

# The Action Strategy

# 5

## 5.1 Introduction

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

## 5.2 Urban Structure

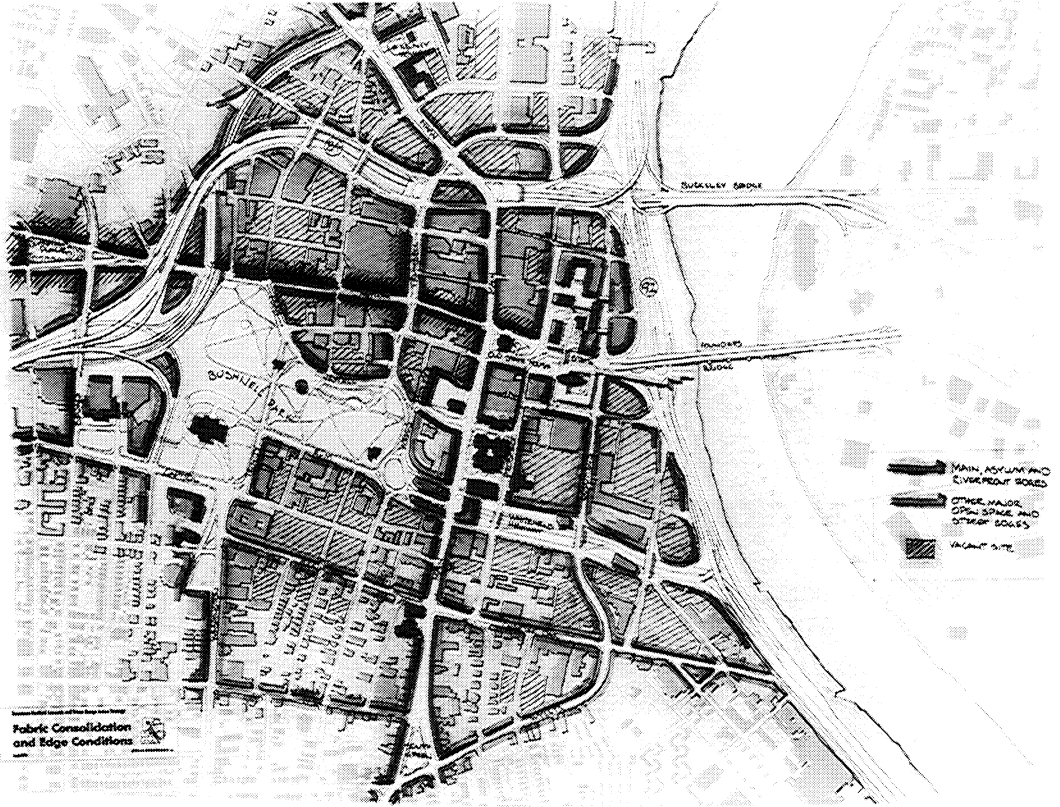
The fabric of downtown Hartford has undergone profound changes in the last 50 years. Although the underlying “bones” remain intact - the streets, blocks and a core group of buildings - the strength of the whole is undermined by a sense of discontinuity that makes places feel far apart and discourages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

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

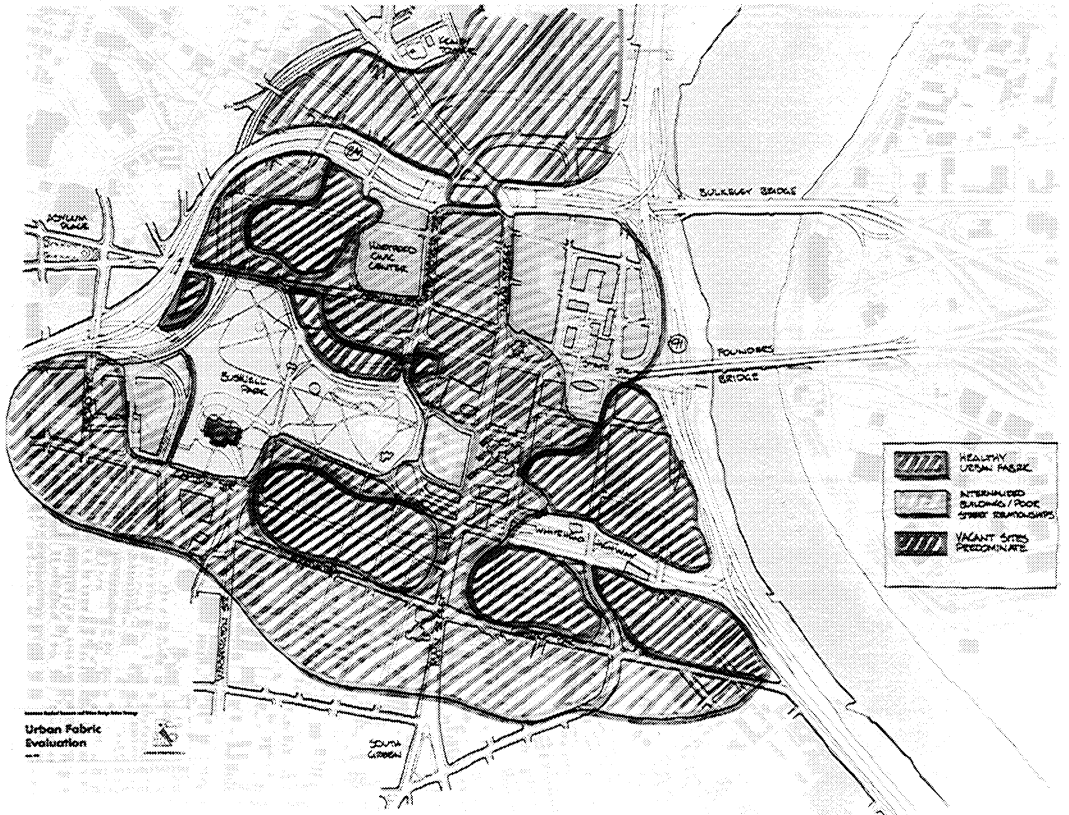


There is a strong sense of disconnection in much of downtown.

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



The existing condition of the urban fabric



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

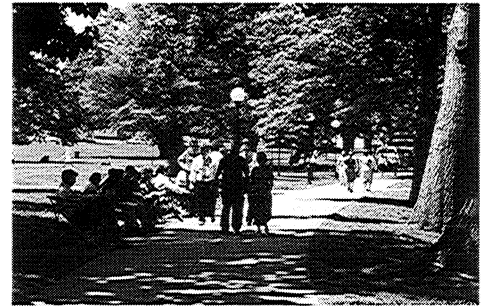
### Issues

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

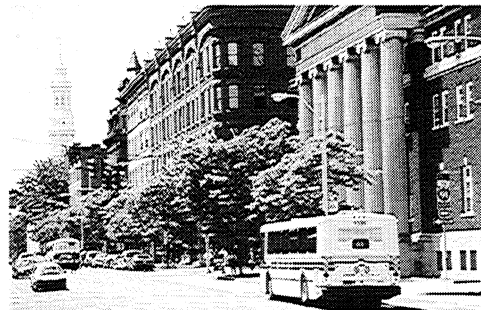
Parks are a prime example. Buried and uncelebrated within the urban fabric of Hartford lies an outstanding collection of parks. In 1854, the creation of Hartford's Bushnell Park and New York City's Central Park signaled the start of the American Park movement. Following a call in 1870 from one of American's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

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

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



Bushnell Park is an outstanding success



Main Street forms an important civic space



Constitution Plaza typically feels less safe than city streets.

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

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

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

### **Opportunities**

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

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

## Actions - The shared civic spaces

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

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

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

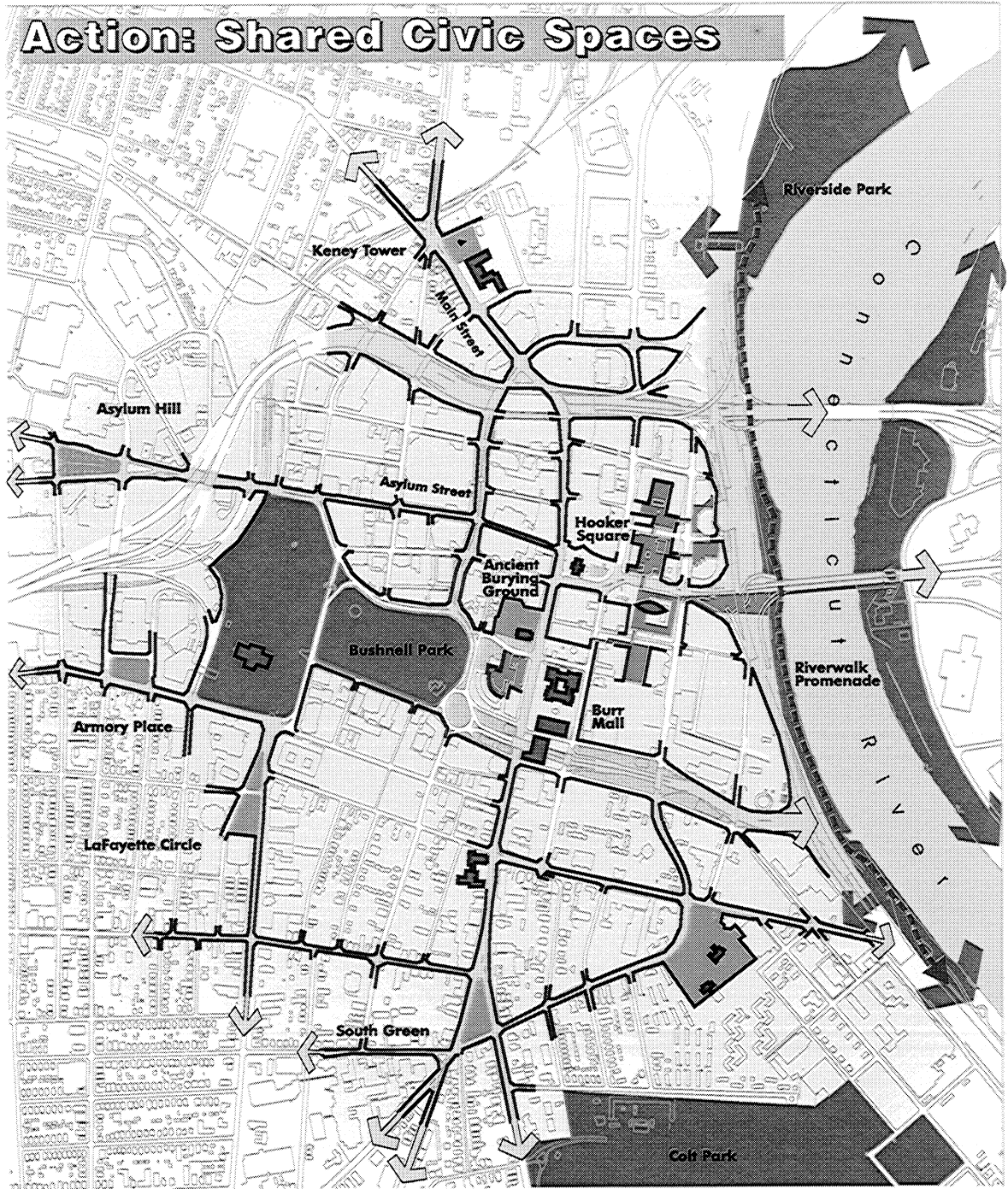
- **Main Street.** Coordinate existing and proposed streetscaping and minimize the negative aspects of bus traffic.
- **Asylum Street.** Make the necessary street improvements to allow two-way traffic and recognize it as one of the city's main connecting streets.
- **Charter Oak Avenue.** Make necessary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



