

A Gateway to Squirrel Hill

SUMMER 2009

Neighborhood Vision:

“To produce a comprehensive design that creates a welcoming and engaging entrance corridor for visitors and residents coming from the Parkway into Squirrel Hill.”



Sponsored by:



Project Chair: Mardi Isler

Funded by:



Prepared by:

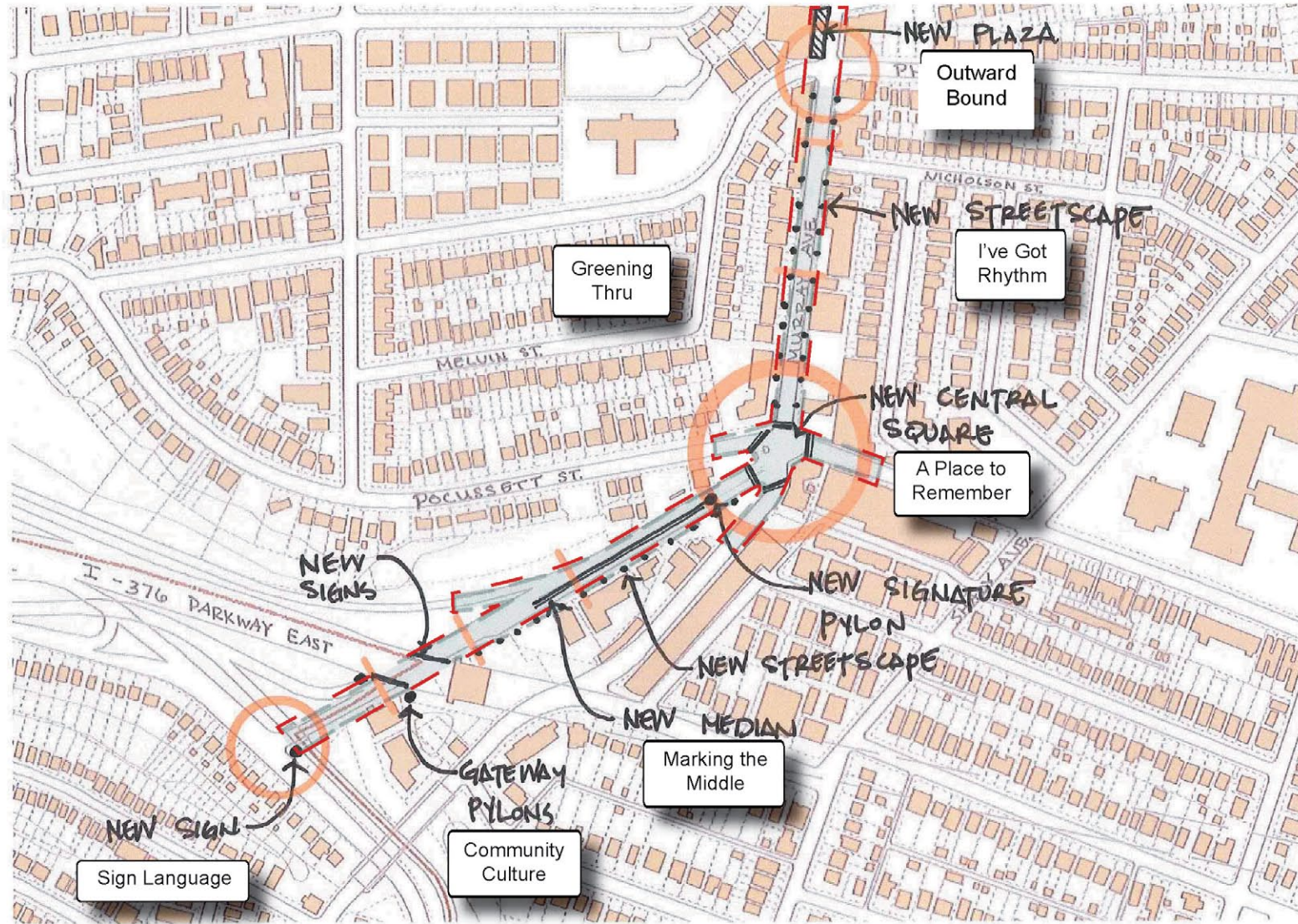


ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN DESIGN



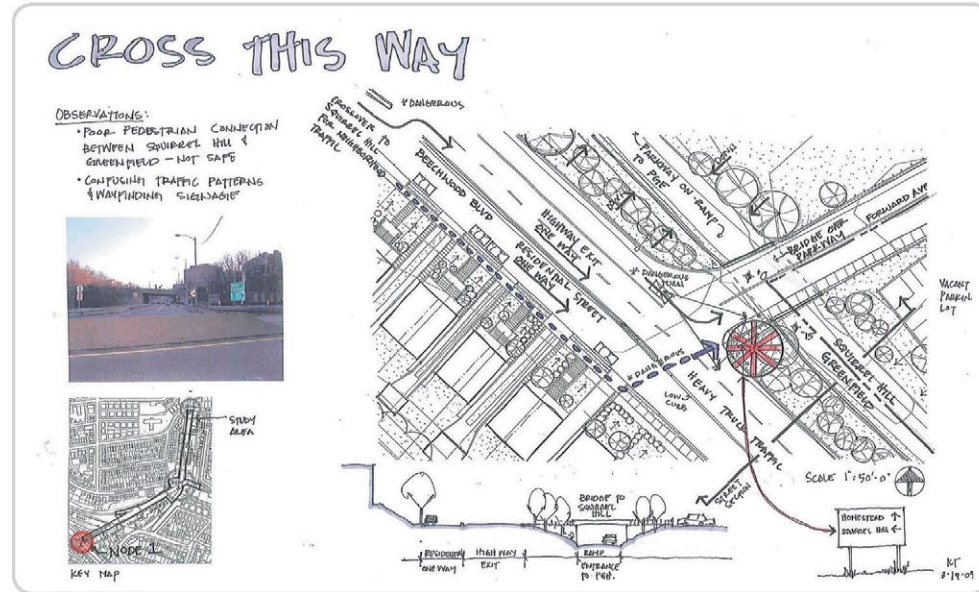
Table of Contents

GATEWAY GREETINGS

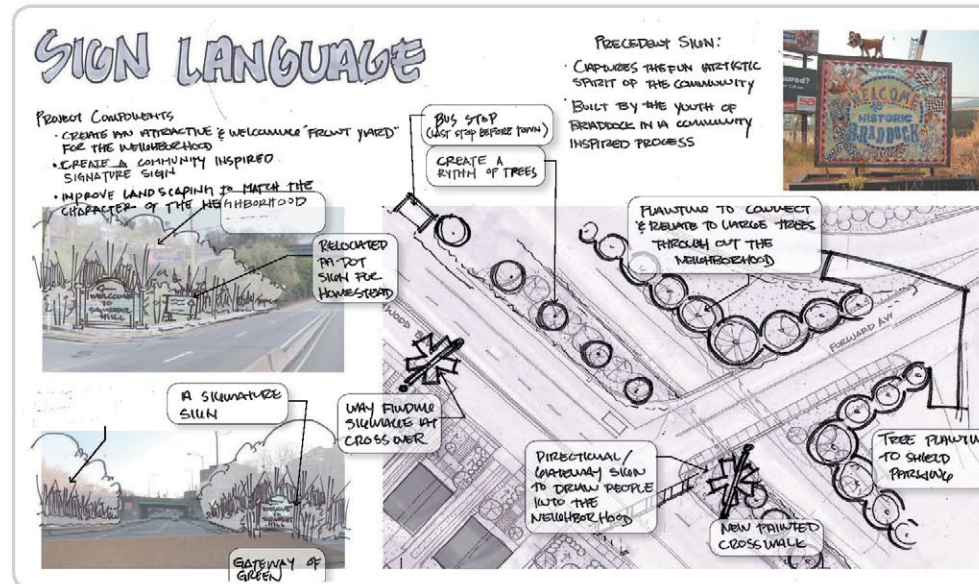


Sign Language	2
Community Culture	4
Marking the Middle	6
A Place to Remember	8
I've Got Rhythm	10
Outward Bound	12
Greening Thru	14

Sign Language



Design Sketchbook



Design Sketchbook

VISION:

