

STAMFORD MASTER PLAN 2002
GROWTH MANAGEMENT STUDY

URBAN DESIGN REPORT
SUMMARY REPORT
SEPTEMBER 2003



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INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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 City-wide Policies Report. 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 City-wide Policies Report, 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

**AREA-SPECIFIC DESIGN STUDIES
IN THIS REPORT**

**Note: the full Urban Design Report
outlines design studies for these
locations.**

DOWNTOWN

- 1. Downtown – Chapter I

ROADWAY CORRIDORS

Radial Corridors

- 2. E. Main St. – pg. 49
- 3. Elm St. – pg. 53
- 4. Atlantic St. – pg. 57
- 5. W. Main St. – pg. 61
- 6. W. Broad St. – pg. 65

Edge Corridors

- 7. Washington Blvd. – pg. 70
- 8. US-1/E. Main St. – pg. 71
- 9. Tresser Blvd. – pg. 72
- 10. US-1/W. Main St. #1 – pg. 73
- 11. US-1/W. Main St. #2 – pg. 74

High Ridge and Long Ridge Roads

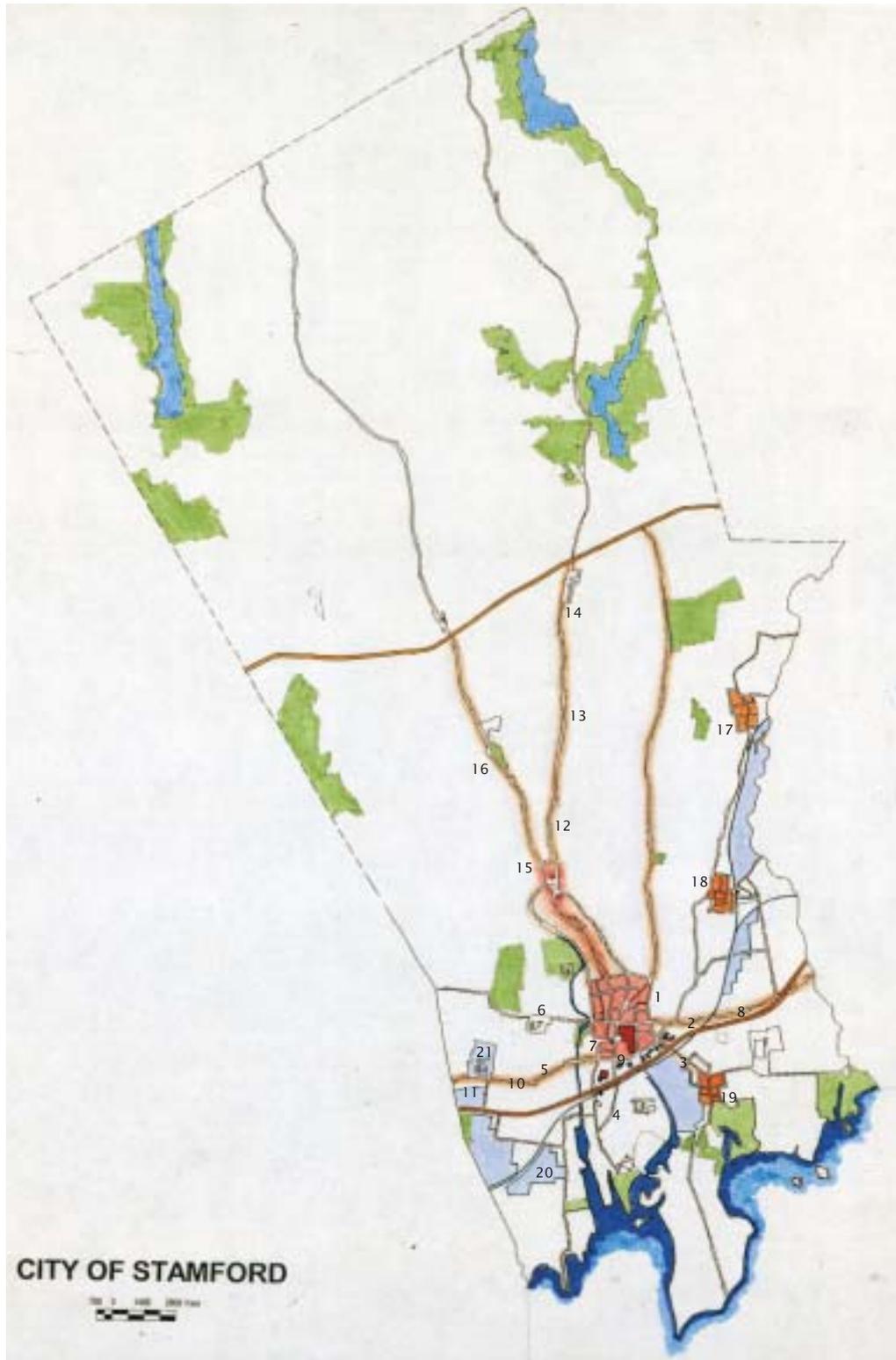
- 12. High Ridge Rd. #1 – pg. 78
- 13. High Ridge Rd. #2 – pg. 79
- 14. High Ridge Rd. #3 – pg. 80
- 15. Long Ridge Rd. #1 – pg. 81
- 16. Long Ridge Rd. #2 – pg. 82

NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS

- 17. Springdale – pg. 90
- 18. Glenbrook – pg. 92
- 19. Shippan – pg. 94

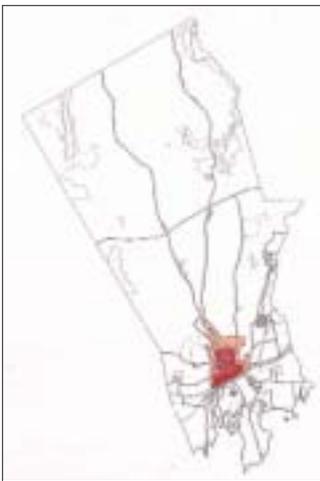
INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS

- 20. Waterside – pg. 110
- 21. Cytec – pg. 112



I . D O W N T O W N

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 center-piece 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:

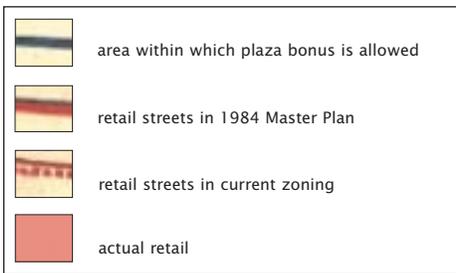
- Reestablish Main Street, from the Mill River Park to Elm Street, as an integral part of the downtown pedestrian network, including a real connection through the Town Center Mall.
- Make the physical design of downtown more coherent by establishing normative height ranges and by managing transitions 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.

The existing (1984) Master Plan and zoning concepts (fig. 1.18) do not recognize the differences in scale and character 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

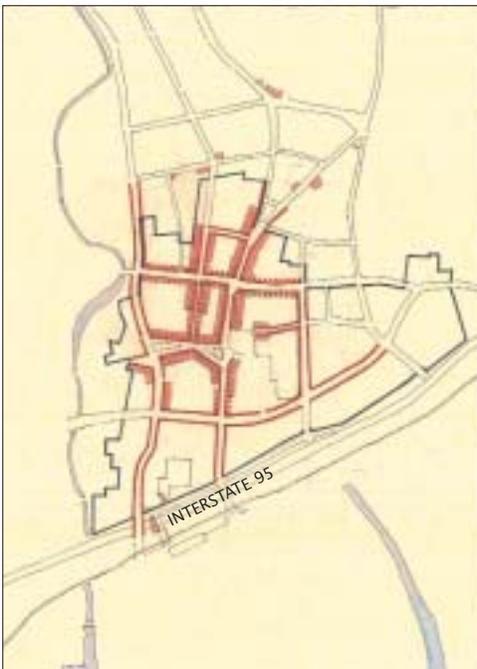
1.19 Actual densities



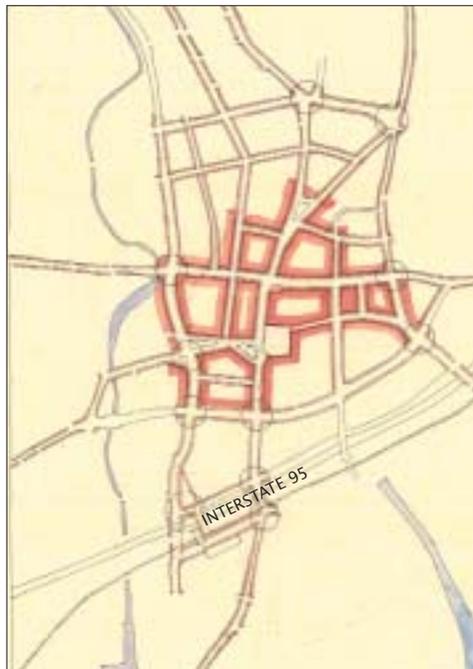
1.35 Existing pedestrian-friendly areas are limited to several places within the historic core.

