

City of Rome

Urban Design Plan

Connecting Rome's Waterfront

Rome, New York

May 19, 2006

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This document, including plans, was prepared for the New York State Department of State with funds provided under Title 11 of the Environmental Protection Fund.

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The City of Rome Urban Design Plan was completed as a component of the City's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program and with additional support from the New York State Department of Transportation. Completing an urban design plan was identified as a Main Street Development catalyst project initiative in the City's Comprehensive Master Plan completed in 2004; was a recommendation of the National Main Street Center as part of a Downtown Assessment completed in 2002; and was also identified as a Quality Communities Downtown Demonstration Project initiative. Rome is one of twelve designated New York State Quality Communities.

To complete **Volume One**, the consultant team worked closely with the Department of Planning and Community Development and obtained input from all appropriate City departments. Main Streets Program representatives assisted the team in understanding the challenges, and in developing goals and objectives for this project. Volunteers from each of the four Main Street Committees (Organization, Promotion, Economic Restructuring and Design) and members of the three Main Street Program Corridor Groups (James Street, West Dominick Street and East Dominick Street) provided valuable input via public meetings and one-on-one work sessions. The National Main Street Center also provided overview assistance and guidance to the City throughout the process.

The Wayfinding Study - Volume Two incorporated input from a signage committee with representation from the Planning Department, the City's Sign De-

partment - Department of Public Works, Marketing Department, Parks & Recreation Department, New York State Department of Transportation, National Park Service and the Main Streets Design Committee and Corridor groups. The signage committee reviewed multiple alternative designs for logos and an overall package of proposed wayfinding concepts.

Volumes Three and Four were completed with assistance, input and evaluation from the Main Streets Design Committee. The Design Committee is charged with reviewing all design changes in the Main Streets corridors, including facades, signs and changes to the public right-of-way, including entranceways into the City. The Committee also provides review and recommendations to the Planning Board regarding Historic District properties. The Urban Design Plan consultants provided architectural design assistance and developed design guidelines. The design guidelines were used to implement an Urban Design Plan Commercial Façade Demonstration Project focused on the Main Street Corridors, and administered by the Design Committee.

Three public information meetings and scoping sessions were held to introduce the project and solicit input from City administration, Main Street Program volunteers and the general public. All meetings were well-attended and each enjoyed high levels of public participation. Individual meetings with the Mayor, City Councilors and City Department personnel were also conducted. The meetings attracted wide local media coverage, as indicated in Appendix D.



Downtown Rome is the historic and government center.

The City of Rome is rich in history interwoven by waterways, immigrant communities, industrial development and the American Revolution. Comprised of 72 square miles, and situated on the Mohawk River and the Erie Canal, Rome's Great Carry once provided crucial waterway access to the world's ports.

This history of Rome's downtown could be that of just about any downtown in upstate New York. It is a story of early successes - historic architecture, movie theaters and opera houses, candy stores and ice cream shops, shoe stores and hat shops and . . . people! Once known as the Copper City, with industries such as Revere Copper and Brass, Rome Cable and other metals factories, Rome was a center for commerce, transportation and heavy industry, and its downtown was a focal point for shopping and socializing.

That is, until it all came to a crashing end with Urban Renewal and a few other unexpected twists and turns. What makes Rome's story unique is how the City worked closely with State agencies to create a successful plan for downtown revitalization. And then, how they rallied residents to help them implement the plan . . .

From the late 1960s into the early 70s, as part of Rome's plan to modernize, the wrecking ball crashed and old landmarks came tumbling down. It was an emotional event for many residents, as they watched cranes and bulldozers take the heart of their City. Before Urban Renewal, there were an estimated three hundred and fifty downtown stores and businesses; following Urban Renewal, the number was reduced to about thirty-five. In fact, Rome's main - downtown street disappeared, replaced by a modern walking mall, flanked at both ends, by huge cement parking garages. The National Park Service used 18 downtown acres to re-create Fort Stanwix, one of the most important American Revolution sites, as Fort Stanwix National Monument. It was expected that residents and visitors would park their cars and leisurely stroll, enjoying the Fort as well as the modern shops and businesses. But, those who were used to parking their cars in front of their destination, were not willing to use the big parking garages, and walk...braving the cold upstate New York winter winds swirling through this new downtown.

Vision for The Rome Urban Design Plan

- Spur Business Investment
- Enhance Quality of Life for Residents
- Capture Fort Stanwix, Erie Canal, Community Center (Sports Complex) and Other Visitation
- Enhance Aesthetics of the City
- Work with Existing Main Street Groups
- Engage the Public

Result:

a Beautiful, Pedestrian Friendly Environment

This was followed by the closing of Griffiss Air Force Base, the largest employer. Thousands of military and civilians worked at the base – thousands more depended on the vitality of the installation. In 1995, when Congress shut down the 50-year-old facility, the results were staggering, and Rome spent a number of years reeling from the effects. But, the City held its own and by 2001, the Planning Department was prepared to move forward. Recognizing that the health of a City begins at its core, they hired the National Trust for Historic Preservation's National Main Street Center to come and assess the downtown and provide a plan based upon the Center's four-point approach to revitalization: organization; promotion; design; and economic restructuring.

In 2004, the City completed a new Comprehensive Master Plan which identified three priority areas: Downtown Development; Waterfront Development and Brownfield Development. This was the City's road map for comprehensive thinking - tying the initiatives together and moving the Main Streets Initiative forward.

Much of the downtown's scale, form and architecture still remain, however, many gaps exist and there are many locations reflecting neglect and loss of integrity. Left unchecked, continued corrosion of the quality of the urban fabric could have resulted in even more disinvestment in the City. Luckily, a new energy is turning the City around. The Main Street Center's organizational structure has helped mobilize downtown businesses and residents to take ownership and participate in plan implementation. The National Park Service's \$6.5 million Marinus Willett Visitors Center has helped revitalize the downtown. Statewide Canal and heritage tourism initiatives are helping to attract tourists interested in history and recreation.

The Urban Design Plan addresses a large and diverse area, and so by necessity, provides a broad overview. The plan is the City's framework for discussion and implementation of demonstration projects that promote consistent design and provide essential physical and conceptual connections.



Project Area Recommendations

Boarding the Colonial near South James Street on the south side of the Erie.

EMPLOYEES OF THE ROME TEXTILE CO. LOADING TEA, WHICH WAS TO MAKE THEM EAT, DRINK, AND BE MERRY, AT SYLVAN BEACH, AUG. 19, 1922. SOME GOOD TIME. PHOTO BY C.B. HOWLAND.

Project Area Recommendations

The following are recommendations for the entire project area. Each recommendation is described in more detail on the following pages.

- Implement Coordinated Wayfinding Program
- Create Gateways to the City Center
- Implement Design Guidelines
- Focus Revitalization on Three Main Street Corridors
- Create Waterfront Connections
- Evaluate Parking Alternatives



Implement Coordinated Wayfinding Program

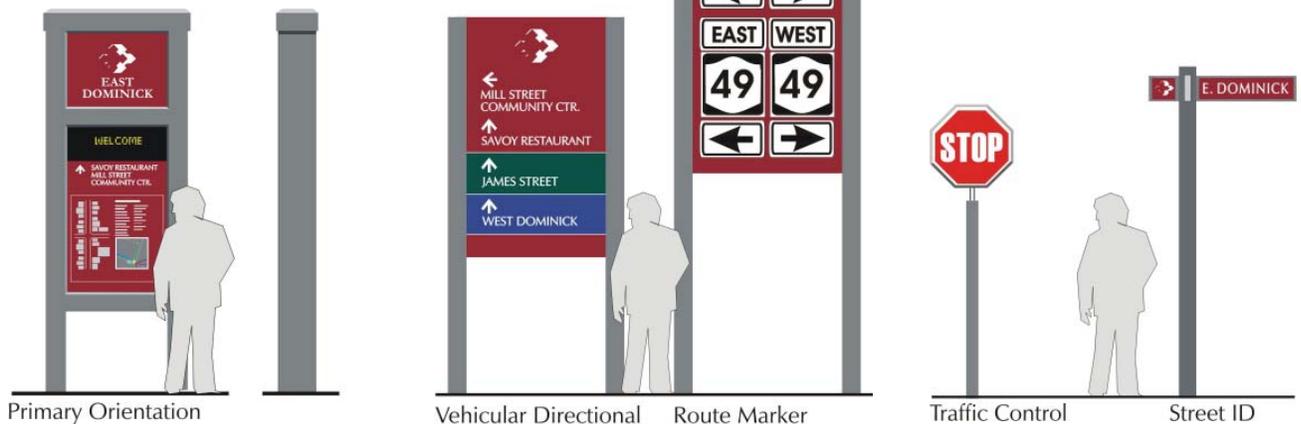
A coordinated wayfinding program is proposed that provides effective directional signage, and contributes to the promotion of the identity of the City of Rome and its tourism. The wayfinding system is an opportunity to create and reinforce identity. In order to maximize the identity of the City throughout the Main Street Corridors, there should be both continuity and distinction in signage. Although it will be beneficial to distinguish the three corridors from one another, there should also be shared visual relationships among signs in the approach corridors so that they convey a uniform City identity. A color zone approach is proposed to create distinction among the three corridors. The East Dominick Corridor is identified by the burgundy red color, the James Street Corridor is identified by green, and the West Dominick Corridor identified by blue. The consistent

