



# *Holton Lane Area Improvement Vision*

## Takoma Park, Maryland



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# Introduction

This document is intended to guide and inform the design of facade improvements in the Holton Lane area, as well as future infill development, to help transform Holton Lane into a pedestrian friendly shopping street, over time. The recommendations provided within this document should be used as a guide for improving the pedestrian and the shopping experience within the Holton Lane area by providing a comprehensive vision for the future of the street as a destination shopping area.

Along with specific guidelines for individual building facade improvements, this document suggests further enhancements which might be considered, both by the merchants within the study area as well as the City, to improve the value of the area, and the sales productivity of the merchants, long-term.

To that end, the key to Holton Lane's ultimate success will be in creating a unique shopping environment which will differentiate itself within the larger market context in which it resides. This document should help to demonstrate how that might be accomplished.



*Annapolis, MD*



*Sag Harbor, NY*



*Lake Forest, IL*

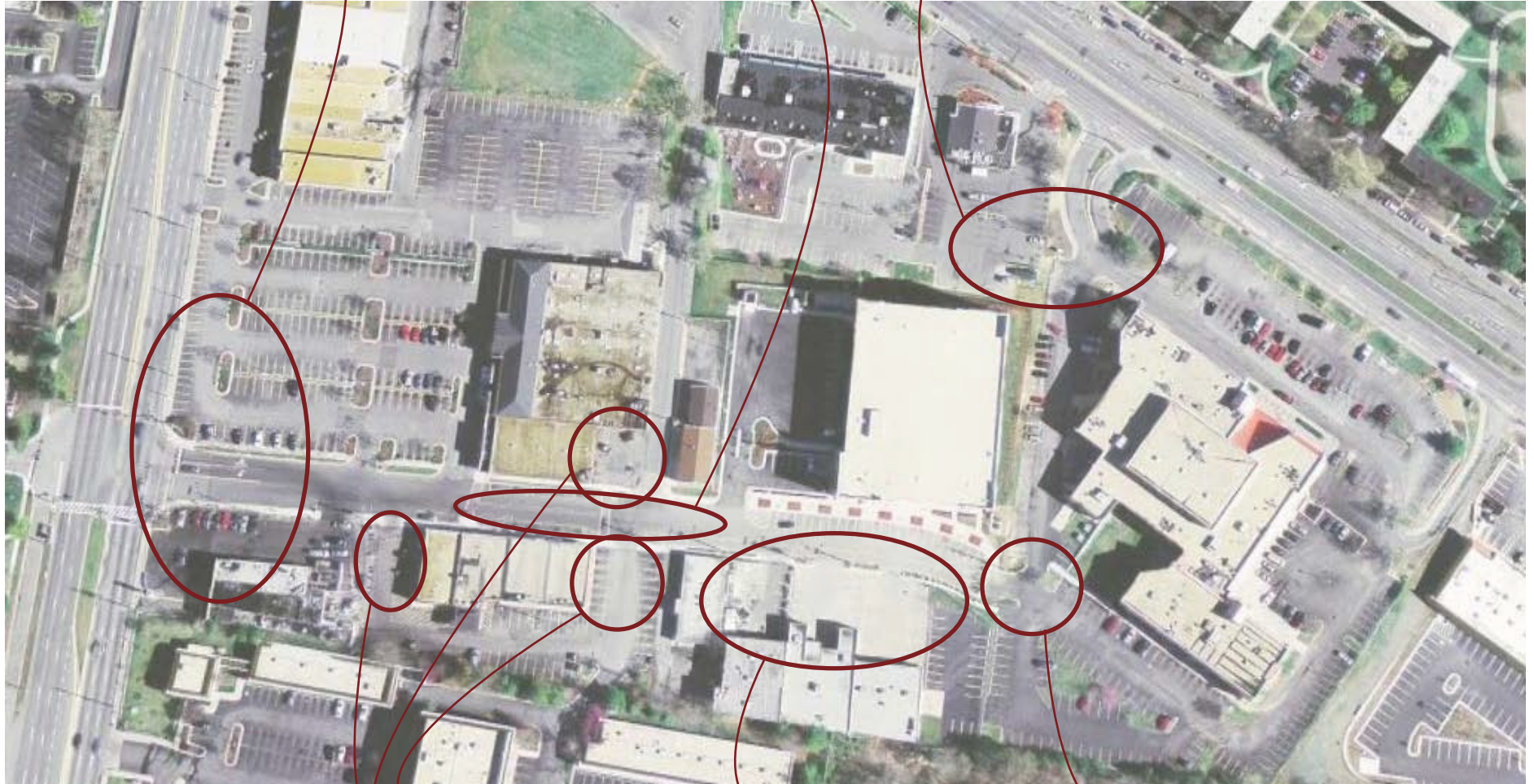


# Holton Lane Area Existing Plan

*Lack of defined entrance and edge to Holton Lane at New Hampshire Ave. diminish "sense-of-place"*

