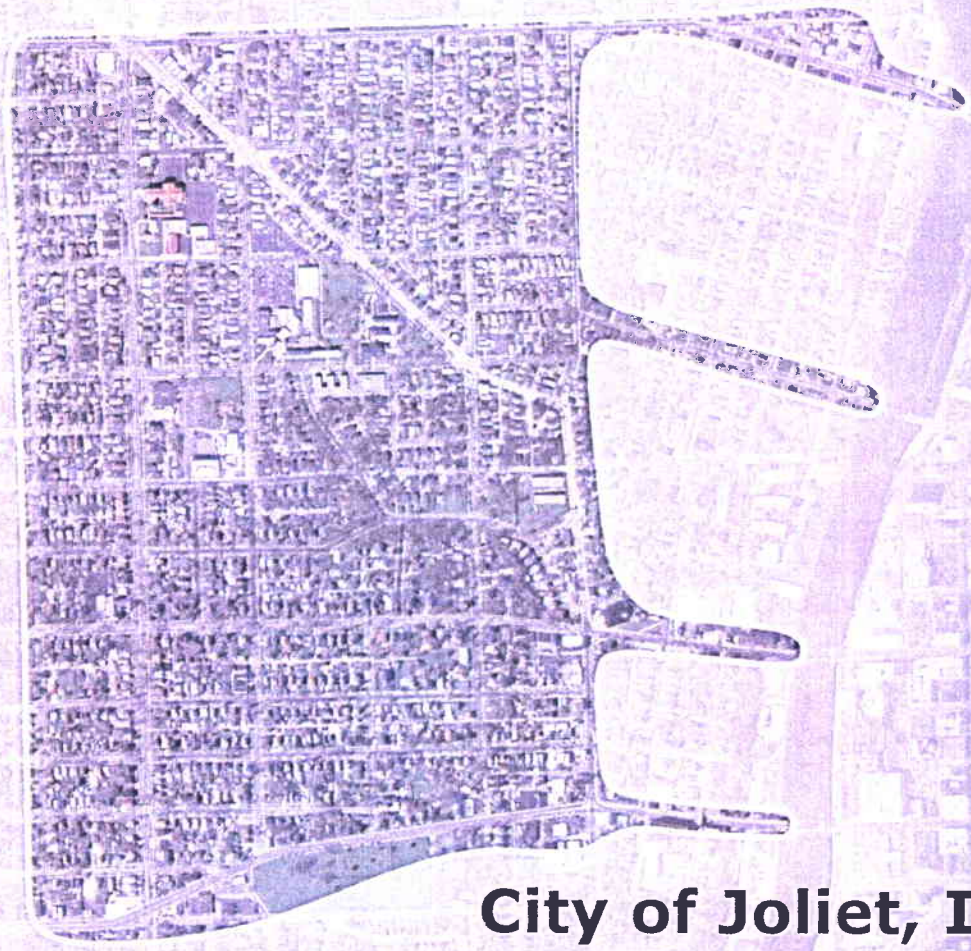


NEAR WEST SIDE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN



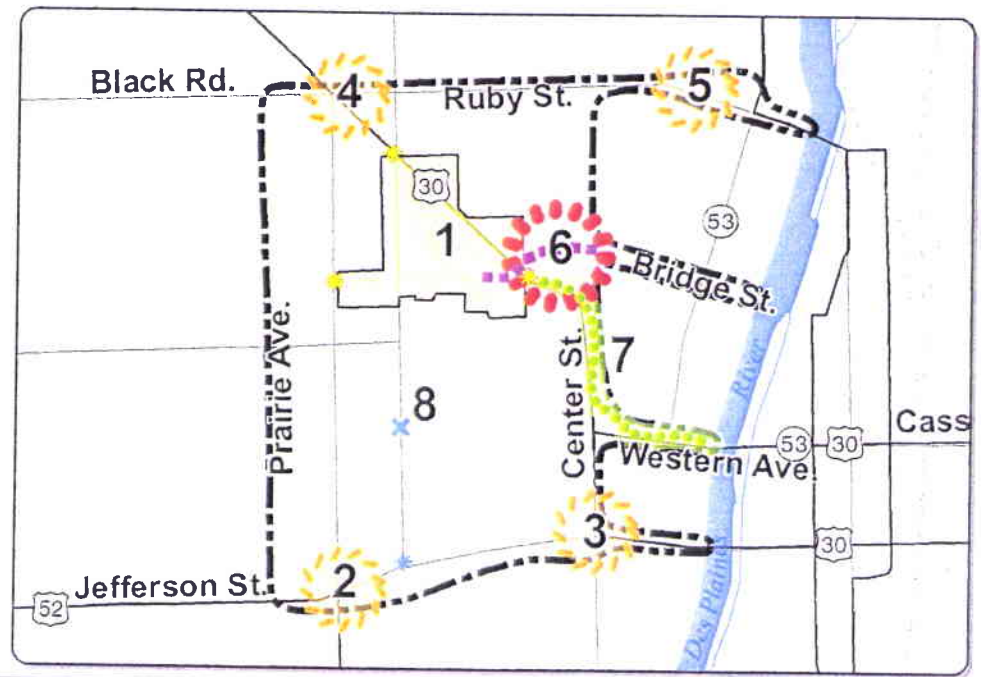
City of Joliet, IL
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Prepared By:



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**JOLIET NEAR WEST SIDE
NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN**

STAKEHOLDERS

Joliet Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry
63 North Chicago Street
Joliet, IL 60432

Joliet Park District
3000 West Jefferson Street
Joliet, IL 60435

Cathedral Area Preservation Association
809 Buell Avenue
Joliet, IL 60435

Joliet Regional Landlords Association
415 Collins Street
Joliet, IL 60432

St. Mary Nativity Neighborhood Group
337 Marble Street
Joliet, IL 60435

Joliet Public Schools District 86
420 North Raynor Street
Joliet, IL 60435

Will County Senior Services Center
251 North Center Street
Joliet, IL 60435

Cathedral of St. Raymond's
604 North Raynor Avenue
Joliet, IL 60435

Diocese of Joliet
425 Summit Street
Joliet, IL 60435

First Presbyterian Church of Joliet
805 Western Avenue
Joliet, IL 60435

Historic Preservation Commission
City of Joliet
150 West Jefferson Street
Joliet, IL 60432