use of these background colors on signage related to these corridors communicates to the visitor that he is approaching or has arrived in the appropriate location. The schematic design alternatives below show the role of compatible graphic elements in projecting a uniform image and cohesive wayfinding.

The concepts shown illustrate the compatibility that can be achieved among exterior signs of varying informational requirements. Pedestrian directional signage, orientation, and regulatory signs are depicted with a consistent top profile, logo usage, typographics and field color. The consistency of design that is shared among these elements not only serves to unify signage design but it can also condition visitors to seek wayfinding information in a specific format and in predictable locations. The complete *Wayfinding Plan For the City of Rome* is included in Volume Three of the Urban Design Plan.



Schematic Alternatives - Street Directory



Primary Orientation

Vehicular Directional

Route Marker

Traffic Control

Street ID

Schematic Concept for Coordinated System

Create Gateways to the City Center

Gateways to the City are designed to announce a sense of arrival and welcome, and to reflect the pride and values of the City. Gateway features will vary according to location and will include elements reflective of the individual locations. Landscaped medians, low stone walls and gateway markers are the common elements. A gateway marker has been designed for use in various locations throughout the City to announce entrances in a cohesive manner. The

gateway marker is an approximately 15-foot tall by 4-foot wide bluestone column incorporating the City logo on the corridor background color. Copper urns on top of the columns recall the City's historic role as the "copper city". The Marinus Willett Center has successfully used native stone markers to identify entrances to the National Monument. A similar native stone vocabulary is proposed for the City's gateway markers and low stone walls at landscaped medians.



Proposed Gateway on West Dominick Street

Implement Downtown Design Guidelines

Design guidelines and standards have been established for the three Main Streets Corridors. The City needs to adopt a process whereby all proposed improvements within the Main Streets Corridors are reviewed by the Design Committee for compliance with the Design Guidelines. This process will ensure consistency and quality. The purpose of the Design Guidelines is to:

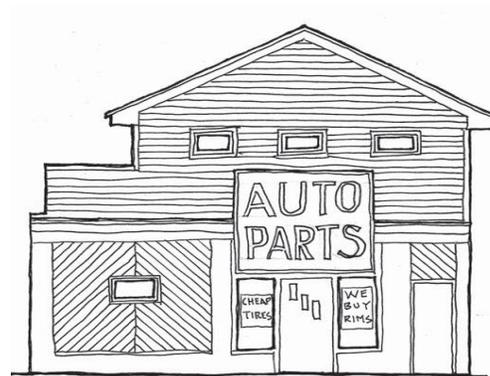
- Restore the role of these streets as civic spaces where people are attracted for shopping, business, socializing, and recreational activities.
- Improve the visual quality of the primary streets leading into the downtown area.
- Preserve and enhance the unique urban character of the City.
- Improve pedestrian safety and provide amenities that encourage pedestrian activity.
- Encourage economic development.
- Retain the visual character and character-defining features of existing historic buildings.

The Guidelines address improvements to existing buildings, new construction, signage, and site development. Shown below are examples from the Downtown Design Guidelines. The complete *Downtown Design Guidelines for the City of Rome* are included as Volume Two of the Urban Design Plan.



DO:
Maintain the visual character of older buildings; provide transparency at storefront; use appropriately sized and located signs; and preserve existing architectural elements and proportions.

Example of Design Guidelines



DON'T:
Cover or remove architectural features; reduce size of storefront windows; install signs that are out of scale or inappropriately placed; and introduce elements that are out of character with building (diagonal siding).

Focus Revitalization on Three Main Streets Corridors

Revitalization efforts should be focused on the three identified Main Streets corridors. Because revitalization of cities occurs building by building and block by block, it is important to focus the City's effort in specific geographic areas so that improvements are concentrated. Widely dispersed improvements will not be perceived as having a large enough impact to effect change. Focused, highly visible improvements will generate confidence in the business community to invest further, and will generate excitement in residents who will want to support businesses in newly improved districts. Distinctive assets and characteristics are already present in each of the corridors. We recommend that each Main Street Corridor develop projects and programming to build on these distinguishing characteristics and to create the following district corridor identities:

- Tourism Corridor: James Street
- Arts District: West Dominick Street
- Heritage Corridor - Little Italy: East Dominick Street

Each of the Main Streets Corridors should implement the following basic principles to:

Create Safe and Attractive Streets

- Construct new sidewalks with specialty paving accents. Clearly delineate pedestrian and vehicular zones to encourage pedestrian activity, calm traffic, improve aesthetics, and enhance safety.
- Install decorative lighting
- Undertake a street tree planting program as advised by Dr. Nina Bassuk
- Implement a maintenance plan
- Consider relocating overhead wires to back alleys
- Locate utilities and transformers to be as unobtrusive as possible. Where possible locate close to the ground. Landscape screening is appropriate, but covering utilities with murals draws more attention to them and should be avoided.



Exxon Station Demonstration Project



FasTrac Demonstration Project

The North James Street Demonstration Project included the implementation of the basic principles of creating safe and attractive streets. Curb cuts are limited and clearly defined and pedestrian walkways are clear and separated from the street by tree plantings. Where possible, low plantings behind the sidewalk screen parking and minimize pavement areas. These basic principles should be implemented throughout the Main Streets Corridors.

Install Coordinated High Standard Commercial Street Furnishings

Victor Stanley benches and planters, already in use by the City of Rome, are attractive, durable, and appropriate for the commercial and historic areas of downtown. They should be adopted, in color and

style variations appropriate to each corridor as the “standard” street furniture. Likewise, the Central Park light fixture should be adopted as the standard decorative street light fixture. Decorative ironwork was traditionally produced and used throughout the City and its continued use should be encouraged.



Above Left: Victor Stanley Metal Bench, West Dominick Street

Above: Victor Stanley Wood Bench, Gansvoort Park

Far Left: Victor Stanley Planter

Left: Central Park Light Fixture

Create Waterfront Connections

The City of Rome enjoys access on the Erie Canal and the Mohawk River. Both waterways represent underutilized passive and active recreational opportunities. Bellamy Harbor Park is an attractive waterfront park on the Erie Canal, but is not well linked to the City's street system and feels isolated. The nearby DPW facility and abandoned industrial sites contribute to a desolate atmosphere. Visitors arriving to the park by boat are offered little encouragement to explore the City. Development of attractive pedestrian linkages is proposed between the Main Street Corridors and the Erie Canal at Bellamy Harbor Park. The goal of these linkages is to encourage:

- residents of the City to walk to Bellamy Harbor Park and the commercial corridors of the three main streets,
- visitors to Front Stanwix to walk to Bellamy Harbor Park and the commercial corridors of the three main streets,
- visitors arriving at Bellamy Harbor Park by boat to walk to Fort Stanwix and the commercial corridors of the three main streets.

