



Armonk



Banksville



North White Plains

Town of North Castle: Hamlet Design Guidelines

October 2011

Acknowledgements

Town Board

SUPERVISOR: William R. Weaver

TRUSTEES: Rebecca Kittredge
Michael Schiliro
John Cronin
Diane Roth

Hamlet Design Study Committee

Jane Black, Planning Board Representative
Ryan Coyne, PE, Kellard Sessions, Consulting P.C.
Susan Geffen, Architectural Review Board Representative
Adam R. Kaufman, AICP Director of Planning
Beata Buhl Tatka, Planning Board Representative

Architectural Consultants:

Sullivan Architecture, PC
John P. Sullivan, FAIA
John D. Fry, AIA, LEED AP BD+C
Elisa Volpati, AIA
Brittany Grannan, LEED AP BD+C

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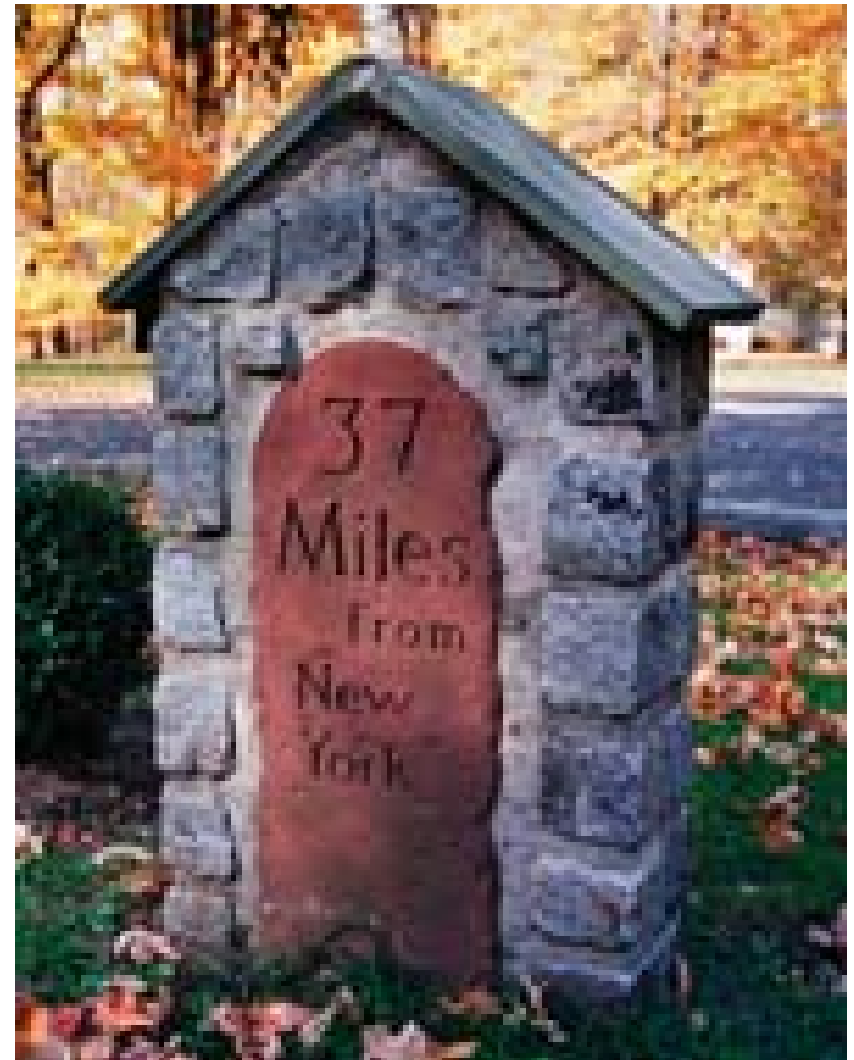
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Back in the 1770s, milestone markers were placed at every mile along the New York-Danbury Post Road to set the rate and to orient the stagecoach drivers and passengers to the number of miles. This marker is located outside of Smith's Tavern on Armonk-Bedford Road.

Introduction

MISSION STATEMENT:

The Town Implementation Program included in the *1996 Town Comprehensive Plan Update* recommends that the Town of North Castle “develop design standards and hamlet Design Overlay Zones in the North White Plains, Armonk and Banksville hamlet areas”. The Town Board, realizing that it is time to take action regarding this recommendation, has created the Hamlet Design Study Committee made up of Town Staff, Planning Board, and Architectural Review Board members.

GOALS:

The Committee aims to create design standards and recommendations that will foster a vibrant downtown environment for each of the three hamlet areas, and create a clear “sense of place” with harmonious buildings, signage, streetscapes, walkways and plantings.

PURPOSE:

As a result of the work of the Committee and their design consultant, the Hamlet Design Guidelines document was prepared. It has been produced to offer design guidance to applicants with properties located in the Hamlet Design Overlay Zone. The document is meant to assist in the preservation of the positive attributes of each hamlet, and offer recommendations for those areas in need of the creation of, or the restoration of a “sense of place”. Mixed-use development in all hamlet areas is encouraged.

IMPLEMENTATION:

These design guidelines will be incorporated into a new Hamlet Overlay District. The Hamlet Design Guidelines supersede the base zoning regulations contained within the Town Code for properties within the district, meaning that where regulations conflict, the requirements of the Hamlet Overlay District shall apply. The illustrated design standards contained herein are intended to assist with the interpretations and understanding of the Hamlet Overlay District requirements. Applicants are encouraged to consider their property development as an opportunity to make a positive contribution to the betterment of the built environment, and the community-at-large. New construction should aim to follow current prescriptions for sustainability and longevity, including the use of sustainable building products and when possible, conform to the LEED design and construction standards.



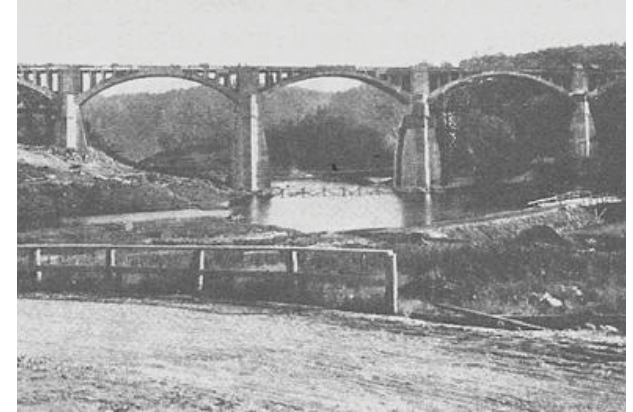
Courtesy www.allaboutarmonk.com

This home is located on Bedford Road in Armonk's Historic District #1 (circa 1910).



Courtesy www.allaboutarmonk.com

Reynolds Saloon and Armonk Hotel on Main Street circa 1910. These establishments were located on the west side of Main Street near Citibank.



Courtesy www.allaboutarmonk.com

Rye Lake Bridge was originally constructed in 1910-11. This bridge connects North White Plains to Armonk along Route 22. (Photo taken from the now underwater hamlet of Kensico).

HISTORY:

The Town of North Castle is comprised of approximately 26 square miles and is situated in eastern corner of Westchester County, adjacent to the Connecticut state line. The majority of the Town's land area lies to the north, while the most densely populated part of the Town lies to the south. These two parts of North Castle are separated by the Kensico Reservoir. The Town was incorporated on March 7, 1788 when the State of New York passed an act for dividing the counties of the state into towns. North Castle was once much larger than it is today. In 1791 it was divided in half, and the upper portion was named New Castle.

The Town is divided into (3) distinct geographic areas, known as the hamlets: North White Plains, Armonk and the Eastern District (Banksville). Each of the three geographic areas has its own unique characteristics. North White Plains is the oldest hamlet, and has an urban center. Armonk is a suburban hamlet center, and Banksville is considered a rural center, with its low-density residential character. While the hamlets may have different goals and recommendations based on their unique characteristics, there are some basic design guidelines which are applicable to all three hamlets.

