

Gateway District Plan

City of Sylvania, Ohio

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OVERVIEW

As a mature and vibrant community on the west side of metropolitan Toledo, the city of Sylvania is located along the US-23 corridor, providing access to the region and encouraging growth opportunities. Sylvania's heritage of great neighborhoods, committed employers and cultural amenities sits within the natural framework of the Ottawa River and its tributaries, providing a unique character to the community.

Several decades of changing lifestyle patterns, shopping habits and the introduction of the automobile have slowed economic development in Sylvania's downtown core and along Monroe Street, its primary east-west thoroughfare. Collectively described as the Gateway District, these areas contain buildings and land, developed before the automobile was invented, that no longer appropriately address Sylvania's needs and create barriers to redevelopment. First impressions, particularly for a visitor coming from US-23, are confusing, unattractive and do not provide a strong sense of place.

CREATING THE VISION

In the fall of 2006, Sylvania embarked on a transformative planning effort to define a vision for the Gateway District that will effectively guide civic investment; attract new businesses, stores and residents; and ensure Sylvania's vitality and appeal for current and future generations.

The Sylvania Gateway District Plan is a community vision. The planning process evolved from constant input and refinement from the citizenry to create a document and a path of which the entire community can be proud. Its success depends upon the continuing involvement of everyone who has participated, as well as the new champions of Sylvania's vision.

The vision contained in the plan is for an idealized future for the Gateway District, and is not a final site plan. Each element represented within the document will depend upon funding, economic conditions, employment opportunities, lifestyle trends and specific site conditions. It is the combination and inter-relationship of all the elements that makes the vision work.

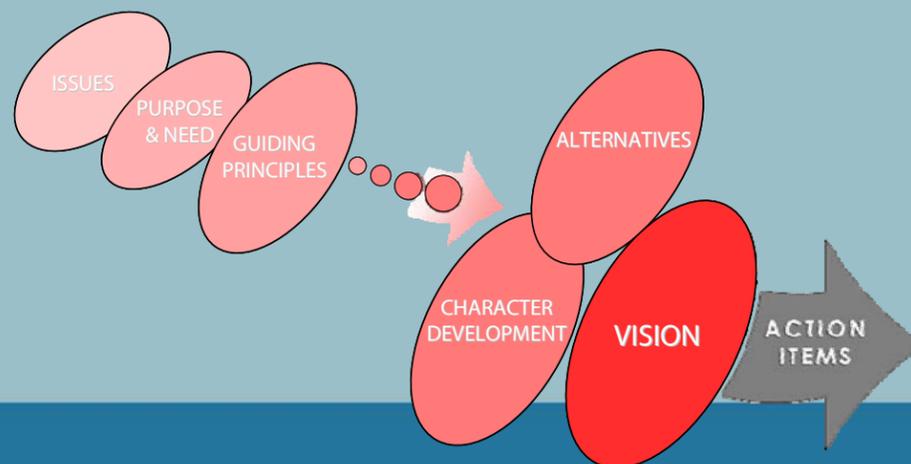
One clear defining plea was heard throughout the process: this is the heart of our community, it needs to work better and we want to be proud of it. The manifestation of pride comes in many forms: occupied store fronts, flower boxes on upper story windows, continuing education classes at night, historic structures preserved, sidewalk café seating that is full, clean sidewalks and easy to find parking—signaling that the Gateway District of Sylvania is alive and thriving.

To reach this level of pride, the community needs to make some difficult decisions. Sylvania's Gateway District is at a crossroads; it has a collection of commercial, retail and office uses that work independently of each other to varying degrees of success and do not create the feeling of being a cohesive district.

Exciting, successful downtowns don't just happen, they are the result of many people pouring their lives into their businesses, homes and community where they believe there is a future. The Gateway District Plan represents that future.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

1. Identify community **assets and issues** through public comment, leadership input and visual assessment.
2. Address the issues with a defined **purpose and need** statement for the district.
3. Establish guiding principles that Sylvania will use to meet the needs of the Gateway District.
4. Develop a series of concepts that address land use, building massing, placement and scale, parking, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, streetscape character and natural systems.
5. Create the plan that utilizes concept preferences, includes a refined streetscape strategy, and makes fundamental district and subdistrict action item recommendations.



DEFINING THE STUDY AREA

The Gateway District encompasses the Central Business District (CBD), the Monroe Street business corridor west of US-23 and the civic campus along Monroe, west of the railroad tracks. The boundaries are defined by recognizable landmarks and land use transitions:

South

Delineated by the Ottawa River

North

Erie Street where land use transitions to residential neighborhoods to the north

West

Where the civic campus transitions to residential neighborhoods at Silica Street

East

Intersection of Alexis and Monroe directly east of the US-23 interchange where land use along Monroe transitions to more vehicular oriented, larger format commercial development

There are four subdistricts that are created by common characteristics and shared issues:

Regional Gateway

Visual and physical connection to the region via US-23

Monroe Street Corridor

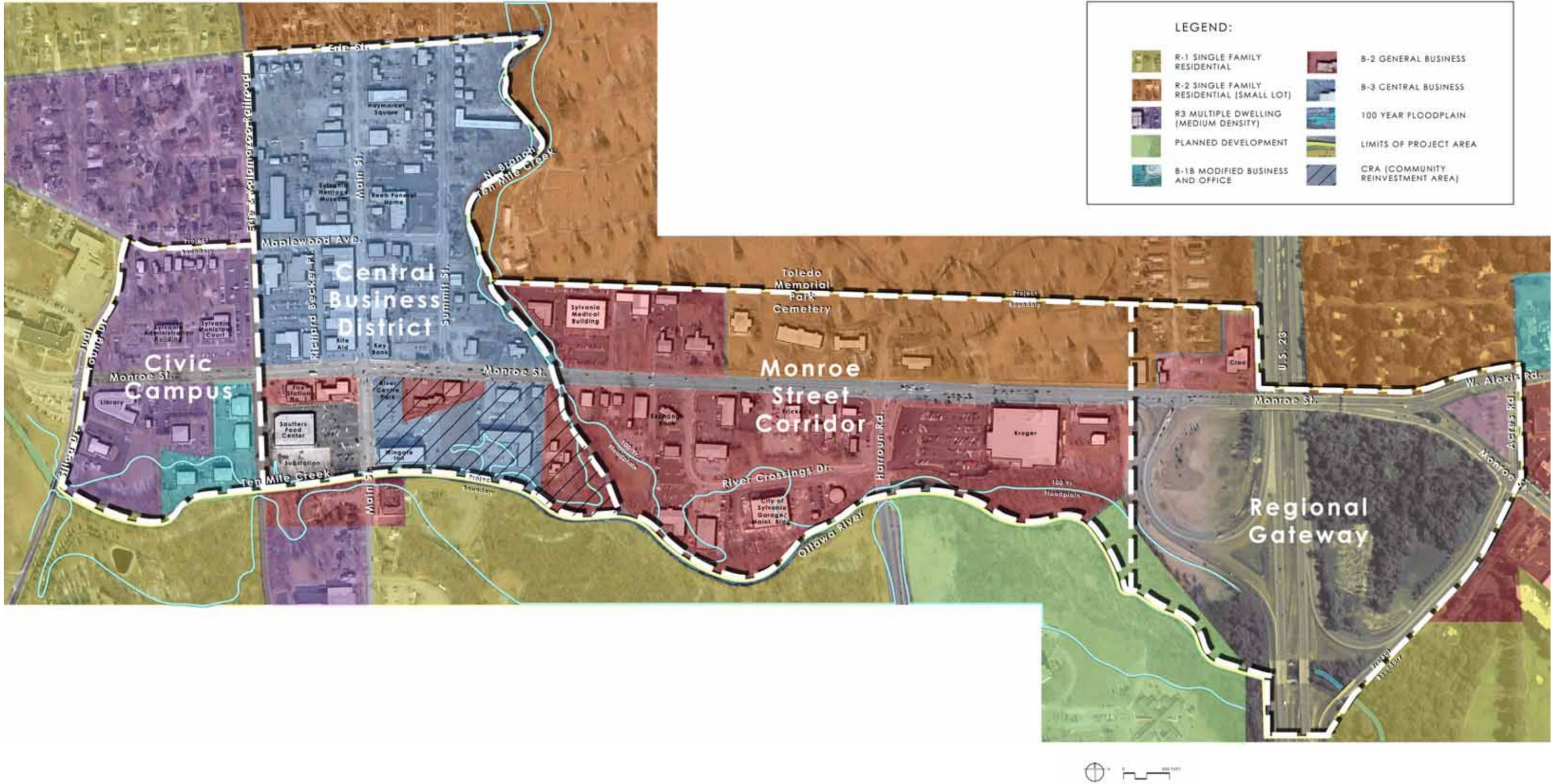
Business and commercial offerings in an automobile oriented corridor

Central Business District

Historic district/downtown village character with one-to two-story masonry buildings located on the Main Street right-of-way (R.O.W.)

Civic Campus

Civic uses including library, city hall and courts



COMMUNITY ASSETS

Simply defined, a community asset is something easily recognized that positively contributes to the overall character of the Gateway District. Sometimes, they can be easily overlooked or taken for granted—but take any of the assets away, and a different, less dynamic district is created. Imagine Sylvania without the Ottawa River, the core of historic buildings along Main Street, or the community's great schools. In a community workshop, stakeholders were asked to identify the following:

- Features
- Reasons to Visit Downtown
- Opportunities (ways to make the district better)

At the end of the workshop, all of the responses were compiled and sorted by topics and issue type. The result is captured in the Issue Summary—these are the challenges the Gateway District Plan must respond to and resolve.

Features

- Main Street/Downtown/Historic
- Parks/Recreation/Bike Trails
- Ottawa River/Ten Mile Creek
- Schools
- Proximity to US-23/Accessibility of Major Freeways
- Adjacency to Toledo – Toledo Zoo, Museum of Art, MetroParks
- Civic Amenities – City Hall/Museum/Library
- Major Employers – Hospital/Lourdes College
- Sylvania Lifestyle – Events
- Neighborhoods (nice, affordable)

Reasons to Visit Downtown

- Socialize with “Neighbors”
- Restaurant and Pub
- Small, Quaint Shops and Restaurants that are not Chains/Galleries/J&Gs/Salons/Gift Shops/Etc.
- Restaurants
- Unique Shops Not Found in Malls
- Restaurant with Outdoor Seating
- Shop at Lily's
- Pick Up Baked Goods at Brieschke's Bakery
- Appointment at Reve or Creative Designs

Opportunities – A Community Perspective

- Provide a central community center for families, children and adults.
- Improve bike access to downtown and around the district.
- Construct a traffic reliever route in addition to Monroe Street.
- Provide better control of lights—morning flow of traffic to Flower Hospital.
- Build footbridges across both creeks.
- Make one statement with all elements; there are currently too many different looks. “Less is more!”
- Open views to the river, and preserve floodplains and natural landscapes.
- Control planting—limit to native.
- Add a small art cinema to draw people to Sylvania.
- Provide more shops and restaurants: coffee shop, contemporary clothing store, shoe store (not a chain), children's clothing, music/book store (possibly used). Mix old with modern elements: trendier and hip, lunch restaurant, family friendly restaurants, bed & breakfast.
- Resolve parking issues (Monroe Street). Add parking garage and more parking downtown (angle parking).
- Provide more freedom for exterior building expression, as long as it is well done (reference Europe).
- Improve regional traffic issues.
- Improve gateway(s)—image and functionality.
- Create development standards (now and in future).
- Develop a regional master plan.
- Eliminate above-ground electrical lines.
- Consider a boulevard on Monroe Street and minimize curb cuts.
- Preserve historic development/rural farmland.



Ten Mile Creek



Monroe Street

ISSUES SUMMARY

Wayfinding Challenges

Confusing traffic routes, excess curb cuts, signs and utilities resulting in uncomfortable and limited pedestrian experience

Redevelopment Barriers

Vacancies and limited options due to small and shallow parcel sizes, obsolete commercial buildings and lack of organized parking

Underutilized/Diminished Natural Systems

Valuable waterfront real estate is underutilized; limited visual and physical connections to a community asset; riverine system degraded by development within the floodplain (increased flooding, high insurance rates, loss of habitat)

Unremarkable User/Visitor Experience

Absence of clear focal points, lack of uniformity (architecture & spatial) and indistinctive character

Regional Gateway:

Defining Element:

Visual connection to/from the region via US-23.

Issues:

Limited welcoming cues to visitors. Presence from US-23 gives little indication of what Sylvania has to offer combined with poor signage and minimal streetscape represents a lost opportunity for increasing visits to community. Limited connections to adjacent neighborhoods.

