



## THE INGERSOLL AVENUE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

### CHAPTER 4 ■ THE CONCEPT PLAN FOR INGERSOLL AVENUE

The Concept Plan uses input from the Ingersoll Corridor Planning Committee and other key stakeholders to develop principles to guide an improvement program for Ingersoll Avenue. The Plan is a guide to public and private development policies which can lead to a comprehensive improvement of the corridor. This chapter consists of a series of Development Principles, that will provide a framework for the comprehensive improvement strategy, and a specific Concept Plan, with established improvement concepts for each segment of Ingersoll Avenue.

#### IMPROVEMENT CONCEPTS

The improvement strategy for the Ingersoll Avenue corridor is built on certain key concepts, defined during the planning process. Because development takes place incrementally, these concepts and patterns provide a needed common thread to unify individual decisions.

These key concepts include:

- A Unified, Pedestrian-Friendly Street
- Mixed Uses and “Main Street” Character Areas
- Open Space and Neighborhood Commons
- Attractive, Renewed Streetscape
- Strategic, Well-Located Parking Facilities
- An Outdoor Gallery

- Redevelopment of Vacant and Underutilized Sites
- Rehabilitation and Preservation of Important Buildings
- Regulatory Framework

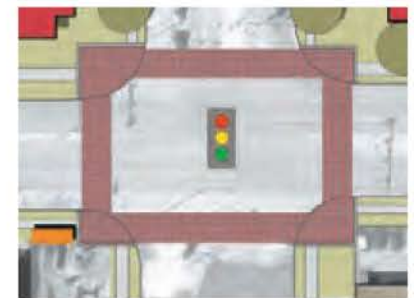
## A UNIFIED, PEDESTRIAN-FRIENDLY STREET

From an urban function perspective, major streets can be viewed along a continuum ranging from forming a barrier to forming a bridge between its adjacent neighborhoods. Along this continuum, Ingersoll Avenue displays many characteristics of acting as a barrier; traffic speeds are often high and pedestrian crossings are infrequent. While both sides of Ingersoll Avenue are lined with important residential and commercial uses, the north and south sides are not well-connected in many areas. Thus, the Plan recommends making the street more pedestrian-friendly and to unify its two sides, including:

- *Adding crosswalks and installing pedestrian-actuated traffic signals* in four areas where traffic speeds are particularly high and pedestrian crossing is difficult—just west of 24<sup>th</sup> Street, just west of 29<sup>th</sup> Street, midway between Crescent Drive and 34<sup>th</sup> Street, and just east of 37<sup>th</sup> Street. Map 6 illustrates these locations.
- *Adding crosswalks* with a differentiated paving surface at key intersections.
- *Providing enhanced landscaping between the curb and sidewalk* along much of the corridor to provide a more attractive environment and a better demarcation between pedestrian and vehicular traffic. The detailed plan should include bus shelter locations and additional street furniture.
- *Adding “bulb-outs”* which narrow intersection throats and reduce pedestrian crossing distance at certain intersections where on-street parking is not necessary. Bulb-outs can increase the amount of open space for pedestrians at important commercial nodes, increase pedestrian safety, and slow traffic through intersections. Ingersoll Avenue’s intersection with 28<sup>th</sup> Street, a key commercial area, presents such an opportunity for bulb-outs.
- *Resolving the street lane configuration issue.* Ingersoll Avenue was recently restriped to accommodate added traffic due to the closing of Grand Avenue. This action added turn lanes at all signalized intersections and an eastbound morning peak bus lane. Most observers believe that Ingersoll handled this temporary increase in traffic well, and that the current striping should be made permanent. The planning process included considerable discussion of alternate lane configurations, most notably striping three lanes, with one traffic lane in each direction, a bike lane in each direction, and a center turn lane. A traffic engineering analysis to test this concept concluded that the three-lane alternative would not adequately handle peak traffic levels. Therefore, the current four-lane configuration should remain in place.
- *Improving bicycle accommodation.* Ingersoll Avenue is the logical bicycle link between the downtown and west side neighborhoods and regional trails and is currently a designated bike route. The City’s Recreational Trails Facilities map indicates a “Planned Bike Lane” on Ingersoll from M.L. King Jr. Parkway to 59<sup>th</sup> Street. Standard 5 foot bike lanes can



