



UPTOWN EDEN
.....
SMALL AREA
PLAN

Introduction and Analysis

Introduction

The Uptown Eden Small Area Plan (SAP) is the result of a focused study that was conducted as part of the Comprehensive Plan update project. It is the first of a series of small area plans the City anticipates for its historical downtowns. Uptown Eden is currently seeing a resurgence of investment, small business activity, and redevelopment that makes it a prime candidate for planning. The Small Area Plan will help define the goals for Uptown Eden (also known as Downtown Leaksville) so that all stakeholders are working towards the same objectives.

Process

The process of analyzing this area and creating this SAP largely followed the same process as the Comprehensive Plan. The project team analyzed the area using mapping and demographic data, and listened to local residents and business owners through questions on a survey, stakeholder meetings, an Uptown Merchants' Association meeting, and site visits to create this set of tailored strategic recommendations for Uptown.

Issues and Opportunities

Through this analysis and interview process, the project team identified a number of issues to address with this SAP. These included sidewalk condition and width, a need for more public parking near businesses, limited public restrooms, limited public open space (parks, outdoor dining, etc), and a lack of greenery and lighting around Uptown.

This Small Area Plan comes at an advantageous time. There is increasing business activity in the study area, new residential development being built, an increasing number of public events like Riverfest, and new City and state-led streetscape improvement projects planned (see "Planned Improvements" on page 52 for more.)



▶ The project team attended an Uptown Merchants Meeting in June 2021 to get a firsthand perspective on the existing conditions of Uptown.

Survey says...

