



City of Mechanicville

Central Avenue Corridor Linkage Study

06/03/09

Prepared for:
City of Mechanicville and
Capital District Transportation Committee

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This City of Mechanicville Central Corridors Linkage Study was funded by the Capital District Transportation Committee's Linkage Program 2008.



I. Introduction

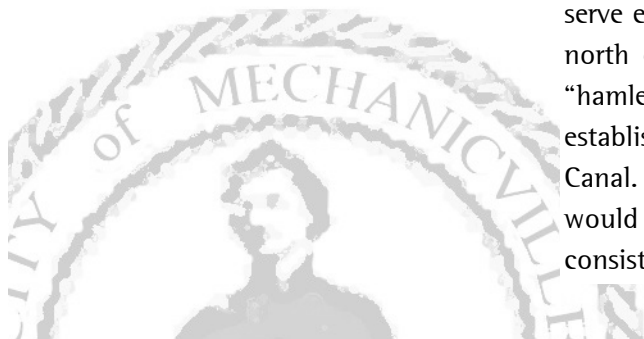
A. *Project Purpose*

The City of Mechanicville has recently engaged in a wide-ranging revitalization and planning effort, with a variety of initiatives intended to address specific issues facing the community. These initiatives include a Waterfront and Downtown Revitalization Plan, Architectural Façade Improvement Program, and the work of the Downtown Revitalization Grants Committee. Additionally, the City has pursued many regional partnerships, including taking part in the Greenway program and the Saratoga-Washington on the Hudson Partnership.

In this vein, the City has collaborated with the Capital District Transportation Committee to prepare this Linkage Study, focused on the Central Avenue corridor. The Linkage Study Program provides an opportunity for communities to take a focused look at the interaction of land use and transportation within a certain area. This study will result in a comprehensive set of physical and policy recommendations which the City can pursue, with the goal of improving this important corridor.

Mechanicville is located just a few minutes drive from the Luther Forest Technology Park, home to the \$4 billion dollar Global Foundries plant scheduled to begin construction shortly. Due to the jobs being created at the new plant and spin off support industries, significant increases in population and the resultant development is anticipated. Furthermore, Central Avenue is the direct connection between Luther Forest and Troy (home of RPI) so significant traffic generation is anticipated between the two regions.

Additionally, during the course of this study a local developer unveiled what will become the community's largest economic development project in more than a century and the first that would serve employees of Global Foundries. This new project is located just north of the study area and will consist of a 283,700- square-foot "hamlet" of residential, retail, entertainment and recreation establishments along the Hudson at Lock 3 of the state's Champlain Canal. The sprawling, mostly-pedestrian complex of seven structures would be built on eleven acres of the former Westvaco paper mill and consists of 179 residential units, including "penthouses" with roof-



top gardens, a canopied-arcade and river walk, and anticipated dockage for boats.

As development in the Capital Region continues, Mechanicville is looking to leverage its assets, such as plentiful housing stock, charming downtown, easy access to Route 87, and waterfront location. This Linkage Study will assist the City to set feasible goals to improve the Central Avenue corridor. In turn, the improvements to this area will contribute to the greater revitalization efforts being implemented throughout the City.

B. Study Area Description

The Study Area, shown in Figure 1, is located around the northern portion of Central Avenue. As a transportation corridor, Central Avenue is important in both a historic and contemporary sense. Although Central Avenue is currently one of the most heavily traveled vehicle routes in the City, Central Avenue was once a rail- and canal-oriented transportation corridor. In fact, portions of Central Avenue are located along the old Champlain Canal alignment, which was filled in to accommodate vehicle traffic. Today, it is estimated that almost 18,000 passenger cars per day travel along Central Avenue.

The study area encompasses an area between the intersection of Central Avenue and Route 67 in the north through the intersection of Central and Mabbett/Hill Streets to the South. The intersection of North Main and Routes 67 and 4 was included in the study area as well. The section of Central Avenue located between Route 67 and Mabbett/Hill represents the link to downtown and waterfront, civic services, two shopping centers, and regional bike and pedestrian trails.

Within the study area, Central Avenue runs north-south for approximately 1/3 of a mile. Central Avenue is intersected by several east-west cross streets, including Saratoga Avenue, Cypress Street, William Street, Frances Street, Burke Street, and Mabbett/Hill Street. Central Avenue also travels over the Tenendaho Creek, also known as the Anthony Kill.

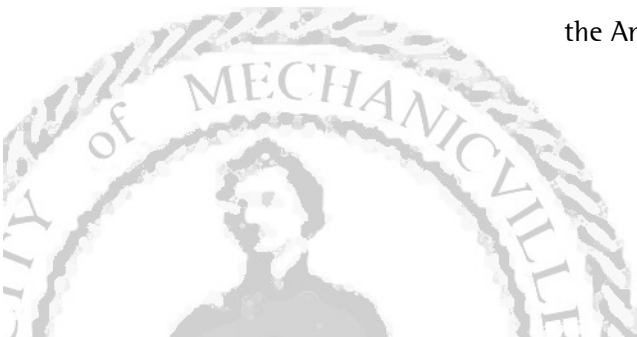


Figure 1:
Study Area Boundary

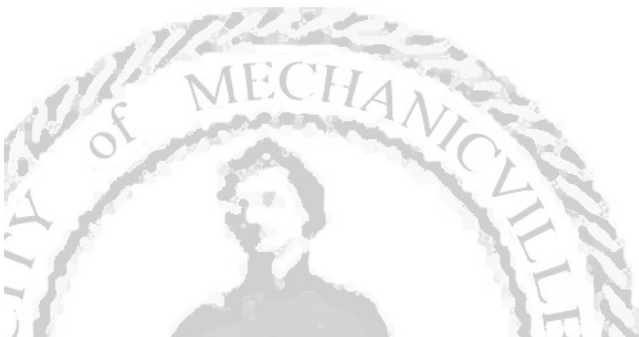


II. Assessment of Existing Conditions

As part of the Linkage Study, a broad inventory and analysis of the study area was undertaken. The purpose of this process was to provide an understanding of the existing conditions in and around Central Avenue which might contribute to the physical re-development of the area. Specifically, the following elements were examined:

- Land Use
- Roadway Conditions
- Traffic Analysis
- Pedestrian Features
- Streetscape Amenities
- Historic and Cultural Amenities
- Public Transit
- Zoning
- Environmental Features

These topic areas are discussed in greater detail below.



A. Land Use

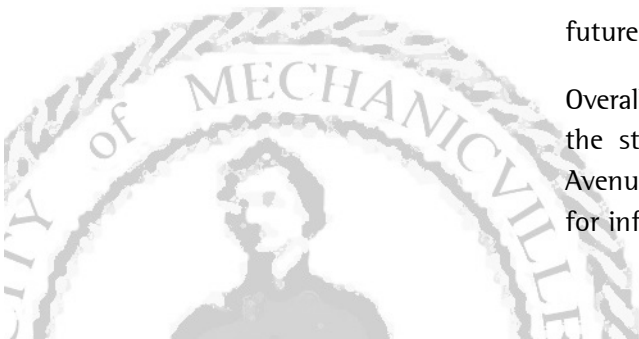
As shown in Figure 2, there are a variety of land uses within the study area. The commercial uses in the corridor include a combination of small, neighborhood-scale businesses such as delis, realtors, and offices, and larger retail operations, such as Rite-Aid, Country Living Center, and DiSiena Furniture. These landmark stores draw customers to the area, which can help other businesses that might benefit from the additional traffic.

As might be expected given the high volume of traffic passing through the area on a daily basis, the study area is vehicle oriented. Large commercial properties and their associated parking lots dominate the study area visually and functionally. There are few vacant parcels within the study area; however, there are a number of commercial properties with small buildings (as compared to the lot size), leaving the impression of vacancy and creating the opportunity for infill development.

Adjacent to Central Avenue on the intersecting side streets are strong residential neighborhoods including those along Burke, James, Williams and Saratoga Streets. There are limited residential properties facing Central Avenue, though most appear to be located in converted commercial structures or apartment building(s).

Though there are significant areas of the study area zoned for industrial use, the only industry observed is the NYSEG substation. The Verizon building on the east side of Central Avenue, between Frances and Hill Streets, is also classified as Industrial according to the assessor. Several prominent commercial properties are currently in use as warehousing, which may not be the most beneficial use in this area for the future of Mechanicville.

Overall, while there is significant commercial activity within the study area, a number of the properties along Central Avenue appear to be underutilized and/or have opportunities for infill development or redevelopment.



**Figure 2 –
Existing Land Use**

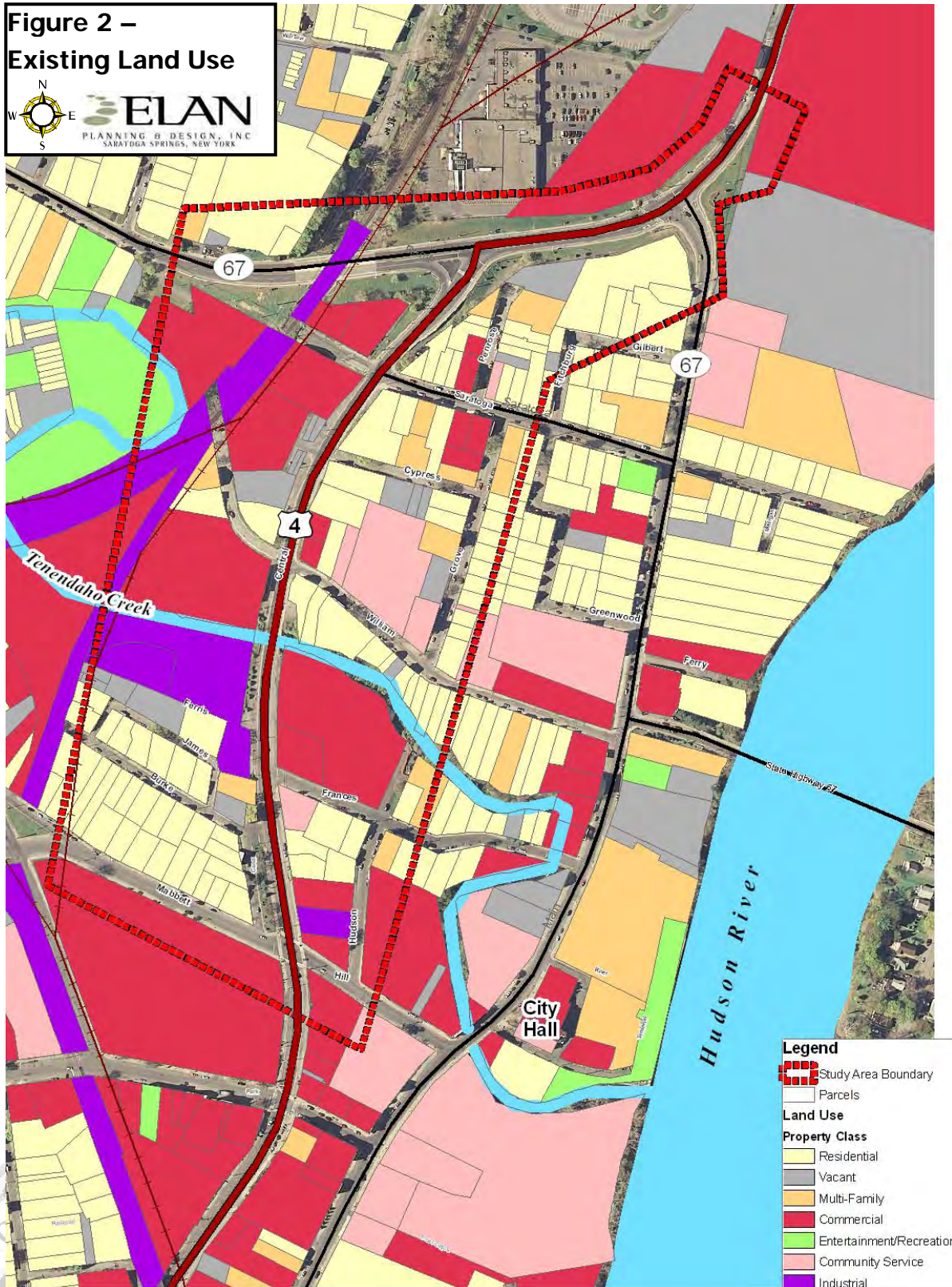




Figure 3 –looking south near intersection of Saratoga Ave.



Figure 4 – looking south near Country Living Center

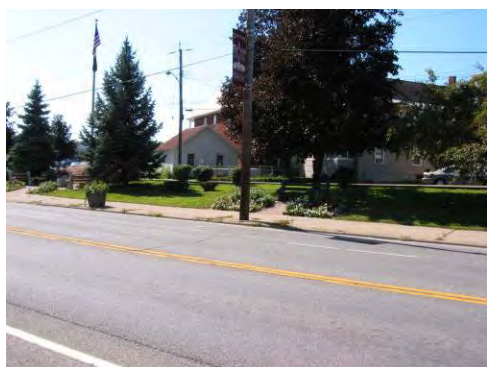


Figure 5 – Patenaude Park

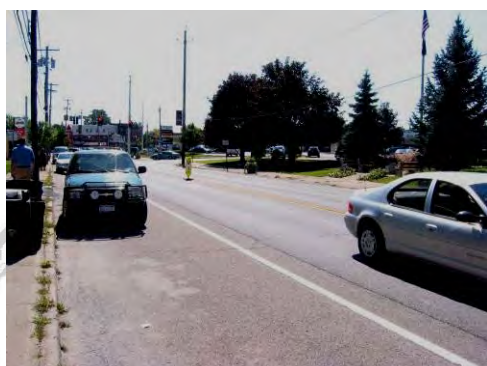


Figure 6 – looking south near Public Safety building

B. Roadway Characteristics

The Central Avenue roadway varies throughout the study area in terms of pavement width, number of travel lanes, and availability of on-street parking. The northern portion of the roadway is two lanes, with no on-street parking. South of Frances Street, the roadway widens to three lanes; two south-bound and one north bound. There is on-street parking in this section, south to the study area boundary. The pavement and right-of-way widths are summarized in Table 1.

The condition of the roadway itself also varies. In the northern section, especially along the old Champlain Canal alignment, the pavement is quite bumpy and in need of significant repair. The placement of curbs is also inconsistent, with many stretches of roadway having gravel shoulders instead of curbs. In addition, the condition of existing curbing varies widely.

Access management principles are also inconsistently applied throughout the Central Avenue corridor. In general, existing entrance and exit driveways are excessively wide, often spanning the entire frontage of the parcel with no curbing or striping to delineate travel ways.

Route 4 – North Central Avenue: The study area includes Central Avenue between Route 67 to the north and Mabbett/Hill Streets to the south. Both ends of the study area have signalized intersections. Along the northern portion of the corridor, there are several areas where there are no curbs or where there are large open driveway cuts with parking lots immediately adjacent to the roadway (See Figures 3 and 4). The southern end of the study area has well defined sidewalks and curbs, on street parking, and other important features such Patenaude Park (See Figures 5 and 6).

Mabbett Street/Hill Street: These cross streets provide important connections from the neighborhoods on the east side of North Central Avenue to the downtown and waterfront areas. Mabbett Street is also the historic link between the downtown area and the train station. (See Figures 7 and 8)



Figure 7 – Hill Street



Figure 8 – Mabbett Street



Figure 9 – Frances Street Intersection



Figure 10 – Williams Street

Canal/Burke/James/Ferris Streets – These neighborhood streets serve the residential areas on the west side of Central Avenue. These streets are generally narrow, with curbs and sidewalks on both sides of the street. On-street parking is also generally allowed. The intersection of Burke and Central Avenue is almost 55' wide, which is excessive to accommodate the turning radius needed from Central Avenue. The Canal Street intersection with Mabbett Street is also located very close to the intersection of Mabbett/Hill and Central Avenue. As Canal Street is one way only, this may have a detrimental effect on the traffic flow near this large intersection.

