

DNW DW

Downtown North / Downtown West
A Plan for the City of Hartford

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Project Vision

To harness the full potential of Downtown North and Downtown West by creating a seamless environment.

Project Overview

This plan creates a framework that is founded on implementable projects, and builds a vision for long-term development. It builds upon past planning efforts for the area, and takes a fresh look by responding to changing economic conditions.

The plan, funded by a Department of Housing and Urban Development Sustainable Communities Grant, includes the following:

- Existing Conditions Study: The team conducted a thorough analysis of the existing conditions of the study area. This informed our planning approaches and decisions.
- Market Analysis: An analysis of the housing and retail markets has informed the development potential for the area. This information has been used to program design solutions and direct the appropriate uses for the study area.
- Urban Design Framework: A broad approach that assesses the whole of the study area and how it relates to its context has set the structure of bigger urban design moves, such as street alignments or new streets, open space networks, determining focus areas for development, etc.

- Recommendations and Implementation Plan: The final designs and development scenarios reflect a synthesis of market demand and a mix of public and private investments. A phased approach to the overall set of recommendations will be necessary.
- Design Guidelines and Zoning: Coordinated with the in-progress rewriting of the City of Hartford zoning, a new set of design guidelines for the City-owned parcels in Downtown North has been developed.

This document comprehensively looks at

- ① the vision for the project and the previous studies
- ② the physical evolution of the study area,
- ③ the on-the-ground character of the study area,
- ④ the condition of the existing transportation network,
- ⑤ the state of existing parcels to help inform a planning strategy,
- ⑥ five development scenarios and associated transportation improvements that form unique districts,
- ⑦ additional transportation improvements,
- ⑧ open space planning and landscape design for the study area and

- ⑨ design guidelines for City-owned parcels

This report provides a strategic approach to planning for Downtown North and Downtown West. It will also present a clearer framework for marketing the district for future development and informing requests for development proposals.

This plan creates a framework based on implementable projects, and builds a vision for long-term development.

Vision for Hartford

To harness the full potential of Downtown Hartford by creating a seamless built environment that balances pragmatism and vision.

The regeneration of Downtown North/ Downtown West (DN/DW) will require strategy, foresight, and opportunistic planning. The two areas differ in their scale, density, activity, and use. Downtown North is characterized by large underutilized parcels, non-contextual single-use buildings, and small but valuable remnants of the old neighborhood. Downtown West is a more lively urban environment offering the daily amenities one looks for in a city; however, it remains piecemeal at certain locations and is often pockmarked by surface parking lots.

These different conditions require unique approaches to each area. The consultant team used parcel testing for Downtown West sites to determine the development capacity. Downtown North requires a longer term strategy; with the City we developed criteria that helped us select the most opportune development sites for further testing. A phasing plan will prioritize the study area's development sites.

In addition to development sites there should be a concurrent focus on connectivity, streetscape and pedestrian conditions, and access to open space. The roads in Downtown North are generally over-scaled and should partially be geared to pedestrian movement rather than solely vehicular. There is a dearth of open space in the majority of the study area; however, Riverside Park, immediately across the interstate, is a major citywide asset. Access to the riverfront park is a priority for this planning study.

Ultimately, beyond establishing development priorities, the goal of the plan is to set a template for the growth of a neighborhood in Downtown North and to “fill in the gaps” in Downtown West. This long-term process can have the effect of breaching the physical divide between Downtown Hartford and the adjacent neighborhoods, as well as making Downtown Hartford a desirable place to live and visit.



Sizeable vacant lots provide opportunities for large-scale development. Sites that abut I-91 should explore ways to connect to Riverside Park and the Connecticut River

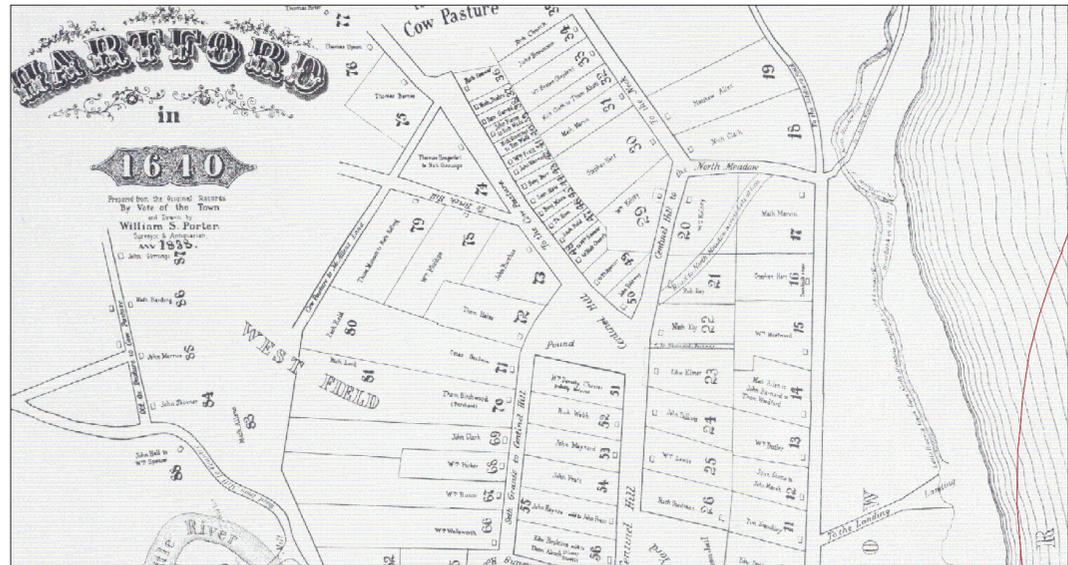


Riverside Park is a major citywide asset, but remains somewhat inaccessible from the rest of the study area.

Study Area Evolution

Traces of the old neighborhood remain, as does the hope that a new neighborhood will emerge.

The area north of I-84 has witnessed substantive change over the last 50 plus years, suffering the wholesale demolition of much of the neighborhood in the 1960s. What was once a largely residential neighborhood adjacent to heavy rail infrastructure, was cleared for larger-scale commercial development. The neighborhood to the west of Main Street witnessed a more piecemeal deterioration, with an urban landscape that reveals gaps in



1640 Map of Hartford, CT

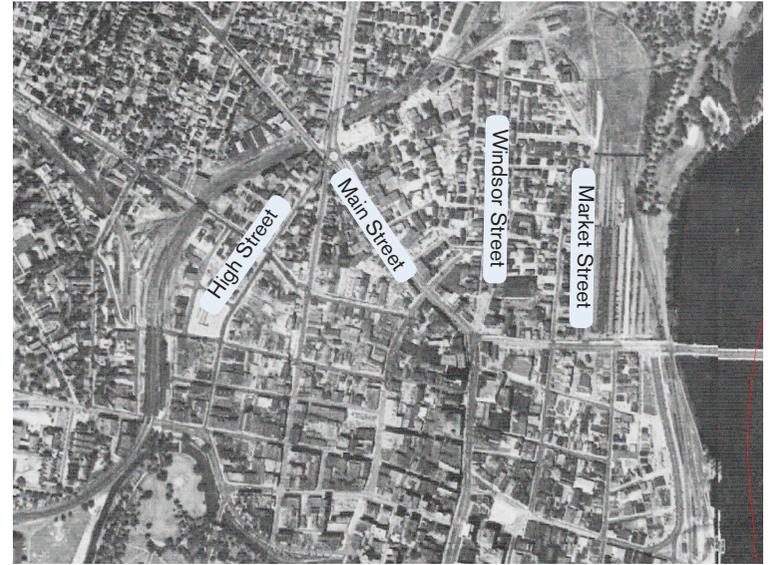
its continuity. However, it is witnessing new investment and prioritizing preservation of its historical assets.

Downtown West's transformation over the same period of time is less dramatic, as it has retained much of its historic structure and many of its buildings. Some have been replaced by commercial office buildings or event spaces, such as the XL Center, and surface parking lots that scatter the area remain an obstacle to the area evolving into a true neighborhood.

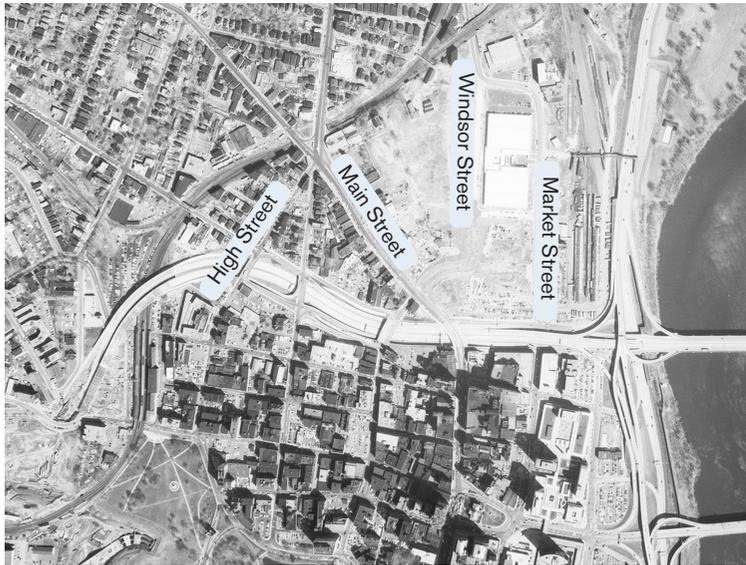
A 1640 map of the City of Hartford shows the primary structure of a street network that still holds true today. Albany Avenue/Main Street, High Street, and Windsor Street served as paths to the city center. Observing the street network today shows that Main Street still forms the backbone of the study area and is the primary connection to downtown. High Street, also represented on the 1640 map, will become an increasingly important connection as the primary pedestrian route to an evolving Union Station.



1880 Sanborn Map



1934 Aerial Photo



1960's Aerial Photo



2008 Aerial Photo

Previous Studies

Building upon Hartford's Plans

Few plans are born without precedence. They are almost always an effort to build upon prior studies that served as a solid stepping stone, or else they provide a fresh view to something that has lost its relevance due to changing economic conditions or approaches to urban planning.

A broad range of studies have been done for Downtown Hartford, but there are a few with particular relevance to Downtown North and Downtown West. These studies are both foundational for this master plan and, in some cases, in need of reexamination. They provide directives ranging from future land use assumptions to targeting areas and buildings that are well suited for redevelopment to creating a public realm plan and cognitive map of how to navigate Downtown Hartford to best take advantage of its assets.

Understanding these plans, why they were needed, and where they should be taken will help inform our planning decisions, so as not to contradict universally accepted recommendations and to avoid commonly agreed upon mistakes.

Downtown West Opportunities Plan

The purpose of the plan, commissioned in 2006, was to guide public and private investment by identifying areas in Downtown West that are well suited for redevelopment. Many of these areas or properties are still relevant with respect to their development potential and were further explored during this planning process. The plan focused on six components

- Development Anchors
- Cultural and Entertainment Assets
- Development Challenges / Opportunities
- Potential Sites for a Parking Garage
- Office / Mixed Use Opportunities
- Housing Opportunities

A reexamination of this document informed our assumptions about the state of certain properties in Downtown West.

Downtown Circulation Study

The 2010 Downtown Circulation Study was a comprehensive plan to understand Hartford's current circulation patterns, demands, and needs.

Projects were identified that resolve some of the major issues for downtown, as well as work with the One City, One Plan Comprehensive Plan for Hartford. They are

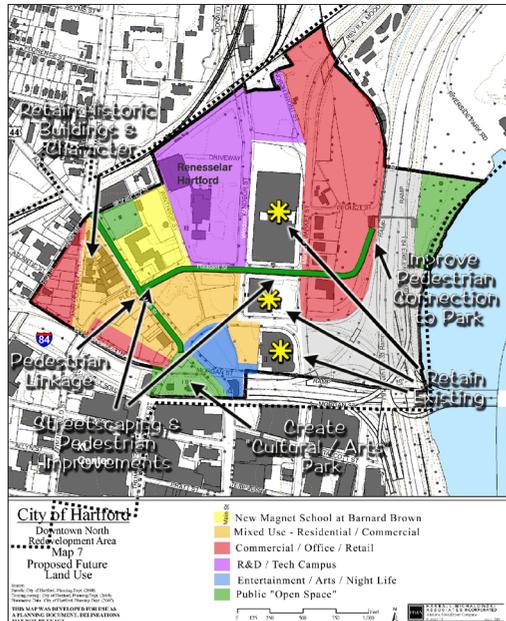
1. Asylum Street Improvements
2. North Chapel/Walnut Street
3. Columbus Blvd/Market Street
4. Market Street and Morgan Street

The projects were largely concerned with the conversion of one-ways to two-ways, as well as intersection redesign for improved traffic mobility at peak-periods.

Downtown North

The Downtown North project from 2008 provided a platform from which this master plan evolved. Its purpose was to “remove obsolete and blighted buildings from a critical perimeter area of the Downtown, conduct site assemblage, and create a development opportunity for mixed-use development, rehabilitation of historic structures, and educational and commercial development that will strengthen the development patterns of the Project Area”.

This current plan takes into consideration the findings and observations made by the Downtown North plan and take this



Land Use Plan from the 2008 Downtown North plan approach to a greater level of detail and a larger expanse of area.

The Downtown North plan identified five discrete areas with unique characteristics. They were

- ❶ The Ann Street Historic Corridor;
- ❷ Trumbull Street Village;

- ❸ Downtown North Technology Campus;
- ❹ Market Street Service Corridor; and
- ❺ the New Magnet School at Barnard-Brown.

The assessment of these areas and their characteristics were considered in the master planning process, but adherence to them was not requisite, as development conditions have changed and City priorities have shifted. Nonetheless, this document proved to be an instructive guide to the conditions of Downtown North and Downtown West.

iQuilt

In 2008 the iQuilt planning process began, born out of the recognition that while Hartford is fortunate to have a wealth of cultural assets, the links between those assets are often broken, disparate, and unapparent.

The iQuilt Plan is summarized as “Downtown Hartford’s exciting urban design strategy for walkability and creative placemaking. It capitalizes on two of Hartford’s greatest strengths: its extraordinary concentration of arts, cultural, and landscape assets and its

exceptionally compact downtown.” The plan is by most measures focused on signage, wayfinding, and placemaking strategies for Downtown Hartford - primarily projects in the public realm of varying scales and time frames.

The centerpiece of the iQuilt is the Greenwalk Master Plan. This is a landscape and public realm strategy and design concept that proposes a strong linear “green” connection from the Connecticut River to Bushnell Park, linking the City’s two greatest open space assets and providing a much needed east-west connection across downtown. The new Greenwalk will also be located so as to be no more than a 5-minute walk from many of Hartford’s treasured cultural assets. The plan becomes manifold; it is a way to connect open spaces, provide wayfinding, and encourage tourist and residents alike to visit Hartford’s valued cultural destinations.



I-91
North

Downtown North

Connecticut River

I-84
East

Downtown West

I-84
West

State House

I-91
South

Bushnell Park

Study Area Character

By bearing both the traces of its historical structure and the scars of urban renewal planning, the study area also reveals the potential for change.

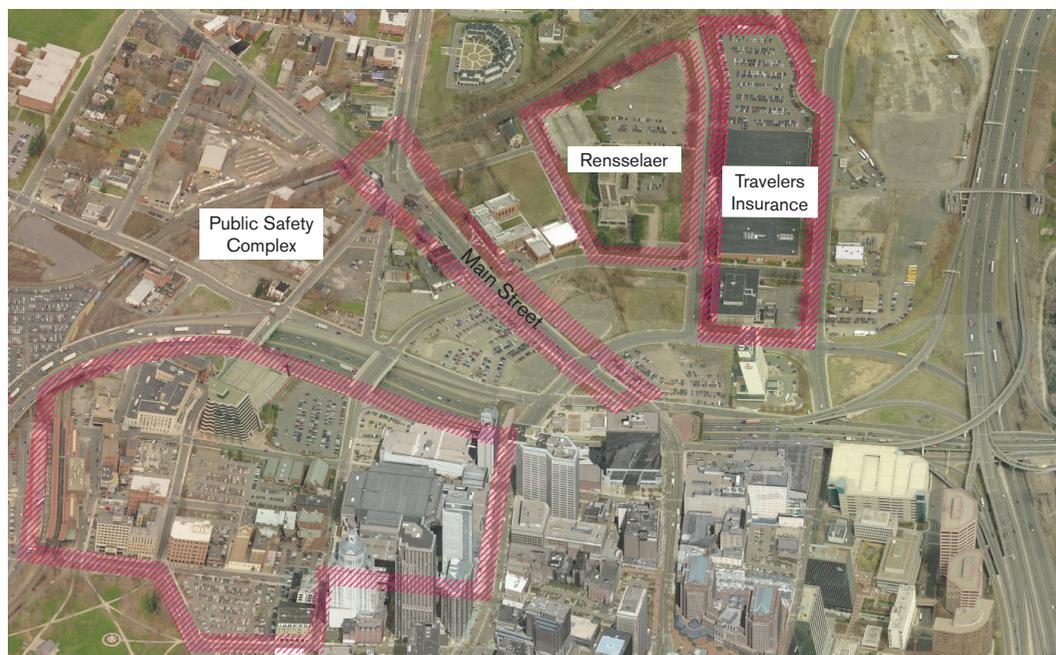
Study Area Character

The greatest challenges, and opportunities, of the study area lie in the regeneration of underutilized sites.

The clearance of the Downtown North in the 1960s removed a fine-grained urban street network that was a mix of residential uses and local retail, and replaced it with

monolithic buildings, such as the Travelers Insurance building and the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and surface parking lots. East of Main Street only a handful of buildings exist. The area is a collection of vacant or underutilized lots and surface parking. Along Main Street is collection of neighborhood retail buildings. The most significant new structure and investment in the area is the Public Safety Complex.

In contrast, Downtown West is a collection of turn-of-the-century commercial and residential buildings; however, it also is not immune from an ample collection of surface parking lots. Downtown West includes Union Station and the XL Center, two major landmarks in the city that draw visitors, as well as a collection of bars, restaurants, and institutional buildings, clustered south of I-84.



Pedestrian bridge over I-91: The only access in the study area to Riverside Park is via the imposing and isolated pedestrian bridge. Additional access points to the waterfront are needed, as well as improvements to the pedestrian overpass.

This aerial shows the extents of the study area, which is partly characterized by underutilized parcels, surface parking lots north of I-84, and a more active urban environment in the Downtown West area.



The photos demonstrate the varied character of the study area, ranging from neighborhood retail along Main Street to a bucolic Riverfront Park.

Roads

The majority of the streets in Downtown North that are north of I-84 tend to be oversized or poorly utilized. Many of them are built for a higher traffic volume than is present, such as Market Street and Pleasant Street. These are streets that could be narrowed to accommodate wider sidewalks, bike lanes, or on-street parking where necessary.

The streets south of I-84 in Downtown West tend to be more urban in nature with on-street parking, narrower lanes, shorter pedestrian crossing distances, and more intersections at which to cross.

Specific problem areas include

- ❶ Market Street: Despite being only four lanes, the street feels expansive and underused.
- ❷ Intersection at Main Street and Albany Avenue: The intersection is intimidating to pedestrians and confusing to drivers.
- ❸ Highway crossings: Bridge crossings and highway underpasses should be improved to draw people comfortably from Downtown North to Downtown West.
- ❹ Scale of streets: As future development is built, the streets should be redesigned to Complete Streets standards.



Market Street: Lined by parking lots, scattered uses, and the Travelers Insurance building is a high speed corridor that should be evaluated in the planning process.



Intersection at Albany Avenue and Main Street: Main Street is an important commercial node for the area, but it fails to offer a walkable environment for people in the neighborhood.

Parcels

The greatest challenge for the study area is also the best opportunity for change. The number of vacant or underutilized parcels in both Downtown North and Downtown West, many of which are City-owned parcels, present strategic development sites for infill development and may be a way to spur development on a district scale.

An incremental approach to parcel redevelopment is more appropriate for Downtown West, while parts of Downtown North along Market Street present a chance for large-scale redevelopment.



Public Ownership
City-owned property, such as the parcels at Main Street, Trumbull Street, and Pleasant Street (totaling 8.3 acres) are well suited for redevelopment. Their adjacency to the downtown core can help bridge the gap between the two areas.



The underutilized parcels between Market Street and I-91 present opportunities for large-scale redevelopment

Key Buildings

The buildings in study area vary greatly by their use, size, context and engagement with the city. Different areas within the project boundary have distinct building character and uses.

Areas to the east of Main Street in Downtown North have larger, often monolithic, single-use buildings, such as the Travelers Insurance building, and the Rensselaer campus building. They tend to be removed from the street edge and any urban context. Generally, they are surrounded by surface parking lots or an apron of landscaping.

Main Street still retains some of the original three-story commercial and residential structures. This neighborhood scale should be built upon for future development. The new Public Safety Complex on High Street is the first step toward changing the character of that area.

Downtown West has a substantive amount of historic, mixed-use building types. This scale of density and its relationship to the city should be preserved and built upon in this area.



Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's Hartford campus is surrounded by a landscaped lawn and surface parking lots to the rear of the building.



The buildings along Main Street are remnants of the original neighborhood prior to urban renewal and should be preserved and built upon in future plans.



The new Public Safety Complex along High Street shows a commitment by the City to spur development in this area.



The vacant building at the intersection of Market Street and Trumbull Street is a barrier to creating east-west development continuity.



The Travelers Building, which stretches multiple city blocks, is an impediment to creating strong east-west connections and is a difficult presence on Market Street.

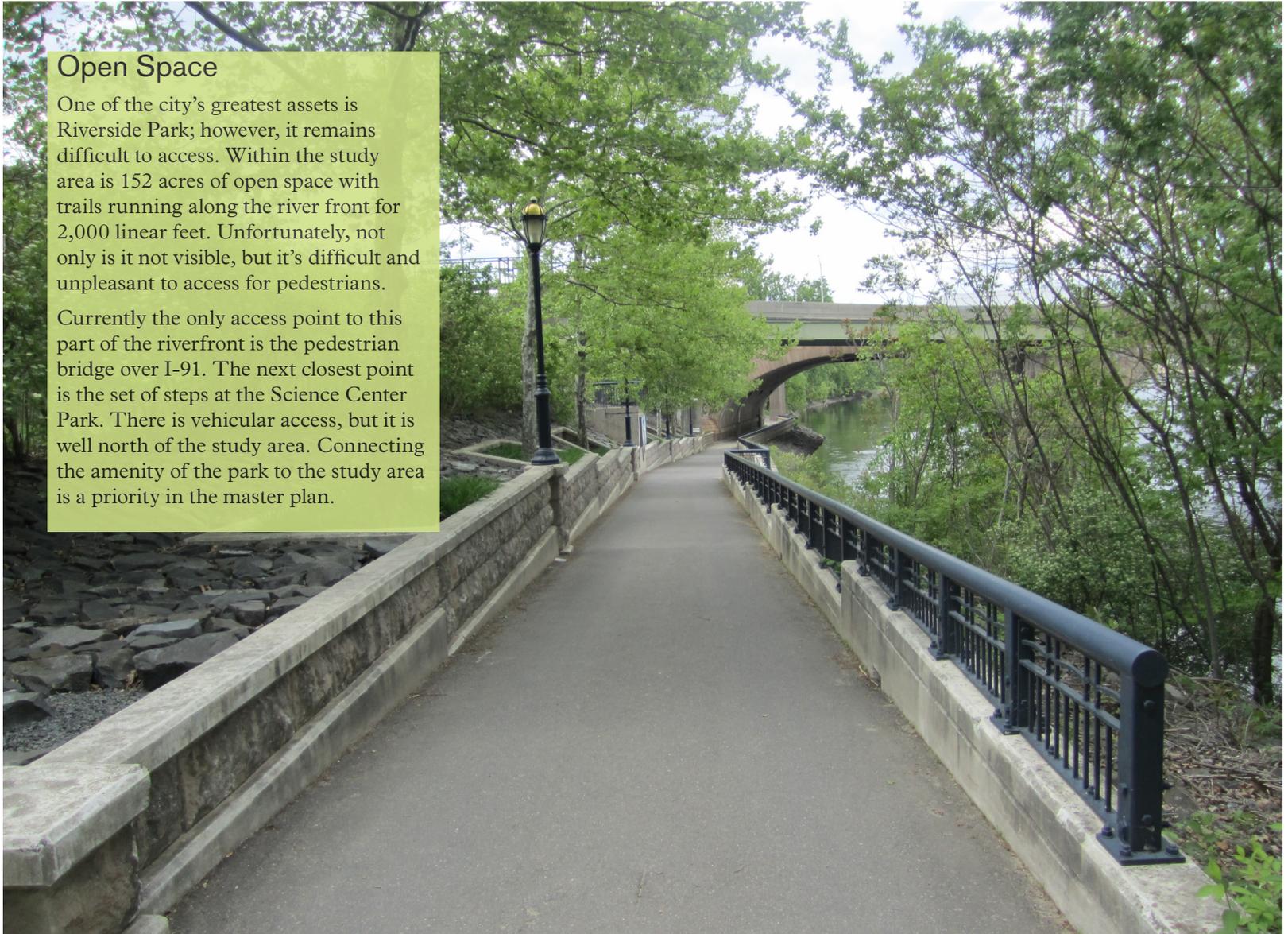


Union Station is a major hub for the city expansion plans, including the new busway project, will make it a significant part of the redevelopment of Downtown West.

Open Space

One of the city's greatest assets is Riverside Park; however, it remains difficult to access. Within the study area is 152 acres of open space with trails running along the river front for 2,000 linear feet. Unfortunately, not only is it not visible, but it's difficult and unpleasant to access for pedestrians.

Currently the only access point to this part of the riverfront is the pedestrian bridge over I-91. The next closest point is the set of steps at the Science Center Park. There is vehicular access, but it is well north of the study area. Connecting the amenity of the park to the study area is a priority in the master plan.



Neighborhood Connectivity

Concerns were raised in the Steering Committee meeting about neighborhood connectivity. Landscape will play a role in enhancing connectivity by providing visual sequences along the streets and potentially in the rebuilding of some of the overpasses over I-84, which are scheduled for redesign. Married to the ideas of landscape connectivity will be the role that open space will play in the future development of NP.

Recommendations for Further Study

- Based on market research, develop a palette of desired landscape types
- Begin research and coordination on the I-84 initiative

Develop a district landscape strategy that will tie into initiatives underway. Such initiatives could include the Upper Albany CSO (Combined Sewer Overflow) separation or the I-84 renewal project and/or other Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) projects.

Riverside Park

The park offers something unique in a northeastern city with its bucolic views and sweeping vistas of the Connecticut River and its adjacency to Downtown Hartford. It offers amenities like a boat launch and a river walk, as well as impressive groves of trees.

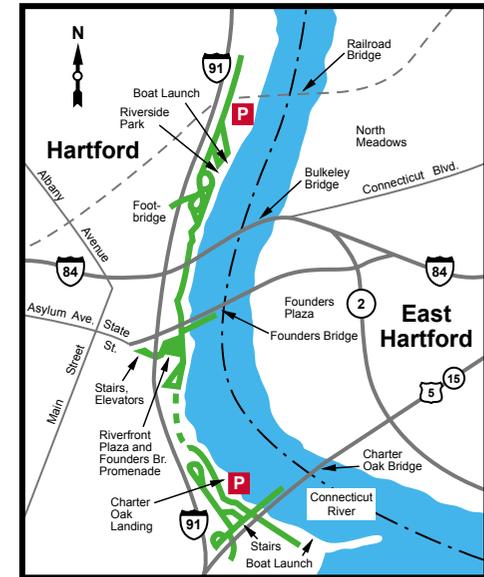
Access is a primary issue if Riverside Park is to be an amenity to the Downtown. There is one vehicular access point which is far north of the study area itself. The two other access points are the Downtown amphitheater connected by the Mortenson Riverfront Plaza and the pedestrian footbridge over I-91 at Pequot Street. Neither of these two points offers easy bike circulation because of steep grades and the presence of steps.

Access to the park for recreation and bike commuting should be a priority of the plan. Efforts by Riverfront Recapture (<http://www.riverfront.org/>) outline the current bike trail configuration.

Recommendations for Further Study:

- Look at a topographic solution/amenity to retrofitting the footbridge for access to the river
- Consider a new pedestrian/bike connections at I-84 crossing
- Program river path for a more pleasant connection
- Work with Riverfront Recapture for more information gathering and coordination

HARTFORD RIVERFRONT RECAPTURE





Green Infrastructure Opportunities

The MDC manages the water and sewer issues that are currently being monitored. Several actions and projects are relevant to the DN/DW work, such as the North Meadows CSO overflow basin north of Riverside Park. The other significant action is the separation of the CSO in Upper Albany northwest of the study area.

Future developments in DN/DW will have to manage stormwater in a way as to not impact current efforts and limits on discharges. Standard baseline issues such as highway runoff/air contamination are prevalent and should be part of a sustainable approach.

Recommendations for Further Study:

- Consider how an intervention at the highway overpass could perform as green infrastructure (e.g. stormwater management, as well a particulate knockdown from car emissions next to the highway).
- Further exploration of the North Meadows detention pond connections and opportunities
- Investigate related MDC projects and their relationship to the project site
- Investigate CSO/SWO existing and proposed locations and understand the potential/opportunities for natural stormwater attenuation interventions.

What is Combined Sewer Overflow? Combined sewer systems are sewers that are designed to collect rainwater runoff, domestic sewage, and industrial wastewater in the same pipe. Most of the time, combined sewer systems transport all of their wastewater to a sewage treatment plant, where it is treated and then discharged to a water body. During periods of heavy rainfall or snowmelt, however, the wastewater volume in a combined sewer system can exceed the capacity of the sewer system or treatment plant. Such systems can overflow occasionally and discharge excess wastewater directly to nearby streams, rivers, or other water bodies.

These overflows, called combined sewer overflows (CSOs), contain not only stormwater but also untreated human and industrial waste, toxic materials, and debris. They are a major water pollution concern for the approximately 772 cities in the U.S. that have combined sewer systems.*

*http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/home.cfm?program_id=5



Transportation Network

An improved street network—one that offers a seamless transition across the interstate—is necessary for the successful redevelopment of Downtown North/Downtown West.

