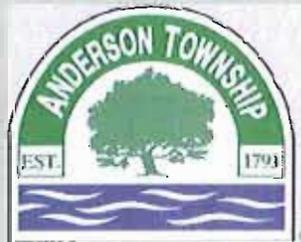


beechmont corridor vision plan

Prepared for **ANDERSON TOWNSHIP**
HAMILTON COUNTY, OHIO

PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT

NOVEMBER 2005



KZF DESIGN

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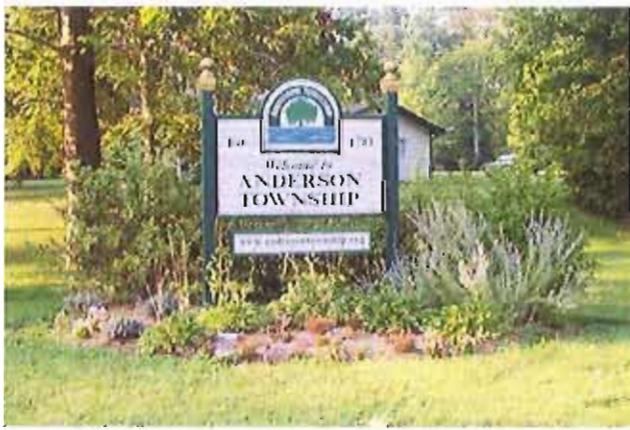
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A. INTRODUCTION

The Anderson Township Board of Trustees identified the need to continue the transformation of the Beechmont Avenue Corridor and build upon the work that has been accomplished to date. The Township is interested in creating a set of visual enhancement guidelines that will aid in the discussion of how to make Beechmont an attractive and viable focal point for Anderson Township and the surrounding region. These guidelines will help initiate a dialogue between the community, its property owners and stakeholders. The Township formed a Beechmont Visioning Committee to work with KZF Design with the task of designing urban enhancements that will begin to transform the corridor into a more attractive destination.

This document has been created to guide the transformation of one of the more unsightly retail corridors in the Greater Cincinnati Region. This change will be the result of private development and public initiatives acting hand-in-hand to create a central image that is worthy of Anderson Township. While this may take many years, the plan will be in place for anyone wanting to enhance, renovate or redevelop property within the Beechmont Corridor. The end result will be a community based, mixed-use, walkable attractive destination for Anderson Township residents and a regional draw for the larger community. This new image will increase property values, customer base and a sense of community. It will also strengthen the Township's identity.



B. BACKGROUND

Township community surveys continue to identify the conditions, traffic congestion and visual character of Beechmont Avenue as being undesirable. In response to these concerns, Anderson Township initiated a number of studies that focused on how current conditions might be improved, including:

- Beechmont Corridor Transportation Study (1996)
- Landscape Plan (2001)
- Sidewalk Studies
- Wayfinding Address Signs
- Revised Sign Guidelines
- Streetscape Banners Program
- Beautification Recognition
- Overhead Utility Assessment for Undergrounding (2001)

Anderson Township also hired a safety coordinator to help promote improvements within the corridor and other places in the Township. This Vision Plan, in collaboration with the Access Management Study Update currently underway, brings together these previous efforts into a new coordinated document to guide future enhancements along Beechmont Avenue.



C. EXISTING CONDITIONS

The overhead utilities are one of the most dominating visual forces along the corridor. Through discussions with Cinergy, the Township determined that the burial of these services was cost prohibitive. Estimates by Cinergy ranged well in excess of \$50 million. Relocating the utilities to the rear of the buildings also proved to be logistically very difficult, once again due to excessive cost and lack of permanent easement space. The Township is therefore left with finding ways to limit their visual impact. Section K further addresses overhead utility issues.



Signs along Beechmont offer a mixed bag of billboards, dominating pylons and large corporate signs, some more on the scale of a freeway sign. The scale of these elements makes it difficult for other small-scale wayfinding and safety signs to be seen. Anderson Township recently published new sign language in its zoning code to further address signage issues and encourage the use of low monument signs.

The lack of architectural guidelines for buildings along the corridor has resulted in a wide range of building styles that do not promote a sense of place. This gives the Township the wrong identity at its core. The Township acknowledges that one style or character will not be achievable or appropriate. However, design guidelines and standards are needed to help achieve a more holistic, but energetic identity.

Currently, the pedestrian is an afterthought for most of Beechmont Avenue. Sidewalks are widespread with little continuity. Parking lots front right onto the corridor with no regard to accessibility. Citizens do not feel safe; customers have trouble going from one store to the next without hopping in their car. A pedestrian space must be defined to provide a safe and welcoming zone.



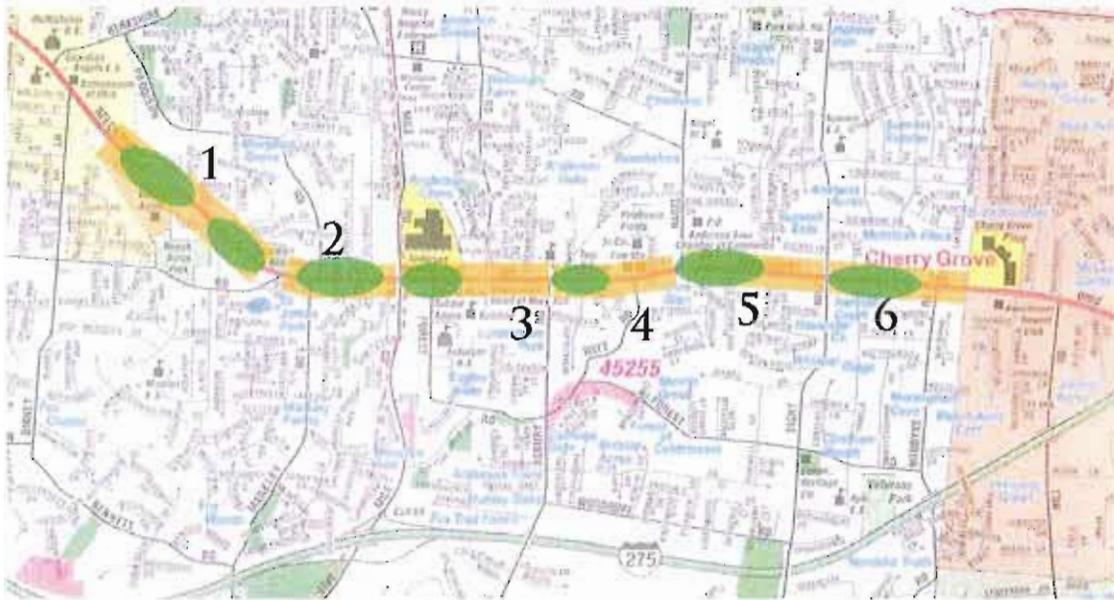
There are many parcels with multiple curb cuts, while some parcels have one continuous curb cut along their frontage. This creates confusion and dangerous conditions for pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Left turns into and out of the properties become hazardous. A companion study to the Vision Planning effort is underway to address access management and safety issues and update the 1996 Corridor Plan. A more controlled solution must be enacted for better access management and public safety.

The entry to Anderson Township is a pleasant transition coming from Mount Washington. However, there could be a clustering of existing signage entry elements to create a stronger gateway image. At the east end, the current Township sign at the Clermont County border is lost in a sea of overpowering business signs, utility poles, billboards and advertisements. This eastern end gateway must take on a stronger role to announce a sense of arrival and set the stage for future change on Beechmont Avenue in Anderson Township. The entry from I-275 onto 5 Mile Road should also be strengthened. While not part of this scope, this gateway could be modeled after the west and east gateways that are developed.



D. DEFINING MIXED-USE NEIGHBORHOODS

Beechmont Avenue is currently one of the most congested corridors in Greater Cincinnati. While the businesses serve the community well, the visual and safety concerns adversely affect the Township's overall excellent image. While change will not happen quickly, there needs to be a plan to help facilitate the appropriate change over time. Working with recommendations from the 2001 Landscape Plan, six mixed-use neighborhoods have been identified within the corridor to help channel resources and attention into key areas. Each neighborhood (identified in orange) will have a Green Break (shown as green ovals) opportunity associated within its boundary.

