Wladyslaw Prosol 2007

STATE STREET VILLAGE

ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

Existing Plan

Proposed Plan

State Street Village: State Street and Ridge Road intersection

Existing views

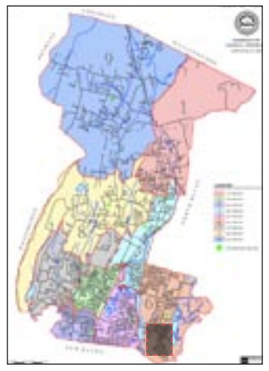
State Street, located along Route 5 in the southeastern corner of Hamden, is one of the area's last vestiges of a viable neighborhood. Wedged between East Rock and the Quinnipiac River, a small commercial center serves a neighborhood of single-family homes and apartments within easy walking distance of manufacturing plants sited next to the north/south oriented railroad tracks.

The charrette team's first response was to investigate the possibilities for a TOD (Transportation Oriented Development) enhanced by a redeveloped shoreline along the riverfront. However, several factors precluded that plan. The river's edge is, for the most part, a brownfield and cleanup costs would be prohibitive, at least at the present time. In addition, the only undeveloped block between State and the railroad tracks is slated for a several hundredsquare foot single story transportation facility to house and service municipal buses. The team felt that more time would be needed to address these issues, but that the town should pursue these possibilities at a later time.

For the present, attention was focused on improving the existing fabric by strengthening the neighborhood's street edges. Infill commercial and live/work units could be built starting at mid-block on State Street between Cook Street and Merritt Street and heading north to the intersection of Ridge Road and State, continuing down the first block of Ridge to the west of State. A micro development could be developed for the abandoned lot at the intersection of Merritt and Welton Streets: locating live/works along the western and southern borders of the lot, and along both streets at the intersection. At the center of the lot these units could front on a small intimate plaza and a new lane cut between Merritt and Welton. The team proposed that the marsh directly across from the intersection of Merritt and Welton could be developed into a nature preserve with a series of trails and lookouts for bird watching.

Further north, flanking rows of brownstones could be constructed between Ridge and Potter Place/ Edmund Street. To the west these units could block the unappealing rear view of existing apartment buildings; to the east the units could obscure the view of the proposed transportation facility. Parking spaces lost to the existing apartments west of State could be relocated along Franklin Road. The owners of both properties affected could profit from the sale of buildable lots, the municipality could reap increased tax revenues, and the neighborhood could benefit from affordable housing, improved aesthetics and increased walkability.

Strategically placed trees along State and flanking side streets could serve to create a datum tying the neighborhood together as well as to temper the speed of pass through traffic.



Location of State Street Village

STATE STREET VILLAGE

ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

Wladyslaw Prosol 2007

WHITNEYVILLE

ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

Gas Backwards

Existing Plan

Proposed Plan

Whitneyville: Whitney Avenue and Putnam Avenue intersection

Although one thinks of the intersection of Whitney and Putnam Avenues as the center of Whitneyville, there is no defined physical center. The two most prominent communal features, Whitneyville United Church and the village graveyard, are off axis, located diagonally across the avenue from each other. The church faces a green to the south, turning its side to the avenue. The village's two commercial blocks straddle Putnam Avenue to the west of Whitney Ave. While the commercial blocks adhere to a common setback distance which allows ample room for sidewalk dining and gathering, the bank and apartments opposite them are oriented diagonally to the street and are of varying heights, massing and setbacks. South of the commercial blocks the village fabric dissipates into a mix of high and low rise apartment complexes, street fronting parking lots, gas stations, and single family homes.

Like other communities within the town, Whitneyville turns its back to a striking landscape feature that has potential to provide the community with a unique identity as well as a location for leisure activities and community defining events. Lake Whitney extends the full north/south length of the village, just a hundred feet or so to the east of Whitney Avenue, yet there is little to no visual or physical access to it.

