



SCARSDALE VILLAGE CENTER PLACEMAKING PLAN

AN ELEMENT OF THE SCARSDALE STRATEGIC MOBILITY + PLACEMAKING PLAN
10/28/22

Contents

- Overview2
- Background2
- Revitalization Planning3
- A Unique and Vibrant Village Center4
- A Plan to Create a Great Place 10
- Multi-Modal Mobility 24
- Implementing the Vision 26
- Cost Estimate and Implementation Summary 30



Prepared by FHI Studio for
the Village of Scarsdale

Overview

The Scarsdale Strategic Mobility + Placemaking Plan is a community-driven transportation planning effort to identify and address challenges and opportunities in the Village Center. The plan's goals are to increase pedestrian and cyclist safety, provide access for all users, improve traffic flow and circulation, activate public spaces, and incorporate sustainability. **This document outlines the conceptual improvement plans for the Village Center.**

Background

The concepts in this report are based off findings from community and stakeholder feedback, planning documents, traffic studies, drone data collection from March 2022, and an analysis of crash data. The project team collected community and stakeholder feedback through a walk audit in March 2022, through comments on the project website (www.scarsdalemobility.com), via email, and at Village Board working group meetings, a design workshop, and a virtual public workshop.

Revitalization Planning

In 2010, the Village of Scarsdale adopted the Update of the Village Center Component of the Village of Scarsdale Comprehensive Plan ("Village Center Plan"). The plan focused on ensuring a comprehensive development framework that would preserve, protect, and enhance the Village Center's character, function, and value.

The plan was created to address a lack of vibrancy that undermines the Village Center's economic and social function. The plan articulated a vision for a "vibrant and pedestrian friendly center, where a mixed-use environment is home to a diversity of businesses and pleasant gathering places where people of all ages interact." The plan identified the need to increase the amount of people in the Village Center, stating that, "More people means more demand for retail, dining, and cultural venues."

The plan recommended two primary strategies for achieving vibrancy: increasing the number of programmed events to attract visitors and increasing the number of people who live in the Village Center. The plan acknowledged this approach will exacerbate two hot-button issues that existed at the time: a perceived lack of parking and traffic congestion. It notes that, "Calls for reduced traffic congestion, increased walkability, and parking have been constants throughout the development of this plan and indeed have been abiding concerns for decades."

To achieve the vision and address the concerns, the Plan identified several goals including:

- Attend to traffic congestion.
- Enhance walkability and pedestrian safety and amenities.
- Maintain an acceptable level of parking availability.
- Improve bike connectivity and amenities.
- Expand green spaces that provide interest and a calming atmosphere.

The Plan was followed by several additional efforts including:

- Report of the Downtown Revitalization Committee on A Case Study of Lake Bluff, Illinois - Bringing the Community Together (2017).
- The Consumer Survey Concerning Scarsdale Village Center (2018).
- The Merchant Survey Concerning Scarsdale Village Center (2019).
- Report of the Downtown Revitalization Committee on The Revitalization of Boniface Circle in the Village Center (2020).

There were also several traffic studies conducted since the plan was adopted. More detail can on this work can be found in the Scarsdale Strategic Mobility + Placemaking Plan Data Analysis Memorandum Appendix.



“More people means more demand for retail, dining, and cultural venues.”

A Unique and Vibrant Village Center

The Vision

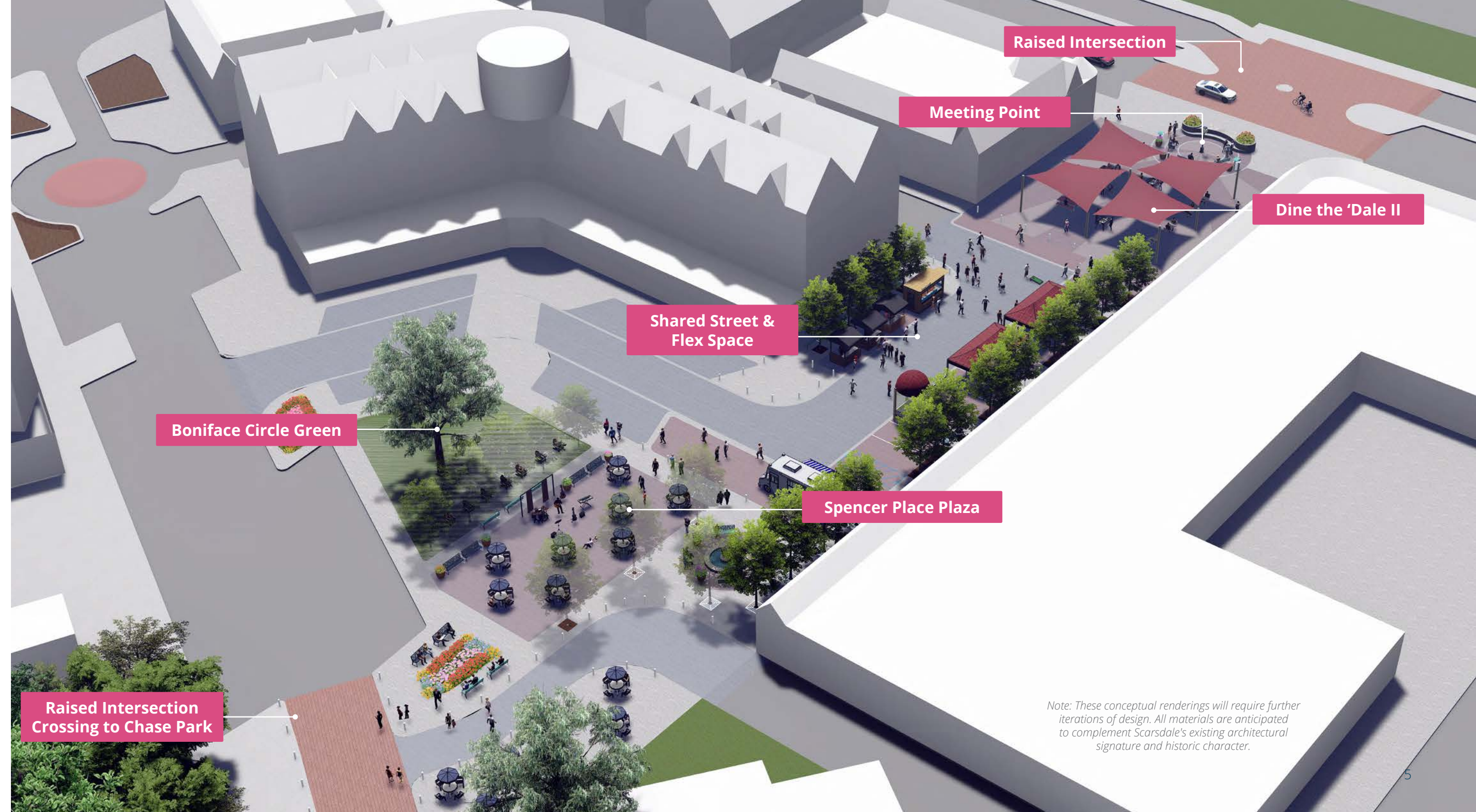
The Village Center Plan illustrates the placemaking improvements that will support a “vibrant and pedestrian friendly center, where a mixed-use environment is home to a diversity of businesses and pleasant gathering places where people of all ages interact.”