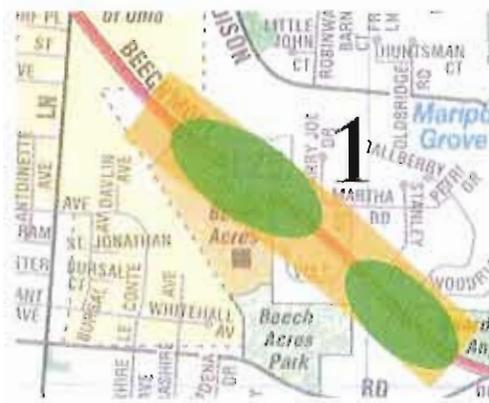


MIXED-USE NEIGHBORHOODS

By defining separate areas along Beechmont Avenue, each individual area begins to take on its own character and identity. Using this approach for focused visual enhancements will begin to transform the 3+ mile long corridor into unique, but compatible series of mixed-use neighborhoods. Following is a brief description of the suggested location for each of these six neighborhoods. Note that one of them (between Forest and Asbury Roads) has been identified as a Focus Area and studied in further detail to suggest how it might be transformed in the future. Use of building placement and character, streetscape enhancements, better pedestrian features, improved vehicular access and circulation and existing building façade improvements all focus on enhancements within the neighborhood. Examples in the focus neighborhood can be applied to other mixed-use neighborhoods in order to establish their individual identity. All elements should still be within the context of a cohesive overall Beechmont Corridor image.

1. Neighborhood 1

Neighborhood One begins at the City of Cincinnati corporate limit and extends east to a point just west of Salem Road. This area has primarily a mix of dense residential and single-family houses. It incorporates the west end gateway and has large areas of visual release into natural, non-formal landscape areas. This sets a good tone for the image of Anderson Township. Beech Acres and The Mount Washington Care Center are in the center of this neighborhood. The eastern edge includes the Guardian Angels Cemetery. The emphasis on a residential community is a positive image as the corridor begins to transition to a mixed-use area east of Salem.



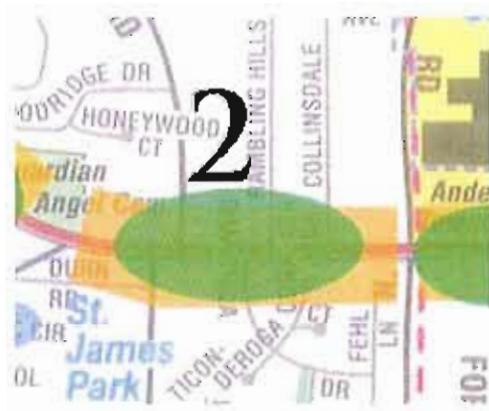
LOCATION



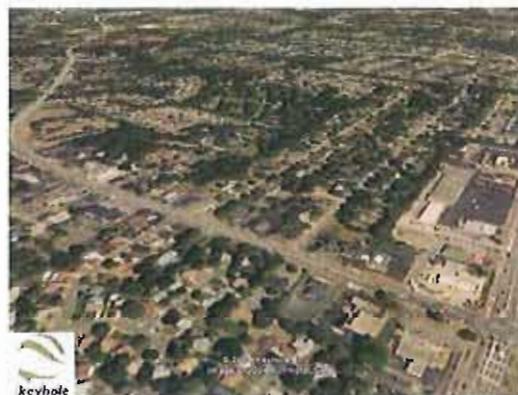
AERIAL

2. Neighborhood 2

Neighborhood Two is a transition area from the residential feel west of Salem Road to the Commercial area east of 5 Mile Road. This neighborhood is made of single-family residences, conversions of some residences into business (mostly office) establishments and commercial buildings. This neighborhood becomes denser than the prior area due to the mixed-use environment.



LOCATION



AERIAL

3. **Neighborhood 3**

Neighborhood Three begins at 5 Mile Road and extends to Asbury Road. This area has a variety of use groups and building types. The Anderson Towne Center, larger scaled office buildings, a vacant big box building, two car dealerships, a strip center and a large box entertainment facility are some of the major elements in this area. There are several chain establishments including fast food restaurants, as well as locally run businesses. Single-family homes are immediately adjacent to this area. This area also has a wide range of elements that can serve as a microcosm of Beechmont Avenue. Most of the building types and conditions found elsewhere in the corridor is represented here. It is in this mixed-use neighborhood that the Vision Plan focuses on visual enhancements. The Towne Center anchors not only this neighborhood but also the business corridor. The transformation of the old mall will serve as a catalyst for change. A more detailed description and graphic images of this focus area are contained in Section E.



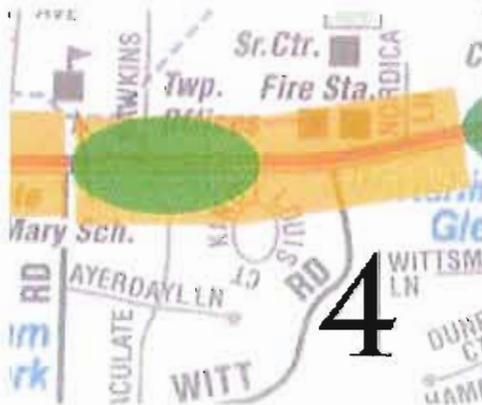
LOCATION



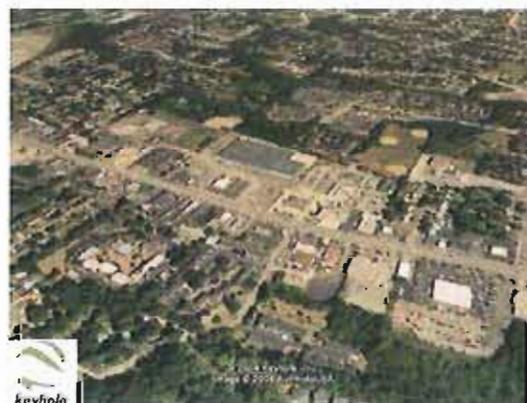
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4. **Neighborhood 4**

Neighborhood Four begins at Asbury Road and terminates at Nagel Road. The Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, a multi-tenant big box, the Township Government Center and several car dealerships define this area. A mixed-use environment of chain restaurants, auto focused businesses and office buildings are also prevalent. This neighborhood should focus and capitalize on the Township's Government Offices, which is in the center of this neighborhood and the center of the Corridor's business/ commercial environment.



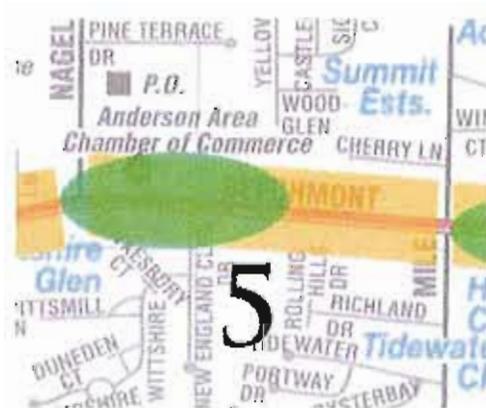
LOCATION



AERIAL

5. Neighborhood 5

Neighborhood Five is defined to the west by Nagel Road and to the east by Eight Mile Road. This neighborhood includes St. Timothy's Church, multiple strip malls that dominate the character and several smaller retail and office use buildings. The New England Club, The Anderson and Whitshire Glen are entered through this area, but stand back off of the corridor.



LOCATION



AERIAL

6. Neighborhood 6

Neighborhood Six extends east from Eight Mile Road to the Hamilton County/Clermont County line. While serving as the East Gateway, car dealerships and big box retail dominate this area. Smaller office and retail businesses co-exist. This Eastern Gateway needs a different character to be able to hold its own in this highly congested area. A more contemporary visual enhancement character is recommended, primarily due to the influence of the new car dealerships. This should be reflected in the streetscape elements as well.