- 1.1 acres
- central open space provides location for Sylvania identity sign
- location of mature trees in island open space hinders views of identity sign
- important viewsheds
- overabundance of directional signage without a planned strategy makes wayfinding difficult



- 2.6 acres
- isolated commercial uses front Monroe and buffer residential to the north
- initial visual impression of Sylvania for southbound US-23 traffic



- overabundance of signage is confusing and makes wayfinding difficult
- overhead utility lines add to visual clutter



- 21.1 acres
- challenged by ODOT jurisdictional constraints
- depressed elevation of US-23 restricts visual connection to Monroe corridor and Sylvania community
- existing landscape within cloverleaf presents nondescript image of Sylvania to visitors



Monroe Street Corridor:

Defining Element:

Business and commercial offerings in automobile-oriented fashion.

Issues:

Access and circulation challenges due to excessive curb cuts, high traffic volumes and a patchwork of small parcel sizes. Additional issues include visual clutter (signage, overhead utilities) and minimal pedestrian connection. Inefficient use of land due to uncoordinated response to natural bluff, the location of non-prime civic uses, and lack of cooperation between parcel owners.

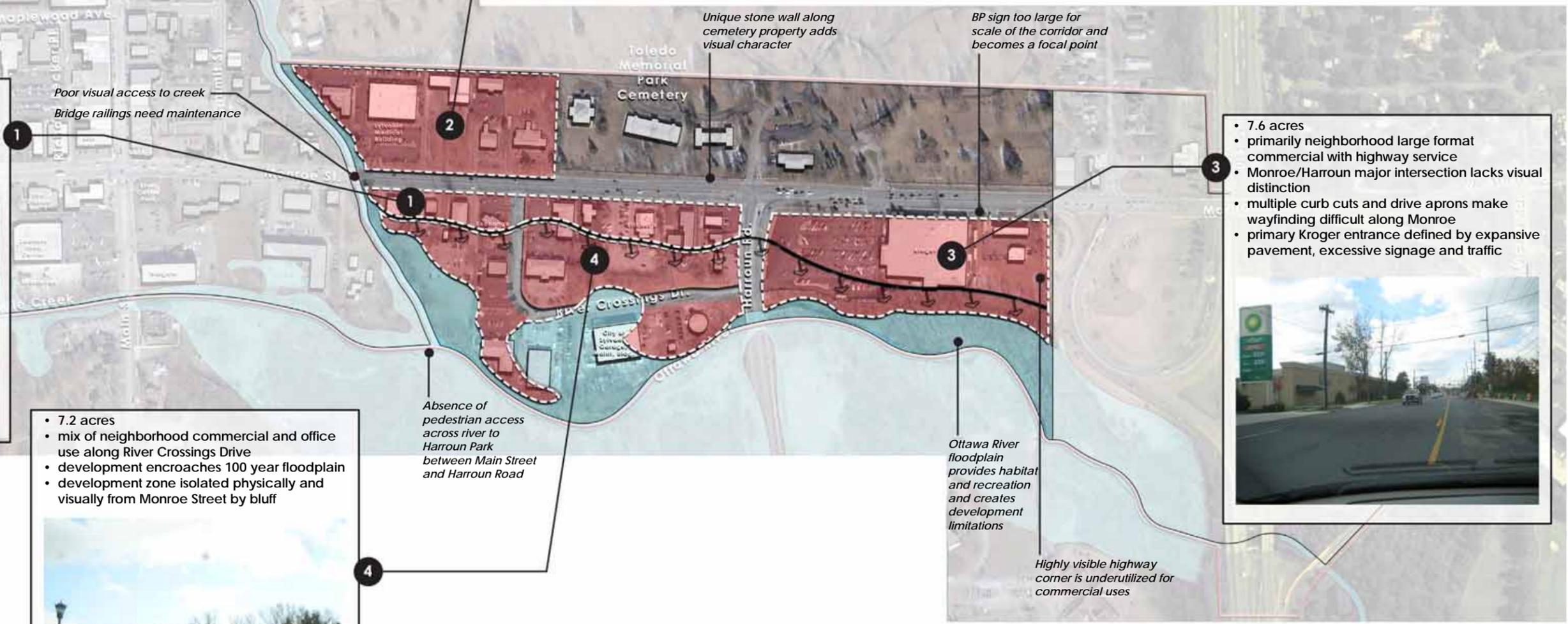
- 6.7 acres
- mix of neighborhood commercial (medical office, retail and banking)
- large setback from Monroe Street with parking in front yard
- short visits generate high peak traffic volumes
- steep grade change at R.O.W. creates challenges, but adds visual interest



- 3.3 acres
- commercial development fronts Monroe
- small parcel/individual owner
- shallow development zone constrained by Monroe Street and Ottawa River bluff
- multiple curb cuts and drive aprons make wayfinding difficult along Monroe



Poor visual access to creek
Bridge railings need maintenance



Unique stone wall along cemetery property adds visual character

BP sign too large for scale of the corridor and becomes a focal point

Absence of pedestrian access across river to Harroun Park between Main Street and Harroun Road

Ottawa River floodplain provides habitat and recreation and creates development limitations

Highly visible highway corner is underutilized for commercial uses

- 7.6 acres
- primarily neighborhood large format commercial with highway service
- Monroe/Harroun major intersection lacks visual distinction
- multiple curb cuts and drive aprons make wayfinding difficult along Monroe
- primary Kroger entrance defined by expansive pavement, excessive signage and traffic



- 7.2 acres
- mix of neighborhood commercial and office use along River Crossings Drive
- development encroaches 100 year floodplain
- development zone isolated physically and visually from Monroe Street by bluff



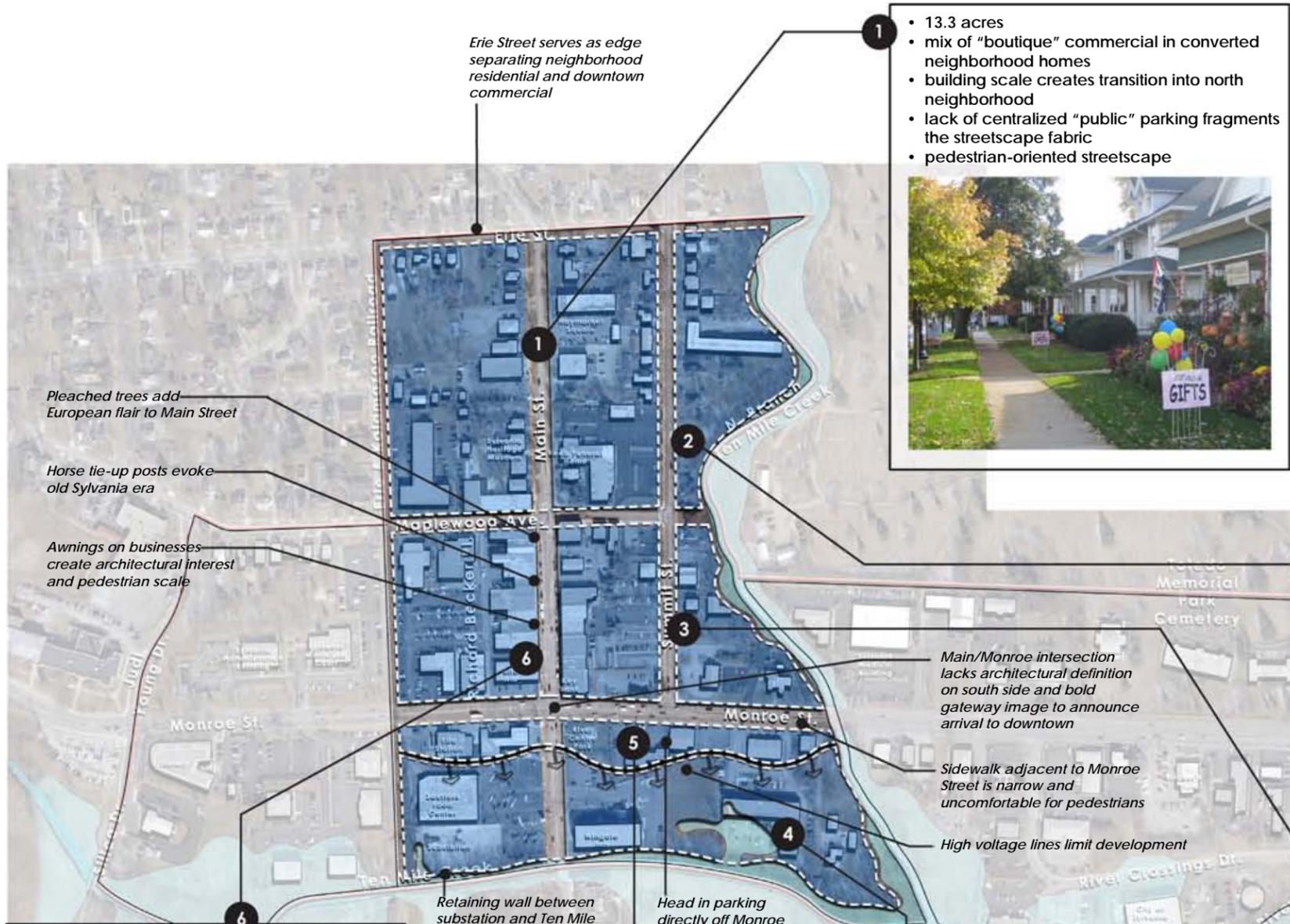
Central Business District:

Defining Element:

Historic main street/downtown village character with 1-and 2-story masonry commercial buildings with little or no setback from the Main Street R.O.W.

Issues:

Current retail composition lacks a balance between everyday needs, services, and destination type retail. High vacancy rate coupled with limited commercial offerings – not a compelling/necessary destination. Other issues include limited/poor signage, lack of a focal point, and no organized parking system.



- 13.3 acres
- mix of "boutique" commercial in converted neighborhood homes
- building scale creates transition into north neighborhood
- lack of centralized "public" parking fragments the streetscape fabric
- pedestrian-oriented streetscape



- 4.1 acres
- mix of single family/multi-family residential
- frontage along Ten Mile Creek is desirable
- rental conditions diminish neighborhood character north of Maple Avenue



- 2.7 acres
- mix of small lot neighborhood commercial
- gaps in building frontage along Monroe Street fragments the streetscape fabric
- proximity to Monroe Street & river underutilized
- first impression of CBD



- 8.2 acres
- mixed use development consists of 1- to 3-story buildings with on-street parking
- defined intact streetwall at R.O.W.
- streetscape with site furnishings, accent paving and street trees create a pedestrian-oriented environment
- high vacancy east side of Main Street
- back of house parking is poorly identified and difficult to access
- lack of streetwall along Monroe and Summit



- 2.6 acres
- wide range of uses including commercial, park and fire station
- shallow development zone fronting Monroe constrained by Ottawa River bluff
- lack of centralized "public" parking fragments the streetscape fabric



- 8.4 acres
- mix of hotel, commercial and office
- existing building placement does not relate to Main Street
- development encroaches into floodplain
- grocery store in CBD adds diversity to downtown commercial



