Village of East Syracuse

Main Street Vision Plan

Center for Community Design Research
State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry

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We would like to thank all of the community members who gave us vital insight into the Village of East Syracuse by participating in the project activities. We would also like to thank all those who helped prepare for and take notes at the workshops.
Introduction

Vision Planning

The Vision Plan for East Syracuses’s Main Street provides a framework to guide decisions about the community’s future based on shared values and collective understanding of resources, opportunities and challenges. It is composed of a vision statement that is supported by a series of goals that will help achieve the vision. The process of creating the vision brought residents and other stakeholders together in constructive forums to explore and document issues and ideas. Through a series of participatory activities and events, community members contributed their local knowledge and worked in collaboration with each other and design professionals to create a plan that they can move forward into implementation. In addition to the vision plan document, this process has increased excitement and interest in the revitalization of the Main Street and introduced community members to possible new roles.

The Village initiated the vision planning process with the understanding that it would provide a strong foundation for its revitalization efforts and with the desire to involve a broad range of community members. The residents and business owners had been concerned about a number of issues on West Manlius Street, the village’s “Main Street” and were ready to have positive changes occur. In summer 2008, Mayor Danny Leidka contacted the Center for Community Design Research (CCDR) at the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY ESF) to help design and facilitate the creation of the vision plan. This plan will give direction to future revitalization efforts and provide the basis for developing detailed plans and seeking needed resources for implementation.
Local Organization and Outreach
The planning process began several months before the first community workshop with the formation of a Leadership Committee that included members of the Village Board and the Revitalization Committee. The committee met with faculty and staff from CCDR to organize the process and to outline the issues and questions to be explored at the initial workshop together. A series of community workshops was chosen as the primary method to engage community members in the vision planning process to bring different groups together, involve a large number of people and establish the practice of working together. The Leadership Committee planned and implemented an outreach strategy that included making presentations to numerous community organizations and making personal visits to Main Street businesses. The vision planning process proceeded as a series of four workshops held between January and April 2009.

Workshops:
The workshops were designed to gain a better understanding of the values, opportunities and constraints from the point of view of the residents. The first workshop centered around understanding the values, historical knowledge and concerns of the community members as the basis for drafting the vision statement and goals. These were reviewed and revised during the second workshop and the community brainstormed action strategies to achieve each goal. Armed with this information, the ESF students created alternative design solutions appropriate to implementation of the vision and goals to the physical place of East Syracuse. During the third workshop, participants suggested revisions to these designs following presentations by students. The refined and modified designs were presented at the last meeting where participants prioritized action strategies and signed up for future involvement.

Communication
On-going communication is important to keep interest in the process and keep everyone informed on the continual progress. Over the four months of activity, newspaper articles kept the public informed of the happenings of the workshops and fliers placed around town kept everyone notified of the workshop dates. Workshop results and design studies were hung in the village hall after all of the workshops.

Document Organization
The document is organized into five sections as follows:
Section 1: Setting and Context provides an overview of how East Syracuse’s history has shaped the development patterns of the village,
and describes the contemporary land uses, built form characteristics and environmental conditions along West Manlius Street.

Section 2: The Vision Process describes the workshop activities and results.

Section 3: The Vision Plan documents the community’s vision statement, goals and action strategies developed during the workshop process.

Section 4: Illustrating the Vision illustrates the character of this community vision and displays the design studies completed by the students.

Section 5: Implementing the Vision reviews key issues which emerged during the meetings deserving of further investigation such as land use, parking and traffic. It discusses the next steps the village can take to continue working toward the vision including how to continue community involvement and support of the process.

A digital process notebook was also created which documents all of the workshop activities, and raw and summarized results in addition to the information in this report.

A narrated Powerpoint has been prepared that summarizes the workshop process and the final vision, and should be especially useful to introduce the Vision Plan to people in the community that were unable to participate in these initial planning stages.
All planning occurs within a physical and cultural context. In the case of East Syracuse there were several factors that emerged after the design team’s initial introduction to the village, the initial workshop, field work and research that are particularly important to understand more fully as the community considers the future of its Main Street.

**Historical Context**

The existence and form of East Syracuse and West Manlius Street was most influenced by its history as a railroad town. Based on information found in several documents provided by the village, it is clear that East Syracuse was founded because of its location relative to a junction line of the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad Company that was constructed in 1872. While Manlius Street was already in existence at the time as a toll road between Lodi Street in Syracuse and the town of Manlius, there was no settlement in this area until the branch line was constructed. In the several years following, the East Syracuse Freight Yards (later called the Dewitt Yard) were developed and opened in late 1874. According to “The Story of East...
The railroad was responsible not just for the establishment of East Syracuse but also for its rapid growth. By 1890 the population had reached 2,231, with the highest population of 4,646 reached in 1930. From that time the population has declined and according to the census in 2000, the population of the village was about 3,200.

The historic commercial core of the village was concentrated around the intersection of West Manlius Street and Center Street. Sanborn Insurance Maps from the 1920’s and 1930’s document a dense structure extending a couple of blocks to the east and west, with general stores, hotels, shops, the post office, a movie house and services. With few exceptions, most of the properties west of North Street were in residential use. In general, these residences were set back further from the right-of-way line than structures in the commercial core. On Terrace Street, which runs parallel to West Manlius Street along the railroad, the primary use appears to have been small single family residences, presumably for railroad workers families. In the far western section of the Vision Plan study area, the principal land use was a silverware factory located in the triangle shaped parcel west of Highland Street and north of West Manlius Street. There is very little other built structure evident on the Sanborn maps.
The Changing Use and Structure of West Manlius Street
The 1963 Master Plan documents deteriorating building conditions in those areas of the village closest to the railroad tracks, especially residential units. Specific mention was made of the area west of the historic core, where it noted that deterioration may have been due to rapid initial construction which permitted more rapid deterioration.

The master plan also projected the population decline, anticipating the effects of the planned move of the railroad classification yard away from East Syracuse. By 1960, the impact of the railroad on the village economy had declined considerably and the plan described that manufacturing began to overtake transportation in the 1950’s as the major economic driver. Also noted, was the fact that suburbanization was occurring in places beyond the village and that there was little developable land left in the village. Like other “urban villages” the development pattern in East Syracuse resembled city more than suburbs with relatively small residential lots and dense commercial core.

Not envisioned in the master plan document was the development of the big box retail district in the village east of the railroad corridor, and easily accessible from interstate 690, the city of Syracuse and surrounding suburban towns.

Current development patterns along West Manlius Street
The physical form and structure of West Manlius Street can be traced to the historic patterns and influences that are still visible today, however, like many village “Main Streets”, West Manlius Street has been impacted by the pressure to conform to suburban patterns of development. It is easy to see where the historic commercial core is located, where deteriorated residences were removed and replaced with other uses and suburban style development in the area to the west of the commercial core, and where no structure existed in the far western section to guide a cohesive or unified street environment.
Today the Historic Commercial Core is characterized by:

- Remnants of the historic dense pattern of development, with buildings close to or on the right-of-way line
- Older buildings of two and three story height, many with storefront windows oriented towards the pedestrian and view from the sidewalk
- Large gaps in the structure, where buildings have been removed and the lots are unkempt, vacant or used for parking
- Infill buildings that are not sensitive to the scale of the historic core
- Façade renovations that are not compatible with the traditional Main Street style and materials
- Several buildings in poor condition
- Very few features that support pedestrian use
- Inconsistent street tree planting
- A mix of land uses, some of which are appropriately located in the civic and business center of the village and some of which are not compatible with a village Main Street setting.
- Terrace Street and vicinity in the central core area is utilized to access parking lots and service areas

Above: Some uses on West Manlius Street do not complement or require the village Main Street setting.

Right: In other sections of the historic core, the dense fabric is broken by vacant properties.
Above and left: Contemporary development in the central section of the Main Street features smaller windows and large surface parking lots.

Left: Surface lots in front of buildings have taken over the sidewalk in many places in the central section.

The **Central Section** is characterized by:

- Newer large footprint buildings on the north side replacing the former residential structures. These buildings are set back from the right-of-way, typically separated from the sidewalk by large parking lots. The scale and detailing of these buildings and associated site design represent a suburban pattern of development and do not complement the village Main Street setting.
- Retention of the former residential structures on the south side, many of which have been converted to commercial use. The scale of former residential use remains but in many cases parking has been installed in the front and sides of buildings, with no separation between parking pavement and sidewalk.
- Several buildings in poor condition
- Automobile orientation with little attention given to people walking, aside from the presence of a sidewalk.
- No civic or resting space for pedestrians along this section of the corridor.
- Difficult street crossing
- Fast moving vehicular traffic (tends to be a bigger problem than volume)
- Very few street trees and other vegetation besides grass
The Western Section is characterized by:

- A large footprint building that houses a bowling alley and several other businesses, surrounded by parking
- Auto repair and service, all with extensive paved areas, parked cars and storage, all in view
- A sense of disorder, and no sense of orientation in the corridor
- Very uncomfortable walking environment, with no sidewalks along the south side of the street, no crosswalks and no other features to support safe and comfortable walking.
- No street trees or very little other vegetation with the exception of the Veterans Memorial Park at the west end
- An important gateway to the village but the scale of paving and openness overwhelms signs of welcome.

