STAMFORD MASTER PLAN 2000

GROWTH MANAGEMENT STUDY

URBAN DESIGN REPORT

NOVEMBER 2002

Regional Plan Association (NJ CT NY)

Abeles Phillips Preiss & Shapiro, Inc.

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INTRODUCTION

URBAN DESIGN, GROWTH MANAGEMENT AND THE FOUR GOALS

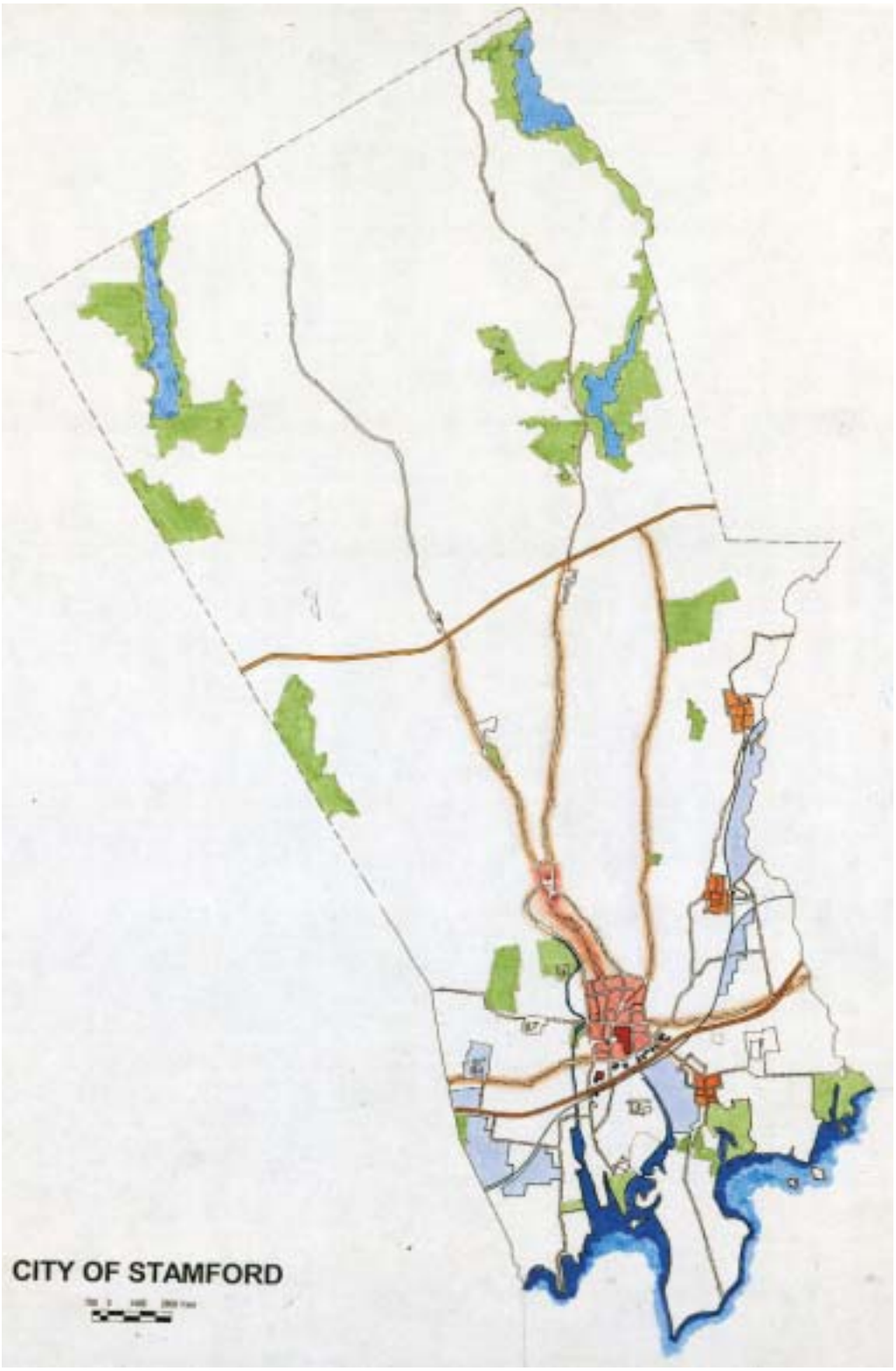
This urban design report is one of three foundations for the larger Growth Management Study which describes the interaction of three sets of issues:

- **Economic development** – how much new employment and population growth there may be over the next twenty years.
- **Traffic and transit** – how residents and workers will travel to and around Stamford.
- **Urban design** – where Stamford should grow and what should new development look like.

In order to understand the consequences of growth, the Growth Management Study modeled three futures – slow, trend and high growth - and for each of these possible futures, policy recommendations are made.

In the context of Growth Management, Urban Design is not so much an aesthetic exercise as a strategic land use policy intimately related to the Four Goals of the Action Plan. Stamford can only solve its traffic problems and protect Neighborhood Quality of Life by accommodating a diverse range of housing and commercial developments in configurations and locations that support transit. Thus, the urban design recommendations in this report, and as summarized in the City Beautiful and Downtown sections of the Action Plan, are important because they insure that these new developments will reinforce and improve the physical quality of the neighborhoods. The urban design recommendations are also important because they model future development in the Downtown which, by virtue of its ample capacity and accessibility to transit, is the centerpiece of any “smart growth” management plan. In order to support Stamford’s goals for economic and social Diversity, the urban design study identifies and models a complete range of development sites, both in the downtown, and in the industrial districts. Finally, the Urban Design report includes recommendations for increased access to well-designed parks and open spaces.

It is important to note that design is itself a tool for controlling growth as two countervailing forces are at work: On the one hand, the Urban Design Study supports growth by illustrating the ways in which future growth can be accommodated in Stamford. On the other hand, the ambitious agenda described here for controlling growth in terms of location, configuration and appearance, all act to slow growth by increasing development costs.



i. Map of Stamford, Connecticut

The key recommendations summarized below, and explored in detail in this special report, can be found primarily in the City Beautiful and Downtown sections of the Action Plan.

1. Reinforce the design and identity of the "greater downtown"

A well designed downtown is a shared resource for all Stamford residents and it is the centerpiece of any growth management strategy for the city. The Stamford downtown has evolved with two centers of gravity: One center of gravity is created by the highway-scale developments along the I-95 corridor, including Tresser Boulevard. The other center of gravity is the original pedestrian core, still centered around the intersection of Atlantic Street and Broad Street. Some of the concepts in the existing Master Plan and zoning, including the boundaries of "downtown", the definitions of "CBD" and "collar" areas, and the strategies for amenity bonuses linked to those definitions, should be re-aligned to reflect this reality. Other major dimensions of this initiative include the following:

- Reestablish Main Street, from the Mill River Park to Elm Street, as an integral part of the downtown pedestrian network, including a real connection through the Town Center Mall.
- Make the physical design of downtown more coherent by establishing normative height ranges and by managing transitions in scale between new developments and the existing neighborhoods in and around the downtown. Building height and bulk should reinforce the edges and identity of downtown.
- Create design guidelines for the remaining soft sites in downtown. These have been identified and modeled as part of the Growth Management study.
- Promote the long-term redevelopment and redesign of the eastern gateway to the downtown defined by the intersections of Elm, Main and Broad Streets.
- Weave the "green infrastructure" of the city into the downtown and link the existing open spaces to each other with an aggressive and comprehensive landscaping plan.

2. Reinforce the role that the major roadway corridors play in organizing the city

In Stamford, the road network is made up of corridors of different kinds: The most important are the original "radial corridors" that historically have extended from the pedestrian core of the downtown into the adjacent neighborhoods. These include Elm Street, East and West Main Streets, Broad Street, Atlantic Street and the Bedford Street/Summer Street pair. There are also "edge corridors" that define the edges of the downtown – Tresser Boulevard to the south and Washington Boulevard to the west. These function less as neighborhood streets and more as through-connectors, primarily to I-95. Finally, there are the High Ridge and Long Ridge Road corridors that organize the neighborhoods between Bulls Head and the Merritt Parkway.

These different kinds of corridors, which together can create the armature for a comprehensible and well-organized city, each require their own set of strategies. Major dimensions of this initiative include the following:

- Develop streetscape, landscape, and building placement guidelines that reinforce the particular character and function of the radial corridors. The pedestrian and bicycle experience is as important as car circulation along these roads.
- Acknowledge the larger scale and automobile-oriented nature of Tresser Boulevard and Washington Boulevard while, at the same time, providing a well-designed and safe pedestrian experience.
- Special design consideration should be given to the intersections where the radial corridors, which connect the downtown pedestrian core to the surrounding neighborhoods, must cross Washington Boulevard and Tresser Boulevard.
- Along High Ridge and Long Ridge Roads, balance the needs of the automobile with the role that these roads can play in knitting together the extensive geography south of the Merritt and north of downtown.
- Along High Ridge Road, identify and reinforce the design of the intersections that serve as the gateways into neighborhoods, intersections with important east-west roads or important crossing points. This can be part of a larger long-term strategy for creating a High Ridge Road residential boulevard.

3. Reinforce neighborhood "town centers"

Neighborhood concentrations of retail and service businesses are extremely important in creating a sense of scale within a city the size of Stamford. While these concentrations exist in almost every neighborhood, those that seem to have their own discreet identity as town centers include the Belltown shopping area around Belltown Road, the Shippan Avenue shopping area, and especially, Glenbrook and Springdale which even have their own train stations. Major dimensions of this initiative include the following:

- promote new, contextual infill development, uniform streetscape and landscape treatments, façade and signage guidelines.
- rationalize and interconnect parking lots behind stores
- Repair the discontinuities in the street network to create new blocks and development parcels.
- Complete greenway connections.

Stamford's neighborhoods are unique in the physical elements that define them–landscape, streetscape, building massing and siting–and design review must focus on those elements that are most important in each neighborhood (see Design Review discussion in the Citywide Policies Report). In addition, Stamford's growth continues to put tremendous pressure on existing neighborhoods for residential expansion and redevelopment. For this reason, and as part of a comprehensive and balanced strategy for affordable housing, new design guidelines for multifamily housing are important.

4. Exploit the potential of the industrial districts to make the edges of important roads and complete neighborhoods.

By providing space both for traditional manufacturing and for the hybrid uses of the new economy, Stamford's industrial districts can preserve the diversity of employment that is so important to a growth management strategy. As the nature of manufacturing and its role in Stamford's economy continues to evolve, so too will the physical character of the industrial districts: large properties may be redeveloped for new uses; obsolete factory buildings may be

subdivided and reused for new purposes – every thing from live-work housing to flex industrial incubators. With so much land area under pressure and in transition, design strategies for the industrial districts will be important. Major dimensions of this initiative include the following:

- Promote the mixed-use redevelopment of large underutilized or downsized industrial campuses. A mixed-use program can include residential uses while preserving technology-based light industrial uses.
- Where industrial districts are surrounded by residential neighborhoods, exploit the potential to create new connections in the neighborhood or complete fragmented street and block patterns.
- Where industrial districts abut important road corridors, and along the edges of neighborhoods, design guidelines should control the edges and entry points of the industrial districts.

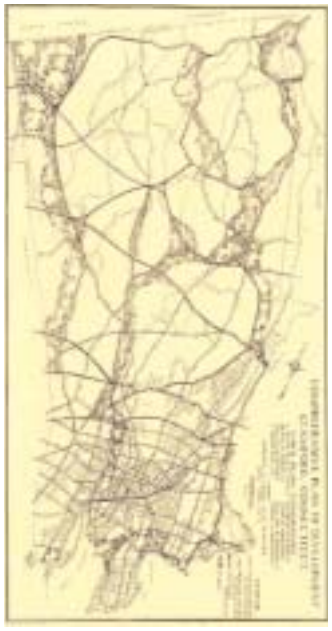
5. Reinforce the "green infrastructure" of Stamford and create a continuous network of open spaces and greenway connections

There is an extensive array of public and private open spaces throughout Stamford that are largely disconnected. Because natural systems (streams, ground water, habitat) are continuous, the livability and environmental sustainability of the city will depend on linking as many of these resources together as possible. The elements that must be linked range from the most rural (the large tracts and reservoirs in North Stamford) to the most urban (street trees and parks in the downtown core) and must include the water's edge (a resource of still unrealized potential for the city). Major dimensions of this initiative include the following:

- Negotiate access easement agreements on strategic private parcels, including the large corporate campuses along Long Ridge Road which can become part of a north-south pedestrian and bicycle connection.
- Preserve strategic parcels along existing watercourses.
- Make linkages to the larger statewide greenway network including the Merritt Parkway trail.
- Knit the greenway, park and open space opportunities into the downtown with landscaping, streetscaping and other urban landscaping devices.
- Continue to acquire important private parcels, especially in North Stamford.

I. DOWNTOWN

INTRODUCTION: STAMFORD STREET AND BLOCK PATTERN



1.01 The map of Stamford as it appeared in **Swan Plan**, 1929

Downtown Stamford, from an urban design point of view, is a fascinating place. Unlike many American cities which are laid out on a grid, Stamford is organized around a highly idiosyncratic pattern of radial streets, interestingly shaped public spaces, and oddly shaped oversized blocks; all of this a combination of historic patterns and large scale redevelopment projects.

This was recognized as early as 1929 by Herbert S. Swan in his wonderful *Plan of a Metropolitan Suburb: Stamford, Connecticut*:

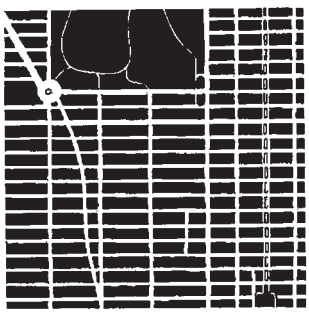
> The street plan of Stamford is full of little jokes and idiosyncrasies; it bubbles over with them; The streets of other cities are often illogical enough, but they are illogical in a different manner; it is the pranks played by its street system that differentiates Stamford from other cities. Indeed, it is these whimsicalities of its streets that give Stamford a character all its own–in a very unique sense, they are Stamford.

Seventy years later it is still possible to share his assessment of this pattern: that it is at once frustrating for any planner who would attempt to rationalize it, and at the same time, it is the very thing that gives Stamford its special identity. The oddly shaped streets and open spaces are something that is generally associated with the centers of European cities. But this potential asset–of a downtown organized around a highly articulated and well-defined network of streets, plazas and mid-block passageways–is realized only if there is an aggressive effort to infill the core of the downtown as a uniformly dense and compact center. The ideas discussed below support this vision.

Stamford is organized around a highly idiosyncratic pattern of radial streets, interestingly shaped public spaces, and oddly shaped oversized blocks. (These three plans are the same scale.)

1.02 Stamford block pattern

1.03 Florence, Italy block pattern



1.04 Midtown Manhattan block pattern

WHAT ARE THE EDGES OF DOWNTOWN?

This is a question that sits squarely at the intersection of urban design, growth management and land use policy.

From a growth management perspective, it is essential that most of Stamford's future growth be directed to the downtown: to protect other parts of the city from unwanted intensification, to assure transit accessibility for new developments and to complete the vision shared by all Stamford residents for a vibrant cultural and commercial center with a distinct identity.

While there may not be complete consensus on the exact limits of downtown, there seems to be a shared sensibility about a number of edges, informed by the overall geography of the city – the scale of buildings, the scale and character of roadways and natural features. It is important to understand and articulate the underlying geometry of the downtown, as this informs the boundaries and characteristics of the three proposed master plan land use categories that describe the "Greater Downtown": Core, Corridor and Collar. The boundaries of the downtown and its Core, Corridor and Collar components described below, are important because a number of zoning regulations have been, and will continue to be, linked to the mapping of these areas.

The 1984 Master Plan Amendment described Downtown in terms of a Central Business District (CBD) and a Collar area to the north. Fifteen years later, it is important to revisit those boundaries both in terms of the physical realities of development patterns as well as in terms of the shared perception that has evolved of a Core bounded by Grove Street, Hoyt Street, Tresser Boulevard and Washington Boulevard.

1.05 Aerial photograph of downtown: South End and Bedford/Summer to Bulls Head

This is summarized in Figure 1.06. The areas in red are places where downtown-scale developments exist outside of the 1984 Downtown boundary, suggesting the extension of the Collar. Of course, some of these existed at the time of the 1984 mapping, but they nevertheless obscure the identity of the Downtown. Some of these should be part of the new

1.06 Actual densities versus 1984 Downtown boundaries (dashed line): red represents high density development outside of the original Downtown boundary; tan represents lack of density within the 1984 Downtown bounds.

1.07 The proposed edges of downtown: Core (red), Corridor (dark red) and Collar (pink). The striped area is the focus for pedestrian improvements.

Actual development patterns do not reinforce the identity of the 1984 Downtown Boundaries (fig. 1.05). Future development should support the identity of a pedestrian core bounded by Grove, Hoyt, and Washington and a collar that makes a transition to existing high density development north of Hoyt Street.

Collar which would use design guidelines to promote transition to these more intense developments as well as to manage the scale and character of future developments.

The areas in tan are the areas where downtown scale development was never achieved within the boundaries of the Downtown. Despite the fact that there are site assembly and parking issues associated with aggressive in-fill development, these are the areas that should be intensified to reinforce the perceived boundaries of the Downtown Core–Grove, Hoyt, Washington and Tresser (Figure 1.07).

1.08 Tresser Boulevard–the south edge of the Core

1.09 Washington Boulevard–the west edge of the Core

1.10 Hoyt Street–the north edge of the Core

1.11 Grove Street–the east edge of the Core

Defining the Core

Over the years, a number of roadway projects including the urban redevelopment work centered around Tresser Boulevard and I-95, the widening of Washington Boulevard, completion of the Hoyt Street Connector, and most recently improvements to Grove Street, have made these four roads the south, west, north and east boundaries of the downtown Core.

Within this Core is a smaller “Pedestrian Core”, the most urban, pedestrian-friendly part of the city, with the greatest concentration of older mid-rise buildings that make these streets and public spaces among the most clearly defined and distinctive in the city. Despite the impact of a few over-scaled developments, this has remained the heart of the city, centered around the intersections of Broad and Atlantic, extending north along Bedford Street to John Latham Park, and to the south, along West Main, Columbus Park and old Town Hall. The exact limits of the pedestrian core are suggested in Figure 1.07 by the striped area. It is this area that must become the focus for ground floor and pedestrian amenities.

Defining the Collar

Beyond the Core is an area of intermediate scale development that acts as a transition to the lower scale of the neighborhoods surrounding the downtown. This is the limit of the “Greater Downtown” of Stamford. As with the Core, the Collar area also has boundaries that are informed by the scale of roads, character of development and natural features.

To the east, the edges of the Greater Downtown are defined by the existing high-rise residential developments along Glenbrook Road and the established residential neighbor-

hoods between Glenbrook Road and Grove Street. The apartment buildings on Glenbrook Road are higher in scale than many of the blocks within the Core, suggesting that one has already arrived at the edge of downtown at this point.

To the north, the edges of the Greater Downtown are defined by the high-rise and mid-rise residential buildings north of Hoyt Street, and beyond that, by the blocks between Bedford Street and Summer Street, from Hoyt Street north to Bulls Head. The commercial developments north of 6th Street, especially the hotel and office buildings, did not conform with the intent of the 1984 Master Plan or the underlying CN zoning (Neighborhood Commercial) under which they were built. Also, the haphazard intensification of the blocks between Bedford and Summer Streets is regrettable. Nevertheless, the extension of the Collar concept acknowledges the large-scale commercial developments north of 6th Street and, in conjunction with design guidelines, the Collar concept can help manage the on-going transformation of this area.

To the west, the Greater Downtown is defined by the Mill River corridor. The river is a natural boundary that will be reinforced by the proposed intermediate and low-rise scale residential neighborhood, Mill River greenway and park.

To the south, the Collar boundary of the Greater Downtown is defined by the blocks on either side of the proposed Stamford Urban Transitway (formerly known as the “Dock Street Connector”). A Mixed-Use Overlay District (MOD) is suggested for this area to capture the development benefits of proximity to the Transit Center, take advantage of site assembly facilitated by realignment of the right-of-way, and to promote development that is compatible with the Downtown.

1.12 Glenbrook Road–east edge of the Collar

1.13 Bulls Head–north edge of the Collar

1.14 Mill River–west edge of Collar

1.15 Stamford Urban Transitway–south edge of Collar

1.16 Tresser Boulevard–spine of large scale office buildings over structured parking

1.17 Columbus Park–heart of the pedestrian core characterized by mixed use and a dense pattern of low-rise and mid-rise buildings

TWO CENTERS OF GRAVITY

There are two important focal points for the transit lines in Stamford–the railroad station–and the Square at the intersection of Main Street and Atlantic Street in the heart of the business center.

Herbert Swan, 1929

The Stamford downtown has evolved with two centers of gravity: One center of gravity is created by the highway-scale developments along the I-95/Tresser Boulevard corridor. The other center of gravity is the original pedestrian core, still centered around the intersections of Atlantic Street with Broad and Main Streets. This is also the center of the area that was described in the 1984 Amendment as a Historic/Conservation Area, the intent of which was to preserve the "traditional" downtown. However, the concept of a conservation area has never been institutionalized in the zoning.

Along the Tresser Boulevard/I-95 corridor is a tremendous amount of office space, concentrated in a number of 250,000 to 500,000 square foot office buildings sitting on top of, or adjacent to, multi-story garages. While the scale of development is certainly urban, the pedestrian experience is definitely not: There is almost no ground floor retail activity. There is no uniform distance by which buildings and their entrances are set back from the sidewalk. This, together

The existing (1984) Master Plan and zoning concepts (fig. 1.18) do not recognize the differences in scale and chcaracter between two centers of gravity: the Tresser Boulevard/I-95 Corridor and the pedestrian Core entered on Broad and Atlantic (fig. 1.19).

1.18 Densities as conceived in the 1984 Master Plan and Zoning

1.19 Actual densities

with the scale of Tresser Boulevard and the crossing distances at intersections make Tresser Boulevard more an automobile environment than a pedestrian precinct. (See discussion of design suggestions in the Roadway Corridors section below).

The other center of gravity is the historic center of the City, concentrated around the intersections of Atlantic Street with Main Street and Broad Street. From an urban design perspective, the characteristic that most distinguishes the historic core is the clearly defined streets and open spaces–a function of the dense and, for the most part, uniform pattern of low-rise and mid-rise buildings, "shoulder-to-shoulder" at the edge of the sidewalk. While many of the buildings are undistinguished from an architectural point of view, almost all meet the minimum urban design qualification for any downtown–that there must be visible activity at the ground floor to assure a lively and continuous pedestrian experience.

While the automobile is ubiquitous in the downtown, including in the Core, the pedestrian experience is the priority. Not surprisingly, almost all of the ground floor retail in the entire city is in this network of well-defined, pedestrian-oriented streets and public spaces. Unfortunately, the historic core occupies a relatively small portion of the downtown and is challenged in a number of ways:

- There are significant underutilized and vacant sites, especially along Broad Street, that disrupt the pedestrian experience.
- There are several out of scale developments that do not make a comfortable transition to the prevailing scale of the pedestrian core.
- There are some developments that do not relate to the sidewalk (such as Avalon Grove and the windowless department store on Broad Street).
- The historic pedestrian network along Main Street is made discontinuous by the Town Center mall.
- The Park in front of the mall does not work as an urban space, primarily because of the relationship of the surrounding buildings to the space is very weak, with few entrances or windows at the park level.

1.20

1.21

1.20 and 1.21 Veterans' Memorial Park is underutilized

1.22 Public spaces need both to be designed and programmed to encourage lively interaction at different times of the day

As different as these two centers of gravity are–in terms of scale, character and pedestrian experience–at present they are both encompassed by a single master plan concept, CBD, and by two zoning districts, CCN and CCS, that do not make significant distinctions in scale, massing, or character. As long as this is the case, it will be more difficult to achieve the goal of completing the pedestrian experience in the Core. In the worst case, there is the danger of new developments that are out of scale with the strong urban context in this portion of the downtown.

The urban design analysis illustrates a number of ways in which the 1984 Master Plan and zoning are misaligned with existing development patterns and are potentially at cross-purposes with the goal of articulating a well-defined Core and Collar for the downtown.

Figure 1.23 describes the height thresholds that are allowed under the existing CCN and CCS Zones as mapped in the '84 Master Plan. (The districts are grouped within 50', 90' 150' and 250' thresholds. Note that some districts appear in more than one height bracket, as the site area can determine maximum building height.)

Figure 1.24 shows actual building heights, organized into the same threshold brackets. This clearly illustrates the persistence, in spite of the potential to build higher, of the intermediate scale pattern of the pedestrian core north of Tresser Boulevard.

Finally, Figure 1.25 illustrates a number of the existing and potential scale conflicts that the existing Master Plan and Zoning pattern promotes.

HEIGHT RANGE	ZONING CATEGORIES
50 FT.	R5, RMF, CI, MG, CL, RH, CB, CN, R71/2
90 FT.	MXD, PD, CG, CL
150 FT.	RH, MXD, PD, CG
250 FT.	CCN, CCS

1.23 Existing zoning heights: four ranges of building heights under current zoning

1.26 Aerial photograph of Downtown, showing scale conflicts.

1.24 Ranges of heights of existing buildings

1.25 Future development sites where scale conflicts may occur. Striped areas are existing scale conflicts.

Existing buildings have not reached the heights allowed under current zoning/CBD boundaries (figs. 1.23 and 1.24). Without massing guidelines, future developments may create scale conflicts within the downtown Core and Collar (fig. 1.25).

Any space that is not animated with street level activity, however well appointed, is ultimately an obstacle to the vision of the Pedestrian Core.

1.27 The Biltmore plaza is out of scale with Broad Street

1.28 The public plaza, provided here as a floor area bonus, detracts from the character of Broad Street as a coherent pedestrian corridor

1.29 The public plaza at Canterbury Green is a well-designed urban amenity

TWO CASE STUDIES

The Biltmore is an example of an existing high quality development that is nevertheless out of scale with the Pedestrian Core and which illustrates a number of the issues related to the mapping of the CBD and associated CCN zoning.

First, this building is out of scale with the overall context of Broad Street and Pedestrian Core. The excessive height and bulk is in part a result of the ability under CCN zoning to stack floor area allowances for commercial and residential uses. Even more, it is the result of the absence of any massing strategy that could create a transition from the tower to the intermediate scale of Broad Street.

The development also exposes problems with the Plaza Bonus. While it is true that the current zoning would no longer permit the above-grade portion of the plaza, the at-grade plaza at the corner of Greyrock and Broad makes little contribution to the pedestrian life of the downtown. The paving pattern, even though it is elaborate and well-executed, contributes little to the Broad Street corridor because it is not part of a larger unified design for the entire corridor. Any space that is not animated with street level activity, however well appointed, is ultimately an obstacle to the vision of the Pedestrian Core.

By way of contrast, Canterbury Green accomplishes a number of urban design objectives which should be encouraged for other sites in the downtown Core. The building massing steps down to the scale of St. Johns Church at Elm Street. The plaza bonus was used to create a well-defined, south-facing space in the middle of the block with pedestrian connections to surrounding streets. However, even this project seems to be out of scale with Broad Street.

TOWARDS A VISION FOR DOWNTOWN: REINFORCING THE CORE, CORRIDOR AND COLLAR

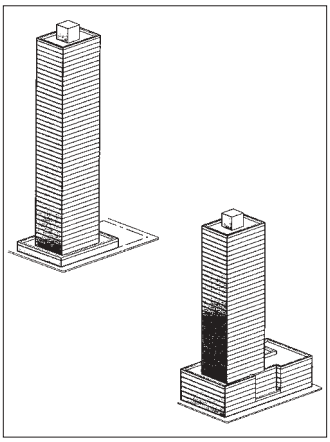
Inadequacy of FAR as an Urban Design Tool

It is tempting to rely on "floor area ratio" (FAR) as the principle indicator of scale, but it is an inadequate tool from an urban design perspective and from the point of view of trying to distinguish and manage the differences between the Pedestrian Core and the Tresser Boulevard corridor. In fact, many of the smaller, older buildings in the Pedestrian Core, which cover their entire sites ("zero lot line") have higher FARs than the buildings on Tresser Boulevard. Rather, a set of comprehensive height, bulk and setback regulations must assure that new buildings are in-fill buildings with high coverage, maintain the street wall and are massed in such a way that they make transitions to their immediate context. One model for this kind of zoning is the contextual zoning regulations developed in NYC which were meant to address many of the same issues Stamford faces such as the jarring changes in scale and inanimate plazas created by lower coverage developments.

These goals are illustrated in the massing studies for several downtown infill sites which are found at the end of this chapter.

1.30 The intermediate scale of this portion of a highrise building creates a transition from the tower to the scale of the adjacent buildings on the avenue.

A set of comprehensive height, bulk and setback regulations must assure that new buildings are infill buildings with high coverage, maintain the street wall and are massed in such a way that they make transitions to their immediate context.



1.31 New York City conextual zoning elminates the plaza in favor of a contextual tower and base strategy.

1.32 Tower and base massing can be used to articulate important intersections and make transitions to context.

Realign bonuses

The zoning bonuses that are meant to promote a pedestrian-oriented experience in downtown–in particular, the plaza bonus and the ground floor amenity bonus–must be realigned to reflect the differences between the Core and Corridor and the goal of reinforcing the pedestrian core.

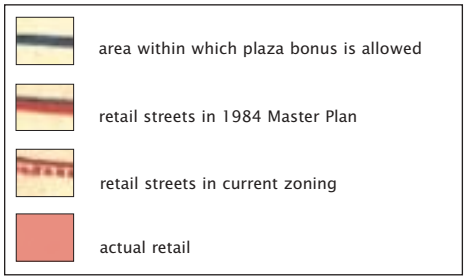
The 1984 Master Plan was overly expansive in terms of its goals for retail streets, which were mapped extensively, including the area along Tresser Boulevard. In fact, 20 years of experience shows the extent to which ground floor retail has remained concentrated in a relatively small area of the downtown center, not surprisingly, within the Main Street, Broad Street, Atlantic Street and Bedford Street pedestrian core. Current zoning acknowledges this, and so the ground floor retail amenity bonus is available within a much smaller area. This supports the existing concentration of retail and reflects the reality that Tresser Boulevard will never become a pedestrian friendly "main street." Some refinements to the current zoning are suggested (see Figure 1.33). Also, the mapping of retail streets in the 1984 Master Plan Amendment should now be superceded by the mapping of the Pedestrian Core suggested in Figure 1.34.

The existing zoning is less appropriate with regards to the plaza bonus. This is currently allowed throughout the CBD (in districts CCN, CCS, CL and CG), both within the Tresser Boulevard Corridor and the Pedestrian Core. The plaza bonus may make sense in the Tresser Boulevard Corridor where new open spaces could become part of a larger, integrated landscaping strategy that incorporates other spaces in front of the buildings along Tresser Boulevard. However, the plaza bonus is not appropriate in the Pedestrian Core. Here, activity at the sidewalk is at a premium. It is far better to have an appropriately scaled building with ground floor activity at the sidewalk, even if it is architecturally undistinguished, than to have a plaza which, however well designed, interrupts the continuity of the pedestrian experience within the Core.

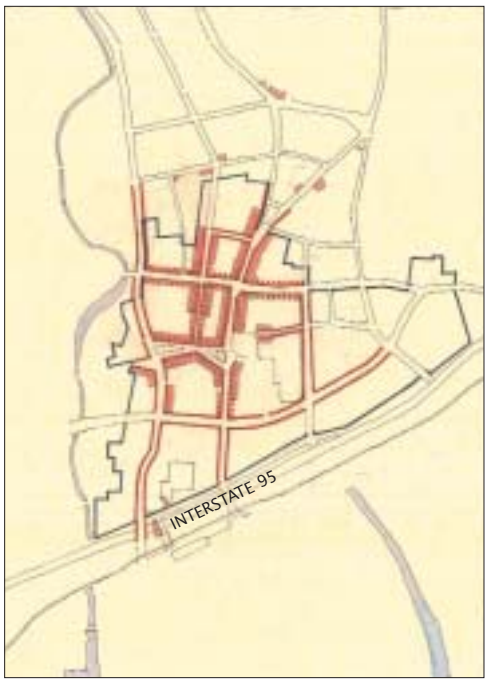
If one of the priorities is to complete the Pedestrian Core, then bonuses for ground floor retail and streetscape amenities should be linked to an overall unifying design. Perhaps the ground floor amenity bonus could be granted for sites throughout the Greater Downtown, but would be used to finance streetscape improvements only within the Pedestrian Core. In this way, the pedestrian improvements could be completed incrementally, and the whole would be greater than the sum of the individual and disconnected bonuses currently granted.

