

April 2006



Downtown Strategic Development Plan

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with:

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for

The City of Manchester, New Hampshire

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This study was funded in part by the Manchester Development Corporation, Economic Development Administration, and Development of Housing and Urban Development.

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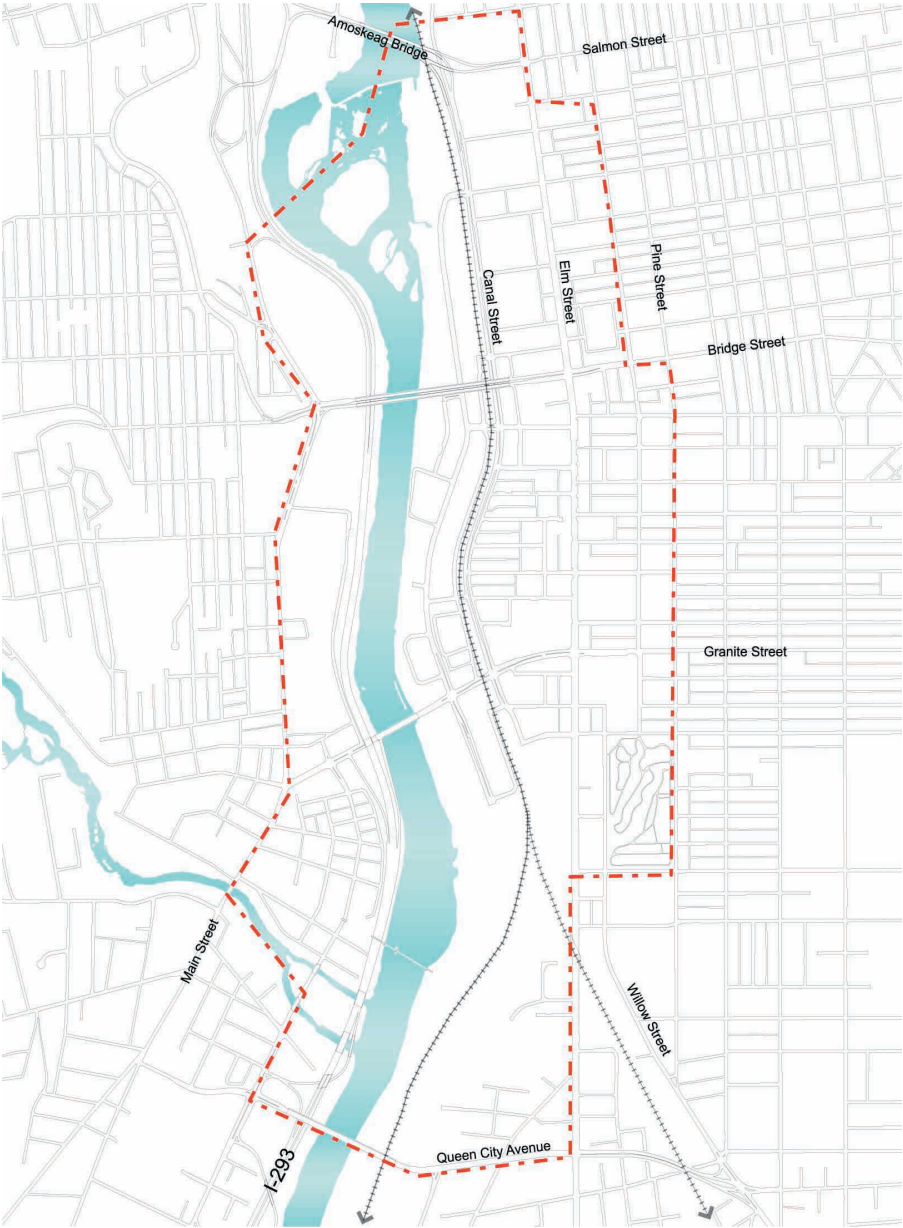
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Former Downtown Boundary (Intown Manchester)



Originally Proposed Expanded Downtown Boundary

section 1.0

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Consistently rated one of the most livable cities in the country for the past decade, Manchester, New Hampshire has worked hard to foster its transition from a struggling post-industrial community into the “place to go” in New England. Through a variety of planning efforts and development projects, the City has successfully guided development. However, the City has reached a point at which it needs a plan to strategically shape its future. Building on previous plans, this study recommends new ideas and is intended to serve as a blueprint for the future of Manchester’s downtown development.

1.2 Study Area

Traditionally, Manchester’s downtown was the small area bounded by Bridge and Granite Streets to the north and south, and Pine Street and the Merrimack River to the east and west. One of the City’s goals in undertaking this planning effort was to expand the traditional downtown boundary and promote growth throughout this new area. The consultant team was asked to study the area roughly bounded by North Street and Queen City Avenue to the north and south, by Main Street on the west, and Elm and Pine Streets on the east side. However, after visiting the proposed Study Area and assembling preliminary data, the consultant team recommended that it be expanded even further to the southeast to include the land around Willow Street. This expanded area, after consultation with the City, became the final Study Area and is referred to throughout this plan as “downtown Manchester.” Some key features of the Study Area are listed below.

- Population: 9,568 (10% of total City population)
- Total Housing Units: 4,262 (4.9% are vacant)
- Median Income: \$32,427 (in 2004 dollars)
- Average Rent: \$582/month
- Main Employment Sector: service establishments (more than 50%)
- Commercial Businesses Size: over 70% employ less than 10 people



Recommended Expanded Downtown Boundary (Study Area)

1.3 Planning Consultant Team

Hillier Architecture – Urban Planning, Visioning, and Project Management

Hillier's urban design and planning practice operates in the public arena and serves a wide range of clients and interdisciplinary constituencies who represent communities, municipalities, government agencies, property owners, universities, and entrepreneurs. From downtown revitalization plans to rezoning former industrial sites; from planning new transit patterns in established communities to large scale land planning, Hillier's professionals foster public-private partnerships that make towns and cities more livable, economically viable, and ecologically sustainable.

Anish Kumar, AIA, AICP, PP: Principal-In-Charge
David Chen, AICP: Urban Designer
Martha Cross, AICP: Urban Designer
Emily Young: Urban Planner

Econsult Corporation – Economic Analysis

Econsult staff provides the highest levels of technical expertise in economics and statistics combined with years of experience at the highest levels of government policy-making. The firm combines expertise in quantifying and evaluating real estate market trends, performing financial-feasibility assessments and financing options, estimating economic impacts, and planning and implementing varying development strategies. Econsult specializes in assisting clients with structuring successful development initiatives that are justified economically, sustainable financially, and fully implementable.

Richard Voith: Principal Economist

Copley Wolff Design Group – Landscape Architecture

CWDG is a landscape architecture and planning firm specializing in parks & recreation, urban landscape, corporate, institutional, planning, waterfront, and resort projects. CWDG participates in public workshops, educational programs, and public forums. CWDG's client list includes municipalities, architects, public and private institutions, and developers. For each project, CWDG collaborates with multi-disciplinary teams and assembles the expertise and approach specific to each project and its context.

Lynn Wolff: Principal Landscape Architect

1.4 Planning Process

The Downtown Strategic Plan for Manchester is the product of extensive analysis by the planning consultant team and collaboration with Manchester staff including the Planning and Community Development Department and the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. The consultant team met with the City of Manchester from March 2005 through December 2005 to ensure that the recommendations set forth in this Plan reflect their vision for the City's future. The following visioning meeting were held.

- Project Kick-Off March 18, 2005
- Ideas Workshop May 12, 2005
- Case Study Presentation July 8, 2005
- Plan Recommendations Presentation July 27, 2005

During this process, the following groups offered their input and local expertise to the consultant team.

- Bank of New Hampshire
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Manchester
- CB Richard Ellis
- City of Manchester Board of Aldermen
- City of Manchester Conservation Commission
- City of Manchester Department of Public Works
- City of Manchester Department of Traffic
- CLD Consulting Engineers, Inc.
- For Manchester
- Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce
- Intown Manchester
- Lavallee/Brensinger Professional Association
- Main Street Development Group
- Manchester Area Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Manchester Development Corporation
- Manchester Historic Association
- Manchester Transit Authority
- Norton Asset Management, Inc.
- The Gove Group Real Estate, LLC
- The Norwood Group, Inc.
- Thomas Schwieger, CCE
- Verizon Wireless Arena

Feedback gained during these meetings was integral in formulating the Plan's recommendations.