*Shift in lanes not well defined, dangerous to drivers and pedestrians*

*Confusing traffic patterns and a lack of cross-easements hinders the ability of drivers to get to Holton Lane from University Blvd.*



*Empty frontage space along Holton Ln. creates disconnected merchandising frontage and ill-defined street edge*

*Parking lots with unkempt landscaping fronting Holton Lane*

*Holton Lane is essentially a dead-end, limiting traffic along the street, and severely diminishing the retail potential at its eastern end*

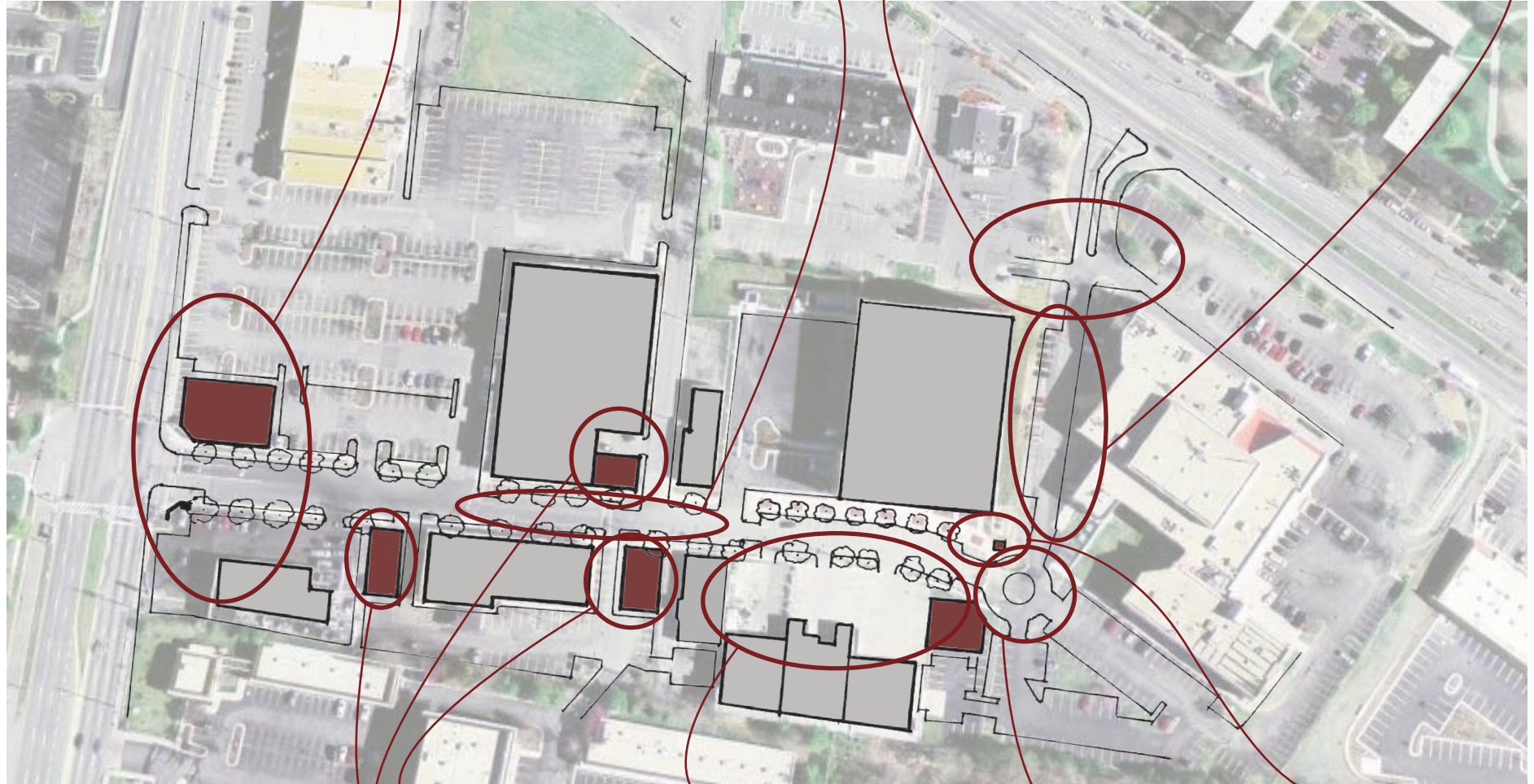
# Holton Lane Area Proposed Plan

Add building at north corner and marker at south corner to define entrance to Holton Lane, add bulb-out to make pedestrian crossing shorter

