



ULI TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANEL REPORT

REPOSITIONING THE DPW CAMPUS

WORCESTER, MA

JANUARY 23, 2023



Boston/
New England

URBAN LAND INSTITUTE (ULI)

The Urban Land Institute is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit research and education organization supported by its members. The mission of ULI is to shape the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide. Founded in 1936, the Institute has grown to over 45,000 members worldwide, representing the entire spectrum of land use and real estate development disciplines working in private enterprise and public service. ULI membership includes developers, architects, planners, lawyers, bankers, and economic development professionals as well as other related disciplines.

The Boston/New England District Council of ULI serves the six New England states and has nearly 1,400 members. As a preeminent, multidisciplinary real estate forum, ULI Boston/New England facilitates the open exchange of ideas, information, and experience among local and regional leaders and policy makers dedicated to creating better places.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANELS (TAPs)

The ULI Boston/New England Real Estate Advisory Committee convenes TAPs at the request of public officials and local stakeholders of communities and nonprofit organizations facing complex land use challenges, who benefit from the pro bono recommendations provided by the TAP members.

A TAP consists of a group of diverse professionals with expertise in the issues posed. The Panel spends one to two days visiting and analyzing existing conditions, identifying specific planning and development issues, and formulating realistic and actionable recommendations to move initiatives forward in a way consistent with the applicant's goals and objectives.

A recent independent study by Rivera Consulting surveyed municipalities that received assistance from the TAP programs and reported a positive impact by the TAP process on communities. Eighty-two percent of participating municipalities said their behavior and approach to municipal planning and economic development strategies were affected; 67% said there were increased municipal investments related to the stated goals and recommendations of their TAP report; and 62% said at least one key developable asset addressed in their TAP report had been redeveloped, consistent with ULI Boston/New England recommendations.

Learn more at: <https://boston.uli.org>

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Executive Summary

Chapter 1: ULI and the TAP Process

Provides an overview of ULI's District Council and its Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs) and includes a list of the panel members and stakeholders who took part in the information-gathering sessions. The section also highlights key elements of the tour of the project area for the TAP and describes the process undertaken by panelists and stakeholders to arrive at their recommendations.

Purpose of the TAP and Project Background

Gives a brief synopsis of the purpose of the TAP, including the specific questions that the City asked the panel to address. The chapter also provides a thumbnail history of the City and an overview of the study area, as well as transportation, population, and demographic information.

Assets and Opportunities

Identifies the strengths of the study area, including the thriving retail/restaurant corridor of Shrewsbury Street, the assemblage of historic buildings along East Worcester and Albany Streets, and the expansive parcels being proposed for redevelopment.

Challenges

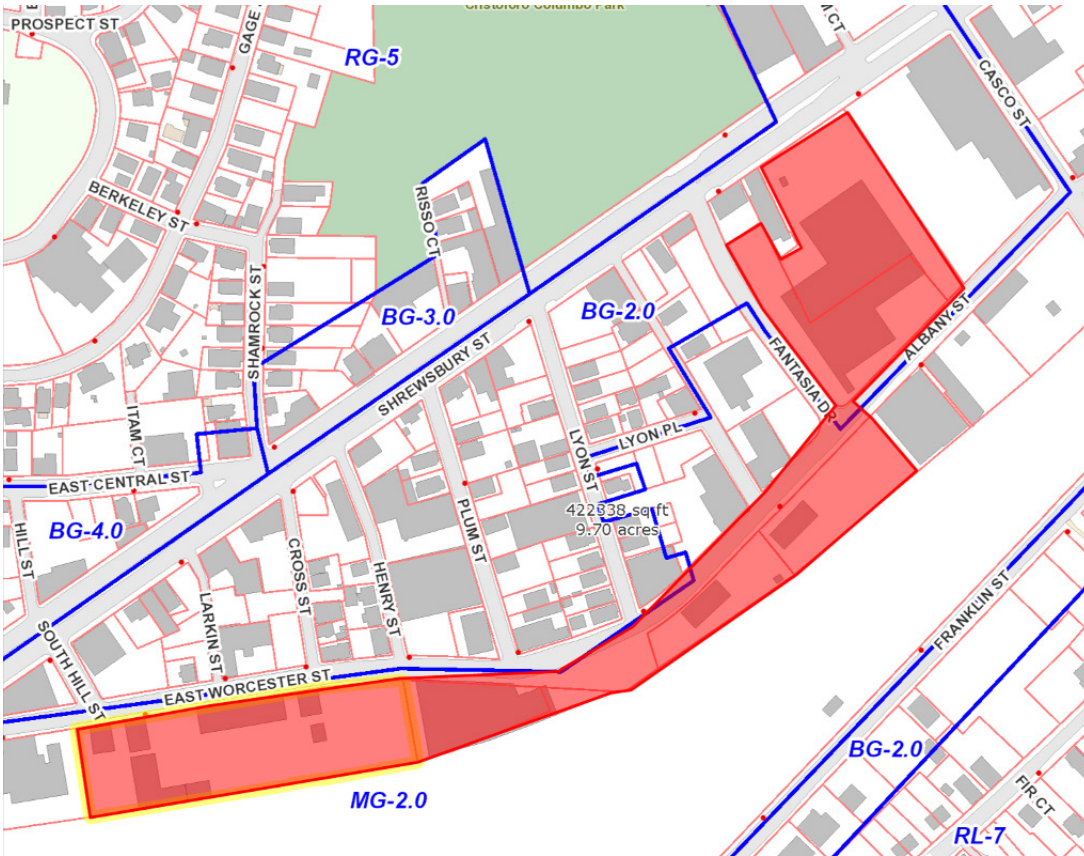
Outlines the areas that are problematic within the district, including perceived lack of parking, possible contamination of some redevelopment sites, the current condition of the neighborhood infrastructure, and the identification of alternate sites for relocation of DPW operations.

Recommendations

Proposes a number of redevelopment scenarios that would increase housing and commercial activity in the district while strengthening the Shrewsbury Street retail/restaurant corridor.

Funding Sources/Resources

Provides a list of potential funding sources through federal and state agencies pertinent to the redevelopment of the City of Worcester assets.



Study Area – East Worcester/Shrewsbury Corridor.



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ULI and the TAP Process

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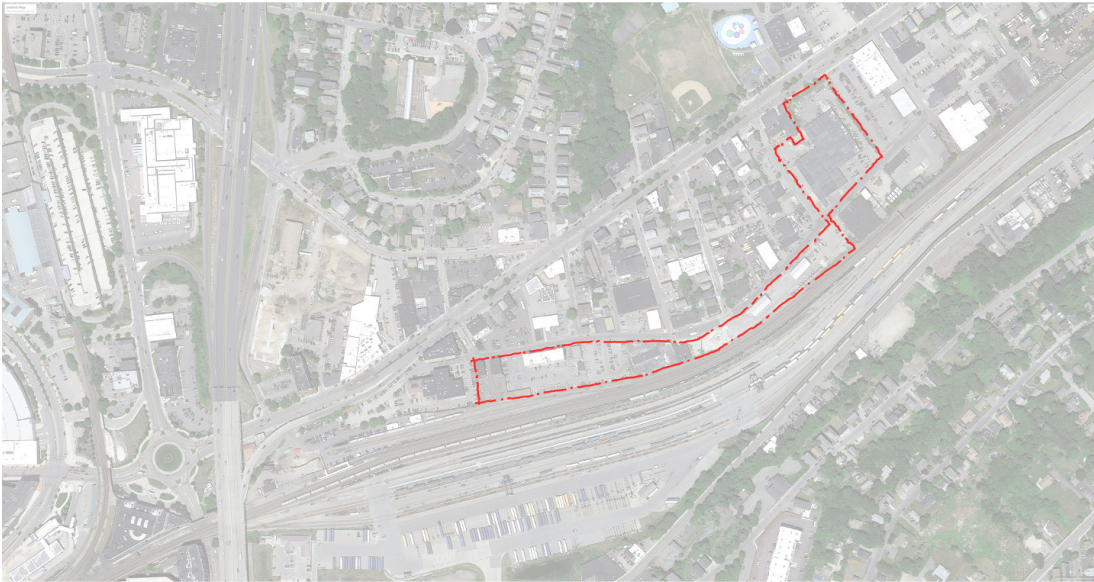
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MassDevelopment