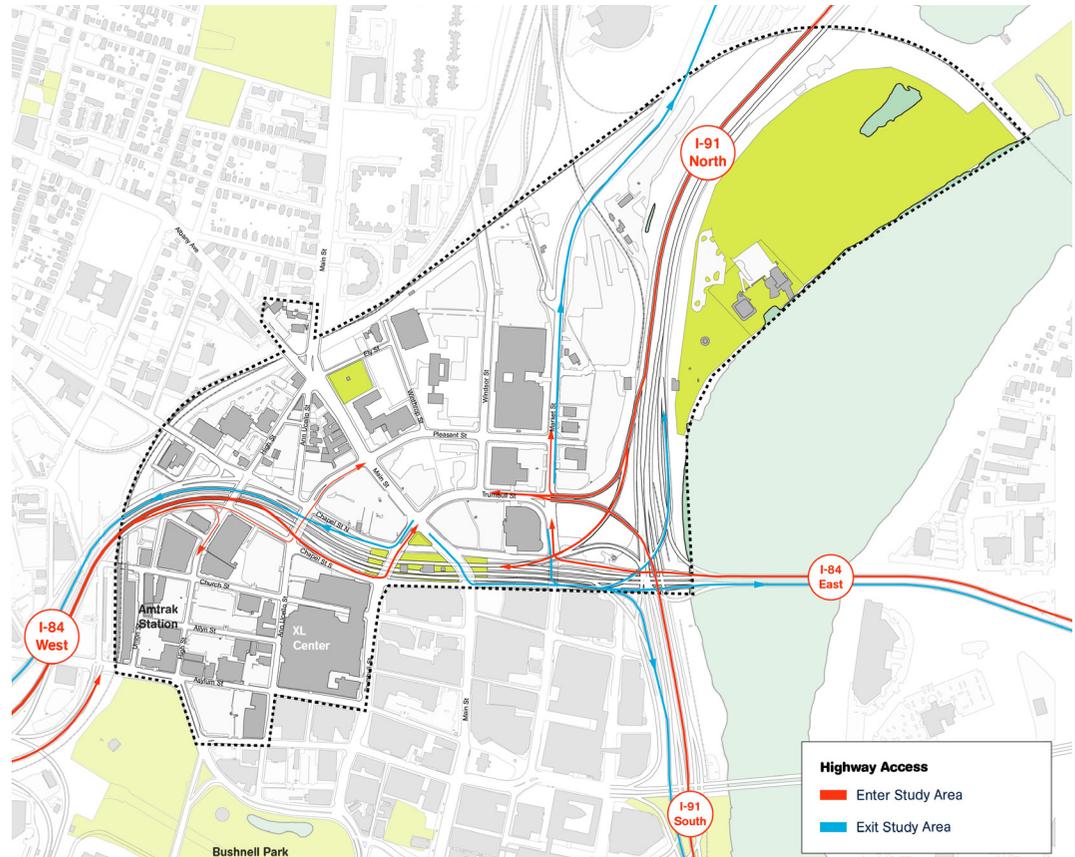
Transportation Network

Downtown North is easily accessible, yet its streets offer little to draw people. Improving streets is paramount.

Highway Access

Historically, the interstates have disrupted physical urban continuity of the City of Hartford. The study area was originally severed from the Connecticut River with the construction of I-91, and later the downtown was divided half with the addition of I-84. Despite the negative effects of the interstates, they have become crucial in providing access to and through the City of Hartford.

Our study area is fortunate to have immediate highway access as it sits at the intersection of the two major interstates. This should be considered a locational advantage for certain uses, such as large-scale retail or office. However, residential uses may need to be buffered between the interstate and alternative uses.



The diagram illustrates the access (both entering and exiting) to the city from the interstate system.

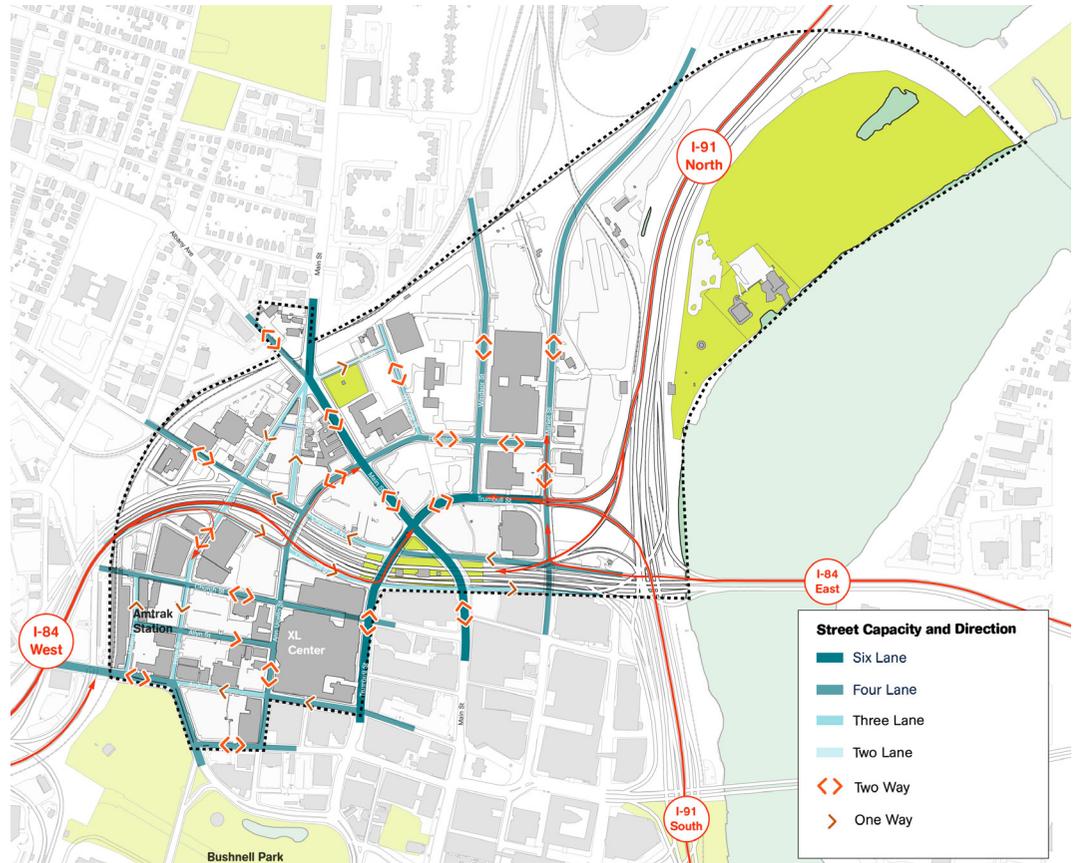
Street Capacity

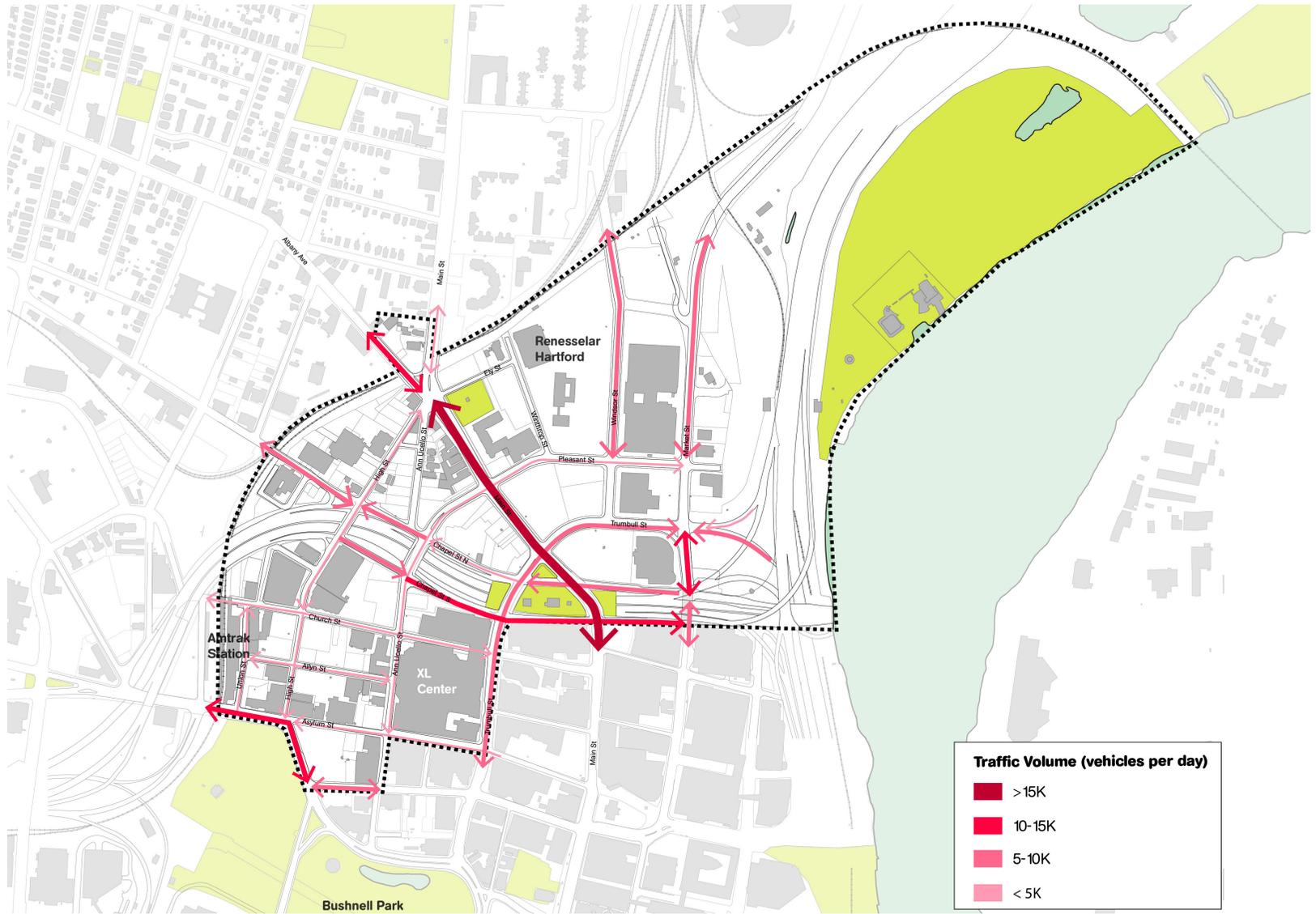
Many of the streets in the study area are oversized for the level of traffic that they carry, in particular streets such as Market, Pleasant, and Trumbull. These oversized streets have the potential to be retrofitted to either shrink the curb-to-curb distance by widening sidewalks or by implementing bike lanes or on-street parking where possible.

Most streets are two-way with the exception of the highway access roads, High Street, and Asylum Street in Downtown West. The difficulty of circulation lies less in the presence of one-way streets and more due to the condition of “superblocks” in Downtown North.



Market Street provides direct access to the study area. The 2010 Downtown Circulation study proposed alternatives to alleviate the congestion at the Market Street and Morgan Street intersection.





Traffic Volume

Traffic volume in the study area is moderately heavy; the majority of that traffic is limited to a few select streets, largely Main Street (the primary north-south connection) and the highway access roads (N. Chapel and S. Chapel streets).

Connecticut Department of Transportation (CT DOT) 2012 Average Daily Traffic (ADT) counts reveal that the highest traffic volume is on Main Street between Morgan and Pleasant streets where an average of 17,000 vehicles travel per day. Additional streets that have high traffic volumes include

- ① Asylum Street (15,200 ADT),
- ② Morgan Street South (13,000 ADT),
- ③ Ford Street (12,800 ADT), and
- ④ Market Street (11,300 ADT).

Some of the assumptions and general observations of the existing conditions reveal that:

- Main Street carries the highest traffic volume in the study area. At six lanes wide, it also has the most travel lanes.
- Despite their size, some of the larger roads actually carry a relatively small number of vehicles per day,

supporting the assumption that some of these roads are overbuilt and could go on a road diet.

- There is a heavy volume of traffic at Market Street and Morgan Street. Previous recommendations from the Downtown Circulation study have identified this as a priority project.

Sidewalk Condition

The sidewalks in the study area vary greatly. Most sidewalks lack street tree presence; they are often undersized and in poor condition.

- The smaller scale streets in Downtown West often have wider sidewalks to accommodate a higher number of pedestrians.
- The small sidewalks in the area east of Main Street reflect a lack of prioritization for pedestrian activity. Their small scale combined with a lack of destinations are a deterrent to pedestrians.
- Main Street has wide sidewalks; however, it is not an active pedestrian street per se. The exception to this is the area near Albany Avenue.



Main Street has broad sidewalks, but no street tree coverage. The sidewalks are often broken or in poor condition.



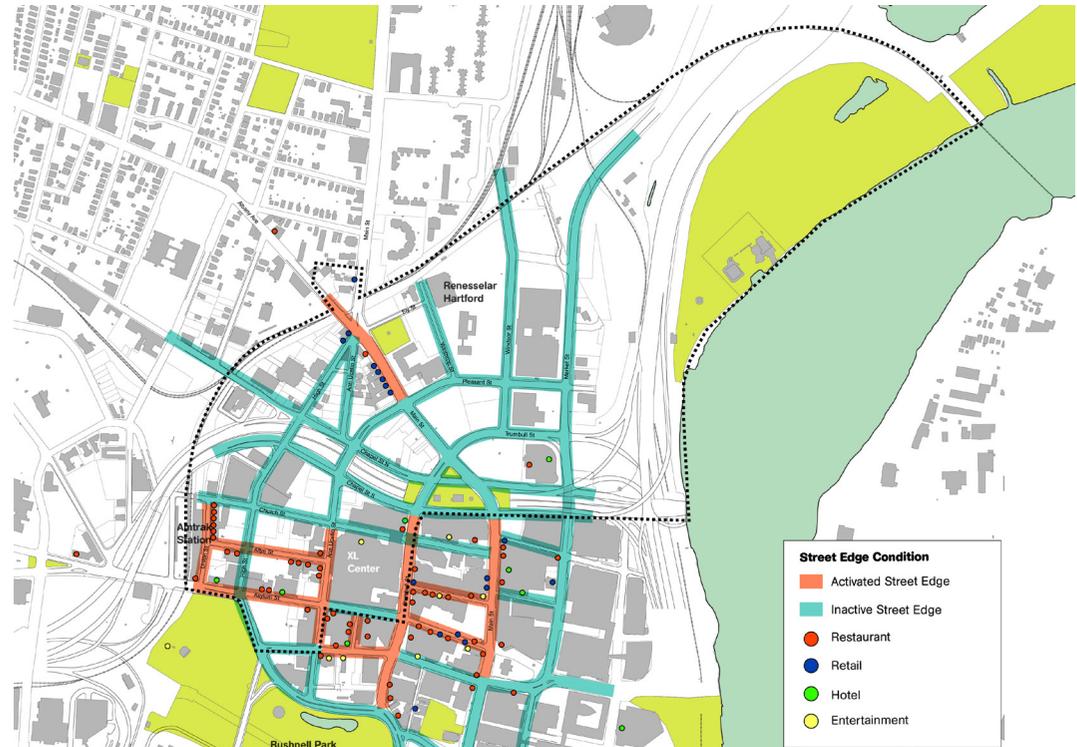
Market Street's sidewalks are narrow with a consistent tree lawn. They are more suburban in character.

Street Activity

Street activity has the ability to change one’s perception of a place. Buildings that address the street and draw in the pedestrian with visual variety are immediately more engaging than those that lack a relationship with the street. Such environments fail to become destinations for residents and visitors.

The character of the streets in the study area vary greatly. Many of the streets in Downtown North function primarily as through streets, lacking any streetfront presence, and are generally void of an active street edge. This is largely the result of the presence of I-84 and the renewal of the area decades ago that removed, but never replaced the urban fabric. The only street that maintains a neighborhood character is Main Street, between Pleasant Street and Albany Avenue, which has a series of local retailers, and the Capital Preparatory Magnet School.

The majority of the activity along the streets in the study area occurs in Downtown West, particularly during the evening. The scale and concentration of uses along these streets inherently makes them more appealing.



The diagram shows the disparity of active uses between Downtown West and the rest of the study area.

Asylum Street (pictured at right) in Downtown West has unique local shops and restaurants that create a lively street.



BARTFORD ROOM
& LOUNGE

BAR

ONE WAY

RESTAURANT
LOUNGE

COMING SOON

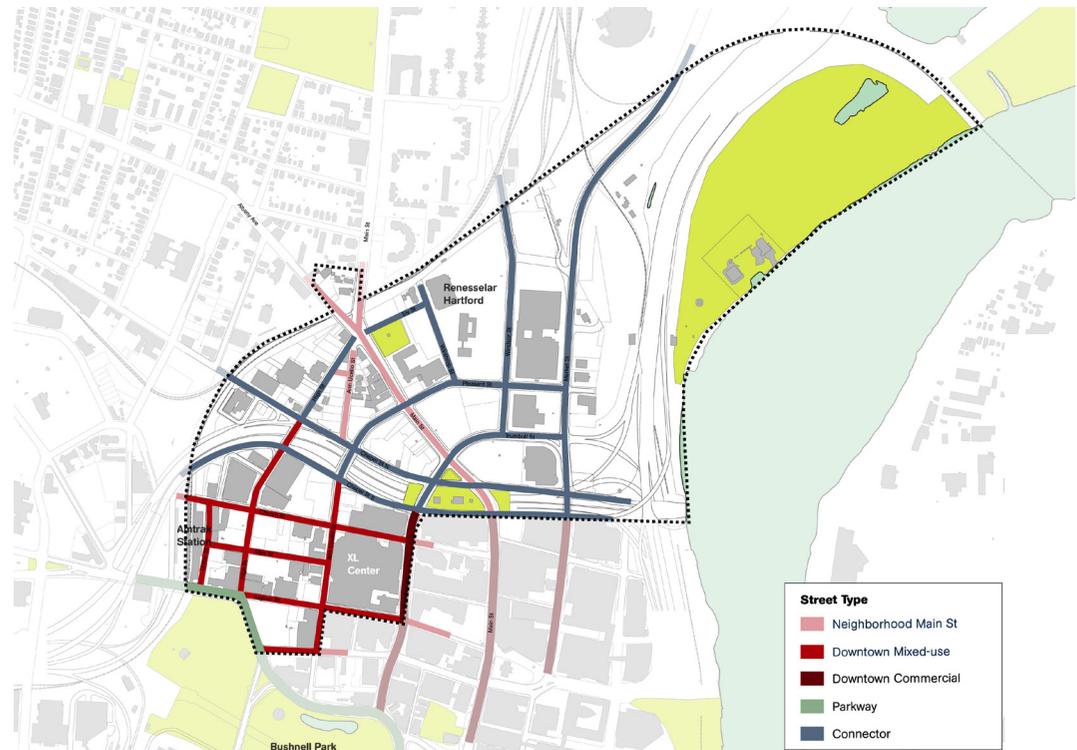
Street Character

Due to the fragmented nature of the study area—largely the result of the divisive presence of the interstate and urban renewal—the character of the streets varies dramatically between the Downtown North and Downtown West.

As previously mentioned, Downtown North is characterized by oversized streets with an excess carrying capacity for the amount of traffic in that area. Downtown West, however, has a more traditional street network that remains active due to consistent streetfront presence and a mix of uses. A challenge for this project will be to make this disparity more seamless, where the transitions between the areas are subtle and a sense of continuity is apparent.

Street Typologies

The following street types (p. 31-32) can be used as prototypical streets for the master plan. They not only are able to characterize some of the existing streets, but present ambitions for the future street conditions in the study area. These typologies will be reintroduced in the future planning phases. Observations of the street character in the study area.



Downtown Commercial

Containing a mix of mid- and high-rise office buildings, the streets serve as cultural destinations and connect with highways and transit hubs that serve a metro region. These streets play a key role in the regional movement of people, and their designs must support high user volumes.



Downtown Mixed-use

Serving a more diverse mix of uses, these streets generally support a lively melange of retail, residential, office, and entertainment uses, creating many of a city's most dynamic public spaces. They also must support high levels of walking, bicycling, and transit, in addition to short-term vehicle parking.



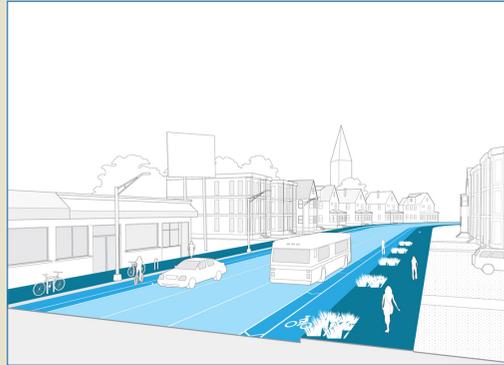
Neighborhood Main Street

Neighborhood Main Streets are located in the heart of a residential part of the city. Characterized by dense single-floor commercial and retail use, they are often concentrated in an area only a few blocks long. They are the nucleus of the neighborhood economies, providing residents with daily essentials, locally owned shops, and amenities.



Neighborhood Connector

Neighborhood Connectors traverse several neighborhoods and form the backbone of a multimodal street network. They provide continuous walking and bicycle routes and still accommodate major bus routes and vehicle flow. They are essential to the flow of people between neighborhoods.



Parkway

Parkways are typically characterized by long uninterrupted stretches running parallel open space systems. Parkway run along uninterrupted stretches of open spaces and have fewer intersections. While this makes them convenient for motor vehicles, it can make it difficult for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross.



- The Downtown West neighborhood lends itself to the Downtown Mixed-use street typology. While it carries a fair amount of capacity, it also has an active street life at all hours of the day and is a mix of uses.
- Trumbull Street is the east-west border where the downtown streets lend themselves more to the Downtown Commercial typology.
- Main Street is a focus and destination for local residents and already has an appropriate neighborhood scale similar to the Neighborhood Main Street.
- The streets that prove the most difficult for creating a sense of place are the oversized and poorly animated streets in Downtown North, such as Market Street and Pleasant Street.
- Future development in the area should consider how these streets might be activated to make the area a place that people will want to visit rather than pass through.



The existing street frontage along Main Street is indicative of the local retail and scale typical of Neighborhood Main Streets.



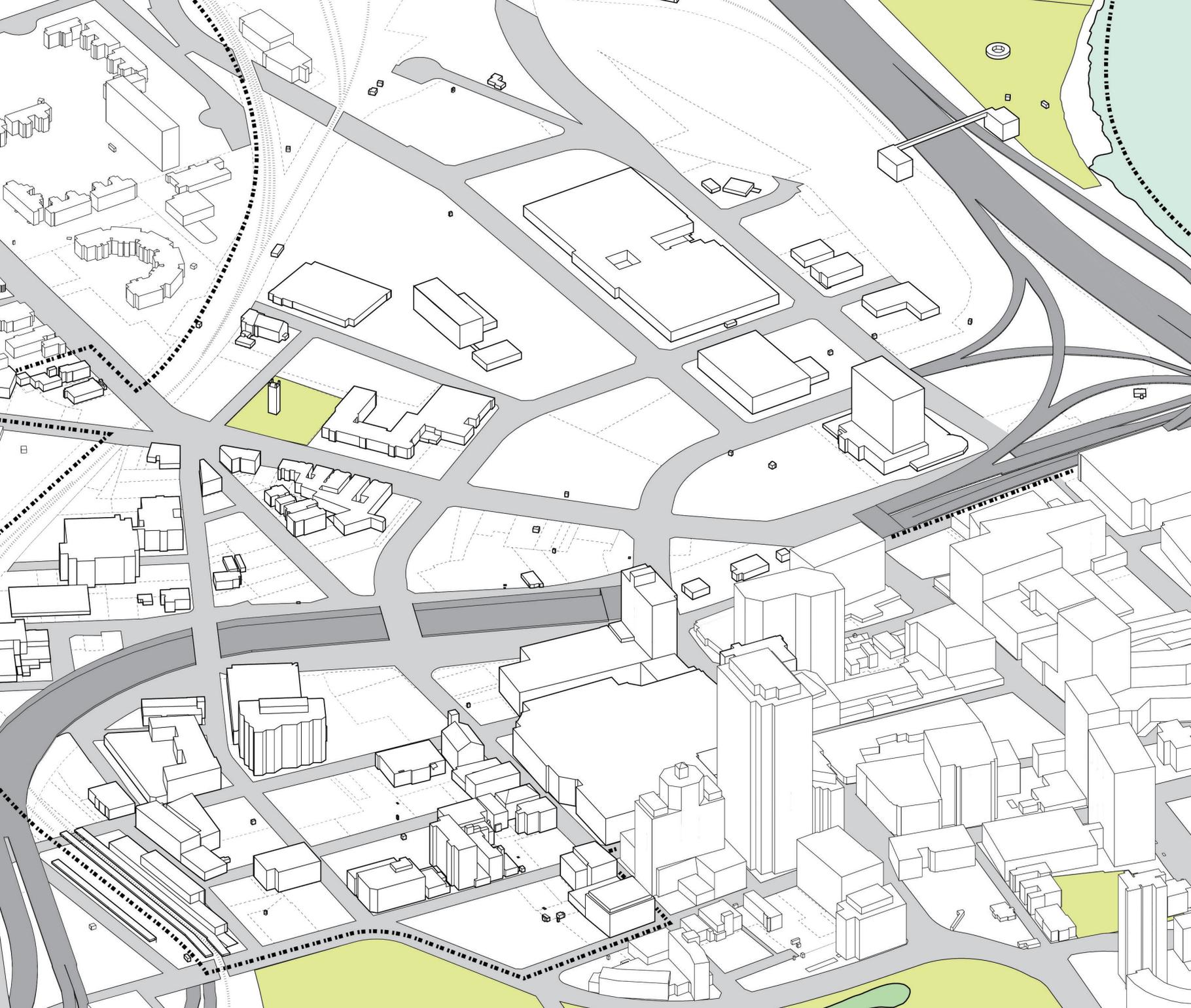
In Downtown West, Asylum Street provides a variety of uses and a scale that is similar to the Downtown Mixed-use street type.



Market Street is indicative of a Neighborhood Connector street; however, it currently lacks amenities that might make it a pleasant transition between neighborhoods.



The State Capitol building sits in the center of Bushnell Park, which runs along the southern edge of Asylum Street and Jewell Street, acting as a primary parkway.



Planning Strategy

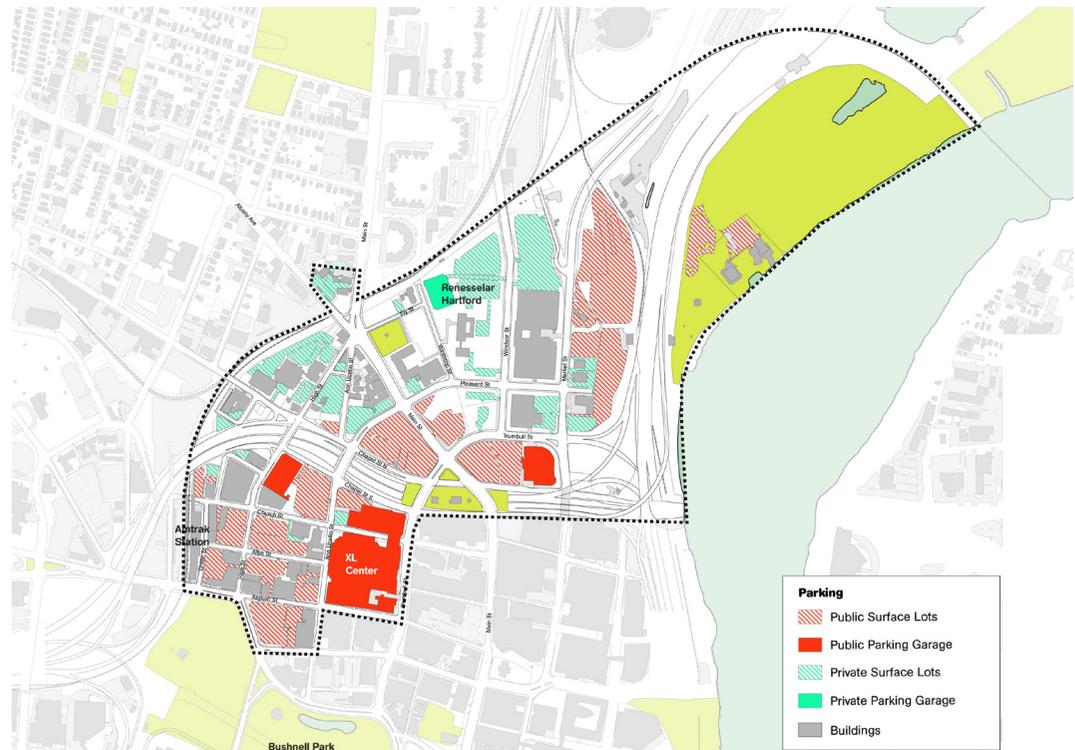
An examination of character, use, parcel conditions and proximities between these areas begins to frame how future planning may be approached.

Inventory and Assessment

Evaluating parcels based on their use, availability, ownership, and proximity to existing development help define where future development may occur.

