestnut St.—Singleton Ave.
5. Centerville Pl.—Gertrude St.

### Land Uses

-  Single-Family Residential
-  Multi-Family Residential
-  Institutional
-  Commercial
-  Professional Service
-  Open Space
-  Municipal Parking
-  Vacant





Street, and along Baum Avenue, provide marginal benefits towards promoting the vision of Village Center. Their redevelopment for a commercial use is compromised largely by their location on a street with no outlet.

The portion of the Village Center north of the Chestnut Street/Centerville Place and Main Street intersection (Sector 4) has a suburban-style feel with large lots and varied building setbacks. In particular, the large apartment buildings located on the northeastern corner of the intersection take away from the Village Center concept. The apartment buildings have suffered from years of minimal maintenance and their orientation away from the street is counter to the image and use being promoted in the Village Center.

The zoning ordinance refers to the Village Center as a C-3 district, permitting the following uses: retail and personal services, professional and business offices, religious institutions, community centers/private clubs, schools, funeral homes, multi-family homes, public utilities, and accessory uses and structures. Uses allowed but, requiring a special permit include outdoor or indoor recreational facilities, drive-in services, restaurants or bars, hotels, shopping centers, or residential units in combination with nonresidential use.

Zoning has been created based on the historic building and lot configuration in order to maintain the village center feel, with minimal lot sizes, small side yards, and regulated distances between buildings and the road. While zoning regulates the location and size of buildings and parking lots, it leaves aesthetics largely unrestricted, running the risk of proprietors making poor choices for building and lot design that may not be compatible or consistent with other properties in the Village.

Supplementary regulations—which monitor off-street parking, loading, signage, screening, landscaped areas, and site plans—do not necessarily correspond with the Village Center concept as they were not written specifically for it, but rather for anywhere in the Village. This makes matters such as parking slightly complicated, as the number of spaces per building are allocated solely on building use, allowing no recognition of the concept of “shared parking,”—a practice implemented and deemed valuable in many village settings, aimed at reducing pavement.

Another ambiguity in the Village zoning lies with signage. The zoning ordinance groups all signs under one category, giving no priority or hierarchy to different types of signs. This creates confusion to drivers, and consequently important indications such as the municipal parking sign go unnoticed.

The implications of this broad type of zoning create inefficiencies in the promotion of the Village Center by hindering streetscape aesthetics, effective vehicular and pedestrian circulation, and shared parking.

## **II. Real Estate Market**

### **A. Commercial Setting**

The Village Center is located in the vicinity of several major commercial districts which serve residents of the northern suburbs, and in some cases, residents of the region and beyond. The Carousel Center/Destiny USA complex, one of the country’s largest retail developments, is located approximately five miles south of the Village Center. Community-scale retail sites featuring national re-



tailers, including the Northern Lights Plaza, are located along Route 11 near the I-81 interchange. Taft Road features a Wegmans supermarket west of Route 11. North of the I-81 interchange to the Village Center, Route 11 and South Bay Road are lined mostly by single-establishment retail and other commercial uses; these roads carry heavy volumes of traffic, and development patterns are auto-oriented with abundant curb cuts and parking capacity.

Similar auto-oriented commercial development lines Route 11 north of the Village Center to the I-481 interchange. North of I-481, Route 11 and East Circle Drive feature regional-scale retail sites with several major national retailers. This commercial district draws customers from the northern suburbs and throughout the region. The concentration of major retailers typifies the modern “big box” retail model, in which a number of large, complementary establishments are located together to provide a critical mass that establishes the area as a retail destination. Retail uses dominate this area, and offices or other commercial development are secondary.

The character, development patterns, and enterprises of the Village Center stand in contrast to its commercial surroundings. Parcels and structures are smaller, reflecting development patterns from past times in which scale, merchandise volume, and automobile access were emphasized less prominently. Business uses in the Village Center consist of several professional service offices such as financial institutions, real estate, health care and beauty practices; retail uses are somewhat limited, and Wilson Farms and Rite Aid are among the more auto-oriented retail uses in the heart of the Village Center. Dining and entertainment options are limited to the Basil Leaf Restaurant and Limp Lizard Restaurant; both of which are quite popular. On-site parking is provided for most

properties.

Over the past couple of decades, new large-scale commercial uses have grown to dominate the retail market as developers take advantage of open lots and a mobile, outward-migrating population. The Village Center, long established in the historic heart of North Syracuse, was not in a position to attract the newer, big box-style development formats which have become prominent in the surrounding area. Simply put, the Village Center and its establishments probably cannot compete directly with the scale, depth of merchandise, or convenience of big-box retailers, and attempts to do so would likely be futile because of the district’s physical and structural limitations. As a result, the Village Center district has experienced a period of decline, although many of its individual establishments are successful and contribute much to the community.

*As a business district, the Village Center faces the following conflict: How do its businesses compete with the newer, bigger establishments located to the north and south, given the limited size and parking capacity of its parcels and its somewhat outdated structures?*

## **B. Village Market Assessment**

In shaping a strategy to reinvigorate the Village Center as a business district, it is important to understand the area’s strengths—which are many, despite the challenges it faces.

**Visibility** – The Village Center is bounded by NYS Route 11 and South Bay Road, each of which carries thousands of potential customers or clients directly past Village Center establishments every day.



**Population Base** – The Towns of Clay and Cicero, which bracket the Village of North Syracuse, have a combined population of approximately 90,000 (Census 2010) residents live within 1 mile of the Village Center.

**Density** – Smaller parcels in the Village Center provide a concentrated setting for a diverse set of retail, service, and professional establishments to operate. This provides opportunities for co-utilization as customers or clients visit multiple establishments in a single trip.

**Local Ownership** – Most businesses in the Village Center are locally owned and operated. Many consumers prefer to visit local businesses because their patronage helps to directly support the community and local economy.

**Identity** – The Village of North Syracuse has a rich history, and many residents have family ties to the area dating back to previous generations. Community support for a vibrant Village Center would likely be strong.

**Setting** – The Village Center offers an alternative to the large-scale, big-box development formats that dominate nearby commercial districts. Independent, niche-style establishments can be provided opportunities to flourish in this type of setting.

This district provides an excellent setting in which smaller retail or dining and entertainment establishments could supplement – rather than compete against – the major retailers which draw heavy volumes of consumer traffic from Route 11 and South Bay Road. Independent, unique establishments – such as (for example) antique and craft dealers, computer/technology retailers, ethnic or

natural groceries, specialty clothing or footwear, coffee shops, full-service restaurants, or any number of similar uses – could readily expand the area’s commercial diversity without competing directly against big box retail.

A number of professional service establishments have been located in the Village Center for some time; this location offers ideally sized work spaces that are highly visible and accessible to a clientele base residing in the northern suburbs and elsewhere in the Syracuse metropolitan area. Such businesses contribute much to the district and community, as they provide economic stability and facilitate strong relationships between practitioners and residents.

### III. Circulation

#### A. Vehicular

US Route 11/Main Street is a north/south route owned and maintained by the New York State Department of Transportation. It is heavily used by those traveling between Syracuse and the northern suburbs. Main Street is a two lane route with a center turn lane at intersecting streets of Chestnut Street, Centerville Place, Church Street and Ferguson Avenue.

Traffic volumes collected by the NYSDOT in 2010 show that there are approximately 13,500 vehicles per day on US Route 11. These volumes are comparable to volumes that would be experienced on Route 5 in Camillus/Geddes, Route 20 in Skaneateles, and Old Liverpool Road and Teall Avenue in Salina. South Bay Road located on the eastern boundary of the Village Center has traffic volumes of approximately 8,500 vehicles per day as reported in 2010.

Because Route 11 concurrently functions as major commuter



route, traffic tends to move at higher speeds than are appropriate for the Village Center section of the road. The speed limit for Route 11 through the Village is 35 mph. As a safety precaution, consideration should be given to reducing speed limits at this location due to the number of side street intersections and numerous driveways that front onto the route.

Localized congestion exists on Route 11, especially during the morning and evening commuting periods due to the conflict between through traffic and local traffic. Uncontrolled driveway access, offset intersections (Ferguson Avenue, and Church Street) through truck traffic and parking along the front of businesses are many of the factors which contribute to congestion. In addition, commercial growth occurring along the U.S. Route 11 corridor north of the Village, has created an increase in traffic volumes through the Village, especially on Saturdays and Sundays. This traffic congestion causes difficulty for travelers to find parking and patronize local businesses located along the route.

Another concern typical of villages throughout Onondaga County is the conflict between pedestrians and vehicles, particularly in the heart of the Village. Traffic congestion and pedestrians don't mix well unless without careful study.

#### **B. Pedestrian**

Walking around the Village Center, to and from various establishments is often difficult as pedestrian behavior is responsive to the automobile-oriented design of the Village. Direction and pedestrian routes are unclear and patchy with sidewalks that are inconsistent in size, curb cuts, and material. The location and safety of crosswalks currently located within the Village Center should be reviewed and revised to better encourage pedestrians to cross the street.

### **IV. Public Space**

#### **A. Streetscape**

Pedestrian facilities in the Village Center include sidewalks, crosswalks, curbing, street furniture, on-street parking, street trees, and bus stops/other signage. While the amenities are there, there is a general discontinuity and visual irregularity observed throughout the area. Sidewalks and crosswalks consist of varying widths, inconsistent paving materials, and arbitrary curb cuts. The concrete curbing is generally deteriorating and creates an unsafe, unappealing character. In addition to a small public green space, there are a few street trees, but they vary in species, style, and are inconsistent in placement. The street furniture, another valuable amenity, also appears inconsistent and irregular in style, size, and placement. The bus stops are visible, but generally, no space is provided for patrons to wait. Furthermore, there is a general lack of continuity within the architecture and setbacks of Village Center buildings. This also detracts from the streetscape and public space of the village center.

