



## Master Plan

### Master Plan

The North River Canal Corridor Master Plan provides a framework for new growth and development in the North River area , while preserving and enhancing the quality of life in the adjacent residential neighborhoods.

The Master Plan and following recommendations were developed in response to the comments that were received during a two-day workshop and subsequent meetings with the working group and public. It incorporates land use, urban design and transportation elements. This chapter has four sections that describe various aspects of the Master Plan. The first section is the vision statement that was created by the working group. The second section of this chapter includes the illustrative Plan that has provides written recommendations and an overview of the planning area. It also includes renderings that illustrate various urban design features and concepts of the Master Plan. Following the illustrative plan are two sections that outline Urban Design Recommendations and Transportation Recommendations based on the components of the Illustrative plan .

# North River Canal Corridor Vision Statement

(February 2003)

Salem was settled by English colonists 375 years ago along the banks of the North River. Today, the North River Canal Corridor area is a diverse district with a mix of commercial, residential, and industrial uses adjacent to vibrant residential neighborhoods. This important area is also the main entrance corridor into the city and commuter gateway to the downtown. However, the river, the railroad, and industrial development have created a barrier to the downtown. Future development should reconnect this area creating a mixture of compatible uses that expand upon the urban character of the city. Its strategic location offers the opportunity to reconnect the diverse neighborhoods that surround it and take advantage of the available building stock, vacant parcels, unique open space system, and waterfront access. This important area deserves thoughtful development worthy of the rich neighborhood tradition of Salem.

The North River Canal planning process was initiated in June 2002, and planners, residents, businesses, and political leaders developed this Vision Statement for the future.

## ***Create appropriate development while preserving our historic neighborhood character***

*Create new housing opportunities that encourage a range of housing types and affordability. Take advantage of the unique architectural character of the existing underutilized industrial buildings by embracing uses such as artist exhibit, work, and live/work space.*

*Encourage development projects that preserve the unique historic character and scale of the adjacent neighborhoods and which take advantage of its waterfront location. Use zoning to encourage desired quality development that respects the quality of life provided by the existing neighborhoods.*

*Support development that contributes to the quality of life for all Salem residents by providing housing options, livable-wage employment prospects, and cultural and recreational opportunities.*

## ***Address transportation issues for existing and new developments***

*Encourage public and private developments in the area that provide connections and links to the adjacent train station to promote transit use; reduce and manage*

*existing traffic congestion; address parking demand; and provide a more pedestrian-friendly area.*

*Improve and enhance traffic patterns to facilitate access to and through the area by channeling traffic to appropriate roadways while providing better connections to open space through integration of pedestrian and bike paths.*

## ***Enhance the public realm in keeping with our unique neighborhood character***

*Upgrade the public realm by creating an accessible network of safe, clean, and well-landscaped areas and open spaces where people can sit, walk, run, or bike.*

*Coordinate the development and implementation of guidelines for landscape and streetscape improvements that are historically sensitive and encourage the use of appropriate materials.*

Development of the NRCC area in accordance with this vision offers an opportunity to link neighborhoods to create an area in which people can live, work, shop, and play in a diverse urban area.

## Potential for Future Development

For planning purposes and the traffic analysis, this study looked at the future potential for additional build-out within the North River Canal Corridor. The potential future land uses included residential, industrial, retail, commercial and office uses. In order to examine the impacts of vehicular traffic, these future build-out assumptions were located throughout the site to respond to the land use options that were generally preferred by the Working Group and correspond to the parameters of the market summary. The build-out assumptions were used as the basis of the traffic study that projected the future impacts on the existing and proposed street network. As a result of the findings of the traffic study and further consideration of urban design preferences, the initial build-out assumptions were modified in this section to reflect land-use choices and general design principals and guidelines for potential future build-out that support the recommendations of the final Master Plan and short and long term Transportation Recommendations. It should be noted that the build-out assumptions were moderate in scale and have a relatively low impact on the surrounding network of existing and proposed streets.

