



**Master Plan Document for:**

# **CREATIVE PLACEMAKING PILOT PROGRAM**

**New London, Connecticut**

**Grant from the Office of the Arts  
Department of Economic  
and Community Development**

**New London Landmarks (NLL)**

A non-profit corporation which has taken a leadership position to promote the preservation and development of the urban environment of New London, CT (since 1976).

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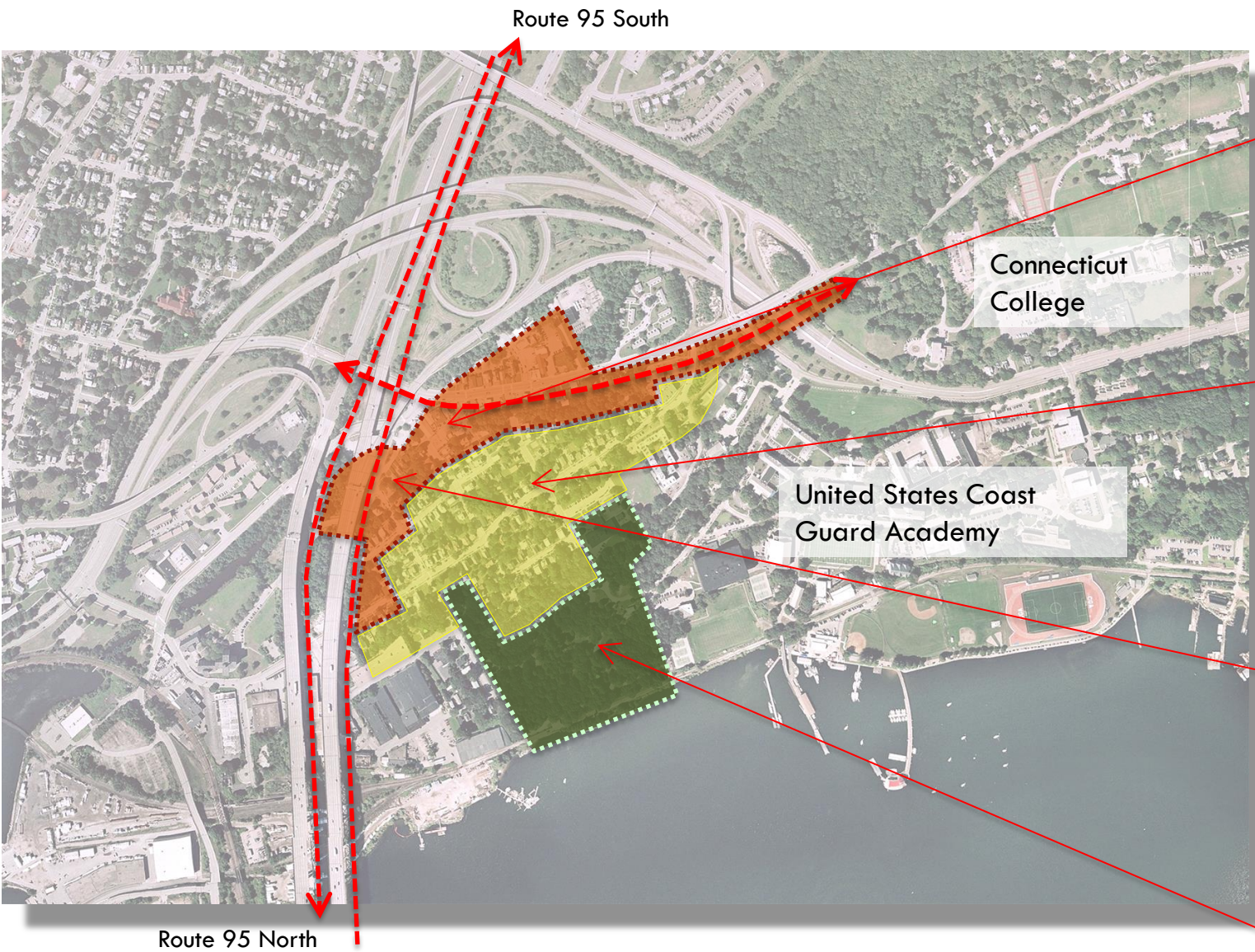
November 2013



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Project Types and Sites



**MP**  
**Williams**

**Hodges Square and Williams St.**  
**Master Plan for Streetscape Improvements**  
Work performed by: Kent + Frost Landscape Architecture  
Contact: Brian Kent  
bkent@kentfrost.com

**MP**  
**Hilltop**

**Hill Top Neighborhood and Environs**  
**Master Plan for Street Improvements**  
Work performed by: UConn's Community Research & Design Collaborative  
Contact: Associate Professor Peter Miniutti  
peter.miniutti@uconn.edu

**GP**  
**Williams**

**Hodges Square and Williams St.**  
**Governance Plan for Business Development**  
Work performed by: Thames Valley Sustainable Community Connections  
Contact: Art Costa  
artebova@sbcglobal.net

**MP**  
**Riverside**

**Riverside Park**  
**Master Plan for Park Renovation**  
Work performed by: UConn's Community Research & Design Collaborative  
Contact: Associate Professor Peter Miniutti  
peter.miniutti@uconn.edu



# Introduction

## A Bit of History:

Creative Placemaking is a continuation of a study begun in 2010 to assess the challenge of re-connecting the area north of the twin bridges and Interstate 95 with the southern – and larger – portion of New London, Connecticut. This northern area includes a small Hodges Square business district, an historic neighborhood along Crystal Avenue and its side streets; Riverside Park; the U.S. Coast Guard Academy and Connecticut College.

The area we are most concerned about with this project includes Riverside Park, the historic neighborhood and Hodges Square. Beginning with the construction of the first major highway bridge across the Thames River in the mid-1940s, extensive demolition of homes and businesses created a slow deterioration of the neighborhood. In the late 1960s, plans for the second bridge, expansion of I-95, and the wide interchange system caused expanded demolition of homes and a wide division of this neighborhood from the center city. Historic homes became multi-family rental units, the business district lost its character and became a speedy pass-through for traffic entering or exiting I-95.

A later development on route #32, its conversion from a local road to a four-lane highway, created more pass-through traffic. Three Hodges Square gas stations attract patrons who seldom patronize the Square's other businesses. Both college and Academy students find the area difficult to access, as traffic pattern changes and sidewalks became inconvenient and unattractive for pedestrians

and bicycle lanes nonexistent.

The connection to downtown New London's Historic Waterfront District, while fairly close, is an unattractive trek under highway bridges, up hills and along major roadways. It does not encourage anything other than automobile traffic.

Riverside Park was once a major attraction for the whole region surrounding the park. By 1910 it included almost 33 acres and hosted a goldfish pond, a campground, a beach and pier. A 1913 report by John Nolen, Landscape Architect says in part:

*"I recommend, as one of the first actions of the Park Board, the preparation of definite plans for the extension and development of Riverside Park. It is already too good not to be made better..."*

An active, beautiful park through the early part of the century, it began to lose its popularity after WWII with the expansion of the highway and the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. By the mid-1950s it had lost about half its land to the Academy expansion; the larger public lost interest in the park, and social changes in the neighborhood altered the character of the park. This trend slowly continued as maintenance of the woodlands decreased. The play equipment, pavilion and bathhouse fell into disuse. As people abandoned the park, so did the city. It became a forgotten area, patrolled by police and the Academy, but rarely used. Occasional calls to improve the park were short-lived, and while a few neighbors continued to mow sections for their kids to use, it was no surprise when the

Coast Guard Academy asked to purchase the center of the park for their expansion plans.

Before that question arose, the "Re-Connect New London" planning had begun and improvements to Hodges Square, Crystal Avenue and Riverside Park became the topic of public meetings, charettes, and published planning documents.

By a very narrow margin in the local election of 2011, New London city voters voted to save the park for city use and not sell it to the Coast Guard Academy. Plans for improvement began:

The Parks & Recreation Commission created a committee to develop a 5-year plan of development and conservation "Riverside Park Study: Waterfront Access & Overall Master Plan" was developed by Madeline Schad, of UConn's Department of Plant Science and Landscape Architecture.

The state Department of Economic & Community Development, Office of the Arts granted New London Landmarks a \$100,000 grant for Creative Placemaking.

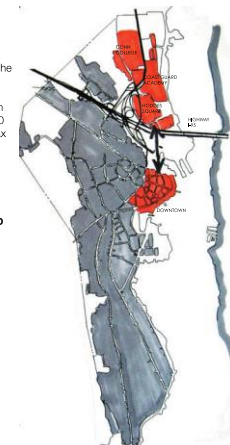
## Goals & Objectives of Creative Placemaking

The primary goal is to encourage and energize all the people who live and work in this neighborhood to look at their streets, their park, and their business center with new eyes.

### CAN WE RECONNECT THE NORTH END & DOWNTOWN?

Fifty years ago, the face of New London was irrevocably altered by the construction of I-95.

The impact of the highway, its ramps, bypasses and the changes to Route 32 on the city has been enormous: the entire neighborhood is cut off from the rest of the city. Connecticut College, only a 10-min bike ride from downtown, feels as far away as the moon, almost 100 acres of land have been removed from use and the tax rolls.



**COME SHARE YOUR IDEAS ABOUT HOW WE CAN RECONNECT CONN COLLEGE, THE COAST GUARD CAMPUS AND HODGES SQUARE NEIGHBORHOOD TO DOWNTOWN NEW LONDON.**

Can we make new connections?

Can we change the perception of this area and unlock new potential for the city?

Can we work the unique mix of industry, housing and commercial areas to our advantage?

THURSDAY JUNE 24- 6: 30 pm  
FRIDAY JUNE 25, 5:30 pm

**CONN COLLEGE: Palmer Library**  
It's easy to find: just follow the signs from either entrance

For more info go to [re-newlondoncouncil.org](http://re-newlondoncouncil.org)

Sponsored by:  
UConn Center for Transportation & Urban Planning, UConn Community Research & Design Collaborative, Re-New London, New London Landmarks



# Introduction

Beginning with a variety of programs developed by local artists, neighbors will be given a strong voice in the changes they would like to see take place throughout this small community that has been so cut off from central New London. A second goal is to create long-range planning documents for extensive improvements to the park and business district which to be undertaken by partners in Creative Placemaking. They will hold public meetings with neighbors and business people to develop this long-range planning.

## The Professional Designers Include:

Landscape Architect, Brian Kent will provide new ideas of “Complete Street” planning, landscape and façade improvements, and concepts for creating attractive, safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle sidewalks and paths.

Peter Miniutti, Associate Professor at UConn and director of the Community Research and Design Collaborative. Peter has worked with the earlier Re-Connect New London plans and conducted preliminary research and planning for Riverside Park. Ideas include assessing the existing street grid in the park; learning from neighbors about the play equipment and amenities they would like in the park; and planning bike and pedestrian access through the park and around the neighborhood.

Art Costa of Thames Valley Sustainable Connections, will work with the businesses in Hodges Square to assess their current business plans and work with them to explore ways to invigorate this small, neighborhood commercial

center. Community assets will be studied and ideas for new businesses will be explored. Landscaping, parking, bicycle paths, and improved pedestrian access will be studied. Concepts of “Complete Streets”, landscaping and façade improvement will be evaluated and plans developed for the physical and economic revitalization of Hodges Square which is a northern gateway to New London.

## New London Landmarks

Since 1976 New London Landmarks has led the city to preserve and protect the architectural and cultural resources of the city, beginning with the campaign to save Henry Hobson Richardson’s Union Station.

The Mission Statement reads: *A non-profit corporation to promote the preservation and development of the entire urban environment of New London, Connecticut, including significant individual structures, streetscapes, neighborhoods and open spaces.*

## Beginning a Year-Long Project: ART JAMS in the Summer of 2012

The first objective was to get people back into Riverside Park. City Public Works devoted a great deal of time in the spring of 2012 on long overdue maintenance. Helped by a number of volunteers, large areas were cleared of overgrowth, mowed and opened to activities. The picnic area was revived and new picnic tables installed, trees were limbed up revealing views of the Thames River and overall the park took on a cared for appearance that was attractive to visitors.

A series of six ART JAMS were designed for families and fun for all ages. Admission was free for all events. Each Saturday had a theme and offered unexpected chances to explore & express new ideas. The local artists who participated in the **Saturday ART JAMS** are Hot School Master Teaching Artists. They include **Derron Wood**, specializing in performance art and Director of Flock Theatre; **L’Ana Burton**, Director of CDC- Creative Dance Continuum, who uses dance and body movement to explore the wider physical world; **Mark Patnode**, whose Master Teaching classes explore the visual arts of color, movement and their relationships to the world around; **Dr. Roger J. Tremblay** uses the computer, mathematics and visualization of fractals to inspire interest and understanding of mathematics; and **Elizabeth Tyler**, a sculptor, encourages thinking and creating in three dimensions with found, natural objects discovered in the park.

These Art Jams were a highly successful way to meet neighbors and gain friends for the real work of planning improvements. They led easily to our fall workshops on Riverside Park and Hodges Square under the banner of “Beyond the Bridges”.

## Beyond the Bridges Workshops: 2012 – 2013

Throughout the fall of 2012 and winter/spring of 2013 the partners in Creative Placemaking led a series of community meetings at various





The first ART JAM on July 14 brought around seventy five people of all ages to Riverside Park for a wonderful day led by Derron Wood of Flock Theatre. The first project of the day was making "mouse masks" and re-hearing for the Mouse Play performed later in the afternoon. At mid-day there was a parade down to the Old Town Mill to celebrate the restoration of the mill and the opening of the water flume that originally turned the mill wheel to grind the grain for the early New London settlers.

Returning to Riverside Park everyone set to work creating all the little jungle characters playing a part in The Great Kapok Tree. Performed in the Pine Grove, everyone had a part to play and after the performance everyone provided their review of the play and the day with "I LIKE" AND "I WISH" comments.









Derron Wood tells the story of Arap Sang & the Cranes illustrated with giant puppets in the lovely setting of Riverside Park during the July 14 ART JAM.





# Introduction

locations in the neighborhood to gain the interest and support of those who live and work in this area for new ideas to revitalize their neighborhood. With each workshop interest grew and attracted people within this small community as well as other New Londoners who were interested in learning about this project.

The exploration of new ideas and the realization that neighbors can make a difference in their community was exciting. Many of these ideas are expressed in the following reports on several of the meetings and major points of agreement were strongly accepted.

Among these ideas:

## **For Riverside Park:**

Riverside Park is a unique park in New London and needs to be created as a retreat for walkers and bicycles; improve picnic facilities; limit cars in the central area where children play; fix toilet facilities; get special playground equipment that will attract people from throughout the wider New London area to come to Riverside Park because it is

SPECIAL! UNIQUE!

- Signage is essential! No one can find the park easily, it is hidden behind houses / the Thames River / the Coast Guard Academy. It's not visible even from Adelaide Street.
- A community garden could be another way to attract local residents

- Replace hazardous steps from Winthrop School to the park!
- Create a new pedestrian entrance at Grove Street for school children and all who live in this area at the top of the hill on Crystal Avenue.
- Connect the park to the Thames River with a new bridge and pier for small boats

## **For Hodges Square:**

- “Make it prettier” All agree on improving the appearance – trees, flowers, paint, building facades, etc.
- Slow traffic
- Improve bicycle safety – Bailey Circle improvements for the bicycle/ pedestrian path over the bridge
- Establish new businesses to attract students and all the people who speed through on Williams Street
- Create a Governance Committee to continue working for all improvements
- Add signage throughout the area: to Riverside Park, downtown New London, U.S. Coast Guard Academy, Connecticut College, Lyman Allyn Museum, Arboretum, Quaker Hill, etc.
- Improve all pedestrian and bicycle access to and from the neighborhood

## **Winthrop Magnet School. A STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) lower school (K – 5)**

Winthrop School was the local school for this community since the late 1800s. It stood next to the Old Town Mill and was demolished for

the construction of the second bridge and expansion of I-95. The current building was built in its present location in 1968 and closed in 2009 for rebuilding and restoration. For the past three years the neighborhood children were bused to other New London schools and the neighborhood lost its local school.

The new Winthrop Magnet School opened in the fall of 2012 and another goal of the Creative Placemaking project was to help re-connect the school with its neighborhood. Winthrop was offered the services of the HOT School teachers who led the summer ART JAMS to hold modified HOT School programs at Winthrop. Several teachers took advantage of this offer and Derron Wood and Roger Tremblay did extensive programs. In a fascinating science/art project, Derron led students to explore magnetism by creating a giant paper mache globe showing all the continents as well as the interior layers from the surface to the molten core. This illustrates how our magnetic field is created and how birds, turtles and fish navigate through this almost magical force. The art students also created paper mache birds and turtles.

Dr. Roger Tremblay combined math and art classes in his “Playing with Fractals” project providing students with an understanding of fractals as well as learning more about their computers.





# Introduction

In March Creative Placemaking offered a series of Saturday Workshops for all 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in New London. Thirty-five students took part in the workshops learning about the art and science of color, basic painting techniques with Mark Patnode; exploring the science of fractals with Roger Tremblay and creating their own computer images of fractals; while Derron Wood and L’Ana Burton led students in performance art, creating their own dance program and a shadow play to be performed the final Saturday for their parents, siblings and friends.

Many of our workshops were held in the library of Winthrop School which brought parents and community members to the school and providing the opportunity for the larger population to visit this new magnet school.

## Conclusions and Recommendations:

The following Master Plans, developed by Landscape Architect, Brian Kent of Kent + Frost in Mystic, CT; Peter Miniutti, Associate Professor, UConn Director of Community Research and Design Collaborative, and his talented graduate assistant Madeline Schad; and Art Costa and Jerry Sinnamon of Thames Valley Sustainable Connections, are the result of all these workshops and community outreach programs.

The Master Plans are a 2 – 5 – 10 – and 20 – year plan of change from the most simple signage and street improvements to complex traffic changes, landscaping, creating the link across the railroad tracks to the Thames River

and an extensive series of changes to this whole area of New London. We believe these changes will revive the economy of the area, creating a revitalized neighborhood with stronger links to all of New London as well as to Connecticut College and the U.S. Coast Guard Academy.

Already change is in the air,

A Farmers Market opened in June 2013 and operated every Saturday from 2:00 – 5:00 in Hodges Square.

A Governance Committee of local business owners and residents was established to oversee the Farmers Market and plan additional improvements throughout the neighborhood and commercial district.

A group of firemen from New Jersey selected Riverside Park to receive a playscape as part of their program, “Where Angels Play.” The playscape was installed in November 2013 and was dedicated to Emilie Parker who was killed in the tragic shooting at Sandy Hook School in Newtown, CT. This is one of twenty-six playgrounds to be built in New England and New Jersey to honor those who lost their lives at Sandy Hook.

Riverside Park Conservancy – a 501 c 3 organization has been formed to work in the community and provide leadership, fund raising for projects and grant writing to continue the work that has begun with this Creative Placemaking grant from the Connecticut Department of Economic & Community Development, Office of the Arts.

The Creative Placemaking project members would like to thank all the community members who have spent innumerable hours with us at these workshops for their time and the ideas and dreams they have shared with us through the last year. Additional thanks go to New London Public Works and all the volunteers who have worked in Riverside Park clearing, planting, and helping to maintain the park.

# Beyond The Bridges

Workshops At The Winthrop School

Led by UConn Landscape Architects **Peter Miniutti**, A.S.L.A. and **Madeline Schad**, the workshop will hear from neighbors and friends of Riverside Park about amenities they would like to see in the Park with the goal to develop a Master Plan of development.

**Art Costa** and **Jerry Sinnamon** lead the workshop to explore ideas with residents, businesses and entrepreneurs who are interested in Northeastern New London. The goal is to create a sustainable residential, commercial, educational, and recreational community in this Northeast New London neighborhood.

Following up on ideas collected from the September Workshop, we will explore more specific ideas for the Park and the Neighborhood and begin plotting new uses on large maps.

**Riverside Park**  
Design & Ideas  
for the Park  
Wednesday  
September 19  
7:00-9:00 pm

**Hodges Square**  
**Business**  
**Community**  
Thursday  
October 18  
7:00-9:00 pm

**Riverside Park**  
**Neighborhood**  
Design & Ideas  
Wednesday  
November 28  
7:00-9:00 pm

For further information contact: New London Landmarks,  
49 Washington Street, New London - 860-442-0003 info@newlondonlandmarks.org.



Department of Economic and  
Community Development

Office of the Arts



# Creative Placemaking

## What is Creative Placemaking?

### According to the National Endowment for the Arts:

*“Creative Placemaking animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local business viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire and be inspired. In turn, these creative locales foster entrepreneurs and cultural industries that generate jobs and income, spin off new products and services, and attract and retain unrelated businesses and skilled workers.”*

### Riverside Park Art Jams:

Young people from throughout the area attended the Art Jams learning an entirely new sense of place in Riverside Park which has stimulated a whole new interest in this community asset. ART JAMS in the summer of 2012 were led by 5 artists in six Saturday Art

Jams providing a wide range of arts activities – fun & games & educational experiences.

**Creative Placemaking** is a continuation of the 2010 study to assess the challenge of re-connecting the area north of the twin bridges and Interstate 95 with the southern – and larger – portion of New London, Connecticut. This includes Hodges Square business district, the historic neighborhood along Crystal Avenue and its side streets; Riverside Park; the U.S. Coast Guard Academy and Connecticut College.

This is the challenge New London Landmarks has accepted with a \$100,000 grant from the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) and the Office of the Arts.

We began with the goal of bringing more people into Riverside Park and helping neighborhood residents re-discover the beauties of this steeply sloped wooded

wonderland in their backyard through a variety of arts projects to stimulate thinking and imagination.



Dance  
L'Ana Burton

Performance  
Derron Wood

Computer Art  
Roger Tremblay

Painting  
Mark Patnode



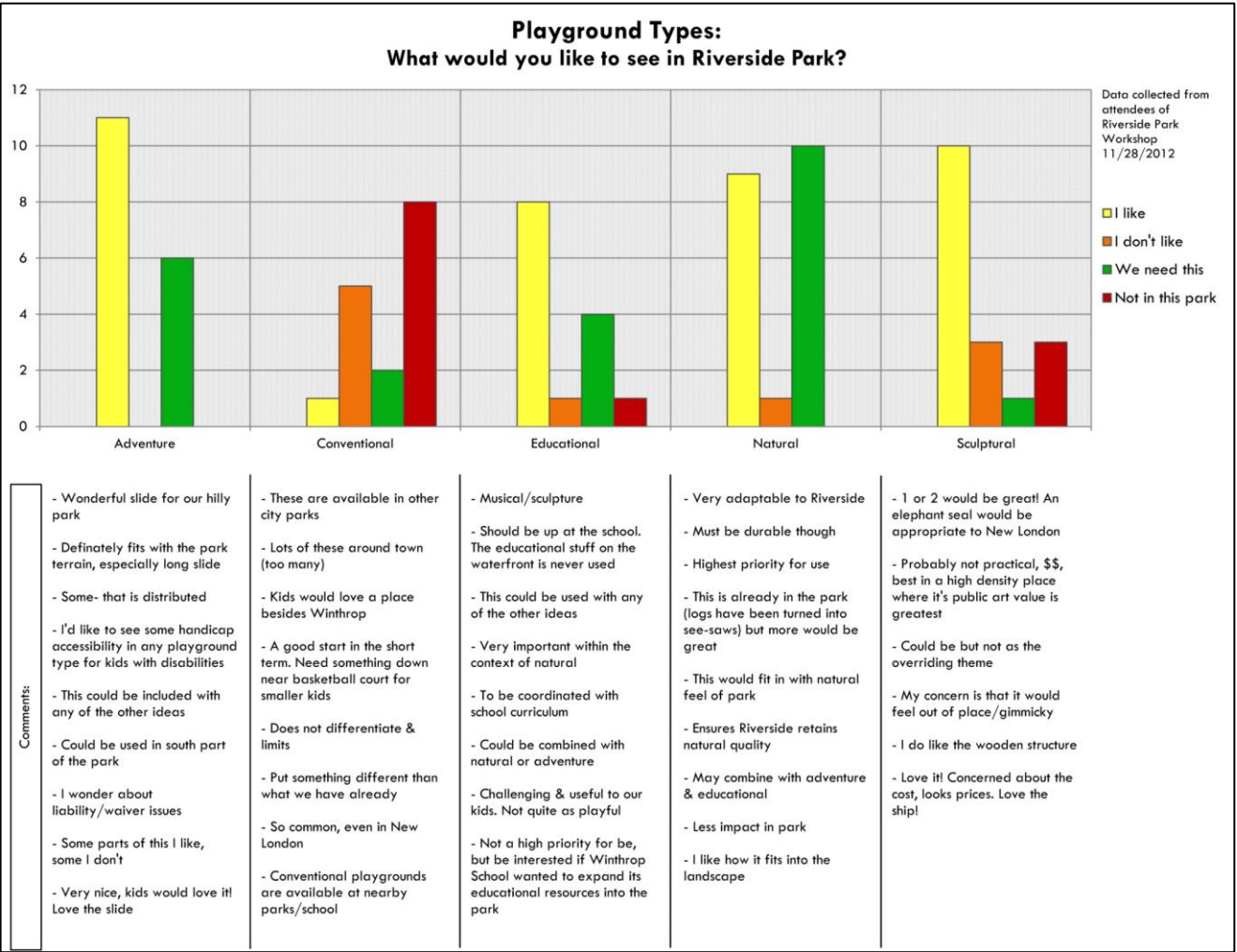
# Introduction: Creative Placemaking

## Beyond the Bridges

Throughout the fall of 2012 and spring of 2013, in a series of Workshops for all friends and neighbors in New London, thoughts and ideas were shared about what development should happen in Hodges Square, Riverside Park and the Crystal Avenue neighborhood.

Workshops on Riverside Park were led by Peter Miniutti, Associate Professor at UConn and director of the Community Research and Design Collaborative with graduate student Madeline Schad.