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).



1.33 Actual Retail versus 1984 Maser Plan and Zoning Strategies



1.34 Proposed Pedestrian Core and Improvements

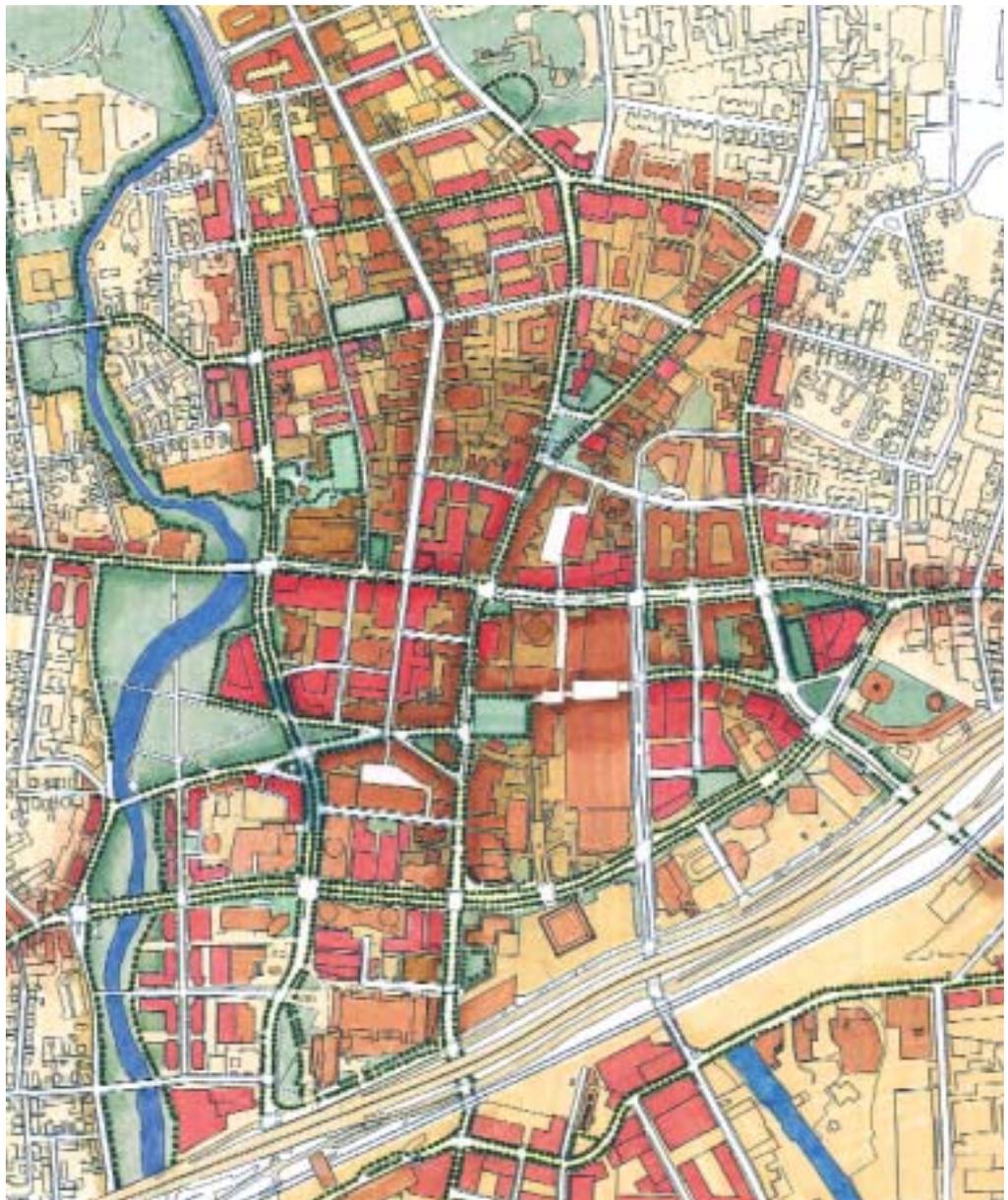




This drawing illustrates the vision for a compact pedestrian environment within the Core. (Darker buildings are redevelopment concepts. See Massing studies in this chapter.)

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 at the east edge of town, a robust connection through the Mall and improved Mill River Park.