This plan illustrates how placemaking strategies could be leveraged to support that vision. Through consistent investment in the public realm, **Scarsdale could be home to the most unique and vibrant small village center along Metro-North rail corridor.**

Among other amenities, a vibrant Village Center would include:

- A **meeting point**, which includes a relocated clock and benches, a clear center to the downtown and make it easy for people to find and meet people. (See *A Place for Community* on page 10)
- An upgraded **Dine the 'Dale** area that would allow for year-round enclosed or semi-enclosed community. The area would be public space and support social gatherings that serve to strengthen community cohesiveness. (See *A Place for Community* on page 10)
- A **shared street & flex space** along Spencer Place that would transform the area into a pedestrian-prioritized space. This would help to support a vibrant commercial district that attracts customers who seek high-quality places to spend time rather than short-term convenience shopping. During special events, the entire street can be transformed into a pedestrian-only space. (See *A Street for Everyone and Every Occasion* on page 12)
- The **Spencer Place Plaza** and a redesigned **Boniface Circle Green**. During normal operation, the space would serve as a passive recreation and gathering space. For smaller special events, the space could be actively programmed to allow for everything from farmers markets to concerts. (See *An Unmatched Plaza and Village Green* on page 16)

This flexible street network would allow for small events to occur without street closures and for larger events to happen without major disruptions to the rest of the network. (See *Making It Work* on page 20)



Note: These conceptual renderings will require further iterations of design. All materials are anticipated to complement Scarsdale's existing architectural signature and historic character.

Wins and Continuing Obstacles

The Village has worked consistently since the adoption of the Village Center Plan to implement its dual strategy of driving economic development through programming and increased residential population. This effort has been successful as well. The Village Center has a robust and successful event schedule, redevelopment along Christie Place has increased the residential population Downtown, and the Dine the 'Dale tent has been a major draw to the area. All of these strategies are viable and should continue.

Nonetheless, the Village continues to struggle to attract downtown retailers that are consistent with its vision for a vibrant Village Center. Moreover, the Village has seen no abatement in traffic and parking availability concerns that were identified in the Village Center Plan. A major concern has come from two constituencies:

- Retailers who are concerned that loss of parking will make them less competitive in the region.
- Residents who feel that activating the Downtown will exacerbate traffic congestion and parking problems.

The concerns of these constituents are valid, yet their persistence indicates that the Village Center Plan did not effectively articulate a framework for how and why positive change would happen.

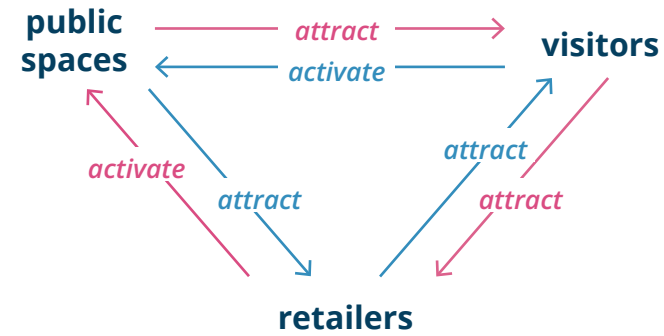
A Framework for Success

The Village Center has several competitive advantages over surrounding commercial areas that, if properly capitalized on, could be a strong foundation for economic development.

Most importantly, the Village Center has an internally-facing commercial center that is unique in the region. As stakeholders have consistently pointed out, this creates the opportunity to create an experientially-driven amenity-rich public realm that will attract visitors, businesses, and residents to the area. No other commercial area in the region has such potential. If Scarsdale is successful, the Village Center will be highly competitive for people looking for that experience.

The Placemaking Strategy

This placemaking strategy is a tried-and-true approach to economic development. The basic premise is that people will go to great places and people attract businesses. Those businesses make those places better, which attracts more people. Over time, the process becomes self-reinforcing. The diagram below helps to illustrate how this system works.



Reading the Diagram

Clockwise: "high-quality public spaces attract visitors who attract retailers who activate public spaces."

Counter-clockwise: "high-quality public spaces attract retailers, who attract visitors, who activate public spaces"

This placemaking strategy for economic development has several advantages:

- In addition to retailers, placemaking also serves to attract residential development. Attracting more residents was a major goal of the 2010 Village Center Plan.
- A high-quality public realm can be a significant amenity that may help incentivize redevelopment in accordance with the Village Center Plan.
- The same physical environment that will attract visitors and boost retail demand (high-quality public spaces) creates spaces for socializing and community building essential to the long-term sustainability of the community.
- The type of retailers that are attracted to high-quality places are the same types of retailers that the Village wishes to attract: restaurants, cafes, performance spaces, and other experiential retailers.

- Investment in high-quality public infrastructure, especially in a key community hub, builds community pride.

When Convenience Is Not Everything

When undertaking such a strategy, it will be important to balance the benefit of placemaking improvements (safe and more attractive places) with the costs in convenience (more traffic and fewer close-by parking spaces) that can result. In striking that balance, it will be important two key principles:

- **Communities can create places where people are willing to sacrifice convenience for high-quality experience.**
- **People will change their behavior based on the benefit they anticipate receiving.** For example, people may be more willing to walk a half-mile to a great restaurant but only a few hundred feet to grab a snack.

This may sound counter-intuitive to some until they consider all the inconveniences and trade offs that people regularly endure to enjoy things they love: people wait in long-lines to see bands they love; they park in massive parking lots and walk long distances to enjoy enclosed air conditioned shopping malls; and they deal go through airport security and sit next to strangers in uncomfortable seats to see the people they love or visit new places.

Knowing Your Competition

The Village Center has an ideal physical setup for a placemaking approach to economic development. Equally important, it is the right approach when examining the areas competitive disadvantages.

