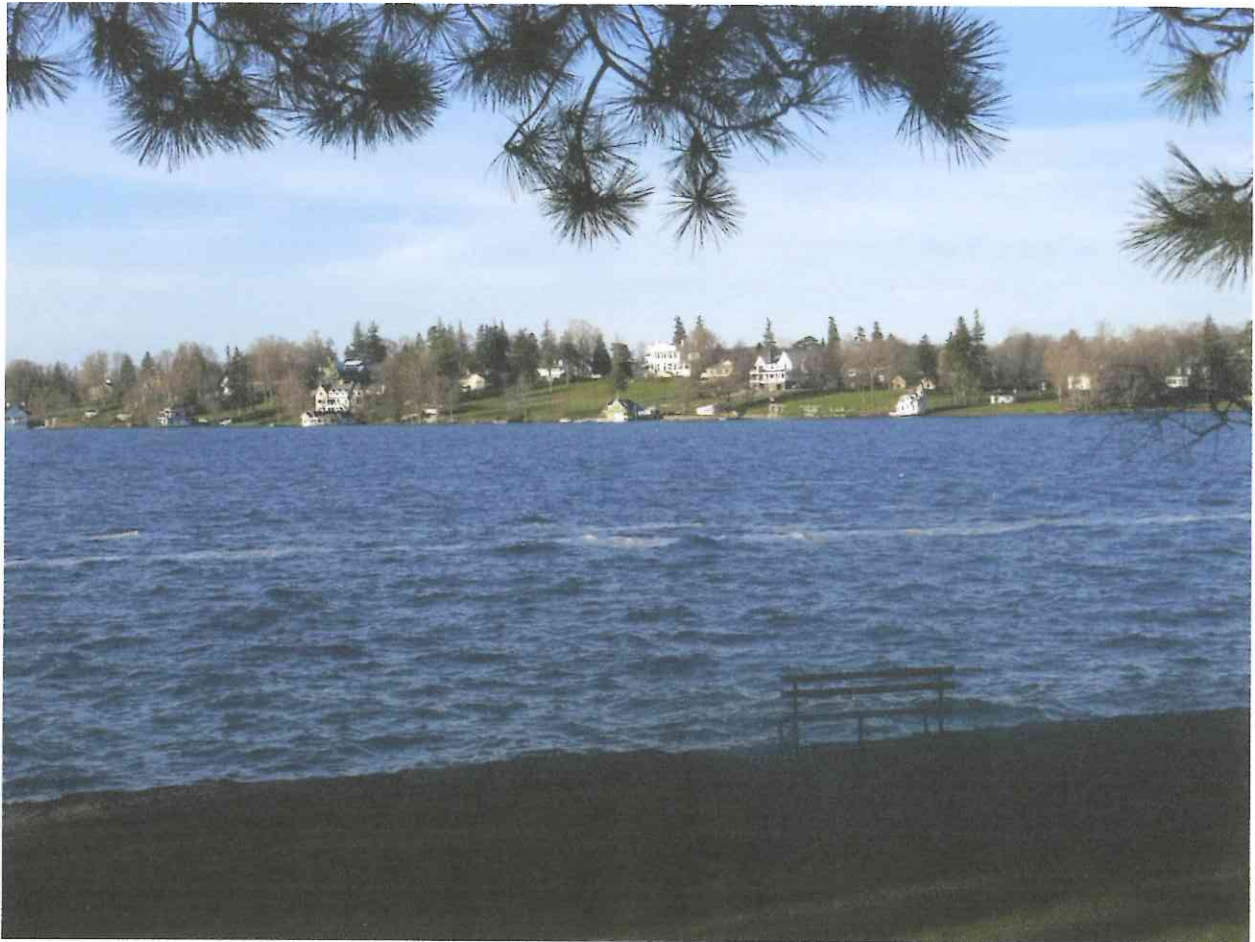


# Issues and Ideas Relating to the Eastern Gateway Corridor

Skaneateles, New York



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Greener Prospects

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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to provide findings and recommendations to guide aesthetic and functional improvements along the Eastern Gateway to the village of Skaneateles, and to suggest options for improving the character of the entryway and properties along it. It follows two days of meetings, a corridor tour, and an evening presentation describing and illustrating ways that other communities similar to Skaneateles have successfully dealt with the challenge of gradually remaking their gateway corridor entrances, in terms of roadside development.

An important goal of the meetings, tour, and public presentation was to spur discussion and to elicit comments from participants, so that I might learn which of the illustrated examples the public likes best and feels would be most appropriate for Skaneateles to consider, and which examples it likes least.

As stated in the work proposal, this report summarizes the design principles that were illustrated and discussed in the public workshop. It also describes certain kinds of actions that could be taken by the Town, by individuals, by local organizations, by local public/private partnerships, and by the DOT. It also contains proposals for improving existing zoning (including design standards for buildings, signage, landscaping, etc.) in an updated Site Plan Review Ordinance; for planting trees and landscaping along highway frontages; for modifying roadway lane widths and edging; for introducing sidewalks and bike paths linking commercial properties; for encouraging more opportunities for vehicular movement between adjacent parking lots; for encouraging larger shared stormwater facilities incorporating progressive principles of infiltration and recharge; and for relocating or undergrounding power lines.

By and large, this report is not site-specific to individual properties and does not contain maps or drawings, which could become part of a later phase of work. It does, however, attempt to suggest ways that the Town could create a fairly consistent design vocabulary governing proposal to develop or redevelop corridor properties. And, with this thought in mind, this report could be considered as a draft amendment to the *Town and Village Comprehensive Plan*, one of whose goals is to “develop joint Town/Village physical plans to enhance the appearance and function of the Village gateways.” If future iterations of this report evolve into an Area Plan that is made part of the Comprehensive Plan, it can become the basis for future zoning changes, subdivision regulation changes, and public improvements.

*A Note About the Report Cover:* While it might seem unusual to select a photo of Skaneateles Lake for the cover of a report on a highway corridor, many issues concerning the visual appearance and functionality of the Eastern Gateway (including potential infill development and redevelopment) are closely related to concerns about protecting the very high quality of the lake water. A central challenge to improving conditions along this corridor lies in dealing with water issues: finding better ways to treat polluted stormwater runoff, and finding ways to expand the Village sewage plant capacity – which could be facilitated, in part, through a program of water conservation creating spare capacity at the treatment plant (further discussed in the stormwater and wastewater sections of this report, as well as in the concluding section).

## RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS WITHIN THE RT. 20 RIGHT-OF-WAY

### Phase One

The goal of this project is the aesthetic and functional improvement of the Route 20 corridor, and the recommendations will primarily focus on the section between the Lee-Mulroy Road intersection and the

Village line. Many of the recommendations along the gateway will also require partnering with the NYS DOT (hereafter DOT). Improvements within the state ROW are controlled by that department, which owns the land, has engineering expertise, and potentially has limited funding to help finance improvements such as installing curbing, replacing open ditches with buried culverts, designating bikelanes, creating sidewalks, planting trees, and controlling the number, width and location of curb-cuts. It also has the ability to modify existing speed limits. Although it can take any of these actions without the consent of adjacent landowners, it prefers to work with them to find the best possible solution, but has the authority to make final decisions.

### Curbing

It is recommended that the most developed section of Rt. 20 (say from Chase Design to the Village line) be curbed with granite (as used on the Western Gateway), punctuated as necessary with curb cuts meeting DOT criteria. In this section of the highway, approximately 20 feet of ROW land exists between the far edge of the two travel lanes and the ROW edge. That 20 feet generally consists of paved shoulder and open ditch. By lessening the width of the paved shoulders (currently as much as 11 feet in some places) and by replacing the open ditches (which are unattractive, collect windblown trash, and pose hazards to drivers in slippery conditions) with grassy areas edged by granite curbing, the appearance and safety of this section of the corridor could be greatly enhanced. According to DOT staff, such curbing could be located close to the edge of the two travel lanes, or about 6-8 feet back from them to allow for a lane for cycling and vehicular breakdowns (as in the Western Gateway), and the remaining 12-14 feet could be used for grass, utilities, new trees, and sidewalks.

### Bike Lanes, Sidewalks, Trees, and Utility Poles

Bike lanes could be provided either between the white line of the travel lanes and curbing set back say 6-8 feet from them. Or they could be provided beyond the curbing, up on the grassy area that could replace the open ditches. One possibility would be to locate a bike lane beyond the curbing on one side of the highway (ideally with white painted bike symbols marked on the pavement), and to locate a sidewalk on the other side. However, the need for sidewalks should be very carefully examined, if the range of permitted uses continues to be those that do not compete with village center uses, which are walkable kinds of uses. Because of this policy, commercial uses along the Gateway Corridor have been limited to auto-oriented uses that are usually described as “drivable suburban” (rather than “walkable urban”). However, if the MacDonald property (for example) were to be developed for moderate-density residential (see Appendices B and C), it is possible that sidewalks between that property and the Byrne Dairy convenience store could be used with some frequency. This report acknowledges that land uses in the Gateway corridor are now auto-oriented and intended not to compete with walkable businesses in the Village. However, at the same time it would be desirable to make these areas more pedestrian-friendly and walkable. Introducing residential uses into this area would help, as would various physical design improvements intended to encourage walking and biking.

