



Figure III-10: Aerial view of Swormville between Stahley and North French Roads.

D. Focus Area II

Vision:

“Traditional hamlet with an attractive business/pedestrian friendly main street connected to adjacent walkable neighborhoods”

Focus Area II is located in the Hamlet of Swormville (Figure III-10). The Hamlet includes a mix of development that is pedestrian-scaled. Existing uses include a school, church, fire hall, post office, tavern and a variety of small businesses. In this portion of the study area, Transit Road transitions to narrow lanes with a reduced speed limit of 35 mph and short setbacks along the corridor.

Issues:

During the planning process, members of the Technical Advisory Committee and the community at large identified concerns about high speeds and pedestrian safety. While the goods and services offered in the Hamlet make it a destination for many, the high volume of through traffic makes it difficult to provide safe, multi-modal access within the area.

Enhanced pedestrian and traffic calming facilities are needed to maintain the current scale and character of the Hamlet and to ensure the future viability of this area.

In addition, the Hamlet lacks sufficient parking to provide easy access to local retail and service opportunities. Connectivity throughout the Hamlet would be improved by expanding the current street grid.

Response:

- Enhance the Hamlet's character and appeal;
- Encourage pedestrian-scaled development practices and techniques;
- Utilize traffic calming to slow speeds through the area;
- Identify additional parking opportunities;
- Extend the current street grid to improve connectivity of all modes of transit;
- Encourage mixed-use development;
- Improve pedestrian facilities throughout the Hamlet; and
- Preserve historic structures.

Actions:

Enhancing Walkability

A Hamlet's appeal stems from its pedestrian-scaled development, availability of diverse services and retail opportunities, and well-defined sense of place. Adequate pedestrian facilities are needed to capitalize on these assets.

While Swormville has a lot going for it in terms of its

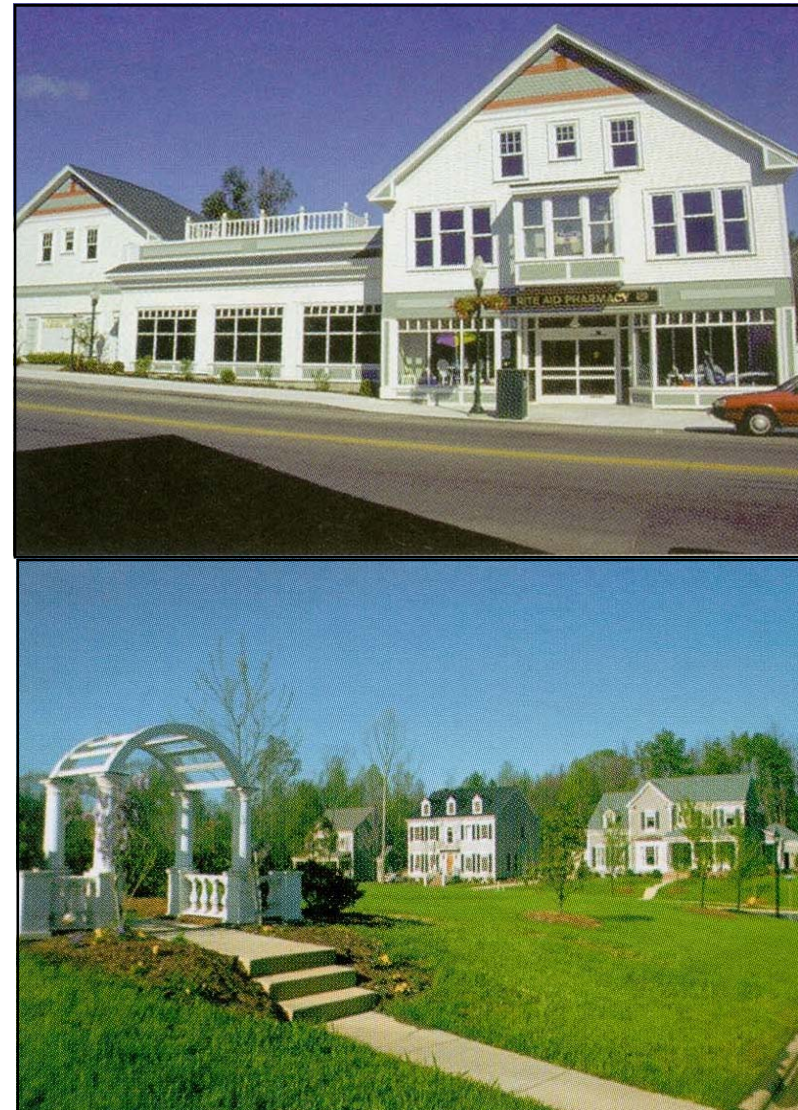


Figure III-11: High scoring images from the Preferred Development Survey that represent the appropriate style and scale for the Hamlet area.



