

BETHEL
BETTER BLOCK

AARP Real Possibilities in
Vermont

01. Introduction

Better Block is a process for communities to dream, test and build momentum for active places. The AARP Vermont Chapter selected the town of Bethel to demonstrate how Better Block can foster livable places for all. Bethel has many active cultural and civic groups doing great things. Bethel Revitalization Initiative and Bethel University in particular are leading a resurgence of community focused activities in and around downtown Bethel. The Better Block will add new tools to these existing efforts with a team of internationally recognized designers in the field of public space and street design.

The first weekend of October will see a transformation of the downtown into a more walkable area with pop-up shops that highlight the unique culture and assets of Bethel, public spaces that show off the natural beauty of the area, public art and improved transportation options for biking and transit use. This concept plan provides guidance, but the success of the project lies in the hands of the community.



02. Methodology

The Community Walk & Talk was held on June 29, 2016. Attended by over eighty people, this event demonstrated the appetite for further revitalization of downtown.

Team Better Block used the input provided by residents and to generate a number of recommendations for installations in the downtown that would further the goals of the community.

These recommendations were refined after meeting with property owners and are in line with national best practices. Better Block Bethel is anticipated to contribute to these best practices through innovation in the field.

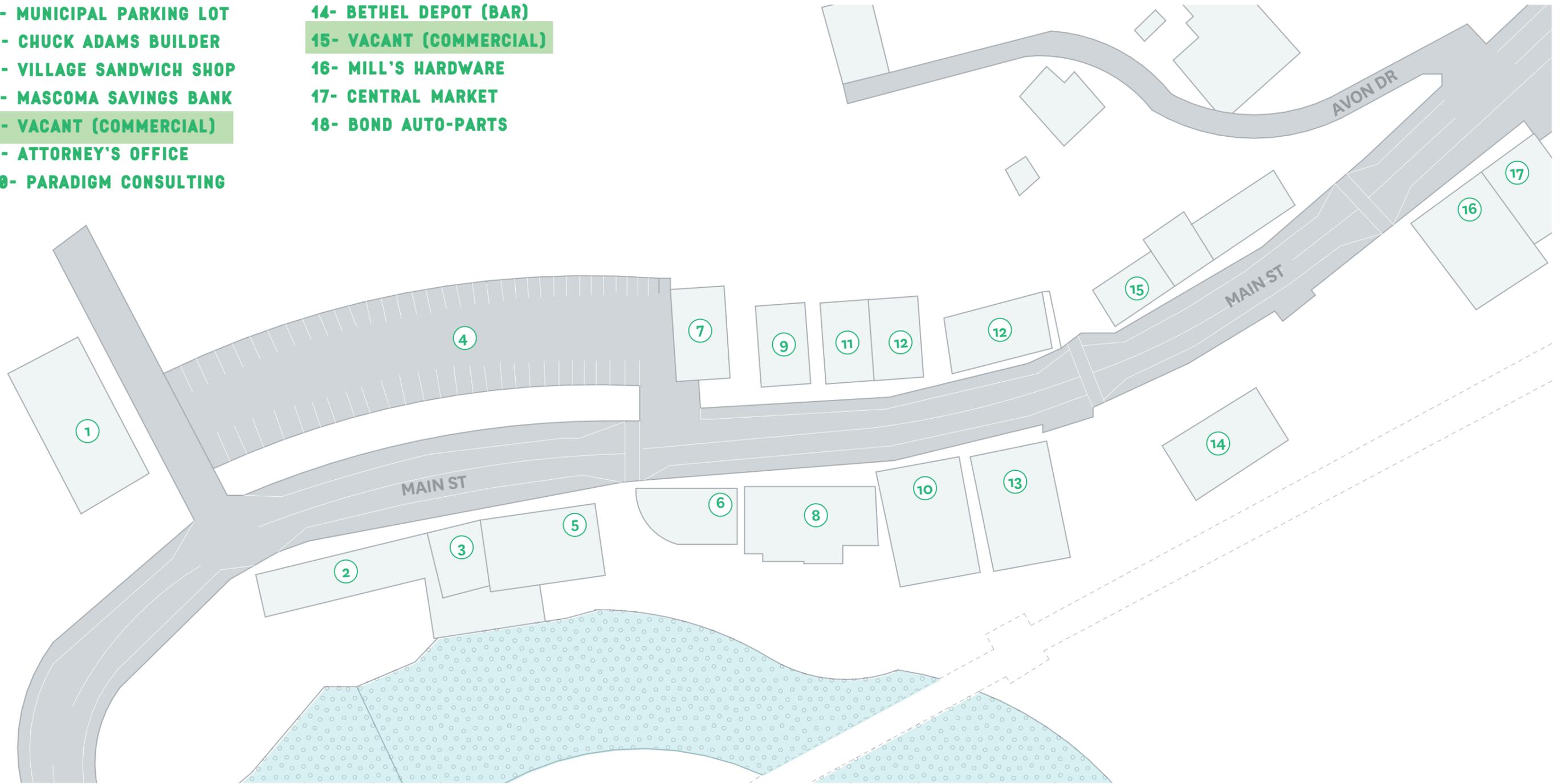
The following page describes the recommendations on a map and then each element is broke down into a set of recipes for creating them with community know-how.