Trees (and utility poles) – until efforts to relocate or bury the lines are successful -- should ideally be located between the curbing and the bikelanes/sidewalks. Such a location would keep both walkers and cyclists farther from passing cars and trucks, and reduce watersplash on rainy days. A planting interval of say 25-30 feet is suggested for the smaller trees, and 35-45 feet for the larger ones. DOT can provide a list of recommended species that are relatively tolerant of harsh urban conditions, including road salt. It should be determined if National Grid would pay for tree plantings under its wires if the species it requires are selected. Another idea would be to adopt a tree-planting program similar to the one

followed by Honeoye Falls, where the village government, with the assistance of the local Rotary Club, plants between 12 and 18 shade trees a year within the rights-of-way along public streets. Costs are shared equally between the Village, the service clubs, and property owners.

Utility wires should be buried or relocated to locations away from the highway. Only as a last resort should they be organized so that they are on only one side of the highway (except when poles are needed for wires crossing Rt. 20 to supply properties on the opposite side). Larger trees attaining greater mature heights should be planted in the grassy strips on the side without the majority of poles, while flowering ornamentals (crabapple, plum, etc.) could be planted under the wires. Ideally, utility poles could be either eliminated (by undergrounding the wires) or relocated to new easements created parallel to and say 100-150 feet back from the highway ROW. Acquiring such easements would probably be more time-consuming than costly, but might be worth the effort, if funds to pay for expensive undergrounding cannot be found.

The combined visual effect of such physical improvements would be profound, and functionality (safety, etc.) would also be enhanced.

Beyond the currently commercially developed area (currently ending near Chase Design), the need for such improvements is not nearly as urgent, and could be addressed in a later phase of work. Along those sections, curbing is less essential, and perhaps too urban for the more rural character existing there. Tree plantings in these areas, particularly the third and outermost section, could be less formal, perhaps being arranged in more naturalistic groups or clumps. In my view, the need for sidewalks grows progressively less as one moves east of Chase Design, as the walking time to the village center is more than most people would normally consider, even on a day with fine weather. A bike lane along the paved shoulder might serve more people. Routing it away from the highway itself would probably make it more desirable. On the north side, it might be aligned to follow the woodland edge at the far side of farm fields, with landowners' permission. A logical destination might be the pond behind the Birds Nest Motel and Skan-ellus. On the southern side, a bike path might be located through an adjacent property, linking up with the Windward Estates subdivision, not only to connect that neighborhood, but also to follow a gentler gradient.

### Speed Limits

Currently the speed limit is 45 mph along the entire Eastern Gateway Corridor. It is recommended that the Town consider asking the DOT to lower those limits along two segments of the highway. For example, from Grace Chapel to Chase Design, a limit of 40 mph might be appropriate. From Chase Design to the Village line, a 35-mph limit should be considered. Speeds higher than that are generally thought to be incompatible in areas with frequent curb-cuts for roadside businesses, or areas with pedestrian activity. Consistent with speed reduction would be a similar reduction in the width of the travel lanes, as drivers are sensitive to such changes. Currently, travel lanes along Rt. 20 are generally as wide as those found on interstate highways, which is inconsistent with the goal of calming the traffic in the more developed section of the corridor.

### Street Networks and Connectivity

Several previous plans have shown potential north-south street linkages between Routes 20 and 41 (New Seneca Pike). Such a connection would be in the long-term best interest of the Town, to provide a network that would increase efficiency, better distribute traffic, and make travel easier for many people. Some municipalities take advantage of state enabling laws allowing them to adopt "Official Maps" to

reserve rights of way for new streets, bikepaths, trails, and even parkland. In communities reluctant to adopt official maps, a workable alternative is to show proposed streets, trails or bikepaths in a municipal master plan or in design guidelines accompanying a zoning ordinance. Appropriate qualifying language should state that proposed alignments are approximate and advisory to the Planning Board when approving new streets. This approach avoids some landowner concerns, while providing municipal guidance and leverage. Along the Eastern Gateway, it is recommended that the Town consider reserving a ROW for a new connecting street that would proceed north from Rt. 20 at a point near Chase Design. Such an alignment would also allow existing or future businesses in the LAB Building to expand more easily, creating additional good, local jobs.

Closer to the Village line, the Town could follow a similar approach, indicating that it expects land developers to create an interconnected network of streets on the long, deep properties extending backward from Rt. 20. A conceptual plan should be developed illustrating how the properties between the Village line and Chase Design could be redeveloped using traditional village building forms and connective street patterns.

## **GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING PROPERTIES ALONG THE RT. 20 CORRIDOR**

### **Phase Two**

#### Property Aesthetics

Beyond the state ROW, considerable scope exists to improve the corridor's general appearance, and that of many individual properties, where reinvestment should be strongly encouraged. Some of the possible changes are more easily and quickly achieved than others, but a shared and steady vision, buttressed by consistent municipal support, could achieve significant results over the short, medium, and long terms.

#### Building and Parking Location

Over the last several decades, a clear trend has emerged in professional thinking of town planners concerning the relative positions of commercial buildings and parking, with the former being recommended for closer proximity to roadways, for a more town-like appearance, and the latter being situated either behind or alongside such buildings (and also visually screened from the roadway). This arrangement makes sense for both merchants (whose wall signs and display windows are more easily seen) and for the visual character of the district (which would be less suburban in appearance). Zoning regulations could be amended to establish maximum front setbacks for commercial and institutional buildings, at least in the western section of the corridor, to avoid wasting land or creating an auto-dominant appearance. In that section of the corridor, the minimum front setback might be 25 feet, coupled with a maximum front setback of perhaps 35 feet (but without front parking), more than enough room for free-standing signs and attractive landscaping (and no parking). Along the more rural section of the highway, which is less intensively developed, it is appropriate for buildings to be situated at greater distances from the ROW, although parking should still be located behind or beside those buildings (and be effectively screened, to maintain rural character).

#### Signage

Free-standing signs can be either pole-mounted or ground based / “monument” signage, as illustrated in Appendix A. Many communities concerned about their visual appearance prohibit the former and require the latter, also setting moderate height limits, such as six feet. The Town could establish a consistent approach for such monument signs, utilizing a common signage structure and base material (which would not be counted when calculating sign area). Tall signs (those over 6-8 feet) are typically useful along highways where speed limits are 55 mph or higher, where drivers need more time to see them, make a decision, decelerate, and turn into a business property.

Regarding the maximum area of free-standing signs, the current limit of 12 SF is very strict. However, with an “incentive zoning” approach, this area limit could be increased to encourage lower signs, or wooden or metal signs that are illuminated externally (thereby reducing nighttime glare, which can create road hazards). Another glare-reduction approach would be to allow internally-lit signs only if the background area is dark, with light-colored lettering.

#### Landscape Planning and Design

The Town should consider an overall landscaping strategy for the corridor and then, when an application is submitted to modify or change a property, apply updated standards consistent with the overall planting strategy, to establish a generally consistent appearance for the corridor over time. In the absence of such an application, the Town can only encourage business owners to augment their currently minimal landscaping. However, it could encourage such improvements by underwriting the costs of commissioning site-specific recommendations by a trained landscape architect, such as those on staff at the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board. (Such detailed recommendations could also become part of the work scope for a second phase of this Gateway project.) Over the years, I have generally recommended hardy trees, shrubs, and perennials. Native trees and shrubs should generally be planted wherever possible, in order to capture the “spirit of the locale” through indigenous species (such as lilac, viburnum, day lilies, ferns, red-twig dogwood, red oak, red maple, sycamore, linden, hawthorne, birch, shadbush, etc.).

In addition, required landscaping should be maintained, and the Town should periodically check to ensure this is being done, notifying owners that they need to replace dead or seriously damaged trees or shrubs. A case in point was brought up in recent discussions regarding Gateway landscaping, when it was observed that the front grassy area originally required by the Planning Board as a condition on approval for the newer (more eastern) Ford agency building was never replaced after the sewer line was installed. It is now paved over and filled with vehicles.

#### Potential Regulatory Changes

Although detailed suggestions relating to individual businesses are beyond the scope of this report, it is possible that the planning board could enhance their guidance for new projects by developing a guideline for the corridor, such as those relating to signage, outdoor lighting, landscaping, and stormwater management (Impervious coverage, etc.). In addition, changes should be considered in both the zoning ordinance in terms of building setbacks, parking location and screening.)