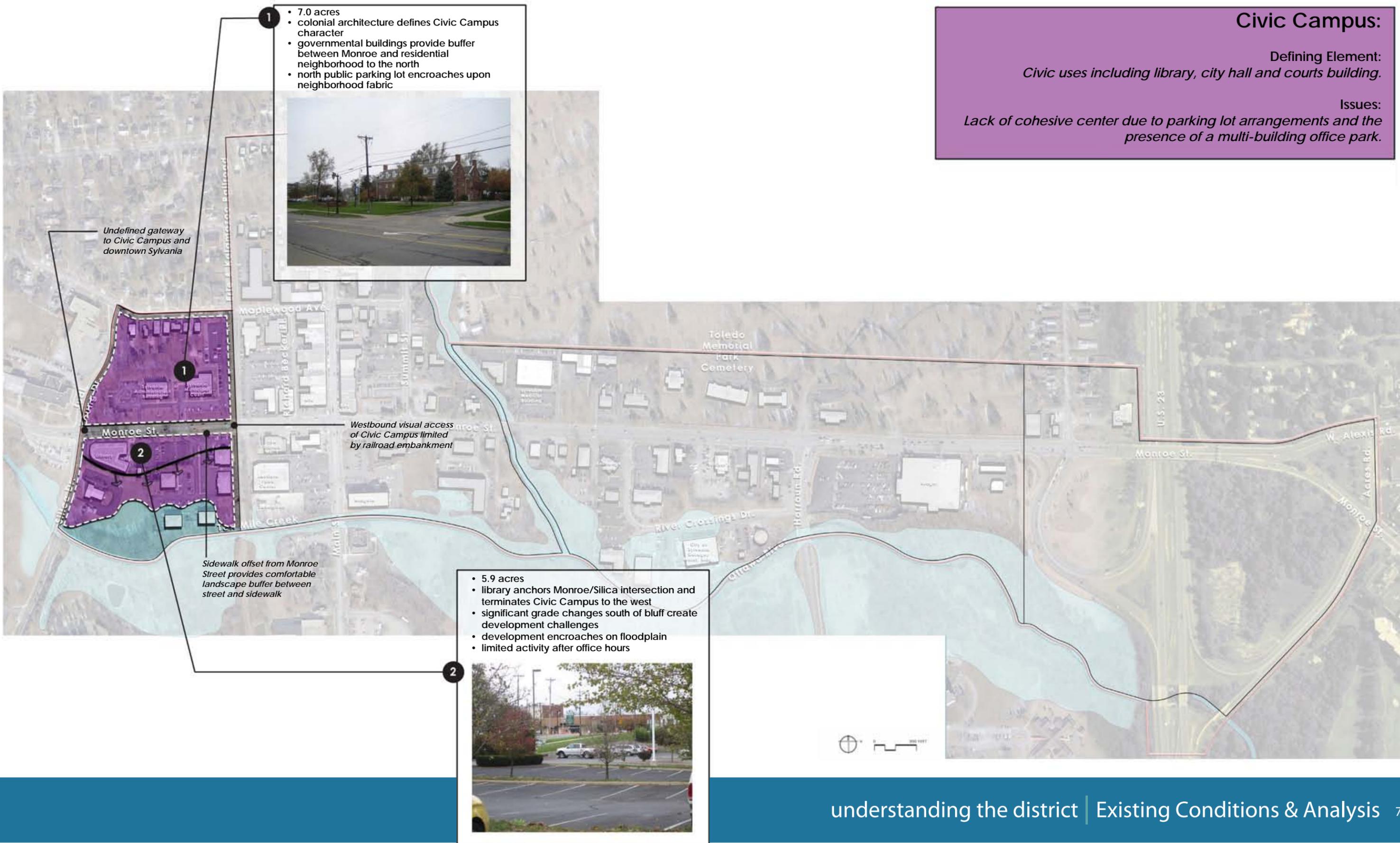
Civic Campus:

Defining Element:

Civic uses including library, city hall and courts building.

Issues:

Lack of cohesive center due to parking lot arrangements and the presence of a multi-building office park.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

It is easy to get lost in the details of reviving and improving an entire district. With so many technical, financial and site related issues to resolve, it is easy to lose sight of the big picture. Guiding Principles act not only as reminders of what is important to accomplish, they act as a test for new ideas or conditions. For each idea, ask “Is this principle being accomplished?”

Strengthen Downtown

Minimize redevelopment barriers and resolve wayfinding challenges.

Enhance Monroe

Resolve wayfinding challenges and minimize redevelopment barriers.

Connect to Nature

Value, use and connect to the waterfront.

Spotlight Highlights

Enhance the user/visitor experience and create a unique sense of place.

Provide More Options (Housing & Retail)

Minimize redevelopment barriers.

THE FUNDAMENTALS

Fundamentals are shorthand for how to create the ideas contained within the Guiding Principles. For example, if the principle is “Enhance Monroe,” the Fundamentals will identify specific ways and opportunities to do so.

1. Improve the pedestrian experience.
2. Reclaim the river.
3. Update/enforce architectural and historic guidelines.
4. Encourage downtown redevelopment.
5. Rethink type, location and amount of retail.
6. Develop a parking strategy.
7. Apply access management.
8. Consolidate parcels.
9. Increase district residential.
10. Coordinate signage.
11. Enhance cloverleaf delineated gateway.

EXPLORING THE ALTERNATIVES

Using the Guiding Principles and their Fundamentals, a series of alternative district plans were developed to explore opportunities in land use, circulation, massing, open space planning and image enhancement. The intent of each Guiding Principle is reflected in these alternatives:

Alternative #1 – Restore Sylvania

Strengthen the Gateway District by simplifying land uses through parcel consolidation, shared access and parking, and attraction of a significant single user on the south side of Monroe.

Alternative #2 – Four Corners

Redefine the Monroe corridor by introducing residential uses along the corridor, and focus redevelopment downtown at the Main/Monroe Street intersections.

Alternative #3 – To The River

Focus on revitalizing downtown Sylvania by expanding the CBD through increased density (commercial, office and residential) in and around the downtown core.

ASSESSING THE ALTERNATIVES

Alternatives show different ways of enacting the Fundamentals in a cumulative and specific way. Decisions and difficult choices are embedded in each alternative. With each decision, inter-related dependencies (e.g., a new parking lot is created by removing a building) are created and expanded upon that create new patterns.

Assessing the alternatives reveals the preference of how to prioritize and resolve issues in a cumulative way—finding and keeping the elusive balance between preservation and new development, independent needs and civic needs, open space and urbanity, and convenience and tradition. It is this balance that makes Sylvania what it is.

Each alternative was reviewed in terms of the balance it represents and how well it meets the Guiding Principles and Fundamentals. The following list identifies the specific questions that were used by the Steering Committee to assist them in assessing the alternatives.

Does the alternative propose a strong strategy to “strengthen downtown”? Is there a focus on Main street? Are entry points defined? Is there a place for events/activities?

Does the alternative improve Monroe Street? Do adjacent land uses minimize clutter? Is the experience improved? Is it better than other sections of Monroe?

Does the alternative provide a variety of new options? Are residential densities compatible? Is housing on Monroe viable? Is there too much retail?



Does the alternative embrace the river and other open spaces? Natural areas are the pride of Sylvania. Does the alternative provide visual and physical access? Does it encourage restoration?

Does the alternative highlight the positives? Are the gateway areas organized/simplified? Is the downtown visible? Are public spaces accessible?

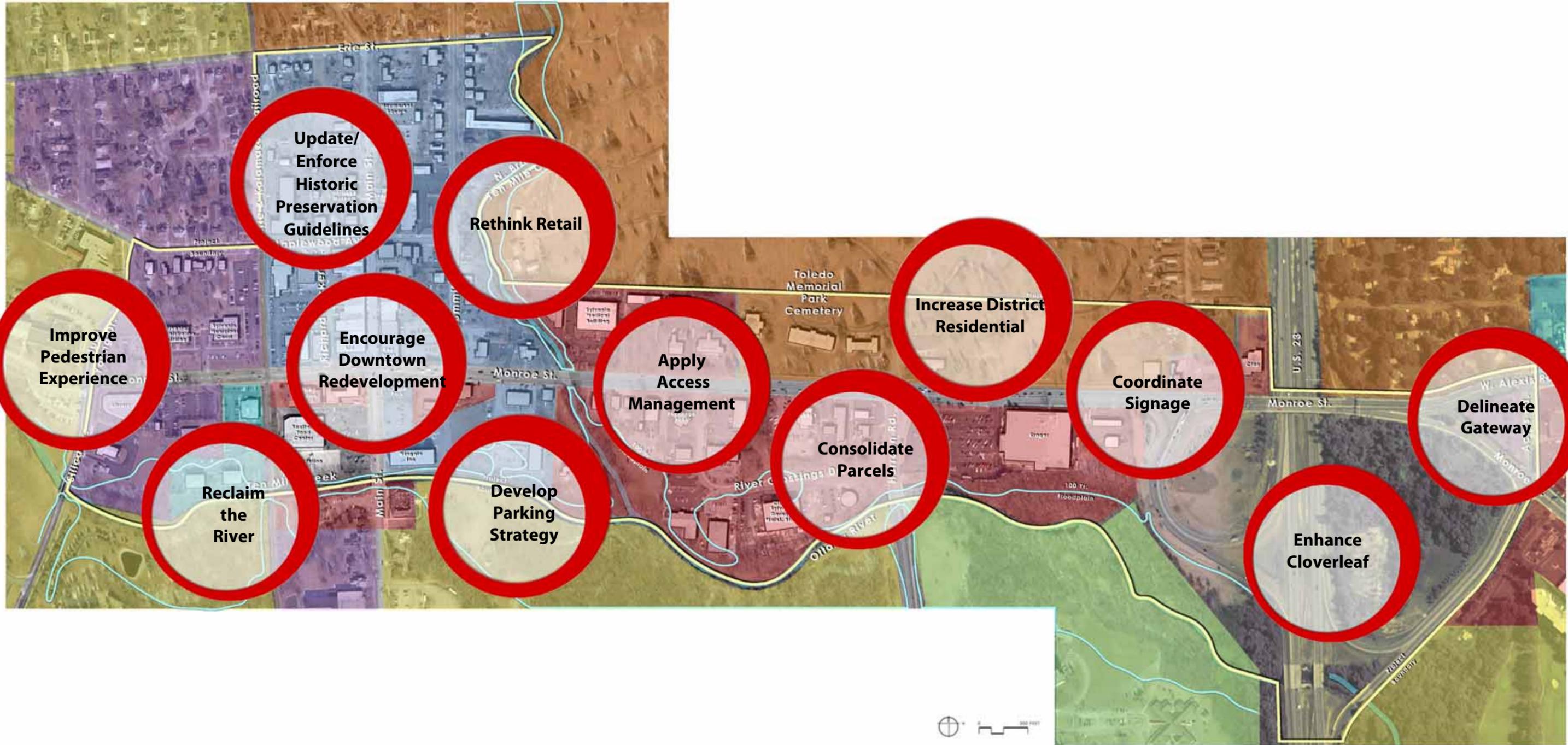
CREATING THE GATEWAY DISTRICT PLAN

At the end of the assessing the alternatives exercise, a better understanding of what elements were most important to Sylvania emerged:

- A tight urban core sited at the corner of Main and Monroe that blends old and new
- The creation of an easily identifiable Civic Campus linked to the downtown
- A significantly enhanced Monroe Street experience, with simplified land uses and a new boulevard
- Restoration of the river and floodplain and expanded pedestrian greenways throughout the Gateway District
- A new city park as entry to downtown for gathering, special events and programmed activities

There were some ideas expressed in the alternatives that were not looked favorably upon, including too much density in the downtown and residential uses along Monroe Street.

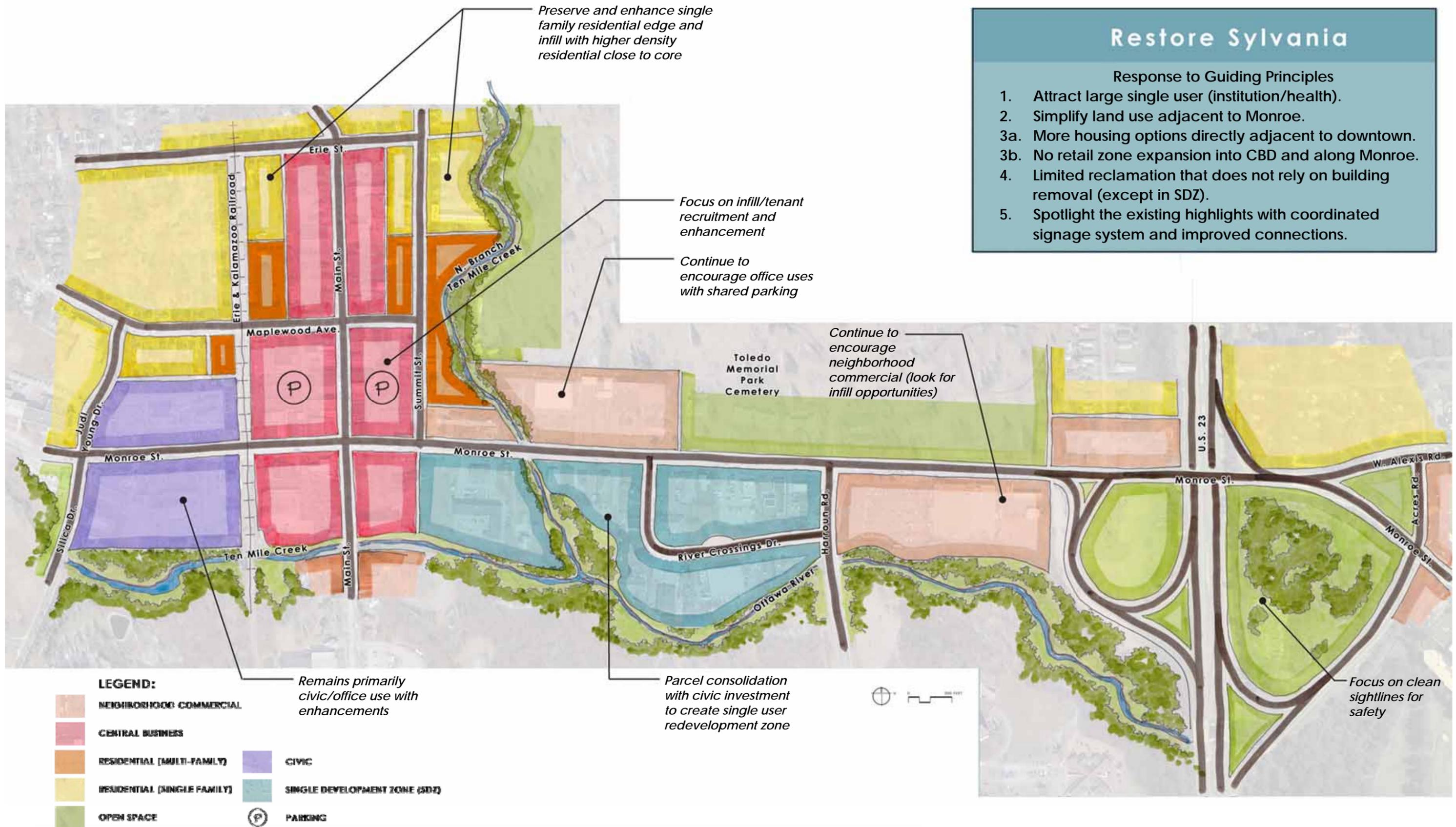
Taken together, these larger ideas created the framework for an alternative plan that was refined, debated and reworked. At the end of the process, it became the Gateway District Plan.



