



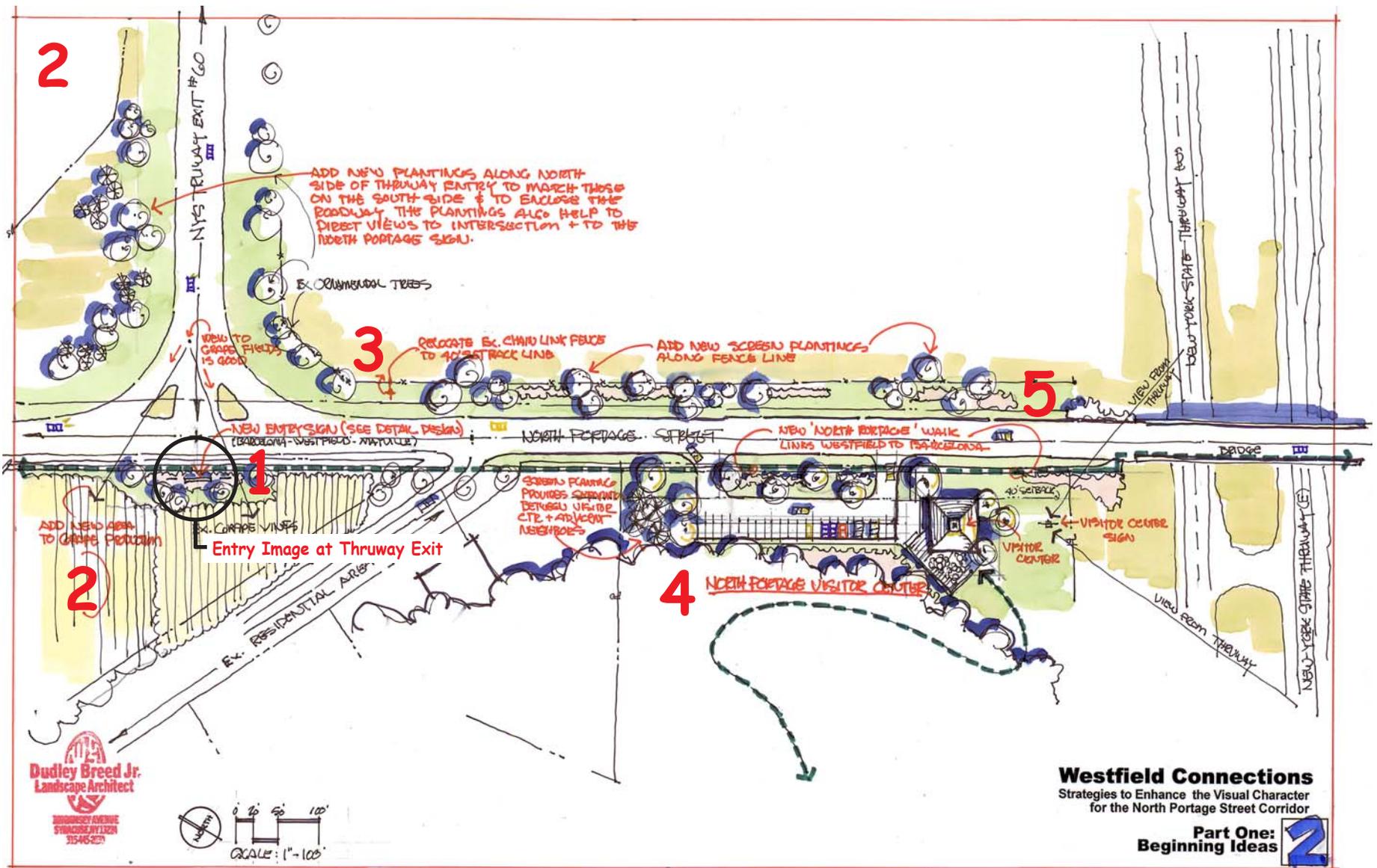
# 1

## North Portage Street: Improving the Roadway Landscape

North Portage Street is the primary north-south roadway that connects the Village of Westfield north to the NYS Thruway and the Hamlet of Barcelona Harbor and south to Chautauqua Lake and the Village of Mayville. Its name is steeped in history as it aligns along the historic "Portage Trail" first established in the 1600's by the early French explorers as they searched for a transport route linking Lake Erie to the Ohio River.

Although today it is a busy state highway and serves a variety transport needs, it still has the potential as an avenue of exploration, offering access to visitors and tourists to a region rich in recreation interests. Among these include the lakeshores of Erie and Chautauqua, the heritage architecture of the Westfield, the McClurg Mansion, the beautiful vineyards producing grapes for juice and fine wines, Chautauqua Creek Gorge, the Chautauqua Institute, and a thriving antiques market. And North Portage Street is one of the principal corridors of access, the entry way to the region. As such, it becomes a key part of an overall strategy to enhance the image and appeal for visitors to the area.

This section of the report addresses the landscape character of North Portage Street and summarizes a number of design activities the community can undertake to enhance the landscape setting of the roadway. The following pages include conceptual plans and detailed sketches that illustrate these design suggestions or "strategies". The design strategies are described both as summary text and notations located on the drawings.



## North Portage St. & NYS Thruway

This section of Portage Street offers the initial welcome to visitors arriving to the Westfield area via the NYS Thruway and as such, it becomes a key piece in the overall landscape strategy for the roadway. The landscape here needs to welcome visitors and provide them with an interesting visual setting to encourage them to explore the settlements in Westfield and Barcelona.

○ Indicates a detail sketch for a specific feature. See following pages for details.