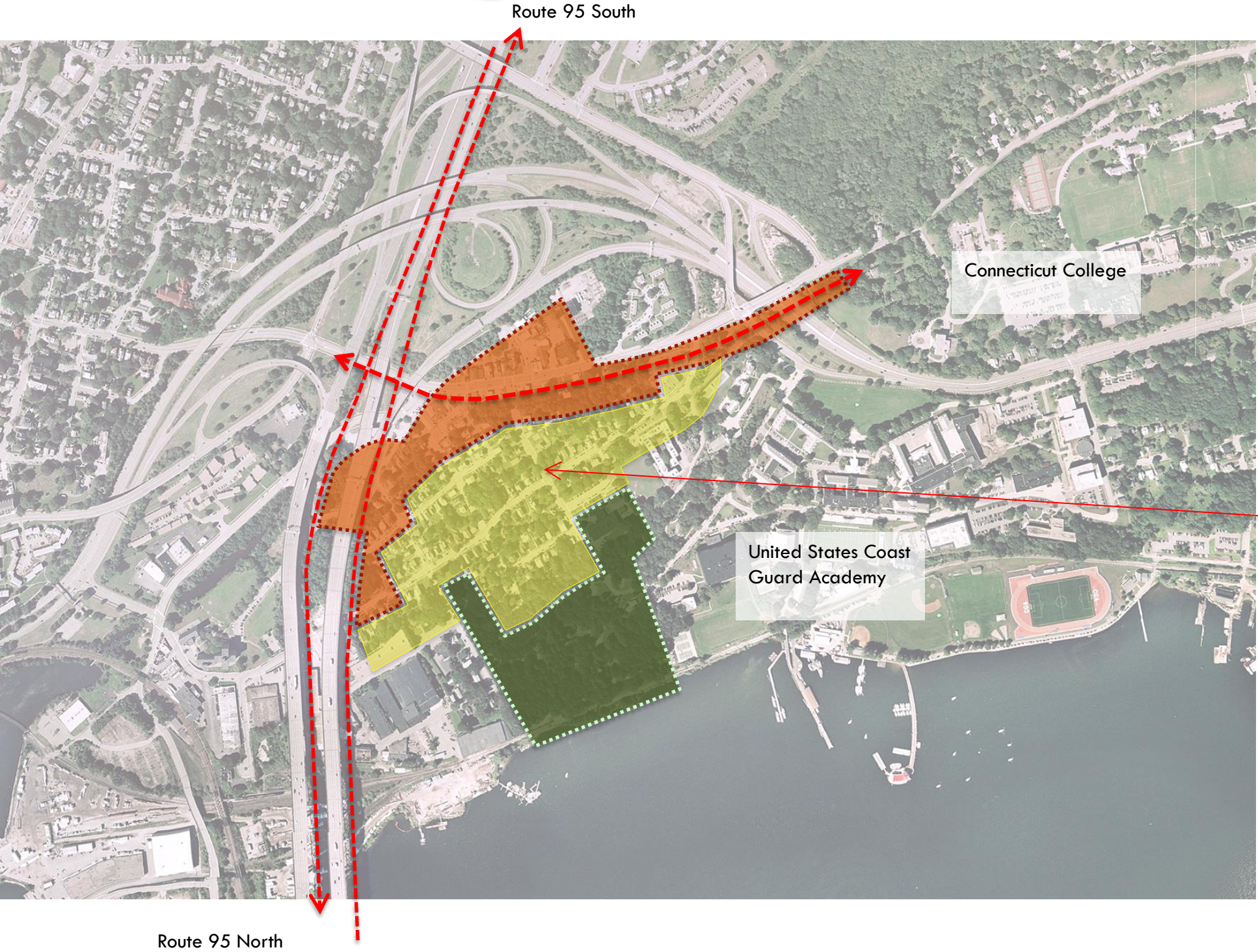
Enthusiastic ideas poured out as neighbors got into the swing of exchanging thoughts and thinking deeply about what they would like to have in Riverside Park.



Community Workshops



Project Type and Site



**Hill Top Neighborhood and Environs  
Master Plan for Street Improvements**  
Work performed by: UConn's Community  
Research & Design Collaborative  
Contact: Associate Professor Peter Miniutti  
[peter.miniutti@uconn.edu](mailto:peter.miniutti@uconn.edu)





## Problem Statement

When the 1800's became the 1900's, the city of New London was ideal. Its fabric had evolved over the previous century from a small coastal town into a flourishing port development with healthy interconnected neighborhoods. This urban fabric of streets and buildings was disrupted during the mid-1900's when the revolutionary interstate system swept across the country and I-95 was constructed just off center of downtown. Now, 60 years later, New London has not yet recovered from the shock of that dramatic alteration; the lands around the interstate are fragmented and vacant, and the Northern and Southern portions of the city are almost completely cut off from one another.

This situation is familiar to Dr. Norman Garrick, a professor at the University of Connecticut and renowned expert in urban transportation planning. While he has seen many cities fragmented by highway systems, New London caught his attention during his brief visit in the winter of 2009. He was struck by the vast disconnect that the interstate and high speed interchange had created between the exciting New London downtown South of I-95 and the College Campuses just North of the interstate.

At the core of any solution must be the reworking of the high speed interchange which presently confounds residents and visitors alike, fragments land, and inhibits movement from one side to the other. Closely related to the untangling of the interchange is the redevelopment of the urban fabric which was eliminated with the construction of the interstate and interchange. The existing infrastructure can readily accommodate

retrofits as green/complete streets; streets which function as open space through which multiple modes of transportation move in a comfortable environment. A large aspect of repairing the urban fabric entails infill and adaptive reuse of buildings to enhance the street edge and invigorate the connecting corridors.

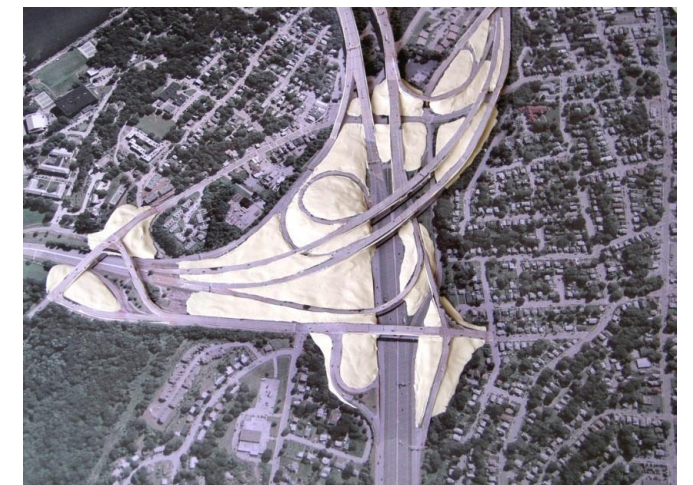
There is also great potential to reestablish natural connections through steps such as day-lighting Briggs Brook, removing the fencing which isolates wetlands, and identifying key parcels to create an open space system that improves environmental health and increases the health/quality of life for residents.

Miniutti, along with other team members employed the criteria developed by the Project for Public Spaces (PPS) for waterfront development. PPS is a nonprofit planning, design and educational organization dedicated to helping people create and sustain public spaces that build stronger communities. Their pioneering Placemaking approach helps citizens transform their public spaces into vital places that highlight local assets, spur rejuvenation and serve common needs.

Steps to creating a Great Waterfront by:

1. Look First at the Public Space
2. Make Sure Public Goals are the Primary Objective
3. Build on Existing Assets & Context
4. Create a Shared Community Vision

5. Create Multiple-use Destinations by Tapping the Power of 10
6. Connect Destinations Along the Waterfront
7. Maximize Opportunities for Public Access
8. Balance Environmental Benefits with Human Needs
9. Start Small to Make Big Changes

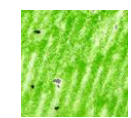
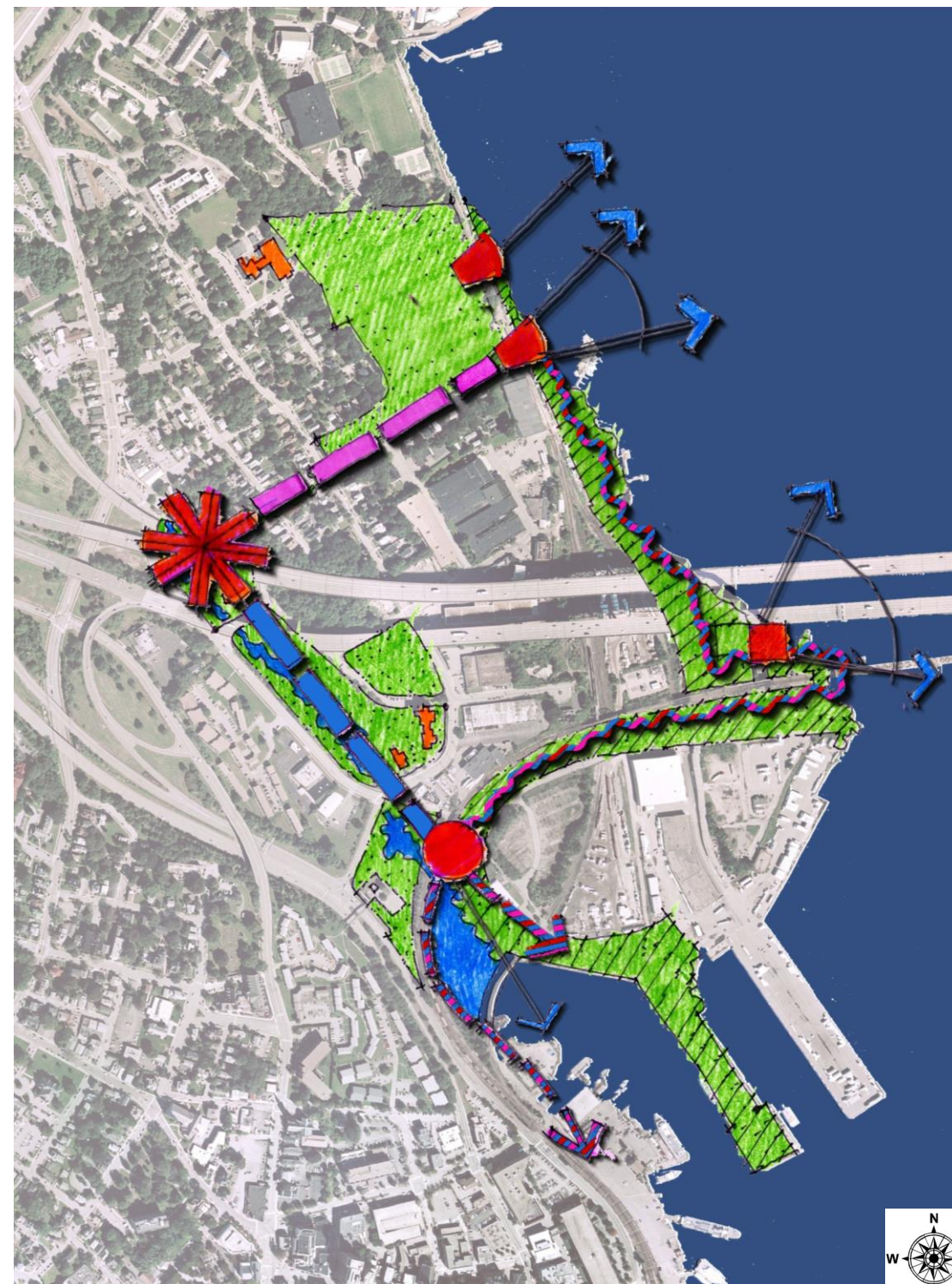






# Proposed Open Space, Events & Opportunities

Hilltop Residential Neighborhood and Environs



Ex. Open Space



Proposed Open Space



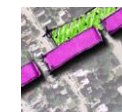
Ex. Mill Site



Ex. Pedestrian Bridge



Ex. Boat Launch



Street as Primary Connector



Stream as Primary Connector



Path @ River's Edge



Public/Quasi-Public Buildings

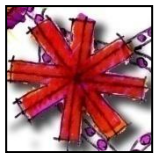






# Proposed Wayfinding and Street System

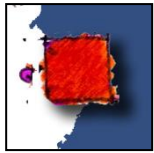
Hilltop Residential Neighborhood and Environs



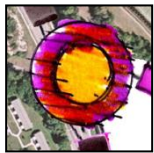
Hodges Square



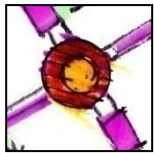
Elevated Walkway



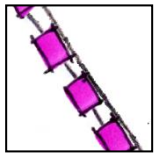
Riverside Structure



Gateway



Cross Roads

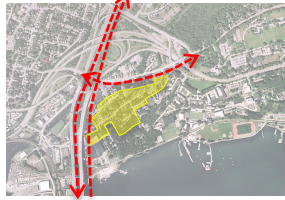


Crystal Avenue



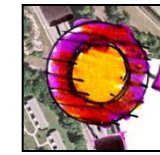
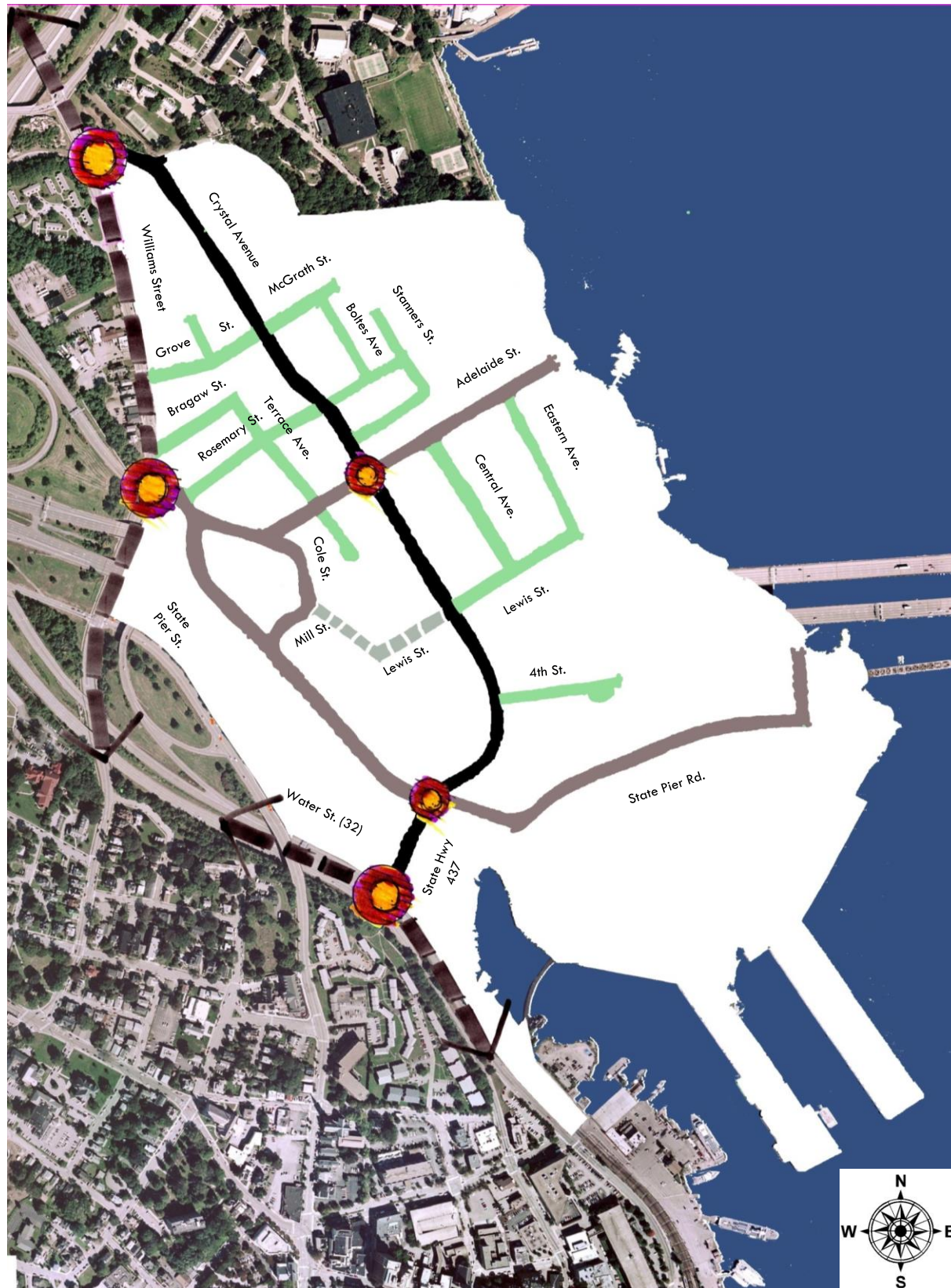
Secondary Roadways



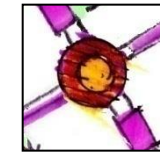


# Proposed Street Types

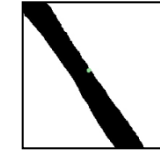
Hilltop Residential Neighborhood and Environs



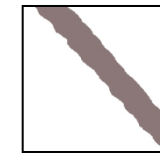
Gateway



Crossroads



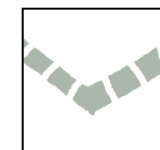
Crystal Ave Primary



Secondary Roads

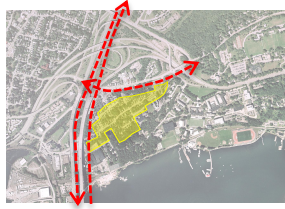


Green Roads (residential)



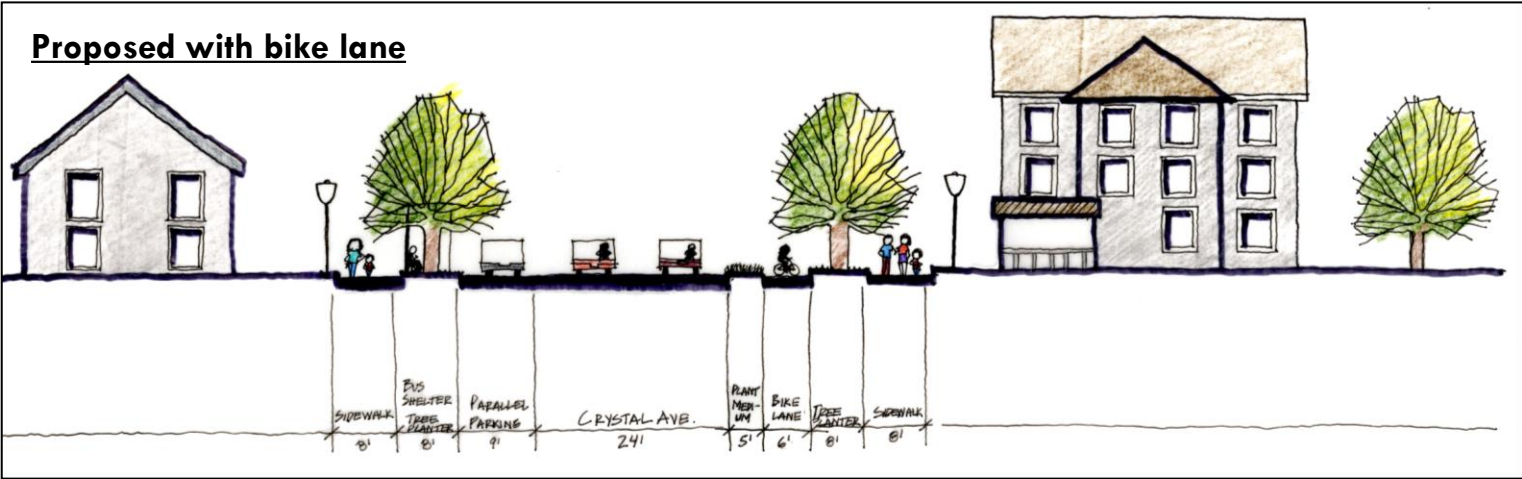
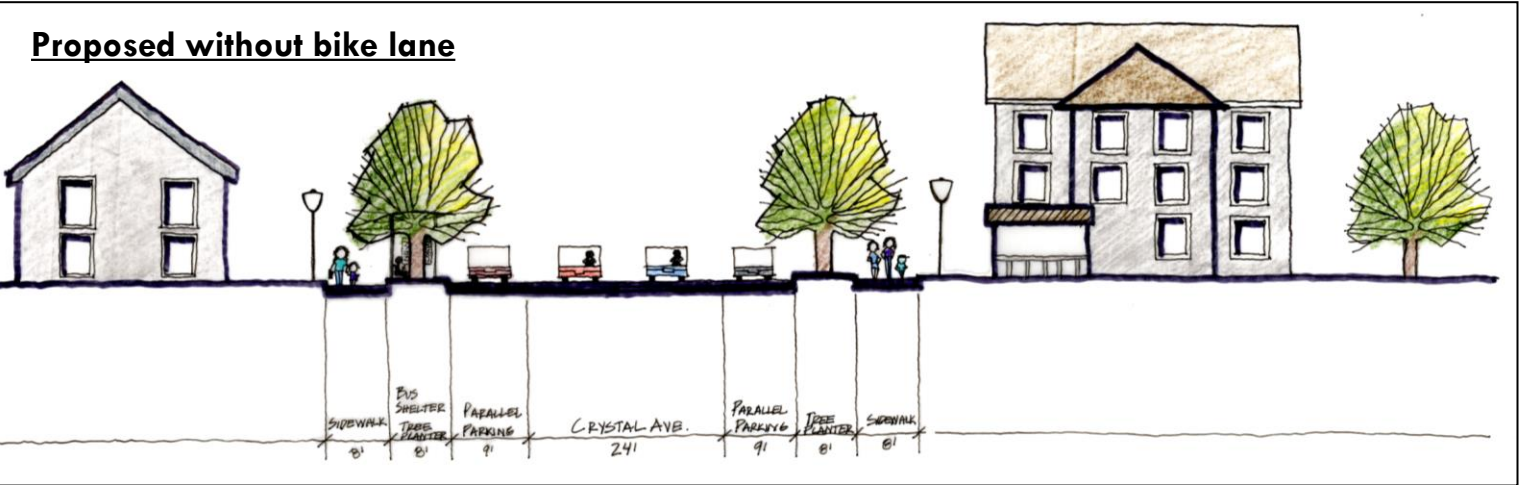
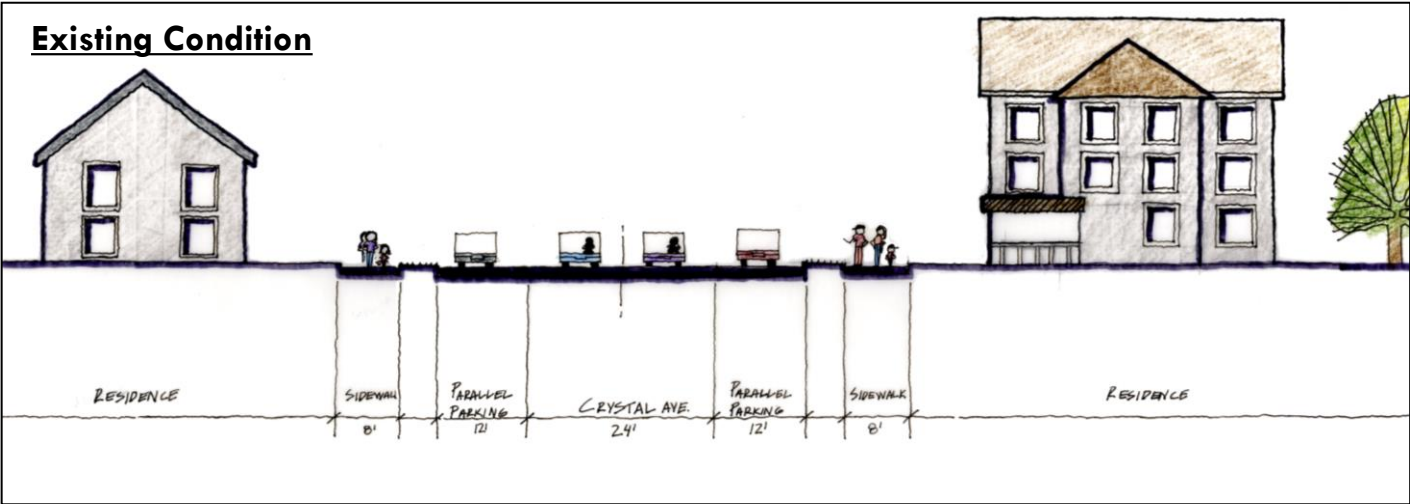
Roads to be removed



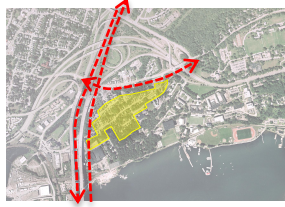


# Proposed Street Types: Primary Path - Crystal Avenue

Hilltop Residential Neighborhood and Environs



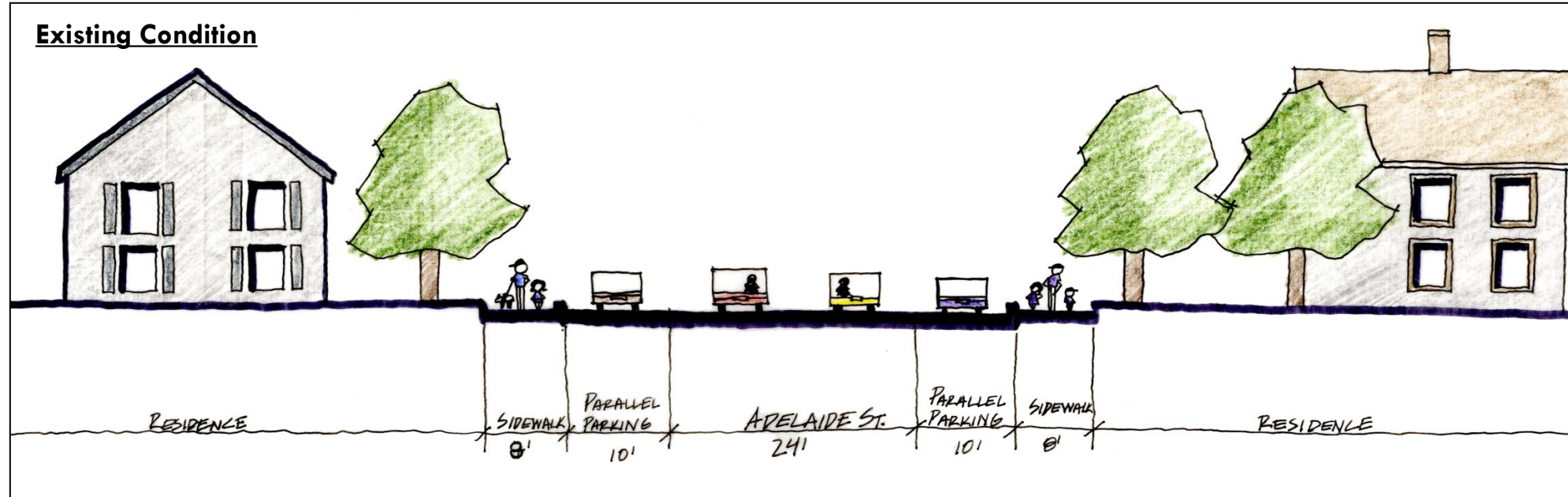




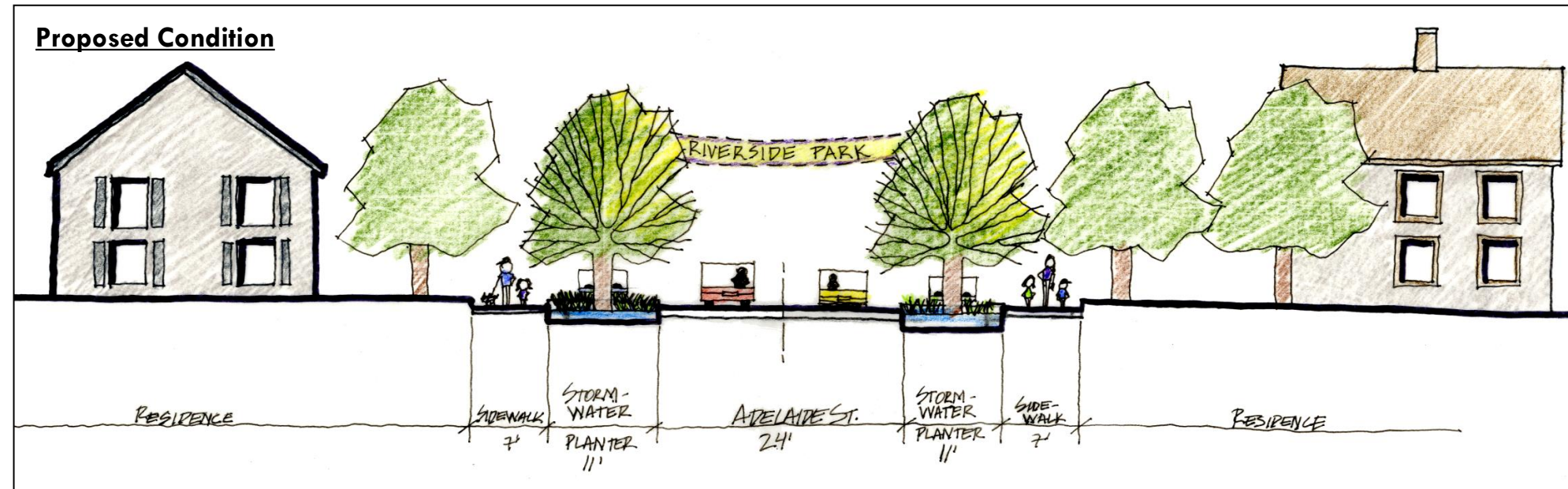
# Proposed Street Types: Secondary Path - Adelaide Street

