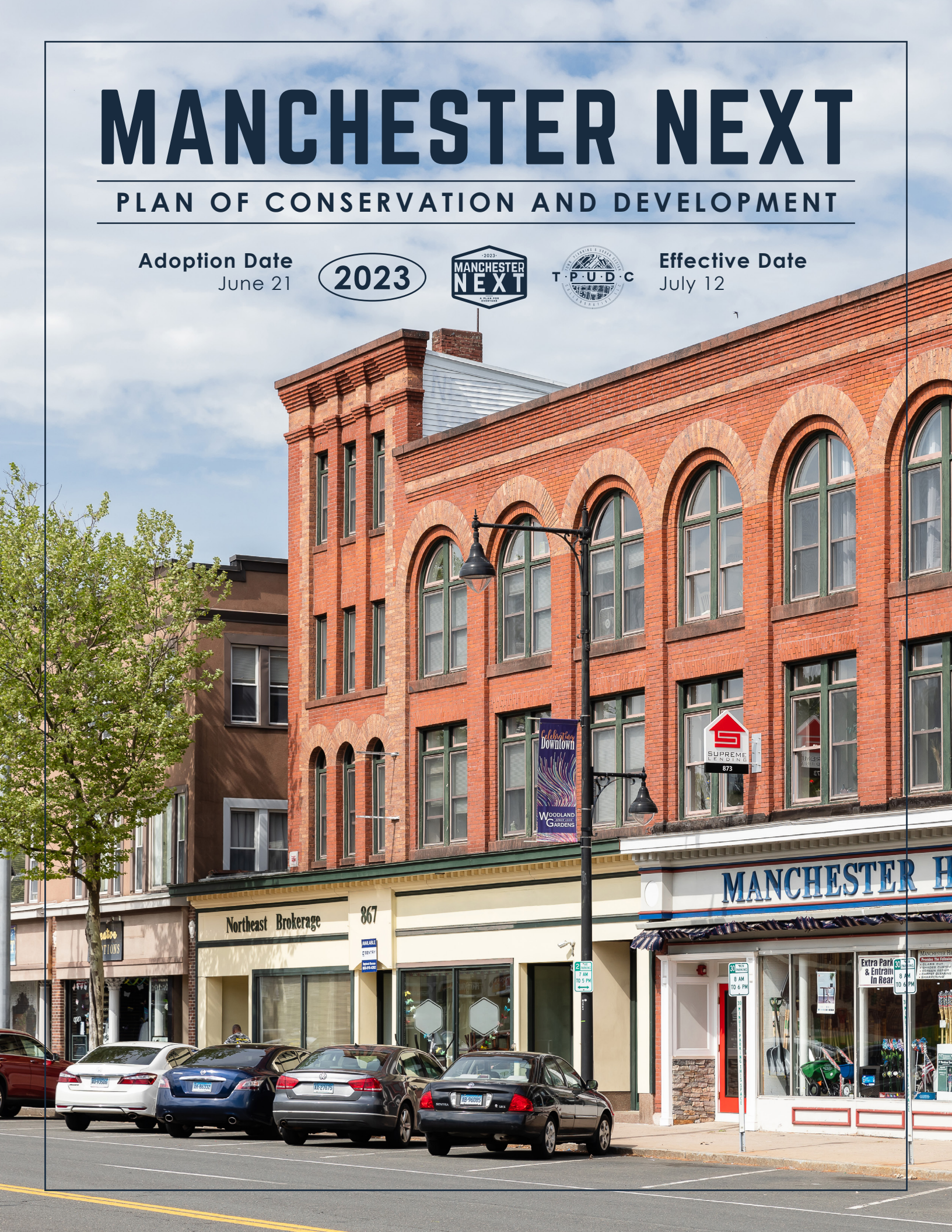
MANCHESTER NEXT

PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Adoption Date
June 21

2023

Effective Date
July 12



The Town of Manchester would like to express our appreciation to all the community members, business owners, students, families, and friends who contributed to **Manchester NEXT**. Whether you participated in Planapalooza™, watched a focus meeting video, joined an On The Table discussion, completed a survey, submitted photos, or visited the website, your participation helped to inform the creation of this Plan of Conservation and Development. Thank you for playing an important role in shaping the vision for the future of Manchester.

·2023·

MANCHESTER NEXT

A PLAN FOR EVERYONE

©2023 Town Planning & Urban Design Collaborative LLC.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Planning and Zoning Commission

Eric Prause, *Chairman*
Patrick Kennedy, *Vice Chairman*
Michael Stebe, *Secretary*
Nicole Clemons
Teresa Ike
Carlos Jusem
Dean Ott
Chris Schoeneberger
Yamuna Menon
Bonnie Potocki
Spencer Walker

Manchester Board of Directors

Jay Moran, *Mayor*
Sarah Jones, *Deputy Mayor*
Tim Bergin, *Secretary*
Pamela Floyd-Cranford
Jessee Muñiz Poland
Dennis Schain
Jacqueline Crespan
Zachary Scott Reichelt
Peter Conyers

Town Manager's Office

Steve Stephanou, *Town Manager*
Kasia Purciello, *Assistant Town Manager*

Manchester Planning and Economic Development Department Staff

Gary Anderson, *Director of Planning and Economic Development*
Megan Pilla, *Principal Development Planner*
Emma Petersen, *Principal Comprehensive Planner*
Kyle Shiel, *Senior Planner, Comprehensive Planning*
Heather Guerette, *Community Development Program Manager*
David Laiuppa, *Environmental Planner, Wetlands Agent*
Stacey Zackin, *WORK_SPACE Manager*

On The Table Meeting Hosts & Organizations

Isaac Barber
Terry Bogli
Leslie Frey
Calvin Harris
Parag Joshi
Tom Phillips
Latasha Turnquest
Fiona Vernal
Manchester Youth Commission
Manchester High School Staff & Students
Summer Youth Employees
Sustainability Commission

Consultant Team

Town Planning & Urban Design Collaborative, LLC (TPUDC)
City Explained, Inc. (CEI)
Arnett Muldrow & Associates
Toole Design
Horsley Witten Group
Zanetta Illustration

Manchester Residents & the Manchester Community!

Image Credits: Unless otherwise indicated, all images are courtesy of the Town of Manchester; public submissions; Town Planning & Urban Design Collaborative, LLC; or Google Earth/ Google Map Aerials. Thank you to all those who submitted photos throughout the process and during the call for photos. Your images helped shape this document.

Table of Contents

6 INTRODUCTION

8 Introduction
9 What is a Plan of Conservation and Development?
9 Growth Management Principles
10 User's Guide
12 Manchester THEN: The Town's History
14 Manchester NOW: The Town's Character
16 Manchester NEXT: Good to Great
18 The Public Process
22 Core Values

24 COMMUNITY PROFILE

26 Introduction
26 Demographics
30 Economic Data
32 Housing Data
32 Transportation Data
34 Land Development Status Data

38 ECONOMICS & EMPLOYMENT

40 Introduction
42 Employment Data
44 Retail & Service Economy
50 Distribution, Healthcare, & Industry
54 Downtown District

60 HOUSING

62 Introduction
64 Current Housing Stock
68 Changing Preferences
70 Housing Attainability
76 Homelessness

78 PUBLIC SERVICES

80 Introduction
82 Background Information
84 Baseline Infrastructure Assessments
96 Community Facilities + Services Map
97 Coordination Activities

98

COMMUNITY & CULTURAL RESOURCES

100 Introduction
104 Downtown Manchester Community
106 Festivals, Events, & Entertainment
110 Historic Resources
116 The Arts
122 Educational Facilities
126 Library

128

TRANSPORTATION

130 Introduction
134 Creating a Successful Multimodal Network
136 The Public Realm
138 Transportation Considerations

146

PARKS, RECREATION, & OPEN SPACE

148 Introduction
152 Parks, Recreation, & Open Space
160 Trails

166

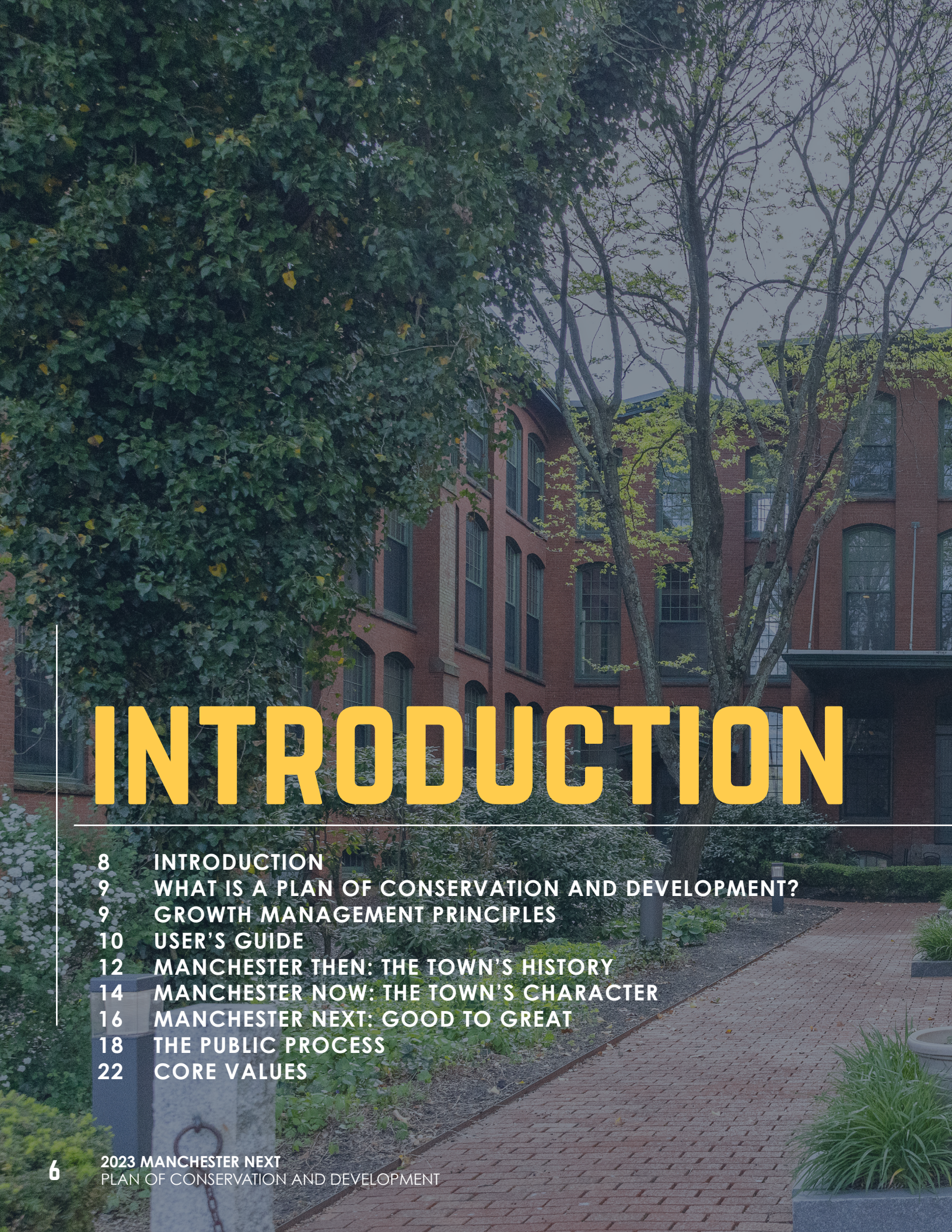
LAND USE & COMMUNITY CHARACTER

168 Introduction
170 Community Character & Design
175 Conservation & Growth Framework
176 Conservation & Growth Map

180

FOCUS AREA CONCEPTS

182 Introduction
184 Spencer Street Corridor
188 Depot Square/Hop River Innovation Park
196 Midtown Wellness District
202 Buckland Hills



INTRODUCTION

8 INTRODUCTION
9 WHAT IS A PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT?
9 GROWTH MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES
10 USER'S GUIDE
12 MANCHESTER THEN: THE TOWN'S HISTORY
14 MANCHESTER NOW: THE TOWN'S CHARACTER
16 MANCHESTER NEXT: GOOD TO GREAT
18 THE PUBLIC PROCESS
22 CORE VALUES

Ribbing Mill
Apartment
Information

INTRODUCTION

In 2022, the Town of Manchester kicked off "Manchester NEXT," a community-wide initiative to update the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development (also referred to in this document as the "POCD" or the "Plan"). Building on past planning efforts and the 2012 Plan of Conservation and Development, this updated Plan seeks to implement a vision that emphasizes equity and sustainability while enhancing the Town's economic base, housing stock, public services, cultural resources, mobility, parks and recreation facilities, and overall character. The Town has identified a ten-year planning horizon for this document, meaning its recommendations and guidance should carry the Town into the 2030s.

This process was supported by extensive and robust public participation that included involvement from residents, business owners, local interest groups, and elected and appointed officials. The updated POCD is the result of thoughtful public conversations and represents a path forward for the Town of Manchester to achieve its vision. The "What we heard" sections under each chapter are taken from the feedback that was received.

Manchester's Plan of Conservation and Development is designed to guide the Town's future by providing a vision and policy framework for the Zoning Regulations and Town priorities. It also helps manage municipal service areas and influences planning initiatives and decisions. The Plan should be used by the Board of Directors, the Planning & Zoning Commission, the Planning and Economic Development Department, Public Works Department, and other relevant Town departments to evaluate development applications, amend policies and regulations, and plan future expenditures. Together, the POCD and its implementation tools ensure future decision-making that is consistent with the community's vision and residents' expectations for a high quality of life.

Credit: Evin Photography

WHAT IS A PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT?

This Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) is a long-range policy document that establishes visions and goals and guides Town growth for the next ten years. The POCD is used to help guide and improve livability, economics, mobility, recreation, employment, housing, and resilience throughout the Town. Through this process, the community informed the vision and goals for the future. The Town aimed to hear from as many residents as possible. The goal is that this POCD is a plan for everyone.

The State of Connecticut requires municipalities and regional councils of government to prepare and update their respective plans of conservation and development at least once every ten years.

Connecticut's Plan of Conservation and Development is based on six growth management principles. Municipalities are required to note any inconsistencies with these growth management principles (see the list to the right). Every recommendation in this POCD has been reviewed against the GMPs, and no inconsistencies were identified.

These Principles will be referenced throughout the POCD in the applicable sections. Each one is appropriately addressed in the Plan as required by the State.

Together, the POCD and its implementation tools ensure that future decisions are consistent with the community's vision and residents' expectations. Ultimately, the relevance of the Plan will be measured by its use during everyday decision-making. Monitoring the Plan's implementation should be an open and ongoing process, summarized each year in a community report card that examines performance, measures achievement, and reflects changes generated by the plan.

DEFINITIONS are indicated by this icon and presented throughout the document.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLE 1

Redevelop and Revitalize Regional Centers and Areas with Existing or Currently Planned Physical Infrastructure.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLE 2

Expand Housing Opportunities and Design Choices to Accommodate a Variety of Household Types and Needs.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLE 3

Concentrate Development Around Transportation Nodes and Along Major Transportation Corridors to Support the Viability of Transportation Options.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLE 4

Conserve and Restore the Natural Environment, Cultural and Historical Resources, and Traditional Rural Lands.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLE 5

Protect and Ensure the Integrity of Environmental Assets Critical to Public Health and Safety.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLE 6

Promote Integrated Planning Across all Levels of Government to Address Issues on a Statewide, Regional, and Local Basis.

A USER'S GUIDE

EQUITY & RESILIENCY COME FIRST

The Town of Manchester has committed to putting equity and resiliency at the forefront of future planning efforts. Every decision the Town makes should be a step toward reducing inequities among its residents and neighborhoods and making the Town a more sustainable place for future generations to live in. Sustainability can be reached through three main concepts: people, planet, and purchases. All future development should aim to consider the effects on and desires of the community, utilize and produce financial resources thoughtfully, and consider and mitigate impacts on the environment. A sustainable Manchester is a community taking bold action toward climate justice by reducing emissions, centering equity, and building resilience. A sustainable Manchester integrates environmental and public health, community needs, and economic well-being to weave sustainability into all Town programs, serve as a model for other communities, and benefit all residents, especially those most vulnerable to climate change. The recommendations provided in this POCD represent a collective effort to create a more equitable and resilient future for the Town, but each should be carefully considered during the implementation phase to weigh the impacts and ensure successful results. If the Town finds that a recommendation cannot be successfully implemented without compromising Manchester's equity and sustainability goals, the strategy should be revised.

Resiliency

Resiliency means the ability to withstand, adapt, and recover from external adversity. It is a sign of a prepared and strong community.

Sustainability

Sustainability means meeting current needs without sacrificing the needs of future generations.

WE HEARD YOU

This POCD is the culmination of Manchester NEXT, an extensive and transparent community planning process that reflects many points of view. Residents, businesses, visitors, and stakeholders participated in the process and contributed to the creation of this Plan. Manchester is a place of differing opinions, and while not everyone is going to agree with everything in it, we are confident that the voices of Manchester's community are represented in the POCD.

UNDERSTAND THE ELEMENT OF TIME

At first glance, the Plan may seem ambitious. It is important to understand that not everything in the Plan will happen all at once, and some things may not happen at all. Included are some big ideas that, if implemented, would bring about transformative change, taking years or even decades to come to fruition. Other ideas are smaller and can happen right away. This planning process is about planting seeds and seeing what we can make grow under the right conditions with careful tending. As a 10-year Plan, this document will require periodic re-evaluation of its recommendations as conditions evolve.

BE A CHAMPION OF THE PLAN

The Plan reflects the ideas of an entire community and includes many differing points of view, informed by the varied experiences of those community members—a bit of something for everyone. It is important to bear that in mind and to consider the big picture, with the overarching goal that this POCD takes Manchester in the right direction.

SUPPORT, INCENTIVIZE, & PRIORITIZE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INVESTMENT

The role of this POCD is to offer a vision for the future and set a course of action. Funding for the recommendations outlined in this Plan does not rest solely on the Town. Much of what will be needed to bring the vision to life is private investment in individual properties, public investment in individual properties, and public investment by other government agencies, such as the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT). The Town will have to ensure that the stage is set through supportive regulations and investments in infrastructure, but most of the cost and development responsibility will fall to individual private and non-profit property owners, often in partnership with public entities.

BE A PART OF THE ACTION & IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

Great ideas, like those presented in this plan, take time, money, and capacity. For the POCD to become a reality, residents, stakeholders, and Town Staff must care enough to stay involved and help execute the Plan. Residents are encouraged to join a Town board or commission, participate in a task force, or turn out to support new projects that are in concert with the POCD as they come forward. For the Plan to be successful, it must be supported by active engagement and participation. Communities that work together, and work smartly, succeed.

MANCHESTER THEN

THE TOWN'S HISTORY

Pre-1673

PODUNK NATIVE TRIBE ERA

Originally grounds for the Podunk Tribe, English settlement began in 1673 in what is now known as the Town of Manchester.

~1673 to 1822

PRE-CHENEY EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT ERA

The Pre-Cheney European Settlement Era is defined by the establishment of multiple industries in the late 1700s and early 1800s, including Pitkin Glassworks and Hilliard Mills. These mills are situated along the Hockanum River for water power. By 1790, the area has attracted around 1,000 residents.

Old Union Mill along Hockanum River, early to mid 1800s

1800s to Mid 1900s

CHENEY ERA

Manchester is incorporated as a town in 1823. Silk mills are established by the Cheney family in South Manchester. The construction of a railroad through the center of Town begins to evolve Manchester into a lively commercial, cultural, and civic hub.

Parade passing T. Weldon Drugs, Downtown Manchester, 1920

1950s to 1980s

PARKADE SHOPPING ERA

The Parkade Shopping Center serves as a primary commercial destination east of the Connecticut River through the 1970s, offering shopping and dining options for the region.

Super Stop & Shop, Manchester Parkade

1980s to 2000s

BUCKLAND HILLS DEVELOPMENT ERA

Buckland Hills Mall opens in 1990 and becomes a valuable part of Manchester's economy and retail growth.

Source: Spinosoreg.com

2000s to Today

REDEVELOPMENT, REHABILITATION, AND REUSE

As the Town experiences build-out, it becomes necessary to redevelop, rehabilitate, and reuse existing infrastructure, buildings, and homes.

Mill converted into multi-family housing | Source: ApartmentGuide.com

MANCHESTER NOW
THE TOWN'S CHARACTER

1 A Town for All

Leadership has committed to supporting the goals of diversity and equity in Manchester, making a concentrated effort to further them in studies and plans such as this POCD. The Town has already been incredibly responsive to its changing demographics through asset management, in an effort to address the needs of all residents regardless of their culture, race, religion, age, or gender. The recommendations in this Plan are based on equity and diversity in hopes that all will feel welcome in Manchester, whether it be through the arts, education, businesses, community resources, housing, or transportation.

2 Parks + Open Space

The Town of Manchester offers an abundance of parks, trails, and open spaces. This is something that residents are particularly proud of, as it displays the Town's prioritization of healthy lifestyles and sustainable recreation options. The Town also understands that quality of life is positively impacted by access to quality parks and open spaces. Key assets include the Cheney Rail Trail, Case Mountain, Charter Oak Park, Union Pond, and Center Springs Park.

3 Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods are the backbone of society, and in Manchester especially, residents greatly value their neighborhoods; some for the character and architectural history, and for others, the social aspects of gathering with neighbors and looking out for one another. Manchester has a variety of neighborhoods. Each one has its own character and identity, but together they make up the lively and diverse Town that is home to so many.

4 Businesses

Manchester supports a wide array of businesses, from small, locally owned shops to large industrial and manufacturing companies. As a result, the Town plays a crucial role in the economy of the Greater Hartford Region. The top industries in Manchester are educational services; healthcare and social assistance; professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services; retail trade; and warehousing.

5 Events

Various exciting events occur in Manchester that attract visitors from surrounding communities, such as the Annual Road Race, Cruisin' on Main Street, Spring Butterfly Stroll, Halloween Happenings, Silk City Fest, Holiday on Main, and 2nd Saturdays Downtown. Each of these events highlights something special about Manchester—whether it be the arts, food, sports, local businesses, niche interests, or shopping. Some are decades-long traditions and others are new, but they are all cherished by the community.

Source: mpspride.org

Credit: Evin Photography

Credit: Evin Photography

Source: journalinquirer.com

MANCHESTER NEXT
GOOD TO GREAT

Throughout the Manchester NEXT process, it became quite clear that the Town is a vibrant, full-service community—it includes all the necessary things that one might need to live, work, and play. Those amenities simply need to be linked in a way that accurately tells the Town's story. Stemming from the concept in Jim Collins' best-selling book, "Good to Great" is a perfect way to describe Manchester, as it is far ahead of other places around the country in terms of responding to the basic needs of residents through housing, recreational opportunities, employment, and cultural resources. The Town has successfully fulfilled its residents' ever-changing needs and aims to continue to do so. The goal of this updated POCD is to find ways to connect these good assets to present Manchester as a cohesive, welcoming community—essentially making it a great place to be.

> **"GOOD IS THE ENEMY OF GREAT. AND THAT IS ONE OF THE KEY REASONS WHY WE HAVE SO LITTLE THAT BECOMES GREAT. WE DON'T HAVE GREAT SCHOOLS, PRINCIPALLY BECAUSE WE HAVE GOOD SCHOOLS. WE DON'T HAVE GREAT GOVERNMENT, PRINCIPALLY BECAUSE WE HAVE GOOD GOVERNMENT. FEW PEOPLE ATTAIN GREAT LIVES, IN LARGE PART BECAUSE IT IS JUST SO EASY TO SETTLE FOR A GOOD LIFE."**
>
> JIM COLLINS, GOOD TO GREAT

THE PUBLIC PROCESS

The Town of Manchester and a consultant team, led by Town Planning and Urban Design Collaborative (TPUDC), conducted an open public engagement process unlike any other past planning effort. The process was branded "Manchester NEXT," with the tagline, "A Plan for Everyone."

Over the course of 3 months, Manchester offered a wide variety of engagement opportunities, using multiple creative techniques to reach a broad variety of Manchester residents and stakeholders. In today's busy world, where there are so many ways to reach people, the Town went above and beyond to reach constituents, utilizing in-person and online methods to engage the public and solicit their input on the Plan.

The Manchester NEXT process saw a need to make participation comfortable for all, offering a hybrid form of in-person events, virtual outreach, and community engagement. A project webpage was created early in the process to share information and request input from the community. The Town was tasked with offering an array of engagement opportunities, using innovative techniques to reach an assortment of residents and stakeholders. Over 250 people participated in the process, offering ideas and opinions that helped shape the vision for the future of the Town of Manchester.

Elected/Appointed Official Interviews

The consultant team held interviews with members of the Board of Directors and Planning & Zoning Commission via Zoom. These conversations involved discussing what is loved about Manchester, its competitive advantages, what challenges it has faced, the community's vision, and the goals of the POCD update process.

Print, Broadcast, Social Media & Online Engagement

TPUDC worked with Town Staff to initiate the Manchester NEXT social media campaign using the Town's Planning and Economic Development Department Twitter account (@Plan_Manchester) and Facebook Account ("Manchester, CT Planning"). Print materials were provided for distribution, explaining what Planapalooza™ is (see page 20), when and where it would be, and what a POCD is. Local news outlets reported on the event to spread awareness and increase participation.

In addition, the Town's Your Voice Matters web platform was utilized for online engagement, integrating online tools, such as surveys, discussion forums, links to additional information, presentations, and Planapalooza™ meeting recording links to YouTube. The webpage was home to the On The Table packet, Art Contest, Planapalooza™ schedule information, Idea Book, information poster, and the project timeline.

Community Kickoff

TPUDC conducted a public meeting on April 11, 2022, a couple of weeks before Planapalooza™, to serve as the official start of the planning process for the public. It was used to generate excitement about the POCD, provide an overview to date and moving forward, generate and share big ideas for a long-term vision, and answer questions. This event was conducted virtually and in person for people in the community to gather and live stream the Kickoff meeting at the East Side Office of Neighborhoods and Families and the Bangladesh Bhaban Community Center. Approximately 60 people participated.

"On The Table" Meetings

From April to June 2022, residents and business owners in Manchester were invited to complete On The Table, an opportunity to come together through guided discussion to brainstorm, collaborate, become more involved, and be more committed to their community. Participants were encouraged to gather around the table with friends, neighbors, colleagues, and maybe even a few people they were meeting for the first time to talk about Town issues, big and small, that impact their lives. These conversations could be hosted in person or online, and the process was designed to create opportunities for people to have meaningful conversations on their own time in a smaller, more intimate setting with people they feel comfortable with.

In addition to residents and local business owners, some of the local groups that hosted On The Table meetings included:

1. Manchester High School Staff
2. Manchester High School Students
3. Sustainability Commission
4. Youth Commission
5. Economic Development Commission

In total, over 10 groups got together to participate in On The Table discussions and talk about matters such as:

- Food insecurity
- Transportation
- Recreational and social activities
- Business opportunities
- Equity
- Open space
- Schools
- Sustainable development
- Senior housing

Marketing Materials

TPUDC provided the Town with print materials to advertise the Community Kickoff, Planapalooza™ and Community Open House. The Town was responsible for printing and distributing these materials throughout the community to help spread the word about the project and gather input from local stakeholders who might not otherwise pay attention to typical avenues used to increase project awareness.

Idea Book

Through collaboration with Town Staff, TPUDC designed an Idea Book for Manchester residents of all ages to discuss the Town's goals for the future. This packet featured questions about Manchester's present and future, connectivity, equity, and what's missing. It also included a "Put Yourself in Someone Else's Shoes" page where participants were asked to imagine themselves as a different race, age, gender, having a disability or different level of education, or living in another neighborhood, and how their quality of life in Manchester might be different. This visioning exercise helped people to be creative, while making equity a focus.

PLANAPALOOZA™

In May 2022, the Town and TPUDC hosted Planapalooza™, an opportunity for residents of Manchester to work directly with friends, family, neighbors, Town Staff and officials, and a team of planners and designers to build a stronger, more cohesive, updated vision for the Town of Manchester. The event was held Downtown at WORK_SPACE.

The first two and a half days of Planapalooza™ featured topical Focus Meetings, where residents shared their hopes and concerns related to conservation, growth, & development; transportation; economic & business development; transportation and mobility; parks/recreation/open space; sustainability & resilience; housing; and community, cultural resources, and downtown. These meetings were held in person and recorded to be posted online after the conclusion of Planapalooza™. Citizens were able to watch recordings of each meeting after they occurred and add their ideas related to these topics in the Focus Meeting forums on the Manchester NEXT website. TPUDC hosted an opening presentation at Manchester High School on the first night of Planapalooza™, along with a mapping workshop where participants identified places in Town that they love, do not like, and that they feel are full of opportunity.

For the entirety of the Planapalooza™, the Team and participating Town Staff worked in a temporary design studio at WORK_SPACE. Any citizen, business owner, or official who wished to stop in and provide comments, suggestions, or simply watch us work, was able to stop by at their convenience. Our Team members were available to engage with the community, ask questions and accept feedback and ideas.

On the final evening of Planapalooza™, the Team presented its findings to date and discussed how community input would shape the recommendations likely to be in the updated POCD. In addition, residents were able to view the video recording and slideshow of this presentation via the Manchester NEXT website.

Opening Presentation Mapping Workshop Credit: Evin Photography

Additional Outreach by Town Staff

After the conclusion of Planapalooza™, Town Staff felt the need to conduct additional public outreach to ensure feedback was more reflective of the Town's diverse population. Planning Department staff partnered with the Leisure, Families & Recreation (LFR) Department to conduct outreach at previously planned community events, where a more diverse cross-section of Manchester residents could contribute feedback for the Manchester NEXT project. The primary tools used to gather input were the dot mapping exercise and an online survey adapted from the Idea Book created and administered by TPUDC and Town Staff. Many surveys were administered in person by paid canvassers with roots in the community, while others were accessed from a QR code advertised at the events. Focus events included:

- Spruce Street Market
- Juneteenth Freedom Day Commemoration
- Summer youth recreation staff orientation

In addition to this extra outreach, Town Staff and TPUDC compiled a list of "Big Ideas" after Planapalooza™ that synthesized all feedback received during the event. This list was posted on the project website, along with a survey asking what residents thought of those big ideas, if they thought anything was missing, and what they liked the most about them. Over 80 people submitted responses, which were then used to inform the recommendations listed throughout this POCD.

Community Open House

Following the release of the Public Draft POCD, TPUDC and Town Staff held a two-night Community Open House in February 2023 at WORK_SPACE to present key recommendations and other highlights of the Plan to the community, presenting an opportunity for the public to make any comments or suggestions for improvement to the document. The Public Draft was then posted on the Manchester NEXT website, initiating a month-long public review period.

Additional Outreach by Town Staff

Additional Outreach by Town Staff

Community Open House

CORE VALUES

TPUDC worked with the public to identify a set of Core Values critical to Manchester's current and future quality of life. These Values embody the fundamental priorities for the Town, expressed by the community. Though the local context and approach for carrying out these Values may change over time, they should endure for generations.

PROMOTE INCLUSIVITY.

Ensure that all public places, transportation modes, and natural and cultural resources are available, welcoming, and accessible to all people.

Accessibility

Accessibility can be viewed through multiple lenses:

Mobility: Physical movement and the quality (availability, speed, frequency, comfort, etc.) of various travel modes (walking, bicycling, taxis, public transportation).

Geographic Proximity: The distances between destinations.

Transportation System Connectivity: The density of sidewalks, roads, and public transit networks. Intermodal connection quality, such as bike access to transit.

Affordability: The financial costs of travel relative to various incomes.

Convenience: The ease of obtaining travel information, paying fares, and carrying luggage.

BALANCE CONSERVATION & GROWTH.

Stabilize the need to conserve natural resources and local character while allowing purposeful, quality growth and development in strategic areas, so that the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors are met.

ENHANCE CONNECTIONS.

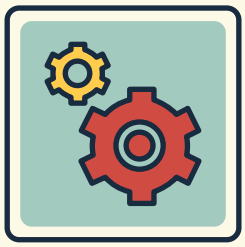
Provide a dependable, connected, multi-modal transportation network that strengthens mobility between neighborhoods, commercial centers, and area-wide amenities through all forms of transportation (walking, biking, motor vehicles). Upgrade the safety and aesthetics of existing corridors and streets through updated zoning, road diets, and streetscape improvements.

EXPAND HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES.

Seek out opportunities to provide a greater range of housing choices to meet the needs of current and future residents of all ages and income groups. Develop a more intentional and diversified housing strategy, which is critical to the enhancement of the Town's well-being and economic growth.

PRESERVE CHARACTER & AUTHENTICITY.

Retain the small-town charm, scale, and character of the community to ensure a high quality of life. Promote the Town's historic character, cultural resources, and branding within the region. Ensure high-quality development that reflects the desired character of the community.



BUILD TO ENDURE.

Emphasize sustainable development, climate resilience, and a long-lasting built environment.

STRENGTHEN ECONOMIC DIVERSITY.

Keep Manchester's economy sustainable and vibrant by providing opportunities for a variety of new and innovative business endeavors.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

26 INTRODUCTION
26 DEMOGRAPHICS
30 ECONOMIC DATA
32 HOUSING DATA
32 TRANSPORTATION DATA
34 LAND DEVELOPMENT STATUS DATA

es,
CAN
Here

INTRODUCTION

Since the adoption of the Town of Manchester's previous Plan of Conservation and Development in 2012, much has changed. The 2012 POCD was written in the context of the 2008 economic recession and housing market collapse, which in turn negatively affected federal support for local government spending. The Manchester NEXT process kicked off in 2022, amid an unprecedented time in the world's history as COVID-19 devastated overall public health, the job market, tourism, and the supply chain. Manchester, along with every municipality around the country, had to quickly adapt to the policies adopted to combat the spread of coronavirus through mask mandates and social distancing requirements. However, through all this change, the Town has continued to grow, both demographically and economically. This section briefly profiles Manchester through data concerning demographics, economics, housing, transportation, and land development status.

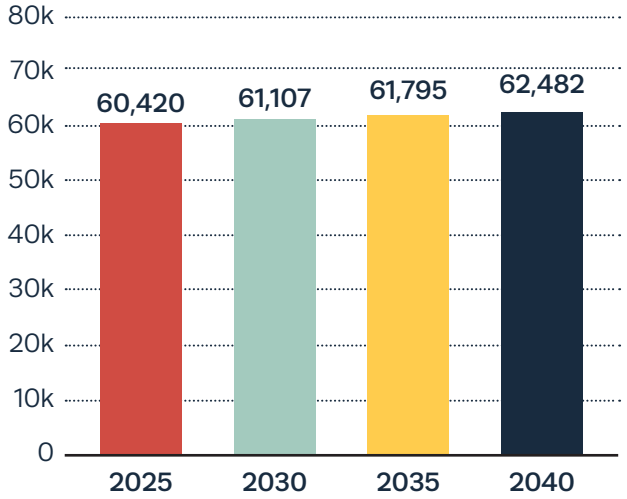
DEMOGRAPHICS

A Steadily Growing Town

Manchester's 2020 US Census population was 59,713. This represents a modest population growth of 2.5% since 2010. The community is still growing, but the pace has slowed from its previous growth rate of 6.4% during the decade of 2000 to 2010. Manchester's growth rates reflect the modest growth trends of the Greater Hartford-West Hartford Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) and Connecticut.

Using data from the US Census and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's State of the Cities Data System (SOCDS), residential building permits dating back to 1960 were annualized and used to project population growth through 2040.

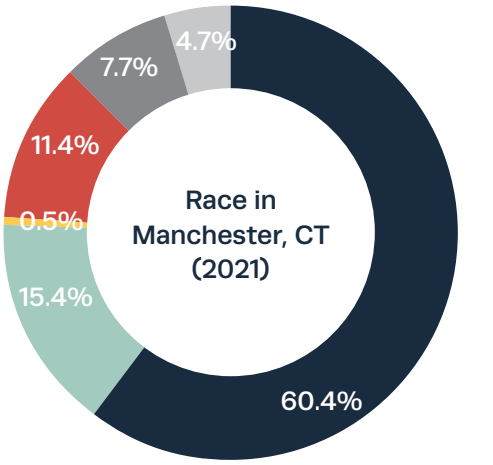
Predicted Population Growth, 2025–2040



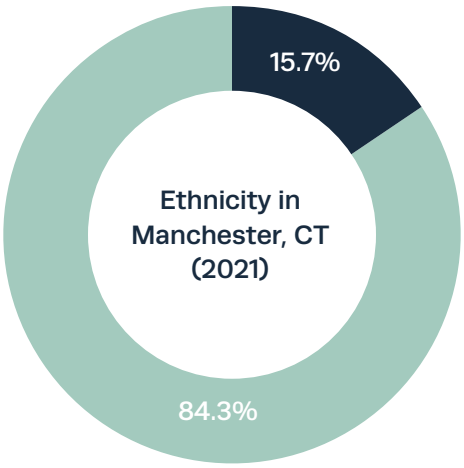
Race & Ethnicity

Manchester is truly a diverse community. Niche, a website specializing in school data, reviews, and insight, ranked the Manchester School District as the most diverse in Connecticut in 2022. Claritas' robust online database also indicates that 23 different languages are spoken in the home in Manchester. (Claritas is one of the nation's leading market research firms providing demographic, consumer spending, sales, socio-graphic, and market data for communities across the United States. Formerly associated with Neilson, Claritas has an extensive database of proprietary data sources it uses to provide market research to a variety of industries as well as market analysts.) The US Census reveals that the percent of foreign-born residents in Manchester is 21.4%.

95.3% of Manchester's population in 2021 identified as one race. Almost two-thirds of Manchester's population was White alone in 2021. Manchester's racial composition was more diverse than the State of Connecticut, with a higher percentage of Asian, Multi-racial, and African American households. Black or African American alone was the second-largest racial group, accounting for 15.4% of the population, which is higher than Hartford County (13.9%), the State of Connecticut (10.8%) and the United States (12.6%). The Asian population in Manchester (11.4%) was also a higher composition than that of the county (5.7%), state (4.6%), and country (5.7%). Additionally, 15.7% of the population of Manchester was Hispanic or Latino (of any race).



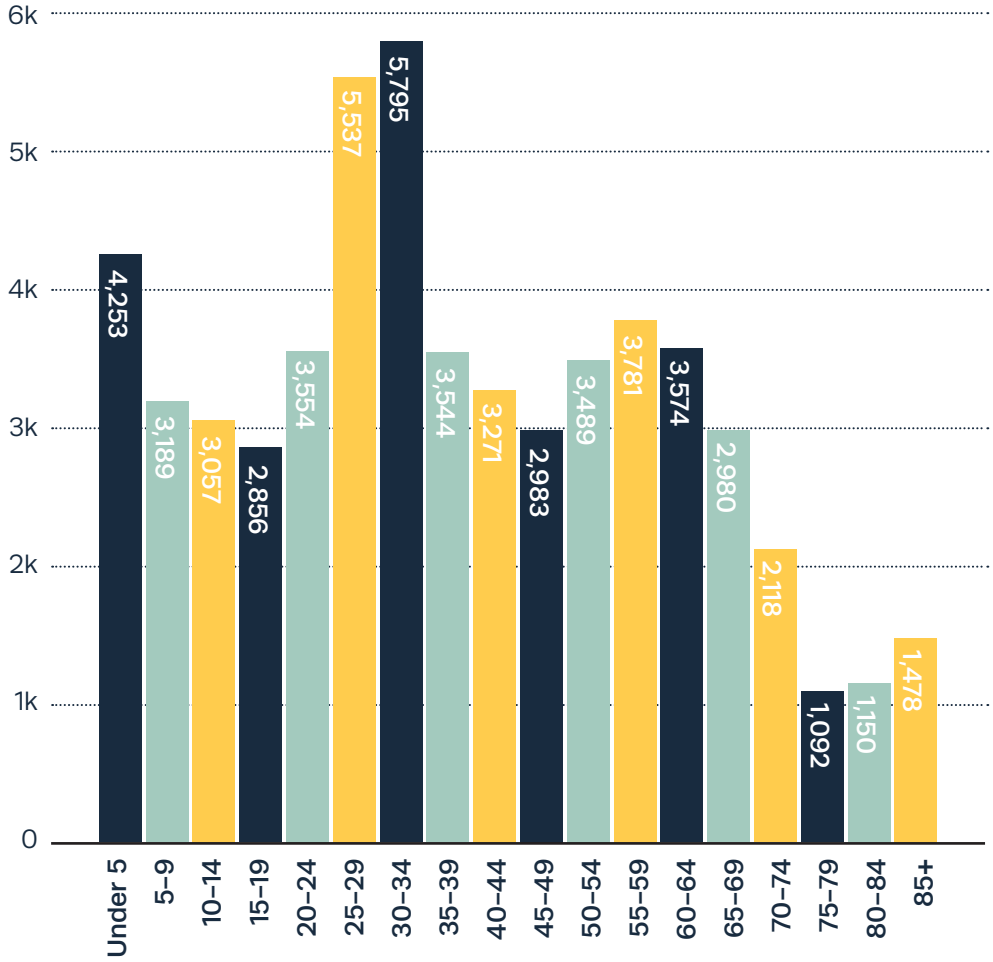
Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year estimates, 2021



Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year estimates, 2021

Age & Sex

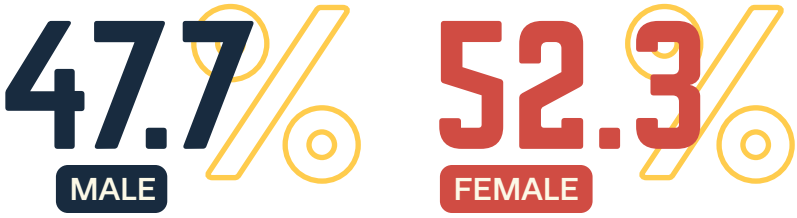
Population by Age Group in Manchester, CT (2020)



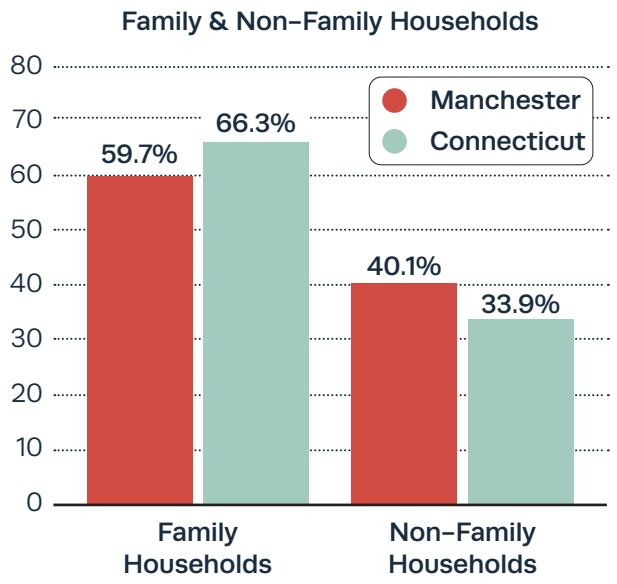
Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year estimates, 2020

The largest age group in Manchester in 2020 was 25–34, likely encompassing young professionals and young parents. Since the third largest age group was children under 5 years old, it can be inferred that Millennials planting roots in Manchester are contributing to its population growth.