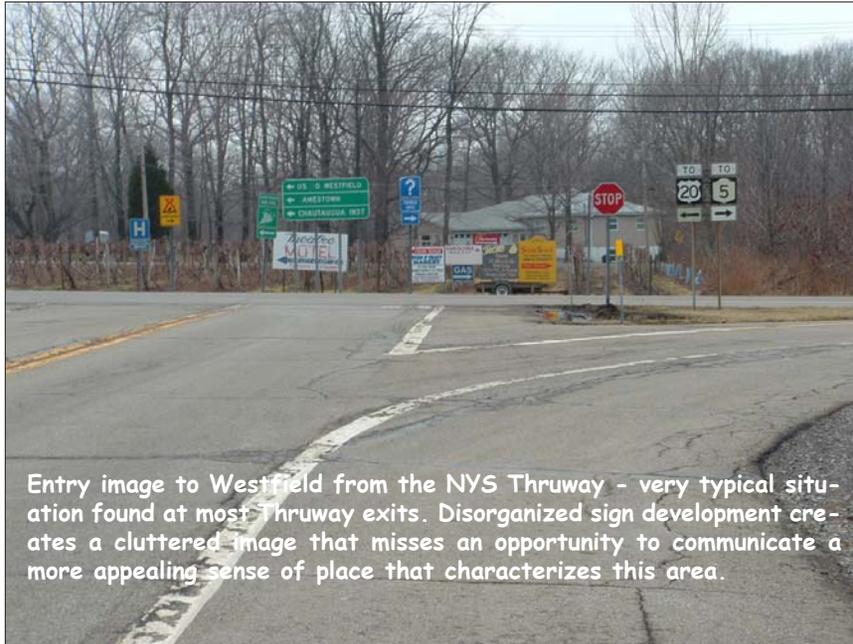
Specific recommendations include:

1. Improve the signage situation at the Thruway entrance/exit.
2. Maintain views to existing vineyards.
3. Work with NYS Thruway to improve the visual quality of the security fence (chain-link) at entry. Add plantings along the fence line.
4. Consider developing a Visitor Information area near the entry.
5. Add roadside plantings to enclose the Portage St. roadway and give it an identity separate from the adjacent lands.
6. Develop the historical resource of the Portage Trail through special signs.

# Entry Image at Thruway Exit

This strategy has two parts:

1. Create a new entry sign that establishes an image for the community that gives the visitor a clear sense of place. Consider using colors, images, typeface that captures the grape culture, history and geography of the immediate area. The village, vineyards, Lake Erie shoreline and Chautauqua Creek & Gorge are wonderful characteristics of this area. The sign should also link the three principal communities along Portage St., Westfield, Barcelona Harbor and Mayville. This not only supports these communities but also establishes Portage St. as linking corridor for the area.
2. Advertising signs for local businesses are important but consider displaying them in a more elegant and purposeful manner. The existing situation presents a mixed bag of sign types and size that is not only hard to read from a moving car but is also unsightly. As a design strat-



Entry image to Westfield from the NYS Thruway - very typical situation found at most Thruway exits. Disorganized sign development creates a cluttered image that misses an opportunity to communicate a more appealing sense of place that characterizes this area.

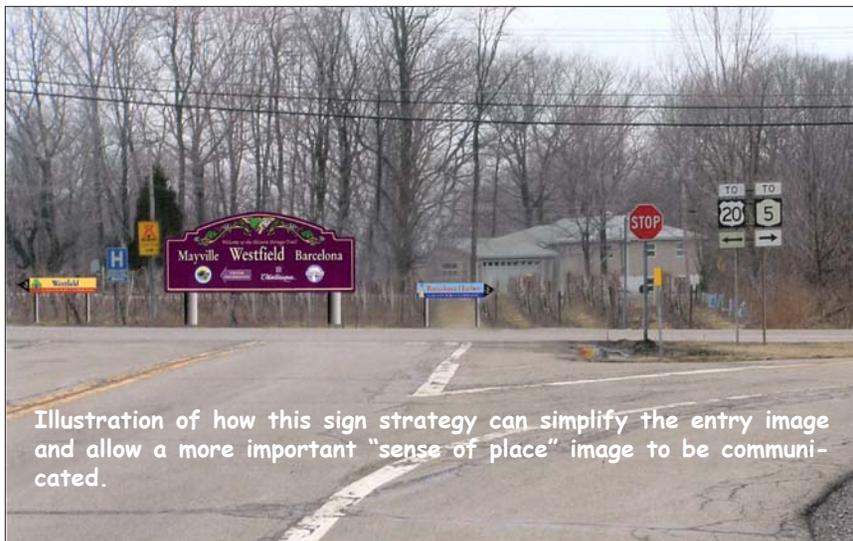


Illustration of how this sign strategy can simplify the entry image and allow a more important "sense of place" image to be communicated.

The design strategy here would be to present a more distinguished arrival image to visitors to the Westfield area and provide them with a better understanding of the beauty and character of the area, a "sense of place".



