Reimagine 9th Street Corridor Plan
Louisville, KY

9th Street Today
Reimagining the Street: 3 Options
Preferred Option: The Russell Trail
Piloting Change

Prepared by Gehl
April 2018
While amenities are relatively few along the corridor today, change is coming to 9th Street with new residential, enhanced transit, and park and open space in development. As energy builds to re-imagine 9th Street, it is crucial to understand how the corridor is used today and where it wants to go tomorrow.

* I-64 Highway Interchange outside of focus. Changes will be required on the northern leg of the Jefferson intersection depending on selected scheme.
EXISTING
Typical Street Section
(Viewing North, between Muhammad Ali & Liberty)
EXISTING
Typical Street Section
(Viewing North, between Muhammad Ali & Liberty)

5’ Sidewalk
4’ Buffer
36” Roadway
56’ Median
36” Roadway
4’ Buffer
5’ Sidewalk

150’ ROW
Public Space, Public Life
Pulse on the Ground Today
In April—with help of 40 volunteers—we mapped and surveyed 9th Street between Broadway and Main for a full Thursday and Saturday. This infographic illustrates the flow of pedestrian activity.

We studied both weekday and weekend pedestrian rhythms—how people move and spend time—along 9th Street. This Map is an overview of the weekday activity, which generally saw more people out.
Hello! Is there someone over there?

9TH STREET TODAY

The sheer width of the street, several lanes of traffic, and the berm obstructing the view in some places—all contribute to the distinct separation between sidewalks. This also explains the varying pedestrian counts on either sidewalk, despite their parallel orientation one another (see overview map in appendix).
9TH STREET TODAY

No safe way to cycle

Speedy traffic

Elevated Berm!

Crosswalk?
9TH STREET TODAY

During the week an average of 62 pedestrians walk along 9th Street every hour. On average 28 people an hour cross the street mid-block. In other words, 1 in 2 people walking along 9th street cut across before reaching the intersection.

The distance between intersections is too far for people, so they cut through midblock.

255 PEOPLE ARE CROSSING MIDBLOCK EVERYDAY
An average of 220 people an hour were counted crossing intersections on 9th Street. 75 of them were walking against the red light. That’s 678 in a day.
9TH STREET TODAY

The median has nice trees and a welcoming canopy, but there are no invitations to stay.

Nice trees, but where do I stay?

How do I get here?
Beecher Playground is consistently busy throughout the week, with around 10 people hanging out in the park at any given time. In the evening, the number of people spikes. At 6pm, over 100 people were recorded hanging out in the playground, 80 of which were children playing. On Saturday an average of 50 people spend time here between noon and 7pm.

Nodes of activity off 9th Street, around Muhammad Ali and Main Street

80 PEOPLE PLAYING SPORTS ON A THURSDAY NIGHT IN BEECHER PLAYGROUND

And families and kids bring these spaces to life

1/2 OF ALL PEOPLE SURVEYED HANGING OUT WERE KIDS, 14 YEARS AND YOUNGER
9TH STREET TODAY

The intersections at Broadway (18 cyclists), Muhammad Ali (10 cyclists), and Main St (22 cyclists) were the busiest for cyclists crossing 9th St, while the block between Chestnut and Muhammad Ali (18) was the busiest for cyclists moving along 9th Street.

I guess I’ll stick to the sidewalk

100 CYCLISTS WERE SURVEYED ON 9TH STREET THROUGHOUT THE DAY
9TH STREET TODAY

More than 80% of the edges people walk along are inactive, and only a few locations have public seating available. These are located at either end of the street, on Main Street and Broadway.