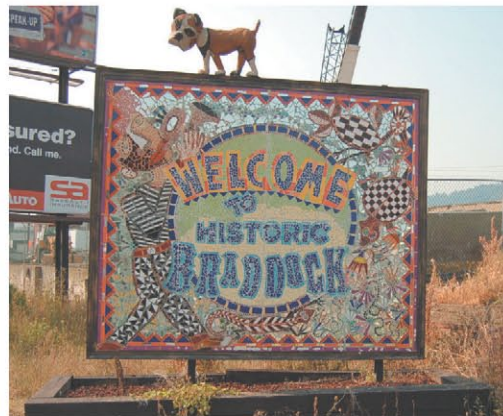
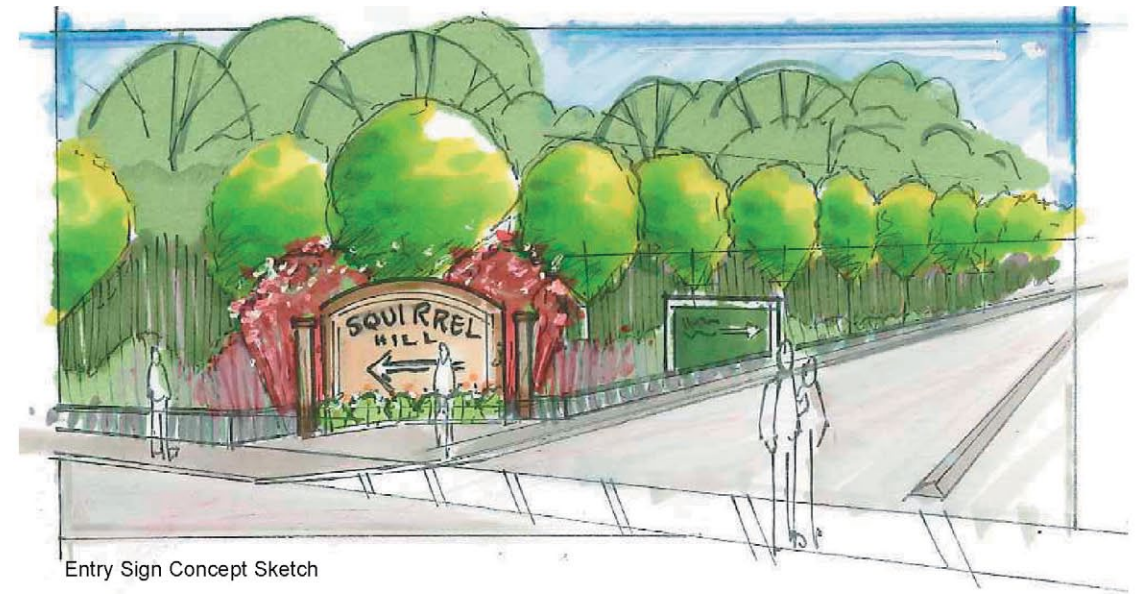
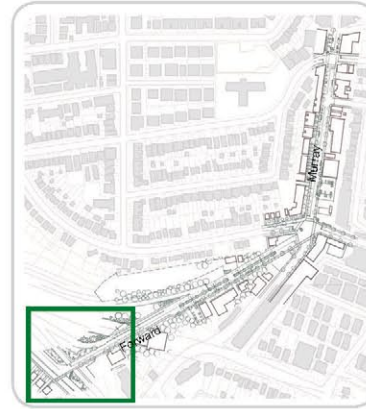
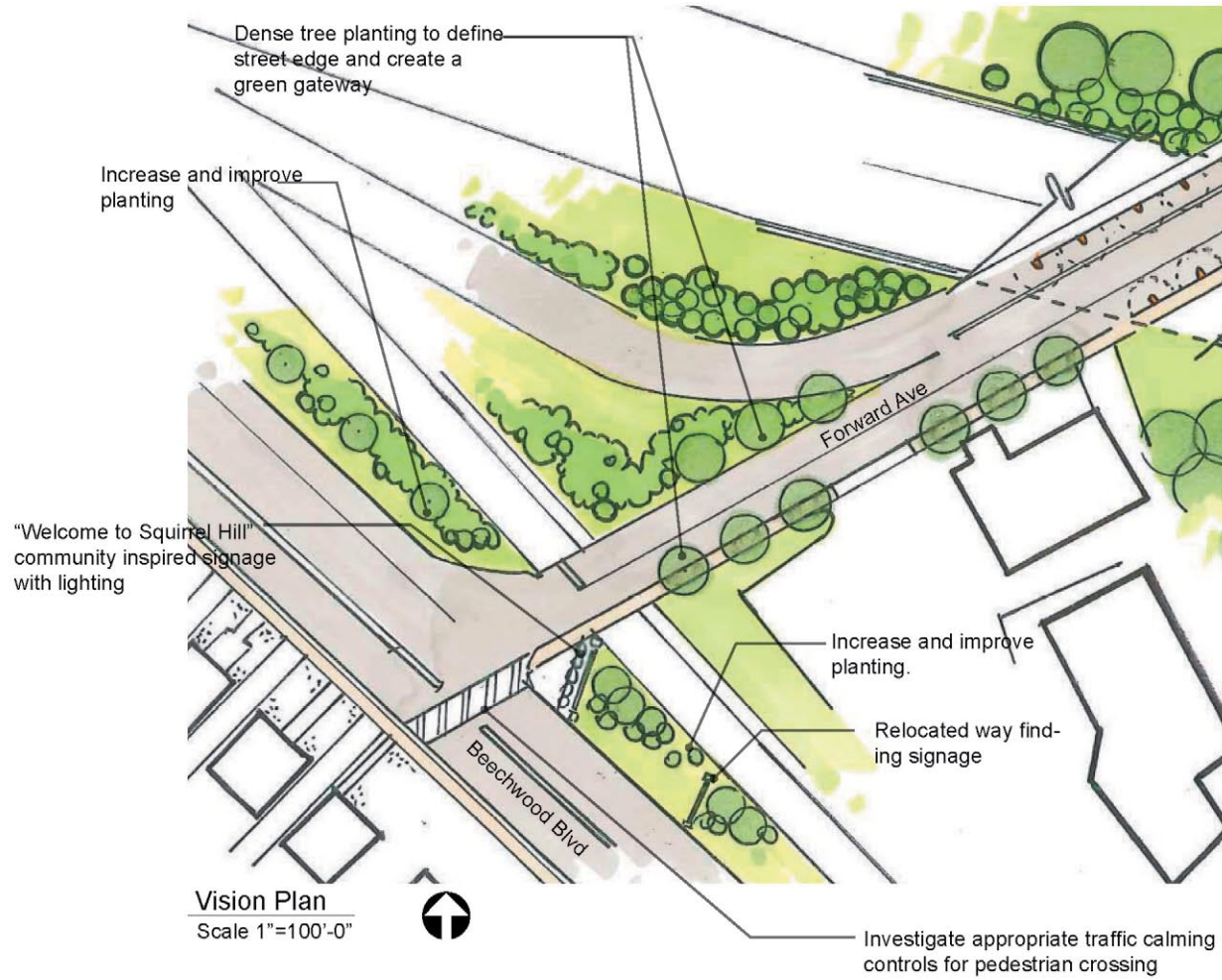
Create a "front yard" to the neighborhood through signage and landscaping.

ELEMENTS:

- Create an entry sign to Squirrel Hill, inspired by the community that reflects the character of the neighborhood.
- Work with PennDot and the City to increase and improve the landscaping around the intersection to form a "Green Gateway" into the neighborhood.
- Relocate the Penn Dot way finding signage beyond the entry sign for Squirrel Hill.
- Improve pedestrian crossing and investigate appropriate traffic calming measures to increase the safety of the intersection.