Contemporary Land Use

There are a diversity of land uses that occur along West Manlius Street. and because of this it is difficult to characterize the land uses by segment. (These are shown in the Land Use plan insert at the end of this section.) While historically, commercial uses were confined primarily to the historic core, today retail, offices and services are spread throughout the corridor.

- The historic core contains the civic uses of the village municipal offices and firehouse in addition to Key Bank, Sacks Department Store and several small shops. There is some mixed use, with residential units above commercial or office uses.
- The central section has most of the convenience retail, such as the Byrne Dairy and the RiteAid.
- The western section has several auto service and repair businesses, in addition to the bowling alley.

Residential use, which formerly occupied most of the central section, has become less prominent but there continues to be single family residences as well as multi-family dwelling units in this section. Most of the residential use occurs in older residential structures. There
are also residential units in the historic core primarily in upper story apartments and multi-unit older structures.

Land uses along Terrace Street in the central section include large parking areas for new car storage, several small businesses and a few remaining residences.

**Environmental and Physical Characteristics**

The landscape of West Manlius Street is dominated by an extensive amount of paved surfaces, particularly roads and parking lots. There are a number of issues connected to this factor.

- It reinforces the fact that the current street corridor is more accommodating to the automobile than to the pedestrian.
- There is loss of a common or consistent setback along the street and the rhythm created by buildings of similar footprints and scale.
- In combination with the building roofs, significant burden is placed on the stormwater system both in the immediate area as well as downstream and non-point source pollution is being washed into the system.
• There is very little green space and plant material present on the corridor.
• Because the asphalt is dark and absorbs the energy from the sun, it contributes to the “urban heat island effect” and makes it an uncomfortable place to walk.

The railroad corridor that was the driving force in the founding and development of the village is located in the low-lying corridor south of West Manlius Street. While the rail lines are still active and owned by CSX, there are vacant and underutilized buildings and sites related to the former more intensive activity of the railroad.

Most of the natural features and systems of East Syracuse including wetlands, stream courses and vegetation have been altered or destroyed by development over the last century. Several small remnant wetlands still exist to the east and north of the village in areas that are in the Butternut Creek and Ley Creek watersheds. As noted above the high percentage of paved area and impervious surfaces in the West Manlius corridor combined with disruption of these natural systems may contribute to periodic flooding and stress on the storm drainage system in and beyond the village.

The Gateways to the Village and West Manlius Street
In addition to its traditional “Main Street”, the Village of East Syracuse is also home to another commercial district along Bridge Street/ Rt. 298 that contains several “big box” retailers and numerous other businesses with easy access from Rt. 690, the city of Syracuse and other suburban towns. This heavily trafficked corridor with four to six driving lanes should serve as the Eastern Gateway to Main Street. While this provides an opportunity to attract visitors and customers to the Main Street business district there are a number of characteristics that are challenges to this important gateway role.

• This commercial corridor has a very different scale and character than the West Manlius Street corridor, with large parking lots and buildings set back from the driving route. It is oriented toward vehicles, with no sidewalks or crosswalks.
• There are no attractive signs or other landscape cues to draw attention to the Main Street business district for drivers arriving from Rt. 690 or along the Bridge Street/Rt/ 298 corridor.
• The road connection between the two commercial districts is via Old Bridge Street. The existing intersection of Bridge Street and Old Bridge Street is very unattractive, unwelcoming and dominated by traffic control structures.
• As suggested by its name, Old Bridge Street traverses a bridge over the railroad tracks that separate the two
commercial districts. This bridge is short and steep, of featureless concrete design with utilitarian fencing which in no way acknowledges or contributes to the character or image of its community setting. There is limited sight distance over the crest of the bridge, resulting in a very abrupt arrival and transition from highway to village scale. The view at this primary entry is of a gas station and a currently vacant former bowling alley.
• This bridge also provides the vehicular and pedestrian connection between the small neighborhood on the east side of the tracks with the Main Street commercial area and other neighborhoods on the west side. There are basic four-foot wide sidewalks on both sides of the bridge but no other pedestrian amenities or support such as lighting, separation from vehicular paving or planting at the bridge approach.

There are two Western Gateways to the West Manlius Street corridor. One comes in from Burnet Street, past the well kept and fenced property of the Bristol Myers Squibb Corporation. Beyond Bristol Myers, there is a panorama view of the village “skyline”, with the exclamation points of St. Matthews Church spires, but it is viewed over the foreground of a large unkempt field that runs to the railroad...
tracks and the view beyond to the back of the auto repair businesses. The bridge over the railroad tracks along this entry is not as steep as that at Bridge Street but it is similar in material and appearance. The entry intersection at West Manlius Street is dominated by the wide expanse of parking and road pavement. The existing “Welcome to East Syracuse” sign is lost in this vast space. The sign and its supporting landscape features are not at the scale or of a composition needed to command attention within this setting.

The second gateway from the west occurs at the intersection of Yates Street and West Manlius Street, where the land use changes from primarily residential to the mixed commercial and residential of the Main Street corridor. This gateway is highlighted by the triangle of the Veterans Memorial Park and beyond that to the view of a patriotic themed mural on the west side of the bowling alley building. These two features are at an appropriately large civic scale that brings attention to this as the gateway into the Main Street corridor. A pole sign for one of the businesses detracts from this view and the corridor beyond these features is dominated by extensive road and parking lot pavement.

Above: The welcome signs at the two of the main entrances to the village seem hidden among the larger scale street elements.

Right: The veterans memorial and the mural in the background at the intersection of Yates Street and West Manlius Street welcome people to the village and speak to the history and values of the community.
Current Land Use on West Manlius Street Vicinity
Intent and Process
Through a visioning process, communities can identify opportunities, voice concerns and understand their values. The East Syracuse workshops, facilitated by SUNY ESF students, were designed to create a welcoming space for dialogue. Following each of the sessions, the findings were organized and analyzed to reveal common themes.

The first workshop looked into the values, historical knowledge and concerns of the community members. At the end, they were asked to imagine what they would like to see for the future of West Manlius Street. From this information, students and faculty created the draft vision and goals, which were reviewed and discussed at the next meeting. Design studies that considered community concerns and values and an inventory of existing conditions were presented at the third workshop and then revised for the final presentation.

Workshop summaries
Below are summaries of the workshops. Included in these are the questions that were asked through a variety of activities, brief descriptions of how the activities were run and the findings.

Workshop 1: Exploring the Village and Main Street
Community Questions:
The purpose of this workshop was to become more familiar with the issues, concerns and strengths of the village and West Manlius Street. Following a walking tour of West Manlius Street with local residents and preliminary research, the students developed the following questions to be discussed at the first workshop.

- What do community members value about the history of East Syracuse?
- Where are the areas they consider sacred and wish to retain for future generations?
- How do they view themselves as a community and what do they think is important about the Village of East Syracuse?
- How do people currently use West Manlius Street?
- What does the community like, and what are their concerns about the current physical conditions?
- What types of uses and activities would they like to occur along West Manlius Street in the future?

Workshop 1 Activities:
The workshop started with a brief introduction to the project and the design team. The presentation also informed the community participants of their role in the process and the basic goals for the workshops.
Workshop activities included:

• Photo Entry Survey- Individuals selected photos they thought best fit with different phrases about physical conditions.
• Introduction- Participants introduced themselves and briefly shared a memory they had of East Syracuse.
• Sacred Places Mapping- Participants listed places they considered to be sacred within the village and explained why they were sacred. The places were then recorded on a map and a tally was taken on how many others had thought of the same place.
• Word Association and Community Image- Individuals recorded words or phrases they thought best described East Syracuse. The responses were then discussed as a group and participants commented on everyone’s words and phrases. They then indicated on a map where these qualities were evident.
• Existing Use and Activity- Teams of two recorded on maps their daily, weekly and monthly activity on West Manlius Street indicating the route and mode of transportation. Typical parking location was also recorded.
• Qualities and Characteristics of West Manlius Street- Using photos of the street as a reference, individuals listed physical characteristics of West Manlius Street that they liked and did not like. The focus was on characteristics, not specific properties.
• Looking Forward- Individuals recorded activities they would like to see occur on West Manlius Street in the future. These activities were placed on a flip chart where participants voted for their top five.
• Exit Survey- Individuals responded to questions evaluating the workshop and wrote how they would like to be about to describe West Manlius Street in 10 years.

Workshop 1 Findings:

(Summary posters can be found at the end of the Workshop 1 findings)

The responses from each workshop activity were analyzed separately. The findings from each activity were then synthesized and common themes became evident. By mapping the sacred places from all of the groups, it was found that most of the places occurred along West Manlius Street, although Saint Matthew’s Church, the sacred place identified by the most participants, is located two blocks north. From participant written responses and discussion, it was evident that places are considered sacred for Historical, Social or Local Significance reasons. Historically significant places are those that have a long standing role in East Syracuse’s history and/or have historical
architectural design and detailing. Socially significant places are ones where people can meet as a part of formal or informal gathering and be a part of the community. Local significance refers to places valued by residents because of their convenience, local ownership or services offered. Many of the places fell into at least two of the categories.

Through the Word Association activity, participants shared a wide variety of words and phrases to describe East Syracuse. Half of the words described East Syracuse in a positive way, while the other half were negative. The words and phrases could be categorized into the four main themes of Community, History, Rental Properties and Visual/Physical Concerns. This activity identified contradictions in how participants perceived the community, and some characteristics were identified in some ways as positive and in others as negative. For example, the residents were very concerned with image. They were proud of places that displayed an attractive front, but were worried about the places in disrepair. The corridor was described both as walkable and un-walkable pointing to the conflicting views within the participants. In terms of the pedestrian realm, they appreciated the plowing of the walks and new pavers, but thought it was lacking safety, continuity, and general maintenance. Another very varied topic was the vehicular traffic. Some people appreciated the traffic and the convenient entrance to Rt.690 because it gave the businesses more exposure, but on the downside, some commented that most of the traffic just passes through and makes the street unsafe to walk on, contributing noise and pollution. The categories of likes in descending order were Beautification/Signs of caring, Pedestrian realm, Building condition, Vehicular realm and Safety. The concerns, paralleling the likes, in descending order were Image, Safety, Pedestrian Realm, Vacancy, Parking and Green Space.
The Current Uses activity revealed that participants visited businesses on West Manlius Street generally on a weekly or monthly basis. Those sited most often as being used on a weekly basis by some and a monthly basis by others included the Post Office, Byrne Dairy, the Rite Aid, Key Bank, the Village Deli and other restaurants. A number of the other service businesses were visited by individuals on a monthly basis.

Responses to the Looking Forward activity fell into three categories: desired use and activities, characteristics and infrastructure and support. Uses mentioned by the most participants include a grocery store, specialty shops, and community space, such as community center and places for youth. Characteristics include business diversity, parking in the rear, a walkable Main Street and landscaping. Infrastructure improvements include better street lighting and parking and underground utilities.

In describing their vision for Main Street, participants reinforced their desire to have shopping and retail, as well as a mixture of businesses. They would like it to be place where people want to visit, and be accessible and welcoming to everyone. It would be a good place to walk with lots of green and trees, have a thriving and busy level of activity and be attractive, clean and beautiful.
ENTRY SURVEY: STRENGTHS

- People and Organizations of the Community
  - Close knit
  - Neighborhood Watch

- Municipal Services
  - Community Services
  - Department of Public Works
  - Police Department
  - Fire Department

- Businesses of the Community
  - Diversity of business type
  - Small and local

- Physical Attributes
  - Location
    - Proximity to highways & commuter routes
    - Proximity to City of Syracuse
    - Proximity to State Parks
    - Village Scale and size
    - Room to Grow

- History
  - Railroad
  - Historic buildings
  - Businesses in the community

ENTRY SURVEY: UNDERUTILIZED RESOURCES

- Business District
- Village History and Railroad
- Available Storefronts and Space on W. Manlius
- Village Services
- Proximity to Highway

- Pool
- Community Networks
- Village Character
- Youth
- Potential Customers on W. Manlius
HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Refers to buildings and structures within the village of East Syracuse valued by the residents of the community. These buildings and structures either remain as physical elements in the community landscape or in memory. This elements of buildings and structures are considered sacred because of their unique architectural characteristics and/or long standing presence in the community.

SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

Refers to land use within the village of East Syracuse valued by the residents of the community. These either remain as physical elements in the community landscape or in memory. These places are characterized by the type of activities they host. Both private and public lands in the community are considered sacred because these places allow for both formal and informal interaction and gathering.

LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE

Refers to the location of services or features within the village of East Syracuse valued by the residents of the community. These services or features either remain as physical elements in the community landscape or in memory. These services or features are considered sacred because of convenient accessibility, local ownership, and/or services offered.
PATTERN OF CURRENT USES ON W. MANILUS STREET
(as reported by workshop participants)

PATTERN OF CURRENT USES

PATTERN OF CURRENT USES BY TYPE
(locations ranked in each category by intensity of use)

Restaurant
Village Deli
Twist Tree Pizza
A&A Doner
Shaw's
Ciccar's Pizza
Serr's Donut Shop
Kaya's Pizza
Bear's Extra innings Bar

Retail
Byrne Dairy
Rite Aid
Family Dollar
Family Shopper
Sheep
Frontenac Bakery
Willy Lumber
Gas Station

Municipal Service
Post Office
Municipal Bldg

Service
Critical mascara
Tiny Bubbles Laundry
Used Motors
Laird's Auto Academy
J&A's Can & Bottle Return
Tanglewood Office
Village Auto

Banking
Key Bank

Community Organization
American Legion
Peace Inc.

PHOTOS OF HIGHLY VISITED PLACES

To better understand what places participants visit on W. Manlius St, we asked where they commonly go, and how frequently they go there (i.e. daily, weekly, or monthly). Some apparent trends included that most activities occur close to where residents live, and that most activities occur on the stretch of Main Street between Bridge and Broad Streets. Activities that participants took part in daily included visiting food establishments like Village Deli and Serr's Donuts or running errands to places like the Post Office and Rite Aid pharmacy.

Village of East Syracuse
MAIN STREET VISION PLAN
Workshop 1 Results 02/24/09
Observations
- One of major entrances onto W. Manilus St.
- Intersection of three streets
- Access that brings in residents from NW of East Syracuse Village

Observations
- Kinne St. is the most highly used access point onto W. Manilus St. for workshop participants
- Street does not align with intersecting street
- Two active uses at corners, Post Office & Byrne Dairy

Observations
- Major street intersection
- Internal access to W. Manilus St. for participants and serves as an access from outside of the Village
This poster summarizes an activity where participants commented on characteristics about West Manlius St. they liked and those of concern. The responses were categorized and are comparatively ranked.

### West Manlius St. Positives

**Beautification/Signs of Caring**
Welcome signs, holiday decorations, well kept businesses

**Pedestrian Realm**
Sidewalks, benches, new pavers

**Building Condition**
Victorian style, nice old buildings

**Vehicular Realm**
Wide roads, new curbs

**Safety**
Well policed, lighting, presence of others

### West Manlius St. Concerns

**Image**
Disunity, run down, delapidated, sterile, needs maintenance

**Safety**
Youth on street, truck traffic, dangerous utility poles, trees block lights

**Pedestrian Realm**
Sidewalk in bad repair, lack of shopping alternatives

**Vacancy**
Waste, trash filled, discouraging to visitors

**Building Condition**
Needs maintenance, poor image, unsafe

**Parking**
Lacking, when in front: out of character/ugly

**Green Space**
Stark, implies health

### Observations

Many of the comments given as likes and concerns deal with the same issues; pedestrian realm, image and maintenance appear both as positive features and concerns.

The highest ranking topics under both positives and concerns are:

**Image**: most comments (positive and concerns) deal with image. Related categories include Building Condition, Beautification and Vacancy.

**Pedestrian Realm**: also of high importance. While the presence of the sidewalk and amenities such as benches and pavers are highly valued, the pedestrian realm care and maintenance are concerns.

### Other contradictions include...

**Traffic**: seen as positive because it could attract potential business to shops and restaurants. But it is also seen as a health hazard and a matter of pedestrian safety.

**Parking**: While stated as a concern, the nature of the reasons differ. While some comment on the ugliness of the parking, others want more.
Word Associations

This is what was said about East Syracuse:

Strengths and Concerns

During the conversations about the word associations, some of East Syracuse’s strengths were brought to light as well as a number of concerns.

**Strengths**

**Community Ties and Activities:** Close knit families and friends, everyone knows each other, seniors and elders value each other, Senior Keeners, programs at elementary school, weekend events.

**Community Resources:** Young people in parks, the schools, PEACE, Inc.

**Physical Attributes:** Small and quiet community, safe, walkable and convenient, owners take pride in their homes, owner occupied homes are well maintained.

**History:** Railroad town, older buildings along West Manlius Street, formerly largest rail yard in North East, Iconic Bridge.

**Concerns**

**Visual:** Dull buildings, lack of identity through the years, lack of maintenance, especially W. Manlius St., park and other public spaces are not cared for or maintained.

**Physical:** Heavy traffic on W. Manlius St., people only drive through and don’t stay, lack of unity, physical separation, many vacant lots and businesses, businesses don’t last long, lack of places to visit, not walkable/bikeable.

**Rental Properties:** High percentage of rental properties, poorly maintained, not connected to community, especially W. Manlius Street.

Rental properties were identified by many as their biggest concern in East Syracuse. Many of the issues with rental properties were visual/aesthetic.
What would you like to bring to West Manlius Street?

Categorized Community Responses

USES & ACTIVITIES
- Grocery Store
- Specialty Shops
- Community Center/Space
- Doctors Office
- Boutique Shopping
- Upscale Apartments
- Upscale Dining
- Services/Shops
- Dentist Office
- Farmer's Market
- Small Grocery
- Rec Center
- Payment Center (Bills)
- Youth Center
- Sidewalk Activities
- Casual Restaurant
- Skate Park
- Senior/Youth Center
- Youth Activities
- Movie Theater
- Vet
- Restaurants
- Quality Restaurant
- Gas Station

High Ranking

Public/Community
- Community Center, Community Space, Gas Station, Small Gathering Spaces
- Community Gardens, Parks, Youth Activities

Characteristics
- Diversity of Business, Parking in Rear
- Landscaping on Mainstreet, Residential Apartments, Walkable Mainstreet, Unifying Design

Retail
- Grocery, Farmer's Market, Small Grocery, Fish Market

Specialty Retail
- Specialty Stores, Recreational Shopping, Wireless Cafe, Distributor Shop

Professionals/Medical
- Offices, Dental Office, Doctors Office, Vet

Infrastructure
- Street Lights, Improvements Existing, Underground Utilities

Restaurants
- Casual Restaurant, Restaurants, Upscale Dining

Amenity
- Street Decorations

Museum
- Rail Road Museum

Banking
- Payment Center

Entertainment
- Movie Theater, Music Center

New Building
- New Buildings w/ Green Technology, Small Strip Mall

Events
- Rail Road Days Festival

Low Ranking

During our community workshop citizens were asked the question: “What would you like to bring to West Manlius Street in the future?”

This question resulted in a lot of feedback and ideas that have been categorized into three sections: Uses/Activities, Characteristics, and Infrastructure. The blue charts show all responses broken down into sections and ranked according to the number of people who responded similarly.

The red graph groups the responses into categories primarily of use. This helps better understand the relative priority of uses and improvements desired by workshop participants and helps define goals for the revitalization of West Manlius Street.
Workshop 2: Confirming the Vision

Community Questions:
After the first meeting, the design team developed a vision statement and a series of goals based on the activity findings. The purpose of the second meeting was to present the vision and goals, to give participants a chance to edit these statements and to consider possible action strategies to achieve the goals. The design team developed a series of questions:

- Are there any big ideas missing from the vision statement?
- Are there any big ideas missing from the goals?
- What goals, if any, are missing?
- What are action strategies that would help fulfill the goals and vision statement?

Workshop 2 Activities:
The workshop began with a presentation of the findings from the first workshop and an explanation of the draft vision and goals. This was followed by:

- Vision Review- Community members reviewed the draft vision statement and made suggestions for additions of big ideas. Next, the draft goals were reviewed and the group made suggestions for additional goals.
- Developing Action Strategies- Each group focused on a different individual goal and brainstormed projects, policies or programs to achieve that goal.

Workshop 2 Findings:
Community members at the workshop were generally in agreement with the draft vision and goals. Upkeep, continued revitalization and history were themes they wanted emphasized in the vision and statements on building maintenance, corridor landscaping, railroad history and attracting new residents were added to the vision. The goals were revised to also emphasize those themes and to include safety.

Each of the groups developed a series of action strategies related to the goal they were assigned to address. These included projects and programs that community members and organizations could implement as well as those that would require municipal leadership. The action strategies along with the revised vision and goals were documented for review at the third workshop.

Above: Participants at Workshop 2 revise the Vision Statement and review the results from Workshop 1.
Workshop 3: Exploring Alternatives

Community Questions:
After the first two workshops, the design team investigated the history and existing conditions of the West Manlius Street Corridor. Given the initial analysis from this investigation and the understanding gained from community members at the workshops, the team divided the corridor into sections based upon physical characteristics: the Western, Central, Historic Core and the Gateways. The design team developed alternative design approaches to address the issues and and achieve the goals that had been identified. The purpose of the third workshop was to review and discuss the alternative designs to understand preferences and answer the following broad questions explored in this stage.

- What might West Manlius Street of the future look like?
- What are ways to improve the pedestrian experience and calm vehicular traffic along the corridor?
- How might the image and history of East Syracuse be expressed through physical design?
- What are the appropriate development patterns, scale and land uses?

Workshop 3 Activities:
The workshop began with a power point presentation that included the vision and goals revised from the second workshop, an overview of the historic and existing conditions, characteristics and issues of each section of West Manlius Street, and an introduction to the design alternatives. The participants then divided into groups to comment on the design studies. There were two sessions, allowing each participant to discuss and comment on two of the four sections of the corridor. Each of the design sessions were conducted in the same way.

- For each section of the corridor there was documentation and illustration of existing conditions and at least two alternative future scenarios. In general, one of the alternatives illustrated short or near term improvements primarily within the public right-of-way to improve the corridor appearance and the pedestrian environment. The other alternative(s) for each section required more significant changes on private property or longer term initiatives to improve conditions of the corridor.
- Students presented each alternative in plan view, illustrated with sections and sketch photo perspectives. Participants asked questions and commented on elements of the design they liked and what concerned them.
- New Uses and Prioritizing- Participants gave suggestions for new uses they thought were appropriate for that section and finished the session by voting for the ideas for new uses and design elements they liked best.
Workshop 3 Findings:
At the beginning of the workshop, the participants were hesitant to say what they liked about the designs. With some additional explanation and examples from the design team about the importance of illustrating and describing their desired vision for their Main Street, they were able to discuss what they thought were positive elements as well as challenging characteristics. Following are summary narratives for each of the four areas.

The intent of the **Eastern Gateway** designs was to create a sense of welcome and provide a suitable transition from the highway and suburban scale landscape of Bridge Street to the village scale of West Manlius Street. The designs also acknowledged pedestrian use and the desire for people to walk to the commercial area across Bridge Street. The design alternatives illustrated different ways of creating a gateway and modifying the bridge, using elements in ways that referenced the railroad and railroad history.

There were concerns expressed regarding the ownership of the bridge, cost of these improvements and snow removal challenges.

The eastern entry studies also addressed redevelopment of the former Bella Luna property and the adjacent site to the east, shown in the upper right section of the plan sketch to the right. These sites were recognized as critical to the image of the village. Also shown was programming the existing parking to the west of the bridge for an outdoor market or youth skate park. Although participants stated that both have been tried and were not successful in the past, some felt that with other improvements shown in the design studies, those type of activities would have better chance of success.

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**As a gateway to the village Main Street from Bridge Street/Rt. 290, participants preferred the overhead beams (above) to the column option (below) because it provided a viewing frame and effectively brought the highway scale down to village scale.**

**Left and above: Community members liked ideas of adding elements onto the Bridge Street bridge to recognize the railroad history.**

**Above: Examples from other places helped community members consider possibilities for the Old Bridge Street bridge.**

**The plan, above, and sections, to the left, illustrate an approach to redevelopment of the major entry intersection onto Main Street that replaces the existing gas station, the vacant Bella Luna building and adjacent site with commercial and residential buildings.**
In the **Historic Core** section, the intent of the designs was to re-establish the civic and commercial core, address the discontinuity and vacancy, and improve the pedestrian environment. There was general agreement by workshop participants in review of the design alternatives of the following ideas:

- A definitive edge along the sidewalk to establish a sense of continuity and structure across the front of currently vacant lots
- Public spaces with seating and gathering areas
- Attractive parking areas in the rear of buildings but parking should be convenient and visible
- Any parking in lots along Main Street should be buffered and screened
- Increasing the amount of planting and green areas should be a priority but trees need to be spaced and selected to avoid blocking views of buildings and signs
- There should be a mix of retail office and civic uses appropriate to a pedestrian oriented commercial core

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*Above: These sketches illustrate short term approaches to screening parking areas in the historic core, with fencing in the upper sketch and hedge plant material in the lower. Both establish a definitive edge to the sidewalk. Additional improvements could include murals on blank building walls, lighting and sidewalk connections.*

*Right: Encouraging the redevelopment of mixed use buildings on vacant lots will provide both commercial and residential activity in the Historic Core.*

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*Above: These section/elevation sketches illustrate alternative strategies for the block on the south side of the street that includes the Key Bank. The bottom sketch shows fencing to buffer the existing parking lot adjacent to the Key Bank and small building to the west. The middle sketch shows a similar approach, but utilizing hedge planting. The top sketch illustrates infill buildings on the lots to the east (left) of Key Bank and to the west (right) of Sacks. Participants agreed that infill buildings should match the scale and character of traditional Main Street buildings, as shown.*
In the **Central section** the goals of the design team included improving the pedestrian environment, reducing the scale and amount of parking and pavement in front of the buildings, consolidating parking, and calming vehicular traffic. In review of the design alternatives, participants were in agreement about the following:

• This section of the corridor must be more pedestrian oriented, including crosswalks, creating places to sit along the corridor and controlling and managing vehicular access into and out of parking lots
• Expanding green space and plant materials is important but consideration should be given to maintenance, location in relation to power lines and blocking views.
• It is important to minimize the visual impact of parking but there is the need for ample, convenient parking
• Vehicular traffic should be slowed to improve safety and give drivers the chance to stop and explore the village but not to the extent that drivers avoid the village
• Land uses similar to what already exists in this section, with specific mention of small stores, services, offices and a railroad museum and shop.

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*Above and right: This design proposal for the ARC building site involves reorganization of the parking lot to provide an attractive entry and pedestrian access from the sidewalks, as well as buffering the parking lot with plant material and a wall.*

*Left: The top section illustrates the lack of separation between the street, sidewalks and parking lots a condition which exists along much of the Central Section. The bottom section illustrates how the addition of bumpouts in the street to define the parking lane, the addition of trees and low planting, and a walkway for the sidewalk to the front entry of the Rite Aid can improve the environment for all users.*

*Parking lots in the central section were evaluated and vegetation and sidewalks were added to increase safety and reduce their visual dominance. The plan and perspective sketch above show modifications to the Rite Aid site including the addition of a walkway from the sidewalk to the store entrance.*
In the **Western section**, the design team sought to improve the entry image, improve the environment for walking and reduce and buffer large expanses of pavement. The existing land use and the condition of the pedestrian realm were the focus of discussion, with general agreement about the following ideas:

- The parking and storage areas of the auto repair shops are unsightly and should be buffered or screened with plant material or fences
- The vast amount of parking in this area contributes to its abandoned appearance but may be necessary for bowling leagues at certain times of the year
- Continuous sidewalk and pedestrian scale lighting on both sides of the West Manlius Street
- The small triangular park proposed at the corner of West Manlius St. and Highland Avenue would be a good improvement to the entry experience and pedestrian environment but some were hesitant about giving up parking
- The addition of trees and vegetation but without blocking business signs
- Some business signs are poorly located, such as the Family Dollar Store sign which blocks the mural
- Installation of bioswales to this and other sections of the street
- Ideas for new land uses included retail business and services, offices, medical or dental facilities, and a new library.
Final Meeting:
Community Questions:
After the third workshop, the design team organized, analyzed and synthesized the community responses to the design alternatives for each section of the corridor. They identified ideas around which there was agreement and shared understanding. These included:

- Recognition that there are different districts or zones along the Main Street corridor
- Envisioning the historic core as a civic and community center in addition to having businesses
- The desire for this to be a “green” corridor with a variety of vegetation and introduction of bioswales for treatment of storm water
- The need for improvement of the pedestrian realm
- The need for improvement of entries into the village and Main Street
- The need to remove or mitigate uses that are not appropriate for Main Street
- The need to address parking comprehensively
- The desire to acknowledge and incorporate railroad history in the corridor revitalization

The design team also reviewed and discussed issues and questions with the advisory committee to determine how to proceed with preparing final design studies for the Main Street corridor. The design team prepared a final conceptual design proposal. This conceptual proposal is included as Section 4 of this document.

The community questions in this final meeting focused on implementation of the vision plan:

- What are the priority long term and short term action strategies?
- How are community members interested in participating in implementation of the vision?

Meeting 4 Procedure:

The design team gave a power point presentation that included a review of the inventory and analysis, final vision statement and goals and the final conceptual corridor design. The presentation also focused on the importance of making an action plan to prioritize goals and projects and included a summary by the Mayor of the actions that the village has been taking to move forward with implementation.

After the presentation, community members had the opportunity to review the posters of the final design proposal for the corridor and discuss them with the design team. They selected the long and short term
priority action strategies for each goal of the vision. They also had the opportunity to fill out a questionnaire about how they would like to continue to be involved in the future.

Meeting 4 Findings:

Responses to the questionnaire provide the village with contact information for community members that would like to continue to be involved either in a leadership position, as a member of a task force or project team and/or to attend information and review meetings. Action Strategies prioritized by community members will provide a foundation for development of an action plan to begin to implement the vision.
The Vision Statement
The Village of East Syracuse’s Main Street is a thriving, walkable, mixed use shopping and business district known for its well maintained buildings and attractive corridor landscape. It is central to the daily life of all residents, proudly recognizes its history as a railroad town, and welcomes visitors and new residents to enjoy the traditional village character.

Goals:
1. Reinforce the image and identity of Main Street as a welcoming district of village commerce and community.

Action Strategies:
   a) Develop and implement plans for the visual and environmental improvement of the gateways to Main Street, on the east at Bridge Street/Rt. 290 and on the west along the Burnet Street corridor.
   b) Develop a comprehensive signage program to coordinate the multiple aspects of wayfinding, including welcome and entry, directional, informational and commercial/business, encouraging creativity, appropriate scale and high quality design and materials.
   c) Organize events that will attract visitors and community residents to Main Street on a regular basis.
   d) Develop an arts and cultural program to bring people together to teach and learn.
   e) Develop strategies to publicize community events and happenings to residents and visitors.

2. Recognize and celebrate the history of the village and Main Street, tapping the past to inspire the future.

Action Strategies:
   a) Record the history and stories of the railroads in ways that engage former railroad employees, community residents of all ages, and the CSX company so that it can be a project that builds understanding and collaboration
   b) Develop temporary and permanent displays of the railroad history, starting small with displays in existing public buildings and civic spaces, vacant lots and buildings, signage and other improvements.
   c) Encourage renovation or adaptive reuse of historic buildings that respects the historic materials and design.
   d) Creatively reference the railroad and industrial history in...
public rights-of-way and civic places, signage, lighting and other site or street amenities.

e) Engage people in the living history of the village, such as creating a walking tour that highlights the history of East Syracuse, holding a ‘parade of homes’ of historic architecture, and developing a brochure showcasing points of interest.

3. Stimulate and maintain a vibrant, diverse economy on Main Street.

*Action Strategies:*

a) Prepare an economic and market analysis to better understand the type of uses that are appropriate and viable for this Main Street and to confirm or redefine the community vision.

b) Create a marketing program that builds on this vision and promotes East Syracuse as an attractive and supportive community in which to establish a business.

c) Research and present case studies of successful small town revitalization, using these to inspire and model best practices.

d) Provide incentives and other types of support (such as mentoring, business related programs) for development of desired businesses and continuation of existing businesses.

4. Create a Main Street and village environment that invites and supports safe pedestrian use, community events and an active lifestyle.

*Action Steps:*

a) Prepare a comprehensive “green corridor” plan that is coordinated with needed infrastructure improvements, to calm vehicular traffic and provide a supportive environment for pedestrians. (See also vision design concept and key elements)

b) Prepare design guidelines for Main Street buildings (including façades), right-of-way improvements and site improvements that reinforce the creation of a traditional walkable Main Street environment.

c) Continue the sidewalk improvement program so that there is a network of continuous, well maintained and accessible sidewalks in the village.

d) Review and update the existing zoning code to ensure that this regulatory tool supports accomplishment of the community vision.
e) Study possible ways to provide access to all parts of the village by those who are handicapped or physically challenged.

5. Encourage signs of caring and proactive maintenance along Main Street and throughout the village.

Action Steps:

a) Organize clean up days and other volunteer efforts to maintain and improve the corridor appearance and promote shared responsibility.

b) Encourage the garden club and others knowledgeable in plant selection and care to assume responsibility for seasonal or higher maintenance planting in selected areas along Main Street.

c) Continue to improve code enforcement, including in single family dwellings.

d) Develop a program to provide building owners (residential and commercial) with low or no cost professional advice on improvements to their buildings and sites that will reinforce the principles of the Main Street vision.

6. Provides opportunities for community members to continue to participate in the revitalization of Main Street.

Action Steps:

a) Establish a steering committee to guide implementation of the downtown Vision Plan, the first task of which is to create an Action Plan to determine strategic priorities.

b) Provide open forums during the revitalization process to promote continued involvement and review by community members. Provide different ways for people to stay in touch, such as a gallery exhibit, drop box or internet blog.

c) Ensure that all village residents are aware of the Main Street vision and how they can be involved in its implementation.

d) Create a network of communication, coordination and information exchange between residents so that there is a shared understanding of actions, activities and purpose.
Significance of the Vision Plan
The Vision Plan for East Syracuse’s Main Street sets a direction around which there is shared agreement and provides a framework upon which decisions can be based. This vision was created by community members and leaders whose collective knowledge, concerns and values came together to define a desired future, and develop a series of goals and related action strategies that can be undertaken to achieve the vision. However, there is no one way for a community to accomplish its vision. With additional information on market conditions or uncovering new opportunities, goals and related strategies may be modified or added over time. The vision plan should be used as tool to evaluate proposed development, to develop guidelines or standards, and for marketing the village to potential businesses and residents.

The Value of Graphic Representation
Throughout the East Syracuse Vision Planning process, the design team used graphic images to gather information, elicit discussion, and illustrate alternative design ideas specific to the village and West Manlius Street. In most aspects of design and planning, graphic representation of information and ideas is essential to promote shared understanding and allow people to contribute effectively. While words can be interpreted in many ways, images can help encourage shared understanding and clearly show the relationships, elements and scale of an actual place. It is an effective way not only to communicate ideas, but also as a way to study the physical representation of concepts to solve problems.

Conceptual Strategy
The design team began to develop a conceptual strategy for the revitalization of Main Street after the second meeting with the community and as they came to know the corridor better through on-site investigation and research into some of the issues that were emerging through these activities. Like the vision, the conceptual strategy is meant to provide a framework for future decisions, particularly those which will influence physical design and redevelopment within the corridor. This strategy is a physical representation of the community’s vision. The diagram of the conceptual strategy follows this section.

The conceptual strategy envisions West Manlius Street as a green corridor that provides connection and continuity between the three different sections of the street and the adjacent neighborhoods.
The Design Framework

- The entry corridors – The Main Street identity and character must extend beyond West Manlius Street, on the west to Burnet Avenue and Thompson Road, and on the east to Bridge Street and potentially beyond to 690. Improvements should include signage, planting and other landscape elements in compositions that take into consideration the scale and perspective of people approaching and traversing these gateways primarily in vehicles but with consideration to those on foot, especially on Bridge Street.

- The entry intersections – These are the primary locations where people entering Main Street should feel that they have arrived. There should be clear and village specific signage for welcome and direction, evidence of the village character and pedestrian scale improvements, that will continue the length of the corridor.

- The green corridor – The entire length of West Manlius Street should be thought of as a continuous “green” corridor. Although each section of the corridor may have different land uses and physical form, the concept of this as a continuous and unified corridor should be readily evident. Reducing the amount of impervious surface, lining the street with canopy trees, planting a variety of other plant material, and introducing bioswales and rain gardens along the entire corridor will improve the quality of the pedestrian experience and environmental conditions.

- The historic core – The oldest commercial section of the Main Street centered on the intersection of Center Street and West Manlius Street should again be the heart of commercial and civic activity. Corridor improvements should favor and attract people exploring the district on foot. Historic and older buildings should be renovated and new infill buildings designed to reflect traditional architecture, with large storefront windows, parking in the rear and on the street, spaces for gathering and relaxing, and a mix of retail, office, restaurants and residential uses.

- The central section – This section of the street should continue to function as a mixed use residential and commercial area but with right-of-way, site and building improvements that promote balancing the needs of those in vehicles or on foot, whether they are arriving at a destination or passing through. Existing parking in front of buildings should be buffered or relocated where possible. New buildings should be close to the right-of-way line with parking in the rear or side.

- The western section – Defining the corridor edges with curbs, sidewalks, street trees and parking lot buffers will greatly improve the experience for both pedestrian and vehicular users.
**VISION STATEMENT**

The Village of East Syracuse's Main Street is a thriving walkable, mixed use shopping and business district known for its well maintained buildings and attractive corridor landscape. It is central to the daily life of all residents, proudly recognizes its history as a railroad town and welcomes visitors and new residents to enjoy the traditional village scale and character.

**GOAL 1:** Reinforce the image and identity of Main Street as a welcoming district of village commerce and community.

**GOAL 2:** Recognize and celebrate the history of the village and Main Street, tapping the past to inspire the future.

**GOAL 3:** Stimulate and maintain a vibrant, diverse economy on Main Street.

**GOAL 4:** Create a Main Street and village environment that invites and supports safe pedestrian use, community events and active lifestyle.

**GOAL 5:** Encourage signs of caring and proactive maintenance along Main Street and throughout the village.

**GOAL 6:** Provide opportunities for community members to continue to participate in the revitalization of Main Street.

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**Concept Diagram**

**Key Elements**

- West Section
- Central Section
- Historic Section
- Green Corridor
- Entry Intersections
- Gateway Corridors
- Railroad
- Roads

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**Village of East Syracuse MAIN STREET VISION PLAN**

Final Vision Presentation

April 21, 2009
and reinforce this area’s role as the western gateway. Future land uses of light manufacturing or technology businesses that directly address West Manlius Street with parking in the rear could attractively mediate between the residential neighborhoods to the north and west, and the manufacturing uses to the south.

- Terrace Ave – The areas south of West Manlius Street present opportunities for re-development of sites that are currently underutilized as car storage or are vacant. Possible re-use includes condominiums that step down the hill; shared parking lots for businesses on Main Street; or service businesses that do not need a Main Street location.

To address identified issues and build on strengths the following principals should govern decisions in each section of the corridor:

- Favor the pedestrian
- Encourage a synergistic mix of uses
- Promote sensitive renovation and infill
- Coordinate way finding and signage
- Reveal history
- Plan creatively for parking

The final design strategies documented on the posters in this section describe and illustrate how the conceptual strategy and principles can be applied in each section of the Main Street corridor.
Design Intent

The design intent for this section of West Manlius St. is to re-establish a civic and commercial core and create a sense of welcome and arrival into the village from Bridge Street.

Pedestrian realm: Improvements to the pedestrian experience are a key part in this proposal.
- Placement of crosswalks and curb bump-outs will promote safe crossing and identify this as an area that favors those on foot.
- Introducing pedestrian scale lighting will improve night time visibility, providing a sense of security and continuity along the entire corridor.
- The sidewalk is buffered from the road with tree, shrub and seasonal plantings.
- Providing choices of places to sit, on benches and seat walls, will invite residents and visitors to linger and enjoy the active commercial district.
- Large storefront windows encourage window shopping.

Land Use: While a full market analysis is needed to determine what kinds of uses are most needed and viable on Main Street, proposed uses include:
- A civic use in the zone adjacent to Key Bank. Historically, this area was the center of commercial activity and community life on Main Street and civic uses such as a library, youth/senior center, or railroad museum/exhibit could bring more activity to the struggling retail environment.
- Consideration to relocate auto repairs and large parking lots from this section, as it does not represent the highest and best use of the land.
- Small specialty retail, a coffee shop, and restaurants are also desired uses.
- The current Bela Luna site is another strategic site to address the current land use, with parking in the rear and on the street would help activate this important corner.

Renovation & Infill:
- Infill of new buildings on vacant lots is done in a way that reinforces the Main Street edge.
- Buildings should meet the historic setback lines and there should be no on-site parking in front of the buildings.
- Any parking on the sides of buildings must be screened in a way that shields the cars from view and reinforces the build-to line.
- New buildings should follow the older building pattern in this section of Main Street by keeping to two or three stories with large windows on the first floor, upper story windows matching the rhythm and size, and be designed in a compatible architectural style.

Parking:
- Adequate parking is accommodated through the use of municipal and shared lots and on-street parking.
- Lots are located in the back of buildings with vacant lots used for infill buildings when possible to create a continuous built edge on the street.
- Coordinated signage will direct visitors to the lots and attractive alley-ways will link the lots to the street.
- On-street parking is retained for handicapped and short term parking.

Wayfinding & Signage:
- Repetition of design details such as lights, paving materials, trees help cue pedestrians and motorists and provide continuity with the rest of W. Manlius St.
- Entry signage at the Bridge Street Gateway establishes the welcoming image of the village.
- The historic core should also include directional and orientation signage for visitors on foot.

History: History is referenced primarily by the detailing in this section. This could include interpretive signage, traditional pavers, and lighting, and design forms that reference railroad history.

View looking East past Key Bank. New Infill meets existing build-to line and is architecturally sensitive to its context.

View across the street from Sacks: Screening minimizes visual impact of parking and maintain an edge along the street.

View of entry from Bridge Street. Panels and vegetation provide a transition to a village scale and reference the history.

Sign Detail at Bridge Street. Notice the detail and historic reference in the signage.

View across West on West Manlius St. at Twin Tree Pizza

Sections:
- View West on West Manlius St. at Twin Tree Pizza
- View looking East past Key Bank

Plan
Scale 1"= 50'

No image/exhibit could bring more activity to the struggling retail environment.

The design intent for this section of West Manlius St. is to re-establish a civic and commercial core and create a sense of welcome and arrival into the village from Bridge Street.

Pedestrian realm: Improvements to the pedestrian experience are a key part in this proposal.
- Placement of crosswalks and curb bump-outs will promote safe crossing and identify this as an area that favors those on foot.
- Introducing pedestrian scale lighting will improve night time visibility, providing a sense of security and continuity along the entire corridor.
- The sidewalk is buffered from the road with tree, shrub and seasonal plantings.
- Providing choices of places to sit, on benches and seat walls, will invite residents and visitors to linger and enjoy the active commercial district.
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Land Use: While a full market analysis is needed to determine what kinds of uses are most needed and viable on Main Street, proposed uses include:
- A civic use in the zone adjacent to Key Bank. Historically, this area was the center of commercial activity and community life on Main Street and civic uses such as a library, youth/senior center, or railroad museum/exhibit could bring more activity to the struggling retail environment.
- Consideration to relocate auto repairs and large parking lots from this section, as it does not represent the highest and best use of the land.
- Small specialty retail, a coffee shop, and restaurants are also desired uses.
- The current Bela Luna site is another strategic site to address the current land use, with parking in the rear and on the street would help activate this important corner.

Renovation & Infill:
- Infill of new buildings on vacant lots is done in a way that reinforces the Main Street edge.
- Buildings should meet the historic setback lines and there should be no on-site parking in front of the buildings.
- Any parking on the sides of buildings must be screened in a way that shields the cars from view and reinforces the build-to line.
- New buildings should follow the older building pattern in this section of Main Street by keeping to two or three stories with large windows on the first floor, upper story windows matching the rhythm and size, and be designed in a compatible architectural style.

Parking:
- Adequate parking is accommodated through the use of municipal and shared lots and on-street parking.
- Lots are located in the back of buildings with vacant lots used for infill buildings when possible to create a continuous built edge on the street.
- Coordinated signage will direct visitors to the lots and attractive alley-ways will link the lots to the street.
- On-street parking is retained for handicapped and short term parking.

Wayfinding & Signage:
- Repetition of design details such as lights, paving materials, trees help cue pedestrians and motorists and provide continuity with the rest of W. Manlius St.
- Entry signage at the Bridge Street Gateway establishes the welcoming image of the village.
- The historic core should also include directional and orientation signage for visitors on foot.

History: History is referenced primarily by the detailing in this section. This could include interpretive signage, traditional pavers, and lighting, and design forms that reference railroad history.

View looking East past Key Bank. New Infill meets existing build-to line and is architecturally sensitive to its context.

View across the street from Sacks: Screening minimizes visual impact of parking and maintain an edge along the street.

View of entry from Bridge Street. Panels and vegetation provide a transition to a village scale and reference the history.

Sign Detail at Bridge Street. Notice the detail and historic reference in the signage.

View across West on West Manlius St. at Twin Tree Pizza

Sections:
- View West on West Manlius St. at Twin Tree Pizza
- View looking East past Key Bank

Plan
Scale 1"= 50'
Design Intent:
The design intent is to create a more favorable pedestrian experience and through overall streetscape improvements to reestablish a continuity of facades, set-backs, and building masses, and a more clearly defined, safe pedestrian realm.

Pedestrian realm:
• Cross-walks provide a better connection between the north and south sides of West Manlius Street.
• The number of curb-cuts along the street has been reduced and are better defined through the use of concrete aprons.
• The entrances to buildings have been altered to create a better connection to the sidewalks along West Manlius and a more inviting pedestrian entry.
• Trees and light fixtures are placed between the curb and sidewalk wherever possible to provide a buffer between pedestrians and the traffic on West Manlius Street.
• On-street parking on the south will buffer pedestrians from traffic and will slow the overall speed of vehicular traffic on the street.
• A consistent street tree canopy and vegetation along the street and sidewalk define the sidewalk, providing shade and adding detail and interest.
• Small plazas and seating areas have been added throughout this section of the corridor to offer more public space for resting or gathering.

Renovation and In-fill:
• To re-establish the former density and character of Main Street, new structures should be of a village scale height, massing, and setback closer to the right-of-way, with no parking in front of buildings.
• Property owners should be encouraged to improve the facades of their structures to meet guidelines established for structures along Main Street.

Packing:
• The visual impact of large parking lots has been reduced by buffering with vegetation and fences/walls and by breaking up expanses of asphalt with islands of tree and vegetation plantings.
• Parking has been reconfigured to be more efficient in terms of size and orientation of stalls and vehicular ingress and egress from the lots.
• A shared-lot strategy is shown between and behind buildings as a way to minimize the total number of parking spaces required on each individual property, with improved sidewalk access.
• Parking is increased in the underutilized space between West Manlius and Terrace Streets.

History:
• Throughout the central section, the history of East Syracuse as a railroad village will be referenced in the streetscape details such as lighting, fences, walls and by breaking up expanses of asphalt with islands of tree and vegetation plantings.
• In the future, this section of West Manlius Street will be predominately commercial land uses, with a continuation of many office and service businesses. The residents of the village have expressed a desire for a diversity of businesses here including retail.
• Residential land use will be located on the upper stories of commercial structures and could also exist in terraced residential buildings to the south of the Main Street that could be accessed from Terrace Street.

Land Use:
• Throughout the central section, the history of East Syracuse as a railroad village will be referenced in the streetscape details such as lighting, fences, walls and by breaking up expanses of asphalt with islands of tree and vegetation plantings.

Wayfinding and Signage:
• Signage in this section should be a part of a uniform sign program for the whole West Manlius Street corridor. On the south side of the street, signs should be attached to the structures relating to the pedestrian realm, while on the north side the signage of high-traffic chain businesses like Byrne Dairy and Rite-Aid should be larger, but still suitable for the village context and scale.

Village of East Syracuse MAIN STREET VISION PLAN Final Vision Presentation April 21, 2009
DESIGN INTENT

The intent of this design is to create a welcoming entrance to the Village of East Syracuse and better use of vacant and underutilized lands to develop a safe, more attractive pedestrian environment.

Pedestrian Realm
- Continuous sidewalks and consolidated curb cuts provide a safe walking environment.
- Trees and shrubs define and buffer the sidewalk and create a village scale.
- Pedestrian scale lighting provides visibility at night and corridor unity.
- The pocket park will be a destination and resting place for people walking along W. Manlius Street.

Parking
- Bio-swales are used to filter and slow the amount of storm water runoff and adds a green buffer to the parking lot.
- Better delineated entry and exits into the parking lots will help to control circulation through parking lots and make it safer for pedestrians and vehicles.
- Parking for proposed buildings is located behind and in shared lots.

Renovation & Infill
- New buildings should be close to the sidewalk and street, with architecture and site design that is oriented toward providing and attractive edge to the corridor.
- Buildings planned in this area make better use of underutilized lands through increased density.
- Even buildings with large footprints should be designed to match the scale and characteristics of buildings in the historic core, with large windows on the first floor and reduction in scale through detail and materials.

Land Use
- This section should be considered for office and research businesses and light manufacturing that respects the building and site standards established for the corridor.
- Re-establishment of second story residential above first floor office or commercial on the east side of Highland will provide a transition to the neighborhood.

Way-finding and Signage
- Installation of a properly scaled gateway sign will welcome people to the Village of East Syracuse and coordinated directional signage will orient them.
Addressing the Key Issues
Through the process of creating the vision plan a number of key issues were expressed by the community or became apparent through observation. These will need to be considered and addressed as the village proceeds into implementation. Addressing some of the issues may come down to mediating between what may seem to be contradicting desires, such as the desire to slow down traffic but also to not discourage pass-through traffic. Most of the issues concern physical conditions and characteristics of the corridor, but the final issue involves continued community involvement.