The following linkages (*see Waterfront Connections map on page 15*) are proposed:

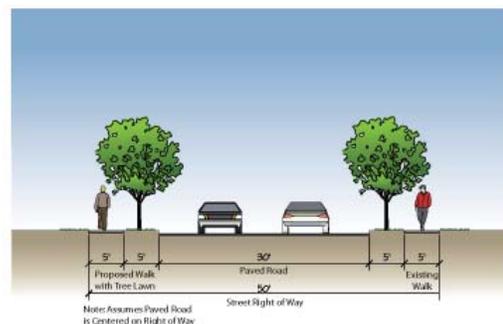
- Mohawk River Trail
- Mill Street to East Dominick Street
- Great Carry Trail

Mohawk River Trail

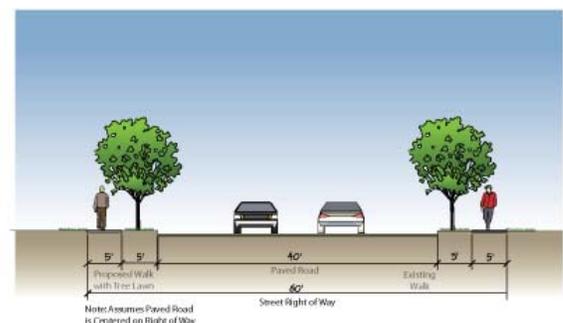
The Mohawk River Trail is proposed to be located along the east side of the Mohawk River, west of the DPW site. The City does not currently control the land along the river but should establish as a long term goal the development of the trail in this location. The trail will link the existing Black River Trail and Black River Recreation Area to the north with Bellamy Harbor Park on the Erie Canal, and continue west along Harbor Way to provide linkage to Pinti Field and surrounding neighborhoods. The Harbor Way segment of the trail would utilize existing City streets. The City of Rome Planning Department is utilizing EPF funding to complete a trails study that will examine the feasibility of route options and establish a project timeline.

Mill Street to East Dominick Street

Harbor Way, a newer road with sidewalks and decorative lighting, currently provides access from the Erie Canal and Bellamy Harbor Park to the East Dominick Corridor. Through the developing East Rome Business Park, an improved linkage via Mill Street will provide more direct pedestrian access to East Dominick Street and Fort Stanwix National Monument. Development of an attractive pedestrian walkway, using EPF funding, is proposed for 2006. The goal is to provide easy and safe resident access to Bellamy Harbor Park and to encourage watercraft and trail visitors to the Park to explore Main Street Corridor shops and eateries and visit the Marinus Willett Visitors Center at Fort Stanwix National Monument. Site plans and estimates for new sidewalks and curbing, tree lawns with street tree plantings, decorative lighting and appropriate signage are included in Appendix A: Cost Estimates.



TROWBRIDGE & WOLF, LLP
 10 Scale
 Proposed New Sidewalk
 Mill Street,
 Mallory Street to Harbour Way
 Rome, NY
 26 September, 2005



TROWBRIDGE & WOLF, LLP
 10 Scale
 Proposed New Sidewalk
 Mill Street,
 Dominick Street to Mallory Street
 Rome, NY
 26 September, 2005

The Great Carry Trail

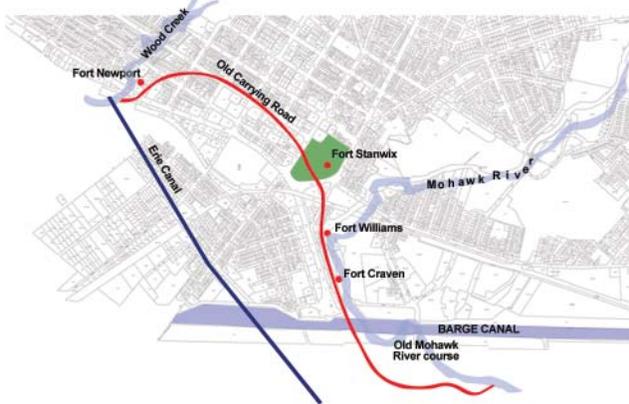
The Great Carry was a three mile trail that connected the Mohawk River to Wood Creek. The trail was important to Native Americans and Early European Traders because it was the portage needed to connect the Great Lakes to the Atlantic Ocean through the Hudson River. Native Americans and traders carried the bateau on their back along this landside route. The British Army, realizing its importance, set up several forts including Fort Stanwix to control and protect the route. The historic route of the Great Carry ran from Fort Stanwix south along the west side of the Mohawk River. The Great Carry Trail will be an extension of the story being interpreted at the Marinus Willett Center and will allow visitors to experience and visualize the historic route.

The City of Rome should partner with the National Park Service to develop the Great Carry Trail including interpretive signage, beginning at the Marinus

Willett Education and Visitors Center where the story of the Great Carry is highlighted to visitors. The proposed route of the trail is as follows:

- From the Center south on James Street to a pedestrian friendly crosswalk to Whitesboro Street.
- From Whitesboro Street, the trail will cross over the Mohawk River where it converges with the Erie Canal, via an existing pedestrian bridge providing direct access to Bellamy Harbor Park and the Canal; and
- From Bellamy Harbor Park the trail will cross over the Canal via the Mill Street Bridge and end at the historic Rome Train Station.

Interpretive signage is proposed at Bellamy Harbor Park and along Whitesboro Street that is coordinated with existing interpretive signage at the Marinus Willett Center.



Historic Route of the Great Carry

NYS Canalway Trail

In 2005, the State appropriated \$2.6 million in transportation funding to complete the Oriskany Trail segment of the Canalway Trail, which ends near Martin Street. Martin Street connects to the Erie Canal Village, where trails already exist to Syracuse. The NYS Canal Corp is currently working with Rome to define the trails route via Martin Street to Bellamy Harbor Park and along Muck Road to Erie Canal Village. Construction is slated for 2009-2010.



Existing interpretive signage at Marinus Willett Center



Reproduction of bateau at Marinus Willett Center

Waterfront Connections 11 x 17

Evaluate Parking Alternatives

The City of Rome has ample parking that is well distributed throughout the Main Streets Corridors. All of the Main Streets Corridors have on-street parking, critical for the convenience of shoppers and the creation of street activity. On-street parking tends to slow the flow of through traffic and helps to develop a pedestrian environment where walking is desired. On-street parking should be reserved for short-term use of business patrons and guests. Business owners and employees should be required to park in off-street lots located at the rear of the main street buildings.

East Dominick and South James Streets have on-street parking without parking meters. West Dominick and North James streets both have parking meters. Parking meters on these streets are sometimes fed throughout the day by business owners and employees, thus making the spaces unavailable for patrons and guests. The City should study alternatives to the parking meters in these locations. Some type of control is required to ensure availability for short-term use. One alternative is to post a mix of 10-minute, 30-minute and 2 hr. short term parking, and then enforce it. This eliminates the possibility of a single person occupying the space all day.

Time limits on parking are typically developed based on the characteristics of the area and on existing and forecasted traffic volumes and patterns. For most cities, studies have shown that the following time limits are satisfactory where on street parking is permitted.

1. One hour is the normal time for the central part of the downtown area. Studies have shown that motorists do not stay in the downtown area for more than one hour.
2. Two hour limits in the fringe area of downtown districts will normally accommodate parkers who desire to park longer and are willing to walk further.
3. Fifteen (15) to thirty (30) minute limits in the vicinity of post offices, banks, and merchandise loading zones will normally be of sufficient duration for parkers to accomplish their desires.

In all cases, setting time limits can only be effective if the limits are strictly enforced.

In general, parallel parking is preferred. Angled parking is acceptable as long as it is restricted to the street, behind the curb, and does not cross over the pedestrian sidewalk. Pedestrian access and safety should be the priority for the Main Streets Corridors, and vehicles should not be permitted to cross over pedestrian sidewalks except at driveways. Deliveries should be made to the rear of buildings so as not to block pedestrian traffic. Luckily, the City has alleyways behind most of the streets that can accommodate deliveries to the rear of the buildings.

North James Street historically had angled parking. An earlier study for the City of Rome recommended reinstating angled parking, and consideration was given to this alternative as part of the Urban Design Plan. However, when main street business owners took measurements and understood how much sidewalk would be lost to the street, it was decided that this alternative was undesirable, and that the existing parallel parking would be maintained. Additional on-street parallel parking is proposed on the east side of North James Street between West Dominick and Liberty streets. Only one of the two lanes of traffic in this location are utilized, and the east lane would more effectively be used for parking without requiring any alteration to the street.



DON'T allow parking to be located in the front yard and cross over pedestrian space.



Main Streets Corridors Recommendations

Busy Corner, 1915.