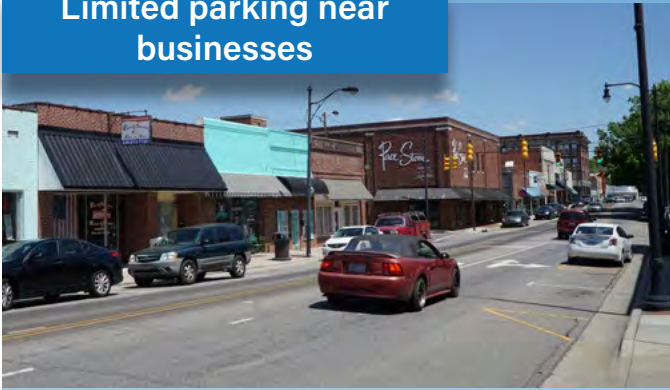


Issues

Lack of greenery and pedestrian lighting



Limited parking near businesses



Gaps in sidewalk network



Damaged, narrow sidewalks



Opportunities

Public Events



New Businesses



New Residential Units

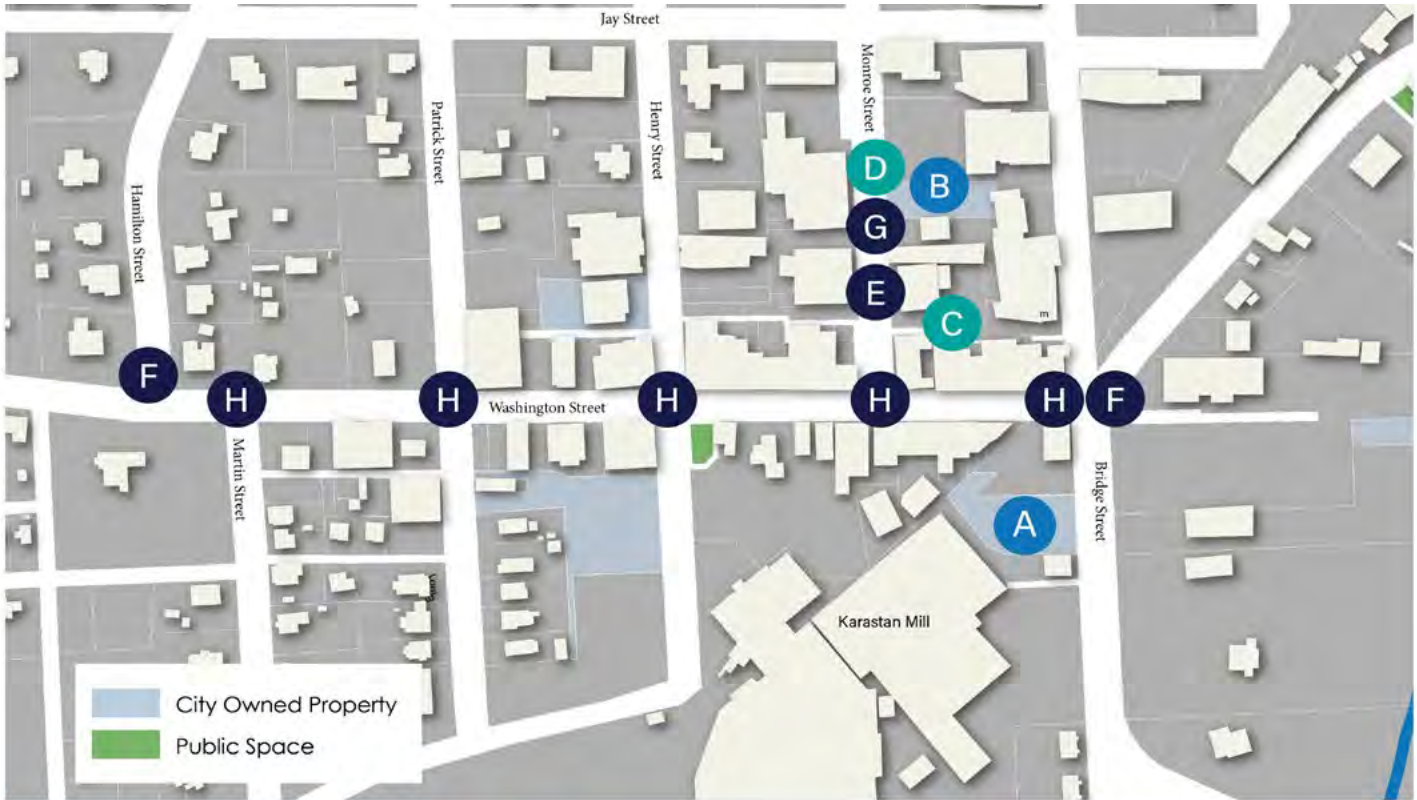


Planned Improvements



PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

The Uptown Small Area Plan builds on the current momentum of improvement in the area. Many improvement projects are already planned, including upgrades to parking, infrastructure, and the streetscape. These projects are at different stages of the funding, approval, and construction process.



Parking

- A** Bridge Street Parking Lot - Wall and Tree Removal
- B** Monroe Street Parking Lot Resurfacing and Drainage Improvements

Paving/Utility

- C** Alley Behind Ray Commons Building
- D** Monroe Street Resurfacing

Streetscape

- E** Hotel/Ray Commons sidewalk
- F** Washington Street Crosswalks at Hamilton and Bridge Streets
- G** Monroe Street sidewalk maintenance
- H** Washington Street pedestrian signals between Bridge Street and Patrick Street

Source: City of Eden Planned Projects as of October 2021.

Note: funding sources and timeline for projects subject to change.

Analysis

Existing Land Use

Uptown Eden has been a historical business center for the City and region. Commercial uses are concentrated along Bridge, Washington and Monroe Street. Henry Street also has some commercial land uses. The former Karastan Mill property occupies a large portion of the study area, anchoring the Southern end of Uptown between the commercial area and the Dan River. Away from the commercial and industrial center of Uptown, land use transitions to residential, typically single-family homes on smaller lots.

Business Activity and Events

Small, local businesses are the heart of Uptown. The area has seen an increase in business investment in the past few years. More activity is on the horizon, with investors taking advantage of the affordable older building stock found in Uptown. The project team conducted a market leakage analysis on the study area,