Hamlet Overlay Zone Maps

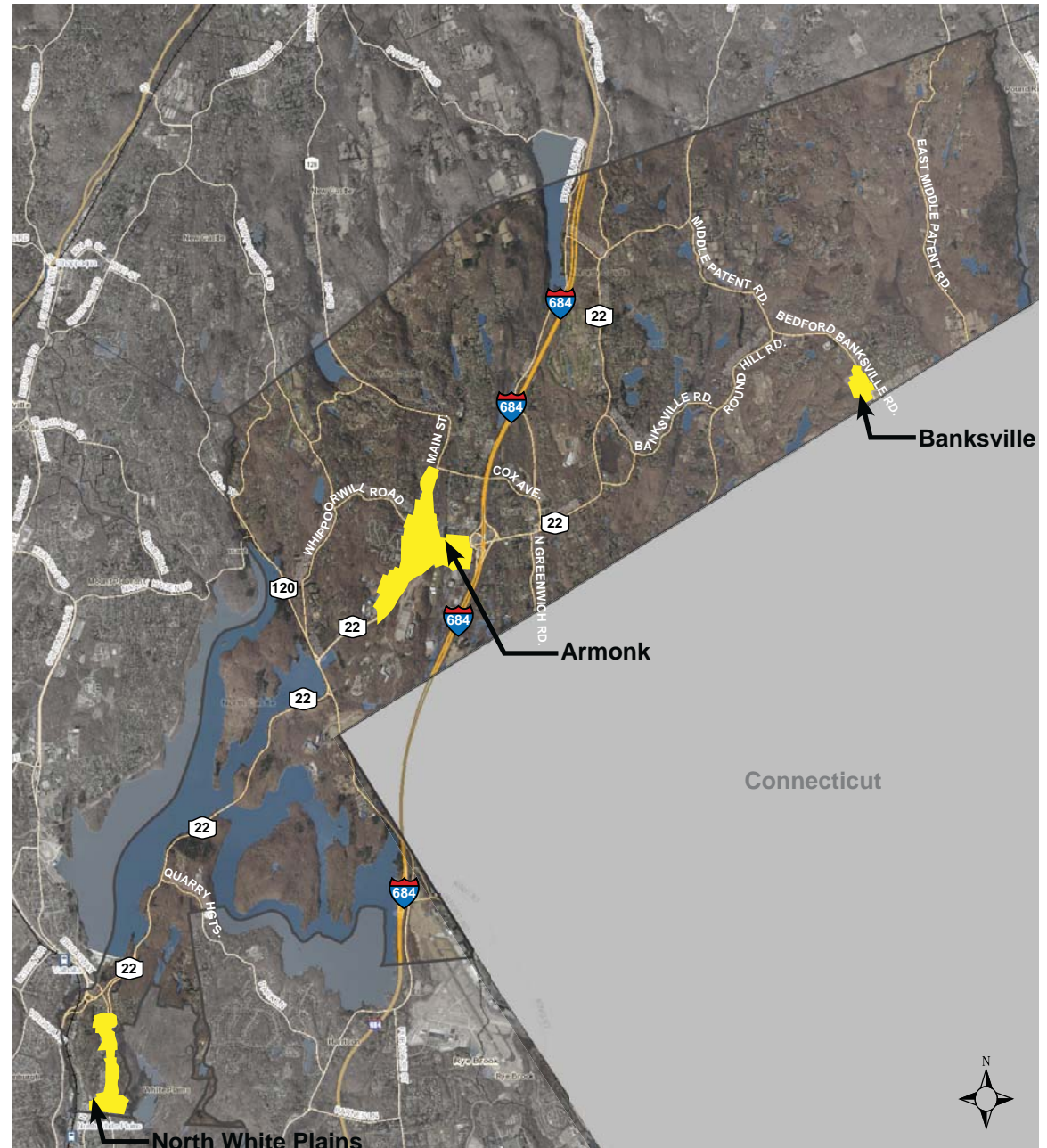
The purpose of the Hamlet Overlay Zones are to preserve the unique characteristics of each Hamlet which exist today, and to encourage future development to maintain and further enhance these positive attributes through the guidelines presented in this document.

Armonk maintains a very pedestrian-friendly downtown area, and development here should aim to enhance this quality, keeping large areas of parking tucked away from view of the major retail corridors. The streetscape presents a variety of architectural styles, and new development should look for cues in the existing variety of the downtown fabric.

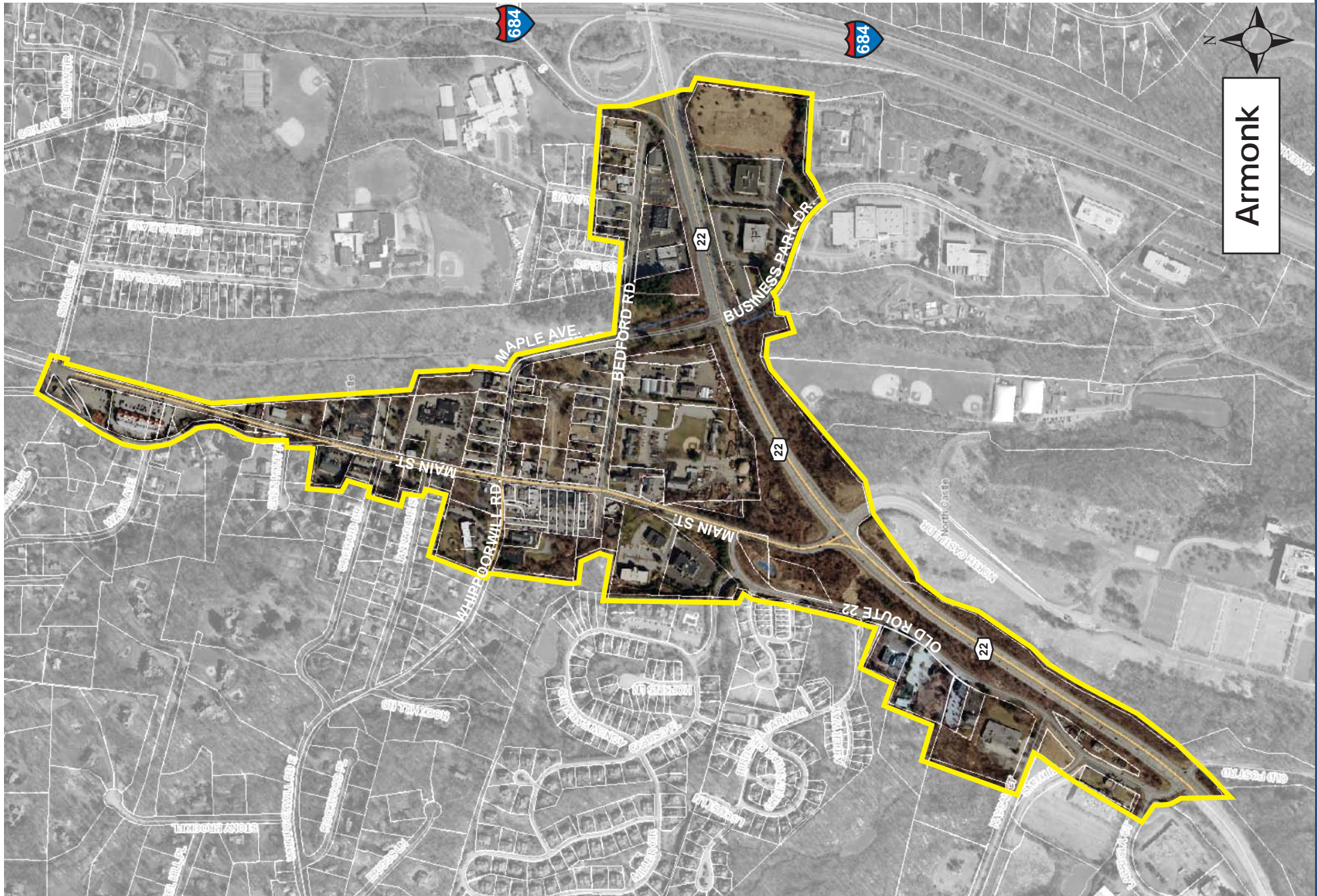
North White Plains is the oldest Hamlet, and can be seen as two very distinct sections separated by the 287 connector along Rt. 22. The southern portion has maintained a more urban, walkable feel, while the northern area, with 2 lanes of traffic in each direction, feels much more “suburban” with strip commercial areas. Goals for both of these areas will be different, as the southern section should look to enhance the retail storefronts and manage parking effectively, and the northern section would benefit from safer, improved traffic patterns at building locations, while adding landscape buffers and street furnishings where appropriate.

