Downtown West:

Development Anchors • Challenges • Opportunities

Planning Division
Development Services Department
City of Hartford, Connecticut
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# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Anchors</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional and Public Spaces</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Sector</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural &amp; Entertainment Inventory</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Challenges &amp; Opportunities</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Inventory</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office and Mixed Use Opportunities</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Opportunities</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Opportunities Themes</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Items</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aerial Photograph of Study Area</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Locations Map</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural and Entertainment Locations Map</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Map</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Map</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Housing Units Map</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential Development Sites Map</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Purpose

In early 2005, Mayor Eddie Perez asked the Development Services Department to undertake a review and analysis of a portion of the Hartford Downtown.

The purpose of the review was to develop an Opportunities Plan to guide public and private investment.

For the purpose of the analysis, Downtown was divided into four sections.

The focus of this review, referred to here as ‘Downtown West’, is the area bounded by

West: Cogswell Street / Myrtle Street/ Edwards Street
North: Walnut Street / Main Street
East: Trumbull Street
South: Jewell / Ford / Asylum

This area is shown on the aerial photo and six maps at the end of this document.

This Opportunities Plan focuses on six components

- Development Anchors
- Cultural and Entertainment Assets
- Development Challenges / Opportunities
- Potential Sites for a Parking Garage
- Office / Mixed Use Opportunities
- Housing Opportunities

Occasionally, discussion of these issues touches on locations outside of Downtown West, because activities and development in one area naturally have an impact in adjacent areas. Wherever possible, only outside influences of city wide or regional significance were examined.
Development Anchors

A development anchor is a place, structure, or institution that brings a positive influence to a location. Further positive development can then capitalize on that influence.

The Planning Division updated the Land Use Conditions Map for Downtown West. This updated map serves as the basis for this review.

Institutional & Public Spaces

State Capitol
While the Gold Dome of the State Capital Building is outside the boundaries of the review area, it offers an inviting and invigorating view throughout Downtown West.

Bushnell Park
An expansive green space in the center of an urban area is a major asset.

Union Station  # 8 on Development Locations Map
This regionally significant transit hub offers bus and train connections to New Haven, Metro North, and Springfield, and Amtrak service to Boston. It will also be a terminal for the planned busway to New Britain, which will include stops in Hartford, West Hartford, and Newington.

Civic Center  # 4 on Development Locations Map
UConn basketball, minor league hockey, the circus, concerts, and other events attract visitors to Downtown

Cotter Federal Building  # 7 on Development Locations Map
This federal office building adds another layer to the different government entities present in Hartford’s Downtown.

St. Patrick / St. Anthony Church and Urban Center  # 10 on Development Locations Map
Known for its efforts to alleviate poverty, St. Patrick / St. Anthony draws is parishioners from a wide geographic area. Just as notable are its architecturally significant buildings.
Development Anchors

State Capitol

Bushnell Park

Union Station

Civic Center
Development Anchors

Cotter Federal Building
St. Patrick – St. Anthony Church

City Place
Lincoln Financial Metro Center
Private Sector

City Place I and City Place II (Trumbull St.)
# 3 on Development Locations Map

This 38-story building and its companion 18-story office complex house many prestigious firms, with floor area totaling over 1.1 million square feet.

Metro Center (Church St)
# 6 on Development Locations Map

This 12-story high-rise is the home of Lincoln Financial. The complex has 290,000 square feet.

AT&T (Former SBC) Complex (Trumbull St)
# 2 on Development Locations Map

This facility is a major location for this national telecommunications company.

Goodwin Square Hotel and Office Complex (Avon St.)
# 3 on Entertainment/Accommodations Map

This 30-story high-rise complex has 331,000 square feet. The 124-room hotel portion of the complex represents historic Hartford architecture at its best.

Hartford 21
# 4 on Development Locations Map

This 34-story high-rise building will house 262 residential units (currently under construction,) and retail shops along Asylum and Trumbull Streets.

Hilton Hotel
# 5 on Development Locations Map

This 309-room hotel reopened in early 2005 after extensive renovations.

55 On the Park
# 1 on Development Locations Map

This newly renovated building offers 110 residential units at the corner of Trumbull and Jewell Streets.
Development Anchors

Former SBC Building

Goodwin Hotel

Hilton Hotel

55 On The Park
Interstate Access

Six entrance /exit ramps to Interstate 84 and almost immediate access to I-91 make this area extremely accessible.

Entertainment & Cultural

The entertainment and cultural offerings in this area include a range of destinations in and adjacent to Downtown West, such as the Civic Center, the Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts, the Hartford Stage, TheaterWorks, and the Wadsworth Athenaeum.

