

Connections

GREATER LITTLE ITALY FEDERAL HILL

5 YEAR WORK PLAN

5 MAY 2023

YARD & COMPANY



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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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- Kenya Johnson, The Learning
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- Patrick & Rachel McCreary, The
Shop at 19th & Chestnut
- Sara Harris, Resident
- Tom Maggio, Gaming Authority





John Keller

Chicory Hill
HERBS

GYPSY JEWELRY BOX

WHERE WE'VE BEEN

WHAT WE'VE BEEN ASKED TO DO

- » Establish a “north star” for making Census Tract 19’s streets and public spaces safer, more enjoyable and more walkable
- » Create a 5-year work plan
- » Identify a tangible pilot project to be installed in 2023



STREET REDESIGN PROJECT IN MT. WASHINGTON, PITTSBURGH, PA

A MOVEMENT IS BUILDING





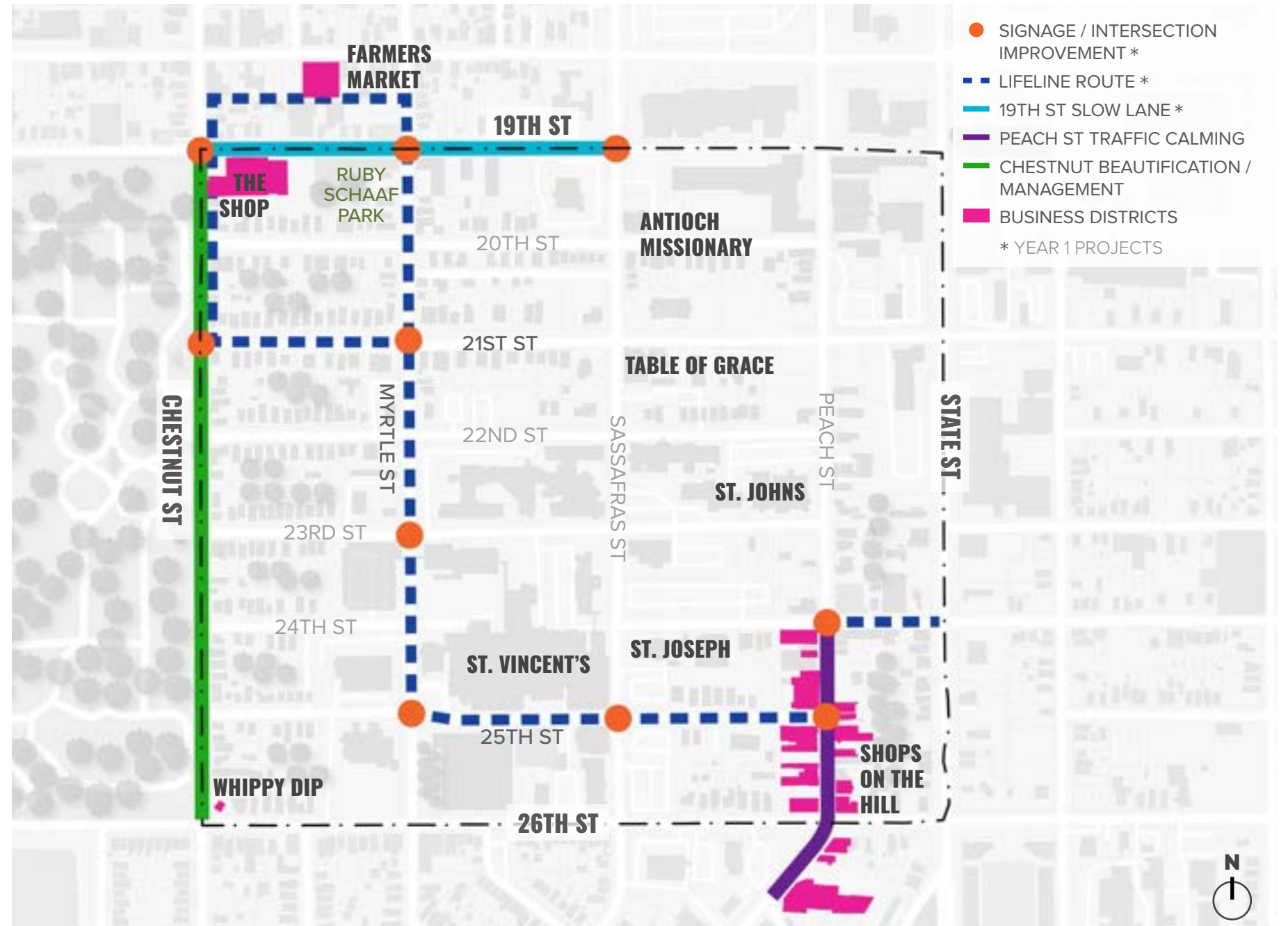
WHERE WE ARE GOING

OUR VISION

Become the most mobile neighborhood in Erie, connected to one of its most vibrant neighborhood commercial districts

SSJNN'S MISSION & ROLES

- » Planning and coordination
- » Elevate and promote inclusive excellence in design and experiences
- » Leverage funding and institutional partnerships
- » Support our business districts





THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

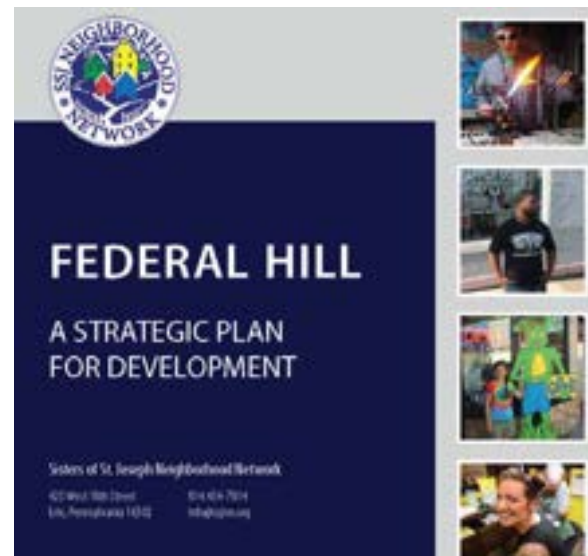
YEAR 1 OVERVIEW

- » Install a 'Slow Lane' on 19th Street & activate Ruby Schaaf Park
- » Design and install a neighborhood signage system
- » Create a dedicated Business District Marketing and Events position
- » Develop an implementation plan for the Federal Hill Strategic Plan