#### **B. Lighting & Utilities**

Utility poles and power lines are located throughout the Village Center. They are unsightly with many of them jutting out from the sidewalk or located within street parking. Putting utilities underground is often considered too costly for a municipality to undertake. An interim strategy to consider is consolidating services and therefore reducing the number of poles.



Street lighting consists of overhead cobra lights attached to the utility poles. Pedestrian-scale lights would add interest and improve the aesthetics of the streetscape.

## V. Parking

Except for the municipal lot located near the intersection of Ferguson Avenue and Main Street, all off-street parking is provided and controlled by individual property owners. These parking spaces are undefined and difficult for patrons to determine exactly where to park. Traveling between parking lots to connecting streets is not encouraged. Signage for municipal parking is placed in inopportune locations, often going overlooked and creating a perceived lack of public parking, while in actuality there is a great deal of public parking available. It is difficult to find parking upon arriving to the Village Center, and once found there is a lack of consideration for landscaping or maintenance. On-street parking is available in front of several businesses, and while a valuable and convenient service, seems to vary in width and is often much wider than the average car requires. Spaces are also unpredictably broken up by utility poles or irregular curb cuts. Additionally, commercial lots have their stalls divided per proprietor, instead of utilizing the space communally.

Off-street parking is provided and controlled by individual property owners except for the municipal lot located near the intersection of Ferguson Avenue and Main Street. Parking spaces are primarily located behind the buildings. They are unsigned and undefined making it difficult for patrons to determine exactly where to park. This also creates the perception that there is an insufficient amount of parking. As illustrated on the "Village Center Existing Parking Plan, (Page 13) this is not the case. The following number of parking spaces per sector presently exists:

**Sector 1:** 121 spaces

**Sector 2:** 234 spaces

**Sector 3:** 240 spaces

**Sector 4:** 66 spaces

**Sector 5:** 232 spaces

**Sector 6:** 187 spaces

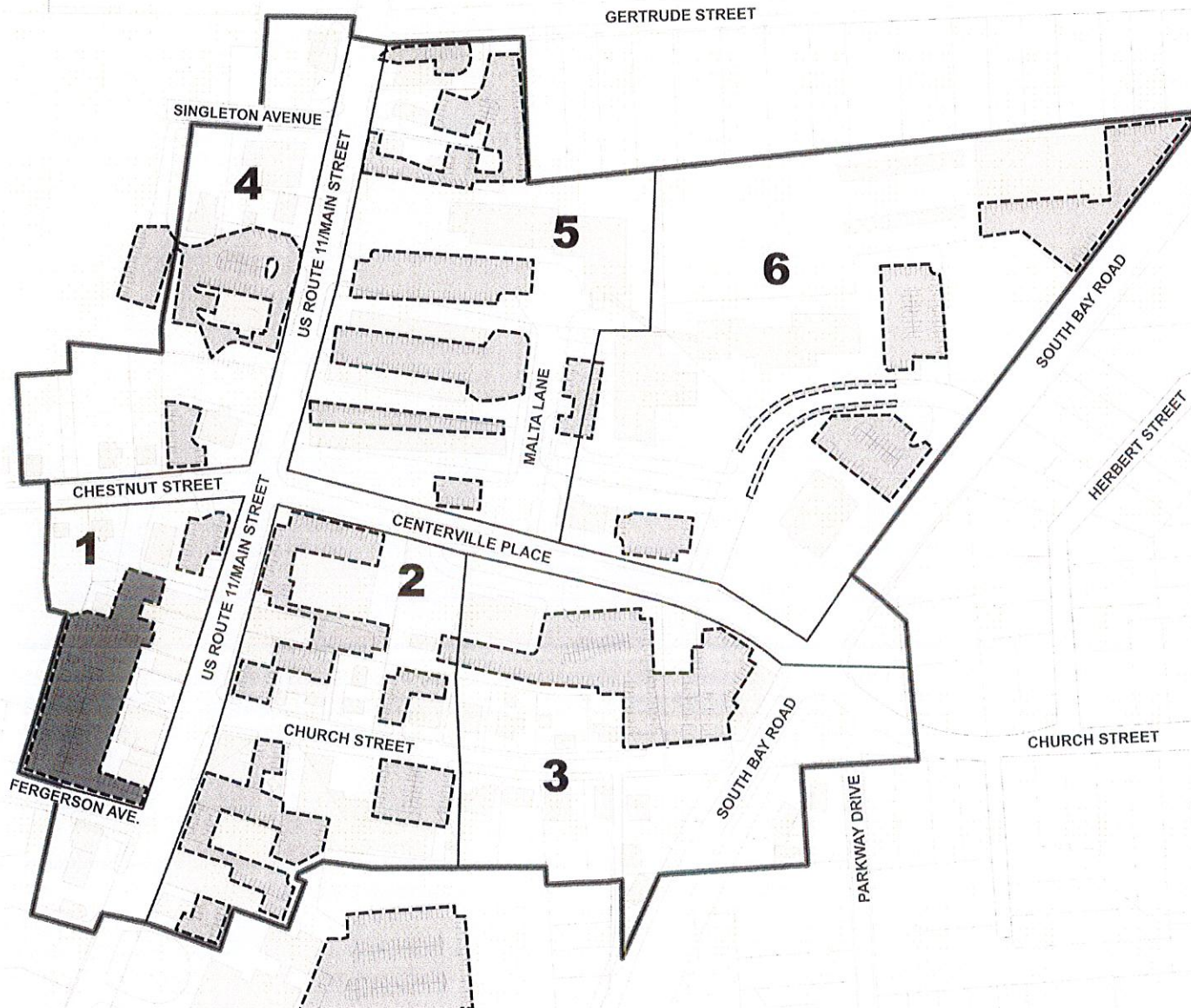
In addition, business-owned parking lots are shared with trash disposal systems. This coupled with the fact that they are not landscaped, make them an unpleasant place to park.

## VI. Village Sector Summary of Issues & Opportunities

As illustrated on The Village Center Land Use Map and the Existing Parking Map (next page), the Village Center has been separated into six distinct sectors. The issues and opportunities specific to each sector have been summarized on pages 14-19.



## Village Center Existing Available Parking



### Total Spaces by Sector

**Sector 1.** 121 Parking Spaces

**Sector 2.** 234 Parking Spaces

**Sector 3.** 240 Parking Spaces

**Sector 4.** 66 Parking Spaces

**Sector 5.** 232 Parking spaces

**Sector 6.** 187 Parking Spaces

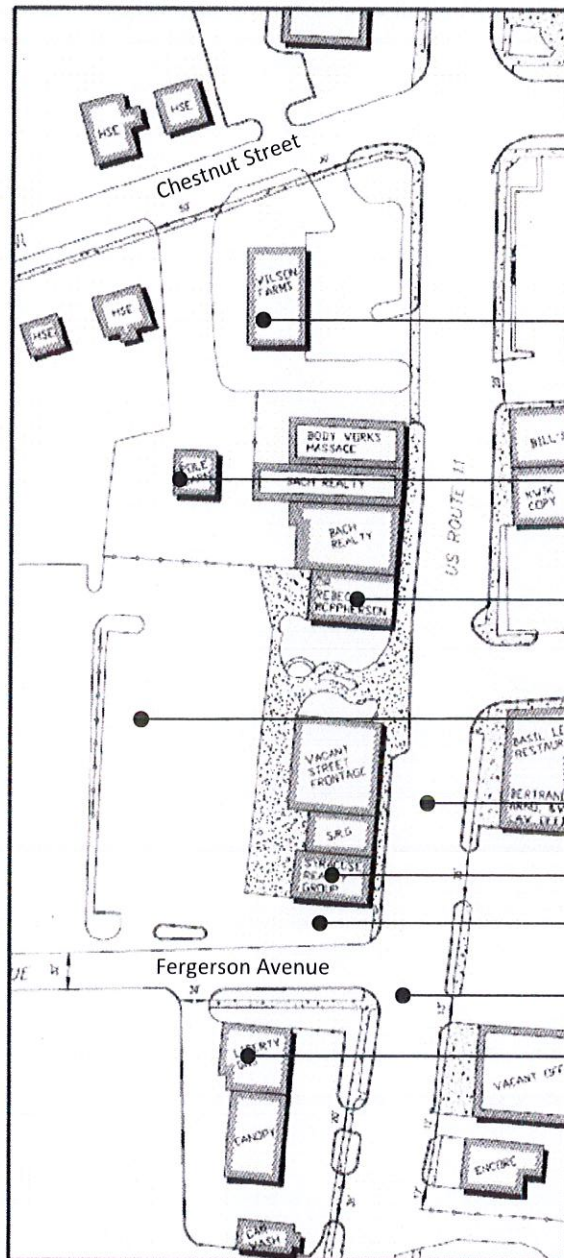
\*35 Spaces allotted to Andrews Memorial United Methodist Church