North James Street *Tourism Corridor*

North James Street, centrally located at the heart of the City of Rome, includes the City's most significant attraction, the Fort Stanwix National Monument. Other attractions include the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, St. Peter's Church, Veterans Park, Gansevoort Park, Fort Stanwix Park, and the new National Park Service (NPS) Visitor's Center, the Marinus Willett Educational and Visitors Center. The North James Street commercial district is poised to benefit from increased visitation to the new Marinus Willett Educational and Visitors Center, and the concentration of historic resources in the corridor.

Façade and landscape improvements implemented in the last year along North James Street create a visibly revitalized corridor. The sidewalk, lighting and landscape improvements at the FasTrac and Exxon stations provide a model of good site planning that can be utilized on other existing and new developments. Buildings that have been vacant for years have been rehabilitated and new business activity has created more pedestrian traffic, resulting in a more lively and safe downtown that benefits businesses and residents. The North James Street Corridor Demonstration Project illustrates the benefit of focusing improvements on specific corridor segments to achieve visible success, as opposed to spreading improvements across a larger area which dilutes the effect and seldom creates the same benefit. Confidence that this same success can and will be repeated in other corridors has now been established.



North James Street includes two distinct zones: the civic and historic center between Erie Boulevard and Stanwix/Huntington streets, and the commercial corridor north of Stanwix/Huntington to Bloomfield Street. These land uses are stable and well established and should be continued.

The Civic and Historic Center (Erie Boulevard to Stanwix/Huntington). A number of the civic functions occur here, and much of this area is included within the Bellamy-Gansevoort Historic District which includes the County Courthouse, Rome Historical Society, Unknown Soldiers Park, Old City Hall and St. Peter's Church.

The intersection of Erie Boulevard and North James Street marks the point that one has "arrived" downtown Rome. Unfortunately, it is a vehicular dominated intersection with excessive pavement, a lack of visual amenity, and no accommodation for pedestrians. The dominance of the highway does not create the welcome image one would hope for when arriving at the heart of the downtown. This important intersection should be developed as a gateway to the City, the James Street corridor, and the new Marinus Willett Center.

Pavement widths at the Erie Boulevard / James Street intersection and north on North James Street are excessive. This encourages motorists to speed, creates a safety hazard for pedestrians, and is unattractive. A central landscaped median with gateway marker should be installed between Erie Boulevard and West Dominick streets to create a welcoming approach to the downtown and new Visitor's Center that communicates a sense of arrival. Visitors to the Marinus Willett Center are directed to park in the City parking garage, but walking from the garage to the Center is unsafe and unclear. The North James/West Dominick intersection should be modified to address these shortcomings and to create an appropriate entrance for the Visitor's Center, slow traffic and allow pedestrians to move safely from the City parking garage to the Visitor's Center. A compass rose paving design is proposed for the intersection, acknowledging and interpreting the historic location of the American Corner. A safe, attractive environment will encourage residents and visitors to explore the main street corridors and support the local businesses.

Proposed Improvements For North James Street Civic and Historic Center

Create Gateway to the City: Install Landscaped Median With Gateway Marker Between Erie Boulevard and West Dominick Street (visual simulation shown below)

Create Welcoming and Appropriate Approach to the Marinus Willett Center

Create Safety and Aesthetic Improvements at North James/Dominick Street Intersection with Compass Rose Design to Mark the American Corner

Implement Parallel Parking on the East Side of North James Street Between West Dominick and Liberty Street

Clean the Exterior of the City Parking Garage and Install Color Tile Insets on Facade

Eliminate Island With Slip Ramp and Replace With Regular “T” Intersection at North James/Liberty Street Intersection

Install Period Lighting

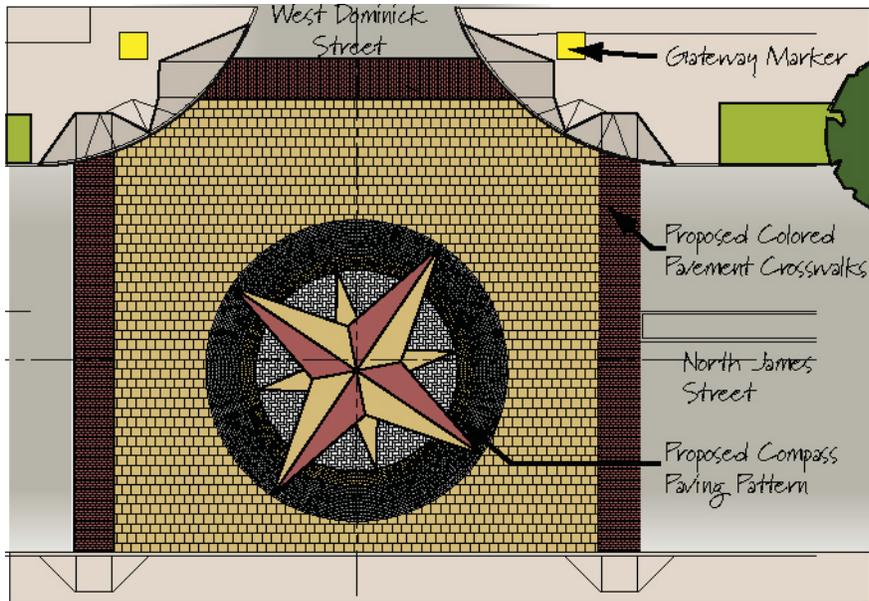
Provide Color Pavement Crosswalks at all Intersections

Plant Street Trees

Encourage Improvements to Structures and Construction of New Structures Consistent With Downtown Design Guidelines



View looking northeast on North James Street with new Marinus Willett Center behind, showing proposed gateway to the City including landscaped median with low stone wall and decorative lighting.



Visual simulation of parking garage showing color tile insets.

American Corner Specialty Paving Intersection

- Increases Safety for Pedestrians
- Provides Traffic Calming and Gives Priority to Pedestrians
- Provides Aesthetic Treatment and Gives Importance to the Marinus Willett Center
- Eliminates Sea of Asphalt



Pedestrian safety improvements at West Dominick and James streets showing Compass Rose pavement design and gateway markers. Compass Rose intersection constructed of IMPRINT, a colored application for asphalt pavement. The intersection design will create a gateway and appropriate approach to the Marinus Willett Center.

Further north on the corridor, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Veterans Park and Gansevoort Park are traditional greenspaces with formal geometry and mature trees. Given their age, location and purpose, the traditional formal geometry of these spaces should be preserved and contemporary interventions avoided. The existing setting of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is appropriate for a space intended for reflection. Colorful displays would be inappropriate for the solemn dignified space. The tomb is set back from the street, and the City parking garage obstructs the view. Installing an iron fence along the edge of the sidewalk at North James Street that is compatible with the fence surrounding the tomb would give the site greater visibility at the street. The fence could terminate at a large brick column at the corner of North James and Liberty Streets. Interpretive signage could be incorporated in the brick column.

The landscape of Veterans and Gansevoort parks is mature and beginning to decline. The mature trees of these parks should be assessed by an arborist, and a plan for removals and replacements developed. Some of the trees could pose safety hazards, and should be pruned and reshaped accordingly. It is recommended that the sidewalk along the north edge of Gansevoort Park be narrowed from the existing 8-feet to 6-feet to allow for the installation of street trees between the curb and the sidewalk along Court Street. Cobra head light fixtures should be removed and replaced with the historic Central Park fixture. Sidewalk replacement, reconditioning the lawns, and arboriculture work on the trees is recommended. These parks are traditional village greens, composed principally of lawn and large shade trees overhead. Plantings

of flowers and perennials are not really necessary. Between Court Street and Huntington Street the lack of trees and predominance of pavement creates a barren appearance. Concrete pavement in front of the police station should be reduced and a row of trees planted behind the sidewalk. A brick wall that matches the Police Station would screen the generator. Concrete panels should be removed from the sidewalk in front of the Court House to allow for the installation of street trees.



Existing conditions of the Police Station, showing generator and excessive pavement in front.



Proposed Conditions. Construct brick wall to screen view of the generator. Remove 50% of pavement behind sidewalk and plant large trees.



View of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. An iron fence located along the sidewalk of North James Street is proposed to give the site greater visibility. A brick column at the corner of North James and Liberty Streets could serve as a sign and incorporated interpretive signage.

