

DMC Design Sprint - Saint Marys District

A process referred to as the Design Sprint is being used to create a public realm plan for the Saint Marys district within the Destination Medical Center Master Plan in Rochester, Minnesota. The area of particular focus includes the blocks on either side of the Second Street corridor from 11th to 16th Avenues SW. The Design Sprint consists of a research phase, a series of workshops involving key stakeholders, prototyping design concepts on site, and synthesizing this information into a final public realm plan. This document contains three distinct concept plans resulting from a series of three workshops held on September 27-29. Each group was asked to take on the perspective of particular groups affected by the plan. Group A had the perspective of Mayo patients, visitors and staff; Group B represented business owners and developers; and Group C played the role of community members from surrounding neighborhoods. Each group was asked to identify issues, images and strategies that addressed land use, pedestrian connectivity, transit, and streetscape design. These ideas were then synthesized into three design concepts illustrated here. The three approaches have some common elements such as creating a walkable, active commercial district north of Second Street, connections to neighborhoods, convenient transit, dedicated bikeways, and a safe, comfortable pedestrian environment. They differ in the ways to accomplish these goals.



Design Description

Group B - Protect

Group B met on September 28, 2016. The group was asked to take on the perspective of business owners and developers in the Saint Marys District.

Key design and planning issues that emerged from the Group B workshop included creating a gateway to the Saint Marys District and the city as a whole. This could be done with public art and urban forms that denote a major entrance to the city. Closing some Avenues between First and Second Streets and locating diverse activities there (such as street fairs and winter movies) contribute to business activity and vitality of the neighborhoods. Memorable sidewalks with public art and nodes of business activity around intersections are envisioned.

Group B mentioned grade separation in the form of pedestrian tunnels for climate protection and safety. Pedestrian walkways outside of the tunnels should have outdoor heaters and snow melting. Convenient transit within the city with protected shelters and transit to destinations outside of Rochester are desired. Group B found it acceptable to move dedicated bicycle lanes from Second Street to First Street. In addition, this group suggested slowing traffic and minimizing cars on Second Street while removing on-street parking assuming some form of off-street parking is available.

The title **Protect** was chosen for the Group B design to reflect the pedestrian tunnel system that provides climate protection and safe crossings under major streets. A key component of the tunnel system is a crossing beneath Second Street located in front of the original main entrance to Saint Marys hospital. The tunnel is envisioned as having open courtyards, stairways, and glass-enclosed elevators on both sides of the street. The tunnel will connect to the lower level of the hospital and be respectful of the historic façade of Saint Marys. A major transit station area is located in the vicinity of the tunnel crossing.

A second component of the proposed tunnel system extends east and west under the center of Second Street running

from 11th to 16th Avenues SW and potentially beyond. This long tunnel, which includes skylights placed in the median of the roadway above, then connects to the lower levels of buildings and stair/elevator towers on both sides of the street. The advantage of placing the tunnel under the public right-of-way is the ability to control the overall design and keep the infrastructure on public land. Important to the design of the tunnel system is making it accessible visually and physically. The plan incorporates transparent access points typically at the street corners. The disadvantages of the tunnel system under the street are the cost and the need to build it all at once when Second Street is renovated in the near future. Another option is to build the crossing tunnel in front of Saint Marys entrance and let the enclosed walkway system be developed incrementally through the lower levels of private developments north of Second Street.

Another feature of the Group B design is the creation of pedestrian-oriented north-south Avenues (11th, 12th, 13th, 14th and 16th Avenues). These Avenues are raised above the level of Second Street forming tables at the intersections that will slow traffic and mark major at-grade pedestrian crossings. The Avenues are imagined as flexible streets that may be closed for special events and activities and be respectful of pedestrians and bikes even when open to motor vehicles. These pedestrian-oriented Avenues and alleys between First and Second Street create a major pedestrian district.

