West Hartford Center
Infrastructure Master Plan

May 2025

Stantec


MUSIC & ARTS

Table of Contents

01 / FOREWORD

02 /PROJECT OVERVIEW

03 / EXISTING CONDITIONS

04 / COMMUNITY INPUT

05/ RECOMMENDATIONS

06 / IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

07 / APPENDICES

A. Detailed Mobility Analysis

B. Design Workshop #1 Summary Memo

C. Design Workshop #2 Summary Memo

D. Public Parking Survey Analysis and Key Findings



Photo credit: Noah Webster House & West Hartford Historical Society


WEST HARTFORD CENTER
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IRIS
STARBUCKS

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West Hartford Design Review Advisory Committee

West Hartford Pedestrian and Bicycle Commission

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West Hartford Police Department

West Hartford Center Business Association

West Hartford Chamber of Commerce

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Foreword A VISION FOR WEST HARTFORD

Over the past 30 years, West Hartford's traditional New England town center has evolved from its historic, local-serving roots to an appealing destination for the entire region. Between locally owned retailers, numerous restaurants, the Town library, and several national retailers, the historic Town Center, and neighboring Blue Back Square offer something for everyone. Further, many wide sidewalks, tree-lined streets, outdoor dining and ample parking translate to a very walkable and enjoyable environment.

With its enduring success, West Hartford Center's infrastructure has experienced wear and tear, especially in the historic Town Center west of the newer Blue Back Square. Besides older street pavement, sidewalks have worn and been subject to utility repairs, while street trees have reached their natural life spans. It is time for a holistic look to plan repairs and upgrades to infrastructure while considering how patrons experience the Center.

Three recent initiatives have spurred the development of this Plan. In 2016, the Town's participatory visioning process for development in the Center created a valuable tool for any planning effort - a set of guiding principles driven by community values. The community integrated these into its Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), released in 2020. In addition, the Town proactively responded to the pandemic with changes to sidewalk and street configurations in the Center, which showed that there are opportunities to further develop and enhance the Center for all users. In 2023, the Town began a needed update to its bicycle facility master plan. Finally, the Town recently embarked on a Vision Zero effort to eliminate deaths and serious injuries on Town streets. This Plan integrates the outcomes of these efforts and provides guidance for needed infrastructure investments that will emphasize community goals such as safety, walkability, commercial vibrancy, and historic preservation.

In a place like West Hartford Center, the majority of public space is street space. While green spaces like the Veteran's Memorial and the Unity Green are great community assets, the tree-lined sidewalks of North/South Main Street, Farmington Avenue, LaSalle Road, and throughout Blue Back Square are also pieces of the public space puzzle. Providing appropriate seating, sidewalk materials, tree cover, sidewalk amenities, lighting, places for outdoor dining, and landscaping, plus anticipating the need for on-street parking, bike parking, pick-up and drop-off, electric vehicle charging, transit and bike use, street festivals, emergency access, and the accommodation of additional new development is key to continuing West Hartford's success while supporting community goals. Importantly, while the Master Plan applies to West Hartford Center, many of the ideas and concepts can be applied in town in general.

The following pages provide an overview of the study process together with guidelines for investment in West Hartford Center in the years to come.

Message from the Mayor:



The West Hartford Infrastructure Master Plan is a visionary step towards a future where our town thrives as a model of innovation and community spirit. By investing in modern infrastructure, we enhance the quality of life for residents and create a vibrant, sustainable environment that attracts businesses and visitors. Our vision is to blend tradition with progress, ensuring West Hartford remains a beacon of excellence for generations to come. With the current pace of development, we are poised to achieve these goals faster than ever before, setting a new standard for community-driven growth and prosperity. This plan is a testament to the collaborative efforts of our community, whose input and engagement have been invaluable in shaping a future that reflects our shared values and aspirations.

- Mayor Shari Cantor

The following vision and seven goals were developed as part of the *West Hartford Plan of Conservation and Development 2020-2030 (POCD)*:

"West Hartford strives to be a welcoming, innovative, livable and prosperous community with a unique diversity across economic, religious, and cultural spectrums. We seek to maintain and promote our thriving community by providing regular equitable access to a variety of options for housing, employment, transportation, education and other amenities in a manner that reflects responsible stewardship of the environmental, sociocultural, and economic resources necessary for a vibrant quality of life for the Town's current and future residents."

Facilities and Infrastructure Goal

Promote practices that will maintain and modernize Town facilities and infrastructure in order to meet the evolving needs of the community in sustainable ways and recognize the need to provide services harmoniously with West Hartford's place in the greater Hartford Region and State at large.

Neighborhoods and Housing Goal

Enhance and maintain West Hartford's existing neighborhoods and encourage diversity of housing types and costs to provide access and availability of housing options to current and future residents.

Economic Development Goal

Promote growth and retention of existing businesses and development of new business opportunities to strengthen the community's tax base in an innovative manner, while preserving and protecting the residential character of the surrounding neighborhoods.

Transportation Goal

Promote an integrated and balanced transportation system, including "complete streets," to improve traffic flow; enhance parking opportunities; promote public transportation and car-pooling; enhance traffic calming efforts, pedestrian mobility and bicycle access; and meet the needs of the next generation of transportation technologies and infrastructure.

Cultural and Historic Resources Goal

Preserve, protect, enhance and promote, the cultural and historic resources of West Hartford.

Open Space and Environment Goal

Preserve, protect, enhance and promote our open space and our fragile natural systems in concert with managing responsible growth and development.

Land Use Goal

Sustain and preserve the Town of West Hartford as a balanced community, maintaining and promoting neighborhood quality and open space in conjunction with the principles of Smart Growth.

Project Overview

The Town of West Hartford has developed a comprehensive Infrastructure Master Plan for West Hartford Center. This is based on an evaluation of the existing street and sidewalk infrastructure, including travel lanes, sidewalks, street trees, open spaces, bus stop accommodations, biking accommodations, crosswalks, parking supply, and landscaping and how well they collectively ensure that the area remains a great place for residents, visitors, and businesses. Many of the lessons learned from this process will be applicable to other parts of town as well.

While aging or non-compliant infrastructure is the primary focus of the plan, an emphasis has been placed on improving connections for people walking, making bicycle connections, accommodating emerging modes of travel, expanding outdoor dining opportunities, adding new trees and landscaping, and improving parking access while fostering a friendly and safe environment for residents, visitors, business owners, and employees alike. The Plan draws on previous principles developed with residents and stakeholders for West Hartford Center.

As part of the planning process, the Town also advanced detailed designs and construction plans for LaSalle Road from the intersections of Ellsworth Road to Farmington Avenue as well as Farmington Avenue from the intersection of Walden Street to North/South Main Street.

The Plan and the design process were informed by multiple discussions with community stakeholders including area residents, business owners, and property owners. This process builds upon the participatory visioning process for development conducted in the Center in 2016.

This process consisted of these steps:

- **Plan and Data Review.** Past plans and available data helped identify where today's network might be falling short of project goals.
- **Field Observations.** Multiple visits by the project team documented existing conditions, identified deficiencies, and collected additional data.
- **Existing Conditions Analysis.** The team analyzed material conditions, tree health, utility needs, traffic data, crash data, and circulation patterns by all modes to determine specific challenges in the center.
- **Public Engagement.** A multifaceted engagement process including scheduled and "pop-up" public workshops, online surveys, a project website, and project email.
- **Identification of Conceptual Plan Alternatives**. Multiple types of public realm improvements were presented to the public for refinement and selection, particularly for the designs of LaSalle Road and Farmington Avenue.
- **Selection and Documentation of Alternatives.** With the input of the community and Town staff, preferred investments in the Center were identified and presented in this Plan.

PROJECT TIMELINE

The project timeline has evolved since its inception to allow for an increased level of feedback, secure consensus, and position the Town to pursue significant changes in the near future which are sustainable and supported by the community, at large.

2022

- Project Kickoff
- Existing Conditions Analysis
- Review LaSalle One-Way and Connection to Memorial Road
- Roundtable discussions (businesses, property owners, bike/ped commission)
- Emergency and First Responders
- Online Interactive Map and Survey
- **Design Workshop #1**

2023

- Public Workshop #2 Prep
- Roundtable discussions (businesses, property owners, bike/ped commission
- Boards and Commissions Meetings
- **Concept Design Development**
- **Design Workshop #2**
- Preliminary Design for LaSalle and Farmington
- Semi-Final Design for LaSalle and Farmington
- **Business Stakeholder Meeting #3 (Nov)**
- Concept Re-design Options

2024

- Public Meeting #4 Prep
- **Public Meeting #4**
- **Online Survey and Live Polling**
- **Concept Design for LaSalle and Farmington**
- Public Meeting #5 Prep
- Final Concept Design
- **Public Meeting #5**
- Semi-Final Design for LaSalle and Farmington
- Planning for Two Mobility Hubs On Farmington Ave and LaSalle Rd.
- Bollard Design for Temporary Traffic Closure of LaSalle Rd from Farmington Ave to Arapahoe
- **CPED Approval of Design Direction**
- **Final Design for LaSalle and Farmington**
- **Bid Awarded - Gerber Construction for LaSalle Rd and Farmington Ave Streetscape Improvements**

2025

- Design of Mobility Hubs
- Construction Mobilization
- **Construction Commences on Phase 1 LaSalle Rd**
- Draft of Infrastructure Master Plan
- **Final Infrastructure Master Plan**

2026-FUTURE

- **Construction Commences on Phase 2 Farmington Ave**
- Implementation of priority projects

PROJECT GOALS AND A VISION FOR DOWNTOWN WEST HARTFORD

Building on the vision from the West Hartford POCD, the project goals for this effort were further refined and reviewed by workshop participants to define what is important to West Hartford today and to envision how West Hartford Center's infrastructure can support what the Center should be in the future.













FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- Maintain and modernize Town facilities and infrastructure
- Meet the evolving needs of the community
- Be sustainable
- Provide services harmonious with the community and region

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Promote growth and retention of existing businesses
- Attract new businesses
- Strengthen our tax base
- Preserve and protect the residential character of surrounding neighborhoods

NEIGHBORHOODS + HOUSING

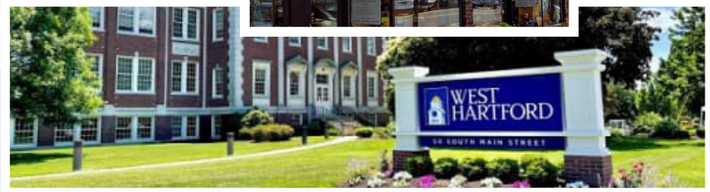
- **Enhance and maintain existing neighborhood**
- **Encourage diversity of housing types and costs**
- **Provide affordable housing for residents of all ages**















TRANSPORTATION

- Integrate and balance all modes
- Prioritize safety & “complete streets”
- Improve traffic flow
- Optimize parking opportunities
- Promote public transportation
- Enhance traffic calming efforts
- Prepare for the next generation of transportation technologies

OPEN SPACE + ENVIRONMENT

- Preserve, protect, enhance and promote our open spaces
- Respect our fragile natural systems
- Manage responsible growth and development

LAND USE

- Sustain and preserve a balanced community
- Maintain and promote neighborhood character
- Preserve and create open spaces
- Focus on Smart Growth

CULTURAL + HISTORIC RESOURCES

- Enhance and promote cultural resources
- Preserve and protect historic resources

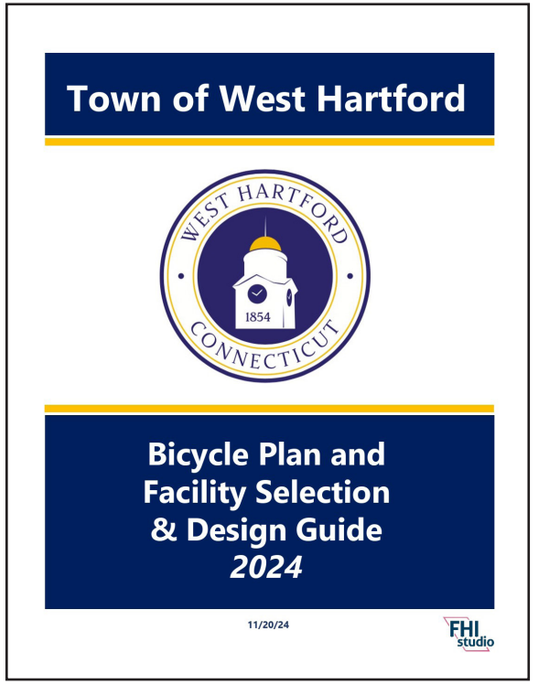
RECENT PLANNING PRECEDENTS West Hartford Sets the Stage

Electric Vehicle (EV) Infrastructure Plan (2024)



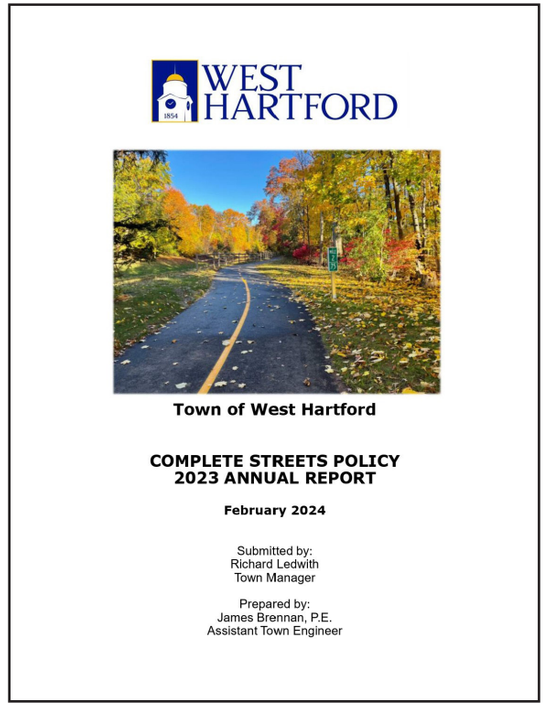
This plan laid an important foundation for the recommended locations, infrastructure needs, and potential funding approaches as the Town continues to pursue the expansion of its EV charging resources.

Bicycle Plan and Facility Selection & Design Guide (2024)



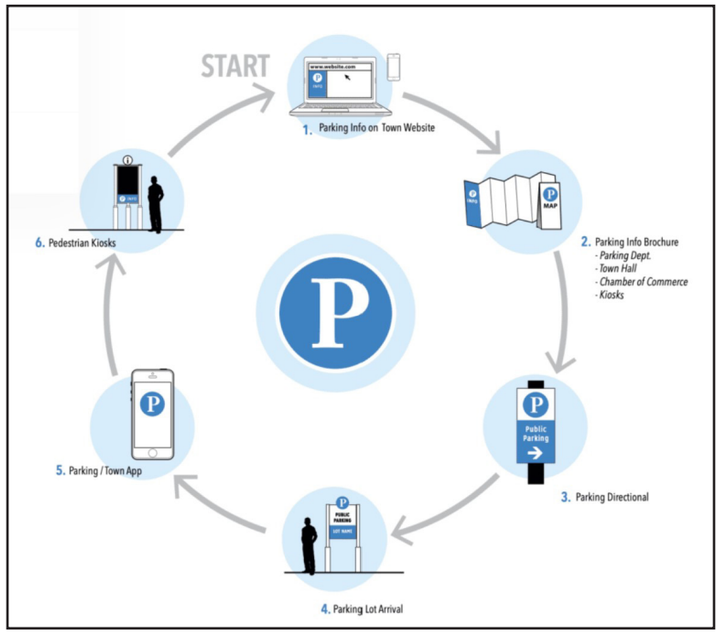
This plan will assist the Town in planning and designing bicycle facilities that are safe, appropriate, and comfortable for a wide range of users within the Town. This guide provides a methodology for selecting appropriate bicycle facilities and intersection treatments, as well as design guidance.

Complete Streets Policy 2023 Annual Report (2024)



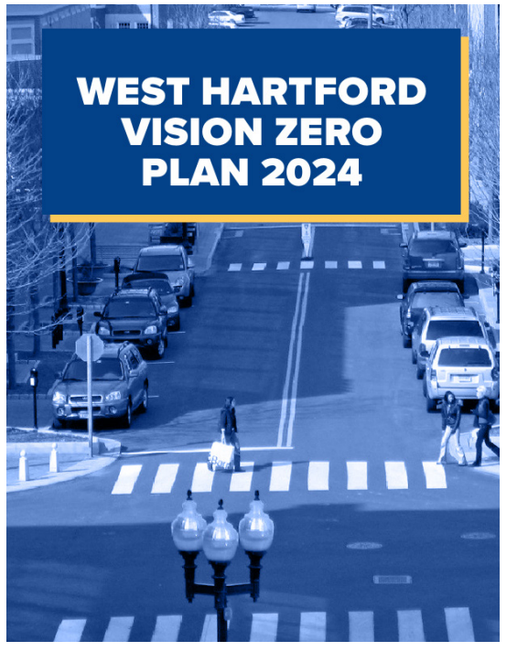
This report highlights the continued annual investment increase of safety-related improvements for the town, with $2.2 million invested in 2023. These included 0.57 miles of new bike lanes, 31 repainted crosswalks, 0.68 miles of multi-use trail constructed, 2.7 miles of sidewalks installed or replaced, some traffic signal modifications, and more.

Wayfinding Study (2023)



This effort took a fresh approach to analyzing West Hartford's current wayfinding signage in relation efficiently and comprehensively providing navigation to multi-modal users of the Town's key destinations and parking facilities. Through public and stakeholder processes, design concepts for a potential new suite of signage was developed with the understanding that the Town intends to pursue their fabrication in the near future.

Vision Zero Plan (2023)



On January 10, 2023, the Town of West Hartford Town Council unanimously adopted the Vision Zero Initiative in Support of Safe, Healthy, and Equitable Mobility with the goal of eliminating fatalities and severe injuries on West Hartford streets by 2033. The Vision Zero Action Plan (the Plan) is West Hartford's roadmap to achieving zero fatalities or serious injuries. The Plan is data-driven, based on the best practices in the industry, and focused on implementation.

Plan of Conservation and Development (2020)



The POCD provides a future vision for West Hartford's physical form, economic and social health, and quality of life. That vision and community goals provide a foundation for policy and funding decisions. The Plan was developed with extensive input from Town residents, businesses and stakeholders, elected officials, and Town staff. In total, the planning process received input from over one thousand stakeholders.

Existing Conditions

The analysis of existing conditions in West Hartford Center began by assembling data and electronic line files from recent Town efforts and State data sets. These include:

- Tree condition reports
- Multi-modal traffic counts
- Transit service data
- Parking activity data
- Crash data
- Utility surveys

Available data was mapped in a geographic information system (GIS) for subsequent analysis or added to a base computer aided drafting (CAD) file. Gaps in data were identified and supplemental observations, counts, and surveys were conducted then merged into the GIS or CAD as appropriate.

Supplemental field observations included assessments of street, sidewalk, and planting conditions, crosswalk design and placement, sidewalk materiality and conditions, and tree age and health. Analysis of how existing conditions were meeting project goals was conducted and has been summarized on the following pages for the defined study area.

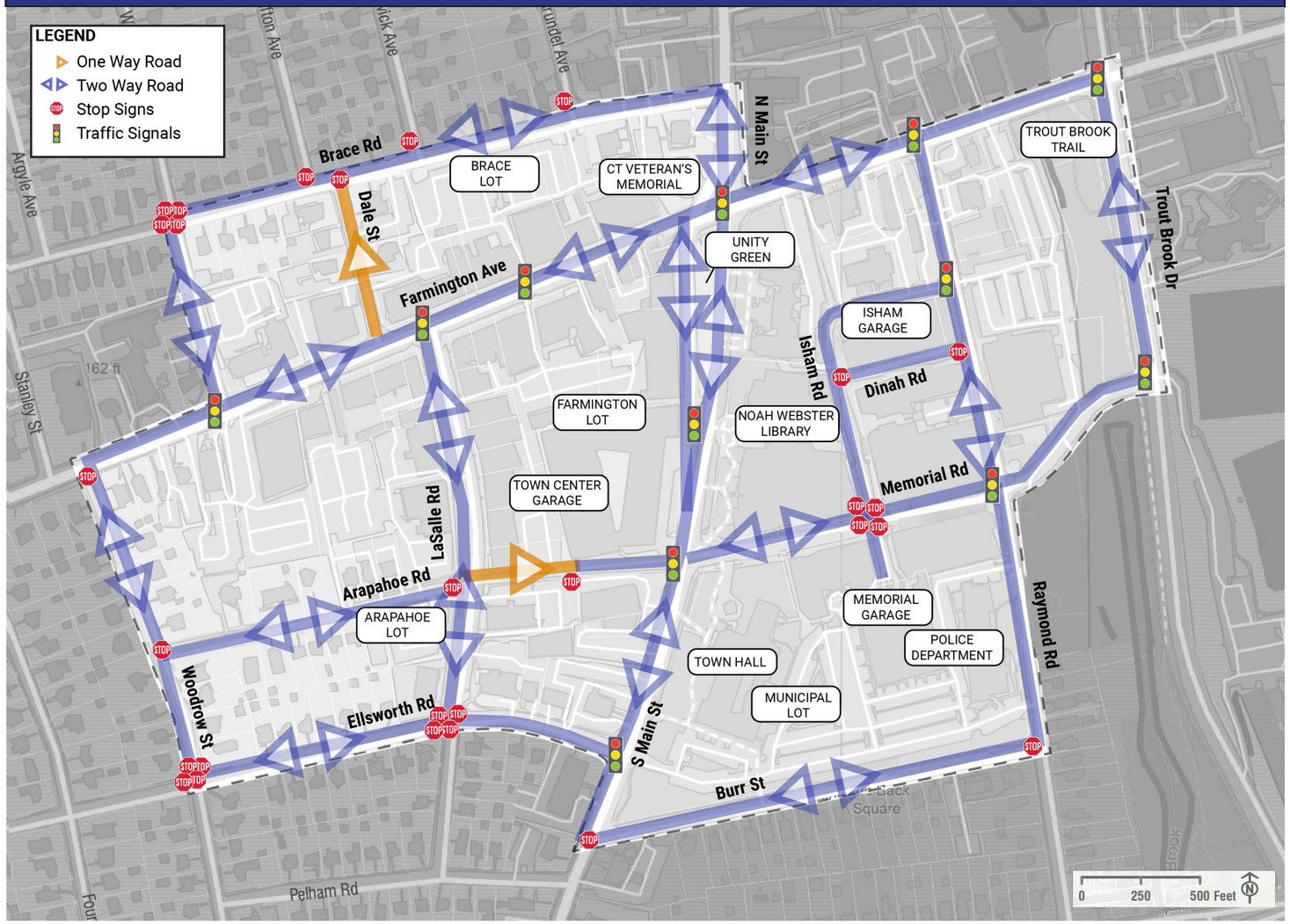
The plan's study area was defined to include the key east-west and north-south corridors through the core downtown activity area of greatest commercial density in the Center as well as key visitor destinations (like Town Hall and public parking facilities). This includes Brace Road to the north, Trout Brook Drive to the east, Woodrow Street to the west, and Burr Street to the south.

Plan study limits



CIRCULATION Road Directions and Intersection Control Type

The Town Center is well-connected internally and externally by mostly two-lane, two-way streets with sidewalks on both sides. .