Hilltop Residential Neighborhood and Environs

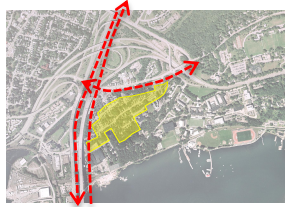
**Existing Condition**



**Proposed Condition**



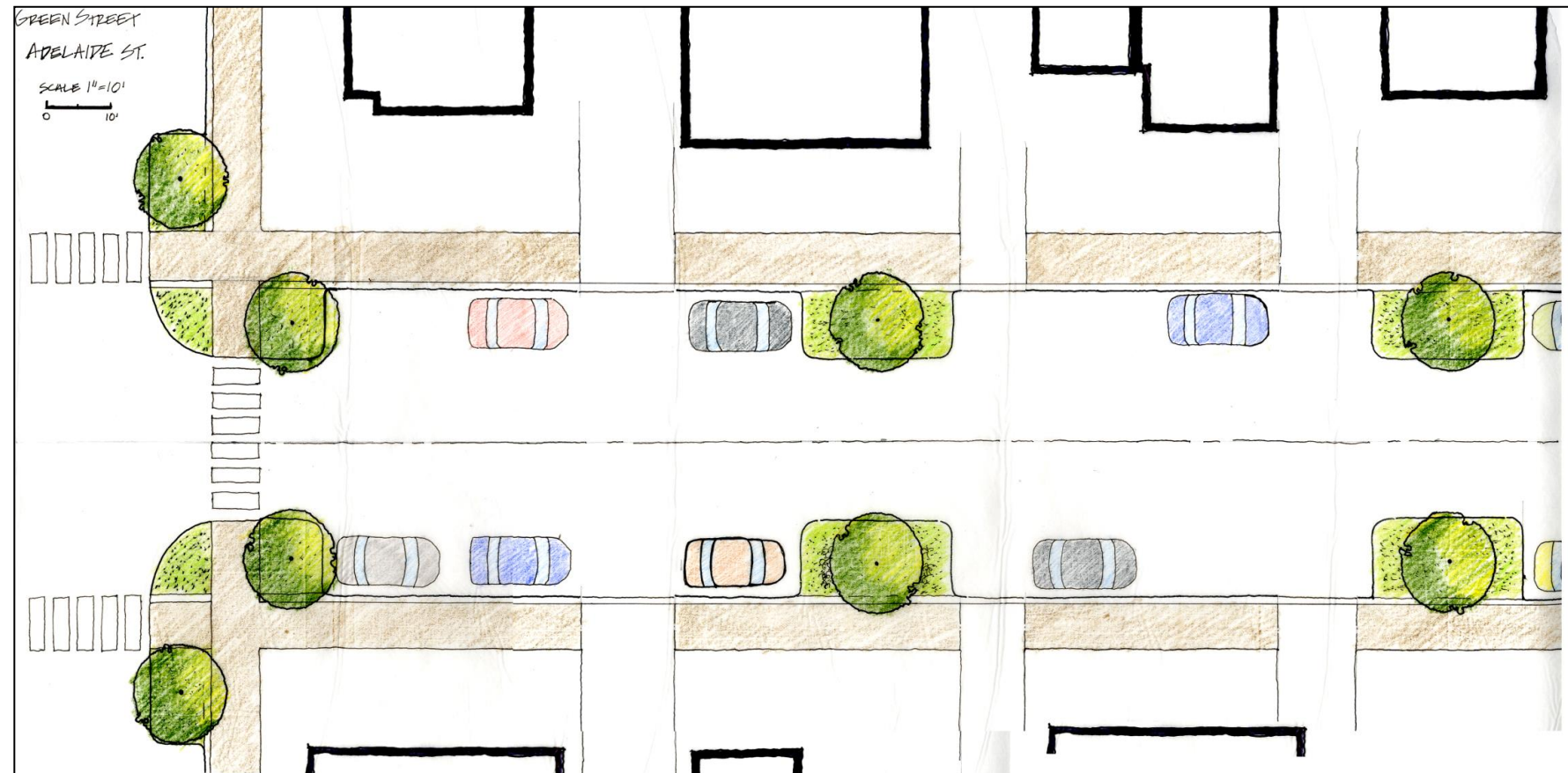




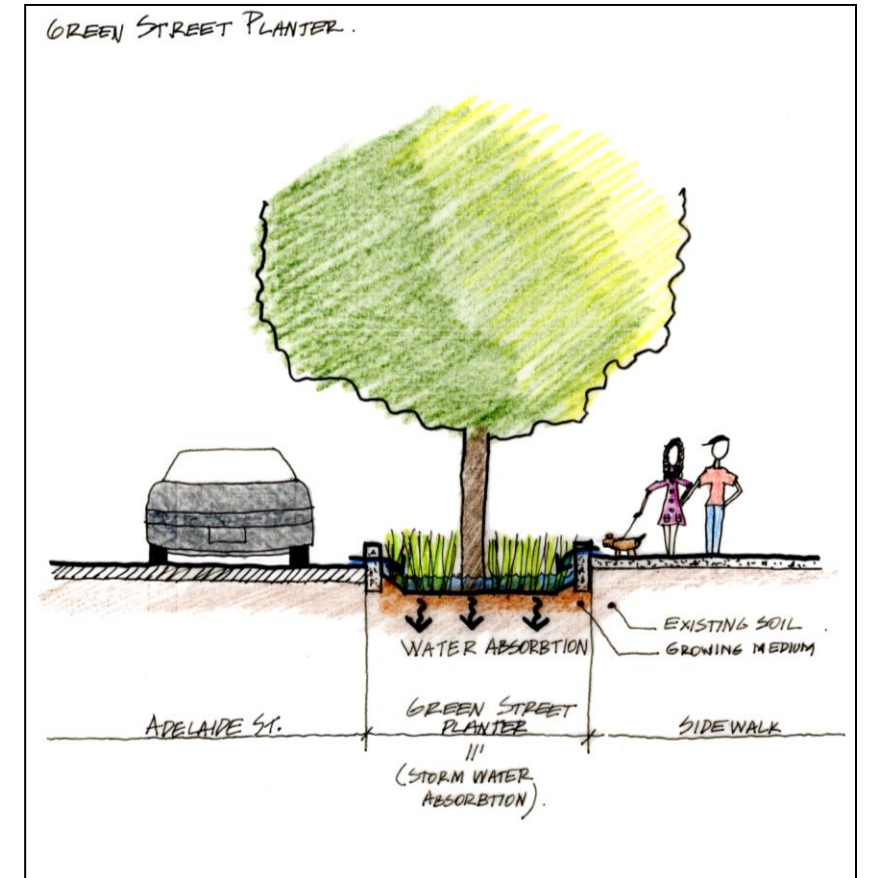
# Proposed Street Types: : Secondary Path - Adelaide Street

Hilltop Residential Neighborhood and Environs

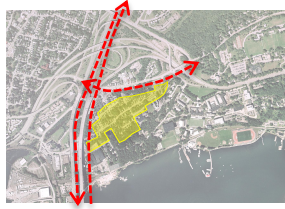
## Proposed Plan



## Proposed Section



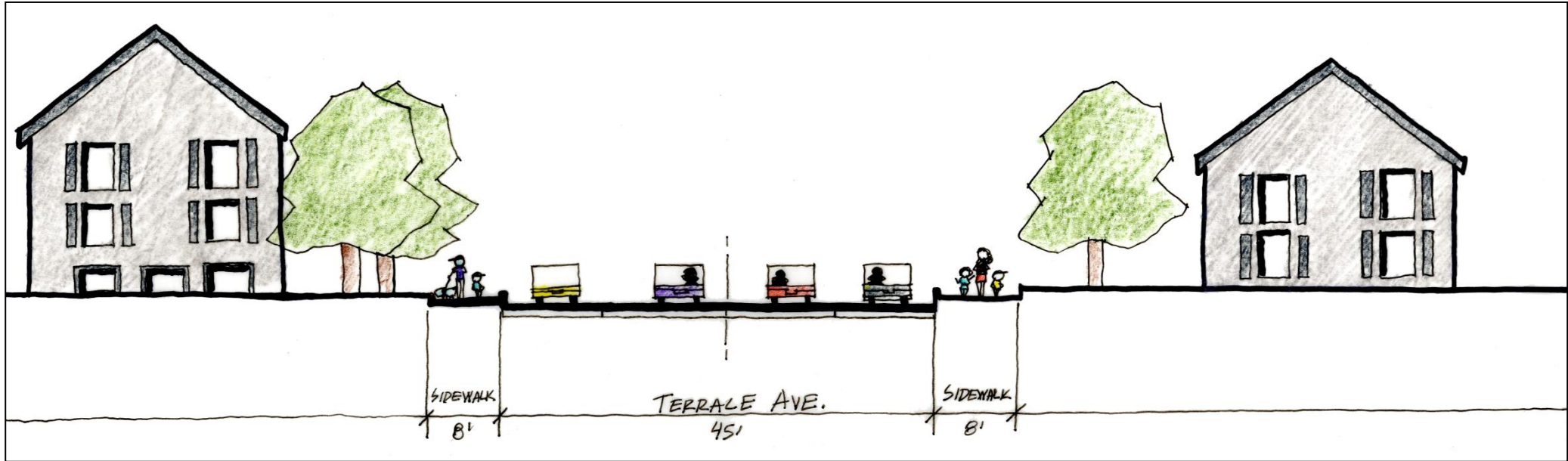




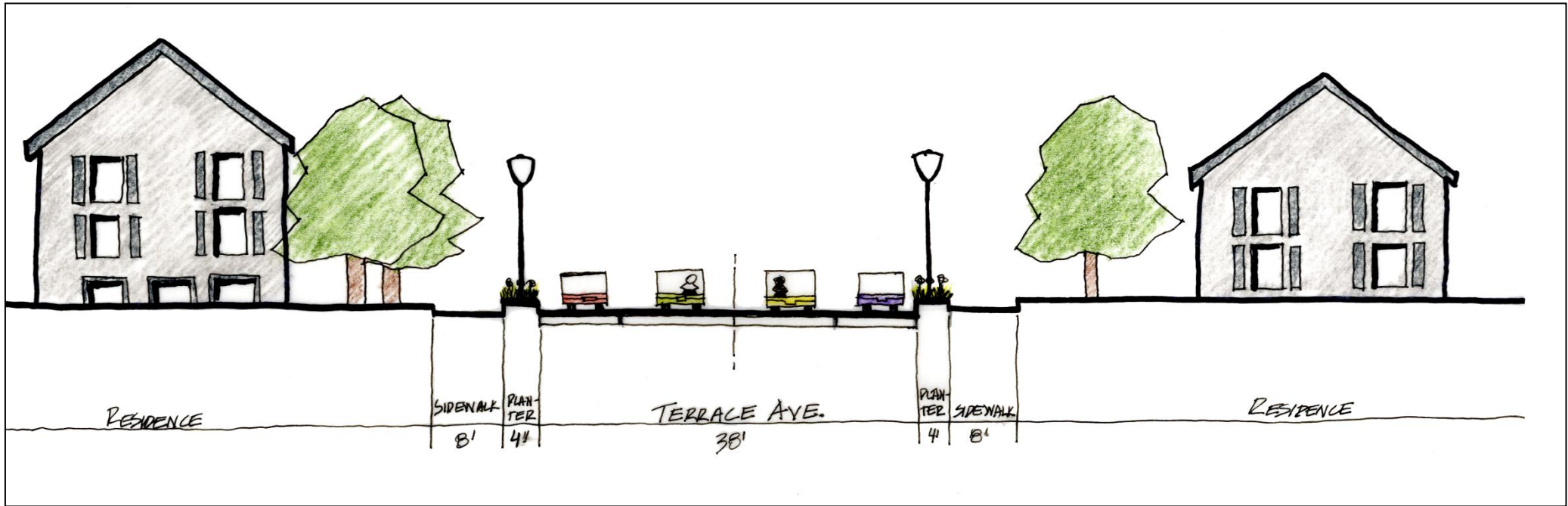
# Proposed Street Types: Residential Streets

Hilltop Residential Neighborhood and Environs

## Existing Condition



## Proposed Condition







## Summary

### **The street patterns along Crystal Avenue**

and its cross streets were laid out in 1854 and development began slowly. New London's fine local builders, inspired by the design ideas of A.J. Downing, Orson Squires Fowler and others, these homes are well-built, comfortable family homes. Today the "bones" of this quality construction are attracting enterprising individuals to invest in "fixer-upper" projects to improve housing in the neighborhood. Many homes are still owner occupied and are well maintained.

Infrastructure improvements to the streets, and especially to the sidewalks, improved lighting and signage will create an incentive to continue private investment in the neighborhood.

**Winthrop School** has been a neighborhood asset since the late 1800s. The new Winthrop STEM school opened in the fall of 2013 after several years of reconstruction.

The Creative Placemaking project held many workshops at the school to encourage neighbors to begin thinking of the school as a community resource.

In March the artists who led the Art Jams conducted a series of workshops for all New London 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. All students had the opportunity to participate in the activities which were divided into two groups. The Performance Group, led by L'Ana Burton and Derron Wood created dance and a shadow puppet play. The Art Group painted a mural and created fractals on their computers.

### **The Re-Connect New London team**

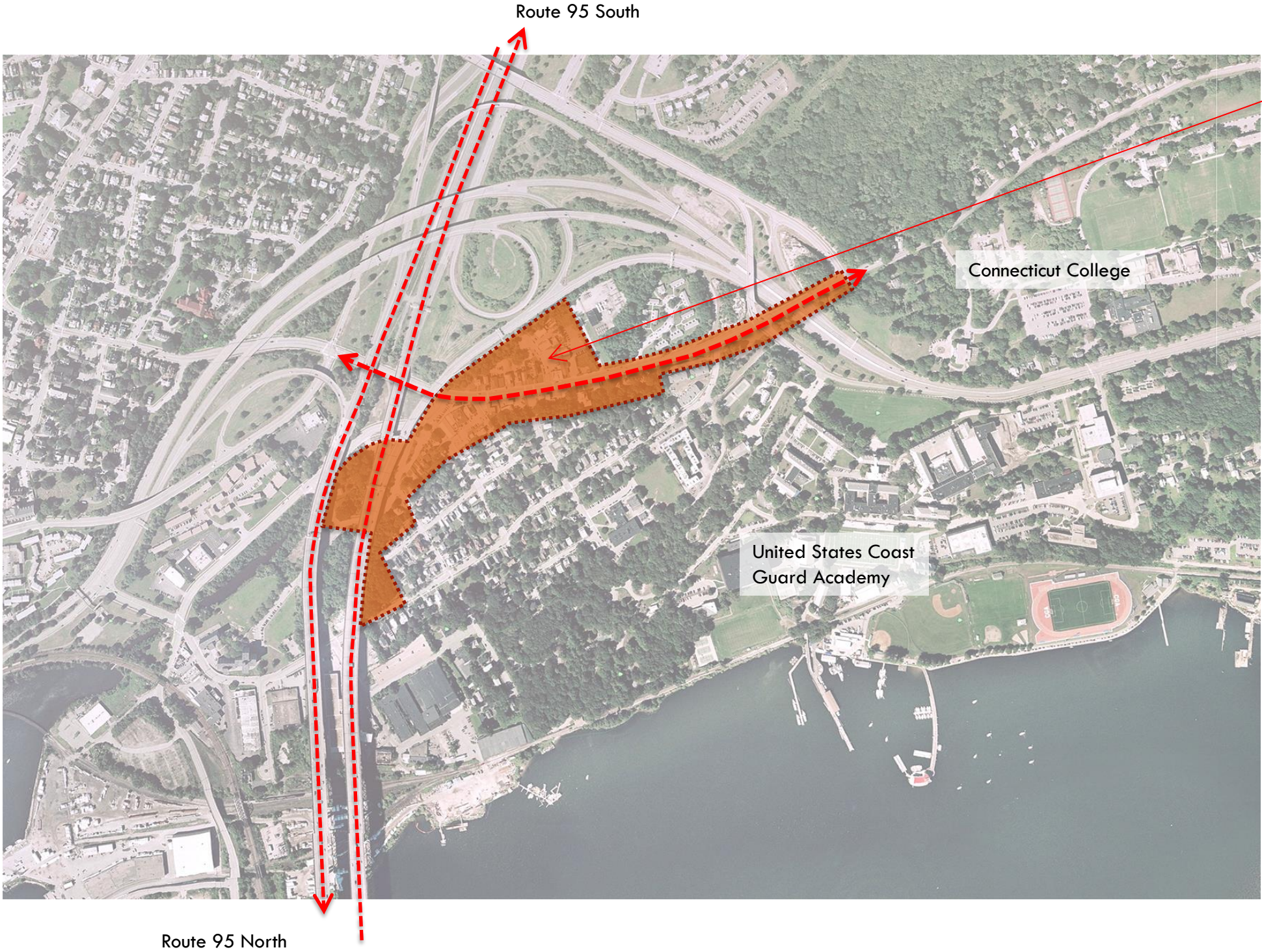
encourages the City of New London to approach this situation as an opportunity to showcase its artistic nature and exemplify the value it places in its citizens and spaces. There are three avenues which need specific attention, remembering that while unique, they are closely related to one another.

- 1.) The city can begin to re-organize the interchange and local streets into a multi-modal transportation network which encourages public transit, walking and biking alongside the ever present cars and trucks.
- 2.) The vacant lands among the interstate and interchange could be redeveloped into creative mixed use developments which are attractive to visitors, residents, and potential residents.
- 3.) The entire area would benefit from a serious look at the open space system and how it could be refurbished as an amenity which helps to link the communities and improve quality of life. Specifically, Riverside Park, Winthrop Cove Park and the Old Mill are unique amenities which are sadly underutilized.





Project Type and Site:



● **Hodges Square and Williams St.  
Master Plan for Streetscape  
Improvements**  
Work performed by: Kent + Frost  
Landscape Architecture  
Contact: Brian Kent  
bkent@kentfrost.com





# Program Statement

Hodges Square & Williams Street

Kent + Frost, LLC Landscape Architecture located in Mystic, CT has undertaken the master planning of the Williams Street Corridor including Hodges Square. K + F has completed several local projects including the Hygienic Art Park in downtown New London. This component of the Placemaking project was closely coordinated with other aspects of the overall project including the economic development analysis.

The Northeast New London Project area contains colleges, neighborhoods, commercial areas and a waterfront park. Williams Street from Briggs Street at the north to Huntington Street at the south bisects this area and serves as one of the principal transportation corridors between Northeast New London and Downtown. Williams Street accommodates vehicular traffic with wide lanes that encourage speeds higher than the posted speed limits. Accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists are minimal or nonexistent.

The pedestrian environment is characterized by long expanses of narrow sidewalks with no separation from fast moving traffic. There are no public benches (excepting two bus stops), very few street trees (except along the frontage of a recent apartment complex), no bike racks or directional signage, no landscaping of any kind except for strips of grass, and lighting is limited to highway-style cobra head fixtures.

One benefit of excessive lane widths is the potential for bicycle accommodations within the roadway. In most sections of Williams Street, space exists for 5 or 6' wide bike lanes. An option to bike lanes includes painted sharrows and signage. Huntington Street at the south west corner of the project areas provides a direct

connection to downtown and also contains wide travel lanes.

Most existing businesses along the corridor and especially in Hodges Square would benefit from a more pedestrian and bike friendly environment. There is currently an abundance of parking in the district. Besides existing on-street parking, several underutilized off street parking lots occur behind commercial buildings.

The Master Plan recommends a number of uniform improvements that will attract more walkers and bicyclists to the area:

- Wider sidewalks
- Vehicle lanes reduced to 11'
- Bike lanes or shared lanes with Sharrows & signage
- Colored and textured crosswalks
- Benches
- Pedestrian scaled lighting
- Landscaping including street trees, pots and seasonal flowers
- Wayfinding signage
- Trash receptacles
- Bike racks

Certain areas have unique conditions that warrant special design responses. These include:

## Briggs St/Williams St intersection

Create all-way stop intersection to enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety. Install crosswalks and lighting.

## Williams Street /Route 32 Bridge

Reduce lane widths to 11', turn lane to 10'. Add 5' bike lanes, widen sidewalks, replace the opaque screen wall with a visually pervious screen.

## Route 32 Connector off-ramp onto Williams

## Street

Reconfigure the high speed merge lane into a 90 degree full stop intersection with Crystal Ave (may need signalization).

## Bailey Circle

Create a "shared street" that allows all users equal access (uniform pavement for walkers, bicyclist and walkers). Include trees, landscaping and a "gateway plaza" at the terminus of the Gold Star Bridge bike/pedestrian path. Install signage and an iconic sculptural landmark to signify the importance of the gateway.

## Hodges Square

Remove unnecessary pavement by moving parking away from buildings to create wider sidewalks and a small "Fountain Plaza". Repatriate the original fountain and install as the focal point of plaza. Channel stormwater through the plaza (visible and underground), under State Pier Road to the empty space at the highway bridge. Create "Headwater Park" in this area. Add trees and landscaping to improve streetscape appearance and provide for comfortable outdoor seating throughout. Develop the theme, "Source to Sea" to connect the Fountain Plaza, Headwater Park and Old Town Mill.

## I-95 Underpasses

Utilize the blank expanses of concrete under the three elevated highways as canvasses for murals that relate to the Northeast New London community. Install colored LED lighting to give the underpasses a dynamic nighttime presence.

Kent + Frost, LLC  
Landscape Architects and Urban Planners



Brian Kent



Chad Frost



Elisa Lathrop







# Analysis of Site Existing Conditions: Summary

Hodges Square & Williams Street corridor

## Opportunities:

**Hodges Square:** Recognizable place name. Mixed use commercial center with adjacent neighborhood.

**Williams Street:** Principal transportation corridor connecting Conn College, Coast Guard Academy, Lyman Allyn Museum, and Quaker Hill to Hodges Square and downtown New London.

**Walkability/Bikeability:** Proximity of important destinations makes walking and biking potentially attractive alternatives. The Gold Star Bridge path lands on Bailey Circle near Hodges Square.

## Constraints:

**Deteriorated Buildings:** Several commercial and mixed use buildings in Hodges Square are in need of improvements. Several buildings/retail spaces are vacant.

**Travel Lanes, Sidewalks & Crosswalks:** Excessively wide travel lanes encourage excessive speeds. Narrow sidewalks, certain unsafe crossings and excessively long crosswalks discourage walking. No provisions for bicycle use such as: signage, pavement markings, bike racks.

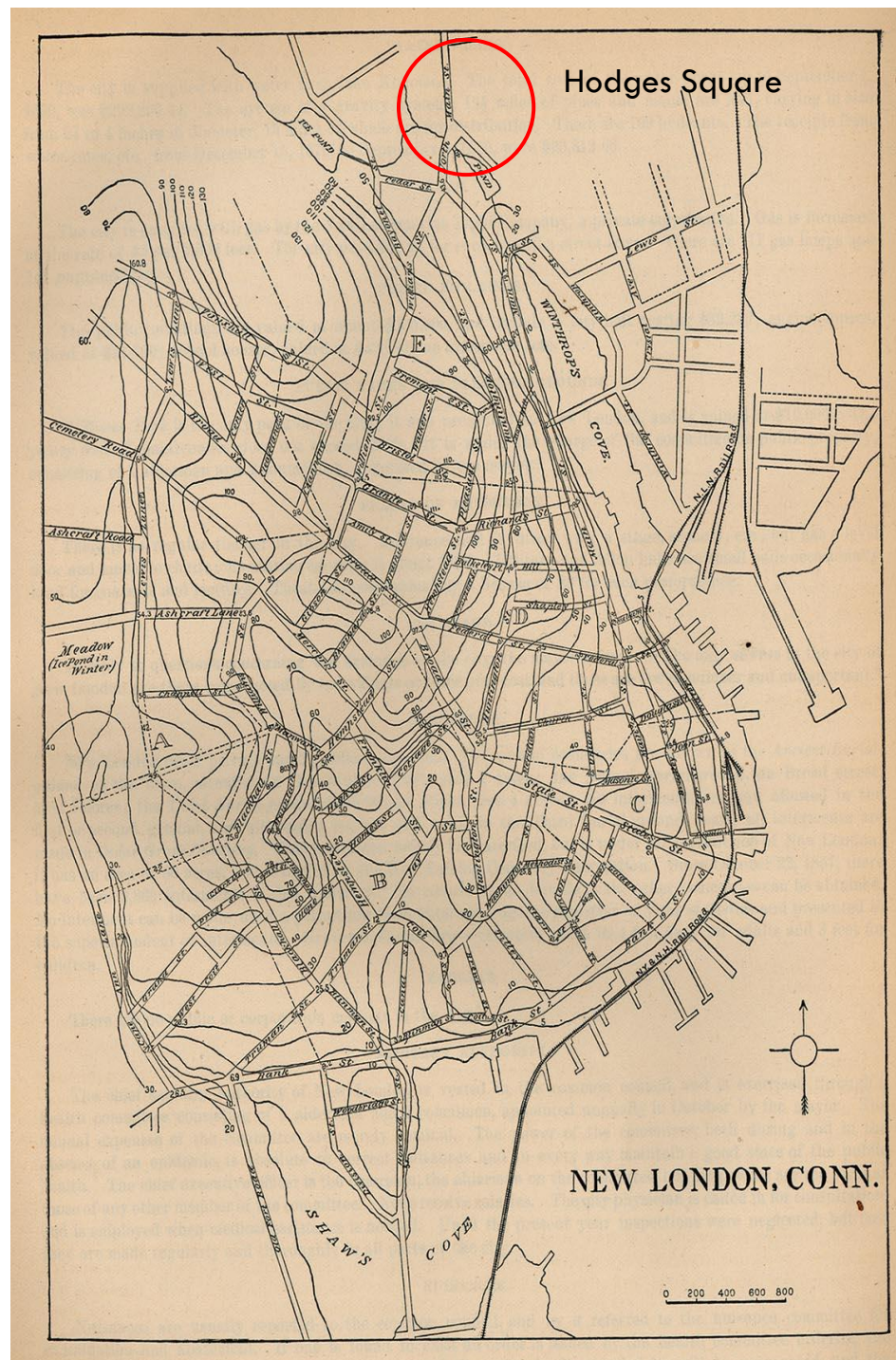
**Lack of Streetscape Amenities:** The district's public areas lack pedestrian friendly elements such as: street trees, benches, litter receptacles, bike racks, planters and sidewalk scale lighting.