General Image Sign for the Communities along Portage Street

General directory signs direct visitors to communities where they can find additional signage for specific services

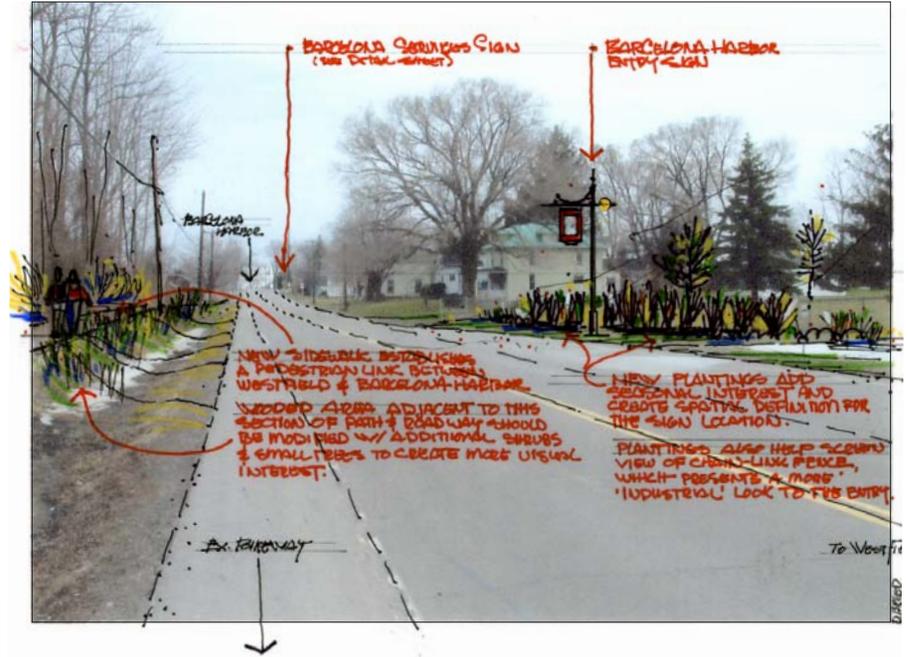
egy, consider simplifying the image at the Thruway exit with two signs that direct visitors to services in each direction - Westfield & Barcelona Harbor. Follow up these signs with more specific listing of services on sign panels located along Portage St. nearer to each community. See following pages for examples of these sign styles.





N. Portage St. view north to the Hamlet of Barcelona.

**1** The visual sense of arrival in the hamlet occurs where the residential structures begin even if this is not the actual point where the municipality begins. This is the place to establish a sign and entrance to the hamlet.



Corner lot at N. Portage St. & NYS Rt. 5 in the Hamlet of Barcelona.

**2** Because this is one of the four corners of the main intersection in the hamlet, it play an important role in establishing the visual quality of the settlement. Near-term suggestions include addition of planted screens to enclose parking and the addition of a location sign that identifies various businesses in the community.