83% OF EDGES ARE INACTIVE

Narrow Sidewalk

No safe way to cycle

Little protection from micro-climates like sun and rain
I found a shady spot!
Shared Qualities

We asked what urban qualities residents, workers, commuters and visitors of the area value and envision for 9th street. Distilled from over 200 public responses, key spatial qualities and shared values rose to the top.
Gehl 9th Street Concept Plan

- Smile – bring people a daily dose of joy
- Active for active kids
- I love that there are no mobile devices in this picture
- Open, contemplative space
- Multi-use, multi-modal: blocks, park space, from cars
- I love the playfulness of this simple intervention
- Good place to hangout with family
- Glass, light, color, beauty

Unexpected inspiration
Public spaces to enjoy
Jazz in the park
1. Neighborhood & Family Friendly Amenities
   - Fun and unique children's play spaces
   - Greenery and flowers! Need more colors in the green spaces!
   - Places to sit, lounge, and people watch
   - Yes to neat chairs!
   - Watch movies with family
   - Places for teenagers to hang out and be active

2. Places to Relax & Spend time
   - Engaging water activities for all ages
   - Public art that’s engaging after dark
   - Plaza with whimsical unique elements

3. Bold, Creative & Unexpected Experiences
   - Diversify the sports facilities that are offered. Something other than basketball
   - Engaging programs and events
   - Dusk/nighttime placemaking (interesting engaging lighting)

4. Open Play & Recreation Areas
   - Provide safe crossing for children who have to cross when trying to catch the bus!
   - Safe seating and shelter areas for JCPS bus stops.
   - The space needs to be activated at night. It needs to be well lit and feel safe

5. Safe, People-First Infrastructure
   - Bold, Creative & Unexpected Experiences
   - Open Play & Recreation Areas
   - Safe, People-First Infrastructure

SHARED URBAN QUALITIES

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18
1. Neighborhood & Family Friendly Amenities

- Fun and unique children’s playspaces
- Watch movies with family
- Places for teenagers to hang out and be active
Places to Relax & Spend Time

- Greenery and flowers! Need more colors in the green spaces!
- Places to sit, lounge, and people watch
- Yes to neat chairs!
3

Bold, Unexpected & Layered Experiences

Engaging water activities for all ages

Public art that’s engaging after dark

Plaza with whimsical unique elements
Diversify the sports facilities that are offered. Something other than basketball.

Engaging programs and events.

Dusk/nighttime placemaking (interesting engaging lighting).
Provide safe crossing for children who have to cross when trying to catch the bus!

Safe seating and shelter areas for JCPS bus stops.

The space needs to be activated at night. It needs to be well lit and feel safe.
Less “Sting like a bee”
Less “Sting like a bee”
More “Float like a butterfly”
OPTIONS

**Existing Conditions**

- Wide lane width (11’-14’)
- Inconsistent and unclear pedestrian crossings / markings
- Short pedestrian crossing signal (20 seconds)
- Narrow sidewalks
- Few places to sit and stay comfortably

**Urban Boulevard**

- Reduced lane width (10’-11’)
- Reduced turning radius (10’)
- Separated bike lanes
- Expanded median
- Programmed multi-use trail down the median
- Improved pedestrian crossings
- Improved sidewalk greenery and canopy

**Urban Street**

- Reduced Roadway
- Reduced lane width to (10’—11’)
- Reduced turning radius (10’)
- Increased potential development area
- Separated bike lanes
- Improved buffer and bus stop amenities
- Improved pedestrian crossings
- Wider sidewalk space
- Improved sidewalk greenery and canopy

**Urban Parkway**

- Reduced Roadway
- Reduced lane width (10’—11’)
- Reduced turning radius to (10’)
- Separated bike lanes
- Improved buffer and bus stop amenities
- Improved pedestrian crossings
- Wider sidewalk space
- Improved sidewalk greenery and canopy
Urban Boulevard

An option maximizing the existing layout, leveraging the median as the gathering place.
URBAN BOULEVARD
Typical Street Section
(Viewing North, between Muhammad Ali and Liberty)
URBAN BOULEVARD
Typical Street Section
(Viewing North, between Muhammad Ali and Liberty)
URBAN BOULEVARD
Multi-use Recreation Trail

In Focus

The BeltLine — Atlanta GA

30' Furnishing zone/Programmable space
12' Recreational path
14' Planting area/ Bioswale

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Potential dedicated turn lanes at median for further study.
*Hybrid of Option 1 and Option 2
envisioned
URBAN BOULEVARD
Configuration Diagram