A review of the regional commercial centers illustrates that **competing centers are likely to continue to "out-convenience" the Village Center. They are physically better situated to provide more convenient parking and better automotive access that Scarsdale could reasonably provide in the Village Center. As discussed previously, however, they are unlikely to be able to compete on creating place.**

The following provides some background on the different centers in the region:

- The Route 100 corridor, shopping centers along White Plains Road, Golden Horseshoe Shopping Center (see the "Quick Look" below), and

Hartsdale Shopping Center all provide commercial retailers and shoppers convenient shopping through access to large surface parking lots and high-capacity roadways. Attempting to compete with these centers by providing improved automotive access, is the same failed strategy that downtowns made for decades after the rise of suburban shopping centers.

- The other town centers along Metro-North sit at the junction of at least one, if not several, major regional throughway. Bronxville's commercial corridor sits along Pondfield Road and is distinctly main street in character. This makes it very difficult to create activity centers and major events have major disruptions on the roadway network. Fleetwood's commercial district lies along Broad Street, and White Plains has regional connections via state and interstate highways. All of these centers provide retailers and shoppers quick in-and-out access as they go from one place to another.



A Quick Look: The Golden Horseshoe Shopping Center

The Golden Horseshoe Shopping Center has a large central parking space as well as parking along the perimeter. However, the area also lacks amenities and in many ways is completely indistinguishable from any other shopping center. The only reasons to come here are the businesses and the fact that you can find parking easily. There is no reason to stick around after you have done your shopping.

A Holistic Approach

Placemaking should be part of a multi-pronged vibrancy effort. The Village should continue to provide business support services, identify and attract new businesses and residents, make regulatory updates, and aggressively program the area. Improving multimodal access is also critical: the implementation section of this plan includes a discussion of the need for a Station Access, Loading, and Parking Plan to improve access to the area. (See page 27)

Putting the Strategy into Action

In taking this placemaking approach, the following general guiding principles can help the Village make decisions:

- The loss of nearby parking is substantially more important to convenience-oriented retailers because it attacks their competitive advantage. **Retailers attracted to vibrant commercial centers, while certainly receptive to convenient parking, understand that it should not come at the expense of the high-quality public realm** that attracts their customers in the first place.
- Traffic is a major concern from convenience-oriented retailers because it obstructs their customers' ability to get in and out quickly. **Traffic is less of a concern for retailers in place driven spaces because (1) they expect their clients to stay for longer periods of time, and (2) it can enhance the feeling of activity and vibrancy that attracts their customers.** Traffic becomes a concern when it makes the environment unfriendly, like when cars idle next to outdoor seating or horns interrupt dinner.
- **De-prioritizing easy automotive access does not mean that it can be ignored.** Instead, **customers are willing to accept more inconvenience as long as they are still given access.** Providing high-quality experiences from car door to shopfront can be an important strategy for reducing inconvenience. **This plan includes several strategies the Village can pursue to mitigate the impacts of placemaking on parking and traffic, identified in the Multi-Modal Mobility Section of this report and in the Mobility Plan.**
- The quality of the public spaces (including streets) matters very little to convenience retailers. However, in a place-driven approach to attract Scarsdale's desired retail mix, **the quality of the space (as well as the programming of that space) needs to be high enough to overcome the inconvenience.** Thus, the Village should focus on high-quality investments. This does not have to mean that all investments need to be expensive just that they need to be intentional and well designed to achieve the desired results.

Case Study in Placemaking

Suburban Square in Ardmore, PA

Suburban Square in Ardmore, PA provides an example of how an internally facing commercial area can be redesigned to create a unique place that distinguishes an area from its competition. The area bills itself as, "a modern oasis filled with activities to help you revitalize, relax, and recharge." Visit Philadelphia notes that it is, "a pedestrian-friendly, upscale outdoor shopping center that serves as one of the Main Line's premier retail and dining destinations."

St James Street only serves local traffic for commercial land uses, much like Spencer Place. A portion of the street was recently re-designed with pavers, bollards, curbs, and planters to ensure that pedestrians are prioritized. A new plaza creates a "town square" element that attracts visitors and keeps shoppers in the area.

This report does not suggest that Scarsdale attempt to create a shopping mall environment. Instead, this case study provides an example of how placemaking can help develop a rich experience for visitors through aesthetics and a design that prioritizes pedestrians.



Google Maps



Suburban Square (top left); Visit Philadelphia (top right); Mahan Rykiel (bottom)

A Plan to Create a Great Place

This section provides details on how the Village could build a unique downtown that would attract visitors and support a vibrant business and residential population. Details regarding how the Village can implement the plan, and how to change the mobility network to support it, are addressed in subsequent sections.

Welcome to Scarsdale Village Center

First impressions matter, and one of the most important will be the impression that passengers exiting the train have. The image on the right illustrates several key elements which help announce to visitors that they have arrived in a special place:

- A **welcome sign** announces that you have arrived in the Scarsdale Village Center. The use of stone is consistent with the historic architectural qualities in the area.
- A **raised intersection** protects pedestrians as they cross East Parkway and ensures drivers know that this is a pedestrian-prioritized area. The immediate introduction of high-quality paving helps users quickly understand that this is no ordinary village center.
- Robust **plantings** bring life and energy into the area. They serve to soften the harder materials and remind people that this place is about enjoyment, entertainment, and relaxation and not just about moving through.
- The **Village's historic clock** is moved out of the roadway network and becomes a major landmark signaling the center of the Village Center and meeting point.

This design would also simplify the intersection and reduce the potential conflict points between drivers and pedestrians. The area would become easier and more comfortable to navigate for all users.



Note: These conceptual renderings will require further iterations of design. All materials are anticipated to complement Scarsdale's existing architectural signature and historic character.

Note: These conceptual renderings will require further iterations of design. All materials are anticipated to complement Scarsdale's existing architectural signature and historic character.



Looking from Spencer Place back towards East Parkway



A Place for Community

Entering into the Village Center, people are immediately introduced to opportunities to participate in the community. The **meeting point** is illustrated in more detail here: colorful seating, more plantings, and the relocated clock all help.

A redesigned **Dine the 'Dale** (opposite page) space builds off the success of the tent and expands the types of offerings available. Pictured are two options: a fully enclosed space and an open air style.

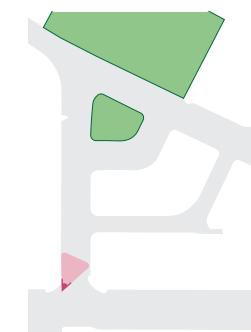
The sides of the enclosed option can be retracted and left open during warmer months and closed during the cooler months. The front doors can be locked, allowing the enclosure to be closed at night or during times when the Village wanted to limit access.