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



Streetscaping: St. George Street in Toronto



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



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

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

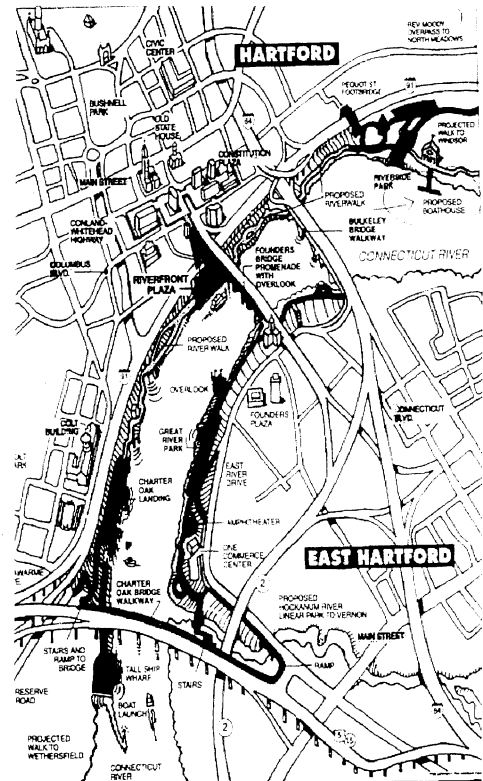
● **Continue the restoration of downtown’s significant green spaces to provide amenities for the region’s residents, workers and visitors and to enhance the sense of place:**

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

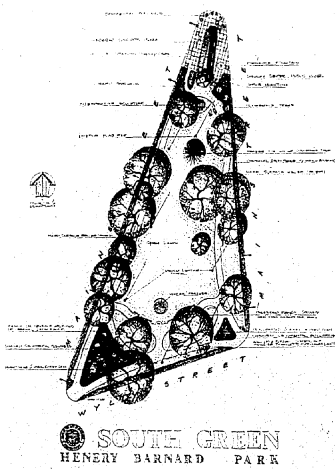
● **Improve pedestrian connections to the Connecticut River through signage, streetscape and landscape initiatives to help knit the river back into the city fabric and raise its profile. Improvements to be made include:**

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

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



Riverfront Recapture has proposed several new connections to the river.



The South Green revitalization plan should be supported.

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

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

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

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

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

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



## 5.2.2 Streets and Blocks

### *Issues*

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

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

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

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

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

## ***Opportunities***

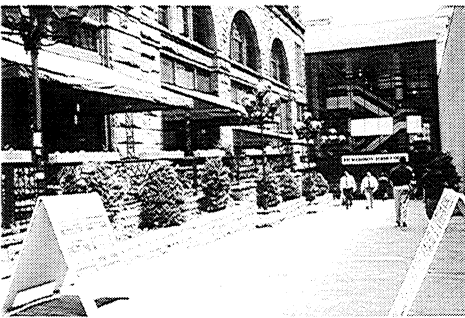
Opportunities lie in mitigating the impact of the interstate by improving connections across and under it. Opportunity also lies in restoring pedestrian and /or vehicular activity along closed streets.

## ***Actions - Streets and blocks***

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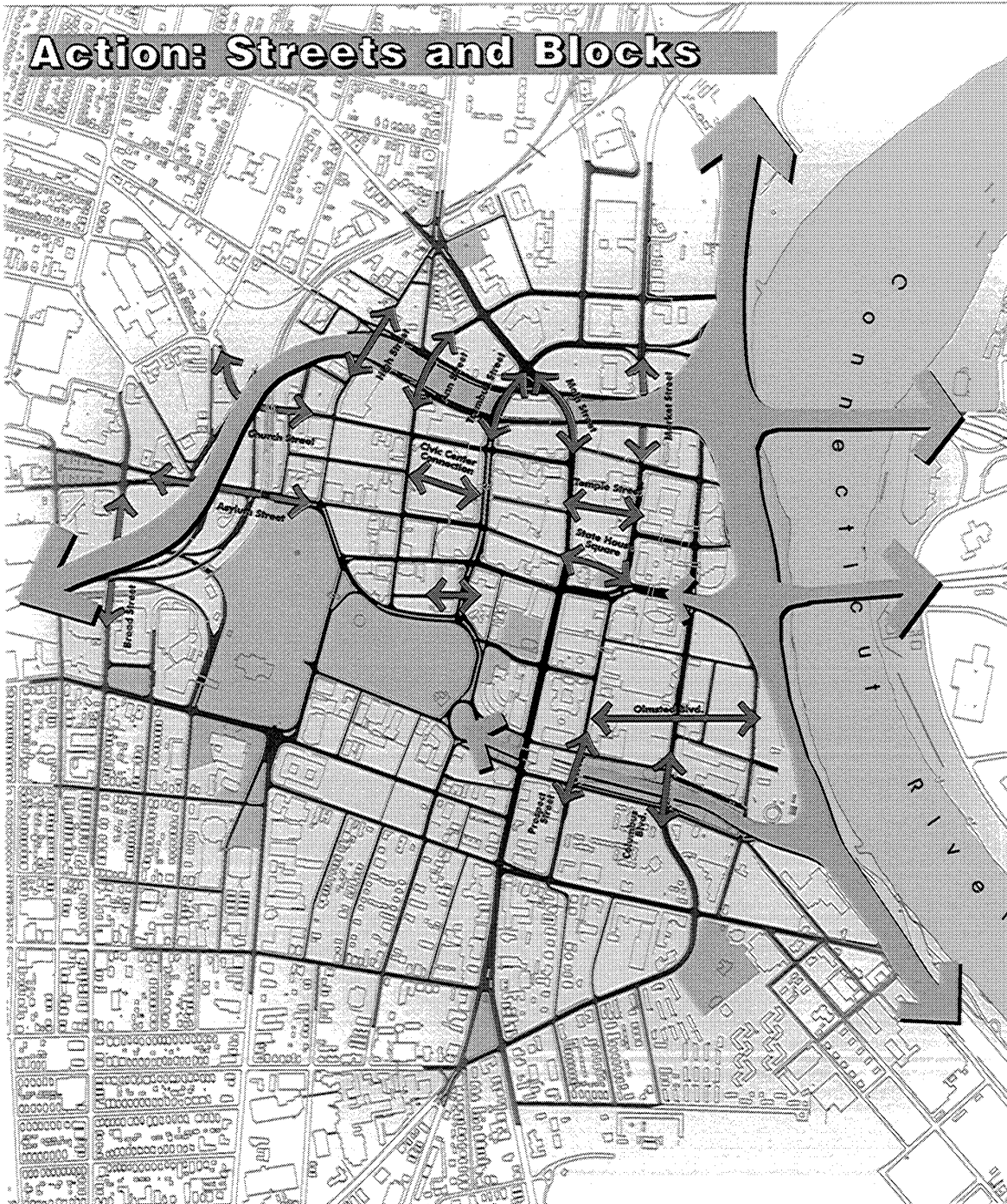
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- **Restore movement along closed streets.**
  - Reopen Temple Street by removing the “mix-master” building.
  - Reopen the Isle of Safety by the Old State House for transit vehicles. Special paving materials should be used to signify limited use.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






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

# Action: Streets and Blocks



## Streets and blocks

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



## 5.2.3 Gateways and Arrival Points

### *Issues*

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



The entry to downtown from the south is from South Green



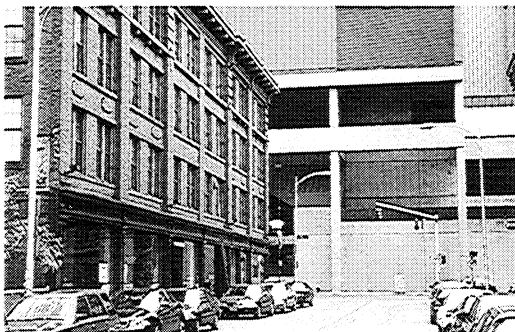
Entry from the highways is disorienting

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

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

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

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



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

## 5.2.4 Heritage Resources

### Issues

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

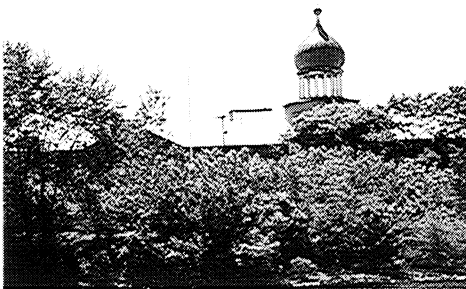
Lithographs and old photographs reveal Hartford's history as a bustling waterfront city created at the upper most navigable point on the Connecticut River. An active waterfront was dotted with piers, boats and streets came right down to the water's edge. Perched on the banks of the river, Little Italy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

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

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

### Opportunities

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



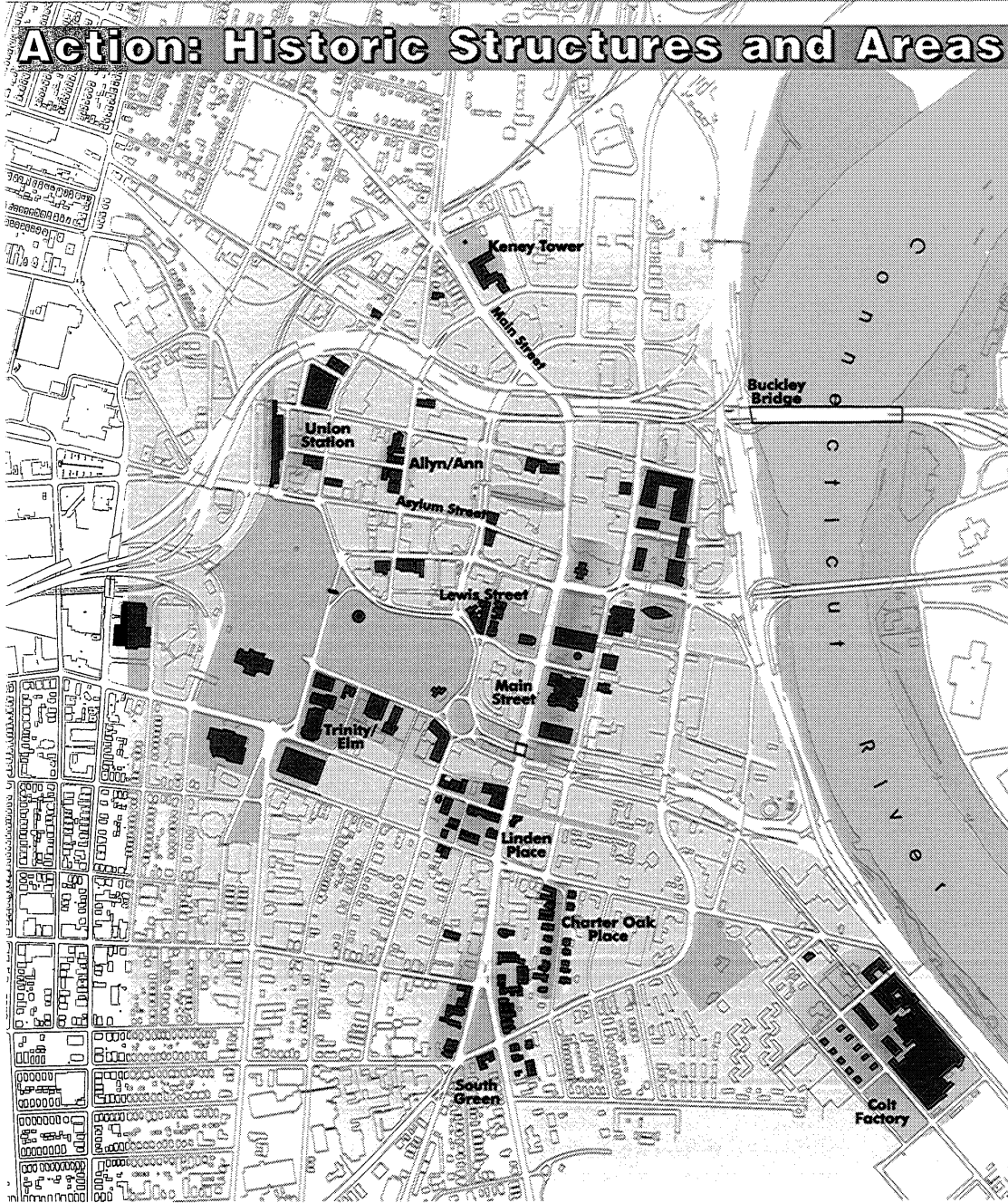
Colt Factory



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

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

# Action: Historic Structures and Areas



## ***Actions***

- **Develop a public heritage signing system that identifies and describes Hartford's historic:**
  - open spaces
  - important structures
  - relationship to the river
  - role of the river
  