LIFE LINE

SEE THE 2023 PILOT PROJECT KIT FOR ADDITIONAL DETAILS

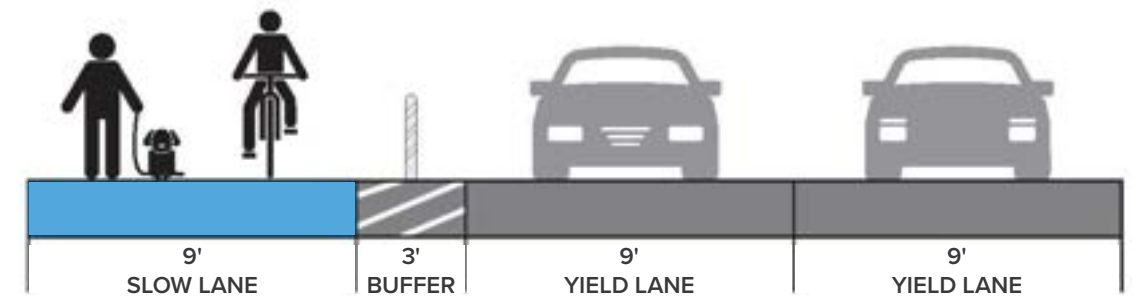


Install a 'Slow Lane' on 19th Street

- » Restripe 19th Street into a Yield Street, first from Chestnut to Myrtle Street, to install a 'slow lane' that invites all mobility types to use the street. After observation and testing, expand the restriping to Sassafras and Cherry streets, applying any helpful tweaks to the design.
- » The full width of 19th Street may be temporarily closed to create a Play Street with movable planters for special events and programming
- » Ruby Schaaf Park can be activated by working with community members to design and install a mural on the basketball court
- » The Slow Lane can also be promoted as a green space connector, providing safe access to Ruby Schaaf Park, Erie Cemetery, and Three Sisters Park



Slow Lane & Play Street Plan



Slow Lane Section

Design and Install a Neighborhood Signage System

- » Creates a sub identity for the neighborhood through LIFE Line: Little Italy Federal Hill
- » Identifies a pedestrian-oriented route to walk to destinations in Little Italy Federal Hill
- » Uses a mix of signage, sidewalk paint, planters, and other amenities to create identity and signage
- » Painted blue lines designate the walking route, orange circles designate a destination



GREATER LITTLE ITALY FEDERAL HILL, ERIE, PA



Create a Dedicated Business District Marketing and Events Position

Hire or contract a dedicated staff person to provide marketing services and produce events for the commercial areas within and adjacent to focus neighborhoods.

GOALS OF THE ROLE

- » Position the commercial areas as hubs of activity for neighborhood residents and the broader Erie community
- » Foster economic vitality so both new and established businesses thrive, which creates stability and opportunity for neighborhood residents and employees

COMPENSATION

- » \$25,000 - \$45,000/year
- » Health care (coverage or stipend)



Implement the Federal Hill Strategic Plan

The list of Actionable Projects from the Federal Hill Strategic Plan has been consolidated and organized into four categories using the lens of improving the pedestrian experience and creating business vitality.

ACTIONABLE PROJECTS

SHORT TERM PROJECTS (next 2 years):

- Lighting on buildings
- Security cameras
- Line painting on streets for parking and pedestrian crossings (after resurfacing)
- Flower baskets, trash receptacles, banners
- Community garden at Bay City OrthoCare
- Stakeholder meetings
- Festival
- Maintain current businesses
- Develop brochure of businesses in area and distribute at stores
- Hold business education session with City
- Meet with each business in district
- Complete a comprehensive signage review and recommendations—Lee Ann
- Develop a logo and tag line
- Pursue common street numbers for all buildings
- Start a parking meter project—use old meters for donations and decorate them

MEDIUM-TERM PROJECTS (2-4 years):

- Mural
- Comprehensive stakeholder involvement
- Start a Farmers Market
- Install a coordinated signage system
- Add more festivals and enhance the farmers' market
- Add 2-4 new businesses
- Pursue media advertising for the district
- Hold several business education sessions
- Develop simple design standards for district
- Acquire a façade grant and start a façade improvement program (ECGRA)
- Identify needed businesses for the district and work with the City to recruit them
- Pursue NAP and NPP with SSJNN
- Pursue an EMTA bus shelter for the district

LONGER-TERM PROJECTS (5-10 years):

- Overall streetscaping—pursuing State funding—curbs, sidewalks, trees, line painting, pedestrian crossing signals, signage, etc.
- New parking lot
- Two-way traffic on Peach and Sassafras Streets
- Add more new businesses
- Enhance marketing efforts

PLACEMAKING

- » Install lighting on commercial buildings
- » Install security cameras on building facades
- » Install flower baskets, trash receptacles, banners & other beautification measures
- » Install a coordinated signage system
- » Install Peach Street striping - parking spaces delineation and crosswalks

PROMOTION

- » Create advertising campaign for the district
- » Create an annual festival
- » Create materials promoting district businesses - print & online
- » Create new events & activations

PROGRAMS

- » Develop quarterly business meeting schedule/communication
- » Develop business recruitment plan
- » Develop simple design standards for district
- » Develop series of business education sessions (with City of Erie)
- » Develop/expand facade grant program

PROJECTS

- » Streetscaping - curbs/sidewalks/trees/crosswalks/traffic calming
- » Build EMTA bus shelter for the district