Population in 2020



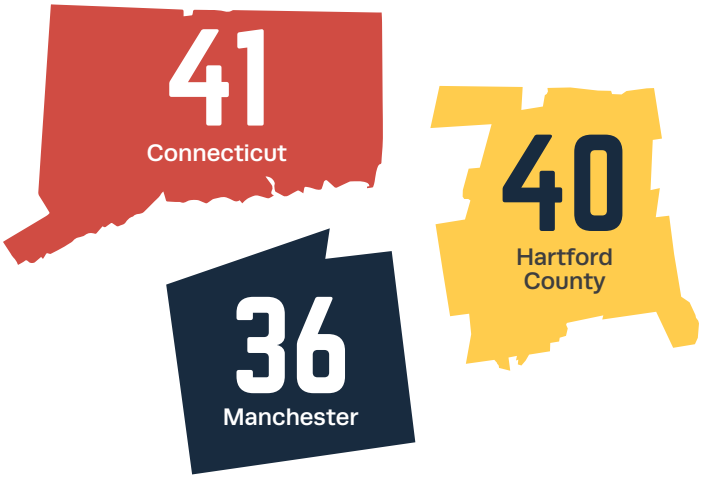
Estimated Households & Household Size



In 2021, there was a greater percentage of non-family households in Manchester than in Connecticut. Household size is slightly less than that of the state at 2.34, compared with 2.51 in Connecticut. (Source: Claritas)

Median Age

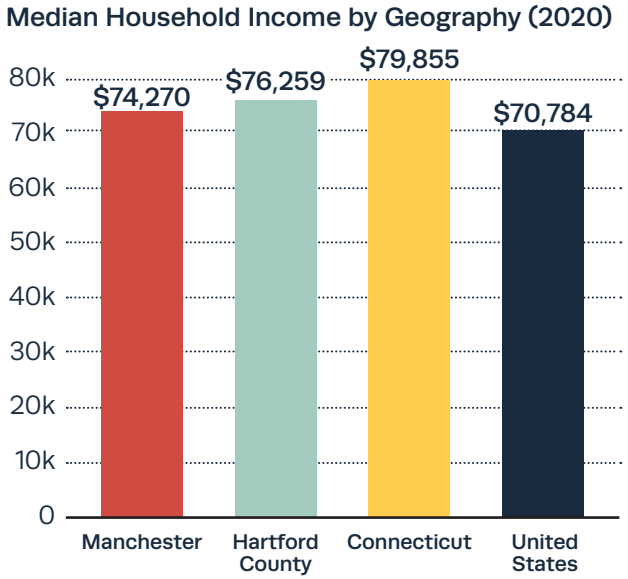
The median age of Manchester is lower than that of Hartford County and Connecticut. (Source: US Census)



ECONOMIC DATA

Median Household Income

Manchester's median household income was on par with that of Hartford County and higher than the United States' median in 2020. It should also be noted that the State of Connecticut has the 6th highest median household income in the country. See the "Median Household Income by Geography (2020)" graph to the right for details (Source: US Census).

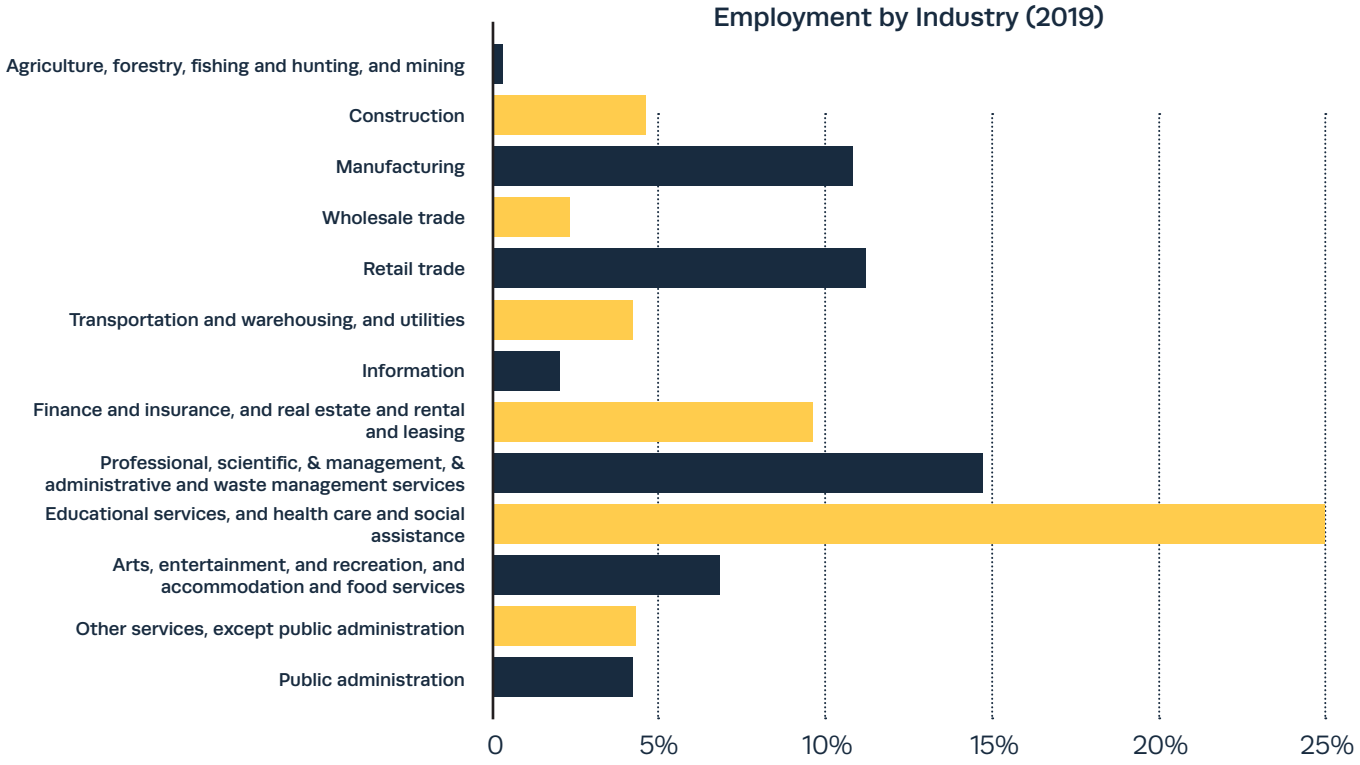


Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year estimates, 2020

Employment by Industry

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, the civilian employed population aged 16 or over was just over 30,000 in 2019. The graph below shows the breakdown of this population by industry.

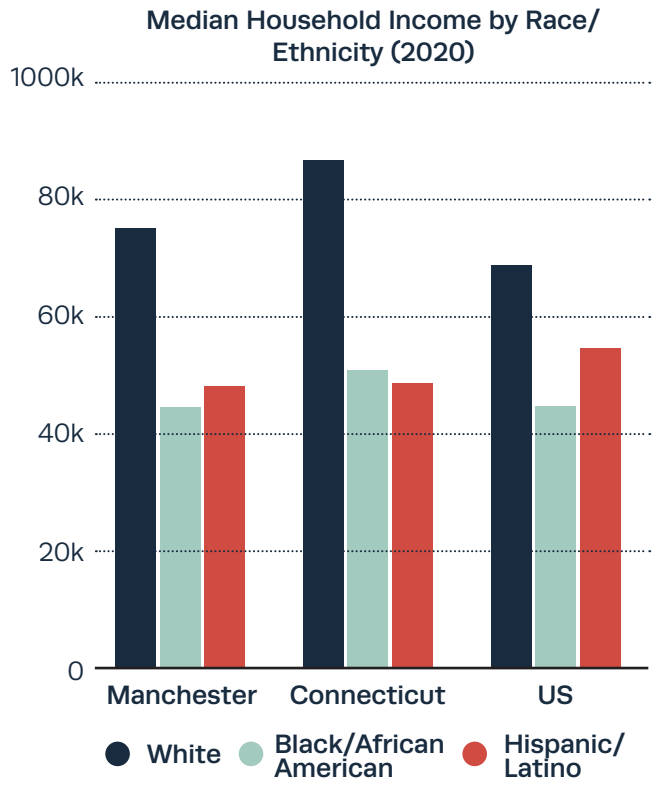
Education, health care, and social assistance were the most popular industries for employed residents of Manchester, followed by professional, scientific, management, and administrative and waste management services.



Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year estimates, 2019

Median Household Income Disparity

Income disparity is a national issue but also filters to the state and local levels, as is shown in the graph below (Source: US Census 5-Year Estimates).



Educational Attainment

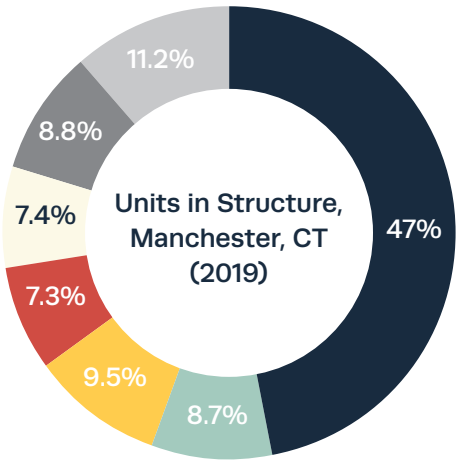
Manchester's educational attainment closely mirrored that of the state and county in 2022 for those age 25 and up. (Source: US Census Bureau, 2022)

Source: Unigo.com

Educational Attainment (2022)						
	Connecticut		Hartford County		Manchester	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Less than 9th Grade	100,985	3.98	26,368	4.15	914	2.17
Some High School, No Diploma	134,895	5.32	36,619	5.77	2,078	4.94
High School Graduate (or GED)	681,372	26.85	165,491	26.07	10,276	24.43
Some College, No Degree	418,622	16.50	106,780	16.82	7,898	18.78
Associate's Degree	196,561	7.75	54,094	8.52	3,890	9.25
Bachelor's Degree	554,932	21.87	134,672	21.21	9,441	22.45
Master's Degree	327,125	12.89	80,714	12.71	6,015	14.30
Professional Degree	79,794	3.15	20,484	3.23	1,036	2.46
Doctorate Degree	43,237	1.70	9,682	1.52	510	1.21

HOUSING DATA

There were 23,645 total occupied housing units in the Town of Manchester in 2019. 1,537 units were estimated to be vacant, according to US Census Bureau ACS data, resulting in a 6.1% vacancy rate. The dominant housing type is single-family detached with 47% of units being single-family detached. Housing tenure has seen a shift toward more rental units across the housing market over the last several years. See more detailed data in the Housing Chapter. The graph below displays units in structure for units in 2019:



- 1-unit, detached
- 1-unit, attached
- 2 units
- 3 or 4 units
- 5 to 9 units
- 10 to 19 units
- 20 or more units
- 0% Mobile home
- 0% Boat, RV, van, etc.

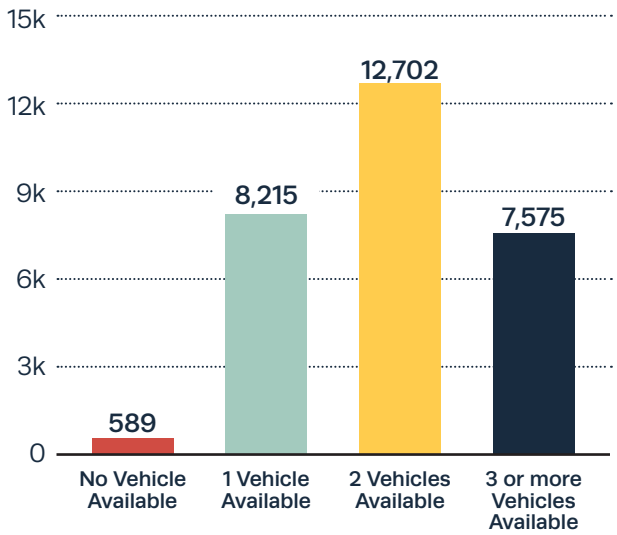
Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year estimates, 2019

This is quite unusual, compared to most cities and towns around the country, which have focused more on building single-family detached units in the last several decades. This makes Manchester more marketable and desirable to a wider array of individuals and families, likely contributing to the Town's diversity. This desirability is especially true in comparison with the state of Connecticut, which is made up of 58.9% single-family detached units.

TRANSPORTATION DATA

In Manchester in 2020, the majority of employees had two or more vehicles available in their household, while over 80% (23,953 individuals) drove their car, truck, or van alone to work, and 2,250 carpooled. Only 444 people indicated using public transportation, 474 indicated walking, 166 indicated taking a taxicab, motorcycle, bicycle, or similar means, and 1,794 worked from home.

Means of Transportation to Work by Vehicles Available, Manchester, CT (2020)



Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year estimates, 2020

In 2020, the total number of workers 16 years and over in households was 29,081. The graph above indicates how many personal vehicles were available in each household to commute to work. For more detailed transportation data, see the Transportation Chapter.

93
95

LAND DEVELOPMENT STATUS DATA

Of Manchester's 15,000+ total acres, over half of the Town's parcels are developed, and over one-fourth (28.9%) are open space. 8.3% of the Town is undeveloped and just under 2% is underdeveloped. There was no data available or applicable for 0.1% of the Town's parcels. It should also be noted that the Town owns over 300 parcels within its limits. The map on the following page displays these development statuses by parcel.

Developed

Parcels that are fully developed and adequately serving the needs of the community.

Undeveloped

Land that is undeveloped, but not preserved as such.

Open Space

Land that has been intentionally preserved as parks or open space for recreational, environmental and/or similar purposes.

Redeveloped

Parcels that have been previously developed but should be considered for redevelopment due to obsolescence, aging structures, underutilization, etc.

Underdeveloped

Parcels that are developed but offer opportunities for strategic infill.

Development Status Map

Legend

- Developed (60.4%)
- Undeveloped (8.3%)
- Open Space (28.9%)
- Redevelopment (0.6%)
- Underdeveloped (1.7%)
- Highway Corridor (0.1%)

MANCHESTER NEXT

ECONOMICS & EMPLOYMENT

HOUSING

PUBLIC SERVICES

Community & Cultural Resources

TRANSPORTATION

PARKS, RECREATION, & OPEN SPACE

Land Use & Community Character

ECONOMICS & EMPLOYMENT

40 INTRODUCTION
42 EMPLOYMENT DATA
44 RETAIL & SERVICE ECONOMY
50 DISTRIBUTION, HEALTHCARE, & INDUSTRY
54 DOWNTOWN DISTRICT

EZ-10
HANDY WACKS

INTRODUCTION

Manchester is not simply a residential suburb of Hartford. It is a multi-faceted hub of diverse businesses that employ and service the greater region. The Town's history of commerce dates back to the community's founding. From early sawmills and paper mills, Manchester evolved into a manufacturing center for glass and a notable textile manufacturing sector with silk as a specialty by the mid-1800s.

Today, Manchester has over 1,200 businesses, including manufacturing, research and development, healthcare, and education. Manchester is also a retail powerhouse for the region with over $1.5 billion in retail sales in 2021 (Source: Claritas).

The Economics + Employment Chapter provides insight into the labor market (employees), existing industries (employers), and market segments. This chapter also explores retail/services and manufacturing in Manchester and the community's economic role regionally, along with recommendations to strengthen the Town's economy.

Credit: Evin Photography

Equity in Economics + Employment

For a place to be considered equitable in the lens of economics and employment, several factors must be analyzed. Specifically, income levels, educational attainment, employment data, and business ownership should reflect the diversity of the community and show no disparities regarding gender, race, ethnicity, age, disability, or sexuality. If residents feel they do not have equal opportunities to advance their education, career, and/or entrepreneurial goals, Manchester and all towns must evaluate the local systems enabling these disparities and address them. Local resources need to be available for minorities who wish to start their own businesses, and existing business owners must feel supported by the community as well. Additionally, it is imperative that low-income residents have access to resources for education and employment opportunities that can aid in breaking the cycle of poverty.

Sustainability in Economics + Employment

The ongoing shift towards clean energy and green infrastructure will provide expanded "green jobs" opportunities for communities that embrace sustainability and resiliency. Green jobs are jobs in businesses that produce goods or provide services that benefit the environment or conserve natural resources, or jobs in which workers' duties involve making their establishment's production processes more environmentally friendly or use fewer natural resources. Future employment sectors expected to see increases in green job creation include renewable energy, buildings and construction, transportation, industry, agriculture, and forestry.

As a sustainability leader in the region, Manchester can position itself as a desirable location for companies making an environmental impact. Manchester can further strengthen its internal and external networks by encouraging and partnering with non-profit organizations and related programs that provide green jobs training and internships. Training programs and connections with schools and universities often provide the potential to develop into long-term employment and business pipelines that did not previously exist. Furthermore, recent infrastructure funding from the federal government, which will be disbursed over the next five or more years, includes significant support for green jobs training and projects that will require green jobs, signaling that this sector will continue to grow.

CASE STUDY

GROUNDWORK, PAWTUCKET, RI

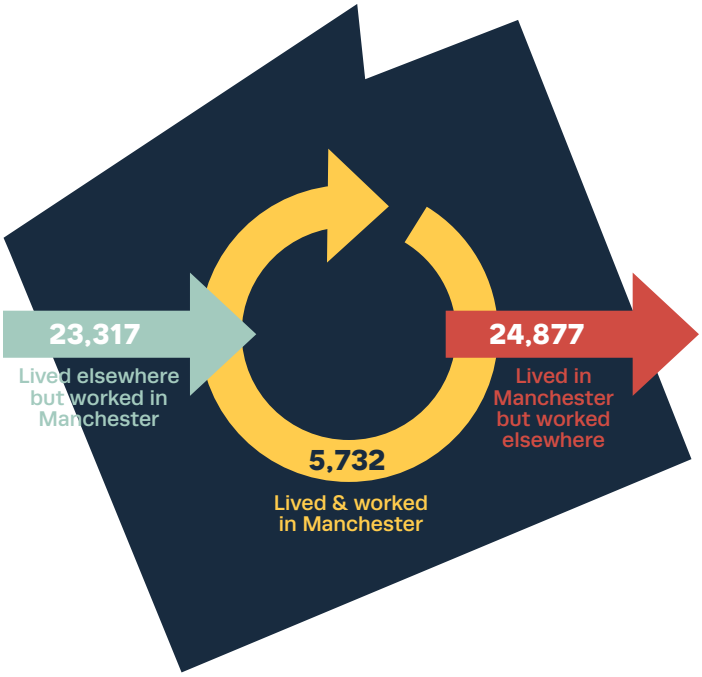
Groundwork Bridgeport's main goal is to convert blighted areas into gardens, parks, playgrounds, and other community spaces. The organization develops programs related to education, community service, and programming, especially to impact marginalized populations. Groundwork RI has a related mission, focused on urban stewardship and projects to train at-risk and lower-income Rhode Islanders, including those with past conviction records and youth. Groundwork RI developed additional programs, including adult job training, residential composting service, and a social venture landscape design-build and maintenance business offering work to graduates of job training programs. Groundwork Lawrence, in Lawrence, MA, supports similar green jobs workforce training projects related to green infrastructure installations and maintenance, a youth green team, and local urban farming, among other programs.

Source: Groundworkri.org

EMPLOYMENT DATA

Labor Force and Jobs

Inflow & Outflow Job Counts (2019)



Source: US Census OnTheMap, 2019

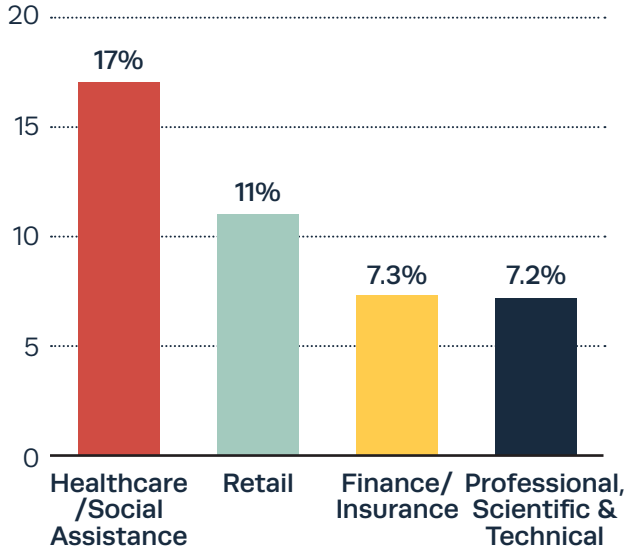
According to US Census On The Map Data, 29,050 people worked in Manchester in 2019. Of those jobs, 23,317 were held by people who commuted into Town for work. Likewise, 24,877 employed Manchester residents were commuting outside of Town for work. Notably, 5,732 people lived and worked in Manchester. This dramatic inflow/outflow pattern is a result of several factors:

- The historic role of Manchester as an employment hub since its founding.
- The relative ease of commuting within the metropolitan area, which allows for average commute times of 23 minutes. This commute time is comparatively lower than the state and national averages of over 27 minutes.
- The difference in industries and jobs within the Town vis-à-vis those available in the metropolitan area and other regional locations.

Labor Force and Job Characteristics

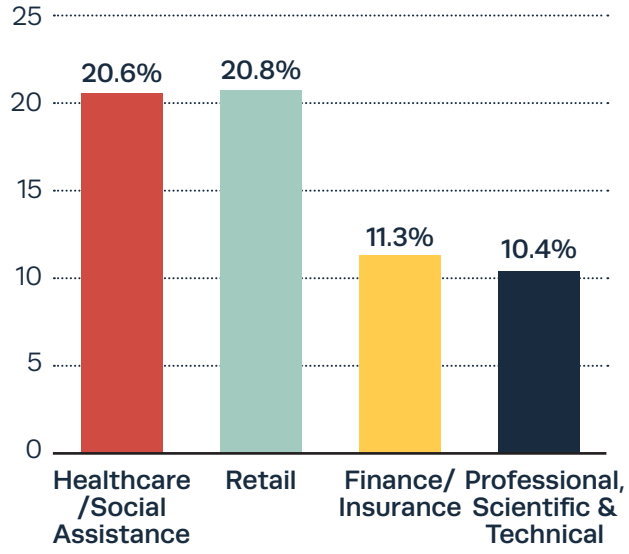
There is a distinction between the industries Manchester residents work in and the industries Manchester employs. Employed residents (the labor force) of Manchester work primarily in the industries shown in the graph below:

Manchester Labor Force by Industry

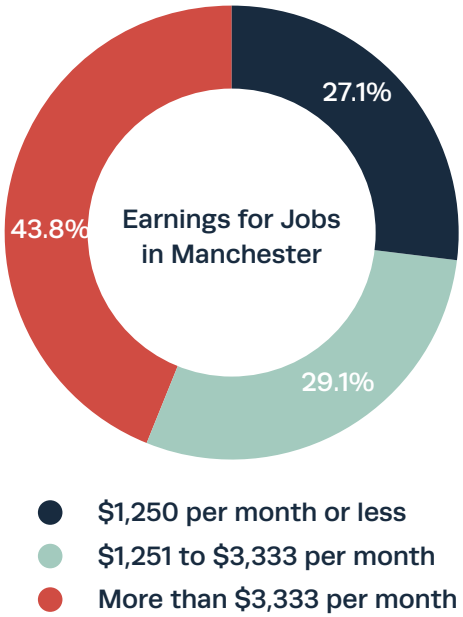


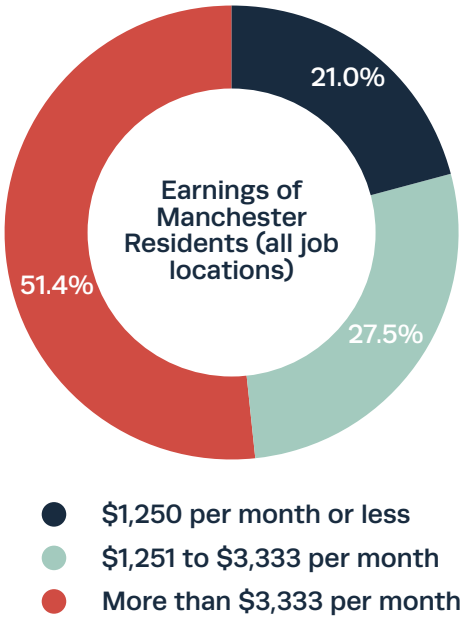
The leading employment sectors in Manchester are similar to those above, but the industry composition and earnings are unique to the Town. The leading job sectors for Manchester are shown in the graph below:

Leading Job Sectors in Manchester



Another important difference is in earnings. Jobs within the Town of Manchester tend to pay less than resident jobs outside of Town.





Observations

Manchester is an important employment center for the greater Hartford region. With nearly 30,000 jobs and 30,000 residents employed, the market is dynamic with an inflow and outflow of workers every day. Significant in-commuting and out-commuting create a "different reality" for many residents depending on their household work patterns (it also contributes to traffic and spending patterns). Some may view Manchester as a residentially focused community, while others may view it as a place of employment.

The Manchester job market is reflective of industries outside the Town, with a sizable job base in retail and healthcare. The remaining 57% of residents not accounted for in the leading industries work in a variety of employment sectors and may commute outside of Town to do so. It is notable that residents tend to commute out of Manchester for jobs in finance, insurance, science, and technology. Regional residents commute into Manchester for jobs focused on healthcare, retail, finance and insurance, science, and technical jobs.

Source: Manchester Community College

RETAIL & SERVICE ECONOMY

What we heard...

- Outdoor dining opportunities increased with the pandemic and ordinances have changed to encourage it more. Some restaurants have taken up parking spaces to accommodate outdoor dining, which has been well-received.
- Some restaurants have successfully changed their business models in response to Covid.
- Residents wish for the Town to take a more proactive approach to the ever-changing economy, rather than reactive, like they had to be with the pandemic.
- Planapalooza™ participants are not concerned about Buckland Hills being redeveloped as it related to Downtown economic growth. They say there is no competition between the two entities. Rather, there is a symbiotic relationship between Downtown Manchester and the Buckland Hills area, as for example, businesses that started in carts at the mall have evolved into brick-and-mortar shops in Town.
- Residents want to leverage the Town's diverse population through businesses, offering multicultural cuisine and retail sales options.

Purnell Place Businesses in Manchester | Credit: Evin Photography

Market Assessment

Understanding the local market requires an understanding of the regional context. As a result, the Hartford Metro area must be considered in the Town retail market assessment.

The Town of Manchester has been a retail center for the metro region for many years. With a vibrant Downtown, the Buckland Hills retail center, and several smaller retail centers, Manchester is a destination for area residents. Excluding non-store (online) retailers, the Town of Manchester saw $1.27 billion in retail sales in 2021 (source: Claritas). Retail sales per capita in Town stand at $26,549 compared with $15,824 for Hartford County and $15,496 for the State of Connecticut (2017 US Census data).

As a regional retail center, Manchester enjoys a retail and restaurant supply that exceeds local demand by $416 million. Consequently, any look at the true retail and restaurant market for Manchester requires a regional perspective. As part of the Hartford Metropolitan Area, Manchester niches into a market that is dynamic and interactive. In fact, retail growth between Hartford and Manchester, dynamic commuter patterns, and rapid regional retail changes foster a complex and growing retail market. Consumers seldom pay attention to political boundaries when shopping and dining.

Leakage Analysis

As mentioned, retail sales in Manchester exceeded consumer demand by $416 million in 2021. This market gain can be understood by evaluating regional market dynamics, and by examining specific retail categories where Manchester gains and loses market share.

The Town of Manchester represents approximately 8.3% of the overall sales for Hartford County which has retail sales of $15.2 billion. It is notable that Hartford County is also a retail "gain market" with sales exceeding demand by $1.6 billion. This is not unusual as a metropolitan center. Although the retail market has been in a state of flux since before the Covid-19 pandemic, Manchester has maintained a strong retail presence and retail sales are expected to grow by another $102 million by 2027.

Leaking Sales

Leaking sales refers to money that customers spend outside of the local market.

Main Street, Manchester
Credit: Evin Photography

Retail Sales by Category

With these local and county dynamics established, the next step is to delve deeper into the retail market data to explore the categories where Manchester is leaking sales, despite the overall gains in the retail market. These numbers are then compared to numbers in Hartford County to see if the potential expands or shrinks at a regional level.

Manchester is leaking sales in the following categories
Limited-service restaurants ($2.8 million leakage)
Drinking places ($286k leakage in Manchester, $28 million leakage in Hartford County)
Art dealers ($1.6 million leakage)
Gift, novelty, souvenir stores, used merchandise ($3.2 million leakage)
Home and garden centers ($4.6 million leakage)
Paint and wallpaper stores ($2 million leakage)

This presents a tremendous opportunity for Manchester to continue to thrive as a destination for regional dining, shopping, entertainment, and services. The fact that these highly specialized categories are leaking while others gain points to a vibrant opportunity for continued Downtown development and potentially re-imagining of traditional retail centers to focus on growing sectors of dining, entertainment, and highly specialized retail. Furthermore, this presents opportunities for entrepreneurial development.

Manchester is "over-performing" in these retail clusters, which could indicate an unsaturated market and a clustering opportunity for the community. The following store types tend to locate in similar locations:

- Furniture stores ($15 million market gain)
- Clothing & accessory stores ($37.8 million market gain)
- Sporting goods and hobby stores ($19.1 million market gain)
- General merchandise ($75.1 million in market gain)
- Full-Service Dining ($12.8 million in market gain)

Additional categories where Manchester gains sales are in automobile sales, grocery stores, and healthcare/pharmacies. These stores tend to cluster as well but have been impacted by overall market dynamics.

Clustering

"Business clusters occur when companies working in similar industries are grouped together in the same geographical location. Concentrating industry like this has a number of positive effects on the companies involved. Being located closely to rivals, businesses are pushed to be more competitive in order to out-do their neighbors. Besides fostering a spirit of competition, the proximity to other companies tends also to facilitate the sharing of information, and clusters often see the emergence of new business partnerships using combined power to leverage economies of scale," (Source: businessdestinations.com). Clustering also allows shoppers to browse and see what their options are before committing to a purchase.

Opportunities

Although the data indicates a thriving regional retail market, the future of retail is changing, and major retail centers in Manchester and adjacent communities are feeling the effects. The Covid-19 pandemic and the advantages of online shopping put retail in a state of flux for the foreseeable future. With the national decline of shopping malls and strip malls, many cities are adapting to the new face of retail.

The Buckland Hills Shopping area, Downtown and Manchester's other smaller commercial districts make Manchester a "complete" market for shopping options, with a large collection of both formula-based retail and independent merchants. Policy utilization should be considered to encourage new uses for vacant and underutilized retail strip centers and big box complexes. Because of its large size, accessible location, and existing infrastructure, the Mall represents long-term infill and potential redevelopment opportunities.

Infill

The process of developing vacant or under-utilized parcels within existing urban areas that are already largely developed and typically have necessary infrastructure already in place.

Downtown should continue to position itself as a unique and distinct specialty district for the East of the River Greater Hartford area. Local businesses in multi-story buildings have a great opportunity to expand, given that they are well-suited for downtown locations, smaller in-line shopping centers, and neighborhood centers, rather than large shopping centers and malls. This aligns with the continued focus on Downtown revitalization of an already strong Downtown market, as well as specialty districts within Manchester, to curate entrepreneurial retail and restaurant development.

Broad Street Redevelopment

The Broad Street Redevelopment area is a 148-acre commercial district in central Manchester, lying between Manchester's historic Downtown and Buckland Hills. While the district served as a primary east-of-the-river commercial destination in the 1960s and 70s, the area continues to transition into more of a walkable, mixed-use community district. Today, single-story, single-use commercial buildings house various businesses, including banks and credit unions, restaurants, automotive shops, food and grocery stores, retail, and health and recreation uses accessible to surrounding residential neighborhoods. Anticipated development at the currently vacant Parkade site is expected to accelerate this transition.

In 2008, Manchester's Board of Directors charged the Manchester Redevelopment Agency with creating a redevelopment plan for the Broad Street site. The Agency engaged the Manchester community and experts in real estate development, housing, medical facilities, and land use law to craft a plan that would map out a future for Broad Street in light of both market conditions and community support. The Broad Street Redevelopment Plan calls for a mix of uses in the redevelopment area to transition from an exclusively commercial district to an environment where people work, socialize, and live. Residential, retail, service, office, entertainment, and civic uses are possibilities throughout the area and for the redevelopment parcel. Since the approval of the Broad Street Redevelopment Plan in 2009, the Broad Street commercial area has been a major focus for the Town. The subsequent approval of an $8 million bond referendum provided funding to accomplish the goals in the plan, and since then, the great majority of the plan's objectives have been completed. Those include:

- Reconstructing Broad Street
- Developing flexible form-based zoning regulations
- Purchasing and clearing blighted structures
- Conducting market research
- Remediating environmental contamination on the former Nichols properties and creating a physical connection between the district and Center Springs Park

While the infrastructure and zoning are in place for significant development on Broad Street, redevelopment of the Broad Street Parkade itself remains unaccomplished. Legal and other challenges persist, but redevelopment of the Parkade remains one of the Town's very top economic development priorities.

Broad Street Redevelopment site, 2022 | Source: Google Earth

Retail & Service Economy Recommendations

01	Facilitate the development of mixed-use districts in focus areas such as Spencer Street, Midtown, Buckland Hills, or Depot Square (see Focus Area Concepts chapter).
02	Continue to seek high-quality development for the former Parkade site, and explore alternative uses not originally contemplated in the Broad Street Redevelopment Plan.
03	Maintain the promotion of first-floor retail and destination uses on the street level, with office and residential uses on upper floors.
04	Continue to partner with the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce (GMCC) to encourage local entrepreneurship and attract new retail businesses to the town. Emphasize Manchester's economic advantages, such as its proximity to Hartford, New York City, and Boston, and its vicinity to major automobile and rail networks.
05	Consider updating zoning regulations periodically to reflect the changing needs of the retail and service industry, such as the recent increase in demand for outdoor dining and drive-through services.

Credit: Evin Photography

DISTRIBUTION, HEALTHCARE, & INDUSTRY

What we heard...

- Manufacturing industries are in Town because of its vicinity to nearby interstates (I-384, I-84, and I-291) and neighboring industries like Pratt & Whitney in East Hartford.
- Workforce development efforts are limited and disjointed and should be improved.
- Manchester Community College has a great culinary program and other specialized offerings that should be leveraged through training and/or co-op programs that urge young people to live and work in Manchester.
- Manchester Memorial Hospital is the largest employer in Town.
- Manufacturing should be emphasized at Manchester High School, Cheney Tech, and Manchester Community College.

Source: Manchester Community College

As mentioned in the Employment section of this chapter, Manchester has maintained its historic role as a community where employment uses drive both the economic success of the community and the use of land throughout the Town.

Distribution

Industry, services, and distribution cluster in three main areas in Manchester, the first being located along both the Adams Street and New State Road Corridors that are home to a variety of service and light manufacturing businesses. The second area is the Manchester Business Park located in the northeastern portion of Town. This park is home to over seventy businesses in the service, manufacturing, distribution, and technology sectors. The third area, located along Tolland Turnpike and Chapel Road, is home to the Commerce Industrial Park and three large distribution center buildings, the largest of which is the 1.9 million square foot building known as the Winstanley Logistics Center. Currently, the building is occupied by three distribution companies, including the recent addition of Amazon.

Healthcare

The healthcare sector centers around Eastern Connecticut Health Network's (ECHN) medical facilities located in the midtown area of the Town and is the largest employer in the Town of Manchester. This sector is likely to continue to grow, and the recent announcement of Yale New Haven Health's intended acquisition of the facilities will likely facilitate that growth. See the Public Services Chapter for additional information.

Industry

Large-scale distribution and healthcare are likely to remain key employment nodes in Manchester. Even so, smaller-scale entrepreneurship and business creation are fundamental to the health of the economy in the Town. Currently, the areas available for small-scale uses vary from existing business parks to the potential for mixed-use areas that have been strictly commercial in nature. More than 97% of the businesses in Connecticut employ fewer than 500 people each (Source: Small Business Administration). The retention and expansion of diverse industries should be sited in appropriate locations with suitable public infrastructure.

Manchester is ideally suited to capitalize on national trends. Across the United States, companies less than 5 years old create an average of 1.5 million new jobs for

Americans each year. Immigrants in particular play an important role in creating jobs as they are more likely to start a new business than the rest of the population. Manchester has a unique opportunity to capitalize on this trend because of the Town's diverse population.

The Small Business Administration (SBA) sets the size standards by industry for what it considers a small-scale business. In general, these standards reflect a business's number of employees as well as average annual receipts. In the mining and manufacturing industries, companies with 500 or fewer employees are considered small-scale. In non-mining and manufacturing industries, the SBA defines businesses with $7 million or less in annual receipts as small-scale. The Town of Manchester offers a great opportunity in its business parks and corridors, which are positioned to thrive as hubs of small business activity. Potential links to Manchester Community College and UConn, placemaking and amenity development, and an enhanced ecosystem for businesses only stand to benefit continued growth. A manufacturing/entrepreneurial hub would give students and young professionals the opportunity to participate in co-op programs and gain on-the-job experience related to a variety of industries. It is also important to note that small-scale entrepreneurship is a key opportunity for women and immigrants. See the Depot Square/Hop River Innovation Park Focus Area in the Focus Area Concepts Chapter for more details.

Distribution, Healthcare, & Industry Recommendations

01	Pursue a small-scale manufacturing hub at the Manchester Business Park. This would use a vacant building for micro-enterprise related to manufacturing, assembly, technology, etc. Include amenities, open space, and gathering places for pop-up dining and retail in the park at the trailhead. See the Hop River Innovation Park Focus Area Concept for more details.
02	Continue to retain existing industry clusters in distribution, healthcare, manufacturing, logistics, etc.
03	Contemplate rebranding and updating the Manchester Business Park as a whole.
04	Consider applying for funding through the Connecticut Manufacturing Assistance Act to pursue a Small Scale Manufacturing Initiative. This State-sponsored funding would support the development of manufacturing businesses through property acquisition, site construction/demolition/renovation, business support services, and more. See https://portal.ct.gov/DECD/Content/Business-Development/05_Funding_Opportunities/Manufacturing-Assistance-Act for details.

CASE STUDIES

1 BIRD ON THE WIRE STUDIOS
(KNOXVILLE, TN)

As a shared studio space in Downtown Knoxville, Bird on the Wire Studios offers shared equipment for artists, makers, and designers to refine their crafts and encourage what its founder, Derek White, calls "creative manufacturing." Past projects include chandeliers, functional public art installations, and furniture for local businesses.

2 OAK HILL COLLABORATIVE
(YOUNGSTOWN, OH)

The Oak Hill Collaborative, Inc. is a 501-C3 non-profit organization in Youngstown. The goal of the organization is community revitalization through small business development and neighborhood beautification. The partnership between the community's nonprofits, educational institutions, government, and businesses has created a small business incubator and programs that help marginalized residents create thriving businesses. (Source: https://oakhillcollaborative.org/about-us/)

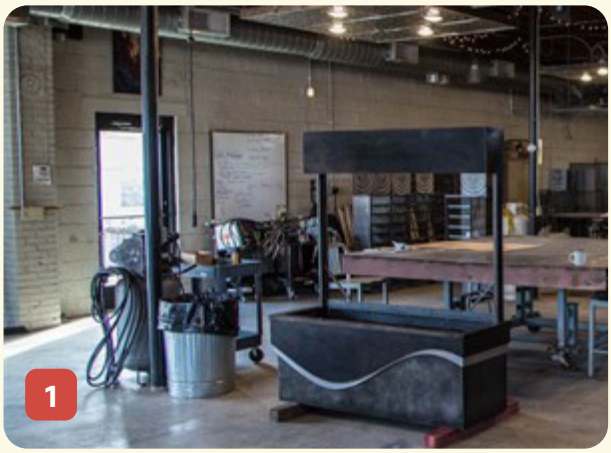
3 MAKE 717 INNOVATION CENTER
(LANCASTER, PA)

Make 717 is a "maker space...with a variety of tools and equipment for use by members...to offer a collaborative environment to create things for everyone," (cultivatelancaster.com). It is part of an overall network that Lancaster has developed to foster entrepreneurship and small business through a partnership called Cultivate Lancaster, which began as a biannual workshop series in December 2015 and has since evolved into a collaborative initiative led by a coalition of over 20 non-profit, for-profit, government, and educational institutions that is dedicated to providing emerging entrepreneurs and micro businesses with:

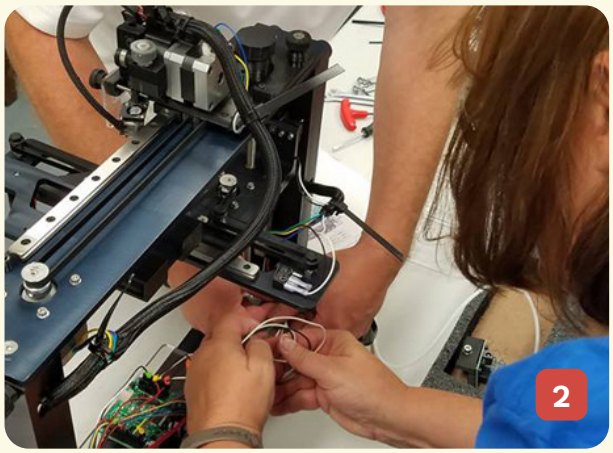
- Opportunities to meet, network, and share their experiences with one another;
- Direct channels to engage with local small business support organizations and learn about their services;
- And easy access to tools, resources, and programming that is tailored for startups.

4 RECENTER
(NORTHAMPTON, MA)

In order to reduce waste, the City of Northampton's Department of Public Works and ReUse Committee initiated ReCenter, which, through its Swap Shop, "allows individuals and organizations to donate durable, useful homegoods and furnishings for reuse," (northamptonma.gov).



Source: Bird on the Wire Studios



Source: Oak Hill Collaborative

Source: Make 717 Innovation Center

Source: ReCenter

DOWNTOWN DISTRICT

What we heard...

- There is a shared vision among residents that Downtown Manchester can become even more of a destination.
- People want Downtown to be a vibrant place but worry about the potential for future gentrification in surrounding neighborhoods.
- Some felt that Downtown needs a core employer.
- In terms of street design, Downtown feels one-sided.
- Residents want the Town's amenities to be well-connected to Downtown to improve accessibility and spur economic growth.

Gentrification

Gentrification is "the process in which a poor area (as of a city) experiences an influx of middle-class or wealthy people who renovate and rebuild homes and businesses and which often results in an increase in property values and the displacement of earlier, usually poorer residents." (Source: Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

Existing Conditions + Recent Initiatives

Downtown Manchester includes approximately 200 businesses, offering food & drink options, shopping, personal services, health & fitness businesses, professional services, education & classes, art & creative spaces, business support, nonprofits, weddings & event spaces, services for the home, and technology services (See the "Special Services District" section below and the "Downtown" section under the Community & Cultural Resources Chapter for more details). The Downtown area also contains an impressive 900 free parking spaces including seven public parking lots. These days, it can be fairly difficult to find free parking in any downtown at all hours, so this is something that Manchester should market and use to its advantage to attract visitors. In addition, the open parking lots present opportunities for local festivals and events to locate, increasing foot traffic and spurring economic activity.

The continued revitalization of Downtown continues to be one of Manchester's top priorities, not simply from an economic development perspective, but because of the importance of the district to the entire community. Downtown is one of the Town's greatest and most unique assets and continues to serve as the heart of the community. While some long-time residents note that Downtown is no longer the Town's primary commerce and banking center, it has, in reality, become much more: a restaurant destination, an arts and culture center, a small business hub, a central location for community events, and a gathering place for people of various backgrounds and interests.

Over the past decade, the Town's goal has been to increase the vibrancy of the district and to encourage and invest in place-based economic development. Millions of dollars in both public and private funds have been invested in the building stock and public places over that period. At the same time, the Town has been able to attract many new successful businesses, including coffee shops, a brewery and tap room, an art studio and café, and an ice cream shop.

In 2018, the Board of Directors approved the Downtown 2020 (later extended to 2022) Initiative to target public investment in the Downtown area. That initiative:

- Established a loan fund for transformative private development projects intended to address building/fire and safety code issues.
- Provided funds for capital improvements to enhance Downtown's sense of place.
- Reorganized professional staff support between the Special Services District and the Town, reiterating the importance of Downtown to the municipality and cutting the additional assessment paid by Downtown property owners in half.

Sense of Place

Places carry meaning, memories, and cultures. Integrating "Sense of Place" in development transforms a location into a home, a neighborhood, and a community. Sense of place describes the wide range of connections between people and places that develop based on the place's meaning and attachment.

Through this initiative, Manchester has awarded three projects with funds for loan programs. With the Town's assistance, the Firestone Art Studio and Café has become a successful business, a hub of economic activity, and an attraction to Downtown. When complete, the former Catsup & Mustard building at 2–4 Pearl Street will be completely rehabilitated, with new restaurant space on the first floor and modern market–rate apartments above. In terms of capital projects, Manchester has installed murals at two connections between the rear parking lot and Main Street, reimagined Purnell Place with strung bistro lights and pedestrian improvements and provided a key pedestrian connection between Main Street and the St. James church parking lot.

The next phase of reinvestment is likely to be even more transformative, centered upon a new location for the main branch of the public library, complete street enhancements, and the redevelopment of underutilized properties.

Credit: Evin Photography

Special Services District (SSD)

As a designated Special Services District, Downtown Manchester provides business and property owners a way to collaborate to keep the area clean and beautiful, organize projects and community events, and spread awareness about events via an e-newsletter called "What's Up Downtown." The district is voluntarily overseen by a board of seven commissioners who represent properties Downtown, with the Downtown Manager handling daily tasks. Downtown Manchester would not be the charming place it is without the help of "Friends of Downtown," composed of local businesses, organizations, and non-profits. The following groups support and partner with the District:

- ART FÜD
- CAST Children's Theatre
- Down Syndrome Association of Connecticut
- DuBaldo Construction & Management, LLC
- Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce
- Imagine Main Street
- Little Theatre of Manchester
- MACC Charities
- Manchester Public Library
- RiseUP for Arts
- Sweet Pepper
- Town of Manchester Planning & Economic Development Department
- UR Community Cares
- WORK_SPACE

In addition to the services described above, the Special Services District also serves as Downtown's Parking Authority, and manages parking, landscaping, and maintenance.