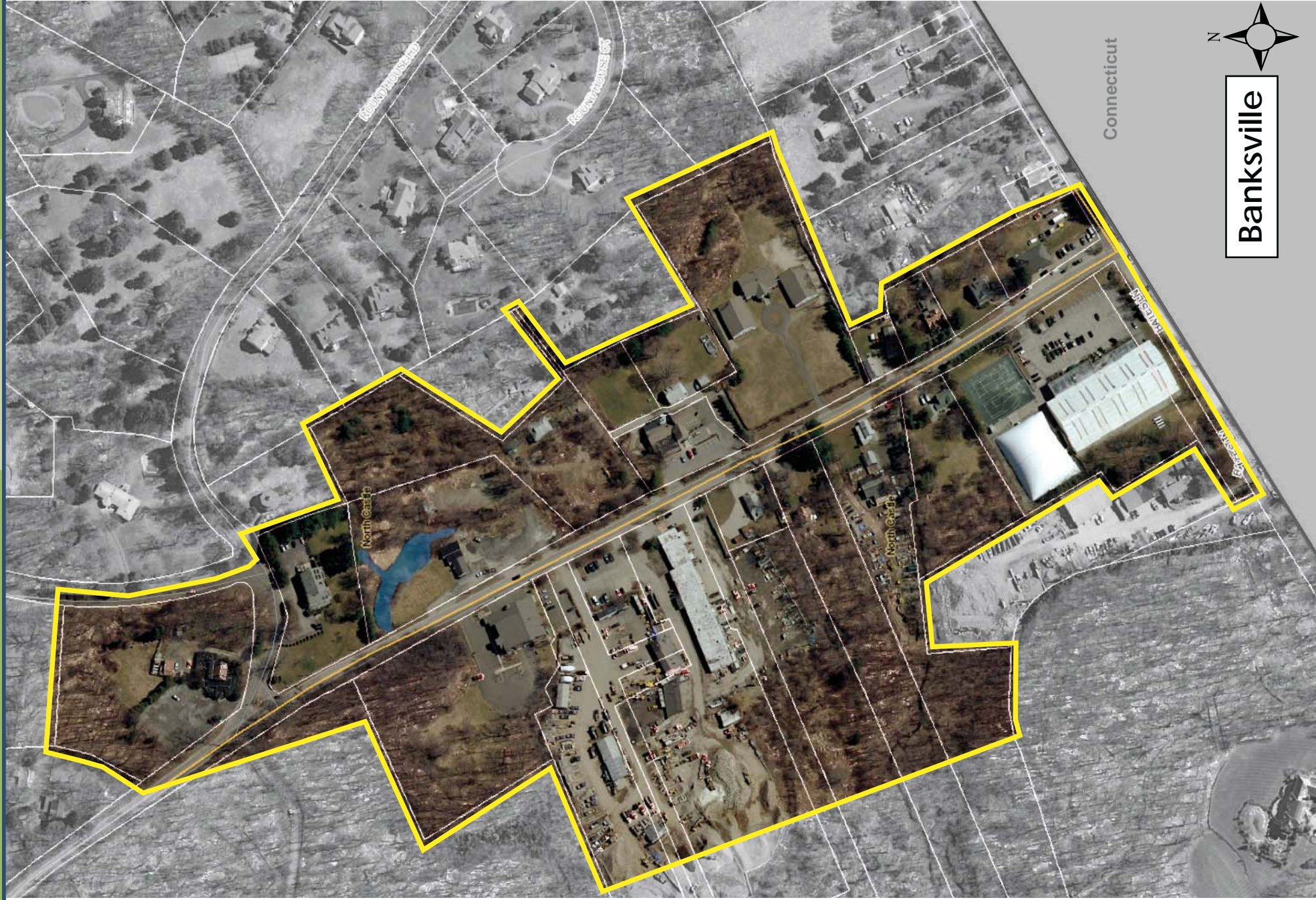
Banksville is the most rural of the three Hamlets, with a mix of low-density residential and commercial properties along its major thoroughfare, Bedford-Banksville Road. Vehicular traffic is predominant, and future improvements should consider site planning alternatives to streamline access to retail locations, and to utilize creative paving and landscaping means for cars pulling in and out along the main retail route.

The boundaries for the Hamlet Overlay Zones are shown on the following maps. The guidelines within this book apply to properties lying within these zones as well as the laws and codes of the Town of North Castle. In addition, commercial properties neighboring the overlay zones should be subject to the Town review and application of these design principles.



Location of Hamlets Within the Town of North Castle





Banksville

Connecticut

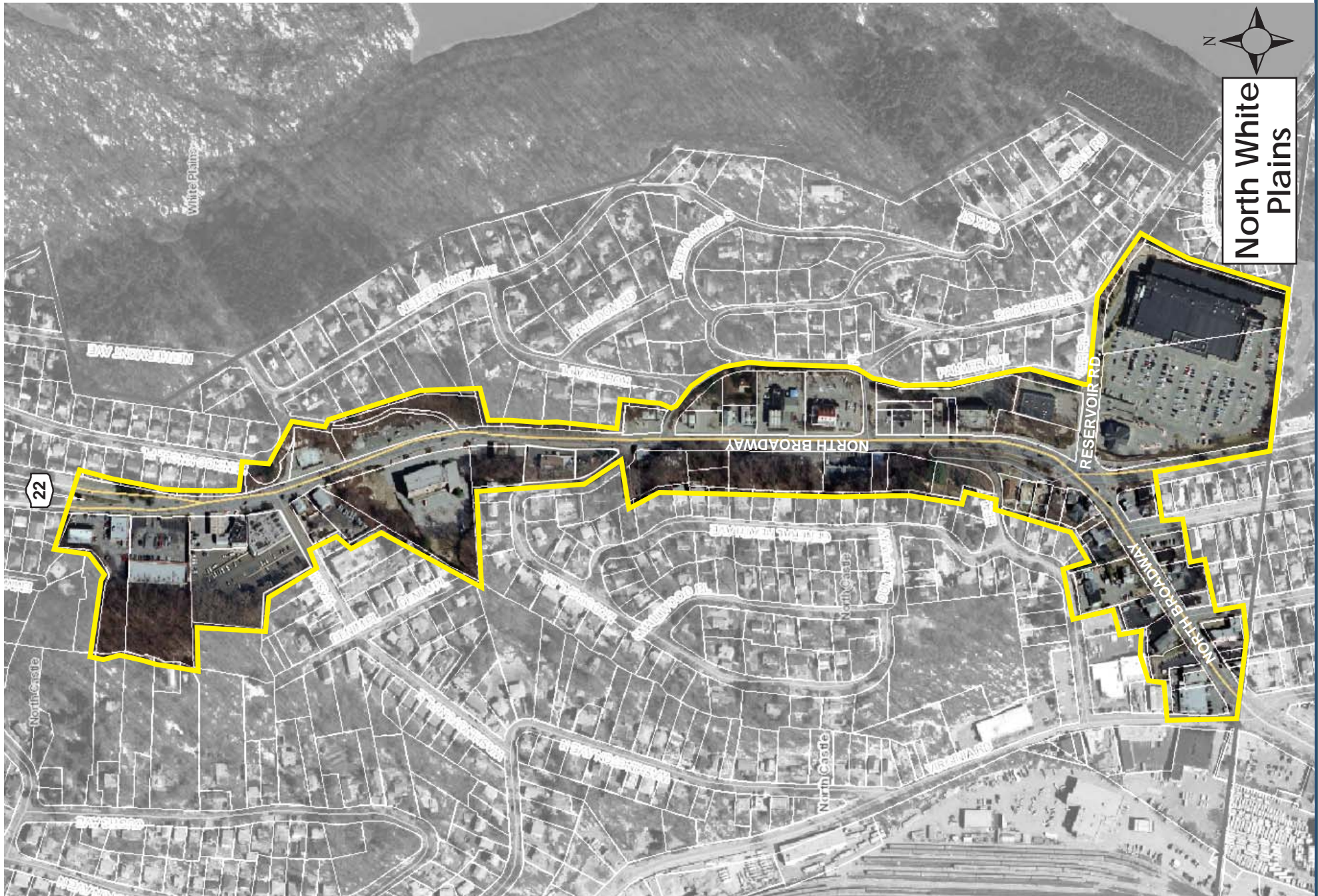
North Gate

North Gate

North Gate

Connecticut

Connecticut



North White
Plains

Section 2

General Design Standards

Site Planning

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Site Planning

The following diagrams and recommendations, applicable to all Hamlet areas, aim to create a distinct, safe separation between pedestrian and vehicular traffic, while aiming to create a “townscape” that is more livable, pedestrian-friendly, and fosters an active mix of residential and commercial uses throughout the day. Through various elements such as sidewalks, landscaping, parking and drive location(s), paving materials, and the thoughtful placement of buildings and parking with respect to the street, these guidelines strive to achieve an improved flow of pedestrian and vehicular traffic while creating a much more desirable “sense of place”.

DO:



This site plan is a good example for the Hamlets of Armonk and Banksville.

DO:

- Provide pedestrian public and private access.
- Create landscaped areas along street, sidewalks, parking and buildings.
- Locate parking in rear/sides.
- Encourage mixed use.
- Link new sidewalks to existing sidewalks.
- Keep curb cuts to a minimum.
- Share parking with neighboring buildings when possible.
- Provide landscape buffer between street and sidewalk.
- Keep asphalt to a minimum (use of alternative pavers encouraged).
- Allow for al fresco dining in front of restaurants.



This site plan is a good example for the Hamlet of North White Plains to provide access off a busy road, while maintaining a strong building presence.



DO:

Courtesy www.pedbikeimages.org/ photographer: Ryan Snyder

Create pedestrian corridors with retail access and possible al fresco dining if appropriate.



DO:

Create intermediate pocket parks to provide pedestrians a place to sit and relax.

