



BACK RIVER BRIDGE
GATEWAY & TRAFFIC CALMING

Gateway to the Water: A Vision for the Future of Essex-Middle River





*James T. Smith, Jr.
County Executive*

January 9, 2006

Dear Friends:

It is with a sense of great pride that I thank the Essex-Middle River community and the skilled Urban Design Assistance Team (UDAT) professionals, who worked together to create a bold vision for the future of Essex-Middle River. Under the strong leadership of Shawn Meyer, John Gontrum and other dedicated community leaders, you had the courage to dream, to share your dreams, and to work together to craft a unique blueprint for the realization of those dreams.

This is an exciting time for Essex-Middle River residents and the County. Community leaders, business owners, institutions, community residents and County staff came together for a shared purpose; to make your proud community even stronger. Before the first shovel hits the ground, you have already accomplished this. You have pulled together in a community-driven process to raise the funds and resources needed to craft an achievable plan.

But now it is time to roll up our sleeves. As we work together to refine and implement the concepts left by the UDAT, I pledge my continued support to the renaissance of Essex-Middle River. The same enthusiasm, hard work, commitment and participation that brought about this plan will be needed to carry it to fruition. I wish you the best in this endeavor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James T. Smith, Jr.", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

James T. Smith, Jr.
Baltimore County Executive



The Baltimore County Council

January 9, 2006

Dear Citizens:

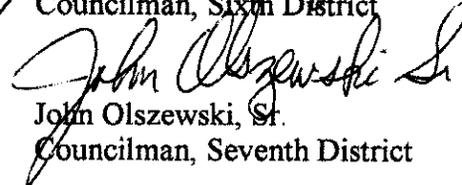
What an exhilarating accomplishment. What started in May 2003 at a meeting at Hawthorne Elementary School - where community leaders learned about the Urban Design Assistance Team (UDAT) process and decided to invite a team to the area - has culminated in a new vision for Essex-Middle River.

Many thanks to the residents and businesses in Essex-Middle River. You volunteered your time, resources and money, and shared your thoughts and ideas with the professionals who came to our community, listened to us, and made recommendations to enhance our community. Thanks also to County staff, particularly those representatives from the Office of Community Conservation, Department of Economic Development and Office of Planning, who lent support and guidance to the effort and to County Executive James T. Smith for his continued support of the area.

The effort undertaken to bring this plan about has empowered the community. The community should feel a sense of pride for their role in creating this vision for a better Essex-Middle River. The UDAT recommendations are far reaching and show evidence of thoughtful planning. It will be exciting to watch as the plan takes shape and is implemented in the upcoming months and years. We look forward to supporting and assisting the community in this endeavor.

Sincerely,


Joseph Bartenfelder, Chairman
Councilman, Sixth District


John Olszewski, Sr.
Councilman, Seventh District



WHAT WE HEARD

DESIGN IDEAS

MAKING IT HAPPEN

Essex-Middle River Steering Committee Members

Co-Chairs	John Gontrum Shawn Meyer
Neighborhoods	Steve Verch
Fundraising	Gary Jennings
Accommodations & Workshop	Randy Cogar
Flyover & Boat Tour	Penelope Soteria
Public Forums	Julie Gaynor
Public Relations	Jean Flanagan
History, Maps & Documents	Jackie Nickel
Institutions & Panel Discussions	Dr. David Ring

Special thanks to the Essex Library for hosting the UDAT design studio.

Technical support to the UDAT process:

Terri Kingeter, Baltimore County Office of Community Conservation
Katy Kendrick, Baltimore County Office of Community Conservation
Amy Mantay, Baltimore County Office of Planning
Bill Jones, Baltimore County Department of Economic Development



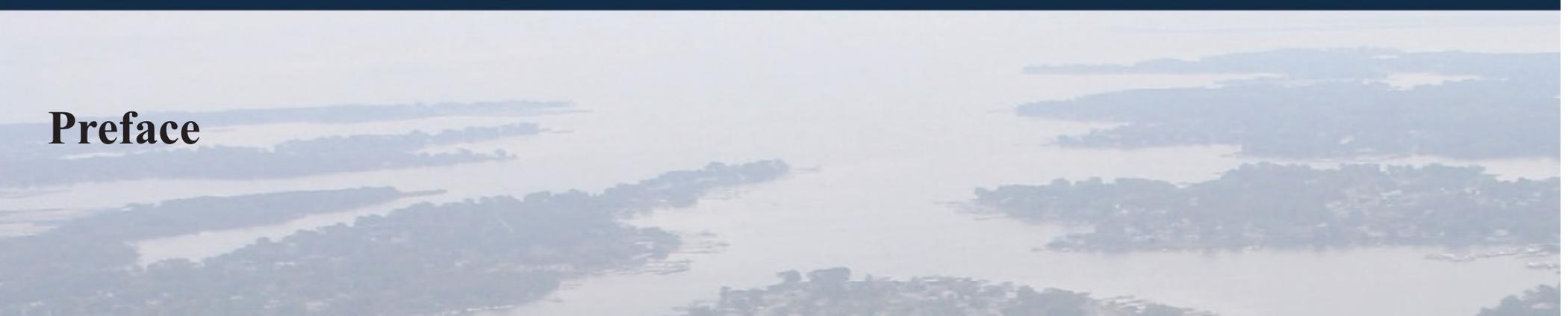
Essex-Middle River is comprised of numerous neighborhoods in Eastern Baltimore County wrapped around the waterfronts of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. Initially, the area was noted for its summer homes and the businesses that grew up along the waterfront and rail lines. World War II saw the influx of tens of thousands of workers for the Martin Company in Middle River, and permanent communities grew from a relatively short wartime boom. The Martin Company and its successors were major employers in the area, and along with the Bethlehem Steel Corporation, formed the bedrock of hard-working, middle class employment. The long-term decline of employment at those companies is a sad story as thousands lost their jobs, having to seek employment elsewhere or find lower paying, less secure jobs. Solid communities and housing developments changed to more transient communities with less owner occupied housing and more rental housing, and while other areas in Baltimore County grew rapidly, Essex-Middle River lost population and a sense of direction.

The last ten years, however, has seen a rekindling of spirit and an upswing in both public and private investment. New investment has come to the center of Essex and Middle River on Eastern Boulevard. New homes are being built in increasing numbers each year, and developments such as Miramar Landing, WaterView and Hopewell Pointe have broken ground to replace run down and decrepit properties. With the new development has come recognition of the assets of older communities in Essex and Middle River, including Hawthorne, Middlesex, Middleborough, East Hopewell, Wilson Point and the many others. These communities have seen their housing values escalate and an increasing appreciation of their unique contributions to the area.

In the context of this history and of the new growth, members of the residential and business communities in Essex-Middle River sought a sense of direction to continue revitalization efforts while providing connections between communities, commercial areas and area amenities. While recent investment had been made in the area, individual projects needed to be bound together to strengthen the area and not detract from the older communities. It was recognized that it is the older neighborhoods that give the area character, and the newer developments have to enhance the attributes that make Essex-Middle River a vibrant place to live and to work.

In May 2003 approximately 100 members of the diverse communities that comprise the Essex-Middle River area met at Hawthorne Elementary School to discuss the future of their communities. The County introduced an Urban Design Assistance Team (UDAT) process, previously successful in the Dundalk community, which would provide volunteer experts in fields such as urban planning, landscape architecture, transportation, community development, environmental studies and other disciplines to work closely with the community to formulate a plan to continue revitalization efforts in the area. While there had been several studies of the area, including most recently a

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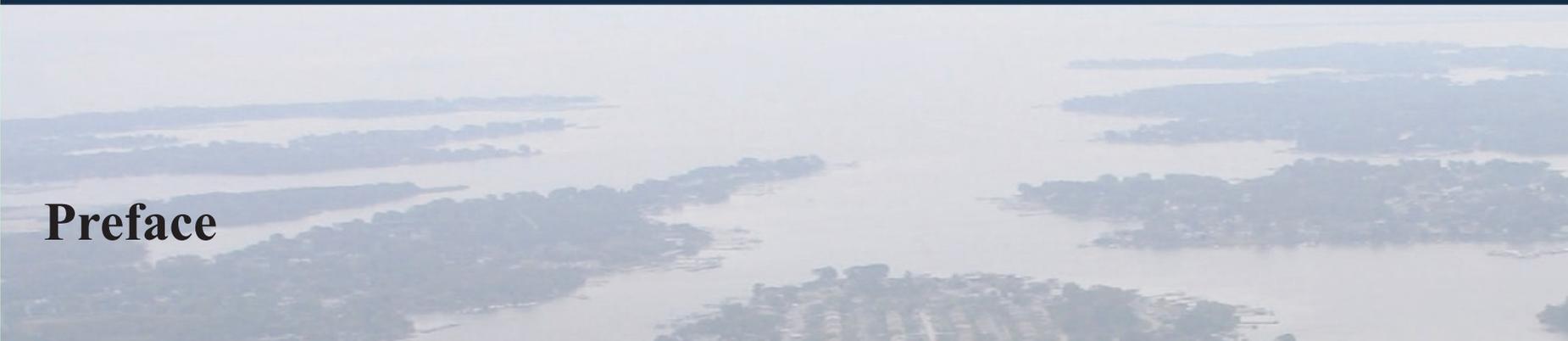
Waterfront Revitalization District Implementation Plan that drew attention to the waterfront as a unique asset of the community, the UDAT process was intended to be different; not a plan, not a study, but more of a road map to a vision of what the community could be...

With the prospect of a UDAT fully embraced by the community, Peter Batchelor, FAIA, FAICP, Director of the North Carolina Urban Design Assistance Program was contacted by Baltimore County and Essex-Middle River community leaders and invited to visit the community. Seeing the value of an Essex-Middle River UDAT process, he agreed to put together a team, and recruited Steven Gaddis, an architect from Durham, North Carolina, to lead the team. They then worked to put together a ten-member team of seasoned professionals to carry out the UDAT process.

The tremendous enthusiasm for the UDAT program resulted in the creation of a steering committee which was formed to assist the UDAT team members in their research and work in the community. The Essex-Middle River Renaissance Corporation was formed in 2003 as a tax-exempt, charitable corporation to act as a conduit for community participation and fund-raising. Community participation was fantastic. Members of the residential and business communities responded to community input forums and also to corporate and individual membership drives, which had as their purpose not just fund-raising, but more importantly, involvement by community members in a process that inherently should be community driven.

For one week in October, 2004, the team visited the community, listened and responded to the community's vision for Essex-Middle River. They produced drawings, renderings, plans and recommendations for the revitalization of the community. Recommendations included a new vision for Eastern Boulevard through the heart of Essex, a new look at Josenhann's Corner and the Country Ridge Shopping Center, re-development opportunities at Lockheed Martin and the Middle River Depot and creating neighborhood connections. They endorsed plans brought to them by the Hawthorne community and envisioned an enhanced gateway to Hawthorne and Middle River at the Middle River Bridge. Most important, the UDAT emphasized the importance of taking the visioning to the next step. The vision is not complete - it should grow and adapt as communities provide additional input. As the program originated with

Preface



community involvement and input, it must continue with more detailed planning and programming to bring the vision to fruition.