Additional changes could address the boundaries of the existing HC commercial district (particularly its currently long depth) and the range of uses that are permitted, conditional, or prohibited. For example, facilities for day care and medical treatment could be specifically allowed. Offices, which are permitted, could be more strongly encouraged, as an ideal land-use (generating relatively little traffic and creating

more jobs). Other uses that might be considered in any HC district, to encourage higher-quality redevelopment and/or infilling on vacant parcels, include townhouses, apartments and condominiums, as well as health facilities, gyms, spas, and tanning salons. Single- and two-family housing (such as for workforce or seniors) should also be considered. Encouraging two-story construction, where feasible, would also help to reduce impervious coverage for the same amount of floorspace, in addition to providing more building variety.

Further zoning approaches (mostly involving dimensional standards) to facilitate some of the design ideas are presented in Appendix B (showing examples of single-family and two-family, and multi-family dwellings). They might include waiving street frontage requirements when garages are accessed by rear lanes or alleys (to permit houselots to directly abut neighborhood greens or parks, siting homes off-center on lots to increase the usability of yards on one side, and requiring greater minimum front setbacks for front-facing garage doors (to visually subordinate garages), which is particularly necessary on relatively narrow lots where garages often protrude forward of the house.

The town's current site plan review standards, contained in its zoning ordinance, are relatively complete, but could benefit from several modifications, as described in potential ordinance language, with illustrations, in Appendix A. If adopted, other related sections of the zoning ordinance would need to be updated as well.

### **Phase Three**

#### Stormwater Improvements

To the greatest extent feasible, as many Eastern Gateway properties (both commercial and residential) in the section nearest the Village, should be connected to a large new stormwater detention and treatment facility, which might be located on land behind the existing Ford dealership, if the Town succeeds in acquiring it from its current owner. Such a facility could provide a very high level of treatment for runoff from both new developments and from existing properties (most of which were developed prior to onsite stormwater management requirements). By treating the relatively large volume of runoff from large expanses of rooftops and parking lots on currently-developed properties, the volume of untreated and polluted runoff currently reaching the lake could be substantially and immediately reduced. One alternative would be to use the proven constructed wetlands technology which employs certain aquatic plants to filter and purify the stormwater, removing pollutants and sediments. According to engineers specializing in them, they work well in colder climates such as those in central New York. Care must be taken to design them with sufficient spare capacity so they release treated water slowly, to avoid overwhelming downstream watercourses or affecting their natural temperatures.

A large facility serving multiple properties would enable the contributing parcels to be designed more efficiently, without new detention basins such as the one recently created at the existing dance studio building, near the front lot line. If a combined facility cannot be created, smaller basins or "rain gardens" on individual properties should be designed by both an engineer and a landscape architect, to maximize their attractiveness with naturalistic plantings (mostly of native species), particularly if situated within view of Rt. 20. Please see Appendix D for illustrations of large and well-landscaped retention basins, and rain gardens.

#### Wastewater Treatment

Currently, public sewer lines extend along only the southern side of Rt. 20, up to Chase Design, due to capacity limitations at the Village's sewage treatment plant. Properties on the north side, and beyond Chase Design, must rely on septic systems. If plant capacity were increased, such restrictions could be eased, enabling better development to occur, and providing a superior long-term alternative to on-site septs. Historically, considerable concern has existed about enabling more development to occur along the highway corridor, beyond the Village line. That concern has been partially addressed by limiting the scale and types of new development allowed under Town zoning, specifically prohibiting uses that could compete with established uses in the Village, such as pedestrian retail, grocery stores, and pharmacies. Maintaining most or all of those use restrictions would ensure that new development (or redevelopment), particularly in the most urban section of the corridor, would not negatively impact the Village, even if sewerage were extended along the northern side of Rt. 20 in the western end of the corridor.

In the absence of substantial funds to expand the sewage plant, additional capacity can be created less expensively by replacing old sewer pipes that allow significant infiltration of groundwater. Engineers can estimate the amount of new capacity being created by the current line replacement project, involving some particularly leaky pipes. Other pipe lengths could be evaluated and prioritized for further replacement, and the additional capacity could be calculated.

Another, and even less expensive, approach to creating additional sewer treatment capacity involves a water conservation program, such as successfully implemented by a number of towns in the greater Boston area about 25-30 years ago. Under that program, sponsored by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA), the agency supplied thousands of residential, commercial, and institutional customers with low-flow plumbing devices (such as flow restrictors in showerheads and indoor faucets, plus "toilet dams" inserted into toilet tanks to reduce the water volume released with each flush) as part of an extensive public information and school education program. These devices were widely distributed over a period of months at no charge (at town offices, libraries, shopping centers, and sometimes in bags hung on front doors). In several towns MWRA paid contractors to install the devices to ensure a higher compliance rate.

Together with replacing leaky pipes to reduce groundwater infiltration, MRWA cut water consumption by nearly 24% (from 336 mgd to 256 mgd). Even if similar efforts in Skaneateles were only half as successful, trimming sewage inflows by 10-12% could free up plant capacity to allow for new investment in infilling and redevelopment along the corridor.

On the other side of the country, successful water conservation efforts enabled the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District in 2010 to drop plans to construct additional sewage treatment capacity. According to its website, "Water conservation in the Sacramento region over the last decade has been effective and the amount of wastewater generated per capita has decreased." Although water conservation in the context of a huge lake with an abundant supply might sound counter-intuitive, it could be part of the solution to spurring private investment along the gateway corridor.

A detailed report by the USEPA [https://www3.epa.gov/watersense/docs/utilityconservation\\_508.pdf](https://www3.epa.gov/watersense/docs/utilityconservation_508.pdf) provides 17 case studies, including one on the MWRA, and one on the individual municipality of Goleta CA, which reduced its water use by 30% through a water efficiency program emphasizing plumbing retrofits including high-efficiency toilets, high-efficiency showerheads, and increased water rates. As a result, it was able to free up capacity and delay a wastewater treatment plant expansion.

The relevance of the above section is that it is easier to improve an area lagging in new investment if incentives are created to encourage owners to build on or redevelop their properties, and the best incentives usually involve offering sewer service, and generally increasing the permitted intensity of development and expanding the allowable use mix on a site. Although the Town cannot wave a magic wand and require owners to improve their properties, it can, with cooperation from the Village, give them significant infrastructure and zoning incentives to do so. One of the zoning incentives, to encourage the provision of new housing close to the Village, is described below.

#### Land Use Commentary: Residential Development Potential

Several properties at the westernmost end of the Gateway corridor provide opportunities for new residential development, extending adjacent neighborhoods in a logical manner with a network of connected streets (as recommended in the new *Comprehensive Plan*). The north side does not yet have sewer service, posing a considerable constraint, particularly as on-site soils are somewhat limited for septic systems. On the southern side of the corridor, the strict limit of 10-30% for impervious coverage makes it difficult to create much new housing, particularly if an efficient “new urban” pattern of relatively narrow lots served by streets and back lanes providing rear garage access) were to be proposed. Appendix B (from the second edition of *Rural by Design*) includes a number of photos and other graphics illustrating this approach, while Appendix C reproduces a case study of a “pocket neighborhood” of attractive workforce housing, from the second edition of *Rural by Design*. There is also an unmet need for compact housing suitable for seniors, with common maintenance. (mowing lawns, raking leaves, shoveling snow, etc.). Sites close to the Village line would be best for such age groups, if affordable sites within the Village are unavailable or prohibitively expensive. Appendix G contains a case study of a mixed-use development with two-story commercial buildings in front, and moderate -density housing behind them.

### **OVERALL CONCLUSIONS**

Improving the aesthetics and functionality of the corridor is a complex effort that can be best achieved by addressing the issues sequentially, beginning with those that have the broadest immediate support and are most easily implemented, perhaps according to the three phases suggested above.

