

For zoning codes refer to Appendix C.

Main Street/ Kenmore Avenue /Bailey Avenue Commercial Corridor

(From Niagara Falls Boulevard to Bailey Avenue & Main Street to Brant Street)

Kenmore Avenue is an east-west arterial extending from Main Street at the University Plaza area to the Town of Tonawanda, Village of Kenmore and north Buffalo to the west. Main Street (NY 5) extends through the heart of the City of Buffalo and passes through Eggertsville enroute to Williamsville and beyond. Bailey Avenue is a major north-south arterial connecting the City of Buffalo and Eggertsville. These streets form the southern boundary of the study area (*See Key Map at left*).

The Main/Kenmore/Bailey Corridor is unique in that for many years the corridor's commercial establishments served the University of Buffalo's student population as well as the adjacent neighborhoods. In recent years, the University of Buffalo's transition of undergraduate programs and student housing to the North Campus, changing demographics in the University Heights community, and new area power centers are reshaping the corridor's position in the market. This is evidenced by Benderson Development's on-going renovation of the University Plaza.

Findings

- ❖ Kenmore Avenue and Main Street from Niagara Falls Boulevard to Bailey Avenue are zoned for Office Building (OB) and General Business (GB) uses. These classifications are inappropriate, with the exception of University Plaza, in that they allow for big box type developments completely out of scale and context with the surrounding neighborhood. Bailey Avenue is zoned General Business (GB) on the west side and Residential District-3 (R-3) on its east side.
- ❖ Land uses on Kenmore Avenue and Main Street include a major supermarket, numerous retail establishments, hotel/motel, restaurants / fast-food establishments, professional offices, and movie theater. Unfortunately, prime locations such as the northwest corner of Bailey Avenue and Main Street, host low density, single land uses. Bailey Avenue between Main Street and Brant Street is primarily residential in contrast to its General Business zoning classification.



- ❖ Confusion and congestion have been used to describe this area. An upcoming NYSDOT roadway reconstruction project of Main Street and major intersections should prove to be very helpful in alleviating both of these concerns.
- ❖ The gateway to Eggertsville, the intersection of Main Street and Bailey Avenue, is weak visually. This is a prime parcel that should define the visual character of the community.
- ❖ Wide streets and awkward triangular intersections make it difficult for safe and easy pedestrian movements. The upcoming road reconstruction project should address pedestrian access issues.
- ❖ This area was one of the first suburban shopping areas in Western New York. However, two decades of decline have given it a very worn-out and dated appearance. New construction over recent months has already improved the image for the better.
- ❖ Very little has been done to address the streetscape character of the corridor over the years. The upcoming Main Street reconstruction project will include a landscape plan that should contribute to improving corridor streetscape aesthetics.

This corridor continues to be a crossroads between Amherst, Buffalo, and Tonawanda. The University of Buffalo's presence, although evolving to a graduate and postgraduate health science research focus, will continue to provide demand for services. In addition the University at Buffalo's "University Community Initiative" has the potential to provide incentives for new investment in neighborhoods surrounding the South Campus. Public right-of-way improvements by the NYSDOT should address streetscape and pedestrian mobility issues.

Given the scale and character of the neighborhoods along this corridor and the accessibility of this site to public transit and major roadways, opportunities for new mixed-use developments should be explored as a short-term action by the Town. Additionally regulatory changes will be required to protect existing residential areas from the impacts of inappropriate large-scale developments.



Main Street/Kenmore Avenue/Bailey Avenue Commercial Corridor Recommendations

Action 1

Town Planning Department prepares rezoning request applying new “Neighborhood Business” classification to Kenmore Avenue from the rear property lines on the east side of Windemere Boulevard to Niagara Falls Boulevard (See General Recommendations section of Action Plan). This will generally retain the existing scale of development.

Cost: Not applicable

Action 2

Town Planning Department prepares rezoning request to change the General Business (GB) classification on Bailey Avenue between the north property line of Burger King and Brant Street to Residential District-4 (R-4). This action maintains a residential character in the area.

Cost: Not Applicable

Action 3

Town Planning and Engineering Departments should continue to be active participants in the NYSDOT Main Street reconstruction project to ensure the final design for the project satisfies Town goals for access, mobility, safety, and aesthetics. This will also require close working relationships with the City of Buffalo and the University of Buffalo. The Town should encourage an emphasis on the Main Street project, generally found only on regional “demonstration” projects. This includes a focus on special materials and amenities, increased landscaping and other aesthetic features.

