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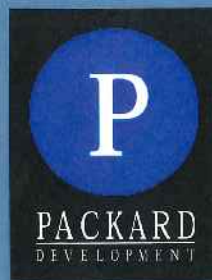
PROJECT: Morrills Crossing Contract Rezoning

ADDRESS: 33 Allen Avenue



# Morrill's Crossing

## Proposed Mixed Use Development



Portland Planning Board  
August 24, 2004

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## I. Overview

- Morrill's Crossing is a proposed mixed-use neighborhood development on 20 acres of land at the intersection of Allen and Forest Avenues in Portland.
- The development will transform an existing underutilized area into a community focus for the neighborhood. Uses will include a supermarket, small retail shops, commercial office space, housing, a new expanded facility for Portland Boxing and more than 1.7 miles of walkways connected to the Portland Trails system.
- The plan utilizes urban design concepts, with significant landscaping and buffering to the residential neighbors that provides a transition between the existing commercial uses along Forest Avenue. Over 40% of the site is dedicated to green space, which well exceeds current zoning regulations for commercial development within the city.
- More than \$1 million of private funds will be invested to improve the public infrastructure in Morrill's Corner, including roadway improvements, upgrades to traffic signals, improved railroad crossings and designated pedestrian access to the neighborhood. Extensive traffic studies demonstrate that these improvements will result in improved traffic flow through Morrill's Corner.
- There will be a one-way vehicular ingress to the site from Morrill Street, providing those who live in the neighborhood access to the shopping center and convenient access to the project's traffic signal at Allen Avenue. Traffic from the development will not be allowed to enter into the neighborhood.
- The site will also provide Metro bus service within the development for neighbors and shoppers to utilize public transportation.
- It is estimated that the development will generate over \$350,000 in annual tax revenue to the City.
- Over 250 new full and part-time jobs will be created for local residents, many of which will be union positions. In addition, the project will create many ancillary positions in construction, maintenance and professional positions to support the local businesses.





# Morrill's Crossing

Portland, Maine

*Aerial Photo*  
*Looking East*







# Morrill's Crossing

Portland, Maine

*Aerial Photo*  
*Looking North*





## II. Site Plan

The proposed Morrill's Crossing project offers the redevelopment of 20 acres in the heart of Morrill's Corner. The mixed use design creates an environment where people can live, work, shop and dine. The project will offer:

- A neighborhood shopping center comprised of small to medium sized retail shops, restaurants, professional office space, and housing, all anchored by a Stop & Shop supermarket.
- Morrill's Crossing will provide 10 residences located above the retail space at the site entrance and 18 town homes located along Princeton Street.
- Significant pedestrian amenities are an integral part of the development. They include:
  - 1.7 miles of pedestrian walkways and trails linked to the Portland Trails system and the neighborhood.
  - Multiple pedestrian connections between Morrill's Crossing and the neighborhood are provided, with amenities such as bike racks and seating available.
- Metro bus service will be located within site, servicing the new residents, existing neighbors, and patrons of Morrill's Crossing.
- 40% of Morrill's Crossing is designated as green space, approximately 3 acres of which is dedicated for recreational and open space.
- Bruno's Restaurant will continue to service the neighborhood from its existing location.
- The Portland Boxing Club will remain in its current location with improvements including parking, landscaping, and a 10,000 square foot expansion.
- The 598 parking spaces available will provide ample parking for visitors to the center.





# Morrill's Crossing

## Portland, Maine

# Site Plan Exhibit





### **III. Conditional Zone Agreement**

The Conditional Zone Agreement features the following components:

- Establishes permitted uses for a mixed use development.
- Establishes design standards and review procedures for the development.
- Requires the creation of 28 residential units.
- Requires the establishment of a walking trail, internal sidewalks and pedestrian connections to Allen Avenue and the neighborhood.
- Requires privately funded improvements to nearby public streets in excess of \$1 million.
- Requires the creation of over 3 acres of recreational and open space.
- Commits to 40% green space on the site, including the installation of significant landscaping and buffering.
- Requires a contribution to the City's Fall Brook Combined Sewer Overflow project.

## IV. Comprehensive Plan Analysis

- The integration of commercial, office, residential, recreational and open space on a single site is a bold and innovative plan for redevelopment of the Morrill's Corner property.
- The design and layout of Morrill's Crossing creates a transition between the commercial/industrial areas of Morrill's Corner and the residential neighborhood areas, respecting the traditional development patterns of the area.
- Diverse housing options on site support the City's goal to create quality housing for all.
- The private funding of over \$1 million in traffic improvements, contributions to storm water system improvements, recreational and open space opportunities help the City meet the Comprehensive Plan's goal of providing high quality infrastructure.
- The proposed traffic improvements will result in improved traffic capacity and pedestrian safety in Morrill's Corner facilitating the safe and efficient movement of traffic in the Forest and Allen Avenues transportation corridor.
- The redevelopment project provides substantial increases in property tax revenue and diversification of Portland's property tax base, which meets the Comprehensive Plan goal of improving the economic sustainability of Portland.
- The project creates over 250 new jobs and business opportunities, helping to promote a positive economic climate in Portland.
- Pedestrian and bicycle access and direct site access to public transportation promotes interconnectivity with the existing residential neighborhood, while minimizing vehicular traffic to neighborhood side streets.
- 40% green space, approximately 3 acres of which is dedicated recreational and open space linked with the Portland Trails system, connects and extends the public's range of open space opportunities, helping to meet the Comprehensive Plan's open space goals.



ANALYSIS OF THE MORRILL'S CROSSING PROJECT'S CONSISTENCY  
WITH THE CITY OF PORTLAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

**I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The proposed redevelopment at Morrill's Crossing is consistent with the policies and goals of the City's comprehensive plan. Specifically:

The integration of commercial, office, residential and open space/recreational uses on a single site is unlike any other development in Portland. It is a bold and innovative plan for redevelopment of the Morrill's Corner property.

The design and layout of Packard's redevelopment plan creates a transition between the commercial/industrial areas of Morrill's Corner and the residential neighborhood areas, thereby respecting the traditional development patterns of the area.

The inclusion of diverse housing options on site supports the City's goal to create quality housing for all.

The private funding of \$1M in traffic improvements and Packard's contributions to stormwater system improvements and public open space/recreational opportunities help to provide high quality infrastructure.

The redevelopment project provides substantial increases in property tax revenue and diversification of Portland's property tax base, which improves the economic sustainability of Portland.

The project creates hundreds of new jobs and new business opportunities, helping to promote a positive economic climate in Portland.

The proposed traffic improvements will result in improved traffic flow and pedestrian safety in Morrill's Corner over existing conditions, facilitating the safe and efficient movement of traffic in the Forest Avenue/Allen Avenue transportation corridor.