In either option, the Village can invest in high-quality amenities that would encourage people to spend more time in the space. Examples include outdoor lounge furniture; tabletop games like chess and Jenga, as well table games like foosball and shuffleboard. Many communities have found that putting out a piano can lead to great fun for kids and opportunities for people to surprise their neighbors with hidden talents.



Note: These conceptual renderings will require further iterations of design. All materials are anticipated to complement Scarsdale's existing architectural signature and historic character.

There are several fabrication options for an enclosed structure. The one pictured was based on those offered by Roll-A-Cover (<https://rollacover.com>)



Looking from East Parkway towards Dine the 'Dale



Looking down Spencer Place Sidewalk toward Chase Park

A Street for Everyone and Every Occasion

Anyone and everyone in the Village Center will know that this is a place to get out of your car and walk around. However, drivers will still need to access the area during normal operating hours. The **curbless street** provides an excellent opportunity to make it easy for people of all ages and abilities, including those with mobility limitations, to move freely around the Village Center.

Changes in **paving material** make the area more attractive and indicate to drivers where it is appropriate to drive and park. Strategically located **bollards** help ensure that key pedestrian-only locations are protected from potential encroaching drivers. New **benches** give people a place to stop and relax and a more robust planting of **trees** softens the environment, helps keep it cool in the summer, and makes a strong psychological connection with Chase Park at the end of the block.

A new **flex space** on the south side of the street (on the right side of the image) creates opportunity for short and mid-term programming. This space could be home to any variety of amenities including ones that could be temporary, seasonal, or permanent:

- A sidewalk cafe
- Flexible vendor space
- Food truck parking
- Artist studio

During events the curbless street allows the area completely transform into a major event space (see page 15 for an illustrative example). The lack of curb means allows the space from building facade to building facade to be configured in whatever way necessary meets needs of the events and business owners.



Note: These conceptual renderings will require further iterations of design. All materials are anticipated to complement Scarsdale's existing architectural signature and historic character.

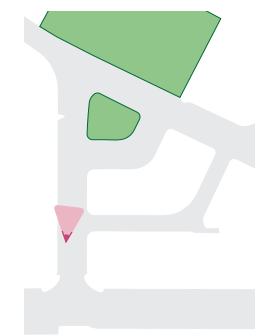


Looking down Spencer Place from Dine the Dale

Note: These conceptual renderings will require further iterations of design. All materials are anticipated to complement Scarsdale's existing architectural signature and historic character.



This concept plan allows for Spencer Place to be closed to allow major events to be held along the corridor without disturbing the larger circulation system. For more details on how this works, see the Multi-Modal Mobility Section.



Looking down
Spencer Place from
Dine the 'Dale

An Unmatched Plaza and Village Green

No commercial center in the region has anything that would rival the draw that would be created by creating a unified **Spencer Place Plaza** (right), redesigned **Boniface Circle Village Green** (not pictured), and **Chase Park**.

During normal operation, the plaza can be furnished with **movable amenities** that include tables with umbrellas, movable seating, plantings, and games. A permanently installed **fountain** provides an excellent location for people to relax. A robustly planted **rain garden** helps to bring color and stormwater management to the space. The redesigned **Boniface Circle Village Green** would provide an attractive natural counterbalance to the harder elements of the plaza and allow for light active recreation, like tossing a ball or playing with a dog, or a more natural setting to relax and read a book.

Along Spencer Road, a **loading zone and flex space** would support both business and visitors. During peak delivery hours, it would help retailers get their goods in and out quickly and easily. During peak visiting hours (typically those after 5 PM), the space could be home to food trucks, vendor or informational booths, or other temporary amenities. The area also serves as a natural space to locate a stage for evening events.

The **flexible space** at the center of the plaza is ideally sized to accommodate small to mid-sized event that can occur throughout the week. Page 20 illustrates this area transformed into a farmers market, but there number and types of events that could be accommodate in the space are endless.

Larger events could easily spill into the Boniface Circle Green or across the street into Chase Park. In all events, the Loading Zone is an ideal location for event organizers and participants to load and unload their materials without disrupting those walking and driving along Spencer Place.

As part of the redesign effort, the Village should examine relocating the WWII Memorial to Chase Park. An appropriate ADA-accessible memorial could be incorporated into a redesign of Boniface Circle Green.

Additionally, the Village should consider various improvements to Chase Park that have surfaced during the project. Simple improvements like movable tables and chairs could be placed on the flat performance spaces at Chase Park, which allow additional seating in Chase Park. Additionally, existing benches in Chase Park could be paired with new benches that are not anchored in concrete.



Looking at Spencer Place Plaza from Boniface Circle

Note: These conceptual renderings will require further iterations of design. All materials are anticipated to complement Scarsdale's existing architectural signature and historic character.



Looking at Spencer Place Plaza from Boniface Circle

A Village Center Park

Chase Park is a wonderful but underutilized amenity. A major issue is that Chase Road serves as a visual and physical separator between the Village Center and the park. An investment in a raised crosswalk would give people the feeling that the park was an extension of the Village Center and the ultimate destination. The raised crosswalk would also reduce travel speeds and make the connection safer for pedestrians.



Looking at Chase Park from Boniface Plaza



Note: These conceptual renderings will require further iterations of design. All materials are anticipated to complement Scarsdale's existing architectural signature and historic character.

Beyond Infrastructure

In addition, to the above infrastructure improvements, there are several strategies that the Village should explore that will substantially enhance the place quality of the Village Center.

Develop a Brand and Use It

The Village has recently completed a re-branding effort that will help it communicate a visual identity for Scarsdale that is intentional and also represents what the Village is today. The new brand will be used on website, signage, buildings, vehicles and other entities.

The Village Center needs a brand too: one that will help it communicate the center's essential qualities to residents and visitors. This Village Center brand should communicate the idea of vibrancy, diversity of businesses, and attractive destinations that would be inappropriate to apply to the rest of the Village. It should resonate with local residents (most importantly), visitors, and investors. There are several good examples of downtown / village center branding guides. The Barre, VT [Downtown Action Team Report](#) includes an appendix with a branding guide that can be used as a reference. The [West Allis](#) branding and marketing plan also helps to illustrate the power of branding is shaping the narrative around what a place is and why it is worth visiting.