MassDevelopment is the Commonwealth's economic development and finance authority. The quasi-public agency works closely with state, local and federal officials to increase housing and create jobs. With the power to act as both a lender and developer, MassDevelopment also works to fill in gaps in infrastructure, transportation, energy, and other areas that may be holding back economic growth. MassDevelopment has worked with ULI since 2011 to help sponsor and support the TAP process in cities and towns across the Commonwealth.

Panel Members

ULI Boston/New England convened a volunteer panel of experts whose members represent the range of disciplines necessary to analyze the challenges and uncover opportunities that will help the City of Worcester transform City-owned parcels and properties into a thriving mixed-use neighborhood. Member practice areas included architects, engineers, developers, a



Site area with DPW property outlined in red.

real estate attorney, and a finance expert. The following is a list of panelists:

Chair

Andrew Colbert, senior project director, WinnCompanies

Panel

Aida Diakite, assistant project manager, Trinity Financial

Tiffany Gallo, vice president of project development, Timberline Construction

Amanda Gregoire, vice president of real estate, MassDevelopment

Abigail Hammett, associate principal/managing director, brick.

Doug Manz, partner, chief investment officer, The HYM Investment Group

Paul Momnie, real estate attorney, Goulston Storrs

Keri Pyke, chief people officer, Howard Stein Hudson

Seth Riseman, principal, Handel Architects

Paul Schlapobersky, associate principal, SCB

Panelists have donated their time.

ULI Staff

Catherine Rollins, director

Timothy Moore, manager

TAP Writer: Mike Hoban, principal, Hoban Communications

Stakeholders

The TAP also benefited from the participation of several stakeholders representing the district, including property and business owners, City officials, and residents.

The following is the list of stakeholders:

Diana Biancheria, resident/former Worcester School Committee member

Craig Blais, president and CEO, Worcester Business Development Corporation

Gina Cariglia, resident/business owner, Gina's Hair Salon

Charran Fisher, resident/business owner, Worcester License Commission member

Albert Lavalley, resident/chair of Worcester Planning Board

Candy Mero-Carlson, District 2 City Councilor

Steve Tankanow, business owner, Bancroft School of Massage

Project Area Tour

Panelists gathered at the Worcester Department of Transportation & Mobility building (formerly the DPW Customer Service building), located within the study area, and were greeted by Peter Dunn, chief development officer for the City of Worcester. Following a short briefing, Dunn led panelists on a walking tour of the study area and was joined by Worcester Business Development Corp (WBDC) executive VP Roberta Brien



The Panel touring the study area.



Existing conditions along East Worcester Street.



Existing conditions along Shrewsbury Street.

and assistant chief development officer Paul Morano.

As panelists walked past the adjoining DPW building on E. Worcester Street towards Cross Street, they observed several cars parked on the sidewalk, making passage somewhat difficult. Across the street from the DPW building is a mix of light industrial buildings. The tour passed the large DPW parking lot, which sits across from a pair of residential properties at the corner of Cross Street and a glass business. Proceeding down E. Worcester Street, there were multiple brick one to four-story buildings with a mix of office and some service-based retail uses, with surface parking lots and some light industrial uses across the street. The tour stopped at a historic building that houses the Worcester Business Development Corporation offices, with the popular Italian eatery VIA Italian Table occupying the entirety of the first floor.

The tour reversed direction and headed to the opposite end of the study area. Panelists passed by the large sand and salt lots at the point where East Worcester transitions into Albany Street, and noted a light industrial building and a single residential building with 6-8 units across the street. Further down the road, there were additional industrial uses such as auto repair shops, the City parking lot for employees and City vehicles, and the DPW garage and gasoline station. The tour proceeded past Fantasia Street to the intersection of 68 Albany Street/225 Shrewsbury Street, an active retail plaza. A portion of the site will be redeveloped by Lundgren Equity Partners into a seven-story, 218-unit apartment building with 178 parking spaces.

The tour passed through the site to Shrewsbury Street, a bustling retail corridor known as “Restaurant Row.” The street serves as a busy thoroughfare for Worcester, divided by a tree-lined median, with two-and three-story buildings on either side. The tour then returned to the Transportation & Mobility building via a “ladder” street, Lyons Street, one of a handful that connects East Worcester and Albany Streets to Shrewsbury Street. Panelists then conducted stakeholder interviews with residents, business owners, and public officials to better understand the needs of district residents and business owners representing the community. Panelists then reconvened to assess the information and to develop recommendations for the transformation of the study area and presented their recommendations that evening to the Albany Street Committee at the Transportation & Mobility building.

Purpose of the TAP and Project Background

The City of Worcester sought the help of the ULI TAP to provide guidance for developing a vision for the redevelopment of the existing Department of Public Works (DPW) Campus. Located along Albany Street and East Worcester Street, the campus is comprised of administrative offices, garage space, surface lots, and storage yards for sand and salt used during weather emergencies. The campus totals approximately 10 acres and 180,000 square feet of building space in a mixed-use neighborhood that is primarily industrial uses with some residential units. East Worcester and Albany Streets run adjacent to Shrewsbury Street, a thriving retail/restaurant corridor that also serves as a thoroughfare to access Interstate 290 (I-290).

The panelists were asked to address the following questions:

Land-use/Zoning: What is the highest and best use of the DPW land and buildings that will also meet the needs and priorities of the community? Please include any recommendations relative to the existing zoning in the area.

Transportation/Infrastructure: What recommendations could the panel make relative to parking, traffic flow, and other infrastructure elements, including water/sewer considerations or other sustainable/resilient design elements.?

Market Feasibility: How would the proposed vision for land use fare in the short-term and the long-term, both in Worcester and regionally? Is the vision consistent with the other adopted plans or goals of the City of Worcester?

City of Worcester Snapshot

The City of Worcester is the second most populous city in New England, located within 40 miles of the major metros of Boston and Providence, and 50 miles east of Springfield. Named after Worcester, England, its geographic location in the middle of Massachusetts has earned the city the moniker of the “Heart of the Commonwealth”.

Incorporated as a town in 1722 and a city in 1848, Worcester became a thriving industrial hub in the 19th century, following the opening of the Blackstone Canal in 1928 and the completion of the Worcester and Boston Railroad in 1835. The city features many examples of Victorian-era mill architecture from that era, many of which have undergone conversions into multifamily and office space in recent years. After World War II, Worcester began to fall into decline as the city lost its manufacturing base to less expensive alternatives across the country and overseas. The city has rebounded economically over the last few decades on the strength of its focus on healthcare (the UMass Memorial Medical Center is the largest hospital in central Massachusetts) and biomedical research, with the development of the Massachusetts Biotechnology Research Park.

