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# FALL RIVER · DOWNTOWN URBAN · RENEWAL · PLAN

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Draft September 2018

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# 1. Executive Summary

What makes a place a **place**? In other words, what transforms a collection of streets and buildings into a destination that provides jobs, goods and services, and housing, and also has a physical and visual quality that instills a desire to return?

A downtown is an active area, with a vibrancy that comes from a mix of goods, services, people, food, and opportunities for housing and jobs. That activity is enhanced by places to pause and reflect, whether alone or in groups. Other factors that contribute to a welcoming environment include establishing the identity of the area with creative streetscape components and ensuring safety for all users, including drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, and people of different ages and mobility levels.

Fall River has a distinct downtown that has been ravaged, in part, by misguided past urban renewal efforts, economic downturns, functionally obsolete building types, and a failure, or inability, of the private market to

fully address the underlying physical conditions and marketing of the older building stock.

The Federal government constructed Interstate 195 (I-195) and Route 79 between 1959 and 1966, during the heyday of urban renewal. These two highways altered the landscape of the city, dividing the waterfront from the neighborhoods and splitting the downtown into two halves.

This Urban Renewal Plan envisions the reuniting of those two halves, creating a spine of North and South Main Streets, hinged at City Hall and the surrounding plaza (Government Center). To accomplish this vision, this Urban Renewal Plan has identified acquisitions for the Fall River Redevelopment Authority (FRRA) that would promote the rehabilitation of existing structures and new construction in the form of additions to existing structures or redevelopment of vacant lots now used for parking.

However, the downtown is not just about the two halves of Main Street. Secondary streets connect the downtown to surrounding neighborhoods (Cherry Street, Bedford Street, Spring Street, Rodman Street) and to the waterfront (Central Street, Anawan Street/Pocasset Street). Over time, as the "missing teeth" of underutilized buildings and vacant lots along Main Street are filled in, the FRRA will have the opportunity to complete some of the missing pieces along these secondary streets, creating an appropriate transition from the higher density of uses along the spine to the lower density of the mostly residential neighborhoods.

Finally, the Bedford Street/Pleasant Street/Thirteenth Street block is a commercially vibrant area, but has a mix of business that are auto-dependent for access or because of the type of business (vehicle repair and servicing). A few buildings of historic architectural character are scattered within a development pattern more similar to a suburban strip mall than to a urban downtown. This Urban Renewal Plan does not anticipate change to this area in the first 10 years

of this 20 year plan. However, as the efficiency of land use and the market values increase on the main spine, the auto-oriented block is likely to change. This Urban Renewal Plan contains design guidelines that are applicable throughout the urban renewal area, and will control the physical appearance and public amenities provided by new private investment to ensure that new development is responsive to the interests of the Fall River community.

The downtown is the home of several civic uses, including Government Center, the Fall River Public Library, the US Post Office, and the Fall River Justice Center. These anchors, however, have not been sufficient to create a downtown that is active beyond a limited number of hours. Some businesses close mid-afternoon, after the Justice Center closes, because there is not enough economic activity to support extending the hours until evening.

This Urban Renewal Plan recommends adjusting the zoning for the area to add increased residential density. This change will

contribute to increased activity after business hours that could support more businesses beyond the closing hours of the civic anchors. Other proposed zoning changes would remove uses that do not reinforce the dense, walkable development pattern of the downtown but do encourage a development pattern that is lower in scale and requires more land to support. If these proposed zoning changes are not enacted, then it will be harder to create the 12 to 18 hour day that could support additional restaurant and retail activity downtown.

Fall River's downtown lacks significant open space. The FRRA has the opportunity to address the missing spaces in several ways, including requiring developers to include public spaces as part of the Land Disposition Agreement (LDA) or acquiring land for pocket parks to be created either by the FRRA or by the City (such as the proposed Harborside Park on Central Street).

The connections between the downtown and the waterfront will be strengthened by the implementation of this Urban Renewal Plan.

The proposed Quequechan River Trail that leads people above the original course of the river will lead people to the Infra-Space park proposed in the *Fall River Waterfront Urban Renewal Plan*. Improvements to the proposed Harborside Park will offset the steep slope of Central Street, making a more attractive walk from the downtown to Battleship Cove.

Finally, the need for additional parking was a subject of discussion during the conversations with members of the FRRA and participants in the public meetings. A perceived parking shortage exists now, although this perception may be in part due to a lack of understanding of which parking spaces are available to whom. A study of existing available parking relative to the underutilized building space in the core of the downtown indicates a strong probability that a lack of parking could be a limitation on future redevelopment. The FRRA has identified certain parcels for acquisition and redevelopment into parking garages to support future development, should the need for additional parking arise. However, the increasing use of ride-sharing



Figure 1-1: Developing the Spine of North and South Main Street

services and the potential for widespread use of autonomous vehicles makes the certain need for car storage in the center of downtown less certain.

The remainder of this *Executive Summary* provides additional information about the vision, goals, and planned actions for the Fall River Downtown. This *Executive Summary* is intended to act as a stand-alone document, and will therefore repeat some of the information found in the later sections.

The intent of *Section 2* through *Section 16* is to fulfill the requirements of 760 CMR 12.00 for the format and content of an urban renewal plan under Chapter 121B of the Massachusetts General Laws (MGL). The appendices provide additional information to support these Sections.

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## Introduction

Fall River is an exciting city with many assets, including a historic downtown and extensive waterfront area. The FRRA sponsored the production of two urban renewal plans starting in the fall of 2016. The focus of this Plan is on the City's downtown; the focus of the second plan is on the waterfront.

The FRRA appointed a Citizens' Advisory Group (CAG) to provide input and feedback during the process and held two public meetings: one in February 2017, and the second in April 2017. The FRRA also held an Open House at City Hall, leaving boards describing both plans up in the atrium for three weeks in May to June 2017 and giving the public the opportunity to deposit comments in a "Suggestion Box."

To assist with the planning process and the preparation of the plan, the FRRA hired a consultant team led by Harriman and including FXM Associates, and Fitzgerald & Halliday.

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## Purpose of this Plan

This Fall River Downtown Urban Renewal Plan (the Urban Renewal Plan) is an urban renewal plan as defined and enabled by MGL Chapter 121B and has been prepared in accordance with proposed revised 760 CMR 12.00 as required by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).

The general purpose of this Urban Renewal Plan is to identify current conditions that have been obstacles to investment, determine the needs of the downtown and the goals for its redevelopment, and define those actions that will create incentives for the private market, over time, to address the existing conditions.

## Primary Goal and Related Actions

The primary purpose of this Plan is the revitalization of Fall River's historic downtown. Despite anchor uses, such as the Fall River

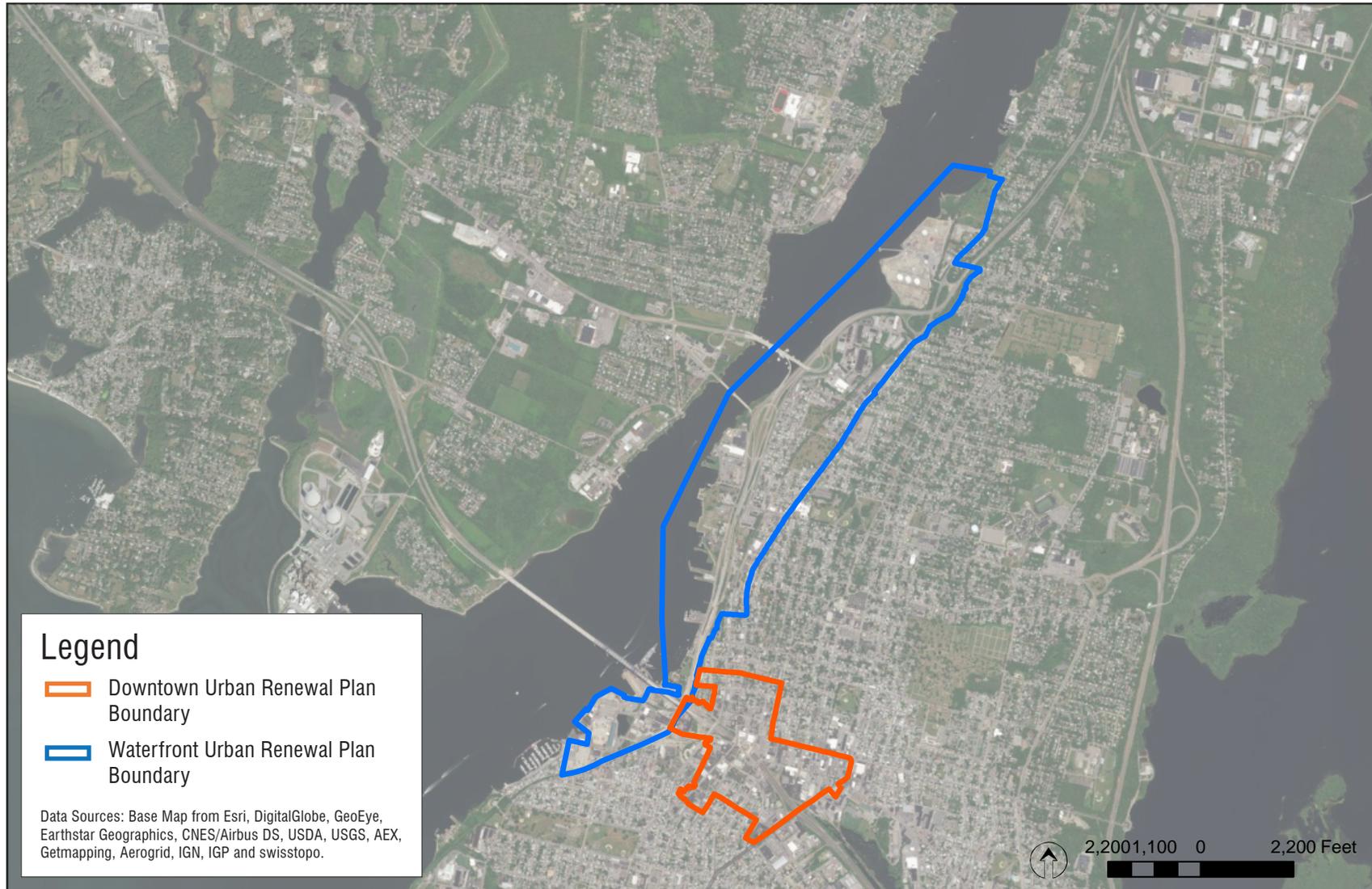


Figure 1-2: Downtown and Waterfront Urban Renewal Plan Boundaries

Justice Center and City Hall, this urban renewal area has significant vacancies. Both the Bristol County Superior Court and the Fall River District Court close at 4:30 pm, while the isolation of City Hall from North and South Main Streets make it an ineffective single anchor for the area.

The FRRA has identified a number of properties that could be redeveloped as mixed-use buildings, including residential and retail or other commercial uses. Adding more residents to the downtown would create incentives for businesses to remain open into the evening hours, increasing the activity and vitality downtown.

However, a parking analysis of the downtown suggests that if the existing buildings downtown were fully occupied, the available parking might not be sufficient for all uses. The conditions under which cars are parked, or stored, during the day is in flux as the advent of ride-sharing services and the early promise of autonomous vehicles are projected to have significant impact

on the need to store vehicles for long periods of time downtown. These potential benefits have not yet materialized, and the FRRA understands that additional public parking may be needed during the life of this Urban Renewal Plan to support increased activity downtown.

In order to create the active, economically viable downtown envisioned during the process of developing this Plan, and to address the conditions preventing this transformation, the goals for this urban renewal area are as follows:

- Attract residents downtown to support existing and future businesses and services that will also serve adjacent neighborhoods
- Rehabilitation and redevelopment of underutilized, partially vacant, and vacant buildings along the Main Street "spine"; expand into other areas of the downtown as needed
- Establish design guidelines within this Plan to control the physical character-

istics of future development to support the goals of this Plan

- Provide public parking, landscaped and lit, to support downtown businesses as vacant or partially vacant buildings are rehabilitated

To meet these goals, the FRRA will undertake the following actions to support the redevelopment of parcels in strategic locations within the downtown:

- Acquire underperforming buildings and/or vacant land. Acquisitions have been identified by phase in the Implementation Plan, however, the order in which parcels are acquired may shift based on market conditions related to both the value and availability of the proposed property and its proposed future use at the time of acquisition
- Merge or divide the parcels (reparcelization), as necessary, into developable parcels



- Disposition of the parcels to one or more private developers who will undertake the activities necessary to add buildings, landscaping, and public/private open space. Land transferred from the City to the FRRA may be disposed of, as with any other parcel acquired by the FRRA, or retained by the FRRA, depending on the future use of the parcel and the transfer agreement with the City
- Control over the development by the use of an LDA and the design guidelines found in this Urban Renewal Plan
- Use of design guidelines to control the physical form of private future development within the urban renewal area

**Secondary Goals and Related Actions**

During the course of the planning process for this Urban Renewal Plan, opportunities to address other conditions within the downtown became evident based on public feedback and

research into previous planning processes. Key actions include the following:

- Establish critical links between the waterfront and the downtown; those links should be physical (along Columbia Street, Anawan/Pocasset Streets and Central Street/Bedford Street), cultural, and economic
- Undertake additional studies to examine the parking and circulation needs within the downtown
- Install public infrastructure improvements such as public parking and open space to enhance the urban renewal area and attract additional private investment

Additional information about the goals for the downtown is provided below within this *Executive Summary* in *Plan Goals* and specific actions are described in the *Implementation Plan*.

**Implications of the Plan**

The boundary of the Urban Renewal Plan contains 198 acres. To support the actions identified in this Plan, the FRRA has identified 24 parcels for acquisition of approximately 13 acres, or about 7% of the total area. Over time, the FRRA expects to dispose of all or most of these parcels, excepting those used for public infrastructure improvements and public open space.

If the FRRA acquires all parcels identified for acquisition, the estimated number of businesses that may be displaced is approximately 18. This Plan does not anticipate the displacement of residential units. These numbers are estimated based on a visual survey undertaken in December 2017 and information from the City Assessor's database. Should the FRRA acquire any parcels requiring displacement of one or more residents and/or businesses, it must follow the requirements described in *Section 10. Relocation*. Additional information about the

parcels for acquisition is provided in *Section 2. Characteristics*.

The FRRA will evaluate the need to acquire parcels over the life of this Plan and will amend the Plan as necessary to add or delete potential acquisitions. Should property owners redevelop their property in accordance with the goals and the design guidelines established by the Urban Renewal Plan, the FRRA may remove those parcels from the list of acquisitions.

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## Fall River Redevelopment Authority

The Fall River Redevelopment Authority (FRRA), is a public body politic and corporate, duly created pursuant to MGL Chapter 121B, § 4, by the City of Fall River, MA on July 28, 1964. The FRRA, as a redevelopment authority, is authorized to undertake certain actions, including the acquisition and disposition of land, the redevelopment of land, the issues of

bonds, the establishment of certain controls on land developed by others, and the acquisition of land by eminent domain for the public purpose established by this Urban Renewal Plan.

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## Plan Goals

**The primary goal of this Plan is to encourage and support the revitalization of Fall River's downtown.** Over the years, the area has declined so that many buildings are fully or partially vacant and empty lots are covered in asphalt and dedicated to parking. Few public spaces exist in the area, and there is little activity at night.

However, the existing buildings downtown show the development pattern over time and create a sense of place that is unique to Fall River. Many buildings are historic with architectural details not found on newer buildings. From parts of the downtown there is a visual link to the waterfront, notably from the Gramada Plaza on the western side of City Hall, overlooking the Braga Bridge, Battleship Cove,

and the Taunton River, and along Central Street towards Battleship Cove.

The strategies and actions defined by this Plan are targeted towards the activities that a redevelopment authority can undertake in support of the revitalization of a decadent area. The FRRA has identified several parcels that it may acquire in support of the redevelopment of the downtown. By partnering with one or more developers, the FRRA will undertake projects that can act as examples to, and an incentive for, additional private investment in the area.

In addition, the FRRA intends to support public improvements, such as the continuance of the City's existing streetscape program and the creation and programming of public open space, that will increase the attractiveness of the area to potential residents, business owners, and redevelopers. Suggested design guidelines and a design review process will create an understanding of what the community expects from developers as projects move forward within the downtown area.

## Connection to the Waterfront

Because the FRRA sponsored the planning process for both the downtown and the waterfront at the same time, the parallel processes allowed the FRRA and the consultant team to consider how the downtown and the waterfront could be linked. The two are separated by a significant topographical change from the Taunton River, up a steep slope to North and South Main Streets. Historically they were linked by the Quequechan River; the river now flows under the downtown until it reaches the Taunton River. Although daylighting the river through the downtown has been discussed in the past (see *Section 9. Public Improvements*), near-term interventions for the river will be covered in the *Fall River Waterfront Urban Renewal Plan*.

There is a second link between the waterfront and the downtown – the Arts Overlay District (AOD), a regulatory mechanism that links both areas by encouraging the development of uses that support or relate to the arts. Again, most

of the near-term strategies related to the AOD are found within the *Waterfront Plan*, however, it is hoped that the proposed changes discussed in that Plan will spread up Anawan /Pocasset Street and Columbia Street, and up the Central Street/Harborside Park/Green Street/Bank Street corridor, to the downtown.

Finally, a connection between the downtown and the waterfront also exists in terms of demand in the real estate market. The vision for how these two districts can interact with each other assumes that each area will attract a different market. The downtown is expected to attract those who want smaller, urban spaces with varying floorplates and materials that reflect the historic architecture of the downtown. Under this scenario, future residents will be attracted to pedestrian-oriented streets that have a mix of retail, experiential retail, personal services, and restaurants along the ground floor. Retail and restaurants will enhance the urban feel and reinforce the historic materials of the downtown and the cultures of the people who live in Fall

River. Small, innovative businesses will be attracted to this area.

The vision for the waterfront is to attract residents and businesses looking for something new. The floorplates of new construction will be more suitable for certain types of businesses and for standard residential floorplans. The view of the water will add value to higher-level units, while access to the South Coast Rail commuter station will be attractive to others. Retail and services will be in two categories: those that serve the residents and employees of the existing and new neighborhood and those that focus on visitors to the waterfront.

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## Summary of Market Conditions

This market conditions analysis focuses on potential for growth in three parts of the economy which are likely targets for downtown development: the retail market, the rental housing market, and the office market. The full discussion of the data and methodology underlying this summary is provided in *Appendix C. Economic Development and Real Estate Market Conditions and Trends: FXM Associates*. The good news for both the downtown and the waterfront is that demand potential exists for residential, retail, and office space. The challenge is how to address that demand in both areas. As the downtown and waterfront change in response to their respective visions, the character of each should attract residents and businesses looking for different space and amenities.

## Retail Trends and Projections

Two types of analyses underlie this discussion of retail trends. The first is an analysis of available jobs; the second is a measure of the gap between the demand for goods and services and the types of retail currently available. In both cases, the methodology and results are provided in detail in *Appendix C. Economic Development and Real Estate Market Conditions and Trends: FXM Associates*. Note that the reliability of projections into the future is important in interpreting the results shown in this analysis for retail and office trends. Trends over the last decade in retail employment, whether at the city- or county-level, provide only a limited guide to the future. The 2008-2009 recession caused large drops in the numbers of jobs in the city and county, but at the city-level, the decline began in 2006. In both places, recovery began in 2011, but is not yet well-established enough to serve as the basis for reliable projections.

Although there is evidence of an upward climb in the city since 2011 (*Figure 1-3*), suggesting

that retail trade may have growth potential in the city, the performance at the county level shows little sign of recovery yet, and the trend lines for both to 2021 decline. The level of confidence in the Fall River projection, however, is very low, leaving open the possibility of future growth in the sector. This recent pattern of growth is confirmed in subsequent analyses of historical trends and projections of net absorption of retail space in Fall River. At the county level, though, the R<sup>2</sup> value is quite high, indicating the downward trend there may be more reliable.

Closely related to the retail sector and included in the retail analysis is Accommodation and Food Services (NAICS code 72). Here the trend has been positive for both the City of Fall River and Bristol County. *Figure 1-4* shows both historical employment and projected trends, as the R<sup>2</sup> value is high for both, making the projection reasonably reliable.

The retail gap analysis,<sup>1</sup> a snapshot of activity at the time the report was generated, indicates that

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<sup>1</sup> This analysis should be reviewed and updated on a

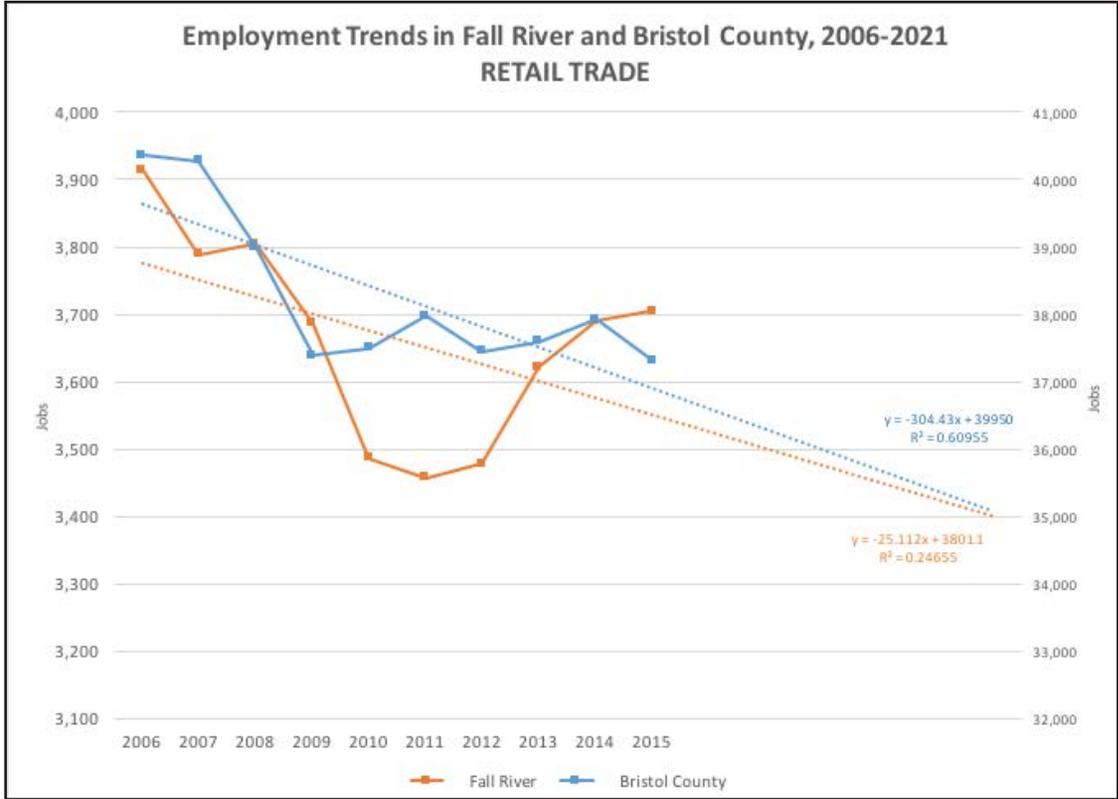


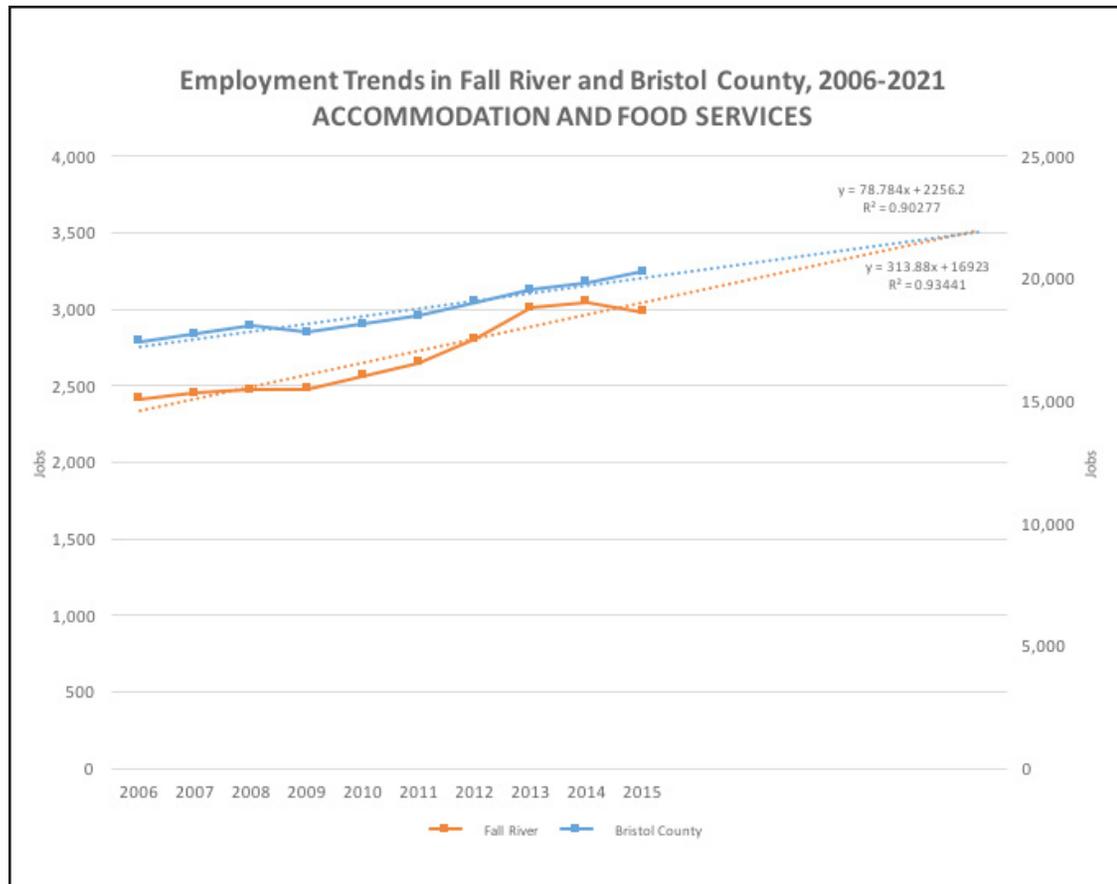
Figure 1-3: Employment Trends in Fall River and Bristol County - Retail Trade  
 Source: Massachusetts Department of Labor ES202 data series; US Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System; and FXM Associates

there is currently potential demand to support 28 stores, across 13 categories, for an estimated 92,000 total square feet of additional retail space within the effective market area for the downtown and the waterfront. How much is captured by the downtown and the waterfront depends upon which stores are appropriate for each area and how those opportunities are captured as part of the implementation of this Urban Renewal Plan and other marketing efforts by the City. The highest amount of projected space (15,300 square feet) is for Full-Service Restaurants. Food-related businesses are clustered in the top one-third of categories showing a retail gap, representing an opportunity for strategic clustering of related businesses. Other businesses represent the types of goods and services appropriate for downtown/village center areas.

The analysis also examined trends in the supply, occupancy, vacancies, and pricing of retail space because retail is an especially important

regular basis to ensure that the data is consistent with current market conditions.

potential use for both the downtown and waterfront urban renewal areas, and because the retail opportunity gap analysis is only a snapshot of current potential. In the second quarter of 2017, Fall River had about 266,000 square feet of vacant retail space, a declining vacancy rate, and average annual net absorption (new occupancies minus move-outs) of 67,500 square feet per year. The implication of this forecast is that without new construction or rehabilitation of currently underutilized space virtually all the existing inventory would be absorbed within the next four to five years. This forecast of net absorption coincides with the employment growth trends observed in recent years (since 2011; see *Figure 1-3*). Caution must be noted in the near term, however, because the extremely low average rents will challenge developers to create especially attractive space in prime locations for the higher rents necessary to support new construction or rehabilitation of existing space.



*Figure 1-4: Employment Trends in Fall River and Bristol County - Accommodation and Food Services*  
 Source: Massachusetts Department of Labor ES202 data series; US Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System; and FXM Associates

## Rental Housing Demand Analysis

Housing can be a critical component of a downtown renewal plan, providing not only a market for the goods and services produced in the downtown area and prospective employees for downtown businesses, but also vital street activity both during and outside of business hours. Properly integrated, it is a critical component of most mixed-use developments, which dominate developer preferences.

Households within the under 35 and 55 to 74 age groups are frequently targeted by developers for urban and specialty rental housing, such as re-use of formerly commercial and institutional structures, because they are less likely to have school age children and therefore more open to units with fewer bedrooms in locations that are not necessarily ideal environments for children. They are also likely to be attracted to denser urban environments that allow walking distances to restaurants and retail shops.

Retail Store Type and NAICS	Selected Sales Opportunity/Gap (2016 \$)	Potentially Supportable Square Feet	Estimated Capturable	
			Square Feet	# Stores
Specialty Food Stores-4452	\$23,145,183	36,717	6,280	2
Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores-4453	\$20,314,499	75,155	12,000	3
Cosmetics, Beauty Supplies, Perfume Stores-44612	\$2,271,894	5,315	1,500	1
Other Health & Personal Care Stores-44619	\$7,077,568	26,688	4,098	3
Women's Clothing Stores-44812	\$8,295,400	27,432	4,100	1
Family Clothing Stores-44814	\$12,128,934	30,969	6,000	1
Shoe Stores-4482	\$2,375,271	11,495	3,000	1
Sporting Goods Stores-45111	\$11,051,835	38,697	6,000	1
Office Supplies & Stationery Stores-45321	\$4,647,229	14,464	4,000	1
Gift, Novelty & Souvenir Stores-45322	\$9,117,074	38,808	12,600	3
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers-4539	\$14,378,155	45,180	9,200	4
Full-Service Restaurants-7221	\$13,778,283	26,403	15,300	3
Special Foodservices-7223	\$8,419,482	23,677	8,000	4
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$137,000,807</b>	<b>400,999</b>	<b>92,078</b>	<b>28</b>

Table 1-1: Fall River Urban Renewal Area Retail Gap Analysis: Indicative Results  
 Source: The Nielsen Company, Segmentation and Market Solutions, 2016; various industry sources for sales per square foot and square footage per store; and FXM Associates

Households in other age groups, however, may also comprise demand for housing within the market area, and this report also assesses overall potential demand for all age groups.

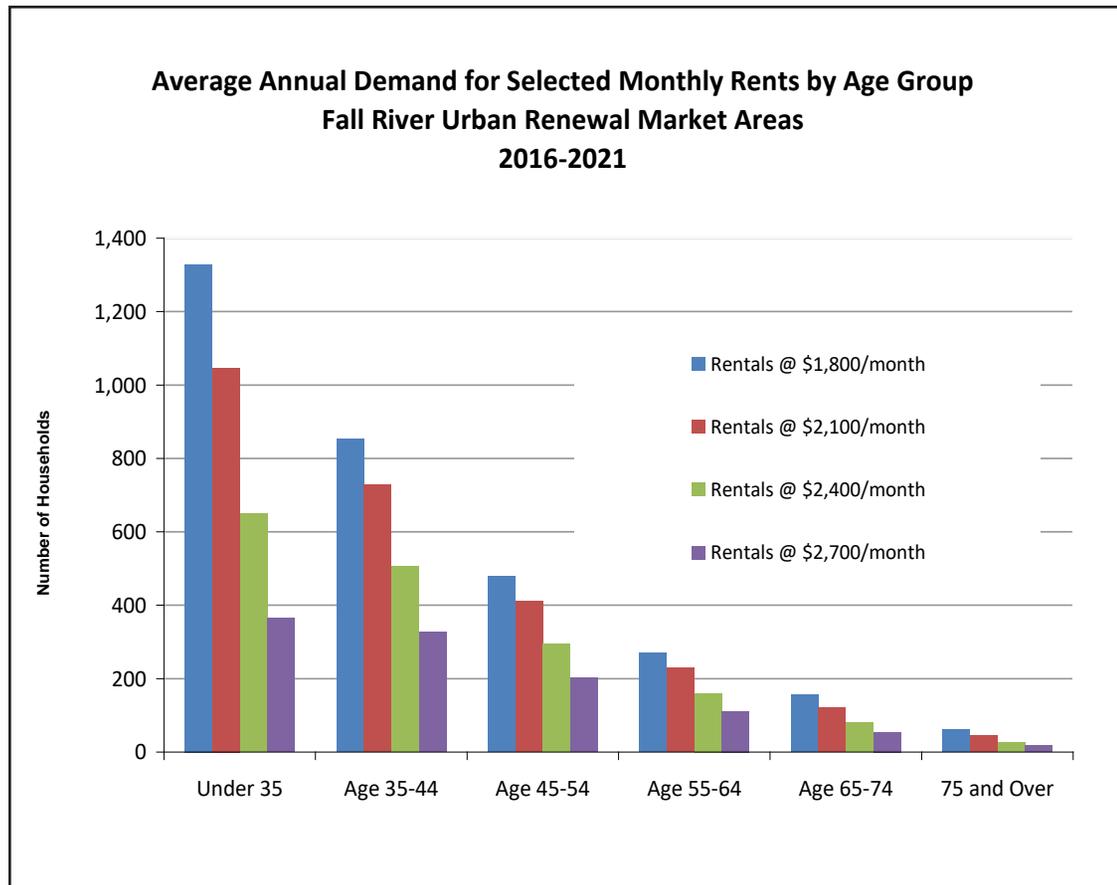
Based on the combined waterfront and downtown urban renewal areas' current share of rental housing in the market area and recent absorption rates in comparable projects, an estimated 135 households that are able to afford

up to \$1,800 a month rent might be absorbed by additional rental development in a competitive rental property in this location each year.

As discussed above, the downtown and the waterfront are likely to have different residential products at varying price points. The information in *Figure 1-5* indicates the demand for rental units at different price points in the combined areas; note that the different amenities and floor plans of the individual products will determine the price points in each area.

## Office-using Sector Analysis

Office-using industries are a major employer in the City of Fall River and in the urban renewal areas. As shown in *Figure 1-6*, occupied office space is projected to increase in Fall River and in the Attleboro/Fall River/New Bedford submarket overall. Over the next several years, projected demand could be absorbed by vacancies in existing office space, but if current trends continue, there will be opportunities for rehabilitation and possible new office space



*Figure 1-5: Average Annual Demand for Selected Monthly Rents by Age Group, Fall River Urban Renewal Market Areas*

Source: FXM Associates, Housing Demand Model, November 2016

construction. In the absence of some dramatic local, regional, state, or national economic downturn (worse than the recent great recession, which the region and city survived comparatively well), that demand for office space is likely to continue to be positive for at least the next several years.

The professional, technical, and financial sectors comprise the largest share of demand for office space in Fall River, followed by social assistance services, medical offices, and public administration. The demand for medical office space is projected to grow by 2.4% per year and all office space by 1.2% per year city-wide. (See *Table 1-2*).

The Health Care and Social Assistance sector is a large proportion of both downtown and city labor forces. Future growth in the downtown area would also depend on City choices regarding attracting more of this sector's activity in Fall River to the downtown area. A little more than half of the employment in this sector is in Health Care, and most of that is in Ambulatory

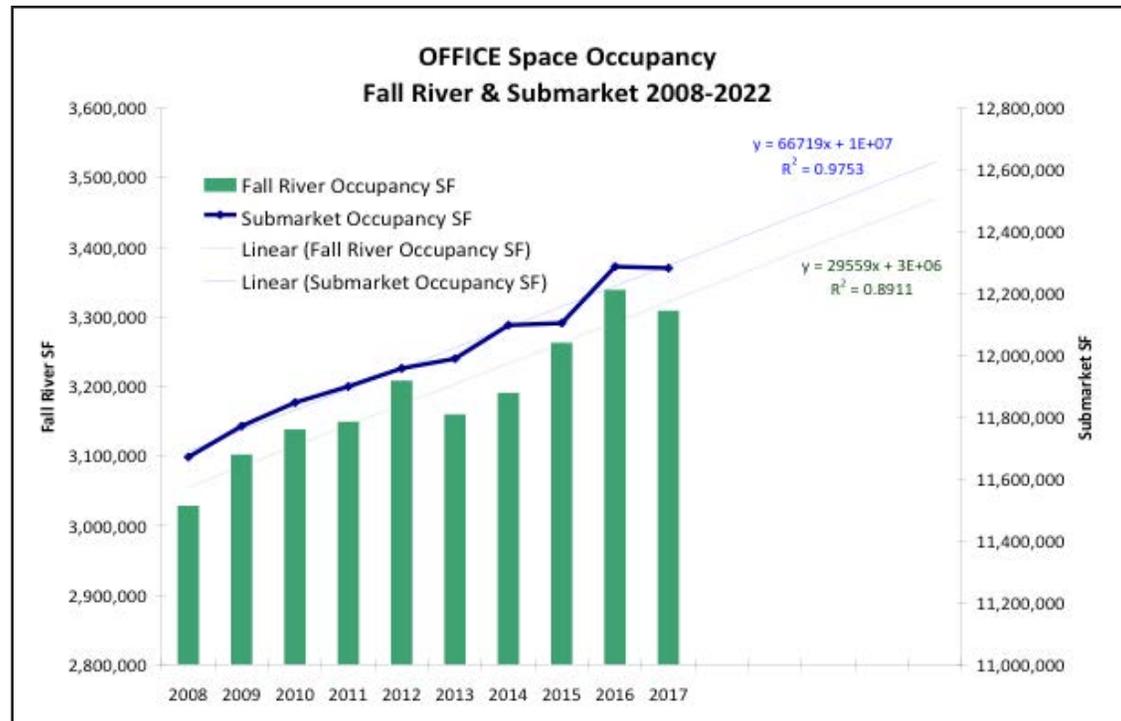


Figure 1-6: Office Space Occupancy Fall River and Submarket 2008 - 2022  
 Source: Co Star Property Information Systems, March 2017; and FXM Associates.

and Health Care Services. Almost all the Social Assistance activity is in Individual and Family Services.

A much smaller but growing sector in the City of Fall River is Educational Services. Some of this activity is also included in the office-using industries section below. *Figure 1-7* shows the total employment for city and county. Trends are positive for both, with a stronger R<sup>2</sup> at the city level than at the county.

As with retail and residential, this analysis calculates demand across both urban renewal areas. The difference in product – rehabilitation versus new construction – will help determine how much and what type of office is captured in each area.

Projected Growth in Occupancy in Medical & Total Office Space in Fall River				
	2017 Supply (SF)	2017-2022 Growth (SF)	Average Annual Growth (SF)	Annual % Growth
<b>Medical Office Space</b>	580,784			
Co Star Forecast Net Absorption		36,400	7,280	1.3%
2006 to 2017 Co Star Trend Line		86,666	17,333	3.0%
Employment Growth Trend Line				
<i>Jobs</i>	2,188	312	62	2.9%
<i>Space</i>	580,784	82,817	16,563	2.9%
<b>Average of Above Forecasts</b>		<b>68,628</b>	<b>13,726</b>	<b>2.4%</b>
<b>Total Office Space</b>	3,308,878			
Co Star Forecast Net Absorption		107,480	21,496	0.6%
2006 to 2017 Co Star Trend Line		222,988	44,598	1.3%
Employment Growth Trend Line				
<i>Jobs</i>	11,079	905	181	1.6%
<i>Space</i>	3,308,878	270,289	54,058	1.6%
<b>Average of Above Forecasts</b>		<b>200,252</b>	<b>40,050</b>	<b>1.2%</b>

*Table 1-2: Projected Growth in Occupancy in Medical & Total Office Space in Fall River*  
 Source: Massachusetts Department of Labor ES202 series; Co Star Property Information Systems; and FXM Associates. March 2017.

# Implementation Plan

The following tables list the actions associated with this Urban Renewal Plan, the parties responsible for their execution, and the time they are expected to occur. Phase I activities are scheduled for two to five years after the plan's adoption, Phase II activities are scheduled for five to 10 years after the plan's adoption, and Phase III activities are scheduled for 10 to 20 years after the plan's adoption.

The implementation of this Plan requires actions by the FRRA, of course, but also requires public action from the Planning Board and the City Council, especially in the early years of the plan.

In order for each identified group to be an effective partner, appropriate staffing and funding resources are required. While some of the capital costs for this project may be met by grants, loans, or bond issues, in general, operating costs for staff and other resources must be funded by the appropriate entity. The FRRA and the City must provide the required resources to fulfill their respective roles in the implementation of this Plan. **The proposed activities in this Plan will require an increase in staff for the City Planning Department.**

Section 6. Financial Plan provides more information about funding needs and strategies.

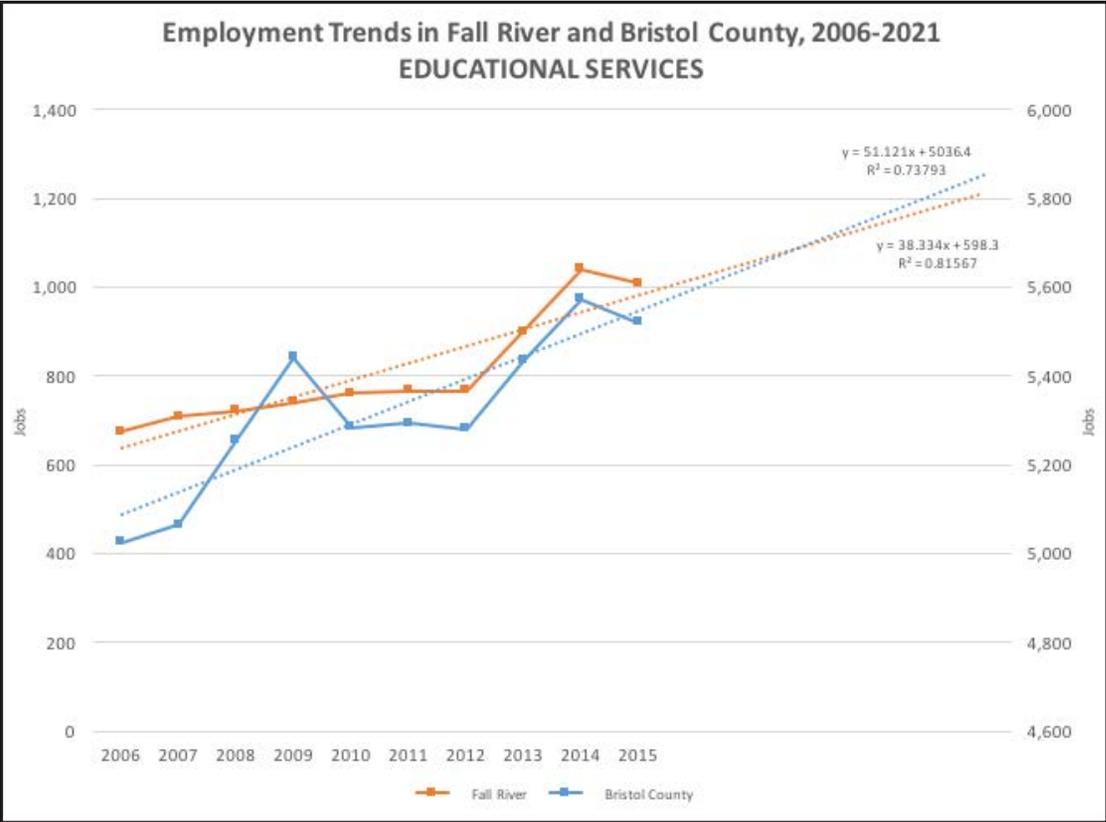


Figure 1-7: Employment Trends in Fall River and Bristol County, 2005-2021: Educational Services  
Source: Co Star Property Information Systems, March 2017; and FXM Associates.

### ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES

ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION	TIMELINE
Rebuild staffing levels in Planning Department to meet projected workload.	City Council	Phase I
Review progress and amend plan if necessary.	FRRA, Planning Board, City Council	Phase I, II, III
Apply for a MassDevelopment Transformative Development Initiative (TDI) Fellow.	FRRA, Planning Board, City Council, Fall River Office of Economic Development	Phase I

### REGULATORY ACTIVITIES

ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION	TIMELINE
Adopt zoning changes, including design guidelines and design review process.	FRRA,, Planning Board, City Council	Phase I
Undertake design review of all parcels developed within the boundary of this Urban Renewal Plan using the design guidelines identified in this Plan under <i>Section 4.3 Design Guidelines</i> .	FRRA, Planning Board	Phase I, II, III
Initiate Home Rule legislation to secure enough on- and off-premise liquor licenses to meet future demand.	FRRA, City Council, Licensing Board	Phase I

### ACQUISITION ACTIVITIES

ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION	TIMELINE
Acquire properties identified for acquisition along the Main Street corridor to meet goals of this Plan.	FRRA	Phase I
Acquire properties for the corridor plans that link the waterfront and the downtown.	FRRA	Phase I, Phase II
Acquire properties identified for the smaller infill projects in the neighborhoods.	FRRA	Phase II, Phase III
Continue acquisitions and project development for Main Street corridor.	FRRA	Phase II, Phase III



**DEVELOPMENT AND DISPOSITION ACTIVITIES**

ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION	TIMELINE
Develop relocation plans and identify preferred developers for acquisitions.	FRRRA	Phase I, II, III

**PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE ACTIVITIES**

ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION	TIMELINE
Continue streetscape improvements within the downtown.	City Council, Department of Community Maintenance	Phase I
Install wayfinding strategies for new traffic patterns, key locations within the downtown, and public parking.	FRRRA, City Council, Department of Community Maintenance, Traffic Department, Planning Board	Phase I
Implement recommendations of downtown traffic circulation and existing and projected parking needs. Consider amending plan if acquisitions for right-of-way improvements are required.	FRRRA, City Council, Department of Community Maintenance, Traffic Department, Planning Board	Phase I, II

**PLANNING ACTIVITIES**

ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION	TIMELINE
Undertake study for possible mixed-use parking/residential and business/retail development at the Third Street Parking Garage and Third Street flat surface parking lot.	FRRRA	Phase I
Undertake study of downtown traffic circulation and existing and projected parking needs.	FRRRA, Planning Board, City Council	Phase I
Undertake further planning and implementation of improvements to the proposed Center Street/Harborside Park/Green Street/Bank Street Streetscapes corridor as link between the waterfront and the downtown.	FRRRA, City Council, Planning Department	Phase I
Undertake study of possible development of a Historic Quequechan River Walking Trail, including public access to exposed river falls and banks, wayfinding signage, and interpretive panels.	FRRRA, City Council, Planning Department	Phase I
Evaluate need for acquisitions and development within the secondary corridors to meet goals of this Plan.	FRRRA	Phase III

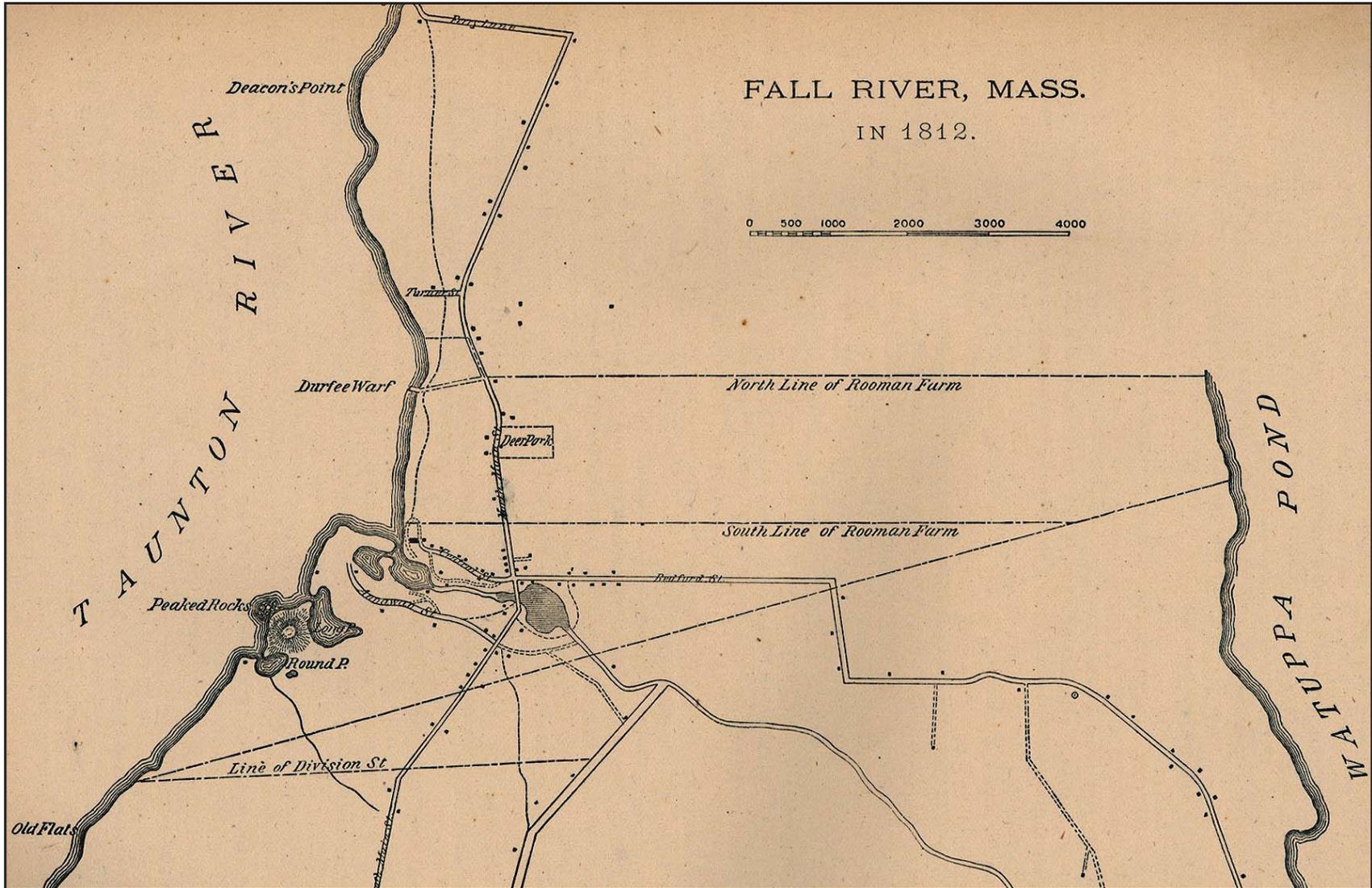


Figure 2-1: Fall River, Mass in 1812  
 Source: Census Office, Part II. 1812 Map of Fall River, 1887

## 2. Characteristics

### 2.1 Description of the Plan Area

#### History and Development

Fall River's western edge is defined by the Taunton River. North Watuppa and South Watuppa bound it on the east. The Quequechan ("Falling River") River cuts across the lobe defined by these bodies, flowing westerly from the ponds to the Taunton River over a course that once involved eight small waterfalls. Much of Fall River's history centers around its plentiful water resources and the industry they enabled.

First populated by the Pokanoket Wampanoag tribe, Fall River incorporated in February of 1803. Fall River's first textile mill, Globe Manufacturing, was built eight years later. More textile mills followed: Fall River Manufactory in 1813, Troy Cotton and Woolen Manufactory in 1813, and the Pocasset Manufacturing

	URBAN RENEWAL AREA	CITY OF FALL RIVER	PERCENTAGE OF CITY
Total Number of Properties	438	~22,300	2.0%
Total Acres	~198	~26,100 acres	0.8%
Total Valuation	~\$226.3 million	~\$6.265 billion	3.6%

Table 2-1: Downtown Urban Renewal Plan Urban Renewal Area Snapshot

Company in 1821.<sup>1</sup> These mills brought residents to the city and by 1830, Fall River's population had climbed from the two dozen families that were present at its incorporation to 4,159.<sup>2</sup> These years saw the construction of Fall River's early street grid, consisting of Bedford, Central, Annawan (now Anawan), North Main, and South Main streets;<sup>3</sup> the Fall River Branch Railroad, which connected the city to New Bedford and later to Bridgewater; and the Fall River Line, a luxurious steamship that provided service between Boston and New York City.

1. Fenner, Henry Milne. History of Fall River Massachusetts. Fall River Merchants Association, 1911.

2. *ibid.*

3. Census Office, Part II. 1812 Map of Fall River, 1887.

The textile industry in Fall River flourished through the 1800s and into the 1900s. In 1868, with 500,000 spindles, it overtook Lowell, Massachusetts as the leading textile city in the country. By 1872, Fall River had doubled this capacity. Mill development and subsequent population growth tapered after this point but hardly stalled. By 1876, the city produced one-sixth of all cotton and one-half of all print cloth production in New England. President William Howard Taft attended the city's "Cotton Centennial" in 1911. The population at that time was 119,295, and the city had 3,943,036 spindles in operation.<sup>4</sup>

4. Fenner, Henry Milne. History of Fall River Massachusetts. Fall River Merchants Association, 1911.



Figure 2-2: Fall River Downtown Urban Renewal Area

In its tremendous success, the city was also very exposed. Other industries had not developed in Fall River. In 1918, after World War I ended, the US economy began to slow, then the Great Depression hit. By 1940, the number of textile companies in Fall River had declined to 17, which was 32 fewer than had existed in 1917. Smaller companies, focused on garment production, partially offset this loss. These businesses survived until the 1990s, when globalization and foreign competition led them to relocate or shut down.<sup>5</sup>

In the decades following the decline of the garment industry, a few large infrastructure projects have drastically altered the city. Between 1959 and 1966, the Federal and State governments constructed Interstate 195 (I-195) and Route 79. I-195 follows the path of the Quequechan River, and its construction involved the channelization and burial of most of the exposed waterway. This course also split the city's downtown, located in the area immediately adjacent to the Quequechan

5. Koorey, Stefar, *Fall River Revisited*, Arcadia Publishing, 2012.

River, in two. Meanwhile, Route 79, which runs roughly perpendicular to I-195, and roughly parallel to the Taunton River, separated residential communities located on higher ground from the waterfront.

Today, Fall River's population is 88,712, approximately 31,700 less than at its peak in 1920. The median household income and level of educational attainment for this population are both around half of what is seen statewide.<sup>6</sup> The city's proud history is evident in the numerous mill buildings that dot its landscape. Some of these buildings have been masterfully adapted to new uses, but others remain partially-occupied or vacant, absent a local economy that is robust enough to support redevelopment. The city's housing stock – a majority of which was constructed during the mill boom – is starting to show signs of wear.<sup>7</sup> I-195 affords great access to the region, but inhibits movement locally. City Hall, which rests on top of this roadway, pieces

6. MassInc, *Gateway Cities Profile: Fall River*, 2008.

7. UMass Dartmouth Public Policy Center and Representative Carole Fiola, *Towards an Evidence-Based Housing Policy in Fall River*, MA, 2016.

the downtown together slightly, but the area is still largely fractured. Route 79, meanwhile, is scheduled for major construction that will remove the roadway's elevation, enhancing connection to the waterfront and freeing up about ten acres of land for new development. This area will undergo significant change in the coming years.

## Location and Access

Fall River is located in southeastern Massachusetts, just north of Rhode Island, and next to the Massachusetts towns of Westport, Dartmouth, Freetown, and Somerset. It is accessible by several major roadways: I-195, which connects Fall River to Providence, RI; US Route 6, which runs from Providence, RI to Cape Cod; and State Routes 79 and 24, which run north to Boston.

This urban renewal area is located in the city's downtown, which is close to, but not touching, the banks of the Taunton River. Cherry Street delineates the Area's northern boundary;

Morgan Street, generally, delineates its southern boundary. The eastern edge of the Area is defined by Plymouth Avenue and 13th Street; Pearl Street marks the western edge south of I-195, while Green Street marks the western edge north of I-195.

I-195 cuts through the center of the urban renewal area, dividing it into two approximately equal sections; one to the north and one to the south. The roadway is below-grade in relation to the downtown and the connection across it is provided by four at-grade overpasses. These are located at Milliken Boulevard, South Main Street, 3rd Street, and 4th Street. Fall River's City Hall is located between South Main and 3rd Street, on a plaza situated directly over the interstate. I-195 ascends as it proceeds eastwards, and by Bow and 7th Streets, it is on the same plane as the surrounding area. The only way to traverse it within the urban renewal area after this point is at Plymouth Avenue, which passes under the roadway 0.3 miles east of the 4th Street connection. Circulation within the downtown, including one-way patterns, are discussed further in *Section 2. Eligibility*.

In addition to its roadways, the urban renewal area is also defined by its topography; land in Fall River descends at a moderate grade just west of South and North Main streets. At best, this terrain generates excellent views of the

water from the downtown, but at worst, isolates the area from the rest of the city.

## Transit Infrastructure and Service

Public transportation, while limited, is also available. The Southeastern Regional Transit Authority (SRTA) operates ten bus routes within Fall River and two intercity routes, one to the Swansea Mall, and a second to New Bedford. All buses leave from the newly-constructed Louis D. Pettine Transportation Center, which is located off Borden Street, between Fourth and Fifth. These buses provide reasonable coverage of the city geographically but hours of operation could be improved; many bus routes stop at 6 pm and none run on Sundays. The 2016 *Regional Transportation Plan* notes the lack of a Fall River-Taunton intercity route; presently, riders must travel via New Bedford.

In addition to these public bus options, the city is also served by Megabus and Peter Pan. Megabus operates a route from Fall River to UMass Dartmouth, Fairhaven/New Bedford, Providence, RI, New Haven, CT, and New York, NY. Peter Pan offers service to Boston, Hyannis, Newport and Providence, RI, and New York, NY.

There is no railroad infrastructure within the urban renewal area, however, a state-owned rail

corridor is located immediately to the west. The state-owned rail corridor does not currently have passenger rail service or a passenger rail station, but passenger service, two stations, and a layover facility are planned for Fall River as part of the South Coast Rail (SCR) project. This future service would connect Fall River to Boston via the Middleborough/Lakeville Commuter Rail Line in the first phase of service, which is planned for completion in 2022. At full build out, Fall River is planned to receive service through an extension of the Stoughton Line.

Neither of the stations planned for Fall River will be located within the downtown urban renewal area, however, they both will be nearby. Fall River Depot will be constructed during Phase 1 along the portion of the rail corridor bound by Old Colony Street and Pearce Street, which is about a half-mile from the closest point in the urban renewal area. Battleship Cove Station will not be constructed until Full Build. More details on the South Coast Rail Project are available in *Section 3.4 Local Survey and Conformance with the Municipality's Comprehensive Plan*.

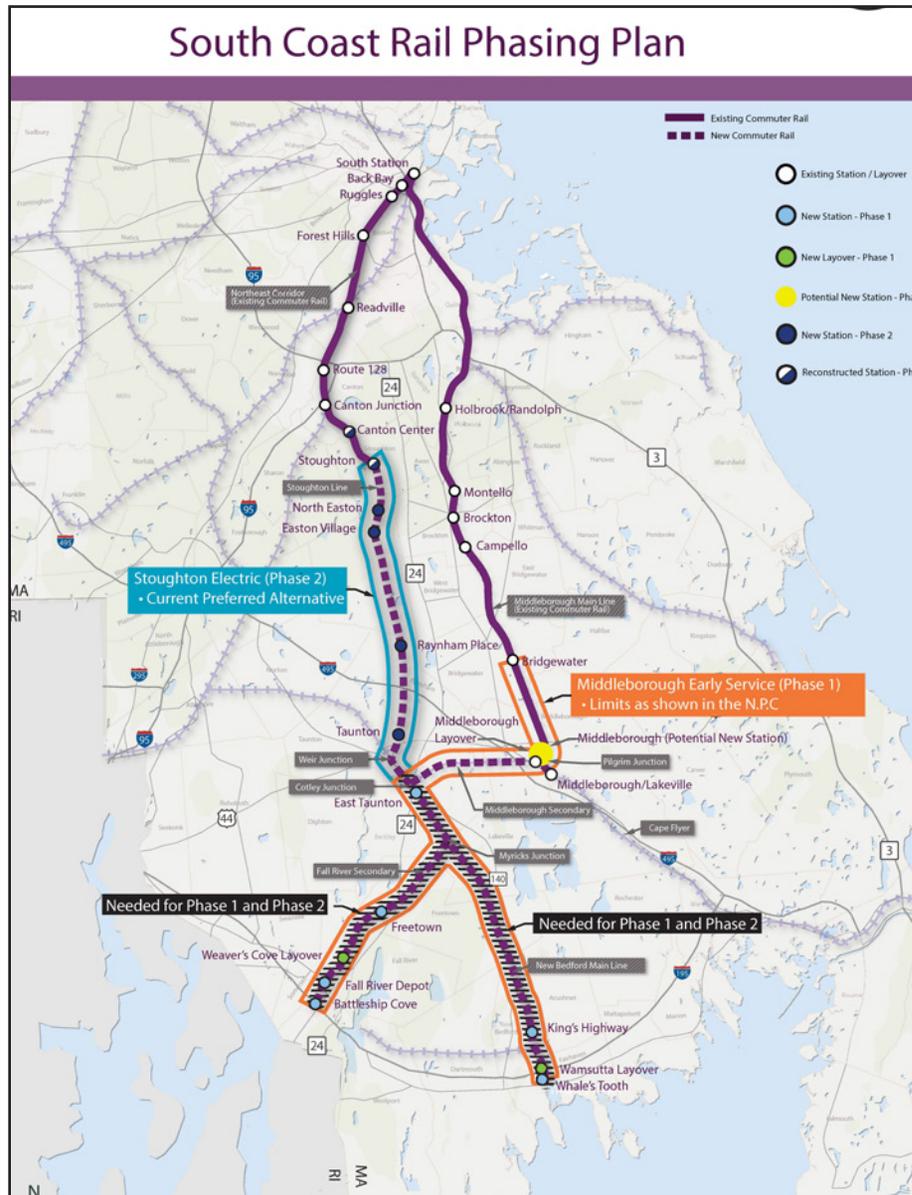


Figure 2-3: South Coast Rail Phasing Plan

Source: South Coast Rail Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report, January 2018

## Environmental, Natural and Cultural Resources, Regulated Areas

The urban renewal area was screened for the following environmental, natural and cultural resources, and regulated areas:

- Topography
- Surface water resources
- Other natural resources
- Title 5 setback zone
- Floodplains
- Utilities

*Section 3. Eligibility* describes other conditions, such as hazardous risk sites, historic properties, and Environmental Justice areas.

### Topography

The downtown urban renewal area sits above the waterfront with grades rising steeply from the waterfront to North and South Main Streets. Most of the downtown is 100 feet or more above sea level and the waterfront, and many of the streets are noticeably sloped, with the exception of the area around City Hall and

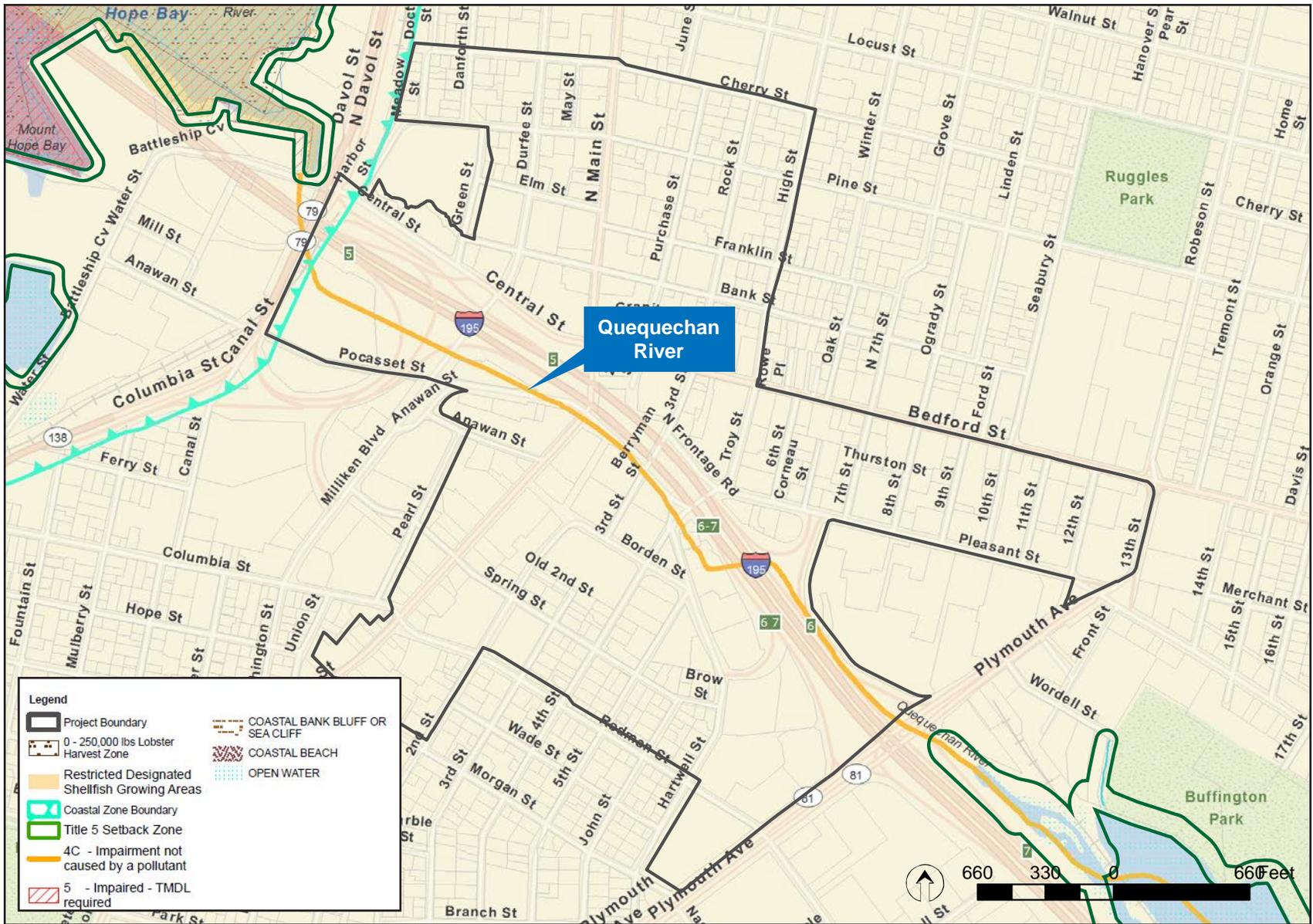


Figure 2-4: Natural Resources

between Bedford and Pleasant Streets. (See *Figure 2-6*).

### Surface Water Resources

The Quequechan River is the only water body within the downtown urban renewal area. The river flows in a northwesterly direction from South Watuppa Pond through the downtown and into to the end of the Taunton River at Mount Hope Bay at Heritage State Park/Battleship Cove. The river is almost entirely underground throughout the urban renewal area, having been placed in a series of culverts when I-195 was constructed. (See *Figure 2-4*.) The falls are exposed in two locations: east of Ironworks Mill No. 6 and 7 and in the Courtyard of that complex. (See *Figure 2-4*).

### Other Natural Resources

As an urbanized area, the downtown urban renewal urban renewal area does not contain any significant natural resources areas.

### Title 5 Setback Zone

The area surrounding the Quequechan River is likely exempt from regulation by Massachusetts Title 5 (The Massachusetts Rivers Protection Act Chapter 258 of the Acts of 1996) because the river is in a culvert throughout most of the urban renewal area. The statute which provides guidance on the definition of a river and therefore applicability of the Rivers Act is below:

Massachusetts 310 CMR 10.58(2)(a)3

“Where a river runs through a culvert more than 200 feet in length, the riverfront area stops at a perpendicular line at the upstream end of the culvert and resumes at the downstream end.”

### Floodplains

Despite the urban renewal area's proximity to North and South Watuppa Ponds and the Taunton River, the elevation and topography of the area provides protection from most flooding. As shown in *Figure 2-5*, just the western-most

portion of the urban renewal area falls within the High-Risk Coastal Area (VE) zone.

### Utility Infrastructure

Water and sewer service are available throughout the urban renewal area and are provided by the City of Fall River. Electric service is provided by National Grid. Natural gas service, provided by Liberty Utilities, is available within the urban renewal area.



Figure 2-5: Flood Zones in the Urban Renewal Area

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## 2.2 Required Maps

*Section 2.2 Required Maps* contains all the maps of the project area mandated by 760 CMR 12.02(2). They are as follows:

- Boundaries of the project area and topography (*Figure 2-6*)
- Property lines and the footprint of buildings and parking areas on each lot, existing and proposed (*Figure 2-7*)
- Existing uses and the current zoning (*Figures 2-8, 2-9, 2-10*)
- Proposed land uses, public improvements, and other activities (*Figure 2-11: Proposed Uses, Figure 2-12: Public Improvements, and Figure 2-13: Proposed Zoning*)
- All thoroughfares, public rights of way, and easements, existing and proposed (*Figure 2-14*)
- Parcels to be acquired (*Figure 2-15*)
- Lots to be created for disposition (*Figure 2-16*)
- Buildings to be demolished (*Figure 2-17*)
- Buildings to be rehabilitated (*Figure 2-17*)
- Buildings to be constructed (*Figure 2-17*)

The Plan Boundary includes the full right-of-way for all streets that define its borders.

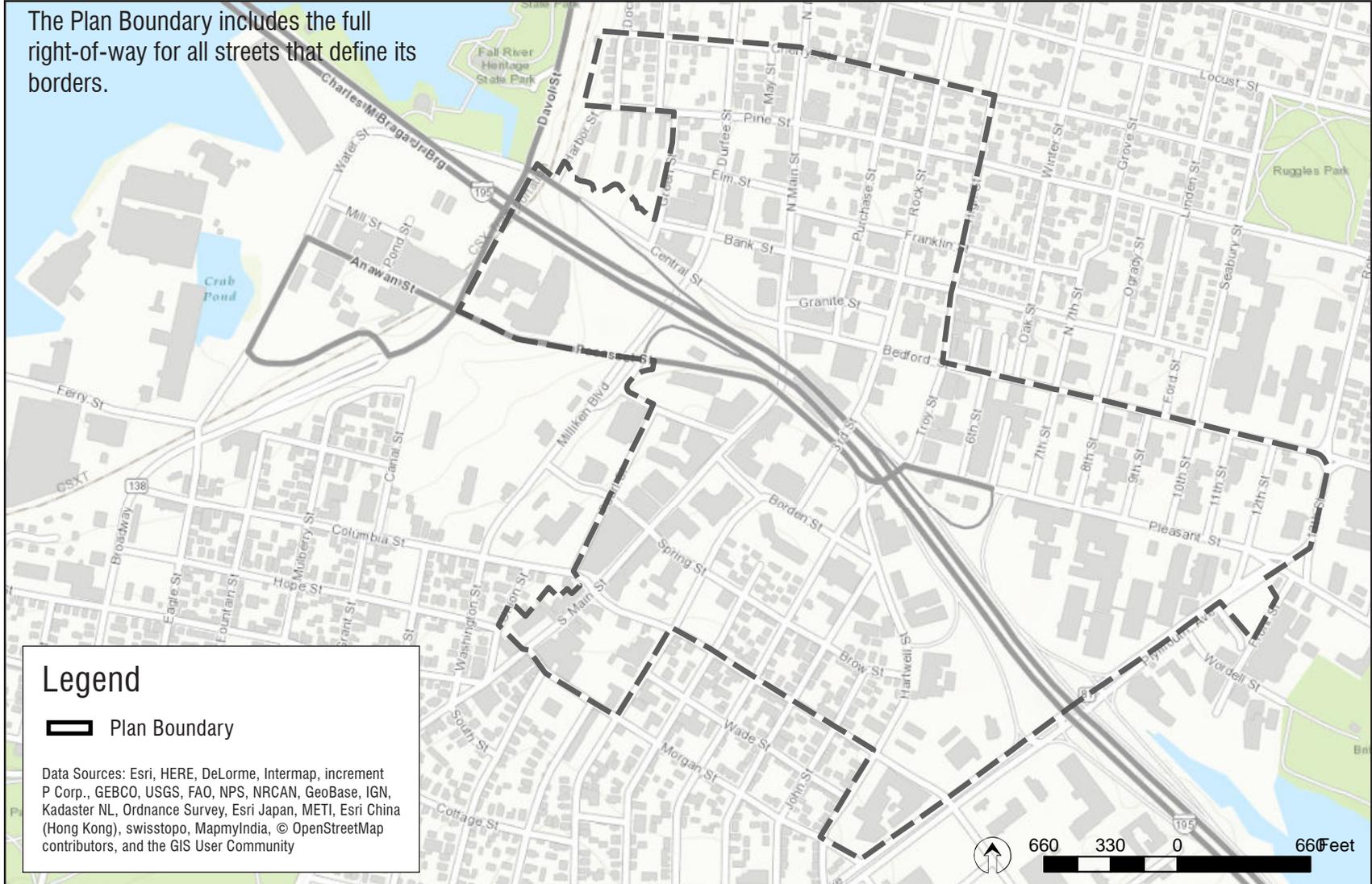


Figure 2-6: Boundaries of the Project Area



Figure 2-7: Property Lines, Building Footprints, and Parking

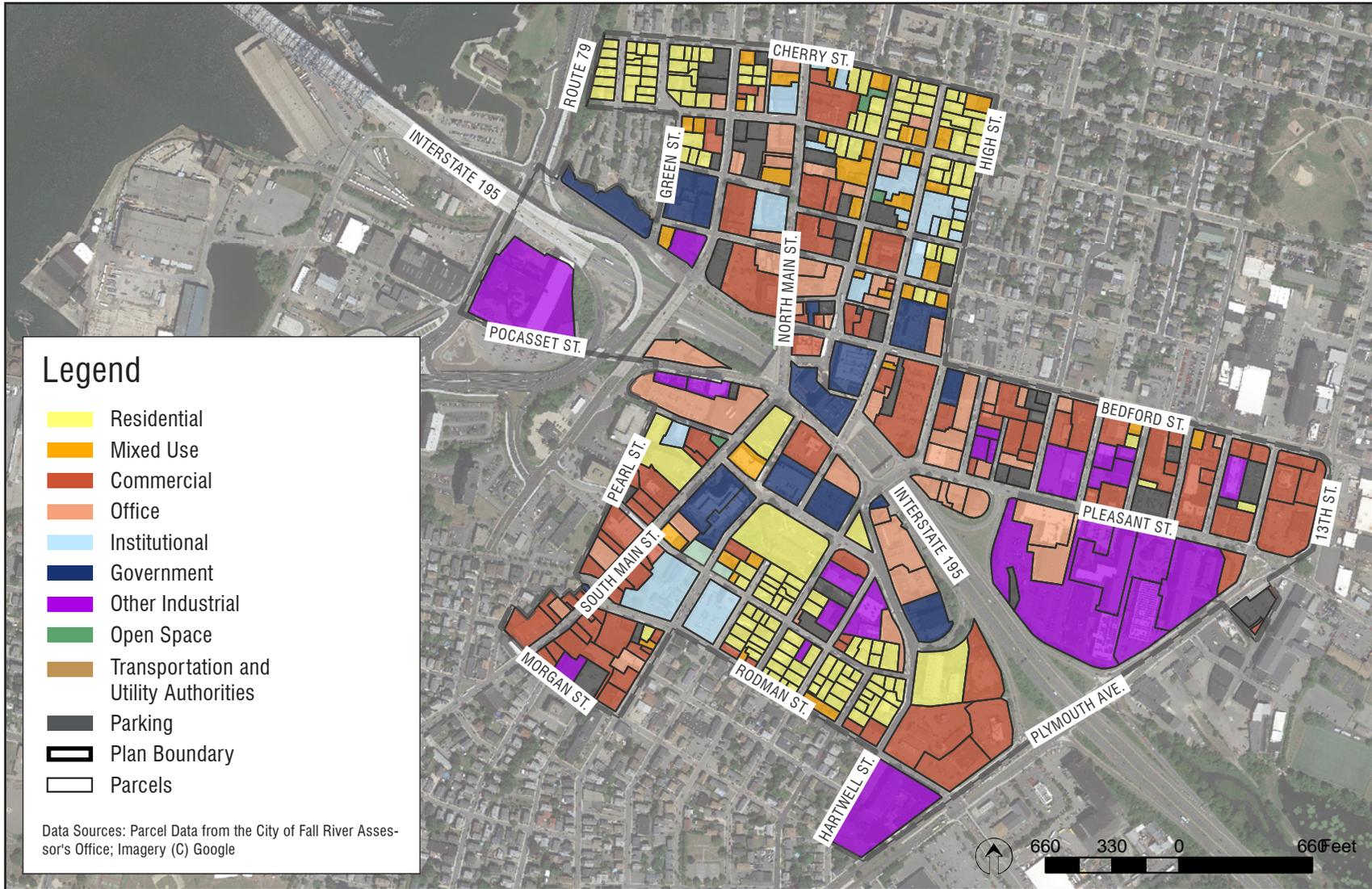


Figure 2-8: Existing Uses (See Section 2.3 Existing Land Use for more information.)

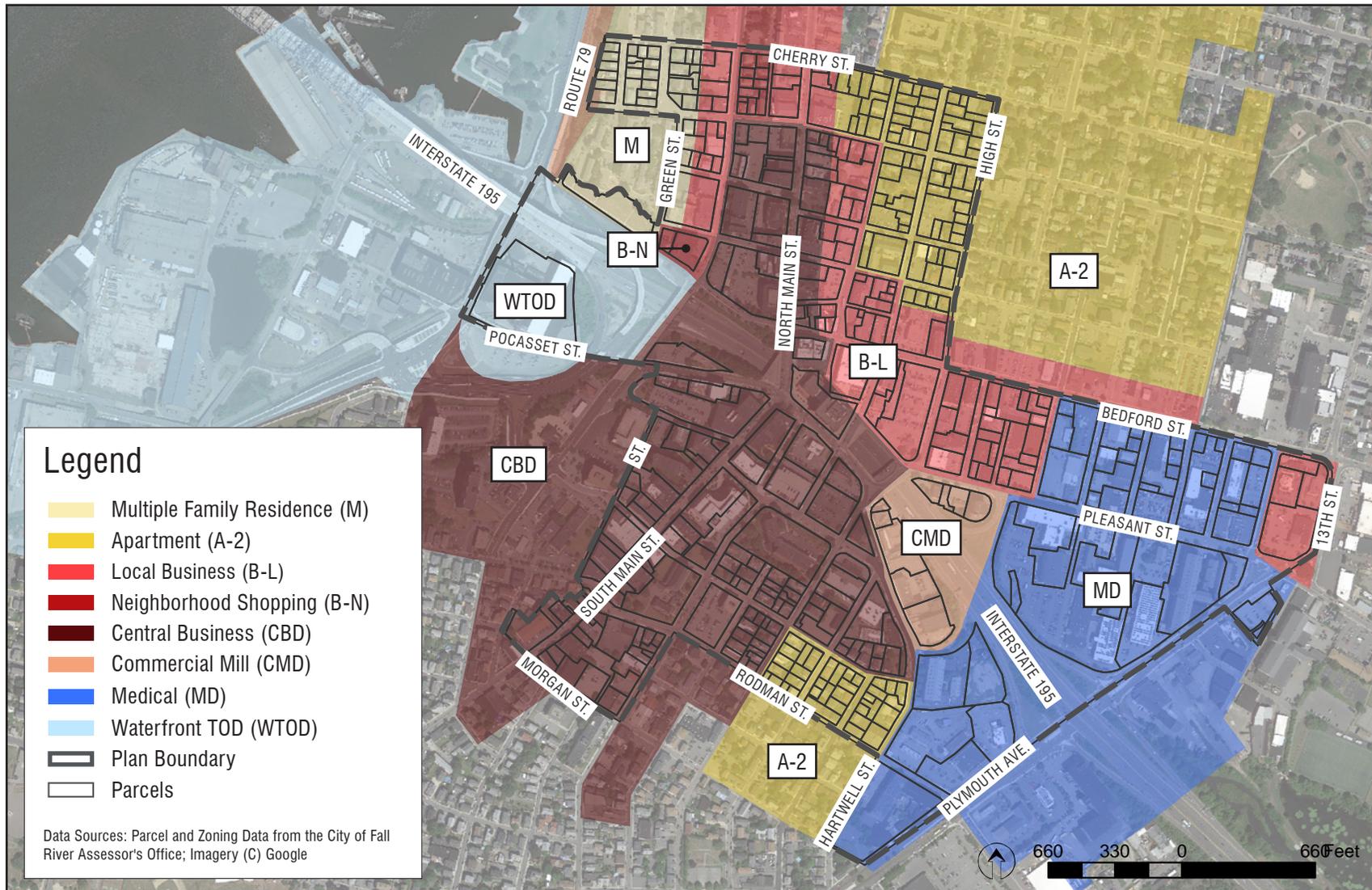


Figure 2-9: Current Zoning (See Section 2.4 Current Zoning for more information.)

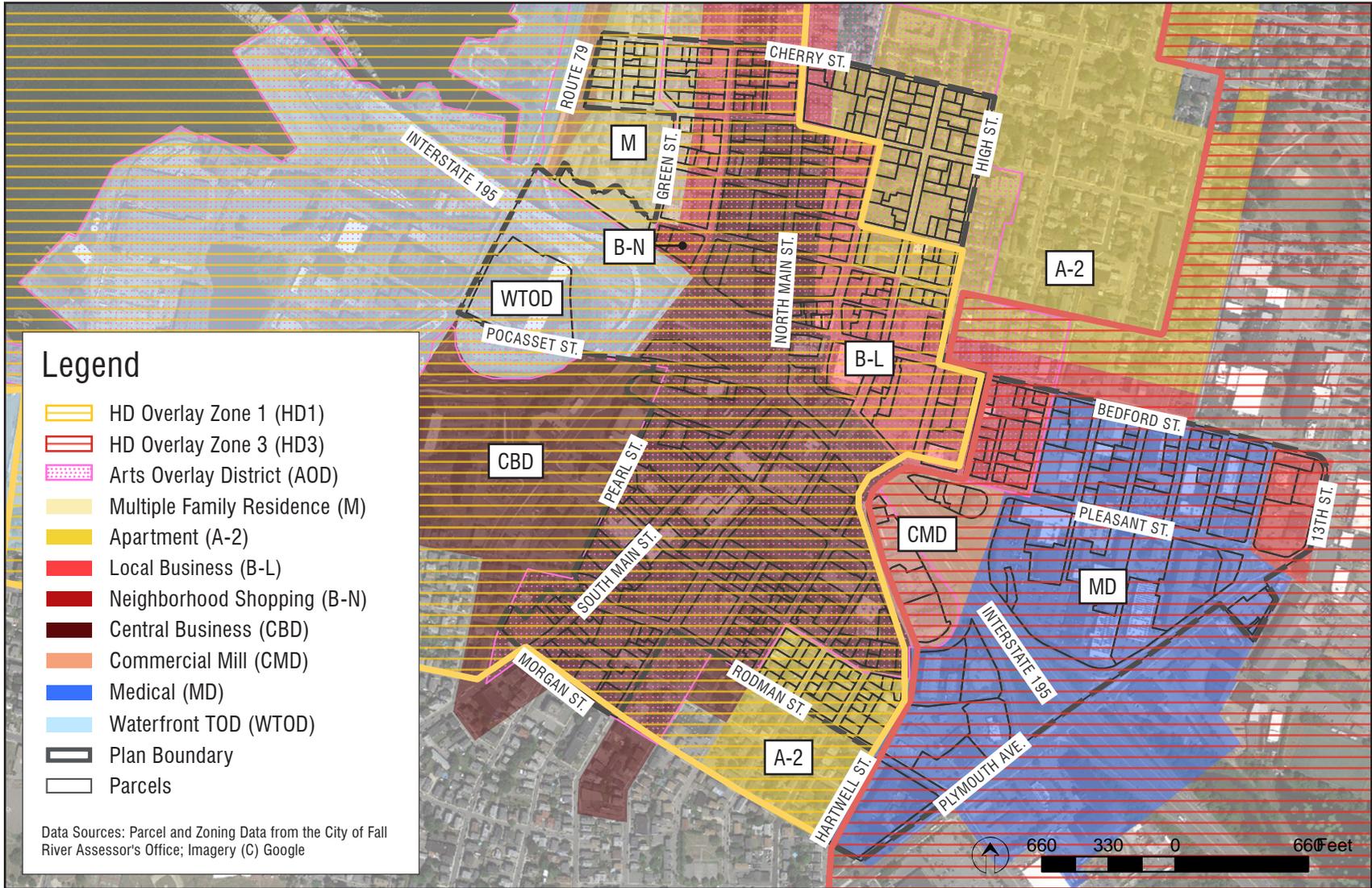


Figure 2-10: Current Zoning including Arts Overlay District (See Section 2.4 Current Zoning for more information.)



Figure 2-11: Proposed Uses (See Section 2.5 Proposed Land Use for more information.)



Figure 2-12: Public Improvements (See Section 9. Public Improvements for more information.)

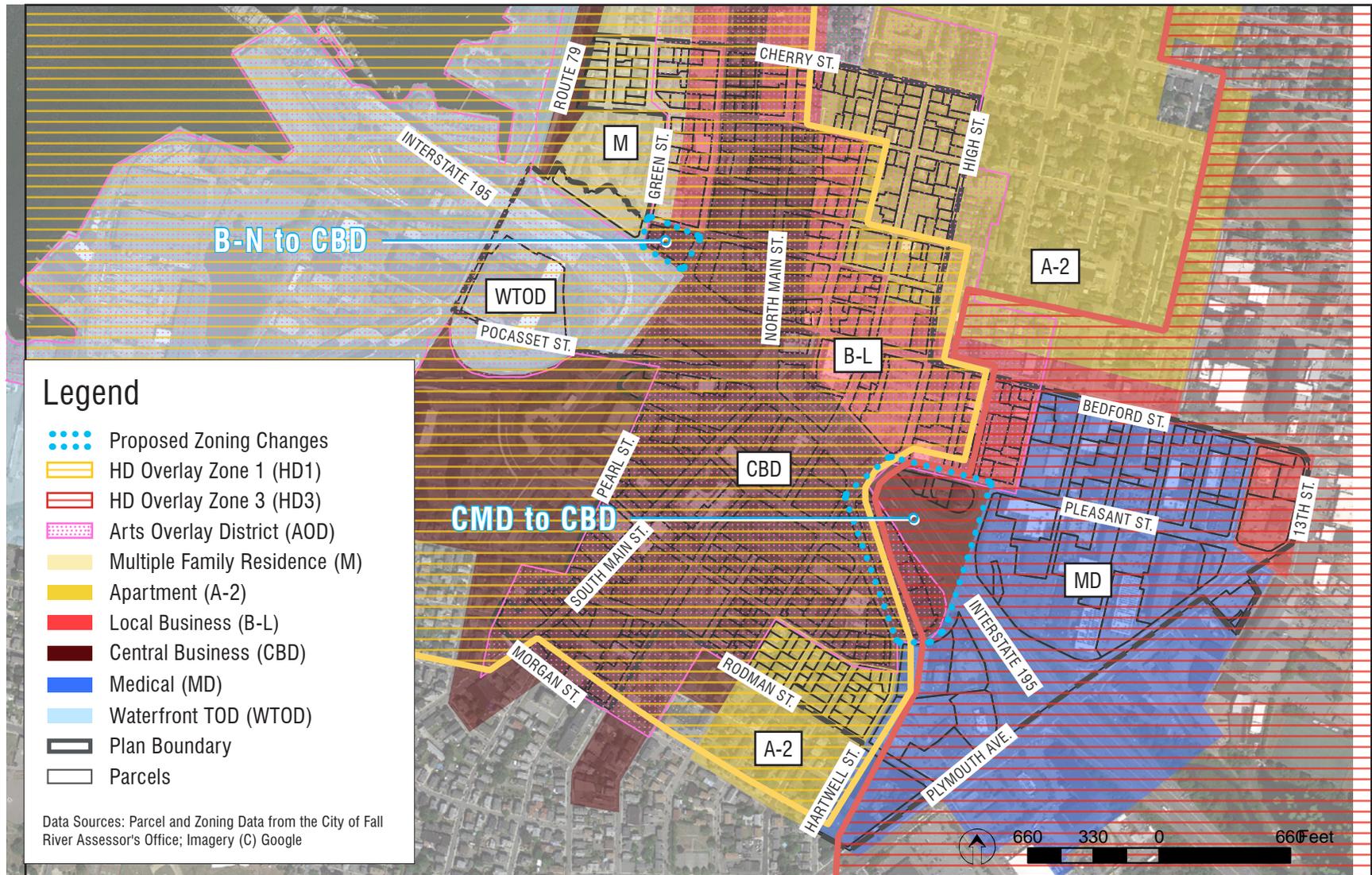


Figure 2-13: Proposed Zoning (See Section 2.6 Proposed Zoning for more information.)



Figure 2-14: Thoroughfares and Rights-of-Way (There are no easements, existing or proposed, within the urban renewal area.)

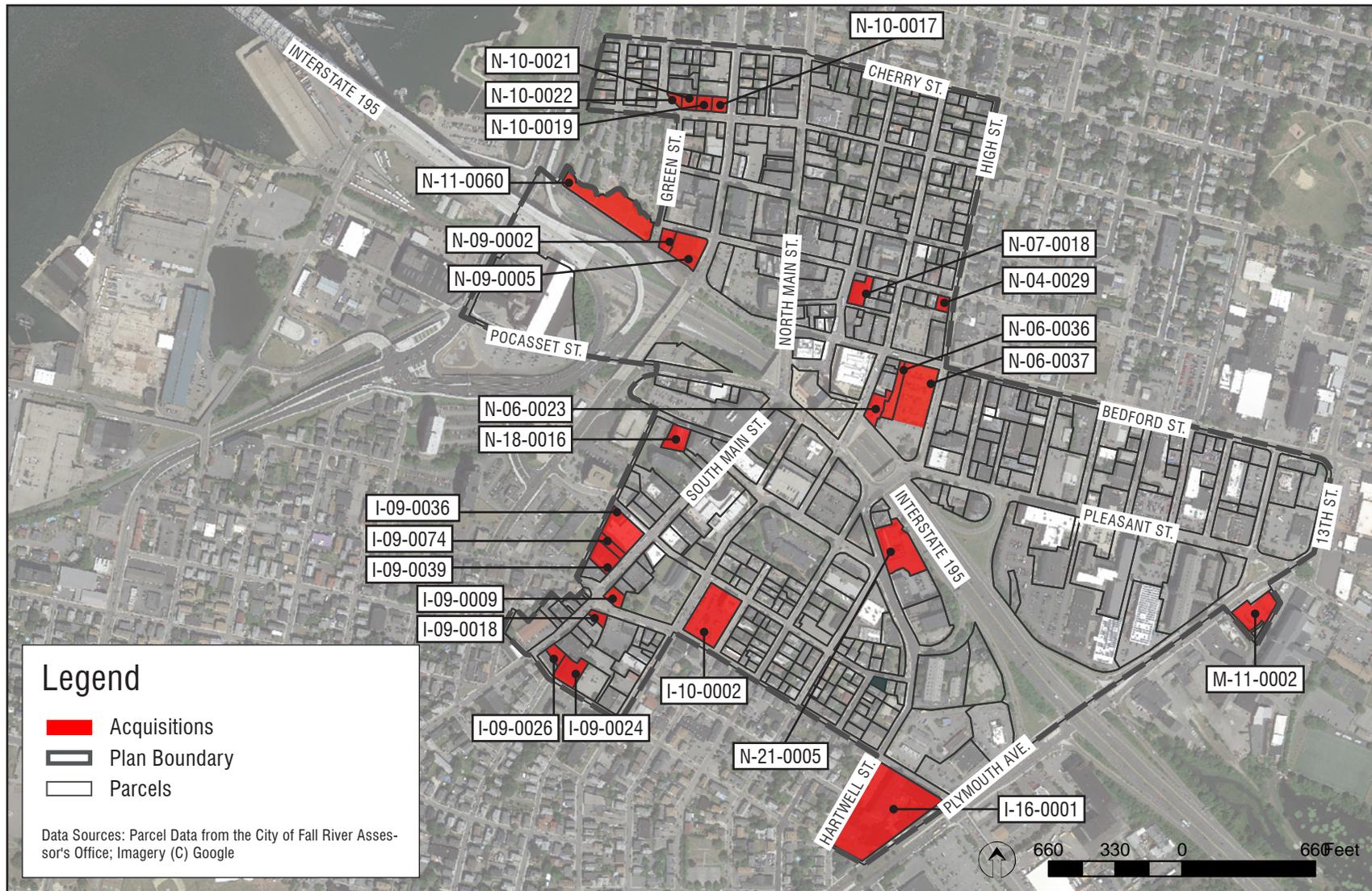


Figure 2-15: Parcels to be Acquired

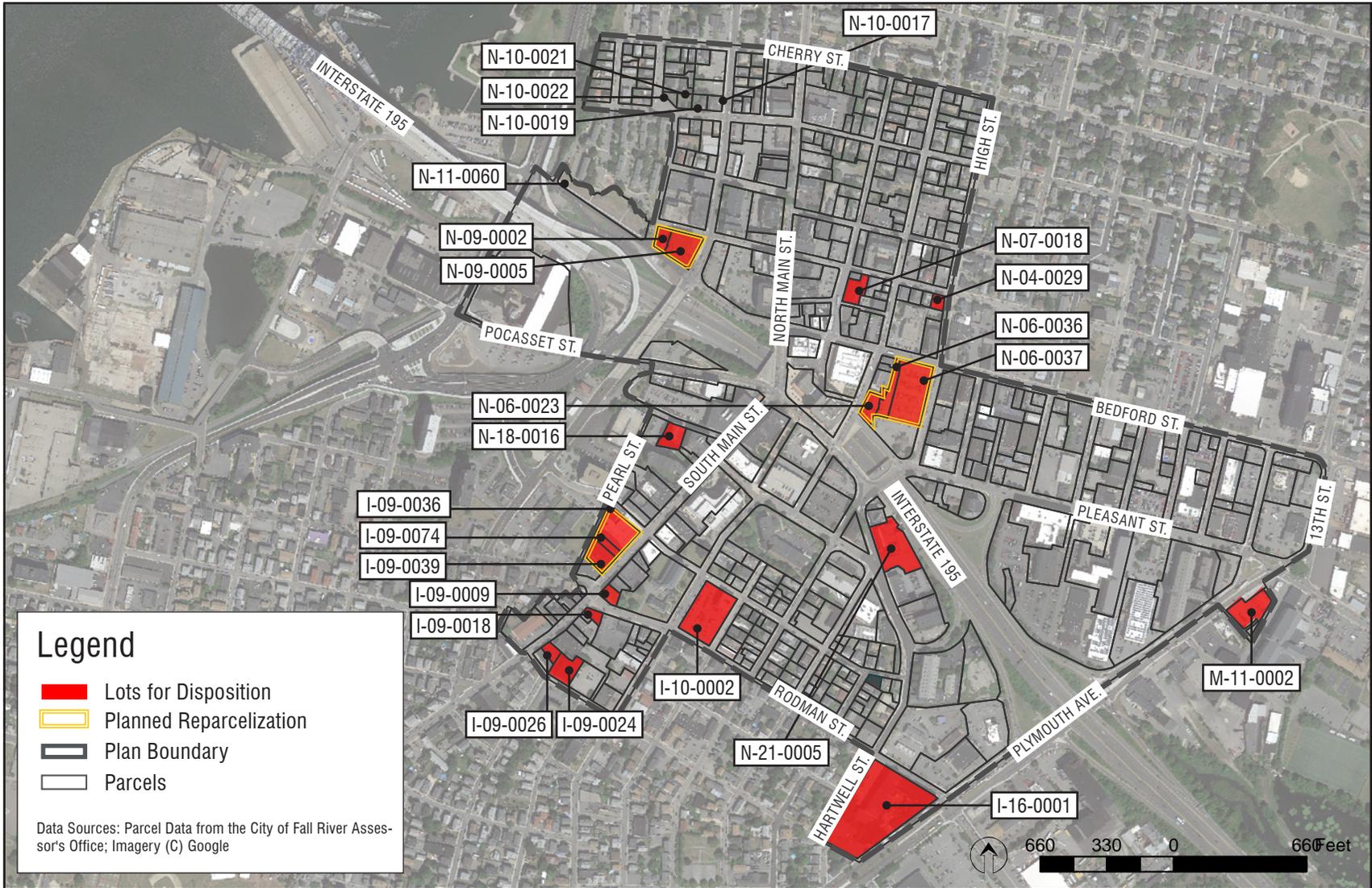


Figure 2-16: Lots to be Created for Disposition

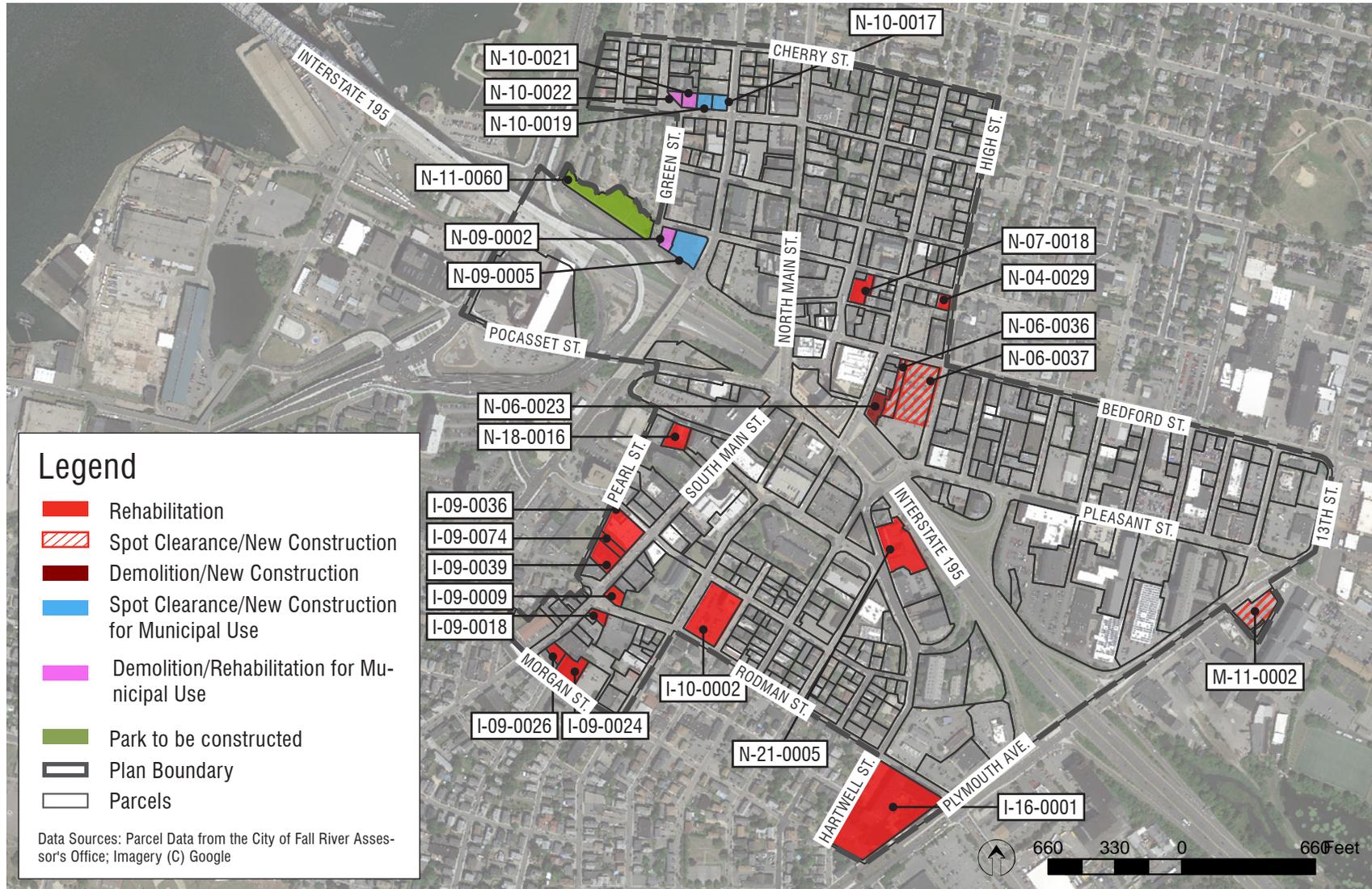


Figure 2-17: Buildings to be Demolished, Rehabilitated and/or Constructed (See Section 3.3 Clearance and Rehabilitation for more information.)

PARCEL ID	ADDRESS	OWNER	PROPERTY SIZE (ACRES)	ASSESSED VALUE (2017)	PLANNED ACTIONS
I-09-0009	308 South Main Street	River Town Reality LLC	0.14	\$561,100	Acquisition, Disposition
I-09-0024	350 Morgan Street	Group Teresa LLC	0.78	\$249,400	Acquisition, Disposition
I-09-0026	390 South Main Street	Group Teresa LLC	0.12	\$356,000	Acquisition, Disposition
I-09-0018	31, 33, & 47 Rodman	Almeida Nelson; Almeida Ana P	0.64	\$314,100	Acquisition, Disposition
I-09-0036	251 & 255 South Main Street	Antonio Costa Property Management LLC	0.58	\$389,300	Acquisition, Disposition
I-09-0039	285 & 299 South Main Street	Dosouto Nuno	0.32	\$376,100	Acquisition, Disposition
I-09-0074	277 South Main Street	Yee Sherm Jv	0.13	\$261,500	Acquisition, Disposition
N-18-0016	403 Anawan Street	Fall River Roman Catholic Bishop of	0.28	\$608,200	Acquisition, Disposition
I-10-0002	467 Spring Street	Fall River Roman Catholic Bishop of; St Marys	0.96	\$983,900	Acquisition, Disposition
I-16-0001	427 Plymouth Avenue	Patel Realty Inc	2.95	\$1,206,000	Acquisition, Disposition
N-04-0029	289 Bank Street	Lechan Harry M; Lechan Sylvia B	0.10	\$235,400	Acquisition, Disposition
N-07-0018	37 Purchase Street	Hyland House Inc	0.27	\$456,000	Acquisition, Disposition
N-06-0023	38 Third Street	JLD LLC	0.26	\$356,200	Acquisition, Disposition
N-06-0036	SS Bedford Street	MKM Management LLC	0.28	\$178,200	Acquisition, Disposition
N-06-0037	82 Troy Street	People Incorporated	1.11	\$318,300	Acquisition, Disposition
N-09-0002	238 & 244 Central Street	Chodkowski Paul	0.16	\$114,700	Acquisition and/or Disposition
N-09-0005	10 Durfee Street	Mart Inc Midtown Motor	0.51	\$917,730	Acquisition and/or Disposition

Table 2-2: List of Parcels for Acquisition



	CURRENT LAND USE	PROPOSED LAND USE	ESTIMATED RELOCATION	PHASE	
	Partially vacant (Classified as small retail and services stores)	Rehabilitation, redevelopment to active ground floor uses with office, residential, or light manufacturing above	2 businesses	I/II	
	Vacant (Classified as other storage, warehouse, and distribution facilities)			I/II	
	Partially vacant (Classified as general office building)		1 business	I/II	
	Small retail and services stores		1 business	I/II	
	Partially vacant (Classified as small retail and services stores)		2 businesses	I/II	
	Vacant (Classified as general office buildings)			I/II	
	Partially vacant (Classified as small retail and services stores)		1 business	I/II	
	Vacant (Classified as charitable services)			I/II	
	Vacant (Classified as educational - private)		Rehabilitation, redevelopment to small-scale residential and mixed-uses.		I/II
	Partially vacant (Classified as warehouses for storage of manufactured products)		Rehabilitation, redevelopment to retail and residential use or office	3 businesses	I/II
	Vacant (Classified as 4-8 unit residential)	Rehabilitation, redevelopment to small-scale residential and mixed-uses.		I/II	
	Charitable services			I/II	
	Vacant (Classified as office building)			I/II	
	Parking lot	Clearance, demolition, and/or rehabilitation to retail, residential, or office use		I/II	
	Developable commercial land			I/II	
	Classified as parking garage; contains retail/office uses	Develop for open space/recreation or dispose of for redevelopment	6 businesses	I/II	

PARCEL ID	ADDRESS	OWNER	PROPERTY SIZE (ACRES)	ASSESSED VALUE (2017)	PLANNED ACTIONS
N-10-0017	164 Durfee Street	I and F Inc	0.13	\$178,000	Acquisition
N-10-0019	120 Pine Street	Martins Teresa D; Paradise Stacy M	0.13	\$180,900	
N-10-0021	102 Pine Street	Alexander William	0.13	\$80,000	
N-10-0022	Pine Street	Travis Justin Louis A; Alexander Michelle Lee	0.07	\$78,300	
N-11-0060	Central Street	Fall River City Of	1.10	\$195,800	Transfer to FRRA
N-21-0005	82 Hartwell Street	Massachusetts Electric Co; c/o Property Tax Dept	0.93	\$403,300	Acquisition, Disposition
M-11-0002	34 Plymouth Avenue	Samuels Realty Co Inc; c/o Polo Center	0.51	\$195,700	
	<b>Total</b>		<b>12.6</b>	<b>\$9,194,130</b>	

Table 2-2: List of Parcels for Acquisition (Continued)

	ACQUISITIONS	TOTAL URBAN RENEWAL AREA	PERCENTAGE OF URBAN RENEWAL AREA
Total Number of Properties	24	438	5.5%
Total Acres	~13	~198	~6.6%
Total Valuation	~\$9.2 million	~226.3 million	~4.1%
Estimated Displacements*			
# of Businesses	18		
# of Residential Units	0		

Table 2-3: Snapshot of Parcels for Acquisition

\*These estimates are based on a visual survey of the parcels to be acquired conducted in December 2017. Some parcels were not fully visible from the public way. An internet search has been used to confirm the presence of existing businesses when that information is available. The number of residential units is an estimate based on the description of the land use in the City Assessors' database. See Section 10. Relocation for additional information about the relocation process and the building inventory and Appendix I. Parcel Inventory for additional information about these parcels.

	CURRENT LAND USE	PROPOSED LAND USE	ESTIMATED RELOCATION	PHASE
	Small retail and services stores	Parking	2 businesses	I/II
	Vacant (Classified as 4-8 unit residential)		I/II	
	Developable residential land		I/II	
	Potentially developable residential land		I/II	
	Vacant, Selectmen, or City Council	Public park		I/II
	Vacant (Classified as general office building)	Rehabilitation, redevelopment to small-scale residential and mixed-uses.		I/II
	Parking lot		I/II	

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## 2.3 Existing Land Use

As shown in *Figure 2-8*, the urban renewal area exhibits a diversity of land uses: residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional.

In general, residential uses are clustered along the northern edge of the urban renewal area and in a grouping within the southern quadrant. Commercial parcels, in contrast, are located everywhere but these zones. These parcels do appear with increased density along South and North Main Streets, where they loosely form a commercial corridor. Mixed-use parcels are uncommon; those that do exist border residential and commercial parcels, producing a gradient of use.

Around 20 of the 438 parcels in the urban renewal area (~5%) are classified as industrial. For the most part, these parcels lie in the eastern portion of the area, concentrated along Bedford Avenue and Pleasant Street. Institutional uses

are almost entirely located in the western portion of the urban renewal area.

As part of this planning effort, the consultant team conducted an independent inventory of uses downtown. This work, which was largely motivated by a desire to catalogue vacancies within the urban renewal area, necessarily involved surveying uses. This inventory identified use as it related to the building's occupant. For instance, a commercial-type space with a social service tenant would be designated as institutional; a mill building (industrial) occupied by a gym and offices would be designated as commercial. The inventory also took a more granular look at the downtown, enabling a more thorough picture of land use.

On the whole, the resulting map reflects the land use depicted in *Figure 2-8*, which was generated using ESRI ArcGIS and data provided by the City. There are, however, a few differences: First, it shows that South Main Street and North Main Street have distinct character. South Main Street is largely inhabited by retail, cafes,

restaurants, and commercial-type spaces; North Main Street is largely inhabited by office and institutional uses. It also revealed an increased number of mixed-use properties, notably the Academy Building at the corner of South Main and Pocasset, and a series of smaller buildings on the Bedford Avenue/Pleasant Street corridor. Further, it showed a decreased number of industrial uses in the downtown. The results of this analysis pertaining to vacancy are discussed in *Section 2. Characteristics* and available in *Appendix K. Downtown Inventory*. Data on building conditions can be found in *Table 3-4: Comparison of Recorded Building and Lot Conditions* and *Appendix I*.

## Open Space

With the exception of two plazas – both of which are less than 0.1 acres in size – and the Old Second Street Pedestrian Walkway, the Fall River downtown urban renewal area is without designated, public, open space (*Figure 2-18*).

This deficit within the immediate area is partially offset by a large number of parks in the surrounding region; as depicted in *Figure 2-19*, nearly all parcels within the urban renewal area are within a five-minute walk of open space. The quality, distribution, and accessibility of these spaces, however, must also be taken into account. For example, park A, the outlying park closest to the southern-most portion of the urban renewal area, is now a paved parking lot; park B is a gravel lot that is absent of any furnishings save for a single trash can, and park C is just an expanded median strip. The parcels in the northern portion of the urban renewal area, which are near Battleship Cove and Fall River Heritage State Park, are isolated from these amenities by limited crossings along Route 79 and a shift in elevation.

Though it is not categorized as such by the Fall River Tax Assessor's database (it is categorized as "vacant, Selectmen, and City Council"), the urban renewal area does have one additional open space. This parcel, which is owned by the City, is 200 feet wide and 1,000 feet long

and is referred to in Planning Department studies as "Harborside Park." Apart from a series of sidewalks, it is without development. This parcel is significant due to its large size, but also because of its position; located in the western-most tip of the urban renewal area, it runs at a moderate slope along the north side of Central Street towards the Taunton River. Thus, it presents tremendous opportunity to enhance the connection between the downtown and waterfront areas. Acquisition of parcels along Central Street between Green and Durfee Streets (see *Figure 2-15*) for expansion of Harborside Park would significantly enhance both the physical and visual connection between the waterfront and the downtown, as well as provide open space for nearby proposed residential development.

The land between the Bank Street Armory and the Public Library presents great potential for providing public open space that could supplement programming conducted by these two public institutions and enhance their setting. Relegating this area to its current use

for parking would represent a significant missed opportunity.

Even if these outlying spaces were in good condition, Fall River's downtown would still benefit from increased open space. Open space helps develop community, improve public health, and increase neighborhood safety. Green open space has the added benefit of mitigating urban heat island effect and decreasing stormwater runoff. Open space is also known to benefit the local economy by boosting property values, attracting and retaining residents, and increasing municipal revenues.<sup>1</sup> For all these reasons, developing open space is a critical path in improving Fall River's downtown.

1. BREC. "General Info". Accessed June 2, 2017. [www.brec.org/index.cfm/page/1808/n/153](http://www.brec.org/index.cfm/page/1808/n/153)

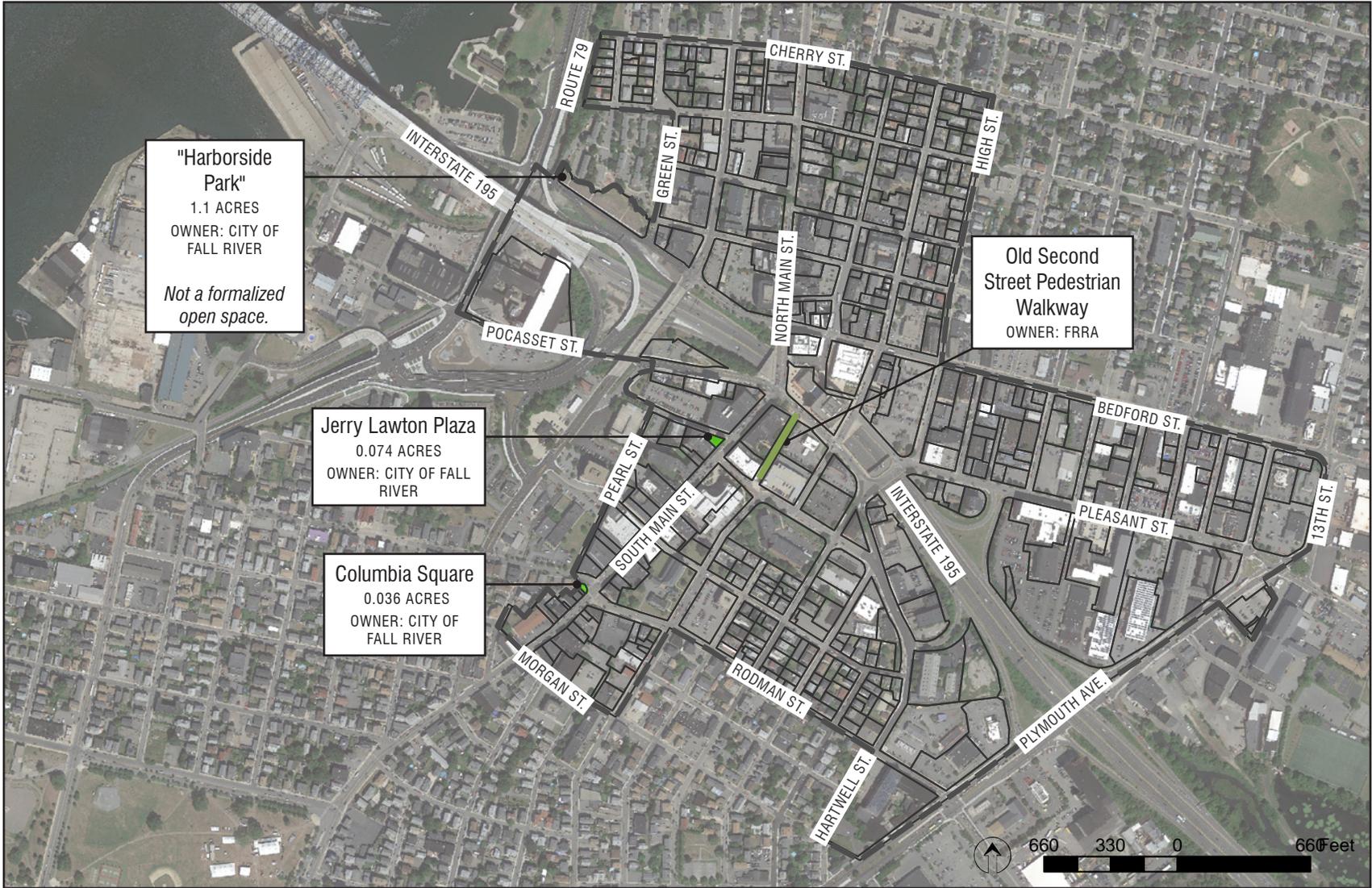


Figure 2-18: Parks within the Urban Renewal Area

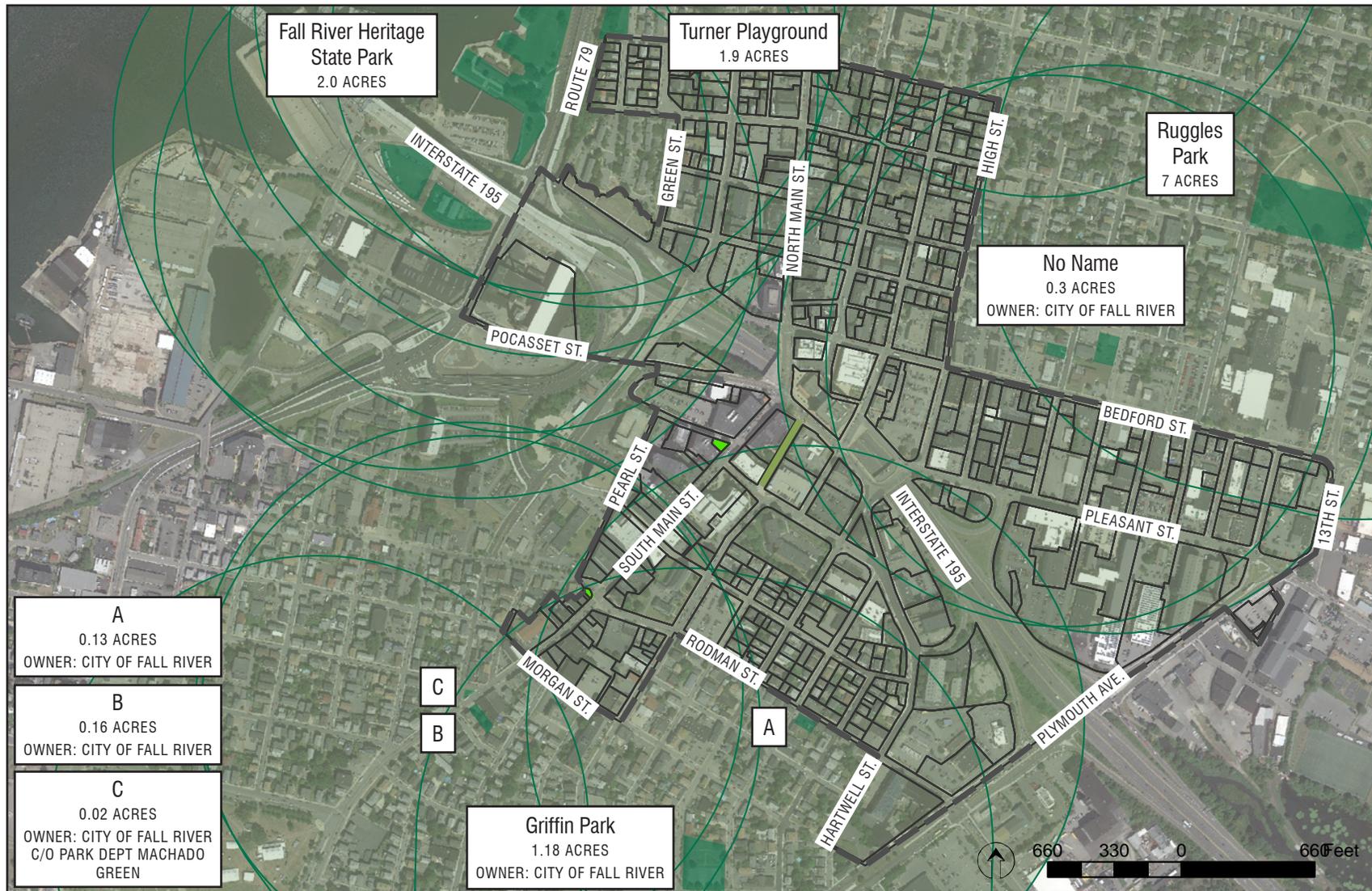


Figure 2-19: Parks within a Five-Minute Walk of the Urban Renewal Area

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## 2.4 Current Zoning

As shown in *Figure 2-9*, the urban renewal area for the Downtown Urban Renewal Plan is composed of eight zoning districts: two that are residential, four that are business, one that is industrial, and one that promotes transit-oriented development. All eight districts permit religious, educational, and municipal uses, bicycle and pedestrian paths, and pedestrian parks and plazas by-right, and allow radio and television transmission stations with a special permit. Apart from these similarities, they differ in the following ways:

- Multiple Family Residence District (M) – This district permits single- to six-family residences and all related accessory uses. Small retail operations and funeral establishments are allowed by special permit.
- Apartment District (A-2) – This district allows all types of residential uses, including senior congregate housing,

boarding houses, bed and breakfasts, and hotels and motels. Residential accessory uses are also allowed. The A-2 district's other regulations are identical to those of the M-district: small retail operations and funeral establishments must obtain a special permit.

- Central Business District (CBD) – This district allows high-density residential uses (20 units and above) and most retail, restaurant, and consumer service uses; with the exception of bars (which require a special permit), kennels, and body art establishments (which are both prohibited), these uses are allowed by-right. Automotive sales, car washes, parking lots, radio and television studios, offices, call centers, and visual and performing art spaces are also permitted.
- Neighborhood Shopping District (B-N) – This district's zoning restrictions are identical to those of the CBD with the following exceptions: auto repair stations, gas stations, self-storage facili-

ties, and artist lofts are allowed by-right; auto body shops are allowed by special permit; and residential uses of any size are excluded.

- Local Business District (B-L) – With the exception of kennels (which the B-L district allows by-right) and self-storage facilities (which the B-L district prohibits), this district perfectly replicates the permissions set forth by the B-N for utilities, telecommunications, public service, office, and industrial uses. The B-L district diverges from the B-N district in respect to residential, automotive, and arts uses; the B-L district permits low-density residential uses and sheds, requires a special permit for gas stations, and excludes all arts uses.
- Medical District (MD) – This district is much more restrictive than the other business zones (CBD, B-N, and B-L) in the urban renewal area. This zone only permits small retail operations, service businesses, restaurants, banks, ATMs,

parking lots, radio and television studios, offices, research and development industrial spaces, and data processing and storage centers. Senior congregate housing is the only residential use allowed, but it requires a special permit.

- Commercial Mill District (CMD) – This district is the only industrial zone within the urban renewal area. This district allows most retail, restaurant, and consumer service uses (bars and body art establishments require a special permit; veterinary establishments, kennels, and funeral establishments are prohibited), and most industrial uses (indoor recycling and water-dependent uses are prohibited). Residential uses larger than one-unit are allowed by special permit.
- Waterfront and Transit Oriented Development District (WTOD) – This district allows high-density residential development (four units and above), institutional, recreational, and commercial uses, as well as industrial uses

in existence prior to September 2011. One parcel within the urban renewal area – American Printing Company/ Metacomet Mill site on Anawan Street – lies within this district.

In addition to these zoning districts, the urban renewal area has three overlay districts:

- Arts Overlay District (AOD) – This district promotes the expansion of art and culture in Fall River. Within the urban renewal area, it overlays the entire B-N and WTOD district and portions of the A-2 district, the B-L district, CBD, and CMD. This district permits high-density residential development and allows a subset of institutional and commercial uses. Notably, it is the only district which permits bars by-right. Arts uses like art schools, dance and photography studios, carpentry shops, visual and performing arts spaces are permitted in this area.

- Waterfront/Downtown Market Rate Housing Incentive Zone (HD 1) – The State's Housing Development Incentive Program (HDIP) offers tax incentives to developers of market rate, multi-family housing in pre-established zones in Gateway Cities. Both HDIP zones and development projects must be approved by DHCD. There are two tax incentives that are made available to developers through the program: (1) "a local-option real estate tax exemption on all or part of the increased property value resulting from improvements", and (2) a "State tax credit for Qualified Project Expenditures (QPEs) that are awarded through a rolling application process." HDIP zones support the work of this Urban Renewal Plan by making development that might otherwise be financially infeasible possible. Fall River has defined an overlay district to delineate the boundaries of its HDIP Zone, referred to in its application to DHCD as the Waterfront/Downtown Market

Rate Housing Incentive Zone and in Fall River's zoning code as the Housing Development Overlay District (HD). This zone permits all uses in whatever zone it overlays and states that buildings in the district may be "altered, enlarged, or reconstructed" for market-rate housing (110% AMI) and typical accessory uses. There are no dimensional regulations associated with the HD zone. The Waterfront/Downtown Market Rate Housing Incentive Zone will expire on January 1, 2034, 20 years from the date of DHCD's approval.

- Central Market Rate Housing Incentive Zone (HD3) – Fall River's second HDIP Zone, the Central Market Rate Housing Incentive Zone, or HD3, was approved by DHCD on May 10, 2016 and will expire on May 10, 2036. This zone abuts the existing HD1 zone.

Dimensional standards vary by district, and while many districts share regulations, no singular regulation is consistent across the

urban renewal area, and no district has identical regulations to another. This high variability is eased by the fact that districts with similar dimensional regulations are generally adjacent to one another. For example, the CBD abuts the B-L district. Both districts share a minimum lot area of 5,000 square feet, a minimum frontage and width of 50 feet, and minimum side and rear yards of 10 feet. Similarly, the B-L, M-D, and CMD, which all touch, share a maximum building height of 80 feet and 6 stories.

All eight zones share parking and loading requirements. The number of spaces required is dictated by use, however, so districts that allow uses with significant parking requirements (for example, retail businesses and hospitals) will have more parking than districts where uses with less intensive parking requirements are dominant.

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## 2.5 Proposed Land Use

As shown in *Figure 2-11: Proposed Uses*, the urban renewal area will continue to be composed of a variety of uses. This Plan aims simply to increase the vibrancy of the existing area by facilitating the transformation of partially-vacant and vacant buildings and lots into occupied, productive spaces. A mixed-use area is ideal for a downtown as it helps activate the area for most parts of the day and increases pedestrian activity. Parcels on the map identified as mixed-use are buildings that have a combination of commercial and residential uses within their structure. Mixed-use buildings are a one component of a mixed-use area.

More details about the further development of this mixed-use district are available in *Section 4. Plan Objectives*.

## 2.6 Proposed Zoning

### District Boundaries

While they are positioned in a manner that minimizes disruption, justification for eight different zones within the 198 acre urban renewal area is challenging. The two residential districts (M and A-2) are well-defined from each other, as the M district functions as a medium-density residential area and the A-2 district functions as a high-

density residential area. Both districts work to ease the transition from the downtown to the lower-density residential areas that surround it. The CMD, WTOD, and the AOD all similarly advance unique purposes. There is, however, a high-degree of consistency in use regulations between three of the business districts (CBD, B-L, B-N).

As shown in *Figure 2-13*, this Plan recommends that the area in the downtown that is currently within the B-N district be incorporated into the adjacent CBD. This option is preferred over

the alternative – the incorporation of this area into the B-L district – as the CBD will better facilitate the development of the downtown into a higher-density, mixed-use area. The B-L district, in contrast, permits low-density residential uses, sheds, and kennels.

In practice, this modification is minor; this change would result in the inclusion of multi-family dwellings 20 units and above, and the exclusion of automotive repair stations/garages, gasoline filling stations, and auto body and paint shops and self-storage facilities. The CBD also prohibits art uses (with the exception of visual and performing art spaces), however, since this area falls within the AOD, a pathway exists for their inclusion, should interest arise. This conversion is similarly easy in terms of dimensional regulations. B-N is more restrictive than the CBD so any structure currently allowed will conform to the new standards. (See *Table 2-4* for further detail.)

The actions recommended by this Plan are best supported by this proposed re-zoning, however,

DIMENSIONAL RESTRICTION	B-N	CBD
Minimum Lot Area (Square Feet)	10,000	5,000
Minimum Frontage and Width (Feet)	100	50
Minimum Front Yard (Feet)	35	12
Minimum Side Yard (Feet)	35	10
Minimum Rear Yard (Feet)	25	10
Maximum Building Height (Feet)	45	45 or 70
Maximum Lot Coverage	-	-

Table 2-4: B-N and CBD Dimensional Restrictions

they do not require them to occur. There are two parcels (N-09-0002 and N-09-0005) that are listed for acquisition within the area proposed for conversion. The proposed actions for each one are open space/recreation or disposal for redevelopment. Landscaped pedestrian parks and plazas are permitted in all districts in Fall River and redevelopment, while more likely to occur under the re-zoning due to the option to build at a higher-density, could still occur, especially with assistance from the FRRA.

Separately, the City should also consider re-zoning the area of the downtown that is currently within the CMD. Unlike the proposed modification to the B-N district, which was largely motivated by redundancy, this change is desirable because the use regulations associated with the CMD are not consistent with a vibrant downtown. For example, this zone allows vehicle-intensive, low-density uses like distribution centers, warehousing, and wholesaling, while requiring that all residential uses obtain a special permit. Further, the CMD district within the downtown is isolated

between three business districts (CBD, B-L, and M-D), which will result in the creation of a small industrial enclave over the long-term, disrupting the continuity of the area.

This Plan suggests that the land currently within the CMD be incorporated into the adjacent CBD, as the CBD district best aligns with the long-term development goals for this area. As with the proposed transition from the B-N district to the CBD, this change should not be difficult. The land use map (see *Figure 3-1*) generated by the consultant team during their inventory shows that the buildings within the CMD are not used for industrial purposes (which would become non-conforming uses with re-zoning to the CBD) but are rather used for institutional or office purposes, or are vacant. The changes to dimensional restrictions are similarly easy, as the CBD is generally more lenient than the CMD. Two exceptions to this are the Minimum Front Yard requirement,

DIMENSIONAL RESTRICTION	CMD	CBD
Minimum Lot Area (Square Feet)	10,000	5,000
Minimum Frontage and Width (Feet)	100	50
Minimum Front Yard (Feet)	10	12
Minimum Side Yard (Feet)	10	10
Minimum Rear Yard (Feet)	10	10
Maximum Building Height	80 feet (or 6 stories, whichever greater)	45 or 70 feet
Maximum Lot Coverage	-	-

Table 2-5: CMD and CBD Dimensional Restrictions

which would increase from 10 to 12 feet, and the Maximum Building Height, which would increase from the greater of 80 feet or six stories to 45 feet. In this case, existing structures will be allowed to adhere to the restrictions associated with the CMD. As with the proposed conversion of the B-N to CBD, the actions recommended by this Plan are best supported by this proposed re-zoning, but do not require it to occur. There is one parcel, N-21-0005, located within the impacted area. The proposed action for this parcel is redevelopment, which can occur under any zone.

One potential disadvantage of this change is that it could dissuade further development. A primary concern is environmental contamination. While the consultant team's survey revealed just one brownfield (the New England Gas site), the area's industrial history suggests that further contamination may exist. If this is the case, the heightened costs associated with remediation to a standard acceptable for residential and office uses (relative to industrial) may serve to prohibit future development.

Existing building typologies, to a lesser extent, may also be a concern if they are determined to be unfit for desired uses. For these reasons, the City should carefully study the area before making its decision.

## Permitted Uses

A second test to apply to the urban renewal area's zoning concerns the use regulations and dimensional restrictions associated with each zone; in other words, whether each district will support the development of the downtown in a manner consistent with this Plan. The permitted uses within each District are generally in keeping with the goals of this Plan. One notable exception to this is the CBD. Due to this, and that only one area of the city has this zoning, the following changes are recommended by this Plan.

Permit the following excluded uses from the existing table of uses:

- Residential Uses:

- (i) Senior congregate Housing, including, but not limited to, assisted living facilities

Exclude the following permitted uses from the existing table of uses:

- Automotive and Related Uses:
  - (a) Automotive Sales, indoor and outdoor
  - (e) Car Wash

In addition, the City should consider the introduction of light-manufacturing uses to the CBD. For language, the City can look to South Norwalk, Connecticut's "boutique manufacturing" use for ideas. It reads:

Boutique manufacturing shall be allowed as an accessory use to a permitted retail use, subject to compliance with the following requirements:

- (a) Such boutique manufacturing shall not exceed three thousand (3,000) square feet in area and shall be directly related to the principal permitted retail use; and

- (b) All manufacturing activity, including the storage of all equipment, materials and products, shall occur inside the building; no outside storage of any kind is permitted; and
- (c) Only manufacturing processes that are not offensive with regard to noise, light, dust and odors, and which have the same or lesser impact that the principal retail use are permitted; and
- (d) The manufacturing activity shall occupy an area of no more than sixty percent (60%) of the gross floor area occupied by the associated retail establishment; and
- (e) The manufacturing process is principally artisan or fabrication by hand, and shall not include mass production or assembly line operations; and
- (f) The manufacturing operations will not generate excessive traffic volumes or truck traffic in excess of that typically occurring in the adjacent district

or neighborhood; all loading activity shall occur during daytime hours only.

Language like this will support additions to the vibrancy of the downtown and Fall River's new "Make it Here" brand. The actions recommended by this Plan are best supported by this proposed change to permitted uses but do not require it to occur. There are nine parcels listed for acquisition in the impacted area. They are N-18-0016, I-09-0036, I-09-0074, I-09-0039, I-09-0009, I-09-0018, I-09-0026, I-09-0024, and I-10-0002. This Plan identifies these parcels are for redevelopment.

## Parking Requirements

Throughout the planning process, Fall River community members told the consultant team that they felt there was a parking shortage downtown. As part of its response to these concerns, the consultant team undertook an analysis of the parking supply and potential demand. (See *Section 3. Eligibility* for the methodology and results.) Regarding

regulations, this analysis revealed that Fall River's parking requirements are not in a format consistent with the *Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Parking Generation* manual. Fall River, for the most part, bases its requirements on occupancy, while the ITE Manual uses square footage. At a minimum, the City should modify its parking requirements so that they are normalized by square footage. This conversion will allow for a more uniform comparison moving forward.



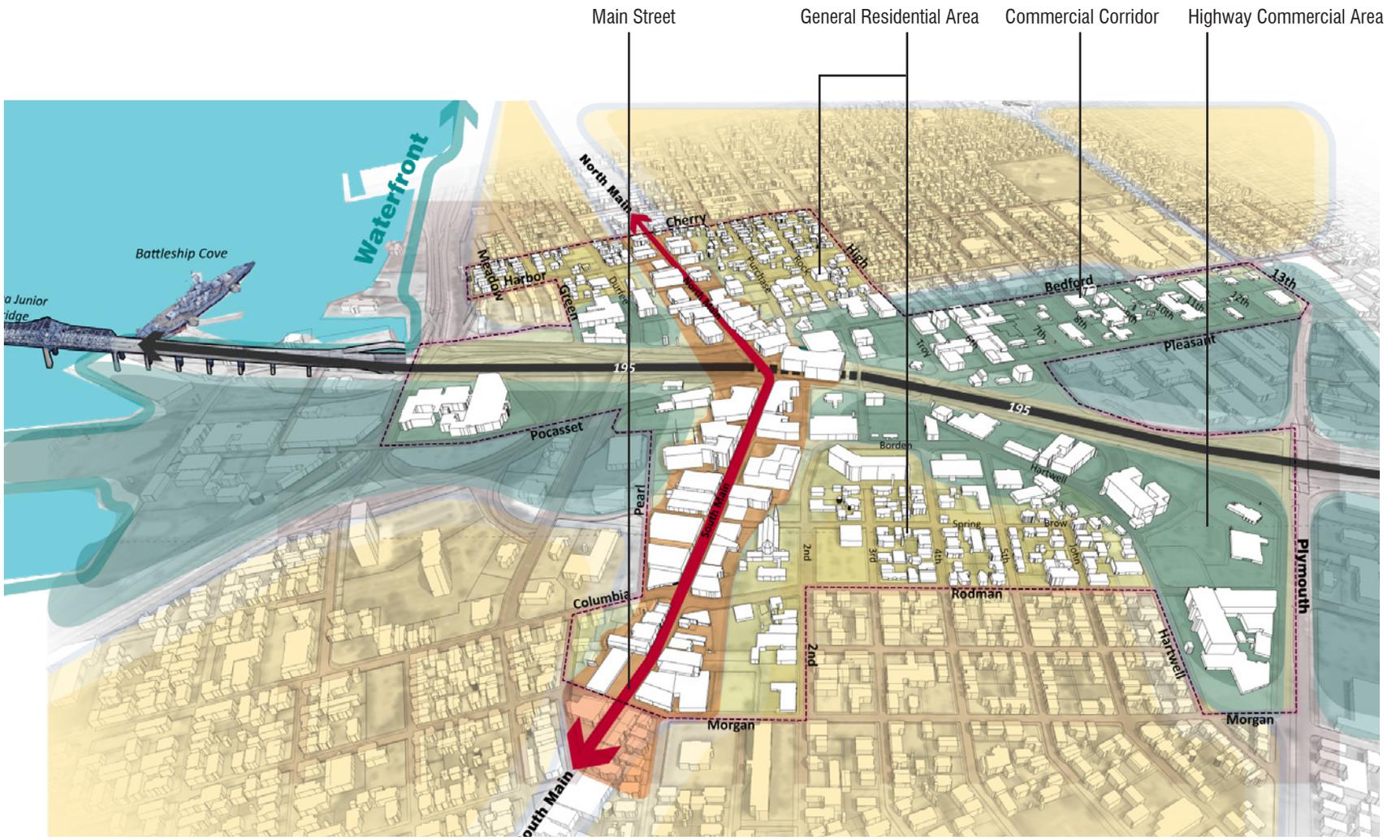


Figure 2-20: Urban Design Character Areas

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## 2.7 Urban Design Characteristics

The urban renewal area comprises parts of three different neighborhoods: Lower Highlands, Bank Street, and Corky Row. They come together at the banks of the historic Quequechan River, now I-195. These neighborhoods are separated by South Main Street towards the south and Highland Avenue towards the north of the I-195, with I-195 itself acting as an east-west dividing line between neighborhoods. I-195 passes through Downtown Fall River and effectively divides Downtown and the City to north and south portions.

The urban renewal area comprises different urban morphologies that range from Main Street (a retail spine), to residential areas, highway industrial areas, commercial corridors, and historic mill lands which were located close to I-195 and major arterials. Each of these areas has their design character, which is closely related to land use, density, age, and architectural

character of buildings. Five different character types have been identified in this urban design analysis as subareas with their configuration and identity. These categories are listed and further described below, and they are represented in *Figure 2-20: Urban Design Character Areas*.

1. Main Street
2. Highway commercial areas
3. Commercial corridors
4. General residential areas
5. Parks and open spaces

## 1. Main Street

Main Street is the main connective spine running north-south through Downtown and the entire city. It is divided into north and south segments with I-195 intersecting it in the center of the downtown. In addition, the character of Main Street changes as it cuts across different neighborhoods to connect to the downtown. Main Street is a two- to three-story neighborhood retail street that connects various neighborhoods with a combination of service, community retail, and low- to medium-density multifamily housing. As Main Street approaches the downtown, its character changes with commercial, office, and institutional uses and ground floor retail.

Building heights along Main Street vary from two- to three-stories in the residential neighborhoods to three- to six-stories in the downtown. The architecture style and quality also change from more traditional wood frame residential construction in the neighborhoods, to a blend of historic and modern architecture

with stone masonry and brick in the downtown. Within the downtown, Main Street has a well-defined street wall with many of the buildings built to the lot line. This street wall character fades near the residential neighborhoods with the introduction of the strip mall-style parking lot and building setback from Main Street.

In addition to retail and restaurants on the ground floor, and commercial and office uses on the upper floors, Main Street is also dotted with many institutional uses, like the Bristol County Court House and City Hall, with its unique position on top of I-195.



*South Main Street with its ground floor retail and upper floor commercial and office uses.*



Figure 2-21: Fall River Downtown Urban Renewal Area and Main Street as a connective spine through the downtown

## 2. Highway Commercial Areas

I-195 cuts across downtown with on-and off-ramps, creating a distinct variety of parcels, that take advantage of the location and proximity to the highway. As the regular street grid breaks down near the highway, these parcels and areas are also larger and odd-shaped. The proximity to the highway and adjacent on- and off-ramp infrastructure are not conducive to residential uses. The parcels primarily developed as commercial, office, or short-term paid parking. Some of the parcels in this area are currently underutilized, and partially- or fully-vacant with dilapidated building conditions, a lack of good tenants, and profitable paid parking lot uses. The development in this area has mainly occurred in the form of redeveloped mills or suburban retail/commercial use surrounded by a parking lot.

There are a number of historic mills within the urban renewal area which are notable for their architecture and historic character. Ironworks Mills No.6 and No.7 Complex, located on

Pocasset Street, is underutilized and partially vacant with tenants like Workout World. Davol Mill No. 1 and Davol Mill No. 2 located on 427 Plymouth Avenue are other mills which are on the National Historic Register but are underutilized with a lack of strong creditworthy tenants that can spur reinvestment in these properties. These historic mills, with their high ceiling heights and sturdy masonry or brick architecture, offer a unique opportunity for reinvestment and redevelopment in the urban renewal area.



*Ironworks Mill No. 7*

Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:APC\\_Mill\\_No7.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:APC_Mill_No7.jpg)



*Davol Mill No. 1*

Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Davol\\_Mills\\_1.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Davol_Mills_1.jpg)



*Davol Mill No. 2*

Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Davol\\_Mills\\_Fall\\_River.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Davol_Mills_Fall_River.jpg)



*Building conditions and vacancies in the highway commercial area*



*Building conditions and vacancies in the highway commercial area*

### 3. Commercial Corridors

The urban renewal area has a major commercial corridor bound by Bedford Street and Pleasant Street, between 13th Street and Troy Street. This commercial area is mainly characterized by automotive-related businesses, like new and used car dealerships, automotive body shops and repair garages, with some regional shopping destinations, like the Portuguese grocery store. These commercial businesses take advantage of proximity to I-195 and major arterials, like Robeson Street and Bedford Street, and provide a sense of vibrancy and activity during the day, which is not reflected in other parts of the downtown.

Long, narrow blocks (approximately 150 feet by 450 feet) that have businesses and high parking requirements create fragmented street wall environments in the commercial corridor between Pleasant and Bedford Streets. These environments have parking lots fronting the streets.



*Bedford Street commercial corridor*

#### 4. General Residential Areas

As I-195 and Main Street define the structure of the downtown, residential blocks fill in the areas undefined by highway commercial uses and the Main Street commercial spine. A typical residential block is composed of two- to three-story wood-framed houses with single-family and multifamily housing density. Many lots are vacant or have been used for parking, which creates an inconsistent street wall along the streets. Various institutional, recreational, and open spaces use, like churches and playgrounds, create a sense of neighborhood.



*Residential area north of Downtown with view up the Cherry Street*

## 5. Parks and Open Space

The urban renewal area contains only a handful of public open spaces. Fall River Justice Center has a public plaza at the intersection of South Main Street and Borden Street, and another small plaza is located at the intersection of Anawan Street and South Main Street. Harborside Park, which is categorized as "vacant, Selectmen, or City Council" in the City's parcel database, is a vegetated open area located adjacent to Fall River Housing Authority's Heritage Heights complex.

Apart from these public open spaces, there are private open spaces associated with St. Mary's Cathedral that provide much needed visual relief to users south of I-195. Some portions of the urban renewal area are within a five-minute walking distance of city and neighborhood parks, like Kennedy Park in the South, Ruggles Park in the North, and waterfront parks in west.

Despite these neighborhood and city parks, downtown lacks a vibrant and multifunctional

public open space within its core area, with the notable exceptions of the Old Second Street Pedestrian Walkway, connecting Sullivan Drive/City Hall to Borden Street/Justice Center districts, and the untapped potential represented by significant unused space immediately surrounding the street and first floor levels of City Hall. The urban renewal area also lacks an open space connection to the waterfront with transportation infrastructure separating the downtown and the waterfront assets. There is great potential for development of this connection along the Central Street/Harborside Park/Green Street/Bank Street corridor. In addition, the downtown-waterfront connection might be enhanced by "daylighting" portions of the Quequechan River. In the short term, the focus should be on public access to small sections of the river's exposed falls east of Ironworks Mills No. 6 and No. 7 and in the courtyard of that complex. The Quequechan River, which historically connected the downtown area with the waterfront, has been built over and flows underneath some of the existing buildings. A potential day-lighting of the Quequechan River

could be used to create a stronger connection to the waterfront from downtown.

## Safety

Residents and visitors perceive the urban renewal area as unsafe in the evening. Many parcels in the residential areas either have parking uses on them, or they lack the infill development to help provide "eyes on the street." Restaurants and bars on Main Street help generate a sense of safety during evening hours. Commercial activity within the Bedford Street/Pleasant Street commercial corridor stops in the evening hours, however, and large empty parking lots fronting the Bedford Street and Pleasant Street reduce the perception of safety in this area.

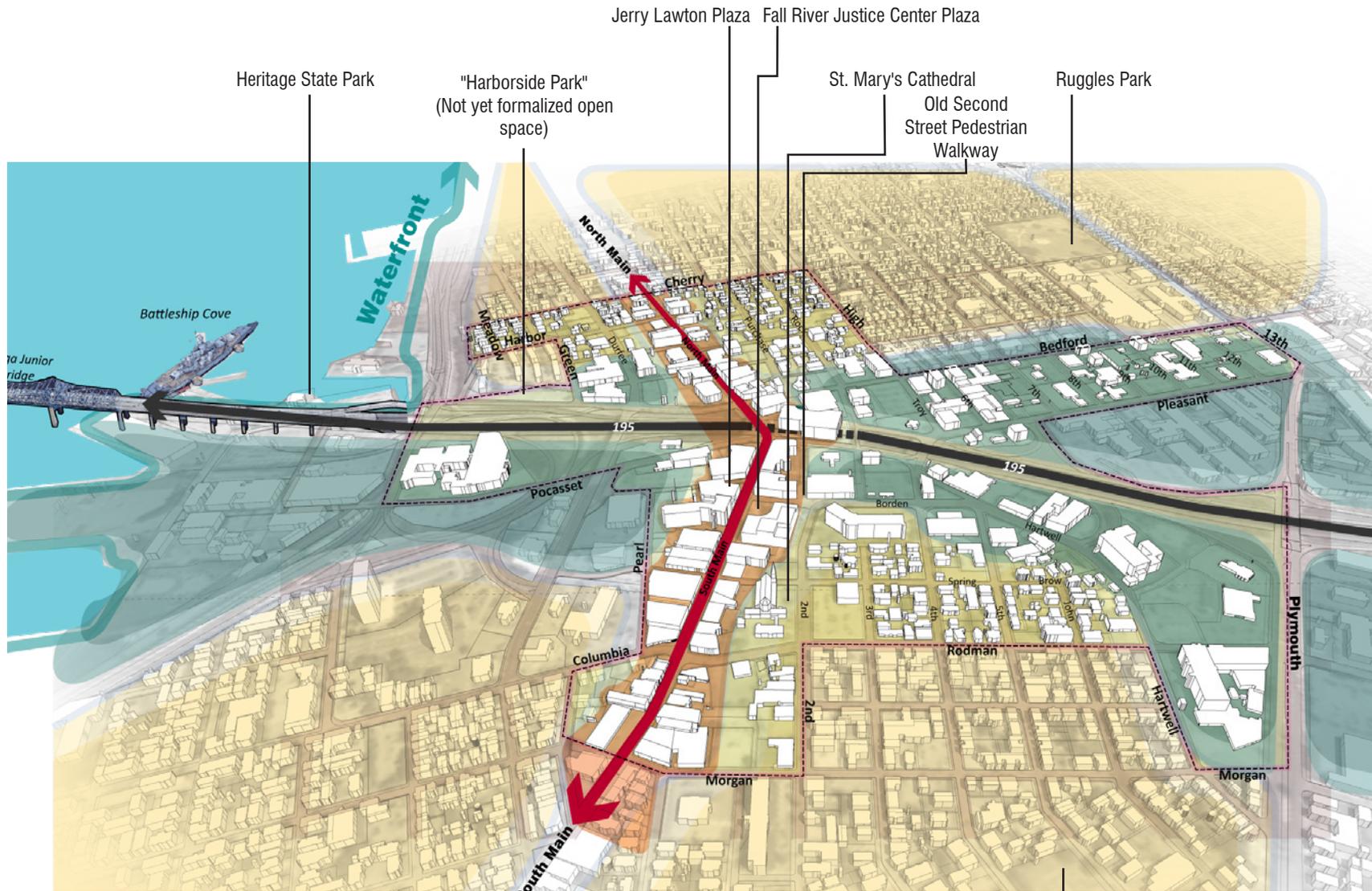


Figure 2-22: Public and private open spaces close to Downtown Fall River

Branch Street park

## CONDITION

### ACTIVE STOREFRONTS

Some storefronts along Main Street and within the downtown are vacant, boarded up, or have uses that lack transparency with blinds drawn or blank walls. This creates a perception of inactivity, discourages pedestrian activity, and affects the viability of retail.

### BUILDING CONDITIONS

Building age and conditions of disrepair in older residential neighborhoods affect rentability and the owner's financial capability to rehabilitate, maintain, and upgrade deteriorated buildings.

### PARKING REQUIREMENTS

There is a perception that there is not enough parking available for downtown and Main Street businesses. In addition, it is also understood that there are informal arrangements between different landowners and businesses to share existing parking spaces. Furthermore, zoning for certain land uses requires higher parking ratios, which discourages development as it depresses the development yield in Fall River's challenging market conditions.

### PARKING LOTS

Asphalt-covered parking lots and lack of vegetation contribute to water runoff and 'heat island' effects in dense areas of the neighborhood, while detracting from the visual image and perception of safety.

### STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS

Narrow or broken sidewalks, a scarcity of trees, and a lack of landscaping diminish the quality of the walking experience in some areas. They restrict access and contribute to a perception of neglect.

### WATERFRONT ACCESSIBILITY

The Fall River waterfront, with many attractions, is currently not clearly accessible from downtown. The waterfront is currently separated from downtown due to the remnants of Route 79, the Braga Bridge, and associated transportation infrastructure, and the physical topography.

### DOWNTOWN ACTIVATION & PROGRAMMING

Although a hub of activity for businesses, Main Street and downtown are devoid of activity after office hours. This lack of activity creates a perceived lack of safety and further depresses investment from private developers for future economic development as the demand and rents remain stagnant.

Table 2-6: Urban Design Conditions and Possible Solutions

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- Create a program to educate landlords and existing tenants about the benefits of maintaining and upgrading their storefronts.
  - Encourage uses that promote transparency, and dynamic and active storefronts.
  - Promote creative storefront activation strategies by encouraging short-term rental of vacant spaces to artists, art-related businesses, and creative entrepreneurs in order to reduce vacancy and provide income to landlords.
  - Actively discourage blank walls and encourage unobstructed windows along Main Street and other designated commercial corridors.
- Provide design guidance and financial assistance to homeowners to renovate and update their buildings (e.g., create a Façade Improvement Program, offer building improvement loans).
  - Promote historic façade preservation and the creative and innovative redevelopment of historic properties for reuse.
- Undertake a detailed parking demand and supply study to understand the existing inventory and future demand scenarios.
  - Streamline parking requirements for new developments by taking into consideration future trends in mobility such as self-driving cars and shared transportation modes.
  - Encourage alternative parking arrangements in new development proposals to promote development in downtown.
  - Create and maintain a formal parking exchange where business owners are encouraged to exchange and share their excess parking capacity on a short- or long-term basis so that parking capacity is fully used and parking demand data is collected for future decision-making.
- Adopt guidelines for the design of parking lots and their edges that promote the creation of green areas and landscape buffers to screen the view of parked vehicles from the street and introduce design amenities such as sitting areas, benches, or trees along sidewalks.
- Increase the provision, maintenance, and upkeep of sidewalks and street trees. Build sidewalks in places where they are missing and add extensions to widen stretches of sidewalk that prevent universal access.
  - Establish streetscape design guidelines for Main Street and throughout the downtown which unify the storefront design, streetscape design principles, wayfinding and signage to create a cohesive identity for Main Street and the downtown.
  - Improve and upgrade public open spaces and plazas in unison with streetscape design guidelines.
- Establish a trolley/transit-based connection to waterfront attractions from various locations in the downtown.
  - Develop special pedestrian-friendly streetscape, crossings, signage and wayfinding along Pocasset Street, Central Street and Columbia Street to clearly identify them as connections to waterfront.
  - Explore additional opportunities to connect to the waterfront from Metacomet Mills, the Ironworks Mills No. 6 and 7 complex, and underneath the Braga Bridge infrastructure.
  - Develop waterfront-to-downtown linkage with enhancements and expansion of "Harborside Park" and along the Central/Green/Bank Street corridor to the Purchase Street neighborhood, including a focus on the 64 Durfee Street proposed residential development, and on to Bank Street Armory/Public Library block.
- Create a Main Street and Downtown Business Improvement District to change the perception of the area and to market this area as an unique destination to live, work, and play.
  - Promote a mix of uses with market-rate residential homes to attract households to live close to or on Main Street.
  - Support cultural and arts events to increase the attractiveness of downtown as a potential residential location.
  - Promote Main Street-focused events like a farmers market, block parties, and outdoor events and concerts.

# 3. Plan Eligibility

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## 3.1 Findings

The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) must be able to make certain findings with respect to this redevelopment plan under Massachusetts General Laws (MGL) Chapter 121B, Section 48. These findings and their applicability to the plan are summarized in *Table 3-1*.

The supporting information for each of these findings is presented in the remainder of this section, with additional information in *Section 2* and *Section 4*. Supporting technical memoranda are provided in the Appendices.

These findings are related to the conditions of the urban renewal area relative to the need to invoke the intervention of a redevelopment authority under the enabling legislation. This section will provide evidence that this urban renewal area is a decadent area, that the activities proposed by this Plan are justified by the conditions, and that the recommendations of this Plan are

consistent with previous planning efforts at the local, regional, and state levels.

The conditions required by Chapter 121B are known as conditions of "blight." The common understanding of blight includes settings such as broken or boarded-up windows, and/or a lack of maintenance, such as peeling paint or unmowed lawns.

For the purposes of an urban renewal plan, blight is defined as those conditions that cannot be addressed by the private market alone – in other words, public action is needed to help address those conditions.

The origins of urban renewal lay in large projects, funded by the federal government, in the 1950s and 1960s. These projects cleared large areas of land, demolishing buildings and relocating people from what were seen as overcrowded and inadequate housing units. In many communities, this type of clearance did not welcome or even involve public input. Instead,

municipalities made the planning decisions and undertook the clearance themselves.

Today's focus is on creating incentives for the private market to invest. These incentives can include changes to the regulatory environment, investments in public infrastructure, and/or help with financing.

The purpose of this Plan is to identify the current conditions that prevent such private investment, determine the needs and goals of the smaller community of this area and the impact they expect for the larger community as a whole, and define those actions that will create incentives for the private market, over time, to address the existing conditions.

This urban renewal area is a Decadent Area, as defined by Chapter 121B. The content of this section supports this finding with evidence that meets the requirements of Chapter 121B and 760 CMR 12.00, the regulatory requirements of DHCD.



REQUIREMENTS OF CHAPTER 121B, SECTION 48	APPLICABILITY TO THE AREA	RELEVANT SECTION
(a) the project area would not by private enterprise alone and without either government subsidy or the exercise of governmental powers be made available for urban renewal.	The private market has been unable to fully address the conditions that lead to a finding of a decadent area. Anticipated public infrastructure improvements and regulatory controls, including design guidelines, will create an environment that is more conducive to private investment, while strategic acquisitions by the Fall River Redevelopment Authority (FRRRA) and resulting partnerships with developers will create the catalytic projects necessary to demonstrate financial feasibility for investment in this downtown.	<i>Section 3. Eligibility</i>
(b) the proposed land uses and building requirements in the project area will afford maximum opportunity to privately finance urban renewal consistent with the sound needs of the locality as a whole.	The proposed zoning changes and public infrastructure improvements provide incentives for the private market to invest in the urban renewal area.	<i>Section 4. Objectives</i>
(c) the financial plan is sound.	The financial plan provides estimates for the projects that are expected to be undertaken by the FRRRA, based on the list of parcels for acquisition.	<i>Section 6. Financial Plan</i>
(d) the project area is a decadent, substandard or blighted open area.	The project area is a Decadent Area.	<i>Section 3. Eligibility</i>
(e) that the urban renewal plan is sufficiently complete, as required by section one.	This Urban Renewal Plan (1) conforms to the previous planning efforts conducted by the municipality, and (2) indicates the boundaries of the area, the anticipated land acquisition and rehabilitation of structures; the proposed public improvements; and zoning and other planning changes, including proposed land uses, maximum densities, and building requirements.	<i>(1) Section 3. Eligibility (2) Section 2. Characteristics and Section 4. Plan Objectives</i>
(f) the relocation plan has been approved under chapter seventy-nine A.	A statement regarding the FRRRA's intent to provide a relocation plan in conformance with the requirements of MGL Chapter 79A and relevant federal law.	<i>Section 10. Relocation</i>

Table 3-1: Findings Required by DHCD

CONDITIONS OF A DECADENT AREA	APPLICABILITY TO THE AREA	SECTION
Existence of buildings which are out of repair, physically deteriorated, unfit for human habitation, or obsolete	90% of the building in the area are pre-1978 and 76% are pre-1930. Older building stock signifies the potential presence of hazardous materials such as lead paint and asbestos. Older commercial buildings may not be suitable for efficient redevelopment for current uses.	<i>Section 3. Eligibility: Building and Site Conditions</i>
Existence of buildings which are in need of major maintenance or repair	Nineteen percent (19%) of parcels with buildings in the urban renewal area have an assessed condition of below average. Certain sites have been identified as having had a release of hazardous materials. The status of these sites vary and, as is common in urban areas, not all may have been identified. See <i>Table 3-4</i> and <i>Appendix I</i> for more information.	<i>Section 3. Eligibility: Building and Site Conditions</i>
Much of the real estate in recent years has been sold or taken for nonpayment of taxes or upon foreclosure of mortgages	Properties under tax liens exist throughout the area.	<i>Section 3. Eligibility: Tax Liens</i>
Buildings have been torn down and not replaced and under existing conditions it is improbable that the buildings will be replaced	Forty-five (45) of the 63 vacant lots in the urban renewal area are predominately used for parking. Current market conditions, including the prevalence of existing vacancies, do not provide enough value for redevelopment of these sites.	<i>Section 3. Eligibility: Building and Site Conditions: Infrastructure</i>
Substantial change in business or economic conditions	The area has significant economic challenges, including the presence of one or more Environmental Justice (EJ) populations. Significant vacancies exist in current buildings.	<i>Section 3. Eligibility: Building and Site Conditions; Demographics, Real Estate Market Conditions</i>
Inadequate light, air, or open space	Few open, green spaces exist within the area; some parts of the area have no green space within a quarter-mile walking distance, even when including parks outside the boundary.	<i>Section 2. Characteristics: Land Use, Section 3. Eligibility: Land Coverage</i>
Excessive land coverage		
Diversity of ownership, irregular lot sizes or obsolete street patterns make it improbable that the area will be redeveloped	As shown in the fit studies provided in <i>Section 4. Plan Objectives</i> , parcel assembly may be needed for the redevelopment of certain sites within the area. Parcels are small and few have similar ownership.	<i>Section 2. Characteristics: Land Use, Section 4. Plan Objectives, Appendix I. Parcel Inventory</i>

Table 3-2: Applicability of the Definition of Decadent Area to the Existing Conditions

## 3.2 Determination of Conditions: Decadent Area

### Definition and Applications

#### Definition of a Decadent Area

Chapter 121B defines a Decadent Area as:

...an area which is detrimental to safety, health, morals, welfare or sound growth of a community because of the existence of buildings which are out of repair, physically deteriorated, unfit for human habitation, or obsolete, or in need of major maintenance or repair, or because much of the real estate in recent years has been sold or taken for nonpayment of taxes or upon foreclosure of mortgages, or because buildings have been torn down and not replaced and under existing conditions it is improbable that the

buildings will be replaced, or because of a substantial change in business or economic conditions, or because of inadequate light, air, or open space, or because of excessive land coverage or because diversity of ownership, irregular lot sizes or obsolete street patterns make it improbable that the area will be redeveloped by the ordinary operations of private enterprise, or by reason of any combination of the foregoing conditions.

#### Application of the Definition

*Table 3-2* breaks this definition apart and demonstrates how the existing conditions within the urban renewal area prevent the private market from addressing those conditions. The remainder of this section provides the evidence to support these conclusions.

The determination that this urban renewal area is a decadent area rests on three sets of conditions present within the boundary:

- The physical conditions of the area, including site conditions, such as flooding and the presence of environmental contaminants; infrastructure, both public and private; and building conditions, including historic building styles and development patterns
- The demographics as those demographics are related to both the housing market and the job market
- The economic trends and market conditions that encourage or discourage investment within the urban renewal area

### Building and Site Conditions

#### Building Conditions

*Appendix I. Parcel Inventory* contains data from the City's Assessors Office on a parcel-

by-parcel basis. In addition to data on the age, size, ownership, condition and valuation of the buildings and parcels, the inventory includes photographs of the parcels identified for acquisition in *Section 2 Characteristics*.

## Downtown Inventory

As part of this planning effort, the consultant team conducted an independent inventory of uses downtown. This inventory involved an Internet survey of occupancy in non-residential properties, followed by an extensive site walk for verification. As noted in *Section 2.3 Existing Land Use*, the uses identified during this effort are largely consistent with those documented in the Tax Assessor's Database.

In addition to identifying uses, this inventory documented the locations of fully- and partially-vacant properties within the downtown. The results of this work indicate that nearly 27% of the square footage in non-residential, non-mixed-use buildings in the urban renewal area



*A vacant, but maintained, property on Hartwell Street.*

are vacant (500,294 square feet). This is a compelling total, that has serious repercussions on the economic strength and the character of the downtown.

In total, there are 22 properties downtown that are completely vacant. Combined, they represent 330,097 square feet. These vacant properties are in varying states of disrepair. Some, like the Hartwell Street property in the center column, are relatively well-maintained. Others, however, like the Bank Street property,



*A vacant, and largely abandoned, property on Bank Street.*

look abandoned and amplify the perception that the area is unsafe. While the condition of the Hartwell Street property is preferred, both instances are undesirable.

There are 52 properties in the downtown that are partially-occupied. Combined, the vacant square footage in these properties is estimated to be around 170,198 square feet, of which 73,620 square feet is located on ground floors and 96,578 square feet is located on upper floors. An overwhelming majority of the vacant

ground floor square footage is for office space uses; the majority of vacant upper floor square footage is for mixed office and retail uses. (See *Table 3-3* for further detail.)

*Figures 3-1* and *3-2* depict land use and fully-vacant properties, and the locations of fully- and partially-vacant properties, respectively. Other than a density of fully-vacant properties

near Hartwell Street, and a lack of vacant properties along the Bedford/Pleasant Street corridor, there is nothing particularly significant about the locations of these vacant properties; they simply map to the locations of commercial areas within the downtown and are evenly distributed.

The high instance of vacancy is made worse by the fact that many occupied spaces downtown have windows that are partially or completely covered by blinds, opaque panels, or large posters. While these spaces largely appear as occupied, window obstruction of this kind reduces "eye on the street," a well-established tenet of neighborhood safety, and something

USE	EST. VACANT GROUND FLOOR (SQ. FEET)	EST. VACANT UPPER FLOOR (SQ. FEET)	EST. TOTAL VACANT SQUARE FOOTAGE	EST. TOTAL OCCUPIED SQUARE FOOTAGE	TOTAL INVENTORIED SQUARE FOOTAGE
Office	47,805	8,495	56,300	474,765	531,065
Retail	13,712	27,622	41,333	234,152	275,485
Mixed Office and Retail	10,973	38,821	49,794	148,565	198,359
Mixed Office	1,131	7,791	8,921	44,170	53,091
Mixed Retail	-	13,850	13,850	457,258	471,108
Fully Vacant Buildings	135,256	194,841	330,097	N/A	330,097
Total Square Footage	208,876	291,419	500,294	1,358,910	1,859,205
Percent of Total Inventoried Square Footage			26.9%	73.1%	100%

*Table 3-3: Vacancy Totals from the Downtown Inventory.*

These numbers ignore vacancies in mixed-use and non-office, non-retail commercial properties.

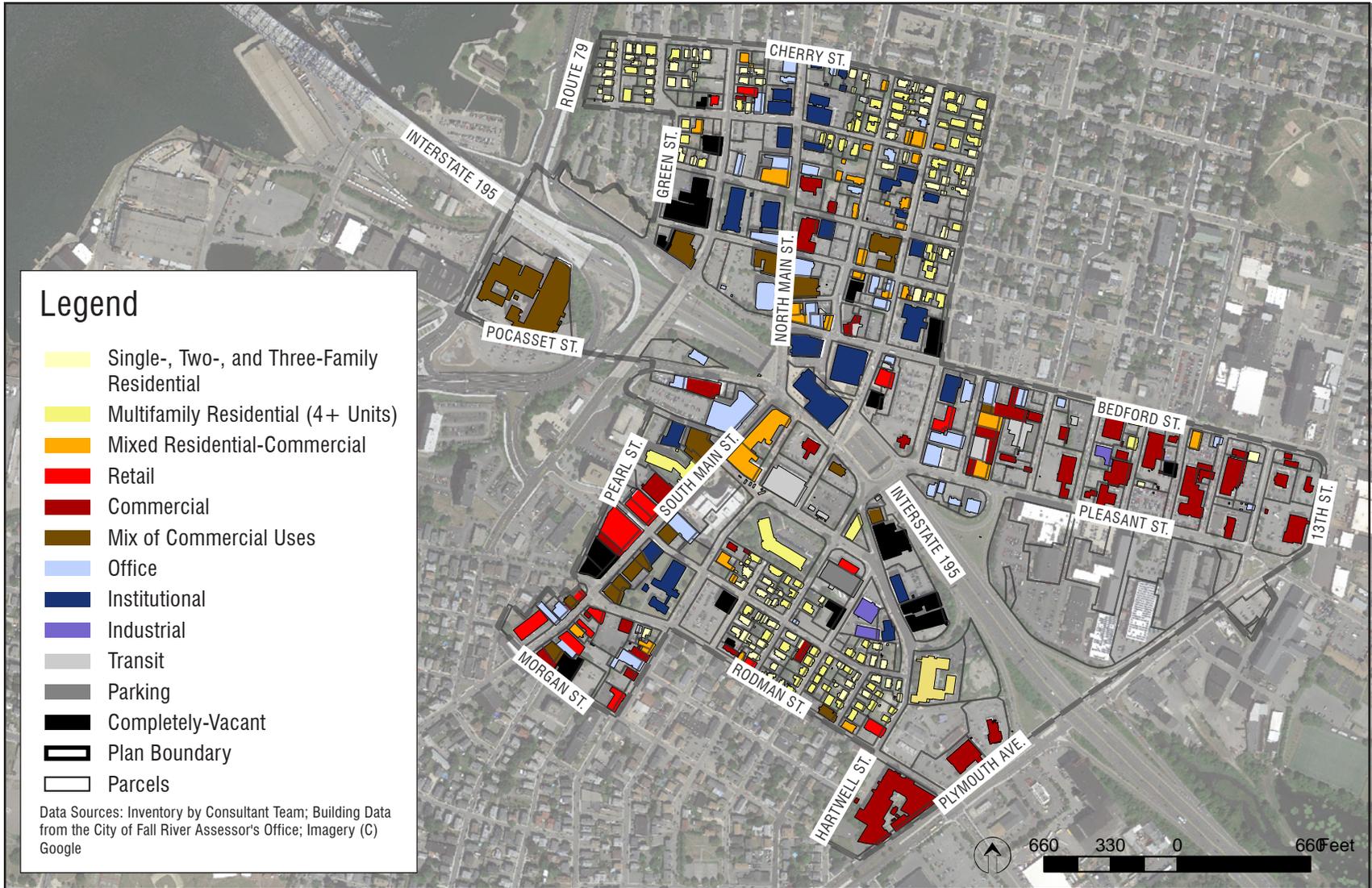


Figure 3-1: Downtown Inventory – Land Use in Existing Buildings



Figure 3-2: Downtown Inventory – Locations of Fully- and Partially-Vacant Buildings

that is already diminished downtown due to true vacancies. As it moves forward, the City should encourage the owners of ground floor businesses to present a more public face to the street. This Plan includes strategies regarding the activation of storefronts in *Section 2.6 Urban Design*. It is worth noting, however, that the occupants may have covered windows because their businesses, for example a law office or a methadone clinic, require privacy. Over the long-term, the City should work to ensure that uses like these are located on upper floors.

## Evaluation of Parcel Condition

The database maintained by the City's Assessors office provides information about the condition of land and buildings within the city. A review of this data shows that within the City of Fall River, 6% of parcels with buildings have an assessed condition of below average (fair-average to dilapidated), while 19% of the parcels with buildings in the urban renewal area are below average. Forty-seven percent (47%) of the

CONDITION	PARCELS WITH BUILDINGS						
	IN FALL RIVER		IN URBAN RENEWAL AREA		IDENTIFIED FOR ACQUISITION		
	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Excellent	15	0.1%	4	1.1%	0	0.0%	
Very Good	788	3.9%	19	5.2%	0	0.0%	
Good-Very Good	277	1.4%	1	0.3%	0	0.0%	
Good	6,085	30.1%	75	20.4%	0	0.0%	
Average-Good	4,207	20.8%	50	13.6%	1	5.9%	
Average	7,636	37.7%	149	40.5%	8	47.1%	
Fair-Average	376	1.9%	15	4.1%	1	5.9%	
Fair	686	3.4%	37	10.1%	2	11.8%	
Poor	108	0.5%	10	2.7%	4	23.5%	
Very Poor	21	0.1%	3	0.8%	1	5.9%	
Dilapidated	13	0.1%	5	1.4%	0	0.0%	
No entry	28	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,240</b>		<b>368</b>		<b>17</b>		

Table 3-4: Comparison of Recorded Building and Lot Conditions

	CONDITION	PARCELS WITHOUT BUILDINGS					
		IN FALL RIVER		IN URBAN RENEWAL AREA		IDENTIFIED FOR ACQUISITION	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
	Excellent	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Very Good	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Good-Very Good	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Good	7	0.3%	2	2.9%	1	14.3%
	Average-Good	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Average	1,334	64.0%	56	80.0%	5	71.4%
	Fair-Average	1	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Fair	6	0.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Poor	1	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Very Poor	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Dilapidated	2	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	No entry	734	35.2%	12	17.1%	1	14.3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2,085</b>		<b>70</b>		<b>7</b>	

parcels with buildings that have been identified for acquisition are below average. Condition is not populated for many vacant lots so a parallel analysis is not possible.

### Building Age

Just over 75% of the buildings in the downtown urban renewal area were built before 1930, during Fall River's mill boom. This construction plays a significant role in defining the character of the downtown, however, as the 2016 *Towards and Evidence-Based Housing Policy in Fall River* document notes, this older housing stock is prone to structural deficiencies. Further, city-wide, a strikingly high percentage (64.2%) of housing is renter-occupied. In general, renters have less of an incentive (and are often not permitted) to take on home improvement projects. This may mean that the building stock is not getting the

attention it needs to stay functional and safe over the long term.

	NUMBER	% OF TOTAL
Total Buildings	478	100%
Pre-1930	361	75.5%
Buildings Pre-1978	432	90.4%
Buildings Pre-1980	437	91.4%

Table 3-5: Building Age

In addition to overall age, the percentage of buildings constructed prior to 1978 (when lead paint was phased out) and the percentage of buildings constructed prior to 1980 (when asbestos was phased out) are important measures. Within the downtown urban renewal area, 90% of buildings were constructed before 1978, and therefore may have lead paint, and 91% of buildings were constructed before 1980, and therefore may have asbestos. These percentages are striking; they indicate both potential health concerns (particularly for children under age

six) and an increased cost associated with the redevelopment of the property if remediation is necessary.

### Land Coverage

Land coverage is the amount of land that is occupied by a building or by a paved surface, such as a parking lot or driveway. As the numbers in *Table 3-6* indicate, Fall River's downtown is overwhelmingly covered by built surfaces, including buildings, parking lots, driveways, sidewalks, and roadways. This arrangement results in very little vegetated open space, which is a problem both from a public amenity standpoint, and from an

environmental standpoint, as a dearth of open space contributes to the urban heat island effect and stormwater runoff. Both of these issues are discussed further in respective sections later in this document.

### Flooding

The elevation of the downtown urban renewal area relative to its surroundings provides protection when the nearby Taunton River and Watuppa Ponds breach their banks; as depicted in *Figure 2-5*, just the western-most portion of the urban renewal area intersects a flood zone.

		ACRES	% OF TOTAL
All Parcels		198.2	100.0%
Built Area	Roads	- 42.2	- 21.3%
	Parking and Driveways	- 54.1	- 27.3%
	Existing Buildings	- 49.6	- 25.0%
Unbuilt Area		52.3	26.4%

Table 3-6: Land Coverage

The urban renewal area occasionally suffers from flash flooding, most recently in March 2010, September 2012, and August 2015. Flash flooding is typically caused when large quantities of rain fall within a short time period. Fall River's 2012 floods, for example, were caused when 2.48 inches of rain fell in a twelve hour period; its 2015 floods were caused by 0.9" in a thirty-minute period. In urban areas dominated by impervious cover like Fall River, this water is unable to infiltrate the ground surface and consequently collects and begins moving rapidly downhill. This type of flooding is extremely dangerous as it is difficult to predict and moves extremely quickly.

Photos captured of the 2010, 2012, and 2015 floods show water at the intersection of Plymouth Avenue and Rodman Street, in the southeast corner of the urban renewal area.<sup>1</sup> Though far from comprehensive, this review does suggest a persistent problem within the

1. Root, Jon. Flash flooding in Fall River, September 2012. <https://storify.com/jqroot/flash-flooding-in-fall-river>.

region that at best, threatens transportations and at worst, poses significant safety risks.

### CLIMATE CHANGE

*The Massachusetts Climate Change Adaptation Report* identifies the threats to natural systems from climate change, including threats to the forests within the floodplains, reduced precipitation flows during projected summer droughts, and increased precipitation flows during winter floods.<sup>2</sup> The report projects that drier, hotter summers will reduce the quality of the water and that warmer, wetter winters may increase stormwater runoff from rain and shift the timing and impact of flood events.<sup>3</sup>

### Hazardous Risk Sites

Data sources reviewed to identify potential hazardous materials and environmental risk

2. Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and the Adoption Advisory Committee, *The Massachusetts Climate Change Adaptation Report*, September 2011.

3. Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and the Adoption Advisory Committee, *The Massachusetts Climate Change Adaptation Report*, September 2011.

sites within the urban renewal area include the US Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Information System (CERCLIS) geographic information system (GIS) database and Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) databases.

The listed sites in the downtown urban renewal area (see *Figure 3-5*) include two Tier II sites (an EPA designation), two activity and use limitation sites (AUL), and one additional site with conditions placed on its use. Eight additional sites have been classified as A2 (a permanent solution has been achieved; contamination has not been reduced to background).

The Tier II sites within the urban renewal area are 240 Hartwell Street and the Mid-Town Motor Mart (which is also classified as Tier ID). The AUL sites include the New England Gas Company site and the Fire Department Headquarters. The site with conditions placed



Figure 3-3: Buildings Built Before 1930



Figure 3-4: Buildings Built Before 1978 and 1980

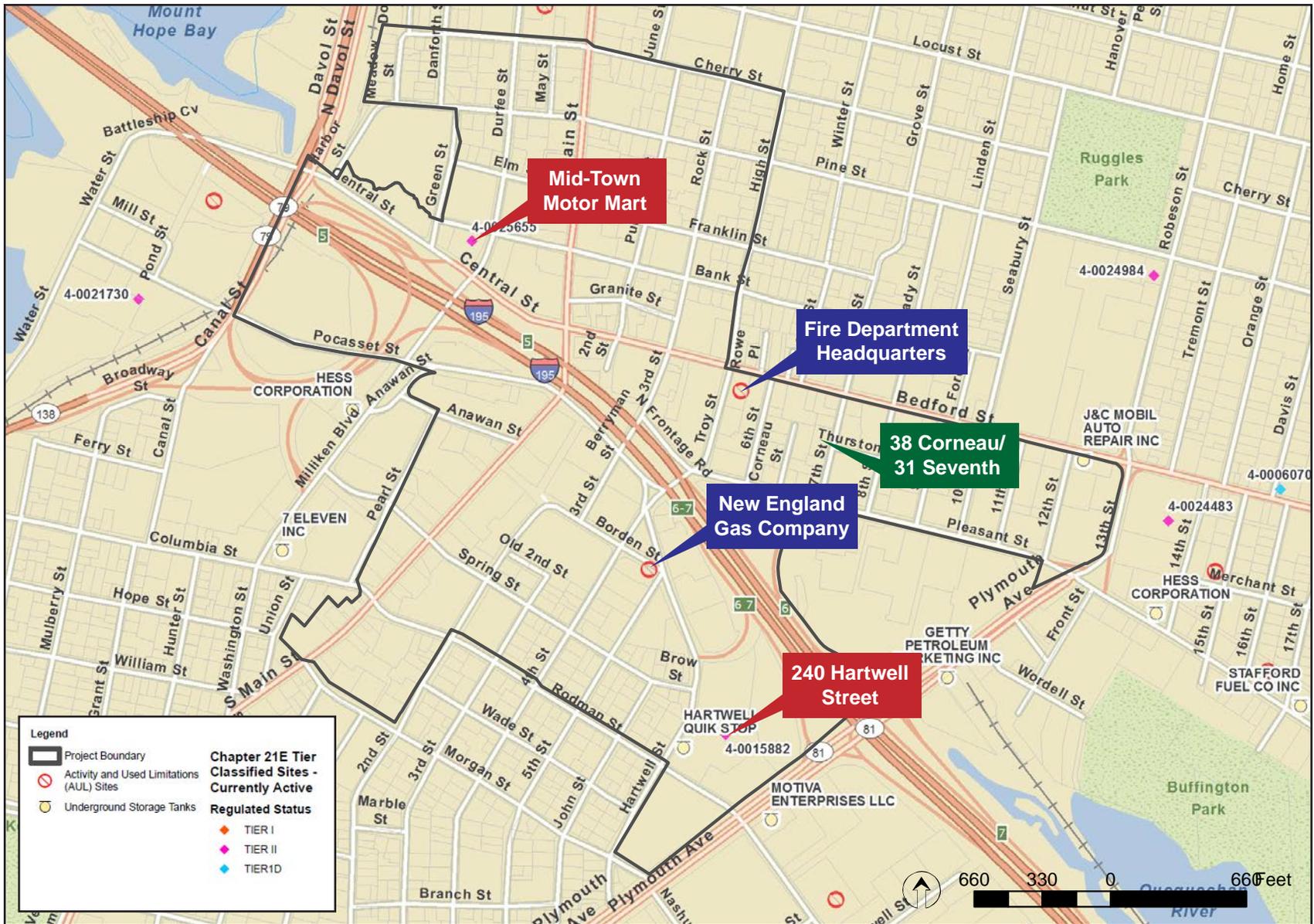


Figure 3-5: Hazardous Materials Sites

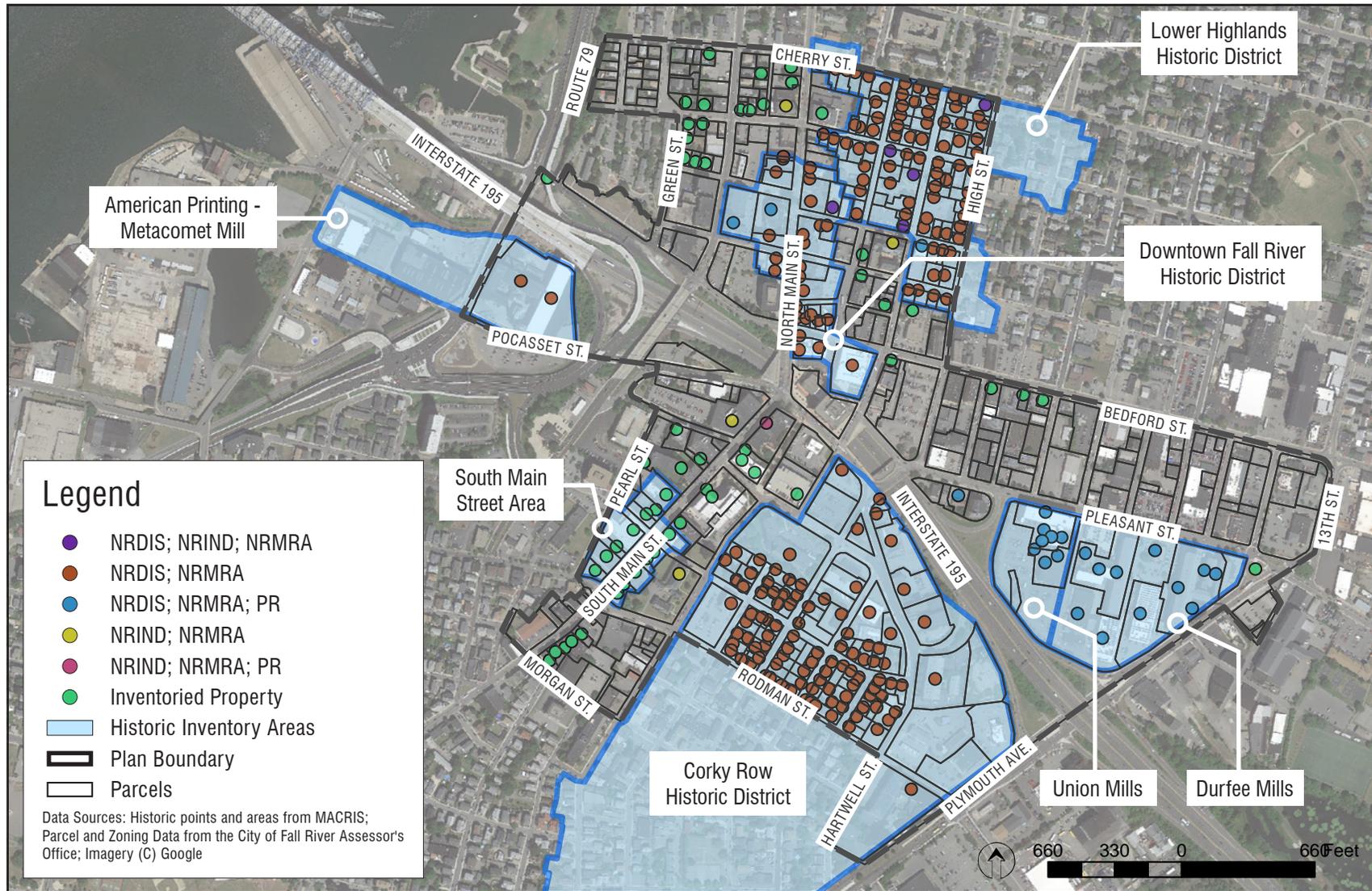


Figure 3-6: Historic Resources  
Source: MACRIS, National Park Service

**NRDIS:** National Register District **NRIND:** National Register - Individual Property  
**NRMRA:** National Register - Multiple Resource Area **PR:** Preservation Restriction

upon its use is located at 38 Corneau/31 Seventh Street.

## Historic Register Properties

The downtown urban renewal area includes historic resources that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places (National Register), which is administered by the National Park Service. The National Register is the official Federal list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects which are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture.

This listing of properties requires that there is consideration of the property status in planning for Federal, Federally-licensed, and Federally-assisted projects. Nationally listed properties are also eligible for tax provisions; owners of properties listed in the National Register may be eligible for a 20% investment tax credit for the certified rehabilitation of income-producing certified historic structures such as commercial,

industrial, or rental residential buildings. Properties also qualify for Federal grants for historic preservation, when funds are available. Owners of private property listed in the National Register are free to maintain, manage, or dispose of their property as they choose provided that no Federal monies are involved.

There are 291 properties within the urban renewal area that are listed in the Massachusetts Historical Commission's Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS) database; of these, 235 have a National Register designation of some kind: National Register District, National Register - Individual Property, National Register - Multiple Resource Area, and Preservation Restriction. There are also seven historic districts located within the urban renewal area: American Printing – Metacomet Mill, Corky Row Historic District, Downtown Fall River Historic District, Lower Highlands Historic District, South Main Street Area, Union Mills, and Durfee Mills.

These points and areas are depicted in *Figure 3-6* and are listed in *Appendix M: Historic Inventory*.

## Infrastructure

### Roadway and Pedestrian Infrastructure

Roadway and pedestrian infrastructure within the urban renewal area includes Interstate 195 (I-195) and an extensive local street network. The Braga Bridge, Route 79, and a state-owned rail corridor are immediately west of the downtown urban renewal area. Urban arterial corridors include the following streets:

- Second Street
- Third Street
- Fourth Street
- Seventh Street
- Bedford Avenue
- Borden Street
- Central Street

- Columbia Street
- Durfee Street
- Hartwell Street
- North and South Main Streets
- Pleasant Street
- Rodman Street
- South Frontage Road
- Troy Street

All streets within the urban renewal area have sidewalks, with nearly all having sidewalks on both sides of the street. Marked crosswalks are located at almost all intersections. There are no dedicated bicycle facilities such as bike lanes or pathways within the urban renewal area.

The downtown street network is primarily comprised of one-way streets, a result of narrow rights-of-way and traffic and on-street parking demands (see *Figure 3-7*). This one-way network has the disadvantage of being inefficient for local trips, is less supportive of the retail district, and results in higher traffic speeds and reduced traffic and pedestrian safety. Wayfinding

within the downtown is also lacking, which further complicates travel within the one-way network, particularly for first-time visitors to the downtown.

### Parking Infrastructure

Parking infrastructure is critical to the function of Fall River's downtown transportation system. The downtown urban renewal area is served by multiple surface parking lots, on-street parking, and two parking structures, Third Street Garage and Pearl Street Garage. (Pearl Street Garage is located outside the urban renewal area but serves buildings within the urban renewal area.) Total parking supply (excluding parking areas or driveways for less than five vehicles) within the downtown area is approximately 5,700 spaces. This is comprised of approximately 1,000 on-street spaces, 4,400 parking lot spaces, and 300 garage spaces (see *Figure 3-8*).

Based upon the building area and uses in the urban renewal area, the downtown is

slightly underserved by parking supply. This assessment is based upon minimal standard parking generation rates which indicate that the downtown has a demand for approximately 6,340 parking spaces to serve those existing uses. Compared to the existing parking supply, there is a deficit of 640 parking spaces in the urban renewal area. This parking demand figure does not account for building space that is vacant. Assuming 100% occupancy of those currently vacant spaces, downtown parking demand could increase to approximately 7,380 spaces, with a resulting parking deficit of 1,680 spaces.

Observations of parking utilization, however, indicate that there are only acute parking shortages, limited to specific uses, properties, or times of day. The lack of an area-wide parking shortage, in spite of the calculated parking deficit, suggests that downtown buildings are not fully used and the residential population has low per capita level of car ownership. The lack of significant supply of structured parking in the urban renewal area also contributes to the parking demand deficit. Limited transit services

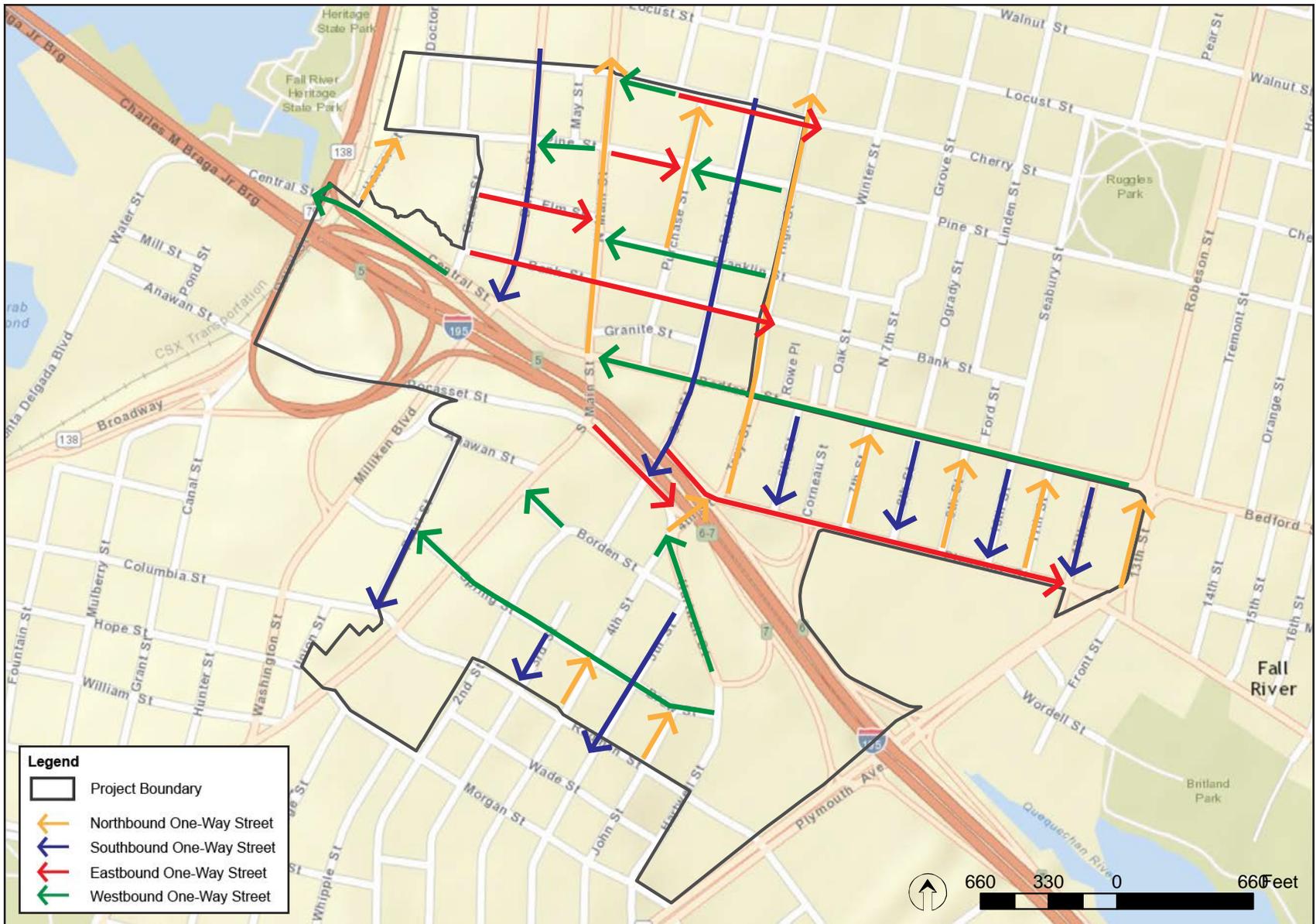


Figure 3-7: Circulation

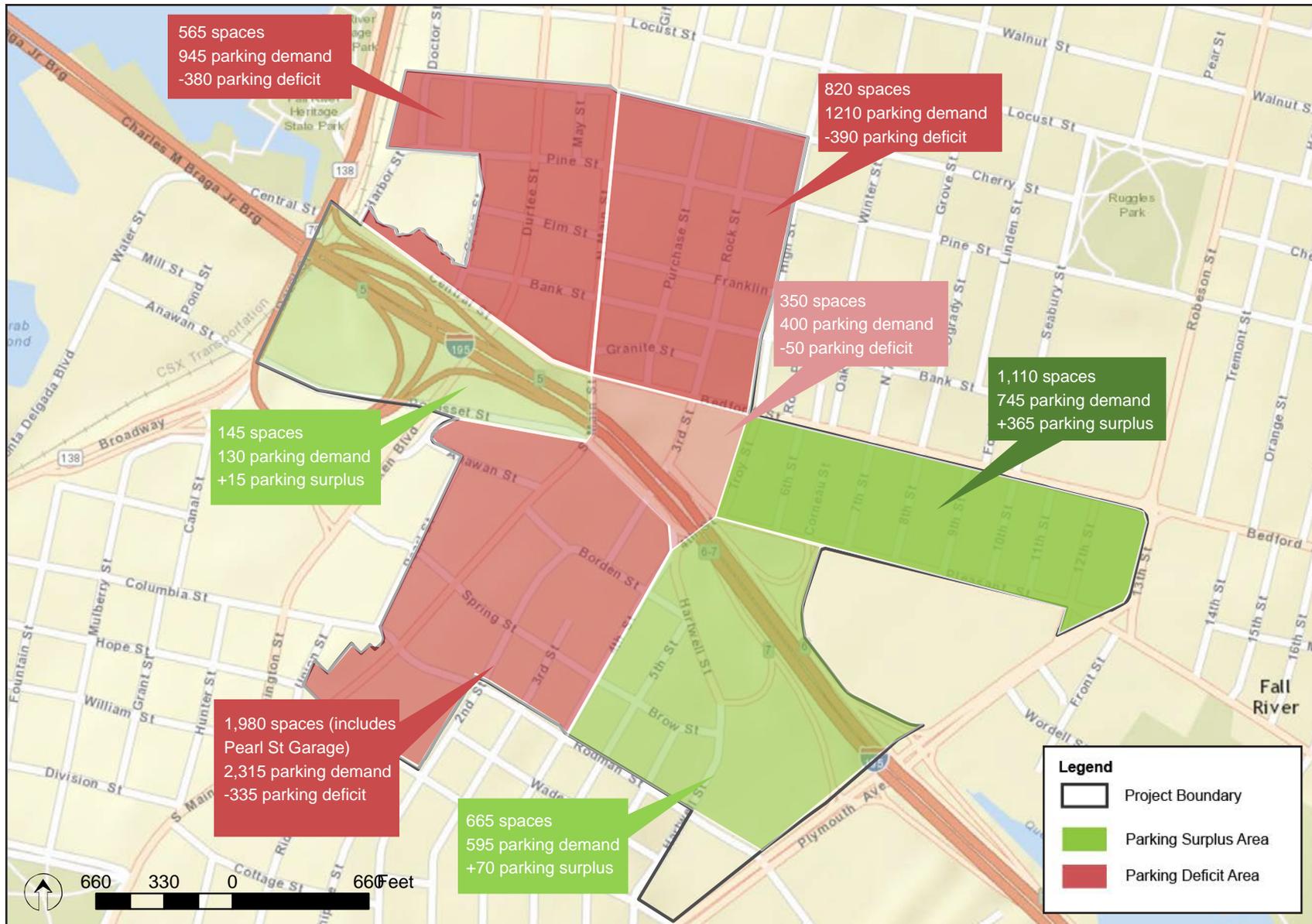


Figure 3-8: Parking Supply and Demand

and lack of downtown goods and services imply that future residential populations will likely remain car-dependent and will contribute towards parking demand growth in the urban renewal area. Revitalization within this area is likely to contribute to parking demand and may increase pressure to expand surface parking resources.

## Parking Demand Methodology

The urban renewal area was divided into seven sub-areas. Fall River Assessor's data was used to determine total finished floor area per building use for each subarea. Building uses were field verified to confirm use as feasible. Minimum parking generation rates were applied to building uses based upon the ITE *Parking Generation* manual and other parking demand research specific to urban areas. The following parking generation rates were applied to each of the following building use types:

- One-, two-, and three-family residential: 0 parking demand (parking lots

and driveways for one- to three-family homes were not inventoried and do not contribute to supply; parking demand is presumed to be met on site)

- Multifamily Residential (4+ units): 1.0 spaces per dwelling unit
- Warehouse: 0.5 spaces per 1,000 square feet
- Office: 2.0 spaces per 1,000 square feet
- Judicial Center: 2.0 spaces per 1,000 square feet
- Auto Service: 3.0 spaces per 1,000 square feet
- Recreation Center: 2.0 spaces per 1,000 square feet
- Library: 2.0 spaces per 1,000 square feet
- City Hall: 2.0 spaces per 1,000 square feet
- Bank: 2.0 spaces per 1,000 square feet
- Retail: 3.0 spaces per 1,000 square feet

- Restaurant/Bar: 5.0 spaces per 1,000 square feet
- Church: 6.0 spaces per 1,000 square feet

The parking generation rates are generally equal to or less than parking requirements of Fall River's zoning for the same uses. For example, Fall River's Central Business District (CBD) requires 5.0 spaces per gross square feet of office space and retail space. The CBD also requires 1.0 parking space per 3 seats in a restaurant or bar, this requirement would likely greatly exceed the demand generation rate of 5.0 spaces per 1,000 square feet.

## Demographics

The urban renewal area encompasses the downtown area approximately surrounding I-195 from Plymouth Avenue on the west to the Route 79 interchange on the east. A polygon, shown in *Figure 3-9*, encompasses this area and defines the area for demographic and business data reported from the subscription data service, The Nielsen Company, Segmentation and

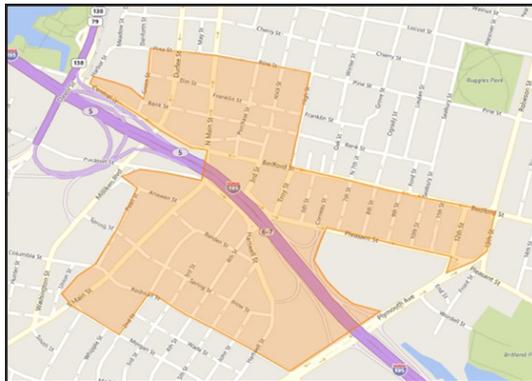


Figure 3-9: Downtown Urban Renewal Area

Market Solutions. The Nielsen data are 2016 estimates based on the latest US population, according to Nielsen, and economic censuses updated by sources and algorithms proprietary to Nielsen.

### Population and Households

As shown in *Table 3-7*, the 2016 estimated population of the downtown urban renewal area is 1,611. This represents about 2% of the population of the city. The urban renewal area has lost population since 2010 (-0.7%),

Demographic Data: Population & Households Compared								
	Downtown Study Area	%	City of Fall River	%	Bristol County	%	State of MA	%
<b>Population</b>								
2021 Projection	1,623		88,938		568,878		7,044,678	
2016 Estimate	1,611		88,241		556,766		6,810,281	
2010 Census	1,623		88,857		548,285		6,547,629	
2000 Census	1,675		91,985		534,732		6,349,100	
Projected Growth 2016 - 2021		0.74%		0.79%		2.18%		3.44%
Estimated Growth 2010 - 2016		-0.74%		-0.69%		1.55%		4.01%
Growth 2000 - 2010		-3.10%		-3.40%		2.53%		3.13%
2016 Estimated Average Age	44.7		40.2		40.6		40.1	
<b>Households</b>								
2021 Projection	950		38,919		222,627		2,762,575	
2016 Estimate	936		38,469		217,359		2,661,460	
2010 Census	929		38,457		213,010		2,547,075	
2000 Census	931		38,772		205,434		2,443,572	
Projected Growth 2016 - 2021		1.50%		1.17%		2.42%		3.80%
Estimated Growth 2010 - 2016		0.75%		0.03%		2.04%		4.49%
Growth 2000 - 2010		-0.21%		-0.81%		3.69%		4.24%
2016 Average Household Size	1.7		2.3		2.6		2.6	
<b>2016 Estimated Household Income</b>								
	<b>936</b>		<b>38,469</b>		<b>217,359</b>		<b>2,661,460</b>	
Income Less than \$15,000	343	37%	9,025	23%	29,067	13%	292,798	11%
Income \$15,000 - \$24,999	256	27%	5,987	16%	23,155	11%	229,047	9%
Income \$25,000 - \$34,999	105	11%	4,889	13%	19,245	9%	202,734	8%
Income \$35,000 - \$49,999	81	9%	5,116	13%	26,289	12%	275,636	10%
Income \$50,000 - \$74,999	69	7%	5,810	15%	36,334	17%	417,166	16%
Income \$75,000 - \$99,999	38	4%	3,425	9%	25,783	12%	331,997	12%
Income \$100,000 - \$124,999	23	2%	1,963	5%	19,615	9%	260,434	10%
Income \$125,000 - \$149,000	8	1%	877	2%	13,148	6%	186,540	7%
Income \$150,000 - \$199,999	2	0%	793	2%	13,484	6%	215,727	8%
Income \$200,000 - \$249,999	2	0%	226	1%	4,979	2%	89,479	3%
Income \$250,000 - \$499,999	5	1%	244	1%	4,883	2%	110,598	4%
Income \$500,000 and over	6	1%	114	0%	1,377	1%	49,304	2%
Household Income Less than \$25,000	599	64%	15,012	39%	52,222	24%	521,845	20%
Household income more than \$150,000	14	2%	1,377	4%	24,723	11%	465,108	17%
<b>2016 Families by Poverty Status</b>								
2016 Families Below Poverty	116	39.6%	4,805	21.4%	15,123	10.5%	141,758	8.5%
2016 Families Below Poverty with Children	96	32.7%	3,789	16.9%	11,211	7.8%	108,867	6.5%
		% of state		% of state		% of state		
2016 Estimated Average Household Income	\$ 33,032	35%	\$ 49,044	51%	\$ 76,900	80%	\$ 95,602	
2016 Estimated Median Household Income	\$ 19,904	29%	\$ 33,637	48%	\$ 57,516	82%	\$ 69,807	
2016 Estimated Per Capita Income	\$ 19,192	51%	\$ 21,381	57%	\$ 30,021	80%	\$ 37,361	

Table 3-7: Demographic Data: Population and Households Compared

Source: Nielson Segmentation & Market Solutions, 2016 and FXM Associates

as did the city (-0.7%), while Bristol County has grown by slightly less than 1.6%, and the state of Massachusetts by about 4%. In fact, the urban renewal area also lost 3% of its population between 2000 and 2010, and the city lost 3.4% of its population, which was a time period of growth for both Bristol County (2.5%) and the state (3%). These numbers indicate that Fall River is lagging both the county and state in terms of population growth, which is key to economic growth. Projections for the next five years are not much better for the downtown urban renewal area and city, with both projected to grow less than 1%, compared to 2.2% for Bristol County and 3.4% for the state.

The estimated 936 households in 2016 in the urban renewal area experienced a slight loss in the decade between 2000 and 2010. Households in the urban renewal area had small gains since 2010 and are projected to grow faster than population rates, exceeding those of the city but less than in the county and state by substantial margins. Average household size in the downtown urban renewal area is smaller

than in any of the other three areas shown in the table.

Household incomes are strikingly different between the urban renewal area, the City of Fall River, Bristol County, and the state. As shown in Table 3-8, the median income for the downtown (almost \$20,000) is substantially lower than that for the city (\$34,000), and is less than one-third the median income for the state (almost \$70,000). Table 3-7 also shows that an estimated 64% of downtown urban renewal area households and 39% of city households live on less than \$25,000 a year. Such an income level is true for only 24% of county households and 20% of state households. Poverty rates for families in the urban renewal area and city are similarly high: 40% and 21%, respectively, compared to 10.5% in the county and 8.5% in the state. An estimated 2% of downtown households and 4% of city households have incomes over \$150,000, compared to the county's 11% and state's 17%. (Table 3-14 in the *Business Characteristics* section provides

more detail on wages at the city-, county-, and state-levels.)

## Workforce Characteristics

The data in Table 3-8 show that education levels in the urban renewal area are very low: 8% have a college degree, and 39% have no high school diploma. The city has slightly higher educational levels, with 28% lacking a high school diploma and 14% with a college degree. The county has somewhat higher levels: 25% of its residents have a college degree, and 17% have not completed high school. This contrasts with the state, where 10% of the population over age 25 have not completed high school, and 40% have a college degree.

Over 40% of workers in the downtown urban renewal area and the city have white collar jobs. The proportion of blue collar workers are similar to the county, but higher than the state. One-third of the urban renewal area's workers are employed in the Service industry. Most workers

Workforce Characteristics								
	Downtown Study Area		City of Fall River		Bristol County		State of MA	
		%		%		%		%
<b>Education (Pop. Age 25+)</b>	<b>1,214</b>		<b>62,607</b>		<b>386,344</b>		<b>4,716,560</b>	
Less than 9th grade	243	20%	9,930	16%	34,935	9%	229,964	5%
Some High School, no diploma	235	19%	7,789	12%	31,908	8%	253,607	5%
High School Graduate (or GED)	342	28%	20,042	32%	118,271	31%	1,219,765	26%
Some College, no degree	203	17%	10,941	17%	70,409	18%	765,414	16%
Associate Degree	93	8%	5,013	8%	34,891	9%	363,494	8%
Bachelor's Degree	73	6%	5,979	10%	60,721	16%	1,058,366	22%
Master's Degree	21	2%	2,146	3%	27,203	7%	577,037	12%
Professional School Degree	2	0.2%	493	1%	4,560	1%	130,877	3%
Doctorate Degree	1	0.1%	274	0%	3,446	1%	118,036	3%
Less than high school diploma	478	39%						
Bachelor's Degree or higher	97	8%						
<b>Occupation Classification (Pop. Age 16+)</b>	<b>378</b>		<b>35,886</b>		<b>269,572</b>		<b>3,446,996</b>	
Blue Collar	89	24%	9,352	26%	58,845	22%	534,552	16%
White Collar	165	44%	17,660	49%	157,198	58%	2,291,687	66%
Service and Farm	124	33%	8,874	25%	53,529	20%	620,757	18%
<b>Type of Worker (Civ. Employed Pop. 16+)</b>	<b>378</b>		<b>35,886</b>		<b>269,572</b>		<b>3,446,996</b>	
For-Profit Private Workers	270	71%	26,005	72%	189,173	70%	2,269,193	66%
Non-Profit Private Workers	49	13%	3,722	10%	24,847	9%	443,727	13%
Local Government Workers	30	8%	2,079	6%	20,275	8%	236,447	7%
State Government Workers	4	1%	1,198	3%	11,242	4%	130,882	4%
Federal Government Workers	4	1%	809	2%	4,380	2%	59,972	2%
Self-Emp Workers	21	6%	2,047	6%	19,475	7%	302,499	9%
Unpaid Family Workers	1	0.3%	26	0%	180	0%	4,276	0%
<b>2016 Est. Households by Number of Vehicles</b>	<b>936</b>		<b>38,469</b>		<b>217,359</b>		<b>2,661,460</b>	
No Vehicles	399	43%	7,791	20%	24,087	11%	330,099	12%
1 Vehicle	396	42%	17,232	45%	76,165	35%	962,641	36%
2 Vehicles	88	9%	9,616	25%	77,089	35%	972,801	37%
3 Vehicles	35	4%	2,771	7%	27,806	13%	286,691	11%
4 Vehicles	10	1%	893	2%	9,447	4%	83,106	3%
5 or more Vehicles	9	1%	166	0%	2,765	1%	26,122	1%

Table 3-8: Workforce Characteristics  
 Source: Nielson Segmentation & Market Solutions, 2016 and FXM Associates

within the four areas work in the private sector. Forty-three percent (43%) of the households in the urban renewal area have no vehicle. This is over twice the city's vehicle ownership level of 20% and almost four times the county's 11% and state's 12%. Travel times to work for those in the downtown urban renewal area and city are shorter than for the county and state: 24 and 26 minutes, respectively, compared to 30 and 31 minutes at the county and state levels.

### Environmental Justice Communities

The downtown urban renewal area is entirely covered by EJ areas (see *Figure 3-10*). This includes an area in the western urban renewal area that is minority- and income-based and an area at the eastern end of the downtown that is income-based.

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs' (EEA) Environmental Justice Policy is intended to help address the disproportionate share of



Figure 3-10: Environmental Justice Communities

environmental burdens experienced by lower-income people and communities of color who, at the same time, often lack environmental assets in their neighborhoods. The Policy is designed to help ensure their protection from environmental pollution as well as promote community involvement in planning and environmental decision-making to maintain and/or enhance the environmental quality of their neighborhoods.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts defines an EJ population as “those segments of the population that [the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs] has determined to be most at risk of being unaware of or unable to participate in environmental decision-making or to gain access to state environmental resources”.<sup>4</sup>

4. Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Massachusetts Environmental Justice Policy, October 9, 2002, p5. Accessed January 17, 2017.

	EJ CRITERIA	MEAN EJ CRITERIA IN BLOCK GROUPS	POPULATION 2010	% POPULATION IN EJ BLOCK GROUPS
<b>Fall River</b>	Minority - Income - English	<b>1.29</b>	<b>88,857</b>	<b>66.7%</b>
Brockton		1.34	93,810	96.8%
Lawrence		2.27	76,377	100.0%
Lowell		1.46	106,519	87.6%
New Bedford		1.81	95,072	69.6%
Taunton		1.44	55,874	23.6%

*Table 3-9: Environmental Justice Criteria in Comparable Municipalities*

Source: EJ\_2010\_municipal\_stats.xls; Executive Office of Administration and Finance, Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS), <http://www.mass.gov/anf/research-and-tech/it-serv-and-support/application-serv/office-of-geographic-information-massgis/datalayers/cen2010ej.html>, last accessed January 17, 2017.

To be considered an EJ neighborhood, a census block group must meet one or more of the following criteria:

- 25% or more residents are foreign-born; or
- 25% or more residents are minority; or
- 25% or more households qualify as English-Isolated, meaning that any

householder over 14 years of age speaks a non-English language and also has difficulty speaking English; or

- Median annual household income is at or below 65% of the statewide median income. In 2010, the year of the last US Census, this threshold was \$40,673.<sup>5</sup>

5. Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Massachusetts Environmental Justice Policy, October 9, 2002, p5. Accessed January 17, 2017.

MassGIS provides a table of the 2010 environmental justice populations, based on the 2010 US Census. The information in *Table 3-9* was extracted from that data. *Figure 3-10* shows that the entire downtown urban renewal area meets the EJ qualifications described earlier; 90.1 acres qualifies due to income criterion and 108.1 acres qualifies due to both income and minority criteria.

## Real Estate Market Conditions

### Housing

*Table 3-10* summarizes housing characteristics within the urban renewal area, the city, the county, and the state. The great majority, 90%, of downtown urban renewal area residences are renter-occupied, higher even than the 64% of Fall River residents who rent. In the county, the picture is different: 63% of units are owner-occupied and 37% are rented, which is very close to the state's proportion of 62% owner-occupied and 38% rented. Average length of residence is comparable: 20 years compared to

Housing Characteristics								
	Downtown Study Area		City of Fall River		Bristol County		State of MA	
		%		%		%		%
<b>Tenure (Occupied Housing Units)</b>	<b>936</b>		<b>38,469</b>		<b>217,359</b>		<b>2,661,460</b>	
Owner Occupied	89	10%	13,901	36%	136,044	63%	1,655,459	62%
Renter Occupied	847	90%	24,568	64%	81,315	37%	1,006,001	38%
<b>Avg. Length of Residence (yrs)</b>								
Owner Occupied	20.1		21.3		19.8		18.8	
Renter Occupied	8.7		9.9		9.3		8.5	
<b>Owner-Occupied Housing Values</b>	<b>89</b>		<b>13,901</b>		<b>136,044</b>		<b>1,655,459</b>	
Value Less than \$20,000	1	5%	425	3%	3,102	2%	31,179	2%
Value \$20,000 - \$39,999	4	0%	278	2%	2,044	2%	14,560	1%
Value \$40,000 - \$59,999	1	0%	22	0%	834	1%	8,587	1%
Value \$60,000 - \$79,999	3	0%	117	1%	814	1%	8,213	0%
Value \$80,000 - \$99,999	1	5%	256	2%	1,726	1%	13,837	1%
Value \$100,000 - \$149,999	10	19%	1,154	8%	5,360	4%	67,728	4%
Value \$150,000 - \$199,999	19	19%	2,212	16%	13,924	10%	131,887	8%
Value \$200,000 - \$299,999	36	28%	5,987	43%	46,154	34%	348,458	21%
Value \$300,000 - \$399,999	9	6%	2,289	16%	32,422	24%	346,867	21%
Value \$400,000 - \$499,999	4	8%	793	6%	15,915	12%	245,119	15%
Value \$500,000 - \$749,999	1	6%	270	2%	9,982	7%	252,507	15%
Value \$750,000 - \$999,999	1	3%	61	0%	2,483	2%	102,593	6%
Value \$1,000,000 or more	0	0%	37	0%	1,284	1%	83,924	5%
<b>Median Value*</b>	<b>\$216,648</b>		<b>\$241,532</b>		<b>\$287,139</b>		<b>\$358,605</b>	
<b>2016 Est. Housing Units by Year Structure Built</b>	<b>1,071</b>		<b>43,121</b>		<b>235,821</b>		<b>2,930,757</b>	
Housing Units Built 2010 or later	15	0.8%	701	2%	6,622	3%	140,159	5%
Housing Units Built 2000 to 2009	24	4.3%	1,539	4%	16,605	7%	214,492	7%
Housing Units Built 1990 to 1999	35	3.9%	2,073	5%	20,928	9%	211,390	7%
Housing Units Built 1980 to 1989	83	9.4%	3,158	7%	25,206	11%	308,979	11%
Housing Units Built 1970 to 1979	137	9.4%	3,139	7%	28,618	12%	328,843	11%
Housing Units Built 1960 to 1969	58	6.8%	2,292	5%	21,553	9%	290,768	10%
Housing Units Built 1950 to 1959	23	2.4%	3,129	7%	22,257	9%	320,611	11%
Housing Units Built 1940 to 1949	31	4.4%	2,733	6%	13,551	6%	163,314	6%

*Table 3-10: Housing Characteristics*

Source: Nielson Segmentation & Market Solutions, 2016 and FXM Associates

21 in the city, 20 in the county, and 19 in the state. Length of residence for renters is almost the same in each area (between nine and 10 years).

The median value of owner-occupied structures in the downtown urban renewal area is just over \$200,000, while the estimate for the city is a little over \$240,000, for the county \$287,000, and for the state, \$360,000. The proportion of structures valued at less than \$100,000 in the downtown area (10%), is twice that of the state (5%).

Over half the housing stock in the urban renewal area and City of Fall River was built before 1939. Both the county and state’s median year in which structures were built is 1961, with approximately a third built before 1939.

Fall River Downtown Study Area: Business Profile						
2016 estimated						
	Establishments	%	Employees	%	Sales (\$ millions)	%
23 Construction	19	3%	94	2%	19.6	3%
31-33 Manufacturing	5	1%	57	2%	14.0	2%
42 Wholesale Trade	8	1%	55	1%	206.9	35%
44-45 Retail Trade	42	7%	183	5%	51.6	9%
48-49 Transportation & Warehousing	2	0%	205	5%	.9	0%
51 Information	10	2%	56	1%	9.0	2%
52 Finance & Insurance	59	9%	325	9%	65.1	11%
53 Real Estate and Rental & Leasing	25	4%	78	2%	8.2	1%
54 Professional, Scientific, & Technical Svcs	169	27%	597	16%	120.9	20%
561 Administrative & Support Svcs	8	1%	40	1%	3.1	1%
61 Educational Services	10	2%	116	3%	.3	0%
62 Healthcare & Social Assistance	142	23%	1,009	27%	70.7	12%
621-623 Healthcare	98	16%	520	14%	46.1	8%
624 Social Assistance	44	7%	489	13%	24.6	4%
71 Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	0	0%	25	1%	.9	0%
72 Accommodation & Food Services	35	6%	346	9%	17.6	3%
721 Accommodation	0	0.0%	24	1%	2.4	0%
722 Food Services & Drinking Places	32	5%	322	9%	15.2	3%
81 Other Services (excl Public Administration)	49	8%	170	5%	5.3	1%
92 Public Administration	44	7%	411	11%	.0	0%
<b>ALL INDUSTRIES</b>	<b>627</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,767</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>594</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 3-11: Business Profile - Downtown Urban Renewal Area

Source: Massachusetts Department of Labor and Workforce Development, ES202 Reports, 2015

## Plan Area Economy: Business Characteristics

Data in Table 3-11 show the business profile of the downtown urban renewal area. The downtown urban renewal area held an estimated 627 establishments with about 3,800 employees and \$594 million in business sales in 2016.

The Healthcare and Social Assistance industry is the largest employer in the urban renewal area, with Healthcare employing the most people and producing the largest amount in sales (over \$70) million. The Healthcare sub-sector is composed of ambulatory health care services, hospitals (2), and nursing and residential care facilities. The Social Assistance sub-sector includes services for the elderly, persons with disabilities, and “other individual and family care services.”

Table 3-12 shows the city of Fall River business profile.

Second to the Healthcare industry is the Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services

City of Fall River: Business Profile 2016 estimated						
	Establishments	%	Employees	%	Sales (\$ millions)	%
23 Construction	346	6%	1,835	4%	601.8	7%
31-33 Manufacturing	193	4%	5,106	11%	1,040.1	12%
42 Wholesale Trade	163	3%	1,417	3%	2,769.3	32%
44-45 Retail Trade	595	11%	4,149	9%	1,043.4	12%
48-49 Transportation & Warehousing	71	1%	775	2%	54.6	1%
51 Information	67	1%	713	2%	211.2	2%
52 Finance & Insurance	323	6%	1,490	3%	443.1	5%
53 Real Estate and Rental & Leasing	243	5%	971	2%	232.8	3%
54 Professional, Scientific, & Technical Service	473	9%	1,803	4%	391.6	4%
561 Administrative & Support Services	127	2%	709	2%	80.4	1%
61 Educational Services	105	2%	3,896	9%	3.4	0%
62 Healthcare & Social Assistance	1,558	29%	13,525	30%	1,381.4	16%
621-623 Healthcare	1,339	25%	9,470	21%	1,353.8	16%
624 Social Assistance	219	4%	4,055	9%	27.6	0%
71 Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	57	1%	467	1%	28.4	0%
72 Accommodation & Food Services	305	6%	4,145	9%	306.0	4%
721 Accommodation	57	1%	1,349	3%	150.0	2%

Table 3-12: Business Profile - Fall River

Source: Massachusetts Department of Labor and Workforce Development, ES202 Reports, 2015

industry, which employs 16% of the urban renewal area's workers and accounts for \$121 million in sales, 20% of the Area's total. Wholesale Trade, which has only 1% of the area's jobs, dominates sales, with over \$206 million, 35% of the total sales in the urban renewal area. These companies are merchant wholesalers in durable and non-durable goods.

Retail accounts for relatively little, 7%, of downtown employment.

The Construction industry, while not a major employer, is worth a note, since almost half these establishments are small Specialty Trade Contractors. The Accommodation and Food Services sector is also of interest. The large majority of both employment and sales is in the Food Services and Drinking Places sub-sector, and most of these are full-service restaurants.

Some of the patterns in the downtown urban renewal area exist in the city data: the Healthcare and Social Assistance industry is the largest employer in both by a considerable margin. The

Business Profiles Compared: Downtown Study Area and City of Fall River							
2016 estimated							
	Establishments		Employees		Sales (\$ millions)		
	Downtown	City	Downtown	City	Downtown	City	
23 Construction	3%	6%	2%	4%	3%	7%	
31-33 Manufacturing	1%	4%	2%	11%	2%	12%	
42 Wholesale Trade	1%	3%	1%	3%	35%	32%	
44-45 Retail Trade	7%	11%	5%	9%	9%	12%	
48-49 Transportation & Warehousing	0%	1%	5%	2%	0%	1%	
51 Information	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	
52 Finance & Insurance	9%	6%	9%	3%	11%	5%	
53 Real Estate and Rental & Leasing	4%	5%	2%	2%	1%	3%	
54 Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	27%	9%	16%	4%	20%	4%	
561 Administrative & Support Services	1%	2%	1%	2%	1%	1%	
61 Educational Services	2%	2%	3%	9%	0%	0%	
62 Healthcare & Social Assistance	23%	29%	27%	30%	12%	16%	
621-623 Healthcare	16%	25%	14%	21%	8%	16%	
624 Social Assistance	7%	4%	13%	9%	4%	0%	
71 Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	
72 Accommodation & Food Services	6%	6%	9%	9%	3%	4%	
721 Accommodations	0%	1%	1%	3%	0%	2%	
722 Food Services & Drinking Places	5%	5%	9%	6%	3%	2%	
81 Other Services (exl Public Administration)	8%	12%	5%	6%	1%	1%	
92 Public Administration	7%	2%	11%	4%	0%	0%	
<b>ALL INDUSTRIES</b>	<b>101%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Sources: The Nielsen Company, *Segmentation and Market Solutions*, 2016 estimates; and FXM Associates

Table 3-13: Business Profile - Comparison

Source: Massachusetts Department of Labor and Workforce Development, ES202 Reports, 2015

Wholesale Trade industry, a relatively minor employer, accounts for almost a third of the downtown's and city's sales.

There are, however, substantial differences, which are better shown in *Table 3-13*, comparing the relative shares of business industries in the downtown with those in the City of Fall River.

The Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services industry has a larger share of economic activity in the urban renewal area than it does in the city: quadruple the share of employees, triple the share of establishments, and twice the share of sales.

There is more Healthcare activity across all three categories (establishments, employees, and sales) in the city than in the urban renewal area and more Social Assistance activity in the downtown urban renewal area. The Retail Trade industry, as noted above, has a smaller share of employment in the downtown urban renewal area than in the city.

Employment is important to an area's economy, but so are wages. *Table 3-14* compares average annual wages for city, county, and state in 2015, the last year for which complete data are available.

Wages in the city lag county and state wages in most sectors. The largest gap is in the Management of Companies and Enterprises sector, where city wages are 28% of the county's. Workers in the city earn more than county workers in the Information, Administrative Support and Waste Management Services, Health Care and Social Assistance, Accommodation and Food Services, and Public Administration sectors. The city's wages are below the state average in all sectors, with the greatest disparity (lowest percentage in table) in Finance and Insurance and Management of Companies and Enterprises, both high wage sectors at the state level.



Average Annual Wages, City of Fall River, Bristol County, and State of Massachusetts, 2015					
Sectors	City of Fall River	City as % of County	City as % of State	Bristol County	State of Massachusetts
Total, All Industries	\$44,616	93%	67%	\$48,152	\$66,716
23 - Construction	\$56,992	94%	81%	\$60,372	\$70,772
31-33 - Manufacturing	\$49,608	76%	58%	\$65,364	\$86,164
22 - Utilities	\$74,620	83%	74%	\$90,376	\$101,088
42 - Wholesale Trade	\$55,328	77%	60%	\$71,968	\$91,624
44-45 - Retail Trade	\$27,768	98%	89%	\$28,288	\$31,356
48-49 - Transportation and Warehousing	\$38,428	84%	73%	\$46,020	\$52,624
51 - Information	\$65,884	107%	64%	\$61,828	\$103,480
52 - Finance and Insurance	\$58,344	92%	40%	\$63,076	\$145,652
53 - Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	\$44,044	97%	60%	\$45,344	\$73,164
54 - Professional and Technical Services	\$64,844	85%	55%	\$76,544	\$118,508
55 - Management of Companies and Enterprises	\$57,096	28%	41%	\$207,532	\$140,192
56 - Administrative and Waste Services	\$32,656	103%	74%	\$31,616	\$44,356
61 - Educational Services	\$48,256	92%	82%	\$52,624	\$58,708
62 - Health Care and Social Assistance	\$46,436	106%	86%	\$43,732	\$54,080
71 - Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	\$21,632	99%	59%	\$21,892	\$36,452
72 - Accommodation and Food Services	\$18,512	109%	83%	\$17,056	\$22,360
81 - Other Services, Ex. Public Admin	\$25,740	99%	73%	\$25,896	\$35,464
92 - Public Administration	\$68,276	108%	93%	\$63,388	\$73,112

*Table 3-14: Average Annual Wages*

Source: Massachusetts Department of Labor and Workforce Development, ES202 Reports, 2015

## Tax Liens

Table 3-15 details the 13 parcels in the urban renewal area that have tax liens. Collectively, they total \$355,970.03. The oldest of these liens dates back to 1995; the median lien age is five years old.

Figure 3-11, on the following page, shows the locations of these parcels. Six of these liens are located in a residential district in the northernmost portion of the urban renewal area. Three of these are classified as multifamily residential housing, and three are parking lots or unbuilt space. Not one of these properties is owned by the same individual. The seven other parcels with tax liens are dispersed throughout the urban renewal area. Note that this data is current as of April 13, 2017, and is subject to change. It is offered only to demonstrate character of the urban renewal area.

*Towards an Evidence-Based Housing Policy in Fall River, Massachusetts*, a document published by the Public Policy Center at UMass Dartmouth in November 2016, discusses foreclosures in

Fall River since the mortgage crisis. It presents data that shows Fall River with low foreclosures in comparison with other Gateway cities. The document also states, however, that interviews

with stakeholders suggested that the crisis did leave a significant mark on Fall River's housing market as it prevented many renters from pursuing home ownership.

PARCEL ID	ADDRESS	TITLE	YEAR	DUE
N-11-0003	34 Danforth Street	20120055	2012	\$20,004.63
N-10-0067	39 Danforth Street	20090469	2009	\$16,970.52
N-20-0048	186 Rodman Street	20100085	2010	\$26,873.68
N-20-0042	158 Forth Street	201410058	2014	\$5,892.13
I-09-0056	335 South Main Street	20080089	2008	\$8,390.42
I-09-0009	308 South Main Street	20120189	2012	\$160,154.72
N-03-0012	205 Bedford Street	201500049	2015	\$4,257.77
N-07-0049	25 North Main Street	201500130	2015	\$11,976.26
N-10-0021	102 Pine Street	20120007	2012	\$12,839.62
N-10-0022	Pine Street	95016010	1995	\$44,088.63
N-08-0029	251 Rock Street	20120207	2012	\$12,708.16
N-10-0016	Durfee Street	20100605	2011	\$29,058.45
N-11-0002	40 Danforth Street	20160144	2016	\$2,755.04
Total				\$ 355,970.03

Table 3-15: *Parcels with Tax Liens*  
Source: City of Fall River, April 13, 2017



Figure 3-11: Parcels with Tax Liens  
 (Note: Current as of date of April 13, 2017. Subject to change.)

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### 3.3 Clearance and Rehabilitation

This section describes specific redevelopment activities within the explicit purview of the FRRA that support the objectives detailed in *Section 4. Plan Objectives*.

#### Acquisitions

A map of planned acquisitions and table listing parcel identifications, addresses, owners, size, value, and potential activities is available in *Section 2.2 Required Maps*. This map identifies the parcels the FRRA intends to acquire to fulfill the public purposes of this Urban Renewal Plan. The FRRA has identified parcels for acquisition (see *Table 2-2* in *Section 2. Characteristics*) and will acquire one or more of these parcels over the life of the Plan and undertake the appropriate course of action as identified below. All of these activities may be undertaken by the FRRA alone or in partnership with a redeveloper.

The FRRA will periodically assess the progress of this Plan's implementation and identify other properties for acquisition and disposition or remove any properties identified in the list of acquisitions that have subsequently been developed according to the requirements of this Urban Renewal Plan. Changes to the Plan are governed by 760 CMR 12.03, as outlined in *Section 15. Process for Future Changes*.

Before the FRRA can acquire a parcel, two independent appraisals of the parcel must be submitted to DHCD. The appraisal and negotiation process must follow the requirements set forth in 760 CMR 12.04. In addition, the FRRA must follow the requirements for a Relocation Plan as described in *Section 10. Relocation*.

760 CMR 12.02 (2) requires certain additional information if the urban renewal plan proposes clearance and/or rehabilitation activities.

Fit studies, described in *Section 4. Plan Objectives*, tested the type and scale of

development that could take place on some of the parcels identified for acquisition.

#### ACQUISITION OF PROPERTIES UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

As the FRRA acquires property that is under the jurisdiction of the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC), it must consult with the MHC regarding its specific plans for spot clearance, rehabilitation, and/or new construction early enough in the process to allow the MHC to undertake its statutory review and comment. Buildings listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places and/or those included in the *Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth*, maintained by MHC, are under MHC's jurisdiction for review. Please see *Appendix M. Historic Inventory*.

The approval process for this urban renewal plan requires two separate notifications of MHC; the first notification is of the public hearing held by

the City Council. The FRRA notified MHC of the hearing held by the City Council on June 26, 2018. The second notification is when the Environmental Notification Form is filed under the Massachusetts Environmental Protection Act (MEPA). See Section 14 of this document.

The proposed acquisitions in this plan are, in part, dependent on market conditions; as such, the details of spot clearance, rehabilitation, and/or new construction would need to be communicated to MHC on a case-by-case basis. In some cases, an updated MHC Building Form (Form B) may need to be submitted to clarify the eligibility of a building for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

## Redevelopment

Redevelopment actions, undertaken after acquisition of one or more parcels by the FRRA, include clearance, spot clearance, rehabilitation, and new construction. *Section 2. Characteristics* contains the maps that locate the actions related to spot clearance, rehabilitation, and

new construction. Of these, spot clearance and rehabilitation are the most likely activities in the first three to five years of this Urban Renewal Plan; new construction is likely to take place later in the life of the plan. The FRRA does not anticipate undertaking clearance activities.

### Clearance

A clearance project is defined in MGL Chapter 121B, Section 1. Definitions as "the demolition and removal of buildings from any substandard, decadent, or blighted open area by an operating agency in accordance with subsection (d) of section twenty-six." The FRRA does not intend to undertake clearance activities for the entire downtown urban renewal area as defined by the legislation.

### Spot Clearance

The FRRA will undertake spot clearance activities in the context of the acquisition and disposition of parcels as identified in *Table 2-2*.

*Figure 2-17* identifies those parcels that would be cleared in order to be redeveloped.

The FRRA may either clear existing structures or mitigate existing environmental conditions itself or it may dispose of acquired properties to a developer with the requirement in the Land Disposition Agreement (LDA) that the sites be cleared and/or mitigated to the appropriate standard as part of the redevelopment of those sites. Existing environmental conditions may include one or more of the following: the presence of hazardous materials, flooding conditions, or other similar site-related conditions.

### Rehabilitation

The existing market conditions and the presence of so many buildings with upper floor vacancies suggest that initial development activities by the FRRA will focus on rehabilitation in the first three to five years rather than significant new construction.

Some parcels identified for acquisition have existing structures that could be rehabilitated. The FRRA will dispose of these parcels to private developers who will undertake the rehabilitation; the FRRA does not anticipate undertaking rehabilitation activities itself. The fit studies in *Section 4.1 Plan Objectives* demonstrated how some buildings could be renovated to serve new purposes. The ability to renovate existing buildings depends on factors that vary by building, including structural conditions, the ability to mitigate existing hazardous materials, and the market for the type of floor plates and access the existing building provides. In some cases, these buildings are partially occupied.

Sustainable development principles look towards the adaptive reuse of buildings in a high-density core with access to transit and other infrastructure as a better use of resources and materials than development in less dense and well-served areas. Fall Rivers' downtown meets these conditions, and rehabilitation of these

existing and, in some cases historic, buildings will reinforce the original development pattern of the downtown while continuing to contribute to the character and shared history of the Fall River community.

### **New Construction**

This Urban Renewal Plan does not assume significant new construction in the first five years, as noted earlier.

When market conditions begin to favor new construction, the FRRA will acquire one or more parcels, and dispose of the parcel(s) to private developers, using individual LDAs and the design guidelines in this Plan to control the subsequent development.

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## **3.4 Local Survey and Conformance with the Municipality's Comprehensive Plan**

760 CMR 12.02 (2) requires that the urban renewal plan be based on a local survey and conform with the municipality's comprehensive plan.

### **Local Survey**

The *Downtown Urban Renewal Plan* was built upon a thorough analysis of local conditions. Spatially, much of this analysis was conducted using ESRI ArcGIS and shapefiles provided by the City of Fall River. As necessary, this data was supplemented with shapefiles downloaded from the MassGIS and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) websites. Data layers and sources are identified on each map, below the map's legend.

In addition to this GIS analysis, the consultant team completed an inventory of the urban renewal area on foot. This inventory was motivated by two goals: (1) identifying current land use in the downtown, and (2) cataloguing locations of vacancies. Vacancy data, in its aggregated form, was later used to understand how the downtown might develop in the future, and how this development would impact parking demand. The results of this analysis are discussed in *Section 2. Characteristics* and *Section 3. Eligibility*.

## Master Plan

*The City of Fall River Master Plan*, published in 2009, establishes a 15 point Vision for the city for the year 2030. This Urban Renewal Plan advances several components of this Vision:

- Have actively preserved all that is good about the city including its waterfront, historic buildings, churches, unique

parks, natural resources, ethnic diversity, arts, and cultural venues.

- Have an economy that attracts a wide variety of jobs and provides job training opportunities for its residents.
- Be an active site for tourism based on its historic and cultural resources, its waterfronts, and its ethnic diversity.
- Have a vibrant downtown that serves as an active center for commerce.
- Have many attractive mill buildings and other historic structures that have been rehabilitated to provide for retail, artists' live/work space, tourism, and residential uses.
- Have a renewed and well maintained park system that is knitted together by tree-lined boulevards and a system of multi-use trails, sidewalks, and greenways.
- Be a safe and clean place to live and raise a family. Public safety will be a priority. Residents will take pride in the city's ap-

pearance, and public spaces and private buildings will be well-maintained.

- Have a wide-variety of housing options for individuals and families of all means.
- Have a convenient and safe circulation system with adequate and affordable public transportation that includes a commuter rail connection to Boston, safe intersections, provisions for pedestrians and bicyclists, and an easy to follow sign system.

The Vision also includes points on day-lighting the Quequechan River, a topic that is discussed in *Section 9. Public Improvements*.

In addition to the Vision, which applies to the city as a whole, the *Master Plan* makes twelve recommendations specifically pertaining to the development of Fall River's downtown and Quequechan River corridor. They are:

1. Reestablish the downtown as an important commercial and activity center.

2. Improve parking and circulation in downtown.
3. Develop linkages between the waterfront and downtown.
4. Improve the appearance of downtown through a façade and sign improvement initiative.
5. Improve the downtown streetscape through a historically sensitive and lively palette of paving materials, lighting, and site amenities.
6. Continue to explore artist’s live/work space as a way to create housing and utilize low-use mill space.
7. Continue to explore the desirability of waterfront lofts for residences for both artists and non-artists, and the possibilities of mixed-use buildings on the waterfront combining commercial and residential activities, with higher income units.
8. Restore the Quequechan River and its falls as a key element of the City’s revitalization and serve as a focal point for community gathering and pride.

9. Develop greenways along the Quequechan River corridor as linkages between areas.
10. Continue to support the Fall River Energy Enterprise (FREE) proposal to once again use the Quequechan River as a source of hydro-power.
11. Encourage the reuse of the historic mill buildings along the Quequechan River corridor for a mixture of uses –residential, commercial, and industrial.
12. Include provisions governing mill conversion in the modernized zoning ordinance.

As with the points in the Vision, this Urban Renewal Plan is consistent with, or builds upon, these ideas as they apply to present-day Fall River, and to the scope and geography of this planning effort.

## Other Recent Planning Initiatives

Nearly eight years have elapsed since the *Master Plan’s* publication. During this time, additional

local planning documents have been published. These are:

- *Open Space and Recreation Plan*, 2010 (Open Space and Recreation Task Force, City of Fall River)
- *Towards an Evidence-Based Housing Policy in Fall River, Massachusetts*, November 2016 (Public Policy Center at UMass-Dartmouth and Representative Carole Fiola)
- *Fall River Historic Streetscape Study*, 2014 (BETA Group)
- *Preliminary Feasibility Study – Daylighting and Revitalizing the Quequechan River*, August 2017 (Prepared by ESS Group for Green Futures)
- *Historic Lower Highlands Downtown Streetscape Project*, December 11, 2015 (BETA Group)
- *Targeted Streetscape Improvements Master Plan 2016 - 2021*, April 2016 (BETA Group)
- *Purchase, Bank and Granite Streetscape Enhancement Project*, May 17, 2017 (BETA Group)

- *Columbia Square Intersection Enhancement Project*, May 24, 2017 (BETA Group)
- *Harborside Neighborhood District Enhancement Plan*, January 11, 2016 (BETA Group)

### **2010 Open Space and Recreation Plan**

The 2010 *Open Space and Recreation Plan* defines seven goals for the city. Of these, four are relevant to this Urban Renewal Plan:

- Expand and improve recreation opportunities in Fall River parks.
- Create and implement a plan for a municipal and regional system of walkways, trails, and bike routes.
- Create a system of greenways in urban Fall River.
- Reposition the parks, green and open space in terms of their benefit to public safety, public health, economic development and quality of life in Fall River.

In addition to its goals, the *Open Space and Recreation Plan* is instructive in the environmental inventory and analysis it

contains. Fall River’s environmental challenges, as described in the document, include hazardous waste and brownfield sites, illegal trash dumping, ground and surface water pollution (which it partially attributes to stormwater runoff), and impaired water bodies. Some of these conditions, the *Plan* notes, are relegated to specific geographies in the city, making environmental equity a challenge in itself. This Urban Renewal Plan expands on these conditions in *Section 3. Eligibility*.

*The Open Space and Recreation Plan* is currently being updated.

### **Towards an Evidence-based Housing Policy in Fall River**

The recommendations contained within *Towards an Evidence-based Housing Policy in Fall River* pertain to policy. Thus, there is no significant intersection with this planning effort. That said, the analysis featured within the document – particularly details about absentee landlords, housing code violations, and foreclosures and vacancies – have been extremely valuable in the development of this Urban Renewal Plan. See

*Section 1.1 Description of the Plan Area* for more detail.

### **Fall River Historic Streetscape Study**

This study proposed streetscape improvements for the downtown corridor along North Main and South Main streets between Cherry and Columbia streets.

### **Preliminary Feasibility Study – Daylighting and Revitalizing the Quequechan River**

This *Feasibility Study* was prepared by ESS Group for Green Futures, a Fall River environmental group. The Study reviews current conditions along the path of the Quequechan River and provides an overview of potential opportunities for its partial restoration. While various City departments were asked to contribute materials and comments to the Study, it has not been vetted or adopted by the City. It was also not a part of the public process for the waterfront or downtown urban renewal plans, since it was published after that process started, and is therefore not incorporated into the

recommendations of this Plan. However, the document does summarize existing materials and resources, which may be useful in future planning efforts.

### **Historic Lower Highlands Downtown Streetscape Project**

The project area for this study extends north from the I-195 corridor to President Avenue and is bounded to the east by June Street and to the west by the Taunton River. It includes the Lower Highlands Historic Downtown District, recognized in 2012 by the American Planning Association as one of the *Great Places in America: Neighborhoods*. The focus of the study is to propose functional, safe, and understandable vehicular, bike, and pedestrian connections between both existing destinations and planned future attractions and destinations.

### ***Targeted Streetscape Improvements Master Plan 2016 - 2021***

This *Master Plan* proposes streetscape improvements for several neighborhoods, two of which are within the boundaries of this Urban

Renewal Plan and which are the subject of more detailed planning documents (see below): (1) Purchase, Bank, and Granite Streets; and, (2) The Columbia Square Intersection.

### **Purchase, Bank and Granite Streetscape Enhancement Project**

This project, for which construction will begin in late 2017/early 2018, includes significant enhancement to Purchase Street (between Bedford and Cherry Streets), Granite Street (between North Main and Rock Streets), and Bank Street (between Purchase and Green Streets). The goals include encouraging private investment in the Purchase Street neighborhood and enhancing the link between the waterfront and downtown via Bank Street.

### **Columbia Square Intersection Enhancement Project**

This project is for streetscape enhancements at the intersection of South Main Street and Columbia Street as a gateway for the Columbia Street cultural district. Columbia Street itself

has potential to serve as one connection between the downtown and the waterfront.

### ***Harborside Neighborhood District Enhancement Plan***

This report introduces the concept of the "Harborside Neighborhood" as a vital link in the connection between the waterfront and the downtown area. In the plan, "Harborside Park" (city-owned, vacant land north of Central Street), the proposed 64 Durfee Street residential project, and the Bank Street Armory/Public Library block, including the open space connecting them, are conceived of as critical links in a chain leading from the waterfront along the Central Street/Green Street/bank Street corridor to the North Main and Purchase Street downtown business district.

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## **3.5 Regional Planning**

The Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD) is the regional planning agency for Fall River.

This group has issued several plans that direct the city's development:

- *Southeastern Massachusetts: Vision 20/20 - An Agenda for the Future*, 1999
- *South Coast Rail Corridor Plan Update: Community Priority Areas of Regional Significance*, 2013
- *South Coast Rail Corridor Plan: Five-Year Update of Community Priority Areas - Fall River*, 2013
- *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy*, 2015
- *Regional Transportation Plan*, 2016

### **1999 Southeastern Massachusetts: Vision 20/20**

Published in 1999, *Southeastern Massachusetts: Vision 20/20* follows a period of tremendous population growth in southeastern Massachusetts. (Notably, Fall River, along with Brockton and New Bedford, did not experience this growth; these cities grew by about 4% between 1970 and 1999 while the rest of the region grew by more than 80%.) Correspondingly, *Vision 20/20* emphasizes managing future growth, diverting growth to

existing urban centers, protecting rural areas, and preserving natural environments. Transit infrastructure is seen to enable this work, thus its development is defined as a priority. The document also stresses the importance of maintaining the unique identities of the region's municipalities.

This Urban Renewal Plan, in its revitalization of a downtown area, and intent to reinforce unique elements of the city, supports the goals identified by *Vision 20/20*.

### **2013 South Coast Rail Corridor Plan Update: Community Priority Areas of Regional Significance**

The 2013 *South Coast Rail Corridor Plan Update: Community Priority Areas of Regional Significance* was developed by SRPEDD, Old Colony Planning Council, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, and representatives from the communities they serve. The intent of this Plan is to designate Priority Areas in the region which will then be the target of investment and focused planning activities. These Priority Areas fall into two categories:

Priority Areas for Development (those areas that have excellent development potential due to proximity to transit and existing infrastructure) and Priority Areas for Protection. Fall River has six Priority Areas for Development, two of which (Arts Overlay District and the Central Business District) intersect the urban renewal area. Not one of the three Priority Areas for Protection that exist within the city intersect the urban renewal area.

### **South Coast Rail Corridor Plan: Five-Year Update of Community Priority Areas - Fall River**

Like its region-wide counterpart, the *South Coast Rail Corridor Plan: Five-Year Update of Community Priority Areas - Fall River* describes the Priority Area designation and identifies those areas that have been selected. It also includes a series of maps: (1) Community Priority Area Designations, (2) Open Space and Developed Land, (3) Economic Development and Infrastructure, (4) Water Resources, (5) Biodiversity and Natural Resources, and (6) Housing and Environmental Justice.

## 2015 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Every year, the SRPEDD publishes a comprehensive economic development strategy for the region. The 2015 *Strategy* establishes six goals:

- Support the development of small business and new startups in the region
- Support the development of infrastructure for economic development
- Pursue sustainable development and enhance the region's quality of life
- Broaden the region's economic profile; promote employment opportunities in emerging sectors such as marine science, biotech, and the creative economy
- Provide institutional support for economic development
- Broadband infrastructure, adoption, and digital inclusion in Massachusetts

Each goal is attached to a measurable indicator, and is connected to a regional Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats analysis. The document also includes activities and progress relating to that goal. Fall River is mentioned in the activities and progress section a number of times in relation to University of Massachusetts

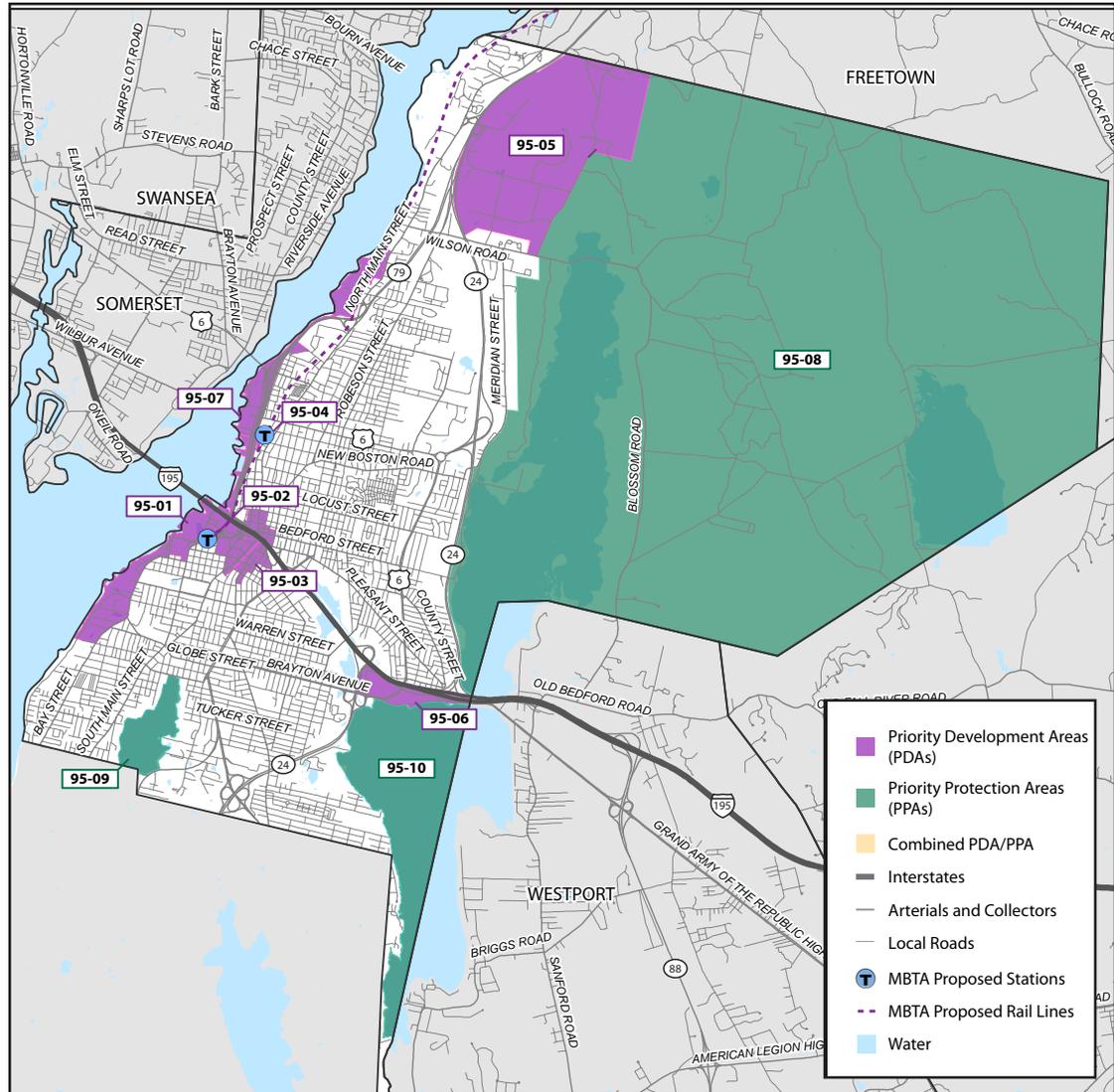


Figure 3-12: City of Fall River Community Priority Areas

Source: South Coast Rail Corridor Plan: Five-Year Update of Community Priority Areas - Fall River

Advanced Technology Manufacturing Center, Bristol Community College, and construction on State Pier. The *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy* also involves a series of findings, a portion of which relate to the region's challenges. Among these are that population growth currently outpaces job growth, that educational attainment is low, and that some parts of the region experience more economic distress than others. The *Strategy* cites Fall River as one of the regions with heightened economic distress.

## **2016 Regional Transportation Plan**

The 2016 *Regional Transportation Plan* generally aims to use the region's transit system to enable Smart Growth development. The *Plan* establishes a number of goals towards this end, which are distributed across seven categories: Safety, System Preservation, Congestion Reduction, System Reliability, Environmental Sustainability, Economic Vitality and Freight Movement, Project Development and Implementation. Many of the goals listed in these sections will both advance, and be supported by, the work of this Urban Renewal Plan. For example, the goal to "Improve the efficiency of the transportation system for all users while promoting transit, bicycling, and

pedestrian alternatives" will, among other things, support this Urban Renewal Plan's work of increasing safety by increasing activity on the streets. The streetscape improvements prescribed by this Plan will make bicycling and walking more attractive, another goal of the *Regional Transportation Plan*.

In its assessment of existing conditions in the region and projections of future challenges, the document describes a number of conditions specific to Fall River. These include dangerous intersections and high pedestrian crash rates (six of the region's top ten pedestrian crash corridors are located in Fall River, and all six intersect the downtown urban renewal area). This *Plan* also recognizes Fall River as the municipality in Southeastern Massachusetts with the "highest un-met transportation need." The planned South Coast Commuter Rail Line will offer some relief, however its development will take many years.

## **2018 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (DSEIR) - South Coast Rail**

MassDOT is planning an extension of the existing Stoughton commuter rail line that will provide much needed commuter rail service to both Fall River, as well as to other communities

along the line. This effort is known as the South Coast Rail (SCR) project. On March 15, 2017, MassDOT and the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority filed a Notice of Project Change for the SCR project that introduced a phased development scheme that would provide commuter rail service to Fall River and New Bedford during construction of SCR though an extension of the existing Middleborough/Lakeville line. This phased plan is expected to result in the provision of service for the two cities by November 2022.

On January 31, 2018, MassDOT filed a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (DSEIR) with the Commonwealth for the SCR project under the phased model. Per the DSEIR, the SCR project will lead to the development of two commuter rail stations and one layover station in Fall River. The Fall River Depot Station and the Weaver's Cove layover facility will be developed in the first phase of the project (Phase 1) while the Battleship Cove station will not be completed until full build-out (Full Build). The Fall River Depot Station will be located along the existing rail corridor in the land bound by Old Colony Street (south), Davol Street (west), and Pearce Street (north), and North Main Street (east).

### 3.6 Consistency with the Commonwealth’s Sustainable Development Principles

DHCD requests that communities undertaking an urban renewal plan consider the Commonwealth’s Sustainable Development Principles. The chart below identifies these principles and the strategies within the *Plan* that support those principles.

SUSTAINABILITY PRINCIPLES	FALL RIVER DOWNTOWN STRATEGIES	CONSISTENT?
1. Concentrate Development and Mix Uses	Focus on mixed-use development within the existing downtown	Y
2. Advance Equity	Recognition of the needs of the EJ population for jobs, goods, and services	Y
3. Make Efficient Decisions	Coordination between FRRA, planning Board, and City council for implementation actions	Y
4. Protect Land and Ecosystems	Prioritization of infill development and redevelopment within an existing urban area	Y
5. Use Natural Resources Wisely		Y
6. Expand Housing Opportunities	Encouragement of new/rehabilitated housing at multiple income levels	Y
7. Provide Transportation Choice	Consideration of improvements to existing bus network as area is redeveloped over time	Y
8 Increase Job and Business Opportunities	Redevelopment of vacant upper floors to encourage businesses to locate within downtown; expansion of uses, including light/boutique manufacturing	Y
9. Promote Clean Energy	Inclusion of energy-efficient measures in design guidelines	Y
10. Plan Regionally	Consistent with regional plans	Y

Table 3-16: Consistency with the Commonwealth's Sustainable Development Principles



## 4. Plan Objectives

The Fall River Redevelopment Authority (FRRA) seeks to reinvigorate Fall River's downtown and connect it, where appropriate, to the waterfront. Public action is required because the downtown has a history of underutilized buildings and lots that the private market has been unable to fully address. Upper floors are vacant, lower floors do not contain active uses that contribute to the vitality of the street, and current parking is insufficient for future uses. The FRRA will undertake two types of public actions to address the conditions identified in *Section 2. Characteristics* and *Section 3. Plan Eligibility*. The regulatory controls under *Section 4.3 Design Guidelines* will allow the Site Plan Review Committee and the Zoning Board of Appeals, acting on behalf of the FRRA, to control the physical and visual future of the downtown, ensuring a higher standard for the public realm than current regulations allow. The acquisitions identified in *Figure 2-15* require a partnership between the FRRA and future developers, controlled by a Land Disposition Agreement (LDA) that will create catalytic

projects to help transform, over time, the downtown into a vibrant, mixed-use district.

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### 4.1 Plan Objectives

Creating an active, vibrant downtown requires three main strategies:

- Transform drivers into pedestrians using short-term strategies, such as wayfinding, and longer-term strategies such as revisiting the current circulation patterns and addressing parking needs to support additional development over time.
- Redevelop underutilized land and buildings into mixed-use structures that support active use on the ground floor, and office, light industrial, and/or residential above.
- Create a lively streetscape with “eyes on the street” 12 to 18 hours a day in the short-term with planned streetscape improvements already begun by the

City and in the long-term with design guidelines that require active uses on the ground floor and redevelopment controlled by the use of an LDA to support mixed-use projects, including active uses on the ground floor and office and residential uses on the upper floors, as appropriate to the goals of this Plan.

### Transform Drivers into Pedestrians

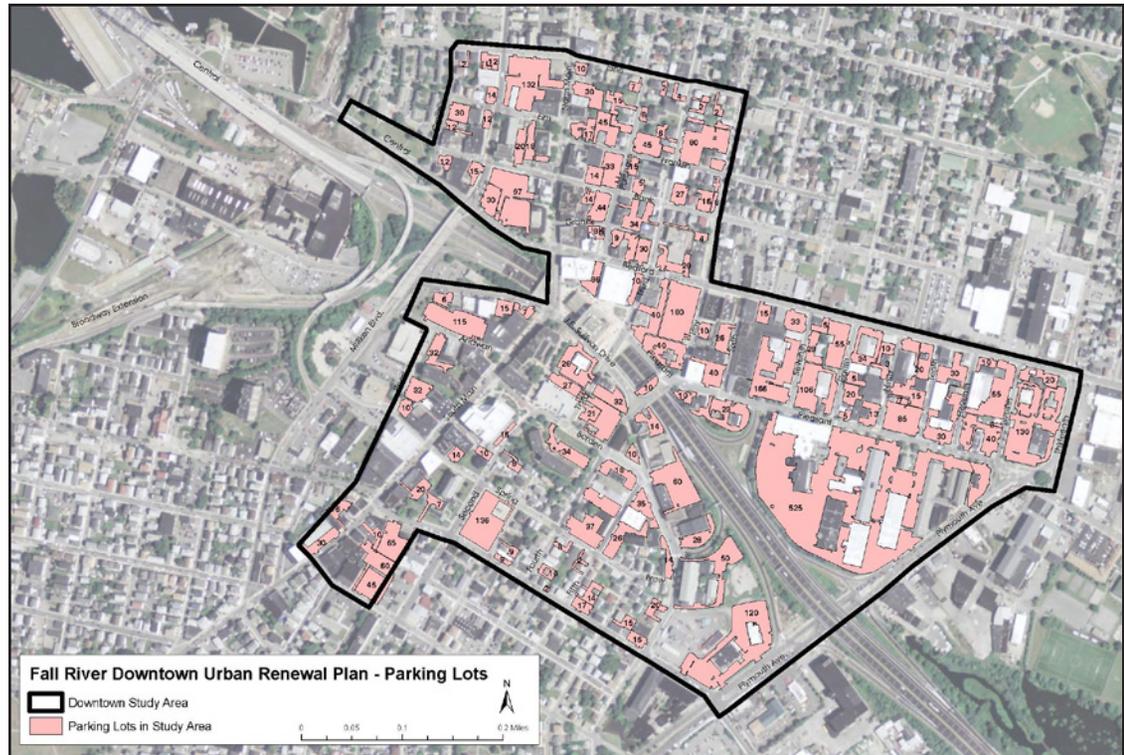
The first key to an invigorated downtown is to get people to stop, park, and move around in the downtown. The location has excellent regional access from Interstate 195 (I-195), Route 79, and the extended Main Street corridor. However, once within the immediate area, a system of one-way streets is difficult for drivers to navigate. Drivers who wish to park within the downtown are unsure of which locations are appropriate and availability changes drastically during the business hours of the Fall River Justice Center on South Main Street.

## Wayfinding

Getting people from “there” to the downtown requires physical signage and a marketing strategy that reaches beyond the city’s borders. A coordinated signage strategy – wayfinding – with consistent graphics and text, can direct people from the principal roads to the downtown, key spots within the downtown, and accessible public parking that will encourage drivers to leave their cars and walk throughout the area. The wayfinding strategy could change over time to address the redevelopment activities, advertising new businesses, residences, and available parking as these amenities are added.

## Street Network

The street network within the downtown is set up as a grid, but with a system of one-way streets that can confuse drivers unfamiliar with the area. (See *Figure 3-7: Circulation.*) One-way networks are inefficient for local trips, and may require a driver to circle around the area because



*Figure 4-1: Parking Lots in Downtown Fall River*  
Source: Prepared by the Consultant Team for the December 2016 FRRA Meeting

of a missed destination. One-way streets are also less safe as drivers are more likely to move at a higher speed. These conditions are not ideal

for retail environments; in addition, fewer drivers on a street mean less visibility for stores. Many cities have begun to shift their one-way

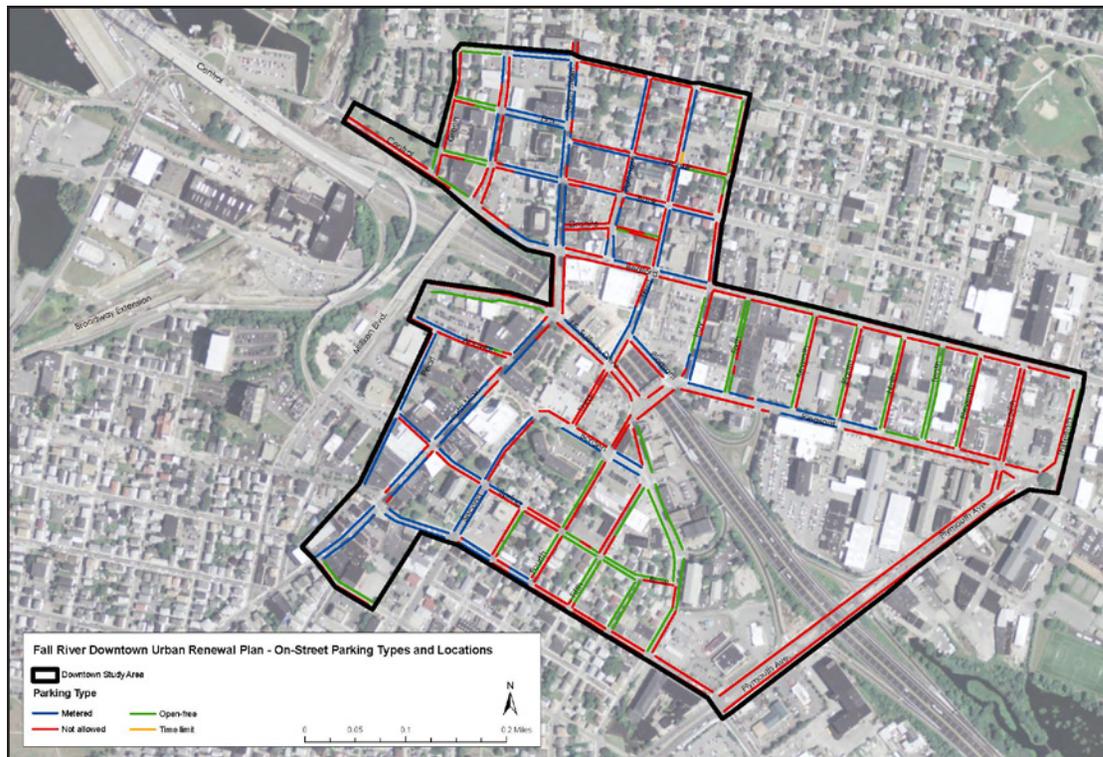


Figure 4-2: On-Street Parking Types and Locations in Downtown Fall River

Source: Prepared by the Consultant Team for the December 2016 FRRA Meeting

networks to two-way networks, including Austin, Berkeley, Cambridge, Chattanooga, Cincinnati, Louisville, New Haven, Palo Alto,

Sacramento, San Jose, Seattle, St. Petersburg, and Tampa.

The primary one-way corridors include North Main Street, Bedford Street, and Pleasant Street. The one-way system should be re-evaluated to see if conversion to a two-way system would support the active ground-floor uses that are appropriate for the downtown area. Pedestrian safety in a walkable downtown is also critical; slowing vehicular speeds by converting to a two-way system could address perceived safety issues in the area.

### Parking

As noted in *Section 3. Eligibility*, the amount of parking available now is not fully sufficient for the needs of existing businesses, with some crunch periods during certain times of the day. While adding more parking, especially structured parking, is an obvious choice, emerging trends in personal travel may decrease the need for significant amounts of structured parking over the next decade or two. This timeframe is well within the life of the bond necessary to finance a stand-alone parking structure, and so alternative

methods of addressing the need for parking should be considered.

A parking space is simply storage for a vehicle for some period of time. The need for such storage may change as technology changes. The rise of car sharing services such as Zipcar, Uber, and Lyft have changed how people in urban areas think about local travel. Millennials have tended to get their drivers licenses later in life and in fewer numbers than other generations. Demographics show that 43% of the households in the urban renewal area do not own cars. Autonomous vehicles are still in the test stage, however, within the life of a bond, such vehicles may change how people think about travel and car storage in fundamental ways.

In the short-term, Fall River needs to consider other tools for managing parking demand. These include the following:

- Undertake a full parking study to establish current demand as a baseline. The baseline would help measure the

impact of new development to determine the amount of parking necessary for the area.

- Revise the parking requirements in the City’s zoning to be consistent with current best practices. As noted in *Section 3. Eligibility*, the current requirements are based on the number of employees rather than square footage, which is the industry standard. This difference makes it difficult to compare the parking regulations with standards such as the *ITE Parking Generation* manual or those standards developed by other cities for their downtowns.
- Create a “fee in lieu of” parking program that allows developers to pay a fee to the City in lieu of providing required parking; such a fee would allow the City to provide parking when there is a demonstrated need for additional parking to support future development.
- Encourage private property owners with abutting properties to enter into

formal shared use parking agreements. This strategy is most effective when the abutting properties have compatible uses with parking demands that do not conflict with each other. For example, an office next to residential or daytime retail with evening restaurant.

Developers sometimes create more parking than is needed; empty parking fields are a waste of valuable downtown land and create spaces that may appear unsafe to pedestrians. The City should consider regulations that prevent overbuilding parking such as:

- Adopt maximum parking requirement instead of, or in addition to, minimum requirements.
- Allow the use of off-site parking within a certain walking distance to contribute to satisfying minimum parking requirements.
- Require that the cost of parking be “unbundled” from leases; charging sepa-



rately for parking creates an incentive for more efficient use of available parking.

In the long-term, strategies to reduce future parking demand include the following:

- Expand and enhance local transit service provided by the Southeastern Regional Transit Authority (SRTA). Many existing routes end too early in the evening for commuters and no bus routes have service on Sunday.
- Consider the impact of the expansion of commuter rail services through the SCR plan and how public transit could link the proposed commuter rail station to the downtown at times that support the commuting habits of new residents.
- Encourage the expansion of goods and services in the downtown that allow residents to meet daily needs without driving.
- Understand the changes in vehicular technology that will change how people

view and use cars over the next two decades.

The FRRA can undertake certain actions to support the goal of turning drivers into pedestrians. These actions include the following:

- Partner with the City and local institutions to develop and install a consistent and coordinated wayfinding strategy for visitors and residents. This strategy can be tied to the City's marketing strategy, but with a specific element, such as a logo and associated font, that identifies the downtown as a separate and distinct area.
- Undertake a parking study that builds on the research for this Urban Renewal Plan and identifies the baseline parking supply and demand, evaluates future demand, and recommends revisions to the City's parking requirements.
- Acquire land/easements for streetscape improvements and two-way conversions.

- Acquire land for parking to supplement needs of new development.
- Partner with the City and SRTA to evaluate current and future bus transit needs to supplement transit choices.

## Redevelopment

The redevelopment of the downtown is likely to take place in three stages. Market conditions and the processes required for acquisition and disposition will almost certainly cause these stages to overlap. The three stages are as follows:

- Developing the Spine: South Main to North Main
- Filling in the Blanks: Infill Rehabilitation and New Development
- Expansion: Connecting the Corridors

The FRRA will act as a catalyst by helping to focus development efforts to meet the goals of this Plan, by acquiring under-used buildings and land, and disposing of those properties to redevelopers whose proposed projects meet the

public purposes and objectives of this Urban Renewal Plan. To support the development strategies discussed that follow, the FRRA will assemble parcels through acquisition and then dispose of those parcels to redevelopers as outlined in *Section 10. Disposition*. The FRRA may improve the site prior to disposition (*Section 8. Site Preparation*). Other actions to support these strategies include implementing public streetscape or infrastructure improvements (*Section 9. Public Improvements*) to support private development and establishing controls on land use, building dimensions, and building and site design as discussed in *Section 4.5 Proposed Development Controls*.

## **Developing the Spine: South Main to North Main**

Both arms of Main Street (North and South) connect the downtown to the larger city by reaching into the neighborhoods. City Hall acts as the elbow between the upper and lower arm, connecting across the valley of I-195 that split

the two sides of the city when it was constructed in the 1960s. Regional access to the downtown is excellent – recent improvements to the I-195/ Braga Bridge connections have simplified the access between the downtown and both I-195 and Route 79.

South Main Street is the location of the Fall River Justice Center, and although the buildings along this street are under-used, it retains more of the original development pattern than North Main Street, with fewer breaks in the wall of buildings that define the streetscape. The design of City Hall creates a block to that streetwall, and the wall is further compromised moving north on North Main Street. These breaks in the streetwall along North Main Street are generally lots devoted to surface parking.

The activity levels are consistent with the development pattern and the presence of the anchor of the Fall River Justice Center. South Main Street has more activity, although some of it is tied to the hours of the court. For example, one coffee shop closes at 3 pm at the same time

as the court. North Main Street has even less activity. Although the Fall River Public Library is a natural anchor, there are fewer restaurants and other active uses in this area. *Figure 4-4* shows vacancies in the buildings along North and South Main Streets that contribute to the lack of economic vitality in the area.

The primary goal for the redevelopment of the downtown is to strengthen Main Street as a consistent corridor or spine, so that active uses on both sides of the I-195 split attract people to move from one side of the downtown to the other. To achieve this consistent spine, vacant and under-used buildings should be redeveloped to contain active uses on the ground floor and office, residential, and/or light manufacturing on upper floors. The scale of these buildings should be appropriate to the core of a downtown and of higher density than the nearby neighborhoods. Over time, lots now used for parking can be redeveloped with new buildings, creating infill development to complete the spine. The loss of the parking in those surface lots can be addressed by the

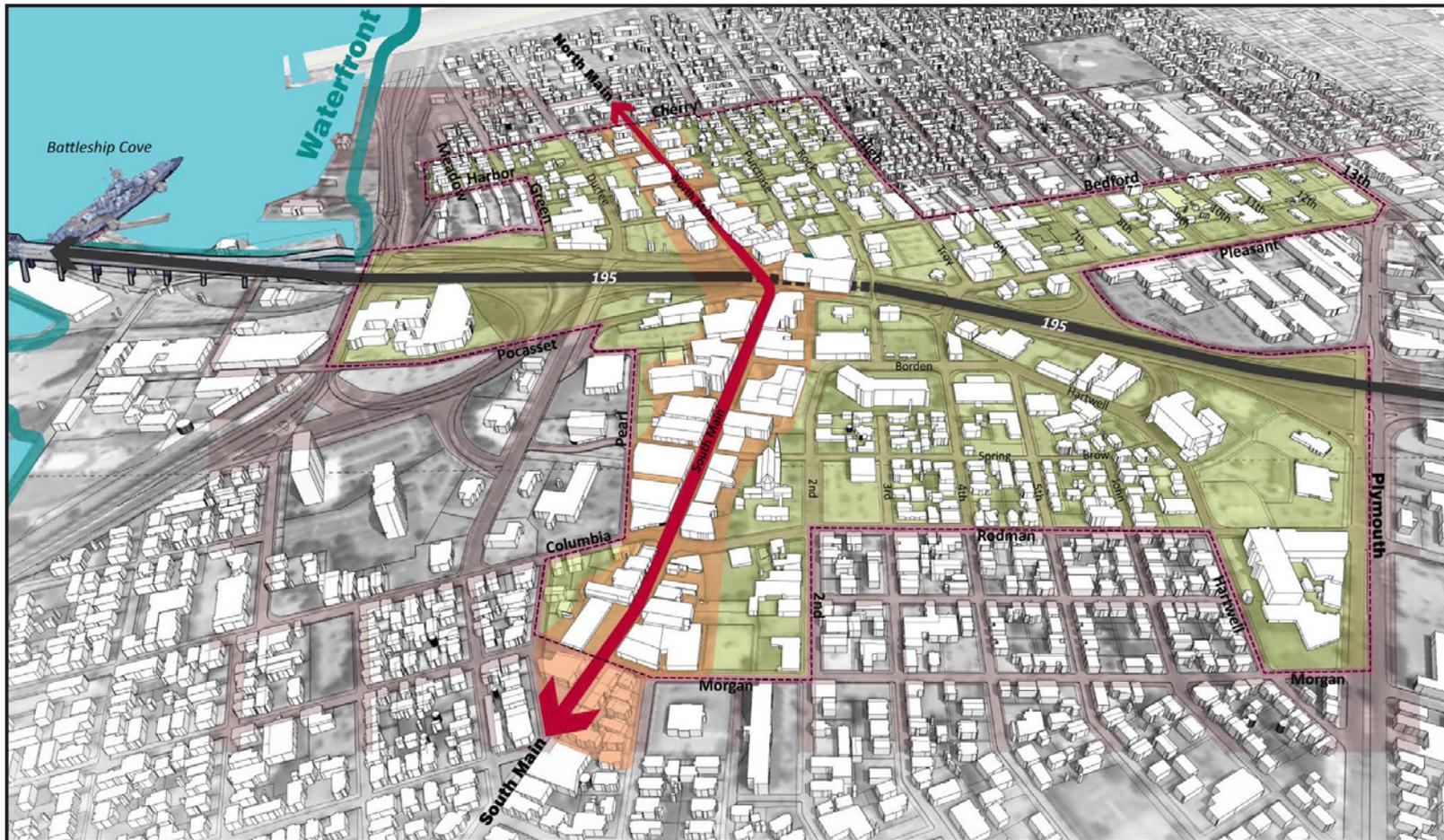


Figure 4-3: Developing the Spine

parking management strategies discussed earlier in this section.

### Filling in the Blanks: Infill Rehabilitation and New Development

As the spine of North Main and South Main Streets is completed, infill development is likely to spread into the neighborhood areas contiguous to the corridor. These areas are mostly residential, but with missing “teeth” where parking needs have created surface lots and where buildings are fully- or partially-vacant. Small residential or mixed-use developments, consistent with the existing scale of the neighborhoods, can support the denser uses along the Main Streets corridor. Additional neighborhood retail and services on the ground floors of some of these buildings would support the needs of the residents.

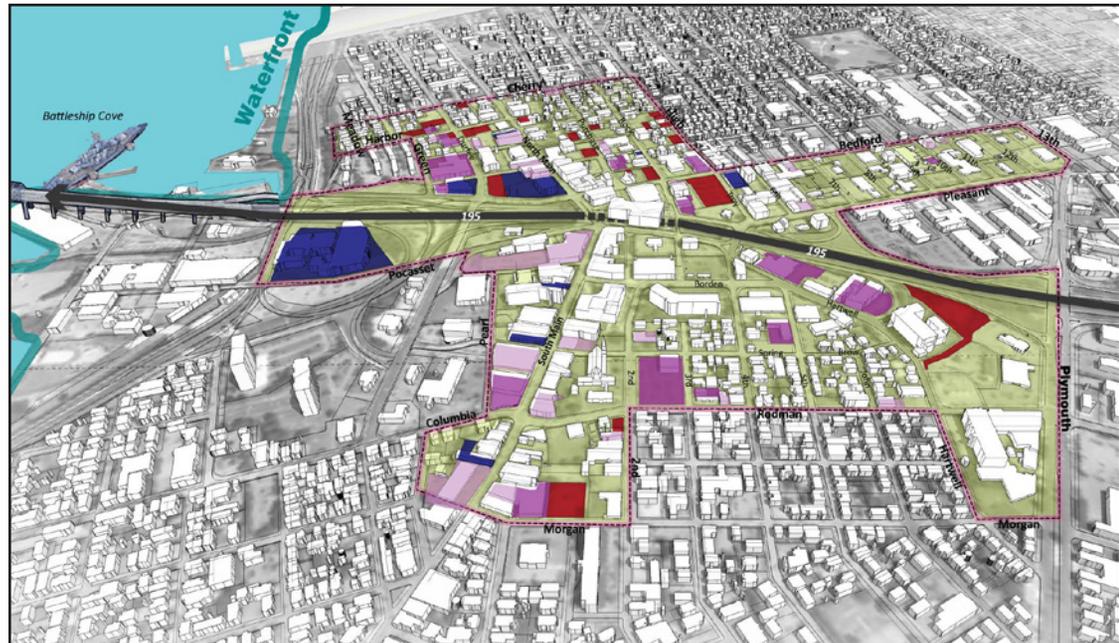


Figure 4-4: Filling in the Blanks

### Expansion: Connecting the Corridors

The rectangle defined by Bedford and Pleasant Streets is an economically vibrant area whose uses are less compact than those of the core of the downtown. As the remainder of the downtown changes over time, infill development may spread to this area. At that point, the businesses that require significant parking and auto-oriented businesses that are not appropriate for the downtown would need to relocate elsewhere in the city. In the short-term, as uses change, design guidelines and the design review process can ensure that parking lots are appropriately lit and landscaped to address concerns about pedestrian safety.



Figure 4-5: Connecting the Corridors

## Fit Studies

Several fit studies tested how development could meet the goals for the revitalization of the downtown. The sites used to test the City's current zoning and the development potential in the downtown are as follows:

- 285-255 South Main Street
- 82 Troy Street
- 467 Spring Street
- 427 Plymouth Avenue

Each of these sites, and the underlying parcels, has been identified for acquisition by the FRRA and are referenced in the Plan in *Figure 2-15* and *Table 2-2*. However, the fit studies shown are for illustrative purposes only.

### 285-255 SOUTH MAIN STREET

Three options were tested for this site, which is a combination of three parcels.

Scenario 1 kept the front of the ground floor as retail but added two levels of parking (basement



*Figure 4-6: 285 - 255 South Main Street - Scenario 1*  
For illustrative purposes only. Not a proposed project.



*Figure 4-7: 285 - 255 South Main Street - Scenario 2*  
For illustrative purposes only. Not a proposed project.

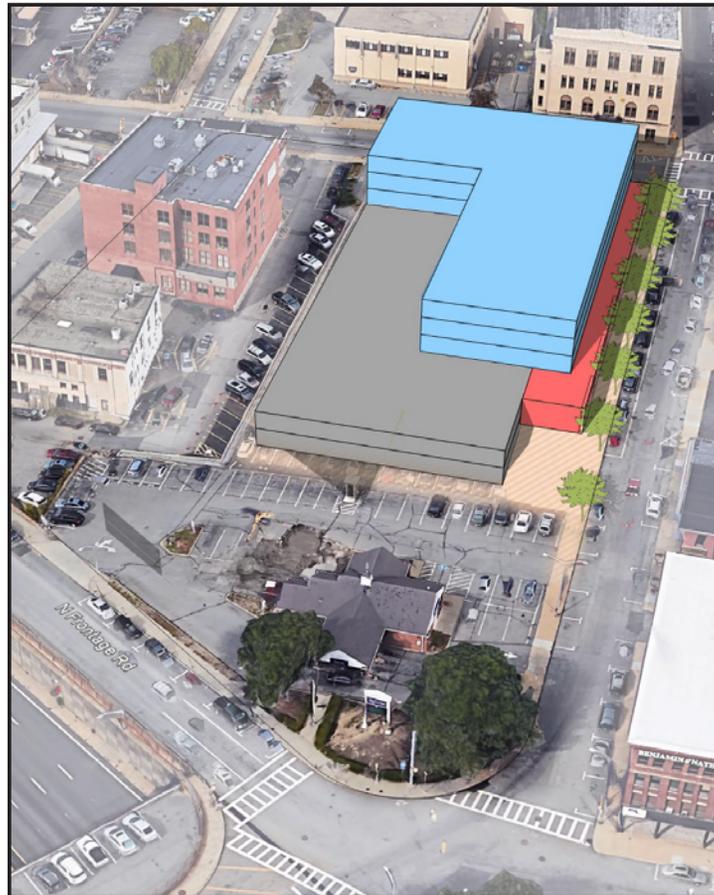


*Figure 4-8: 285 - 255 South Main Street - Scenario 3*  
For illustrative purposes only. Not a proposed project.

and rear ground floor). The remainder of the building, including a new top floor, was residential. Scenario 2 removed the existing building and added a new building. The new building has a similar use profile to Scenario 1. Scenario 3 kept the ground floor retail on the South Main Street façade, but converted the remainder of the building into a parking garage to support other uses in the downtown. Parking below the existing basement level was not considered as part of this fit study.

### 82 TROY STREET

This parcel is located on the corner of Bedford and Troy Streets. The fit study tested ground floor retail along Troy and Bedford Streets, with two levels of parking at the rear of the site. The remainder of the building is office. Residential was not tested, but could be an appropriate use for the site.



*Figure 4-9: 82 Troy Street*  
For illustrative purposes only. Not a proposed project.

### 467 SPRING STREET

This site includes St. Mary's School, owned by the Diocese of Fall River. The building is partially vacant and surrounded by a parking lot. The fit study tested ground floor retail along Rodman Street and Spring Street, converting the remainder of the site into residential uses at a scale that matches the existing neighborhood. Parking is provided at grade on site and open space surrounds the buildings. The City could use development incentives to encourage a future developer to make any private open space part of the development available for public use. Any plan for this site should include the preservation and re-use of the existing former school building because of its architectural value.



*Figure 4-10: 467 Spring Street*  
For illustrative purposes only. Not a proposed project.

SITE AND SCENARIO	DEVELOPMENT (SQUARE FEET)	RESIDENTIAL UNITS	RETAIL (SQUARE FEET)	FLOOR:AREA RATIO	PARKING (SPACES)	PARKING SURPLUS/ DEFICIT
285 - 255 South Main <i>Scenario 1</i>	70,000	44	16,900	1.55	209	86
285 - 255 South Main <i>Scenario 2</i>	132,000	93	23,500	2.94	208	11
285 - 255 South Main <i>Scenario 3</i>	17,000	0	17,000	0.38	380	295
467 Spring Street	66,148	50	7,000	1.58	74	-18
82 Troy Street	67,500	53,000	14,500	1.4	227	-15
427 Plymouth Street <i>Residential/Retail</i>	143,500	134,500	9,000	1.12	167	1
427 Plymouth Street <i>Office Only</i>	110,000	101,000	9,000	0.78	201	-96

Table 4-1: Current Uses of Test Sites for Fit Studies

The four test sites used for fit studies are listed as acquisitions in the *Downtown Urban Renewal Plan* in Figure 2-12 and Table 2-2.



*Figure 4-11: 427 Plymouth Street - Residential/Retail*  
For illustrative purposes only. Not a proposed project.



*Figure 4-12: 427 Plymouth Street - Office Only*  
For illustrative purposes only. Not a proposed project.

#### 427 PLYMOUTH AVENUE

This site is an historic mill building, listed on the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS) database as FLR.478. The study tested two options: the first was a combination of residential and retail and the second tested office only.

The parking discussion above noted the need for parking on-site to support the proposed uses is a limitation for some sites. A second limitation on redevelopment is the existing demand for residential, office, and retail. The market analysis performed as part of this study process indicates a current absorption rate that is below the amount of under-used space currently available. This suggests that, in the short term, new development will come from the rehabilitation of existing, under-used buildings rather than new construction. Over time, as the first successful projects spur additional demand, the absorption rates may shift to match developing trends. This is unlikely without significant support from the FRRA in terms

of parcel assembly, the development of one or more catalytic projects that act as an example to private developers, and/or the implementation of public improvements to support private investment.

## Streetscape

Enlivening the streetscape creates the activity currently missing from the downtown area. Important anchors, such as City Hall and the Fall River Justice Center attract people to the area, but there are few reasons for those people to stay past the opening hours of both anchors. While additional development, as described above, will be beneficial, investing in public amenities along the street will help improve activity and the “eyes on the street” that contribute to a perception that this is a safe and attractive area in which one can walk, shop, work, and live.

The City of Fall River has already undertaken a significant number of streetscape studies, as noted in *Section 3.4* and has issued bonds for

several projects, identified in *Section 9* and in *Figure 2-12*. This evidence of public investment in the downtown will be attractive to private investors.

This Urban Renewal Plan contains design guidelines to address the creation and maintenance of an active streetscape throughout the downtown, and ensure that as private property is redeveloped, that the public realm is enhanced by the investment and that the City's own investment is protected. See *Section 4.3 Design Guidelines*.

## 4.2 Proposed Redevelopment Activities

Actions related to clearance, rehabilitation, redevelopment, and new construction are listed in *Section 3.3 Clearance and Rehabilitation*.

### Retention and Creation of Jobs

760 CMR 12.02 (3)(b) requires a specific estimate of the number of jobs retained, created, and/or eliminated by the proposed redevelopment actions in the Urban Renewal Plan.

The expected effect of the actions within this Urban Renewal Plan – and a major goal of this Plan – is that existing employers will be encouraged to expand and new employers will be attracted to the area due to a combination of the planned physical improvements, the changes to the regulatory environment, and efforts of the FRRA, The Fall River Office of Economic Development, and the City of Fall

River to assist current businesses and attempt to recruit new ones. Development of market rate rental housing in the downtown is also a targeted effort designed to attract new workers and stimulate job increases in local businesses.

Among the short term prospects for job creation in the downtown are those that

emerge from the Retail Opportunity/Gap Analysis. This evaluation identifies target retail store types and restaurants for which current consumer expenditures exceed store sales within a defined geographic market area. Because consumers are likely to purchase goods and services as close as possible to where they live and work the identified opportunity/gaps

Retail Store Type and NAICS	Selected Sales	Potentially	Estimated Capturable	
	Opportunity/Gap (2016 \$)	Supportable Square Feet	Square Feet	# Stores
Specialty Food Stores-4452	\$23,145,183	36,717	6,280	2
Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores-4453	\$20,314,499	75,155	12,000	3
Cosmetics, Beauty Supplies, Perfume Stores-	\$2,271,894	5,315	1,500	1
Other Health & Personal Care Stores-44619	\$7,077,568	26,688	4,098	3
Women's Clothing Stores-44812	\$8,295,400	27,432	4,100	1
Family Clothing Stores-44814	\$12,128,934	30,969	6,000	1
Shoe Stores-4482	\$2,375,271	11,495	3,000	1
Sporting Goods Stores-45111	\$11,051,835	38,697	6,000	1
Office Supplies & Stationery Stores-45321	\$4,647,229	14,464	4,000	1
Gift, Novelty & Souvenir Stores-45322	\$9,117,074	38,808	12,600	3
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers-4539	\$14,378,155	45,180	9,200	4
Full-Service Restaurants-7221	\$13,778,283	26,403	15,300	3
Special Foodservices-7223	\$8,419,482	23,677	8,000	4
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$137,000,807</b>	<b>400,999</b>	<b>92,078</b>	<b>28</b>

Sources: The Nielsen Company, *Segmentation & Market Solutions*, 2016; various industry sources for sales per sf and sf per store; and FXM Associates

Table 4-2: Retail Gap Analysis

suggest a competitive advantage for expansion of existing establishments or recruitment of new ones within downtown Fall River. The retail/restaurant opportunity for the 5-10-15 minute drive time market area for downtown is currently estimated at \$137 million in sales and about 400,000 square feet, of which an estimated 92,000 square feet is likely capturable in downtown *Table 4-2* identifies the store types, supportable square footage, and number of stores based on average sales per square foot for each store type.

If those 92,000 square feet of expansions by existing retailers and restaurants and recruitment of new ones to fill existing vacant or newly rehabilitated space materializes as a consequence of actions taken as part of the Urban Renewal Plan, then an estimated 185 new jobs would be realized in downtown. The waterfront urban renewal area – which shares with downtown the same effective market area and retail gap – would be expected to capture some of these opportunities thus lessening the actual impact in downtown.

In addition to capturing new sales and jobs now leaking from the downtown market area, additional retail jobs could be realized within the urban renewal area by capturing a share of estimated growth city-wide. The market assessment projected net absorption of 67,500 square feet of retail space city-wide each year

over the next five years. That would mean about 135 new jobs per year, or 675 over the next five years city-wide. If the downtown urban renewal area captures only its current share of city-wide retail and restaurant employment (7%), then jobs within the downtown urban renewal would expand by 10 each year or 50 over the

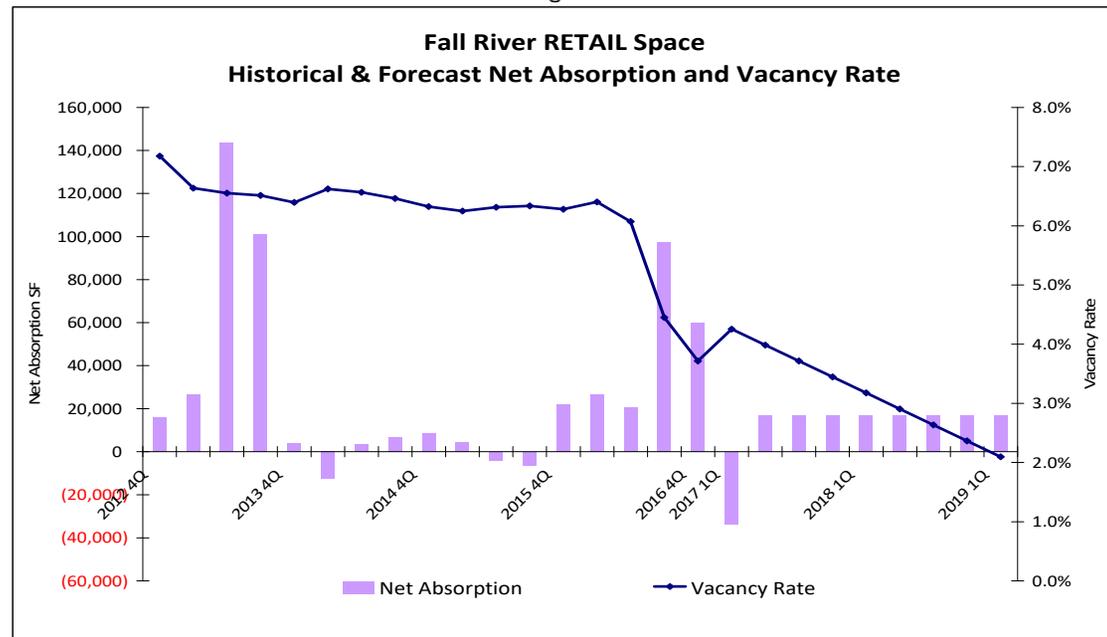


Figure 4-13: Retail Space: Historical and Forecast New Absorption and Vacancy Rate

next five years. With the proposed physical and regulatory improvements as well as aggressive marketing and recruitment efforts focused on revitalization within the urban renewal area, downtown's share of retail space growth and the number of jobs associated with that growth would be greater. *Figure 4-13* shows historical and projected growth in retail space occupancy city-wide.

Another category of job generation that will be influenced by the Downtown Urban Renewal Plan is office using employment – encompassing the information, finance, professional & technical, real estate rental & leasing, administrative support, social assistance, medical services, and public administration sectors. *Table 4-3* shows the calculation of average annual growth city-wide in office space. The physical improvements, regulatory, and programmatic initiatives of the Urban Renewal Plan are designed to encourage expansion of existing office-using businesses as well as recruitment of new ones to downtown.

If downtown captures only its current 15% share of office-using employment city-wide then an additional 28 jobs per year, 138 over the next five years, would be expected in the downtown Fall River Urban Renewal Area. If

the Urban Renewal Plan succeeds in enhancing the physical and regulatory environment for downtown development then its share of city-wide office-using employment is expected to increase, as well as an increased share of regional

Projected Growth in Occupancy in Medical & Total Office Space in Fall River				
	2017 Supply (SF)	2017-2022 Growth (SF)	Average Annual Growth (SF)	Annual % Growth
<b>Medical Office Space</b>	580,784			
Co Star Forecast Net Absorption		36,400	7,280	1.3%
2006 to 2017 Co Star Trend Line		86,666	17,333	3.0%
Employment Growth Trend Line				
<i>Jobs</i>	2,188	312	62	2.9%
<i>Space</i>	580,784	82,817	16,563	2.9%
<b>Average of Above Forecasts</b>		<b>68,628</b>	<b>13,726</b>	<b>2.4%</b>
<b>Total Office Space</b>	3,308,878			
Co Star Forecast Net Absorption		107,480	21,496	0.6%
2006 to 2017 Co Star Trend Line		222,988	44,598	1.3%
Employment Growth Trend Line				
<i>Jobs</i>	11,079	905	181	1.6%
<i>Space</i>	3,308,878	270,289	54,058	1.6%
<b>Average of Above Forecasts</b>		<b>200,252</b>	<b>40,050</b>	<b>1.2%</b>

Source: Mass DOL ES202 series; Co Star Property Information Systems ; and FXM Associates. March 2017

Table 4-3: Projected Growth in Occupancy in Medical and Total Office Space



growth where over 8,000 additional jobs in office-using sectors are projected over the next five years.

## Loss of Jobs

As the primary focus of this Urban Renewal Plan is the development of under-utilized or vacant buildings and land, no jobs are anticipated to be lost as a direct result of the recommendations of this Urban Renewal Plan.

The FRRA is required to create a relocation plan (see *Section 10. Relocation*) for any business or resident displaced by an acquisition. As such, no jobs are anticipated to be lost as a result of the planned acquisitions of existing buildings.

## Proposed Development Controls

There are two types of development controls envisioned within this Plan. The first are the revisions to the City's zoning ordinance

detailed in *Section 2.5 Proposed Zoning*. These recommended changes to the boundaries of the zoning districts within the urban renewal area will allow and encourage the development activities anticipated within this Plan.

The buildings, sites and streetscapes exhibit a variety of urban design characteristics and conditions, as noted in *Section 2.6 Urban Design Characteristics*. This Plan incorporates the identified solutions into a series of design guidelines detailed in *Section 4.3 Design Guidelines*. These design guidelines are applicable throughout the urban renewal area and promote the visual characteristics, public spaces, multi-modal access, and landscape treatments discussed within this Plan and the accompanying *Appendix J. Waterfront Park Case Studies* and the results of the Visual Preference Survey shown on the following pages.

The second means of development control is related to those properties under the control of the FRRA. *Section 11. Redeveloper's Obligation* notes that the FRRA will enter into an LDA

with any developer acquiring property from the FRRA by either purchase or lease. The LDA should include design guidelines for the redevelopment of the property that are consistent with *Section 4.3 Design Guidelines*.

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## Section 4.3 Design Guidelines

The following design guidelines will apply throughout the urban renewal area. All development projects within the urban renewal area that are subject to the City's zoning requirements for a Major Project under Site Plan Review or a Special Permit are required to follow these guidelines.

Section 10-1 of the City of Fall River *City Ordinance* establishes the threshold for Site Plan Review. A Major Project is defined as "any project that includes one or more of the following criteria and requires a building permit." These criteria are as follows:

- Residential development (subdivisions) that are subject to approval under the Subdivision Control Law
- Development, redevelopment or expansion of any primary or accessory structure that is utilized for commercial

and/or industrial purposes that is located on a lot with an area of 10,000 square feet or more.

- Development (residential, commercial, industrial) that will result in the creation of 30 or more off-street parking spaces.

All Major Projects as defined by this Section 10-1 will be subject to the design guidelines in this Urban Renewal Plan.

In Fall River, the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) is the Special Permit Granting Authority. All projects within the Urban Renewal Boundary that are subject to a Special Permits from the ZBA are also subject to these design guidelines.

The Site Plan Review Committee and the Zoning Board of Appeals will use these guidelines as criteria within their approval process.

1. New buildings in a historic district should relate harmoniously to their neighborhood context by establishing relationships of use, scale, dimensions,

design patterns, and materials that are compatible with the historic design character of adjacent buildings.

2. Improvements and repairs to historic buildings and resources should employ high quality materials consistent with the materials historically employed, such as granite, brick, stone, wood, and cast iron; the use of synthetic replacement materials should be avoided.
3. The renovation or adaptive reuse of existing buildings is preferable to demolition and replacement with new construction, especially when the existing buildings are made of durable, good quality materials.
4. Large parking lots should incorporate landscaping in the form of trees, vegetated islands or swales, and landscaped edges to screen parking from street view.
5. Sidewalks, crosswalks, and sidewalk extensions should be designed to pro-

- vide universal access (ADA standards) throughout the district.
6. On-site parking should be located to the side and rear of buildings, or at the ground level of multifamily residential buildings; parking areas visible from the street should be screened by fences, hedges, or landscape buffers.
  7. Building placement, massing, scale, and proportions should be compatible with, and complementary to, the alignment and patterns of neighboring buildings.
  8. Building façades should be articulated with window openings or screens that allow for visibility and transparency; or landscape buffers to mitigate the negative impact of long blank walls on pedestrian activity.
  9. Ground floor windows should be transparent (not blocked by shades, curtains, paint, or paper) to allow visibility from the street into the store or restaurant and vice versa, increasing safety and activity.

10. Where possible, the ground floor of the building should contain active uses such as retail, restaurant, experiential retail, or other uses with significant need for public access.
11. The development should provide amenities consistent with the public standards (see below), including lighting, street furniture, paving treatments, planters, café seating, pocket parks or plazas.

The FRRA will work with the City to establish the following standards for public space and streetscape. Developers providing public space should ensure their amenities are consistent with these guidelines:

- Consistent pedestrian-oriented street lights and other street furniture (benches, trash bins, etc.)
- Banners and other signage integrated with the wayfinding and marketing strategy for the downtown.

- Well-maintained planters and other landscape treatments suitable for an urban environment.
- Well-maintained pocket parks and public plazas. (See *Appendix J* for case studies on pocket parks and other urban open spaces.)

## Results of Visual Preference Survey

The text and images that follow describe the results of a Visual Preference Survey issued to attendees of the first public meeting in the planning process. Attendees were asked to evaluate a series of images based on how appropriate they felt they were for Fall River's downtown.

### MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL

Attendees gave images of higher-density residential development greater scores than images of lower-density residential development. Traditional forms (rectilinear with uniform breaks) and finishes (wood clapboarding, brick, or stone) scored better than those that were more contemporary in style. This said, images depicting developments with a mixture of traditional finishes—a modern twist—did rank well.



### OFFICES

The favored office images offered no indication of a preferred density; highest-ranked images varied greatly in scale. In all cases however, the building occupied the full parcel, with edges extending fully to meet the sidewalk. First floors were highly permeable, with ample entrances and windows. Preferred images were all also united in design strategies, such as higher elevations that were offset, that facilitated a human-scaled environment. As with residential developments, attendees exhibited a preference for more traditional building forms and finishes. They did assign high scores, however, to images with traditional forms on the lower stories and more modern styles above.



**MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT**

On the whole, images depicting mixed-use projects scored much higher than those exhibiting just residential development or just office development. The favorite images for the mixed-use development category were of uniformly lower density (two to four stories) than the images selected for the previous categories. They also show a high degree of horizontal variation; even when the building is continuous, finishes vary intermittently to disrupt any monotony. These images are also characterized by a blurred boundary between private and public realm. For example, buildings have glass store fronts, large awnings, and café furniture.

**PUBLIC-PRIVATE OPEN SPACE**

The scores for images of public-private open space supported the conclusions drawn from the mixed-use development category; attendees enjoy a varied, active public realm with wide sidewalks and cafe furniture. They also showed a preference for plazas with water features over those that were empty, and did not give high scores to images of green spaces that were only minimally furnished. Small-scale, tactical urbanism-type installations (colorful benches, painted sidewalks) received uniformly low marks.



**STREETScape**

Of the images presented for streetscape, attendees assigned higher scores to more traditional styles such as brick sidewalks and stamped crosswalks. The image of a wider sidewalk with street trees scored better than the narrow sidewalk without street trees.

## 5. Time Frame

This Plan shall take effect on the date of approval by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), and shall be in effect for twenty years from that date. If the Fall River Redevelopment Authority (FRRA) wishes to exceed the 20 year time frame, it must extend the Plan in accordance with *Section 15. Process for Future Plan Changes* and 760 CMR 12.00, as required by DHCD.

The activities described in the Implementation Plan in the *Executive Summary, Section 4. Objectives*, and *Sections 8 through 12* are anticipated to take place over a period of 20 or more years, according to the anticipated phasing schedule in this section. Some of the proposed activities are dependent upon market conditions and/or the actions of other entities, including City boards, committees, and departments and state agencies. This phasing schedule, therefore, is an estimate of when certain actions are likely and may shift depending on these factors.

Phase I activities should be completed within the first two to five years. Phase II activities

should be completed within five to 10 years. Phase III activities should be completed within 10 to 20 years.

As noted in the *Executive Summary*, in order for each identified group to be an effective partner, appropriate staffing and funding resources are required. While some of the capital costs for this project may be met by grants, loans, or bond issues, in general, operating costs for staff and other resources must be funded by the appropriate entity. The FRRA and the City must provide the required resources to fulfill their respective roles in the implementation of this Plan. **The proposed activities in this Plan will require an increase in staff for the City's Planning Department.**

Should the FRRA's development activities include income-producing properties, over time, operational needs could be met, in part, from the revenue stream from leased properties.

The FRRA should undertake regular review of the timeline and the proposed actions to ensure

that the goals of this Urban Renewal Plan are met by the actions and to consider whether this Plan should be amended to reflect changes in goals or completed actions.

## 6. Financial Plan

The estimated revenues and expenditures in this section are based on estimates applicable as of the writing of this Urban Renewal Plan. It is important to note that over the 20 year life of an Urban Renewal Plan, costs will shift based on the economic and market conditions at the time of implementation.

This section contains a series of three tables. *Table 6-1* identifies funding sources that are available to the Fall River Redevelopment Authority (FRRA) and the City to implement the recommendations of this Urban Renewal Plan. These funding sources and the amounts available for each type will also change in response to both economic and political conditions over the next 20 years. In particular, grant programs that exist now may not be available in the future. Certain sources of revenue have a specific purpose which has been identified. Others, such as historic tax credits, have specific restrictions on use and eligibility. This list of revenue sources is not meant to be a comprehensive list, but indicates the types of resources available. As noted in the *Executive*

*Summary*, most of these sources are for capital-related costs, not ongoing operating or maintenance costs.

GENERAL FINANCIAL SOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES	PURPOSE
Commonwealth of Massachusetts	
Legislative Appropriations	Restricted by purpose of related legislation
MassWorks	Public infrastructure
Chapter 90	Public Roadway/Streetscape
MassHousing Workforce Housing Fund	Workforce housing
New Market Tax Credits, Historic Tax Credits	Development
Historic Tax Credits	Development
Brownfields Redevelopment Fund	Development
Commonwealth Places (MassDevelopment)	Place-making
MassHousing	Affordable Housing
Federal Sources	
Opportunity Zone Program	Development
TIGER	Public infrastructure
Historic Tax Credits	Development
Brownfield Grants	Development
HOME	Affordable Housing
CDBG Funds	Housing, Infrastructure, Streetscape, Jobs

*Table 6-1: General Financial Sources of Funding for Development Activities*

Of the funding sources identified in *Table 6-1* that are currently available to the City, the City would expect to draw on a portion of the following three funds to support the goals of this Urban Renewal Plan over the 20 year life of the Plan:

- HOME – average annual funding of \$775,000
- CDGB – average annual funding of \$2.6 million
- Chapter 90 – average annual funding of \$1.9 million

*Table 6-2* lists the parcels identified for acquisition in this Plan and provides the current assessed value (as of 2018). This assessed value is used as the basis for the cost of acquisition in the project budget, which is provided in *Table 6-3*.

The project budget in *Table 6-3* below estimates the potential costs over the 20 year life of this Urban Renewal Plan. The current assessed value of the properties to be acquired is known and is

PARCEL ID	ADDRESS	OWNER	PROPERTY SIZE (ACRES)	ASSESSED VALUE (2017)
I-09-0009	308 South Main Street	River Town Reality LLC	0.14	\$561,100
I-09-0024	350 Morgan Street	Group Teresa LLC	0.78	\$249,400
I-09-0026	390 South Main Street	Group Teresa LLC	0.12	\$356,000
I-09-0018	31, 33, & 47 Rodman	Almeida Nelson; Almeida Ana P	0.64	\$314,100
I-09-0036	251 & 255 South Main Street	Antonio Costa Property Management LLC	0.58	\$389,300
I-09-0039	285 & 299 South Main Street	Dosouto Nuno	0.32	\$376,100
I-09-0074	277 South Main Street	Yee Sherm Jv	0.13	\$261,500
N-18-0016	403 Anawan Street	Fall River Roman Catholic Bishop of	0.28	\$608,200
I-10-0002	467 Spring Street	Fall River Roman Catholic Bishop of; St Marys	0.96	\$983,900
I-16-0001	427 Plymouth Avenue	Patel Realty Inc	2.95	\$1,206,000
N-04-0029	289 Bank Street	Lechan Harry M; Lechan Sylvia B	0.10	\$235,400
N-07-0018	37 Purchase Street	Hyland House Inc	0.27	\$456,000
N-06-0023	38 Third Street	JLD LLC	0.26	\$356,200
N-06-0036	SS Bedford Street	MKM Management LLC	0.28	\$178,200

*Table 6-2: Assessed Value of Identified Acquisitions*



summarized below. Market conditions over the acquisition period may increase or decrease the value of those properties. Certain parcels may be acquired only in part or the rights may be acquired by easement (for example, the right

to extend the Waterfront Boardwalk may be an easement rather than the acquisition of a full parcel).

Relocation costs can be significant, and will depend on the tenancy (the number of residents and/or businesses) at the time of acquisition. An estimate has been provided based on known tenancies as explained in *Section 10. Relocation*.

PARCEL ID	ADDRESS	OWNER	PROPERTY SIZE (ACRES)	ASSESSED VALUE (2017)
N-06-0037	82 Troy Street	People Incorporated	1.11	\$318,300
N-09-0002	238 & 244 Central Street	Chodkowski Paul	0.16	\$114,700
N-09-0005	10 Durfee Street	Mart Inc Midtown Motor	0.51	\$917,730
N-10-0017	164 Durfee Street	I and F Inc	0.13	\$178,000
N-10-0019	120 Pine Street	Martins Teresa D; Paradise Stacy M	0.13	\$180,900
N-10-0021	102 Pine Street	Alexander William	0.13	\$80,000
N-10-0022	Pine Street	Travis Justin Louis A; Alexander Michelle Lee	0.07	\$78,300
N-11-0060	Central Street	Fall River City Of	1.10	\$195,800
N-21-0005	82 Hartwell Street	Massachusetts Electric Co; c/o Property Tax Dept	0.93	\$403,300
M-11-0002	34 Plymouth Avenue	Samuels Realty Co Inc; c/o Polo Center	0.51	\$195,700
	<b>Total</b>		<b>12.6</b>	<b>\$9,194,130</b>

Not all actions proposed in this Urban Renewal Plan will be undertaken by the FRRA. As noted earlier, the FRRA expects to work with developers using a Land Disposition Agreement (LDA) to control the terms of the development. Construction and rehabilitation activities will be the responsibility of the developer after the LDA is executed. For this reason, those costs have not been included. Mitigation of environmental conditions may be a joint responsibility; the estimated costs for testing are included in this budget.

PROJECT EXPENDITURES	AMOUNT	SOURCE
<b>Public Improvements</b>		
Streetscape Improvements	\$9.3875 million	Bonds issued by the City of Fall River (See Section 9)
Public Parking	\$5,000 per space (surface) \$25,000 per space (structured)	FRRR/MassWorks
Repairs to Third Street Garage	\$2 million	FRRR/MassWorks
Estimated Cost of New Garage (similar to Third Street Garage)	\$6 million	FRRR/MassWorks
Harborside Park	\$0.5-1 million	MassDOT; Seaport Economic Council Grant; Land and Water Conservation Fund/Commonwealth Places
<b>Total Estimated Public Improvements</b>	<b>\$17-19 million</b>	
<b>Additional Planning Activities</b>		
Parking and Circulation Study	\$100-\$250,000 depending on scope	FRRR/City of Fall River
<b>Total Additional Planning Activities</b>		
<b>Project Costs</b>		
Acquisitions <i>Per current Assessor's Valuation</i>	approximately \$9.2 million	FRRR/Private developers
Appraisals (per project)	\$5,000-12,000	FRRR/Private developers
Relocation Expenses (per resident or business)	\$25,000-100,000	FRRR/Private developers
Planning, legal, financial, and administrative costs (per project)	\$15,000-\$75,000	FRRR/Private developers/ Opportunity Zone Program
New Construction/Rehabilitation of Existing Buildings	Not included	Private developers/ Opportunity Zone Program
Site preparation (per project)	\$0.25-\$1 million	FRRR/Private developers/ Brownfields Redevelopment Fund/ Opportunity Zone Program
<b>Total Estimated Project Costs</b> <i>Based on all identified acquisitions; does not include the cost of construction</i>	<b>\$13 million</b>	
<b>Contingency (20%)</b>	<b>\$6-6.4 million</b>	
<b>Grand Total Urban Renewal Budget</b>	<b>\$36-38.4 million</b>	

Table 6-3: Urban Renewal Budget

## 7. Requisite Municipal Approvals

This section contains the formal records of the following required actions:

- Vote of the Fall River Redevelopment Authority (FRRA) to support the Plan and move it into the approval process, at a meeting held on January 10, 2018.
- Determination of conformance with the *Fall River Master Plan* (2009-2020) by the Fall River Planning Board, at a meeting held on **May 9**, 2018.
- Opinion of Counsel for the FRRA/City Solicitor/both, dated **February 13**, 2018.
- Vote of the Fall River City Council to approve the plan for submission to Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), at a meeting held on **xx**, 2018.

*Appendix E. Public Meeting Minutes and Notes* contains the minutes from each of the meetings noted above.

In addition, the Massachusetts Historical Commission receive notice of the public hearing held by the City Council on xx, 2018.

#### CERTIFICATE OF SECRETARY

I, **Joseph Oliveira**, hereby certify that I am the Secretary of the Fall River Redevelopment Authority, an urban renewal authority duly organized pursuant to M.G.L. Ch. 121B (the “Authority”) and do further hereby certify that attached hereto as “Exhibit A” is a true, accurate and complete copy of the vote which has been duly adopted by the Members of the Authority at a meeting held on February 12, 2018. Said vote has not been amended or repealed and remains in full force and effect on the date hereof.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and cause this Certificate to be delivered this 12 day of Feb., 2018.

  
Secretary – Joseph Oliveira

#### “EXHIBIT A”

**VOTED:** Pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 121B and 760 CMR 12.02, the Fall River Redevelopment Authority does hereby determine that the area within the boundaries of the Fall River Downtown Urban Renewal Plan (Dated – Draft February 2018) constitutes a decadent, substandard or blighted open area and that the Fall River Redevelopment Authority does hereby approve the said Fall River Downtown Urban Renewal Plan for consideration and approval by the appropriate municipal officers of the City of Fall River and by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development.

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## 7.1 Fall River Redevelopment Authority



## 7.2 Planning Board

Insert pages when ready

BOGLE, DeASCENTIS & COUGHLIN, P.C.  
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February 13, 2018

Fall River Redevelopment Authority  
Attn: William G. Kenney, Chair  
One Government Center  
Fall River, MA 02722

Re: Certification of Fall River Downtown Urban Renewal Plan

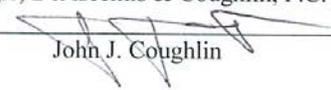
Dear Authority Members:

As counsel to the Fall River Redevelopment Authority I hereby certify as follows:

That I have reviewed the Fall River Downtown Urban Renewal Plan (Dated – Draft February 2018) prepared and approved by the Fall River Redevelopment Authority. It is my opinion, and I do hereby certify to the Fall River Redevelopment Authority, that the said Fall River Downtown Urban Renewal Plan is in compliance with applicable laws in all material respects.

This opinion and certification is made pursuant to 760 CMR 12.02(5).

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Very truly yours,  
Bogle, DeAscentis & Coughlin, P.C.  
By:   
John J. Coughlin

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## 7.3 Opinion of Counsel for the FRRRA/City Solicitor



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## 7.4 Vote of the City Council

Insert pages when ready

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## 7.5 Massachusetts Historical Commission

Insert pages when ready



## 8. Site Preparation

The Fall River Redevelopment Authority (FRRA) expects to work with a preferred developer to prepare a site or sites to conditions specified in the Land Disposition Agreement (LDA). As noted in *Section 11. Redeveloper's Obligation*, the FRRA will enter into a Land Disposition Agreement (LDA) with the preferred developer. The LDA will control the conditions under which the land is conveyed and developed. Such conditions will detail required site preparation, including any needed mitigation of hazardous environmental conditions.

Certain sites have been identified in *Section 2. Characteristics* as either sites that have environmental risks or have had such risks in the past. Development of any of these sites must follow the relevant requirements of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP). However, the downtown is an urban environment, and not all sites with hazardous materials may have been identified. Buildings built prior to 1978 may have lead paint either in the material or

the surrounding soil and older buildings may also have asbestos. The potential for hazardous materials should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis prior to the commencement of the project.

Many of the streets have a significant slope. Such a slope can be an asset by allowing parking to be tucked underneath an upper story, if the slope is in the right direction relative to the principal façade. No significant reconfiguration of the topography is anticipated as part of the activities of this Urban Renewal Plan.

# 9. Public Improvements

The public improvements that the Fall River Redevelopment Authority (FRRA) will undertake as part of this Plan are shown in *Figure 2-12: Public Improvements*.

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## Streetscape Improvements

The City has already begun a \$7 million program of streetscape improvements. The City should create a plan to maintain these streetscape improvements on a regular basis once installed. Enhancements will support additional investment from private developers.

Streets targeted for improvement include the following:

- Tentative Completion Fall 2018 – Purchase Street (from Bedford to Cherry); Bank Street (from Purchase to Green); Columbia Square (intersection of Columbia and South Main)
- Tentative Completion Fall 2018 – East Main (from South Main to Dwelly)

- Tentative Fall 2019 – Bedford Street (from North Main to 13th)
- Tentative Fall 2020 – South Main Street (from Columbia to Poccasset); North Main (from Bedford to Cherry)
- Tentative Fall 2021 – Rock Street (from Bedford to Cherry)

The streetscape improvements scheduled for 2019, 2020, and 2021 may be reordered. The cost and the funding sources for the current streetscape projects are as follows:

- Purchase Streetscape Bond: \$1.398 Million
- Columbia Sq. and Bank Streetscape Bond: \$1.2605 Million
- Bedford Streetscape Bond: \$2.450 Million
- Rock Streetscape Bond: \$775,000
- North Main Streetscape Bond: \$1.444 Million

- South Main Streetscape Bond: \$1.060 Million
- Purchase and Bank Street Drainage Improvements: \$1 Million (Community Utilities funds)

The total amount is included in *Figure 6-3*.

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## Public Parking

As existing buildings within the downtown are redeveloped, new uses will place pressure on the current parking supply. In the short-term, the FRRA could acquire and manage vacant lots for surface parking. Although structured parking is a long-term solution, as discussed in *Section 4. Objectives*, rapidly developing technologies might make such structures obsolete before the bond is paid in full. In the near-term, a better solution might be to partner with the City and developers to encourage other parking management strategies, such as shared parking resources and to work with the Southeastern Regional Transit Authority (SRTA) and South

Coast Rail (SCR) to encourage more public transportation.

The FRRA owns the Third Street Parking Garage and the flat surface parking lot east of the garage. As the garage approaches the end of its useful life, possibilities for concentrated mixed-use development (parking, residential, and office/retail) should be given serious consideration. This site is at the very core of downtown, adjacent to the SRTA Bus Station, and has easy highway access.

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## Public Open Space

As noted in *Section 2. Characteristics*, the Downtown has little outdoor gathering space. The FRRA has made an effort to experiment with programming on the Old Second Street Pedestrian Walkway, including food trucks. Major landscaping enhancements are scheduled to begin in Spring 2018. This Plan recommends additional public space, or the creation of public/private space as part of the public

amenities required of new development in the area.

However, City Hall itself has existing underutilized plazas. Treating City Hall as a connector between North Main Street and South Main Street and between Purchase Street and the Old Second Street Pedestrian Walkway would include programming activity to draw people to City Hall for food, festivals, public art, and other engagement strategies to introduce people to this otherwise empty area. The view from City Hall over the Taunton River should be part of any programming for the plazas around City Hall.

Enhancement of so-called "Harborside Park" (vacant land north of Central Street) as open space/recreation land, and as a link in the chain of connection between waterfront and downtown along the Central/Green/Bank Street corridor should be given top priority. This should include serious consideration of expanding Harborside Park by acquiring parcels to the east to increase open space, enhance

the linkage, and afford spectacular views of Battleship Cove.

Planning should also focus on the vacant land connecting the Bank Street Armory with the Public Library, which has great potential for outdoor public use and which should not be resigned to a fate as a parking lot.

Planning for this neighborhood should be comprehensive and inclusive and could take its cue from the BETA Group's January 11, 2016, *Harborside Neighborhood District Enhancement Plan* proposal.

MassDevelopment sponsors a fellowship program as part of their Transformative Development Initiative. The Fellow (usually a mid-career planning professional) is placed by MassDevelopment in a Gateway City for a three-year period. Investigating how to create and program open space in the Harborside Neighborhood and elsewhere in the Downtown would be an appropriate project assigned to Fall River. The City must submit an application to

MassDevelopment to be considered for this program.

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## Long-Term Plans

Daylighting the Quequechan River and decking over Interstate 195 (I-195) were ideas brought forward during the public process, but are not part of the public improvements defined within the 20 year term of this Urban Renewal Plan. Both ideas and the surrounding context are recorded in this section as they could be brought forward for implementation as part of a major plan update.

### Daylighting the Quequechan River

Another popular idea from the public process was to daylight – or open to public view – the Quequechan River. In the short term, daylighting any significant portion of the river, which is contained in an underground culvert

throughout almost the entire project area, does not seem practical or feasible. However, a series of signpost interpretive panels and markers establishing a historic Quequechan River walking trail that tracks the River through the downtown to its mouth at the Taunton River would be a way of acknowledging the importance of the Quequechan River to the history of Fall River. This could include public access to the two areas within the project boundaries where small sections of the Falls of the Quequechan are currently exposed – one to the east of Ironworks Mills No. 6 and No. 7, and one in the courtyard of that complex. The *Fall River Waterfront Urban Renewal Plan* contains additional strategies for activating the space around the mouth of the Quequechan River.

### New City Hall “Deck”

One idea that appeared during the public input process was to deck over the section of I-195 adjacent City Hall that is bounded by Third

Street, South Frontage Road, North Frontage Road, and Fourth Street. I-195 is below grade at this point, so the decking would serve to join the city without disrupting the roadway. City Hall does connect the two halves of Main Street, but the design of City Hall does not create a direct relationship with a pedestrian between the two sides. Suggestions for the decked area include a combination of public space and building, to create a more attractive entrance to City Hall, a gathering spot for people, and an extension of the link between the two sides of Main Street. The provision of a park at this location would be a great amenity for a possible residential development at the People, Inc site or at the combined sites of the Third Street Parking Garage and the flat surface parking lot to the east of the garage. This project would require significant funding and would probably include a combination of funds and approvals at the City, state, and federal levels. It should be noted that the original plan for City Hall included a parking deck spanning I-195 at this location which of course was never built.

## 10. Relocation

If the Fall River Redevelopment Authority (FRRA) acquires all parcels identified for acquisition, the estimated number of businesses that may be displaced is approximately 18. This Plan does not anticipate the displacement of residential units. These numbers are estimated based on a visual survey undertaken in December 2017 and information from the City Assessor's database. Relocation may be permanent or temporary, depending on the particular acquisition.

The FRRA will prepare a relocation plan for persons and/or businesses that must be relocated and are considered to be a displaced person asset out in Massachusetts General Laws (MGL) Chapter 79A, Section I, including a business that must be relocated because of any public acquisition of land to fulfill the public purpose of this Urban Renewal Plan. The FRRA commits to a process that will accomplish the following goals, established by 760 CMR 27.00:

- A fair, equitable, and consistent treatment of the persons or businesses who are displaced through the acquisition
- Minimize the adverse impact of displacement on the residents and businesses and their community
- Prevent the closure of business

As required by 760 CMR 27.00, the FRRA will establish a relocation advisory agency prior to any acquisitions. The FRRA will file a relocation plan with the Bureau of Relocation (part of the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)) for any project that displaces the occupants of more than five dwelling units or business units. This Plan recommends a pre-filing consultation with the Bureau of Relocation.

The relocation plan must meet the requirements of MGL 79A, the process outlined by 760 CMR 27.00, and federal laws related to relocation, including 49 CFR Part 24, as applicable. The Plan must be approved by the Bureau of

Relocation before the occupants are displaced by the acquisition.

The plan must be filed with the Bureau of Relocation at least 45 days before the anticipated date of the acquisition of the property, along with notification of the affected occupants of their rights and the available relocation assistance and payment prior to the at acquisition of the property. However, DHCD recommends filing the relocation plan at least 180 days in advance of the beginning of relocation activities to allow sufficient review of the plan and to accommodate the 120 day Notice to Vacate required for permanent displacement of a displaced person or business.

PARCEL ID	ADDRESS	OWNER	ESTIMATED RELOCATION
I-09-0009	308 South Main Street	River Town Reality LLC	2 businesses
I-09-0024	350 Morgan Street	Group Teresa LLC	
I-09-0026	390 South Main Street	Group Teresa LLC	1 business
I-09-0018	31, 33, & 47 Rodman	Almeida Nelson; Almeida Ana P	1 business
I-09-0036	251 & 255 South Main Street	Antonio Costa Property Management LLC	2 businesses
I-09-0039	285 & 299 South Main Street	Dosouto Nuno	
I-09-0074	277 South Main Street	Yee Sherm Jv	1 business
N-18-0016	403 Anawan Street	Fall River Roman Catholic Bishop of	
I-10-0002	467 Spring Street	Fall River Roman Catholic Bishop of; St Marys	
I-16-0001	427 Plymouth Avenue	Patel Realty Inc	3 businesses
N-04-0029	289 Bank Street	Lechan Harry M; Lechan Sylvia B	
N-07-0018	37 Purchase Street	Hyland House Inc	
N-06-0023	38 Third Street	JLD LLC	
N-06-0036	SS Bedford Street	MKM Management LLC	

Table 10-1: Anticipated Relocations from Identified Acquisitions



PARCEL ID	ADDRESS	OWNER	ESTIMATED RELOCATION
N-06-0037	82 Troy Street	People Incorporated	
N-09-0002	238 & 244 Central Street	Chodkowski Paul	
N-09-0005	10 Durfee Street	Mart Inc Midtown Motor	6 businesses
N-10-0017	164 Durfee Street	I and F Inc	2 businesses
N-10-0019	120 Pine Street	Martins Teresa D; Paradise Stacy M	
N-10-0021	102 Pine Street	Alexander William	
N-10-0022	Pine Street	Travis Justin Louis A; Alexander Michelle Lee	
N-11-0060	Central Street	Fall River City Of	
N-21-0005	82 Hartwell Street	Massachusetts Electric Co; c/o Property Tax Dept	
M-11-0002	34 Plymouth Avenue	Samuels Realty Co Inc; c/o Polo Center	
	Total		

**TOTAL NUMBER OF RESIDENTIAL UNITS: 0**

**TOTAL NUMBER OF BUSINESSES: 18**

# 11. Redeveloper's Obligation

Redevelopers within the urban renewal area will be subject to the City's zoning ordinance, as may be revised according to the recommendations of this Plan. Redevelopers of all property within the urban renewal area will also be subject to the urban design guidelines in *Section 4.3 Design Guidelines*.

The Fall River Redevelopment Authority (FRRA) may sell or lease land it owns within the boundary of this Urban Renewal Plan to a redeveloper or redevelopers who will undertake a project on the site. Such sale or lease shall be undertaken in accordance with the disposition process outlined in *Section 12. Disposition*. The FRRA will issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to identify potential redevelopers. The RFP will require that any project meet the objectives of this Urban Renewal Plan as described in *Section 4. Objectives*. Response to the RFP must include a detailed narrative that includes, but is not limited to, the following requirements:

- The proposed development, including proposed land uses.

- How the proposed development will meet the objectives of this Urban Renewal Plan.
- The parties involved (ownership, development team, etc.)
- Any public improvements required for the proposed project
- The proposed timeline to completion of construction
- Pro forma for the project and available financial resources
- Relevant experience and related references
- Proposed job creation, including temporary and permanent jobs

In accordance with the Department of Housing and Community Development's (DHCD's) Urban Renewal Regulations at 760 CMR 12.00, the selected redeveloper will be subject to a Land Disposition Agreement (LDA). This agreement will define any requirements specific to that property and any requirements the

FRRA has for the development of property, in general.

The FRRA will establish the following requirements within the LDA:

- Development of the parcel(s) must follow the relevant design guide-lines in this Urban Renewal Plan.
- All improvements must be completed in accordance with the objectives of this Urban Renewal Plan.
- All improvements must be completed within a reasonable timeframe.
- The project will be subject to the City's relevant project approval process.

In addition, the FRRA may require performance standards relative to the timing and completion of construction within the LDA.

DHCD must approve the LDA.

## 12. Disposition

The Fall River Redevelopment Authority (FRRA) has not yet identified a developer or developers for the parcels shown in *Figure 2-15* and listed in *Table 2-2*. Any disposition must meet the relevant requirements of Massachusetts General Laws (MGL) Chapter 121B and Chapter 30B. Under these two chapters, the sale, lease, or acquisition of residential, industrial, or commercial real property by a redevelopment authority engaged in the development and disposition of real estate in accordance with an approved plan, is exempt from public disposition procedures required of all other local government bodies.

However, any parcel of land to be sold or otherwise disposed of by the FRRA must meet the requirements of 760 CMR 12.05. This includes an independent disposition appraisal of the parcel. The criteria for determination of the disposition price of the parcel are detailed in 760 CMR 12.05. The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) must approve both the disposition price and the Land

Disposition Agreement (LDA) between the FRRA and the purchaser.

The sale, lease, or development (redevelopment, rehabilitation or new construction) of any property controlled by the FRRA must be in accordance with the objectives of this Urban Renewal Plan.

The FRRA will periodically assess the progress of this Plan's implementation and identify other properties for disposition or remove any properties identified in the list of dispositions that have subsequently been developed according to the requirements of this Urban Renewal Plan. Changes to the plan are governed by 760 CMR 12.03, as outlined in *Section 15. Process for Future Changes*.

# 13. Citizen Participation

## 13.1 Participation in Plan Development

Citizen participation in the development of this Urban Renewal Plan involved the following:

- The appointment of, and subsequent meetings with, a Citizens' Advisory Group (CAG)
- Two public workshops
- An Open House on May 23, 2017, attended by Mayor Correia, Fall River Redevelopment Authority (FRRA) Chairman William Kenney, and the consultant team, followed by a two-week presentation board display in the atrium of Fall River's City Hall during which a "Suggestion Box" was made available for citizens to deposit comments and suggestions

The FRRA and the Fall River Planning Division advertised these efforts through a variety of channels. The consultant team provided

English-, Spanish-, and Portuguese-language flyers to aid in these efforts.

All public meetings, including those with the FRRA, were recorded by Fall River Government Television and are available for streaming, free of charge, on the organization's website, [frgtv.fredtv.us](http://frgtv.fredtv.us).

### Roles and Responsibilities of the CAG

The roles and responsibilities of the CAG were as follows:

- Provide input on the topics related to this Urban Renewal Plan
- Review and comment on materials prior to the public meetings
- Review and comment on results received from the public meetings
- Review and comment on the draft Urban Renewal Plan

- Reach out to other community members to inform them of the process and encourage them to participate in the public workshops

The CAG members were:

- Jamie Karam, President and CEO, *First Bristol Corp.*
- Christina Catelli, Owner, *Tequila Lime Cantina*
- Christopher Antao, *TD Bank*
- Jerry Donovan, *G & J Property Management Co.*
- Joseph Holdiman, *President of Residential Commercial Services Inc.*

The CAG met in January 2017. During this session, members were introduced to urban renewal plan-framework and their role within it, the urban renewal area, and the consultant team's initial analysis, which included parking and access, infrastructure and environmental conditions, economic conditions and market trends, land use and ownership,

development history and urban design. During this meeting, CAG members brought up the perceived scarcity of parking downtown, the poor reputation of the downtown (particularly Bedford Avenue), frustration with one-way street patterns, and a desire to involve more arts uses.

A second CAG meeting was planned for April 2017, but was rescheduled, and later canceled, due to poor weather. This meeting would have focused on fit studies, implications of the economic, regulatory, and circulation analyses completed by the consultant team, and an overview of the decisions required for the Urban Renewal Plan and the approval process.

## Public Workshops

The planning process involved two public workshops, one in February 2017 and a second in April 2017. Each workshop was divided into two parts: (1) a presentation that provided information and research about the urban renewal plan and posed questions to be answered

during the workshop, and (2) an interactive session designed to engage participants and ask them to apply their knowledge of the area and the information they had just received to answer the questions posed during the presentation. In both workshops, attendees were invited to fill out comment cards with their questions, concerns, and ideas relating to the Plan.

The February public workshop featured an introduction to urban renewal plans, followed by the presentation of the consultant team's analysis. The interactive session took the form of a visual preferences survey. Here, attendees were given score cards and asked to evaluate a series of projected images based on whether they felt the image would be a good fit for Fall River's downtown. A summary of the results of this survey are available in *Section 4. Plan Objectives*.

The April meeting asked "What could the downtown be?" and explored four related actions. These were access to the downtown, the development of the South Main Street-North

Main Street spine, infill rehabilitation and new development, and the connection of subsidiary corridors to the main spine. For the interactive portion of the workshop, attendees participated in a data walk in which they circulated around presentation boards depicting key components of the consultant teams' analyses, and early drafts of the Plan. Members of the consultant team stood by each board and listened to attendees feedback and responded to questions.

## Open House and Presentation Board Display

In an effort to hear feedback from a greater portion of the Fall River community, the consultant team worked with the Fall River Planning Division to host an Open House on the Urban Renewal Plan. The Open House, which took place May 23, involved a speech by Mayor Correia followed by questions from the press. Chairman William Kenney and members of the consultant team then stood by presentation boards while attendees circulated

around the room. Boards remained in the City Hall Atrium for three weeks after the event and community members were invited to review the materials and leave comments in a suggestion box.

## Approval Process: Winter 2018

The FRRA met on January 10, 2018 and voted to determine that the urban renewal area met the criteria for blighted, decadent, and substandard conditions.

Additional meetings for the approval process included a meeting with the Planning Board on May 9, 2018 and a meeting with City Council on **xx**.

## Record of Public Participation

Materials from the CAG meetings, the public workshops, the Open Houses and community meetings, and from the surveys are provided in *Appendix D. Public Engagement Materials*.

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## 13.2 Participation in Project Execution

The FRRA is responsible for the implementation of this Urban Renewal Plan.

### Future Public Involvement

Meetings of the FRRA are public meetings and are thus subject to the Open Meeting Law of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. As described in *Section 15. Process for Future Changes*, a major plan update would require the same public process as the preparation of this Urban Renewal Plan. Any use of eminent domain requires a public process, as stipulated by Massachusetts General Laws (MGL) Chapter 79 and by the requirements of Chapter 121B, the enabling legislation for this Urban Renewal Plan.

To capture the existing institutional knowledge about this Plan and the planning process, the FRRA will convert the CAG into a working

group that can review the progress of this Urban Renewal Plan on an annual basis. As more businesses, residents, and nonprofit organizations move to the area, the FRRA should expand this group to include additional members, representative of the new mix of waterfront activities.

## 14. Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA)

The Fall River Redevelopment Authority (FRRRA) filed an Environmental Notification Form (ENF) under the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA). *Appendix H* contains the ENF filed with the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) on **xx**.

# 15. Process for Future Changes: 760 CMR 12.03

In accordance with 760 CMR 12.03, changes to the Plan may be made any time during implementation, including changes to the following: property/parcel designations such as acquisition, clearance, disposition, rehabilitation, and new construction. Plan changes are divided into two types: a minor plan change and a major plan change.

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## Minor Plan Change

The Fall River Redevelopment Authority (FRRA) must submit all proposed minor and major plan changes to Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) for approval, along with a resolution authorizing the plan change. However, the following minor plan changes do not need DHCD approval:

1. Granting or receiving easements for utilities
2. Confirmatory takings for the purpose of title clearing
3. Tax foreclosures
4. Conveying non-buildable lots of less than 5,000 square feet to owners of adjacent parcels
5. Acquiring an interest in property made available through a discontinuance of a public way
6. Transfer of a property interest to or from another public entity

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## Major Plan Change

Major plan changes require the same process as the initial preparation of this Plan:

- Evidence of public outreach
- A Public Hearing
- Determination by the Planning Board that the plan is in conformance with the City's comprehensive plan
- Approval by the City Council

DHCD must approve a major plan change. A major plan change is defined by DHCD as a significant change to any of the basic elements of the approved urban renewal plan, including characteristics, objective, public improvement, redeveloper's obligations, or disposition. This would include changes to the boundary of the plan and identifying a parcel for acquisition that had not previously been so identified.

Additional requirements are provided in 760 CMR 12.03.

## 16. Severability

Should any section, paragraph, or provision of the Plan be rendered unconstitutional, or invalid, such decision shall not affect the whole or any part thereof other than the part so decided to be unconstitutional or invalid.





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# FALL RIVER · DOWNTOWN URBAN · RENEWAL · PLAN

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Prepared for the Fall River Redevelopment Authority  
By Harriman · FXM Associates · Fitzgerald & Halliday