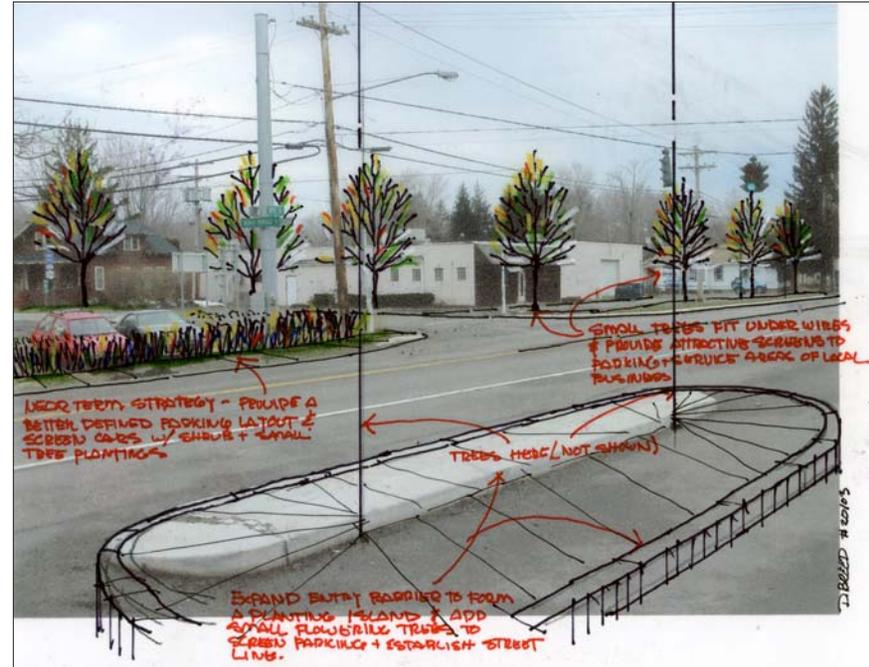


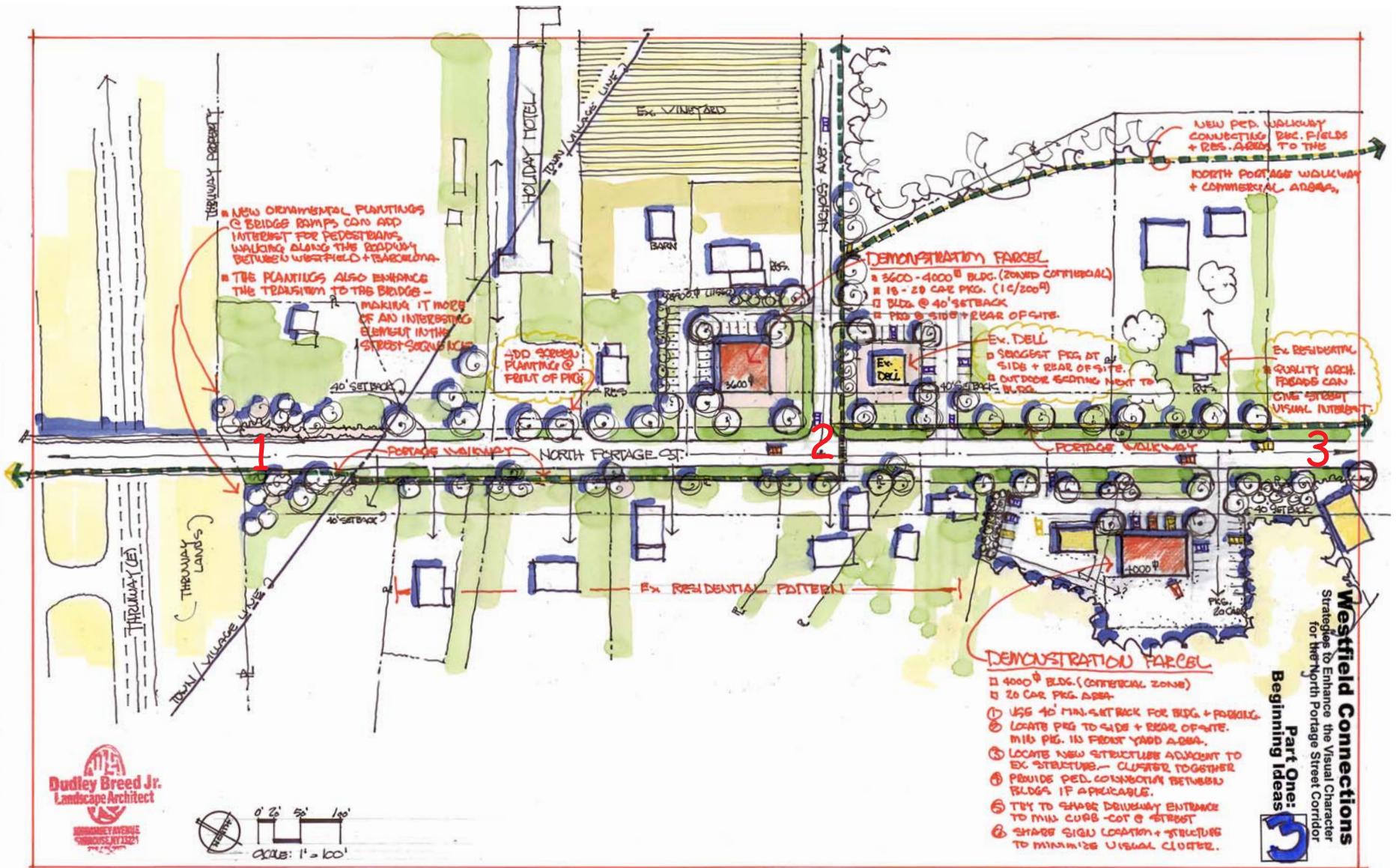
3 The addition of street trees and selected placement of shrubbery masses can help define a smaller scale space within the intersection making it less vehicular oriented and more pedestrian oriented. This is a key strategy when trying to restore a sense of habitation in a community where the scale has been altered (enlarged) over the years by expansion of automobile-related development.

**Create people friendly spaces within the larger circulation spaces in the community.**

The picture above illustrates a very common occurrence in communities all across the state: parking lot and roadway pavements are visually connected in the landscape so that the scene is dominated by vehicle pavements - usually asphalt - and the visual space is large and unobstructed.

While it is certainly necessary to have adequate pavements for vehicular movement and storage, that does not necessarily mean that the visual landscape - the landscape that people live in - must be sacrificed. The design strategy presented here and elsewhere in this report offers an alternative approach that balances both the engineering requirements for vehicular circulation with those essential elements of the landscape that create enjoyable places for people to live and visit - small scale, visual richness, seasonal influences, to name a few.





1

North Portage St. @ NYS Thruway bridge ramp. Consider adding plantings along the bridge ramps to acknowledge the bridges along N. Portage St. and to add points of horticultural interest.