Change parking in front of EZ Storage to parallel so lanes can stay aligned all along Holton Lane, restripe road

Simplify traffic pattern and add a cross-easement to get between parking lots without going onto University Blvd.

Reconstitute alley as a street to encourage thru traffic to University Blvd.



Infill empty sites with buildings to unify street edge

Landscape edge in front of parking lot and build low wall between lot and sidewalk to help define/maintain street wall

Add traffic circle to encourage thru traffic along Holton Lane

Add pavilion or marker as terminating vista for Holton Lane

# Design Guidelines

## Street Improvements

An improved façade alone does not make a great street; for a truly high-quality shopping street, the whole streetscape must be designed. The streetscape represents the public realm – the place where the pedestrian interacts with the built environment, and great care must be taken to ensure that Holton Lane is perceived as an attractive, comfortable, and safe place to spend time. The streetscape should strike a balance between the pedestrian and the car, accommodating both without sacrificing safety and comfort for the pedestrian. Several key elements should be considered in designing an attractive streetscape: building form and materials, pedestrian protection/cover, furniture, public art, and landscaping.

- Materials should be well detailed and of high quality, at least at the first floor. Natural materials are preferred over synthetic materials.
- Arcades and awnings should be used appropriately to provide shade and protection from the rain to pedestrians. Awnings can also be used as a marquee for the shop.
- Street furniture should be carefully selected to compliment the overall aesthetic, and to give pedestrians a place to sit and interact with each other.
- Cafes or restaurants should provide places for outdoor seating to help animate the street.
- Public art and landscaping can dramatically enhance the comfort and appeal of an urban space.
- Place trees evenly along a street to create a sense of rhythm and enclosure, and use planter boxes or planting strips to differentiate the street and seating areas from the sidewalk.
- Street lights should be scaled to the pedestrian, not the car as on a busy highway.



Annapolis, MD



Annapolis, MD



Winter Park, FL



## Composition

Storefronts are the critical interface between the retailer and his customer and should be appropriately designed and scaled for the pedestrian. While storefronts may stand out as specific to both their building and the type of merchandise they frame, they should also be designed with the whole context of the street in mind. All elements of the façade should work together to create a harmonious composition. These elements include materials, windows and doors, signage, awnings, and lighting. See the image on the following page for a diagram of the elements that make up a well-designed storefront.

- Take into consideration the design of adjacent elevations and the larger neighborhood as a whole to create a more cohesive shopping precinct with a unique character of its own.
- Proportions, spacing, and rhythm of storefront elements should be consistent with local historical patterns (downtown Takoma Park, downtown Silver Spring).
- Retain established roof lines, cornice lines, and window heights to knit the street together.
- Individual storefronts should have vertical proportions that draw the eye up, creating a stronger sense of rhythm along the street, as horizontal proportions make the street seem longer.
- Buildings should be designed in three parts, with a base, middle, and top. The base should be the first floor with windows, the top is generally the cornice or pediment, with a differentiated band in the middle. See diagram on following page.
- One story buildings should be designed to appear as one and a half stories or two stories with a clear delineation between base, middle, and top.



Setauket, NY



Setauket, NY



Takoma Park



Grand Rapids, MI



## Glossary of Terms

**Awning** - a covering attached to a building extending over the sidewalk above a window or door

**Beltcourse** - a continuous row of stones, brick, or tile in a wall

**Blade Sign** - a sign that projects out from the building so that it hangs over the street

**Bulb-Out** - an extension of the sidewalk that extends into the street delineating the on-street parking spaces from the drive lanes and creating shorter crossing distances for pedestrians

**Cornice** - a horizontal projection where the wall and ceiling meet, crowning the building

**Marker or Pylon** - an architectural element that marks an important spot; can take many forms including a small pavilion or kiosk, a low wall and sign, or vertical element like an obelisk or other element