More recently, the city has begun to focus on becoming a center of biomanufacturing, with the development of The Reactory, a 46-acre park with approximately 500,000 SF of biomanufacturing capacity within the City of Worcester. The City is also home to eight colleges and universities, providing an educated talent pool for the tech and biomedical industries.

Over the last 25 years, the City has invested heavily in the revitalization of its downtown and neighborhoods, including the renovation of the city's convention venue, the DCU Center; the revitalization of the Canal and Theater Districts, including the Hanover Theatre for the Performing Arts; the renovation of Union Station, the MBTA commuter rail and bus terminal; and more recently, Polar Park, home to the WooSox.

Transportation and Highway Access

Highways – Interstate 290 (I-290) runs through the heart of the City, providing access to I-190 (north), I-495 (north and south), and Route 146 (south). The Massachusetts Turnpike I-90 (east and west) and I-84 (south) are easily accessible via these highways.

Train and Bus Service – Union Station is an inter-modal hub providing train and bus service. The MBTA Framingham-Worcester Commuter Rail Line provides service between Worcester and Boston. The Worcester Regional Transit Authority provides bus service throughout the City and into surrounding towns from the transportation hub adjacent to Union Station. There are also private bus lines to accommodate travelers going outside of the City.

Population, Demographics, Housing Data

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the population for the City of Worcester is the fastest-growing New England city, undergoing a significant population increase, from 181,045 in 2010 to 205,918 in July of 2021, a 13.7% increase. The population is 53.6% White (alone); 23.9 Hispanic/Latino (any race); 12.7% Black; 7.2% Asian; and 9.8%, Two or more races. Median household income is \$56,746, with a poverty rate of 19.3 percent. The average Worcester home value is \$365,166 as of February 2023, up 7.8% over the past year, according to Zillow.

Renter-households in Worcester have become increasingly cost-burdened over time,

potentially pricing many long-time residents out of the city, according to the Worcester Regional Research Bureau. Between 2010 and 2020, the percentage of renter-occupied units in the city that were cost-burdened—that is, households that spend more than 30% of their monthly income on housing costs—grew to more than 50%. Data from the Zillow Observed Rent Index, which tracks typical observed market rate rent, from March 2015 through August 2022 shows observed rent increasing from just over \$1,000 to just over \$1,800 in that time frame, an 80% increase, according to Zillow data.

The Study Area

The study area consists of the East Worcester and Albany Streets neighborhood and a portion of Shrewsbury Street. The DPW campus is comprised of land and buildings along Albany and East Worcester Streets, totaling approximately 10 acres and 180,000 square feet of building space. The building space includes administrative offices, customer service, garaging, and sand and salt lots for snow emergencies. The East Worcester and Albany Street portion of the study area is intermingled with a mix of often-conflicting uses on the same street, including office buildings, small-scale residential units, surface lots, and various industrial uses such as auto-related businesses. This collection of properties is adjacent to Shrewsbury Street, a critical commercial corridor that connects the Downtown and Union Station with the East Side of the city, and is a gateway to Route 9, the UMass Memorial Medical Center, UMass Medicine Science Park, the Reactory Biomanufacturing Park, and the Town of Shrewsbury.

There is also a large park (Cristoforo Colombo Park) along Shrewsbury Street. The study area is within close proximity to Union Station (Framingham/Worcester Line commuter rail, the WRTA, and private bus lines) and downtown Worcester.

Assets and Opportunities

Large Scale of Development Parcels – The sheer size and contiguous nature of the City-owned parcels allows for a wide range of development possibilities for the City and potential partners.

Multi-story Historic Buildings Along East Worcester Street – The one to four-story brick office buildings along E. Worcester – some dating to the late 1800s – lend character to the neighborhood and create appeal for potential re-purposing of the assets in creative ways.

Thriving Mixed-use Neighborhood – The restaurants and retail along Shrewsbury Street draw visitors from throughout the City and region, while the East Worcester/Albany Street corridor offers industrial uses and small-scale multifamily.

Challenges

Parking – Unlike downtown and the Canal District, there is no metered parking on Shrewsbury Street or the remainder of the study area, largely due to historical precedent. There are also no municipal lots in the study area. Stakeholders noted that paying for parking is not something residents are accustomed to and it may cause some initial consternation if municipal lots or metered parking are instituted. Some of these issues may be tied to the lack of a walkable pedestrian environment, such as unsafe crossing conditions on Shrewsbury Street or a lack of lighting on E. Worcester and Albany Streets. In addition, the underlining zoning for the district requires more off-street parking than what is considered to be in line with best urban planning practices.

Possible Site Contamination – Given the nature of many of the uses (heavily weighted towards automobile-related businesses) in the East Worcester/Albany corridor, some sites would likely require remediation prior to redevelopment.

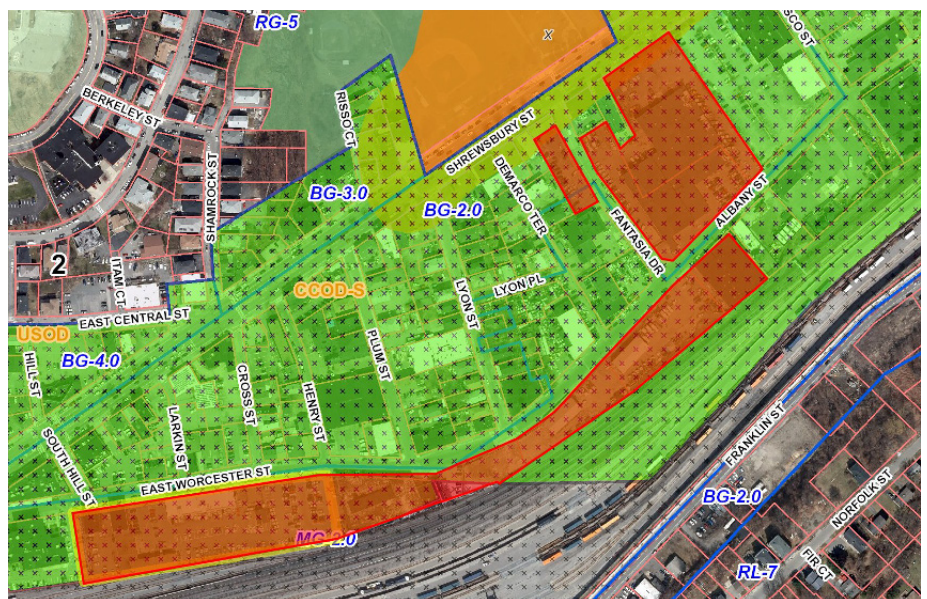
DPW Operations Relocations – In order to maximize the value of the City-owned parcels, some of the City operations, particularly the sand and salt yards, would need to be relocated within the City – without compromising access for the DPW's snow response team.

Condition of Infrastructure – The roadways and utilities, particularly along the East Worcester/Albany corridor, need significant upgrades.

Integration of New Development with Existing Neighborhood – Careful consideration must be given to the process of redeveloping the neighborhood in a thoughtful manner that minimizes the impact on current residents.

Proximity to Railyard – Any redevelopment scenario must take into account the presence of the railyard in terms of noise, aesthetics, etc.