The Center is well-connected internally and externally, with two-way circulation on most links providing clear connections by car, on foot, or by bike. Nearly all streets have sidewalks on both sides and the generally slow nature of most side streets allows bicycles to safely take the lane. However, no dedicated bicycle facilities exist, besides the nearby Trout Brook Trail.

The streets have changed as the study evolved. LaSalle Road is currently a two-way street; but when the study began, it was temporarily one-way, northbound as a pilot project. Similarly, at the start of the study, Memorial Road did not allow through traffic, and now traffic can use the road to travel one way eastbound from LaSalle Road, and back and forth up to the entrance to the Town Center Garage.

Stantec evaluated the impact of multiple traffic circulation scenarios, resulting in the changes described above before the final development of the Plan. The analysis considered one- and two-way options for both roads as well as a complete closure of LaSalle Road, evaluating congestion, sidewalk safety, crosswalk safety, visibility for stores, abutter access, and access for deliveries and drop offs.

The analysis concluded that a two-way LaSalle Road had distinct advantages for business access, dispersing traffic, slowing vehicle speeds, improving parking circulation, and reducing spill-over pressure on nearby streets like Woodrow Street. Meanwhile, opening up Memorial Road to LaSalle Road provided improved access to parking while avoiding any westbound cut-through traffic and associated safety concerns crossing the sidewalk at LaSalle Road.

MULTI-MODAL Other Modal Accommodations

Although the pedestrian network is complete, sidewalk widths vary. In spite of many bike racks throughout downtown, bike infrastructure is incomplete and inconsistent, conditions which can be intimidating for riders.







Bike Network Conditions

There are no dedicated bike facilities in the Town Center. The Trout Brook Trail goes along the eastern edge of the Center, and Boulevard to the south provides east-west access. There are also bike lanes on Farmington Avenue west of the Center and in Hartford not far to the east of the study area. However, there is no easy and safe way to get from these facilities into the Town Center.

Within the Center, total bike rack capacity is 14 bikes on LaSalle Road, 20 bikes on Farmington Avenue, and parking for eight bikes on Main Street and a total of 16 bikes in. Blue Back Square. In the Center, the “hitch” style bike rack is being used and should be continued throughout the Center. The hitch style is durable and easily installed and provides multiple points to securely anchor bikes and takes up less real estate on the street.





Pedestrian Network Conditions

West Hartford Center is generally a great walking environment. However, that are many notable concerns that warrant attention. The sidewalks along prime streets like LaSalle Road, Farmington Avenue, and Memorial Road in the core area are more than 10 feet wide, allowing two walking couples to pass conveniently. Beyond the heart of the Town Center and Blue Back Square, most sidewalk widths reduce to less than six feet. This is below the recommended standard and does not provide space for street furniture or other street elements that make for a pleasant walk. Some intersections have very long crosswalks, especially on Main Street at Farmington Avenue, and South Main Street at Memorial Road. All of these large intersections have signalized pedestrian crossings that operate on pushbuttons with exclusive pedestrian phases. A long mid-block crossing of Farmington Avenue is also signalized.

Deteriorating paver conditions impact walk safety throughout the Center. Repairs to pavers along Farmington and LaSalle have left varied conditions, and crosswalks with pavers are in need of repair.



Electric Vehicle Network Conditions

Electric vehicle chargers are currently in the Town Hall lot, Arapahoe Lot, and within the Isham Garage. Additional chargers are planned for the Center and will follow placement guidance from the 2024 West Hartford EV Infrastructure Plan.



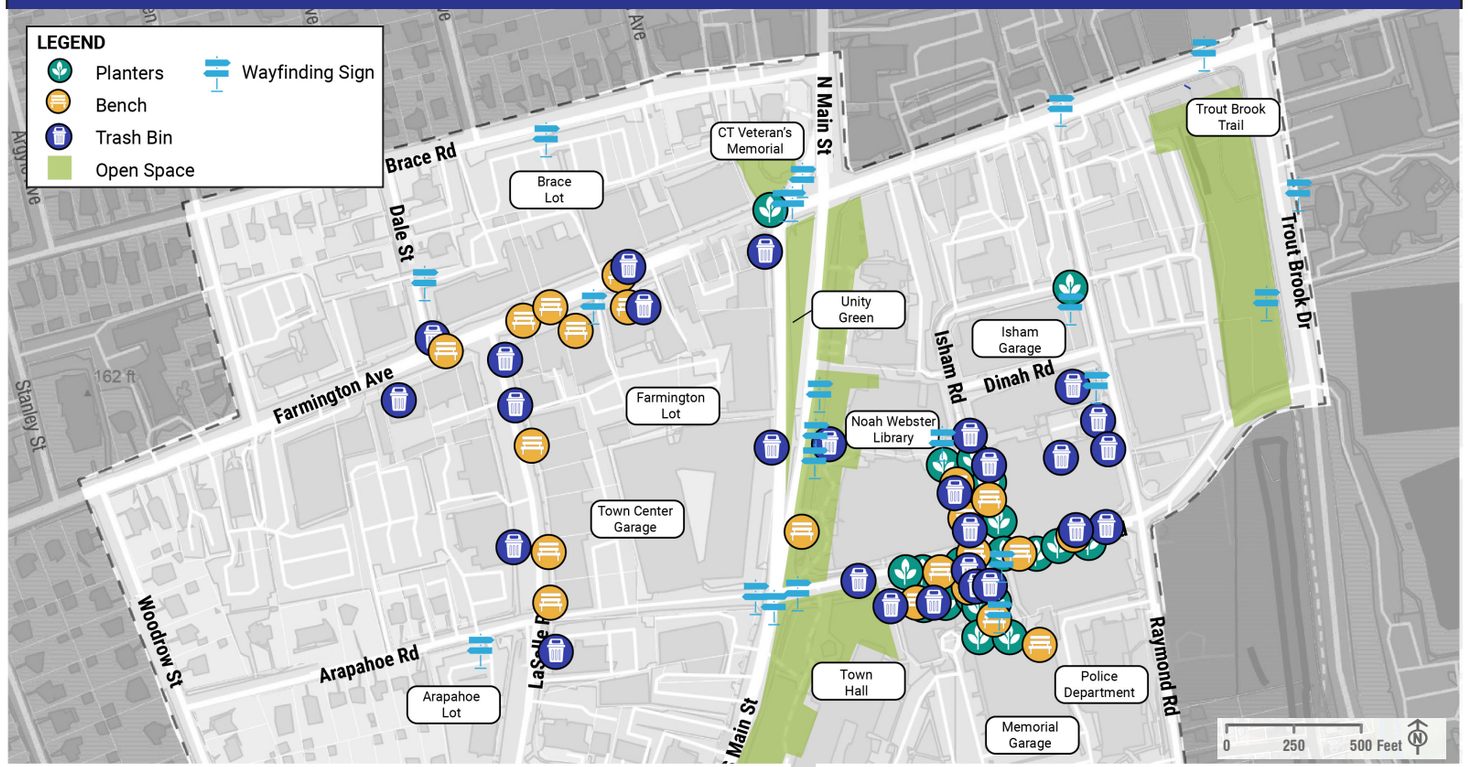
Transit Shelter Conditions

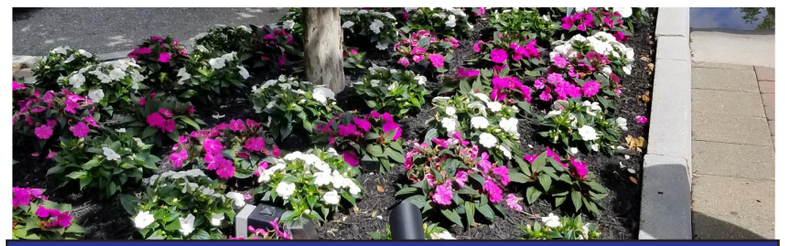
While CTtransit serves the Center with four routes, shelters are only present on Farmington Avenue at North/South Main Street, and information signing is limited. Shelters are in good condition. Other CTtransit Route 66 stops west of North/South Main Street are not signed.

Additional detailed parking and mobility network analysis is in the Appendix.

URBAN DESIGN Streetscape Features and Amenities

Generally, there is a good concentration of streetscape features that make the Center inviting and welcoming, particularly in Blue Back Square where they are more concentrated.





Typical plantings



Big Belly trash receptacle with Blue Back Square standard bench

Overall, streetscapes in the Center are very welcoming and inviting for visitors. However, some barriers and inconsistencies exist.

- **Blue Back Square Seating** - Wood with steel benches line the sidewalk along Memorial Road. In the square at Isham and Dinah Roads, there is a combination of traditional black and blue powder coated steel benches and more modern picnic tables in the plaza space.
- **Town Center Seating** - Some stone benches are used, but there is a lack of public seating not associated with a restaurant. There are very few benches on LaSalle Road and South Main Street especially, despite abundant restaurant and retail destinations.
- **Movable Planters.** There are several different shapes of movable planters in traditional styles. They are concentrated in Blue Back Square.
- **Green Space.** There is relatively little green space in the Center. Unity Green, the Veteran's Memorial, and Trout Brook Trail offer some grassy areas. However, all are relatively difficult to access.
- **Litter Receptacles.** Well placed through out the Center the Big Belly compactors along with 30 Gallon black decorative steel receptacles fit in well with other site amenities.
- **Wayfinding.** There is no wayfinding signage on LaSalle Road, and only a few on Farmington Avenue, though Blue Back Square is generally well-promoted. The Town is conducting a separate wayfinding study to improve local conditions. Some locations are unsigned, such as the alley into the Farmington Lot and the Memorial Road Connection.

Other Observations



Sidewalk and Crosswalk Pavement

Blue Back Square - Variable sized concrete unit pavers in a running bond pattern with a tumbled finish make up the bulk of sidewalk and plaza spaces, with uniform paver bands defining the edges. Overall, these surfaces are in very good condition with some selective settlement typical to this material.

Center - Variable sized interlocking concrete unit pavers are used throughout LaSalle Road, Farmington Avenue, and South Main Street. The current condition varies but is in poor condition in areas around tree pits due to root upheaval and have settled in other locations. In many cases the differential settlement is enough to create an uncomfortable walking environment, particularly for those with mobility challenges. Crosswalks with pavers are in poor condition due to utility work, snow plowing and drainage, and some have already been removed.



Public Art and Memorials

Many notable installations exist across the Center and are well-maintained. These include the Noah Webster Statue and the collection of sculptures in the lawn adjacent to Town Hall, the Veteran's Memorial at the intersection of Main and Farmington, murals along the library walk in Blue Back Square, accessway to Farmington Lot, and even a mural on a Farmington Avenue bus shelter.



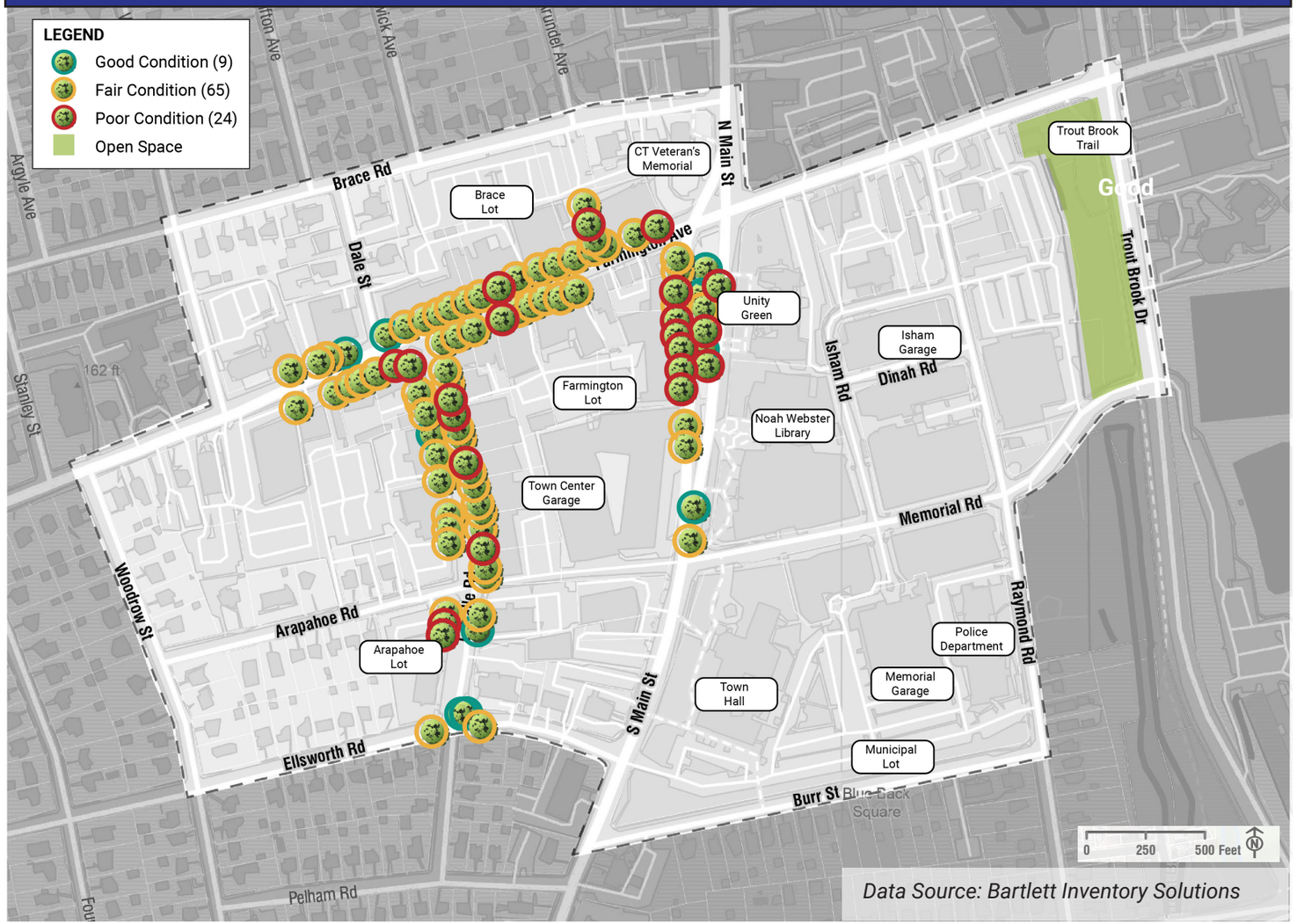
Lighting

Blue Back Square - Post lights are a traditional pedestrian-scaled post but with a singular acorn luminaire. At intersections and other key nodes, a double acorn fixture is used, centered on the curb radii on all intersection corners. Double acorns are not energy efficient. Post lighting occurs at approximately eighty-five feet on center intervals, with equal spacing between street trees. At key intersections, accent tree up-lighting is used to highlight the tree canopies at night.

Center - Predominant lighting is a traditional pedestrian-scaled post with a acorn style luminaire that includes attachments for banners and flags. The spacing of this is variable and generally has an alternating pattern from one side of the street to another.

TREE COVERAGE Locations and Tree Condition

Although there is a good density of older trees downtown which contribute to a pleasant streetscape and pedestrian experience, few are in good condition.



Data Source: Bartlett Inventory Solutions

In December 2022, the Bartlett Inventory Solutions (BIS) Team from Bartlett Tree Experts conducted an inventory of trees in the Center on Farmington Avenue, LaSalle Road, South Main Street, and within the Unity Green. They identified 98 trees which included 8 species and determined their size, age and condition class, plus provided a visual assessment of tree structure, health, and vigor.

The trees were given a condition score of:

- **Dead**
- **Poor** - Most of the canopy displays dieback and undesirable leaf color, inappropriate leaf size or inadequate new growth. Tree or parts of tree are in the process of failure.
- **Fair** - Parts of the canopy display undesirable leaf color, inappropriate leaf size, and inadequate new growth. Parts of the tree are likely to fail.
- **Good** - Tree health and condition are acceptable.

Of the 98 trees inventoried, 24 were in poor condition, 65 were in fair condition, and 9 were in good condition.

The predominant (83 of 98) tree species in the Center is Honey Locust, most were likely planted in the 1980's. Honey locusts are a non-native, generally urban-tolerant selection, but they are showings signs of extreme stress and disease. The following defects are easily observed including girdling roots, fungus infections, wound-rot, base-decay, dead branches, low vigor, poor branch structure and sidewalk lifting. West Hartford Public Works has repeatedly worked to save the trees through arboriculture measures.

Center Trees

The street trees along Farmington Avenue, South Main Street and LaSalle Road contribute to the spirit and character of the Town Center. These trees not only help define the Center but also have crucial environmental, psychological, and aesthetic benefits to the community.

An approximately forty-foot on-center spacing creates a continuous canopy along the sidewalks. The predominant species is a mono-culture of Gleditsia triacanthos – the Honey Locust.

The trees do not have enough available soil volume below the pavement, resulting in the root zones becoming limited in their planting wells, causing paving upheaval and tree decline.

Based on an arborist's report, several trees need extensive hazard pruning which will result in the removal of a large percentage of the canopy once all of the potential life/ safety hazards are removed with proper arborist cuts.

There is an opportunity to implement new tree planting strategies that increase the urban tree canopy by providing larger soil volumes to ensure large healthy trees. Proper location, spacing and protection of trees to avoid being damaged, provide a diverse and native/ adapted tree planting palette that avoids a monoculture which are prone to disease.

Blue Back Square Trees

Street trees in Blue Back Square are planted in cobblestone curbed open planters in 2006. The approximate 20-25 foot on-center spacing is considered a dense spacing. The predominant species is Honey Locust, similar to the Center, but there is more variety in Blue Back Square, including Green Ash, London Plane, River Birch, and smaller flowering trees.

The Town does treat the Green Ash for Emerald Ash borer but they are showing signs of stress likely due to the effects of disease. Many of the trees appear to be planted too low, covering up the root flare which can cause rot, lack of oxygen and general stress to the trees.

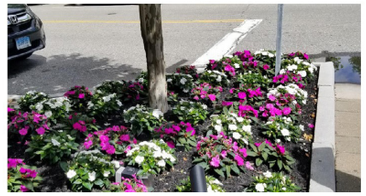
As trees are removed due to disease or other reasons, trees should be replaced with a diverse and native/ adapted tree planting palette that avoids a monoculture which are prone to disease.

Tree Species Identified

GENUS	SPECIES	COMMON NAME	COUNT	% OF TOTAL
Acer	*platanoides*	Maple-Crimson King	2	2%
	saccharinum	Maple-Silver	1	1%
Gleditsia	*triacanthos*	Honeylocust-Thornless Common	83	85%
Malus	*sp.*	Crabapple	2	2%
Pyrus	*calleryana*	Pear-Callery	3	3%
Quercus	*palustris*	Oak-Pin	3	3%
Ulmus	*americana*	Elm-American	1	1%
	parvifolia	Elm-Chinese	3	3%











EXISTING CONDITIONS SUMMARY

Today's environment in West Hartford Center supports POCD goals in many ways, but there are gaps between the built environment and where the Town hopes to be in its future. As the Center is a showcase of West Hartford's character, it is vital that it reflects these community goals.

To identify design solutions, the team compared the existing conditions analysis to the overall goals that the POCD established (see p.9).

There are considerable below grade utility constraints within the master plan limits. Water, sewer, electrical, gas, storm drainage and telecommunications systems pose significant challenges that must be planned and considered during design. Coordination among various utility service providers early on, is critical to understanding space constraints, maintenance accessibility, environmental impacts, as well as cost and resource allocation.

FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Key Findings

- Sidewalks in Blue Back Square are generally in good condition, but many in the Town Center are in poor condition due to age, ice melting salts, and tree roots.
- Lighting is inconsistent in the Town Center, but consistently placed throughout Blue Back Square.
- Crosswalks are faded.

Why it Matters

- Differences between Blue Back Square and Town Center reinforce the public perception that the two are different places.
- Faded crosswalks and disrupted sidewalks create an uncomfortable walking environment, which may make people feel they 'have to' drive between the two adjacent districts.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Key Findings

- Allowing two-way traffic on LaSalle Road helps people see and access local businesses and parking better.
- In certain places, sidewalk widths cannot accommodate outdoor dining and comfortable pedestrian activity.
- There is ample parking available, but today's management and wayfinding system does not optimize its use.

Why it Matters

- Vehicle circulation patterns should be easy to understand for customers.
- Businesses value the perception of easy parking access for customers.
- Sidewalk space should be flexible and support businesses in many ways, from outdoor dining or retail space to seasonal bicycle racks to plantings and more.

NEIGHBORHOODS + HOUSING

Key Findings

- Allowing two-way traffic on LaSalle Road reduces cut-through traffic in nearby neighborhoods
- Long street crossings, real and perceived safety issues, and poor sidewalk conditions limit walkability in the Center.

Why it Matters

- Walkability issues may limit the ability of visitors who live nearby to walk and thus create excess vehicle traffic.
- Similarly, a limited bicycle network means that it is not a viable option for local residents, particularly those with a lower level of comfort riding in-street, such as children and seniors.

TRANSPORTATION

OPEN SPACE + ENVIRONMENT

LAND USE

CULTURAL + HISTORIC RESOURCES

Key Findings

- The walking environment is uncomfortable in some places.
- There are a few comfortable biking options in the Center.
- EV parking is available and expanding.
- CTtransit serves the area with multiple routes.

- There is relatively little green space in the Center, with the majority of planters located in Blue Back Square.
- Street trees are in poor condition, especially in the Town Center, with a lack of soil, need for extensive pruning, and some diseases.

- The Center offers multi-modal transportation opportunities, and with improvements could attract new development that is less-dependent on automobile use.
- New road connections help reduce the traffic impact of new development, minimizing any impact to surrounding neighborhoods.

- West Hartford is home to murals, memorials, and other forms of public art.
- The historic character of the Center's buildings, trees, and sidewalks is an emblem of West Hartford.

Why it Matters

- Providing safer, comfortable facilities for people walking, biking, and taking transit will create a balanced transportation system and reduce parking demand.
- Investing in more EV infrastructure supports local EV adoption rates.

- It will be important to preserve the existing amount of green space to align with this community goal.
- A healthy tree canopy is vital to combating heat islands and stormwater runoff.
- A canopy of trees has helped define the Town Center for years and should be kept healthy.

- Sustainable transportation options are vital to supporting compact development without overwhelming the transportation network.
- Walkable places are vital to community health across all demographic brackets.

- Important cultural elements should be celebrated, accessible, and preserved.
- The overall character of the Center should be preserved.

Community Input

An integral part of developing the Infrastructure Master Plan was working with the community on its many elements. To that end, the team worked collaboratively with the Town to establish a Public Engagement Plan, then carried out the plan with adjustments as needed.

The plan built off of input from West Hartford business owners, residents, employees, and more, which was provided through the following opportunities:

- **Public workshops** built around interactive exercises. These included opportunities for people to visualize street design elements, indicate ideas for improvements on maps, and prioritize design features.
- **"Pop-ups"** in West Hartford Center where the team invited people on the street to weigh in on project ideas and opportunities.
- **Presentations** with question and answer sessions. These allowed the team to get into more technical detail on the project and answer questions as needed.
- **Online questionnaires** and workshop elements, so that those who could not attend in-person meetings could provide feedback and ideas.
- **Targeted stakeholder meetings** to discuss specific needs and hear detailed feedback in a 'roundtable' type forum.
- **A project-specific email address**, monitored by the Town, where people could send feedback at any time.
- **Additional meetings** that the Town facilitated with key stakeholders.
- **A project website** with materials and updates.