At the end of the book are the acknowledgements of dozens of individuals and businesses without whose contributions of time, talent and treasure this project could not have been undertaken let alone succeeded. Certainly we need to give special thanks to Dr. Peter Batchelor, Steve Gaddis and the team members who gave their time and talent to the project and to creating a vision for our future. We hope to invite them back one day to see the outcome of their work. The major acknowledgement, however, has to be to the people of the Essex-Middle River communities, without whose contributions there would have been no UDAT visions and without whose ongoing support the visions will have no meaning.

Shawn Meyer
John Gontrum
Essex-Middle River Renaissance Corporation
Co-Chairs

What we saw





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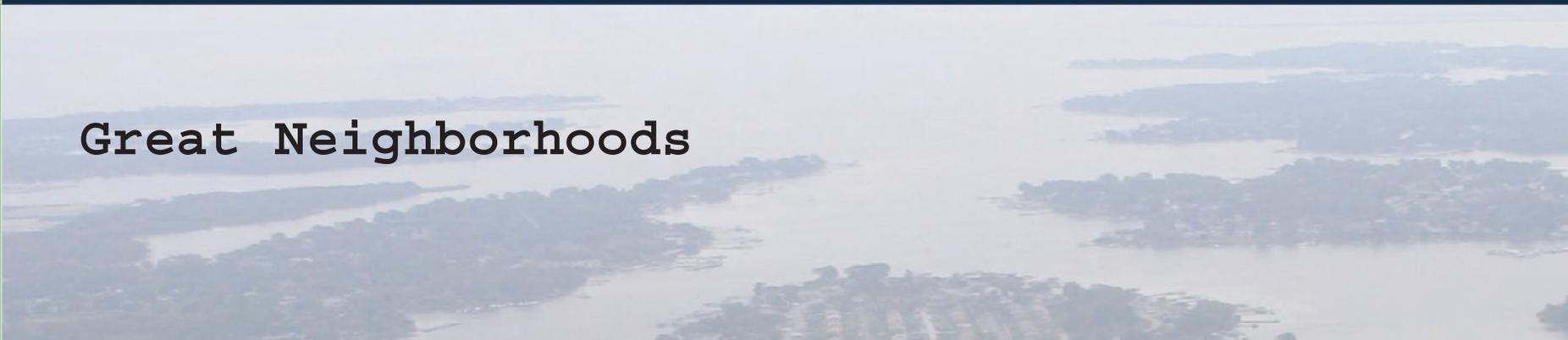


There are many great neighborhoods in the Essex-Middle River area. Some, like the Hawthorne and Middlesex communities, are revitalizing themselves. As the current population ages, young families are moving in and renovating the housing stock to fit their needs.

However, some housing, dating back to World War II and the influx of workers at the Glenn L. Martin aircraft factory, has formidable problems of deterioration. It is being replaced with new residential development, including single family detached homes, villas, townhouses and senior apartment complexes.

Most remaining developable land already is in the planning stage or construction phase of development. These projects are providing housing sizes and types that were not readily available previously. Their success is apparent in new communities such as WaterView and Hopewell Pointe, which are attracting younger residents with higher incomes.

Great Neighborhoods





The Essex - Middle River area has a stunningly beautiful natural environment. Clearly, its most important environmental asset is the Chesapeake Bay and the extraordinary views of the water and the shoreline it affords.

Few small towns in America can boast this wealth of unspoiled waterfront scenery.

What is notable, however, is how few places on land are accessible to public view and activity.

There are various small public parks and recreation areas on the waterfront, numerous marinas and a few restaurants, but nowhere in the heart of the community is the waterfront celebrated on the large public scale it deserves.

The new park at Wilson Point Lagoon will help fill this void by creating a waterfront welcome center in conjunction with Chesapeake Bay Memories and the Glenn L. Martin Maryland Aviation Museum. In addition, Chesapeake Gateway Park at the former Eastern/Old Eastern triangle, although small in size, will allow public pedestrian access to the Middle River Bridge area.

A pedestrian walkway cantilevered from the bridge has been discussed as further encouraging activity along the waterway. Landscaping along the shoreline and cosmetic improvements to the bridge itself will enhance water views for the commuter as well.

Beautiful Natural Environment

What we saw





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Essex-Middle River is well connected to surrounding communities through roads, highway access, rail, water, and air. It has bus service and regional rail service, as is the case in most American urban areas, but the frequency of service could be increased to benefit commuters.

There are future plans for the extension of the Baltimore light rail system into the area, and this will be a welcome development to supplement the MARC system. It is notable that the Amtrak line also passes through the community, however it does not make a stop.



Numerous Transit Corridors



Any community that can have two or three good blocks of downtown development has a true town center, according to a noted urban designer. Essex clearly meets this criteria in the 400 and 500 blocks of Eastern Boulevard. These blocks have a good stock of buildings which are at a pedestrian scale and, for the most part, open onto the sidewalk with glass storefronts. These areas present good bones on which to hang new development and re-development.

Many of the buildings have a unique character and create a unique image of Essex. The old fire station is a perfect example, demonstrating that resources are required to preserve public buildings. Fortunately, this

building has been adapted to house a local history museum and continues to assert its importance in the community. In fact, it would be difficult to disguise the significance of the structure regardless of the use within.

While most residents express their respect for historic landmarks, a number of citizens requested a chain restaurant in their community. Ironically, visitors from outside the area would rather visit local restaurants.

Essex still possesses a spirit of blue-collar authenticity, the result of local people just living their lives. New residents are both charmed and challenged by their older neighbors' staunch and determined ways.

Downtown Essex

What we saw





The public had numerous opportunities in the months leading up to the UDAT visit to tell the team what they would like to preserve, create or change in their community.

The citizens of Essex-Middle River have clearly identified their assets.

Essex-Middle River has strong neighborhoods and community activism centered around schools, civic associations, senior centers, veterans organizations, and religious institutions. Recreation councils play a key role in providing opportunities for the community's youth.

The community would like to Preserve:

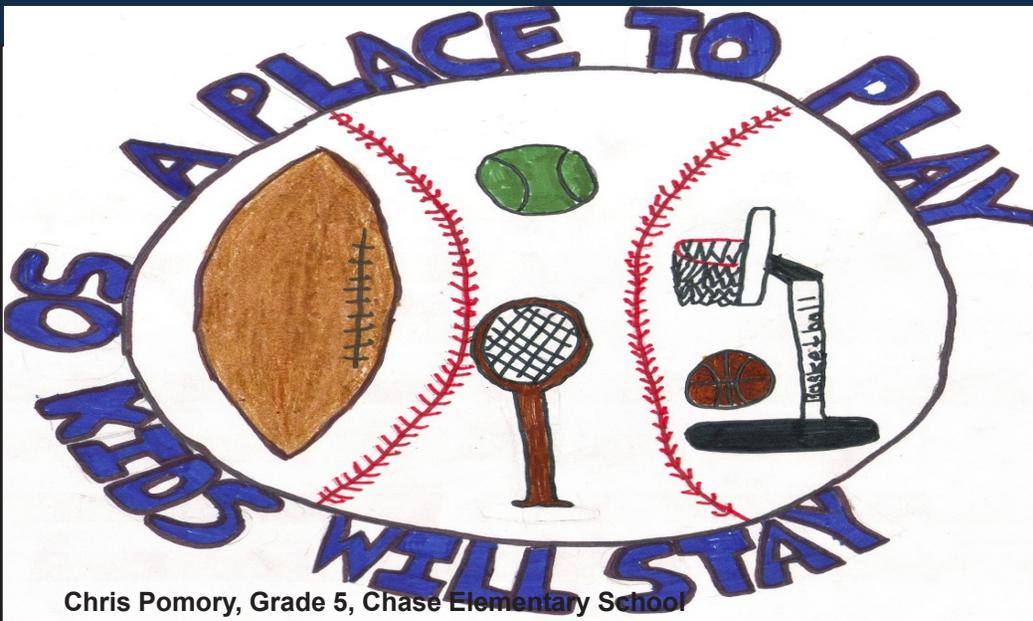
- Rich local history
- Strong neighborhoods
- Strong community activism
- Diverse population
- Local landmarks
- Beautiful views
- Parks and undeveloped spaces
- Numerous marinas



Preserve

The community would like to CREATE:

- More mid-priced housing
- Links to recreation
- Youth recreation spaces
- More bike and walking trails
- More community centers
- Waterfront destination
- New use for GSA Depot
- Expanded aviation museum
- More upscale shopping
- Enhanced community gateways



When asked what should be created in the Essex-Middle River area, the community focused on the waterfront and on one of the largest buildings in the area, the GSA Depot, for good reason. The waterfront, often referred to as the hidden gem of Eastern Baltimore County, has huge development potential and will provide a long-lasting economic engine. Clearly, the problem with the almost two-million-square-foot GSA Depot is to determine its redevelopment potential and how it can help drive this powerful force.

The need for more upscale housing is another key part of the growth problem. The community needs growth in income and in population to attract and support more upscale shopping as well as housing. It is clear that The Avenue at White Marsh is providing an alluring shopping destination model. But White Marsh most likely has a monopoly on this type of format, so it would be wise for the Essex-Middle River area to focus on a different niche.

While upscale housing is an attractive draw to the area, affordable housing is also needed. Many children and grandchildren of existing residents cannot afford to live in \$300,000+ homes. For this reason, many younger families continue to move to Harford or Carroll counties where the housing dollar buys more.