Current zoning in the area presents numerous challenges.



Recommendations

Goals

- Leverage City assets into redevelopment & economic development opportunities
- Create 18/7 activity on the street
- Improve safety within the district
- Solve parking and right-of-way issues
- Maintain and build on existing neighborhood character
- Leverage existing buildings
- Support local businesses
- Improve neighborhood-wide infrastructure and streetscape improvements
- Phase projects in a thoughtful manner

After studying the DPW sites in great detail, exploring the broader neighborhood, and speaking with stakeholders, the panel made the following general observations:

Zoning – The underlying zoning is split between two districts – BG3, which is general business, and MG-2, which is manufacturing. These districts bisect the actual DPW site and the broader Shrewsbury Street neighborhood, and while there is some multifamily in the study area – either existing or under construction – it is not currently allowed by right. This may present a challenge to future development of the parcels in the broader neighborhood.

While some multifamily is allowed within the study area, there are challenges to achieving density beyond a triple-decker. The current zoning requires ground-floor commercial uses for larger residential buildings. While this may be appropriate for the Shrewsbury Street corridor, it is not the best practice for multifamily development on East Worcester or Albany Streets. Having additional ground floor commercial/retail in the neighborhood

may hurt existing restaurants and retail on Shrewsbury Street. Any redevelopment plan should focus on enhancing Shrewsbury Street as a retail/restaurant corridor with the DPW parcels reserved for other uses.

Visitor Experience – How are people coming to and leaving the area and how they are spending their time in the broader area? Panelists studied the existing rights of way on East Worcester, Albany, and Shrewsbury Streets, as well as the “ladder streets” that connect those main thoroughfares throughout the neighborhood. We also examined the existing signalized intersections and pedestrian crossings (or lack thereof) to propose enhancements to improve vehicular, non-vehicular, and pedestrian connections throughout the district.

Green space – There is ample green space in the district, including Cristoforo Colombo Park and plantings and trees along Shrewsbury Street, but the remainder of the study area is considerably less green. Setting a consistent development and infrastructure plan for the network of streets will enhance the entire district and create a true neighborhood feel. These improvements should include improved street lighting, sidewalks, street trees, plantings, etc. to achieve consistency throughout the district that will connect to Cristoforo Colombo Park.

Transportation Improvements – Safe pedestrian crossings are vital to creating a thriving Shrewsbury Street corridor. The restaurant/retail businesses are currently destination-based, with little movement by customers/patrons between restaurants or other businesses. This is primarily due to the unsafe pedestrian experience, with signalized intersections multiple blocks apart, making



Suggested Urban Design Framework.



Suggested Urban Design Framework.



Precedents – Mixed-Use Development & Step-Backs.

safe crossings inconvenient and difficult. Any redevelopment scenario should aim to enhance the connections between the South and North sides of Shrewsbury Street to promote a better pedestrian experience and create a walkable neighborhood that will improve access to Shrewsbury Street's retail and restaurant offerings.

Land Use and Zoning

As previously noted, the study area is split between two underlying zoning districts (BG3 (general business) and MG-2 (manufacturing)). There is already an overlay in place – the Shrewsbury Street Commercial Corridor Overlay, but it is not sufficient in its current form to accommodate some of the uses or design elements that are being proposed.

The first zoning change panelists recommend would be to eliminate the ground-floor retail requirement for new multifamily development in the study area (excluding Shrewsbury Street). Having retail on the first floor of new developments along East Worcester, Albany, and the ladder streets would draw the focus away from the existing and future retail along the Shrewsbury Street commercial corridor, which is one of the neighborhood's strengths. In addition, panelists do not feel that the additional retail created by the requirement would be adequately supported, relative to the amount of existing and planned residential that would be developed in the neighborhood. Such a requirement could also mean the possibility of empty storefronts and underutilized building space.

Create Height Step-back from Shrewsbury Street – This model will encourage pedestrian scale on Shrewsbury Street, and as additional development happens (with ground floor retail), it is important that the new buildings not overpower the pedestrian experience. Such a design would also respect Cristoforo Colombo Park and the residential (North) side of Shrewsbury Street. Avoiding tall buildings adjacent to the park will prevent shadows and preserve the percentage of sky visible from the space while keeping the larger scale development further back towards the railyards.

Using this model, the new development would begin as a lower-rise development (up to three stories total or a three-story frontage with increased height at the rear of the building to maintain pedestrian scale) along Shrewsbury Street. Heights would gradually increase to four stories mid-block with additional development stepping back towards the railyards, up to 6 stories abutting the railway. This type of development would also create a buffer from the railyards. The crescent shape of the parcels owned by the DPW also creates an opportunity to create some density, and buffer the railway line from the rest of the neighborhood.

Increase Connectivity

Panelists examined the connections beyond the immediate study area to Union Station and the Polar Park area. Although the I-290 ramp at Exit 19 is an obstacle to pedestrians and cyclists, they could potentially navigate around to the south side of the ramp through the creation of a greenway. Although given the overabundance of ramps to I-290 along Shrewsbury Street, the ramp could potentially be removed (which will be discussed elsewhere in the report). Building a greenway south of the existing I-290 ramp could also be coordinated to connect with the lengthened Union Station commuter rail platform. Current plans call for the platform to connect to the general vicinity of the 45 Shrewsbury Street parking lot, which will be extended to the east side of I-290. This would provide the opportunity for pedestrians to utilize the station walkway to connect directly to the station from east of I-290 and to easily connect to the Green Island (Polar Park) district on foot.

Transportation and Infrastructure

Assets

- Proximity to job centers
- District connectivity
- Width of Shrewsbury Street
- Access to transit
- Street layout (ladder street)
- Secondary street system

Challenges

- Highway off-ramp
- Lack of pedestrian protections on Shrewsbury Street
- Perceived lack of parking
- Lack of public infrastructure, contributing to safety concerns

Shrewsbury Street Corridor

Slide 42 – Shrewsbury Street as it Currently Exists

In its current configuration, Shrewsbury Street has two lanes going in each direction, separated by a median with trees, with some

painted midblock crossing locations and sidewalks on both sides of the street. Panelists devised a number of reconfiguration options (as illustrated at the top of page 15), each with their own pros and cons:

OPTION 1

Shrewsbury Street drivers often travel at excessive speeds, and while the median currently in place offers a greater degree of safety for motorists in preventing head-on crashes, it also encourages speeding and creates a less safe environment for pedestrians and bicyclists. Eliminating the median would create extra space that will lead to increased redevelopment opportunities for Shrewsbury Street. The proposed redesign would allow for outdoor dining next to the buildings on the South side of the street, as well as sidewalks and street trees. This design would also allow for two travel lanes in either direction as well as a parking lane on both sides.