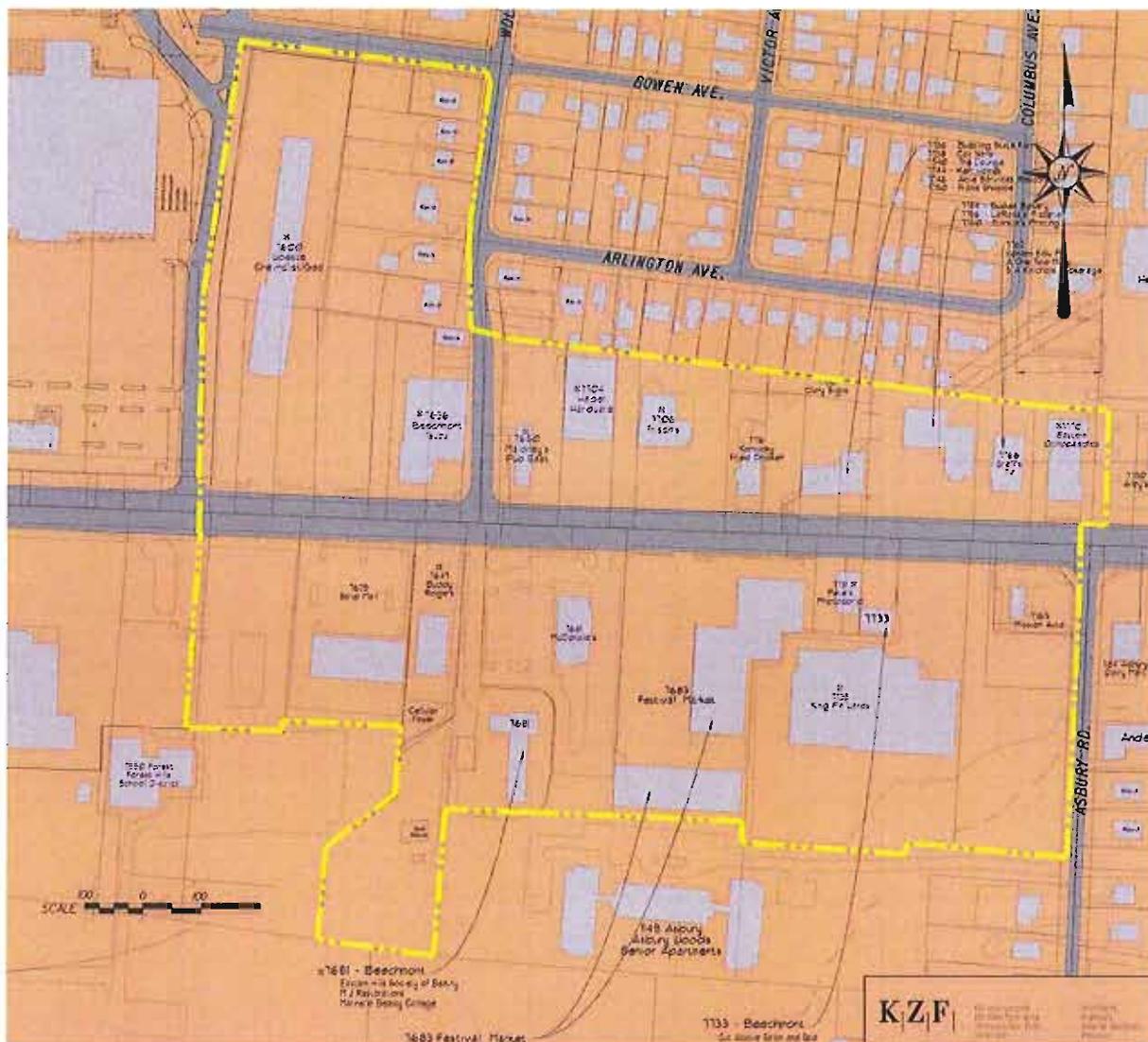
LOCATION



AERIAL

E. FOCUS AREA DESCRIPTION

Anderson Township officials identified a target area to concentrate design and strategy efforts. This area, from the Anderson Towne Center to Asbury Road, was chosen for its variety of building types, setbacks and character, which will serve as an example for the remainder of the corridor. Many of the conditions found throughout Beechmont Avenue can be found in this concentrated segment, as described in Section D.



LEGEND

	GREEN SPACE		OFFICE
	EXISTING BUILDING		RETAIL
	EXISTING REMODELED		OFFICE OVER RETAIL
	RESIDENTIAL		RESIDENTIAL OVER OFFICE



The change that will occur over the next few decades will be primarily developer/ property owner driven. As such, the market will dictate which properties will modify and in what order. The Focus Area Study will allow developers and property owners to see the long-range vision of the Township. As some properties become available, the opportunity to transform the Beechmont image becomes more realistic. It is highly suggested that Gateway Buildings be placed at the edges of each neighborhood. These buildings should have a key feature, such as a bump out or tower, that distinguishes itself from the main fabric of the district. Ideally, these buildings will form a dialogue with its partner across the street.

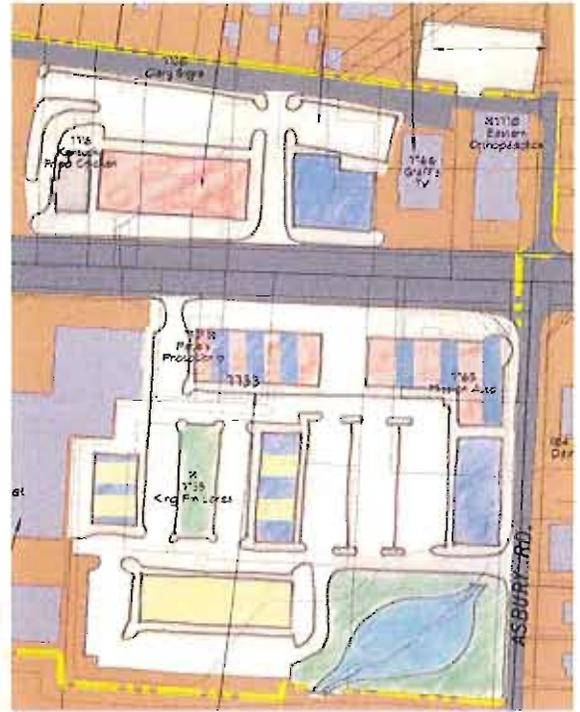


LEGEND

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
|  | GREEN SPACE |  | OFFICE |
|  | EXISTING BUILDING |  | RETAIL |
|  | EXISTING REMODELED |  | OFFICE OVER RETAIL |
|  | RESIDENTIAL |  | RESIDENTIAL OVER OFFICE |



The desire to have a true mixed-use community is strong, so this plan integrates dense residential (indicated by the color yellow) into the plan. The stripes indicate the possibility of having a live over work arrangement. Red indicates retail and blue indicates office use. While the exact mix will be market driven, it is recommended that there be some mix of residential, office and retail uses. It is important that areas of concentrated dense residential have some associated green space for those who live in the area. As more and more properties begin to up grade or redevelop, shared parking, curb cut closures and rear access can become a reality.

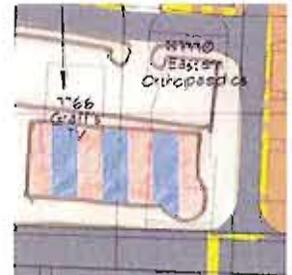
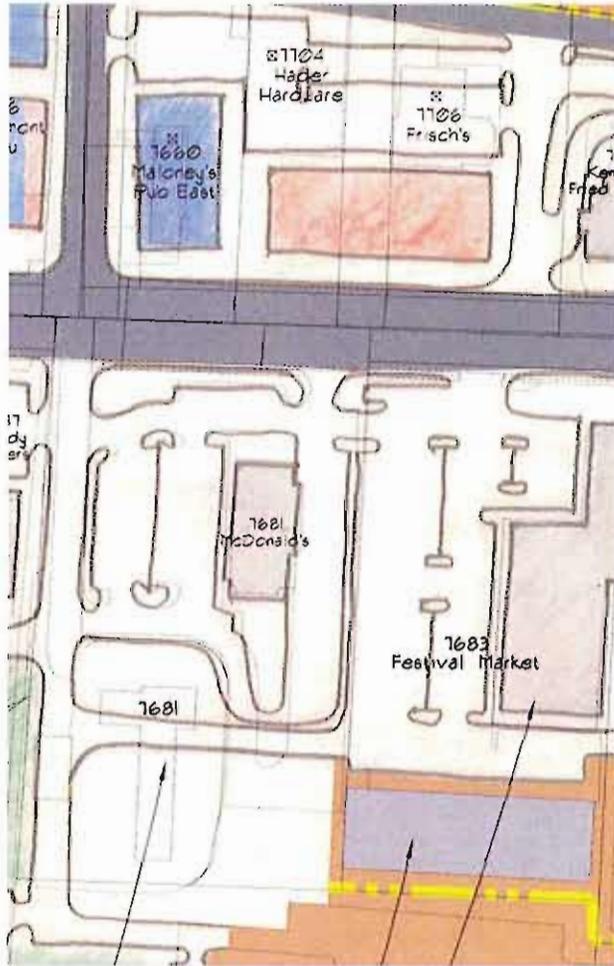


LEGEND

	GREEN SPACE		OFFICE
	EXISTING BUILDING		RETAIL
	EXISTING REMODELED		OFFICE OVER RETAIL
	RESIDENTIAL		RESIDENTIAL OVER OFFICE



It is not realistic to think that all the properties in any neighborhood will be redeveloped over the next few decades. Those owners whose buildings remain are encouraged to adhere to the architectural guidelines when rehabilitating their structures. In this way, all properties can become somewhat unified to achieve a greater sense of place. Examples of those properties that may remain are shown in gray.