 Municipal Parking

 Private Parking



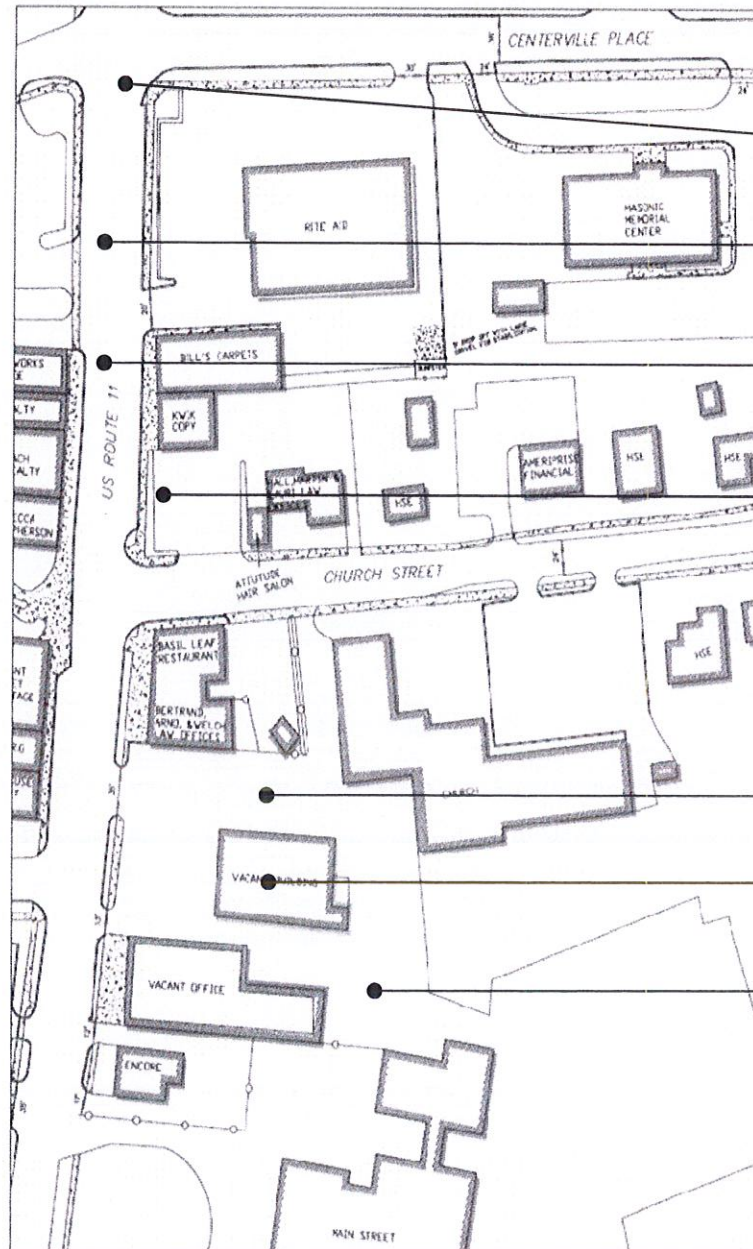
### Sector 1: Fergerson Avenue—Chestnut Street Issues and Opportunities



- Use, building configuration & setback does not support Village Center character
- Storage building and fence blocks potential access to municipal parking lot
- Pink building distracts from Village vision
- Municipal Parking is difficult to find for travelers from North or South, not used to full capacity, and visually lacking with little landscape treatment.
- Streetscape enhancements lacking
- Building façade establishes future building design
- Cars parked here must back into moving traffic
- No sense of arrival to Village Center
- Use, building configuration & setback does not support Village center character



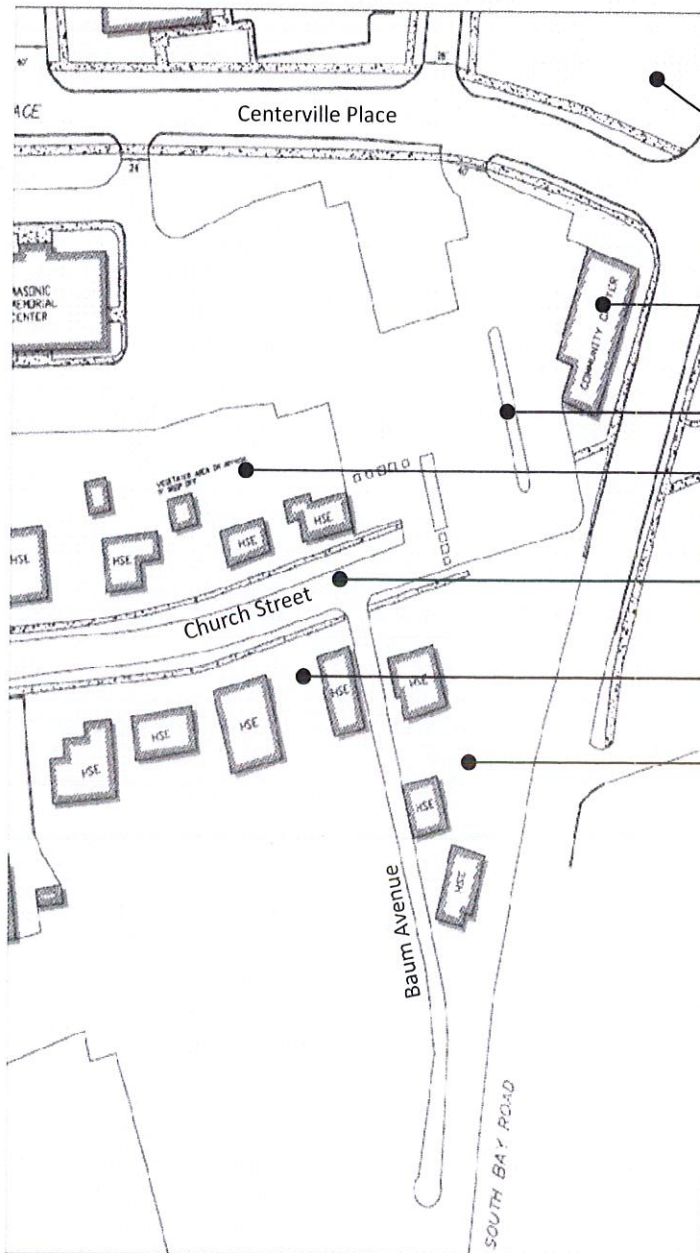
## Sector 2: Church Street—Centerville Place Issues and Opportunities



- Key intersection to Village Center; Lacks aesthetic appeal; Difficult for pedestrians to cross street.
- Streetscape is not pedestrian friendly.
- Vehicular traffic moves too quickly through Village Center to locate parking making it difficult for pedestrians to feel safe.
- Many openings in “street wall” reduce the impact of Village Center feel.
- Parked cars and pavement diminish visual appeal of streetscape.
- Vacant building is in prime redevelopment location
- Parking lots unlined and without landscape treatment.



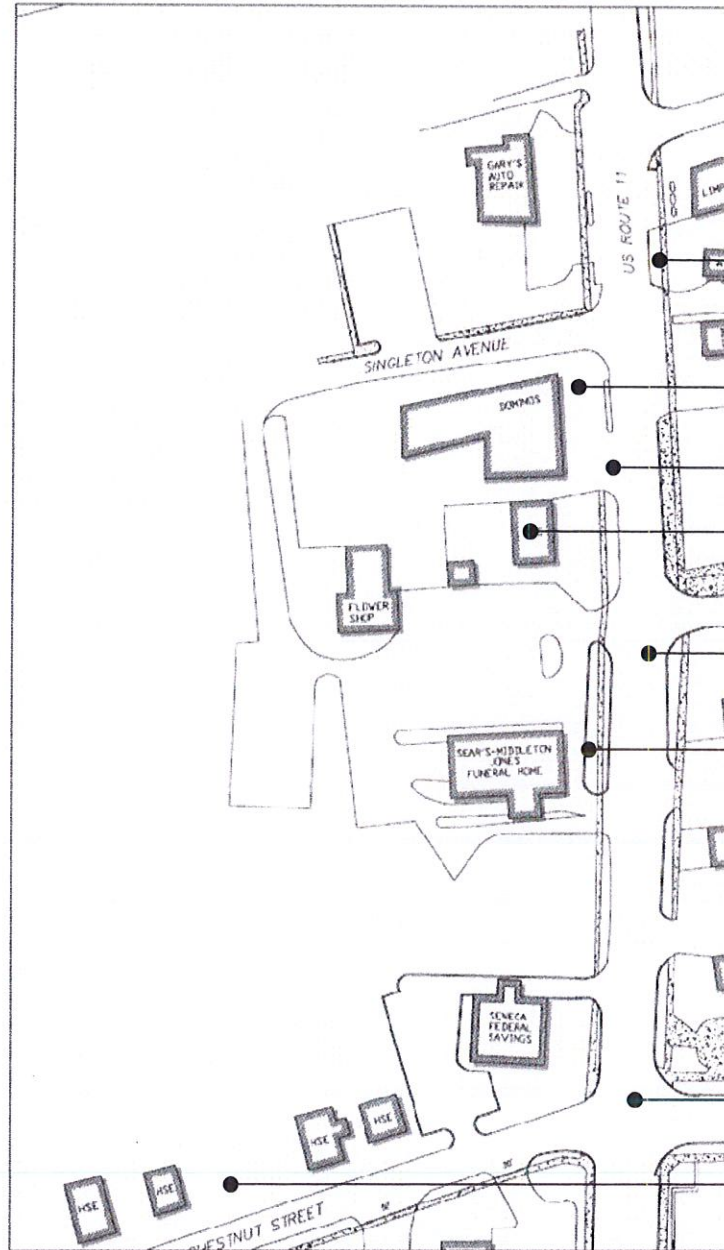
### Sector 3: Church Street–Baum Avenue Issues and Opportunities



- Intersection should be enhanced to provide identity to Village Center
- Community Center is a nice anchor to intersection and is well-maintained.
- Parking barrier is confusing and appears unnecessary.
- Small scale residential parcels are zoned commercial.
- Church St and Baum Ave. are narrow with no outlet and unconnected to Village street pattern.
- Parcels have no parking onsite if redeveloped for commercial use.
- Redevelopment of individual parcels will create disharmony for neighboring properties—intent of area should be reviewed and zoned appropriately.