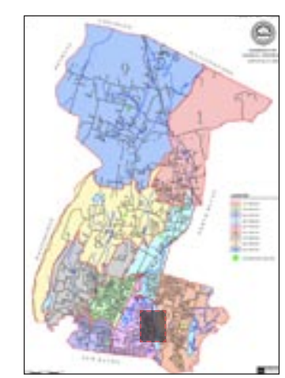
The charrette team proposes that a town plaza be created to the north of Putnam on the east side of Whitney Ave, thus providing a location for village fairs and events. Municipal or mixed use buildings would flank the plaza, leaving it open at the north to the adjacent church green. The visual terminus of Putnam Avenue would be extended across a pedestrian bridge spanning the lake, linked to a limited access park on the opposite shore.

The team proposes mixed use infill buildings along the western edge of Lake Road, creating a place for cafes and restaurants overlooking the lake.

It is proposed that a street edge with mixed use infill buildings be permitted along both sides of Whitney Avenue, wrapping the corners of Putnam Ave, Augur Street and Ralston Ave. Parking for the high rise apartment complex west of Whitney Ave would be relocated behind live/work (owner occupied commercial buildings) and residential three story town houses filling the center of the block defined by Whitney, Putnam and Augur. New streets cutting through the block would provide access to residences and parking.

It was further proposed to allow the gas station on the corner of Whitney Ave and Augur Street to be rebuilt as a street edge multi-storey mixed-use grocery/gas station with pass-through access to out-of-sight pumps located now behind the new building. North of the village, it is suggested that the extant chain link fence surrounding the graveyard be replaced with a wrought iron fence appropriate to the period of the gazebo located at its center and that trees be planted along Whitney and Treadwell to ameliorate the disruption of the street edge.

To address the residents' concern over the undue speed of cars passing through the village center, the team proposes planting trees along both sides of Whitney Ave and the immediate side streets. Traffic should be further calmed by way of parallel parking located on both sides of Whitney and Putnam.



Location of Whitneyville

Wladyslaw Prosol 2007

SPRING GLEN

ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

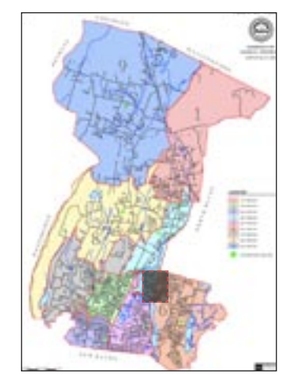
Existing Plan

Proposed Plan

Existing Views

Spring Glen: Whitney Avenue and Hawthorne Avenue intersection

From its beginning as a trolley suburb of New Haven, Spring Glen has retained the important characteristics of density, neighborhood center and walkability. The neighborhood center is linear, flanking Whitney Avenue for 4 blocks. The west side, with its mixed-use buildings holding the street edge yet remaining in character with the residential neighborhood, is the model to emulate on the east side. The east side is a big box/strip mall study in miniature, in great contrast to the environment just across the street. This proposal addresses this descrepancy while retaining the functions and promenance of the existing businesses. A green space replaces superfluos parking, infill buildings are added, and appropriate landscaping completes the tableau.



Location of Spring Glen

SPRING GLEN

ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

Wladyslaw Prosol 2007

CENTERVILLE

ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

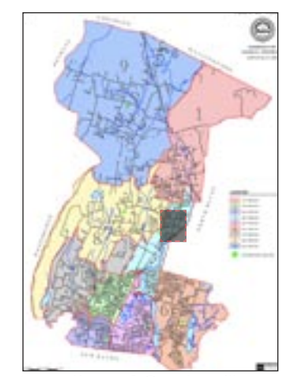
Existing Plan

Proposed Plan

Existing Views

Centerville: Whitney Avenue and Dixwell Avenue intersection

The intersection of Whitney Avenue and Dixwell Avenue is the symbolic center of Hamden, with Memorial Town Hall anchoring the northwest corner. This busy intersection is more of a thru-way than a destination, however, and often becomes a hinderance during peak traffic flow. This proposal addresses the need for traffic management while retaining and enhancing the symbolic importance. Creating an underpass for Dixwell Avenue allows it to run unobstructed through the intersection. Whitney Avenue remains at street level. The addition of a formal green and relocation of the memorial fountain to the center of this space creates the foreground, currently wanting, for the Memorial Town Hall. This grand gesture is an appropriate improvement to the civic realm, while functioning practically as a traffic-calming feature. Attention must be paid to the details of construction so that this intersection creates a civic space that is not reminiscant of 70's era urban renewal.