- *Making immediate improvements by installing curbing, narrowing highway pavement, and improving roadway edges*
- *Eliminating the swales and providing buried drainage in piping to eliminate one of the greatest eyesores within the corridor ROW*
- *Organizing overhead utilities, planting trees within the ROW, and coordinating with utility companies (and also with landowners, if negotiating rear rights-of-way are part of the solution)*
- *Improving access to the east with sidewalks and a bike path, providing a safer method for traversing the gateway corridor*
- *Establishing landscape strategies for future review and adoption*
- *Organizing stormwater management from multiple properties to detain and effectively treat stormwater currently running into streams feeding the lake, thereby potentially allowing modifications to current impervious coverage limits, facilitating desirable infill development (such as senior or workforce housing)*
- *Offering incentives to landowners to move existing parking and buildings farther from the road, such as by bonusing increased impermeable surfaces created by additional setbacks*

- *Determining the amount of spare capacity that could be achieved in the sewage plant by continuing to replace leaky sewage pipes and perhaps also by a water conservation program involving plumbing retrofits*
- *Reviewing usage restrictions and appearance standards in existing zoning, site plan review, and subdivision regulations to ensure consistency with the new comprehensive plan, currently being updated.*

*Various ideas for surmounting current obstacles posed by the overriding stormwater and wastewater concerns are discussed above, for public consideration. It appears that -- if ways can be found to treat stormwater from corridor properties collectively and much more effectively -- existing impervious coverage ratios could be modified without negatively impacting lake water quality. Such a regulatory change could enable either multi-family or the kind of single- and two-family housing illustrated in Appendix B to be created, alleviating a housing shortage and potentially helping to repopulate the elementary school.*

*Likewise, if additional spare capacity in the wastewater treatment plant could be created -- by further reducing groundwater infiltration seeping into old sewage pipes that are being gradually replaced, and by implementing a program of water conservation to increase sewage plant capacity (as demonstrated by experiences in other communities) -- new sewer lines could be installed to serve corridor properties to the north of Rt. 20, an area containing a number of underutilized properties, some of which might be residentially developed, at least in part, to provide for unmet housing needs.*

*Adopting a package of design standards (such as discussed in Appendices E and F) to control the appearance and functionality of new infill development and redevelopment, combined with continuing zoning controls over the uses permitted beyond the Village line (to protect downtown vitality), could provide the community with a balanced solution to the current problem wherein the Eastern Gateway has seen relatively little investment -- and therefore relatively little improvement -- over the past decade or so. Spurring appropriately-scaled, compatible investment in that area, with new regulatory design standards to ensure attractive appearances consistent with Skaneateles' lovely traditional character, while continuing to safeguard village commercial areas and lake water quality, would improve this critical entry corridor (where visitors' first impressions are made) in some very positive ways.*

*In summary, the Eastern Gateway ought to appear as if the Village-Town boundary had always been about a quarter-mile farther to the east, with the Village's traditional appearance extended to the end of that quarter-mile edge. Beyond that, it ought to appear as if the Town had maintained a farming-zone designation up to Skaneateles, with just a few visual interruptions.*

## Appendix A - Some Ideas for Supplementing Current Site Plan Review Standards

*This appendix contains a number of ideas recommended for consideration by the Town, to help improve the quality, appearance, and functionality of new development (and redevelopment) along the Eastern Gateway corridor.*

### A. Location of Parking

Parking lots shall be provided only to the rear of non-residential buildings visible from public roadways. If that is not possible or practicable, a single row of parking spaces may be located in front, screened from the road as described below for side parking. Parking may also be located to the sides of such buildings, and effectively screened from the roadway. Thickly vegetated buffers shall be provided, whose width, length, and planting materials shall be sufficient to visually screen parked vehicles from the public way. This screening shall consist of deciduous shade trees spaced at 30-foot intervals, under-planted with a hedge between 36 and 42 inches in height, for example. In rural situations, a less formal planting scheme including taller hedges and/or denser plantings shall be utilized.

When rear parking areas would abut existing residential development, the parking lots and outdoor lighting shall be effectively screened from view by a solid wooden fence six feet high, lights directed toward the proposed development and away from neighboring residences, or similar protective measures.



*Example of replacement commercial buildings (Mill Village) along Rt. 20 in Sudbury MA, the town's Eastern Gateway corridor, showing rear parking, plus shade trees and sidewalks in front. Note the two-story construction, reducing building (impervious) coverage by 50%. Ditto for the example below, with second-floor shops. (The septic system is located under the deep lawn seen at the top of the aerial photo.) Details of both of these examples appear as case studies in chapter 24 of Rural by Design, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., q.v.*



**B. Location of Gasoline Pumps and Canopies**

When convenience stores are proposed as part of a gasoline retail business, pumps and canopies shall be located behind the store, which would typically have a rear entrance, unless such an arrangement is not feasible due to physical constraints of the property. To ensure that potential customers (such as visitors unfamiliar with the area) are aware that gasoline is sold on the premises, the area of free-standing signs may be increased to 20 SF.



*Example: Rusty's Market and Shell station along Rt. 24 in Topsham, Maine.*

**C. Vehicular Connections between Adjacent Nonresidential Properties**

In order to facilitate vehicular movement among abutting nonresidential properties along the highway corridor, and to reduce the need for drivers to enter and exit the Rt. 20 traffic flow simply to visit nearby premises, site plans for new development or redevelopment shall provide vehicular connections between adjoining nonresidential properties, wherever feasible (i.e., where there are no physical constraints that would be unreasonably expensive to overcome).

**D. Landscaping and Screening**

1. All existing roads, and proposed access streets and ways, shall be lined with shade trees planted at intervals not less than 40 feet. Such plantings shall be on both sides of any new street or access way. Parking lots shall be provided with at least two shade trees (of 2.5" caliper, dbh) for every 15 car spaces, evenly distributed throughout such lots. Streets and access ways shall be planted with shade trees at no less than 40-foot intervals, close enough to the traveled way so as to create a canopy effect in decades to come.



*Example of a car dealership in Rockford IL and a car wash in Brunswick Maine, illustrating tree planting and landscaping in highway commercial districts.*

2. Shade trees shall generally be planted in planting strips (sometimes called "tree lawns") at least four feet wide, located between the pavement or curb and the continuous sidewalk or footpath system (which shall also be required). Species shall be selected according to the following criteria:

- a. cast moderate shade to dense shade in summer;
- b. long-lived (over 60 years);
- c. mature height of at least 50 feet;
- d. be tolerant of pollution and direct or reflected heat;
- e. require little maintenance, by being mechanically strong (not brittle) and insect-and disease-resistant;
- f. be able to survive two years with no irrigation after establishment; and
- g. be of native origin, provided they meet the above criteria

Among the species that are recommended in this ordinance are sycamore or London Plane, sweet gum, red maple, green ash, Shademaster golden locust, littleleaf linden and Village Green Zelkova. For further relevant information, readers are specifically referred to Street Tree Factsheets, Henry Gershold, Editor, School of Forest Resources, Pennsylvania State University, 1989.

2. All streets and access ways shall be provided with sidewalks, preferably of brick, stone or concrete paving block in commercial areas, although cement, asphalt, or compacted stone dust may also be allowed. Street lighting shall utilize posts that are not overly ornate and, in order to ensure consistency, the final decision on their style, height, color and brightness shall rest with municipal officials.
5. Where new fencing is greater than four feet in height, or more than 20 feet in length, it shall be softened visually with tree and shrub plantings.
6. In instances where healthy plant material exists on a site prior to its development, the Planning Board may adjust the application of the above mentioned standards to allow credit for such plant material if, in its opinion, such an adjustment is in keeping with and will preserve the intent of these standards.
7. Appropriate screening/buffers are to be maintained or installed to provide privacy and noise reduction to residential areas abutting nonresidential sites:
- a) Where all of the required off-street parking cannot be located behind the building, buffer areas shall be planted along the public edge of front or side parking lots. Such areas shall be at least ten feet wide with dense evergreen plantings 36-42 inches high and canopy shade trees planted not less than 30 feet apart and parallel to the public way. All trees shall be a minimum of 2.5-inch caliper (trunk diameter, dbh) when planted. Native trees and shrubs shall be planted wherever possible, in order to capture the "spirit of the locale" through indigenous species (such as lilac, viburnum, day lilies, ferns, red-twig dogwood, oak, maple, sycamore, linden, hawthorne, birch, shadbush, etc.).



*Examples of landscape screening to minimize the visual impact of front parking areas. Hedges are used in front of a Mobil station in Rockford IL (left), while deciduous trees and shrubs screen the Maplelawn Village shopping center in Phoenixville PA (planted about 25 years ago).*

b) Buffer strips between single-family residential and multi-family residential uses, and between non-residential and residential uses, shall consist of either solid wooden fencing at least six feet high, or dense vegetation that will effectively screen nonresidential an multi-family uses from the sight of single-family residential uses during both summer and winter months.

c) Storage areas and garbage collection areas must be fenced or screened.

#### **E. Glare and Outdoor Illumination**

1. Outdoor lighting shall be controlled in both height and intensity. No lighting from any land-use or establishment shall project beyond its lot lines onto neighboring properties, or onto any public road or state highway so as to impair the vision of the driver of any vehicle upon that public way. To achieve this, light standards are restricted to a maximum of eighteen (18) feet in height, and luminaires shall be shielded to prevent light shining beyond the lot lines into neighboring properties or public ways.