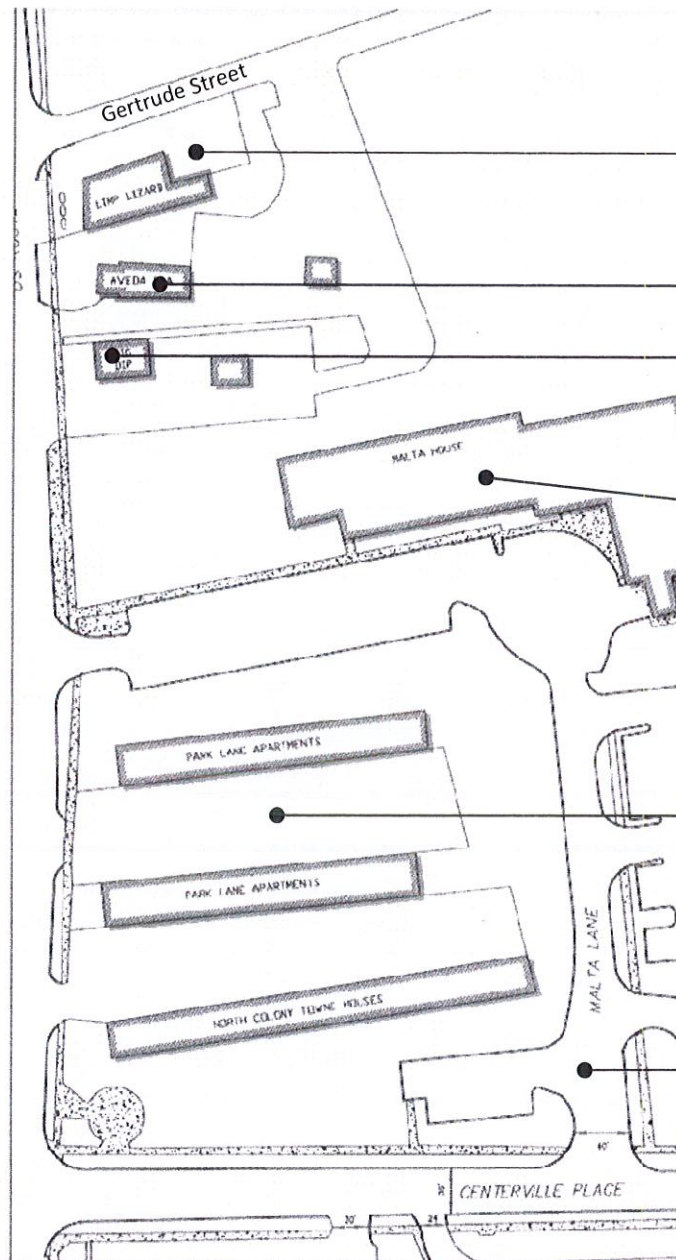
## Sector 4: Chestnut Street—Singleton Avenue Issues and Opportunities



- Power lines are unsightly in this section of the street.
- Building setbacks and lot configuration are a suburban style.
- Driveway openings at many parcels are too wide.
- Residential property provides prime redevelopment opportunity.
- Drainage is poor. Curbs and buffer are needed between sidewalk and the streets.
- Curbed island with grass strip & street-lights is example of streetscape improvements needed throughout Village Center.
- Four corner intersection should be enhanced to create an identity as the center of Village.
- Residential properties may be candidates for multifamily redevelopment to support Village Center uses.



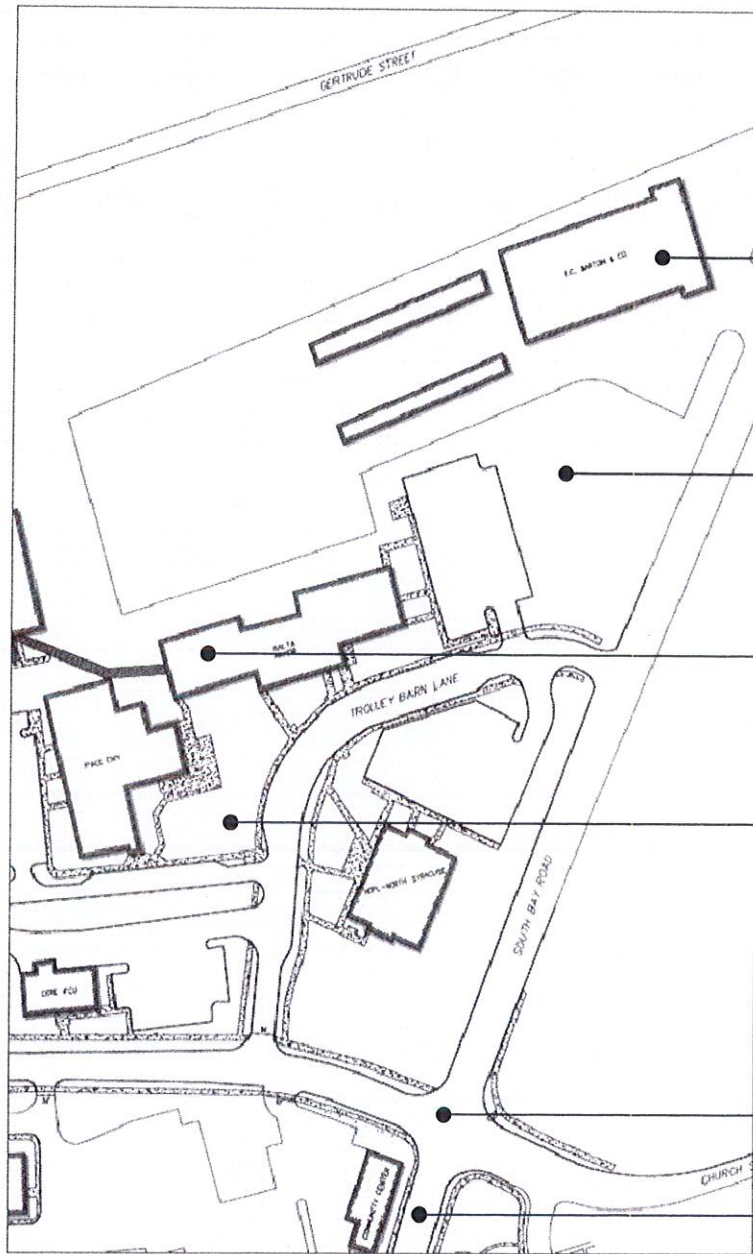
### Sector 5: Centerville Place—Gertrude Street Issues and Opportunities



- Limp Lizard Restaurant provides street front seating; pleasant village center use, but lacks sufficient parking.
- Property could be target of redevelopment; small building on large lot.
- Big Dip Ice Cream Shop is a popular Main Street use. Because of lacking sidewalk and streetscape amenities, it is difficult for residents to comfortably walk to this location.
- Malta House is attractive building; setback is too far from edge of street. Opportunity for street planting to close gap.
- Apartment buildings are not well maintained. Orientation of buildings do not promote village center concept. Parked cars along side of the building detract from visual appeal of area. It is the largest lot in Village Center. Could be redeveloped in undesirable fashion/use if not regulated appropriately.
- Malta Lane should extend into "old" Village Center to allow for better circulation and improved access.



## Sector 6: “New Village Center”—Trolley Barn Lane Issues and Opportunities



- Property use could change as market changes; should plan for its preferred reuse, site lay out and amenities.
- Additional trees planted throughout the area would create more of a park-like setting.
- “New Village Center” works well with its concentration of civic uses, building designs and senior housing.
- Area feels separated from old village center. Visual and physical connections should be created.
- Intersection should be enhanced with streetscape amenities; i.e. street trees, identification of signage of uses.
- Extending Trolley Barn Lane into the “New Village Center” would encourage apartment dwellers to walk/drive to shop or visit restaurants.



# Redevelopment Plan

*The Village Center Redevelopment Plan is presented after careful review and assessment of land use and zoning, real estate market opportunities, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, parking issues and the public space in the Village Center. This plan supports the vision, principles, goals and objectives for the future of the Village Center as detailed earlier.*

## I. Introduction

The purpose of the redevelopment plan is to provide a land use market strategy and urban design framework to guide public and private investment in the revitalization of the Village Center. It should be consulted as property improvement and development proposals are brought forward to the village, helping to guide in the decision-making process about appropriate land uses and design issues in the Village Center area. This plan will also serve as a basis for future federal and state funding applications prepared to offset the cost of proposed streetscape improvements and building façade rehabilitation.

The Redevelopment Plan described below and illustrated on page 30 presents strategic recommendations to upgrade the Village Center's current land use and development patterns, vehicular circulation, parking lots and streetscape. These recommendations are discussed below by each topic with more detail provided by Village Center sector.

