



## Planning Process

The planning process began with the appointment of a 20 member Working Group that with the assistance of a public process consultant drafted a Vision Statement for the area. From there, a multiple month interactive planning process began, including:

- A two day workshop
- Transportation Analysis
- Six months of Working Group meetings
- Development of a draft plan
- Development of this final plan

The two-day workshop session was held to "brainstorm" about the potential future of the North River Canal Corridor. This was the first step in the process of transforming the Vision Statement, which was prepared by the Working Group, into illustrative plans that each represented various design options.

Three scenarios were developed by Goody Clancy and Associates for the first day of the two-day workshop. Each scenario tested a number of different possibilities that provided a basis for comparison, discussion, and critique. Based on comments from the Working Group and public, an illustrative plan was developed for the second day of the workshop that advanced the successful elements of the three

scenarios into a preferred plan. The illustrative plan also provided additional design consideration for portions of the planning area at the request of the Working Group.

Following the two-day workshop, the illustrative plan was further refined and reviewed with the Working Group and general public. The plan was also reviewed in terms of the general market opportunities that are identified in the Market Summary chapter and also in terms of the transportation modifications that were suggested in the plan, which included new streets, pedestrian pathways, improved signalization and general safety measures.

The illustrative plan that is included within this document was developed in response to this iterative planning process. This chapter provides a general summary of the three scenarios to show the reader the iterative concepts which led to the illustrative plan. The Working Group meetings that followed further developed the illustrative plan into this Master Plan.

The following describes in detail the components of each of the three scenarios that were presented to the group in order to gain input and develop a preferred plan based on those comments received.



### Scenario 1: Creating Connections

The first scenario, titled “Creating Connections,” emphasizes enhancement of pedestrian connections throughout the canal corridor and especially to Leslie’s Retreat Park, the corridor’s heart. The scenario proposes modest new development and infill development to strengthen the identity of the district, while reconnecting the diverse sections of the neighborhood that have been historically cut-off from downtown, the canal and waterfront. Features of Scenario 1 are explained in detail below.

#### North

- Build on the historically industrial character of the canal corridor.
- Continues uses such as commercial and industrial between Mason and Commercial Streets.
- New landscaped pedestrian connections between the Mason Street Neighborhood and canal to connect people to the Canal and waterfront.
- New pedestrian connection between Commercial Street cul-de-sac and Flint Street, further enhancing the recreational value of the park’s perimeter.

#### South

- Bridge Street remains as a two-lane road.
- Small-scale residential infill on Bridge Street’s southern edge
- A new multi-use, landscaped pathway along the edge of Leslie’s Retreat activates the northern side of Bridge Street
- A new pedestrian bridge over the rail line and into the park creates a new link for the residential neighborhood to the south.

#### East

- Franklin Street Parcels – Focus on residential development
- New pedestrian connections to the waterfront with landscaping and a multi-use pathway to the MBTA station to the south.
- Pedestrian connection under North Street between the North River and Leslie’s Retreat Park.

#### West

- Longer-term commercial redevelopment of western Bridge Street and the Boston Street & Bridge Street intersection.
- Retail development at the former FlynnTan site.
- Enhanced streetscaping on Bridge Street.
- Landscaped buffer between Bridge Street development and Federal Street Neighborhood.



## Working Group and Public Reaction

- General favor expressed for improved pedestrian access to the park and improvement to the character of Bridge Street,
- Liked residential uses along the southern edge of Bridge Street.
- Much discussion about the quality of Bridge Street character and the reality of it being a 2 vs. 4-lane street.
- Increased pedestrian access between Leslie's Retreat and Franklin Street/Furlong Park was also seen as a positive development.
- There was guarded support for residential development of the waterfront at Franklin Street—while some approved of the concept, there were others that expressed concerns about traffic and overloading utilities.
- Proposed improvements were too modest to bring about a significant change in the canal corridor.