Much of the feedback provided at these opportunities has been incorporated into the Plan. The following pages summarize this feedback at a very high level. For more detailed information please see the materials--including design workshop summaries and recordings of presentations--in the appendix and on the project website.

Round 1 (Fall 2022)

- Design Workshop #1
- Roundtable discussions with businesses, property owners, Bike/ Pedestrian Commission
- Interactive map and survey

Round 2 (Winter 2023)

- Design Workshop #2
- Roundtable discussions with businesses, property owners, Bike/ Pedestrian Commission
- Boards and Commissions Meetings

Round 3 (Fall 2023)

- Business Stakeholder Discussions

Round 4 (Winter 2023-2024)

- Public Information Meeting
- Online Survey

Round 5 (Spring 2024)

- Public Information Meeting

Ongoing

- Community feedback via project email
- Presentations to committees, such as Bike/Pedestrian and Community Planning & Economic Development Council Subcommittee

BY THE NUMBERS

5 PUBLIC MEETINGS

2 PUBLIC POP-UP EVENTS

2 PUBLIC SURVEYS (1,500+ PARTICIPANTS)

10+ STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

100+ EMAILS FROM THE COMMUNITY



Design Workshop #1, September 2022

PUBLIC EVENTS

The project team connected with the community in a variety of ways to reach the broadest range of participants and interests possible. Each approach was developed with the intent of securing specific feedback that could provide details about the local experience of living, working, visiting, or traveling within West Hartford.

For consistency and for convenience, most in-person public meetings were held in the Town Hall Auditorium. Other pop-up events were held at centralized locations downtown to allow passersby who were already visiting downtown to easily engage.

Open House- 9/12/22







Meeting #1- 2/2/23



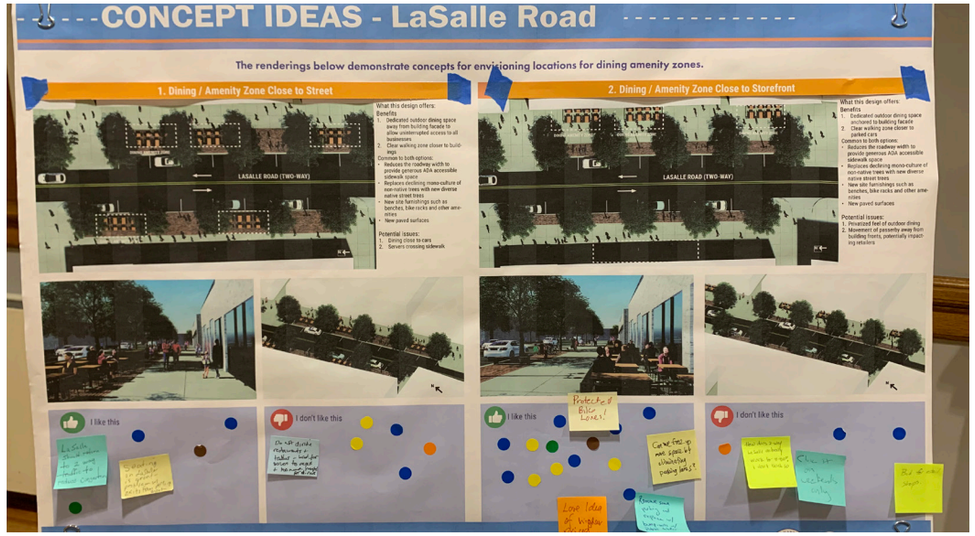
Pop-Up Tent 9/12/22

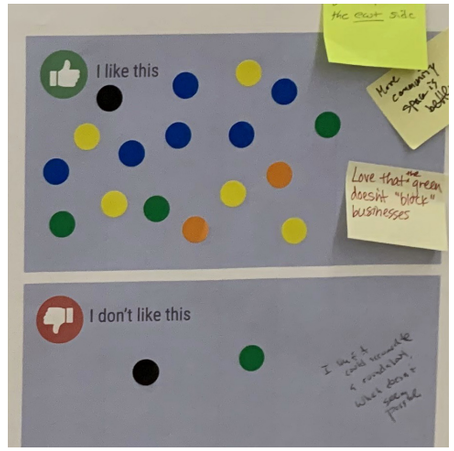


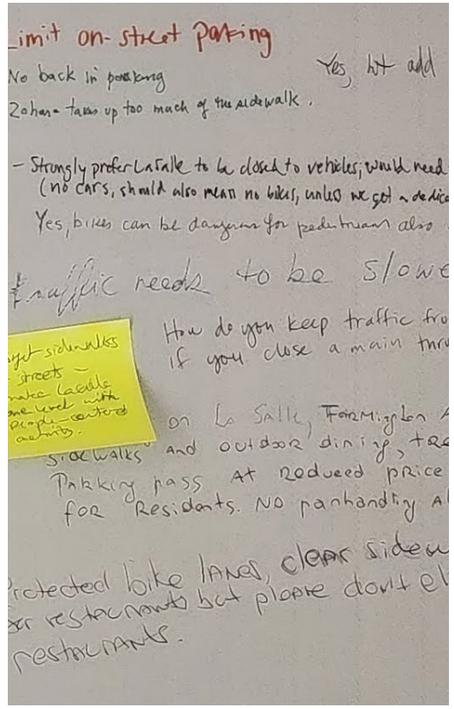


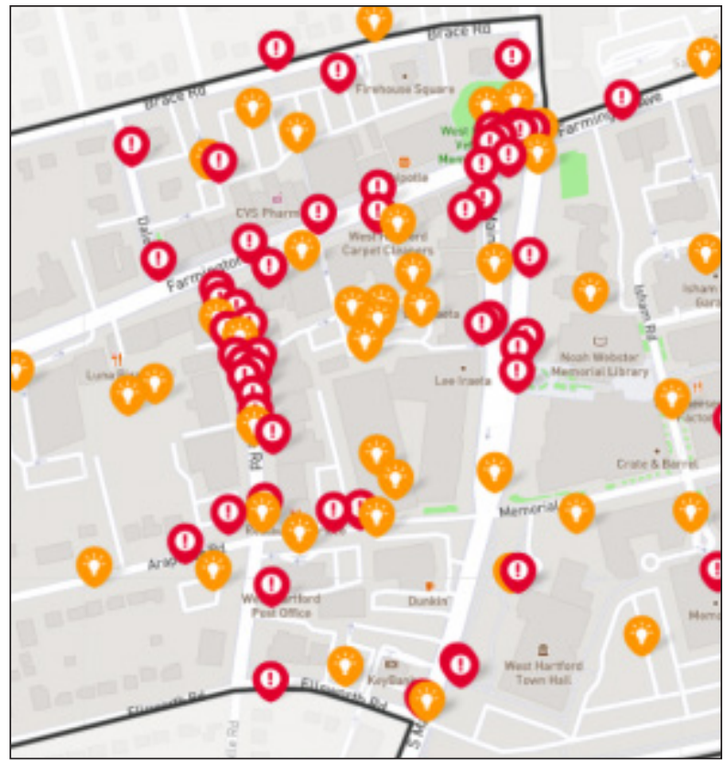
Meeting #4- 4/4/24











Information and feedback from the public was captured in a number of interactive ways, including through written comment, highly-visual voting exercises using stickers, and through an interactive, online map where visitors could place pins on specific areas they had concerns or ideas.

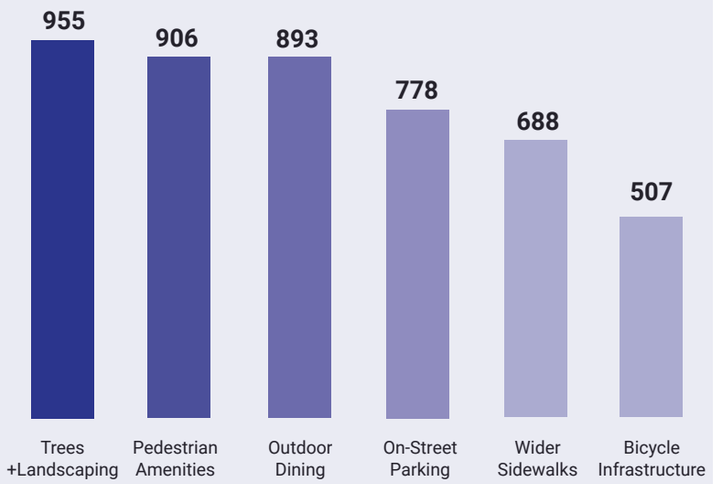
Beyond this feedback, comments vocalized during in-person discussions or meetings were also documented.

WHAT WE HEARD Project Goals

Participants both online and in-person had the chance to offer comments on project goals (below), which were developed based on goals from the West Hartford Town Center Initiative (2016) and Town's 2020 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD).

Meeting participants slightly adjusted and confirmed the following set of goals to guide the recommendations:

Q. Which of the following are important to incorporate into the project?



Facilities + Infrastructure

Promote practices that will maintain and modernize Town facilities and infrastructure in order to meet the evolving needs of the community in sustainable ways and recognize the need to provide services harmoniously with West Hartford's place in the greater Hartford Region and State at large.

Neighborhoods + Housing

Enhance and maintain West Hartford's existing neighborhoods and encourage diversity of housing types and costs to provide access and availability of affordable housing options to current and future residents of all ages.

Economic Development

Promote growth and retention of existing businesses and development of new business opportunities to strengthen the community's tax base in an innovative manner, while preventing and protecting the residential character of the surrounding neighborhoods.

Transportation

Promote an integrated and balanced transportation system which prioritizes safety, including "complete streets," to improve traffic flow, optimize and enhance parking opportunities, promote public transportation and car-pooling; enhance traffic calming efforts, pedestrian and bicyclist safety and access; and meet the needs of the next generation of transportation technologies and infrastructure.

Open Space + Environment

Preserve, protect, enhance and promote our open space and our fragile natural systems in concert with managing responsible growth and development.

Cultural and Historic Resources

Preserve, protect, enhance and promote the cultural and historic resources of West Hartford.

Land Use

Sustain and preserve the Town of West Hartford as a balanced community, maintaining and promoting neighborhood character and open spaces in conjunction with the principles of Smart Growth.

Design Workshop 1: West Hartford Center Issues and Ideas

Workshop participants offered ideas on key components of the Center. Some of the idea are in direct conflict with one another, showing the breadth of how people want to experience the Center.

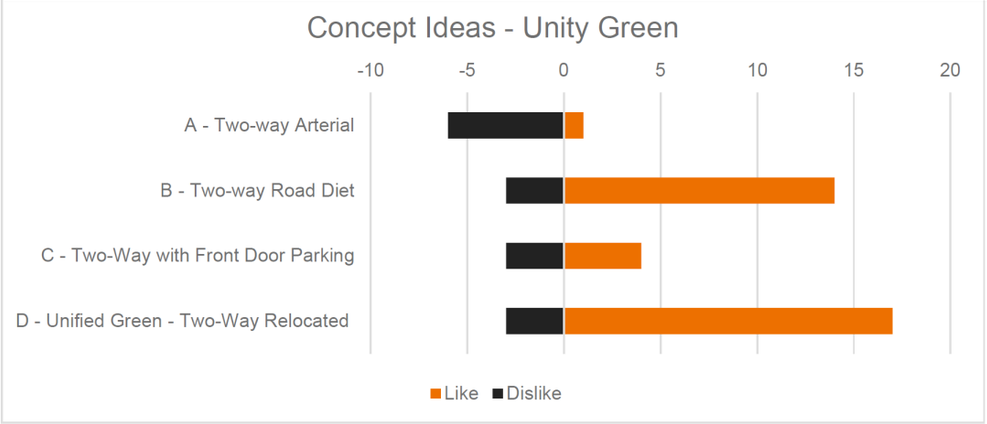
Stakeholder Feedback Summary	Detailed Concern
LaSalle Road should be redesigned to better serve people while preserving access to businesses and reducing traffic impacts elsewhere • Many participants want to see LaSalle Road fully closed to traffic, while others do not • A smaller group of respondents preferred the current one-way design or switching the direction of traffic flow	**Pedestrians and bicyclists are not comfortable along LaSalle** • Businesses rely on vehicles accessing LaSalle • Traffic diverted from LaSalle is affecting residential streets elsewhere
Bicycling through the Center must be safer, more convenient, and more accessible • Few participants opposed implementing additional bicycle facilities, which received widespread support	**Biking on major roads in Center is dangerous and uncomfortable** • Not enough bike parking and existing parking is often inaccessible
The Center often does not feel comfortable for people walking • Few participants opposed improvements to pedestrian infrastructure, however, some participants highlighted the need to maintain efficient traffic flow and outdoor dining installations	**Pedestrians are not prioritized at key intersections** • Sidewalks are narrow in spots, uncomfortable for pedestrians • Outdoor dining has made walking through the Center more difficult
Green space and parks in the Center should be expanded and better utilized • Many participants support expanding Unity Green and/or Veterans Memorial Park by converting existing street space to park space, but some oppose reducing the number of travel lanes and parking opportunities on South Main	**Existing green space is inaccessible and underused** • Not enough green space in the Center • Children and young people have few outdoor recreational opportunities
Address excessive traffic and vehicle speeds in and around the Center • While many participants cited the need to reduce vehicle traffic in the Center, participants highlighted the need to ensure that traffic is not redirected onto residential streets	**Car traffic dangerous for pedestrians** • Excessive traffic on residential streets • Key intersections (such as South Main Street at Farmington Avenue) are difficult to navigate and have long waits
Parking is needed, but there may be opportunities to reduce and redesign • Many participants support replacing back-in parking (that was in place at the time) with more intuitive options such as parallel or angled parking, but some support preserving back-in parking for safety reasons • Some participants support re-purposing existing surface parking lots as green space or housing, however, some participants prioritized maintaining existing parking supply	**Too much space in the Center is reserved for parking** • On-street parking is not user-friendly
Interest in a connection to Memorial Road but concern for worsening traffic on residential streets and bicyclist and pedestrian safety	**The current passage functions as a comfortable route for cyclists** • Concerns regarding traffic on residential streets
Embrace new forms of development and growth while preserving the character of West Hartford	• Encourage new types of development in the Center, including new forms of retail and housing • Maintain West Hartford's feel and brand

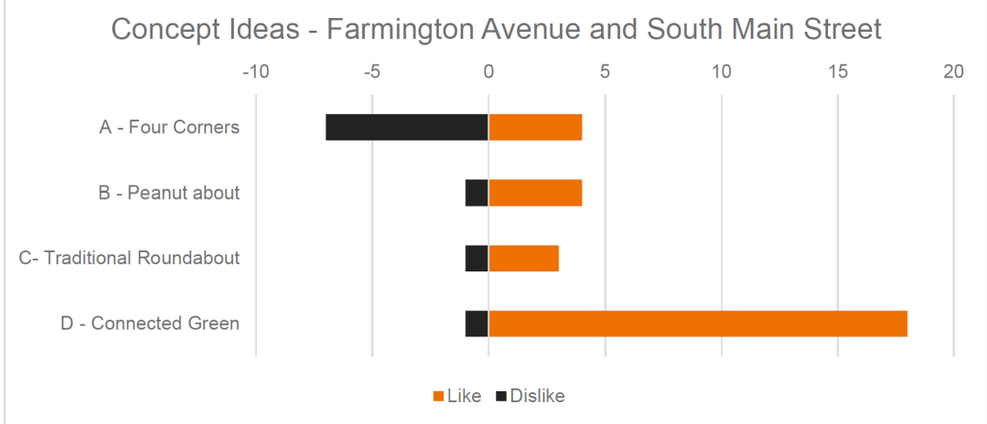
Design Workshop 2: West Hartford Center Issues and Ideas

The second design workshop asked for feedback in response to some design scenarios, including on LaSalle Road, Farmington Avenue, and the intersection of Main and Farmington. While the feedback is location specific, it also provides a basis for ideas that people have for West Hartford Center overall.

Topic Area	Detailed Concerns	Feedback and Ideas
Plantings and Materiality	• Wildlife in trees creates issues for those below • Pavers are challenging to walk on, bike on, and maintain	• Support for native plantings • Consider raised crosswalks • Desire for benches with both no backs and backs
Infrastructure Master Plan		• Increase cost of on-street parking to maintain 80% occupancy
LaSalle Road	• Desire for bike lanes on LaSalle Road • Don't like dining close to traffic • If seating close to parking, concerns about people walking through from parking their cars	• Keep LaSalle Road 1-way, widen sidewalks and provide bicycle amenities • Free up space by removing parking, and create drop and go spots, bicycle facilities, and/or more space for sidewalks • Close road entirely • Close road on weekends only • Higher priced street parking • LaSalle Road too short of a street for bicycle lanes
Farmington Avenue		• Sidewalks should prioritize pedestrians over dining • Like the idea of higher priced street parking, with lower priced parking in garages • Need physical barrier for bicycle facilities • Review Massachusetts Separated Bicycle Lane Design Guide for transit stop treatments

Votes for concept designs from the public workshop. *Refer to p. 61-62 for these designs.*





Additional Feedback

Through detailed stakeholder meetings, project emails, and other meetings that the Town held, some key considerations emerged. These include:

Topic Area	Detailed Concerns	Feedback and Ideas
Deliveries and Loading	• Need to create space for deliveries and loading	• Create loading access along Memorial Road • Create additional 15 minute spaces elsewhere, for example LaSalle Road • Curb lanes should be for multiple modes
Trees	• Leaf fall can be a burden for merchants to clean up	• Focus on native species
Key Redesign Areas	• Safety issues on South Main St	• South Main Street should be the next area of design focus. • Trout Brook Drive and Farmington Avenue should be a gateway
Maintenance	• Who will maintain the additional pedestrian space? • What happens to the amenity space in the 'shoulder season' (i.e. when it is colder outside)?	
Character	• Underutilized public gathering spaces	• Maintain key components of the Town Center character, such as the large clock • Better connect Town Center and Blue Back Square • Consider stylish bicycle racks • Interest in signage improvements, including for parking
Outdoor dining	• Should be carefully considered as it can be unfair use of public space	• General preference to separate this from store frontage
Parking Access		• Parking van/shuttle • Price garages lower than on-street • Consider central bicycle parking hub

PROJECT INFORMATION

In addition to scheduled activity promotion, information about the project and opportunities to engage were advertised through a range of platforms including the West Hartford Chamber newsletter, the Town website, and through articles by local news outlets.

An email dedicated to the project was monitored and reviewed for messages from community members, and responses were provided wherever possible.

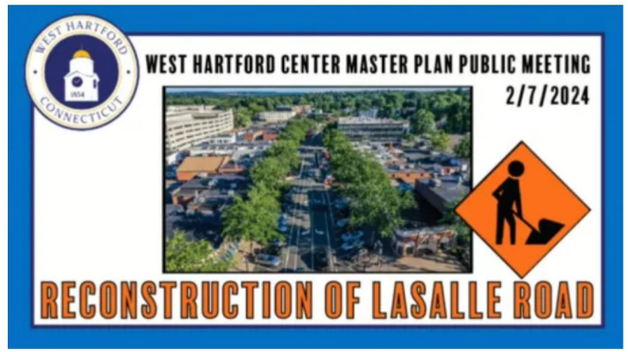
townofwesthartfordct After months of extensive community engagement and public outreach, the Town of West Hartford today announced the adoption of a reimagined Town Center Infrastructure Plan. The final plan reflects input from a wide range of local stakeholders and balances the town's goals of enhancing pedestrian and cyclist safety while preserving the charm and character that defines West Hartford's town center.

138 likes

September 24, 2024

WEST HARTFORD

VISIT US GOVERNMENT



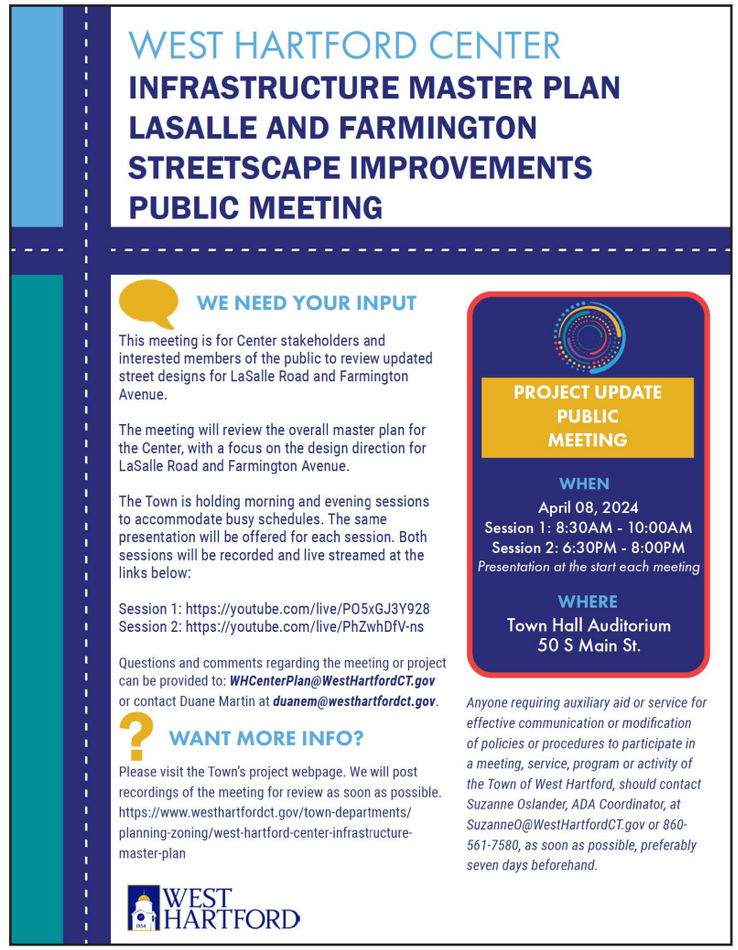
February 7, 2024 West Hartford Center Infrastructure Master Plan public meeting (YouTube)

we-ha.com

We have it all in West Hartford.