## II. Land Use Zoning & Market Strategy

A revitalized Village Center must be (1) diversified, (2) unique, and (3) cohesive in order to remain a viable commercial district in the future. Further expansion of auto-oriented commercial uses is impractical in the Village Center due to the district's physical and structural constraints, and would potentially degrade this district's existing strengths in the real estate market.



*Example of a streetscape that is diverse but cohesive*

### A. Diversity

The most successful village-scale commercial districts include a mixture of complementary uses that appeal to a wide variety of residents and visitors. In combination with commercial uses, housing provides a round-the-clock presence which supports dining and entertainment or retail establishments in a village setting.

Second-floor residential uses located above retail or professional



office uses are quite popular in the local real estate market, and help to establish a resident base that supports local businesses. Some existing buildings in the Village Center are suited to accommodate mixed-use residential units, and property owners may wish to consider commercial/residential mixed use formats when making improvements in the future.

Village officials should revise its current zoning ordinance for the C-3 District to ensure that only new businesses consisting of mixed retail, professional, and residential uses appropriate to the Village Center vision is allowed. In addition, the supplementary regulations should be revised to provide a more complete setting, in line with traditional village development patterns that have proven successful in comparable communities.

### **B. Uniqueness**

The Village Center is different than surrounding commercial districts which feature big-box establishments and bountiful parking. And if properly leveraged, it's unique attributes can help to breathe new life into this important commercial center.

The Village Center setting is ideal for small, local businesses which provide goods and services that larger retailers cannot or do not feature. Boutique-style storefronts and locally oriented professional services can thrive in village-style business districts offering a distinctive, appropriately scaled district. Time and again, village business districts are reinvigorated by unique ideas and imagination: The upbeat café that draws new energy to a tired storefront, a fashionable clothing boutique that uses window displays to draw people from the street, outdoor seating that allows residents to meet and mingle.

In its current state, the Village Center provides a relatively clean palate for improvements that will make it a better place to do

business. A walkable district with mixed commercial and residential uses provides contrast with commercial districts in surrounding areas to provide an alternative small-business environment with a unique North Syracuse identity. The Village Center offers a setting ripe with opportunity to create this type of environment. Village officials should capitalize on this unique setting and continue to enhance the Center's walkability with streetscape amenities to welcome visitors and new businesses to the area.

### **C. Cohesiveness**

The success of revitalized a Village Center depends on its presentation as a unified business district. By establishing a clear identity through branding and place-making efforts—such as signage identifying the district to motorists, district-wide advertising campaigns, outdoor seating and plantings—the Village Center can provide the type of appealing business climate that is sought by local entrepreneurs. It is important for the Village Center to provide a critical mass of businesses with a collective draw that establishes the district as a commercial destination.

Village officials should promote this cohesiveness through meeting regularly with property owners to strategize area wide advertising campaigns, and discuss issues like parking concerns, maintenance issues and beautification opportunities.

The Village's Zoning Ordinance should also be reviewed to ensure that the village character is retained against encroachment by big-box style development. One way to do so, it to eliminate the opportunity for drive-through development within the Village Center boundaries.

*Through coordinated efforts, the village and business owners can create a Village Center district with a community value that is greater than the sum of its parts.*



### III. Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation

#### A. Vehicular

Improvements to the district's internal vehicular and pedestrian circulation would promote movement among establishments, and encourage customers or clients to visit multiple businesses in a single trip.

Reducing traffic speeds within the Village Center is essential to a visitor's safety and overall experience while traveling through the area. Village officials should consult with the New York State Department of Transportation who owns and maintains Route 11, on measures that could be taken to slow traffic down once inside the Village Center boundaries. Two traffic calming techniques that should be consider include:

- **Enforcement:** Targeted police enforcement is intended to influence driver behavior without physical changes to the roadway. Because the police typically have limited resources, targeted enforcement is often not a long term solution and needs to be supplemented with self-enforcing devices.
- **Engineering:** Engineering measures are self-enforcing devices installed on roadways to influence driver behavior. These self-enforcing devices can further be classified by the desired result one hopes to achieve. Devices whose primary purpose is to slow traffic speed and address safety concerns and quality of life include roadway narrowings such as bump-outs, vertical deflections such as speed humps and raised crosswalks. Further discussion about crosswalks is provided below.

As stated earlier, there is no internal vehicular and pedestrian connections between the "Old" Village Center sectors and the "New"

Village Center sectors. Traveling between the two areas requires drivers and pedestrians to exit on to Main Street from Church Street or Centerville Place to get from, for example, the library to the Basil Leaf Ristorante. To promote pedestrian and vehicular movement between the old and new sections of the Village Center as well as spur new development, it is recommended that following new streets and sidewalks be constructed:

- Extend Trolley Barn Lane crossing Centerville Place and connecting to Church Street. This new street would provide Church Street with through access thus, improving the redevelopment potential of the properties along this street.
- A new connector road should also be constructed connecting



*Example new connecting street with sidewalks & trees*



Centerville Place to Church Street. This new street is proposed to be located along the Andrews Memorial Church western property line, with connections to the rear yard parking lots of businesses along Main Street and intersecting with Church Street. The purpose of this road extension is to allow apartment dwellers located in the “New” Village Center to travel as pedestrians or motorists through the “Old” Village Center without venturing onto Route 11 to do so. This would relieve traffic congestion on Route 11 and reduce turning movements at the intersection at Centerville Place and Route 11/Main Street. The Redevelopment Plan on Page 30 illustrates the location of these new connector streets.

### **B. Pedestrian**

Clearly defined sidewalks stimulate pedestrian movement—consistent widths, alignments, curb-cuts, and materials are essential in encouraging circulation. Additionally, bump-outs at corners and cross walks create a sense of safety and further promote way-finding. Sidewalks continuing all the way around the Village Center (both old and new) encourage connectivity and better circulation, and diminishing the automobile-oriented feel in the Village Center is ideal.

### **C. Crosswalks**

The Village has two midblock crosswalks within the Village Center created to provide pedestrians a “safe zone” to cross Main Street. It should be noted that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in 2002 found that “on two-lane roads, the presence of a marked crosswalk alone at an uncontrolled location was associated with no difference in pedestrian crash rate, compared to an unmarked crosswalk.” The report concludes that adding crosswalks alone will not make crossings safer, nor will they necessarily result in more vehicles stopping for pedestrians.

Whether or not marked crosswalks are installed, it is important to consider other pedestrian facility enhancements, i.e. a raised median, traffic signal, or other traffic crossing measures. Crosswalks within the Village Center should only be marked where all of the following occur:

- Sufficient demand exists to justify the installation of a crosswalk. Need for a crosswalk is generally demonstrated by 20 pedestrians per hour during the peak hour or 60 pedestrians total for the highest consecutive four-hour period;
- The proposed crosswalk location is 300-feet or more from another crossing;
- There is sufficient sight distance.



*Example of a brick crosswalk.*



Given the posted speed of 35 mph through the Village Center and traffic volume approximately 14,000 cars, if a crosswalk is determined necessary, it should be designed to be highly visible with such treatments as:

- **Bump-outs** which are curbs that extend into the street by approximately seven to eight feet, shortening the crossing distance for pedestrians and raising their visibility to motorists.



*Typical example of a bump-out at a crosswalk.*

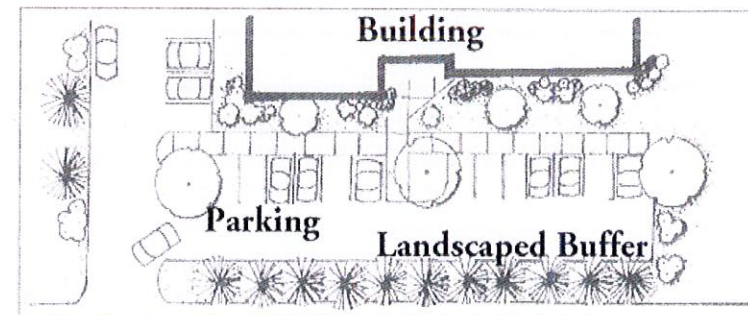
- **Crosswalks** constructed of brick is another technique that could be located at key points along Main Street. These would alert motorists to slow down allowing pedestrians to cross the street safely. A picture of a raised crosswalk is on page 23.

The village should engage in the services of a qualified traffic engineer as well as have details conversations with the New York State Department of Transportation to determine if the demand for crosswalks exists and if so, their ideal location and design.

#### IV. Parking

Readily available parking Main Street that is key to the success of a business district like the Village Center. Parking that is easily accessible, well-lit with trees and other plantings makes visitors feel safe and welcomed.

As indicated in the “Issues and Opportunities” section of this report, there is plenty of parking options for businesses and their patrons in lots located behind their buildings. Unfortunately, these spaces are ill-defined, segregated into small lots, and unkempt. To solve this problem, Village officials should encourage existing property owners to entertain the idea of *Shared Parking*. Shared Parking takes advantage of the fact that most parking spaces



*Example of Shared Parking*

es are only used part time by a particular motorist or group and many parking lots have a significant portion of unused spaces, with



utilization patterns that follow predictable daily, weekly and annual cycles. For example, an office building can efficiently share parking spaces with a restaurant since offices require maximum parking during weekdays, while restaurants require maximum parking during evenings and weekends. Shared parking in most cases, reduces the amount of parking needed and therefore, leaves room for landscape treatment and commonly located trash receptacles.

