Figure 10.6 Before and After Installation of Rubber Sidewalks

Source: Rubber Sidewalks Inc.

Planting strips, found between the road and sidewalk, should also be expanded and/or installed such that trees can be planted all along the corridor (Figure 10.7). Any plantings will function as greening agents capable of screening the harshness of the street from pedestrians, but incorporating bushes with trees in the planting strip will provide greenery at different heights, thus maximizing the visual effect. Planting in planting strips or along the chicanes recommended earlier will also decrease impermeable surfaces, thus increasing the capacity of the area to absorb rain water and reduce runoff. In addition to greenery in the strips, inlaid bricks or cobbles, flower planters, decorative bike racks, boulders and other decorative materials should be added to sidewalks to enhance their aesthetic appeal as well as their functionality. Some of these are discussed in more detail below.

Figure 10.7 Example of Sidewalk Planting Strip (Portland, OR)

Source: Bureau of Environmental Services

Lighting

Another way that the objective of attracting more people to the corridor can be achieved is by installing additional street lamps, as suggested by the East Side neighborhood assembly. The installation of additional lighting increases the perception of safety. It is important that the perception of safety be fostered if the corridor is to be a place where people are willing to walk about at night. To be consistent with the improved aesthetics that will resulting from improvements in transportation infrastructure as well

as the adoption and implementation of traffic calming devices, it is suggested the decorative street lamps be placed along both sides of the corridor. This will add character to the area and contribute to the goal of creating a "sense of place".

Lighting along the corridor is currently unsatisfactory from a variety of perspectives. The street would be greatly enhanced by the addition of decorative street lamps (Figure 10.8). Recent improvements in solar technologies have led to the creation of inviting, street level solar lamps, which should be considered (Figure 10.9). The city should use this corridor to experiment with these solar technologies to evaluate their economic and environmental values as well as their aesthetic qualities. In addition to decorative lighting, banners and flowers can be hung from the street lamps, and vine flowers can use lamp posts as supporting structures, further enhancing the aesthetic appeal of the streetscape.

Figure 10.8 Example of Decorative Street Lighting

Source: Hendersonville, TN

Figure 10.9 Street Level Solar Lamp

Source: NovaLighting Company, LLC

10.3.2 Transportation

Bicycle Friendliness

Many of the recommendations above will have the added benefit of facilitating pedestrian access and safety. Additional actions are needed to reduce automobile usage, thereby alleviating traffic problems mentioned by the residents surveyed, as well as improving environmental quality of the neighborhood. These actions include encouraging the use of bicycles as well as the use of public transportation. Bike racks should be installed near major commercial establishments as well as at other junctures along the

sidewalks and in parking lots. Bike racks should be functional as well as pleasing to the eye (Figure 10.10). The City should work with local artists or artisans to design functional sculptural bike racks that will not only encourage bike use but will also give the street a unique touch.

Figure 10.10 Decorative Bicycle Rack

Source: WashCycle

East Side residents and businesses may also want to consider a Yellow Bike Program which has been started in a number of U.S. cities such as Portland, OR, Austin, TX, and Lexington, KY. Yellow Bike initiatives are typically non-profit volunteer organizations that provide free bikes for children under 12, affordable bike repairs for all, and inexpensive recycled bicycles as an alternative for average cyclists. Yellow Bike leasing projects have also supplied refurbished bicycles for local residents for neighborhood commuting. Perhaps the most valuable service of the Yellow Bike Program is the hands on, practical experience provided. By participating, volunteers learn how to fix their own bikes, learn how to build bikes from recycled parts, and get a feel for the strength of cycling community.

10.3.3 Public Transportation Facilities

In order encourage use of the public transportation system; public bus stops should be improved. We repeat our recommendation for covered shelters as shown previously in Figure 8.6. Bus shelters should be installed with instructions for bus use incorporated into the design. Also important in the design is aesthetics. A bus shelter design competition could be presented city wide and would help to bring aesthetics and community pride to the Robinson St. community. Solar powered lighting of the bus shelters would improve bus ridership in the later hours of the day.

10.3.4 Outdoor Public Spaces

With a greener corridor and more people walking to and from stores or bus stops, seating and leisure arrangements are needed to accommodate citizens' needs. Currently there are very few public benches and no public tables, nor are there private enterprises, namely restaurants, that utilize outdoor space for their customers. If the width of sidewalks is expanded as recommended previously, much more space will be made available for public benches, picnic tables, and other seating arrangements. These can be incorporated into some of the planting areas or in other strategic locations.

Figure 10.11 Restaurant Sidewalk Space

Source: Tina Feinberg for The New York Times

Wider sidewalks will also allow private businesses to extend their spheres of influence onto the street, a move that could increase their customer base while improving the overall appearance of the corridor (Figure 10.11). Adding seating to the streetscape has the potential to also encourage walking.

Waste Receptacles

In order to maintain neighborhood quality, trash cans and recycling bins should be provided along both sides of the street. Waste receptacles should be placed at regular 100 ft intervals along the corridor to decrease the likelihood of littering. It is vital that recycling containers be places next to *every* trash bin with instructions on what should be recycled, or combined trash/recycling bins should be provided. Waste containers must be lidded or covered and should be a neutral color such as green, brown or tan. A decorative logo or decal representing the East Side (perhaps incorporating a logo from the gateway signs) could be placed on the side of the bins to increase community pride. The city should consider purchasing waste receptacles made from recycled materials (Figure 10.12).

Figure 10.12 Outdoor Waste Receptacles

Source: Belson Outdoors

10.3.5 Incorporating Landscaping

As mentioned earlier, landscaping is an important, but relatively low cost opportunity to quickly and drastically improve the aesthetic appeal of the neighborhood. Landscaping in spaces between sidewalks and streets, as recommended earlier, is one element of this, but there are other areas that would benefit significantly from a greening of the area.

The East Side should focus its landscaping efforts on tree planting. Tree planting offers a very cost effective method of beautifying the neighborhood. Trees also offer numerous other benefits to the community such as temperature control (energy conservation), asphalt protection, the buffering of noise

pollution, carbon sequestration and storm water runoff absorption. Additionally, the presence of trees can increase a properties real estate value by up to 18 percent. Figure 10.13, a map of Robinson St., offers suggestions of planting sites on public land.

When planting, the city should *only* use native plants. When native plant species disappear, or are replaced by alien exotics, the insects disappear, impoverishing the food source for birds and other animals. By favoring native plants, gardeners can provide a welcoming environment for wildlife of all kinds. A list of commercially available native plant species suitable for planned landscapes in New York is provided in Appendix 5.

Other Landscaping Needs

Given the number and condition of parking lots on Robinson Street, landscaping and planting with trees along the perimeter of the lot wherever possible as well as within the parking lot itself would help significantly. In addition to improving aesthetics, increasing tree cover will lessen the temperature of the lots in summer, thus shielding the protective seal which holds asphalt aggregate together. In this way, planting trees in parking lots can actually increase the durability of the paved surface. Tree planting will also drastically improve the appearance of lots and will decrease impermeable surfaces, thus decreasing storm water runoff. Planters can be installed along the perimeter of parking lots and planted with low maintenance shrubs or grasses. Such an action would create a screen such that the parking lots would be less visible from the street.

Landscaping and tree planting should also be encouraged on private, residential and commercial properties. The city might consider offering funding incentives to the Robinson Street community, such as shared or split cost opportunities to purchase trees, shrubs and plants.

Figure 10.13 Tree Planting Sites for Portion of Robinson Street