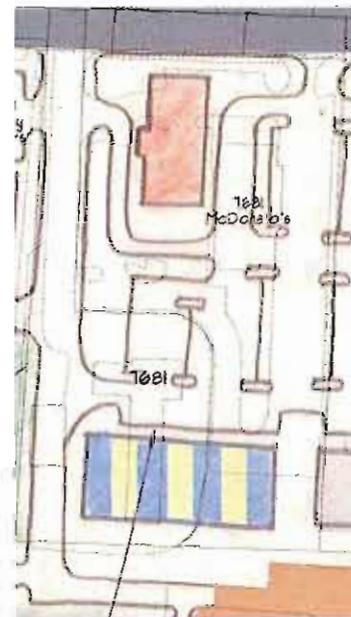
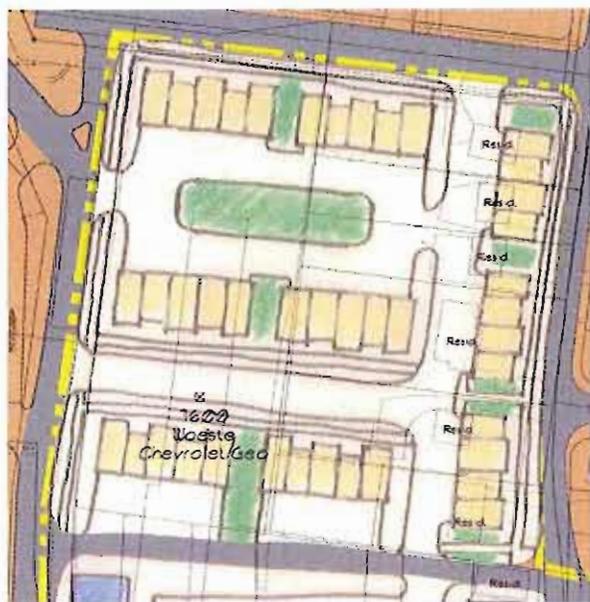


LEGEND

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  GREEN SPACE |  OFFICE |
|  EXISTING BUILDING |  RETAIL |
|  EXISTING REMODELED |  OFFICE OVER RETAIL |
|  RESIDENTIAL |  RESIDENTIAL OVER OFFICE |



Other properties may begin filling in the few remaining areas left in the neighborhood. Residential should be allocated at the edges – especially near existing housing stock. A prime example is along Wolfangle and Bowen. It is preferred that parking be placed in the rear, with porches or front stoops in the front to present a nice pedestrian edge. People will sit on these areas and communicate with their neighbors more frequently. Other areas could have a mixed use, live over work environment. Proper allocation for green space commons and pocket parks is key to help foster a sense of community. Amenities such as recreation centers could be placed close by.

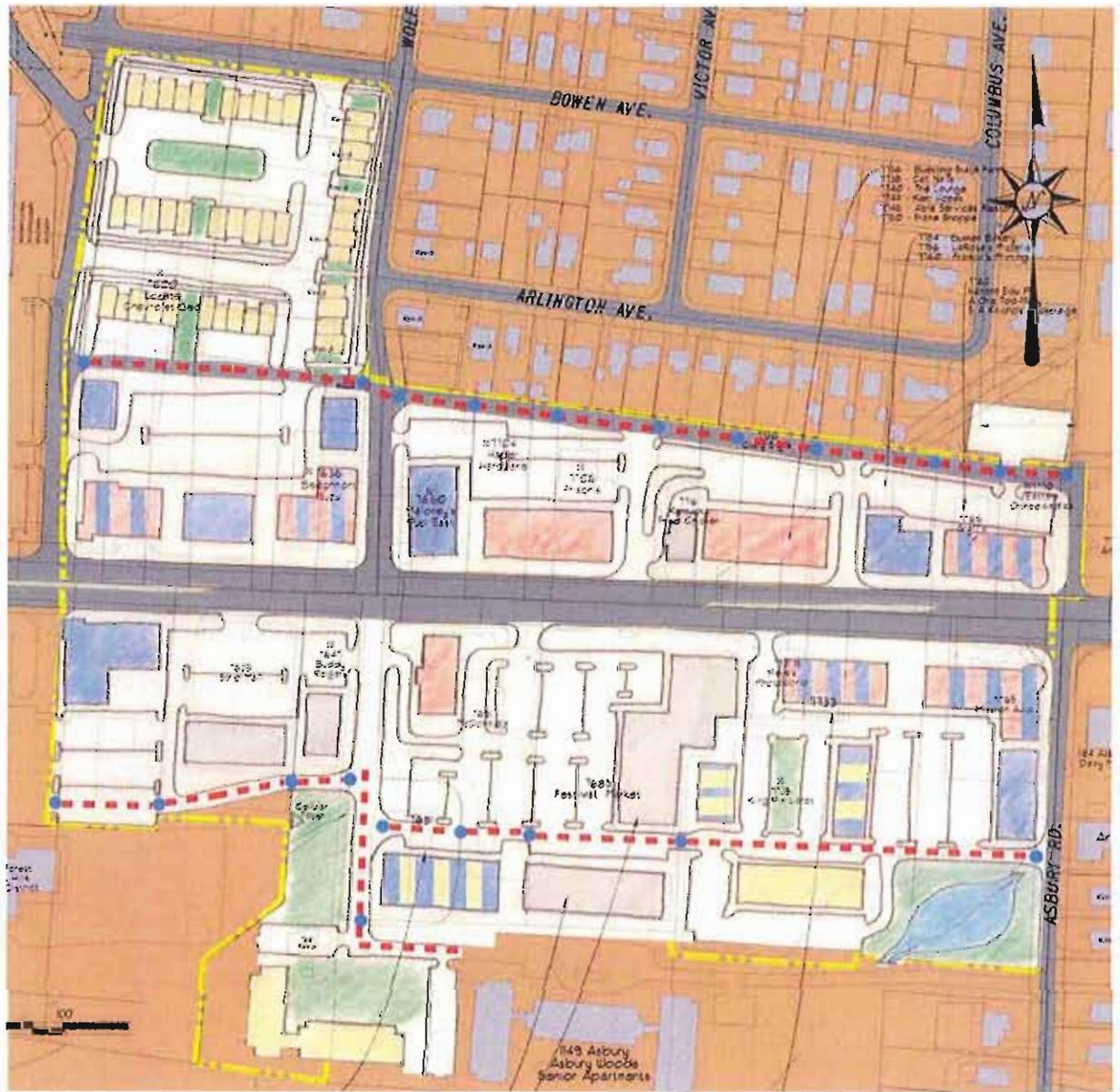


LEGEND

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
|  | GREEN SPACE |  | OFFICE |
|  | EXISTING BUILDING |  | RETAIL |
|  | EXISTING REMODELED |  | OFFICE OVER RETAIL |
|  | RESIDENTIAL |  | RESIDENTIAL OVER OFFICE |



As the neighborhood transforms, pedestrian space is allocated, shared parking lots are pushed to the back and access can be gained from parcel to parcel through rear alleyways (as shown by the red dashed line). The blue dots indicate new parcel connections. In the long-range plan it is possible to access business groups without the need to enter onto Beechmont Avenue. This allows for better access management, which creates quicker traveling times and decreases accidents. Residential units are shown to serve as buffers between existing housing stock and the new mixed-use corridor. Medians would further improve the safety of the avenue by encouraging the use of the rear alley access. While this is just one example of the way the Vision Plan could be implemented, it will serve as a template for future improvements and development that will begin to change the appearance and image of Anderson Township's main business corridor and heart of the Anderson area.