The perception of insufficient parking is most prevalent within the “old” Village Center—south of Chestnut Street and Centerville Place where individual property owners have the potential of many more spaces made available; many more than is currently realized (See Village Center Existing Park Map on Page 13).

If property owners agree, parking lots located in the rear portion of the lots fronting onto Main Street could be consolidated for the purposes of creating additional parking spaces as well as allowing property owners to share in the cost of:

- Parking lot maintenance
- Lighting fixtures
- Landscape treatment
- Dumpster enclosures
- Sharing stormwater runoff

In addition, the Village should improve rear yard parking access by creating a through street connecting Centerville Place and Church Street on the east side of the Village.

If property owners located west of Main Street agree, parking behind their buildings could be joined with the Municipal Lot, thus creating the opportunity for access rear parking from both Ferguson Avenue and Chestnut Street.

Future development/redevelopment within the Village Center should be allowed and encouraged to reduce the amount of pavement needed to accommodate a single use’s parking requirements. This would require a change to the Zoning Code to accommodate this language.

## V. Green Infrastructure

The Village Center currently consists of roadways, walkways, parking areas, buildings, and lawn areas which comprise approximately 65 acres—all within the Onondaga County sanitary sewer district. With the proposed redevelopment, additional hardscape (buildings, walkways, parking areas, etc.) are necessary to create a thriving Village Center.

These areas, however, are considered impervious, which increases the amount of storm water runoff that enters the drainage system.



*A typical parking lot bio-retention island*

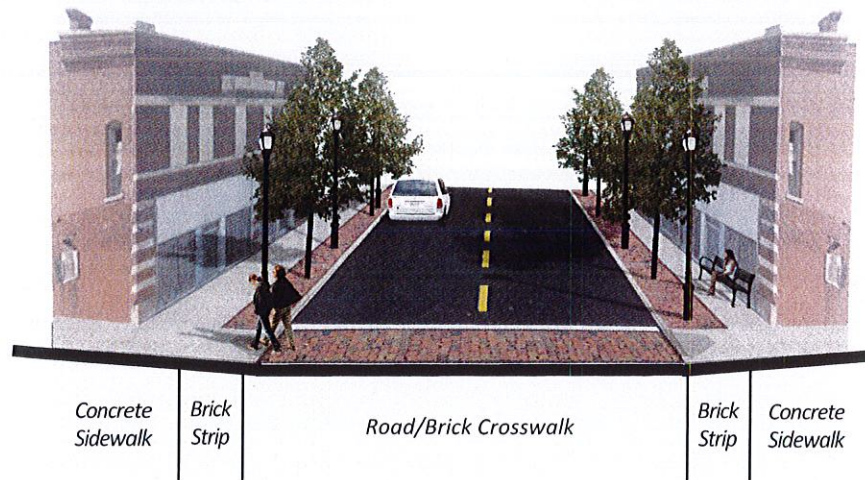


and the already overtaxed County Sanitary Sewer Overflow System (SSO). In addition to measures being taken by the County, the Village adheres to the NYSDEC's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) and Storm water Permit Requirements. However, the majority of the Village properties are less than 1 acre to require these policies to be followed. It is the Village's goal to assist the County and its waterways from excess storm water and to create aesthetic, green spaces within the Village Center.

Green infrastructure measures can be implemented into new and rehabilitated parking areas. These can range from being relatively simple with lowered landscaped islands (rather than raised, curbed islands) receiving storm water to an underground filtration system, to the use of pervious pavement rather than asphalt. The Village and/or property owner should engage the services of a qualified professional when facing these types of decisions.

## VI. Public Space

### A. Streetscape



The Village's streetscape consists of the area from the building line of one side of the street to the building line of the other side of the street. Within this area typically are sidewalks, crosswalks, curbing, street furniture, on-street parking, street trees, signage, and associated amenities. The streetscape should identify this area as its core within the Village. This would include buildings at the property line with zero setback, utilizing the sidewalk as their outdoor space for signage, seating, access, etc. The aesthetics of this area would be considered "urban." Building facades, materials, colors, fenestrations, awnings, and screening of HVAC equipment would have to be a cohesive, yet distinct aesthetic. Using the existing examples for reference is the Syracuse Realty Group at 106 South Main Street and Basil Leaf Ristorante at 101 South Main Street.

Sidewalks should contain three areas—1) The utilitarian strip (aka the snow storage area) along the street, 2) The site amenity strip (seating, trash receptacles, street trees, bike racks), and 3) the pedestrian strip along the buildings. These should not be given equidistant widths, but priority given to the pedestrian strip.

Street trees and amenities should expand upon the Village's previous installations, such as along Centerville Place and within Goettel Park. The Village is a participant of the Tree City USA Program and in Chapter 219 of the Village Code identifies the species and placement of street trees within the right-of-way and should be used as a resource. Street trees not only provide shade, but also soften the hardscape. These should be incorporated along the entire Village Center streetscape.

The street itself, basically curb to curb, should be utilized as a thoroughfare as well as an aesthetic element within the streetscape. This is sometimes the only chance the Village will have to catch a driver and/or passenger's attention to have them slow down and park. It is within this short drive that may make all the difference.



Village officials should prepare a detailed streetscape plan.

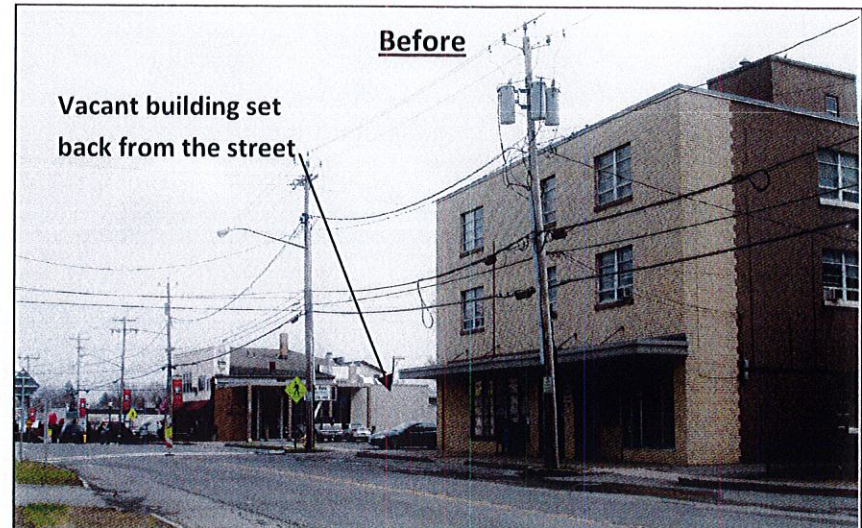
### B. Lighting & Utilities

Lighting should be consistent with those poles and fixtures along Centerville Place, which are the 12'-0" Edgewater as manufactured by Spring City with the Armory Square lamp post and Sclex-118-3s globe refractive luminaire.

Existing right-of-way utilities such as hydrants, overhead wires, power poles, and manhole covers are considered common place and generally overlooked as part of the streetscape. HVAC equipment is not as common, however; all utilities should be integrated and screened where possible with vegetation, signage, or art to enhance the visual corridor.

## VII. Design Guidelines for Village Center Redevelopment

Village officials should consider the following design and development guidelines for all new development and significant redevelopment projects that occur within the Village Center. These guidelines should be applied to all commercial and business development. Site planning and design needs to address a variety of aesthetic issues that consider the site's relationship to its surroundings. Within the Village Center, it is important to address design issues in the immediate view of the public right-of-way (streets and sidewalks). Building location and building orientation, the exterior appearance of buildings, parking lot location and appearance, landscaping, signage, lighting as well as vehicular and pedes-



**Before**  
Vacant building set  
back from the street

*Current view of former Post Office building with adjacent building setback from the property line creating a gap in the streetwall.*



**After**  
New building  
built at property line

*Proposed view with new building at property line, former Post office building repainted and trees added.*



trian circulation all need to be considered in the overall site design and site plan review.

### **A. Orientation of Buildings**

As indicated in the “Before and After” pictures on the previous page, maintaining the streetwall with buildings located at the property line is critical to maintain the distinction of the Village Center from the surrounding suburban-like development. All new buildings should be located at the property line with zero setback and oriented to maximize views of the front, not the sides or rear of the buildings from the street.

Parking areas, service areas, outdoor storage and utility areas as well as delivery locations should be located in the rear of the building.

### **B. Building Design and Architectural Features**

New or rehabilitated buildings in the Village Center should reflect traditional architectural styles over highly ornate, ultra modern styles as new buildings. Also, corporate franchise-style and “cookie cutter” architecture should be discouraged to maintain the Village Center feel. In addition, it is recommended that building facades should have features of suitable scale and utilize construction materials that integrate consistently and compatibly with the visual characteristics of adjoining properties.

The rear and side facades of buildings that are visible from public streets or connector streets should have a finished quality utilizing materials and colors that are consistent with the remainder of the building. Loading and delivery areas, outdoor storage areas, trash collection areas and parking areas should incorporate suitability scaled landscaping features to screen their appearance.

### **C. Building Materials**

Building materials should have desirable architectural character and quality. Materials should be selected for harmony in color and texture with adjoining buildings. Materials should be selected for their durable quality, longevity and ease of maintenance. Front and side building façade materials should be of subtle colors and low reflectance to prevent glare. Building colors should be classic in appearance, neutral, timeless, and of an earthen tone over non-traditional, bright or neon colors.