- **Preserve, restore and re-use heritage buildings wherever possible.**
  
- **Identify, preserve and support ensembles of historic buildings and open spaces including:**
  - Constitution Plaza and the Phoenix Building (the Boat Building)
  - the buildings along Lewis Street, Arch Street, Main Street, Charter Oak Place, Pratt Street
  - the buildings and open spaces at Allyn / Ann, Linden Place / Capitol, Trinity / Elm, South Green
  - the brownstones on Capitol Avenue
  - Union Station and warehouse structures north of Bushnell Park
  - the Ancient Burying Ground behind Center Church
  - Pulaski Mall
  - the Old State House and the surrounding park
  
- **Prepare a master plan for the Colt Factory area which addresses the stadium lands to the south, the Connecticut River, the Sheldon-Charter Oak neighborhood, the Colt Factory complex, Colt Park and connections to downtown.**
  
- **Strengthen the City's historic preservation regulations.**



## 5.3 The Use of Downtown

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

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



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



City Place  
Downtown is dominated by offices.

## 5.3.1 Housing

### Issues

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

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

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

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



The brownstones along Capitol Avenue



Bushnell Towers in the heart of downtown

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

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

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

### **Opportunities**

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

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

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

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

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

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



High Street sites

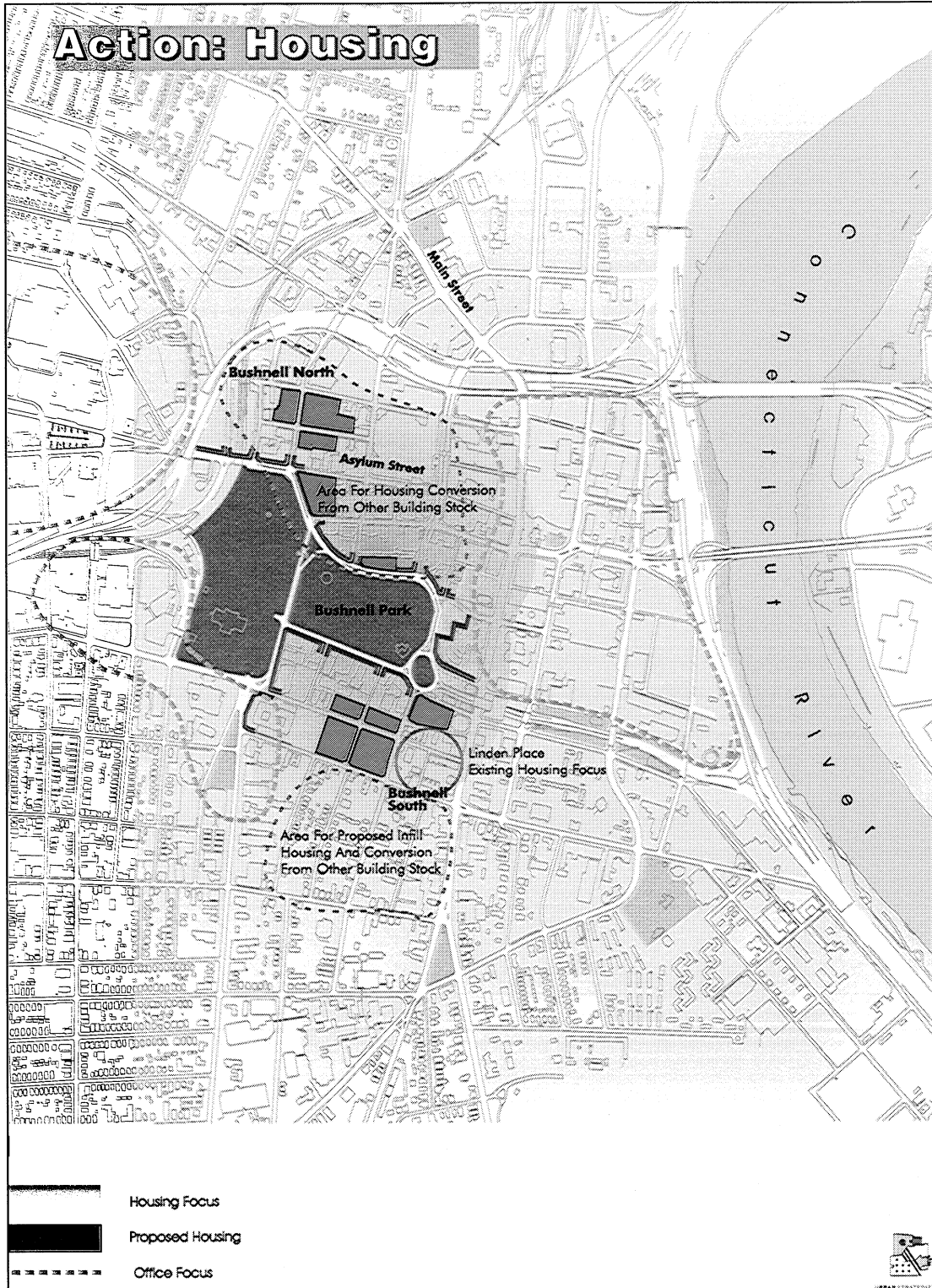


The SNET site  
There are many vacant sites for new development.

## ***Actions - Housing***

### Five-year Development Program

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



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

Long term development plan:

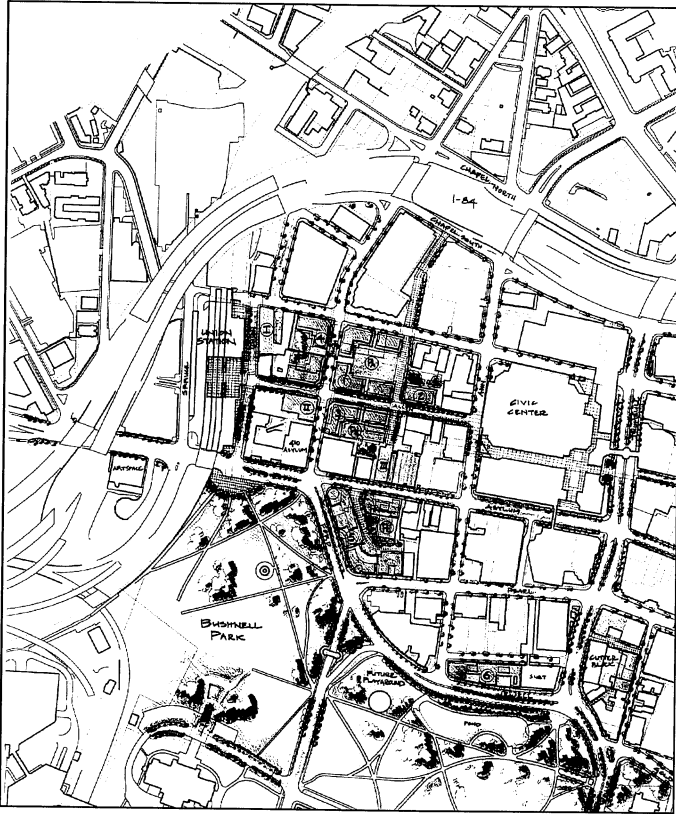
- Add an average of 250 units per year to total 3,750 to 5,000 units in 15 years.
- Target one-third of the overall downtown residential development for condominium occupancy and two-thirds for rental.
- Ensure that ownership town homes account for one-third to one-half of the infill neighborhood projects.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

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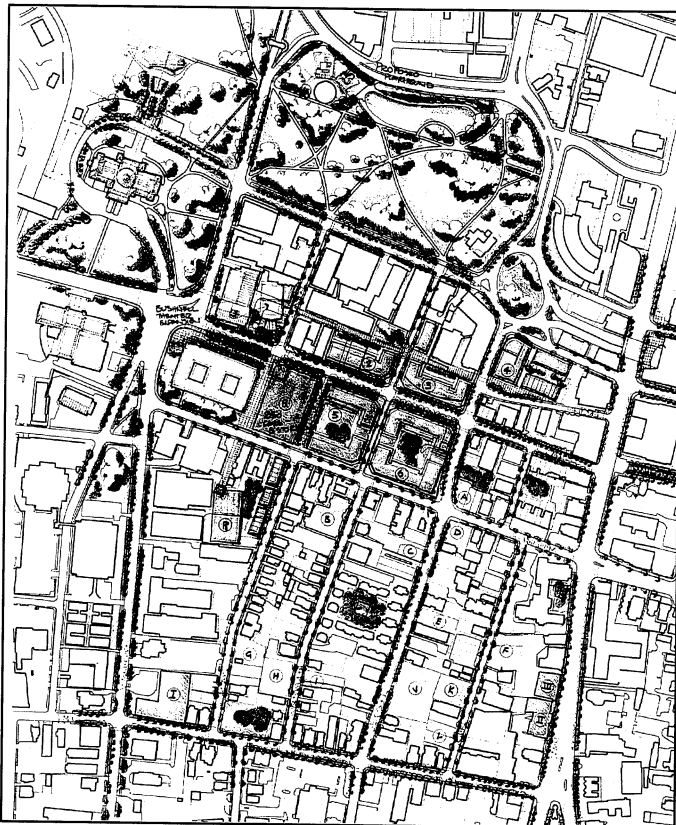
***Housing Development Goals***