*Mid-block crossing with pedestrian-actuated signal*



*Crosswalk with differentiated paving*



*Bulb-out at 28th Street*



only be accommodated on Ingersoll between M.L. King and 42<sup>nd</sup> Street if the street is reconfigured for three-lanes, which cannot handle anticipated traffic levels. This plan recommends that better bicycle accommodation be achieved through a signed “share the lane” designation for the outside traffic lane in each direction.

## MIXED USES AND “MAIN STREET” CHARACTER AREAS

Ingersoll Avenue’s typical land use pattern features higher-density commercial development, focused around key intersections that once were streetcar stops, and residential and lower-density commercial development toward the middle of blocks. Despite its mix of uses, the Ingersoll corridor as a whole does not represent a “Main Street” district with a single period of architecture and buildings that abut the sidewalk. However, the corridor does contain several smaller “Main Street” character areas, such as the 28<sup>th</sup> Street intersection, the area between 36<sup>th</sup> and 38<sup>th</sup> Streets, and, to some degree, 31<sup>st</sup> Street. While these “Main Street” areas, illustrated by Map 6, provide a unique pedestrian identity to the corridor as a whole, most of Ingersoll Avenue includes small-scale buildings set back a short distance from the sidewalk. Unlike typical strip commercial development, these uses rely heavily upon on-street parking. The Concept Plan proposes preservation and enhancement of these development patterns and the street’s unique environment for both business and living. Where more parking is needed, additional on-street angle parking is proposed.

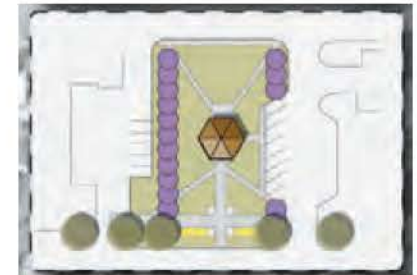
## OPEN SPACE AND NEIGHBORHOOD COMMONS

Ingersoll Avenue presently offers very little public open space. Public space can stimulate pedestrian activity and accommodate special events or outdoor festivals. Potential future neighborhood open space areas are indicated by Map 6 and include:

- The present site of the Citgo gas station on the north side of Ingersoll east of 28<sup>th</sup> Street. This would improve the buffer between the Linden Street residential area and businesses and parking facilities along Ingersoll.
- The present site of the Phillips 66 gas station at 37<sup>th</sup> and Ingersoll. The building on the northwest corner of 37<sup>th</sup> and Ingersoll would be demolished to allow for a realignment of 37<sup>th</sup> Street to the west. The existing gas station building would be retained and the surrounding area utilized as a public open space and outdoor seating area. Because, the Phillips 66 station currently contributes to the quality of the area, this improvement would likely occur upon abandonment of the gas station.