Restore Sylvania

Response to Guiding Principles

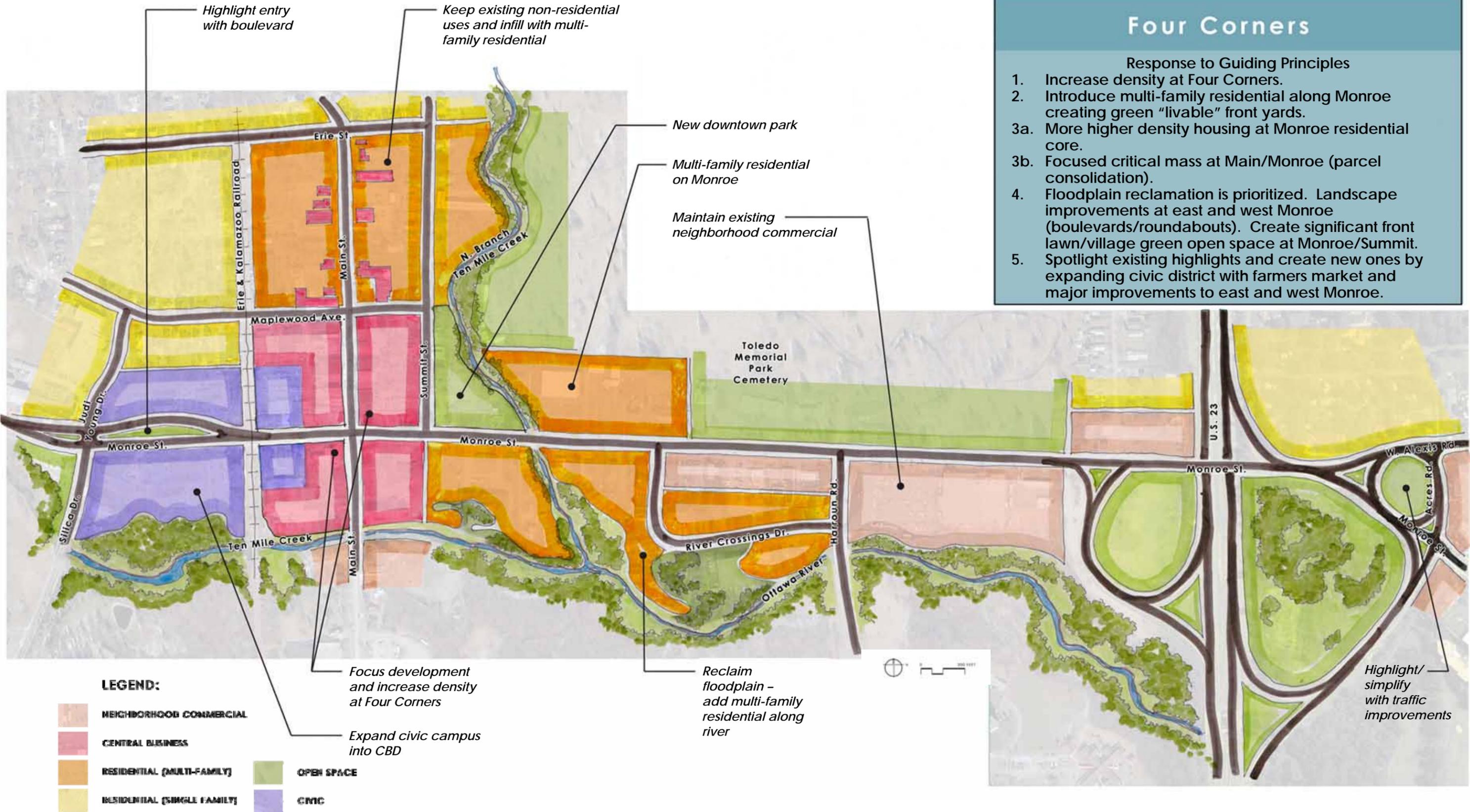
1. Attract large single user (institution/health).
2. Simplify land use adjacent to Monroe.
- 3a. More housing options directly adjacent to downtown.
- 3b. No retail zone expansion into CBD and along Monroe.
4. Limited reclamation that does not rely on building removal (except in SDZ).
5. Spotlight the existing highlights with coordinated signage system and improved connections.



Four Corners

Response to Guiding Principles

1. Increase density at Four Corners.
2. Introduce multi-family residential along Monroe creating green "livable" front yards.
- 3a. More higher density housing at Monroe residential core.
- 3b. Focused critical mass at Main/Monroe (parcel consolidation).
4. Floodplain reclamation is prioritized. Landscape improvements at east and west Monroe (boulevards/roundabouts). Create significant front lawn/village green open space at Monroe/Summit.
5. Spotlight existing highlights and create new ones by expanding civic district with farmers market and major improvements to east and west Monroe.



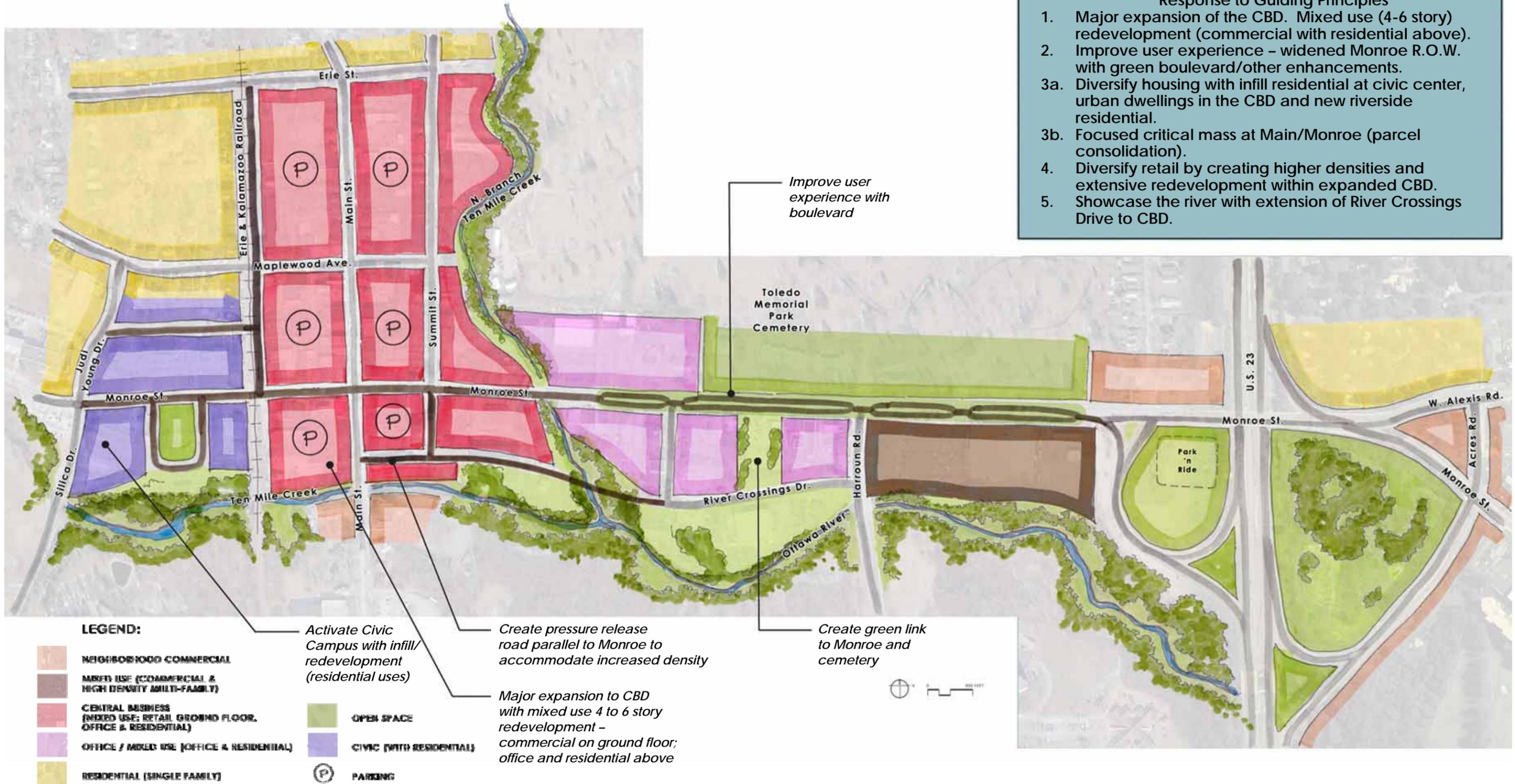
LEGEND:

 NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL	 OPEN SPACE
 CENTRAL BUSINESS	 CIVIC
 RESIDENTIAL (MULTI-FAMILY)	
 RESIDENTIAL (SINGLE FAMILY)	

To The River

Response to Guiding Principles

1. Major expansion of the CBD. Mixed use (4-6 story) redevelopment (commercial with residential above).
2. Improve user experience – widened Monroe R.O.W. with green boulevard/other enhancements.
- 3a. Diversify housing with infill residential at civic center, urban dwellings in the CBD and new riverside residential.
- 3b. Focused critical mass at Main/Monroe (parcel consolidation).
4. Diversify retail by creating higher densities and extensive redevelopment within expanded CBD.
5. Showcase the river with extension of River Crossings Drive to CBD.



LEGEND:

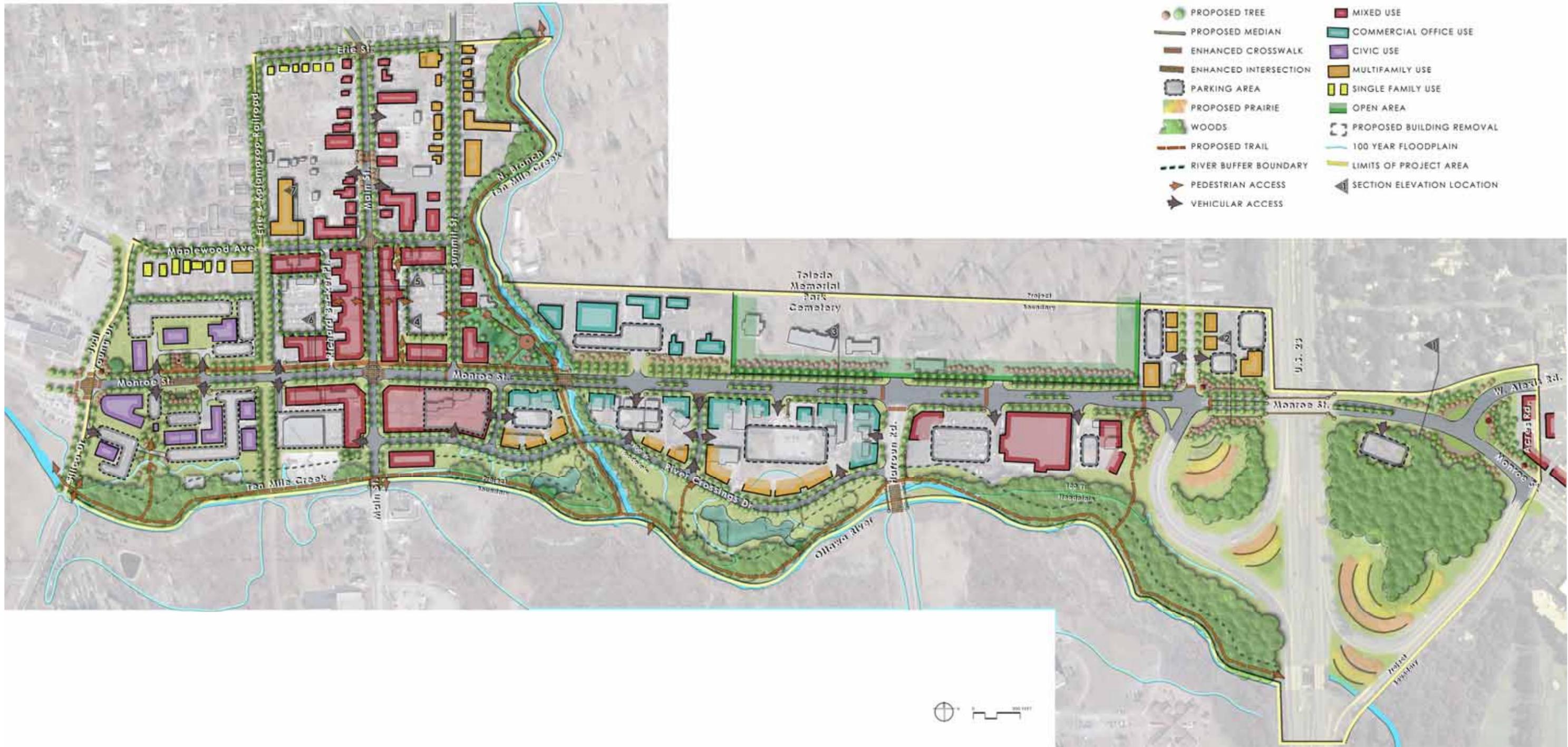
- NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL
- MIXED USE (COMMERCIAL & HIGH DENSITY MULTI-FAMILY)
- CENTRAL BUSINESS (MIXED USE; RETAIL GROUND FLOOR, OFFICE & RESIDENTIAL)
- OFFICE / MIXED USE (OFFICE & RESIDENTIAL)
- RESIDENTIAL (SINGLE FAMILY)
- OPEN SPACE
- CIVIC (WITH RESIDENTIAL)
- P PARKING