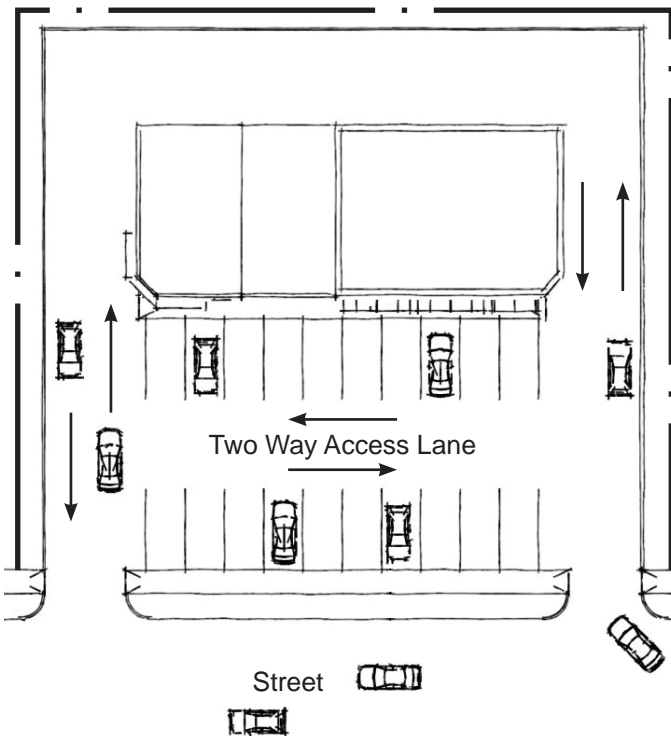


DO:

Courtesy www.pedbikeimages.org/ photographer: Reed Huegerich

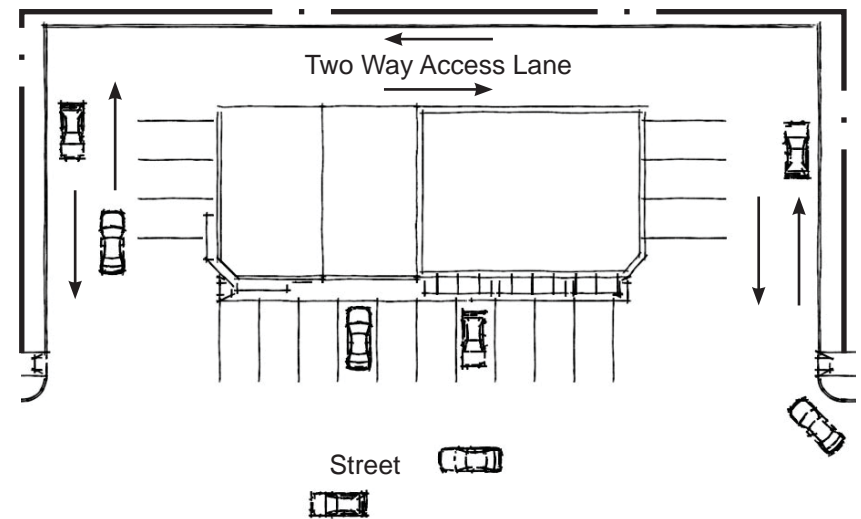
Enhance the public right of way with landscaping and alternative pavers.

DON'T:



DON'T:

- Place parking in the front yard and set buildings to the rear of the site.
- Have pedestrians traverse parking to access stores/ residences.



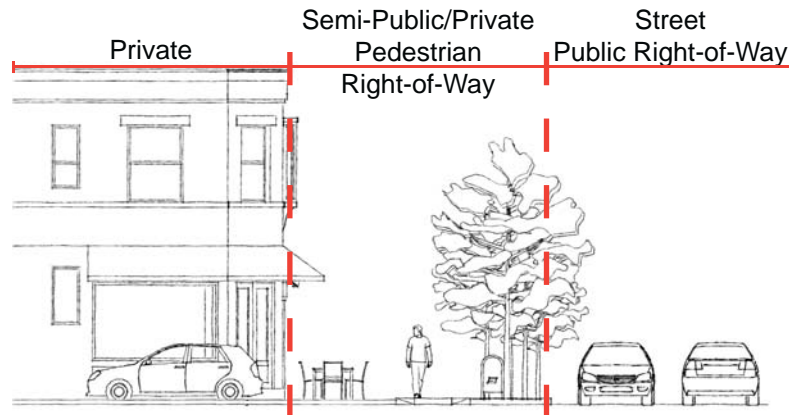
Streetscape Design

The mass, scale, and height of each building, and extensively a group of buildings, will greatly affect the overall streetscape of a block, street and ultimately an entire neighborhood. Careful planning and regulation in this regard is aimed at creating a streetscape that is both pedestrian and vehicular-friendly, while incorporating building elements which directly relate to the human scale. An appropriate amount of hardscape and softscape elements should be implemented. Greenspace, such as pocket parks and trees, provide pedestrians relief from densely built areas. Together, all these elements create aesthetically walkable desirable, safe, neighborhoods.

DO:

- Design building to have elements that are in scale with the neighborhood and pedestrians.
- Link new sidewalks to existing sidewalks.
- Create landscaped areas along street and sidewalks.
- Provide landscape buffers.
- Use landscaping as a design element to enhance the site and building.
- Allow for al fresco dining in front of restaurants.
- Use curbs to separate streets and sidewalks.
- When possible, design for pocket parks between buildings.

DO:



EXAMPLE OF APPROPRIATE INFILL SCALE



Courtesy www.pedbikeimages.org/ photographer: Dan Burden

DO:
Create designated street parking with pavers and land banks.



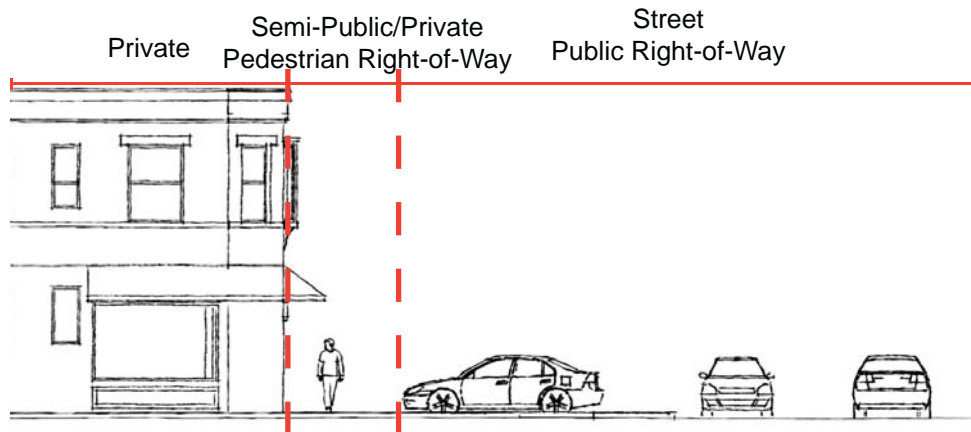
Courtesy www.pedbikeimages.org

DO:
Enhance the streetscape with landscaping, pavers, and the appropriate building scale.



DON'T:
Place parking directly in front of a building or design a building with an inappropriate scale.

DON'T:



DON'T:

- Place parking between building & street.
- Set buildings away from street.
- Provide only the code minimum for landscaping.
- Cross pedestrian and vehicular traffic.
- Hide main entrances from public view.



EXAMPLE OF INAPPROPRIATE INFILL SCALE

Building Facade Design

Illustrated below are sketches that depict basic building elements, especially with respect to scale which can greatly enhance a building's relationship to the street and its neighboring context. Two and three story scale buildings encourage pedestrians to linger and shop. The Zoning Code will ultimately determine a property's allowable building height. A 10' to 12' first story retail storefront, attractively appointed, with most likely one or two stories of residential or office use above is ideal. Large storefront windows allow shoppers to visually access the goods and services of individual businesses. Mixed use residential and retail in all three hamlet areas would enhance the local economy, bring life to the street after work hours, and foster interaction between members of the community on a regular basis.

DO:

- Articulate relationship between retail and residential use.
- Reinforce neighborhood architecture.
- Take cues from surrounding context regarding detail, height, and exposure.
- 10' to 12' minimum storefront height.
- Provide appropriate lighting for interest and security and depth.
- Avoid reflective glazing that masks interior activity, depth, and potential glare hot spots.

DO:



For larger structures, the building façade should read as multiple storefronts and not as a large single component. This will maintain the traditional streetscape of the business area. There are many ways to accomplish this guideline either through changes in materials, recesses and bays, or the addition of dormers, awnings, or a clear distinction between floor levels.



INTRODUCE COHESIVE BUILDING MASSING AND FACADE TREATMENT



DO:

Courtesy www.pedbikeimages.org/ photographer: Dan Burden

Take cues from the surrounding context and reinforce the neighborhood character.



