
Section Five: Development Model



Section Five : Development Model : Mega-Block

One of the dilemmas to encouraging development along the South Salina Street Corridor is the prevalence of small parcels which do not allow enough area for economical & contemporary retail without combining several parcels together. While this approach is typical for the modern developer it does not address the Community's goals of trying to encourage localized entrepreneurship and incubator concepts of allowing local residents to start-up businesses in order to better their economic circumstances.

This Design Plan suggests a different approach to development in the Corridor; an approach which has been successful in new urbanist developments around the country. We will focus on just one as a model. This is the successful retail core at Kentlands in Gaithersburg, Maryland. Kentlands, designed by Andres Duany, is a recently-built mixed-use development which not only has traditional style residential neighborhoods but also an urban fabric for a retail center. The development for this retail is formed by large mega buildings which in turn are subdivided into individual tenant spaces on the first floor to accommodate retail, office or food establishments. What is unique about these buildings is that they look like traditional urban facades with changes in architectural styles to match up with the length of storefront on individual tenant exposure. The developer is able to accomplish this economic feat by building one mega-building for the block and then modifies the veneer of it in bays to match the individual stores.

The examples at right show a main street in Kentlands built in 2002 which has the appearance of a 19th century village. The upper floors are mixed use – some office and or apartments on second floor and the third floor is apartments only. The shared emergency exits, shared Mechanical and Electrical systems for the Mega Building allow for an economy of scale that makes this mixed use approach profitable to the developer.

This is the approach the Design Plan recommends without necessarily endorsing this style of architecture for South Salina Street in Syracuse, NY.



Commercial Development at Kentlands in 2002



Mega-Block Development at Kentlands in 2002

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The development model for a Neighborhood Commercial Center is designed to serve the larger Southeast Gateway community, and beyond. The approach is based on the traditional principles of mixed-use, urban living, working and shopping communities, both existing and being created around the country.

The development model is based on the existing resources of the area, as well as on urban design examples found throughout the city of Syracuse.

Traditional mixed-use commercial districts provide opportunities for interesting and diverse urban character. New buildings can be built to “form based” design guidelines to recreate cohesive neighborhood centers serving nearby residents and visitors alike.

Shown here are photos of typical building types from the Syracuse area which are appropriate models for the proposed Development of the Design Plan.



The basic form and efficiency of the traditional two and three story, mixed-use commercial building can be expanded to larger sizes with current construction methods and economies. This is the basic building block of this development model.

Early design sketches were developed to illustrate how “form-based” design guidelines can be used to create new buildings which fit into a traditional urban design context. Three and four story commercial and residential buildings are illustrated on the right. On the left, a tall single story, neighborhood grocery store.



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These ideas were based on many examples of good Architectural design within the City, helped to set the character of the Vision of the Design Plan.

New “infill” two and three story mixed-use buildings, with brick exteriors, large street level windows, and residential scaled windows on the upper floors are compatible with existing buildings built 50-100 years earlier shown to the right.



The large single story commercial buildings can be designed to serve as “in-fill” buildings in city neighborhoods. The building can be from 20-30 feet tall, with large windows and entrances facing the main street. Buildings should be built to the sidewalk to maintain a typical street setback character and scale. Brick materials are recommended for color and permanence. The use of smaller upper windows can be scaled to complement typical two and three story mixed-use buildings nearby.



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These are street views including 2 & 3 story buildings found typically in and around the City of Syracuse.

The quality of the pedestrian streetscape is very important to a commercial shopping area. Tables and chairs can transform a common sidewalk into an enjoyable dining experience.



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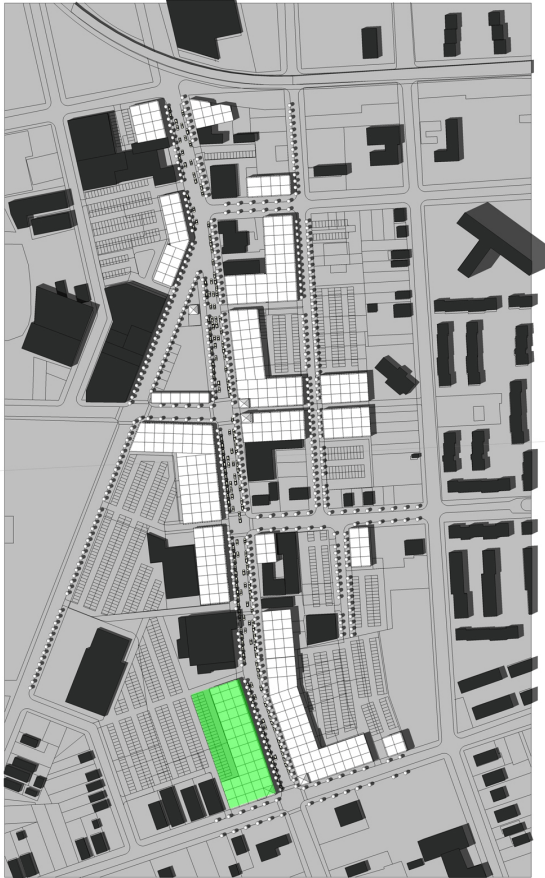


Buildings and materials can be simple. First floor storefronts should have large windows to provide views to the shopping, service and dining businesses within.