Source: CAST Children's Theatre

Source: Down Syndrome Association of Connecticut

Source: Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce

Source: RiseUP for Arts

Source: Sweet Pepper

Source: UR Community Cares

Source: RiseUP for Arts

Credit: Evin Photography

Source: WORK_SPACE

Downtown District Recommendations

01	Continue to encourage and support the development of creative working spaces, shared workspaces, and think tanks. Diversify workplaces by allowing more mixed-use, maker spaces, and live/work buildings.
02	Consider launching a Town branding/marketing initiative to create a cohesive image that markets the Town, and Downtown more specifically, accurately and creatively. See the Waterbury, VT Identity Guidelines Case Study.
03	Contemplate prioritizing the addition of new retail and restaurant businesses over service-oriented businesses Downtown to increase foot traffic.
04	Invest in connections to adjacent neighborhoods. Downtown should be the center of social interaction for Manchester residents. Trails and connections to Downtown will strengthen these neighborhoods and connect residents to the many independent businesses, job opportunities, and cultural amenities in the district.
05	Create and implement stabilization programs for long-term/minority-owned businesses to minimize displacement if taxes rise.
06	Strive to make Downtown Manchester welcoming and inclusive for all residents. This could include a range of tools, such as historic interpretation of the history of Manchester from different perspectives, creating amenities and programs that facilitate bringing communities together, and a focus on businesses that are owned by traditionally under-represented populations.
07	Survey minority populations to determine what would make Downtown feel more welcoming.
08	Continue to support temporary outdoor dining options that expand seating capacity while allowing patrons to comfortably socialize post-Covid.
09	Support existing initiatives and identify new ones that encourage teens, college students, and young adults to spend more time Downtown.
10	Incorporate an inclusive understanding of community needs and cultural awareness into Downtown policing practices.
11	Incentivize development of the few vacant properties for mixed-use development.
12	Continue to assist owners with code improvements to older buildings.
13	Consider a night market to celebrate local businesses, highlight creative talent in the region, and bring the community together.

CASE STUDY

WATERBURY, VERMONT IDENTITY GUIDELINES

In 2013, the Town of Waterbury, Vermont hired Arnett Muldrow and Associates, a nationally recognized branding specialist, to create Identity Guidelines to "provide a style guide and illustration adoption of the Waterbury brand by a variety of commercial, nonprofit, and municipal groups," (revitalizingwaterbury.org/rw-brand). Branding elements include a specific color palette and fonts, logo size and spacing guidelines, brand extension ideas, wayfinding signage, and advertising design strategies. These guidelines aid in telling the story of Waterbury while also boosting community pride and securing the Town's economic opportunities.

Brand Extension

Brand extension is the process of incorporating the brand into events and activities going on in the community. By adopting the look, feel and tone of the Waterbury, Vermont brand, these events begin to be connected in the consumers mind and begin to add strength to the primary brand and vice versa. The general approach of brand extension is to select at least one of the members of the color palette as the primary color of the logo, and expand the color palette from there. The use of approved fonts also connects the logo to the overall brand.

Source: WaterburyVT.com

CASE STUDY

STARTUP PHL

The City of Philadelphia's Department of Commerce launched a grant program initiative in collaboration with the Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation in 2019, which aims to support startup entrepreneur companies who come from socially or economically disadvantaged backgrounds. To qualify, organizations must demonstrate an ability to increase the number of jobs available in the municipality. Eligible entrepreneurs receive small grants and business support. StartupPHL's website offers additional resources for those who wish to start their own business.

Source: Startup PHL

HOUSING

62 INTRODUCTION
64 CURRENT HOUSING STOCK
68 CHANGING PREFERENCES
70 HOUSING ATTAINABILITY
76 HOMELESSNESS

Housing

GROWTH MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLE 2

CORE VALUES

INTRODUCTION

Historically, the Town of Manchester's housing market has successfully adapted to the Town's changing demographics and consumer preferences, resulting in a wide variety of housing types. Planapalooza™ participants did not have many negative things to say about the Town's existing housing stock, except that some of it is outdated, and some units are priced too high. Rather than exclusively building new units, residents would prefer to update current units through rehabilitation to comply with building codes.

The national housing market has suffered great disruption in the last 15 years. This Plan addresses ways to maintain the quality of existing neighborhoods, be thoughtful about the adaptive reuse of historic buildings (which has been a pillar of planning in Manchester) and contemplate residential mixed-use development in areas that have traditionally been solely commercial in nature. This chapter discusses the Town's current housing stock, changing preferences, housing attainability, and homelessness.

Equity in Housing

Equity in housing can be revealed through a Town's housing variety, cost burden, housing stock age and condition, and homelessness. If residents do not have equal access to adequate housing, this can create a myriad of other issues such as unemployment, homelessness, poverty, and health-related problems. It is of utmost importance that Manchester strives to offer housing for all ages, genders, races, abilities, and stages of life. Providing mixed-income housing should also be a goal, which encourages interaction between people of varying backgrounds and allows for a range of housing options for buyers and renters. Recommendations to assist Manchester in its effort to provide fair housing for all residents are discussed in this chapter.

Cost Burden

A household is considered cost-burdened when they "pay more than 30% of their income for housing" and "may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care." (Source: US Department of Housing and Urban Development)

Sustainability in Housing

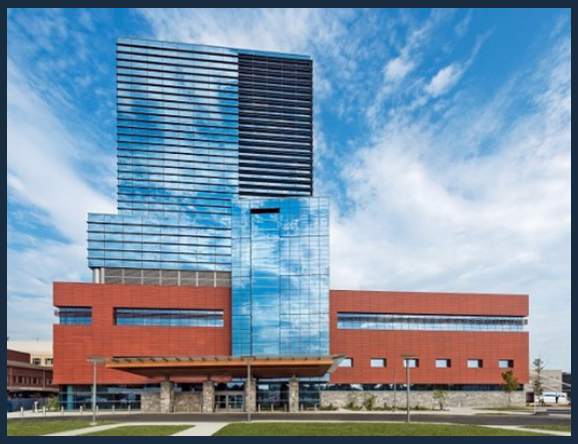
The principles of sustainability in housing, sometimes called "green homes", often focus on housing design and construction strategies to minimize negative impacts on the environment, foster healthy spaces for the residents, and reduce the carbon footprint of the homes. For example, reduction in water and energy use, waste reduction, and reduction of the impact of pollutants and chemicals all contribute to environmental sustainability and are key principles in green building rating systems. Green homes often achieve these goals using tools and techniques such as renewable energy, optimized solar orientation and tree preservation, water and energy-efficient fixtures and appliances, natural air circulation, improved insulation, green stormwater infrastructure, and locally and sustainably sourced materials.

In addition to building-specific techniques, neighborhood-scale sustainable planning and design principles including Smart Growth and "missing middle" housing types outlined in the Land Use + Community Character Chapter of this Plan can increase Manchester's social and economic resiliency. Policies and programs that encourage a range of adaptable housing options in pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods located in proximity to jobs and commercial uses will provide more economic opportunity, better social connectivity, higher quality of life, and reduced commutes, resulting in a stronger and more welcoming Manchester.

CASE STUDY

LEED REGULATIONS IN CONNECTICUT COMMUNITIES

Stamford, Connecticut's ordinances require all city-owned buildings over 5,000 sq ft and buildings where the city leases at least 50% of total space to earn Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver or higher. Multiple Connecticut communities including Norwalk, Groton, and Haddam include green infrastructure and LEED rating in their regulations as examples of features that qualify for development incentives such as bonus floor area, increased building height, increased density, and increased allowable lot coverage. Windham requires use of LEED rating systems as a guide to building design.



Stamford Health, located in the City of Stamford, became the first LEED Certified hospital in Connecticut in 2018
Source: Stamfordhealth.org

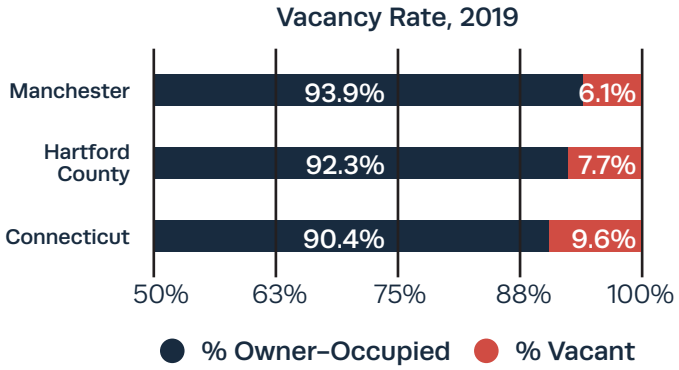
CURRENT HOUSING STOCK

What we heard...

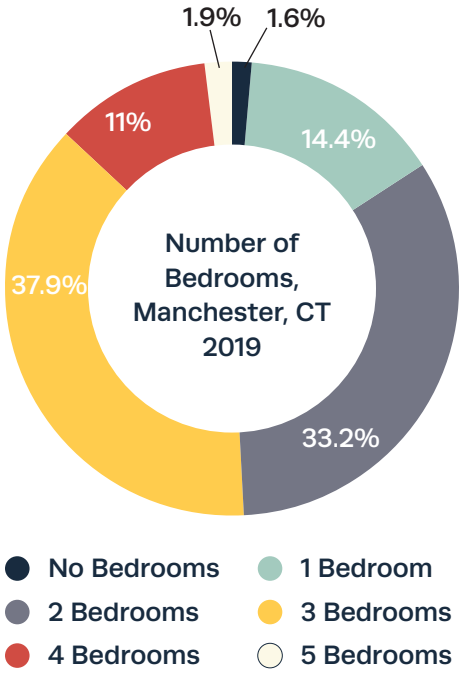
- The Town has been averaging 20–25 constructed single-family housing units per year since 2010.
- A small percentage of homes were built with faulty concrete from the 1980s to 2011. While Manchester is not experiencing it as much as other towns in the state, it is still a problem for some homeowners.
- One of the biggest problems in Town and around Connecticut is the older housing stock that needs to be maintained and/or rehabilitated.
- More energy-efficient housing is desired.
- The existing rehabilitation programs available in Town should continue to improve communications/connections with one another to help those who need housing assistance.
- Planapalooza™ participants wish to repair existing housing with sustainable measures, but do not know how the Town would pay for such a program.
- Keep the Promise is a great State-organized program that provides housing for the disabled/ Medicaid recipients/those unable to work.

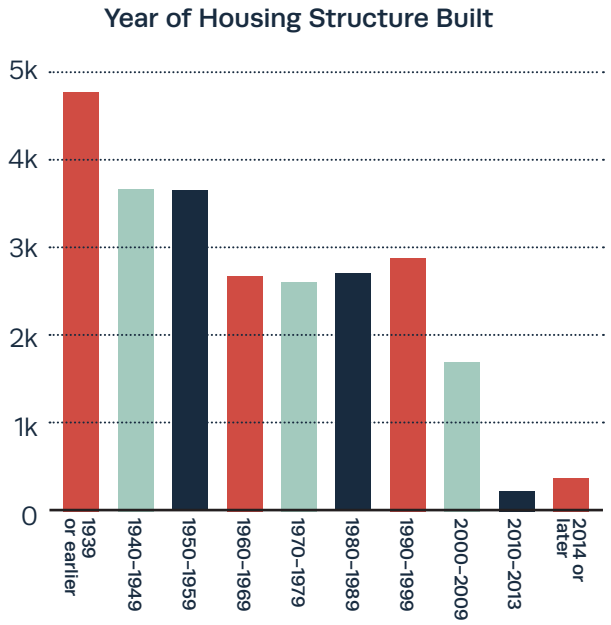
Type and Age of Current Housing

As noted previously in the Community Profile, in 2019, just under half of the housing units in Manchester were in 1-unit detached, followed by 44.2% 2-unit or more structures. There were 23,645 total occupied housing units in 2019 and 25,182 housing units in total. Manchester's vacancy rate was also lower than Hartford County's and Connecticut's.



In 2019, 2- and 3-bedroom houses were the most common type for all housing units in Manchester.





(US Census ACS 2020 5-year estimates)

Manchester has experienced a fluctuating rate in the number of homes built each decade. Most of the housing (18.9%) in the Town was built in 1939 or earlier.

Housing Rehabilitation Program

In response to the Town's aging housing stock, a Housing Rehabilitation Program was established through a Community Development Block Grant. It is managed by the Planning & Economic Development Department and "provides forgivable loans to owner-occupied or investor-owned single- and multi-family residential properties in select housing rehabilitation areas," (manchesterct.gov). There are several eligibility requirements that recipients must meet, but repair work ranges from painting to plumbing to electric and heating work. Since its implementation, hundreds of housing units in Manchester have been rehabilitated through this program, assisting hundreds of families and individuals.

Emergency Replacement Program

Another notable program that the Town's Planning & Economic Development Department offers is the Emergency Replacement Program, also funded by a Community Development Block Grant. This program "provides financial assistance for replacement of systems or housing features that, if not addressed, would threaten the health and/or safety of the property's occupants," (manchesterct.gov). There are specific requirements regarding the property and applicant's income that must be met in order to receive funding. Examples of insufficient systems and features that can negatively impact resident health and safety include furnaces, HVAC, and roofs.

Rebuilding Together of Manchester

Rebuilding Together of Manchester stems from the national non-profit known as Rebuilding Together. This organization aids in rehabilitating low-income housing through volunteerism, meeting every year on the last Saturday of April after months of preparation. Volunteers help repair home safety issues, paint, do yard work, and more. As their website notes, the program has restored over 1,600 homes through over 22,000 volunteers (rebuildingmanchester.org).

Source: Google Maps

Housing Stock Recommendations

01	Continue to aid property owners looking to make repairs or rehabilitate existing housing for low- and moderate-income residents and families, especially those that may violate health and safety codes.
02	Consider increasing public awareness and adopting guidelines or incentives for suburban retrofitting. Through form-based regulations that allow for a mix of uses, diverse housing types, and pedestrian-oriented rights-of-way, suburban retrofitting is encouraged, creating an opportunity for new housing options.
03	Educate the public on Low Impact Development best practices and erosion control.
04	Continue to address dilapidated structures and building code violations through code enforcement.
05	Consider forming a community land bank (see Hartford Land Bank Case Study).
06	Create, enforce, and periodically evaluate standards for residential design, building and property maintenance, landscape design, and planting to improve housing conditions. Amend standards as necessary to meet the needs and desires of the Town.

Suburban Retrofit

Suburban Retrofit involves "the transformation of underutilized, car-oriented assets like malls, shopping centers, industrial areas, and office parks. They can then become compact, walkable, mixed-use 'activity centers.' Suburban retrofit also reduces the carbon footprint of the suburbs and builds community. This helps people get out of their cars and get to know each other—including across social classes and ethnicities." (Source: Stantec)

Low Impact Development

Low Impact Development refers to systems and practices that use or mimic natural processes that result in the infiltration, evapotranspiration or use of stormwater in order to protect water quality and associated habitat. (Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, EPA.gov/nps/urban-runoff-low-impact-development)

CASE STUDY

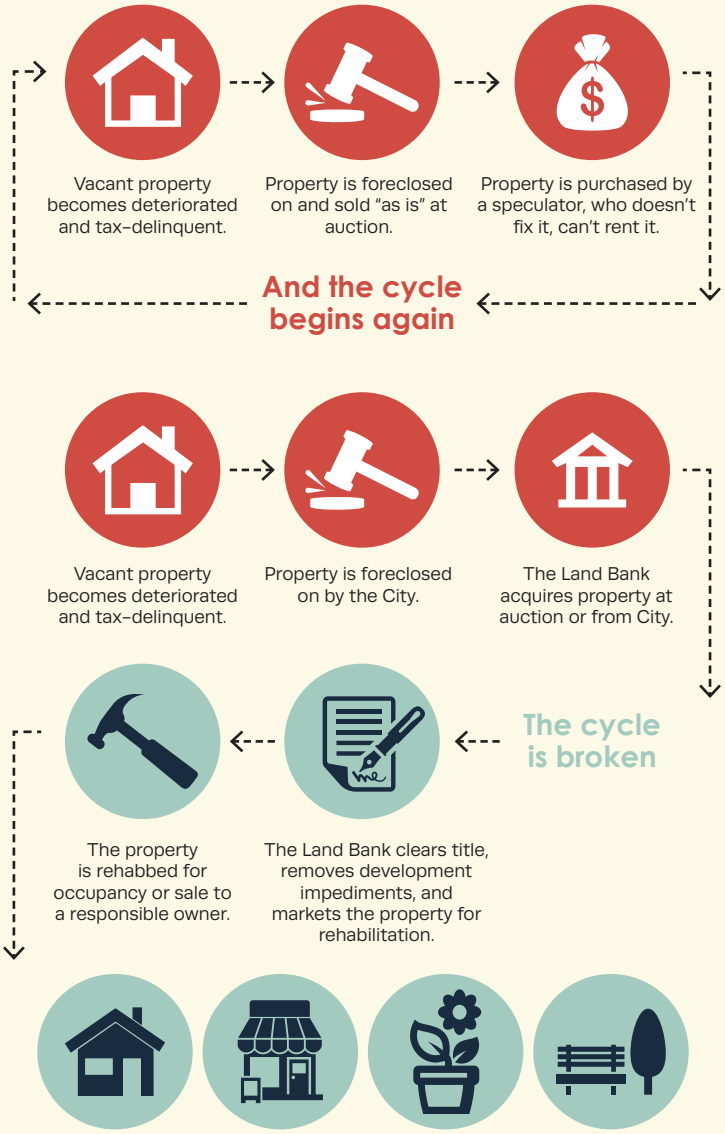
HARTFORD LAND BANK

The Hartford Land Bank is a non-profit corporation that identifies and acquires vacant, abandoned, tax-delinquent, and/or distressed properties in the City of Hartford, Connecticut to steward their rehabilitation and return to productive community assets. It efficiently and effectively reduces blight. Problem properties are transferred back to responsible ownership and productive use in accordance with local zoning and neighborhood goals and priorities. The Hartford Land Bank Board of Directors is comprised of local economic development and urban planning professionals, and neighborhood and community stakeholders. Staff members are all Hartford residents and community leaders, enthusiastic about their work as catalysts for vacant properties, homeownership advocacy, and workforce development. Not to be confused with a Land Trust, Land Banks like this one can effectively work with Land Trusts to achieve similar, but different, goals. (hartfordlandbank.org/land-bank-vs-land-trust/)

Source: hartfordlandbank.org

How a Land Bank Works

Life Cycles of a Vacant Property



HartfordLandBank.org

CHANGING PREFERENCES

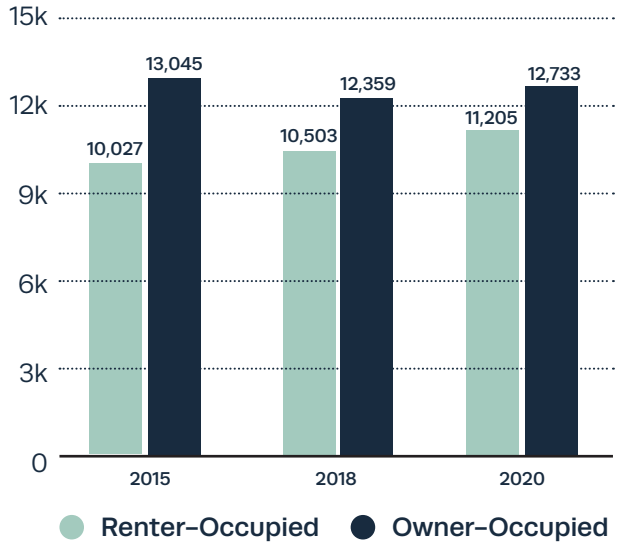
What we heard...

- The occupancy rate in apartment buildings is very high, especially compared to Hartford County and the state.
- Larger multifamily complexes, including the Cheney Mill apartments, always have a waiting list.
- The Town obtained CARES Act funding for housing stability.

Owning vs. Renting

As shown in the data below, the percentage of owner-occupied housing units in Manchester has decreased steadily over the last decade, and subsequently, the number of renter-occupied units increased from 2015 to 2020. Once again, Manchester appears to be ahead of the national trend by moving towards multifamily housing and rental options, with an understanding that not everyone desires to own a home, and/or can afford to do so.

Housing Tenure Data for Total Households in Manchester



(US Census ACS 5-year estimates)

The trends in Manchester's rental market are consistent with those of the rest of the country. Statistically, Millennials are less likely to purchase homes and are contributing to the rising national preference for renting. Most attribute this to a lack of affordable home-buying opportunities rather than a preference for renting. The most common housing type for sale nationwide is the detached single-family home, which can have higher maintenance and overall costs. Local governments in the US have started producing more diverse options for home buyers that fit a variety of lifestyles and budgets. The stigma of duplexes and apartments as exclusively affordable housing has fallen away to accommodate the newer generation's various lifestyle preferences. At the same time, rental rates have been increasing and high-end apartment construction is booming in many cities. In Manchester, as a result of high demand, median rent on apartments increased 44% between 2021 and 2022, to a high of $1,585.

In the meantime, Baby Boomers and Generation Xers are downsizing and looking for other housing options. Older people who are moving strongly prefer more walkable neighborhoods where they can access goods and services without driving. In this way, their preferences mirror Millennials' desire for cohesive, mixed-use neighborhoods. Research shows that renting provides some seniors with opportunities to test new locations before committing to a purchase. Some ultimately choose to remain as renters because they prefer more budget-friendly, low-maintenance housing. The Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University reported in 2019 that older adults may be more likely to relocate to large multifamily units "because they are more likely to offer accessibility features, such as elevators and single-floor living, than garden-style properties or smaller multifamily buildings," (jchs.harvard.edu). This trend of shifting from owning to renting is expected to continue as aging Baby Boomers prefer the benefits of renting.

Conversely, recent studies show that the youngest generation, Generation Z (or "Gen Z"), prefers homeownership over renting. A March 2022 survey from Bankrate found that 59% of Gen Z cited owning a home as part of the "American Dream" and view it as an investment. Potential reasons include the increased ability to work remotely, a stronger desire to renovate a fixer-upper, and wanting to have more space after having lived with one or more roommates. However, affordability is

the largest roadblock to homeownership for Gen Z due to higher housing prices, high mortgage rates, rising student loans, and stagnant wages. Therefore, renting appears to be Gen Z's default option in the meantime. Fortunately, the Town of Manchester understands this and has provided adequate housing options for its residents.

Generations	
Silent Generation	born 1928–1945
Baby Boomers	born 1946–1964
Generation X	born 1965–1980
Millennials	born 1981–1996
Generation Z	born after 1996

Source: Pew Research Center | www.pewresearch.org

Changing Preferences Recommendations

01	Strengthen neighborhoods and expand housing choices through an increased mix of uses, diversified housing choices, and the concentration of more housing within mixed-use areas such as Downtown.
02	Identify opportunities to enhance connections within existing neighborhoods, and connections to surrounding neighborhoods, centers, and recreation areas.
03	Monitor the changing preferences of residents in existing neighborhoods using community- and neighborhood-wide surveys. Periodically evaluate the satisfaction of residents when it comes to factors such as safety; quality and availability of civic spaces and facilities; and neighborhood elements such as sidewalks, paths, trails, landscaping, and street lighting.
04	Introduce a street/pedestrian lighting element into the Sidewalk Plan with the understanding that implementation will be a neighborhood-by-neighborhood approach dependent on consensus in each neighborhood to add lighting.
05	Offer funding mechanisms and programs to provide pathways to homeownership for residents who prefer to own instead of rent.
06	Ensure an adequate supply of both rental and for-sale housing to keep up with projected demand.
07	Provide educational opportunities and outreach to both tenants and landlords to facilitate and encourage building upgrades to improve energy efficiency, switch to renewable energy sources, and fit out with EV charging plug readiness. Often landlords have little incentive to do these things when the tenant pays for utilities.

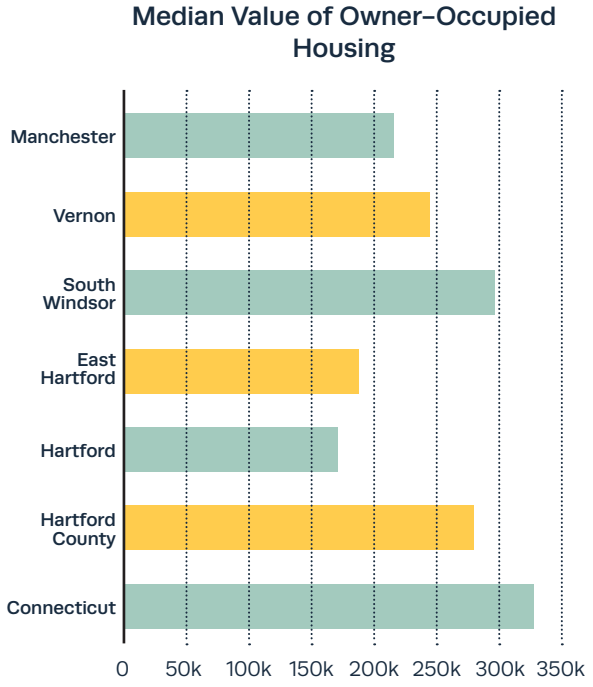
HOUSING ATTAINABILITY

What we heard...

- Planapalooza™ participants said that, according to the data, Manchester has a fair share of affordable housing compared to the rest of the State.
- Rehabilitation of existing housing seems more practical than the construction of new housing because of the lack of available land.
- More reasonably priced housing is needed than "affordable housing." The term "attainable" is preferred over "affordable" due to its stigma.
- 35.4% of renters and 15.8% of homeowners are paying over 35% of their income on housing.
- Many landlords are unable to afford necessary repairs to keep apartments up to code.

Housing Market Data

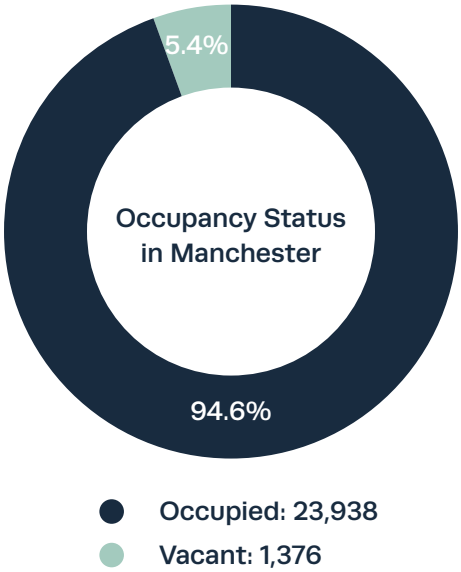
Housing values in Manchester are more affordable than in the county, state, and some neighboring communities (see data below):



(Source: US Census, American Community Survey, 1-year estimates)

However, these values are deceptive. They account for all owner-occupied housing. The robust housing market is yielding the results below, where values have dramatically increased:

- Median sales price in Hartford County in April 2022 was $290,000, up from $274,900 in April 2021 (Source: Berkshire Hathaway).
- Median number of days on the market is 6.
- Average sold prices exceed average list prices and have since early 2021. The Zillow Home Value Index in Manchester is $236,800, up 16% over the past year, and up from $158,000 in 2015.



(US Census Decennial 2010 & 2020 estimates)

Total Households (2016-2020)	23,938
Persons Per Household	2.38

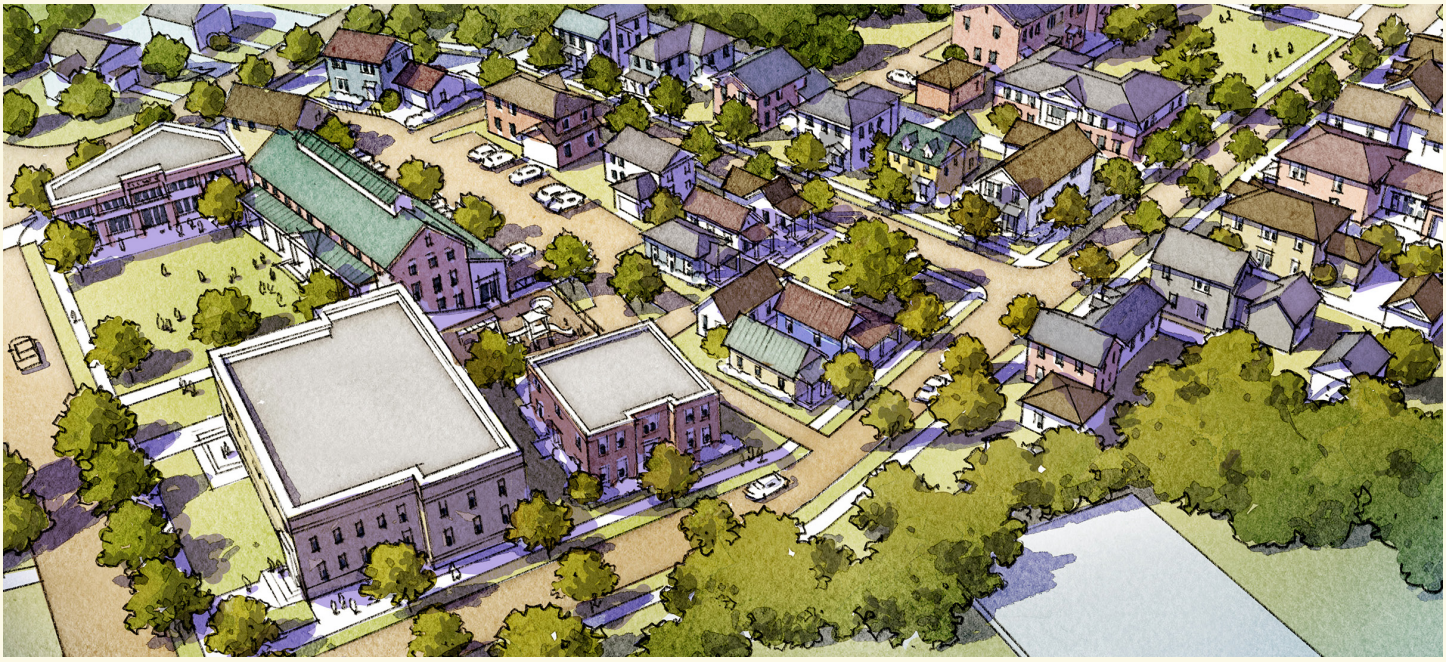
Notably, the Town of Manchester is one of the only municipalities to comply with Connecticut's Statute 8-30g, which established a goal of every municipality creating 10% protected affordable housing units. According to the Town's Draft Affordable Housing Plan (December 2022), Manchester has surpassed that goal, averaging roughly 14%.

Missing Middle Housing

Cities tend to focus on providing affordable/attainable housing to those with the greatest needs, and developers focus on making the maximum return on their investment. Updated zoning regulations and streamlined development application processes in many cities can potentially reduce development costs and housing prices (this is just one of many reasons why housing prices increase). When this happens, the gap in the middle of the home price spectrum is closed, leaving not only those who are struggling with poverty, but also those who are simply not wealthy, the ability to actually find the housing they need. Those in the middle-income bracket would no longer have to rent or buy below their means and occupy attainable housing that is desperately needed by many others, which causes an attainable housing shortage.

New housing development in Manchester should be encouraged, or required, to include housing in a broad range of building types and price points, especially those in the "Missing Middle." Manchester has already taken action to address this goal by allowing single-family detached homes to be converted to multifamily housing and by permitting accessory dwelling units by right. This should continue to be a priority for the Town as the demand for housing variety and attainability are projected to increase.

Credit: Opticos Design Inc.



Missing Middle Pocket Neighborhood Concept

MISSING MIDDLE
Housing Types

Tiny House

Accessory Dwelling Unit

Duplex

Fourplex

Bungalow Court

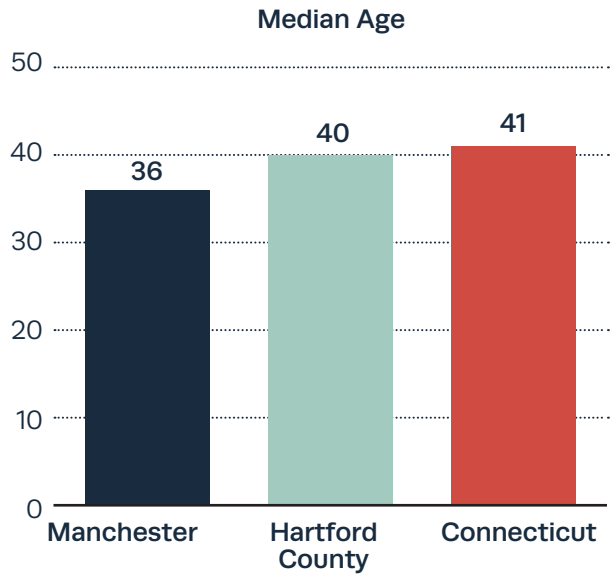
Townhouse

Multiplex

Live/Work

Housing Demand

In Manchester, the median age is 36, younger than that of 40 for Hartford County and 41 for the State of Connecticut (Source: US Census).



(Source: US Census)

The younger median age implies that the Town appeals to young professionals (most of whom are Millennials) and families with young children. This generation is now more likely to rent than own, desiring to live closer to Downtown and walkable neighborhood centers in units that require less maintenance. This is generally true among all genders and races of the younger generation.

The Town should also not neglect options for those who wish to age in place. Providing housing of different sizes, types, and price points within the same neighborhood gives people the ability to stay in their chosen area, even if their household circumstances or lifestyle choices change.

Accessory Dwelling Units

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) are housing units constructed as an attachment to the principal structure or as a detached unit on the same parcel. ADUs can be incentivized by the Town through tools such as a 5-year tax abatement for the homeowner. ADUs provide a potential source of income for the primary mortgage holder while offering additional low-cost housing options within the community. Fortunately, in 2022, the Town of Manchester approved a zoning regulation to allow ADUs by right on all single-family residential lots. The requirements prioritize preserving the existing character of the single-family housing unit while offering an affordable alternative to Manchester residents. Many have not yet been constructed, so the Town should encourage the use of housing alternatives like ADUs to improve Manchester's variety of places to live.

Accessory Dwelling Unit examples.

Housing Attainability Recommendations

01	Update zoning regulations to better accommodate attainable housing by reducing lot size requirements, reducing setbacks, and reducing and/or eliminating parking requirements.
02	Prioritize policies and programs that encourage higher density pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods with a range of housing choices.
03	Encourage mixed-use development in areas that traditionally consume large amounts of land, like big box shopping centers and malls. This would locate people near transportation and jobs, create more livable places, increase housing options and lower costs, and likely not be looked upon as a NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) use as might be the case in existing neighborhoods.
04	Create additional opportunities to produce 'Missing Middle' housing types, or more compact housing types compatible in scale with single-family housing, such as cottage-style development or townhomes.
05	Identify resources the Town is willing to provide to incentivize desired types of housing development, such as grants, tax abatements, land, or shared parking.
06	Consider lowering parking requirements for proposed attainable housing to make these projects more viable.
07	Ensure that low-income and attainable housing are interspersed with market-rate housing to create mixed-income communities that include options for disabled persons, elderly persons, and those experiencing homelessness.
08	Implement the strategies described in the Affordable Housing Plan, which can be found at https://www.manchesterct.gov/files/assets/public/planning/documents/final-affordable-housing-plan-12_2022.pdf.
09	Ensure new low-income and attainable housing is served by public transportation.
10	Find ways to streamline the development review process by producing a guide to the process for different development types. Shorter and simpler approvals avoid unnecessary increases in development costs that could be passed on to buyers and renters. Utilize software to ensure that new development follows the Sectors in the Conservation & Growth Map.
11	Identify underutilized funding sources including local, state, and federal opportunities. Explore non-traditional funding sources such as the donation of buildings and land to utilize for affordable housing units.
12	Continue to produce affordable housing units and ensure that deed restrictions do not expire on larger affordable housing developments.

HOMELESSNESS

What we heard...

- There has been an increase in the homeless population in Manchester over the last year.
- Manchester addresses homelessness and often relieves other surrounding communities from confronting it by offering several services dedicated to providing resources (Journey Home, Manchester Area Conference of Churches, Town of Manchester Human Services, CHR, Keep the Promise, etc.)

As of 2021, the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness reported that the homeless population in the state was 2,594, a 10.7% decrease since 2020 (CT Point-in-Time Count Report, 2021). Due to the transient nature of the homeless population, obtaining homelessness data for the Town of Manchester is difficult, but Planapalooza™ participants voiced their concerns about the number of homeless people they see in Town, hoping to find ways to help. The Town is aware of the problem and has a long history of providing local assistance, partnering with service organizations, and assisting those in need. Local, regional, and state organizations that aid homeless individuals and families in Town include:

Manchester Area Conference of Churches (MACC) Charities

This organization aims to end poverty within the community through local partnerships, offering services such as a Community Kitchen, Emergency Food Pantry, Threads Thrift Shoppe, and Outreach and Emergency Services. According to their website at macc-ct.org, MACC has helped serve 46,000+ community meals and 27,000+ senior meals, provided 1,000+ snackpack meals, and responded to 2,000+ outreach situations and emergencies.

Continuum of Care

The Manchester Continuum of Care Working Group meets monthly at Town Hall and is a collaboration of State and local organizations and agencies who attempt to coordinate services, housing, and programs for the homeless.

Journey Home

Established in 2007, Journey Home strives to work "with service providers, elected officials, businesses and local communities to end homelessness in the Capital region of Connecticut," (journeyhomect.org). Through a system of eight established Coordinated Access Networks (CANs), Journey Home works with other nonprofits and state departments to create and streamline access to housing and shelters for the homeless. Programs like A Hand Up and the Career Pathways Employment Program help individuals transition to homes with necessary household goods and connect them to job opportunities.

Community Health Resources (CHR)

Community Health Resources offers outpatient mental health care to families, children, and adults, in addition to "substance abuse, child welfare, supportive housing, foster care, prevention and wellness services, and integrated care," (chrhealth.org). CHR is the first nonprofit behavioral healthcare agency in the State and Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC), and has a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Manchester is home to one of CHR's largest outpatient offices, located at 444 Center Street.

Keep the Promise

To address the "broken promise" by the State of Connecticut to concentrate on mental health resources for local communities, Keep the Promise (KTP) was established in 1999. KTP acts as an advocate for those who experience mental illness and homelessness, keeping the state accountable for its goal to provide housing and health services. Members put various events together each year to raise funds and spread awareness related to mental health and homelessness, like art shows, spaghetti dinners, and public speaking engagements.

Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness (CCEH)

CCEH's mission of ending homelessness involves five strategies: (1) Research and analysis, (2) Advocacy and strategic communications, (3) Community connections, (4) Training, technical assistance, and leadership development, and (5) Emergency assistance (cceh.

org/about/about-cceh/). Their annual Point-in-Time Report gives a glimpse into the current state of homelessness within Connecticut, which helps the state and municipalities understand what needs should be prioritized to terminate the problem once and for all.

While Manchester understands that homelessness has many root causes that must be addressed, including mental illness, joblessness, systemic racism, and addiction, the Town also offers temporary resources, especially when temperatures get unbearably low. During the winter of 2020-2021, the Town of Manchester partnered with MACC, Journey Home, and regional agencies such as Cornerstone Shelter out of Vernon, to offer the homeless a site to stay warm, called the Winter Warming Center. The following winter, the Town coordinated with short-term hotels to offer stays for the homeless with the hope of connecting them to permanent housing. Manchester plans to offer hotel stays again through the winter of 2022-2023, as this strategy has proved effective at providing temporary shelter for the homeless.

Homelessness Recommendations

01	Create a stigma-reducing campaign to provide a consistent definition of the term "homeless." This definition would then be used across all departments and town-wide correspondence. A public service component would include reasons why individuals become homeless, early warning sign indicators, and available community resources, such as those described in this section.
02	Consider becoming a "Built for Zero" Community (See Built for Zero Call-Out Box).
03	Continue to develop, partner with, expand, and improve upon existing agencies and programs to further provide food, healthcare, shelter, temporary housing, or transitional housing for all segments of the homeless population regardless of sex, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, age, physical ability, mental condition, etc.
04	Reduce housing cost burden and expand attainable housing opportunities (see Housing Attainability & Current Housing Stock sections for specific recommendations)

BUILT FOR ZERO

Built for Zero is an initiative brought about by Community Solutions, a non-profit with one goal: to end homelessness for good. Becoming a Built for Zero Community means aiming to reach functional zero, an indicator of three or fewer individuals experiencing homelessness at any point pertaining to veteran homelessness or chronic homelessness. 105 communities are currently participating and 14 have achieved functional zero for either population (veteran or chronic). Built for Zero offers participating communities a variety of tools that are helpful in the fight against homelessness, such as problem-solving methods and ways to sustain functional zero once the milestone is reached. In addition, it helps communities build real-time comprehensive data on their homeless populations by name. In just seven years, Built for Zero has housed over 147,000 individuals!

HOMELESSNESS IS SOLVABLE

Communities in the Built for Zero movement are proving it.

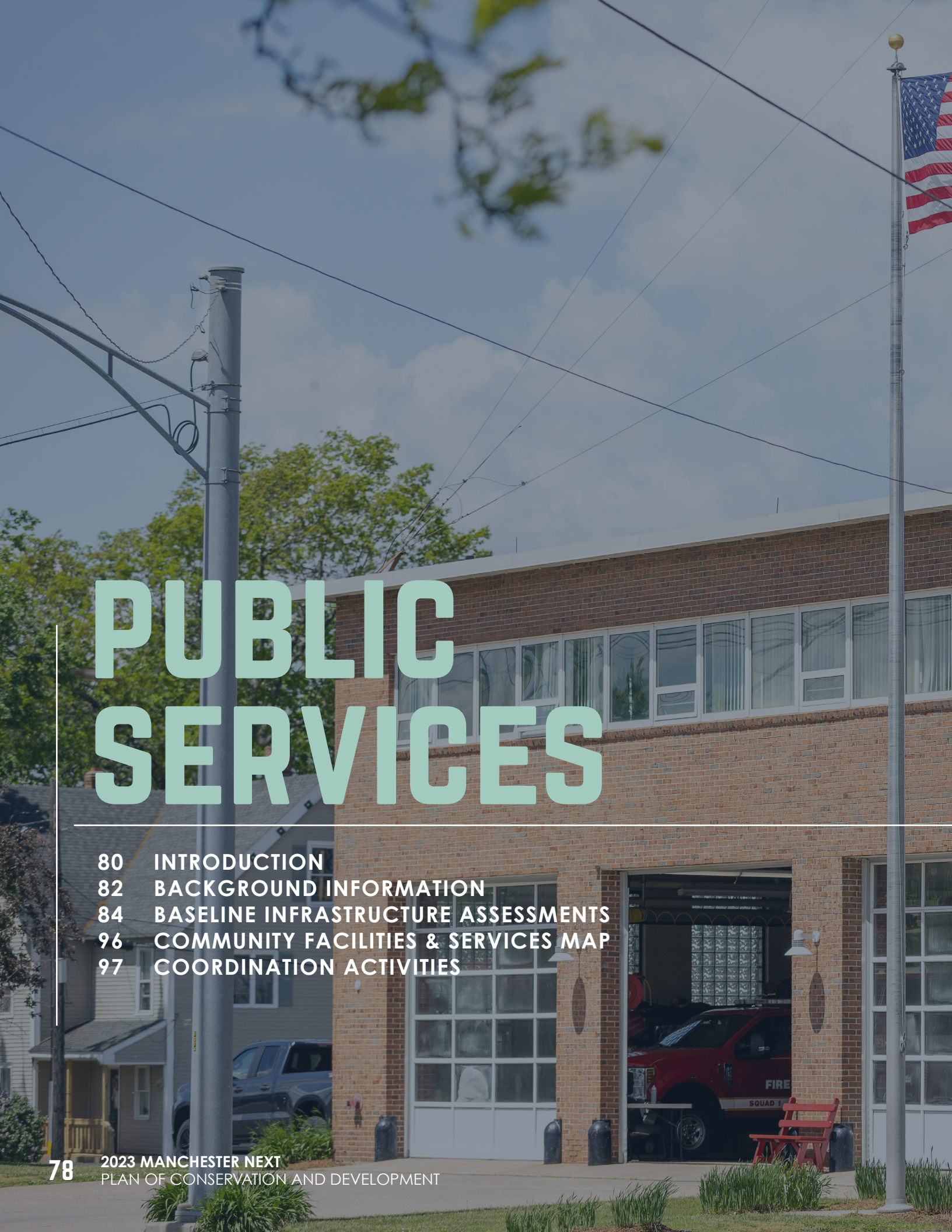
105 Communities are **participating in Built for Zero.**

147,000+ Individuals housed **by Built for Zero communities since 2015.**

64 Communities have achieved **quality real-time data.**

14 Communities have **functionally ended homelessness for a population.**

42 Communities have achieved **a measurable reduction.**



PUBLIC SERVICES

80 INTRODUCTION
82 BACKGROUND INFORMATION
84 BASELINE INFRASTRUCTURE ASSESSMENTS
96 COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES MAP
97 COORDINATION ACTIVITIES

FIRE CHIEF JOHN C. RIVOSA
FIRE HEADQUARTERS COMPANY FIRE STATION 2
ONE WAY
75 CENTER

Public Services

GROWTH MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLE 1

GROWTH MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLE 6

CORE VALUES

INTRODUCTION

The Town of Manchester is responsible for constructing, operating, maintaining, and replacing public facilities and services (infrastructure) to keep pace with existing demands and future year development patterns. Some Town infrastructure is planned and funded solely by the Town of Manchester, while other infrastructure is provided by Manchester Public Schools, the Eighth Utilities District, the State of Connecticut, non-profit organizations, or other partners.

The type, location, and capacity of infrastructure available are critical to the Town's ability to grow, develop, and redevelop in accordance with the Conservation + Growth Map presented in the Land Use + Community Character Chapter. Sufficient and quality infrastructure is also important to maintain a high quality-of-life for Manchester residents and promot economic development. Managing the cost and timing of infrastructure improvements is important for the Town. If not properly managed, infrastructure in need of improvements could impact property owners with increased taxes from future year capital and operating budgets.

This chapter includes background information, baseline conditions, a public facilities and services map, policy statements, and coordination activities for ten different infrastructure categories: natural gas, electricity, water, sewer, stormwater, fire protection, police protection, solid waste collection, landfill, and health care access. Parks, recreation facilities, and trails; public education; youth and senior services; the public library; and the transportation system are all discussed in separate chapters.

Information on the infrastructure categories provided in this Plan of Conservation and Development should be shared with the infrastructure service providers serving Manchester and refined further in future master plans or feasibility studies completed after the Plan is adopted.

Source: Facebook, Manchester Fire Rescue EMS

Equity in Public Services

Equity in relation to public services can be displayed through a municipality's access to the internet and emergency services, and the response times of those emergency services. Today, internet connectivity and appropriate internet bandwidth are critical for people to work or learn remotely and connect with others socially. When there are specific pockets of Town that do not have adequate internet access, this must be addressed to ensure that there are equitable connections for all. The same can be said of emergency services and response times, as every resident needs equal and sufficient access to first responders. Additionally, civic participation and representation in Town leadership are indicators of an equitable community, and municipalities have the responsibility to cultivate and facilitate both. If the Town's elected and appointed officials accurately reflect the demographics of the Town, residents will feel more trusting of their local government and want to be involved in public processes. This chapter includes recommendations to assist Manchester in its attempt to effectively provide necessary public services for each of its residents.

Sustainability in Public Services

Manchester's Sustainability Commission is an advisory commission comprised of residents, with the stated goal of analyzing and making recommendations to initiate or improve Town policies, programs, and practices that promote sustainability actions. The Commission will continue its progress towards achieving its guiding principles to improve resiliency, reduce emissions, be transformative, and serve as a model.

Additionally, the Town should continue to align planning efforts to prepare for and solicit federal sustainability and resiliency funding – for example, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), also known as the "Bipartisan Infrastructure Law". Often infrastructure investments that address climate change objectives also provide local co-benefits including economic, mobility, cultural, and open space/recreation improvements.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

What we heard...

- The Town tends to have somewhat higher property taxes than some other communities because it offers a wide array of public amenities and services.

The following information provides a general background on the topic of infrastructure and its roles in supporting the Conservation + Growth Map, which can be found later in the Land Use + Community Character Chapter.

Entities Responsible for Providing Infrastructure in Manchester

Residents, business owners, and Manchester visitors expect a well-coordinated and streamlined system of infrastructure to meet existing demands and future year needs. A summary of service providers operating in Manchester and their primary responsibilities are provided below.

Town of Manchester

The Town of Manchester is responsible for a majority of public facilities and services provided in the community, including police protection; fire protection; solid waste collection; parks, recreation facilities, and trails; library services; senior services; youth services; building facilities; water service; and sewer service. Responsibilities for the service categories are assigned to different Town departments, and performed using in-house staff and equipment to build, operate, maintain, and replace infrastructure.

The Town's Water and Sewer Department and the Sanitation Department operate as enterprise funds, meaning the government-owned utilities operate like a business with the Town Board of Directors serving as its governing board. The Board of Directors establishes service rates for its customers and plans capital improvements to maintain or expand the different infrastructure systems (i.e., landfill, solid waste collection, water, or sewer).

The two Departments extend their services outside Town limits at its discretion and within agreed-upon service areas with other utility providers. It also establishes service rates and fees for customers, and plans for all phases of the different infrastructure systems: capital construction, operations, maintenance, and replacement.

Manchester Public Schools

Manchester Public Schools is autonomous from the Town of Manchester and operates with a separate governing Board of Education. The school district is responsible for instruction, operations, and capital planning for future needs.

Eighth Utilities District

The Eighth Utilities District is a special taxing district that provides fire protection and sanitary sewer services to specific areas in the north end of Town. As of the adoption of this Plan, the dissolution of the Eighth Utilities District had begun, and it was expected that the fire and utility services will be merged with the Town. This merger is planned to be completed in 2023.

Connecticut Department of Transportation

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CT DOT) is responsible for building, operating, maintaining, and replacing specific State roads and highways serving the Town of Manchester.

Manchester Memorial Hospital

Manchester Memorial Hospital was acquired by Yale New Haven Health in 2022. The hospital will be part of a larger healthcare system that includes access to one thousand primary care physicians, specialists, and medical professionals in the Northeast Medical Group and Yale Medicine.

Non-Profit Organizations

Several non-profit organizations serve Manchester and the surrounding areas. They provide a variety of services to different target groups. Their efforts sometimes complement the services of Town government, but their organizations operate independently of the local government.

Private Developers

Private developers will build infrastructure (streets, water lines, sewer lines, etc.) to serve new or redeveloped

neighborhoods, employment centers, or shopping centers and dedicate it to the Town or their service partners when the project is complete. The receiving agencies operate and maintain the infrastructure after it is accepted and are responsible for increasing system capacity and repairing deteriorating infrastructure in the future.

Changing Infrastructure Needs

Infrastructure needs in Manchester change over time as various parts of the community grow. Demands for service generally increase in areas of growth, and existing facilities expand, or new facilities are built, to provide minimum levels of service to existing and new customers.

Solutions for meeting new infrastructure demands also change as neighborhoods and districts transform. In more rural areas, minimal infrastructure is provided by the Town and its partners to meet existing needs, and residents or businesses rely on private solutions to meet at least some of their demands (e.g., well and septic systems, private open space, etc.). In more suburban areas, infrastructure investments are increased and provide either "point-of-service delivery" at the property line (water distribution and sewer collection systems or curbside trash pickup) or "close proximity to nearby facilities" in defined services areas for the different providers (e.g., schools, fire and rescue services, or police protection). In many U.S. towns, providing infrastructure to serve areas that are primarily single land use, low-density, and not well-connected is expensive, and, over time, demands for service eventually surpass available supply to the point that systems may break down.

As the Town grows, some suburban nodes on the Conservation + Growth Map may become denser and take on certain urban characteristics: mixed-use development, taller buildings, different living options, different mobility solutions, or formal public spaces. Increased density or new land uses not anticipated at the time the original infrastructure was installed may create various stresses on the system and needs to expand existing systems to accommodate increased demands. In addition, one or more suburban models used previously for delivering specific facilities and services such as school location and construction standards or park design and location standards may need adjustments to meet the needs associated with a more urban area.

Changes in the economy, consumer preferences, climate, and lifestyle choices may also impact how the Town and its partners plan for and invest in new infrastructure. Forward-thinking and close coordination with officials that influence land use and development standards—the demand factors for the various systems—will be needed to control costs and manage the timing of new infrastructure to meet demand.

True Cost of Infrastructure

Some communities struggle with managing the true cost of providing infrastructure – starting with construction or acquisition of the facility or equipment, budgeting for its annual operating and maintenance costs, and programming funds for future years to eventually rehabilitate or replace the asset because it has reached the end of its useful life. Other communities under-utilize their municipal buildings or facilities (or leave them completely empty) for years after the original purpose for construction has passed, which leads to large and sometimes expensive repairs to address years of neglect. These communities are surprised by large, unanticipated budget requests because departments or elected officials are not prepared for the full accounting of providing infrastructure. Unplanned expenditures lead to unfortunate budget discussions where priorities are triaged because there is not enough money for everything.

A rising debt burden for the Town may result in less capacity to authorize new debt for capital projects in the future. And, with debt less affordable, the Town may need to make difficult decisions to control expenditures and prioritize competing infrastructure requests.

Continued unmet operating and maintenance costs for existing infrastructure deferred to future years may also lead to larger, more expensive capital costs when facilities fail and lead to emergency repairs or replacement. The cost to complete these improvements could place additional long-term burdens on future budgets for decades to come that could be managed with regular spending on maintenance of existing infrastructure.

BASELINE INFRASTRUCTURE ASSESSMENTS

Baseline conditions and emerging trends for the ten infrastructure categories are provided in this section: natural gas, electricity, water, sewer, stormwater, fire protection, police protection, solid waste collection, landfill, and health care access.

Information presented in the various assessments provides a 2022 snapshot of Manchester's community facilities and services and highlights different needs to address existing capacity deficiencies or deferred maintenance responsibilities. A composite map highlighting different community facilities and services in the planning area is provided on page 96.

Natural Gas

Connecticut Natural Gas provides service to residential, commercial, and industrial customers in Manchester and the Greater Hartford and Greenwich areas.

The utility operates and maintains miles of gas mains and related infrastructure throughout the community; however, there are several streets and neighborhoods in Town where service lines currently do not exist. Employees for the utility are responsible for the system's management, instrumentation and measurement, inspection, construction, and related services.

Electricity

Eversource Electric purchases bulk power from others and distributes it to 29,280 residential, commercial, industrial, and municipal customers in Manchester. The distribution system includes transformers, high-power transmission lines, substations, and miles of overhead and underground wires. The utility is responsible for system maintenance and expansion, service rates, provisional policies, and efficiency programs for its customers. Its resources are generally provided from offices in Hartford.

Eversource Electric's energy efficiency programs focus primarily on solar energy, building upfits, and electric vehicles. Local participation in the residential solar program has been significant, but projects are generally limited to rooftop applications. Medium- to large-size community solar applications that benefit multiple customers at once are generally not present in Manchester currently.

The Town was recently awarded funding for thirty-two electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, assigned between five different locations, under the CT Electric Vehicle Charging Program. This infrastructure will be critical to an expanded charging system that will be installed in the decades to come to meet federal and state policies and targets for increased EV use. The Town's commitment to an electric vehicle fleet for municipal services police patrol vehicles, garbage collection vehicles, utility trucks, etc. should also be studied and increased, where feasible, in future years. Initiatives to electrify bus services in Manchester should be coordinated with the CT Transit System.

Businesses of all sizes are also encouraged to participate in different Eversource Electric energy efficiency programs that manage demand during peak periods. The utility and their partners recommend different options or tools for businesses based on their specific operations or energy needs.

New investments in the electric distribution system — transmission lines, substations, or meshed networks — are planned and constructed to serve the needs anticipated in the future, influenced largely by the development types, locations, patterns, and intensities depicted on the Conservation + Growth Map. An existing bulk substation in the Manchester service area would be favorable for increasing or expanding electric service to meet future demand.

Water

The Town provides potable water service to customers in Manchester and portions of the abutting towns. 15,750 customers currently use the Town's water system, which represents approximately 55,000 of 59,400 residents in the Town's water service area (an area larger than Town limits).

Potable water for the Town's water system is drawn from seven reservoir impoundments, which have a combined total capacity of 520 million gallons, or enough capacity to draw approximately 4.6 million gallons per day. The

system also has ten individual groundwater wells that can draw up to 5.2 million gallons per day (i.e., total water supply capacity is 9.8 million gallons per day, 4.6 reservoir plus 5.2 groundwater).

A significant amount of land near the reservoirs is permanently protected and dedicated to providing reliable and clean drinking water in the community: approximately 4,000 acres. 65% of the land area drains directly into seven of the ten surface water reservoirs and provides an undeveloped buffer from surrounding land uses. Portions of the Town's land protected for water quality purposes extends into Glastonbury to the south, Vernon to the northeast, and Bolton to the east.

Much of the watershed protected land is forested and managed by the Town's Water and Sewer Department. Areas are harvested from time to time to control invasive species, maintain diverse wildlife habitat, and generate income for the Town. Some areas are open to the public for hiking, bird-watching, and other outdoor activities.

Nearly all the aquifers for the ten groundwater wells are in developed portions of the community, which generally impacts groundwater recharge processes negatively.

The Globe Hollow Water Treatment Plant is located on Spring Street and treats water drawn from the Town's seven reservoirs and Well #1. The Plant has a capacity of 12 million gallons per day. Water treatment for the remaining groundwater wells is performed at the well house for each well (or in the case of Well #6, 7 & 8, a shared treatment facility). The water distribution system includes ten elevated storage tanks to maintain water pressure, 260 miles of water mains varying in size from four to thirty-six inches, and several water pump stations to serve customers. The current demand of the system is 5.2 million gallons per day.

The water supply available to the Town and its associated water treatment facilities are generally considered adequate to meet future year needs.

Chapter XII, Water and Sewer in the Manchester Town Code establishes rules, policies, and powers to manage the Town's water system. Furthermore, the Water and Sewer Department operates the water system as an enterprise fund, which means the revenues collected for the services provided are used to pay for all the expenditures required to provide the service. The Town does not supplement the Department's water service budget with tax dollars.

Sewer

The Town provides sewer service to customers in Manchester along with the Eighth Utilities District and some abutting towns in limited areas. This situation limits the Town's abilities to expand sewer service in some portions of Manchester (primarily in north-central portions of the community). This will be remedied with the planned merger of the Eighth District services and Town services. The Town provides treatment for the Eighth Utilities District sewage collection system. 14,400 customers currently use the various sewer systems, and 10,600 of those customers are direct customers of the Town. Approximately 95% of Manchester's population is served by sewer.

The Hockanum River Water Pollution Control Facility is located on Thrall Road. The system is permitted to treat up to 8.2 million gallons per day. The current demand at the plant is 4.9 million gallons per day. Solids from the treatment process are sanitized with a neutralizing compound to reduce odor and sent to the Town's landfill to minimize impacts to nearby impaired streams and lakes.

The Town's sewer collection system consists of 167 miles of sewer mains of various sizes. The Eighth Utilities District sewer collection system adds 37 more miles of mains to Town limits.

The sewer treatment capacity available to the Town is considered adequate to meet future year needs.

Chapter XII, Water and Sewer in the Manchester Town Code enacts rules, policies, and powers to manage the Town's sewer system. Furthermore, the Water and Sewer Department operates the sewer system as an enterprise fund, which means the revenues collected for the services provided are used to pay for all of the expenditures required to provide the service. The Town

does not supplement the Department's sewer service budget with tax dollars.

Stormwater

Impervious surfaces such as roads, parking lots, and buildings interfere with the ability of rainwater to soak naturally into the ground. Stormwater runoff from a rain event travels quickly across impervious surfaces — accumulating sediment and pollutants — and carries them to nearby lakes or streams. The simultaneous increase in water quantity and suspended sediments in some areas may lead to stream erosion and degraded water quality (i.e., non-point source pollution).

Federal mandates in the Clean Water Act require some towns, like Manchester, to obtain permits to meet National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requirements, including a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) Phase II Permit. Specifically, the NPDES MS4 Phase II Program requires policies and projects to address six minimum criteria:

1. Public Education & Outreach;
2. Public Participation & Involvement;
3. Illicit Discharge & Detection;
4. Construction Site Run-Off;
5. Post Construction Run-Off Control; and
6. Pollution Prevention & Good Housekeeping.

In 2004, the Town developed a town-wide stormwater management plan to comply with the Federal MS4 Phase II Permit requirements (and the General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater from Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems requirements enforced by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection). The 2020 Annual Report tracks the Town's compliance with the MS4 Phase II General Permit.

Generally, areas of greatest need to improve stormwater management performance in the town include: 1) more guidance and more restrictive controls in riparian zones to safeguard water quality and reduce water run-off, and 2) reductions in impervious surface in riparian zones to increase stormwater infiltration and decrease stormwater runoff to other areas. Priority investment areas to improve stormwater conditions include aquifer protection areas and locations in and around Hockanum River, Hop Brook, Lydall Brook, Salters Pond, and Union Pond. All of these water courses are identified as "impaired" on the Town's Directly Connected Impervious Areas Map. The Town should continue its initiative towards improving local stormwater management infrastructure throughout the community, which may also increase property values, create scenic views, manage flood events, or attract wildlife as incidental benefits.

Stormwater management standards, best management practices, contractor requirements, and perimeter controls are enforced by the Town for new residential and non-residential developments. Chapter 275, Storm Drainage System Management in the Manchester Town Code enacts rules, policies, and powers to safeguard water quality and runoff in the community.

Fire Protection

Fire protection and emergency medical services are provided in the community by both the Town of Manchester Fire-Rescue-EMS Department (MFRE) and the Eighth Utilities District Fire Department.

Both Departments also provide services outside their response areas under mutual aid agreements with five different fire departments in the area: Glastonbury, Bolton, South Windsor, Vernon, and East Hartford. Fire and rescue calls for the two Departments are dispatched from the Manchester Public Safety Dispatch Center.

Five stations are located in the Town's response area. They are staffed by seventy-five certified, career firefighters, and most are also licensed paramedics or emergency medical technicians (EMTs). A fire chief, assistant chief, battalion chiefs, and lieutenants on duty provide leadership and oversight at the Department. A fire marshal oversees fire education, plan review, fire inspection, fire investigation, and fire code enforcement interests in Manchester. Firefighters work in four, twenty-four-hour shifts. MFRE provides paramedic services for the entire town.

Source: Facebook, Manchester Fire Rescue EMS

Seven fire engines, two aerial (ladder) trucks, one command vehicle, and various support vehicles serve between the five stations. Some of these vehicles are kept in reserve, with four engines and one aerial in service.

Resources for the Town Department were used to respond to 8,034 calls for service in 2021 — about twenty-two calls per day. Service calls include fire-related emergencies, serious medical emergencies, motor vehicle accidents, hazardous material incidents, or related activities. The Department currently maintains an ISO Class Rating 3 for the community (scale is one to ten, with one being the best score possible).

ISO Rating

The ISO (Insurance Services Office) Fire Score is a rating that determines the level of protection that fire department can provide for your community and home. The score is used by insurance companies to determine home insurance rates, since a home that is less likely to be seriously damaged or destroyed by fire costs less to insure.

Utility District Resources

Two active stations are located in the Utility District's response area. They are staffed by twelve career firefighters and ten to twelve active volunteer firefighters, and most are also licensed emergency medical technicians (EMTs) or emergency medical first responders (EMRs). A volunteer fire chief, full-time, paid assistant chief, two deputy chiefs, and a lieutenant are available to provide leadership and oversight at the Department. Firefighters work in four, twenty-four-hour shifts. Volunteers are on-call when available.

Demands on volunteer firefighters are increasing over time from both personal commitments that limit availability to respond to an emergency, especially during work hours when firefighters may be busy or outside the response area, and training requirements that match those of a career firefighter. New firefighters needed to keep pace with the Town's growth and development may need to emphasize career service tracts (vs. volunteer tracts) to ensure equipment and personnel are available for incidents twenty-four hours a day.

Five fire engines, one aerial (ladder) truck, two rescue trucks, and various support vehicles serve between the two stations.

Source: Facebook, Manchester Fire Rescue EMS

Resources for the Utility District's Fire Department were used to respond to 2,113 calls for service in 2021 – about six calls per day. Service calls include fire-related emergencies, serious medical emergencies, motor vehicle accidents, hazardous material incidents, or related activities. The planned merger of Eighth District emergency services with Town services in 2023 would help to alleviate this need by streamlining the availability and distribution of equipment and resources throughout Town. The Department currently maintains an ISO Class Rating 4 for the community (scale is one to ten, with one being the best score possible). On-duty strength of the department is four members (two engines with two members on each).

Demands for fire protection and emergency medical services at both Departments may increase as Manchester continues to develop in the future. More equipment and personnel may be needed to maintain or improve fire protection and emergency medical response times. The concentration of new employment or population centers in specific areas of the community, or rising congestion town-wide, could increase demands for new fire stations, new vehicles, or new equipment to serve area needs with acceptable response times.

Police Protection

The Manchester Police Department protects residents and business owners in the community using the resources of 117 sworn officers. The Department is also supported by thirty-five employees working in either the support services or administrative services divisions. Service calls for the Department are dispatched from the Manchester Public Safety Dispatch Center.

Police Headquarters is located on East Middle Turnpike. Two police substations are located on Main Street and in the Buckland Hills Mall. 15 patrol vehicles and miscellaneous equipment support police activities.

Officers patrol inside identified districts twenty-four hours a day. General services for the Department include traffic enforcement, criminal investigation, community policing, drug enforcement, a school resource officer program, animal control, tactical response team needs, and special events. Resources of the department were used to respond to 64,675 calls for service in 2021.

The police department may provide services outside its patrol districts under mutual aid agreements formed to support different regional task forces: narcotics, traffic enforcement, SWAT team, human trafficking, digital forensics, and the BLUE Plan (regional emergency response strategy).

As the population grows, so will the volume of calls the Police Department will respond to, and this may vary by the type and location of development. For instance, single-family detached neighborhoods historically generate fewer service calls compared to shopping centers, multifamily buildings, or mixed-use development activity centers. Furthermore, the density of a community may influence the number and type of police officers needed to adequately cover a patrol district or meet the local community's needs. Existing patrol districts in the Town may need to change in size or number in the future to right-size police resources with observed demands. Continuing efforts to hire new officers and purchasing new patrol vehicles should be priorities for the Manchester Police Department.

Public Education

A summary of Manchester's public education system is provided in the Educational Facilities section of the Community & Cultural Resources Chapter of the POCD.

Solid Waste Collection

The Town provides trash and recycling collection within town limits using a private firm selected by competitive bid, currently All-American Waste of South Windsor, CT. Town-funded collection service is limited to single-, two-, three-, and four-family dwelling units. All other residential and non-residential locations must contract directly with a service provider for trash and recycling collection.

The Town's curbside pickup service for refuse is provided on a weekly basis. Recycling pickup service is provided every two weeks using an A-week and B-week schedule. Limited bulk trash collection is provided to Town customers during the year. Special events are also held throughout the year to collect household hazardous waste from residents. A curbside leaf-vacuuming event is held once per year, usually in October or November.

Solid waste collected in the service area is sent to a transfer station operated by the Town of Manchester, where it is sorted before being transferred to the landfill adjacent to the transfer station.

Landfill

The Town operates a landfill and transfer station, which is currently permitted by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) for operation through December 2025. The facility is allowed to accept bulk waste (personal belongings, furniture, or appliances), recyclables (cardboard, metal, leaves, grass, rigid plastics, or textiles), electronics, construction debris (lumber, drywall, shingles), and yard waste. Manchester residents access the site using a residential recycling permit or payment punch cards. Non-residents and businesses access the site using a pay-as-you-dump cash payment option. Items are sorted at the transfer station before moving to permanent storage at the landfill.

The landfill currently spans sixty-five acres and is surrounded by wetlands, the WPCA sewer plant, and other public roads and facilities. Horizontal expansion of the landfill and transfer footprint to increase capacity is generally considered unfeasible. At this time, the landfill stands at 180 feet tall and is permitted to reach 250 feet under the current DEEP permit. A gas recovery system at the landfill is used to capture odorous gases and reduce nuisances for nearby residents. In 2020, the remaining capacity of the landfill, with no changes, was approximated to be 1.2 million cubic yards.

The landfill generates significant revenue each year for the Town in the form of dumping (tipping) fees. The funds are used to pay for all residential curbside collections inside town limits, and several other programs or capital needs that may change from year-to-year. Chapter 200, Landfill in the Manchester Town Code empowers the Director of Public Works with certain duties and powers to maximize the capacity and efficiency of the landfill to extend its life and revenue-generating potential.

Town officials are working to extend the permit with DEEP to December 2028 by increasing the landfill's capacity by 700,000 cubic yards with no substantial changes to the facility's current footprint. The increase is made possible by installing reinforced, terraced walls (36 feet high and 70 feet wide) around the landfill's perimeter (approximately 4,000 feet). Proposed improvements and the permit to extend operations to December 2028 are still under review.

Town officials are also evaluating long-term land uses, activities, or applications for the site beyond December 2028, which may reinforce a coordinated, campus-like atmosphere for the facility focused on, but not limited to, organic digestion, diversion, and reuse of discarded materials, gas turbines, solar farms, or anaerobic digestion. Buildings, working lands, demonstration areas, or education kiosks on the campus may be appropriate for a new "environmental destination" in the area.

Senior Services

A summary of Manchester's senior services is provided in the Parks, Recreation, & Open Space section of the Parks, Recreation, & Open Space Chapter of the POCD.

Youth Services

A summary of Manchester's youth services is provided in the Parks, Recreation, & Open Space section of the Parks, Recreation, & Open Space Chapter of the POCD.

Library

A summary of Manchester's library system is provided in the library section of the Community & Cultural Resources Chapter of the POCD.

Health Care Access

Manchester Memorial Hospital (MMH) was acquired by Yale New Haven Health in 2022. The hospital will be part of a larger healthcare system that includes access to one thousand primary care physicians, specialists, and medical professionals in the Northeast Medical Group and Yale Medicine.

The primary hospital buildings for MMH in Manchester are located at the intersection of Middle Turnpike and Main Street, which support emergency rooms, a birthing center, a cancer center, a heart center, wound care,

general surgery rooms, and continuing care facilities. The medical facility, in total, supports 249 patient beds. Doctor offices and ancillary medical buildings are located throughout the community. Long- and short-term nursing care is available from the Manchester Manor Health Care Center.

Credit: Evin Photography

Public Services & Infrastructure Recommendations

01 **Increase revenue potential with the Town's Conservation + Growth Map presented in the Land Use + Community Character Chapter to help fund future infrastructure investments.**

Focus, in part, on long-term priorities to improve the Town's financial outlook by increasing its overall tax base and its diversity. Be creative in implementing strategies that maximize sustainable revenue streams for future year infrastructure investments, and reconsider rules and requirements (like tax assessment agreements) in the Town for commercial, office, industrial, or mixed-use areas related to densities, land use mix, building heights, or parking requirements that depress development potential (and thus tax and fee generation potential).

Consider Town policies and incentives that encourage the redevelopment of underutilized parcels in the Town to increase property tax revenues.

02 **Ensure the safety and adequacy of the Town's drinking water supply and promote water conservation and reuse principles in future investments.**

Manchester needs to ensure a safe and adequate supply of drinking water, and climate change may bring more frequent and longer drought events, which could potentially limit surface reservoirs or groundwater aquifers as reliable drinking water supply sources.

Water conservation and reuse practices and technologies should be considered for new development and redevelopment in Manchester, which, in part, promote greywater reuse for non-potable users or the installation of water-conserving fixtures and appliances. Some recommendations in the POCD to protect drinking water supply may require modifications to existing codes and regulations. Others may benefit from public outreach and education campaigns about the water conservation in homes, businesses, and gardens.

03 **Improve stormwater management performance throughout the community, addressing water quantity (run-off) and water quality concerns as top priorities.**

Priority investment areas to improve stormwater conditions should include Aquifer Protection Areas and locations in and around the Hockanum River, Hop Brook, Lydall Brook, Salters Pond, and Union Pond. All of these water courses are identified as "impaired" on the Town's Directly Connected Impervious Areas Map. The Town should continue its initiative towards meeting MS4 requirements and improving local stormwater management infrastructure throughout the community, which may also increase property values, create scenic views, manage flood events, or attract wildlife as incidental benefits.

Evaluate best management practices to reduce stormwater run-off from private developments, including, but not limited to, rain gardens, conservation landscaping, reduced impervious surface areas (especially for parking lots), underground storage areas for large-scale rain events, or on-site swales for short-term stormwater retention. Implement one or more ideas for stormwater management as a condition of private development in the Town's subdivision rules and/or engineering design standards.

Prioritize recommendations for improved stormwater conditions in riparian zones throughout Manchester, including the reduction of impervious surface in riparian zones to increase stormwater infiltration and decrease stormwater runoff to other areas.

Thinking long-term, climate change is expected to bring shifting precipitation patterns that could lead to more frequent and stronger storm and flooding events. Town officials should consider, and plan for, increasing demands for stormwater infrastructure in Manchester.

Public Services & Infrastructure Recommendations Cont.

04 **Be a successful solid waste entrepreneur.**

Manchester should be creative in its thinking about solid waste. Becoming a solid waste entrepreneur could minimize the waste produced each year; promote reduction, reuse, and recycling philosophies; and increase other sources of revenue and public education, all important to operating a more profitable solid waste management system.

Learn from other solid waste collection agencies in the United States about how they are expanding their business models, and consider implementing some of their best practices in Manchester.

Continue long-range analysis of landfill maintenance and operation beyond the current 2030 fill horizon.

05 **Capitalize on strategic partnerships to implement future infrastructure projects.**

Different stakeholders in Manchester — Town government, other service providers, state and regional agencies, developers, investors, business owners, and neighborhoods — have a shared responsibility for implementing the vision and guiding principles in the POCD. This group is stronger when working together to identify, prioritize, and fund capital projects in the community, and leveraging their individual investments in the Town will maximize benefits for all.

Convene a professional/community leaders committee to regularly discuss public and private infrastructure projects in the Town.

Coordinate individual private sector projects to meet shared Town goals.

Contribute to upsizing certain infrastructure beyond the needs of an individual project to serve larger community needs,

Sync individual project schedules to minimize disruptions in the community.

Look for economies of scale with multiple projects to build infrastructure more efficiently.

06 **Empower the Sustainability Commission and connect it with other departments and committees with shared goals to integrate sustainability & resiliency into all Town decision-making. For example:**

Provide funding for technical assistance to support Commission efforts.

Integrate Low Impact Development (LID) techniques and Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) into the private development approvals process and municipal capital improvements planning/design.

Develop baseline metrics to track sustainability indicators over time.

Public Services & Infrastructure Recommendations Cont.

Expand equity as a component of the Commission's work.

Require representatives of the Sustainability Commission to be included as dedicated members of or liaisons to other Town boards and commissions.

07 **Produce a Resiliency & Adaptation Plan focused on adapting to and reacting to climate change.**

08 **Address deferred maintenance concerns in future year budgets.**

Town officials should set and commit to a minimum guaranteed fund allocation for maintaining critical infrastructure categories in Manchester as a component of the annual budget process.

Identify localized flooding issues as a community priority as most conditions will worsen with climate change.

09 **Maintain Sustainable CT certification, building on the Town's October 2022 Silver Certification.**

10 **Invest in the Town's fire protection services to keep pace with future growth.**

Areas targeted for growth and development on the Conservation + Growth Map may eventually generate the need for new or expanded fire stations to keep pace with growth. Some developed areas may require investments in land, buildings, or equipment to accommodate larger facilities, new vehicles, or more personnel at the stations. The magnitude and timing of investment should be phased to maintain an ISO 3 insurance rating for the Town.

Study the need for new and expanded fire station facilities in the Town, and program future capital improvements and personal investments in the Town's Capital Improvements Plan and Annual Operating Budget to keep pace with the location, magnitude, and timing of growth anticipated through 2040.

Continue ongoing discussions to explore a merging of the two town–serving Fire Districts.

11 **Invest in the Town's police protection services to keep pace with future growth.**

As the population grows, so will the volume of calls the Police Department will respond to, and this may vary by the type and location of development in the community. Continuing work to recruit and hire new officers and purchase new patrol vehicles should be priorities for the Manchester Police Department to keep pace with new development.

Public Services & Infrastructure Recommendations Cont.

12 **Invest in the Town's water and sewer services to keep pace with future growth.**

As the population grows, so will the volume of demand for water and sewer service in Manchester. Information from the POCD should be considered in future updates to the Town's water and sewer master plans, or its capital investment plans and programs to keep pace with the location, magnitude, and timing of growth anticipated through 2040.

13 **Support appropriate applications for "Smart Town Technologies" in future capital projects.**

Integrate different technologies for improved facilities and services in the community, which benefit from a broader "smart towns initiative" in Manchester that links together different information systems and provides more opportunities for real-time information-sharing with the community.

Early ideas for smart town technology should begin in the POCD and be implemented in one or more master plans that follow to develop a townwide strategy that acts as a framework to coordinate individual investments for various departments or their partners.

14 **Increase the number and location of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations in Manchester to support public and private initiatives to expand EV ownership and uses to meet daily needs.**

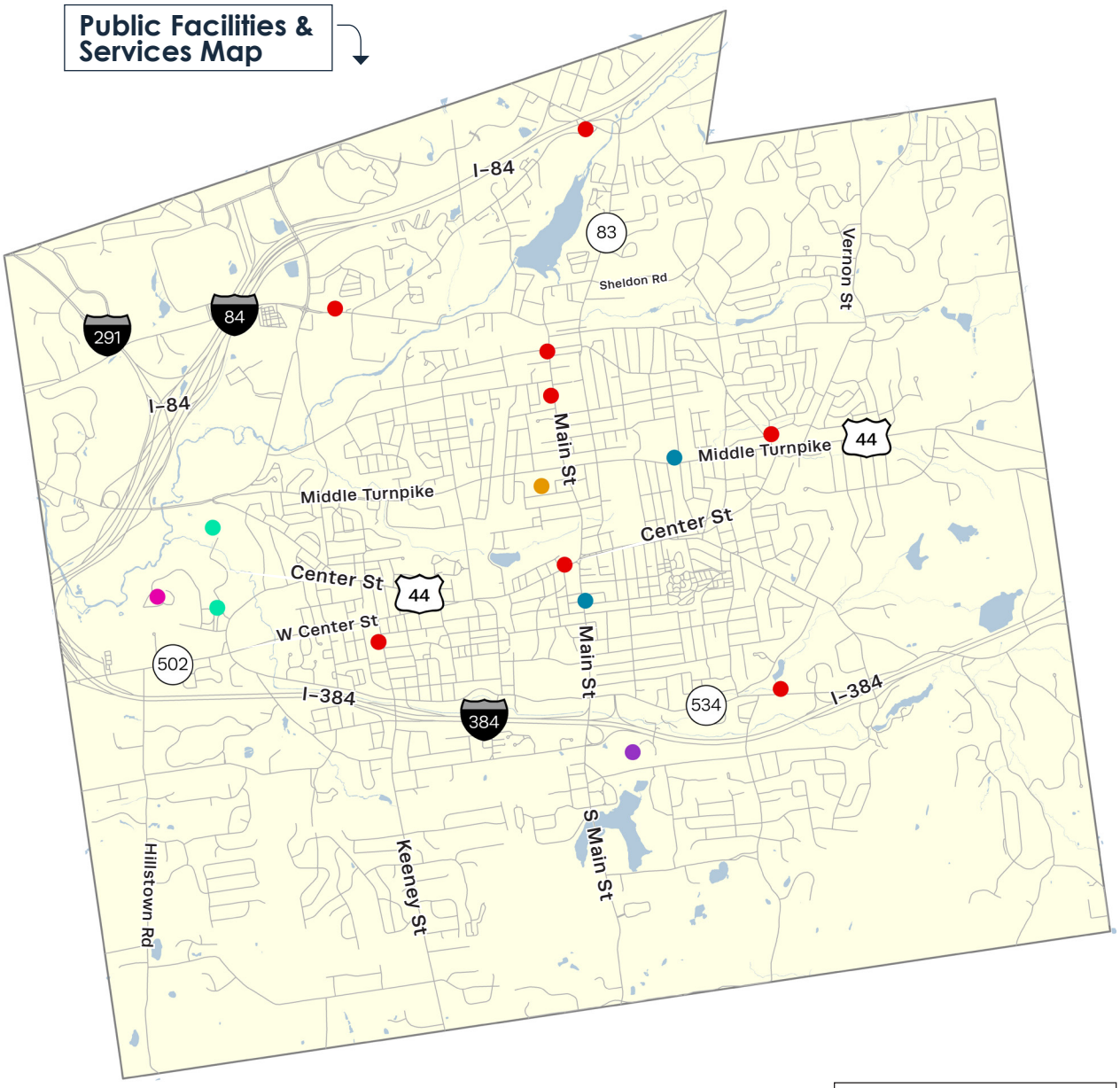
Continue monitoring the supply and demand for public and private EV charging stations and other infrastructure in Manchester. Ensure the Town is adequately covered and equipped to meet future demands. Identify funding sources to be able to install additional infrastructure quickly, as necessary.

15 **Increase access to high-speed broadband internet.**

Information technology infrastructure — specifically high-speed, high-quality internet service — is essential for Manchester if it wants to recruit high-tech industries, the creative people they target as employees (who often work from home), or a growing group of entrepreneurs that could strengthen a community.

Evaluate options for bringing faster high-speed broadband internet throughout the community, especially to low- and moderate-income neighborhoods, whether by partnering with a private provider or through investments in some sort of a municipally-funded network.

Public Facilities & Services Map



Legend

- Fire Department
- Hospital
- Landfill
- Public School
- Sewer Plant
- Water Plant

COORDINATION ACTIVITIES

Public Services

Anticipating new infrastructure needs for the Town is essential to planning, programming, and funding new capacity for the future, and direct coordination with the different service providers and the officials that influence development patterns and intensities in Manchester is critical to ensuring that capacity (supply) keeps pace with new development (demand) throughout the community.

Town officials should communicate with service providers on future year needs associated with the Conservation + Growth Map presented in the Land Use + Community Character Chapter. General priority investment areas for managing the timing, location, and magnitude of growth consistent with available resources should also be shared with service providers. Both activities should begin within the year following the adoption of the Plan of Conservation and Development.

Information for the infrastructure categories provided in the POCD should be refined further in future master plans or feasibility studies, to be completed after the Plan is adopted.

Credit: Evin Photography

COMMUNITY & CULTURAL RESOURCES

100 INTRODUCTION
104 DOWNTOWN MANCHESTER COMMUNITY
106 FESTIVALS, EVENTS & ENTERTAINMENT
110 HISTORIC RESOURCES
116 THE ARTS
122 EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES
126 LIBRARY

Historic
DOWNTOWN
MANCHESTER
Public Parking

INTRODUCTION

What we heard...

- Manchester offers residents and visitors a wide variety of activities, venues and events but needs help connecting the pieces and telling the Town's story.
- Residents want to celebrate the Town's diversity with culturally relevant events, businesses, and public spaces.

The cultural and community resources in Manchester are abundant, proving that the Town and its residents are responsive to its diverse demographics and cultural backgrounds. Known as the "City of Village Charm," Manchester's unique history is quite visible through its Downtown, historic mills, and architecture. However, Town residents also understand the importance of starting new traditions and fostering an equitable, welcoming, multi-cultural identity, such as offering a wide array of community-wide events, inclusive festivals, and creative learning opportunities. This chapter discusses current conditions related to Downtown Manchester; festivals, events & entertainment; historic resources; the arts; educational facilities; libraries; the hospital; and recommendations for each.

Equity in Community & Cultural Resources

There are a handful of ways to assess the equity of cultural and community resources: through their proximity to residents and each other, their quality, their attendance, and to what extent they are inclusive and multi-cultural. When residents feel their culture is being represented through entertainment, festivals, education, the arts, and events, and that resources like the library and hospital are accessible, then the Town is a welcoming place. These concepts need to be considered at the forefront of all planning decisions and future development and redevelopment projects. This will ensure that Manchester provides everyone with the freedom to express and celebrate what makes them who they are, and that they have equal access to necessary resources and social relationships.

Sustainability in Community & Cultural Resources

Resilience Hubs

Resilience hubs are places that are "augmented to support residents, coordinate communication, distribute resources, and reduce carbon pollution while enhancing quality of life," (resilience-hub.org). Manchester could designate existing and/or proposed community buildings such as community centers, libraries, schools, and park facilities to cost-effectively double as resilience hubs – enhancing resilience and social equity during everyday disruption and recovery conditions could include:

- Providing educational information regarding climate change, energy efficiency, retrofit incentives, and other sustainability content, and providing a forum for residents to share with each other – from tools and cars to stories and art.
- Serving as shelters and cooling centers during extreme weather events and activating to support the local community as needed during times of disaster and recovery.
- Connecting underserved and marginalized populations to resources and building social networks and connections to Town staff.
- Bolstering food and job security.
- Empowering neighborhoods and residents to address injustice and build local connectivity and capacity.
- Demonstrating sustainability practices, such as building energy and water efficiency retrofits and green stormwater infrastructure.

Many of the first examples of resilience hubs are from outside New England, including California and Hawaii, yet they address common challenges to those faced in Manchester. The potential benefits of resilience hubs could be realized by building on work that is already underway in Manchester, such as the expansion of municipal facilities to serve as community centers with services and programs.

See the Vibrant Hawaii Resilience Hubs Case Study on the following page for details.

Source: vibranthawaii.org/hubs

CASE STUDY

VIBRANT HAWAII RESILIENCE HUBS

Vibrant Hawaii is building a network of resilience hubs, supporting and encouraging trusted physical spaces that support residents on a daily basis and activate in times of disaster to support emergency response and recovery. Officially launched in 2019, Vibrant Hawaii mobilized within days of Covid shutdowns in 2020 to lead community-driven mask distribution and establish a network of physical hubs that served and distributed meals, provided laptop and Wi-Fi access, provided training and certifications for mental health treatment, served as safe spaces for students and families to access distance learning, and distributed information regarding community assistance programs such as rent assistance, tax credits, and nutrition assistance.

CASE STUDY

UC DAVIS CLIMATE RAISING CHALLENGE

In March 2022, the winner of the UC Davis Climate Raising Challenge was a painting titled "Hungry for Connection" which was painted earlier this year on a roadside barn outside of town between Davis and Woodlawn, CA. This type of project brings together art and community resilience and provides an opportunity to engage with people on this topic in a creative way.

Hungry for Connection" Mural Winner | Source: UCDavis.edu/news/help-paint-climate-action-mural

Community & Cultural Resources

DOWNTOWN MANCHESTER COMMUNITY

What we heard...

- Downtown is currently more service-oriented than retail-oriented.
- If there were more quality housing options, people would live Downtown.
- Downtown is currently one-sided, and the western side feels incomplete. Additional mixed-use development on the western side would help, and it would add shade to the eastern side, effectively cooling the street for pedestrians in summer.
- Participants said they would love if businesses were dog-friendly, as many Manchester residents are dog owners.
- Outdoor dining has become more popular since Covid, temporarily taking up parking spaces for tables and chairs. Downtown visitors are enjoying it!
- Downtown businesses need support post-Covid.
- Town-wide branding needs a special emphasis on Downtown.
- Most people visit Downtown for the bank, hardware store, library, or to eat.
- There is a need for a Downtown Master Plan! Marketing and parking studies have been done (2008 Design Study for Downtown Parking Lots, 2010 Downtown Parking Study, 2012 Downtown Market Study) but no full plan.
- The Special Services District has its own board which is made up of 7 commissioners representing Downtown properties and businesses.

Credit: Evin Photography

Main Street

Downtown Manchester incorporates Main Street and portions of side streets generally between Hartford Road/Charter Oak Street to the south, and Center Street to the north. It is home to a wide variety of local businesses, including Manchester Hardware, Inc., Silk City Coffee, Mulberry Street Pizza, Market on Main, Lucky Taco, Beller's Music, the Firestone Art Studio & Cafe, The BeaHive Salon, and Center Scoop, as well as civic destinations such as Center Memorial Park, St. James Church, and Mary Cheney Library. Historically, Downtown has offered some housing on the upper floors of commercial buildings, and there is still a desire to live on Main Street, but residents wish to have more modern, quality housing options. Notably, the East– and West–side neighborhoods directly adjacent to Downtown offer a dense mix of relatively affordable housing types.

Center Memorial Park, located in the northwestern portion of Downtown, offers visitors passive recreation along with an outdoor concert and theater venue, a hill often used for sledding during the winter and a green space for gathering and outdoor events. The park also offers opportunities to learn about the Town's history. The Revolutionary War Memorial Fountain, Civil War Monument, and Spanish American War Monument can be found there.

Downtown's location in the heart of Manchester presents a major opportunity to better connect this commercial and recreational center to all the Town's other assets, improving mobility and making Manchester more equitable and sustainable for all. The proximity of Downtown to other key districts and some of Manchester's most vulnerable neighborhoods should be taken advantage of so that all residents can benefit from Downtown's success. See the Economics + Employment, Transportation, and Land Use + Community Character chapters for additional information and recommendations.

