



The
Downtown
Hartford

Economic and
Urban Design
Action Strategy

December 1998

Prepared by:
Urban Strategies Inc.
in association with
Development Strategies Inc.
Glattig Jackson Kercher -
Anglin Lopez Rinehart
and Bartram and Cochran
Svigals Associates
Patrick Pinnell
Tony Hiss
Norman Mintz



URBAN STRATEGIES INC.

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The Client Team

• The MetroHartford Millennium Project

Karl J. Krapek, Chairman

• The Hartford Downtown Council

Anthony Caruso, Executive Director
Gary Flynn, Director of Marketing
Linda Snyder, Manager of Support Services

• The Hartford Downtown Council Action Strategy Task Force

Dr. David D'Eramo, Chairman
Robert Birnbaum, Co-Chair
Honorable Steven Park, Co-Chair
Edward L. Morgan Jr., Co-Chair
Mustafa Abdul-Salaam
Commissioner James Abromaitis
Honorable Veronica Airey-Wilson
John Bazzano
Saundra Kee Borges
James Boucher
John Burns
Anthony Caruso
Peter Ellef
Cynthia Gardner
Marie Lopez Kirkley-Bey
Eileen Kraus
Michael Lipton
Wayne Mills
Marjorie Morrissey
Timothy Moynihan
Marie O'Brien
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William Russell
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Richard Weaver-Bey
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- **Urban Strategies**

Ken Greenberg
Nicola Jancso
Warren Price
Michael Sraga

in association with

- **Development Strategies**

Richard Ward
Bob Lewis
Ruth Sergenian

- **Glatting Jackson Kercher Anglin
Lopez Rinehart**

Walter Kulash
Wade Walker

- **Patrick Pinnell**

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Barry Svigals

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Norman Mintz

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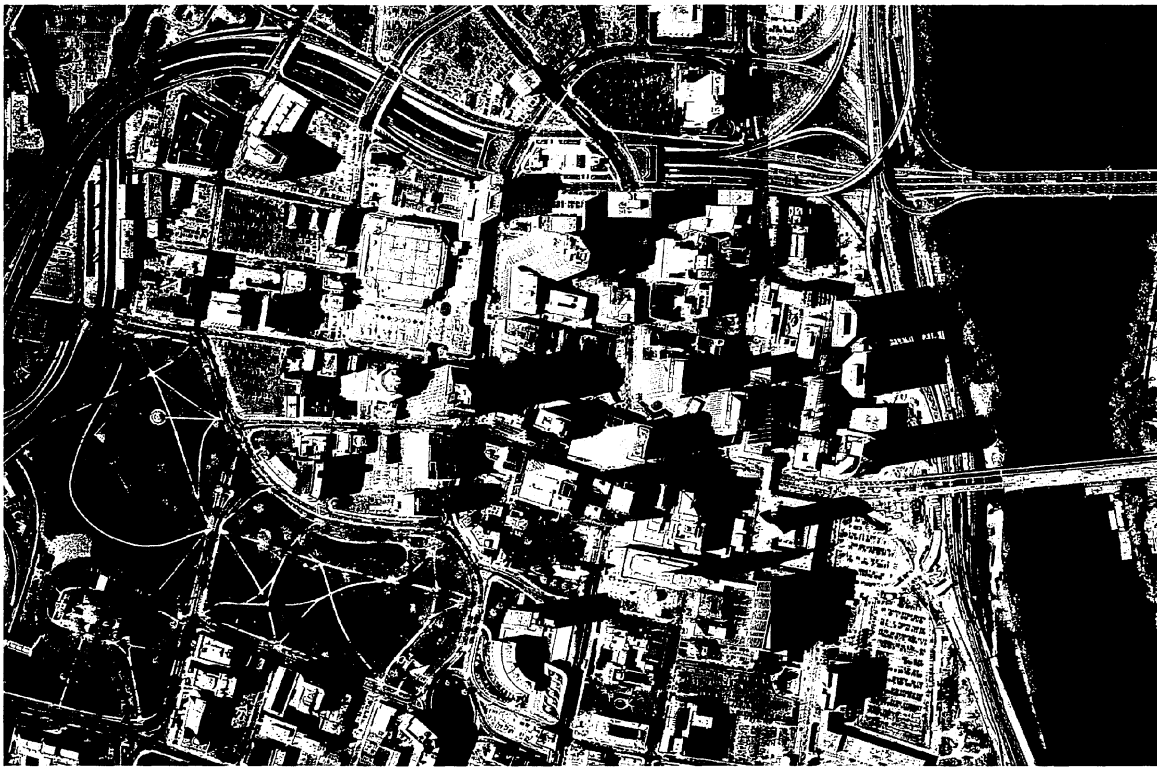
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Forward:

Hartford at Its Heart

by Tony Hiss

There were times, during the fiercely anti-urban decades after World War II, when it seemed as though hundreds of American cities might simply disappear. This hasn't happened, despite a full half-century of massive federal disinvestment, explosive suburban sprawl, and unthinking highway construction programs that chopped many cities into strangely shaped, dysfunctional fragments.



Interstates 84 and 91 slice through downtown Hartford

Forward

Instead, on the verge of a new century, it looks like America's cities will thrive again and once more become shining lights, places of strength and hope. Why is this? Primarily because so many Americans - urbanites, their suburban neighbors, business leaders, developers, investors, non-profit groups, and responsible government officials at all levels - are now banding together (slowly in some areas, more rapidly in others) to insist that cities have a permanently important part to play in this country's future.

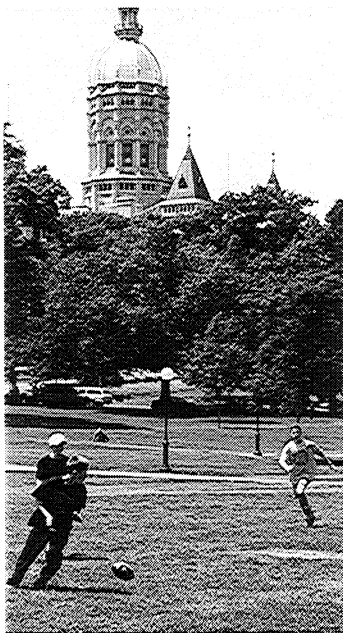
For one thing, we've now learned - probably in the nick of time - why cities matter so much. Beginning in 1961 with Lewis Mumford's monumental The City in History and Jane Jacobs' brilliantly insightful The Death and Life of Great American Cities, a full generation of modern studies have convincingly established that cities may be humanity's greatest and most continuously rewarding early invention. While agriculture gave humanity its first moments of security and stability, and the wheel allowed us to move around faster and farther afield, the city has permanently accelerated our minds.

The math of it is rough, but inescapable - each person we meet up with in the course of a day can show us, simply during casual conversation, up to, say, 100 new thoughts and points-of-view we never considered before or actions we never noticed. So: 100 encounters = 10,000 possibilities; and 1,000 glimpses into other lives = 100,000 potentially nourished brain synapses. Evolution in action - or a comfortable setting for it, at least - right before our very eyes.

Very stimulating and, just as often, delightful. Cities can address all our senses, intensifying and fine-tuning information, so they offer at each step and at every turn a change of pace, an interplay of new colors, unexpected reflections, and dramatically revealed vistas to look at; sudden rushes of sound, quiet nooks, fountains, children's laughter, footfalls; the smells of bread baking, coffee roasting, final preparations for lunch and dinner. Busy-ness and pause. It's *hurry up* now, and then *linger* later on. In a city, there are so many concurrent moments and patterns to be observed and sampled, that whatever you're up to, you're always doing more than one thing at a time.

The classic Greeks called cities the best schools in the world. Go about your everyday business, they said - shopping, strolling in parks, sitting on juries. Over time this offered an education in what it means to be human that no book or university could hope to duplicate.

One contemporary historian, Gunther Barth, of the University of California, has suggested that modern American democracy might never have come into being if our 19th-century cities hadn't shown American farmers and European immigrants how to live and work together -



Bushnell Park is the setting for the State Capitol and serious afternoon football.

In a city, there are so many concurrent moments and patterns to be observed and sampled, that whatever you're up to, you're always doing more than one thing at a time.

apartment houses created neighbors; department stores brought people downtown with a common purpose; ballparks taught the rules of competition and cooperation; newspapers offered an information base; and vaudeville theaters held up a mirror so people could laugh at themselves and their troubles.

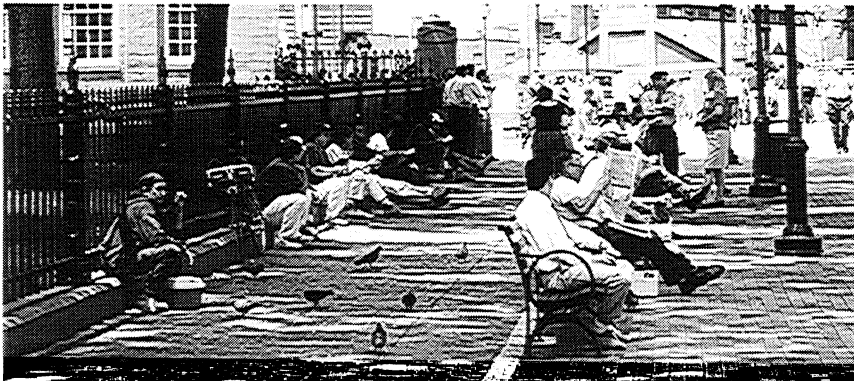
Barth might well have mentioned city parks, too. One of Hartford's greatest native sons, Frederick Law Olmsted, saw that America's new city dwellers also desperately needed common ground - places of beauty where, despite differences, people could come together as fellow citizens and celebrate their common humanity. Some of Olmsted's insights came from his childhood pastor, the Rev. Horace Bushnell, of Hartford, who, in 1854, even before Olmsted designed his first park (Central Park, in New York), persuaded the citizens of Hartford to purchase land for Bushnell Park, the city's central anchor and defining grace for the last century and a half.



Frederick
Law
Olmsted

Equally important are Hartford's ancestors, the men and women whose hundreds of years of efforts made Hartford into a city that, by the turn of the 20th century, stood among the best of the best.

There are, in addition, a host of other compelling reasons for cities to come alive: businesses can thrive and be innovative and feed one another when they exist in close proximity; irreplaceable natural resources, such as land and water, are used more sparingly by people who live and work in the same area; large communities can immeasurably enrich their own experiences because they can afford world class arts and performance institutions; suburban communities in metropolitan regions falter when their central cities stumble, and prosper fully only when these cities have once again found their way.



City life feeds off itself, creating synergistic opportunities for business, recreation and the creation of communities

Even as we're learning why we crave wonderful cities, we have to get better - often on a crash course basis - at taking care of them: protecting them, healing them, cherishing them, making them work for everyone. Too frequently in the past, even successful cities were lopsided affairs, disfigured by bands of slums and acres of drabness and environmental degradation, all too easily torn apart by crime, racial and ethnic tension,

Forward

and marked by despair on the part of those mired in poverty and a lack of caring by those gifted with the means to reach out.

Fellow feeling and *patience* - those are the new watchwords. Cities that work are enduring partnerships. They come into being, grow, and last, whenever the totality of a community - all parties and interests and viewpoints - find a way to trust one another and work together to build something that will outlast anyone in the room. The second lesson learned (once only a platitude, now a painfully acknowledge reality) is that no city can be built, or re-built, in a day. Not Rome, not New York, not Hartford.



Downtown Hartford represents centuries of investment, providing the city with a legacy of enduring assets.

Which means that no single project, however gargantuan, can re-make a city. But any project that thinks about the city as well as about itself can be an essential stepping stone. Any project is a success when it works, and also (1) it makes people feel better about the city; and (2) it leads on to another city-enhancing project. Each project can be a partner to all the projects that follow.



The Traveler's Building recalls an earlier era of sophisticated urban architecture

Cities are harder to kill off than they look, and have far more friends than are visible to the naked eye (which sounds like the opposite of urban paranoia). Who are Hartford's friends? There are several powerful groups at work. The many efforts of many citizens of the city and its neighboring towns - in re-investment, in parks restoration, in re-capturing the riverfront for public use - have already created a climate where a once-again-wonderful Hartford has begun to seem real to tens of thousands of people. Subsequent hard work, thoughtfulness, vision, and determination have made this present "Action Strategy" a practical blueprint for immediately reclaiming much of downtown, and for creating lasting progress over the next five to fifteen years.

Equally important are Hartford's ancestors, the men and women whose hundreds of years of efforts made Hartford into a city that, by the turn of the 20th century, stood among the best of the best. Before World War I, Hartford was the wealthiest city per capita in America - and, wisely and innovatively, used its immense wealth to enlarge and embellish the lives of its citizens. Mark Twain called Hartford "the best built and handsomest town I have ever seen" when he made it his home. During the famous "Rain of Parks," in 1894 and 1895, the city acquired more than 1330 acres of new parkland within fifteen months (lovely Bushnell Park is only 40 acres).

Even though Hartford during its first period of greatness never finished its work - there were to have been parkways, for instance, that Olmsted and his sons envisaged as direct connectors from downtown to the large new parks at the city's edge - the vast park system that flowered after the rain, along with the city's many other permanent endowments (it is the home

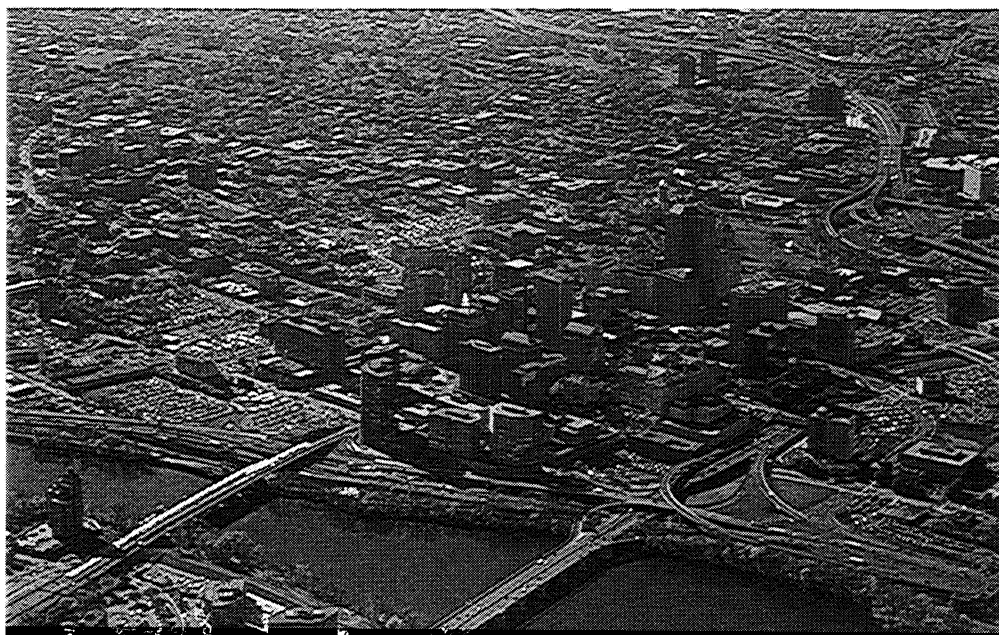
of the country's oldest, continuously-published newspaper and the first public art museum) are the strength, the treasure, the compass points, and the sacred structure that held the city firmly to its purposes throughout the uprooting storms that followed World War II.

Now a new group of Hartford friends is emerging - from far away. Within the next few years, the city will become a central stopping point along the new East Coast Greenway, a long-distance hiking and biking trail planned for fifteen states that, as "the urban equivalent of the Appalachian Trail," as it's already calling itself, will link cities, towns, and countryside from Maine to Florida.

Like so many American cities, Hartford is no longer a place that exists by itself. In Hartford's case, it has become the center of an expanding, diverse metropolitan region that is home to more than a million people. It's a region that needs a heart, a focus, a common ground for celebrations, for cultural enrichment, for having fun - for the urban pleasures and deeply rewarding experiences that human beings still crave and that only cities can provide. Half the region still works in downtown Hartford - but can the downtown, which now feels disconnected from the region and even from the city itself, rebalance so that it becomes a place where office workers, residents, and visitors all feel equally welcomed and at home?

Like so many American cities, Hartford is no longer a place that exists by itself.

Ten years ago, no one could have answered that question *yes*, at least not with certainty. Nowadays the work is eminently do-able, and is already underway in a score of American cities - places where people have believed in their cities and have been rolling up their sleeves to get the job done.



Hartford is the center of an expanding, diverse metropolitan region that is home to more than a million people.



Introduction

1

The revitalization of downtown Hartford: this is the goal of the following Action Strategy, a set of actions to be implemented in downtown Hartford. The Action Strategy is a MetroHartford Millennium Project led by the Hartford Downtown Council in partnership with the City of Hartford and the Connecticut Capitol Region Growth Council. The focus of the Action Strategy is on action - short, medium and long term.

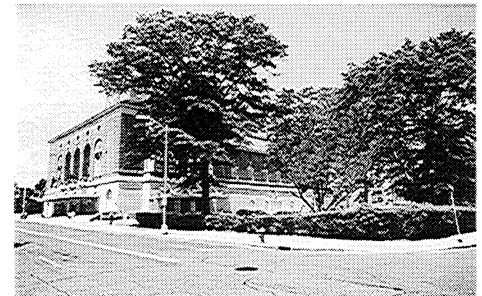
The Hartford Action Strategy springs from the Millennium Project, an economic plan for the entire MetroHartford region sponsored by the Connecticut Capitol Region Growth Council. Amongst other findings, it concluded that a healthy downtown is required for a healthy regional economy. The statement, "You can't be a suburb of nowhere," summarizes the recognition that while suburbs might provide a safe, comfortable and convenient place for many to live, they need to be centered on a dynamic core that is succeeding. A healthy downtown offers a range of cultural experiences, diversity of living accommodations and an intensity of activity that cannot be duplicated in the suburbs.

At the heart of the Millennium Project's recommendations is a new vision of downtown Hartford. Building on its existing cultural and entertainment venues, the Millennium Project suggests that the new role for downtown Hartford is as a regional arts and entertainment center. This is key, but only a part of the future role which will inevitably be more complex and multi-faceted, supporting layers of overlapping and inter-related uses. Downtown needs to evolve from a 9 - 5 workplace into a place where people also live and play, that remains active throughout the day and night, and which attracts tourist and visitors from local and far flung destinations.

The Millennium Project highlights the need for healthy neighborhoods that offer a high quality living environment. Bringing people back to the city to live, to support local retailers and restaurateurs, and to stroll on the streets in the evening is one of the keys to re-energizing downtown



A healthy downtown is required for a healthy regional economy



The new vision for downtown Hartford builds on its existing cultural and entertainment venues, such as The Bushnell Theater.

Hartford. This has implications in terms of built form. It is these implications that are the focus of the Action Strategy. What should downtown Hartford look and feel like?

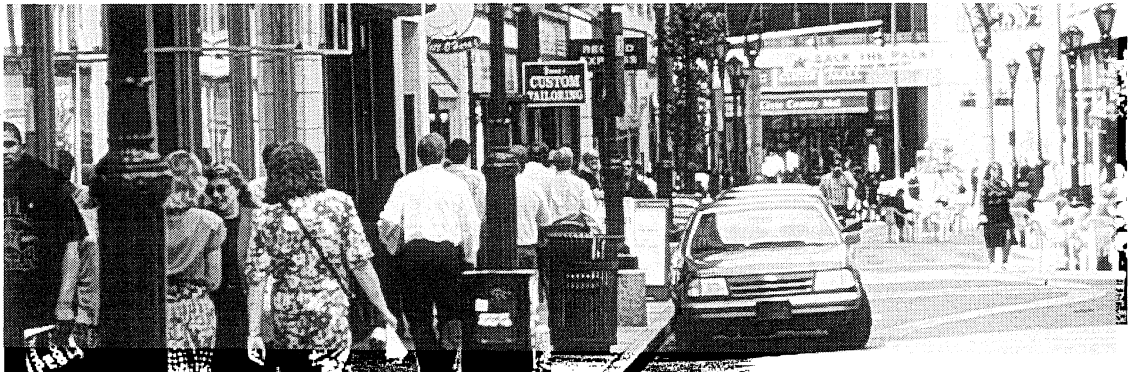


At Zuzu's Cafe street life means good business

Many elements impact the way a city looks and feels: the quality of parks, the design and feel of streets, the shape of buildings, the relationship between buildings and streets, and the relationship between uses. Above all, it is the partnership between these elements that creates a place, and a sense of vitality. The buildings, the streets, the transportation systems, and the landscape must all work together to form a healthy city. The Action Strategy addresses all these aspects of the urban fabric.

Downtown Hartford today

The timing for this Action Strategy is ideal. Downtown Hartford is on the cusp of a significant change. After decades of unprecedented economic shocks - downsizing in the defense, finance and insurance industries - the economy is slowly rebounding. Job creation is on the upswing. The office market is strengthening. A small group of individual investors are planning several significant new developments, albeit at a more modest



Pratt Street - bringing people back to live, to support local retailers and restaurants and to stroll the streets is one the keys to re-energizing downtown Hartford

scale than that proposed in the late 1980s. Governor Rowland and the Legislature have earmarked some \$300 million to kick-start the downtown revitalization. Beginning as early as the 2001 NFL season, Hartford will be the new home of the New England Patriots.

How can energies be directed to contribute to the emergence of downtown Hartford as the regional cultural and entertainment destination envisioned

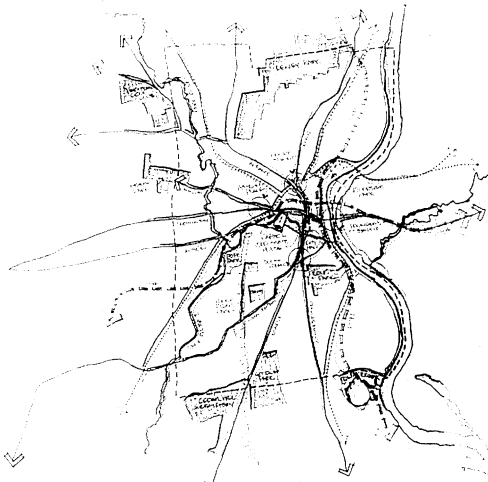
by the Millennium Project? How should existing proposals be modified? Where should new development be targeted? What are the important connections to be made, and how? What other initiatives need to be undertaken?

There are outstanding resources on which to build: historic, built, natural and social. For example, the “Rain of Parks” created an emerald necklace of parks ringing the downtown that includes Bushnell Park, an oasis within the city; Colt Park, waiting in the wings for rejuvenation; and Elizabeth Park, with the magical rose garden. Despite extensive demolition, there remain some beautiful heritage structures that reveal Hartford’s former wealth and stature. However, a long standing tendency to undervalue important resources means that many are diminished or stand alone as isolated objects. The opportunity now exists to establish new synergies between these resources and build from them.

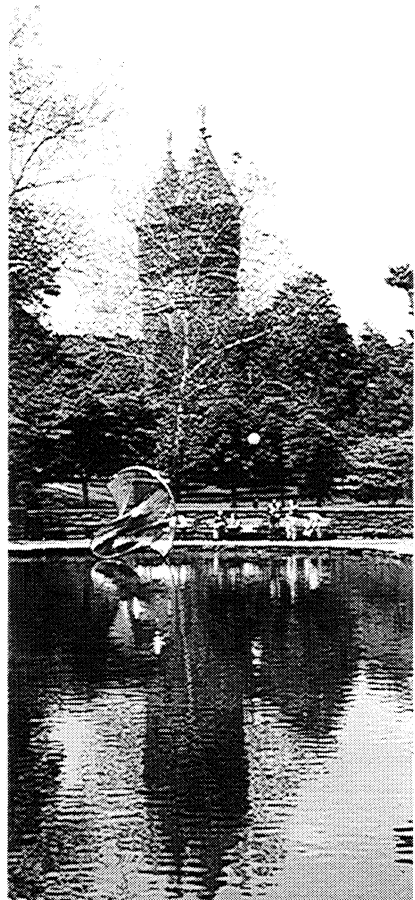
Current initiatives can be leveraged to support a more diverse future for downtown. These initiatives also provide an extraordinary opportunity to modify the quality and pattern of development. There is a need to shift from project driven development, which contributed to the fragmentation of the social and physical fabric of downtown Hartford, toward the creation of a place. Through an integrated and strategic approach to the siting and design of new projects, Hartford can reinvest itself for the next millennium, by creating a unique, inviting and human-scale destination. At the same time, there are significant challenges to overcome.

Hartford at the Crossroads

The metaphor of the crossroads is useful in a number of senses. First, literally: Downtown Hartford is focused on the Main and Asylum Streets crossroads, which form the hub of a once highly-coherent, radial system of streets and parkways that stretched out from the Old State House into the surrounding neighborhoods. This legacy was dwarfed in the postwar period by the dominating presence of the I-84 / I-91 interchange, a cross roads at an altogether different scale. Although the Interstate system provides excellent regional access, it cut a great swath through the historic street pattern, separating communities from the river and disrupting any intuitive sense of direction. There is now an opportunity to make these two crossroads, old and new, work in tandem, by building



The “Rain of Parks” ring downtown



Bushnell Park, created as part of the “Rain of Parks”, is an oasis within the city

Downtown Hartford is focused on the Main and Asylum Streets crossroads, which forms the hub of a radial system of streets and parkways that stretch out from the Old State House into the surrounding neighborhoods.



on the historic hub and spoke system and restoring the pre-eminence of downtown within the Region.

Socially, Hartford is also at the crossroads. Like so many American cities, the middle class fled to the suburbs, leaving a concentration of the most disadvantaged people in the city and downtown. In pursuit of purchasing power, the major retail stores also relocated to the suburbs, leaving the small downtown population with few services required with which to meet day-to-day needs. The creation of a holistic vision for downtown that supports an integrated community, holds the rare potential to forge bonds and unite currently disparate neighborhoods, identities and interests.

Finally, Hartford is at the crossroads between the car-oriented city of the past and a more balanced, pedestrian-oriented city of the future. Too many concessions have been made to the private automobile in isolation from other concerns. In the rush to accommodate cars, the downtown road system became heavily biased toward the automobile, making the streets uncomfortable and uninviting for pedestrians. Even for drivers, the road network is confusing. An “addiction” to immediate parking proximity sees the ground floors of many buildings used for parking and a pattern of



Too many concessions have been made to the private automobile in isolation from other concerns.

surface parking lots that fragments the city fabric. There is an opportunity to redress this imbalance and redesign streets to make them more comfortable for pedestrians once more.

The vision, principles for investing strategically, the actions and the Circuit Line

The Action Strategy provides a framework for decision making. It begins with the guiding “vision” for downtown Hartford and follows with the principles for investing strategically. From there on the Action Strategy outlines steps to be taken to achieve the vision and take maximum advantage of existing opportunities. The actions are broadly grouped under Urban Structure, Land Use and Transportation. Issues, opportunities, and actions are outlined.

Central to the Action Strategy is the Circuit Line, a set of high priority initiatives to be implemented over the next 3 - 5 years. The Circuit Line is an overlay of investments that builds on downtown’s core assets and new initiatives, proposed and in the pipeline. It is both a band of reinvestment and a shuttle line, the implementation of which can be structured as funds come available.

Building on downtown’s most significant physical asset, Bushnell Park, the Circuit Line links together virtually all of the existing and potential assets - Union Station, the emerging entertainment district north of Bushnell Park, Main Street, Constitution Plaza, the Connecticut River, Adriaen’s Landing, the Old State House, the Wadsworth Atheneum, the restaurants south of Bushnell Park and the State Capitol.

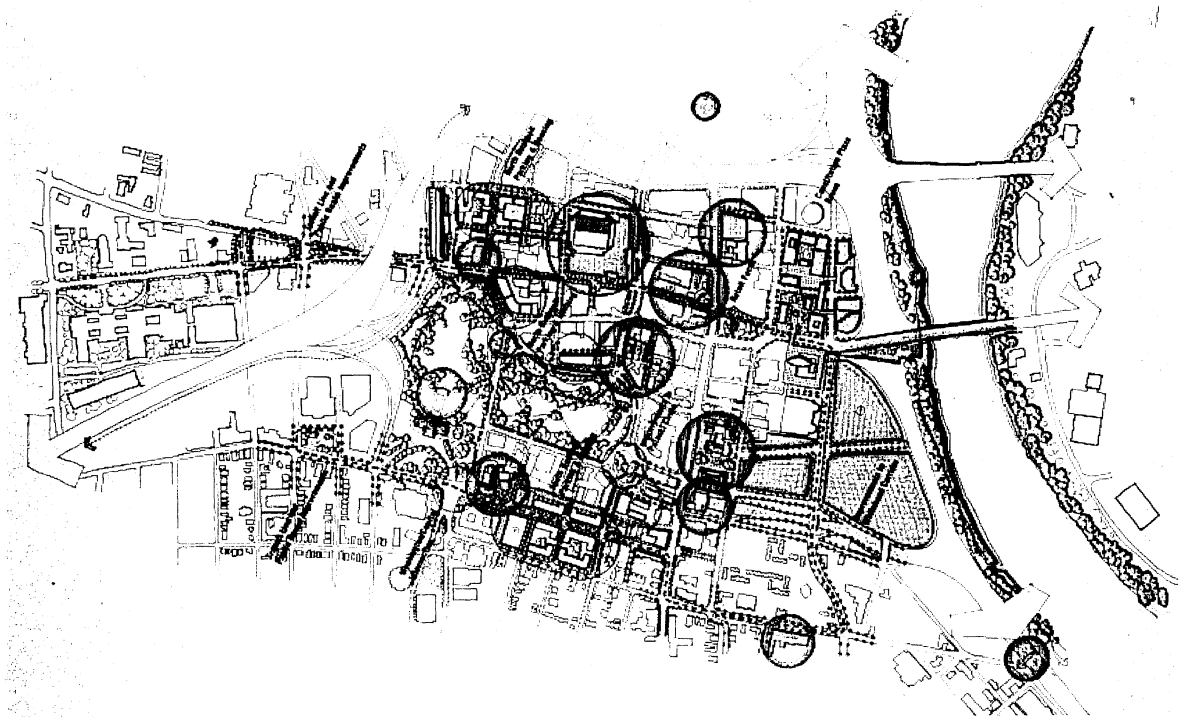
The Circuit Line anticipates a blend of new residential development, shared parking structures, streetscape and transit improvements that will form a band of healthy city fabric and a catalyst for further investment.

Introduction

Responding to each of the principles for investing strategically, this band of linked reinvestment facilitates the simultaneous achievement of many interrelated objectives and is recommended as the most effective means for revitalizing downtown Hartford. The Circuit Line provides a concrete example of how to use the principles for investing strategically as a framework for decision making.

Investment that has a sensible, understandable pattern is stronger. A series of urban design guidelines are outlined to shape buildings that embrace the city, its streets and pedestrian life, adding vitality to the city. A series of more detailed guidelines are then established for each of the major facilities and uses proposed for the downtown. The Action Strategy concludes with thoughts on implementation, outlining the next key steps that need to be taken.

6



The Circuit Line is an overlay of investments that builds on the downtown's core assets and new initiatives, proposed and in the pipeline.



Methodology

2

The core Action Strategy Team reflects the necessity of a multi-disciplinary approach to revitalizing downtown Hartford. Urban Strategies, planners and urban designers, led the team. Development Strategies addressed market and economic matters. Glatting Jackson, transportation engineers, addressed movement. The core team was assisted by a wide variety of special advisors including Bartram and Cochran, local market analysts, Svigals Associates, architects, Patrick Pinnell, architect, Tony Hiss, author, and Norman Mintz, retail consultant. Working in unison, the team adopted a holistic and integrated approach to downtown's revitalization.