2. Indirect lighting shall be used on signs advertising goods or services offered on the premises. Blinking or flashing lights or signs are not permitted.

3. Outdoor lighting is restricted to that which is necessary in the opinion of the Planning Board for advertising and security of the property.



*LED lighting installed flush with a gas station canopy ceiling in Cobleskill reduces nighttime glare to a minimum. Vertical shields or hoods extending below luminaires help keep light rays from spreading widely onto the highway or neighboring properties.*

4. Where there is a mix of residential and commercial or industrial uses, and where light rays from on-residential lighting sources would otherwise fall onto residential property, all outdoor lighting shall be hooded and/or screened to prevent such light trespass, or shall be turned off between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. Exceptions will be granted for those businesses which are operating during these hours.

#### **F. Signage**

##### **1. Free-Standing**

A self-supporting sign not attached to any building, wall, or fence, but in a fixed location. This does not include portable or trailer type signs. Dimensional standards for free-standing signs in different districts are specified in Table \_\_\_\_\_, which relates requirements to the character of each area and the speed at which traffic usually travels within them. Free-standing signs for single-occupant premises shall be no taller than eight feet and no larger than 15 SF (each side). Multi-occupant free standing

signs may be up to 10 feet in height and contain up to 20 SF (each side). The same size limit applies to businesses with gas pumps and canopies located behind convenience stores.

a. Free-standing signs over four feet in height may have not more than two sides; those less than four feet in height may have three or four sides.

b. A lot with frontage of three hundred (300) feet or more may have two free-standing signs, not less than one hundred seventy five (175) feet apart.



*Example of a free-standing "monument" sign, approximately six feet in height (left), The second example is of a similar sign, at a Mobil station in West Kingston, RI (note canopy and pumps behind the convenience store)...*

## 2. Illuminated Signs

a. Signs shall be illuminated only with steady, stationary, shielded light sources directed solely onto the sign without causing glare.

b. Internal illumination is allowed only under the following conditions:

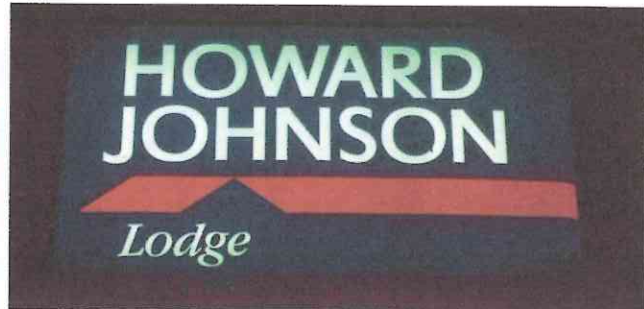
€ Individual back-lit letters, numbers, and symbols which are silhouetted against softly illuminated wall;

€ Individual letters, numbers, and symbols with translucent faces, containing soft lighting elements inside each letter;

€ Metal-faced box signs with cut-out letters and soft-glow fluorescents tubes, or

Plastic signs with opaque or dark-colored background and light-colored letters, numbers, and symbols.

The display of internally-illuminated plastic signs with dark-colored movable letters shall be strictly prohibited in all districts. Moveable rented signs of this nature, existing on the enactment of these provisions, shall be permanently removed within twelve months of the date of this ordinance.



*Example of gas station sign made of wood, and illuminated from above (left), and internally-lit plastic sign with dark-colored background to reduce nighttime glare.*

c. Non-flashing neon window signs may be permitted in town and village centers in cases where they are custom-designed to be compatible with the building's historic and/or architectural character, and where their color has been selected to harmonize with the building's exterior colors.

d. Gas-filled light tubes shall be allowed for indirect illumination and when placed in such a manner that the tubes are not exposed to view from any point along the public roadway or sidewalk.

e. Signs shall not be illuminated directly or indirectly between the hours of 11 p.m. and dusk of the following day unless the premises are open during such hours

f. Illuminated signs shall not be permitted to shine onto residential properties or onto public thoroughfares.

### **3. Moveable-Letter Signs**

Moveable-letter signs shall be allowed provided they are not themselves movable, and shall be permanently attached to buildings, walls, or the ground (except that they may be permitted as window signs hung inside display windows). Moveable-letter signs shall not be internally illuminated, and their lighting elements shall not cast glare onto roadways or adjacent properties..



*Example of a moveable-letter sign in Belchertown MA, consisting of two wooden posts supporting a panel of exterior-grade plywood covered with indoor/outdoor carpet. Vinyl lettering is held fast with Velcro tabs.*

## Appendix B: Examples of Different Residential Development Options

*Below are a number of examples illustrating different ways to design and arrange homes in communities with traditional architecture and street patterns. This section has been adapted from my fifth book, *Envisioning Better Communities*.*

**Street Patterns:** These three panels illustrate the existing situation and two contrasting approaches to expanding a small, traditional Pennsylvania town in a sensitive, incremental manner. While both extensions include connected streets and important open space, the third panel with my design is faithful to the historic pattern of rectilinear streets and blocks, while the other (proposed by a progressive developer) incorporates a more contemporary, curvilinear design approach. On relatively flat or unchallenging terrain, the traditional design is often preferable, to retain the community's historical aspect. However, if natural features such as slopes, draws, and other elements pose physical obstacles, a more relaxed layout often fits the terrain better



**“Bungalow Courts”, or Cottage Greens:** One of the most livable neighborhood forms seen in recent years, the “cottage green”, is based closely on the “bungalow courts” built throughout the West (notably in Seattle, Portland, Pasadena, Alameda, Fullerton, and San Diego) during the 1910-30 period. Originally designed with multi-family dwellings, typically as workforce housing, the form has transitioned into one featuring detached cottages. All of the below examples were built in single-family zones under *innovative Conditional Use codes* allowing medium density, provided that each home is limited in finished floorspace, is not taller than 1 ½ stories, and is grouped around a common green/garden courtyard with detached garages on the site perimeter.



The 1991 restoration of the 1915 Pine Street Cottages in Seattle inspired the region's planning community to adopt new single-family land-use codes meeting the state Growth Management Act's objectives. These codes have

allowed innovative single-family infill developments that have been created as tangible models and examples of new housing choices. It is important to note that this approach, as commonly practiced in western Washington, does not require re-zoning for each project, as the Cottage Court neighborhood type is typically classified as a Conditional Use, allowing another code option for a single-family detached living. A case study of Poplar Gardens, a bungalow court (or pocket neighborhood) for workforce housing in Boulder CO is presented in Appendix C.



**Greenway Streets:** In a traditional grid system, occasional cross-streets can be eliminated, closed to traffic, and designed as linear greenway parks, by accessing garages from the rear, *via* alleys or back lanes, and substituting grass and shade trees for asphalt pavement and concrete curbing in front of the houses. The very best results are achieved when dual sidewalks are installed, bordering a park-like central green, which functions as neighborhood open space, part of the public realm (below left). When a sidewalk runs straight down the middle (right), as in the below right example from Chautauqua, the space is divided into individual private front yards, and the park-like effect of the central green disappears, thereby missing a huge opportunity to create something even more special.



Fire engines serve the homes from behind, *via* the alleys, and from the collector streets at each end of the short greenway street. This design approach has been used for decades with multi-family buildings in PUDs, but it has re-emerged only recently as a design approach for single-family neighborhoods.

**Siting Homes Off-Center:** On narrow lots where side yards are too small to be usable for much, greater livability can be achieved by situating homes off-center, with minimal or no yardspace on one side, and nearly or fully double yards on the other. Instead of having two skinny ten-foot side yards, one could provide 17 feet on one side and three on the other, or the full 20 on one side and none of the other (so-called “zero-lot lines”, typically with a



three-foot maintenance easement on the neighbor's lot). Clearly, this approach must be implemented comprehensively from the outset, to maintain a normal distance between dwellings on adjoining lots up and down the street. In the example pictured here, a side veranda (less public than a front porch) overlooks a patio. Windows on the opposing homes with 0-3 feet of setback must be of the "clerestory" type, having sills above eye-level, providing privacy while being fully adequate for daylighting and ventilation.

**Avoiding Protruding Garages:** When lots are less than 60 feet wide, builders often locate garages as appendages to the housefronts, with the result that protruding garages doors become a central feature of the street facades, dominating the streetscape and defining the neighborhood in an ugly and distinctly non-traditional way.