Activate Civic Campus with infill/redevelopment (residential uses)

Create pressure release road parallel to Monroe to accommodate increased density

Major expansion to CBD with mixed use 4 to 6 story redevelopment - commercial on ground floor; office and residential above

Create green link to Monroe and cemetery



The Gateway District Plan achieves the Guiding Principles through the following strategies:

Principle #1: Strengthen Downtown

Focus redevelopment at Main and Monroe. Link the west to the east side of downtown with a pedestrian oriented green promenade.

Principle #2: Enhance Monroe

Redefine the Monroe corridor by introducing a landscaped boulevard, simplifying land use, eliminating clutter and clarifying wayfinding.

Principle #3: Connect to Nature

Increase visibility and access to the water, establish a green buffer, manage downtown stormwater and limit development.

Principle #4: Spotlight Highlights

Showcase the downtown, view and access to the river, and frame and enhance the Civic Campus.

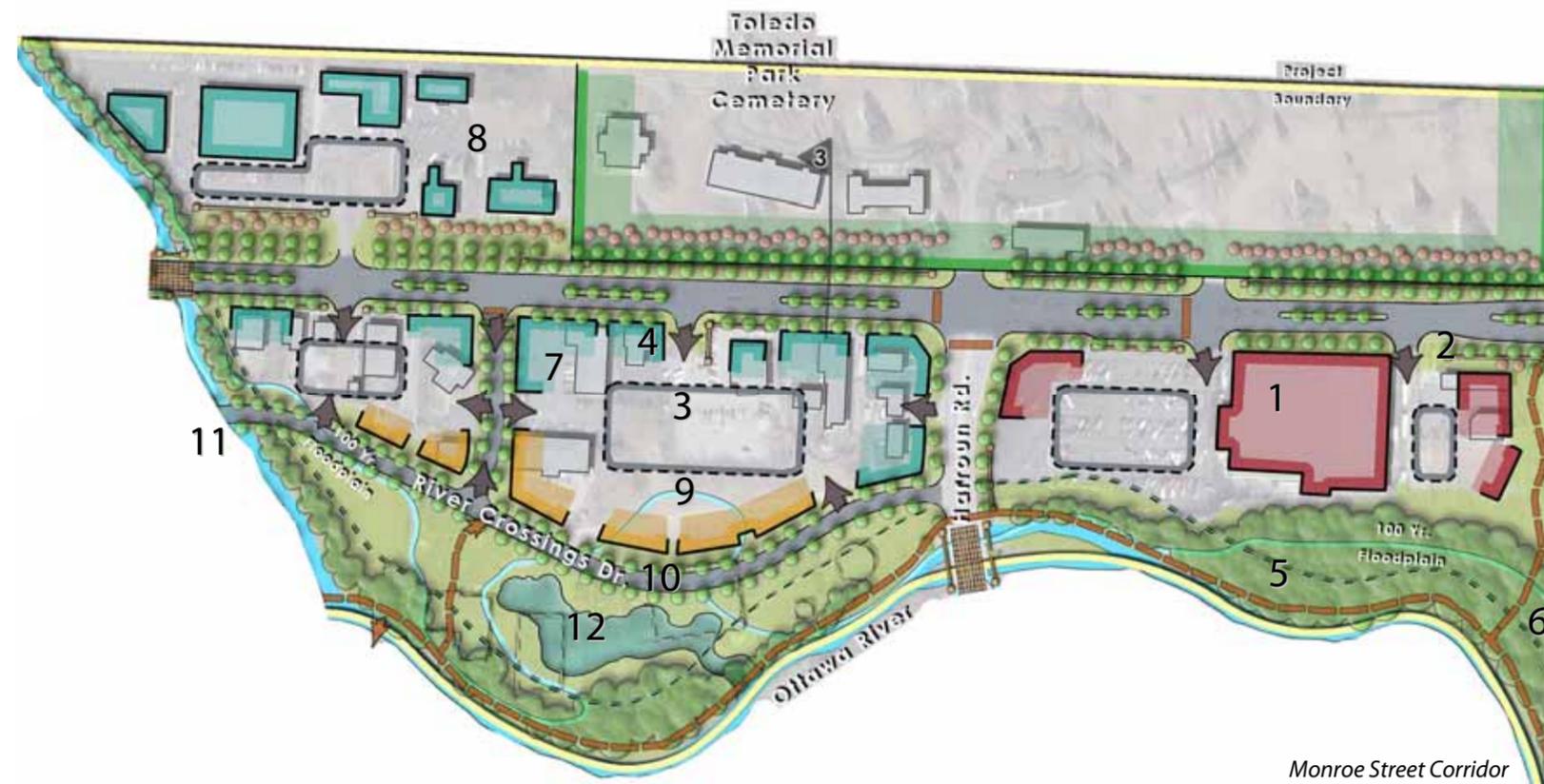
Principle #5: Provide More Options

Increase vibrancy in the district by encouraging multi-family residential infill along the river/downtown, and encourage mixed use and retail options throughout the district.



Regional Gateway: Action Items

1. Gateway Delineation – Create an east “Oak Opening” with realigned intersection as new regional entry experience.
 - “Discover” the tree sculpture.
 - Eliminate excess street signs.
 - Encourage redevelopment to open onto “opening.”
 - Enhance landscape and pedestrian access.
2. Gateway Delineation – West “Oak Opening” further defines the regional entry experience.
 - Incorporate stone entry markers, walls and special landscape treatment.
 - Encourage pedestrian crossing at Monroe to north neighborhoods.
3. Cloverleaf Enhancement – Landscape interchange to reflect prairie and woods with walls and seasonal color.
4. Coordinated Signage – Add regional signage at off-ramps.
5. Add unique enhancement at bridge for regional recognition.
6. Parking – Meet regional parking needs w/Park ‘n’ Ride screened by woods in the cloverleaf.
7. Place high intensity commercial uses directly on Monroe to transition to less intense use north against residential.
 - Screen and buffer from Monroe—no curb cuts on Monroe.
 - Place setbacks on side street to respect residential (no front yard parking).
 - Create shared parking solution in rear and side yards.



Monroe Street Corridor: Action Items

1. Encourage neighborhood/regional commercial adjacent to interchange.
 - Encourage infill.
 - Highway = front yard setback.
2. Coordinate signage along Monroe.
 - Eliminate excess street signs.
 - Require ground signs.
3. Parking Strategy – Create consolidated parking; encourage required shared parking and access.
 - Locate in side and rear yards.
 - Require screening (see streetscape).
4. Eliminate/combine curb cuts.
5. Adopt “no build or pavement” 100-foot buffer from top/bank of river.
6. Develop a riverwalk path along river.
7. Consolidate parcels to encourage transition from retail to office use on south side of Monroe.
8. Maintain office land use on north side of Monroe.
9. Introduce multi-family residential along river w/front doors on River Crossing Drive.
10. Relocate River Crossing Drive to maximize redevelopment opportunities along river bluff.
11. Extend River Crossing Drive west to maximize access to and development along the river.
12. Implement regional/downtown stormwater management strategy in riverfront park.



Central Business District: Action Items

1. Create a "Four Corner" downtown with infill to R.O.W. on all sides.
 - Encourage vertical density.
 - Adaptively reuse residential buildings.
2. Create mixed use zone to support downtown.
3. Create a new city park along creek as downtown's front yard. Front park with mixed use zoning that allows retail/office.
4. Connect the park to the Civic Campus via the promenade.
5. Four Corner Parking Strategy – Provide large municipal parking lots in all blocks, where possible.
 - Improve existing lots with lighting, paving and landscape.
 - Size for future parking deck conversion.
6. North CBD Parking – Encourage shared access and lots; minimum required.
 - Locate in side and rear yards.
 - Require screening (see streetscape).
7. Coordinate signage in downtown.
 - Eliminate excess street signs.
 - Require ground and building signs in lieu of pole signs. Minimize size.
8. Eliminate/combine curb cuts.
9. Encourage redevelopment at corners—respect residential street wall along Summit.
10. Adopt "no build or pavement" 100-foot buffer from top/bank of river.
11. Develop a riverwalk path along river and creek.

Civic Campus: Action Items

1. Consolidate the Civic Campus around a green civic square for all current and future public buildings to have as an address.
2. Frame square with additional office and public uses.
3. Protect single family neighborhoods (with buffers).
4. Connect the park to the Civic Campus via the promenade.
5. Parking Strategy – Consolidate parking, and encourage shared access and spaces.
 - Limit parking around square.
 - Connect office parking to Silica.
 - Eliminate parking lot on Maplewood.
6. Eliminate/combine curb cuts.
7. Adopt "no build or pavement" 100-foot buffer from top/bank of river.
8. Develop a riverwalk path along river.



STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

Improvements within the Gateway District shall meet the streetscape principles and be applied at the following types of locations:

Road Corridors

Proposed improvements will include street trees, parking lot screen walls, seasonal landscaping at eye level, lighting, sidewalk expansions, traffic refuge islands (and/or boulevard) and overhead utility/sign removal.

Primary Intersections

Primary intersections will be highlighted with special paving areas (sidewalks, crosswalks, intersections), bumpouts, additional/double fixture street lights, unique signage and enhanced landscape materials.

Primary & Secondary Entries

Key entry points into the city will be highlighted with enhanced landscape and paving materials, lighting, signage and unique entry markers.

Greenway Links

Visual and physical connections to the river will include sidewalk/boardwalk access, landscape treatments and signage.

Primary Focal Points

In addition to proposed streetscape and intersection improvements, the regional impression of Sylvania and the Main/Monroe Street intersection will be enhanced with unique architectural and landscape elements.



STREETSCAPE PRINCIPLES

The following principles were developed based on input from the community and the Steering Committee, and are generated to give direction to the streetscape design.

ONE – Reinforce Downtown as Center of Sylvania

- Complement existing Main Street architecture.
- Highlight and enhance urban experience.
- Program seasonal events at appropriate locations.
- Make it easy to find.

TWO – Enhance Viewsheds

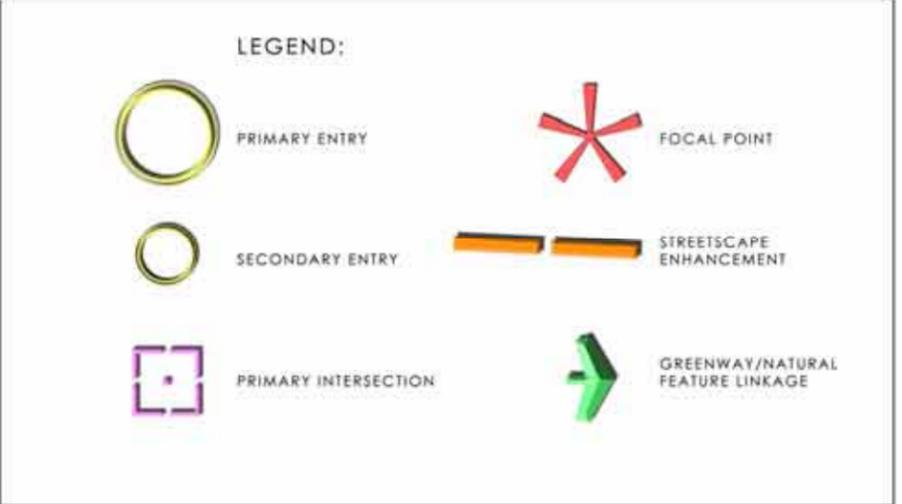
- Screen overhead utility lines and parking areas.
- Frame strategic views to river and downtown.
- Simplify Monroe Street experience with coordinated signage.
- Maximize visibility from US-23.