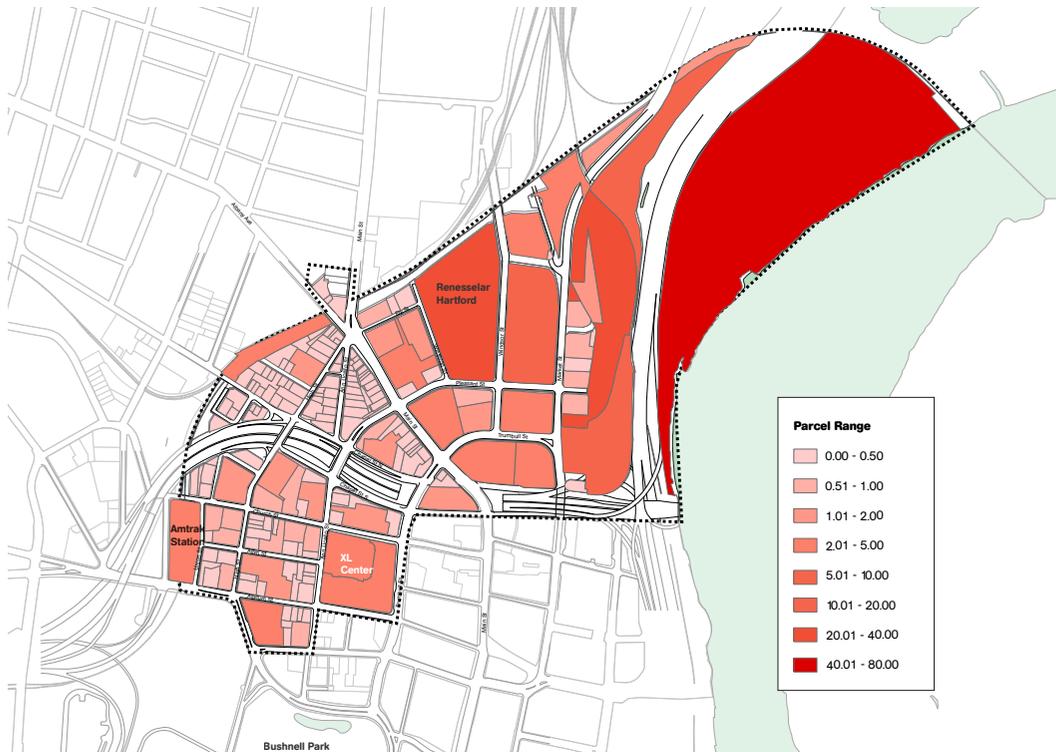
Parking Inventory

The amount of parking presents an opportunity for significant redevelopment. The majority of parking consists of surface lots, some of which are striped, while others act as overflow parking for large events. There are approximately 9,356 off-street parking spaces within the study area. This figure includes both private and public surface lots and garages. Of these, 7,016 are spaces in garages or lots available to the public, 2,340 are private spaces in garages or lots. There are four garages within the study area that are available to the public. City owned surface parking lots should be considered when evaluating the development potential of selected areas.



Parking Inventory: An initial analysis of the number and type of parking spaces can begin to illuminate where development opportunities may occur.

Parking Spaces	Surface	Garage	Total
Public	5,010	2,006	7,016
Private	1,542	798	2,340
Total	6,552	2,804	9,356



Parcel Size: An examination of the the parcel sizes within the study area reveal that larger scale development opportunities are more likely along Market Street, and Pleasant Street and Trumbull Street between Main and Market Street.

Parcel Ranges

An analysis of the parcel ranges in the study area demonstrates the disparity in parcel sizes. Downtown West’s parcels range from smaller half-acre infill sites to mid-size parcels generally used for an institutional or civic use, such as the Post Office and XL Center. The neighborhood fabric of the area surrounding Main Street, Ann Uccello Street and High Street reveals, through its intricate make up of parcels, the scale of the neighborhood that it once was.

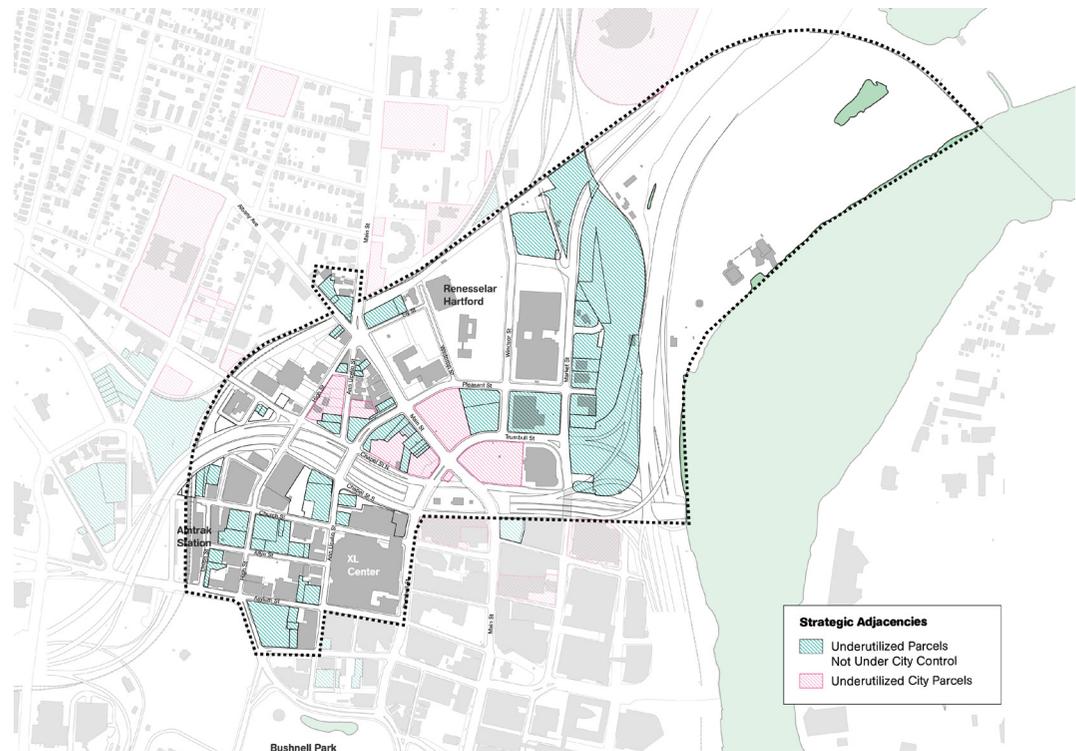
The mark of Urban Renewal planning is evident in the area between Main Street and Market Street where Travelers Insurance and Rensselaer Hartford are located. Some of these larger parcels are under city control and are therefore good candidates for redevelopment. The largest parcel in the study area boundary is Riverside Park, which of course will not be subject to development, but rather landscape improvements.

Strategic Adjacencies

The study area has a wealth of parcels that have been labeled as vacant or otherwise underutilized; however, not all of those parcels are suited for development at this time. The planning approach targets redevelopment areas where these vacant or underutilized properties have proximity to one another, and to more active areas in the downtown core. When clustered they can act as an extension of that downtown activity.

The City and its development partners should take into consideration

- Adjacencies between underutilized land and City-owned property
- Underutilized land that can provide shovel-ready development sites
- Parcel acquisition and any assemblage that may be necessary



Potential Development Areas

By assessing strategic adjacencies, concentrations of parcels may be found that are the most suitable for redevelopment areas. At times, these parcel clusters will create nodes akin to a neighborhood and other times they may lend themselves to large-scale redevelopment sites, such as the parcels to the east of Market Street.

The potential redevelopment parcels identified meet some established development criteria:

- Their status or use is generally vacant or underutilized, which may include undeveloped lots, surface parking, or obsolete buildings.
- They have a single owner, which reduces the process and expense of parcel assemblage.
- There is no site demolition of existing structures on the lot.
- They are proximate to downtown or other activity centers thereby reducing the distance (both real and perceived) between built areas.
- There is little to no environmental remediation needed on site.

- They are of a scale that is suitable for types of development for which there is a market demand and that are financially feasible.

A deeper investigation into the parcels and areas being identified revealed facts that may be contrary to first observations. Some areas that have multiple parcels are actually held by a single landowner. In this scenario acquisition for development may be less burdensome than assumed because there are multiple parcels within the area identified.



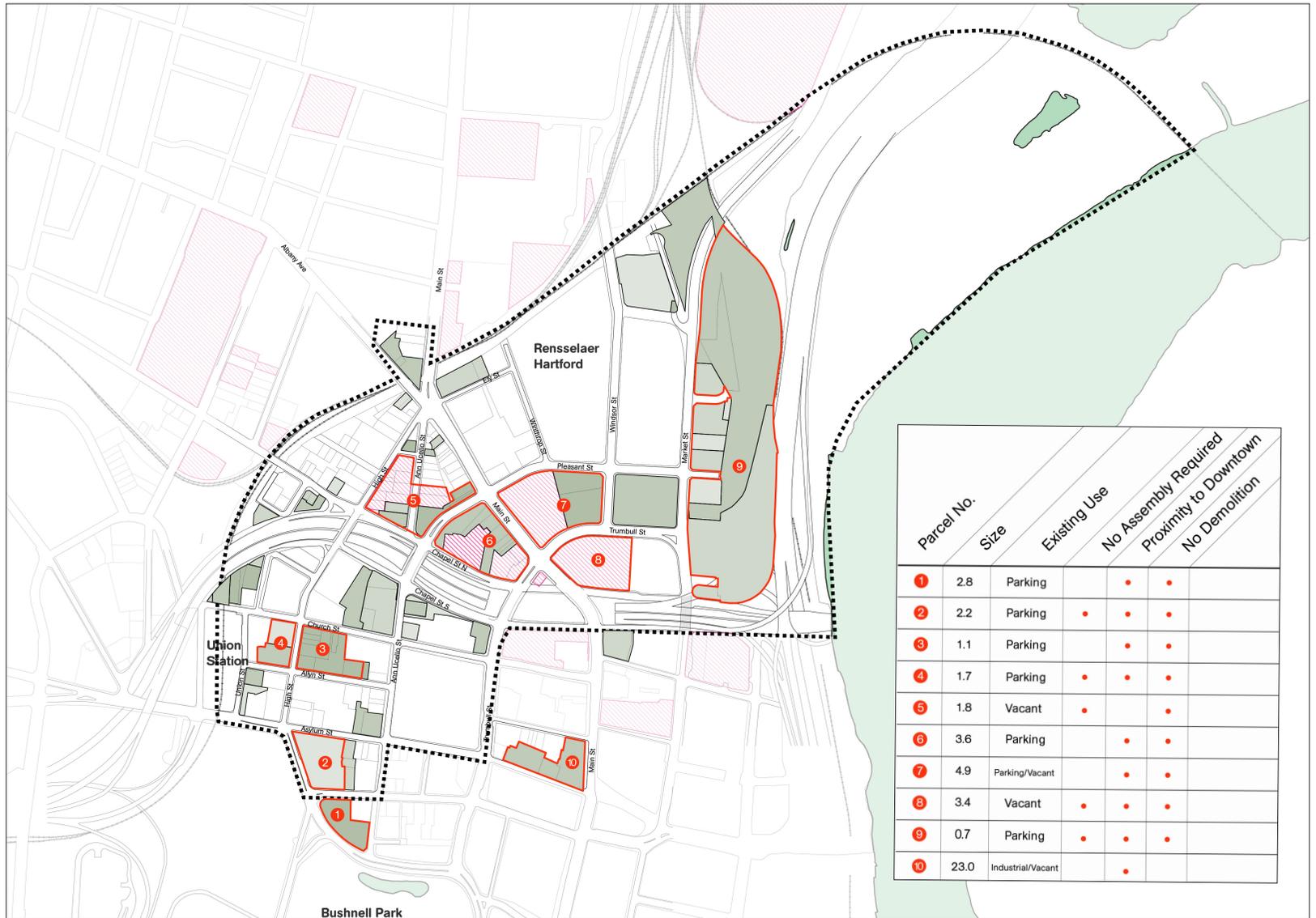
Parking areas of different sizes can yield a range of development scales from single-parcel infill development (as seen in the photo of the surface lot at top) to large redevelopment sites, such as the area pictured above.

DEVELOPMENT AREA	NUMBER OF PARCELS	OWNERSHIP	STATUS/USE	SIZE
Area 1	1	Single	Parking/Building	1.3 acres
Area 2	4	Multiple(2)	Parking	2.8 acres
Area 3	9	Single	Parking	2.2 acres
Area 4	2	Multiple(3)	Parking	1.1 acres
Area 5	14	Multiple(15)	Parking/Vacant	4.0 acres
Area 6	12	Multiple(2)	Parking	3.6 acres
Area 7	3	Multiple (2)	Parking/Vacant	4.9 acres
Area 8	1	Single	Parking	3.4 acres
Area 9	10	Multiple(8)	Parking/Vacant	23.0 acres
Area 10	2	Single	Parking	2.1 acres

Most areas identified are currently surface parking or vacant, as revealed by GIS parcel data. On-the-ground observation yielded similar conditions, making these areas more amenable to development. There are some parcels along Market Street with structures that are active businesses.

Assessment of the number of parcels and ownership data for these areas revealed that despite some areas having a high number of parcels, they are often under the control of the same landowner who has consolidated the parcels into a contiguous area, but still has the opportunity to sell them off piecemeal.

The different tones of gray in the development areas (diagram opposite page) indicate multiple owners. If parcel ownership is contiguous, the tone will be the same for adjacent parcels.



Potential Development Areas



Downtown Retail and Housing

New residents and
retail will revitalize
the life of downtown.

Retail Market Analysis

There is significant un-met demand for retail in Downtown North and Downtown West to serve both local and regional populations.

The retail market analysis revealed that there is not only demand for local retail that could serve the immediate area (both residents and office workers), but that it is also strategically located, such that it is attractive to retailers looking to serve a broader geographic area. In particular, Downtown North, is located at the intersection of two major interstates (I-84 and I-91) with multiple exits for I-84 at the site.

This immediate access has the ability to draw in populations that are not relegated to the immediately surrounding neighborhoods. However, the study also revealed that there is a dearth of retail options in the primary trade area for Downtown North, which includes the residential neighborhoods to the north, often considered a food and retail desert.

The Downtown West neighborhood was also analyzed and concluded that there is a

Downtown North Supportable Retail

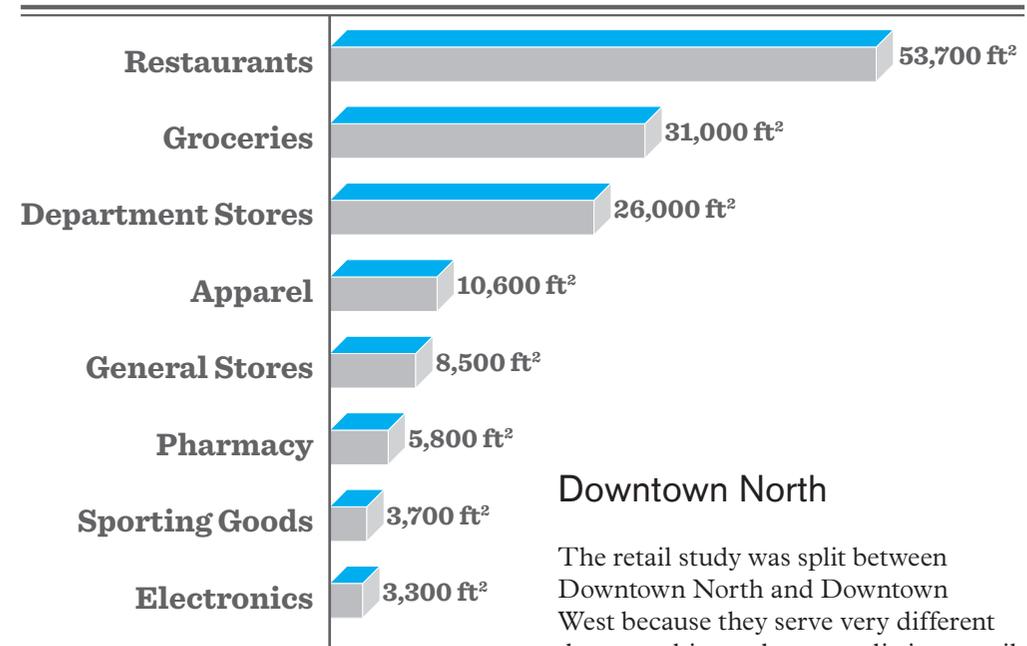


Figure No. 2

significant amount of retail that could serve a daytime population of office workers in the study area. The Downtown West primary trade area was smaller and found that there are fewer residents to be served by retail, but that the office worker population was significant.

Downtown North

The retail study was split between Downtown North and Downtown West because they serve very different demographics and present distinct retail demand. The area of Downtown North can potentially provide needed goods and services for the surrounding population, including nearby residents, office workers and visitors. The residents north of the study area are currently underserved by retail and are required to drive to find basic retail services, such as groceries stores.

It was determined that the Downtown North study area has a demand for 163,000 square feet (sf) of additional retail development. This development would produce \$59 million in sales, and by 2017 it would generate up to \$62 million in gross sales. The area could absorb up to 53,000 sf of restaurant space, a new 31,000 sf grocery store and additional retailers, such as departments stores, appliance stores and clothing stores.

This site is able to draw upon, not just nearby residents, but also the 70,000 daytime office workers in Downtown, creating additional linkages between Downtown North and the core business district of Downtown Hartford. The



availability of large parcels of vacant and underutilized land make this an attractive area for near term development.

Downtown West

The Downtown West primary trade area, which is limited to the boundaries of the Downtown West study area for the project and an overall trade area that comprises Downtown Hartford south of I-84. The total trade area is within a 1/4 mile walk (5 minutes) from anywhere in the Downtown West study area. This is a common metric of how far people are willing to walk before they decide to drive or take transit. This proximity bodes well for successful retail.

The study found that Downtown West has an existing demand for 72,000 sf of additional retail development, which would produce up to \$25.7 million in sales. By 2017 it has the potential to produce over \$27 million in gross sales. Retail may include restaurants, neighborhood grocers, bars or pubs, and a discount department store.

The primary population for retail would be daytime office workers. While there are currently a smaller amount of downtown

residents that in the Downtown North trade area, future housing demand may change that scenario.

Ultimately, the retail market analysis has assessed that there is 235,000 sf of retail that could be absorbed between Downtown West and Downtown North. This significant demand for additional retail is a positive sign for the potential of new development in Downtown Hartford.

Downtown Housing

The Downtown Housing analysis was conducted to gain a better understanding for the future residential development potential in Downtown.

Downtown housing increased by 626 units between 2000-2013 and using traditional methods of housing projection it is estimated that Hartford will only add 100 units over the next five years. The fluctuation of the housing market, the volatility of local economies and change in consumer preference can all affect demand for housing that historical growth patterns are unable to assume.

Because of this unpredictability, a different approach to a housing analysis was taken.

This approach involved a combination of

- ➊ Resident Market Research
- ➋ Demographic Statistics and
- ➌ Precedent Case Studies.

to determine the quantity and type of housing that could be absorbed in the Downtown Hartford study area.

The Resident Market Research assessed current downtown residents and those

interested in the growth of downtown housing. The process included input from

- ➔ 368 survey respondents
- ➔ Four formal focus groups
- ➔ Three informal focus groups at evening events

The results of the survey will help to include on the ground research in the overall market assessment.

Demographic statistics used for the study included

- ➔ Baseline demographics of Downtown, including residents and workers
- ➔ City of Hartford
- ➔ Hartford Metro
- ➔ Psychographic segmentation, which is an analysis of purchasing patterns, lifestyle, and entertainment choices

And lastly, precedent case studies of cities similar to Hartford in size, economic base and demographic profile were analyzed as benchmarks for Hartford. Like Hartford these cities are not “university towns”, they have similar talents pools, they focus on insurance and financial services industries, and they have had significant growth in downtown housing.

These included

- ➔ Cleveland
- ➔ Milwaukee
- ➔ Kansas City
- ➔ Des Moines, and
- ➔ Additional secondary research

What Was Heard

The focus group interviews produced a series of common themes that could provide insight into ways that Downtown could improve its image and what it has to offer.

- ➔ The is not enough to do, especially on the weekend days
- ➔ The City has an image problem
- ➔ The City needs to do a better job marketing itself
- ➔ It is hard to find a housing product that suits needs and affordability
- ➔ It is important to create a walkable environment that focuses on place-making
- ➔ Access to staples and small quantities of fresh foods is highly desirable.
- ➔ Improved transit on weekends would be helpful

The on-line housing survey that was filled out by 368 respondents showed a demand

for a mix of housing products. The highest response rates included

- Townhouse or condo that opens to the street (61%)
- High-rise apartment or condo of 4-10 units (46%)
- Loft or untraditional (46%)
- Apartment or condo building (37%)

Some of these housing types exist only in limited quantities and therefore reveal a potential market for such housing types.

Other questions also asked why people would chose to move to Downtown Hartford. Responses varied from providing proximity to work to requiring less driving on a daily basis. The highest rate of responses included

- For “city life”
- Proximity to work or school
- Closer to cultural resources
- Less driving on a daily basis

Secondary research of downtown residents and those in the metro Hartford area that match shopping and lifestyle preferences can be used to determine what type of amenities are desirable. These similarities reveal that there is latent demand for additional housing

in Downtown Hartford that could serve a regional market, one that is young with a high annual income and discretionary spending potential.

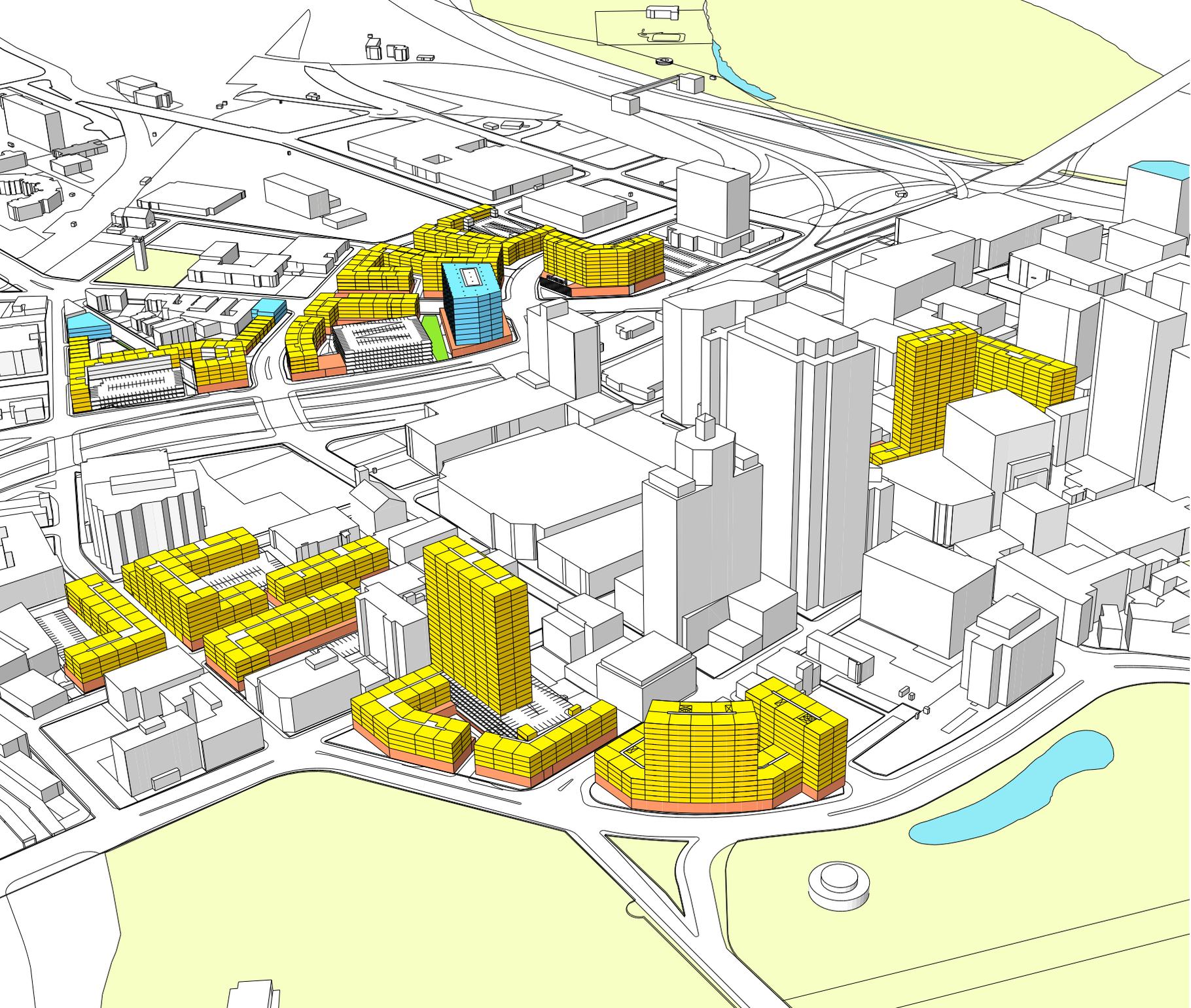
What Was Learned

Downtown housing’s growth is being led by a young-adult cohort, currently comprising 42% of the households in downtown. Empty nesters are also a growing population in downtown. Based on analysis and the associated median income for young-adult residents (\$60,882)—and considering the average student debt that this demographic carries—it was determined that a rental price point would have to be between \$750 to \$1,000 per month.

It was discovered, based on psychographic fit, that there is a large pool of residents in the metro Hartford area that fit the profile of the downtown resident, totaling 46,950 persons. Analyzing the percentage of residents that are downtown compared to the metro area population, the highest level would equate approximately 13,300 people or 7,400 units. At .5% that would equate to 6,100 people or approximate 3,400 units.

Aside from a benchmark based estimate, looking at the households in the region that have expressed an affinity for urban living (10-16% of the addressable market opportunity in the region), the survey suggests that 30-40% of that demographic would consider living in Downtown Hartford. IRS data suggests that 12,000-15,000 people move into Hartford every year and 7,000-9,000 people on average move within Hartford County. Based on the population distribution considered, that means approximately 1,400 to 2,000 households per year are in these segments and income categories.

Based on the analysis, it is plausible that an additional 1,700 to 4,700 units of housing could be supported in Downtown Hartford. This is taking into account the units presently downtown and the 1,100 units that are planned. How long it will take to reach the maximum build-out is dependent on a number of factors including housing types, prices and rents, and the required place-making to enhance liveability to accelerate present absorption rates. Place-making strategies including investments in public art and park space—through public and private funding—helped to spur additional development in all case study cities.



Development Districts

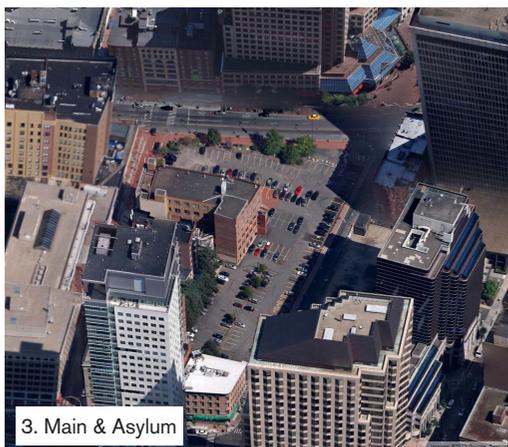
Sites identified for future growth arose out of a planning strategy that established criteria for the most opportune development areas.

Site Selection

Following an established set of criteria, unique areas for infill development were targeted.

Based upon the logic of identifying a collection of parcels that are underutilized and have strategic advantages—such as City ownership, appropriate sized parcels for development and those that are well-located—five districts or “nodes” have been selected for development planning. Parcel acquisition and ownership may be the biggest hurdle toward assembling contiguous development sites in some cases.

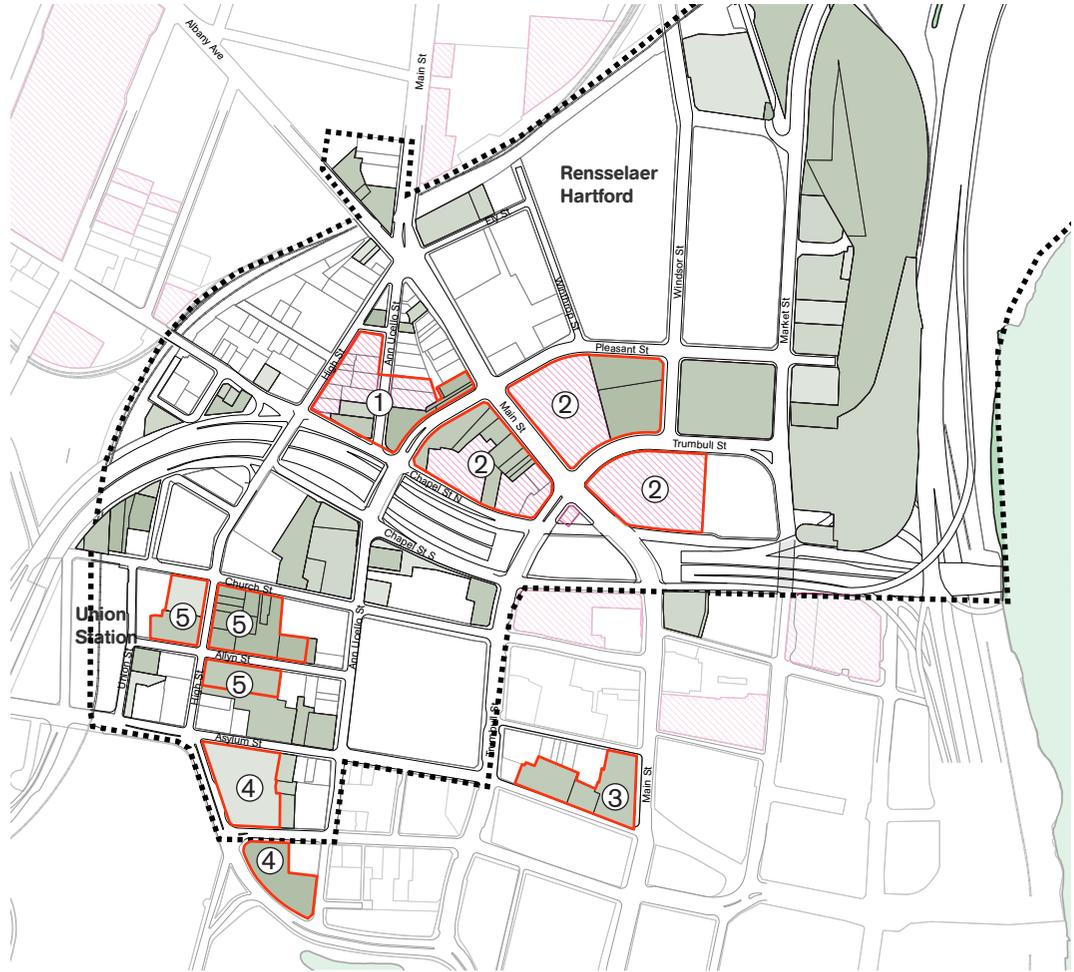
These sites should be seen less as a whole, and more as a series of potential build-out scenarios for their respective areas. Each district has a different character and would yield a different type of development. Rather than spreading development out across the study area in a thin blanket, concentrating it into districts or “nodes” will create a center of activity that ultimately—when built out—can spread outward, thereby connecting the distinct districts through a more seamless urban pattern.