Over 25 restaurants and/or taverns exist within Downtown West. Several of these feature nighttime entertainment, which attract folks to the area.

An inventory of cultural and entertainment venues in Downtown West is included as one of the maps at the end of this document.
Development Challenges & Opportunities

1. **Main / Trumbull Vacant Building**  
   # 8 on Development Locations Map

   This blighted building is visible from two interstates, greeting all motorists entering downtown Hartford. The rehabilitation or demolition of this building is a high priority.

2. **Myrtle St. Vacant Building (the former Capital West Building)**  
   # 7 on Development Locations Map

   A proposal exists to convert this eyesore office building into ninety residential units. Its current condition is a detriment to the City’s image.

3. **Proposed Public Safety Complex (on the border with Downtown North)**  
   # 6 on Development Locations Map

   Downtown West would benefit from public investment in this site that is adjacent to Downtown North.

4. **Mass Mutual Site (Asylum Hill)**  
   # 9 on Development Locations Map

   This extraordinary historic site containing 140,000 square feet of office space exists on eleven acres is currently on the market. If this site were no longer suitable for corporate use, it would be attractive for high-end housing or mixed-use development.

5. **YMCA (Jewell / Pearl / Ann Streets)**  
   # 1 on Development Locations Map

   The YMCA is interested in removing itself from the housing business, and has sought proposals to develop this site for high-end condominium development. A developer has been selected and negotiations are underway.
6. **Bond Hotel** # 3 on Development Locations Map

The conversion of this 114-unit hotel to an extended stay hotel is ongoing.

7. **Ford/ Pearl/ Asylum** # 2 on Development Locations Map

This prime 2-acre site facing Bushnell Park is an excellent candidate for housing, as it overlooks the park and is close to the train station.

8. **Allyn St Parking Lot** # 4 on Development Locations Map

This vacant site could serve as the location of a parking garage mid-block, which could incorporate mixed-use development facing High St.

9. **370 Asylum St** # 8 on Office Locations Map

This modern 75,000 square foot office building sits empty. Access issues and a lack of parking near the site have proven problematic in the past. The creation of a parking garage in the vicinity, and implementation of a 2-way street pattern on High St would help alleviate these difficulties.

10. **410 Asylum St** # 5 on Development Locations Map

This former office building has been proposed for conversion to residential housing.

11. **266 Pearl St** # 11 on Residential Map

This former office building is being converted for residential use.

**Adjacent Downtown North**

12. **1212 Main St (aka 12b)** #11 on Development Locations Map

This site has been proposed as a location for Downtown developments on a number of occasions. It boasts visibility and access to Interstates, but may require assemblage of a larger parcel for prime utilization.
13. Trumbull / Pleasant / Windsor  #10 on Development Locations Map

This vacant site owned by Rensselaer could be developed with a parking garage, if there were adjacent user development or there were a shuttle trolley to Downtown.
Development Challenges

1161 Main Street  

1-7 Myrtle Street  

Site of Future Public Safety Complex  

Mass Mutual
Development Challenges

YMCA

Bond Hotel

Ford, Pearl, and Asylum Street

Allyn Street Parking Lot
Development Challenges

1212 Main Street – Development Site

370 Asylum Street

266 Pearl Street

410 Asylum Street
Parking Inventory

In any urban area, the existence of parking is often key to the success of potential development.

Almost 30 acres of Downtown West are currently utilized for surface parking lots. 3700 vehicles park in these lots. Another 3950 vehicles park in 5 main garages.

The Planning Division has identified four sites for further study as public garage locations. These sites are shown on the Development Opportunities Map.

1. Mid-block on Pearl Street between Trumbull and Ann Street through to Jewell Street

2. Mid block on Pearl Street between Ann and Ford Streets through to Asylum Street

3. Mid-block on Allyn Street between Ann and High Streets through to Church Street

Adjacent Downtown North

4. Main Street between Pleasant and Trumbull Streets.

The Hartford Parking Authority has commissioned a parking demand study incorporating these sites.
Office and Mixed-Use Opportunities

While the market for new Downtown businesses is unknown, the need for upgraded facilities among existing businesses will always exist. Typically, these needs require the construction of new facilities as well as the improvement of existing facilities.

The Planning Division has identified six sites for further study as potential sites for office or mixed-use development. These sites are shown on the Development Opportunities Map.