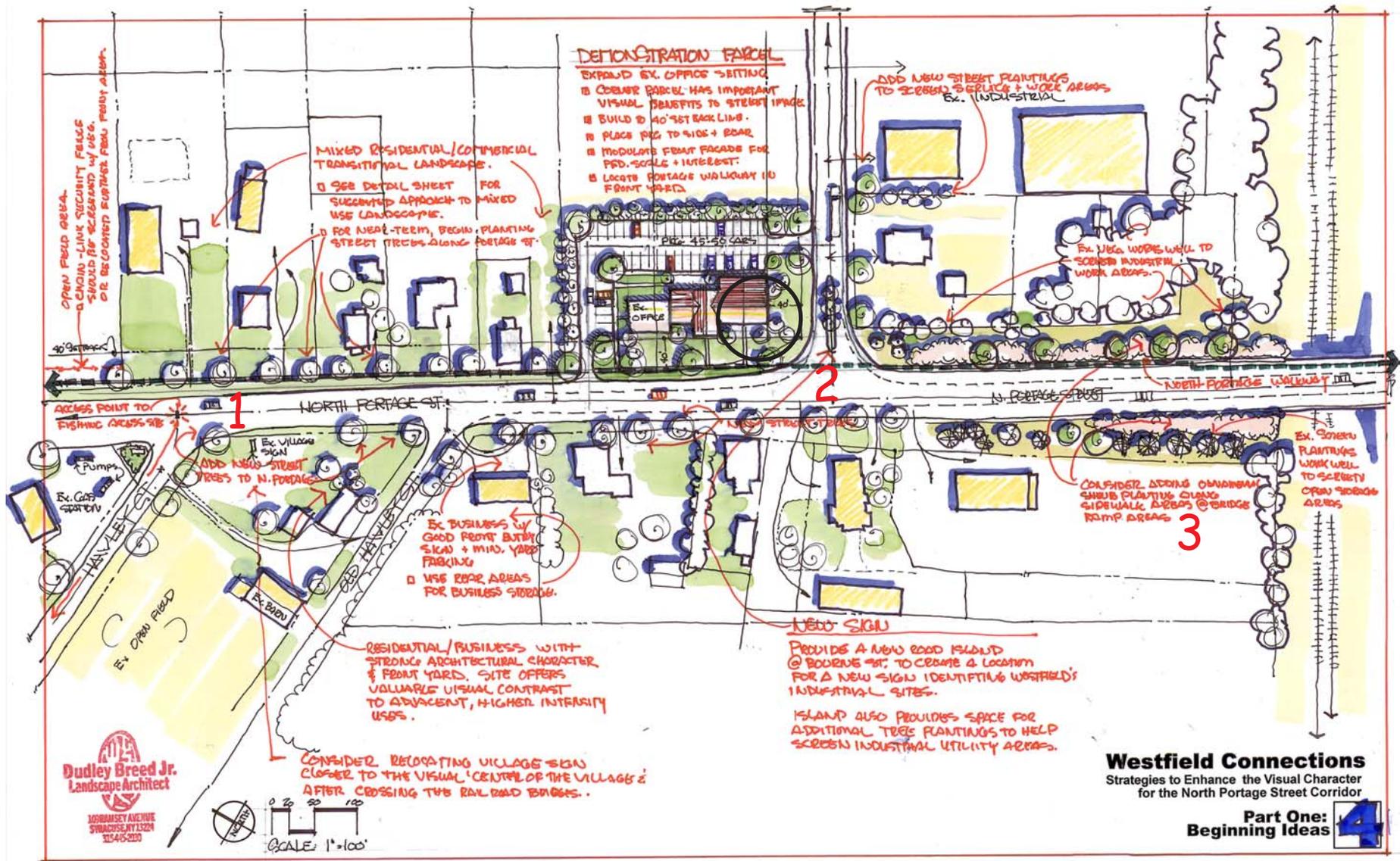
2

Corner lots @ Nichols Ave. with commercial development. Plan above offers suggestions to arrange site plans to use buildings to maintain street line and place parking lots to the side and rear areas of lots.



3

Existing condition image along N. Portage St.



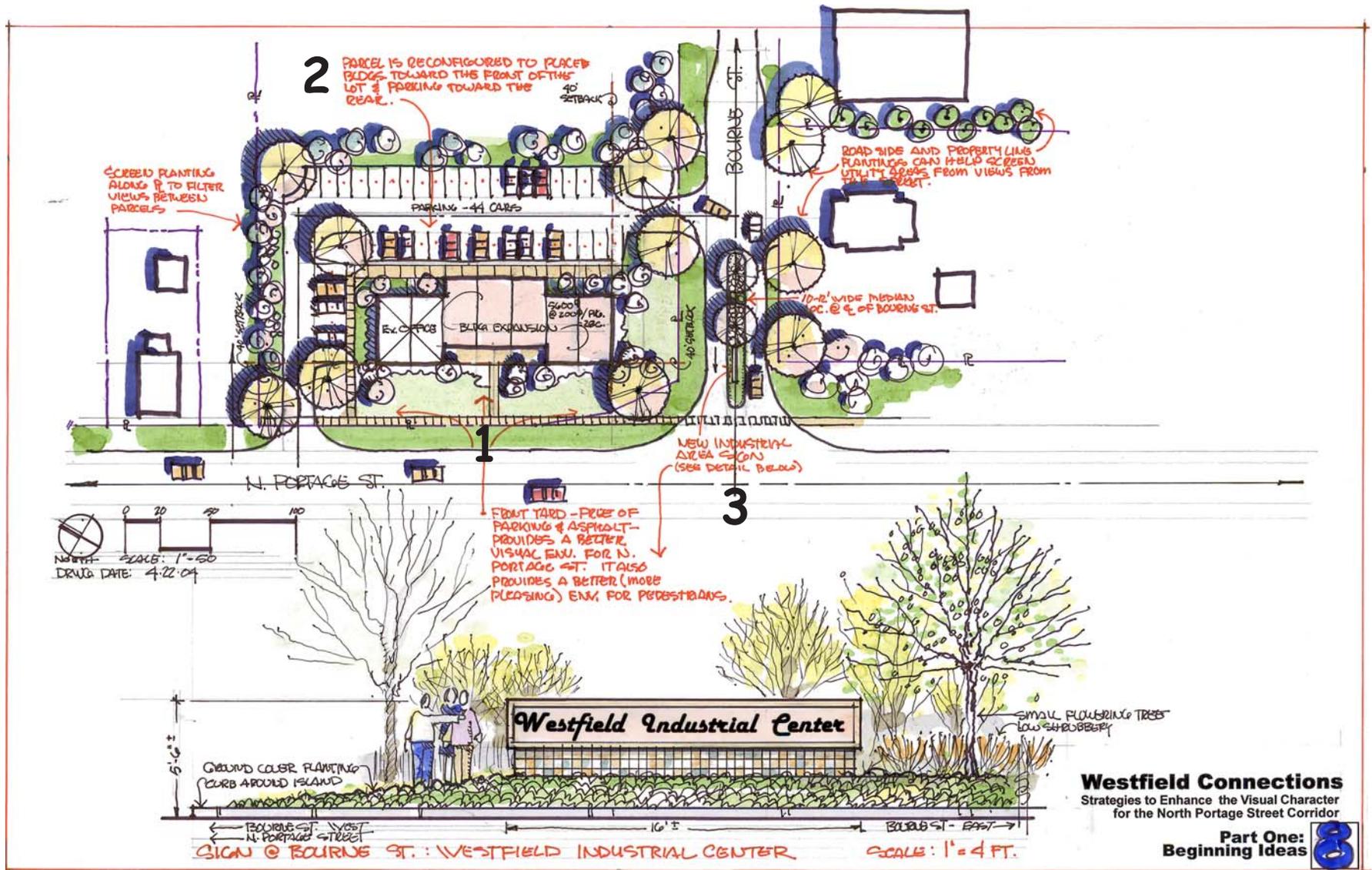
1 The condition of the landscape within the road ROW and, to some extent, within the front yard areas of the bounding properties establishes the visual quality of the roadway landscape. Cooperation by both the highway managers and adjacent property owners is needed to establish a quality streetscape.