LONG RANGE TRANSFORMATION PLAN

F. GATEWAYS

The **Western Gateway** is proposed as the clustering of two existing signs, the Anderson Township welcome sign and the State of Ohio Bicentennial sign. The Bicentennial sign is recommended to be placed on a wood background and frame to tie the material better with the welcome sign and the surrounding environs. These signs are recommended to be placed on a stone base and landscaped modestly. In ground luminaires will light the gateway at night.

Inset stone or stamped concrete is proposed to be placed in the center lane to further designate the gateway. If stamped concrete is used, then it should be a geometric pattern and not imitate another material. This scale and presentation matches the locale and collects the images into one gateway piece. The enhancements that take place in the right-of-way must not interfere with ODOT's regulations. Any additional costs associated with installation and/ or maintenance may need to be supported by Anderson Township.



LOCATION



EXISTING



PROPOSED

The **Eastern Gateway** will combine the existing signs in a similar format to the Western Gateway to achieve consistency. However, because of the environs, a more dramatic gateway will need to be implemented. Currently, a few small pedestrian scale signs are scattered in the area. This is the only clue that a change in municipality exists. These signs get lost in the vast visual activity that takes place. The Eastern Gateway takes place from the county line to approximately 800 feet westward. Colored asphalt is recommended to replace asphalt for the driving lanes and shoulder, while inset stone or geometrically stamped concrete is proposed to be placed in the center to designate the turning lane. This change of color and texture will help identify that the driver is entering into and exiting out of Anderson Township. Since the change in pavement falls outside of ODOT's standard materials, this cost will likely be borne by the Township. A low stonewall is planned to run the length of the Gateway outside of the right-of-way and terminate as a base for the Township signs. Deciduous trees are recommended to be planted along these stonewalls to help screen the utilities and symbolize Anderson Township's Greenspace Preservation Program. A small bus stop plaza in this area is recommended to be furnished with benches and trashcans. A competition could be held for Gateway sculpture as well.

There should also be a gateway placed along 5 Mile Road just off of I-275. While out of the scope for this study, the gateway should be compatible with the examples described above.



LOCATION



LOCATION



EXISTING



PROPOSED

G. NODES



LOCATION

Nodes are identified as key intersections along the Corridor identified above in purple. Red circles are the major nodes at 5 Mile and 8 Mile. Nodes should have a special quality that either announces arrival to a neighborhood or a zone within a neighborhood. Zebra striping or special treatment is recommended at these nodes to help present a more noticeable pedestrian space, which in turn will increase safety. This is outside ODOT's standards, so the Township will likely need to finance the installation and maintenance of the zebra striping or special treatment. Trashcans and planters should be placed at each node. Benches should be placed at bus stops. Other landscaping is encouraged, but should be low in scale to maximize intersection visibility. All streetscape elements should be placed off the right of way or outside the clear zone. Concrete pavers in the sidewalk are recommended at the corners. Pedestrian lighting should be added. In the major node at 8 Mile, concrete pavers are proposed in the crosswalks in lieu of zebra striping. This would fall outside ODOT's responsibility; however, it will help create a safety zone for pedestrians at these critical intersections and will act as a traffic calmer. It is anticipated that drivers will dedicate more attention to these areas with its added emphasis to pedestrians. The Five Mile intersection is being studied for pedestrian treatments and other transportation enhancements.



EXISTING AT WOLFANGLE



INTERIM



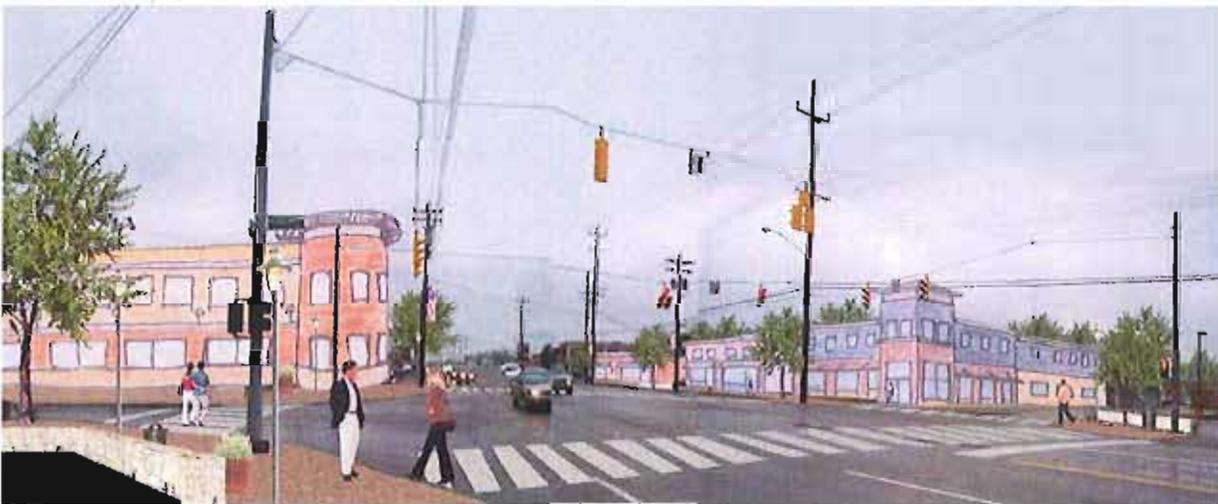
LONG RANGE TRANSFORMATION



EXISTING AT ASBURY



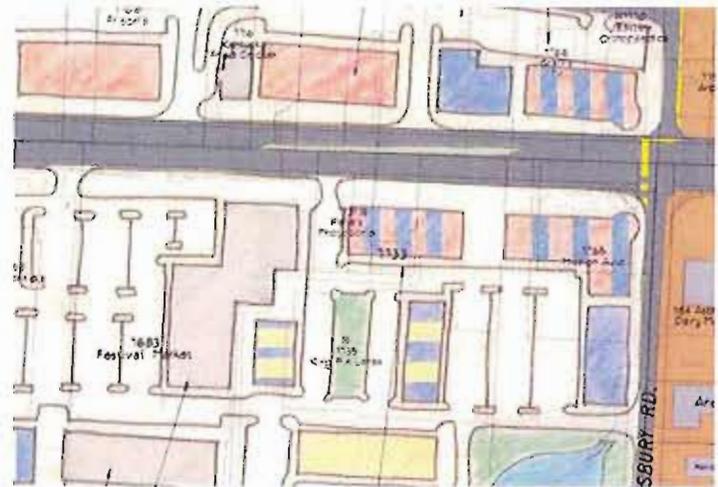
INTERIM



LONG RANGE TRANSFORMATION

H. MIXED-USE ZONING STANDARDS

Efforts should be initiated to make Beechmont Avenue a true mixed-use area. Higher density residential should be encouraged in the form of "live-over-work", apartments and condominiums. There are several deep parcels with the capability to include living quarters off the corridor and still within the limits of the study area. Several examples are depicted in the Focus Area study described in Section E. Where a concentration of dense residential activity forms, care should be given to include a thoughtfully designed open space area for play and relaxation. A true mix of residential, retail and office is most desirable; however, the Township understands that this will be market driven by demand and responded to by developers. Shared parking is strongly recommended. This will allow for peak hours to be accommodated among abutting parcels without the need for vast areas of parking that only are fully utilized for peak events. Retail centers will expand their capacity after normal business hours when workers leave their offices. Internal walking paths are highly encouraged to help facilitate pedestrian movement from one establishment to the next. The customer should be able to park the car and visit several businesses without the need to drive to each location. Sidewalks along Beechmont Avenue will contribute greatly to this effort.