**Mullion** - a framing member that divides adjacent window units in the same framed opening

**Muntin** - a strip of wood or metal that divides panes of glass in a window or door

**Parapet** - low wall projecting above the roof of a building

**Pier** - a solid vertical element of a wall between two openings, can be on one floor or extend the full height of the building

**Signband** - horizontal band used to display sign name, also know as a fascia

**Transom** - a smaller window above a door or larger window

**Window Base** - creates a strong base for the windows so that the glass does not extend all the way to the ground



One Story Storefront



Two Story Storefront



## Windows and Doors

- Storefronts should feature large windows and effective awnings, signage, and lighting.
- Windows should be free of clutter to foster visibility into and out of the store.
- Use transom windows to allow light to reach farther inside the store.
- Recessed doorways create an entry threshold and enhanced protection from the elements and protect pedestrians from outswinging doors.
- Muntins should be used to divide panes of glass so that none is wider than ten feet to introduce vertical rhythm to the storefront.
- All glass should be transparent, and glass block and opaque glass should be avoided.
- Doors should have no more than 75% and no less than 25% glass.
- Doors facing main pedestrian pathways should be active and inviting, while service doors should face the rear of the building.
- Use awnings, signage, and architectural details to emphasize the entrance to a store.

## Awnings

- Awnings and canopies should be incorporated into the storefront façade to provide pedestrian protection from rain or sun and to reduce glare on the window for better visual merchandising.
- Awnings should be deep enough for people to walk side by side underneath them without being exposed to the elements, at a minimum of four and a half feet.
- Awnings should be placed at the top of windows and fit inside the building elements so as not to conceal important architectural details on the façade.
- On a building with multiple storefronts, awnings should be consistent in character and scale, but can be unique in color and detail.
- Cloth or synthetic fabrics are the preferred material for awnings.
- Text on awnings should be minimal and scaled so as not to overpower the awning.



Winter Park, FL



Winter Park, FL



Grand Rapids, MI



The Hamptons, NY



The Hamptons, NY





## Signage

- Signage should be appropriate to the type of tenant within, and should reflect or add to the character of the street.
- Use distinctive lettering styles, colors, and icons that relate to the type of store, but do not overpower the facade design.
- Flat signs applied to the building should be integrated into the overall facade design in a clearly articulated signband without obstructing architectural details. Signs in the signband should contain only the name of the business and, if necessary, the nature of the store.
- Flat signs should either be painted or have individually applied, three dimensional letters.
- Blade signs offer the most opportunity for creativity and visibility and should be aligned with the signband. A store should have no more than one blade sign and it should be placed above the shop entrance and directly in view of pedestrians walking along the sidewalk.
- Window decals or signs painted on windows should cover no more than 15% of the window and should be unique to the merchandise. Windows should not be cluttered with signs and posters, as they detract from the quality of the street and block views into the store.
- Signs should be mounted no higher than one story above the sidewalk, unless deemed appropriate to the scale and nature of the building.

## Lighting

- Lighting should be used as a design feature to accent building facades and as a means of focusing illumination on merchandise and signage.
- Signs and window displays should be well lit with direct lighting.
- Flashing, pulsating, or moving lights are discouraged, as are lights that are overly bright and produce glare.



Signband



Window Decal



Blade Signs



Sag Harbor, NY



Takoma Park, MD



## Landscaping

- The landscaping in front of a store reflects on the store it is near and so should always be well maintained.
- Landscaping should have a variety of trees, bushes, and flowers.
- Use colorful plants that do not require constant attention to add vibrancy to the streetscape.
- Planting boxes should be placed at the sidewalk if the building does not extend to the sidewalk, creating a continuous street edge, and filled with flowers or bushes.

## Access

- Provide pedestrian access to the store, directly off the sidewalk.
- Replace high fences with low planters or hedges to create a street edge while allowing both visual and practical access to the store.
- Remove clutter of signs and merchandise in store windows in order to provide views into the store, which is vital to having customers feel safe within the store and also to maintain a safe street (eyes on the street).
- Remove any physical barriers to healthy pedestrian activity to encourage access to the store.
- Stripe parking lots to provide a clear pedestrian connection from the sidewalk or car to the store if a parking lot in front of the store is necessary.
- Add trees and bushes along the sides of parking lots to create a more welcoming effect while improving the safety of the customer.



Mount Dora, FL



Greenwood, SC



Bowie Town Center, MD



Winter Park, FL



## Materials

- Materials should be consistent with the character of the neighborhood and street.
- Brick is commonly used in the area and can be left natural or painted.
- Stucco and metal are also acceptable materials for Art Deco and Streamline style buildings, which are common in Takoma Park.
- A building should not have more than two materials, aside from the trim, with the heavier or more rusticated material placed below the lighter one.