## Urban Design Recommendations

The following Urban Design Recommendations correspond to the illustrations and comments on the Master Plan and are organized by seven sub-sectors, which include the following areas;

Northwest  
North  
North East  
Southwest  
Leslie's Retreat park  
South  
Southeast

### Northwest

Urban Design Goal - Make connections, places and unlock redevelopment—North of Bridge Street

#### Recommendations

- Redevelop FlynnTan
  - 2-4 stories tall, oriented towards Boston Street
  - Preserve view corridors through the site towards the canal
- Extend Hanson Street to improve vehicular access from Boston to Goodhue.
  - Coordinate with City RFP for redevelopment of Flynntan
- Promote long-term waterfront access along the Canal from Boston Street through the rear of the the Goodhue parcels to Harmony Grove
  - Coordinate with the redevelopment of Goodhue parcels
- Improve image of canal edges
  - Replace chain-link along Bridge Street – between Flint and Grove - with quality fencing—include trees, widen sidewalks, etc
- Enhance the intersection of Mason/Grove/Harmony Grove to potentially include a new roundabout including landscaping, new signage and pedestrian improvements (See traffic recommendations)

### North

Urban Design Goal - Extend Commercial Street to Flint Street—Connect Mason Street neighborhood to Leslie's Retreat Park With new pedestrian path, the redevelopments of key sites and potential new streets

#### Recommendations

- Extend access from Mason Street to canal edge— at key locations
  - Seek opportunities for short-term pedestrian access
  - Seek long-term vehicular solutions as properties redevelop
  - Extend Commercial Street to Flint
- Extend Commercial Street to Mason at Tremont

- Prohibit all through traffic from Commercial Street from entering Tremont by limiting traffic movements to left and right turns onto Mason Street. The design solution for the extension of Commercial Street must be coordinated with the local residents – Options could potentially include making the extension of Tremont a one-way pair with Flint, while still prohibiting through traffic and requiring left and right turns
- Work with existing property owners to provide replacement parking where properties are impacted with new sidewalks and potentially streets
- Consider redeveloping the Salem Suede site for housing and commercial
  - Seek maintaining portions of the historic industrial structures
- Improve and maintain views from the Mason Street neighborhood to canal
- Reuse and redevelop industrial uses that exist between Mason and Commercial Streets—transition new development and uses from Mason to Commercial to compliment the residential to industrial transition that currently exists
- Enhance the residential character and streetscape along Mason from North Street to Grove to strengthen Mason Street as a quality residential road.
  - Work with neighborhood to promote reinvestment including; new lawns, fences, façade improvements, and landscaping
- Enhance Canal edge
  - Develop public private partnership to provide enhanced maintenance trees, sidewalks, benches, etc.
- Seek opportunities for arts-related uses along and adjacent to the canal

### **Northeast**

**Urban Design Goal - Improve identity, waterfront access and connections along Franklin Street**

#### **Recommendations**

- 28 Foster Court should be developed in keeping with the requirements of the R-2 Zoning District.

- Support reuse/rehab that includes commercial/low density housing/open space/recreation that is in scale with the surrounding neighborhood
- Support existing uses and upgrade buildings north of Franklin
- Restructure the North/Franklin Street intersection—resolve pedestrian access and safety issues; add pedestrian signal at intersection
  - Coordinate with North Street Corridor Study
  - Resolve connecting Commercial south to Bridge (west of North Street)
  - Coordinate efforts with MBTA Study and Salem Trial Court Study
- Improve pedestrian access along riverfront adjacent to Franklin Street—-independent of redevelopment efforts
- Connect Franklin Street to the downtown area (via the MBTA station) with a quality pedestrian pathway
- Improve streetscape and sidewalks along both sides of Franklin Street and Furlong Park
- Seek opportunities to incorporate water-dependent uses—pursue efforts to clean up North River
- Expand play fields of Furlong Park