Create

What we heard



The community would like to Change:

- Improve reputation of the area
- Slow traffic on Eastern Blvd.
- Beautify main streets
- Improve pedestrian safety
- Improve downtown parking
- Replace trees blocking stores
- Improve bus shelters
- Mix downtown building uses
- Improve Gateway signs
- Upgrade parks and play areas
- Update Country Ridge Shopping Center
- Upgrade the train station
- Expand dredging program for Back River and Middle River waterways
- Reduce housing density

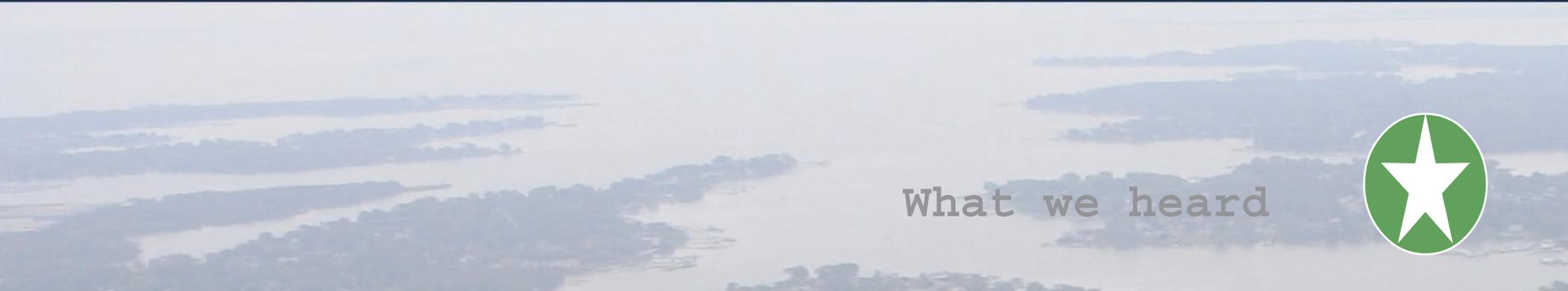


Residents of Essex-Middle River told the Urban Design Assistance Team that their community is sometimes derided by people who live outside the area. However, the team came in with fresh eyes and found Essex-Middle River to be full of good people and a treasure of assets. It is now time to build on the assets and show them off. It is time to take advantage of the unique aspects of the communities: the waterfront, the history, and the remarkable variety of housing.

As one reads through the list of changes, it is obvious that the communities have a solid core vision regarding changes to be made. The team believes that there is an important link between the enhancement of private property and community growth. It will take the collective energy and will of the community to make improvements.

Essex-Middle River could benefit from a growth in income, which in itself does not dictate physical change, but will in all likelihood require it. An example of this is the WaterView community - new housing which replaced older housing with numerous social problems. This change brought new residents who have decent purchasing power and who like to spend their money locally.

Change



What we heard





The Urban Design Assistance Team began its design process with an analysis of the focus area by looking at Essex-Middle River in terms of centers, connections, and gateways.

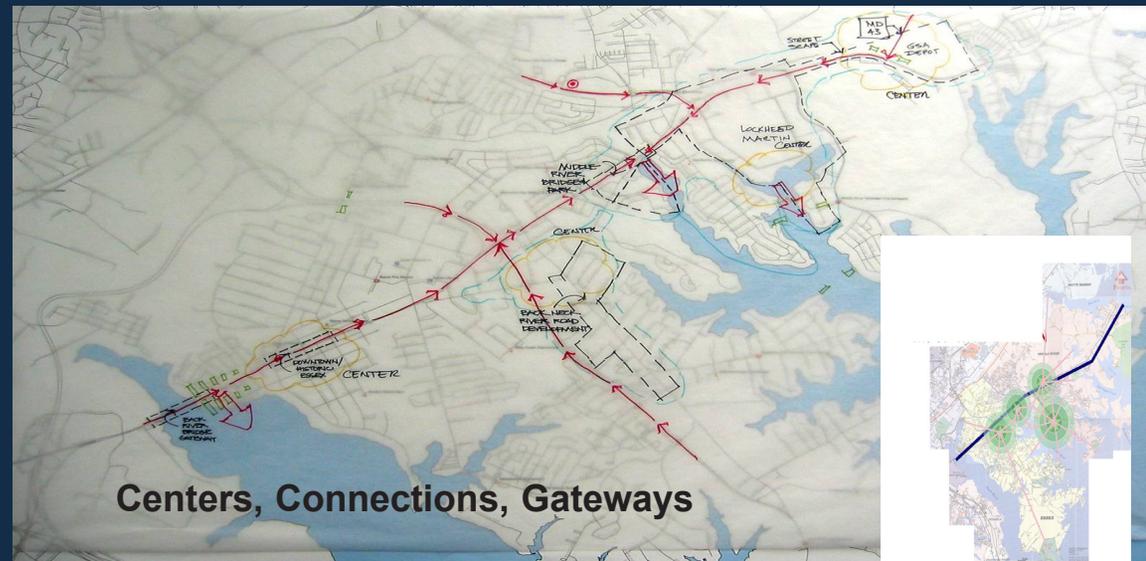
Centers generally mean places around which businesses, housing and activities are focused. The team was able to identify one clear center and at least three other areas that would benefit from redevelopment and thus, create more well-defined centers. Downtown Essex is a center, and the intersection of Old Eastern Avenue and Back River Neck Road was once a center which now would benefit from additional development. The redevelopment of the Lockheed Martin site has the possibility of creating a new center on the water, and finally, the GSA Depot is also a potential center.

Connections generally include roads as the primary connector. The red arrows on the map show possible

water connections which have not yet been developed.

In conjunction with connectors, there exist gateways into and out of the community. These have been identified by pairs of green rectangles on the map. None of the current gateways are currently functioning very well. The major gateways that we see include an entrance to Essex over Back River Bridge, the entrance to Middlesex, and the new gateway with the extension of MD Route 43.

The goal in creating good community connections is to make it easy to get to a multitude of places. Good connections take the form of a network. Part of the planning for the future must focus on these networks.



Site Analysis: Centers, Connections, Gateways



The Team devoted significant time and energy to crafting recommendations for the Essex Revitalization Area along Eastern Boulevard. A primary goal was to create gateways to and from Essex and to reinforce the town's centers. The map above shows two potential locations for new gateways and suggests areas where creative approaches to development and redevelopment should be pursued.

When one arrives in Essex, there is

nothing of note or scale that creates anticipation or interest. Nothing slows traffic. Eastern Boulevard's wide, straight lanes with no visual relief encourage speeding. The Red Cube does not have the scale or design impact to effectively announce the Essex commercial area. The pages ahead will present a variety of detailed recommendations for enhancing this crucial area.



Commercial Revitalization Area





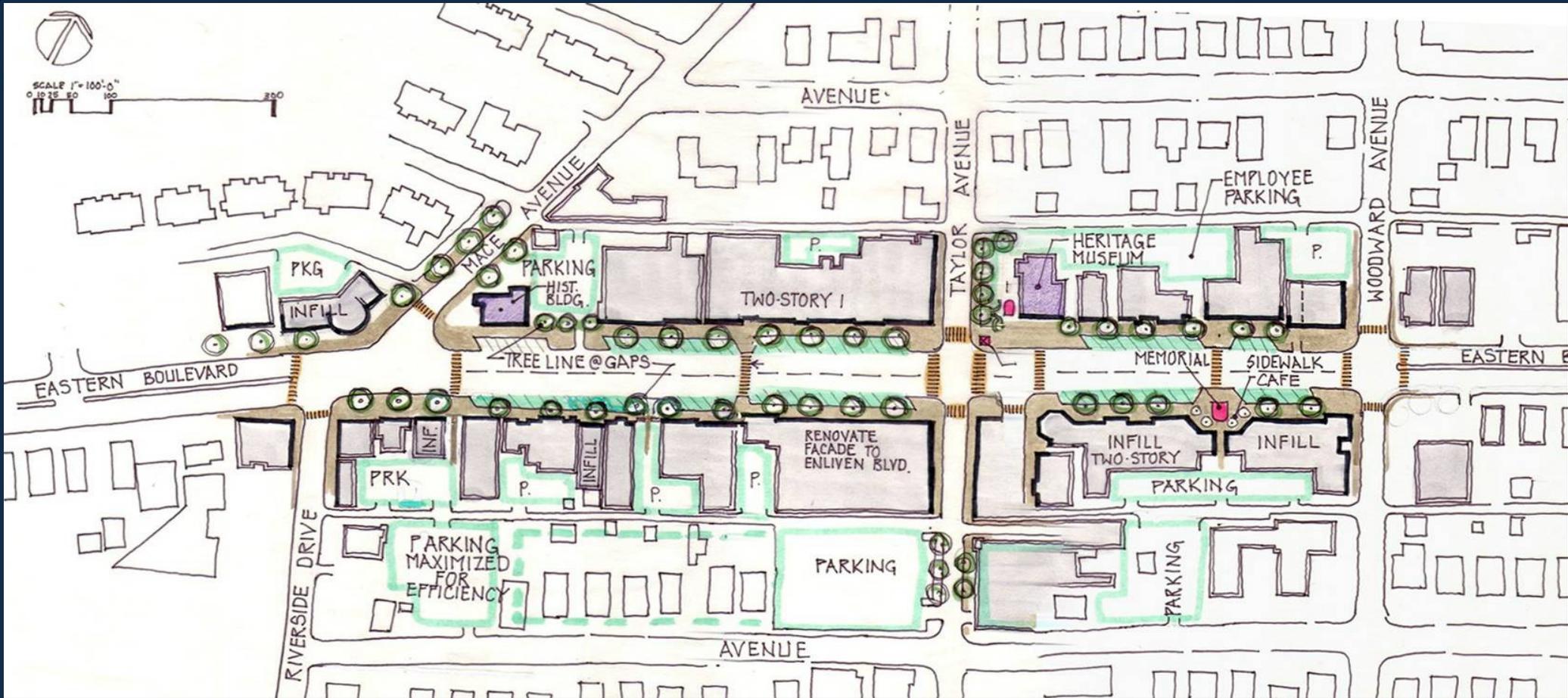
BACK RIVER BRIDGE
GATEWAY & TRAFFIC CALMING

Monumental signage will be required on the eastern side of Back River Bridge to catch the attention of people who have been traveling on a high speed road where even the bridge itself doesn't make much of an impression.

In order to slow the traffic, a center island with some type of landmark monument has been proposed. This will alert travelers to their approach to downtown Essex.



Commercial Revitalization Area: Back River Bridge Gateway



Essex needs to strengthen its community core by creating a distinctive shopping district. Local and authentic businesses can create a unique identity for Essex.

Commercial Revitalization Area: 400-500 Blocks of Eastern Boulevard





The existing streetscape has numerous pedestrian impediments. There are narrow and uneven sidewalks. Many utility poles, signs and street lamps are intrusive.

Eastern Boulevard's wide vehicle lanes and concrete median strip invite speeding.

The proposed streetscape aims at making Essex more

inviting. Street-level establishments should feature more transparent facades, enlivening the sidewalk by letting people see into the shops. Also, creating sidewalk activity with cafes and outdoor seating would be inviting.