Among many uses, the brand would be used on:

- Wayfinding signage in the area.
- On a website designed specifically to support visitors and help potential businesses find the information they need to establish themselves in the area.
- On marketing materials, including posters and event promotional materials.
- On social media posts.

The Village should hire a consultant to help develop a strong brand for the area as well as materials to promote the brand..

Build a Placemaking Toolkit

The Village should continue to build its inventory of movable planters, chairs, benches, games, paint, and other materials that can activate spaces as the Village waits for construction. Having a variety of placemaking tools on hand can provide an opportunity to experiment with different configurations. Fortunately, these materials will be useful after construction to support short-term programming along Spencer Place and in the proposed Spencer Place Plaza.

Improve Wayfinding

The Village should develop a wayfinding plan to help all users (drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians) find important locations. Such a plan should include signage that is scaled to the appropriate mode and incorporate district branding.

Design and Build Sustainability

The Village should engage a landscape architect familiar with the state-of-the-art sustainable building approaches. Generally speaking, the Village should plant perennial and drought-tolerant native plants instead of annuals that must be watered and replaced each fall. Native shade trees of suitable size at maturity should be integrated throughout the Village Center, in addition to those illustrated in the concept plans. Smaller greening efforts like planters should be placed around the Village Center to break up the cement streetscape and provide a more attractive environment.

Beyond Streetscaping

A detailed lighting plan should be included with redesign of the Village Center to ensure that areas are safe and welcoming. The Village should also consider identifying locations for decorative murals or locations for public art that would add color and interest. Facade design guidelines could help produce a more attractive and coordinated environment.



Note: These conceptual renderings will require further iterations of design. All materials are anticipated to complement Scarsdale's existing architectural signature and historic character.

Multi-Modal Mobility

Pedestrian Circulation

Pedestrians in the Village Center will have a direct walk from the train station to Chase Park along an entirely pedestrian-prioritized space. The use of raised crosswalks and shared streets will provide the safest and most convenient environment for people of all ages and abilities.

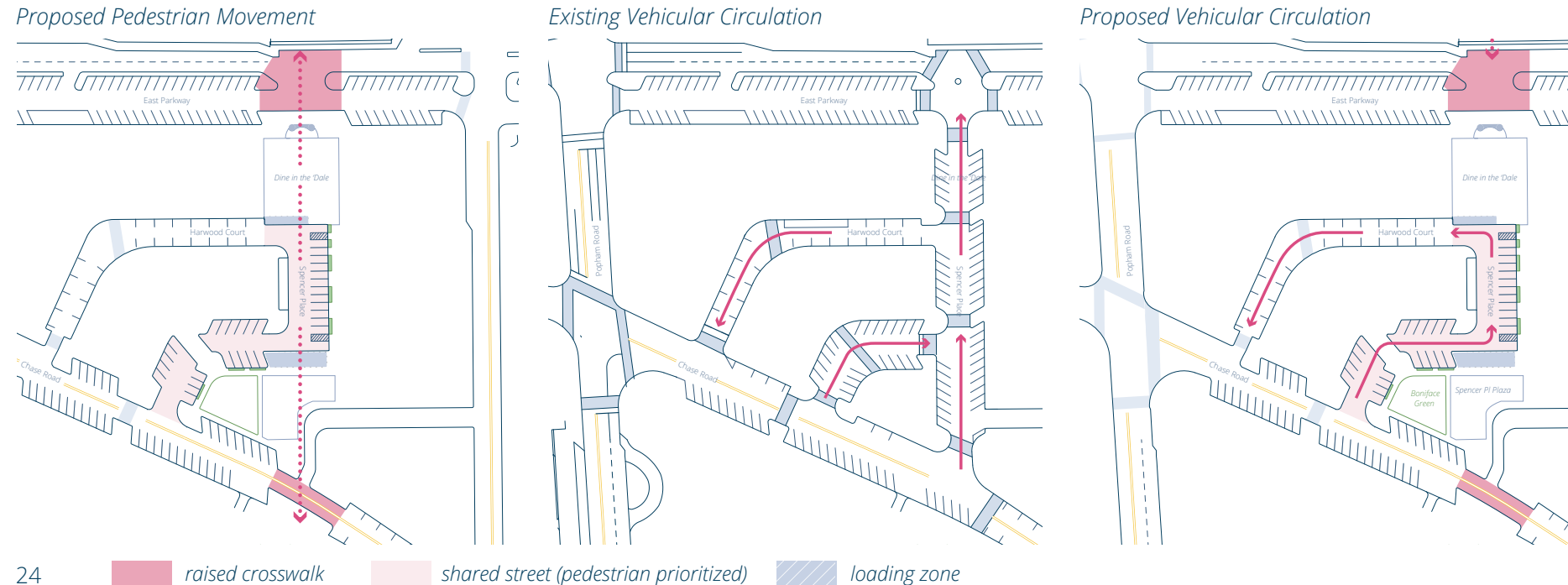
Vehicular Circulation

The placemaking design for the Village Center utilizes a similar circulation pattern that exists when the Dine the 'Dale tent is in place. Removing one leg of the Spencer Place - East Parkway intersection will reduce conflict points and make the intersection easier and more enjoyable to navigate for all users. The Spencer Place Plaza would eliminate the Chase Road - Spencer Place intersection. This will help to make the area even safer for pedestrians and simply traffic circulation as illustrated below.

Drone footage revealed that approximately 75 cars enter the Village Center core and exit on East Parkway. With the Dine the 'Dale space closed, these cars exit on Harwood Court. The result is an increase in vehicles exiting onto Chase Road from 37 to 112, a three-fold increase. This plan includes a companion document, "The Mobility Plan," that provides more detail on how to address this issue.

As part of the design of the Spencer Place Plaza, the Village should engage the postal service to discuss reconfiguring access to their site. Stakeholders have noted that if all employees and trucks accessed the facility via Christie Place, it would reduce the need to have an exit through the Spencer Place Plaza.

Figure 1. Pedestrian and Vehicular Circulation



Bicycle Circulation

The slow-moving traffic and low volumes in the Boniface-Spencer-Harwood connection make for a safe place for bicyclist to share the road with pedestrians and cars. Along Chase Road and East Parkway, the addition of raised crosswalks should help to slow traffic and help to make those intersections safer for bicyclists as well as pedestrians.

The Mobility Plan that provides more detail on how the bicycle network could be extended along Popham Road, potentially allowing for a direct connection between the Bronx River Pathway and the intersection of Chase Road and Popham Road. Such a connection would allow bicyclists to avoid East Parkway and enter the Village Center core on Boniface Circle.