## Scenario 2: Redefining Bridge Street

The second scenario, “Redefining Bridge Street,” envisions the expansion of Bridge Street’s role in the canal corridor, in terms of traffic circulation, redevelopment, and pedestrian access. By enhancing new development along Bridge Street, the character of the entire corridor changes from a service corridor to Salem’s “new front door” and strengthens the edges of Leslie’s Retreat Park. Redevelopment is at a moderate scale, and plays a more significant role in shaping the plan than in Scenario 1, but pedestrian connections still contribute a major part in bringing life into the corridor on a fine-grained level. Interpretive elements and artifacts enhance the park program of Leslie’s Retreat and provide new programming options and interest beyond the current passive open space uses. Features of Scenario 2 are explained in detail below.

### North

- Mason Street Neighborhood and canal-front area undergo slow infill and redevelopment over time, while promoting a “funky mix” of character including residential (w/ artists loft space), industrial, commercial and retail.
- Extend Commercial Street to Mason Street at Tremont – enhancing access to and from the canal and downtown.
- Extend several roadways between Mason and Commercial - Buffum Street and Barstow Street
- Enhance the waterfront pathway along the northern edge of the canal to link Commercial Street to Flint Street - Helps redefine the north edge of the park.

### South

- Bridge Street has an active southern edge, while a new landscaped multi-use path creates a recreational northern edge.
- Bridge Street is widened into a 4-lanes
- The multi-use path also gives Leslie’s Retreat a formal landscaped edge
- A new pedestrian bridge over the rail line provides access to the park and connects the residential neighborhoods to the north and south.

### East

- Explore the potential for redevelopment along Franklin Street and the waterfront.
- Promote commercial uses on the corner of North and Franklin Streets
- Provide a mix of commercial and residential redevelopment.
- Focus residential uses on the edge of Furlong Park (townhouse-scaled units)
- A waterfront path and landscaping connects the Franklin neighborhood to the MBTA station and its waterfront.
- Commercial Street is extended below the North Street bridge to improve vehicular and pedestrian access to and from the MBTA Station.

### West

- “Gateway Village” at the intersection of Bridge and Boston, with uses that promote the public realm.
- Redefines a sense of urban place, and minimizes the negative effects of parking.
- Residential development occurs on the FlynnTan site





- Additional streetscaping enhances the pedestrian realm.
- Expands the canal-front path (north and west of the canal) from Leslie's Retreat to Goodhue Street.

## Working Group and Public Reaction

- The "Gateway Village" at Boston and Bridge Streets was intriguing to many of the reviewers, although there was some concern about the traffic, parking, and deliveries associated with any additional commercial and retail development.
- The Group was concerned about the impacts of extending Commercial street to Mason – (potential for additional traffic on Tremont and the need to resolve relocating existing parking)
- General interest expressed in the scenario's maintenance of the current mix of industrial and residential uses in that district.
- Many agreed that improved pedestrian and vehicular connections to the MBTA Station were necessary.
- General discussion about the need to widen Bridge Street to four lanes.
- No support for the commercial redevelopment of Bridge Street's southern edge (There was a great preference for residential redevelopment in that area)
- Widespread support for the use of Leslie's Retreat to include interpretive venues and programming.



### Scenario 3: Transforming Park Edges

Leslie's Retreat is a park with great potential that is looking for active edges to give it life. The third scenario, "Transforming Park Edges," uses redevelopment along the park's edges to lend the park vitality while, in turn, provides that development with an open space amenity. The approach places new development and circulation improvements on both sides of the park and at both ends of the corridor to feed the area's revitalization. Like in Scenarios 1 and 2, this scenario enhances connections throughout the corridor, but it relies, in part, on redevelopment to bring about significant change in the area. The enhancement of Bridge Street in the south and Commercial Street in the north creates a safe, enclosed feel to Leslie's Retreat that aids it in attracting new users. New recreational programming and year-round facilities in Leslie's Retreat also make it a destination for the surrounding neighborhoods, furthering the area's new identity as Salem's "front door." Details of the transformations of Scenario 3 are described below.

#### North

- The district between Mason Street and the canal undergo perhaps the greatest change in circulation and redevelopment.
- Commercial Street is extended to Flint Street as a new landscaped waterfront boulevard – to provide to access and enhance the north edge of the park.
- Promote active edges that support the neighborhood park.