THREE – Reveal Sylvania’s Sense of Style

- Use gateways and focal points to firmly establish style.
- Employ restrained/uncluttered approach to street furniture.
- Choose accenting details carefully.
- Integrate greenways to contrast/accentuate urban setting.

FOUR – Respect Functional and Practical Considerations

- Make it work for crowds of 1–1000.
- Integrate seasonal and maintenance requirements into plan.
- Consider budgetary and staff impacts of decisions.
- Allow for flexibility to encourage additional private investment.



DEFINING SYLVANIA'S CHARACTER

The selection of materials, colors, patterns and styles used in a streetscape setting can create a unique character that complements Sylvania's heritage and reflects its personality. In order to better understand how the community expresses its own personality, a visual preference exercise was performed in a public workshop. The following questions were asked:

- Which materials best reflect Sylvania's character?
- Which landscape treatment best enhances Sylvania's pedestrian experience?
- Which gateway element best welcomes you to Sylvania?
- Which furnishings do you like best?

The images illustrated reflect the preferences that the community expressed. In addition to the elements that were well received, there were items that were not as favorably viewed, such as: plantings in contemporary pots; too much hard surfacing without enough landscape to soften it; plain concrete paving; metal rails/screening; light columns; and modern colorful "art" elements.



Seating Under a Tree Canopy



Boulevard

Sitting or strolling under the shade of a mature tree, landscape material throughout the district (edges of the R.O.W., in a boulevard, etc.) will add visual interest.



Add Color and Contrast

Vertical elements
Indigenous materials (i.e., limestone)
Clear, simple signage



Clear, Simple Signage



Brick and Stone Markers



Stone Entry Markers

Lights that are consistent with the current Sylvania standard
Benches that are metal or wood backed, more "traditional" than contemporary

"Traditional" Wood Bench



"Traditional" Bench Style Expressed in Durable Metal



Existing Street Light



Rich Texture of Stone



Brick

Materials include brick in warm red/orange colors, limestone, richly textured paving and wall materials.

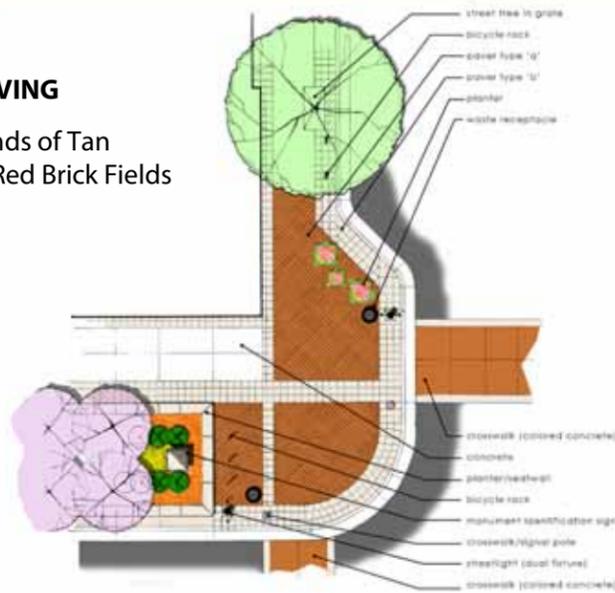
ESSENTIAL SYLVANIA

Located at the northern edge of Ohio's **Oak Openings** region, Sylvania's essence is that of a small, tightly knit community reconnecting to its **unique natural setting**.

The **use of stone**, opening views and access to the Ottawa River and Ten Mile Creek, and the strategic placement of **formal plantings** and design treatments, will express the essential Sylvania experience clearly and effectively for generations.

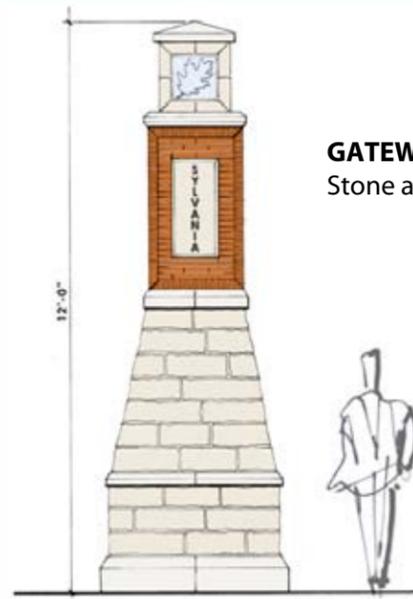
PAVING

Bands of Tan w/Red Brick Fields



GATEWAY MARKERS

Stone and Brick Markers with "Leaf" Cupola



BENCH

Scarborough by Landscape Forms, Back and Backless Benches, Black Metal, 6' Long



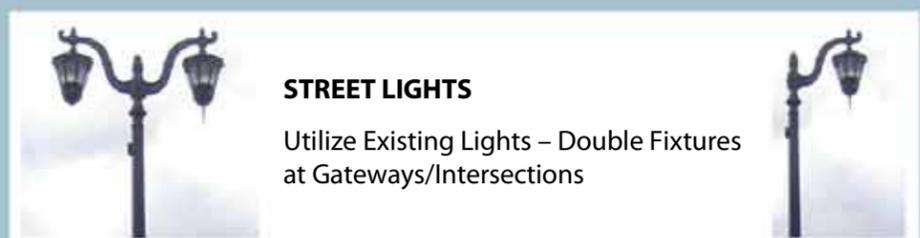
WASTE RECEPTACLES

Scarborough by Landscape Forms, Black Metal, 6' Long



STREET LIGHTS

Utilize Existing Lights – Double Fixtures at Gateways/Intersections



LIGHT BOLLARDS

Accent Lighting along Promenade – Model TSQDC ,by Architectural Area Lighting, Inc.



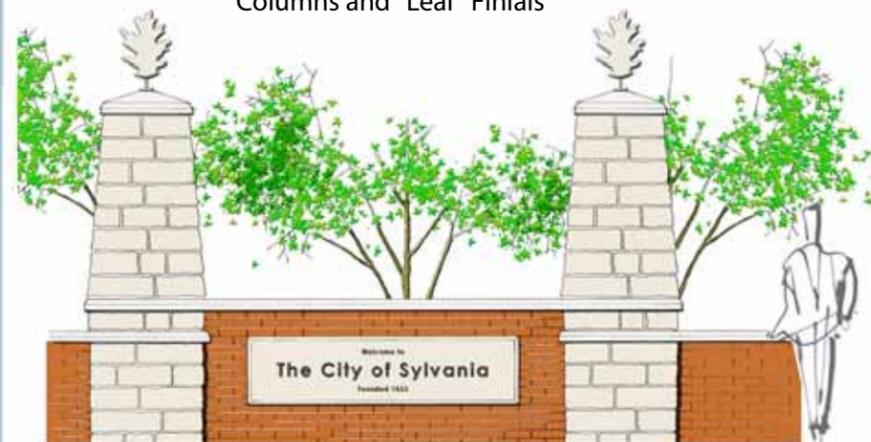
SEAT WALL

15" – 20" High Brick and Stone Seatwall with Stone "Leaf" Insets



GATEWAY & SCREEN WALLS

Brick and Stone Walls (36' High) and Sign w/Stone Columns and "Leaf" Finials



PLANTER

Galveston Planter , Durartsone, Color S16, Mexican Tile (variety of sizes)



BIKE HOOPS

Decorative metal "Leaf" hoops



STREETSCAPE CONCEPTS



Section A: Monroe @ Alexis

Width – Remains as existing.

R.O.W. – Additional not needed, utilize ODOT R.O.W.

Gateway – Create “oak opening” with realigned intersection as new regional entry experience.

- “Discover” the tree sculpture.
- Eliminate excess street signs.
- Enhance landscape and pedestrian access.
- Buffer residential to north.

Area is under ODOT jurisdiction, so it will likely occur in conjunction with interchange improvements.

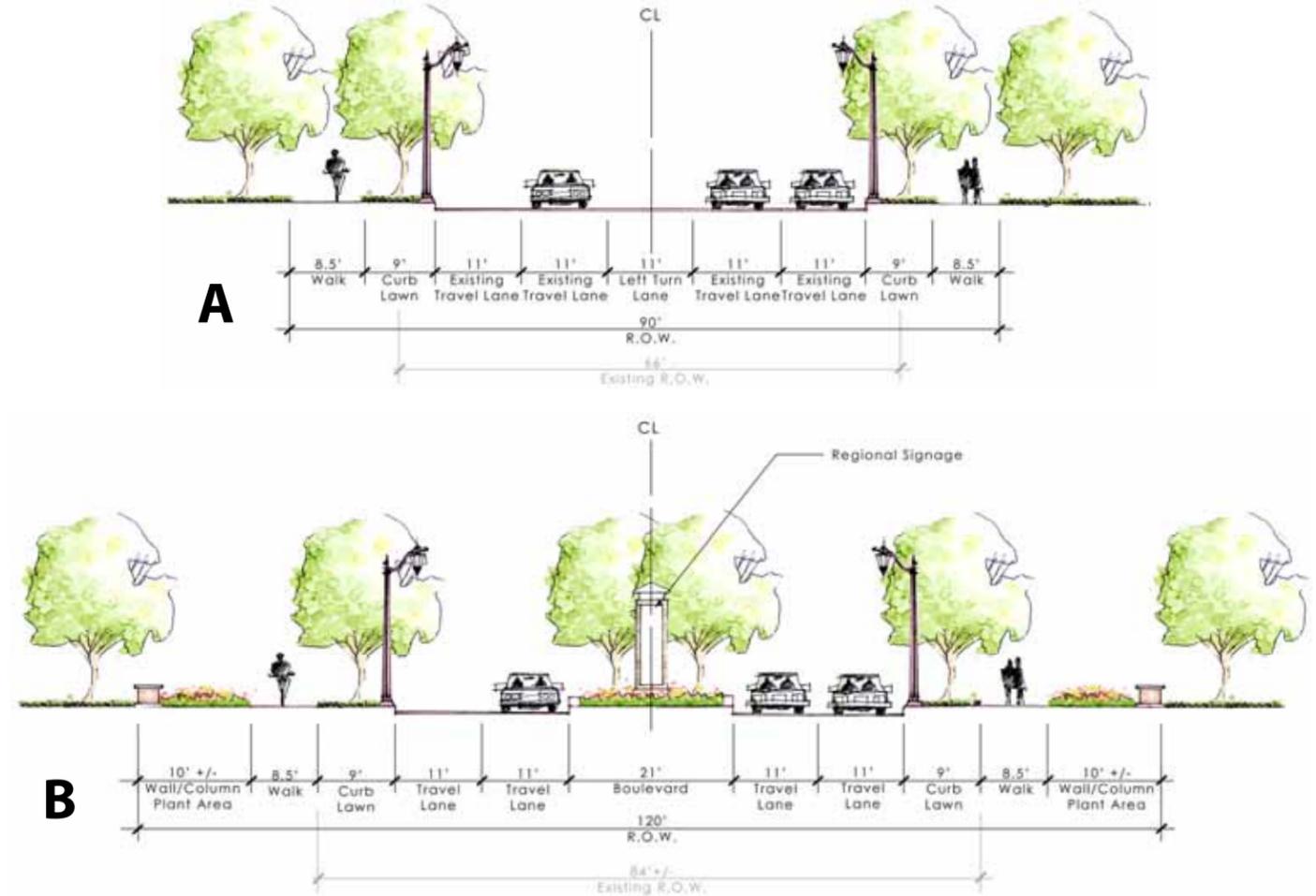
Section B: Monroe @ West of US-23 Bridge