The retail market analysis for Downtown North determined that approximately 163,000 square feet of demand for new retail exists north of I-84. An additional 72,000 square feet of retail could be absorbed in Downtown West within the next five years.

These development scenarios take this absorption into account, providing a consistent active ground-level use. It is understood that not all street level uses will ultimately be retail, but will still be a productive collection of uses that lend a vibrancy and character to the city.



Potential Development Areas

Five Districts

Five districts or “nodes” have been identified; each one offers a different set of opportunities.

Some of the development areas are attractive based on their ability to fill in an already rich fabric of urbanism, such as Downtown West and Bushnell Park. Other sites, such as Main and Trumbull, are vacant or underutilized City owned parcels that are ripe for disposition for larger scale development.

All of these development areas, however, must have an accompanying improved public realm that complements the quality of new development. The streets in Downtown North have excess capacity for the amount of traffic they actually carry. Furthermore, some streets in Downtown West have poorly utilized their available right-of-way (ROW). Solutions to this condition have been incorporated into the district plans that follow.

In these scenarios, residential units are provided one parking space per unit. This differs from the current regulations of 1.25 spaces per unit, but represents a more progressive approach commonly used for

downtown residential parking. Dedicated retail parking was provided for the grocery store in Downtown North; all other retail will be accommodated in new excess spaces or in existing parking downtown.

Building typologies for the development scenarios will establish the number of stories permitted.

- Low-rise Mixed Use: 4-5 stories using wood frame construction.
- Mid-rise Mixed Use: 10-12 stories using steel frame construction.
- Landmark High-rise: Select buildings will be identified for high-rise development. These heights will set a maximum number of stories.

The heights of the buildings reflect the development economics of construction types. Four to five story wood frame buildings are considerably less expensive per square foot than steel high-rise buildings that exceed seventy feet in height, the threshold for high-rise construction. As a result, buildings are either shown at four or five stories to maximize density with wood frame construction, thus maximizing the return on land cost – or are shown at ten stories or taller to provide enough density to

allow developers to recoup the cost of steel construction and other features that are required as a result of the more stringent high-rise building code.

Standard heights were used when measuring floor-to-floor height for prototypical buildings in the development scenarios.

- Residential: 11’
- Office/Commercial: 13’-6”
- Retail (Ground Level): 18’-20’

The following are districts identified for new development:

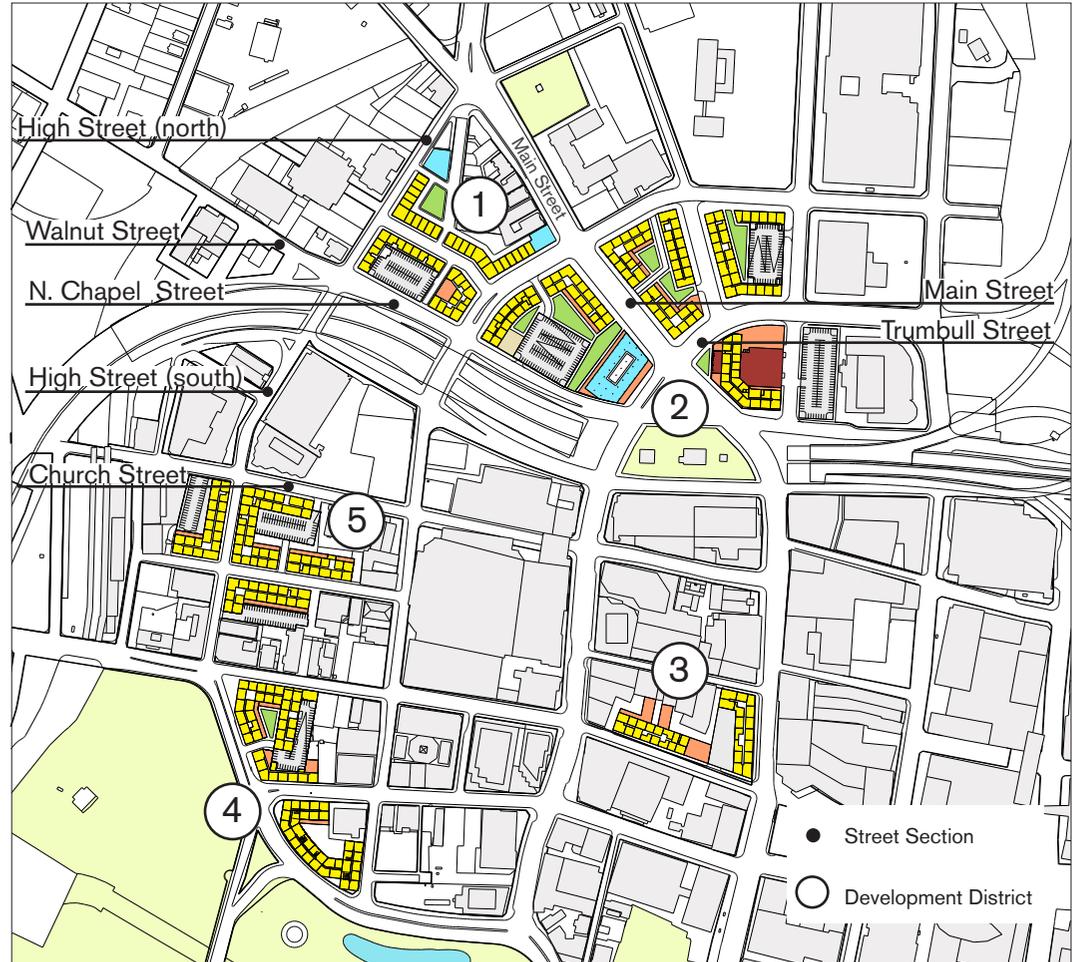
1. Ann Uccello: Located across from the new municipal complex, which sits between High Street and Pleasant Street, this district is a neighborhood-scale development with three-story townhomes, a new cross street, and corner retail. This scale complements the existing Main Street buildings.

2. Main and Trumbull: Based on retail market analysis, there is demand for a substantial amount of new retail in Downtown North (approx. 163,000sf), including a 30,000sf grocery store. This area could form a new town center with retail anchors, residential development, and a proposed municipal office building.

3. Main and Asylum: Hartford's Main Street forms the primary north-south spine for downtown. Its edge condition and public realm are continuous for the most part, but gaps exist. At the intersection of Main Street and Asylum Street, there is a large surface parking lot. A new mixed-use building could anchor that corner and repair the broken street wall condition.

4. Bushnell Park: Bushnell Park is one of Hartford's most valued assets. Currently, there is a large surface parking lot on the corner of Asylum Street and Ford Street, as well as a YMCA building immediately south on the corner of Ann Uccello and Ford Street. These two sites offer views and access to the park, and they are only blocks from Main Street and Downtown West.

5. Downtown West: Adjacent to Union Station—in the heart of a restaurant and nightlife district and amidst historic buildings—Downtown West's development opportunities are a natural extension of the already vibrant district. There are a number of surface parking lots dotting the district that could be used for infill sites, particularly a series of lots at the intersection of High Street and Allyn Street.



1 Ann Uccello

Creating a Neighborhood

The area that is bound by High Street to the west, Main Street/Pleasant Street to the east, and Chapel Street to the south is mostly a collection of vacant lots (at the southern end) and Downtown North's only



Much of the area is currently a surface parking lot.



Older buildings will be preserved and new development will complement their scale.

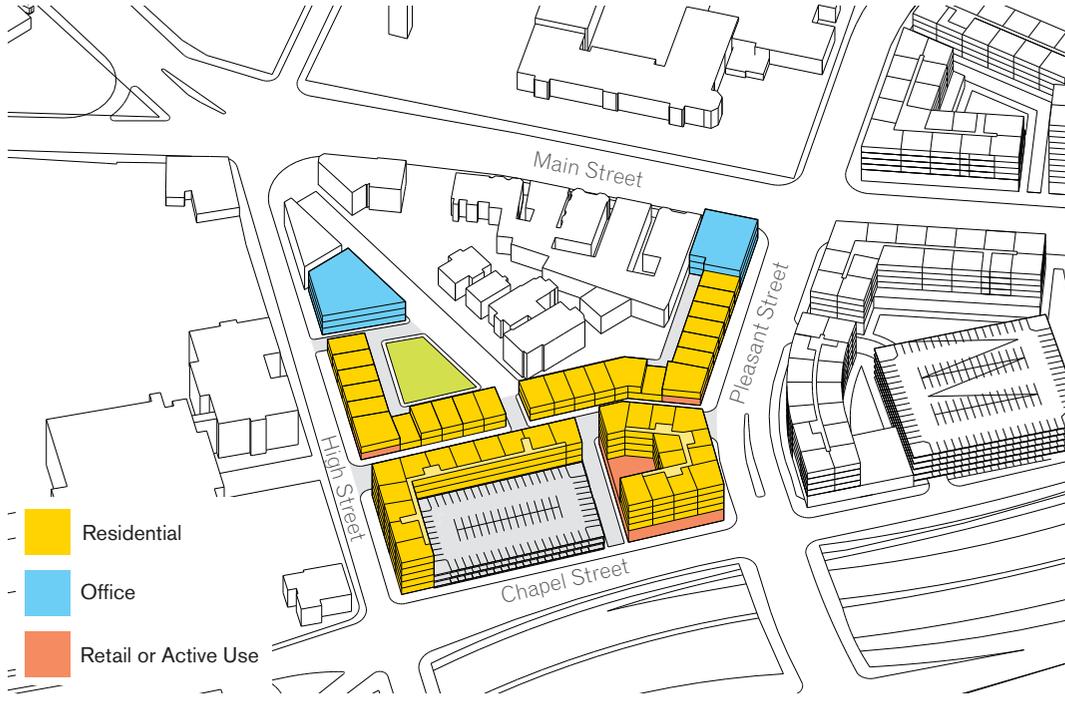
active retail along Main Street. The area is bisected by Ann Uccello Street which is truncated on the northern end at the intersection of Main Street and Albany Avenue and terminates at Chapel Street to the south.

The lower scale building stock—largely turn-of-the-century three-story brick buildings, and the new municipal complex—lends itself to a neighborhood character. Building upon the scale of the existing neighborhood, this plan proposes townhouses, corner retail, and Low-rise Mixed Use buildings (generally 4-5 stories) that are sensitive to the context of the area. Corner retail provides a social gathering space, while a courtyard behind the townhouses offer private outdoor space. Townhouses will have street facing front doors and vehicular access via a rear alley.

A new street, running east-west through the area will provide a connection between High Street and Pleasant Street, facilitating better circulation in Downtown North. In addition, High Street will change from a one-way into a two-way street.



Corner store retail and townhouses provide the desired density and activity for this area.



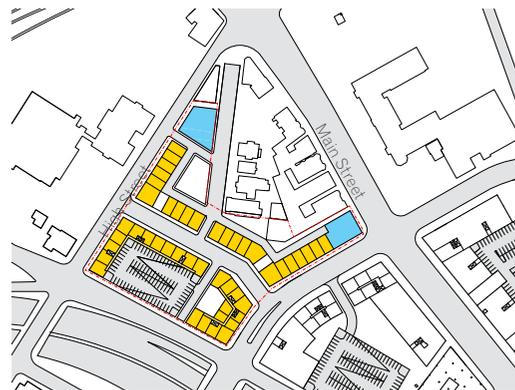
- Residential
- Office
- Retail or Active Use

Future build-out of district

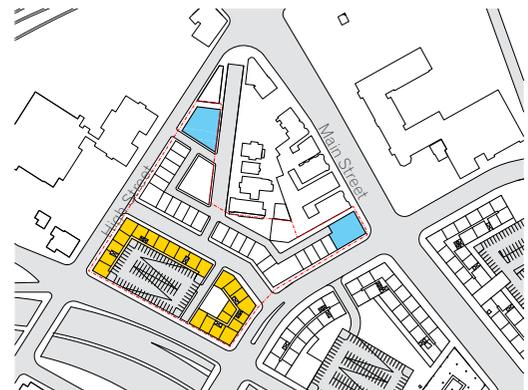
	Area	Units
Residential		129
Commercial	35,000 sf	
Retail/Active Use	19,000 sf	
Parking		174 spaces



Ground Floor Plan



Second Level Plan



Upper Level Plan

High Street (north of I-84)

The conversion of High Street from one-way southbound to a two-way street addresses a number of challenges with its current configuration. This will be outlined in greater detail in the Transportation Chapter (p. 76).

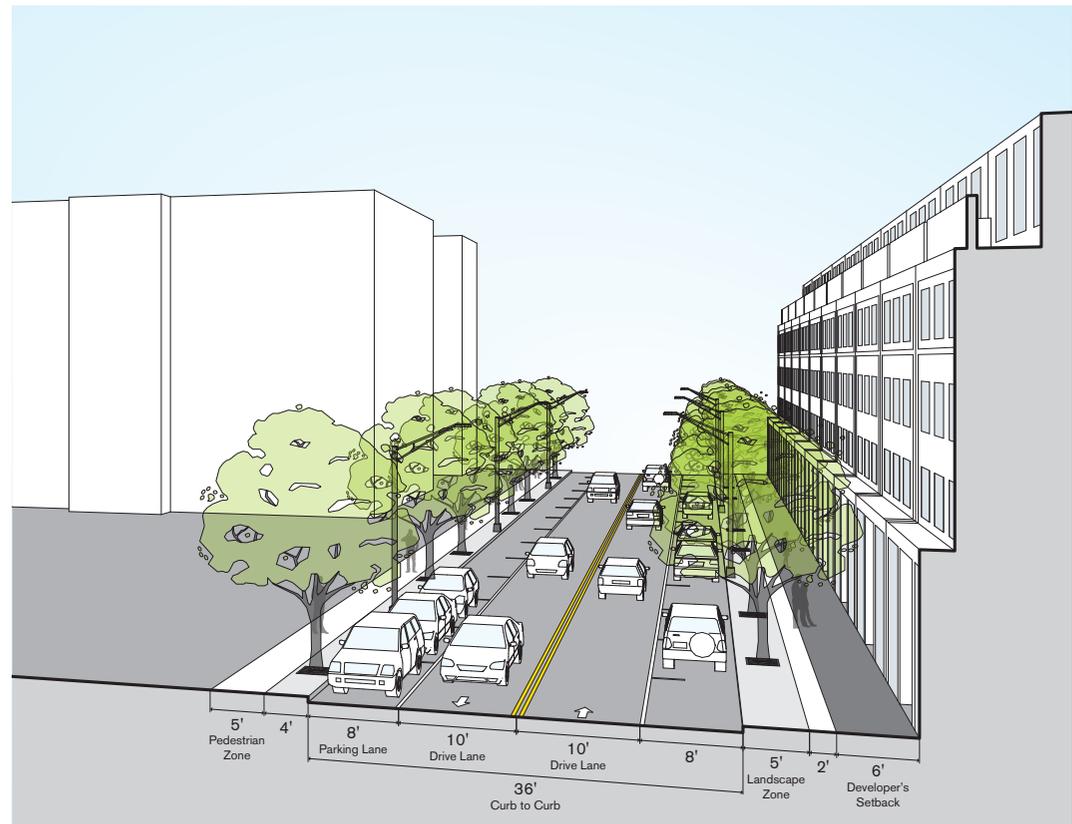
The proposed design of High Street remains a smaller scale, low-speed street with two travel lanes and on-street parking on either side of the street. Due to its constrained ROW it requires a small developer setback to accommodate an appropriately sized sidewalk.

	Existing	Proposed
ROW	52 feet	58 feet*
Curb-to-curb	36 feet	36 feet
Number of travel lanes	3 lanes	2 lanes
On-street Parking	No	Yes
Bike Lanes	No	No
Direction	1-way	2-way

* 6' developer setback



High Street looking north.



Proposed High Street design

N. Chapel Street

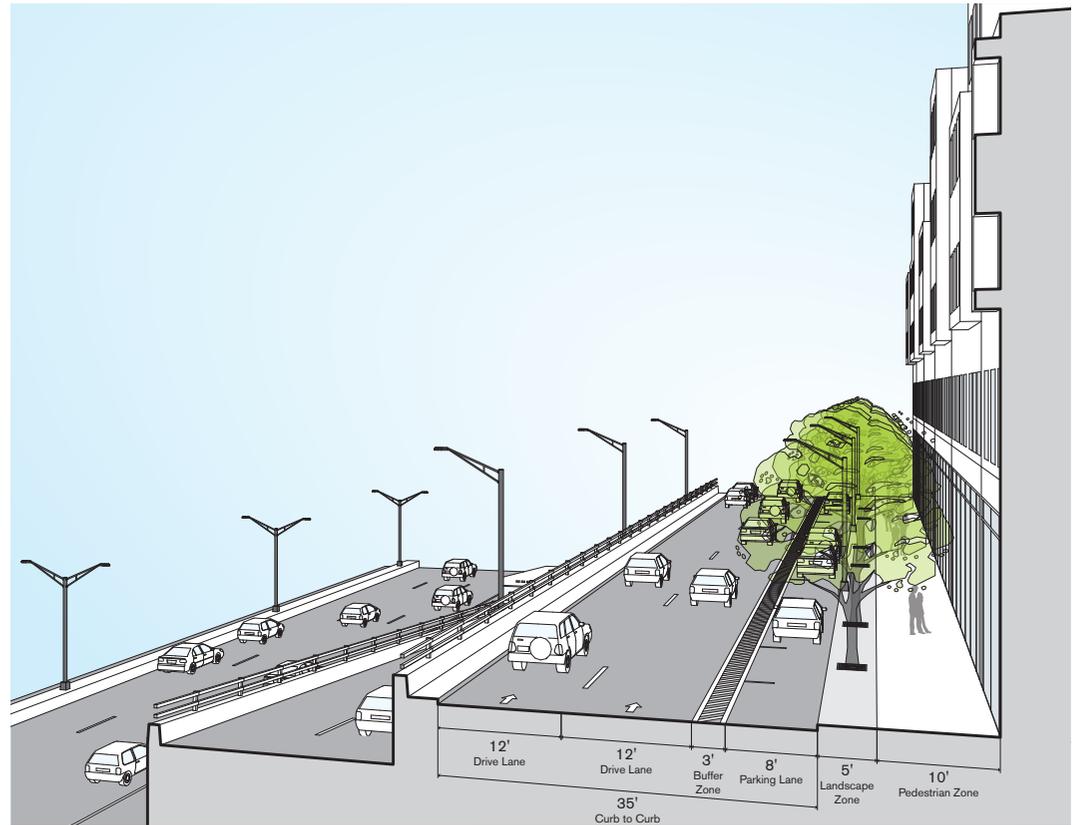
N. Chapel Street serves as one of two frontage roads for I-84 within the study area. Its current configuration is three lanes westbound; however, based on its daily traffic counts it can be reduced to two travel lanes, opening up one lane for on-street parking on the northern side of the street.

As a primary frontage road, N. Chapel runs adjacent to the interstate, ostensibly acting as the backside of the Downtown North area. While it serves more as a vehicular access route than an active public street, it will still generously accommodate pedestrian space and landscape treatment.

	Existing	Proposed
ROW	50 feet	50 feet
Curb-to-curb	42 feet	35 feet
Number of travel lanes	4 lanes	2 lanes
On-street Parking	No	Yes
Bike Lanes	No	No
Direction	One-way	One-way



N. Chapel Street looking west.

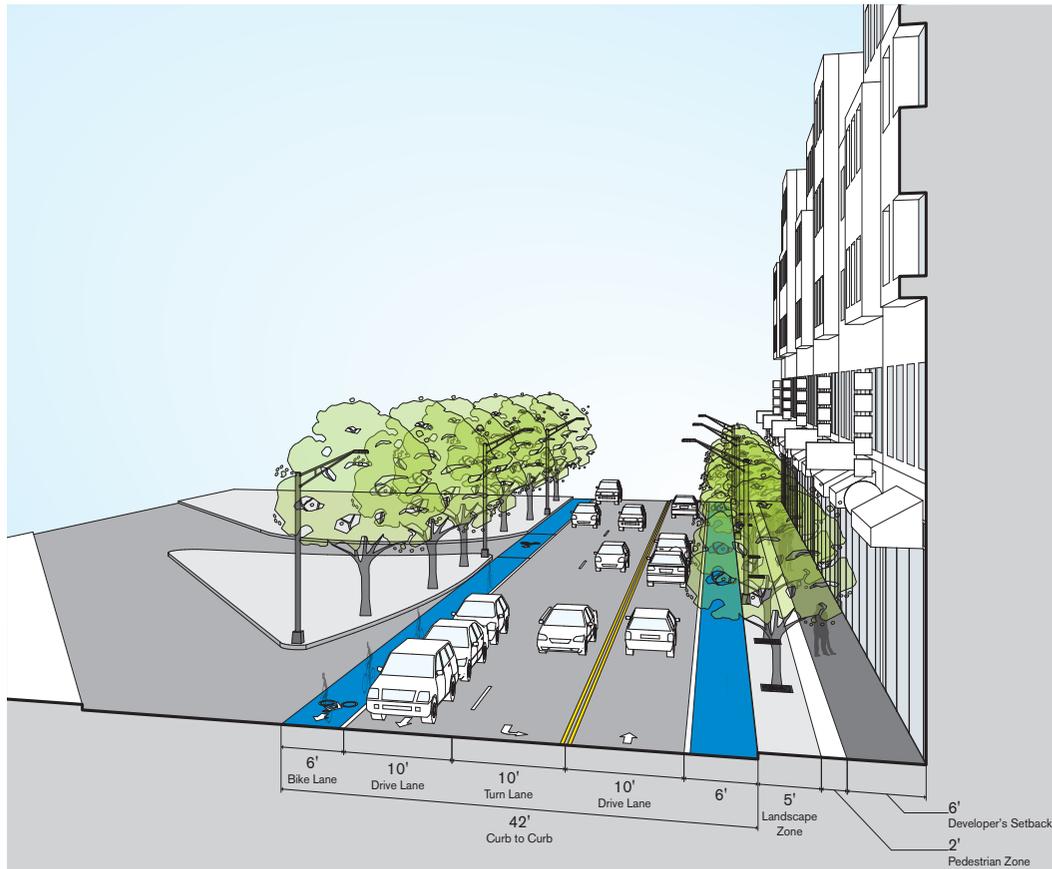


Proposed Chapel Street design

Walnut Street

The proposed redesign of Walnut Street reduces it from a four-lane road to a two-lane road with an eastbound center left-hand turn lane at the High Street intersection. This road diet allows for bike lanes on either side of the street.

A wider sidewalk that provides room for tree plantings may require a developer setback at certain points along the street because the ROW varies.



Proposed Walnut Street design

	Existing	Proposed
ROW	49 feet	55 feet*
Curb-to-curb	42 feet	42 feet
Number of travel lanes	4 lanes	2 (3 lanes at High Street intersection)
On-street Parking	No	No
Bike Lanes	No	Yes
Direction	2-way	2-way

*developer setback required



Walnut Street looking west.

Walnut and High Street

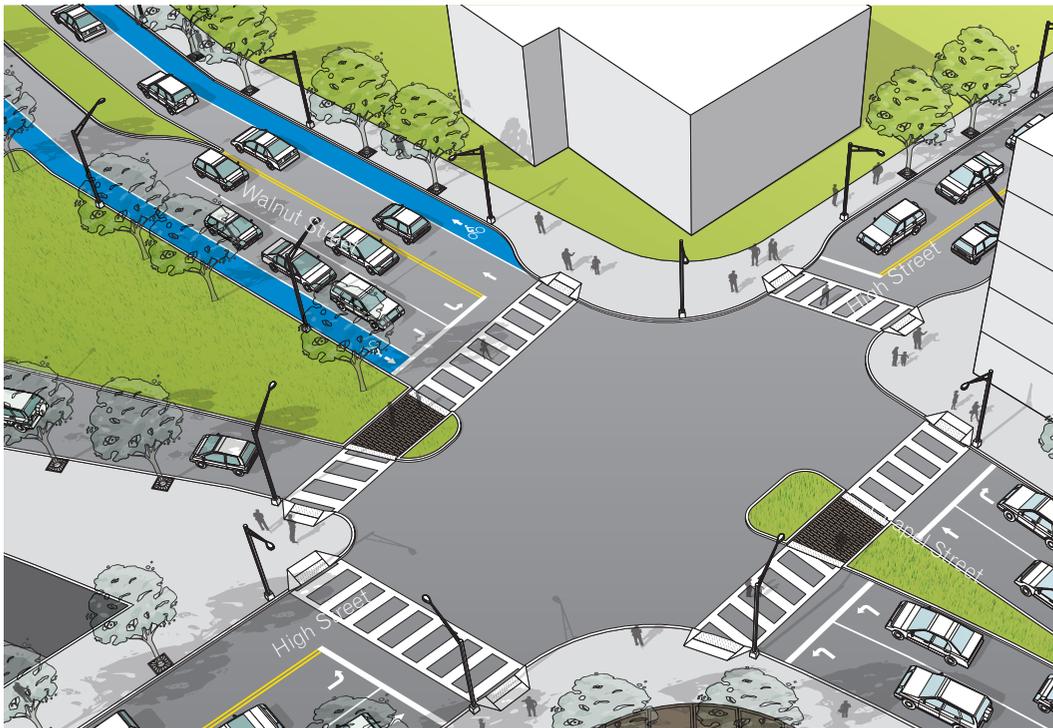
Walnut Street’s eastbound movement comes to an abrupt stop when it intersects with High Street and N. Chapel Street. This results in the inability to move north or east because High Street and Chapel Street are one-way streets southbound and westbound respectively.

The conversion of High Street to a two-way street will provide new access for

northbound movement. Any vehicles traveling east on Walnut Street now have to take an overwhelmingly circuitous route to go north.

Chapel Street is redesigned at the intersection, as well. Instead of a five-lane road with two dedicated left-turn lanes and three through-lanes, it is proposed as a four-lane road with two dedicated left turn lanes,

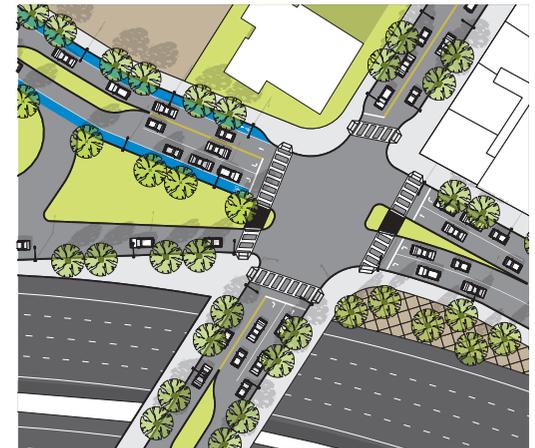
one interstate access and southbound access on High Street, one through-lane and one right-turn lane onto High Street heading north with a new pedestrian island.



Future Walnut and High Street intersection configuration.



Walnut and High Street intersection.



Plan for Walnut and High Street intersection.

② Main and Trumbull

A New Town Center

One of the biggest challenges of jump-starting development in Downtown North is the presence of I-84. The actual distance between the core of downtown and Downtown North is minimal; however it is a very palpable psychological distance. Despite the presence of a highway overpass park (Heaven Park, which has fallen into disrepair), the walk across the bridges over the interstate still has the quality of a “no-man’s land”.

The area that is bounded by Pleasant Street to the north and west and Chapel Street to the south, using Main Street as its spine, forms an additional node for development. Currently, the area is a collection of surface parking lots and vacant parcels. Much of the property is comprised of large parcels



owned by the City of Hartford. There is a collection of smaller parcels under private ownership that would need to be assembled for future development.

The market analysis for Downtown North/Downtown West determined that there is a substantial demand for new retail downtown, including a grocery store (30,000 sf). This node is an ideal candidate to locate a grocery store due to its highway access and area required for a grocery store. An improved gateway will have a profound



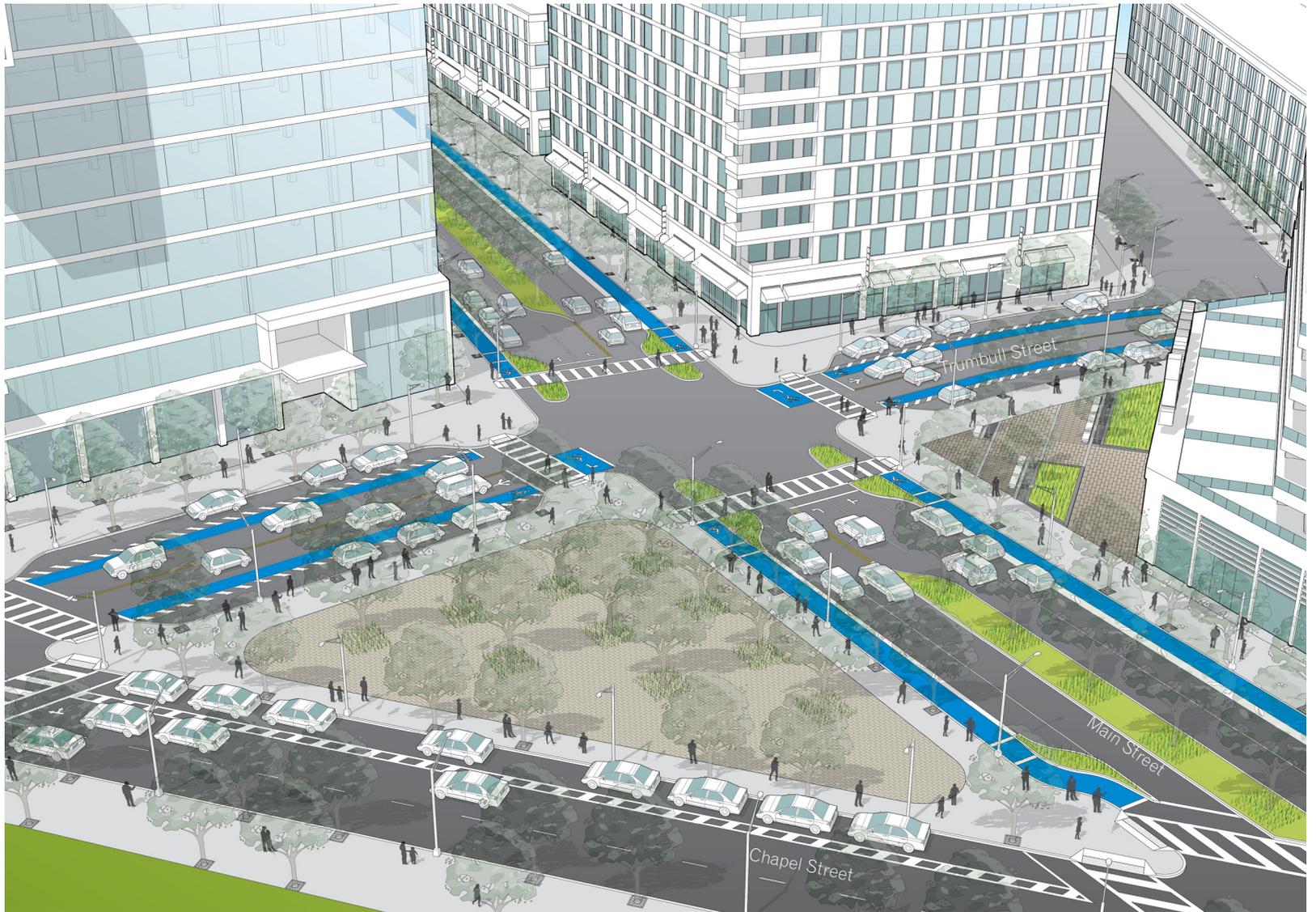
A grocery store would draw nearby residents from downtown, as well as the surrounding neighborhoods.

impact on development north of I-84. Retail and residential development will complement a proposed municipal building that will attract daytime workers, nearby residents, and new Downtown residents.