### **Southwest**

**Urban Design Goals - Create an "Urban Village" and "Gateway" to Downtown at Bridge Street and Boston Street**

#### **Recommendations**

- Create a strong "Urban Village" and "Gateway" at the intersection of Bridge and Boston Streets
- Improve sidewalks and the pedestrian environment on four corners of Bridge and Boston Streets
- Include a landmark building at the SE corner of Bridge and Boston
  - Seek active uses at the ground floor
- Attract uses that serve local markets and are complementary to existing businesses that are within the new Urban Village
- Provide sensitive transitions in scale toward the Federal Street neighborhood
  - Reduce building heights at rear of parcels along Bridge Street

- Provide landscaped buffers at rear of parcels along Bridge Street
- Place new buildings close to the street at the intersection of Boston and Bridge Streets and Along the length of Bridge Street
- Support improvements to existing properties
  - Improved signage, parking and additional landscaping
- Explore potential for a shared-use parking between uses with different peak needs within the Urban Village and specifically at the parcels along Bridge Street as they redevelop over time
- Enhance corner of Flint and Bridge
  - Explore additional development at the rear of the Church
- Work with the city and school department to determine the future of the "St. James School" on Federal Street
- Improve the edges of Bridge Street and the canal
  - Seek public-private partnerships for maintenance
  - Replace chain-link with visually attractive fence
  - Explore long-term expansion of Leslie's Retreat Park on north side of canal from Flint to Grove
- Provide a "free-right" turn from Boston onto Goodhue

### **Leslie's Retreat Park**

Urban Design Goal - Strengthen Leslie's Retreat Park as a neighborhood amenity

#### **Recommendations**

Strengthen character and identity of the park and surrounding streets—connect the park to the surrounding neighborhoods to the north and south

- Build a program into the park
  - Work with City and other organizations to develop events, program, etc to activate the park and its edges, to potentially include:
    - Children's Playscape areas
    - Historic interpretive features
    - Artists exhibition areas

- Improve access and safety to the Park by creating two new pedestrian access points at Bridge St. One new access point between Flint and North Streets to connect the Federal Street neighborhood to the park via a pedestrian bridge
- The second access point through the extension of Commercial Street to Bridge and the associated relocation of the existing entrance to the MBTA parking lot
- Include safety measures at the edge of the canal to prevent people from falling in
- Seek additional pedestrian bridge further east of the existing bridge, to directly link Downtown and Mason Street
- Improve Park Image
  - Solve park drainage problems
  - There is the potential for the Bridge Street reconstruction project to re-align Bridge Street so that it extends two-meters into the park. The Working Group and residents should continue to be involved with Mass Highway and the City to ensure that the design of Bridge St. complements the park edge and provides adequate pedestrian connections and landscaping
  - Develop park clean-up programs and build relationships with surrounding owners

### **South**

Urban Design Goal – Strengthen identity of Bridge Street and the Park Edges

#### **Recommendations**

- Redefine Bridge Street as an attractive 4-lane boulevard
  - Include quality sidewalks and well-landscaped areas on both sides of the street
  - Consider off-peak parking along park edge
  - Coordinate with Mass Highway and Court Study
- Improve pedestrian connections and access to Leslie's Retreat Park
  - Pedestrian Bridge at the end of Lynn Street
  - An grade crossing near new eastern entrance
- Promote residential redevelopment that is in scale



and character with the historic neighborhood.

- Include buildings that are of a similar footprint and mass as some of the larger old homes on Federal and Essex Streets
- Include options for condominium units with the redevelopment of the south side of Bridge Street.
- Locate parking at the rear of the parcels away from Bridge Street
- Remove rail storage
  - Enhance views and image of park
- Support improvements to existing properties
  - Signage, parking and additional landscaping
- Consider artists live-work housing at the Webb building

### **Southeast**

Provide enhanced pedestrian access to and through the MBTA station site; enhance the site's waterfront edge