LINK TO RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

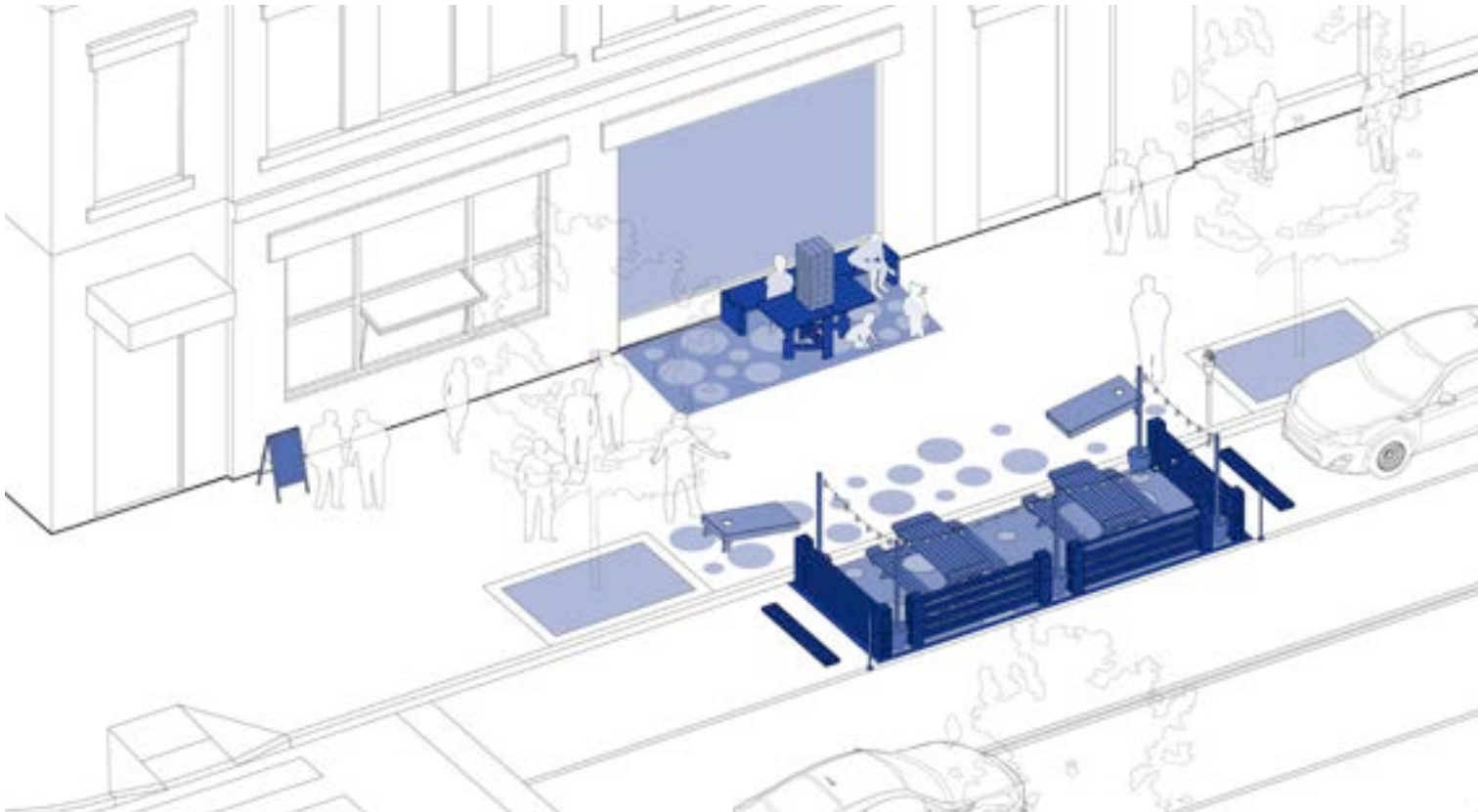
YEARS 2-5 OVERVIEW

- » Develop, deploy, and maintain a commercial streetscape kit
- » Design and install Peach Street traffic calming measures
- » Launch a Commercial District Lighting, Signage and Facade Grant Program
- » Beautify Chestnut with landscaping, bumpouts, and managed parking
- » Install high visibility crosswalks and stop signs along the LIFE Line
- » Project costs and funding





















Develop, Deploy, and Maintain a Commercial Streetscape Kit

- » Build a library of tools and materials that will allow residents and business owners to easily activate or spruce up their storefront.
- » Have games and activities available for residents to rent for neighborhood programming.
- » As the library of parts grows, create different kits such as a 'storefront kit' or 'bike lane kit' to allow more accessibility for residents who want to utilize the tool.
- » Encourage residents in the neighborhood to get involved whenever the toolkit is being used to help install the activation.
- » Build guidelines that allow easy and fast permission for residents to use the Toolkit.



STOREFRONT KIT

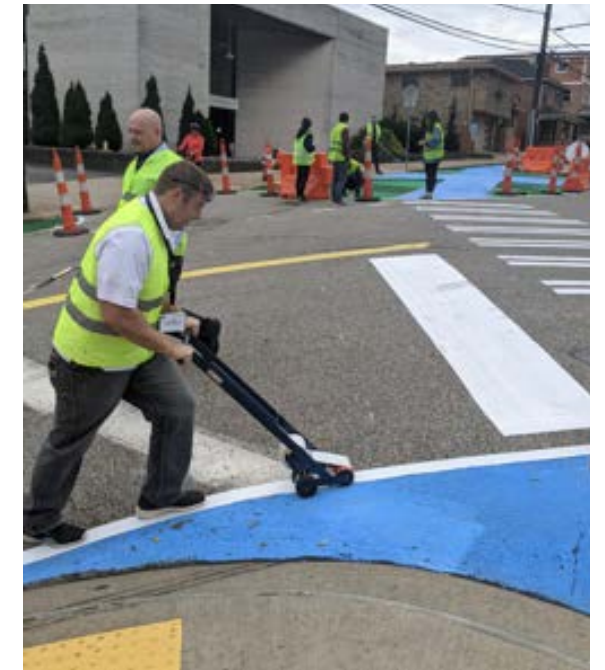
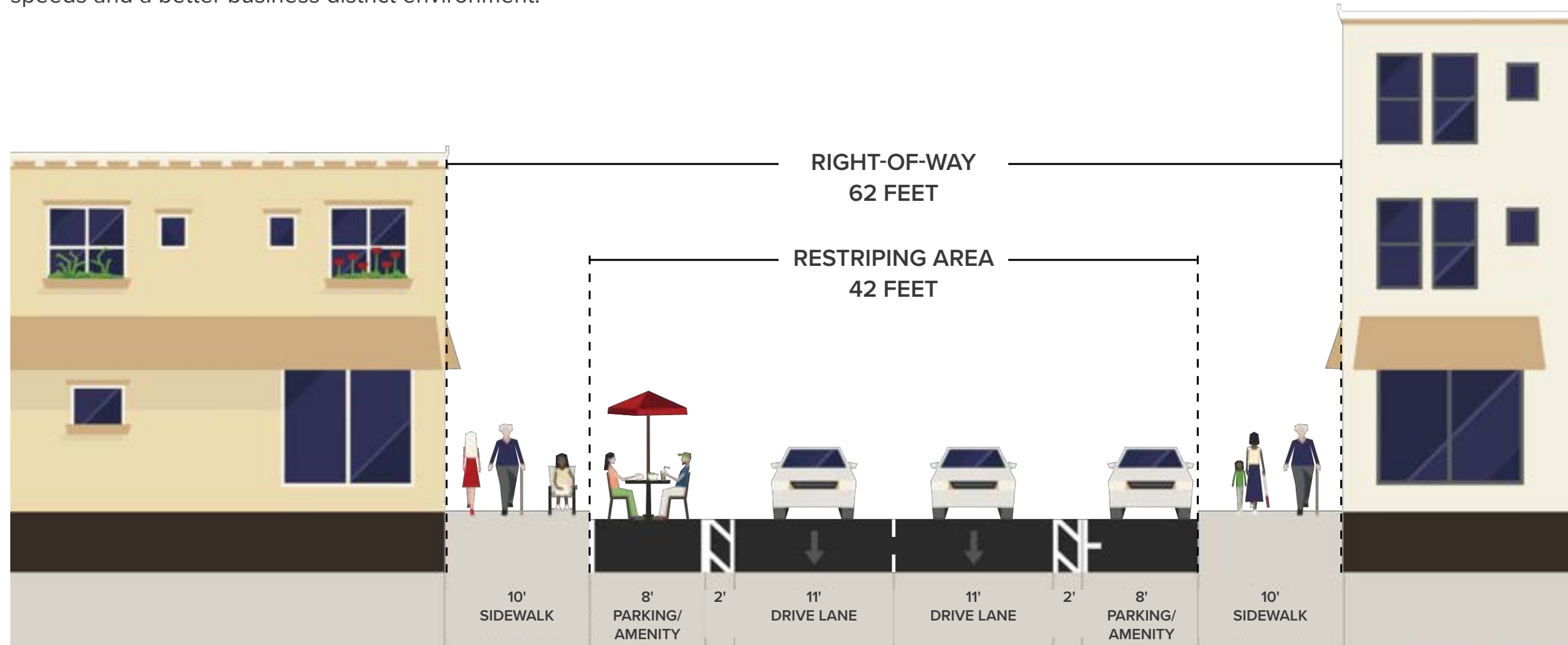
					