The team pursued two parallel and concurrent tracks of study. The first involved a series of meetings and workshops in which individuals with a broad range of backgrounds and expertise participated. The intent was to ensure a comprehensive understanding of Hartford and the creation of a holistic vision. The second involved research and analysis by each firm in its own area of expertise. Through an iterative process, each track provided input to the other, creating a dynamic and prolific study process. The activities in which all team members participated included:

- ***Visioning Workshops***

The team heard the voices of Hartford. Beginning with a series of visioning workshops, the Action Strategy encouraged and invited direct public participation. Focussing on a discussion of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and favorite places, individuals from all walks of life were asked to contribute their viewpoints about their city, both positive and negative. A shared vision of what the city could and should be was sketched out by workshop participants.



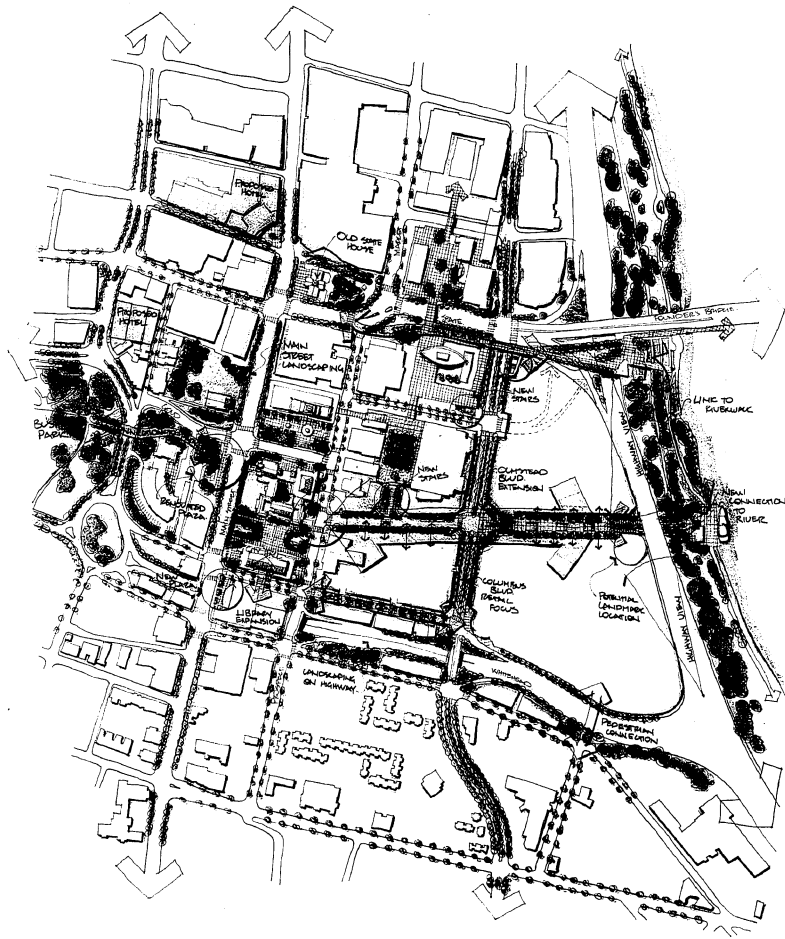
Work began with an intensive week of interviews, workshops and site visits

• **Area Workshops**

To allow for more detailed analysis, the downtown was divided into five specific study areas: Bushnell North, Bushnell South, Riverfront, Civic Center / Old State House, Main Street North / Constitution Plaza. To each of the five area workshops, a small group of stakeholders was invited with the authority, expertise and commitment to create and implement actions: landowners, representatives of major organizations and institutions, residents, etc. Through the workshops a detailed set of actions was established for all of downtown.



Through the workshops, a detailed set of actions was established for all of downtown.



Drawings were produced illustrating the opportunities and issues in five areas.

• **Monthly Bulletins**

Monthly bulletins, containing an update on the workshops, meetings, findings and recommendations, kept the public informed on the emerging Action Strategy.

• **Pipeline Projects**

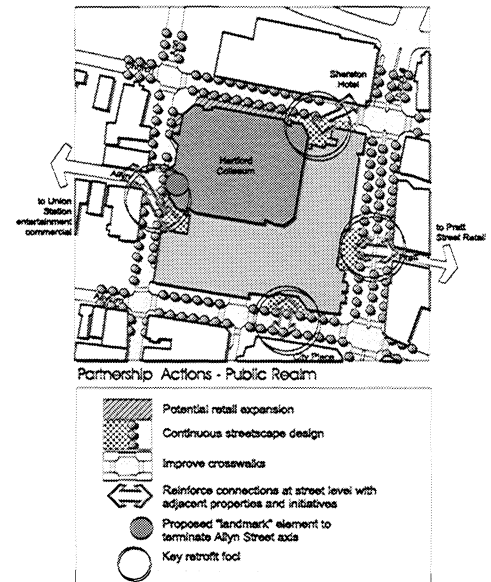
During the initial visioning workshop, the team learned that five major developments were in the pipeline, the Cutter Site, Civic Center, the Society Block, 410 Asylum Street and Adriaen’s Landing. It was clear that each contained the potential to make a significant contribution to the revitalization of downtown if appropriately designed. The team met with the developers, reviewed plans and made specific recommendations to shape the projects to respond to the vision. As well, a financial review assessed the viability of each project. The analysis and recommendations are the subject of a separate report and are included as an appendix.

• **Implementation**

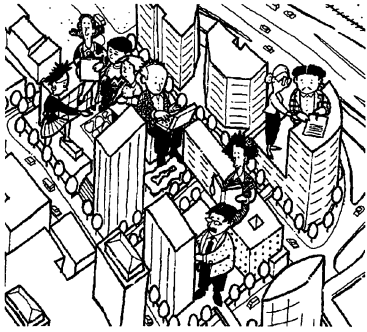
Realization of the Action Strategy requires a carefully thought out implementation plan. Preliminary discussions have been held focusing on implementation, beginning with a workshop that involved the key players at the city, the Hartford Downtown Council and the Capitol Region Growth Council. Further fleshing out of the implementation plan is still required.

Each firm also pursued issues and opportunities related to its own area of expertise. For example, to support its market and research analysis, Development Strategies conducted two surveys exploring the demand for downtown living - one of local business employees, the other through The Hartford Courant. Glatting Jackson met with city traffic engineers and coordinated their findings with the ongoing study into parking in downtown. Urban Strategies held numerous meetings with development proponents, individuals and organizations representing specific projects.

This Report incorporates the comments received on the draft Action Strategy and is now in its final form. It is submitted to the Hartford Downtown Council, the Connecticut Capitol Region Growth Council, the MetroHartford Millennium Project, and to the City of Hartford for approval.



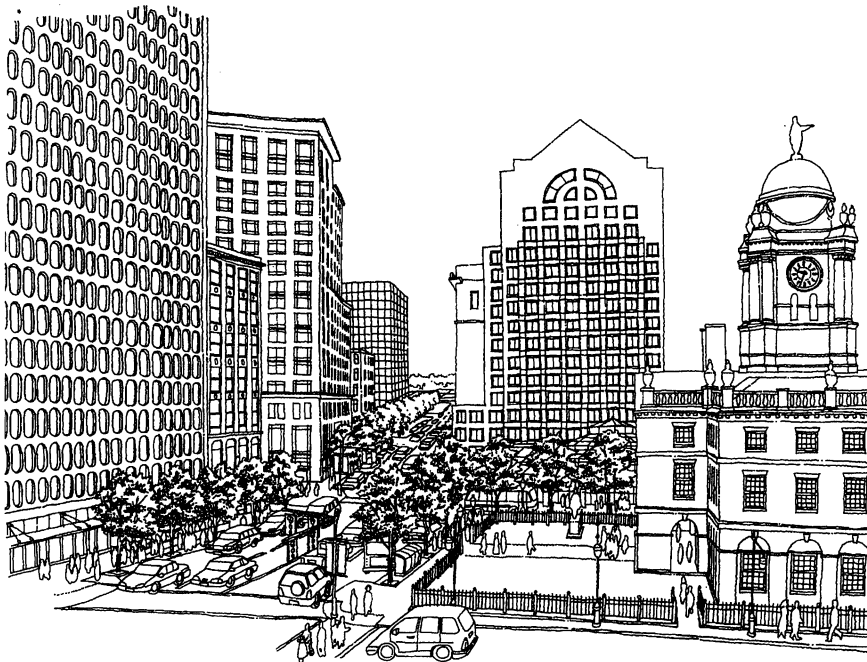
For the Civic Center and other pipeline projects, the team met with the developers, reviewed plans and made specific recommendations to shape the projects to respond to the vision.



Vision

3

The road to renewal is being followed by downtowns across the continent, forming a recognizable and repeated pattern of reinvestment as the inner cities meet suburban competition by carving out a new, unique and competitive niche. In the future, downtown Hartford will do what downtowns do best - offer an urban, intense, cultural experience. In this role, downtown will not compete with or attempt to replicate the suburbs. Downtown will succeed on its own terms. With a renewed sense of confidence, the downtown community will recognize that only urban areas can offer urban experiences and that people travel all over the world to visit great cities.



Main Street landscaping and traffic calming are some of the many relatively inexpensive and fast improvements to be implemented. These investments will make downtown a more inviting place to be and help set the stage for other development to take place.

The Vision Plan legend

1	Potential housing sites	12	Proposed connection to river
2	Circuit Line	13	Proposed housing conversion
3	Civic Center renovation / potential Higher Education Center location	14	Proposed Coltec and Conservatory / Botanical Gardens development
4	Proposed hotel	15	The Bushnell expansion
5	Proposed hotel and housing	16	Library expansion
6	Proposed G. Fox department store renovation	17	12B site - possible stadium / convention center location
7	Gateway	18	Proposed Olmsted Boulevard
8	Proposed stadium / convention center	19	Housing infill and conversion
9	New connection through Civic Center	20	Constitution Plaza - potential Higher- Education Center location
10	Re-open Temple Street	21	Proposed parking location
11	New connection to river		

The new downtown will offer a wide range of opportunities for living, working and playing. As the hub of cultural and artistic activity in the region, entertainment, arts and cultural venues will be clustered in the warehouse and commercial district east of Union Station, along Main Street and south of Bushnell Park. New, mixed income housing will be situated around the north and south sides of Bushnell Park and cater to those who seek an alternative to suburban living, including the empty nesters, young professionals and families.

The city will have a much more complex pattern of use. Visitors will frequently have multiple destinations on each trip. Patrons of The Bushnell can arrive early, walk to nearby restaurants for dinner, and take the shuttle to have drinks at a late-night cafe following the performance. After work, workers may stay downtown to enjoy dinner and relax with friends. A new community of residents will be able to patronize local shops, walk to work, local cafes and restaurants, and bicycle through the streets in the evenings and on weekends. Families with children can enjoy the playground in Bushnell Park and attend free concerts.

Shopping in downtown, in one of a kind, specialty stores, will be an enjoyable activity. Focused on the historic axes of Main and Asylum Streets, clusters of retail stores will line these corridors from north of I-84 to South Green and from west of the I-84 to the edges of the Connecticut River. A major new grocery store will support the emerging new downtown population and encourage others to relocate to downtown.

Downtown Hartford has an intact and healthy structure on which to recreate and reposition itself. Hartford's vast legacy of parks will provide residents and visitors with a wide variety of opportunities for recreation and leisure activities. Bushnell Park will form the center piece and a venue for many musical and theatrical events year-round, as well as the home of the new skating rink and children's playground. Renewed

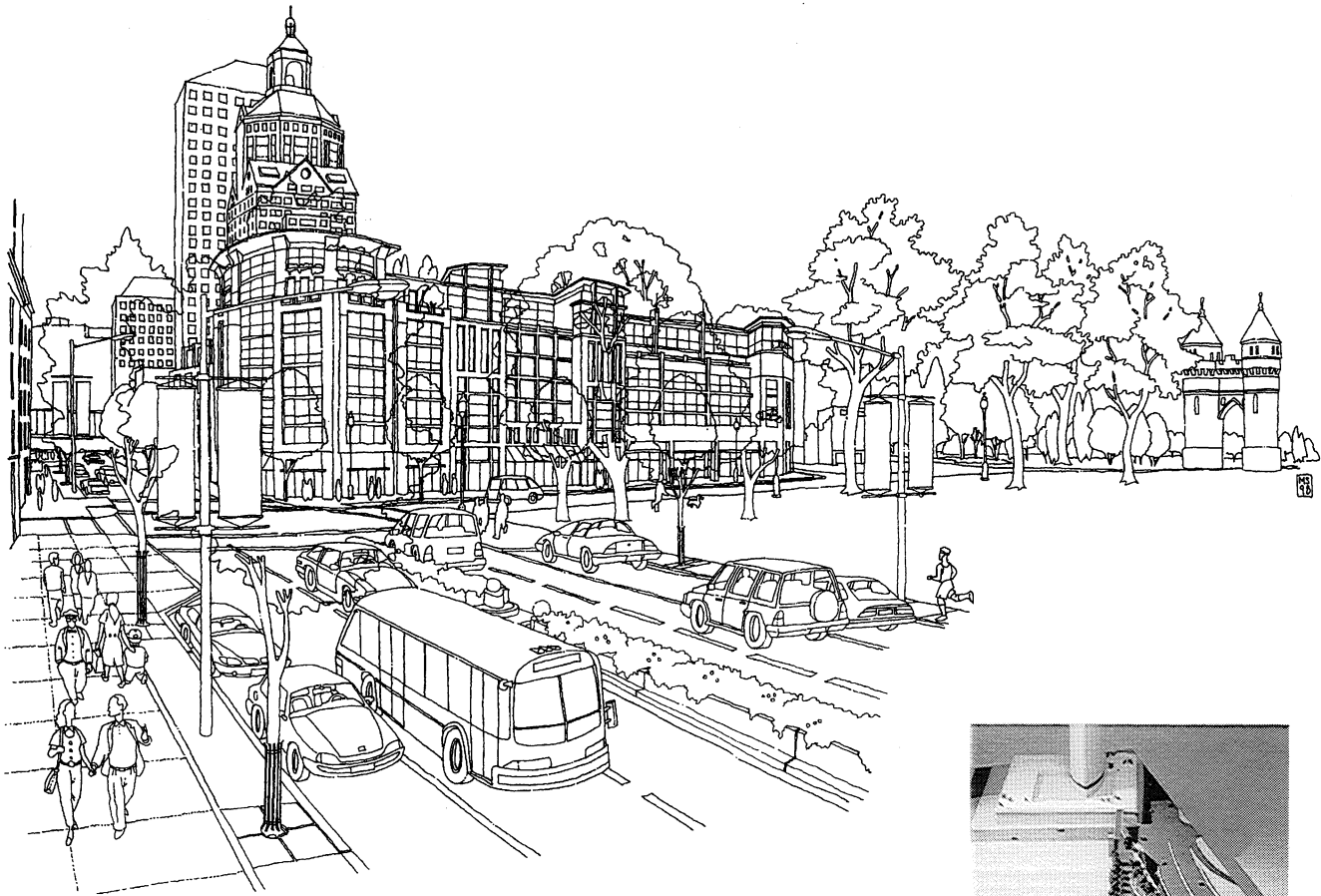


Proposed housing on Capitol Avenue, looking towards the Bushnell Theater

by the efforts of the Bushnell Park Foundation, Bushnell Park will be revered as an outstanding urban park and the sites around it, some of the most valuable in the downtown.

Downtown Hartford will be reconnected. The riverfront deck and the promenade on the new Founders Bridge will provide the residents of Hartford and the Greater Hartford Region an opportunity to access the Connecticut River. A recreational loop along both riverbanks will connect East Hartford with downtown and provide a unique facility for joggers, walkers and cyclists to experience the river and escape the hustle and bustle of downtown.

Adriaen's Landing will open up the east side of downtown and be home to the New England Patriots. Columbus Boulevard will be animated with retail stores along both sides. Olmsted Boulevard will assist in linking Bushnell Park and the new residential communities along its north and south sides with the River. Downtown will be closely tied to the City's neighborhoods and the Greater Hartford Region. The success of the downtown will assist to ensure the success of the entire region.

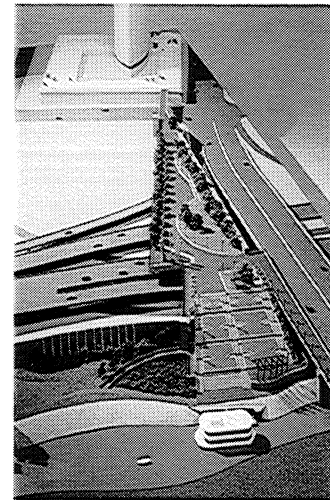


Proposed housing overlooking Bushnell Park, as seen looking east from Asylum Street.

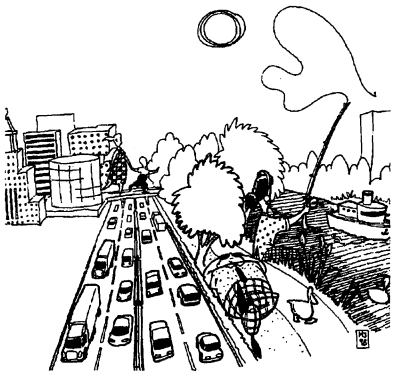
The emerging downtown will emphasize the quality of the travel experience and will balance streets so that both pedestrians and cars are comfortable to use them. Visitors to downtown will navigate their way easily in an inviting, safe and attractive environment. The new Hartford will encourage strolling and lingering; the casual use of city streets for passing time, people watching, and sitting in cafes. The streets will be designed to ensure that the elderly and children can cross streets comfortably and in safety. Signals will provide an adequate length of time for pedestrians to cross.

In the future, the buildings, streets, the parks and transportation systems will be designed to work together.

The Action Strategy outlines the built form, land use, and transportation elements that underpin the vision and their relationship to each other. It then outlines the specific actions that must be taken to realize the vision. First, laying the groundwork for the Action Strategy and the Circuit Line, a number of principles for investing strategically are explored in Chapter 4.



The riverfront deck and the promenade on the new Founders Bridge will provide an opportunity to access the Connecticut River.



The Principles of Investing Strategically

4

This chapter introduces a number of basic guiding principles for reinvesting strategically, drawn from the team's experience in projects across North America and Europe. To have the greatest impact, public and private investment needs to be targeted. This means directing and shaping initiatives to spark additional investment and to achieve a total benefit that is greater than the sum of the individual parts. The principles are as follows:

- **Use public sector funds as levers**

Public monies, such as Governor Rowland's \$300 million bond package, can be used to leverage private sector dollars. Used to create a more attractive investment climate, they can act as a catalyst for private funds. Directed toward existing private sector investments, they can magnify the benefit of an existing or recent development.

For example, streetscape improvements such as special paving, plantings, trees, benches and lighting can signal an area's rebound, inviting further investment. The same improvements directed in the vicinity of recent development, be it housing, office, retail, hotel or industrial, will enhance the project.

- **Build on existing strengths.**

Investment benefits will be greatest when an initiative builds on existing strengths. Core assets can be natural or built, and in Hartford's case include: natural features, such as the Connecticut River; open spaces, such as Bushnell Park; heritage structures, such as the brownstones along Capitol Avenue; and cultural resources, such as the Atheneum and The Bushnell. The list is extensive.

Often resources go unnoticed. For example, Park Street is a unique retail and cultural destination that receives little recognition. The courtyards at the back of Linden Place, along Whitman Court, and in the Cutter Site are opportunities to create hidden gems. Topographical features add interest and tend to be overlooked. Efforts to establish the 61 foot elevation of Main Street as grade-level have historically tried to flatten Hartford's undulating landscape, rather than celebrate it. Hartford also has an illustrious history, the vestiges of which have been too often undervalued and demolished.

A development that takes advantage of core assets, such as the reconstructed Founders Bridge or the addition to The Bushnell, will have a greater overall impact than a similar investment completed in isolation.

● **Think holistically**

City building involves many fields of expertise: architects, planners, urban designers, market analysts, developers, landscape architects, traffic engineers, artists, etc. The tendency over the last several decades was to view all the tasks of city building as separate endeavors and to isolate them. This resulted in lack of communication, disconnects, and missed opportunities.

Creating a healthy city and making the most efficient use of existing resources requires all these professionals to work cooperatively in an integrated fashion. Different perspectives can shape projects to meet many objectives, to create synergies, and ultimately, more beneficial results.

In downtown Hartford, street design has been the purview of traffic engineers, and as a result, much greater emphasis is placed on the movement of cars than people or bicycles. In the future: Building a new street or reviving an old one? Bring in the traffic engineers, the landscape architects, advocates of cycling, artists. Building a new residential building? Bring in the developers, retailers, urban designers, market analysts, planners, traffic engineers and landscape architects. In all cases, have them work together.

● **Think about the place, not projects**

Projects should contribute to the creation of a place, and should not be thought of as islands unto themselves. By and large, buildings

To us, our Hartford house was not unfeeling matter - it had a heart, & a soul, & eyes to see us with; & approval, & solitudes, & deep sympathies, it was of us, & we were in its confidence, & lived in its grace & in the peace of its benediction.

Mark Twain, Letter to J.H. Twichell, January 19, 1897

and other initiatives need to be well-behaved urban structures that fit in, establish a relationship with adjacent uses, and improve the public lands at the periphery.

Two buildings contribute more if they frame a view corridor to an important natural feature or structure. Buildings that include a weather-protected pedestrian walkway at the periphery enhance the public realm. Buildings that address the street and are animated at the ground level add more life to the streets. For example, Adriaen's Landing proposes to locate retail uses fronting Columbus Boulevard which could add much needed vitality to the eastern side of downtown. In developing a residential community in Bushnell North, it will be important to preserve an unimpeded view of Bushnell Park down High Street.

● **Encourage modest, incremental change.**

The desire for quick change and immediate results creates a tendency to believe in silver-bullet solutions. For example, the Civic Center was such a mega-project. It occupies some 7.5 acres, required the closure of at least one city street, and contains three major uses - the Mall, the Coliseum and exhibition space. It is also directly attached to a hotel / conference center.

The entire complex is now faltering economically. Its revitalization will likely require renovation of the entire 7.5 acre complex, calling for a massive cash infusion and enormous effort, much greater than if each of the three elements were separately woven into the city fabric.

Hartford has a history of making too large investments. For example Pratt Street, although successful, absorbed too many dollars that should have been spread out for a bigger impact.

A diversity of small-scale, incremental changes must be encouraged. Although individually, each initiative might be small, their cumulative impact will be significant. They fit into the existing city, do not place undue and unreasonable expectations on the success of any one, and can be modified and redeveloped over time as required and appropriate with reasonable effort.

Where large scale investments in major new facilities on consolidated sites do occur, they need to be broken down into elements which are compatible with the grain of the city.

● **Draw upon the human capital of the city**

Everyone needs to be involved in rebuilding downtown Hartford: the public and private sectors, and small and large scale organizations. A myriad of opportunities exist at all levels. Direct investments, policy developments, organizations such as merchant associations, block watches, and neighborhood groups, all provide opportunities for individuals to get involved. Hartford has leagues of committed citizens who donate hours of volunteer time to represent, oversee and implement such initiatives.

The Goodwin Estate is represented by a group of citizens committed to finding an opportunity for its reconstruction and reuse. Another committee of volunteers is assessing the feasibility of a botanical garden / conservatory that will form a visitor center and position Hartford itself, with its wealth of parks, as a botanical garden. Scores of residents in the MARG neighborhood, North Hartford, the South End and South Green, are involved in the preparation of revitalization plans for submission to the city and for funding. Revitalization efforts need to tap into this wealth of energy and commitment.

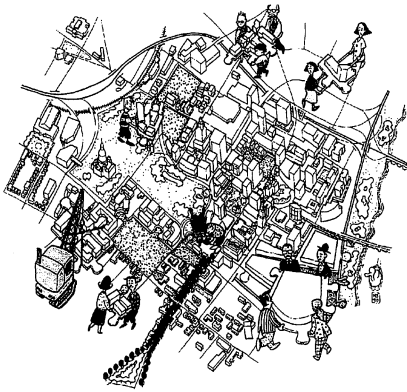
● **Build early success**

Nothing succeeds like success. Early successes will build confidence, increase the momentum and inspire others to act.

One of Hartford's most notable recent success stories is Riverfront Recapture. The restoration of the river valley and the reconnection of the downtown to the river has had a remarkable impact on Hartford's psyche, lifting the community's spirit and inspiring others to act.

Now, the proposed Adriaen's Landing project incorporates a new connection to the river. Coltec Industries, soon to oversee the redevelopment of the Colt Factory, is positioned to benefit from another link being proposed to the river. Annual angling competitions are now held on the river and a recreational loop will invite people to use the river valley and, by extension, the downtown.

These principles underpin the actions identified in Chapter 5 and the Circuit Line identified in Chapter 6, all of which are aimed at realizing the vision.



The Action Strategy

5

5.1 Introduction

This section of the report outlines the Action Strategy - the elements and actions to be implemented in downtown, over the short, medium and long term. The Actions are broadly grouped according to three main categories: Urban Structure, Land Use and Movement. In each section, issues, opportunities and a list of actions are outlined. The actions aim to realize the vision.

5.2 Urban Structure

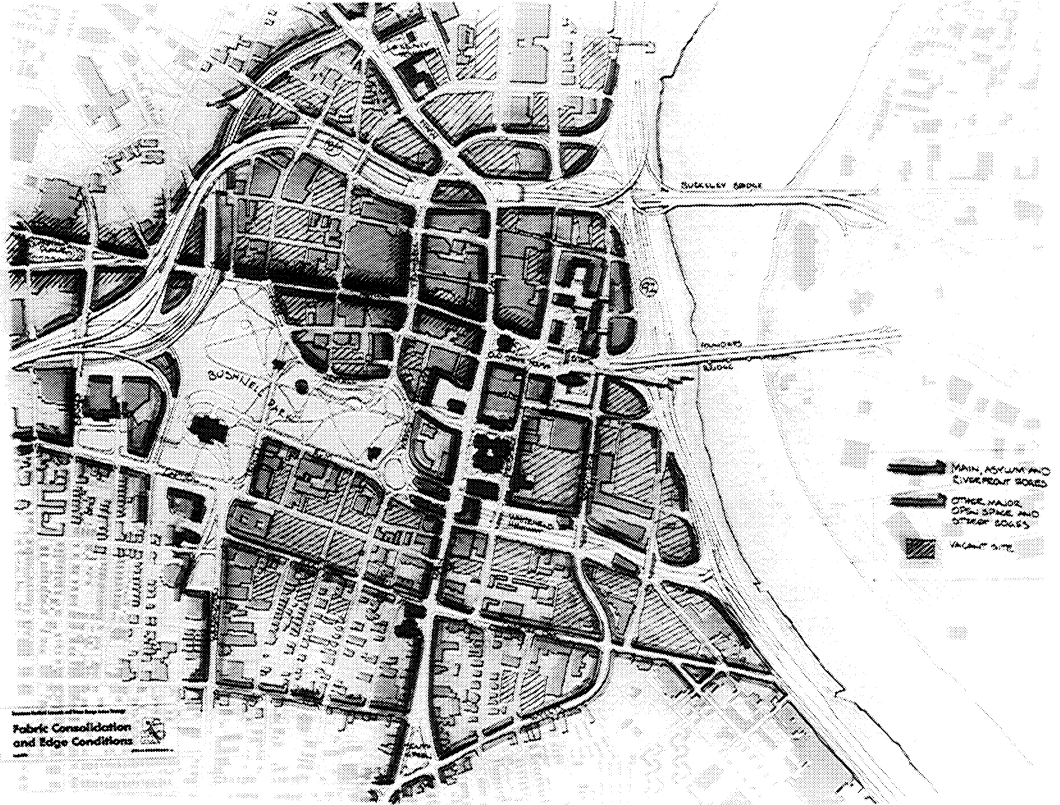
The fabric of downtown Hartford has undergone profound changes in the last 50 years. Although the underlying “bones” remain intact - the streets, blocks and a core group of buildings - the strength of the whole is undermined by a sense of discontinuity that makes places feel far apart and discourages walking in the downtown. A legacy of demolition, acres of surface parking lots, poor quality streetscapes, street closures, and diminished gateways all contribute to the sense of disconnection. Many developments are positioned as isolated objects and contribute little to the street or the creation of a place. As a result, in many areas of the downtown, there is no there there.

The predominant opportunities in Hartford lie in bridging the gaps and creating greater cohesion. All aspects of the urban structure warrant improvement, the quality and coherence of the public realm, the gateways, the relationship between buildings and public spaces, and attention to heritage preservation. In addressing these specific issues, there is also an important opportunity to move from an exaggerated focus on individual projects to the ingredients that tie the city together and create place.

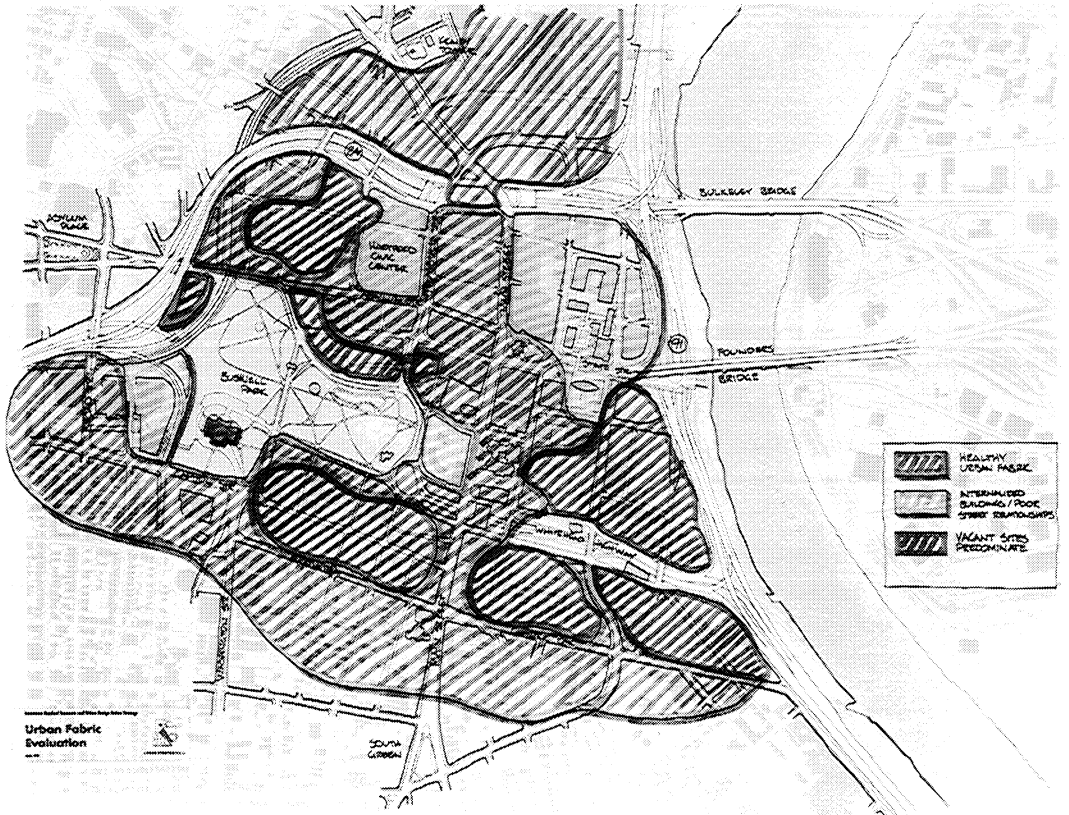


There is a strong sense of disconnection in much of downtown.

The urban fabric should be made of coherent and complete blocks that frame the public realm.



The existing condition of the urban fabric



5.2.1 The shared civic spaces: streets, parks, squares, trails

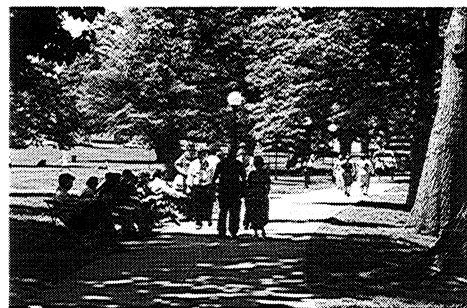
Issues

The public realm is made up of the shared civic spaces - the streets, parks, squares and trails. These are the places where civic life happens, strolling in the streets, sitting in sidewalk cafes, playing in the parks, and contemplating by the river. The public realm also plays an important role in linking places together. For example, well-designed, attractive streets lead drivers and pedestrians from one destination to another. Unfortunately, little attention has been paid to the quality and cohesion of Hartford's public realm.