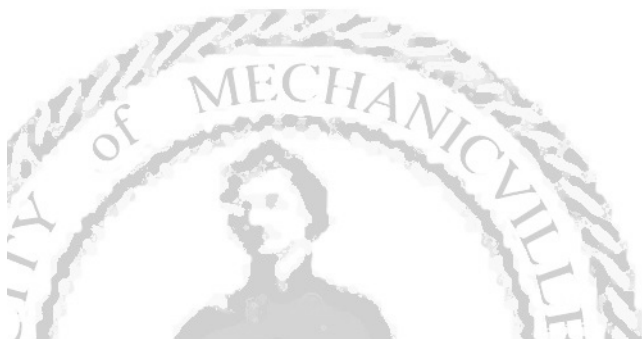
Frances Street – The intersection of Frances and Central is poorly defined, due to poor access management and a lack of buildings located at the corner (See Figure 9). The vacant gas station and large parking lots associated with DiSiena's, as well as the parking lot for the John Ahearn Rescue Squad building give this area the "sea of asphalt" feel. On the easterly edge of the study area Frances enters into a well defined residential neighborhood before joining Main Street and is an important vehicular and pedestrian connection between the two areas.

Williams Street – On the west side of Central, Williams Street terminates at the railroad tracks and functions as a local service road to a number of businesses and multi-family buildings. (See Figure 10) Williams Street also serves as an informal but important pedestrian link over the tracks to the neighborhoods beyond. On the east side of Central, Williams connects to the downtown area, through an attractive residential neighborhood.

Cypress Street leads east through a well established residential neighborhood. Cypress provides no direct connection to the business district on Main Street.

Saratoga Avenue – Once a main corridor leading to and from downtown, Saratoga Avenue was bypassed by the Route 67 bridge. East of Central Avenue, Saratoga Avenue leads through an established neighborhood of multi-story buildings, many with very interesting architecture. On the west side of Central, Saratoga is a short dead-end street

serving three businesses and ending at the railroad tracks. The terminus of Saratoga Avenue provides an informal but important pedestrian connection between Central Avenue and the residential areas west of the tracks. This pedestrian route is also the most direct connection to the park along the Tenendaho Creek.



C. Traffic Analysis

To gain a better understanding of the function of Central Avenue and Route 67, a broad analysis of traffic conditions was conducted. This was intended to reveal any deficiencies in the condition of the roadway and intersections, as well as highlight any locations in which traffic flows and crashes pose a problem for the community.

From this analysis, several conclusions can be noted. First, the level of service is generally acceptable on Central Avenue, with no major traffic flow problems. However, the high crash rate at the intersection of Central and Saratoga indicates an issue which needs to be addressed. It appears that there are an elevated number of incidents associated with southbound cars attempting to turn left on to Saratoga Avenue. This is probably exacerbated by the geometry and proximity of the intersections at Central and Route 67 and Central and Saratoga Avenue. There is limited visibility for eastbound vehicles turning right on to Central Avenue, due to the topography of the intersection, which may not allow enough time for drivers to react to a vehicle waiting to turn left on to Saratoga Avenue. This is contributing to a crash rate significantly higher than the statewide average. These findings are summarized in Tables 1 and 2 below.

In addition to the traffic analysis, several public meetings were held to discuss this project. At these meetings, residents and business owners relayed anecdotes about their own experiences walking and driving the Central Avenue corridor. Specific issues that arose repeatedly included:

- The need to accommodate northbound traffic turning right on to Route 67. Residents reported long delays at the traffic light, which causes queues to back up past Saratoga Avenue during the peak hour.
- The need to make the intersection of North Main and Route 67 easier to traverse. Since the intersection is offset, it appears to be difficult for drivers to perceive who has the right-of-way when traveling through the intersection.

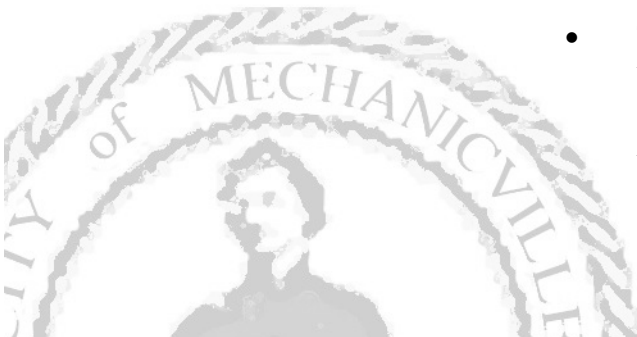


Table 1: Central Avenue Roadway Network: Existing Conditions							
	<i>NY 67</i>	<i>Central Ave (Route 4/32)</i>	<i>Saratoga Ave.</i>	<i>Williams St.</i>	<i>Frances St.</i>	<i>Mabbett St.</i>	<i>Hill St.</i>
Functional Class	Urban Minor Arterial	Urban Minor Arterial	Local Road	Local Road	Local Road	Local Road	Local Road
Geometry	2-way, 2 lanes 48' pvmt. 60'-100' ROW	2-way, 2-3 lanes 36'-46' pvmt. 60'-120' ROW	2-way, 2 lanes 34' pvmt. 68' ROW	1-way, 1 lane 18' pvmt. 45' ROW	2-way, 2 lanes 30' pvmt. 40' ROW	2-way, 2 lanes 40' pvmt. 55' ROW	2-way, 2 lanes 36' pvmt. 50' ROW
Site Access	Curb Cut	Curb Cut, Dropped Curb	Dropped Curb	Dropped Curb	Dropped Curb	Dropped Curb	Dropped Curb
On-Street Parking	None	South of Frances St., east side	Both Sides	South side	One side, alternating	Both Sides	Both Sides
Ped/Bike Facilities	5' Sidewalks both sides	5' sidewalks, one or both sides	6-8' sidewalks, both sides	5' sidewalks, both sides	5' sidewalks, both sides	5'-6' sidewalks, both sides	5'-6' sidewalks, both sides
Bus Service	W Loop	R, S, W loops	W loop	none	R Loop	H, R, S, W loops	H Loop
Notable Features	none	Discontinuous sidewalk on both sides	Narrow pvmt. Width for on-street parking on both sides	Narrow pvmt. Width for on-street parking on one sides	No sidewalk on north side from Central to Hudson St.	No curb drops @ Rite-Aid entrance	No curb drops @ Hudson St., N. Main St.
Level of Service¹	C	C	NAC	NAC	NAC	NAC	NAC
Traffic Volume²	W of Olap: 6,530 (590)	N of Olap: 7,670 (645) Olap: 14,760 (1,270) S of Olap: 15,820 (1,215)	NDA	NDA	NDA	NDA	NDA
Crashes and Severity³	1 PDO	4 PI, 8 PDO	1 PDO	2 PDO	1 PDO	3 PDO	None Reported
Crash Types⁴	RE	7 RE, 1 RA, 1 OT, 1 SS, 2 OTH	RE	1 RE, 1 FO	RE	1 RE, 1 OT, 1 SS	N/A
Crash Rate⁵	1.27 (1.55)	1.40 (1.55)	NAC	NAC	NAC	NAC	NAC

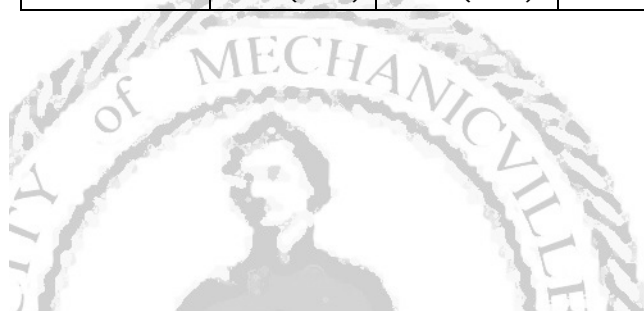


Table 2: Central Avenue Intersections: Existing Conditions

	<i>Central/N. Main</i>	<i>Central/ NY67</i>	<i>Central/ Saratoga</i>	<i>Central/ Williams</i>	<i>Central/ Frances</i>	<i>Central/ Mabbett & Hill</i>
Geometry	4 legs w/turn lanes	3 legs w/turn lanes	4 legs	4 legs	3 legs	4 legs, 2 lanes NB, SB approaches
Ped/Bike Facilities	Curb drops, 2 ped buttons, 2 striped Xwalks	Curb drops, 2 striped Xwalks	Curb drops, no Xwalk striping	Curb drops, no Xwalk striping	Curb drops, no Xwalk striping	Curb drops, 4 ped buttons, 3 striped Xwalks
Notable Features	Curb drops behind stop bars	2 Xwalks behind stop bars	No curb drop @SW corner	None	None	Grate located in striped Xwalk, SB approach
Traffic Control	Traffic signal	Traffic signal	Stop signs	Stop signs	Stop signs	Traffic signal
Level of Service¹	A	B	NAC	NAC	NAC	B
Traffic Volume²	17,150 (1,460)	18,020 (1,520)	NDA	NDA	NDA	18,830 (1,540)
Crashes and Severity³	None reported	2 PI, 6 PDO	5 PI, 5 PDO	1 PO	1 PI	2 PI, 8 PDO
Crash Types⁴	N/A	5 RE, 2 LT, 1 FO	5 RE, 3 LT, 2 FO	OTH	RE	6 RE, 1 RA, 1 HO, 1 OT, (1 PED)
Crash Rate⁵	0.00 (0.28)	0.41 (0.19)	NAC	NAC	NAC	0.48 (0.36)

Legend:

Pvmt. = pavement width; ROW = right-of-way; Xwalk = crosswalk; NAC = No Analysis Conducted; NDA = No Data Available

1 - Peak hour LOS; 6 letter categories (A-F); LOS D or better is generally acceptable

2 - AADT (Peak Hour); Traffic volumes at intersections represent entering vehicles

3 - Crash Severity: F = Fatality, PI = Personal Injury, PDO = Property Damage Only

4 - Crash Types: RE = Rear End, RA = Right Angle, LT = Left Turn, OT = Overtake, SS = Sideswipe, FO = Fixed Object, PED = Pedestrian, OTH = Other

5 - Calculated Rate (Statewide Average Rate); roads = crashes/million vehicle-miles; intersections = crashed/millions entering vehicles

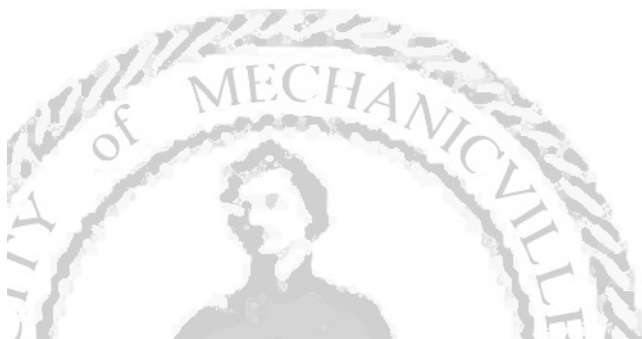




Figure 11 – Lack of sidewalk on Central Ave.



Figure 12 – Curb drop on Route 46&32 has no corresponding crosswalk or curb drop on other side of road.



Figure 13 – Sidewalks not accessible per ADA standards

D. Pedestrian/Bicycle Features and Transit

Mechanicville is a compact city, and many pedestrians walk and bike throughout the area. As such, a detailed examination of the pedestrian features was conducted, including sidewalks, crosswalks, and curb drops within the corridor. As the photographs illustrate, pedestrian infrastructure in the study area is varied. In certain areas, pedestrian infrastructure such as sidewalks and crosswalks already exist. The location of these is noted in Tables 1 and 2, as well as Figure 16.

Sidewalks: In general, the sidewalks are adequate along the side streets along Central Avenue. However, Central Avenue itself has limited to no pedestrian infrastructure. Where there are sidewalks, they are in disrepair and not particularly well defined from the adjacent busy roadway, parking areas, or driveways. Also observed was that many areas had very distinct angles towards the roadway, which made walking on them difficult, and would make use by a wheelchair nearly impossible. In several areas, there are no sidewalks at all (Figure 11), or the sidewalks are not accessible according to current Americans with Disabilities Act standards (Figure 13).

Crosswalks and Intersections: Throughout the study area, crosswalks are poorly marked or missing. The intersection of North Main and Route 67 has several significant pedestrian deficiencies (see Figure 12). Although there are two pedestrian signal buttons, there is no countdown timer or other indication of when it is safe to cross the street. The pavement is also very wide in this location, and the crosswalks are not perpendicular, which increases the length for pedestrians to cross the street even further. Given that this intersection is used by many of seniors to access Price Chopper, these issues should be addressed.

In the case of the intersection of Route 67 and Central Avenue, the location of the crosswalk is behind the stop bar, forcing pedestrians to walk between stopped cars in order to traverse the intersection. This is a very dangerous situation, especially given the lack of pedestrian signalization.



Figure 14 – Pedestrian waiting at unofficial railroad crossing

The intersection of Central and Mabbett/Hill Streets also poses some difficulties for pedestrians, due to the lack of perpendicular sidewalks and adequate sightlines. Again, pedestrians are forced to walk further to cross the street than is necessary, especially at the northern corner of Central Avenue. There are pedestrian signal buttons at this intersection, but there are no countdown timers or other indications of when it is safe to cross.

Railroad Crossing: The construction of the Saratoga Avenue Bridge and bypass appears to have largely cut off the neighborhoods to the Northeast of the study area. Due to the location of the roadway, the railroad, and the Tenendaho Creek, there is no direct pedestrian link to North Central Avenue or into the Downtown Area. To access this area from the adjacent neighborhoods, pedestrians or bicyclists must now travel over the bridge along a very busy roadway and then cross at one of the two major intersections on Saratoga Avenue, or more likely, “jump the tracks” to take a short cut between the neighborhoods (see Figure 14).

Bicycle Facilities: There are no dedicated bike lanes or special amenities along Central Avenue for cyclists. Although it is possible to ride a bicycle along Central Avenue by sharing the lane with vehicles, this option is undesirable. Pavement along the shoulders is often broken, or the shoulders are too narrow to allow vehicles to pass cyclists safely. In addition, a lack of access management makes it difficult for cyclists to anticipate where vehicles are likely to travel, which can lead to cycle/vehicle conflicts.

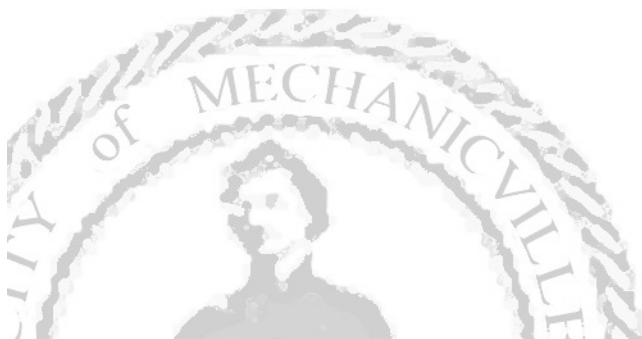


Figure 15 – City bus

Transit: Public transit options in the study area are limited. Local transit is provided by the City bus system, which operates essentially on an on-call basis. Regional transit had been provided by the Northway Xpress service through the Capital District Transit Authority, which had two stops per day at a park-and-ride at the McDonalds within the study area. However, the park-and-ride has recently been de-authorized by the property owner, forcing commuters wishing to use the NX service to park elsewhere.

In terms of local transit, the local bus service has four routes (see Figure 16). However, the day-to-day service functions on

an informal, on-call basis, in which bus riders may call City Hall to request a route deviation. This allows many residents, particularly seniors, to catch the bus closer to their home. The on-call service functions well currently and is a testament to the small-town character that residents prize so highly.