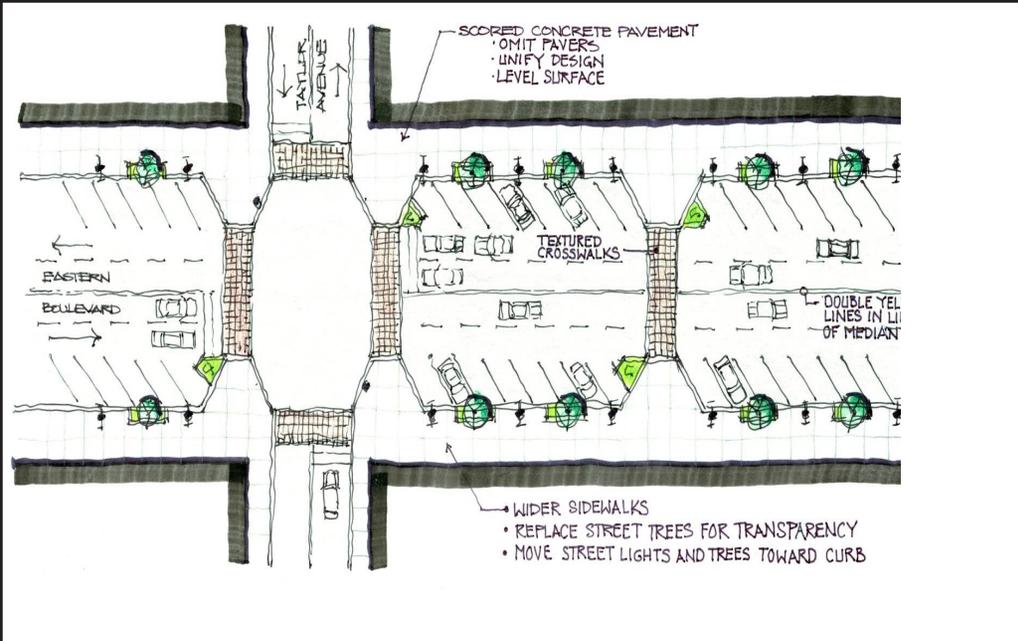
The team also recommends two-story redevelopment to create more of a

downtown atmosphere. With two story buildings, offices or residences should be placed on the second floor while commercial uses occupy the first floor.

The utility lines should also be buried. This is expensive, but very important. Also, more appropriate street trees are needed to replace the old ones.



Commercial Revitalization Area: Streetscape and Buildings



There is a great need to make pedestrian crossings safer in the Essex area. These crossings should be clearly identified and are needed at street corners as well as at mid-block.

One way to mark these crossings is by replacing the pavement with a uniform, level and durable surface. Concrete works well, particularly if it is scored with joints to create a pattern.

It is also recommended that the crossing distance be shortened by bumping out the sidewalk to the back edge of the diagonal parking.

The pedestrian path needs to read stronger than the vehicular path.

In order to accommodate the proposed two-story redevelopment, additional parking alternatives should be pursued. One option is to create structured parking, possibly behind the building at the grade drop between Eastern Blvd. and Maryland Avenue. This new parking would eliminate the need for on-street parking, maximize the efficiency of surface lots and allow for employee parking in the rear of the buildings.



PROPOSED PARKING DECK SECTION





Two retail uses shown above represent different approaches to urban design.

One company (left photo) constructed its building based on a standard plan. Unfortunately, the building is divorced from the street. There is no street corner definition, and blank walls, which are not welcoming, face the street. This design accommodates the car

more than the pedestrian. There isn't a good path to enter the building.

The second building, a bank, is considered more desirable urban design. The building's placement reinforces the streetscape. Windows on the facade are inviting to the public.

The bank building also values the pedestrian over the car. There is a clearly defined path-

way for the pedestrian - even on the drive-thru lane. The bank builders also added a planter wall in order to define the building entry.

The bank design is an excellent example of the type of redevelopment sought for downtown Essex.

Commercial Revitalization Area: Urban Design Area

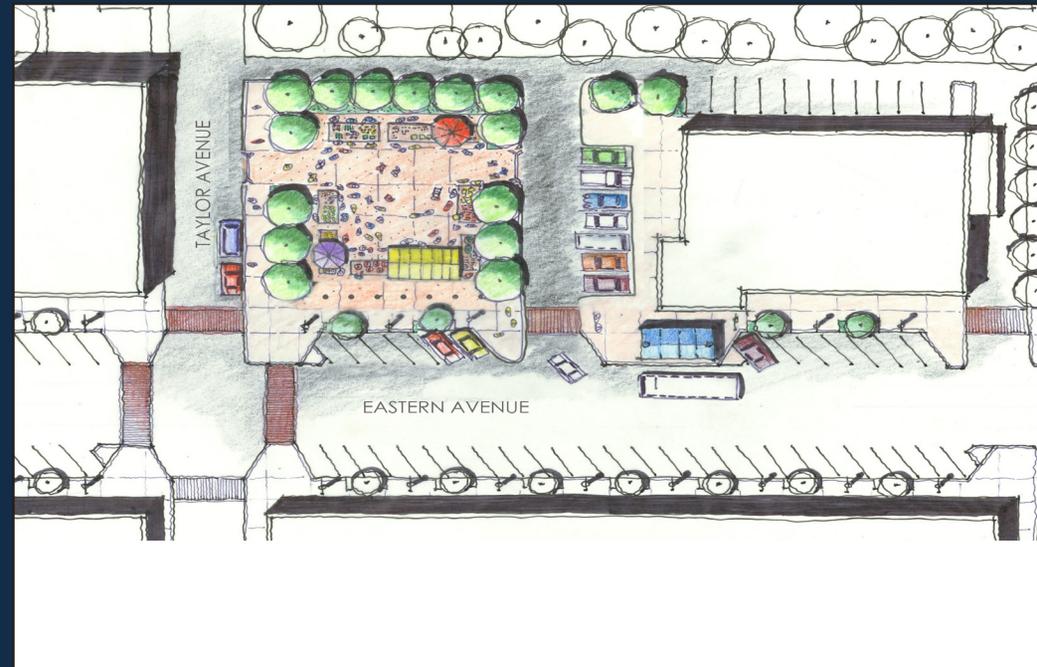
The heart of Essex must define a center. The center of a downtown can be a space, such as a plaza, a square, the courthouse, etc. The most appropriate place to locate the center is where there is currently a void - the parking lot adjacent to the CVS building.

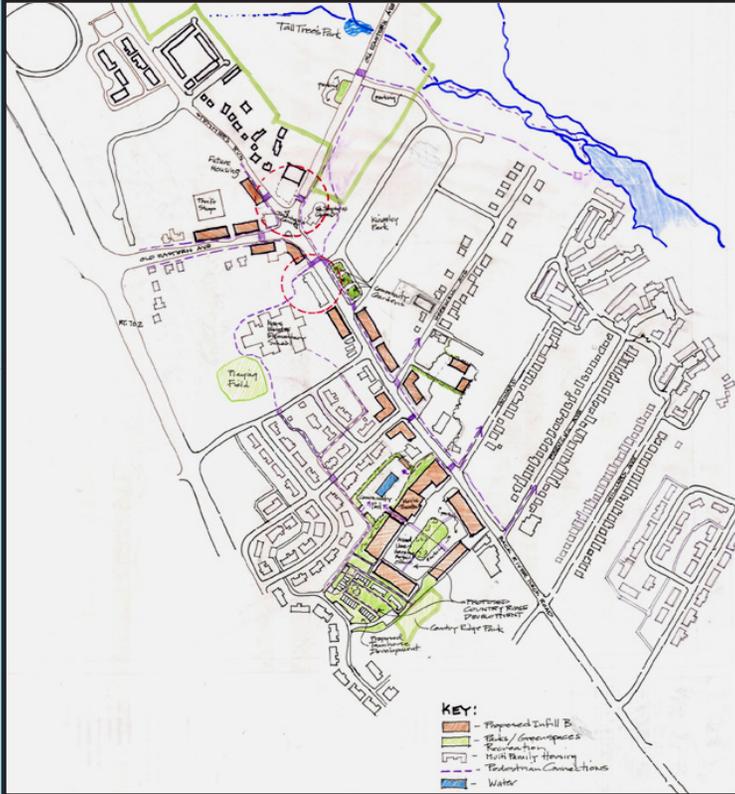
This parking lot could be converted into a multifunctional area. During a typical day, the lot would still be used for parking. There would be some minor design changes that would include special paving and shade trees in order

to create a defined space.

When the lot is not being used for parking, the community could use the location for community events, including a farmers market, arts and crafts festivals, street festivals and community fairs.

The lot could easily be changed from a parking lot to a town center by placing bollards at the entrance to the lot. The pharmacy will still have sufficient parking with the spaces located around the perimeter of the building.





Back River Neck Road is now a chaotic mix of commercial, public, religious and residential uses and undesignated parking areas. Mars Estates Elementary School is located just off Back River Neck Road in a residential area; Josenhan's corner is a major vehicular and pedestrian intersection, and a new grocery store is poorly situated.

On the northeast corner stands St. Stephen's AME Church. St. Stephen's, which has a congregation of several thousand, has recently leased, with the option to buy, the building on the southeast corner. Apparently, this building will be renovated into a learning center.

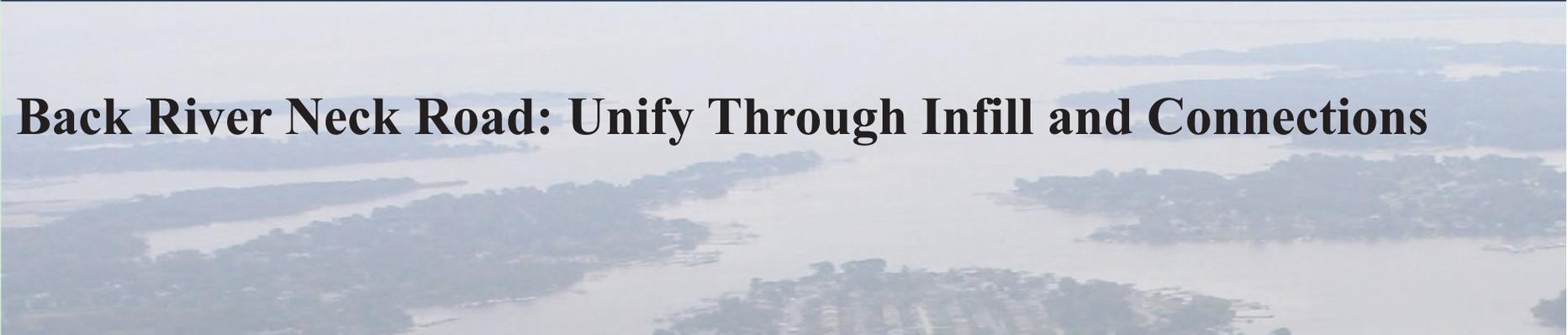
Behind the church is the now-demolished Kingsley Park Apartment complex, which will be redeveloped in the near future.

Located on the southwest corner is Neptune's Seafood restaurant, a locally owned business.

What can be done to tie this all together?



Back River Neck Road: Unify Through Infill and Connections



Mars Estates Elementary School:

One way to strengthen the target area is to strengthen the definition of the edge of the street and signify important places. Currently there is a lack of definition of the entranceway to the school, which sits next to the auto supply store.

The construction of a continuous “street wall” ties the individual pieces together, while still allowing the diversity to show through. At the school grounds, the edge would be defined with a wall, and most importantly, the entrance to the school would clearly be evident at the street edge. As you drive by, you become aware that this is a significant place - a gateway to the school and the community.