Mobility Hubs, Safer Sidewalks, Pedestrian Crossings Key Elements Of Finalized West Hartford Center Infrastructure Master Plan

Published On: September 24, 2024

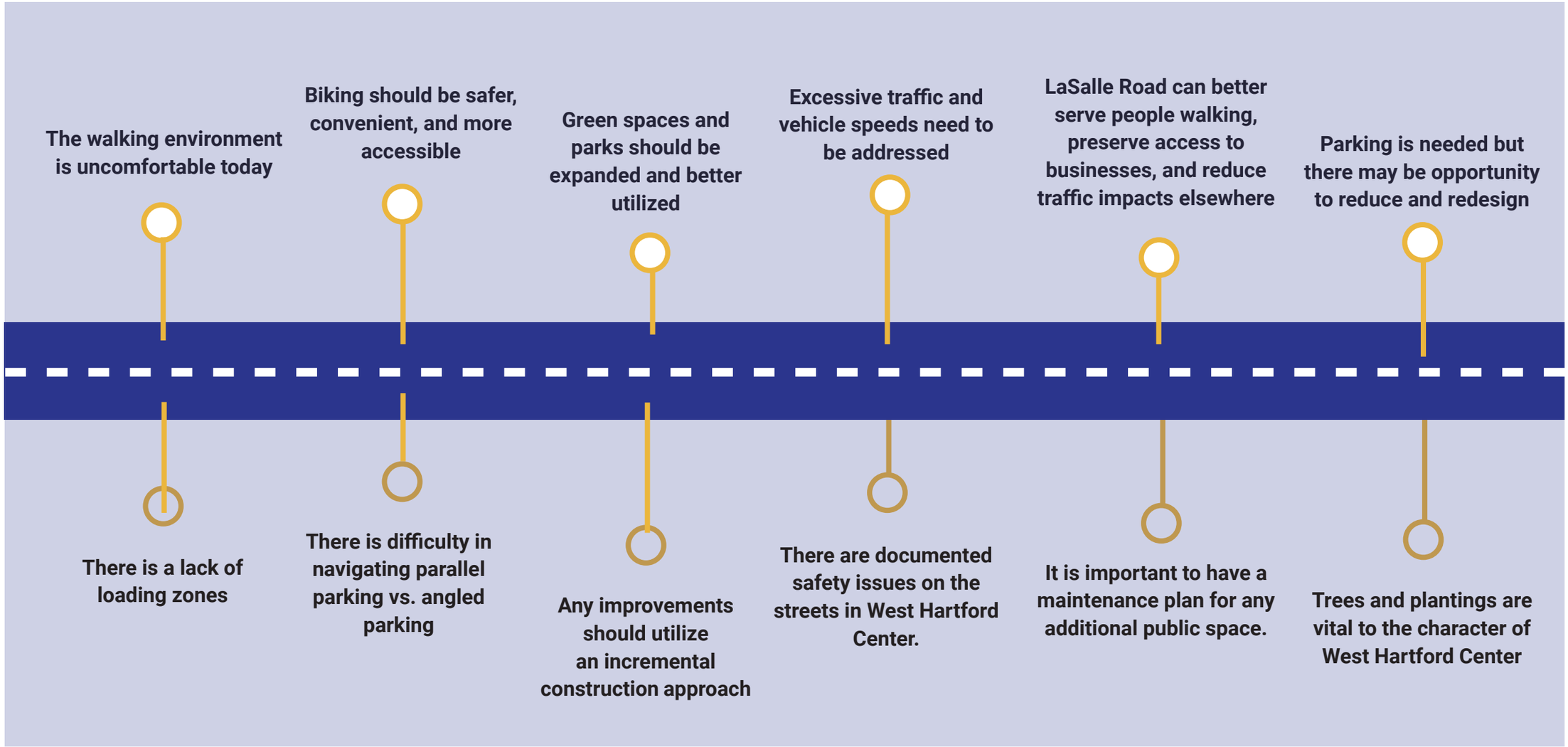


Public Meeting And Poll Will Seek Input On West Hartford Center Infrastructure Master Plan Options

Published On: February 5, 2024

KEY POINTS OF CONSENSUS

A Unified Path Towards Shared Priorities



West Hartford Center Infrastructure Master Plan

The following recommendations and concepts are specific to the Center, and intend to create a cohesive, sustainable, high quality public realm. The guidelines are intended to be used as a high-level planning tool to guide future public projects. Importantly, this consistent approach will that will draw Blue Back Square and the Town Center closer to feeling like one place.

The efforts of this study focused on the public realm and the area under public ownership and includes areas such as streets, sidewalks, open space, landscaping, lighting, and street furniture. Planning and design of public and private streetscape elements can help establish a cohesive character and strengthen the identity for the West Hartford Center. Many of the lessons learned from this process will be applicable to other parts of town as well.

Plan elements include sidewalks and public space, signage, public art, parking, and transportation, with the goal of identifying opportunities to further enhance the Center for all users. These elements are rooted in previous principles developed with residents and stakeholders for West Hartford Center.

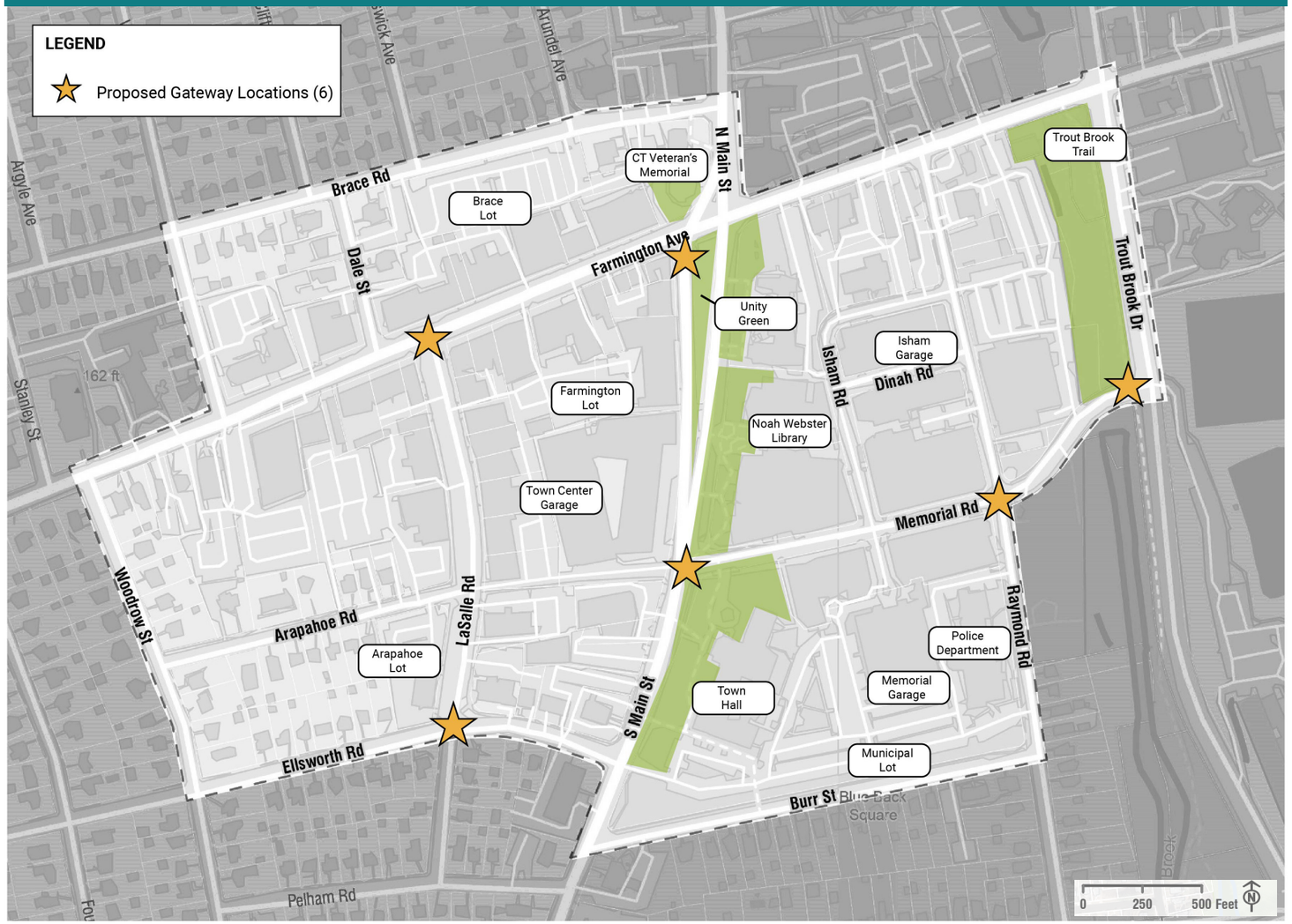
The Plan and design process has been informed by discussions with community stakeholders including area business owners, property owners, and associations. This process was built on the participatory visioning for development conducted in the Center in 2017 as well as street reconfigurations that the Town has recently implemented.

The Master Plan includes the following elements:

- **Site Lighting**
- **Street Furniture**
  - Seating
  - Trash Receptacles
  - Seating Locations
- **Sidewalk Design and Materials**
- **Public Art and Memorials**
- **Trees**
  - Tree Selection
  - Tree Infrastructure
- **Low-Impact Development (LID)**
- **Outdoor Dining**
  - Roadway Cafes
  - Sidewalk Cafes
- **Public Restroom**
- **Mobility Networks**
  - Walking Improvements
  - Proposed Transit Access
  - Pick-Up/Drop-Off and Loading Zones
  - Bike Infrastructure Network and Parking
  - Mobility Hub
  - Parking Pricing Changes
  - Special Parking Types

GATEWAY ELEMENTS

The following locations were identified as high-priority locations to consider creating true Gateways to West Hartford Center



Gateways are the primary points of entry and exit to West Hartford Center, and thus shape the first and last impressions of the area. They should create a sense of entry that reflects the community's values, such as the Town's commitment to green space, its cultural/historic resources, and its vibrant commercial offerings.

The gateways on this map reflect the main places where people might come in to the Center, whether by car, on foot, on transit, or by bike. Important to this Plan is the concept of gateways that encourage connection between Town Center and Blue Back Square. In these locations, the Town should incorporate:

- Public art by local artists
- Traffic calming elements to tell people driving to slow down and begin to look for people on foot / on bikes
- Wayfinding and signage / Town branding
- Plantings
- Lighting, particularly to ensure that any signage is visible once the sun has set

Recommendation: Plan for incorporating gateway elements in future road redesigns.

SITE LIGHTING

The streetscape lighting in West Hartford Center plays a crucial role in defining the character of the area, enhancing safety, and promoting nighttime economic activity. The historic replica style of the fixtures is an elegant pole that features an Acorn style luminaire. South Main Street, Farmington Avenue and LaSalle Road employ the double luminaire version while Blue Back Square features a single luminaire with double luminaires at intersections. All the poles have banner arms. The poles along the major roadways have banner arms and flag mounts, Farmington Avenue and LaSalle Road also have ad-hoc mounts for Winter season lighting decorations.

Lighting Objectives

- **Safety and Security**: Ensure adequate illumination to enhance visibility and safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers.
- **Visual Appeal:** Create an aesthetically pleasing environment that enhances the overall experience of visitors and residents.
- **Energy Efficiency:** Utilize modern lighting technologies to minimize energy consumption and maintenance costs.
- **Consistency**: Achieve a uniform and harmonious lighting scheme that reflects the identity of West Hartford Center.

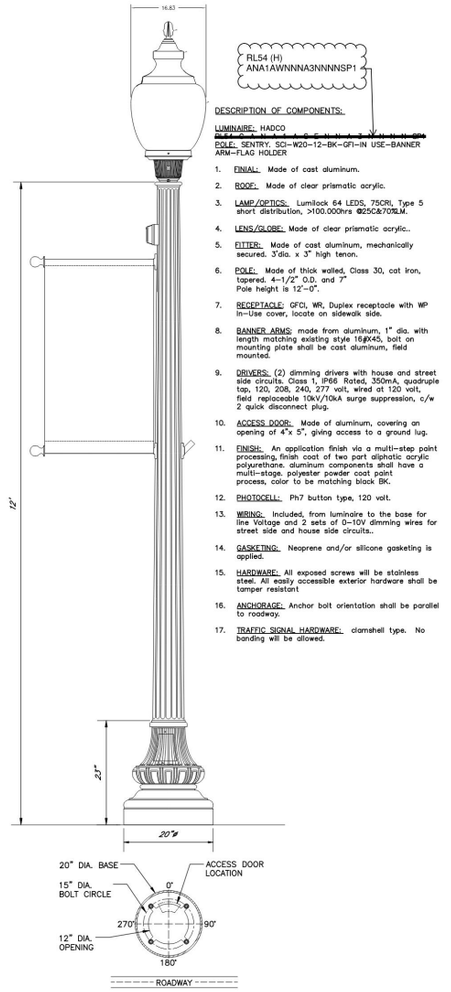
For future projects, phasing out the double luminaires should be considered for lighting efficiency purposes. A single luminaire generally meets the footcandle requirements and will reduce light trespass. Although the Town standard is not dark sky compliant, future design should maximize efficiency while maintaining public safety.

The electrical wiring for much of the Center is direct burial and not on a metered system. Each lighting project should be reviewed for the opportunity for metering and adding smart lighting controls that can give the Town flexibility in managing light levels based on factors like time of day, traffic flow, or occupancy sensors, along with new conduit runs. Spare conduit runs should be considered as well to accommodate future electrical needs.

Other Electrical Opportunities

Power pedestals are currently proposed on LaSalle Road and Farmington Avenue. These features allow for exterior power hookups along the streetscape which can be utilized by outdoor dining, events, and other temporary seasonal lighting. These features can be located in tree pits to keep the sidewalk clear.

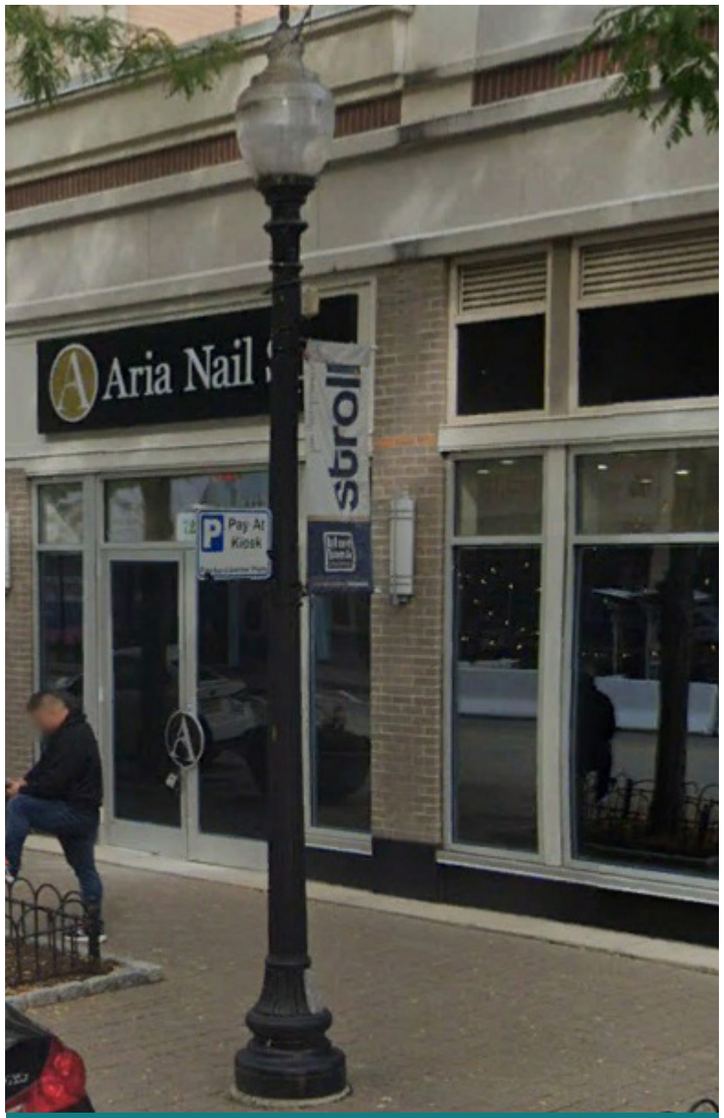
Recommendation: Plan for incorporating single luminaires in future designs.



West Hartford Lighting Standard



West Hartford Standard - Double Luminaire with Flag Mount



West Hartford Standard - Single Luminaire with Banner Mount



Power Pedestals

STREET FURNITURE

Street furnishings not only serve a utilitarian function but also improve the aesthetic quality of the public realm. Street furnishings include all items placed within the public right-of-way, such as streetlights, benches, bus shelters, bollards, trash receptacles, planters, bicycle racks, parking, kiosks, and newspaper racks.

Proper design and placement of street furnishings is extremely critical, and when properly executed, has the power to unify and enhance the public realm. Materials and colors should be carefully selected to create the desired aesthetic and vision for the public realm. The following guidelines should be considered when selecting and locating street furniture amenities.

- **Investment.** High-quality street furniture conveys permanence and shows that the public realm is valued, important and well-protected.
- **Materials.** In Blue Back Square, metal components are preferred and shall be powder-coated the same color to create a sense of continuity. In the Town Center, the Dumor 165 bench shall be used with FSC Ipe slats.
  - Prior to selection, the Public Works Department should review choices for durability of materials and ease of maintenance after installation.
- **Prioritize the user.** The design and selection of street furniture should consider safety, security, comfort, and convenience of the user.
- **Maintenance.** Street furniture should be securely anchored to the sidewalk and a graffiti-resistant coating should be applied to ensure a good appearance over the long term.
- **Location.** Street furniture should be located along the street edge of sidewalks, with clear, sufficient width maintained for pedestrian traffic.
- **Organization.** Furnishings should be grouped to create a more organized and efficient use of sidewalk space. Trash and recycling cans should be located near benches with a variety of furnishings in higher pedestrian traffic areas.

Seating

Public seating creates a comfortable, usable, and active public environment where people can rest, socialize, read, or people-watch. It is a simple gesture that can go far to create an important sense of place. Seating creates places where people can see and be seen. This ability to entice people to linger is the hallmark of great and successful public spaces. Further, benches support access for those with limited mobility in particular by providing rest stops for people of all ages and abilities.

Adding seating in high use areas is an easy street improvement that can be made by individuals, community groups, business districts, and others, often as part of an overall streetscape project.

Seating in West Hartford Center should follow the street furniture guidelines as well as:



The Dumor Model 165 is low-maintenance and suitable for hash winter conditions.

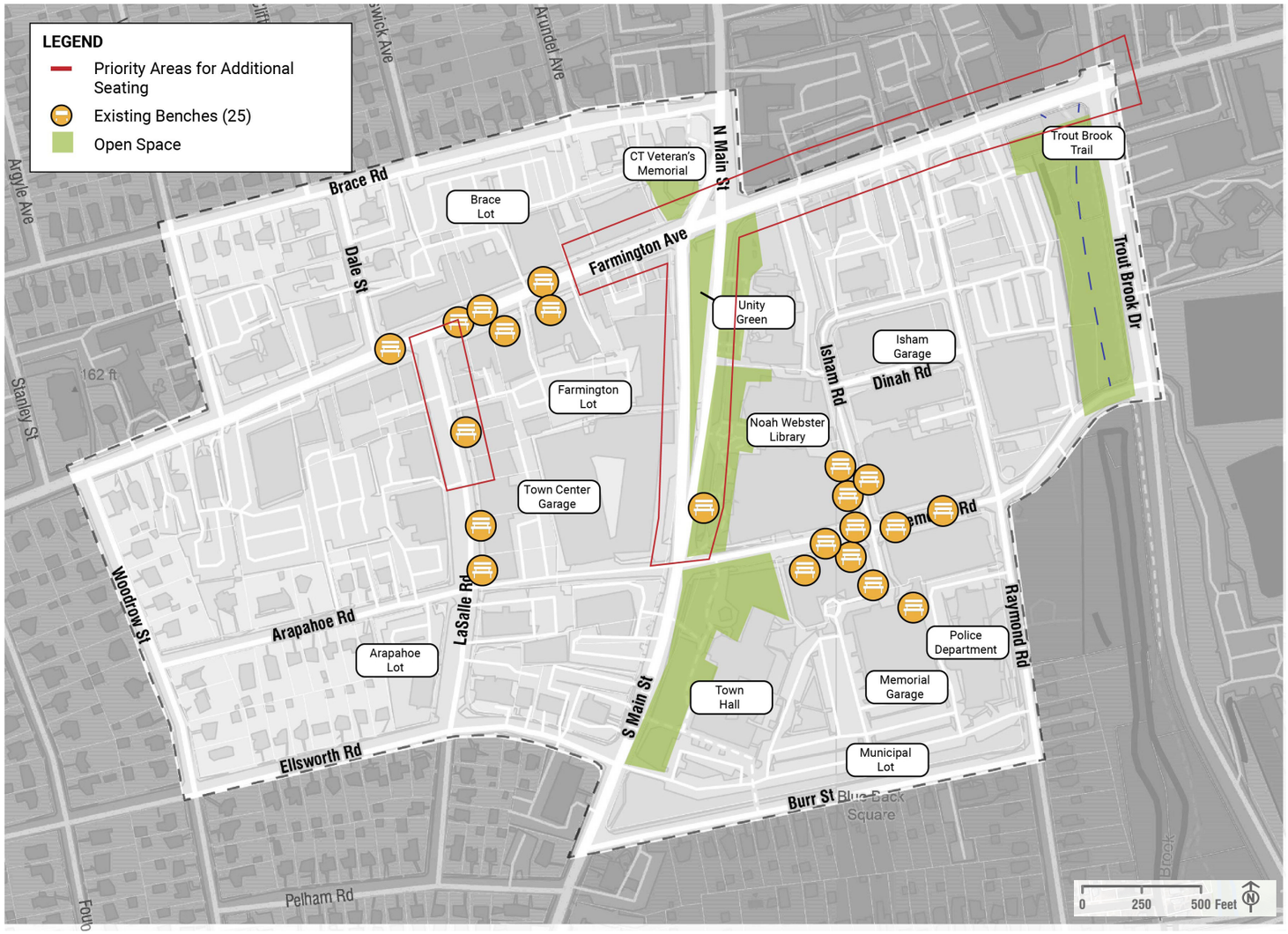
- **Placement.** A six-foot bench should be placed approximately every 100-feet in the high traffic areas
  - Clusters of benches appropriate for transit stops and intersections

Trash Receptacles

Future installations of trash receptacles should consider:

- Large-capacity format, ~300 gallon
- A below-grade sleeve

Seating Locations



Priority locations for benches include:

- **The western side of LaSalle Road.** This will serve businesses on LaSalle Road as well as folks walking to/from parking.
- **Main Street between Memorial Road and Farmington Avenue.** This will serve people who visit the library, as well as people who may want to walk from Blue Back Square over to the Town Center.
- **Farmington Avenue between Trout Brook Trail and Main Street.** This will serve people who may use the Trout Brook Trail and want to walk to the Center, including both the Town Center and LaSalle Road. This could also offer CTtransit users more places to wait comfortably.

Recommendation: Develop annual seating acquisition, installation, and maintenance plan.

SIDEWALK DESIGN AND MATERIALS





Cast in place concrete pavement can still be decorative, shown in these examples.

Sidewalks provide pedestrian access to virtually every activity in West Hartford Center. Walking and rolling are the foundation of travel even for people who primarily use another mode such as driving or transit; everyone who parks a car becomes a pedestrian to get to their final destination. The pedestrian experience will therefore play an important part in the functionality of West Hartford Center and the economic health of town.

The following are design guidelines for sidewalks and pedestrian treatments.

- **Through zone.** Sidewalks should have a "through pedestrian zone" that is kept clear of street furniture, landscape features, and other fixtures/obstructions. A minimum of six feet — preferably eight feet — should be reserved to allow for two people to walk comfortably side by side in compliance with the American Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.
  - Fixed objects, like light poles, utility poles, or other items affixed to the ground, should not be placed in this through zone.
- **Surfaces.** Sidewalk surfaces should be stable, firm, smooth, cleanable and slip-resistant. Select materials that can support this over time.
- **Materials.** Cast in place concrete is recommended. If unit pavers are preferred, they should always be set on a concrete base first to prevent frost heaving and differential settlement.
- **Driveways and curb cuts.** Sidewalk grade, paving pattern, color, and material should continue when driveways/curb cuts intersect. Where pedestrian circulation paths come in contact with vehicular circulation paths, crossing should clearly delineate a continuous pedestrian path (material change, contrasting color, or slightly raised surface).
- **Distinguishing characteristics.** Design features such as enhanced paving on walkways, landscaping, and lighting should be used to distinguish the pedestrian route from the vehicular route.
- **Plan for maintenance.** Sidewalks shall be well maintained, kept free of litter and cleaned regularly.
- **Tree wells.** Design tree pits to encourage tree growth while limiting sidewalk upheaval (See Tree Infrastructure section for more details). This can be done by right sizing the pit, providing a root barrier to direct growth, and choosing trees that are tolerant to urban conditions.