## Infill Development

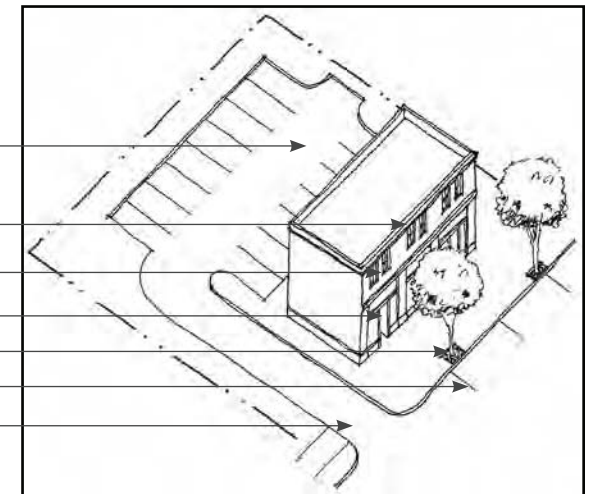
- New construction along Holton Lane should infill empty lots along the street to create a more cohesive street edge and continuous merchandising path.
- Position buildings on the site to properly address the street; build up to the lot line such that main entrances open directly onto the sidewalks along Holton Lane.
- Storefronts and street furniture should contribute positively to the overall pedestrian environment, both functionally and aesthetically.
- Place main entrances so that they face Holton Lane, with secondary entrances from the back or sides, so that no blank walls face Holton Lane.
- On-street parking should be provided wherever possible, while off-street parking lots should ideally be kept toward the back of the lot and shared between buildings when possible.
- If parking is visible from the street, it should be screened from view with landscaping or low walls, allowing the car to be appropriately accommodated, but not wholly at the expense of the pedestrian experience.
- All previously mentioned design guidelines should be followed regarding composition, materials, windows, signage, awnings, lighting, landscaping, and access for infill development.



Grand Rapids, MI



Takoma Park, MD



# Recommendations

The viability of the Holton Lane area as a shopping district depends on the entire precinct working as a coherent, safe, and vibrant shopping environment, capable of accommodating both the pedestrian and the car. Also, if the design guidelines are followed correctly, the street will become a more pleasant, and safer, place to be.

To that end, the principles of 'Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design' (CPTED) are implicit in any thoughtfully designed environment, and help to clearly show that the occupants of that place care deeply about it. The theory of CPTED uses the strategy of natural surveillance to create a safer environment. Natural surveillance relies on the perception that people who consistently observe their environment, can help to prevent or deter crime before it happens. The design guidelines and recommendations in this document are intended to encourage more people to use the street, which in itself helps prevent crime and acts as natural surveillance. Windows with clear views to

sidewalks, open views above fencing and landscaping, well placed lights that are not too bright so as to create glare, and an active street with pedestrians and cars will help to deter crime. The term "eyes on the street" refers to the theory of natural surveillance which states that through the activation of the street and the visibility of the street from inside buildings, criminals will be much less likely to act, and crime will be less likely to occur.

The following section explains and illustrates how the design and configuration of individual buildings, as well as the area as a whole, can help in making Holton Lane area a safer and more vibrant place. A possible plan for the infill development and street improvements of the Holton Lane area is shown below, which redefines Holton Lane as a legitimate thru-street connecting to University Blvd. and changing the perception of Holton Lane as a dead-end. Infill development fills blank holes in the streetscape, creating a more cohesive street and enhancing the natural surveillance of the area.



*Holton Lane Existing Conditions*



*Holton Lane Proposed Improvements*



## *Holton Lane and New Hampshire Avenue*

BEFORE



- Remove the 'No Outlet' sign
- Add a building in the grocery parking at the north-east corner of New Hampshire Ave. and Holton Lane with an entrance from Holton Lane
- Add an architectural element such as a marker or an entrance sign with landscaping on the south-east corner of Holton Lane and New Hampshire Ave.
- Add more evenly spaced street trees
- Add a bulb-out at the south-east corner of Holton Lane at New Hampshire Ave. to reduce the distance a pedestrian has to walk to cross the intersection