REALIGN ZONING BONUSES

The 1984 Master Plan was overly expansive in terms of the extent of viable retail streets, allowing for plaza bonuses in places where street walls are needed (fig. 1.33). Master plan and zoning strategies should be targeted to a smaller pedestrian core, reinforcing existing retail and eliminating the plaza bonus in favor of a continuous, pedestrian-friendly street wall (fig. 1.34).



1.35 Existing pedestrian-friendly areas are limited to several places within the historic core.

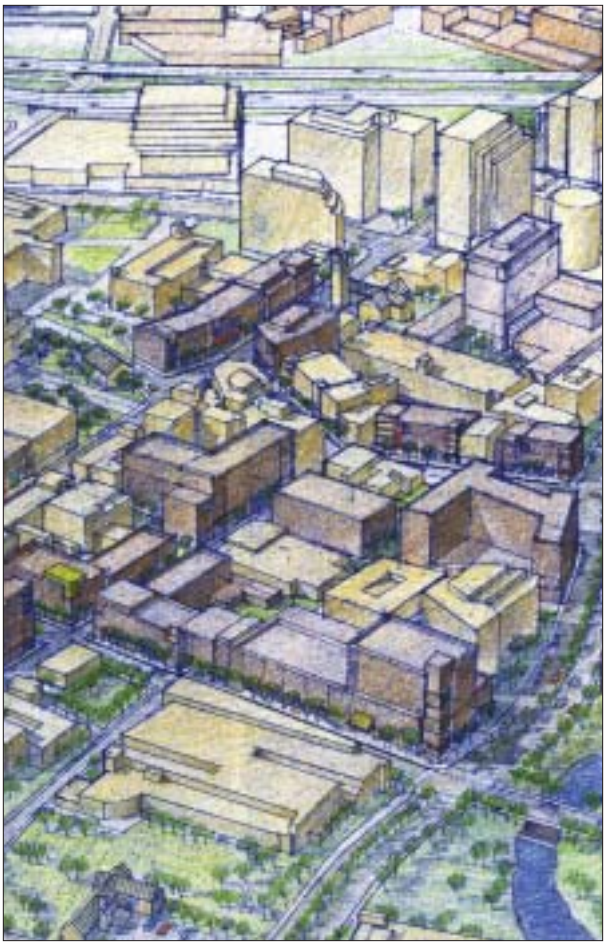


1.33 Actual Retail versus 1984 Maser Plan and Zoning Strategies

1.54 Proposed Pedestrian Core and Improvements

Realign development intensity

The following series of diagrams and massing models is an attempt to summarize the issues raised above. In particular, they address the goal of realigning development intensity both with historic development patterns and with shared perceptions about the edges of Downtown and the concepts of Core, Corridor and Collar.



1.36 Acknowledge "two centers of gravity"–a Tresser Boulevard Corridor of towers and a Core scale of dense and compact urban environment

The first diagram and model (Figure 1.37) illustrate the way downtown was conceived in the 1984 Master Plan. It was a rational model which provided for a progressive stepping down in scale from the most intense development, represented by the master plan category with the higher number (8D – Central Business District) to intermediate-scale master plan categories (7 – Intermediate Business), to a high density multi-family housing (Category 5), and finally, to the medium and low density multi-family zones of the surrounding neighborhoods (Categories 4 and 3).

The next diagram and model (Figure 1.38) show the actual pattern. The kind of intensity envisioned for Master Plan Category 8D (CBD), exists only along the Tresser Boulevard I-95 corridor. Elsewhere, there is no clear pattern, supporting the criticism that is often leveled at downtown Stamford–that it seems to be more a collection of disparate pieces than an integrated whole.

The last diagram and model (Figure 1.39) represent the proposed pattern that the new master plan categories and policies will support. This reflects a number of considerations, especially the reality of the Core and Corridor centers of gravity and the proposed edges of the "Greater Downtown," specifically:

- That there are two centers of gravity in the downtown, with a fundamentally different scale on the Tresser Boulevard corridor.
- That the Pedestrian Core should become a uniformly dense environment of clearly defined streets and public spaces.

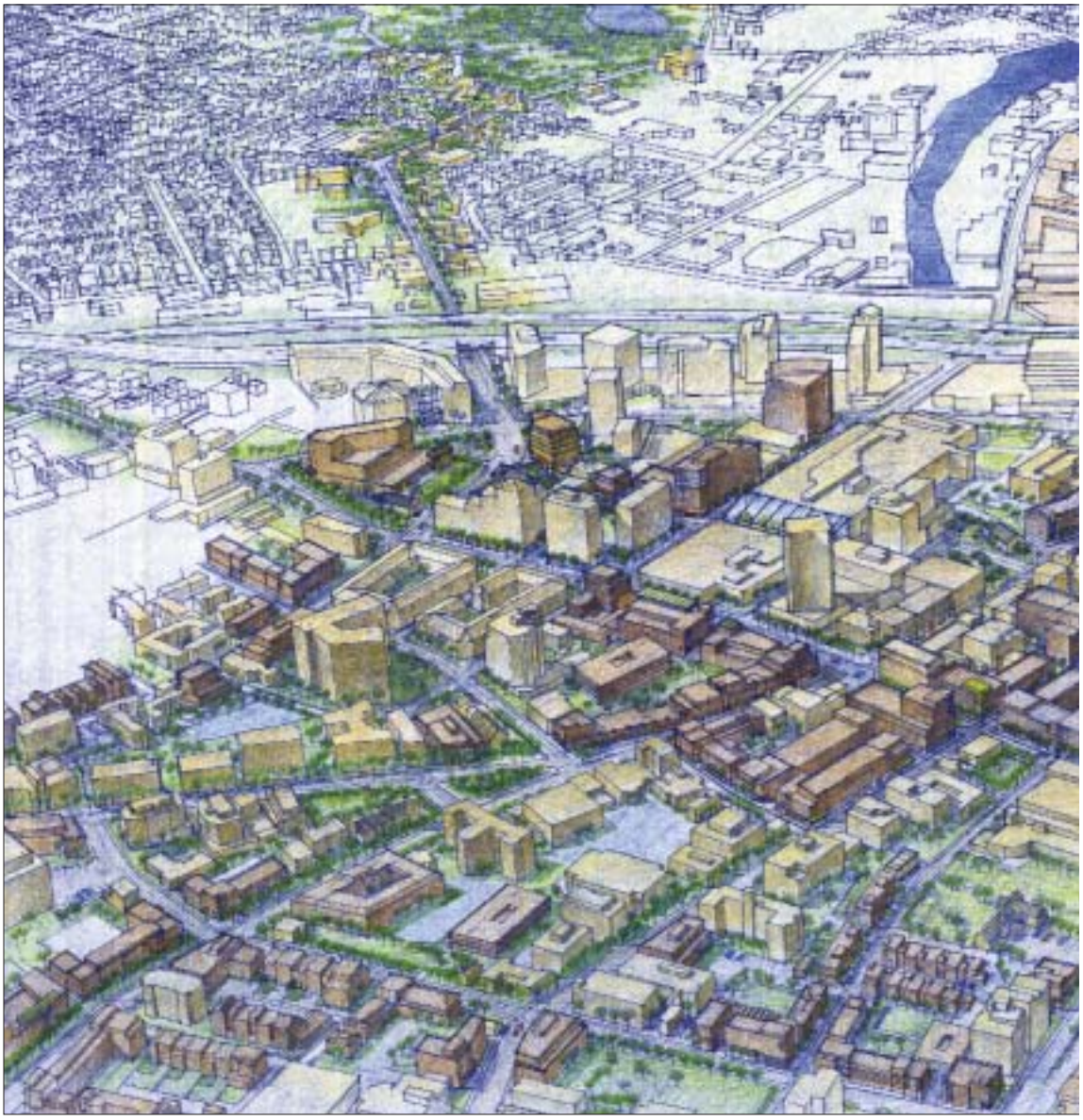
1.37 1984 density concept

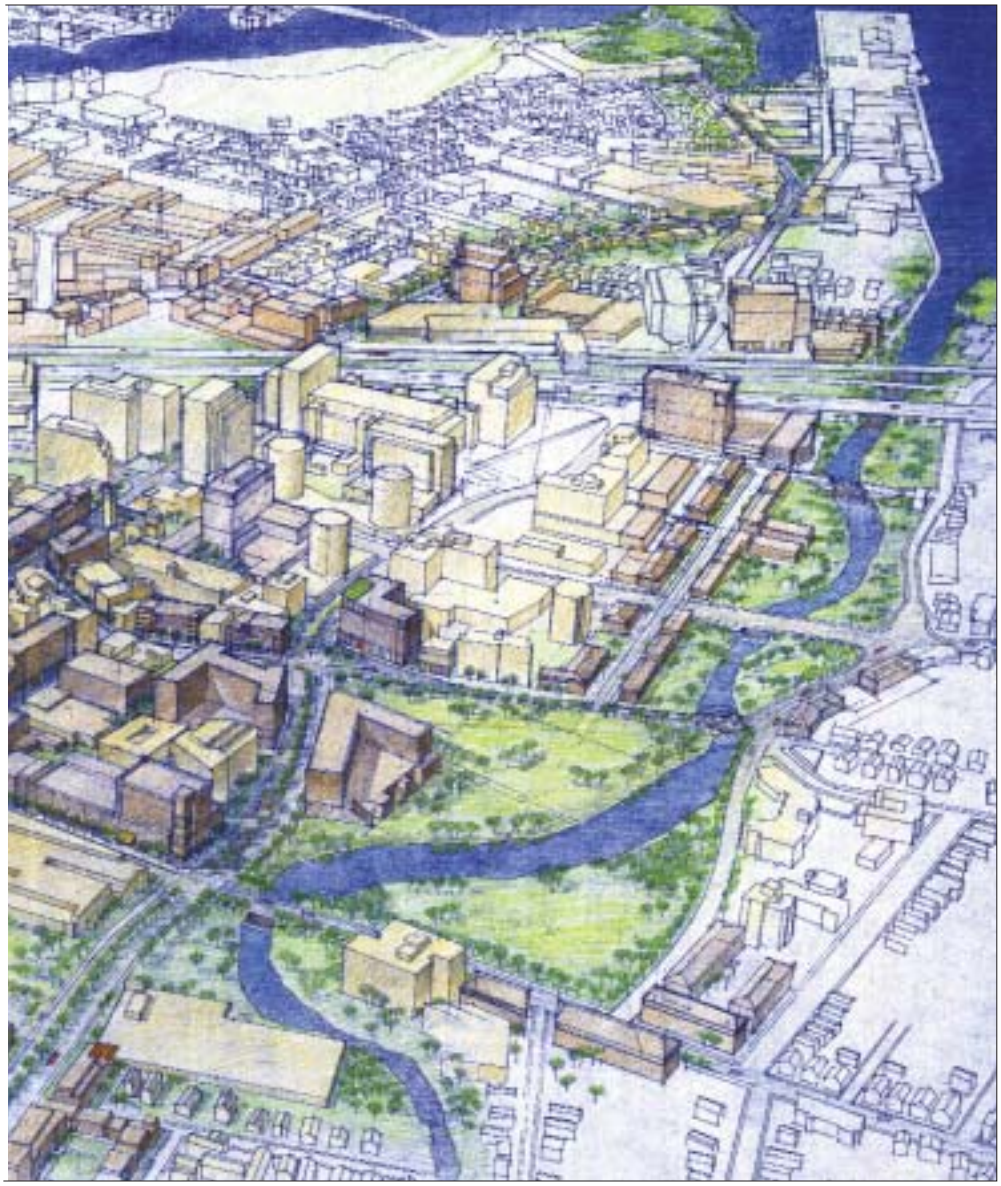
1.38 Actual density pattern

1.39 Proposed density and massing concept

- That the character of Summer Street should be maintained as a well-defined and uniform corridor of intermediate density.
- That Broad Street should be reinforced at a similar intermediate scale.
- That the somewhat lower scale of the historic center of the city, focused around Columbus Park and John Latham Park, should be maintained.
- That the intermediate scale development originally mapped in the area immediately around the transit center should be extended along the Stamford Urban Transitway to the east channel.
- That the Bedford Street/Summer Street blocks can, as originally conceived in the 1984 Master Plan Amendment, support higher density development if appropriately designed.

Proposed density and massing concept: reinforce the Core bounded by Tresser Boulevard, Hoyt, Grove, and Washington Boulevard, and articulate the Summer Street and Broad Street corridors within the Core (fig. 1.39).



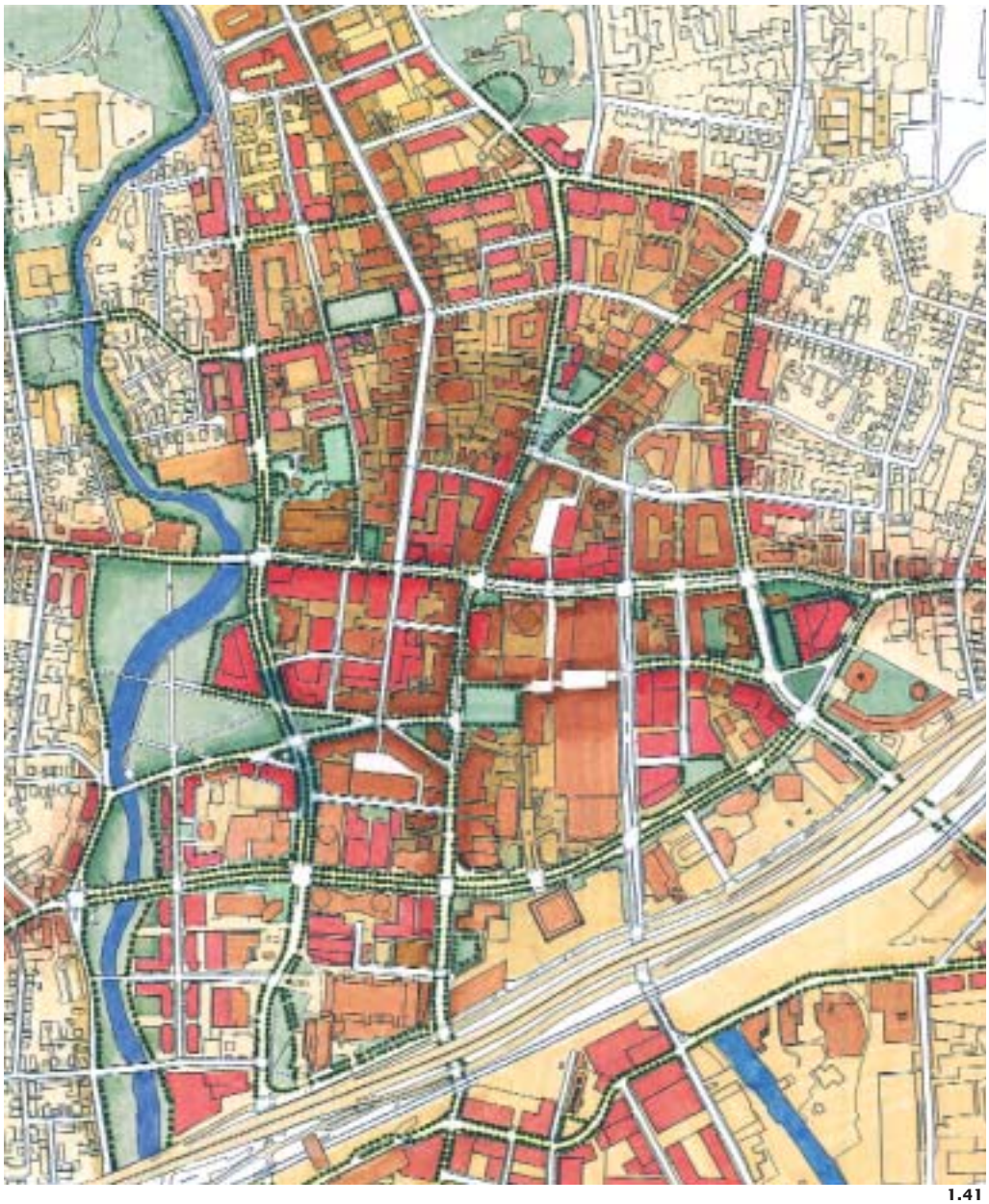


1.40

This drawing illustrates the vision for a compact pedestrian environment within the Core. (Darker buildings are redevelopment concepts. See Massing studies in this chapter.)

ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN OF DOWNTOWN

- The Pedestrian Core is a uniformly dense environment of clearly defined streets and public spaces.
- The edges of the core as defined by Grove Street, Hoyt Street , Washington Boulevard and Tresser Boulevard are reinforced.
- Open spaces are linked into a comprehensive network and the "green infrastructure of the parks" is brought into the Core as street trees and parks of various sizes.
- The interiors of the oddly shaped and over-sized blocks are thought of as part of the pedestrian experience and linked accordingly.
- A Main Street- Broad Street Downtown Loop is established (see discussion following) including a new gateway ay the east edge of town, a robust connection through the Mall and improved Mill River Park.



1.41

1.42 Design guidelines for new development should reflect this hierarchy of scale, from higher (darkest color) to lower (lighter color):

- "Highway scale" development in the Tresser boulevard/I-95 Corridor.
- Intermediate scale development along the Summer Street and Broad Street corridors to reinforce their importance within the Core.
- Development to reinforce the edges of the Core along Grove Street, Hoyt Street and Washington boulevard, with emphasis on transition to surrounding neighborhoods.
- High coverage, high FAR infill development throughout the Core with emphasis on massing transitions to historic context.

1.43 Aggressive infill development (top) helps reinforce the Core as bounded by Grove, Hoyt, Wathington and Tresser.

THE MAIN STREET-BROAD STREET DOWNTOWN LOOP

1.44 Historically, the principle route through downtown was the Boston Post Road (US 1). This "Main Street" in Stamford and in countless other towns between Boston, New York City and beyond.

1.45 The urban renewal plan made Main Street discontinuous at the Town Center Mall and created Tresser Boulevard as a high-volume through road. Approaching the city from the east and west, Tresser Boulevard draws people away from the Pedestrian Core. The connection through the core is discontinuous as Main Street (from the east) dead-ends at the Mall and Broad Street continues west to Washington Boulevard.

1.46 A new Main Street-Broad Street loop is proposed to make the pedestrian experience in the core continuous.

CORRIDORS TO THE CORE

1.48 Several significant corridors link the neighborhoods around downtown to the proposed Main Street-Broad Street Loop (see discussion in Chapter 2 of this report). There are several key gateways to downtown that need to be addressed, especially where these corridors cross Washington and Tresser Boulevards.

THE MAIN STREET-BROAD STREET DOWNTOWN LOOP

1.49 Downtown Gateway

1.50 Downtown Mall

1.51 Washington Boulevard

Major components of the proposed Main Street-Broad Street Downtown Loop:

▪ At the east side of town, use new development and open spaces to create a gateway that connects Broad Street and Main Street and clarifies the choice between two destinations: the office buildings on Tresser Boulevard or the Pedestrian Core centered on Broad and Main Streets (fig. 1.49).

▪ Reestablish Main Street through the Core by creating a robust connection through the Mall, perhaps by creating a true, multistory arcade or atrium (fig. 1.50).

▪ At the west side of town, improve Washington Boulevard (see design study in Chapter 2 of this report) and the Mill River Park to connect Broad Street and Main Street (fig. 1.51).

MASSING STUDIES FOR SELECTED DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT SITES

On the following pages are massing studies for a variety of sites and areas in the downtown. These studies reflect the urban design goals for the downtown. The proposed developments shown on these sites were used to generate the build-out square footages used in the Economic Development Report and the Growth Management Model.

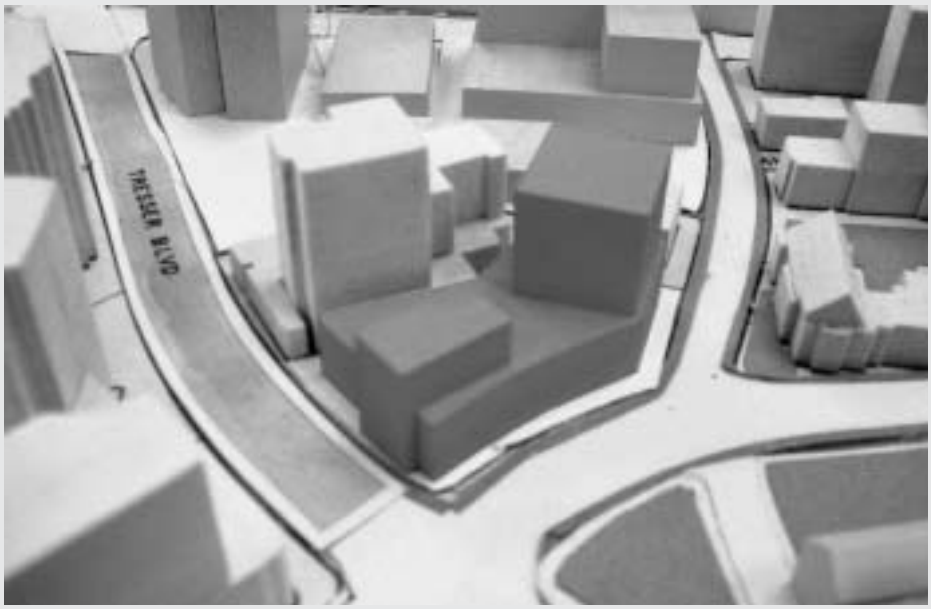
A. SITE AT CORNER OF WASHINGTON BOULEVARD AND WEST BROAD STREET

Open Space Connections: This is a strategic site, as it is the western anchor to the Broad Street commercial and residential corridor, and an essential part of one of the most important gateways into downtown Stamford. Open space considerations include adjacency to the Mill River Park and to the widened sidewalks and the "vest pocket park" associated with the UConn campus. Direct open space connections include the passageway into one of the most important large, irregular blocks, where linkages are made to a system of new passageways in the center of the block created by the Park Square West redevelopment project.

Massing Strategies: High massing should be at the corner creating a visual marker for this gateway. The massing should respond to view corridors as one approaches from the north on Washington Boulevard and as one approaches either from the east or west along Broad Street. The rest of the site should be at the intermediate scale of the Broad Street corridor.

Entry and Ground Level Access: Primary entry should be from Broad Street. Secondary access from Washington Boulevard. Pedestrian-oriented retail uses should be required along the Broad Street frontage. The Washington Boulevard frontage should also be pedestrian oriented because of its proximity to the park and the desire to treat this section of Washington Boulevard as a true boulevard for pedestrians as well as automobiles. Service should be from the block interior.

Uses and Growth Management Assumptions: Because of its location at the edge of the Pedestrian Core, this site can support a mixed-use development - residential as well as commercial uses. Retail uses are required along Broad Street.

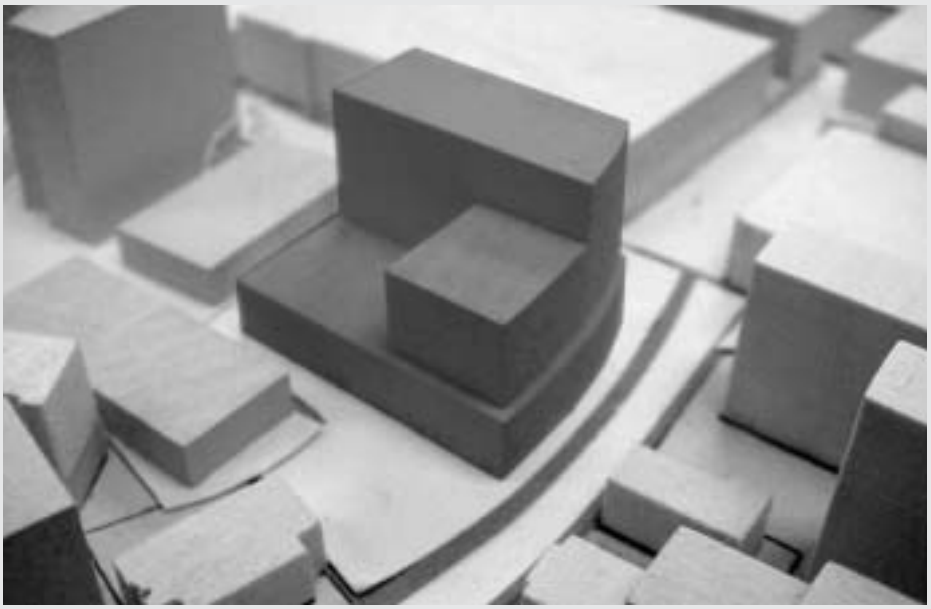


B. SITE AT CORNER OF GROVE, TRESSER AND EAST MAIN

Massing Strategies: The buildings on this site should create a well-defined edge to St. Johns Park as well as help contain the potential new open spaces on the east side of Elm/Grove. In order to respect the light and view issues around the residential towers, as well as the scale of the Church, an intermediate scale tower is placed on the East Main frontage. This also helps emphasize the beginning of the East Main corridor into the downtown Core, as well as a visual terminus to the Elm Street approach from the south-east. A change in massing also marks the corner of Tresser and Elm.

Entry and Ground Level Access: Primary and secondary entrances are on East Main and Tresser Boulevard. Pedestrian-friendly uses are required on the Elm Street and East Main frontages. Because this is a large, irregularly shaped block, access agreements should allow for service from the interior of the block.

Uses and Growth Management Assumptions: The immediate context has office uses, residential uses and several institutional uses in the nearby churches. It also has several open spaces existing (at Canterbury Green) or proposed as part of the redesign of this gateway. Thus the site could support residential, office, or mixed development. The site is accessible to transit, especially if the various pedestrian connections are made.



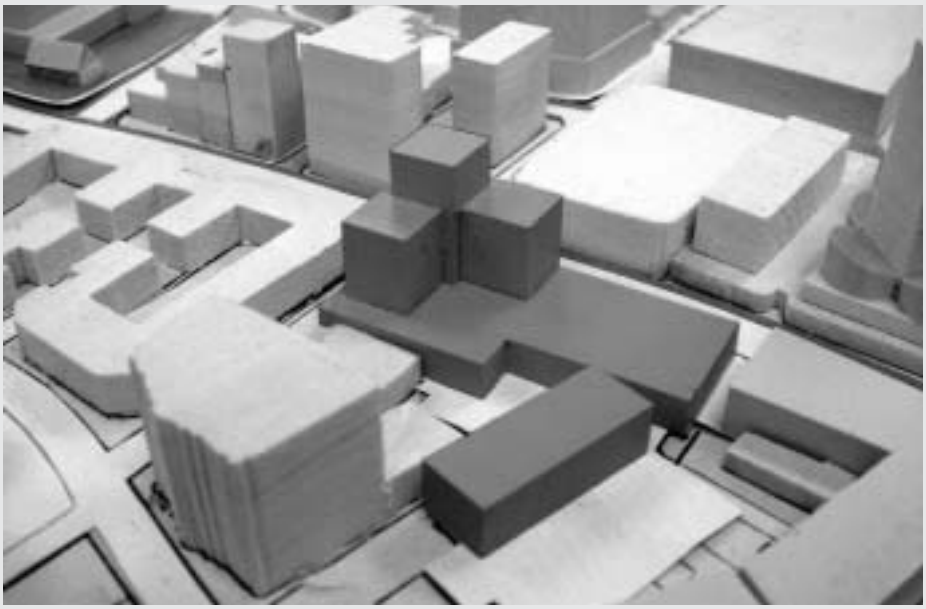
C. SITE AT CORNER OF EAST MAIN AND GREYROCK PLACE

Open Space Connections: The planning for this site should allow for a connection to the interior of the block to facilitate service to the several redevelopment opportunities, including the Tresser Boulevard site.

Massing Strategies: The new buildings should define the entrance to the Main Street connection through the Town Center Mall. This will be especially important if, as proposed in this study, the connection through the mall becomes a true arcade or other large public space. High massing should be closest to Greyrock Place and the mall. The massing steps down to the east in response to the scale of the buildings on East Main and the existing firehouse.

Entry and Ground Level Access: Primary access should be from East Main Street, with secondary access from Greyrock Place. Pedestrian-oriented uses should be required along the East Main frontage, and encouraged along Grove Street. Service should be from the interior of the block.

Uses and Growth Management Assumptions: There are both residential and office uses nearby. This site is accessible to transit, especially after Stamford Urban Transitway improvements, and can therefore fulfill the policy goal for concentrating housing or office development in the "Greater Downtown."



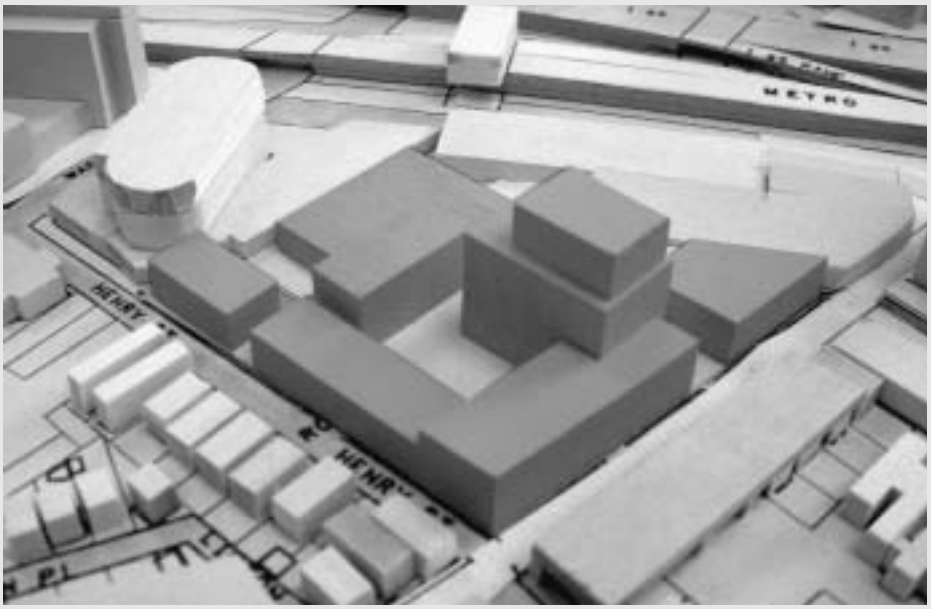
D. SITE AT CORNER OF GREYROCK PLACE AND BROAD STREET

Open Space Connections: The redevelopment of this block is an opportunity to re-organize the interior of one of the large irregular blocks. A new parking structure should be positioned to define a space in the center of the block that is part of a through-block connection between Forest Street and Broad Street. The Broad Street entrance to the block interior should be coordinated with the entrance to Landmark Square on the opposite side of the street. From the interior of the block it is also possible to access the backs of the stores on Bedford Street.

Massing Strategies: Higher massing should be at the corner of Greyrock Place and Broad to allow the massing to step down to the lower scale of the block frontages on Bedford Street. An intermediate height tower is appropriate.

Entry and Ground Level Access: Primary access to the tower portion of the development should be from Broad Street. Pedestrian oriented uses should be required on all Broad Street frontages. Service access should be from the interior of the block.

Uses and Growth Management Assumptions: This site, in the heart of the Pedestrian Core of the downtown, should be a mixed-use development.



E. SITE AT CORNER OF HENRY STREET AND ATLANTIC STREET

Open Space Connections: Redevelopment at this site should help reorganize the interior of this large, irregular block. Site planning should consider the possibility of a direct connection to the Transit Center from the north edge of the site.

Massing Strategies: The massing should create a transition from any higher structures to the low-rise scale of the surrounding neighborhood. Any tower massing should relate primarily to Atlantic Street, an important connecting corridor between the South End and the Pedestrian Core of the Downtown. Low-rise structures are appropriate along Henry Street. The frontage along Atlantic should be low-rise but somewhat higher scale than the single-family houses that line much of the corridor.

Entry and Ground Level Access: Primary access should be from Atlantic Street with secondary access from Henry Street. Pedestrian oriented uses should line the Atlantic Street frontage with residential scale windows and entrances along Henry Street. Service can be from the interior of the block.

Uses and Growth Management Assumptions: The context suggests residential uses, although office uses can be justified on the basis of access to the transit center, garages and the highway.