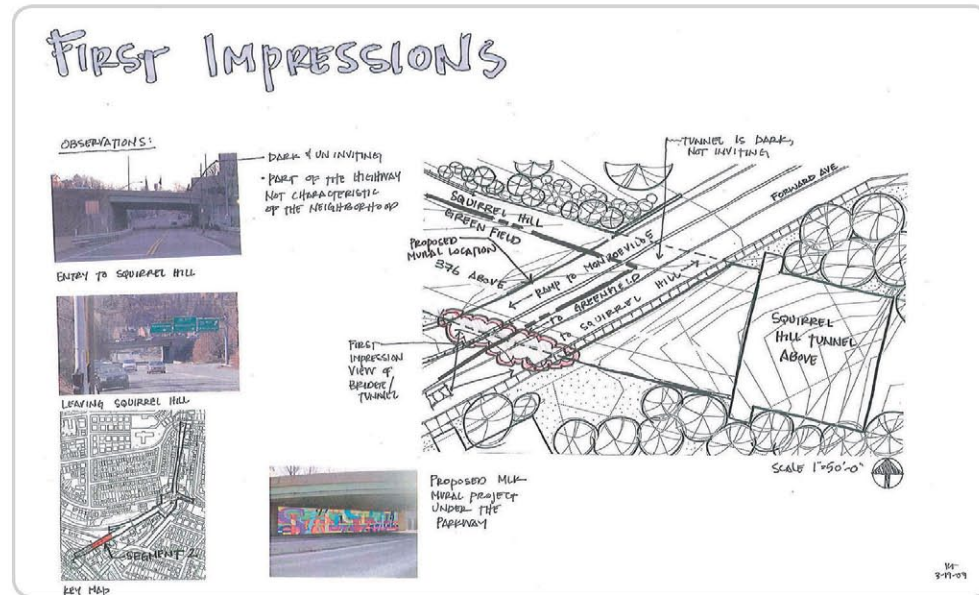


Existing Conditions

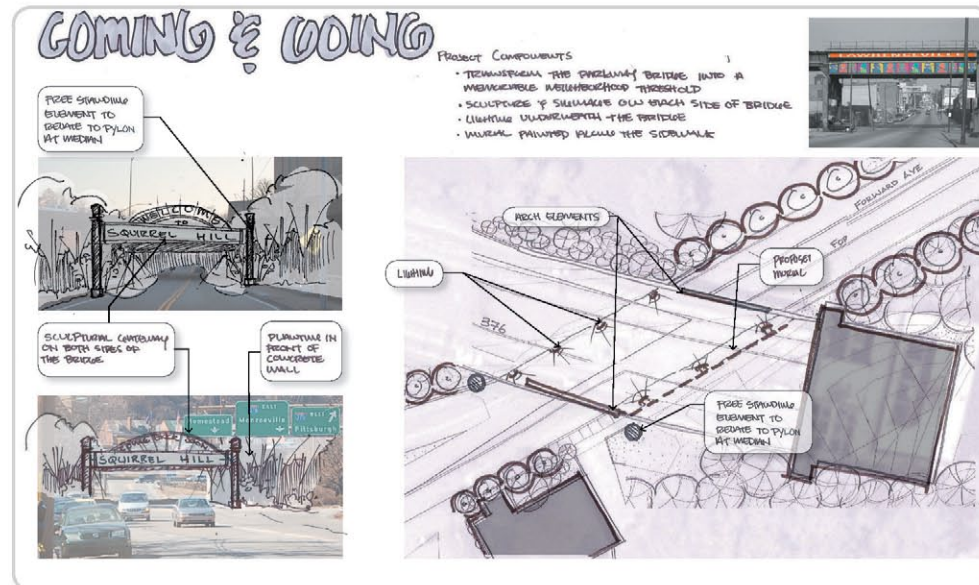


Precedent: Braddock entry sign (created by neighborhood youth)

Community Culture



Design Sketchbook



Design Sketchbook

VISION:

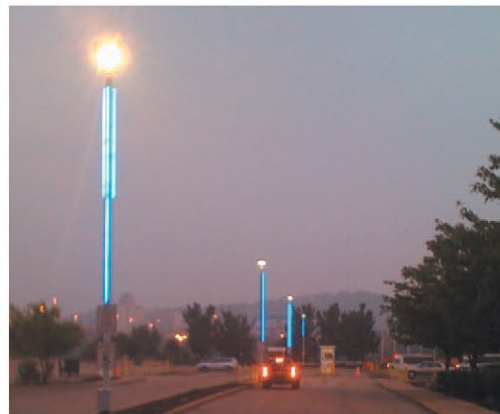
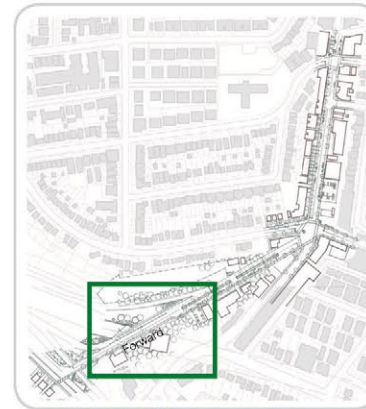
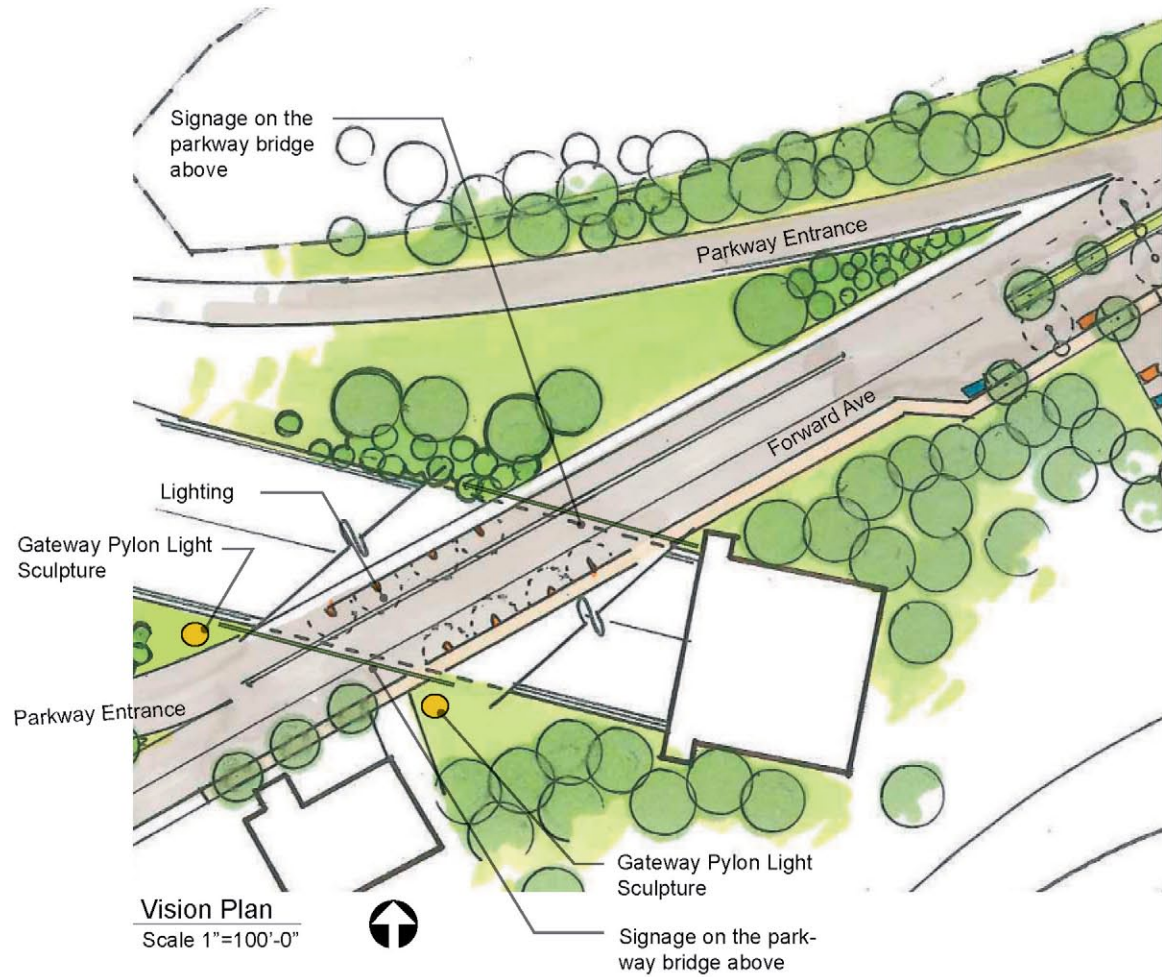
Transform the Parkway bridge into a welcoming gateway that reflects the cultural diversity of the community.