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

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



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

## 5.3.2 Retail

### *Issues*

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

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

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

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

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



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



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

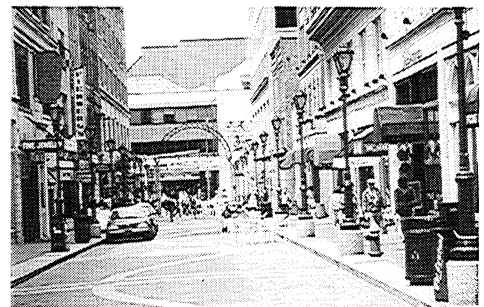
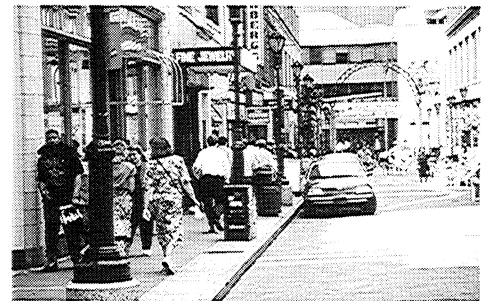
The surveys of downtown employees and *The Hartford Courant* readers showed that downtown is expected to be a diverse environment with retail stores offering a wide range of goods and services. Downtown is also perceived as a place for locally owned businesses, which are generally preferred by survey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

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

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

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

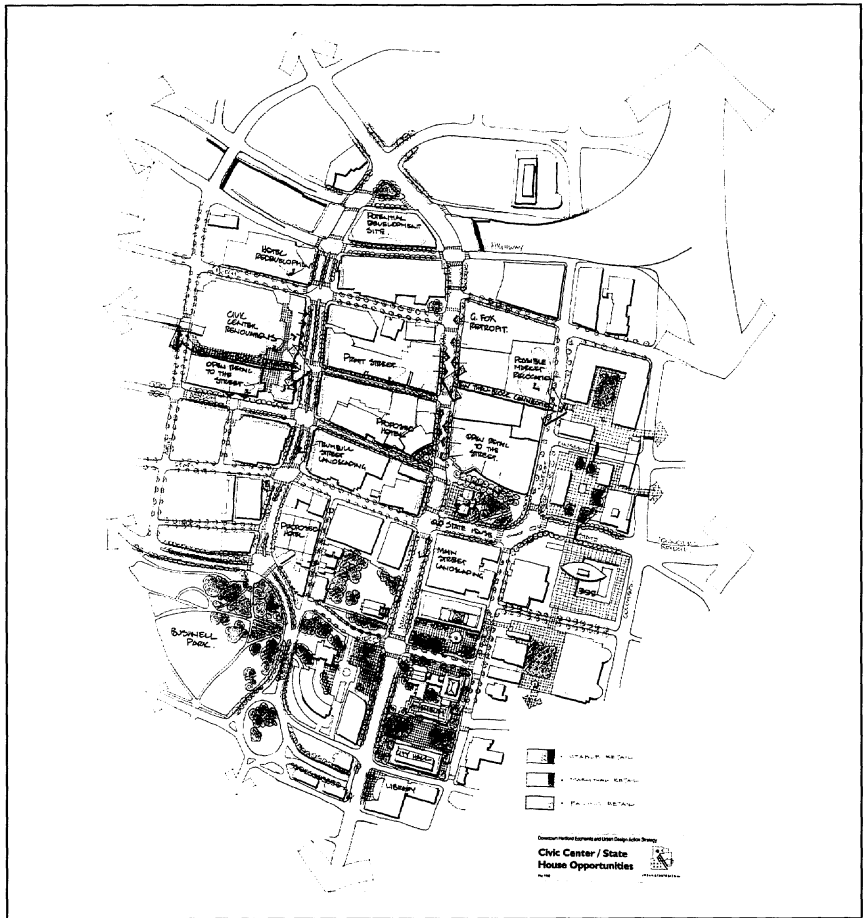
The retail/entertainment segment of the market should be considered carefully. Entertainment uses should be in several clusters, not focused in a single venue. The large-scale single development approach is risky as a long-term proposition given the size and location of the Hartford market.



Pratt Street continues to be an active retail street.

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

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



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

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

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

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

## ***Opportunities***

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

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

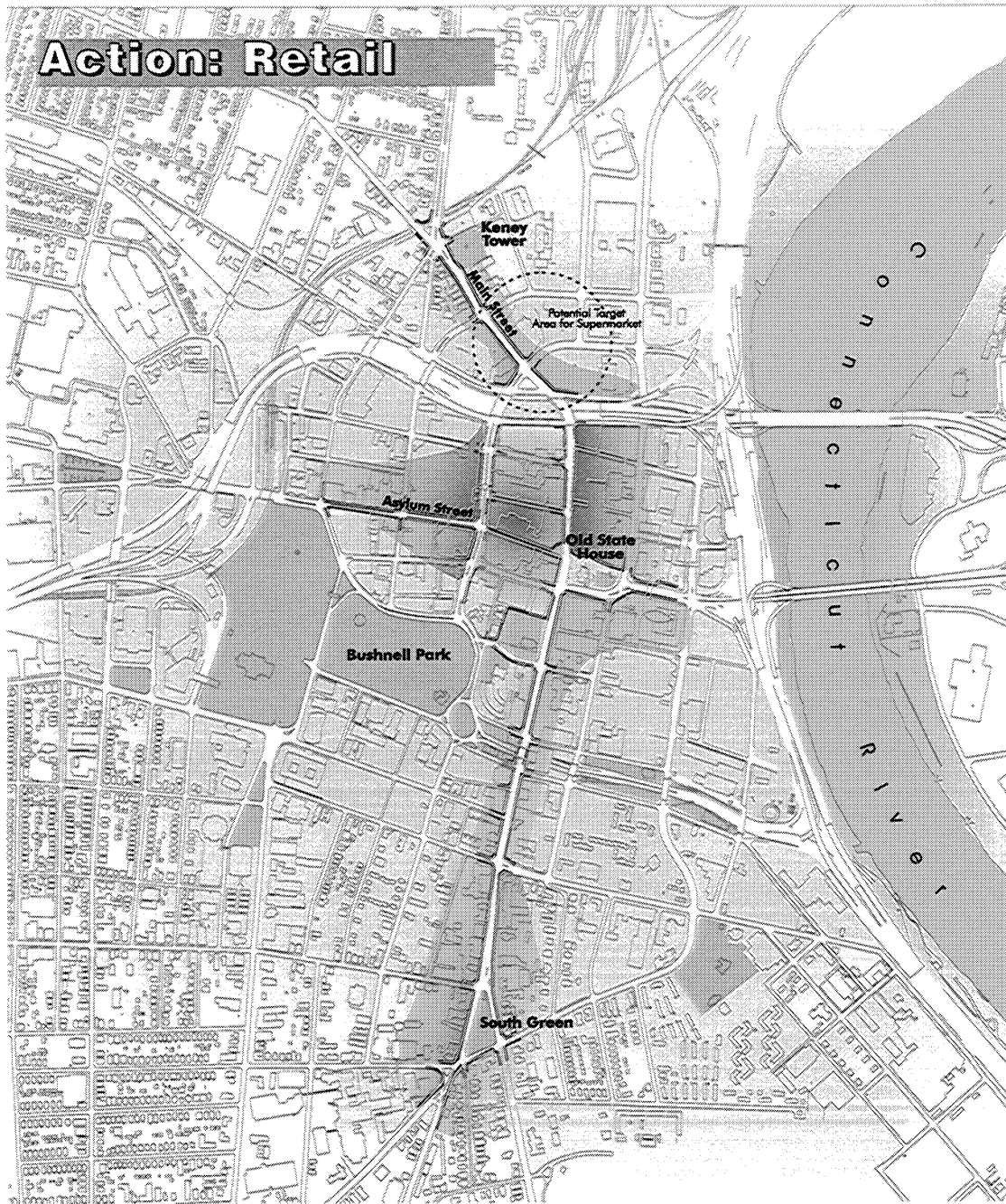
Vacant and occupied but outmoded retail space in downtown offers redevelopment opportunities, including conversion to other uses such as residential or office space, as well as reconfiguration for new retail uses especially on the ground floor.

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

## ***Actions - Retail***

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

# Action: Retail



 Retail Focus



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

**Number of Retail Establishments in the City of Hartford**

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

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

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

\*Lower Manhattan Hotel Rooms

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

### 5.3.3 Hotels

#### *Issues*

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

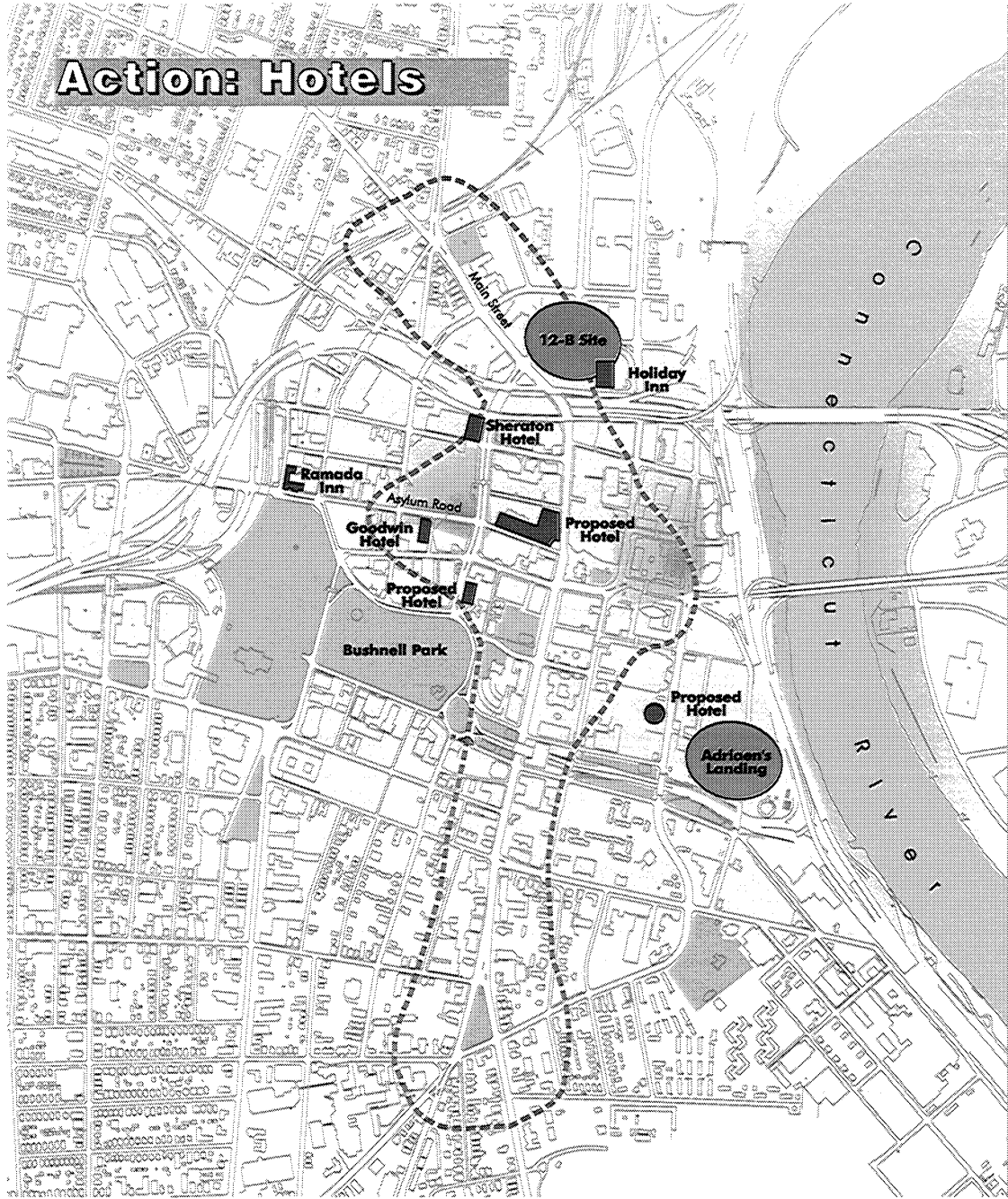
A weakness in the Hartford hotel market, particularly the downtown hotel market, is the lack of a strong tourist and convention base. This means hotels are filled during the week with business travelers and empty on the weekends. This explains occupancy rates that remain around 70 percent. The business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

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

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

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

# Action: Hotels



Proposed Hotels



Retail Focus



Proposed Stadium Site



Proposed State College Site





## ***Opportunities***

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

## ***Actions - Hotels***

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

## 5.3.4 Convention and Stadium Development

### *Issues*

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

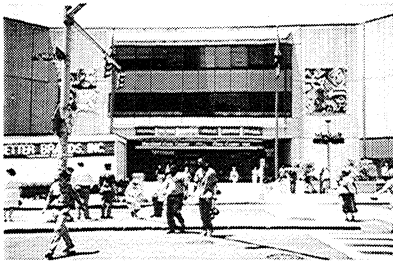
The Hartford Coliseum seats over 16,200 and has a 71,000 square foot exhibition hall. Following the relocation of the Hartford Whalers, the Connecticut Development Authority signed a 14-year partnership agreement with Madison Square Garden LP (MSG). MSG brought its American Hockey League franchise, the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

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

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

### *Opportunities*

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



The Hartford Civic Center will soon be renovated.