DO:

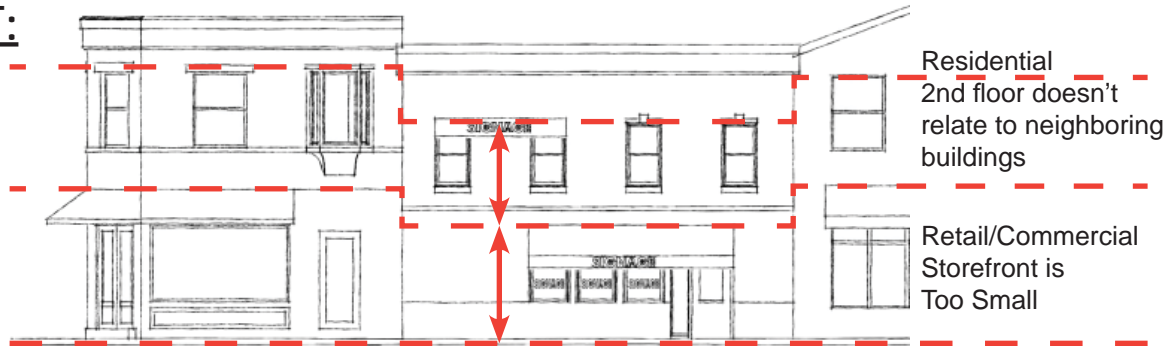
Create a large storefront while maintaining the relationship between retail and residential use.



DON'T:

Use a singular repetitive design across a large facade.

DON'T:



DON'T:

- Use understated storefronts.
- Select materials incompatible with the surrounding context.
- Have new construction overwhelm neighboring buildings.
- Have a large area of storefront with a singular design.
- Punch glazing openings and high sill skirts at street level.



INTRODUCE CONTINUOUS STREET WALL REPETITIVE FACADE

Building Materials

A new property applicant should carefully study the surrounding context when specifying building materials for their project. The use of appropriate materials for a building is critical, as this element will play a key role in the overall streetscape and neighborhood as outlined above. The type of fenestration, exterior cladding materials, roof shingles, and selected colors of all of these elements should aim to be compatible with, but not grossly dissimilar to buildings in the immediate surrounding context. The project will naturally be presented before the Town's Architectural Review Board (ARB) for approval.

Traditional, *sustainable*, and *maintenance-free* finishes include:

- Common brick and cementitious stucco.
- Wood and fiber cement siding.
- Wood or aluminum frame windows and doors.
- No building should be dramatically different or identical to surrounding context.
- Building colors should complement the overall character of the hamlet center.

DO:

DO:

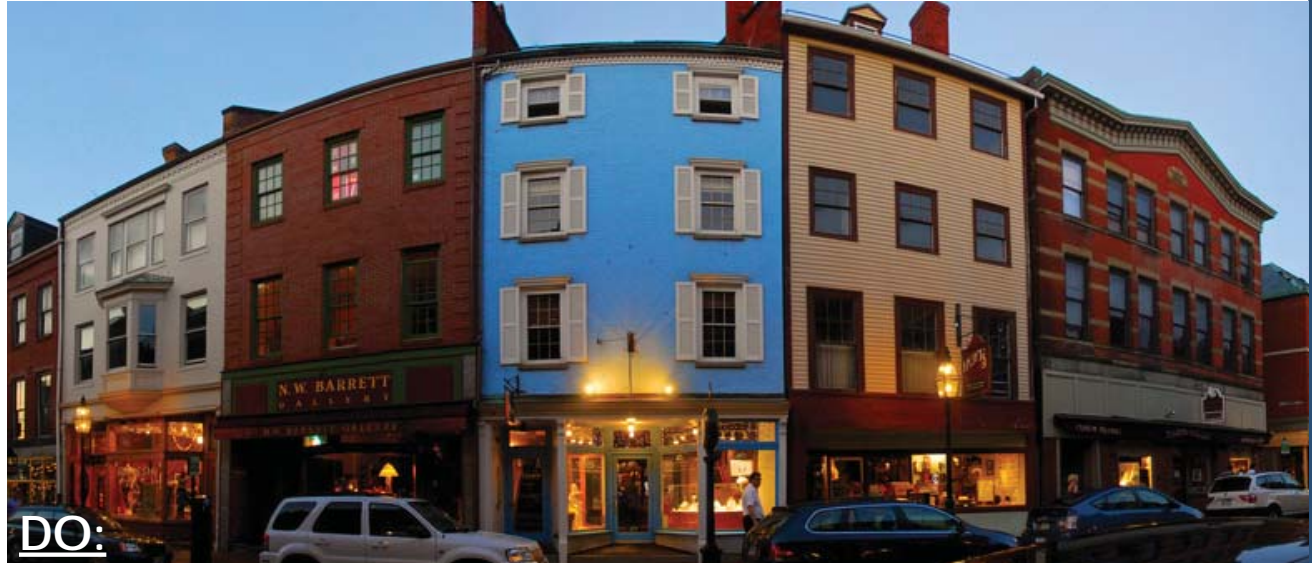
- Use natural and sustainable materials when possible.
- Compliment but do not imitate adjacent/surrounding materials.
- Chose materials that will enhance the architectural intent of the building design.
- Color selections for storefronts should be used throughout the entire building, unifying upper and lower portions.
- Overall color schemes should be simple for walls and decorative features.





Courtesy www.pedbikeimages.org/ photographer: Dan Burden

Chose colors and materials that will enhance the architectural features of the building.



Compliment the overall character of the hamlet without being identical or dramatically different than neighboring buildings.

DON'T:



Too many different types of materials have been used and is distracting.



Glazed openings at street level are punched with misproportioned high window skirts.

DON'T:

The following exterior finishes are discouraged:

- Vinyl or aluminum siding.
- Ceramic tile.
- Highly reflective or glossy finishes, such as polished stones.
- Mirrored glass or reflective glazing.
- Use materials that are historically inappropriate for the building's particular architectural style and intent.
- Replicate the use of the same materials and color palette of adjacent buildings.
- Specify color palettes that use too many or uncomplimentary colors, this can be distracting.

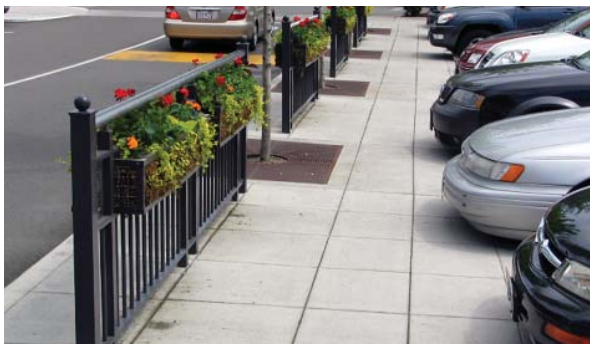
Site Furnishings & Signage

Signage, awnings, lighting, fencing, and landscape elements are sometimes considered of lesser importance compared to previously identified design elements. However, they can often be the factor(s) that becomes most noticeable on the exterior face of a building or at the edge of a parcel of land. These elements should be seen as an opportunity to enhance the architectural qualities of a particular building or piece of property, not detract from it, or be a distraction. Where applicants comply with the basic intent and requirements of the Town ordinances, often design opportunities utilizing these elements are not fully explored or implemented. In the hamlet overlay districts, additional attention to detail regarding design and use of all site accessories should be given. Consideration should be given to the surrounding neighborhood context before specifying these elements to insure that they are compatible with adjacent and nearby properties.

DO:

- Use landscaping to screen equipment.
- Install underground utilities.
- Select lighting fixtures compatible with the style of the neighborhood.
- Use “dark sky” compliant lighting.
- Integrate awnings and canopies in a manner sensitive to the building and neighborhood.

DO:



Signs, awnings and canopies should be properly scaled to allow pedestrians and slow-moving vehicles to visually scan individual businesses as the travel through the district. Retractable awnings are strongly encouraged. These elements can reflect the business while reinforcing the overall aesthetic of the hamlet district.





DO:

Courtesy www.pedbikeimages.org/ photographer: Dan Burden

Chose furnishing that are compatible with the surrounding neighborhood character.



DO:

Courtesy www.pedbikeimages.org/ photographer: Dan Burden

Add site furnishings to create an active public right of way for pedestrians.



DO:

Courtesy www.pedbikeimages.org/ photographer: Dan Burden

Soften the streetscape with landscaping in planters or around site furnishings.

DON'T:



Oversize signage and lighting for storefronts.



DON'T:

- Obscure character-defining features.
- Alter or damage architectural details.
- Street elements out of neighborhood character.

Application of Guidelines

Below are images illustrating the overall design intentions of the above guidelines. One property can help improve and develop the entire streetscape of the hamlet overlay district. In this example, the existing building has been demolished to allow for parking. The new structures have been relocated to the front of the site reclaiming its presence on the street. The buildings are set far enough back to allow for the development of a landscape buffer separating the new large sidewalk from the street. This new site configuration incorporates a small pedestrian alley to allow patrons easy access to their vehicles without traversing a large parking lot or dark alley.

The overall streetscape is greatly improved by moving the structure forward on the site. The street edge is complete and helps define the pedestrian zone. The new plantings in the landscape buffer soften the hard surfaces. With the parking in the rear, walking and lingering among stores is easy and encouraged.

DO:

- Place parking in the rear.
- Separate pedestrian and vehicular traffic.
- Enhance street parking.
- Keep curb cuts to a minimum.
- Screen parking with landscaping.
- Create and enhance pedestrian spaces.
- Create public pedestrian access and street corridor.