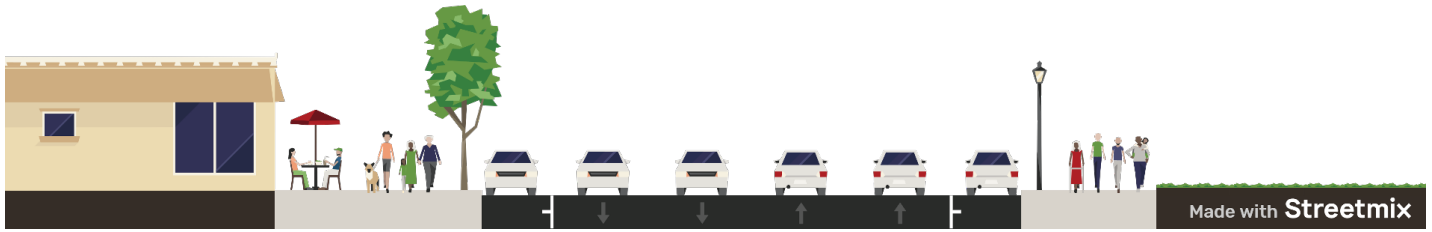
OPTION 2

This option would also eliminate the median (as a traffic-calming measure) and retain the same number of travel and parking lanes in either direction. But instead of outdoor dining, the design would allow for a two-way cycle track for bikes. This would allow for increased connectivity between downtown, the medical center, the UMass campus, and the various parks within the district for bikes, and be part of the larger bike infrastructure in Worcester. It would also ensure a greater degree of safety provided by the buffer between the parking lane and the two-way cycle track.

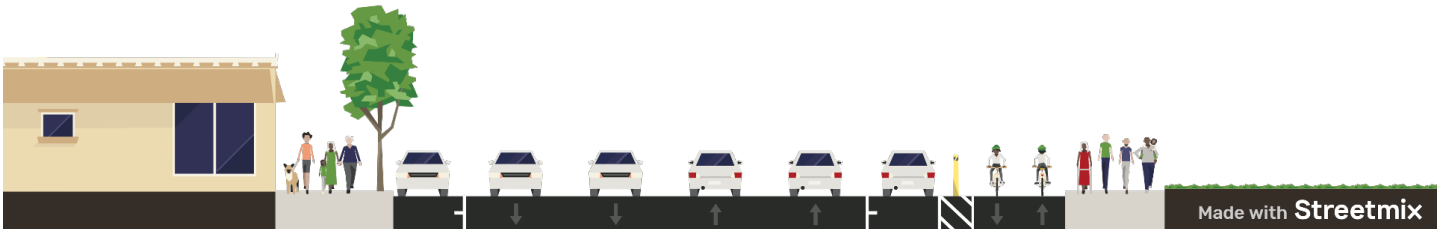
OPTION 3

This more radical option also eliminates the median, but reduces traffic lanes to one in each direction, with a center-turn lane with left-turn pockets to the ladder streets from Shrewsbury Street. The center lane would also create a lane for emergency vehicles, particularly ambulances traveling to and from UMass Medical Center. The parking lanes on both sides would also be retained, and the bike lanes would now be on both sides. The additional space created would allow for outdoor dining and street trees along the South side.

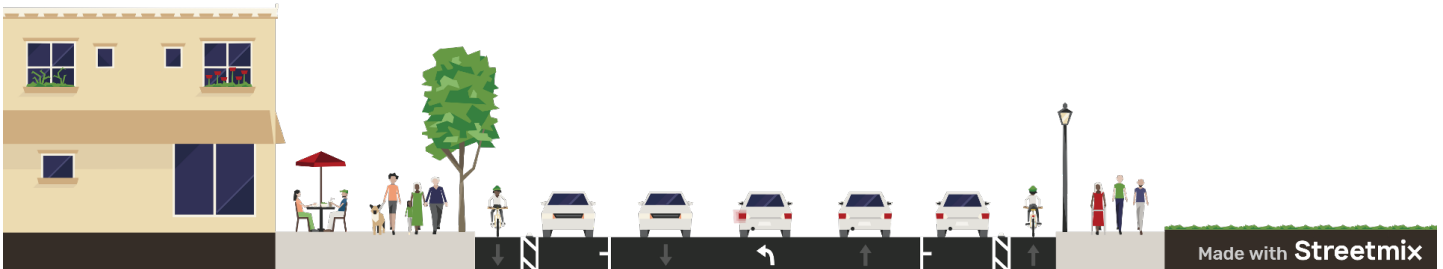
Shrewsbury St - Option 1



Shrewsbury St - Option 2



Shrewsbury St - Option 3



Shrewsbury St - Option 4



OPTION 4

The most radical of the options, this design retains the current median but reduces the traffic lanes to one in each direction. It keeps the parking lanes on either side, as well as the bike lanes and buffers. Keeping the median in place would require less construction while allowing for changes between the curbs.



East Worcester/Albany Street – Existing.

East Worcester/Albany Street Corridor

Slide 47 – East Worcester/Albany Street as it Currently Exists

East Worcester Street has narrow sidewalks on either side, with one traffic lane going in either direction. Because of the narrow streets, motorists often park with their tires on the curb. Panelists propose these various redevelopment options:

OPTION 1 (SLIDE 48)

This scenario would maintain the parking lane on the North side of the street, away from the existing development parcels (the new developments will include their own parking instead of street parking). The sidewalks on both sides of the street would be widened, with the South side (where DPW properties are located) constructed somewhat wider to accommodate streetlights. While dedicated bike accommodations were considered, panelists determined that East Worcester is a lightly trafficked street that may not need separate bike lanes. Instead, priority sharrows (typically white pavement markings showing a bicycle symbol with two chevrons on top) could be used to indicate a bike lane.

E. Worcester/Albany St - Option 1



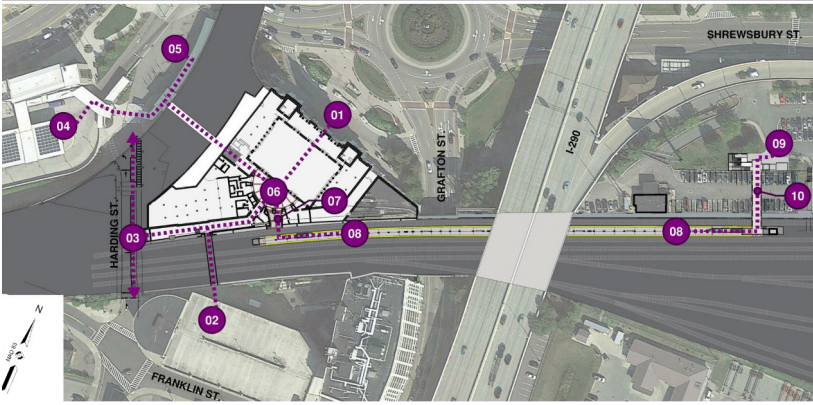
East Worcester/Albany Street – Options.

Slide 49 Current Ladder Streets – Circulation

Both Fantasia and South Hill Streets have two-way traffic, while the remainder of the ladder streets connecting from Shrewsbury Street are one-way (southbound). Panelists feel that there is a need to create a northbound ladder street that cuts through the middle of



Ladder Streets - Circulation.



Points of transportation and infrastructure improvements.



Pedestrian-scale lighting in Central Square, East Boston, MA.



Priority sharrow along School Street in Everett, MA.



Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon along Massachusetts Avenue in Cambridge, MA.

the district to Shrewsbury Street. The City should consider making it a signalized intersection.

Slide 51, Precedent Example – Boylston Street near Fenway Park, Boston MA

Stakeholders expressed concerns about pedestrian safety due to the excessive speeding on Shrewsbury Street as it currently exists. Although there are crosswalks along the street, they are often multiple blocks apart, and the ones that are not signalized do not feel safe to pedestrians. The panel recommends the installation of rectangular rapid-flashing beacons (RRFBs) that indicate to drivers that a pedestrian is waiting for or is actively using the crosswalk and that drivers should come to a full stop. Other options for traffic calming measures would be to consider using raised crosswalks, which would discourage speeding without using law enforcement resources, or installing radar speed signs (also known as “Your Speed” signs) to slow traffic. Other suggestions for the district would include increased pedestrian scale street lighting for both East Worcester/Albany Street to increase safety as well as additional lighting on Shrewsbury Street.