Pedestrian and bicycle access and improved access to public transportation promotes interconnectivity with the existing residential neighborhood, while not adding vehicular traffic to neighborhood side streets.

The inclusion of 8 acres of green space, 3.5 acres of which is dedicated recreational and open space linked with the Portland Trails system, helps to connect and extend the public's range of open space opportunities.

## II. PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Morrill's Corner site is located in an area where a number of different land use types come together. The Morrill's Corner neighborhood is identified in the City's Comprehensive Plan as being part of the "inner ring neighborhoods", which are considered to be suburban in nature, Comp. Plan, p. 9. The Comprehensive Plan also specifically recognizes that, at the same time, the Morrill's Corner area "is intensively developed with commercial and industrial uses", Comp. Plan, p. EX-6, and its land use is only 51% residential, compared to other inner ring neighborhoods, where the residential land use averages 80%, Comp. Plan, p. EX-5. The Packard project site is the cornerstone site for the commercial and industrial development areas located along and adjacent to Forest Avenue. Also, as identified in the Comprehensive Plan, the Forest Avenue/Allen Avenue area is a major transportation corridor into and through Portland. Comp. Plan, p. 28. It is also located next to the start of what becomes a more residential area of Stevens Avenue and its side street network. Finally, the Packard site is among the largest parcels of land available for development within the City, which the Comprehensive Plan recognizes is in limited supply, Comp. Plan, p. EX-13.

The site's unique position as a transitional area between existing commercial and industrial development and the existing Morrill's Corner residential neighborhood makes the redevelopment of this site both a challenge and an opportunity. Packard believes that its revised redevelopment plan for the Morrill's Corner site, known as Morrill's Crossing, rises to that challenge. By proposing a mixed use development that includes retail, commercial, office, residential and open space/recreational uses, Packard's redevelopment plan creates the opportunity to bring together the juxtaposing land use areas in a way that provides needed services to the neighborhood, additional housing and new open space and recreational opportunities. As discussed below, this proposed mixed-use development proposed for Morrill's Crossing is consistent with the goals and principles of Portland's Comprehensive Plan.

## III. CONSISTENCY WITH THE COMMUNITY VISION/FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR PORTLAND

The introductory portion of the Comprehensive Plan sets out the vision for what Portland can become in the future. Packard strongly believes that its proposed mixed-use development is consistent with that future vision.

### A. Build a Vibrant Small City.

1. Development of new buildings that respect the scale and character of traditional development patterns.

The Comprehensive Plan calls for the development of new buildings that respect the scale and character of traditional development patterns, Comp. Plan, p. 16. The traditional development pattern of the Morrill's Corner area is a mixture of large-scale



industrial and dense commercial development, combined with adjacent residential development. The overall layout of the Packard project respects this development pattern by including its residential component in the area adjacent to the existing residential neighborhood, which serves to blend the residential use into the site, while serving as additional buffer for the existing neighborhood from the commercial aspects of the development. The scale and character of the commercial buildings of the project site is certainly less imposing than the adjacent industrial developments, and is designed to be compatible with nearby commercial development. As called for in the Comprehensive Plan, the development is also designed to allow and promote pedestrian access throughout the development, both from Allen Avenue, and from several locations in the adjacent neighborhood. The development in the front part of the site is oriented to provide easy pedestrian access and to create a more urban, pedestrian-oriented commercial center, and incorporates a residential component on upper floors to further promote mixed use of the property. The supermarket area of the project is set back from Allen and Forest Avenues and from the existing residences, but with pedestrian, bicycle access and one way limited vehicular access from the neighborhood area to the site and public transportation available both to the site and to the supermarket. The project also combines open space and recreational opportunities, located adjacent to both the residential component of the project and to the existing neighborhood, promoting pedestrian use of the site and providing neighborhood recreational/open space opportunities.

Finally, it is important to recognize that the roadway area adjacent to the Morrill's Corner project is one of the City's transportation arterials, which serves as an "economic lifeline for Portland, connecting the city with regional and national markets with workers and shoppers who live in the suburbs," Comp. Plan, p. T-28. The Comprehensive Plan calls for encouraging commercial development along these transportation arterials to preserve the traditional development patterns of the more residential neighborhood areas of the City. As result of the redesign of the redevelopment plan, the level of traffic volume associated with the project is less than the prior design. As discussed below, Packard has proposed traffic improvements in the area that will not only completely address the increase in traffic volume associated with the project, but will maintain or improve level of service and capacity at the Morrill's Corner intersection and improve traffic flow through other nearby intersections.

## 2. Strive for innovation and bold initiatives.

While calling for respect for traditional development patterns, the Comprehensive Plan also calls for "innovation and bold initiatives" that increase the livability and quality of life in Portland, Comp. Plan, p. 16. What Packard has proposed is both bold and innovative in its incorporation of diverse uses within the site, particularly when compared with other commercial development within the City. Nowhere else in Portland has a commercial development incorporated diverse residential housing, as well as extensive open space and recreational opportunities on site. Packard has proposed improved pedestrian access along Allen Avenue, designed the project to be pedestrian and bicycle friendly to the existing neighborhood, and provided public transportation access, both to

bring persons to the site and to provide the existing residential neighborhood with METRO bus access. Packard has developed a partnership with RTP to bring its Shoppers Express to the project site, including providing its users with a community gathering area within the supermarket. The project includes an area for a daycare facility and for a community building to be available to the residential neighborhood. Packard is working with Portland Trails to link the proposed walking trails with the Portland Trail system, as well as improving pedestrian walkways and crossings in Morrill's Corner to enhance the accessibility of the existing trails System. Packard is also proposing to establish an escrow fund to be used by the neighborhood to develop recreational facilities on site that meet the neighborhood's needs.

3. Capitalize on Portland's economic assets and develop a strong economy based upon traditional industries, a strong retail and office center, and emergent opportunities in industry, business, and coastal commerce.

The Comprehensive Plan identifies the transportation arterials, such as Forest Avenue, for areas to concentrate additional commercial development. Packard's development will provide a strong retail center, with some office space as well, in an area identified for commercial development, capitalizing on the existing use of the Forest Avenue arterial by commuters from Portland and outside communities.

As discussed below in Section IV(C), Packard's proposed development will also provide diversification of the tax base, increasing property tax revenue to the City by an estimated \$350,000-400,000 per year. The project will result in increased retail and professional/medical office development. In addition to the new jobs coming to Portland as a result of Stop & Shop's new facility, the other retail and office facilities will bring new businesses to Portland and bring new jobs with them. The project is also providing over \$1 million in needed traffic improvements to the Morrill's Corner area, all paid for through private funding. Packard will also help fund additional traffic planning and will contribute to the development of the stormwater separation system proposed for the Fall Brook watershed.