The Commercial District (Huntington Street to Bloomfield Street).

The commercial district of North James Street consists of mostly two story wood frame or masonry buildings located at the sidewalk edge. The street retains much of its traditional main street character and this should be preserved and enhanced.

North James Commercial Corridor

The buildings form a mostly continuous line along the sidewalk, although there are a few “missing teeth”. These “missing teeth” or gaps where buildings have been removed, interrupt the visual continuity, make the streetscape less interesting to the pedestrian, and can create a perception that the area is unsafe. It is the density of buildings in historic city centers created by an uninterrupted continuity of buildings along the street edge that results in a vital and dynamic environment that is visually appealing. For this reason, removal of existing buildings is generally discouraged. Demolition of existing buildings should not occur, even if they are inhabitable, unless there is a plan for infill of the site.

New buildings should be located at the sidewalk to reinforce the traditional streetscape. Building setbacks with parking located in front of the building violates this fundamental principal, erodes the visual quality of the streets and creates an unsafe condition for pedestrians and should be prohibited. Façade improvements have been completed on many of the buildings on North James Street within the last year and several more are planned. Continued preservation and improvement to the existing building stock, consistent with the Downtown Design Guidelines should be encouraged.

New sidewalks are proposed and should include either brick or brick colored concrete accents to provide more complexity and visual interest. There are maintenance concerns regarding bricks given the severe winters in Rome. Bricks can have a tendency to heave and then be picked up by snow plows. However, if the base course beneath the bricks is correctly installed and compacted these problems are minimized. Brick pavers are successfully and widely used in Canadian and European cities that experience similar winter conditions. Bricks are particularly advantageous as a paving material where there are street trees. Water is allowed to infiltrate between the bricks, resulting in significantly better growing conditions and performance of the trees. Brick is a traditional building material, appro-

priate to the historic character of the City of Rome and should be considered in certain locations, especially in tree planting zones. The Brick Industry has offered to provide technical and engineering services to the City.

As previously stated, pavement widths on North James Street are excessive, encouraging speeding traffic. A six foot wide center median of colored IMPRINT pavement to be overlaid on asphalt in a pressed brick pattern is proposed for the center of North James Street between Park Street and Bloomfield Street. The center median will reduce the overall perceived width of the street, thereby slowing traffic and increasing pedestrian safety. It will also create a more visually pleasing street. This center median is proposed to be flush with the surrounding asphalt pavement to facilitate snow plowing. Gateway markers are proposed at the intersection with Fort Stanwix Park Street. A single marker located in the center median is also proposed at the southern terminus of the corridor at Erie Boulevard/North James Street and on North James at the Liberty Street intersection.

Fort Stanwix Park was recently rehabilitated and is a fine and elegant green space in the tradition of a village green. The park provides a strong focal point for the surrounding houses and residential streets. The park is appealing as a simple lawn and tree landscape. However, historic photos show that a large flower garden existed in the park in earlier times and residents have expressed an interest in reinstating the flower garden. The flower garden could be a nice amenity if the City has the ability to commit the resources to the maintenance of the garden. A mural installed to screen transformers in the park is out of place in the current location. Other murals have been installed in other locations to serve a similar purpose. These murals should be relocated and aggregated in a single location along a building wall where nearby pedestrians could better enjoy them. The existing residential land use surrounding the park is stable and should be continued. Conversion of houses to commercial use or art galleries should be discouraged since it would create parking demands and erode the stability of the residential neighborhood.

The triangular space at Byrne Dairy provides an opportunity to create a landscape display at a prominent intersection and to mark the far end of the corridor. Masses of flowering shrubs and/or perennials would be appropriate.

Proposed Improvements For North James Street Commercial Zone

Install Gateway Markers at the North James Street and Fort Stanwix Park Street Intersection

Install Center Colored Pavement Median Flush to Asphalt

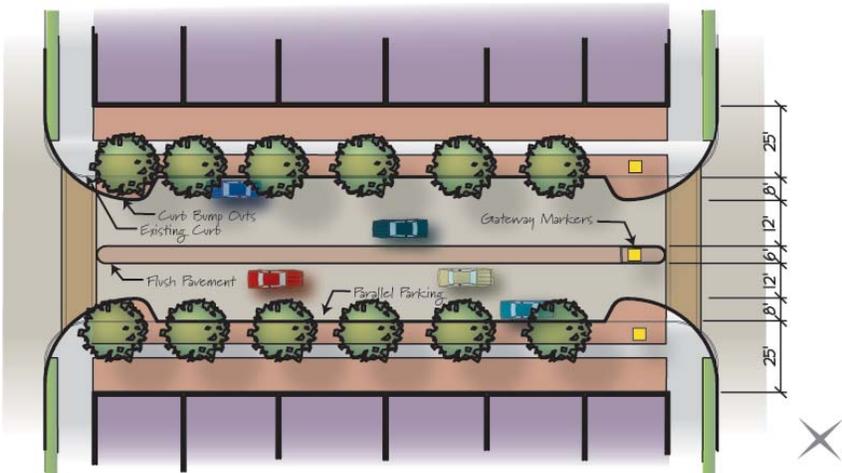
Install Period Lighting

Construct New Sidewalks Including Brick or Colored Paver Accents

Provide Color Pavement Crosswalks at all Intersections

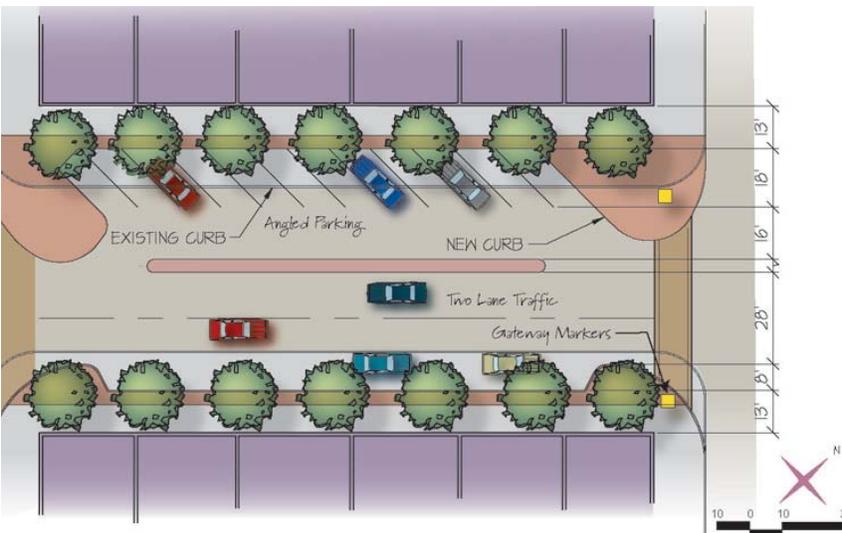
Plant Street Trees

Encourage Improvements to Structures and Construction of New Structures Consistent With Downtown Design Guidelines



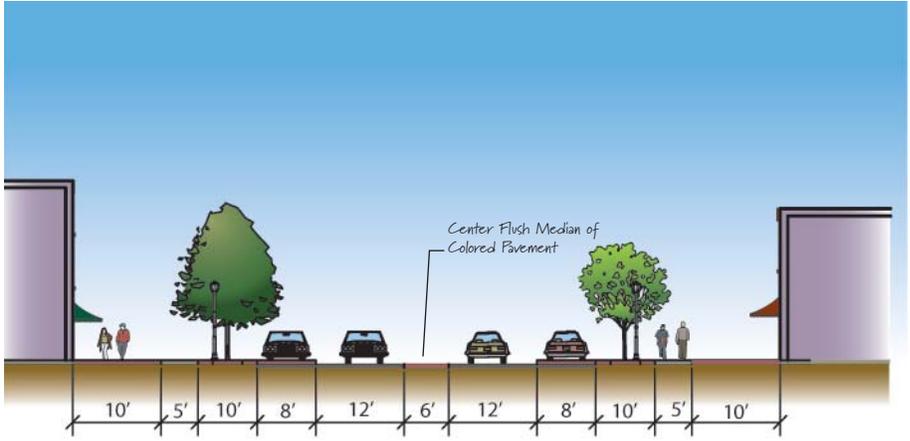
North James Street: Proposed Street Design