Back River Neck Road: Enrich the Streetscape





The existing development at Josenhans Corner is strong. St. Stephen's occupies two corners and Neptune's is located on the third corner. The Team felt an enhancement to the fourth corner, site of the new grocery store, could strengthen the design of this well-travelled intersection.

Unfortunately, the grocery store's parking lot dominates the street edge in an undesirable way. This is

known as "parking testosterone," allowing people to see all of the parking and showing that you've got what it takes to accommodate customers.

A proposal to fix this issue is to put a small cafe or focal point on the corner. A cafe will probably use the parking in the off times for the grocery store.

This would complete the fourth corner of the intersection.

Back River Neck Road: Josenhan's Corner

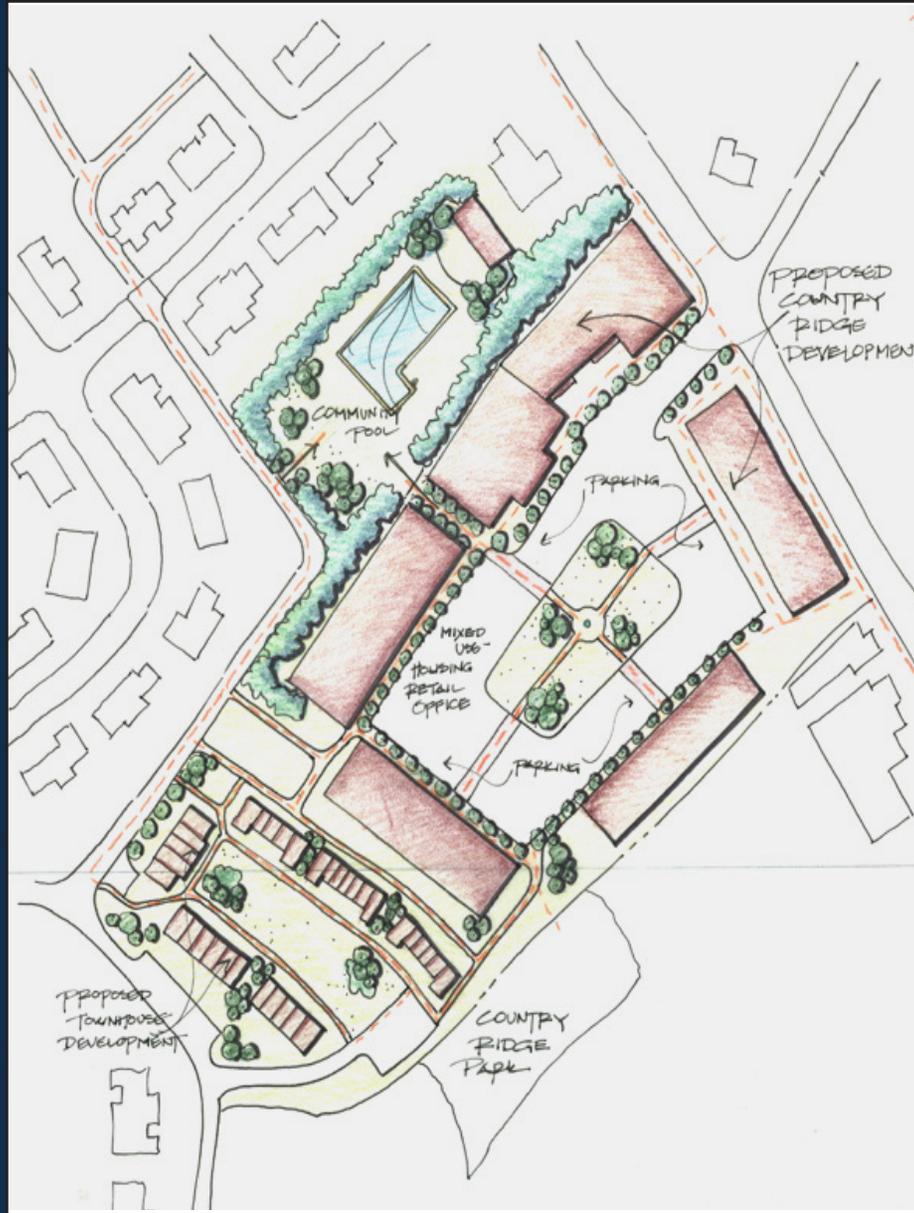


The team recognizes that Neptune's is a good restaurant that has an intimate, enclosed atmosphere. If Neptune's chooses to remodel in the future, they should include windows and other architecturally appealing options. Because they are located on a prominent street corner, Neptune's restaurant has an opportunity to attract more pa-

trons by projecting a warmer image.

An example of this is in Scandinavia, where in the dead of winter, with lots of snow on the streets, each eatery and tavern has windows which cast warm light onto the street and sidewalk. This exudes a glow of comfort.





The Team recommends that the Country Ridge Shopping Center be redeveloped to harness its full economic potential and increase community amenities.

The property lacks a center. It consists of numerous buildings on the edge, but has nothing but parking spaces in the middle. This design draws the focus away from the buildings rather than toward them.

The following design features should be considered should an opportunity for redevelopment emerge: a compact town center, quality public spaces, a network of pedestrian and bicycle paths, diversity of use, preservation of local character and smart growth practices.

Back River Neck Road: Country Ridge Proposal

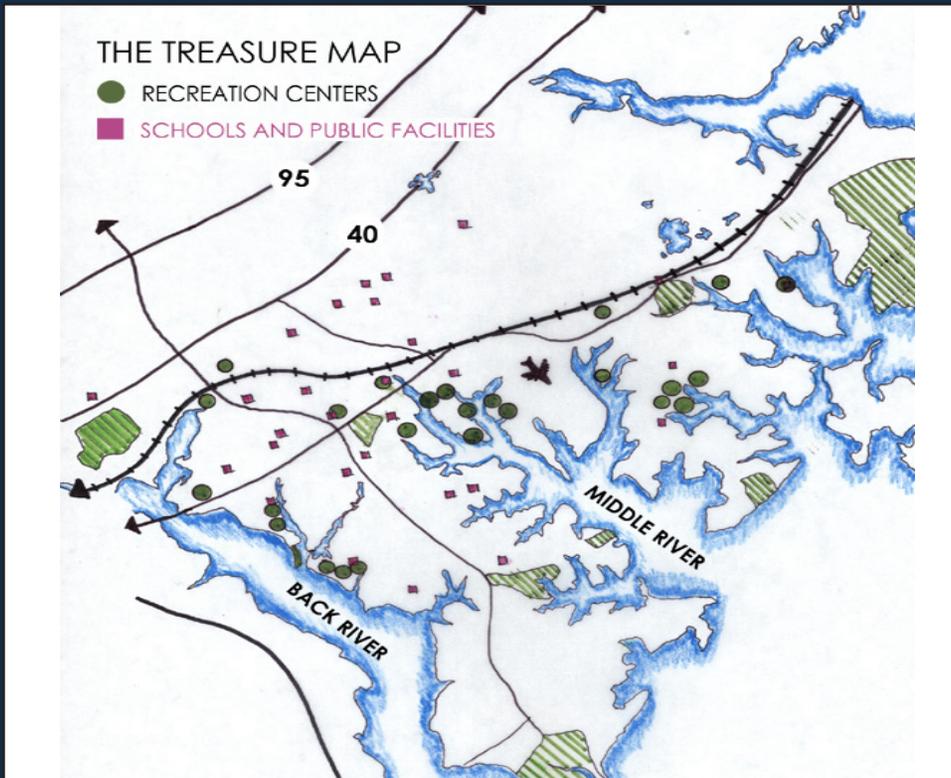


To create a center and a downtown feel, the Team suggests that the shopping center be redeveloped with two-story buildings. Parallel parking can be located on the “street” front and the main parking area could be located behind the buildings. The lots would be well-lit and there with rear-entrances to all establishments.

This would create an environment in which people would linger among cafes, theaters, etc. There would not be that rushing in and out of businesses normally associated with big box stores.

It is also recommended that a community swimming pool be located on the Country Ridge Shopping Center site. The shopping center can be made into a family destination with something for the entire family.



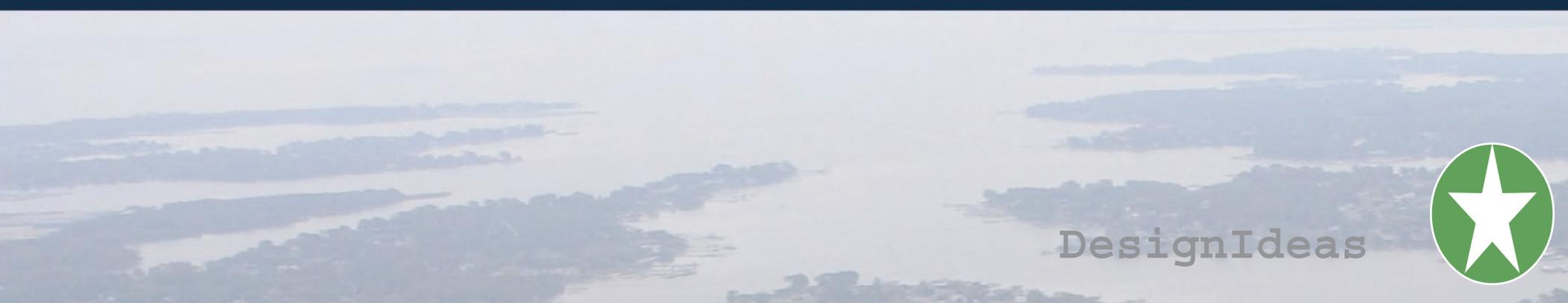
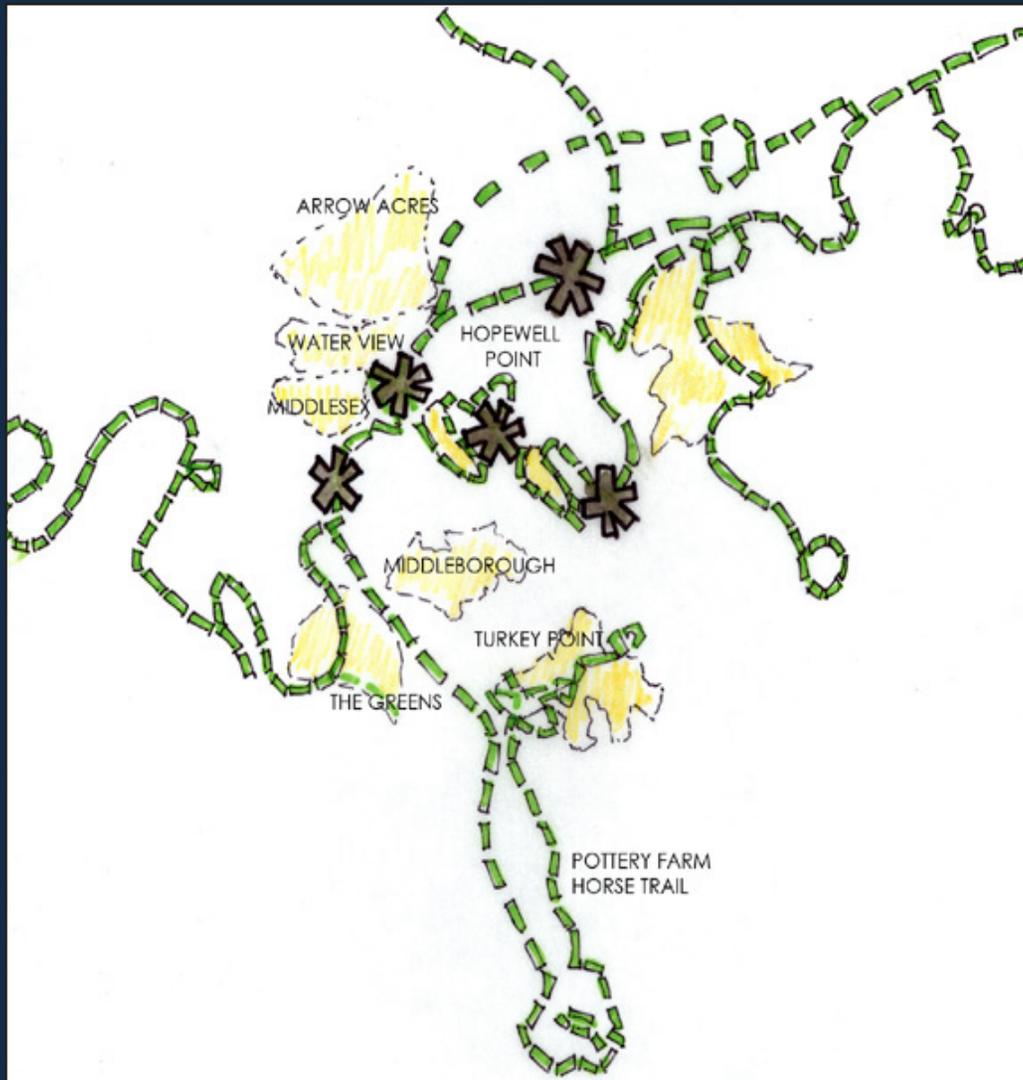