Panelists also encourage the City to consider closing the Exit 19 I-290 ramp but acknowledge that this may be a longer-range goal, given that doing so would involve MassDOT and other agencies. Panelists feel that the ramp is redundant, given that the next ramp to I-290 on the northbound side is approximately 750 feet further down the road. Removal of the ramp would help with connectivity to Union Station, which is currently undergoing enhancements, while also helping the flow of traffic on I-290.

Slide 52 Precedent Examples of streetlighting, RRFBs, priority sharrows

Proposed Project Phasing

Slide 58 – Overview of Study Area

The redevelopment of the district should be executed in phases, rather than releasing all of the parcels at once as a single entity for development. This will help to avoid the possibility of creating a project too large and too uniform that would abruptly change the character of the existing neighborhood. The panel proposes a thoughtful

phasing of the project that will have a more organic feel and allow the City to gauge how each phase is working with respect to the neighborhood, before making final decisions that impact the entirety of the site. This will allow the City to learn from the early phases to make sure that later development will accomplish what is best for the neighborhood and Worcester as a whole.

Panelists determined that, based on the configuration of the parcels, the optimal action may be to approach the site from two directions – literally and figuratively. Development should begin simultaneously, with the large parcel at the corner of Shrewsbury and Fantasia Streets down to Albany Street (Zone 1) on one end, and the DPW office buildings on East Worcester Street (Zone 2) on the other. This approach literally brackets the neighborhood from both sides without radically altering the neighborhood all at once. It also allows the City to create variety by mixing larger scale developments with smaller-scale projects, and new construction with existing historic buildings. This approach would allow the development to stay true to the neighborhood’s rich mixed-use character by balancing denser housing uses in Zone 1 with a mix of other uses in Zone 2. It also allows the City to begin development simultaneously on the parcel with the greatest revenue generation potential (Zone 1) and

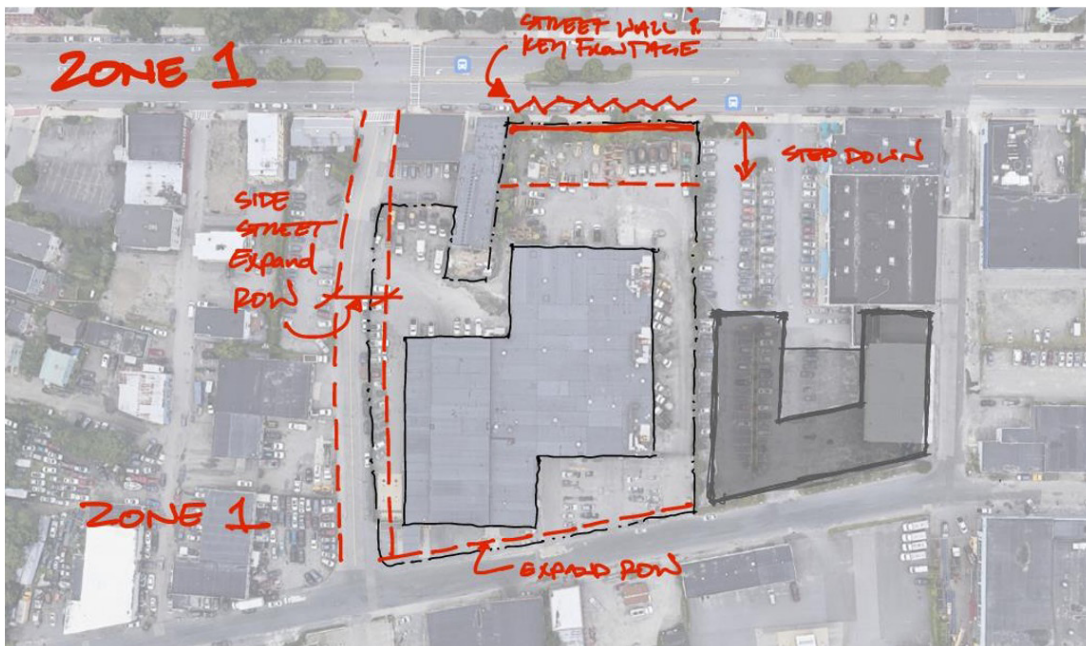
a parcel with the greatest opportunity for community benefits (Zone 2).

This proposal provides variety in the initial phase while allowing the City time to explore options for the more developmentally challenging parcels and to study the relocation of the DPW salt and sand yards. It also has the potential to let successful early-phase projects bolster the market for later-phase parcels and provide greater revenue to the City. It also allows the City to experiment with interim uses on the later phase parcels, such as surface parking lots that can serve the Shrewsbury Street retail/restaurant corridor as well as temporary recreational uses to drive traffic to the district. This model balances many different goals simultaneously and allows Zones 3 and 4 to develop more organically in response to projects completed in the initial phase.

Zone 1 – 29 Albany Street/Central Garage

Slide 59 – Zone 1 – 29 Albany Street/Central Garage

This image depicts the key opportunities and constraints of the Zone 1 site. As the largest of the DPW parcels at 3.8 acres, this site represents the most significant development opportunity of all the DPW parcels. The site is approximately twice the size and could



Zone 1 - 29 Albany Street / Central Garage



Zone 1 - 29 Albany Street / Central Garage.



Zone 1 - 29 Albany Street / Central Garage.



Zone 1 - 29 Albany Street / Central Garage.

accommodate twice the capacity of the adjacent site, where a 218-unit development has been approved. The Zone 1 site is contiguous and easier to develop than the other DPW parcels, due in part to the nearly rectangular site configuration. There is also direct frontage onto Shrewsbury Street with the opportunity for new active retail. Additionally, the adjacent right-of-ways along Fantasia and Albany Streets could be expanded (where possible) to accommodate a better flow for pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles.