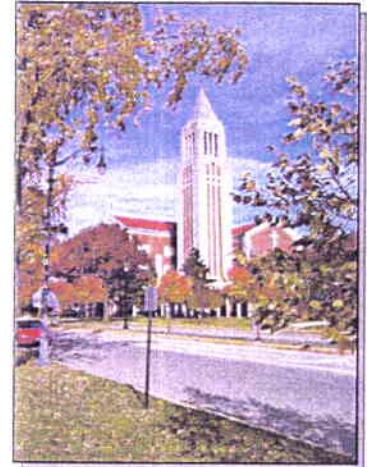
Neighborhood Oriented Policing Team
City of Joliet Police Department
150 West Jefferson Street
Joliet, IL 60432

University of St. Francis
500 Wilcox Street
Joliet, IL 60435

Community and Economic Development Department
City of Joliet
150 West Jefferson Street
Joliet, IL 60432



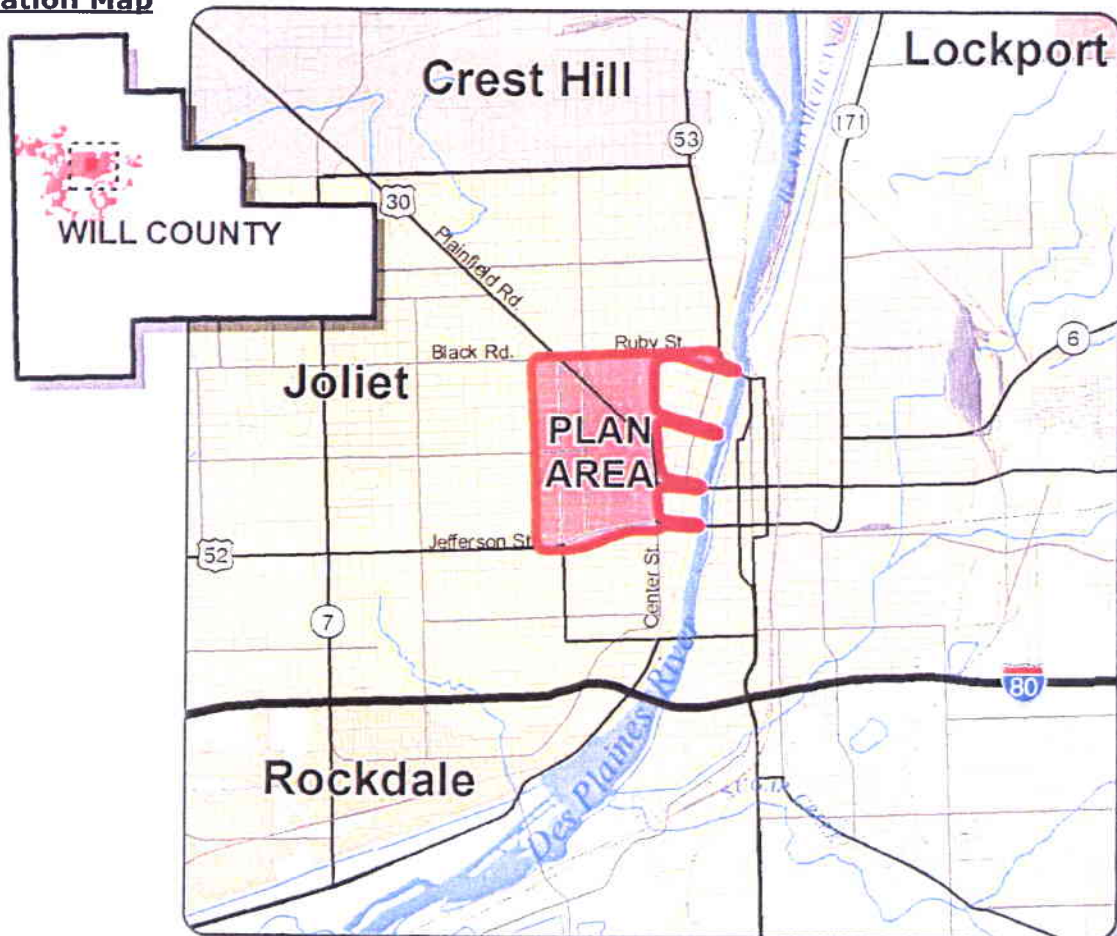
The City of Joliet's Near West Side is a vibrant and diverse urban neighborhood of historic homes, shops, churches and education facilities. It's proximity to downtown, unique historic character and its prevalent religious and education anchors have maintained the neighborhood's character and attractiveness to residents.



Recent years have shown a renaissance in the area as home prices have continually risen and many of the neighborhood institutions have started to implement plans to grow and expand their facilities. Coupled with the resurgence of Joliet's City Center, the Near West Side is an ever-improving jewel in the City of Joliet.

The purpose of this plan is to provide policy level direction to the City and community for key strategies that will further improve and enhance the Near West Side. The planning area covers key intersections that are gateways to the near west side neighborhood as well as downtown Joliet and the Des Plaines River. Generally, the area referred to in this plan is bound by Center Street on the east, Black Road and Ruby Street on the north, Prairie Street on the west and Jefferson Street on the South.