ELEMENTS:

- Work with an artist to create a mural along the beam of the bridge on both sides.
- Mark the entrance with light sculptures and install lighting underneath the bridge.



Existing Conditions



Precedent: Strip District

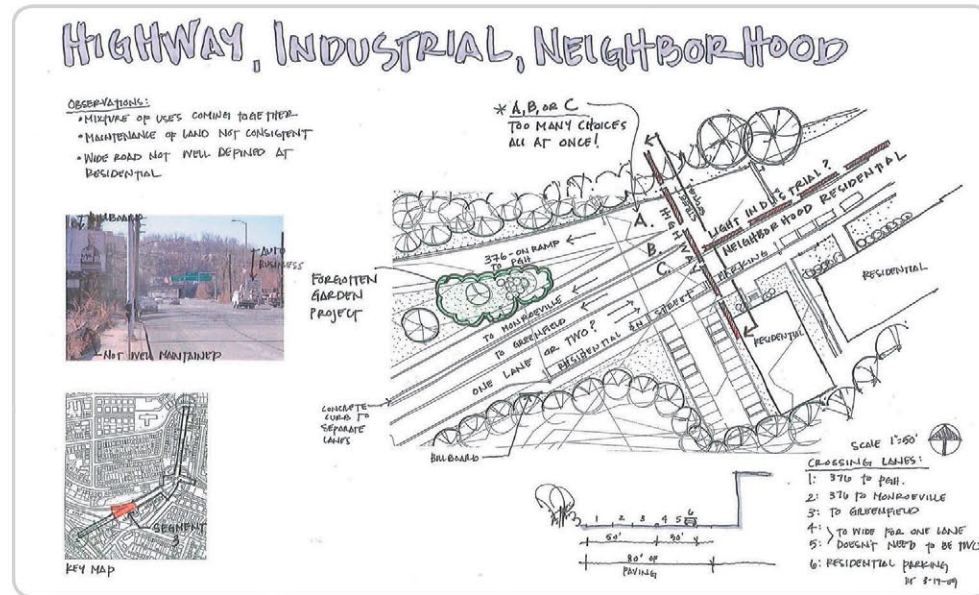


Precedent: Veteran Glass City Skyway

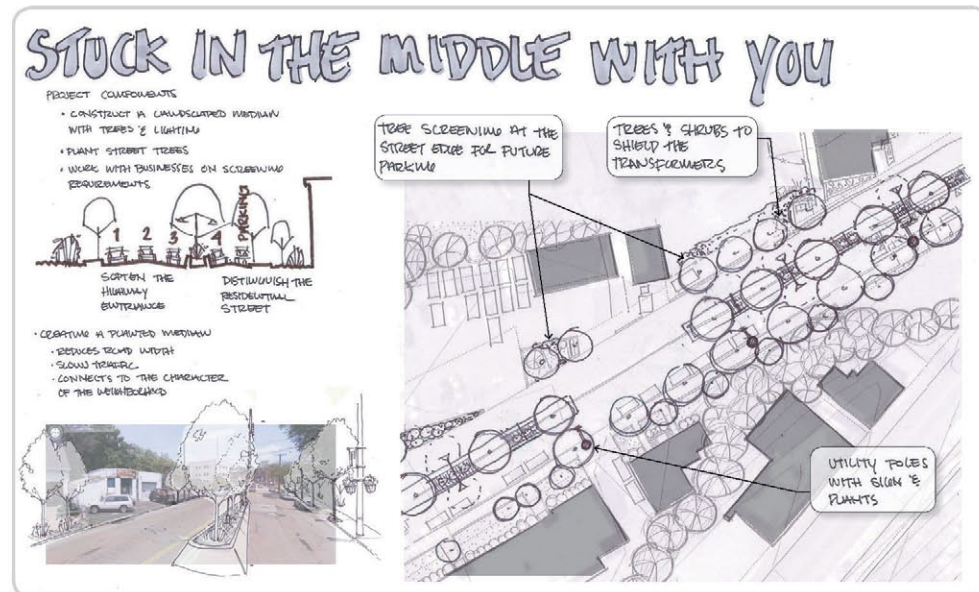


Precedent: Lawrenceville

Marking the Middle



Design Sketchbook



Design Sketchbook

VISION:

Create a welcoming, residential feel to Forward Avenue with a planted median, street lights, and banners.

ELEMENTS:

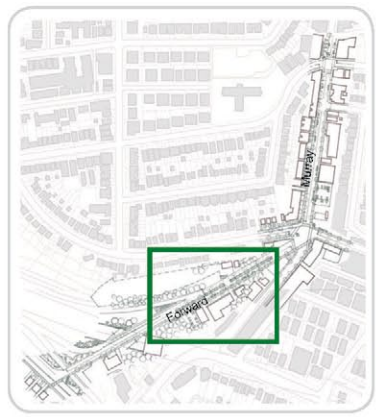
- Construct a raised concrete median with trees, low level landscaping, street lighting, and banners.
- Incorporate benches along the sidewalk to improve the pedestrian character.



Existing Conditions



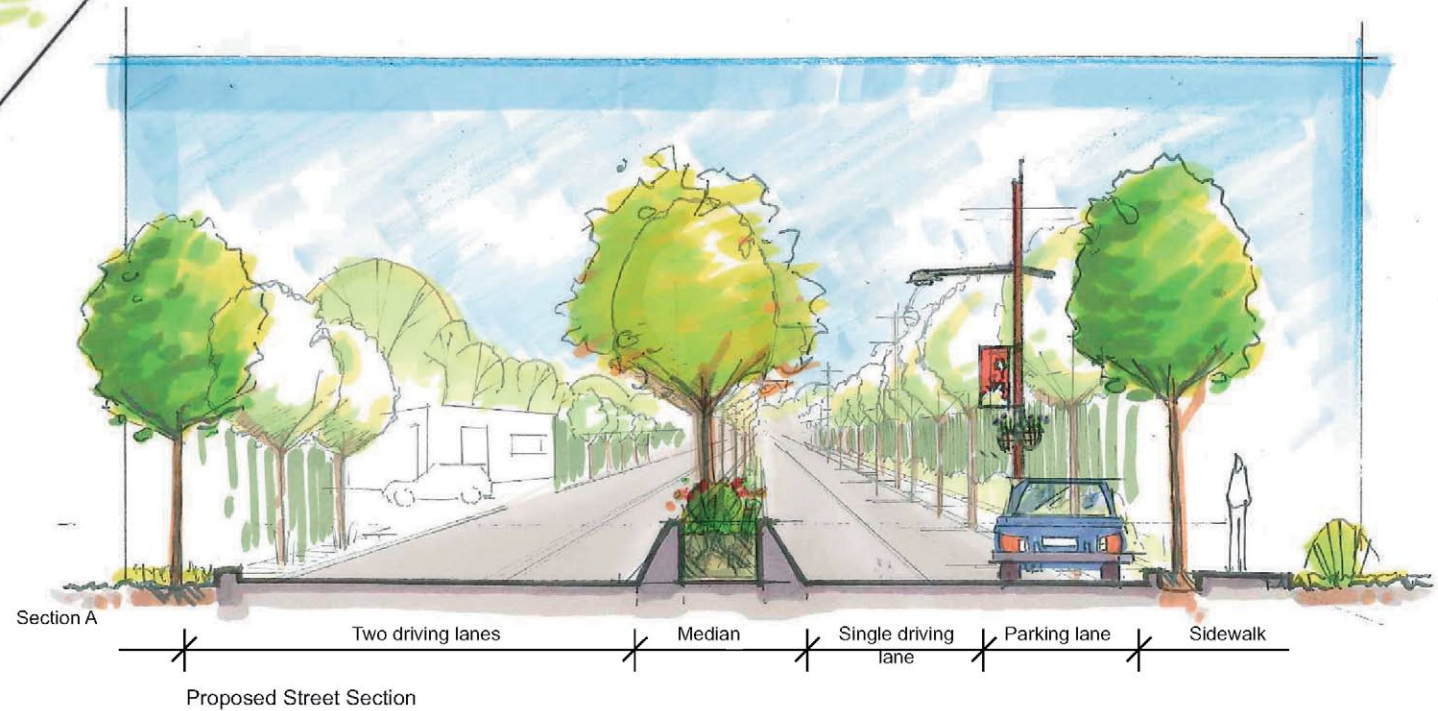
Vision Plan
Scale 1"=100'-0"