Parks are a prime example. Buried and uncelebrated within the urban fabric of Hartford lies an outstanding collection of parks. In 1854, the creation of Hartford's Bushnell Park and New York City's Central Park signaled the start of the American Park movement. Following a call in 1870 from one of American's renowned landscape architects, Frederick Law Olmsted, some 1,200 acres of park land were acquired between 1894 and 1895, creating an emerald necklace around the city focussed on the Old State House. The parkways planned to connect the parks to the city center were never built, although a series of radiating arterial streets still form strong connections.

The great parks also still exist: Bushnell Park, Keney Park, South Green, Elizabeth Park, Colt Park, Pope Park and Goodwin Park. Although a number of parks have been upgraded and are outstanding open spaces in their own right, the park *system* receives little fanfare. The network is diminished by the declining neighborhoods that surround several of the parks and by the lack of connections between them.

Streets are consistently underestimated as important civic spaces. The tendency over the last several decades to view streets solely as conveyors of automobiles has diminished their role as places for walking and sitting. It has also led to the creation of a pedestrian-only level in some parts of downtown. For example, the skywalks and Constitution Plaza elevate pedestrians into a car free environment which typically feels less safe and is less successful.



Bushnell Park is an outstanding success



Main Street forms an important civic space



Constitution Plaza typically feels less safe than city streets.

Streets that are designed to carry cars tend to be wide, encourage fast moving traffic and have poorly marked pedestrian crossings. Generally, they are unappealing for pedestrians. In Hartford, the idiosyncratic signals which seem to almost never say “walk” send a strong message to pedestrians that the streets are not for them. Bushnell Park is cut off from the city by the high speed travel surrounding it and the long crossing distances.

A well-designed street, landscaped with trees and ornamental plantings, will connect parks, buildings, neighborhoods and shopping districts. Because it can also invite people to walk and patronize sidewalk cafes as well as encourage such things as street vendors and musicians, a well-designed street is an animated street. Pratt Street and Park Street are excellent examples. Pedestrians also feel safer in environments where there are multiple users. For example, cars passing by provide an informal means of surveillance.

The area where the greatest improvements have been made, setting a bold precedent, is the river. Magnificent strides have been made in reclaiming the Connecticut River and restoring the city’s historic ties to it. Thanks to the efforts of Riverfront Recapture and a large number of volunteers, a green, naturalized corridor now winds its way through the city offering residents and visitors an oasis within the city, and an attractive recreational facility where it is now even possible to hold annual angling competitions. The new Founders Bridge and riverfront deck, which extends out from Constitution Plaza and over the freeway, enables residents to walk to the river from the heart of downtown for the first time since the 1930s.

Opportunities

The single largest opportunity is to celebrate Hartford’s public realm. Downtown development should build on the efforts of Riverfront Recapture, celebrating and capitalizing upon the new connections to the Connecticut River. Bushnell Park should be acknowledged as one of downtown’s key assets. Streets should be understood as key elements in the public realm. Landscaping of the most important streets will assist to form links within the city. Main Street is one of downtown’s key connecting elements, tying downtown to the neighborhoods in the north and south, containing important cultural attractions and supporting a range of retail activity. In making improvements to the public realm, the approach needs to be broad-brush: a lot of streets and spaces need to be rejuvenated, not just one or two high-cost spaces.

The downtown should be stitched together by a cohesive, coherent and high-quality public realm that includes parks, streets, squares and trails. A greater sense of safety is ensured when public spaces are shared by as many different users as possible.

Actions - The shared civic spaces

● Develop plans to beautify and repair streets that will address:

- trees and plantings
- tree planters and grates
- paving materials
- pedestrian lighting
- bicycle racks
- street furniture
- on-street parking

● Implement streetscape plans along all the main connecting streets to improve the pedestrian and driving experience and create stronger links:

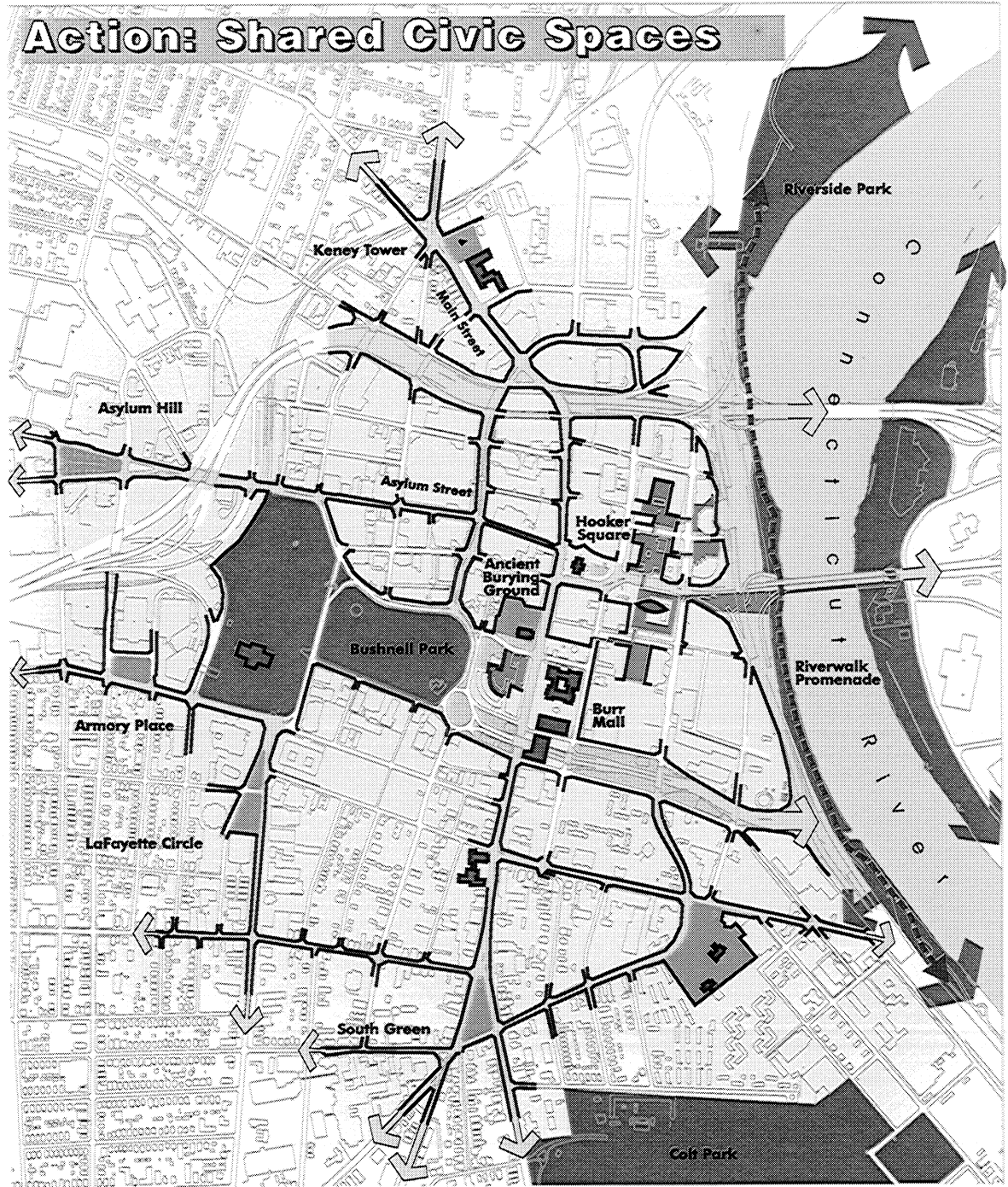
- **Main Street.** Coordinate existing and proposed streetscaping and minimize the negative aspects of bus traffic.
- **Asylum Street.** Make the necessary street improvements to allow two-way traffic and recognize it as one of the city's main connecting streets.
- **Charter Oak Avenue.** Make necessary improvements to the street-scape in anticipation of its increased importance as the Colt Factory Complex is redeveloped.
- **Trumbull Street.** Introduce traffic calming.
- **Jewel, Ford, and Elm Streets.** Traffic could be calmed and pedestrian connections strengthened at the main entrances to Bushnell Park.
- **Washington Street.** Highlight its character as an administrative corridor and connection to the neighborhoods.
- **Park Street.** Strengthen its role as a neighborhood main street
- **Wyllys Street.** Develop this street as an important connector between South Green, Colt Park area development and the proposed stadium development on Columbus Boulevard.



Attractive street furniture send an important message about the value of the public realm.



Streetscaping: St. George Street in Toronto



- | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|---|-----------------------|
|  | Major civic spaces |  | Pedestrian Plaza |
|  | Civic parks and squares |  | Major civic buildings |
|  | 'Green' streets |  | Trails |



● **Implement landscape improvement plans along the free-ways, where they are at grade, to improve their visual appearance and enhance the sense of arrival to downtown:**

- the Whitehead Highway
- Interstate 91 (I-91)
- Interstate 84 (I-84)

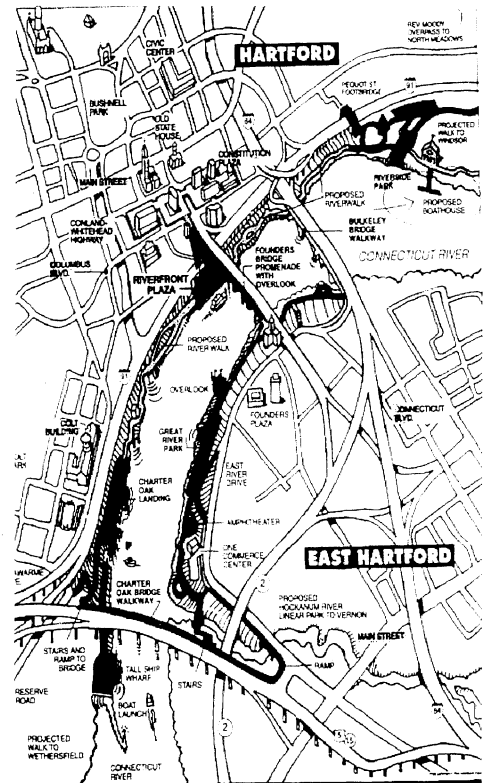
● **Continue the restoration of downtown’s significant green spaces to provide amenities for the region’s residents, workers and visitors and to enhance the sense of place:**

- Support the Bushnell Park Foundation’s ongoing plan to restore Bushnell Park, including the introduction of the playground, the Memorial Arch interpretive center and the overlook.
- Support the work of Riverfront Recapture to restore the Connecticut River valley.

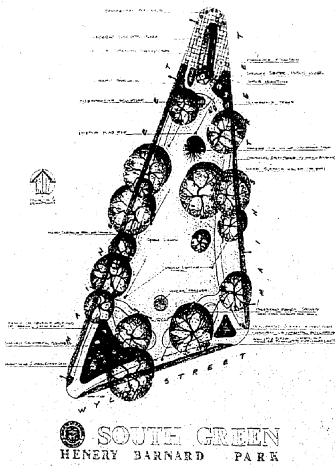
● **Improve pedestrian connections to the Connecticut River through signage, streetscape and landscape initiatives to help knit the river back into the city fabric and raise its profile. Improvements to be made include:**

- the walk up the ramp at Riverside Park
 - a link to Riverside Park through the IPC Saari site
 - the new connection proposed at Charter Oak Landing
- **To enhance the proposed residential communities, improve pedestrian connections between Bushnell Park and surrounding neighborhoods through signage, streetscape and landscape initiatives in the vicinity of:**

- **Union Place** - as the traditional entrance to the city and the Capitol
- **The Bushnell** - to increase the potential for connection to the Capitol
- **Trumbull Street** - and the proposed hotel development on the Cutter site
- **Pulaski Circle** - traffic calming and pedestrian crossings
- **the Memorial Arch and Trinity Street**



Riverfront Recapture has proposed several new connections to the river.



The South Green revitalization plan should be supported.

● **Promote and continue efforts to restore the open spaces at the periphery of downtown to improve the sense of arrival:**

- Support the ongoing plan to restore South Green.
- Develop an open space at each end of the Circuit Line, one at Asylum Hill, which will primarily require upgrading of the existing space, and one in the vicinity of the State Armory.
- Restore the open space around the Lafayette Statue.
- Improve Pulaski Circle.
- Improve the landscape surrounding the Church of the Good Shepherd.
- Improve the landscape surrounding Keney Tower.
- Redesign the intersection of Washington Street and Capitol Avenue to make a civic space in front of The Bushnell.

● **Restore informal and pocket open spaces throughout the city to improve the physical environment for Hartford's residents, workers and visitors, including:**

- Pulaski Mall
- the Ancient Burying Ground behind Center Church
- the courtyards along Whitman Court, behind the Linden Place, and in the Cutter block, off Lewis Street
- the State Building front lawns in the vicinity of the Lafayette Statue
- Burr Mall
- Hooker Square

● **On a case-by-case basis, explore opportunities for resolving the elevated, pedestrian-only areas of the downtown.**

- Study opportunities for improving the elevated plaza at Constitution Plaza. Depending on the long-term use, options include snipping the existing connections between buildings to create a series of internalized, free-standing courtyards or increasing the number of connections with the street-level to knit the plaza level back into the city fabric.
- Do not make any further additions to the skyway system. Explore the possibility of removing segments of the skywalk network in the vicinity of the Civic Center, as feasible. There are however a few exceptional situations where topography dictates key connections, such as the walkway to the river.

5.2.2 Streets and Blocks

Issues

Downtown has two overlapping networks of streets and blocks. A series of radial streets emanate out from the downtown, and form the main connections to the neighborhoods. These include Wethersfield Avenue, Maple Avenue, Main Street, Washington Street, Park Street, Capitol Avenue, Asylum Avenue, Albany Avenue, Farmington Avenue, Windsor Street and Weston Street. A more fine-grained, dense street network overlays this radial structure, with the greatest density found in the area bounded by Capitol Avenue, the Connecticut River, I-84 and Bushnell Park.

Where the road network is most dense, the blocks are smaller. In her 1961 book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jane Jacobs was one of the first to notice that these smaller blocks are better. All other things being equal, they foster a higher level of connection, synergy and nurture retail uses. Because they form an equally fine web of streets, smaller blocks also facilitate vehicular and pedestrian movement throughout the city, particularly if they are two-way streets.

Interstate 91 and 84, constructed during the post-war era provided high-speed, easy access to downtown. While efficient for motorists, it fundamentally disrupted the streets and blocks network, creating a permanent divide between north and south, east and west. An aerial photograph of the city reveals awkwardly shaped sites in the immediate vicinity and a massive barrier effect.

As well in the post war-period, large-scale projects claimed chunks of the downtown and caused the closure of several streets. For example, the Hartford Civic Center required the closure of Allyn Street east of Ann Street. Constitution Plaza erased the street plat in the former Front Street neighborhood. Temple Street was closed to make way for the “mix-master” building, disconnecting Market from Main Street at the north end of downtown. Although not as significant as the construction of the interstates, these closures diverted pedestrian and vehicular flows and weakened east-west ties.

Disruptions to the city’s network of streets and blocks, both large and small, enhance the sense of disconnection within the city. At the large scale, the interstates create a great psychological divide, separating communities from each other. At both the large and small scale, disruptions to the street and block network foster a sense of disconnection and discourage pedestrian activity. A disconnected street network also stymies vehicular movement; the fewer routing options exist, the more bottlenecks will be created as traffic is concentrated onto the remaining routes.

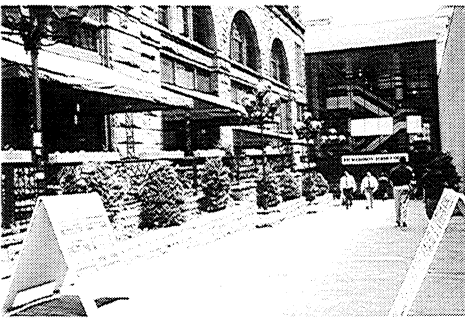
Opportunities

Opportunities lie in mitigating the impact of the interstate by improving connections across and under it. Opportunity also lies in restoring pedestrian and /or vehicular activity along closed streets.

Actions - Streets and blocks

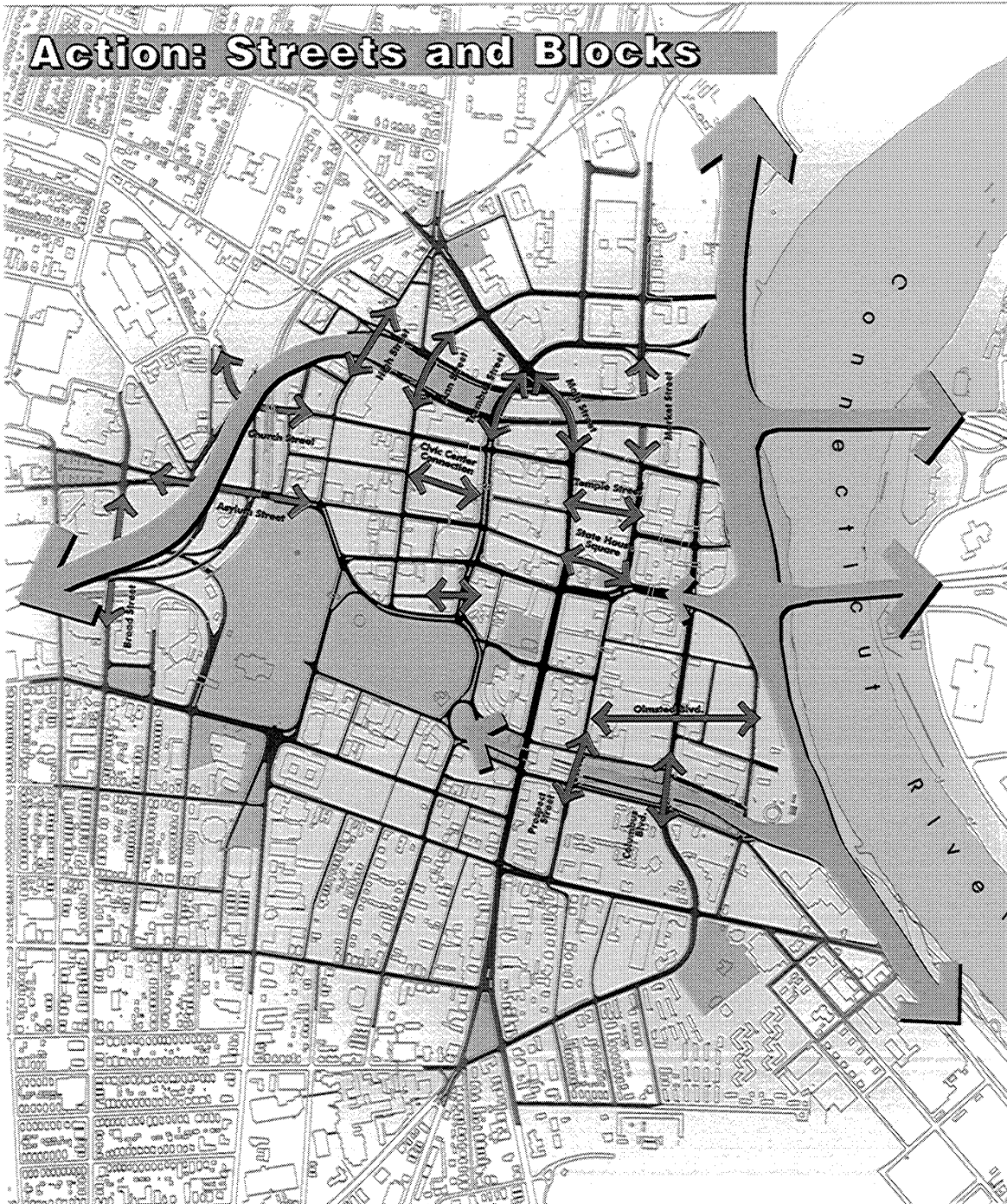
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- **Restore movement along closed streets.**
 - Reopen Temple Street by removing the “mix-master” building.
 - Reopen the Isle of Safety by the Old State House for transit vehicles. Special paving materials should be used to signify limited use.
 - Reopen Hicks Street.
 - Create a pedestrian connection through the Civic Center to reconnect Allyn with Pratt Street.
 - Facilitate the creation of Olmsted Blvd from the Atheneum to the river as part of Adriaen’s Landing.
- **Improve the conditions for drivers and pedestrians along the streets that run under the I-84 and I-91 through installing pedestrian-scale lighting, decorative barriers, sound baffling, public arts, etc. Initiatives should target:**
 - Market Street
 - Spruce / Church / Myrtle
 - Broad Street
 - Asylum Street






Temple street should be reopened by removing the “mix-master” building

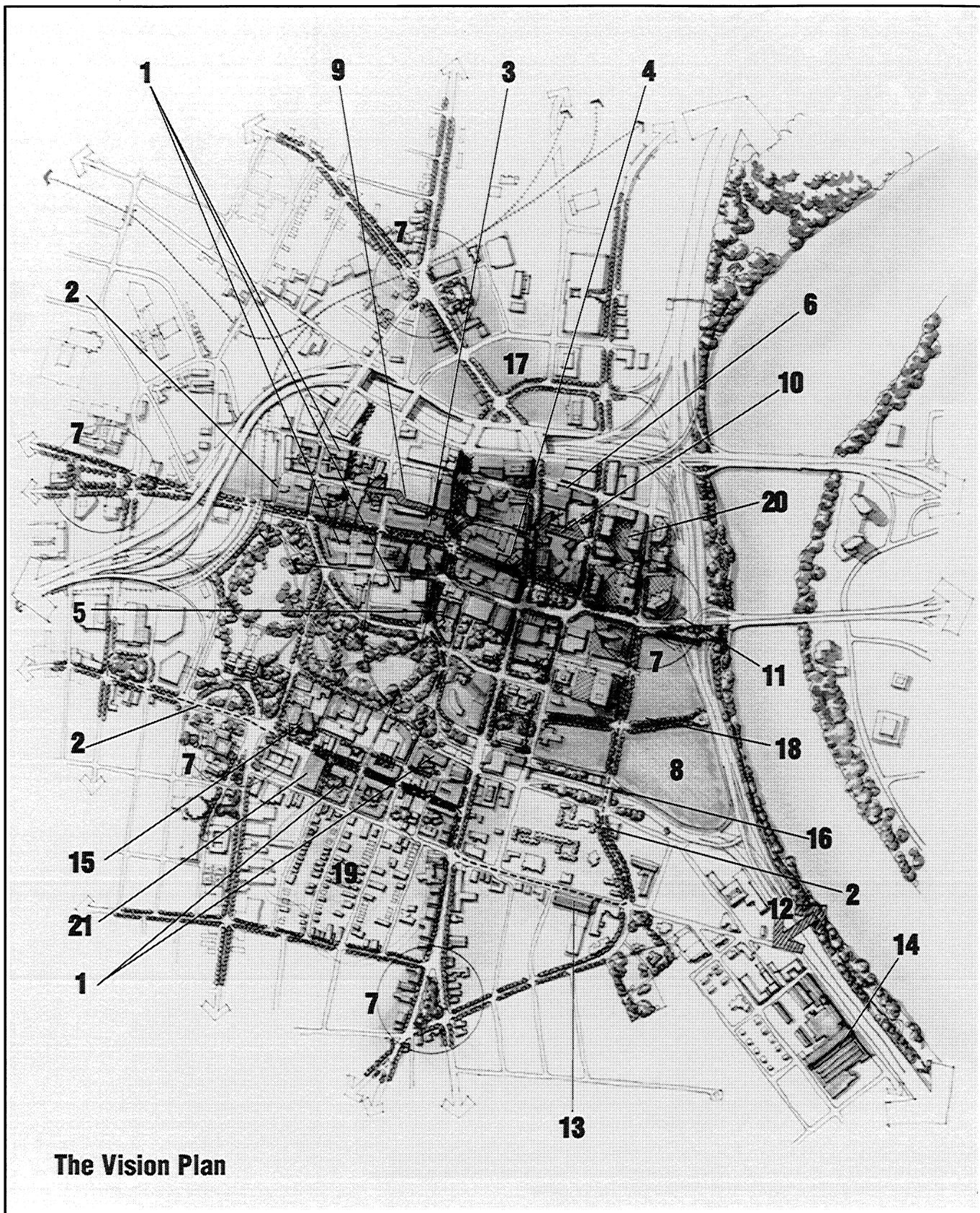
Action: Streets and Blocks



Streets and blocks

-  Connection to be created
-  Underpass connection to be strengthened
-  Overpass connection to be strengthened





5.2.3 Gateways and Arrival Points

Issues

Gateways mark a sense of arrival and departure and form connecting points between two areas. They can take many forms, being literally a gate or arch, or more informally, a sequence of open spaces and buildings, an ensemble that forms a sense of arrival. Whatever the form, gateways create a transition point between one area and another. The issue of gateways is strongly tied to how people feel as they travel. In addressing gateways, built form and street design are virtually inseparable. Because it is primarily related to how one moves through the city, this topic is dealt with under 5.4.1 Rebalancing Movement: Gateways and Arrival.



The entry to downtown from the south is from South Green



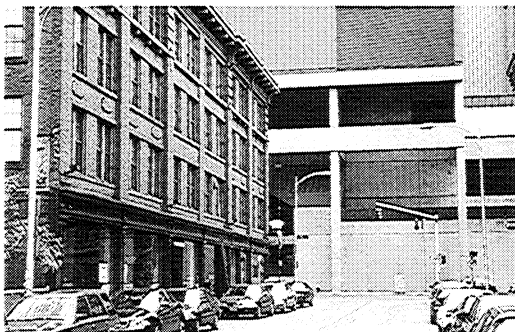
Entry from the highways is disorienting

- **Continue to improve the conditions for drivers and pedestrians along the bridges crossing over the I-84 and I-91 through installing decorative plantings, banners, weather protection, decorative fencing, etc. Bridges to be improved include those along:**

- Main Street
- Trumbull Street
- High Street
- State Street

- **Use internal lobbies to contribute existing weather protected walkways at the ground level to the pedestrian network. Key opportunities are through:**

- the Goodwin Hotel
- the G. Fox Building
- State House Square
- the Civic Center



An opportunity exists to create a connection between Pratt and Allyn Streets through the Civic Center

5.2.4 Heritage Resources

Issues

History and its artifacts are unique to each city. Heritage resources, a rather formal name for the built, cultural, and natural features that remain from the past, play an important role in defining a sense of place. Despite its rich and illustrious history, neglect and ill-considered initiatives have eaten away at Hartford's former wealth of heritage resources, weakening ties to the past and the sense of place.

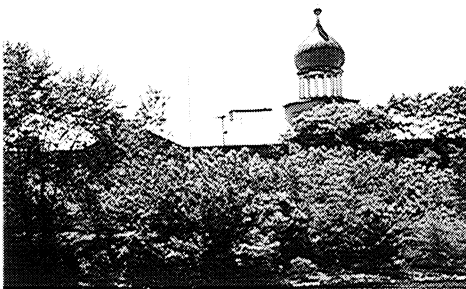
Lithographs and old photographs reveal Hartford's history as a bustling waterfront city created at the upper most navigable point on the Connecticut River. An active waterfront was dotted with piers, boats and streets came right down to the water's edge. Perched on the banks of the river, Little Italy was a tightly woven neighborhood of streets and blocks and home to a vibrant ethnic community. Today, downtown Hartford is disassociated from the river. The annual flooding, which once created fertile agricultural lands and wetlands, became a hazard as the developed area expanded. First the railroad, then the dike, and later the interstate cut off the downtown from the river, belying Hartford's history and foundation as a port city.

The fabric of downtown Hartford reveals vestiges of a grand and prosperous history. Bushnell, Elizabeth, Colt, Keney and Pope Parks are the product of a city that was progressive, successful and concerned with the quality of life of its citizens. The Colt Factory Complex is testament to Hartford's once strong manufacturing industry. City Hall, the Wadsworth Atheneum, the Travelers Tower, the Old State House and the State Capitol speak to a time when Hartford was one of the wealthiest cities in the northeast and the capital of the insurance industry. Constitution Plaza represents Hartford's bold move to adopt what were then considered progressive building practices.

However, much of this legacy has been lost and for each building left standing, many more have been demolished. The brownstones along Capitol Avenue and the restored housing along Charter Oak Avenue are virtually all that is left of an affluent population that lived and worked in the center of the city.

Opportunities

In planning and directing reinvestment in the downtown, there is the opportunity to restore and enhance heritage resources and to reaffirm Hartford's unique identity and sense of place.



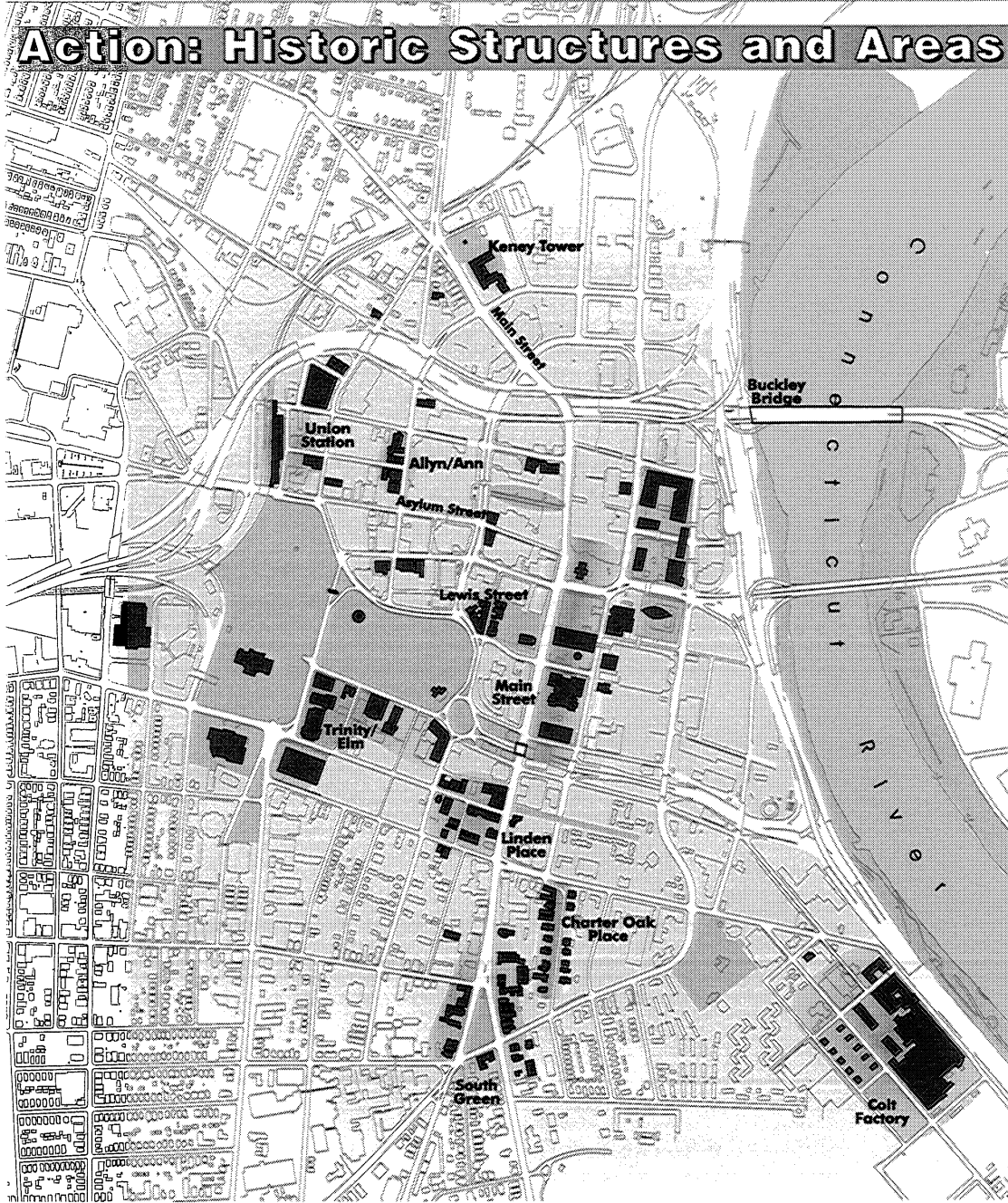
Colt Factory



Union Station Place.
There is an opportunity to restore heritage resources and to reaffirm Hartford's unique identity and sense of place.

Heritage resources play an important role in defining Hartford's sense of place and should be preserved.

Action: Historic Structures and Areas



Actions

- **Develop a public heritage signing system that identifies and describes Hartford's historic:**
 - open spaces
 - important structures
 - relationship to the river
 - role of the river

- **Preserve, restore and re-use heritage buildings wherever possible.**

- **Identify, preserve and support ensembles of historic buildings and open spaces including:**
 - Constitution Plaza and the Phoenix Building (the Boat Building)
 - the buildings along Lewis Street, Arch Street, Main Street, Charter Oak Place, Pratt Street
 - the buildings and open spaces at Allyn / Ann, Linden Place / Capitol, Trinity / Elm, South Green
 - the brownstones on Capitol Avenue
 - Union Station and warehouse structures north of Bushnell Park
 - the Ancient Burying Ground behind Center Church
 - Pulaski Mall
 - the Old State House and the surrounding park

- **Prepare a master plan for the Colt Factory area which addresses the stadium lands to the south, the Connecticut River, the Sheldon-Charter Oak neighborhood, the Colt Factory complex, Colt Park and connections to downtown.**

- **Strengthen the City's historic preservation regulations.**

5.3 The Use of Downtown

Over time, the broad mix of uses that was once found in downtown, housing, retail stores, commercial, and industrial enterprises, has become increasingly narrow. The closure of the G. Fox and Sage-Allen Department Stores, the reduced number of small retailers and residents, have contributed to the positioning of downtown Hartford as a 9 - 5 workplace for suburban commuters. Although Hartford has a number of outstanding cultural venues, such as The Bushnell, the Wadsworth Atheneum and the Hartford Stage Company, visitors tend to make single purpose trips, arriving shortly before and leaving shortly after; there is little reason to linger in downtown.

The opportunity in downtown Hartford is to reintroduce a more complex pattern of land use. Downtown should build on the outstanding cultural resources, and blend more housing, retail, cultural and entertainment uses with a strong base of office employment. Uses should overlap with each other, be mutually supportive, creating a sense of synergy among them. A key opportunity exists to build on existing, successful cultural attractions to promote the downtown as a regional center of cultural and entertainment uses.



G. Fox Department Store
Department stores and many small retailers have closed.



City Place
Downtown is dominated by offices.

5.3.1 Housing

Issues

Housing is a key component of downtown Hartford's revitalization. With only 1,200 competitive housing units, downtown Hartford does not currently have the critical mass of residents needed to constitute a sustainable housing market. Likewise, the residents of such a limited housing supply cannot support many of the basic amenities for daily living, such as grocery stores and other convenience retailers. The reduced number of people living in the downtown contributes to the lack of vitality.

The city's housing market has declined since 1970, leading to greater vacancy rates and disinvestment. Over the past two decades, middle class flight to the suburbs has also impacted on the neighborhoods surrounding downtown. Some homeowners found themselves in a situation of negative equity, with housing values having dropped below the mortgage value. (More recently, house prices have seen a modest rebound.) Poor public schools, high taxes and insurance rates as well as fear of crime and the perception that diversity is a weakness have fueled a retreat to the suburbs.

The downtown housing market has also suffered from limited downtown development activity. Most of the competitive housing units in downtown were built or renovated in the 1960s and 1970s. In the mid-1980s two large developments, Park Place Towers and Charter Oak Square, were completed. The Linden Building and the brownstones along Capitol Avenue and Buckingham Street were rehabilitated into condominiums. Then building activity came to a halt. Recent activity is limited to the 46-unit ArtSpace rehabilitation project on Asylum, completed in 1998. (This is an example of the small-scale, high visibility projects that should receive greater emphasis in Hartford.) Still in the pipeline, the Cutter Block development proposes 60 units in the rehabilitated 111 Pearl Street building and 40 units on Lewis Street, as part of a larger mixed-use development.

Yet, there is now a new demand for downtown housing. Occupancy and rental rates in competitive downtown apartments are expected to continue to rise. A tightening rental market and the results of a recent survey of downtown employees and *The Hartford Courant* readers, point to substantial unmet demand. The survey, conducted by Development Strategies Inc. (DSI) on behalf of the Downtown Hartford Economic and Urban Action Strategy, determined key perceptions and attitudes about living, working, shopping, and recreating in downtown Hartford (see Appendix 2 for a summary of survey results).



The brownstones along Capitol Avenue



Bushnell Towers in the heart of downtown

Over one in five survey respondents expressed interest in living in or adjacent to downtown Hartford. When interpreted most conservatively, DSI concludes that the core market for new downtown housing constitutes about 6 percent of all downtown employees. When added to the estimated pool of interested residents region-wide, as revealed by the *Courant* survey, DSI concludes that there exists a total potential demand for some 6,400 housing units – households expressing a desire to live downtown and having the economic capacity to consider such a move.

The survey found that the top reasons for not being interested in living downtown, are simply that people are happy with the home they have or they prefer non-urban spaces. Other reasons, however, suggest that negative perceptions of urban living prevail: higher rates of crime, poorer schools, and higher taxes are all concerns. True or not, these perceptions must be addressed by future housing developers and marketing programs.

Adults will form the majority of the market for downtown housing, a fact that should be reflected in the design, function, and marketing of most of the future downtown housing stock. Survey respondents also identified the five most important housing features as off-street parking, reasonable price, electronic security, and nearby convenience and supermarket shopping options.

Opportunities

New and competitive housing in the downtown provides the opportunity to expand and diversify the population living in and around the core. Creating mixed-use areas and offering a range of density, ownership, rental options, new and old buildings, and work/live spaces will allow individuals with diverse incomes and family structures to live in the downtown.

The emerging downtown community will be attractive neighborhoods, distinct from the suburban counterparts by taking advantage of existing amenities such as Bushnell Park, access to the river, historic architectural styles, and existing neighborhoods. There is an opportunity to create a strong sense of community by concentrating rather than scattering housing development. Individual developments need to be large enough to be easily identified and to support a critical mass for emerging neighborhoods.

Large sites for new residential development exist in the Bushnell North and Bushnell South neighborhoods, where appropriately designed mid-rise apartments would have the greatest chance for success. Sites fronting on the north side of the park and along Capitol Avenue, one block south of the park, are prime sites for housing. Under utilized office and retail

Increasing the number of people living in the downtown is one of the quickest and surest routes to rejuvenation, increasing the life on the streets after office hours and creating a stronger sense of community. As the residential population grows, so will support for convenience shopping and services, and demand for retail and entertainment venues.

buildings within the core form an important opportunity for reuse. Buildings with the potential to be adapted with a residential component include the G. Fox and the Sage-Allen buildings as well as the SNET building and 410 Asylum Street.

Infill housing in the neighborhoods can also play an important role in revitalizing the core. Lower density row house/townhouse units and loft apartments are the preferred typology in the neighborhoods that ring downtown (Frog Hollow, Barry Square, South Green, Sheldon-Charter Oak, Asylum Hill, Clay-Arsenal, and North Meadows) as well as other outlying city neighborhoods.



High Street sites



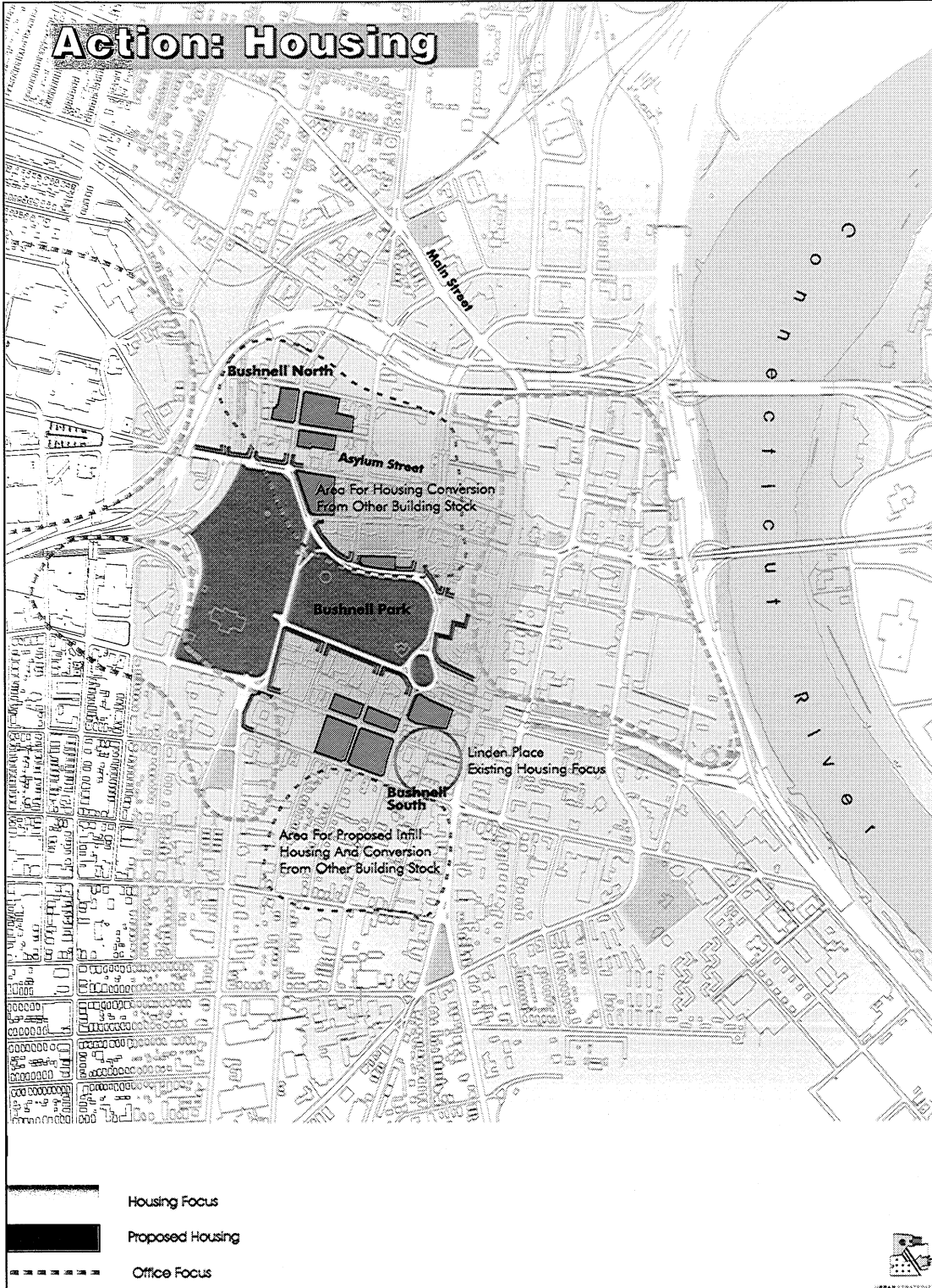
The SNET site
There are many vacant sites for new development.

Actions - Housing

Five-year Development Program

- **Develop new parking structures that can be shared with a number of users to free up lands for residential development, and to provide much needed parking for downtown residents.**
- **Make improvements to the streetscape in the vicinity of new residential buildings to make the streets feel more safe. Lighting, ground level uses, and attractive tree-lined sidewalks are especially important.**
- **Add 1,250 units, doubling the current downtown inventory, to increase the number of people living in the downtown.**
- **Locate 600 to 800 units in the core, mostly in new, mid-rise buildings and loft conversions, to suit residents seeking alternative lifestyles.**
- **Add 400 to 600 units in the surrounding neighborhoods, mostly attached town homes and infill apartments.**
- **Construct, as early as possible, at least one and preferably two residential developments of 180- to 200-units to quickly broaden the market base for downtown housing.**
- **Create incentives and subsidies to spur development.**

Action: Housing



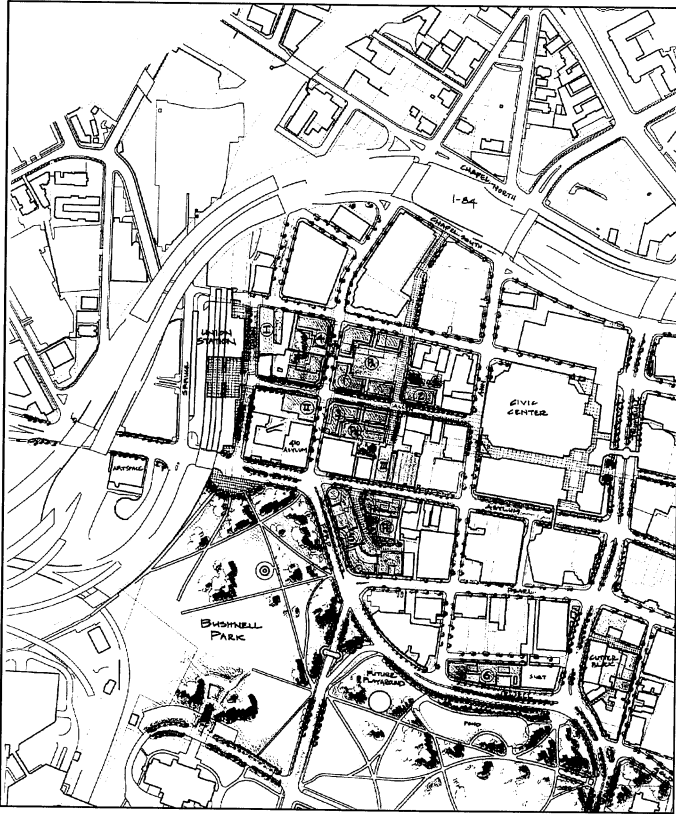
- Devise effective means to preserve key residential development sites. This may include zoning strategies that do not permit commercial or office uses, uses which support higher land values and would eventually preclude residential development where it would be otherwise most promising.
- As the number of residential units increases, introduce supporting uses, such as a grocery store.

Long term development plan:

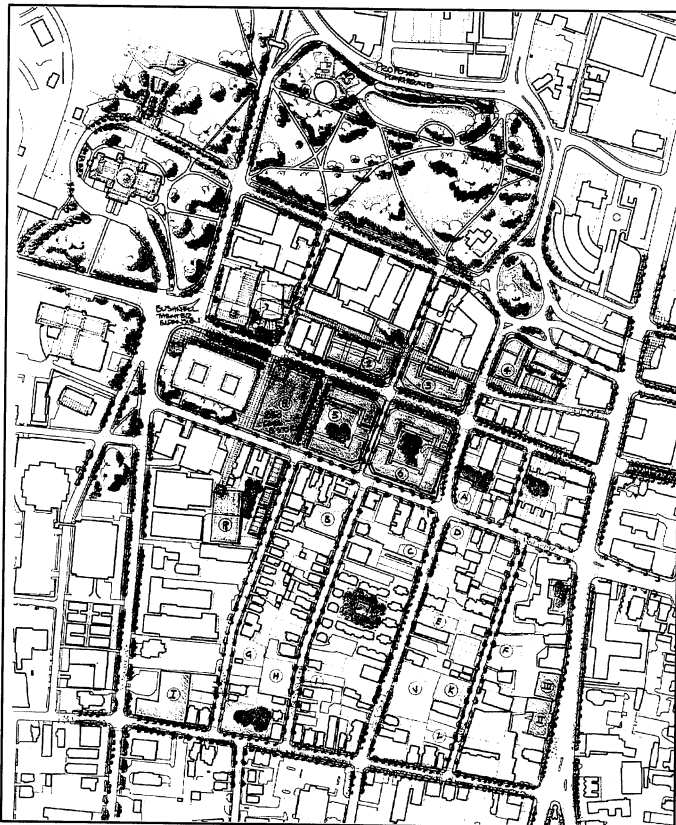
- Add an average of 250 units per year to total 3,750 to 5,000 units in 15 years.
- Target one-third of the overall downtown residential development for condominium occupancy and two-thirds for rental.
- Ensure that ownership town homes account for one-third to one-half of the infill neighborhood projects.
- Ensure loft office and retail conversions account for one-third of the development and that two-thirds of the downtown residential growth is newly constructed.

Housing Development Goals

	<i>Total Units</i>	<i>Units in Core</i>	<i>Units in Surrounding Neighborhoods</i>
<i>Five Years</i>	1,250	600-800	400-600
<i>Fifteen Years</i>	3,750-5,000	2,200-3,000	1,500-2,000



In North Bushnell there are opportunities for a significant residential population. Between 700 and 1,400 residential units could be built in structures of approximately 6 - 10 stories in height. In response to the scale and character of existing warehouse structures, the density proposed is slightly higher than that anticipated in the Bushnell South area.



In South Bushnell it is proposed that the vast number of existing surface parking spaces be collected into a structure to free-up land. Between 600 and 1,200 units of housing could be built in medium - density structures, ranging from townhouses to apartment buildings approximately 6 stories in height. The scale is intended to be compatible with the existing Linden Building and the historic brownstones along Capitol Avenue which enhance this corner of downtown.

5.3.2 Retail

Issues

Over the past decade, downtown Hartford lost its position as a regional shopping center as competitive department stores and major comparison-shopping retailers (clothing, appliances, home furnishings, etc.) closed. A ring of newer suburban regional centers serve much of the comparison shopping needs of all regional residents, and will likely retain this role for the foreseeable future.

The decline of Hartford's retail market has been dramatic. A slow decline began in the 1950s, and accelerated between 1990 and 1993, when 1.4 million square feet of retail space closed, including the G. Fox and Sage-Allen department stores. In 1998 Luetgen's Limited, a department store, closed its doors, having already cut its space in half from 68,000 to 30,000 square feet. As the large retailers shut down, downtown attracted fewer shoppers, reducing the small retailers' customer base.

The plight of commercial uses and the small retailer in particular is exacerbated by the current tax situation. Resolution requires cooperation between the city, the state and the property owners in downtown. Ideally, the state would increase its payments in lieu of taxes in consideration of its role as the largest landlord in downtown. A regular program of annual or bi-annual property reassessments should be adopted and combined with steps to broaden the array of sources of revenue available to the city, thereby reducing its dependence on property taxes.

Office workers, residents, and visitors currently generate an estimated demand for 480,000 square feet of retail space, which approximately equals the supply of occupied retail inventory. Much of the downtown shopping opportunities are geared to the office worker population, and less so to residents and visitors. For example, the Civic Center, Richardson Mall, City Place, and State House Square are all internally oriented, not particularly inviting to the newcomer, and rely primarily on the captive market of close-by office workers. Further, most retailers are only open on weekdays from nine to five, with most of their business done during office workers' lunch period. While some stores are open on Saturday, virtually all are closed on Sunday. Downtown restaurants and retailers also face competition from on-site food courts and company cafeterias that discourage employees from patronizing local businesses.

A significant share of downtown Hartford's retail market is outdated and is not competitive with the modern, efficient retailing in the surrounding suburbs. Some vacant and occupied retail spaces in downtown offer redevelopment opportunities, including conversion to other uses. In the Civic



Between 1990 and 1993 1.4 million square feet of retail space closed, including the G. Fox department store.

Center Mall, for example, one proposal sought to convert the second floor of retail space to educational or office uses. Other proposals seek to add limited amounts of retail space as part of larger mixed-use projects. The Cutter Block development proposes to include 52,000 square feet of retail space in renovated buildings.

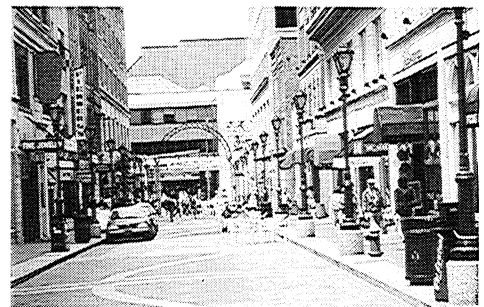
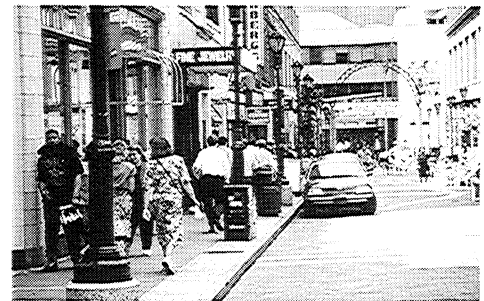
The surveys of downtown employees and *The Hartford Courant* readers showed that downtown is expected to be a diverse environment with retail stores offering a wide range of goods and services. Downtown is also perceived as a place for locally owned businesses, which are generally preferred by survey respondents, as are smaller specialty stores.

New downtown office workers and residents will generate demand for new retail space, making downtown a livelier place for living, working and recreating. Downtown employees and *Courant* readers were given a list of 21 kinds of shopping and entertainment activities which are or could be located in downtown Hartford, and respondents were asked how likely they would be to patronize each. The top five preferences comprise an encouraging diversity of businesses: bookstores, specialty food restaurants, bank ATMs, specialty clothing, and gift/card shops.

Development of a new downtown convention center and stadium would add to the visitor base and, designed appropriately, increase market-generated spending for retail goods and services as well as entertainment. In order to create more “walking traffic” throughout the downtown and enliven it as a whole, it is recommended that retail and entertainment venues be distributed throughout the core downtown area, rather than concentrated in a single, internalized facility.

The big-box or category- killer retailers are targeting some urban areas, particularly when there is strong market support not served by suburban options. However, this is generally not an appropriate retail configuration for downtown Hartford. The suburban markets already offer big-box shopping in readily accessible automobile-dominated environments. This type of format can be at odds with the pedestrian-friendly environment that should be cultivated downtown. Some exceptions might be home furnishings, book, and music stores. These types of stores can flourish in urban neighborhoods and complement specialty retailing districts.

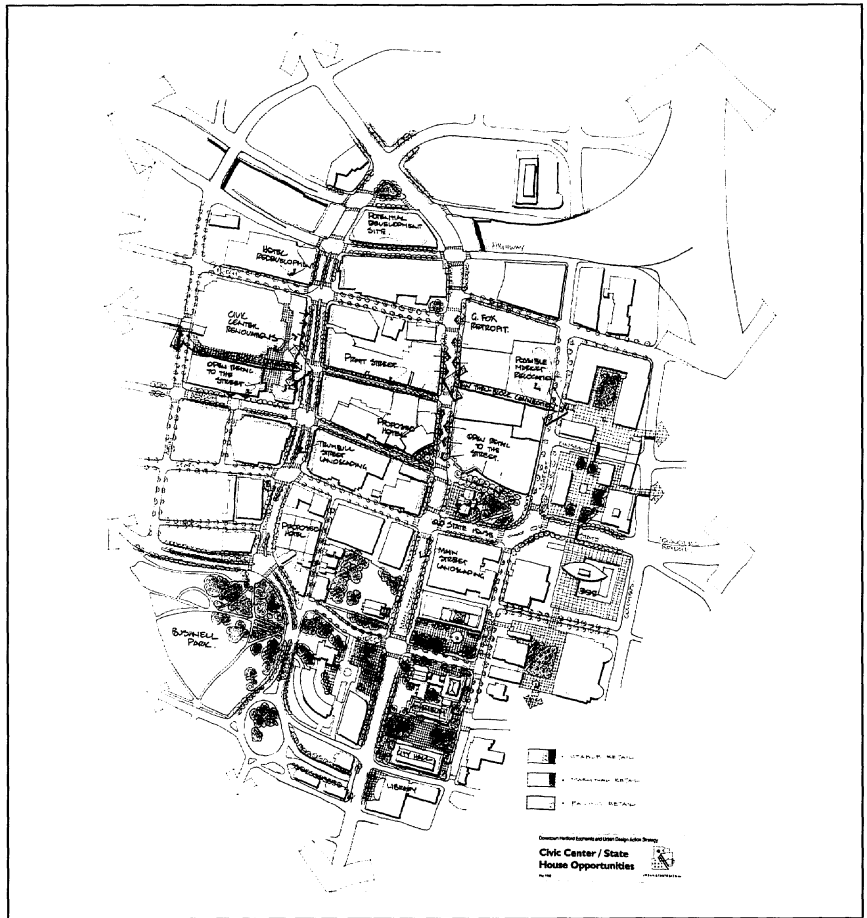
The retail/entertainment segment of the market should be considered carefully. Entertainment uses should be in several clusters, not focused in a single venue. The large-scale single development approach is risky as a long-term proposition given the size and location of the Hartford market.



Pratt Street continues to be an active retail street.

The Civic Center/Old State House workshop evaluated the health of downtown's retail.

Downtown should establish itself as a shopping destination offering a unique tenant mix and the services for a growing downtown population.



Another type of large-scale, retail project is the Festival Market Place concept. Festival Market Place projects were developed in downtowns of numerous large to mid-sized metro areas across the country in the mid-1970s until the mid-1980s. Some, such as Baltimore's Harborplace and Boston's Faneuil Hall by Rouse Company were and remain very successful.

However, this format did not meet with the same level of success in most markets, where projects built on the same principles sprang up in competing and overlapping retail markets. The current performance of the remaining Festival Centers shows that *visitors* generate the majority of sales in six of eight Rouse centers examined. All the Festival Market Places, with the exception of Jacksonville, Florida, are in markets considerably larger than Hartford, and all have higher levels of visitors. Jacksonville's Festival Marketplace is not considered an economic success.

There is clearly local interest in reviving downtown and making it a “place to go.” With the right mix of speciality retail, entertainment, and eating and drinking establishments, there is the opportunity to create a “downtown experience” that is an attraction itself, a regional destination.

A critical mass of small retailers can function as an anchor to draw shoppers from a wide area. This retail scheme offers the greatest likelihood of sustained success for downtown Hartford. Given Hartford’s market location between the major tourist draws of Boston and New York, as well as its mix of both current and anticipated office workers and visitors, this configuration, rather than a major, stand-alone, internalized entertainment/retail development, is recommended.

Opportunities

Retail development should focus on small local retailers with unique products and a regional following that do not compete with suburban malls. Hartford’s cultural diversity can play an important role in strengthening downtown as a unique shopping destination. Park Street, for example, should be positioned as a regional destination and draw.

Part of the opportunity lies in creating a retail destination that is unique from a physical perspective. Development must be street-related, not in an internally-oriented mall. Retail uses should be concentrated along the historic main streets in the downtown core, in clusters of activity that enliven the street scene and create synergies with other uses. Key links to the river and to surrounding neighborhoods should also be supported.

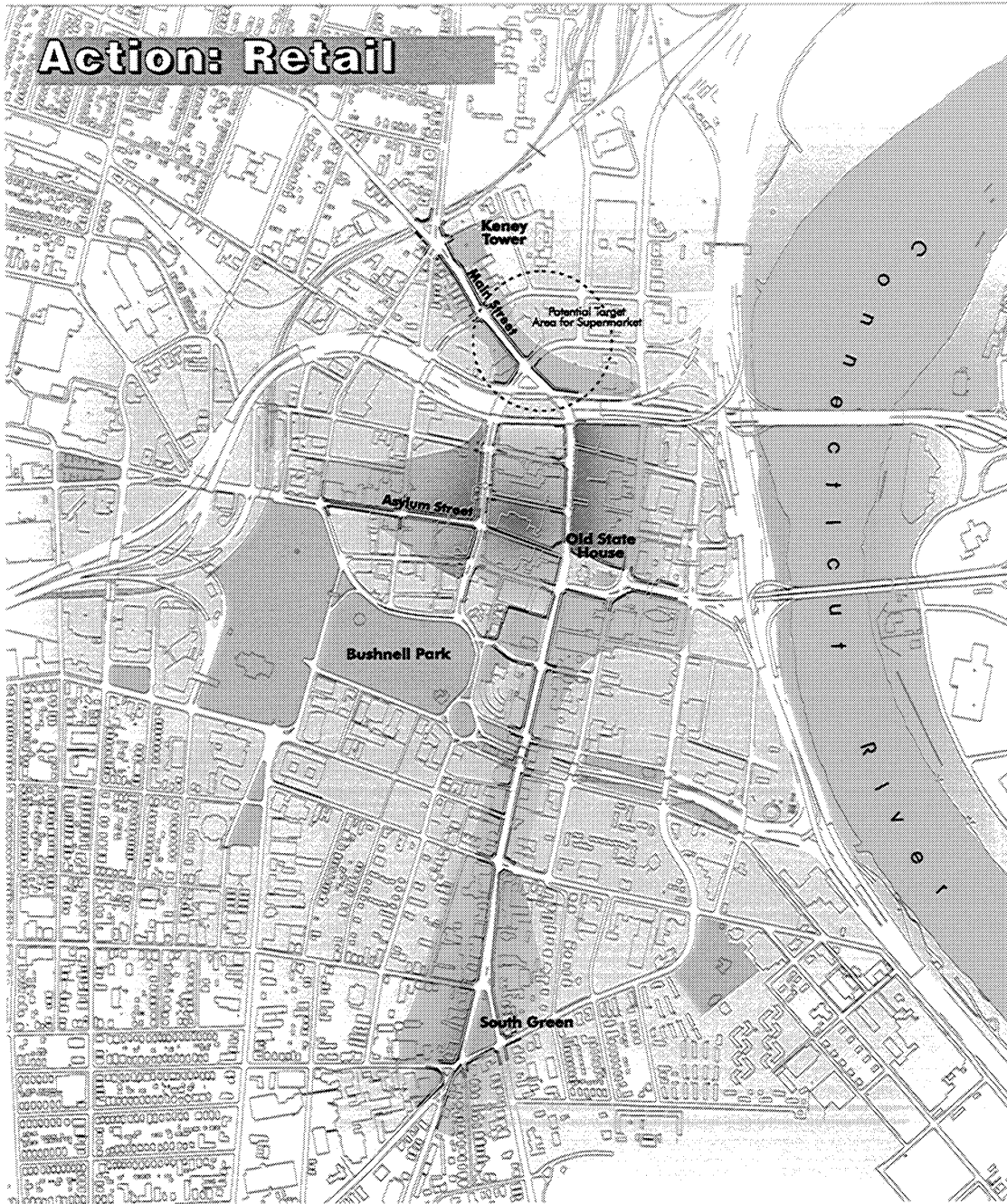
Vacant and occupied but outmoded retail space in downtown offers redevelopment opportunities, including conversion to other uses such as residential or office space, as well as reconfiguration for new retail uses especially on the ground floor.

Typically, retail development is not a leader in urban revitalization, but rather follows as more people live, work and visit the city. There is an opportunity to increase the retail market in Hartford by tying it to other projects that attract people to live, work, and recreate in downtown. There is also an opportunity to bolster the retail market by taking action in other real estate markets. Building limited-service hotels will complement an improved downtown retail market. New office buildings can be designed without cafeterias to encourage employees to support existing and new businesses. The development of a stadium and/or convention center can bring in visitors and building housing units will add to the demand for convenience retail space as well as dining and entertainment.

Actions - Retail

- **Develop a retail marketing package to target and attract desirable businesses.**
- **Coordinate with surrounding neighborhoods, such as Sheldon-Charter Oak, South Green, Frog Hollow, Asylum Hill and Clay Arsenal, to develop unique and complementary business districts and retail shopping areas.**
- **Work with major employers, such as the major insurance companies, to encourage employees to eat lunch outside of the office buildings as well as to shop in downtown during their lunch period or after work.**
- **Identify site(s) for a major grocery store in or near the downtown core.**
- **Encourage street-related retail clusters along Main Street, Trumbull Street, Asylum Street, Columbus Boulevard, and Pearl Street. The upper stories of former Main Street department stores - G. Fox, Sage Allen and the Richardson Buildings - should be adapted to either office or loft residential uses.**
- **Big-box retail stores, such as music and books stores, might be appropriately located in renovated structures, such as the G. Fox Building.**
- **Plan for a net gain of 50,000 to 70,000 square feet of new retail and entertainment space in the downtown core over the short-term. The actual amount of new or rehabilitated space that could be successfully created would exceed this target range for a net increase because of a need to replace obsolete and uncompetitive retail locations. It is important to keep these uses in the heart of the downtown where synergies can be created with other uses.**

Action: Retail



 Retail Focus



- Over the long term, as much as 150,000 square feet of net new retail space should be market justified in addition to the redevelopment or replacement of existing retail properties. This space could potentially include a specialty, even one-of-a-kind, supermarket with broad market appeal such as Bread and Circus to serve the downtown population and regional patrons.

Number of Retail Establishments in the City of Hartford

Year	Number of Retail Establishments
1956	2,345
1972	1,777
1983	1,105
1992	1,048
1997	1,022

Sources:
 U.S. Department of Commerce,
 County and City Data Book,
 Clarita and DSI

MSA	Population	SMM Forecast Growth Rate 1997-2002	Convention Center Size	Exhibit space	Downtown Workers	Visitors	Downtown Hotel Rooms	Project Size (Retail)
Hartford, CT	1,100,000	-0.08%	16,000 seat Coliseum	71,000 in Civic Center	55,000		1,647	
Miami, FL	2,100,000	6.70%	1,000,000	500,000	100,000	12,000,000	3,235	223,000
Boston, MA	3,853,000	2.80%	370,000		240,000	15,000,000	2,875	215,000
Baltimore, MD	2,491,000	2.70%	1,225,000	370,000	100,000	700,000	5,500	277,000
New York, NY	20,219,000	0.30%	900,000		375,000	16,000,000	2,000*	235,000
Jacksonville, FL	1,025,000	3.40%	295,000	10,000	70,000	4,500,000	1,078	128,000
New Orleans, LA	1,314,000	0.40%	1,700,000		96,000	10,000,000		178,000
New Orleans, LA	To be by 2000:		3,100,000					
St. Louis, MO	2,551,300	1.90%	502,000	240,000	90,000	6,000,000	5,500	171,000

*Lower Manhattan Hotel Rooms

Sources: DSI, The Rouse Company, Sales and Marketing Management Magazine, 1997

5.3.3 Hotels

Issues

The Hartford hotel market is strong. Driven by business customer demand, occupancies are up. The strength of the hotel market is spawning renovation activity and construction plans around the region. Holiday Inn downtown has been upgraded to a Crowne Plaza with a \$12 million renovation budget. The new owners of the Hastings Hotel and Conference Center will spend \$3.5 million in improvements. The Goodwin Hotel recently updated its facility with a \$1.6 million project. The Sheraton-Hartford Hotel recently completed a \$2 million interior renovation program; CapStar Hotel Company recently purchased it and has converted the hotel into a Hilton and has plans to invest another \$4 million to upgrade the exterior, redecorate meeting rooms, and upgrade some rooms to include business workstations.

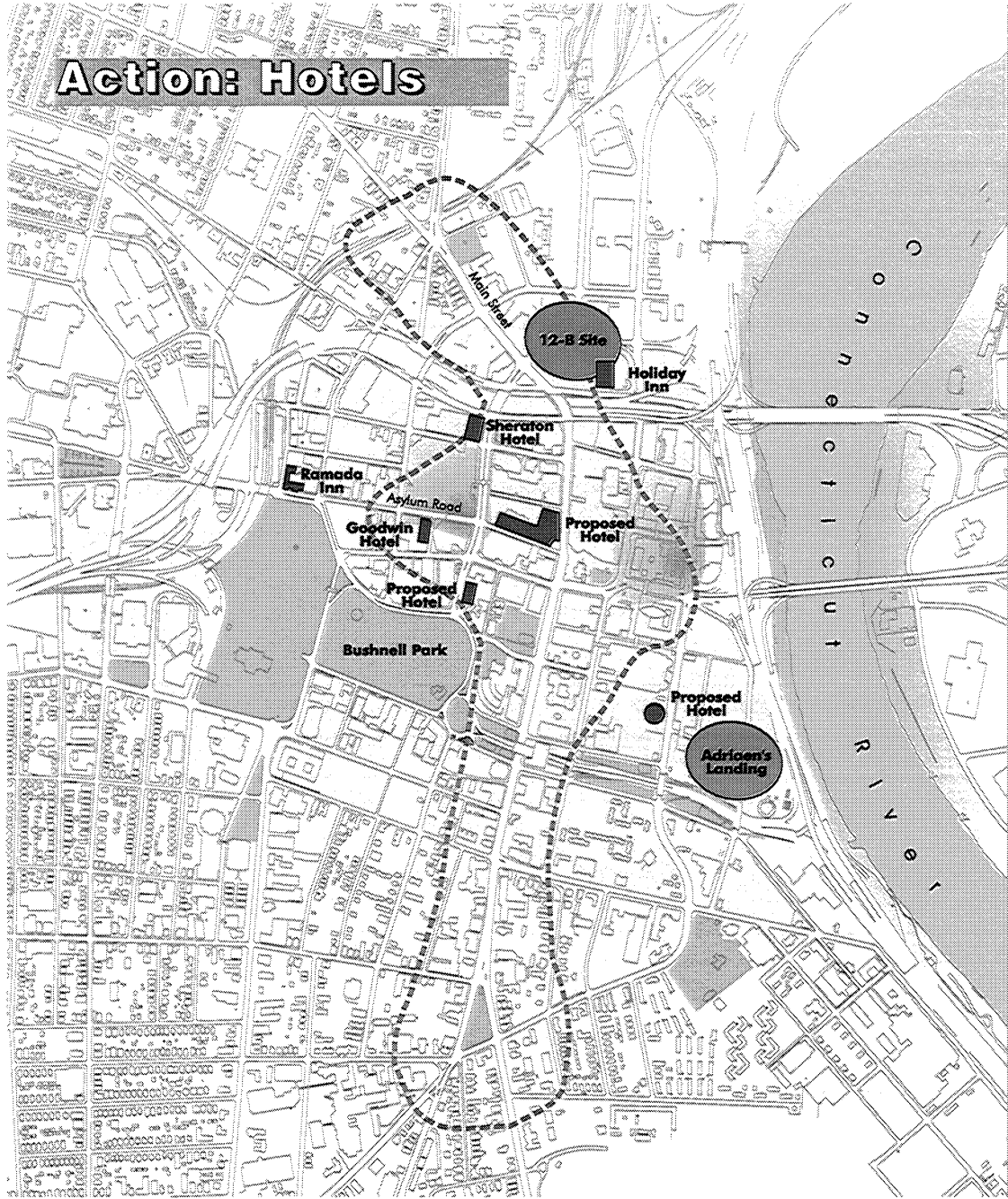
A weakness in the Hartford hotel market, particularly the downtown hotel market, is the lack of a strong tourist and convention base. This means hotels are filled during the week with business travelers and empty on the weekends. This explains occupancy rates that remain around 70 percent. The business market is so strong, however, that downtown hotels are not interested in convention business that requires discounted rooms on weekdays.

Downtown hotel development proposals include a 200-room hotel with a parking garage on the Cutter Block. Also, a 300-room hotel is proposed on the site of the former Main Street Market, known as the Society Block. Preliminary plans for the proposed Adriaen's Landing include a 700-room convention headquarters hotel in the first phase and a 350-room full service business hotel in a later phase.

The presence or absence of a major new convention facility will certainly influence the ultimate number, mixture, and level of success of downtown hotels. More hotel rooms downtown are necessary if the city wants to support business generated by a new convention center and stadium. Unless this demand is limited to weekend business, conventioners will displace existing business customers.

When possible, hotels should be located to serve patrons of the major office and convention facilities in downtown and to create synergies between hotel and retail patronage.

Action: Hotels



Proposed Hotels



Retail Focus



Proposed Stadium Site



Proposed State College Site



Opportunities

In downtown Hartford, the best immediate opportunity for hotel development lies in building a mid-range business class hotel with limited services, such as a Courtyard or Hampton Inn. Limited service hotels would generate demand for dinner reservations at downtown restaurants as well as provide some patronage to specialty retailers. It is important to locate a hotel in the downtown core, and not on the periphery, in order to create synergies with local businesses and animate the streets.

Actions - Hotels

- **Add a 250 room limited service hotel in the short-term (one or two projects).**
- **In the longer term, adding the proposed new convention facility and stadium as part of Adriaen's Landing would increase demand for hotel rooms and justify a new, full-service convention headquarters hotel.**

5.3.4 Convention and Stadium Development

Issues

A 68,000 seat, open-air stadium at Adriaen's Landing will be the home of the New England Patriots, beginning as early as the 2001 NFL season. The project will also include a convention center, hotel, NFL-X retail and entertainment pavilion, a large-scale wellness center, additional parking, and infrastructure improvements.

The Hartford Coliseum seats over 16,200 and has a 71,000 square foot exhibition hall. Following the relocation of the Hartford Whalers, the Connecticut Development Authority signed a 14-year partnership agreement with Madison Square Garden LP (MSG). MSG brought its American Hockey League franchise, the Wolf Pack, to Hartford and operates the building. MSG's established connections with performers and its ownership of the New York Knicks, Rangers, and Wolf Pack have brought increased traffic to the Civic Center. Even without the Whalers, attendance is increasing. Both the New England Blizzard and the UConn Basketball have very significant attendance numbers.

The Adriaen's Landing development will clearly influence Hartford's Civic Center. However, the proposed 68,000 seat stadium and domed convention center is quite different from the existing facility and the two venues could complement each other well, rather than compete. The Coliseum would be the only venue in Hartford with an ice surface, and its smaller more intimate setting (16,000 versus 68,000 seats) is more appropriate for many events including both hockey and basketball. Several cities around the country support two similar venues including St. Louis, Philadelphia, and Indianapolis.

The exhibition hall in the Civic Center is too small to attract large conventions. As an alternative to the convention center now proposed in Adriaen's Landing, the city and state considered developing a convention center north of I-84 on the city-owned parcel 12-B. In either event, with the right marketing, Civic Center management should be able to continue to attract smaller groups, again complementing rather than competing with a larger convention facility.

Opportunities

There is an opportunity to boost the downtown economy by adding the new stadium and convention center. The city is fortunate to have two potential locations for a new stadium and convention center complex. One is the Adriaen's Landing site. The second is the city-owned parcel 12-



The Hartford Civic Center will soon be renovated.

B to the north of I-84. In the event that any of the proposed facilities cannot be accommodated on the Adriaen's Landing site, 12-B is an appropriate back-up site. It is also a key site for other civic facilities.

Great care should be given to siting convention and stadium facilities to avoid the deadening affects these uses can have on their surroundings when there are no scheduled events. Carefully sited and designed, the pedestrian traffic coming and going from events can foster downtown revitalization. In particular, much of the parking demand generated by the stadium should be met by the vast supply of existing parking lots throughout the city. This will both ensure that people walk through the city's streets to get to the stadium, and reduce traffic congestion in the vicinity of the stadium.



Proposed Adriaen's Landing

A combined convention center and stadium complex will complement the Civic Center and should be located to take advantage of existing hotels while fostering the creation of additional lodging facilities.

5.3.5 Office

Issues

The downtown Hartford office market was one of the tightest markets in the country in the mid-1980s and, following a burst of construction activity, and major corporate dislocations, one of the most overbuilt during the mid-1990s recession. Since that time, the office market has been improving.

The Hartford office market has three unique qualities that give it strength. First, Greater Hartford has a high percentage of Class-A office space. As the market rebounds, a surplus of outdated inferior space will not unduly depress rental rates. Second, Hartford's downtown is an established office center, accounting for more than a third of the metro market's inventory. The marketplace finds value in the downtown location and improvements to the downtown will allow it to effectively compete against suburban markets. Third, Hartford has a unique office composition, with a larger-than-typical share of owner-occupied space. Further, growth and changing space requirements of large office users will generate significant demand for office space over the long term.

Based on recent tenant activity and the fundamental strength of the office market, downtown Hartford should be able to accommodate carefully phased new office construction. Downtown Hartford's office market faces competition from surrounding suburban markets and needs new supply to meet this competition. The next wave of office development needs to be more conducive to a vibrant urban environment. Construction activity in the 1970s and 1980s, created large, internalized office structures that were out of scale with downtown.

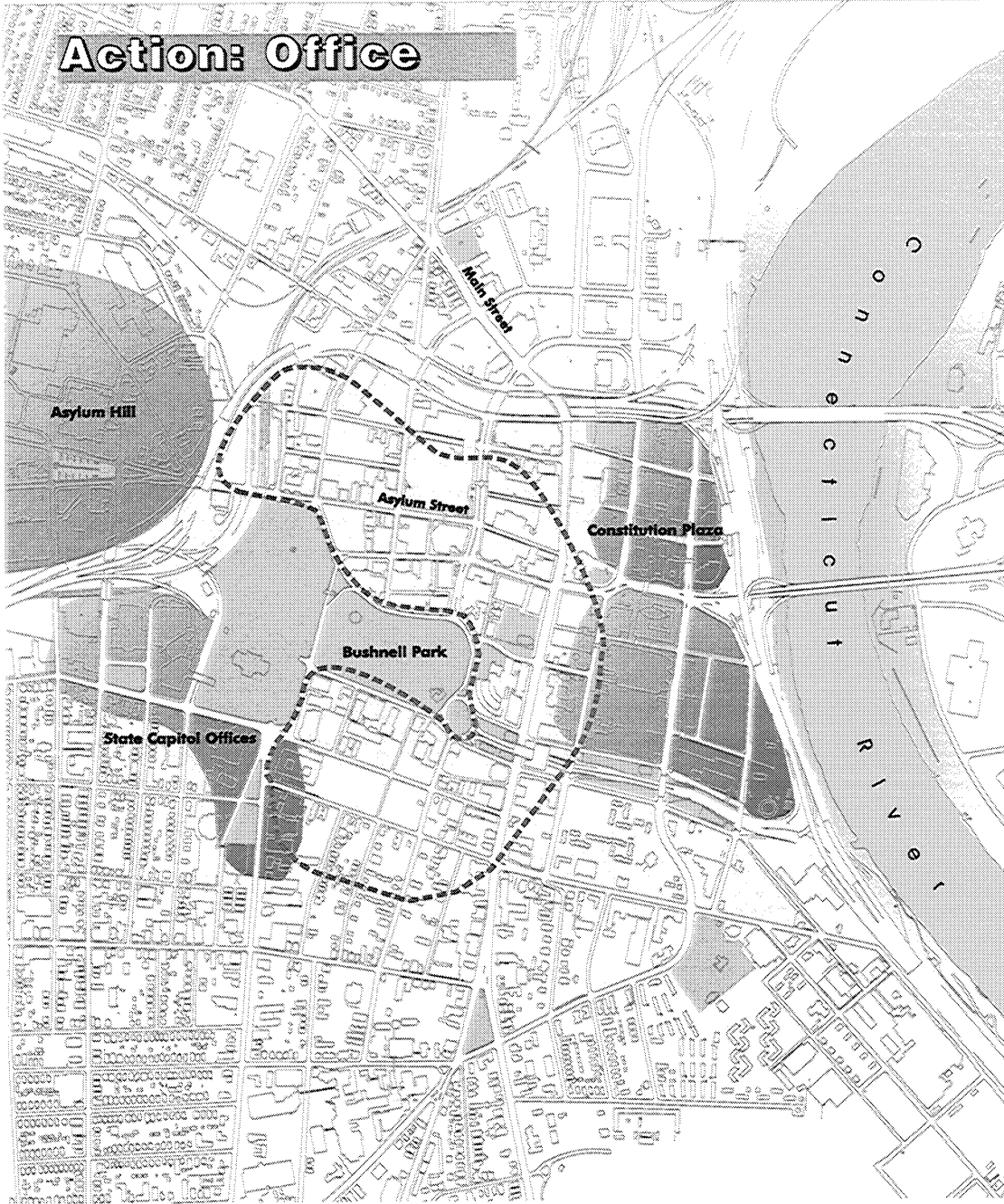
There are several office projects already proposed for downtown Hartford. Developers for the Society Block (Main Street / Market Site) propose a mixed-used development that includes 118,000 square feet of high-end office space along with a hotel, street-level retail space, and a 900-car parking structure.



Proponents of the Cutter Block, bordered by Trumbull, Pearl and Lewis Streets, propose renovation and infill redevelopment. The site includes two buildings that could be converted to 120,000 square feet of office space and a new infill building that will combine apartment units, a 200-room hotel, and a 600-car parking garage.

While the upper level of the Civic Center Mall is currently occupied by office uses, redevelopment of this facility could include more, less, or the same amount of office use.

As the primary source of employment in the region, every effort should be made to accommodate new, expanded or rehabilitated office space throughout the downtown area.

Action: Office



-  Office Focus
-  Housing Focus



Opportunities

There is an opportunity to add new office space where it will create synergies with other downtown uses, namely retail, hotel, and a convention center / stadium complex. Government office uses should remain concentrated in the area west of the capital, while private development should focus on the area east of Main Street. The addition of new Class-A space can reinforce the image of downtown Hartford as the region's premiere address.

Older properties offer opportunities for redevelopment for either office or residential uses. The next generation of office buildings can be developed in scale with the city fabric and contribute to a "positive downtown experience", which in turn can improve the office market's competitive position with suburban markets. There are opportunities for mixed-use development that include an office component as well as hotel, retail, and residential components.

Office development, along with mixed-use development can provide the opportunity to expand and diversify the employment base in downtown Hartford. As existing businesses expand and new businesses enter the downtown market a broad range of new jobs will be created.

Actions - Office

- **Develop in two to three separate projects in the short term a total of some 500,000 square feet of new office space (targeting year 2000 completion).**
- **Additional office development would be justified within five to seven years.**

5.4 Rebalancing Movement

The circulation system in downtown Hartford is burdened with numerous remnants of the 1960s planning concept, popular in downtowns, calling for the separation of vehicles from pedestrians. Reacting to the then-emerging suburban malls, this viewpoint sought to capture the features of pedestrian malls in downtown areas. Constitution Plaza, an example of this approach to planning, situated pedestrians on a pedestrian-only platform while relegating vehicles to what was to become a vehicle-only lower level. Skyways, such as those connecting the Civic Center with nearby buildings, were intended to move pedestrians between buildings without contact with the street.

Streets, devoid of pedestrians, became places only for moving as many vehicles as fast as possible. Street geometrics (design speed, width and corner radii) encouraged vehicles to move at speeds incompatible with good pedestrian atmosphere. One-way street operations, signal progression and the very brief duration of “walk” pedestrian signals are further indications of the domination of the street by vehicle travel. As a result, activity such as retail shopping and personal services, found at street level in a healthy environment, turned inward and was located in internalized malls no longer addressing the street.



Pedestrians, cars, bicycles, public transit, all need to be given equal importance in the design of roads and signals.



Large portions of Hartford's downtown is devoted to surface parking - sites which could be put to higher and better uses.

Strangely, despite the emphasis put on moving cars quickly in their own right-of-way, Hartford is disorienting even for drivers. The one-way street network, the lack of signage and the underwhelming sense of arrival from the freeways all contribute to the sense of confusion. While this is less an issue for daily commuters, familiar with the idiosyncracies of the network, it is particularly a problem for those who only visit downtown occasionally, such as patrons of The Bushnell, the Wadsworth Atheneum, and tourists. As downtown emerges as a tourist and cultural destination, it is important that the city street system be user-friendly, particularly for visitors.

The major opportunity in downtown Hartford is to redress the current imbalance in the networks for movement. Pedestrians, cars, bicycles, public transit, all need to be given equal importance in the design of roads and signals. The existing system must be modified to be more intuitively navigable for drivers.

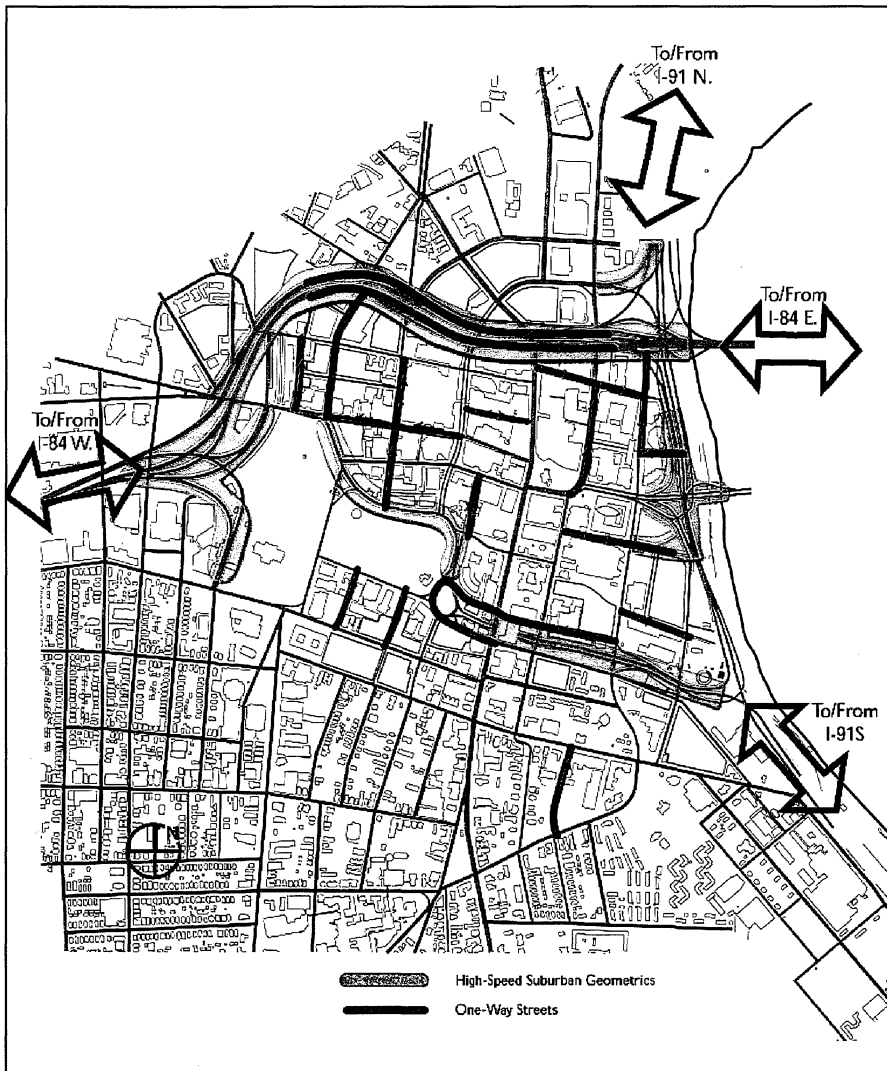


Columbus Boulevard
Streets became places for moving as
many vehicles as possible.

5.4.1 Gateways and Arrival

Issues

Before the freeways were constructed, access to downtown Hartford was accomplished by traveling from the surrounding neighborhoods on grand surface arterials, which spread out from the downtown like spokes on a wheel. Maple Avenue, Asylum Street, Main Street, Washington Street, Capitol Avenue, Windsor Street, Weston Street were the main arrival routes.



The existing street network. The Interstate, downtown roads designed with high-speed geometrics, and one-way streets create an unceremonious sense of arrival that is improved by the Action Strategy.

As the radial pattern intersected with the grid of streets, an intriguing pattern of triangular parks unique to Hartford was created. South Green, and Asylum Hill are two of these triangular parks. The Keney Clock Tower, although square, is a similar type of open space. These parks played an important role along the arrival routes, marking the transition between the downtown and the neighborhoods. Many of these parks have fallen into disrepair. Hopefully, recent initiatives, such as the South Green Restoration Plan, signal a renewed recognition of their importance and herald their revival.

Following the creation of Interstates 91 and 84, many downtown workers found it easier to live in the suburbs and commute, increasing the distance traveled to and from work each day. As a result, the main arrival routes to the downtown shifted from the traditional arterial spoke to the freeways, and the freeway exit and entrance ramps emerged as the gateways to the downtown. Thousands of daily users, tourists and visitors are deposited unceremoniously and abruptly into areas of the city that lack the sense of place and charm characterizing the historic gateways.

Downtown's ability to thrive as an entertainment and cultural hub will, in part, be dependent upon the creation of a strong and appealing sense of arrival which will distinguish it from its suburban counterparts. Much improvement is required to create a more enticing and attractive feeling of arrival.

Opportunities

The opportunities are twofold. First, there is the opportunity to restore the historic gateways and recreate a sense of transition between the neighborhoods and downtown. These can be created through a variety of initiatives. New buildings can be added, historic buildings can be restored. Special features can be added, such as arches, pillars, signage or banners. Parks and open spaces can be landscaped to mark a transition. An ensemble of buildings and open spaces can also create a sense of transition, requiring attention to a combination of built and landscape features.

Second, there is the opportunity to improve the sense of arrival in the vicinity of the interstate ramps and create a more coherent sense of transition between the freeways and the city streets. A variety of means can be employed including a definitive change in roadway character, freeway exit signage that indicates downtown, and better directions to parking lots.

There should be clearly defined gateways that form a sense of arrival and demarcate a point of transition between areas. The gateways must be legible for visitors arriving via all modes of travel: driving, walking, bicycling, etc.

Actions - Gateways and Arrival

The historic arrival routes.

- **Improve historic arrival sequences:**
 - from Keney Clock Tower to the overpasses at Main and Trumbull
 - from Asylum Hill to the Union Station along Asylum
 - at Washington Street and Capitol Avenue in the vicinity of the Lafayette Statue
 - along Main Street from South Green through restoration of heritage buildings and the open space
 - from the Founders Bridge

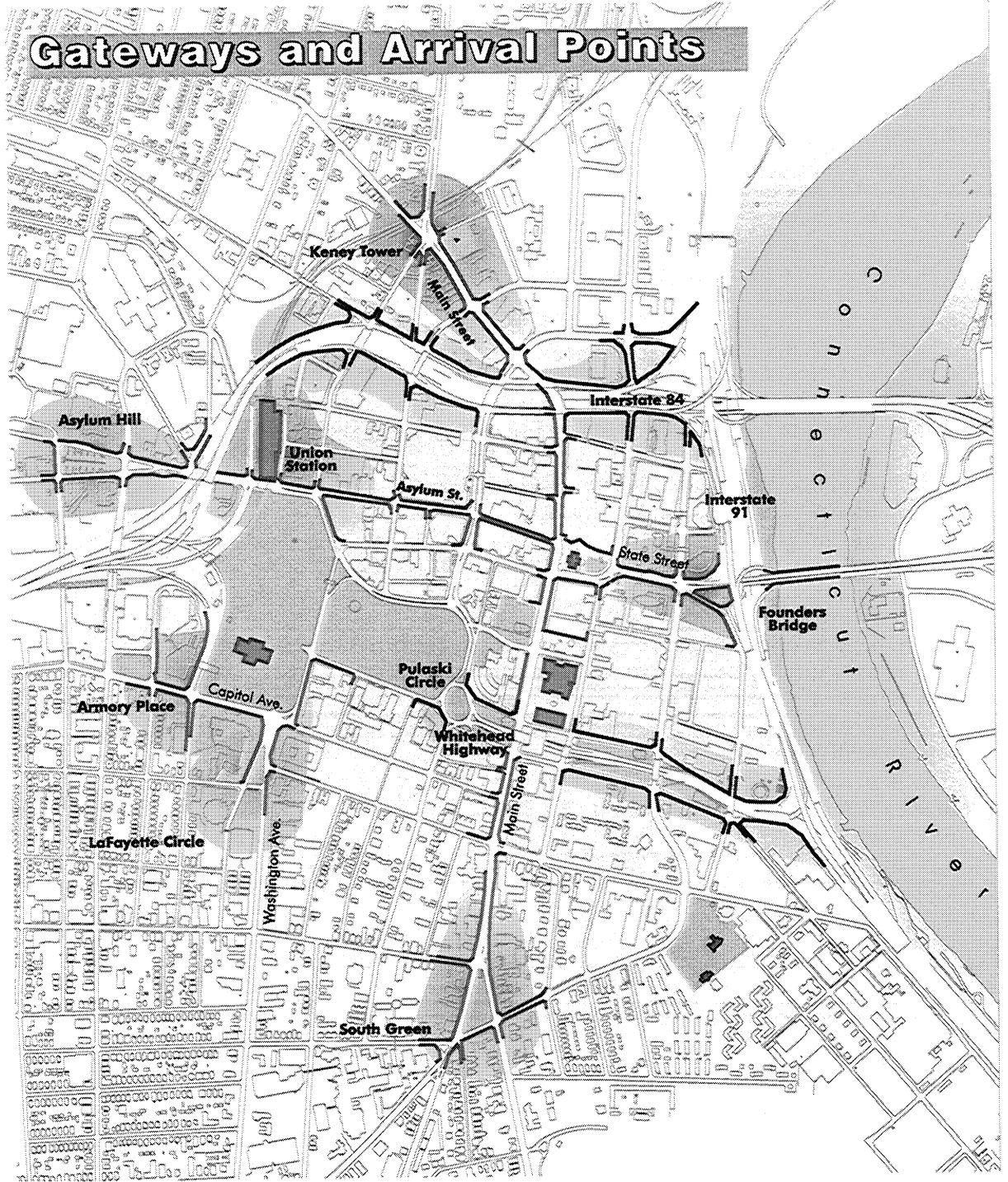
- **Initiatives to improve arrival sequences should include:**
 - Signage to connect the neighborhoods and downtown
 - Gateway plans prepared jointly by the neighborhood and adjacent downtown community. These plans should aim to make places for motorists and pedestrians alike by addressing:
 - streetscaping (including trees, planters and paving)
 - wayfinding
 - street furnishing (bus shelters, benches, trash receptacles, banners, lighting)
 - development opportunities
 - built form



The freeway arrival routes

- **Improve the visual appearance of the freeway entrances to make them a more integrated part of the city at:**
 - the Whitehead. Extend streetscaping from Pulaski Circle onto the Whitehead Highway to just east of the Library bridge. Utilize the bridge as a gateway similar to the entry found on I-84 westbound from I-91.
 - I-91 and Trumbull Street
 - North and South Chapel
 - Asylum Street
 - Broad Street

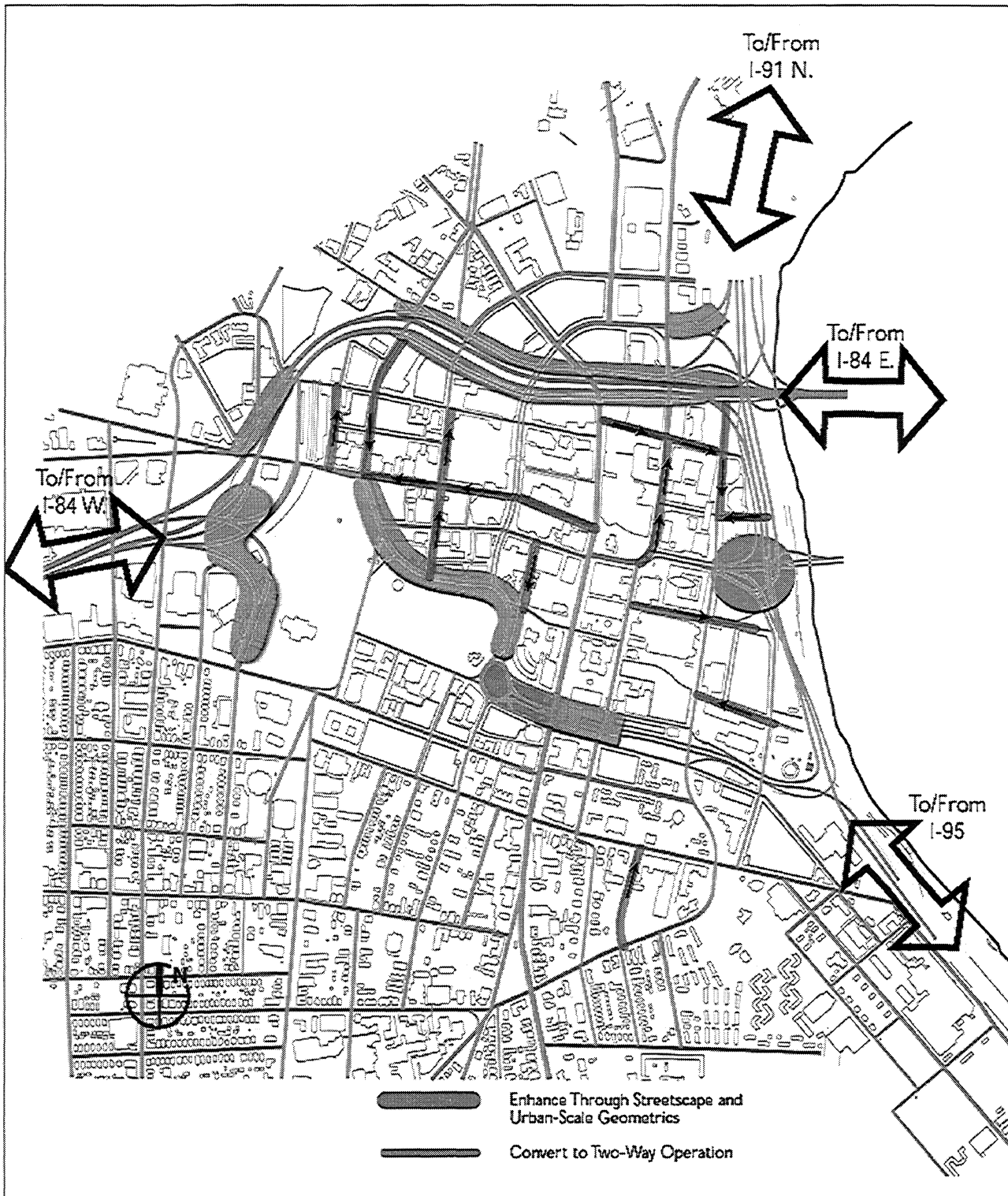
- **Initiatives should include:**
 - adding the word “downtown” to signage on I-84 and I-91, indicating an exit to downtown
 - standardizing signage for parking and provide directional signage to the motorist at all juncture points between the freeway and the downtown street network
 - introducing a mix of uses at terminus of ramps to dilute the concentration of parking structures in these areas.

Gateways and Arrival Points



-  Reinforce Historic Gateway / Crossroads
-  Highway Edge to be Defined

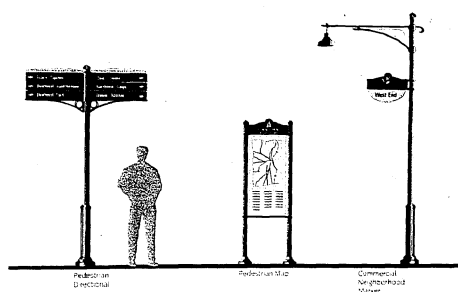




Downtown Arrival and Departure

5.4.2 Making streets friendly for pedestrians: Traffic calming

Issues



The proposed signage system for downtown developed by 212 Associates would provide direction to both motorists and pedestrians.

The traditional downtown street network was constructed to facilitate movement of vehicles and pedestrians and to connect the individual sections of downtown Hartford into one cohesive place. Roads were no wider than necessary to meet traffic demands, which in turn made the streets a safe place for pedestrians. Pedestrian crossings were clearly marked. The constrained geometrics required traffic to move more slowly and in character with urban downtowns. People walking and busy storefronts made these corridors safe and enjoyable places to walk.

Newer roadways in downtown, such as Ford and Jewel Streets, were constructed with high-speed geometrics characteristic of suburban roadways. These geometrics incorporate excessive pavement widths and sweeping corners, which in turn encourage higher speeds for the motorist and compromise pedestrian safety and comfort. In these areas, pedestrian needs have been down played. Pedestrian crosswalks are not clearly marked. Most noticeable, pedestrian signals are extremely confusing. Some say “walk” for only a few seconds, barely enough time to reach the middle of the intersection. Others appear to almost never say “walk”, making it very unclear as to whether pedestrians are welcome at all.

Main Street is perhaps the most visible example of a very important downtown street that has been neglected in the past several decades and has now become a very uninviting place for people. Configured as a wide street, dominated by cars and bus stops, Main Street has a diminished ability to provide a strong link between downtown and the community in north and south Hartford.

As downtown Hartford changes roles and becomes a regional cultural and entertainment center and a place where people live, work and play, it will become increasingly important to make pedestrians feel comfortable and safe. The livability of the downtown streets is becoming the dominant concern, and the unequivocal movement of commuter traffic no longer the first priority.

Opportunities

There is the opportunity to redesign the major connecting streets to meet the needs of pedestrians and motorists. In some cases, this means introducing traffic calming measures to slow traffic. In others it means celebrating streets through the use of streetscaping, special lighting, and other features.

Excess pavement width can and should be reclaimed for other uses. Provision of on-street parking where it currently does not exist can aid in slowing motorist speeds through the downtown, enhancing pedestrian safety. High-speed geometrics such as corner radii can be downsized to discourage excessive motorist speeds through these pedestrian corridors. Pedestrian bulbouts at intersections can tame the oversized width of these facilities.

Traditional high-pedestrian activity corridors, such as the areas adjoining Bushnell Park, the Civic Center, Union Place, and Main Street, can include design features that increase pedestrian mobility and safety. Enhancement of pedestrian facilities such as crosswalks and “Walk/Don’t Walk” signals, along with significant streetscaping in these corridors, can provide a better balance between pedestrian and vehicular mobility.

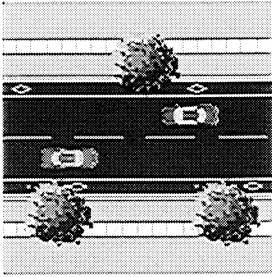
As the key connecting street in downtown, Main Street can be enhanced for pedestrians by a general taming of the auto-only atmosphere of the street. The excessive pavement width can be reclaimed in segments to facilitate on-street parking, ease of crossing, and scale of street. Aesthetic improvements to the street, sidewalks, and crosswalks can return the corridor to pedestrians as well as vehicles.

Actions - Traffic Calming

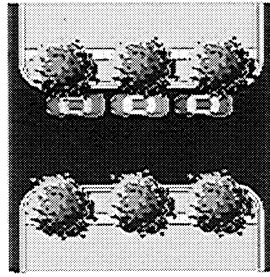
- **Develop detailed design for each of the major connecting streets and introduce traffic calming measures to slow traffic in the downtown as appropriate.**
- **Improve the problematic intersections. The intersections highlighted in the diagram all contain geometric elements which make them particularly hostile toward pedestrians. The four detailed illustrations show some elements that could be incorporated into all of these locations to create a more pedestrian friendly street environment.**
- **Major connecting streets, such as Main, Trumbull, Asylum, and Jewel Streets, should receive focused efforts in streetscaping and aesthetic and pedestrian enhancements to reinforce their importance for people, as well as cars.**
- **Restore on-street parking to Main Street from South Chapel to Charter Oak Avenue, to effectively narrow the oversized street.**
- **Relocate bus transfer activities to a centrally located, modern hub facility. This action will help to reestablish Main Street as the main pedestrian spine for downtown, not just a vehicular corridor.**

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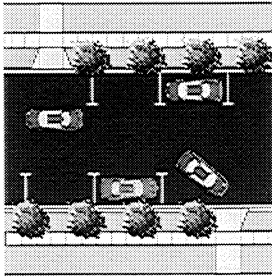
Downtown should offer an aesthetically appealing network of streets that balances the movement of vehicles with the comfort and safety of pedestrians and that strengthens connections between communities.



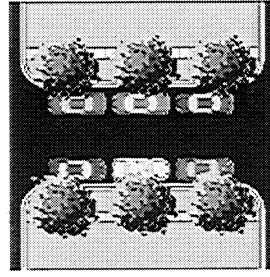
Stripe Lanes



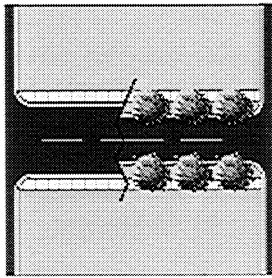
On-Street Parking One Side



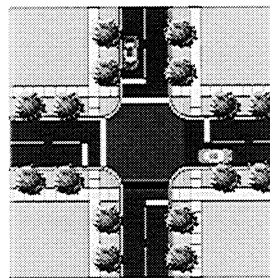
Parking



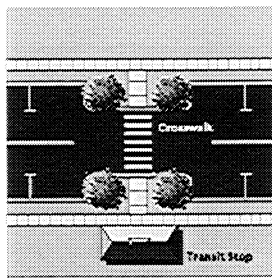
On-Street Parking Both Sides



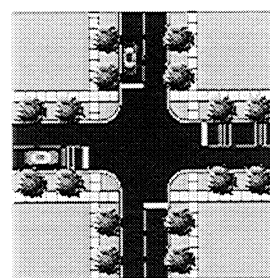
Rebuild Street



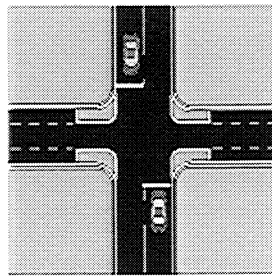
Raised Intersection



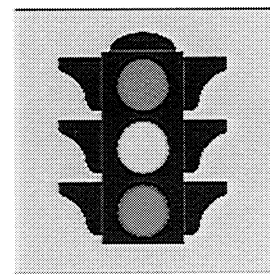
Bulbout Midblock



Textured Pavement



Bulbout Intersection



Signalization

A menu of traffic calming options

5.4.3 One-Way Street Network

Issues

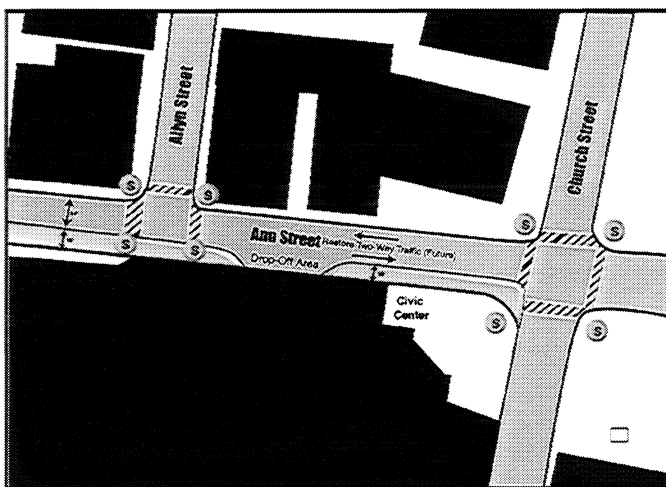
Downtown Hartford has a highly-evolved network of one-way streets, a legacy that can be traced back to the time when traffic engineers were tasked with the mission to move as much traffic into and out of the downtown employment center as quickly as possible, without regard to any other mode of transportation.

As in many downtowns, the one-way street network in downtown Hartford presents a confusing situation. They are hostile to daily uses, and particularly so for the occasional visitor to downtown who has less opportunity to learn the network. Often a motorist can see the destination but has to recirculate through the system to reach it.

There are several ancillary effects. Many businesses located along one-way streets are invisible to the pass-by motorist. One-way streets can diminish the value of the parking capacity of the downtown, by making some lots difficult for a motorist to locate and access. One-way streets generate more travel and turning movements than two-way streets, and their crossings are also particularly hostile to pedestrians.

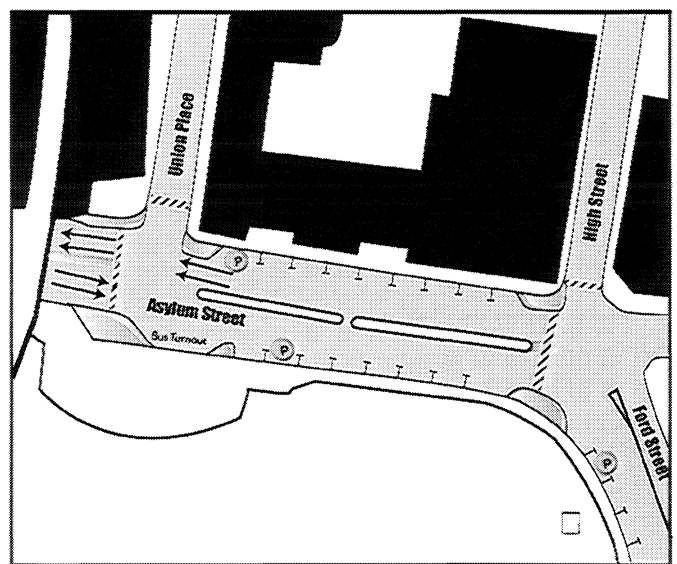
As the downtown emerges as a destination for visitors, it will be important that the network be easily navigable and that it be comfortable for pedestrians.

Potential improvements for four problematic intersections



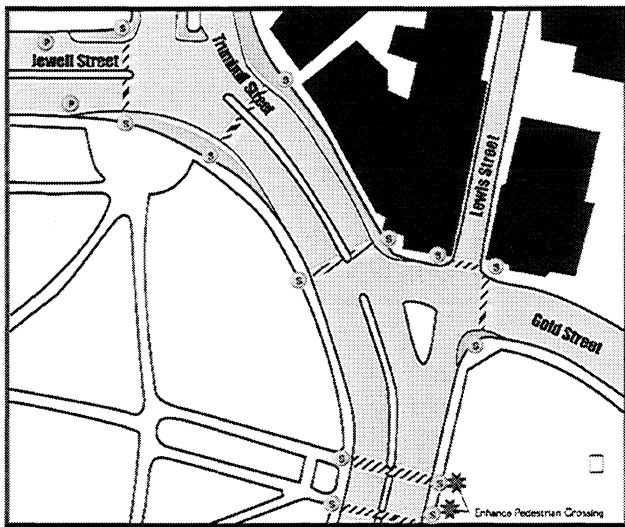
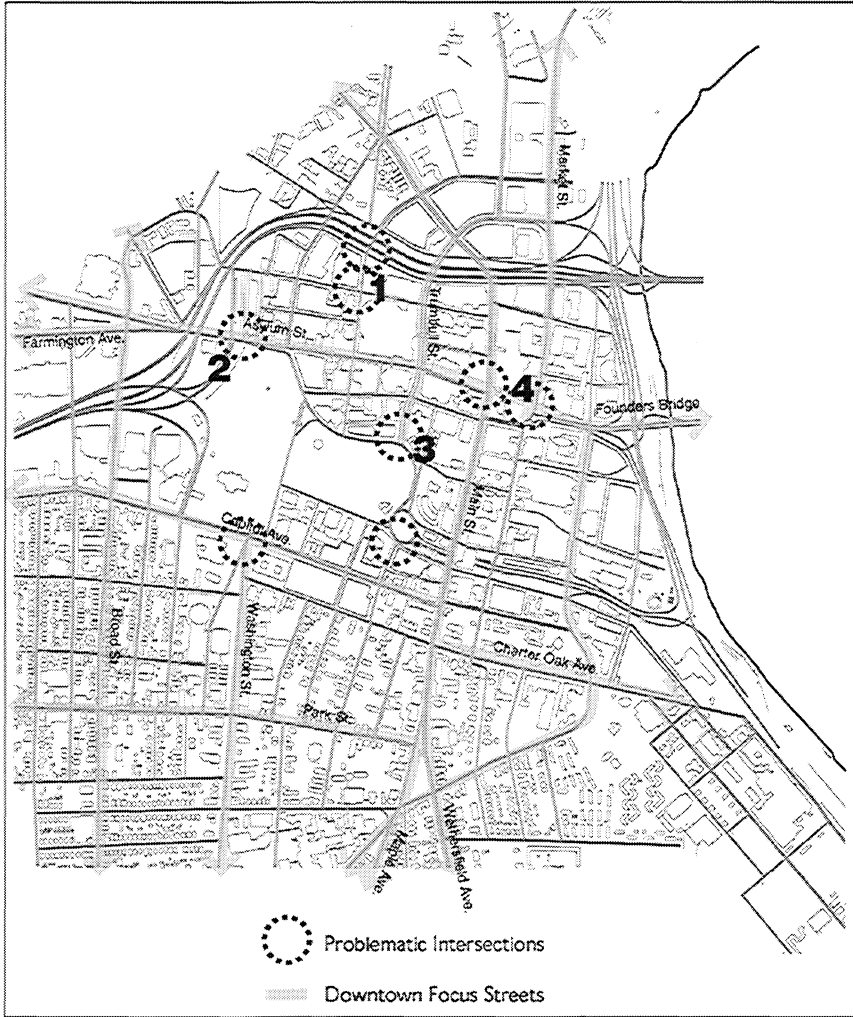
⑤ "Pedestrian-Only" Signal Phase During Events

1



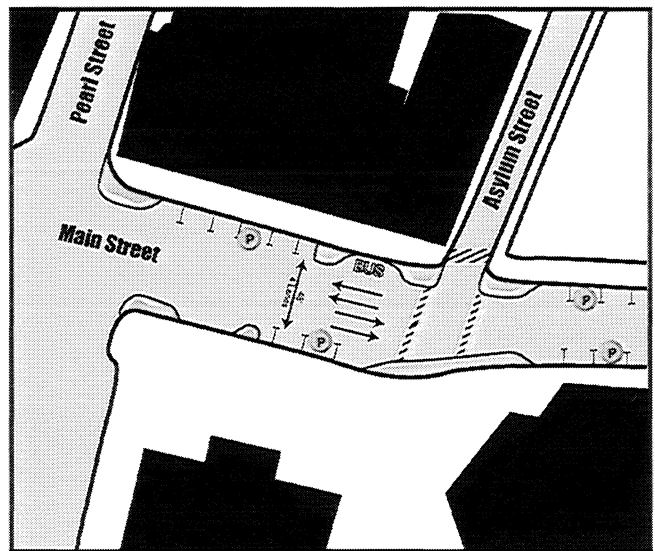
⑥ Restore on Street Parking Both Sides

2



- ① Curbcut Parking to Roman
- ② Pedestrian Signal Head
- ③ Pedestrian Signal Head

3



4

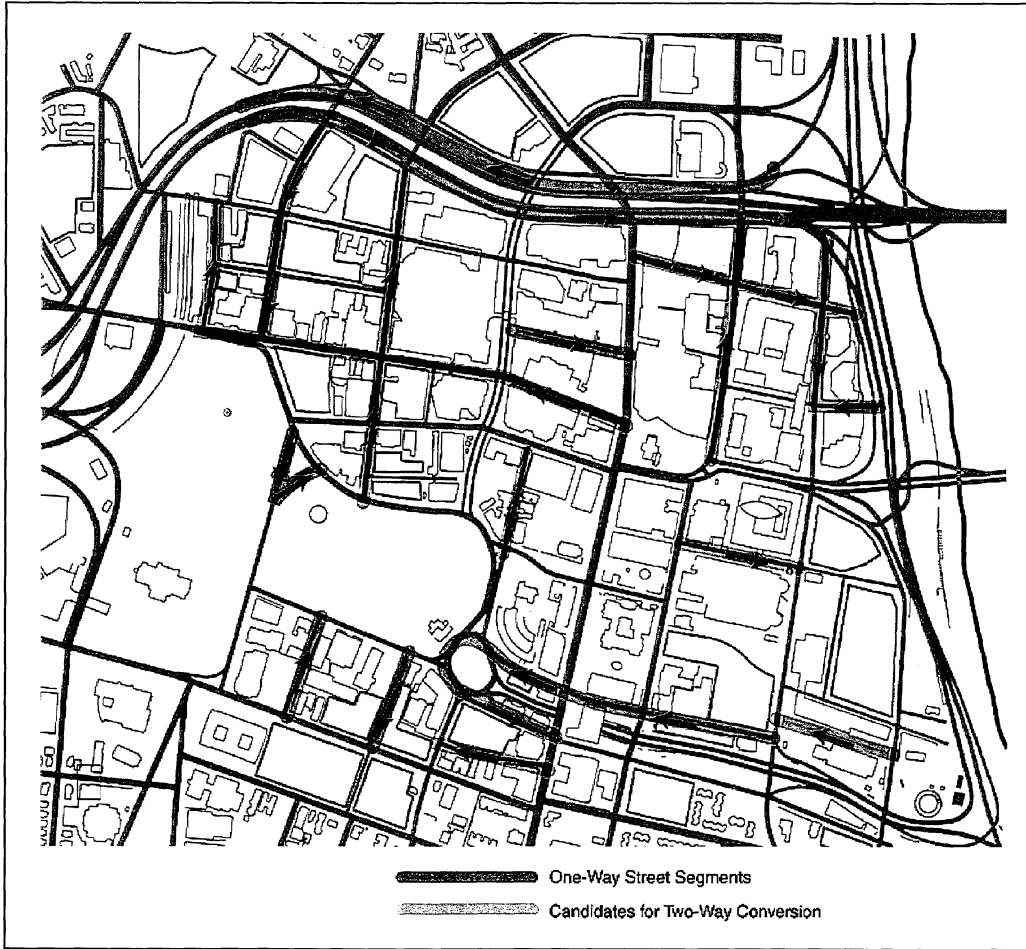
Opportunities

Downtown streets should be two-way unless they serve as frontage roads for the freeways or are geometrically constrained to one-way travel.

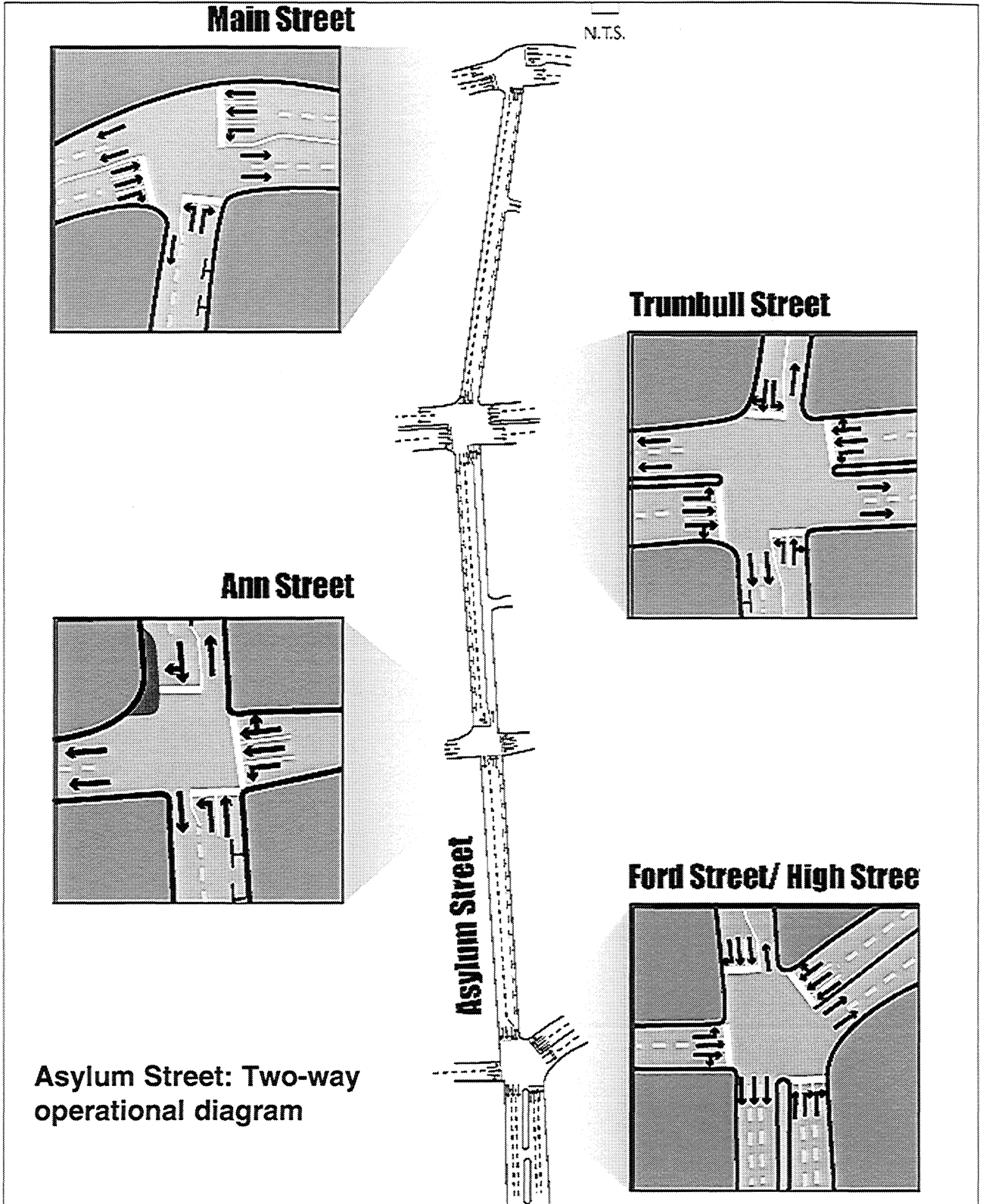
By converting one-way streets to two-way streets in downtown Hartford, there is the opportunity to gain back much of the livability of the street with only a small delay penalty for the motorist. All existing one-way streets in downtown can be considered as candidates for conversion to two-way. Exceptions are those which function as highway frontage roads (North and South Chapel Streets) and streets with a pavement width of less than 30 feet (Pratt, Clinton, and Lewis Streets). Any new or reconnected street segments can also be two-way, provided they meet the above geometric criteria.

Actions - One-Way Street Network

- **Convert Asylum Street to two-way operation (one lane in each direction) between Main Street and Jewel Street as soon as practical. This conversion is required to facilitate the implementation of the Circuit Line shuttle service.**
- **Continue to convert all other downtown one-ways on a case-by-case evaluation in a scheduled, time-certain program.**



Existing one-way street network



5.4.4 Parking Strategies

Issues

There is a commonly held perception of downtown Hartford that a tremendous deficiency in parking supply exists. However, this complaint reflects more on the quality of parking rather than its quantity. Many outlying surface lots on the fringe of downtown are rarely used due to the lack of connection to the downtown (either walking or shuttle).

The issue also reflects on the quality of the streets as places for walking. People who might walk for blocks in cities such as New York cannot be enticed to walk even a block in downtown Hartford because the streets, by and large, are not comfortable for walking. Downtown workers and visitors do not walk between downtown destinations; rather, they seek to park at or adjacent to their destination and use their vehicle to make multiple trips within the downtown.

The City of Hartford has recently received the results of a downtown parking study which calls out a future deficiency in the magnitude of 13,000 parking spaces. Given the amount of development planned for the future and reinvestment already announced for downtown Hartford, the number proposed is not unrealistic. The study also recommended the creation of a new Parking Authority to manage the city's public lots which is an important step toward improving the parking situation in downtown Hartford.

It is imperative, however, that the design of new parking facilities to meet this demand are carefully reviewed. For many years, new parking facilities were provided as an afterthought in downtown; the multitude of surface parking lots within the downtown core are remaining evidence of a time when it was considered acceptable to tear down buildings to provide parking. Many of these surface lots are located on prime redevelopment parcels within the downtown. Garages that were constructed were often not maintained, and were designed with "blank faces" against the adjoining street, creating uninteresting gaps in the downtown walking environment.

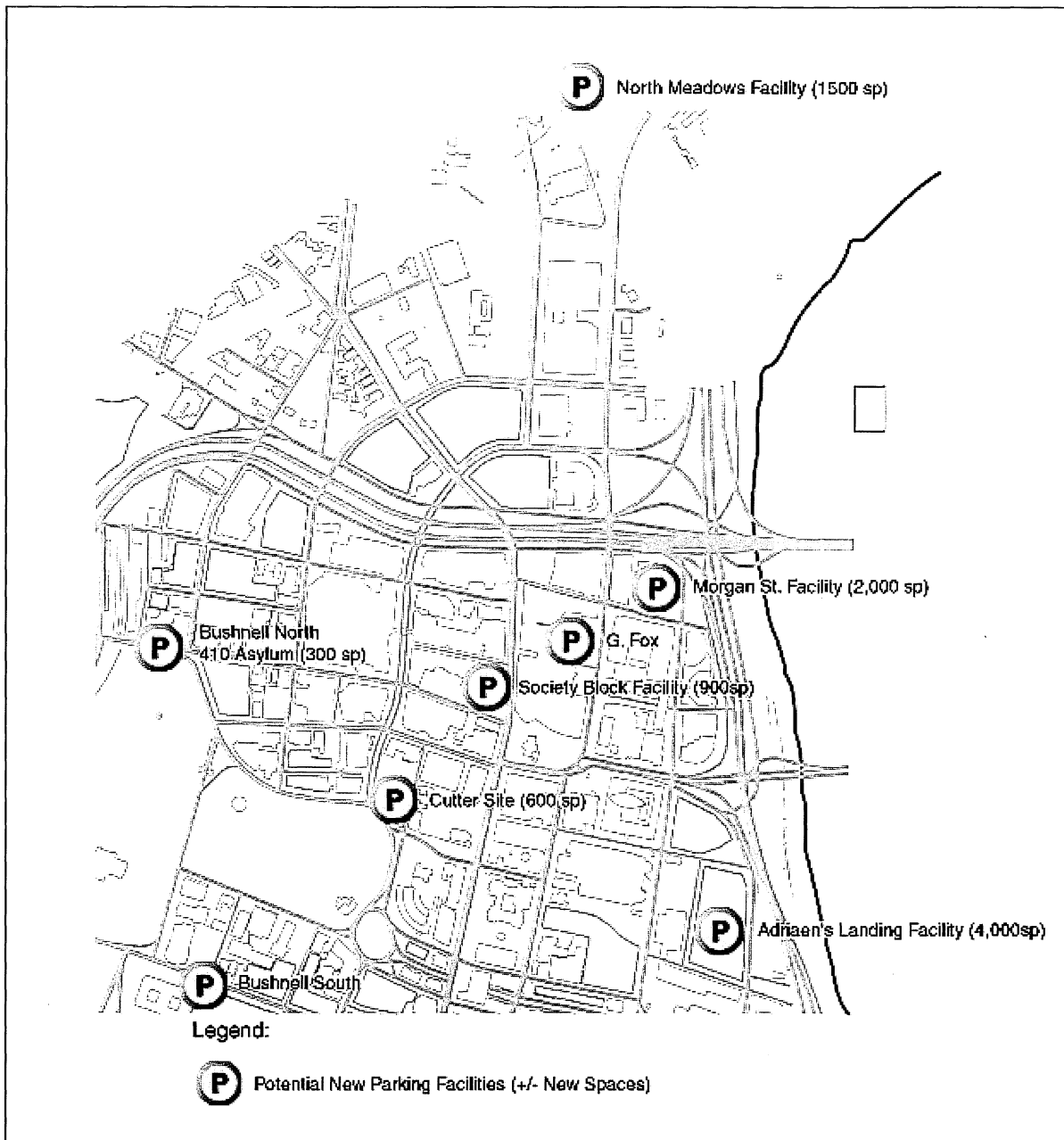
New parking facilities should be well-dispersed, designed to blend into and contribute to the city fabric and contribute to a "park-once" environment. Their size should be carefully considered to avoid traffic congestion.

Opportunities

A significant amount of new parking is proposed for downtown Hartford. There is an opportunity to simultaneously meet the need for new parking structures and free up development parcels by accommodating existing surface parking spaces in some of the new structures.

New structured parking can be shared among a number of users, reducing the need for every development to have its own dedicated parking. Attractively designed structures with active uses, such as retail stores, located on the ground floor create the opportunity to use parking structures as important building blocks that can help to revitalize downtown. Parking can also be edged with housing, so as to be invisible from the street and contribute to the long term housing goal for downtown. Other uses can also be used to edge the parking structures in order to make them less visible.

Parking venues should be well-dispersed. Outlying fringe parking facilities could be brought back into the downtown market through the implementation of a transit shuttle serving those facilities, thereby freeing up more development parcels in the downtown. Streetscaping and animation along the streets can contribute to extending the distance a pedestrian would consider walking, thereby making downtown part of a “park-once” environment and encouraging people to walk. Again this can contribute to the long term goal of getting people back on the streets of downtown and making the city feel more active. There is an opportunity to tap into the Governor’s \$300 million bond package that has ear-marked funds for parking as one of the six pillars of progress.