Location Map



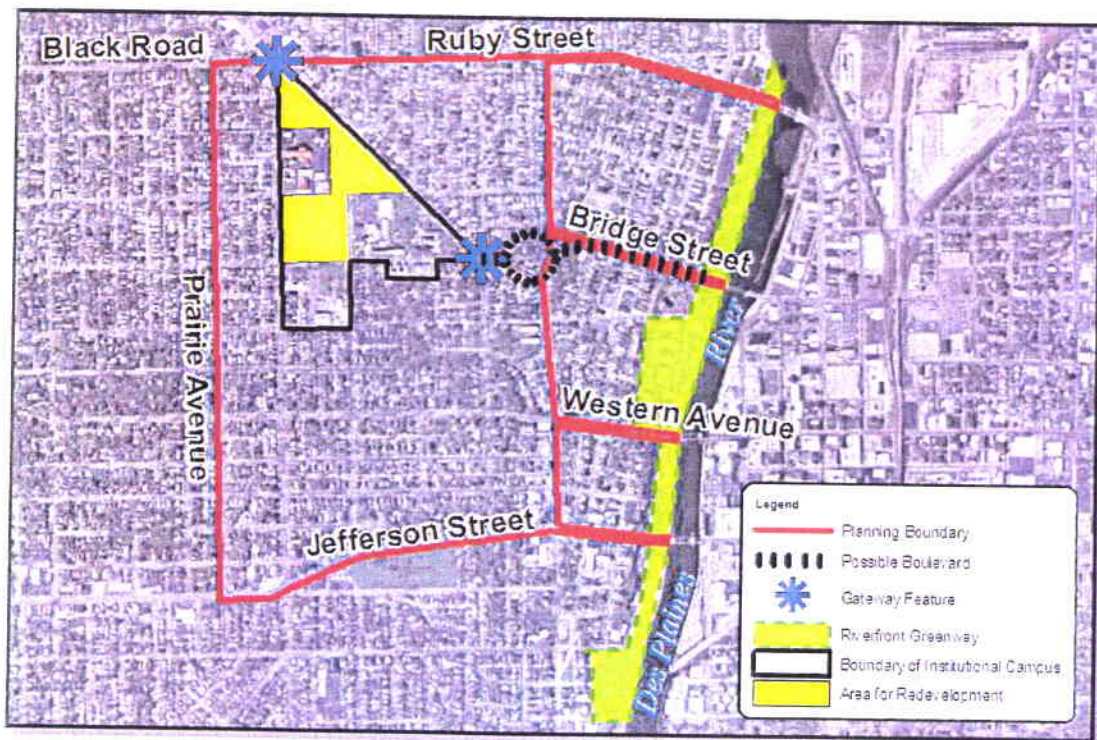
Planning Process

The Near West Side Neighborhood Plan has been created through a process of community involvement and participation. The process started with the identification of key stakeholder groups that have a vested interest in the neighborhood. This group consisted of City officials, neighborhood groups, local associations and groups as well as major institutions within the neighborhood planning area.

An initial kickoff meeting was held with the stakeholders to introduce the process, key issues, opportunities and purpose of creating a plan for the neighborhood. This meeting also helped identify planning activities currently in progress by the institutions throughout the neighborhood.

Following the initial kickoff meeting a survey was sent to the stakeholders to gain input into the neighborhood and to acquire and prioritize each group’s goals and objectives for their organization. This information was used to hold a design charrette to bring together the ideas and goals from the stakeholders. The consensus from the stakeholders during this charrette created strategic goals for the neighborhood such as a boulevard entry and gateway to the downtown area via Bridge Street, gateway features to the University of Saint Francis area, redevelopment opportunities for the institutions, greenway opportunities along the riverfront, and a greenway connection to the City Center.

The involvement of the stakeholders throughout the process provided a majority of the input to create the framework for the plan. The consolidation of these ideas and issues formulated Key Planning Priorities for the Near West Side Neighborhood.



Stakeholder Strategic Goals Exhibit

Historic Preservation

- ▶ Encourage the preservation and restoration of the historic homes located throughout the neighborhood.
- ▶ Ensure that new development is consistent with the historic character of this urban neighborhood.
- ▶ Protect and preserve existing mature trees as they are a vital part of the community's character.
- ▶ Find new uses for vacant or obsolete structures that can maintain their historic character and architecture.



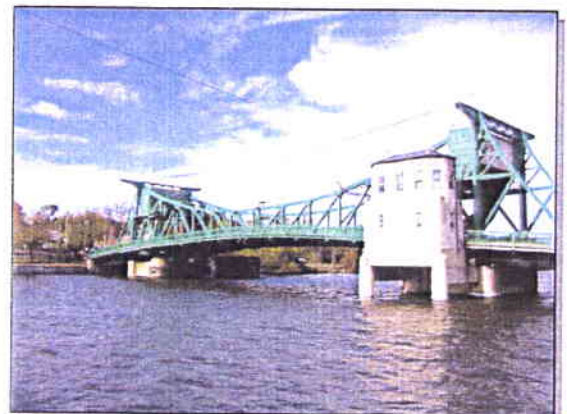
Institutional Growth and Stability

- ▶ Plan for adequate land and facilities for the long term needs of the University of St. Francis, the Cathedral of St. Raymond's, First Presbyterian Church and other neighborhood institutions.
- ▶ Ensure long term institutional growth is compatible with and sensitive to existing residential neighbors.
- ▶ Work with institutions to provide shared facilities such as parking to reduce underutilized and overcrowded areas.



City Center Linkages

- ▶ Develop new and improve existing transportation and greenway linkages between the Near West Side and City Center.
- ▶ Extend Bridge Street west to provide a new City Center Gateway.
- ▶ Develop Route 30 (Center Street) and Western Avenue Greenway.



Retail and Commercial Redevelopment

- ▶ Redevelop strategic intersections at neighborhood gateways with mixed use retail and office developments.

Key Intersections:

- Jefferson Street and Raynor Avenue
 - Jefferson Street and Center Street
 - Plainfield Road and Black Road
 - Ruby Street and Broadway Street
- ▶ Where appropriate, residential housing opportunities should be incorporated into redevelopment plans in a traditional neighborhood form.



Neighborhood Improvements

- ▶ Continued maintenance and improvements to neighborhood sidewalks, streets and lights.
- ▶ Work with neighborhood groups to provide assistance to property owners for incentives and landmark designation guidance.
- ▶ Encourage the application for Landmark status for historically significant buildings.