1.41

THE MAIN STREET-BROAD STREET DOWNTOWN LOOP



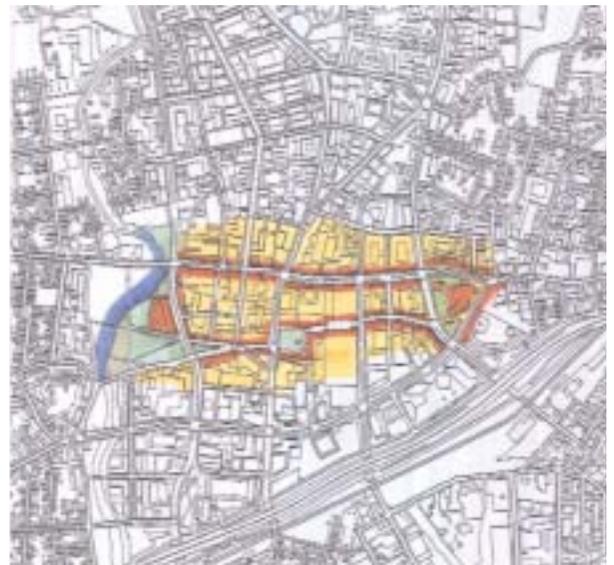
1.44 Historically, the principle route through downtown was the Boston Post Road (US 1). This is “Main Street” in Stamford and in countless other towns between Boston, New York City and beyond.



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.

II. THE ROADWAY CORRIDORS OF STAMFORD

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.



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:

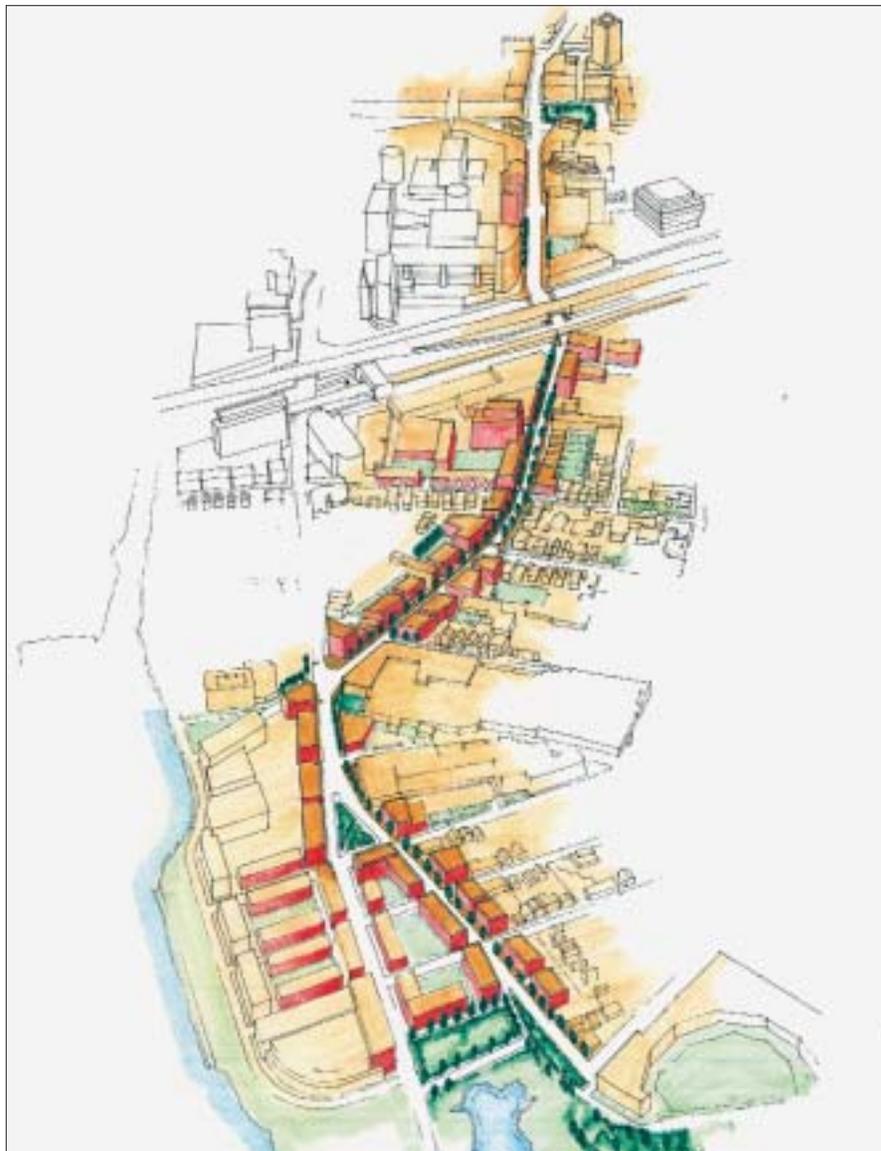
- **East Main** from the railroad trestle to Tresser Boulevard (see page 49)
- **Elm Street** from the Shippan neighborhood center to the monument in St. Johns Park (see page 53)
- **Atlantic Street/Dyke Lane** from Kosciusko Park to Tresser Boulevard (see page 57)
- **West Main** from Jackie Robinson Park to the Mill River (see page 61)
- **West Broad** from the Hospital to the University of Connecticut campus (see page 65)