## ATTRACTIVE, RENEWED STREETScape

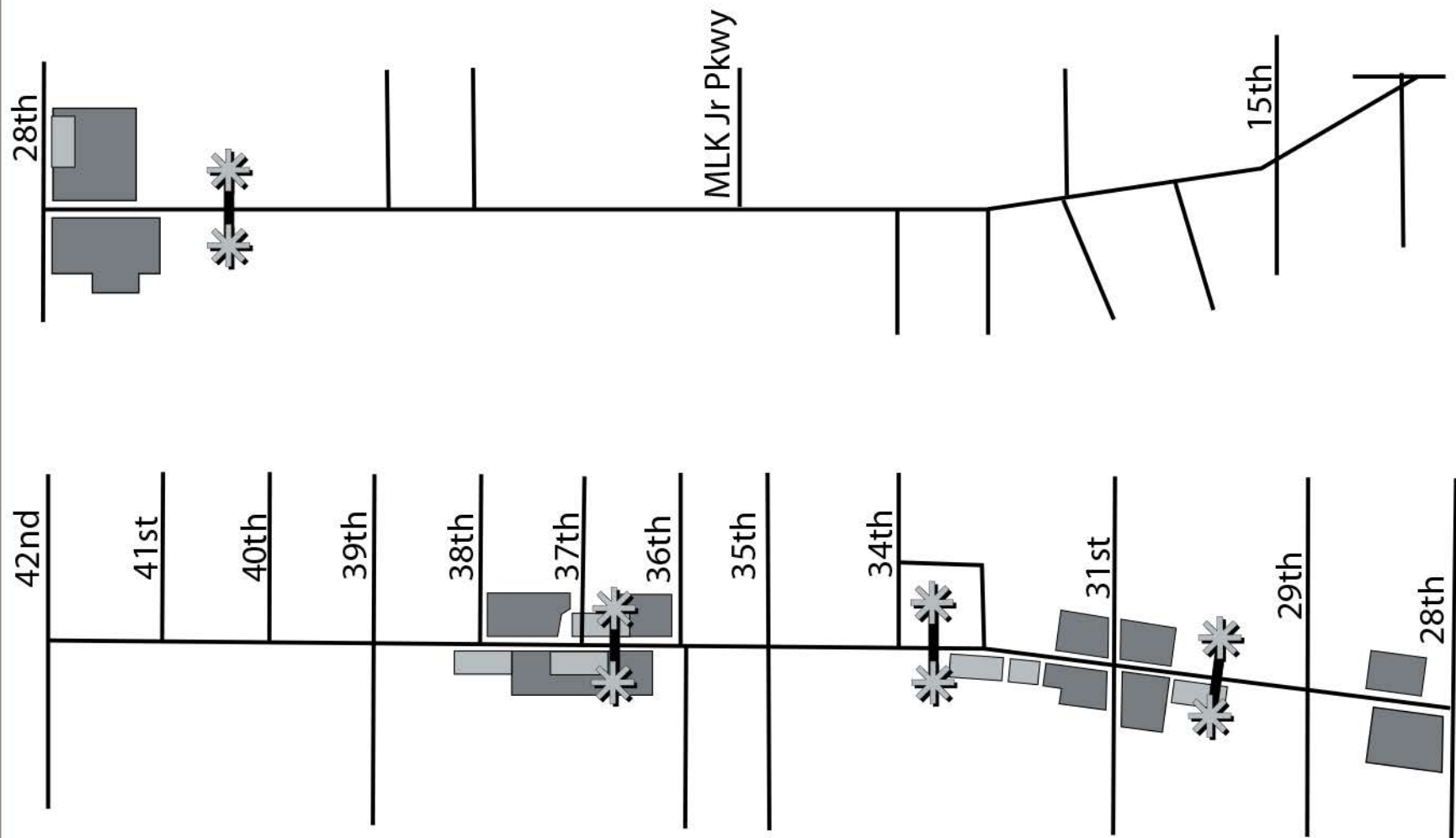
At present, much of the Ingersoll corridor has little landscaping and presents a harsh environment for both pedestrians and motorists. A few areas, such as the area between 35<sup>th</sup> and 37<sup>th</sup> Street, contain a continuous row of trees between the curb and sidewalk and provide a much more pleasant setting. The Concept Plan proposes several enhancements to Ingersoll’s overall streetscape and street landscaping, including:



*Potential neighborhood open space at existing Citgo gas station.*



*Potential neighborhood open space at existing Phillips 66 gas station.*



Map 6:  
 "Main Street" Character Areas,  
 Proposed Angle Parking,  
 and Proposed Pedestrian Crossings

- "Main Street" Character Areas
- Proposed Angle Parking
- ✱ Proposed Pedestrian-Actuated Traffic Signals