2 Bourne St. provides an entrance to an industrial - services area of the town and provides an opportunity create a more appealing image to the area. See next page for details.

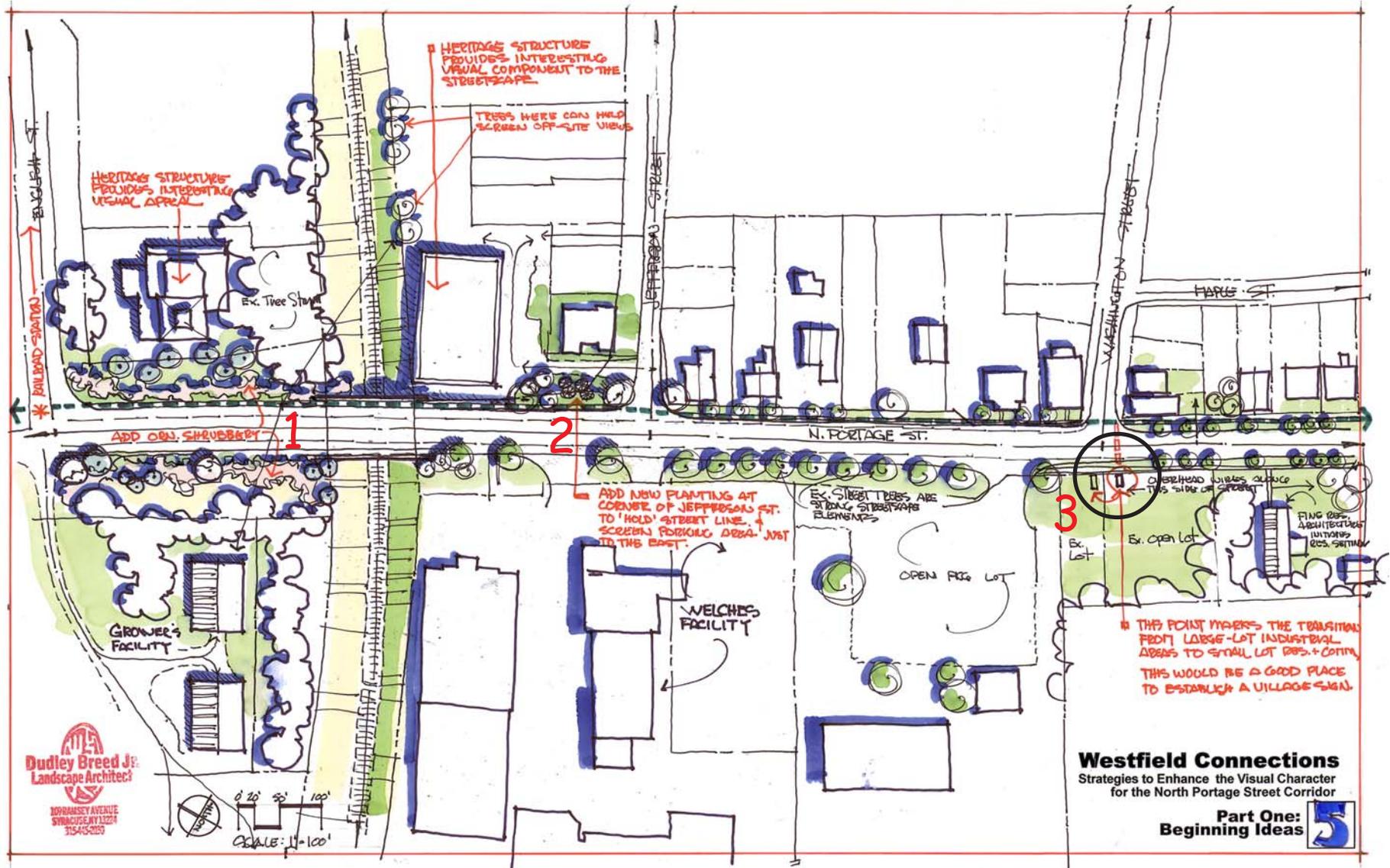
Bridge-ramp side slopes also offer opportunities to "dress-up" the street landscape





The drawing above, which is a hypothetical development located on the NE corner of N. Portage and Bourne Sts., illustrates several aspects for the design strategy for North Portage Street and Bourne Street in particular.

1. Front yards should not be used for parking. This area should be used for landscape development for the buildings on the site, as a place to support business signage, as a place for street trees, and space for a pedestrian walkway. The walkway not only serves the property owners along the street but is also part of a future walking trail connecting the village with Barcelona Harbor.
2. Parking should be located to the sides of the structures and at the rear.
3. For Bourne Street, consider the benefits of a more elegant entry to the street and the industrial areas it serves. The sketch above illustrates the development of a new sign located in an island in the roadway. The road would need to be widened to accommodate the sign and a mix of tree and shrub plantings would be added to define the entry and screen views to utility areas associated with businesses in the area.



**1** Bridge-ramp embankment with wine grower's Cooperative in view.

Bridge-ramp embankment near Jefferson St.