The intersection of Main and Trumbull is a significant destination and gateway. The planned municipal building is ten stories based on current programmatic needs (250,000 sf). Other Mid-rise Mixed Use buildings anchoring that corner should be between 10-12 stories tall. As the development moves beyond that key node, the recommended building heights are between 4-5 stories for Low-rise Mixed Use buildings, which are primarily residential with some ground floor retail.



The intersection at Main Street and Pleasant Street is inhospitable to pedestrians



Key intersection at Main Street and Trumbull Street

Plan Phasing

The scale of the development at Main and Trumbull, and the geographical territory it covers, should be considered a phased project. A first phase would fill in empty lots that face Main Street to create a seamless environment from downtown, accommodate

retail demand, and provide room for the proposed municipal office building.

A second phase would fill in the blocks to address blank street edges along Trumbull Street and Pleasant Street with mostly 4-5

story buildings that are primarily residential, acknowledging that retail cannot cover every street edge and that often residential streets are appropriate.



Phase I: Ground Level Plan



Phase I: Second Level Plan



Phase I: Upper Level Plan



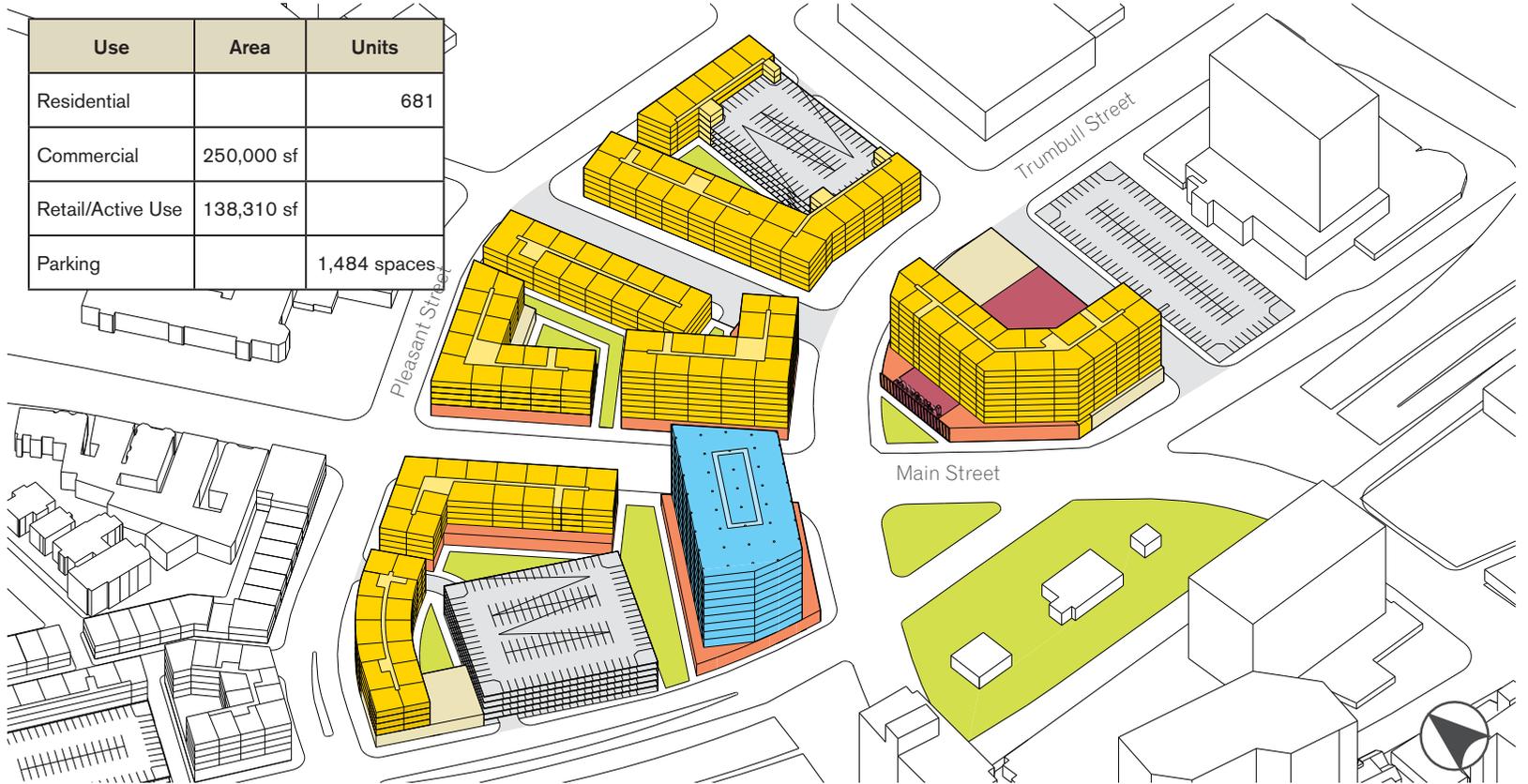
Phase II: Ground Level Plan



Phase II: Second Level Plan

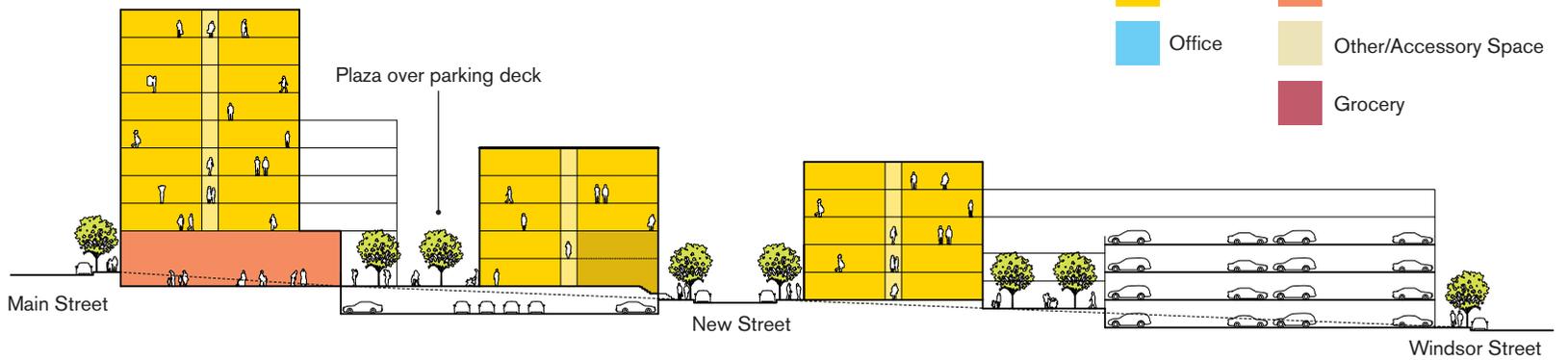


Phase II: Upper Level Plan



Use	Area	Units
Residential		681
Commercial	250,000 sf	
Retail/Active Use	138,310 sf	
Parking		1,484 spaces

- Residential
- Retail
- Office
- Other/Accessory Space
- Grocery



Main Street

As the primary street through Downtown North, and a main north-south thoroughfare for the city, Main Street permits and deserves a sense of hierarchy in its design and scale.

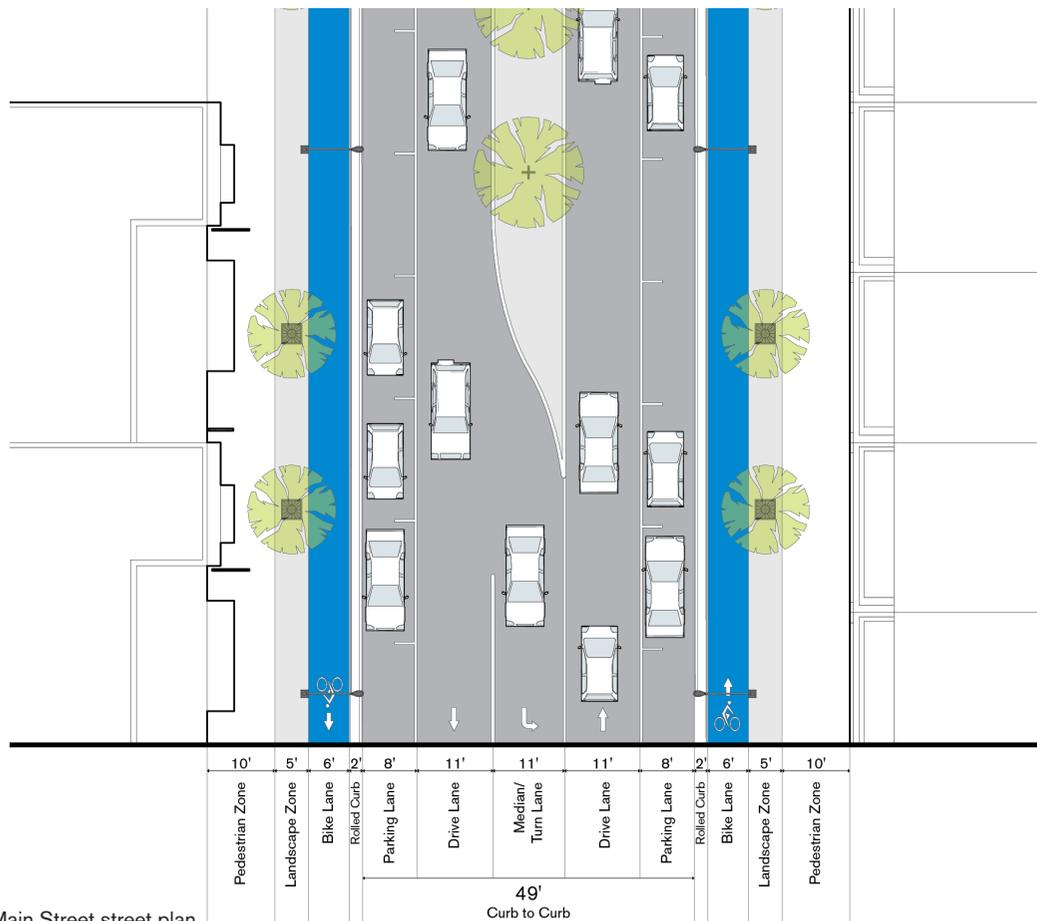
Its current configuration is much larger than is necessary for the amount of traffic it carries. That being the case, there is room for amenities, such as large sidewalks with tree planting zones, elevated cycle

tracks, and a landscaped median. With the exception of center turn lanes at the intersection, Main Street is designed as one travel lane in both directions with on-street parking on both sides of the street.

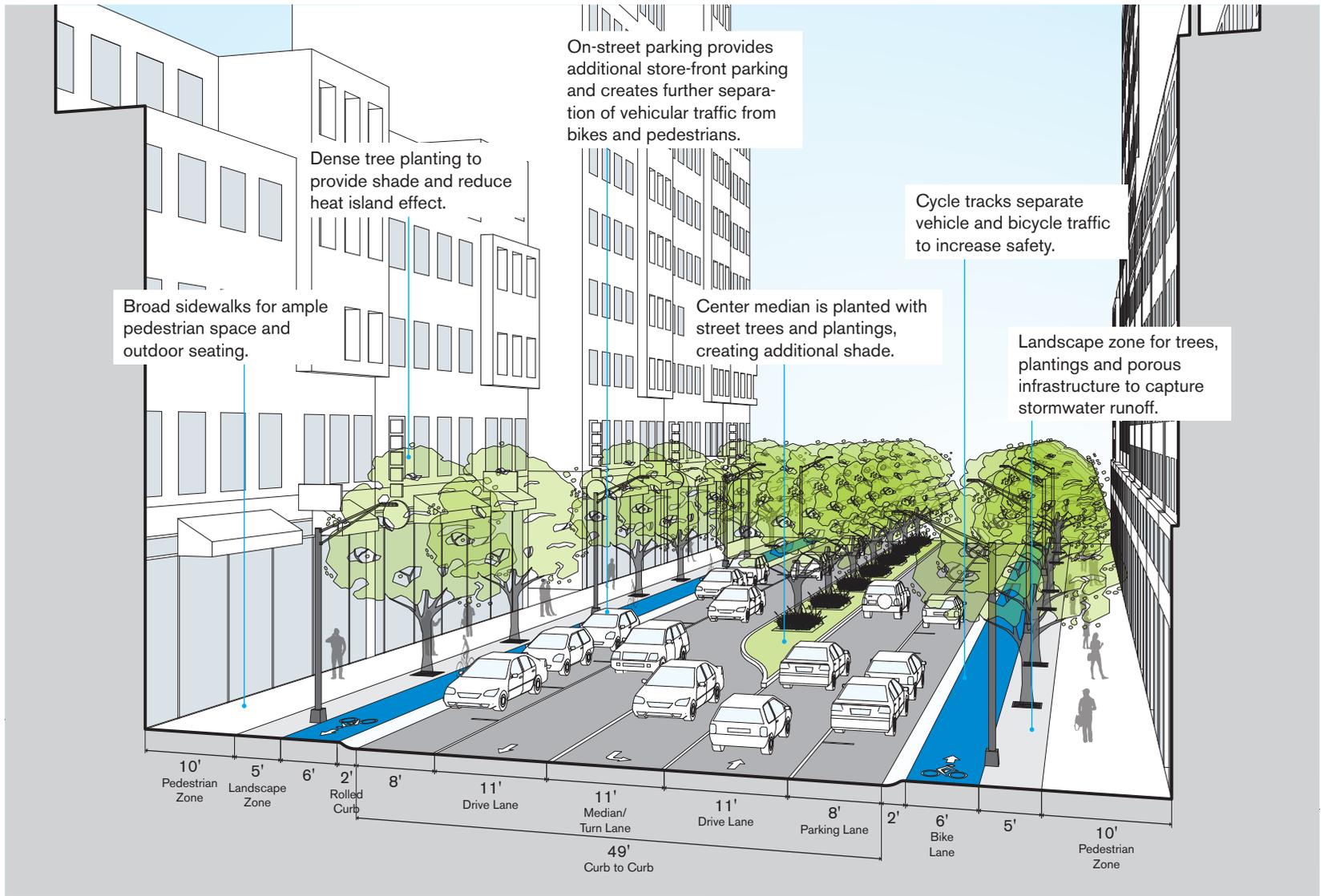
	Existing	Proposed
ROW	100 feet	95 feet
Curb-to-curb	75 feet	49 feet
Number of travel lanes	6 lanes	2 (3 with turn lane)
On-street Parking	No	Yes
Bike Lanes	No	Yes
Direction	2-way	2-way



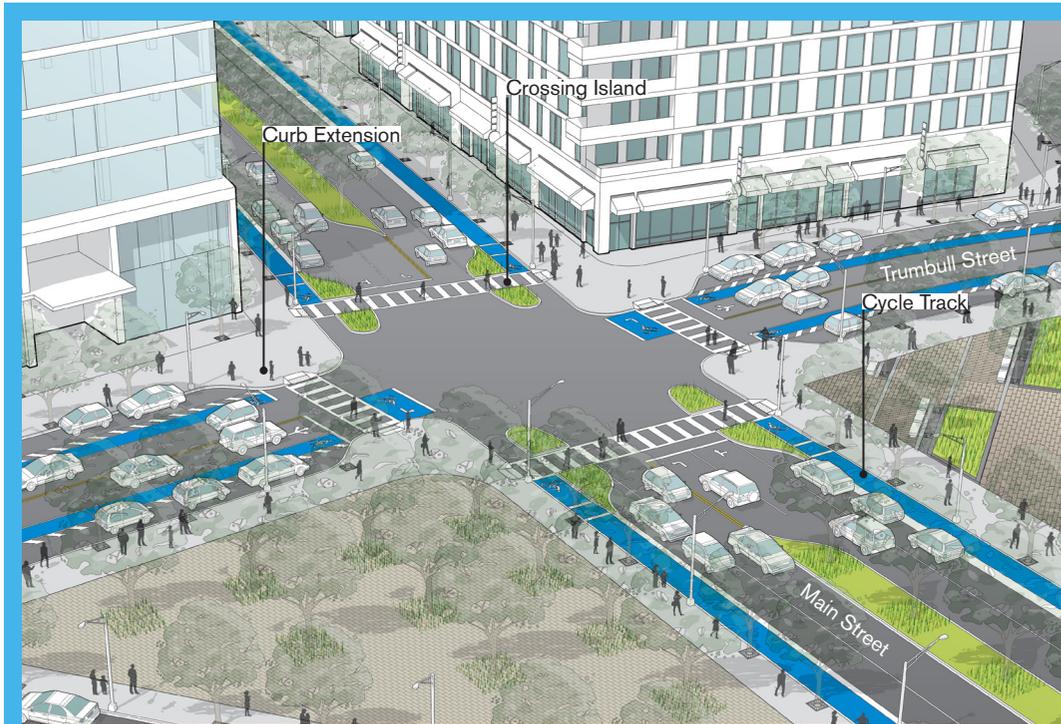
Existing Main Street looking south.



Main Street street plan



Proposed Main Street (looking south) recommends a CompleteStreet accommodating all modes of movement.



Elements of the Intersection

The intersection at Main and Trumbull Street could provide a template for progressive street infrastructure. Some of these best practices include:

- ➔ **Crossing Islands:** Also known as pedestrian refuge islands, they provide a mid-crossing pause and protected space for pedestrians as they cross the street.
- ➔ **Cycle Tracks:** Cycle tracks can be either in the street protected by temporary bollards or a median, or elevated to be at grade with the sidewalk. Cycle tracks provide protection for bicyclists from vehicular traffic.
- ➔ **Curb Extensions:** These shorten the crossing distance for pedestrians at intersections.



Crossing islands shorten the distance needed to cross an intersection (New York, NY).



Moving on-street parking away from the curb provides a protected area for bicycle lanes.



Elevated cycle tracks separate vehicular and bicycle traffic.

Trumbull Street

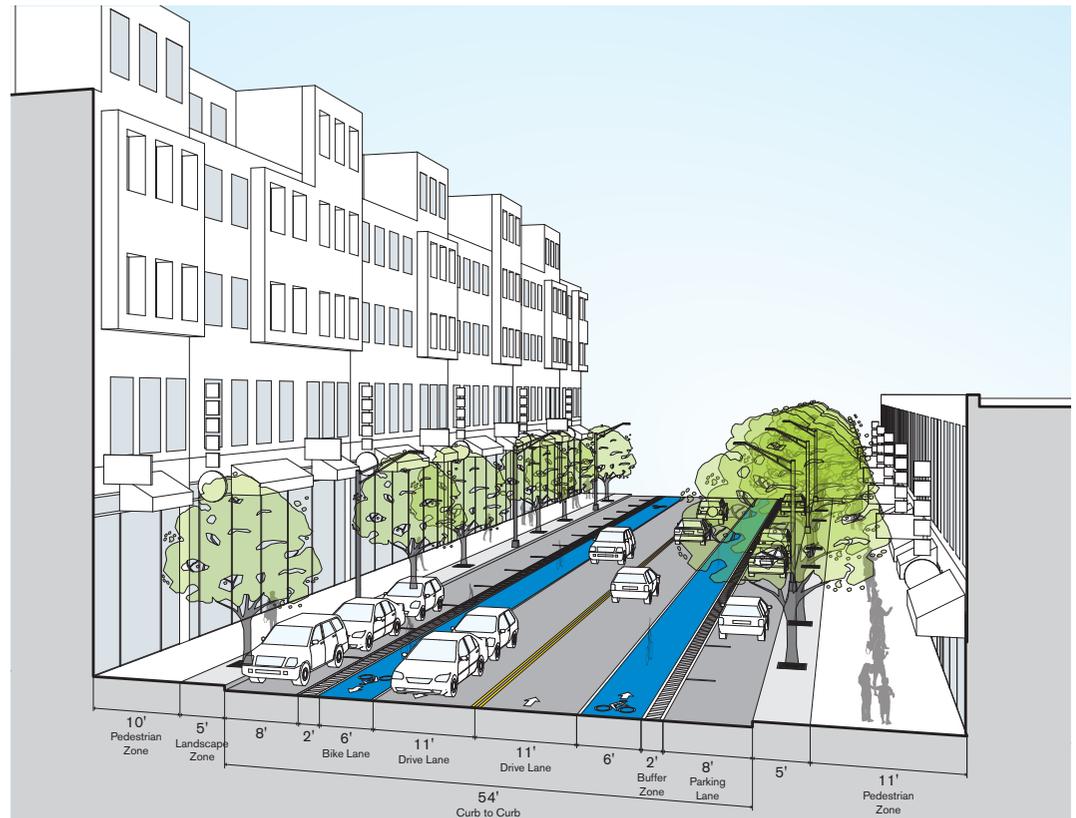
Trumbull Street, a primary commercial street through downtown, ultimately comes to a “T” at Market Street, as it arches through Downtown North. Once it crosses I-84 it loses its significance, but not its scale. It is ultimately too large for

its appropriate capacity, even considering future development. Our plan reduces the size of the roadway and substitutes two of the travel lanes for on-street parking, as well as buffered bike lanes.

	Existing	Proposed
ROW	85 feet	85 feet
Curb-to-curb	60 feet	54 feet
Number of travel lanes	4 lanes	2 lanes
On-street Parking	No	Yes
Bike Lanes	No	Yes
Direction	2-way	2-way



Existing Trumbull Street looking east.



Proposed Trumbull Street looking east.

③ Main and Asylum

The Heart of Downtown

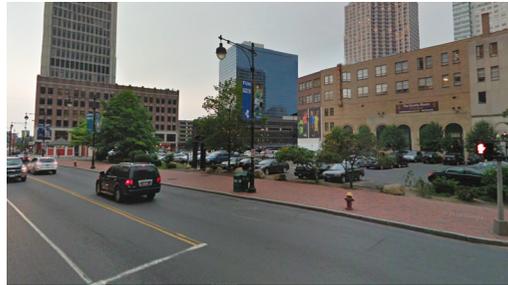
Main Street's street wall is largely consistent downtown, but begins to fray as it moves north toward the interstate. In order to maintain this streetfront consistency, the block between Asylum Street and Pratt Street should be considered for development.

The site is currently being used for surface parking lots, which is not the “highest and best” use for a prime downtown location. The plan recommends high-density development with ground-floor retail or other active uses. Maximum building heights for Landmark High-rise buildings are denoted on the illustration (next page). Due to site constraints, the parking for the development is elevated over the ground-floor use, essentially tucked between the upper-story residential and the ground-floor. The parking levels will be screened to be aesthetically seamless with the rest of the building.

The City of Hartford does not own the properties, so parcel acquisition would be necessary by the City or private developers. This will may be the case for other development districts, as well.



Aerial view of the parking lots at Main and Asylum St



View from Main Street lacks a street edge condition.



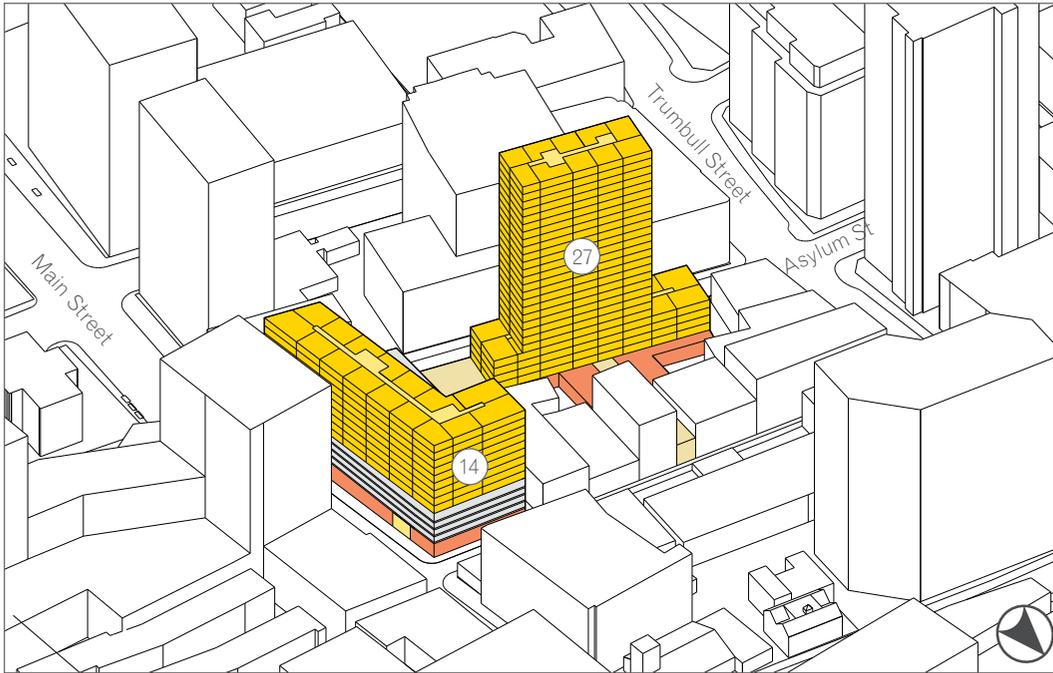
Surface parking tends to dominate a core section of Downtown.



Corners are activated by a large retail presence that captures both sides of the street (Chicago, IL).



Cafe seating provides an additional street edge and adds vibrancy to the sidewalk. Cafe zones can be found outboard at the edge of sidewalk or adjacent to the building.



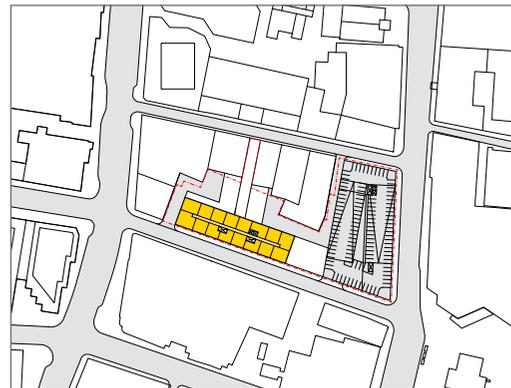
	Area	Units
Residential		394
Retail/Active Use	51,000 sf	
Parking		396 spaces

- Residential
- Retail or Active Use
- Other/Accessory Space
- Parking
- Landmark High-rise: Maximum Stories

Asylum and Main Street development scenario



Ground Level Plan



Middle Level Plan



Upper Level Plan

④ Bushnell Park

A View of the Park

Bushnell Park is one of the city's most valued amenities and the location of the State Capitol. Despite the inherent appeal of being located on a park downtown, there are still underutilized sites along the park's edge.

This proposal takes advantage of the surface parking lots along the edge of the park at Asylum and Ford Street, as well as suggesting development on the YMCA site toward Main Street. The plans capitalize on park views by siting lower-scaled buildings along the park edge and strategically places Landmark High-rise buildings in order to capture and preserve views.



Landscaped pathways through the development (Vancouver, BC).



High-rise buildings provide views of the adjacent park (Atlanta, GA).



The development sites are currently surface parking lots and an existing YMCA.



Future development will take advantage of its proximity to Bushnell Park, and wide parkways to provide additional recreation space (Boston, MA).



Ground Level Plan:



Second Level Plan



Upper Level Plan



Bushnell Park development creates a relationship with the park edge.

- Residential
- Retail
- Other/Accessory Space
- Parking
- Landmark High-rise: Maximum Stories

	Area	Units
Residential		644
Retail/Active Use	38,000 sf	
Parking		649 spaces

5 Downtown West

Building on a Foundation

Downtown West is an emerging area filled with restaurants and nightlife, drawing a younger professional demographic. The attractive building stock, and proximity to Union Station and Bushnell Park, makes this an ideal location for new residential and retail development.

This area “fills in the gaps” of the neighborhood and complements the urban environment of Downtown. This scenario takes advantage of parking lots and underutilized sites. Most buildings in this area should be Low-rise Mixed Use (between 4-5 stories) respecting much of the existing scale in Downtown West. The

Mid-rise Mixed Use buildings (10-11 stories) should be limited to the northeast block at High Street and Allyn Street because its height adds variety to the massing, as well as limiting its effect on shadows.



Medium-scale development in Portland, OR (above) is similar to the proposed design for Downtown West.

A continuous active edge (left photo) engages the pedestrian (Vancouver, BC).