- Major redevelopment of the canal-front district includes a mix of office and residential uses that front on the new waterfront boulevard.
- Several side streets in the Mason Street neighborhood are extended to the canal, enhancing access to the park.

#### South

- Bridge Street is widened to a 3-lane, tree-lined boulevard to compliment the character of the canal's northern edge along the new Commercial Street.
- Moderately-scaled residential redevelopment and a new landscape buffer create a pleasant pedestrian environment on the southern edge of Bridge Street.

#### East

- Commercial Street extends south to Bridge Street and below the North Street bridge, to connect to the MBTA Station.
- Consideration for commercial space that fronts on a landscaped North River waterfront.
- The character of Franklin Street is transformed by mixed commercial and residential redevelopment on both sides of the street up to Furlong Park.
- A landscaped waterfront pathway connects Furlong Park to the MBTA station and continues to connect with the East Salem waterfront.

#### West

- The theme of "Gateway Village" from Scenario 2 is picked up and expanded in Scenario 3.
- In addition to office and retail redevelopment, residential and artist live/work space is encouraged in the village



- Residential and limited commercial redevelopment of the FlynnTan site.
- A linear canal park is extended from Leslie's Retreat to Goodhue Street.
- Extend Hanson Street to connect Boston Street to Grove, as part of the redevelopment of the FlynnTan Site.

#### Working Group and Public Reaction

- Of the three scenarios presented, Scenario 3 seems to have been the most provocative and elicited the most comments, both positive and negative.
- Most of the reviewers agreed with the notion of extending Commercial Street to Flint Street as a waterfront boulevard in an effort to transform the edge of Leslie's Retreat and create a better traffic flow in the area.
- There was little support, however, for the significant redevelopment of the entire district between Mason and Commercial for office and residential use. Rather, there was an expressed desire to retain the existing businesses and older housing that characterize the area and promote moderate infill with a mix of uses.
- Although there was little comment regarding widening Bridge Street to 3 lanes, a number of reviewers agreed with the residential redevelopment of Bridge Street's southern edge as shown in Scenario 3.
- The "Gateway Village" also received consensus support from the reviewers, yet some residents and members of the working group expressed concern about having retail as an option for land use at the corner of Boston/Bridge Streets
- Many supported the new roadway configuration that would link Commercial Street to the MBTA station and Bridge Street, and provide new pedestrian access under North Street.



## Day 2 Advancing the Plan

Using the comments and feedback on the three scenarios from the first day of the workshop, a new illustrative plan was developed for the workshop's second day. The new iteration took features that were considered desirable from the three preliminary scenarios, and addresses concerns raised about a number of the elements found in each. The plan that resulted borrowed a number of the specific elements of Scenarios 2 and 3 and most of the core values expressed in all three scenarios. The major issues and refinements of the illustrative plan are broken out by planning area below.

### North

- Strengthen the Character of Commercial Street – landscaping and new development – extend it to Flint
- Create connections between Mason Street Neighborhood and Canal (some vehicular and some pedestrian)
- Promoted enhanced landscaping at the edges of existing commercial uses to improve identity and provide buffers to adjacent uses.
- Create varied identity along the length of Commercial Street.
- Promote major redevelopment of the Salem Suede building adjacent to Flint (Residential or Commercial)

### South

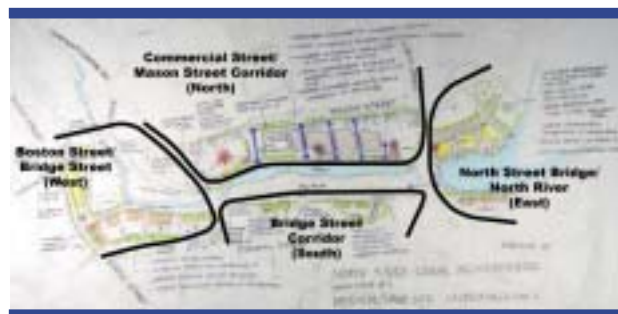
- Enhance the character of Bridge Street and focus on aesthetic improvements, and residential redevelopment or enhancements of current uses were preferable.
- Bridge Street is a tree-lined street that supports residential infill development.
- The plan suggested that the historic Webb Building has potential for reuse.
- across from the intersection of River, Lynn, and Bridge Streets improves pedestrian access to the park.

### East

- Provide a waterfront pathway along both the north and south banks of the North River, as shown in all three preliminary scenarios.
- The character of Franklin Street is enhanced with residential development and associated streetscaping in character with the rest of the neighborhood, and Furlong Park is given a formal edge with neighborhood scaled residential development.
- Seek ground floor uses to support the waterfront pathway along the southern waterfront.
- Provide pedestrian connections between Furlong Park, Leslie's Retreat Park, and the MBTA Station.

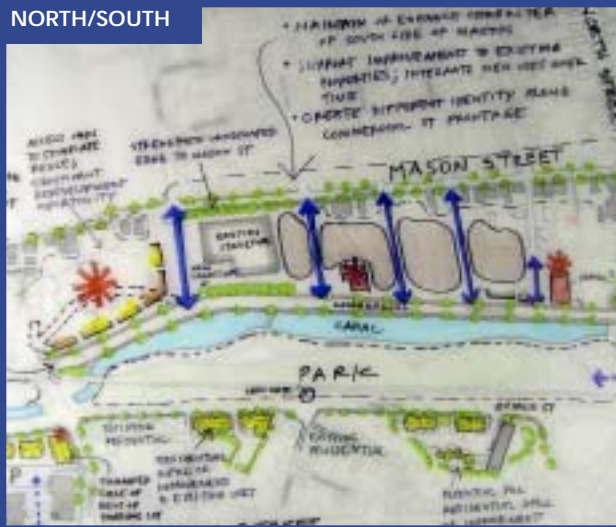
### West

- “Gateway Village” approach to the Boston Street and Bridge Street intersection.
- Commercial development that creates a landmark building on the corner of Bridge and Boston.
- Seeks potential for new residential development on the church parking lot.
- Extend Hanson to Grove to improve vehicular traffic and general access.
- Include a wide landscaped buffer between new development along Bridge and nearby existing residences.
- The former FlynnTan site is considered for a mix of residential and commercial uses that would have a low parking requirement.
- The plan also suggests possible reuse of former industrial properties in the area, especially those along the canal.





## NORTH/SOUTH



## EAST



## WEST



## Working Group and Public Reaction

- The illustrative plan received overwhelming support from the Working Group and public observers for many of its features.
- Most reviewers believed that extending Commercial Street as a wider boulevard to Flint Street had desirable effects on the area's traffic flow, commercial viability, and aesthetic character.
- Many also agreed with the plan's suggestion to retain and improve the existing commercial and residential development between Mason Street and the canal.
- Connections between the Mason Street Neighborhood and the canal were also widely appreciated, although there was some concern about how they could be implemented on privately owned property.
- Streetscape improvements to Mason Street were received as positive.
- Smaller-scale residential redevelopment of the southern edge of Bridge Street gained support, although the potential for small amounts of new or enhanced commercial development were discussed.
- Resolving pedestrian access from the southern neighborhoods to Leslie's Retreat was still a concern.
- While most agreed that the improvements and development along Franklin Street were beneficial, there was still concern and much discussion regarding the quality and character of the development and what the existing B5 zoning would potentially allow to be built. People were generally concerned that any new development must fit into the context of the surrounding residential neighborhood and not be taxing on the existing transportation network and local utilities. There was, however, consensus regarding the desirability of a waterfront pathway that linked the corridor's parks and lead to the commuter rail station.
- Commercial uses in the "Village" were favored over residential uses, although there were suggestions that residential, artist live/work, and even hotel space could be considered in the area.
- Some reviewers commented that new commercial development should be concentrated close to Boston Street.
- A new roadway connection through the FlynnTan site to Grove Street was seen as positive, however, there was still a lack of consensus about the use for that site.
- General comment regarding the need to for a well-designed fence along the canal for safety, and the desire for active recreational programs and interpretive programming in the park.