Downtown Manchester Community Recommendations

01	Implement the Downtown for All Complete Streets Plan. This would increase pedestrian and visitor activity by ensuring that the Downtown area is safe, walkable, and welcoming for everyone.
02	Celebrate Manchester's evolving cultural identity by celebrating the wide variety of nationalities and cultural identities that call Manchester home. See the "Festivals, Events & Entertainment" section that follows for more detailed recommendations.
03	Encourage art and performances in public places by continuing to collaborate with local artists through facilities like WORK_SPACE. Manchester's creatives should be fairly compensated for their contributions to the Town and should not be asked to donate their time or work.
04	Consider expanding upon the existing Downtown District by identifying and developing key vacant and underutilized parcels on the west side of Main Street to make Downtown feel more complete and inviting to visitors.
05	Explore the pursuit of an Arts and Cultural District designation through the State of Connecticut.

FESTIVALS, EVENTS & ENTERTAINMENT

What we heard...

- The Lutz Museum is incredibly popular with kids and young families.
- The Butterfly stroll is a hit!
- Outdoor music happens Downtown occasionally, and visitors enjoy it.
- The Thanksgiving Manchester Road Race is internationally known and attracts 10,000 participants each year.

Community Events + Entertainment

Events that celebrate history and culture build community pride and, for some, foster a sense of belonging. One of the most effective ways to engage the community in shared experiences is to organize events and activities around holidays and other significant dates. These events allow participants to learn something about their Town while engaging with people they may not otherwise meet.

1 Manchester Road Race

Manchester's venues and festivals draw attendees from the county, state, and beyond. The **Annual Manchester Road Race** takes place on Thanksgiving Day and has since 1927, attracting thousands of visitors each year. Even through the height of Covid-19, the Manchester Road Race Committee offered a virtual race option, keeping the tradition alive in a safe yet innovative way. The race is a 4.8-mile loop through Town along Main Street, Center Street, Porter Street, and Highland/Charter Oak Street. Runners, walkers, and costume-wearing spectators are welcome to join in the fun, and the top twenty-five finishers receive monetary awards. The race attracts +/- 10,000 participants and thousands of spectators annually and tens of thousands of dollars are raised for local charities each year.

2 Cruisin' on Main Street

Cruisin' on Main Street is another community-wide event that residents of Manchester are proud of. Since 2001, owners of vintage cars (1987 or older) have been invited to display their automobiles for visitors to view. Local vendors set up booths and food trucks and special activities take place. Over 1,000 cars are brought to the event annually, and the fun activities and nostalgic nature have made it one of Manchester's most successful festivals involving tens of thousands of spectators. The best part of Cruisin' on Main is that the proceeds are donated to local charities, as the Town's website notes that $154,371 have been contributed to date. The committee has also established a scholarship fund, giving a total of $2,500 to five students since 2013.

3 CAST Children's Theatre

CAST Children's Theatre is a non-profit organization whose mission is to "enrich the lives of children through the magic of performing arts, thereby inspiring them to strive toward higher goals. We do this one line at a time, one show at a time, one child at a time," (casttheatre.org). Members range in age from 5 to 18 and represent over 15 communities. CAST offers classes year-round and puts on at least one production each year. The staff, Board of Directors, and members work incredibly hard each year to entertain the Town through plays and musicals, and these productions would not be possible without local sponsorships, donations, and fundraising. This organization means a great deal to residents of all ages in the Town of Manchester and the region.

4 Little Theatre of Manchester at Cheney Hall

Located in the Cheney Brothers National Historic Landmark District is the **Little Theatre of Manchester at Cheney Hall**. Built in 1867, this Victorian building was designed to hold galas, local gatherings, lectures, and theatrical events, which it did, for approximately sixty years. It was transformed into a salesroom during the 1920s due to political and social changes and then closed fifty years later. In 1991, the venue was restored for its original purpose as a cultural institution and has housed The Little Theatre of Manchester (LTM) ever since. It is the oldest operating theater in Connecticut.

Cheney Hall is viewed by the community as a cultural and historic resource, fostering appreciation of the arts and creativity within Manchester and beyond. The Little Theatre of Manchester only strengthens that role. As their website notes, "LTM has collaborated, promoted, planned and engaged the community to make Cheney

Source: Journalinquirer.com

Source: CASTtheatre.org

Source: cheneyhall.org

Source: cheneyhall.org

Hall an arts and cultural center for the region. In addition to its five main stage annual productions, which represent a minimum of 47 performances, LTM also produces Evenings @ 7 play-readings several times a year," which "offers the troupe an opportunity to hear new works, allows playwrights to see their works performed, and gives new directors and actors an opportunity to hone their skills," (cheneyhall.org). LTM is now recognized as one of the best theater companies within the State and continues to put on excellent productions every year.

5 Manchester Country Club

The Manchester Country Club (MCC) opened in 1917 and was modeled after an "old New England design," meaning that the natural landscape was maintained in the creation of the course totaling just over 6,000 yards. Various membership options are available, and a number of amateur, professional, and charity tournaments are held here annually, including the Opportunities & Access for Kids of Color (OAKC – Together We Tee) Tournament and the Manchester Open. MCC also has a Golf Shop and Learning Center with indoor golf simulators and training areas open year round, along with a full service restaurant (The Hollow) and both indoor & outdoor banquet facilities. Golfers can enjoy league play offered at all levels, and receive either private or group lessons from PGA golf professionals. This beautifully landscaped facility provides entertainment for every age and skill level while also allowing them to enjoy the outdoors.

6 Lutz Children's Museum

The Lutz Children's Museum is a unique Manchester asset, named after Miss Hazel P. Lutz, the Chairperson for the Art Department for Manchester schools at the time of the museum's opening in 1953. Within four years, the museum's impressively large amount of exhibits was outgrowing its first location in the Waddell School basement. In 1958, the museum moved adjacent to Washington School, giving it more room to hold children's classes and display live animals and rare collections. Two more locations later, the Lutz Museum has expanded to include programming at the Oak Grove Nature Center, a fifty-two-acre preserve allowing for natural science exploration just 1.5 miles away from the museum. The Nature Center is owned by the Town and jointly operated. There is also an exhibit called the "Imagination Space," a mock-up of Downtown Manchester, which is immensely popular among all age groups. Overall, the Lutz Children's Museum offers creative and fun educational opportunities for everyone, achieving its mission statement: "to provide a multi-faceted museum for children to explore culture, history, and the natural sciences through internal and external exhibits, programs, and experiences," (lutzmuseum.org).

Additional Events and Entertainment Options

Manchester has quite a few additional events and entertainment options in the Town of Manchester including:

- The Off Main Experience (event)
- Holiday on Main (event)
- Beller's Concert Series (event)
- Silk City Fest by Art FUD (event)
- MACC Farmer's Market (event)
- Imagine Main Presents (includes Annual Songwriters' Concert and Youthfest) (event)
- Downtown Scarecrow Festival & Halloween Happenings (event)
- Second Saturdays (event)
- Spring Butterfly Stroll (event)
- Manchester Band Shell, Manchester Pipe Band, Manchester Symphony Orchestra and Chorale, Rotary Music Garden @ Charter Oak Park (programs/nonprofits)

Festivals, Events & Entertainment Recommendations

01	Consider bringing smaller events to individual neighborhoods to increase participation in cultural events.
02	Continue to celebrate diverse cultures. Consider expanding on the annual Juneteenth Freedom Day Commemoration and Hispanic Heritage Celebration and adding celebrations of other cultural events.
03	To ensure broad participation in festivals and events, ensure that public transportation is available, or provide transportation such as shuttle buses that run from walkable neighborhood centers or other neighborhood facilities. This can help reduce parking needs and allow events to take place in underutilized parking lots or on closed streets.
04	Continue to keep the Town of Manchester website calendar updated with local festivals, events, and entertainment options.
05	Utilize current civic and cultural assets to create a thriving arts, culture, and entertainment market.

Source: Manchester Country Club

Source: Lutz Children's Museum

Source: Lutz Children's Museum

HISTORIC RESOURCES

What we heard...

- The Town of Manchester has a rich history that must be preserved.
- Connectivity is lacking between the mills and Downtown and could be improved.

Manchester Historical Society

The Town of Manchester has a fantastic resource known as the Manchester Historical Society, a non-profit organization devoted to historic preservation and education that was established in 1965. Composed solely of volunteers and led by officers and a board of directors, this group manages multiple historic museums and properties around town, such as the Historical Society History Center, Cheney Homestead, Keeney Schoolhouse, Old Manchester Museum, former Cheney School building, and the Woodbridge Farmstead. The Manchester Historical Society also holds walking tours of the Cheney Mills and other historical sites, educational events, lectures, and fundraisers. Their website (manchesterhistory.org) consists of a wealth of information, including historic photographs, documents relating to the Town's incorporation in 1823, historic district maps, building surveys, and details on the Town's nationally registered historic places. According to their website, the vision of the Manchester Historical Society is to "be the premier resource for information about the history and heritage of Manchester, Connecticut that includes the Native American culture and the growth of the agricultural, industrial, and suburban communities of the Northeast. It will attract visitors of all ages from around the country to its exhibitions and programs. Its efforts will reflect the diversity of the community and will remain connected to the community," (manchesterhistory.org).

Land Acquisition and Historic Property Investment Committee

In 2016, the Town of Manchester Board of Directors appropriated $4 million to pay the costs of the acquisition of real property for open space, recreation, and other Town purposes and improvements to historic Town buildings and facilities. This fund allows the Town to pay for the costs of open space acquisition and infrastructure investments in historic buildings over time as opportunities arise. The Land Acquisition and Historic Property Investment Committee is responsible for reviewing and prioritizing requests for funding for the open space and historic building investment fund and recommending actions to the Board of Directors. The committee meets biannually and as required to consider proposals.

Credit: Evin Photography

Historic Districts

1 Cheney Brothers National Historic Landmark District

There are numerous historic buildings and districts in Manchester that add to its character and architectural history. One of the most prominent districts is the Cheney Brothers National Historic Landmark District which was designated as a nationally registered Historic Place in 1978 by the US Department of the Interior. The Manchester Historical Society notes that "the district extends for about 1.25 miles from east to west and about 0.6 miles from north to south, covering approximately 175 acres. It encompasses all the existing Cheney Brothers silk mills, the 1785 Cheney family homestead, several 19th and 20th-century mansions built for the Cheney family, schools, churches, and halls built by the Cheney Brothers for their employees, and over 275 residential structures built for company workers and their families," (manchesterhistory.org). Notable buildings include the Washington School (constructed in 1915), Ribbon Mill (1909), Velvet Mill (1901), Dye House (1914), Yarn Mill (1911), Clock Tower Mill (1872), Cheney Hall, South United Methodist Church (1924), Frank Cheney, Jr. Mansion (1901), and Bennet Academy (1915). While a majority of these buildings no longer serve their original purposes, their architecture has remained intact and well-preserved. The mills have been adapted to accommodate apartments, offices, storage facilities, museums, and most recently a brewery, offering users a glimpse into Manchester's important past as an industrial and manufacturing hub. The Cheney Brothers National Historic Landmark District Commission oversees any proposed changes to the district and helps ensure that its historic integrity will continue to be maintained.

2 Main Street Historic District

Another notable district that seeks to preserve the Town's history is the Main Street Historic District, just north of the Cheney Brothers Historic District. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1996, it runs along Main Street between Eldridge and Center Streets and includes the cluster of civic and municipal buildings at Center Memorial Park. 50 of the district's 63 structures and sites are listed as contributing resources to the historic district. Architectural styles represented in the district include Colonial Revival, Neo-Classical, Art Deco, and Romanesque Revival. One of the main reasons why the Main Street Historic District is significant is because it reflects the early 1900s commercial development that contributed to the formation of the Downtown area, and that early development is still visible today. This historic pattern of development is part of what makes Downtown Manchester so special. This district is evidence of the Town's evolution from an early industrial center to a prosperous town as a result of its need to respond to economic growth through commercial development and civic spaces funded by charitable contributions from the Cheney family.

3 Case Brothers Historic District

Located in the Highland Park area, the Case Brothers Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2009 and encompasses the Case Mountain Recreation Area, which is owned by the Town, along with former paper mills and Upper Case Pond. The district once played an important role in the Town's manufacturing history but is now known for its recreational opportunities offered to residents and visitors alike through miles of hiking, biking, and walking trails. It is also a wonderful example of how structures, such as the bridge at Case Pond, can be designed to blend in with nature, rather than disrupt it. The mill buildings that once were used for making paper have been converted to accommodate small businesses. Visitors to the district can step back in time to understand Manchester's manufacturing history and also see the three mansions once owned by the Case family, which have been well-preserved. These homes can be found at 673 Spring Street, 680 Spring Street, and 720 Spring Street.

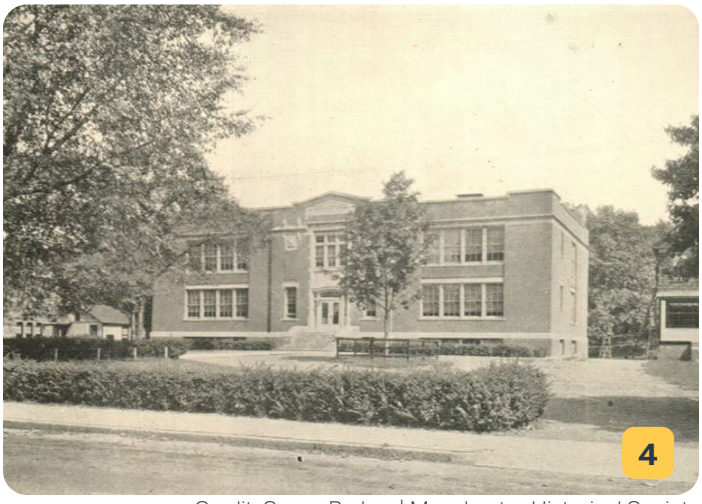
4 Union Village Historic District

The Union Village Historic District was registered by the US Department of the Interior as a Historic Place in 2002. This area was home to one of the Town's earliest industrial facilities, the Union Cotton Mill, in the late 1700s, and was strategically located by the Hockanum River for water power. Worker housing was provided here for the

mill workers as well, evolving over time into an "ethnically and industrially diverse working-class village," (nps.gov). Although the mill no longer exists here, the housing (both single- and multi-family) has been preserved, making up 80% of the district's contributing principal buildings. The Whiton Branch Library, built in 1922, is also located here at 100 North Main Street. Additional civic buildings have been adapted for current uses. For instance, the North District School building has been updated to accommodate the Manchester Board of Education, and Apel's Opera House has housed multiple uses over the last 100+ years.

Credit: Susan Barlow | Manchester Historical Society

Credit: Susan Barlow | Manchester Historical Society



Credit: Susan Barlow | Manchester Historical Society

Historic Manchester Landmarks, Places, and Districts		
Name	**Address**	**Registration/Recognition**
Cheney Brothers National Historic Landmark District	Roughly bounded by Hartford Rd, Campfield Rd, High St, Chestnut St, Forest St, Spruce St, Wells St, & Cooper Hill St	National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) (1978)
Main Street Historic District	7 blocks of Main St, from Eldridge St to Center St	NRHP (1996)
Case Brothers Historic District	680–728 Spring St, 40 Glen Rd, & Case Mountain Recreation Area	NRHP (2009)
Union Village Historic District	Roughly bounded by Union Pond, Oakland St, RR Right of Way, Marble St, Hockanum R	NRHP (2002)
Manchester Historic District	From East Center St on the north to Charter Oak St on the south, paralleling I–384	NRHP (2000)
US Post Office (1931) (now the Weiss Center)	479 Main St	NRHP (1986)
Pitkin Glass Works (1783)	Intersection of Putnam and Parker Streets	NRHP (1979)
Edward L. Burnham Farm	580 Burnham St West	NRHP (1982)
Woodbridge Farmstead	Manchester Green	NRHP (1999)
Cheney Hall	177 Hartford Rd	CT State Register of Historic Places
E. E. Hilliard Woolen Mill Company	640–642 Hilliard St	CT State Register of Historic Places
Private Residences	Approximately 560 throughout Town	CT State Register of Historic Places

Other Town-Owned Historic Buildings:	
Town Hall (part of Main Street Historic District)	92 Bissell Street (part of Manchester Historic District)
Lincoln Center (part of Main Street Historic District)	Fire Museum (part of Manchester Historic District)
Probate Court (part of Main Street Historic District)	East Side Neighborhood Resource Center (formerly Spruce Street Fire House) (State Register)
Mary Cheney Library (part of Main Street Historic District)	Old Manchester Museum (part of Manchester Historic District and Cheney Brothers National Historic Landmark District)
Whiton Memorial Library (part of Union Village Historic District)	Washington School (part of Manchester Historic District and Cheney Brothers National Historic Landmark District)
Robertson School (part of Union Village Historic District)	Nathan Hale School (State Register)
Bennet Apartments (part of Manchester Historic District)	

Historic Resources Recommendations

01	Consider partnering with others to promote private, or public, acquisition of historic properties to hold, manage, preserve, restore, and improve properties to promote historic preservation efforts.
02	Make a concerted effort to understand what kinds of historic preservation programs are desired by marginalized communities and attempt to acquire State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) grant funding during the appropriate yearly cycle to implement programs and accomplish tangible goals as it relates to honoring "hidden histories."
03	Continue to support the efforts of the Manchester Historical Society to bring history–related programming, events, and tours to Manchester.
04	Expand the resources available to those seeking to learn about Manchester's black and immigrant history and the indigenous people that were the original settlers of Manchester.
05	Utilize technology to improve wayfinding and storytelling within the historic areas, bringing history back to life through Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, etc.

Source: Manchester Historical Society

THE ARTS

What we heard...

- An Arts & Culture District designation would benefit the Town.
- WORK_SPACE offers an environment that is welcoming for all and has helped many individuals grow both creatively and professionally over the last several years.
- Residents understand the need for the arts to be emphasized in a way that welcomes all races, sexualities, genders, socioeconomic groups, abilities, and ages.

Introduction

Manchester enjoys arts and cultural resources that rival those of much bigger cities, and residents of the community continue to express a strong desire to expand arts-related programming and events and to provide options for all demographics. There are a variety of organizations and programs, such as the Tiny Gallery and Leisure Labs, that have made a conscious effort to bring arts and creative spaces to the Town so that people can express themselves in a multitude of ways.

Arts Programs & Institutions

WORK_SPACE, located in the heart of Downtown at 903 Main Street, is a "meeting center & coworking space for professionals to meet, create, learn, and work in a hospitable and stimulating environment that fosters positivity, productivity, and possibility," (workspacemanchester.com). The space is owned by the Town and includes three art galleries, six media-equipped meeting spaces, and twelve private offices that can be rented and reserved. WORK_SPACE promotes and values respect, comfort, and openness above all else, providing the perfect place for artists to showcase their talents in a safe, supportive environment. It is the only collaborative coworking space east of the Connecticut River and is a powerful resource for entrepreneurs and creatives alike. Planapalooza™ technical meetings and open studio were held at WORK_SPACE, allowing the consultant team and participants to understand the value of the space and view the art gallery with work from local artists.

The **Manchester Art Association** is a non-profit organization that was founded over 70 years ago and offers classes, lectures, workshops, and exhibitions to encourage the development of artistic skills. The MAA brings local artists together to spur creativity through a welcoming and supportive environment. With over 100 members and a board of directors, the MAA is a wonderful way for artists to connect with one another.

The **Manchester Art Commission** was created over 20 years ago with three responsibilities: to network, support, and create. The Commission networks by putting together multiple artistic and cultural events and activities for the community each year; supports the arts community in the Greater Manchester area and acts as an advocate for artists; and creates arts opportunities within the Town. It is comprised of a board of directors led by a chairperson and vice-chairperson.

manchester ART association

MANCHESTER ARTS COMMISSION

Source: WORK_SPACE

Public Art

Imagine Main Street seeks to bring a sense of vibrancy back to Downtown Manchester through artistic performances, public art, beautification projects, and pop-up stores, creating a hub for culture and the arts. This non-profit's main goal is to bring economic growth to the Special Services District, and, in doing so, enrich the community through cultural events. Some of Imagine Main Street's projects and festivals include the Runners ART Parade, a Sock Hop, the Main Street ART Benches project, and the painting of street planters and garbage receptacles throughout Downtown. This is just one example of the collaboration between Manchester residents that has resulted in the rejuvenation of the historic downtown district.

Murals

Artists local to the area have installed a number of murals in the last few years, sponsored by RiseUP for Arts and CT Murals, that both residents and visitors enjoy.

1 "Birthing of a Legacy"

In 2021, a mural celebrating Martin Luther King Jr. was painted on a wall outside of the Mahoney Recreation Center on Cedar Street. This piece of art by Ben Keller was titled "Birthing of a Legacy" and unveiled during the Town's Juneteenth Freedom Day Celebration.

2 "Wings of Refuge"

Keller painted another mural in 2021 in Purnell Place called "Wings of Refuge," which "represents hope for the community, strength, and a foundation of resilience," (CT Murals).

3 Concrete Barriers

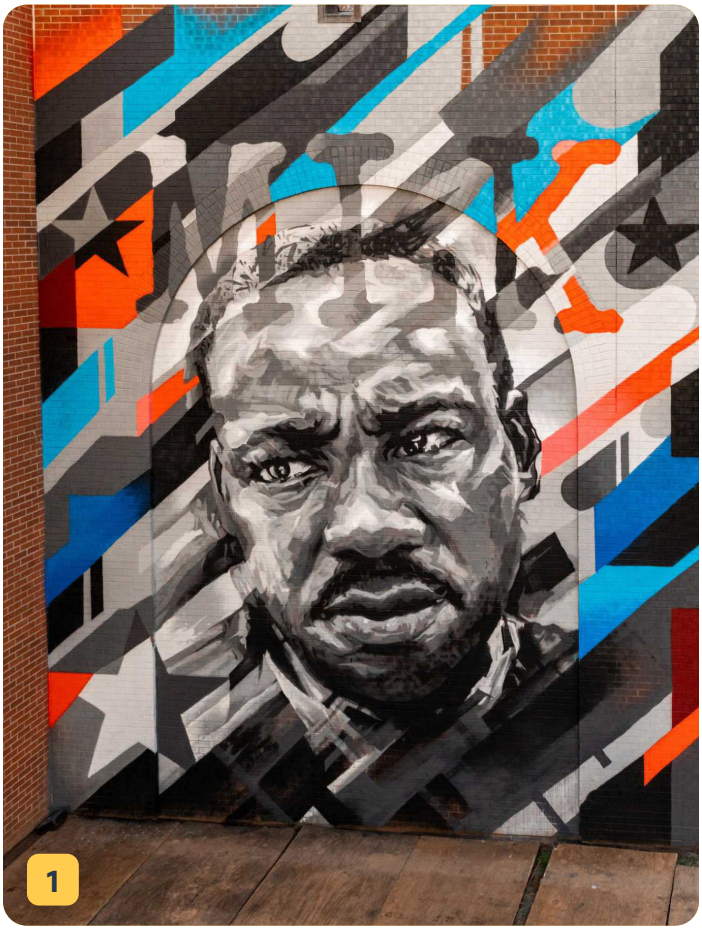
16 concrete barriers placed outside of businesses along Main Street were also painted by Keller, demonstrating how public art can be functional, too.

4 "One Manchester"

The colorful "One Manchester" mural outside of WORK_SPACE was completed in the Fall of 2019 by Black Ink Creative Partners. This piece of public art, with its colors and moving arrows, is symbolic of the Town's diversity and inclusion as its residents "move forward and onward as one," (One Manchester plaque).

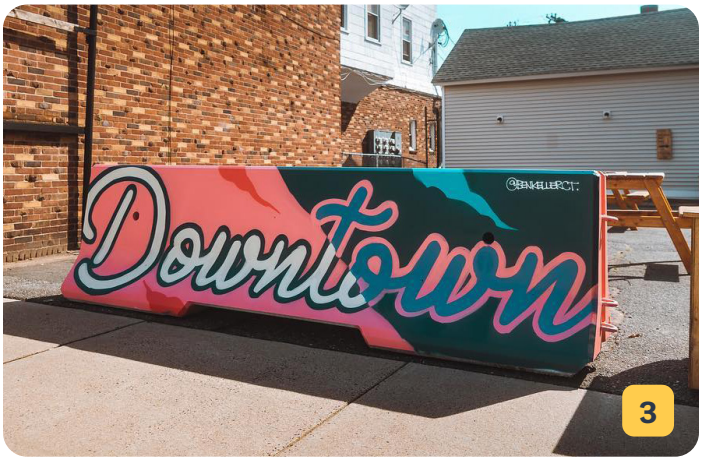
The Arts Recommendations

01	Continue to encourage and support neighborhood-level arts events like pop-ups, mini galleries, sidewalk art shows, and walking art tours.
02	Provide destinations and programming for all ages, incomes, abilities, and cultural backgrounds.
03	Consider developing a public art master plan.
04	Support arts programs in public schools in order to provide equitable access for students. Recognize that transportation may be an issue for some families and that some students are unable to take advantage of extracurricular activities unless transportation is available.
05	Consider designating an Arts & Culture District within Town to show that the arts are valued by Town leadership and stimulate economic growth.
06	Seek national grants to showcase and support local artists, especially those with marginalized identities. See the Historic Heber Downtown Mural Initiative Case Study and Park Social Case Study.
07	Continue supporting institutions like WORK_SPACE that understand the importance of an open and welcoming creative environment for artists and professionals alike.



Source: benkellerart.com

Credit: Evin Photography



Source: benkellerart.com

Credit: Evin Photography

CASE STUDIES

1 PLAYABLE ART (DULUTH, GA)

In the Spring of 2022, the City of Duluth held a local arts contest where community members of all ages could submit inspirational and imaginative playground designs that were reviewed by the Public Arts Commission and eventually given to an artist who produced unique pieces of playable art. Submitted designs ranged from sea creatures to tree houses, pirate ships to crash-landed satellites, and musical instruments to giant animals. In July, the mayor and council announced three contest winners from the 175 total submissions to get their designs actualized on the Local Town Green Playground. Winners received monetary prizes and Duluth merchandise.

2 HISTORIC HEBER DOWNTOWN MURAL INITIATIVE

The City of Heber, Utah sought to turn its historic downtown into a world-class destination in 2020 through a public arts initiative sponsored and funded by the City, Heber Valley Chamber of Commerce, and the Community Alliance for Main Street. The local arts initiative envisions turning blank walls into huge public art canvases for local artists to paint murals. The murals are intended to build a sense of community, encourage private investment, and make public spaces welcoming areas for pedestrian activity. Local artists are invited to submit mural ideas for selection through the City of Heber website, and are compensated for their time and materials. Each phase of the initiative is a different blank canvas that artists can apply for. According to Heber Downtown Redevelopment Services, public art is a proven tool for encouraging private investment. Additionally, private investments made within a downtown area have a high rate of return and average $3 to $1 return on the investment in economic development. The initiative is currently in the third and final phase.

3 PARK SOCIAL (SAN DIEGO, CA)

In May 2022, San Diego launched a public arts initiative through a series of local artist projects in local parks. Projects include art installations, interactive events, and performances in 28 parks throughout the city. These projects explore topics like environmental justice, belonging, and social cohesion, and are intended to activate local public spaces, showcase local talent, explore important topics as a community, and reconnect the sense of community following Covid-19. The project ran through November 2022. To learn more, visit sandiego.gov/park-social.

Playground Design Contest

1

Source: news.duluthga.net

2

2

Source: heberut.gov

3

3

Source: sandiego.gov/park-social

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

What we heard...

- There are many differing opinions on what should be done with the now vacant elementary schools in Town.
- Career pathways are being used in high schools to lead students into specific careers, and there is a need to increase awareness of salaries for varying jobs at different educational levels (high school diploma, associate degree, bachelor's degree, master's degree, etc.).
- There are mixed feelings about the school system. Some feel as if it is great, and others feel like the perception of the quality of public schools deters people from moving to Manchester.

Manchester Public Schools

Students in Manchester attend public schools in the Manchester Public Schools (MPS) district. A limited number of private or charter school options also exist in the community, which provide children and their parents more options for attending pre-school, elementary school, middle school, or high school.

MPS is governed by an independently-elected Board of Education, which consists of eight members and works collaboratively with the Town Board of Directors to develop and adopt its annual budget. The average expenditure per student for MPS was $16,973 for the 2018-19 school year. The State of Connecticut contributed $17,629 per student for the same school year (Connecticut State Department of Education Bureau of Fiscal Services, 2021).

At present, there are fifteen public schools in Manchester, including: one pre-school, seven elementary schools, three middle schools, three high schools (or alternative high schools), and one adult education center. Adult education programs in the MPS system are focused on high school completion, GED certification, workplace training, English as a second language (ESL), and U.S. citizenship. Total enrollment for school year 2019-2020 was 6,309. Students are assigned to schools in the district using attendance boundaries, as appropriate.

MPS and its partners established a working group in 2012/13, the School Modernization and Reinvestment Team Revisited, SMARTR, to develop and recommend long-term strategies for (re)investing in the school district. Specific to infrastructure, the group evaluated the type and number of schools needed to serve future generations and identified priority investment areas to realize near- and long-term goals for education in the community. The working group was reconvened in 2018/19 as SMARTR II to address concerns with aging and inefficient elementary schools, preferences for neighborhood-focused schools, and conflicts between buses, cars, and walkers heading to and around school sites.

MPS and their partners consider recommendations from the SMARTR II initiative in their current facility planning and capital programming. A local bond referendum was passed in 2019 to renovate three local elementary schools from the SMARTR II initiative: Bowers, Buckley, and Keeney Elementary Schools. Recommendations for other school facilities in the MPS district may be realized as the elementary schools are renovated (e.g., repurposing Martin Elementary School as a pre-school center and closing Washington Elementary School).

MPS also shares its buildings, athletic fields, and playgrounds with the Town of Manchester Parks and Recreation Divisions during certain times of the year to support local sport leagues and recreation programs.

MPS maintains strong relationships with local businesses, professional groups, and advocacy organizations to enrich the learning environment for its students and teachers. A formal department within MPS, Business and School Partnerships, organizes events throughout the year as a supplement to the traditional learning curriculum. MPS partners may provide jobs or internships to local students, help design and implement real-world learning experiences within a traditional instructional process, host networking events, serve on school-focused boards or committees, participate in school-sponsored special events, or make donations in the form of scholarships, equipment, or supplies.

Source: CMTA.com

Repurposed Schools Task Force

In an effort to determine how a number of old school buildings in Town should be redeveloped, Manchester hired a consulting firm to initiate Repurposed Schools. This is a planning process designed to strategize, engage the community, and create a vision for the future of Nathan Hale, Washington, and Robertson Schools. The process was overseen by the Repurposed Schools Committee, comprised of 23 appointed individuals, which was later reorganized into a task force made up of 3 members from the Board of Directors. The hope was that this new subcommittee would revamp the project and spur progress after months of delays.

This is a pivotal moment in the Town's history, as residents submit wish lists for what they feel would be most appropriate for each school building. During the Planapalooza™ process, participants suggested multiple options, including:

- For Nathan Hale: senior housing, community or recreation center, affordable apartments, mixed-use development with housing and shops, food incubator, year-round farmer's market, library, homeless shelter, art gallery;
- For Washington: black-owned business mall, indoor gardening and greenhouse, recreation center, low-income housing and workspace, a community-organizing and investment space, park, apartments, affordable housing; and
- For Robertson: bowling and recreation, veterans housing, indoor market space, low-income housing, equitable community center, organic franchise grocery store.

The same survey asked what participants did not want each building to become, and most responders referenced big businesses, luxury apartments, a jail, an abandoned building, or large chain stores.

In January 2023, the Repurposed Schools Task Force presented a final report to the Board of Directors, outlining the community engagement methods used during the process, a summary of community input, how to address the challenges of repurposing the three chosen school sites, and next steps for the project. The detailed report can be found at yvmmct.com/repurposed-schools.

Manchester Community College (MCC)

Located just south of I-384 on the west side of Town, Manchester Community College (MCC) is one of the largest community colleges in the state. It is the only higher-education campus in Manchester and serves more than 15,000 students annually with just over 450 faculty members. MCC offers associate degrees in more than 40 disciplines, such as human services, liberal arts and sciences, business, engineering and technology, and fine arts, and seven of its programs are nationally accredited. The student population is impressively local and diverse, as the college's website notes that 48% of students come from surrounding towns and "49% are from under-represented racial and ethnic groups," (manchestercc.edu).

Manchester Community College is a vital local asset and contributes to the local and regional economy in a variety of ways. Most importantly, the institution educates and trains students, producing talent that can benefit the local workforce. Students also purchase local goods and services, helping to fuel the Town's economy.

Howell Cheney Technical High School

Just under 2 miles north of Manchester Community College is Howell Cheney Technical High School (also known as Cheney Tech), which offers a curriculum across more than 10 different programs, including health technology; information technology; science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); architecture and construction; and manufacturing. The school has over 600 students enrolled from grades 9 through 12 but also offers educational opportunities for adults. Students receive extensive hands-on training and gain experience that will prepare them for their futures in technical careers, from the culinary arts to welding and metal fabrication.

Manchester High School

Manchester High School (MHS) is centrally located within the Town at 134 Middle Turnpike East. Its population reflects the diversity of Manchester, with approximately 1,700 students representing 32 countries. According to its "School Profile 2022," found on mpspride.org, MHS has 164 faculty members, 15 counselors, 3 school psychologists, 4 school social workers, 5 student advocates, 24 paraprofessionals, a principal, and 6 assistant principals (mpspride.org). Students at MHS have a wide array of course options and co-operative programs to choose from at varying levels (Advanced Placement, Articulated Courses, UCONN Early College Experience, Certifications).

In addition, Manchester High School emphasizes student involvement in extracurricular activities and programs, such as Youth Leadership Council, Academy Advisory Boards, Broadcast Journalism, athletics, Young Mens and Womens Leadership, Drama, and future professional programs. Faculty members and students alike are able to perform exceptionally well inside and outside of the classroom because "equity is the norm and excellence is the goal," as the Manchester Public Schools Mission Statement declares.

Source: mpspride.org

Educational Facilities Recommendations

01	Expand opportunities for the Town of Manchester to partner with Manchester Community College, identifying potential public-private partnerships with clear and tangible goals. These partnerships could yield events, studies, grant funding, educational and economic development opportunities, and co-op programs. (See Economics + Employment Chapter for more detailed information).
02	Strengthen and expand existing partnerships between Manchester Community College, Manchester High School, Cheney Tech, and local employers.
03	Complete the Repurposed Schools project and move forward.
04	Introduce local youth to government and community planning.

LIBRARY

What we heard...

- Mary Cheney Library is one of the main reasons why people come Downtown.
- There is an opportunity for a new, main library branch to be constructed Downtown.
- The new library should have meeting spaces or classes for those with limited access to existing ones. The new library would need to be larger and include more features while staying close to Downtown.
- Both the Mary Cheney Library and Whiton Branch Library attract many visitors daily.

Existing Conditions

The Mary Cheney Library is a resource for residents of all ages in the community. It boasts the second-highest circulation of books, e-books, and other material in the State of Connecticut for 2021, and the highest circulation of children's material in the State for the last three years. The size of the library and its adjacent parking lot are significantly undersized to keep pace with demands in the community.

The 21st Century Library Report for Manchester was released on June 14, 2022 and summarized the work of Town staff and their hired consultants to identify needs and options for expanding library resources sufficiently to keep up with the type, intensity, and location of demands now and anticipated in the future. The Report recommended a new, 21st century library be built somewhere in Town. Staff and consultant partners researched several potential sites, eventually recommending the corner of Main Street and Maple Street in Downtown (the current Webster Bank site).

As part of that work the Town engaged an economic development consultant firm to look at the economic impact of the Mary Cheney Library and what it would mean to relocate it within, or outside Downtown. The resulting report strongly recommended keeping the main branch Downtown, noting that the library attracts hundreds of visitors a day to Downtown, many of whom travel from outside of Manchester, and that approximately a third of library visitors make another stop in the Downtown area before or after their visit to the library (Economic Impact of the Mary Cheney Library Study, Goman and York, 2022). Manchester residents approved a $39 million bond referendum in 2022 to help fund a public library downtown. State and other funding sources are also being considered to reduce construction costs for taxpayers.

The Mary Cheney Library will be repurposed for other Town groups and initiatives once the new downtown library is open. Both the old and new facilities should focus on community meeting space, job-readiness training opportunities, youth and adult programs, and technology experiences to keep pace with existing and emerging trends for community resource buildings. Modifications considered for the Mary Cheney Library should respect the historical integrity of the building and the prominence of the building as a component of Center Memorial Park. The building and surrounding park should continue to be a popular destination Downtown and attract visitors to the area.

Library Recommendations

01	Expand library programming and services. Along with an anticipated physical expansion of the library, community resources and programs provided at Mary Cheney Library should be extended (both in scope and variety) to meet the needs of residents. Technology and mobile resources (e.g., book mobiles, book fair events at public schools, preschool programs, etc.) could expand the scope of the library to serve the needs of the community.
02	Ensure connectivity to local libraries by multiple modes of transportation.
03	Partner with the library to identify what municipal services could be more easily provided to the community at the facility in addition to, or instead of, those located at Town Hall. This could include community orientation materials, licenses, taxes assistance, or language classes.

DINOSAURS
CONCEPTS
KINDERGARTEN READINESS
OLD BOAT
America, do you love me?
A FIRST SCIENCE STORYBOOK
The Squirrels' Busy Year
MARTIN JENKINS
Illustrated by RICHARD JONES
Raindrops Roll
Jorey Hurley
A SLED FOR GABO
IN MY GARDEN
NEW
NATURE
SEASONS

TRANSPORTATIO

130 INTRODUCTION
134 CREATING A SUCCESSFUL MULTIMODAL NETWORK
136 THE PUBLIC REALM
138 TRANSPORTATION CONSIDERATIONS

N

INTRODUCTION

What we heard...

- Residential streets are serving as connector streets, creating a problem because people want to use them as shortcuts and travel faster than is legal.
- Safety lanes get smaller in certain areas of Town.
- Manchester is underserved by the regional mass transit system, even though it has the densities to support it.
- The Town tries to implement bike racks in public projects but they are not required for most private projects.
- Investment in bike lanes around Town has been less of a priority than investment in buses, but this should be changing in the next few years.
- Residents want the Town to balance bike lanes with parking needs.
- The Town would like multimodal options for all destinations.

A successful multimodal network is one that creates mobility options for people of all ages, incomes, and abilities. Manchester has an efficient roadway network that connects people driving personal vehicles to the places they need and want to go. For many Manchester residents and visitors, walking, bicycling and other people-powered modes are important transportation alternatives for both recreational and daily trips and activities. These alternative transportation modes are particularly important for people for whom access to a vehicle is not feasible. Ensuring that the network provides equal access and connections for all users—including people riding bicycles, walking, and using transit—is essential to implementing a safe, connected, and convenient multimodal system.

While providing a circulation network is the primary function of streets, these corridors can also contribute to, or take away from, a community's vibrancy and quality of life. Transportation is about more than moving vehicular traffic through a community; a multimodal focus on transportation can improve the travel experience for all users, while also encouraging adjacent land uses that result in a more active and attractive economy. Streets and roadways make up a large percentage of a community's public realm space. The public rights-of-way, including travel lanes, parking, sidewalks, green space, and open space, play a critical role in creating safe, vibrant, and healthy neighborhoods. Great streets that are built with a people-first design approach reflect and celebrate neighborhood context, create inviting and vibrant public spaces, support a healthy environment, and provide opportunities for sustainable, responsible growth.

The design of great neighborhood streets employs a holistic methodology that includes a context-sensitive approach, resulting in streets that deliver a balanced quality of service to all modes of transportation and high quality of life for the surrounding neighborhood communities. Thoughtful design is also important to environmental health and resiliency, as streets influence the environment through the urban heat island effect, stormwater runoff, and the degree to which they support energy-efficient modes. Properly designed streets that create a truly multimodal and intermodal network can improve the safety, health, and economic trajectory of a community.

The Town of Manchester has communicated the desire to realize an equitable, safe, and sustainable transportation network. Manchester's residents understand the changes and challenges faced by the community and are committed to continuing the work toward fulfilling transportation goals that will result in a resilient, healthy town where everyone has accessible, safe, and enjoyable mobility options.

Great streets place people first, regardless of their chosen mode of transportation.

Equity in Transportation

When it comes to transportation, equity-based planning is essential to connect everyone. Whether it be through personal vehicles, pedestrian and biking facilities, or public transportation, residents need to have accessible options to safely and efficiently get where they need or want to be. Equitable transportation must consider every demographic when expanding the Town's network and improving the conditions of existing roads, sidewalks, trails, and public transportation services and stops. When it comes to expanding transportation options, the cost of each mode should also be considered, as some modes cost more or less to use than others (due to maintenance, repairs, registration, insurance, fuel, etc.) and can disproportionately impact lower-income groups. Since automobile ownership is the most expensive form of transportation, Manchester must continue to prioritize alternative methods like sidewalks and public transit, which will result in an equitable transportation network.

$894

According to the American Automobile Association (AAA), the national average cost of owning and maintaining a new vehicle in 2022 was $894 per month, including gas, maintenance/repair/tire costs, insurance, license/registration/taxes, depreciation, and finance charges. This equals to just over $10,000 annually.

Source: https://newsroom.aaa.com/2022/08/annual-cost-of-new-car-ownership-crosses-10k-mark/

Sustainability in Transportation

Green and Complete Streets

Manchester's approach to complete streets in Manchester could be expanded to include additional consideration of sustainability using Low Impact Development (LID) techniques and green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) in every project. Public rights-of-way comprise approximately 13% of land area in Manchester. Requiring consideration of LID and GSI as an integral part of all future transportation investment and measuring performance over time can have a significant positive impact.

Conversion of extraneous pavement from "gray to green" and planting trees within the public right-of-way wherever possible are two simple strategies to reduce stormwater runoff and improve public health, with relatively minimal municipal maintenance demands over time and a vast array of benefits. More detailed techniques such as pavement elimination using road diets and parking reduction, bioretention systems and bioswales, tree trenches, and permeable pavement provide even greater opportunities for benefit.

Public RIGHTS-OF-WAY comprise approximately 13% of land area in Manchester

CASE STUDY

GREEN AND COMPLETE STREETS
PROVIDENCE, RI

In 2020, Providence amended its City Ordinance to add a "Green and Complete Streets" article. Green and Complete Streets are defined as "streets designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, in that pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transportation users of all ages and abilities are able to safely move along and across a street, provide for visual pleasure, including exposure to natural elements, and improve environmental quality by providing for reduction and on-site pretreatment of stormwater prior to eventual release into local waterways and the Narragansett Bay." The article, which also applies to privately constructed streets and parking lots, requires all phases of transportation improvement projects including planning, programming, design, acquisition, construction, operation, and maintenance be approached as opportunities to include green and complete streets strategies. An annual report documents performance measures such as ADA compliance, total miles of bike lanes, street trees, average travel lane width, percent impervious surface, the water quality of each stormwater outfall, and maintenance of green and complete streets facilities. A Green and Complete Streets Advisory Council is comprised of three residents and representatives of Public Works, Planning, Public Safety, and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Commission.

Source: visitrhodeisland.com

CREATING A SUCCESSFUL MULTIMODAL NETWORK

A successful multimodal network must be tailored to the community's needs, goals, and vision. While specific considerations are required for the implementation of network infrastructure in Manchester, several guiding measurements of success should be considered:

SAFETY

The frequency and severity of crashes are minimized; conflicts between non-motorized users and motor vehicles are limited and rare. Personal safety is prioritized.

COMFORT

Conditions do not deter non-motorized users due to stress, anxiety, or concerns over safety. Environmental conditions create an enjoyable experience for all.

CONNECTIVITY

All destinations can be accessed using a complete bicycle, pedestrian, and transit network with no gaps or missing links.

DIRECTNESS

Bicycling and transit routes and trip times are minimized. Designated crossings are provided frequently to reduce trip distances.

COHESION

Distances between parallel and intersecting non-motorized routes are minimized. Routes are easily navigated due to appropriate wayfinding and design elements.

ATTRACTIVENESS

Routes direct bicyclists and pedestrians through priority destinations and lively areas, and context and character are reflected in design elements.

UNBROKEN FLOW

Stops, such as long waits at traffic lights, are limited, and street lighting is consistent.

EQUITY

Network improvements prioritize the most vulnerable roadway users (pedestrians and bicyclists) and seek to provide facilities where demonstrated need is the greatest.