Location of Centerville

CENTERVILLE

ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

Wladyslaw Prosol 2007

MT. CARMEL

ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

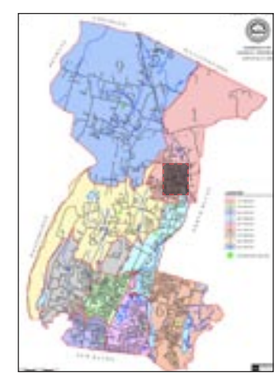
Existing Plan

Proposed Plan

Existing Views

Mt. Carmel: Whitney Avenue and Route 40 intersection

The neighborhood of Mt. Carmel is a mixture of quaint shops, residential streets, the Farmington Canal trail, and a convenient location. It suffers, however, from this convenience: traffic calming along Whitney Avenue is needed along with a reduction of paved paring lots fronting Whitney, and the intersection of Route 40 and Whitney Avenue is a sprawling series of highway on and off ramps. This proposal shortens the on-ramp and creates neighborhood aminities in its former space. Streets are added and existing ones connected so that traffic can move along multiple corridors, reducing the arterial effect of Whitney. Mixed-use buildings are added to define the street edge of Whitney, in areas of former parking lots. Parking is relocated behind the buildings, accessable by alleyways and secondary streets. This added density will enhance the neighborhood feel of Mt. Carmel, and create enticing vistas and narrower frames of vision that act as traffic-calming devices.



Location of Mt. Carmel

MT. CARMEL

ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

Wladyslaw Prosol 2007

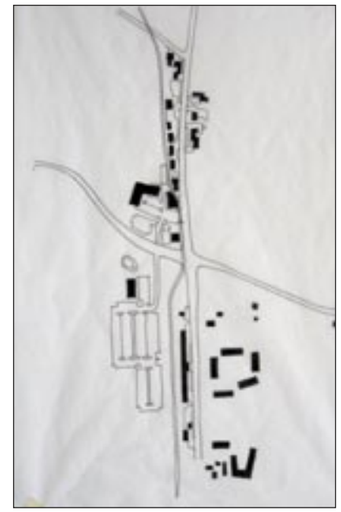
QUINNIPIAC

ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

Existing condition of misalignment

Proposed plan

Proposed DOT plan of alignment



Existing condition with proposed alignment

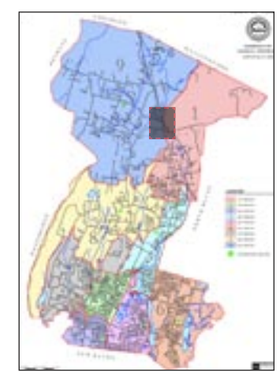
Proposed new street network with alignment condition

Proposed new street network with alignment condition

Existing Views

Quinnipiac: Whitney Avenue and Mt Carmel Avenue intersection

The misalignment of West Woods Road and Mt Carmel Avenue as they meet at Whitney Avenue is being addressed by the DOT. Unfortunately, the effect will be a sprawling intersection that is not pedestrian friendly and will encourage speeding traffic. This is particularly undesireable, as Quinnipiace seeks to expand across Whitney. The opportunities that exist to create a neighborhood center that would serve the needs of both students and residents will certainly be reduced with the current DOT proposal. This proposal shows an alternate solution: one that solves the misalignment problem, while creating a walkable and desirable neighborhood center. The proposed new street network surrounding the center creates additional opportunities for student housing that is within walking distance of new amenities.