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

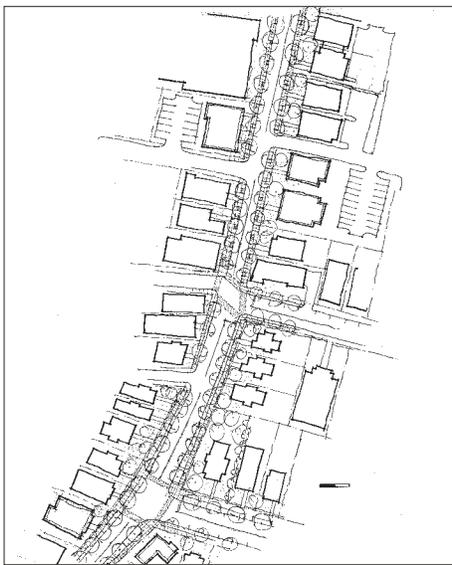
**CASE STUDY:
ATLANTIC STREET/
DYKE LANE**

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

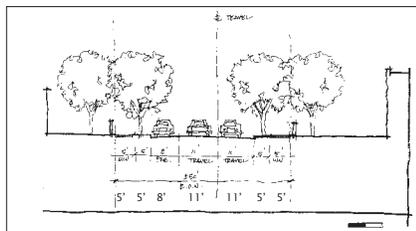
Note: the full Urban Design Report contains similar studies for the four other radial corridors



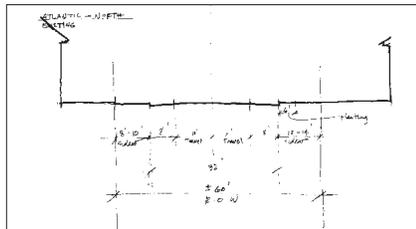
2.22 Atlantic Street/Dyke Lane aerial perspective view showing connections between new waterfront development and the existing streets as well as contextual redevelopment along the street edge.



2.25 Atlantic Street proposed plan



2.27 Atlantic Street proposed section



2.28 Atlantic Street existing section

**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 inadequate sidewalks
- Underutilized properties



2.26 Atlantic Street existing plan



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

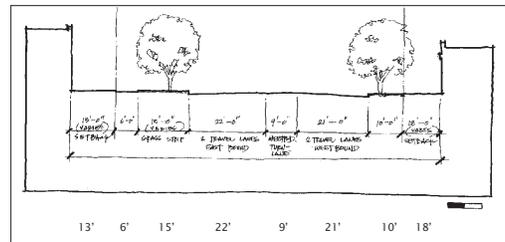
**CASE STUDY:
US-1 / EAST MAIN
STREET**

**US-1 / East Main Street
Proposed Conditions**

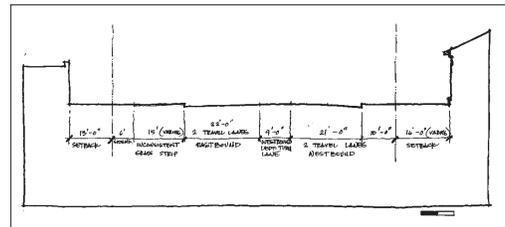
- Consistent pavement width and travel lanes
- Defined curb cuts to parking lots
- Landscaped parking lots to create “parking rooms” and discreet service areas
- New development oriented to the street with parking to the side or rear; larger scale development potential on north side of street
- Consistent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



2.49 US-1 (East Main Street) proposed plan



2.51 US-1 (East Main Street) proposed section



2.56 US-1 (East Main Street) existing section

**US-1 / 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

Note: the full Urban Design Report contains similar studies for the four other radial corridors