Parking

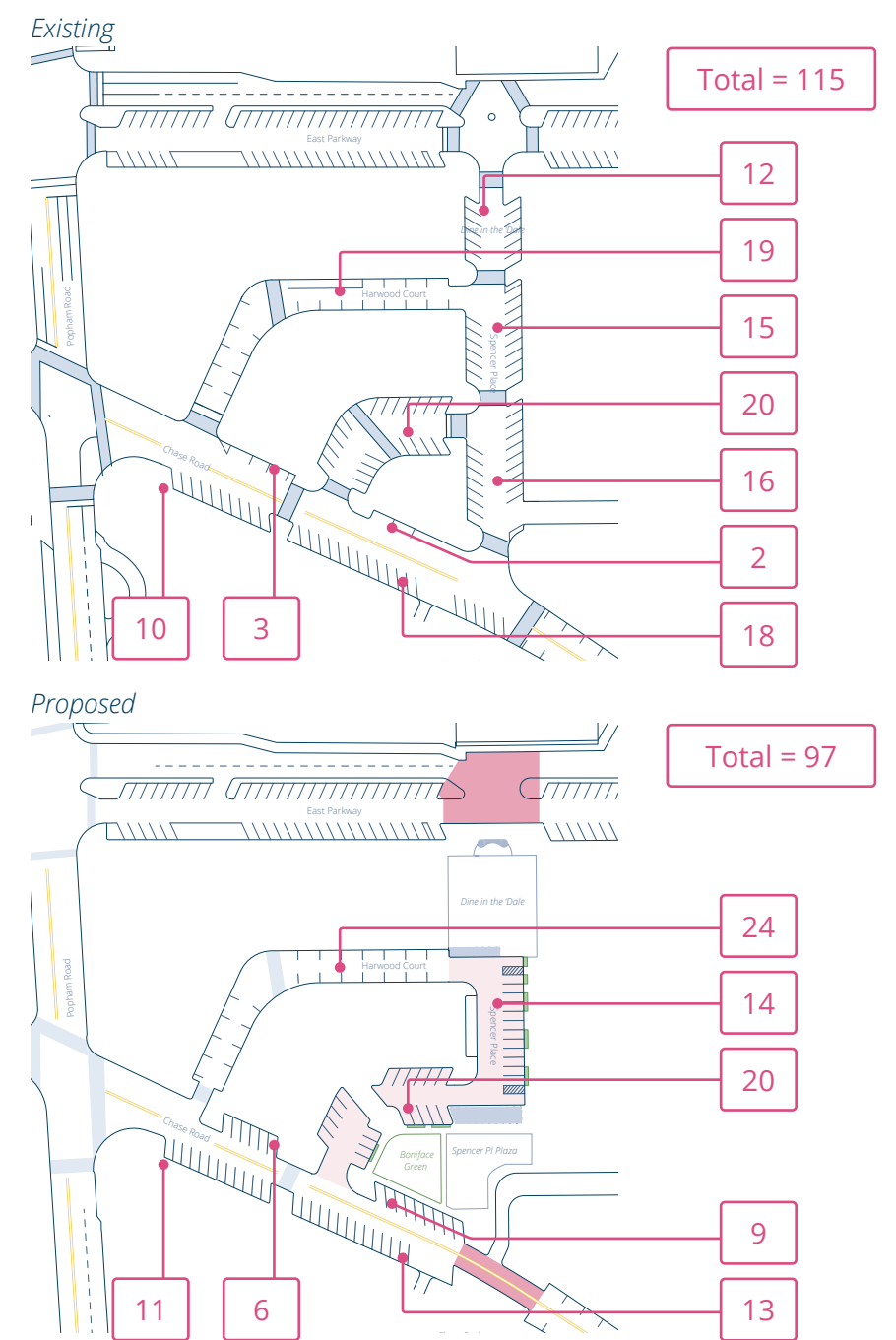
The proposed redesign of the Village Center minimizes the impact on parking to the greatest extent possible. When the Dine the 'Dale tent is up, the area loses 12 parking spaces, including one handicap space. The following section provides direction on how the Village can recoup those spaces. This design minimizes the impact on parking in the following ways:

- The redesign of Spencer Place includes a redesign of the spaces so that they sit 90 degrees to travel lane. This ensures that the most spaces can be placed along this edge. The plan also includes two handicap spaces to address the loss of spaces in the Dine the 'Dale area.
- The spaces along Chase Road are redesigned to increase capacity along that road and maximize the current space dedicated to parking. Detailed survey and design should be undertaken to verify that additional angled parking can be accomplished.
- New loading zones are proposed allowed the re-purposing of the Harwood Court Loading area to parking.

Loading

The redesign of the Village Center includes two new loading zones at the top and bottom of Spencer Place. During off peak times, these loading zones can be used as flex space for other activities, like food truck parking.

Figure 2. Existing & Proposed Parking



Implementing the Vision

Bold and Incremental: A Path Forward

Good design and placemaking is iterative. Communities have found success experimenting with placemaking, adjusting designs based on lessons learned, and then investing in more permanent infrastructure investments with community buy-in. They have also found that places need to be consistently managed, whether to provide programming or to deploy new amenities based on changing community needs.

The term “tactical urbanism”, or the use of temporary materials to test changes to the built environment, is often used to encompass this approach. Scarsdale has already engaged in tactical urbanism when it created the Dine the ‘Dale tent. The success of that experiment shows should strongly encourage the Village to continue along that path.

Scarsdale should adopt an incremental approach to test certain design concepts on a small scale before investing in major construction costs. As part of this process, the Village will likely identify ways that the recommendations in this plan could be improved and, as such, the concepts may evolve over time.

Key Actions

Hire a Landscape Architect and Professional Engineer and Get Cost Estimates.

The Village will need to advance the conceptual design presented here to preliminary design with the support of a landscape architect and professional engineer with experience in roadway design. The professionals can refine the concept presented here and add details regarding materials, plantings, and furnishings; roadway, drainage, and utility improvements can complement the landscape design work. This is also an appropriate time to develop an initial phasing strategy. Based on this information, the landscape architect and engineer can provide a more detailed cost estimate.

While the Village secures financing for the improvements, they can test various strategies. These lessons learned can be incorporated into a final design strategy that will produce final designs and cost estimates.

Complete a Station Access, Loading, and Parking Plan.

Stakeholders have consistently noted that East Parkway is a high-traffic area. East Parkway is complicated by the variety of uses: parking for the Village Center, access to commuter parking, bus stops, loading zones, bike parking, and passenger pick-up and drop-off.