Key Plans

In recent years, Manchester has made significant progress in improving a robust multimodal network that reflects these measurements of success. Several plans and policies have been put into place that will guide complete streets and trails projects, as well as improvements to the public realm. These documents include:

Manchester 2020 POCD

The previous POCD was completed in 2012 and established several goals related to transportation improvements and addressing issues such as intra–town transit; land use and development around transportation nodes; green infrastructure, energy, and resilience; vibrant, walkable, and bikeable neighborhoods; and accessibility and equity.

Sidewalk and Curb Plan 2019-2024

This plan articulates policies for the installation and improvement of sidewalks, location of new installations and removal, and the minimum standards for design and implementation of sidewalks.

Manchester Complete Streets Policy 2017

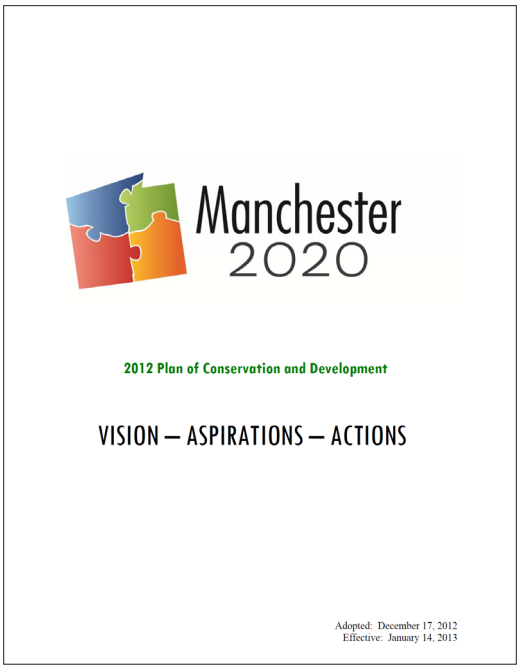
The policy was adopted in 2017 and established principles which must be applied to all transportation projects within Manchester. The Policy relies on established design guidance from several state and national authorities including the Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) & Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE); American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO); National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO); Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT); Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); and others.

Trails and Connectivity Plan 2021

The goal of the recommendations is to establish a comprehensive connected network of trails and open spaces throughout the Town. The Plan focuses on improvements to existing trails and filling the trail gaps for pedestrian and bicycle users.

Main Street Downtown Manchester Improvement Project

The goal of this project is to create a concept plan that will transform Main Street (Center Street to Hartford Road) into an accessible, vibrant, and equitable Complete Street. The Project includes a road diet, additional bicycle facilities, improved sidewalks and roadway crossings, and expanded public spaces.



THE PUBLIC REALM

The public realm, which encompasses all publicly held land, is a community's greatest asset. These spaces present significant opportunities to enhance the quality of life for all residents. Improvements to the public realm should result in enjoyable, comfortable, and accessible spaces for people to meet and socialize, move through safely, conduct business, and celebrate the diversity and culture of the community. Streets, including adjacent sidewalks, plazas, and green space, often make up the largest portion of the public realm. The character and allocation of space on a street play a key role in the experience for those who are walking, biking, or rolling and driving. Streets should reflect the surrounding context and be attractive, inviting, accessible, safe, and comfortable for all users. Great streets are designed to place people first—people who ride a bicycle, walk, drive a car, ride transit, and who work, live in, or visit the neighborhood. A people-first design approach celebrates life; creates inviting, vibrant, and resilient public space; and provides opportunities for community growth.

Thoughtful design also considers environmental effects, as streets influence the environment through the urban heat island effect, stormwater runoff, and air quality. The design of great streets encompasses green infrastructure which can serve to mitigate negative environmental effects and, while doing so, also provide beauty, shade, and enjoyable spaces. People-first streets will embrace community values and enhance their quality of life, rather than simply providing a means of travel from one destination to another.

Urban Heat Island Effect

Urban areas are often hotter than outlying, more rural areas due to paved surfaces and buildings re-emitting the heat from the sun. (Source: Toole)

The public realm in Manchester is improving; the Town is taking steps towards rebalancing streets for people. It is important to recognize that the key elements of safety, health, and aesthetics in the design of enjoyable public spaces are interdependent and synergistic. The effect of harmonizing these elements can lead to improved human and environmental health, economic development, and community resiliency. As street improvement projects move forward, Manchester should seek to adopt a truly holistic approach to designing public realm areas, one that balances the elements that create great urban spaces:

- Safety for all modes and users of transportation and prioritizing, and encouraging, pedestrian and other non-motorized forms of transport are paramount. Providing high comfort and enjoyable alternative transportation pathways and routes to destination points will encourage less single-occupancy vehicle use and more physical activity. This strategy should also include an approach to public transit that focuses on the safety, convenience, and comfort of all users by improving stop locations and amenities, as well as reliable service to desired locations and destinations. Improving public transit as a truly viable alternative to driving will decrease vehicle use, traffic issues, and vehicle emissions.
- Promote climate-positive design criteria that increase resilience and mitigate the effects of climate change, while adding to the beauty and interest of the urban spaces. Maximizing street tree planting and ensuring the health of trees through better planting techniques, replacement, and maintenance will lead to summertime cooling due to increased shade from healthier tree canopies, air quality improvements from the tree canopy filtering of pollutants, and improved water quality of stormwater runoff through tree absorption and filtration. The addition of other planted areas and green stormwater infrastructure will also contribute to the cooling of urban spaces while providing stormwater filtration and control and habitat for pollinators and other wildlife. In addition, the effects of green spaces, small and large, on the well-being and happiness of residents have been proven to be overwhelmingly positive.
- Focus on placemaking with the addition of public art and cultural expressions. These elements can be included in many forms such as permanent installations, setting aside areas to allow for seasonal or temporary elements, and as uniquely designed amenities such as benches, bus shelters, lighting, and other typical streetscape furniture. Placemaking is intrinsically about the character of the place. Therefore, involving neighborhood residents and organizations in the development of placemaking features is critical.

Dining Under the Stars, Annapolis, MD (Source: Toole Design)

East Boston Greenway, Gove Street Crossing, East Boston, MA
Source: Toole Design

TRANSPORTATION CONSIDERATIONS

What we heard...

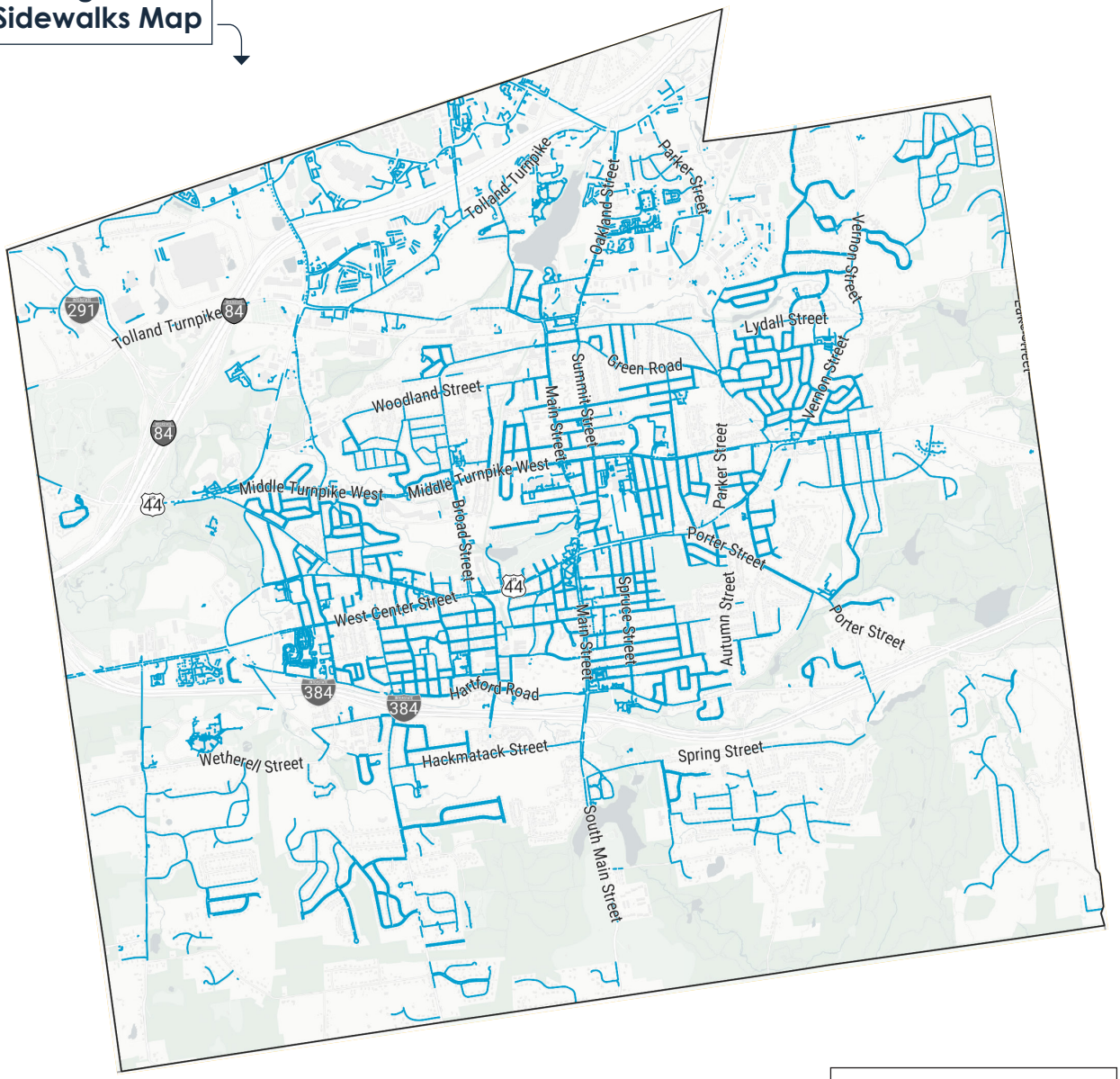
- The creation of an active transportation master plan was suggested.
- Manchester has been approached by electric scooter companies and the Town is doing further research on the benefits.
- Pedestrian flashers like the ones at road crossings along the Cheney Rail Trail should be placed in other areas as well.
- There are multiple senior rider options: the CTtransit System, Greater Hartford ADA Paratransit Service, Manchester Dial-A-Ride, and the Manchester Senior Center Bus system.
- The Department of Public Works has been upgrading bus stops.
- Electric mini-buses and more charging stations are desired options for local transit, especially to lower the use of fossil fuels.
- CTfastrak (bus rapid transit) reaches certain areas of town, like Manchester Community College and Buckland Hills Mall, but not Downtown or other population centers. The Town should push for expansion into these areas.
- There should be a needs-based bus for those without access to cars, similar to a dial-a-ride service where people can call a driver when they need to get somewhere.
- The Town should take advantage of the East Coast Greenway expansion by connecting it to bus stops.
- CTfastrak offers a handful of connections from Manchester to the Greater Hartford area, including a route from Manchester Community College to UConn.
- A previous CTfastrak Expansion Study conducted by the Connecticut Department of Transportation includes Manchester via Silver Lane.
- The Highland Park area is not served by public transit, resulting in the need for a better circulation route.
- There is an overall negative connotation associated with putting children on buses alone in Manchester due to safety concerns.

All transportation recommendations are based on a multifaceted existing conditions analysis and public feedback gathered throughout the planning process. The analysis included the consideration of adopted transportation plans, existing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, existing transit routes crash data, and demographic characteristics such as commute trends and household access to vehicles.

Key Indicators

- **Transportation System**
  - There are more than twice as many miles of roadway owned and operated by the Town of Manchester than by CTDOT within Town. However, the State controls three major interstate highways, Routes 84, 291, and 384, as well as some arterials, and any changes made to street design Town-wide will require CTDOT coordination.
  - There are several existing bicycle facilities and trails both within the Town and connecting to adjacent statewide systems. However, there are gaps in connectivity, and the ability to access key destinations via trails is limited.
  - Most streets in Manchester have sidewalks, but some neighborhoods are not served as well. *See Existing Sidewalks Map*.
  - There are 6 CTtransit Bus routes servicing the Manchester area, with one CTfastrak (CTtransit Bus Rapid Transit [BRT] Service) route connecting to Downtown Hartford. Much of the town is served by these routes, with many households located within ½ mile of a bus stop. However, the east side of Town which has a low to moderate income level is currently underserved by CTtransit and the southern and western parts of Town are without transit service or easy access to transit stops. *See Transit Map*.
  - Crash hot spots are mostly located at intersections along the Main Street and Broad Street corridors and at Rt. 84 and 384 interchanges. *See Crashes Map.*

Existing Sidewalks Map



Legend

- Existing Sidewalk Area

N

0 0.5 1 mi

Transit Map

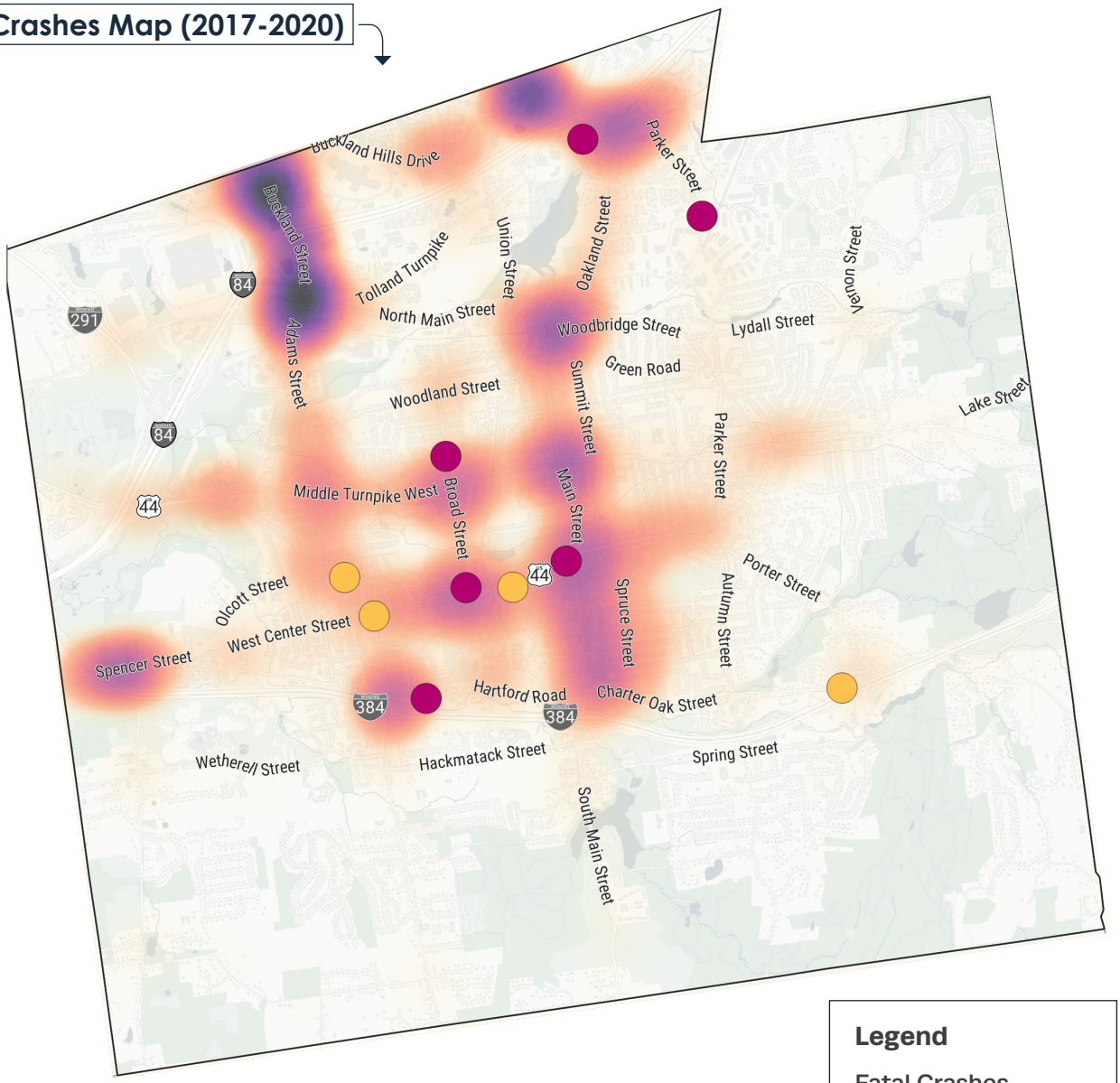
Legend

- CTfastrak Route 121 Bus Stops
- Other CTtransit Bus Stops
- CTfastrak Route 121
- Other CTtransit Bus Route
- Area within Half Mile of Bus Stops

N

0 0.5 1 mi

Crashes Map (2017-2020)



Legend

Fatal Crashes

- Pedestrian
- Motor Vehicle

Density of All Crashes

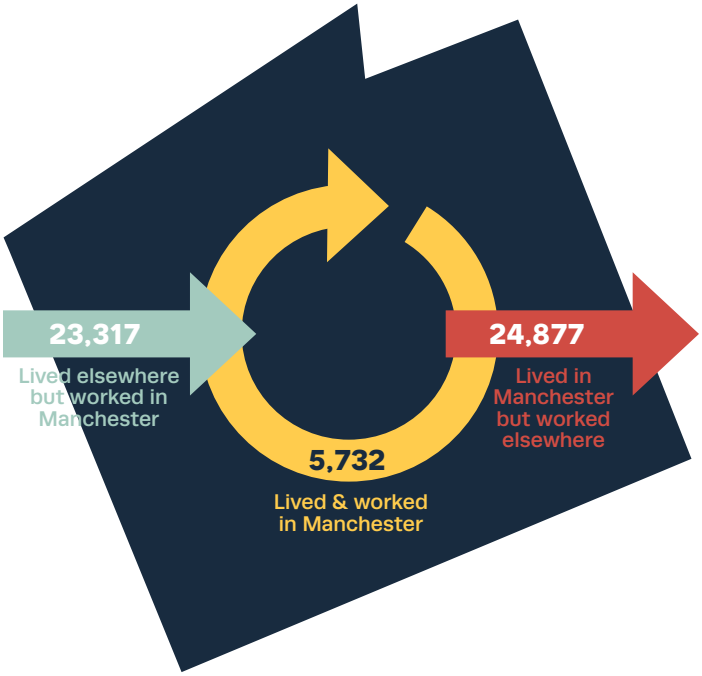
- Fewer Crashes
- More Crashes

N

0 0.5 1 mi

This map illustrates the density of crashes that occurred over a 4-year period relative to a geographic area. Lighter colored areas indicate that fewer crashes took place. Dark purple areas indicate where more crashes occurred. Dots show where fatal crashes took place.

- **Driving and Commuting Patterns**
  - According to the 2019 Census statistics, almost an equal amount of people who live in Manchester are commuting to jobs outside of Town (outflow), as people commuting to jobs within Manchester who live in other surrounding communities (inflow).



  - Approximately 18% of employed residents in Manchester work in town.
  - Most Manchester resident commuters are traveling to work in the Hartford area and communities southwest of the Town.
  - The primary transportation mode for all commuters is driving to work in personal automobiles (84.8 %) with 6.57% carpooling.
  - Only 4.57% of employed residents worked from home full time. Anecdotally, there may be more people working from home part of the time given the trends due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
  - Households average 2 automobiles per household; 42% have access to at least 1 car, and about 7% of households do not have access to an automobile.
  - Commute times average about 22 minutes.

Key Plans

In addition to the Plans and documents cited in the previous section, Manchester relies on the following to guide development and transportation and public realm design:

Adopted Budget

The Town of Manchester adopts a yearly fiscal budget, which is published online and is a user-friendly document that covers all expenditures. The Department of Public Works, Engineering Division is responsible for approximately 7% of that budget. All roadway maintenance, design and engineering, and construction is overseen by the Department of Public Works.

Zoning Regulations

For the most part, Manchester's Zoning Regulations address development requirements and allowable use standards. However, certain sections directly pertain to public realm regulations, particularly Article II, Section 26, Form Based Zone Regulations for the area around Broad Street, which includes provisions for Outdoor Amenity Space as well as other parking and streetscape requirements.

Public Improvement Standards

The Town of Manchester Public Improvement Standards, last updated in 2020, were established to provide a uniform set of requirements for work conducted by both public and private entities within public easements and rights-of-way. The standards ensure that any improvements within these public spaces meet minimum requirements for health and safety, accessibility, and sustainability.

Credit: Evin Photography

Transportation Recommendations

01 Create an Active Transportation Master Plan.

Manchester has adopted a robust set of up-to-date plans and policies that lay out important goals to enhance the transportation network. Creating an Active Transportation Master Plan (ATP) will help to organize the plans and policies into one cohesive, Town-wide plan that addresses the roadway network, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, trails, and transit. A prioritization plan or action items list should be a critical part of the ATP to assist in future project implementation, planning, funding, and budgeting. This Plan should be coordinated with the current ongoing Greater Hartford Mobility Study which includes alternatives for bus and BRT improvements within and near Manchester.

02 Improve intersections.

A focus should be put on improving the most dangerous and congested intersections. Improving intersections, creating safer pedestrian and bicycle crossings, and slowing traffic are effective ways of enhancing the overall network.

03 Connect existing trails.

Trails should be considered as an integral part of the overall multimodal network to be used for commuting and everyday transportation as well as recreational purposes. Filling gaps in the existing trails along with providing safe and convenient access to trails along streets and roadways will significantly expand non-motorized transportation options.

04 Promote widespread transit options.

Support the development of fast, convenient, and affordable transit along major commuter corridors, as well as to neighborhood centers. Requiring new development and substantial redevelopment projects to provide transit easements and baseline infrastructure (i.e., bus stops) will encourage transit usage. Consider future implementation of transit technology such as traffic signal prioritization, queue jumps, and bus-only lanes where appropriate. The Town is also in a strong position to advocate for better access to CTfastrak given the Hartford to UConn corridor and the demographic profile and densities within the Town that would support the transit service improvements.

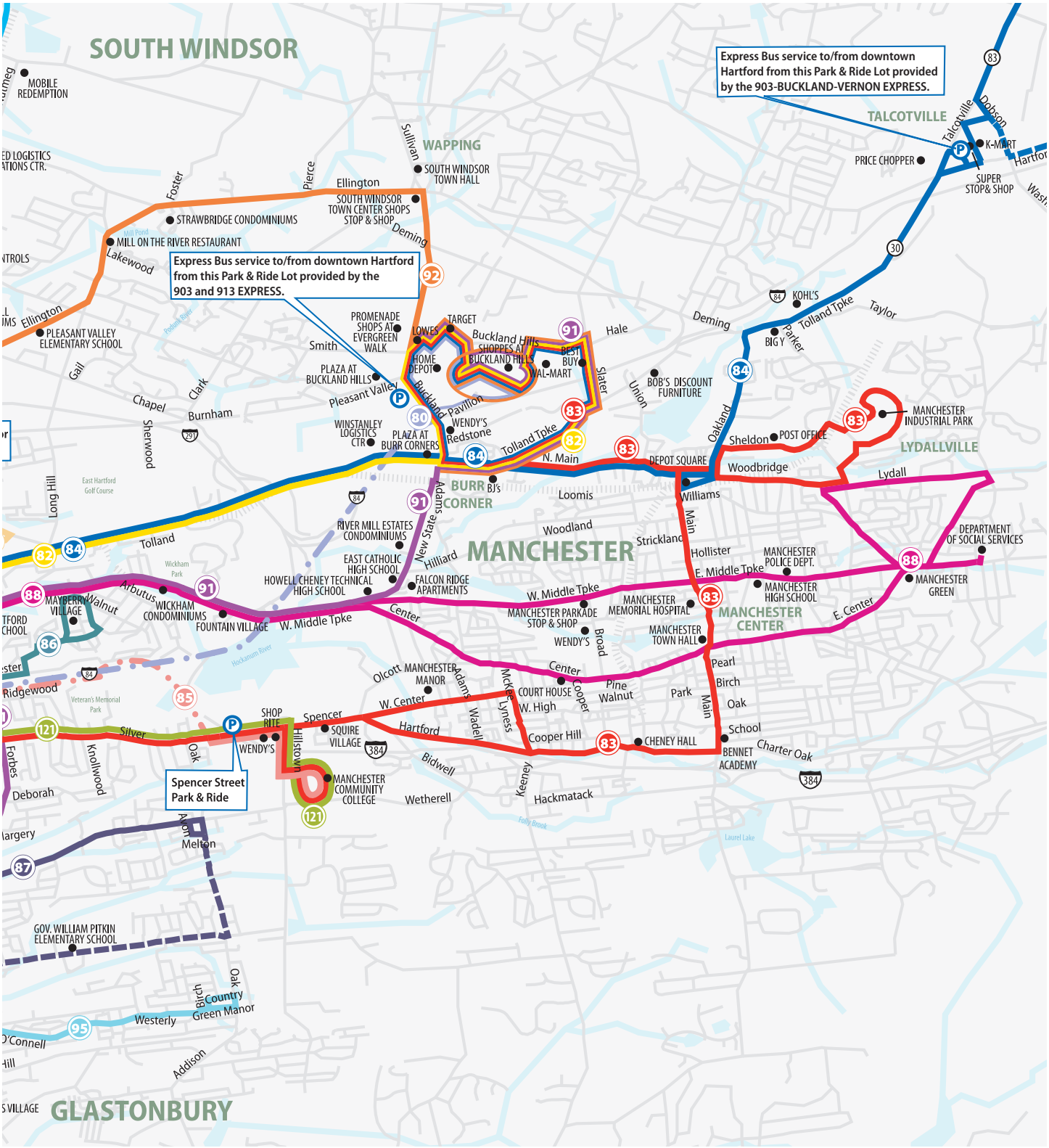
05 Incorporate first mile/last mile options.

Improving access to transit is a priority goal for Manchester. Along with improvements to bus stops and circulation routes, the Town should explore micro-mobility options for transit users to easily travel to and from bus stops to encourage transit use.

06 Ensure a well-maintained system.

Ensure pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities are kept clear and accessible. Establish maintenance schedules for non-motorized facilities to avoid reliance on complaints or requests, which may lead to inequities.

Public Transportation Routes in Manchester



(Source: CTtransit.com)

Source: UConn.edu

Source: CTFastrak

CASE STUDY

AUTONOMOUS BUSES AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

To achieve climate neutrality by 2050, Michigan State University introduced an electric autonomous bus in the fall of 2021. It has 22 seats and can operate without any human interaction, driving a 2.5-mile non-stop route through campus. As MSU's website notes, "traffic lights along the route will be controlled through intelligent roadside units and communicate with the bus." Over 600 test trips were conducted with the bus before carrying passengers, assuring its safety and reliability. This project is a collaboration between Karsan, a state-of-the-art bus manufacturer, and ADASTEC, an automotive software engineering firm that received grant money from the Michigan Office of Mobility and Electrification to make the idea a reality.

https://mobility.msu.edu/events/MSU%20Autonomous%20Bus%20Fact%20Sheet_3.pdf

PARKS, RECREATION, & OPEN SPACE

148 INTRODUCTION
152 PARKS, RECREATION, & OPEN SPACE
160 TRAILS

INTRODUCTION

Manchester offers a wide variety of natural resources, parks, trails, open spaces, and recreational facilities that present numerous opportunities for outdoor activities and entertainment. These assets contribute to the overall health, quality of life, and economy of the Town and adjacent areas.

Manchester experiences all seasons, with average high temperatures in the low 80s and lows in the 20s. The average annual rainfall is just under 50 inches, and the Town averages 3 feet of snow per year. January alone has seen almost 1 foot of snow in previous years, making it the snowiest month in Manchester while also presenting colder-weather recreational opportunities in the winter. The best time for warm weather activities is from May to October. Ultimately, Manchester's climate gives residents and visitors the ability to do outdoor recreation activities during the entire year.

The Town is located east of the Connecticut River, connecting to the Hockanum River that runs through the northwest area of Manchester. Several ponds and reservoirs can be found here as well, including Globe Hollow Reservoir just south of Downtown, Case Pond at Case Mountain, Porter Reservoir and Howard Reservoir in the Highland Park area, and Union Pond, which is situated between Union Street and Oakland Street. Ponds can also be found in Manchester's parks, including Northwest Park and Union Pond Park (at Union Pond), Case Mountain Recreation Area (at Case Pond), and Center Springs Park (at Center Springs Pond). In addition, over 100 miles of trails weave throughout the Town and along some of these waterways.

Every waterway, park, trail, open space, and recreation center in Manchester is viewed as an asset to the Town by its residents, offering them chances to participate in activities that support active and sustainable lifestyles. The preservation of open space improves the vibrancy of activity centers and corridors, increases walkability and access to transit, and increases private investment in core neighborhoods. It is incredibly important that these assets be preserved so that residents can continue to enjoy them.

Equity in Parks, Recreation, + Open Space

Parks and recreation facilities contribute to the health, quality of life, and economy of Manchester, and, as a result, should improve the equity of the Town as well. Therefore, it is crucial that all residents have equal access to these amenities via multiple modes of transportation, and that they are of high quality. These spaces should be safe and inviting, increasing their desirability and usage. The overall goal is that every home should be within a comfortably shaded ten-minute walk of a park, trail, open space, or recreation center that they can enjoy.

Sustainability in Parks, Recreation, + Open Space

In 2021, the Town completed a Parks & Facilities Master Plan and a Trails & Connectivity Plan, which together provide a detailed and well-informed series of steps to prioritize open space and recreation investments. Sustainability is one of the four key themes of the Parks & Facilities Master Plan. In that Plan, sustainability is defined as meeting the needs of current residents without compromising the ability to meet the needs of future generations, noting that sustainability is about environmentalism and green practices but also includes social and financial resources as well as maintaining facilities and programming.

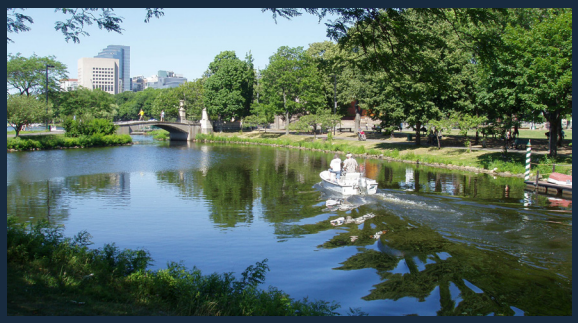
Increased connectivity between departments and involvement of the Sustainability Commission in planning and design will help boost environmental sustainability such as flood resilience, cooling from heat islands, connection to nature for public health

and mental health benefits as priorities in future open space and recreation investments. An additional layer of green infrastructure design with maintenance in mind and investment in ongoing maintenance will help continue the momentum that currently exists. Improved connections with non-profit organizations and streamlined volunteering systems could address social and financial resources, supplementing Town resources both for maintenance and cleanup of facilities as well as planning, outreach, and fundraising as outlined in the Plan's Funding and Revenue Strategy.

CASE STUDY

BOSTON, MA PARKS & RECREATION GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE GUIDELINES

Boston's park-specific Green Infrastructure Guidelines describe appropriate green infrastructure practices for certain park contexts in the City. The guidelines demonstrate a series of steps, including defining objectives, identifying contexts, understanding the site and benefits and maintenance requirements of green infrastructure practices, and leveraging partnerships. The Guidelines recognize the importance of green infrastructure as a key element in urban climate adaptation to help reach city environmental and equity goals through promoting rainwater use and recharge, adapting to increased flooding, reducing urban heat islands, connecting people to nature, increasing green spaces, and improving water and air quality, and habitat value.



Source: Sustainablesites.org

Source: Flickr

TREE EQUITY SCORE

81

Manchester's Tree Equity Score averages out to 81 out of 100. This tool, developed by American Forests, obtains population data (% unemployed, % people of color, % children, % seniors, % people in poverty, health index) and environmental indicators (such as temperature), to calculate an equity score for every Census block group in cities around the country. The goal is for every block group to have a score of at least 75, and the Town of Manchester only has 10 of 48 block groups that are below that benchmark. Tree canopy scores are also available by block group. For the detailed report, visit treeequityscore.org /reports/place/manchester-ct/.

BENEFITS OF URBAN TREES

Strategic placement of trees in urban areas can **cool the air** by between 2˚C and 8˚C.

Mature trees **regulate water flow** and **improve water quality**.

Large urban trees are excellent **filters for urban pollutants** and fine particulates.

Wood can be used for **cooking and heating**.

Trees can **provide food**, such as fruits, nuts and leaves.

A tree can absorb up to 150 kg of CO_2 per year, sequester carbon and consequently **mitigate climate change**.

Trees properly placed around buildings can **reduce air conditioning needs** by 30% and **save energy used for heating** by 20–60%.

Landscaping, especially with trees, can **increase property values** by 20%.

Trees provide habitat, food and protection to plants and animals, **increasing urban biodiversity**.

Spending time near trees **improves physical and mental health** by increasing energy level and speed of recovery, while decreasing blood pressure and stress.

PARKS, RECREATION, & OPEN SPACE

What we heard...

- Residents are proud of the number and quality of parks and recreational spaces that the Town provides.
- There are many different types of parks that serve a variety of functions (natural, neighborhood recreation, sports fields, etc.).
- There is a need for better signage for entrances into parks and trails.
- The Town needs updated maps with park/trail information, and stakeholder groups and the Town should coordinate with each other on this effort.
- There has been a decline in volunteerism to help maintain parks and trails.
- The Parks & Facilities Master Plan from September 2021 is comprehensive, and most are pleased with it. A lot of recommendations from the plan are being implemented.
- Invasive species are a concern, especially in unmanaged open spaces. Ecological land management should be encouraged and spaces of focus prioritized.

Current Facilities

Early in the Planapalooza™ process, it became obvious that the Town of Manchester has prioritized offering open green spaces and community parks for all to enjoy. The Parks and Facilities Master Plan states that Manchester has approximately 685 acres of parks and 191 acres of additional facilities, including recreation centers and public schools. Ranging in types from sports fields to pools to pocket parks to recreation areas, Manchester offers facilities for all ages at all levels of recreation. The following table lists each existing park and recreation facility in Town, along with its location, type (scale), and size.

The Manchester Land Conservation Trust, Inc. (MLCT)

The Manchester Land Conservation Trust, Inc. (MLCT) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that preserves open space lands in Manchester, Andover, Bolton, East Hartford, Glastonbury, and Vernon. Established in 1972, MLCT is a volunteer organization with a board of directors, officers, committees, and over 300 members. The Trust accepts donations of undeveloped land as gifts from individuals or businesses and occasionally purchases land which would otherwise be sold for development. MLCT is a strong partner with the Town of Manchester and has preserved over 350 acres in Manchester, which are maintained for passive recreation and open for public use.

Credit: Evin Photography

Existing Parks & Recreation Facilities			
Facility	**Address**	**Park Type**	**Acreage**
Northwest Park	448 Tolland Turnpike	Community	27.63
Stoneybrook	866 Parker St	Neighborhood	2.67
Meadowbrook Fields	Meadowbrook Drive	Neighborhood	4
Kennedy Soccer Fields	103 Kennedy Rd	Community	12.45
Union Pond Park	116 N School St	Neighborhood	4.12
Robertson Park	45 N School St	Community	16.02
Salters Pool	123 Lydall St	Neighborhood	3.43
Carl Silver Field	250 New State Rd	Community	22.58
Waddell Recreation Area	163 Broad St	Community	10.35
Leber Field	100 Love Lane	Neighborhood	1.79
Verplanck Recreation Area	126 Olcott St	Neighborhood	13.90
Center Springs Park	39 Lodge St	Regional	55.78
Center Memorial Park	586 Main St	Neighborhood	6.90
Nathan Hale Rec Area / East Side Neighborhood Resource Center / Market Field	160 Spruce St	Neighborhood	5.33
Wilfred Road Park	81 Wilfred Rd	Small/Mini Park	0.43
West Side Rec Area / Mahoney Rec Center	94 Cedar St	Neighborhood	7.56
Charter Oak Park	110 Charter Oak St	Community	22.66
Mt. Nebo Park	155 Spring St	Community	16.73
Globe Hollow Swimming Area & Camp Kennedy	100 Spring St	Community	108.59
Case Mountain Recreation Area	670 Spring St	Regional	309.18
Nike Site Recreation Area	160 Garden Grove Rd	Community	36.98
Wickham Park	1326 Middle Turnpike West	Regional	280

Parks and Facilities Master Plan

The Town of Manchester recently adopted a Parks and Facilities Master Plan. The drafting process involved extensive community engagement throughout the second half of 2020, with equity and sustainability at the forefront. Approximately 1,500 participants gave their input through a variety of outreach efforts. The result was a nearly-300-page, comprehensive document discussing each recreation program, park, and trail in Manchester in great detail. Implementation strategies, six conceptual vision plans, and funding and revenue strategies were gathered to be included in the plan, giving Town Staff a playbook of ideas to execute over the next decade or so in relation to parks and recreation facilities. Planapalooza™ participants spoke highly of the Master Plan during the Manchester NEXT process, mentioning that many of its ideas have already been implemented, and they are pleased with the direction that Town Staff is heading in with future parks and recreation development/updates.

The Parks and Facilities Master Plan includes four key themes which came about during the planning process

Dynamic: The Town is known as an agent of change, continuously adapting services in response to changing community demographics and being at the forefront of evolving industry trends. This also entails constantly looking at service delivery through a different lens and being responsive to community needs.

Connected: The Town is committed to connecting with all residents, creating access and inclusion for all through diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts—with a focus on the equitable distribution of programs, services, parks, and amenities for the entire community. Residents have identified connecting parks and facilities as a major priority. As a result, the Department will continue the development of connectivity throughout the Town, creating ease of access to parks, schools, and other points of interest. This theme also includes establishing, growing, and strengthening community partnerships that augment the Town's ability to provide services and robust outreach to residents.

Thriving: The Town's park and recreation offerings are a significant contributor to physical and mental health, education, economic vitality, environment, recreation and leisure time, social belonging, and safety for all Manchester residents. All of these factors, along with other Town services, make Manchester a desirable place to live through its great quality of life. The Plan will influence future parks, recreation, and trail development to keep Manchester growing and thriving for years to come.

Sustainable: The Town will focus on meeting the needs of current residents without compromising the ability to meet the needs of future generations. Sustainability is about environmentalism and green practices, but it also includes other important focus items, such as social and financial resources, and maintaining facilities and programming to a consistently high standard. Manchester's parks and recreation services directly contribute to the economic vitality of the Town.

Please refer to the Parks and Facilities Master Plan for specific recommendations.

Credit: Evin Photography

Recreation Programs

The Town of Manchester manages recreation programs through its Leisure, Family, and Recreation (LFR) Department, which plays an active role in ensuring that residents have access to social, environmental, learning, recreation, and leisure opportunities. The department is split into three divisions: Neighborhoods and Families, Manchester Recreation, and Manchester Youth Service Bureau. Listed below are some of the programs that the Manchester Recreation Division offers:

- **Adult & Youth Programs:** these include classes for CPR certification, tap, yoga, Zumba, barre, and more
- **Adult Sports:** men's softball, volleyball, or basketball; women's volleyball; and co-ed softball or volleyball
- **Learn to Swim:** taught year-round and offers lessons for every age to decrease the risk of drowning
- **Summer Camp:** day camp that occurs from June to August for ages 5 through 13 at community centers, schools, and recreation centers around Town
- **Rec on the Run:** a "mobile pop-up creative arts, sports, and games vehicle offering programs and activities to Manchester residents in neighborhoods and parks" in the community, distributing "specially designed activity boxes on a first come, first served basis" (manchesterct.gov)

Youth Services

The Manchester Youth Service Bureau is devoted to increasing the number of opportunities, and quality services, available to the Town's youth, ages zero to twenty-one. Programs, activities, and services are provided as no-cost and low-cost options with the goal of developing responsible youth that make positive contributions to the community. Access to youth services is provided to children and their families that reside in Town limits or attend school in the Manchester Public Schools district.

Youth programs and services fall into six core areas: early childhood services, teen center and outreach, life skills, employment or vocational, diversion, and community service. A twenty-four-member Manchester Youth Commission works with the Manchester Board of Directors to increase awareness of youth needs in the community.

One program that the Youth Service Bureau is particularly proud to offer is Journey. As the Town's website explains, "this program is designed for Manchester youth aged 9-14, separated into age-specific groups. Journey is a service-learning program with an emphasis on environmental education, leadership, and woodworking training. Projects focus on giving back to the community while building relationships and learning important life skills." (www.manchesterct.gov).

Senior Services

The Manchester Senior Center encourages community involvement, healthy lifestyles, lifelong learning, and general independence for older Town residents. Programs offered by the Center include fitness classes, wellness programs, art classes, social groups, and card games. Activities and events are held throughout the year.

Membership to the Senior Center is available to adults sixty years or older. Annual memberships cost ten dollars and provide access to the Senior Center, all Town recreation centers, the local YMCA, and outdoor pools. Transportation is provided to seniors in the community, Monday through Friday, using a "dial-a-ride" ride request-notification system.

Town officials launched a survey in 2022 to inventory and prioritize needs for improving senior services in the community, including a new or expanded Senior Center in the future. A report highlighting programming needs and spatial requirements for a new or expanded Senior Center is expected sometime in the near future.

CROWD4U

It was made clear early on in the Planapalooza™ process that finding volunteers to help maintain local trails and parks is difficult, and crowdsourcing was suggested as a potential solution. Crowd4U is a great way to gather individuals together to complete specific "microtasks" that ultimately get the job done—whatever that job might be. In Manchester, it could be assembling residents to pick up trash along Cheney Rail Trail or finding several people who can help clear invasive plant species from one of the Town's many parks. Crowd4U.org allows users to maintain "a task pool to store a number of microtasks that can be performed in a short period of time," and the platform has helped over 2 million tasks be completed. This crowdsourcing tool could help the Town maintain all its beautiful assets in a manner that brings locals together while forming social bonds.

NO DIVI

Parks, Recreation, & Open Space Recommendations

01	Continue to implement recommendations from the Parks and Facilities Master Plan.
02	Emphasize sports tourism as one means to increase the amount of spending in the community (and the sales tax receipts that accompany that spending). Year–round sports opportunities should be targeted. (See the Buckland Hills Focus Area Concept as it demonstrates the potential for a sports facility.)
03	Regularly engage the community in discussions about parks and recreation facilities in the Town to ensure park programming meets the needs of residents who use the system. Work directly with residents to ensure the Town provides inclusive and accessible parks and outdoor recreation opportunities.
04	Evaluate each park and the pedestrian and bicycle routes to the park from surrounding neighborhoods to ensure maximum accessibility and ADA compliance where feasible.
05	Expand tree planting and consider becoming a Tree City USA.
06	Improve park safety by providing additional lighting and emergency call buttons.
07	Consider providing Wi–Fi in the Town's parks, aligning with one of the Parks and Facilities Master Plan's goals to attract teens to parks.
08	Explore opportunities to coordinate with and empower volunteers to help with park maintenance through mobile crowdsourcing apps or websites. (See Crowd4U call–out box.)
09	Look into the positive economic impacts of the parks system and promote its value to the community.
10	Continue to expand existing Senior and Youth Services in the community to keep up with demand. Town officials should program resources in the future to keep pace with the timing, location, and intensity of potential demands for these services. Early policies, projects, or initiatives identified should respond to the Town survey completed in 2022.

TRAILS

What we heard...

- Residents are extremely pleased with the number of trails that the Town has to offer.
- The Cheney Rail Trail needs to be connected to the Hop River State Park Trail in the North End.
- Teenagers in Manchester wish for technology to be combined into the trails.
- There should be connections to bus stops from the trails.
- Manchester has not applied to be a Trail Town USA since 1996 and should consider applying again.
- The Happy Trails pamphlet needs to be updated to include all trails.
- The Nike Site trails are a wonderful resource but require maintenance.

1 Charter Oak Greenway

The Charter Oak Greenway is the 17-mile portion of the East Coast Greenway (ECG) that runs through the southern area of Manchester. The East Coast Greenway is a planned recreational route running approximately 3,000 miles from Calais, Maine to Key West, Florida, led by the East Coast Greenway Alliance. The Charter Oak Greenway in Manchester was designated as one of the first five segments of the ECG in 1996. The trailhead for the Charter Oak Greenway can be found south of Hartford Road and east of House Drive in Manchester, traveling parallel to Hartford Road, Keeney Street, and I-384, ending at the intersection of Porter Street and Camp Meeting Road. It goes through Charter Oak Park and extends south toward Mt. Nebo Park. The trail includes varied landscaping and lengthy segments lined by trees on either side. It also passes through the Manchester Community College campus and commercial and residential areas, showcasing all that Manchester has to offer. An interactive map of the full East Coast Greenway can be found at greenway.org (Sources: ctvisit.com/listings/charter-oak-greenway & TrailLink.com).