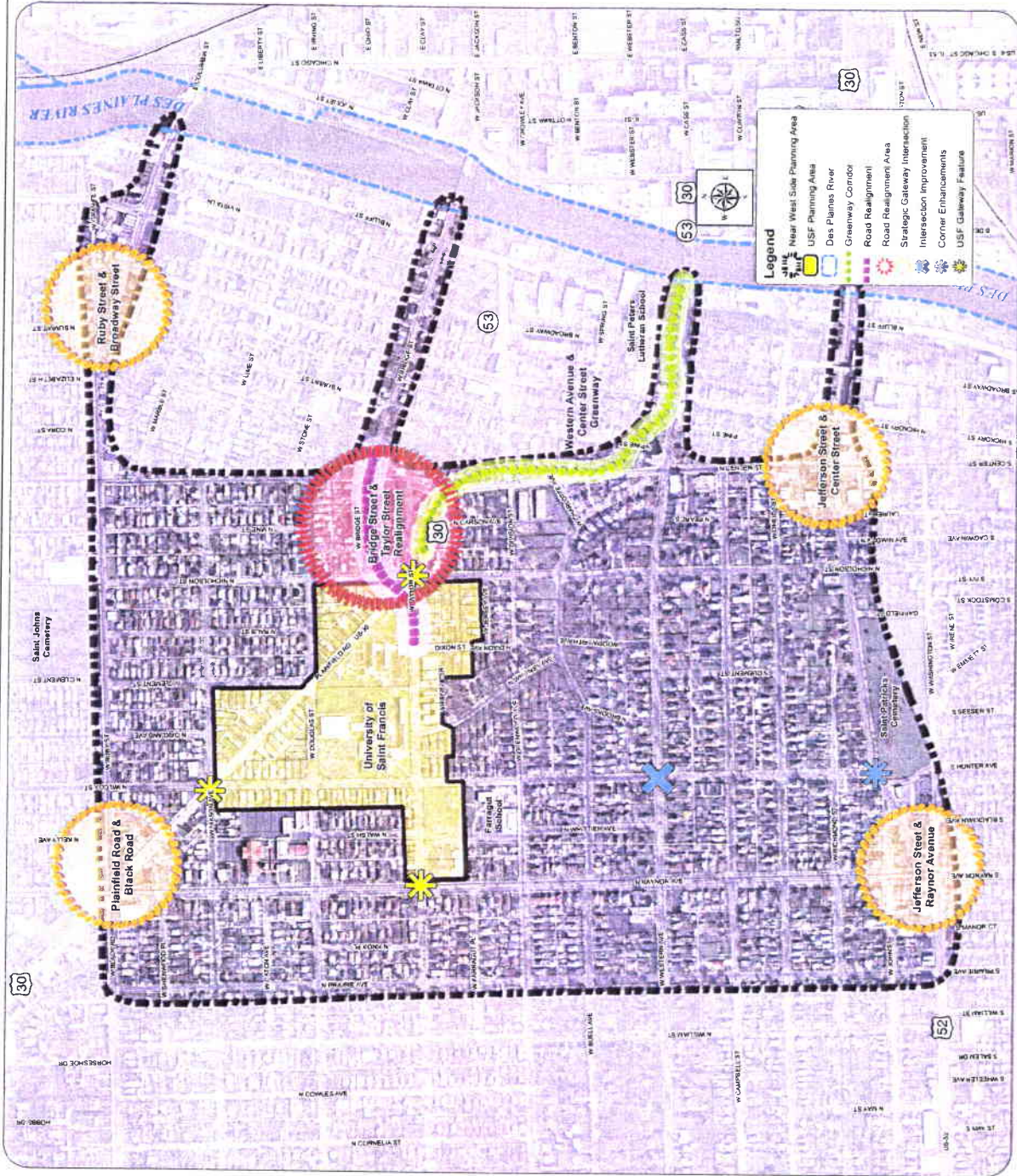


Neighborhood Green Spaces

- ▶ Increase the amount of neighborhood green space for both active and passive recreation purposes.
- ▶ Incorporate active recreation spaces into institutional growth plans.
- ▶ Develop and enhance gateway and green space features at key intersections.
- ▶ Implement greenway linkages between the open spaces, commercial developments and the City Center.



Near West Side Neighborhood Plan



Plan Methodology

The Near West Side Neighborhood Plan has been developed as a means of realizing the identified key planning priorities.

The four eastern extensions of the planning area are to be viewed as a network of connections to the existing city center. By focusing on these critical linkages, it helps to improve the overall accessibility of the area to both automobile and pedestrian traffic. Additionally, it will bring added accessibility to the nearby riverfront.

The revitalization of strategic gateway intersections will provide the area with recognizable points-of-entry, contributing to an enhanced sense of identity for the Near West Side.

The existing institutional presence is viewed as a positive influence and anchor within the neighborhood, and opportunities for future facility enhancement and expansion should be pursued. Interactions between these newly-proposed elements and existing residential neighborhoods should remain fluid. Access to proposed open space and greenways shall be both universal and prominent.



The University of St. Francis was established in 1920 as a private Catholic University and currently has approximately 4,000 students and 300 full and part time faculty. This institution is an anchor in the near west side and has a large vested interest in the continued revitalization of this area. The University is located on Route 30, adjacent to Douglas Street and Taylor Street in the heart of the near west side planning area and is a regional draw of students, faculty and programs.



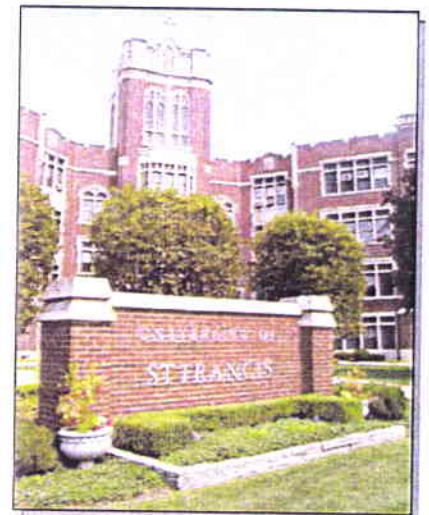
The transportation needs as well as the location within

the historic and largely residential neighborhood create challenges in integrating the University's current and future goals and objectives.

The University of St. Francis Master Plan was developed as the result of an extended planning effort, charged with the purpose of setting a strategic course for future campus development. Existing facilities, as well as potential areas of expansion were inventoried and analyzed against the four project goals of *form, function, economy and time*.

Form-based goals were developed relating to the site, the physical environment and the quality of open space and construction. *Function-based* goals were constructed relating to activities and the relationship between spaces and people. *Economy-based* goals related to initial construction budgets, operating costs and fund-raising strategies. *Time-based* goals were formed with the influences of history, the inevitability of change and projections for the future in mind.

The collection of ideas that resulted from this extensive goal generation process was then converted into an actual plan for future campus development. Another series of meetings and workshops was conducted, with input and participation geared towards laying out a prescribed framework of ideals and imperatives for future land development to follow. Upon completion of this meeting process, a comprehensive land plan was developed addressing the identified areas of concern.