## Historical Context

Hodges Square & Williams Street



Hodges Square circa 1905. Looking South.



Hodges Square circa 1940. Looking North up Williams Street.





## Existing Conditions

Hodges Square







# Existing Conditions

Bailey Circle & Williams Street







## Opportunity for Improvement

Williams Street Bridge over Route 32



Williams Street Bridge

Narrow sidewalks are dwarfed by unnecessarily wide travel lanes that encourage excessive vehicle speeds.

Older bridges can be retrofitted with wider sidewalks and pedestrian scale lighting.



Walnut Street Bridge, Philadelphia, PA





## Opportunity for Improvement

Williams Street Residential Properties



Williams Street Residential Block

Residential Properties on Williams Street lack “Curb Appeal”

No separation between the public and private landscape



Philadelphia, PA Residential Block

Curb Appeal can be created with wider sidewalks, street trees and picket fences





## Opportunity for Improvement

Williams Street Retail Area



Williams Street Retail Area

Sidewalks are in disrepair and underutilized.



Portland, OR Streetscape Project

Pedestrian amenities (street trees, benches, lighting) & façade improvements create an appealing streetscape, enhancing walkability.





## Opportunity for Improvement

Williams Street/I-95 Underpasses



Williams Street underpass at Rte 32 Connector

Underpasses are barren and inhospitable for pedestrians

Murals and lighting effects can transform eyesores into attractive passageways



Underpass Mural, West Oakland, CA by the Oakland Mural Project



San Antonio Lighting Project by Bill Fitzgibbons

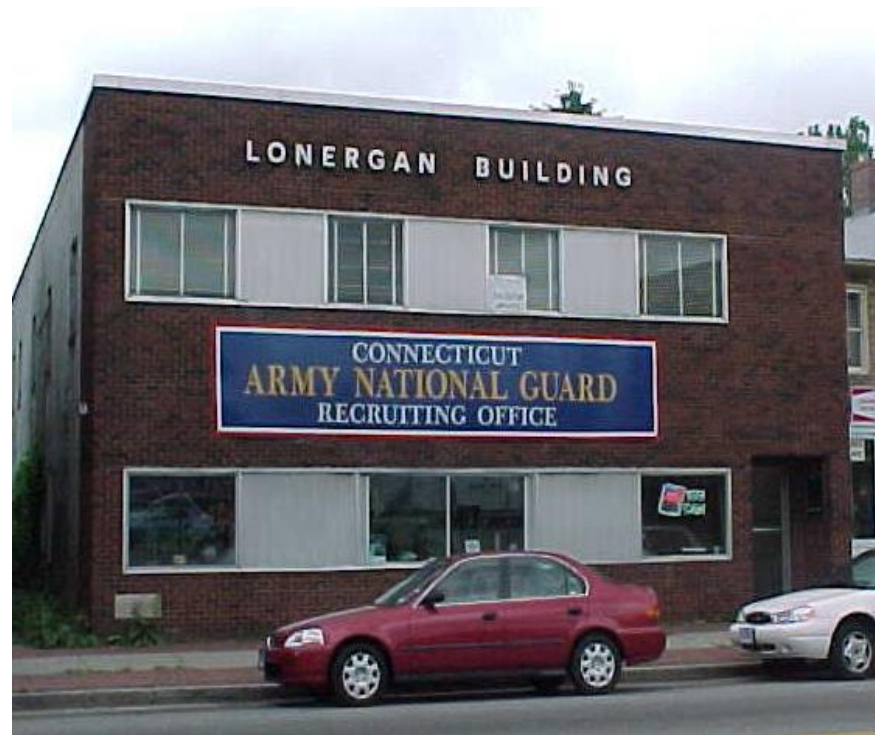




## Façade Improvement Case Study

Willimantic, CT Main Street

### 948 Main Street Willimantic, CT Building Transformation



**Before**



**After**

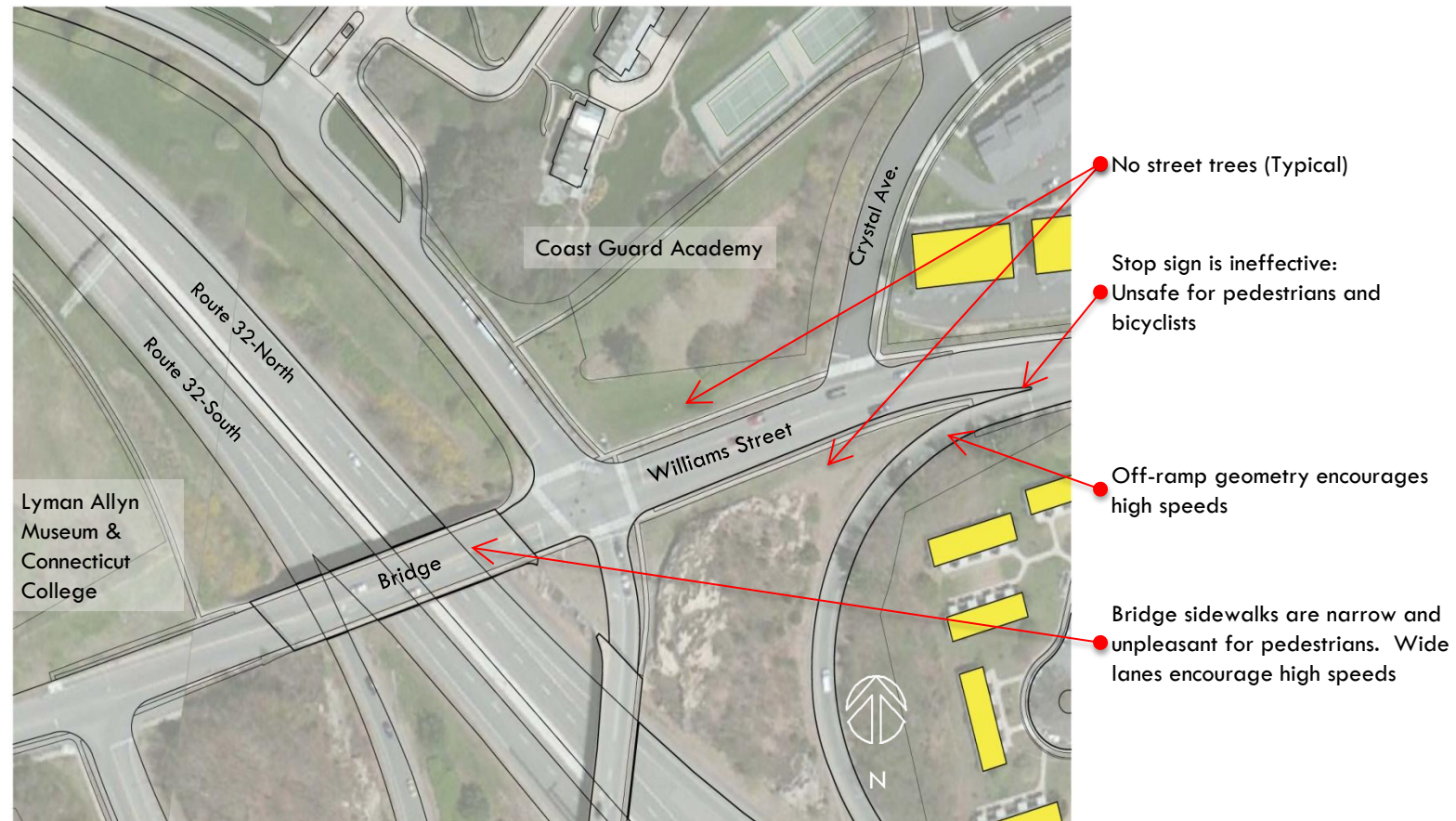
Progressive zoning ordinances and design guidelines can help stimulate appropriate economic development





# Inventory of Site Existing Conditions: Key Features

Hodges Square & Williams Street



- No street trees (Typical)
- Stop sign is ineffective:  
Unsafe for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Off-ramp geometry encourages high speeds
- Bridge sidewalks are narrow and unpleasant for pedestrians. Wide lanes encourage high speeds

## Legend:

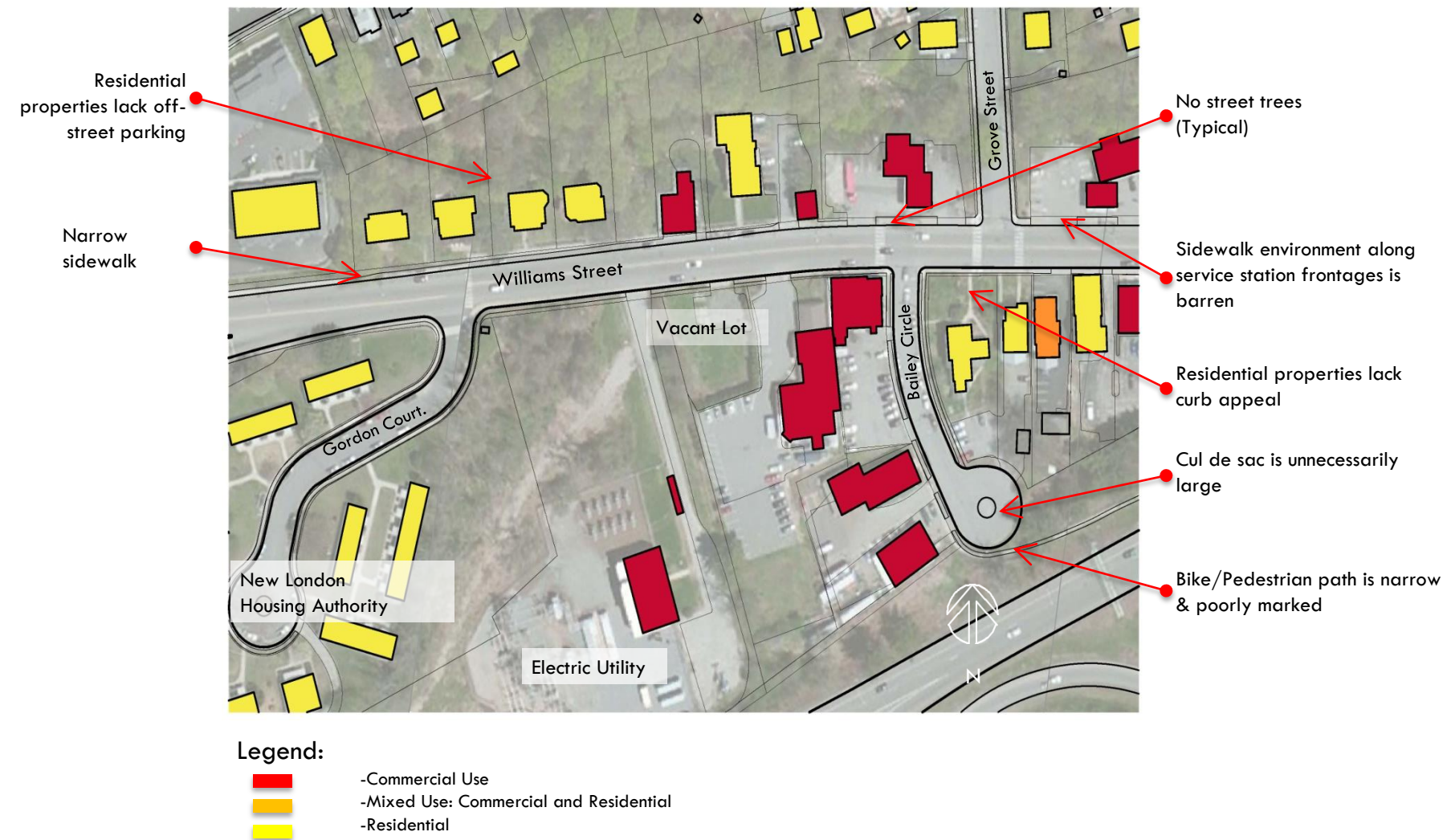
- Commercial Use
- Mixed Use: Commercial and Residential
- Residential





# Inventory of Site Existing Conditions: Key Features

Hodges Square & Williams Street

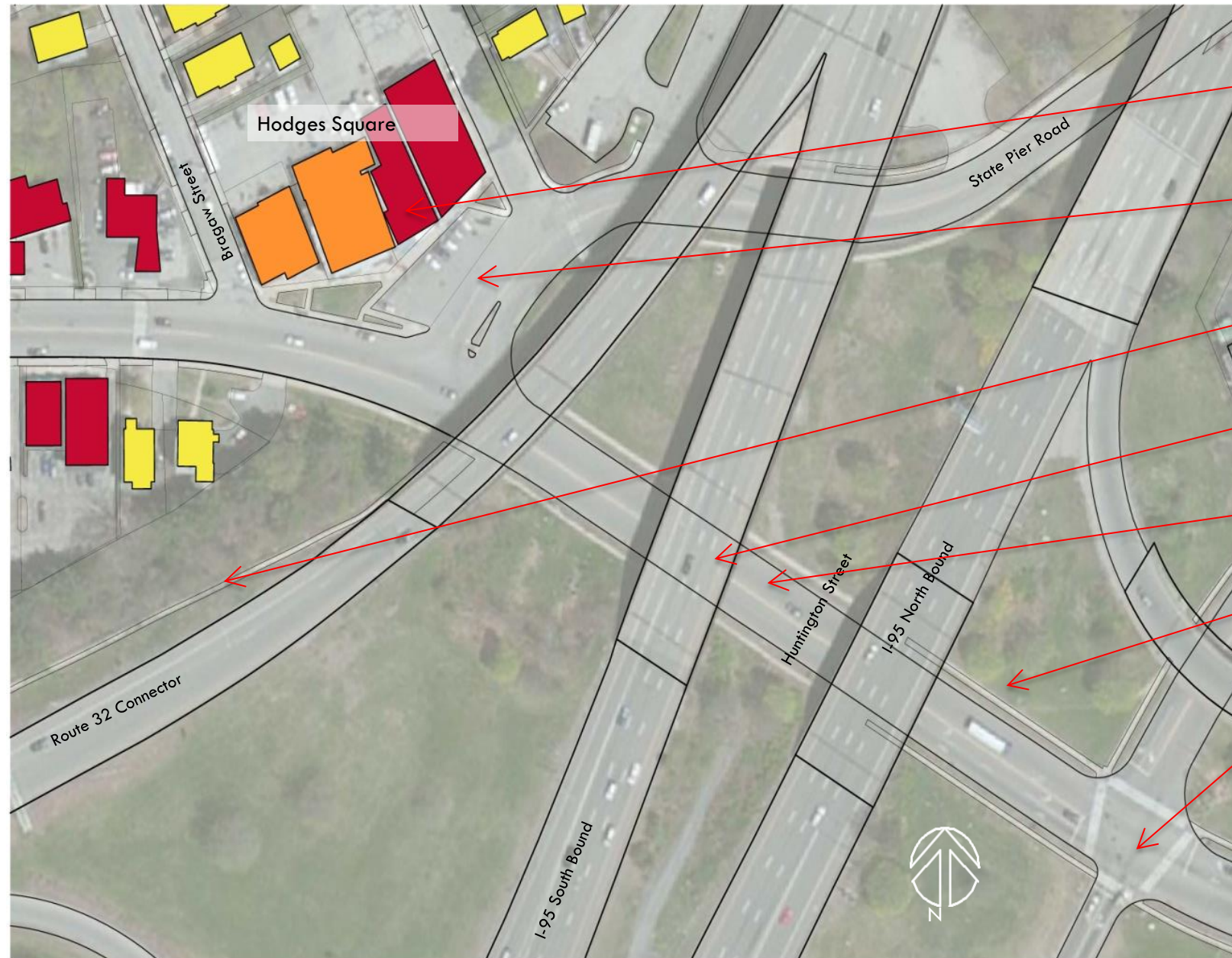






# Inventory of Site Existing Conditions: Key Features

Hodges Square & Williams Street



Mixed use buildings with vacant spaces and deteriorating facades

Surplus pavement is unattractive & creates heat island effect.

Bike/Pedestrian path is too narrow (5') for safe two-way travel

Barren underpasses are unpleasant for pedestrians

Unnecessarily wide (50') two lane street

No street trees (Typical)

Unnecessarily long crosswalks

## Legend:

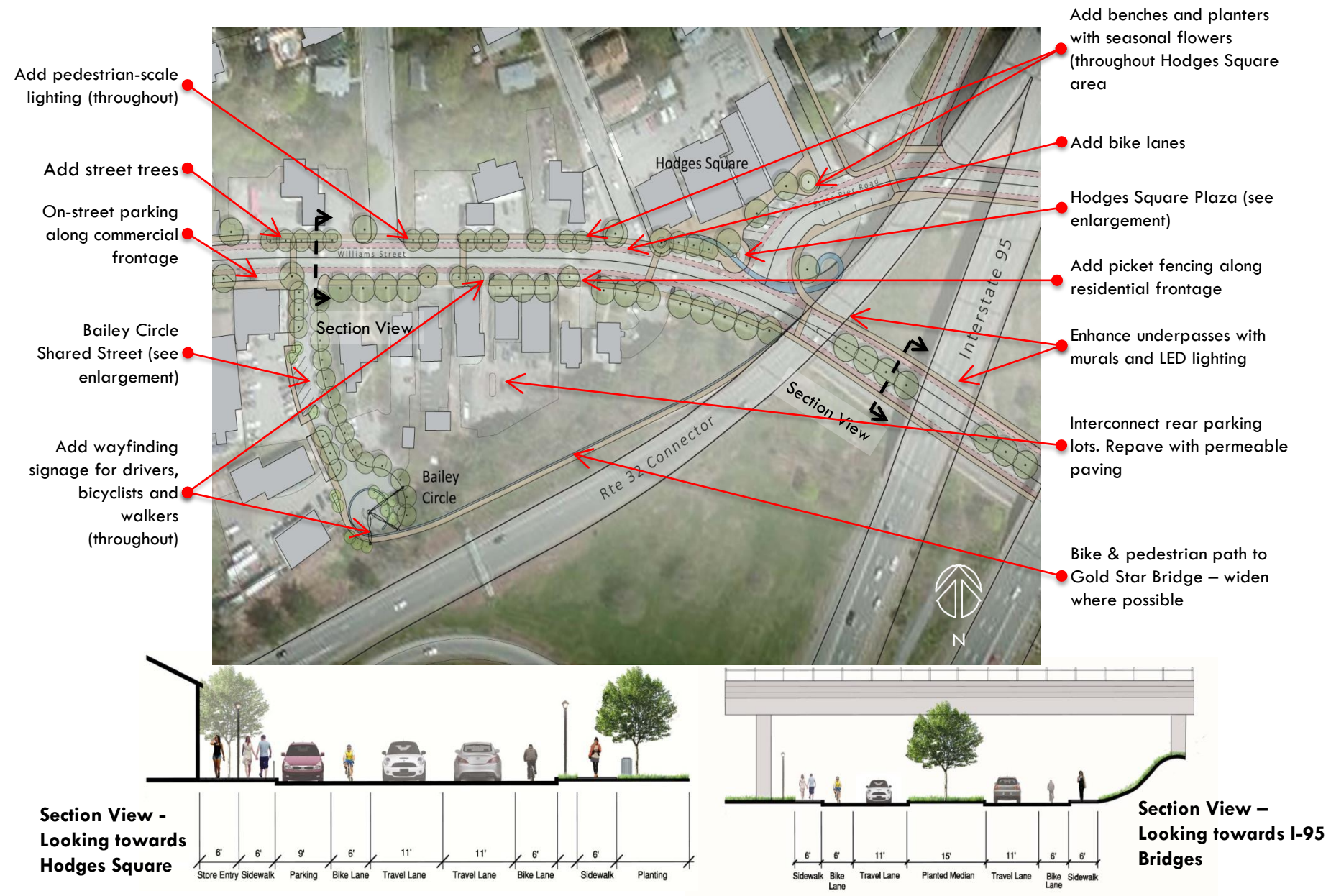
- Commercial Use
- Mixed Use: Commercial and Residential
- Residential





# Proposed Master Plan: Illustrative Plan

Williams Street Streetscape: Segment 1

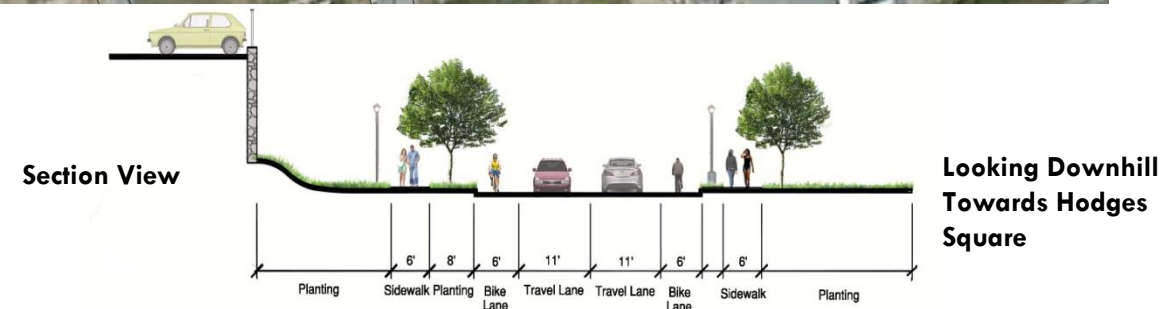
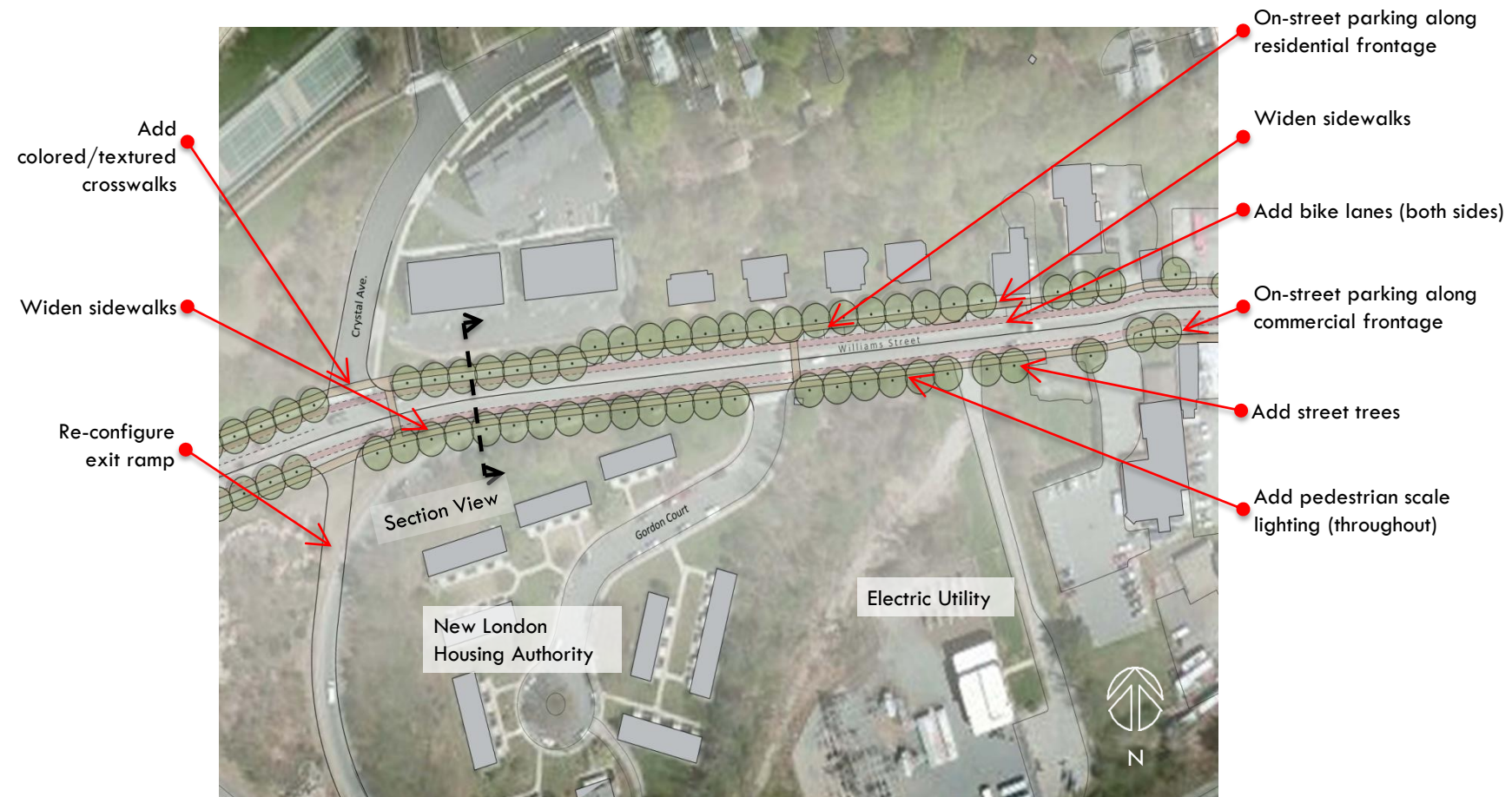