03. Study Area

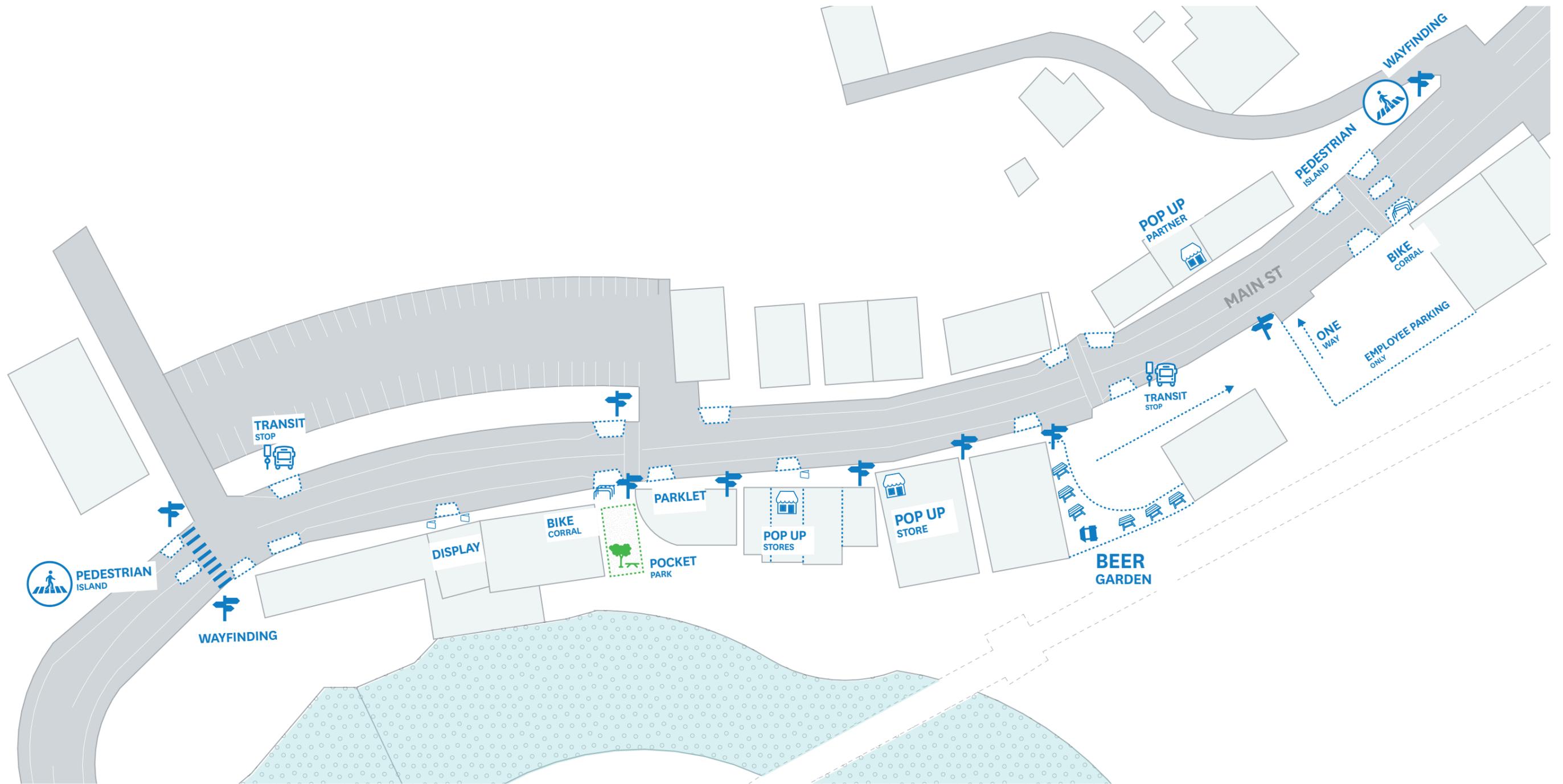
- 1- BETHEL TOWN HALL
- 2- BETHEL MILLS HYDROPLANT
- 3- LUKANA'S DREAM
- 4- MUNICIPAL PARKING LOT
- 5- CHUCK ADAMS BUILDER
- 6- VILLAGE SANDWICH SHOP
- 7- MASCOMA SAVINGS BANK
- 8- VACANT (COMMERCIAL)
- 9- ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
- 10- PARADIGM CONSULTING

- 11- LADY BUG SALON
- 12- MILL'S LAUNDROMAT
- 13- COCKADOODLE PIZZA
- 14- BETHEL DEPOT (BAR)
- 15- VACANT (COMMERCIAL)
- 16- MILL'S HARDWARE
- 17- CENTRAL MARKET
- 18- BOND AUTO-PARTS