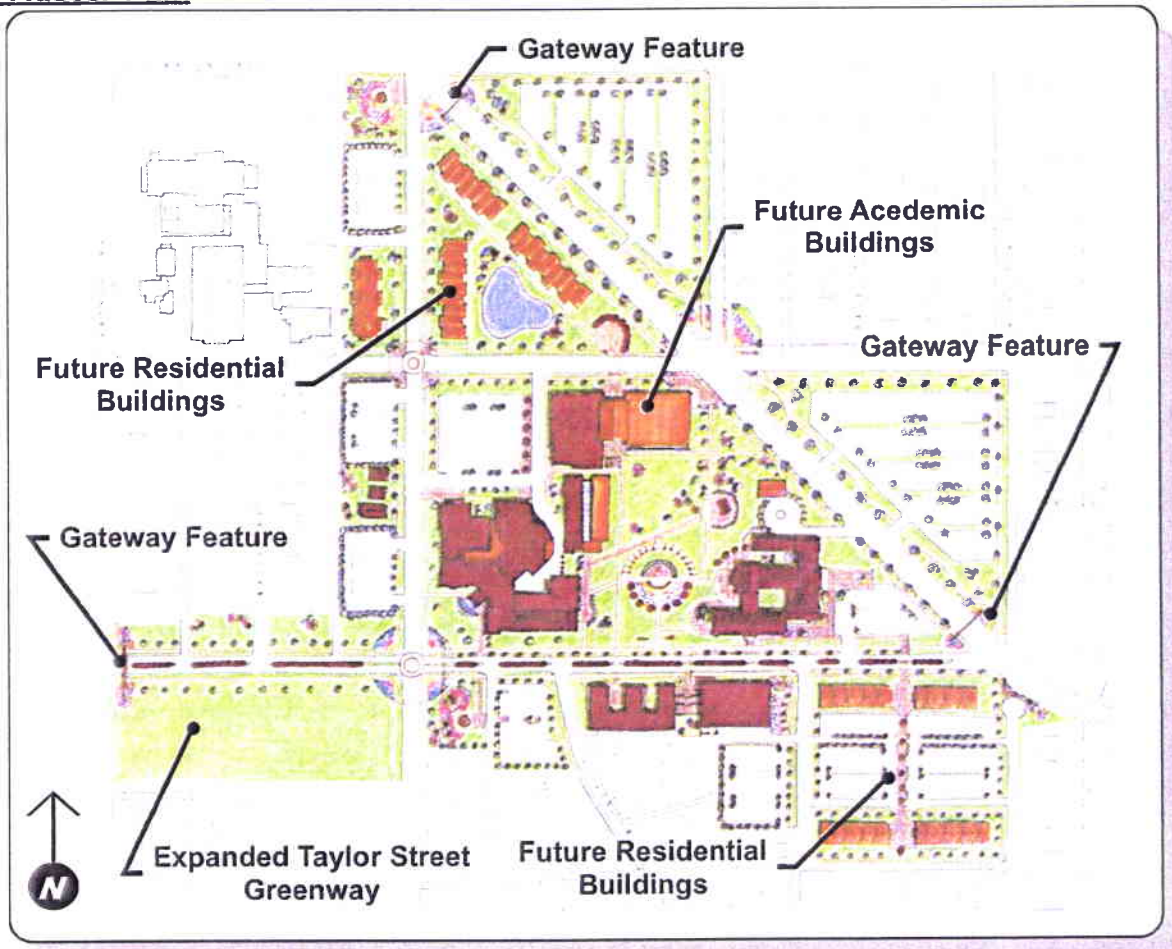


- ▶ Provisions are made for the development of new entrance gateway features and unifying thematic design elements to be applied at key locations around campus.
- ▶ The redevelopment of several properties within campus was considered as a way of meeting a recognized need for expanded academic and residential facilities.

- ▶ The acquisition of specific land lying adjacent to the existing campus was also identified as a means of providing sufficient parking and open space for future campus expansion.
- ▶ The instillation of a campus experience that remains consistent with the overall historic character of the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

The proposed land plan provides a strategy for meeting the identified goals established in the planning process by providing locations for future facilities, open spaces, parking facilities and identifying gateway feature locations.

USF Master Plan



The USF Master Plan has made preparations for the development of multiple adjacent properties, to be used as locations for new residential buildings, academic facilities, parking facilities, and expanded institutional amenities. The plan will foster a unified campus identity by creating a unique character with identifiable features. Multiple gateway features are to be introduced to set the entrance and boundaries within the campus. Open spaces and parks are to be expanded and the boulevard already built along Taylor Street is to be extended along with additional greenway to Raynor Avenue.

USF Gateway Concept & Streetscape Elements

Representative illustrations from the USF Master Plan of potential gateway entrances, landmark treatments, and thematic elements (i.e. decorative pillars/signage) are included on this page. These features will aid in improving the overall campus identity and improving the character of the neighborhood. Streetscape enhancements are to be applied throughout the entire campus neighborhood through streetscape and open space elements.



Isometric view of proposed land plan



Suggested gateway intersection concept



Intersection treatment and pillar concept



Entry feature concept with gateway arch detail



The Near West Side Neighborhood Plan has identified four existing intersections as critical locations of regional importance. The intersections possess great potential in terms of initiating a network of thematic development within the neighborhood. By creating a sound presence of pedestrian-related retail and commercial activity, it is intended that all portions of the study area will collectively benefit from the resulting community identity and sense of place.



Strategic Gateway Intersections

Jefferson Street and Raynor Avenue	(2)
Jefferson Street and Center Street	(3)
Plainfield Road and Black Road	(4)
Ruby Street and Broadway Street	(5)

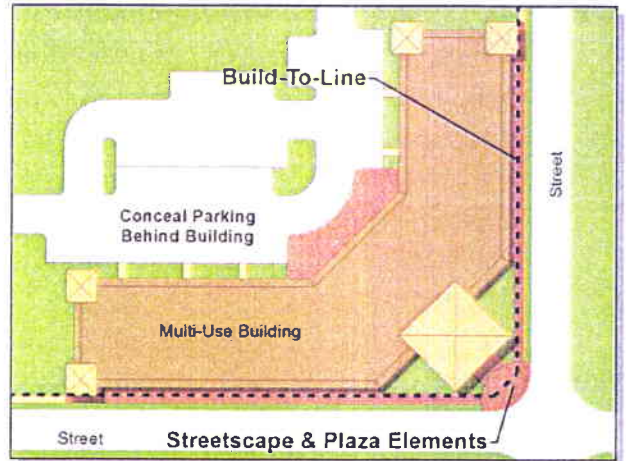
Redevelopment Guidelines

The following identified characteristics should be incorporated into the future design of all strategic gateway intersections. Many of the design guidelines can be used throughout the rest of the planning area to carry on the urban theme.