# Proposed Master Plan: Illustrative Plan

Williams Street Streetscape: Segment 2

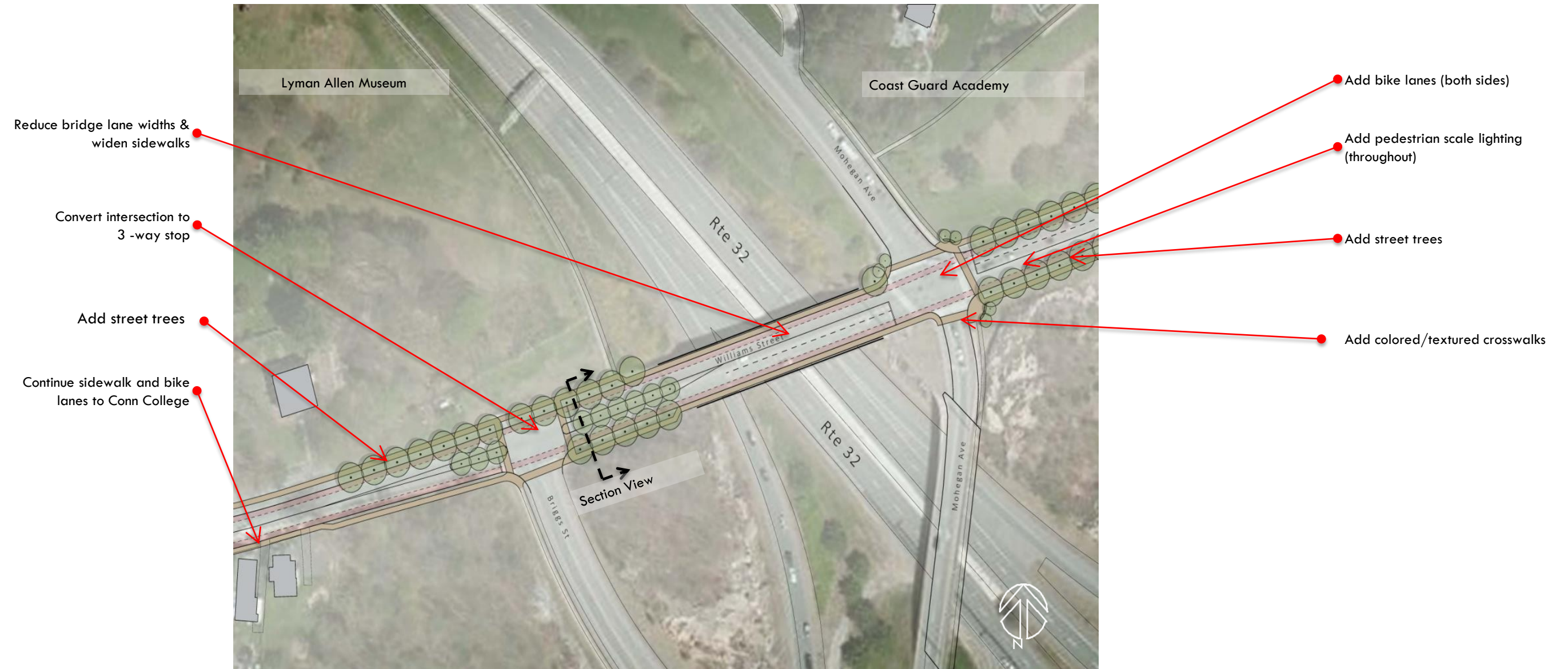




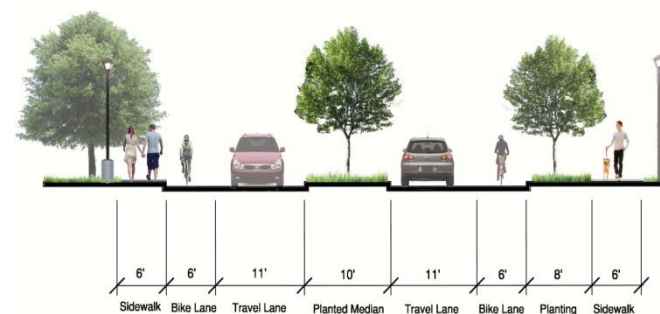


# Proposed Master Plan: Illustrative Plan

## Williams Street Streetscape: Segment 3



### Section View



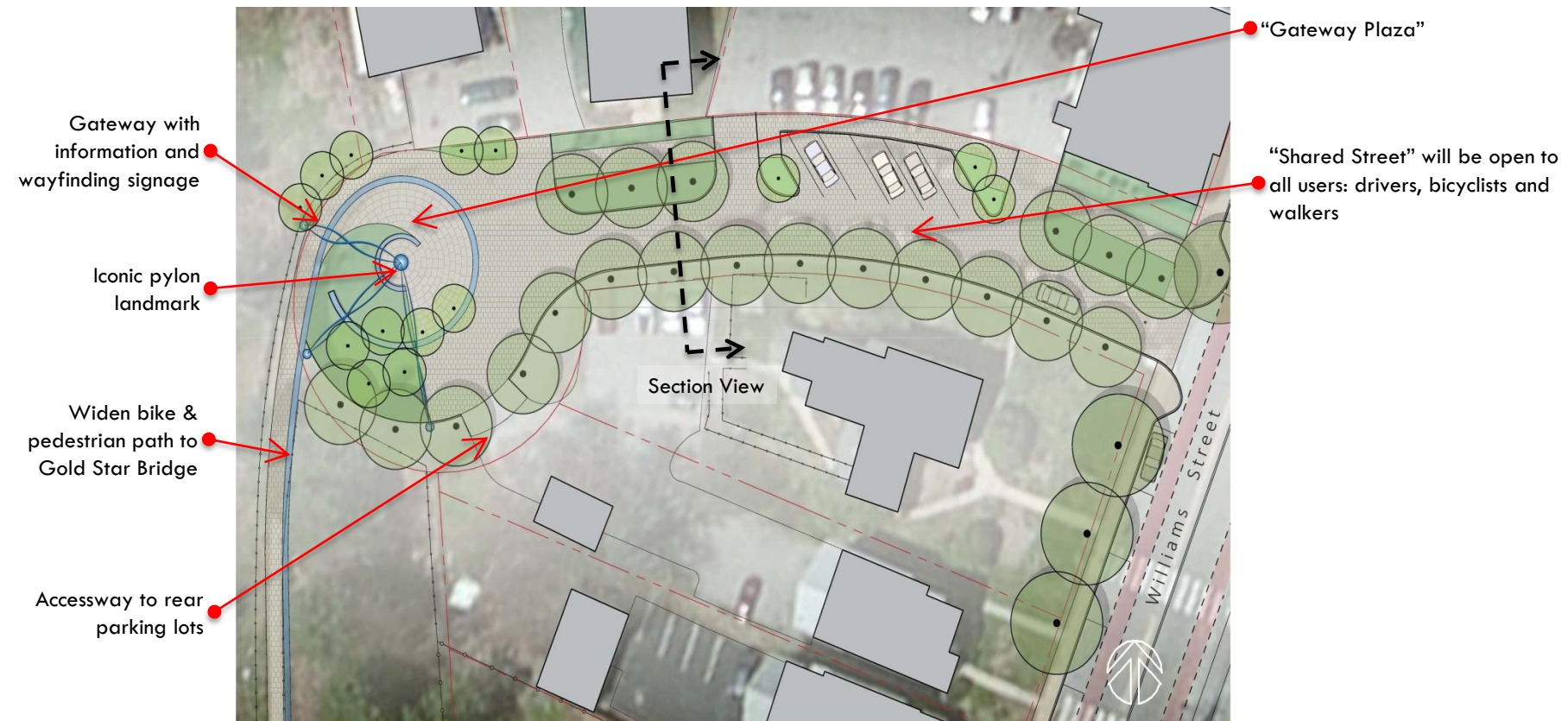
Looking East  
towards Bridge





# Proposed Master Plan: Illustrative Plan

## Bailey Circle

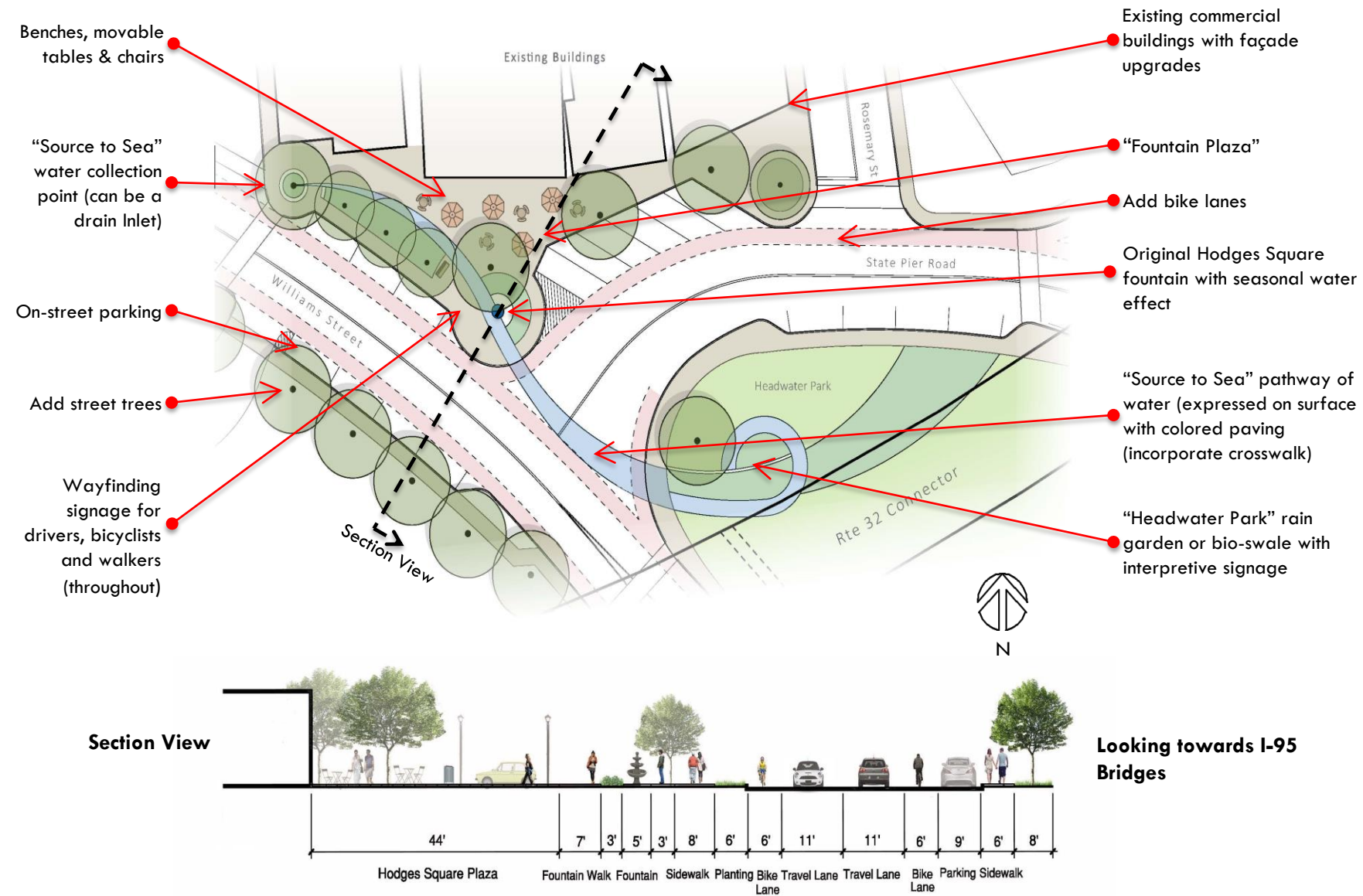






# Proposed Master Plan: Illustrative Plan

Hodges Square







## Proposed Master Plan: Illustrative View

Hodges Square & Williams Street







# Prioritized Action Plan

Hodges Square & Williams Street

Priority	
Higher	Lower

Note: All work on state highways and within state Right-of-Ways must be approved by the CTDOT

Segment 1 – Williams St - Huntington Street to Bailey Circle		
Stripe bike lanes, sharrows and/or appropriate signage/striping		
Replace crosswalks with high visibility surfacing		
Implement landscape improvements (street trees)		
Install picket fences along residential frontages		
Install pedestrian scale sidewalk light posts		
Install trash/recycling containers		
Install planter boxes		
Install bike racks		
Install benches		
Install wayfinding signage		
Segment 2 – Williams St - Bailey Circle to Mohegan Ave		
Stripe bike lanes, sharrows and/or appropriate signage/striping		
Replace crosswalks with high visibility surfacing		
Implement landscape improvements (street trees)		
Reconfigure exit ramp to a 4-way intersection with Crystal Ave if poss.		
Install pedestrian scale sidewalk light posts		
Install trash/recycling containers		
Install planter boxes		
Install bike racks		
Install benches		
Install wayfinding signage		
Segment 3 – Williams St - Mohegan Ave to Briggs St & Connecticut College (incl. Rte 32 bridge modifications)		
Stripe bike lanes, sharrows and/or appropriate signage/striping		
Install bike detection loops at Mohegan Ave signal		
Convert Briggs intersection to 3-way stop		
Repair sidewalks on S side, install new sidewalks on N side to Conn College entrance		
Replace crosswalks with high visibility surfacing		
Implement landscape improvements (street trees)		
Reconfigure exit ramp to a 4-way intersection with Crystal Ave if poss.		
Install pedestrian scale sidewalk light posts		
Install wayfinding signage		
Hodges Square		
Enlarge sidewalks along commercial frontage		
Re-align Williams/State Pier Intersection		
Implement a façade improvement program		
Implement “Fountain Plaza”		
Stripe bike lanes, sharrows and/or appropriate signage/striping		
Replace crosswalks with high visibility surfacing		
Install picket fences along residential frontages		
Install pedestrian scale sidewalk light posts		
Install trash/recycling containers		
Install planter boxes		
Install bike racks		
Install benches		
Install wayfinding signage		
Bailey Circle		
Implement “Shared Street”		
Implement “Gateway Plaza”		
Widen Gold Star Bridge path on grade to beginning of bridge structure		
Install picket fences along residential frontages		
Install pedestrian scale sidewalk light posts		
Install trash/recycling containers		
Install planter boxes		
Install benches		
Install wayfinding signage		





## Conclusion Hodges Square & Williams Street

Hodges Square has potential to energize the surrounding Northeast New London district. Both private and public investment must be coordinated and targeted for the greatest effect. Private investment can result in improvements to existing buildings and the implementation of new commercial and mixed use development. Public investment can enhance the streetscape through landscape, lighting and pedestrian safety improvements. Accommodations for safe and convenient bicycling and walking will induce greater visitation to Hodges Square from surrounding neighborhoods and college campuses.

Certain regulatory constraints currently create disincentives for redevelopment. Zoning regulations are dated and may not allow for the realities of a contemporary urban village. New zoning regulations that include form-based design guidelines can facilitate appropriate redevelopment. Off-street parking requirements reduce buildable area and inflate the cost of development. Significant surface parking exists in the area and can accommodate additional development through shared-use agreements. A more walkable and bike friendly Hodges Square will also reduce the need for parking spaces. Current property tax policy that penalizes owners for building improvements is a disincentive to redevelopment.

Williams Street provides the principal transportation corridor from the college campuses and Quaker Hill through Hodges Square and on to downtown New London. The right-of-way from Briggs Street to Huntington

Street was acquired by the state in the late 1960's to facilitate construction of the extensive expressway interchange and to serve as a connector road to the various on and off ramps. The segment is designated as State Road 635 (unsigned). The average daily traffic measured on Williams Street in 2011 was 11,100 motor vehicles (*source: CTDOT 2011 ADT*). Any changes to the street or land within the Right-of-Way are subject to CTDOT review and approval.

Since it was reconfigured as an expressway connector, Williams Street displays certain characteristics that reflect the prevailing philosophy of transportation efficiency at the time. For example, a clover leaf exit ramp merges with Williams Street just south of the Crystal Avenue intersection. But rather than allowing a free flowing merge, the ramp is signed with a stop sign; an example of how an outdated philosophy collided with the reality of slower moving and highly vulnerable users that occupy a local street. Another outdated characteristic includes extremely wide sections (the two lane section under passing I-95 is 50' wide).

A newer philosophy of street design that can be applied to Williams Street is known as Complete Streets. The State of Connecticut ratified a Complete Streets act in 2009 (*Senate Bill 735, An Act Improving Bicycle and Pedestrian Access*). Over 500 Complete Streets (CS) acts and ordinances have been enacted as of this writing across the US. In Connecticut, New Haven, Middletown, and Bridgeport have

enacted CS ordinances and Glastonbury and South Windsor have been recognized as Bicycle Friendly Communities by the League of American Bicyclists. CS strategies share an underlying principle: streets are used by multiple constituents including car, truck and motorcycle drivers, bicyclists, pedestrians and the physically disabled; therefore, streets should be designed to be safe for all users. At least 1/3 of the population in America does not drive including children, the elderly and disabled, and those who choose not to own a car or cannot afford the cost. A 2011 survey by Portland State University found that out of 900 respondents, 65% agreed with the statement: "If or when I ride a bike, I'm concerned about being hit by a motor vehicle". The concerns of this group, known as the "Interested but Concerned" must be assuaged if the mode share of bicycling is to increase. For this reason, the master plan recommends bicycle safety improvements on Williams Street such as striped bike lanes, sharrows, signage, and bike racks. Other CS strategies include traffic calming that reduce speeds and make drivers more sensitive to their surroundings, wider sidewalks, street trees, safer crossings, better lighting, better transit options, and compact mixed uses that encourage walking.

This part of the master plan encourages the combination of Creative Placemaking and Complete Streets strategies for a comprehensive approach to the Williams Street corridor. Placemaking strategies include the resurrection of historical references and celebration of a community's culture through artistic expression.



Hodges Square Fountain





## Conclusion

### Hodges Square & Williams Street

Two primary opportunities for Placemaking are emphasized in this part of the plan: Hodges Square's "Fountain Plaza" and Bailey Circle's "Gateway Plaza".

The Fountain Plaza restores an iconic landmark to its intended site. Gifted to the city at the turn of the century by the Allyn family, the Hodges Square fountain occupied the center of the square and provided passing travelers water for their horses and themselves. The handsome carved granite monument was removed during the highway expansion and fortunately preserved in storage at the nearby Lyman Allyn Museum. The museum has generously offered to make the fountain available for restoration to the reconfigured square. The proposed streetscape includes a landscaped plaza with the fountain as a focal point and point of pride for the revitalizing community.

The Gateway Plaza takes a side effect of the highway expansion and transforms it into a celebration of how people and communities can connect through walking and bicycling. The current entrance to the Gold Star Bridge bike/pedestrian path is a narrow path at the end of a largely unmarked dead end street. As the only coastal bike /pedestrian crossing over the Thames River, its importance is poorly represented. In fact, many travelers struggle to find it when biking along the Connecticut shore. The proposed design transforms Bailey Circle into a "Shared Street" where slow moving autos, bicycles and pedestrians share a corridor that includes parking, landscaping, lighting and

wayfinding signage. The terminus of the street takes the form of a circular plaza accentuated by a vertical pylon sculpture that serves as both placemaker and visual landmark for those seeking out the bike/ped gateway to the bridge.

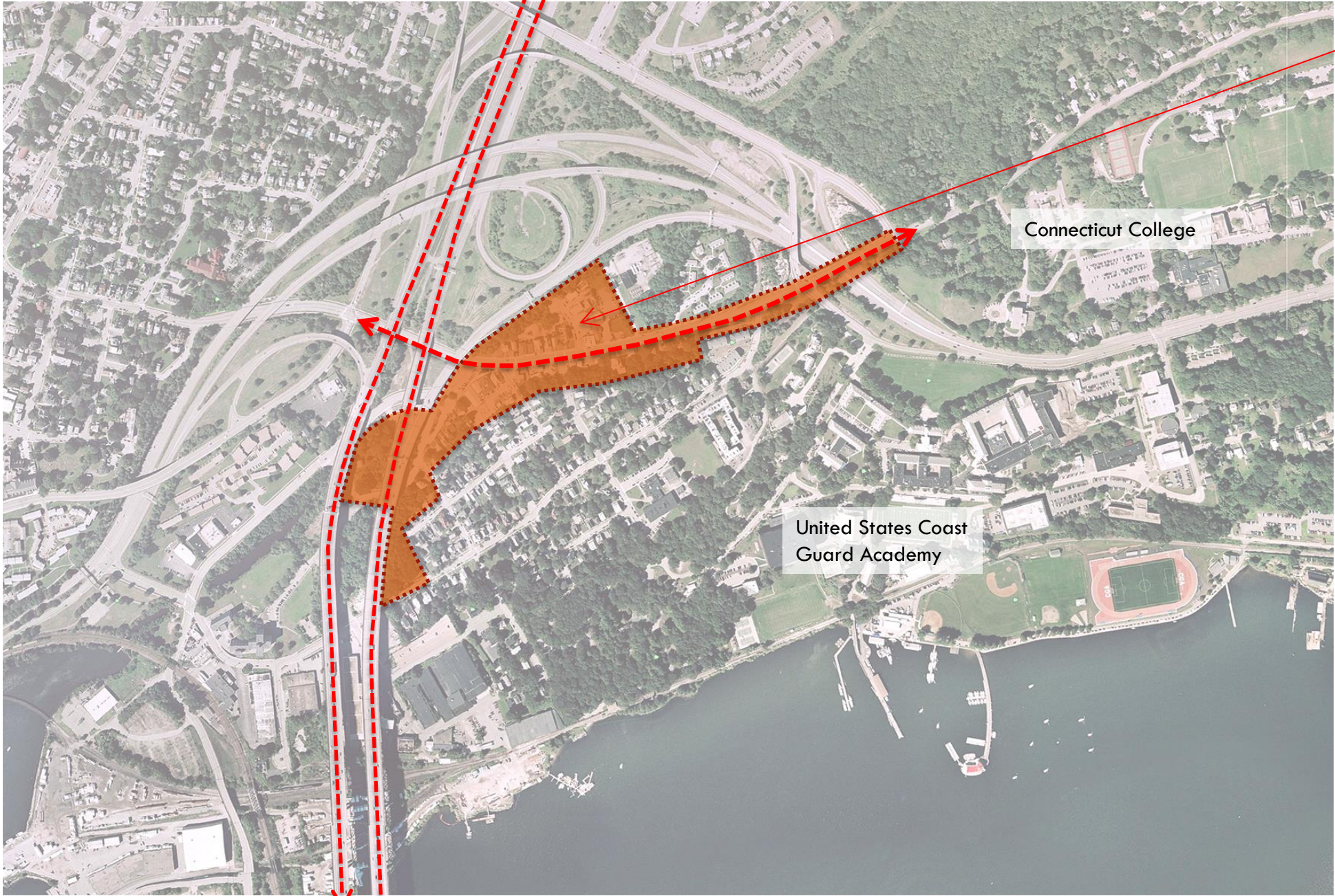
The master plan addresses the Williams Street corridor from Connecticut College to Huntington Street on the south side of I-95. It seeks to humanize the street through a comprehensive strategy of public realm improvements that will encourage private investment. An essential goal of this strategy is to increase the safety of all users, both in fact and by perception. By making people feel safer and comfortable with wider sidewalks and well marked crossings, with striped and signed bike facilities, with street trees, pedestrian scaled lighting, benches, bike racks, trash receptacles, and public art, a strong sense of place will be established that can help to catalyze the revitalization of a community.



Project Type and Site:



Route 95 South



Route 95 North

**Hodges Square and Williams St.  
Governance Plan for Business  
Development**  
Work performed by: Thames Valley  
Sustainable Community Connections.  
Contact: Art Costa  
artebova@sbcglobal.net





# Report

## Hodges Square and Williams St. Governance Plan for Business Development



### Northeast New London/Hodges Square Place-Making Project 07.22.13

#### I. Project Summary, Findings, and Recommendations

##### Project Summary

**Project Definition:** The Northeast New London/Hodges Square Place-Making project identified and integrated community assets for the purpose of mobilizing these assets and creating the structures and processes which the community can employ to revitalize the physical and economic underpinnings of a thriving community .

**Project Scope:** To identify the community assets (physical, natural, institutions, associations, businesses) within the project area, which includes all of New London north of I -95 and the State Pier and adjacent Crystal Avenue, **(see map in Figure1 on page 5 below)**. The area includes a central commercial hub, residential areas, two significant colleges, an art museum, and a recently renovated k – 6 Magnate School. The area covers about 1.44 square miles and includes 1,500 households with about 3,000 residents. The colleges, Connecticut College and the U.S. Coast Guard Academy add another 3,000 students, faculty, and staff. In addition the scope includes assuring community governance to proceed with the implementation, over time, of master plans.

**Project Method:** Used the well established “building community from the inside-out asset mapping, formulated by Northwest University’s Asset-based Community Development, the project:

- Mapped the mentioned assets and locations.
- Assessed financial expenditures and property ownership (Census 2010 and municipal GIS data.
- Conduct a series of community workshop to present mapping discoveries and outcomes and to empower community to envision a revitalized future, employing the notion of an Urban Village and the absolute necessity of community “ownership” of whatever plans were developed, with this ownership being represented in the short term by a community governance forming committee.

##### Project Findings and Recommendations

##### Governance:

➤**Finding: Major study recommendations for municipalities without a clear and coherent constituency quickly become “shelved” until and if residents create a sufficient set of stakeholders necessary to shepherd the recommendations through implementation.** **Recommendation:** The Northeast New London Governance Forming Committee, created in January and February of 2013, will continue to meet and recruit additional members as it matures into a community-based governing body which will represent and lead Northeast New London residents and businesses in establishing its mission and short and long term strategies to accomplish a revitalization of Northeast New London. To be determined during the balance of 2013:

- Governance be subsumed by one or more of the following:
- Final form for community governance as separate entity and/or,
- Community
- Business/Resident Association
- Community Land Trust
- Community Cooperative for Building Ownership
- Community Development Corporation

Present Governance Forming Committee and its sub-committees – **beautification, public market, business development and strategic planning, and public information and website** --will continue to meet and take short-terms actions to sustain and build the momentum necessary assure the study

findings and recommendations remain in the awareness of the community residents and businesses. Implementation of short-term, low-cost strategies intended to create and sustain momentum in building community cohesion and commitment to longer range revitalization strategies include the following:

Community Famers’ market initiated on June 22, operating weekly on Saturdays, from 2to 5 pm into October. Experience to be assessed by the community and operating entity–New London Field of Greens Markets.

www.hodgessquare.com became active week of June 10 to make available to the community and other interested parties all the elements of the Northeast New London Revitalization program, and to serve as a platform for community input via community survey, the first of which was reported on June 25. Additional opportunities to engage the community via the website will be developed and implemented.

Beautification Committee installed two planters with appropriate plantings to highlight location for the Famers’ Market. The committee will explore and implement other strategies to continue making the Williams Street corridor through Northeast New London more attractive.

##### Business Development:

➤**Finding: During community workshops and other asset mapping tasks it became apparent residents and businesses in Northeast New London saw their community as a distinct and unique community that could thrive if businesses were fostered and developed that would provide services needed by the community; could attract and serve more directly the students, faculty and staff of the two colleges within the community; and serve the large number of commuters traversing the community to access major highways.** An organizing framework of an “urban village” was discussed and adopted as a way to describe the community and how it could attract and nurture a business community both supportive of resident needs and sufficient to attract patronage from the local colleges and commuter traffic. In short, the description of Urban Village and all that it implied became a way for the community to describe a desired “smart growth,” approach to development which would result in a residency which is beautiful, safe, affordable, healthy and easy to get around in which has a strong local business climate. The Urban Village/Smart Growth concept also advocates the creation of meaningful jobs that pay well and reinforces the foundations of the local economy.