- *Overstory trees on the north side and ground planting beds on the south side.* This concept responds to existing patterns created by power distribution lines. Landscape enhancements could eventually connect the green spaces at Meredith's campus at the east end of the Ingersoll corridor to Waterbury Garden at the west end. Map 7 illustrates areas along the north side of Ingersoll Avenue that would benefit from an enhanced tree canopy and sets priorities based on need.
- *Upgraded lighting.* Because the corridor's architecture is eclectic and spans a wide time period, period lighting is not appropriate. Rather, contemporary sharp cut-off fixtures on the north side of the street would be a suitable replacement for the existing cobra-head fixtures on wooden poles. New fixtures should include an additional contemporary pedestrian-scale light, moderated for brightness and designed to direct light to the sidewalk.
- *Consolidated utility poles.* The implementation of a streetscape plan, including replacement of existing street lights on the north side of the street, provides the opportunity to work with utility companies to consolidate locations and remove extraneous poles.

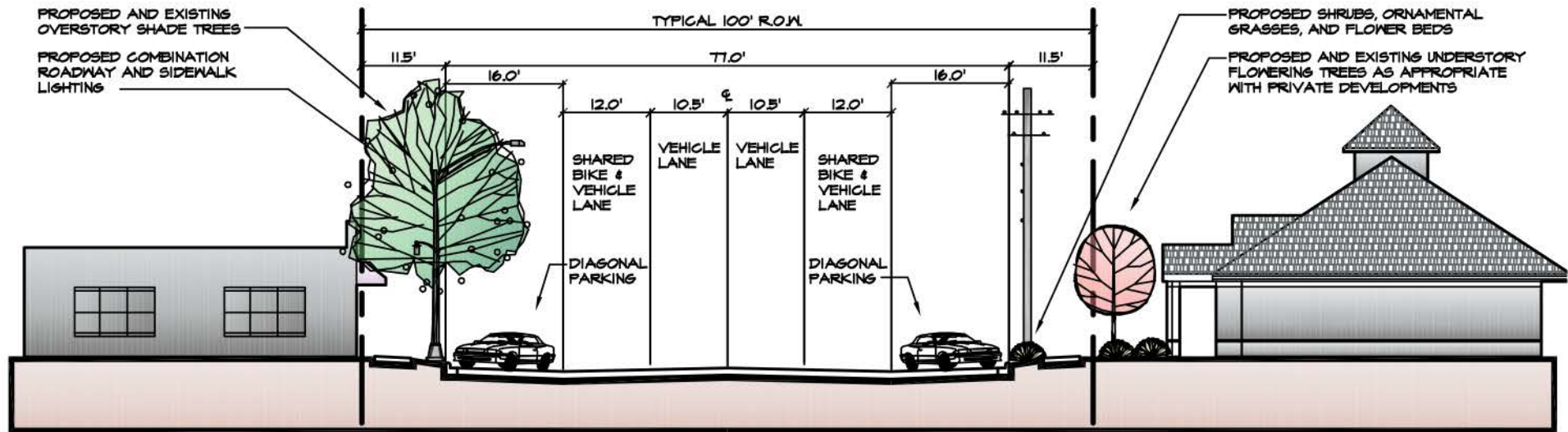
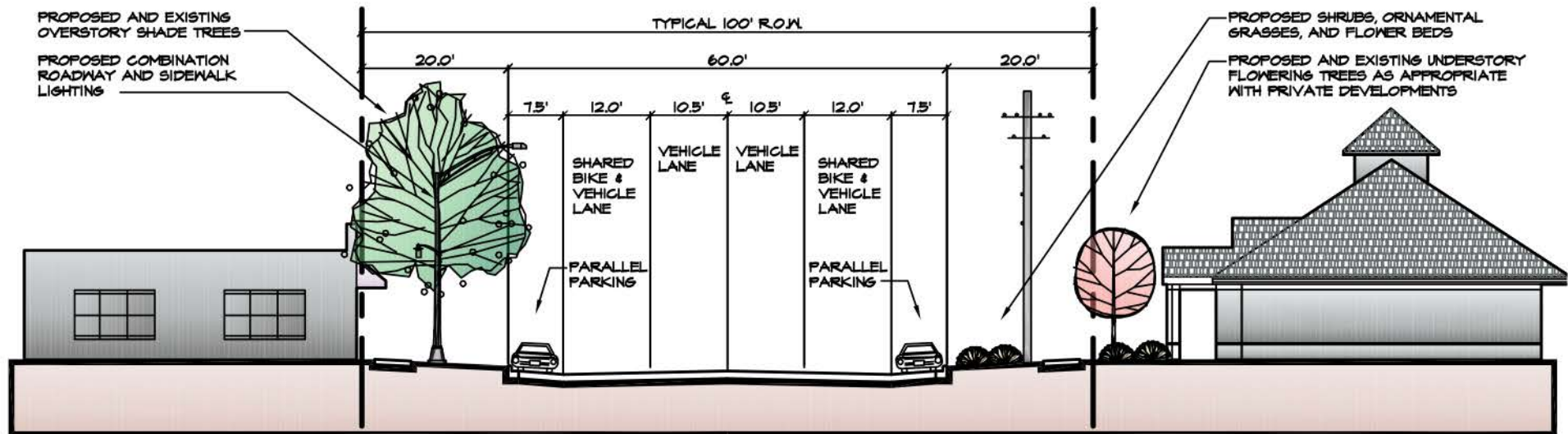
## STRATEGIC, WELL-LOCATED PARKING FACILITIES