Recommendation: Assess utility and maintenance/repair of new LaSalle Road and Farmington Avenue sidewalks, then develop annual maintenance and reconstruction plan for other Center sidewalks

PUBLIC ART AND MEMORIALS

The Center already has great precedents of public art and memorials. From Noah Webster sculpture in front of the Library, to the murals that appear at special moments, to the Veteran's Memorial at the corner of Farmington Avenue and South Main Street, these works add to the spirit of place for the Center. Additional considerations for future public art include:

- **Consider a variety of scale.** Incorporating a variety of scales of installations throughout the center will further enrich and already vibrant public realm.
- **Integration with infrastructure.** Art can be integrated into public improvements such as benches, trash containers, street lights, signs, paving patterns, and gateways.
- **Promote and advertise.** Create a publicly available map, such as the one to the right, to unify and promote information related to public art and cultural moments in the Center.
- Opportunities for future public art include:
  - Intersection of Farmington Avenue and LaSalle Road.
  - Incorporating public art into Unity Green
  - Gateway opportunities, such as walking along Farmington Avenue from the Trout Brook Trail
  - Locations along newly widened sidewalk space on LaSalle Road

Recommendation: Develop plan for annual installation / replacement of one or more public art displays in the Center.



The current public art map for Kendall Center's Urban Park in Cambridge, MA proudly and clearly highlights local public art locations to encourage visitors to explore the neighborhood.

TREES

Street trees are important to West Hartford Center for a number of reasons, including environmental benefits, aesthetic benefits, and infrastructure benefits. Trees provide much needed shade and improve air quality. In terms of aesthetics, street trees align with the Town's goal to preserve open space and natural habitats. They also create a cocooned, shady environment in the Center that helps people feel comfortable, particularly on hot days. Finally, trees can help control stormwater by capturing water on leaves and branches and ultimately filtering it down to the soil.

The guidelines below govern how trees should be managed in West Hartford Center.

Tree Selection

- **Caliper.** New deciduous street tree planting at the back of curb should be a minimum of 3" caliper at installation.
- **Context.** Selection should consider tolerance to the urban condition as well as being native to the State of Connecticut.
- **Avoid monoculture.** A monoculture of any species should be avoided in case of disease and pest pressures.
- **Minimum two species.** For each block, a minimum mix of two urban tolerant tree species should be selected. (Sample of diverse street tree palette shown to the right)



Acer rubrum – Red Maple



Ostrya virginiana - Hophornbeam



Liquidambar styraciflua – Sweetgum



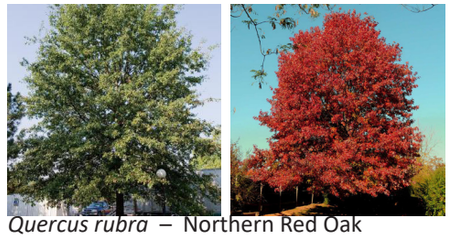
Nyssa sylvatica – Black Tupelo



Gleditsia triacanthos – Honeylocust



Quercus bicolor – Swamp White Oak



Quercus rubra – Northern Red Oak



Ulmus 'Accolade' – Triumph Elm

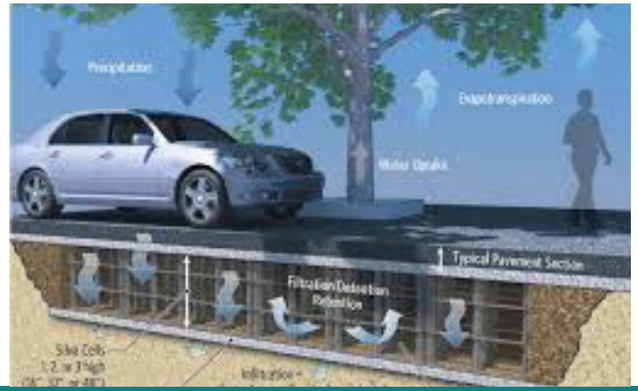


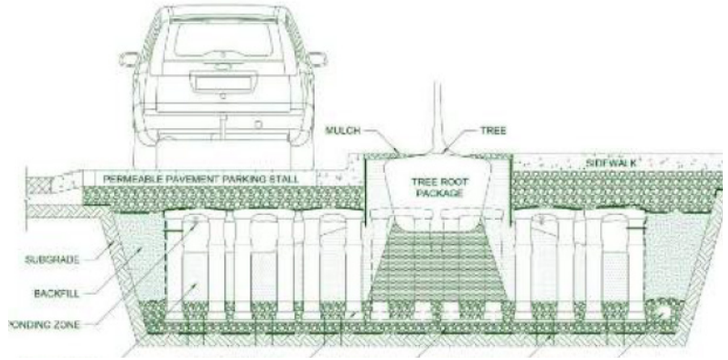
Cornus mas – Cornelian Cherry

A diverse native and adapted street tree palette for West Hartford Center and Blue Back Square

- **Maintenance.** Consider using non-fruiting species adjacent to heavily pedestrian trafficked areas. In areas with utility lines, consider smaller flowering trees that will not interfere.
- **Review.** All proposed tree planting shall be reviewed by DPW for maintenance requirements.
- **Median planting.** Drought and salt tolerant species need to be considered for medians as the conditions are challenging. Fastigiate and upright habit trees should be considered for trees planted in the median to avoid damage to branches by passing vehicles.

Tree Infrastructure





Soil cell diagram

Soil volume is the biggest factor whether street trees can thrive in the urban environment. It is critical that enough soil volume is provided for each tree in order to maximize the canopy. Without adequate soil volume a tree will never reach its full size. To support adequate soil volume, street designs in West Hartford Center should include:

- **Minimum soil volume.** Provide 700-1000 cubic feet of soil volume per tree where possible.
- **Breakout zones.** Where possible, breakout zones should be provided under the concrete sidewalk for the root zone to make its way to native soil areas to improve health and size of the trees. This can be accomplished using a soil cell system.
- **Soil cell system.** A soil cell system is an underground framework or scaffolding that holds up pavement slabs while providing for lightly compacted soil that supports large trees and absorbs runoff from rain, increasing air and water quality, reducing energy loads, mitigating heat island effect and nurturing trees for a long life in their communities. Research has shown that soil cell systems yield larger trees than structural soil.
- **Continuous soil trench.** In paved areas, it is recommended that a continuous soil trench connecting groupings of trees be implemented that allows the trees to share soil volume (via a soil cell system). This approach has the added benefit of storing and releasing stormwater.
- **Root barriers.** Tree pits in paved areas should utilize root barriers to prevent the heaving of sidewalks. Irrigation for tree establishment should be provided where possible.
- **Tree grate selection.** Tree grates should be used sparingly, and should be steel when needed. Tree grates should only be used where heavy foot traffic might cause compaction at the base of the trees and where the tree pit might infringe on the pedestrian right-of-way. ADA accessible tree grates should only be used in these areas.

Recommendation: Continue to regularly monitor tree health and plan for periodic replacements. Develop tree planting plan for new locations.

LOW-IMPACT DEVELOPMENT (LID)

Stormwater runoff is a major source of pollution in our urban environment. When rain falls on our streets, parking lots, and rooftops, it is unable to permeate the soil. Instead, it drains into West Hartford's gutters, drains, storm sewers, and ultimately nearby bodies of water, like the Trout Brook, carrying with it the collected pollution along its course, including trash, oil, metals, bacteria. It also can erode, damaging properties and driving up maintenance costs. To combat this, cities across the world have increasingly incorporated "green infrastructure" into their streetscapes and urban design, creating Green Streets.

From a regulatory perspective, the State of Connecticut requires municipalities to take action in reducing and cleaning stormwater before it enters the storm sewer. The General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater from Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4 General Permit) is the product of a mandate by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as part of its Stormwater Phase II rules in 1999. This general permit requires each municipality to take steps to keep the stormwater entering its storm sewer systems clean before that stormwater enters water bodies. Green infrastructure strategies are tools to assist in meeting the intent and goals of the MS4 permit.

Future street designs in West Hartford Center should therefore consider:

- **Existing Utilities**. There are considerable below grade utility constraints within the master plan limits. Water, sewer, electrical, gas, storm drainage and telecommunications systems pose significant challenges that must be planned and considered during design. Coordination among various utility service providers early on, is critical to understanding space constraints, maintenance accessibility, environmental impacts, as well as cost and resource allocation. Through innovative solutions related to LID and tree planting, future projects can balance the practical requirements of utilities with the aesthetic and social goals of streetscape design, enhancing the quality of life for town residents.
- **Design to mitigate flooding**. Although flooding is not a major issue in the Center, care needs to be taken in future drainage design efforts to ensure that water is not ponding or puddling in areas that people walk such as ADA curb cuts, public sidewalk, and at bus stops where people are loading and unloading.
- **Maintenance and feasibility**. Green infrastructure must be designed with maintenance in mind. Maintenance and operations strategies must consider the feasibility of what types of green infrastructure to pursue along South Main Street. Specifically:
  - Town crews will need a basic understanding of how these stormwater systems function, along with distinguishing between key plant species and unwanted weeds.
  - Snow storage and clearing along with future and existing subsurface utilities are important considerations in the location and management of green infrastructure systems.

Although there is a broad selection of green infrastructure tools when designing a green street, the character and context of the Center helps to focus the choices when designing for a functional and vibrant street. Green street design tools, which integrate stormwater control and management within the right - of - way, are a critical component of complete street design, ensuring the street remains usable and safe for all people during storm events, regardless of mode. Introducing green infrastructure on roadways helps reduce the impervious cover while filtering stormwater. Tools to deploy in West Hartford Center include:

- **Bioswales.** Bioswales are long channels designed to concentrate and convey stormwater runoff while removing debris and pollution. They consist of a

swaled drainage course with gently sloped sides and are intended to maximize the time water spends in the swale, aiding in the collection and removal of pollutants, silt, and debris

- **Rain gardens.** Rain gardens are shallow depressions planted with native plants designed to capture, temporarily hold, and filter stormwater back into the ground. They help reduce sewer flows, improve runoff water quality, and expand urban biodiversity.
- **Permeable pavement.** This type of pavement allows stormwater to infiltrate through its surface to the ground. This can be an alternative to traditional pavement.

Added benefits in implementing rain gardens and bioswales is the creation of vital habitat for pollinators and insects. Insects are experiencing an apocalyptic collapse in population due to numerous man-made factors which has a ripple effect on many other species. Through design and planning using the right plant species, green street design can provide (albeit small) habitat for critical species.

There is no "one-size fits all" when it comes to implementing green street strategies. Maintenance capacities, existing soil permeability, cost, and other factors will drive the decision-making process, and each project should be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Recommendation: Incorporate LID design principles in all roadway and parking lot projects, where logistically possible.



BIOSWALES AND RAIN GARDENS

- Vegetated depression designed to capture, treat, and infiltrate stormwater runoff.
- Adds street beautification as well as critical stormwater function.
- Can be applied in medians as well as roundabouts.



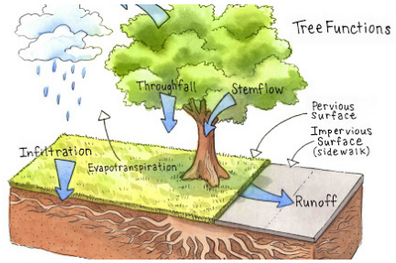
PERMEABLE PAVEMENT

- Infiltrates, treats, and/or stores rainwater where it falls.
- Multiple materials available: pervious concrete, porous asphalt, permeable interlocking pavers.
- Cost-effective were land values are high, flooding or icing are problems.



BULBOUTS

- A traffic calming measure that extends the sidewalk and reduces crossing distance for pedestrians.
- Can incorporate green infrastructure elements, such as landscaped rain gardens.
- Plant selection should thrive in inundated conditions, provide stormwater filtration.



URBAN TREE CANOPY

- Trees reduce and slow rainwater, intercepting precipitation with leaves and branches.
- Root systems can uptake large quantities of stormwater.
- Reduces summer temperatures and "urban heat island" effect, lowering energy use and providing relief for pedestrians.
- Cools and stores stormwater before impacting natural resources.

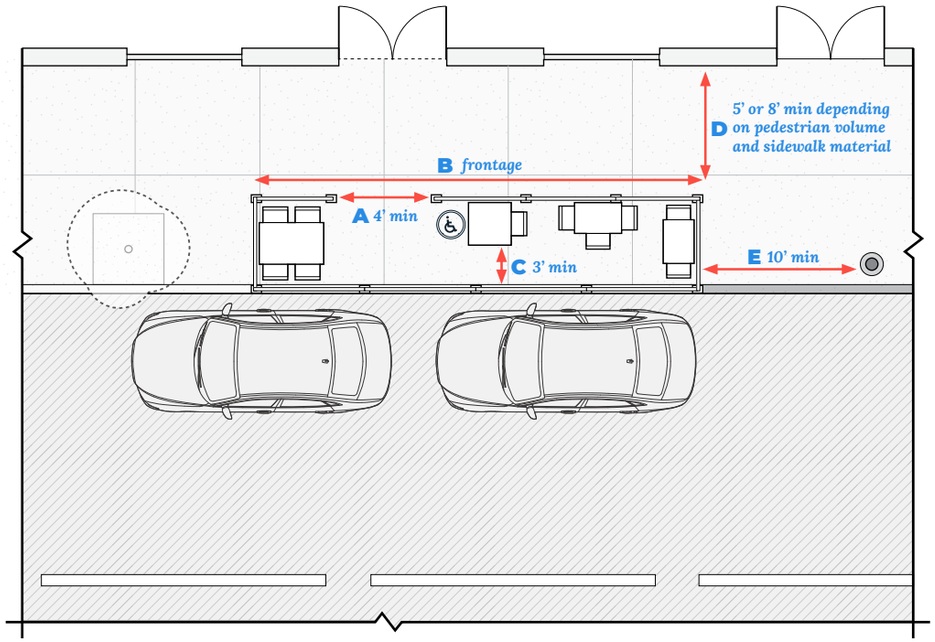


FLOW-THROUGH PLANTERS

- Landscaping structures that capture and treat runoff before filtering into an underdrain system
- Seasonal maintenance and upkeep are required.

OUTDOOR DINING

KEY DIMENSIONS DIAGRAM



A. Entrance to the dining area must be 4ft or more
B. Outdoor seating on sidewalks may not extend past the restaurant frontage unless permission has been obtained
C. A minimum 3ft clearance must be maintained throughout the dining area.
D. Pedestrian clear path of travel, see sidewalk rules above. 5ft or 8ft min depending on pedestrian volume and sidewalk material
E. Seating area must be at least 10ft away from fire hydrants

Best practice: Boston's requirements for sidewalk cafes.

Outdoor dining brings vibrancy to the streets, and can also create issues. In West Hartford Center, outdoor dining has been successful. To maximize the benefits from outdoor dining in West Hartford Center, "sidewalk cafe" design and installations should refer to the following guidelines[1].

- **Length.** The length of the cafe should correspond to the length of the restaurant frontage. The cafe should be as straight as possible.
- **Width.** The Town should provide guidance on the width of the cafe, which should not obstruct the 'clear path' of the sidewalk, or area for people walking and rolling to travel. A minimum width for this is six to eight feet[2].
  - Placement should avoid curb cuts/driveway access.
- **Maintain furnishing zone.** Roadway cafes should not use the furnishing zone, or area with benches, signs, plantings, etc., of the sidewalk.
- **Access.** Cafes should not interfere with access to infrastructure such as a parking meter.

All designs should comply with state accessibility requirements or receive a variance. For sample layouts that meet accessibility requirements, see Boston's Outdoor Dining Program.

Recommendation: Promulgate outdoor dining regulations and encourage more outdoor dining in other parts of the Center

1 Adapted from NYC's Dine Out and Boston's Outdoor Dining Program guidelines for the West Hartford context: https://www.diningoutnyc.info/rules/roadway/siting-setup-area and https://www.boston.gov/economic-opportunity-and-inclusion/outdoor-dining-program

2 NACTO sidewalk requirements require at least six feet of through zone. The NYC Dine Out guidelines recommend eight feet minimum clear path minimum, so this number is included as a reference.

PUBLIC RESTROOM



Public Restroom

During the outreach process there were concerns from business owners about public urination and littering at night along Farmington Avenue and LaSalle Road. A few participants offered the idea of providing public restrooms somewhere in the Center.

Public bathrooms as infrastructure are expensive to build and maintain, in New York City Parks, these modest buildings can run close to $2-3 million to construct. Other countries have pursued creative solutions to an age-old problem by utilizing existing bathrooms to meet this need. It is recommended that further study be provided to understand the maintenance capacity and requirements of these facilities. Considerations include:

- **Staff capacity.** Staff are needed to support the restrooms.
- **Hours of operation.** When will the restrooms be open and available? This does not have to be all day.
- **Available utilities.** Where can a restroom make use of available utilities such as electrical, domestic water and sewer.
- **Location.** Avoid proximity to residences. Consider any access to needed utilities.
- **Amenities.** Other key amenities that the restroom should provide include: soap, needle disposal boxes, and feminine products.
- **Design.** There are specific design and space choices that can combat dangerous behavior.
- **Management/format.** Options include:
  - Automatic public toilets. These facilities rely on self-cleaning features, but do require maintenance.
  - Comfort Stations. These require people to maintain them. Traditionally these include multiple stalls and accompanying facilities (sinks, changing stations).
  - Privately owned public spaces. These are established through development agreements, in a similar fashion to public balconies, for example.
  - Retail/private businesses. These could be offered compensations and/or resources such as staff for opening to the public at certain hours.
  - Existing Town buildings, such as Town Hall, that offer staffing.

Recommendation: Evaluate future needs for a public restroom in the Center, considering these criteria.

MOBILITY NETWORKS Walking Improvements

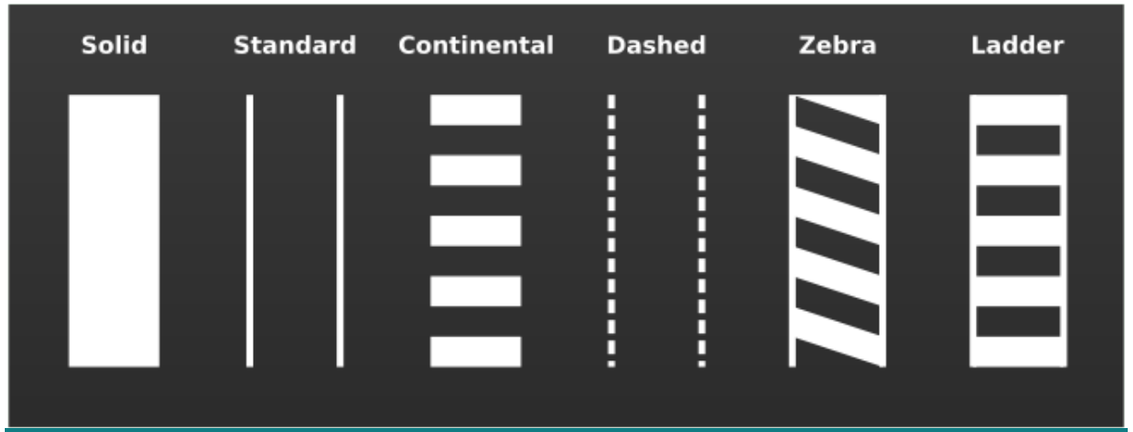
Based on a review of existing conditions, the study team identified the following high-priority locations to improve the consistency of safety and accessibility for pedestrians, and to promote West Hartford as a walkable downtown.



As discussed earlier, the walking environment is the backbone to any mobility system. Today, long crossings, some long block lengths, and faded crosswalks make for a challenging walking environment in some locations. The map to the left shows places where additional infrastructure may be needed. Considerations for these locations should include:

- **Curb extensions.** Curb extensions reduce the amount of time that people are walking in an active roadway.
- **Signalization.** At mid-block crossings, signals such as rapid rectangular flashing beacons (RRFBs) add heightened visibility to people walking across the street.
- **High-visibility crosswalks.** Studies have shown that the "continental," followed by the "ladder" style of crosswalk provide the most visibility for people walking.
- **Raised crossings.** Elevated pedestrian crossings both slow car traffic and provide a safer, more ADA-friendly travel path for people walking and rolling.
- **Leading pedestrian intervals (LPIs).** An LPI gives a person walking or rolling time to establish a presence in the crosswalk before vehicles are given a green indication in the same direction, which reduces conflicts between people and turning vehicles.

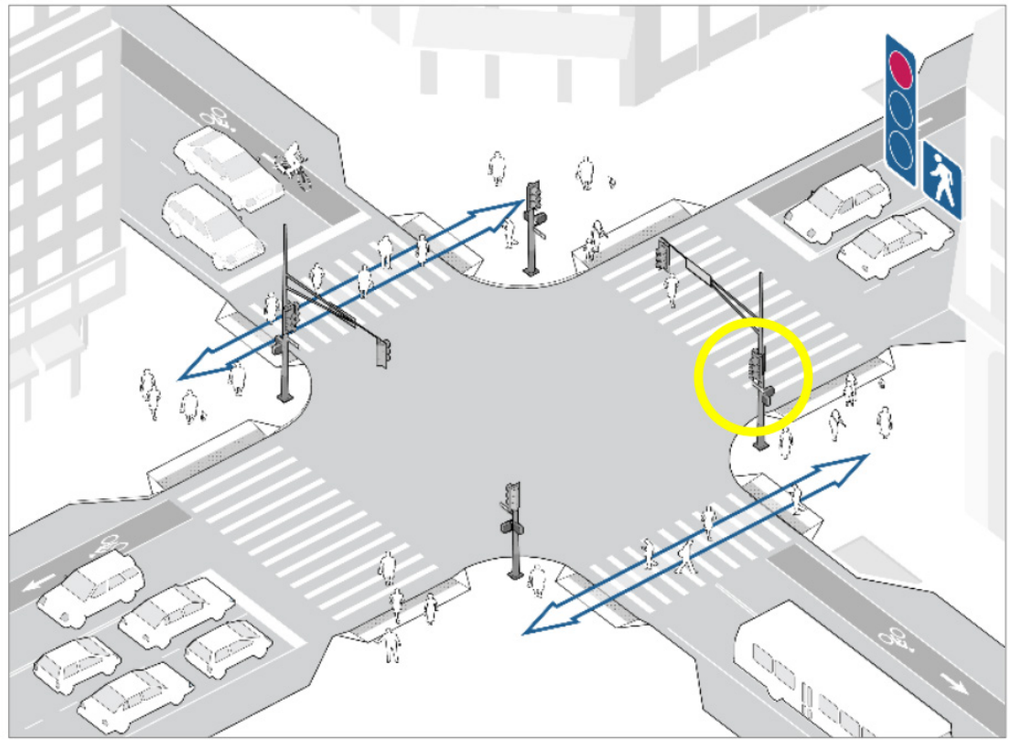
Recommendation: Develop a phased plan and designs to improve other crossings in the Center over the next five years.