To serve the needs of residents, attract personnel form the local colleges, and to serve commuters, encourage the development of a coffee shop in a cooperative environment in which other businesses can also offer services (i.e. bakery, delicatessen, news-stand/books) sharing common space. The neighborhood coffee shop is seen as an important community-building project since it has the demand of residents, as well as the potential customers from the students, faculty, and staff from Connecticut College and USCG and the commuters who are simply passing through.

Explore zoning opportunities which further exploits the notion of an Smart Growth/Urban Village for decreasing the likelihood of “suburban-type” sprawl which comes with each business having to provide a set amount of space for parking (ignoring shared parking), allowing width of streets which encourage speeding, and limiting opportunity for pedestrian and bicycle travel.





# Report

## Hodges Square and Williams St. Governance Plan for Business Development

Encourage expansion of a retail and prepared food cluster of businesses:

- Neighborhood grocery
- Public market moving toward extended months
- Commercial kitchen established for collaborative use

### Community Development

➤ **Finding:** *The governance forming committee established a definition for an urban village that says, in part: An urban village is a way to describe a community which has the best mix of elements of both a city and a village. The city or urban life provides a place of activity, opportunity, diversity, business, and a variety of living accommodations. On the other hand, the notion of being a village fosters a place of repose, tranquility, intimacy, and familiarity. The area we are describing as an urban village is a unique blend of the attributes of a village which is integrally part of a small city.*

"The residents of this urban village, which is now designated as Northeast New London, are proud they are a diverse blend of ages, ethnicities, incomes, and cultural heritages which provide the energizing social, physical, education, recreational, and natural attributes of the area."

When asked in the community survey if they supported the concept of calling Northeastern New London an Urban Village, 91 % of those voting on this issue supported NENL identifying itself as an Urban Village.

In addition, the governance committee also recommended a series of actions that would better employ existing community assets to serve local residents and to begin processes for significantly increasing assets available to the whole community.

➤ **Finding:** *A major asset in the community is a fully renovated and revitalized Winthrop School, which at one time was the primary community school for grades K-6. However, recently the school was designated as a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Magnet Grade School with only limited enrollment by children who live in the area.* Therefore, in order regain the school as a community resource, the governance Committee recommended that the community begin to seek designation of Winthrop School as a "Community School" under the Community School Act which became law, effective July 1, 2013: Under the law, a "community school" is a public school that participates in a coordinated, community-based effort with community partners to provide comprehensive educational, developmental, family, health, and wrap-around services to students, families, and community members during hours when school is not in session. Community partners, according to the legislation, would be providers of at least one of the following services: 1). primary medical or dental care; 2). Mental health treatment and services; 3). academic enrichment activities; 4). programs designed to improve student attendance at school; 5). youth development programs; 6). early childhood education; 7). parental involvement programs; 8). child care services; 9). programs that provide assistance to students who are truant or who have been suspended or expelled; 10). youth and adult job training and career counseling services; 11). nutrition education; 12). adult education; 13).

remedial education and enrichment activities; 14). legal services; and 15). any other appropriate services or programs."

About 80 percent of the residents who answered the question about seeking designation as a community school for Winthrop School said they supported seeking the designation. The other 20 percent were not sure. No one said not to seek the designation.

➤ **Finding:** *For a significant period of time, the community has been cut-off from the rest of New London by state and federal highway initiatives; lost local retail shopping opportunities for household necessities; has been the location of business development that does not offer local employment and is located in the area primarily because of access to highways, not to benefit the community.*

Therefore, to establish a basis for community-owned land and setting conditions for attracting new businesses to community the governance committee will engage in an assessment of the following to see which, if any, will be of benefit to the future of NENL:

- Cooperative to purchase and operate buildings
- Community land trust to own land
- Community Development Corporation
- Community – based exchange to align local investors with local entrepreneurs

➤ **Finding:** *In addition to the highway construction that separated NENL from the balance of the city, a decision was made to augment the major highways by connecting them via Williams Street as it transverses NENL. This decision transformed a local street into a high-speed by-pass unsafe for pedestrians, local traffic, and the health and welfare of the community.* Therefore the governance committee recommends the city of New London begin negotiations with CT DOT to assure that state highways which transverse the community at street level are re-designed and constructed as low-speed "complete streets," meaning streets should be safe for pedestrians, bicyclists, and automobiles; environmentally friendly; and be as responsive to the community through which the street transverses as it is of the automobile traffic passing through. In addition:

- Intersection of Williams Street, exit ramp from I-95, and Crystal Avenue should become a true intersection allowing safe, left hand turn onto Williams and direct access to Crystal from the exit ramp by crossing Williams Street.

➤ **Finding:** *A walking assessment and the community survey both highlighted the fact that sidewalks throughout Northeast New London are in need of repair and that the Hodges Square Business buildings and environs looks shabby and unkempt.* Therefore the Beautification Committee is implementing plans to clean up and improve the Hodges Square area with planters, flowers, and other beautification initiatives, including improved appearance of buildings in the area. Additionally, inclusion of NENL in the present city-wide improvement of sidewalks and curbs will be strongly advocated with the Mayor and City Council.

### II. Northeast New London/Hodges Square Place-Making Project

A process by which area residents and businesses create an action plan to revitalize and invigorate





# Report

## Hodges Square and Williams St. Governance Plan for Business Development

**this important gateway to the City of New London. May, 2012 – July, 2013. Project Definition:** The Hodges Square project identifies and integrates community assets for the sake of mobilizing these assets and creating the structures and processes which encourage the community to employ these resources in a revitalization initiative beneficial to the whole community. **Project Phases: There were three phases to Thames Valley Sustainable Connections work to accomplish this project:**

**Phase 1: May through September of 2012 was the data collection phase during which objective and subjective information was collected concerning the geography, demographics, businesses and commerce, institutions, cultural characteristics. Information was obtained from data source (i.e. census and municipality's assessor's property ownership data) interviews with businesses, residents, and institutional stakeholders. This information was formatted for use by the community to allow residents and business to more fully appreciate the assets upon which to build a more desired future.**

**Phase 2: In the period October through January, 2013, a series of four public workshops were held during which resident and business owners had an opportunity to review and discuss the information collected in Phase 1 and to begin utilizing the data to initiate discussions of what those in attendance would like to see accomplished to improve the business climate and the quality of life for residents and how the community's unique assets could be employed to achieve these plans (details of these meetings are described in the project chronology below).**

**Phase 3: February through June is the period in which a small group of residents and business owners volunteered to serve as an ad hoc, Governance Forming Committee which is committed to bringing into action some of the short term plans identified that could lead to quick action with limited capital. The Governance Forming Committee will also seek to determine what options are available to assure the residents and businesses it would remain in control of initiatives within the community. Part of this analysis included extensive educational opportunities for the governance committee members necessary to fully appreciate the magnitude of revitalization opportunity for the community. This phase will conclude on June 25 when the committee will report its recommendations to the community initially developed during the year-long effort and supported by findings of a community survey conducted during the last few weeks of the project on line as a means to gain feedback from stakeholders as to the feasibility and desirability the governance committee recommendations.**

**Method: Community Asset Mapping and GIS Mapping:** The project team primarily utilized the concept of asset mapping as described by John Kretzmann and John McKnight in their 2003 paper, "Introduction to Asset-Mapping." (See Appendix: 01\_ Introduction to Asset-mapping K – McK.pdf) The goal of this process is to identify all the objective and subjective assets, be they institutional, community resources, individuals, and the physical environment. The Kretzmann and McKnight approach is an iterative and continuous process. However, for the purposes of this project, asset-mapping was primarily conducted during the first phase of the project from May through September.

To the extent possible, given the time constraints of the project, information was sought to describe assets in accordance with the Template for Community Asset Map illustrated below.

Information was drawn from the Census, New London assessor's office; business directories; business, church, and organizational interviews; visual inspection of the community; discussion with city planning officials; GIS data and mapping resources; and selected resident information about the community.

Summaries of most relevant material were prepared for presentation to interested community members and served as the backbone for all further deliberations about what initiatives the community would seek to develop during the project year. (See Appendix: 02\_Northeast New London Comprehensive Description\_Workshop\_10.18.12.pdf)

**Workshop Series:** Upon completion of the initial mapping of community assets, these findings were utilized to begin a series of community workshops intended to familiarize the community of all of its assets; seek to employ these assets in discussing of initial short-term plans focused on revitalization of the community; and to winnow the proposals to those that might be initiated within the time frame of the year-long place-making project and to a few additional projects that could have the greatest leverage for changing the commercial/business climate within the community.

Workshops were held in October, November, December, and January as community and business leaders discussed the area's assets; sought to identify characteristics of the community which made it unique and important to them, and to begin a conversation about how the community has the ability to influence how financial resources of community residents now leaving the area can be re-captured through strategic actions in the future.

**Results:** Outcomes from the workshops included:

- Descriptions of assets from small group discussions on October 18 and November 8 (See Chronology Section below for detail.)
- Recognition of the unique assets of the area which led to describing the community as an urban village. (Definition in Chronology Section below.)
- Projects to re-capture community expenditures for food, transportation (daily work travel) Dining out, and Travel/Trips (Detail in Chronology Section below.)

### Short-term Plans:

**Governance Forming Committee:** As the community workshops progressed it became clear that much of the anticipated work desired by the community would have to be implemented after the present place-making project had concluded. Therefore, if the work being done were to not end with the grant's termination, it became clear that some local, semi-formal constituency needed to be identified with the goal of continuing the planning and development work necessary to develop the community consensus and the resources necessary to continue to place-making initiative to its logical conclusion – i.e. the planning and completion of steps by the community that would lead to its transformation and increase its viability and desirability for present and future residents, shoppers, and visitors.





# Report

## Hodges Square and Williams St. Governance Plan for Business Development

A group of residents and business leaders from the community agreed to become the initial Governance Forming Committee with the charge to implement short term projects that could gain community acceptance and begin a shift in perception of the community by residents and other stakeholders. The Governance Forming Committee subsequently identified four areas of work and inquiry that would begin prior the completion of the place-making grant period and into the months ahead. The priority areas are:

**Beautification:** Through individual and collection action, clear up yards and appearance of Williams Street as it traverses the Hodges Square commercial district, including planting flowers, employing planters in public spaces, seeking assistance from all residents and businesses.

**Public Farmers' Market:** In collaboration with New London Field of Green Markets, initiate a Farmer's Market on vacant land on Williams Street (adjacent to Copy Cats) on June 22 and every subsequent Saturday through October.

**Capital Sources:** Members of the governance committee begin looking at options for raising capital to address some of the longer term place which have priority with the governance forming committee, including: a). More advanced streetscape work to slow traffic traveling on Williams Street, increase pedestrian safety, and beautification; b). Encourage development of collaborative and/or cooperative retail environment for coffee shop, bakery, entertainment, dining, venue; c). Explore how community could acquire properties chronically run-down and operating businesses without community support.

**Community Capital Workshops:** Governance Forming Committee members had three opportunities to participate in three community capital workshops which focused on the range of options available to community groups seeking to revitalize their communities in ways by which the community can play a central role in the planning and implementation of this revitalization. These workshops included a two-hour discussion utilizing a Ted Talk by Amy Cortese discussing the finding of her book, Localvesting: The Revolution in Local Investing and How to Profit From It; an hour-long key note address by Michael Shuman, called "Community Capital 101," and a 7.5 hour workshop by Michael Shuman at which participants had the opportunity to work through the use of four different options for raising local capital: 1). Cutting Edge Coops; 2). Community Portals(for raising local capital); 3). An investment Club; 4). Present Community Opportunities.

**Transition Plans (master plan):** Prior to completing a transition plan and finalizing its recommendations to the community, the Governance Forming Committee participated in two additional community meetings at which its progress to date was discussed. At the first session, June 22, the Governance Forming Committee participated with other sub-projects of the Place-making grant to report the progress and anticipated work for Riverside Park and the Streetscape Project (See Appendix 16\_CommunityReport\_Hodges Square and NENL. The Governance Forming Committee also reported the results of an on-line community survey at a special community meeting on June 25(See Appendix 15\_Final\_Survey Results\_Revitalization of Northeast New London. At the meeting the Governance Forming Committee discussed its time-line for progress on the plans now priority for the Governance Forming Committee. These plans addressed, at least preliminarily:

- Reduced speed of auto traffic and improved walkability, including sidewalk improvement and repair, especially within the Williams Street corridor;
- Other beautification initiatives for the Williams Street corridor and Hodges Square;
- Commercial and retail initiatives to address expressed community needs and desires;
- Zoning initiatives to support the revitalization focus;
- Exploration of financing options including those which may encourage more community ownership/control of commercial property.

### Subsequent Project Timeline

#### Short-term Deliverables (6 months)

- Implement Public/Farmers' Market
- Plan and Implement Prioritized Beautification projects/tasks
- Recruit Governance and Advisory Board Support
- Fundraising for short-term projects

#### Formalize Governance (12 months)

- Funding
- Recruit
- Governance Structure Selection (Currently working under Hodges Square Village Association)

#### Transition of Master Plan Components to Governance Committee (3 months)

#### Develop Short and Long Term Strategy (6 months)

- Funding to develop strategy
- Identify priorities
- Working Strategic Report

#### Raising Capital Project (12 months)

##### Models –

- Cooperative,
- Community Development Corp.,
- Community Land Trust,
- Local Exchange

#### Zoning Plans and DOT Discussions and Resolve(s) (24 months)

#### Implementation (18 months)

#### Phase I (Plan - - 6 months) Phase II – Funding (6 months)

#### Phase III (Task Implementation (6 months)

### Conclusion

The Northeast New London revitalization component of the Creative Place-making project has identified key assets which can be readily leveraged to build out a vibrant economy. The concept of an urban village has helped crystalize the notion of how community belonging and ownership can evolve in the neighborhoods surrounding the commercial area of Hodges Square. A number of governance forming workshops and meetings have been underway, and the most recent result is constituting an association structure with business and resident membership. The name chosen is: Hodges Square Village Association. This group hopes to provide community leadership in a democratic forum. As such it is the expectation that the community governance group be part of the shared municipal efforts to build on the recommendation provided in this report.

The above time line is just a start to begin to move this vital area, an area that has been disconnected from the city at large, and to knit together the important institutional stakeholders of business, neighborhoods, associations, and institutions such as Connecticut College and the US Coast Guard Academy.

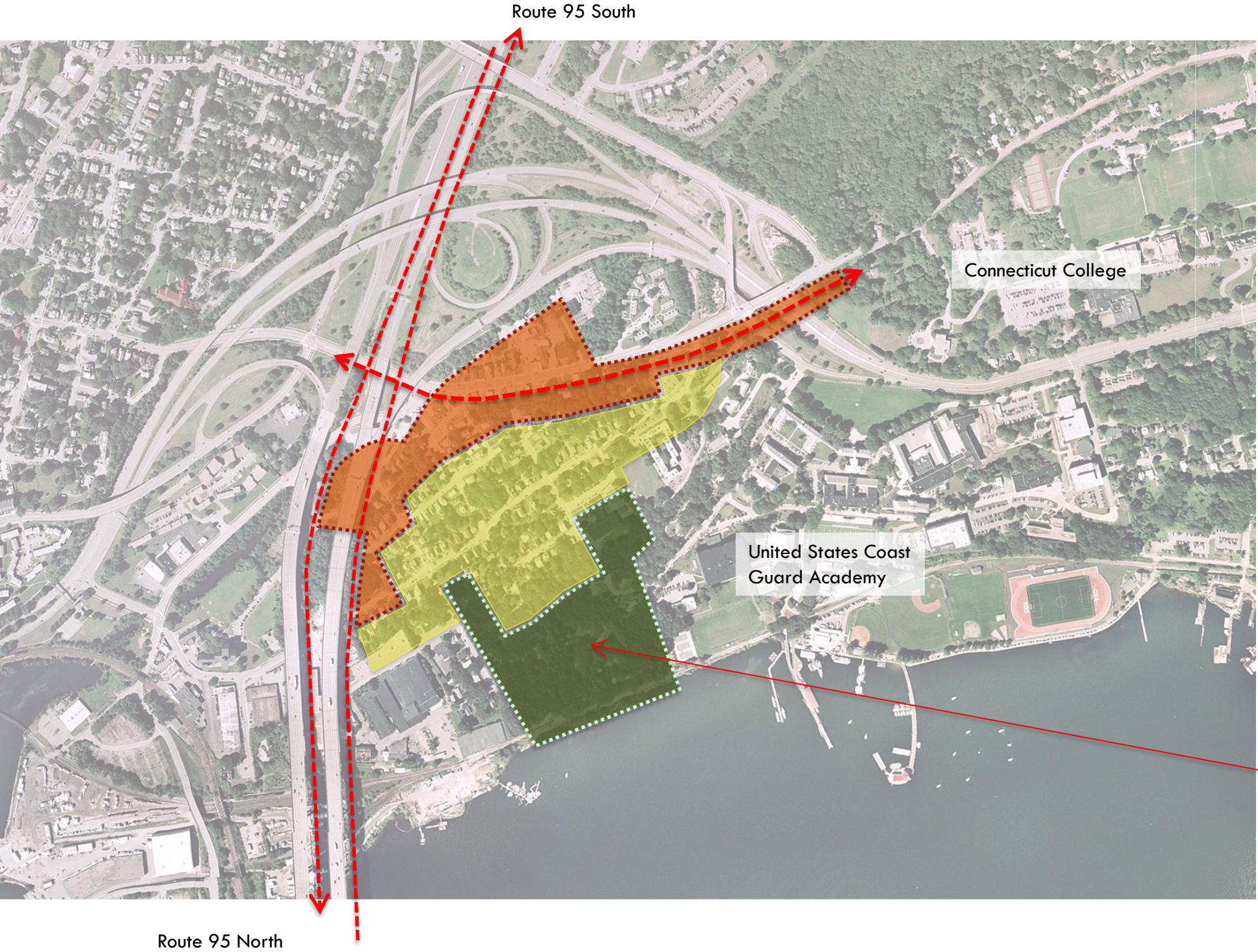
It is the experience and firm belief of the revitalization team that a community governing board is one of the best means to fulfill the potential of the northeast New London community. The pathway to building up and out local businesses that serve the daily needs of the community is essential; not simply for purchases but for jobs and creating a resilient community connecting assets and the larger New London community.







Project Type and Site



**Riverside Park**  
**Master Plan for Park Renovation**  
Work performed by: UConn's Community  
Research & Design Collaborative  
Contact: Associate Professor Peter Miniutti





## Program statement

Riverside Park and Magnet School

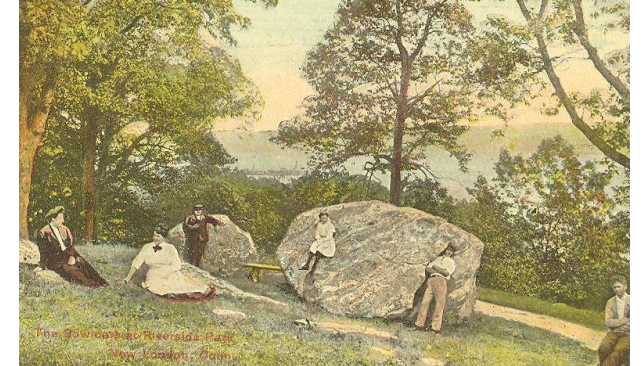
Once a major attraction for the whole region surrounding the park. By 1910 it included almost 33 acres and hosted a goldfish pond, a campground, a beach and pier. A 1913 report by John Nolen, Landscape Architect says in part:

*"I recommend, as one of the first actions of the Park Board, the preparation of definite plans for the extension and development of Riverside Park. It is already too good not to be made better..."*

An active, beautiful park through the early part of the century, it began to lose its popularity after WWII with the expansion of the highway and the U.S. Coast Guard Academy.

By the mid-1950s it had lost about half its land to the Academy expansion; the larger public lost interest in the park, and social changes in the neighborhood altered the character of the park. This trend slowly continued as maintenance of the woodlands decreased. The play equipment, pavilion and bathhouse fell into disuse. As people abandoned the park, so did the city. It became a forgotten area, patrolled by police and the Academy, but rarely used. Occasional calls to improve the park were short-lived, and while a few neighbors continued to mow sections for their kids to use, it was no surprise when the Coast Guard Academy asked to purchase the center of the park for their expansion plans.

Following, a long range Master Plan for the renovation of Riverside Park.







# Inventory of Site Existing Conditions: Aerial Photograph

Riverside Park and Magnet School







# Inventory of Site Existing Conditions: Key Features

Riverside Park and Magnet School



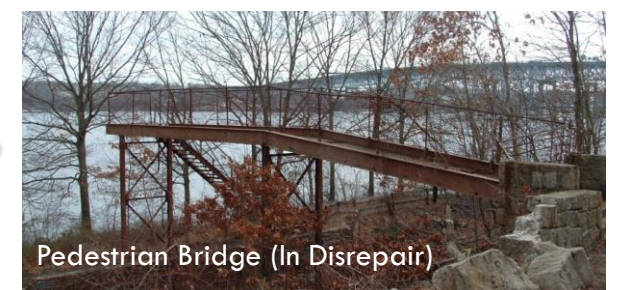
Stairs to Winthrop School



Roads



Parking



Pedestrian Bridge (In Disrepair)





# Inventory of Site Existing Conditions: Use Areas

Riverside Park and Magnet School



Picnic Area



Basketball Court



Playscape (Removed)





# Inventory of Site Existing Conditions: Elevation

Riverside Park and Magnet School



Elevation



140  
↓  
100



90  
↓  
50



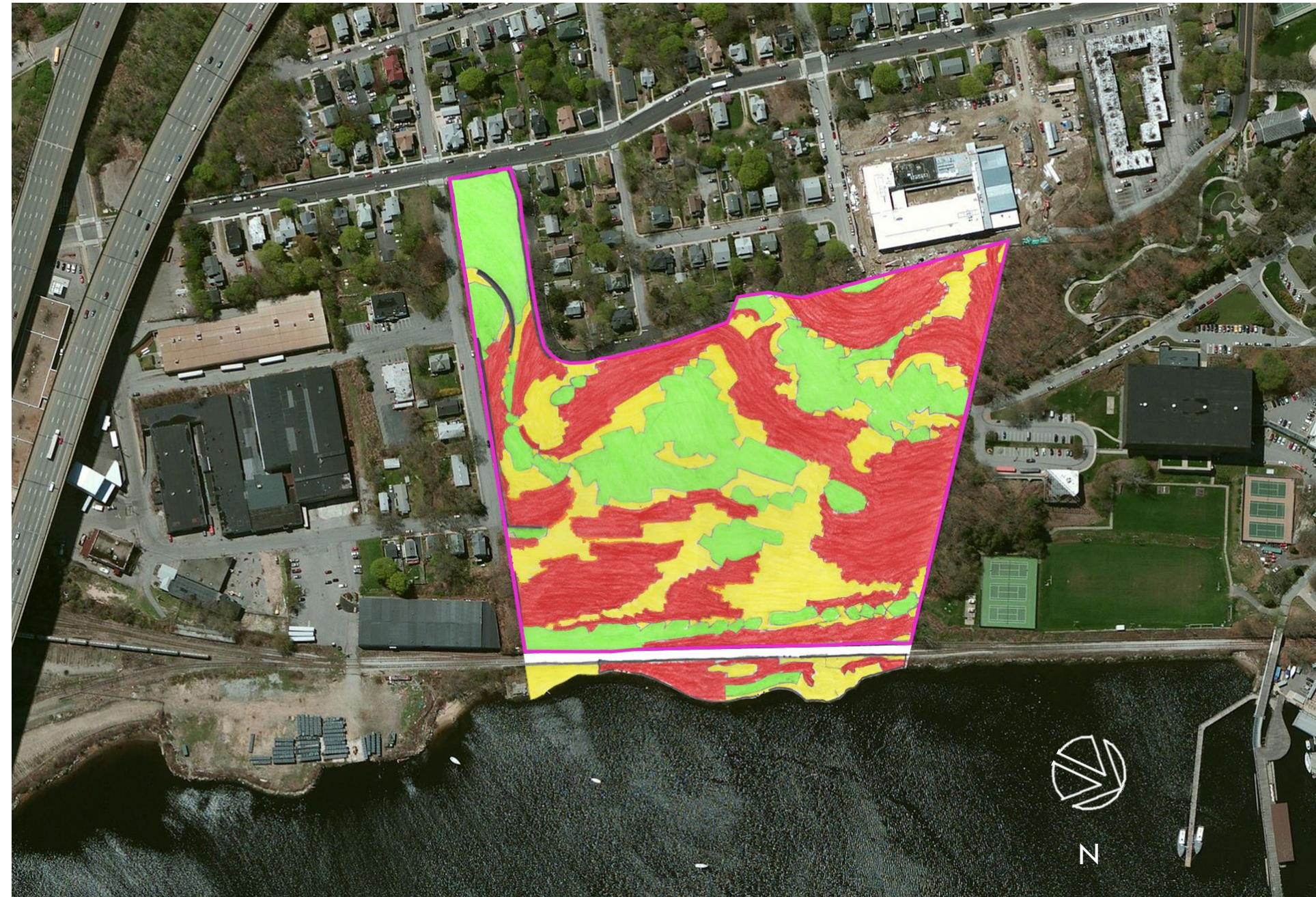
40  
↓  
0





# Inventory of Site Existing Conditions: Slope

Riverside Park and Magnet School



## Slope



20% +



5-10%



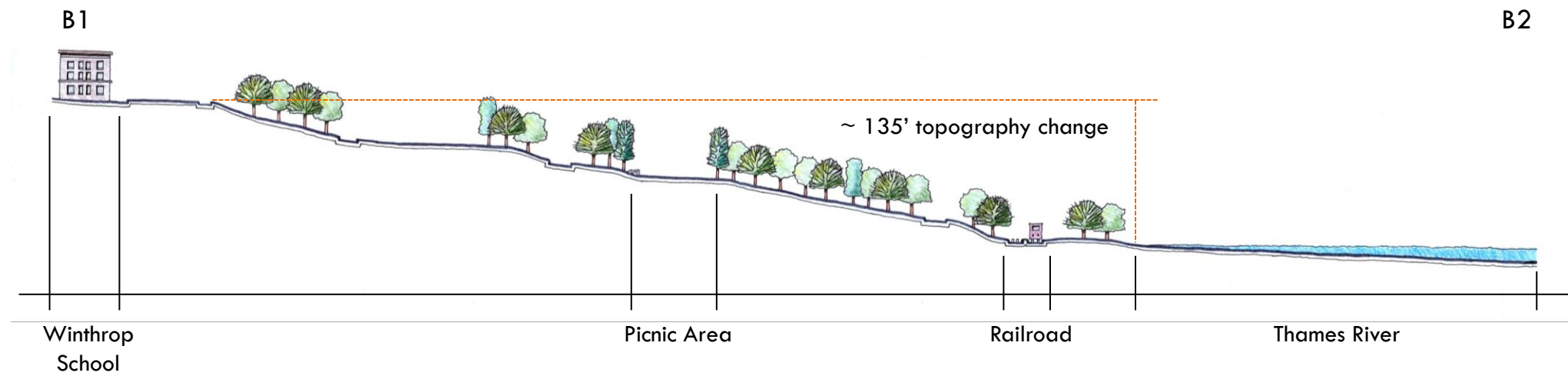
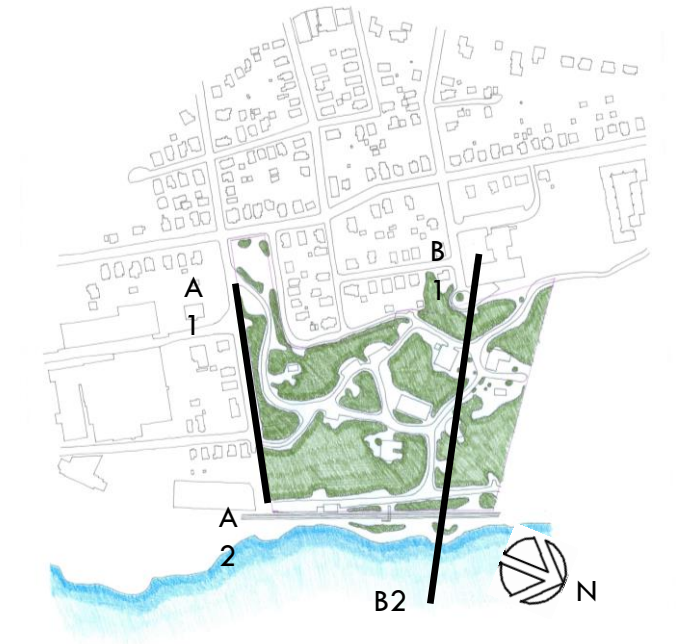
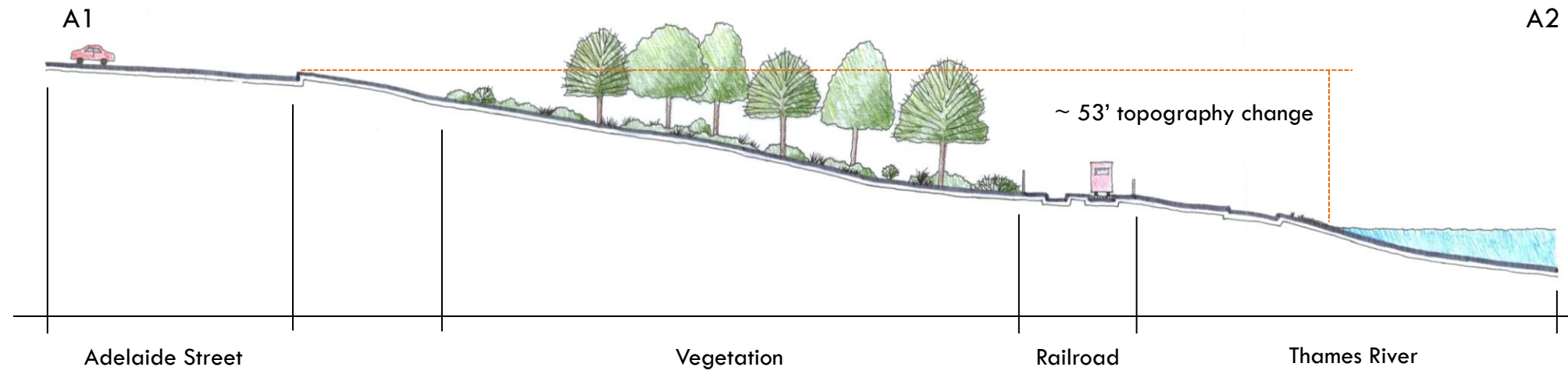
5%