TOTAL PUBLIC REALM GAIN
174,000 sqft

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9th Street Concept Plan
Urban Street

A thought experiment for the future of 9th street — returning the street to a neighborhood scale
URBAN STREET
Typical Street Section
(Viewing North, between Muhammad Ali and Liberty)

12' Sidewalk
19' Bike, Buffer & Furnishing
32'' Roadway
19' Bike, Buffer & Furnishing
15' Sidewalk

100' ROW
~40-50' DEPTH

150' EXISTING ROW

Close the gap

Historic Walnut Street
URBAN STREET

Typical Street Section (Viewing North, between Muhammad Ali and Liberty)

Setback  12’ Sidewalk  11’ Bike & Buffer  10’ Bus stop  32’ Road  10’ Median  10’ Bus stop  11’ Bike & Buffer  10’ Sidewalk

Potential developable land

COLOR KEY
- Sidewalk
- Furnishing Zone
- Programmable space
- Bike Lane
- Planting / Bioswale
- Car Lane

9th Street Concept Plan
URBAN STREET
Active ground floor and street level articulation example
URBAN STREET
Configuration Diagram

TOTAL PUBLIC REALM GAIN
357,000 sqft

COLOR KEY

Public Realm
Median

AREA GAIN

Total Public Realm Gain:
357,173 sqft

Potential Dev Area:
283,214 sqft

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9th Street Concept Plan
Urban Parkway

An option focused on weaving a high quality public realm into the neighborhood
URBAN PARKWAY
Typical Street Section
(Viewing North, between Muhammad Ali and Liberty)
3 URBAN PARKWAY

Typical Street Section
(Viewing North, between Muhammad Ali and Liberty)
URBAN PARKWAY
Cycle Track + Social Sidewalks

50 FT. PUBLIC REALM

Queens Quay — Toronto ON
TOTAL PUBLIC REALM GAIN
298,000 sqft
Evaluating the Options
### Urban Boulevard

**Public Space, Public Life**

- **Access**
  - This option would require people to cross traffic at multiple points, creating complexity and potential people/motorist conflicts.

- **Quality and Experience**
  - This option provides adequate space to create an engaging public realm, but places a high burden on programming to make it feel inviting and part of people’s everyday experience.

- **Stewardship & Ownership**
  - Being an island, maintenance and developing sense of local pride in the space could be challenging since its not connected to any logical residences.

- **Reaching Out**
  - This option would create a clear and legible link to the waterfront park, but not work well to close the gap by doubling down on the median.

- **Open Space Stickiness**
  - Bold and imaginative programming and design in the median, but less seamless access

- **Impact on BRT**
  - This option would better accommodate the proposed BRT, potential for a bus only lane.

- **Traffic**
  - This option would raise some safety concerns and challenges connecting people to the median, and coordinating traffic.

- **Capacity**
  - This option would provide adequate traffic capacity.

### Urban Street

**Public Space, Public Life**

- **Access**
  - Narrow typical section would be easier for pedestrians to cross.

- **Quality and Experience**
  - This option provides tremendous opportunity to create a truly human scaled street

- **Stewardship & Ownership**
  - This option leaves a manageable area to maintain and program, providing less room to create a destination

- **Reaching Out**
  - This option would create a clear and legible linking to the waterfront park, a reduced ROW would reduce the barrier effect of the street as a separator between downtown and the Russell neighborhood

- **Open Space Stickiness**
  - Creates a great street, but less space for any bold public realm gesture

- **Impact on BRT**
  - This option would accommodate the proposed BRT

- **Traffic**
  - Narrower crossings, slower speeds, and more eyes on the street would contribute to pedestrian and bicycle safety.

- **Capacity**
  - Traffic demand may exceed capacity for this option within the planning horizon, possibly on opening day.

### Urban Parkway

**Public Space, Public Life**

- **Access**
  - This option would maintain acceptable traffic flow, while better accommodating pedestrians and bicycles.

- **Quality and Experience**
  - This option provides adequate space to develop and program an engaging public realm.