"Continental" crosswalks are the most high-visibility for pedestrians, and are the Town standard. (Source: sfbetterstreets.org)



RRFBs provide signalization at otherwise unsignalized crossings.



LPIs allow crosswalk flow before a green light is given for general travel lanes.

Source: Arlington Vision Zero Tools and Guidelines, arlingtonva.us

Proposed Transit Access

Transit access is an important consideration for West Hartford Center. It is an affordable, sustainable, and efficient way for both employees and visitors to access the Center.

There have been investments into transit planning recently which the Master Plan should incorporate. The Connecticut Regional Council of Governments, CRCOG, recently completed the Metro Hartford RapidRoutes Transit Priority Corridors Study.

Recommendations for the study area include:

- **Upgrade and expand key facilities.** This includes the bus stop facilities at Farmington & Main and Farmington & Trout Brook. (See CRCOG-recommended elements to the right).
- **Bus stop consolidation.** Consolidation along Farmington would speed up service.
- **Continued coordination.** Future street designs should incorporate these adjustments in coordination with CRCOG and CT Transit.

The master plan should prioritize both making sure buses have the operational space that they need, but also that people can get to and from bus stops. This means that future street designs should coordinate with CTtransit to insure that buses and riders are appropriately accommodated. Considerations for bus stops (where space allows) include:

- **Providing appropriate space.** The bus needs space to pull in and out of the stop. Buses can be different sizes, so this need can vary.
- **Front door landing area.** Provide an accessible 8-foot (depth) by 10-foot (length) boarding area aligned with the front door of the bus.
- **Rear door clear zone.** Provide an accessible 5-foot (depth) by 10-foot (length) alighting area aligned with the rear door(s) of the bus. This may need to be larger if multiple sizes of buses are used on the routes
- **Path of travel.** Provide an accessible 5-foot pathway from the adjacent intersection to the front door landing area and shelter if present.
- **Amenity zone.** Create space, outside of the front door landing area, rear door clear zone, and path of travel where there are passenger amenities including benches and shelters.
- **Clear zone.** Ensure that along the entire length of the bus stop zone there should be no vertical elements within 18 inches of the face of the curb, to maintain accessibility and mitigate potential mirror conflicts.

Furthermore, transit access is not just about the service itself, it is also about walkability. Improving crosswalks, sidewalks, signal timing, and more will increase the reach of transit by making it more comfortable to walk to and from the bus.

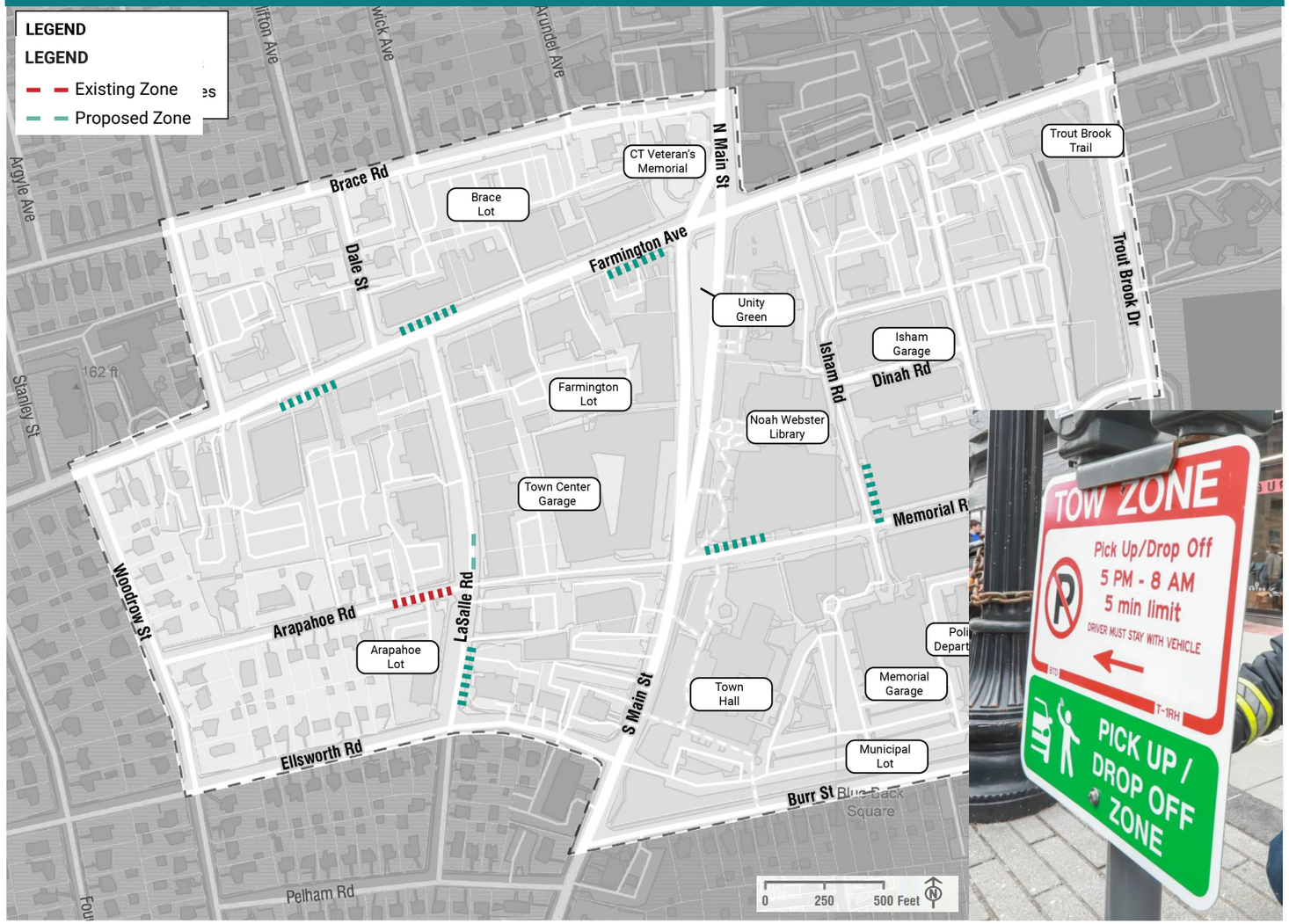
Recommendation: Implement recommended transit stop upgrades as soon as possible.



Elements of enhanced stops as recommended by CRCOG

Pick-Up/Drop-Off and Loading Zones

The following locations were identified as priority locations to integrate a designated area for pick-ups and drop-offs. These should include at least one parking space in the general area of the zones identified below.



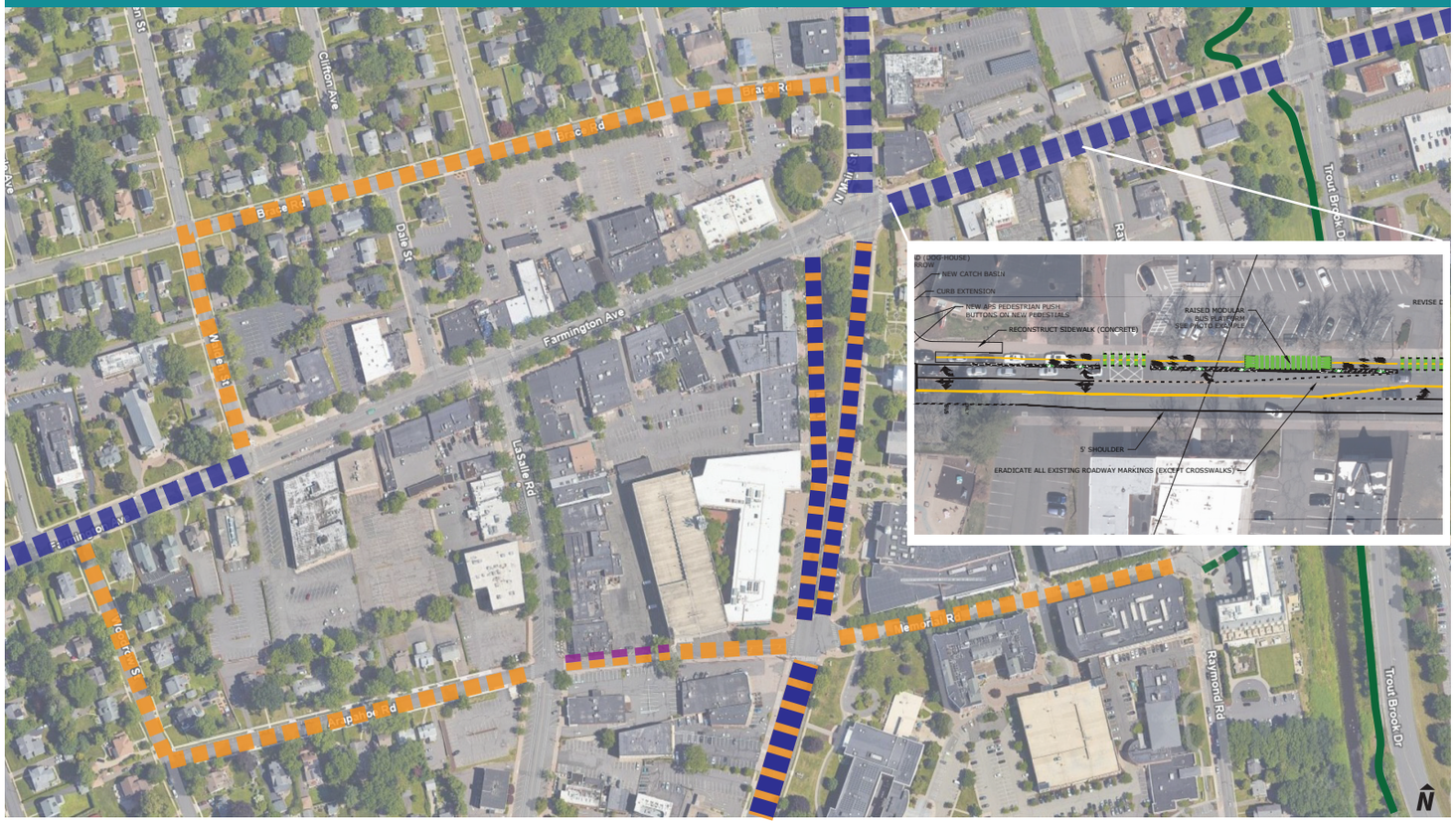
Establishing pick-up drop-off zones (PUDO) has multiple advantages, including mitigating double-parking, using a high-value (front-door) curb space to serve multiple people, and reducing congestion by giving rideshare vehicles a place to go. There is room to expand PUDO in West Hartford Center to capture more of these advantages. Considerations include:

- **Learn from Isham Road.** Continue to monitor and adjust the PUDO on Isham Road as needed. For example, the PUDO may require less curb space.
- **Integration with apps.** Work with apps such as Uber and Lyft to require drivers to use the PUDOs.
- **Universal access.** Where possible, establish PUDOs near curb ramps so that people who use a mobility device can easily use PUDO services.
- **Monitor and adjust.** If using on-street parking for PUDO becomes an undue burden on any one block or is going underutilized, adjust as needed (including time span of operation). A Center-wide review of existing loading zones may be required.

Recommendation: Plan to expand PUDO zones, especially in the Town Center, as soon as possible

Bike Infrastructure Network and Parking

Bicycle network connectivity concept for the Center.



West Hartford Center
Bicycle Connectivity Concept
3/22/24

- Proposed Shared Roadway
- Proposed Contraflow Buffered Bike Lane
- Proposed Bike Lane (Existing Shared Roadway)
- Proposed Bike Lane
- Proposed Sidepath
- Existing Pathway

FHI studio

West Hartford's recently completed Bicycle Plan and Facility Selection & Design Guide 2024 includes bicycle connections on South Main Street with a bicycle route just south of the study area on Boulevard. The plan also calls for shared bicycle facilities that circle the study area on Brace Road and Arapahoe/Memorial Road, with North/South Main and Farmington Avenue providing east-west connections beyond the Center. Both an additional bicycle lane on Farmington Avenue west of South Main Street and a shared facility on Memorial Road will connect to the Trout Brook Trail as well.

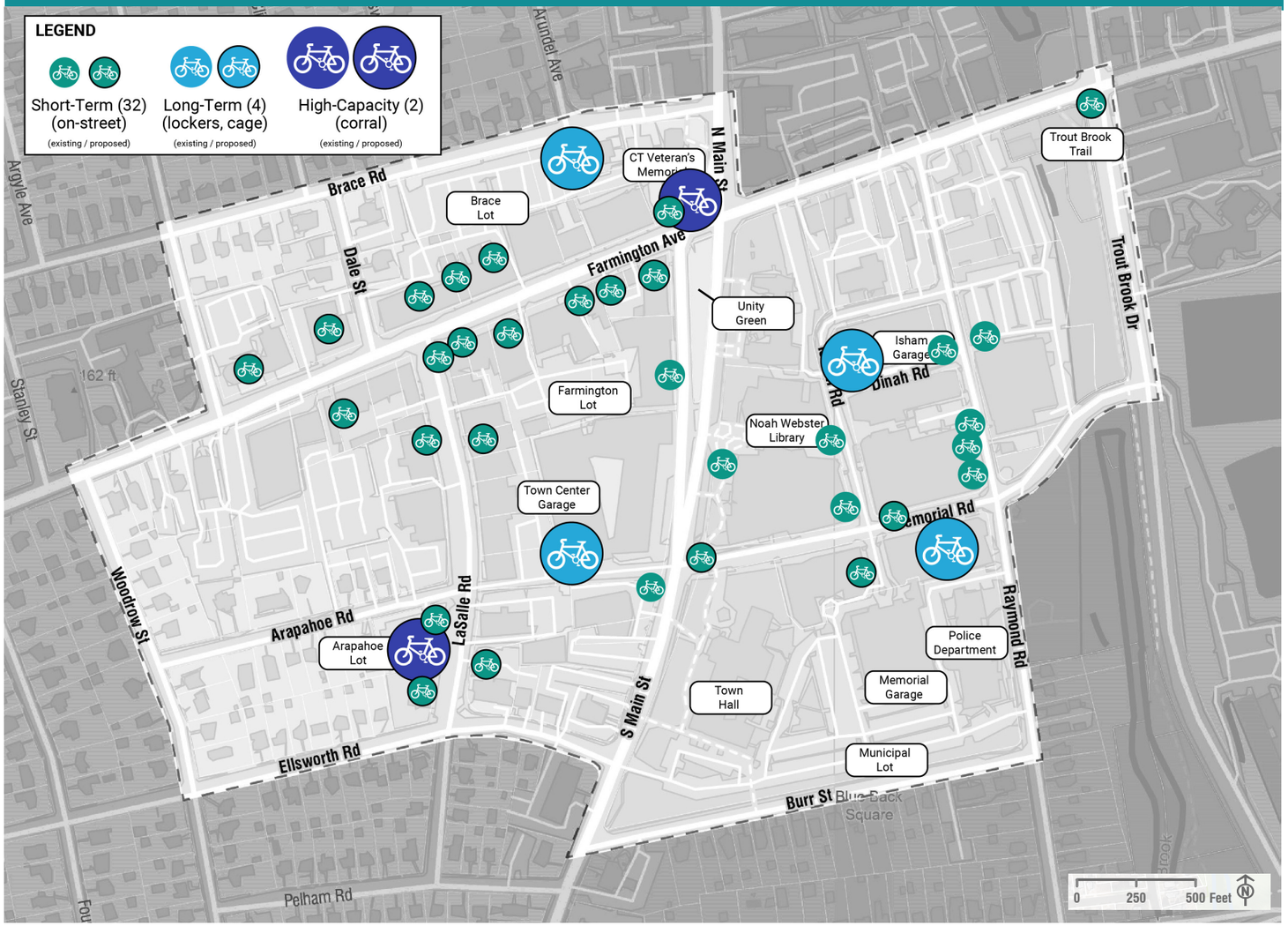
Well-placed, secure bicycle parking racks will encourage bicycle ridership and provide an attractive alternative to locking bicycles to trees and light poles. The map provides an overview of a proposed future bicycle parking system in West Hartford Center.

All bicycle racks should have the following minimum characteristics:

- **Support the bicycle in at least two places to prevent it from falling over**
- **Allow locking the frame and one or both wheels with a U-lock**
- **Securely anchored to the ground**
- **Resists cutting, rusting, bending, or deformation.**

Please see the Town Bicycle Plan and Facility Selection & Design Guide for more details on rack selection, site selection, etc.

Once the Farmington Avenue and LaSalle Road Streetscape projects are complete, close to 50 new bike racks will be available.



Long-Term bicycle parking prioritizes security and access, and should have the following characteristics:

- Signage/wayfinding
- Controlled access (i.e., lockers or a bicycle room)
- Safeguards for users such as lighting, cameras, or other visibility
- Weather protection

Short-Term bicycle parking prioritizes convenience and utility, and should have the following characteristics:

- Located in high-traffic areas with visibility
- Identified by a sign
- Weather-protected, when possible

High-capacity racks should meet the short-term requirements above and:

- Consider the ability to support the bicycle in two places, so that fallen bikes do not reduce rack capacity.
- Consider APBP spacing recommendations when looking at specific racks to ensure that a given rack can fit the number of bicycles it is designed for.
- Consider removable installations, such as bicycle corrals in parking spaces, for seasonal needs.

Recommendation: Add additional bike parking spaces along other Center streets over the next five years.

Mobility Hub

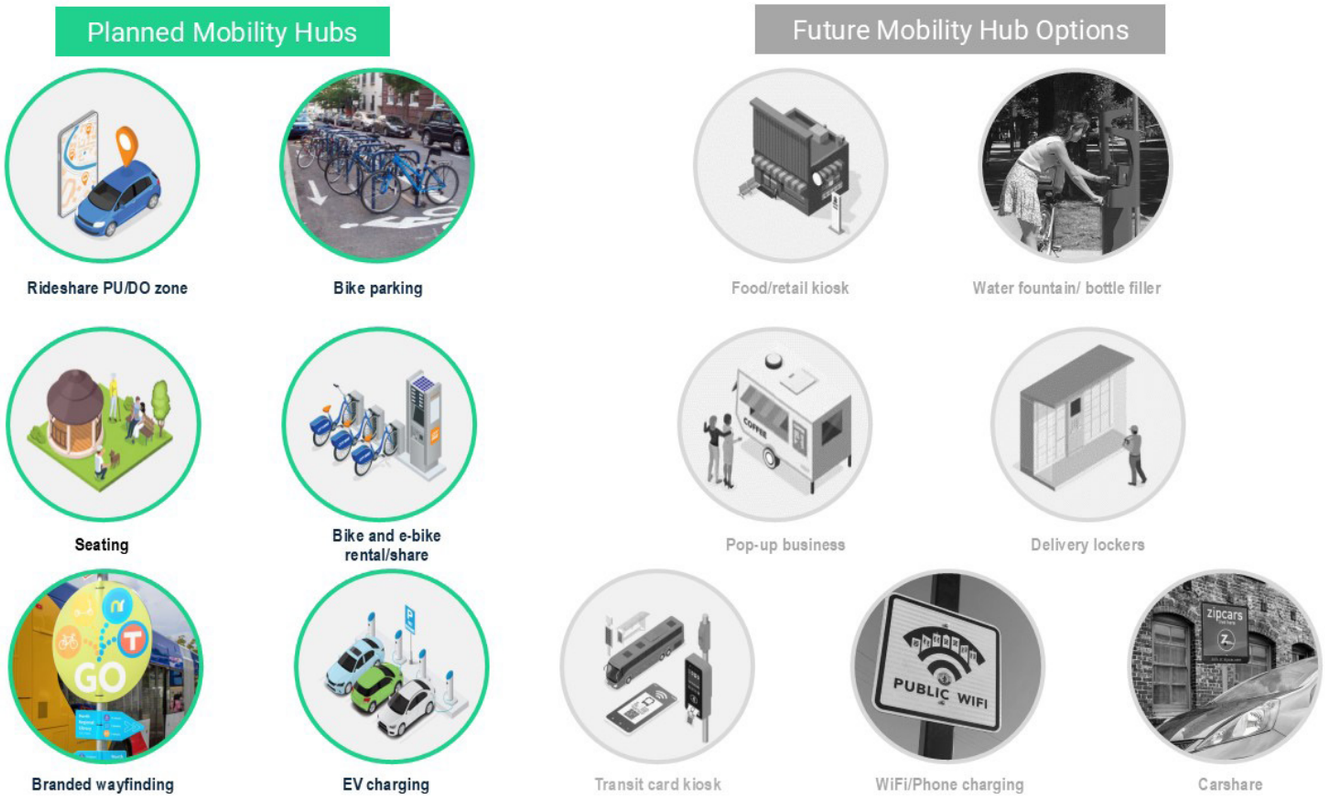
Mobility hubs are locations where transportation services are co-located, so that people can easily transfer from one mode to another. A simple mobility hub might include a bicycle rack at a bus stop, or EV charging near a rideshare pickup/drop off point. Co-locating these facilities is not only efficient for the user, it is also useful from an infrastructure standpoint. For example, providing excellent lighting, waiting areas, and a generally pleasant environment can be useful for people waiting for the bus, a car or scooter to charge, or a ride to pick them up.

In West Hartford, the multi-modal environment gives the Town the opportunity to foster multiple mobility hubs with features that meet Town needs. The Town has identified realistic mobility hub components, shown in the diagram to the right. These may not all appear at every mobility hub.