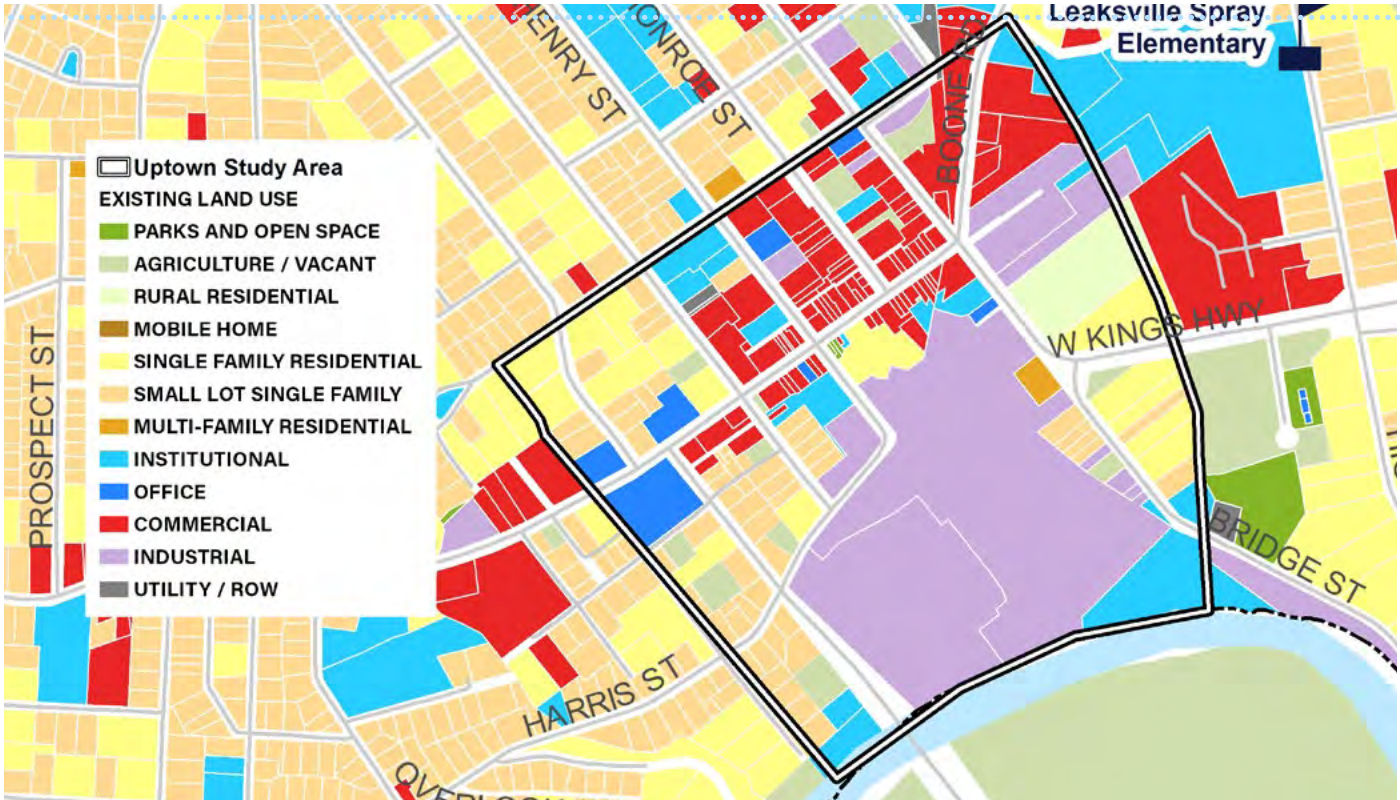
finding that there is a demand for more restaurants and bars in Uptown. This correlates with observations heard during stakeholder engagement from the Uptown Merchants. At the time of writing this Plan, several eateries are expected to open up in the next year, which will address that market gap.

Riverfest and similar events help activate Uptown, drawing visitors and bringing in revenue for businesses. Events like this are a key component of creating an identity for Uptown and help bring in new customers who may return outside of event days.

Residential

As mentioned, residential uses in the study area surround the commercial center and are primarily older single-family homes on smaller lots. The average parcel size for a single-family homes in the study area is 0.33 acres. There are a few multifamily structures in the study area, with more on the way. New apartment and townhome units are being developed within the study area, and according to stakeholder

EXISTING LAND USE



interviews, are in extremely high demand. Introducing new housing types such as these provides a built-in customer base for Uptown businesses and helps activate the area.

Infrastructure and Transportation

With increased visitors to Uptown in recent years, parking has become more of an issue. This was voiced by the community several times during the development of this plan. Stakeholders, the community survey, and the Uptown Merchants Association echoed the public desire for parking solutions in Uptown. The City is exploring methods for expanding options for public off-street parking. Recommendations to manage existing and future on-street parking is addressed in the recommendations section of this document.

Improvements to the streetscape and sidewalks are largely dependent on who owns and operates the roads. The Planned Improvements map on the previous page shows City of Eden and NCDOT projects. Any improvements on Washington Street, being a State road, will likely be through NCDOT.

Monroe Street, one of the key streets in Uptown, is a City maintained road that recently underwent a traffic study. Monroe Street was the subject of a traffic study in 2021 which determined that it could potentially be converted to a one-way street. This option would allow for additional parking, patio dining, and landscaping enhancements on the street. Alternative improvements are also under consideration including the restriping of parallel parking to angled parking on the east side of the street and/or the addition of curb extensions at intersections and a mid-block crossing to make conditions safer for pedestrians.

Pedestrian Realm

Uptown's streets are mostly laid out in a pedestrian-friendly grid. Small block sides, short building frontages, and active facades encourage walking. There are sidewalks along most of the roads within the study area, though sidewalk condition and width varies greatly throughout the area. There are also some gaps in sidewalks that prevent complete connectivity within the study area.

Sidewalk connections to and from the commercial center of Uptown to the residential areas and Dan River can be improved. A Pedestrian Plan is currently underway that identifies several opportunities to better connect Uptown to adjacent neighborhoods and to the Dan River Trail.

During stakeholder interviews and the Uptown Merchants Meeting, users expressed a desire for more landscaping and lighting within Uptown. Landscaping and greenery would provide an aesthetic upgrade in addition to supplying shade to pedestrians in warmer weather. Lighting, particularly in public off-street parking areas, would help increase safety, encourage the uses of these lots, and encourage users to stay in Uptown into the evening.

Public Space

Public spaces such as parks are limited in Uptown. Harrington Park at the corner of Henry Street and Washington Street is a 0.1 acre site at the area's main intersection and provides benches and shade for users. The city also owns several lots in the study area, but does not have plans to convert them to parks. Leaksville Landing is a public park and river access just south of Uptown Eden. A connection to this area could help offset the lack of open space by better connecting Uptown to Eden's natural resources.