*The following three sections (on alleys, recessed front-loaded garages, and side-loaded garages) describe recommended alternatives.*

**Accessing Homes via Back Lanes (or Alleys):** When houselots are narrower than say 65 feet, typically producing homes with front-facing garages that dominate streetscapes in a very nontraditional way, garages should be required to be located *either* behind the homes and accessed *via* back lanes or alleys, or set back say 10-15 feet beyond the house front, as illustrated in the section called "Recessing Front-Entry Garages". Within the last fifteen years, there has been a resurgence of a design approach called the "New Urbanism", which favors rear-entry garages and back lanes in more compact, efficient, walkable residential layouts. One might be excused for assuming that the homes pictured below (from the Rochester area) could be over 100 years old. Good design is timeless, and there is a growing desire among many homebuyers to live in new neighborhoods with authentic traditional small town character. Developers have increasingly found this to be true, and have also discovered that building less-wide homes on less-wide lots saves them money and enables them to deliver new homes at more affordable price-points.



It is very important that shade trees be planted along back lanes or alleys (as well as along streets), creating accessways that become more attractive as the trees mature. Concerns that these rear lanes would add to municipal maintenance costs can be addressed by designating them as private ways to be maintained by the HOA, as they basically function as shared driveways. This approach also lessens the tendency of municipal engineers to

require overly wide pavements. Typically 12 feet is adequate, and 10 feet could suffice if they were to be designed as one-way drives.



**Recessing Front-Entry Garages:** When alleys or “back lanes” are not possible or desirable (such as when houselots could back up to value-adding conservation land), front-loading can be a logical alternative to side-loading (discussed below). The best front-loads are recessed behind the plane of the house façade by 10 to 15 feet, visually subordinating them and providing additional off-street parking (which can sometimes reduce the need for wide streets with parking lanes). Codes can easily effect this result by requiring that front-loaded garages be set back further than the houses themselves, by that additional 15-20 foot distance, beyond the usual minimum front setback. The most traditional approach, of course, is to site front-facing garages behind the house, with a long driveway out to the street, as was commonly done before WWII in neighborhoods without alleys. Homes with protruding front-facing garages usually imply a lack of imagination by developers, or laziness by their building designers, as it is difficult to believe that qualified architects are unable to devise floor plans with the garage pushed back, rather than pushing back the houses in order to “showcase” the garage.



**Side-Entry Garages:** An alternative to rear-loading and front-loading is to locate garage doors so that they face sideways, enabling the garages’ street façades to feature regular windows. In tighter suburban situations, sweeping the resulting J-shaped driveway in front of the front door enables such homes to be situated on lots as narrow as 60 or 65 feet wide, without having to construct alleys, which increase costs. In the below right example, a low masonry wall cleverly reduces garage door visibility from the street.



**“Twin” or Semi-Detached Homes:** Design is key, and the best results occur when these double homes have garages with rear access *via* back lanes. (The house in the below-right photo is a two-family home designed to resemble a single-family home. Each front porch has its own front door, and the porch structures help to visually subordinate the two entrances. This effect is enhanced by one porch being set back farther from the street than the other.)



**Multi-Family:** Attached homes can be either urban or rural in style, as shown below. The more urban example is built close to the street, with rear lanes accessing garages in back. The more rural example, with deeper setbacks, includes a “foreground meadow” with an attractively designed stormwater retention pond.





**Shade Trees:** It cannot be emphasized enough how very important shade tree planting is along neighborhood streets, particularly in treeless agrarian landscapes. Shade trees should be planted at 40-foot intervals on both sides of every street, between the curb and the sidewalk, in tree-lawns ideally six feet wide. If they are not required at the outset, they are seldom planted afterwards, and almost never in any consistent manner. If the municipality fails to require such shade tree planting from the developer as a condition of approval, chances are they will never be planted, and decades later the streetscape will remain barren and unattractive. The below-right photo from Warwick NY shows how well shade trees grow on former farmland, which is often subdivided in rural areas.



## Appendix D: Examples of Several Stormwater Treatment Options

*(adapted from Rural by Design, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition)*

### Infiltration Basin in Clay Soils:

Careful design can sometimes achieve surprising results. In the clay soil country of northern Georgia, Rexford Gonnsen designed a successful stormwater basin that initially met with municipal skepticism from Athens officials, but which demonstrated the feasibility of this approach on the area's difficult tight soils. Applying design principles learned in landscape architecture courses taught by Bruce Ferguson at the University of Georgia, Gonnsen worked at a time (late 1990s) when landscaping and infiltration were rarely done in north Georgia. Although the developer wanted to locate it underground and out of sight (because he assumed basins had to be utilitarian and unattractive), prohibitive costs eliminated that option.

Gonnsen's solution for the Villas at Five Points, a 2.8-acre project with 15 multi-family dwelling units, was to make the basin an asset and to locate it alongside the street at the entrance to the neighborhood. Although tree removal in this highly visible location initially generated negative publicity, once it was landscaped it became a favorite place for nearby residents to stroll through.

Eventually it was included on continuing education tours and student field trips led by the university, where best practices of stormwater management are taught.



*Cross-section of the low-impact stormwater infiltration rain garden designed by Rexford Gonnsen for Villas at Five Points in Athens GA, paired with photo of mature plantings beside the entranceway. The best results occur when these facilities are designed by professionals able to combine landscape architecture and engineering skills.*

Perhaps the basin's most notable feature is its infiltration design aspect, with stormwater filtering down into a stone-filled trench at the bottom, where water is stored until the surrounding ground becomes less saturated. This channel is enveloped in filter fabric (like a burrito) to prevent silt from entering it and filling the voids between the evenly-sized stones, where 40 percent of the volume within the envelope is air space for water storage. After the stone is in place, the fabric is folded over the top and the sides of the trench are filled with soil. The top of the fabric is covered by a shallow layer of stone. However, some experts recommend 2-4 inches of pea gravel instead of the filter fabric, which fine soil particles can clog over time.

### Rain Gardens: Several Minnesota Examples:

One of the least costly ways of infiltrating stormwater is the rain garden, (a form of “constructed wetland”) which consists of shallow depressions that capture, detain, and infiltrate runoff, rainwater and snowmelt. Planted with water-tolerant native grasses, shrubs, and trees, and typically underlain with amended soils consisting of medium sand, compost, and slight amounts of topsoil, they can be installed in a variety of settings, from residential yards to commercial parking lots, and can be arranged in a sequential manner.

Rain gardens are typically designed for six to 12 inches of ponding and vary in size from 100 to 400 SF. When the only goal is infiltration, they can be as small as 10 percent of the impervious area they serve. However, they can be larger when desired for landscape or wildlife purposes with less infiltration, as the greater area evaporates more moisture and the larger number of plants take up the extra water (<http://www.mepartnership.org/sites/lowerphalencreek>) When they are designed as long linear features conveying water across a property, they are known as bio-swales. A separation distance of three to five feet is recommended between the bottom of rain gardens and the seasonal high water table. Rain gardens and other bio-retention facilities must be designed with overflow features for large storm events. In conservation subdivisions with ample open space, these can take the form of prairies or meadows planted with wildflowers and native grasses (as in the Winfield development described in Chapter 22).

In a study completed by the Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District on rain garden performance in parking lots serving the H. B. Fuller office building in St. Paul, MN (photo below right), it was determined that runoff volume fell by 73 percent, total phosphorous fell by nearly 70 percent, and particulate matter fell by 94 percent. Even more impressive results have been achieved in more recent rain gardens constructed with amended soils that increase infiltration through sand/compost mixes. Raising underdrains to create a saturated layer in the bottom of the media material (such as a crushed rock layer) can improve nitrogen removal rates. Adding iron or aluminum creates bonding sites for phosphorous resulting in more effective phosphorous removal.



*Parking lot infiltration bio-swale at the offices of Novus in St. Louis, with cascades over check dams (left), a landscaped cistern retrofitted at the entrance to Maplewood Mall in St. Paul (center), and red maples planted in bio-swales at H.B. Fuller Company in St. Paul, where the parking lot has no curbs blocking water flow.*

Many stormwater improvements were retrofitted at Maplewood Mall (illustrated above) in 2012, a 1980s shopping center in St. Paul, among them a landscaped cistern at its entrance. More than 200 trees were planted in trenches installed in the vast parking lots to infiltrate at least one inch of runoff. These trenches are hydraulically linked to provide a “treatment in series”.

In Hanover MN, an attractive rain garden creates focal point landscaping between the Bank West building and the street, and the same is true at the municipal building in Hugo MN (illustrated below). Runoff at the bank was reduced by 80 percent, and phosphorus by 90 percent, in a design sometimes described as a “daisy chain of rain gardens”.



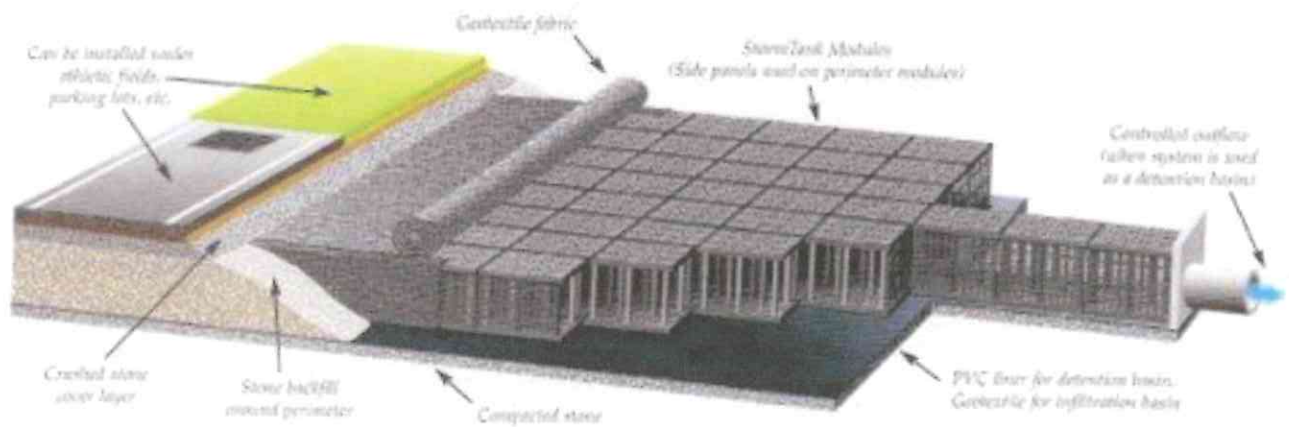
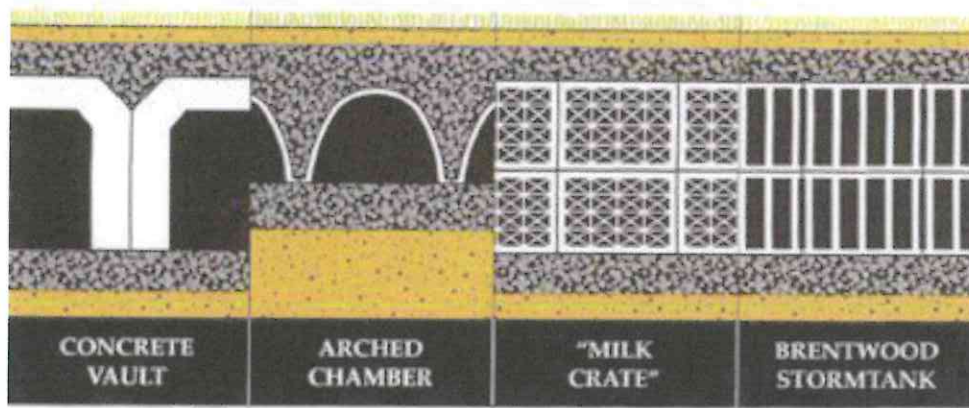
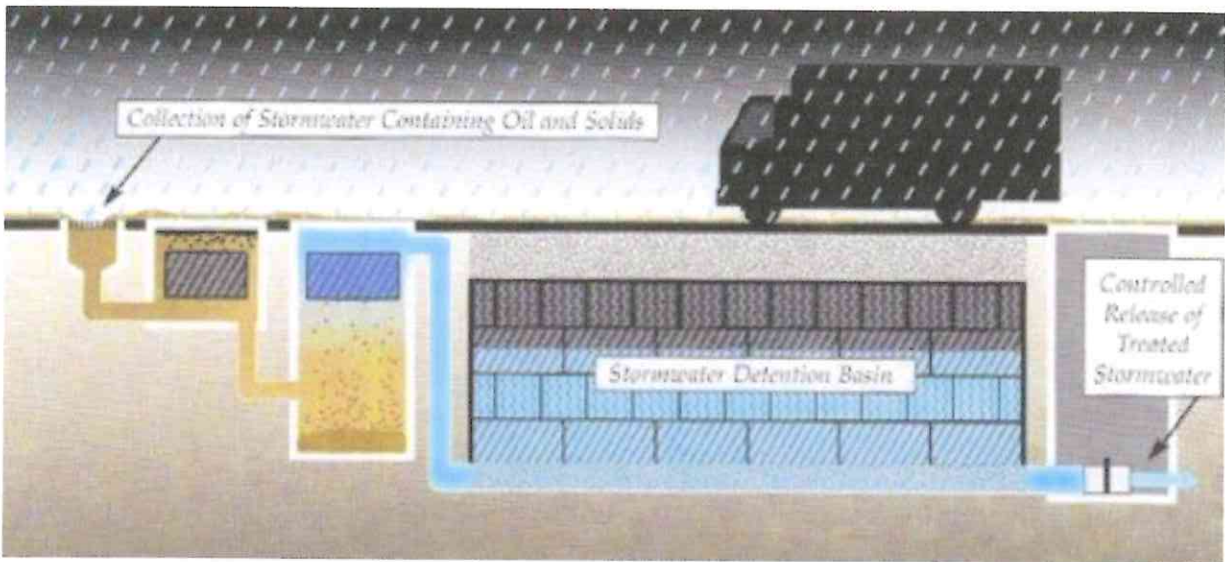
*Three Minnesota examples include a stormwater basin in front of the municipal building in Hugo (left), a rain garden at Bankwest in Hanover (center), and a curbside rain garden serving a residential neighborhood in Plymouth (right)*

Sometimes larger facilities are preferable, such as when collecting and treating stormwater from multiple premises. This is particularly true when streams, rivers, ponds or lakes with very high water quality are downstream from the facility.



*Wet ponds for stormwater retention need not be designed in a sterile way without attractive landscaping, as the above photo pair illustrates. The pond on the right serves a large parking lot and extensive roof area at the Home Depot in North Kingstown, RI. It attracts aquatic wildlife such as ducks and cormorants, in addition to small mammals such as muskrats.*

When land is at a great premium and it makes little sense to use it for stormwater ponds or rain gardens, underground chambers can be constructed below parking lots (and/or buildings), as illustrated in the graphics below. Although this alternative tends to be more expensive, it provides an excellent option when space is not readily available for more land-consumptive, above-ground solutions.



(Images courtesy of Varitech International).

## Appendix E: Design Standards from Warwick, NY

*(adapted from Rural by Design, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition)*

Nine years after completing its community visioning process in 2000, local officials in Warwick NY returned to the perennial issue of how best to improve the impression made on visitors entering the town through its southern gateway, Route 94. Like nearly every other municipality in the country, the zoning which had been in place for several decades had produced a typical strip of very standard commercial development-- characterized by low single-story buildings set far back from the roadway with relatively little landscaping and large plastic signs -- all conforming to official regulations.

After consulting with several planning firms to generate ideas and recommendations on how to spur positive change, the town board engaged an artist to create a visual image of what the corridor might ultimately look like if the regulations were updated to incorporate such recommendations. The artist's Birdseye rendering formed a powerful visual contrast to the aerial photograph of existing conditions.



An artist's rendering of the vision generated by a day-long charrette for land along Rt. 94 in Warwick NY, compared with an aerial photo of the same area. The shared vision is to create a traditional town form along this gateway corridor, with streets lined with buildings fronting directly onto them, plus a neighborhood green providing added small town character. Source: Town of Warwick NY

However, when the Board realized that the consultant meetings and the rendering, although both very useful, were insufficient to convince residents and business owners of the need for more comprehensive regulations, they scheduled a public workshop contrasting various alternative futures. Because showing hundreds of photographs and drawings began to turn the tide of public opinion, town officials followed up with a series of three public engagement sessions led by an experienced facilitator. Local concerns were thoroughly addressed at those sessions, and people began to express their opinions as to what they would like to see more of – and less of – along the corridor over the next 15-20 years.

After the second meeting the facilitator assembled all the suggestions and brought everyone together to reach a general consensus. This set the stage for the Greenplan consulting firm, led by local planner Ted Fink, to work with the town board to create a suite of new regulations consisting of a site plan review process, supplemented by design guidelines and architectural standards. Incentives intended to attract the type of businesses desired by the community were incorporated. After further public discussion and input, these new procedures were adopted in February 2010.



One of the recent projects along Rt. 94 in Warwick NY which people often cite as the kind of development they favor is the new Meadowcrest mixed-use building, which respected vernacular architectural forms and harmonized with the Town's historic building tradition. It was also the first proposal to be approved under the town's then-new design standards.

One casualty of the process was the housing component of the corridor vision. However, as residents and businesspeople become more comfortable with the new regulations, it is possible that the town might revisit the housing issue, so that new development along the corridor could contain a true mixture of uses that will help to make the area more lively and successful.