## **B. Serve the People.**

1. Support and encourage the creation and preservation of an adequate supply of quality housing for all.

Discussed in greater detail below in Section VI, Packard's proposed development will incorporate a range of housing opportunities within the project, an innovative and bold step for commercial development in Portland.

## **C. Provide High Quality Leadership.**

1. Create a sustainable community with vital neighborhoods, high quality infrastructure, a strong economy and a healthy environment, while keeping municipal taxes affordable.



Packard's proposed development will help achieve all of these goals. Packard will provide needed services to surrounding neighborhoods and will provide additional open space and recreational opportunities, all while maintaining the integrity of the adjoining residential neighborhood. It will provide needed traffic infrastructure improvements, provide financial support for the Fall Brook stormwater separation system and provide increased public recreational space, providing high quality infrastructure all at no cost to the City taxpayers. It will bring new businesses and jobs to Portland. It will take a presently contaminated industrial site and turn it into usable open space. And it will increase property tax revenue and diversify the property tax base of the City, which is clearly needed to stabilize the property tax base in Portland.

2. Incorporate environmental, economic and neighborhood considerations in municipal decision-making.

Although primarily a goal for City leaders, Packard has also taken all of these considerations into account in developing its mixed-use proposal. In particular, Packard has worked extremely diligently to incorporate neighborhood input into its development. In addition to the required public informational meeting, Packard held several additional meetings with its neighbors and has held additional meetings with other neighborhood association groups to review the project with them and listen to their concerns and suggestions. The redesign of the project has been in large part due to feedback and comments received from neighbors.

#### **D. Protect our Community Attributes.**

1. Preserve and enhance the park system with its trails, active recreation facilities and natural areas.

As discussed in greater detail below in Section VII, Packard's development provides enhancement to both the trail system, by providing additional pedestrian trail facilities by working with Portland Trails to link the walking trails on site to its existing trails system.

2. Strengthen alternative transportation options in order to create an accessible City that promotes ease of movement for all citizens, serving neighborhood needs, pedestrians, handicapped persons, bicyclists and vehicles.

The Packard redevelopment project provides a number of alternative transportation options for access to and from the project. The pedestrian/bicycle access points to the existing neighborhood, the internal walkways and bicycle storage racks throughout the project all create the option for residents of the project and in the existing residential neighborhood to walk or ride to the supermarket, to other retail services, to restaurants and to other service businesses that will locate within the project. The bus dropoff area at the supermarket and the bus shelter, with pedestrian access to and from the neighborhood, will improve neighborhood access to the Metro system project and will provide Metro access to the project itself. The program with RTP will provide group

transportation to Portland area seniors to provide both increased access to shopping and an opportunity for communal gathering. Finally, improved pedestrian access along Allen Avenue and improved pedestrian crossings at Morrill's Corner will provide increased opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle access to businesses along Forest and Stevens Avenues.

#### **IV. CONSISTENCY WITH PORTLAND GOALS AND POLICIES.**

The second part of the City's Comprehensive Plan sets forth the State's goals for comprehensive planning, and sets forth the policies and goals to enable Portland to achieve the State goals. As discussed below, the Packard redevelopment plan is consistent with the applicable state goals and with the applicable goals and policies for Portland.

##### **A. Encourage Orderly Growth and Development In Appropriate Areas, Making Efficient Use of Public Services and Preventing Development Sprawl.**

This goal covers a broad range of issues, including aspects of the City's housing, transportation and open space plans. These topics are discussed in greater detail below, but this goal also identifies certain policies for community commercial policies and land use planning, Comp. Plan, p. 28. The development goals include accommodating commercial activity within functionally and physically defined commercial centers, revitalization of existing commercial centers and encouraging the development of new commercial enterprises within the existing neighborhood centers. *Id.* The redevelopment of a site that has been historically used for industrial purposes, and which also proposes to make improvements to the existing development already on site, is clearly consistent with the goal of revitalization of existing commercial areas, as well as preventing development sprawl. The mixed use aspect of the proposed redevelopment also achieves the goal of encouraging new commercial enterprises within existing neighborhood centers; the project serves as a link between the existing commercial center of Forest Avenue and the residential neighborhood of Morrill's Corner.

##### **B. Plan for, Finance and Develop an Efficient System of Public Facilities and Services to Accommodate Anticipated Growth and Economic Development**

Although this goal is primarily a policy segment for the development of public infrastructure and services, there are a few policy statements regarding transportation infrastructure and development that apply to the Packard project. These are discussed in greater detail in Section V, below.

##### **C. Promote An Economic Climate That Increases Job Opportunities And Overall Economic Well-Being.**

The Portland Industry and Commerce Plan ("ICPAC"), which is incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan, calls for the creation of job opportunities for the full spectrum of



the labor pool, jobs which provide a living wage and which are rewarding and satisfying. As stated in the ICPAC, it is important to recognize "that jobs and prosperity improve the standard of living" for Portland residents, Comp. Plan, Community Vision, p. 37.

The proposed Packard project will create hundreds of new jobs in Portland. These jobs range from professional positions to part-time labor positions, but all provide additional opportunity for employment. The site's anchor tenant, Stop & Shop, is expected to have 250-300 full time and part time positions and its workforce is unionized.

Another major goal of the ICPAC is the strengthening and diversification of the City's tax base and the reduction of tax burden on residential property owners, Comp. Plan, p. 37. Although the ICPAC was developed in 1994, as the recent discussions about Portland's revaluations demonstrate, its policy goals are even more relevant today. As noted in the Comprehensive Plan, the residential use of land in Portland has increased from 32% in 1989 to 61% in 1999, Comp. Plan, p.53. Commercial uses make up only 8% of the land area, and industrial uses constitute less than 6% of the total land area in the City. Id. Vacant land has also declined dramatically, from 27% in 1978 to 10% in 1999. Id. These numbers demonstrate that the tax base of Portland has become increasingly residential, and the opportunity for diversifying the tax base is limited. As is the case throughout the State of Maine, there is little (if any) demand for new industrial development, and significant capacity of existing industrial space due to the departure of a number of businesses throughout the state. The only viable option for reducing the property tax burden on residential property owners in Portland is through commercial development.

The proposed mixed-use development of the Morrill's Corner site will result in both a diversification of the tax base for the property and a substantial overall increase in property tax revenue. It is expected that the property redevelopment will result in an overall increase in property tax payments of an estimated \$350,000-400,000, and will come from a mix of residential and commercial uses.

The ICPAC also recognizes the need to make commercial development compatible with adjacent neighborhoods, Comp. Plan, p. 37. As discussed in more detail above, Packard has designed its mixed-use development to be compatible both with its existing commercial and residential neighbors.

#### **D. To Encourage and Promote Affordable, Decent Housing Opportunities for All Maine Citizens.**

See discussion of consistency with the City's Housing Plan in Section VI, below.