1. Corner of Asylum and Ann Streets (.66 acre)
2. Corner of High St and Allyn St (2.16 acres)
3. Corner of Church and High St (2.63 acres)

Adjacent Downtown North

4. 1212 Main St (3.38 acres)
5. Main / Trumbull / Pleasant Streets (3.17 acres)
Housing Opportunities

This review of housing opportunities in Downtown West should be read in conjunction with the City-Wide Housing Production Strategy published by the Development Services Department in May 2005.

In 2000 there were 659 housing units in Downtown West. Between 2000 and 2005, an additional 156 units were constructed. 362 units are currently under construction. Therefore, in five short years the number of housing units increased almost 80 percent.

Additional housing development is also proposed for 266 Pearl St, and 410 Asylum St.

The Planning Division has identified seven sites for further study for development with residential units, as shown on the Housing Opportunities Map.

1. YMCA site (Jewell / Pearl/ Asylum) (1.3 acres)
2. Ford / Pearl/ Asylum (2 acres)
3. Union St and Allyn St (.54 acre)
4. Allyn / High/ Church St (1.15 acres)

Adjacent Downtown North

5. Pleasant / Main / Chapel St North triangle (.6 acre)
6. Main, Trumbull and Pleasant St. (3.17 acres)
7. Ann, High and Chapel St North (2 acres)
Overall Development Opportunity Themes

Downtown West has many development anchors, and some terrific development opportunities that could be fostered by targeted public investments and public/private partnerships.

Downtown West will be a mosaic of day and night activities. First class office space will exist alongside residential housing, niche retail uses, cultural and civic activities, and a mix of entertainment venues.

Pedestrian friendly streetscape improvements need to be planned, funded and carried out.

Trumbull Street pedestrian improvements are currently under design, and similar improvements must be initiated on other Downtown streets.

Vehicle circulation should improve with the planned conversion of Ann and High Streets and a portion of Asylum from one-way traffic to two-way.

A trolley-bus system serving Downtown would be a welcome addition to existing transit systems, especially as it may relate to the opening of the Convention Center in Downtown East.

Public and Private Investment can capitalize on the strengths of Hartford. Some of these strengths are the Connecticut River, major urban parks, the state capitol, major national employers, a concentrated population center, educational and historic resources, and connections to major transportation links.
Action Items

1. Implement the Housing Production Plan Strategy to increase pedestrian presence on the street.


3. Seek funding for a new public garage.

4. Market the availability of historic rehabilitation tax credits.

5. Anticipate the retention and expansion needs of existing employers and plan for the availability of suitable sites.

6. Implement a plan to make Ann and High Streets as well as a portion of Asylum streets open to two-way traffic.

7. Implement a trolley-bus system in Downtown.

8. Implement the Downtown Entertainment District Task Force’s recommendations.

9. Think creatively about the availability of sites (i.e. close streets, combine parcels, create new streets, etc.)

10. Review zoning to consider transit-oriented uses around Union Station and the Busway.

11. Review zoning to anticipate and mitigate the conflicts between Downtown residential uses and Downtown entertainment uses.

12. Plan smaller areas within the context of an overall vision of the City.

13. Provide a climate that encourages private sector investment.

14. Foster a spirit that “It can be done in Hartford” by supporting efforts like the Hartford Image Project and the Arts Council.

15. Be flexible.
Acknowledgement

This document was prepared by the Development Services Department.

John F. Palmieri, Director of Development Services

Planning Division

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Revised 6/3/05
DOWNTOWN WEST - OFFICE

OFFICE LOCATION WITH OVER 50,000 SF OF SPACE

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADDRESS</th>
<th>S.F. ESTIMATE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. 188 Asylum St. (City Place 1 and 3)</td>
<td>1,110,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. 225 Asylum St. (Goodwin Square)</td>
<td>331,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. 330 Church St. (Metro Center)</td>
<td>290,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. 111 Trumbull St. (JGC)</td>
<td>242,401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. 135 High St. (Federal Building)</td>
<td>188,390</td>
</tr>
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<td>6. 1 Myrtle St.</td>
<td>189,422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. 410 Asylum Street</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
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<td>8. 370 Asylum Street</td>
<td>75,000</td>
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<td>9. 193 Asylum St. (Iowa 53 High St.)</td>
<td>63,000</td>
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<td>10. 266 Feast St.</td>
<td>53,970</td>
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<td>11. 116 Main</td>
<td>30,930</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>2,625,443 S.F.</td>
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</tbody>
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* Proposed to be converted to housing

EXISTING PARKING

- PARKING GARAGE
- SURFACE PARKING LOT

Map prepared by the City of Hartford Planning Division of the Development Services Department, April 2003.

Revised May 2005