#### **Recommendations**

- Improve the waters edge and forge connections to Downtown, Franklin Street and Leslie's Retreat park—Trees, sidewalks, lighting, benches, plazas, etc
  - Coordinate with Guilford's removal of spur line for expanded service to Danvers
- Promote ground level uses within the proposed parking structure to activate the water's edge
- Visually enhance the parking structure by potentially including; Banners, articulated building mass, expressive stair towers, etc.
- Restore Leslie's Retreat Plaque.
  - Work with local historian and stakeholders to identify appropriate new location for plaque.
- Relocate existing MBTA at grade crossing west of north

### **Transportation Recommendations**

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The following Traffic Recommendations correspond to elements that are drawn on the Illustrative Plan. For a full description of the transportation recommendations see Appendix C.

#### **Short-Term Transportation Recommendations:**

1. **New traffic and pedestrian signals at North Street and Mason Street.** This measure will improve safety for both pedestrians and motorists at this location.
2. **Provide "Free" westbound right turn from Bridge Street to Goodhue Street.** This measure will remove the westbound right-turn traffic from the Boston Street/Goodhue Street intersection, improving overall intersection operations.
3. **Provide pedestrian signals at Boston Street and Bridge Street.** This will improve pedestrian safety when crossing streets at this intersection.
4. **Provide pedestrian signal at North Street/Franklin Street/Commercial Street.** This measure will provide a safe crossing of North Street between Commercial and Franklin Streets.
5. **New pedestrian connection between Franklin Street, Bridge Street, and MBTA station.** This measure would formalize the current informal pathway on the east side of North Street connecting Franklin Street with the MBTA parking lot.
6. **Replace four-way intersection at Grove Street/Harmony Grove Road/Mason Street with Roundabout.** A roundabout at this location will help to reduce accidents at this wide intersection caused by poor sight distance and speeding.
7. **Develop Traffic Calming Program for Franklin Street Neighborhood.** Traffic currently uses streets in the Franklin Street Neighborhood as a cut-through to bypass congestion on North Street during peak periods. A Traffic Calming Program would help to discourage cut-through traffic and/or slow vehicle speeds.
8. **Prohibit on-street parking on North Street during peak periods.** This measure would increase capac-

ity during peak hours which would help reduce delay on North Street and in-turn discourage traffic to cut-through neighborhoods.

9. **Support four-lane cross-section of Bridge Street between Flint Street and Washington Street.** MassHighway is currently developing concepts for a widening of Bridge Street in this area to four lanes.
10. **Coordinate circulation and signalization improvements at the North Street/Bridge Street Interchange.** The ramps and intersections at this location are recognized as having operational and safety deficiencies. Improvement options for this interchange have been recently developed as part of the Trial Court Expansion state environmental process.
11. **New pedestrian connections from Mason Street and Federal Street to North Canal.** This measure will improve pedestrian circulation and access to the North Canal area and from the north neighborhoods to the downtown.

#### **Long-Term Transportation Recommendations**

1. **Extend Commercial Street north to Mason Street.** The goal of this measure is to direct traffic as efficiently as possible to and from Harmony Grove Road to the west.
2. **Extend Commercial Street west to Flint Street north of Bridge Street.** This measure would provide east-west circulation through the project site. Its main function would be to provide access to and from the North Canal area and inbound motorists.
3. **Extend Commercial Street east underneath North Street to connect with the MBTA station surface parking and internal roadway system.** This measure would primarily serve motorists traveling southbound on North Street to turn right onto Commercial Street and continue into

the MBTA site without traveling through the North/Bridge interchange.