2 Hockanum River Linear Park Trails

The Hockanum River Linear Park is comprised of approximately 15 miles of hiking trails alongside the Hockanum River. Nine hiking trails intersect the area, including Oakland, Union Pond, Pitkin, Adams Mill, Hackett, Hilliard, New State Road, Verplanck, and Laurel Marsh Trails. The word "Hockanum" comes from the Native American word "Hocquaun," meaning a hook-shaped or crooked river. Since 1970, the volunteers of the Hockanum River Linear Park Committee, a subcommittee of the Manchester Conservation Commission, have worked to preserve the scenic woodlands, wetlands, and wildlife on the river and to provide hiking trails for public recreation.

3 Hop River State Park Trail

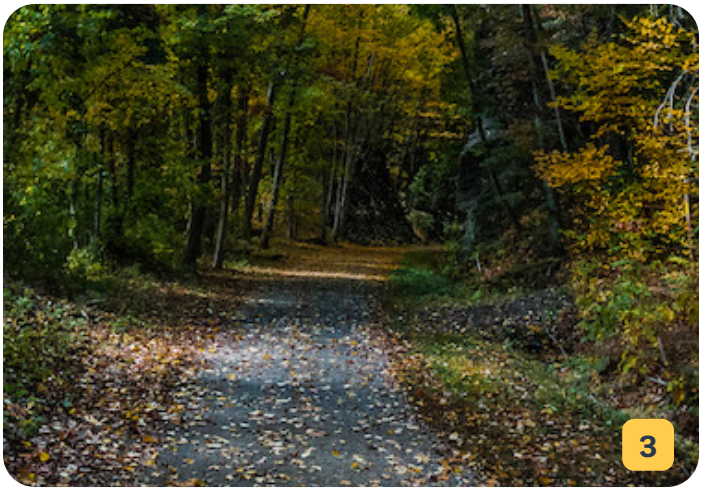
Once a thriving railroad corridor connecting Willimantic to Hartford during the industrial era of the mid-1800s, the Hop River State Park Trail is now a 20-mile-long recreational trail. The 8-mile portion of the Hop River Trail which travels through Manchester and Vernon is the only section of the trail that is not officially part of the East Coast Greenway. Starting at Colonial Road and Parker Street in Manchester, its features include a crushed rock surface under canopies of arched trees, winding parallel to abandoned rail tracks through woodlands and tributaries. This trail was brought about by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, which "has worked to bring the power of trails to more communities across the country, serving as the national voice for the rail-trail movement," (railstotrails.org/about). In 2021, the State of Connecticut purchased a portion of abandoned rail line. In coordination with the Town, the State plans to continue the Hop River trail to the west, where it will connect to the Cheney Rail Trail at Depot Square.

4 Cheney Rail Trail

The Cheney Rail Trail is a multi-use historic connector trail that spans approximately 2.5 miles, following the South Manchester Railroad that was built in the mid-1860s by the Cheney Brothers. The trail runs from the Cheney Mills to the North End, connecting the districts to each other and to Center Springs Park and the East Coast Greenway. This offers a perfect opportunity to

connect various town amenities to one another while promoting a healthy lifestyle. Cheney Rail Trail is partially paved and well-shaded, accommodating bikers, walkers, runners, and leashed dogs.

Source: onlyinyourstate.com



Source: railstotrails.org

Source: greenway.org

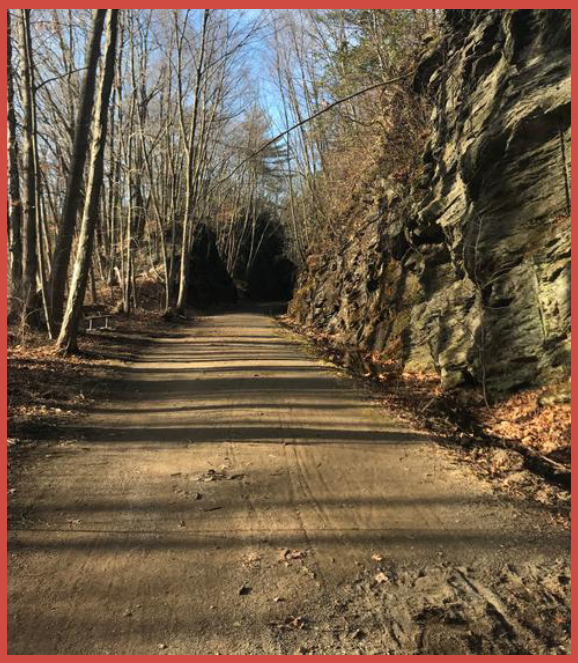
Additional Trails

As stated previously, Manchester has made a concerted effort to provide trails, parks, and open spaces for both the community and visitors to enjoy. According to the Parks and Facilities Master Plan, there are about 109 miles of trails in and adjacent to the Town. Along with the trails described above, there are a handful of others in Manchester that are cherished and well-maintained:

- Case Mountain Trails
- Shenipsit Trail
- Captain John Bissell Trail
- Porter Howard Reservoir Trails

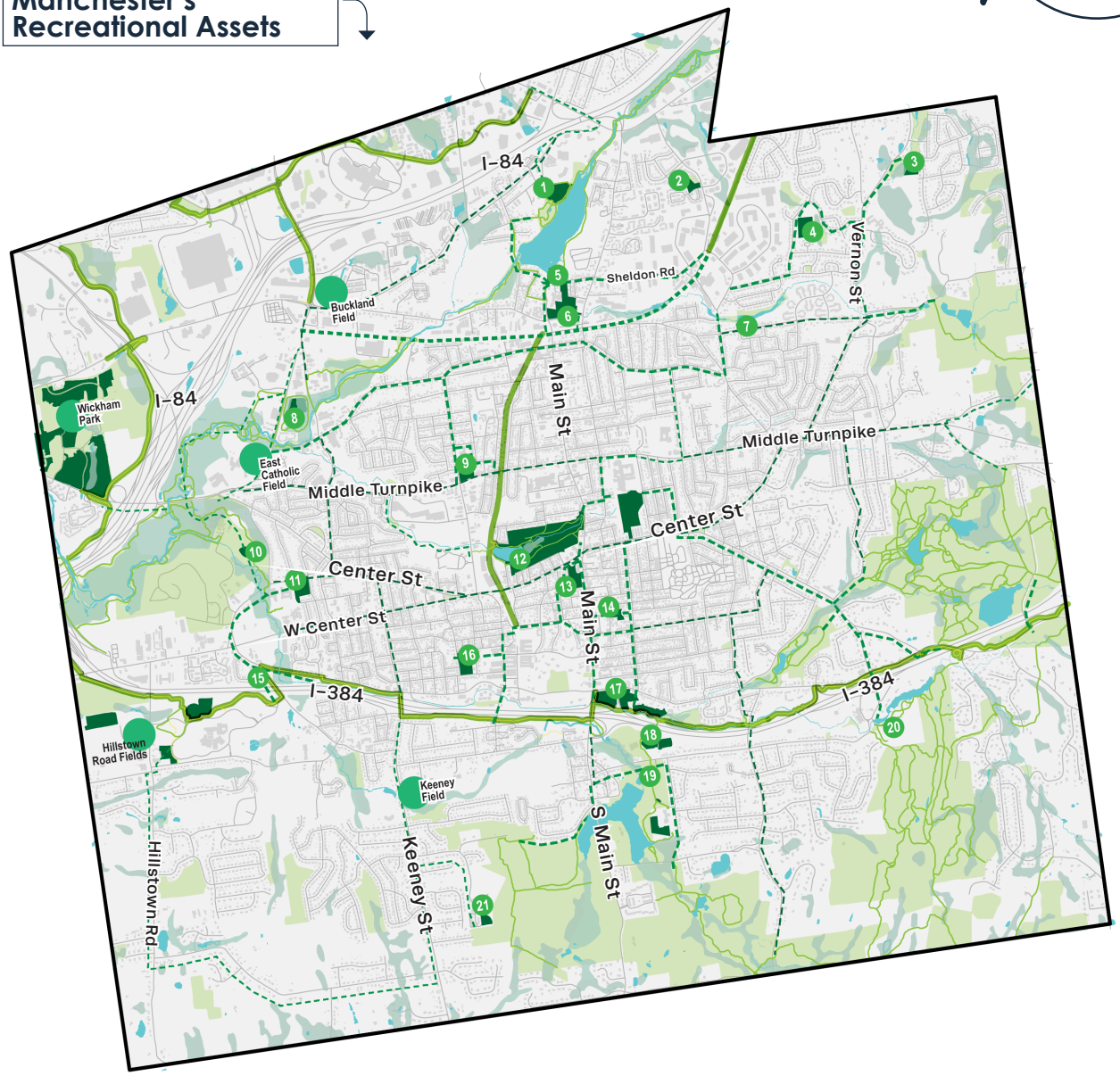
CONNECTICUT TRAIL FINDER

The Connecticut Trail Finder was mentioned during the Planapalooza™ as a helpful tool for all those interested in local trails. Website visitors can search trails around the state by activity (walking, bicycling, hiking, horseback riding, snowmobiling, etc.) or by trail type (nature trail, waterfront trail, pet-friendly trail, bike path). It was created through collaboration with UConn, the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, CT DOT, and multiple other governmental departments and non-profit organizations. Serious trail users can even create a free account on the website, allowing them to track their completed trails and log their adventures. Once users select a specific trail, they can get detailed information on it, such as what activities it allows for, length, difficulty, surface, pet rules, fees, guidelines, trail manager contact information, trail amenities, and maps. For more details, check out cttrailfinder.com.



Source: cttrailfinder.com

Manchester's Recreational Assets



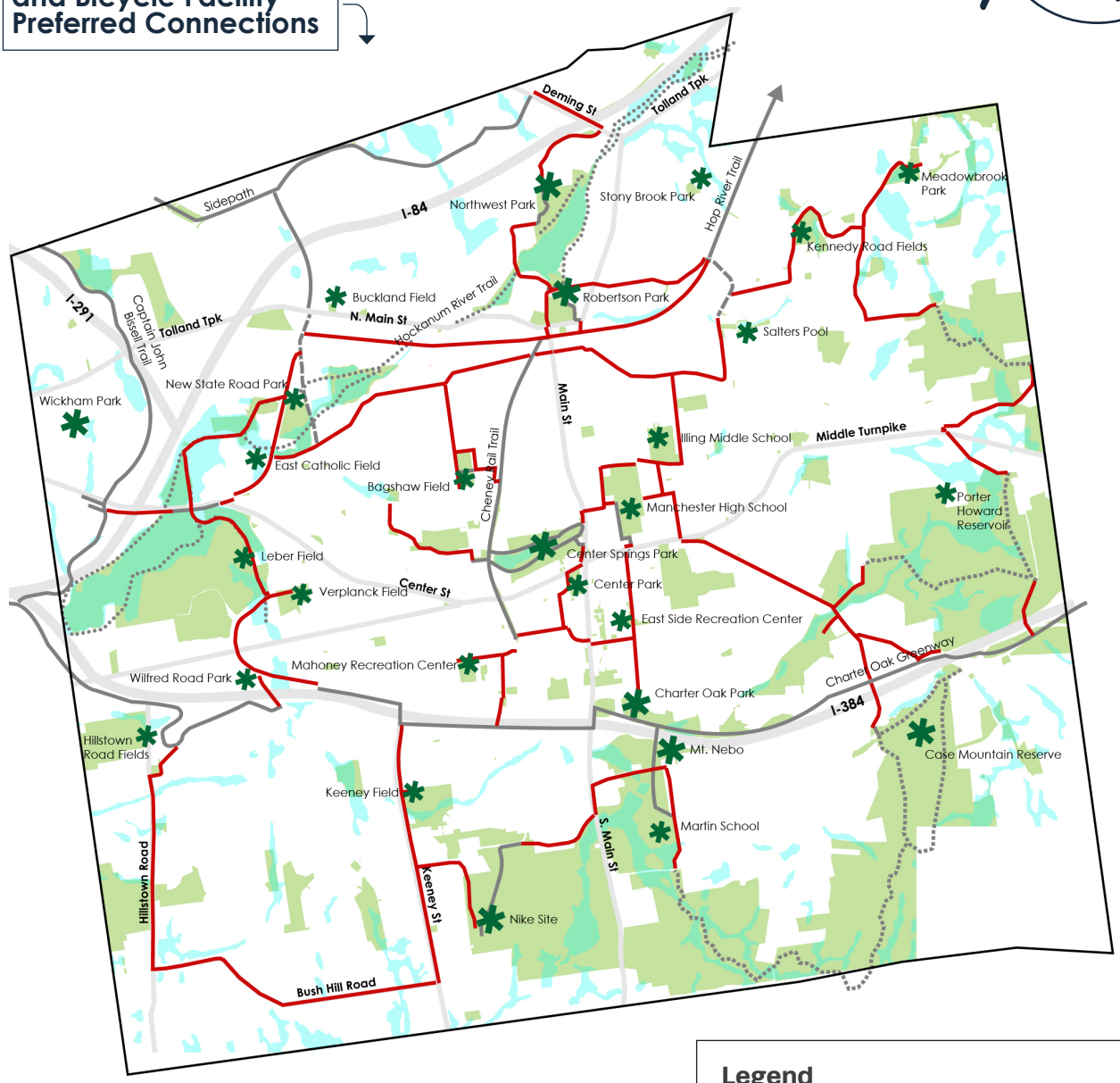
Legend

- Outline
- Streets
- Buildings
- Wetlands
- Protected Open Space
- Parks/Playgrounds
- Existing Trails
- Preferred Pedestrian & Bike Connections
- Streams
- Water Bodies

Trails Recommendations

01	Continue to implement the Trails & Connectivity Plan that was adopted in August 2021, using the "Pathways, Trails, and Bicycle Facility Preferred Connections" as a guide. Consider exploring additional connections between existing destinations around Town like mills, parks, and schools. See Transportation Chapter for more details.
02	Explore adding Manchester's trails to the CT Trail finder website. Having Manchester's wide array of trails added to the Connecticut Trail Finder webpage would help market the Town and attract visitors to come to use the trails.
03	Invest in lighting and other safety features for heavily-used paths to ensure that trails provide for a safe experience.
04	Coordinate and regularly meet with additional entities involved with trails in Manchester to update park and trail maps. Identify who owns which trail and what type of trail it is designed for (bikes, pedestrians, etc.).
05	Improve wayfinding/signage for parking lots at trailheads so users know where to enter the trails.
06	Prioritize land acquisition needs for trail network extensions.

Pathways, Trails, and Bicycle Facility Preferred Connections



Legend

- Preferred Connection
- Existing Bike Lane
- Existing Accessible Pathway
- Existing Trail* (Non-Accessible)
- Hockanum River Trail
- Town-Owned Property
- Waterbody or Wetland Soils

*Only well-established trails that provide strategic connections to and through

LAND USE & COMMUNITY CHARACTER

168 INTRODUCTION
170 COMMUNITY CHARACTER & DESIGN
175 CONSERVATION & GROWTH FRAMEWORK
176 CONSERVATION & GROWTH MAP

TOWN OF EAST HARTFORD
TOWN OF GLASTONBURY
ZONING DISTRICTS
Residential
Business
Other
N

INTRODUCTION

What we heard...

- Development is occurring slower in some places than desired.
- Zoning currently allows for converting single-family housing into multifamily in certain situations.
- The prioritization of plans should be communicated better. People do not know what order plan development stages go in or who is responsible, and some plans just fade out.
- Manchester needs its own identity separate from surrounding towns and cities.
- Manchester feels like more of a "place" than the rest of Connecticut.
- The Connecticut River divides Manchester & East Hartford from Hartford.
- Residents understand that enhancing the Town's charm and character can be used as an economic development tool. Sustainability measures can also improve placemaking and the Town's character.
- Opinions vary on the "City of Village Charm" slogan and whether or not it is still relevant.

Equity in Land Use + Community Character

The way a community is built over time can reveal how equitable it has been historically. For instance, the placement of heavy industrial uses near residential neighborhoods increases the chance of those residents experiencing health issues in the long term. Conversely, research shows that those who live near green spaces feel a stronger sense of happiness and life satisfaction (Source: "A spatial analysis of proximate green space and mental wellbeing in London," Houlden et al, 2019). Gentrification is another issue that new development can create, where people are pushed out of their neighborhoods as property values and housing costs rise. Manchester must be careful to ensure future investment does not create displacement by considering the impacts of land use decisions on people, neighborhoods, the environment, and the community as a whole. Strategic and sustainable growth can ensure that specific groups are not negatively affected by development patterns. In addition, the transportation networks and open spaces that connect new development must be accessible to all.

Sustainability in Land Use + Community Character

Manchester can seize the opportunity to build sustainably with focused growth strategies and expanded natural resource protection.

Character

The sum of the objective qualities of a neighborhood, district, or property as defined by its physical characteristics, including but not limited to building height and size, building placement and lot coverage, natural features and open spaces, mix of land uses, and architectural style.

Where to Grow – Compact Redevelopment

Since much of Manchester is built out, growth over time will focus on strategic development, redevelopment, and infill. At the same time, it is critical for Manchester to boldly utilize current processes and tools to streamline open space acquisition, prioritizing high-quality natural resources and mobility objectives where trail connectivity opportunities exist. Few priority open space preservation parcels remain in town, so their acquisition and preservation should be of paramount importance.

How to Grow – Sponge Neighborhoods

As Manchester redevelops, green infrastructure strategies should be thoughtfully woven into site and building design requirements for development projects. Regulations should also be evaluated and revised where necessary to increase erosion control applicability thresholds and strengthen wetland, riparian, buffer and tree protections. Public projects, such as the library and repurposed schools, can serve as ideal opportunities to demonstrate green infrastructure implemented consistent with Manchester's desired character, as well as showcase Manchester's commitment to sustainability and resiliency.

Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI)

Green stormwater infrastructure practices such as bioretention systems, bioswales, and permeable pavement are examples of LID designed to naturally filter, absorb, and store stormwater as close to where it falls as possible, reducing the impact of development on the environment and promoting the natural flow of water. Many GSI practices provide significant co-benefits including traffic calming, neighborhood beautification, and habitat value enhancement.

Trees can act as stormwater machines. In addition to providing a host of environmental, economic, public health, and community benefits, trees draw moisture from the ground and can intercept and infiltrate runoff. These functions can significantly reduce local flooding, delay the onset and size of peak flows, and lessen requirements for additional costly stormwater management infrastructure, which is especially important given the more intense rainfall and other storm impacts anticipated with climate change. The more water can be intercepted and slowed in the face of more intense storms, the better off the local stormwater and transportation infrastructure will be. A loss or lack of trees is likely to exacerbate localized flooding in the future and impact stormwater and transportation infrastructure. Manchester should consider setting an overall tree canopy goal. Tree species for planting should be selected based on site-specific conditions with the shifting climate in mind so that they are likely to survive for several decades into the future. In addition, street tree planting locations should consider equity and environmental justice such that those most in need of tree canopy cover are addressed sooner.

All stormwater management practices require routine maintenance. The cost-effectiveness and ease of maintenance depend on context, constraints, and design. Current monitoring data shows that GSI practices often have a better chance of long-term function than traditional stormwater infrastructure because they are typically visible, simple, easily understood, and often well-loved by the surrounding community. Across the country, workforce training programs and private landscaping businesses are capitalizing on the increasing trend towards GSI, creating green jobs by training staff in GSI installation and maintenance skills.

Urban Farming

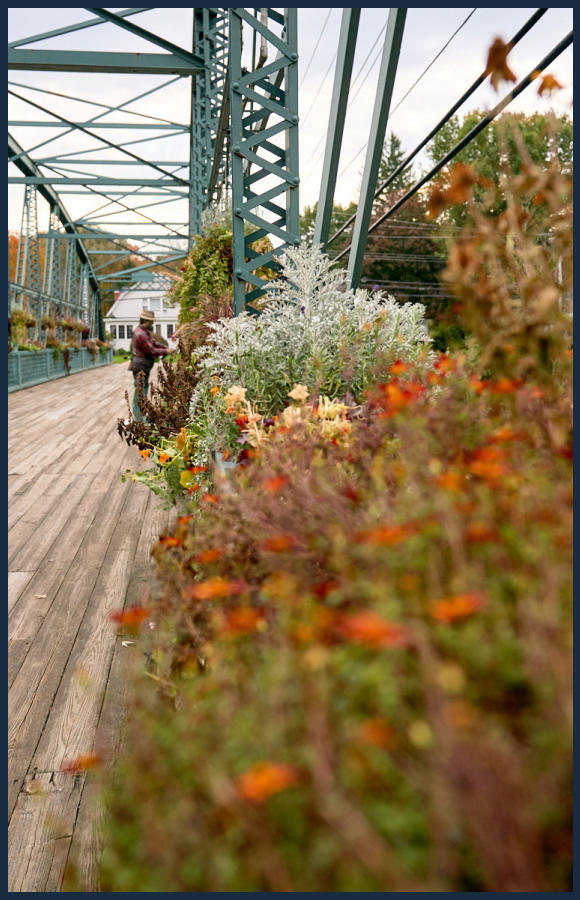
Urban farming is the practice of growing, producing, and distributing food in urban areas where large tracts of agricultural land may be unavailable. These activities can take place in community and school gardens, backyards, and rooftop plots. Growing fresh foods locally creates a sense of community, provides low-cost and accessible healthy foods, and reduces overall carbon emissions by reducing the transportation cost of certain products. Urban farming can occur on occupied land as well as vacant and redeveloped land. Zoning must incentivize and regulate urban farming for it to become relevant and allowed. The Town should streamline zoning to protect and encourage local and urban farming.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER & DESIGN

CASE STUDY

STORMWATER REGULATIONS, SIMSBURY, CT

In 2012, Simsbury produced innovative stormwater regulations and site design guidelines as a follow-up to their town center form-based zoning code. The stormwater article and design guidelines were tailored to Simsbury's unique conditions. They include a site planning and design checklist for development project applications and case studies demonstrating the application of green infrastructure techniques and design criteria using specific sites in Simsbury.



Source: newengland.com

Focus on the Quality of Public Realm

Much of what we learn about a place, we learn as we see and experience the spaces that comprise the public realm. Because of this, cities should deliberately enhance their public spaces to make a positive and lasting impression. Through design, we can strengthen our existing spaces and create new spaces that tell the many stories of Manchester: the stories that celebrate the Town's history and heritage, the stories that build community pride, the stories that strengthen community ties, and the stories that inspire future generations. Modern design should honor the existing culture and history of the community.

Manchester should explore ways to invest in the public realm and align its investments with the Town's identity. By creating a sense of place in key areas, especially Downtown and along important corridors, the Town can reinforce its "brand" and the image it would like to present. Public spaces, gateways, and highly trafficked areas are ideal locations to use physical elements like public art, streetscape improvements, signage, and landscaping to make statements about who and what Manchester is.

Establish & Implement Street Design Standards

The streetscape helps define a community's aesthetic quality, identity, economic activity, and health. When well-designed, the streetscape completes the street by encouraging more pedestrian traffic, improving the circulation and overall experience for users, and increasing biodiversity within urban areas. Both established neighborhoods and areas of potential growth in the Town could link economic development, equity, public health, and environmental goals by adhering to well-planned streetscape design principles. Whether created through new construction or redesign of existing streets, the following streetscape elements should be considered to ensure the creation of usable public space:

- **Street Trees, Plantings, and Furnishings:** A consistent pattern of street trees, plantings, and furnishings can be accomplished with a palette of types and equal spacing. Such regularity unifies the street while reinforcing the pedestrian scale and increasing comfort.
- **Street Lighting:** Lighting can be both street lighting and pedestrian lighting. Proper lighting can make both a more attractive and safer streetscape environment. Standards should be established for both types of lighting and determine when pedestrian lighting is required.
- **Hardscape:** Pavements, raised planters, and seat walls are among the features that comprise the hardscape. The impact of selected materials on the character of the street should be considered. Like street trees and furnishings, a simple palette and consistent application can increase the visual quality of the street.
- **On-street Parking:** On-street parking, especially downtown and along other mixed-use corridors, is essential for optimal access and can serve as a buffer between vehicular and pedestrian traffic. It should be thoughtfully integrated into the streetscape to minimize points of conflict and facilitate the safe exiting of vehicles onto adjacent sidewalks. Careful placement should not impede flow in pedestrian crosswalks or loading areas. Coordination balancing is necessary to accommodate bike features and to know when to prioritize one feature over another.
- **Underground Utilities:** Lines should be buried along streets in new construction. While burying lines on existing streets is preferred, the cost to do so can be high. As an alternative, consider relocating poles and lines to the edge of the right-of-way or to the parallel street or alley to minimize visual clutter.

Community Character & Design Recommendations

01	Establish and implement design standards for Town streets that incorporate the elements described above that are not already covered in the Town's Public Improvement Standards.
02	Pursue grants that will assist in the purchasing and installation of streetscape plantings and furnishings.
03	Explore ways to further support traditional and urban farming, while maintaining good neighbor relations.

Expand Form-Based Zoning Regulations to Ensure High-Quality Development

The Town of Manchester regulates conservation and growth through administration of the Zoning Regulations. These Regulations are approved and administered by the Planning and Zoning Commission and detail land uses and development standards applicable to new development and redevelopment of property located in the Town.

Manchester already has a Form-Based Zone which encourages high-quality future development through the standards in the Zoning Regulations in a handful of designated areas. It also has a Design Overlay Zone that is currently applied to corridors around the Town, and is intended to preserve the specific character of the area through design standards. However, to clearly articulate the community's desired vision for areas targeted for development or redevelopment, expanding existing form-based regulations and Design Overlay Zones to more areas of Town will help Manchester ensure the type and quality of development it seeks.

The Town's Zoning Regulations have been amended several times over the years—most recently in October of 2022— to adapt to the changing needs and priorities of the Town, but it will need a comprehensive "upgrade" to support the recommendations and concepts described in this Plan. Changes to the Zoning Regulations will be necessary to provide the regulatory framework to ensure future development is in keeping with the vision of the Plan of Conservation and Development.

While conventional zoning may still be appropriate for Manchester's existing single-family residential neighborhoods, new regulations that incorporate form-based (or character-based) elements in other parts of the Town will assist in achieving the community's desire for higher quality development. In contrast with conventional zoning that emphasizes separating uses, a form-based code uses character, or the look and feel of a place, as the primary organizing principle. While character-based concepts can be applied anywhere, they are most successful in areas that have a mix of uses already, like Downtown, and in historic districts.

Form-based codes are used to:

1. Encourage and increase the use of active transportation such as walking and biking;
2. Improve connectivity by creating interconnected multimodal transportation networks;
3. Identify appropriate locations for more compact, mixed-use development that can offer more choices and opportunities when it comes to housing, services, and social interactions;
4. Regulate development scale and design to ensure the form and character of development is compatible with surrounding land uses and the public realm; and
5. Regulate parking design and reduce the visibility of parking from the street and civic spaces.

Another advantage of form-based coding is its intended simplicity. The code is designed to be written in plain language, rather than in complicated "legal-speak," and is supplemented by easy-to-understand diagrams and objective—rather than subjective—standards. The goal of a form-based code is to make it clear to the public and landowners what type of development is allowed and to make the results of development more predictable. This approach would help consolidate, simplify, and update Manchester's existing zoning language to reflect the wishes of the community.

Form-based codes are also more equitable and sustainable. Through encouraging connectivity, walking and biking, mixed housing types, civic space, and a mix of uses, towns become more accessible and attainable to everyone. Multimodal transportation is prioritized, resulting in a decreased need to drive and lessening the amount of carbon emitted from vehicles. Various housing types offer more opportunities for a range of socioeconomic groups to live within the same neighborhood, contributing to demographic diversity.

Ultimately, additional form-based zoning could provide additional opportunities to supply residents with all that they need in one place, improving livability in neighborhoods.

Because form-based codes emphasize character and the design and context of development, updated Zoning Regulations will continue to regulate the height and placement of buildings, the location of parking, the frontage, sidewalk, planting area, drainage, density, and the street itself. This information would be conveyed through easy-to-understand diagrams and illustrations.

Community Character & Design Recommendations Cont.

04	Review the current Zoning Regulations to ensure that zoning permits the desired scale and character of development. Look for barriers to their use by developers while maintaining a high standard for human-scale design.
05	Consider a comprehensive update of the current Zoning Regulations by simplifying, consolidating, and modernizing. Highly encourage design and form considerations.
06	Consider reducing or removing parking requirements in some or all existing zoning districts.
07	Consider expanding form-based zoning and Design Overlay Zones to promote high-quality design and development. Amendments or revisions to the existing Zoning Regulations should allow mixed-use development.
08	Develop design standards for architecture, focusing on the materials, scale, orientation, and fenestration, particularly on facades visible from public spaces and streets. These standards can be incorporated into the Zoning Regulations or can be separate Design Guidelines.
09	Lead by example by adhering to design standards for public buildings. By doing so, the Town can encourage the private sector to employ the guidelines when designing new buildings or renovating existing buildings.
10	Consider burying power lines or consider relocating poles and lines to the edge of the right-of-way or to the parallel street or alley to minimize visual clutter. Trees and bistro lights also soften their visual impact.

Continue to Encourage Retrofits and Adaptive Reuse of Buildings

Vacant or underutilized buildings should be prioritized for redevelopment, particularly Downtown. The Town should help maintain the character of Manchester by continuing to facilitate the reuse of existing structures. The retrofitting of buildings, especially historic structures that are valued for their architecture, often requires substantial investments to meet building codes. The Town should consider ways to alleviate the challenges of adaptive reuse through grants, updated and streamlined development application processes, and alternative building standards. Another method is to initiate a Downtown Development Revolving Fund. To help facilitate investment in their downtowns, several cities around the country have created successful development revolving funds oriented toward supporting redevelopment of historic buildings and encouraging appropriate infill construction in commercial districts. These funds come primarily as loans, although some are made in the form of grants. Borrowers must demonstrate that their project meets previously defined financial, design, and social requirements in order to qualify. Financing can be made available to for-profit and non-profit property owners, as well as commercial tenants. Manchester should facilitate and explore the benefits of establishing this type of fund for use in the Downtown aimed at infill as a means to leverage private investment, as well as build in mechanisms to ensure that appropriate design and materials standards are met. With financing made available at low interest, this fund would generate that leverage and ensure that any project would fit the Town's vision for future development.

CONSERVATION & GROWTH FRAMEWORK

Planning for Manchester's bright future requires a careful balance between promoting conservation and supporting growth. This strategy identifies areas of the community that should be conserved or preserved and areas that should be allowed to grow or develop.

This section of the POCD describes the Town's Conservation + Growth Framework, which is intended to guide growth by informing decisions about infrastructure investments, development and redevelopment activities, and initiatives to protect natural and cultural resources. Managing change in accordance with the Framework will help ensure a more equitable and higher quality of life for current and future residents, a more diversified local economy, and fiscal sustainability.

The Conservation + Growth Framework is the culmination of input gathered from participants throughout the Manchester NEXT planning process, Town officials and staff, GIS analysis, and scenario planning. The State of Connecticut's Growth Management Principles and this POCD's Core Values have also informed the framework, through the prioritization of equity, diversity, sustainability, coordination, connectivity, character, infrastructure, housing options, and economic vibrancy. This framework will be used as the organizing structure for the Town's future decision-making priorities.

The Conservation + Growth Framework contained in this Plan protects the character of Manchester's existing residential neighborhoods and promotes growth and increased density in areas of existing infrastructure, while providing a variety of housing and neighborhood services.

There are multiple key areas in Town where opportunities exist for redevelopment and growth that could enhance the Town's character and better meet resident needs. Several of Manchester's vehicular corridors could be reimagined as walkable, multimodal streets with destinations serving adjacent neighborhoods. Similarly, some existing single-use commercial development can be reimagined as walkable, mixed-use destinations serving several neighborhoods in the community.

The Conservation + Growth Framework is a way to organize and illustrate the Town's conservation and growth priorities. The Conservation + Growth Map is made up of Sectors described on the following pages. Examples are illustrated in the "Focus Area Concepts" chapter\ that follows.

CONSERVATION & GROWTH MAP

Sectors

The Conservation + Growth Map is organized using the Sector framework. Sectors are used to guide where, and to what extent, open areas and growth areas are to be encouraged and directed. Sectors are assigned to different areas based on a number of factors, including the availability of planned and existing infrastructure and preservation of valuable open space. Manchester's Conservation + Growth Map includes 2 conservation sectors: C–1 Preserved Conservation Sector and C–2 Reserved Conservation Sector; 5 growth sectors: G–1 Limited Growth Sector, G–2 Neighborhood Infill Growth Sector, G–3 Neighborhood Corridor Infill Growth Sector, G–4 Retrofit Growth Sector, and G–5 Center Infill Growth Sector; and 4 special districts: SD–IP Innovation Park Special District, SD–CH Cheney Special District, SD–C Campus Special District, and SD–IND Industrial Special District. These sectors are described as follows:

CONSERVATION SECTORS	
C-1	Preserved Conservation
C-2	Reserved Conservation
GROWTH SECTORS	
G-1	Limited Growth
G-2	Neighborhood Infill Growth
G-3	Neighborhood Corridor Infill Growth
G-4	Retrofit Growth
G-5	Center Infill Growth
SPECIAL DISTRICTS	
SD-IP	Innovation Park Special District
SD-CH	Cheney Special District
SD-C	Campus Special District
SD-IND	Industrial Special District

Conservation Sectors

C-1 Preserved Conservation

Assigned to open space areas that are in a wilderness condition, including lands unsuitable for development due to topography, hydrology, or resource protection and therefore permanently protected. These areas are characterized by large areas of woodland, grassland, water bodies, and wetlands protected for conservation, public water supply, and/or recreation and trails.

C-2 Reserved Conservation

These areas are open or cultivated land with minimal physical development. These include agricultural lands, wooded areas, and meadows. Lands in this Sector that have environmental, cultural, or ecological value should be considered for protection, and could eventually move into C–1. Some single–family, large–lot homes are present with either wooded or landscaped lots. Agricultural buildings and outbuildings such as barns and farm stands are common, as are prime agricultural soils. Open spaces, such as parks, cemeteries, and playgrounds, are included.

Growth Sectors

G-1 Limited Growth

Areas developed with low– to medium–density neighborhoods that should remain "as is." These neighborhoods are defined by conventional suburban development patterns of primarily detached single–family houses, with some single–family attached houses, small multi–family, commercial, educational, and civic uses. There may be some limited opportunities for infill in this sector, which should be at a scale and character compatible with surrounding development.

G-2: Neighborhood Infill Growth

Areas that are primarily developed with low– to medium–density neighborhoods. These are defined by traditional development patterns of primarily detached single–family houses and multi–family, commercial, educational, and civic uses. They are generally supported by the mixed–use and commercial development of adjacent G–3, G–4, and G–5 sectors. These areas are opportunities for future infill that may include accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and small pockets of additional missing middle

housing choices at a scale and character compatible with surrounding development.

G-3: Neighborhood Corridor Infill Growth

Areas that provide a connection between neighborhoods and may include low-intensity commercial uses. Businesses typically serve surrounding neighborhoods. New development, redevelopment, or the reuse of existing land and buildings should be encouraged to better meet the local goal of achieving more mixed-use, walkable, and bikeable corridors and neighborhoods and improving the aesthetics of these areas.

G-4: Retrofit Growth

Areas that are generally located along transportation corridors, connecting activity centers and destinations in Town. These sectors are mainly developed but still contain underutilized parcels, such as the Buckland Hills district. Most are defined by a conventional, auto-oriented suburban pattern of primarily commercial development. The larger, deeper parcels and lack of an identifiable character in this sector lend themselves to a change in the development pattern and the addition of multi-family and mixed-use buildings. New development, redevelopment, or the reuse of existing land and buildings can better meet the Town's goals of achieving more walkable and bikeable corridors and neighborhoods and enhancing community character.

G-5: Center Infill Growth

Includes the Town's historic Downtown and old North End or Depot Square north of Downtown. These centers of activity are entirely built-out but still have vacant or underutilized land. Downtown is defined by a traditional downtown development pattern, though there are gaps in the streetscape and opportunities for infill. Additional growth and development in these areas is desirable due to the presence of existing infrastructure. These areas represent the greatest opportunity for complete mixed-use, walkable centers, and an abundance of unique character.

Special Districts

SD-IP Innovation Park Special District

The Innovation Park Special District encompasses the existing Manchester Business Park. Lands are developed primarily for industrial or office uses in close proximity to an interstate corridor. Some commercial, service, and/or institutional uses may also be present. New development should add some residential, retail, and restaurant uses to provide workers their daily needs near their homes and workplaces. Connected open spaces throughout to accommodate trails, recreational facilities, small parks, and gathering places should be a priority.

SD-CH Cheney Special District

The Cheney Special District encompasses the Cheney Mansions and Manchester's historic mills that have been thoughtfully adapted into apartments, offices, organizations, and a brewery. The architecture and overall character of these buildings should continue to be preserved to maintain the Town's manufacturing history.

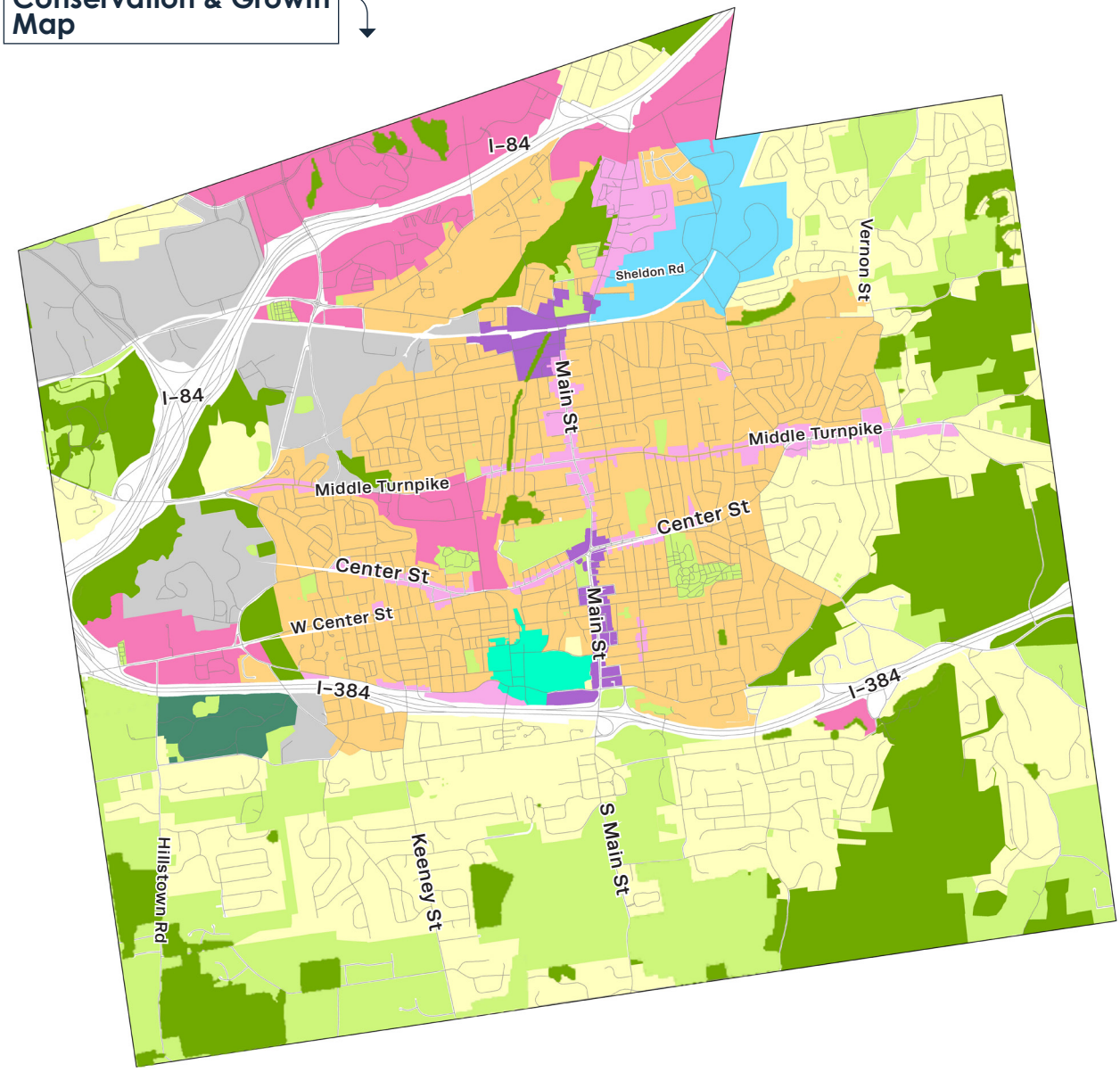
SD-C Campus Special District

The Campus Special District is assigned to Manchester Community College. The character of the campus is exemplified by the large buildings, pedestrian quads, and extensive parking. Future development in this area should enhance the pedestrian and open space network and minimize the visibility of the parking from surrounding thoroughfares.

SD-IND Industrial Special District

The Industrial Special District is assigned to existing Industrial Zone areas. Growth in this district should accommodate truck circulation, large building footprints, and other unique requirements for construction, warehousing, manufacturing, utility, and engineering uses.