SHRUBS	PLANTINGS	PAINT	PAINT BRUSH	PAINT ROLLER	PAINT ROLLER NAP
					
ROLLER POLE	PAINT BUCKET	STRING LIGHTS	PENNANT FLAGS	PICNIC TABLE	DROP CLOTH
					
LADDER	EXTENSION CORD	PUSH BROOMS	CAFE SEATING	PATIO CHAIR	UMBRELLA

5 YEAR WORK PLAN 15

Design and Install Peach Street Traffic Calming Measures

Existing pavement along Peach Street measures 42 feet wide, providing two lanes of vehicular travel and on-street parking on both sides. There are currently no markings to delineate parking spaces. The posted speed limit is 25 mph, but drivers often travel much faster for reasons including wide lanes, no stop signs or signals between 21st and 26th streets, and movement is all going in the same direction. Using materials including thermoplastic (for striping), paint, cones/vertical delineators, and plantings, Peach Street can be redesigned to promote slower speeds and a better business district environment.

Support from the City of Erie Traffic Engineering Division will be needed to implement this project. In addition to approving the design and facilitating a permit, they could collaborate by creating the striped crosswalks and laying down the striping to demarcate parking spaces and bumpouts. Alternatively, a contractor may also be hired for this work. Community members and volunteers can be involved to paint the interior of the bumpouts, build/install planters and fill with flowers and plants.



Peach Street Traffic Calming Plan 24 Street to 26th Street

- STREET MARKING
- PAVEMENT
- BUILDING
- SIDEWALK
- BUMP-OUT
- ALTERNATING BUMP-OUT
- ON-STREET PARKING
- PLANTING / AMENITY AREA



Commercial District Lighting, Signage and Facade Grant Program

Continue helping commercial property owners improve the attractiveness of their properties, while eliminating conditions bearing negative impact on economic growth.

WHY

These successful SSJNN programs have helped fund many improvements that contribute to the physical, economic, social and aesthetic enhancement of the neighborhood.

HOW

- » Continue the existing Facade Improvement Grant program offering a dollar-for-dollar match up to \$5,000 for qualifying exterior improvements.
- » Offer a Commercial Signage Grant offering a dollar-for-dollar match up to \$2,500 for exterior commercial signage.
 - ▶ Prior to offering the grant, review the existing City of Erie sign regulations to ensure funded signs are compliant. If desirable signage types are not allowed by right (projecting blade signs, neon signs with motion), work with the City of Erie on creating an overlay for the Shops on the Hill that allow the desired sign types.
- » Continue installing façade/pedestrian level lighting on Peach Street commercial buildings.
 - ▶ Lighting has been installed on 8 Peach Street buildings to date, with another 10 scheduled for summer 2023.
 - ▶ Conduct an inventory of properties on Peach Street that need lighting and accelerate the program based on ECGRA grant funding.

- ▶ Expand the program to commercial properties on 19th Street between Chestnut and Myrtle.
- » Work with Penelec and the City of Erie to replace the existing sodium/metal halide cobra lights with energy-efficient LED cobra lights on the utility poles along the east side of Peach Street.
 - ▶ Request additional LED cobra lights on the utility poles along the west side of Peach Street, especially on the northwest corner of 25th & Peach where a crosswalk has been previously marked.
- » Promote the use of [Bridgeway Capital's Creative Business Loan Fund](https://bridgewaycapital.org) (bridgewaycapital.org) to attract and/or retain creative businesses in the Shops on the Hill and The Shop at 19th and Chestnut streets.
 - ▶ The fund provides fixed rate loans to creative businesses for working capital, equipment purchases, renovations to retail, production, or office space, and building acquisitions.
 - ▶ Loans range from \$5,000 up to \$250,000 with an average loan of \$75,000.
 - ▶ Eligible creative businesses include craft manufacturers, arts schools, architecture firms, design and fabrication firms, media companies, and visual and performing arts production agencies
 - ▶ The fund prioritizes creative businesses located in low-income communities, those owned by Black, Indigenous, and people of color or serving a diverse market, and those located in small towns and rural communities