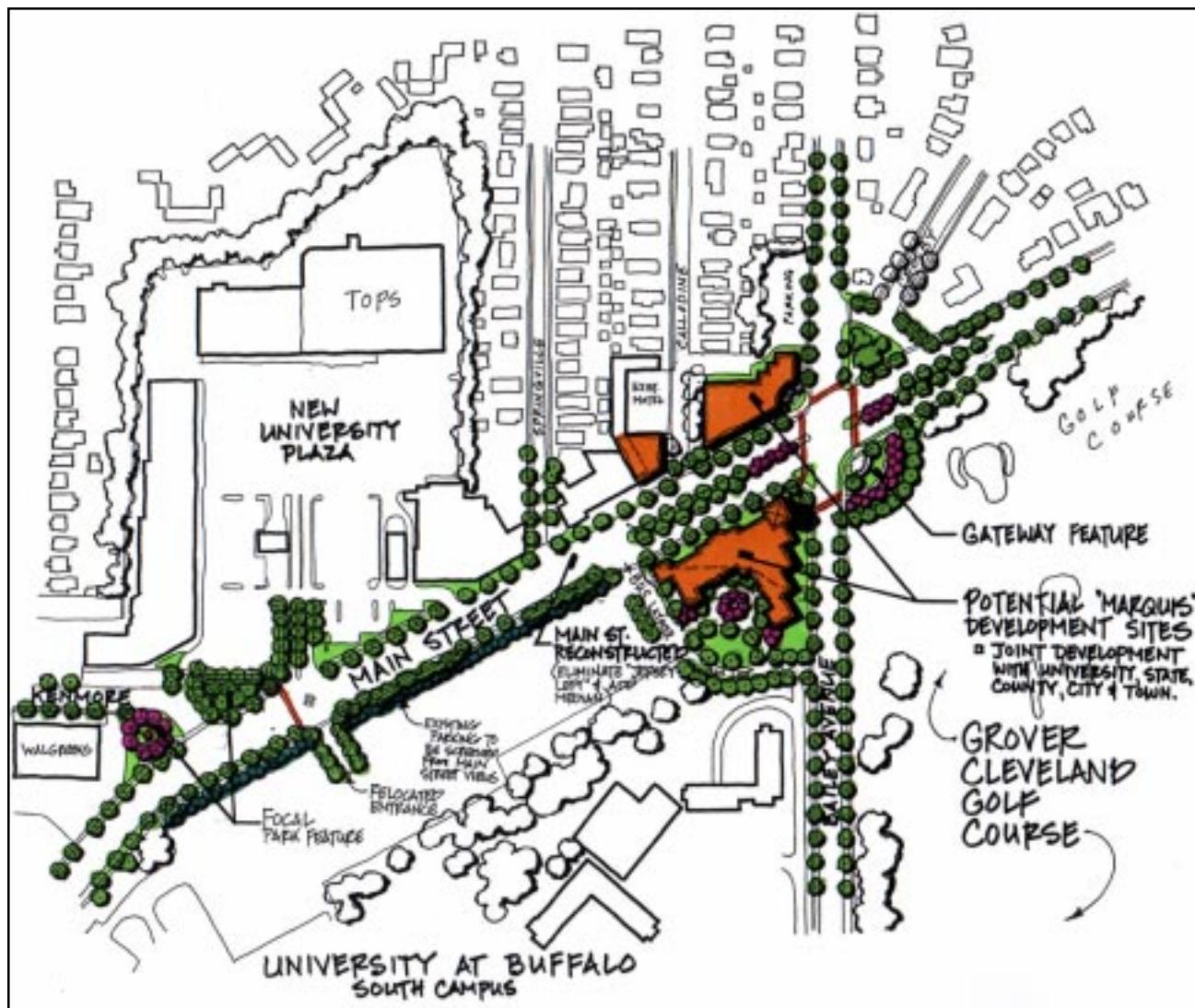
Cost: Not Applicable



Action 4

Amherst Industrial Development Agency, in partnership with the University of Buffalo, should seek to develop a marquee mixed-use project on the northwest corner of Bailey Avenue and Main Street (*See Concept Plan in Figure Below*). The existing Burger King, a successful business, could remain at this location as part of a larger multi-story mixed-use development. This key site would have a much greater impact on the overall image of the area as a mixed-use, multi-story structure.

An appropriate model for this location is Sansom Common, a



Main / Kenmore / Bailey Corridor Concept Plan



mixed-use development in Philadelphia owned by the University of Pennsylvania that was achieved through an RFP process. This recently completed development includes student housing and national and local retailers. A future phase will contain a hotel. The idea and program for Sansom Common were generated internally by the University, which then chose a real estate developer to oversee the construction and tenant recruitment. Though the Town of Amherst cannot be expected to convince the University of Buffalo to pursue a similarly ambitious project on its own, perhaps some sort of partnership or lease arrangement with the University of Buffalo would be more feasible.

The first step in this process is to begin dialogue with the University of Buffalo regarding their potential interest in such a project. A later phase could include southwest corner of Main Street and Bailey Avenue on the University of Buffalo property. This property could be available under the redesign of Main Street. It could be a new “Gateway” structure at the corner of the three municipalities.

Cost: Not applicable at this point - Potential for consultant study to explore specific opportunities and uses.