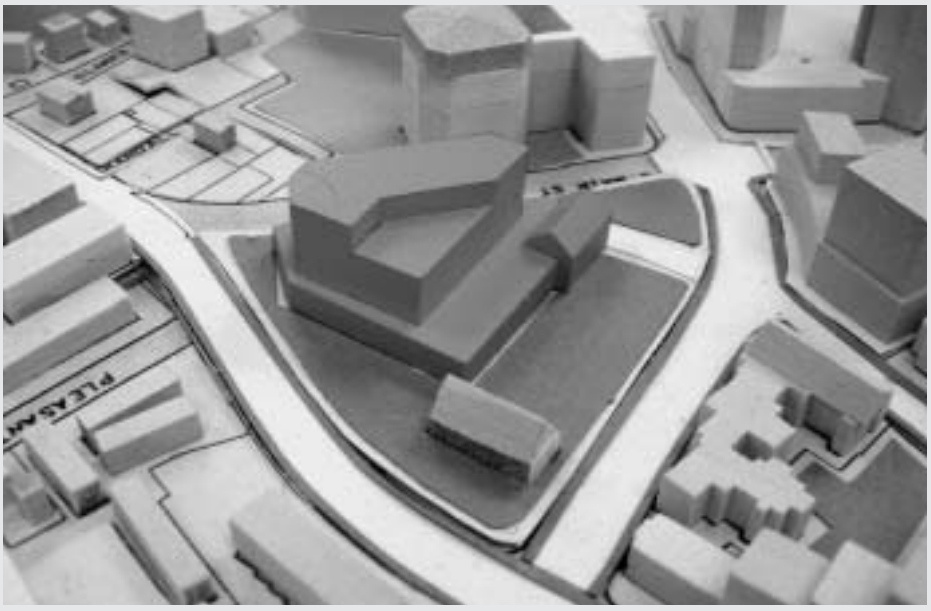
F. SITE AT WOODSIDE STREET AND FRANKLIN STREET

Open Space Connections: The configuration at this site should respond to the termination of Franklin Street. Woodside Street and Second Street are potential crossing points to the Mill River greenway.

Massing Strategies: The massing should accommodate the scales of the surrounding context: the intermediate scale of Bedford Street and Washington Boulevard and the low-rise scale of the single-family houses on Woodside Street. Higher massing is at the corner of Second Street and Bedford, creating a gateway to the intermediate scale of the rest of Bedford Street. The massing also responds to the termination of Franklin Street.

Entry and Ground Floor Access: Primary access is from Summer Street. Secondary access is from Woodside Street. While ground floor retail or business uses would not be required on Summer Street, being this far north of the Pedestrian Core, the facades on both Summer Street and Woodside Street should have a pedestrian scale.

Uses and Growth Management Assumptions: This site, like most of the infill sites between Hoyt Street and Second Street, favors residential uses and, in particular, can anchor the residential uses between Washington Boulevard and Bedford Street.



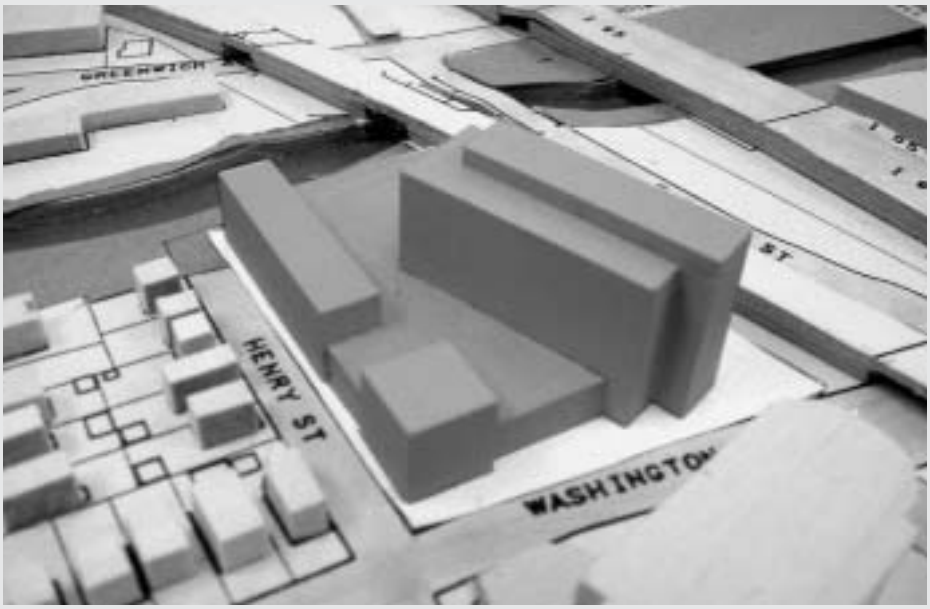
G. BLOCK BOUNDED BY EAST MAIN, BROAD STREET AND GROVE

Open Space Connections: This odd-shaped block bounded by East Main Street, Broad Street and Grove Street is one of the most important gateways into Stamford. While the existing building is generally in the right place, the long term re-design of this gateway should re-establish East Main Street as a connection to the Pedestrian Core of downtown; create views and an open space link to Broad Street and the Pedestrian Core. This would mean reconfiguring the service areas along Broad Street and opening up space around the church, creating open space along Grove Street that provides an appropriate setting for St. Johns Church. This open space is part of a larger system that includes the public plaza at Canterbury Green, St. Johns Park and monument, and even the grand stair up to the plaza at the General RE Building.

Massing Strategies: Larger scale massing is oriented towards East Main and signals the beginning of the larger scale of Tresser Boulevard. The building must also signal the beginning for the Broad Street corridor, so the corner of the building must also be oriented to the north. The building should step down to the scale of the churches and monument along Elm Street/Grove Street.

Entry and Ground Level Access: Primary access should be from East Main/Tresser. However, the low-rise portions of the development should be transparent and active, facing the new open spaces along Broad Street and Elm/Grove. Service will probably continue to be from Broad Street, but must be internal to the building.

Uses and Growth Management Assumptions: Continuation of the hotel use is appropriate if the open space improvements materialize as described. Some residential development is also possible.



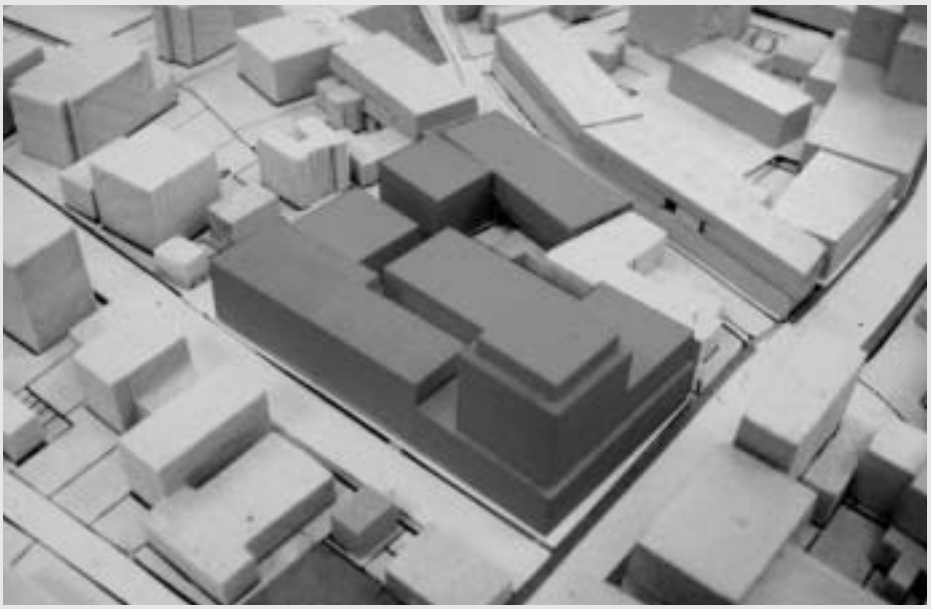
H. SITE AT CORNER OF HENRY STREET AND WASHINGTON BOULEVARD

Open Space Connections: The site planning on this block should anticipate pedestrian connections to the Mill River, either along Henry Street or as an extension of the station plaza drive along the north side of the site.

Massing Strategies: The illustrated massing supports two agendas. 1) The creation of a gateway between the South End and Downtown. 2) Placement of the high massing on the north side of the site proximate to the highway, minimizing shadow effects on the neighborhood.

Entry and Ground Level Access: Primary access should be from Washington Boulevard. Service should be from the interior of the site accessible from an east-west connection just south of the highway. Transparency is required on the ground floors facing Washington Boulevard and Henry Street.

Use and Growth Management Assumption: The scale of the site and its proximity to the transit center and the highway, suggests that the site should be reserved as one of the few remaining sites for large-scale office development. However, a mixed-use program could include pedestrian-friendly retail and business uses along Washington Boulevard and Henry Street and perhaps contextual residential uses along Henry Street.



I. SITE AT CORNER OF BEDFORD STREET AND BROAD STREET

Open Space Connections: There are no special requirements for this site. However if there is a connection to the interior of the block, it can respond to the pedestrian connection that leads to the small park opposite U.Conn on Franklin Street.

Massing Strategies: The building should reinforce the intermediate scale of the Broad Street corridor and reinforce the importance of the intersection with Summer Street. In this study, this is accomplished by siting the tower at that corner which steps down to an intermediate scale base along Broad Street. The building steps down again along Summer Street to provide a transition to the somewhat lower scale of the Core north of Broad Street.

Entry and Ground Level Access: Primary entrance and orientation is to Broad Street, with secondary entrances along Summer Street. Ground floor retail and pedestrian-oriented businesses are along Broad Street and Summer Street.

Uses and Growth Management Assumptions: Because this site is at the heart of the Pedestrian Core, this should be a mixed-use development.

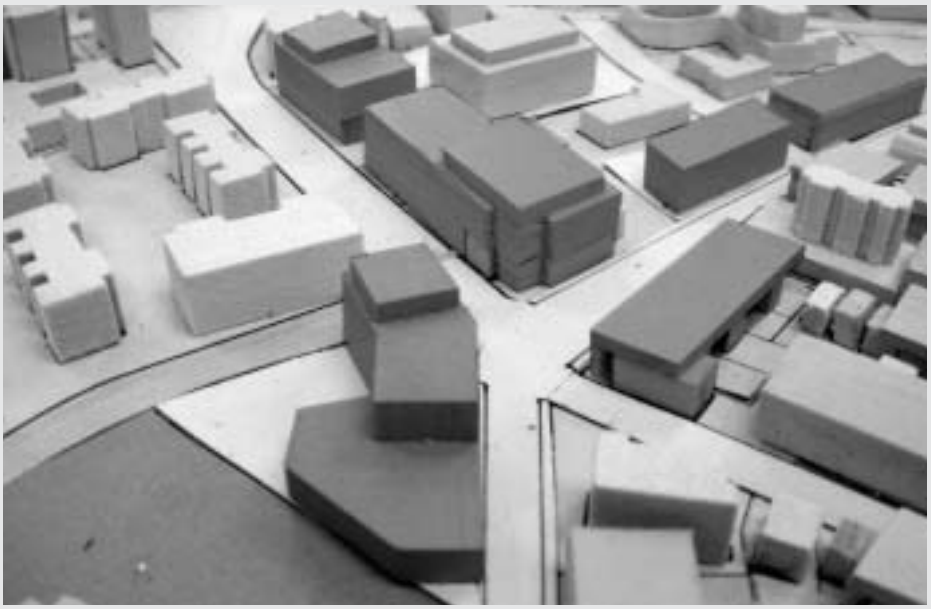
J. SITE ON TRESSER BOULEVARD ADJACENT TO ST. JOHN'S TOWER

Open Space Connections: The development at this site will be at the heart of a "super block." The development should provide for a pedestrian connection between Bell Street, the Bell Street garage and Tresser Boulevard. An open space, midway in this block, would facilitate pedestrian connections.

Massing Strategies: A tower on this site should be located to the east in order to encroach as little as possible on the Saint John's residential tower. The orientation of any tower on the site should maximize the amount of light that reaches the open spaces in the middle of the block. (Link bonuses to other things) A low-rise or mid-rise base should mediate between the tower and the scale of the adjacent buildings (the Rich Forum, the Church, and the St. John's deck).

Entry and Ground Level Access: Primary access should be from Tresser Boulevard, secondary access from Bell Street. Service should be from Bell Street, clearly demised and screened from pedestrian connections in the middle of the block. Transparency is required on ground floor, facing Tresser Boulevard.

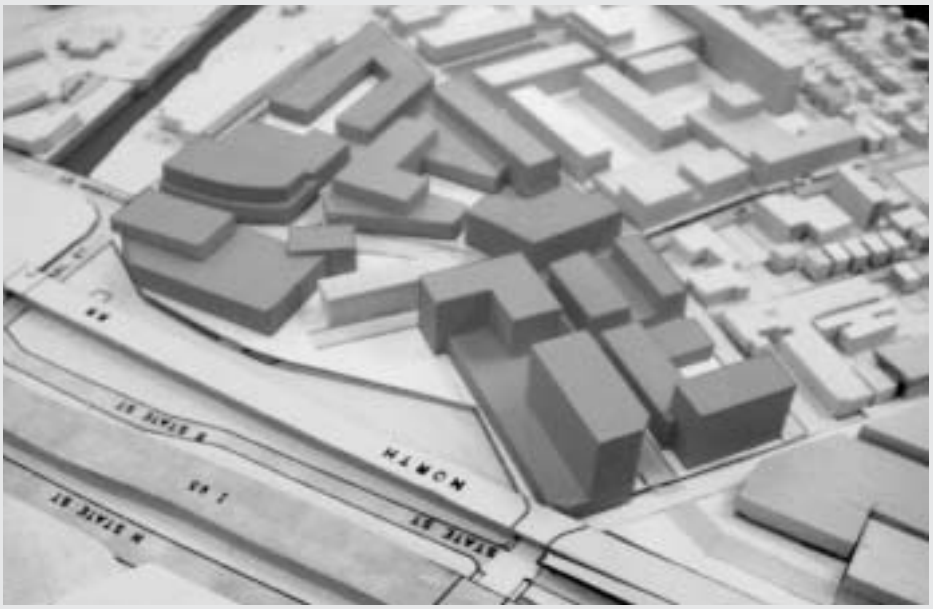
Uses and Growth Management Assumptions: The scale of the site, its proximity to the Transportation Center and the character of Tresser Boulevard suggests that this site should be reserved as one of the few remaining sites for large-scale office development. Residential development or mixed-use residential and office development can be justified on the site, given proximity to the St. John's Towers and the overall Master Plan goal of putting new housing in downtown.



K. THE HOYT / BEDFORD INERSECTION

This is one of the important gateways along the edge of the Pedestrian Core. At the moment, the north side of the intersection is one-story retail with surface parking. The police station is located on the south side of Hoyt Street, a one-story building surrounded by surface parking. The massing described here suggests intermediate scale buildings, comparable to the mid-rise housing on the north side of Hoyt Street. This is also in keeping with the scale of the nearby Courthouse. The massing of the buildings should articulate the corners of the intersection.

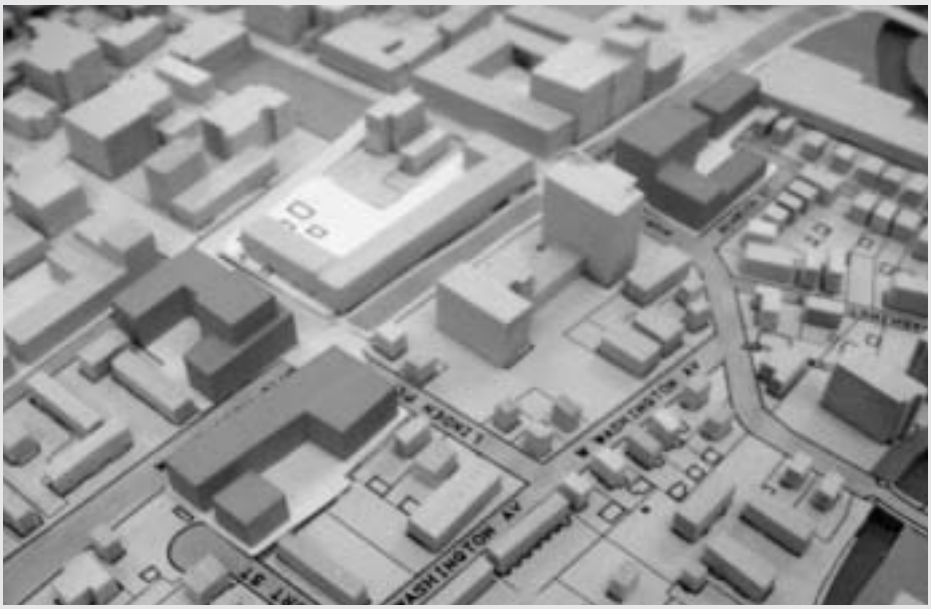
In terms of use, both sites can support mixed –use development. The south east corner could contain government-related offices, providing a new site for the police station and supporting the courthouse. The north side could be residential, as it is proximate to the church and the largely residential area between Bedford and Summer Streets.



L. THE STAMFORD URBAN TRANSITWAY

Over time, the Stamford Urban Transitway will sponsor the redevelopment of adjacent properties. The overall scale of development should be comparable to the intermediate, mid-rise scale of the Collar office areas, such as Summer Street. In addition, massing should be guided by the following considerations.

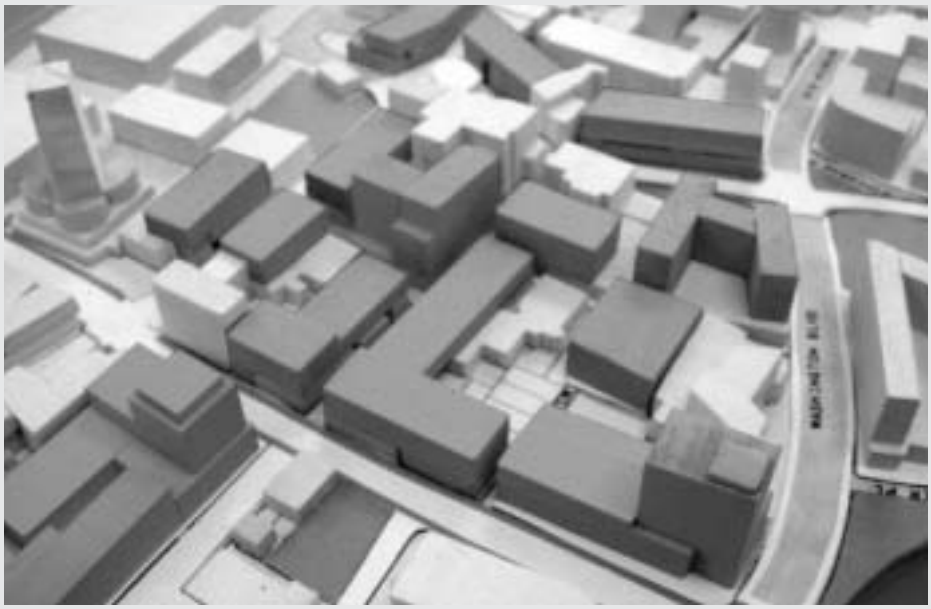
- Create a gateway to the corridor at the Canal Street intersection.
- Create a gateway to the Atlantic Street intersection that relates both to the transit center and the approach to the railroad and highway underpasses. Higher massing at this corner will also be visible as one approaches the downtown along Atlantic Street.
- Maintain a continuous street wall along both sides of the Transitway with parking behind or within buildings.
- Provide a transition from the intermediate scale of the corridor to the low-rise scale of the South End neighborhoods.



M. WASHINGTON BOULEVARD CORRIDOR

The scale of Washington Boulevard suggests that it can support intermediate scale residential development, comparable to the recently completed Avalon Corners project at Hoyt Street.

- Because this is within the "Collar," the transition to the adjacent low-rise neighborhood is essential. (The existing MX-D development on Washington Boulevard at North Street and Linden Place is an example of a building that is out of scale and does not make a transition to the neighborhood context.)
- Primary orientation should be towards Washington Boulevard
- Massing should acknowledge the importance of the corners of intersections
- Parking and service should be screened from adjacent properties.



N. THE PEDESTRIAN CORE

The bulk and massing strategies in the Pedestrian Core are meant to create a uniformly horizontal and compact urban environment. There is a premium on continuity of street wall, pedestrian-oriented ground floor activity and sensitivity to scale of adjacent buildings, including massing transition to lower structures. "Zero lot line" infill development on small sites will require creative strategies for off-site parking. On larger sites, parking must be interior to the development.

The scale of massing should reinforce the identity of Broad Street as the most important east-west road in the Core and Summer Street as an important north-south corridor that organizes the portion of the Core between Broad Street and Hoyt Street.

A NOTE ABOUT THE DOWNTOWN AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT

The vision presented here of a vibrant Downtown depends on directing significant amounts of future development to the downtown Stamford. For example, even if only one or two of the pending proposals are built, most of the projected office growth in the Low Growth scenario will be absorbed.

If the redevelopment projects such as the Mill River Park and Stamford Urban Transitway are built, as well as the rest of the sites for which there are pending proposals, this would account for most of the growth in the Trend Growth scenario.

The completion of the other “soft sites” in Downtown, in combination with the contextual infill on smaller sites, is only possible if most of the growth forecast in the High Growth scenario is directed to Downtown.

For a more detailed discussion, see the Economic Development report as well as the Transit and Traffic Reports.

Analysis of existing Master Plan and Zoning Categories

CBD BIG IDEAS as stated in the 1984 Master Plan Addendum:	• most intensive • full range of uses • highest density residential • historic conservation & preservation	• "humane environment" for pedestrians • unified entity" for pedestrians • variety of building scales and styles	• site for most of future business growth to protect other areas • mixed use development planned • not a max build out	• complete S.E. Quadrant & link to Transportation Center • housing over stores (Atlantic)

MP CATEGORIES (exist'g)	ZONING (existing)	CRITIQUE	RECOMMENDATION
8-D: commercial, CBD • see "big ideas" above **7: commercial: intermediate business** • intensive business development adjoining CBD or major arterials • in scale with abutting neighborhoods • multi-family high density residential development: 69-90 du /acre **11-D: planned mixed-use (floating-mapped)** • urban, 24-hr, mix of uses, ground floor retail **historic/conservation area**	**CCN:** • FAR 2 to 3.5 with bonuses • height 270 to 330 feet • 100% coverage in CBD • bonuses: see below **CCS:** • FAR 2 to 2.5 with bonuses • height 210 feet • bonuses: see below **CG:** • FAR 1.8 to 2.2 (w/ amenity) • height 150 feet • bonus for elderly/non-profit, for residential multi-family development and mixed-use development in CBD • bonuses: see below Note: all of these districts are eligible for the following bonuses: daycare, public plaza, lower coverage at upper floors, arcades, direct garage access, short walking distance, community room, Mill River development, transportation center connection, through-block connection, historic preservation, shared parking, ground floor retail (except in CCS)	**1.** No distinction between highway scale office development at I-95 & Tresser and scale of pedestrian core **2.** Zoning allows unreasonable changes in scale both within the zones and opposite zones adjacent to CBD **3.** CBD is not yet a "unified entity" for pedestrians **4.** Amenity bonuses for: arcades, thru-block connection, public plazas & walking distance are not targeted **5.** No special protection for "historic/conservation" area **6.** CBD area adjacent to south side of the tracks & highway has not materialized	**1.** Re-map "downtown" and "CBD" **2.** Mandate height limits in some areas and setback/massing transitions in others **3.** Map a "pedestrian core" that becomes the target area for streetscape, landscape, façade, traffic calming and other initiatives as well as for the urban design amenity bonuses. Reinforce system of radial corridors that connect the pedestrian core to the adjacent neighborhoods. **4.** As with ground floor retail, tie urban design bonuses to a comprehensive pedestrian design that reflects current realities and "two centers of gravity". Eliminate plaza bonus and target retail bonus within a compact pedestrian Core. **5.** Identify buildings to be preserved and establish maximum heights & setback requirements. **6.** Rezone area along future Urban Transitway for intermediate scale development with special attention paid to scale transition with existing neighborhood.

Analysis of existing Master Plan and Zoning Categories

COLLAR AREA BIG IDEAS as stated in the 1984 Master Plan Addendum:	• highest density residential development • medium density residential development from First to Sixth streets, high density from First Street to CBD/Broad Street • PD possible in some areas • downtown development at south side of tracks to preclude intensive commercial development in South End

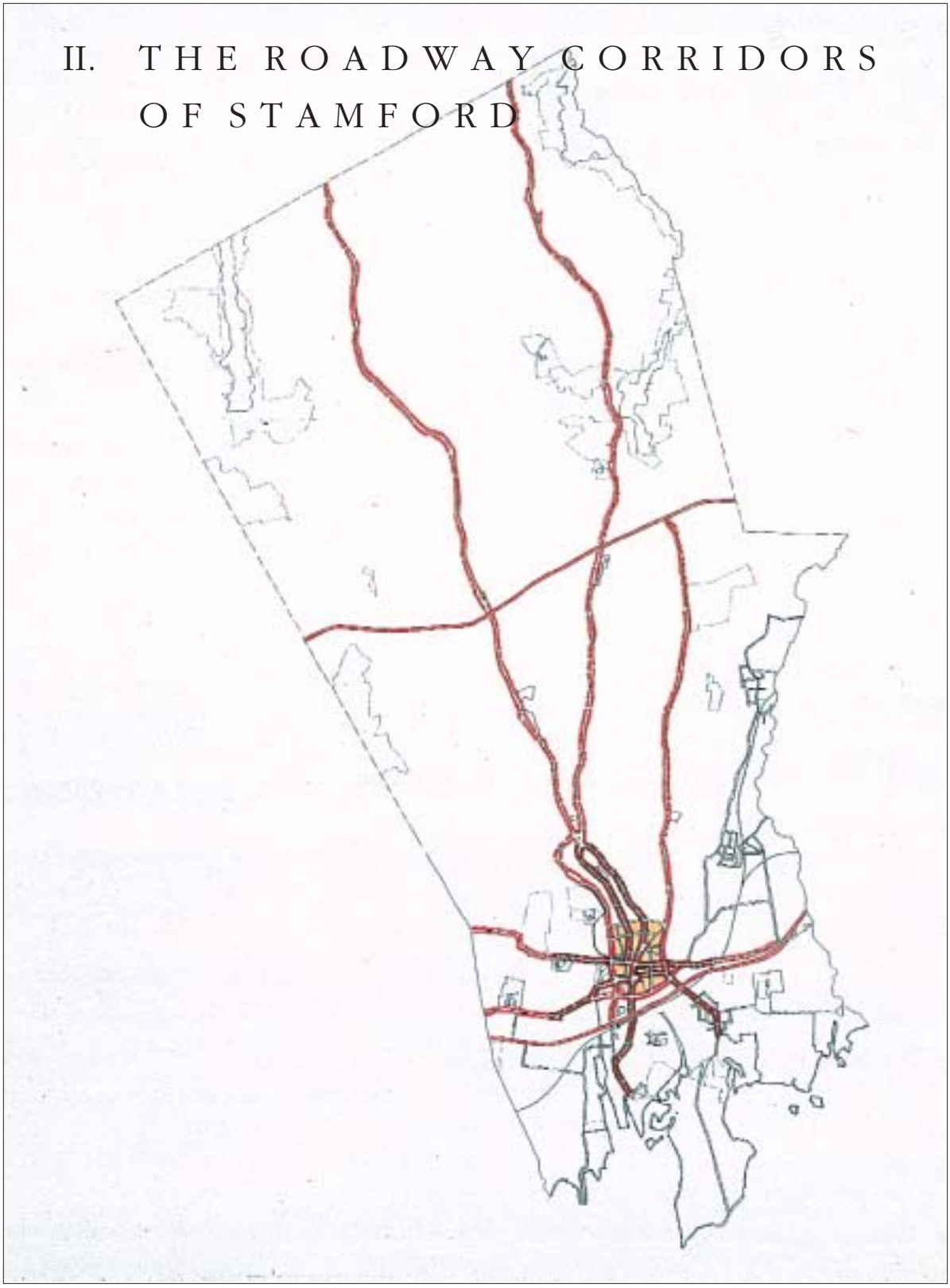
MP CATEGORIES (existing)	ZONING (existing)	CRITIQUE	RECOMMENDATION
7: commercial: intermediate business • intensive business-oriented development adjoining CBD or major arterials • in scale with adjacent neighborhoods • multi-family high density residential development: 60 du /acre **5: residential: multi-family, high density** • promote and protect high density multi-family development convenient to shopping, mass transit and recreation • 60 du /acre • higher density (108 du/acre) planned residential development contiguous **4/6: residential: multi-family, medium density** • transition areas to low density • mixture of apartments, attached or detached residences in mid-rise structures • 29 du /acre • local "centers" compatible with adjacent multi-family and single family neighborhoods (Category 6)	**CL: limited business district** • FAR: 1 • height: 45 feet • height: 75 ft with ground floor amenity bonus in Downtown • bonuses: daycare, public plaza, lower coverage at upper floors, garage connection, community room, mill river greenbelt, historic preservation, shared parking **RMF: multi-family residential** • high middle density in low-rise buildings • apartments and attached & detached dwellings • 40 ft height limit **RH: multi-family design district, high density** • high density high rise dwellings • height: 40 ft for sites less than an acre • height: 125 ft for sites more than an acre • 35% coverage **R5: multi-family medium density** • 30 to 40 ft height • 30% coverage **PD: planned development district** • primarily housing • retail & office possible • apartment house or hotel • contribute to affordable housing • integrated, contextual design • 88 du /acre • height: 110 to 170 feet • within half-mile radius of Atlantic and Main intersection **MX-D:** • primarily housing • apartment house or hotel • retail & office possible • integrated, contextual design • contiguous with CBD • FAR: 2 to 3 (2 acres or more) • height: 90 to 150 feet (2 acres or more)	**1.** The original mapping of Category 5 did not respect the boundaries of "downtown" and the RH developments north and east of downtown have compromised the identity of downtown **2.** The residential densities suggested for downtown have not been achieved **3.** The existing zoning permits unreasonable contrasts in scale, especially at edges of RH zones and the floating zones PD and MX-D **4.** CL zoning over the Category 6 Master Plan has resulted in downtown-scale buildings on sites intended for neighborhood-scale commercial development **5.** The existing office buildings along Summer Street cannot be replaced under the revised zoning, yet the scale of the existing structures is appropriate for this corridor.	**1.** Jointly review regulations in the CI, CL and CG zones to rationalize FAR and other requirements to promote intermediate–scale infill development. **2.** Re-calibrate height, coverage and density requirements to promote higher density development. Promote wider mapping of RH within the core of the downtown with appropriate height and set-back guidelines **3.** Mandate height and set-back transitions between developments, subject to design review **4.** Down-zone commercial structures in Category 6 to create intermediate-scale structures with massing transitions to abutting neighborhoods **5.** Map mid-rise, high density residential uses as well as small office buildings along the corridor.

Analysis of existing Master Plan and Zoning Categories

BEDFORD-SUMMER STREET BIG IDEAS: as stated in the 1984 Master Plan Addendum:	• neighborhood scale retail & services • place for medium density multi-family housing

MP CATEGORIES (existing)	ZONING (existing)	CRITIQUE	RECOMMENDATION
4: multi-family, medium density • transition from lower to medium density use • mix of apts, attached or detached residential mid-rise • 29 du /acre **4/6: commercial: neighborhood or local business** • local "centers" compatible with adjacent multi-family/ single family • residential density per Category 4	**RMF: multi-family residential** • high middle density in low rise buildings • apartments & dwellings • 40 foot height limit **CL: limited business** • FAR: 1 • height: 45 feet • height: 75 feet with ground floor amenity • bonuses: daycare, public plaza, lower coverage at upper floors, garage connection, community room, mill river greenbelt, historic preservation, shared parking **CSCD: existing large shopping centers** • to remake existing large shopping centers • compatible/integrate with adjacent neighborhoods **CB: community business** • FAR .5 • retail & services for several neighborhoods • 4 stories/50 ft	**1.** Has not achieved overall residential densities suggested by '84 Master Plan **2.** Awkward scale contrasts between small office buildings and single family dwelling units **3.** There are poorly designed multi-family developments and small office developments that conflict with the context. **4.** Office & hotel developments at Bulls Head are inconsistent with master plan Category 6 **5.** The existing office buildings along summer street cannot be replaced under the revised zoning, yet the scale of the existing structures is appropriate for this corridor.	**1.** Promote multifamily densities with aggressive design controls to manage transitions in scale. Restrict commercial development in this corridor. **2.** Mandate height and set-back transitions between developments, subject to design review **3.** Mandate design guidelines for infill development **4.** Downzone commercial structures in Category 6 to create intermediate-scale structures with massing transitions to abutting neighborhoods. Rationalize and coordinate CI, CL and CG zones to promote intermediate scale development. **5.** Map mid-rise, high density residential uses as well as small office buildings along the corridor. **6.** Reexamine limits of ground floor retail bonus on Summer Street

II. THE ROADWAY CORRIDORS OF STAMFORD



THE ROADWAY CORRIDORS OF STAMFORD

In Stamford, there are roads that help create the identity for each of the neighborhoods: Hope Street for Glenbrook and Springdale, Cove Road for the East Side, Stillwater Road for Westover.

This road network is made up of corridors of different kinds: the most important are the original "radial corridors" (Figure 2.02) that historically have extended from the pedestrian core of the downtown into the adjacent neighborhoods. These include Elm Street, East and West Main Streets, Broad Street, Atlantic Street and the Bedford Street/Summer Street pair.

There are also "edge corridors" (Figure 2.03) that define the edges of the downtown. They include Tresser Boulevard to the south and Washington Boulevard to the west. These function not so much as neighborhood streets as through-connectors, primarily to I-95.