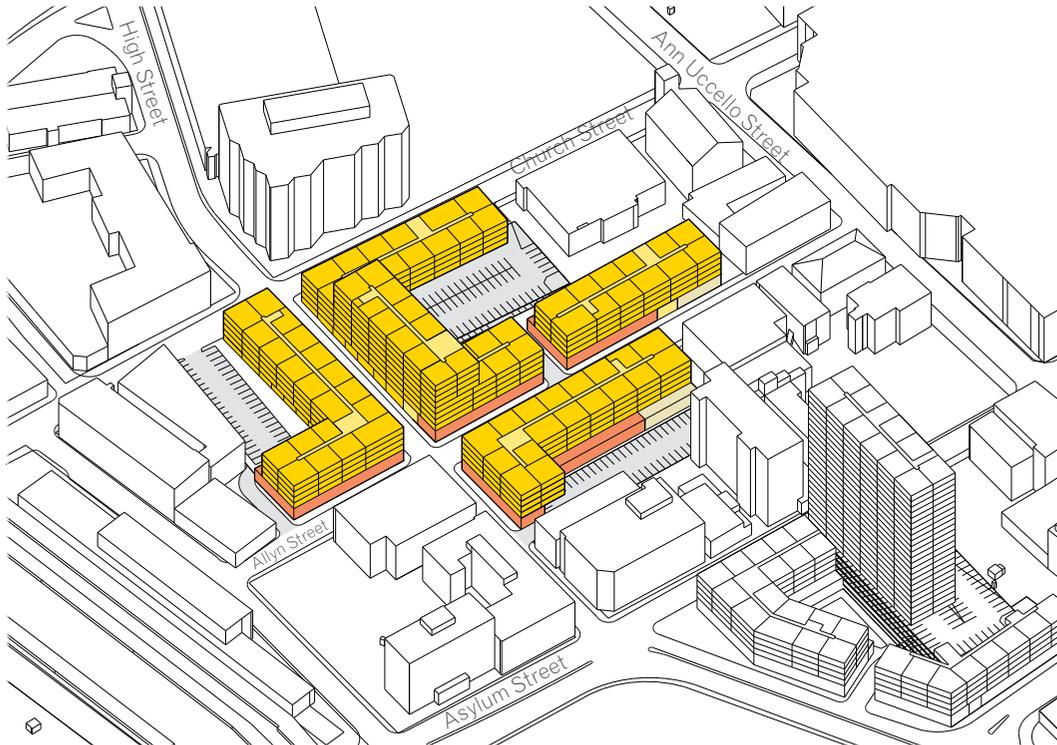
Ground Level Plan



Second Level Plan



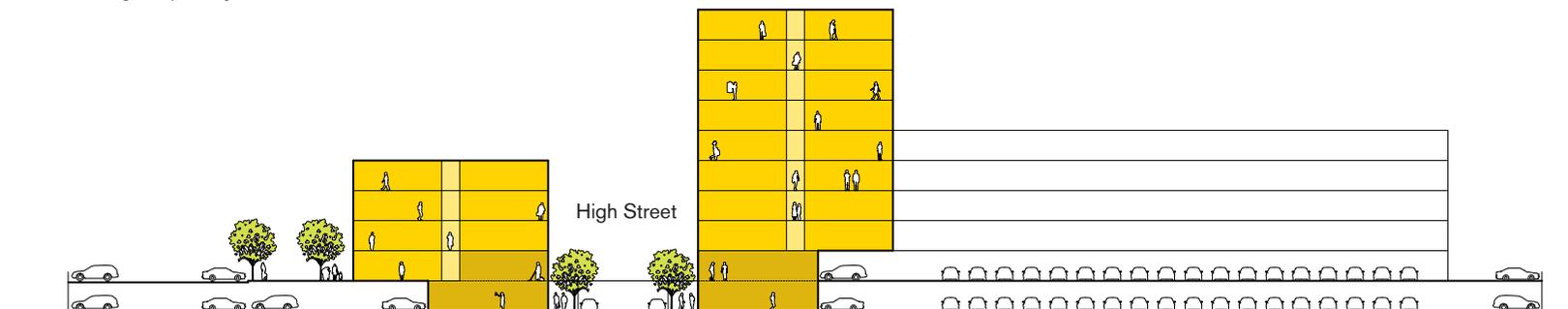
Upper Level Plan



	Area	Units
Residential		337
Retail/Active Use	53,000 sf	
Parking		340 spaces

- Residential
- Retail
- Other/Accessory Space
- Parking

Development proposed at medium density with Allyn Street forming the primary retail thread.



Section Cut at mid-block on High Street between Church Street and Allyn Street. A level w-level interior parking deck will be wrapped with development.

High Street

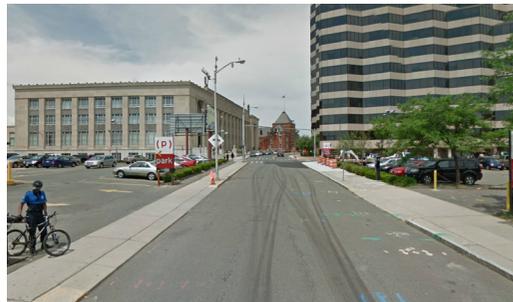
The conversion of High Street from a one-way southbound street into a two-way street can open up a needed northbound access route from Downtown West to Downtown North. It can also offer additional access to I-84, and Albany Ave and Main Street

north of the study area. The right-of-way (ROW) of High Street is fairly limited at 52 feet. This limits the section to two travel lanes and one lane of on-street parking on the east side of the street. A small developer setback is needed to accommodate a

reasonably sized sidewalk. In this case High Street will be two-way until Asylum Street. A current proposal has High Street going one-way north Asylum Street and Allyn Street.

	Existing	Proposed
ROW	52 feet	54 feet*
Curb-to-curb	29 feet	28 feet
Number of travel lanes	1 lanes	2 lanes
Parking	Yes	Yes
Bike Lanes	No	No
Direction	1-way	2-way

*developer setback required



High Street looking north.



Church Street (west of Ann Uccello Street)

Church Street, which runs east-west through downtown, suffers from discontinuity in its scale and direction. At times, its travel lanes are oversized and its sidewalk space constrained.

In Downtown West, Church Street is two-way with one lane in each direction. The southern, eastbound lane is large, leaving ample room for on-street parking. As such, one solution would be to add on-street

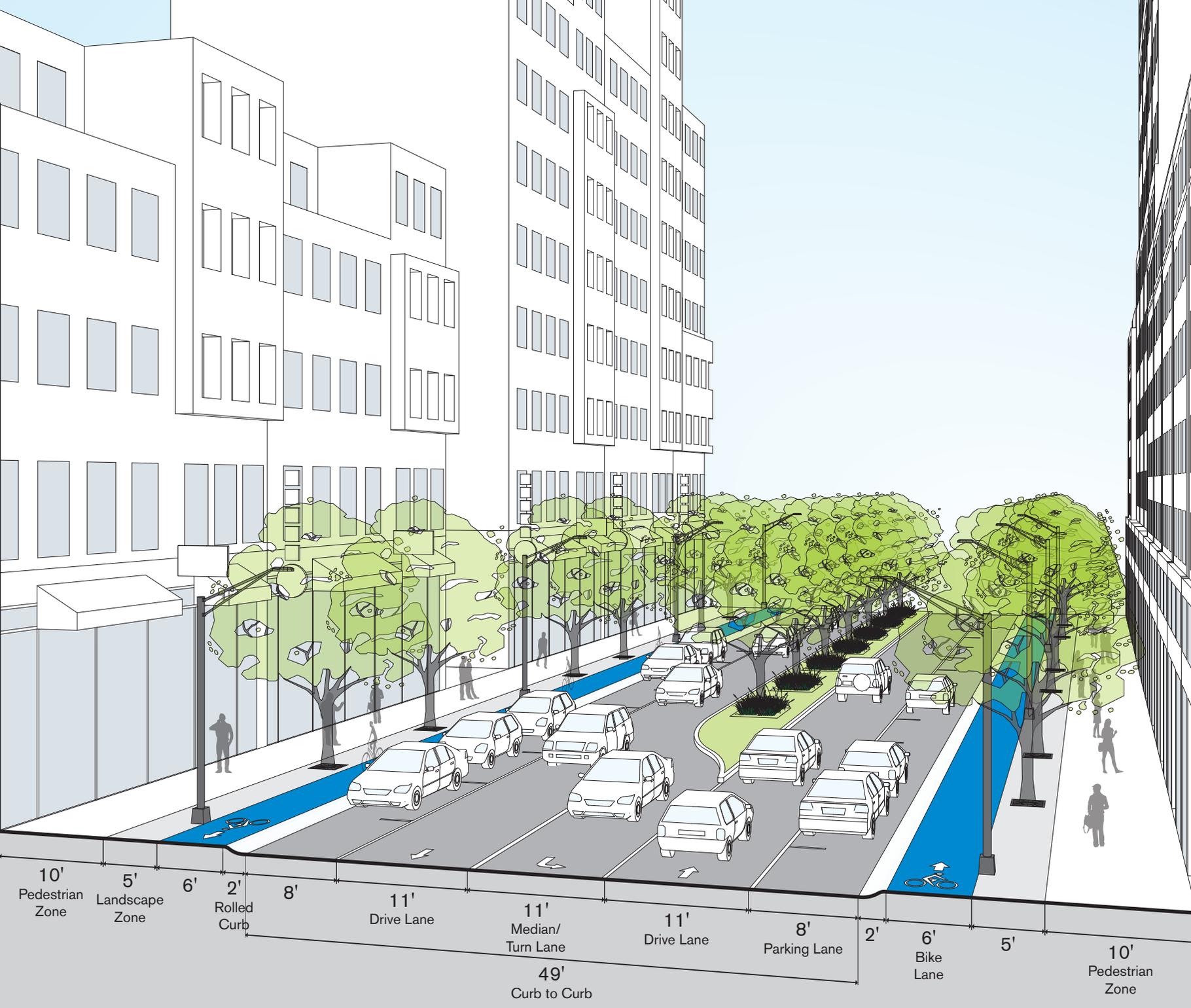
parking and provide more sidewalk space on the south side of the street. The northern side of the street is constrained by the office building that sits between High Street and Ann Uccello Street.

	Existing	Proposed
ROW	54 feet	52 feet
Curb-to-curb	34 feet	28 feet
Number of travel lanes	3 lanes	2 lanes
Parking	No	Yes
Bike Lanes	No	No
Direction	2-way	2-way



Church Street looking east.





10' Pedestrian Zone
5' Landscape Zone
6' Rolled Curb
2' Drive Lane
8' Median/Turn Lane
11' Drive Lane
11' Parking Lane
2' Bike Lane
6' Pedestrian Zone
5' Pedestrian Zone
10' Pedestrian Zone

49' Curb to Curb

Transportation Planning

An efficient and walkable street network is essential to create an inviting and well-functioning City.

Building a “Complete” Network

Transportation Planning Approach

Streets direct people; they move goods; they carry cars, buses, and bicycles; they provide social connections (at times divisions), and ultimately establish the platform for the rest of the city to build around.

An efficient street network that easily moves traffic is desirable, but should not be prioritized to the exclusion of a street designed for the human scale—one that adds daily life to a city and accommodates all modes of transportation in a city equally. This is the intent for the design proposals for new streets and the reconfiguration of existing streets in Hartford.

The plan prioritizes streetscape elements, such as appropriate sized sidewalks and ample room for tree plantings and landscape. Pedestrian safety measures have been incorporated into the street design, such as curb extensions, well-marked street crossings, and crossing islands. Room for bike lanes and paths has been allocated where appropriate, and took into consideration the role of transit in the street design. The collection of these elements go toward a rich and functional street network.

INTERSECTION GEOMETRY
Curb Extensions

Overview

Curb extensions, also known as neckdowns, bulb-outs, or bumpouts, are created by extending the sidewalk at corners or mid-block. Curb extensions are intended to increase safety, calm traffic, and provide extra space along sidewalks for users and amenities.

Curb extensions have a variety of potential benefits including:

- Additional space for pedestrians to queue before crossing
- Improved safety by slowing motor vehicle traffic and emphasizing pedestrian crossing locations
- Less exposure to motor vehicles by reducing crossing distances
- Space for ADA compliant curb ramps where sidewalks are too narrow
- Enhanced visibility between pedestrians and other roadway users
- Restricting cars from parking too close to the crosswalk area
- Space for utilities, signs, and amenities such as bus shelters or waiting areas, bicycle parking, public seating, street vendors, newspaper stands, train and recycling receptacles, and green-space elements

Curb extension designs must be approved by BTD and PWD.

Use

- Curb extensions should be considered at corners or mid-block only where parking is present or where motor vehicle traffic deflection is provided through other outside uses such as bicycle share stations or parks.
- Curb extensions are particularly valuable in locations with high volumes of pedestrian traffic, near schools, at unsignalized pedestrian crossings, or where there are demonstrated pedestrian safety issues.
- A typical curb extension extends the approximate width of a parked car, or about 6' from the curb.
- The minimum length of a curb extension is the width of the crosswalk, allowing the curvature of the curb extension to start after the crosswalk which should deter parking. No stop signs should also be used to discourage parking. The length of a curb extension can vary depending on the intended use (i.e., stormwater management, bus stop waiting areas, restrict parking).
- Curb extensions should not reduce a travel lane or a bicycle lane to an unsafe width.

Considerations

- The turning needs of larger vehicles should be considered in curb extension design.
- Care should be taken to maintain direct routes across intersections aligning pedestrian desire lines on either side of the sidewalk. Curb extensions often make this possible as they provide extra space for grade transitions.
- Consider providing a 20' long curb extension to restrict parking within 20' of an intersection.

Curb extensions should be proposed on snow emergency routes after consultation with BTD and PWD.

- In order to move traffic more efficiently, curb extensions should not be installed on arterials with peak hour parking restrictions. When curb extensions conflict with turning movements, the width and/or length should be reduced rather than eliminating the extension wherever possible.
- Emergency access is often improved through the use of curb extensions as intersections are kept clear of parked cars.
- Curb extension installation may require the relocation of existing storm drainage inlets and above ground utilities. They may also impact underground utilities, parking, delivery access, garbage removal, snow plows, and street sweepers. Those impacts should be evaluated when considering whether to install a curb extension.
- Curb extensions at bus stops are called "bus bulbs." See Transit Accommodations later in this chapter for more information.

182 BOSTON COMPLETE STREETS GUIDELINES 2013 BOSTON TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT 2013 BOSTON TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT 2013 BOSTON COMPLETE STREETS GUIDELINES 183

What are Complete Streets?

Cities across the country are implementing policies plans to ensure that city streets are accessible, safe, inviting and shared by all modes of movement—walking, biking, driving, and taking transit.



Curb extensions are one example of an element that would be incorporated into Complete Streets planning. They can often incorporate landscape design to treat stormwater run-off.

Transportation Improvements

Transportation improvements for the plan are intimately tied to the development districts, as discussed in the prior chapter. However, there are additional transportation improvements in the plan that help provide the thread between disparate parts of downtown and improve general circulation patterns. The following pages illustrate these improvements.

1 New Streets for Downtown North

Urban renewal in Downtown North in the 1960s left much of the area with large superblocks that reduce the options for vehicular circulation and make it difficult for pedestrians and vehicles to get around. The plan recommends reasonably scaled blocks and new streets to improve connectivity.

2 Resolving High Street

High Street is currently one-way southbound, which results in limited options for northbound movements for vehicles coming from Downtown West to Albany Avenue and Main Street. Changing the street to two-way would improve this and open up routes in the study area.

3 Market Street

Market Street is oversized and carries little traffic. It can be reduced in scale to incorporate narrower lanes and on-street parking.



Market Street looking north.

4 Church Street (east of Ann Uccello)

Broader sidewalks will make Church Street a walkable street, improving the east-west transition between Downtown West and the core of downtown, particularly the change in character and scale at Ann Uccello Street.



The intersection at Albany Avenue and Main Street is a priority safety concern.

5 Pleasant Street

Pleasant Street establishes strong east-west movement, but lacks presence. A redesigned Pleasant Street will complement future development.



Pleasant Street looking east.

6 Albany Avenue and Main Street

The intersection of Albany Avenue and Main Street consists of dangerous turning movements and imposing pedestrian crossing. These can be resolved through curb extensions and lane reconfigurations.

1 New Streets for Downtown North

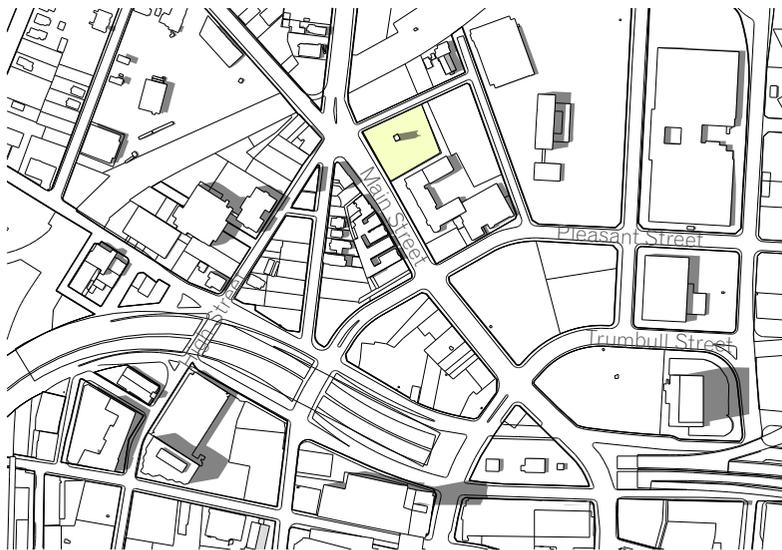
Much of the study area has a tendency to marginalize the pedestrian. The undeveloped parcels—whether vacant or underutilized—and the monumental, but largely unapproachable buildings create an environment that is unwelcoming.

The auto-dominated roads in the area only add to this effect. Many of the Downtown North streets are larger than necessary relative to the amount of traffic they carry on a daily basis. The existing lane capacity is more than double the current and foreseeable demand. This deficiency also offers an opportunity for the streets to be

retrofit to accommodate wider sidewalks, on-street parking, and bike lanes where appropriate.

Additionally, there is an inefficient street network in Downtown North. Many of the blocks are “superblocks”, which create an unpleasant pedestrian condition and restrict multiple outlets for traffic. This plan proposes creating **three new streets** in Downtown North to unlock development potential and create a tighter street grid. Recommendations for new street connectivity include:

- Providing an east-west connection between High Street and Pleasant Street,
- Building a new street that runs north-south between Pleasant Street and Trumbull Street, and
- Constructing a new street between Trumbull Street and Chapel Street.



Existing street network condition in Downtown North.

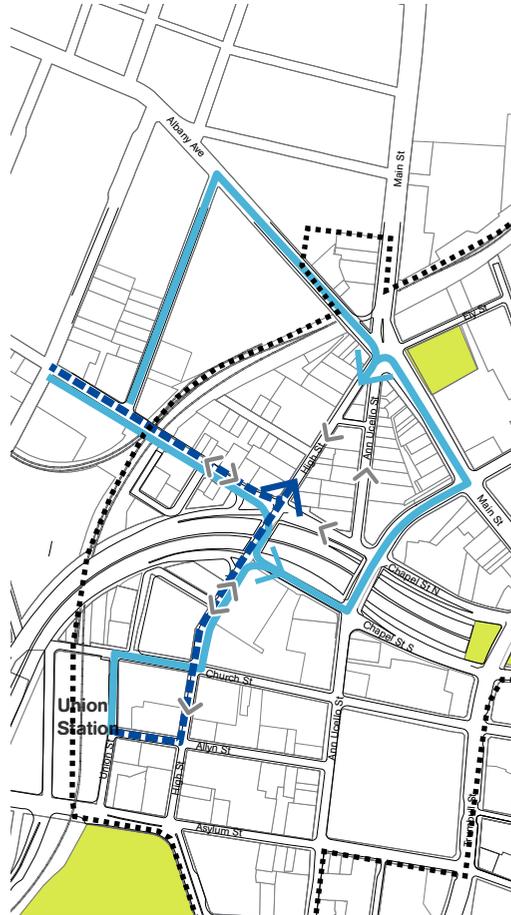


Proposed street for Downtown North.

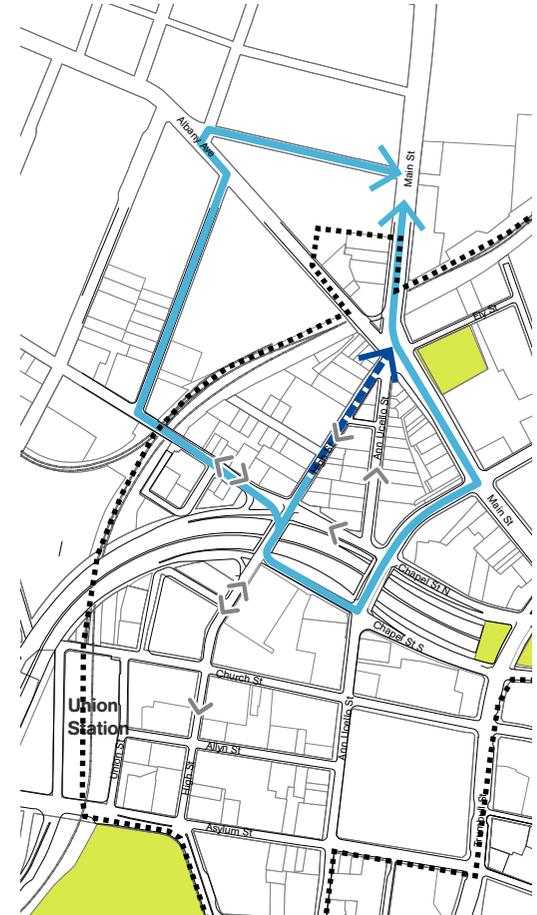
2 Resolving High Street

The one-way circulation on High Street has notable spin-off impacts within this part of downtown, not the least of which is its impact on the viability of adjacent parcels. Any vehicle trip destined for High Street north of Chapel Street from the south or west must make excessive circuitous moves and any vehicle departing High Street north of Chapel Street must be routed similarly. This lack of direct connectivity impacts not just immediate development viability, but how the district north of I-84 is able to interact with downtown.

North and eastbound cars are effectively diverted away from these blocks, and the intersection with Chapel Street at Walnut Street is focused on accommodating entering and turning cars at the expense of safe pedestrian amenities and crossings. A two-way High would reconnect the district, calm vehicle speeds, and makes walking safer—all to the benefit of future development north and south of I-84.



Resolving access to High Street



Providing egress to Main Street

- Additional movement
- Existing movement

3 Albany Avenue and Main Street

The intersection of Albany and Main is a key gateway to the neighborhoods north of downtown; however, today it is characterized by excessive pavement, high vehicle speeds, little pedestrian accommodation, and a history of crashes. Problems at this intersection have been exacerbated by adding extra approach lanes on all streets, which has made the environment unsafe and hostile for both vehicles and pedestrians.

The recommended reconfiguration greatly reduces the size of the center of the intersection. Coupled with making High Street two-way, Albany and Main becomes a traditional four-way intersection without the shallow approach and conflict angles that exist today, bringing logical movement and predictability to the driving and walking experience.

Furthermore, by reducing unneeded roadway capacity, the intersection can be made more complete with bicycle facilities, substantially improved and protected crosswalks, widened sidewalks, and visible curbspace for bus shelters. Returning vehicle space to the walking environment creates new possibilities for public space, landscaping, and public art that can celebrate this gateway at no cost to vehicle capacity.



The Albany Avenue and Main Street proposal reduces crossing distances for pedestrians.



Aerial of the intersection (Ann Uccello Street is currently terminated at the intersection).



The intersection's confusing turning movements make it dangerous for drivers and pedestrians.

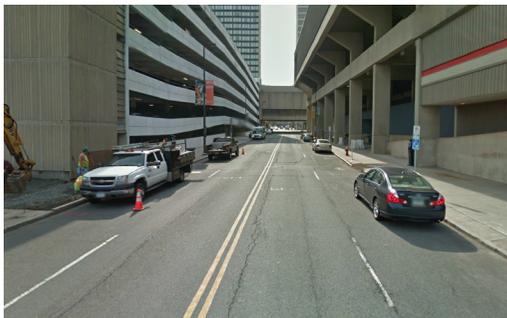
4 Church Street (east of Ann Uccello)

Church Street—east of Ann Uccello—is somewhat constrained by the imposing structures on either side of it (the XL Center to the south and a parking deck to the north).

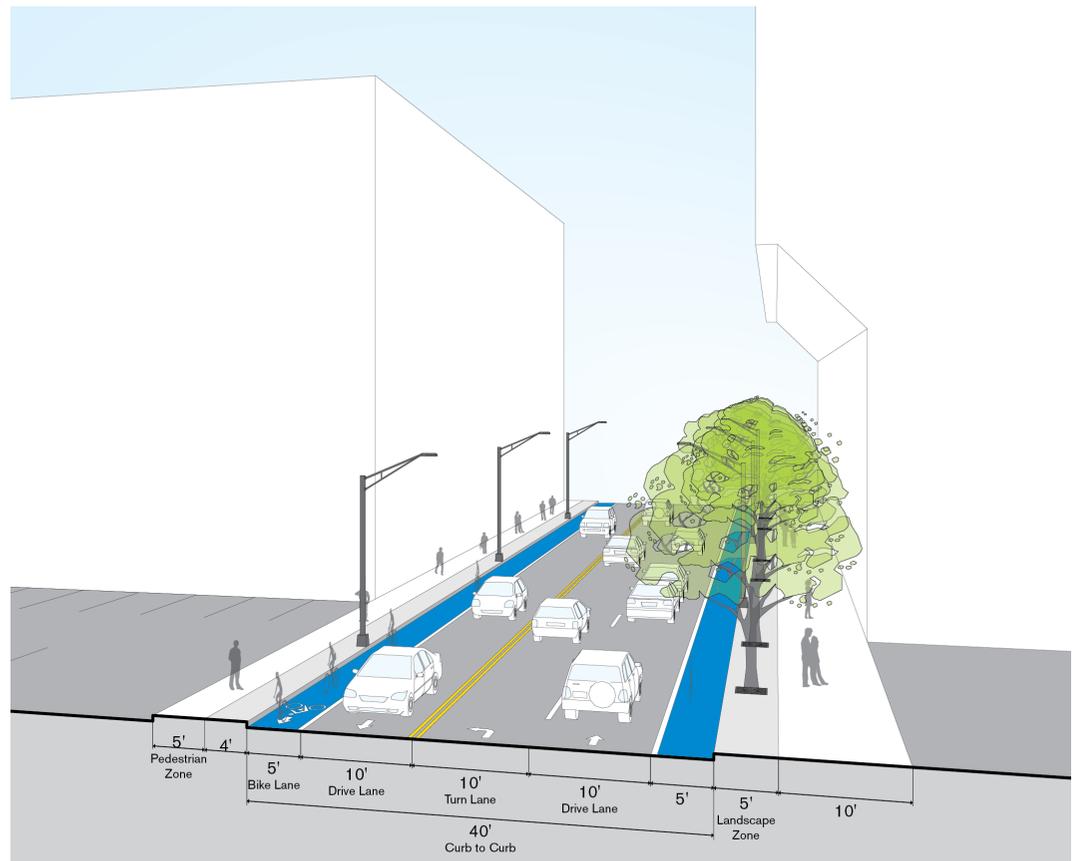
It is currently a two-way, four-lane road. The proposed redesign narrows the travel lanes, eliminates one westbound lane, and incorporates bike lanes into the design. The greatest challenge of this street is

finding ways to mitigate the presence of two inhospitable structures—the parking deck and the backside of the XL Center. This might be achieved through landscape solutions, such as additional planting, or public art.

	Existing	Proposed
ROW	69 feet	64 feet
Curb-to-curb	36 feet	40 feet
Number of travel lanes	4 lanes	3 lanes
On-street Parking	No	No
Bike Lanes	No	Yes
Direction	2-way	2-way



Church Street is overwhelmed by large concrete structures.



Proposed Church Street looking east. Sidewalk widths on the south side of the street vary due to the configuration of the XL Center's footprint.

5 Market Street

Market Street is an instructive example of the over-scaled nature of streets in Downtown North. Historically, Market Street was a primary connection to Downtown Hartford. The construction of I-91 changed the need for Market Street; however, its character remained unchanged.

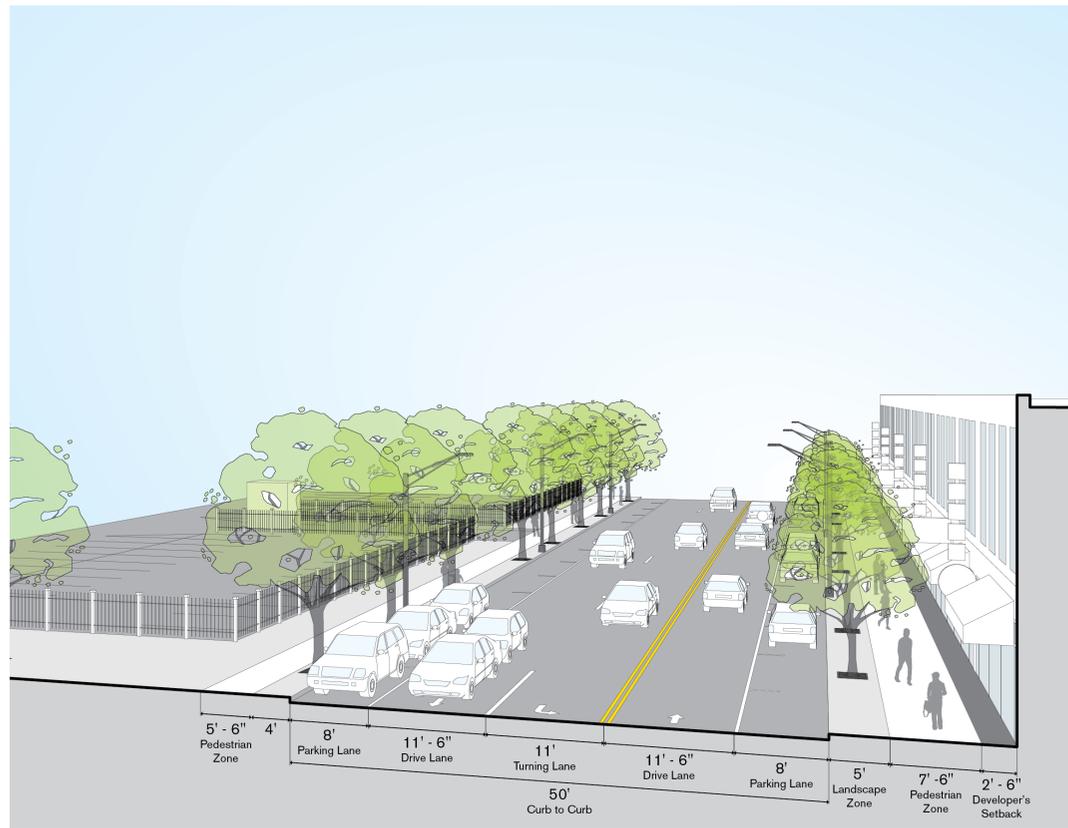
It still has wide travel lanes and the general appearance of a high-speed roadway due to the scale of the street and the lack of uses framing its sides. The proposed design for Market Street narrows the travel lanes, removes one northbound lane, and adds on-street parking. If future development or city

events demand additional road capacity, the on-street parking lanes can be used to handle traffic for peak demand.