- A. Redevelopment should provide mixed-use buildings bringing retail, office and potential residential uses together.
- B. All building architecture and site plans shall be designed to blend with the historic and urban character of the neighborhood. Architectural elements and massing such as towers should be utilized at key points in buildings to provide visual interest and emphasize the pedestrian entrances.
- C. Buildings should have a strong street orientation and provide significant pedestrian oriented details. The use of build to lines can require buildings to be closer to the street to blend with the urban design of the neighborhood.
- D. Parking is encouraged to be shared and concealed behind buildings where practical.
- E. Pedestrian oriented design shall include streetscape improvements, planters, benches and green space areas and connections.
- F. Open space areas should be connected with pedestrian trails and sidewalks and provide amenities such as benches, gazebos and public art displays.
- G. Parkways and open spaces should be landscaped to enhance the character of the neighborhood.
- H. Lighting and signs should match the historic nature of the neighborhood and be designed as part of the architecture of the buildings.

Intersection Plans

The proposed enhancements to the Strategic Gateway Intersections include multi use buildings, areas of pedestrian-friendly commercial uses, concealed parking facilities, local trail access, gateway park features, public fountains and gathering spaces. Illustrative designs and pictures are shown to depict possible design features and concepts and should not be used to limit the design creativity of individual sites implementing the desired amenities and characteristics.



Mixed Use Opportunities

The incorporation of mixed-use developments within plans for the strategic gateway intersections holds multiple purposes. It allows for the placement of retail uses at the street level, serving as the primary engine of pedestrian activity. It also enables the creation of a residential presence at the upper-levels and a twenty-four hour a day presence on the site. The multi-use buildings provide a transition from the retail oriented frontage of the major streets to the residential neighborhoods directly adjacent while maintaining the traditional urban design. The inclusion of neighborhood convenience uses and outdoor eating areas at café's and restaurants within these mixed use developments will foster pedestrian activity from the surrounding neighborhoods. Special attention should be made to create active ground floors providing large windows and features to create an active streetscape.



Pedestrian Right-of-Way Elements



Another key element of intersection design is right-of-way configuration and amenities. Wide sidewalks extending immediately from building fronts, brick pavers, tree planters or planting grates, and enhancement features such as bollards, bike racks and benches provide visiting patrons with access that is both safe and aesthetically-pleasing. The public areas need to be lighted properly to provide a sense of security twenty-four hours a day while being designed to be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. The connection of the intersections to nearby trails, sidewalks, other greenways and commercial elements are essential to creating an appropriate atmosphere for pedestrian activity.



Intersection Treatments

The interaction between pedestrian and automobile traffic should also be appropriately planned for. Variations in pavement materials can help to create designated points of crossing for pedestrians, adding to overall safety and accessibility. These intersections are also ideal locations for the application of landscape planting beds, and corner landmark elements.



Open Space

The Strategic Gateway Intersections should include areas of public open space where appropriate to provide community gathering points. The pedestrian oriented developments can be enhanced by tying into adjacent public open spaces with trails and sidewalks.



Jefferson Street & Raynor Avenue



Raynor Avenue Boulevard

The redevelopment of the Jefferson Street and Raynor Avenue intersection proposes the creation of a highly-active community focal point. It is to serve as the primary gateway entrance into the planning area from the west via Route 52. Raynor Avenue is the primary corridor for access into the near west side neighborhoods and has been enhanced with a landscaped boulevard.

The main distinguishing element of this intersection plan is the gateway park feature. The park should include elements such as a public gazebo, trail-way access and a landmark fountain.

This enhanced open space will significantly contribute to the community identity of the immediate area and provide for needed green space.

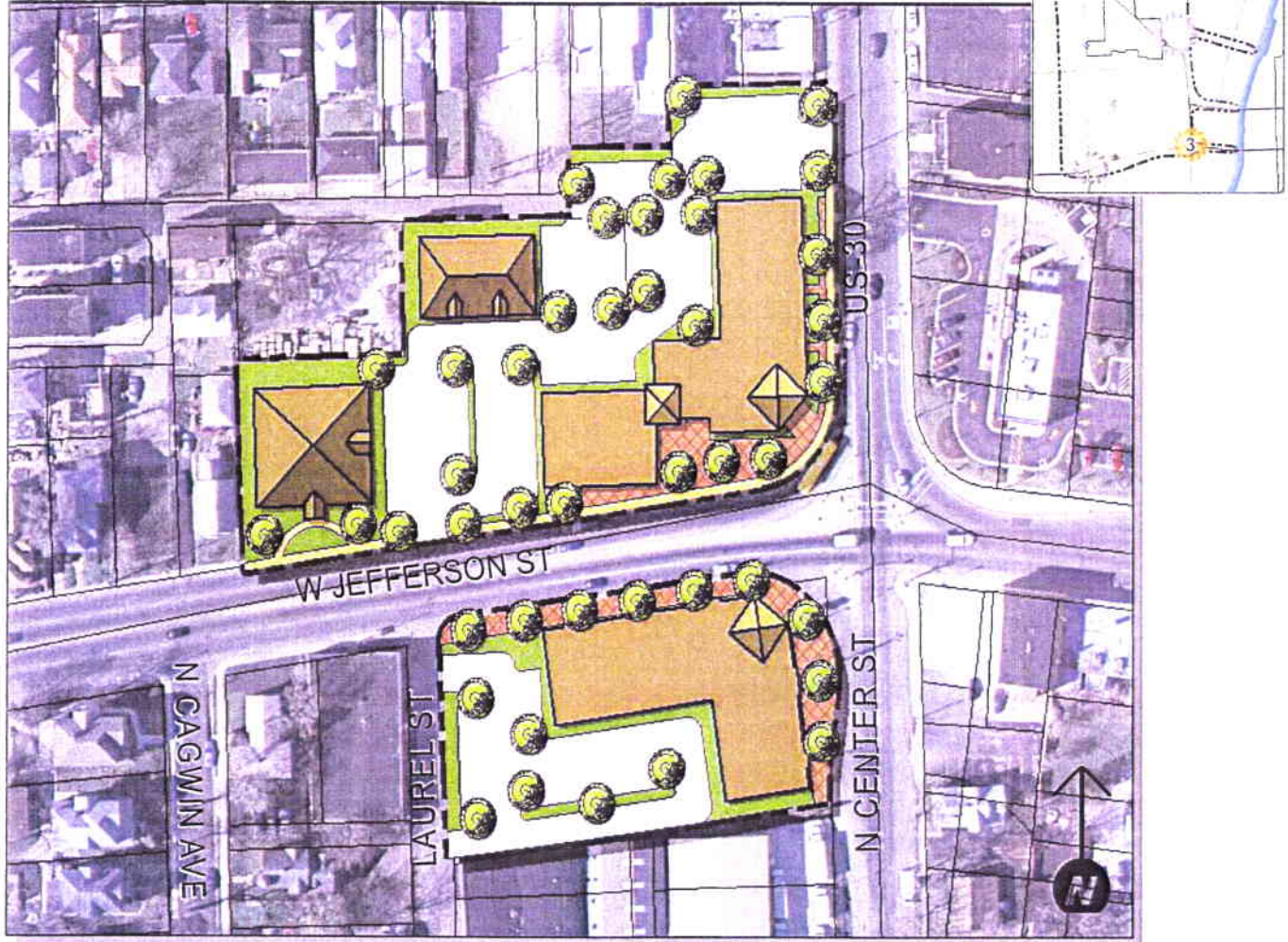
The commercial portions of this intersection are to be geared toward the pedestrian, with all automobile access and parking located internally. Connections between these internal areas and activity at the street front will be created at scenic courtyard locations. The application of brick pavers should also be utilized to instill a sense of place at intersections and other points of interest.