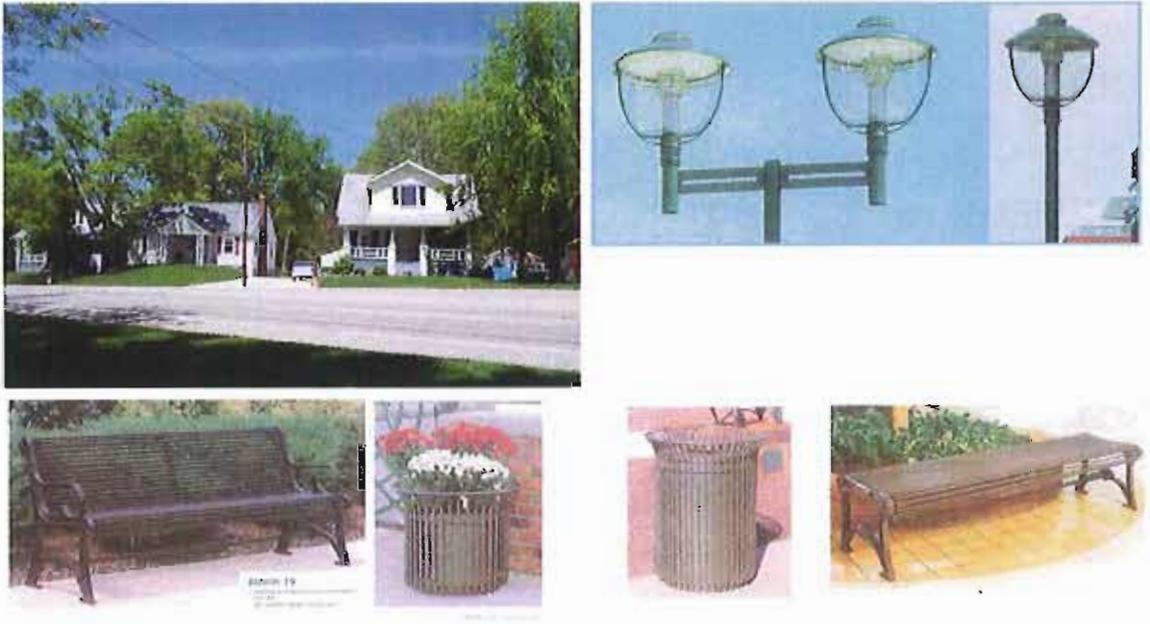


I. ARCHITECTURAL AND STREETScape CHARACTER

As previously described, Beechmont Avenue ranges from an almost rural residential feel at the west end to an intense retail environment in the central and east end. The neighborhood districts identify the changing qualities and it is recommended that the architecture and streetscape reflect those differences. It is not possible, nor desirable, to achieve a uniform style throughout the 3 ½ miles of Beechmont in Anderson Township. There are good qualities that each defined neighborhood should utilize to create well designed zones that have similar qualities within. At the same time, there are common elements that exist continuously, such as banners, landscape walls, address signs, etc., that help unify the corridor. These guidelines are created to help property owners with renovation projects or redevelopment opportunities within these mixed-use neighborhoods. If work is to be accomplished within these areas, then the guidelines should be consulted.

1. **Neighborhood 1**

Neighborhood 1 should focus on the residential character and its green, semi-rural feel. Streetscape elements should be more traditional in design and should include pedestrian lighting, benches and trash cans at bus stops, street trees to help hide the visual impact of the utility lines and a hedge row where needed to create an edge that helps define a pedestrian zone.



PRECEDENT AND POTENTIAL STREETScape ELEMENTS

2. **Neighborhood 2**

Neighborhood 2, as described earlier, begins the land use transition from mostly residential, park and institutional uses, to a mixed use of residential, office and small commercial centers. A number of the former residences have been converted to offices while maintaining elements of a residential environment. It is recommended that this architectural character continue so that the current occupied residences along both sides of Beechmont in Neighborhood 2 remain in a compatible environment. Parking should be placed to the side or rear of the building. New commercial buildings should have a residential scale and use of materials. Similar to neighborhood 1, streetscape, pedestrian and landscape enhancements are recommended to retain elements of a residential area.



PRECEDENT



PRECEDENT AND POTENTIAL STREETScape ELEMENTS

3. Neighborhoods 3 and 4

Neighborhoods 3 and 4 should focus on the Anderson Towne Center as a design catalyst. Mixed-use is highly encouraged. Neighborhood 3 is defined in detail in Section E. Neighborhood 4 should also capitalize on the study area guidelines, as well as the current Anderson Township Government Center that will remain if the administration portion moves to a site north of the Towne Center. The Government Center has good landscaping features, uses some quality materials, adheres to the current sign regulations and addresses the pedestrian scale.



PRECEDENTS

It is proposed that many of the future buildings fronting Beechmont be placed 10 to 15 feet from the right of way while maintaining adequate sight distance for vehicles entering and exiting Beechmont. Buildings should either be a minimum of 2 stories or have a mass that is equivalent to 2 stories in height. This will help define an edge that identifies the pedestrian space, brings the storefronts up closer to the street and allows the parking to be placed toward the side and rear of the facility. Access to the businesses will be from an access way that is to the rear of the property. This drive will link several parcels and will allow for improved access to and from the properties. Vehicular access, safety and the visual character will be improved. The Beechmont Corridor Update Study describes these access improvements in more detail.



PRECEDENT

New buildings should have a first floor frame of substantial material (brick, stone, precast concrete, metal or concrete masonry units). These frames may or may not have a base element. A storefront should reside inside the frame and a knee wall, if desired, should be of a contrasting material. This infill material can be wood or chosen from the list above. EIFS (Exterior Insulation and Finish Systems) should not be used in either the frame or the infill material on the first floor. The second story mass needs to be a contrasting material from the frame and can include any of the substantial materials as well as wood or EIFS. It is recommended that multi-tenant buildings, such as strip centers not be homogenous in appearance. The massing should reflect separate tenant spaces. The concepts above still apply, but the design and material should not be copied from tenant space to tenant space. Awnings and lighting should be incorporated, and signs should be modest in scale – per the Township's sign regulations. The street address should be prominently displayed on the awning or façade.

Streetscape elements should be in a traditional language, but not that of neighborhood 1 and 2. Slightly more contemporary forms are OK as the streetscape will begin to shift in this direction in Neighborhoods 5 and 6. Benches, planters and trash cans should be placed at the bus stops, nodes and other areas that develop the need. Bike racks should be placed as the Township feels fit. Pedestrian lighting should be placed at regular intervals to achieve continuity. Pedestrian walks should also be completed in these areas

POTENTIAL STREETSCAPE ELEMENTS





POTENTIAL LIGHTING

In the short term, it is not conceivable that every property will redevelop based on the above criteria. In the interim, properties wishing to upgrade their image should incorporate as many of the above items as possible. It is conceivable that a property may remove its current façade and attach a veneer based on the substantial material list previously described. Awnings and lighting can be added to help form a more pedestrian feel. Stonewalls are encouraged to screen parking lots and form an edge where building mass is lacking. The example below was completed before these guidelines were created. It does not incorporate all the recommendations; however, it does a good job in showing some of the elements described. A frame was created that helps give the building a nice rhythm. The mass is broken up to develop a hierarchy at the entrance and provides a location for the sign. The design is updated and pleasing to the vision of the Beechmont Corridor. Ideally, this structure would be closer to the street, have some awnings and the street address should be visible.