Location of Quinnipiac

QUINNIPIAC

ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

Mixed-use buildings edging neighborhood green

NEWHALL
ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

Existing plan

Proposed plan: "Swing Blocks" that become permanent housing

Newhall: Newhall Street and Morse Street intersection

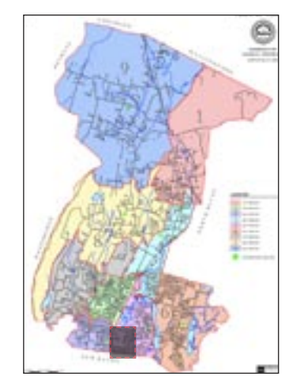
The neighborhood of Newhall presents some unique challenges. Landlocked between two of Hamden's most heavily traveled thoroughfares, it has no neighborhood amenity such as a communal green nor is there an existing commercial district that could serve as its nucleus. The topography of Newhall was primarily swamp and farmlands until the late 1870's when a series of efforts to fill the marshlands began. Over the next century 14 active dumpsites contaminated the soil with arsenic, lead and other pollutants. Nevertheless, in the 1950's residential streets were laid out on the site and single family homes as well as two schools were built. After contaminated soil was discovered several years ago, the Middle School and its playing fields were abandoned and the primary school was closed and converted to use as a community center. The discovery of contaminated soil and the relocation of the school have given the remaining property owners cause for concern about the safey and value of their homes.

Recently, efforts have been underway to test the soil more thoroughly and to ameliorate contamination issues. However, neighborhood residents and the state DEP are in disagreement over satisfactory solutions.

Current DEP plans are to remove waste soil to a depth of four feet at 91 properties and to greater depths at 135 additional properties; to further evaluate 22 additional properties; and to place permanent soil "caps" in order to isolate waste fill on the grounds of public properties. In addition, a large number of homes that suffered structural damage from being built on fill will be repaired or purchased outright. Many residents seek more comprehensive solutions.

Faced with these challenges the charrette team proposes the demolition of the existing Middle School buildings and reuse of the school property, creating eight new blocks within its borders once adverse effects of contamination have been satisfactorily eliminated. The block at the south west corner of the property, which contains the existing community center, would be developed as a town green, with two new commercial buildings housing a small grocery, laundromat, etc. and/or live/works fronting the southern and western borders of the park. A small park and church are proposed to the north. The remaining streets would be lined with townhouses along the southernmost east/west avenue and with single-family homes along streets to the north.

A piecemeal approach to the cleanup/reconstruction would be time intensive, expensive, and disruptive to the community. Therefore, the charrette team came up with an innovative solution: the team proposes that the town temporarily remove structurally sound houses currently located within contaminated areas in order to conduct a massive land excavation and refill process in one fell swoop. They further propose that the town make the building lots on the proposed new blocks described above available to displaced residents during the cleanup of their properties. The residents would have several options: they could swap their existing property outright in order to construct a new house on one of the new lots; swap lots outright in order to relocate their existing home to new lot; temporarily move their existing house to a new lot, relocating it to the original property once the cleanup has been completed; or warehouse their existing home on a storage lot and move into a rental property during the cleanup, relocating it to its original lot at the completion of the cleanup. In any case, Olin manufacturing, the DEP and the town (who share the costs of the cleanup) would benefit in overall cost savings and the community's strong identity would remain intact for the duration of cleanup process.



Location of Newhall

NEWHALL

ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

Proposed Plan

LEEDER HILL

ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

Leeder Hill: Leeder Hill Drive between Putnam Avenue and Treadwell Street

Existing plan

Existing View

Much like Whitneyville, Leeder Hill is a neighborhood that turns its back on a stunning natural feature that has extraordinary potential to define the community.