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

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



Proposed Adriaen's Landing

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

## 5.3.5 Office

### *Issues*

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

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

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

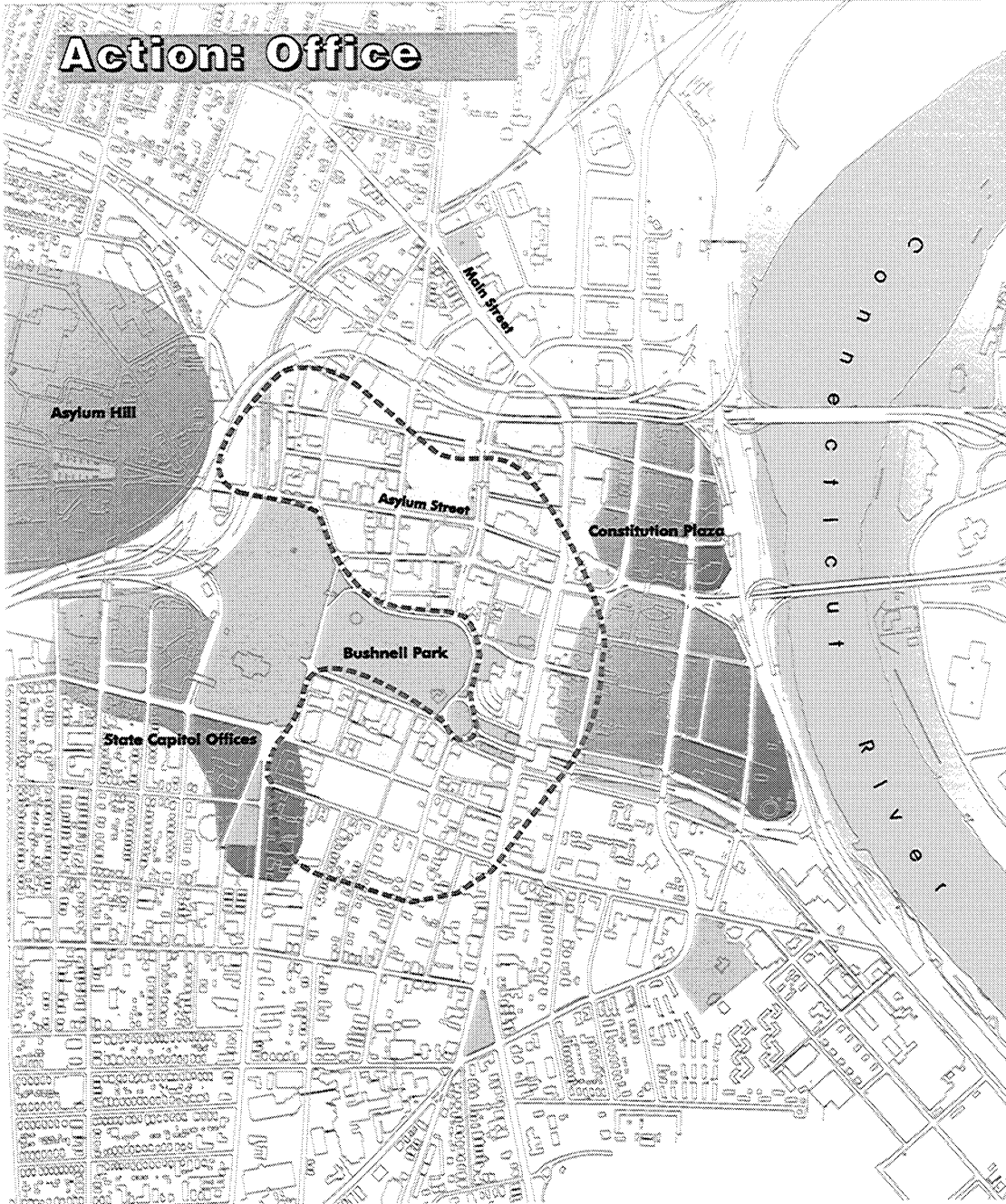
There are several office projects already proposed for downtown Hartford. Developers for the Society Block (Main Street / Market Site) propose a mixed-used development that includes 118,000 square feet of high-end office space along with a hotel, street-level retail space, and a 900-car parking structure.



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

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

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

# Action: Office



-  Office Focus
-  Housing Focus



## ***Opportunities***

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

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

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

## ***Actions - Office***

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

## 5.4 Rebalancing Movement

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

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



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



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

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

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



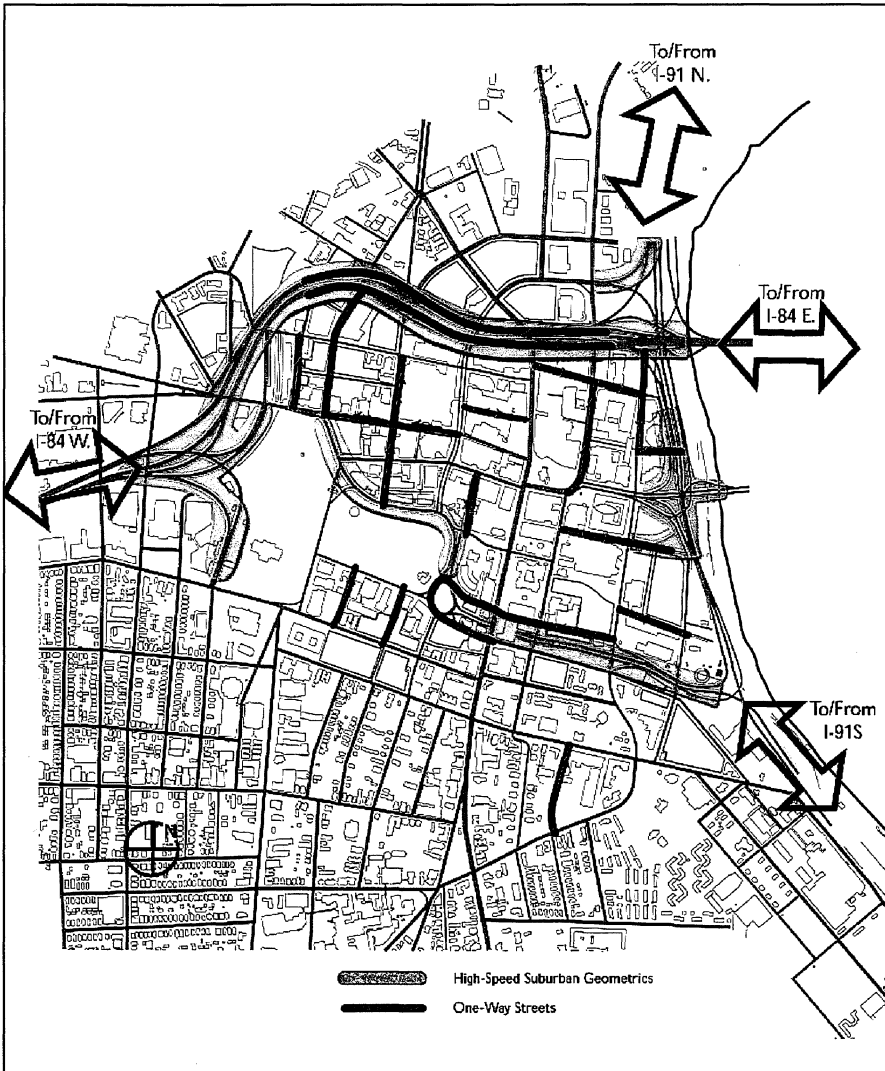
**Columbus Boulevard**  
Streets became places for moving as many vehicles as possible.