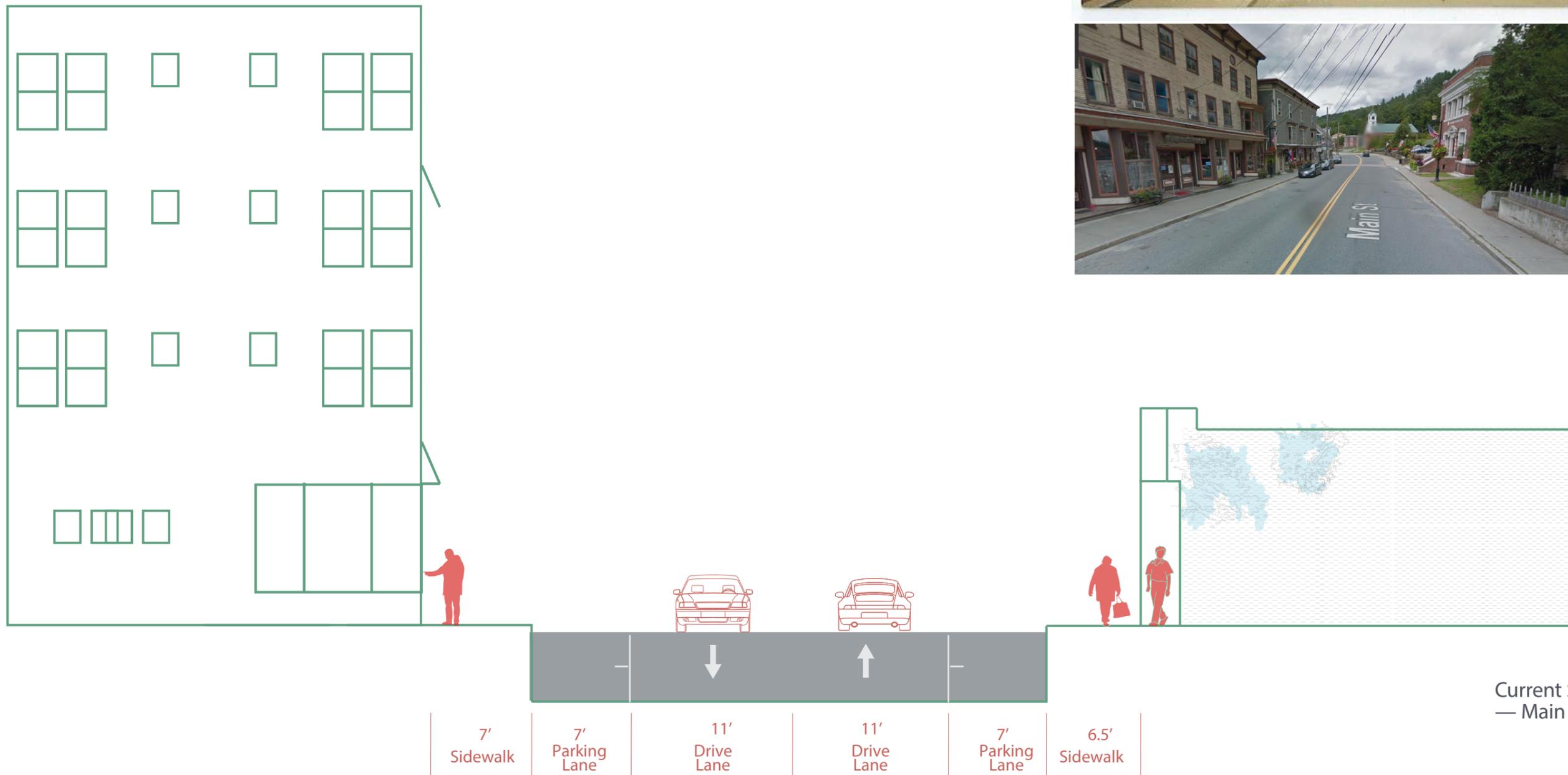
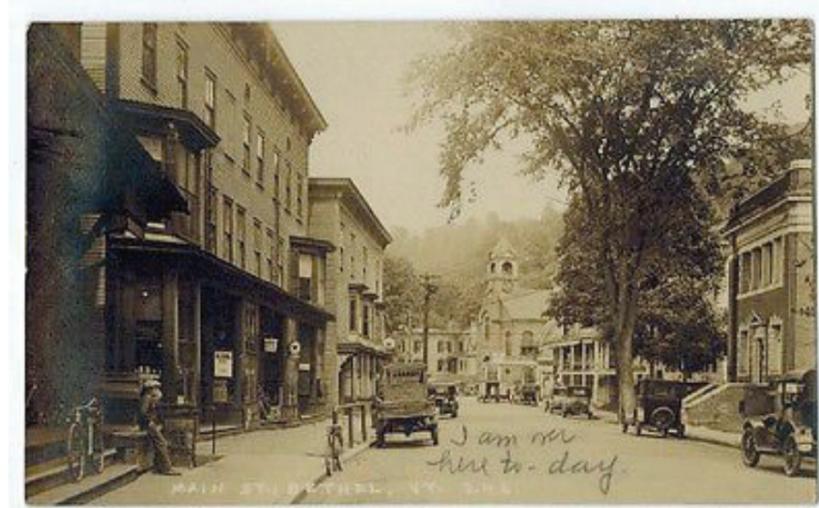
04. Better Block Concept

Working with key property owners, advocates, designers and residents the Team developed ideas to add art, landscaping, storefront facade improvements, and programming to the area. The concept plan below highlights areas for temporary interventions using materials that can be borrowed, built and bought for a weekend to reveal the true potential of the district. Actual placement of items should be verified in the field and use the human scale for guidance.