EXISTING STREETScape



POTENTIAL STREETScape





Unique Hamlet Strategies

Armonk

Development Opportunities page 26-27
Development Constraints

Banksville

Development Opportunities page 28-29
Development Constraints

North White Plains

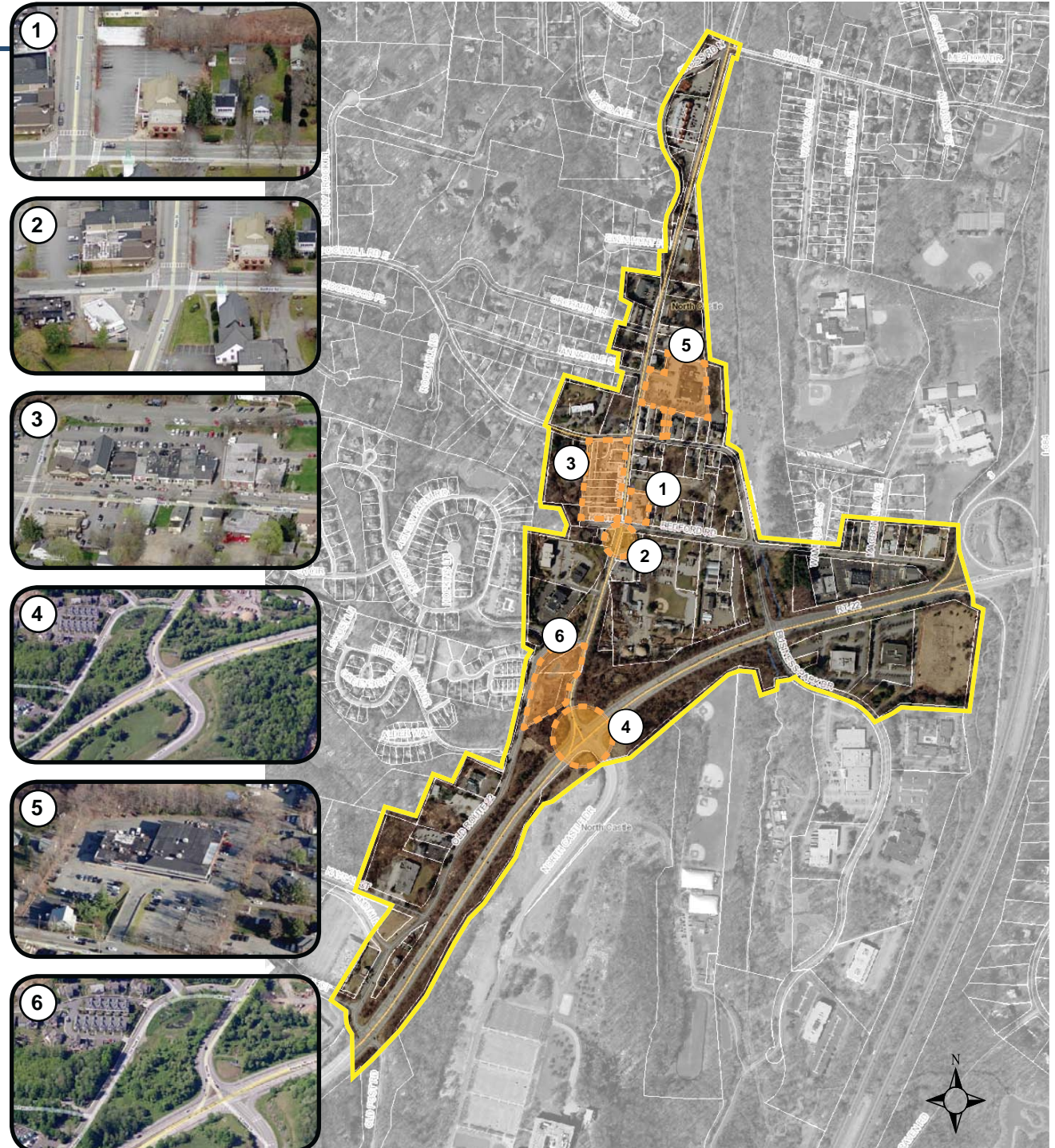
Development Opportunities page 30-31
Development Constraints



Armonk

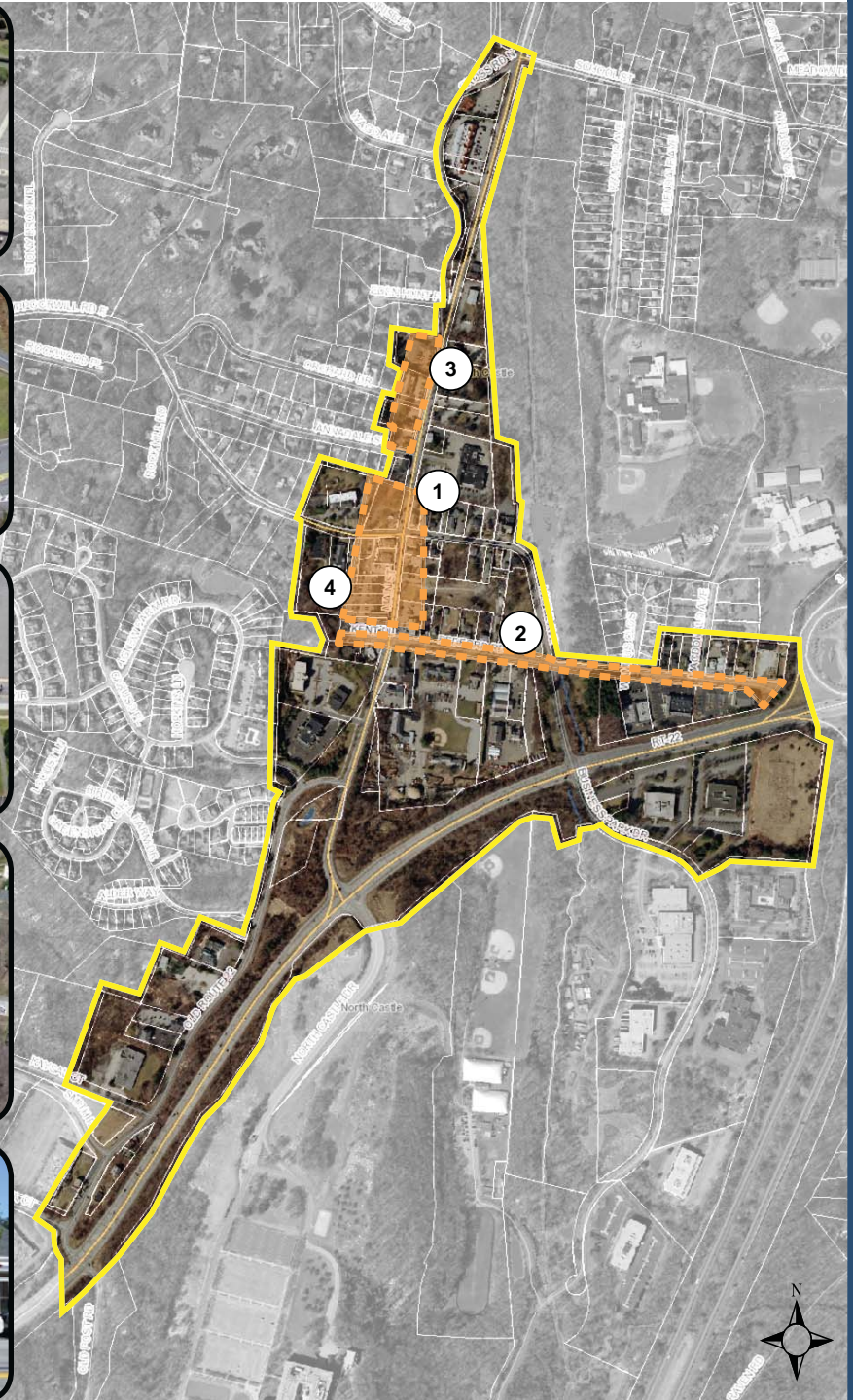
Development Opportunities:

1. 386 Main Street:
 - Reinforce street edge with buildings tighter to street.
 - Add landscape buffer.
2. Corner of Main St. & Bedford Rd.:
 - Make corner more prominent.
 - Reduce asphalt and curb cuts.
3. Enhance Main Street Corridor:
 - Nice existing street façade.
 - Add residential floor on top of existing first floor retail.
4. Armonk Main Gateway:
 - Add signage.
 - Sidewalks connecting main corridor.
 - Develop bus stop to be part of gateway and more commuter friendly.
5. A&P Site:
 - Street presence of structure.
 - Parking not visual priority.
6. Hussar Parcel:
 - Small mixed use property.
 - Add landscape and streetscape elements.