## 5.4.1 Gateways and Arrival

### Issues

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



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

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

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

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

### **Opportunities**

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

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

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

## ***Actions - Gateways and Arrival***

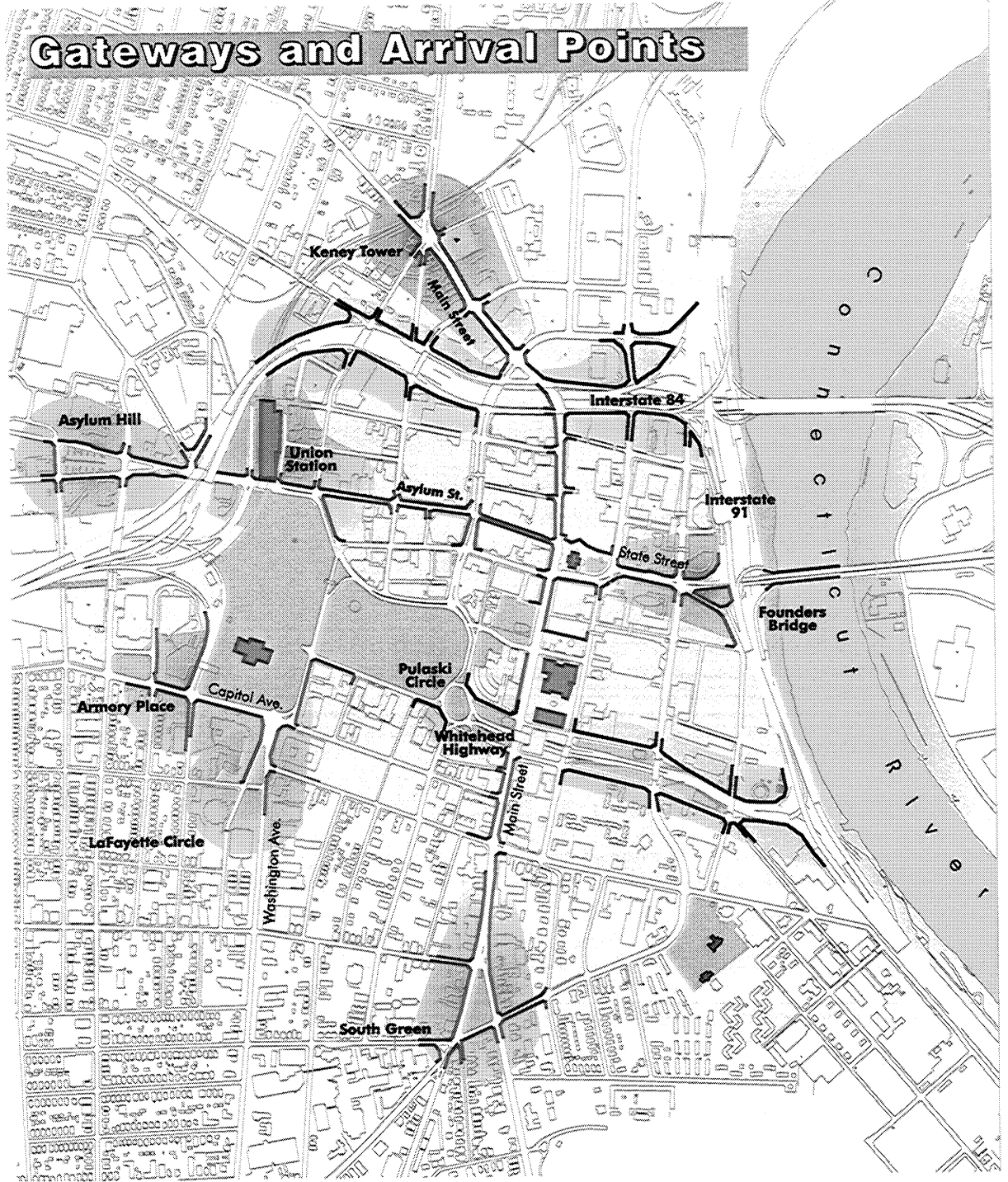
### **The historic arrival routes.**



- **Improve historic arrival sequences:**
  - from Keney Clock Tower to the overpasses at Main and Trumbull
  - from Asylum Hill to the Union Station along Asylum
  - at Washington Street and Capitol Avenue in the vicinity of the Lafayette Statue
  - along Main Street from South Green through restoration of heritage buildings and the open space
  - from the Founders Bridge
  
- **Initiatives to improve arrival sequences should include:**
  - Signage to connect the neighborhoods and downtown
  - Gateway plans prepared jointly by the neighborhood and adjacent downtown community. These plans should aim to make places for motorists and pedestrians alike by addressing:
    - streetscaping (including trees, planters and paving)
    - wayfinding
    - street furnishing (bus shelters, benches, trash receptacles, banners, lighting)
    - development opportunities
    - built form

### **The freeway arrival routes**

- **Improve the visual appearance of the freeway entrances to make them a more integrated part of the city at:**
  - the Whitehead. Extend streetscaping from Pulaski Circle onto the Whitehead Highway to just east of the Library bridge. Utilize the bridge as a gateway similar to the entry found on I-84 westbound from I-91.
  - I-91 and Trumbull Street
  - North and South Chapel
  - Asylum Street
  - Broad Street
  
- **Initiatives should include:**
  - adding the word “downtown” to signage on I-84 and I-91, indicating an exit to downtown
  - standardizing signage for parking and provide directional signage to the motorist at all juncture points between the freeway and the downtown street network
  - introducing a mix of uses at terminus of ramps to dilute the concentration of parking structures in these areas.

# Gateways and Arrival Points

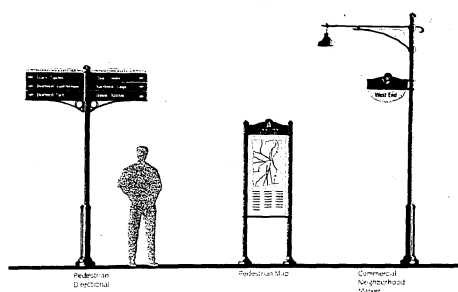


-  Reinforce Historic Gateway / Crossroads
-  Highway Edge to be Defined





### Downtown Arrival and Departure



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

## 5.4.2 Making streets friendly for pedestrians: Traffic calming

### Issues

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

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

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

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

## ***Opportunities***

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

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

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

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

## **Actions - Traffic Calming**

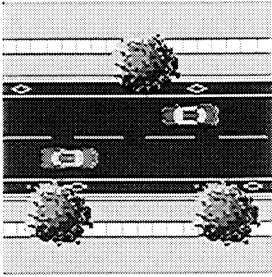
- **Develop detailed design for each of the major connecting streets and introduce traffic calming measures to slow traffic in the downtown as appropriate.**
- **Improve the problematic intersections. The intersections highlighted in the diagram all contain geometric elements which make them particularly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

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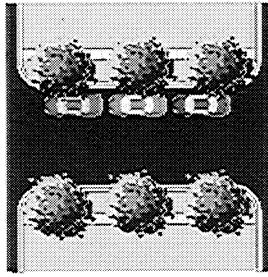
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*Downtown should offer an aesthetically appealing network of streets that balances the movement of vehicles with the comfort and safety of pedestrians and that strengthens connections between communities.*

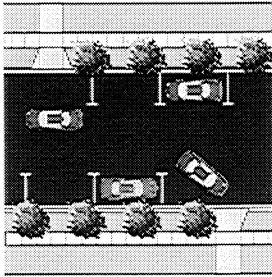




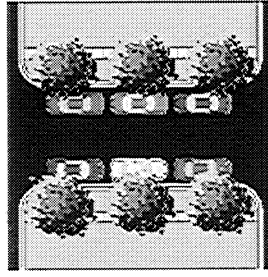
Stripe Lanes



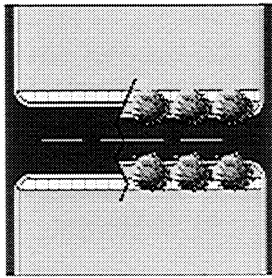
On-Street Parking One Side



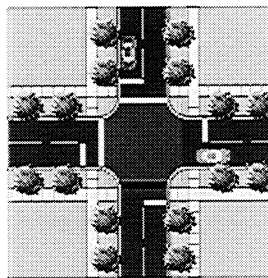
Parking



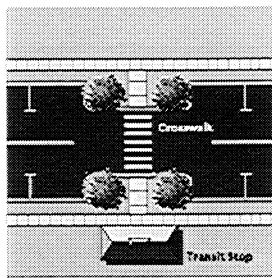
On-Street Parking Both Sides



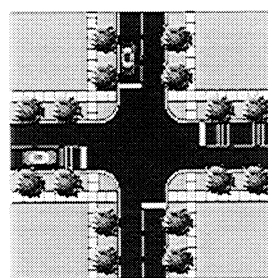
Rebuild Street



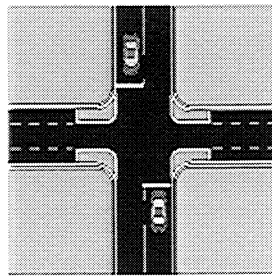
Raised Intersection



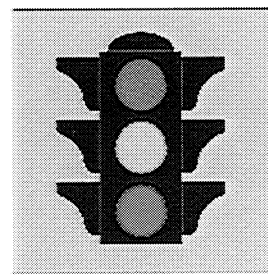
Bulbout Midblock



Textured Pavement



Bulbout Intersection



Signalization

A menu of traffic calming options

## 5.4.3 One-Way Street Network

### Issues

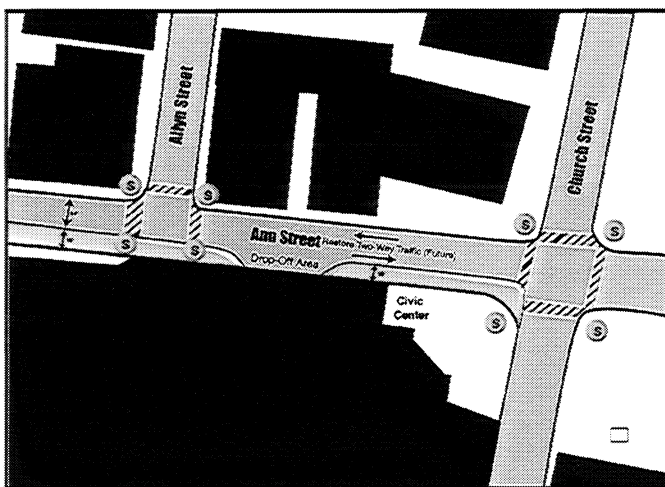
Downtown Hartford has a highly-evolved network of one-way streets, a legacy that can be traced back to the time when traffic engineers were tasked with the mission to move as much traffic into and out of the downtown employment center as quickly as possible, without regard to any other mode of transportation.

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

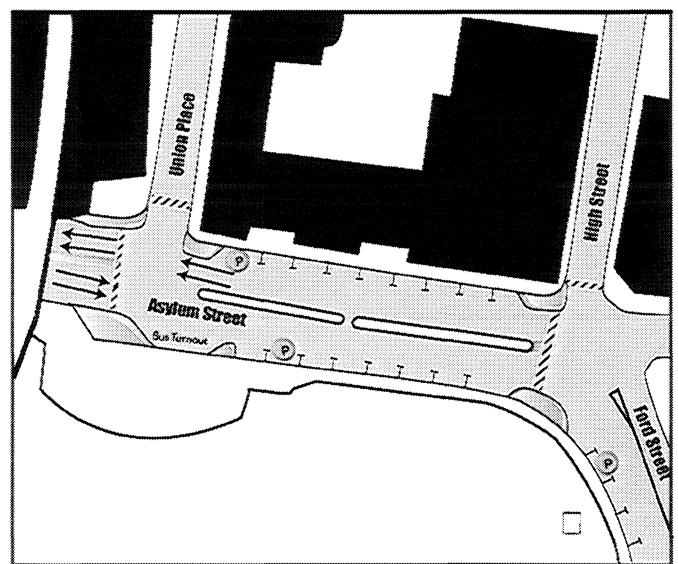
There are several ancillary effects. Many businesses located along one-way streets are invisible to the pass-by motorist. One-way streets can diminish the value of the parking capacity of the downtown, by making some lots difficult for a motorist to locate and access. One-way streets generate more travel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