05. Street Prototypes

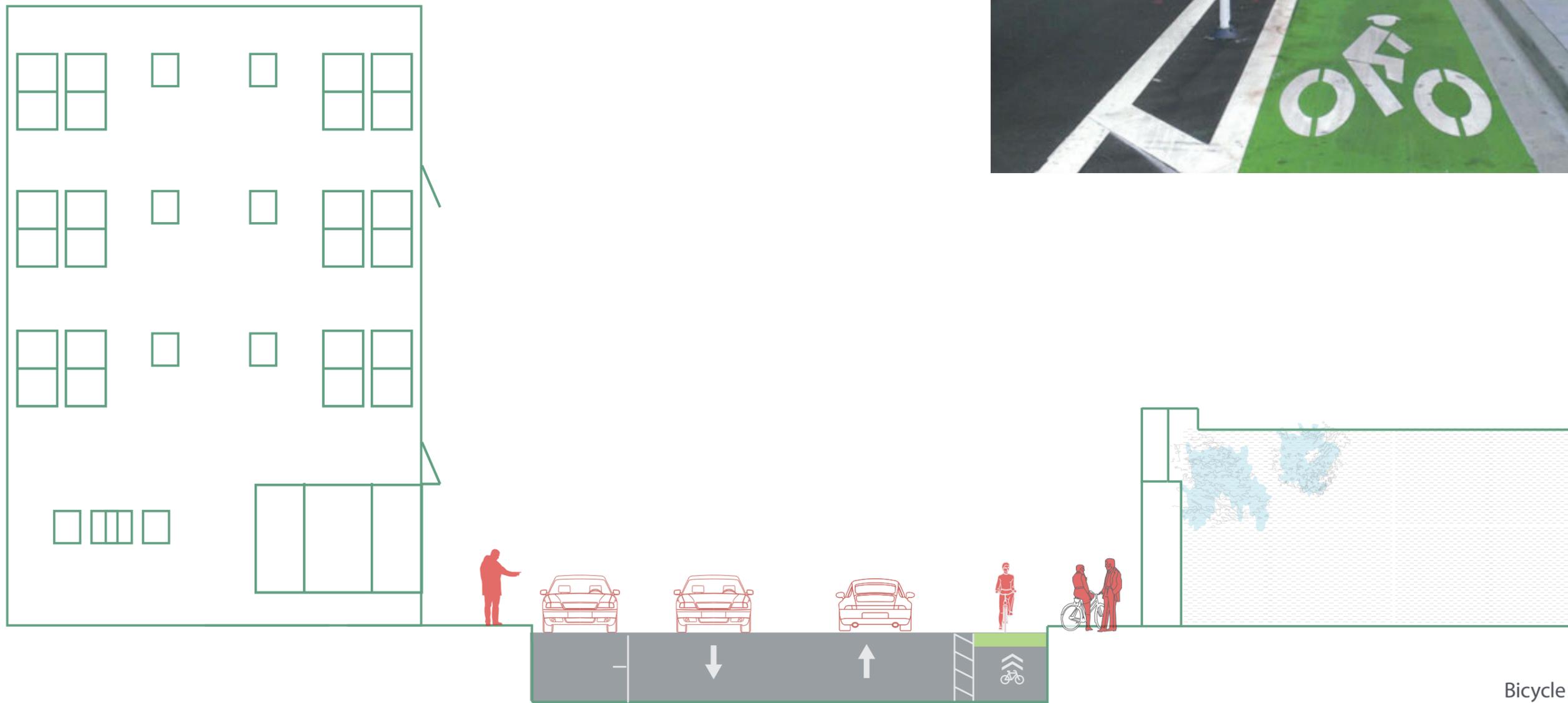
Bethel Main Street has been improved over the years and is in great shape. Now how could it further embrace a community that wants to use the streets for bikes, walking, transit and cars?



Current Section — Main Street

05. Street Prototypes

Adding a bicycle lane on the climbing side of the street (uphill) is one way to make the street more friendly and reduce vehicle speeds. Parking on the eastside will need to be removed.



Bicycle Lane Section — Main Street

7'	7'	11'	11'	2'	5'	6.5'
Sidewalk	Parking Lane	Drive Lane	Drive Lane		Bike Lane	Sidewalk

05. Street Prototypes

By only removing a few parking spaces, more room can be made for people in parklets, improve ADA access and provide safe loading and unloading locations for transit.