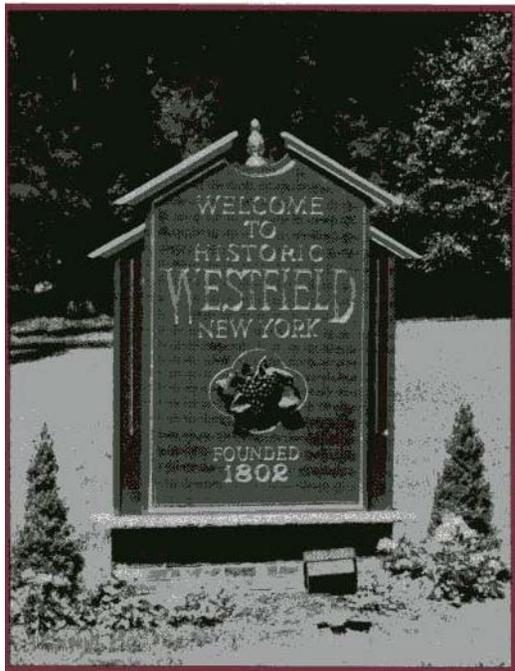
**2**

Open yard area opposite Washington St. This area marks the point where, architecturally and spatially, the village boundary exists. This would be a good place to locate a village sign.

See detail on adjacent page.



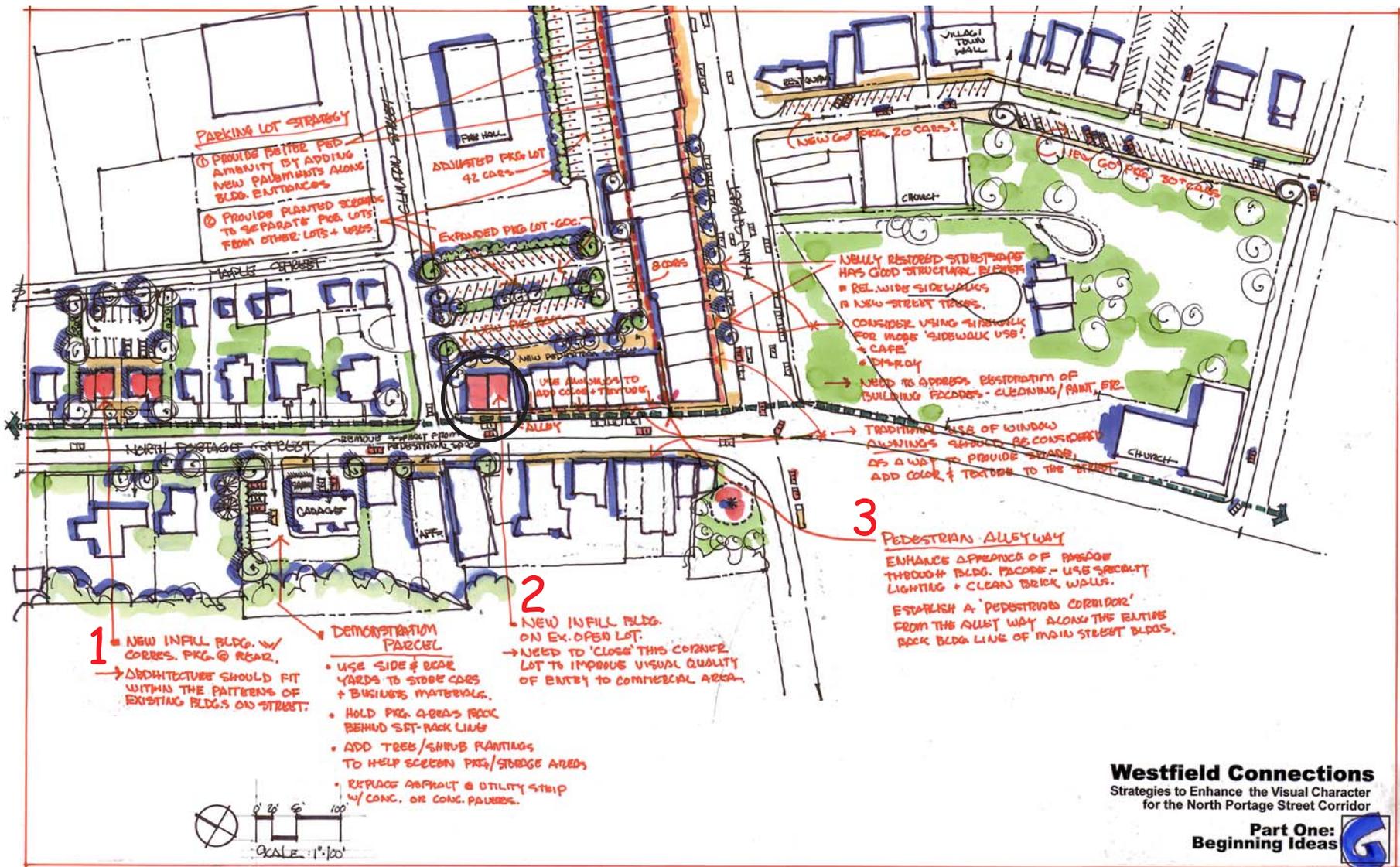
**3**



EXISTING VILLAGE SIGN  
RELOCATED FROM PRESENT LOCATION  
NEAR HAWLEY STREET.

AT THIS POINT, THE CHARACTER OF THE ROADWAY  
CHANGES TO BECOME MORE PEDESTRIAN ORIENTED.  
THE ROADWAY NARROWS, BLDGS. ARE LOCATED CLOSER  
TOGETHER AND CLOSER TO THE STREET, THE TREE  
CANOPY BECOMES MORE DENSE. ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS  
BECOME RICHER AND VISUALLY MORE INTERESTING.  
(NOTE: CHURCH FACADE BECOMES A FOCAL POINT AT  
THIS LOCATION)

Existing Village entry sign presently located at the corner of North Portage and Hawley Streets. Consider relocating this sign to the location noted above. Sign location here strengthens the "sense-of-entry" that exists at this location.