Finally, there are the High Ridge and Long Ridge Road corridors that organize the neighborhoods between Bulls Head and the Merritt Parkway. These are the subject of their own design discussion below. Because these "neighborhood thoroughfares" are the gateways into many neighborhoods and connect the neighborhoods to the rest of the city, the design of these roads both from an aesthetic perspective and from a pedestrian and bicycle perspective is important.

2.01 The Swan Plan described the organization of Stamford around several important corridors radiating from downtown.

2.02 Radial corridors

2.03 Edge corridors

Several radial corridors link the neighborhoods adjacent to downtown with the Pedestrian Core (fig. 2.02). Two "edge corridors," Tresser Boulevard and Washington Boulevard, define the southern and western limits of the downtown core and are through-connectors to I-95 (fig. 2.03).

THE DOWNTOWN RADIAL CORRIDORS

Historically, a series of corridors radiated from the center of the city. These roads connect the surrounding neighborhoods to the Pedestrian Core of the downtown–that portion of downtown centered on Columbus Park/Main Street and the intersection of Atlantic and Broad Streets. These roads are distinct from the two major "edge corridors"–Washington Boulevard and Tresser Boulevard–which skirt the core of the Downtown and act as bypass routes for automobiles.

Over the years, the particular and special identity of these radial roads as neighborhood connectors has been overwhelmed by the automobile. One of the most important urban design initiatives is to restore the importance and special identity of these roads. Each of the corridors, even those that extend to the city limits and beyond, have shorter, discrete segments anchored by some landmark of Stamford's geography. These should be prioritized for a variety of design improvements that gives each a unified and characteristic identity. These roads also play an important role in the larger Greenway network described in Chapter Five. The priority radial corridors are described in the following section.

2.04

THE DOWNTOWN RADIAL CORRIDORS

Five corridors play an especially strategic role in linking surrounding neighborhoods to the Core, each with an identifiable neighborhood landmark or point of origin:

- **West Broad** from the Hospital to the University of Connecticut campus
- **West Main** from Jackie Robinson Park to the Mill River
- **Atlantic Street/Dyke Lane** from Kozsciusco Park to Tresser Boulevard
- **Elm Street** from the Shippan neighborhood center to the monument in St. Johns Park
- **East Main** from the railroad trestle to Tresser Boulevard

Several key gateways and the Main Street connection through the Mall are targets for improvement.

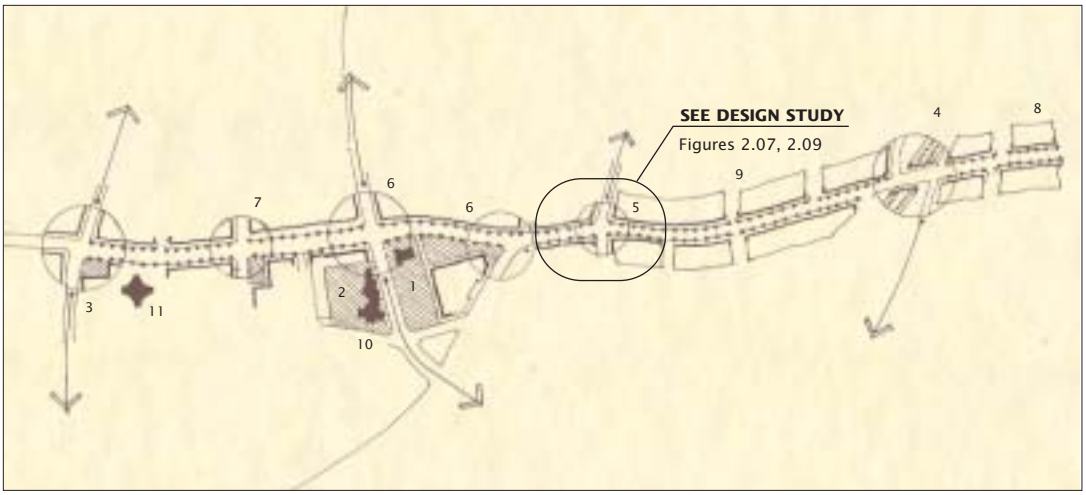
2.05 East Main Street aerial perspective view from the railroad trestle to a re-designed eastern gateway to the core.

EAST MAIN STREET

East Main Street, from the railroad trestle underpass to the downtown eastern gateway at the Tresser Boulevard, Broad Street, and East Main intersections, is a main entrance to downtown and connects to the Hope Street and Glenbrook Road neighborhoods. (Darker colored buildings are redeveloopment concepts.)

EAST MAIN STREET CORRIDOR INTERVENTIONS

Planning Framework Diagram



2.06

Open Space Linkages
Integrate the landscape design strategies for the corridor with the open spaces along it.

1. Reconfigured park spaces on the Broad / Grove / Tresser Block.
2. Public open space at the St. Johns Church and Canterbury Green.
3. Public plaza at the southeast corner of Atlantic and Landmark Plaza.

Gateways and Strategic Intersections
Employ a variety of "place-making" interventions that include a unified and consolidated treatment for utilities and signage, traffic calming/ pedestrian improvements, and other interventions to articulate the connections that can be made to other destinations in Stamford.

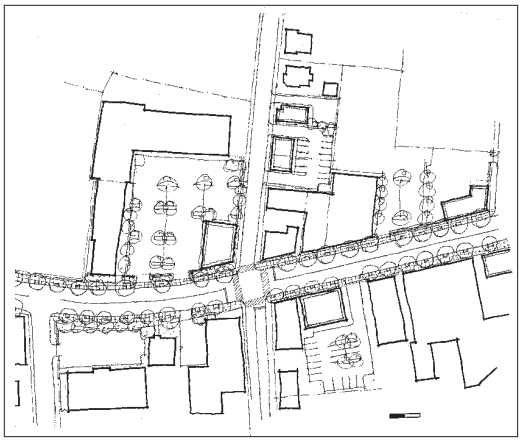
4. I-95/ railroad underpasses: improve lighting, security, appearance, and pedestrian crossings at ramps
5. Glenbrook Road: connect to one of the important north-south arteries.
6. Tresser and Broad/Grove and Elm: re-design an eastern gateway to provide orientation to both the Tresser Boulevard Corridor and Broad Street Core sections of downtown.
7. Atlantic Street: articulate the importance of this significant "cross-roads" of the Pedestrian Core.

Redevelopment Opportunities
Promote contextual development that is oriented towards the corridor and provides transition in scale to adjacent neighborhoods.

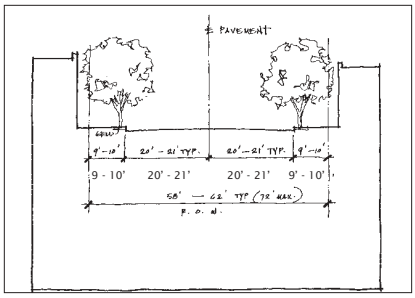
8. New mixed-use commercial redevelopment east of the trestle.
9. New commercial development between the trestle and the Glenbrook Road intersection (see discussion of business corridors in Chapter 3).

Significant Building Locations
Create visual and physical connections to important buildings that can reinforce the identity of the corridor and provide additional orientation.

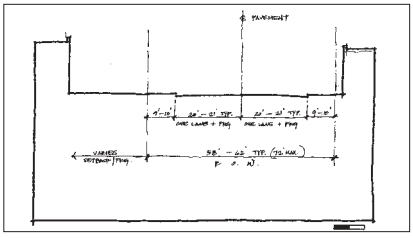
10. The St. Johns and Faith Tabernacle Churches
11. Landmark Tower



2.07 East Main Street proposed plan



2.09 East Main Street proposed section



2.10 East Main Street existing section

2.08 East Main Street existing plan

2.11 Aerial photograph of East Main Street at the intersection of Glenbrook Road.

East Main Street Proposed Conditions

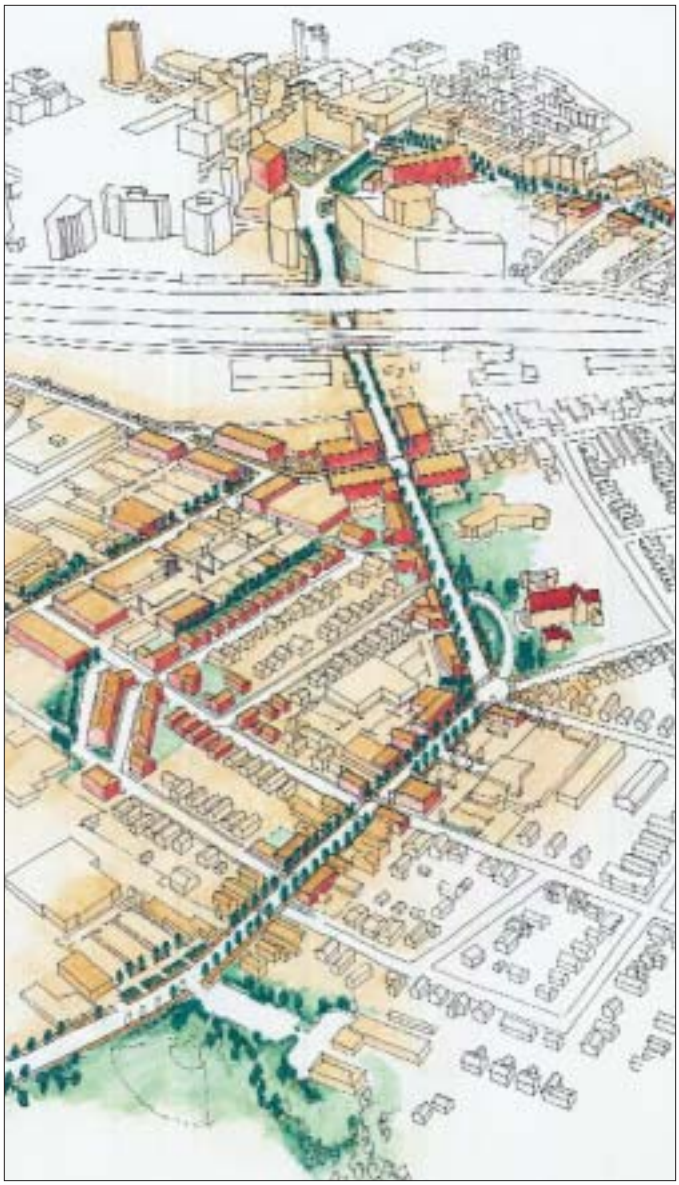
- Consistent pavement width: two travel lanes during rush-hour periods/ one travel lane and parking during day
- Street trees in grates with sidewalks
- Parking lots in-filled with new development and/or screened from view by walls, hedges and other landscape
- New parking areas to be behind buildings
- Landscaped parking lots with landscape separating parcels

East Main Street Existing Conditions

- Auto-oriented uses, non-pedestrian environment
- Surface parking and under-utilized property
- No articulation of important connection to Glenbrook Road
- Unattractive streetscape
- No clear relationship of buildings to the street

ELM STREET

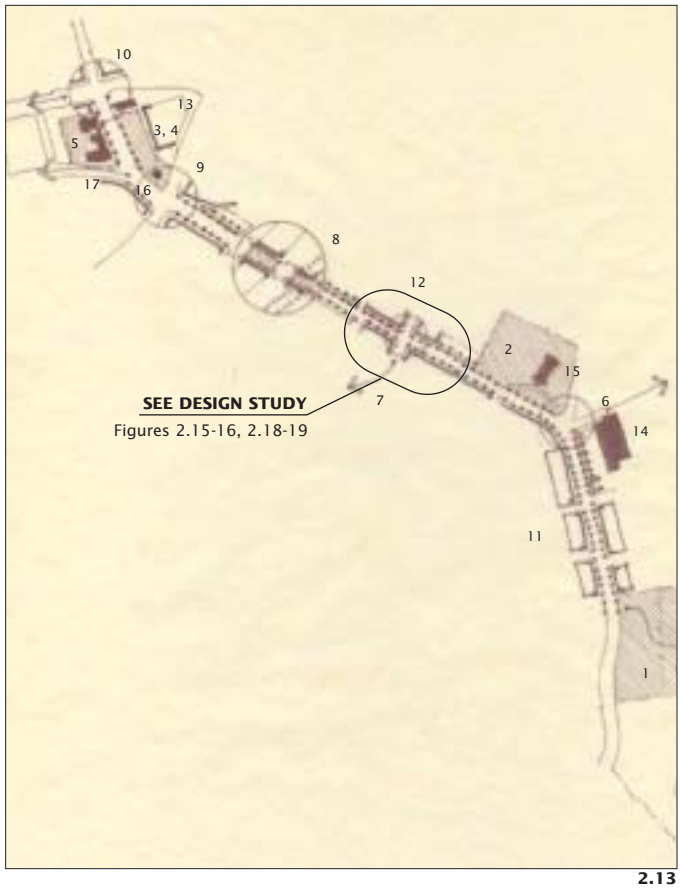
Elm Street links Cummings Park and the Shippan Avenue neighborhood shopping area to the downtown eastern gateway at the Tresser Boulevard, Broad Street, and East Main intersections. (Darker colored buildings are redevelopment concepts.)



2.12 Elm Street aerial perspective showing a revitalized Shippan Avenue "main street," rationalized industrial and residential areas, and the link to the Downtown eastern gateway.

ELM STREET CORRIDOR INTERVENTIONS

Planning Framework Diagram



2.13

Open Space Linkages
Integrate the landscape design strategies for the corridor with the open spaces along it.

1. Cummings Park.
2. Private open space around the St. Mary's Church.
3. Reconfigured open spaces on the east side of Grove between Tresser Boulevard and Broad Street.
4. St. Johns Park.
5. Plaza around the St. Johns Church at Canterbury Green.

Gateways and Strategic Intersections
Employ a variety of "place-making" interventions that include a unified and consolidated treatment for utilities and signage, traffic calming/pedestrian improvements, and other interventions to articulate the connections that can be made to other destinations in Stamford.

6. Cove Road: connection to the significant east-west corridor leading to Cove Island Park. Articulate the beginning of the Shippan Neighborhood center.
7. Jefferson Street: connect to the Stamford Urban Transitway.
8. I-95/ railroad underpasses: improve lighting, security, appearance, and pedestrian crossings at ramps.
9. Tresser Boulevard / E. Main: connect to a re-designed eastern gateway to the downtown (see design studies).
10. Broad street: articulate the beginning of the Broad Street corridor.

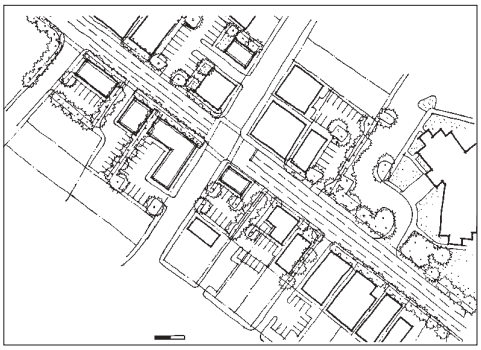
Redevelopment Opportunities
Promote contextual development that is oriented towards the corridor and provides transition in scale to adjacent neighborhoods.

11. Neighborhood scale development along Shippan Avenue "main street" shopping area.
12. Commercial development at the intersection of Jefferson and Elm.
13. New development at the gateway to the Tresser Boulevard corridor (see design studies for a new eastern gateway).

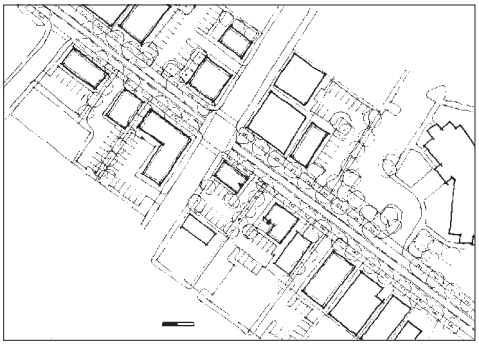
Significant Building Locations
Create visual and physical gateways to important buildings that can reinforce the identity of the corridor and provide additional orientation.

14. The Grade A Shoprite supermarket.
15. St. Mary's Church.
16. Monument in St. Johns Park.
17. St. Johns and Faith Tabernacle Baptist Churches.

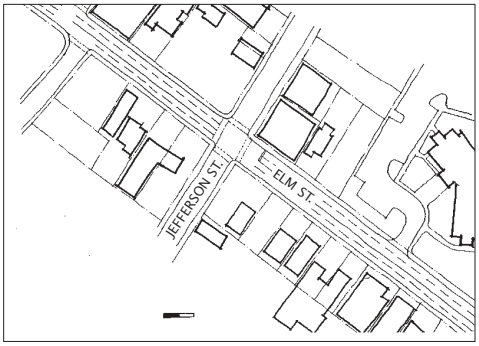
2.14 The Elm Street view corridor to downtown



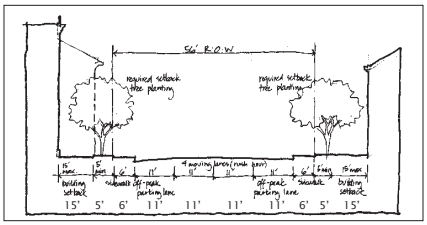
2.15 Elm Street proposed plan



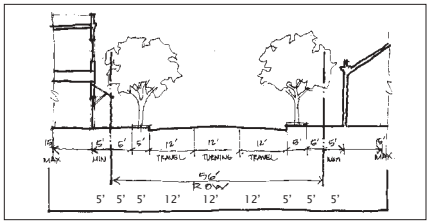
2.16 Elm Street proposed plan (alternative)



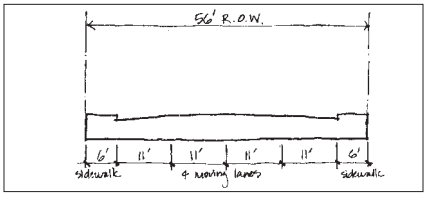
2.17 Elm Street existing conditions



2.04d Elm Street proposed section



2.18 Elm Street proposed section (alternative)



2.19 Elm Street existing section

2.21 Elm Street aerial photograph at the intersection of Jefferson Street

Elm Street Proposed Conditions

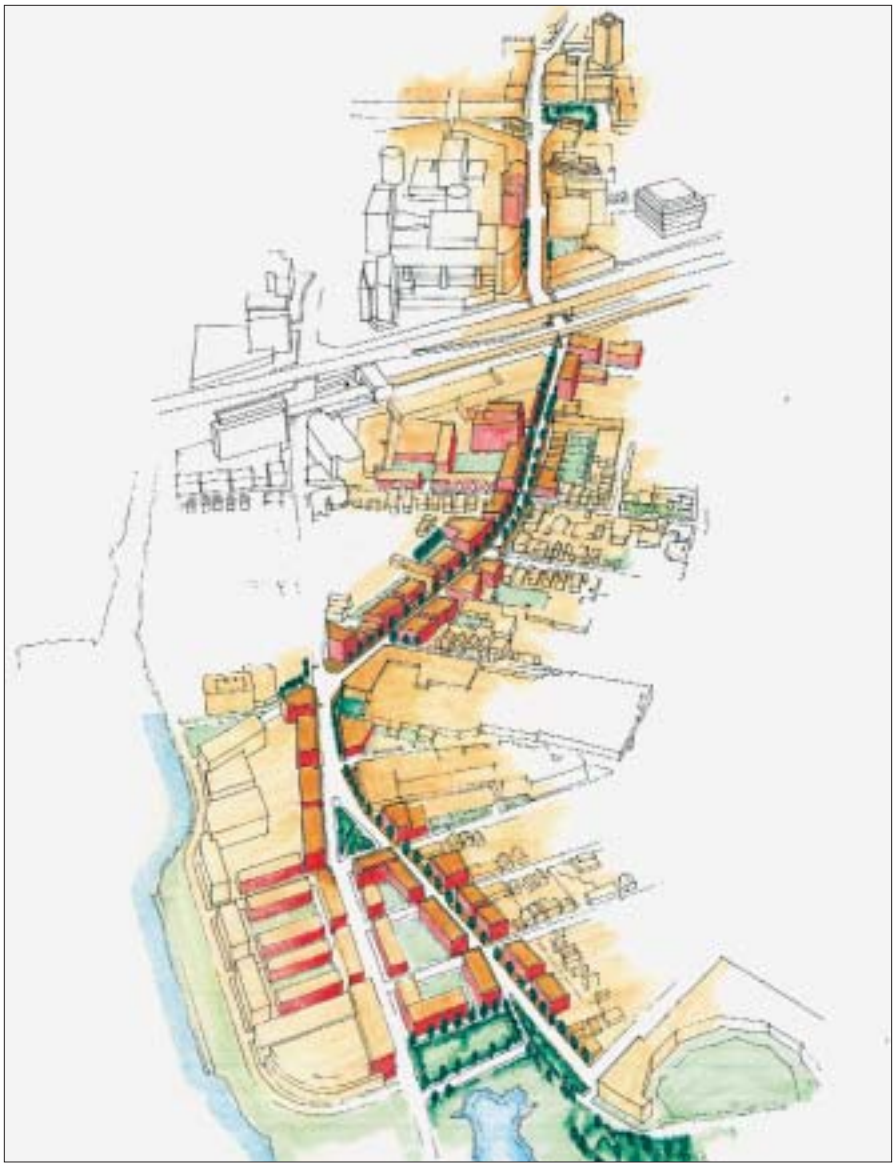
- Consistent width travel lanes
- 4 moving lanes during rush-hour times
- 2 moving lanes & 2 parking lanes during off-peak times
- Existing 56' right of way, precludes landscape opportunities within the section. Mandate tree planting within a required setback zone outside of right of way.
- Require new development to orient toward street with parking behind. New development is setback a minimum of 5' and a maximum of 15' from the existing right of way.

Elm Street Existing Conditions

- Unattractive signage
- Poorly articulated street crossings
- Poor pedestrian environment
- No clear relationship of buildings to the street

ATLANTIC STREET/ DYKE LANE

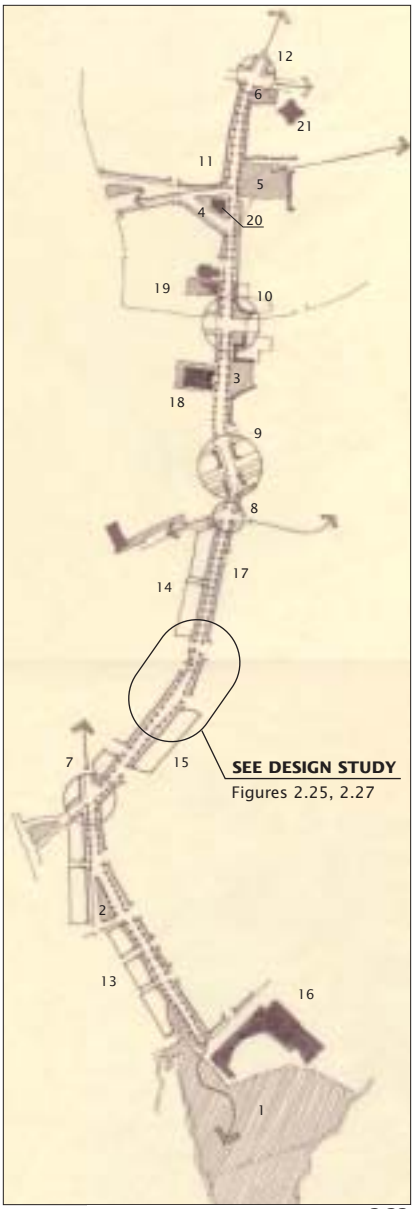
Atlantic Street/Dyke Lane, from Kosciuszko Park to West Main, links waterfront developments and revitalized southend neighborhoods to downtown. (Darker colored buildings are redevlopment concepts.)



2.22 Atlantic Street/Dyke Lane aerial perspective view showing connections between new waterfront development and the existing streets as well as contextual redevelopment along the street edge.

ATLANTIC STREET/DYKE LANE CORRIDOR INTERVENTIONS

Planning Framework Diagram



2.23

2.24 Atlantic Street view corridor

Open Space Linkages
Integrate the landscape design strategies for the corridor with the open spaces along it.

1. Kosciuszko Park and reconfigured entrance to the Park.
2. Potential new small park at the change in the geometry of Atlantic Street at Crosby Street.
3. Public plazas at the building between North State Street and Tresser Boulevard and at the northeast and southeast corners of Atlantic and Tresser.
4. Public spaces around Town Hall.
5. Veterans' Memorial Park.
6. Plaza and sculpture garden at the southeast corner of Atlantic and Broad.

Gateways and Strategic Intersections
Employ a variety of "place-making" interventions that include a unified and consolidated treatment for utilities and signage, traffic calming/pedestrian improvements, and other interventions to articulate the connections that can be made to other destinations in Stamford.

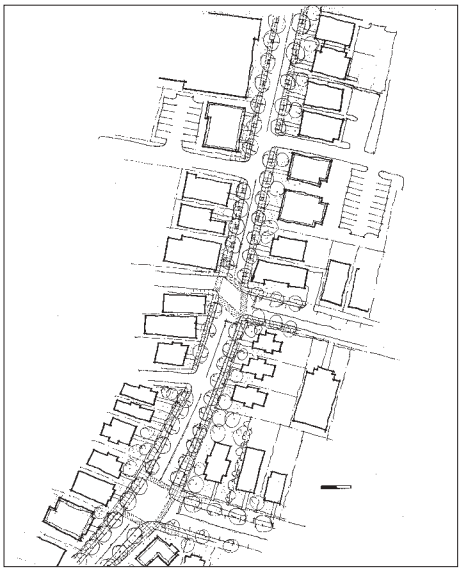
7. At Washington Boulevard: connect to the Transportation Center.
8. Dock Street: connection to the Stamford Urban Transitway.
9. I-95/ railroad underpasses: improve lighting, security, appearance, and pedestrian crossings at ramps.
10. Tresser Boulevard: Articulate the significance of this intersection with the Tresser Boulevard corridor.
11. Main Street: connect to Veterans Park, Columbus Park and the Main Street corridor.
12. Broad Street: connect to the Broad Street corridor. Articulate the importance of this significant "crossroads" of the Pedestrian Core.

Redevelopment Opportunities
Promote contextual development that is oriented towards the corridor and provides transition in scale to adjacent neighborhoods.

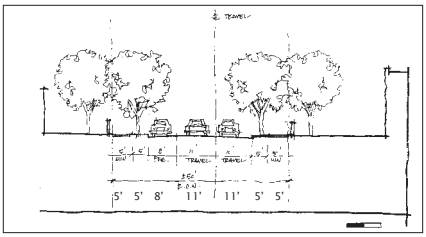
13. N.E. Utilities properties: new mixed-use development and extension of street grid to waterfront. Create transition to adjacent low-rise neighborhood.
14. Site at Henry Street: new mixed-use buildings. (see massing study)
15. Low-rise and mid-rise scale intensification of the ends of the blocks along the corridor, especially on the east side between Crosby and Henry Streets.

Significant Building Locations
Create visual and physical connections to important buildings that can reinforce the identity of the corridor and provide additional orientation.

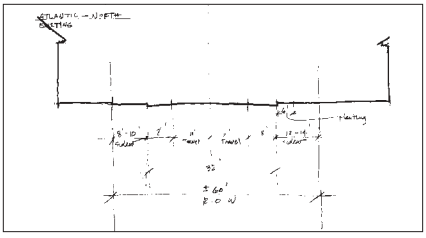
16. Pitney Bowes Headquarters.
17. Historic row houses north of Henry Street.
18. The Stamford Post Office.
19. St. Johns Church.
20. Old Town Hall.
21. Landmark Tower.



2.25 Atlantic Street proposed plan



2.27 Atlantic Street proposed section



2.28 Atlantic Street existing section

2.26 Atlantic Street existing plan

2.29 Atlantic Street aerial photograph showing intersections at Crosby and Henry Streets.

Atlantic Street
Proposed Conditions

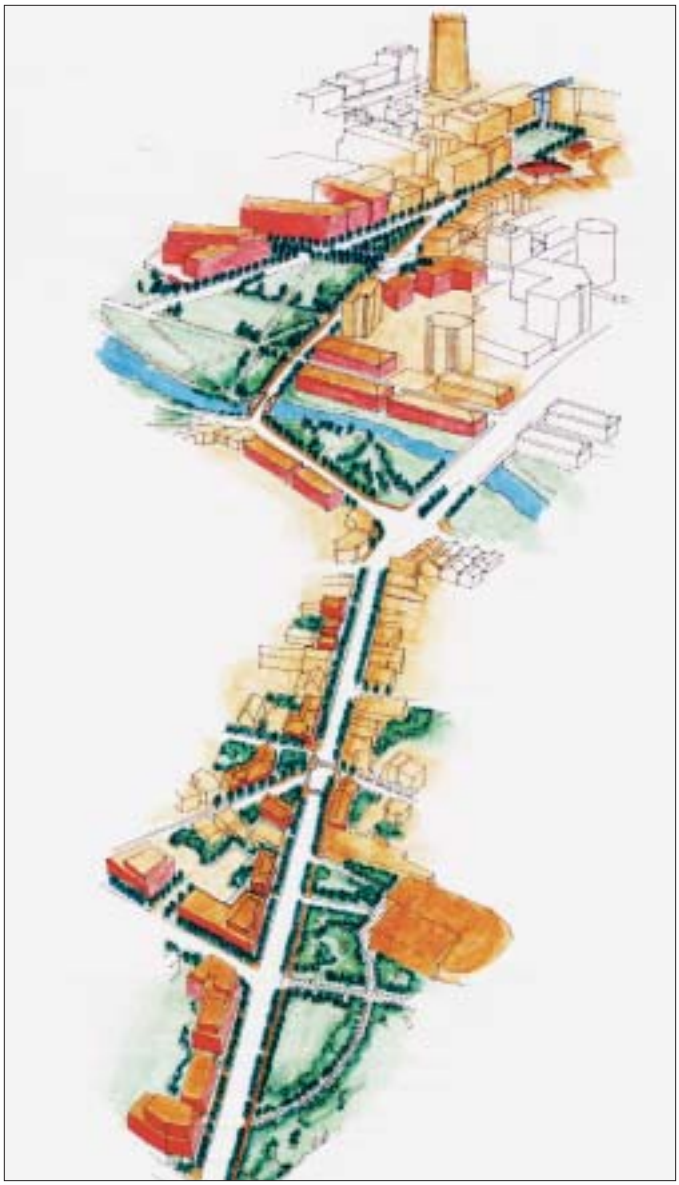
- Pavement width varies significantly
- Pavement width regularized with parking introduced on street (two-sided where possible, one-sided where limited)–see plan
- New buildings to fill empty lots, oriented to street with parking behind. Setbacks to match adjacent buildings

Atlantic Street
Existing Conditions

- Exposed utilities and unattractive streetscape
- Discontinuous or inadquate sidewalks
- Underutilized propoerties

WEST MAIN

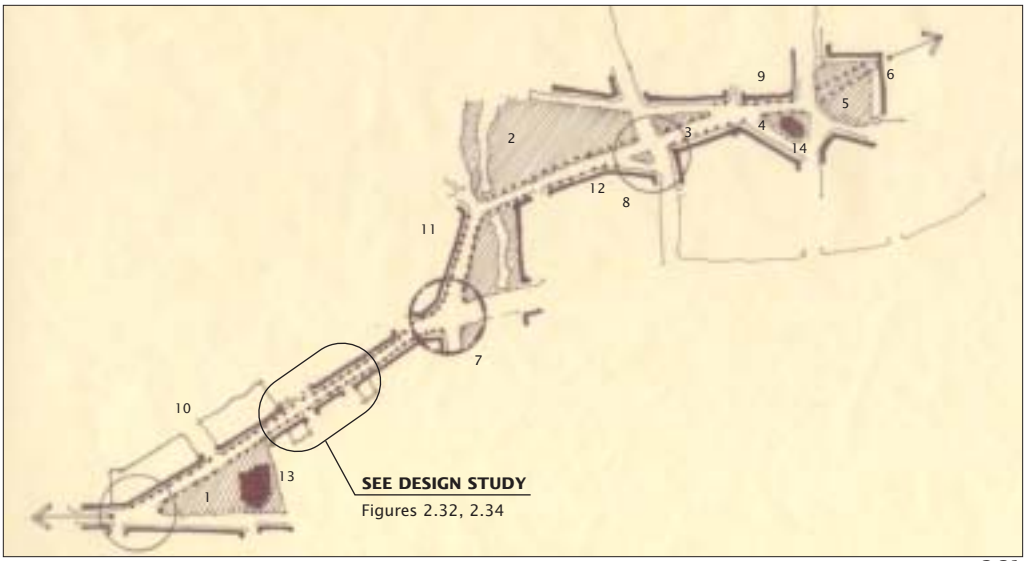
West Main from Jackie Robinson Park and the Yerwood Center to the Mill River Park and the bridge to downtown, links the west side to the Mill River greenway and downtown. (Dark colored building are redevelopment concepts.)