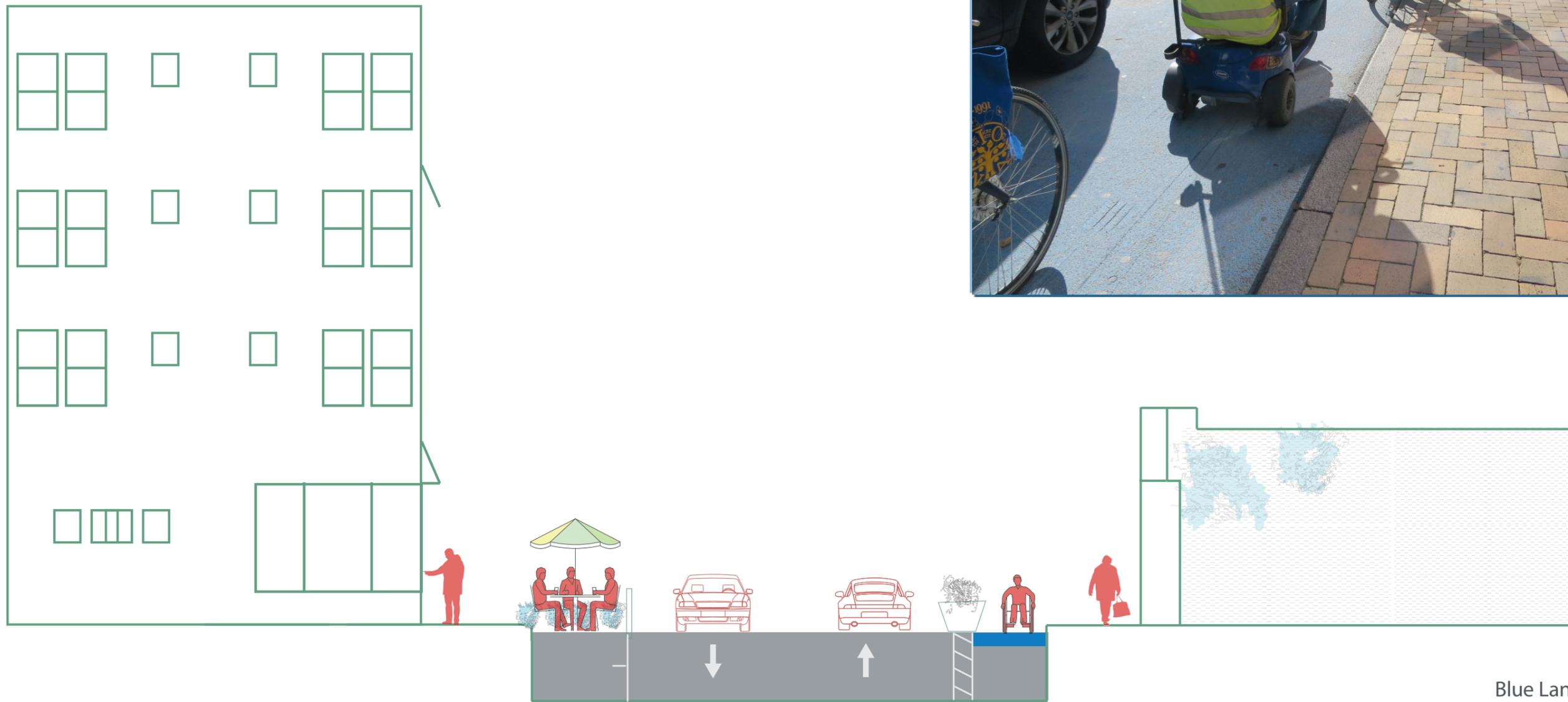


7'	7'	11'	11'	7'	6.5'
Sidewalk	Parking Lane	Drive Lane	Drive Lane	Sidewalk	Sidewalk

Walkable Street Section — Main Street

05. Street Prototypes

With an aging population, how do you build a street for an aging population? Blue lanes are mixed traffic lanes between bicycles, strollers, wheelchairs, battery powered scooters and people walking. Parking on eastside will need to be removed.



7'	7'	11'	11'	2'	5'	6.5'
Sidewalk	Parking Lane	Drive Lane	Drive Lane		Blue Lane	Sidewalk

Blue Lane Street Section — Main Street

GREEN BIKE LANE RECIPE

1 MEASUREMENT OBSERVATION

- Obtain Row widths
- Review traffic accident history
- Assess existing bike facilities

2 DESIGN

- Street mix cross-section
- Sketchup model
- Traffic control plan

3 IMPLEMENT

- Traffic Control: Rental
- Materials

MATERIALS

per 180'

- (3) Tempra Paint: \$10 /unit
- (1) White Spray Paint: \$5/can
- (4) Tape: \$15 / Roll
- (1) Stencil



Tape

ProTapes Pro Duct 110 PE-Coated Cloth General Purpose Duct Tape,

60 yds Length x 4" Width

White



Tempra Paint

Sargent Art 22-7166 1-Pound Art Time Powder Tempra, Green.

1 unit produces 1 gallon.

1 gallon Covers approximately 300sf applied through sprayer.

4 INSTALL

- Total Price for 180' (5' painted bike lane including striping & 2' buffer) : **\$95**, labor and traffic control not included

CLEAN SURFACE	2 people	Use push brooms, collect & dispose of debris
MEASURE & GUIDE MARKS	3 people	Use marking spray, measuring tape & pull string. Measure dimensions off the existing road center line
SPRAY PAINT	3 people	Apply spray with a brisk walk, Person 1 pushes machine, Person 2 guides path, Person 3 tapers edges with cardboard
APPLY TAPE STRIPING	At least 2 people	Person 1 holds end on ground, Person 2 walks ~ 6' in advance ensuring tape is pulled straight. Person 1 walks along tape securing it to the road
BIKE STENCIL	2 people	Person 1 holds stencil in place. Person 2 sprays white paint using hand sprayer or spray cans



PARKLET RECIPE

1 SOURCE MATERIALS



-Pallets (6 pallets per stage, 13 per parklet) - Potential pallet sources include local grocery stores, Home Depot & Lowes check with store managers in advance. Blue painted pallets are off limits. Pallets can also be purchased directly from pallet renters but it may cost up to \$8 a pallet. Renters can supply delivery otherwise, plan on renting a truck to transport pallets to the site. Ideally, use pallets of all the same size 48"x48" are common.

- 1.5" Deck Screws
- (3) 4x8 sheets of OSB Plywood
- Paint - Discounted paint can be obtained from paint shops by requesting 'mis-tints'
- Sandpaper pads
- Hammer
- 1" Medium weight deck nails
- Measuring tape
- Paint Brushes & Rollers (4" preferred)
- Drop Cloth
- Painter's Paper
- Cordless Drill
- Circular Saw
- Safety glasses
- Work Gloves

2 BUILD

-Approximate price (if pallets are not purchased) per parklet **\$50**, Take down- pallets can be returned to original source or picked up by pallet salvage company.