The architecture of the buildings will need to be closely reviewed as the different sites should contain a continuous theme and character.



Open Space Enhancement

Jefferson Street & Center Street

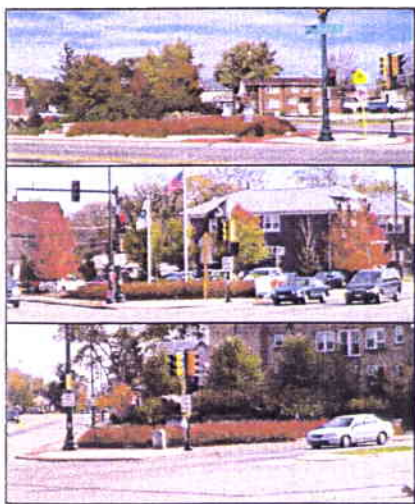


The intersection of Jefferson Street and Center Street is of regional importance as it sits on the crest of the Des Plaines River Bluff overlooking downtown Joliet as well as being the transition from the near west side neighborhoods to downtown Joliet along Route 52. The redevelopment plan for the intersection of Jefferson Street and Center Street has been provided with an expanded pedestrian right-of-way, providing opportunities for extensive amenities such as benches, planting beds, outdoor dining areas and locations for public art. The combination of these elements with the existing intersection improvements on the southeast corner and with intended storefront activity will allow for a recognizable gateway to be created in the southeast corner of the planning area.

By placing parking facilities internally with complimenting landscaping, a high-quality commercial node can be created at this critical intersection. Having such a location in this region of the study area, will provide an appealing transition between the Near West Side and the existing downtown.



Plainfield Road & Black Road



Existing Intersection Improvements

The intersection of Black Road/Ruby Street and Plainfield Road is the primary entry-way to the planning area from the north via Plainfield Rd (Route 30). This intersection already has improvements at the corners consisting of brick pavers walkways and landscaped features. A redevelopment of the area to the southwest will provide for a gateway to the community and provide expanded commercial space. All commercial uses are to be oriented to the street, with all parking and subsequent access points located on Wilcox St or Ruby Street. The development should provide extra wide pedestrian ways with a possible courtyard gathering space. The buildings will need to be designed to orient store fronts facing the street to provide an active facade. The development of neighborhood convenience shopping within walking distance of the surrounding neighborhood will require provisions for design of safe crossing locations for pedestrians along the major roads.

Ruby Street & Broadway Street



The Ruby Street and Broadway Street intersection redevelopment plan is the primary gateway to the near west side from the north along Broadway Street and to the north side of the downtown area. The intersection sits atop a high bluff with a view over the river. The plan for this intersection includes provisions to increase the neighborhood openspace with a gateway park as an entrance feature. A connection to the Broadway Greenway to the north is a vital part of extending the trails and access points throughout the neighborhood. A potential trail east to the river can create additional connections to the downtown area and a possible riverfront greenway extension.

Commercial uses for this intersection are focused on the street. Parking lots should be located in back, and parking access should be controlled to direct all traffic to the adjacent streets. The plan would eliminate the intersection of Granite Street and Ruby Street to provide for additional greenspace and simplified traffic flow.