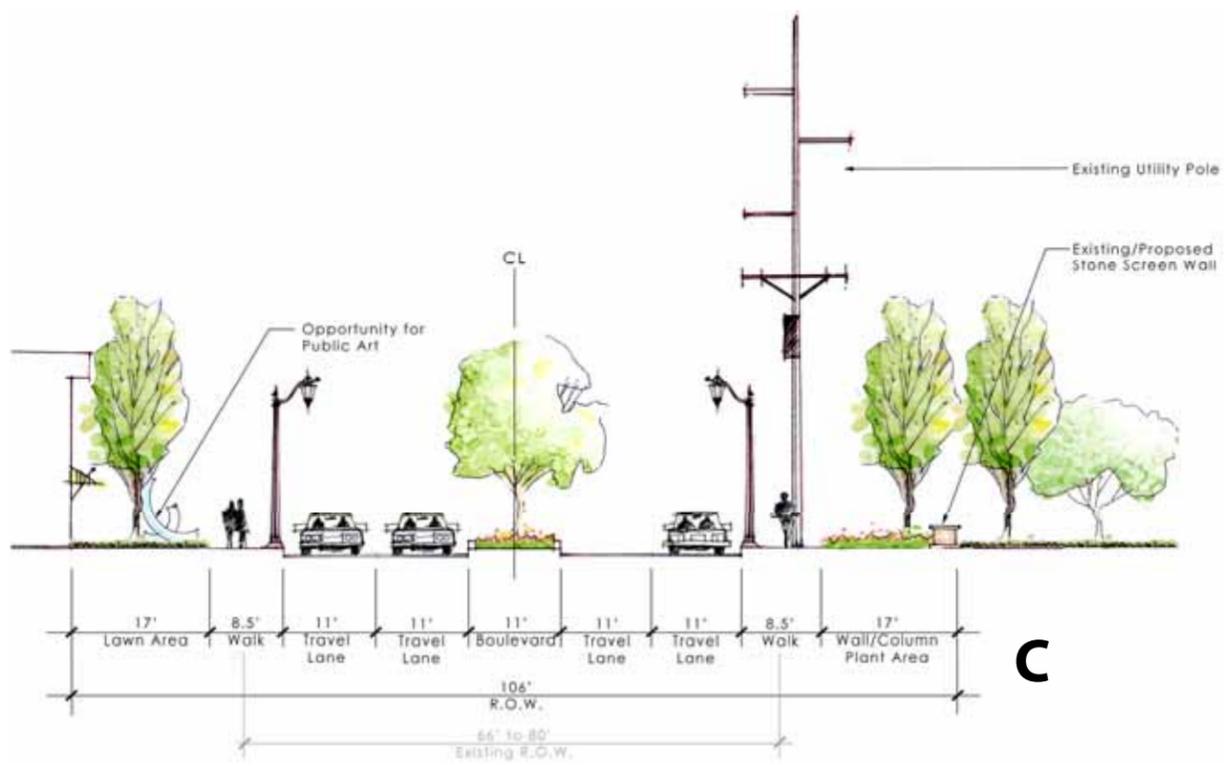
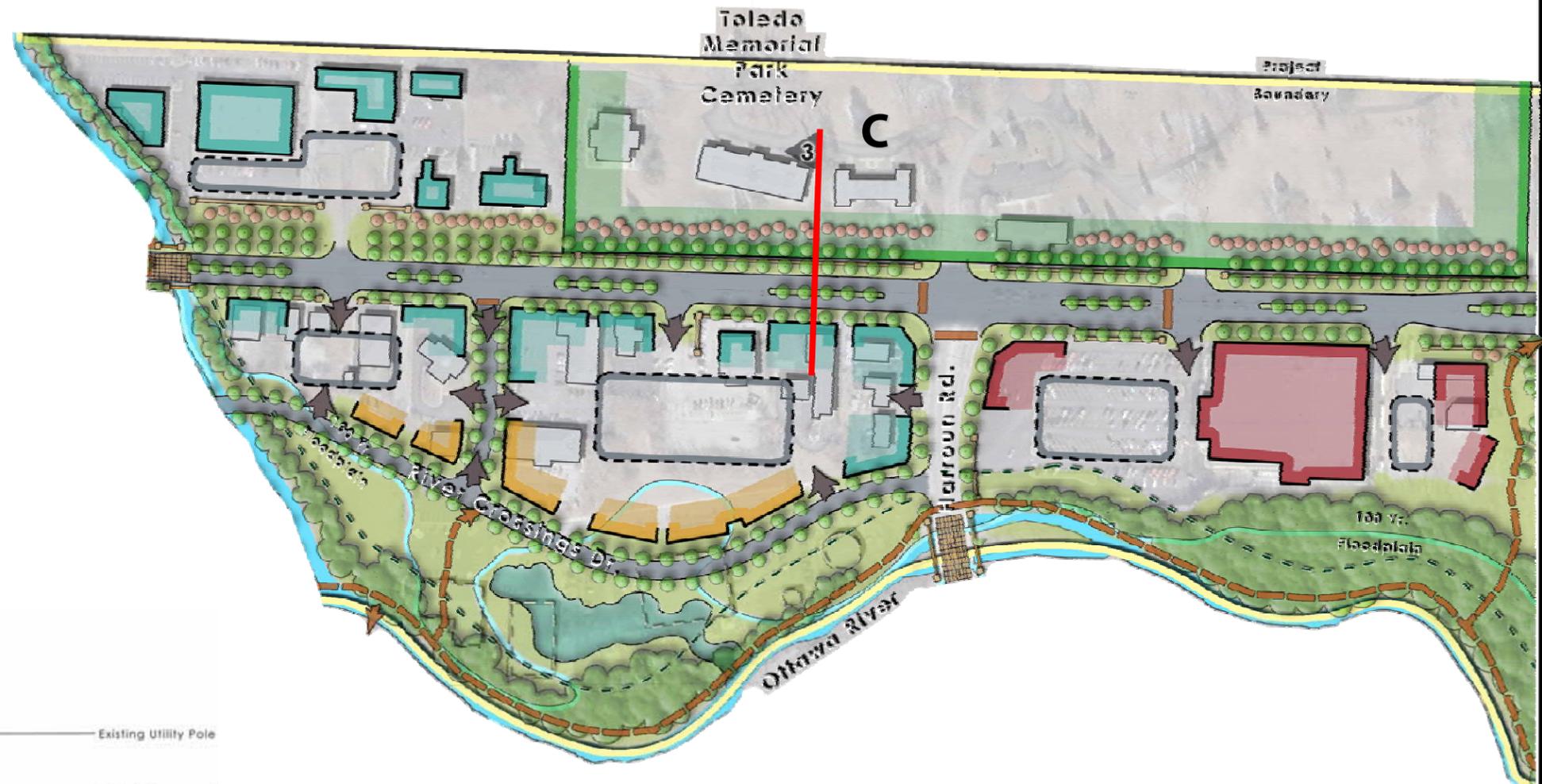
Street Width – Widen to accommodate 21' ± boulevard and 4-11' ± wide lanes.

R.O.W. – 120' proposed - additional 20' ± needed (both sides); utilize ODOT R.O.W.

Improvements – Regional entry markers, green curb lawn, wide sidewalk, accent planting, street trees and entry walls that will connect to bridge.

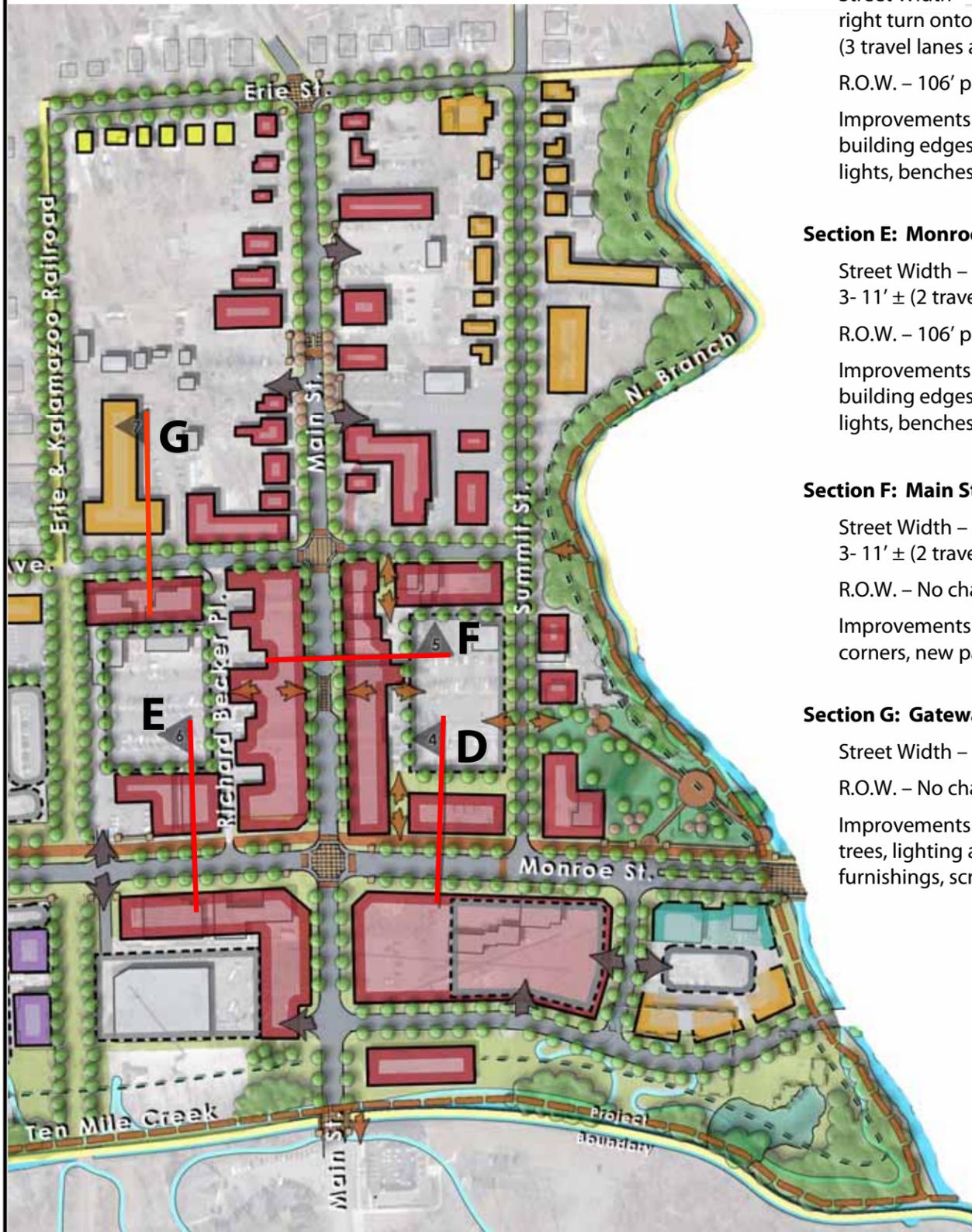
Area is under ODOT jurisdiction, so it will likely be done in conjunction with interchange improvements.





Section C: Monroe Street along Office Corridor

Street Width – Curbs to remain; install 11' ± boulevard and 4–11' ± lanes.
 R.O.W. – 106' proposed - additional 20' ± needed (both sides).
 Improvements – Widened sidewalk adjacent to street, accent plant beds at ground for visual interest (with public art), street trees and screen walls.
 Streetscape to work around utility poles until they can be removed.
 Place decorative streetlights at intersections.



Section D: Monroe – East of Main (Along the Promenade)

Street Width – Narrow on north side by eliminating dedicated right turn onto Main (turn on Summit instead). Provide 4-11' ± (3 travel lanes and a left turn lane).

R.O.W. – 106' proposed - additional 20' ± needed both sides.

Improvements – Raised plant bed on north, wide sidewalks at building edges for retail, street trees, screen walls, decorative lights, benches and other street furnishings.

Section E: Monroe – West of Main (Along the Promenade)

Street Width – Road edge to remain the same width. Provide 3- 11' ± (2 travel lanes and a left turn lane).

R.O.W. – 106' proposed - additional 20' ± needed both sides.

Improvements – Raised plant bed on north, wide sidewalks at building edges for retail, street trees, screen walls, decorative lights, benches and other street furnishings.

Section F: Main Street – West of Main (Along the Promenade)

Street Width – Road edge to remain the same width. Provide 3- 11' ± (2 travel lanes and a left turn lane).

R.O.W. – No change.