**Figure 16 –
Pedestrian Features and
Transit Routes**

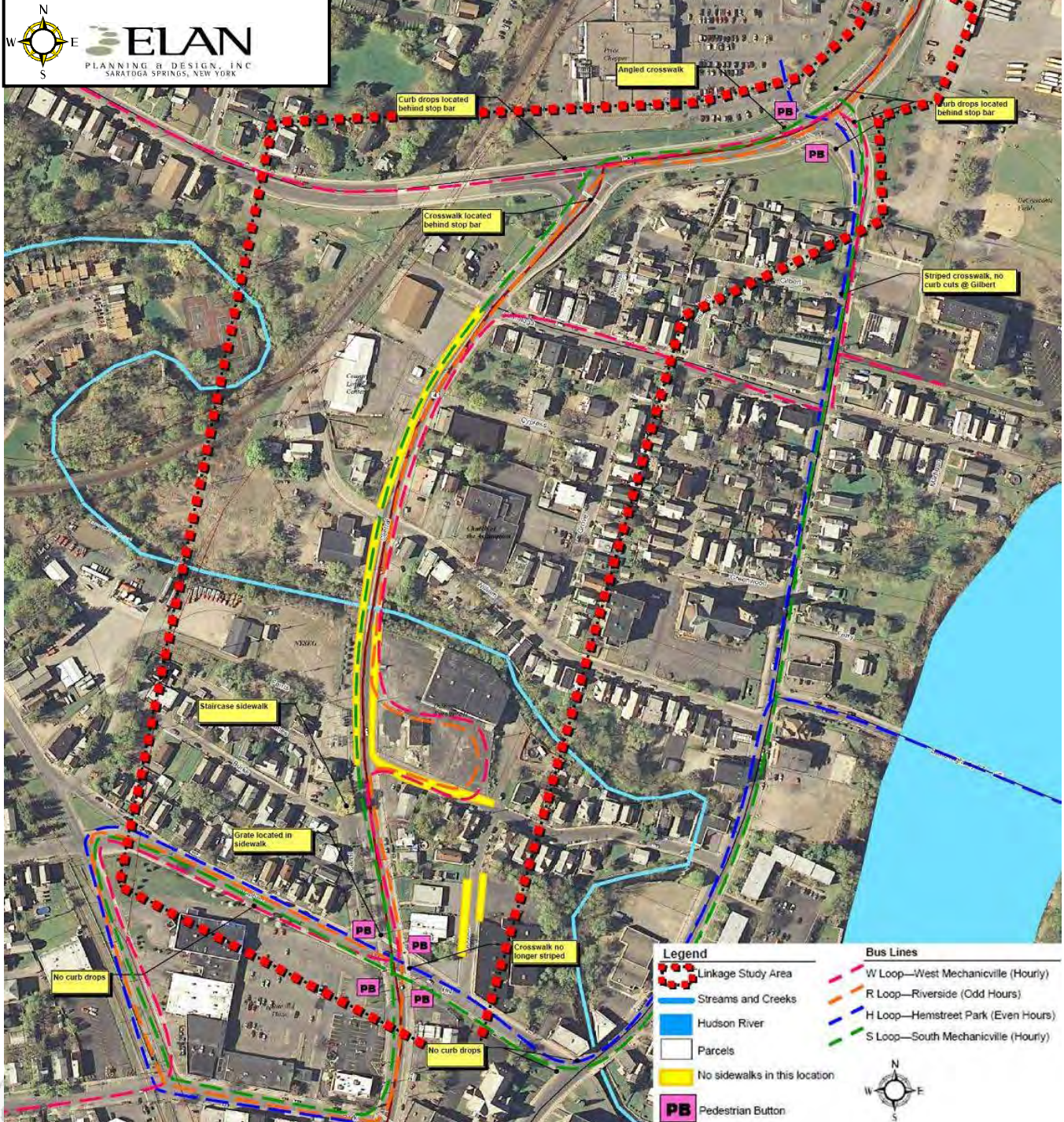




Figure 17– Landscape planters too small to be effective



Figure18 – Fencing at Tenendaho Creek bridge



Figure 19 – Landscaping near Patenaude Park.

E. Streetscape Amenities

Streetscape amenities include features such as street trees, benches, pedestrian lights, decorative planters or banners, and fences. Elements such as these contribute to the character and aesthetics of the public street. Within the study area, these amenities are distributed sporadically. Near the northern portions of the study area, amenities include decorative banners along Route 67, and small “whiskey barrel” style planters at the intersections of North Main and Route 67 and Central and Route 67. While this represents an ambitious effort at community beautification, these amenities are too small to be effective in the vehicle-oriented intersections (See Figure 17).

In the central portion of the study area, roughly between Saratoga Avenue and Frances Street, there are few or no amenities. There is a chain link enclosure around the substation, and steel guard rails at the crossing of the Tenendaho Creek (See Figure 18). However, these features are purely functional and detract from the visual character of the streetscape.

South of Frances Street, the streetscape is highlighted by decorative planters and banners. In addition, Patenaude Park, located between Canal Street and Central Avenue, features benches and landscape plantings, which add significantly to the character of this portion of the streetscape. (See Figure 19)



Figure 20– Historical Sign for Canal Square



Figure 21– Saratoga Avenue

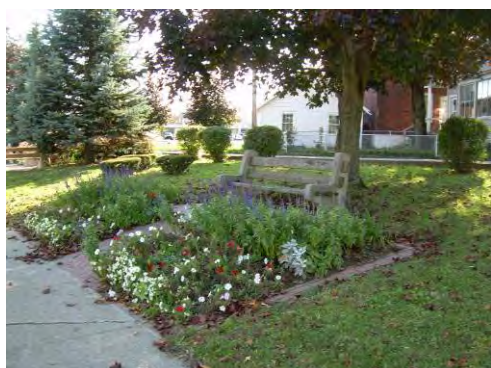


Figure 22 – Patenaude Park



Figure 23 – Hill Street view

F. Historic and Cultural Features

Mechanicville is a city rich in historic resources and cultural amenities. However, the role that these resources play in the study area is not as strong as in other parts of the community. This is due in part to the history of Central Avenue itself. Portions of the street run along the old Champlain Canal alignment, which was developed less densely than a traditional urban roadway. In addition, more recent development, such as the reconstruction of Route 67, and the construction of larger-scale retail operations such as Price Chopper, the old Grand Union (now DiSiena's Furniture) and the Rite-Aid plaza have disrupted much of the historic development patterns. Due to these factors, the number of historic and cultural features in the study area is limited. Existing structures and features of interest include:

Mewton's Hydraulics Building: (See Figure 20) Although the structure itself has deteriorated, the building retains the character and charm of the City's industrial heyday. This building has the potential to become a landmark in the district if it can be salvaged. The building is also located adjacent to a historic marker for Canal Square, which commemorates the mills and saloon once located on the site.

Saratoga Avenue: (See Figure 21). The portion of Saratoga Avenue nearest to Central Avenue is densely developed, with residential and mixed-use structures built quite close to the roadway. Many of the buildings have been altered, particularly by enclosing porches, but some structures retain a high level of historic integrity, such as the old fire house.

Patenaude Park: (See Figure 22). This small, linear park, located between Canal Street and Central Avenue, contains benches, landscape plantings, and a memorial to Harold Patenaude.

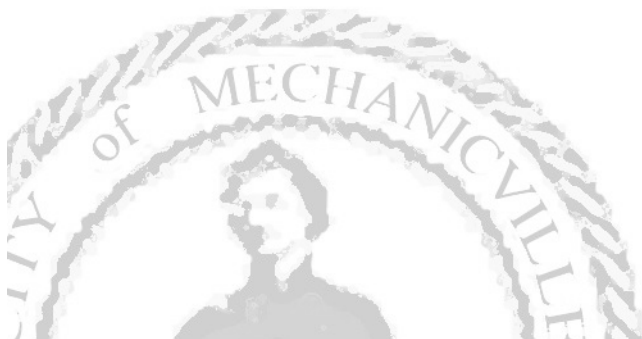
View from Hill Street Intersection: (See Figure 23). During many of the public meetings held for the Downtown Grants Program, Waterfront and Downtown Revitalization Plan, and Linkage Study, residents expressed an appreciation for the view looking downhill from the intersection of Mabbett/Hill and Central Avenue, which affords a view to the Hudson River.

G. Zoning

As can be seen in Figure 24, there are five zoning districts within the Study Area boundary. These include Waterfront Mixed Use, Light Industrial, General Commercial, Residential, and Heavy Industrial. The allowed uses of each zoning district found in the study area are listed in Table 3 below.

Mechanicville's zoning was written in 1968 and has not been comprehensively updated since that time. However, several individual zoning changes have taken place in a piecemeal fashion. Most recently, the City changed the zoning for the Esplanade project, located at the northern boundary of the study area. This zoning change, which was recommended in the Waterfront and Downtown Revitalization Plan recently adopted by the City, amended the zoning from Heavy Industrial to Waterfront Mixed Use.

In addition to individual changes such as these, New York State Law has also changed significantly in the decades since the zoning was adopted; as a result, some provisions in Mechanicville's code are out of compliance with State Law. Most importantly, a disorganized and confusing ordinance can pose a hindrance to development. Although the City has always taken a flexible, common-sense approach to development approvals, there are ways that Mechanicville can both strengthen and streamline its zoning processes which will make it easier for developers to know exactly what is expected before proposing a project.



**Figure 24 –
Existing Zoning**

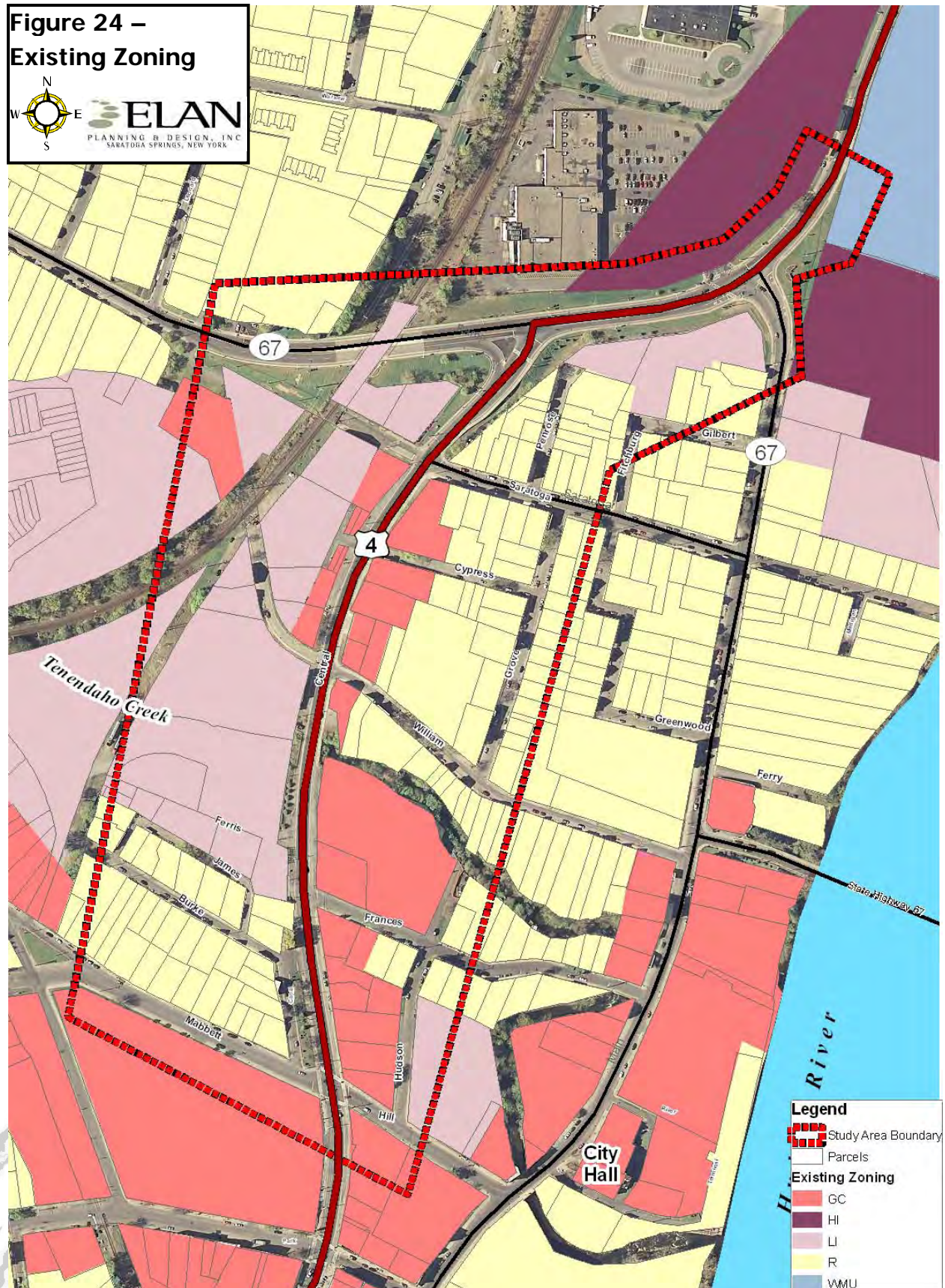


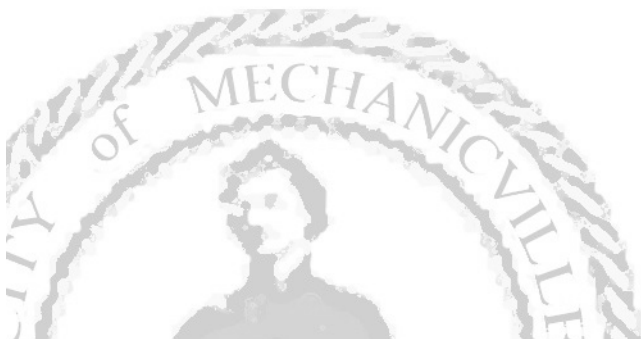
Table 3: Zoning Districts

Zone	Allowed Uses		Special Use Permit Uses	
R	One- and two-family dwellings Public school and Private school Park and recreation facility Municipal operated facility	Church; Rectory, convent, and similar religious building Private non-profit facility Agriculture and gardening (excluding sale of products on-site)	Farmstand Utility substation Membership club Nursery school Hospital Real estate office Cemetery	Multi-family dwellings Nursing home Museum Art gallery Public library Funeral home Mobile home
GC	One- and two-family dwellings Public school and Private school Park and recreation facility Municipal operated facility Church; Rectory, convent, and similar religious building Private non-profit facility Agriculture and gardening (excluding sale of products on-site) Retail Store Professional, banking, or business office	Eating and drinking establishments Personal service establishments Utility substation Veterinary hospital Parking lot Gas station Automotive sales and service Business school Funeral home Commercial recreation facility Membership club Motel/Hotel	Two-family dwelling Multi-family dwellings Dry cleaning and Laundromat Hospital Nursing home Nursery school Cemetery Open storage area Fuel storage area	
LI	Industrial and manufacturing uses including construction, assembly, packaging, and warehousing operations	Uses permitted in commercial zones, excluding residential uses Railroad uses Truck terminals Warehousing	Junkyard	
HI	All uses not otherwise prohibited, excluding residential uses Junkyards Auto wrecking yards Scrap iron, paper, or rag storage, sorting, or baling		Manufacture of: Acid; Alcohol; Ammonia bleaching powder, or chlorine; Animal black, lampblack, or bone black; Carbon; Celluloid; Fertilizer; Glucose; Glue, size, or gelatin; Insecticide Abattoir Acetylene gas manufacture or storage Ammunition, explosives, fireworks, or gunpowder manufacture or storage Bone distillation Coal distillation	Coke ovens Dead animal or offal reduction Fat rendering Hog farm Pickles, sauerkraut or vinegar processing Reduction, canning, processing or treatment of fish products Smelting of tin, copper, zinc, or iron ores Stockyards Stone quarry, mill, or crusher Tar distillation or manufacture Yeast plant