BEFORE



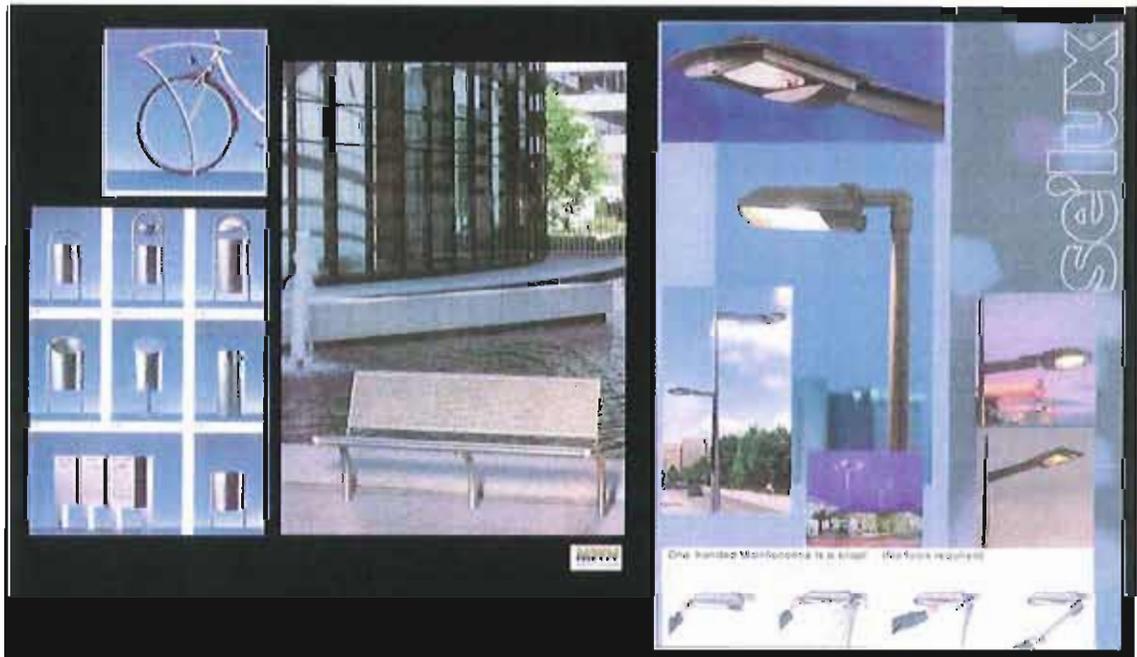
AFTER

4. Neighborhood 5

Neighborhood 5 has large and small strip centers that are prevalent. This building type should have facades designed in such a way as to identify individual tenant spaces as described above. Additional streetscape elements, stonewall and pedestrian elements are recommended along the street frontage typically set back about 30 feet from Beechmont. The streetscape elements should transition from the traditional character of neighborhoods 1 through 4 to the contemporary character of neighborhood 6.



PRECEDENT



POTENTIAL STREETSCAPE ELEMENTS

5. Neighborhood 6

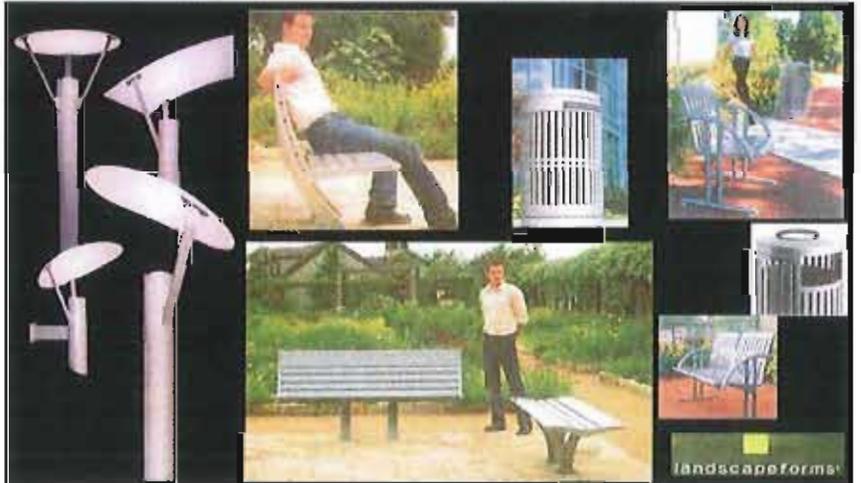
Neighborhood 6 is dominated by big box retail and car dealerships. Many big box retailers have multiple tenants that historically occupied an out-lot. Banks, pharmacies and fast food restaurants are being incorporated into these large buildings set further back from Beechmont. They have become one large mixed-use tenant. The façade should reflect this diversity through massing, material selection and other façade elements. The architecture should be contemporary, such as the car dealership shown below. A more modern streetscape should be employed to reflect the contemporary architecture in this area.



MASSING



ARCHITECTURE



POTENTIAL STREETSCAPE ELEMENTS

I. CORRIDOR STREETScape ELEMENTS

Street trees should be employed to minimize the visual impact of the utility poles. Care must be taken for proper placement per ODOT and Cinergy requirements.



EXISTING

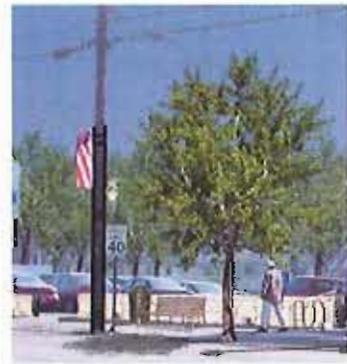


PROPOSED

A surround of painted steel is proposed to encompass, but not attach to, the utility poles. They will serve as a mounting device for banners, address signs, planters and lighting. These surrounds, coupled with the street trees, will create a visual zone up to about 15 feet in height that will further draw attention away from the utility poles. It gives the wooden poles a good street presence and engages them to the pedestrian experience. Further conversations will need to take place concerning this feature. Cinergy has indicated a willingness to attach elements directly to the pole with banding or collars provided they do not interfere with their requirements. Concerns include clearances, weight and accessibility. The feasibility, type and character of this surround element will be determined in a more detailed design phase.



EXISTING



PROPOSED

Bicycle racks should be placed throughout the corridor based on need and the Township's desire. Benches and trashcans are recommended at all bus stop locations and nodes. Planters should be heavily considered where a more natural landscape opportunity does not exist. Strengthening the pedestrian environment is also recommended.



EXISTING



PROPOSED

Pedestrian edge features will create a zone where buildings do not approach the street. These features can be a hedge or low wooden fence in the residential areas and the office district between Salem and 5 Mile in Neighborhood 2. Stone, brick or wrought iron fencing should be used in the commercial areas. Pedestrian lighting should be used throughout. The style should reflect the character of the particular neighborhood.



PROPOSED

Some streetscape elements (such as banners, planters and address signs) should be continuous throughout the length of the corridor to tie the area together. Other elements (such as benches, walls, signage, architectural character, etc.) can be localized to each mixed-use neighborhood.

K. OVERHEAD UTILITIES

The proliferation of overhead utilities predominates along the Beechmont Corridor. Both transmission (69kV) and distribution electric lines and poles extend along both sides of Beechmont Avenue. Overhead service connections then extend into each abutting use. In addition, telephone and cable television lines are strung the length of the corridor, also connecting to adjacent buildings overhead.



EXISTING

Anderson Township requested Cinergy to study the feasibility of placing electric utilities underground. While the technology is available, the cost becomes prohibitive. Their study was completed in 2001 and at that time Cinergy estimated the cost to place the electric utilities underground was over \$50 million. Relocation of telephone and cable TV lines and new utility easements are not included in this estimate. Cinergy also points out that many of the utility poles also have signage attached which will require new poles for support if utilities are placed underground. Additional costs are also anticipated for support infrastructure, easements for underground work and restoration following construction.

These undergrounding costs cannot be incurred by Cinergy alone, so either the Township, corridor property owners or Township tax payers through a levy would need to pay for it. Therefore, at the present time placing transmission and distribution lines underground is not feasible. Another option considered was moving the utilities to the rear of existing properties. However, there is no continuous strip of land available for a utility easement and access for maintenance. Also, moving the utilities to the rear will require most of the existing properties to move their service connection to the rear. This may force many older buildings to upgrade their electric service when they apply for a permit to reconnect, adding substantial cost to individual property owners.

A third option that may be explored is the potential to consolidate some utility lines on fewer poles to reduce the amount of clutter. Also, placing some service connection "underground" will reduce cross-over wires. This would need to be done on a property-by-property basis, and areas for ground-mounted transformers would need to be identified. The ideal times for this option is in coordination with curb replacement at the time of asphalt resurfacing, at the time of property redevelopment or in conjunction with streetscape enhancements.

The Vision Plan, recognizing these limitations, focuses on introducing other streetscape elements (such as banners, landscaping, coordinated signage, pedestrian scale amenities, utility pole surrounds, etc.) that draw your attention away from the utilities.

L. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Anderson Township officials have been promoting a spirit of cooperation with the business and developer community for many years. It remains the Township's desire to encourage and leverage significant improvements within the Beechmont Corridor over time. The Vision Plan provides recommendations on how significant physical improvements may take place; however, most of these improvements will occur on private property. The Right-of-Way (R/W) of Beechmont Avenue, in most places, extends only about a foot outside the existing curb.