#### **E. To Protect the Quality and Manage the Quantity of the State's Water Resources, including Lakes, Aquifers, Great Ponds, Estuaries, Rivers and Coastal Areas.**

The proposed project will not adversely affect the quality or quantity of any of the City's water resources. In fact, the development of stormwater quality and quantity controls for



the site will improve water quality over existing site conditions. In addition, the improvements proposed for the City parcel at the rear of the project will result in improvements to the quality of the stream located on the property.

ICPAC specifically recognizes the need to implement watershed management programs for the Fall Brook watershed (in which the project site is located), including selective sewer separation and stormwater management. Packard has agreed to contribute toward the installation of selective sewer separation in the Fall Brook watershed.

**F. To Protect the State's Other Critical Natural Resources, including, without limitation, Wetlands, Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat, Sand Dunes, Shorelands, Scenic Vistas and Unique Natural Areas.**

None of these critical natural resources exist on the project site. However, the project's increased green space and the cleanup of the City owned parcel to provide open space area will likely result in increased wildlife habitat.

**G. To Preserve the State's Historic and Archaeological Resources.**

The project site is not located within the City's historic district and none of the existing buildings are listed by the City as individual landmarks.

**H. To Promote and Protect the Availability of Outdoor Recreation Opportunities For All Maine Citizens, Including Access to Surface Waters.**

The Comprehensive Plan recognizes that open space and recreational opportunities are important assets to the City of Portland, and ones that need to be enhanced. Packard agrees, and therefore has incorporated open space and a trail system within the project, both for the use of the residents within the project area, as well as the adjacent neighborhood and the community as a whole. In fact, 40% of the overall project site is designed as open space, which is twice the required amount in the B-2 Zone. The project's consistency with the City's Open Space Plan is discussed in greater detail, in Section VII, below.

**V. CONSISTENCY WITH THE GOALS AND CONCEPTS OF THE PORTLAND TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

The Portland Transportation Plan, originally developed in 1993, sets forth a number of goals and action items for addressing Portland's future transportation needs and the interplay between development and those transportation needs.

**A. Proposed Pilot Projects for Transportation.**

The plan specifically identifies the Forest Avenue corridor from Woodfords Corner to Morrill's Corner as a place in which a pilot project should be explored to address high



density residential and mixed-use development within the transit corridor. Transportation Plan, pp. 9,70. Listed in the elements of this pilot project are the following:

- encourage the redevelopment and mixed use of marginal properties along this segment of Forest Avenue
  
- consider contract zoning as a tool to negotiate design features, mixed use and off-street parking.

The Packard redevelopment project is located in the area identified for pilot project consideration. The plan as presented involves high density mixed-use development, including residential, office, commercial, transportation and recreation. The use of the contract zone is appropriate and necessary to achieve this mixed-use development opportunity.

The plan also identifies the Morrill's Corner location as a desired location for a local transport center. Transportation Plan, Figure V-6, p. 30. The proposed development will include a bus shelter linked to the adjoining residential neighborhood through pedestrian access and an additional bus stop location in front of the supermarket area. It will also provide a taxi dropoff and waiting area in front of the supermarket. The development has integrated pedestrian and bicycle access from the neighborhoods and within the project, and will provide bike racks for bicycle storage.

**B. To Achieve a Transportation System Appropriately Structured and Designed to Safely and Effectively Move Goods and People.**

1. Create A Neighborhood Street System Characterized By A Network Of Interconnected Streets That Minimizes Through Traffic In Residential Neighborhoods.

Packard has taken this policy goal into strong consideration in designing its project and the access points from the nearby neighborhood. It has also listened to the thoughts and concerns of the neighbors in that residential area, who have clearly indicated that they do not want the neighborhood side streets to be used for vehicular access to the project site. The project as designed directs its traffic onto Allen Avenue to avoid through traffic onto residential side streets. The project does, however, create numerous connections for bicycle and pedestrian access to provide connectivity between the existing residential neighborhood and the project. At the same time, Packard also wanted to provide an opportunity for the surrounding neighborhood to access the site without going on to Allen Avenue. The propose plan creates a one way access from Morrill Street into the project area, to allow neighborhood vehicle access. It has been located and designed to discourage use of the access as an alternative primary access point, in order to limit potential traffic through the neighborhood.



2. Appropriately Scale And Design Streets And Highways And Other Transportation Infrastructure To Serve Local Traffic, Destination Traffic And Through Traffic.

The Transportation Plan recognizes that certain areas within the city are transportation corridors that include all three types of traffic, and that transportation through these corridors must be allowed to move through the area in the shortest time possible during peak periods. Transportation Plan, p. 38. The plan does state that emphasis should be on traffic movement improvements that make efficient use of the existing road area, not necessarily widening roadways. The proposed development and the associated traffic improvements do take this goal into consideration and address efficient traffic movement using the existing roadway. To the extent possible, traffic movement is improved through the use of improved signalization and timing of lights and rail crossings. While the project does call for additional lanes in certain locations, it does so within the existing right of way of the roads, making efficient use of the existing roadway area and not requiring any expansion.

The City itself recognizes that lane additions within the right of way will be required to address future traffic growth in the Morrill's Corner area and to complete the capacity enhancements that have already been installed in Morrill's Corner. They have recently applied to PACTS for funding to construct lane improvements to Forest Avenue between Stevens Avenue to Bell Street by adding an additional inbound lane, to provide two outbound and two inbound lanes at this section. The application indicates that such lane addition "will allow for "improved operations at Morrill's Corner", PACTS Form for Intersection Proposal-City of Portland ("PACTS Proposal"), p. 1 (a copy of which has been provided in Packard's traffic update information). In response to a request from the City and its traffic consultant, Packard has reviewed the option of tying its improvements to the proposed Forest Avenue improvements by going to a two lane inbound and outbound arrangement. Packard has done this redesign and has found that, along with the improved signalization and timing improvements, the lane reconfiguration will improve traffic in Morrill's Corner. This will improve both the livability of the surrounding neighborhoods and will benefit area businesses and industries, points specifically recognized by the City in its PACTS application. See PACTS Proposal, pp. 3,7 ("By further improving mobility through the extremely busy Morrill's Corner intersection all surrounding businesses and industries will benefit"; "Traffic congestion is a major issue for neighborhood livability. The restriping for additional lanes will address this issue.")