The design for Second Street includes four travel lanes (including two for transit) and a median. Dedicated bicycle paths are located on First Street and not included in the Second Street right-of-way. Removing bicycles and on-street parking from Second Street allows for a median and spacious pedestrian sidewalk areas (18 feet) on the north side of the street even within the existing 66-foot right-of-way. This approach requires use of an easement or additional right-of-way on Mayo property for the sidewalk on the south side of Second Street. As future developments are placed at least 17 feet back from the right-of-way on the north side, additional on-street parking can be added.

Design Principals - Protect

Land Use

- A** Gateway to Saint Marys District
- B** Diverse Seasonal activities in Avenues (north of Second Street)
- C** Close some Avenues to make pedestrian only
- D** Nodes of business activity around intersections

Pedestrian Connectivity

- E** Pedestrian tunnels for climate protection and safety
- F** Outdoor heaters and snowmelting

Transit

- G** Convenient transit and minimize cars
- H** Protected shelters
- I** Transit to destinations outside of Rochester

Street Design

- J** Bicycles moved to First Street
- K** On-street parking not necessary on Second Street
- L** Slow automobile traffic on Second Street
- M** Memorable sidewalks with public art

Group B - Plan



Group B - Precedent Images (chosen by participants)

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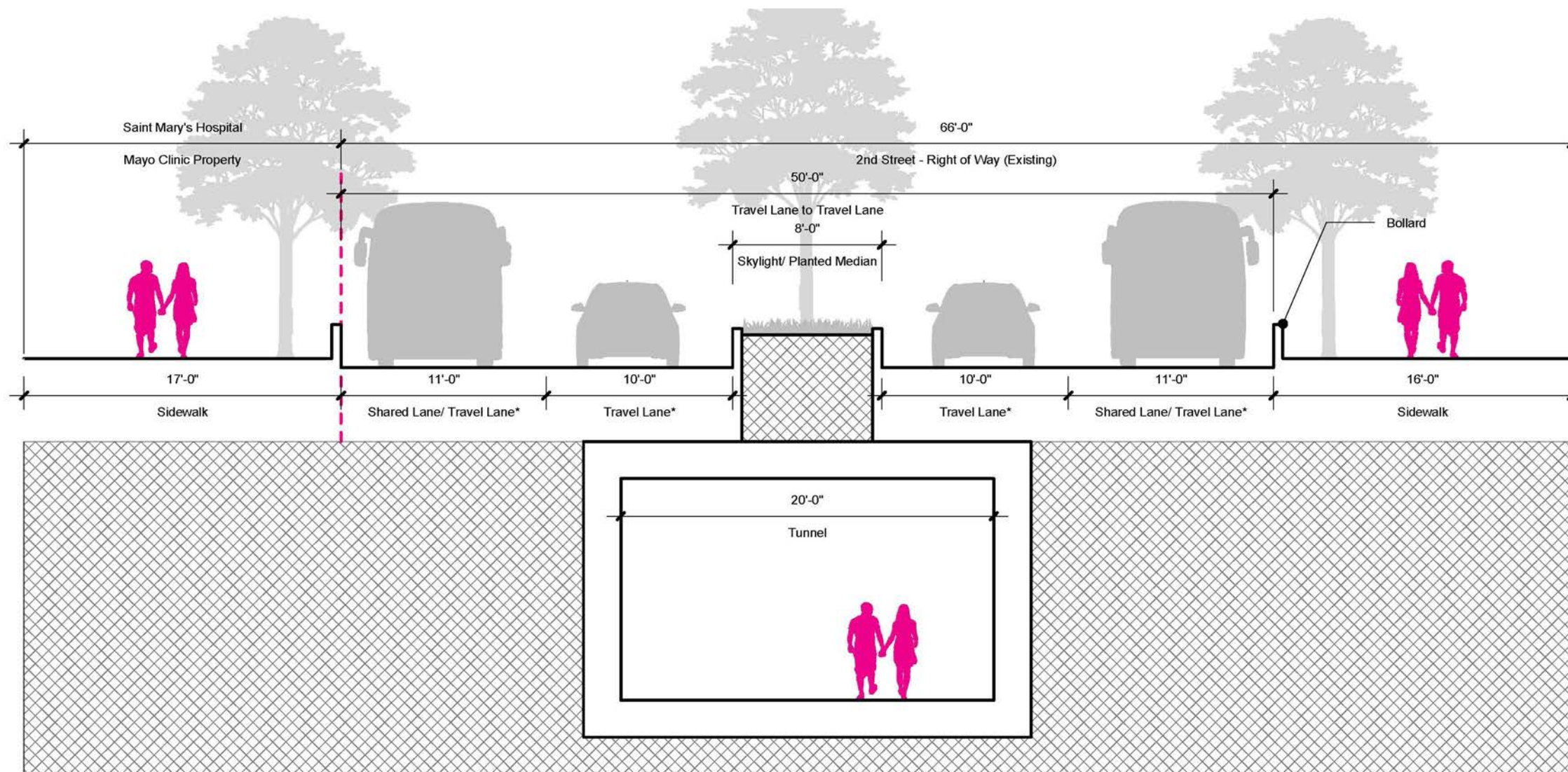