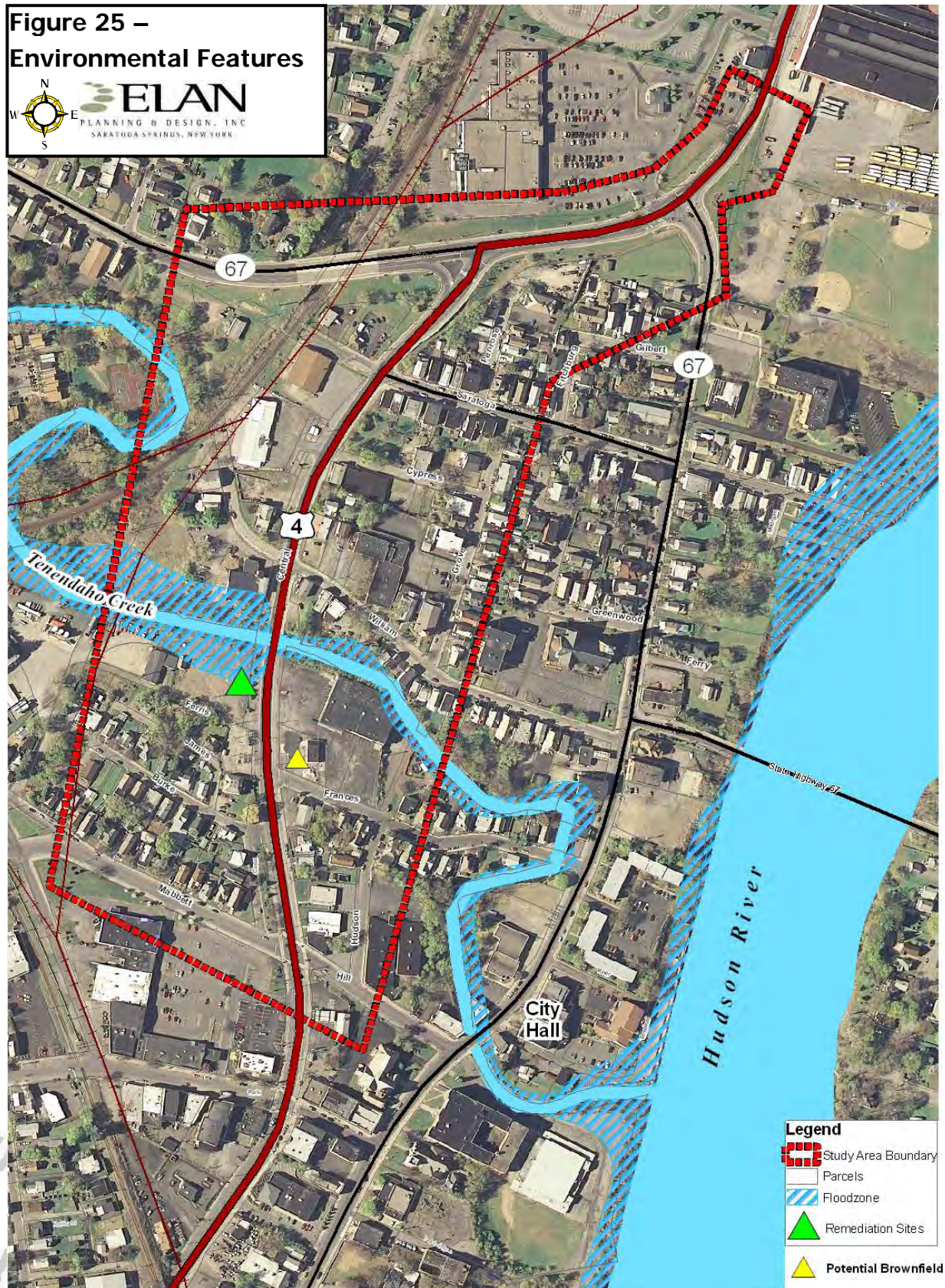
H. Environmental Features

The Central Avenue corridor is located within an urbanized area. As such, there are few environmental features located within the study area (See Figure 25). The most important feature is Tenendaho Creek, also known locally as the Anthony Kill. This Class C stream runs under Central Avenue and empties into the Hudson River to the west. There is a narrow 100-year floodplain associated with the creek as well. The banks of the creek are heavily vegetated with trees and scrub vegetation. The creek is a recreational waterway, and is used throughout the year by the community and by kayakers, including for popular events such as the “duck derby”.

In addition to the natural features within the study area, there are two known or suspected contaminated sites. One site, adjacent to the NYSEG substation on the west side of Central Ave, is being remediated currently. This site was once the location of a Manufactured Gas Plant, which released coal tar into the environment. The remediation plan which was approved by the NYSDEC involves the removal of 10,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil from the site. This remediation effort was underway during the course of this study. The other site which is likely to be contaminated is the former Getty gas station, adjacent to the DiSiena’s Furniture store. Although the gas tanks have been removed, it is possible that the soil surrounding this area was contaminated with gasoline at some point. This potential contamination may need to be addressed prior to the site being redeveloped.



**Figure 25 –
Environmental Features**



III. Strengths, Weaknesses, & Opportunities Analysis

As part of the analysis of the study area, the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities were evaluated. This analysis was conducted to provide a more thorough understanding of the corridor, above and beyond an inventory of existing conditions. This will allow for a more nuanced and effective range of recommendations to improve the corridor.

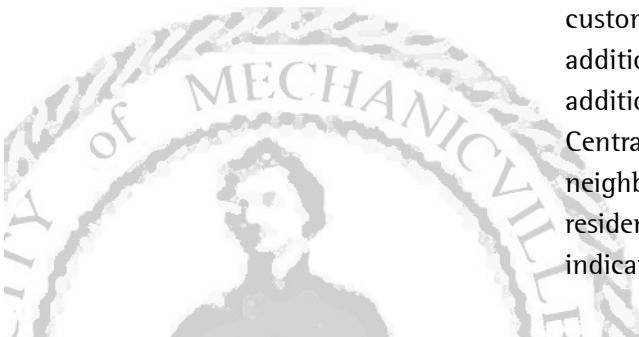
A. Strengths

Community Support: Mechanicville is home to an active group of residents who take a keen interest in the community. In addition, the study area itself contains several important local businesses, whose owners have indicated their support for this project. These residents and business owners have participated public workshops for this study, as well as for other local planning efforts.

In addition to taking an interest in planning efforts, the community also has demonstrated a desire to contribute physically to the improvement of the corridor. There are numerous decorative planters along Central Avenue, as noted in Section II. These are maintained by the community, and represent a desire to beautify the corridor. This level of commitment to the community is one of Mechanicville's biggest strengths.

High Traffic Volume: Average Daily Traffic on Central Avenue in Mechanicville is reported to be almost 18,000 cars per day in certain areas. The presence of a high traffic volume through the corridor provides very high exposure to businesses.

Large Market Area: There are numerous existing residential neighborhoods in the immediate area which provide customers to the existing and/or future businesses. In addition, commuter traffic along Central Avenue provides additional exposure for businesses. The market area for Central Avenue is quite large, and consists of a mix of large neighborhoods within easy walking distance, and large residential suburbs in nearby towns. Local business owners indicated that many of their customers prefer the



convenience of shopping in nearby businesses as opposed to driving to larger retail centers in Clifton Park.

Retail/Service Anchors: The study area benefits from a number of active retail “anchor” businesses, including the Rite-Aid/McDonalds plaza on the south end of the study area, the DiSiena II furniture store at the corner of Frances, the Country Living Center, and the Price Chopper Plaza to the north. These businesses rely on the existing commuter and resident traffic, and draw people to the area. This is a strength that can be built upon as reinvestment in the study area occurs.

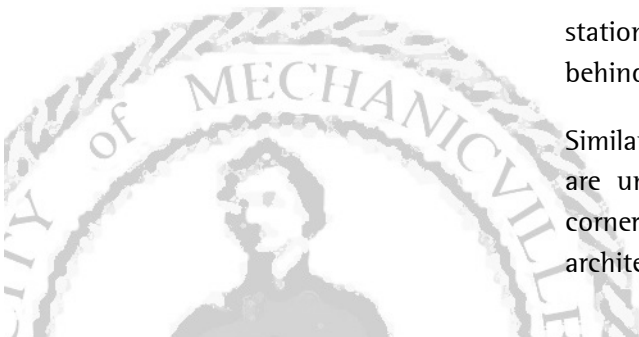
B. Weaknesses

Deteriorating or Missing Infrastructure: As can be seen in the inventory of the study area, Central Avenue serves primarily as a vehicular corridor, with poor or missing pedestrian infrastructure along significant stretches. Deteriorated sidewalks and curbs, and large sections of missing sidewalks, create an unpleasant pedestrian experience, and also make the corridor feel unused or abandoned.

High Traffic Volume: As stated above, Central Avenue is reported to be almost 18,000 cars per day in certain areas. Although high traffic volume can have both a positive effect, it can also cause negative impacts due to noise, dust, and vibration.

Vacant Lots & Buildings/Underutilized Buildings: The presence of vacant lots and vacant buildings make the corridor appear as if there is disinvestment in the community. These empty or underutilized buildings detract from the many successful businesses in the area. The former Getty station at the corner of Frances Street and Central Avenue is an example of an unused or vacant site in a prominent location. In this example, the presence of the empty gas station building detracts from a successful business located behind it.

Similarly, there are a number of sites within the corridor that are underutilized. The Mewton Hydraulics building on the corner of Williams Street is a building with significant architectural presence in the corridor though is underutilized.



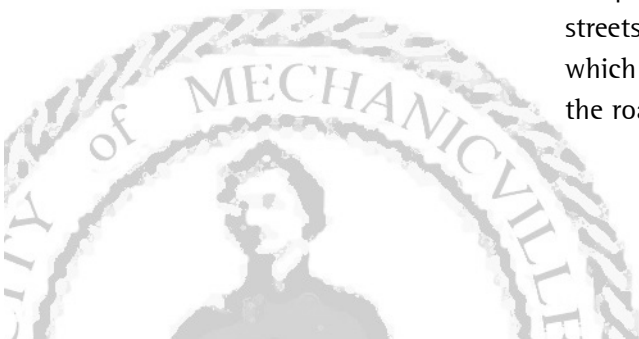
As a result this building does not contribute as positively as it might to the overall impression of the area. In addition, the Yankee Dollar Warehouse is a well maintained and tidy property. However its use as a storage warehouse does not add to the vibrancy of this high profile location.

Power Substation: The location of the electrical substation immediately adjacent to North Central Avenue is an aesthetic blemish and creates a blank space with no retail or business presence, which weakens the overall strength of the Central Avenue corridor. As moving the substation is not an option, the design challenge becomes to minimize its presence aesthetically to improve the image of the community, and so that the balance of the district can prosper.

Overhead Utility Lines: Site inventories conducted in the corridor find that there are numerous overhead power and utility lines feeding in and out of the substation along Central Avenue. This creates aesthetic challenges, and limits the types of landscaping and streetscaping which might be completed.

Sense of Place: At the moment the corridor lacks any specific sense of place. With the exception of the residential neighborhoods which extend into the corridor area, the overall impression when driving through is of individual buildings, of a variety of ages and architectural styles, set at varying distances away from the road. This lack of consistency creates a condition where there is no sense of place.

Low Density of Uses: The businesses in the district are, by and large, dispersed, making the pattern of development appear spotty. This is due in part to the way parcels are laid out along Central Avenue. As discussed previously, many of the parcels along the east side of the roadway face the side streets. This results in the side yard facing Central Avenue, which reduces the potential for buildings to be located along the roadway.



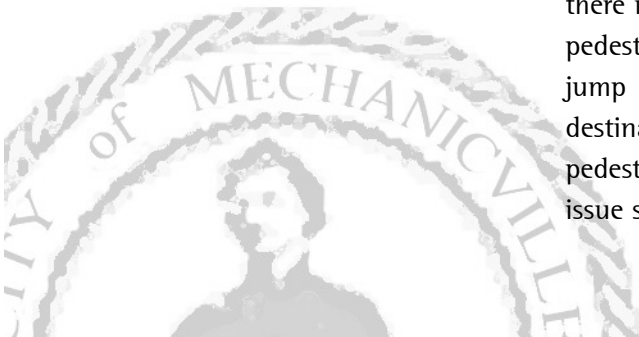
C. Opportunities

Architecture and Heritage: The city has a long and impressive industrial heritage which includes its location on the Hudson, the canal, railroad, and paper mills. Examples of this history remain in the land use patterns and architecture. A number of the buildings in the study area have interesting architectural styles and/or details, as described in Section II.f. These buildings create opportunities along the corridor to create a sense of place unique to Mechanicville. This is a strength that can be built upon further as reinvestment in the study area occurs.

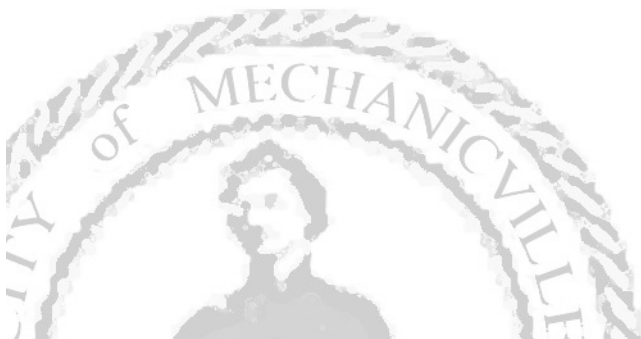
Green Spaces: Generally there are limited green spaces within the study area. The only designated parkland is Patenaude Park, described above. There is also significant green space around the North Central Avenue/Saratoga Avenue Intersection, and the North Main Street/Saratoga Avenue intersections. These areas are largely located within the street right-of-way and are not designated as parkland. The lack of designated green spaces presents an interesting opportunity for further investment in open spaces, perhaps in coordination with redevelopment of these areas.

Linkages: The various east/west side streets that cross North Central Avenue create interesting and important linkages from the residential neighborhoods on the west side, to the downtown and waterfront on the east side. The design challenge is to better define these linkages and to draw pedestrians “across” the tracks to these areas.

There is an important missing linkage between the neighborhoods to the northwest of the study area and the city. This break is the result of the Saratoga Avenue Bypass which has cut off the direct pedestrian route into the City from these neighborhoods. Interestingly, it appears that there is frequent (if informal) use of these historic linkages by pedestrians who, in following the path of the old streets, jump the tracks to take the shortest routes to their destination. This potentially creates a safety hazard for pedestrians using un-marked crossings, and may be a liability issue should there be an accident.



Available Land/Vacant or Underutilized Properties: There are some vacant lots and vacant buildings along the corridor. Additionally there are a number of sites where existing properties and buildings are not currently being utilized to their maximum potential. While these conditions currently detract from the overall impression of vibrancy of the corridor, it also creates the opportunity for existing businesses to expand and new businesses to relocate to the corridor. This also creates opportunities for streetscape improvements, public spaces such as small parks, civic monuments, or the like.



IV. Goals and Recommendations

A. Overall Concept Plan

As part of this study, a series of recommendations were developed to address the issues identified in the inventory and analysis portion of the plan. In addition, two public workshops were held to gather input from members of the public and business owners in the corridor. These workshops, held in October 2008 and February 2009, helped to identify specific issues which were not readily apparent from the inventory and analysis. In addition, the input gathered was critical in determining what the community wants the corridor to be, how it should function, and how it should look.

This input was condensed into a series of goals, which then guided the development of the recommendations for this study. The goals for these recommendations are as follows:

- Maximize the transportation function of Central Avenue
- Provide safe and comfortable pedestrian and bicycle facilities
- Improve the look and feel of the corridor, to encourage healthy economic development
- Identify locations where infill development could bolster the overall economic vitality of the corridor

These goals are illustrated graphically in Figure 26, which shows the overall concept plan for the corridor. These concepts were then further refined into a series of recommendations, which outline strategic physical and policy improvements the City can make to achieve the goals.