The illustrated, town-wide design guidelines adopted by Warwick in 2002 (with sections on access/parking, architecture, landscaping, signage, lighting, and pedestrian/bicycle circulation), can be accessed at:

[file:///C:/Users/randall/Documents/Documents%20from%201100/Ordinance%20Models/Warwick%20NY/Warwick Design Guidelines.PDF](file:///C:/Users/randall/Documents/Documents%20from%201100/Ordinance%20Models/Warwick%20NY/Warwick%20Design%20Guidelines.PDF)

In addition, in 2010 (after the design charrette mentioned above), Warwick adopted *Design Standards for Commercial and Mixed-Use Development*, which can be seen at:

[http://www.townofwarwick.org/departments/zoning\\_docs/design\\_mixed\\_commercial.pdf](http://www.townofwarwick.org/departments/zoning_docs/design_mixed_commercial.pdf)

they quickly inform both development applicants and new planning board members what the standards seek to achieve. Municipalities whose planning staffs do not include individuals with architectural or landscape architectural design education should consider retaining this kind of professional as a development project peer review consultant, whose services would be paid for by applicants similar to municipal legal or civil engineering peer reviewers. Kittery's *Design Handbook* is downloadable at:

[http://www.kitteryme.gov/Pages/KitteryME\\_Manager/handbook/index](http://www.kitteryme.gov/Pages/KitteryME_Manager/handbook/index)

## Appendix F - Highway Corridor Design Standards from Kittery, Maine

(adapted from *Rural by Design*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition)

Observing the successes achieved in neighboring towns, officials in the Kittery, Maine engaged Mark Eyerman, of Planning Decisions, to update their zoning ordinance and develop a set of design guidelines for its commercial corridors in 2003. Terrence DeWan and Associates was retained by Planning Decisions to work specifically on the design guideline component.

As part of the process the planning committee completed a series of exercises created by the consultants: a) to identify examples of good design in the local area, b) to identify examples of not-so-good design, and c) to list design issues and concerns with development in the commercial corridors. The results of this input formed the basis for creating the *Kittery Design Handbook*, which is organized into separate chapters on site planning, architecture, landscape, lighting, and signage. Comprehensively written and extensively illustrated, this document is arguably the best of its kind in Maine.

The *Design Handbook* is written to supplement the town's regulations, including its land use and development code (LUDC). To make the document more user-friendly, it references relevant LUDC provisions.

Each of the chapters begins with a set of town-wide goals that give applicants a sense of how their project fits into a larger vision for the community. The guidelines are divided into those with town-wide applicability and those that are specific to individual land-use zones.

The *Design Handbook* is actually a combination of guidelines (“thou should”) and standards (“thou must”) in recognition of the need for flexibility within the design review process. Where guidelines are used, the handbook provides many alternatives to arrive at acceptable solutions (e.g., choices of building materials). The more stringent standards tend to apply to situations that deal with protecting public health, safety, and welfare (e.g., providing safe pedestrian routes). The handbook is richly illustrated with photographs of projects and details to help inform town officials about acceptable and unacceptable alternatives. The approach has been well received by developers and landowners who are now seeking guidance at the start of the planning board review process. It provides clarity, a bit more certainty, and a level playing field for those involved on both sides of the review process.



Typical of the standards contained in Kittery's design guidelines are requirements for buildings, signage, landscaping, and parking lots with pedestrian walkways through them, increasing public safety.

Adoption of Kittery's standards and guidelines was surprisingly uncontroversial according to the town manager, who noted that the 2002 *Comprehensive Plan* update, which paved the way for other development standards, was more contentious. Town Planner Gerry Mylroie has praised the *Design Handbook* for its “priceless” illustrations, as

## Appendix G – Case Study of Mixed-Use Center Along a Highway Corridor

### Clover Lawn Village: *Mixed Use Center at Edge of Rural Hamlet*

*Location:* Rockfish Gap Tpk. (US Rt. 250), Crozet, VA

*Developers:* Preston Stallings, Keswick VA and Josh Goldschmidt, Fluvanna Land and Development

*Site Designer:* Jim Taggart PE and Steve VonStorch AIA

*Development Period:* 2000 to 2004

Occupying a 6.8-acre site ten miles west of Charlottesville, along the state highway skirting the southern edge of the small hamlet of Crozet -- established as a whistle stop on the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad in 1876 (and named for a French-born civil engineer who designed a 17-mile long railroad tunnel through the Blue Ridge Mountains) -- this mixed use development combines 32,000 sq. ft. of retail and office space with 24 townhomes (in eight blocks of three-family buildings), known as Liberty Hall.

Because they are not vertically integrated, and because the commercial component runs parallel to the highway, the residential section experiences less traffic noise and is therefore quieter than if the living units had been stacked above the shops, as recommended in many “smart codes”. The residential uses, which were begun first, also provide a logical transition to the pre-existing residential development behind the property. The center unit of each three-family building meets criteria for affordability, a concern of both the developer and the county.

In the two-story commercial buildings in front, known as Four Leaf Lane, first-floor tenants include a tea house restaurant, an American grill, a Mediterranean grill, a pizza parlor, a florist, a credit union, a haircutting salon, a fitness center, a financial planner, and foundation offices. Upstairs are professional offices where tenants include a dentist, an optometrist, a women’s health specialist, a chiropractor, and a teachers’ association office. As with other projects reported on in this section, second floor rentals tend to be longer-term than the retail and restaurant uses below, and provide an economic buffer to balance the greater tenant turnover below. Adding a the second floor is often very cost-effective for developers, since it does not require additional foundation or roof costs.



Columned porticos, gables, hipped roofs, and cupolas are among the architectural features distinguishing this property from other uses along this highway. Although most of the parking is located behind the two-story commercial blocks, some is provided in front, for customer convenience.

In the center of the residential area is a half-acre green space consisting of a playground with slides and swings, plus a small grassy playing field for youth soccer and informal ball games, playing catch, etc. Each

unit has its own private, enclosed, fenced-in back yard that adjoins open space, through which a paved footpath winds and connects the units to the common recreational areas and to the commercial uses in front.

Both the rezoning and special use permit processes were discretionary, and the process was long and partly because the developer provided insufficient information in his initial proposal. Secondly, the Land Use Plan for Crozet recommended only a small amount of commercial development in the area proposed for the rezoning and special use permit. That area shown as commercial on the Land Use Plan represented only the area already containing commercial zoning. The rest of the area was shown for residential development. There were many residents of Crozet who believed that additional commercial development on Rt. 250 West would take away from redevelopment of the downtown business district, which was another goal supported by the Land Use Plan. Third, there was an adjoining property owner who wanted to make sure that his opportunities for future development of his property were not going to be limited by consolidating entrances along Rt. 250 West.

In addition, some members of the Rt. 250 West Task Force opposed expansion of commercial development along the highway because of goals to retain the rural appearance along that scenic corridor, even though such uses had been traditionally allowed, such as two commercial properties opposite had already been either constructed (a building supply facility) or approved (a shopping center with large grocery). As a result, the review process took longer and presented more challenges than expected.



The residential units are situated behind the rear parking lot serving the two-story commercial buildings facing US Route 250. They are shown in yellow in Figure 3, below.

Staff recommended that the applicant consolidate both parcels and propose a single mixed-use development with a detailed plan. For these reasons, one might have expected that the rezoning would not have been too controversial. The acreage zoned as Highway Commercial, where 40,000 sq. ft. of retail (or 60,000 sq. ft. of mini-storage units) could be built by right was the site of a former filling station, which later became a basket shop called Clover Lawn, and was vacant for many years prior to the rezoning application.

The residential component of the rezoning (which required a special use permit) was also difficult due to opposition from Crozet residents who preferred low density development over the recommendations in the County's Land Use Plan for density at 3 to 6 dwellings per acre. Architect-designed elevations for townhomes to replace an old house and an unattractive cinder block structure used to house migrant workers on a seasonal basis

failed to persuade the neighbors. A drive connects the rear parking lot with the principal street leading to the subdivisions behind Clover Lawn Village so that townhouse residents do not have to enter and exit *via* the main entrance to the commercial area in front.



The above aerial photo shows how the residential component is located behind the commercial blocks, which screen them from US Route 250. A central open space, forming a terminal vista from the highway entrance, is enclosed by two rows of attached homes. Note the residential access via Radford Road, serving an adjacent subdivision to the west.

It is believed that the Board of Supervisors ultimately approved the rezoning for several reasons: it limited the commercial development available to an equivalent area already zoned commercially, it provided for residential density in accordance with the County's Land Use Plan, a detailed plan of development was provided, and the applicant committed to architectural designs in keeping with the county's preferences. In addition, several separate potential highway entrances allowed under the pre-existing zoning were combined into a single entry point. Together with the building supply facility and the shopping center across the street, Clover Lawn Village rounds out a mixed-use node along this two-lane highway where the predominant rural land use pattern is planned to continue along other stretches.