# Inventory of Site Existing Conditions: Sections

Riverside Park and Magnet School







# Analysis of Site Existing Conditions: Summary (Plan View)

Riverside Park and Magnet School



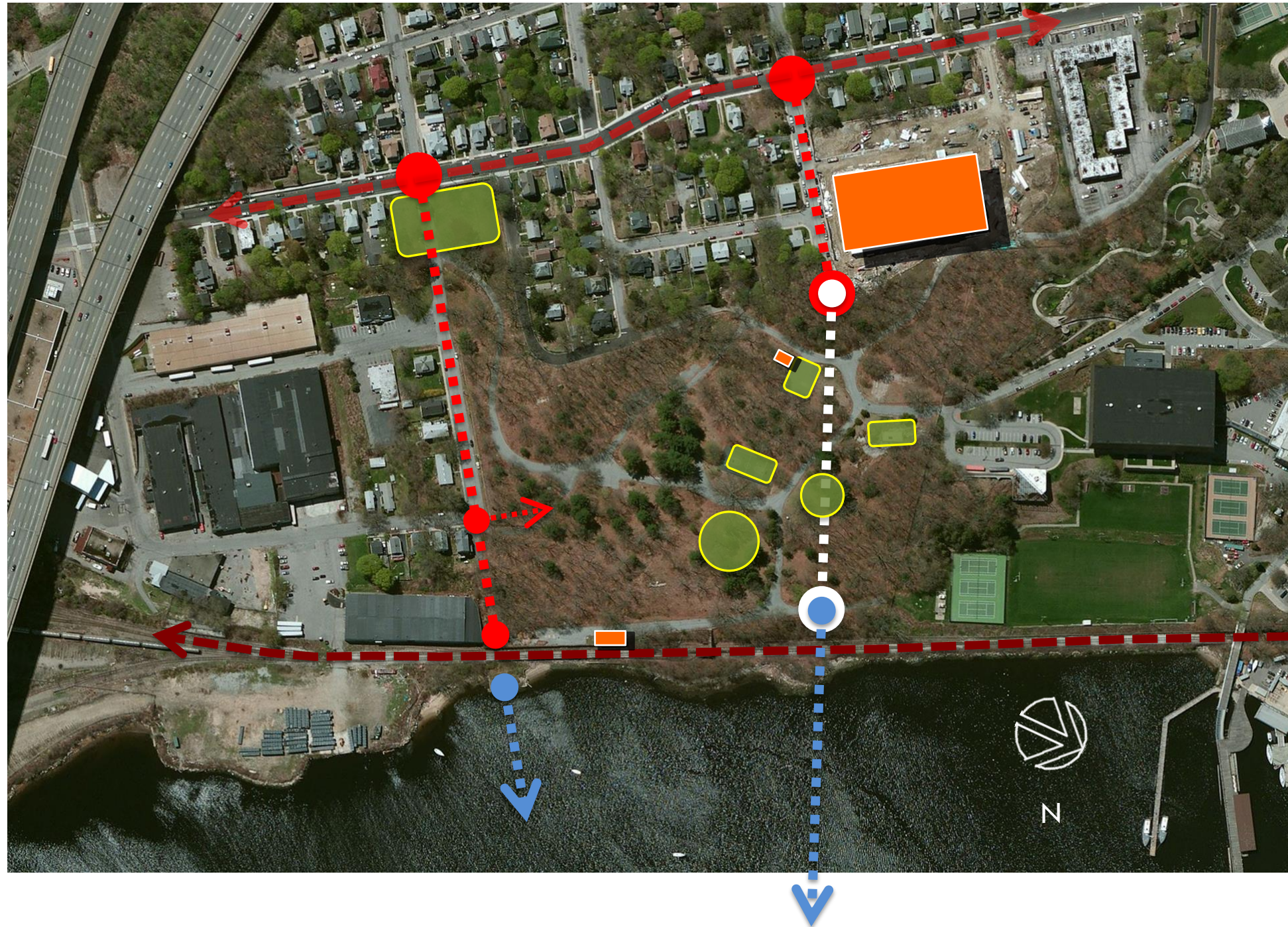
- Environmentally-themed magnet school = excellent adjacent land-use but is currently cut-off from the park. Establishing a relationship between the park & school is key to the success of the park
- Steep slope= challenge for access between park & school
- Dense vegetation throughout park, many mature trees
- Basketball court & picnic area are in good condition & should remain
- Axis of Adelaide creates an intuitive visual/physical connection to the river
- Railroad- currently no way to cross safely
- Waterfront parcel is currently inaccessible by the park. It is a huge amenity & must be reconnected.





# Analysis of Site Existing Conditions: Summary

Riverside Park and Magnet School



## Opportunities:

**Winthrop Magnet School:** Environmental theme ideal for its location adjacent to the park.

**Thames River:** Magnificent location, opportunities for views, recreation.

**Topography & Vegetation:** Slopes toward a major resource (Thames River), varied, interesting. Mature trees, mix of evergreen & deciduous.

## Constraints:

**Railroad:** Currently no safe way to cross the railroad to access the waterfront.

**Waterfront Condition:** Overgrown vegetation, some steep slopes, currently inaccessible.

**Topography:** Steep slopes present a challenge in developing the park





## Proposed: Gateways

Riverside Park and Magnet School







## Proposed: Gateways by Mode

Riverside Park and Magnet School







## Proposed: Circulation within Park

Riverside Park and Magnet School

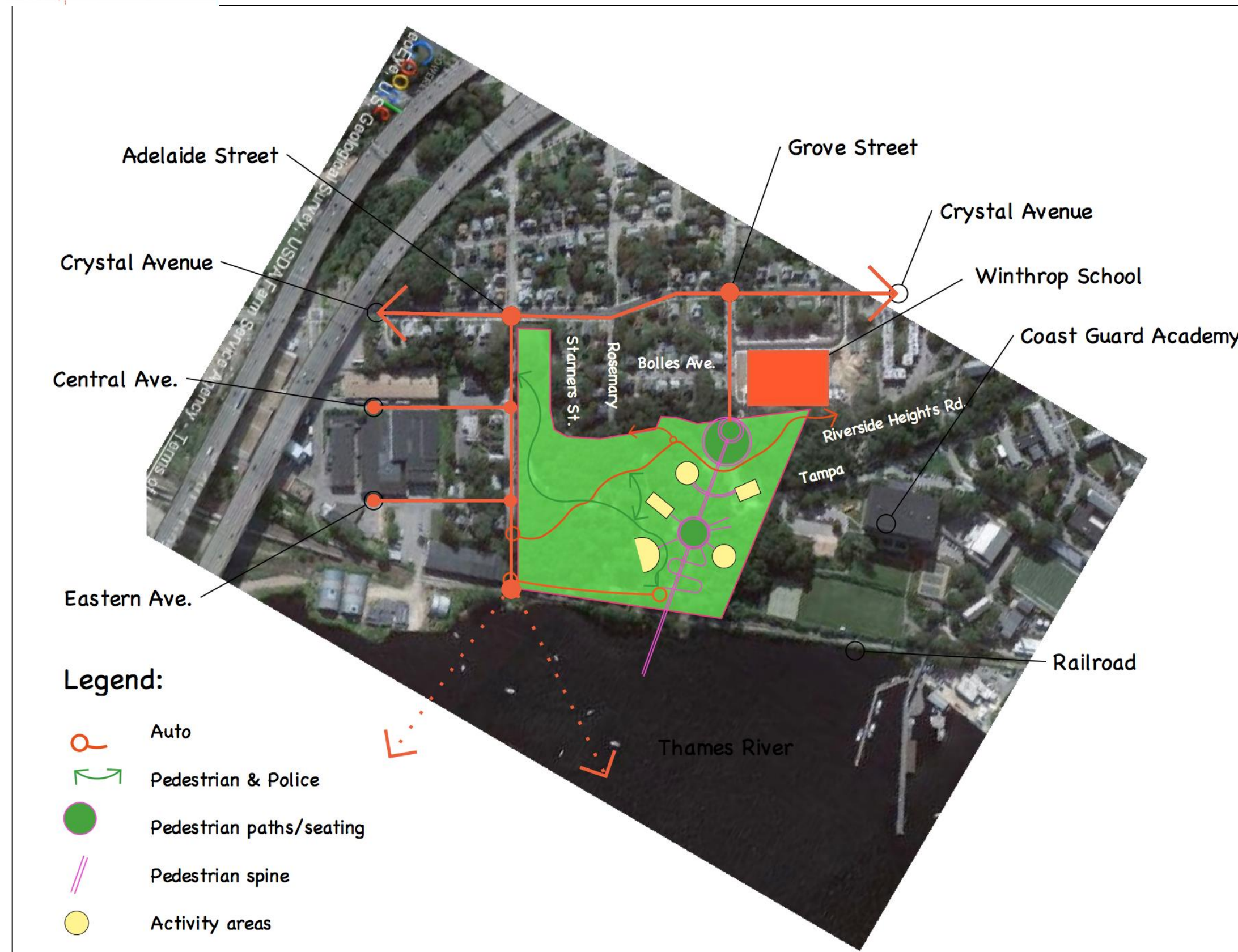






## Proposed: Circulation and Active Use Areas

Riverside Park and Magnet School







## Proposed: Circulation and Active Use Areas

Riverside Park and Magnet School



Winthrop  
School

Accessible ramps to park

Stairs to park

Adelaide Street extension

New activity space

Pedestrian bridge

Pier





## Proposed: Proposed plan utilizes existing spaces in park

Riverside Park and Magnet School



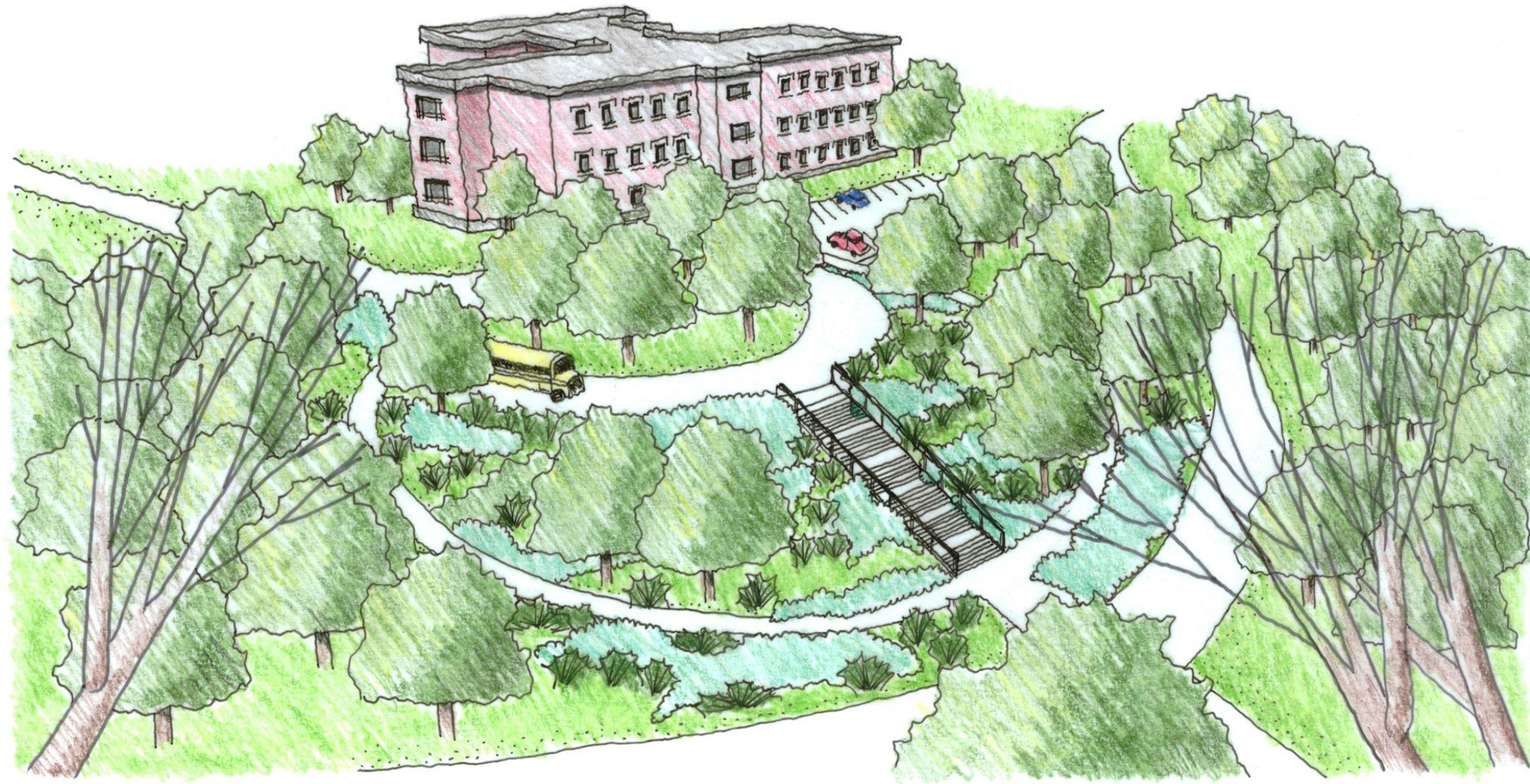
1. Current parking area
2. Basketball court
3. Former playscape area
4. Picnic area
5. Former playscape area
6. Concrete slab (former pavilion)