Given the persistent concerns raised during this and previous planning efforts, the Village should undertake a holistic parking, loading and station access plan. A careful examination of the current assets, needs, and usage (e.g. short-, medium-, long-term) and a detailed strategy for maximizing assets will be an important component of efforts to implement the proposed improvements. Among other topics, the plan should examine:

- The creation of a small number of free short-term (15 or 20 minutes maximum) parking spaces near the Dine the ‘Dale space that would support in-and-out businesses.
- The use of a valet service for those who expect to be in the Village Center for several hours.
- Providing free or discounted parking permits for business owners and employees in the Freightway lot.
- The parking time and cost policies along East Parkway, including whether the 8-hour Premium Station Lot and the 8-hour parking is the best use of that area.
- Better potential locations for loading along East Parkway including how Depot Place could be better utilized for pick-up and drop-off.
- Whether certain parking areas should be designated for short-term pick-up / drop-off during peak commute times.
- Whether the Freightway parking lot parking policies should be revised to better support downtown retailers.
- The extent to which updating the parking strategy could result in a redesign of East Parkway that would make it a more welcoming gateway to the Village Center.

- The potential for improved bike parking, or potentially secure bike storage.
- How improvements to pedestrian signage, lighting, and the addition of covered walkways would increase pedestrian access to the station, Freightway, and Village Center as illustrated in Figure 3.

Try the Spencer Place Plaza and Intersection Improvement.

The Spencer Plaza area has considerable potential and the Village can start experimenting with how the space could best be utilized. The Village should experiment with closing the southern portion of Spencer Place and creating the public space near the park. The space could be closed using concrete barriers, as the Dine the ‘Dale tent has been done. Alternatively, the Village could use planters which provide a more aesthetically pleasing environment. The plaza could be defined using paint and the inclusion of movable street furniture. Barriers, movable planters, seating, umbrellas, lighting, and other materials can help define the space, and programming (e.g., fitness classes, games, food vendors) can help further activate the space. The Village could also experiment with moving the tent to this area, potentially reprogramming the Dine the ‘Dale space. During this time, the Village can evaluate traffic impacts and encourage residents and businesses to share their feedback.

The space identified for raised intersection could be painted to delineate it as a pedestrian priority space. Other communities have engaged local community members and artists to create attractive community-inspiring designs, as illustrated in Figure 4.

Re-stripe the Parking Spaces Along Chase Road.

Chase Road currently has an approximate 60 foot cross section. The current parking and roadway configuration underutilized this space and creates an environment that supports higher driving speeds than is appropriate along the street. A redesign of the parking spots identified in Figure 5 would increase the number of available spaces from 27 to 39. This additional

Figure 3. Pedestrian Connections to Freightway Lot

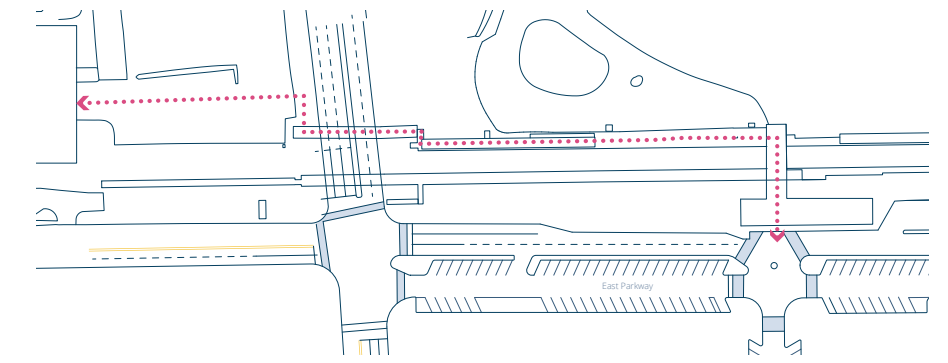


Figure 4. Artistic Painted Crosswalk Example



Source: smithsonianmag.com

12 spaces would completely offset the loss of 12 spaces that would result from making the Dine the 'Dale space permanent. The Village should also designate an additional handicap space along Spencer Place to make up for the lost space in the Dine the 'Dale area. Roadway striping should be designed by a licensed professional and must adhere to the applicable requirements and good engineering practice.

Make Spencer Plaza Permanent.

The Village should learn some valuable lessons during the early experimentation with the Spencer Plaza. In this phase, the Village should make the plaza permanent. This does not mean that the Village has to invest in all the infrastructure improvements immediately. Instead, the goal would be to permanently close this section of Spencer Place and invest in plaza elements that are likely to remain in the final design. The Village can use this time to continue to experiment with ways of activating the space.

As the project progresses, the Village should proceed with eliminating curbing to create a single-level plaza space, purchasing more attractive seating, and overhead coverings consistent with best practices in placemaking.

Make the Dine the 'Dale Space Permanent.

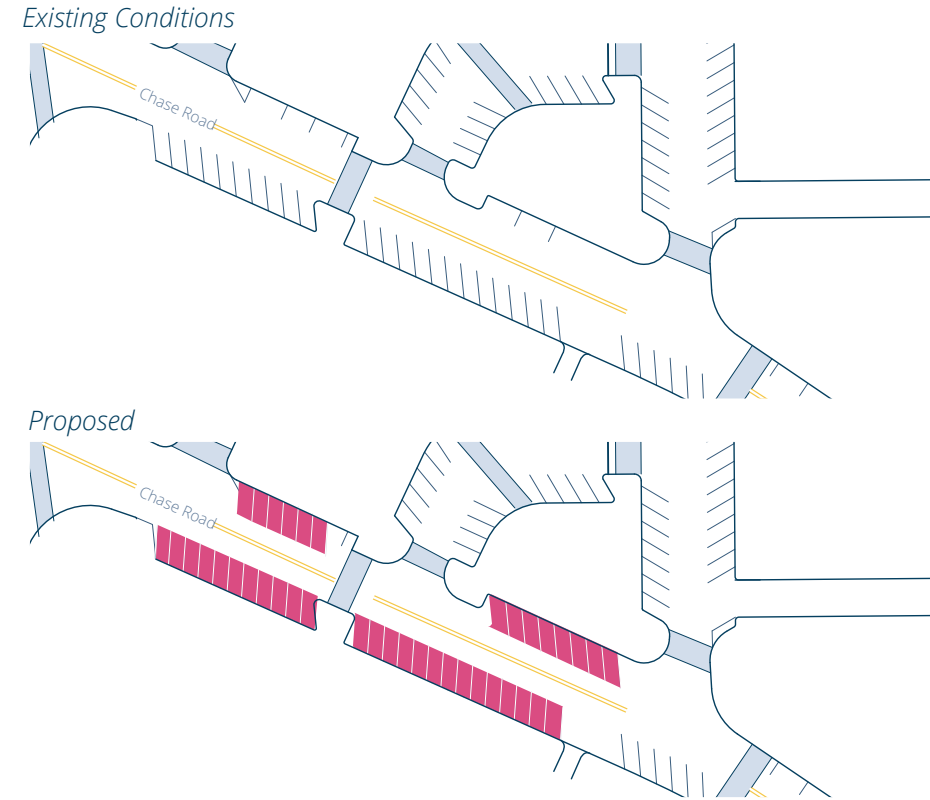
This would set a strong foundation for further placemaking strategies and allow the Village to either implement one of the recommended solutions here (the covered or uncovered space) or continue to experiment with the space, especially with regard to winter programming.