Group B - Aerial



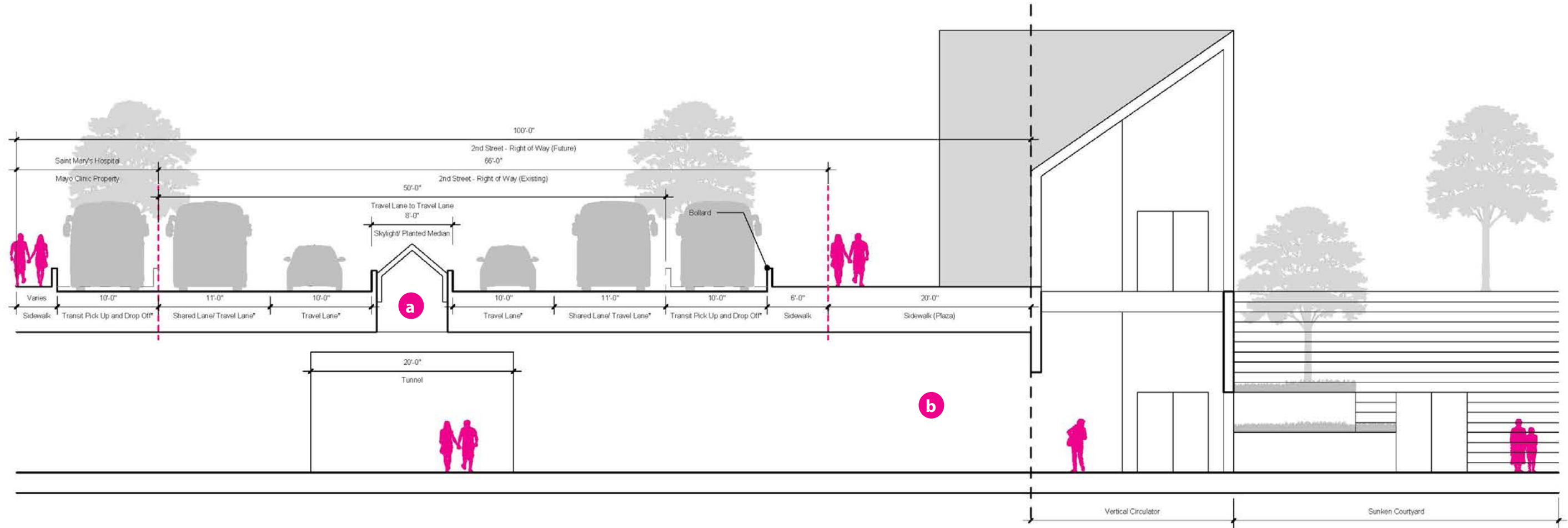
Group B - Sections (based on variances)
Looking West on **2nd Street**

AA



Group B - Sections (based on variances)
Looking West on **2nd Street**

BB



If increase Right of Way to 100'-0"

- a** Skylight and/or Planted Median on 2nd Street - Daylight tunnel below and buffer pedestrian/traffic crossing on 2nd Street
- b** Additional sidewalk and plaza on north 2nd Street