AFTER



## Holton Lane Looking East

BEFORE



- Add bulb-outs at all pedestrian crosswalks to reduce the width of the street, causing traffic to slow, for a safer pedestrian environment
- Regularly spaced street-trees and street lamps will create a rhythm all along the street
- Open the blank wall of Gallo Clothing on Holton Lane with windows and awnings to animate the street on the north side
- See improvements for El Alazan Western Wear on south side of Holton Lane on page 17 to apply to all buildings in that strip

AFTER



# Holton Lane Looking West

BEFORE



- Add bulb-outs at all pedestrian crosswalks to reduce the width of the street, causing traffic to slow for a safer pedestrian environment
- Regularly spaced street-trees and street lamps will create a rhythm all along the street
- Open the blank wall of Gallo Clothing with windows and awnings to animate the street on the north side
- Add an infill building to hide the service bay for the grocery store next to Gallo Clothing

AFTER



## East End of Holton Lane

BEFORE



- Realign the street with parallel parking on both sides
- Add bulb-outs at alleys and wide driveways to make the street narrower
- Add trees to the south side of Holton Lane to complement trees in front of EZ Storage
- Add an infill building on the south side of Holton Lane across from the EZ Storage
- Add a pavilion, kiosk, or other marker as terminating vista
- Add maintained planters as landscaping between street and parking lot

AFTER





## *El Alazan Western Wear and Joe's Shoe Repair*

BEFORE



- Overall the building has a good composition and use of materials
- Windows should be free of many signs and merchandise because cluttered windows prevent pedestrians from seeing into the store and discourage them from coming in
- Signs should be designed and placed according to the design guidelines
- Blade signs will be visible to pedestrians on New Hampshire Ave, attracting them down Holton Lane
- Awnings will provide depth to the facade and provide comfort for pedestrians

AFTER



# EZ Storage

BEFORE



- Holton Lane should connect to a thru-street down to University Blvd. to bring more traffic past the EZ Storage
- Awnings should be added under the lintel for the windows at a low angle to provide enough head height for pedestrians
- Signs should be either bolted on above the lintel or a blade sign on the pier
- The addition of a beltcourse under the window will provide a proper signband
- Gooseneck lights above the signs will help add visual interest and depth to the facade

AFTER



# Sadana Grocery

BEFORE



- Create a more welcoming, pedestrian-friendly environment by removing the chain-link fence
- Use planting boxes and landscaping to create an edge between the sidewalk and the parking lot
- Place signs in more thoughtful positions to improve the composition of the facade
- Remove the tent that blocks the main entrance to the store and replace with an awning that extends the length of the building to improve visibility
- Replace metal overhead door with glass doors

AFTER



# Unilang Center

BEFORE



- Remove awnings on second floor and replace with signs on parapet
- Replace awnings on first floor so that they fit inside each bay without overlapping the piers
- Awnings for each store should have the same form but should be different in color and font
- Fill the windows on each side of the piers to create more solid wall space
- Add a base that runs the length of the building to unify the facade
- Add planters at stairs and ramps to delineate access to stores
- Building can be faced in brick or finished in current building material

AFTER



# Tire Town / Hampshire Car Wash

BEFORE



- Add a canopy and marquee to create a streamlined facade
- The canopy will provide shade to customers waiting for their cars as well as a place for cars to be dried and the marquee will act as the marker for the entrance to Tire Town
- Replace siding on Holton Lane facade with stucco finish
- Roofs of the bay windows should be painted to match the color of the Car Wash awning
- Remove excess signs to clean up facade
- Add landscaping between sidewalk and parking lot
- An entrance marker should be added by the City as a gateway to attract more traffic onto Holton Lane

AFTER



# Hampshire Place

BEFORE



- As it is, Hampshire Place is acceptable as a car oriented strip shopping center
- Low cost improvements to make it more pedestrian friendly should include landscaping, and the addition of trees and bushes
- Restripe the parking lot to provide clear pedestrian paths from New Hampshire Ave.
- The brick piers on the upper floors can be replaced with Dryvit rather inexpensively to differentiate the top from the rest of the building
- In front of the Caribbean Market, head in parking should be eliminated and replaced with a sidewalk that can accommodate cafe seating for the market and restaurant

AFTER



# Hampshire Place

BEFORE



- As a more comprehensive makeover, the piers should be extended all the way up the wall, through the parapet, and should be as wide as at the first floor to create a vertical emphasis for the building
- Replace the windows and existing signs on the second floor with taller windows that extend to the height of the top of the existing sign
- Add a new parapet and cornice with a signband and use bolted on lettering for the signs
- New windows should have vertical proportions

AFTER





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