The following recommendations provide a number of ways that Anderson Township can begin the transformation of Beechmont Avenue into a more visually attractive place in the future.

1. ODOT Interface

It is recommended that Anderson Township develop an understanding with ODOT on what they will allow to occur within the Beechmont Corridor R/W such as those listed below and discussed previously. ODOT has the permit and maintenance responsibilities on Beechmont Avenue (SR125) within Anderson Township. Any improvements planned within the right of way must obtain a permit from ODOT and be coordinated with the Access Management Plan. Through discussions with ODOT, it was learned that ODOT does not object to visual enhancements that do not interfere with ODOT regulations. If it is determined that the cost for any enhancements within the R/W is above the expenses ODOT normally incurs, then the Township would bear the burden for the installation and maintenance of these features. Corridor enhancements germane to ODOT are as follows:

- a. Raised medians (serves first as a traffic safety function, then as a landscape enhancement opportunity).
- b. Textured or colored paving within portions of the center lane.
- c. Enhancement of pedestrian crossings and nodes (zebra striping, cross walk special treatment, etc.)
- d. Supplemental pedestrian lighting that may fall within the R/W.
- e. Pedestrian sidewalks.
- f. Low stonewalls that may fall within portions of the R/W.
- g. Utility pole surround that may be within the R/W.
- h. Wayfinding signage.
- i. Landscaping.

2. **Cinergy Interface**

A similar discussion with Cinergy representatives focused on options to reduce adverse visual effects from the above ground electric utilities. The following suggestions were reviewed with Cinergy. While a number of them may be feasible, detailed discussions with their Technical and Standards Groups will be required prior to starting detailed design of the streetscape improvements.

- a. Introducing the metal surround, collar or banding around the utility poles, while still providing necessary access and safety for Cinergy employees.
- b. Option to hang selected streetscape elements from existing utility poles.
- c. Program for consolidating or cleaning up the existing overhead utility network.
- d. Replacement of unsightly utility poles with new ones, or consolidation to reduce the number of poles.
- e. Feasibility of placing some of the service lines to individual existing buildings underground.
- f. Recommendation to place new electric service connections to future development or redevelopment underground and associated on grade placement of transformers.
- g. Potential to relocate, in a few areas, the overhead utilities to the rear of a group of properties.
- h. Follow up with Cinergy's requirements toward a detailed design of utility pole enhancements.

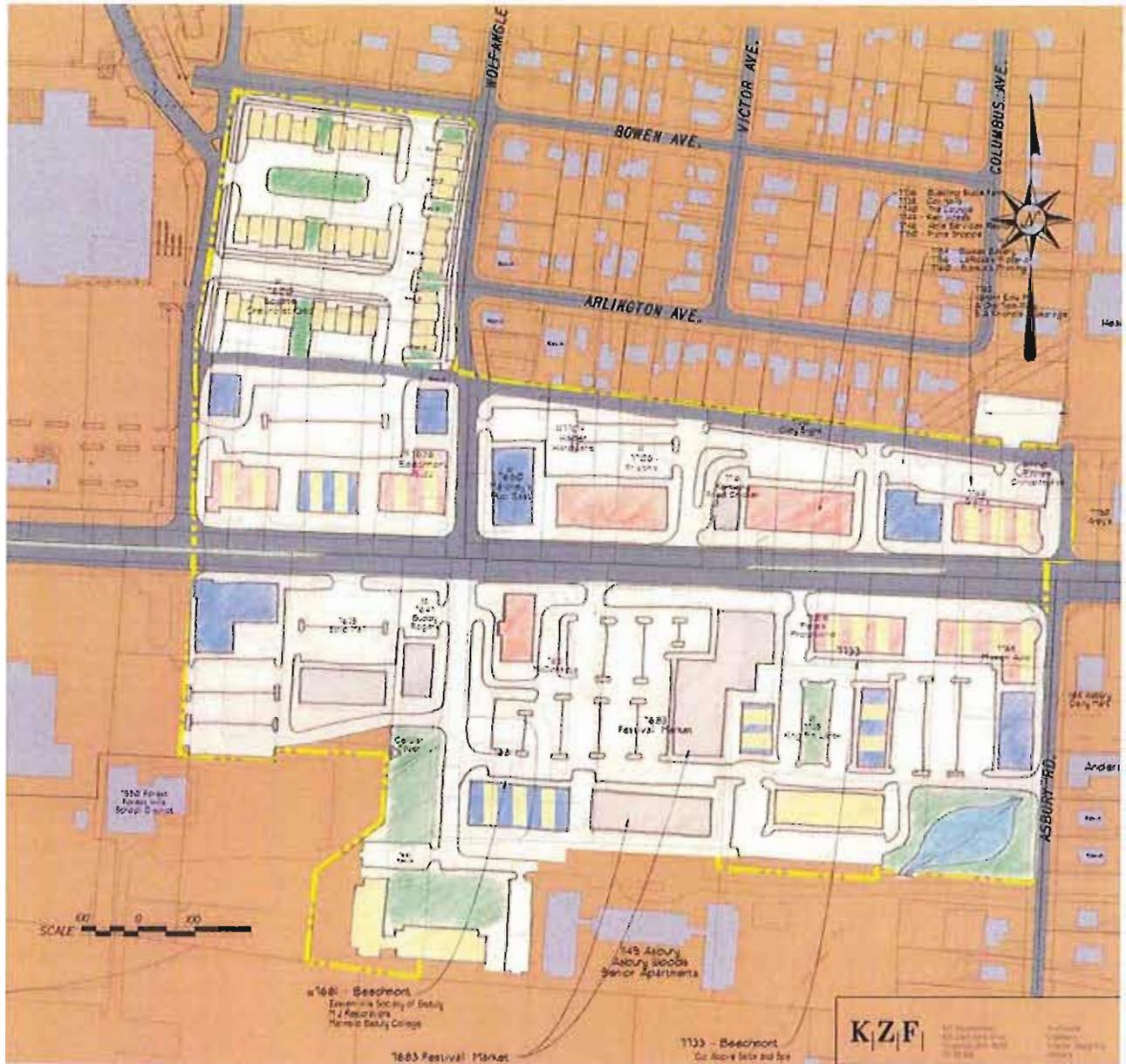
3. **Business/Property Owner Interface**

- a. Make contact with every property owner with regard to the Township's desire to promote visual enhancements along the corridor.
- b. Offer incentives as a catalyst to get owners/businesses to participate.
- c. Provide guidelines (as described herein) to property owners who are considering remodeling or redeveloping their property.
- d. Concentrate on the mixed-use neighborhood between the Anderson Town Center and Asbury Road to serve as a model for other areas within the corridor. Offer a "Design Resource Pool" that can provide initial concepts for physical improvement to selected properties that is funded by Anderson Township. Detailed design will then become the responsibility of individual property owners.

4. **Implementation Tools**

- a. Examine the feasibility of establishing a "visual enhancement overlay district" or architectural standards along the entire length of Beechmont Avenue to better facilitate physical changes and bring owners/developers to the table.
- b. Encourage a low interest loan program through local banks earmarked specifically for funds for property enhancements.
- c. Consider setting up a "Special Assessment District" along Beechmont Avenue with funds earmarked for public improvements.
- d. Allocate a portion of TIF (Tax Increment Funds) Funds for investment in physical improvements.
- e. Explore the potential to place a "Special Tax Levy" on the ballot for voter approval with all funds dedicated to physical improvements along Beechmont Avenue.
- f. Set up an Advocacy Committee whose mission is to transform Beechmont Avenue. Include residents, businesses, public officials and technical design professionals.
- g. Prepare and issue revised signage regulations that encourage the visual enhancements desired by the Township and the option to remove undesirable signs through the use of TIF funds.
- h. Revise zoning to allow for change to take place.
- i. Explore the use of a Development Authority to facilitate redevelopment of the Beechmont Corridor.

FINAL VISION (FOCUS AREA)



LEGEND

	GREEN SPACE		OFFICE
	EXISTING BUILDING		RETAIL
	EXISTING REMODELED		OFFICE OVER RETAIL
	RESIDENTIAL		RESIDENTIAL OVER OFFICE



PROPOSED