FOUNDATION	4 people	For parklets, place two rows of three pallets parallel and flush to the curb. Set plywood on top of pallets. No cutting plywood or pallets should be needed. Secure plywood to pallet with deck screws.
SIDES & CANOPY	4 people	For parklets secure pallets vertically along edge of foundation to create a boundary fence. Leave sidewalk side open. For more embellished parklets, create a canopy using 2x4s as posts. Use landscaping fabric or burlap to create shade. Use heavy duty stapler and 1 x1 trim boards to create support structure for shade.
PAINT	4 people	Paint exterior side of fencing



BULBOUT RECIPE



1 OBSERVE / MEASURE

- Look for areas of street that are unused
- 20 feet on either side of driveways or intersections
- Leave clear space for crosswalk
- Use chalk to mark areas that could become a bulb-out and measure the material you will need

2 SOURCE MATERIALS

- To create a curb use straw wattles, these can be rented at a construction supply store and often delivered
- Black or green landscape weed barrier to cover - concrete
- Keep plantings low, nothing more than a few inches above the knee to keep sight lines open

3 IMPLEMENT

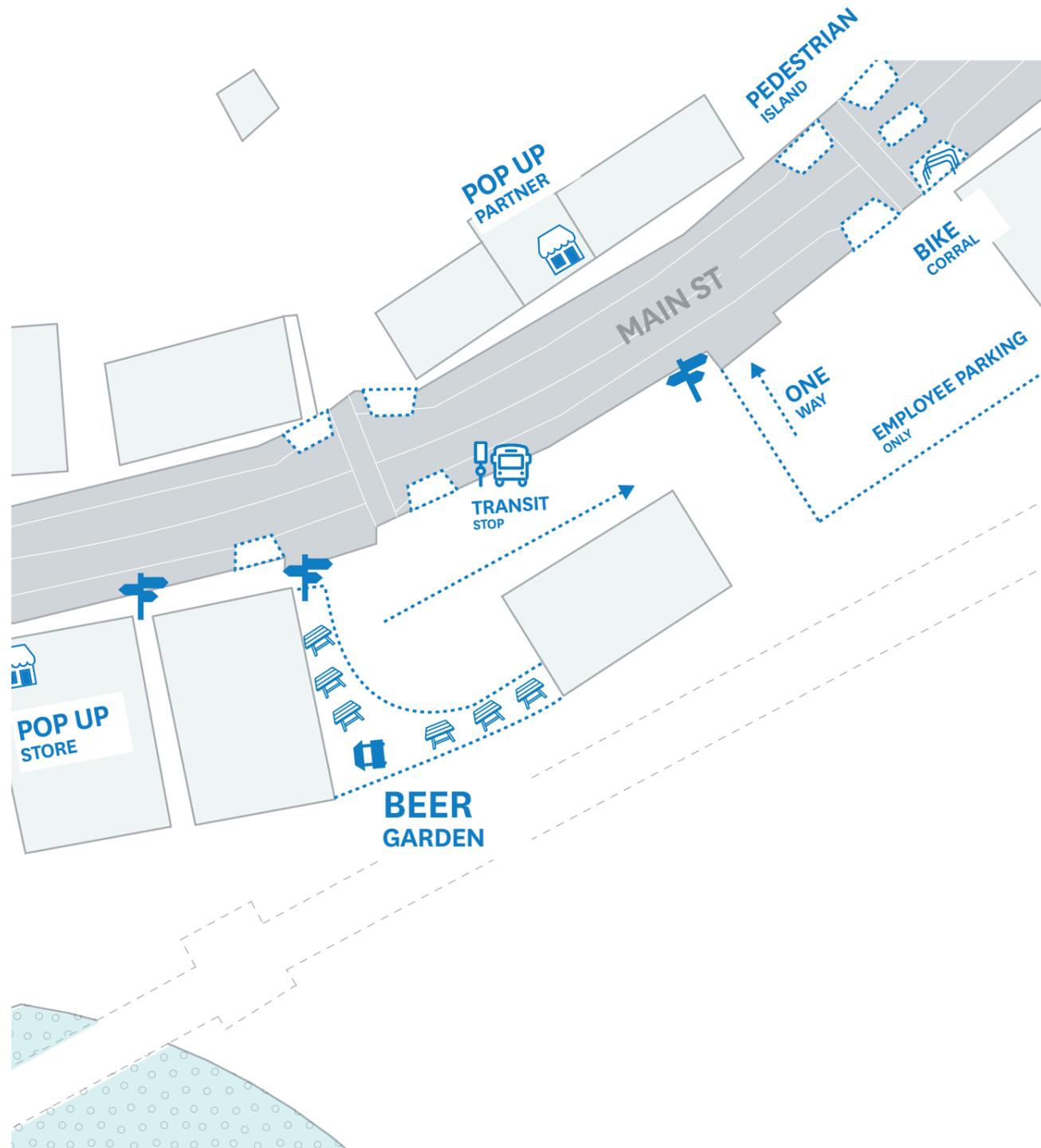
- Use traffic cones to create a work zone
- Wear safety vests
- Have a person dedicated to flagging and watching traffic

PLACE STRAW WATTLES	2 people	Create an arch from crosswalk to curb line
PLACE WEED BARRIER	2 people	Place under wattles to keep down
PLANTS	2 people	Plants can be borrowed from landscape supply, but will need to be watered if left out over a few hours



06. Public Spaces

Downtown is lacking public spaces for the community to gather and celebrate. Create a public plaza next to the Depot that triangulates food/beverage, with games/activities and comfortable places to sit.