## Proposed Master Plan: Illustrative Views

Riverside Park and Magnet School

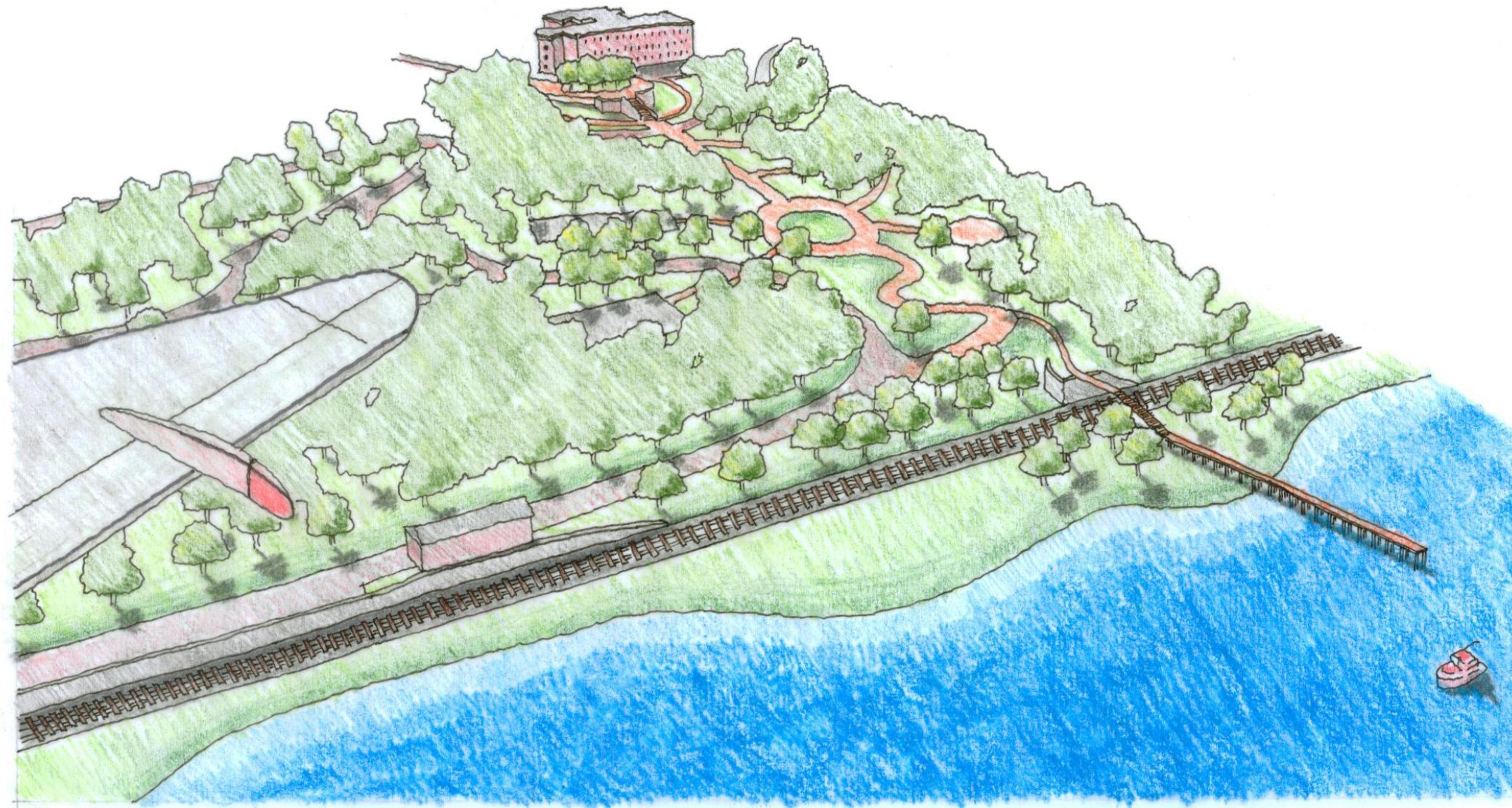






# Proposed Master Plan: Illustrative Views

Riverside Park and Magnet School

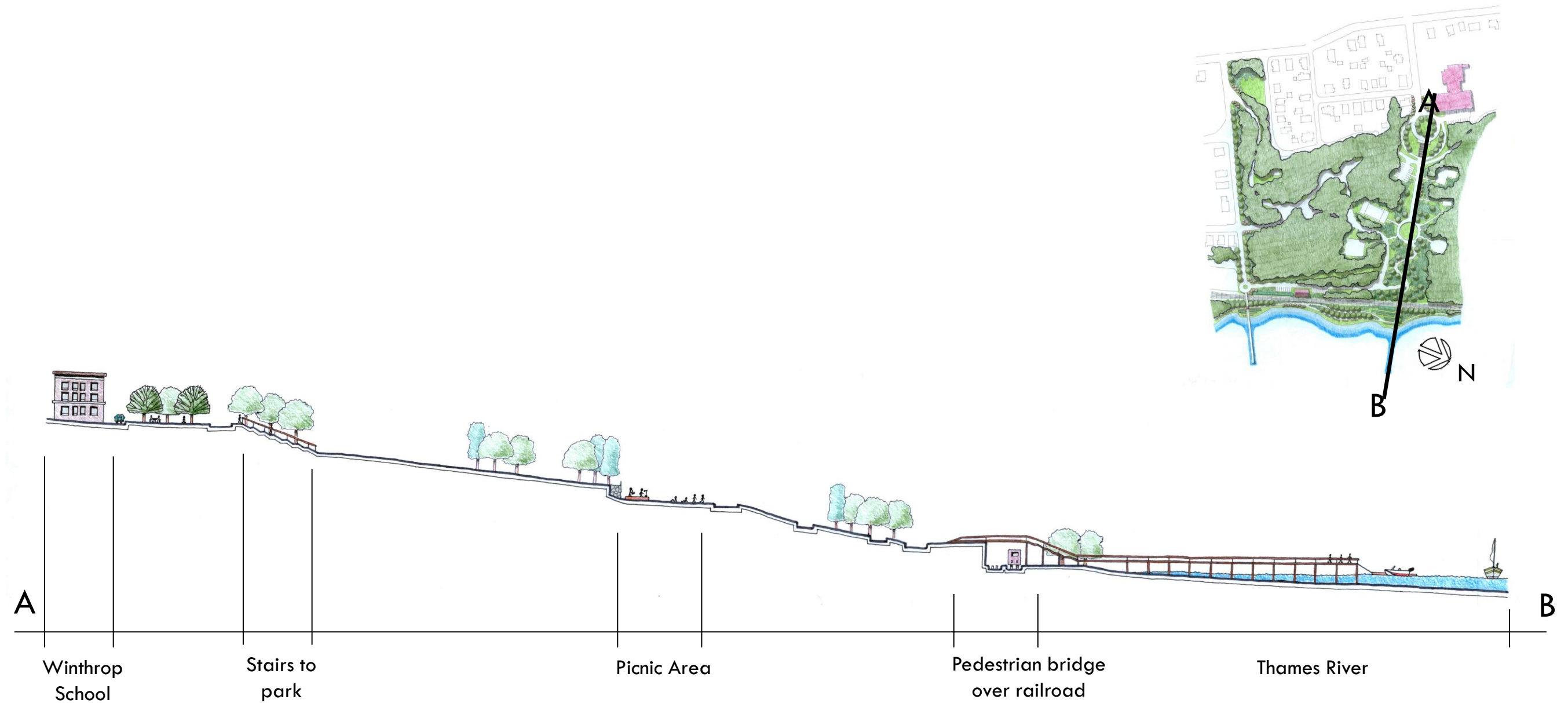






## Proposed: Proposed plan utilizes existing spaces in park

Riverside Park and Magnet School

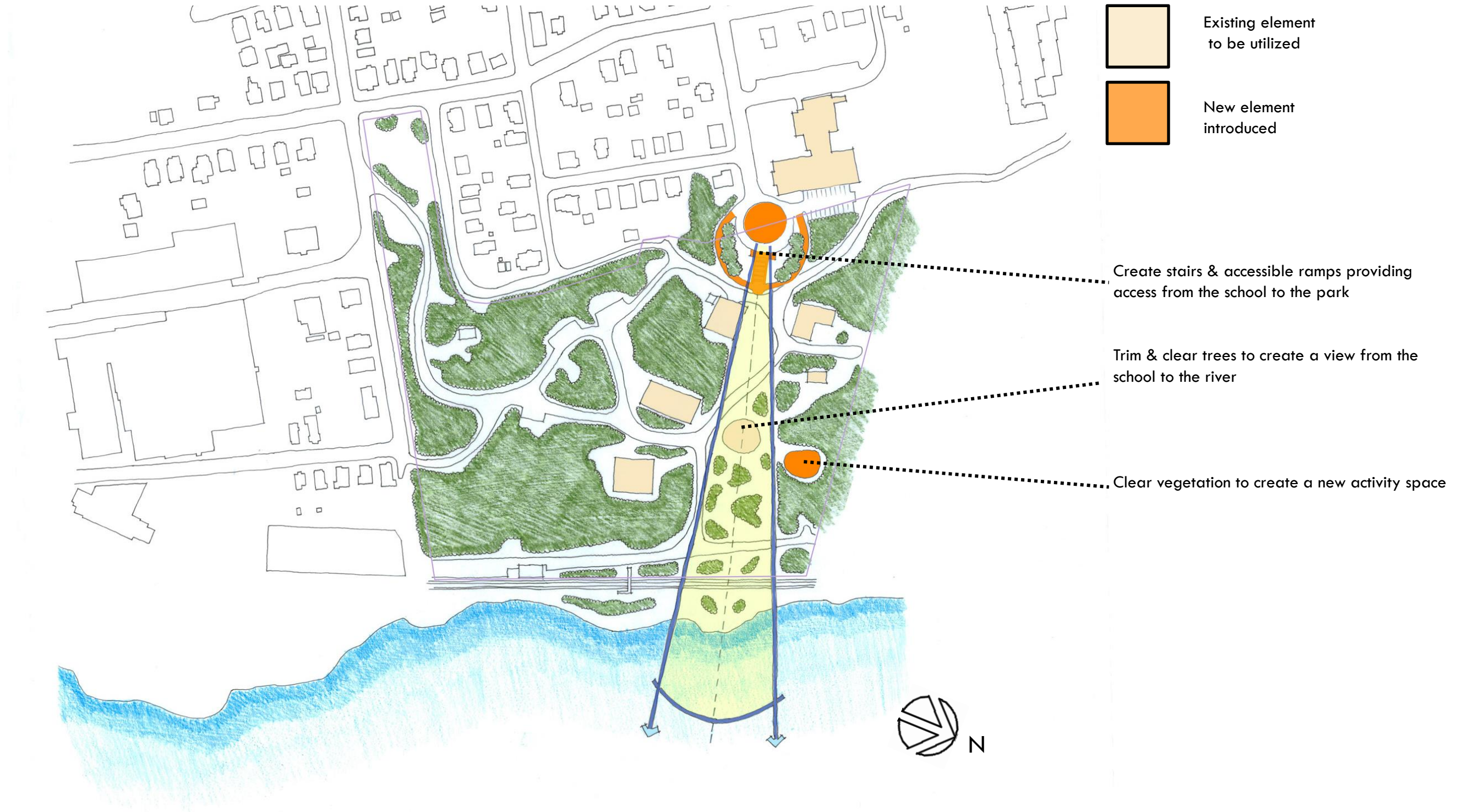






# Proposed Phasing of Master Plan: Phase I

Riverside Park and Magnet School

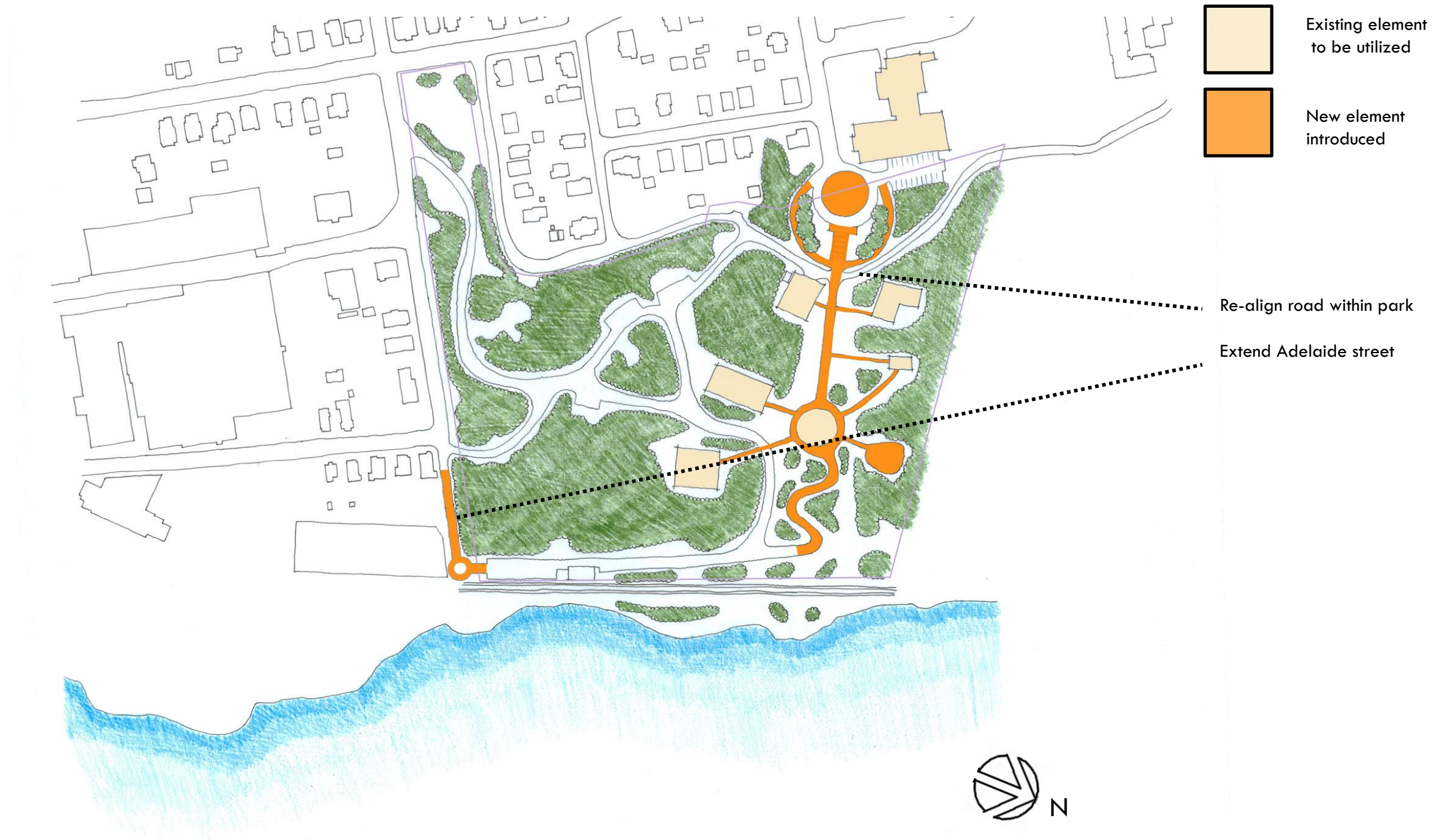






## Proposed Phasing of Master Plan: Phase II

Riverside Park and Magnet School

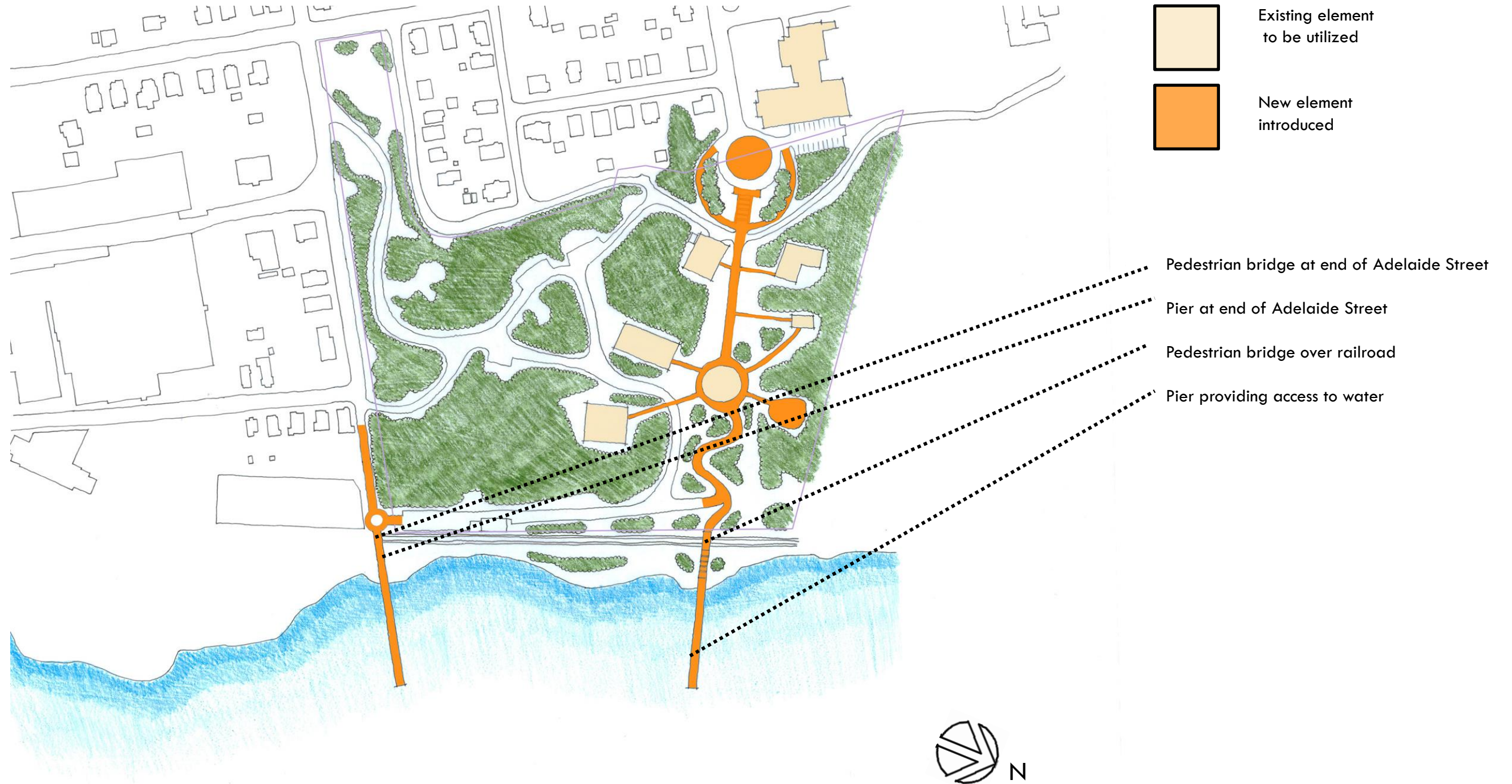






## Proposed Phasing of Master Plan: Phase III

Riverside Park and Magnet School







## Summary

### Riverside Park and Magnet School

The current portion of the Riverside Park project began with reviewing the work that had previously been done by the Community Research and Design Collaborative at UConn. This was followed by a visit to New London to become familiar with the park and the adjacent areas such as the Winthrop School, Adelaide Street, and the railroad tracks running along the Thames River. It was a nice day with several people utilizing the park to play basketball, walk their dogs, etc. While the park was enjoyable, some aspects stood out which could be improved. The overgrown nature throughout a majority of the park tends to block most views of the water, while also creating safety concerns. With the school being adjacent to the park, access between the two is limited. There are steps within the park which traverse the hillside to the school, however these are not the safest and are almost hidden within the vegetation. On another note, given the proximity to the water, there is really no way to access it from the park aside from the pedestrian bridge which is in poor condition. Access to the Thames River presents a huge opportunity for Riverside Park to meet its full potential and also live up to its name.

Once these issues were noted, work began to develop a plan which would address them. This was done concurrently with research on place making. The Project for Public Spaces- a planning, design, and educational organization, has an approach to creating successful parks called the Power of Ten. This is based on the idea that a park should have at least ten distinct destinations within it and that by clustering

activities within the destination, they build off of each other to create a vibrant destination within the park. The Project for Public Spaces views the Power of Ten as “a powerful framework for revitalizing a park and its surrounding district.” Since the Winthrop Magnet School’s science and environmental theme was selected because of its proximity to Riverside Park, the goal is to connect the school to the park and the waterfront. The plan utilizes many of the existing spaces in the park, adds an additional activity space, and links the spaces together.

The plan was broken down into three phases showing how it could be gradually implemented over time. This phased process was presented at the public forum on The Future of Riverside Park at the Pilot House in New London on October 13. Three posters were on display with graphics for the public to view and discuss. A cost estimate was developed based on the work that the plan entailed. Part of the cost estimate process involved contacting specialists with knowledge on the structures proposed in the plan- pedestrian bridges to cross over the railroad tracks, and a pier providing access and views of the water. The pier included in the plan was influenced a great deal by a discussion with a company specializing in waterfront construction that was familiar with Riverside Park. The company was particularly helpful in determining the length that the pier should extend into the water to achieve the desired effect of allowing people to have a view up and down the river.

More work was done which involved exploring

the options for accessing the waterfront via Adelaide Street. Different levels of accessibility for doing so were shown in a series of cross sections. One major factor to be considered in determining how to create an accessible method of reaching the waterfront is space. A pedestrian bridge is recommended for safely crossing the railroad. Space becomes an issue after one crosses the railroad and reaches the waterfront side of the bridge. The maximum slope for an accessible ramp is 1:12 (for every inch of rise there must be one foot of ramp). In order to create a ramp that would lead from the bridge down to the waterfront, that ramp would have to be a minimum of 276’ in length. This is not including the required landings within the ramp. This would not be recommended to place along the waterfront as it would be an unattractive solution. A more space-efficient solution would be an elevator designed for outdoor operation.

Beginning in the fall of 2012, a series of workshops were held at the Winthrop School. These ran from September to June and allowed the public to be part of the process of further developing the master plan for Riverside Park. Topics such as playground types, community gardens, stormwater management, and circulation were discussed. The plan ultimately organizes activity areas along a main axis from the Winthrop School, the Park, and the waterfront of the Thames River.



# Overall Summary

The question may be asked: *Where do we go from here?*

The answer: *Forward . . .* with an array of projects that can be taken up by one of the many stakeholders in the project of Creative Placemaking.

While residents of the neighborhood may be the direct beneficiaries' of these proposed improvements, all New London will experience an improvement in quality of life as Hodges Square becomes a more vital attraction to students, cadets, and people who use this Route 95/Route 32 corridor.

These plans are the result of extensive work with the people who live and work in this Hodges Square neighborhood. Collaboration is the essential method to accomplish the dreams and ideas set forth in this document. The burden of leadership must be shared by key major stakeholders including:

- State of Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development
- Office of the Arts
- State Department of Transportation
- City of New London, Office of the Mayor
- City of New London Development & Planning Office
- City of New London Public Works
- New London City Councilors
- Connecticut College
- Lyman Allyn Museum
- United States Coast Guard Academy
- New London Landmarks
- Peter Miniutti, UConn's Community Research & Design Collaborative
- Kent + Frost Landscape Architects
- Thames Valley Sustainable Connections
- Riverside Park Conservancy
- Hodges Square Village Association
- All citizens of New London who want to see their city grow and prosper.

The Hodges Square Village Association could assume the role of prime overseers as projects develop. With strong commitment from the City of New London and participation from Connecticut College and the Coast Guard Academy, all of whom will profit by an improved business community in Hodges Square, concepts for improving pedestrian and bicycle access through the neighborhood will be a very positive improvement. This could be an early project for the above listed stakeholders.





# Overall Summary

There are, perhaps, three major principles at work to achieve these goals:

- 1. Collaboration
- 2. Development of Shared Goals
- 3. Commitment of Resources

The City of New London and the Connecticut Department of Transportation can work together to improve the Williams Street corridor from Conn College to Broad Street.

Each element of these development plans can be brought to reality as stakeholders band together to adopt a project and bring it to completion. Improvements to the Hodges Square business community include the eventual return of the historic fountain, now being stored at the Lyman Allyn Museum. The museum has generously offered to return it to “The Square” when a proper place has been developed for it.

As emphasized in each section of this Master Plan, these are long-term plans for an extensive development throughout this neighborhood. These improvements will enhance the quality of life for residents, business owners and for the important educational institutions that are critically important to the viability of this New London neighborhood: Connecticut College, the United States Coast Guard Academy, and the Winthrop Magnet School.

Sandra Kersten Chalk  
Executive Director  
New London Landmarks







# Report - Addendum

## Hodges Square and Williams St. Governance Plan for Business Development

### III. Chronology of NENL Place-Making Project

**Chronology of Events:** This time-line of significant work effort/products from Thames Valley Sustainable Connections focuses on the revitalization of business services, especially in the Hodges Square Area; quality of life for all residents of the area; while integrating with the other place-making elements of this project: i.e. streetscape improvement and the project focused on Riverside Park enhancement.

**April – May:** Decide on planning approach for the Northeast New London/Hodges Square project that will prepare community members to assume responsibility for the project upon conclusion of the initiating grant. Seek to empower the community to assume this responsibility role by beginning the project with the mapping of the community's significant assets: institutions, physical environment, community groups, and individuals within the community. To a significant extent, the mapping approach employed by TVSC is that described by Kretzmann and McKnight in their four-page paper, Introduction to Asset-Mapping. (See Appendix: 01\_ Introduction to Asset-Mapping, by Kretzmann and McKnight, 2003).

**May – September:** Mapping assets:

- GIS maps of property ownership, housing stock, zoning, vacant/excess land.
- Business identification, including locations, products, size, and employment.
- Census information, including demographics, income, expenditure patterns.
- Significant institutions within and contiguous to the project area.
- Initial views of residents, institutions, and business of the strengths (assets) and liabilities within the area.
- Condition of the streets and sidewalks.

(These assets were reported at the October 18 community workshop, see Appendix: 02\_Northeast New London Comprehensive Description\_Workshop\_10.18.13 and 03\_Report of Community Walk-Around: conditions of streets and neighborhoods; resident interests, by Jennifer Portella and Jermaine Miller)

**October 18 Community Workshop:** Presentation by TVSC of the Asset Mapping approach and the community assets identified during the period May – September. To assist in an understanding the community assets, small working groups were

formed to review a summary asset list of nature, physical environment, businesses, churches and civic associations, municipal government and other institutions, geographic location, contiguous resources, and social capital. The work groups were each asked to answer a few of the following questions which were subsequently aggregated:

- What do you view as the five top assets of the community?
- What does the community have that sets it apart?
- What in the community are you proud of?
- What would you miss the most if it were not longer here?
- What would you like to see in the community?
- How do you envision your community in the future, say 2020?
- Other valuable information about yourself and your community
- Are there additional stores or service you would like in the community?

(See all responses in Appendix: 04\_Describing Assets of Northeast New London. These results were part of the material utilized by participants at the November 8 workshop.)

**November 8 Workshop:** Reviewed output of the October 18 community meeting:

- 1.Review of community assets
- 2.Discussion of the elements of an urban village (the notion of which was identified in an analysis of the October workshop results)
- 3.Review of potential projects for revitalization proposed:
  - a. Cooperative/collaboration of existing NL business to co-locate in building to provide coffee, bake goods, other food.
  - b. Increase accessibility of essential services to residents of area (who now need to leave area for most services)
  - c. Increase amount and quality of services in area to attract customers from contiguous areas (other parts of New London, Connecticut College and CG students, residents of Quaker Hill)
- 4.Groups sought to identify projects that can reduce the amount of total annual expenditure by community residents in the categories of recreation (\$2.8 million);Dining out (\$3.3 million); Travel/Trips (\$1.5 million); Travel to and from work (\$9million; and Food at home (\$4.7 million). The assumption was with such limited resources to provide these services to residents they would be getting these services outside the community. The question was how to attract these known expenditures into the community?
  - a. Start with outdoor market this summer . As it becomes successful strategize how to make it a year-round market.

Market to be accessible and convenient to all NENL residents.

b. Café with gourmet coffee, baked goods and light food with visible outdoors eating. Maybe incorporate newsstand and small art gallery, bicycle repair, maybe as a satellite of present business. Street - side exposure on main thoroughfare important for increasing new dining visibility.

c. Café focused on collaboration by existing providers of services throughout New London for faster and more economical start up. Focus on servicing bicycle commuters. (See Appendix 05\_Notes November 8 Northeast New London Place-Making Workshop).

**December 12 Workshop**\_(See Appendix: 06\_Notes for 12.12.12 and Description\_ Urban Village):

1.Videos and discussion of alternative business models in Portland, MA and Ann Arbor, MI.

2.Additional discussion of what is needed in the NENI place-making project:

- a. Improve zoning so it is not suburban-type with each business having to provide parking, rather than pooled or community parking. Present parking impedes more friendly environment for bicycling and walking.
- b. Regardless of what else is done – the appearance of the area. Especially Williams St. and the Hodges Square area needs to improve.
- 3.Group adopted a definition of an urban village discussed at the October and November meetings.





# Report - Addendum

## Hodges Square and Williams St. Governance Plan for Business Development

4. Three work groups were formed. Two worked on refining the cooperative retail establishments proposed at the November 8 meeting. Both teams developed variations on the theme of a collaborative environment in which many types of services (many as primary or secondary locations of existing businesses) co-locating in single location. The third work group began planning a public market for this summer (June, 2013). Locations were discussed and sponsorship was proposed for the present sponsor of the other New London public markets, New London Field of Greens.

**January 9 Workshop:** (See Appendix: 07\_Mapping NENL Progress and Governance Presentation and Appendix: 08\_Notes\_01.09.13 Community Meeting)

1. This workshop focused on developing a temporary governing body that can move the project forward as more community involvement is obtained, plans become more specific, and more input is received concerning what kind of governance will ultimately be needed. The evening included a presentation on governance options, a mind map showing highlights of what had gone before and what is to follow in this place-making project, and then workgroups were charged with identifying individuals who would be good representatives of the community to be on the Governance Forming Committee.

2. Names for the Forming Committee were proposed as well as a discussion for the need of on-going professional support (legal, accounting, urban planning.)

**February 15, Governance Forming Committee Established:** (See Appendix: 09\_Diagram of Governance Purview and Appendix 10\_Notes\_Governance Working Group 02.15.13). Utilizing the names recommended by the community meeting on January 9 and initial governance committee was formed and invited to its initial meeting on February 15. Committee members shared their reasons for remaining involved with the project. The committee also discussed 9 priorities to keep top of mind as they generally became more involved in the project and specifically decided on what projects to pursue in the next few months. There also was a major discussion of the roles and responsibilities for governance and the options available for the Forming Group. Notes from this section of the meeting can become part of a

Governance policy manual as it is developed for the forming committee. (see specifically pages 3 and 4 of the February 15 notes.)

### March 1, 2013 Governance Forming Committee

Individuals invited to the February 15 meeting to serve on the Governance Forming Committee were asked to indicate their commitment to become members of the committee. Individuals who agreed to continue serving on the committee were Bill Dougherty, Robert Lee, Priscilla Peabody, Forrest Sklar, Catherine Strother, Ronna Stuller, and Mahmut Tandugan.

The group also identified liaison targets (Connecticut College, Coast Guard Academy, Neighborhood Alliance, Riverside Park Conservancy, Lyman Allyn Art Museum, and the Winthrop School. Chairs and members of various workgroups were identified: Liaison with University of Connecticut – Robert Lee, chair; Community Liaison with Northeast New London Public Market, opening on June 22 – Patricia Peabody and Cathi Strother, co-chairs; and Short-term beautification initiatives – Ronna Stuller, chair.

### March 21, 2013 Governance Forming Committee

1. Planning for the Farmer's Market: The committee reviewed details of the market as now envisioned: It will begin on June 22 at 2 pm. Governance Committee members can help assure the market's success by encouraging other residents of Northeast New London to visit and purchase food. Make neighbors aware that EBT (food stamps) and WIC (women and infant children) vouchers are accepted at markets sponsored by New London Field of Greens, a subsidiary of Thames Valley Sustainable Connections.

2. The committee discussed who it could initiate some near-term, low cost beautification initiatives.

3. Members were encouraged to seek out other residents who might serve on the governance committee. As more project are begun, the greater the demand for volunteers can easily over-burden present members without additional personnel being involved in the project's governance.

4. Interim co-chairs were selected for the Governance Forming Committee: Cathi Strother and Forrest Sklar.

(See Appendix 11\_Notes from 03.01 – 03.21 – and Market Prep)

**April 18, 2013 Governance Forming Committee** (See Appendix 12\_Notes\_Governance Working Group\_04.18.13)

1. The Committee discussed two options for members to participate in workshops focused on raising capital for the kinds of projects being discussed by the committee, to date. The first session was a program on April 19 that discusses why local business is more valuable for a community's economic welfare and some capital options. The second workshop, conducted in person by Michael Shuman, a primary US expert in raising capital locally, was held between 8:30 and 4 pm on May 31. Four members of the Governance Committee were able to attend this workshop. (See Appendices 13\_Invitation to and 14\_Michael Shuman's Presentation Community Capital 101.

2. Also, on April 18 a paper was distributed and discussed: Northeast New London Preparation for the Farmer's Market listed a number of tasks the committee members can help coordinate or perform: (See Appendix 11).

a. Beautification of Williams Street's public areas, as well as business and resident yards on Williams Street.

b. Assisting in support of the cross walks for pedestrian use, especially on Williams Street

c. Clean up of the property on which the market will be held





## Report - Addendum

### **Hodges Square and Williams St. Governance Plan for Business Development**

d. Committees formed to support the market include the Market Committee of Art, Priscilla, and Bill; a clean up committee of Ronna, Cathi, and Priscilla; and a marketing effort initiated by Forrest being supported by Art and Jerry. This initiative included the establishment of a web site for the community(Hodgessquare.com); a post card mailed to each business and household address in the Northeast New London area. The card encouraged residents and businesses to learn about the project on the website and to participate in the on-line survey.

**April 19, 2013;** Thames Valley Sustainable Connections Conducts “**Local Capital Roundtable,**” with primary audience being the NENL Place-Making Project Governance Committee. The program included a video by Amy Cortese, author of the book: **Local Investing: The Revolution in Local Investing and How to Profit From It.**

Round table was designed to begin a community conversation around the concepts of finding investment money for new business and community-based development at the local level. For the most part, since this focus for investment money is quite different than where businesses and nonprofits look, initiating the conversation to last for a period time was seen as important to begin changing pre-conceived notions about the feasibility and safety for projects to find investment income locally.

**May 23, 2013: Governance Committee Meeting** featured a presentation by Harry Smith, City of New London Planner, and staff to the Zoning Commission. Mr. Smith provided a history of zoning in New London, discussed the present zones now located in Northeast New London, ways to change the existing zoning restrictions, and the protections for the community within the zoning regulations. Also discussed at the meeting were the next steps to assure the website was soon available and the remaining tasks necessary before the farmers’ market can become operational on April 22 in Northeast New London.

**May 31, 2013: Workshop, “Local Investment for Local Community and Business”** was held from 8:30 am – 4 pm. (See Appendix 13\_Invitation to Shuman Workshop.) The workshop was conducted by Michael H. Shuman, author of **Local Dollars, Local Sense**, a comprehensive and definitive

description of the many options that now are available to raise investment capital locally. Four members of the NENL governance committee attended the workshop on a scholarship make available especially to support the NENL place-making project. (See Appendix 14\_Shuman\_Presentation\_Community Capital Workshop.)

**June 5, 2013, the website [www.hodegessquare.com](http://www.hodegessquare.com) became live** with basic information about the project and a link to open a survey for residents and business located in NENL. The survey remained open until June 18 at which time it was temporarily suspended while the results were tabulated for presentation to the community at a special workshop on June 25, 2013. (See Appendix\_15 Final Survey Results.

**July 15, 2013, The Governance Committee,** meet to review its priorities during the coming months and to establish a routine meeting date (3rd Monday of the Month). Priorities for the immediate future is identifying and recruiting additional residents and business members from Northeast New London to serve on the Governance Committee, along with individuals who live within Southeastern Connecticut with legal or accounting expertise who would be interested in assisting in the governance effort. Community survey participants and other community residents who indicated an interest in serving on the Northeast New London Revitalization working committee, such as Famers’ Market, Beautification, Public Information/Web Site, and Business Development and Strategic Planning will continue to be recruited during the next couple of months.

**Figure 5. Looking north on Williams St. near Hodges Square. Speeds of 50 mph or more are routine.**