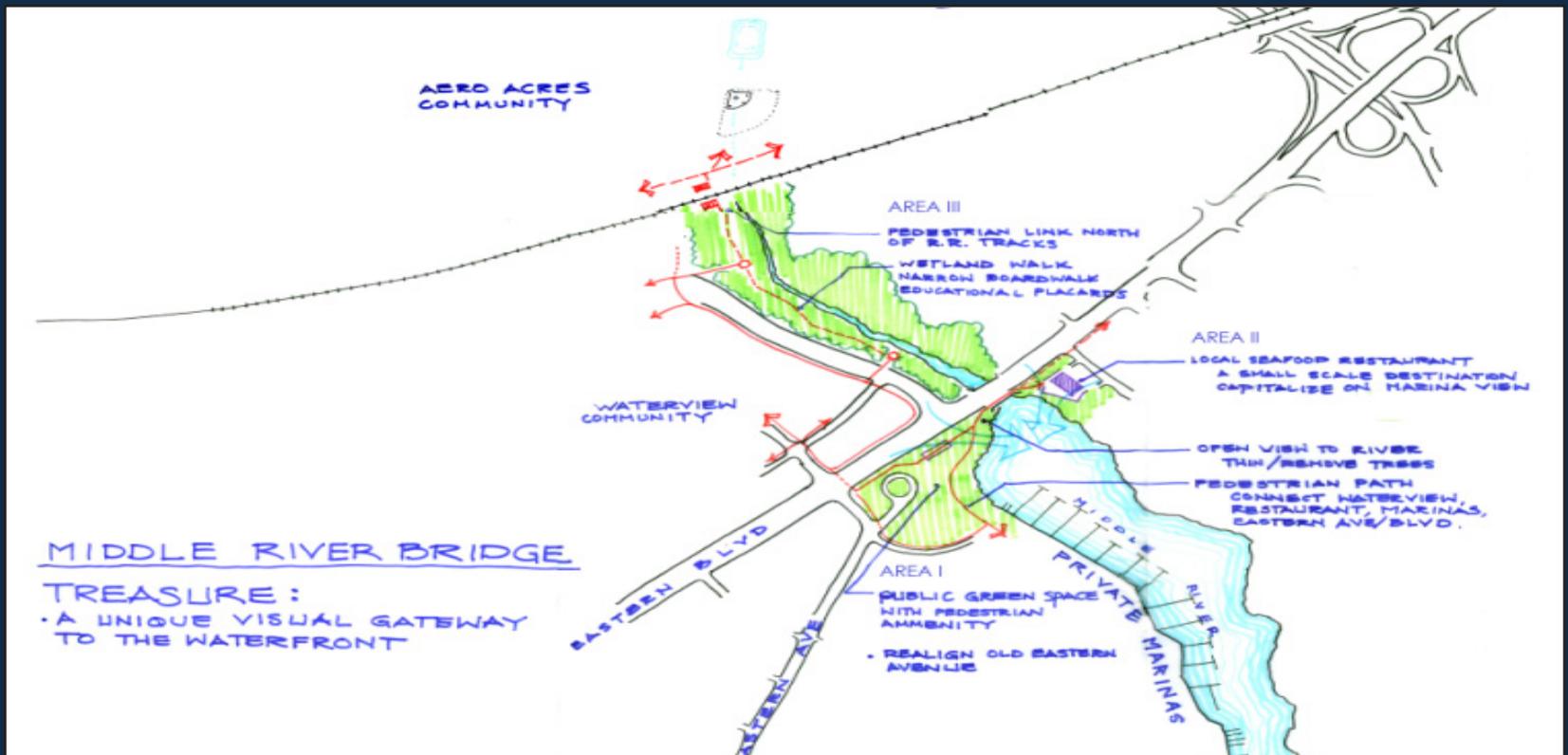
An important aspect in the re-design of Essex-Middle River is creating connections. The community must be connected with the natural environment and cultural and historic amenities. The community also must integrate public transit, pedestrian and bike pathways, and the popular waterways .



Photo courtesy of The Avenue News

Connections: Linking Neighborhoods, Commercial Centers and Water





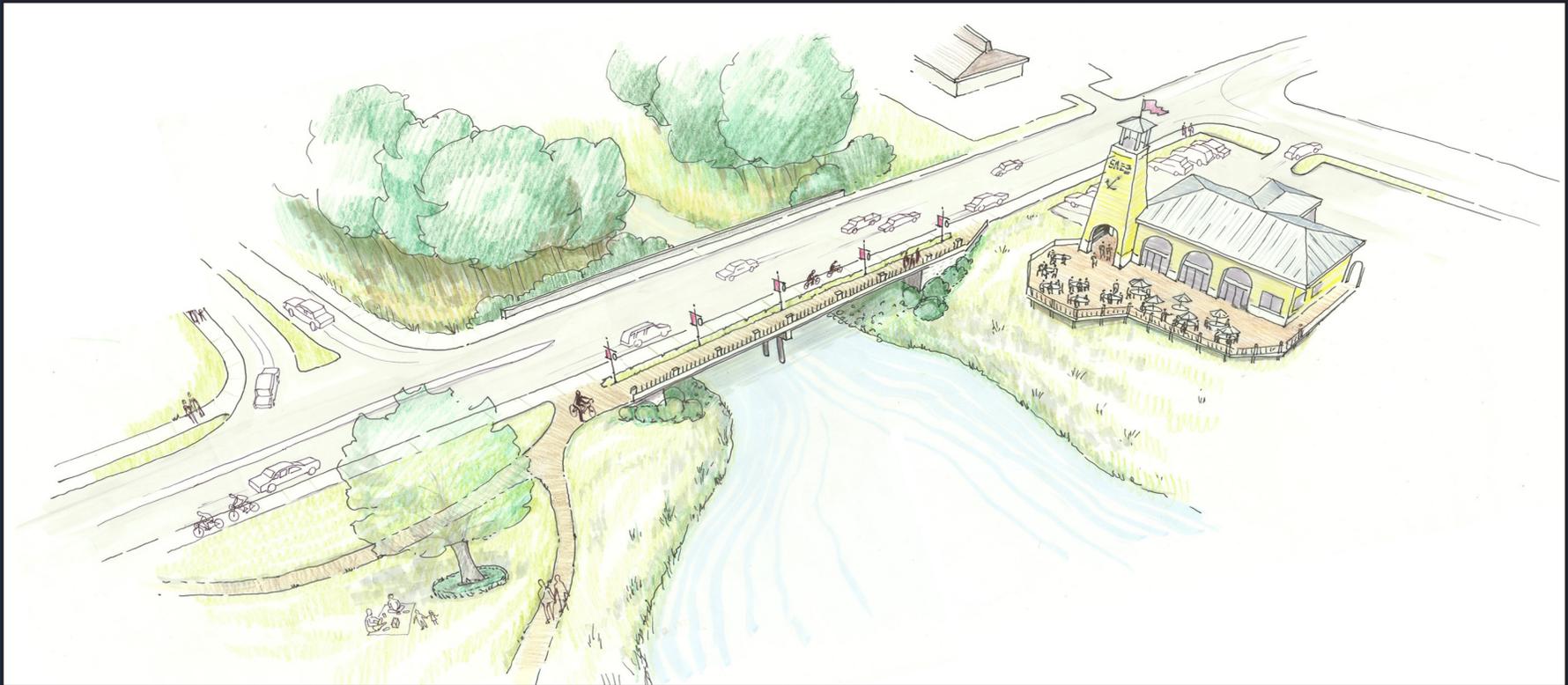
The Middle River Bridge provides a unique visual gateway to the waterfront. To enhance the existing county park, Area 1 could become a public green space with pedestrian access. Area II could one day become a local seafood restaurant with a marina view. The pedestrian path could connect to Area I, WaterView, marinas and Eastern Blvd. Area III proposes a wetland walk that would include educational placards. This would extend north with a pedestrian linkage north of the railroad tracks.

Connections: Middle River Bridge Improvements



The Middle River Bridge is built for cars and for speed. There is not a pedestrian/bike friendly connection on the bridge at this time. Even though MDoT has already completed the redesign of the bridge, it is suggested that the design be revisited. An additional pedestrian lane on the bridge, with a planter box separating the roadway, would provide the community with a safer way to access the new waterfront features. This new bridge should be constructed for all types of access, both pedestrian and vehicular. The site also would provide a nice view of the waterfront for nearby residents and all who use the bridge.