Development Constraints:

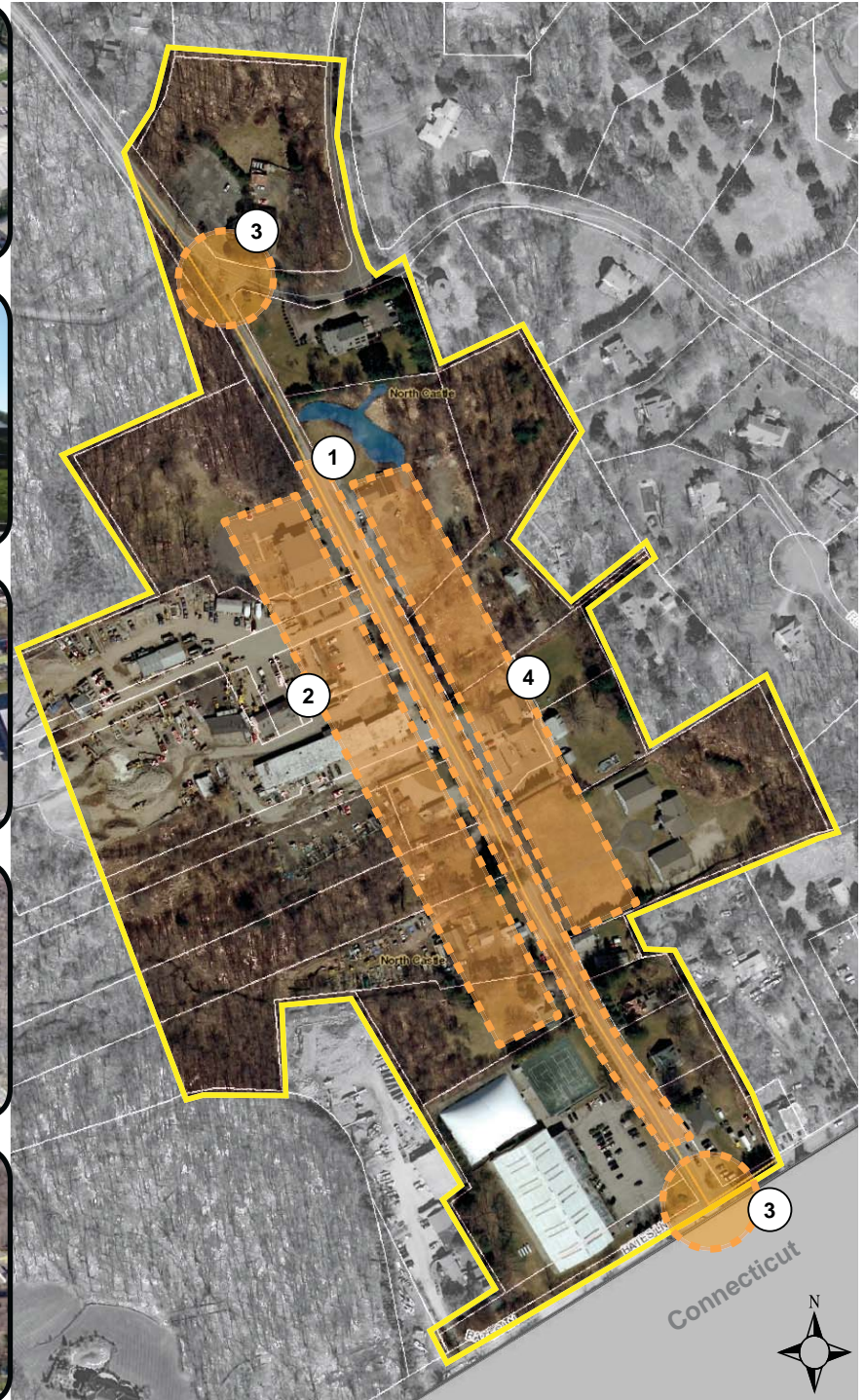
1. No Pocket Parks Exist:
 - No place to sit and read, relax.
 - No connection between parks and Main Street.
 - Only one large park.
 - Highlight new parks as part of a nature/cultural trail.
2. Bedford Road Needs Destination:
 - Make more prominent.
 - Add a public space/park at terminus of road.
 - No pedestrian amenities that encourage lingering or walking among services.
3. Excessive Asphalt and Curb Cuts:
 - Advocate shared parking lots.
 - Add landscape buffers and sidewalks.
4. Lack of Mixed Uses:
 - Encourage retail and commercial for first floor use.
 - Residential units on second and third floors.



Banksville

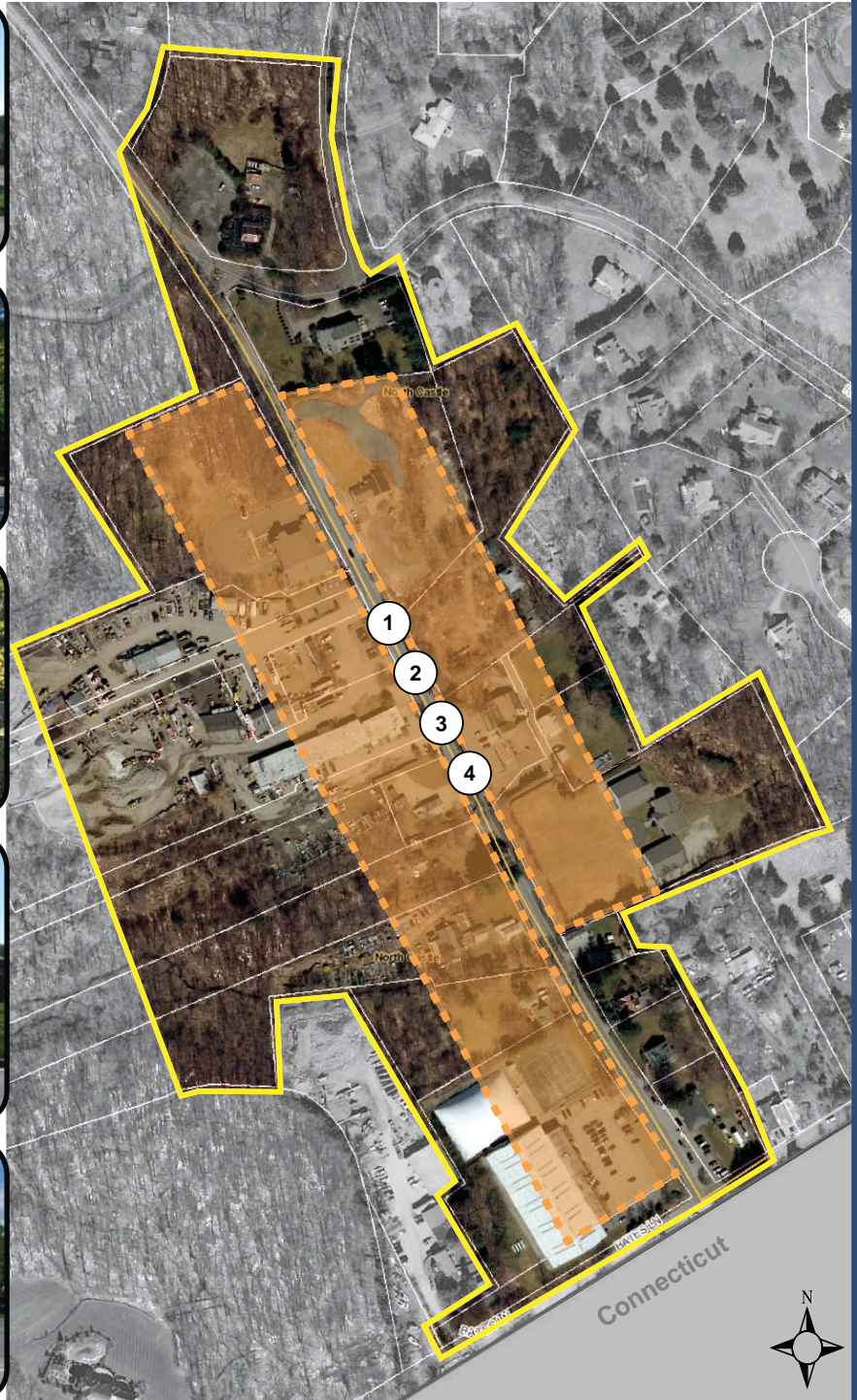
Development Opportunities:

1. Street Edge Landscaping:
 - Add sidewalk to at least one side of street.
 - Add landscaping for street hierarchy.
2. Establish Hierarchy for Property Development:
 - Establish building height and massing limitations.
3. Banksville/New York Gateway:
 - Add signage to highlight border.
 - Add signage to highlight northern entry to town.
4. Lack of Mixed Uses:
 - Have small apartment/residential units for a more diversified population.