- **Stewardship & Ownership**
  - Thoughtful programming is essential, which requires invested partners. Sections without clear ownership run the risk of being leftover space. Running adjacent to residences could help inspire a strong sense of local pride of place.

- **Reaching Out**
  - This option would create a clear and legible link to the waterfront park, and begin to close the gap by reducing the distance across the street

- **Open Space Stickiness**
  - Opportunity to create a seamless neighborhood and citywide destination with a wow factor.

- **Impact on BRT**
  - This option would better accommodate the proposed BRT

- **Traffic**
  - Narrower crossings, slower speeds, and more eyes on the street would contribute to pedestrian and bicycle safety.

- **Capacity**
  - This option would provide adequate traffic capacity.
High Level Public Life & Traffic Analysis Comparison

* See Appendix for High-Level 9th Street Traffic Review for more detail on Traffic analysis

1. Urban Boulevard
   - Public Life
     - Low
     - High
   - Safety
     - Low
     - High
   - Efficient Traffic
     - Low
     - High

2. Urban Street
   - Public Life
     - Low
     - High
   - Safety
     - Low
     - High
   - Efficient Traffic
     - Low
     - High

3. Urban Parkway
   - Public Life
     - Low
     - High
   - Safety
     - Low
     - High
   - Efficient Traffic
     - Low
     - High

Preferred concept
The Russell Trail: 9th Street’s Urban Parkway

Preferred concept based on public realm, transit, and traffic evaluation
From Broadway to the Riverfront, The Russell Trail will transform 9th Street into a linear park woven together with destination draws, a clear and engaging link to the waterfront, and everyday community amenities for adjacent neighbors.
Structuring The Russell Trail
The Russell Trail
From a commercial truck route, to an urban boulevard.
The Russell Trail
From a isolated median to connected linear park.
The Russell Trail
5 programmatic zones, responding to the urban qualities we heard.

WATERFRONT CONNECTION

DOWNTOWN ART LINK

RETAIL FRONT PORCH

PLAY & RECREATION

GARDEN & LEARNING LAB
The Russell Trail
A cohesive experience
The Russell Trail
Through-line elements

- CLEAR & SAFE CROSSINGS
- COMFORTABLE BUS STOPS
- GRADE SEPARATED BIKE PATH
- BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE
- BIOSWALE & GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE
- MIXED USE BIKE & PED TRAIL
- ENGAGING LIGHTING
GARDEN & LEARNING LAB

Key Ingredients:
- Bold welcome node
- Food trucks service nearby offices
- Food learning and living lab
- Community gardens
- Partnership with neighboring schools
- Educational greenhouses
- Informal/wild green infrastructure

Garden & Learning Lab
Quiet, lush and green, prioritizing community partnerships.

NEIGHBORHOOD GARDEN
GREEN SNUGS
SCHOOL & COMMUNITY LEARNING LAB
SOUTHERN GATEWAY
Play & Recreation
Communal activity zones, prioritizing open, inclusive recreation

Key Ingredients
- Mixed recreation, play, and sports
- Designed with sports equipment and courts
- Open space for community gathering
- Meet, greet, and play

COMMUNITY DECK
ADRENALINE POCKETS
LOUNGE GARDEN
MULTI-PURPOSE REC COURT
Retail Porch
Local market square
Pop-up Commercial Street

Key Ingredients:
- Mini-retail/market opportunities
- Shared space street/plaza
- Connects to residential front porches
- Crossover corner at Muhammad Ali Blvd
- Retail and food trucks
- Formal pathways and staying area
- Create edge against parking area

CREATIVE CANOPIES
MICRO-PODS
FLEXIBLE MARKET SPACE
SHARED PLAZA
DOWNTOWN ART LINK

Key Ingredients
- Connect to existing city fabric
- Shaded hardscape design
- Formal green infrastructure
- Art integrated into street

Downtown Art Link
Comfortable micro-climates, urban walkway punctuated with street art.

BOLD SURFACE
ART INSTALLATIONS
URBAN STREET
GENEROUS SIDEWALKS
Waterfront Connection
Comfortable and legible connection to the waterfront

Key Ingredients
- Connection through to River Road.
- Urban design on Main St maintained, extended to 10th St.
- Intersection nodes at Market and Main
- Pleasant urban design along connecting streets
- Indicate node at Main and 10th and 8th
- Informal/wild green infrastructure
- Frame views towards Ohio River
- Use waterfront park design language
- Exposed water run-off

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9th Street Concept Plan
Piloting Change

Pilot — a communication project with an infrastructure component
Testing Strategies through Pilot Projects

A series of temporary pilot projects, carried out in an iterative process, can generate buzz and begin to set the groundwork for a balanced street that provides space for people while testing optionality.
Early Activation
Key areas to test now through light weight pilot projects.

**The Knot**
Coming Soon! Temporary Public Art/lighting enhancement. Includes use of Public Parking lot on South Side of Main

**Waterway Cycle-track**
Bollard protected two-way bike path that connects 9th street to the waterfront.

**9th Street Crossings**
Improve the pedestrian experience at the intersections by shortening the crossing distance and waiting time—it should feel like the pedestrian journey continues without interruption. Clear striping.

**Level the Berm**
Pilot removal of the berm. Program this space as a great front porch for the street. Partner with adjacent residents and Central High School to create a responsive program

**Access to the waterfront**
Make access to the water really clear and inviting: lighting, creative canopies, art and programming to help make this a magnet

**No Slip Zone**
Test closing the slip lane off the on-ramp and slip lane at Market Street. Combine with bold crossway for people and longer traffic signal. Measure impact on traffic, but also people crossing.

**9 for 9 Weekend Market**
Start testing and establishing 9th Street as a destination. Begin with a weekend market fair where locals can exhibit and sell their products, restaurants can set up food kiosks, and where visitors can experience a new 9th street experience—one outside their cars! Potential brand the event on 9 summer weekends.

**9th Street Shortcuts**
Formalize midblock crossings, making both halves of 9th Street more seamlessly connected with safe, fun, and intuitive and mid-block crossings
Moving forward
Material palette for early activation projects
PEOPLE-FIRST INFRASTRUCTURE

Create a safe network for people to move around in, whether walking or cycling along the street, or crossing at intersections. Focus on inviting the most vulnerable users — children and elderly — to use the streets, and everyone else will follow.

Existing Conditions

- Intersections are unsafe due to a lack of clear demarcations.
- The distance between marked intersections is too long for convenience.
- The levels of comfort - seating, lighting, shade - are extremely low.

Protected Bike lanes

Bike lanes can be implemented on a temporary basis while a more permanent design is under preparation. This should be used to generate support in the project’s early stages while testing the best routes.

Midblock Crossings

Midblock crossings improve the pedestrian circulation by adding connections across long blocks in order to reduce travel time and convenience.

Crosswalk Improvements

Crosswalks can be enhanced by using paint on the ground, and by creating corner extensions that slow the traffic and limit the distance from one side to the other.

Nighttime Lighting

A grove or median of trees can be lit artistically, creating both a sense of safety for passersby and an experience.

Existing Conditions

- Intersections are unsafe due to a lack of clear demarcations.
- The distance between marked intersections is too long for convenience.
- The levels of comfort - seating, lighting, shade - are extremely low.
**Markets** are a great way for communities to come together around locally produced food and goods. Markets typically attract a wide variety of people.

**Event & Market Days**
Markets are a great way for communities to come together around locally produced food and goods. Markets typically attract a wide variety of people.

**Micro Retail**
Micro retail centers are a great way to provide community amenities in walking and cycling distance from residential neighborhoods.

**Partnerships**
Partnering with neighborhood schools, community centers, and private local stakeholders creates a sustainable foundation for organizing activities.

**Healthy Community**
Organizing activities relating to health, like urban gardening and sports events, can bring children and families together.

**Existing Conditions**
- Very few planned activities take place along 9th Street.
- 83% of the street edges are inactive or vacant, which create a boring experience.
- Children and young adults hang out on vacant parking lots and in Beecher Park.

**Gehl 9th Street Concept Plan**
A LINEAR EXPERIENCE

Make the most of the underused linear spaces along 9th Street, like the berm and the median. These spaces can provide experiences unique from typical square public spaces and keep inspiring passersby sense of curiosity and imagination.

Creative Canopies
Whether walking along or spending time in linear spaces, proper shade is necessary to secure a minimum level of comfort, especially in hot climates.

Play Along the Way
An excess of linear space can be used to integrate fun and recreational activities into a streetscape, like urban bowling, running tracks, or an obstacle course. We call this play along the way.

Existing Conditions
- Long stretches without places to stay
- Exposure to the elements, and traffic

Lush and Green
Green and rain gardens can be planted along streets with the help of the community and schools to provide a more comfortable micro-climate and calm traffic.
To create a successful public space in an otherwise inactive area requires some elements of interest. These can be static and low-maintenance.

Though public spaces are typically used less at night, it is important that they stay inviting through the evening, signaling safety for passersby and extending potential leisure and recreational hours.

Engaging Pockets

Social Seating

Seating should be integrated regularly along any linear stretch, whether used functionally or playfully. This will invite more vulnerable users, like the elderly and families, while inspiring a sense of curiosity.

Existing Conditions

- There is an abundance of open space, but most of it is assigned for cars.
- The few public spaces have a low quality of urban furniture and few invitations.
- The variety of activities to partake in is extremely limited.

More than Lighting

Though public spaces are typically used less at night, it is important that they stay inviting through the evening, signaling safety for passersby and extending potential leisure and recreational hours.
Moving Forward

Prioritizing next step: where to start
Low Fidelity Pilot: Starting Now

Improving connections and walkability begins with safety.

Piloting change on 9th Street should begin with 3 key, low fidelity, low cost, safety projects in 2018.


2. Lengthen pedestrian lead-time at signals.

3. Improve the ambiance of the street with median tree up-lighting. This can also work to slow traffic down and improve visibility along the corridor.

Bulb-outs and clearly painted crossings along the corridor at each intersection should be a prioritized first step. Consider bolder graphics and colors as well as planters and bollards to slow motorists while giving pedestrians a shorter distance to cross.

Lighting the trees in the median will create a strong and inviting visual impact.
Bolstering invitations to stay with a transformational pilot

The berm, which runs from Muhammad Ali to Broadway along the western edge of 9th Street, should be leveled and made into a community asset. Prioritize activating the section between Ali and Chestnut where there is concentrated activity today. Focus on playful elements which do not rely on heavy programming and coordinating. Instead, look to furnishing this space with linear play elements and places to relax: emphasizing comfortable microclimates (shade, lighting, protection from traffic noise). It will be essential to include adjacent residents and community leaders in the process early and often to help co-create, and to identify a partnering organization with stewardship capacity.

Work to grade and level the length of the berm, while prioritizing the section nearest Muhammad Ali Blvd (in dark blue) for activation.

Play along the way. Rely less on heavy programming, but rather set the table for residents to plug in and play, relax. KaBOOM’s Play Everywhere Challenge provides a strong template for low cost, high impact linear play in “en route” public spaces (such as bus stops, sidewalks, etc).
Early Activation: Small Steps Towards Big Change

With new residential development coming to 9th Street, the corridor is primed to begin testing a series of low-cost, high-impact pilot projects that can be experienced, measured, evaluated, and refined by the City, residents, and local partners and champions.

Improving pedestrian safety is the first step — clear crossings, generous signal timing for people, and bump-outs to shorten walking distances.

Next, leveling and replacing the berm with a linear park space will invite stakeholders and users to see, test, and experience 9th Street in new ways. Helping to redefine the street not just as an efficient traffic corridor, but a viable neighborhood place for people to spend time and connect.

Finally, by making people a part of the pilot project process early and often, Louisville can start to build excitement and local ownership around these improvements, creating a case for longer-term interventions.
Gehl is a people first design consultancy. We work with clients to create mutually beneficial relationships between people’s quality of life and their built environment.

We are Urban Planners, Designers, Architects, Landscape Architects, Sociologists, and Real Estate Professionals.

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In Partnership with

EHI, HDR, and NeelSchaffer