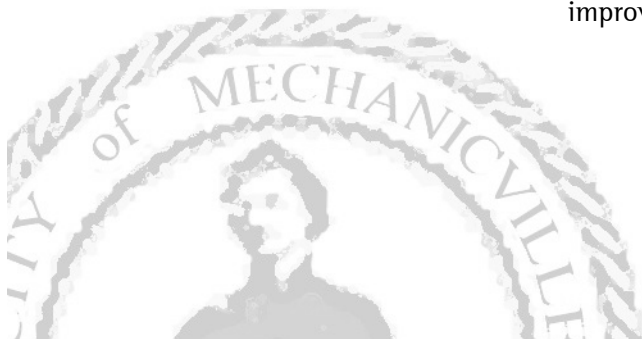
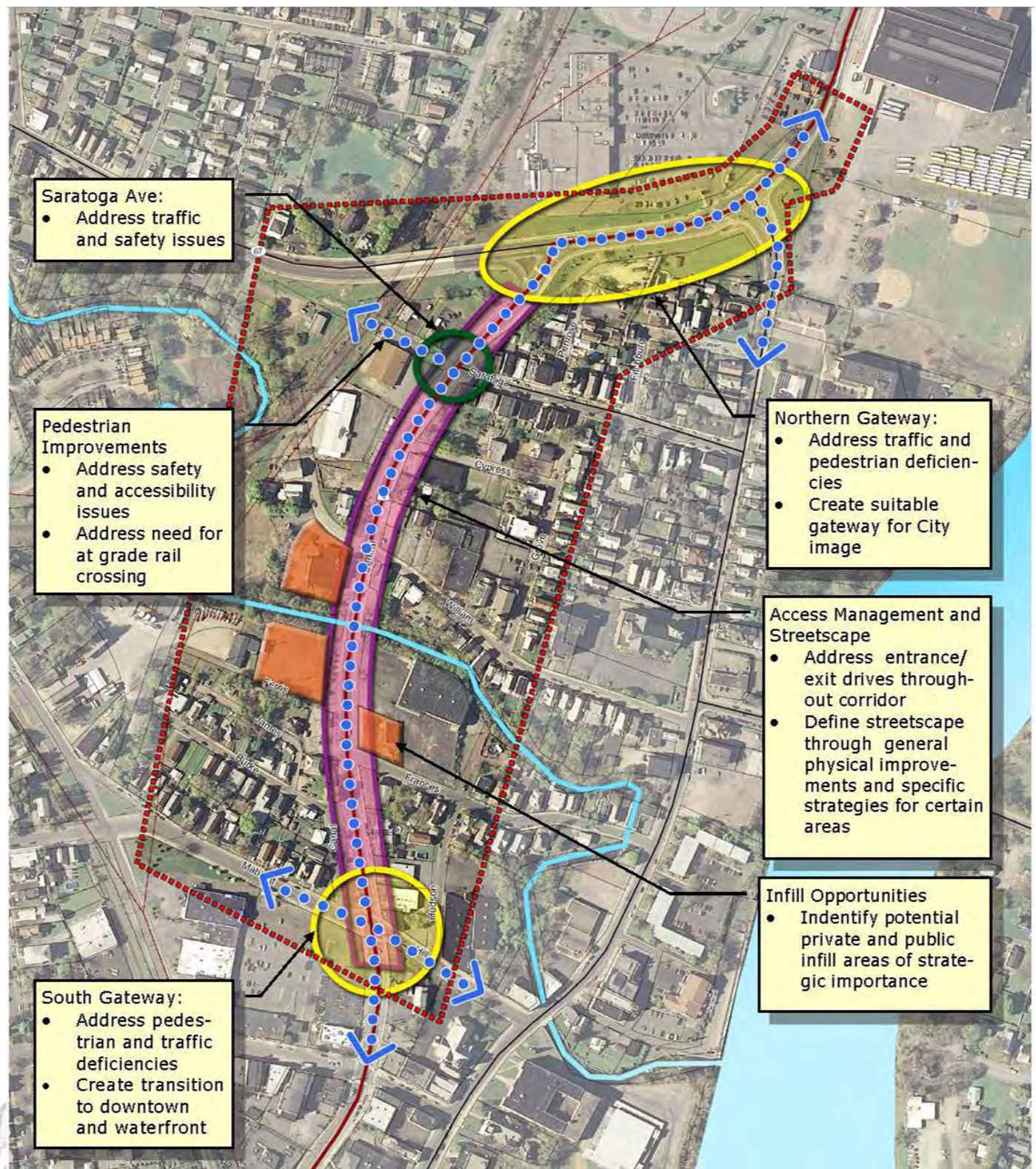


Figure 26 - Overall Concept Plan



B. Recommendations

The following recommendations identify specific strategies and alternatives to address the goals outlined above and illustrated in Figure 26. All of the recommendations have been formulated to work together to achieve the goals for Central Avenue that have been set by the community. To illustrate how the recommendations can be implemented to improve the corridor as a whole, a physical plan for the entire Central Avenue study area was prepared, (see Figure 27).

For the purposes of this plan, these goals have been further categorized into the following topic areas:

- North Gateway Improvements
- Saratoga Ave Intersection Improvements
- Central Avenue Access Management and Streetscape
- Central Avenue Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Transit Service Improvements
- Infill Opportunities and Zoning
- South Gateway Improvements

This allows for a more detailed, individual discussion of each recommendation, in terms of specific actions. Conversely, Figure 27 also illustrates the relationship between these individual recommendations and the overall concept plan, to provide a snapshot of how the corridor could look and function once all of the recommendations are implemented.

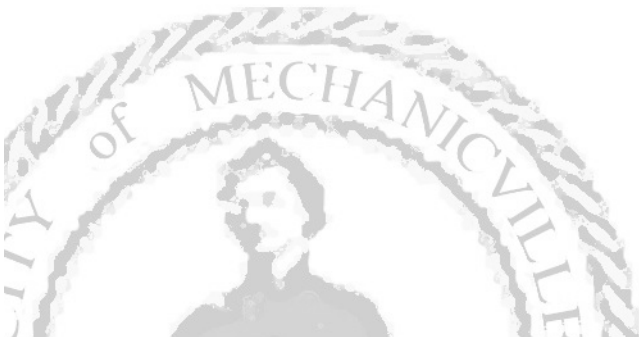
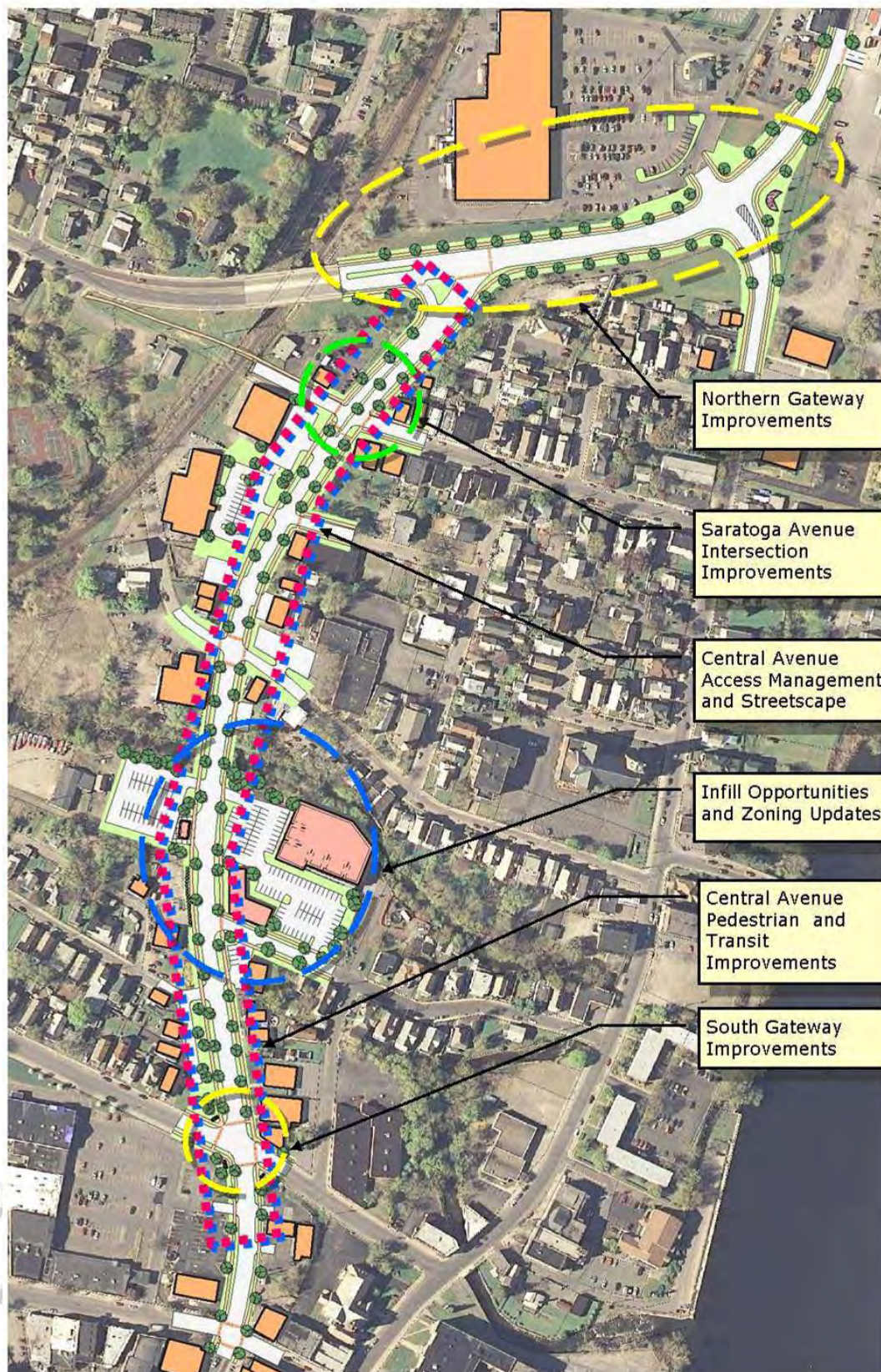


Figure 27 – Overall Physical Plan

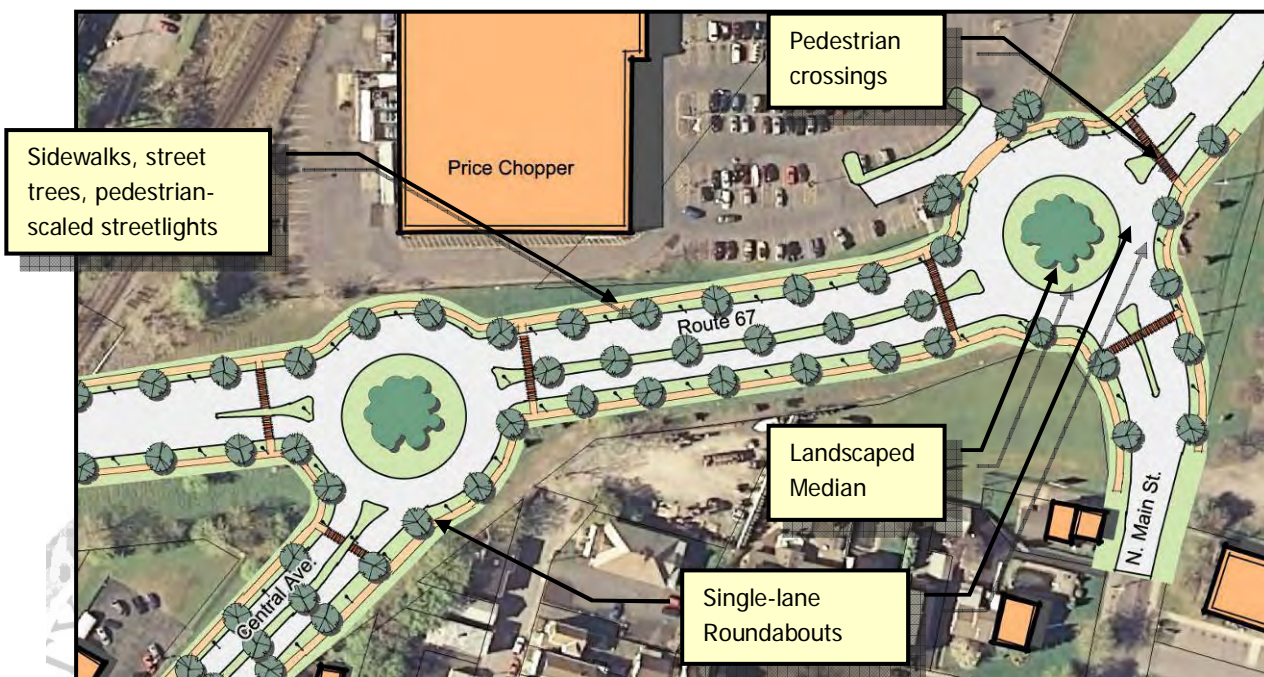


1. Intersection Improvements – North Gateway

For the purposes of this study, the “North Gateway” is presumed to include both the intersection of Central Avenue and Route 67, as well as the intersection of North Main Street and Route 67. Each of these intersections poses a different set of issues for the community, as described in Section II of this report. Since the intersections are in such close proximity to one another, they were considered in concert for the purposes of this plan.

Two options were initially considered for this plan. The first was to construct a dual-roundabout system. (See Figure 28) This would address many aspects of the issues raised regarding these intersections. Two single-lane roundabouts would address traffic flow issues, pedestrian safety, and the aesthetics of the gateway. However, this option may be more expensive to construct. In addition, the roundabout option may be less desirable for seniors, as there would be no signal timers to indicate when it is safe to cross the travel lanes. This may be ameliorated somewhat by the significantly reduced pavement width which pedestrians need to traverse. In addition, the roundabout option may not be feasible in conjunction with the proposed Esplanade project, located just

Figure 28 - North Gateway proposed Improvements – Roundabout Option



to the north of the intersection along Route 67. The traffic study completed as part of that project indicated that the roundabout option would make it difficult to accommodate left turns into and out of the proposed Esplanade.

The second option (See Figure 29) is to re-align the existing intersections to improve traffic flow and pedestrian accommodations. This would address the vehicle and pedestrian deficiencies at both intersections, and may be less expensive to construct. This option does not address the need to improve the area aesthetically as effectively as the roundabout option. The roundabouts, in and of themselves, act as visual gateways more effectively than a signalized intersection. However, attractive landscaping, street amenities, and pavement systems can make up this difference.

Figure 29 – North Intersection Improvements – Realignment Option



This option may also require Central Avenue to be widened to three lanes to accommodate left turns on to Route 67. This may become even more important as development of Global Foundries and the Esplanade Project continues, and traffic west towards Malta increases.

As the City pursues improvements to these intersections, it is recommended that the re-aligned intersections be the preferred option. However, both options should be investigated thoroughly before a final determination is made as to which option will be implemented.

2. Saratoga Avenue Improvements

As stated in the Inventory and Analysis, the intersection of Central Avenue and Saratoga Avenue poses specific traffic issues. There is an increased rate of traffic accidents at this location, due to vehicles waiting to make a left on to Saratoga Avenue. To address this issue, it is recommended that left turns be prohibited for southbound traffic at this intersection. Drivers wishing to access North Main Street from Central Avenue could then use Williams or Frances Streets to travel east.

Although there are several ways to accomplish this, the recommended approach is to establish a physical barrier which prohibits vehicles from making this turning movement, such as a median (see Figure 30). This can be combined with the north gateway improvements, by extending the traffic island down Central Avenue, past Saratoga Avenue.

This option also provides an opportunity to create a pedestrian crossing on Central Ave in an area which can be difficult to traverse. The creation of the median will provide a pedestrian haven between lanes, which will make it easier to cross the street. It is also recommended that this pedestrian area be angled so that walkers must face the oncoming traffic at an angle. This increases the visibility of both walkers and drivers, which increases safety at the crossing.