2.30 West Main aerial perspective view showing redeveloped area around the Yerwood Center and the linked open spaces from Jackie Robinson Park to the Mill River greenway to Columbus Park in the Pedestrian Core.

WEST MAIN STREET CORRIDOR INTERVENTIONS

Planning Framework Diagram



2.31

Open Space Linkages
Integrate the landscape design strategies for the corridor with the open spaces along it.

1. Jackie Robinson Park.
2. Mill River Park.
3. Columbus Park.
4. Public spaces around Town Hall.
5. Veterans' Memorial Park.
6. New Main Street connection through Veterans' Park and the Mall.

Gateways and Strategic Intersections
Employ a variety of "place-making" interventions that include a unified and consolidated treatment for utilities and signage, traffic calming/ pedestrian improvements, and other interventions to articulate the connections that can be made to other destinations in Stamford.

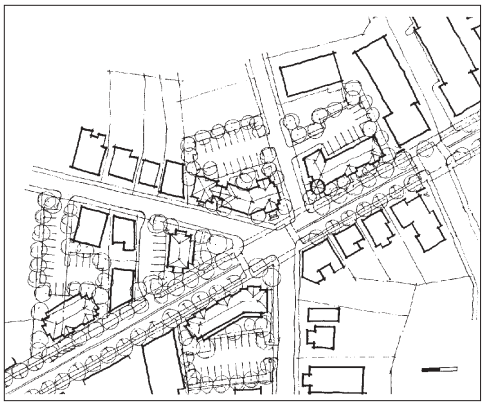
7. Mill River Street: connect to Mill River Greenway. Provide orientation to both the Tresser Boulevard corridor and the West Main connection to the pedestrian Core.
8. Washington Boulevard: create pedestrian crossing at this edge of the Core.
9. Atlantic Street: articulate this major crossroad at the center of the pedestrian Core; connect to Veterans' Memorial Park.

Redevelopment Opportunities
Promote contextual development that is oriented towards the corridor and provides transition in scale to adjacent neighborhoods.

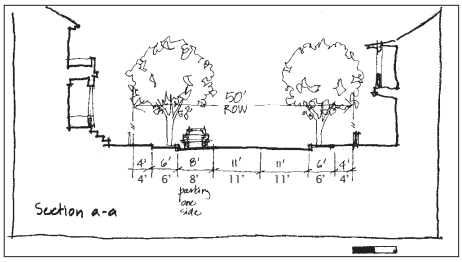
10. Intermediate scale "neighborhood center" development in area between Fairfield Avenue and Rose Park Avenue.
11. New residential development on east and west sides of the Mill River Greenway.
12. New Core scale development at southwest corner of Washington Boulevard.

Significant Building Locations
Create visual and physical connections to important buildings that can reinforce the identity of the corridor and provide additional orientation.

13. Yerwood Center.
14. Old Town Hall.



2.32 West Main proposed plan



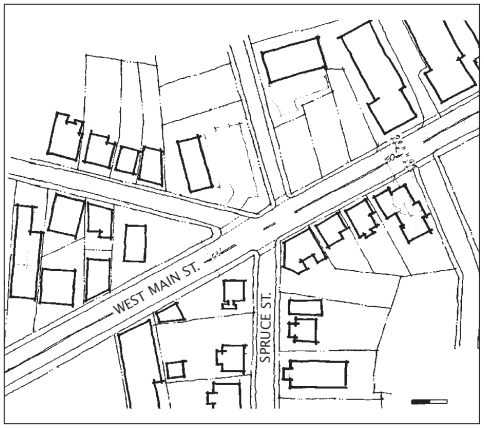
2.34 West Main proposed section

West Main Street Proposed Conditions

- Consistent width travel lanes
- 6' tree planting strip (grass) with 5' - 6' sidewalk
- Clearly defined parking areas with walls, hedges and screening landscape–creating enclosed parking "rooms"
- Enhanced setback planting to define roadway
- New development oriented toward street with parking to side or rear

West Main Street Existing Conditions

- Inadequate and poorly designed sidewalks
- Surface parking lots and underutilized properties

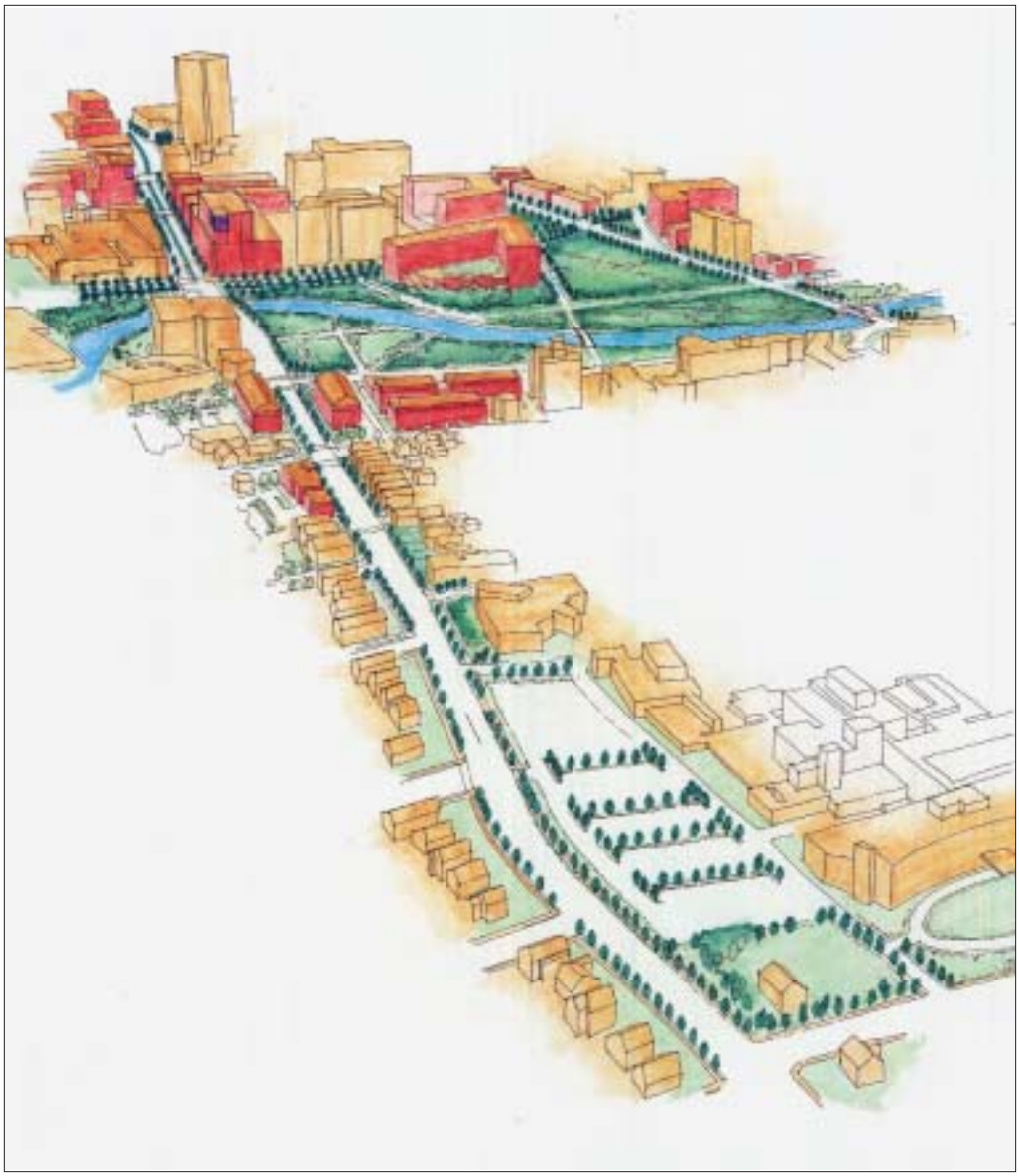


2.33 West Main existing plan

2.35 West Main aerial photograph

WEST BROAD STREET

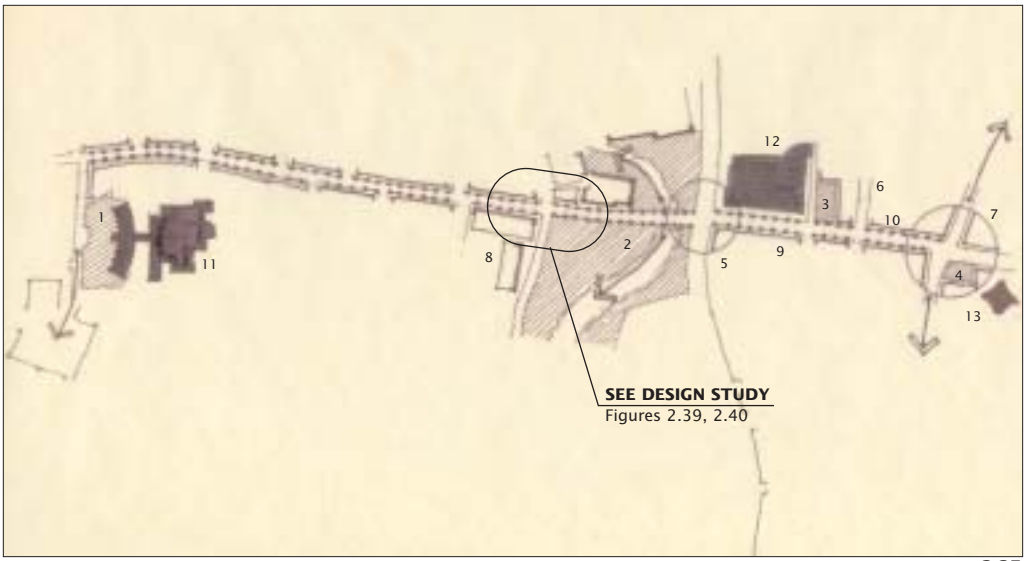
West Broad Street, from the hospital at the top of the hill to the gateway created by the Mill River Park and University of Connecticut campus at the Washington Boulevard intersection, links the west side neighborhoods to the Mill River greenway and downtown. (Darker colored buildings are redevelopment concepts.)



2.36 West Broad aerial perspective view showing connection from Stamford Hospital at the top of the hill to a redesigned Mill River corridor and western gateway to the Downtown Core.

WEST BROAD STREET CORRIDOR INTERVENTIONS

Planning Framework Diagram



2.37

2.38 West Broad Street view corridor

Open Space Linkages
Integrate the landscape design strategies for the corridor with the open spaces along it.

1. The Hospital complex, the Vidal Houses and Lione Park beyond.
2. Mill River Park and the larger greenway system.
3. University of Connecticut and the widened sidewalks and small park adjacent
4. Plaza at Landmark Tower at south east corner of Broad and Atlantic.

Gateways and Strategic Intersections
Employ a variety of "place-making" interventions that include a unified and consolidated treatment for utilities and signage, traffic calming/ pedestrian improvements, and other interventions to articulate the connections that can be made to other destinations in Stamford.

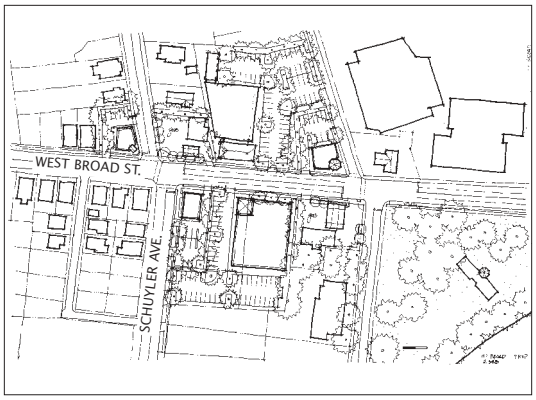
5. Washington Boulevard: articulate pedestrian crossings and connect to the Mill River Greenway.
6. Summer Street: Respond to termination of the intermediate scale Summer Street corridor to the north. Connect to the center of the redevelopment block to the south.
7. Atlantic Street / Bedford Street: Articulate this crossroads at the center of the Pedestrian Core.

Redevelopment Opportunities
Promote contextual development that is oriented towards the corridor and provides transition in scale to adjacent neighborhoods.

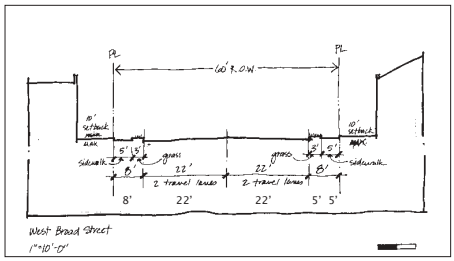
8. New "Collar" scale development, primarily residential at the intersection with Mill River Street.
9. Southeast corner at Washington Boulevard: significant mixed-use development to mark the beginning of the Broad Street corridor (see massing study).
10. Northeast corner at Summer Street: significant mixed-use development opportunities (see massing study).

Significant Building Locations
Create visual and physical connections to important buildings that can reinforce the identity of the corridor and provide additional orientation.

11. The Stamford Hospital.
12. University of Connecticut Campus.
13. Landmark Tower.



2.39 West Broad Street proposed plan



2.40 West Broad Street proposed section

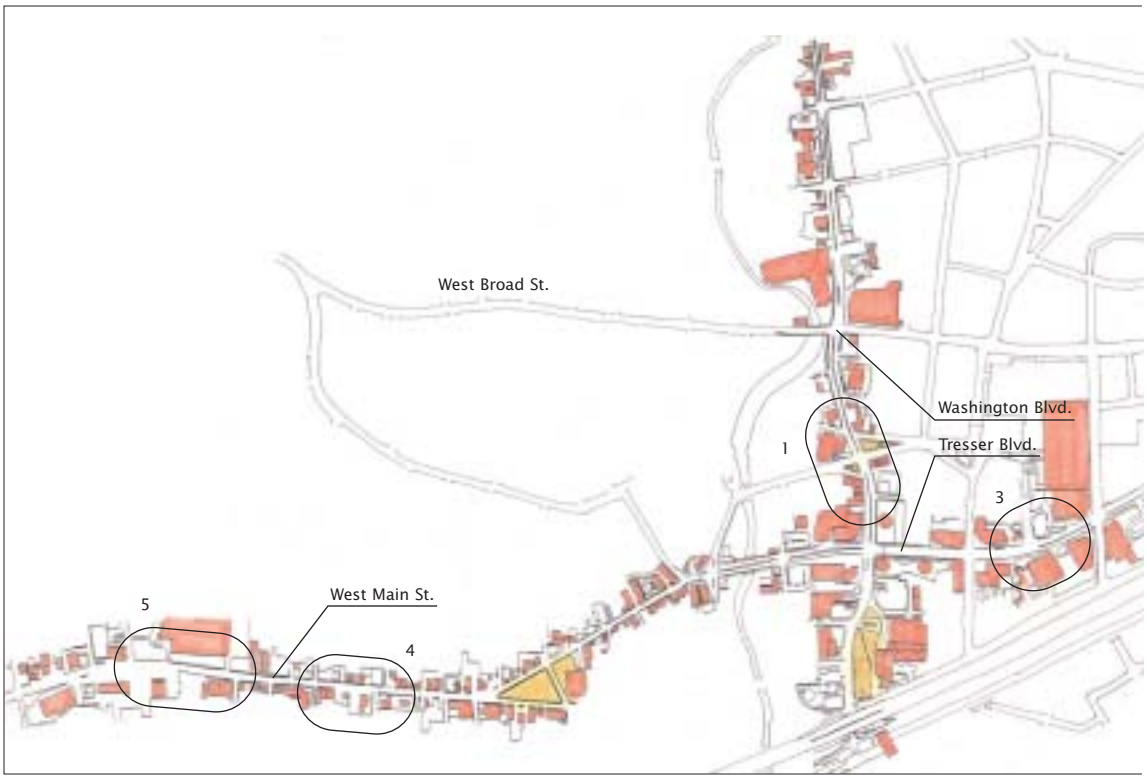
West Broad Street Proposed Conditions

- Maintain four travel lanes (11' each) within existing 60' right of way (restricts landscape opportunities)
- Crosswalks at intersections
- New development oriented to street with limited setback with heavily landscaped parking behind
- Reinforce/enhance parkway along the river

West Broad Street Existing Conditions

- Underutilized and vacant propoerties
- No acknowledgement of connections to Mill River Park and potential longer greenway network.

2.41 West Broad Street aerial photograph at the intersection of Mill River Street.



EDGE CORRIDORS: Washington Boulevard and Tresser Boulevard/East and West Main

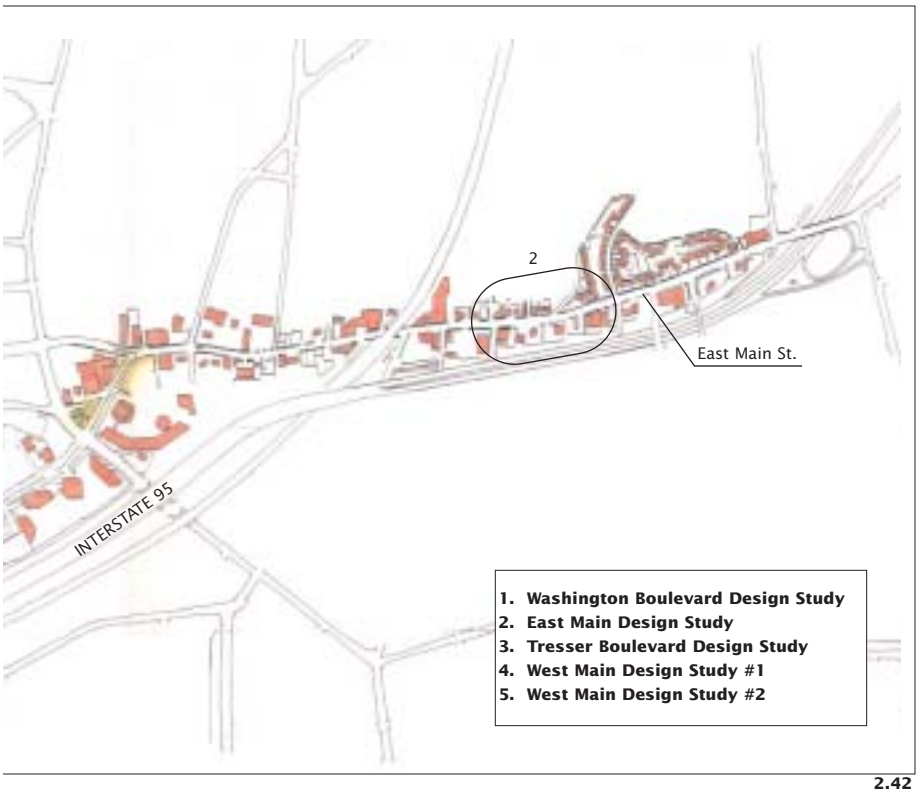
Downtown is framed to the south and to the west by two major roads–Tresser Boulevard and Washington Boulevard. Both function primarily as bypass routes around the core of the downtown.

The Washington Boulevard Corridor
Washington Boulevard has been widened over the years and now is the principal route connecting points north with the Transportation Center and I-95, handling much of the traffic diverted from High Ridge and Long Ridge Roads at Bulls Head.

North of the downtown, in the area of Forest Lawn Avenue, Washington Boulevard also forms the edges of neighborhoods. In these areas, despite the traffic volumes, pedestrian issues and the transition to the adjacent neighborhoods must be addressed.

Adjacent to the downtown Core, Washington Boulevard must become the seam, rather than the wall, between the downtown Core and the Mill River greenway. Design interventions include sidewalk widenings, streetscape improvements and landscaping. Particular attention should be paid to the intersections with the radial corridors–Broad and Main–that connect the Pedestrian Core of the downtown to the neighborhoods, as these are important gateways to the downtown.

The East Main/Tresser Boulevard Corridor
East Main Street, like Washington Boulevard, is another road whose identity is an uncomfortable mix of suburban highway, regional shopping, neighborhood retail, and residential boulevard. East of the New Canaan branch trestle, East Main is lined on the north with multi-family housing and marginal commercial uses at the edge of a neighborhood. On the south are a number of auto-oriented businesses. The master plan has mapped the area proximate to the trestle for redevelopment, enabling mixed-use development along East Main.



2.42

EDGE CORRIDORS

Washington Boulevard and Tresser Boulevard, East and West Main

These roads are the major entryways to Stamford and define the western and southern edges of the downtown Core.

The following section illustrates a variety of design interventions, the purpose of which is to unify the appearance of the area, rationalize access and create a transition to residential areas.

The portion of East Main that extends west of the trestle is a jumble of auto-related and auto-oriented uses–car dealerships, gas stations, etc. The design interventions for this portion of the corridor are described in the discussion of the Radial Corridors (see page 50).

In the downtown, the east-west traffic that would have passed through the center of town as Main Street (US 1/Boston Post Road) is directed to Tresser Boulevard, which was imposed over the original street network as part of the urban renewal plan. At its best, Tresser Boulevard has a kind of clarity–there are enough buildings of comparable scale to give it a kind of monumental identity. It is, after all, Stamford's skyline, and as experienced from an automobile, it works.

However, from a pedestrian perspective, it is extremely problematic. The buildings have no consistent relationship with the street. There are many undefined open spaces that do not relate to each other; and there is little ground floor activity either in the form of retail or building entrances. In addition, the crossing distances are intimidating, cutting off thousands of workers from the shops and restaurants in the Pedestrian Core.

The following figures suggest how "Tresser Highway" could be reconceived as a true Boulevard: well landscaped, with clearly defined spaces for pedestrian activity. As with Washington Boulevard, special attention is paid to the intersections with the roads radiating from the Pedestrian Core, especially Atlantic Street.

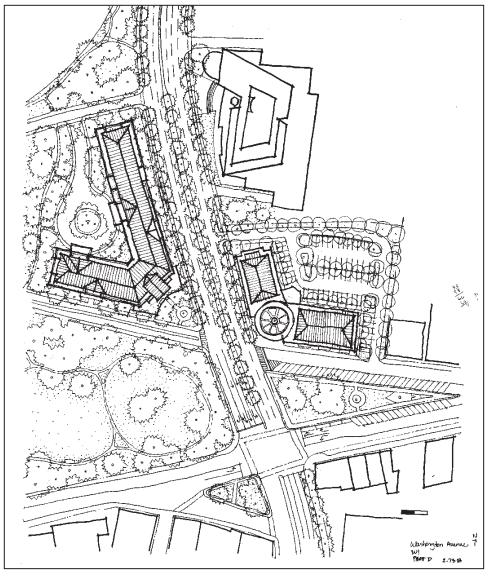
2.43 Precedent: a landscaped median

2.44 Washington Blvd. looking north

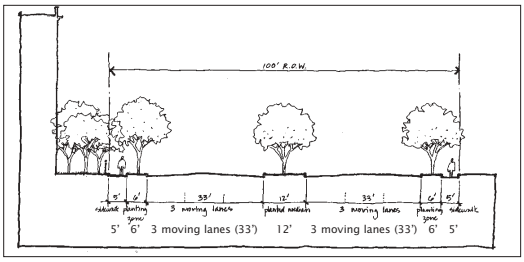
WASHINGTON BLVD.

Washington Boulevard Proposed Conditions

- Consistent 11' travel lanes with 10' turning lanes
- Landscaped center median
- 6' grass planting strip with 5' min. sidewalk
- Landscaped setback zones
- New development oriented to street with parking behind
- New neighborhood park
- Organize landscape, parking and new development to create order and coherence along street.



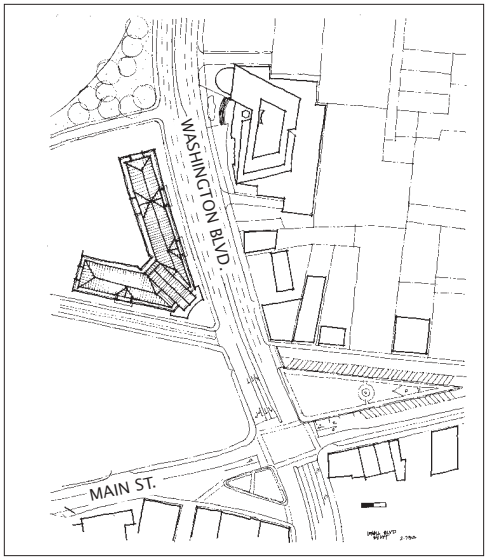
2.45 Washington Boulevard proposed plan (alternate)



2.47 Washington Boulevard proposed section

Washington Boulevard Existing Conditions

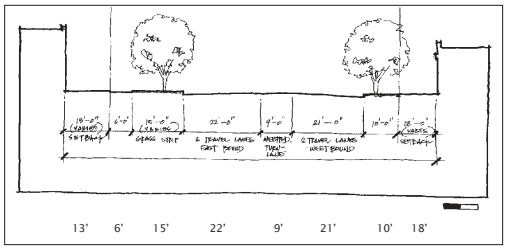
- Sidewalks and crossing discontinuous or in poor condition
- Underactive streetscape
- Underutilized propoerties



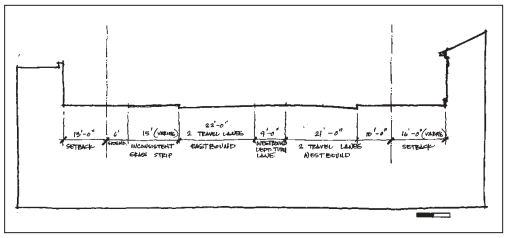
2.46 Washington Boulevard proposed plan

2.48 Washington Boulevard aerial photo

2.49 East Main Street proposed plan



2.51 East Main Street proposed section



2.56 East Main Street existing section

2.50 East Main Street existing plan

2.57 East Main Street aerial photograph

EAST MAIN STREET

East Main Street Proposed Conditions

- Consistent pavement width and travel lanes
- Defined curb cuts to parking lots
- Landscaped parking lots to create "parking rooms" and discreet service areas
- New development oriented to the street with parking to the side or rear; larger scale development potential on north side of street
- Consistent planting strips with street trees (grass to south/grates to north).

East Main Street Existing Conditions

- Small and/or underutilized properties out of scale with a major automobile corridor
- Pedestrian un-friendly environment
- Poorly articulated street crossings

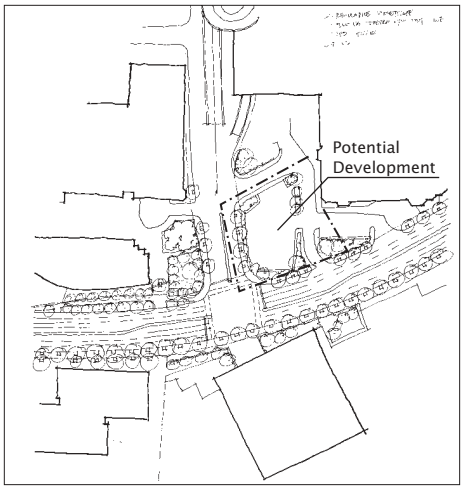
2.58 Well-designed pedestrian crosswalk at a wide road

2.59 Tresser Boulevard

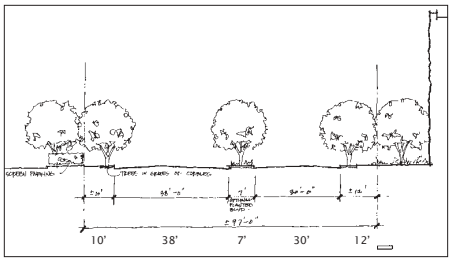
TRESSER BOULEVARD

Tresser Boulevard Proposed Conditions

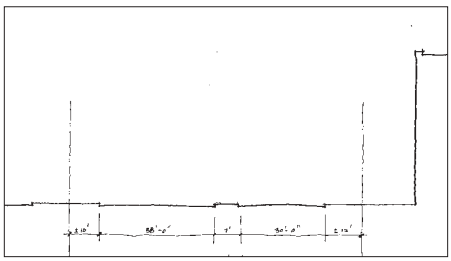
- Design objective: Establish Tresser as "Boulevard"
- Maintain existing pavement width (Design assumption)
- Continuous street trees in grates or cobbles
- Landscaped center median where possible to enhance character of street as Urban Boulevard
- Enhanced setback plantings
- Screen parking areas with heavy landscape



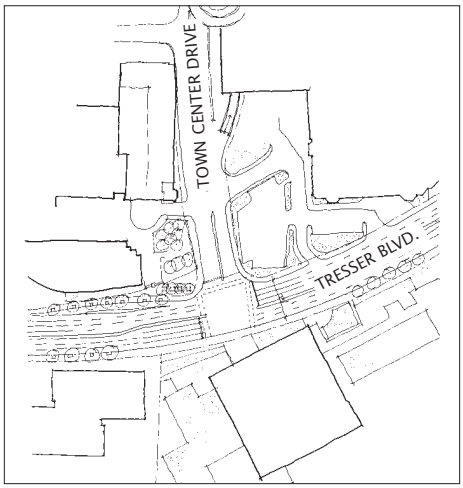
2.60 Tresser Boulevard proposed plan



2.62 Tresser Boulevard proposed section

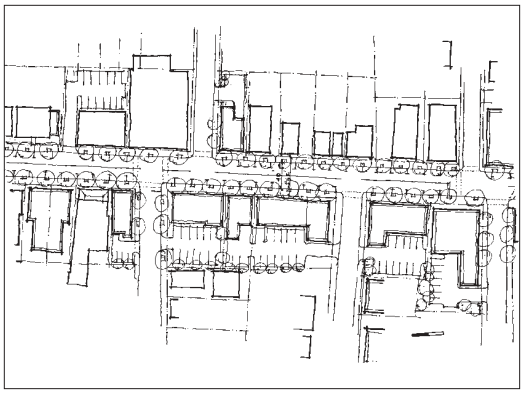


2.63 Tresser Boulevard existing section

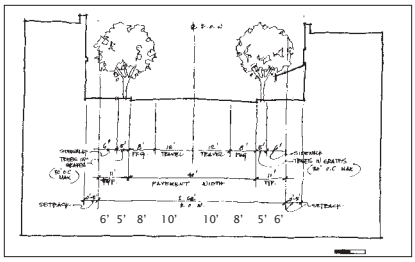


2.61 Tresser Boulevard existing plan

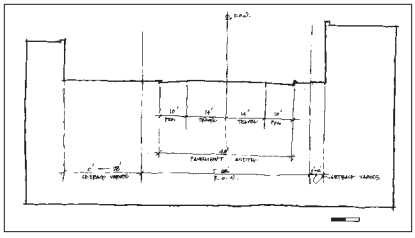
2.64 Tresser Boulevard aerial photograph



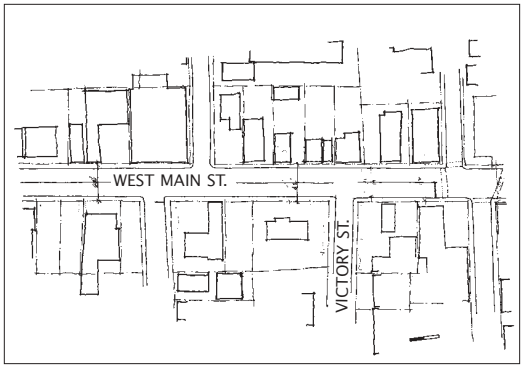
2.65 West Main Street proposed plan



2.67 West Main Street proposed section



2.68 West Main Street existing section



2.66 West Main Street existing plan

2.69 West Main Street aerial photograph

WEST MAIN STREET #1

West Main Street Proposed Conditions

- Two travel lanes with parallel on-street parking
- Consistent street trees in grates with minimum 6' clear sidewalks
- New development to define street as commercial corridor with parking behind; minimum setbacks
- See discussion of business corridors in Chapter 3

West Main Street Existing Conditions

- Underutilized properties
- Inadequate and incomplete sidewalks
- Unattractive streetscape and poor pedestrian environment

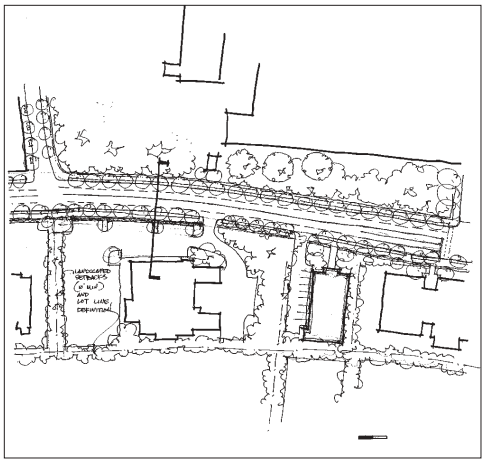
WEST MAIN STREET #2

West Main Street Proposed Conditions

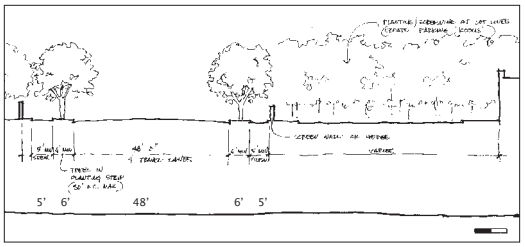
- Pavement width regularized with consistent travel lanes and on-street parallel parking
- Street trees in grass planting strip (6') with sidewalk
- New development to infill sites oriented toward street with parking behind; height/scale consistent with existing buildings

West Main Street Existing Conditions

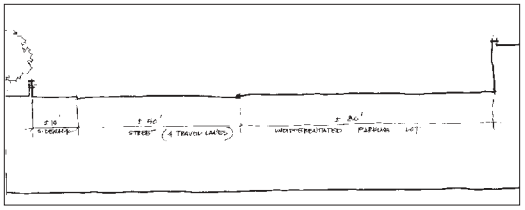
- Large parking areas with poorly defined edges
- Inadequate sidewalks and street crossings



2.70 West Main Street proposed plan



2.72 West Main Street proposed section



2.73 West Main Street existing section

2.71 West Main Street existing plan

2.74 West Main Street aerial photograph

HIGH RIDGE AND LONG RIDGE ROADS

The neighborhoods between Bulls Head and the Merritt Parkway are organized largely around the High Ridge Road and Long Ridge Road corridors. These two roads are usually lumped together and simply referred to as "the Ridge Roads." In fact, they are very different both in terms of the way they relate to the adjacent neighborhoods and in terms of the way they relate to the larger traffic patterns in the city.