2.50 US-1 (East Main Street) existing plan



2.57 US-1 (East Main Street) aerial photograph



2.95 Long Ridge Road—small houses opposite corporate campus

**CASE STUDY:
LONG RIDGE ROAD #1**

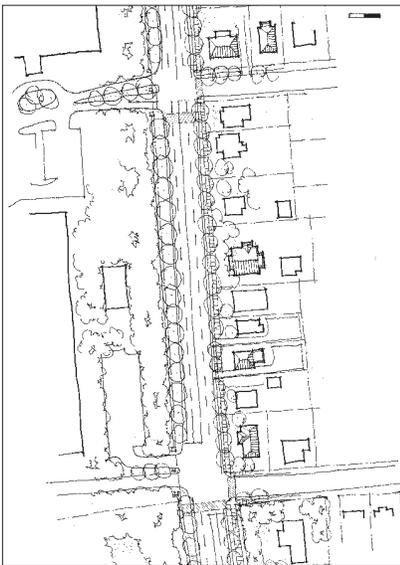
**Long Ridge Road
Design Study #1
Proposed Conditions**

- 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

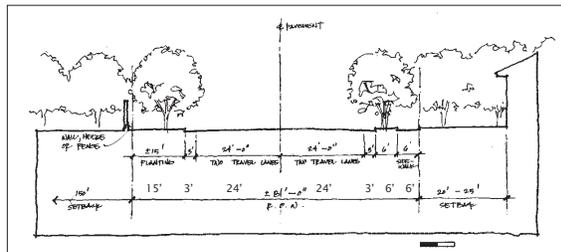
**Long Ridge Road
Design Study #1
Existing Conditions**

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

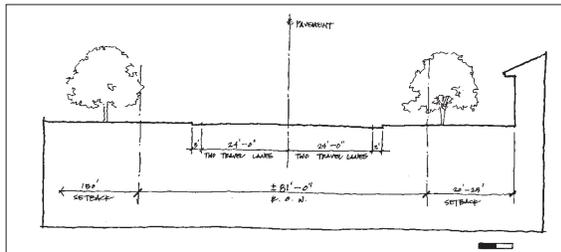
Note: the full Urban Design Report contains design studies for five locations on High Ridge and Long Ridge Roads.



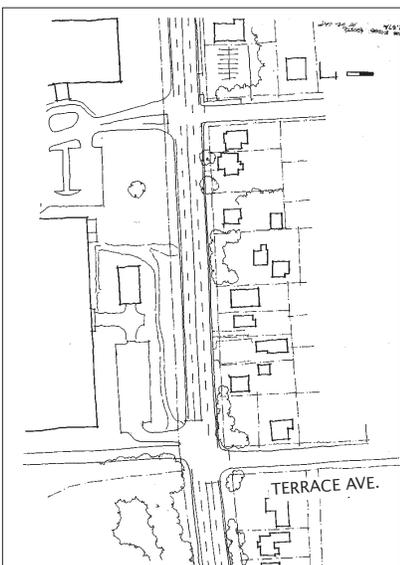
2.93 Long Ridge Road proposed plan



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

III. NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS

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.