Figure III-12: Photo simulation of Transit Road in the Hamlet of Swormville.

balance and scale of development, it lacks adequate pedestrian facilities. Making Swormville a more walkable area by installing sidewalks in key commercial and future residential areas would greatly improve the quality of life in the Hamlet. Figure III-11 includes two high scoring images from the Preferred Development Survey. Pedestrian access is a major theme in both images.

Increasing pedestrian access within and to the hamlet could improve the attractiveness of the area for patrons and businesses and encourage new development. The addition of sidewalks would dramatically improve both the appearance and circulation within the hamlet. Pedestrian-friendly amenities such as street lighting and benches will also help to improve the hamlet's sense of place and overall appeal. The photo simulation shown in Figure III-12 illustrates how the addition of sidewalks, as well as other streetscape improvements, would positively impact the corridor. Figure III-13 illustrates the proposed highway design for the corridor in this focus area.

Corridor Connectivity

Adding and improving sidewalks in Swormville also raises the possibility of enhancing connections along the Transit Road corridor. The hamlet's sidewalks could be joined to any future off-road pedestrian trails in Focus Area I. Although the land uses, scale and appearance of the corridor changes significantly from one end of the corridor to the other, the opportunities

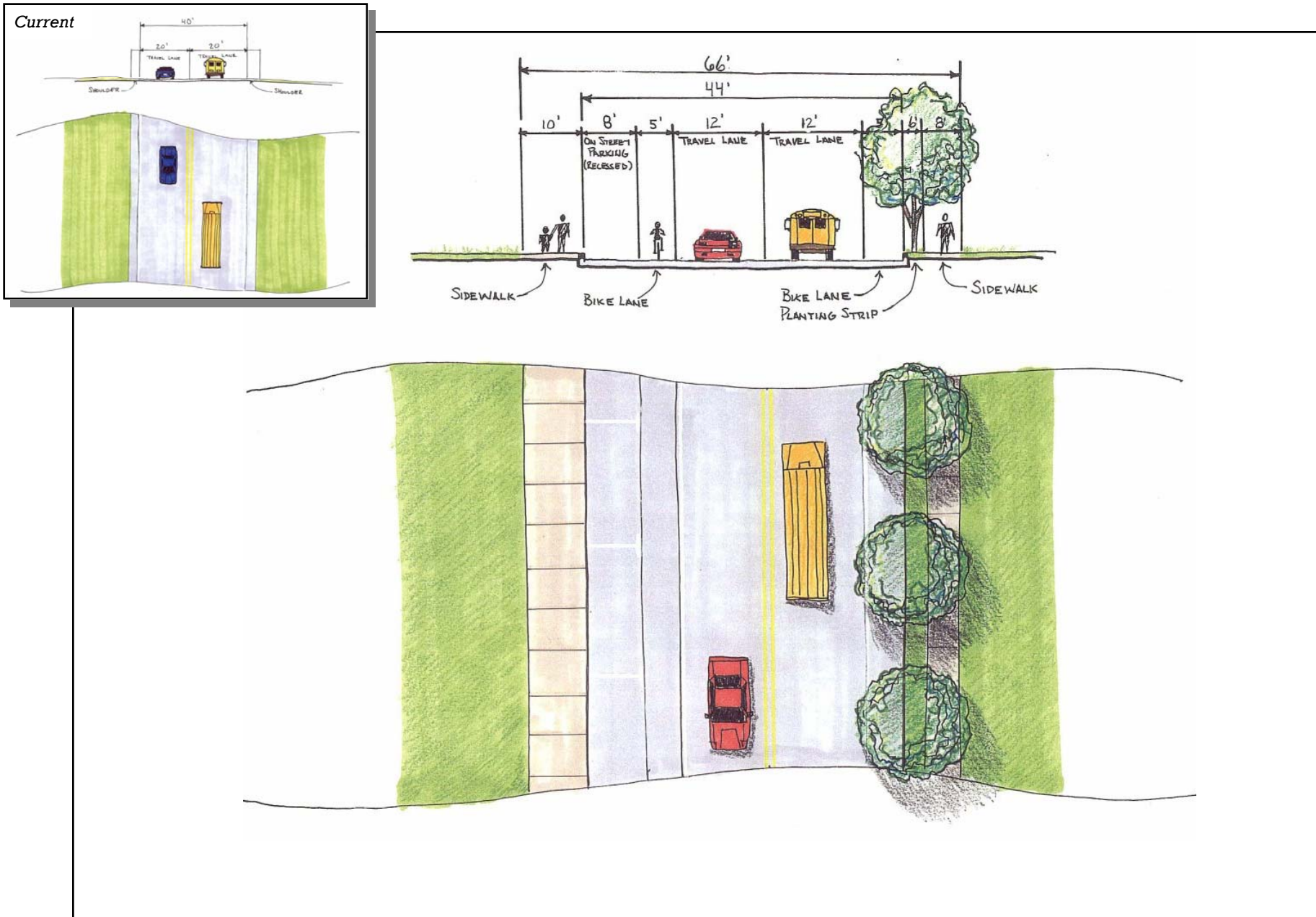


Figure III-13: The proposed cross section for the Hamlet of Swormville should include sidewalks on both sides of the road, on-street parking on the west side of the road, and a tree lawn on the east side.



Figure III-14: Swormville (top picture) currently lacks street-scene amenities, such as sidewalks, traditional lighting and parking. The Charlotte neighborhood in Rochester, N.Y. (bottom picture) has seen the positive results these improvements can have.

for increasing connectivity along Transit Road should not be overlooked.

Multi-modal Access

It is important to accommodate a wide variety of transportation modes in every community. In addition to improving an area's quality of life and providing an important recreational opportunity to area residents and visitors, safe bicycle accommodations also provide another viable mode of transportation and help attract patrons to local retail and services. This is especially vital to a hamlet like Swormville.

For these reasons, a bike lane has been incorporated into the conceptual design for this area.

Traffic Calming

High speeds and pedestrian safety are primary concerns in this portion of the study area. By far the most pedestrian-active section of Transit Road, Swormville would benefit greatly from the use of traffic calming strategies. While physical improvements to slow speeds and improve safety are certainly warranted, changes to local policies and practices could also help to significantly improve conditions. For example, increased speed enforcement by local and state police through this area would encourage motorists to slow down. Additionally, other measures, such as signage and use of portable radar screens,

would help to reduce speeds and improve pedestrian safety.

The cross section in Figure III-13 on page 28 illustrates the towns' desire to slow traffic and make the area a more hospitable environment in which to walk. The design for this area includes narrower travel lanes (12 feet) to slow through traffic within the hamlet. Given the lack of curves in this portion of the study area, reduced lane width will not compromise motorists' maneuvering abilities or emergency services' access in the hamlet. Planting strips and tree lawns serve as traffic calming agents by providing a buffer between pedestrians and motorists and serving as a visual cue for motorists to slow down. The design also includes curb bulb outs, which would create shorter crossing distances for pedestrians. Although not depicted in the cross section, accommodation for left turn lanes could be made at the intersection of Smith and Stahley to reduce the potential for bottleneck conditions through the hamlet.

Parking – Addressing Function and Form

The inclusion of on-street parking will assist in reducing speeds in the hamlet. In addition, residents identified the need for additional parking to attract and accommodate patrons of businesses within the hamlet. The hamlet design concept includes on-street parking on the west side of the corridor. Although not included in the design or photo simulation, pocket on-street



Figure III-15: A conceptual illustration of what future development in and around the Swormville Hamlet could look like.

Figure III-16: An example design that shows how good land use decisions and traditional neighborhood design can preserve open space; build upon centrally located community resources such as schools, retail and recreation; and establish a sense of place.



parking areas could also be provided in key locations along the east side of the corridor if necessary.

On-street parking would improve safety in the area by providing a buffer between motorists and pedestrians on the west side of the street. In addition, highly visible, easy-to-access on-street parking may also attract commuters who do not normally stop in the hamlet. Over time, other off-street parking facilities may be needed to accommodate future development. However, on-street parking should be the first step in the process of providing additional spaces in the area.

Improving Aesthetic Appeal

Although not always a consideration in traditional transportation plans, the impact of road improvements on communities' appearance is an important factor. Throughout this planning process, careful consideration has been given to ensure that recommendations are sensitive to local context and reflect the vision and values identified in the towns' respective comprehensive plans. If carried out, this design concept would enhance the overall appearance of the hamlet and improve the quality of life for residents and visitors.

Future Land Use and Access

The hamlet should contain a mix of land uses, including appropriately scaled commercial and residential development and community resources (e.g. churches, schools, etc.). While Swormville already has adequate

community resources, there is an opportunity to enhance commercial and residential development within the hamlet. Not only would doing so improve the economic condition in the area, but it would improve access management.

Future development in this area should adhere to the ideals of traditional neighborhood development (TND). Examples of TND approaches to development are contained in Figures III-15 and Figure III-16. TND is characterized by smaller housing lots that are located in close proximity to retail, services and community resources. This type of development emphasizes the importance of pedestrian activity by including sidewalks, trails, pedestrian-scaled street lighting, street trees and other amenities that make a community more walkable. Applying this approach to residential development in Swormville would maximize land use in the area and provide the critical mass needed to support the Hamlet's commercial area, which could expand as a result of residential development. Traffic calming techniques should be utilized in the Hamlet to protect pedestrians' and motorists' safety through this area. Traffic calming strategies to consider will range in complexity and might include pedestrian crossing signs, flashing yellow lights (to warn of speed limit change), increased speed patrols and bulb outs. Future residential development should establish a street grid by expanding current streets connections and creating new ones. In order to create an effective and efficient street pattern, cul-de-sac may need to be limited. Future commercial development in the hamlet

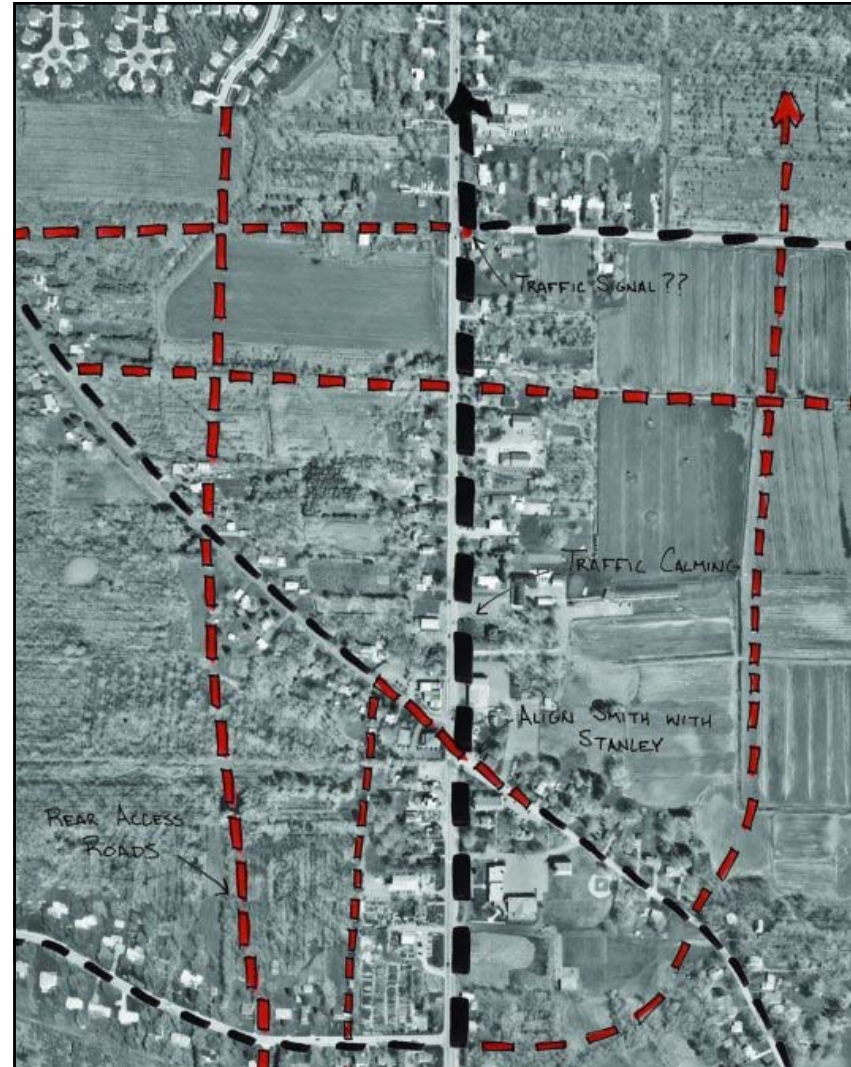


Figure III-17: Potential location for future street connections that would be needed to develop a street grid in the Hamlet that will improve traffic flow and encourage pedestrian-scaled development.

should compliment and enhance the existing character and historic value. By creating a commercial center that is pedestrian-scaled and oriented (buildings up to sidewalks, parking in the rear, etc.), the hamlet will establish itself as a destination for nearby residents and people passing through.

Enhancing Roadway Connections

The success of future development in the Hamlet will depend in large part on the existence of an organized street grid. Figure III-17 illustrates a concept for potential road connections that would provide alternative routes for local traffic, encourage hamlet-scaled residential development and preserve the historic buildings in the hamlet by aligning Smith and Stahley Streets. Although other configurations were examined during the planning process, the future connection shown here was deemed more desirable because it would preserve existing, historical structures that contribute to the hamlet's character and appeal would be preserved. However, future alterations to the proposed road location may be needed to accommodate flood detention ponds identified between Smith and Dodge Roads in Amherst's Ransom Creek Flood Mitigation Study.

New development in this area should utilize back access roads or side roads. Direct access to Transit Road should be closely monitored to avoid the formation of four-way intersections.