While most portions of the Ingersoll Avenue corridor have more parking than the City of Des Moines' zoning ordinance requires, some of its lots are inconvenient and inefficient. Providing better on- and off-street parking facilities in strategic locations and redesigning several existing parking lots will improve Ingersoll Avenue's business environment. Recommendations include:

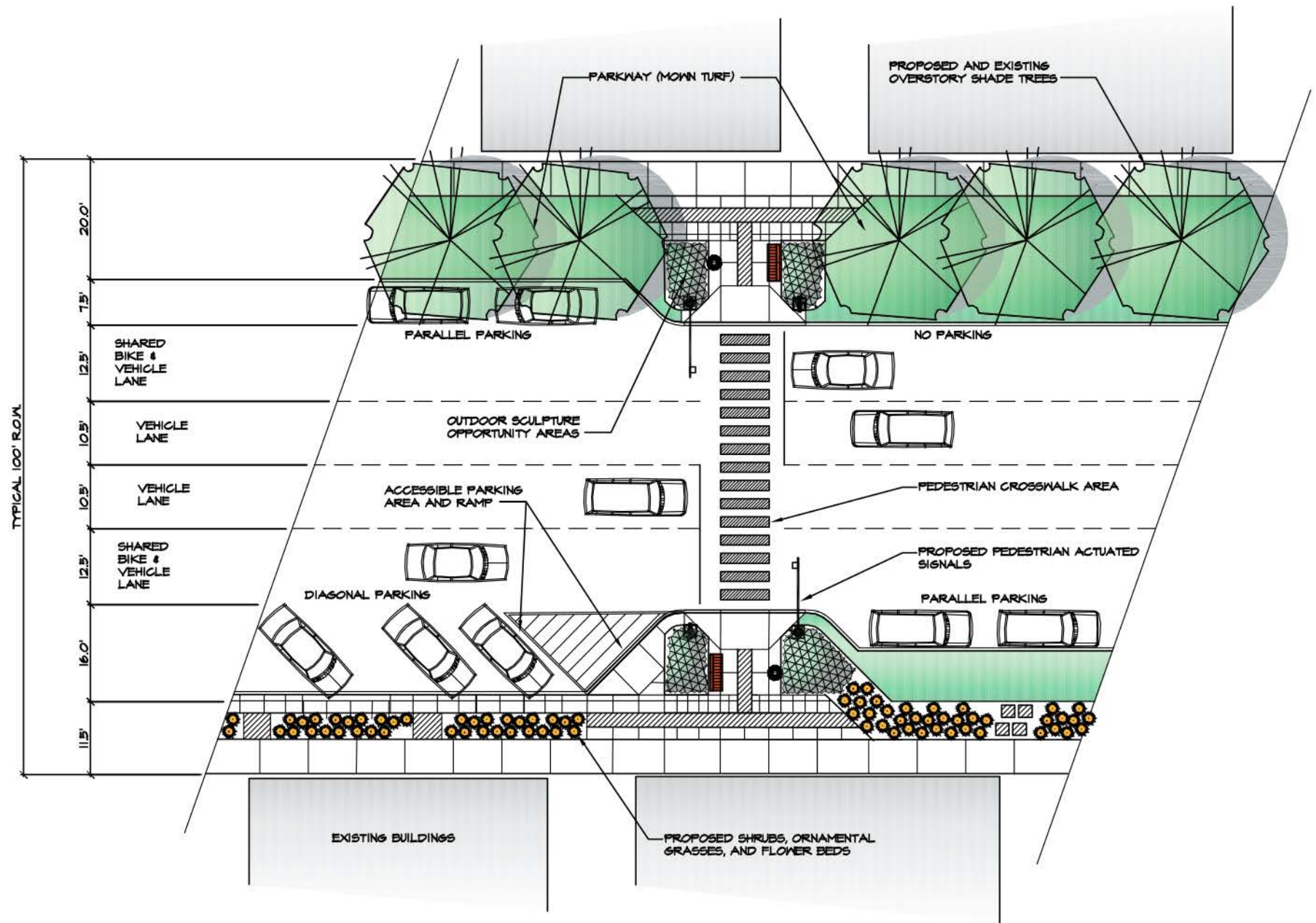
- Improving collaboration among property owners on joint-use of parking facilities and accesses. Specific focuses include businesses on the north side of Ingersoll in the 2800 block, the south side of Ingersoll in the 3100 block, and the area surrounding Bruegger's Bakery and Bauder's Pharmacy on the south side of Ingersoll near 38<sup>th</sup> Street. The Concept Plan proposes improved parking lot layouts.
- Adding on-street angle parking at key need locations. Angle parking can alter the street's traffic flow should be limited to areas where a specific need exists. This includes certain areas of Ingersoll near 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> Streets and near Crescent Drive. These areas, indicated on Map 6 correspond to the "Main Street" character areas identified in earlier in this chapter.

## AN OUTDOOR GALLERY

Ingersoll Avenue is eclectic mix of land uses and architectural styles and is not unified by a common theme. Diversity is very much a part of the corridor's character, but an overall unified theme can distinguish the street. A major area of distinction along Ingersoll has been the clustering of art galleries and related retail stores. This suggests capitalizing on this unique aspect, making the street itself an outdoor gallery. The outdoor gallery concept identifies key locations for sculptures that