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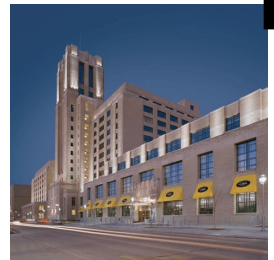
Development Model :

Planning for the “Big Box” Stores



Two possible sites for “big box” store locations are illustrated here. These stores act as anchor stores in a mall development.

The former Sears Department store building is large enough and appropriate for reuse as a “big box” store location. See the Appendix for additional information on a similar renovation of a former Sears Store in Minneapolis.



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The primary goal of this “pedestrian friendly” neighborhood design plan is to create an enjoyable place to shop and live, where business opportunities are supported by the visual environment. Here small business development is encouraged along with larger business market needs.

In contemporary neighborhood planning like this, often called “New Urbanist” planning, the “big box” stores are provided for within the design plan. National trends see the larger retailers reducing their store sizes as they move back into reviving city markets. These illustrations show three locations for the big box store locations. These sites all need to reinforce the streetscape by building to the sidewalk, provide a major store entrance on the main street, and be adjacent to large parking areas which lead to a major store entrance.

Key Elements

- Build to the street property line and fill in “vacant lots”
- Provide a primary street entrance and large storefront windows
- Have access to large parking areas leading to a open store entry.
- Encourage smaller site footprint areas, and multilevel shopping
- Drive-thru’s should be on side streets, not on main streets, in order to maintain pedestrian character
- Building size should respect adjacent buildings and neighborhood character

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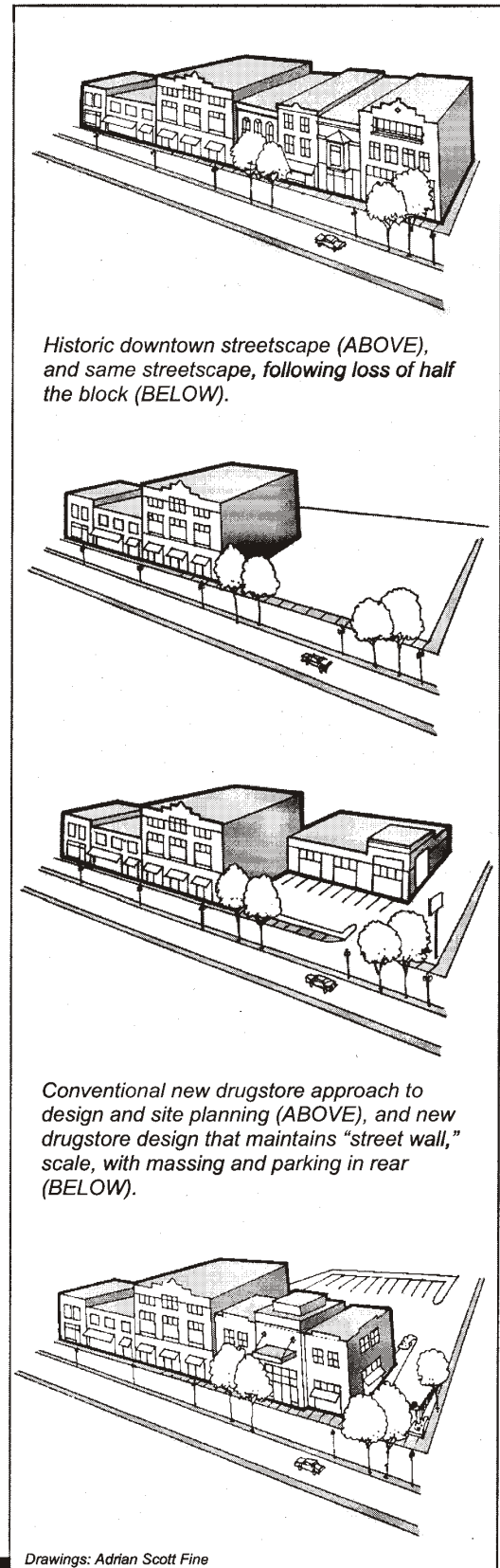
Development Model :

Planning for the “Big Box” Stores



A “big box” store would be appropriate on the first floor of a two or three story mid-block, mixed-use development. This would be a good location for a grocery store or a major retail department store. Additional parking would be provided by a parking garage located on a parking lot location of the parking master plan.

Design guidelines for big box stores are illustrated here. Additional information is included in the Appendix of this report.



Historic downtown streetscape (ABOVE), and same streetscape, following loss of half the block (BELOW).

Conventional new drugstore approach to design and site planning (ABOVE), and new drugstore design that maintains “street wall,” scale, with massing and parking in rear (BELOW).

Drawings: Adrian Scott Fine