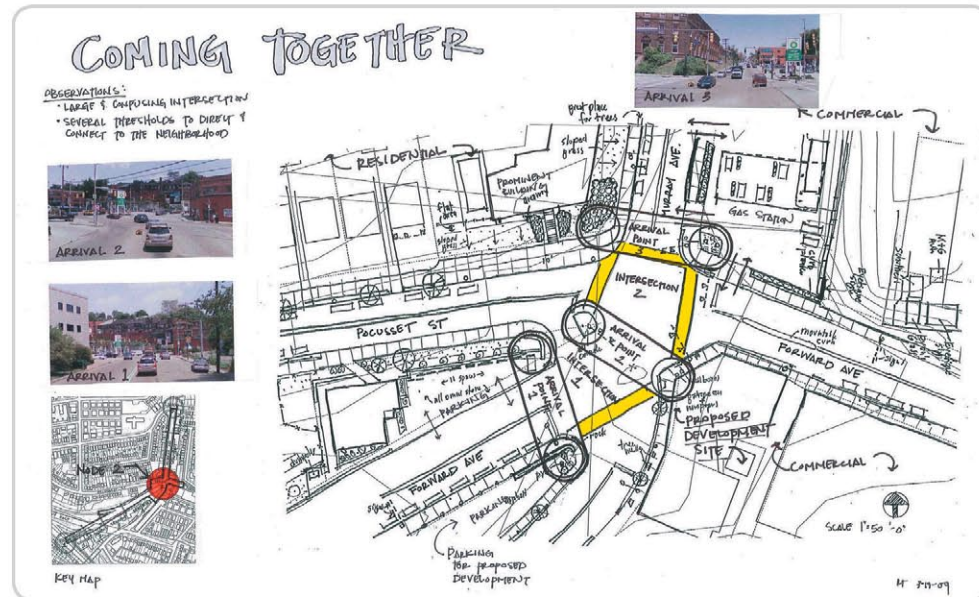
Key Plan



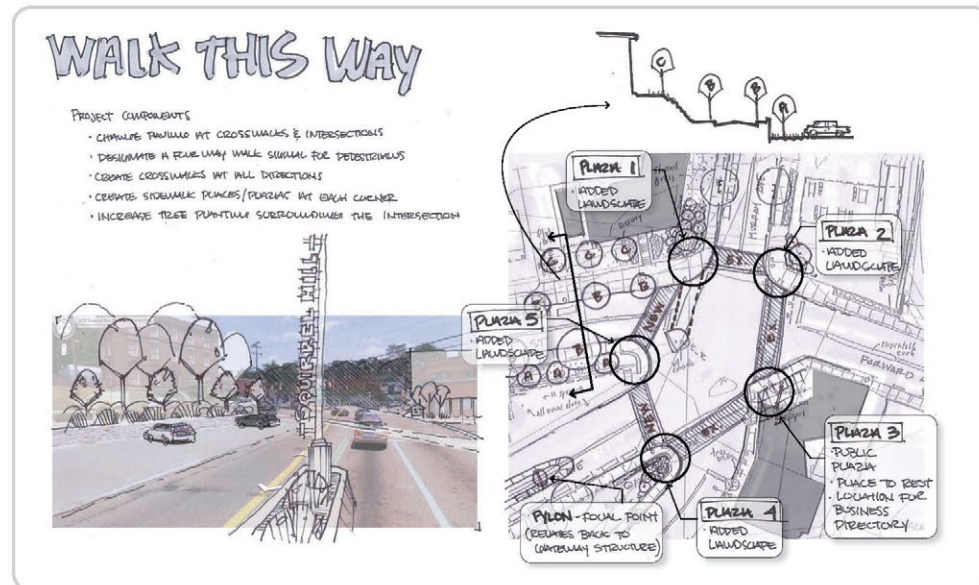
Precedent: Grant Street Median



A Place to Remember



Design Sketchbook



Design Sketchbook

VISION:

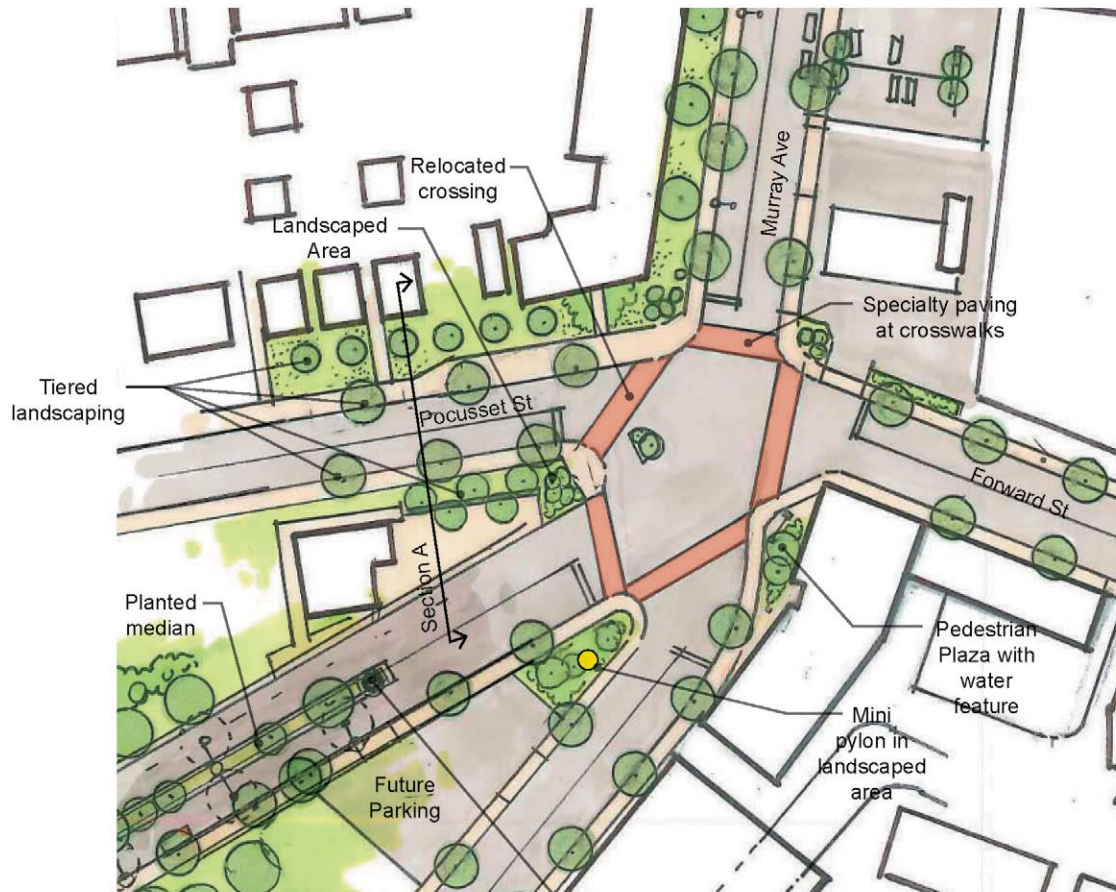
Welcome people to the business district with a memorable sculpture, a well landscaped, and pedestrian friendly intersection.

ELEMENTS:

- Create a signature light sculpture at the end of the planted median.
- Mark the intersection with special paving at the crosswalks. Relocate the crossing at Pocusset Street to improve safety.
- Green the intersection with four tiers of landscaping that transition with the typography of Murray Avenue.
- Improve the signaling at the intersection to create a dedicated pedestrian crossing that accommodates the hearing and visually impaired.
- Create unique plazas at each corner of the intersection with a pedestrian focused design in front of the proposed development.