While the Transportation Plan does set as a major policy goal the reduction in fostering of automobile dependency, it also recognizes that people do depend upon cars to undertake certain activities and that certain major transportation routes will continue to be impacted. The City's PACT application makes clear that "Morrill's Corner is "a crucial link between Portland, Westbrook and the Rte 302 region to the north and west of Portland", PACTS Proposal, p. 4. The Transportation Plan also specifically recognizes that for certain types of activities, such as grocery shopping, motor vehicle usage is important, Transportation Plan, p. 24. As specified in the traffic study provided by VHB, the majority of the expected trips into the project site are from vehicles that are already



passing through the Forest Avenue/Stevens Avenue transportation corridor, and therefore the project is not encouraging use of the automobile by these customers; it is simply drawing in existing traffic. In addition, the inclusion of residential housing in the project and the inclusion of pedestrian access points throughout the project will promote pedestrian access of the project site by the residents and nearby neighbors.

### **C. Neighborhood Issues in the Transportation Plan**

#### **1. Promote Improved Access To Routine Daily Services Within Walking Distance.**

The Transportation Plan contains substantial discussion of neighborhood issues associated with transportation planning. One issue identified is that some neighborhoods lack routine daily services within walking distance, Transportation Plan, p. 13. This is true for the Morrill's Corner neighborhood; although services are available on Forest Avenue, they are spread out and are not readily accessible by foot or by bicycle. The Morrill's Crossing project will provide nearby access to a number of daily services, including groceries, pharmacy, banking, professional offices and other retail and service businesses that will locate to the project. The project has been designed to facilitate pedestrian use of the site and the project provides numerous pedestrian and bicycle access points into the project area. The traffic improvements and sidewalk upgrades will also result in improved pedestrian use of surrounding streets, which will allow better pedestrian access to businesses on Forest, Stevens and Allen Avenues.

#### **2. Interconnection of Neighborhood Streets So That There are Multiple Paths of Travel to Get to Destinations By Foot and By Bicycle.**

The Transportation Plan also recognizes the need for pedestrian and bicycle access to destination points in and around neighborhoods, Transportation Plan, p. 16. In addition to the numerous pedestrian and bicycle access points from the adjacent neighborhood, as well as from the proposed residential components of the project, Packard is also proposing upgrades of the sidewalk areas on Allen and Forest Avenue to help facilitate pedestrian access to the site.

### **VI. CONSISTENCY WITH THE CITY'S HOUSING PLAN.**

The City's housing plan, titled *Housing: Sustaining Portland's Future* ("Housing Plan"), sets forth strong goals and policies to increase and improve the development of housing within the City. The proposed development's inclusion of residential development in several forms is consistent with the goals and policies of the Housing Plan.

The Morrill's Corner site is neither an attractive nor a financially feasible location for high-density residential development as the primary use of the site, due to the proximity of the railroad tracks and the costs associated with the property development (land pricing, traffic improvements, potential environmental remediation of the City owned parcel. Packard has worked hard, however, to incorporate housing in the project areas



within the development where housing is appropriate, and within these areas, the proposed housing would be considered high-density under the Housing Plan.

**A. Ensure an Adequate and Diverse Supply of Housing for All.**

The inclusion of housing in the Morrill's Corner project as proposed meets the policy objective of ensuring an adequate and diverse supply of housing for all. Specifically, this Housing Plan policy calls for combining housing with mixed use developments and for ensuring a diverse mix of housing types that offer a continuum of options across all income levels, both renter and owner occupied. Housing Plan, p. 29. It also calls for the City to assist businesses in creating housing for new employees, Housing Plan p. 33. The inclusion of condominiums and rental housing units within a commercial development clearly meets this goal.

**B. No Net Loss of Housing for All Property Development.**

The Housing Plan also includes a policy calling for the preservation of quality housing stock, with a specific recommendation of having no net loss of housing for all property development, Housing Plan, p. 39. As stated in the contract zone language, Packard is seeking the ability to develop up to 50 housing units. The development as proposed will result in the loss of no more than 7 housing units, so the project as proposed will result in a substantial net increase in housing.

**C. Maintain and Enhance the Livability of Portland's Neighborhoods.**

Another goal of the Housing Plan is to maintain and enhance the livability of Portland's neighborhoods, Housing Plan, p. 43. Packard has been extremely sensitive to this issue, and has specifically considered the impact of the proposed project on the surrounding residential neighborhood. The inclusion of the condominium development in the project, as well as landscaped buffering, provides a buffer between the existing neighborhood and the commercial aspects of the proposed development while providing a compatible residential project immediately adjacent to the neighborhood. At the same time, the project provides connectivity to the neighborhood through pedestrian and bicycle access to allow the neighborhood to avail itself of the businesses and services located in the commercial part of the development. The availability of community meeting space within the supermarket, where neighborhood meetings and functions can be held, also allows integration of the neighborhood with the commercial development. This is consistent with the Housing Plan's stated policy goal of having well-planned developments that enhances compatibility between residential and non-residential uses, as well as the goal of promoting mixed uses within walking distances of existing neighborhoods, Housing Plan, p. 43. In addition, the proposed walking trail and recreational/opens space area in the project is consistent with the goal's objective of encouraging new housing development in proximity to neighborhood assets, Housing Plan, p. 44. Finally, the development of the Morrill's Corner project will result in a clear improvement over the current state of the property, with its existing public safety concerns (crime, environmental contamination) and appearance.



## VII. CONSISTENCY WITH THE CITY'S OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN.

In 1995, the City developed a plan titled "Green Spaces, Blue Edges: An Open Space and Recreation Plan for the City of Portland"; this Plan was updated in 2001 ("Open Space Plan"). The plan calls for the creation of a "cohesive, unified, interconnected open space system that builds upon the historic legacy of our parks, our existing open space studies, the best knowledge of our day and the informed will of its residents", Open Space Plan at p. 5.

It should be pointed out that the Open Space Plan does not identify the Morrill's Corner area as an area of priority for establishment of additional open space or for the preservation of particularly important or sensitive natural areas. There are currently two major open space areas adjacent to the Morrill's Corner, the Evergreen Cemetery and PATHS and an additional trail system exists at nearby University Park, all of which are part of the Portland Trails open space trail system.

However, the Open Space Plan also sets as a goal the extension of the "public's range of open space opportunities and the ability to pursue its choice of use without social or economic constraint, elaborate planning or community intervention," Open Space Plan, p. 6. Packard's inclusion of open space and recreational resources within its plan helps the Morrill's Corner area achieve this goal in several ways. First, it provides a pedestrian walking path throughout the development, which is linked to the adjacent neighborhood at several locations through a series of pedestrian and bicycle access points. Packard also proposes to convert the existing 3.5 acre City owned parcel at the rear of the project from an abandoned industrial site to an open space and recreational area that will be available to the public, and will also be an amenity for the adjacent housing proposed by Packard. This will provide the neighborhood with enhanced recreational and open space opportunity and relieve the City of the financial responsibility of cleaning up the site, thereby eliminating economic constraints that the City might otherwise have for development of that site.

The pedestrian walkway and improved sidewalk area along Allen Avenue also provides opportunity for linkage with the existing Portland Trails system, consistent with the goal of interconnected open space opportunity. Packard is working with Portland Trails to integrate the open space/recreation area into the existing trail system, as well as to improve access to and from existing trail areas.