Figure 2.75 illustrates the most striking difference–that High Ridge Road, despite its scale, the volume of traffic it handles and the on-going pressure for conversion to commercial uses, remains a residential road that is lined with single family houses and forms the edges of neighborhoods. There are myriad curb cuts and intersections with cross streets. Long Ridge Road, by contrast, is lined primarily with open spaces, either undeveloped parcels, parks or more typically the well-landscaped campuses of corporate headquarters. Driveways to individual houses are concentrated in just a few places and, not surprisingly, these are places where the highway scale of Long Ridge Road and the neighborhood scale of the houses collide. These patterns inform the different strategies suggested for each of the Ridge Roads.

High Ridge Road: A Suburban Boulevard

A boulevard can be designed in any number of ways but any design should create along its entire length a strong sense of identity so that it can become the formal organizing element for that portion of the city. It should accommodate, in balanced fashion, automobiles, pedestrians and bicyclists. It should balance through-trips with local trips between and among neighborhood destinations. The strong sense of identity derives from a unified treatment of landscaping, sidewalks and other elements of roadway architecture, including signage, paving materials, street and traffic lights. The design studies that follow describe some prototypical designs for a High Ridge Road/Boulevard.

In order to achieve this balance, traffic calming strategies must not only slow traffic down at important intersections (as they have been shown to accomplish elsewhere) but also move traffic more smoothly so that total time for a through trip from the Merritt Parkway to Bulls Head is not increased.

There is another important dimension to the "High Ridge Boulevard" design that is particular to the geography of the adjoining neighborhoods. As Figure 2.76 shows, access to the adjoining neighborhoods is of three kinds: 1) there are driveways directly off of High Ridge Road; 2) there are short cul de sacs or loop roads to clusters of houses; 3) there are roads that function as gateways to larger groups of streets and blocks in the neighborhoods between the two Ridge Roads. These "gateways" are opportunities to create places with discrete identity and a sense of place. They are a way to create landmarks along what is at present an undifferentiated and characterless journey through the heart of Stamford. Figure 2.87 (page 79) describes the architectural treatment for these gateways. This might include changes in paving materials, distinctive landscaping and signage, and articulated crossing points.

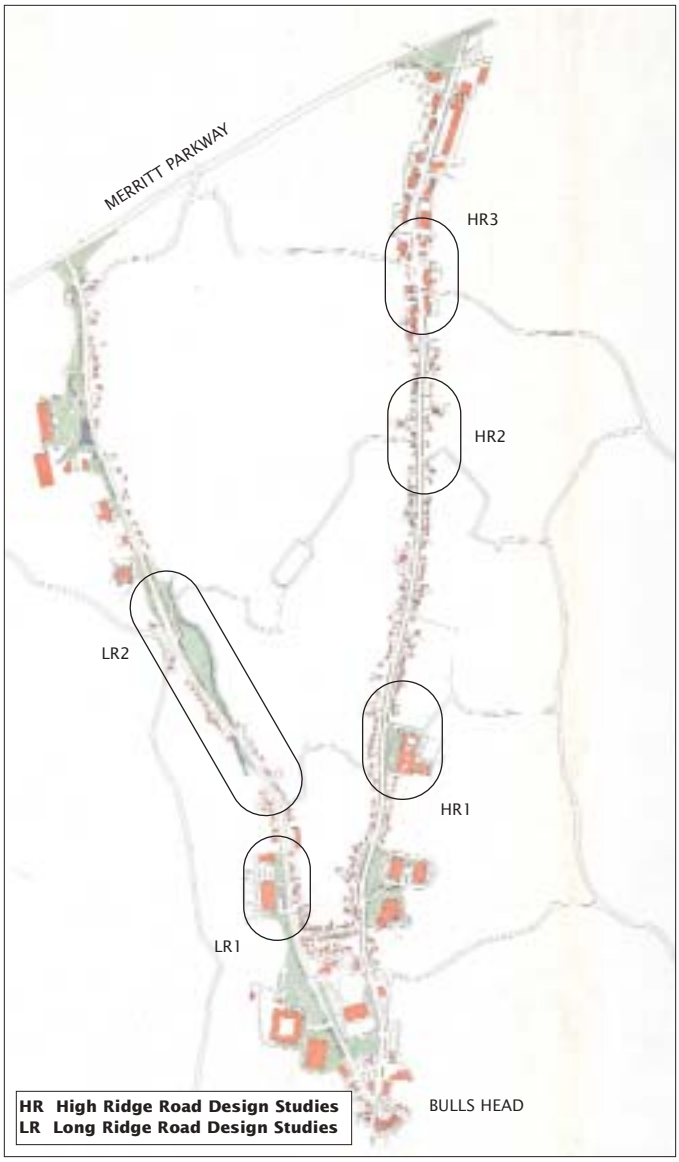
To this last point, there are gateways to the neighborhoods east of High Ridge road as well. Where possible, linkages between these gateways are designed to facilitate east-west pedestrian and bicycle connections across High Ridge Road.

Together, these connections are part of an overall strategy to increase mobility and the connections between neighborhoods, open space and community resources.

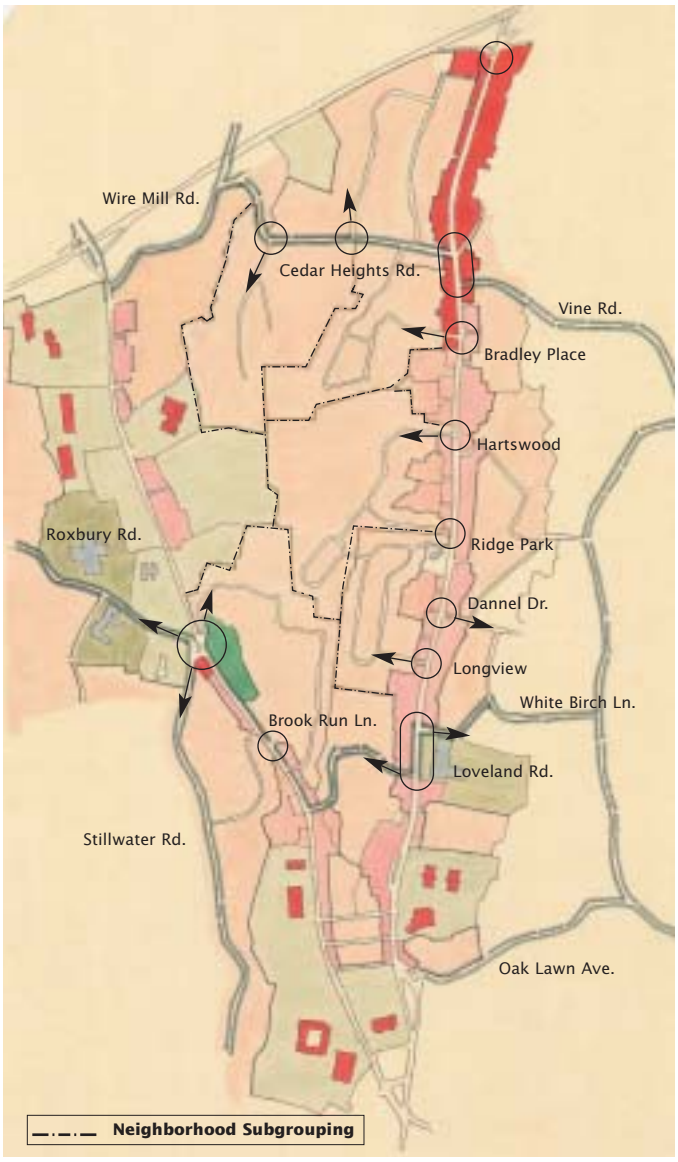
Long Ridge Road: Taming the Suburban Highway
If, along High Ridge Road, the goal is to tip the balance towards the need to create the residential edges of neighborhoods and to accommodate local trips of all kinds, it will be harder to tip the balance away from the automobile along Long Ridge Road. Long Ridge Road, precisely because there is not a myriad of driveways or many intersections with side streets, tends to move traffic at higher speeds. There are almost no sidewalks. The connection at Bulls Head between Long Ridge Road and Washington Boulevard, which skirts the edges of the downtown, insures that this will remain the favored route from the Merritt Parkway to I-95 and the Transportation Center. Nevertheless, there are important design interventions that should be made.

To the extent that traffic can move smoothly and at a somewhat reduced speed, traffic calming techniques should be applied. Despite the fact that pedestrian and bicycle travel along this road will always have trouble competing with the automobile, there are opportunities to articulate gateways and important east-west connections across the road, similar to those described for High Ridge Road. Despite its highway function, Long Ridge Road should be part of the overall connectivity strategy diagramed on the Greenways maps.

Lastly, the remaining residential areas should be the focus of a variety of streetscape improvements that help buffer these uses from the traffic.



2.75 Plan of High Ridge and Long Ridge Roads The houses along High Ridge Road form the edges of several neighborhoods. Long Ridge Road has few houses and connects several large open spaces and corporate campuses.



2.76 Neighborhood Structure Diagram There are certain roads that function as collectors within individual neighobrhoods. These in turn suggest opportunities to articulate gateways and connections between neighborhoods. (See discussion of Greenway Network).

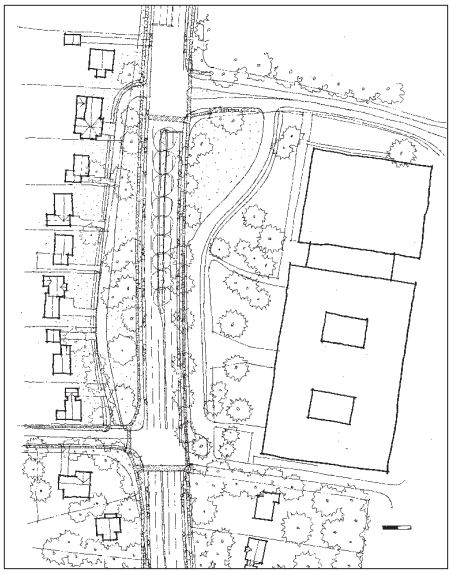
HIGH RIDGE ROAD #1

High Ridge Road
Design Study #1
Proposed Conditions

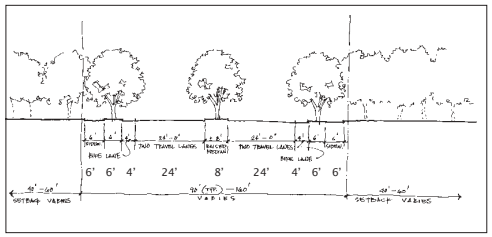
- Landscaped connection and sidewalks between Lakeview Drive and Loveland Drive
- Landscaped median
- New residential frontage lane

2.77 High Ridge Road

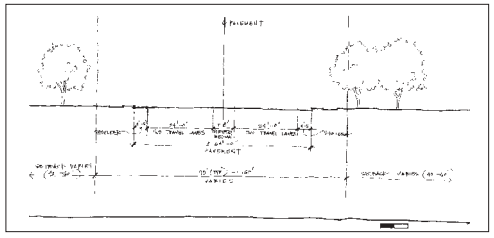
2.78 Suburban boulevard precedent



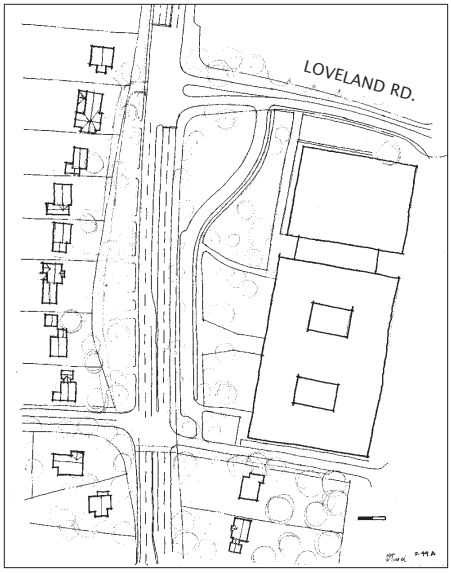
2.79 High Ridge Road proposed plan



2.81 High Ridge Road proposed section



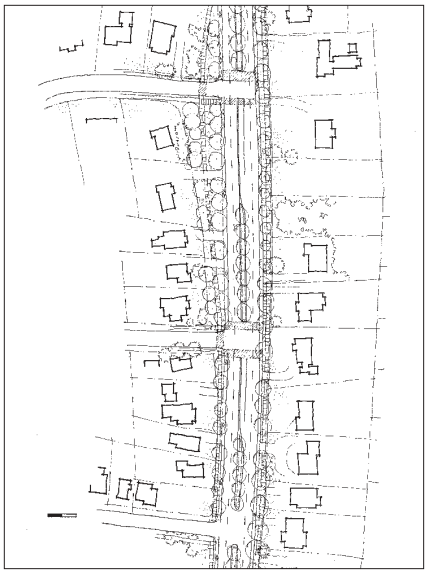
2.82 High Ridge Road existing section



2.80 High Ridge Road existing plan

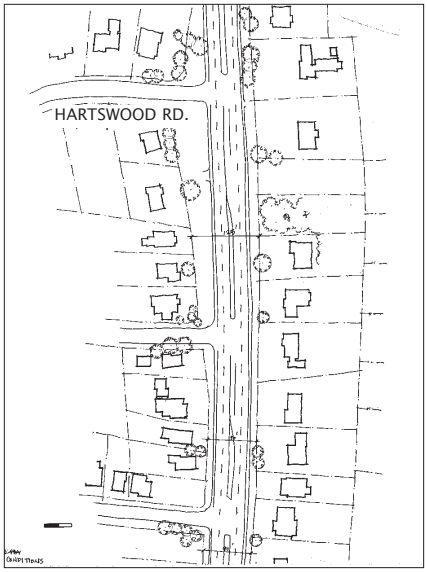
2.83 High Ridge Road aerial photograph between Lakeview and Loveland Drives.

2.86 Existing conditions on High Ridge Road



2.84 High Ridge Road proposed plan

2.87 Neighborhood Gateways: crosswalk design study and precedent



2.85 High Ridge Road existing conditions

2.85 High Ridge Road aerial photograph at Hartswood road intersection.

HIGH RIDGE ROAD #2

High Ridge Road Design Study #2 Proposed Conditions

- Consistent 11' travel lanes with 10' turning lanes
- 4' bike lane in road bed
- Landscaped center median where possible
- 6' tree planting strip (grass) with 5' - 6' sidewalk (planting can increase in some residential areas - See Plan)
- Articulate gateways into neighborhoods at important streets

Strategies for creating neighborhood gateways include:

- Change in paving materials in roadway and at crosswalks
- Additional landscaping
- Consider signalization
- Consider bus stop location and design
- Special architectural elements (pillars, signage, etc.)

High Ridge Road Design Study #2 Existing Conditions

- Sidewalks are discontinuous or too narrow
- Traffic speeds are excessive
- Unattractive streetscape
- Lack of neighborhood identity

2.89 High Ridge Road at Cedar Heights Road

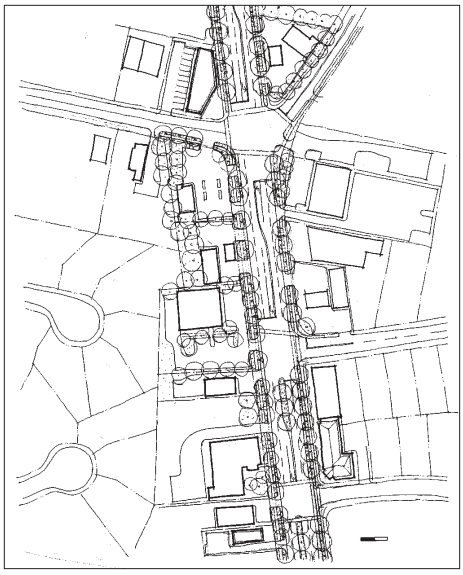
HIGH RIDGE ROAD #3

High Ridge Road
Design Study #3
Proposed Conditions

- New buildings oriented to street with parking behind, entrances to street
- Landscaped setback to vary based on section of road, but with uniform design
- See discussion of business corridors in Chapter 3

High Ridge Road
Design Study #3
Existing Conditions

- Automobile dominated "strip retail" environment
- Redundant curb cuts
- Discontinuous sidewalks
- No clear relationship between buildings and the street
- Unattractive, disorganized streetscape
- Important crossing points–Vine Road and Cedar Heights Road–not articulated

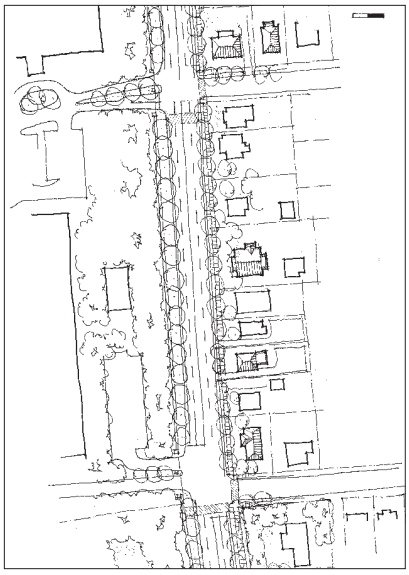


2.90 High Ridge Road proposed plan

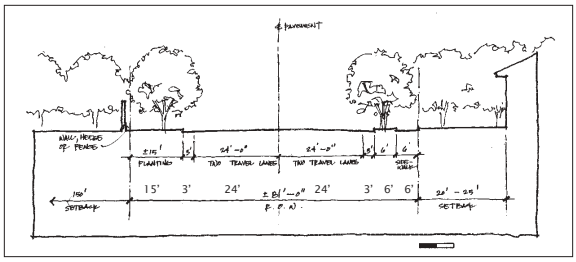
2.91 High Ridge Road existing plan

2.92 High Ridge Road aerial photograph showing intersections at Vine and Cedar Heights Roads

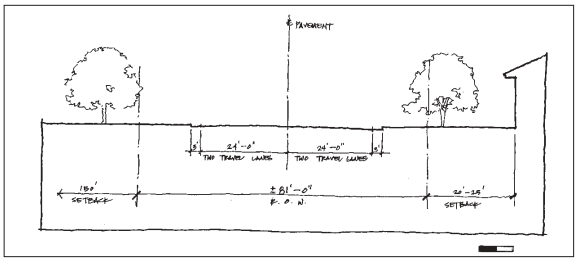
2.95 Long Ridge Road–small houses opposite corporate campus



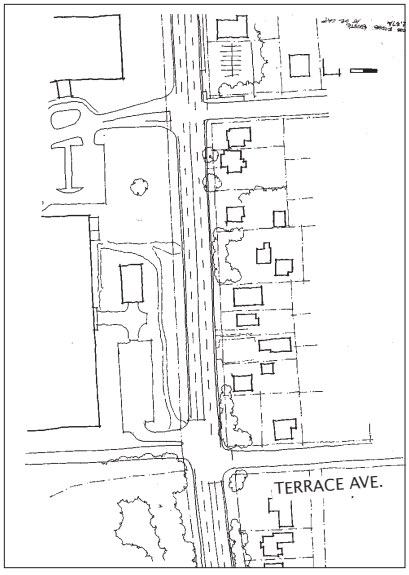
2.93 Long Ridge Road proposed plan



2.96 Long Ridge Road proposed section



2.97 Long Ridge Road existing section



2.94 Long Ridge Road existing plan

2.98 Long Ridge Road aerial photograph

LONG RIDGE ROAD #1

Long Ridge Road Design Study #1 Proposed Conditions

- Maintain existing pavement width
- Consistent grass planting strip with trees; continuous sidewalks
- Landscaped setback zones
- Fences and landscaped screening to help mitigate scale of large institutions
- New development to reinforce existing scale

Long Ridge Road Design Study #1 Existing Conditions

- No sidewalks or well-marked crossings
- Traffic speeds are excessive
- Lack of scale transition between roadway and single family home

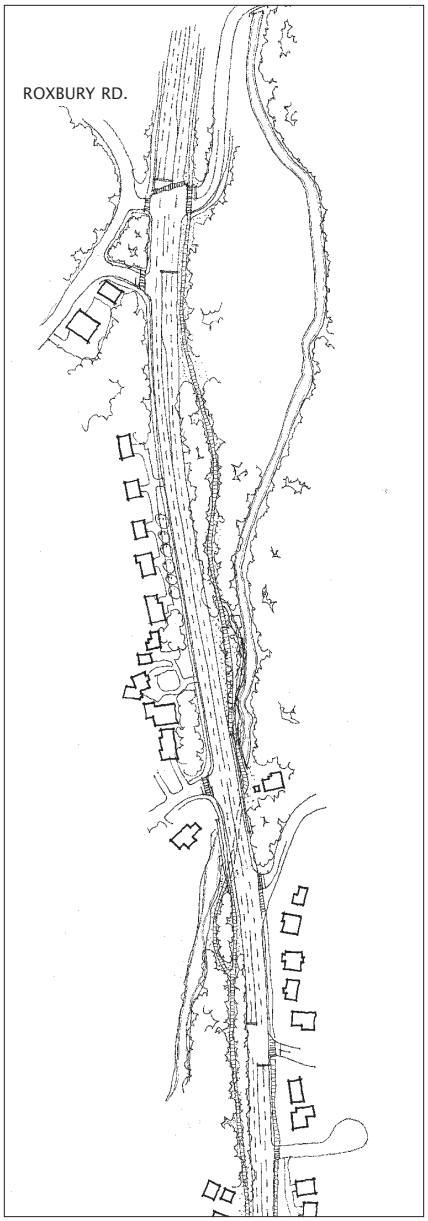
2.99 Long Ridge Road–bridge at crossing with Mill River

LONG RIDGE ROAD #2

Long Ridge Road
Design Study #2
Proposed Conditions

- Maintain existing street section
- Reinforce planting along right of way
- Create multi-use trail which traverses the greenway systems parallel to the Long Ridge Road corridor
- Vary the course of the trail to follow stream beds and other natural features

2.100 Long Ridge Road aerial photograph



2.101 Long Ridge Road existing plan

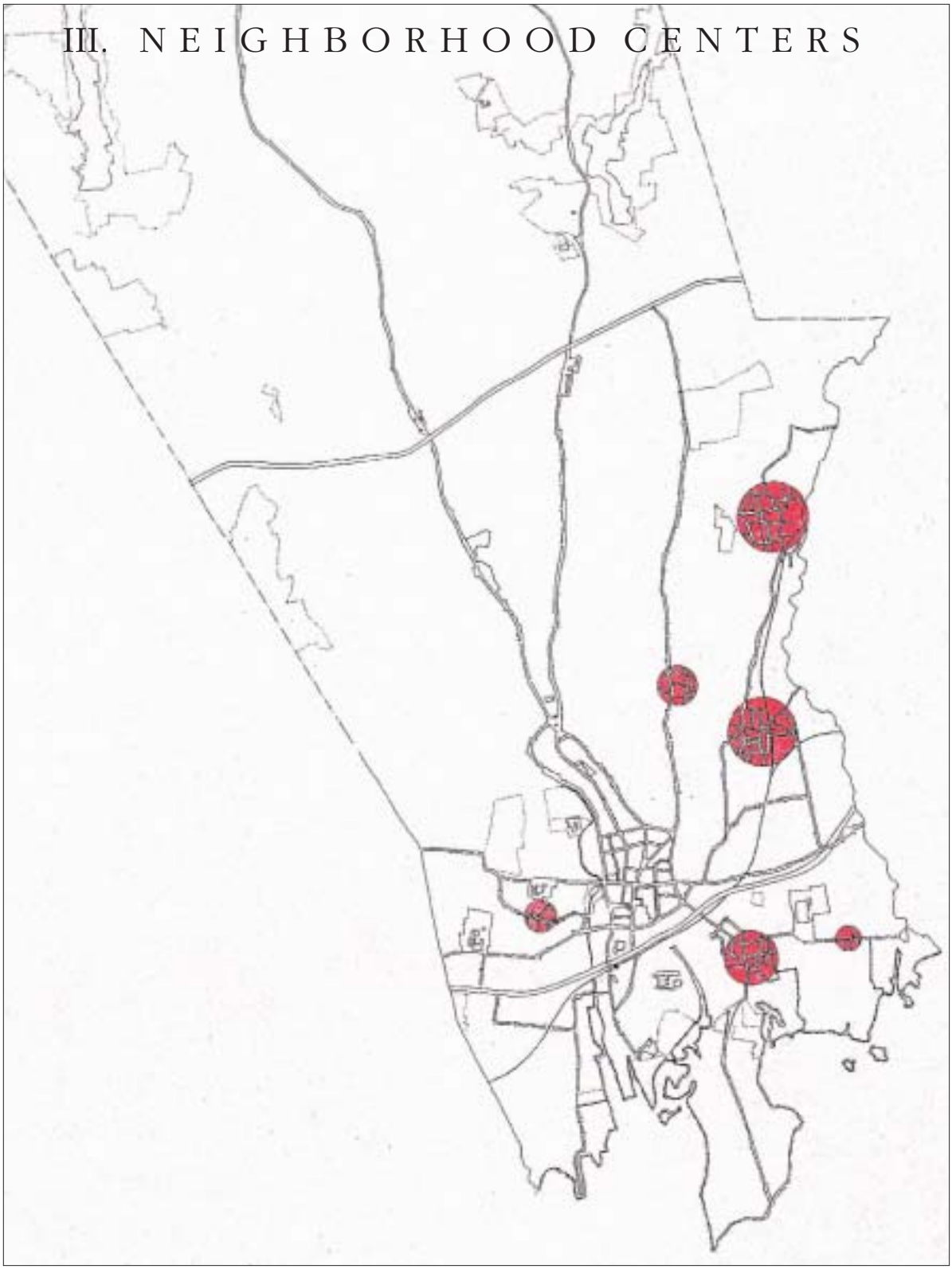
A NOTE ABOUT THE RIDGE ROADS AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Development pressure on the Ridge Roads may be manifest in a number of ways:

- Continued conversion of houses to professional offices
- Development of the several remaining large parcels for new residential subdivisions or elder-care facilities
- Subdivision of underutilized property in the Office Design Districts for residential, office or elder-care facilities
- As-of-right expansion of existing corporate headquarters.

Although there is bus service on the Ridge Roads, these are not transit-accessible locations in terms of the ability to reduce auto trips to Ridge Road destinations. In addition to benchmarks for the total amounts of development that should be allowed outside of Downtown and the neighborhood Centers, the Economic Development Study suggests that the expansion of office uses on the Ridge Roads should be limited to the legitimate expansion needs of existing businesses. The suggested benchmark is that collectively, the four major design districts should expand by no more than half of the total as-of-right capacity and that expansion should be linked to employer-sponsored Traffic Demand Management initiatives (See Traffic and Transit Report). This expansion should also be linked to the open space access improvements described in the greenways initiative.

III. NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS



NEGHBORHOOD CENTERS

If, at the scale of the entire city, downtown must remain the focus of future development, then at the scale of the neighborhood, the local neighborhood centers must be the focus of future development.

Neighborhood commercial areas were described in the previous master plan under Category 6 - Commercial: Local or Neighborhood Business. This master plan now makes the distinction between “Commercial - Arterial” and “Commercial - Neighborhood” in order to recognize that there are some areas that will always have an orientation towards the automobile, and other places that have the potential to be true “main streets” with a unified appearance and distinct identity.

BUSINESS CORRIDORS

Mater Plan Category #7: Commercial–Arterial

There are a number of commercial corridors which will continue to have a strong orientation towards the automobile. In part, this is a result of the way these roads function in the larger citywide roadway and traffic network. This is also a result of past development practices – of creating stand-alone buildings surrounded by parking. Finally, it reflects the fact that these commercial areas are not integrated with the surrounding neighborhoods in the way that the other “main street” commercial centers are.

However, this does not mean that the design of the business corridors is unimportant. Precisely because these places are on major roads, they are the gateways to Stamford and their appearance is a big part of the image which the City projects. There are also pedestrian safety and traffic incident issues created by poorly organized access. Finally, the true development value of the land is squandered on the low-coverage, automobile-oriented uses attracted to these corridors.

3.01 Design intervention on a suburban commercial strip, before and after (simulation)

3.02 Urban infill, before and after (simulation)

A variety of improvements are suggested, not with the goal of transforming these areas wholesale into new “main streets”, but to balance the needs of the automobile with the needs of pedestrians and to create a clearly organized and attractive area:

- Consolidation of curb cuts through cross access agreements
- Relocation of parking areas to the sides and backs of buildings
- Redesigning the edges of parking lots
- Promoting new development where it can help define important intersections.
- Landscape and sidewalk improvements to create a unified design.

In Chapter 2, these principles are illustrated for portions of East and West Main Street and for the northern end of High Ridge Road.

3.03 Neighborhood revitalization, before and after (simulation)

NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS

Master Plan Category #6: Commercial–Neighborhood

The neighborhood centers must accommodate the automobile, but they are first and foremost pedestrian environments. "Main Street" is the metaphor that is most appropriate, and a local model for this might be Main Street in Darien.

The elements of this "Main Street" idea create a safe and coherent pedestrian experience. Interventions include (1) street trees, pedestrian scaled lighting, benches, bus shelters, and other pedestrian amenities; (2) mandates and incentives for ground-floor shops with window displays and frequent entries; (3) prohibitions against ground-floor garage space and other design features that kill public enjoyment of public spaces; (4) pedestrian linkages to nearby residential neighborhoods; and (5) traffic calming—such as neck-downs at crosswalks—to reduce vehicular/pedestrian conflicts.

THREE CASE STUDIES

The following design studies illustrate these principles as applied to three neighborhoods in the City. In two of these, Glenbrook and Springdale, local residents participated in a community design workshop that produced a vision of a dense, mixed-use area connected to the two stations on the New Canaan branch of Metro North. In the third, Shippan Avenue, local residents, including members of the neighborhood association, expressed their support for a similar vision which would be part of a larger effort to clean up the Magee Avenue industrial area.

3.04 and 3.05 Hope Street

3.06 Aerial perspective view of the Springdale neighborhood center showing a completed "pedestrian-friendly" main street along Hope Street, mixed-use redevelopment in the industrial areas and a Noroton River Greenway (darker buildings indicate redevelopment concepts).

SPRINGDALE CASE STUDY

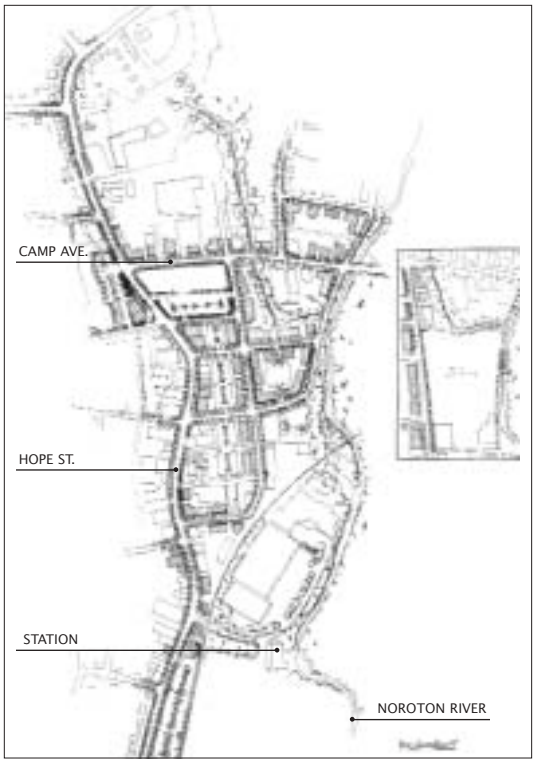
The major design and land use interventions for Springdale are described in Figures 3.07 through 3.11. The diagrams describe the general disposition of land uses, important new connections and gateways.