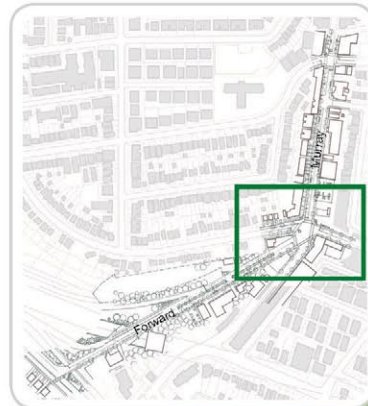
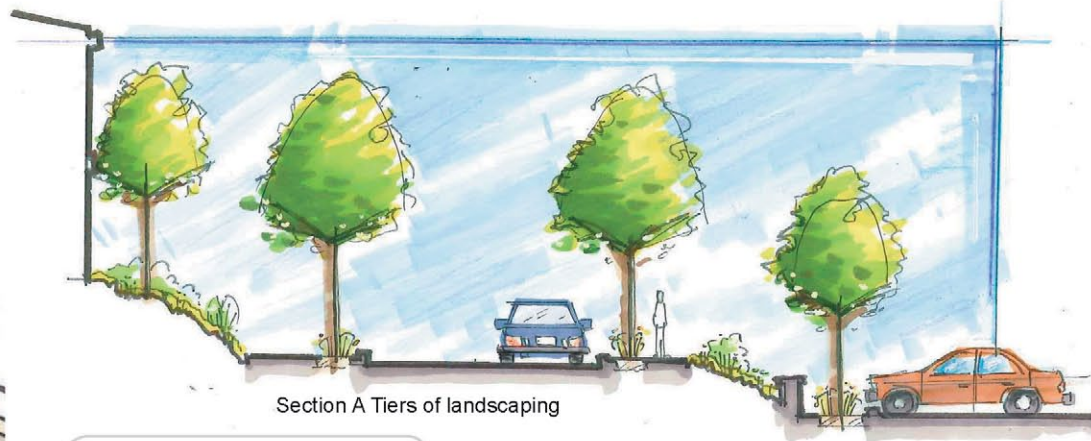
Existing Conditions



Vision Plan
Scale 1"=100'-0"



Signature light sculpture pylon

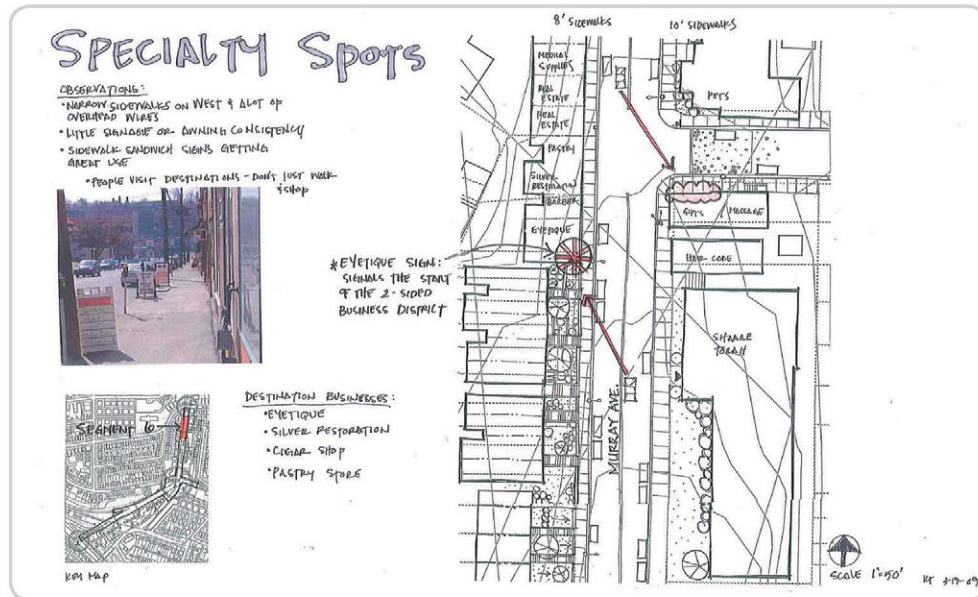


Precedent: CMU Sculpture Pylon



Precedent: Strip District Light Pylon

I've Got Rhythm



Design Sketchbook



Design Sketchbook

VISION:

Highlight the unique character of the businesses through facade improvements, signage, lighting, and guidelines.

ELEMENTS:

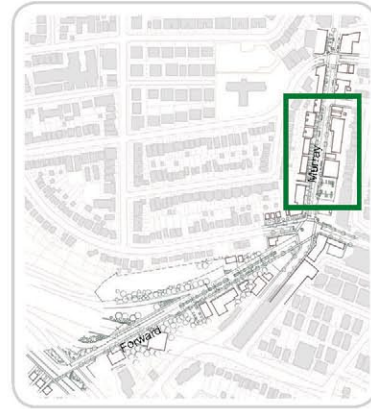
- Connect business owners to funding sources to pursue facade improvements.
- Connect the Murray Ave businesses to the character of the entire Squirrel Hill business district.
- Work with the Port Authority to establish transit notification systems that will encourage travelers to visit businesses while waiting for their bus.
- Establish a zoning classification for the business district to promote individual character and support code enforcement efforts.



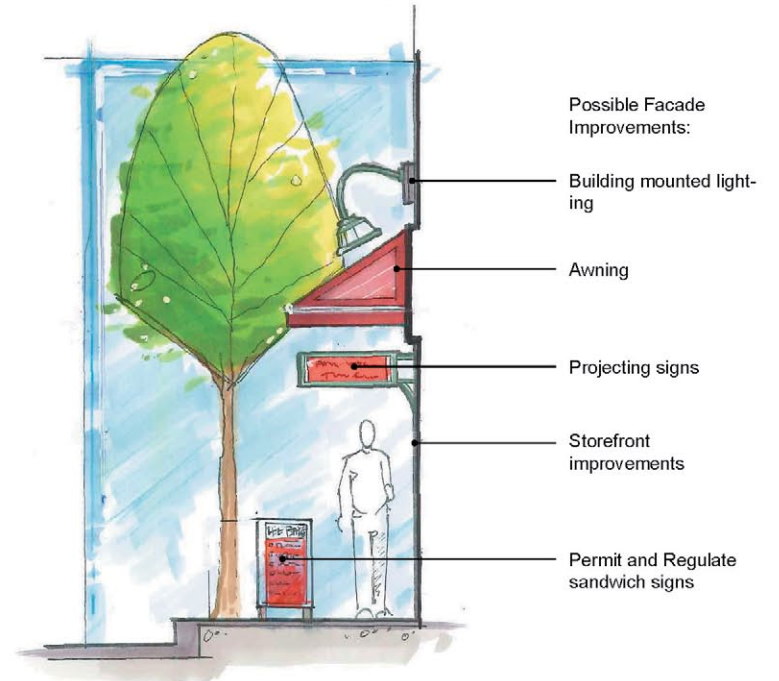
Existing Conditions



Vision Plan
Scale 1"=100'-0"