Different hubs have different components. In West Hartford, the Plan includes hubs at the following locations that offer existing sidewalk space and/or underutilized parking lot space:

- **Farmington Avenue at S. Main Street/Veterans' Memorial.** Key components include:
  - Location for future bikeshare/e-bikeshare
  - Branded wayfinding
  - Seating
  - Bus stop access

West Hartford mobility hub components

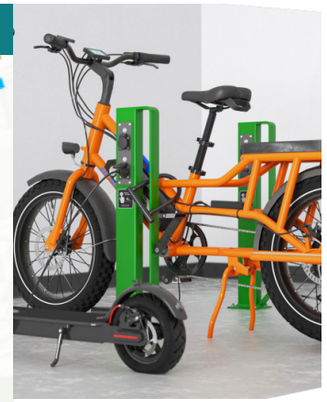


- **Arapahoe Lot.** Key components include
  - EV charging
  - Location for future bikeshare/e-bikeshare
  - Rideshare PUDO
  - Branded wayfinding

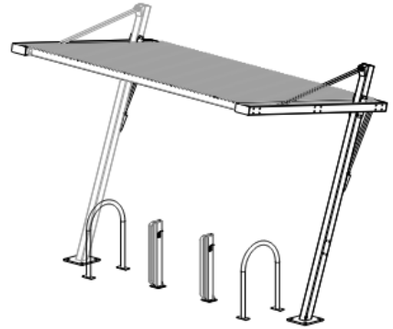
Recommendation: Monitor planned hubs' usage and consider expanding or installing additional hubs, potentially in Blue Back Square

Mobility hub locations capitalize on transit and proposed bicycle parking





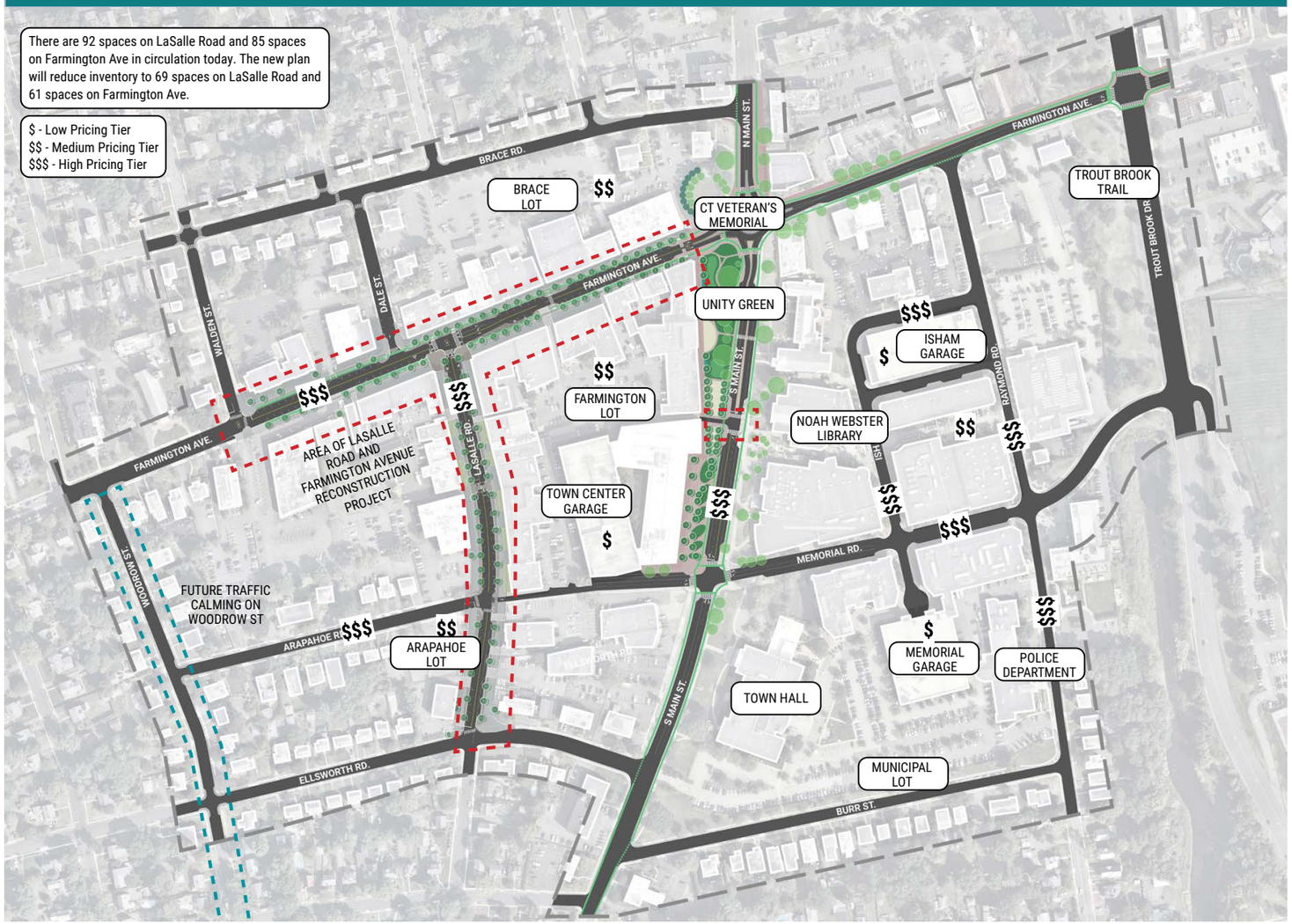






Parking Pricing Changes

Regardless of the location (i.e., convenience) of parking options in relation to downtown destinations or of the parking facility type, all parking pricing throughout West Hartford is the same today.



Varied pricing helps maintain availability by encouraging more turnover in core, higher priced spaces and providing the option for people to use cheaper options that are slightly farther. When a Town's most desirable public parking spaces are priced the same as those which are farther away, people naturally hunt for spaces in congested areas first. By making the most desirable spaces more expensive and those further away slightly less expensive, a varied pricing system creates availability while dispersing parking demand from core locations such as LaSalle Road at Farmington Avenue. Spreading out the parking demand helps people maximize their use of the system, and can also support freeing up street space to be used for other things.

Specifically, pricing recommendations for West Hartford Center include:

- **Adjusting price to match demand.** The garages and on-street spaces with the most demand should be more expensive, while less desirable parking locations such as the Brace Road Lot and the Town Center Garage are less expensive.
- **Make incremental change.** Pricing does not need to be extreme. Changes can be as simple as $0.25 per hour to begin.
- **Monitor and adjust.** Continue to perform parking counts and adjust price as needed to maintain availability and maximize the utilization of underutilized resources.

Recommendation: Pilot new parking pricing as soon as possible, then monitor and adjust.

Special Parking Types

ADA Compliant



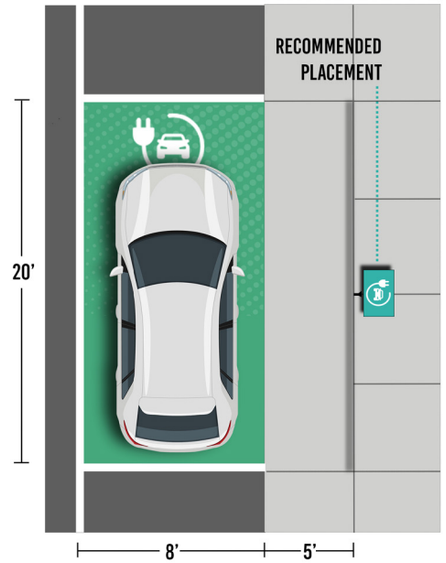
Prioritizing accessible parking access in West Hartford Center is important for many stakeholders, and can be achieved through multiple mechanisms. Dedicated spaces are part of the LaSalle Road and Farmington Avenue reconstruction projects and should be included elsewhere in the Center, even prior to other roadway projects.

Considerations for expanding accessible parking include:

- **Assessment.** An assessment of existing accessible spaces and their dimensions in relation to state guidelines, identify locations requiring an update.
- **Space conversation.** Identifying gaps in the existing inventory and determining potential locations where standard spaces could be converted to an accessible space with updated striping and regulation signage to meet the recommended ratio of accessible spaces in the public inventory (both on- and off-street). ADA recommends one accessible space per 25 as a general guideline. Spaces should be targeted towards commercial destinations.
- **Install supportive infrastructure.** Where feasible, dedicating sidewalk ramps should be provided; this strategy should be implemented on a block-by-block basis. This strategy would ideally coincide with planned sidewalk or roadway improvements. Sign acquisition and installation must coincide with the introduction of an accessible space.
- **Availability methods.** Prime ADA spaces are often occupied all-day by a single user. Where this conflicts with other short-term users, parking pricing should be considered to encourage longer stays in more appropriate places, such as in off-street lots.
- **Public map.** Develop and update a public, online GIS map of accessible spaces in a simple to read style

Recommendation: Conduct a Center-wide ADA parking audit and develop a plan for meeting guidelines, on and off-street.

EV Charging

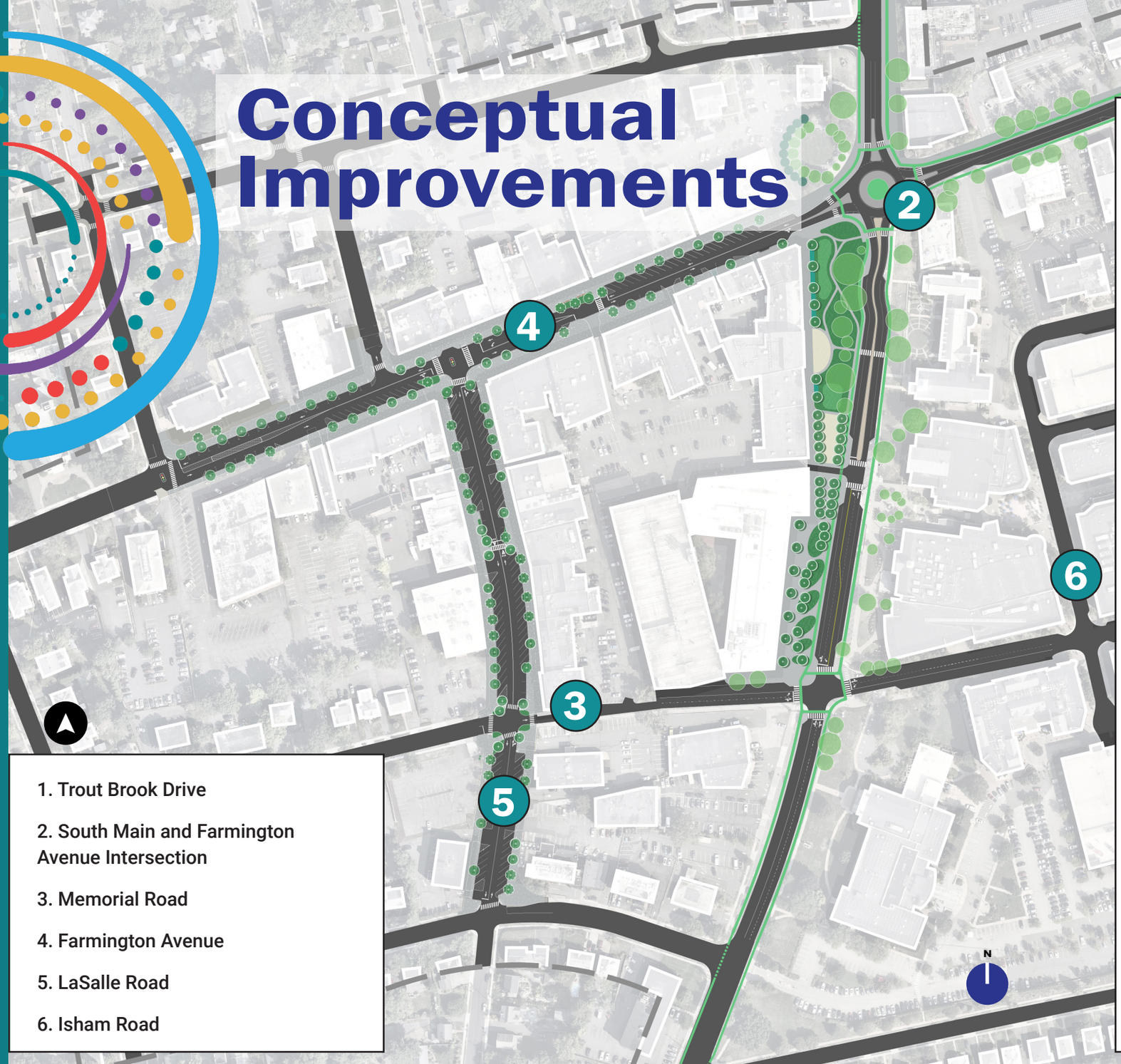


West Hartford's recently completed Electric Vehicle Infrastructure plan identifies the Town Center as a location of focus for investing in EV charging opportunities.

The EV plan notes that installing chargers in Town-owned parking in Blue Back Square / Town Center is a priority. Specific locations include the Arapahoe and Town Hall parking lots and on-street on Isham Road. The Plan includes site design guidelines which future installations should follow.

Recommendation: Add EV charging spaces in the Center.

Conceptual Improvements



1. Trout Brook Drive
2. South Main and Farmington Avenue Intersection
3. Memorial Road
4. Farmington Avenue
5. LaSalle Road
6. Isham Road

The approach to the West Hartford Infrastructure master plan places significant emphasis on pedestrian safety and sustainability, and overall on creating more space for people in the Center.

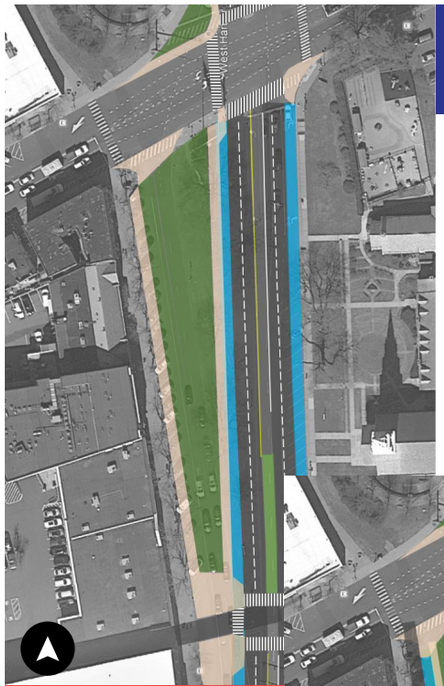
To support this design direction, the team developed concept-level designs for many of the key streets in the core, including for Farmington Avenue and LaSalle Road, which have since gone into construction design. However, this section of the document explores the application of these ideas to other locations as well.

A key idea that came out of the public engagement process was the desire for more expansive green space. The master plan includes a series of concept design ideas that includes options for anchoring Unity Green to the Center business core to create new and more usable green open space.

These ideas reflect the voices of West Hartford residents. This participatory approach included public forums and collaborative workshops, where citizens contributed their ideas and feedback, particularly concerning pedestrian needs and safety. By fostering a sense of ownership and collaboration, the plan aims to reflect the community's values and aspirations, ultimately outlining improvements that will enhance the quality of life for all. The result is a blueprint that not only focuses on pedestrian safety and preserving the functionality of Center destinations but also harmonizes with the natural environment and creates more quality open spaces for dining, recreation, and enjoyment.

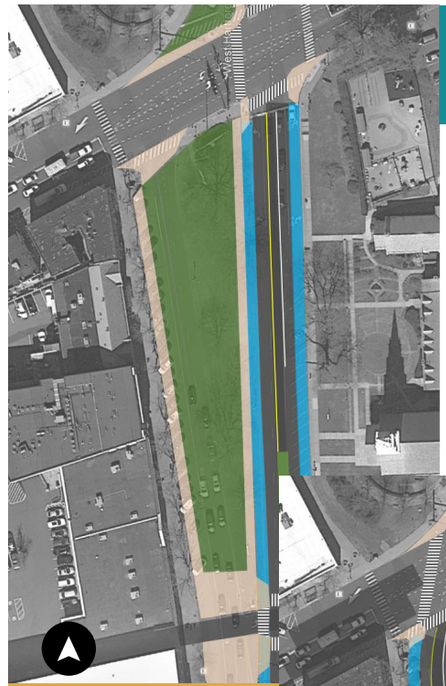
CONCEPT OPTIONS South Main Street and Unity Green

Unity Green and South Main Street offer an opportunity to redesign the space to better meet community goals. Though further study is needed, the plan includes some concepts that help re-envision the space by re-conceiving the current one-way couplet around Unity Green as a normal street to one side or the other. This "road diet" is similar to what has already been dieted on North Main Street and is supported by traffic counts.



A. Two-Way Arterial

Unity Green can be directly connected to Main Street businesses if northbound Main becomes two way with a roundabout (or signal) at Farmington, but business access and parking would be across Unity Green.



B. Two-Way Road Diet

If Main Street were dieted when the southbound lanes were removed, most of Unity Green could be kept while also widening it towards Main Street's businesses.



C. Two-Way with Front Door Parking

Retaining a small carriageway street in front of Main Street businesses results in a smaller Unity Green, unless Main Street is dieted.



D. Unified Green- Two-Way Relocated

Main Street can be realigned two-way into its current southbound bore, resulting in the widening and attaching of Unity Green to the church grounds, significantly expanding continuous open space.

A. Two-Way Arterial

BENEFITS	CONSIDERATIONS
• More accessible Unity Green • Shorter pedestrian crossings • New sidewalks along S. Main St. • New on-street parking along S. Main St. • New signalized parking lot entrance from S. Main St.	• Impact to eastern edge of Unity Green • Relocation of street parking across Unity Green • Road capacity may be excessive

B. Two-Way Road Diet

BENEFITS	CONSIDERATIONS
• Bigger and more accessible Green • Much shorter pedestrian crossings • New sidewalks along S. Main St. • New on-street parking along S. Main St. • New signalized parking lot entrance from S. Main St. • Safe pedestrian crossing from the library	• Relocation of street parking across Unity Green

C. Two-Way with Front Door Parking

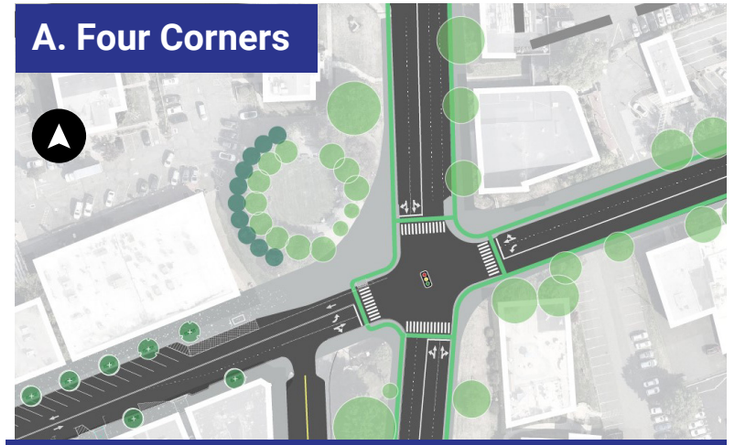
BENEFITS	CONSIDERATIONS
• Retains front door parking on S. Main St. • Much shorter pedestrian crossings • New sidewalks along S. Main St. • New on-street parking along S. Main St. • New signalized parking lot entrance from S. Main St.	• Slightly smaller Unity Green • Turns to/from retained street front parking

D. Unified Green- Two-Way Relocated

BENEFITS	CONSIDERATIONS
• Significantly expanded Green • Shorter pedestrian crossings • New on-street parking along S. Main St. • New signalized parking lot entrance from S. Main St.	• Significant change to Unity Green • Relocation of street parking in front of churches and library across Unity Green

Farmington Avenue at North/South Main Street

A. Four Corners



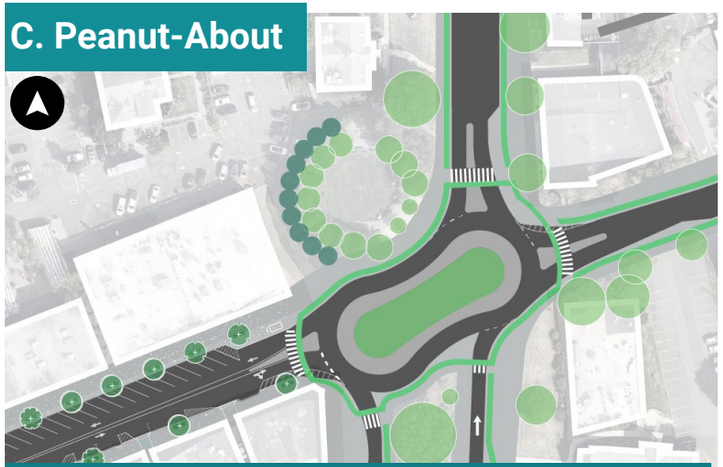
A traditional intersection design would move southbound Main east of Unity Green, resulting in a more compact intersection with Farmington. The abandoned southbound roadway could become a slow carriageway for businesses.

B. Traditional Roundabout



A traditional roundabout could retain front-door vehicular access for businesses by flipping the direction of current southbound Main, while northbound becomes a two-way roadway

C. Peanut-About



An elongated roundabout can maintain the current one-way pair around Unity Green while offering higher capacity and slower speeds than a signal, as well as a new central green.

D. Connected Green



Unity Green can be directly connected to Main Street businesses if northbound Main becomes two way with a roundabout (or signal) at Farmington, but business access and parking would be across Unity Green.

Farmington Avenue and South Main Street is a challenging intersection in the Center, with documented safety issues and public concerns. A future redesign is warranted; some potential concepts are shown.

A. Four Corners

BENEFITS	CONSIDERATIONS
• Simplifies intersection operations • Shorter pedestrian crossings • Protected bicycle lanes • Wider sidewalks • Expanded public outdoor space	• Shifts Unity Green slightly westward

B. Traditional Roundabout

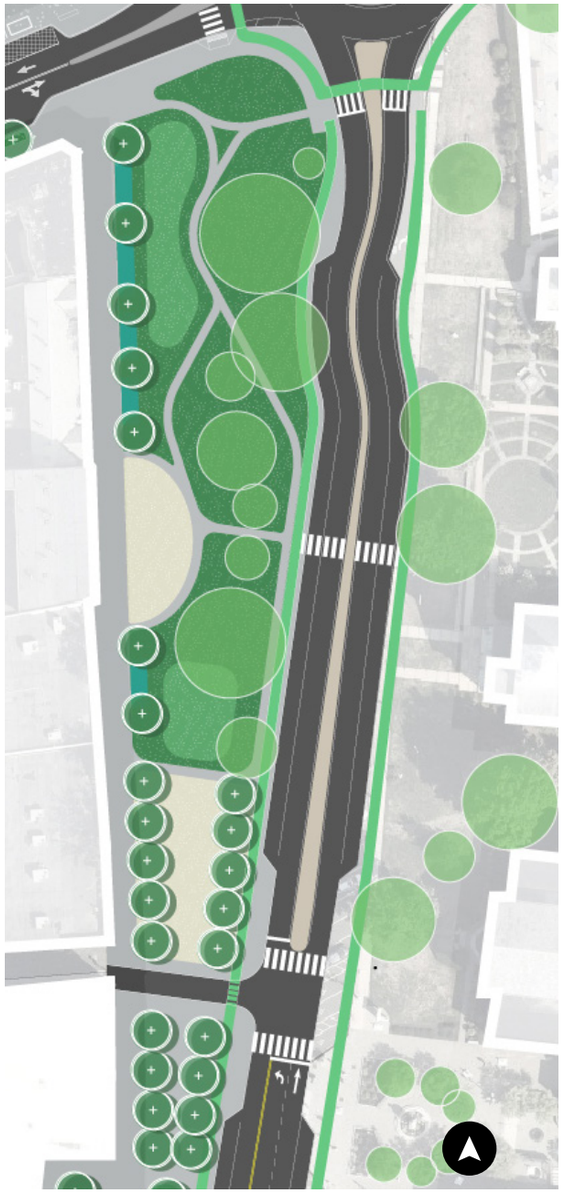
BENEFITS	CONSIDERATIONS
• Shorter vehicular movements • Potential expansion of Unity Green • Protected bicycle lanes • Wider sidewalks • Expanded public outdoor space	• Unsignalized “yield” crosswalks

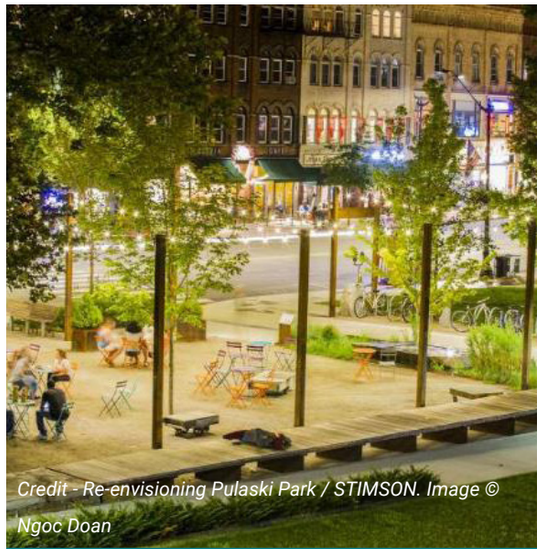
C. Peanut-About

BENEFITS	CONSIDERATIONS
• Slower vehicular movements • Shorter pedestrian crossings • Preserves most of Unity Green • Protected bicycle lanes • Wider sidewalks • Expanded public outdoor space	• Unconventional layout • Unsignalized “yield” crosswalks • Adjustment to new traffic patterns

D. Connected Green

BENEFITS	CONSIDERATIONS
• Slower vehicle movements • Shorter pedestrian crossings • Potential expansion of Unity Green • Protected bicycle lanes • Wider sidewalks • Expanded public outdoor space	• Front door parking displaced across Green • Unsignalized “yield” crosswalks • Land ownership





Credit - Re-envisioning Pulaski Park / STIMSON. Image © Ngoc Doan

Inspiration for a future, activated Unity Green



Credit - Re-envisioning Pulaski Park / STIMSON. Image © Ngoc Doan

A Unified and Connected Green

A new unified green has the opportunity to create a new gateway to the Center and further pedestrianize this area.