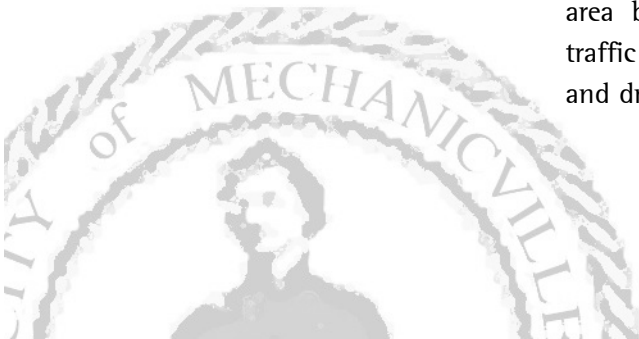


Figure 30 - Saratoga Avenue Intersection Improvements

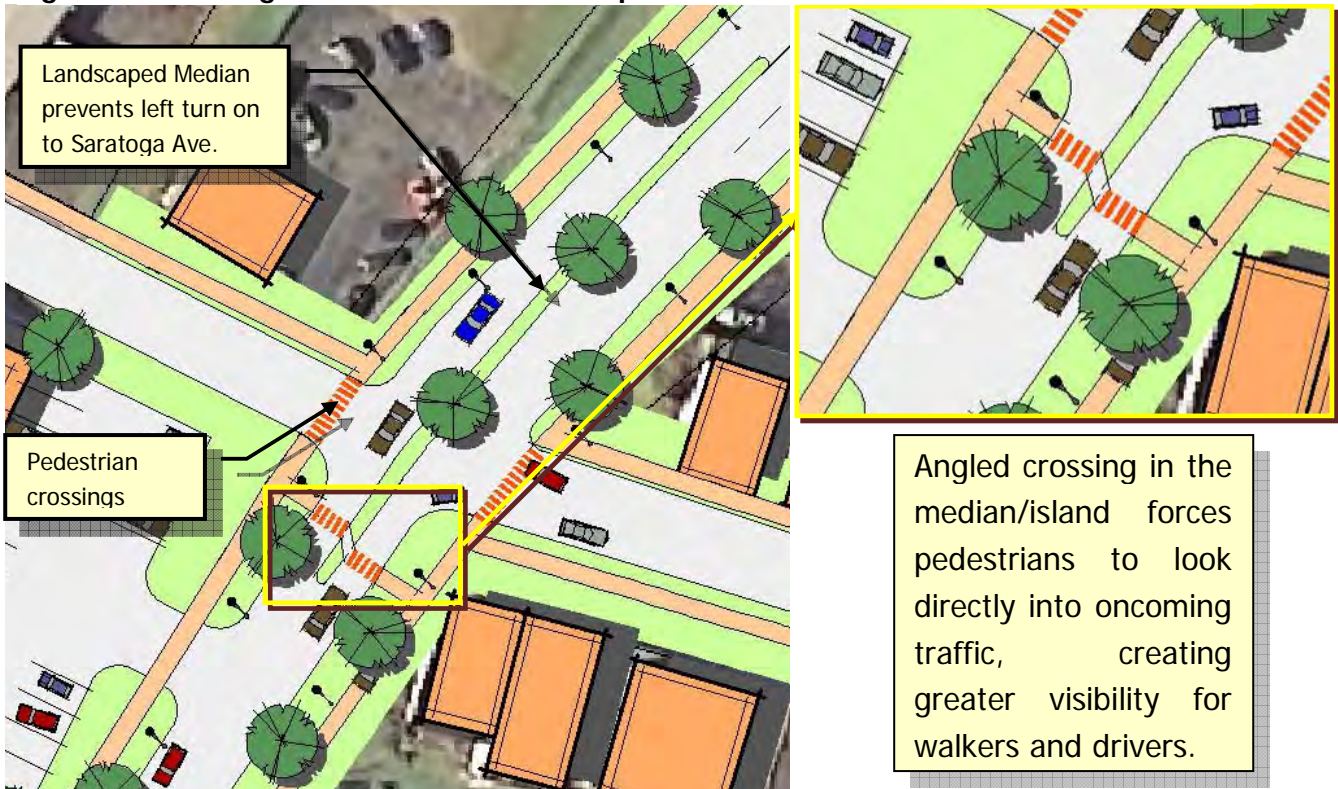


Figure 31 – Example of well-defined entrance/exit driveways

3. Access Management

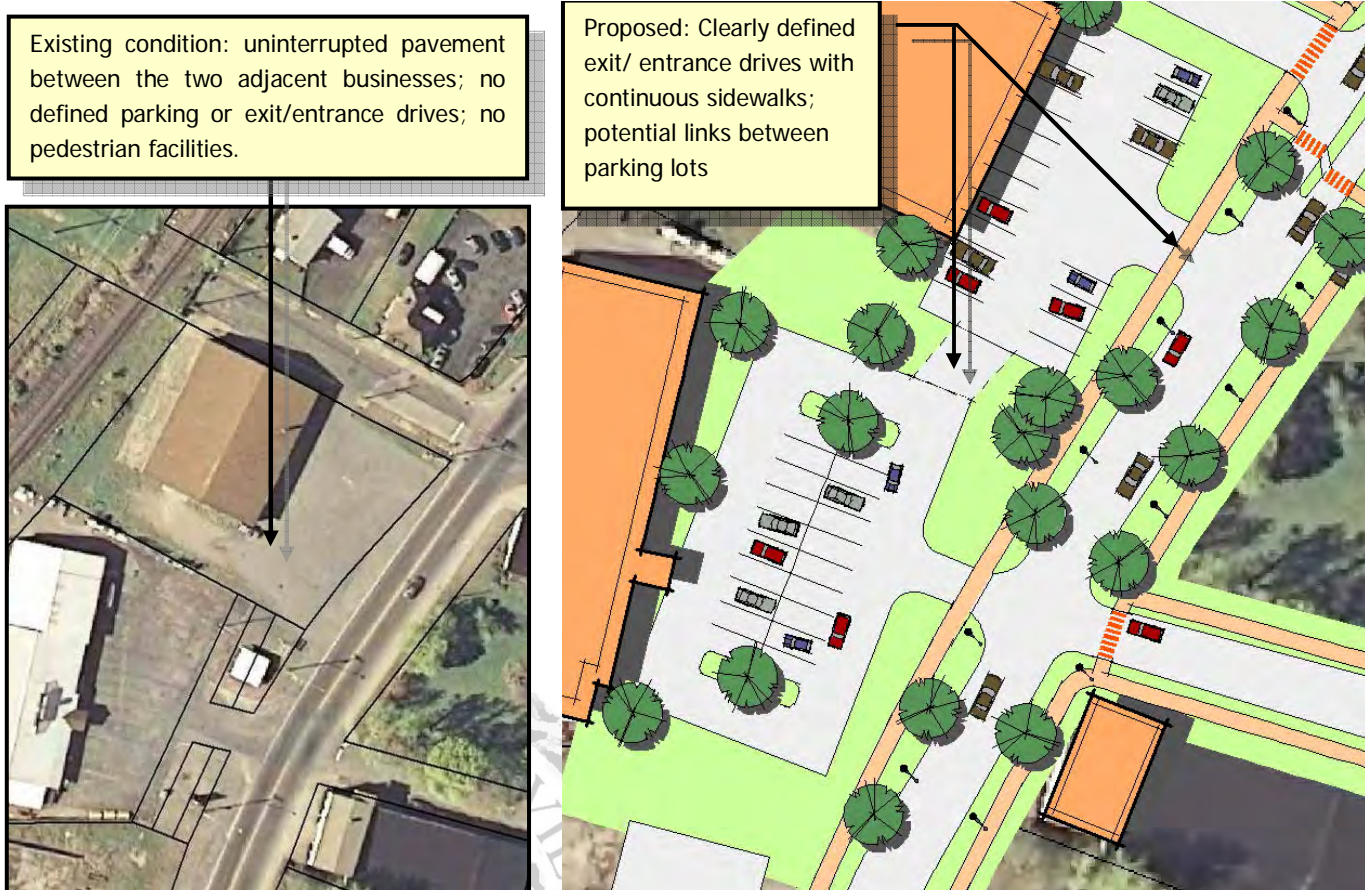
One of the most important recommendations to improve the Central Avenue corridor is to apply consistent access management principles. Access management refers to the manner in which vehicles enter and exit the roadway from private parcels. In the study area, most entry and exit drives have no curbing or striping to indicate travel lanes. In addition, many of the entrance and exit drives are wider than recommended. This can lead to increased conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles, as there is no clear indication of where it is safe to walk, and cars may enter parking areas at a higher rate of speed. In addition, addressing access management can lead to a more orderly traffic flow on Central Avenue.

The application of access management can take two forms: through the definition of individual curb drops, or the consolidation of entrance and exit drives between

neighboring parcels. Although it is generally preferable to consolidate curb drops whenever possible, in certain locations it may not be feasible to accomplish this, either due to physical conditions or lack of cooperation between adjacent landowners. In these cases, establishing individual curb drops which conform to NYSDOT guidelines for entrances to State Highways will still meet the goals of this plan (see Figures 31 and 32).

To implement these principles, the City should institute design guidelines which recommend or mandate adherence to the NYSDOT guidelines. These would be applied through the Site Plan Review process as site are developed or redeveloped. The Planning Board, working with applicants, should work together to apply access management principles to the entrances and exits along Central Avenue, as well as other commercial corridors in the City.

Figure 32 – Access management principles applied to Central Avenue



4. Streetscape Improvements

In addition to improving the access management and pedestrian features, it is crucial that the streetscape itself be improved. As discussed in Section II, the character of the streetscape does not enhance the existing businesses located in the corridor, nor does it reflect the strength of the community itself.

Figure 33 - Design Vocabulary

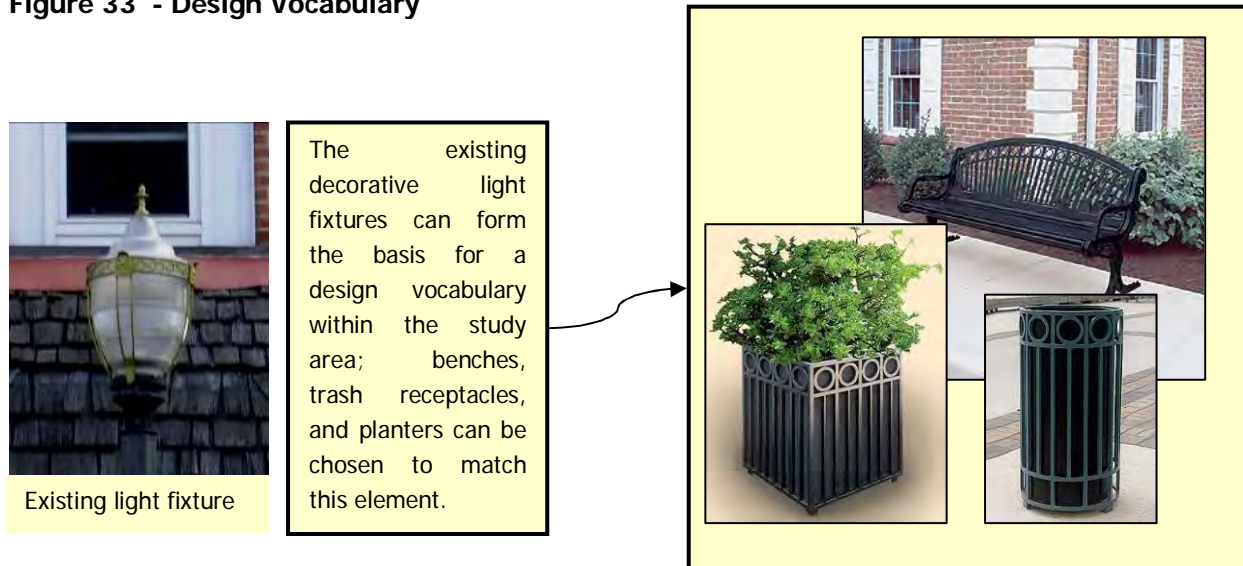


Figure 34 illustrates a potential streetscape treatment which includes consistent curbs, tree lawns and green strips, and pedestrian and bike features. The inclusion of curbs and street trees will help to add vertical definition to the roadway, and will reduce the overall impression of wide open asphalt expanses. Pedestrian-scaled features, such as street lights, will also emphasize the character of the community and give the roadway a more human scale. The City has already begun installing this type of light fixture along Park Street; this design vocabulary should be applied through the study area as well (see Figure 33). Finally, decorative elements, such as banners, planters, benches and even trash receptacles, will underscore and strengthen this vocabulary through the corridor.

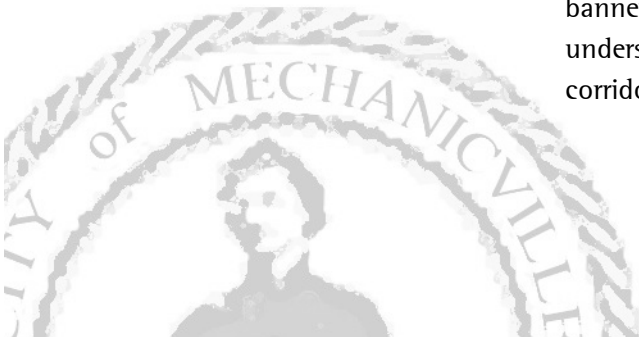
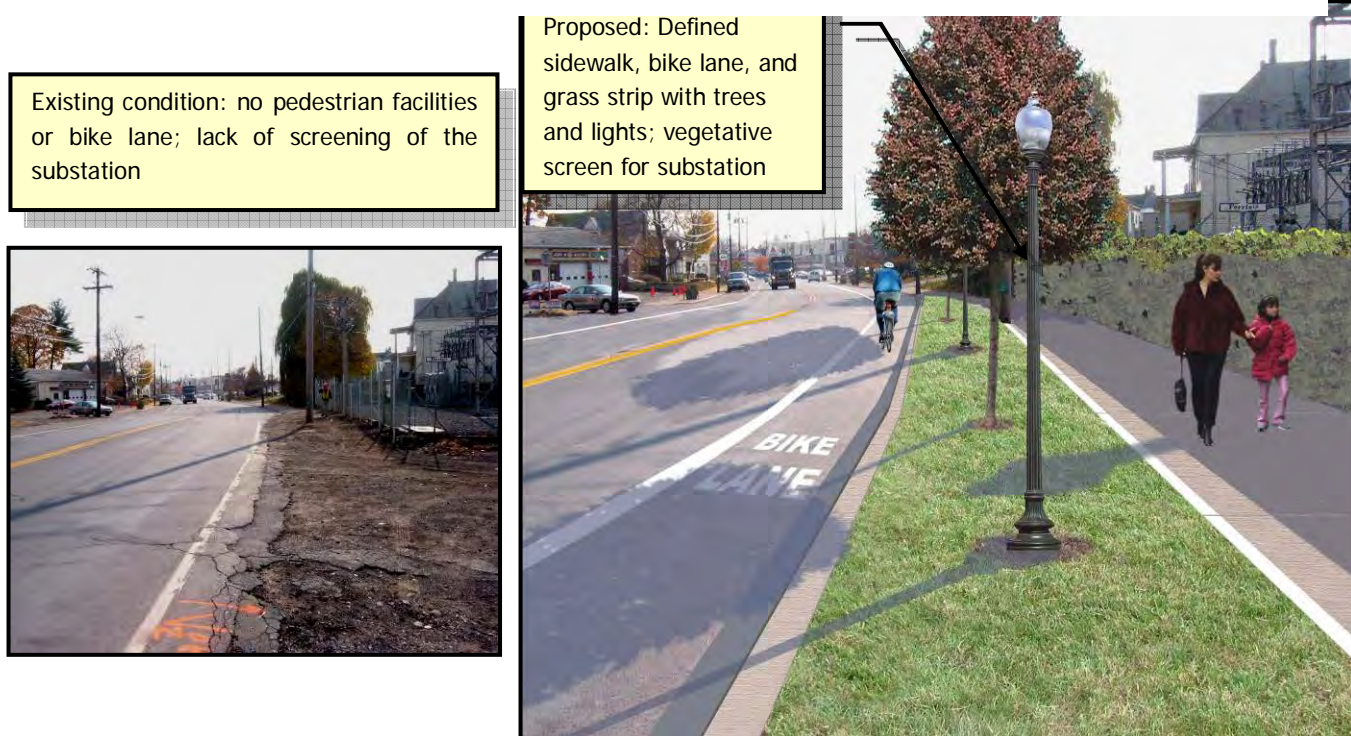


Figure 34 – Potential streetscape improvements photoillustration



5. Pedestrian Improvements



Figure 35 – Example of continuous sidewalk across entrance driveway



Figure 36 – Example of decorative pedestrian crosswalk paving

As stated in the inventory and analysis, the pedestrian amenities within the study area are largely inadequate. The City should work with CDTC and NYSDOT to establish adequate sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian features throughout the study area. Figure 34 illustrates a potential roadway section which integrates pedestrian improvements. This includes sidewalks on both sides of the road, with tree lawns and green strips separating the vehicle travel lanes from the pedestrian area. These sidewalks should continue uninterrupted across vehicle entry and exit drives (see Figure 35), to provide a clear indication of the extent of the pedestrian area in vehicle-oriented zones.