- Reinforce the identity of the Springdale "downtown"–(the portion of Hope Street that extends from the railroad station at the south to the little league field and elementary school to the north)–by promoting new, contextual infill development, uniform streetscape and landscape treatments, and façade and signage guidelines.
- Rationalize and interconnect parking lots behind stores
- Repair the discontinuities in the street network between Hope Street and the Noroton River. Extend the existing mix of commercial and light industrial uses into the new blocks and development parcels.
- Complete a "Noroton River Greenway"

A SPRINGDALE NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

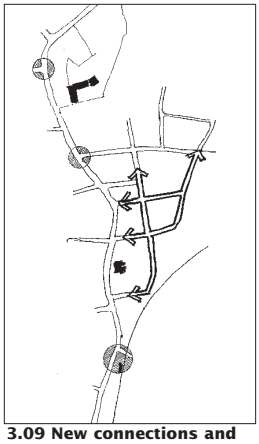
Proposed Conditions

- Complete the street network and connections in the industrial area (fig. 3.09)
- Create a greenway connection between Springdale Station and Drotar Park (fig. 3.10)
- Promote mixed-use commercial and industrial development (fig.3.11)
- Create a Hope Street "main street" from gateways at Springdale Station and at the Hope/Camp intersection (3.11)

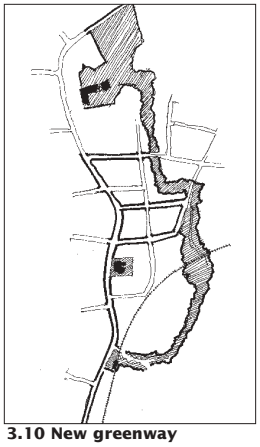


3.07 Springdale neighborhood center–illustrative plan

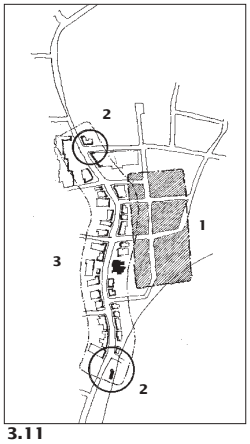
3.08 Springdale neighborhood aerial photograph



3.09 New connections and gateways



3.10 New greenway



3.11

3.11 Redevelopment concepts
1. Mixed-use commercial and industrial area
2. Gateway
3. Hope Street "Main Street"

3.12 Crescent Street

3.13 Glenbrook Road

3.14 Aerial perspective view of the Glenbrook neighborhood center showing a completed "pedestrian-friendly" main street along Glenbrook Road, centralized mixed-use redevelopment along Crescent Street and Church Street, and a new station and public space at the Church Street / Glenbrook Road intersection (darker buildings indicate redevelopment concepts).

GLENBROOK CASE STUDY

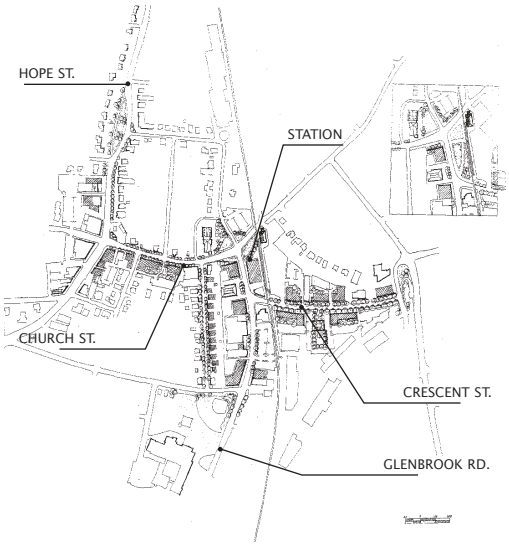
The major design and land use interventions for Glenbrook are described in Figures 3.15 through 3.19. The diagrams describe the general disposition of land uses, important new connections and gateways.

- Create a visible station area with a clear identity by opening up the platform to Glenbrook Road and relocating the Signal Department storage facility in the parking lot.
- Re-establish Glenbrook Road, from the school to Church Street, as the neighborhood "main street" by promoting new contextual in-fill development and implementing streetscape, landscape and façade improvement programs.
- Create an east-west link, with the station at the mid-point, from Courtland Avenue to Hope Street, by promoting contextual mixed-use development along Crescent Street and Church Street.
- Consolidate the residential character of Parker Avenue.

A GLENBROOK NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

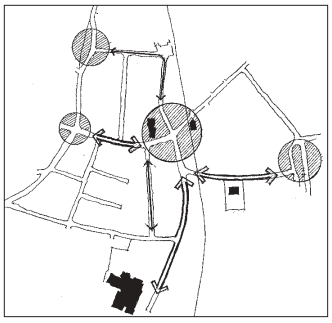
Proposed Conditions

- Link open spaces (3.18) and create gateways (3.17)
- Reinforce existing neighborhoods (fig. 3.19)
- Redevelope mixed-use corridors along Crescent and Church Streets (fig. 3.19)
- Reinforce a Glenbrook "main street" (fig. 3.19)
- Redesign the Hope Street commercial corridor (fig. 3.19)

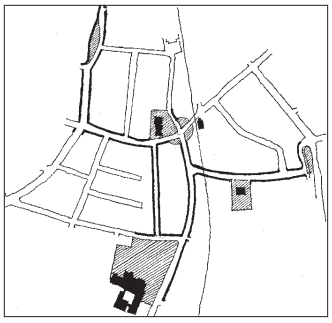


3.15 Glenbrook neighborhood center–illustrative plan

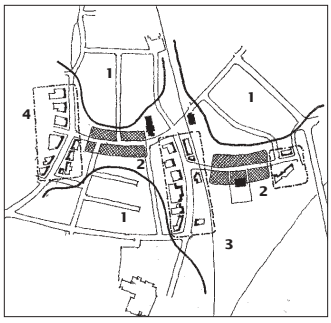
3.16 Glenbrook neighborhood center–aerial photograph



3.17 New connections and gateways



3.18 Open space connections



3.19 Redevelopment concepts
1. Neighborhoods
2. Mixed-use area
3. Glenbrook Road "main street"
4. Hope Street commercial area

3.20 Magee Avenue

3.21 Shippan Avenue

3.22 Aerial perspective view of the Shippan neighborhood center and Magee Avenue industrial area (darker buildings indicate redevelopment concepts).

SHIPPAN CASE STUDY

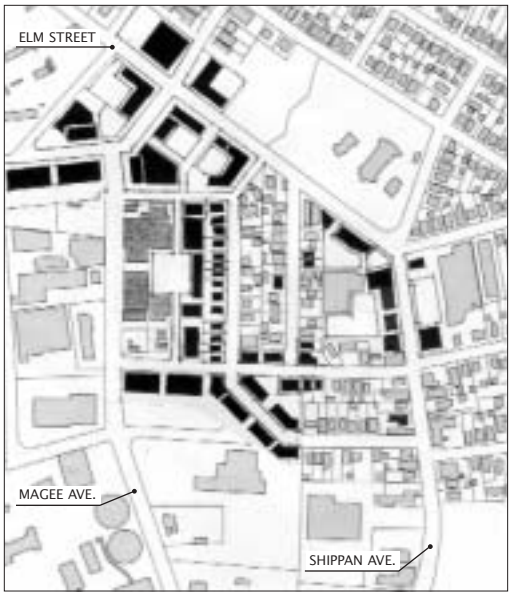
The major design and land use interventions for Shippan are described in Figures 3.23 through 3.27. The diagrams describe the general disposition of land uses, important new connections and gateways.

- Reinforce the "main street" portion of Shippan Avenue (the portion that extends from Cummings Park to the intersection with Elm and Cove Road) by promoting new contextual in-fill development and implementing streetscape, landscape and façade improvement programs. The design of Shippan Ave should reflect its role as part of a larger sequence of spaces that extends from Cummings Park to the downtown by way of Elm Street, one of the important radial corridors discussed previously.
- Repair discontinuities in the street network between Shippan Avenue and Magee Avenue. Clarify and consolidate the residential and industrial uses in the Halloween Boulevard area.
- Organize the industrial uses along Magee Avenue using the model of a modern "industrial park," with more clearly defined edges, improved frontage along Magee Avenue and transition at the mid-block to the residential uses along Halloween Boulevard.
- Consider connecting Halloween Boulevard to Elm Street as a way of consolidating the residential area around the Shippan Avenue shopping area. This will also ease the awkward intersection at Halloween, Magee and Jefferson which will be under more pressure after the

A SHIPPAN NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

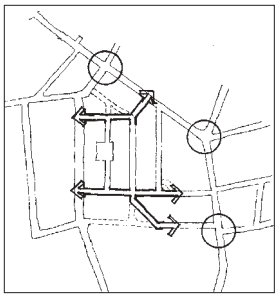
Proposed Conditions

- Complete street network (fig.3.25)
- Create a Shippan Ave. "main street" (fig 3.27)
- Upgrade Magee Ave. "industrial park" (fig. 3.27)
- Gateway redevelopment at Jefferson/Elm intersection (fig. 3.27)

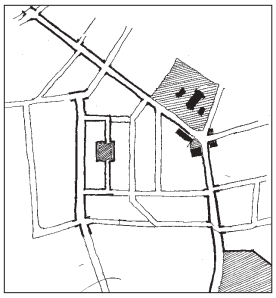


3.23 Shippan neighborhood center–existing and potential new buildings

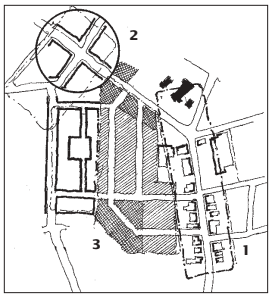
3.24 Shippan neighborhood center aerial photograph



3.25 New connections and gateways



3.26 Open space connections



3.27 Redevelopment concepts
1. Shippan Avenue "main street"
2. Gateway
3. Industrial area

A NOTE ABOUT NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Urban Transitway is completed.

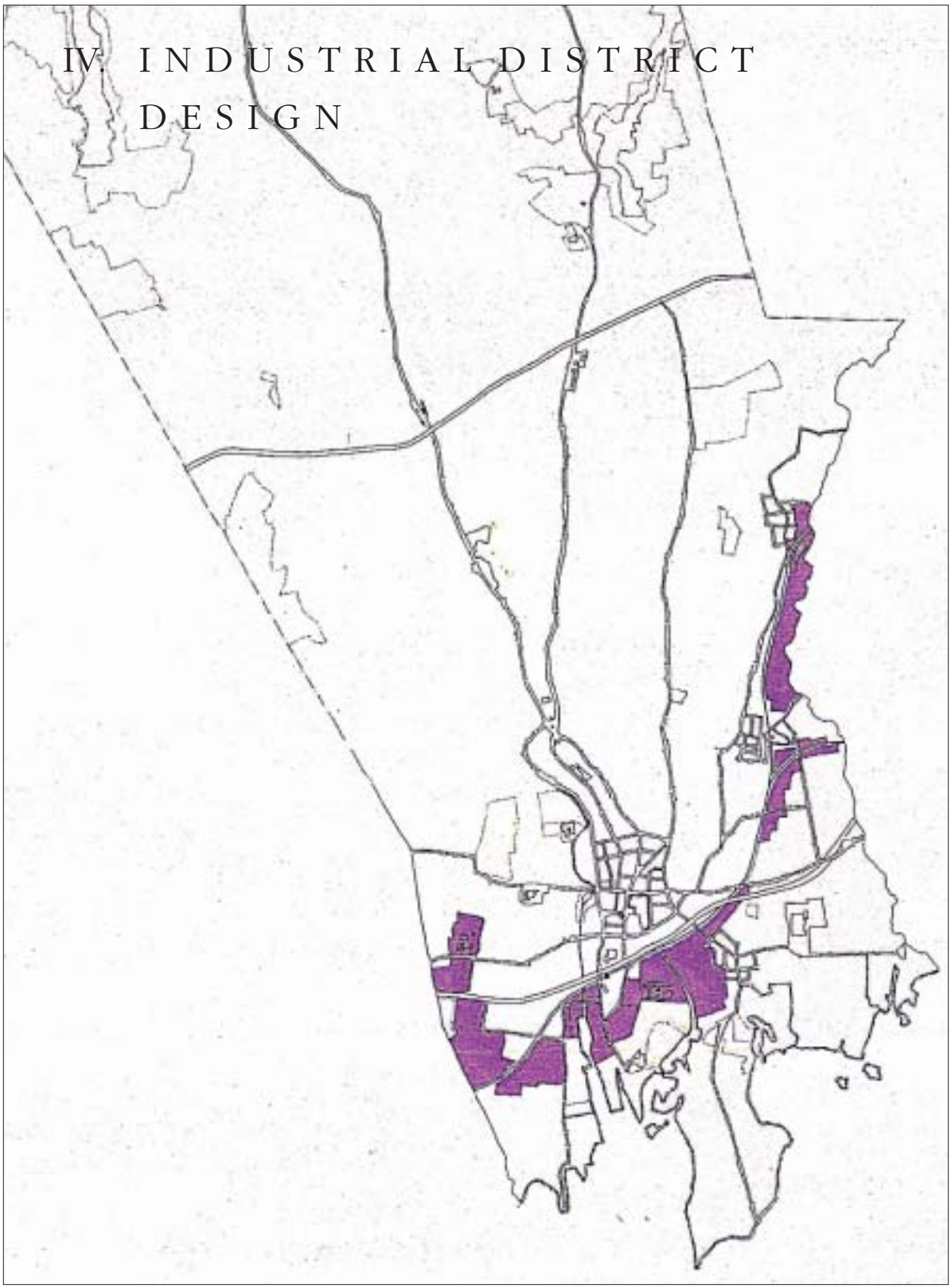
The community-based planning process that generated the neighborhood-specific plans for Glenbrook and Springdale demonstrated that neighborhoods are willing to talk about new development if the residents themselves have shaped the vision and if the new development supports their goals for neighborhood and community revitalization.

Even in the recent period of economic expansion, the neighborhood centers saw little redevelopment due to the comparative difficulties of building on small infill sites. Thus there are two prerequisites for the neighborhood center visions described here:

1. Levels of growth somewhat in excess of the Trend Scenario will be required. The Glenbrook plan would absorb about five or six percent of the Trend Levels of growth.

2. Pro-active participation of residents, the City and developers in creating redevelopment plans will be necessary to make infill sites available and to smooth what is otherwise an uncertain and time-consuming approvals process.

IV. INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT DESIGN



INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT DESIGN

The design of urban industrial districts is generally ignored. This reflects a legacy in modern town planning of trying to isolate manufacturing in segregated precincts or excising industry from the city altogether. These places are discounted as the sinks for any undesirable use. In fact, many other American cities have already discovered that the design of industrial districts is important for a number of reasons:

For one, these places have tremendous economic potential by becoming vibrant mixed–use live-work neighborhoods that attract investment of all kinds–from traditional manufacturing to high-value-added technology-based manufacturing to housing. The 1984 Master Plan Amendment did acknowledge the persistence of messy land-use patterns with houses and factories side-by-side. But policies should go beyond simply stabilizing and managing the messy land use patterns and seek instead to exploit their mixed-use character, recognizing the role design plays in resolving adjacencies between residential and industrial uses.

Second, if properly designed, these mixed-use industrial areas can become physically integrated with the surrounding neighborhood, providing opportunities to complete fractured street networks and make new connections.

Third, by making these places more attractive to new investment in industry, and by helping to stabilize the working neighborhoods that surround them, Stamford's industrial districts remain important facets of Stamford's goals for economic and social diversity.

URBAN MANUFACTURING RECONSIDERED

The continued vitality of industrial mixed-use neighborhoods, and the tendency for manufacturers, especially small manufacturers, to thrive as part of the so-called "agglomeration economies" of urban locations, has caused many cities to rethink traditional zoning and planning strategies. The traditional proposition that urban manufacturing should either be uprooted entirely or completely isolated from all other land uses is being questioned. At the same time, changes in technology have enabled a wide variety of manufacturers to

4.01 A typical mixed-use industrial area

EDGE AND ENTRY

EDGE AND CORE

1. Cytec
2. Waterside
3. N.E. Utilities
4. Yale and Towne
5. Magee Avenue
6. Clairol
7. Springdale

4.02 Industrial District Framing Diagram

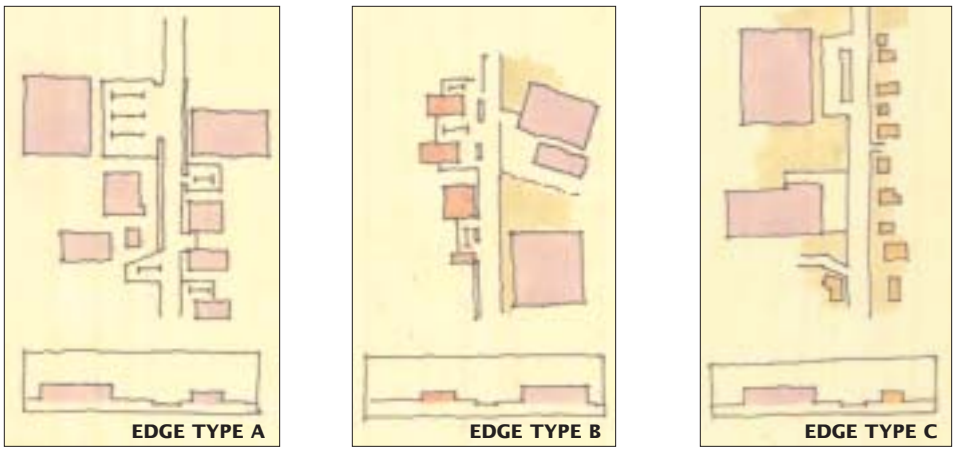
co-locate with commercial and residential uses. Examples are electronic assembly, wood-working and graphics/publishing. All of this suggests a more fine-grained approach to urban manufacturing, including "performance zoning" for mixed-use areas in lieu of conventional use-based zoning. (See discussion in Policy Plan). From an urban design perspective, the varied geography of Stamford's industrial districts can be thought of in terms of two models: "edge and entry" and "edge and core".

EDGE AND ENTRY

Many of the city's industrial districts are large areas of consolidated industrial use neatly demised by some element of Stamford geography–a rail line, a highway, or jurisdictional boundary. Because these industrial areas abut residential neighborhoods only along a single edge, the interior organization and workings of the industrial district are not critical to the neighborhood structure. Although there are opportunities for new roadway connections between and through these industrial districts to provide better road access off of neighborhood streets, these are not areas where the adjoining neighborhood street pattern should be extended into the core of these districts. Nevertheless, the design of the edge of the industrial district and the entry to the industrial district is extremely important to the quality of life of the abutting neighborhood.

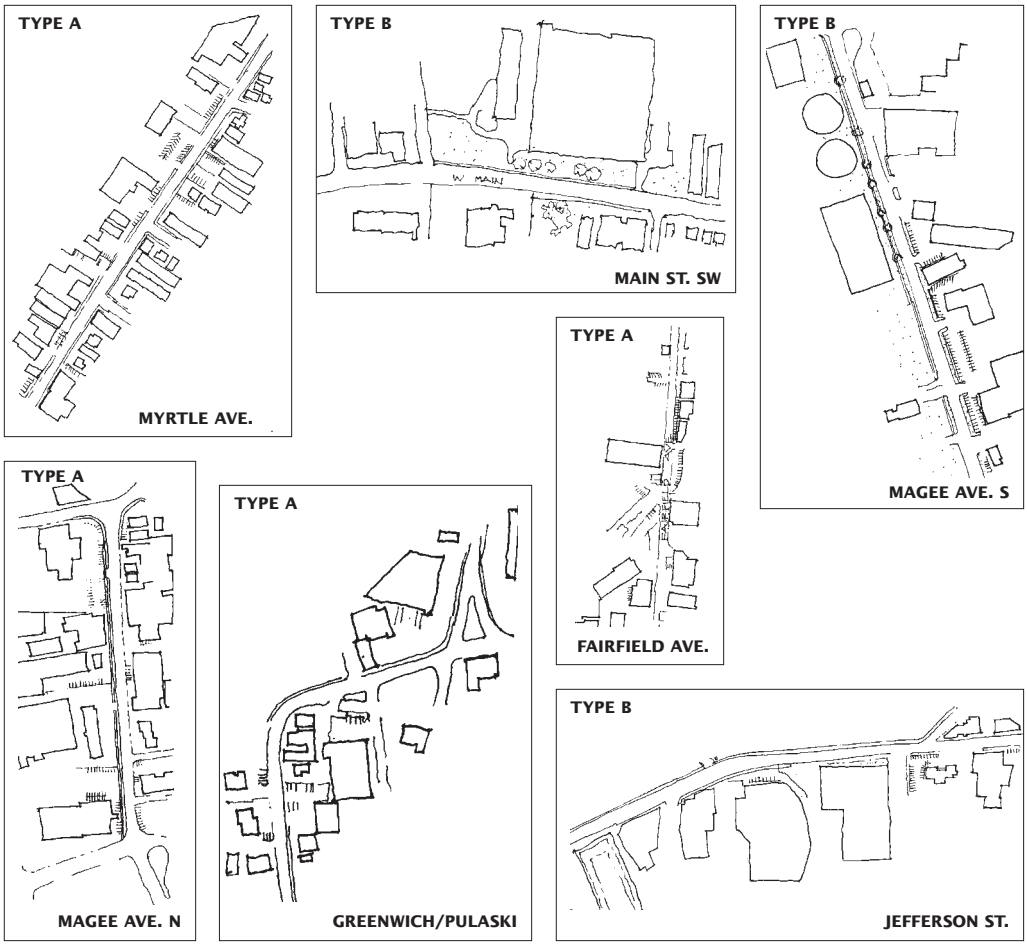
Regardless of how viable or active the businesses within an industrial area may be, the unsightly physical environment–of buildings poorly maintained, sidewalks in disrepair or non-existent–suggests disinvestment. Many of the older buildings have few windows or entrances at the sidewalk, and the buildings are often surrounded by leftover parking, storage or loading areas.

The design studies below suggest ways to make these places visually more appealing and to attract new investment.



4.03 The range of conditions found at the edges of the industrial districts. These can be consolidated into three principal configurations: industrial corridor (A), commercial/industrial corridor (B), and mixed-use edge (C).

4.04 Industrial edges–existing conditions



TYPES OF INDUSTRIAL EDGES

A. Industrial Corridor

B. Commercial/Industrial Corridor

C. Mixed-Use Edge

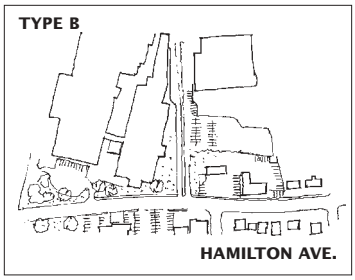
Types of Industrial Edges

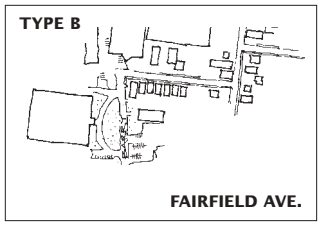
A. Industrial Corridor Here, a variety of small and intermediate scale businesses line both sides of the road. It is a jumble of buildings–there is little that is consistent along the corridor with buildings of different scales, each sited in its own way without regard to its neighbors or the street.

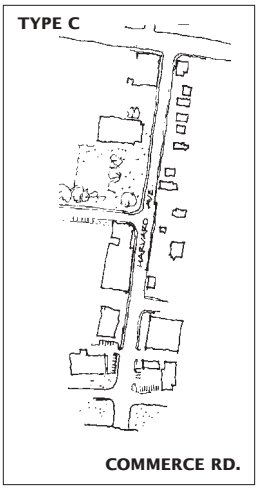
B. Commercial/Industrial Corridor Here, the edges of the district are characterized not only by a change of scale, but of use: commercial buildings on one side of the street confront a large parcel on the opposite side, with one or two large industrial buildings well set back from the street.

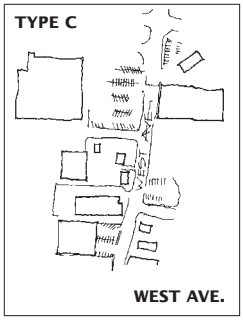
C. Mixed-Use Edge In these locations, one side of the road is the residential edge of a neighborhood. The other side is characterized by the same physical disorder and apparent disinvestments described for the industrial corridor.

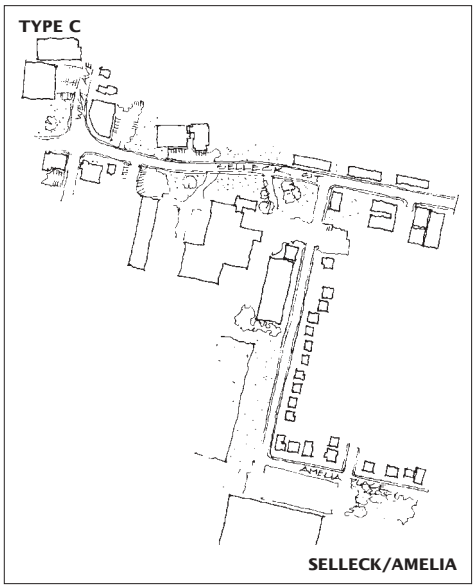
The design studies on the following pages describe a variety of interventions for each of these three typical conditions.

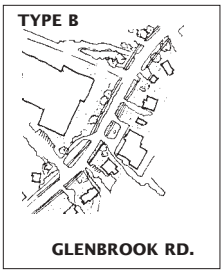


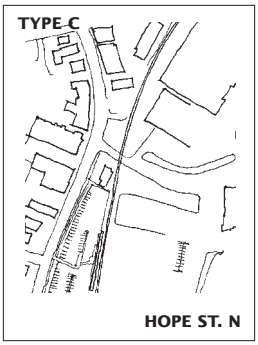








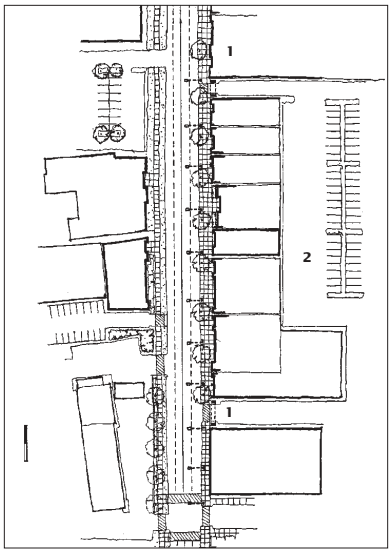




INDUSTRIAL EDGE A

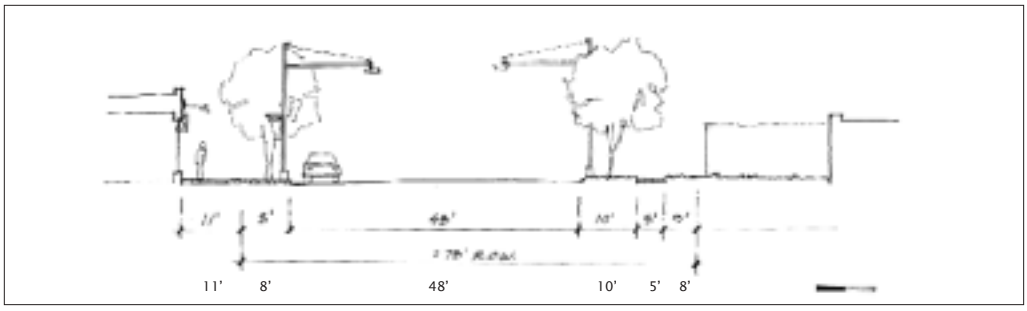
Industrial Corridor
Proposed Conditions

- Completed sidewalks and paving improvements
- Uniform street trees and streetscape elements
- Facade improvements
- Pedestrian improvements at intersections
- Articulated entrances to reorganized interior of the industrial blocks (1)
- Reorganized and landscaped parking areas (2)



4.05 Magee Avenue–proposed conditions

4.06 Magee Avenue–aerial photograph



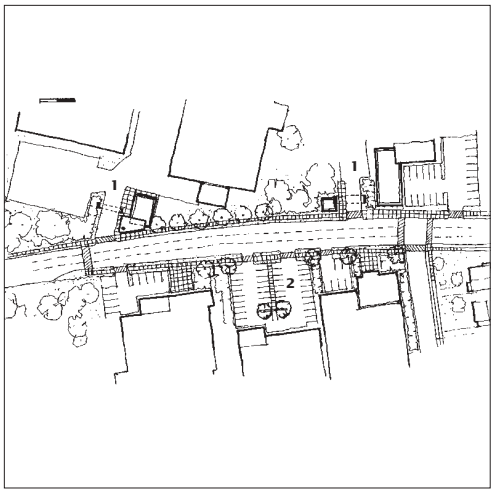
4.07 Magee Avenue–proposed section

4.08 Magee Avenue

INDUSTRIAL EDGE B

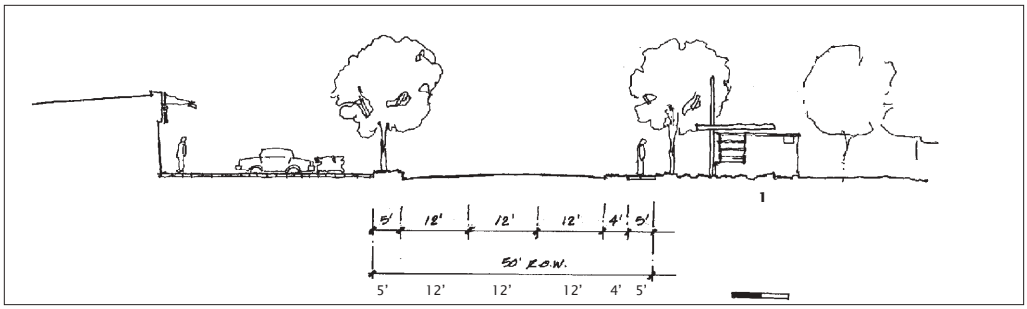
Commercial/Industrial Corridor
Proposed Conditions

- Completed sidewalks
- Clearly identified and accessible building entrances (1)
- Uniform landscaping and streetscape
- Reorganized and landscaped parking areas (2)



4.09 Hamilton Avenue–proposed conditions

4.10 Hamilton Avenue–aerial photograph



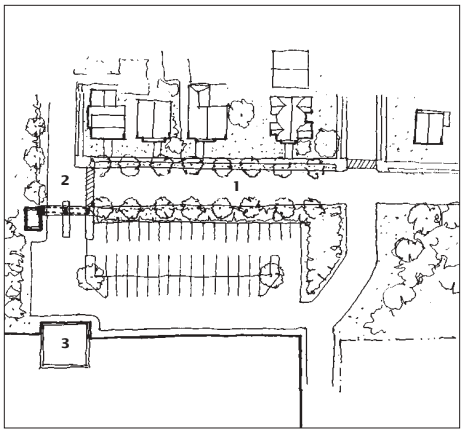
4.11 Hamilton Avenue–proposed section

4.12 West Main at edge of Cytec industrial campus

INDUSTRIAL EDGE C

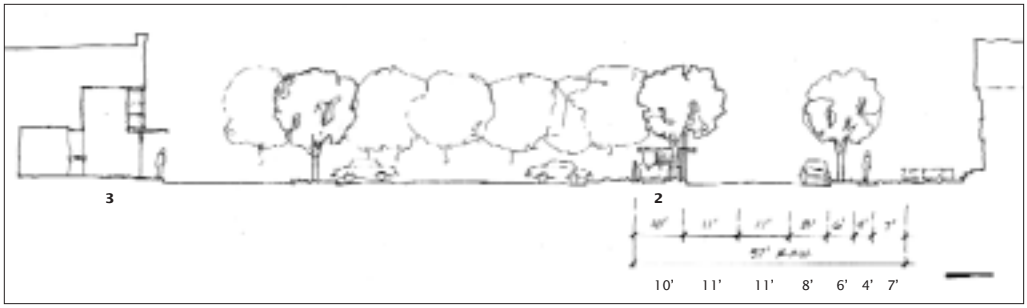
Mixed-Use Edge
Proposed Conditions

- Completed sidewalks and intersection improvements
- Uniform landscaping and buffering parking lot (1)
- Architectural gateway to industrial property (2)
- Architectural building entry, perhaps created with new floor area allowances (3)



4.13 Amelia Place–proposed conditions

4.14 Amelia Place–aerial photograph



4.15 Amelia Place–proposed section

4.16 Amelia Place–existing conditions

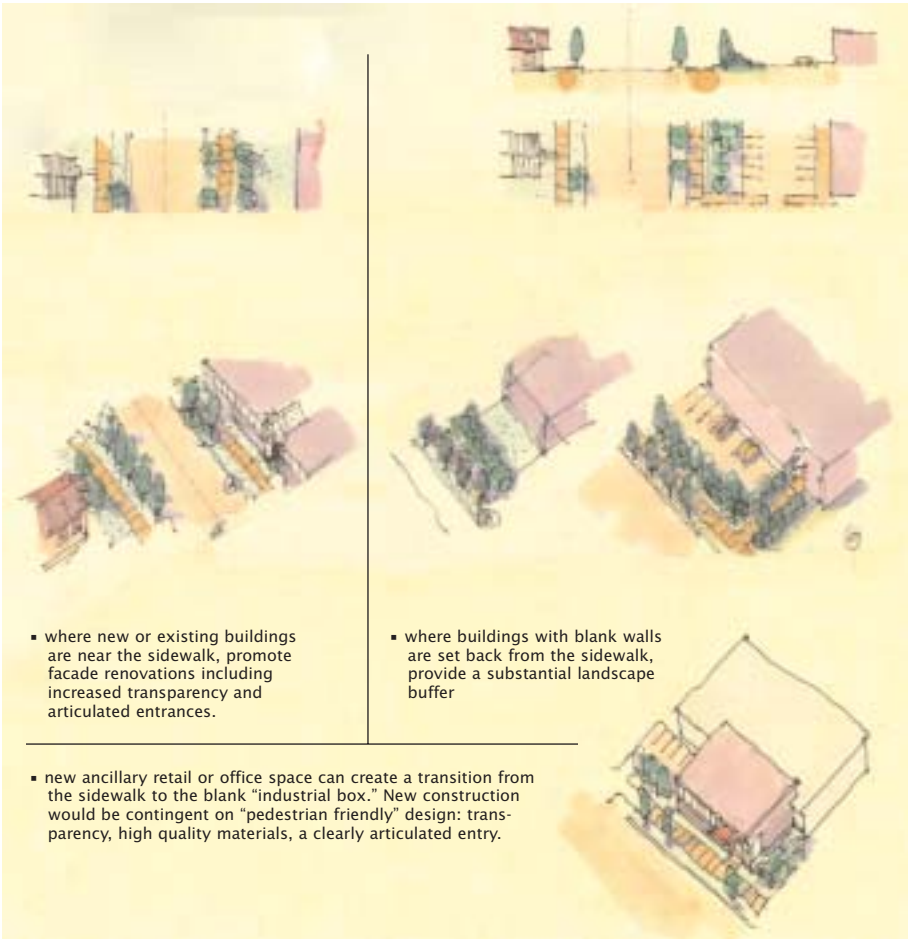
4.17

4.18

4.19

4.17 through 4.19 Precedents for edges and entries of industrial areas

EDGE DESIGN STRATEGIES

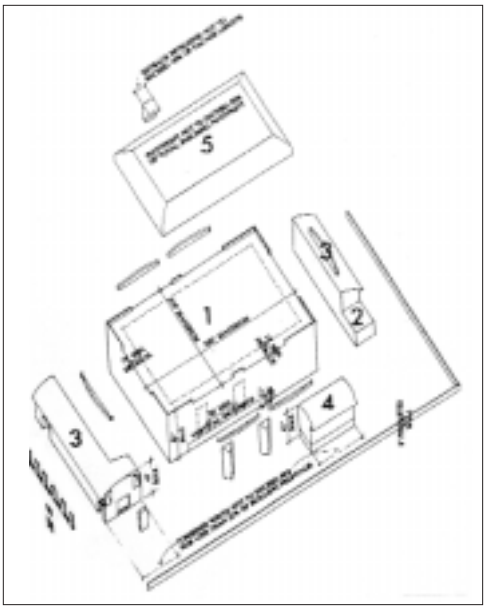


4.20 Design studies for industrial edges (applicable for industrial edge types A, B, or C)

EDGE AND CORE INDUSTRIAL AREAS

4.21 The Bayer industrial facility in Berkeley, California redesigned as a technology-based mixed-use district with urban amenities.