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

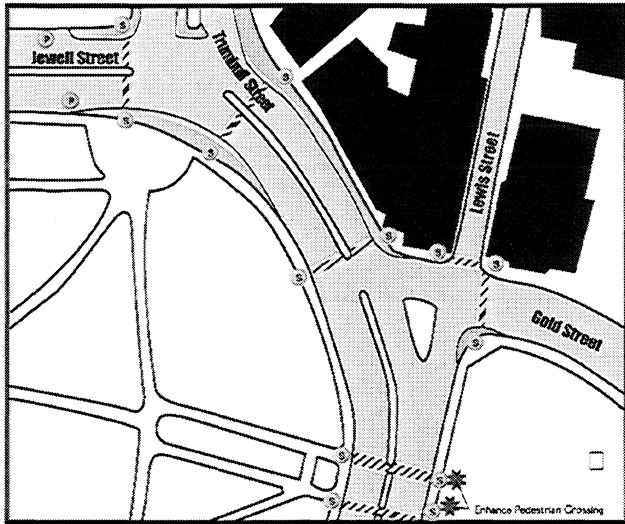
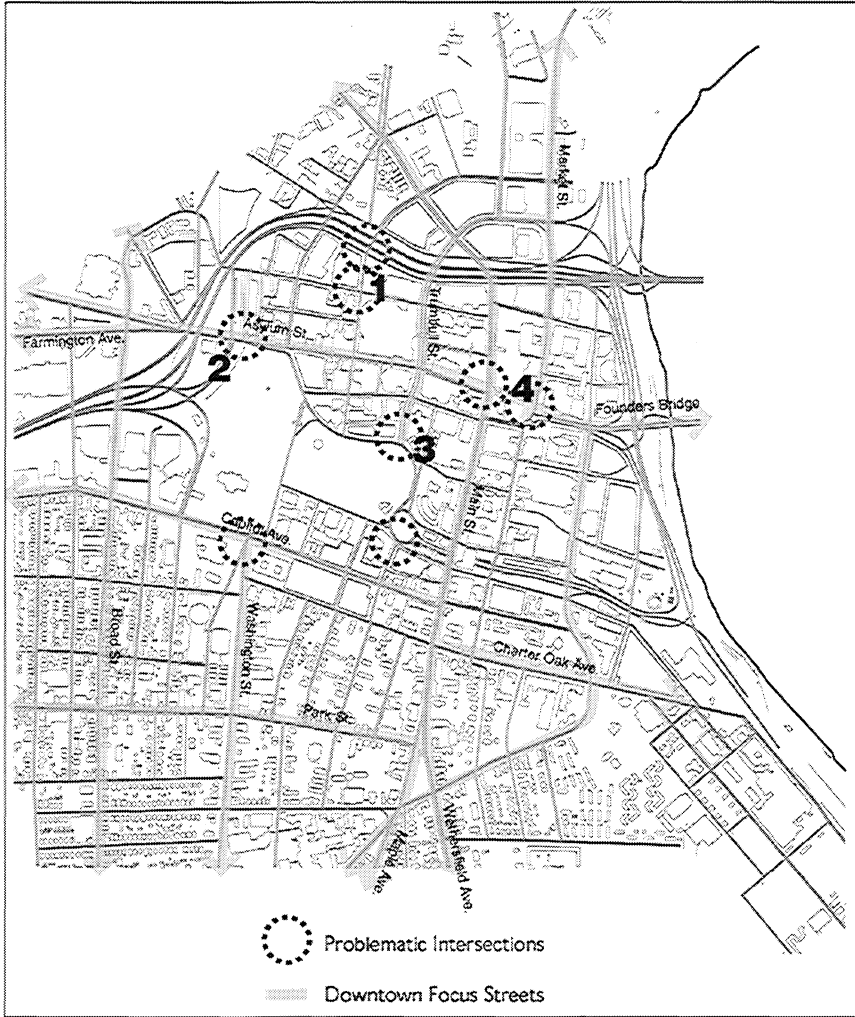
### Potential improvements for four problematic intersections



1  
 S "Pedestrian-Only" Signal Phase During Events

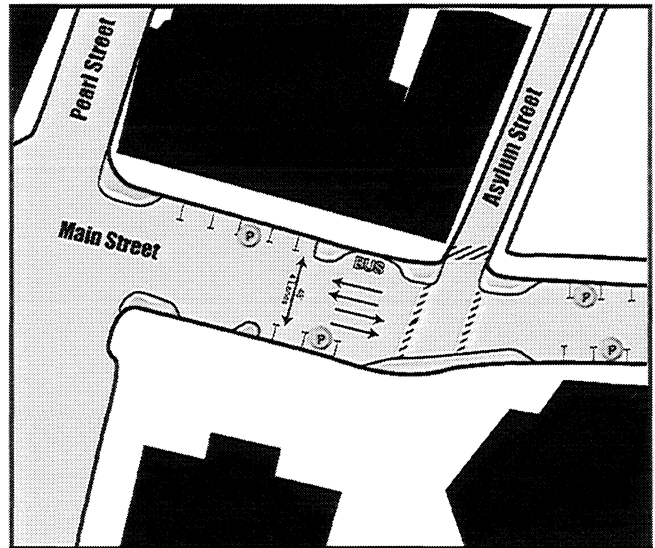


2  
 P Restore on Street Parking Both Sides



- ① Curbcut Parking to Remain
- ② Pedestrian Signal Head

3



4

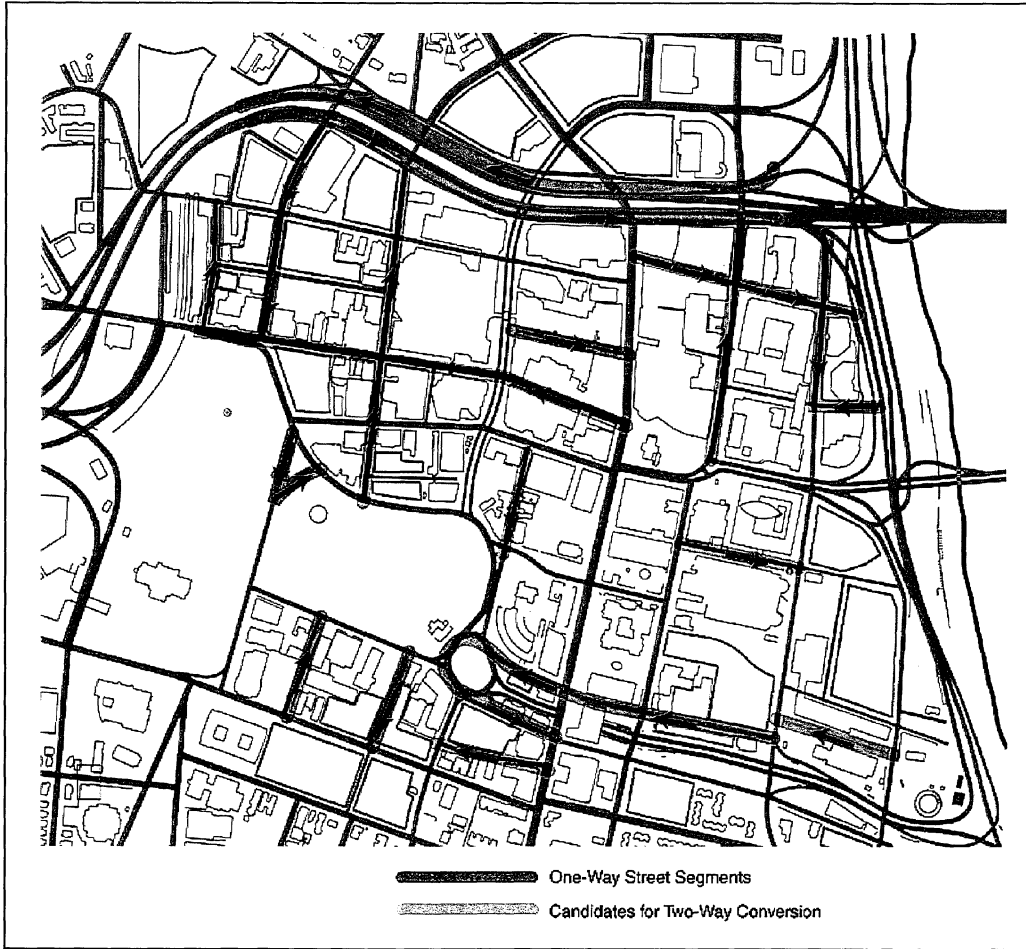
## **Opportunities**

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

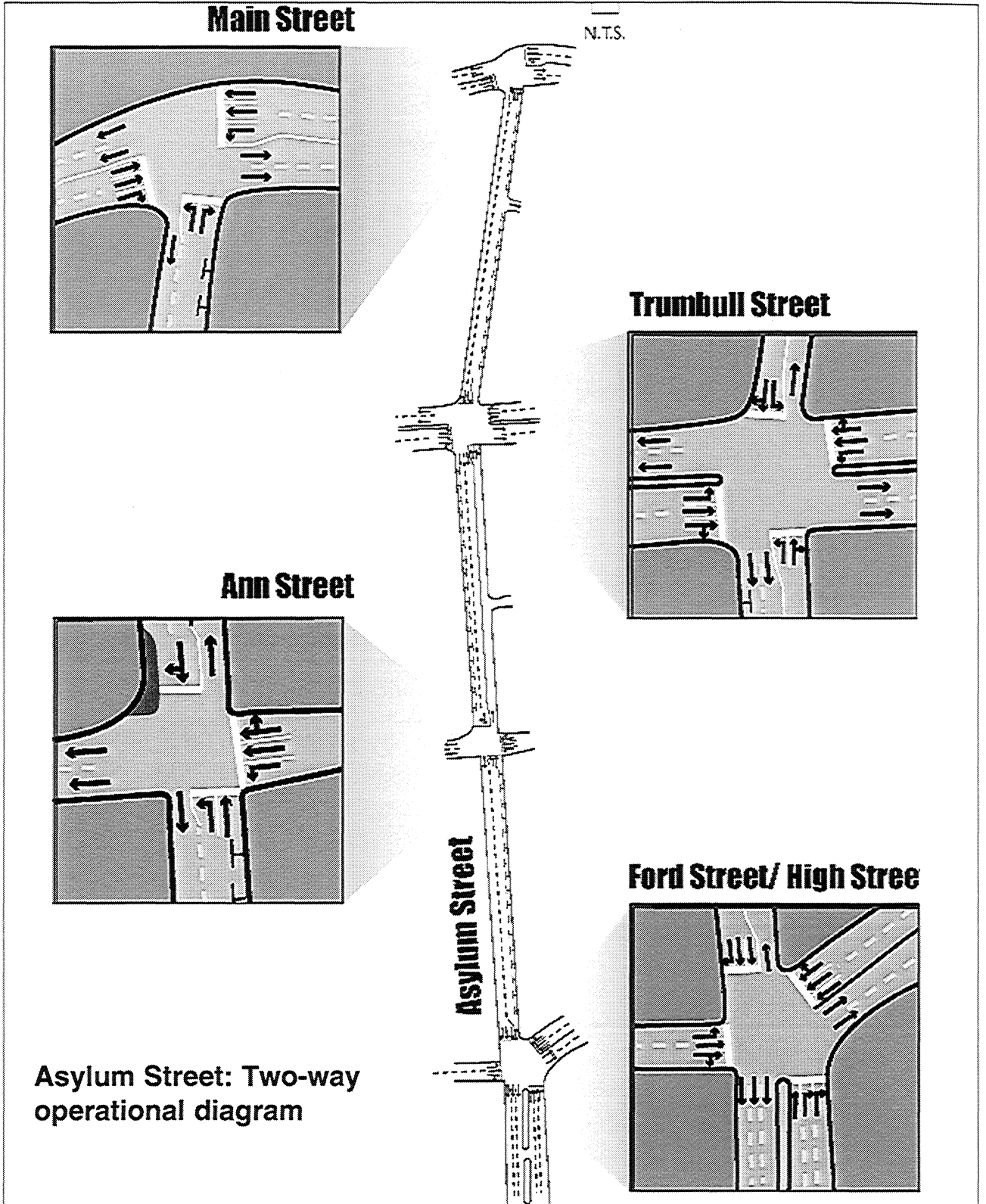
By converting one-way streets to two-way streets in downtown Hartford, there is the opportunity to gain back much of the livability of the street with only a small delay penalty for the motorist. All existing one-way streets in downtown can be considered as candidates for conversion to two-way. Exceptions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