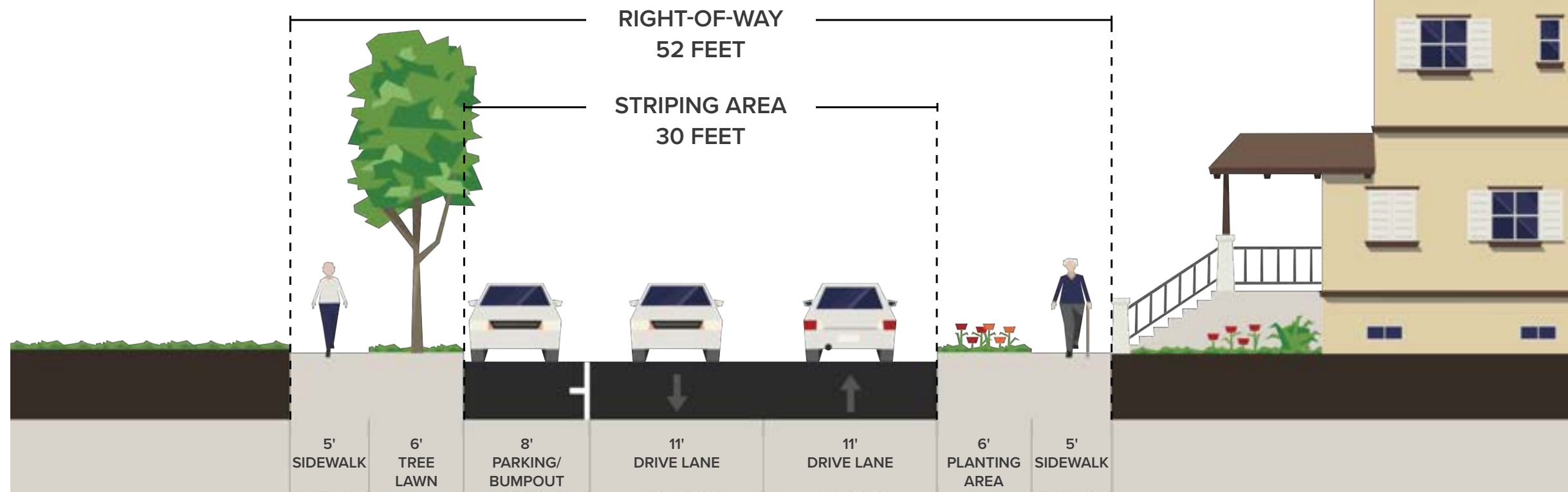


Corner of 25th and Peach where a new LED cobra light is needed to illuminate the crosswalk

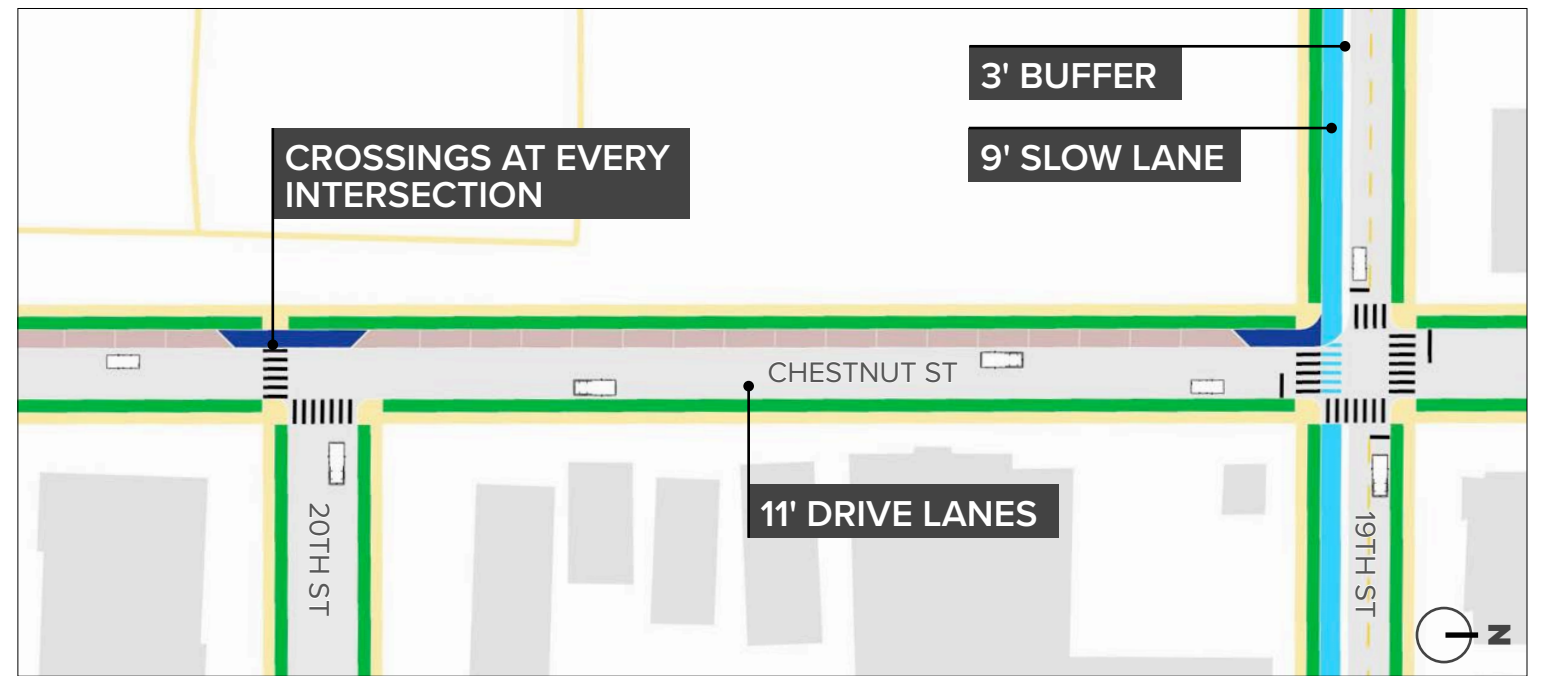