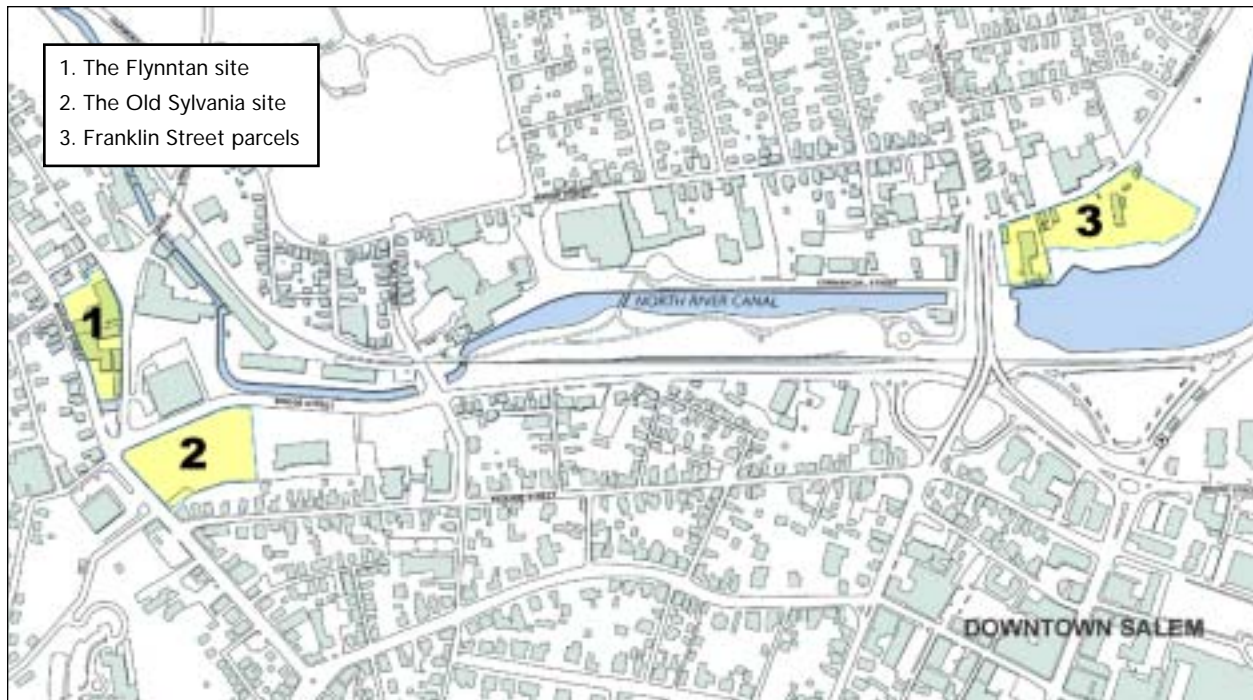
4. **Extend Commercial Street south to Bridge Street.** This measure would allow North Canal site traffic to access Bridge Street without having to travel on North Street.
5. **Connect Goodhue Street with Boston Street via a new Hanson Street connection.** This improvement would provide a new two-way connection between Boston Street and Goodhue Street.
6. **Make Flint Street one-way southbound between Bridge Street and Mason Street.** This improvement could be done in combination with extending Commercial Street to Flint Street (Long-Term Improvement #2). This measure would reduce traffic on residential Flint Street by approximately 4,000 vehicles per day and improve safety at the intersection of Flint Street and Mason Street.

#### **Key Site's and Other Recommendations**

The city identified several key sites that they felt should be studied in detail throughout this planning process. The key sites identified included the Flynnntan site (Boston Street), the old Sylvania site (Bridge Street), and the Franklin Street parcels. The recommendations for development of the key sites are described in detail below:

##### **Flynnntan Site**

The City is currently undergoing a tax title process to obtain ownership of the Flynnntan site. It is expected that the city will have full title of the parcel in 2004. It is one of the few remaining industrial buildings that are located within the study area. The City anticipates, once full ownership is obtained, to release an RFP to redevelop the Flynnntan site for reuse. There was much discussion during the review



of the scenarios and preliminary Illustrative Plan regarding the appropriate uses and design features for this site. They include;

- A mix of uses that could accommodate some retail and housing
- Building heights should be in scale and character with the surrounding buildings, which are typically 2 and 3 stories tall
- Parking for this site will be challenging, given the topography issues— Reduction of parking requirements were discussed as potential options to achieve the desired urban design characteristics
- View corridors should be established from Boston Street to preserve views to the canal and park.
- The redevelopment of this site should consider a partnership with the existing Dunkin Donuts site to establish a stronger presence at the intersection of Bridge and Boston Street as part of the "Village Gateway" theme.
- There was discussion regarding the inadequate vehicular turning radius' onto Goodhue Street – in response, the design option that emerged was extending Hanson Street to Grove as a two-way street

- These elements should be considered as part of the RFP.