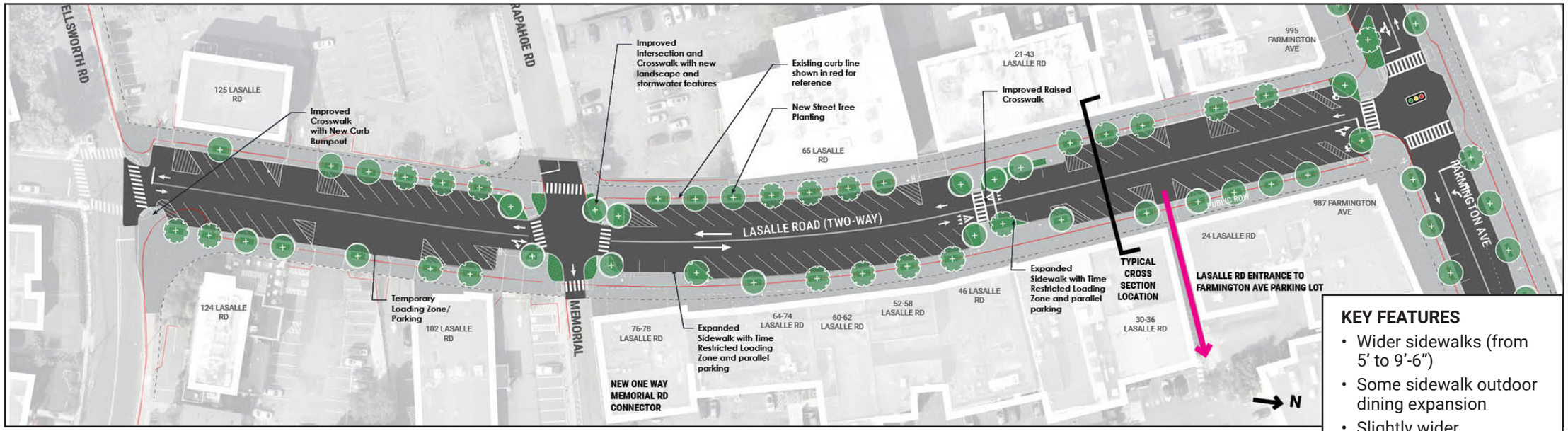
Creating a unified open green space unlocks many recreational opportunities including:

- Outdoor summer stage
- Small nature inspired playground
- Outdoor dining plazas
- Open lawn areas for passive recreation
- Pollinator gardens
- Green Infrastructure
- Opportunities for Public Art

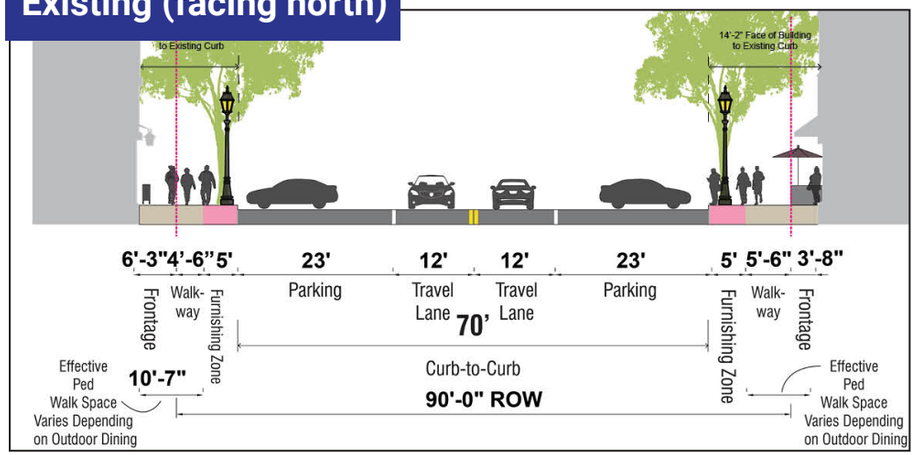
South Main Street

As part of reducing South Main Street's one-way pair to a more compatible village street with expanded Unity Green, recurrent safety concerns about exiting the Farmington Parking Lot resulted in the recommendation to reverse the lot's entry and exit locations. The current exit has poor visibility of crossing pedestrians, while the current entrance on Farmington often requires drivers to pause in traffic waiting for those walking along Farmington. By flipping directionality, drivers exiting onto Farmington can patiently clear the pedestrian zone before engaging with vehicle traffic, while those entering from Main clearly see pedestrians and have room to pause. Combined with broader changes to South Main, the entry to the Farmington Lot can function safely with extra space to yield as a result of combined north and southbound movements into the northbound roadway space, creating a dramatic new Unity Green that is directly accessible and activated without today's barrier of passing one-way traffic.

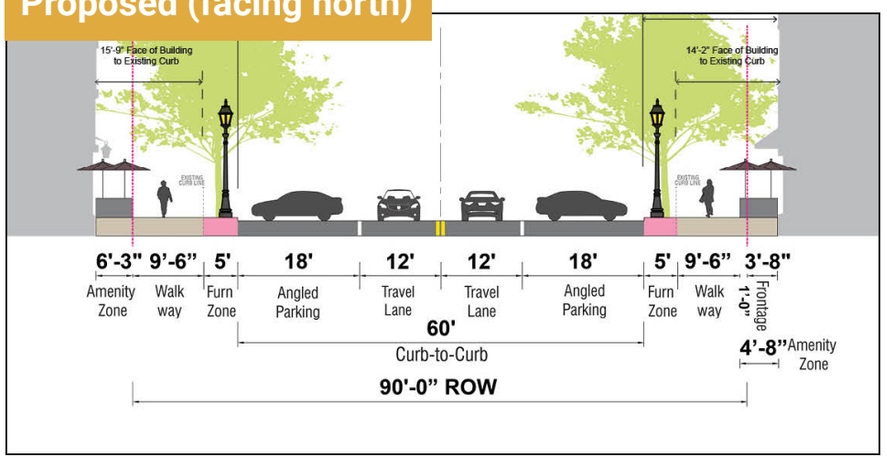
PROPOSED CONCEPT: LASALLE ROAD



Existing (facing north)



Proposed (facing north)



KEY FEATURES

- Wider sidewalks (from 5’ to 9’-6”)
- Some sidewalk outdoor dining expansion
- Slightly wider landscaped area than today
- New and more street trees (36 existing to 52)
- Angled/parallel parking (107 pre-pandemic to 91 spaces)
- Slightly narrowed travel lanes
- Loading zones
- Reduced crossing distances
- Raised crosswalk

LASALLE

Like Farmington Avenue, the concept for LaSalle Road is going into construction. It incorporates a similar narrowing of traffic lanes but retains much of its angled parking, with mid-block areas benefiting from wider sidewalk space due to converting to parallel parking, which facilitates loading and PUDO.

Even where angled parking is retained, sidewalk space is widened, allowing for improved outdoor dining space, sidewalk amenities, trees, and more landscaping.

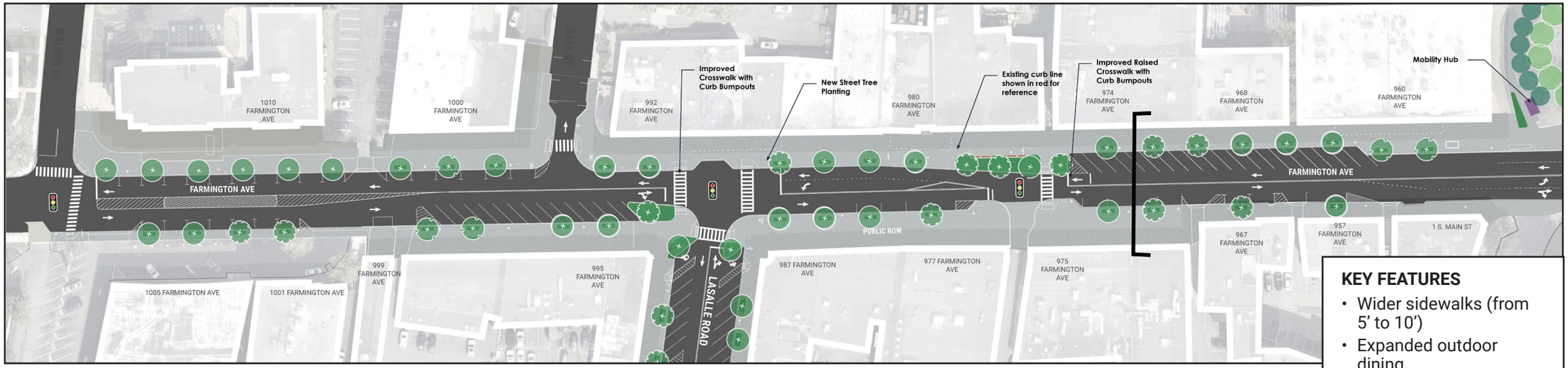
Importantly, in response to community request, the design includes the ability to close the street for events via temporary bollards.



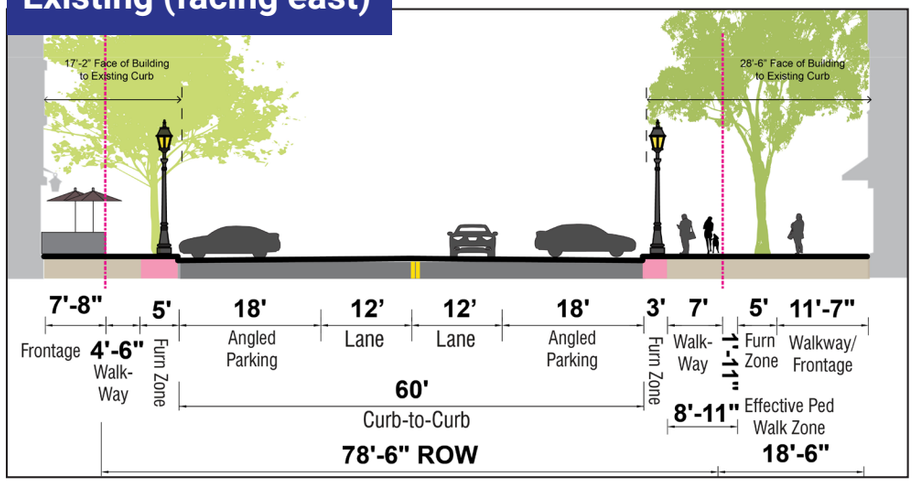




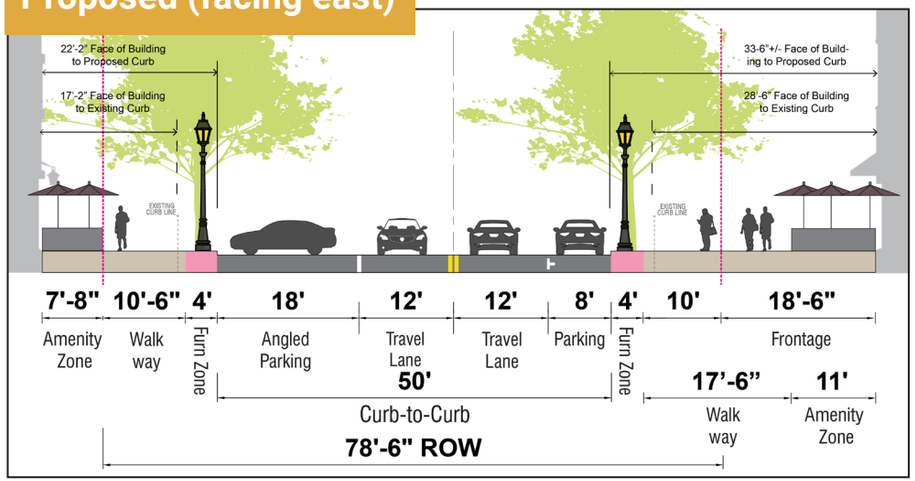
PROPOSED CONCEPT: FARMINGTON AVENUE



Existing (facing east)



Proposed (facing east)



KEY FEATURES

- Wider sidewalks (from 5’ to 10’)
- Expanded outdoor dining
- New and more street trees (38 to 46)
- Angled/parallel parking (67 pre-pandemic to 66 spaces)
- Opportunity for loading zones
- Reduced crossing distances
- Traffic calming- raised crosswalks

FARMINGTON

The concept for Farmington Avenue between Main Street and Walden Street has been elevated to construction documents, and the Town has secured funding for its reconstruction in 2026.

The design takes advantage of excessive space between the current curbs, given that no more than two to three lanes are needed for current and projected traffic flows. On-street parking is still important to retain, but narrowing travel lanes results is more walking space as well as more outdoor dining. Crosswalks are shorter, more plantings can be added, and many sidewalk amenities will be installed, including bike parking, benches, and trees with engineered tree pits.





Implementation Plan

Implementation of this plan has already begun, with recent circulation changes, ancillary studies, and street design plans underway or complete. These include:

- The return of LaSalle Road to two-way circulation.
- The opening of Memorial Road one-way from LaSalle Road, continuing into the existing two-way section.
- The completion of West Hartford's Electric Vehicle Servicing Strategy.
- Reconstruction of Farmington Avenue and LaSalle Road.

There will be many more steps to implement the recommended changes over the coming years, including continuing to coordinate with the community along the way. It will be important to consider Town staffing needs in order to keep up with the demands of these proposed projects.

Vital next steps to help this plan be fully realized over a realistic period of time, include:

- **Coordination with relevant parties.** Various parties such as the Town Council, the West Hartford Center Business Association, West Hartford Chamber of Commerce and key boards and commissions such as the Pedestrian and Bicycle Commission and the Design Review Advisory Committee, will be needed to provide insight and feedback as the Town finalizes details. Communication with appropriate representatives and decision-makers should take place early to maintain transparency, manage expectations, set timelines, and collaborate towards a path forward.
- **Ongoing Public and Business Engagement**. Many of the changes proposed will require continuing coordination with the public as well as key West Hartford Center stakeholders such as specific businesses.
- **Pilots and reporting**. Testing solutions through temporary pilots that last for several months should be considered to educate, test new changes, allow monitoring, and then report back in a public manner. Pilots can help make projects better while increasing user acceptance and support. Changes to parking pricing, lighting, or wayfinding are possible pilot candidates.
- **Parking rate evaluations.** As the Center changes and shifts, the Town can continue to consider and adjust parking rates to maintain availability in the system.

The following pages identify high-level steps that the Town and appropriate partners can pursue to initiate and maintain momentum coming out of this process. The near-, mid-, and long-term milestones can be used to measure progress. They also provide some insight into how different elements may interact or need to be phased relative to one another. Finally, the implementation plan also includes relative cost.

Implementation Plan

Item	Cost	Status	Short-Term (1-3 years)	Mid-Term (3-5 years)	Long-Term (5+ years)
Urban Design Improvements					
Gateway Elements	$$$$		Consider gateway treatments at Farmington Avenue / Main Street, Memorial Road/ Main Street, Farmington / Walden, and Trout Brook Drive / Memorial Road in future street concept designs.		
Street Furniture	$$$$	Upgraded street furniture (benches, bollards, power accessibility) are part of LaSalle & Farmington project.	Review additional needs identified in this Plan and program installations. Use standards in this plan to guide installation.	Maintain & monitor amenities and add as needed. Annual add/repair benches.	Consider other features, such as public toilets, electronic information kiosks, micro-mobility charging, etc.
Streetscape Materials	n/a	Observe performance of LaSalle and Farmington materials and change or implement guidelines developed in this master plan on additional Center streets.			
Public Art and Memorials	$$$$		Develop plan and budget for annual replacement/ repair of existing public art or addition of new art.	Begin annual public art enhancement program.	Monitor and adjust.
Trees / Tree Placement	$$$$	Trees that are past their useful life are being removed. New, resilient plantings are part of Farmington & LaSalle project.	Develop phased tree replacement and planting plan for the entire Center.	Continue to upgrade and maintain trees according to tree planting plan.	
LID	n/a	Implement guidelines developed in this master plan as part of any future roadway or parking lot improvements.			
Outdoor Dining	$$$$		Create and apply outdoor dining standards in terms of maintenance.	Monitor and promote additional outdoor dining in the Center.	Monitor and adjust standards as needed.
Public Restroom	$$$$		Evaluate future needs for a public restroom.	Secure funding & install if warranted.	Monitor need and consider (new) installations if warranted.

Item	Cost	Status	Short-Term (1-3 years)	Mid-Term (3-5 years)	Long-Term (5+ years)
Mobility Recommendations					
Circulation Changes (LaSalle two-way, Memorial Road opening, Farmington Lot entry/exit reversal)	**$**$$$	LaSalle - Complete Memorial - In Progress Farmington Lot - TBD	Monitor LaSalle & Memorial usage. Finalize Farmington Lot circulation plan.		
Walking Improvements (Various locations within Town Center)	**$$**$$	Program improvements outside of LaSalle and Farmington project over next five years.	Integrate improvement locations into asset management planning. Consider piloting stanchion and paint-based upgrades.	Pursue more substantial investments such as curb extensions and signalization at key crossings.	Continue to maintain and install upgrades as needed.
Transit	**$$**$$		Coordinate with CTtransit on stop adjustments/ upgrades planned for Farmington Avenue.	Coordinate with CTtransit for enhanced shelters on Farmington at Main.	Monitor and adjust infrastructure at bus stops as needed.
Expanding Pick-Up / Drop-Off (PUDO) Zones	**$**$$$	Monitor existing PUDO location on Isham Road and adjust duration or hours of operation if needed.	Consider implementing first 10 minute free at all on-street parking. Review additional dedicated loading zones and select a couple for pilot.	Pilot additional loading locations, monitor, adjust if needed (time span, etc.).	As technology evolves, price loading and implement dynamic occupancy information.
Bicycle Infrastructure	**$**$$$-**$$$$**	New bike parking at planned mobility hub will be part of LaSalle & Farmington project. Coordinating with Bicycle Plan. Farmington Avenue from North Main to Trout Brook Trail connection in design.	Implement bike boulevard markings on low speed/ volume Center connections such as Brace Road, Arapahoe Road and Memorial Road. Provide wayfinding for people on bikes to get to/from the Center, including bike parking. Stripe Farmington Avenue from N. Main to Trout Brook Trail.	Integrate a bicycle facility in plans for a Main Street redesign.	Evaluate future parking lane conversions to bike lanes if demand warrants, especially east-west on Farmington.

Item	Cost	Status	Short-Term (1-3 years)	Mid-Term (3-5 years)	Long-Term (5+ years)
Bike Parking	**$$**$$	Additional bike parking in LaSalle & Farmington project. Online bicycle parking map published on parking department website.	Promote bicycle parking map to local businesses. Consider and monitor additional bicycle parking locations. Consider seasonal corral implementation.	Monitor and adjust. Consider implementing long-term (more secure) bicycle parking.	Monitor and adjust.
Mobility Hub	**$$**$$	Hub included as part of LaSalle and Farmington project.	Support final installation of mobility hub components.	Pursue additional mobility hub locations / amenities for existing mobility hubs.	Monitor and adjust.
Parking Pricing Changes	**$**$$$	Preliminary recommendation under Town evaluation.	Implement preliminary price adjustments to match demand	Continue to monitor parking utilization and adjust price as needed.	Continue to monitor parking utilization and adjust price as needed.
ADA/EV On-Street Parking	**$**$$$	Dedicated ADA spaces are in LaSalle & Farmington project. EV charging planned for Farmington Lot.	Assess accessible and EV spaces and identify any locations requiring updates	Pursue additional spaces where there are gaps as needed. Update infrastructure as possible.	Continue to monitor ADA space use and adjust as needed.
Concept Designs					
LaSalle Road	**$$$$**	Construction documents	Construction (phased)	Monitor, adjust as needed, maintenance.	Monitor, adjust as needed, maintenance.
Farmington Avenue	**$$$$**	Construction documents	Construction (phased)	Monitor, adjust as needed, maintenance.	Monitor, adjust as needed, maintenance.
North / South Main Street	**$$$$**		Plan to initiate conceptual design process.	Select alternative, secure funding, and develop construction documents.	Construction (phased)

Options for Maintaining Public Space

An important consideration in developing the additional sidewalk space, plantings, and other additions included in this master plan is who will maintain the new space. The below table provides an overview of different approaches for the Town.

Option	Approach	Benefits	Considerations	Funding
Business Improvement District (BID) or Special Services District (SSD)	• Legally designated areas within West Hartford where property owners pay into a fund to support economic and general welfare of citizens and businesses. • Property owners oversee, manage, and implement public realm improvements.	• Existing Special Services bylaw document from West Hartford with current board members. • Self-sustaining.	• Review existing map extent for understanding Special Services District boundaries. • Memorandum of Agreement can be developed with the municipality to outline both parties relationship and management of public space.	• Fees from members. • Sponsorship from local businesses.
Parking Benefit District (PBD)	• Geographic district where parking revenues are used to fund downtown improvements.	• Can be used to maintain streets, add greenery and shrubs, public art, and general public realm improvements. • Help regulate parking, attract visitors, and support community goals.	• Requires a designated body to manage, that is decided by the municipality (could be a SSD or BID).	• Parking meter revenue.
Chamber of Commerce	• Membership organizations that advance the interests of business members.	• Already exists in West Hartford.	• May need additional funding from outside grants and fundraisers. • Cannot make direct changes or manage improvements without municipality support/direction.	• Fees from members; events • Sponsorship from local businesses.
Informal private partnership	• City Planning and/or Economic Development Office work with local sponsors (banks, etc) to fund, implement, and maintain sidewalk streets with flowers, flags, banners, and other improvements.	• Grassroots approach/workaround for not creating a BID/SSD.	• DPW would be responsible for cleaning and maintenance of space. • Municipality still manages public space, with support from local sponsors.	• Financial sponsor or partner.
Connecticut Main Street Center	• Join a network of CT downtowns and receive resources and technical assistance for managing streets.	• Receive educational materials, resources, and tools to manage and maintaining public spaces.	• May still need to integrate one of the other options in this matrix • Municipality in charge of public space changes and updates.	• Additional information needed on membership fee, if any.