Recommendations

These recommendations for Uptown are based on the analysis and stakeholder input. The goals of the Comprehensive Plan are applicable to Uptown.

Small Area Plan Goals

- Create connections into and within Uptown.**
- Foster a diverse business community.**
- Define land use policies to guide future infill and redevelopment.**
- Make Uptown a destination by beautifying and enhancing the public realm and identifying key infrastructure investments.**

Major Recommendations

- Continue planned improvements including infrastructure and parking.
- Monroe Street improvements – Consider street improvements to increase parking and pedestrian safety.
- Evaluate options for shelter and restrooms on Monroe Street on vacant lot north of Post Office.
- Henry Street Parking Expansion - Coordinate with landowner to evaluate feasibility of an expansion of the Henry Street parking lot.

Programming and Public Space

► Wayfinding

Create an identity and make Uptown Eden more accessible for new visitors through a wayfinding program.

- Additional signage should be added to clearly guide visitors to parking areas, commercial areas, and Leaksville Landing.
- An informational kiosk should be located near the intersection of Washington Street and Monroe Street.

Combine future wayfinding efforts with enhancements to the Historical Eden Walking Tour.

- Add information regarding the Walking Tour on a future informational kiosk.
- Update Walking Tour web pages and fix the corresponding QR codes on the street plaques.

► Parking

Short Term: Complete planned parking improvement projects,

such as the Bridge Street parking lot improvements and the Monroe Street parking lot improvements.

Long-term: The City should also consider studying the potential expansion of the Henry Street parking lot.

► Lighting

Increase lighting in Uptown to promote safety, particularly leading to and within public parking areas.

Consider converting streetlamps to pedestrian-oriented decorative lampposts on Monroe Street.

► Public Spaces

Enhance public spaces throughout Uptown Eden.

- Increase sidewalk width where possible (consider widening sidewalks and/or the addition of bulb-outs at intersections)
- Introduce new public space types such as opportunities for patio dining.

► **Events**

Continue existing programming and events such as Oink & Ale, Rock the Block, and RiverFest.

Add one annual event similar to Riverfest within the next three years.

Consider additional events such as 5K runs, First Fridays, free exercise classes, etc.

► **Public Restrooms and Entertainment Space**

Provide space for outdoor entertainment in tandem with future Monroe Street improvements.

Locate public restrooms in Uptown Eden. Find options to co-locate restrooms in a larger project, such as part of a private redevelopment project, a pocket park with a stage or within a public parking lot project.

► **Central Gathering Space**

Explore site and partnership options for creating a central gathering space in Uptown Eden that could be utilized for a farmers market or other such events.

► **Uptown Gateway**

Consider adding an entry feature to Uptown Eden on Bridge Street.

- Update signage and landscaping along Bridge Street south of Washington Street.
- Explore potential additional parking along Bridge Street.

► **Support Local Businesses**

Coordinate regularly with the Uptown Merchants' Association and property owners to track progress on recommendations in the Uptown Eden Small Area Plan.

Create an annual "Uptown Report" to track public and private



► Harrington Park in Downtown Leaksville / Uptown Eden is named after Jean Dunn Harrington who was a long-time advocate for historic preservation and downtown development in Eden.

investment and recent successes and challenges in the area.

► **Enhance Dan River Connections**

Study ways to increase pedestrian connections from Uptown Eden to the Dan River.

- The Dan River Trail exists between Leaksville Landing and Clearwater Park. If this was linked to Uptown it could create a walking loop from Uptown Eden to and through natural spaces along the river.
- Currently South Hamilton Street has a sidewalk on the east side of the roadway south to Harris Street. There is no sidewalk from Harris Street to Leaksville Landing.
- Complete sidewalks on Bridge Street south of Kings Highway.
- Once a sidewalk connection is made, advertise the River connection on future signage in Uptown Eden.

Improve public spaces along the Dan River.

- Consider enhancements to Leaksville Landing and Clearwater Park including parking improvements, picnic tables and signage.

GATHERING SPACE AND PARKING OPTIONS FOR UPTOWN

Expanding public parking and gathering spaces in Uptown can be done using short-term, smaller scale, or longer-term, larger scale moves, depending on budget and coordination with land owners. A few options for short- and long-term solutions that add parking and improve the area's gathering and entertainment spaces are described below.

Short-Term Intervention: Stage and Shelter on Monroe Street



Introducing upgrades such as a covered area and restrooms on Monroe Street is a short-term way to increase entertainment space and add restrooms. The vacant lot north of the Post Office is a candidate location.

Left: Stage and Public Restrooms in Marion. Right: Farmers Market in Knightdale.