Adequate crosswalks should also be provided (see Figure 35). The design of crosswalks should be consistent with State and Federal guidelines and mandates for accessibility and pedestrian safety. Other pedestrian features, such as count-down timers at all signalized intersections, are also recommended.



Figure 37 – Example of at-grade pedestrian rail crossing



Figure 38 – Example of bus shelter which contributes to streetscape

In addition to the pedestrian improvements called for in the study area, a dedicated at-grade pedestrian rail crossing is also recommended. As discussed in the inventory, many residents currently cross the railroad tracks on foot, on their way to Price Chopper or the nearby residential neighborhoods.

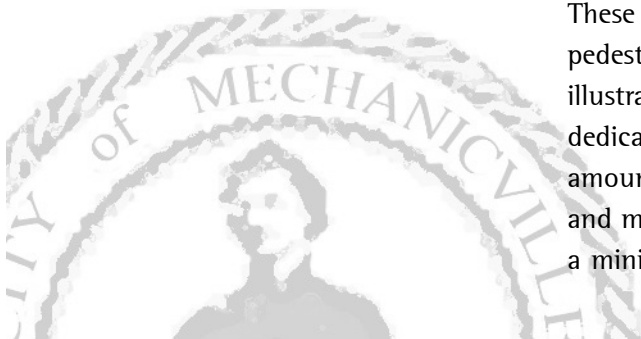
It is recommended that this crossing be provided at the terminus of Williams Street, where it can connect to the trail to Tenendaho Park and to the sidewalks along Route 67. An example of a similar crossing is shown in Figure 37.

6. Bicycle Improvements

Mechanicville is eminently suited to encourage bicycle use, with a compact commercial center surrounded by comfortable, medium to high density residential neighborhoods. However, conditions along Central Avenue are not suitable for use by cyclists, as noted in the inventory and analysis portion of this report. As such, facilities for cyclists should also be improved throughout the corridor. Currently, there are no dedicated bicycle lanes along Central Avenue. Given the high amount of vehicular traffic, it is important that any improvements to the streetscape include bicycle amenities.

This is especially important given the future regional trail connections which are slated to link within Mechanicville. As stated previously, the Champlain Canal and Zim Smith trails converge within the City along Main Street. In addition, Scenic Route 4 travels along Main Street in Mechanicville. These features are likely to increase the number of cyclists in Mechanicville. It is therefore crucial that amenities along Central Avenue be improved to accommodate local and regional cyclists.

These improvements should be designed concurrently with pedestrian and streetscape improvements. Figure 34 illustrates a potential roadway configuration which includes a dedicated cycle lane. This option is partially dependent on the amount of right-of-way width available for Central Avenue, and may not be feasible in all locations along the corridor. As a minimum measure, Central Avenue should be able to safely



and comfortable accommodate shared use lanes, so that cyclists and drivers can both use the corridor effectively.

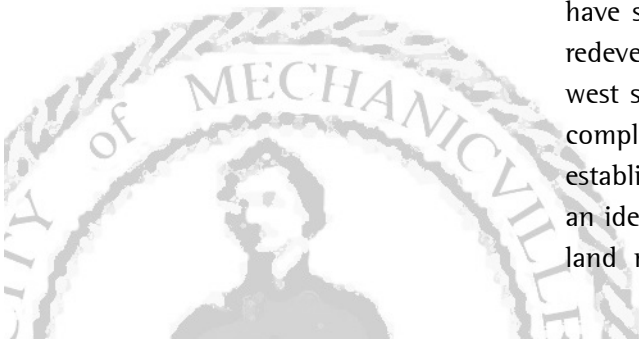
7. Public Transit

As stated in the inventory and analysis, public transit options in the study area are limited. In terms of local transit, the long-term recommendation is to promote and expand the local bus service. As the city continues to pursue expanding its role as a center of housing and community in the region, it may be desirable to formalize the bus service somewhat, perhaps by adding structured routes and designated bus stops in addition to the on-call service.

In terms of regional transit, it is crucial that the City pursue an alternate location for the park-and-ride for the Northway Xpress service, preferably within the Study Area. If the current landowner is unable to negotiate the re-establishment of the park-and-ride, the City should work with CDTA to locate a new facility, perhaps on one of the vacant or underutilized parcels in the study area. Maintaining viable public transit to Albany will be a key element in promoting Mechanicville as a community which is “linked in” to the region. As AMD continues to be developed, the City should pursue other transit options, working in close concert with CDTA to provide service to this future employment center. This will not only provide an important service to residents, but will make Mechanicville an important hub for local commuters in nearby Halfmoon and Stillwater.

8. Infill Opportunities – DiSiena/Substation Properties

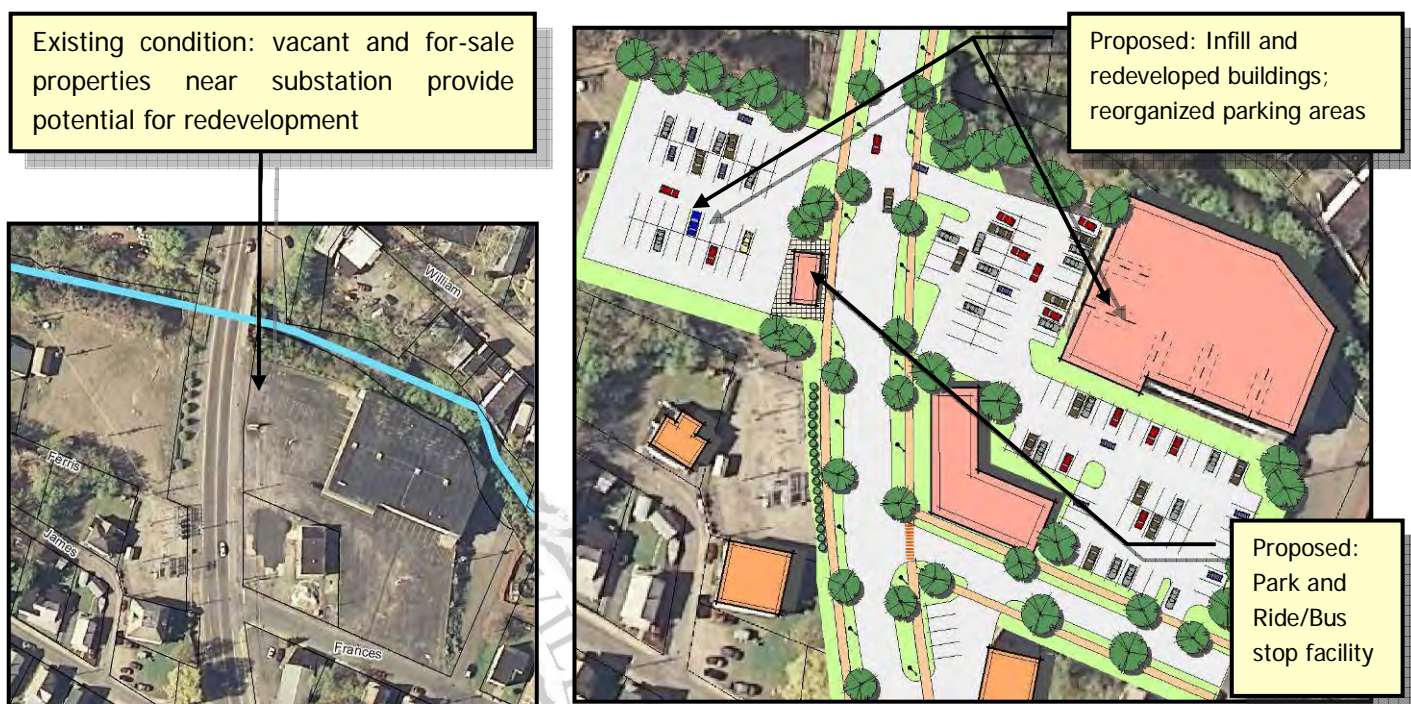
The inventory and analysis indicated few vacant and underutilized properties. This, in turn, means that there are few opportunities for infill within the study area. However, there are at least two key infill opportunities which could have significant impact on the corridor, should they ever be redeveloped. The first of these is the NYSEG parcel on the west side of Central Avenue. Once the remediation process is completed on this parcel, the City should pursue the establishment of a park-and-ride lot at this location. This is an ideal location for a park and ride lot, since the remediated land may not be suitable for more intense land uses. In



addition, the City is currently without a park and ride lot for the Northway Express (NX) line, run by CDTA. It is crucial that accommodations be made for commuters using the NX line, so that this important amenity is not lost to the community.

In terms of commercial infill, the lot across the street from the NYSEG property offers the most potential. This is the site of DiSiena's II, as well as the vacant Getty gas station. When this parcel is redeveloped, it is important that the placement and appearance of any new structures adds to the overall character of the area. The structure(s) should be located relatively close to the sidewalk, with no parking between the road and the building (see Figure 39). In addition, the former Getty property is on the corner of Frances and Central Avenue. This presents an opportunity to provide pedestrian features, landscape plantings, and an element of architectural interest to the corner, which will improve the look and feel of the area. One potential site layout for the infill of these parcels is shown in Figure 39. This is only an illustration of the kind of development which is possible, and is not intended to dictate exact redevelopment schemes on private property.

Figure 39 – Infill redevelopment, potential site configuration



The addition of a park-and-ride lot and a bus stop facility adds to the infill potential of the area. The presence of a 5-day-a-week, consistent group of potential customers across the street makes the infill potential much stronger for many market types including convenience foods, grocery, dry cleaning, deli, coffee shop, beverage/liquor, and take-out restaurants. This potential could be realized by converting the existing DiSiena's structure into smaller shops.

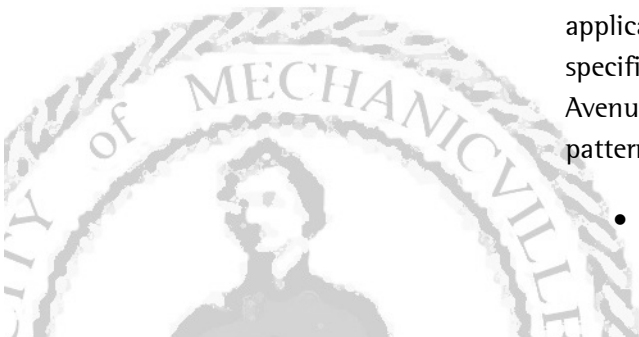
Figure 39 also illustrates the application of access management in the corridor. The existing parking area for DiSiena's has been reconfigured with defined entrances, clearly striped parking spaces, pedestrian features, and landscape plantings.

9. Zoning

To properly encourage the types of development which are recommended in this plan, the zoning ordinance must be revised. As illustrated in the inventory and analysis, the location of the Light Industrial zoning district in the study area do not accurately reflect the current or desired land uses in the corridor. At a minimum, the zoning map should be revised as illustrated in Figure 40, which replaces the LI zone with the more appropriate GC zone along the west side of Central Avenue. This will allow for the types of commercial development most likely to be located in this area. In addition, re-zoning to GC will prevent industrial uses from becoming established near residential and local businesses.

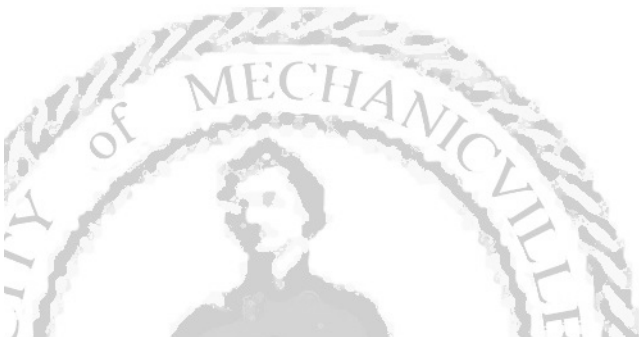
In addition the revising the zoning map, the City should implement other changes to the zoning ordinance as well. Design Guidelines for commercial development, for instance, can help ensure that the future development or re-development of the corridor is aesthetically appropriate and addresses access management issues. These guidelines can be applicable throughout the GC zone, or can be applied specifically to the Central Corridor area. For the Central Avenue corridor, the guidelines can call for development patterns which include, but are not limited to:

- Access management/shared curb cuts

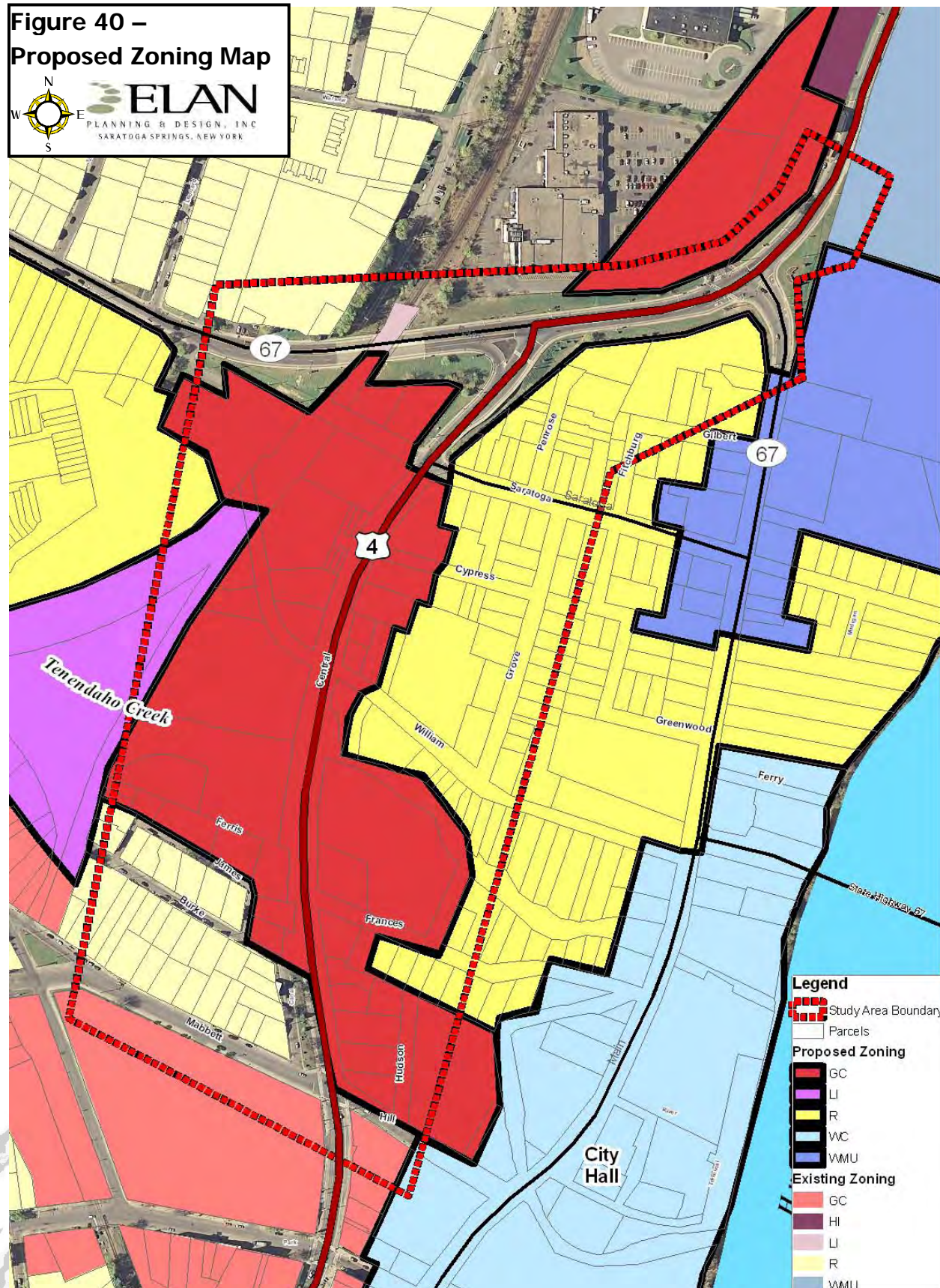


- Pedestrian facilities, such as sidewalks, grass strips and street trees, and plazas
- Parking placement at the side or rear of buildings
- Signage
- Building design, materials, and/or colors
- Landscape plantings

Finally, it is important that any zoning changes which take place as a result of this plan are integrated into a comprehensive ordinance update. The City has undertaken several planning efforts in recent years, such as the Downtown Grants Program, Main Street Façade Program, and Downtown and Waterfront Revitalization Plan. These plans also call for the implementation of design guidelines and zoning changes. It is recommended, therefore, that any zoning update take into account all of these recommendations, to help ensure that the City's planning efforts are being implemented as envisioned by the community. Figure 40, which illustrates the proposed zoning district boundary changes, accounts for the zoning changes recommended in the recently adopted Downtown and Waterfront Revitalization Plan.