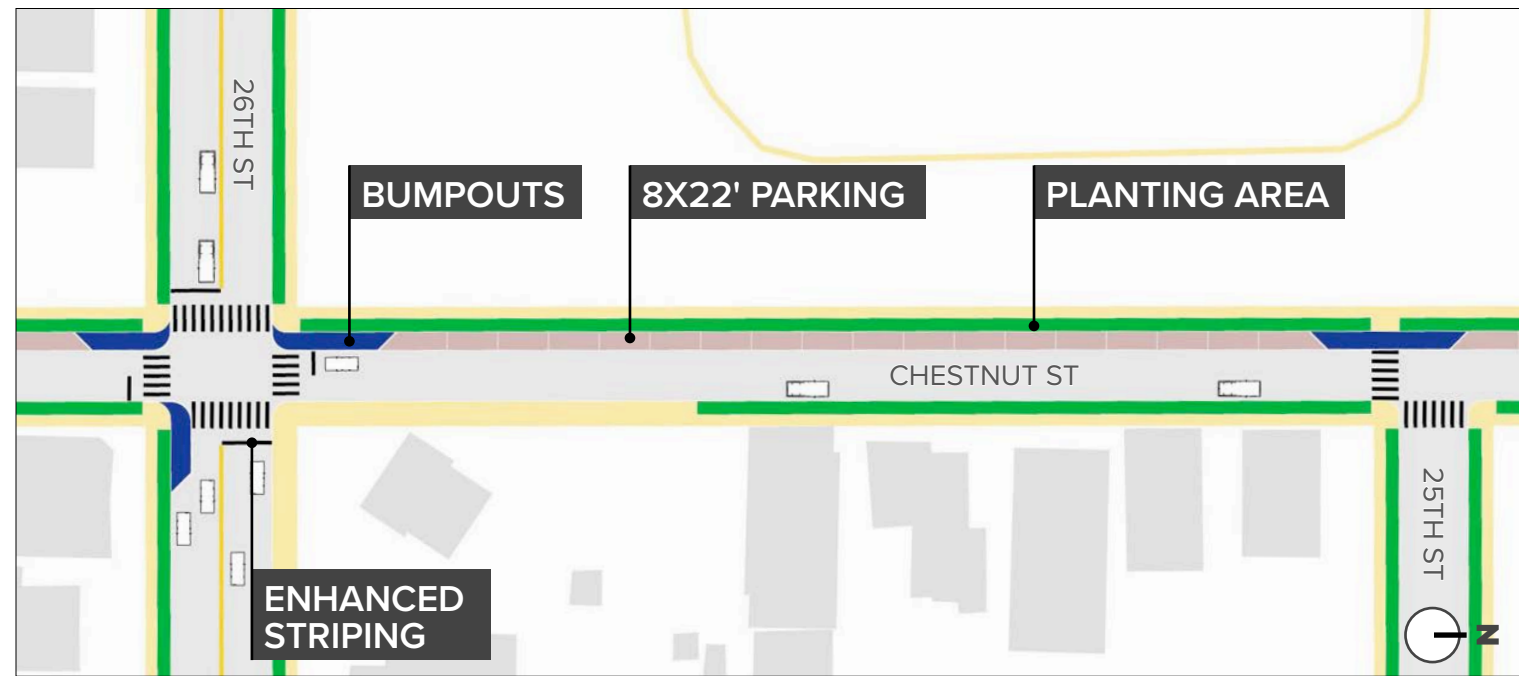
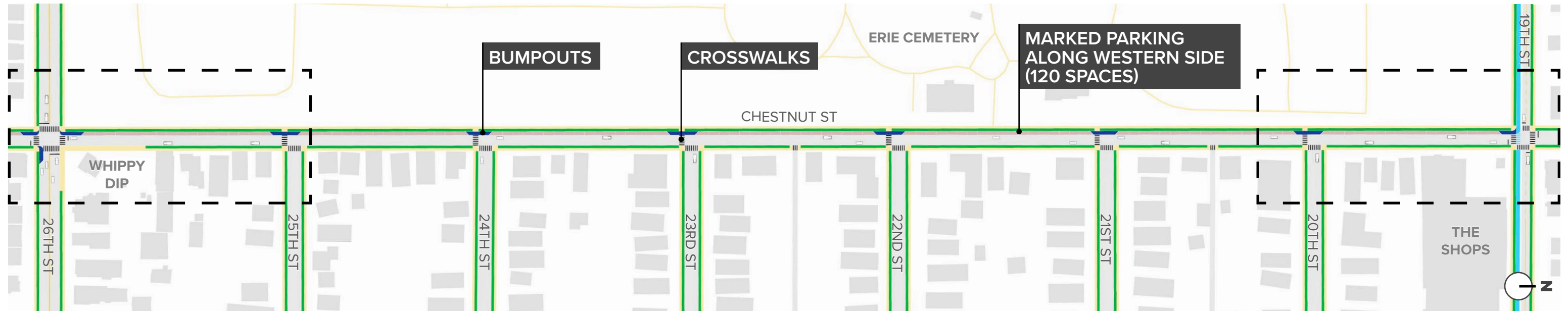
Beautify Chestnut with Landscaping, Bumpouts, and Managed Parking