Long-Term Option: Henry Street Parking Lot Concept



Site Elements

- ① Restroom & water station
- ② Additional event parking/plaza space
- ③ Green lawn/seating area
- ④ Multi-use stage and event structure
- ⑤ Adjusted parking spaces
- ⑥ Trash & recycling area
- ⑦ Updated entry paving band

As a larger, longer-term solution, the City could coordinate with landowners to determine if there is an opportunity for a purchase or lease of the existing parking lot off of Henry and Harris Street. This conceptual diagram shows how strategic design can upgrade existing parcels in Uptown to meet several goals. It takes a portion of the Karastan parking lot and re-imagines it as a central gathering space for Uptown with a stage, covered structure for a farmers market and other events, restrooms, and increasing public parking. Surrounding the stage is a grass area for seating or other use. The permeable paved plaza area accommodates a multi-use structure for bathrooms and water station. The plaza could also be used for additional vehicle parking or food trucks during an event.

Land Use

► Infill and Redevelopment

Encourage adaptive reuse of the existing building stock.

Encourage context-sensitive infill and redevelopment, including a variety of residential and commercial types.

Encourage building design that utilizes architectural materials and details that are in keeping with the character of the area.

Utilize narrow building footprints and other techniques to accommodate the change in grade along many streets.

► Active Uses

Encourage active ground-floor uses for new development along major frontages in the Commercial Core shown in the Uptown Land Use Concept (next page).

Encourage transparency and/or windows and balconies on building facades to support active commercial streets.

► Mixed-Use

Promote projects that vertically mix uses, including new buildings with commercial on the ground floor and office or residential above.

► Residential

Increase and diversify housing options within Uptown. Encourage residential-over-commercial, townhomes, and pocket neighborhoods.

► Neighborhood Transitions

Use small-scale multifamily units such as pocket neighborhoods and townhomes to transition from Uptown's commercial core to the surrounding historic neighborhoods.

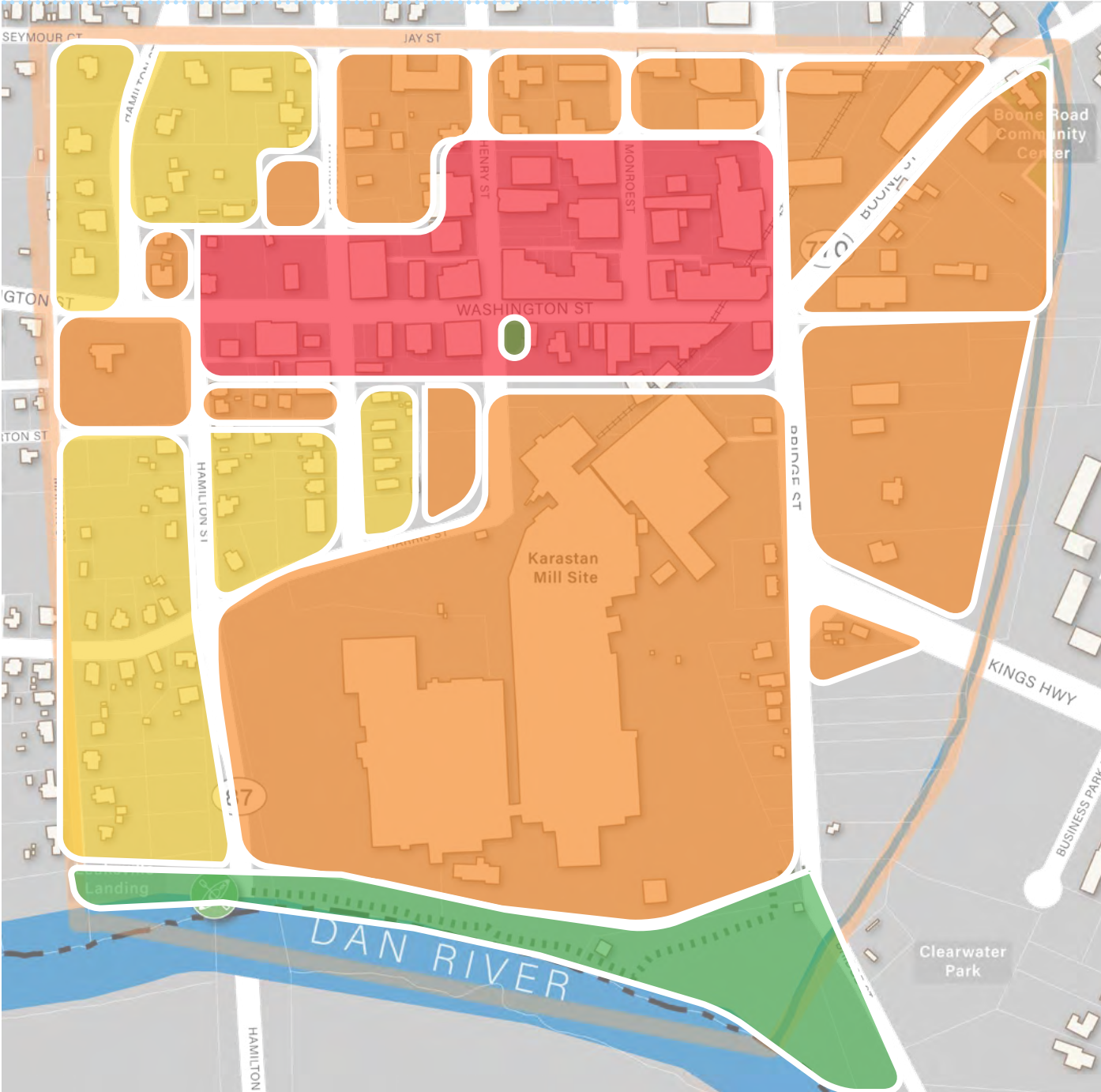


► New development in the Commercial Core of Uptown Eden should be 2-4 stories with active ground floors and parking located in the rear.



► Pocket neighborhoods are clustered groups of homes oriented around a shared open space (i.e. a courtyard, common green, garden, pedestrian way or reclaimed alley).

UPTOWN LAND USE CONCEPT



Commercial Core - Commercial focus with active ground floor uses. Upper stories are a mix of office and residential uses. New buildings are located close to the street, at least two stories high, and parking is located in the rear.

Residential / Traditional Neighborhood - Existing residential areas surrounding Uptown Edén. When redevelopment occurs, new single family homes, pocket neighborhoods, and smaller-scale multi-family units (i.e. duplexes, triplexes) are encouraged.

Mixed Use - A mix of residential and nonresidential uses. Includes larger scale commercial and multifamily residential. No requirement for active ground floor uses. Building footprints can be larger. Less active uses help transition away from the commercial core to the surrounding neighborhoods.

Greenway / Park - Parks and public spaces including Harrington Park and the Dan River Trail.

Transportation and Infrastructure

► Pedestrian Improvements

Support Planned improvements at pedestrian crossings.

- NCDOT and the City are planning to refresh cross-walks and add pedestrian actuated signals along Washington Street.

► Consolidate signage and infrastructure where possible

- Consolidate signage, pedestrian crossing signal poles, and utility poles where feasible.

► Sidewalks

Increase ADA compliance by widening sidewalks and eliminating freestanding posts where feasible.

Address sidewalk gaps as identified in the Eden Pedestrian Plan.

► Implement the Pedestrian Plan:

Implement identified projects from the Eden Pedestrian Plan, including

- Intersection improvements at Washington Street and Hamilton Street and at Harris Street and Hamilton Street.
- Extend sidewalk from South Hamilton Street (Harris Street to Leaksville Landing.)
- Fill sidewalk gaps and rehabilitate sidewalks along Monroe Street and Henry Street north of Jay Street.

► Monroe Street Conversation

Consider improvements to Monroe Street to improve pedestrian safety and increase on-street parking.

- Implement minor improvements after street resurfacing and sidewalk rehabilitation that is scheduled for 2022.
- Study alternative improvements that would better address parking needs and pedestrian safety.
 - *Coordinate with the fire department to determine ways to ensure adequate fire access along Monroe Street.*
 - *See potential alternatives that were studied as part of this plan on P. 62.*

► Manage Parking

Continue to discourage employee parking in on-street spaces.

Consider parking restrictions for a subset of high-demand on-street spaces during business hours.

► Washington and Bridge Street Intersection

Study potential upgrades to the intersection of Washington Street and Bridge Street.

- Improvements could include a roundabout, improved access management, pedestrian facilities and/or an entryway feature.

► Trash and Recycling

Coordinate with businesses and building owners to identify opportunities for shared waste containers and/or cardboard recycling.