There are numerous redevelopment opportunities in the Middle River area. One possible site is the waterfront property located next to the Middle River Bridge. A restaurant with outdoor seating could be created to attract both pedestrian and vehicular traffic. The site also has great potential for opening up the scenic waterfront vista to all residents of the Essex-Middle River area.

Redevelopment Opportunities: Middle River Bridge

Lockheed Martin has been considering plans to develop an underutilized portion of their property. The company had completed a preliminary plan, but wanted further input from the UDAT.

The Lockheed Martin parcel can become a major waterfront destination for the Essex-Middle River area

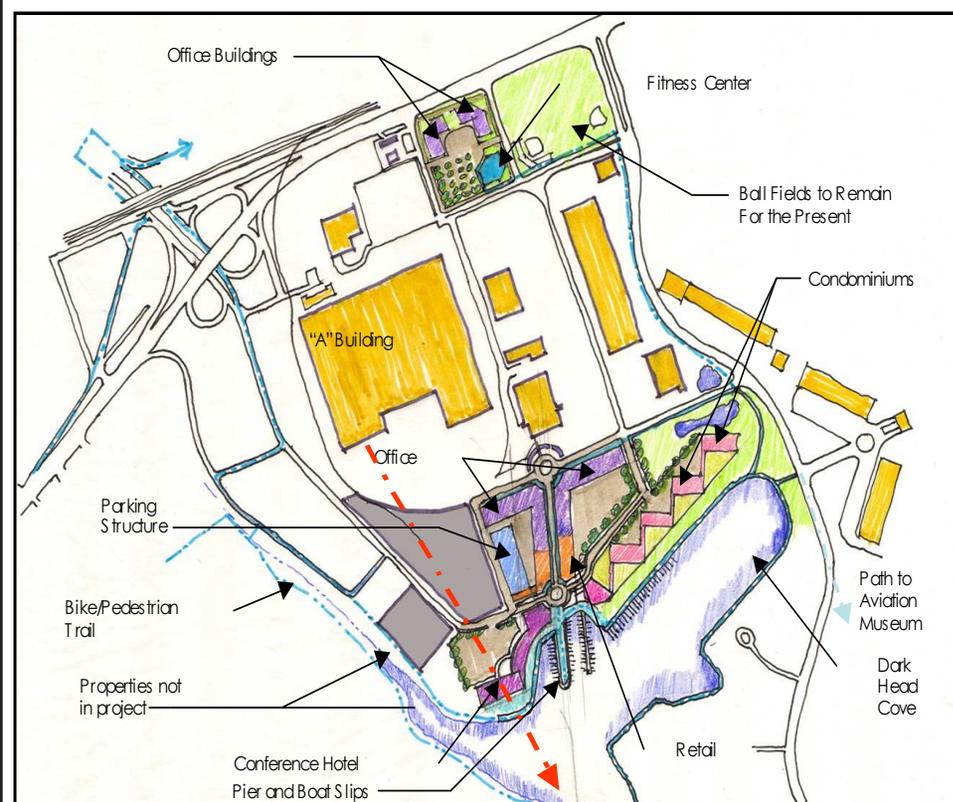
if it is redeveloped properly.

The heart of this project is Dark Head Cove. A road will lead into a circular plaza, which will lead down to the waterfront and to a centrally located pier with boat slips. In order to reach the waterfront, the road must negotiate a 10-foot drop to accommodate office and retail space.

On the southwest side of the plaza, there would be a conference hotel for small and medium sized events. The lobby would be in line with the historical path for the launching of seaplanes (denoted by dashed red line). The double-story lobby would contain the largest Martin seaplane one could find or reproduce. The curved portion of the hotel would contain multiple meeting rooms and conference facilities with views of the Chesapeake Bay. To the southeast of the plaza, there would be a large restaurant.

An integral part of this development is to design piers and boat slips for visitors. The good food, overnight accommodations, and proximity to White Marsh and the Maryland Aviation Museum will all be great draws to the area.

The development would also include 6 or 7-story condominium buildings in a sawtooth pattern with views down to Middle River. Each building would have a triangular outdoor area that could be developed into gardens, common social facilities and small-scale recreation facilities.



Redevelopment Opportunities: Lockheed Martin





The GSA Depot will be a prominent element at the gateway to Middle River once MD 43 is complete. Picture in your mind what the driving experience will be like. The traveler climbs to cross a bridge over the train lines and when on top of the bridge, the driver and passengers are looking over the Martin State Airport, an interesting and eye-pleasing vista. On the right side of the bridge is the MARC station with a large parking lot, a less than inspiring view; and on the left is the 1.9 million square foot GSA Depot, formerly the assembly building for Martin Aircraft's B-26, an intriguing if not attractive sight. GSA has plans to dispose of the property, and it seems very important that the community acquire some kind of control over what will happen with the facility. The building is historic and distinctive, a good start already on making it part of the gateway to Middle River. The big problem is how to reuse the facility.

Redevelopment Opportunities: GSA Depot



The GSA Depot has two stories. The upper story is lit by large clerestories and by vast amounts of glass on the exterior walls. At one end of the building there is a very large, column-free area which has at least 20' clearance below the roof trusses.

The lower story is punctuated by a regular grid of impressive columns with mushroom capitals. The ceiling height is over 15' high. With such a huge and soaring capacity, the question is how can this space be reused?

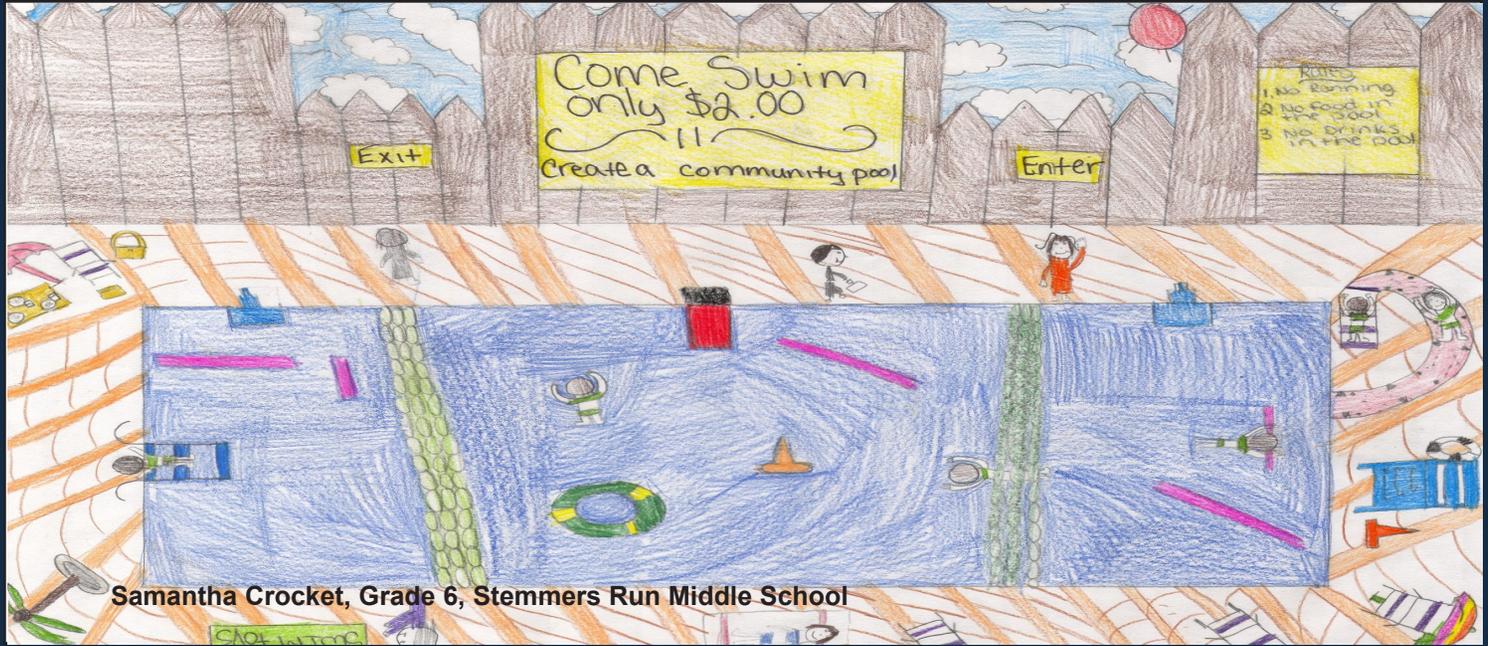


WHAT WE SAW

WHAT WE HEARD

DESIGN IDEAS

MAKING IT HAPPEN



Samantha Crocket, Grade 6, Stemmers Run Middle School



David Lee, Grade 6, Stemmers Run Middle School

Kids Design: GSA



In order to determine the best re-use of the GSA Depot, the UDAT turned to the kids of the community. The hallway located outside the UDAT workspace was filled with drawings that depicted what the youth would like to see located in the GSA Depot. Suggestions included an indoor swimming pool, a skate park, and ball fields.

Other suggested uses include an indoor park and ride lot for the MARC station. Another possibility is to locate an Amtrak stop in Essex-Middle River, rather than just having the train bypass the area.

There is also ample space to allow for an exhibition area that could include weekly or weekend exhibits for collectors and merchandisers. The largest assembly area could be used for indoor rodeos or an indoor bicycle track. The GSA Depot has the potential of being the recreation of the “Mall of America.”

This site could house the Maryland Aviation Museum, which would also create a destination. A mixed use option could also include housing.





The Essex-Middle River area has been presented with numerous design ideas. In order to have success in the renaissance of Essex-Middle River, it will be important to focus on the following key elements of the plan:

- New development should be compact in nature and provide a variety of housing types and sizes. These new developments should be in close proximity to the town centers in order to help reduce the dependence on the automobile.
- The town centers should be marked with clear gateways and edges. The buildings should be at a pedestrian scale, with good landscaping and local character.
- New buildings should try to incorporate environmental (green) building design.

Tools which may be helpful in the implementation of the plan include the Renaissance Redevelopment Pilot Program, Design Standards, Smart Growth Policies, Redevelopment Authority, diverse funding base and volunteer energy.

The Essex-Middle River Renaissance Corporation, community, and government officials need to work together to make this vision a reality. The Vision should ultimately be adopted as the updated Master Plan, replacing the 1996 plan. The Renaissance Corporation will have to take the lead in this endeavor and work with the community to strive for excellence in its redevelopment.