Development Constraints:

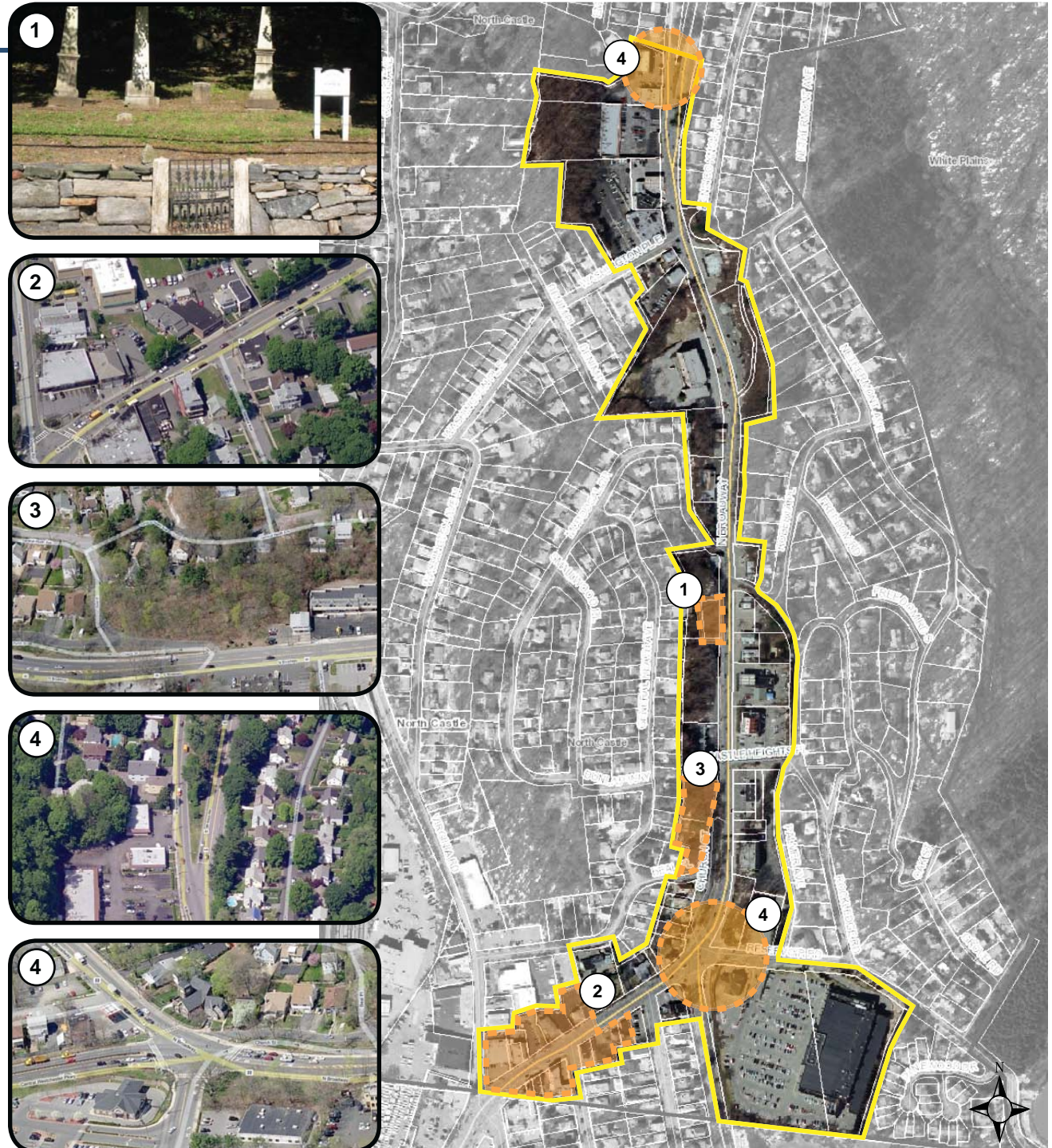
1. No Existing Strong or Established Business Base Model.
2. Need for Diversified Housing:
 - Currently single family residential is the only option.
3. Identify Desired Business Plan:
 - Advocate retail and light commercial such as offices.
4. Lack of Mixed Uses:
 - Encourage retail and commercial for first floor use.
 - Have residential units on second floor.



North White Plains

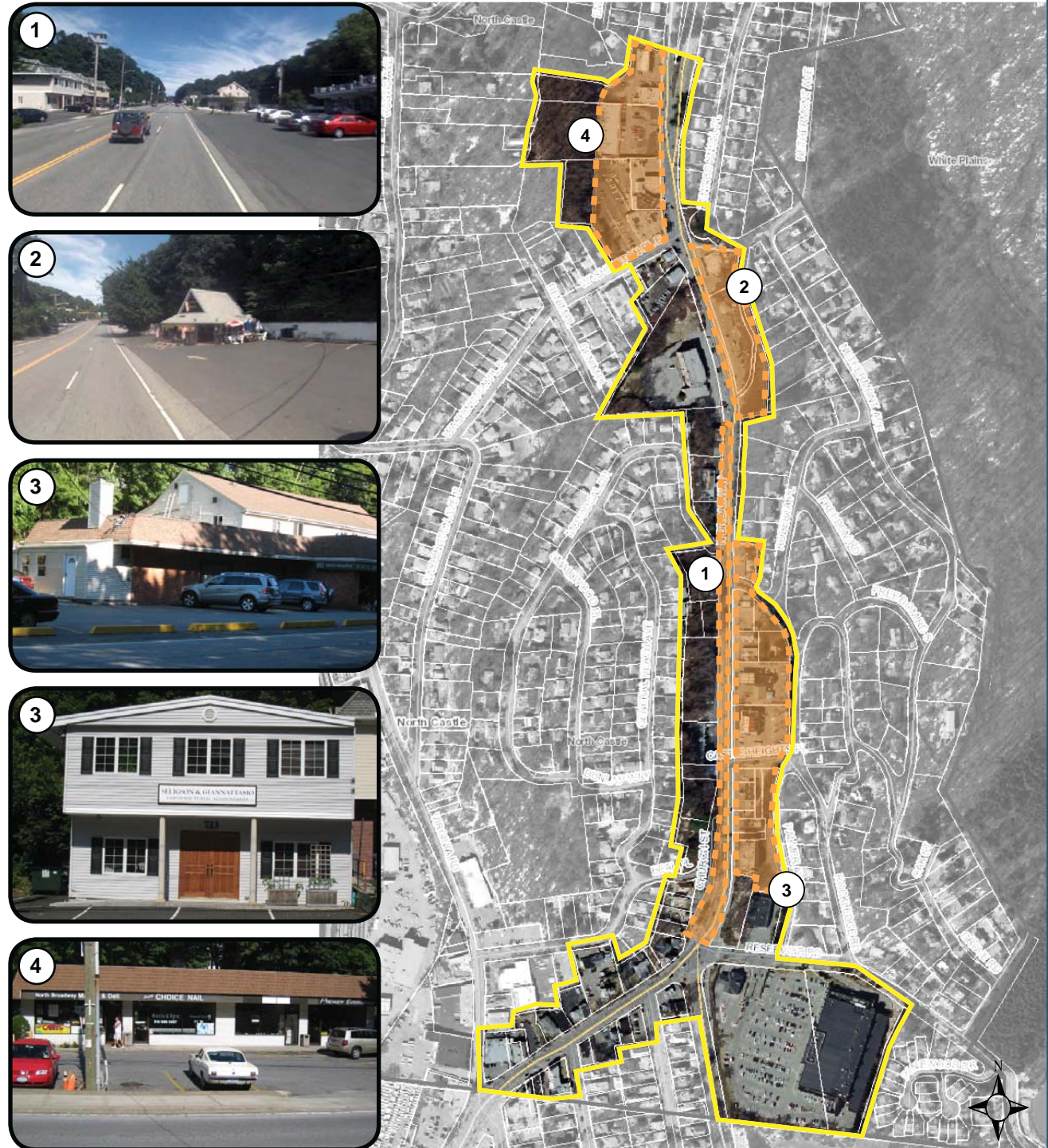
Development Opportunities:

1. Existing Cultural Resources:
 - New signage marking significance.
 - Emphasize cemetery as part of new town center.
 - Highlight as part of a new cultural trail.
2. Pockets of Density:
 - Areas of density already exist, just need to be linked to one another.
 - Need safe sidewalks to help connect the hamlet corridor.
3. Vacant Lots Available:
 - Require current empty parcel to be mixed use developments.
 - Develop properties to visually connect with existing parcels to create a street wall.
4. North White Plains Gateways:
 - Add signage to mark entrance.
 - Sidewalks connecting main corridor.
 - Develop bus stop to be part of gateway and more commuter friendly.
5. Southern Section:
 - Enhance retail storefronts.
 - Manage parking effectively.
6. Northern Section:
 - Safer, improved traffic patterns at building locations, while adding landscape buffers and street furnishings where appropriate.



Development Constraints:

1. No Urban Environment Amenities:
 - No unity between parcels.
 - Sidewalks are sparse and not linked.
 - No benches, trash cans, planters.
 - Street lamps are not in scale with pedestrians.
2. No pocket parks exist:
 - No place to sit and read, relax.
 - No place to grab food and eat at the Little Spot Restaurant.
 - No connection to neighboring Miller Park.
3. Excessive Asphalt and Curb Cuts:
 - Currently parking blends into roads.
 - Advocate shared parking lots.
 - Add landscape buffers and sidewalks.
4. Lack of Mixed Uses:
 - Only one-story retail along corridor.
 - Encourage retail and commercial for first floor use.
 - Residential units on second and third floors.



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