- Vacant or underutilized sites – There are a number of sites along the West Manlius Street corridor that contain no structures, leaving a gap tooth appearance, especially when this occurs in the historic core. The long term solution in most cases is to promote the infill of these lots with buildings that complement the scale and character of a village Main Street and that contain a mix of uses that can be supported in this setting. Given that infill development can take a long time to accomplish, the visual impact of the vacant lots should be mitigated. This might include reestablishing the sidewalk edge with vegetation or fencing, and activating lots for temporary community use such as gardens, art displays, seating areas, or murals on building walls. Those that are used for parking should be screened or buffered. Other sites in the village may not be vacant but can be identified as underutilized because they are not being used to their best potential given their location in the corridor. This includes the former Bella Luna bowling alley site, and several sites along Terrace Street. Additional study is recommended to explore possible alternative uses and redevelopment.

- Deteriorated structures – The village code enforcement officer has identified a number of structures in the West Manlius Street corridor that are in dilapidated and potentially unsafe condition. In some cases, the assessment is that restoring them to good condition may not be economically feasible. However, continued removal of existing structures without firm plans for redevelopment will result in additional vacant sites as described above. The village should develop a strategy to proactively address the issue of declining building conditions before they reach the stage of no return. One of the first items to be determined will be what the community believes to be the value of preserving and rehabilitating existing buildings, which may be based on the quality of the original building construction and subsequent renovations, its historic and architectural characteristics, its location on the street and the potential for adaptive reuse.
• Parking – Most participants at the workshops agreed that parking in the front yards of businesses detracts from the appearance and character of the Main Street and that parking in the rear or shared lots was a good idea. However, there was also discussion that people want visible and convenient parking. The current zoning ordinance requires parking to be handled on individual lots which in some cases makes redevelopment not economically feasible. Customers are not aware that parking may be available in the rear of buildings or along side streets. East Syracuse has an abundance of space for parking but there needs to be coordinated, creative approaches to addressing the demand for parking. Looking into how other communities have successfully addressed parking without compromising their village character, documenting possible approaches, such as shared parking, and working with property owners to develop appropriate options would be a series of initial steps.

• Balancing vehicular and pedestrian oriented improvements - The speed and volume of vehicular traffic on West Manlius Street was identified as a concern during the workshops. Most people felt that it is unpleasant and unsafe for pedestrians and that the type of improvements shown in the design studies would help slow traffic and improve the walking experience. However, there was the concern expressed that this “traffic calming” might cause congestion and discourage pass through traffic that some consider desirable. While it seems appropriate to propose striking a balance between the pedestrian and vehicular use of West Manlius Street, there needs to be recognition that current conditions are decidedly vehicular oriented. To make it more balanced will require significant improvements toward the pedestrian orientation. Business owners, the state DOT, the village highway department and other stakeholders must be involved in the discussions and decisions about the pedestrian and “human scale” improvements to the corridor.

• Changes and improvements to private property – For the vision to be most effective it needs to involve change and improvements to private as well as public property. Participants at the workshops questioned the willingness and ability of property owners to participate in making recommended improvements, such as façade and building renovation, and restructuring and greening parking areas. Addressing this issue will require a multi-faceted approach by the village and vision committee leadership, providing education and information about the revitalization planning, creating illustrated guidelines for the desired appearance and improvements, securing grants for renovations, and assessing and revising current zoning to encourage desired outcomes in future property redevelopment.
• Inappropriate land uses – Related to the issue of private property development and improvements are those land uses that currently exist along the corridor that might be considered inappropriate or non-contributing for a pedestrian oriented Main Street location. It is challenging to encourage or convince active business owners to move. In the short term, mitigation of their presence through screening and right-of-way improvements may be the most feasible solution. In the long term, guidelines for future uses based on the vision as well as suggestions of more appropriate locations for some existing or proposed uses should be developed.

• Residential use on Main Street - There was general agreement during the workshops that residential use should remain and continue along West Manlius Street, with several people voicing the opinion that it is crucial for current and future businesses to see that there is a customer base there. The form and type of residential use was not studied or discussed in-depth. There was discussion by some about the desire to have improved continuity of buildings that have businesses on the first floor and residential on the upper floors. This is based on the perspective that single family type homes remaining on West Manlius Street break up the continuity. While the vision illustrates those structures remaining, the alternatives, costs and market for residential should be further explored and discussed.

• Community capacity and organization – Throughout the vision planning process there was good community involvement, encouraged by the village through outreach efforts and evidenced by strong and repeat attendance at the workshops. Participants seemed interested in contributing their ideas and knowledge constructively and were excited that this vision will be implemented. It is important that community members be given the opportunity to continue to participate in the implementation of the vision through work on projects, events and other local initiatives many of which have been outlined as action strategies in the vision plan. There are small, short term projects that can be accomplished by community members and organizations even while the village is seeking funding and support for larger scale revitalization projects. Community members do not just want to see positive change, they want to be involved in making it happen.

Next Steps
Form a Leadership Team – Many communities find that it is most effective to form a team to guide the implementation of their vision plan. Representation on the leadership team should include important stakeholders in the community. This will vary from place to place, but consider representation from the chamber of commerce, the...
school district, the municipality, other important organizations, as well as individuals that expressed interest in taking on a leadership role during the vision planning process. People considered for this team should be well respected by the community, be open to group decision-making, have the time to commit to meeting on a regular basis and be willing to take responsibility for accomplishing tasks. The size of the group should be no greater than 6 to 8. The group should determine its mission (who we are, what we do and who we do it for), how decisions will be made, and how they will involve and communicate with the community and the village government.

Prepare an Action Agenda for Implementation – The vision plan is composed of the vision statement, a series of goals, and under each goal a series of action strategies. The strategies describe projects and other activities that community members, vision leadership committee and the design team considered necessary to implement the vision. After completing the vision plan, one of the first steps is to develop an action agenda that will prioritize, sequence and organize the projects and activities. Factors to consider in developing an action agenda include:

- The value to the community and the revitalization effort.
- The degree of difficulty and complexity – Some projects will be very manageable in the short term and easy to accomplish with readily available resources, while others will be longer term, take a longer time to plan, gather resources and require a high degree of coordination to implement.
- The logical sequence of projects - It may be necessary to complete some projects in a certain order while others can be done independently.
- Resource requirements of projects and availability (resources may include money, leadership, people, materials, space)
  - Depending on the resources available, there may be a limit to what can be taken on at any one time. It is important to think of community organizations and individuals as resources and to consider how they can be involved in accomplishing community initiatives.
- Length of time to complete various projects – Estimating how long various projects will take may suggest opportunities for sequencing, parallel implementation and staggering.

Development of the action agenda should start with a list of all of the strategies described in the vision plan. Other strategies or projects may start to emerge as you consider what needs to be done to accomplish the projects and achieve the vision. Try to control the length of the list of projects because it can easily become overwhelming. Consider
also the priorities selected by community members during the final vision meeting. These may indicate the projects to which community members are most interested in contributing their time and effort.

As the leadership group develops the overall action agenda, they will more than likely also start drafting action plans for projects that seem to be rising to the top as short or long term priorities. Action plans should guide the progress of each project and should include:

- Defining tasks – What needs to be done?
- Describing techniques – How can that be accomplished?
- Determining resources – What resources are needed?
- Developing a time frame – When will this take place; how long will it take?

Creating an Action Plan requires knowledge of the typical steps in project development. People in the community or on the village staff may have the experience and expertise to describe these steps, but also seek assistance through state or county agencies and consultants if necessary.

_Pursue Brownfield Opportunity Area designation_ – The New York State Brownfield Opportunity Area program provides funding and technical assistance for communities to comprehensively plan for the revitalization of areas that contain multiple vacant, abandoned and potential brownfield sites. Much of the additional planning work indicated as action strategies in the Vision Plan, including economic and market trends analysis, in-depth inventory and analysis, additional site and corridor studies, and marketing materials could be accomplished through this program.
East Syracuse has the resources and assets to revitalize its Main Street as a place of daily business and gathering for residents and as a village scale commercial district for visitors from nearby communities. In a time when people are looking for alternatives to the ubiquitous, placeless suburban shopping malls, the village’s walkability, dense structure, history and close knit community can provide the foundation upon which to re-create a unique mixed use corridor and district.

As with all planning documents, without the on-going support and energy of residents, business owners and elected officials, there is the potential that the excitement generated during the vision planning process will wane. One of the primary purposes of engaging community members in the vision process is to help ensure that implementation actually does occur. Community members have helped create this vision and should continue to take responsibility in making sure it moves forward, by taking part in projects, checking up on progress and informing other residents about the vision. Community leaders and elected officials should continue to provide opportunities for residents and other stakeholders to contribute to the revitalization and make sure that residents are aware of the progress.