- Retain existing curb lines, street width, and parallel parking
- Install “bulb-outs” at intersections to create perception of narrower street, reduce pedestrian crossing distance and calm traffic
- Install center median of colored flush pavement



North James Street: Angled Parking Alternative

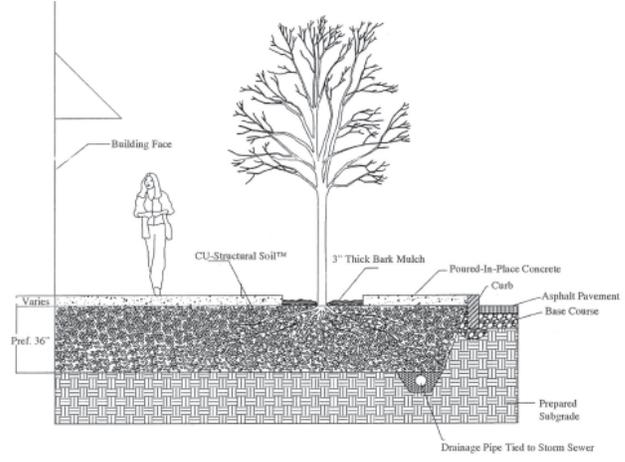
Angled parking previously existed on North James Street. Consideration was given to reinstating angled parking, however, it would significantly reduce the sidewalk width and therefore was rejected.



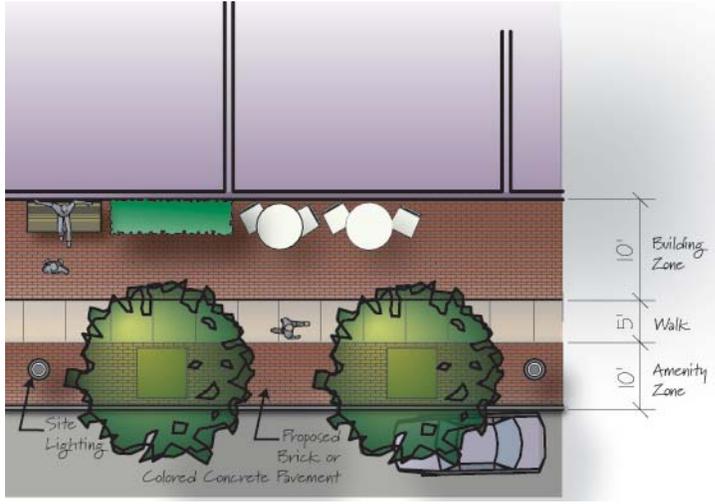
North James Street: Typical Section



Street trees with structural soil and brick paving. Building Zone. North James Street: Section of Typical Sidewalk



Typical street planting using CU-Structural Soil™ under a sidewalk. (excerpted from "Using CU-Structural Soil in the Urban Environment")



North James Street: Plan of Typical Sidewalk

CU-Structural Soil is intended for paved sites to provide adequate soil volumes for tree roots under pavements. It can be used under sidewalks, parking lots, and low-use access roads. Structural Soil is comprised of both rigid stone to meet engineering requirements for loads, and compaction under pavement, and a quantity of soil to meet tree requirements for root growth. The publication "Using CU-Structural Soil in the Urban Environment" has been provided to the City Forester.

- Building Zone**
Outdoor Cafe, Retail Displays, Seating, Landscape
- Clear Walkway**
- Amenity Zone**
Street Trees Planted in Structural Soil
Brick Paving to Allow Infiltration of Water to Trees (or colored accent paving)
Ornamental Lighting
Street Furnishings

North James Street 11 x 17

South James Street

South James Street serves as a gateway to the center of the City, and as such, the appearance and image of the street is of particular importance. Even though the area is zoned for mixed-use, residential use predominates. As one moves north, the street transitions to commercial development. From Muck Road to Ridge Street, residential use dominates. Commercial uses dominate between Ridge Street and Erie Boulevard.

The South James Street/Muck Road intersection at the location of the Barge Canal should be enhanced with a gateway feature that welcomes visitors approaching the City from this direction.

Residential Zone of South James Street

The residential section of South James Street consists of residential scaled buildings located close to the street. Sidewalks and street trees line the street, creating a traditional street character that is pedestrian friendly. The traditional street character and residential scale and use should be maintained and enhanced. Conversion of residential properties to commercial use should not be encouraged. A trend toward commercial conversions in residential areas results in the erosion of these neighborhoods and the insertion of parking lots degrades the residential scale. In addition, many commercial areas in the City are struggling. Expansion of commercial areas would dilute and further weaken existing commercial centers. Commercial development should be limited to those locations in the City where it already exists. The City should establish a façade grant fund that targets the South James residential zone with the goal of improving the aesthetics of this important gateway to the City.

Gryziec Field is a recreation asset on the South James corridor. Currently, it lacks visibility and presence on South James Street. If the park fronted on South James Street it would create a more welcoming gateway into the City and would alleviate perceived security issues in the park. Available properties that are located between Gryziec Field and South James Street should be acquired to allow expansion of the park to the face of James Street. This will provide an appropriate entrance image to the City and improve security and visibility of the park. The Erie Canal, located directly south of Gryziec

Field is not accessible in this location but should be incorporated into the park. “Extending” the park to the canal would enhance the area by taking advantage of the canal side location. There are safety issues associated with this since pedestrians need to cross Muck Road to get from Gryziec Field to the canal. Landscape, lighting, and paving improvements could be made to give the impression that this section of Muck Road is actually moving “through” the park. Specialty colored pavement on Muck Road would encourage traffic to slow down and would provide a visual linkage between the two sites. Decorative lighting and landscaping on both sides of the road would further enhance the linkage and slow down traffic. A seating, viewing and possibly fishing area could be developed on the canal side of Muck Road.

The City should work with the Canal Corporation to extend the Canalway Trail from Bellamy Harbor Park through Gryziec Field to the canal at Muck Road.

Properly marketed, the muck farms and markets south of the canal could be a tourist attraction. There are grant monies available for farmers markets and this opportunity should be pursued.

Proposed Improvements For South James Street Residential Zone

Create Gateway Landscape Feature at Muck Road / South James

Construct New Sidewalks

Plant Street Trees

Install Period Lighting

Encourage Improvements to Existing Housing Stock and Construction of New Structures Consistent With Downtown Residential Design Guidelines

Improve Visibility of Gryziec Field / Create Connection with Canal

South James Street 11 x 17

Commercial Zone of South James Street

Between Ridge Street and Erie Boulevard, South James Street is characterized by an eclectic mix of building types and businesses with large parking lots that have poorly defined circulation and lack clearly defined curb cuts. Very little landscaping exists to provide visual relief. The oversized, undefined curb cuts are unsafe for pedestrians since cars have the ability to enter or exit at almost any location. They also diminish the visual quality of the street by creating large areas of undifferentiated pavement. Clearly defined curb cuts delineate vehicular and pedestrian traffic more clearly, and allow for landscape areas, thus improving safety and aesthetics. Vehicular, pedestrian, and landscape zones should be clarified and enhanced similar to what was done at the FasTrac Market on North James Street. Paving of the gravel parking lots would help reduce dust and dirt in the area.

The intersection of South James Street and Erie Boulevard is an important arrival point in the downtown. Unfortunately, the intersection is confusing, vehicle dominated and pedestrian unfriendly. Buildings are set back from the intersection creating an appearance and feel of a suburban strip mall as opposed to a traditional downtown. As ownership of parcels at this intersection change hands, the City should ensure that new buildings are located in the traditional street pattern, i.e. close to the street, to anchor the corner and reduce the apparent abyss of pavement. Big boxes and national chains do not have to be bad neighbors. Many communities require strict adherence to design guidelines and these companies expect to negotiate to achieve what is in the community's best interest. Continuation of the commercial use in this area is appropriate given its proximity to the commercial center of Erie Boulevard.