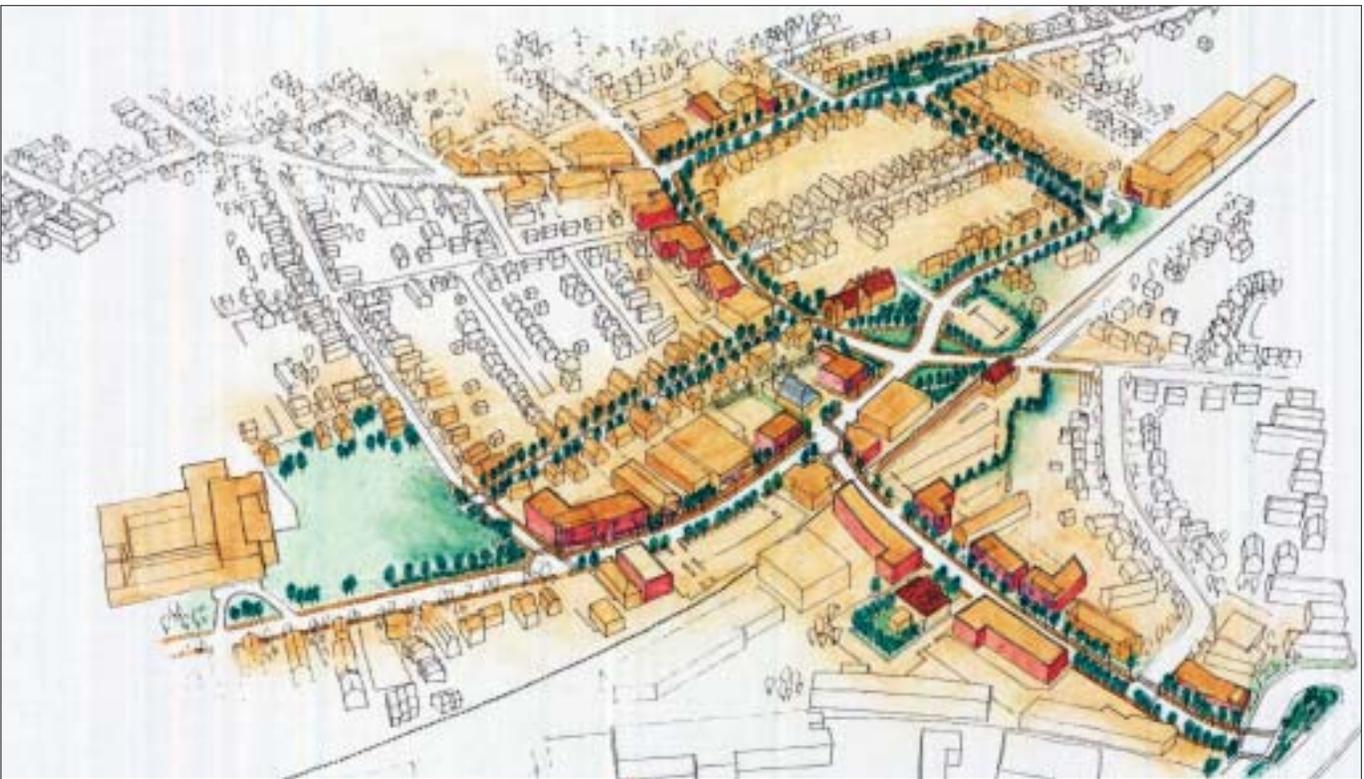
3.03 Neighborhood revitalization, before and after (simulation)



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

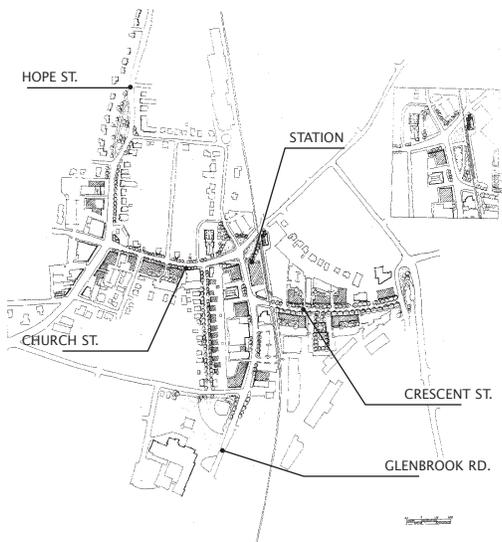
The major design and land use interventions for Glenbrook are described in Figures 3.15 through 3.19. The diagrams describe the general disposition of land uses, important new connections and gateways.

- 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)
- Redevelop 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)

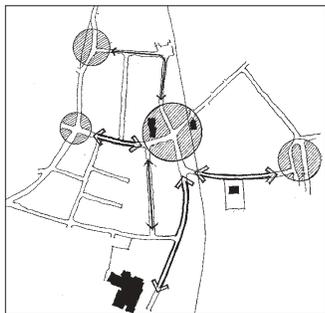


3.15 Glenbrook neighborhood center—illustrative plan

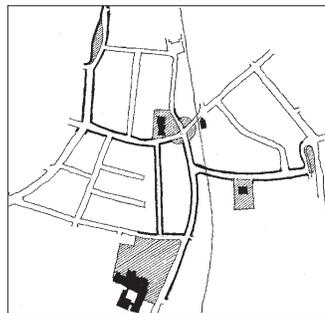


3.16 Glenbrook neighborhood center—aerial photograph

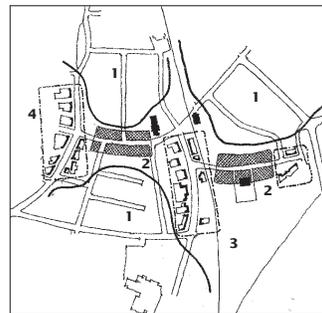
Note: the full Urban Design Report contains design studies for Springdale and Shppan Avenue as well.



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

IV. INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS

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.