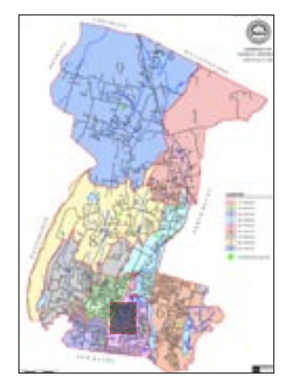
Currently this neighborhood has no cultural or commercial center. Located just to the east of heavily commercial Dixwell Avenue, the present neighborhood is dominated by retirement communities, an Alzheimer's facility, several condominium complexes and an industrial park. A series of small lakes flow through an extensive privately owned property between Dixwell Ave and Leader Hill Drive. Open to the public only one day annually, this property is so heavily wooded that it has little physical and no visual presence in the neighborhood. A former school and Whitney Manor (one of the retirement communities) back up to its shorelines.

The charrette team proposes that the quadrant located on the curve in Leader Hill Road between the school property and Whitney Manor be developed as a new village center. The proposal envisions a crescent shaped pair of buildings inspired by the Paragon at Blackheath, England. The buildings could be set behind a row of parking opposite a lozenge shaped public plaza that could define the street edge and could house alternating live/works and commercial buildings. A fountain placed in the center of the plaza could be on a visual axis that slices between the two crescent shaped buildings, terminating at the center of a grassed circular pavilion that pins the eastern terminus of a formal English garden. Laid out longitudinally behind the new cultural center (the former school), formal gardens could give way at their western edge to a necklace of footpaths lacing the islands between the lakes and wrapping the shores. At the western edge of the property the paths could connect to Dixwell Ave, providing pedestrian safe access to shopping. A series of vistas could be created between informal gardens on the eastern shore behind Whitney Manor, the formal gardens behind the cultural center and gazebos located randomly on the islands. The grassed pavilion could be available as a location for community concerts, with picnic seating on the surrounding shorelines.

A new complex of live/works and/or artist lofts and a gallery could be located to the north of Whitney Manor. Facing a common internal courtyard, the western units could have lake views as well and the eastern units could alternately face a narrow strip park replacing the old Remington shooting gallery to the east of Leeder Hill Ave. A series of paths along and through that park could allow walking access to the village center from single family houses, condominium complexes and the retirement community on Treadwell Street.

The existing industrial park is not obtrusive, but neither is it attractive. The team proposes softening its effect on the community with a series of trees planted along its length. The team also advises the use of well placed shrubs and flowering plants in combination with attractive fencing along the perimeter of parking lots that serve the warehouses and factories along Leeder Hill.

Inspiration - The Paragon at Blackheath



Location of Leeder Hill

LEEDER HILL

ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

Proposed Aerial View: Dixwell and Putnam intersection

LOWER DIXWELL AVENUE

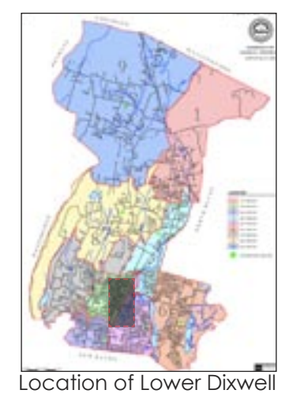
ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

Existing Aerial View

Existing Views

DIXWELL AVENUE RENOVATION
Putnam Avenue North to Wilbur Cross Parkway

Evaluating existing conditions
This avenue is among the three most important in Hamden. It is the spine of the city. It runs north and south, from New Haven to Cheshire. The west side of the avenue is almost exclusively residential, one of the densest residential areas in the state. The east side is a mix of commercial uses, some former factories (many substantial in size), neighborhood commercial businesses and a sprinkling of residential uses.
Due to the strong pattern of north/south arteries, natural lakes and geographical conditions, connections east and west are infrequent. In the study, the urban designers thought it was important to make these east/west routes more visible for travelers. Four such intersections occur along Dixwell at Benham, Mather, Treadwell, and Putnam. These intersection happen to be ideally spaced, about 1000' apart, at just the distance at which neighborhood centers and bus stops are planned.