Key Plan

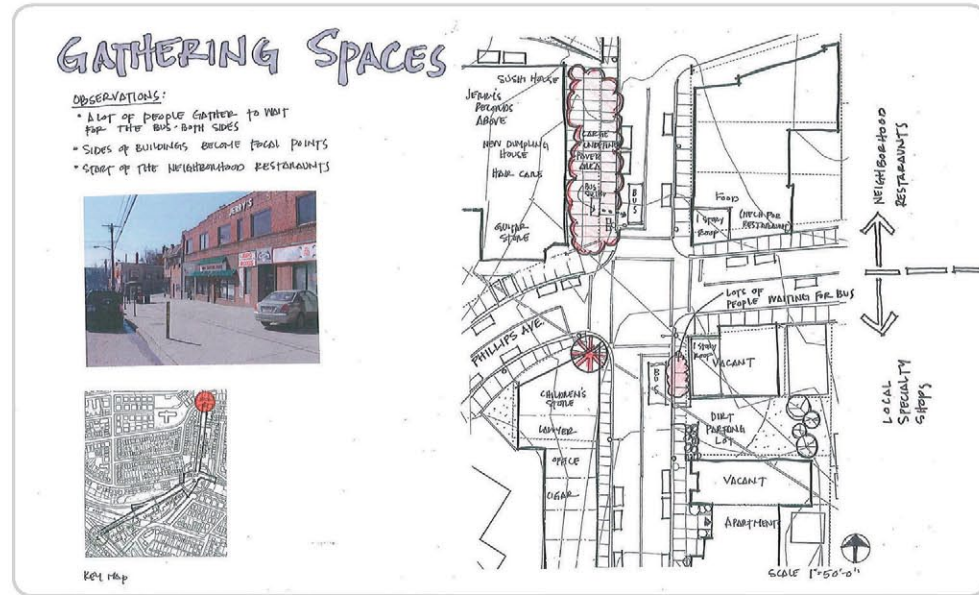


Proposed Streetscape Concept

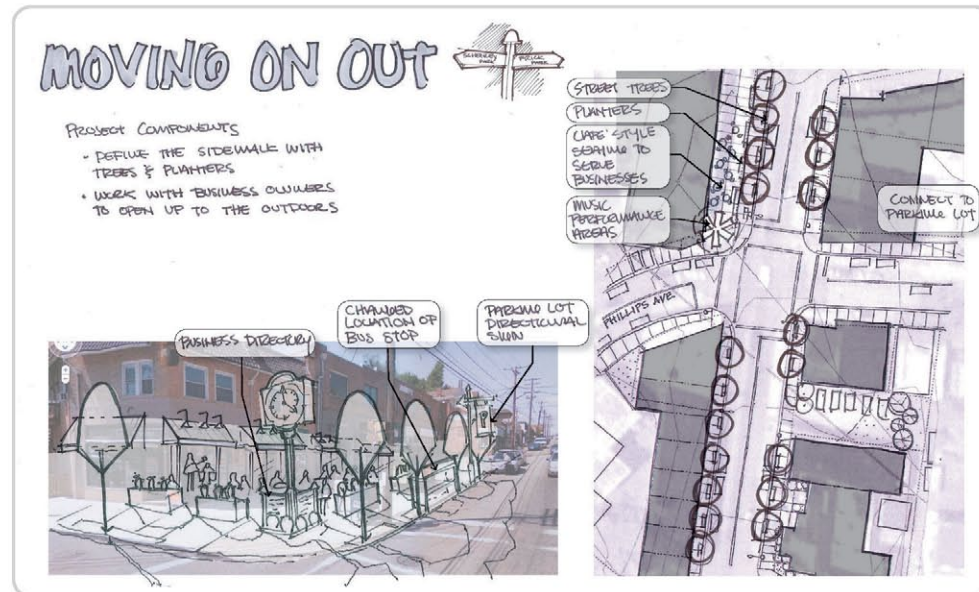


Proposed Streetscape Concept

Outward Bound



Design Sketchbook



Design Sketchbook

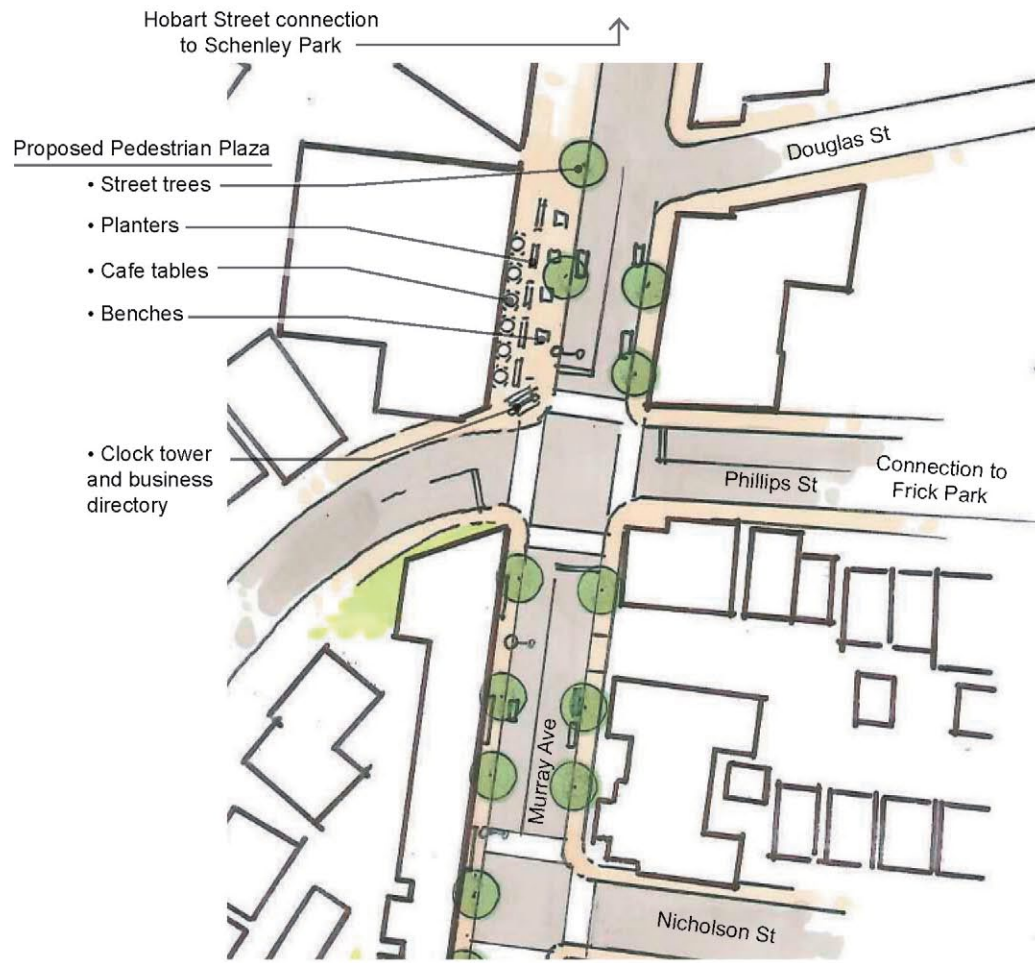
VISION:

Create a destination outdoor plaza to serve as a gathering place and connection point to other neighborhood amenities.

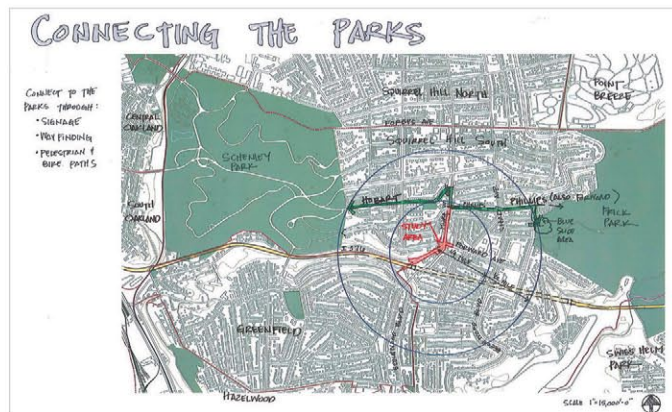
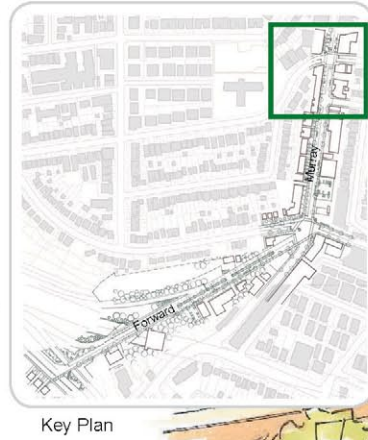
ELEMENTS:

- Community directory and clock tower marking the intersection.
- Define the sidewalk with street trees and large planters.
- Promote facade renovations to connect businesses to the exterior plaza with cafe tables.
- Create an informal performance area with benches to promote interaction and gathering.
- Design way-finding signage to connect people to Frick and Schenley Parks, surrounding businesses, parking, and other amenities.