Slide 60 – Zone 1 – 29 Albany Street/Central Garage

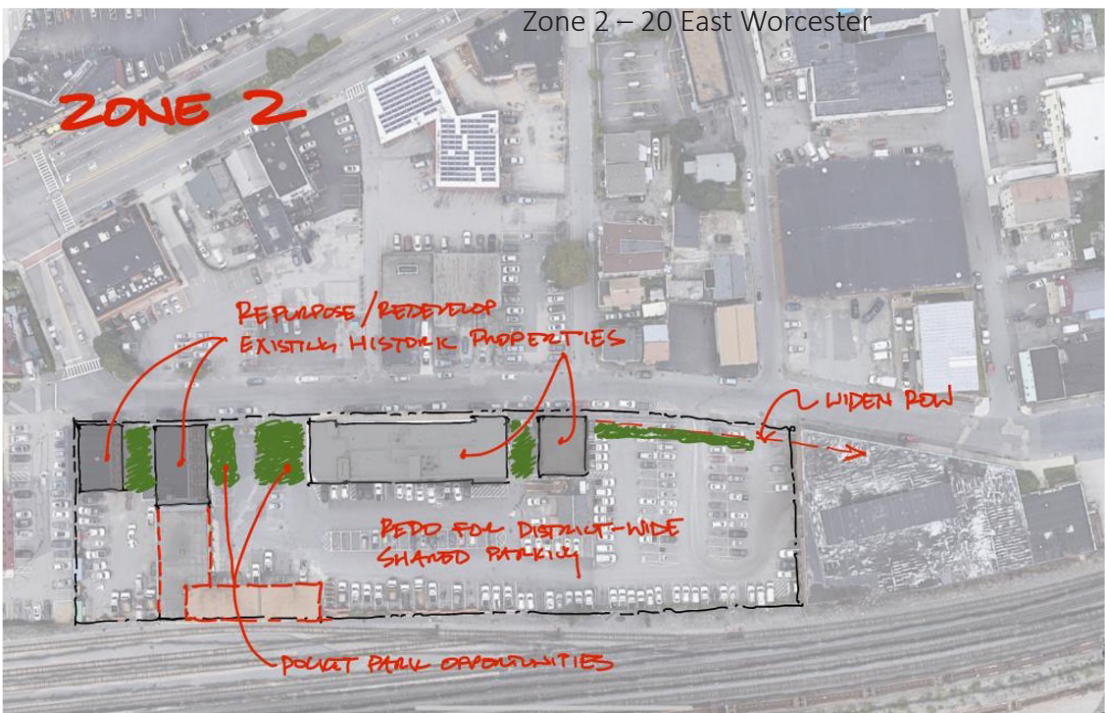
This image represents a “test-fit” design scenario for the site. The site is large enough to be developed in two phases with one or multiple buildings. The new development should have enough new parking to support itself, with the possibility of additional parking to help support existing uses within the district without further straining the existing parking supply. This option also includes a courtyard, adding private, and possibly public, greenspace to the district. Multifamily buildings with active street frontages could be built on the site facing Albany and Fantasia Streets with multiple addresses and lobbies.

Slide 61 – Zone 1 – 29 Albany Street/Central Garage

This alternative design would not only improve Fantasia Street but also include a new connector between Albany and Shrewsbury Streets. Known as a woonerf (a Dutch term which means “living street”) this pedestrian/vehicular street would also serve as a primary or secondary address for the multifamily buildings while breaking up the block and providing some spacing between the approved building on the adjacent site.

Slide 62 – Zone 1 – 29 Albany Street/Central Garage

Since Shrewsbury Street is currently comprised of one to four-story buildings, future buildings along Shrewsbury may want to step down to approximately four stories along the street. This image is an example of a step-down multifamily building with active street frontages, which increases in height as it steps back.



Left: Zone 2 – 20 East Worcester.

Below Top: Small business and co-working.

Bottom Middle: Hotel conversion.

Bottom: Artists' studios.

Zone 2 – 20 East Worcester Street – Adaptive Re-use Opportunities

Slide 63 Zone 2 – 20 East Worcester Street

Zone 2 consists of multi-story DPW buildings that are prime candidates for adaptive reuse. Although there is a strong market for new market-rate housing, the same cannot be said of new commercial development in this market cycle. In keeping with the desire of the City to maintain and build upon a mixed-use district, panelists suggest that rather than dispose of or demolish the existing buildings to build additional multifamily, the buildings could be repurposed as incubator or community space catering to smaller tenants. While new commercial development is not market-feasible, leasing existing buildings is. The existing properties would require minimal buildout investment, so rents would be more accessible to startups, small businesses, and community groups.

Preserving the buildings could also help to resolve the district parking issue, with surface parking reserved for tenants from 9-5 but available to the public after business hours or on weekends to serve the Shrewsbury Street restaurants and retail. In addition, there could be interim alternative uses for some of the excess parking space, such as creating parklets and bringing in food trucks to create vibrancy in the redeveloping neighborhood.

Slide 64 & 65 – Zone 2 – 20 East Worcester Street

The adjacent photos provide examples of uses for repurposed DPW buildings. This scenario would encourage



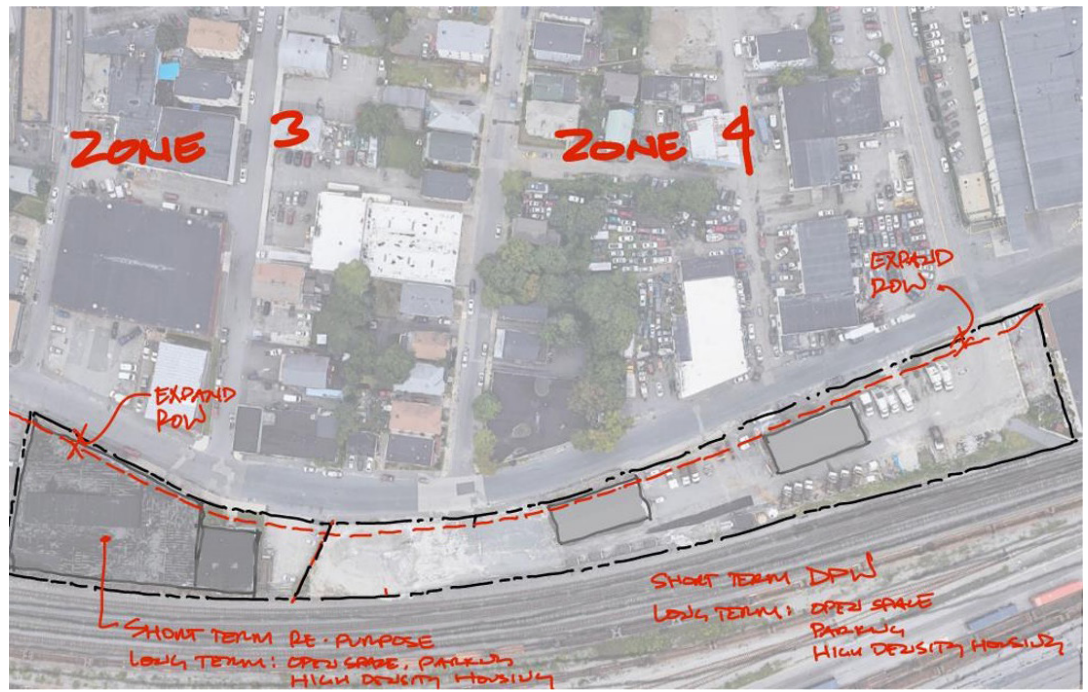
Right: Zone 2 – 20 East Worcester .

Below Top: Greentown Labs type incubators.

Bottom Middle: Distillery.

Bottom Middle: Life science incubator and support companies

Bottom: Residential service based retail.



an eclectic mix of tenants. It should be noted that this does not necessarily mean subsidized leasing rates. The plan would be to have the City retain ownership of the buildings, partner with a local nonprofit or management company, and in a phased way begin to lease the buildings out to smaller tenants, creating activity within the district. This could be done at the same time as the Zone 1 redevelopment, shortening the timeline for the re-imagining of the district. Longer term, an above-grade garage could also be built on one of the vacant lots, thus freeing up the parking lots for further infill development.

Zones 3 & 4 – Interim Uses

SLIDE 66, Zones 3 & 4 – Interim Uses

The remaining two parcels will eventually tie all of the redevelopment elements within the district together. But by using a phased approach, it allows the City to see which of those elements are most successful as the process moves forward and the market evolves. Such an approach allows flexibility in decision-making for the final two parcels. It also allows the City more time to investigate potential sites for the relocation of the salt and sand yards.