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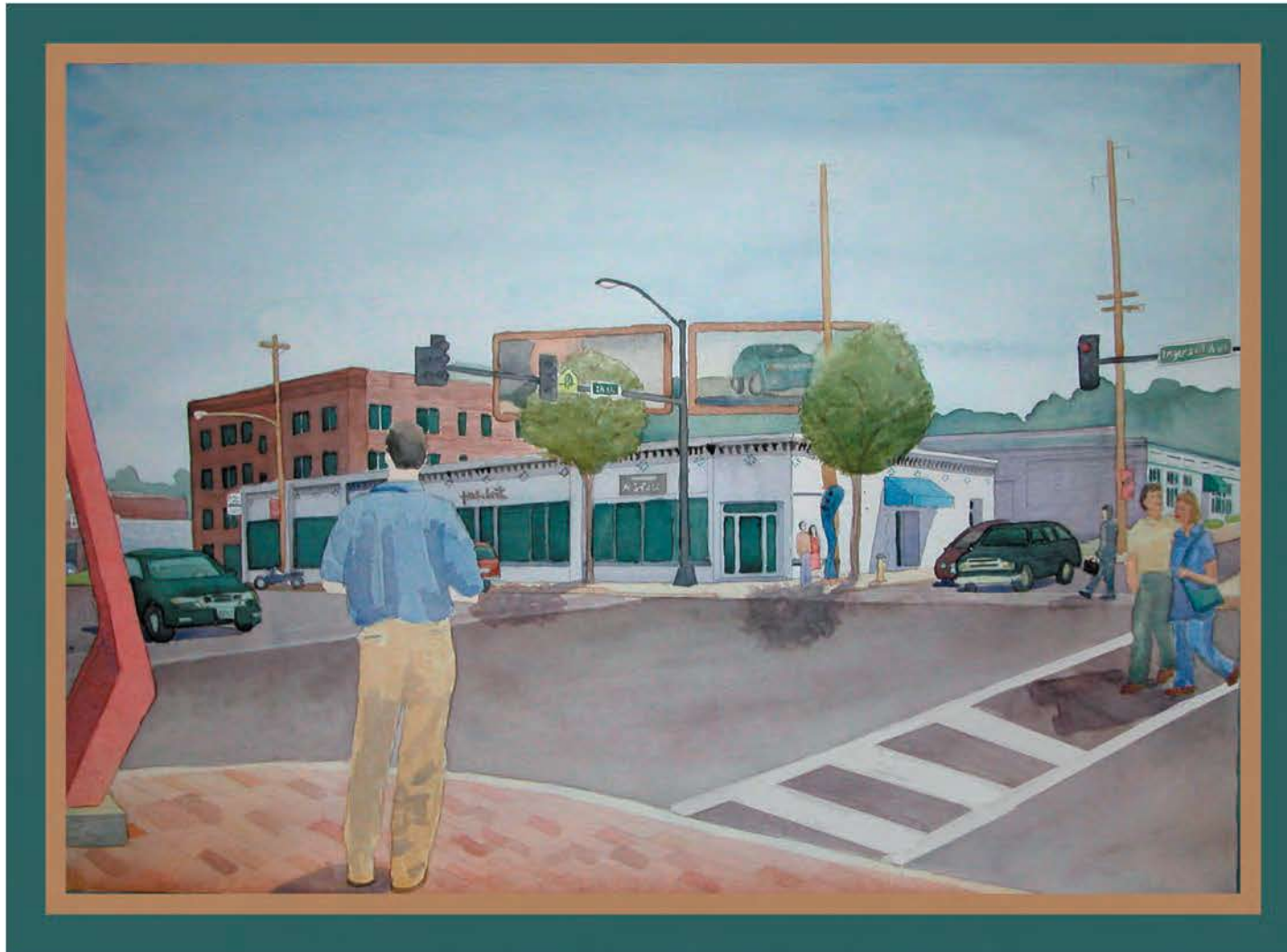
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PLANNING • DESIGN



*Existing condition.*

*Ingersoll Avenue with proposed pedestrian activated crossings, bulb-outs, public art, and overstory trees on the north side.*





*Existing Condition of 28th and Ingersoll.*

*Billboards on the roof of commercial buildings are a distinguished feature and could, themselves, be a giant canvas for environmental paintings.*



### Ingersoll Avenue Improvement Plan

## MAP 7: Existing and Proposed Tree Canopy

- Existing Overstory Trees
- Proposed Overstory Trees and Priority



are either permanent or for sale. This theme could also be incorporated into street signs and bus shelters along the corridor. The Concept Plan indicates the specific locations suitable for public art.