	Existing	Proposed
ROW	72 feet	74.5 feet
Curb-to-curb	49 feet	50 feet
Number of travel lanes	4 lanes	3 lanes
On-street-Parking	No	Yes
Bike Lanes	No	No
Direction	Two-way	Two-way



Market Street (looking north) is overbuilt for the current daily traffic that it handles.



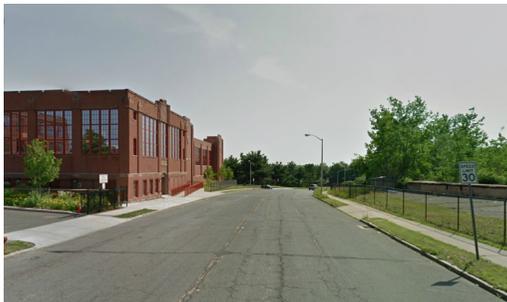
Proposed Market Street looking north.

6 Pleasant Street

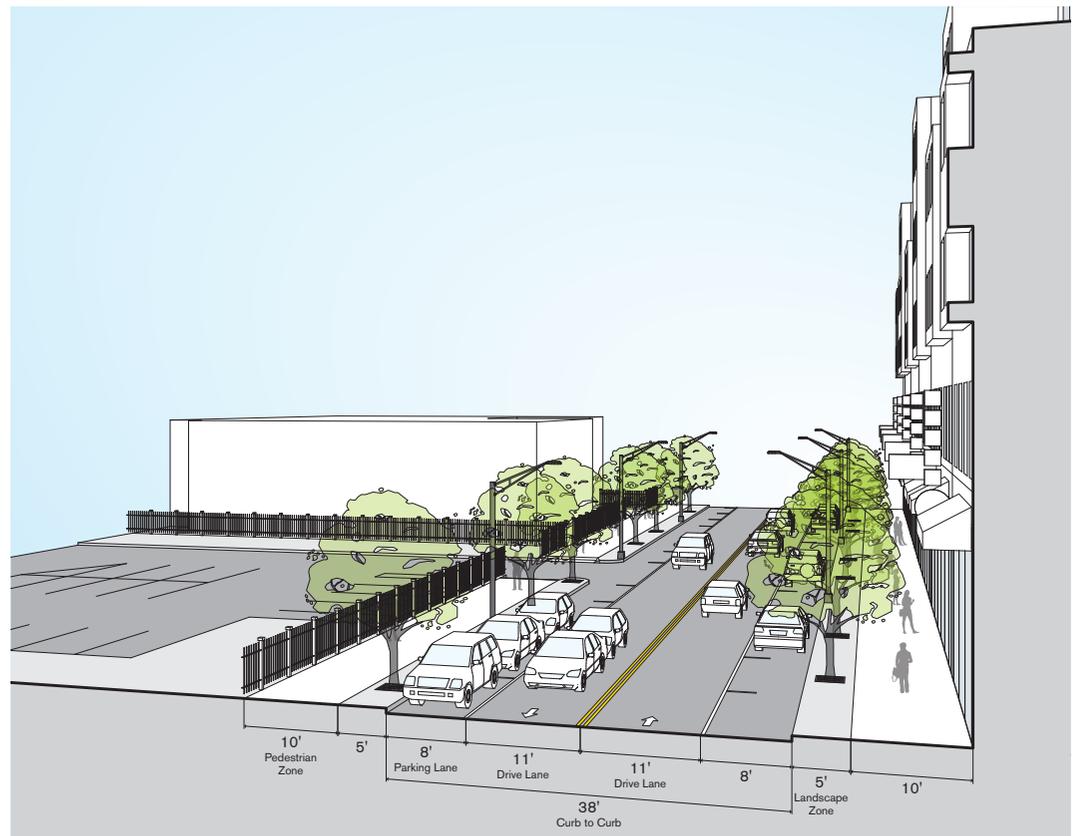
The existing roadway is four lanes wide with no on-street parking, or any defining context. This proposal transforms Pleasant Street, into a neighborhood-scale street. It becomes a two-way street with one travel lane in each direction. It also provides on-street parking.

A smaller-scale street relates well to the height of proposed development along Pleasant Street in Downtown North, which is mostly four-story residential buildings and townhomes. Considering the width of the street relative to the height of the buildings is important when designing environments.

	Existing	Proposed
ROW	68 feet	68 feet
Curb-to-curb	49 feet	38 feet
Number of travel lanes	4 lanes	2 lanes
Parking	No	Yes
Bike Lanes	No	No
Direction	Two-way	Two-way



Pleasant Street looking east at Main Street.



Pleasant street is reconfigured to provide on-street parking and broader sidewalks.



Open Space Planning and Design

The open space approach is defined by transforming what has often been seen as obstacles into assets.

Open Space Assets

In the past thirty years the City of Hartford has rediscovered some of its great open space assets.

Significant open space assets can be found within and adjacent to Downtown North. The growth and reinvestment by non-profits such as Riverfront Recapture have reversed a trend by which the expansion of infrastructure, such as rail lines and highways, have created a barrier for residents and visitors to freely access and enjoy the riverfront parks.

One of the largest and most significant assets for Downtown Hartford is Riverside Park, and the associated trail system. The park's current program, including trails, community rowing, and ropes courses, are the first wave of programs in the park that offers amenities to attract a wider group of people to the district and allow for its growth and expansion.

Wexford Park could be considered the most important space for the development of Downtown North, but it is a neglected and underutilized space. Commonly known as Heaven Park, it suffers from issues similar to the waterfront. Transportation infrastructure is overwhelming and blocks off access, including pedestrian and visual access. The park is in a state of disrepair; however, the construction of a formal skate park has begun with much community support.

Like Wexford Park's presence on I-84 air rights, similar attempts have been made bridge over layers of infrastructure in an effort to partially restore access to the river. Historically, access was gradually lost with the conversion of the Founders Bridge from a carriage and pedestrian gateway to a highway bridge and interchange.

The pedestrian bridge off of Market Street spans I-91 and the adjacent rail line, but due to its visual appearance and isolated access point in downtown, it remains relatively underutilized.

The completion of Mortensen Riverfront Plaza in 1999 created another substantial

connection to Riverside Park. This plaza offers dramatic access, and also a programmable space. One limiting factor of this connection is bicycle access, which is constrained to a single elevator, thus reducing the possibility of wider use.



The Connecticut River is a treasured resource



Wexford Park offers some recreational use, but is physically uninviting for the majority of residents.



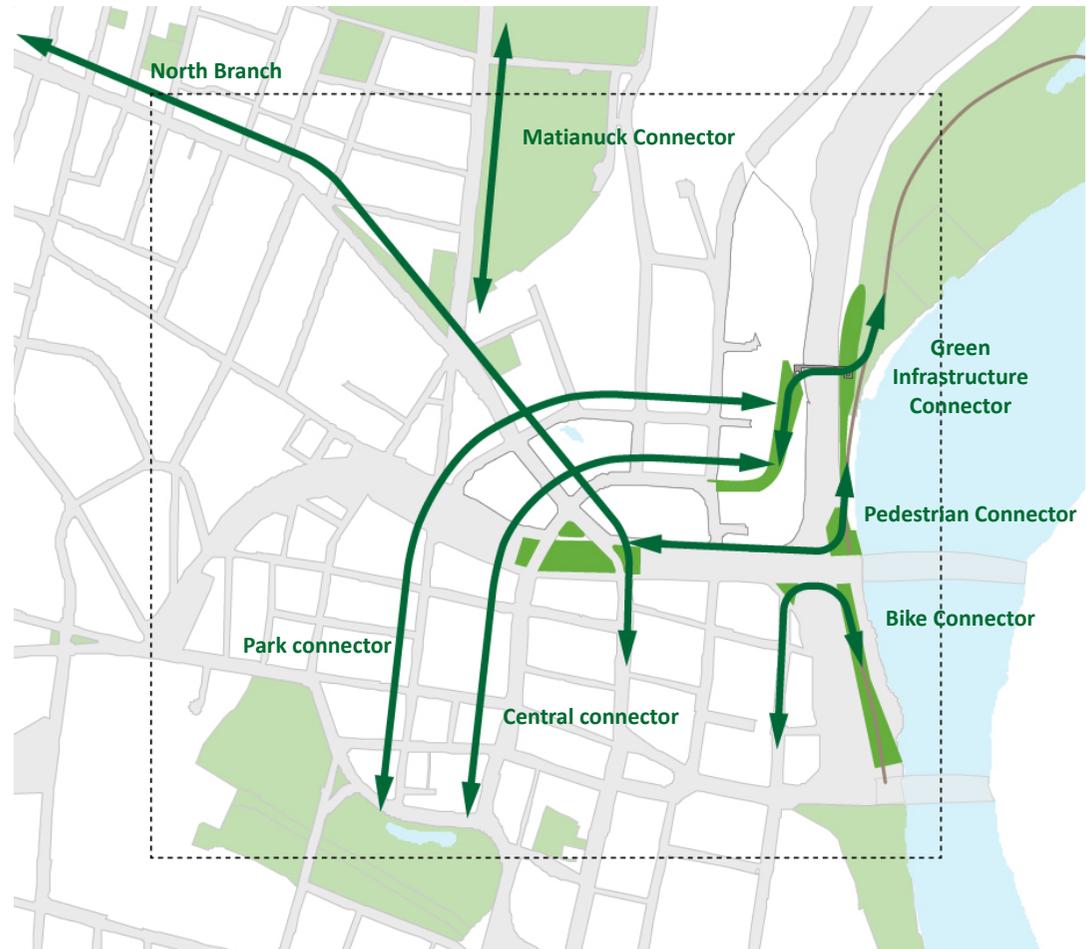
Open Space Connections

Connective Framework

The landscape framework for DN/DW focuses on creating and reinforcing the connections to river, and also looks to connect existing open spaces to a system. Opportunities exist within each of the connections.

- The North Branch connection emphasizes the relationship of the northern neighborhoods to downtown.
- Matianuck Connector connects people from downtown to some of the larger parks north of the district.
- The Pedestrian Connector and the Bike Connector work in tandem to allow for additional access points from the downtown to Riverside Park.
- Further, the Pedestrian Connector links the riverside to the new central open space for Downtown North.

The reformatting and the creation of a landscape connection to and from downtown over the existing pedestrian bridge offers an opportunity to create green infrastructure elements that can clean stormwater runoff and create a vegetated buffer to improve air quality, as well as provide a new city gateway.



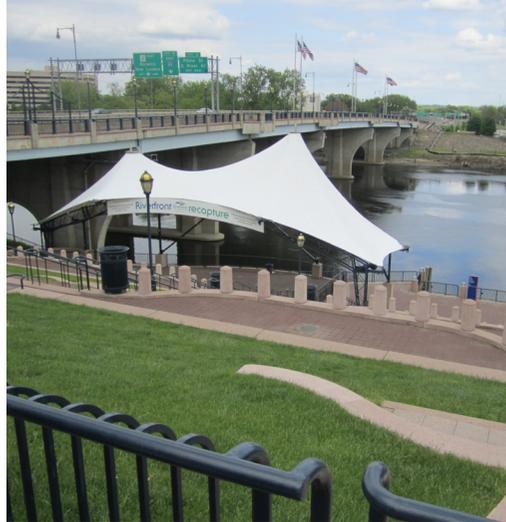
City-wide open space connections/opportunities.

Getting to the River

Given the critical need for access to Riverside Park as recreational corridor for downtown, the team analyzed both the existing crossing and explored the potential for new access points.

Additional vehicular access points to the park are not likely to be feasible or desired since the available space to the left of the park is limited due the flood wall; therefore, any additional vehicular access to the river would come at a great cost. What is more critical to the growth of the district is that existing connections service pedestrian and bikes in a reasonable and seamless way.

Riverside Park can act as a key selling point for downtown because it offers immediately accessible waterfront programs and recreational uses. The more connections that can be created, reinforced or upgraded will help fulfill a landscape framework that will create value and the type of lifestyle amenities that residents desire.



Mortensen Plaza outdoor amphitheatre.



Floodwall adjacent to the Riverside Park trail.



Riverfront path below Bulkely Bridge.



Pedestrian overpass at I-91.

Open Space Design Concepts

Thoughtful landscape solutions can mitigate the barriers caused by infrastructure.

Landscape concepts that address the fragmented connections to the river, and a proposal for redesigning Wexford Park, are the key open space interventions for the project. The following section presents three different options for connecting to the riverfront, as well as a concept for a new “town green” where an existing deteriorated highway cap park sits.



View of the pedestrian bridge over I-91 looking east.



The pedestrian bridge over I-91 is completely enclosed with chain link fencing.



View of the bridge over the interstate.

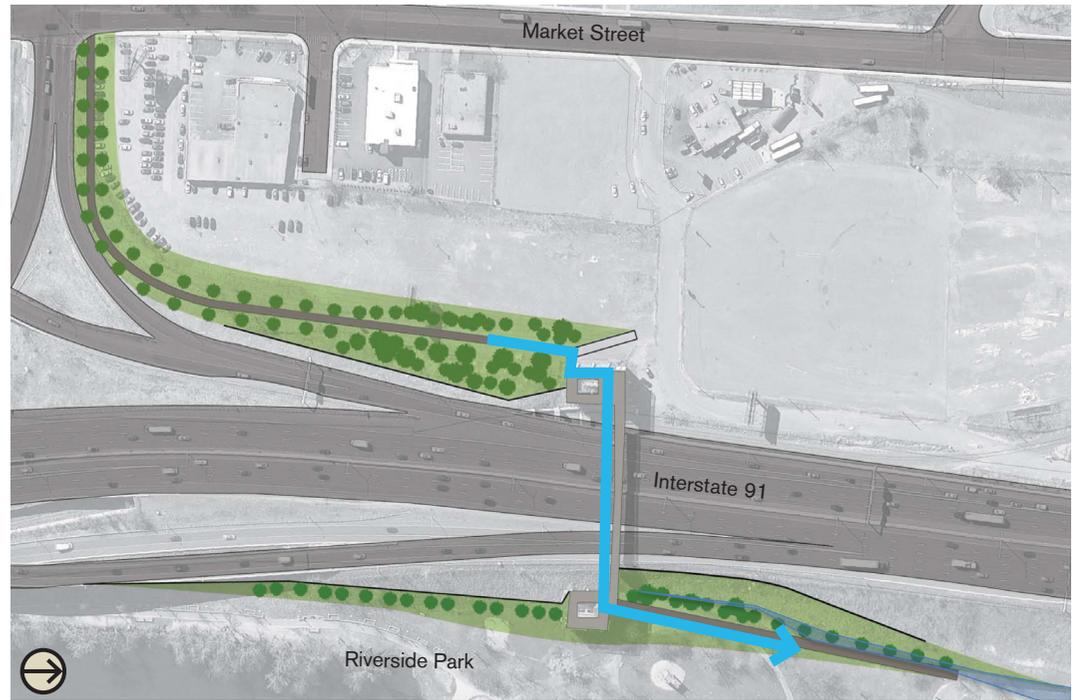
Option 1: Landform

The first option for reconnecting to the river uses a large landform to improve access to the existing pedestrian overpass from Downtown North to Riverside Park.

The landform creates a continuous path from Market Street to the top of the existing pedestrian bridge. A reciprocal landform on the river side of I-91 brings the visitor down into the park where he or she can use the riverfront trail.

The landform is planted with salt-tolerant, pollution-hardy trees species, which frame a visual entrance to the district. Both the trees and the landform have additional environmental benefits including air quality improvement, acoustical buffering, and stormwater polishing capacity that are described further in the landscape strategies section of this chapter.

In addition to the landform, a redesigned pedestrian overpass should be considered. An improved overpass with added design elements, such as new lighting along the stairs and overpass, and decorative screening could provide a more inviting and safer experience when crossing over the interstate.



Option 1: Landform



The landform would be vegetated while the bridge itself could be accented with lighting.



Option 2: Ramp

Converting part of the excess capacity from the Market Street exit ramp on I-84 creates a pedestrian/bikeway that brings the user up to the rail cap from the Market Street intersection. An overlook plaza on top of the rail cap is created that provides views to the river.

A series of switchbacks bring people down to the waterfront trail. While this option could serve both bikes and pedestrians, it is more suitable for pedestrian access because it enables dramatic views, as well as having a tight turning radius because of the switchback. Further study of the slope necessary for the switchbacks would have to be conducted.



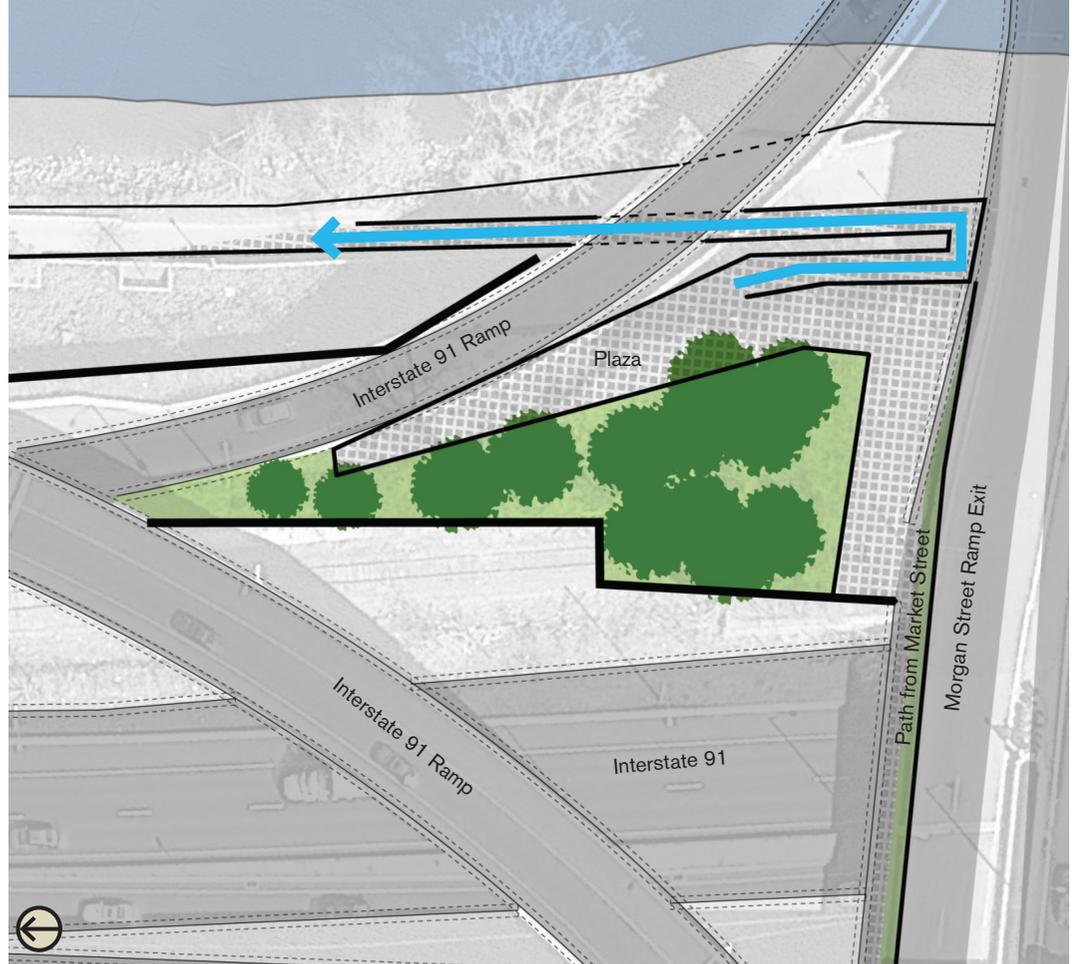
Market Street exit from I-84 looking west.



View of the river trail from the railroad cap.



The proposed access point would be located on the rail cap where it intersects the overpass in the background.



Option 2: Ramp

Option 3: Suspended Bridge

Option 3 offers an access point that builds off of existing pedestrian access to the bridge and over the river. The right-of-way on S. Morgan Street needs to be widened to accommodate a larger sidewalk, and additional capacity exists in this configuration for bike and pedestrian access alongside the highway entry ramp.

The current pedestrian access from the exit ramp that runs on top of the train tunnel would have to be shifted slightly to the west to allow for appropriate clearance for bicycles (see the bottom left photo). The new bridge to the river would connect to this pedestrian path, running alongside the floodwall to the river path below.

Currently, access to the river for bicycles is even more limited than pedestrian access. An elevator is necessary to bring bikes to the river at Mortensen Plaza. The other access point is at the boat house on the northern access point for the river trail.



A widened sidewalk could comfortably bring pedestrians and bike to the bridge entry.



Looking up to the proposed entry point of the suspended bridge in the background at the overpass.



The existing path to the proposed bridge would need to be widened to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists.



View from the proposed entry adjacent to the floodwall and rail cap.



Option 3: Suspended Bridge

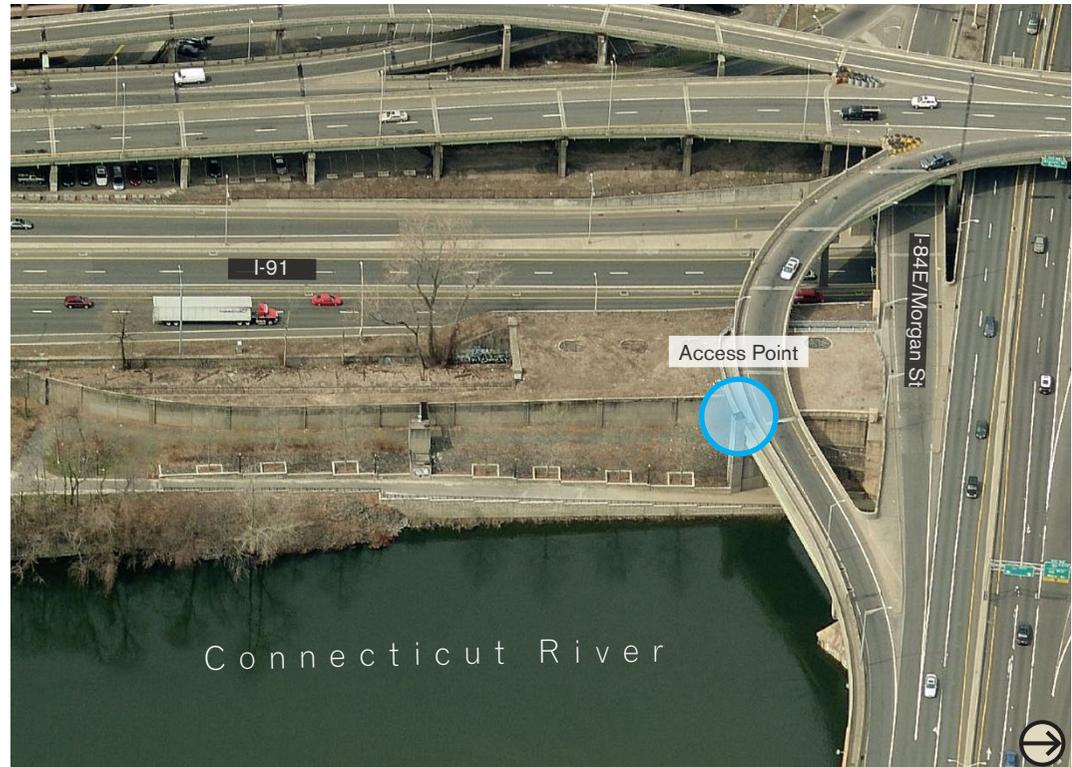




A new ramp running from the pedestrian pathway adjacent to I-84 just past the S. Morgan Street ramp onto I-84 could run parallel to the floodwall down to the riverfront. This path would accommodate both bicyclists and pedestrians.

A prefabricated bridge structure could offer the flexibility to create an access point in the short and long term since the structure can be put in place prior to any improvements to the highway and floodwall infrastructures. While improvements are made, the structure can be stored and then recommissioned after the construction is completed.

The reconfiguration of the floodwall, as well as other ConnDOT activities, may make both Options 2 and 3 financially viable if additional funding is available.



Access to the suspended bridge could happen at the existing pedestrian path over the Bulkeley Bridge

The Town Green

Development and open spaces can enhance the lifestyle that urban dwellers desire.

Wexford Park (a.k.a., Heaven park) is in a prime location, but its current configuration does not allow for the type of desirable uses that will ultimately bring value to the district.

Visual and circulatory access issues limit the use of the park. Walls, high curbs, and fences inhibit pedestrian flow from the sidewalk. Visually the space is broken up by a central space and two flanking spaces. The large ventilation building prevents visual access and consumes large areas of the park.

The park suffers from disrepair and neglect, and is generally not a hospitable environment. This is exacerbated by the fact that in the central space is primarily hardscape. However, recent investments in a skate park on the highway cap suggest that the space is used by some residents for recreation.



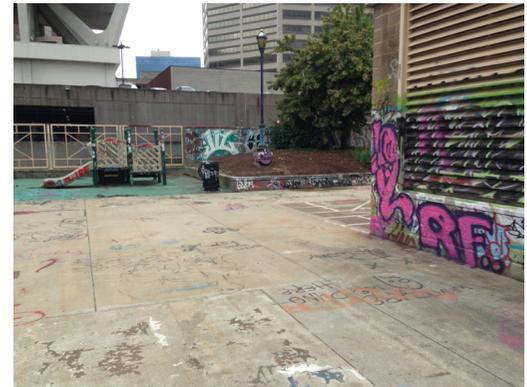
Access to the central open space is hindered by high walls at the sidewalk's edge.



The flanking public space is empty and provides little visual connection to the central open space.



The central open space is entirely hardscape, limiting the functionality of the park.



The park is tagged with graffiti, poorly landscaped, uninviting to pedestrians, and in general, is neglected.

A new town green could tie together the downtown core with Downtown North becoming a center for active and passive recreation. It will be an urban amenity that supports the growing downtown community and allows for wide diversity of program and activities. To create a this new signature space there must be alterations to the current configuration:

1 Acoustical Berms and Planting

To reduce noise and particulate pollution from the highway, berms planted with trees are created. These elements form a visual and acoustical barrier that shape the space inside the green. From the highway the landforms and plantings create a new green gateway on I-84.

2 Unified Paving

Unified paving throughout the park ties together the disparate spaces to the north,

west, and east where new forested plazas offer seating and shelter from the summer sun.

3 Great Lawn

Removing walls, tall curbs and fences allows for visual and pedestrian circulation. Regrading the central space turns it into a lawn for leisure and relaxation.

A new plaza space to the south unifies the reconfigured ventilation system buildings, which act as armatures for active recreation and spectacles like skateboarding and climbing. To the north the great lawn provides space for people to watch the events or to relax on the lawn.

The other remnant buildings of the tunnel ventilation system serve as architectural follies clad in energy-efficient displays offering information and digital content.



The Plaza at Harvard University, Cambridge, MA



Rose Kennedy Greenway, Boston, MA



1. Acoustical Berms and Planting



2. Unified Paving



3. Great Lawn



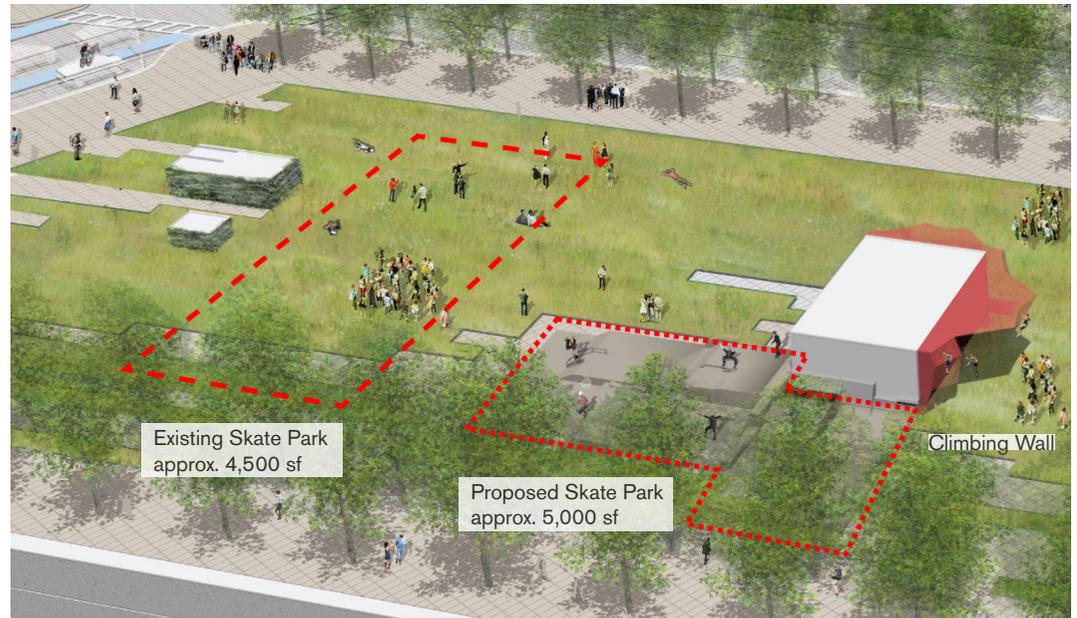
A proposed Town Green would provide recreational and passive open space for all of Hartford's residents.