Next Steps



Steve Gaddis, UDAT Chair, is a graduate of Duke University (B.A. in English, 1968) and North Carolina State University (M. Arch, 1984). He is a registered Architect in North Carolina and works for the Gurlitz Architectural Group in Durham, North Carolina as a senior architect. His interest in the design of communities led him to join with a group of architects, landscape architects, and planners (along with an exciting variety of other professionals) to form a group which wields its crayons to create visions of how his local community can heal, redevelop, and grow. He has led a number of charrettes in Durham as part of this pro bono group, and he specializes in teaching citizens to create empowered and effective groups to address their community's dreams and aspirations. His recent community activities have include three terms as a member of the Durham Historic Preservation Commission (two as Chairman of the Commission), a city government commission overseeing local historic districts, participation in the two year effort to revise the Masterplan for the City and County of Durham, and a long-time participation in the local Historic Preservation Society as one of its gadflies and polemicists.

Judy Kincaid is the founder and principal of Sage Collaboration, a Durham, North Carolina consulting firm specializing in strategic planning and facilitation related to sustainable development. She has served on the organizing team for several charrettes on urban design and has ten years of experience in managing programs promoting green building. She was named Green Builder of the Year in 1998 by the Carolina Recycling Association. She is also internationally known for her work on industrial ecosystem development, which promotes resource-sharing partnerships between neighboring industries.

Martha M. Arango is a native of Colombia and holds an Architecture degree from Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana in Medellin, Colombia. While studying architecture, she spent a semester volunteering at Paola Soleri's Urban Laboratory, Arcosanti, and studied alternative urban solutions. In addition to her architecture degree, she is an avid student of 3D computer modeling, web design and graphic design. Martha has two years with the Durham firm of Roughton Nickelson De Luca Architects and has been an active member of Durham Area Designers, participating in two community charrettes.

Katherine Gill is a third year graduate student in landscape architecture at North Carolina State University (NCSU) and works part-time for the Natural Learning Initiative, an extension office at NCSU. Last fall she had the opportunity to study architecture and urban design in Eindhoven, The Netherlands. She recently interned with a small office in Chapel Hill, NC, and is collaborating with a small team to design a model sustainable house for a competition in Roanoke, Virginia. Katherine graduated from Bowdoin College with a BA in German in 1995.

Jessica Beil Hindman holds a Master of Architecture from North Carolina State University and a Bachelor of Science in Engineering from Duke University. She currently works with David Furman Architecture, an

urban mixed-use/residential architecture firm in Charlotte, NC. Concentrating in Urban & Community Design and Housing, her work and studies have been highlighted by urban studio work in Prague, and design, editorial and advisory work on several publications. Prior to joining Furman, Jessica worked with Bizios Architect, a residential architecture firm in Durham, NC, and with Clark Construction, a construction management company based in Bethesda, MD.

Hannah Twaddell, MAT holds a BA in English and Music from Oberlin College and a Master of Arts in Teaching from the University of Pittsburgh. She has completed advanced coursework in a variety of planning-related subjects including MINUTP traffic modeling, Major Investment Studies, Land Use and Transportation Planning, and Public Involvement and Facilitation. Hannah is a Senior Planner and Public Involvement Specialist for Renaissance Planning Group. She has more than 17 years of experience organizing and managing teams of in-house and outside staff and consultants to create plans and conduct studies for local and regional governments.

William "Bill" Burgin, AIA, graduated with honors from North Carolina State University in 1974 with a Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Design in Architecture and began his career in architecture in Salisbury as an intern architect with John Erwin Ramsay, FAIA. In 1987, Bill and his partner purchased this business and today continue its practice of providing quality regional architecture as the firm of Ramsay Burgin Smith Architects, Inc. In addition, he is currently serving his third term as a City Councilman, City of Salisbury.

Lyn McClay received her BS in Interior Design from Penn State University and her Masters in Architecture from North Carolina State University. As the founder of DesignSpec Inc, Lyn has a wide range of expertise as both an interior designer and a registered architect. She has practiced interior design since 1967 and architecture since 1987. She has been a visiting instructor at UNC-Greensboro and an instructor for the Duke University Continuing Education Program.

Hazel Ruth Edwards, Ph.D., AICP earned the Bachelor of Architecture from Howard University with Design Honors, the Master of Architecture in Urban Design from the Harvard University Graduate School of Design, and the Doctor of Philosophy in Regional Planning from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; and conducted post-doctoral research in city planning at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is an urban designer and certified planner and has over 18 years of experience in many aspects of design. Dr. Edwards is an author and also teaches at Morgan State University.

Mark Humienny is a senior project manager for architectural projects with ARCADIS G&M of North Carolina, an environmental design company. He is a registered architect with broad experience in master planning, programming, and building design, with project experience including university, municipal, and athletic facilities, senior living communities, commercial office space, parking structures, and distribution facilities. Mr. Humienny has also served as an adjunct faculty member at the North Carolina State University College of Design. His approach to planning and design stresses the integration of building and site with their context with a particular emphasis on creating pedestrian-friendly environments.



UDAT Team



Transportation/Infrastructure Panel

Phil Humbertson - State Highway Administration, District 4
 Randall Scott - State Highway Administration, District 4
 Vernon Freeman - State Highway Administration
 Henry Kay - Greater Baltimore Committee
 Bob Berner - Baltimore County Director of Public Works
 Raymond Heil, RLA - Baltimore County Office of Community Conservation
 Kathy Schlabach - Chief, Baltimore County Office of Planning
 Ernie Baisden - Maryland Transit Authority
 Jeff Mayhew - Baltimore County Office of Planning

Public Safety Panel

Lt. Mike Mitchem - Baltimore County Police Department, Precinct 11
 Sgt. Jay Lerch - Baltimore County Police Department, Precinct 11
 Officer Bill Wiley - Community Outreach, Baltimore County Police Dept.
 Joe Klaus - Essex Citizens on Patrol (COP)
 Mark Falkenhan - Middle River Volunteer Rescue Co.

Education Panel

Dr. Steve Tanner - Community College of Baltimore County Essex Campus
 Donna Vlachoz - Principle, Middle River Middle School
 Jean Satterfield - Executive Director, Baltimore County Public Schools
 Paul Martin - Principle, Kenwood High School
 Amy Grabner - Principle, Essex Elementary School
 Althea Page - President, PTSA

Environment and Waterways Panel

David Carroll - Baltimore County Office of the Environment
 Kathy Martin - Past President, "Save our Streams"
 Bob Stanhope - Chief Environmentalist, Marshy Point Nature Center
 Hal Ashman - Ultimate Water Sports
 Wayne Miskiewicz - Marine Trades Association Member

Neighborhood Presenters

Doug Tomecek - Hawthorne
 Bill Balch - Middleborough
 Wilson Point - Jack Schultz

Parks and Recreation Panel

Norman Knoerlein - Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks
 Bob Bendler - Deputy Director, Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks
 Chuck Munzert- President, Stembridge Recreation and Parks Council
 Hal Ashman - Ultimate Watersports
 Curtis Gatterson - community participant

Business Panel

Chip Miller - Jiffy Lube Service Center
 Brad Wallace - Wallace Engine Company
 Gary Rosenberger - Cutter Marine
 Janice Hundt - Norman's Tag & Title
 Bill Jones - Baltimore County Department of Economic Development
 Larry Rosenberg - WaterView
 Elwood Sinski - Hopewell Pointe
 Cecile Myrick - Crab Quarters

History and Culture Panel

Jackie Nickel - The Avenue News
 Jack Breihan - History professor, Loyola State University
 Pastor Grey - St. Stephens A.M.E. Church

Glenn L. Martin Aviation Museum

Gil Pascal - Executive Director

Lockheed Martin

David Gildea - Gildea & Schmidt, LLC
 James DeNapoli - LMC Properties, Inc.

Chesapeake Bay Memories

Penny Soteria - Executive Director

In addition to those mentioned above, members of the Essex-Middle River Renaissance Corporation's Steering Committee served on many of the panels.

Panel Discussion Participants



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- Baltimore County Public Library - Essex
- Bawlmer Lawncare & Landscaping, Inc.
- Big Al's Pit Beef
- Bobby B's Place
- Bolongo Bay Café
- Booz | Allen | Hamilton
- CCBC Essex
- Charlie & Ray's Auto
- Chesapeake Bay Memories
- Cogar Printing
- Cox's Properties, LLC
- Commercial CAD, Inc.
- Councilman Joseph Bartenfelder
- Cutter Marine
- Delegate JB Jennings
- Dr. John Loh, D.O.
- Dr. Rita M. Kurek, D.D.S., P.A.
- Dr. Stephen G. Krizan
- Eastern Boulevard Associates
- Eastern Technical High School
- Essex Church of God
- Essex Dog & Cat Hospital
- Essex Middle River General Partnership
- Essex Senior Center
- Essex-Middle River Civic Council
- Freestate General Contractors Inc.
- Glenn L. Martin Aviation Museum
- Goldstar Title Company
- Hawks Pleasure Club
- Hawthorne Civic Association, Inc.

Hawthorne Elementary School
Hopewell Pointe, LLC
Independent Drug
J & H Tires
Jad's Caddy Shack Café
Jennings Eastern Partnership
Jiffy Lube
Jim Jennings Transmissions
Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Ctr
Kentucky Fried Checken
Kenwood High School
Laidback Lenny's
Lamp Lighters Corporation
Law Offices of Darlene A. Wakefield
Law Offices of Jerry T. Lambdin
Law Offices of Marlow & Wyatt
Law Offices of Matt M. Paavola
Law Offices of Timothy P. Knepp
Law Offices of T. Wray McCurdy, P.A.
Lighthouse Senior Living at Hopkin
Creek
Little China
M & T Bank
Mark Building Company (WaterView)
Martin State Airport
Middle River Water Taxi
Middlesex Barber Shop
Modern Air Conditioning & Heating, Inc.
Morrell's Television Rental Service
Nail Talk
Norman's Tag & Title
Oliver Beach Inn
Orems Trailer Park
Our Lady of Mount Carmel High School
Phil Blythe Towing
Pizza John's
Porter's Seneca Marina
Preski Photo, Inc
Putty Hill Station
Romadka and Gontrum, LLC

- Real Estate Professionals, Inc.
- River Watch Restaurant
- Rogers Construction Corporation
- Romadka Family LTD Partnership
- Rusk & Company P.A.
- Salvo Auto Parts
- Secret Sound
- Sinnott Electric Co., Inc.
- Skye Hospitality, Inc.
- Skytech, Inc.
- Smokehouse of Chase
- Steamin Demons
- Stern Mechanical, Inc.
- Sun Trust Bank
- Sussex Elementary School
- The Avenue News
- The Wax Man of Essex
- Uncle Eddies
- Vigilant Fed Savings & Loan
- Wachovia Bank
- Wallace Engine Company
- WaterView Community
- Wilson Point Civic Improvement Association
- Young Insurance & Financial, Inc.

We thank the many individuals from communities including Essex, Middleborough, Back River Neck Peninsula, Middlesex, WaterView, Hawthorne, Wilson Point, Bowley's Quarters and Chase, as well as other friends of the Essex-Middle River area who assisted in sponsoring this effort.

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