Spaghetti Junction

The intersection of Erie Boulevard and Black River Boulevard is commonly known as Spaghetti Junction for its confusing configuration. The intersection is a visual blight at the primary entry point to the City, and its confusing array of choices does not impart a welcoming sense of arrival. Further, the current configuration, including the underpass, provide virtually no accommodation for pedestrians to move through the intersection. As a part of this Urban Design Plan, Lochner Engineers undertook an analysis of alternatives for this intersection. The objective was to identify an intersection concept that would be safe for pedestrians and vehicles, work well for traffic flow and be an attractive entrance to the City. A roundabout at this location was analyzed but rejected because it could not adequately handle the traffic flows. A larger traffic circle with bypass lanes would be able to handle the flows but would result in a large vehicular dominated intersection without pedestrian accommodation. A traditional at-grade "T" intersection with at grade pedestrian crossings is proposed. This would simplify traffic flows, create a safe pedestrian environment, and provide an opportunity for integrating a landscape feature at this important arrival point to the City. The complete analysis is included in Appendix B. Cost estimates for reconstruction of the intersection are included in Appendix A.

Left: Existing South James Street Commercial District

Below: Proposed South James Street Commercial District



Proposed Improvements For South James Street Commercial Zone

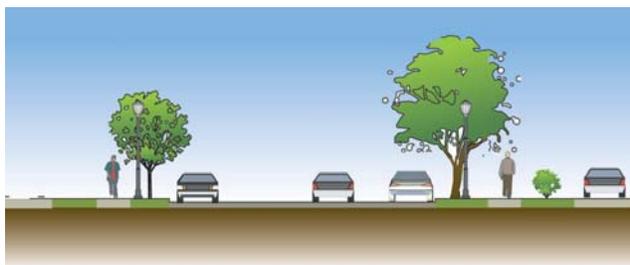
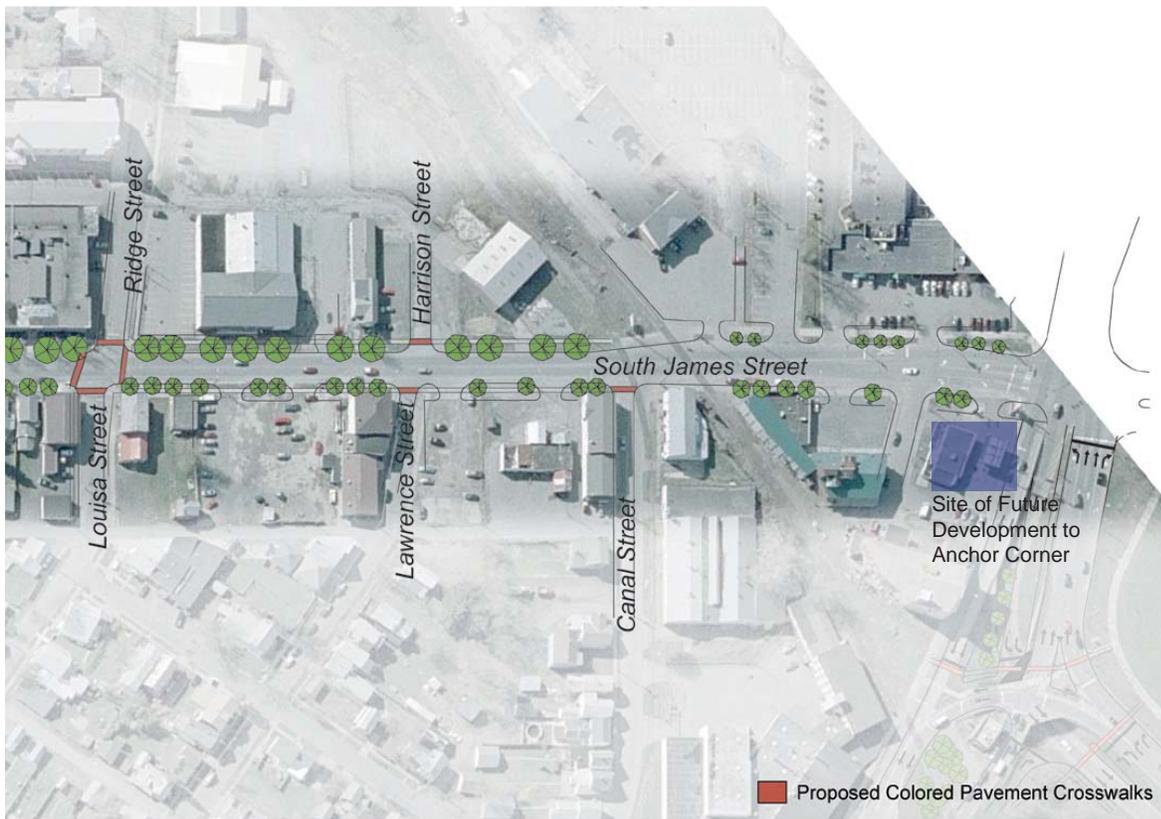
Construct Clearly Defined Driveways at Parking Lot Entrances

Construct New Sidewalks

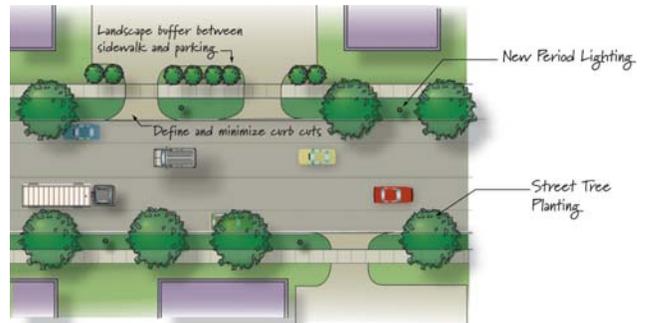
Plant Street Trees and Landscape Buffers Between the Sidewalk and Parking Lots

Install Period Lighting

Encourage Improvements to Structures and Construction of New Structures Consistent With Downtown Design Guidelines



South James Street
Section of Typical Proposed Treatment



South James Street
Plan of Typical Proposed Treatment

West Dominick Street - Arts Corridor

The West Dominick Street Main Streets Corridor is defined by James Street on the east and Arsenal Street on the west, an area that is incorporated in the developing Rome Entertainment, Arts, Cultural and Historic (REACH) District. The east end is anchored by the modern City Hall and City Green, Capitol Theatre, and the “under-construction” REACH Microentreprirse Center located in the former Oliver’s building. The Center will focus on providing business services and incubator-type space to new and existing arts-related entrepreneurs and organizations. The Main Streets offices and art gallery are currently located in the REACH Center.

The east end of the corridor between James Street and George Street was largely reconstructed as part of urban renewal and does not retain the historic character of the west end of the corridor. The concentration of government buildings also serves as a visual barrier, making it difficult for visitors to perceive the business district beyond. Gateway markers identifying the West Dominick Corridor are proposed at the James Street intersection to draw visitors from the Marinus Willett Center into the corridor, and provide information about businesses and services located on the corridor.

Further west, between George and Madison, the street

widens excessively, diminishing its appeal as a pedestrian zone. A central landscape median is proposed in this block to reduce the width of the street and provide visual amenity. Gateway markers are proposed to be located at George Street to reinforce the continuation of the corridor to the west. The street character between Madison and Arsenal is highly eroded. Undefined curb cuts with excessive pavement, lack of defined pedestrian walkway zones, lack of street trees and poor building maintenance all contribute to a poor appearance, lack of cohesion and a pedestrian unfriendly environment. The oversized, undefined curb cuts are unsafe for pedestrians since cars have the ability to enter or exit at almost any location. They also diminish the visual quality of the street by creating large areas of undifferentiated pavement. Again, the landscape, vehicular, and pedestrian improvements implemented at the FasTrac Market on North James Street provide a good model for what should be done on West Dominick Street.

The western end of the corridor is anchored by the Arsenal House, a historic structure dating to the War of 1812. There are plans for the rehabilitation of the Arsenal House, and opening of the building for historic interpretation is planned. The façade program that has been successful on North James Street should be extended to West Dominick Street and rehabilitation of buildings undertaken consistent with the Design Guidelines.



Proposed Intersection at George and West Dominick

Proposed Improvements for West Dominick Street

Construct New Sidewalks

Plant Street Trees

Install Period Lighting

Create Gateway at North James Street and George Street

Install Central Landscape Median Between George and Madison Streets

Relocate Murals to Arts District

Develop a Marketing Plan For Arts Corridor and the REACH District

Develop Oliver Building as Incubator for Artists

Undertake Façade Improvements Consistent With the Design Guidelines

Encourage Improvements to Structures and Construction of New Structures Consistent With Downtown Design Guidelines



Existing - West Dominick Street



Proposed - West Dominick Street



Rome Entertainment, Arts, Cultural and Historic District



REACH Microenterprise Center Under Development

West Dominick Street 11 x 17

East Dominick Street and Harbor Area

East Dominick Street - Heritage Corridor *Little Italy*

The East Dominick Main Streets Corridor extends from Black River Boulevard on the west to Nock Street on the east. The corridor is predominately commercial between Black River Boulevard and Sixth Street and transitions to residential scaled buildings between Sixth Street and Nock Street. East Dominick Street developed as an enclave of restaurants and bars to serve the workers of the copper mills located to the south. The copper mills are largely nonexistent today, but much of the restaurant/bar activity remains, as well as the historic buildings. East Dominick Street has the potential to emerge as an authentic Little Italy. Several successful Italian restaurants are located on the corridor, and the former Gualtieri Italian Grocery is being restored to its former use. Little Italy provides a unique identity and niche market for the corridor.

A landscaped round-about is proposed at the Black River Boulevard/East Dominick Street intersection to mark the western entrance to the corridor. Lochner Engineers evaluated the functionality of a round-about in this location and determined that it is feasible. A central landscaped median with gateway marker is proposed between the Black River Boulevard and the bridge over the Mohawk River to reduce the excessive pavement width, calm traffic and create a more aesthetically pleasing environment. It is recommended that River Street be converted to a one-way street heading north between East Dominick Street and St. Peter's Avenue. This eliminates the problem of vehicles exiting River Street onto East Dominick Street.

Construction of new sidewalks with colored concrete or brick accents is proposed, along with street trees and period lighting. Oversized driveways should be reduced, and clear separation of vehicular, pedestrian and landscape zones created in order to improve safety and aesthetics. Landscaping and period lighting is proposed for the existing median located on the south side of East Dominick Street between East Dominick and Railroad Street.



Historic Photo of Gualtieri Building



Existing - Black River Boulevard Intersection with East Dominick Street



Proposed - Black River Boulevard Intersection with East Dominick Street

Proposed Improvements for East Dominick Street

Construct Roundabout at Black River Boulevard/East Dominick Street

Construct Landscape Median With Gateway Marker Between Black River Boulevard and the Mohawk River Bridge

Convert River Street to One-Way North

Construct New Sidewalks

Plant Street Trees

Install Period Lighting

Install Landscaping and Period Lighting in Existing Median Between East Dominick Street and Railroad Street

Develop Marketing Plan For Little Italy

Undertake Façade Improvements Consistent With the Downtown Design Guidelines

Encourage Improvements to Structures and Construction of New Structures Consistent With Downtown Design Guidelines



Existing - East Dominick Street



Proposed - East Dominick Street



Existing - East Dominick Street



Proposed - East Dominick Street

East Dominick Street 11 x 17

Harbor Area

Bellamy Harbor Park

Bellamy Harbor Park is a lovely waterfront park that has the unique quality of being situated on the Erie Canal. The site has excellent qualities such as large open space, outstanding views of the canal, and fishing and boating access. The recent construction of the footbridge over the Mohawk River provides an important pedestrian linkage between the waterfront, downtown, and residential areas. The park is an immensely underutilized asset and should be developed to provide an amenity for local residents, as well as serve as an attractive destination for boaters and tourists.

The park gains its unique quality from its setting on the canal. Bellamy Harbor Park should be developed as a passive park that takes advantage of this unique waterfront setting. Activities that benefit from the waterfront setting should be encouraged such as picnicking, waterfront viewing, strolling, fishing, boating, and performances. Active recreation fields should not be located at Bellamy Harbor Park. They do not benefit from a waterfront setting and should be located elsewhere.

The site is situated along the route of the Great Carry. Discussions with the National Park Service suggest that there may be an opportunity to develop a Great Carry Trail with markers that would extend from Bellamy Harbor Park along Whitesboro Street to Fort Stanwix and would eventually be linked to the Canalway Trail.

The park is not owned or controlled by the City of Rome. The City should work with the Canal Corporation to develop an agreement for undertaking improvements to the park that enhance public access consistent with the Canal Corporation's vision for the Canal Recreationway. At such time as an agreement is reached, more detailed investigations of the site should be conducted such as preparation of a site survey by a licensed surveyor including identification of ownership, above and below ground infrastructure, topography and mature trees; soil borings; and identification of archaeological resources.

Proposed Improvements for Bellamy Harbor Park

Link the Park to the NYS Canalway Trail and the Mohawk River Trail

Interpretive Signage Telling the Story of the Great Carry

Permanent Restrooms

Picnic Pavilion

Amphitheater With Sound System

Trails

Benches

Landscaping

Expanded Docking

Informational Signage for Visiting Boaters

DPW and Surrounding Land Use

Historically, the harbor area was the industrial heart of the City of Rome. Industry is now largely gone and the area is in transition. Due to its waterfront setting, large parcels, and the opportunity for funding from the NYS Brownfield Programs, there is the potential to redevelop the harbor area as a revitalized district that takes advantage of the waterfront setting. The City Department of Public Works (DPW) does not enhance the waterfront setting and should be moved to another location to allow more appropriate development of the site. The City should seek to acquire and consolidate properties in the harbor area and prepare a redevelopment plan for the area that takes advantage of brownfield funding opportunities. The City recently issued an RFP for a study that will identify a preferred relocation site for the City DPW, as well as a redevelopment plan for the existing site.



Proposed Amphitheater Concept at Bellamy Harbor Park With Proposed Pavilion in Background

The primary proposed features for Bellamy Harbor Park are an amphitheater, picnic pavilion, permanent restrooms, and expanded public docking. Public input emphasized a desire for these facilities that support a variety of activities and programming. The design of the amphitheater (small scale, friendly materials such as native stone, and incorporation of interpretive elements) is such that it is appealing to park users for informal use such as eating lunch while watching the activity of the canal, as well as providing a stage for local events. It is not envisioned as a major performance space that sits vacant when there is no programming. Rather, the amphitheater forms an informal central gathering space. Visitors will be drawn to understand the interpretive elements and take in the view. The plaza is situated at the waters edge with tiered seating facing the canal. Native stone seats would have grass terraces between the tiers. In addition to serving as a stage, the plaza could have interpretive elements embedded in the pavement such as a map of the Great Carry Route and the history of the canal in Rome.

A picnic pavilion is proposed to be located at the topographic high point on the west end of the park. This location provides outstanding views of the canal and a pavilion here would take advantage of the superb setting. The pavilion could be reserved for family reunions and other local functions. A serpentine handicapped accessible walkway is proposed to connect the amphitheater, waterfront promenade and the pavilion and would be part of the Great Carry Trail. This section of the Great Carry Trail could include an interpretive garden of plantings used by Native Americans. The serpentine walkway would wind through the ornamental interpretive planting.

Existing docking at Bellamy Harbor Park is well used and demand exists for expansion of the public docks. Permanent public restrooms need to be developed to support the above facilities and intended programming.

Implementation Priorities

Priority Projects

1. Safety Improvements for Pedestrian Crossing to the Marinus Willett Educational and Visitors Center at West Dominick / North James Intersection / Including Compass Pavement Design and Gateway Markers at West Dominick
2. South James Street Residential Zone Street Improvements
3. Mill Street Pedestrian Linkage Between the Waterfront and East Dominick Commercial Corridor
4. East Dominick Planting along Railroad Median
5. Create City Gateway at North James / Erie Boulevard: North James Landscape Median with Gateway Markers
6. East Dominick Planted Median With Gateway Marker Between Black River Boulevard and Mohawk River
7. West Dominick Planted Median With Gateway Marker Between George and Madison Streets

Second Priority Projects

1. North James Street Sidewalks and Street Improvements and Gateway Marker at Fort Stanwix Park Street
2. South James Street Commercial Zone Sidewalk and Street Improvements
3. West Dominick Street Sidewalk and Street Improvements
4. East Dominick Street Commercial Zone Sidewalks and Street Improvements
5. Bellamy Harbour Park Enhancements

Third Priority Projects

1. East Dominick Street Residential Zone Sidewalks and Street Improvements
2. Round-a-Bout at Black River Boulevard / East Dominick Street Intersection
3. Reconstruct Spaghetti Junction / Eliminate Underpass and Create at Grade Intersection