The pavement width along Chestnut Street measures 30 feet. There are no on-street markings (center line, parking, cross walks). Vehicles travel in each direction and parking alternates sides of the street every other day. While signage is posted to deter parking too close to intersections, parked vehicles often block views. It is recommended that on-street parking be marked along the western side of Chestnut to serve as the designated on-street parking (everyday). This take advantage of the minimal curb cuts along Erie Cemetery, providing more total spaces. Given the competition to use these parking spaces between residents and hospital staff, the City and hospital leadership should be pulled together to introduce a resident permit / fee based structure to promote staff in using the hospital parking garage and allowing on-street turnover.

Professional traffic-grade materials (thermoplastic) will be needed to mark parking and bumpout striping. As described in the Peach Street recommendations, there are opportunities for community members and volunteers to paint the interior of the bumpouts created at intersections and enhance existing planting areas adjacent to the sidewalks with new flowers and plants. These improvements could even be leveraged to revive the Tulip Festival that used to occur in this community. Temporary materials, including channelizer cones, white duct tape, wooden blocks, and painted roofing underlayment (photo), can be utilized to test the parking, bump outs, and crosswalk areas prior to developing a more permanent solution.



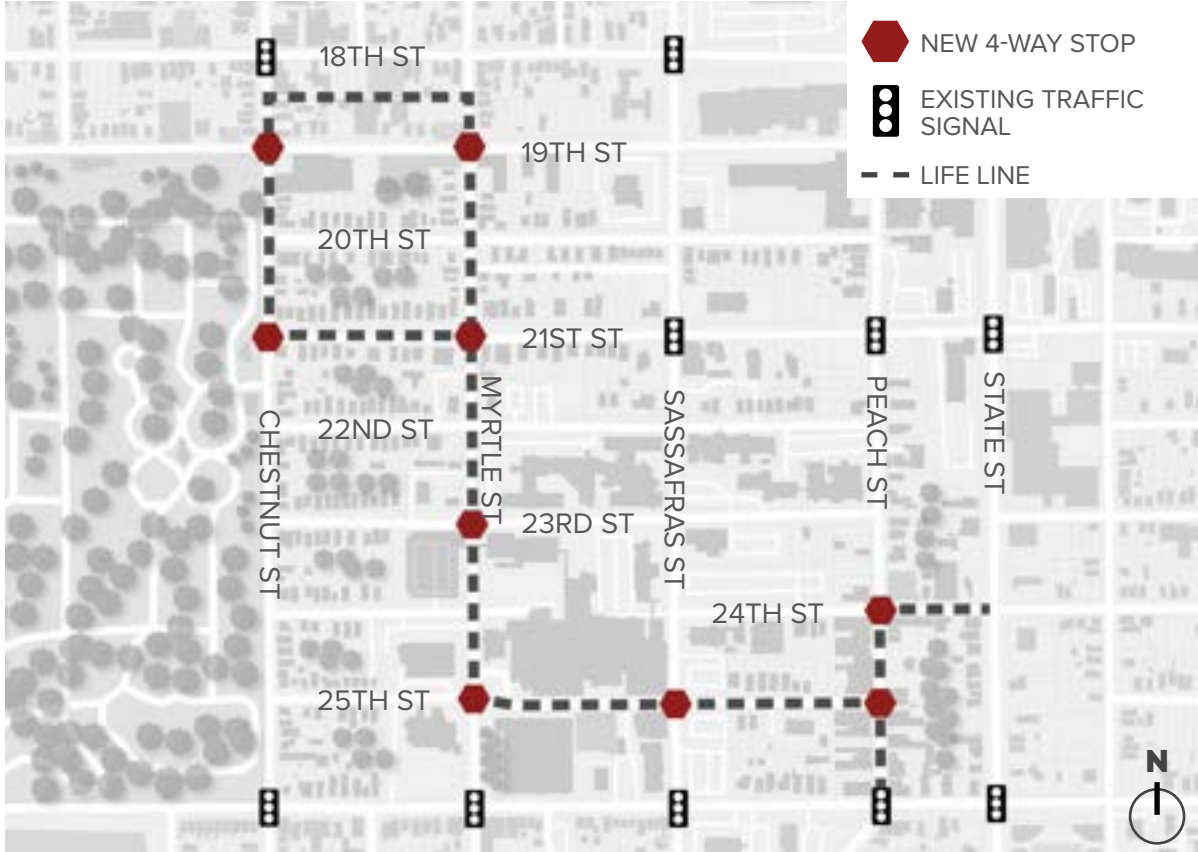
Chestnut Street Plan



- STREET MARKING
- BUILDING
- SIDEWALK
- BUMPOUT
- ON-STREET PARKING
- PLANTING AREA
- SLOW LANE

Install High Visibility Crosswalks and Stop Signs Along the LIFE Line

To support the usability of the LIFE Line, four-way stop signs would ideally be installed at each intersection, as shown on the map below. In the interim, pedestrian crossing signs should be installed to call attention to the the crosswalks, focused on the sides without stop signs. The crosswalks should be enhanced further with striped markings and bumpouts, as shown in the photo examples, and in coordination with the Peach Street and Chestnut Street improvements. Pedestrian paddles and yield signals may also be used in the short-term. US DOT supported safety countermeasures can be referenced to support this work at highways.dot.gov/safety/proven-safety-countermeasures.



GREATER LITTLE ITALY FEDERAL HILL, ERIE, PA



Project Costs

PROJECTS	EST. COSTS
YEAR 1	
19th Play Street & Slow Lane (Test)	\$19,500
Activate Ruby Schaaf Park (basketball court mural)	\$9,350
LIFE Line Neighborhood Signage System & Intersection Improvements (Test)	\$21,000
Year 1 Total	\$49,850
YEARS 2-5	
Peach Street Traffic Calming (24th - 26th Streets)	\$22,200
Chestnut Street Beautification & Management (19th to 26th Streets)	\$21,600
19th Play Street & Slow Lane (Extended/Permanent)	\$16,630
LIFE Line Neighborhood Signage System & Intersection Improvements (Permanent)	\$17,200
Years 2-5 Total	\$77,630

[LINK TO LIVE SPREADSHEET](#)

Project Funding

Mission Main Street Grant

The Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority (ECGRA) offers [Mission Main Street \(MMS\) Grants](#) to renew historic commercial corridors. Projects may include overhauled streetscapes, revamped landscapes, and restored façades.

MMS Grant goals:

- » Redevelop streetscapes and buildings
- » Remove blight and reverse deterioration
- » Promote a positive small business environment
- » Incentivize and spur private investment
- » Make communities more walkable, safe, and attractive
- » Experiment with creative programming & civic engagement
- » Improve the municipal tax base

SSJNN staff anticipates being able to use Pennsylvania Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP) and Neighborhood Partnership Program (NPP) funds as the required 1:1 match for a \$250,000 MMS Implementation Grant.

Mission Main Street grant applications are due June 1, 2023 with an award date of June 15, 2023. Duration of the grant is 3 years, so funds would be available Fall 2023 through end of year 2026.

AARP Community Challenge Grants

The [AARP Community Challenge](#) provides small grants to fund quick-action projects that can help communities become more livable for people of all ages. There are three different grant opportunities.

Flagship Grants

Range from several hundred dollars for smaller, short-term activities to tens of thousands of dollars for larger projects. Since 2017, AARP has funded projects ranging from \$500 to \$50,000 with an average grant amount of \$11,900.

Eligible projects related to the implementation of this 5 Year Work Plan include:

- » Creating vibrant public places that improve open spaces, parks and access to other amenities
- » Delivering a range of transportation and mobility options that increase connectivity, walkability, bikeability, and access to public and private transit

Capacity-Building Microgrants

\$2,500 grants combined with additional AARP Livable Communities training and resources in two categories: Walkability and Community Gardens.

Demonstration Grants

Of particular interest to the desired conversion of Peach Street from one-way to two-way traffic, the Demonstration Grants build capacity towards transportation systems change. Grant funding of approximately

\$30,000 to \$50,000 per project is sponsored by Toyota Motor North America.

Organizations are eligible to apply for more than one grant opportunity and can submit multiple applications. The next Community Challenge grant cycle will take place in 2024 with applications opening mid-January 2024.

According to Mandla Moyo (mmoyo@aarp.org), Senior Advisor for AARP Livable Communities, organizations are strongly encouraged to work with their state AARP office to develop their grant application(s). The AARP Pennsylvania State Office is located in Harrisburg, available during regular business hours by calling toll free 1-866-389-5654 or emailing aarppa@aarp.org.

Project Funding (continued)

Renaissance Block Grant

The Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority (ECGRA) offers [Renaissance Block Grants \(RBG\)](#) to address and reverse housing blight in Erie County and improve the curb appeal of a block, neighborhood, or corridor.