This commitment would give the Village certainty to begin investing in more attractive seating options and/or painting the roadway to establish a sense of permanence. Identifying a day to invite food trucks could help attract attention.

Explore Traffic Circulation Options at Chase Road and Popham Road.

Stakeholders noted that the closure of the Dine the 'Dale space increased traffic congestion in that area. This is consistent with technical analysis which found that, with Spencer Place open to traffic, approximately 75 cars

Figure 5. Re-striping locations



enter the Village Center core and exit on East Parkway. With the Dine the 'Dale space closed to through traffic, these cars exit via Harwood Court and increase the number of vehicles existing there from 37 to 112, a three-fold increase.

This plan includes a companion document, "The Strategic Mobility Plan," that provides more detail on how the intersection of Chase Road, Harwood Court, and Popham Road could be redesigned to support the increased traffic. Considering the Village already closes roadway segments for the Dine

the 'Dale tent and other events, the Village could evaluate the impacts of these road closures this year.

Measuring Success

This Plan and the Village Center Plan articulate a shared strategy for increasing vibrancy in the Village Center: attract more people who (1) spend money on local businesses and/or (2) contribute to a vibrant and active community center.

Fortunately, this goal is easy to measure: simple counts of the number of people in the Village Center before and after interventions are made can provide good data. **The Village should also be aggressively utilizing QR codes and short surveys to get feedback on what is working and what is not. Quantitative and qualitative feedback from users is more useful than word-of-mouth.** Likewise, other entities have utilized positive feedback to build support for more substantive investment and to demonstrate the areas potential to investors.

Business Support

Throughout the implementation process, it will be important to remember that it takes time for businesses to assess the viability of opening in an area and establish themselves. During the development phase, the Village can utilize the graphics developed in this plan to help explain to potential investors the long-term vision for the area. During implementation, it will be critical to continue business attraction efforts that target the types of business that will see the full advantage of locating in a great place. Throughout the process, hiring a good photographer and utilizing traditional and social media can be an effective tool for raising awareness of the Village's plan.

Equally important, the Village will need to continue its efforts to update the

regulatory environment to support businesses and to support property owners as they re-tool their physical infrastructure to support the types of businesses that will make the Village Center vibrant.

Implementing Entity

Stakeholders have identified a variety of mechanisms for organizing and directing improvements. Some stakeholders have proposed the idea of a Scarsdale Streetscape Innovation Lab, which would be a community stewardship group that is funded through the budget annually to develop demonstration projects. As an initial effort, the Lab could implement a "Year of Demonstration Projects" that would highlight the benefits of a tactical approach in the Village Center.

Others have suggested that the Village consider a Business Improvement District or Downtown Association that could raise money, coordinate improvements, and make investments in the Village Center.

In the short term, the Village should continue to make improvements in the area as it studies the benefits and drawbacks of these approaches.

Cost Estimate and Implementation Summary

Cost Estimate

The following estimates are planning level. They are intended to provide the Village with a better understanding of the order of magnitude cost of key elements proposed in this plan. The costs may vary based on choice of materials, amenities, and exact location of improvements. The impact that changes might have on utilities and other existing infrastructure cannot be determined at this time. More detailed estimates can be provided in the preliminary design and engineering phase of the project.

Location	Planning-level Cost Estimate
Dine the 'Dale	\$ 1 million - \$1.5 million
Shared Street	\$ 2.3 million - \$2.8 million
Spencer Plaza & Boniface Circle	\$ 1.5 million - \$2 million
Raised Intersections	\$ 300,000

Implementation Plan

Immediate-term Actions

Install a seasonal Spencer Place Plaza using quick-build materials.

- Create a plan for the project that includes key ideas, project dates, stewardship responsibilities, communications plans, funding, and evaluation.
- Create a plan for the temporary design of the plaza. Mark out key areas and develop a design for the painting.
- Purchase materials including paint, movable furniture, and planters to use as barriers, among others.
- Implement strategy to collect data and community feedback to evaluate what is working and what is not.

Re-stripe the parking spaces along Chase Road.

- Contract with engineer to develop detailed survey and designs for additional angled parking.
- Identify local funding.

Complete a Station Access, Loading, and Parking Plan.

- Consult Westchester County, the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC), and MTA/Metro-North to identify potential sources of grant funding.
- Select a planning and engineering.

Hire a landscape architect and get cost estimates for Dine the 'Dale space.

- Fund initial design phase.
- Establish a steering committee that includes local and regional entities.

Short-term Actions (0-2 Years)

Make Spencer Plaza Permanent.

- Formally adopt resolution to make Spencer Plaza permanent.
- Develop a long-term strategy for improvements that identifies local funding sources.
- Consult with a landscape architect to refine the plan further and create a construction strategy.
- Develop a maintenance plan to accommodate the increase in activated public spaces

Make the Dine the 'Dale space permanent.

- Formally adopt resolution to make the Dine the 'Dale space permanent.
- Develop a long-term strategy for improvements that identifies local funding sources.

Hire an engineering firm and landscape architecture firm to get cost estimates for curbless street and two raised intersections (i.e., adjacent to Chase Park and the train station).

- Fund initial design phase

Medium-term Actions (2-5 Years)

Complete comprehensive planning effort for Chase Park and Boniface Circle Green.

Explore Traffic Circulation Options at Chase Road and Popham Road (see Strategic Mobility Plan).

Construct curbless street and two raised intersections.

Long-term Actions (5+ Years)

Redesign Chase Park and Boniface Circle.

**SCARSDALE VILLAGE CENTER
PLACEMAKING PLAN**

AN ELEMENT OF THE SCARSDALE STRATEGIC MOBILITY + PLACEMAKING PLAN