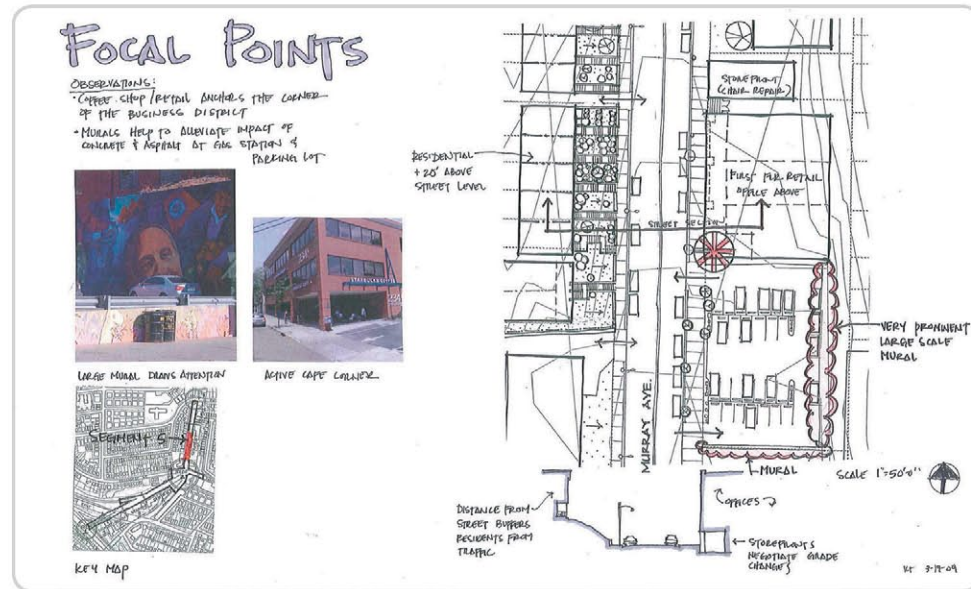
Vision Plan
Scale 1"=100'-0"



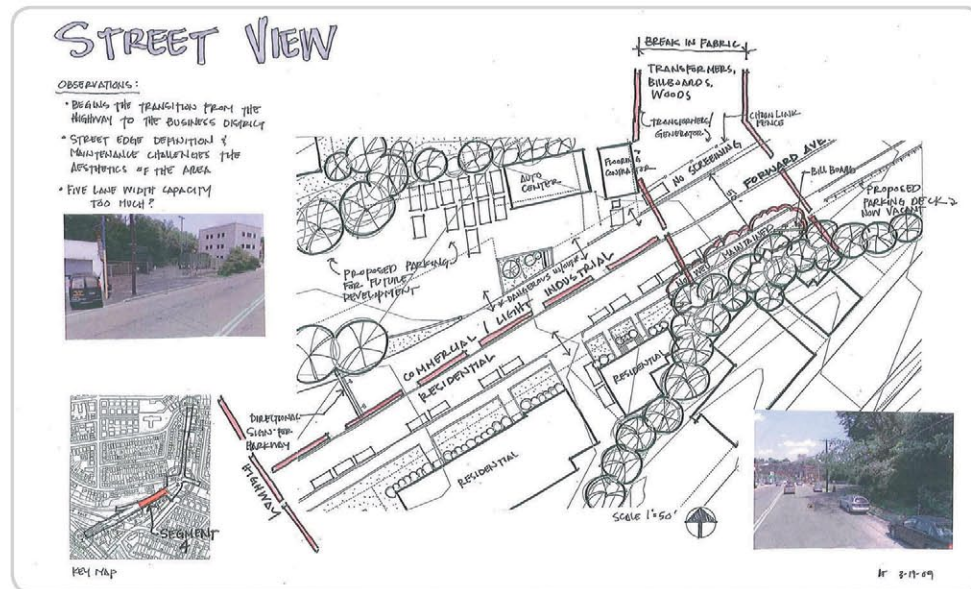
Design Sketchbook



Greening Thru



Design Sketchbook



Design Sketchbook

VISION:

Provide ecological and societal benefits to the study area through streetscape improvements and landscape plantings that enhance the aesthetics, screen views, and soften the hardscape.

ELEMENTS:

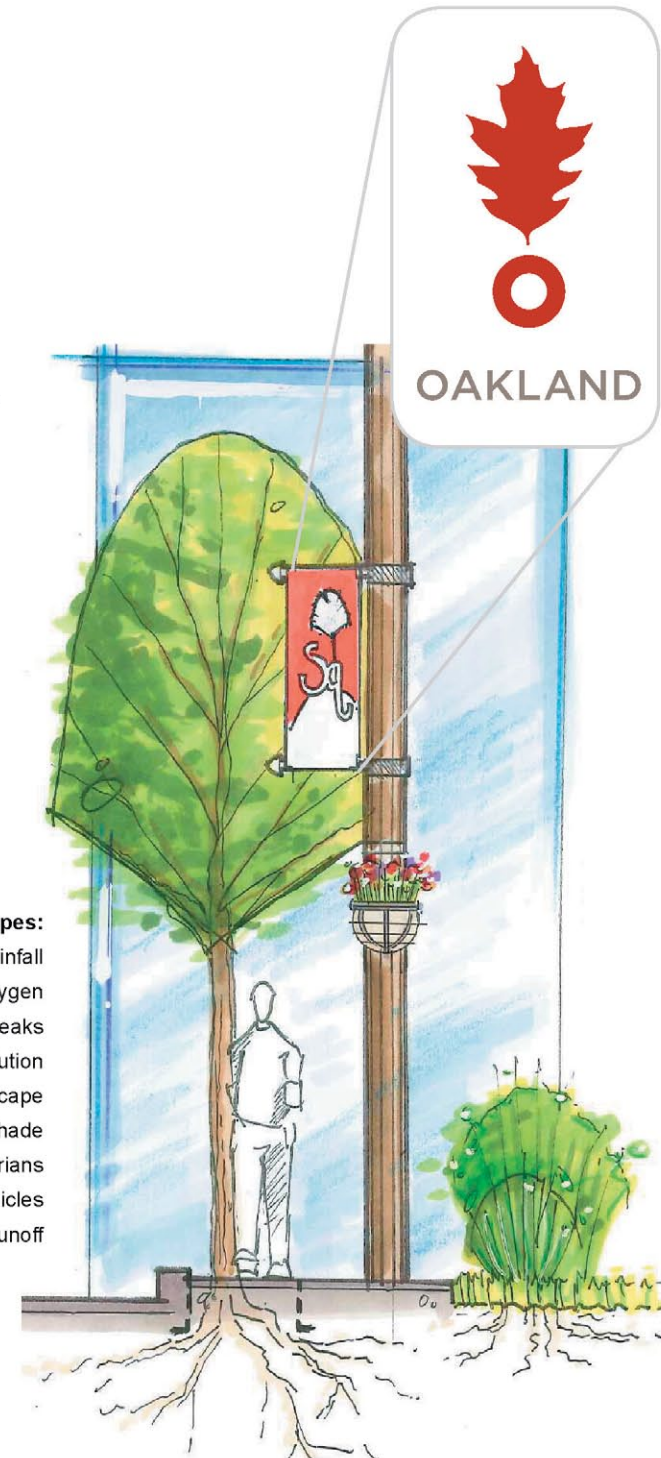
- Use urban permaculture principles to create sustainable human habitats by following nature's patterns.
- Plant street trees throughout the district. Select trees from the City Forester's "Recommended Tree Species for Pittsburgh's Streets" list.
- Establish placement of street lights purchased for the neighborhood.
- Relocate all overhead wires below grade.
- Design banners for street poles throughout the district to create a holistic branding and graphic design along the corridor. Work with business owners to install and fund ongoing maintenance of hanging baskets for street poles.
- Connect businesses and homeowners to tree stewardship programs and promote planting on private lots.
- Encourage business owners to screen existing parking lots with plantings.
- Work with property owners and volunteer groups to restore, clean, and maintain existing planted areas.
- Work with Penn Dot to improve planting and maintenance near the parkway and gateway entrance to the neighborhood. Explore the use of rain gardens to reduce polluted stormwater runoff from entering the storm sewer system.



Vision Plan
Scale 1"=300'-0"



Street trees and hanging baskets throughout business district



Treescapes:

- Absorb rainfall
- Produce oxygen
- Provide wind breaks
- Absorb pollution
- Enhance the streetscape
- Provide shade
- Separate pedestrians from vehicles
- Absorb stormwater runoff

Achieve the dream in collaboration with:

- Cambridge VenturePartners LLC
- City of Pittsburgh Department of City Planning
- City of Pittsburgh Department of Public Works
- City of Pittsburgh Office of Mayor
- Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
- Friends of the Pittsburgh Urban Forest

- Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
- Pittsburgh City Council
- Pittsburgh Shade Tree Commission
- Port Authority of Allegheny County
- Squirrel Hill Merchants Association
- Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition

- State Representative Dan Frankel
- State Senator Jay Costa
- The Buncher Company
- TreeVitalize
- Verizon
- Western PA Conservancy