07 Pop-Up Music Venue

Build upon the strengths of Bethel in supporting local music through the Forward Festival by integrating musical “moments” throughout the streetscape. What is missing now is the small things. An intimate listening room with music will complement the festival, test evening programming and provide a space that cannot be found elsewhere.



08. Pop-Up Art Studio

Give kids something to do by creating a place for them to learn and play. The kids art studio can host workshops and sell art supplies. If during Better Block, there is proof of demand and impact, this could be a permanent home for Bethel University or the start to an after school program



POP-UP RECIPE



1 SOURCE MATERIALS

-Approximate cost is **\$150**, The items that are listed below will be provided by Better Block Organizers

- Generator when space does not have electricity
- Fire extinguisher
- Exit signs
- Fire evacuations sign
- Occupancy limit sign
- Assistance with permitting process

2 IMPLEMENT

- Identify potential business concepts and willing individuals as part of the initial Better Block survey.
- Identify potential vacant spaces and willing property owners.
- Assess spaces and identify potential needs.
- Assign spaces to operators.
- Coordinate safety inspections with local authorities.
- Coordinate access to space for shop operators at least two weeks prior to event to begin to prepare the space.
- Assist operators with necessary permits.

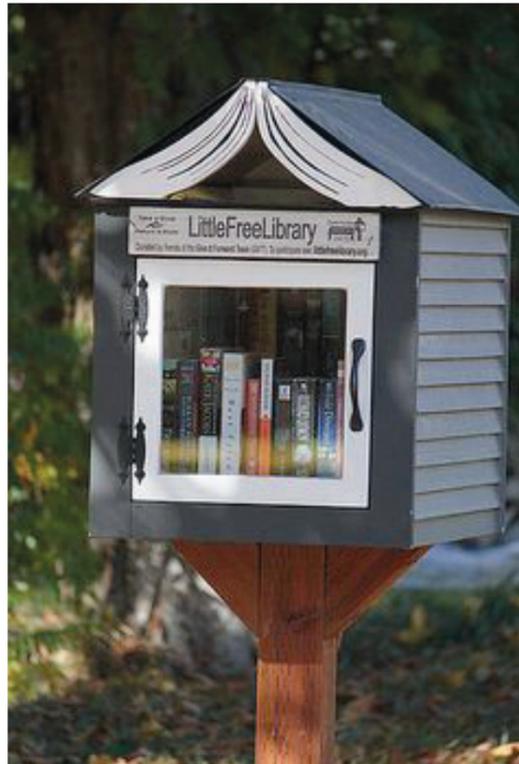
09. Swap Market

Maybe a downtown grocery is not possible today, but to build a market for such start with a food swap. Use a cooler to drop off garden fresh vegetables and canning.



10. City Texture

Don't forget about the little things like murals, alley names and arches and little free libraries. These little touches make walking in downtown interesting even to the old time resident that thought they had seen it all!



11. Programming

Test evening programming on Friday September 30th. Saturday October 1st should be coordinated with the festival and could even occur after hours. It is most effective to schedule around dining times and provide a variety of programming for different ages and interests.

TEAM BETTER BLOCK

EVENT SCHEDULE

Saturday - May 16, 2015

TIME	MAIN STAGE	SIDEWALK STAGE
10:00 AM	Blaine Klein & Patrick Altmire (Steel Drum Duo-Calypso Style)	Chris Miller (Hillbilly Savant)
11:00 AM	Blaine Klein & Patrick Altmire	Raine (Indie Folk Rock)
11:45 AM	Mon Cultural Dances	Raine (Indie Folk Rock)
12:00 PM	Future Stars Productions (Nepali Dances)	JJames (Indie Rock with Folk & Classic Rock Vibes)
1:00 PM	Mon Cultural Dances	JJames (Indie Rock with Folk & Classic Rock Vibes)
1:15 PM	Invictus (K-Pop Style Dance)	JJames (Indie Rock with Folk & Classic Rock Vibes)
1:30 PM	Hmong Dances	JJames (Indie Rock with Folk & Classic Rock Vibes)
2:00 PM	Karen Traditional Dance	Bad News Benny and the Night Fevers
2:30 PM	Shuvani Dance Company (Belly Dance Fusion)	Bad News Benny and the Night Fevers

Friday - May 15, 2015

TIME	MAIN STAGE	SIDEWALK STAGE
6:00 PM	Josephine Marie (Ukulele)	Wandering Aesthetics (Scared Silly: Not Too Spooky Stories from Appalachia)
7:00 PM	Future Stars Productions (Nepali Dances)	Matt Dunigan (Acoustic Rock)
8:00 PM	Gods Creation (Praise Dance)	Weeping Barista (Acoustic Alternative Folk)
8:30 PM	Gods Creation (Praise Dance & Flag Routine)	Weeping Barista (Acoustic Alternative Folk)
9:00 PM	Gods Creation (Praise Dance & Flag Routine)	Michael Clark (Variety Performer)
9:15 PM	Nepali Freestyle Dance	Michael Clark (Variety Performer)
9:30 PM	Something Completely Different (Classic Rock & Jazz with Sax/Flute)	Josephine Marie (Ukulele)