Skate Park

While additions to the skate park are currently underway, there are other opportunities for amenities for the whole community. The proposed configurations will allow for a skate park that is larger than the one currently under construction.

It is likely that within the time frame for design and construction of the Town Green the current skate park will be in need of repair. It is possible that some of the elements currently being use for the park can be reused at the time of the new park.

Given the proximity of this site to several of the proposed development parcels, as well as its relationship to the current assets of the Downtown, it is critical to the future of the district.

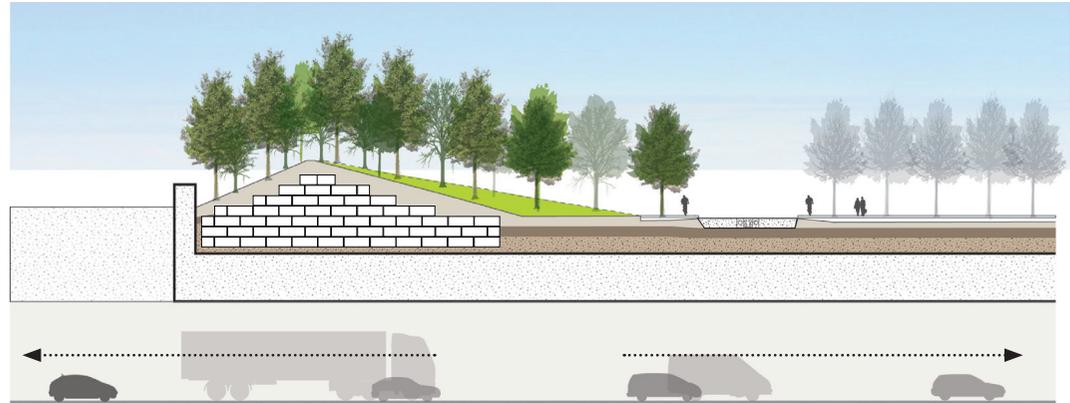


Landscape Guidelines

Landscape Infrastructure

An efficient way of constructing an acoustical berm on top of the I- 84 overpass is with use of a geo-foam block material. Light weight engineered geo-foam allows for construction flexibility and lowers overall construction costs.

The construction of the acoustical berm would also include layer of structural soil allowing for planting of new vegetation for visual and noise separation from the highway below.

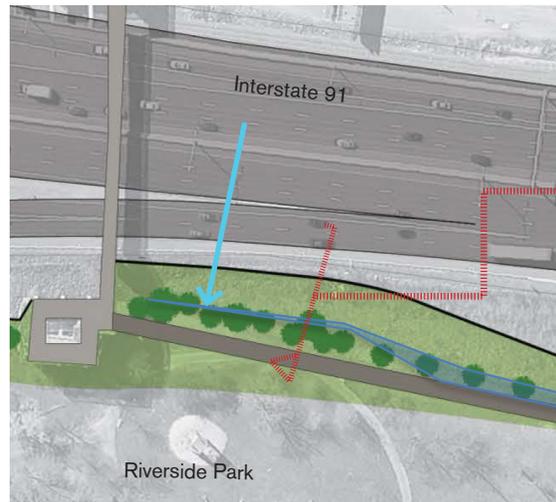


Acoustical Berm (see page 101).

Blue Infrastructure

The proposed pedestrian and bicycle pathway along the Riverside Park that connects to the existing pedestrian overpass structure, presents the opportunity for integrating storm water management.

The new landform system would take runoff from I-91 and allow it to be filtered through series of infiltration zones such a small wetlands located along the pedestrian and bicycle path.



Option 1: Landform - Partial Plan (see page 93).

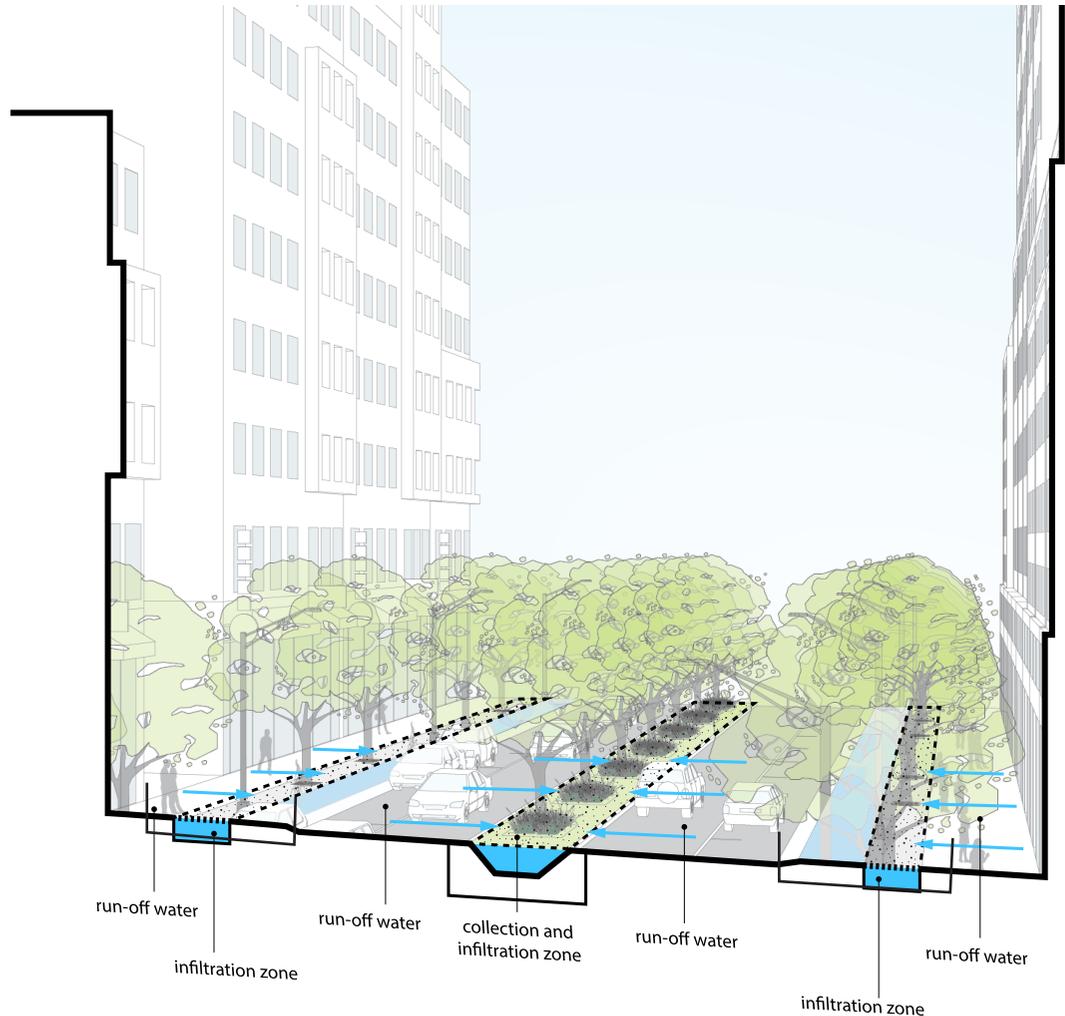


Detail of open landform.

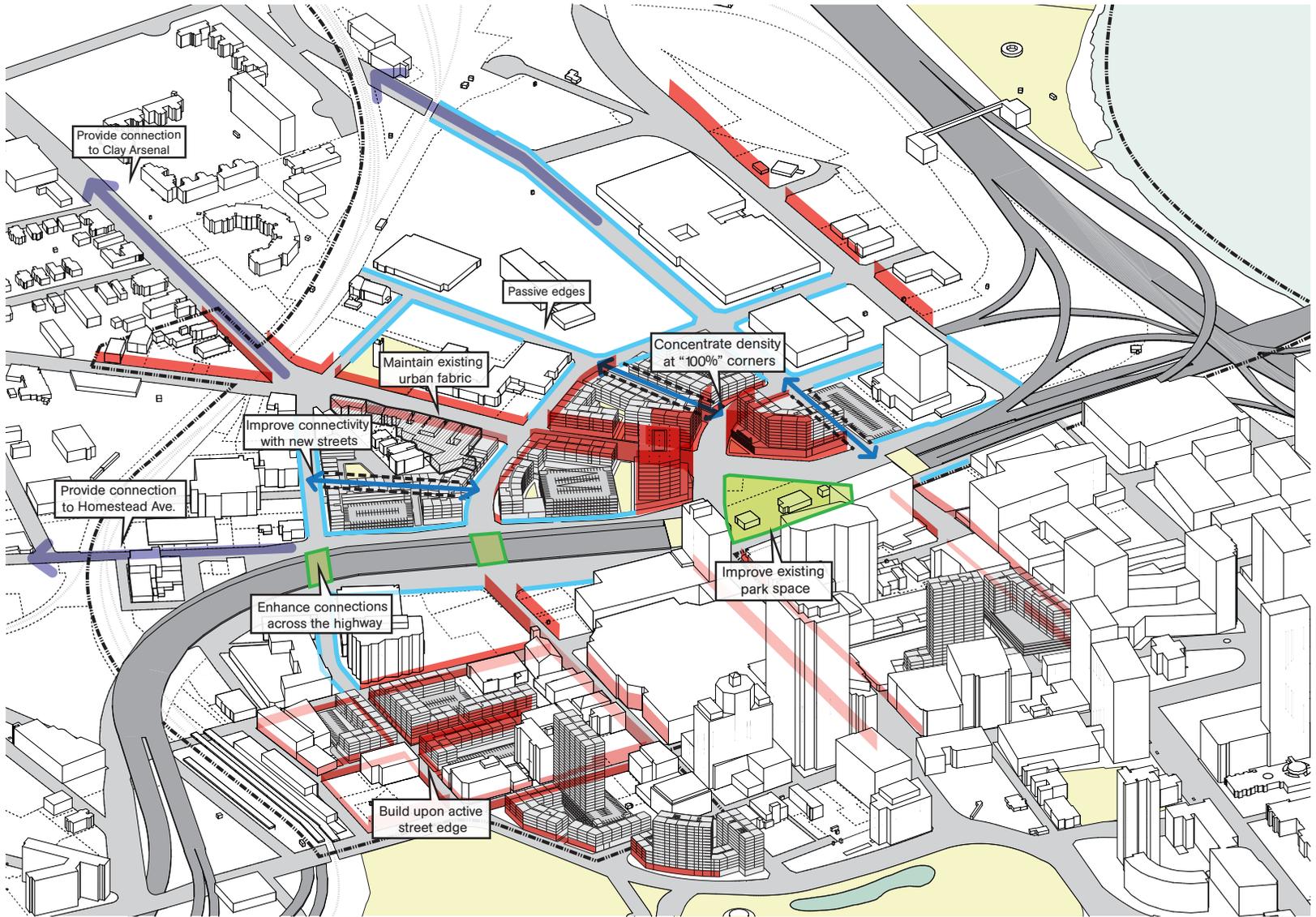
Landscape Guidelines

Living Streets

- A sustainable approach to the design of city streets integrates runoff and storm water management
- The hydrological system of the proposed Main Street incorporates two water management strategies
 - 1 Runoff Collector Buffers run along the sidewalks and planting areas on both sides of the street. They collect the runoff water from sidewalks and use the water for tree and planting irrigation, as well as directing water towards other infiltration areas.
 - 2 A Runoff Collector and Infiltration Zone spans the middle area of the boulevard. This allows for collecting and infiltrating stormwater runoff from the street, and irrigating the whole spine of the boulevard.



Integration of sustainable landscape infrastructure



Design Guidelines and Zoning

Design Guidelines and Zoning

The Design Guidelines and Zoning chapter provides design recommendations that should be incorporated into future RFPs and codified into the zoning regulations. These recommendations are reflected in the Downtown North/Downtown West plan.

Tools for Implementing the Plan

The proposed vision for new buildings in Downtown North and Downtown West is predicated on a balance of building types, including townhouses, five-story apartment buildings, and high-rises of various heights. The plan acknowledges the scale of existing neighborhoods and buildings, and the need to create diversity on the parcels north of I-84 where new development needs to mend the break in the urban fabric between downtown and the neighborhoods of Clay Arsenal and Upper Albany to the north.

To ensure that the plan is realized, the City should use two related tools that can be applied to direct the form of future development.

① Design Guidelines for Development RFPs

The first are development guidelines for RFPs. Through the use of graphic diagrams and language, these guidelines frame the “dos and don’ts” of building on the parcels, if acquired through a public disposition process. These requirements would be included as part of the official “Request for Proposals,” thus binding the winning development team to a final project that met guidelines. The design recommendations (outlined later in the chapter) that are both measurable and qualitative are applicable to the guidelines and will also be incorporated into a city-wide form-based zoning code.

② Form-based Zoning

The second tool to encourage new development consistent with the vision is new zoning. The process to enact new zoning takes time because it requires public comment and support from the City

Council; as a result, the City will need to use development guidelines to shape development for near-term developer RFPs on City-owned parcels.

The City has launched a rezoning effort in Downtown neighborhoods. The code will ensure that the building stock and related street network are consistent-enough in height, scale, and character that general form-based rules can be applied. The areas within the study area of this plan will be prioritized in the rezoning effort.

The Limitations of Existing Zoning in Downtown Hartford

Hartford’s existing zoning is based on the conventional Euclidean model, with districts defined by the dominate allowable use in each district. This framework was originally implemented to protect residential neighborhoods from the encroachment of non-compatible uses. In addition, dimensional requirements in each district are meant to protect property owners from abutting uses through required setbacks and maximum building heights. As a result, the existing code is not an effective tool

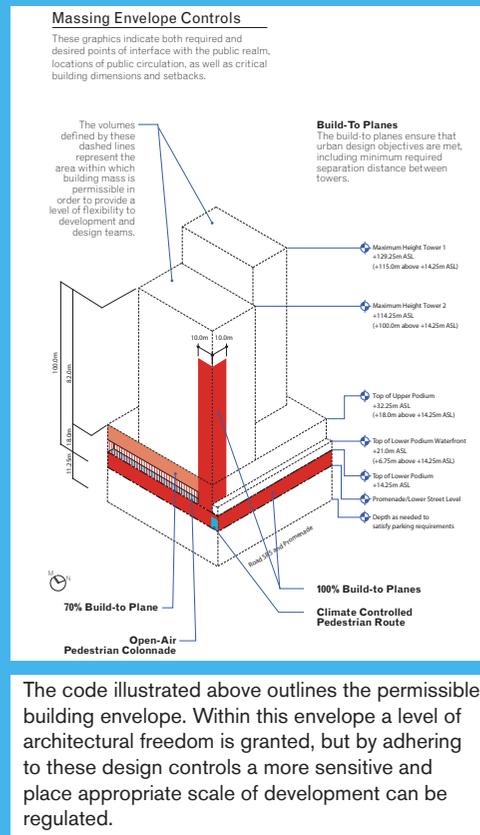
What are Form-based Codes?

Cities across the country are implementing policies to ensure that future development reflects the desired character and form of the community. One way to accomplish this is through form-based codes.

Form-based codes use physical form (rather than separation of uses) as the organizing principle for the code in order to generate desired built form and a high-quality public realm. They are regulations (not simply recommendations) adopted into city or county law.

They focus on the relationship between buildings and the public realm, the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another, and at times the scale and types of streets and blocks. The regulations are generally presented in both words, diagrams and other visuals.

Form-based codes can take on different levels or degrees of regulation. They may go as far as to determine architectural detail, the character and dimensions of the public realm, and signage standards.



for achieving the objectives of the plan for Downtown North and Downtown West, as it is based on use rather than massing and scale.

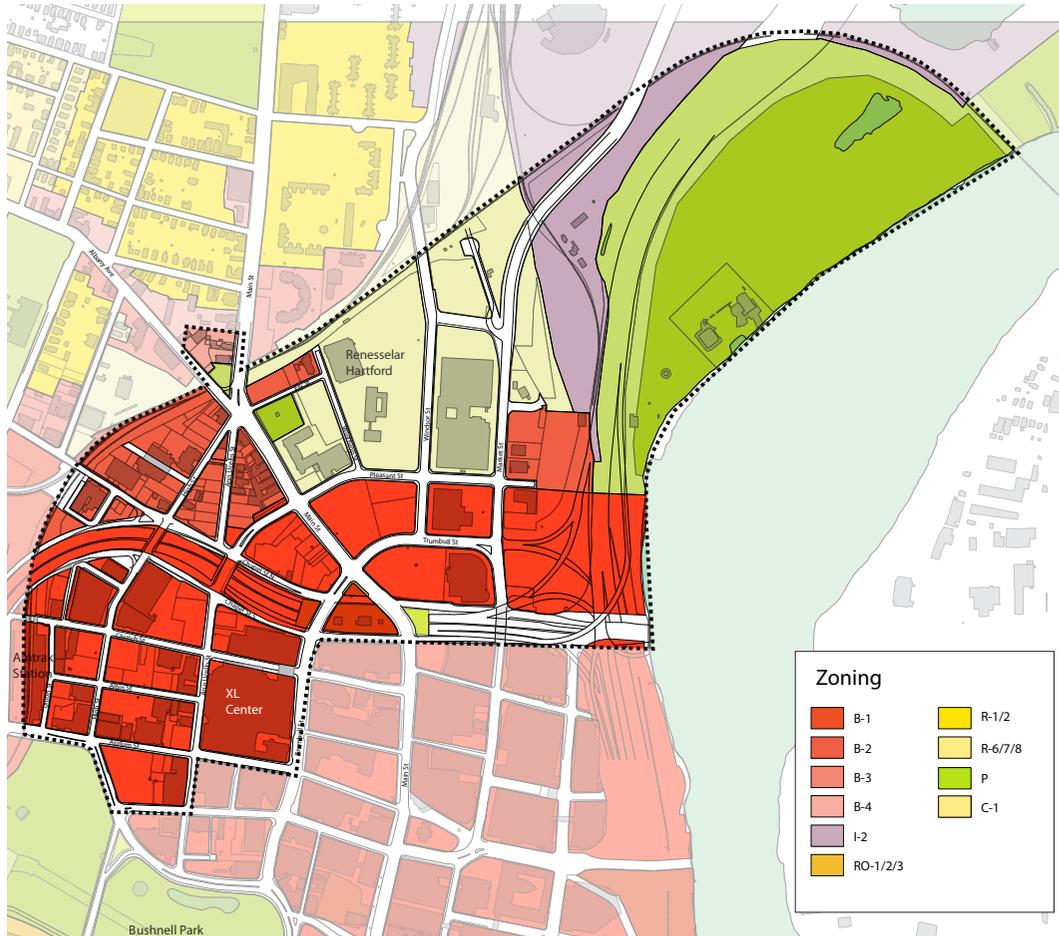
There are a total of twenty zoning categories for the City of Hartford. The categories currently in the study area are as follows:

- ➔ B-1: Downtown Development District
- ➔ B-2: Downtown Development
- ➔ Perimeter District
- ➔ C1: Commercial District
- ➔ I-2: Industrial District
- ➔ P: Public Property and Cemetery District

While the current zoning categories seem appropriate for their designated areas, some are incredibly complex, finite in their allowable uses, and highly detailed in their dimensional requirements in some areas and not prescriptive enough in others.

The existing zoning causes frequent requests for variances or overlays, thus slowing down the permitting process for future development. This can be a disincentive to development that might otherwise meet the objectives of the proposed plan. The recent trend of

Design Guidelines and Zoning



Existing Downtown Hartford zoning

establishing “form based” codes instead of traditional zoning simplifies the code, makes it easier to understand and promotes a faster permitting process for developers.

Recommendations for Design Guidelines and Zoning

Given the real estate market in Hartford for the foreseeable future, the proposed plan, and the guidelines and zoning, should define the heights, building envelope, required building setbacks, and active pedestrian edges of future buildings. In addition, the guidelines and zoning should indicate acceptable locations for loading docks and parking entrances. These preferences will be communicated by distinguishing between primary and secondary streets. This then sets up the framework for differences between pedestrian and vehicle-dominant activities.

This sections presents the following design recommendations to be incorporated into both design guidelines for RFPs and future form-based zoning for the City:

- ➔ Build-to plane
- ➔ Access and loading

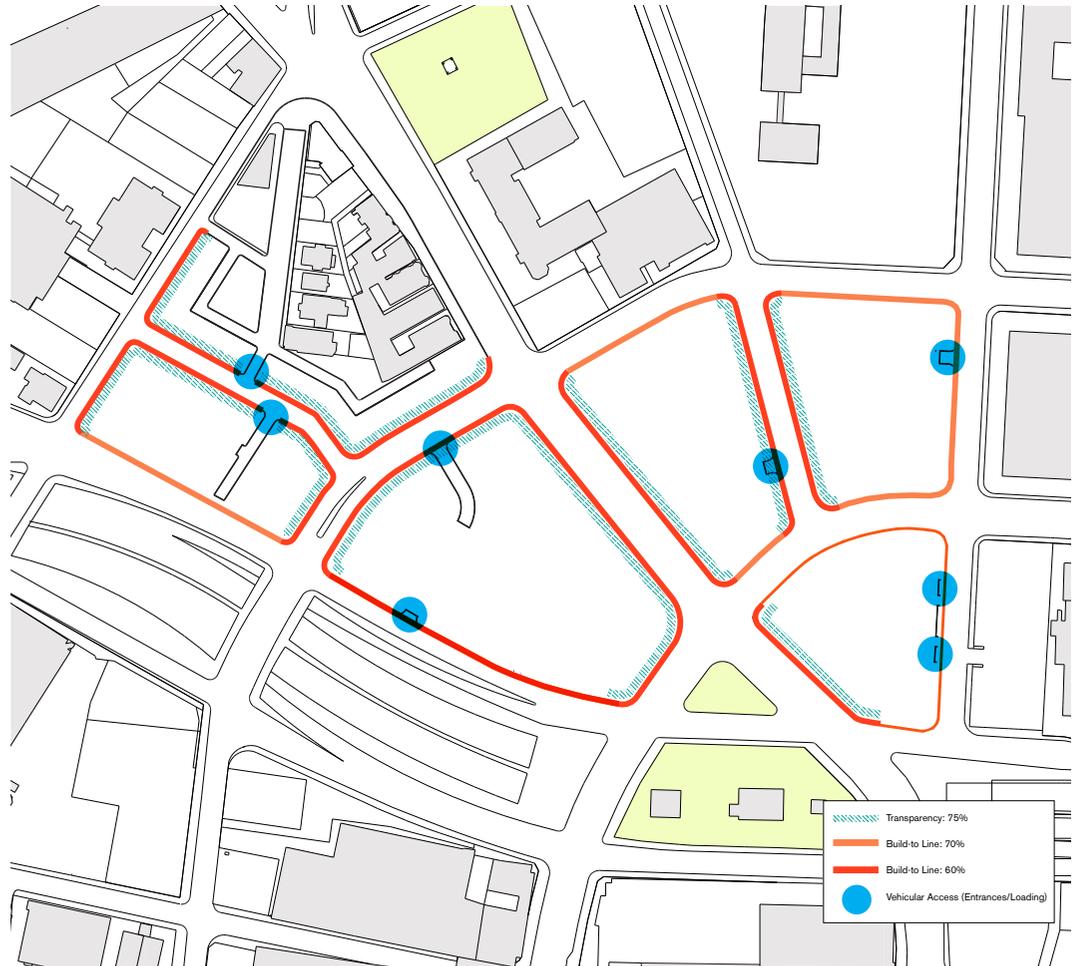
- Curb cuts
- Entrances
- Transparency
- Ground-floor treatment
- Building massing
- Building setbacks
- Parking

Build-to Plane

- The build-to plane shall be a minimum of three and a maximum of four stories.
- Build-to plane for townhomes shall be a maximum of 45 feet.
- The buildings shall have a required “step back” of a minimum of 15 feet from the prescribed build-to plane prior to a vertical transition.

Build-to Line

- A build-to line shall be applicable for 70% of the street frontage for primary streets and 60% of the street frontage for secondary streets.
- Remaining percentage shall be used as space for plazas or entrances, and vehicular access on designated streets.



Design guidelines for RFP showing future street network

Design Guidelines and Zoning

Access and Loading

- Vehicular access and loading for delivery trucks shall be relegated to side or rear entrances relative to the primary street.
- Entrances shall minimize disruption to the building and sidewalk interface.

Curb Cuts

- Curb cuts shall be minimal along primary street fronts.
- Curb cuts are primarily limited to access for parking or loading areas along the side or rear entries of buildings.

Entrances

- Vehicular entrances for parking and service shall be placed along side streets.
- Building entries and doors shall orient to the street.

Transparency

- The required transparency shall be a minimum of 75% of the ground-floor streetwall condition.
- The percentage of transparency shall also reflect the practical programmatic needs of the individual buildings.

Ground Floor and Streetwall Experience

- Ground-floor height shall be set between 18-20 feet high.
- The ground floor shall enable a strong, transparent relationship between the street front and building interior.
- Blank walls on active primary streets shall be prohibited.
- Breaks in the streetwall shall be limited to 10% of the length of the building.

Building Setbacks

- Buildings shall have a zero lot line setback from the rear edge of the sidewalk with some exceptions.
- In the event the proposed ROW for the facing street is wider than the existing ROW, a developer setback from the existing property line shall be required to accommodate the proposed ROW.

Parking

- Parking decks and lots shall be screened from the street by architectural treatments, landscaping, or fencing.
- Parking lots shall be placed behind buildings when possible and screened from the street.

- Where feasible, parking structures shall be wrapped by ground-level use.
- Entry to parking structures and lots shall be limited to side and rear streets.

Design Principles for Development

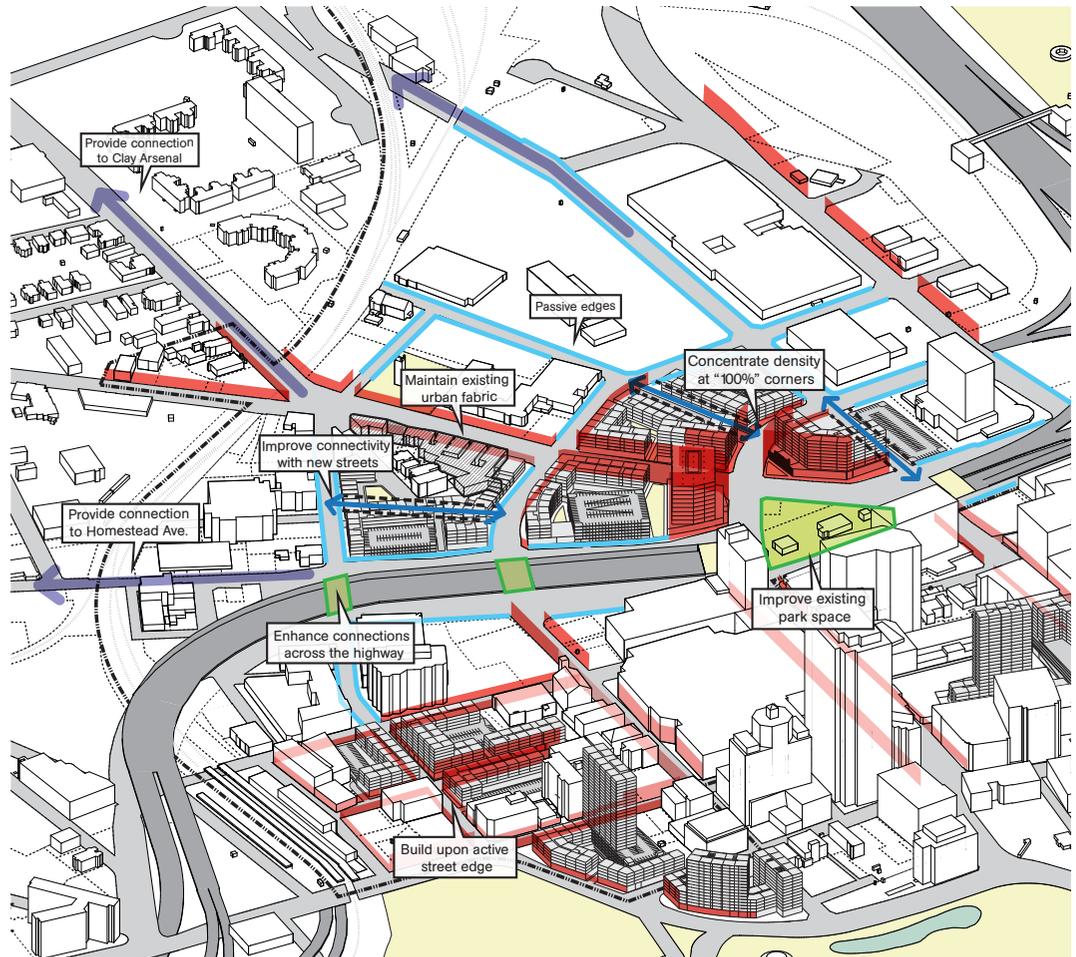
Aside from the more measurable and objective elements of the design guidelines, such as ground-floor heights and build-to planes, there are qualitative and design driven aspects of development to be incorporated into the design guidelines for development and future zoning.

- Intersections or street corners that act as a central axis for transportation or pedestrian flow known as “100% corners” shall have a higher concentration of residential and commercial development to maintain an active urban environment.
- Higher density development shall step down in scale as it interfaces with primarily lower-density residential neighborhoods to respect the character and quality of those areas.
- Entrances to buildings shall denote a sense of arrival and significance, particularly on street corner entrances.

- Extended lengths of blank walls on an active street shall be prohibited.
- The architectural transition from the ground level to the upper stories of each building shall establish a zone that clearly distinguishes the lower elevation facing the public realm from the private uses above.
- Balconies on residential buildings shall be encouraged to provide amenities and distinguish the use.

Material Recommendations

- Sustainable building materials and methods are encouraged for construction of new buildings and retrofits of existing buildings.
- LEED certified development may be used as a guide, and benchmark, toward sustainable building practice.
- Durable building materials are required; therefore, EIFS will not be permitted on facades that face the public realm. It will only be allowed on facades that face the interior of the block.
- Chain link fences will not be permitted on primary and secondary streets, or in areas that face the public realm.



Urban design principles