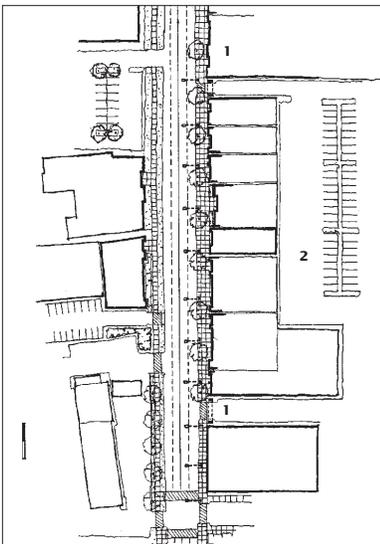
Chapter V:

Reinforce the “green infrastructure” of Stamford and create a continuous network of open spaces and greenway connections

**CASE STUDY:
MAGEE AVENUE
INDUSTRIAL CORRIDOR**

**Industrial Corridor
Proposed Conditions**

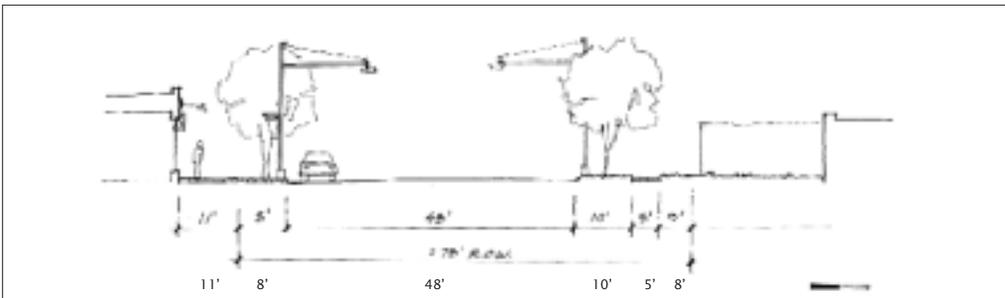
- Completed sidewalks and paving improvements
- Uniform street trees and streetscape elements
- Facade improvements
- Pedestrian improvements at intersections
- Articulated entrances to reorganized interior of the industrial blocks (1)
- Reorganized and landscaped parking areas (2)



4.05 Magee Avenue—proposed conditions



4.06 Magee Avenue—aerial photograph



4.07 Magee Avenue—proposed section



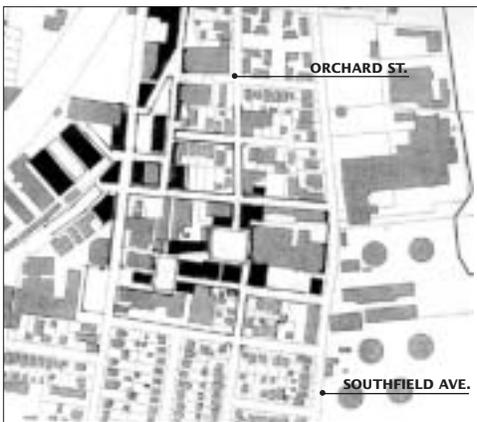
4.08 Magee Avenue

Note: the full Urban Design Report contains design studies for three industrial corridors.



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

**CASE STUDY:
MIXED-USE INDUSTRIAL
NEIGHBORHOOD**



4.25 Waterside—existing and potential new buildings

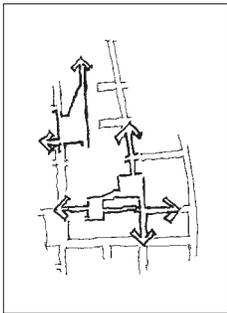


4.26 Waterside—aerial photograph

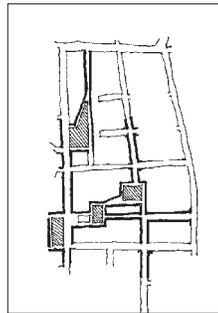
Proposed Conditions

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

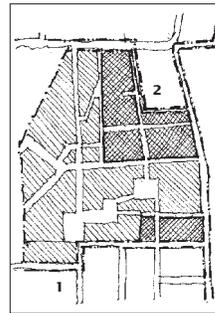
Note: the full Urban Design Report contains design studies for two industrial districts.



4.27 New neighborhood connections



4.28 New open space network



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

V . A GREENWAY STRATEGY FOR STAMFORD

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.



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.



5.04



5.05

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



5.06

5.06 The Mill River Greenway should be completed



	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.

- 1. Springdale
- 2. Glenbrook
- 3. Shippan
- 4. Downtown