**Figure 40 –
Proposed Zoning Map**



10. Intersection Improvements – South Gateway

The southern gateway, located at the intersection of Mabbett/Hill Street and Central Avenue, faces a number of issues as described in the inventory and analysis. These include improperly located pedestrian amenities, inadequate sightlines for traffic, and poor aesthetics.

To address these issues, it is recommended that the intersection be reconstructed as shown in Figure 41. In particular, the pedestrian crosswalks should be re-aligned so that they are perpendicular. This reduces the pavement width which pedestrians must traverse, reducing the potential for conflicts with vehicles. In addition, a decorative paving treatment will add to the aesthetics of the gateway, while the texture within the intersection will alert drivers to the fact that this is a pedestrian-oriented area.

Figure 41 – South gateway improvements

Existing condition: non-perpendicular crosswalks, three “empty” corners, Canal Street close to intersection with Mabbett/Central



Proposed: Perpendicular cross-walks; Canal St. closed for Patenaude Park expansion; shelters/benches at corners

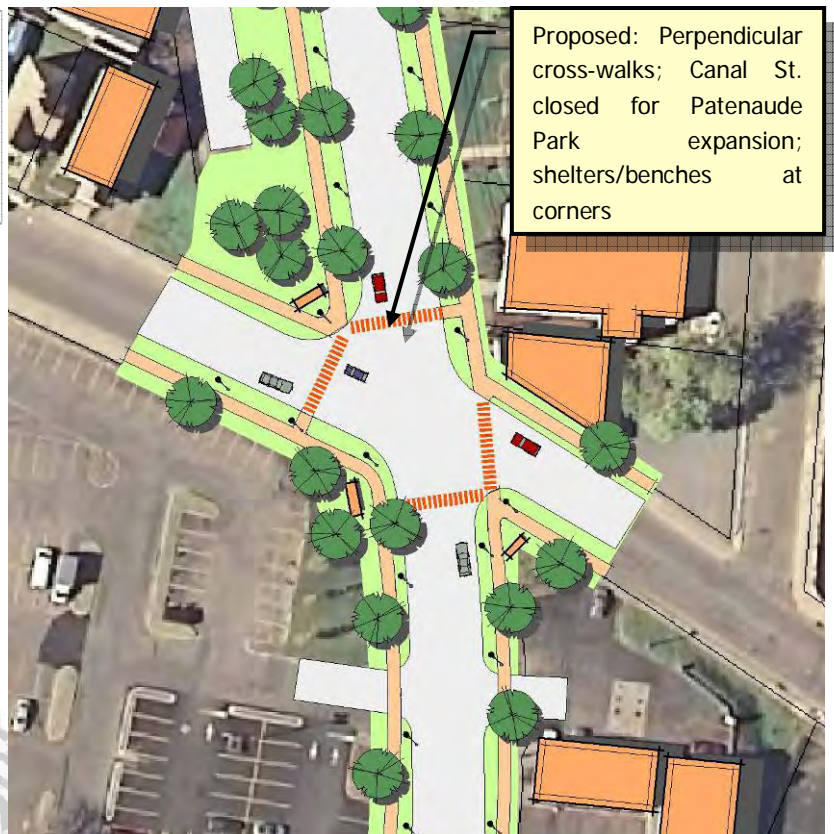


Figure 42 – Existing (top) and proposed photoillustration (bottom) of south gateway intersection



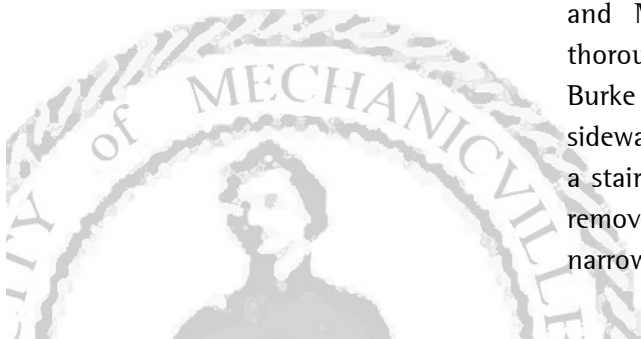
As stated previously, the intersection has three “empty” corners, in those locations where there are no buildings, or the buildings are set back from the road. This adds to the lack of character in the area. To address this, it is recommended that structures are established on the corners, to add definition to the intersection. These structures can be simple benches or bus shelters, as shown in Figure 41. By adding these elements, along with decorative masthead traffic signals and light

Proposed: Masthead signals; re-aligned crosswalks, bus shelters



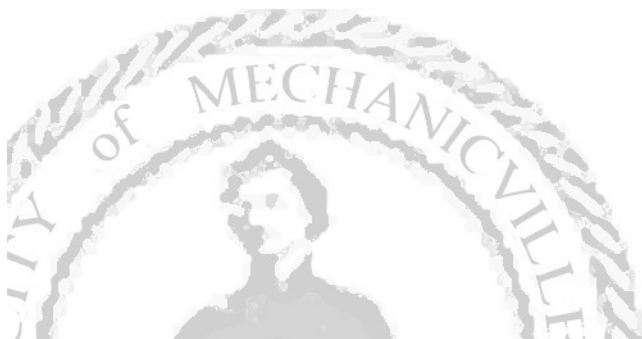
fixtures, the City can begin to establish this intersection as a gateway into the downtown and into the northern Central Avenue area as well.

In addition, it is recommended that the intersections of Canal and Mabbett and Burke and Central be studied more thoroughly. As stated in the inventory, the intersection of Burke and Central is excessively wide. In addition, the sidewalk associated with Burke near this intersection contains a staircase, which is not universally accessible and should be removed. It is recommended that this intersection be narrowed and the pedestrian facilities be redesigned to take



into account contemporary standards for handicapped accessibility.

Similarly, it is recommended that the intersection of Canal and Mabbett Streets be examined more thoroughly. Canal is a one-way street which only services a few residential parcels. However, the intersection is quite close to the larger intersection of Mabbett/Hill and Central Avenue. It may be desirable to close off this intersection and make Canal Street a dead end, accessed via Burke. If this option is pursued, Canal would need to become a two-way street. This would allow for a greater amount of green space for Patenaude Park, which would improve the southern gateway. In addition, it would eliminate left turns from Mabbett on the Canal, which may interfere with the functioning of the Mabbett/Hill and Central Avenue intersection.



V. Implementation

This plan contains a series of recommendations to address issues in the Central Avenue corridor. Some of these recommended actions can be accomplished over a long-term time frame, while others should be implemented immediately. To accomplish this, the City must establish a framework within which these actions can be undertaken. Currently, the City Supervisor and Community Development Agency (CDA), have done an exemplary job in implementing the recent planning efforts undertaken in Mechanicville. The City Supervisor, the CDA, and the Downtown Revitalization Committee, working together as they do currently, have the ability to implement the plan in concert with CDTC and NYSDOT. As implementation of larger projects continues, the City may want to consider part-time staff to help administer grants, coordinate between the various partners, and be a point-person for implementation of planning projects.

Toward this end, the implementation matrix provides a framework for the completion of each recommendation. For each strategy, the implementation leader, involved groups, starting point, and action item is listed. Another issue for consideration when outlining an implementation strategy is the capability to assemble funds; as such, potential funding sources are listed as well.

Implementation Matrix						
	Potential Partners	First Steps	Potential Funding Source(s)*	Implementation Timing		
Recommendation				Short	Med	Long
North Gateway Intersection Improvements	NYSDOT, CDTC, Price Chopper	Obtain funding for design development	TEP			X
Access Management Plan	Planning Board, NYSDOT, CDTC	Update zoning ordinance to guide development and redevelopment of entrance driveways	NYSDOS, TCSP		X	
Saratoga Avenue Intersection Improvements	NYSDOT, CDTC	Obtain funding for design development	TEP, MMPF			X
Pedestrian Rail Crossing	CDTC, Saratoga County	Begin discussions with railroad	NYS RTP, TEP, Spot Improvements	X		
Pedestrian Improvements	NYSDOT, CDTC	Obtain funding for design development; create design guidelines for pedestrian improvements on private parcels	TEP, Spot Improvements, MMPF	X		
Streetscape Improvements	NYSDOT, CDTC	Obtain funding for design development	TEP	X		
Zoning Update	NYSDOS	Obtain funding and release RFP	NYSDOS	X		
Public Transit Improvements	CDTA	Re-establish Park and Ride	CDTA, CMAQ		X	
South Gateway Intersection Improvements	NYSDOT, CDTC, CDTA	Obtain funding for design development	TEP			X

Grant Overviews:

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP): The CDTC is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Capital Region. The CDTC has responsibility under federal law to adopt a multi-year program of proposed transportation improvement projects within the MPO area. CDTC with input from NYSDOT and local government is responsible for programming federal transportation funds for state and local highway and transit projects. CDTC notifies communities when soliciting projects for the TIP under the various federal funding programs. CDTC is committed to enhancing pedestrian and bicycle mobility in the MPO area. As part of their planning process, CDTC typically allocates funds for pedestrian and bicycle projects. Communities interested in having their project considered for funding must complete and submit a Project Justification Package for CDTC review. If the project is selected, it receives federal funds generally up to a maximum of 80% of the overall cost. The remaining 20% is the responsibility of the project sponsor. Each federal aid program has different eligibility requirements but for most roadway reconstruction projects, the minimum requirement is that the facility must be on the federal aid eligible list and thus the road must function as a collector or arterial highway. CDTC has reserved federal funds in the TIP for specific set-aside programs that target specific project types. The following are two of the programs most relevant to implementing the recommendations of this study:

Spot Improvement Program: This program sets aside \$100,000 per year for transportation projects too small for other programs like the Transportation Enhancements Program. Spot Improvements address problems at specific locations such as intersections, short lengths of roadway, or single destinations (e.g., an office building or shopping center), which bridge physical or functional gaps in the system rather than providing new routes. The Spot Improvement program offers 80% funding with a 20% local match requirement.

TEP (Transportation Enhancement Program): The Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP) is a federal reimbursement program administered by the New York Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) through the Capital District Transportation Committee. This program provides funding for transportation projects of cultural, aesthetic, historic and environmental significance. Eligible projects must fall into one or more of the twelve Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) categories. Additionally, the project must have a transportation relationship with the surface transportation system and must be available for public access and use. The TEP program offers 80% funding with a 20% local match requirement.

TCSP (Transportation and Community and System Preservation Pilot Program): The TCSP is a nationwide discretionary program administered by the Federal Highway Administration. TCSP funding availability is limited, with the Federal share payable on account of any TCSP project or activity set at 80%. To be eligible for funding, projects must meet several objectives, which include:

- Improving efficiency of the transportation system;
- Reduce environmental impacts of transportation;

- Ensure efficient access to jobs, services and centers of trade;
- Encourage private sector development patterns.

MMPF (New York State Multi-Modal Program Funding): The MMPF legislation requires that all funds are solely utilized for capital project costs for construction, reconstruction, reconditioning and preserving facilities and equipment with a service life of 10 years or more. However, funds cannot be used for the mandated non-federal matching share of federally funded projects. The amount of funds available under the MMPF is very limited. The most likely scenario is to utilize multi-modal funding for right-of way acquisition, preliminary engineering, and construction supervision and the inspection portion of a project.

NYS DOS (Department of State, Division of Coastal Resources Local Waterfront Revitalization Program): The Department of State, Division of Coastal Resources solicits grant applications from local governments for 50/50 matching grants from the New York State Environmental Protection Fund's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program. Funding to advance preparation, refinement or implementation of Local Waterfront Revitalization Programs (LWRP) is available to local governments to encourage municipalities to plan for the future of their waterfronts and undertake improvement projects to implement their plans. Projects must fall into one of 11 grant categories. Mechanicville recently adopted a Waterfront and Downtown Revitalization Plan; projects which implement the recommendations of this plan (including zoning updates) are eligible for funding.

NYS RTP: The Recreational Trails Program is a State-administered, Federal assistance program to provide and maintain recreational trails for both motorized and non-motorized recreational trail use. Funds for the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) are provided by SAFETEA-LU. The RTP program offers 80% funding with a 20% local match requirement.

CDTA (Capital District Transportation Authority Bench and Shelter Program): CDTA typically budgets approximately \$400,000 system-wide annually for shelters and benches, including replacements. The demand for shelters and benches outweighs the available funds on an annual basis. Since 2004, CDTA has formalized the criteria used to determine placement of new shelters. Lower volume stops may be outfitted with a bench initially, to provide basic waiting area accommodations.

CMAQ (Congestion, Mitigation, Air Quality): The CMAQ program supports the air quality improvement and congestion relief goals of the USDOT. The program was developed to fund transportation projects and programs that will assist in reaching attainment or maintenance of the national ambient air quality standards for ozone, carbon monoxide and particulate matter. One category of funding, cost-effective congestion mitigation activities that provide air quality benefits, may be consistent with several of the recommendations in this study. All projects funded by CMAQ must reduce ozone, carbon dioxide and particulate matter from the transportation system and thus, contribute to the overall clean air strategy. Funding for the CDTC region totals \$24M for the current 5-year TIP program. Allocations are currently split into five categories and can change with each TIP update. Eligible projects must fall into one of the following general categories:

- Capital investment in new or expanded transportation projects or programs that reduce emissions, including infrastructure, congestion relief efforts, diesel engine retrofits or other capital projects
- Operating assistance for new transit services, intermodal facilities, travel demand management strategies, and incremental costs of expanding existing transit services
- Studies that are part of project development, such as preliminary engineering, under NEPA as well as FTA Alternatives Analyses.