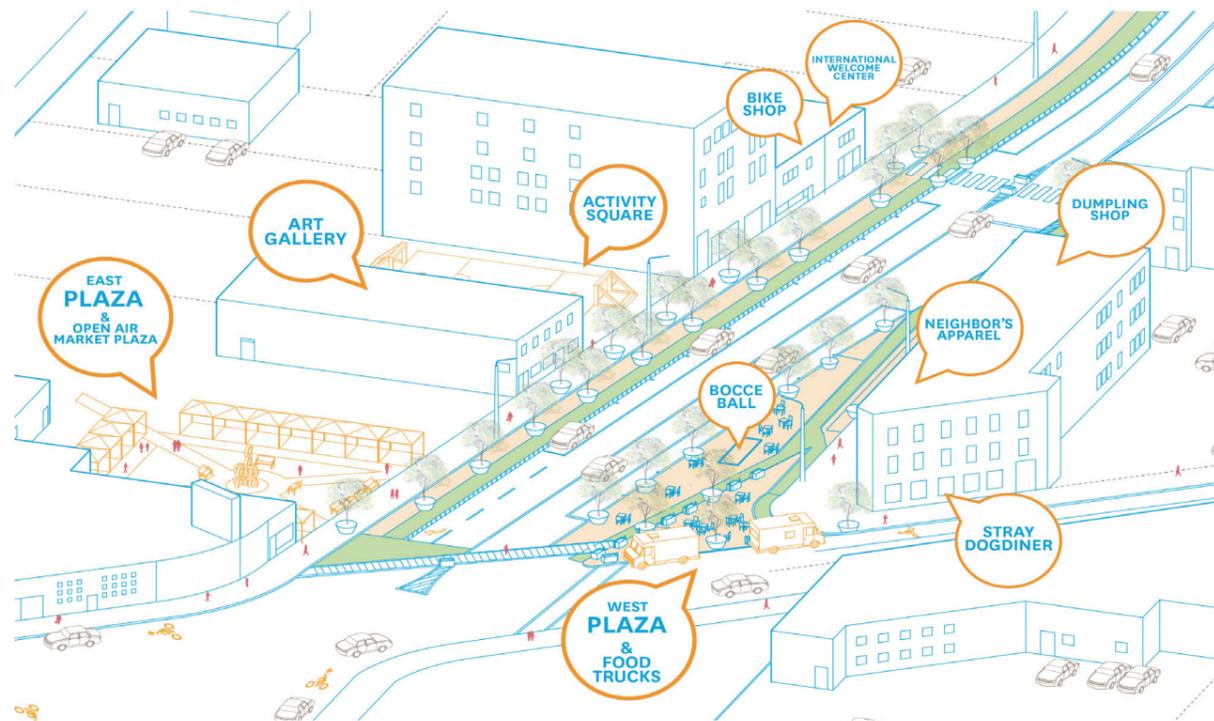
Sunday - May 17, 2015

TIME	STREET STAGE
	T-Gam (Spoken Word/Rap)
	Kirat Society of Ohio (Kirat Cultural Dances)
	Verb Ballets (Wiggle Words)
	Future Stars Productions (Nepali Dances)
	UDS Steel Angels Steel Drum Band
	Mexican & Ecuadorian Dances
	Gods Creation (Praise Dance)
	Akron Balan Group (Nepali Cultural Dance)

12. Wayfinding

Wayfinding is signage that informs pedestrians and bicyclists of amenities within the Better Block area. This signage can be painted on the sidewalks, installed on utility poles, or incorporated into murals on the side of buildings. Use evocative, specific language to catch people’s attention, such as “Maple ice cream, 2 minute walk.” Use pictorial signage to transcend language barriers in multicultural communities.

At highly trafficked areas close to the Better Block, such as at light rail stations and/or bus stops, consider building an information kiosk to house maps of the area, serve as a meeting point for volunteers, and act as a visual connector to various elements of your Better Block.



13. Next Steps

#1 EVENT MARKETING AUGUST 1ST – SEPTEMBER 30TH

Create a Poster, Facebook event, Web Page to generate social media buzz.

#2 HOLD TEAM MEETINGS AUGUST 12TH TO SEPTEMBER 30TH

Review concept plan and define Team Leads for Pop-up Shops, Street Team, Arts, Culture and Activities, Public Spaces and Small Town. Do not over meet! At each meeting set a few deliverables to get done prior to the next meeting.

#3 MATERIAL LISTS SEPTEMBER 1ST TO SEPTEMBER 30TH

Using the recipes, begin to stockpile materials needed. Borrow, build and buy preferably in that order. Put the needs out to the community and make it easy for them to drop off materials. Make sure any materials that need to be purchased can be found locally or are ordered in time for delivery.

#4 BUILDSHOPS SEPTEMBER 1ST TO OCTOBER 1ST.

Open the registration for the buildshops using a web site and connect groups with slack group and encourage them to meet on their own to review the design plans and material lists. Encourage them to prototype some of the elements to get familiar with the design projects.

#5 PROGRAM NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 15TH

Release a schedule of events that highlights the talent of the community. Center the event times on eating times and keep the segments to four hours or less.