### **D. Windows and Doors**

Building components such as windows and doors should be compatible in scale and proportion to another. A well-designed building entrance should be visible from the street and provide the focal point of the building’s front façade. Colors for framing windows and doors should be harmonious with other building elements and the use of compatible accent colors is encouraged.

Long, blank, featureless building walls and facades should be avoided. Building wall appearance can be enhanced with windows or other architectural design elements such as fenestrations.

The “Before and After” photographs on the following page illustrate the importance of building design and compatibility as well as appropriate use of building materials and well placed windows and doors.



Pictured below is a “Before and After” view of 106 Main Street (left) and 108 Main Street (right). The top picture shows 106 Main Street as an existing building that has been recently rehabbed. The majority of 108 Main Street is vacant and the whole building has not been updated in many years.

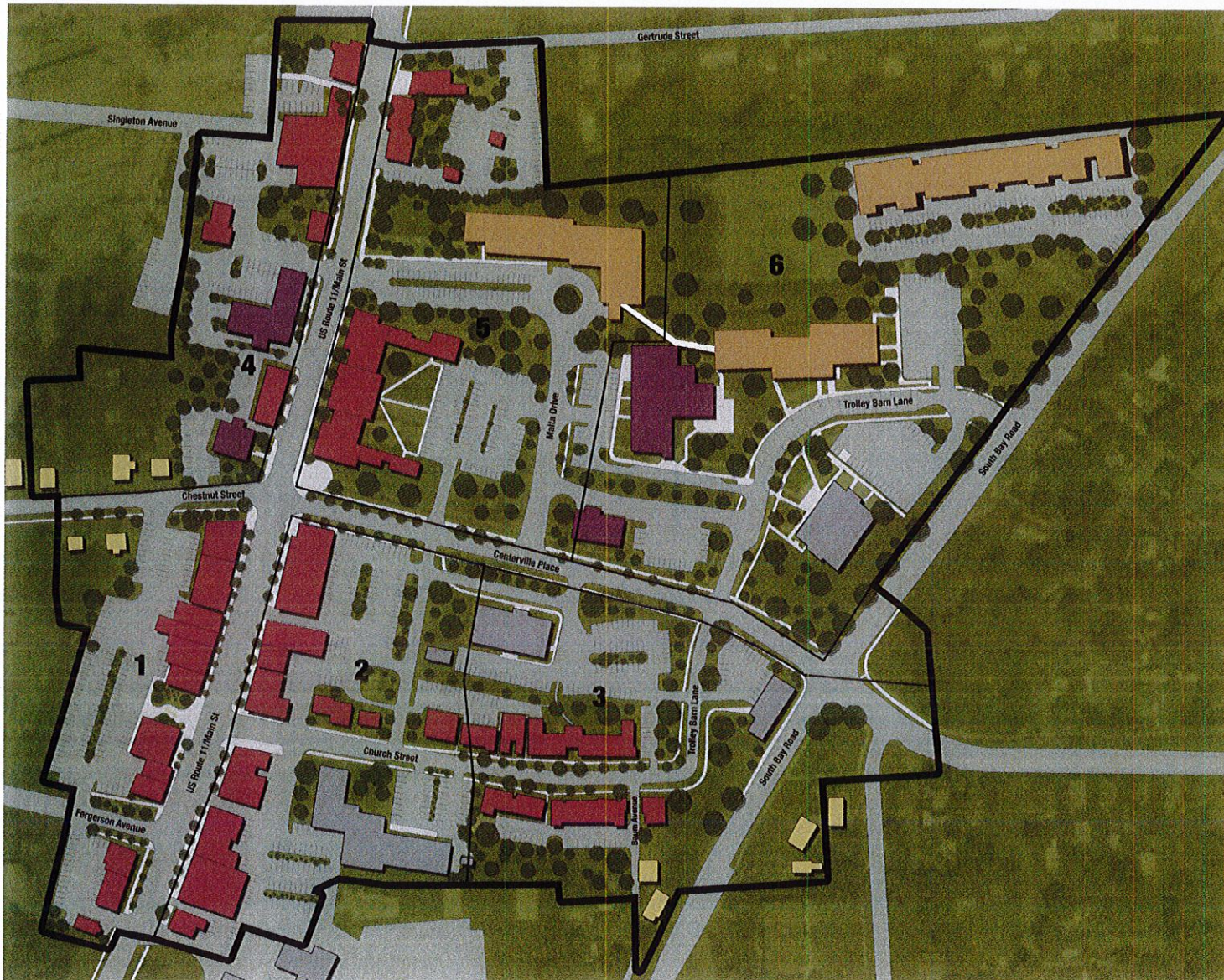


106 Main Street could be used as a prototype for new and rehabilitated buildings within the Village Center. The colors and architectural details express the vision for the Village’s redevelopment. The scale and size of 108 Main Street is also in keeping with the vision but, needs to be rehabilitated as illustrated below.



In the “After” picture, 108 Main Street (on the right) has been repainted with earth tones and new awnings that are compatible with the building colors of 106 Main Street making the two buildings blend with each other, creating a visually pleasing view.



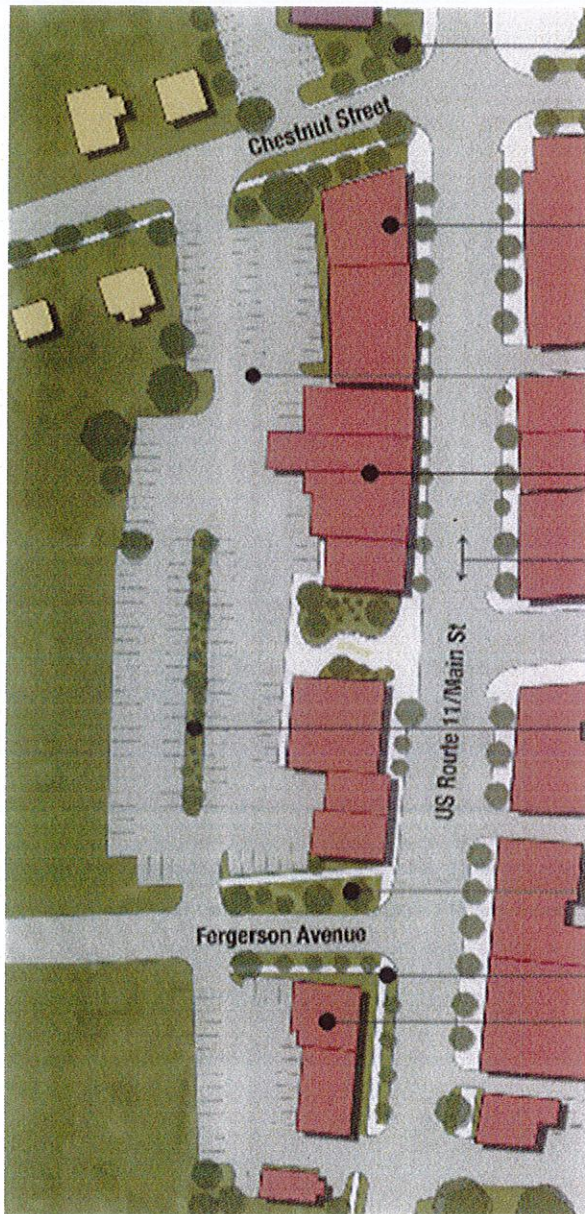


## IX. Redevelopment Plan

This illustration presents a building layout and circulation plan for the future of the Village Center as it redevelops over the next decade. As with the Issues and Opportunities section of this report, the specific recommendations presented in this plan are described by sector on the pages to follow. Mixed used buildings with commercial and professional services on the first floor and residential on the upper floors alongside of the current institutional uses will generate the lively atmosphere of a successful Village Center. New street connectors as recommended will improve the Center's internal circulation. Buildings placed at the street line, shared parking and new streetscape elements as proposed will continue to create a Village Center distinct from the surrounding suburban style setting.



### Sector 1: Fergerson Avenue—Chestnut Street Recommendations



Implement more visible signage both North and South of the municipal parking lot, increasing awareness and utilization.

Adjust use and building configuration to reinforce Village Center character by eliminating setbacks.

Remove existing fence and storage buildings to improve accessibility.

Renovate building facades to coincide with established Village Center colors, building materials, etc.

Improve streetscape by aligning sidewalk widths, curb cuts, and bump-outs. Tree City USA program should be utilized and street trees should be planted along the right of way. Other amenities such as seating, trash and recycling receptacles, and bicycle racks should also be implemented.

Implement lowered bio-retention islands in the municipal parking lot to both receive storm water runoff and enhance landscaping.

Remove existing parking from the side of building and extend sidewalk to curb.

Implement more visible signage both North and South of the municipal parking lot.