## **Actions - One-Way Street Network**

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



Existing one-way street network



## 5.4.4 Parking Strategies

### *Issues*

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

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

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

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

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

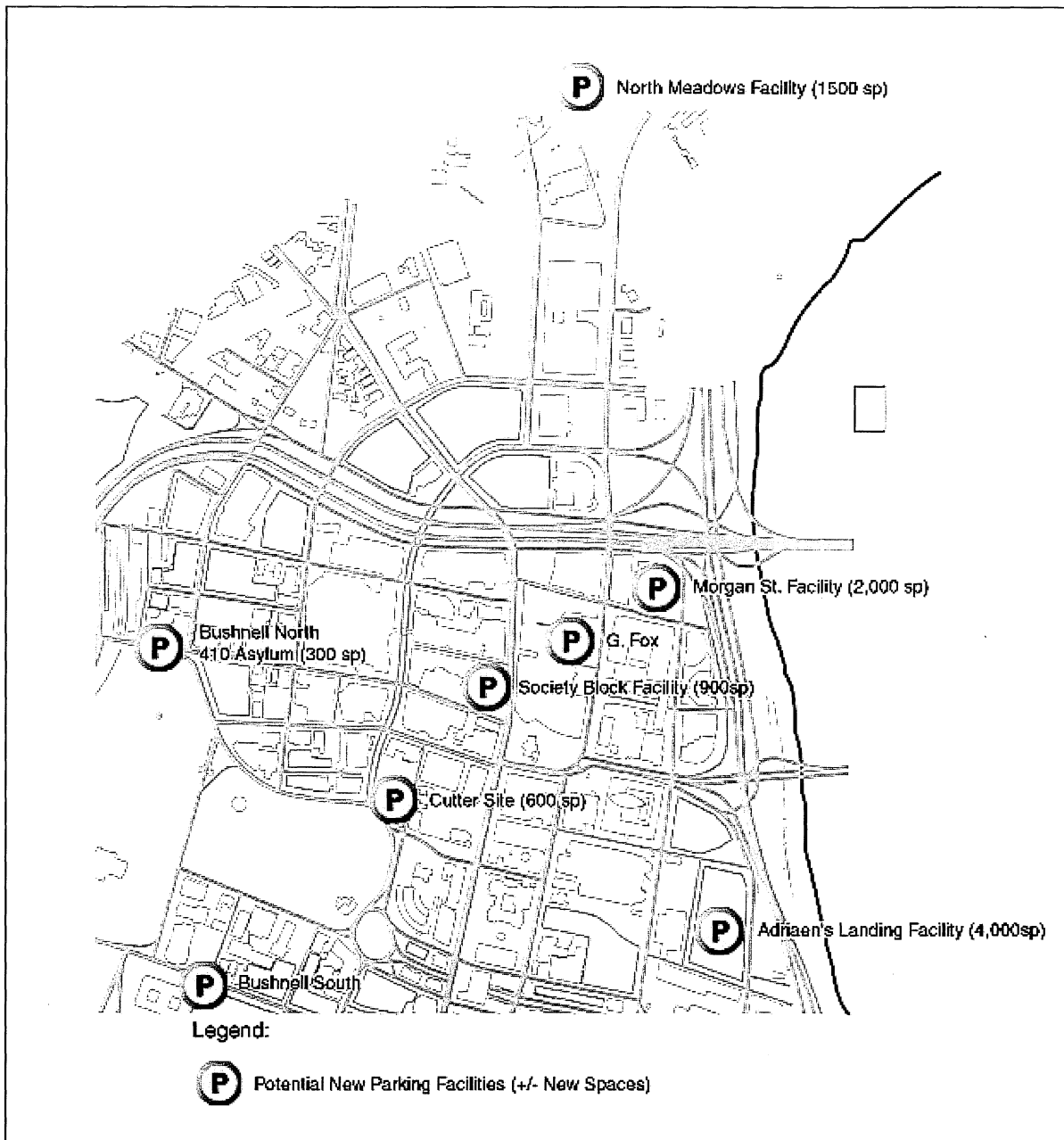
## ***Opportunities***

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

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

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





**Potential new parking facilities**

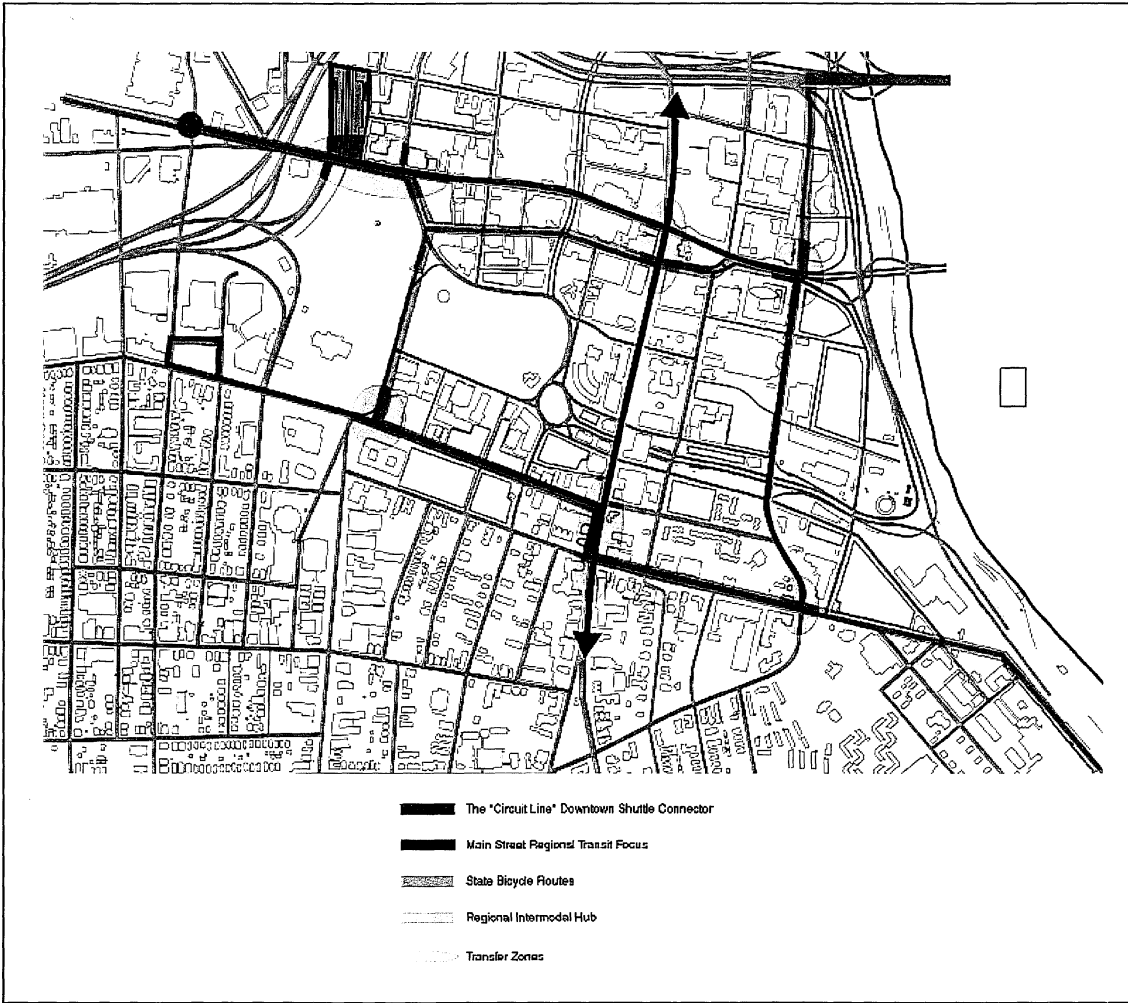
## ***Actions - Parking Strategies***

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

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





## 5.4.5 Modal Interfaces

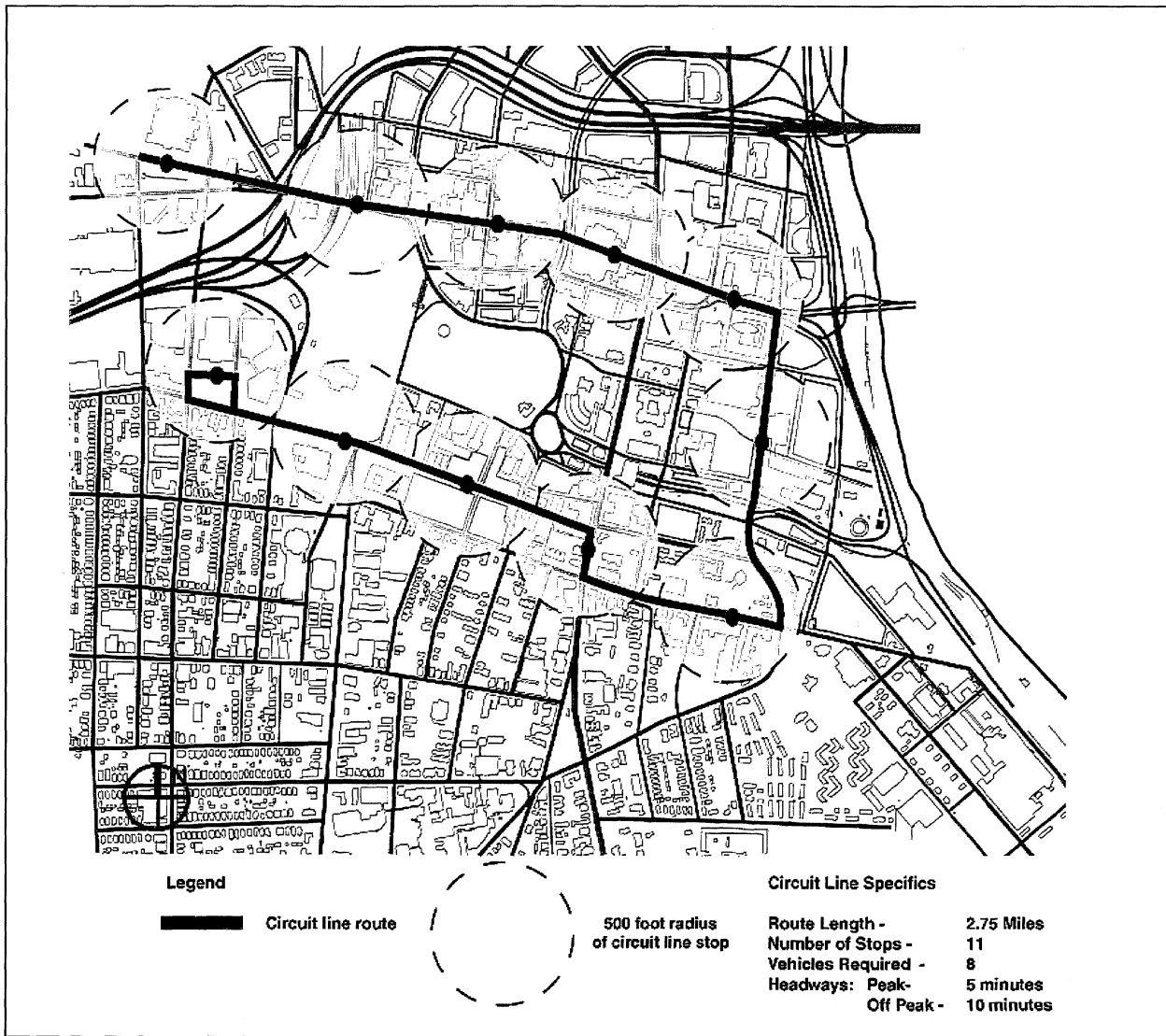
### *Issues*

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

### *Opportunities*

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

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



**Circuit Line route**

## Actions - Modal Interfaces

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

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