#### The old Sylvania site (Bridge Street)

The south-east corner of Bridge and Boston Street was the former site of the Sylvania complex that had several 3-4 story mill buildings. These building were torn down over the past few decades and currently remains as a vacant lot. This large parcel has a unique proximity to the downtown and over the past few years has had several development proposals that have not been viewed as successful from the surrounding community, including a proposal for modestly scaled, freestanding retail and office buildings that were set back from the street and surrounded by surface parking lots. The value of this site and its importance to district was a major part of the discussion within the Working Group. There is the opportunity for this site to play a key role in strengthening the identity of the North River Canal Corridor while establishing a gateway to downtown Salem.





There was much discussion during this planning process regarding the land use of the Old Sylvania site. Retail uses were opposed by the working group, however, active ground floor uses that support the village gateway were encouraged.

- Create a landmark building at the corner of Boston and Bridge Streets
  - 3-4 stories tall
  - Has a "gateway feature" that celebrates entry to the district and downtown
- Place the new Building(s) close to the street
- Improve and expand the existing sidewalk along Bridge and Boston Streets
- Provide a small pedestrian plaza at the corner of Boston and Bridge to promote the Urban Village concept
- Locate parking at the rear of the building, with entry /exit points away from the intersection of Boston and Bridge Street
- Provide landscaped buffers at the rear of the parcels to protect views from the nearby residences along federal Street
- Seek a shared-use parking strategy with adjacent parcels to reduce the overall parking demand
- Focus active ground level uses at the corner of Boston and Bridge Streets
- Extend building frontage along Bridge Street to enhance the southern edges of the street – these uses could be for commercial/ office, however should have a entrance on Bridge Street
- It was noted that deed restrictions currently limit the ability to have residential uses on this site



### Franklin Street Parcels

Many members of the working group stated a preference and interest for the Franklin Street parcels to redevelop into open space that would expand recreational facilities along the waterfront. Given the inherent complexities of acquiring land and redeveloping the sites for open space, the following recommendations, as a second choice, to open space, are also included in the event that the site is redeveloped for non open space uses.

The parcels along the waterfront of Franklin Street were a source of much debate and discussion during the planning study. The existing uses include marine industrial, auto salvage, car wash facilities, and vacant sites. Further east, these parcels abut Furlong Park, which is a neighborhood park used by the residents of the neighborhood to the north.

The site is currently zoned B5, a mixed-use zoning district which includes the downtown. Much discussion focused on what the appropriate size and character of this waterfront site should be if it were to redevelop or remain with its current uses. Similarly, the importance of improving general access to the waterfront and overall visibility were of equal importance.

- Redevelopment should be in character with the surrounding context

- Seek expansion of water-dependent uses
  - The Working Group and City should continue to discuss what are acceptable water-dependent uses. (While most acknowledged the desire to promote water-dependent uses, consensus was not reached as to which specific uses should be permitted.)
- Access to the waterfront should be provide at several locations and along the length of the waterfront, from Furlong Park to North Street
- The City should review the status of the City owned parcels at North Street and adjacent to the river—to provide a new pedestrian walkway from Franklin to the MBTA Station
- Potential uses include
  - Improving and maintaining the existing uses
  - A potential mix of low density housing/commercial and retail
  - Additional open space along the waterfront
- Expansion of Furlong Park
- General improvement to the intersection of Franklin and North Streets
  - Pedestrian Crossing and General Safety
- The need to minimize through traffic though the northern residential neighborhoods
  - There was discussion of the potential to add traffic calming that would limit people from cutting through the site