Conservation & Growth Map



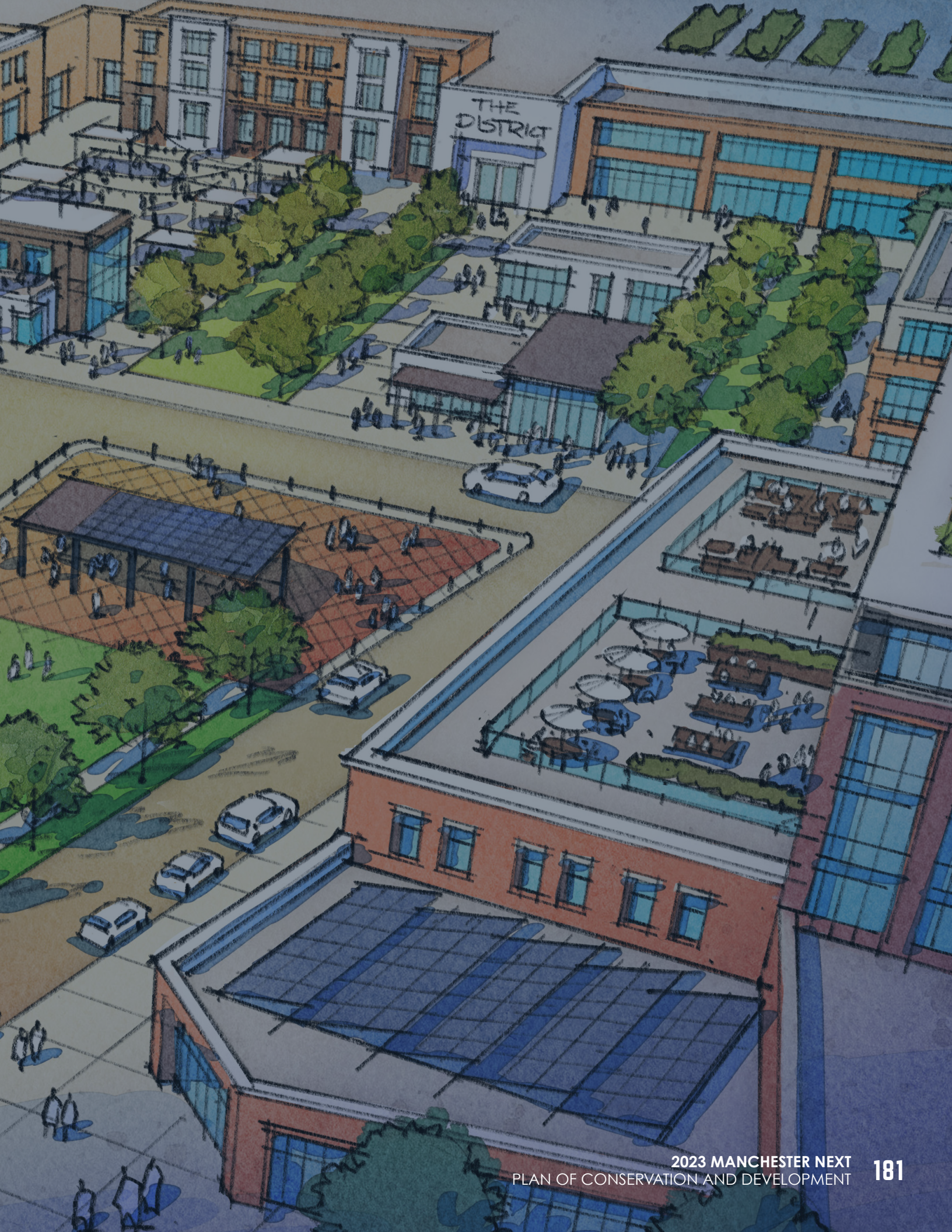
Legend

- C-1 Preserved Conservation
- C-2 Reserved Conservation
- G-1 Limited Growth
- G-2: Neighborhood Infill Growth
- G-3: Neighborhood Corridor Infill Growth
- G-4: Retrofit Growth
- G-5: Center Infill Growth
- SD-IP Innovation Park Special District
- SD-CH Cheney Special District
- SD-C Campus Special District
- SD-IND Industrial Special District
- Streets
- Town Limits

Page Intentionally Left Blank

FOCUS AREA CONCEPTS

182 INTRODUCTION
184 SPENCER STREET CORRIDOR
188 DEPOT SQUARE/HOP RIVER INNOVATION PARK
196 MIDTOWN WELLNESS DISTRICT
202 BUCKLAND HILLS


THE
DISTRICT

INTRODUCTION

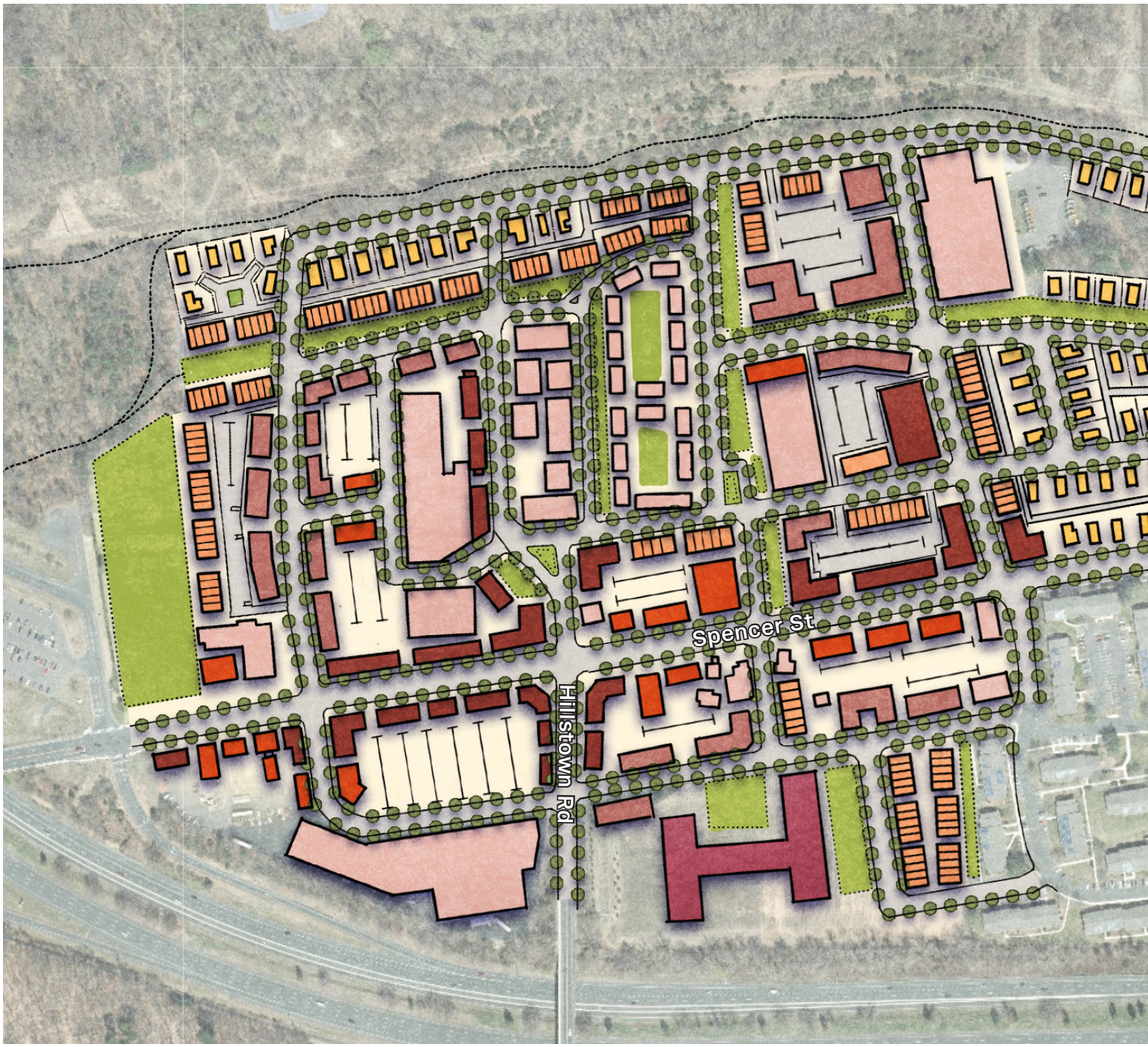
This section includes a collection of illustrative plan drawings that demonstrate how the recommendations and planning principles included in the POCD could "come to life" at maximum build-out. It is important to remember that the new development illustrated here is conceptual and will not be built exactly as envisioned, but the inspirational images represent a vision that will have a positive impact on the economy, tax base, affordability, mobility, environment, and quality of life, following the previously stated Growth Management Principles and Core Values. What is particularly important is that these ideas for the built environment, economy, housing supply, and transportation system are considered together so that they can complement and support one another. These long-range, imaginative, conceptual plans were developed during Planapalooza™ and were based on input received from participants during the Manchester NEXT process. The plans detailed in this section show one potential development outcome for five specific locations in Manchester: Spencer Street, Depot Square/Hop River Innovation Park, Midtown, and Buckland Hills based on community input.

- Spencer Street Corridor
- Depot Square/ Hop River Innovation Park
- Midtown Wellness District
- Buckland Hills

GROWTH MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLE 5

CORE VALUES

SPENCER STREET CORRIDOR



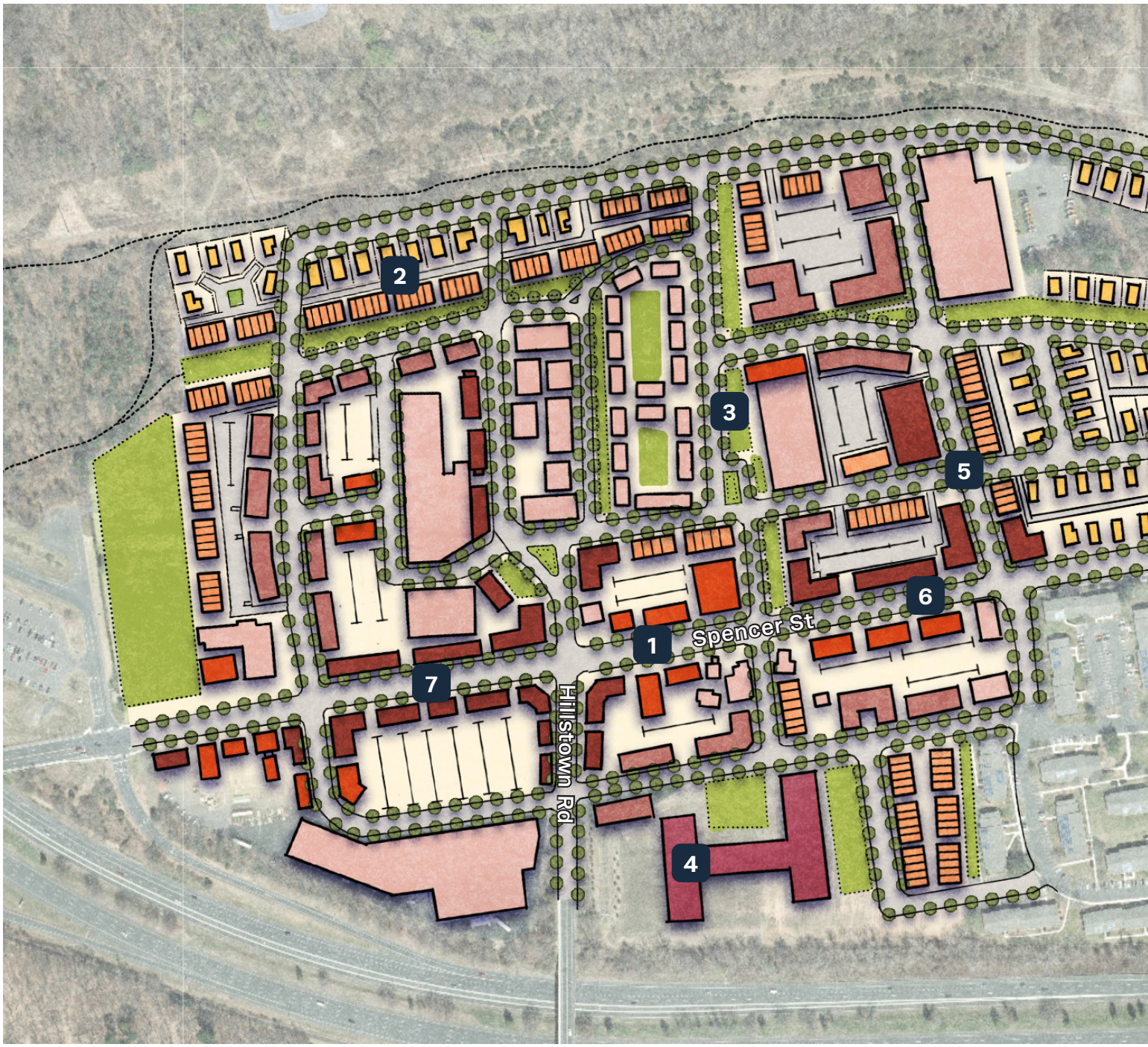
IMPORTANT NOTE: This is an illustration of one possible scenario representing the views of many of the participants and is not intended to be the only plan possible for these properties. The property owner and/or the Town will produce actual development plans through detailed study that will be reviewed during the official Town development review process before any action would be taken on the site. This illustrative plan is intended to help the community visualize possibilities and create a platform for dialogue about the ideas contained in the images.

The Spencer Street Corridor was selected as a focus area because of its potential to exemplify suburban retrofit development. The area is currently dominated by strip mall–type development along Spencer Street where it intersects I–384, making it an important gateway into Town. There is a vast amount of existing parking lots to accommodate fast food chains like Wendy's, Starbucks, and Dunkin' Donuts, along with a ShopRite grocery store, tire shop, and discount store. The corridor does not have much of an identity at the moment due to inefficient uses of land, but has seen increased development interest in recent months and years. As imagined in this plan, this corridor can become an inviting place, offering a mix of residential, commercial, and other uses and something for everyone. It is important to note that suburban retrofit involves an incremental approach, meaning that development progresses slowly over time to achieve these placemaking goals.

Legend

- Multi–Family
- Townhouses
- Single Family
- Mixed Use
- Retail
- Hospital
- Existing Buildings
- Open Space
- Lot

SPENCER STREET CORRIDOR



IMPORTANT NOTE: This is an illustration of one possible scenario representing the views of many of the participants and is not intended to be the only plan possible for these properties. The property owner and/or the Town will produce actual development plans through detailed study that will be reviewed during the official Town development review process before any action would be taken on the site. This illustrative plan is intended to help the community visualize possibilities and create a platform for dialogue about the ideas contained in the images.

POSSIBLE IDEAS

1. Mixed-use buildings with shallow setbacks are infilled along Spencer Street to hide existing parking lots and new structured parking in the rear. Some existing large-scale commercial buildings are kept.

2. Rowhouses, multifamily dwellings, and single-family detached houses are added to provide a variety of housing types that can accommodate all ages and socioeconomic statuses.

3. Streetscapes are defined along internal drives with parks, trails, and green spaces to create a sense of place and provide recreational opportunities. Sidewalks and street trees run through every block to increase shade, walkability, and aesthetics.

4. Senior Housing is in development at the time of adoption.

5. An internal circulation street grid provides multimodal access to green spaces, recreation, and all residential and commercial areas.

6. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities (sidewalks, paths, and protected lanes) provide safe people-powered access along Spencer Street and throughout the neighborhood.

7. Multimodal access is extended to the existing Park & Ride lot where a micro-mobility hub is located, providing a bikeshare, bike parking, improved transit stop, and other amenities.

8. A mixed-use node is created along the intersection of Spencer Street, Hartford Road, West Center Street, and Olcott Street.

DEPOT SQUARE/HOP RIVER INNO

IMPORTANT NOTE: This is an illustration of one possible scenario representing the views of many of the participants and is not intended to be the only plan possible for these properties. The property owner and/or the Town will produce actual development plans through detailed study that will be reviewed during the official Town development review process before any action would be taken on the site. This illustrative plan is intended to help the community visualize possibilities and create a platform for dialogue about the ideas contained in the images.

OVATION PARK

Depot Square is located along a rail right-of-way that runs parallel to Hilliard Street and Woodbridge Street to the south, presenting an opportunity to connect a multitude of existing nearby parks and trails. The Cheney Rail Trail intersects this focus area, and Robertson Park can be found just north of North Main Street, which includes the existing cricket field, outdoor swimming pool, and tennis courts. There are a handful of historic industrial buildings on Hilliard, Chapel, and Woodland Streets, and Second Congregational Church sits on the corner of North and Main Streets. This part of the focus area concept seeks to bring vibrancy back to Depot Square through housing, retail, open space and recreational uses, trail connections, and maker spaces.

The Hop River Innovation Park encompasses the existing Business Park on Sheldon Road, Utopia Road, and Parker Street. In order to encourage micromanufacturing and opportunities for local students to gain experience through co-op programs, the Innovation Park concept imagines keeping and repurposing existing buildings and activates the open spaces adjacent to them. This area of the plan capitalizes on the park's proximity to the Hop River Trail, encouraging social interaction and offering outdoor recreation opportunities.

Legend

- Multi-Family
- Townhouses
- Single Family
- Mixed Use
- Live/Work
- Maker Space
- Existing Buildings
- Civic
- Plaza
- Trail
- Open Space
- Lot

Maker Space

A maker space is a communal public workshop in which makers can work on small personal projects.

Source: Merriam-Webster Dictionary

DEPOT SQUARE/HOP RIVER INNO

IMPORTANT NOTE: This is an illustration of one possible scenario representing the views of many of the participants and is not intended to be the only plan possible for these properties. The property owner and/or the Town will produce actual development plans through detailed study that will be reviewed during the official Town development review process before any action would be taken on the site. This illustrative plan is intended to help the community visualize possibilities and create a platform for dialogue about the ideas contained in the images.

OVATION PARK

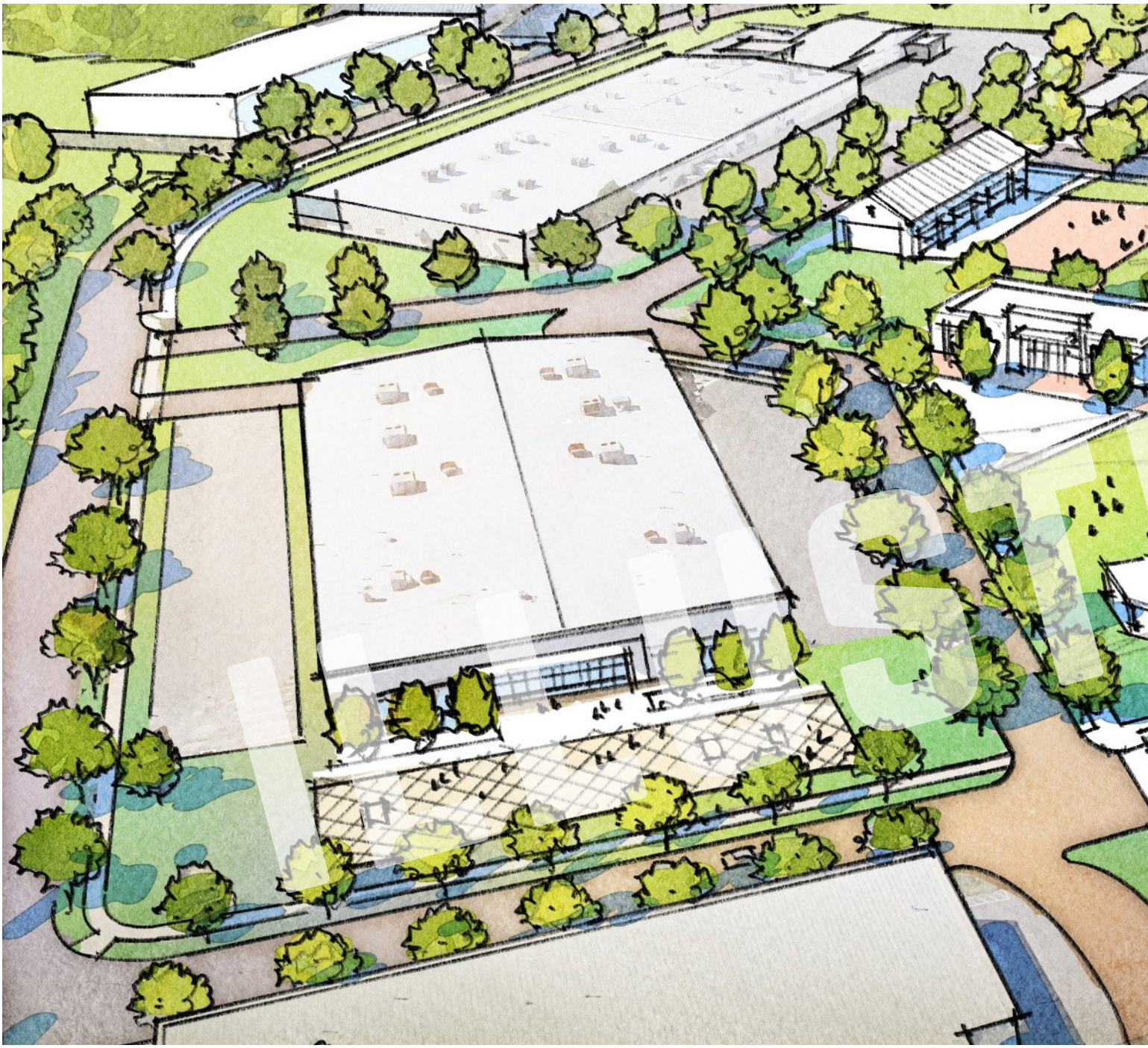
POSSIBLE IDEAS

1. The Cheney Rail Trail connects to the Hop River Trail, combining Depot Square and the Innovation Park into one cohesive destination.
2. Some blighted industrial buildings are replaced with open spaces and outdoor dining areas.
3. Robertson Park and a new community center become more easily accessible through the addition of sidewalks that connect to the existing trails and neighborhoods.
4. New housing along the trails creates "eyes on the trails" to increase safety and usability.
5. Liner buildings, such as live/work units and rowhouses, mask parking lots.
6. The Union Pond/Robertson Park Plan from the Town of Manchester Parks and Facilities Master Plan is incorporated, meaning that the Robertson School campus is enhanced with a plaza and park facilities to support Robertson Park, including two basketball courts, a sprayground, and play equipment.
7. Existing outdoor spaces in the office park are activated for dining and active or passive recreation.
8. Sidewalks and street trees create a walkable environment, connecting office buildings and manufacturing sites to recreational amenities.
9. Protected and/or separated bike facilities are located to connect the Cheney Rail Trail to other recreation and neighborhood destinations.
10. Improved transit stops at North Main and North School Street provide safe and comfortable access to existing bus stops.

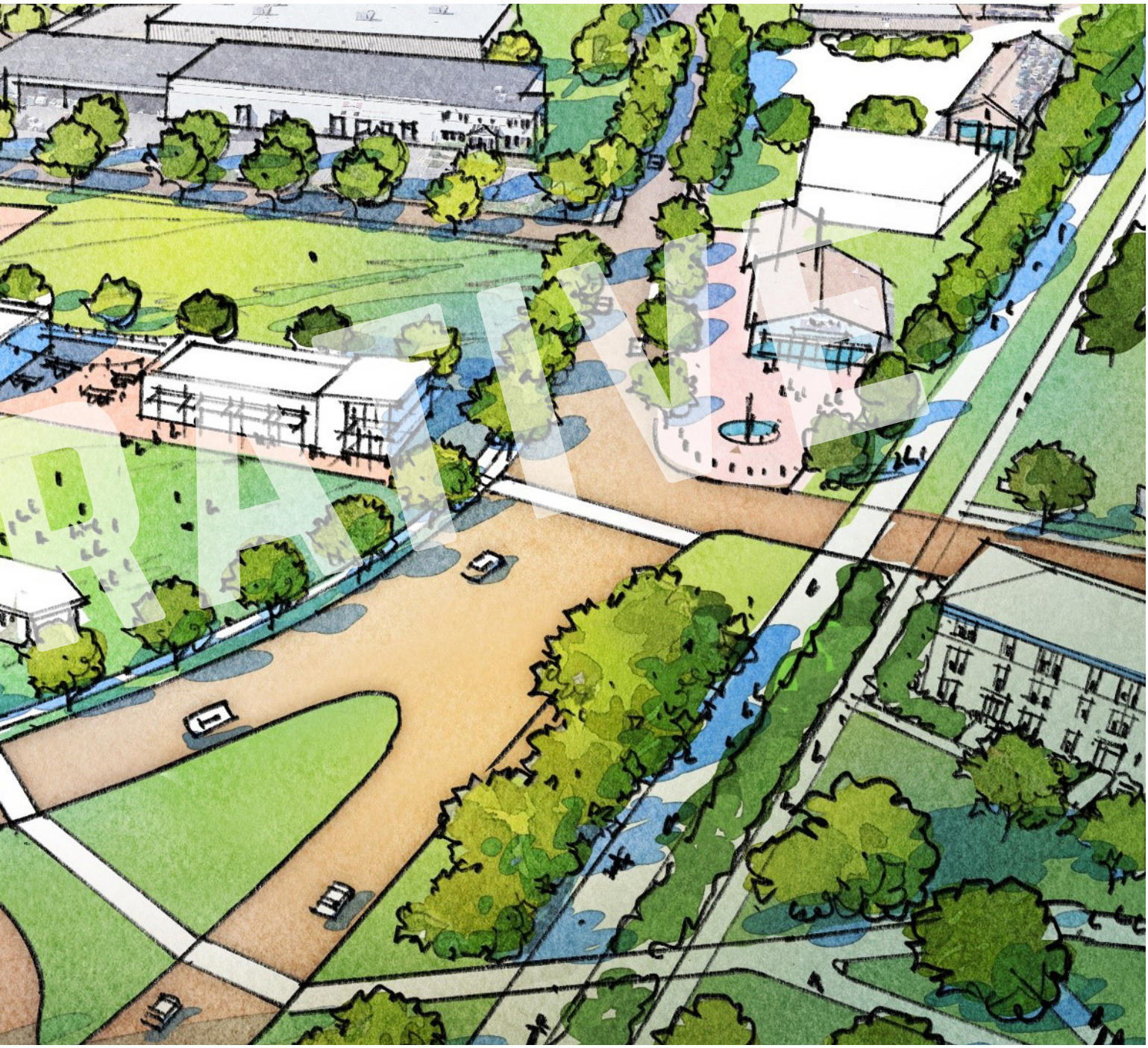
DEPOT SQUARE

IMPORTANT NOTE: This is an illustration of one possible scenario representing the views of many of the participants and is not intended to be the only plan possible for these properties. The property owner and/or the Town will produce actual development plans through detailed study that will be reviewed during the official Town development review process before any action would be taken on the site. This illustrative plan is intended to help the community visualize possibilities and create a platform for dialogue about the ideas contained in the images.

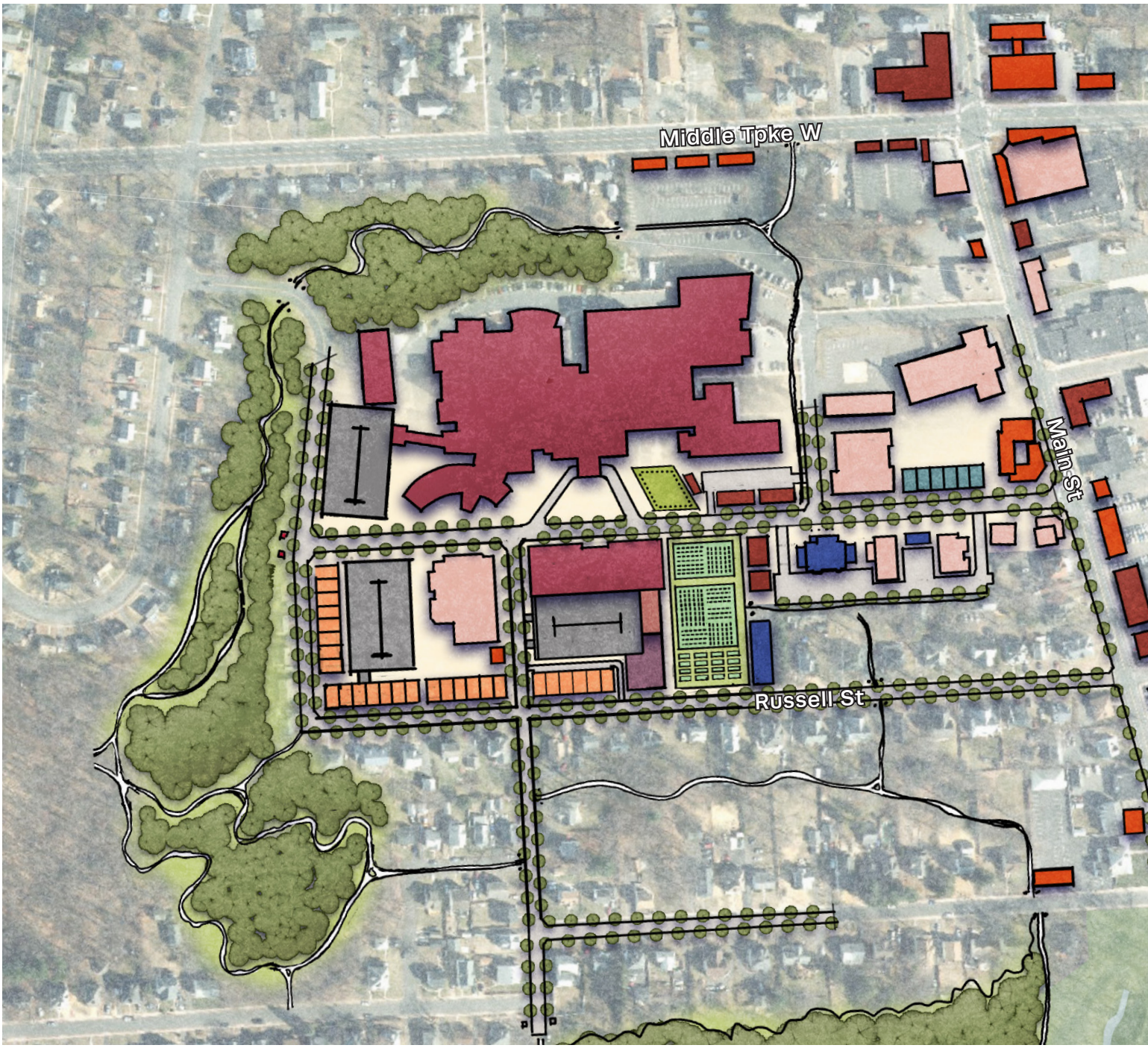
HOP RIVER INNOVATION PARK



IMPORTANT NOTE: This is an illustration of one possible scenario representing the views of many of the participants and is not intended to be the only plan possible for these properties. The property owner and/or the Town will produce actual development plans through detailed study that will be reviewed during the official Town development review process before any action would be taken on the site. This illustrative plan is intended to help the community visualize possibilities and create a platform for dialogue about the ideas contained in the images.


DRAFT

MIDTOWN WELLNESS DISTRICT



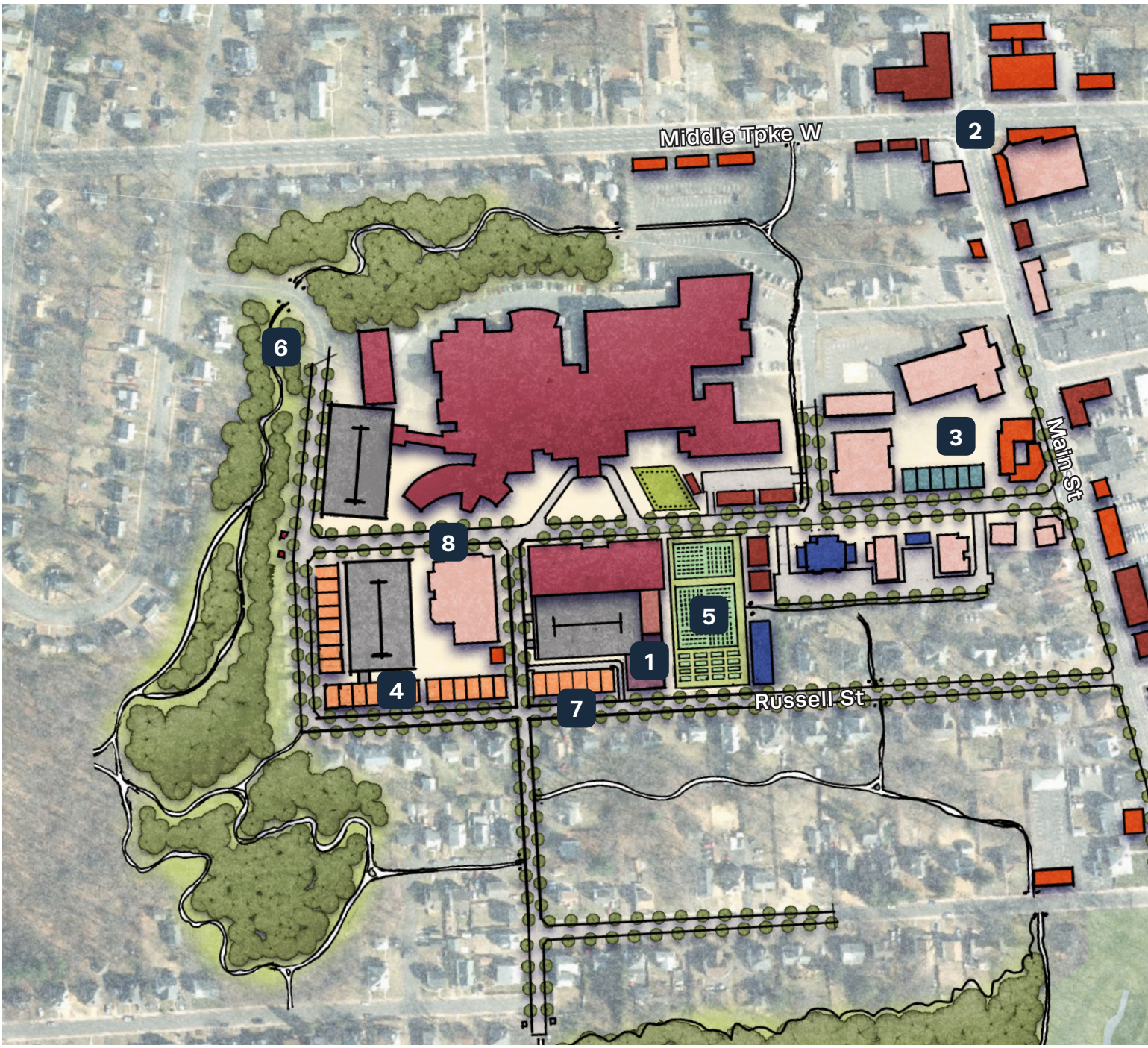
IMPORTANT NOTE: This is an illustration of one possible scenario representing the views of many of the participants and is not intended to be the only plan possible for these properties. The property owner and/or the Town will produce actual development plans through detailed study that will be reviewed during the official Town development review process before any action would be taken on the site. This illustrative plan is intended to help the community visualize possibilities and create a platform for dialogue about the ideas contained in the images.

Midtown envisions Manchester Memorial Hospital and its surrounding areas as a wellness district, which promotes an active, healthy lifestyle. This is achieved through a new trail network that connects to Center Springs Park, additional civic spaces, and community gardens for locally-grown produce. Infill is encouraged where parking lots currently exist, improving the aesthetics of the "Mid-Town" area of Main Street leading into Downtown. The acquisition of Manchester Memorial Hospital by Yale New Haven Health in late 2022 also provides opportunities for additional community investment in this area.

Legend

- Multi-Family
- Townhouses
- Mixed Use
- Retail
- Hospital
- Hotel
- Live/Work
- Office Space
- Existing Buildings
- Parking Structure
- Agriculture
- Open Space
- Lot

MIDTOWN WELLNESS DISTRICT



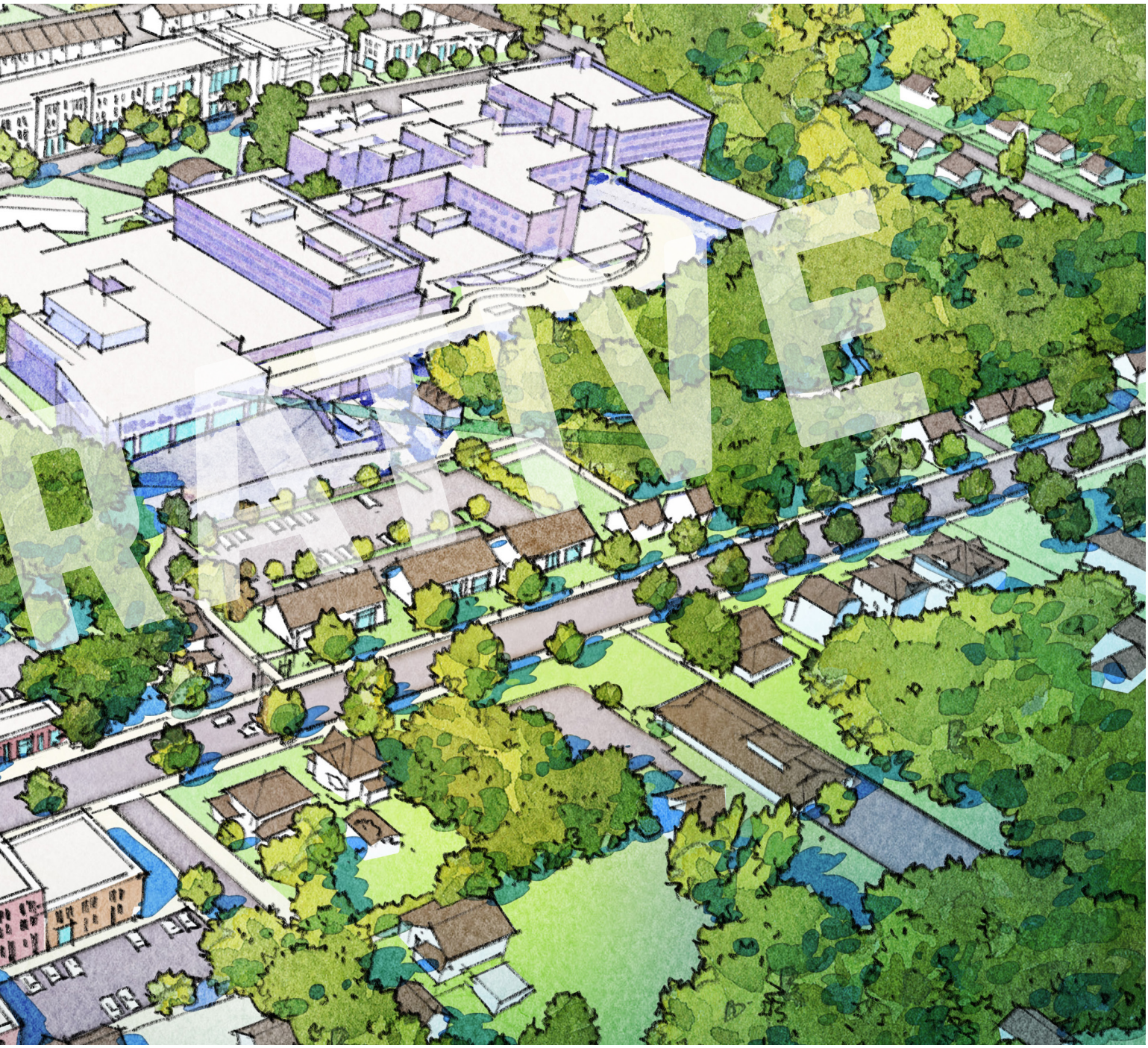
IMPORTANT NOTE: This is an illustration of one possible scenario representing the views of many of the participants and is not intended to be the only plan possible for these properties. The property owner and/or the Town will produce actual development plans through detailed study that will be reviewed during the official Town development review process before any action would be taken on the site. This illustrative plan is intended to help the community visualize possibilities and create a platform for dialogue about the ideas contained in the images.

POSSIBLE IDEAS

1. A hotel is placed one block south of the hospital on Russell Street to provide accommodations for those seeking medical care along with their families.
2. Buildings at the corner of Main Street and Middle Turnpike are reoriented, creating a greater sense of place and a mixed-use center.
3. A street wall on Main Street is encouraged with parking behind.
4. Rowhouses that hide parking structures are included on Russell and Alpine Streets.
5. Agricultural space is placed directly across from the hospital, next to new mixed-use, multifamily, and office buildings, to allow residents to practice sustainable gardening and encourage healthy eating habits.
6. A new walking trail is created to promote physical and mental wellness through recreation and connect to existing civic amenities like Center Springs Park.
7. Multimodal pedestrian and bike facilities are provided along the Russell Street spine to provide active transportation alternatives to the District.
8. Secure bike parking and pedestrian amenities such as benches and wayfinding are located throughout the District.

MIDTOWN WELLNESS DISTRICT

IMPORTANT NOTE: This is an illustration of one possible scenario representing the views of many of the participants and is not intended to be the only plan possible for these properties. The property owner and/or the Town will produce actual development plans through detailed study that will be reviewed during the official Town development review process before any action would be taken on the site. This illustrative plan is intended to help the community visualize possibilities and create a platform for dialogue about the ideas contained in the images.


RAIVE

BUCKLAND HILLS

IMPORTANT NOTE: This is an illustration of one possible scenario representing the views of many of the participants and is not intended to be the only plan possible for these properties. The property owner and/or the Town will produce actual development plans through detailed study that will be reviewed during the official Town development review process before any action would be taken on the site. This illustrative plan is intended to help the community visualize possibilities and create a platform for dialogue about the ideas contained in the images.

The Shoppes at Buckland Hills property is the anchor of the 3 million square foot superregional shopping and entertainment district. This focus area was designed to show how it can be repurposed and reoriented to address a number of development types, including the addition of retail, housing, agriculture, accommodations, open common spaces, and sports facilities. The hope is that new retail and housing outside of the mall proper will attract business activity back into the mall, creating a thriving ecosystem to live, shop, recreate and work in.

Legend

- Multi-Family
- Mixed Use
- Retail
- Big Box Retail
- Hotel
- Market Stands
- Office Space
- Existing Buildings
- Civic
- Plaza
- Parking Structure
- Agriculture
- Open Space
- Lot

BUCKLAND HILLS

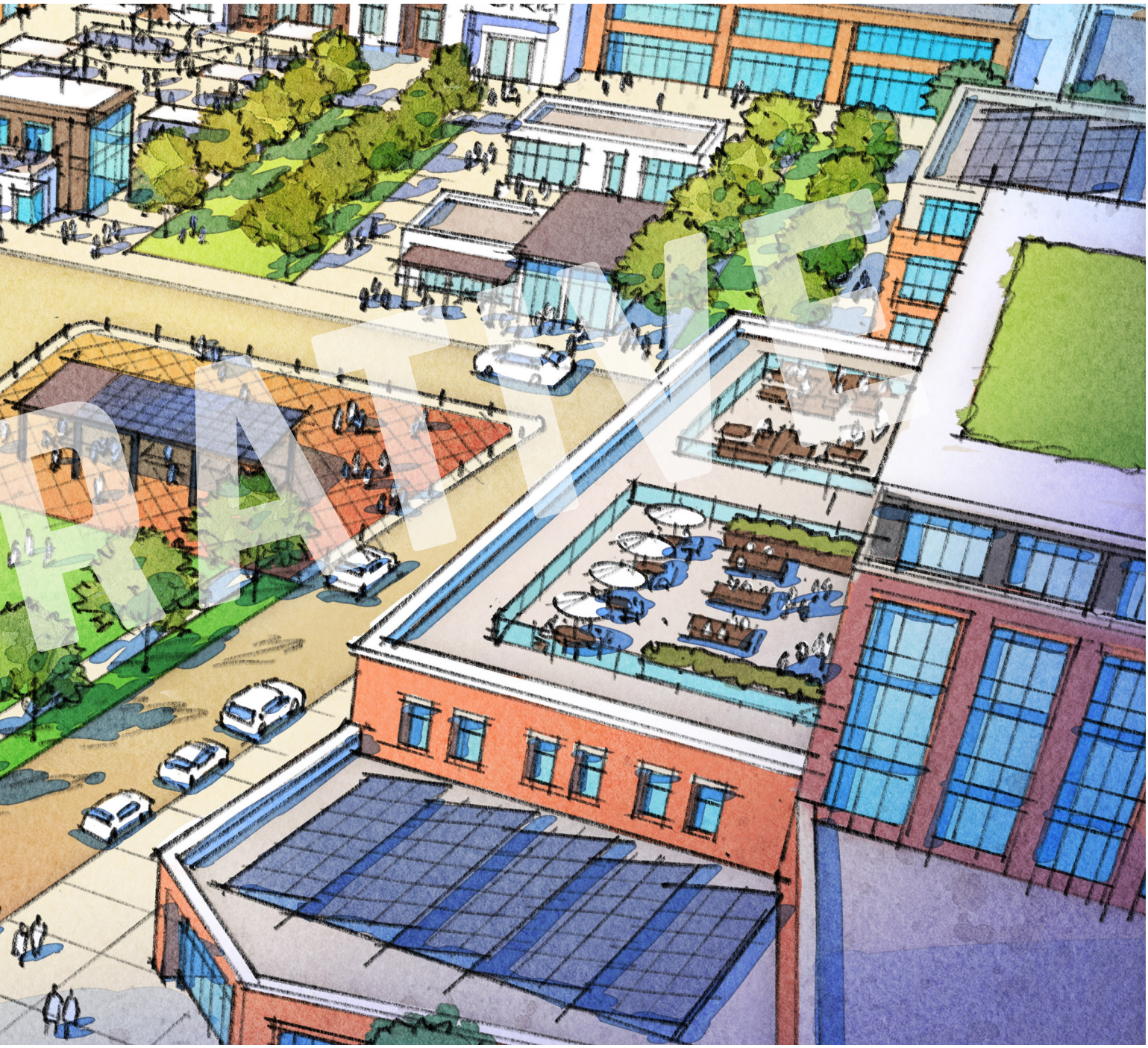
IMPORTANT NOTE: This is an illustration of one possible scenario representing the views of many of the participants and is not intended to be the only plan possible for these properties. The property owner and/or the Town will produce actual development plans through detailed study that will be reviewed during the official Town development review process before any action would be taken on the site. This illustrative plan is intended to help the community visualize possibilities and create a platform for dialogue about the ideas contained in the images.

POSSIBLE IDEAS

1. Smaller storefronts are attached to the blank walls of the mall to create more retail space and make the mall facade more attractive.
2. A plaza is added to the outside of the main entrance of the mall with market stands, outdoor seating, and open space to enhance the shopping experience. Smaller plazas are placed at secondary mall entrances/exits.
3. New parking structures are lined with multifamily dwellings and mixed-use buildings, responding to expected housing and retail growth.
4. A track and field facility is added behind the mall for hosting sports tournaments, and nearby hotels are placed on the outskirts to accommodate visitors of sporting events.
5. Agricultural land is placed behind the mall to promote local food production, and the adjacent parking lot doubles as an orchard.
6. Internal drives with street trees and sidewalks weave through the plan, making the site more accessible and pedestrian-friendly.
7. An enhanced transit stop and micro-mobility hub is provided, with the potential for bike parking, a bike share, shelter for transit riders, and digital transit information.
8. Protected bike lanes or shared-use paths for pedestrians and bicyclists are added along Pavilions Drive to connect to the Park & Ride on Buckland Street.

BUCKLAND HILLS

IMPORTANT NOTE: This is an illustration of one possible scenario representing the views of many of the participants and is not intended to be the only plan possible for these properties. The property owner and/or the Town will produce actual development plans through detailed study that will be reviewed during the official Town development review process before any action would be taken on the site. This illustrative plan is intended to help the community visualize possibilities and create a platform for dialogue about the ideas contained in the images.


DRAFT

·2023·

MANCHESTER NEXT

A PLAN FOR EVERYONE

TOWN PLANNING & URBAN DESIGN

T·P·U·D·C

COLLABORATIVE LLC