Adjust building use and configuration to reinforce Village Center character by eliminating setbacks



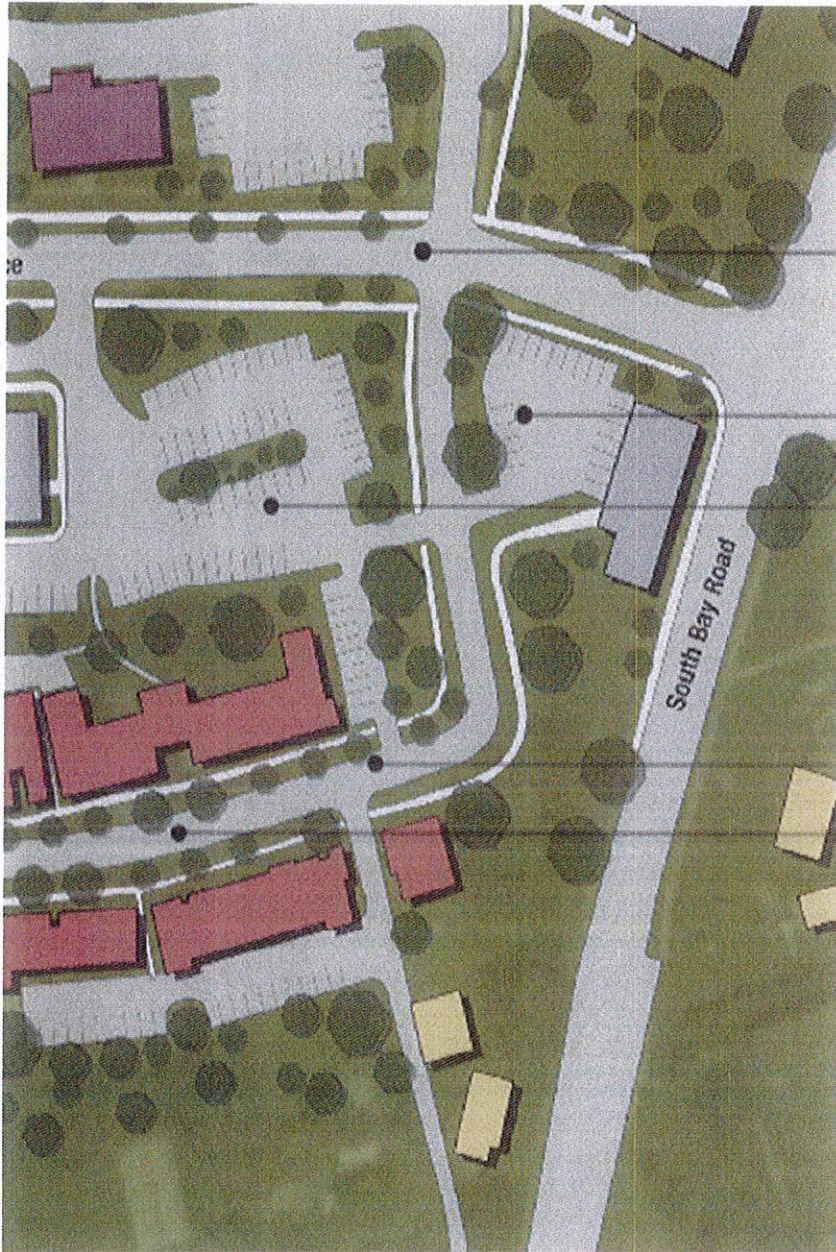
## Sector 2: Church Street—Centerville Place Recommendations



- Adjust building configuration by eliminating setback to reinforce Village Center character.
- Create a through street between Centerville Place and Church Street to increase circulation between “Old” and “New” Village Centers.
- Adjust building configuration by eliminating setback to reinforce Village Center character.
- Slow down vehicular traffic through bump-outs and increased signage.
- Remove existing fence and storage buildings to improve accessibility.
- Develop vacant lots for mixed-use and eliminate openings in the “street wall” to create a more pedestrian-friendly, urban environment.
- Implement shared parking concept between adjacent properties and utilize lowered bio-retention islands.
- Renovate building facades to coincide with established Village Center colors, building materials, etc.



### Sector 3: Church Street—Baum Avenue Recommendations



- Extend Trolley Barn Lane to intersect with Centerville Place and connect to Church Street, increasing circulation between “Old” and “New” Village Centers.
- Reconfigure Community Center parking lot layout to accommodate new circulation route and to eliminate confusion in way-finding.
- Implement Shared Parking concept between adjacent properties and utilize lowered bio-retention islands.

Remove existing bollards at the end of Church Street to extend road and connect with Trolley Barn Lane, improving circulation and opening up Church Street to through traffic.

The single family houses on Church Street could be redeveloped as boutiques, offices, hair salon etc. Parking should be located in the rear yards.

Another possible scenario is that these properties could be consolidated and redeveloped as a small strip-like building.





#### Sector 4: Chestnut Street–Singleton Avenue Recommendations

Adjust building configuration by eliminating setback to reinforce Village Center character. Provide landscape treatment between buildings if new building is not built to fill vacant space. This would shield the view of rear yard parking and create a continuous streetwall to emulate the southern end of the Village Center.

Residential properties are prime candidates for redevelopment opportunities such as mixed-use or multi-family. Redevelopment of these properties should be respectful of neighboring residential areas.

Planting and sidewalk improvements at four corners would enhance village identity.



**Sector 5: Centerville Place—Gertrude Street**

• Implement Shared Parking concept between adjacent proper-

• Improve streetscape by aligning sidewalk widths, increasing curb cuts and bump-outs, consolidating power lines, planting trees to encourage pedestrian movement to local favorites like the Limp Lizard and the Big Dip.

Adjust building configuration by eliminating setback to reinforce Village Center character.

• Increase vegetation to create a park-like setting, eliminating gap between road and the Malta House and enhancing visitor experience.

• This lot is the largest lot in the Village Center making it prime for redevelopment. If this occurs and apartments are demolished, new building(s) should be built at property line with parking in the rear with access provided off of the new Malta Drive.

Architecture/façade should reflect established Village colors, styles, materials, etc.

• Planting and sidewalk improvements at four corners would enhance village identity.

Extend Malta Drive to the "Old" Village Center to encourage circulation.



### Sector 6: “New Village Center”—Trolley Barn Lane Recommendations



Property is a prime candidate for redevelopment. Redevelopment of this site should be compatible with rest of new Village Center.

Implement lowered bio-retention islands in parking lot to improve landscaping and storm water runoff.

Increase vegetation to echo a park-like setting, enhancing visitor experience.

As it is currently disconnected from “Old” Village Center, Trolley Barn Lane and surrounding area should continue the same street-scaping as the “Old” Village to maintain relationship/cohesion.

Extend Trolley Barn Lane to intersect with Centerville Place and connect to Church Street, increasing circulation between “Old” and “New” Village Centers.

Intersection should be enhanced with streetscape amenities—including trees and informative and directional signage.



# Implementation Plan

*So, where do we go from here? This implementation plan provides a list of actions for Village officials to complete to reach the vision of the Village Center Master Plan. The actions are summarized below by planning category and suggested timeframe.*

## I. Land Use Zoning and Market Strategy

### Short-term

- ◆ *Adopt the Village Center Master Plan.* This plan will provide a policy framework that will guide future Village Board, Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals actions relative to the redevelopment of the Village Center.

### Mid-term

- ◆ *Revise the Village Zoning Ordinance* to ensure the Village Center character is retained. Suggested revisions to the C-3 District include among others:
  - Eliminate the opportunity for additional drive-through development;
  - Encourage shared parking by offering parking reduction incentives;
  - Require all new buildings be located at the property line;
- ◆ *Include design guidelines within the Zoning Ordinance* as described within this plan that define building design,

architectural features and building materials. Also, revise the ordinance regarding signage to match the intent of the design guidelines.

- ◆ *Meet with Village Center property owners* to discuss the recommendations of the plan and their role in its implementation. It is critical to get their buy-in on the future goals for the Village Center for long-term success. Specifically, discuss:

- New circulation plan
- Shared parking concept
- Design guidelines
- Maintenance issues
- Branding the Village Center
- Creating a district-wide advertising campaign

### Long-Term

- ◆ *Encourage business-owners* to continuing meeting on their own to foster the branding and district-wide advertising campaign.



## II. Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation

### Short-term

- ◆ *Have Village police monitor traffic traveling along Main Street with the intent of slowing it down.*
- ◆ *Engage the services of a qualified traffic engineer to re-view crosswalk placement for optimal and safest use.*

### Mid-term

- ◆ *Meet with New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) to discuss reducing Main Street's speed limit through the Village Center.*
- ◆ *Also discuss with NYSDOT:*
  - *Improving Main Street maintenance by repaving and restriping on a more regular basis than every three years.*
  - *The opportunity of using brick or some other material within crosswalks to differentiate them from the street pavement.*

### Long-term

- ◆ *Extend Trolley Barn Lane to connect with Church Street and construct proposed new connector road between Centerville Place and Church Street.*
- ◆ *Prepare design of new streets with cost estimates ahead of Consolidated Funding Application cycle in case funding opportunity is revealed.*

## III. Parking

### Short-term

- ◆ *Install non-standard signage to indicate the location of the municipal parking lot. Place it at the Fergerson Avenue as well as at the Chestnut Street intersection if barriers to municipal lot from Chestnut Street can be removed.*
- ◆ *Include the option of shared parking to the zoning ordinance.*

### Mid-term

- ◆ *Convince property owners on the merits of shared parking. This is an action that Village officials need the buy-in of property owners to affect. Village officials could secure this action by introducing the option of constructing the proposed new road extensions described above.*



#### IV. Green Infrastructure

##### Short-term

- ◆ *Revise zoning ordinance to require green infrastructure measures in new and rehabilitated parking areas.*

#### V. Public Space

##### Short-term

- ◆ *Prepare a detailed streetscape plan for all of the streets and major intersections within the Village Center. The design should include new sidewalk pavement including brick strip, street trees, lighting, curbing, street furniture, on-street parking, and signage. Cost estimates for construction in phases should be included as well.*
- ◆ *Include cost of streetscape improvements in the Village's capital program as matching funds to supplement Community Development funds and other funding opportunities that may arise in the future.*