## V. Traffic

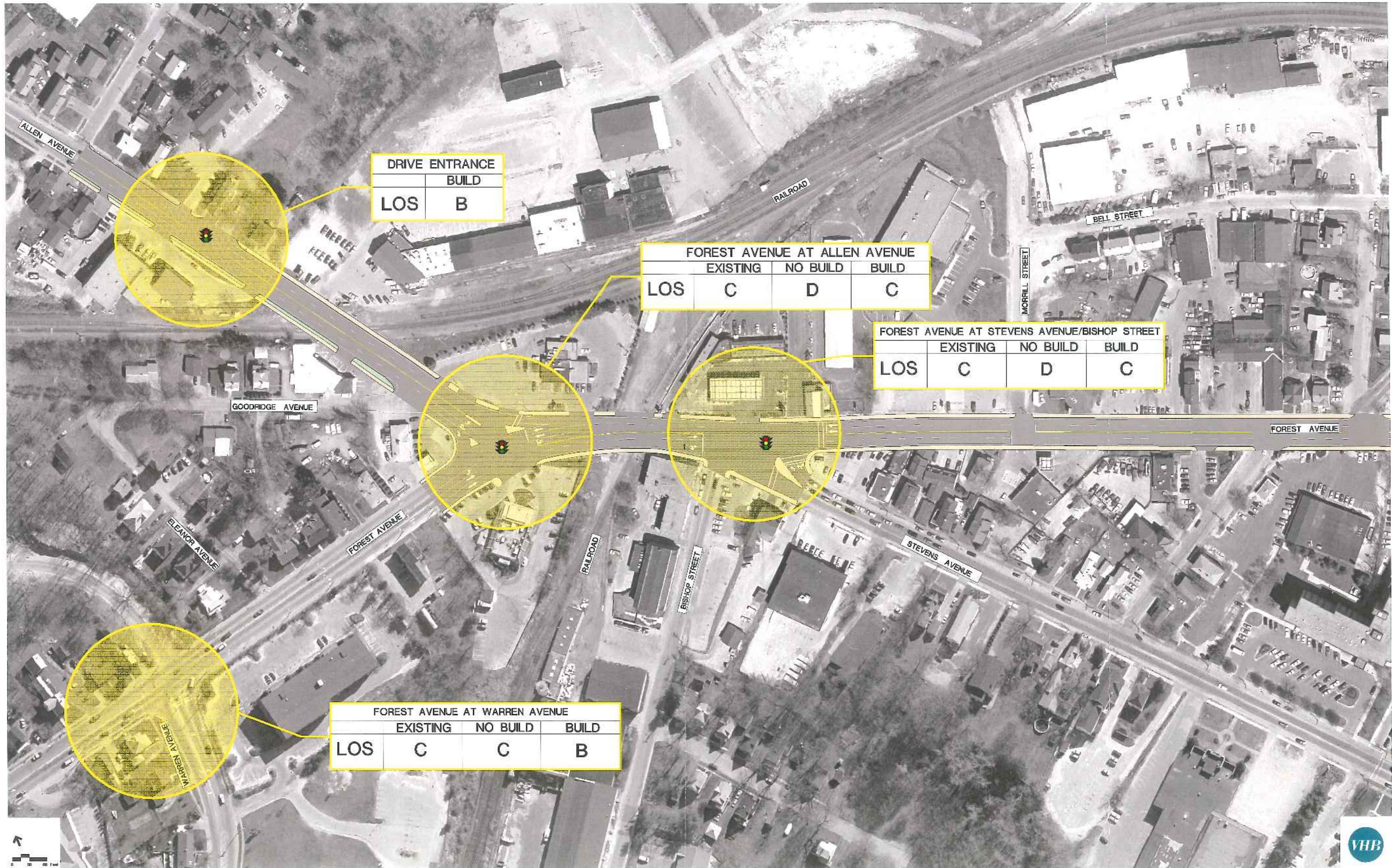
- A traffic study completed in May 2004 demonstrates that traffic flow will improve through Morrill's Corner after the completion of the project.
- There will be a one-way vehicular ingress to the site from Morrill Street, providing those who live in the neighborhood access to the shopping center and convenient access to the project's traffic signal at Allen Avenue. Traffic from the development will not be allowed to enter into the neighborhood.
- Over \$1 million in traffic improvements will include:
  - Improved roadway capacity within the Morrill's Corner intersections
  - Upgraded and safer pedestrian and bicycle facilities within the Morrill's Corner area
  - New and upgraded railroad detection and crossing equipment
  - New and upgraded traffic signal equipment
- Metro bus service will be located within the site.