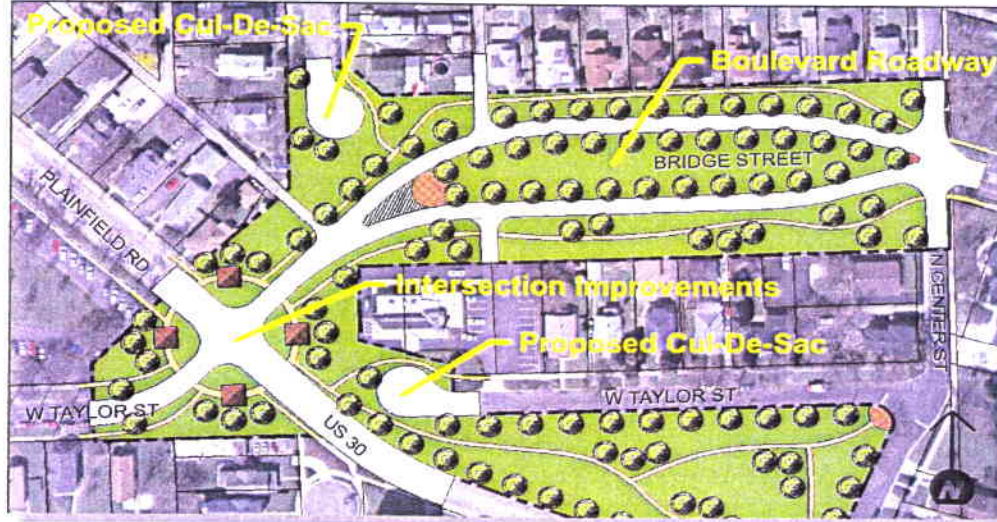


Bridge Street & Taylor Street Realignment

Existing Conditions



Proposed Conditions



The proposed realignment of Bridge Street and the Taylor Street intersection with Route 30 will improve connectivity by providing an efficient route from the near west side to the City Center. The realignment also provides an opportunity to create an attractive gateway to the area as well as a scenic corridor between the USF campus and surrounding neighborhood. The intersection includes amenities such as a large boulevard, trails and open space with connections to the proposed Western Avenue and Center Street greenway.

The realignment will create a safer intersection crossing of Route 30 by improving the sight distances and crossing angles from what currently exist. Nicholson Street and Taylor Street are proposed to be terminated in cul-de-sacs to provide for less congestion and larger spacing between intersections. The realignment of Bridge Street will provide an efficient and attractive alternate route between the near west side and downtown areas.

Western Ave. & Center Street Greenway

A strategic corridor connecting the near west side neighborhood from the University of Saint Francis campus and realigned Bridge Street intersection to the riverfront has been identified as a potential location for a greenway corridor. This greenway will provide attractive pedestrian access to downtown Joliet and the existing riverfront greenway as well as provide additional greenspace within the near west side.



Guidelines

The following items have been identified as the essential functions of this potential neighborhood feature.

- A. Provide a pedestrian oriented greenway linkage from the near west side to the City Center & Riverfront Greenway with trail connections.
- B. Integrate plan and design elements with the proposed realignment of Bridge Street to provide for a seamless open space and scenic greenway.
- C. Incorporate hardscape and landscape elements such as benches, gazebos and paver gathering areas consistent with neighborhood design standards.
- D. Create an observation location along the riverfront as a focal point along Center Street.
- E. Grade transitions should utilize decorative stone retaining walls.
- F. Public art sculptures, paintings and other elements should be added along the greenway consistent with existing displays.

The redevelopment along the east side of Center Street and the north side of Western Avenue will enable the creation of a pedestrian-related amenity that will serve several functions (see Greenway Plan on next page). It will initiate a lengthy network of pedestrian trails and open space, ultimately connecting to the riverfront via Western Ave. The greenway corridor will also provide numerous locations for recreation and the display of public art. The proposed river look out and fountain area located along the riverfront will provide a focal point and destination point along the greenway.



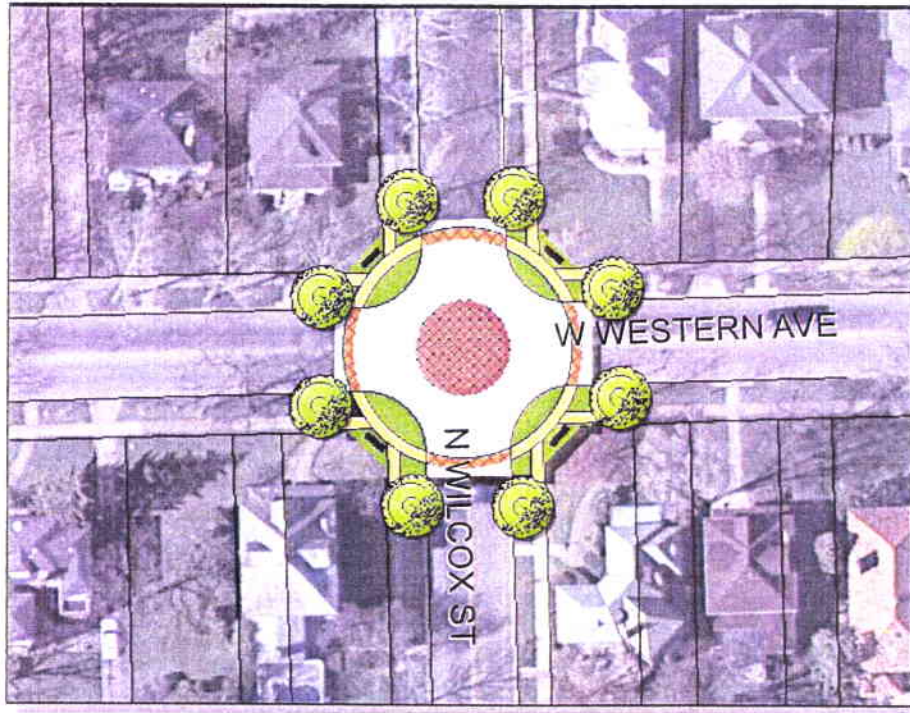
Existing public art displays located adjacent to the proposed greenway

Greenway Plan



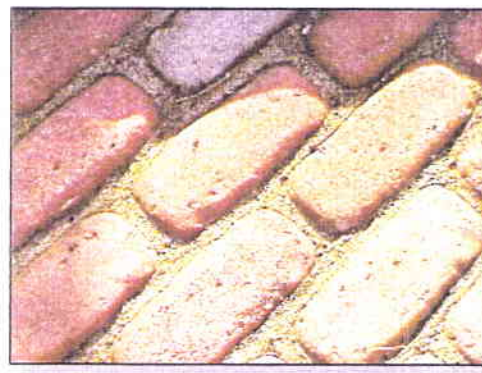
Existing improvements along the west side of Center Street

Intersection Plan



Intersections within the near west side neighborhood can significantly benefit from some simple improvements. As an extension of the ideas and elements suggested for the strategic gateway intersections, basic enhancements such as the example illustration above of Wilcox Street and Western Avenue can extend the theme and character throughout the neighborhood. The extension of the improvements throughout the planning area will bolster the identity of the neighborhood.

The implementation of varied pavement surfaces such as pavers or stamped asphalt or concrete within the parkway and pedestrian crossings and unifying structural elements will be primary components of these standard intersection improvements.



The application of brick pavers at improved intersections, along with structural elements (ie. decorative pillars) add to the overall visual quality of the neighborhood.