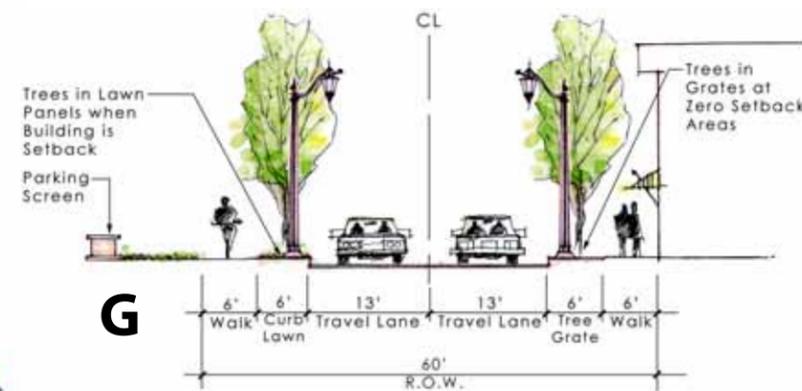
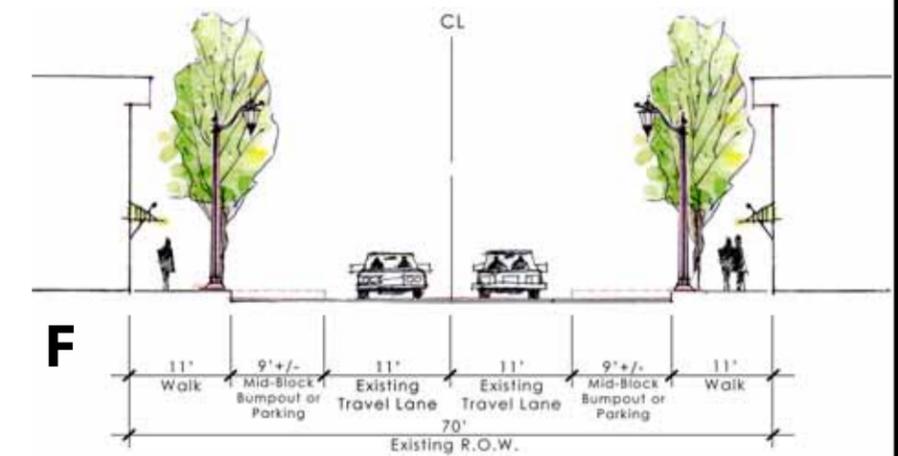
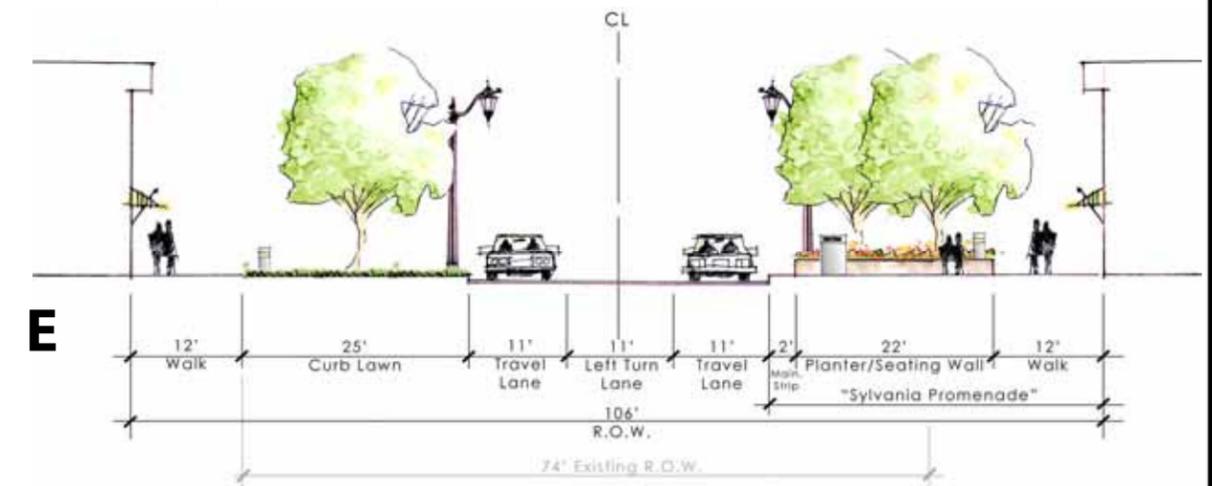
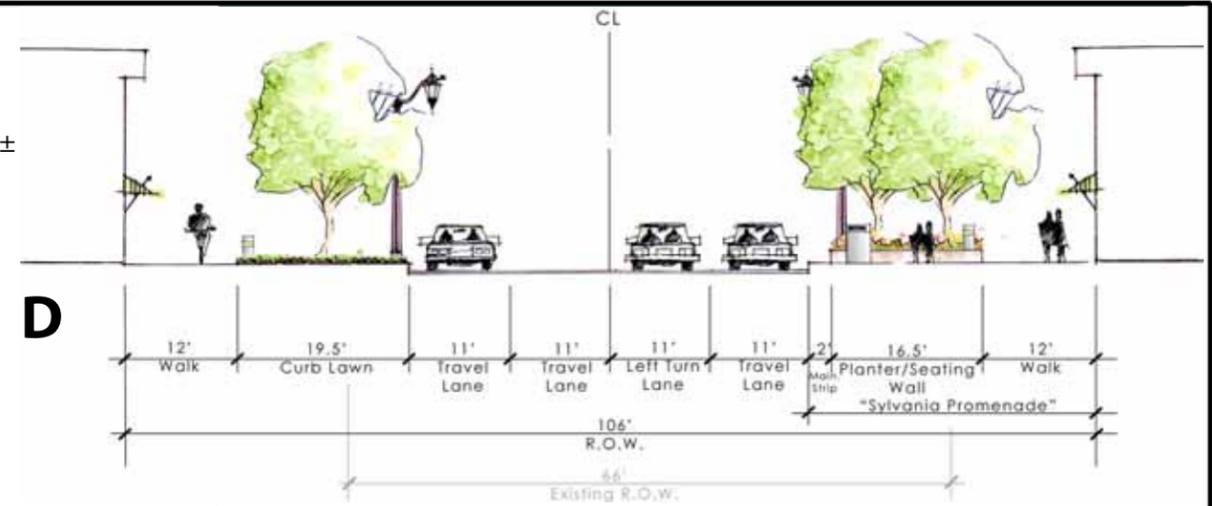
Improvements – Add bump outs to mid-block crossing and corners, new paving, benches and other street furnishings.

Section G: Gateway Secondary Streets

Street Width – Road edge to remain the same width.

R.O.W. – No change.

Improvements – Special paving at key intersections, street trees, lighting at intersections, benches and other street furnishings, screen walls.



GATEWAY DISTRICT PLAN ACTION ITEMS

Achieving the vision as described within the Gateway District Plan is a multi-generational effort that should be carried out in three major phases: immediate actions, mid-term actions and long range actions. Action items are the specific steps that need to happen in a specified order to maximize civic resources while achieving the vision. For example, to build a new downtown park, the City of Sylvania needs to determine the best parcel, consider purchasing options, create design guidelines, seek input from citizens, order site studies and consider maintenance—and this is all before any trees are planted.

To be successful, the effort must begin with the development of policies and partnerships before proceeding to programs and buildings. Policies and partnerships build the support and the market so that there will be a reason for action. Each major initiative outlined in the Gateway District Plan starts with the formation of a Steering Committee. This committee is an extension of city government that organizes volunteer efforts, coordinates fundraising efforts and ensures that the initiative is aggressively moved forward.

Finally, the duration of the three phases is not fixed, but, rather, establishes an order of what must be done first, second and third, with each action building upon the previous action. No community can do it all at one time—or would want to. Finances fluctuate, employment trends change, and new ideas and opportunities arrive continually. Only time allows for the integration of good ideas to a strong foundation of civic character. The vision is just that—an overall goal for Sylvania to continue to strive towards together—building success upon success.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following have been identified as the action items that are of the highest importance for the community to achieve:

Monroe Streetscape and Boulevard Improvement

Continue to work on access, circulation, wayfinding and beautification programs along Sylvania’s gateway street. Includes the creation of boulevard islands and entry gateways.

Utility Relocation Plan

Plan for the removal/relocation of the overhead utility lines on Monroe Street.

Strategic Land Acquisition along Monroe

Acquire parcels that allow for shared parking solutions, better access management and create larger, more developable areas to entice redevelopment

Downtown Parking Strategy

Offer convenient, safe and appropriate amount of parking throughout the downtown. Explore maintenance and operations that may include a separate authority.

Community Greenway

Create a protected area adjacent to the Ottawa River on both sides that is accessible to the public via trails, footpaths and key parking areas. May include interpretive signage, habitat areas and riverbed restoration areas.

Downtown Retail Recruitment

Determine market capacity of the greater Sylvania trade area, and entice the highest and best collection of retailers to locate within downtown Sylvania.

Action Items

Gateway District Plan, Sylvania Ohio

	Immediate Actions	Mid Term Actions	Long Term Actions
A. Strengthen Downtown	P *	Downtown Improvement Committee (4) • Create a Committee Responsible for Plan Implementation/Funding/Programming	• Quarterly and Annual Progress Reports
	1	Downtown Retail Recruitment • Prepare Comprehensive Market Study	• Develop and Implement Retail Recruitment Strategy • Ongoing Implementation of Retail Recruitment Strategy
	2	Downtown Parking Strategy (7) • Refine Parking Strategy • Revise Parking Code Requirements	• Improve/Enhance Existing Public Parking • Build Additional Coordinated Surface Facilities and Structural Parking
	3	Downtown Streetscape Improvement (2) • Refine Streetscape Design	• Implement Main Streetscape Improvements • Implement Monroe Streetscape improvements (Including Sylvania Promenade) • Complete Secondary Streets Streetscape
	4	Strategic Land Acquisition (3) • Identify Land Acquisition Process	• Strategic Land Acquisitions • Ongoing Strategic Land Acquisitions
	5	Downtown Diversification (3) • Create Land Use Diversification Strategy Education/Health Care/Senior Housing/Civic/Etc.	• Revise Existing Zoning Code • Provide Incentives for Adaptive Reuse • Ongoing Implementation of Diversification Strategy in Downtown
	6		Downtown Gateway Park • Create Gateway Park Plan • Implement Downtown Gateway Park Plan
B. Enhance Monroe	P	Monroe Street Improvement Committee (1) • Create a Committee Responsible for Plan Implementation/Funding/Programming	• Quarterly and Annual Progress Reports • Five Year Summary Report
	1	Monroe Streetscape and Boulevard Improvement (13) • Develop Streetscape Plans for Phase I Regional Gateway (US-23 to Harroun)	• Construct Regional Gateway Design at US-23 • Design Harroun to Ten Mile Creek • Construct Harroun to Ten Mile
	2	Utility Relocation Plan (8) • Develop and Begin to Implement Utility Relocation Plan by Burying Low Voltage Crossover Lines	• Ongoing Implementation of Relocation Plan • Ongoing Implementation of Relocation Plan
	3		Monroe Street Land Use Enhancement (1) • Establish Guidelines for Redevelopment • Revise Zoning Along Monroe Street to Encourage Office and Residential • Implement Access Management Strategy • Support/Encourage/Implement All Revised Zoning Codes • Relocate River Crossing Road to Maximize Redevelopment Opportunities
	4		Strategic Land Acquisition (7) • Identify Land Acquisition Process • Ongoing Strategic Land Acquisitions
C. Connect to Nature	P	Greenway Committee • Create a Committee Responsible for Plan Implementation/Funding/Programming	• Quarterly and Annual Progress Reports • Five Year Summary Report
	1	Community Greenway (4) • Develop a Community Greenway Plan • Identify Strategic Land Acquisition Process	• Revise Zoning Code to Adopt a "No Build/Buffer" • Develop Riverwalk Design • Implement Riverwalk (Monroe to Harroun Park Bridge) • Implement Additional Riverwalk Plans
	2	Downtown Stormwater Management (1) • Develop Downtown Stormwater Management Strategy	• Implement Stormwater Management Improvement Strategy • Ongoing Implementation of Stormwater Management Improvement Strategy
	3	Comprehensive Signage Master Plan (2) • Undertake Comprehensive Signage Master Plan	• Revise Zoning to Allow for New Signage Standards • Develop Design Plans for Public Wayfinding Improvements • Install Public Wayfinding Improvements
	4		Green Community Solutions (1) • Conduct "Green Audit" of Community Services and Policies • Implement "Green Audit" Recommendations
	5		Gateway Improvements • Develop Gateway Plans for West Entry Point (at Monroe and Silica) • Implement West Gateway Improvements • Develop and Implement Gateway Plans for North and South Downtown Gateways

* Prerequisite
Action Item (#) Indicated Quantity of Priority Selections

Special thanks to:

GATEWAY DISTRICT STEERING COMMITTEE

Mayor Craig A. Stough

Dr. Read Backus, City of Sylvania

Jeffrey Ballmer, City of Sylvania

Patrick Kriner, City of Sylvania

Art Landseadel, City of Sylvania

Todd Milner, City of Sylvania

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Scott Hudson, Hudson Galelry

Kate Humphrey

Pamela Jensen, ProMedica

Steve Morris, JDRM Engineers

Pat Nowak, Chamber of Commerce

Robert Shenefield, Toledo Memorial Park

Jeff Volschow, Kroger

Jack Watkins, Reeb Funeral Home

Thanks also to everyone who participated in the planning process.