There are three zones of improvement in every neighborhood:

- » Private property
- » Sidewalk
- » The public right-of-way between the sidewalk and curb

Grants are awarded up to \$100,000 per application to improve the functionality and curb appeal of the three zones listed above. RBG is limited to \$5,000 per property for eligible exterior repairs, permanent improvements, and streetscapes. Sidewalks, landscaping/trees, and exterior lighting are eligible improvements.

Project applications require a 1:1 match. Applications are due June 1, 2023 with an award date of June 15, 2023.

Game On - Community Places to Play

An initiative of The DICK's Sporting Goods Foundation and LISC, the program provides funding and technical assistance to community-rooted organizations working to create and renovate multi-use youth sport spaces in under-resourced communities across the country. Awards range from \$50,000-\$100,000 and require match funding. Full information is available at lisc.org.

The Flagship Fund

Anticipated to return in 2024, [The Flagship Fund](#) is the City of Erie's Micro-Grant program for small businesses. Funding awards are granted up to \$2,500 with a 1:1 funding match required.

Registered businesses in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania with a physical address within the City of Erie are eligible to apply. Preference is given to businesses with 25 or fewer employees and to for-profit entities, although non-profit organizations may apply.

Eligible uses of the Flagship Fund grants related to this 5 Year Work Plan include:

- » Marketing and Advertising expenses
- » Façade | Building Improvements
- » Website Development
- » Security Cameras
- » Lighting | Exterior Signage

These funds could supplement existing SSJNN programs that install exterior lighting and security cameras on Peach Street businesses, or kick-start development of an advertising campaign or website redesign.

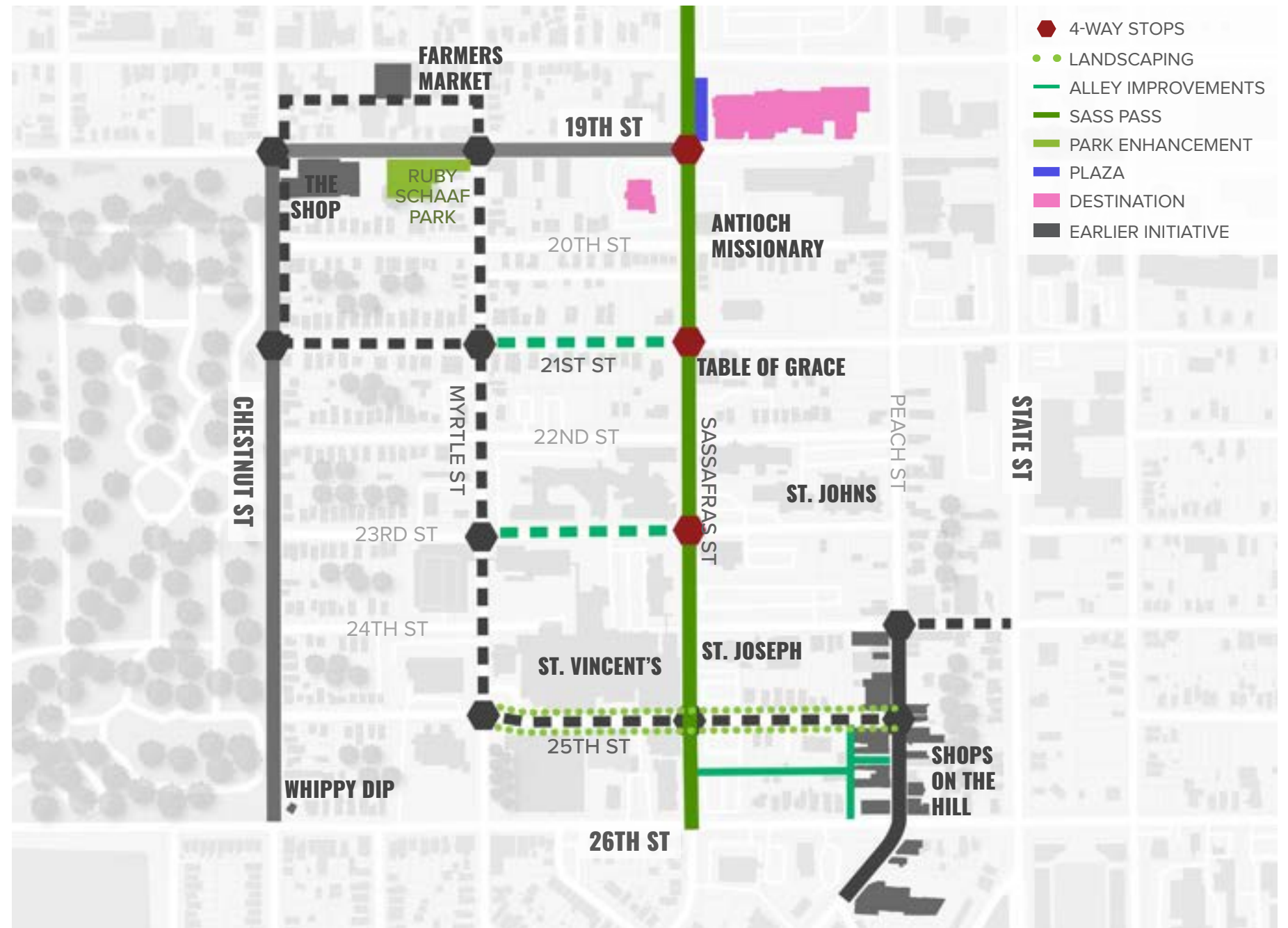
When the Flagship Fund is offered again, either SSJNN or district businesses themselves should apply for funds to supplement and continue existing improvement efforts.



FURTHER AFIELD

LONGER TERM INITIATIVES

- » Sass Pass: two-way protected mobility lane along Sassafras Street
- » Additional four-way stop intersections along Sassafrass
- » Convert excess ROW at 19th St and Sassafras St into a usable public plaza with programming and events. Support and involve adjacent destinations
- » Continue investment and support of Ruby Schaaf Park as a community play space and amenity
- » Landscaping along 25th Street from Myrtle Street to Peach Street
- » Lighting, maintenance, beautification, and activation along alleys between Sassafras and Peach streets to establish a creative, intriguing and pedestrian-first area connected to the business district



Inspiration for Longer Term Initiatives





APPENDIX



Click here to visit the Appendix folder

1. Kick-off meeting recap
2. Brand kit and engagement collateral
3. Survey results
4. Options deck
5. Federal Hill Strategic Plan Implementation Matrix



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