More challenging than the “edge and entry” conditions are places where industrial districts are surrounded by neighborhoods and where there are messy mixed-use areas, especially at the edges. These areas are called “edge and core” districts, reflecting the potential to extend the surrounding street network into the core of the industrial area, making the industrial and residential areas mutually supportive. These are the more difficult industrial areas to manage, but these are also the industrial areas with the most potential to complete the street network and make new connections within the neighborhood. In combination with a commitment to industrial retention, these can become diverse and vibrant live-work neighborhoods.



4.22

At the Bayer Corporation's biotechnology research and production facilities (Berkeley, California) the factory "box" was transformed by making new openings and clipping on new program spaces and architectural elements. Zoning bonuses could promote these kinds of improvements.

This vision has been successfully implemented in a number of places. One of the most interesting is the Bayer Corporation's biotechnology research and production facilities in Berkeley, California. A number of strategies were used to transform this older industrial area into an attractive place for high-value-added research and development. First, rather than creating a closed precinct, an integrated network of streets and open spaces was created which informed a comprehensive strategy for landscape, streetscape and building façade improvements. The second major strategy was to modify and transform some of the existing industrial buildings. The designers accepted the practical, programmatic necessity of the factory "box" with its high ceilings and simple facades with few windows. Then they modified, tamed and transformed the box by cutting in new openings or clipping on new elements such as industrial lights and canopies or even building additions for new programmatic elements.

These kinds of improvements will not happen without a proactive commitment by both the City and the surrounding neighborhood. Some of it can be accomplished with incentives. For example, floor area bonuses could be granted in return for meeting some of the urban design goals, particularly if a new addition to the building creates a better edge at a boundary with a residential district. For example, an ancillary front office space, or even a retail outlet for the product, might be allowed if the addition has a well-designed façade, entry and sidewalk plan (see figure 4.20, page 107). Various tax abatements may also be necessary.

4.23 In the Waterside area, houses and factories coexist.

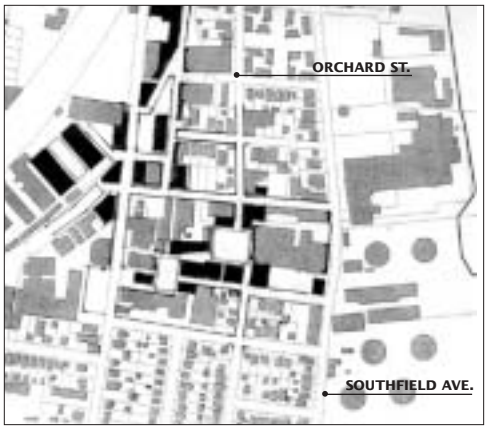
4.24 Aerial perspective of Waterside industrial district redesigned as mixed-use industrial district integrated with the surrounding neighborhood. (Darker colors indicate redevelopment concepts).

A variety of interventions would enhance the appearance and function of industrial properties. The irregular leftover spaces used for parking, loading and storage could be consolidated and rationalized. Some of the new spaces could be dedicated to shared parking and loading operations. Consolidation of these manufacturing-related activities would help manage small truck traffic within the district, minimizing conflicts with nearby residential uses. Other new spaces could become shared plazas with landscaping.

MIXED-USE INDUSTRIAL NEIGHBORHOOD

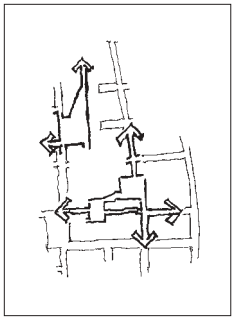
Proposed Conditions

- Create a new network of open spaces (fig. 4.28) with linkages to the neighborhood (4.27)
- Conserve and rationalize leftover parking, loading and storage areas

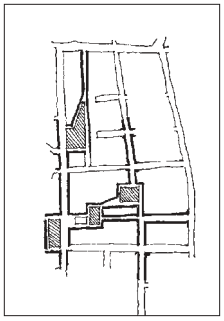


4.25 Waterside–existing and potential new buildings

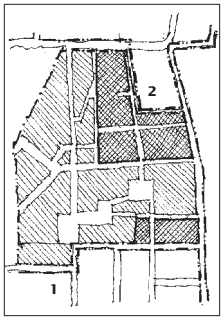
4.26 Waterside–aerial photograph



4.27 New neighborhood connections



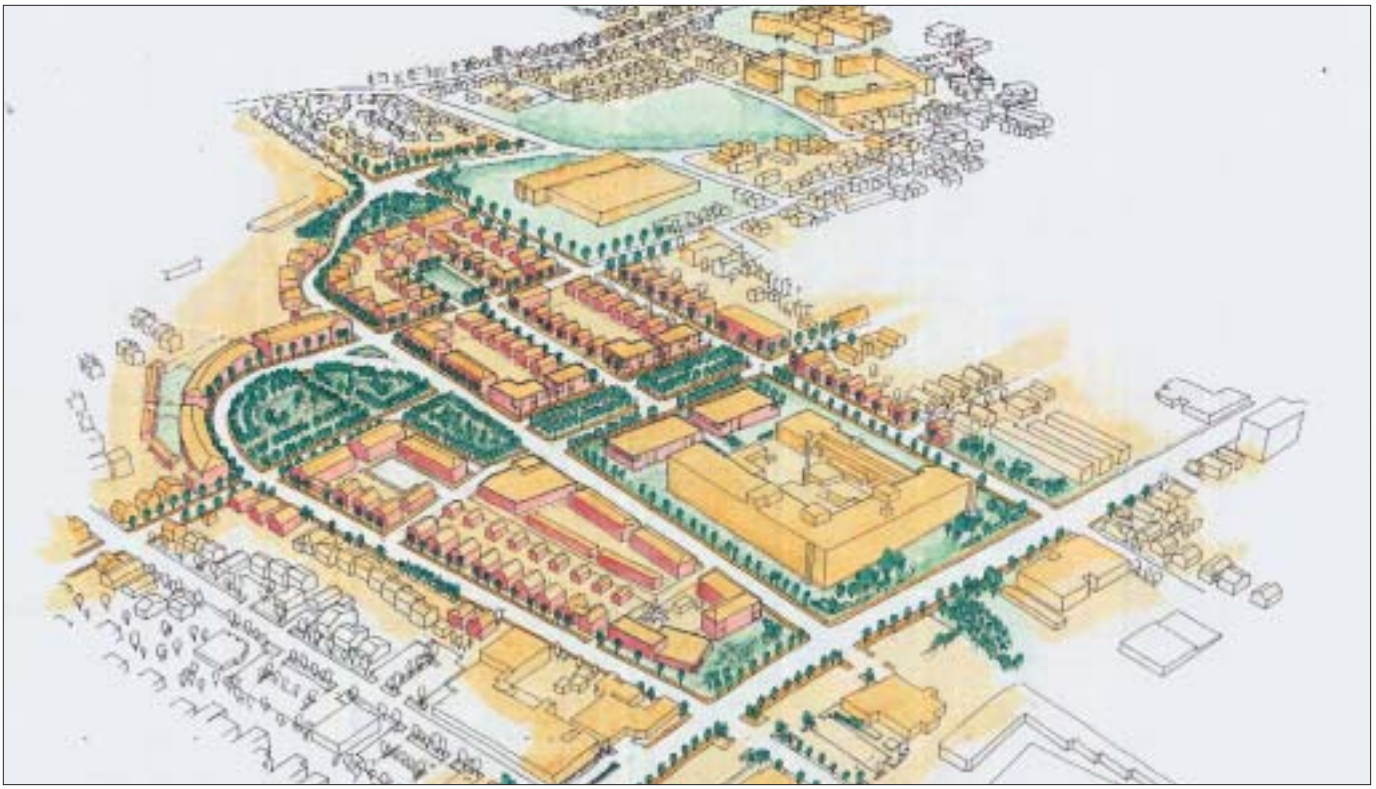
4.28 New open space network



4.29 Development concepts
1. Industrial area
2. Mixed-use area

These spaces are not only a shared amenity for the industrial workers, but can become part of a new open space network linking the manufacturing district to the surrounding street network. Gateways to these spaces will give the district a new, positive identity. Pedestrian circulation to the neighborhood will be improved. Over time, improved appearance and performance will help attract more investment. The long-term vision is one in which this becomes a "flex district," an incubator for a variety of small, high value added manufacturers. This case study, in the Waterside industrial area, illustrates how the principles might play out in Stamford.

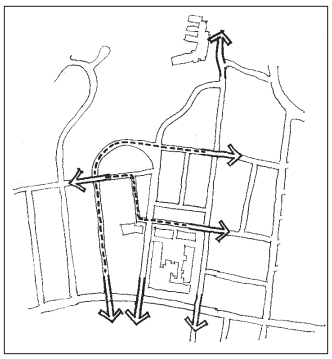
4.30 and 4.31 Photos of existing older builidngs



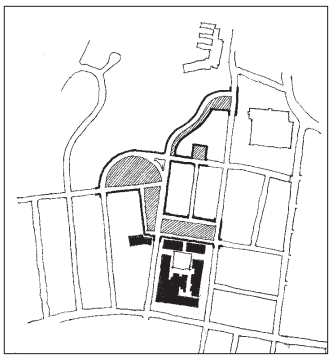
4.32 Aerial perspective of an older industrial campus redeveloped and reintegrated with its surroundings by introducing new connecting streets and residential, as well as industrial, uses. (Darker buildings represent redevelopment concepts.)

THE LARGE INDUSTRIAL CAMPUS

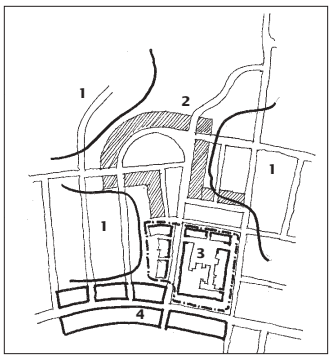
The other edge and core opportunities are at the few remaining large single sites such as Cytec and Clairol. As suggested elsewhere, these may ultimately become mapped as Mixed-Use Overlay Districts (MOD's). Ideally, in keeping with the goals for economic diversity, these sites would remain exclusively industrial in use. However, changes in manufacturing technology may mean that less space is required in older buildings, that more space is needed in modern flex buildings and that manufacturing processes become cleaner, setting the stage for mixed-use development even as the basic manufacturing use is retained. As this happens,



4.33 New neighborhood connections



4.34 New open space network



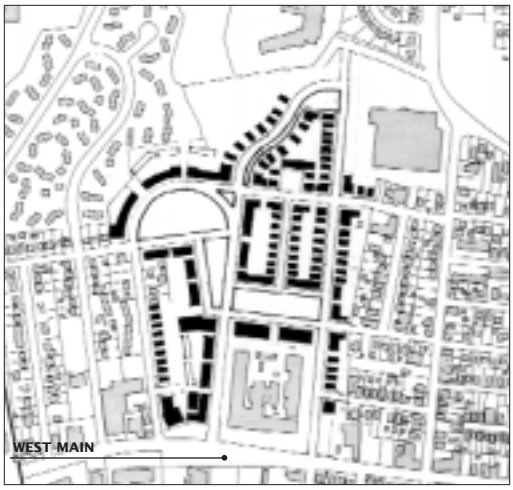
4.35

4.35 Redevelopment Strategy
1. Neighborhoods
2. Higher density housing
3. Industrial area
4. Commercial corridor

MIXED USE INDUSTRIAL CAMPUS

Proposed Conditions

- Create a new network of open spaces (fig. 4.34) and linkages to the neighborhood (fig. 4.33)
- Extend the existing neighborhoods into the site with higher density housing around the open spaces (fig. 4.35)
- Promote technology-based industry in new and existing buildings (fig. 4.35)
- Redesign the commercial corridor (fig. 4.35)



4.36 The industrial campus–existing and potential new buildings

4.37 The industrial campus–aerial photograph

new opportunities to complete fractured street networks by extending roads from the neighborhoods into the core of the sites should be exploited.

Figures 4.33 through 4.37 illustrate one way in which a Mixed-Used Overlay District, endorsed in the neighborhood plan, might play out on the Cytec site. The attractive and monumental loft building is retained but modernized and perhaps subdivided. Several modern industrial buildings create a campus around the original structure. The edge of the property along West Main becomes part of an improved business corridor as mapped in this Master Plan.

Over much of the rest of the site, a new street and block pattern is created by extending the streets in the surrounding neighborhoods into and through the site. A new system of parks and open spaces winds through the site. The new blocks support single-family houses at the same density as the surrounding neighborhood with some low-rise multifamily housing facing the parks.

There are two important cautionary notes with regards to these suggested improvements to

A CAUTION

industrial districts. First, the market place alone will not support them. The Growth Management study suggests that in the absence of policies for economic diversification, traditional manufacturing employment will decline even in the best of economic times. On the other hand, a commitment to up-grading these areas will facilitate a smart growth strategy that promotes conversion to high-value-added, technology-based industries. On the other hand, to prevent these policies from simply "gentrifying" industrial districts for housing or actually office uses, there must be a commitment to industrial employment, clarifying the distinction between "new industry" and office uses. While the potential benefits for a mixed-use live-work neighborhood industrial district are many, mixed-use will become a vehicle for industrial displacement in the absence of a commitment to industrial retention. One of the "performance criteria" for these places must be its ability to support the City's industrial base and to stem displacement.

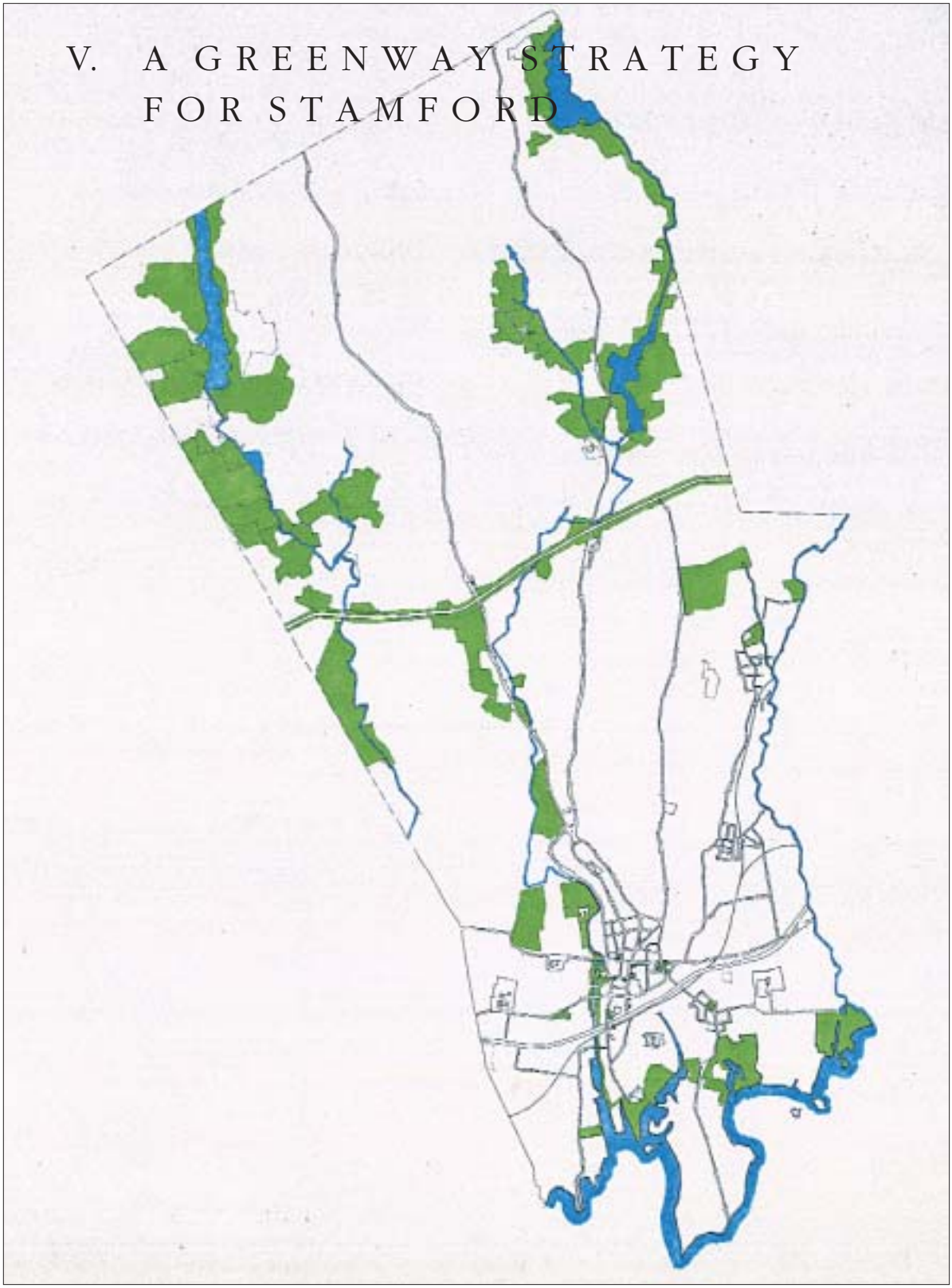
A NOTE ABOUT THE INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT

The Growth Management model suggests that industrial employment will decline, making these districts vulnerable to retail and office encroachment. Collectively, there is the theoretical capacity for more than two million square feet of retail and office development, most of which needs to be directed to transit-accessible locations in downtown or neighborhood centers.

The vision presented here, of a vibrant mixed-use district, is only possible if 1) retail and office encroachment is limited and if 2) a portion of potential office development in these districts is redirected towards technology-based industries that support and build on Stamford's manufacturing base.

A more complete discussion, including benchmark goals for limits on encroachment of non-industrial uses is presented in the Economic Development report.

V. A GREENWAY STRATEGY FOR STAMFORD



A GREENWAY STRATEGY FOR STAMFORD

5.01 The Swan Plan called for a greenway and parkway network

5.02 Stamford has many wonderful open spaces and parks

Stamford's high quality of life, and indeed the physical well-being of the residents, will depend on access to a variety of open spaces. These include small neighborhood parks as well as larger city-wide parks and places for quiet walks and contemplation as well as active recreation. In addition, with its miles of coastline, Stamford residents should have visual and physical access to the water. The original Swan Plan map shows the extent to which Stamford was thought of as a "Garden City", with a great parkway system following the rivers from the north into the downtown. The goal of this initiative should be to recapture that spirit.

SYNERGY: CONNECTING THE GREEN DOTS

A recent study suggests that by some criteria, Stamford has a deficit of 1000 acres of publicly available open space (see the Parks Master Plan prepared by Ward Associates, 1998). Even in a "low growth scenario," as many as 70 acres of new open space would be required just to prevent the deficit from getting worse. In a more likely "trend scenario," 130 acres would be needed.

Given this, it is essential that, to the greatest extent possible, the available open space resources are linked to the neighborhoods and to each other to insure that the whole of the open space fabric is more than just the sum of many disparate and disconnected pieces.

One essential component of this strategy is to embrace a more expansive definition of what constitutes an open space resource. "Open space" must be more than just public parks. It includes the lawns and playgrounds around public schools; the well manicured lawns of the major corporate campuses; the properties held by quasi-public entities such as the Land Trust and the water company.

Finally, an expansive conception of open space includes consideration of properties that are privately held, which may be purchased in whole or in part or may be accessible through easement, and which, at the very least, provide relief–if only through visual access–from Stamford's dense urban and suburban pattern. In this context, Stamford's lowest density neighborhoods (Master Plan Categories 1 and 2) are themselves a kind of open space resource that should be protected and thought of as part of the overall open space pattern.

5.03 A Greenway Strategy for Stamford: the publicly owned open spaces, open spaces such as schools and the water company properties, and certain strategic private open spaces can together comprise a comprehensive greenway network for Stamford.

This more comprehensive thinking about open space is acknowledged in the new Master Plan, Category 17, "Open Space - Overlay," and on the maps in this chapter.

GREENWAYS: MOBILITY, EQUITY AND HEALTH

The need for a comprehensive and connected green network is more than an aesthetic priority. It is intimately linked to opportunities for alternative forms of mobility, in particular bicycle and pedestrian modes. In turn, new linkages for bicycles and pedestrians are part of a public health agenda that enables and promotes a more active lifestyle as a way of addressing increasing rates of obesity, heart disease and other ailments linked to sedentary urban living. Finally, to the extent that a connected greenway network increases activity and health, it is connected to issues of diversity and equity in disadvantaged and minority neighborhoods.

ELEMENTS OF A GREENWAY NETWORK

In the largely established suburban landscape of Stamford, there are many constraints to a comprehensive greenway network, but there are also a variety of opportunities. These are organized into four major categories: trails and greenways, boulevards and green streets, neighborhood connectors and waterfront access.

Trails and Greenways

There are limited but important opportunities to create off-road trails and greenways, and two major opportunities in particular. The Merritt Parkway Trail is an important regional and local connection that has been discussed since the 1920's. It was the subject of a recent RPA study of a prototypical section that demonstrated the feasibility, cost effectiveness and desirability of a trailway.

The other major opportunity is along the Long Ridge Road corridor. Despite the automobile orientation of Long Ridge Road, this corridor is one of the centerpieces of a north-south greenway network. By virtue of the number of contiguous public open spaces and large private open spaces, in particular the corporate campuses, it is possible to create a greenway off of Long Ridge Road, for most of its length, that stretches from the Merritt Parkway to the Mill River Corridor and ultimately to Long Island Sound (see Long Ridge Road Design Study #2 in Chapter 2). North of the Merritt, this Greenway corridor can take advantage of a large number of contiguous private landholdings that may be targets for acquisition.

Other greenway opportunities include the Mianus River, where public lands link the Merritt Parkway to the Mianus River Park, and the Noroton River Greenway, north of Glenbrook. Here, the west side of the Noroton River is lined with large properties in the Research Drive and Riverbend industrial areas, which would simplify negotiations for easements and acquisitions. (South of Glenbrook Road, homes line the river, making a greenway more difficult to implement). The Noroton River Greenway is promoted in the Springdale Neighborhood Plan (see page 90-91).

5.04

5.05

5.04 and 5.05 Examples of well-designed greenways: attention to landscaping, textures of materials, and signage

5.05

5.06 The Mill River Greenway should be completed

5.06

5.06 Green Streets–existing conditions

5.07

5.08

5.07 Neighborhood Connectors–existing condition

5.08 Neighborhood Connectors–precedent

Green Streets

Another component of a comprehensive green network would be "green streets." These are roadways on which landscape architecture, in particular street trees and hedges, gives the street an identity and clearly defines the space of the street. The green streets include the several radial roads that extend from the Pedestrian Core of the downtown into the neighborhoods (see discussion in Chapter 2). The landscape architecture along these radial corridors should extend into the heart of the downtown, becoming part of the proposed open space plan for downtown.

Finally, High Ridge Road, re-conceived as a tree-lined suburban boulevard, is the grandest expression of the "green street" concept. In the area of High Ridge and Long Ridge Roads, the key neighborhood gateways and east-west connections are part of the overall greenway strategy. (see discussion of Long Ridge Road and High Ridge Road designs in Chapter 2).

Neighborhood Connectors

The most understated, but, nevertheless, an essential component of the greenway network, are these typical neighborhood streets that link neighborhoods, open spaces and the other components of the greenway network. These roads, because they are through collectors for smaller roads, will continue to carry automobiles in significant numbers. However, they are roads that in general have sidewalks and, although they are not always wide enough for a dedicated bike lane, they can accommodate a "share the road" strategy with bicycles. Traffic calming techniques must assure a pedestrian-friendly experience along these roads. The bicycle and trails map in the Traffic and Transit Report identifies the roads that are part of the bicycle network.

Waterfront

As in most cities that developed around connections to water as well as rail, much of Stamford's waterfront is inaccessible because of water-dependent industrial uses. Only a fraction of the total water frontage is publicly held. Nevertheless, a comprehensive greenway network strategy should maximize the amount of continuous access along the water. Fortunately, many of the waterfront properties in the industrial areas are larger, facilitating negotiations for waterfront access as part of long-term redevelopment.

Even in the places where the city is promoting water-dependent manufacturing, waterfront access should be considered. In those places where physical access is not possible or safe, visual access should be considered, including sight lines down streets which extend to the waterfront.

These strategies can be most effective in the South End where it is possible to link Scalzi Park, the Mill River Greenway, significant portions of the West and East Channels and Cummings Park. Neighborhood connecting streets would create linkages to Cove Island Park and a Weed Avenue greenway, and in this way, tie together more than half of the city's waterfront resources.

5.09

5.09 Stamford has many miles of shoreline but much of it is inaccessible, sometimes because of relatively minor obstacles such as lack of sidewalks.

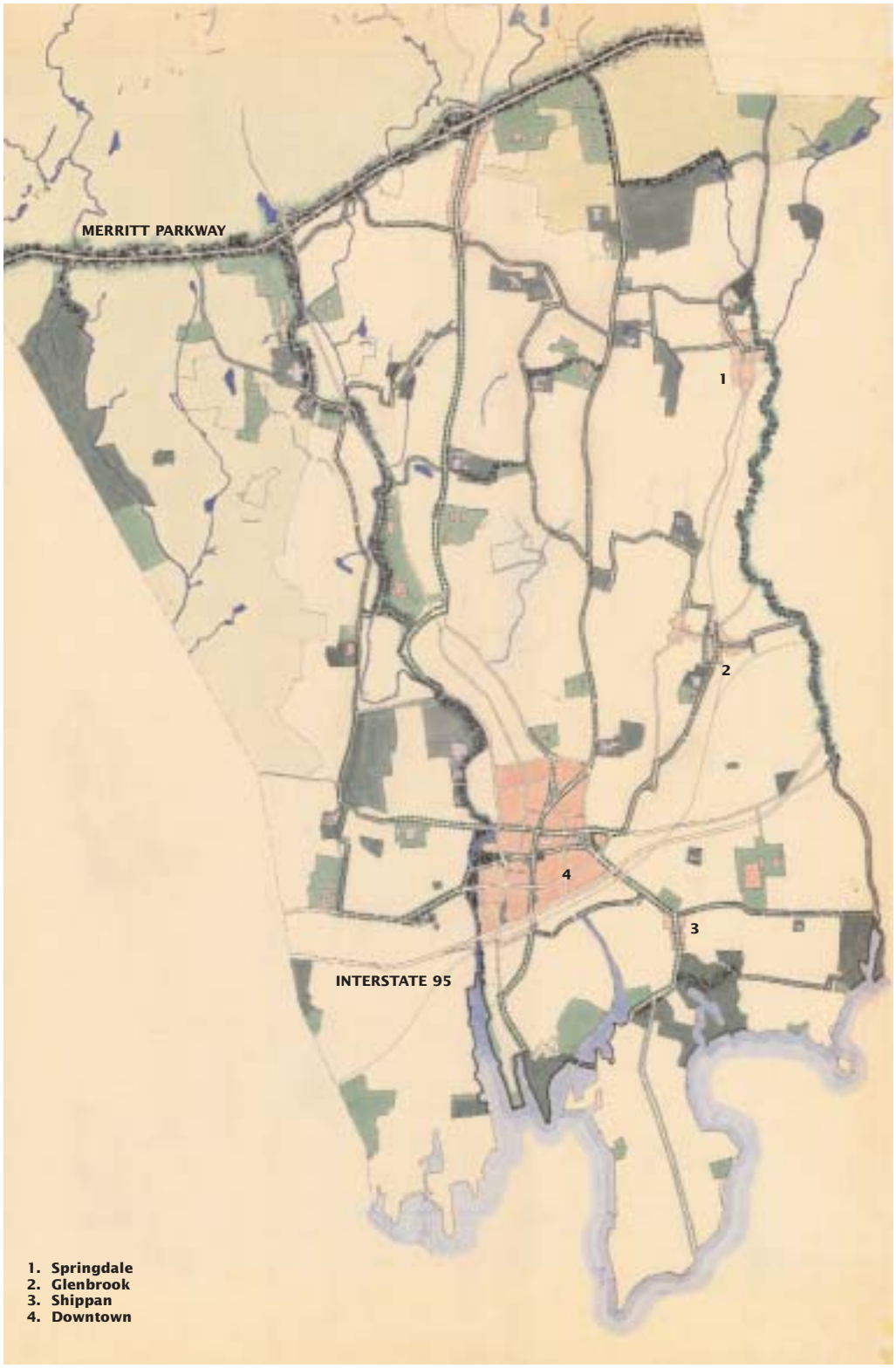
5.10

5.10 Even in active industrial areas, every opportunity for visual and physical waterfront access should be taken.

5.11

5.12

5.11 and 5.12 Examples of waterfront edges: a variety of designs from the most urban to the most natural will be needed in Stamford.



PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

PRIVATE OPEN SPACE

GREENWAY

TRAFFIC CALMING/
BICYCLE ROUTE

STREET LANDSCAPING

5.14 Stamford Greenway Network
This network links neighborhoods with open spaces of all kinds using the full array of strategies described in this chapter.