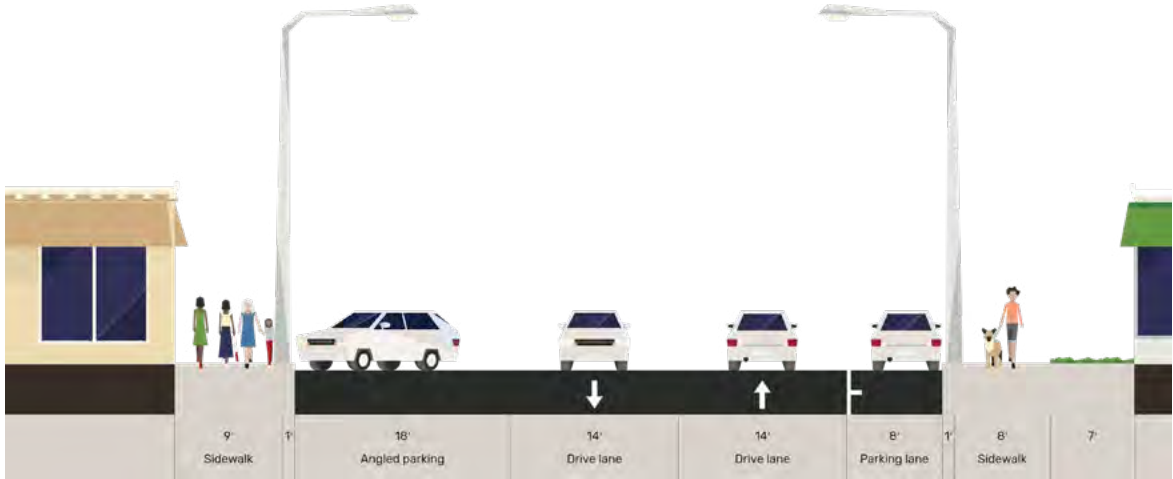
Monroe Street Concepts

Monroe Street was a focus area of the small area plan. The street is currently experiencing a wave of development - both retail and residential. The street has a wide right-of-way and sidewalks in need of repair. Stakeholder interviews and meetings with the Uptown Eden Merchants Association indicated that there is a need for additional on-street parking spaces and support for enhanced landscaping and plantings along Monroe Street.

Monroe Street Stats
 ROW Width: 80 ft
 Pavement Width: 54-55ft
 Travel Lane Width: 28-30ft
 Current Parking: 56 Spaces

Existing Conditions

Monroe Street is currently wide, automobile-dominated, and lacking greenery or plantings. There are marked pedestrian crossings at the main intersections and mid-block. Sidewalks are narrow and do not leave space for street furnishings or plantings. Overhead power lines double as lampposts for cobra head style street lights. The existing street cross-section has angled parking on the west side and parallel parking on the east side. Two wide vehicle through-lanes and parking devote most of the right of way to vehicles. Current width of vehicle lanes are 14-15ft. Studies have shown that wide vehicle lanes lead to increased vehicle speeds and reduce safety for pedestrians.



Existing Monroe Street Cross Section



Looking West at the midway point of the block. Pedestrians often jaywalk here to get to their destinations or vehicles.



Looking North toward Jay Street

Potential Improvements to Monroe Street

Short-term improvements to Monroe Street are planned, including resurfacing and sidewalk replacement. Based on input received it is recommended to study additional improvements including curb extensions (also known as "bump-outs") at the intersection of Jay Street and Washington Street and improvements to the mid-block pedestrian crosswalk. The addition of landscaping or plantings and pedestrian lighting would also be beneficial. Long-term improvements could be studied further as the width of the right-of-way and pavement present an opportunity to better address the need for additional parking and pedestrian safety concerns. Inspiration for future Monroe Street improvements are included in the pictures below.

Inspiration

Hendersonville, NC offers a picturesque streetscape with mid-block crossings and outdoor dining.



Source: Stewart

Curb bulb-outs are an easy project that increase safety for downtown crossings.



Source: AARP

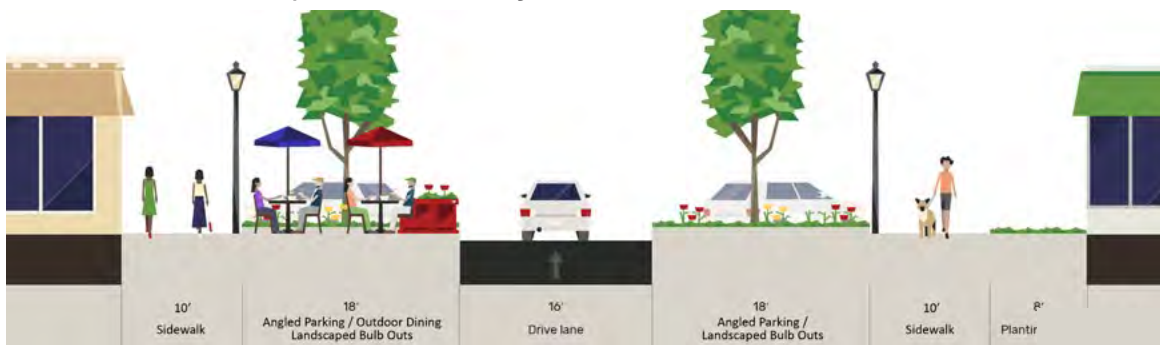
Elevated parklets with seating are a smart interim option before street conversion can occur.