**Westfield Connections**  
Strategies to Enhance the Visual Character for the North Portage Street Corridor

**Part One: Beginning Ideas**



**1** Potential In-Fill area along North Portage St. New development here should consider locating buildings along the street line to maintain the street's spatial integrity.



**2** Corner lot @ Clinton St. See detail on next page for design suggestions that can mitigate open parking lot views.



Existing alley connecting North Portage St. to the Main Street parking lot. **3**



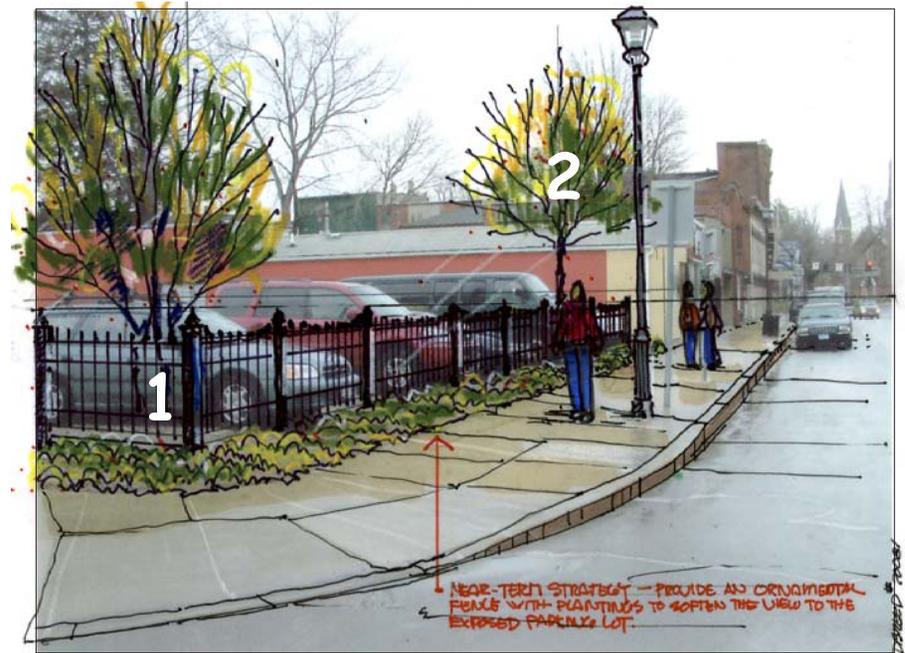
In this photograph of the parking area at the corner of N. Portage St. and Clinton St., it is easy to see that the integrity of the streetscape as a pedestrian space is lost with the loss of the buildings that were once located where the parking lot is now. The building facades that once gave edge and provided material character to the street are gone and replaced with an open lot that gives little spatial definition other than what the cars provide during their itinerate stay.

The corner is now a place for machines.

But this is a village, a place where people live and this corner is an important visual space for residents and visitors alike. This corner marks the transition from residential to commercial architecture in the village and defines the beginning of the core of the village.

So it is important, when considering the revitalization of the village landscape, that the village residents address this location and others like it in the village and develop designs that can help restore the spatial qualities of the street and minimize the extent to which cars and car storage dominate the visual quality of the village landscape.

The slide to the right suggests a design response for this corner lot and illustrates an important strategy for restoring the village landscape.



It would be ideal to rebuild on this location and redefine the streetscape with architectural elements. However that's a solution that requires more complex considerations of market and financial planning. However, it is the best solution for the long term.

For the near term, a number of landscape elements can be employed to bring a measure of spacial definition and scale back to this portion of the street. Consider the following:

1. Provide a fence element to screen the views to the cars in the lot. The fence, which could be ornamental iron or steel, not only reduces the views to the cars but also provides an edge between the sidewalk and the parking lot and establishes a sense of separation and enclosure.
2. Provide plantings. Trees can give additional enclosure to the sidewalk area and together with groundcovers and low shrubs can be designed to provide seasonal interest.

# "The Portage"

The roadway is the namesake of an important and colorful part of the history of settlement of America by the Europeans. Near and parallel to the current Portage Street roadway lies the early exploration route of the French as they sought a transportation link between the Great Lakes and the Ohio River in the early 1600's. As the Westfield community considers its tourism potential, it seems clear that interpretation and celebration of this unique history would be part of the overall tourism strategy.

One design strategy the community could employ would be to acknowledge the relationship of the roadway to the historic portage trail and create a new image for the road that expresses this history. This new image could be established through a schedule of signs and banners located along the road and at specific points that relate to historic settings. In this way, Portage Street could take on a character as the "Portage Trail" and this could in turn serve as a unifying theme for a broad array of community and commercial development.

The illustrations on this page show examples of various types of street markers that could be set out along the roadway to help establish the Portage Trail theme for Portage Street.



## Portage Trail: Community Banners

Banners could be placed at the entrances and within each community along the "trail" to bring an added measure of interest to the roadway.



## Portage Trail: Roadway Markers

The design for the trail markers is based on the round metal markers that are commonly seen on various hiking and ski trails and on the unique lead markers that were used by the French explorers to acknowledge their "claim" of the lands and routes they developed in their search for a transport route from Lake Erie to the Ohio River.

The signs might be 10 to 12 inches in diameter with a color image fixed to an aluminum plate backing. The markers would be placed at uniform intervals along the roadway and at points where opportunities exist to call out special historic sites or areas.



Existing lamppost with both banners and trail markers in place.