Location of Lower Dixwell Avenue

LOWER DIXWELL AVENUE

ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

Create neighborhood centers at four important intersections along Dixwell at Benham, Mather, Treadwell, and Putnam.
Each will have a different character from the others. These centers will also serve as major bus stops and hopefully one day, streetcar stops. Commercial development and higher density residential development will be concentrated here, along with an attractive park or square.

Progress from outdoor market to covered arcade

Noteworthy buildings are made into centerpieces along Dixwell.
Many of these are Art Moderne (Art Deco) factories that residents use as landmarks along Dixwell (in red on plan). Some along the avenue are enhanced with forecourts and other outdoor space. Adjacent new development should make the most of this advantageous proximity and aim to complement the vintage buildings with their designs.

Transform Dixwell into a lush, tree-lined avenue.
By planting 500 shade trees along Dixwell, this sea of asphalt can be transformed into a green oasis, and become a place with its own identity. (132 trees each side, 250 in the center)

Park edge transitions

Create parks, fingers of green, that link the residential areas on the west to the future park on the east (Powder Farm).
The residents asked for more parks and recreational area. One possibility for a playfield is at the current Salvation Army building behind which is a school bus parking lot. This park can be built in phases if needed. If the parking is relocated, that area can be opened as play space even while the store is still in operation. The Dunkin' Donuts located on the corner close to Dixwell can remain as is but the approach to the drive-thru. This will provide an important source of activity around the clock, bringing visibility to the park at all hours.

MIDDLE DIXWELL AVENUE

ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

Create an alley system parallel to Dixwell.

This secondary street network will enable travel north/south and link together all the commercial parking areas. An alley system achieves a number of things: it provides access to service areas and loading docks. It provides a R.O.W. to run utilities along, thus permitting planting of shades trees along the main avenue without the clog of wires and need to trim trees drastically. Alleys also reduce the number of driveways along a street.

Proposed new residential streets

House types

Weave all side streets together to create a grid.

To offer more choice for all types of travelers (local, through, motorist, bicyclist, bus), the ideal street system is a grid network. This expands transportation choices for a wider range of ages: kids can bike to friends' houses, residents can walk to do errands, and an easier walk to a bus stop may get more people on the bus. New streets also open up more land parcels by giving them street frontage.

New residential areas will be created between the commercial areas on the east side of the avenue.

As the commercial areas become better defined, the areas between them are ideal for residential and mixed use development. New street connections will open up land. Different neighborhoods will offer different opportunities for mixed use or housing types, as will different streets. This mix can make for lively, interesting streets and create wider business options for more people.

Parking areas will be screeed from the street with buildings.

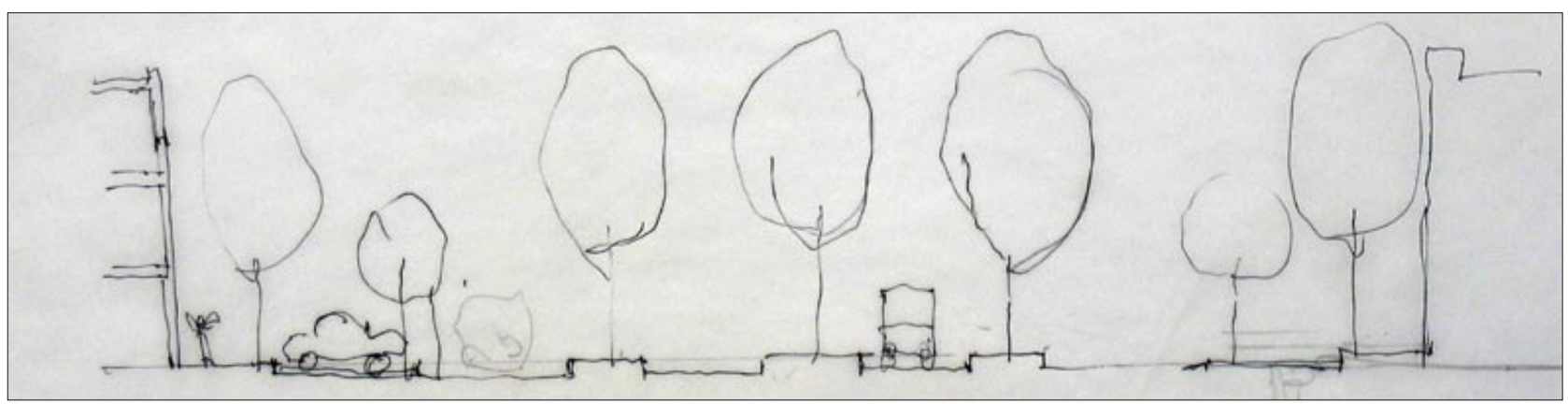
Even where the lots are very narrow, even 25' deep, 1-2 room deep buildings called liner buildings can be built that will screen the parking lots. Such screening will occur even on lots where national chains have typically located their buildings far from the street with parking in front.