Potential new parking facilities

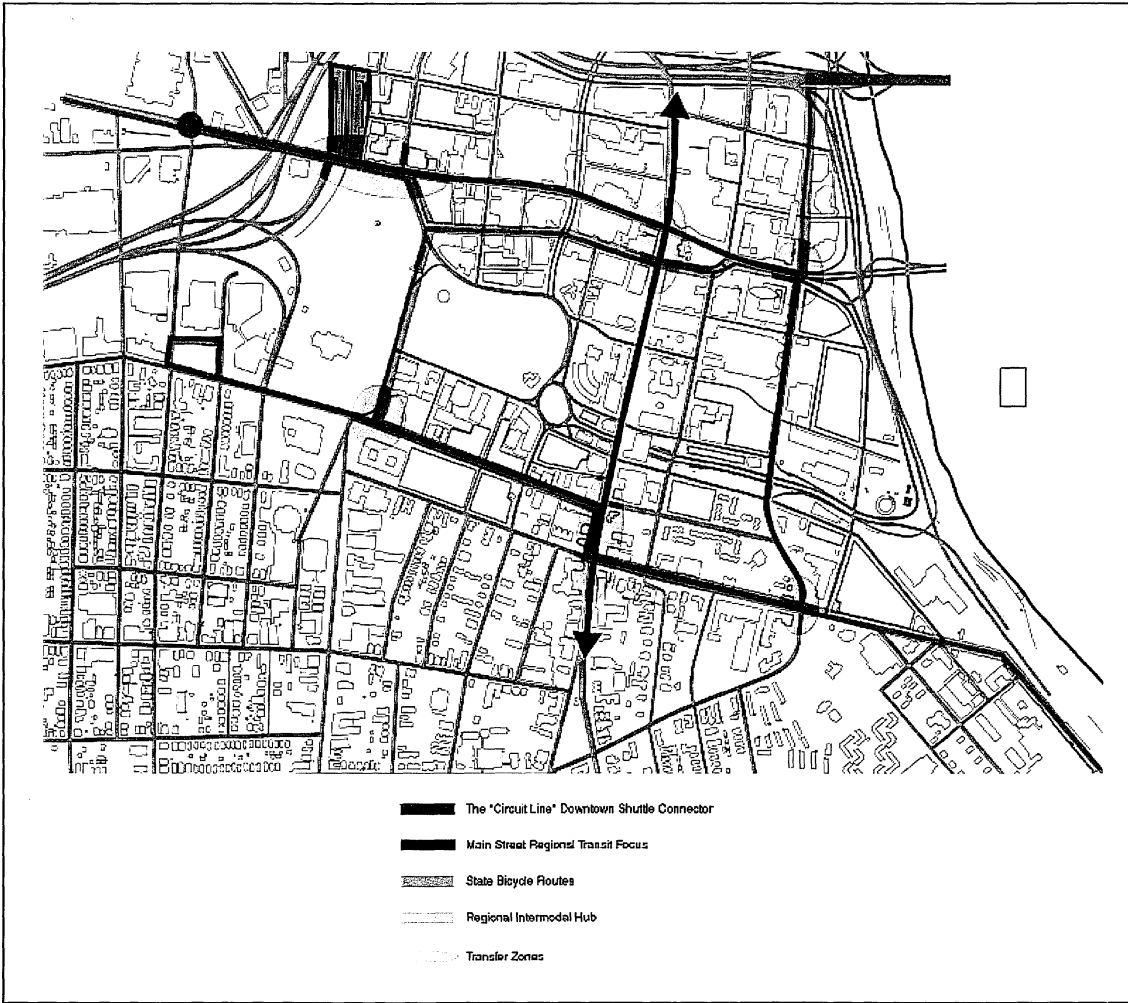
Actions - Parking Strategies

- **Develop new parking structures in dispersed locations throughout downtown.**
- **Review all planned parking proposals within downtown to insure conformity with the principles outlined in this Action Strategy.**
- **Design the “Circuit Line” to facilitate use of the outlying parking facilities and the planned North Meadows connector.**
- **Implement a streetscape program on Main Street and Asylum Street to encourage walking along these important pedestrian spines.**
- **Insure that all new proposed parking structures in downtown have a component of ground-floor retail or other activity to animate the street in front of the garage.**

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Transit should be attractive and simple to use in order to encourage its use and reduce dependence upon private automobiles.





5.4.5 Modal Interfaces

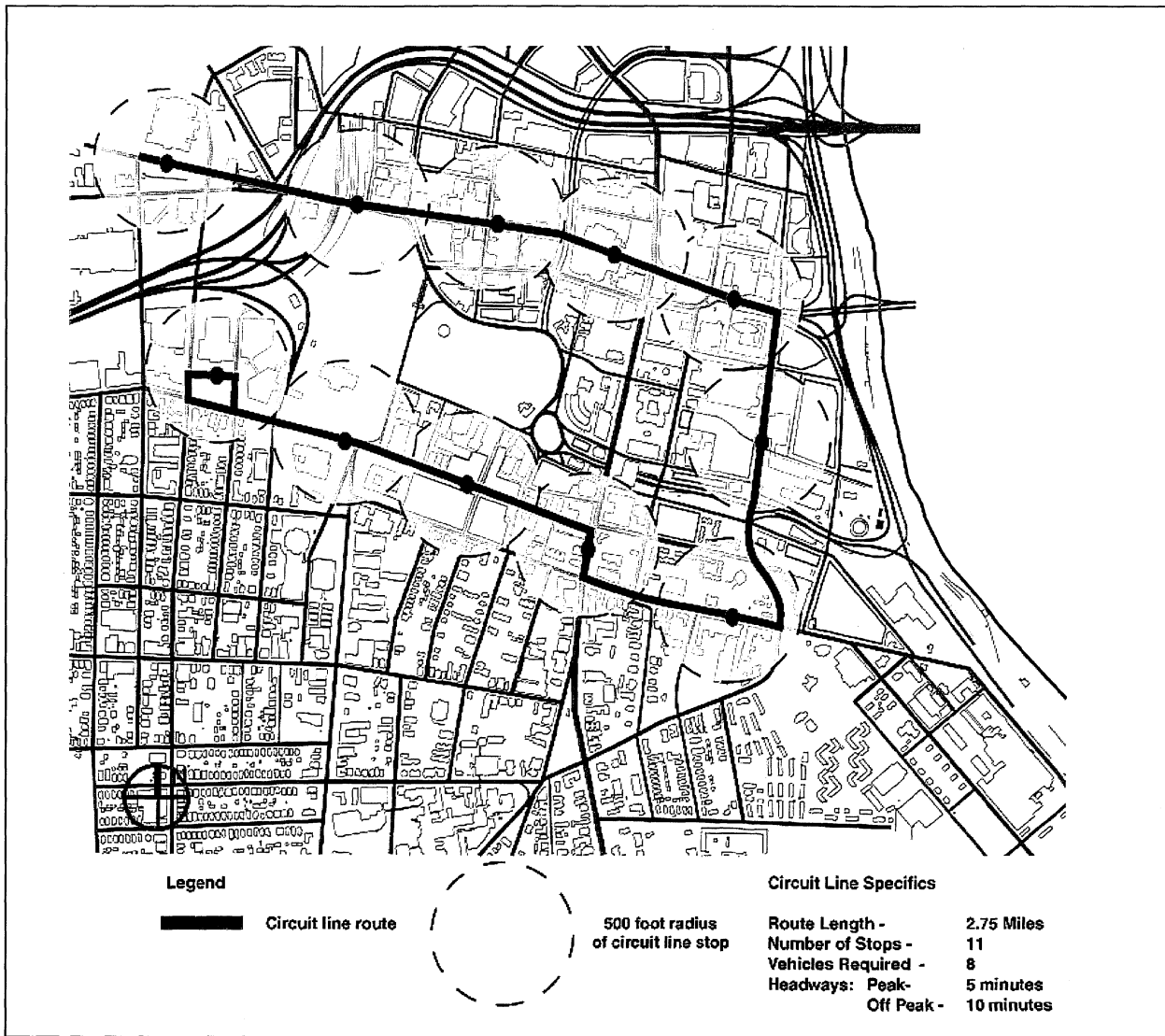
Issues

In downtown Hartford, the various modes of transportation are not proximate to each other and the connections between them not well-defined. Union Station, the region's intermodal hub, is far removed from Main Street, where the bulk of the region's transit transfers take place. The Main Street regional transit spine uses a linear transfer configuration along the length of the street, resulting in buses lining Main Street throughout the day. Transit patrons are sometimes forced to walk great distances in inclement weather when transferring buses, and the amount of time between transfers does not allow most transit riders to patronize the adjacent businesses along Main Street. Connecticut has a comprehensive system of statewide bicycle trails that bisect downtown Hartford; however, no signage exists to show bicyclist where the trails are located within the downtown. There is no common transfer opportunity point for an interface among the state bike trail system, the local and regional transit system, and the interregional rail route.

Opportunities

There is an opportunity to use the electric-powered shuttle bus proposed as part of the Circuit Line to link up the various modes of travel and facilitate movement by transit. Locating transit stops closer to major downtown uses also presents an opportunity to increase transit use.

In the short term, there is an opportunity to consolidate the bus transfers along Main Street rather than dispersing them all along the street. As a longer term solution to the bus transfer question, a site could be selected downtown to house a regional bus station. On the centrally located site, a modern bus transfer facility could be constructed that would offer transit patrons a convenient, weather protected environment.

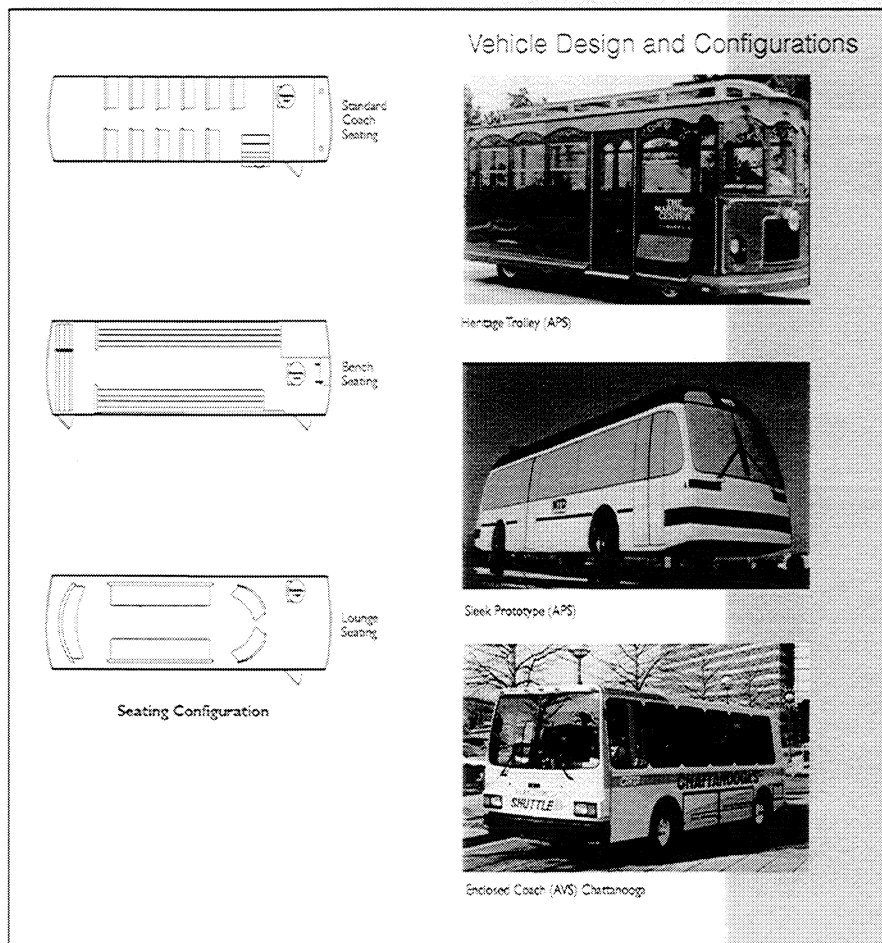


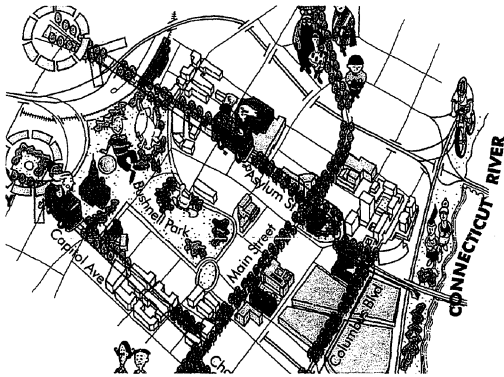
Circuit Line route

Actions - Modal Interfaces

- Introduce an electric-powered shuttle bus along the Circuit Line to provide linkages among the various modes of transportation. Design refinement and implementation of the Circuit Line shuttle should be carefully coordinated among Connecticut Transit, the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CROCOG), Greater Hartford Transit District, City of Hartford, and other agencies involved in transit planning for Hartford. This coordination will be critical to the success of securing a funding source and implementing the shuttle.
- As a first step toward consolidating bus transfers to a hub facility, focus all transfers along Main Street to four or five specific locations and adjust the schedules to facilitate this system.

- As a longer-term action, locate and acquire a site within the downtown for a modern, weather-protected hub transfer facility for the regional transit system.
- Provide directional signage in the downtown area to demarcate the state bicycle trail, and work toward a long-term goal of providing bicycle connections through downtown Hartford.





The Circuit Line

6.1 Introduction

From the full list of actions identified in Section 5, which need to be implemented first? What will be the most effective in setting downtown Hartford on the path to renewal? In this chapter, a series of high-priority initiatives is selected from the full list for implementation over the next 3 - 5 years.

To identify the high priority initiatives, the team went back to the work completed early on. The team wanted to understand where are the greatest concentration of resources on which to build and achieve immediate, high-profile benefit. We recalled the existing assets, the initiatives in various stages of development, and then the actions recommended by the Action Strategy. A band of opportunity ringing Bushnell Park emerged.

We have called this the Circuit Line. It is a band of rejuvenation. It is also a transit line that will link the resources together. The route follows the historic axes of the city and ties together the existing assets with emerging and proposed projects. It is an area toward which private and public initiatives should be strategically directed to leverage existing investments and resources. It responds to the principles of investing strategically, building early successes, confidence and optimism to carry downtown Hartford forward into the next millennium.

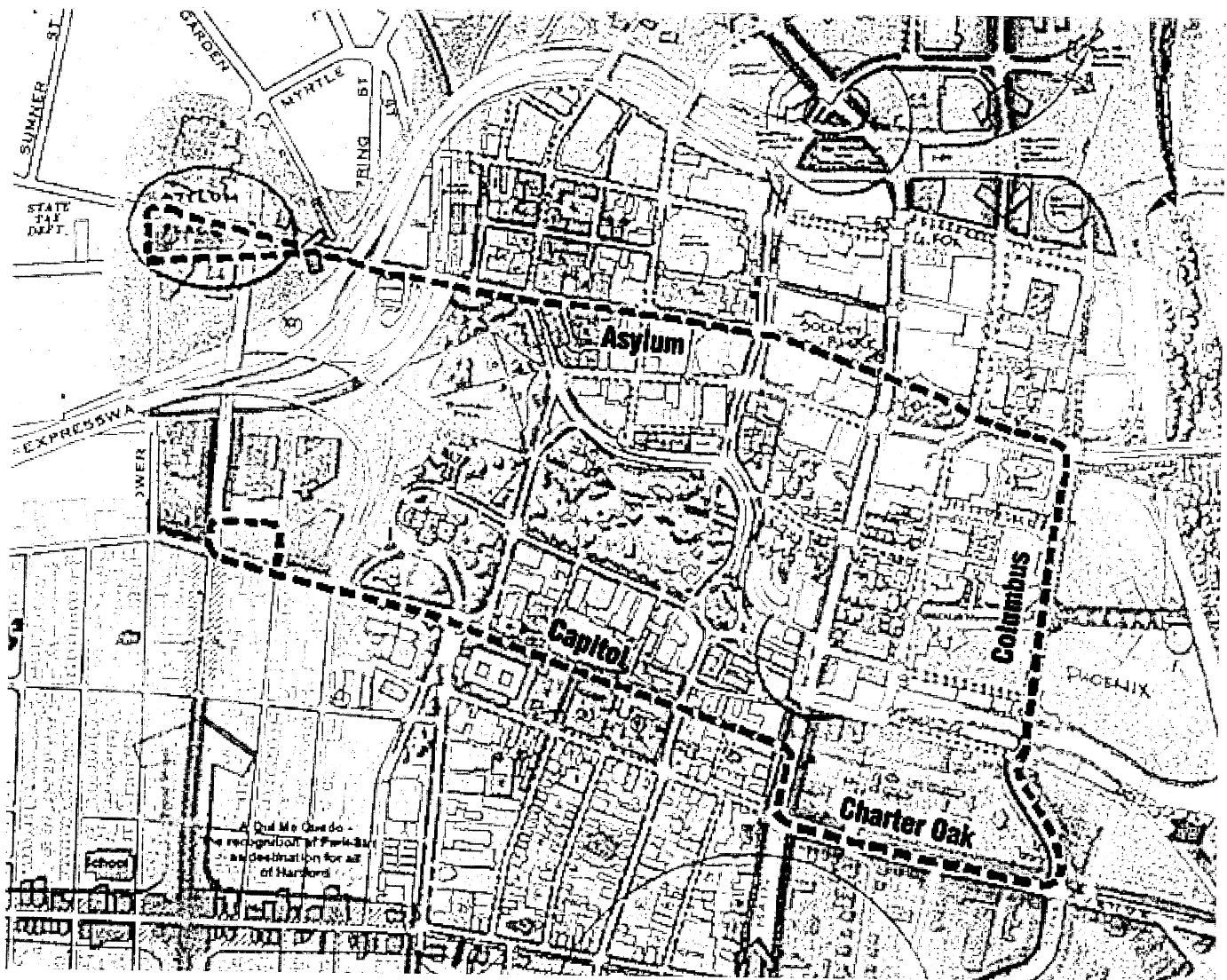
The Circuit Line will be created by implementing a select set of actions drawn from the full list in Section 5. Upon implementation, it will form a healthy piece of city fabric that will have a distinct sense of place and on which future investments can build.

The Circuit Line

An overall vision of the Circuit Line is described below. Then, drawn from the full list of Actions, the individual steps required to realize the Circuit Line are reiterated. The Circuit Line is also discussed in light of the principles for reinvesting strategically, establishing a methodology and way of thinking about reinvestment that can be applied to other parts of the downtown.

The Circuit Line is not the only set of initiatives that should be brought forward over the next five years. However, it is a single coordinated effort that will create a complete place, setting the stage for new development and providing a catalyst for new investment.

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The Circuit Line is a route which connects downtown to the Capitol and Asylum Hill

6.2 The Circuit Line and Links to the Neighborhoods

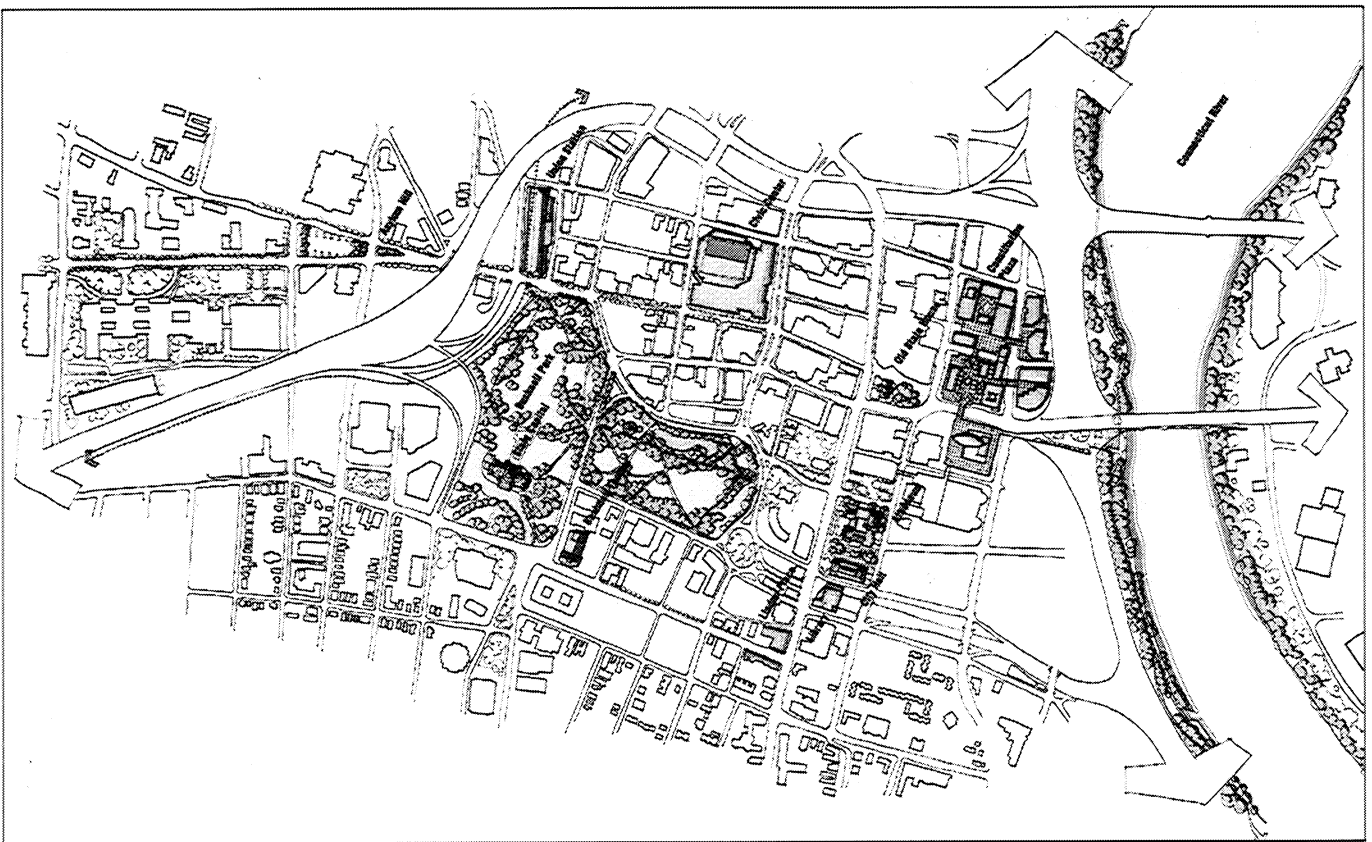
The Circuit Line forms an armature that will support a blend of new residential development, shared parking structures, streetscape and transit improvements to form a band of healthy city fabric around Bushnell Park and along Main Street that will invite visitors and new residents to the downtown and improve the downtown's image.

The Circuit Line will provide a target for public realm investments which in turn can be used to trigger additional private investment. Along the length of the Circuit Line, streetscape, landscape and development initiatives will forge together existing assets, creating synergy between them and a safe zone that will support a vibrant urban life. Capitol Avenue, Charter Oak Avenue, Columbus Boulevard, and Asylum Street will be improved by landscape and streetscape initiatives that will foster a more inviting pedestrian environment and sense of connections.

The Circuit Line will be linked by an electric shuttle bus that will transport people around Bushnell Park, from the Capitol to the River and up to Asylum Hill. It is planned as a small, electric-powered vehicle manned by drivers who will double as city ambassadors, providing historic and tourist information along the route. The Circuit Line will be a component of the regional transportation structure.

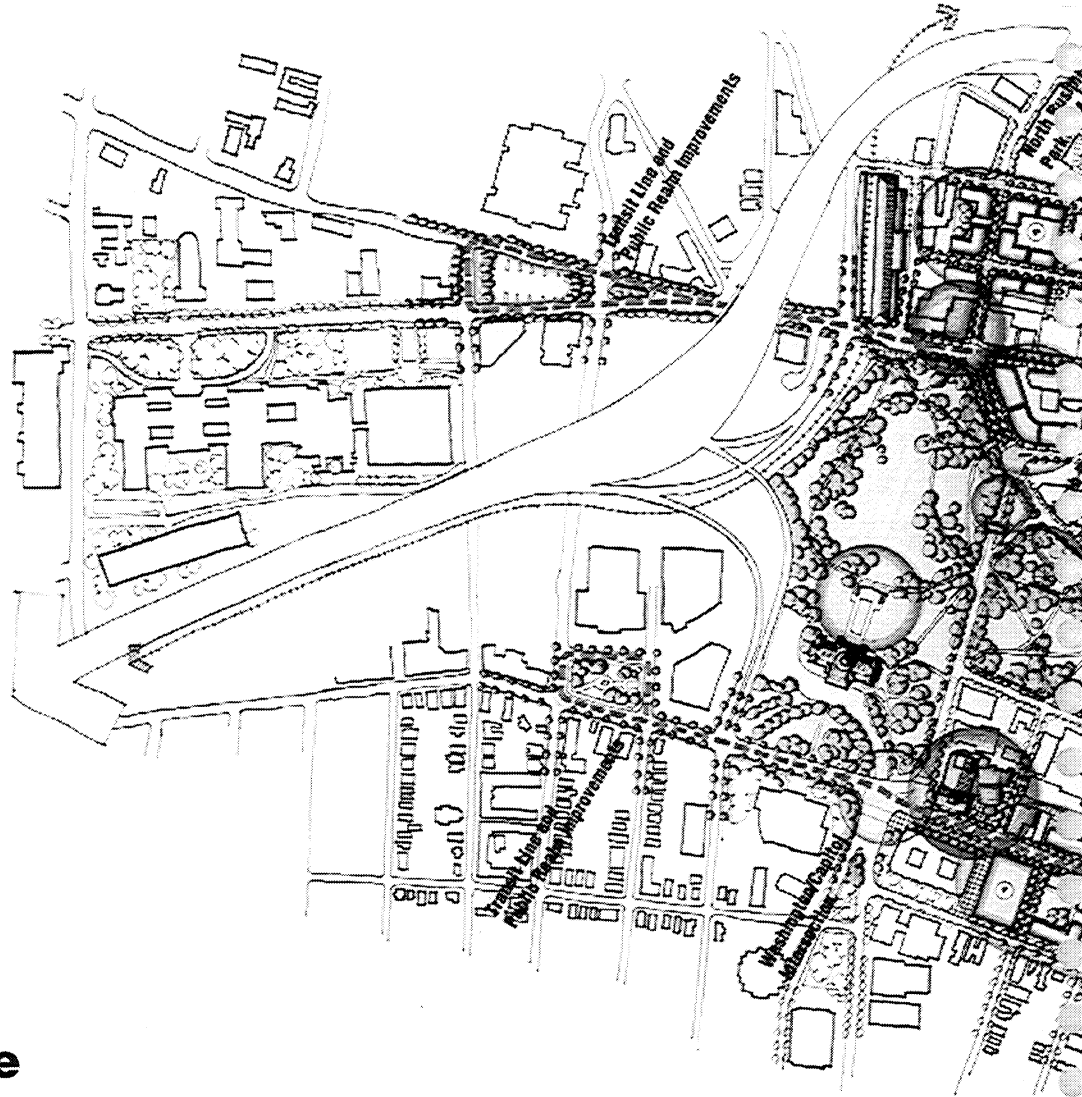
The Circuit Line will be built from small scale initiatives. North and south of Bushnell Park, surface parking lots will be collected into new, shared parking structures, making way for new housing development on the cleared sites. Some 600 - 800 low- to mid-rise units will be built around Bushnell Park. Retail stores will be focused along Main and Asylum Streets, in buildings designed to animate and address the street level.

Linking downtown to the neighborhoods will be a central component of the Circuit Line. Main Street will link downtown with north and south Hartford. Other linking routes will be Asylum Street, Charter Oak Avenue, Trumbull Street, Jewel Street, Ford Street, Elm Street, Washington Street, Park Street and Wyllys Street. Landscape and design improvements along the I-84 over- and underpasses will aim to diminish the barrier effect of this road and to strengthen connections between downtown and the neighborhoods .



Core Assets

There are a number of amenities in the downtown that are, and have been, the anchors for city life for generations. They include open spaces such as Bushnell Park and the Connecticut River, historic structures such as Union Station and the Old State House, and relatively new buildings such as the Civic Center.

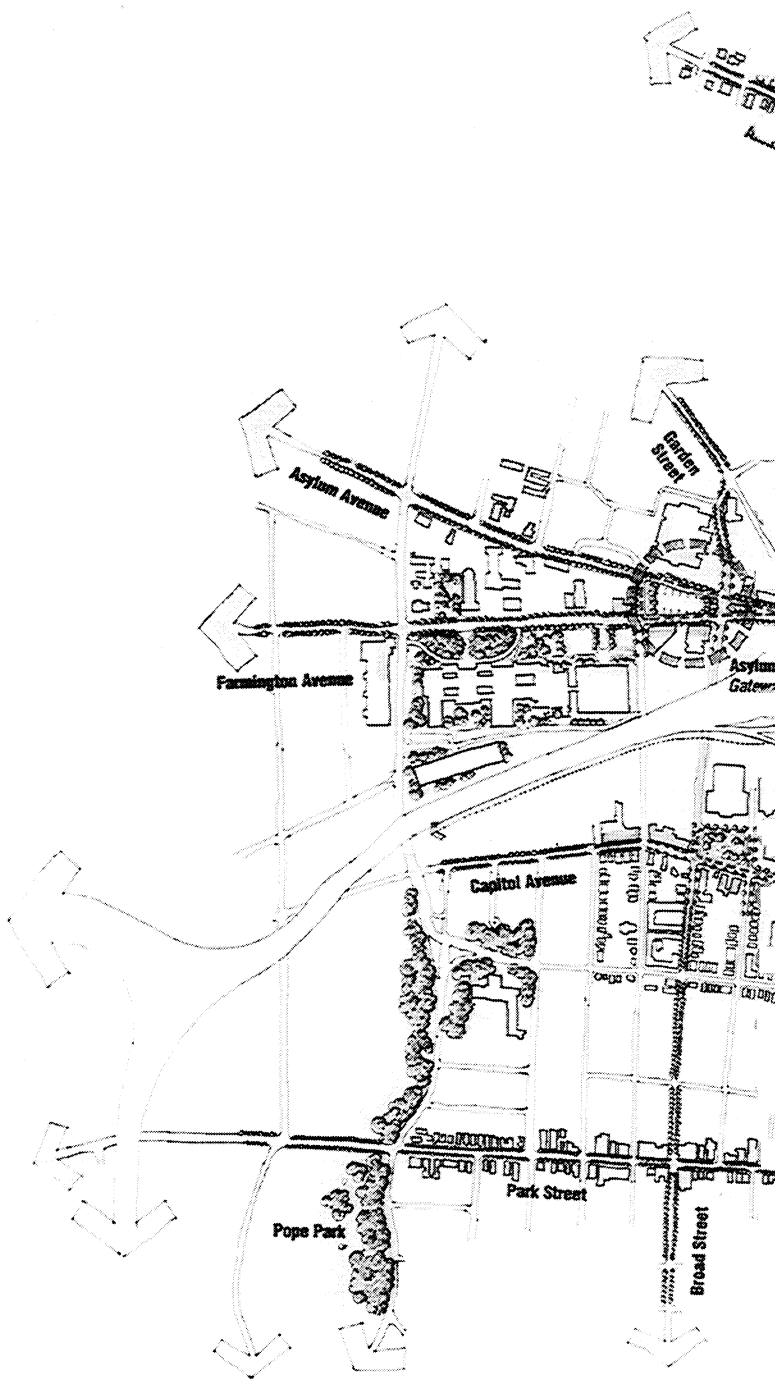


The Circuit Line

Core assets + Projects “in the pipeline” + New investments

Building on the core assets and the proposed projects a number of other investments have been proposed. These new investments, such as new housing and a shuttle route, will tie together the initiatives in the downtown, creating a continuous band of healthy city.





Connecting to the neighborhoods

The Circuit Line can grow, connect to other new initiatives, and knit downtown back into the neighborhoods.



6.3 Priority projects

To realize the Circuit Line in the next 3 - 5 years, specific actions are drawn from the Downtown Action Strategy as high-priority initiatives.

1. *Transit and movement*

- Introduce an electric-powered shuttle bus that follows the Circuit Line. Approximately 8 vehicles will be employed, serving 11 stops distributed over the 2.75 mile route. Head ways in peak periods will be 5 minutes and 10 minutes in off-peak periods.
- To implement the Circuit Line, Asylum Street must be converted to two-way operation (one lane in each direction) between Main Street and Jewel Street as soon as practicable.

2. *Street and public realm improvements*

- Implement streetscape plans along the Circuit Line route and for a short distance along the perpendicular, intersecting streets. The route includes:
 - Asylum Street
 - Columbus Boulevard
 - Charter Oak Avenue
 - Main Street
 - Capitol Avenue
- The perpendicular streets are:
 - Spruce Street, Union Place, High Street, Ann Street, Trumbull Street, Market Street, Grove Street, Arch Street, the Whitehead, Prospect Street, Whitman Court, Hudson Street, Wadsworth Street, Washington Street, Lafayette Street, and Oak Street
- Plans to beautify streets should address:
 - trees and plantings
 - tree planters and grates
 - paving materials
 - pedestrian lighting
 - bicycle racks
 - street furniture
 - signage, building from the work of 212 Associates.

- Related initiatives include restoring movement along closed streets. The Isle of Safety adjacent to the Old State House should be reopened for transit vehicles. Special paving materials should be used to signify limited use. A pedestrian connection should be created through the Civic Center to reconnect Allyn with Pratt Street
- Ongoing efforts related to the restoration of downtown's significant green spaces, Bushnell Park and the Connecticut River, should be strongly supported. Building on the new Founders Bridge and riverfront deck, connections to the Connecticut River and the downtown should be improved. Connections between Bushnell Park and downtown should also be improved by reconfiguring intersections to make them more pedestrian-friendly.

3. Strategic Uses

- Build 600 - 800 housing units, mostly in low- to mid-rise buildings. Construct, as early as possible, at least one and preferably two residential developments of 180- to 200-units to quickly broaden the market base for downtown housing. Key sites north of Bushnell Park include the Hilton site, the sites along Allyn Street and the SNET site. Key sites south of Bushnell Park include the existing state-owned surface parking lots along Capitol Avenue.
- Plan for a net gain of 50,000 to 70,000 square feet of new retail and entertainment space in the downtown core. Encourage street-related retail clusters along Main Street, Trumbull Street, Asylum Street, and Pearl Street.
- All new projects should be designed to define the street edges, make an appropriate transition with adjacent uses, be of an appropriate scale, have active ground floor levels, and be easily accessible from grade-level.
- Related initiatives include the construction of 400 to 600 units in the surrounding neighborhoods, mostly attached town home and infill apartments.

4. *Parking*

- New parking structures should be located along the Circuit Line to encourage a park-once strategy in downtown. Through a coordinated effort, new parking structures connected by the Circuit Line trolley can serve major uses such as Union Station, the Wadsworth Atheneum, the Higher Education Center, downtown housing, entertainment venues, and retail.
- All new proposed parking structures in downtown need to be reviewed to ensure there is ground-floor retail or other activity to animate the street in front of the garage.

6.4 Investing Strategically and the Circuit Line

It is useful to think of the Circuit Line in relation to the principles for investing strategically as it provides a concrete example of how to use the principles as a framework for decision making. It points to a process and a way of thinking about reinvestment that can be applied to other parts of the downtown. Each principle for investing strategically is listed, followed by a description of how the Circuit Line responds.

Build on existing strengths: The Circuit Line embraces downtown's most prominent and important physical asset, Bushnell Park. It also embraces other important resources like the Wadsworth Atheneum, the State Capitol, the Old State House and the Library. It anticipates that greater links will be established between these important institutions and structures, thereby raising their profile and positioning them as important elements in the city fabric. Links will be established through streetscape improvements, improved transit services, streets that are modified to balance pedestrian and vehicular traffic, as well as by a greater sense of synergy.

Use public sector funds as levers: A blend of public and private sector projects are proposed, creating opportunity for the public sector funds to leverage private sector dollars. For example, a number of private developers are in various stages of proposals for residential development in the Circuit Line. A variety of improvements within the public right-of-way as well as in Bushnell Park, will supplement these initiatives, significantly enhancing the quality of life in this part of downtown.

The Circuit Line also includes a number of projects that are eligible for the \$300 million State of Connecticut bonds for the revitalization of downtown. A total of \$155 million is to be used for the development of a new convention center and sports mega-plex. The funds also provide \$35 million for housing projects; \$25 million for riverfront development; \$25 million for demolition ; \$15 million for Civic Center renovation and rejuvenation; \$15 million for parking; and \$30 million for the downtown higher education center.

To use these dollars most effectively, initiatives that combine eligible funds are proposed. For example, projects that include shared parking structures as part of the project will free up development sites and facilitate housing development, which is also eligible for funding.

Think holistically: The diversity of projects proposed encourages a holistic and coordinated approach to reinvestment. Initiatives include new residential development, shared parking structures, landscape and

streetscape improvements, improvements to the design of streets and timing of the signals, etc. As the proposed initiatives are designed, all of the individuals responsible for a project in the vicinity need to be in the room in order to ensure that efforts are coordinated, opportunities are seized and that shared objectives are met.

Think about the place, not the project: The Circuit Line is not about individual projects, it is about creating neighborhoods and districts north and south of Bushnell, and along Main Street.

In particular a mixed-use, residential / entertainment area is established on the north side of Bushnell Park, building off the emerging restaurant/entertainment venues. A cultural corridor is created along Main Street. A lower-density residential neighborhood is established on the south side of Bushnell Park, building off the brownstones along Capitol Avenue.

Although emphasis is placed on individual initiatives, the greatest emphasis is placed on establishing a mix of uses that in total, will create a more vibrant community nestled around Bushnell Park.

Encourage modest, incremental change: The Circuit Line is about modest, incremental change that in total, will revitalize the downtown. It includes many projects at various scales that will bring about change in the downtown in a balanced fashion, linking the existing assets together. Development on Adriaen's Landing must be compatible with the downtown and respond to market forces as it takes shape over time.

Draw upon the human capital of the city: The Circuit Line combines initiatives proposed by a wide variety of interests: private developers, the public sector, the Bushnell Park Foundation, the Library. It therefore has the opportunity to draw upon the experience and energy of a wide group of individuals. Further, it is a compelling image which will rally the broader Hartford community.

Build on early success: The Circuit Line builds on existing success stories. Perhaps first and foremost, it builds off the enormous accomplishments of the Bushnell Park Foundation, that has cleaned up Bushnell Park to create an oasis within the city. It also builds off the expansion of The Bushnell and the emerging restaurants south of Bushnell Park, such as The Savannah, and those north of Bushnell Park, such as Black-Eyed Sally's and Pastis Bistro. Through the improved streetscapes and the shuttle service, The Bushnell will be linked to the restaurants and other entertainment venues encouraging people to travel freely in the downtown, creating synergies that will improve the financial opportunities for all.

Built Form Guidelines

7

7.1 The issue: “Introverted” versus “extroverted” buildings

The way a building relates to the surrounding context profoundly impacts the sense of place. The location of the doorway and windows shapes a visitor’s experience, as well as the quality of the adjacent street for passers-by, in cars and on foot. The amount and location of parking determines how people travel to the facility and their choice of entrance. The siting and configuration directs the flow of people to and from it, which in turn affects the sense of connection between the building and other parts of the city, and ultimately the vitality of adjacent areas.

A more vital and animated city can be created by shaping and locating buildings and spaces according to principles that validate and reinforce the street level: doors and windows that look out on the street; animated ground floors; configurations that encourage people to walk, site plans that forge links to the rest of the city.

Hartford has a strong tradition of buildings designed to contribute vitality to the city and a strong sense of place. Hartford’s building stock includes houses, office buildings, entertainment venues, department stores, and corner retail stores designed to respond to the streets, local built and topographical context. Many of the best examples were built before the 1950s. The G. Fox Building, the Richardson Building, the Old State House and City Hall, are all examples of buildings that relate strongly to the street, and the surrounding context. These are “extroverted” structures.



Building and shopfront design on Trumbull Street help support retail life

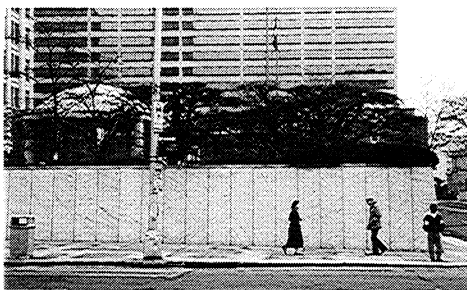
Over the last several decades, Hartford abandoned these principles, creating a wave of development that turned its back to the city and eschewed urbanity, diminishing downtown's vitality. Constitution Plaza and the Civic Center are examples of these mega-complexes. Inwardly-oriented islands of activity, they make few connections to the surrounding city. In some cases, a separate pedestrian level was created, part of a trend which saw streets emerge as places for cars, not people. A walk through the streets of downtown reveals a seam, or a "fault line," where the historic, grade-related city has shifted and been replaced by a new era of "introverted" or non-grade related structures, erasing the vitality at street level along its course.

Building on this trend, downtown Hartford today is dotted with buildings whose mirrored walls, elevated doorways or blank facades isolate the structure from the street and passers-by, revealing little about the occupants, and adding little vitality. State House Square contains a food court that is neither easily accessible nor visible from the street. One State Street has an attractive front lobby. However, after regular business hours it is not possible to enter from the street-level. Pedestrians and drivers alike must enter through the parking garage, the only place where a guard stands ready to admit visitors.

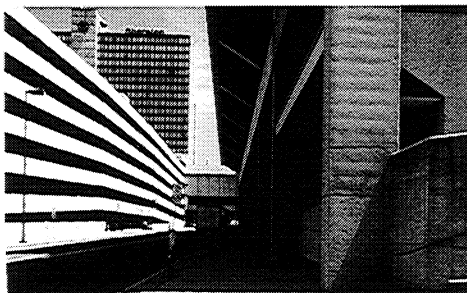
In other cases, vitality is disrupted by buildings that are too large: too tall, too dense, too big in girth. Given Hartford's relatively limited market, they absorb a disproportionate amount of Hartford's total growth into a single structure, preventing the benefits of investment from being more broadly distributed.

Hartford is now embarking on a new wave of investment. Along with some much needed commercial and residential development, several major civic facilities are proposed: a stadium, a convention center, and a higher education center. Every development, large and small, has an impact on the feel of a city and attention must be paid to the relationship of each and every building to its context. However, these civic facilities are enormous in scope and their impact will be significant. It is imperative that they be designed according to principles that embrace the city, its streets and pedestrian activity.

Below, a series of urban design guidelines are outlined that speak to the characteristics of successful urban buildings. These apply to all types of buildings, and function as "rules of thumb" for creating vitality. They are followed by more detailed guidelines and comments on a number of specific building types.



Traveler's Building Plaza



Church Street

Several decades of building have turned their back on the public realm.

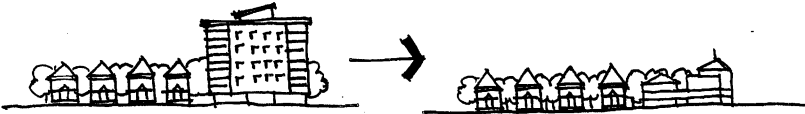
7.2 Urban Design Guidelines

The following general guidelines identify the important design elements in building a strong relationship between buildings and the surrounding context, the vitality of the street and the sense of place.

- *Buildings should define the street edges*, establishing a more comfortable and intimate pedestrian environment.



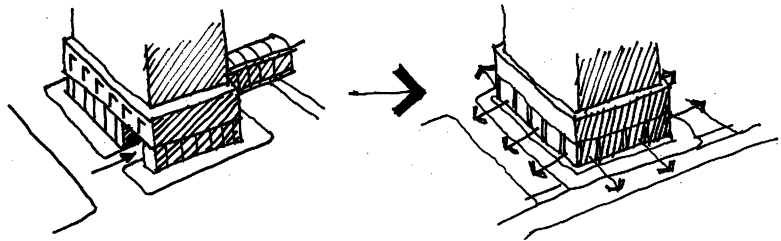
- *New development should make appropriate transitions with adjacent uses, in scale and use*, in order to be compatible with existing structures and fit in.



- *New development should be of an appropriate size* in order to be compatible with the surrounding uses and to contain a reasonable proportion of total proposed development. Large development initiatives should be broken down into city-scale elements rather than treated as internalized superblocks.



- ***Buildings should have active ground floor levels*** to create a more animated and interesting environment for pedestrians. By locating “eyes on the street,” retail stores, restaurants and service uses on the ground floor create an informal means of surveillance and greater personal security.
- ***Buildings should have animated facades*** to add to the visual interest and sense of place. Windows and doors that look out over the street, create an informal means of surveillance, and a greater sense of safety. They also animate the street for pedestrians and drivers.



- ***Building should be easily accessible from grade-level*** to create a stronger relationship with the street and animate the street level.



Policies in Hartford’s Plan of Development and zoning ordinance need to be revised to require buildings to respond to these guidelines.

7.3 Guidelines for specific uses

Given the importance of shaping new development so that it contributes to the rejuvenation of downtown, specific thoughts and guidelines are identified below respecting each of the major uses proposed.

● ***The Stadium and Convention Center***

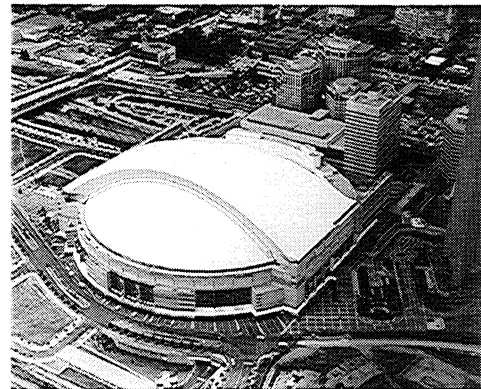
While requiring major public subsidies to develop, stadiums and convention centers can be important catalysts for the local economy. They are also big, bulky facilities that require large service entrances, significant amounts of parking and typically, blank walls on at least some of the sides. These are all characteristics which make them difficult to fit into a fine-grained city context.

They also have unique patterns of use. Stadiums in particular hold events when thousands of people will come and go simultaneously, creating surges in travel patterns and parking requirements, which are interspersed by periods of dormancy. Large crowds coming and going represent a potential boom to local, small businesses, but only if patrons visit the rest of downtown during their visit. The siting and configuration of each facility plays a role in linking the facility to downtown, creating a lifeline to local retailers, restaurateurs and entertainment venues.

The challenge in designing the stadium and convention center is to minimize the negative impact of the bulk, the blank walls, and the service and parking requirements. Often conceived as isolated mega-structures, the challenge will be to “tame” these facilities to act as urban buildings that fit into the street and block pattern and add to the city’s vitality. At the same time, the structure needs to be configured to contribute to downtown’s revitalization by allowing for the capture of economic benefits from the crowds as they come and go from events.

To respond to these challenges the facilities should be:

- hospitable at the street edges
- built in conjunction with streetscape improvements along adjacent streets to improve the pedestrian environment
- sited to minimize the negative impact of blank walls and the servicing requirements
- tied into the regional transit system to reduce the number of people driving



Toronto’s Sky Dome is situated so that surrounding plazas and entries are knit into the grid of surrounding city streets. The walls of the stadium are lined with restaurants and other commercial spaces that open out to these streets and plazas. Only 500 parking spaces were built; patrons rely on parking lots dotted throughout the downtown.

- sited where the travel and parking demands will not disrupt residential uses
- configured so that patrons will be encouraged to visit restaurants and retail stores in the surrounding areas. In particular, entrances should be located to create a direct relationship to other uses.
- planned to rely on the large supply of parking available throughout the city, rather than attempting to locate all parking on site.
- configured to relate to other uses in the neighborhood.

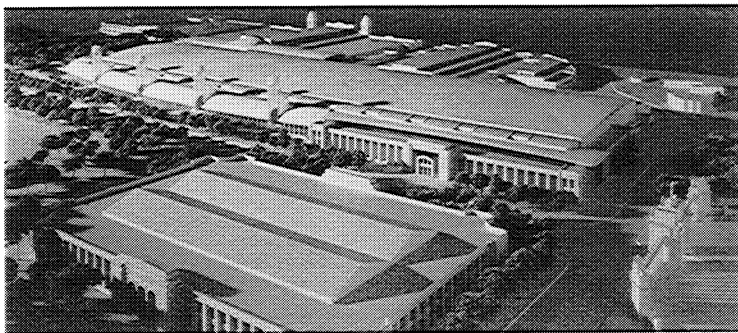
The Opportunity: Greater flexibility can be created by combining stadiums with convention centers, allowing the floor of the stadium to be used for trade shows, etc. However, combining facilities will increase the scale of the project and the design challenge.

The Patriots' decision to move to Hartford has determined that the stadium will be at Adriaen's Landing. However, either the 12B site or Adriaen's Landing is considered appropriate for the stadium and convention center. Both sites could be used as a catalyst for other activities, adding to the vitality of the downtown.

Adriaen's Landing has a number of advantages over the 12 B site. Adriaen's Landing is a large vacant site, situated at the edge of the downtown. Parking and blank walls can be sandwiched adjacent I-91, minimizing the visual impact. The site is positioned to benefit from the new Founders Bridge connection to the river and will not block connections to other parts of downtown. Care needs to be taken that the facility does not present its back to the Whitehead Highway and the Sheldon Charter-Oak Neighborhood immediately to the south.

The challenge on the 12B site, is to prevent a large, bulky facility from creating a visual divide between north and south downtown. As well, parking will be more difficult to accommodate on the site and will likely have a much greater visual impact than on Adriaen's Landing.

The Toronto Trade Centre has the largest floor plate of any non-industrial building in Canada, but by fronting the building with an active galleria and creating several internal public routes through the building, the huge size of the center has been mitigated.



● *The Higher Education Center*

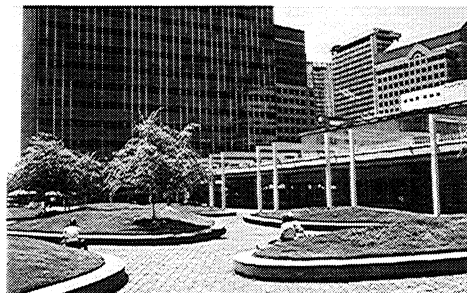
Because of the large numbers of people who will be using the Higher Education Center, it holds the opportunity to make a major contribution to downtown's revitalization. Because of the large number of students who will be commuting, parking is an important issue to address in selecting a site.

The Challenge will be to locate the Higher Education Center in a building that is sufficiently large to accommodate the use, while accommodating the large number of parking spaces required. Any building selected or designed should strive to meet the design guidelines outlined in Section 6.2. Without knowing whether the building will be newly built or a renovated existing structure, specific recommendations are premature.

Key at this point is the selection of a site where it will be possible to establish a relationship and synergies with adjacent uses. The location needs to be adjacent to restaurants, cafes, and residential buildings which can attract and benefit from staff, faculty and student patronage and add to downtown's vitality.

The Opportunity: The Higher Education Center should be located at the northern edge of downtown on a site between the river and Union Station. Part of the parking issue can be resolved by making use of more remote parking lots and encouraging students to use the Circuit Line.

A location in or near the Hartford Civic Center is ideal as it would promote and support the Bushnell North neighborhood, including the emerging entertainment district. As well, students, faculty and staff wanting to live near the campus could find housing in the units proposed on the vacant sites north of Bushnell Park.



The Hartford Civic Center (above) and Constitution Plaza (below) are both possible sites for the Higher Education Center.

- **Grocery Store**

One of the amenities required for current and future downtown residents is a grocery store. However, the major grocery store chains increasingly use a design template that calls for a large floorplate and significant amounts of parking in front of the store, up to the street edge. This standard is often difficult to fit within an established urban environment.

The Challenge will be to either “tame” the emerging template to fit into an urban context, or to identify a grocery store, chain or independent, that is either willing to try a more urban format, or is of such a specialized nature as to serve a region-wide market from the central location of downtown. In either instance, a major issue to resolve is parking. Negotiations with the store should aim to bring the building up to the street edge, to establish a more urban environment, and to site the parking either beside or behind the store. In addition, the design should aim to respond to as many of the guidelines outlined in Section 6.2 as possible.

The Opportunity: Any number of vacant sites within downtown are appropriate for a grocery store. Sites immediately north and south of I-84 would be particularly appropriate as they provide high visibility and could accommodate parking without significant visual impact on the rest of downtown.



The supermarket defines and supports the street with an active building edge.



Parking is located under the supermarket.



A supermarket in Toronto which has adapted to an urban context

● **Housing**

Housing can be created in all shapes and sizes. Housing in the core will most likely be multi-family dwelling units in the low- to mid-rise range. Infill housing on vacant sites in the neighborhoods should be lower density, likely single family, to be compatible with existing structures and to assist the city in meeting its housing targets.

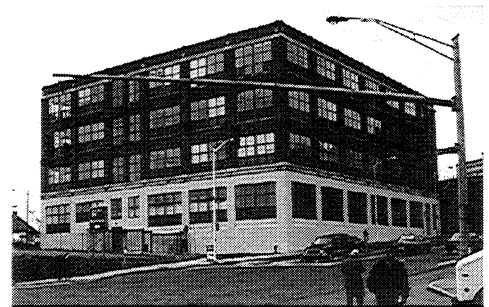
The Challenge will be to respond to a variety of housing needs in downtown Hartford, catering to a wide range of incomes, lifestyles and family sizes. Multi-family dwellings should respond to the urban design guidelines established in Section 6.2.

The Opportunity: Housing should be located in the Bushnell North and Bushnell South neighborhoods, to benefit from the park and to be in close proximity to retail stores, offices and entertainment venues.

In Bushnell North, housing should be slightly denser to be compatible with the existing warehouse and commercial structures. Sites fronting on the north side of the park have the greatest chance for success. Prime sites for housing are also located along Capitol Avenue, one block south of Bushnell Park. Housing in this area should be low- to mid-rise (2 - 6 stories) to be compatible with the existing brownstones.

Under-utilized office and retail buildings within the core form an important opportunity for reuse. Buildings with the potential to be adapted with a residential component include the G. Fox and the Sage-Allen buildings as well as the SNET building and 410 Asylum Street.

Infill housing in the neighborhoods can also play an important role in revitalizing the core. Lower density row house/townhouse units and loft apartments are the preferred typology in the neighborhoods that ring downtown (Frog Hollow, Barry Square, South Green, Sheldon-Charter Oak, Asylum Hill, Clay-Arsenal, and North Meadows) as well as other outlying city neighborhoods.



Artspace is a good example of the kind of conversions to residential space that are possible.



A mid-rise residential building in downtown Toronto. Similar, mid-rise housing with retail at street level has been proposed for north of Bushnell Park.

● **Office**

Office buildings can be built at a variety of scales. It is projected that demand exists for some 500,000 square feet of office space by the year 2000. Too many of the recent office buildings in downtown have been large, internalized structures, that make few gestures to the street and contain internalized food courts and cafeterias that discourage workers from patronizing downtown's shops and restaurants.

The Challenge will be to respond to create new office space that responds to the urban design guidelines established in Section 6.2. As well, new office structures should be:

- designed to contain active uses on the ground floor that relate to the street
- discouraged from including internalized food courts in order to encourage office workers to frequent local restaurants
- most likely in the medium size range in order not to absorb too great a percentage of projected total growth within a given time period
- constructed with shared parking facilities, rather than stand-alone, dedicated parking structures.

The Opportunity: New office space should be encouraged east of Main Street and south west of the Capitol, adding to the existing focus of state office uses in this area. Sites along Columbus Boulevard and Market Street would be particularly appropriate.



Simcoe Place in Toronto is an office development that supports a lively street edge with an arcade.



● **Retail**

The emergence of suburban retail malls in recent decades has put downtown retailers in stiff competition for spending dollars. More recently, retail is beginning to move back into downtowns across the country to support reemerging residential communities, and thriving tourist and commercial markets. Attempts to duplicate the suburban mall in central cities has not been successful.

The challenge will be to compete with suburban retail stores by creating a unique shopping destination in downtown Hartford. To create a physically unique shopping experience, that competes with suburban locations on its own terms, downtown retail stores should be:

- street related: doors should open out onto the street and be easily accessible; windows should provide visual interest
- clustered into concentrations of activity that line both sides of the street, whether located in stand-alone facilities or in the ground floor of residential or commercial structures
- located to benefit from existing and proposed convention / stadium/ residential / hotel uses

The Opportunity: New retail uses should be concentrated around the historic crossroads of Main Street and Asylum Street. A number of existing street-related spaces are available for re-use, particularly along Main Street.



Main Street was once a strong example of how shop, building and street design can support street life.

● **Hotels**

In many cities around the world, the old hotels are the center of activity and grandeur. Hotel patrons bring life to the streets, and frequent local stores. In many ways, they require the same types of services as residents, and support the same diversity of retail uses. Physically, hotels come in a wide range of sizes and shapes. However, increasingly the major hotel chains use prescribed formulas to design their facilities.

The Challenge will be to encourage a hotel design that contributes vitality to the city to the greatest extent possible. This means that any formulaic approach needs to be adapted to respond to the particularities of the Hartford context. In general, hotels should strive to achieve the urban design guidelines set out in Section 6.2. In particular, hotels should be:

- located near existing and proposed restaurants, cafes, stadium / convention centers
- designed so that the curb-cut for the drop-off creates a minimal disruption to the pedestrian realm
- configured so that the lobby has a direct relationship to the adjacent street
- designed so that supporting retail services are street-related, not buried within the interior of the building

The Opportunity: There is a market for downtown hotels. The creation of new hotels in downtown will increase Hartford's capacity to build a strong business travel / convention / tourist market. New hotels are also an important opportunity to increase demand for downtown's small retailers, restaurants and entertainment venues. A number of locations within the downtown core are appropriate. New hotels are an opportunity to add much needed new development and / or to renovate existing under-utilized or vacant buildings.

Hotel entrances should be designed so that the curb-cut for the drop-off creates a minimal disruption to the pedestrian realm. The entry can be directly from the street (above) or from an interior courtyard (right).



● **Parking**

Many parking structures in Hartford are designed as stand alone facilities that occupy an entire site. By locating parking at the street level, these facilities deaden entire blocks, creating little visual interest for pedestrians, little aesthetic appeal, and a certain lack of safety because they provide no “eyes on the street.”

The Challenge will be to create parking that has no negative impact and contributes to a lively urban environment. In general, parking structures should strive to achieve the urban design guidelines set out in Section 6.2. In particular, this means that stand alone-parking facilities should be designed to have active uses - restaurants, retail stores, service outlets - on the ground floor. The facades should be designed to provide visual interest and appeal.

Ideally, at least some parking structures would not be stand-alone facilities. Instead, they would be constructed on the interior of a block, as part of a larger development, and wrapped by other uses in order that they are less visible from the street. For example, the proposal for the Cutter Block, which locates parking at the center of the block, wrapped by housing, is an ideal solution for a downtown parking structure.

As well, a move away from dedicated parking structures toward a greater sharing of facilities among different users, would introduce flexibility into the existing system and help reduce the amount of land occupied by parking structures. It is the achievement of these design elements, more so than the selection of a specific site, that will help to create successful parking facilities comprising an effective overall parking system for downtown.



Parking structures should be attractive, with retail at street level.

Implementation

8

Maintaining the momentum

The next step is to implement the plan. With the assistance of the Hartford Downtown Council, the Capitol Region Growth Council and the leagues of dedicated citizens, responsibility for implementation will rest largely with the City of Hartford and will need to be coordinated with the city's newly strengthened economic development agency. There are many different aspects to consider, procedurally, legislatively and financially.

8.1 Organizational amendments required

- **Create a design center.**

As a first step, immediate consideration should be given to the creation of a design center - a group of professionals representing urban design / architecture, transportation and landscape architecture - that will review and shape projects to achieve the greatest benefit. The design center could be a component of the city's renewed economic development agency, and would play a key role in negotiating with developers and in reviewing public investments, to ensure that the vision is upheld and advanced.

- **Create a Downtown Economic Development Corporation to spearhead and serve as a public / private catalyst for downtown investment decisions.**

While the characteristics and full array of powers / responsibilities of this organization would await definition by its ultimate incorporators, some key considerations would be as follows:

- Institutionalize a public / private partnership or alliance.
 - Assemble equity capital for investment in strategic development projects.
 - Acquire, hold and affect development of key sites to enable strategic development projects as well as to establish development guidelines, sponsor competitive procedures for developer selection, and participate in providing public and private incentives as required.
 - Promote both public and private investment in downtown, including infrastructure, in the interest of a healthy region and city.
- **Consolidate major downtown parking resources under a common management and marketing umbrella.**

The city's current system of public parking management should be carefully assessed to ensure that the most effective tools are deployed to address parking needs while encouraging efficient allocation of this important resource for downtown stability and advancement. The newly created Parking Authority is a positive move. A still more comprehensive effort would include coordinated management of public and private parking facilities relative to hours, rates, signage, etc.; provide incentives for joint or multiple use of garages and lots; limit the amount of parking dedicated to any one facility or use; and creative pricing and funding strategies. This Authority should work in coordination with the Design Center.

8.2 Legislative amendments

- **Action Strategy adoption as a statement of policy, procedure and practice by both public and private interests.**

The Downtown Action Strategy should be accorded official standing in both the public and private sectors. This would suggest its formal adoption by resolution by the city's Commission on the City Plan and City Council. Likewise, it should be similarly endorsed by major private business and development organizations like the Greater Hartford Chamber of Commerce, the Hartford Downtown Council, and the Capitol Region Growth Council.

- **Refine and calibrate city land use regulations in support of the plan**

At the city level, the plan needs to be brought forward into public policy. The city's development regulations, especially the Plan of Development and zoning ordinances, should be revised as necessary to achieve certain key development objectives:

- Preservation of key sites for residential use, recognizing the fact that, otherwise, office and commercial uses can command higher land values and hence preclude residential use where most desirable, i.e. properties fronting on Bushnell Park, property along Capitol Avenue near the Capitol and Bushnell Park, sites with river views, etc.
- That development responds to the general and facility specific urban design guidelines.
- Preservation of historic resources.

8.3 Budgetary amendments

- **Define a capital budget and plan for public improvements and infrastructure investments in downtown.**

While this activity might be seen as the singular responsibility of the City of Hartford, the special needs and potential of downtown justify a broader coalition of interests to sponsor the establishment and annual updating of a plan and budget for capital improvements downtown.

Ideally, this could be a responsibility of the previously discussed Downtown Development Corporation. It would focus both public and private resources and interests on upgrading and maintaining the physical resources of downtown to ensure its economic viability and regional attraction as a special place to live, work, visit and recreate.

The public component of the capital budget would include federal, state, city resources while the private component would undertake to project and induce façade improvements, pedestrian and streetscape improvements associated with private property; upgrade private utility systems; and enhance parking facilities. Some key functional elements of the budget would be:

- Streets, sidewalks, streetscape and pedestrian amenities
- Parks and open space
- Lighting and landscaping
- Utilities
- Signage and way-finding
- Parking facilities

A full implementation strategy needs to be fleshed-out. However, the immediate creation of a design-center would be a significant move forward for the city, establishing a positive momentum and precedent. A gap exists between where the City of Hartford is today and where it needs to be in the future. Options for bridging this gap in the short term need to be considered as part of the implementation strategy.

There are still many bridges to be crossed, but the potential for downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods is exciting. The vision for downtown Hartford and the Action Strategy provide a solid basis on which to build.