Source: Town of Bloomsburg

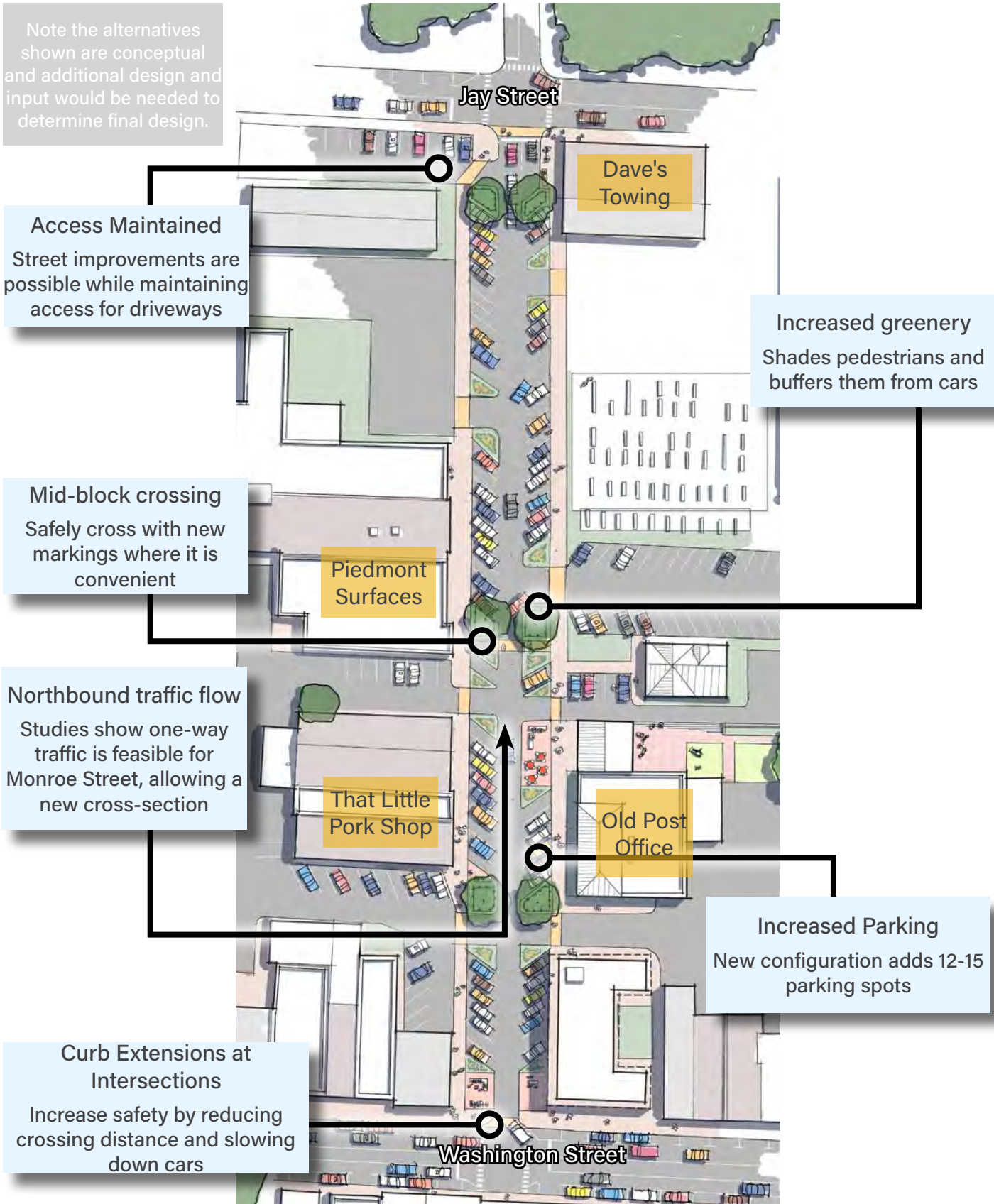
Alternatives

Traffic studies indicate that the street could be reconfigured to allow for an improved pedestrian environment, either in a one-way or two way-format. The concepts on the following pages show both one and two-way options for the street, additional on-street parking, landscaping, and/or flexible areas that could be used for outdoor dining or other uses. All of the options increase on-street parking from its existing 56 spaces. It is estimated that 12-15 additional on-street parking spaces are possible with conversion to a one-way traffic pattern. Narrower lanes and plantings would also increase pedestrian safety.



The cross-section above shows one potential alternative to Monroe Street. This concept and additional alternatives are shown and described on the following pages.

Concept 1 - One-Way Northbound with Enhanced Landscaping



The street concept above shows one-way traffic with added parking and landscaping.

Concept 2

One-way north bound with patio dining

This concept identifies vehicle traffic moving northbound. The maximum number of parking is shown in this layout while providing ROW access from all adjacent properties.

This concept includes enhanced landscaping, angled parking and improved pedestrian crossings at Jay Street and Washington Street that reduces the crossing distance.



Concept 3

Two-Way with enhanced landscaping

This concept identifies vehicle traffic moving north and southbound. The maximum number of parking is shown in this layout while providing ROW access from all adjacent properties.

This concept includes enhanced landscaping and angled parking where feasible. Parking additions may be limited in this alternative due to turn lanes located on either end of the street.



Note the alternatives shown are conceptual and additional design and input would be needed to determine final design.