MIDDLE DIXWELL AVENUE

ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

Proposed View

Wladyslaw Prosol 2007

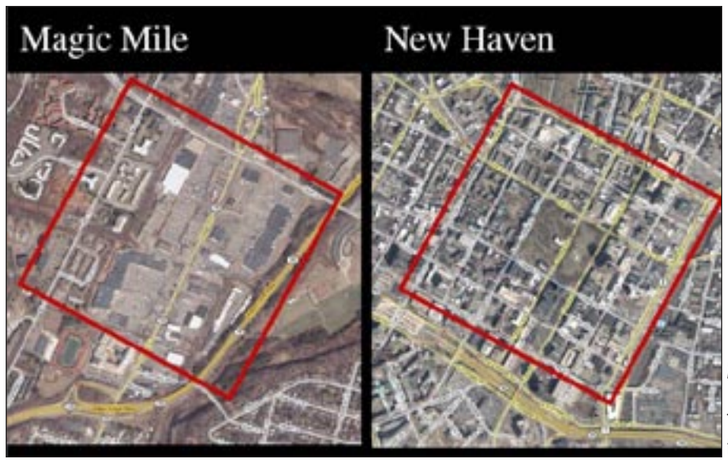


Proposed Street Section thru Dixwell Avenue

MAGIC MILE

ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

Existing aerial view



Comparison with New Haven's 9 squares

1950's

1990's

Images over time

Existing plan

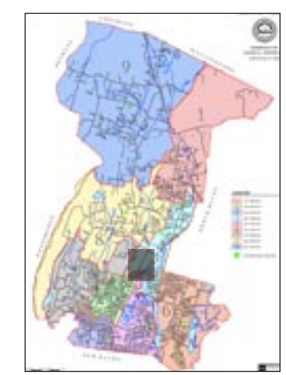
Magic Mile: Dixwell Ave between the Wilbur Cross Parkway & Skiff Street

The "magic mile" of large, big box commercial retailers has gone through many radical transformations over the decades; and due to its location, large parcel sizes, and temporary nature of the construction of structures on the site (not built to last), this area is the leading candidate to become a major central business district in a more traditional design idiom (i.e. pedestrian oriented, increased verticality). Housing should also be allowed made a priority in future redevelopments.

Ordinarily, the area around Hamden Town Hall is thought to be the natural town center. However, the magic mile area is in practice one place where nearly every Hamden resident goes—it is the functioning marketplace. It is centrally located between several dense neighborhoods, and is bounded by important thoroughfares: Wilbur Cross, Skiff, Dixwell.

The magic mile has shown consistently its ability for radical transformation. Increasing density in this area, mixing its primarily heavy commercial use, and radically reorienting the current internal circulation on the site, already adjacent to the higher density living zones on Mix Avenue, could become an impressive addition to Hamden and the region, and take population growth pressures drastically off the remaining vacant lands north of Wilbur Cross Parkway.

Proposed Plan



Location of Magic Mile

MAGIC MILE

ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN