

Union Square Choice Neighborhood Initiative
June 6, 2024 Housing Steering Committee Meeting
High School in the Community – 175 Water Street, New Haven, CT

Attendees:

Michaela Mahon – Housing Team
David Stemble – Housing Team
Ken Boroson – Housing Team
Haley Vincent – ECC/Glendower
Ed LaChance – ECC/Glendower
Jimmy Miller – Censere Consulting
Liz Torres – Housing Co-Chair
Alderwoman Carmen Rodriguez – Steering Co-Chair
Laura Brown – City Planning
Malachi Bridges – City Economic Development
Doug Hausladen – New Haven Parking Authority
Marisol Sanchez
Sandra Melendez
Elisa Rojas
Olga Luna
Abigail Sanchez
Mariely Cerrantes
Luis A. Lespier
Carmen Gonzalez
Jeff Moreno
Rosaly Rosario
Thommye Shaw
Iris Santiago
Yanelle Marquez
Sarah McIver
Sean Mattejon
Velma George-James

Meeting Feedback:

Regular text: notes taken at meeting

Italic text: additional text added for context

STRENGTHS

- *Proximity to Train Station – location, location, location*
- Commuters – *opportunity for TOD Development*
- The Residents! Speaking up for concerns with property management.
- Political will – local & regional (*Political will and momentum has improved over time in the last 5 years*)
- ECC ownership – local and single owner
 - *ECC purchasing the property from Northland is a huge step towards progress. The site is now owned by a single public entity (Housing Authority) that is local to the area*
- Fairly walkable – close to downtown, *well* maintained sidewalks, has *street* trees!
- Community within community
- Zoning precedent – PDD
 - *With the recent rezoning of the Union Station side next door and the previous rezoning of Long Wharf, there is established precedent for rezoning this area with a PDD. City support to back the rezoning process*
- Economic support for vision, time is right
- New city investment – economic momentum
 - *Huge number of projects coming online at this time, there's positive momentum now after previous times of stagnation*
- Proximity to jobs, 40k-50k jobs within 10-15 minute walk
 - *Proximity to the train station opens opportunity for potential residents of new development*
- Mobilizing ability of residents
 - *The residents are an extremely engaged group. They coordinate and mobilize to get people out to vote, to attend these meetings, etc. Their engagement is a huge asset.*
- Previous owner decided to sell *after years of sitting on the property*

WEAKNESSES

- High level of scrutiny/skepticism because of CSS history
 - *Pressure on ECC to do right by past CSS residents and current RTW residents given the history of mismanagement on the CSS site*
- Previously Robert T Wolfe Residents were ignored *in earlier planning processes, sense of "now is their time"*
- Not pedestrian friendly, busy, big roads *surround the site*

- Labor market isn't enormous
- Rents don't support all growth
- Lack of access to fresh foods and retail
- Lack of neighborhood amenities
- Oversaturation of smoke shops *and other undesirable retail*

OPPORTUNITIES

- Deisolate people, *specifically Robert T Wolfe residents who are currently separated from any other housing, retail, or amenities*
- Connect people
- Previous owner decided to sell
- Cleanable walkable safe housing
- Increase *in* deeply affordable housing *for the neighborhood/city*
- *Create a mixed income neighborhood so that there isn't a concentration of poverty (like at CSS)*
- People, *RTW residents specifically*, can have input into *their* living situation – *housing Choice*
- Intentionally create diverse community
- Flooding – raise site, fix larger flood problems
 - *The flooding in the area is an obstacle, this project is an opportunity to make bigger moves to improve resiliency for the long term for the area/city*
- Accountability - *because of history of CSS site, this is an opportunity for ECC deliver on being held accountable*
- Fresh start
- History of CSS – create *new* precedent for mixed income to avoid concentrated poverty
- Engagement of Robert T Wolfe residents
- Leverage housing for infrastructure
 - *Flooding, roads, utilities*
- Intentionality in listening and planning
- Minority owned business/resident owned business *to be located in new site retail spaces*
- Workforce housing
- Change image *of the site and of affordable housing stigma* with input of Robert T Wolfe
- Larger TOD Units
 - *Most TOD units and new units being built in New Haven are smaller studios, 1s, or 2s. This project is an opportunity to deliver family-sized units in a TOD project*

THREATS

- Political pressure, high profile site
 - *High profile site = lots of stakeholders with potentially conflicting opinions and ideas*
- Accountability
- Change of neighborhood culture, *fear of getting pushed out, not belonging anymore*
- Political change – change in political will *depending on election cycles, etc*
- Gentrification
- *Potential of the area to fall into disrepair again*
- Dislocation of *current residents*
- Increased taxes
- Propensity for *developers to build small units to maximize profit*
- Funding environment – *the project will require lots of subsidy, multiphase*
- Flooding and sea level rise - *can the plan design for increasing sea level rise and extreme weather events?*
- Is our city infrastructure keeping up with development?
 - *With so much new housing and other development getting built, is the city infrastructure keeping up to support those needs?*
- Insufficient funding – *possibility of losing steam and running out of money*
- Hiring regulatory requirements
- More expensive building costs
 - *To build densely with adequate parking and flood prevention measures, buildings and site work will be more expensive*
- Marketability uncertainty
- Building too densely, not *leaving enough room for enough green space*

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

- Needs: Community spaces
 - Give affordable buildings amenities
 - Perception of affordable vs market housing
- Opportunity + Weakness: the surrounding developments are not part of a cohesive masterplan
 - Integration with surrounding development (Long Wharf, The Towers, Union Station, 10 Liberty Street, St Martin De Porres)
 - \$12.5 million awarded to the Long Wharf development
 - Connectivity to new and existing amenities
- Strength – opening up of Columbus Avenue
- Opportunity – Union Station getting a BRT route to Long Wharf
- Can we bring a trolley into the area?!

- Homework (given by Dave) – Pride of Place, what do we need to know?
- Build structures that make people glad to come home and say “this is where I live” – Ms. Tomasina

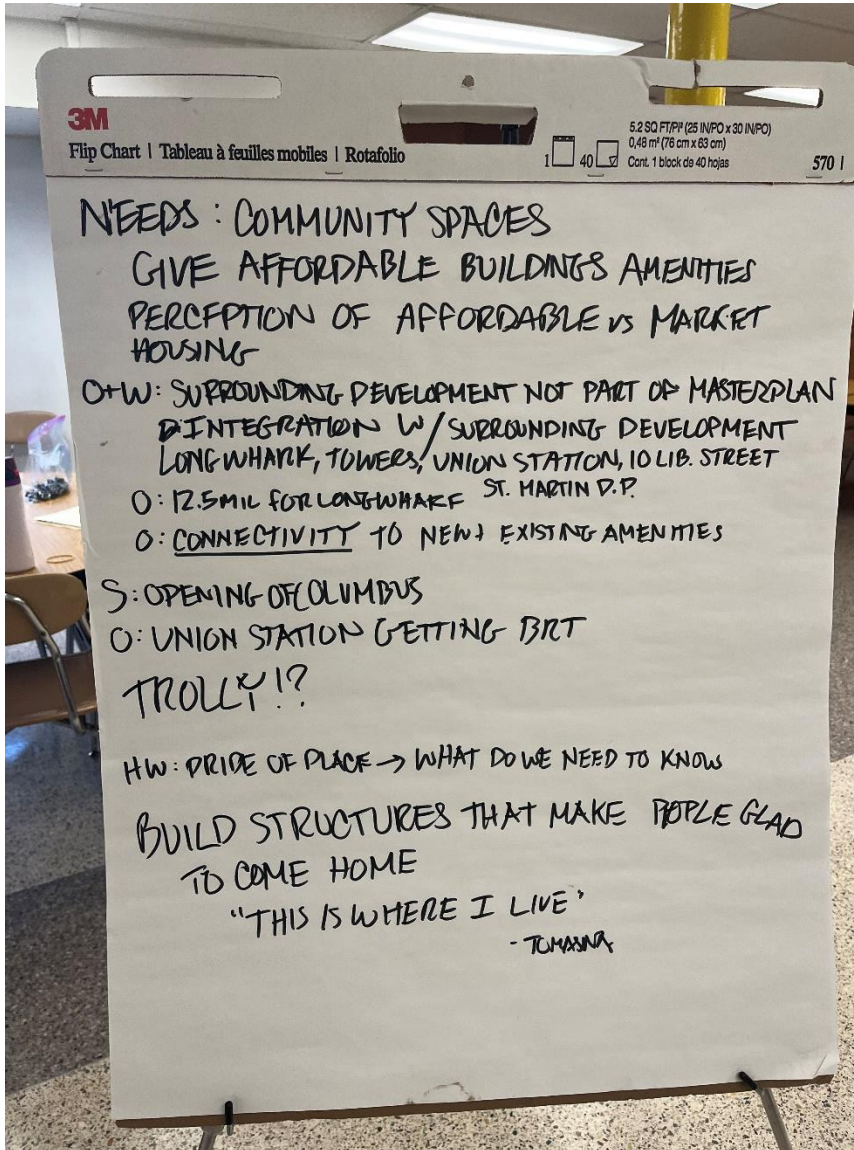
SWOT Board:

HOUSING SWOT EXERCISE

<p>STRENGTHS (INTERNAL)</p> <p>TRAIN STATION - LOCATION LOCATION LOCATION COMMUTERS, TOD DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>THE RESIDENTS! SPEAKING UP FOR CONCERNS W/ PROPERTY MGMT</p> <p>POLITICAL WILL - LOCAL - REGIONAL (IMPROVED OVER TIME)</p> <p>ECC OWNERSHIP - LOCAL + SINGLE OWNER</p> <p>FAIRLY WALKABLE - CLOSE TO DOWNTOWN, MAIN ST SIDE WALK, HAS TREES!</p> <p>COMMUNITY WITHIN COMMUNITY ZONING PRECEDENT → PDD</p> <p>ECONOMIC SUPPORT FOR VISION TIME IS RIGHT NEW CITY INVESTMENT → ECON MOMENTUM PROX TO JOBS 40k - SOL W/ 10-15 MIN WALK</p> <p>MOBILIZING ABILITY OF RESIDENTS</p>	<p>WEAKNESSES (INTERNAL)</p> <p>HIGH LEVEL OF SCRUTINY/SKEPTICISM BC OF CSS HISTORY</p> <p>PREV. RTW RESIDENTS IGNORED</p> <p>NOT PED FRIENDLY - BUSTY, BIG ROADS</p> <p>LABOR MARKET ISNT ENORMOUS RENTS DONT SUPPORT ALL GROWTH</p> <p>LACK OF ACCESS TO FRESH FOODS ↳ RETAIL</p> <p>LACK IN NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES</p> <p>OVERSATURATION OF SMOKE SHOPS</p>
<p>OPPORTUNITIES (EXTERNAL)</p> <p>MINORITY OWNED BUSINESS/RES OWNED WEAKNESS WORKFORCE HOUSING</p> <p>DEISOLATE PEOPLE CHANGE IMAGE W/ INPUT OF RTW</p> <p>CONNECT PEOPLE</p> <p>PREVIOUS OWNER DECIDED TO SELL X2</p> <p>CLEANABLE WALKABLE SAFE HOUSING</p> <p>INCR. DEEPLY AFFORDABLE</p> <p>MIXED INCOME</p> <p>PEOPLE CAN HAVE INPUT INTO LIVING SITCH</p> <p>INTENTIONALLY CREATE DIVERSE COMM.</p> <p>FLOODING → RAISE SITE FIX LARGER FLOOD PROBLEMS HEALING</p> <p>ACCOUNTABILITY</p> <p>FRESH START</p> <p>HISTORY OF CSS → CREATED PRECENT FOR MIXED INCOME TO AVOID CONCENTRATED POVERTY</p> <p>ENGAGEMENT OF RTW</p> <p>LEVERAGE HOUSING FOR INFRASTRUCTURE</p> <p>INTENTIONALITY IN LISTENING + PLANNING</p>	<p>THREATS (INTERNAL)</p> <p>POLITICAL PRESSURE, HIGH PROFILE SITE</p> <p>ACCOUNTABILITY</p> <p>CHANGE OF NEIGHBORHOOD CULTURE</p> <p>POLITICAL CHANGE - CHANGE IN POLITICAL WILL</p> <p>GENTRIFICATION</p> <p>FALL INTO DISREPAIR AGAIN</p> <p>DISLOCATION</p> <p>INCR. TAXES</p> <p>PREDISPOSITION FOR SMALL UNITS</p> <p>FUNDING ENVIRONMENT - LOTS OF SUBSIDY, MULTI PHASE</p> <p>FLOODING + SEA LEVEL RISE</p> <p>IS OUR CITY INFRA. KEEPING UP W/ DEL?</p> <p>INSUFFICIENT FUNDING - LOSING STEAM</p> <p>HIRING REGULATORY REQUIREMENT</p> <p>MORE EXPENSIVE BUILDING COSTS HEIGHT, FLOODING</p> <p>MARKETABILITY UNCERTAINTY</p> <p>BUILDING TOO DENSE NOT ENOUGH GREEN SPACE</p>

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Additional Notes:



Neighborhood Map:





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Welcome!

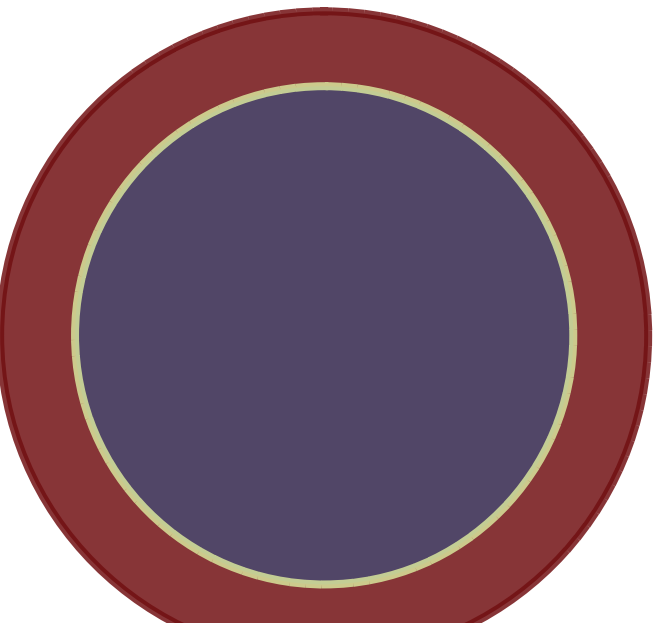
Steering & Housing Meeting Thursday, June 6th



For More Information Visit
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Agenda

- Call to Order
- Introduction
- What we have Heard
- Previous Planning Efforts
- Breakout Sessions
- Regroup
- Discuss Upcoming Charrette/Workshop
- Master Planning Schedule and Next Steps
- Wrap Up



Call to Order



**Thank You to our Housing Task
Force Co-Leads!**

Liz Torres and Charmain Yun



**Thank you to our Steering
Committee Co-Leads!**

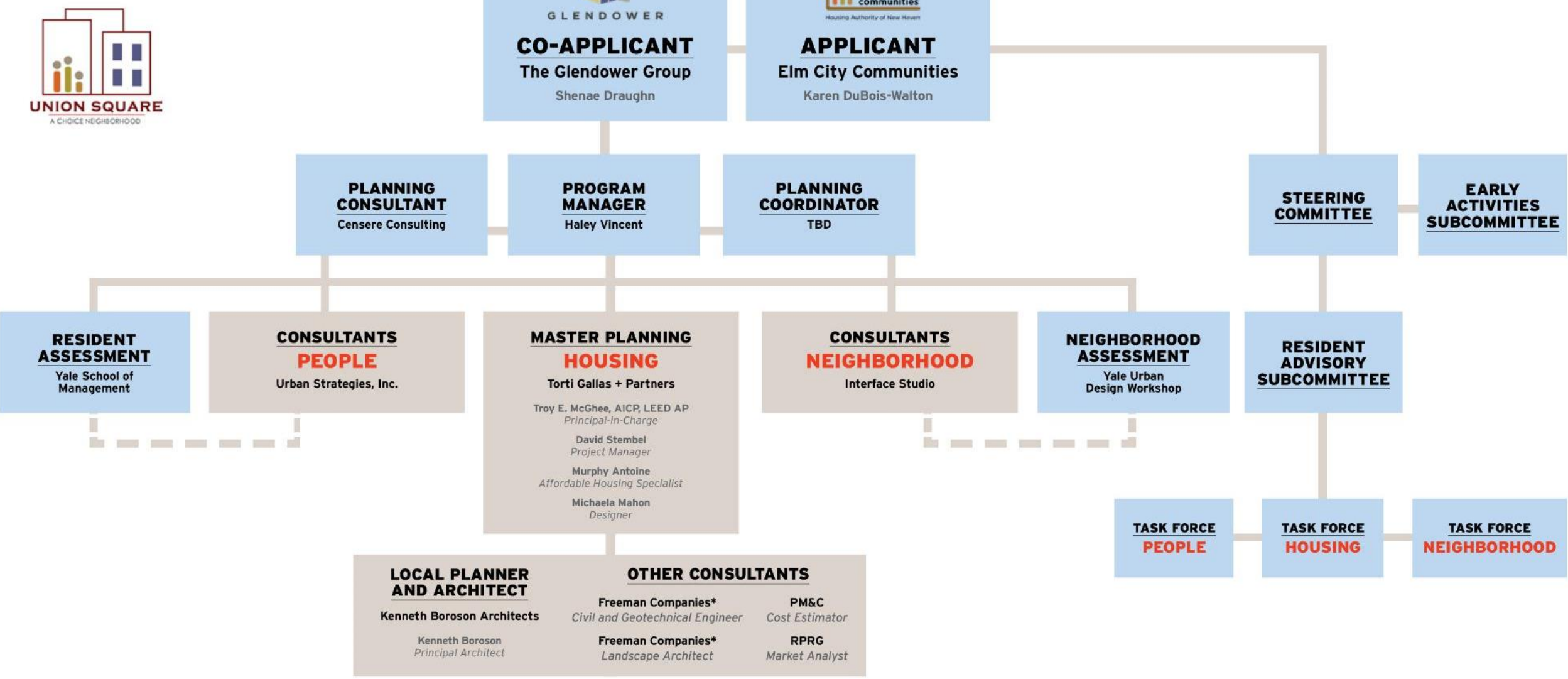
Alderwoman Carmen
Rodriguez and Johnny
Pupello



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Intro: Union Square CNI Organization

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART
May 1, 2024



— Operational Oversight
 - - - Support
 * MBE/WBE/DBE/and/or SBE



The Housing Team:



Kenneth Boroson

A R C H I T E C T S

**MASTER PLANNER &
HOUSING LEAD**

LOCAL PLANNER & ARCHITECT

Troy McGhee, AICP, LEED AP
Principal-in-Charge

Kenneth Boroson, AIA, LEED AP
Principal Architect

David Stembel, AIA, LEED AP
Project Manager

Murphy Antoine, FAIA, AICP, LEED AP
Affordable Housing Specialist

Michaela Mahon
Designer



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What is a Choice Neighborhood Initiative?



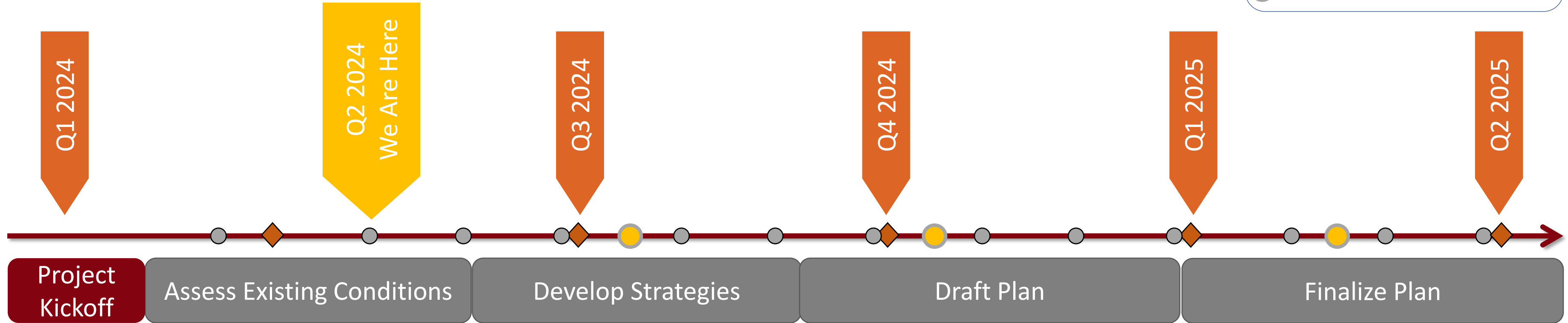
The Choice Neighborhood Initiative will transform distressed neighborhoods into viable and sustainable mixed-income neighborhoods by linking **housing improvements** with appropriate services, schools, public assets, transportation, and access to jobs.



Planning Process – Where Are We?

KEY

-  Steering Committee Meetings
-  (3) Committees Meetings
-  Public Meetings



Project Kickoff

Assess Existing Conditions

Develop Strategies

Draft Plan

Finalize Plan

- **May 23rd Housing Committee Meeting**
- **June 6th Housing/Steering Committee Meeting**
- **June 20th Listening Session**

- **July 18th Housing Committee Meeting**
- **Multi-day Visioning Workshop: September 2024**





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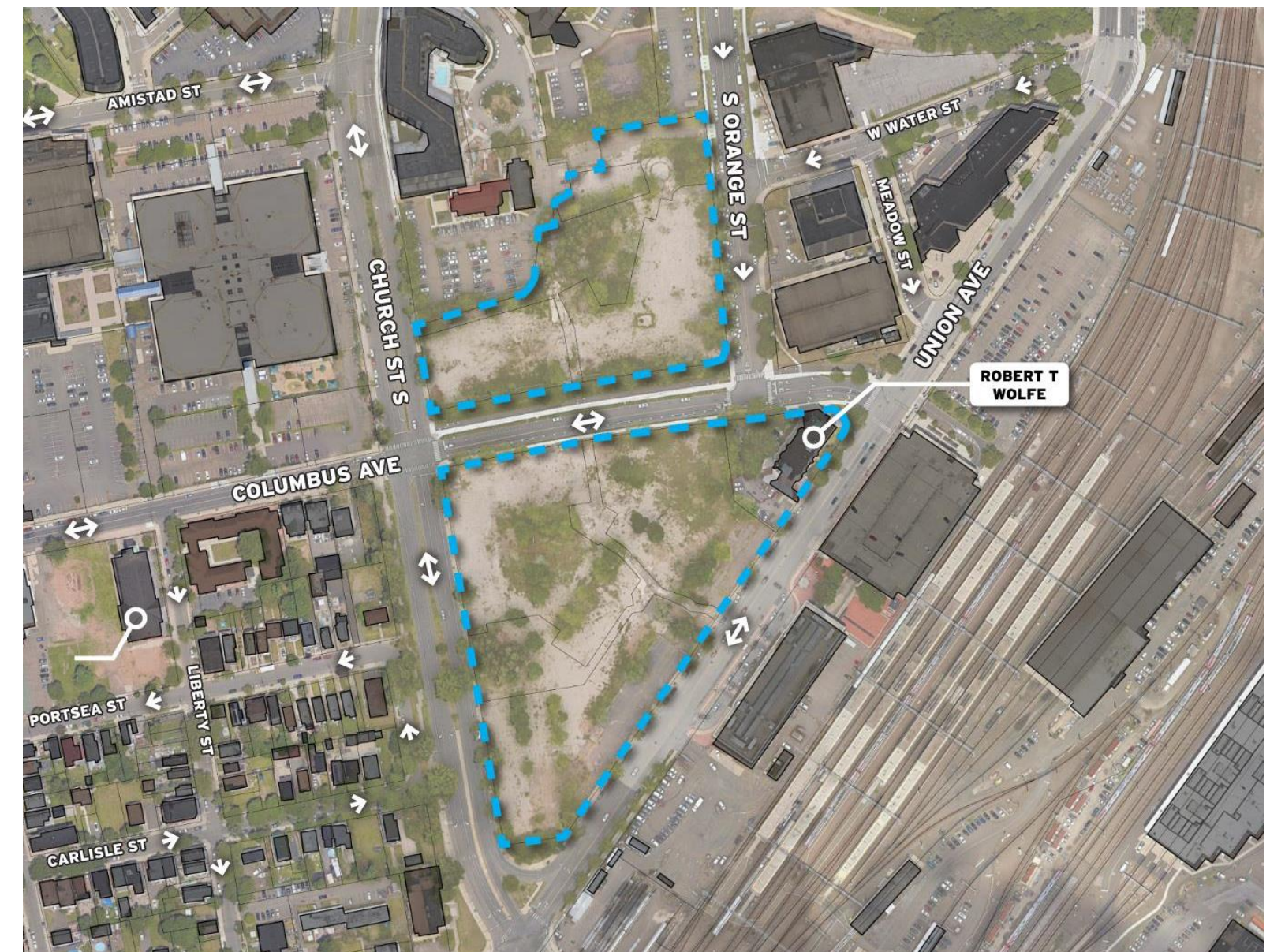
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What We Have Heard



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Steering Committee and Task Force Meetings



• Neighborhood

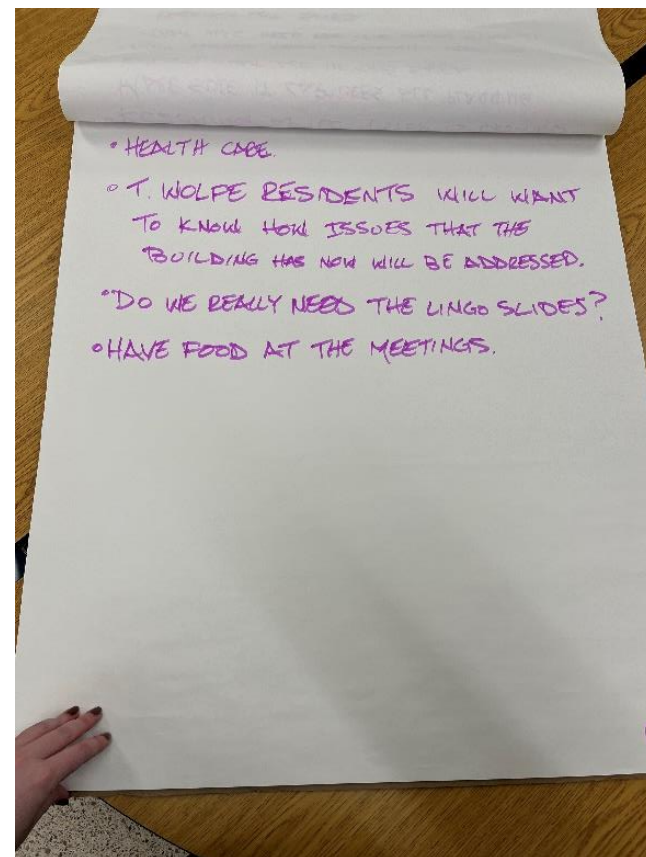
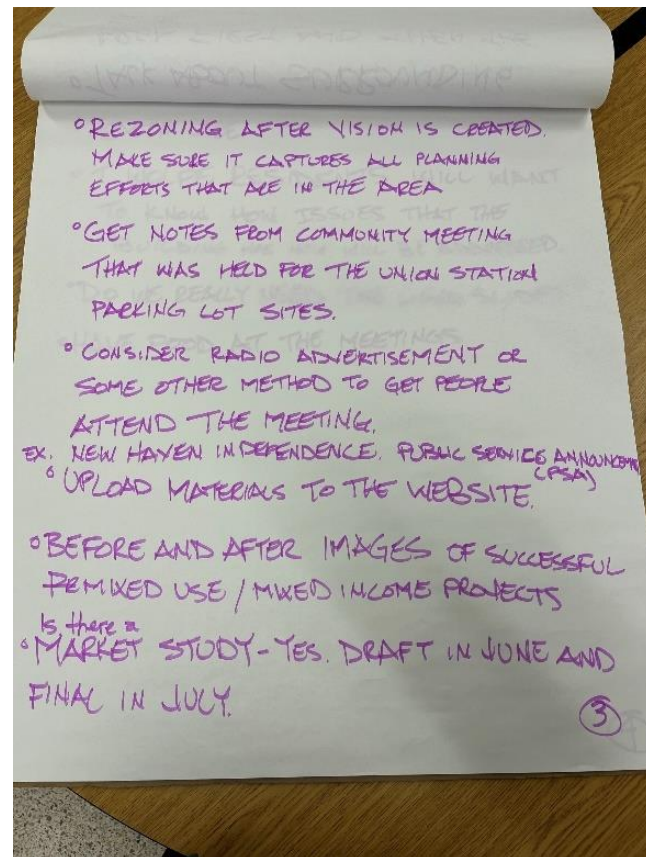
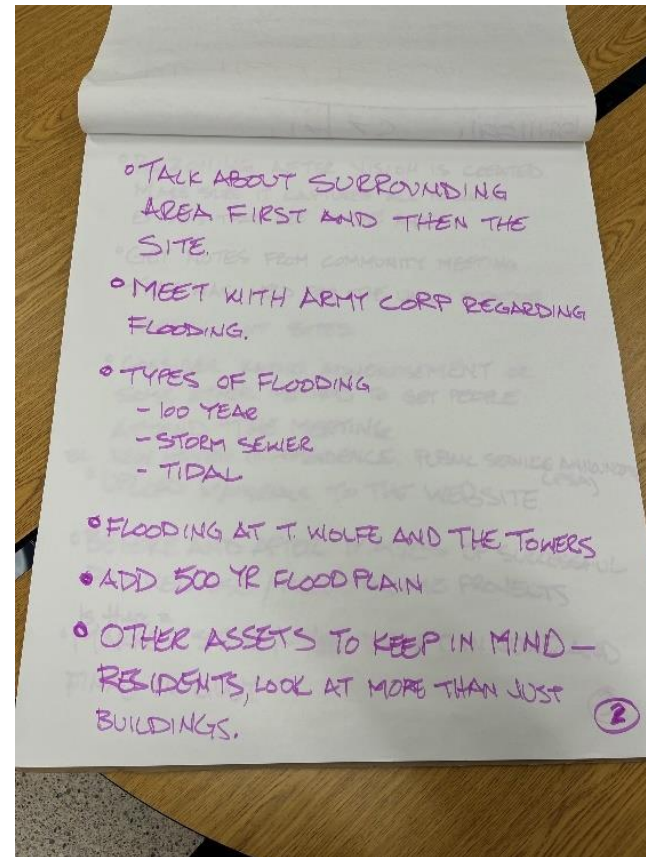
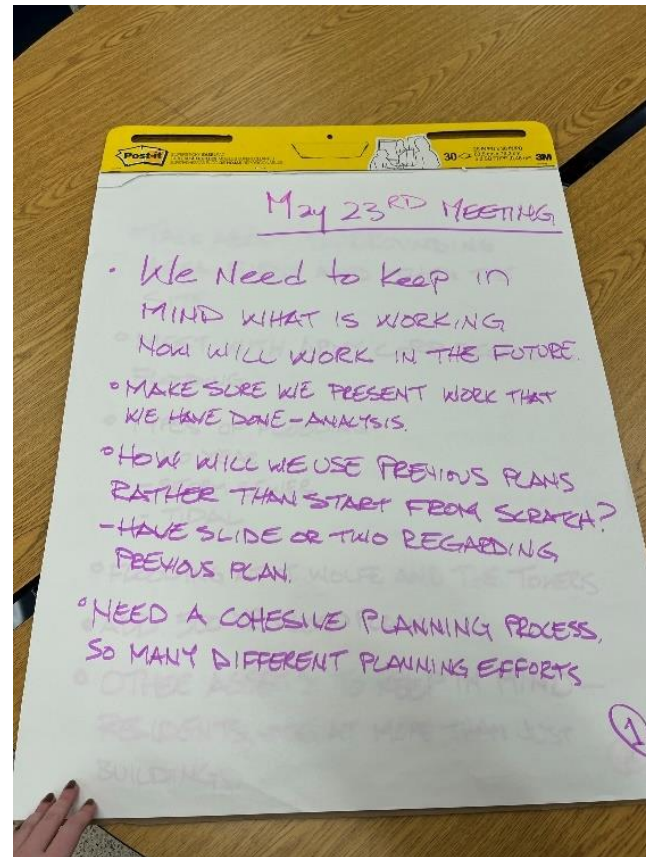
- Take into account **new development** around Union Square
- Neighborhood **Safety**

• Site

- Pedestrian **Mobility** – safer crossings
- Flooding
- Lack of Parking



May 23rd Housing Task Force Meeting



- Plan for longevity – need to keep in mind what is working today will work in the future
- Cohesion with Previous and Current Plans
 - Hill to Downtown
 - Vision 2034 – New Haven Comprehensive Plan
- Coordination with Neighbors
 - The Towers
 - Union Station
- New Haven has different types of flooding
- Community assets – organizations, healthcare, etc





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Building on Prior Planning Efforts

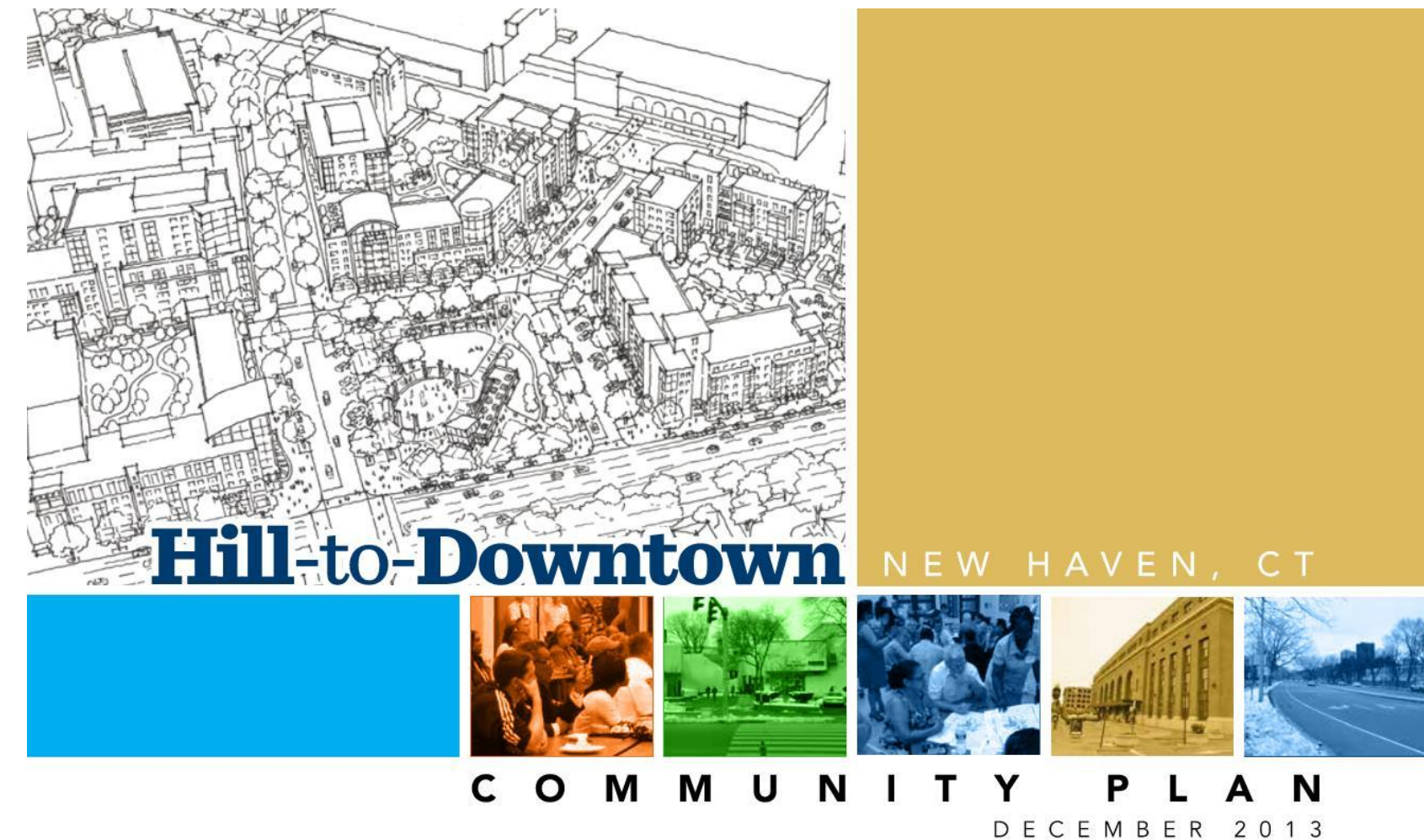


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Prior Planning Efforts

Hill-to-Downtown Community Plan 2012-2013

- To address challenges and leverage opportunities in the district between **Downtown New Haven, Union Station**, the historic **Hill Neighborhood**, and the **Medical District**
- **Vision:** The project envisions remaking the district into a vibrant, **walkable**, and **mixed-use neighborhood**.



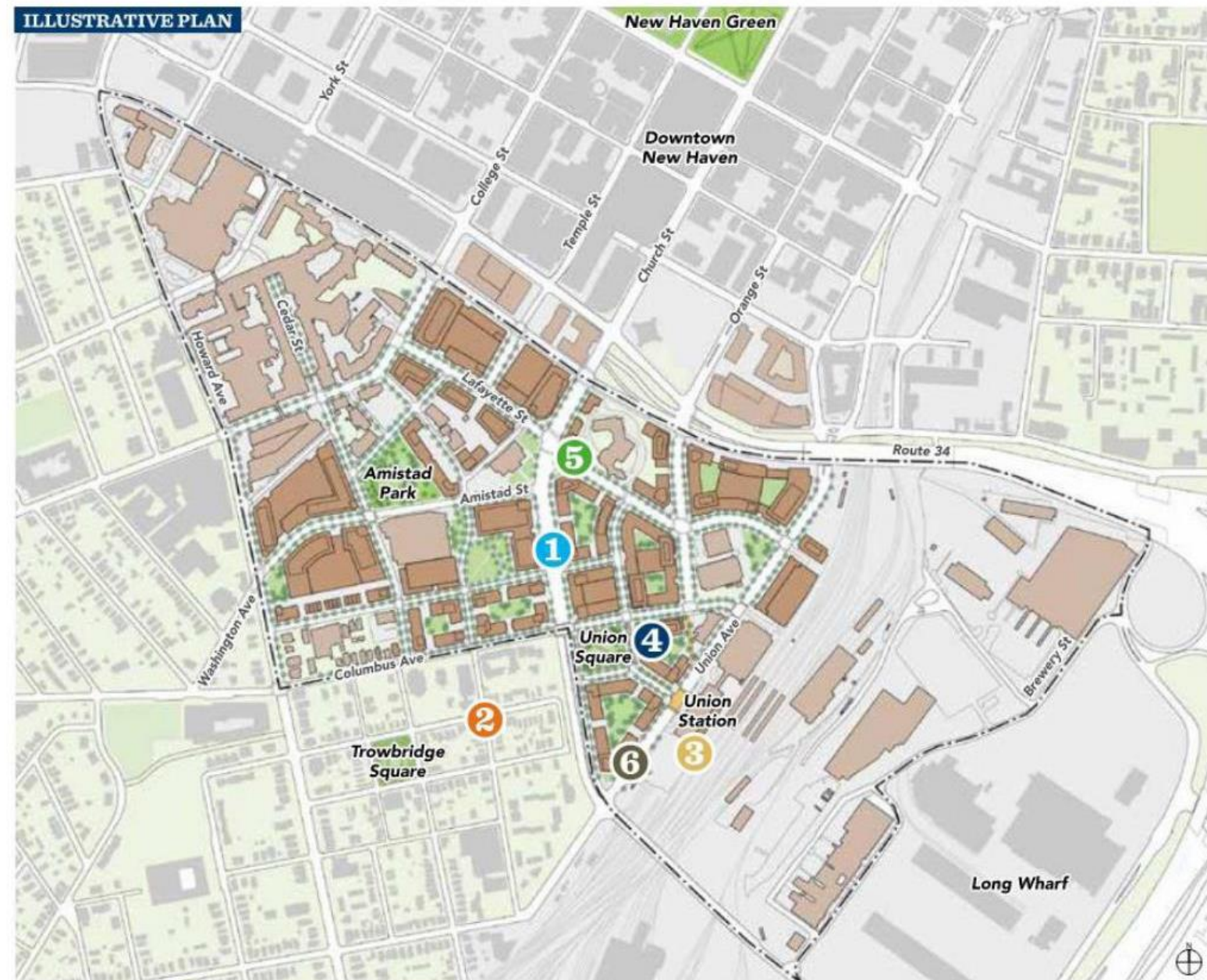
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Previous Efforts: Hill to Downtown Plan

2012-2013 Hill to Downtown Plan



SIX KEY INITIATIVES

1

Establish Church Street as the Center of a Walkable, Mixed-Use District

The Community Plan establishes Church Street as an active, pedestrian-oriented roadway defined by new housing, open space, retail, research and institutional uses.

2

Invest in Existing Neighborhoods (Columbus, Howard, Trowbridge)

The Community Plan promotes strengthened connections between Hill-to-Downtown and Trowbridge Square. A significant reuse opportunity exists at the Sacred Heart Church campus on Columbus Avenue, with several infill opportunities on Cedar Street and Howard Avenue. Funding should be established for these targeted investments that will strengthen the existing neighborhood.

3

Connect Union Station to Church Street

The Community Plan seeks to reestablish a historic connection between Union Station and Downtown by creating a new pedestrian/vehicular corridor extending from the front doors of Union Station directly to Church Street.

4

Redevelop the Church Street South Residential Complex

The Community Plan shows a potential scenario for how this critical area of the district could be redeveloped as a new mixed-income residential community including retail, restaurants and a new destination open space at the doorstep of downtown.

5

Build a New Lafayette Street

The Community Plan establishes a New Lafayette Street, enhancing access, assisting with traffic demand management, and opening up significant development opportunities on key parcels of land along Route 34. The new street builds on the plan for New Orange and Temple Streets that is part of the Downtown Crossing initiative.

6

Strengthen Union Avenue

The Community Plan proposes roadway improvements for Union Avenue, making it a "complete street"—one that balances the needs of autos, pedestrians, and cyclists and anticipates future development next to and across from Union Station.



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Previous Efforts: Hill to Downtown Plan

Three planning scenarios were developed for Public Meeting #6 incorporating public input, market assessment, new street connections, and a desire for placemaking in the Hill-to-Downtown district.

Scenario 1: Urban Village/ Station Square

A retail area surrounding a small green would be located directly across the street from Union Station, creating a focus of activity at a "Station Square". Additional retail would be encouraged along Orange Street to make a key connection back to downtown, while Church Street would become a landscape boulevard.



KEY FEATURES

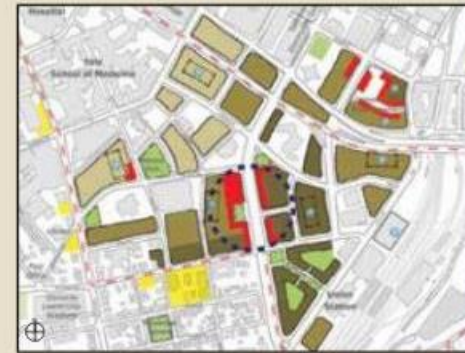
Retail Focus neighborhood services and restaurants/cafes near Union Station.

Public Space Create civic park across from station and neighborhood green space along Columbus Ave.

Scale Keep buildings lower along neighborhood edge.

Scenario 2: Main Street/ Urban Gateway

Church Street becomes the focus of activity with retail on the Nursing School site and across the street on the existing parking parcel. This scheme envisions a new "Main Street" environment that would draw people from downtown or Union Station into the heart of the district.



KEY FEATURES

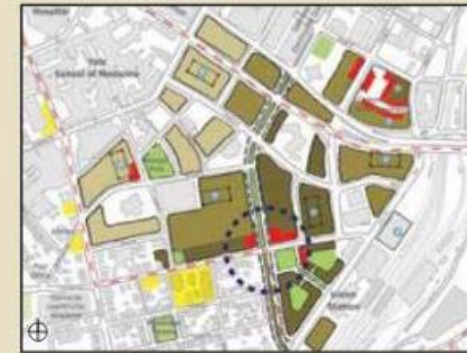
Retail Mix larger format retail (ex. large pharmacy) with neighborhood services to meet wide range of needs.

Public Space Create sequence of green spaces and plazas along Church St. to provide opportunities for different types of use.

Scale Keep buildings lower along neighborhood edge.

Scenario 3: Neighborhood Square

The third scenario scales back the amount of retail development on Church Street and focuses it around a new "Neighborhood Square" at the intersection of Church and Columbus. A new open space would link directly back (visually and physically) to Union Station.

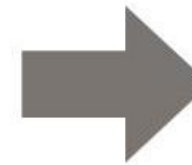


KEY FEATURES

Retail Focus neighborhood service establishments around Columbus Ave./Church St.

Public Space Create community green space at neighborhood intersection (Columbus Ave./Church St.) to define a new place for residents.

Scale Keep buildings lower along neighborhood edge.



The final Framework Plan was discussed at Public Meeting #7 and now serves as the foundation of this Community Plan.

The Framework Plan

One key step in the process was a public workshop to review alternative future options for the district. Three options or "scenarios" were discussed at the public meeting, each one representing a different approach toward the general locations of residential, commercial, institutional and retail land uses and a variety of other concerns. Workshop participants generally concluded that an approach that blended Scenario 2 and Scenario 3 (shown below) most closely met community goals and provided the best foundation for the Community Plan.

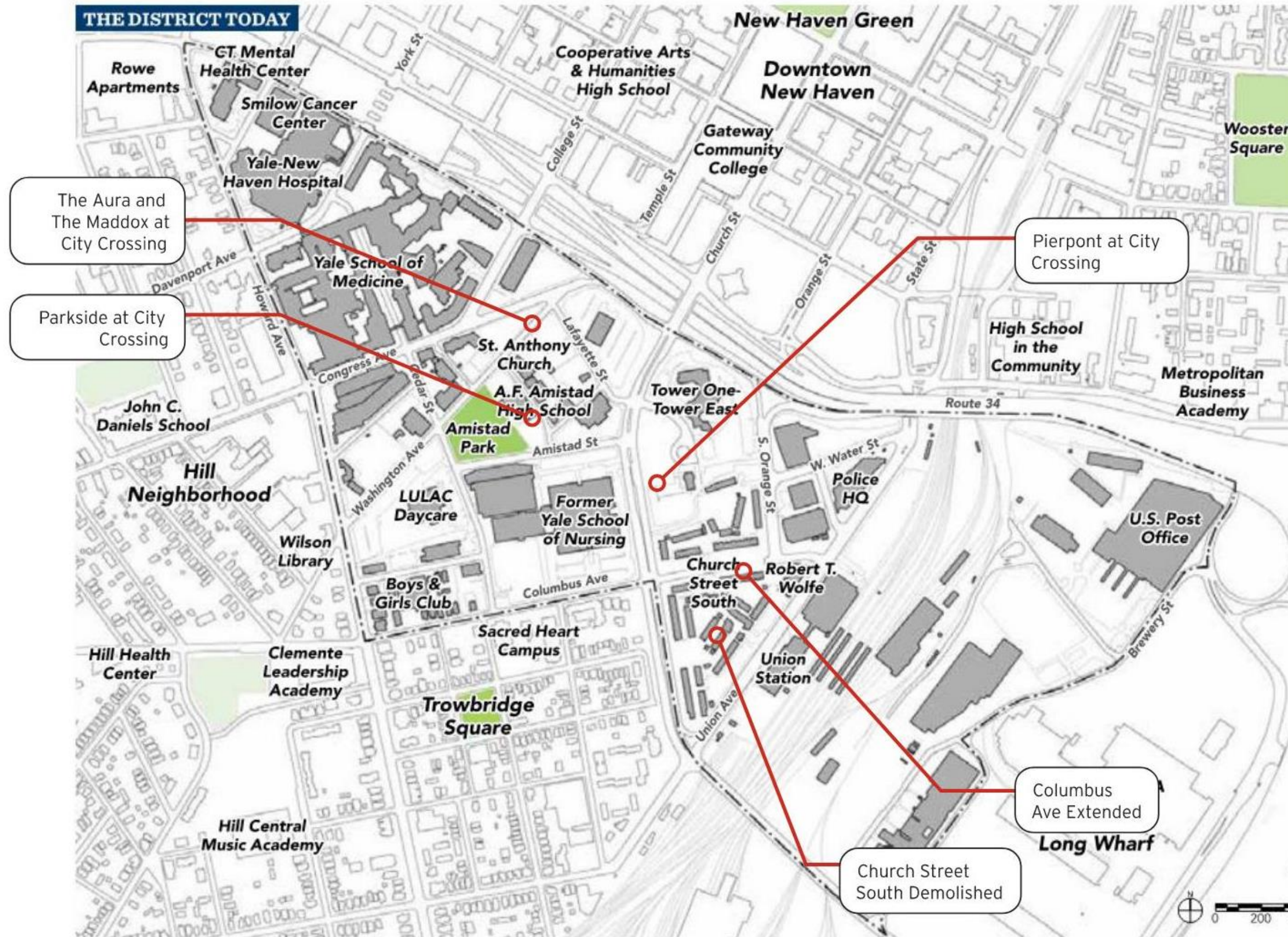


Planning Process

- **Seven** Public Meetings/Workshops generated 3 preliminary plans, which were then streamlined into one "Framework" plan
- **Community Goals:**
 - Create a Sense of Community
 - Provide Safety and Security
 - Provide Opportunities for a Diverse Mix of People
 - Become Connected
 - Incorporate Things to Do
 - Include New Public Spaces



Hill to Downtown Plan – Site Today



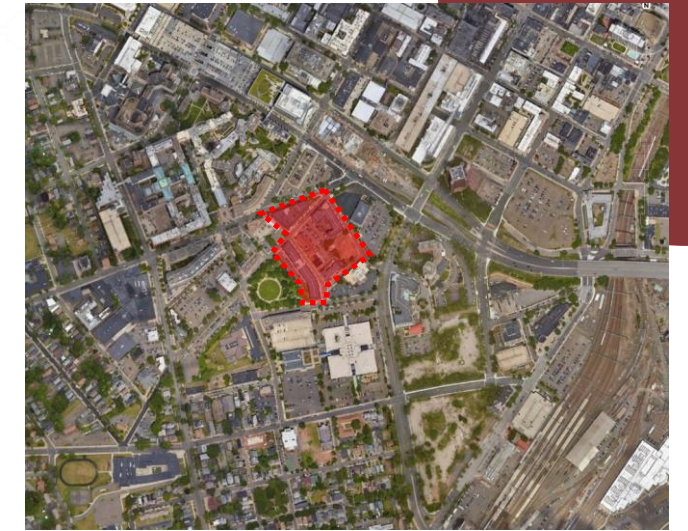
- City Crossing Developments
 - The Aura
 - The Maddox
 - Parkside
 - Pierpont
- Church Street South Apartments Demolished
 - Infrastructure & Environmental Study underway
- Columbus Avenue extended



Site Today

Hill-to-Downtown Community Plan | Progress

- **Phase 1**
 - Parkside at City Crossing – 100 units
 - The Aura at City Crossing – 104 units
 - The Maddox at City Crossing – 90 units
 - Prince Street Apartments – 30 units
 - Total: 324 units
- Parkside, the Aura, and the Maddox received funds from the State of Ct to create 30% of the units to be 80% AMI
- Prince Street received a 4% LIHTC to create 30 affordable units with a mix of AMI levels.



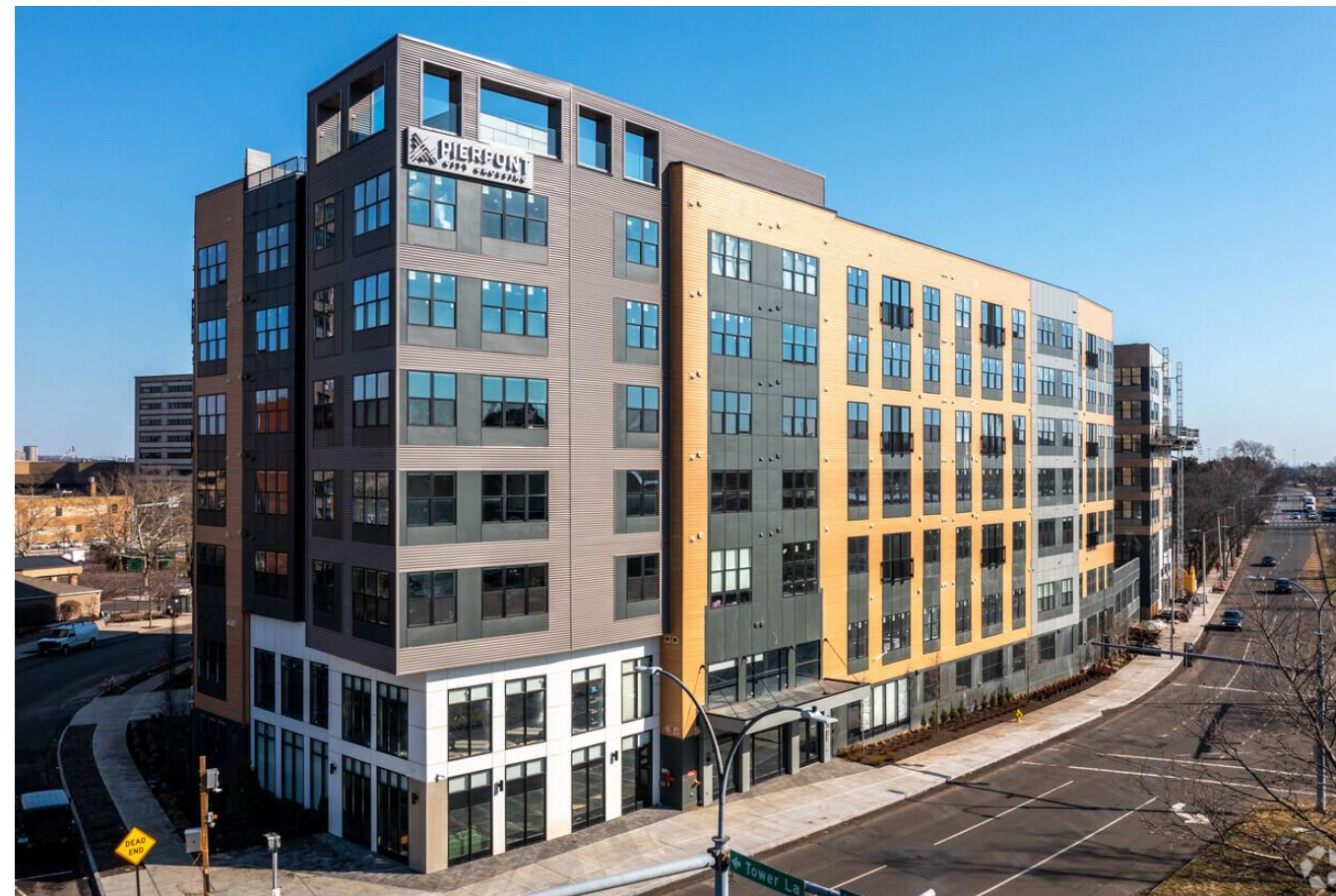
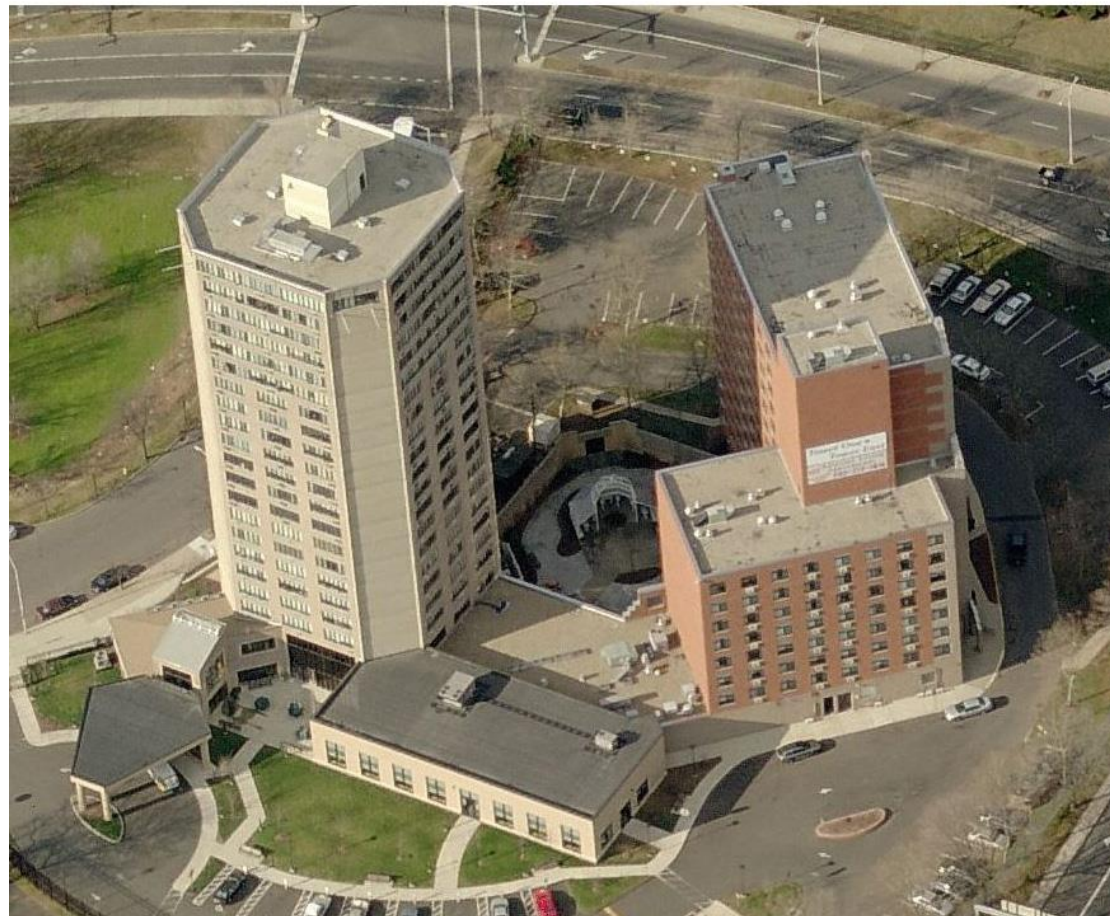
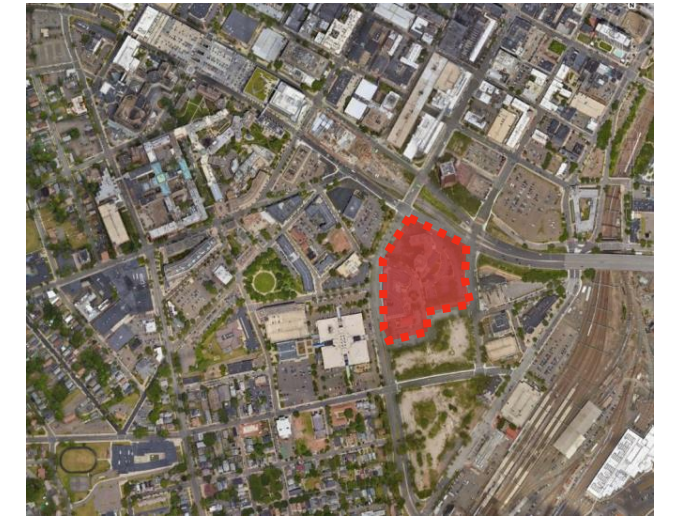
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Clockwise from Upper Right: Prince Street Apartments, Parkside at City Crossing, The Aura and The Maddox at City Crossing
Image credit: Ken Boroson Architects

Site Today

Neighbors to the North of the Site:

- The Towers
- Pierpont at City Crossing
- St Basil's Greek Orthodox Church



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Breakout Sessions



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Regroup & Share



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Upcoming Charrette/Workshop

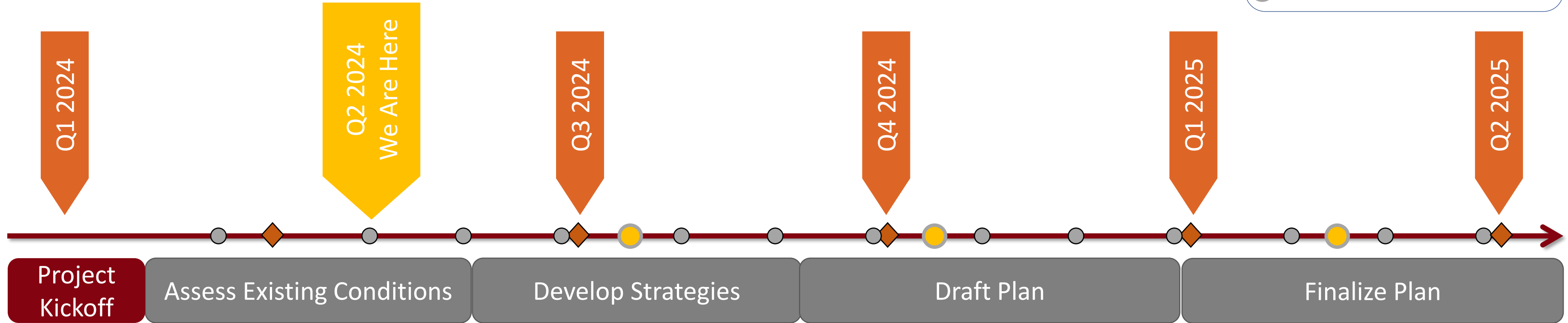


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- **Multi-day Visioning Workshop: September 2024**
 - **September 9 - 12**





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Thank You For Your Time!



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