# Morrill's Crossing Portland, Maine

## Weekday Evening Peak Hour Intersection/Signal Operations

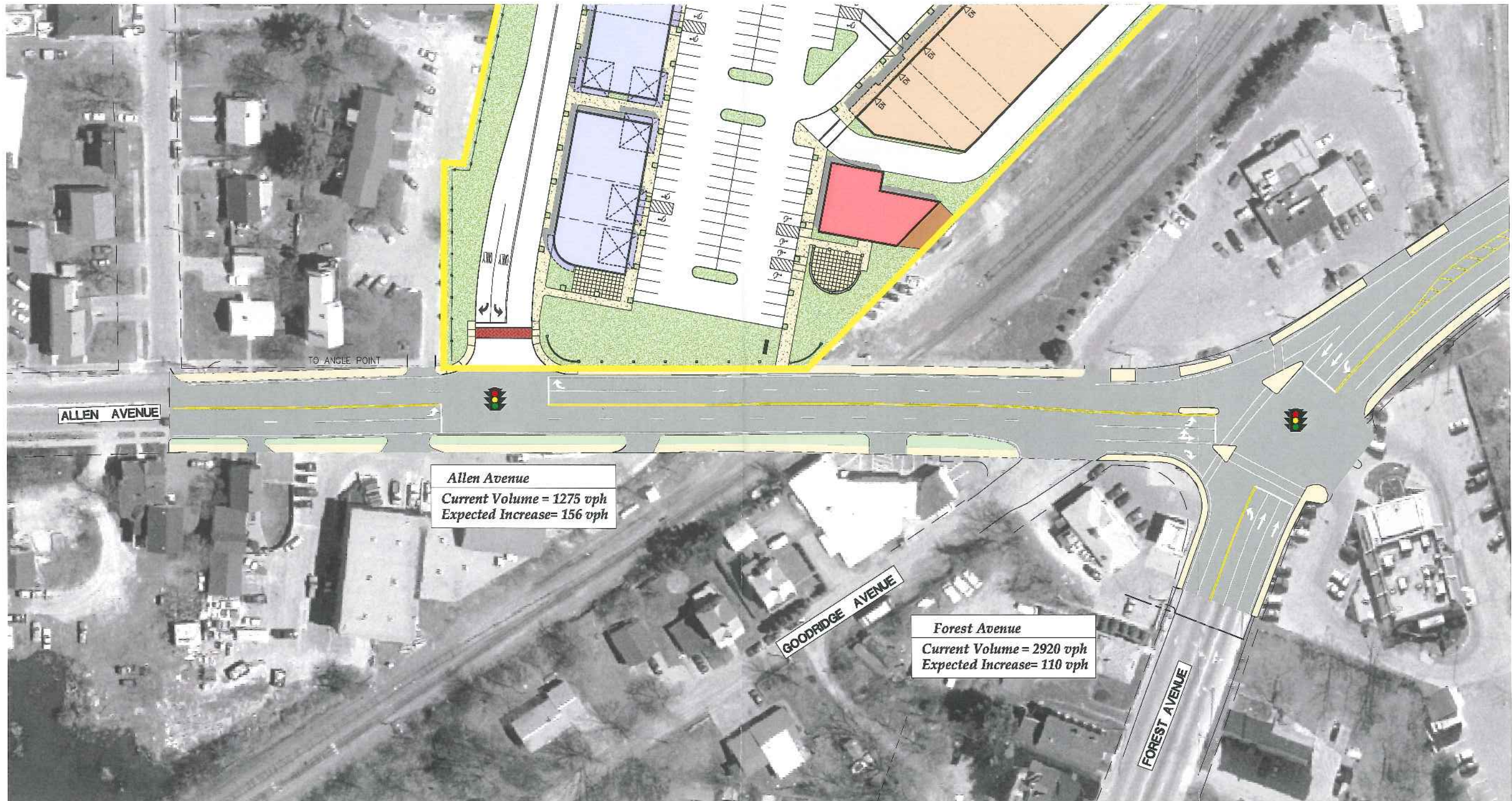






# Morrill's Crossing Portland, Maine

## Forest/Allen Traffic Increases Allen Avenue

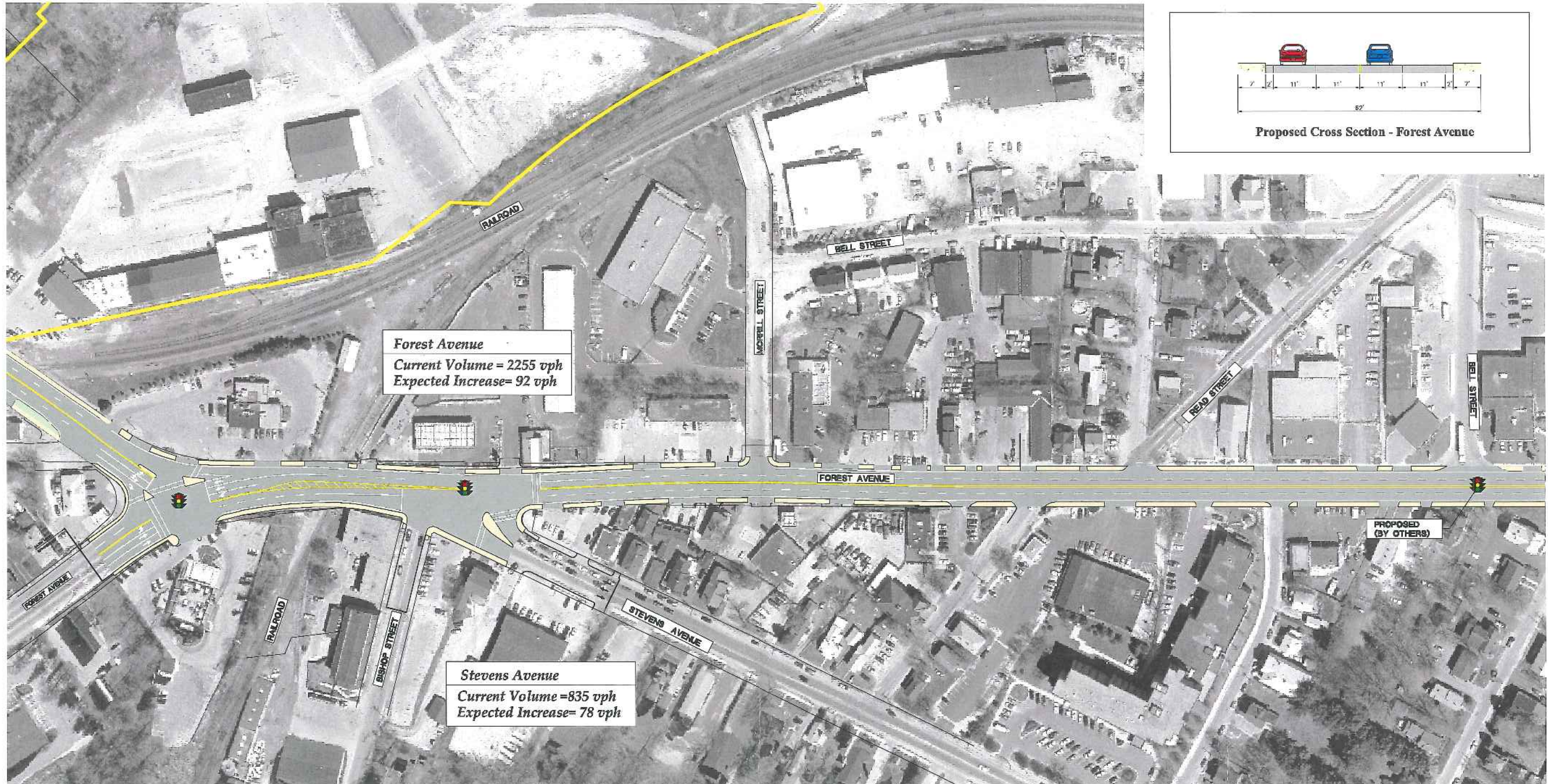






# Morrill's Crossing Portland, Maine

## Forest/Allen Traffic Increases Forest Avenue



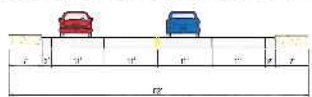




# Morrill's Crossing

Portland, Maine

## Forest Avenue and Allen Avenue Improvements



Proposed Cross Section - Forest Avenue



## VI. Architecture

- The project will transform an underutilized site into a community focus for the Morrill's Corner neighborhood using elements that touch upon traditional Portland architecture.
- A variety of scale and uses will sensitively integrate the development into the surrounding neighborhood and business districts.
- The project begins at the street wall with a safe, landscaped, pedestrian-scaled environment. Brick piers begin the architectural elements that carry throughout the project.
- The project transitions into a grouping of small local businesses along a pedestrian arcade. It gradually increases in scale to a mixed use building of first floor retail tenants with residences above.
- Eighteen town homes provide a transitional buffer between the existing residential neighborhood and the retail shops. The town homes face the neighborhood along a pedestrian greenway with vehicular access located in the rear.
- The project culminates with regional retail tenants anchored by a Stop & Shop supermarket. This new generation store will provide the traditional heart of the Morrill's Corner neighborhood.