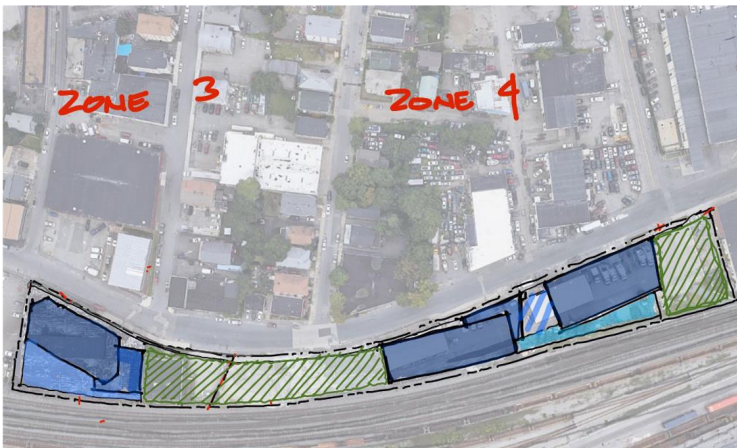


Slide 67 Zones 3 & 4 – Full Build-Out

Slide 68 Zones 3 & 4 – Full Build-Out – Parcel Swap

In the event that the district redevelopment calls for more housing, this scenario provides the option for additional residential to be built closer to Shrewsbury Street by executing a land swap with existing businesses that could relocate to the DPW properties closer to the railyard. The space could also be used for commercial uses, open space (in the form of pocket parks),





Zones 3 & 4 – Full Build-Out.



Zones 3 & 4 -- Full Build-Out – Parcel Swap.

or possibly structured parking, subject to demand.

Slide 69 Zones 3 & 4 – Full Build-Out – Many Opportunities

Slide 70 – Infrastructure Improvements

The district is in need of multiple infrastructure improvements. During this period of planning and redevelopment, it would be advantageous for the City to look at this area as a whole and assess the current capacity and required development needs for water, sewer, and electrical infrastructure. Also, the existing

utilities and how they can be generally improved should be reviewed. For example, it appears that the majority of power distribution is above ground on Albany Street. During this redevelopment phase, it may make sense to relocate the power lines to underground distribution. This upgrade can provide a more reliable power source, increase safety, and reduce the risk of power outages.

Wayfinding & Signage – As phases are completed, the City should replicate the exemplary work done with wayfinding and signage on Shrewsbury Street and other



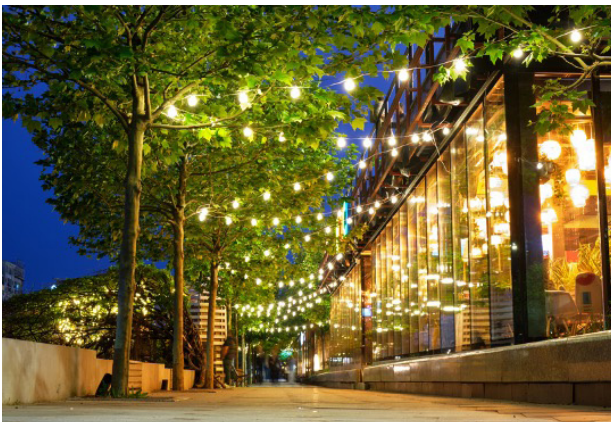
Top Left: Different housing typologies.
 Top Right: Open space.
 Bottom Left: Commercial.
 Bottom Right: Parking garages.



Coordinate with existing district signage standards.



Electrical supply and vehicle infrastructure.



Place finding lighting.



New sidewalks, safety lighting, paving E. Worcester/Albany.

vibrant districts.

Place Finding Lighting – In addition to wayfinding through signage, creating additional wayfinding through lighting is also essential. Lighting will be a fundamental part of providing a pathway for pedestrians as well as providing cues to draw pedestrians into local experiences and businesses. Once arriving at their location, the lighting can also support the desired ambiance of the space, which adds to the further character development of the area. Whether the space is meant to be an outdoor relaxing bistro dining area or a vibrant residential community gathering spot, lighting can lead the community to those spaces and allow them to have a premium experience and enhance the neighborhood.

Electric Vehicle Infrastructure – Although private developers will probably provide charging stations for electric vehicles to meet anticipated market demand, the City should coordinate with utilities to provide adequate infrastructure.

Once the infrastructure is provided, the City can consider providing an area for public electric vehicle charging. Many studies show that with the current demand for electric vehicles and the need for charging stations in local proximity, this could be another draw for the area.

Streetscape Improvements – This includes the widening of East Worcester and Albany Streets, as well as providing pedestrian-friendly sidewalks and safety lighting. There are many options that could be considered with the various number of lanes, the addition of bike paths, and/or parking lanes.

In addition, the overall flow of traffic through the streets should be reviewed. There are many one-way streets, and Albany Street appears to be utilized exclusively by local community members who know of the street and where it intersects with Shrewsbury Street. With the combination of lighting and signage wayfinding discussed above, this could create an additional main artery of circulation that could redistribute the heavy traffic from the main artery of Shrewsbury Street.

Supplemental Funding and Financing Resources

Note: This list is a starting point and not all programs may be relevant or available depending upon the type of development, timing, and owner entity type *i.e.*, some are available to public entities only, others are open to public/private/non-profit entities, etc. The resources the entities pursue would be dependent upon their goals and the circumstances at the time, as well as the party that is applying.

MassWorks – Capital funds for public infrastructure projects that support and accelerate housing production, spur private development, and create jobs throughout the Commonwealth.

Site Readiness Program – Funding for site preparation and predevelopment and permitting activities for large-scale industrial, commercial, and mixed-use sites.

Brownfields Grants – Finances the environmental assessment and remediation of brownfield sites.

Underutilized Properties Program – Predevelopment and capital funding for projects that will improve, rehabilitate or redevelop blighted, abandoned, vacant or underutilized properties.

Real Estate Technical Assistance – Small grants for re-use of municipally owned properties.

Community Planning Grant – Technical assistance for Community Planning, *i.e.*, corridor studies.

Community Preservation Act (CPA) Funding – Helps communities preserve open space and historic sites, create affordable housing, and develop outdoor recreational facilities.

Housing Choice – Flexible grant for planning, site prep, building, and infrastructure activities.

District Improvement Financing (DIF) – A locally-enacted tool that enables a municipality to identify and capture incremental tax revenues from new private investment in a specific area and direct them toward public improvement and economic development projects.

Housing Development Incentive Program (HDIP) – Tax incentives to developers to undertake new construction or substantial rehabilitation of properties for lease or sale as multi-unit market-rate residential housing

Brownfields Loans – Up to \$250,000 for environmental assessment and \$750,000 for environmental clean-up.

MA Brownfields Tax Credit (BTC) – MA tax credit for cleaning up contaminated property.

Tax Exempt Bonds – Tax-exempt financing for 501(c)3 nonprofit real estate and equipment, affordable rental housing, public infrastructure projects etc.

The Infrastructure Investment Incentive Program “I-Cubed” Program – A public-private partnership that allows new state tax revenues generated from private economic development projects to cover the costs of the public infrastructure improvements needed to support the project.

Massachusetts Municipal Modernization Act, Parking Benefit District – A specified geography in which the parking revenues raised are then reinvested back into the district for a wide range of transportation-related improvements.



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