## REDEVELOPMENT OF VACANT AND UNDERUTILIZED SITES

The Concept Plan proposes some redevelopment—the ultimate replacement of vacant sites or obsolete land use patterns with new uses. Areas that require redevelopment are proposed to be developed in ways designed to enhance existing commercial and residential investments. Major redevelopment opportunities addressed in the Plan include:

- Developing the Meadow Gold Dairy site on the south side of Ingersoll Avenue between 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Streets with residential, retail, and office uses.
- Developing residential, retail, and office uses on the Thompson Trust site on the northeast corner of Ingersoll Avenue and M.L. King Jr. Parkway.
- Developing residential, retail, and office uses on the former Stew Hansen auto sales site and the existing Stew Hansen used car lot on the north side of Ingersoll Avenue west of M.L. King Jr. Parkway.
- Constructing a new Dahl's grocery store on the same site as the existing store on the northeast corner of 35<sup>th</sup> Street and Ingersoll Avenue. The new store would lie immediately north of the existing store and include pedestrian connections to Ingersoll.

## REHABILITATION AND PRESERVATION OF IMPORTANT BUILDINGS

Contextual buildings are one of Ingersoll Avenue's most important resources. Thus, their preservation and rehabilitation is a key element of an overall improvement strategy for the corridor. Additional financial incentives may be needed to rehabilitate several older apartment buildings and commercial structures along the corridor. Increased publicity of the City of Des Moines' current incentive of tax abatement on the value of improvements may further stimulate rehabilitation efforts.

## REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

New development along Ingersoll Avenue should follow the street's historical "streetcar strip" development pattern. With higher-density commercial development focused around key intersections and residential and lower-density commercial development toward the middle of blocks. Similar mixed-use former streetcar corridors in Des Moines, include Sixth, University, and East Grand Avenues. Because these corridors provide vital services to surrounding neighborhoods, the City's zoning ordinance includes an NPC Neighborhood Pedestrian Commercial district to preserve the pedestrian-oriented mixed-use character of these streets and encourage the continuation of their neighborhood function. At present, NPC



*Sculpture display.*

zoning is applied to all areas of Ingersoll Avenue west of the 2100 block. Guidelines for development in the NPC district include the following:

- **Building Location:** Buildings should frame the street and maintain minimal setback from the street.
- **Façade Windows:** Building facades should contain at least 40% of the surface as windows on the first floor of the street façade.
- **Location of Entrance:** The entrance should be oriented toward the street.
- **Building Materials:** Brick, stone, tile, stucco, or horizontal clapboard should be used. Two-story buildings are encouraged.
- **Façade Articulation:** Buildings over 50 feet long should be broken into bays.
- **Building Frontage:** At least 50% of the primary building length should front along the street.

While these guidelines strive to recognize the corridor's mixed-use character and minimize visual conflicts generated by new development, they sometimes result in new development that does not fit development patterns along Ingersoll. Thus, guidelines should be customized to reflect the character of Ingersoll and other similar streets, including:

- *Encouraging a front yard setback in certain areas.* Aside from commercial buildings in Ingersoll's "Main Street" character areas discussed earlier, much of the corridor's development has shallow front yards. These areas retain a pedestrian feel because, unlike suburban strip centers, these setbacks are small and not used for parking. In some instances, NPC guidelines have caused the location of new development to be closer to the sidewalk than surrounding development. Thus, encouraging the setback of new development to match that of existing older developments may reduce visual conflicts and result in a more comfortable development pattern.
- *Encouraging side yard setbacks on corner lots.* Similarly, certain new developments on corner lots abut the sidewalk, while surrounding older developments are set back. The Walgreen building's 35<sup>th</sup> Street frontage is an example of a situation where a small building setback would improve the pedestrian environment.
- *Refining permitted uses.* Certain automobile-oriented uses, such as drive-through restaurants, can detract from the neighborhood environment in some areas. The types of uses permitted along the corridor should be revisited in order to better preserve its mixed-use pedestrian-oriented character.

## THE INGERSOLL AVENUE CONCEPT PLAN

This section includes a more fine-grained overview of the specific recommendations regarding a comprehensive improvement strategy for the Ingersoll Avenue corridor. It applies the Development Principles discussed in the previous section to the specific incremental improvements to the corridor's public and private environments. The following illustrations present the Concept Plan's recommendations.