MORRILL'S CROSSING



ALLEN AVE. PERSPECTIVE





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MORRILL'S CROSSING



ALLEN AVE. PERSPECTIVE





MORRILL'S CROSSING



CONDO PERSPECTIVE





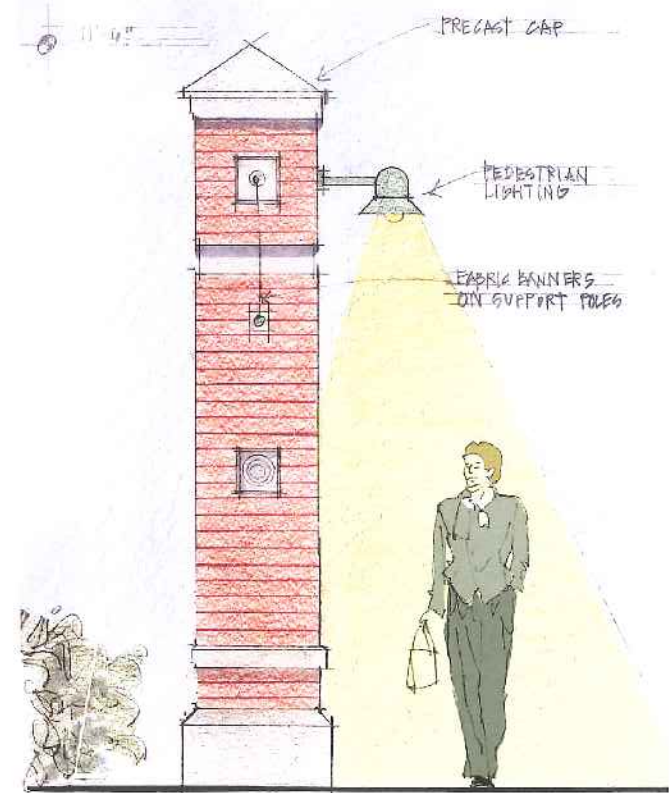
# MORRILL'S CROSSING







TOWN HOMES FRONT ELEVATION



BRICK PIERS @ ALLEN AVE.  
SCALE: 3/4"

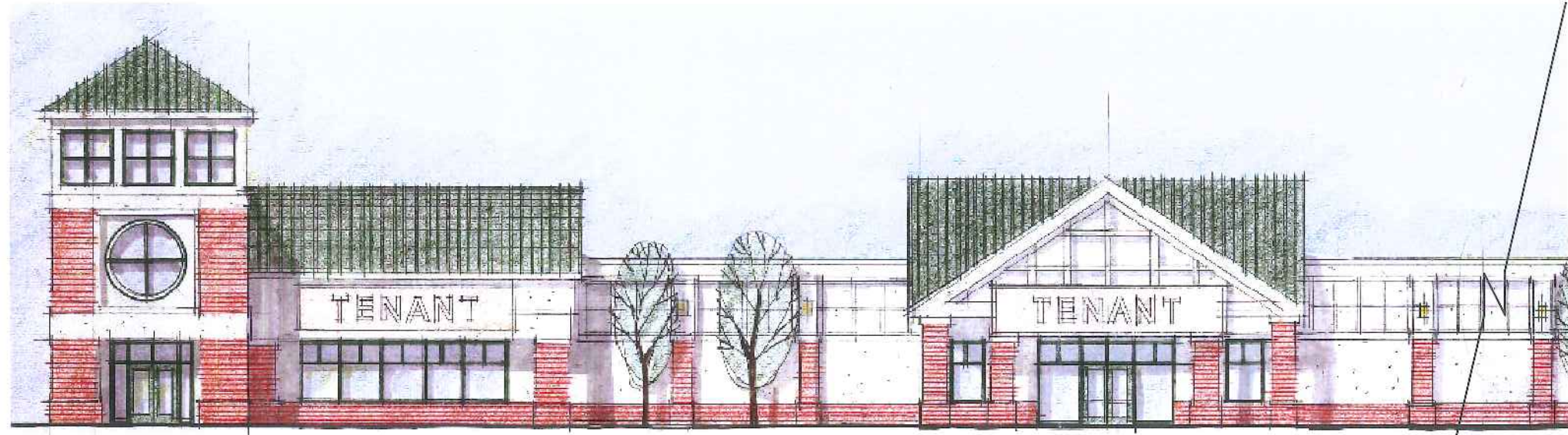
BRICK PIER DETAIL @ ALLEN AVE

MORRILL'S CROSSING



TOWN HOMES





RETAIL MAIN ELEVATION



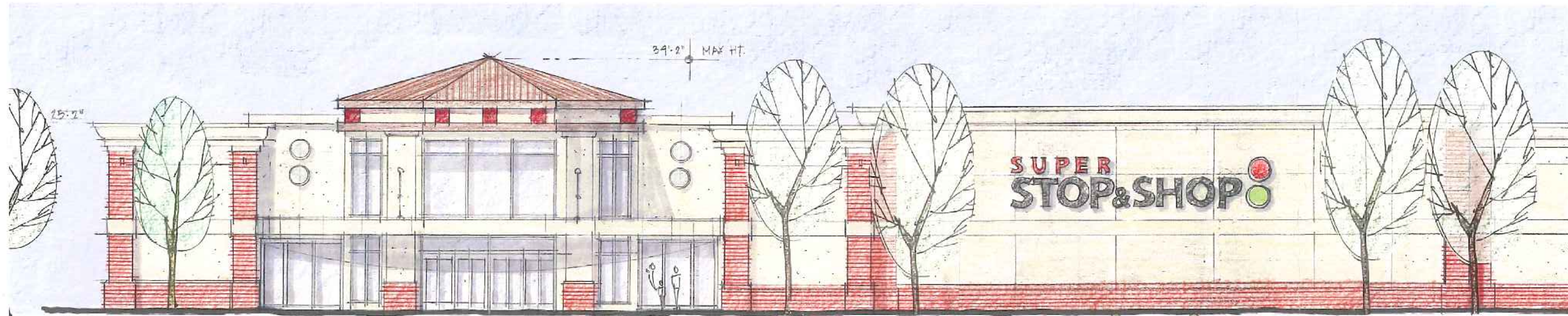
RETAIL REAR ELEVATION

MORRILL'S CROSSING



RETAIL C





# MORRILL'S CROSSING



PORT CITY  
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