

DOWNTOWN WEST HAVEN

REVITALIZATION PLAN

AND

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

WEST HAVEN



HISTORICAL GREEN

JULY 2002

Prepared for the:

WEST HAVEN
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
West Haven, Connecticut

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AND

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Prepared for the:

WEST HAVEN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
West Haven, Connecticut

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JULY 2002

DOWNTOWN WEST HAVEN

Revitalization Plan and Implementation Strategy

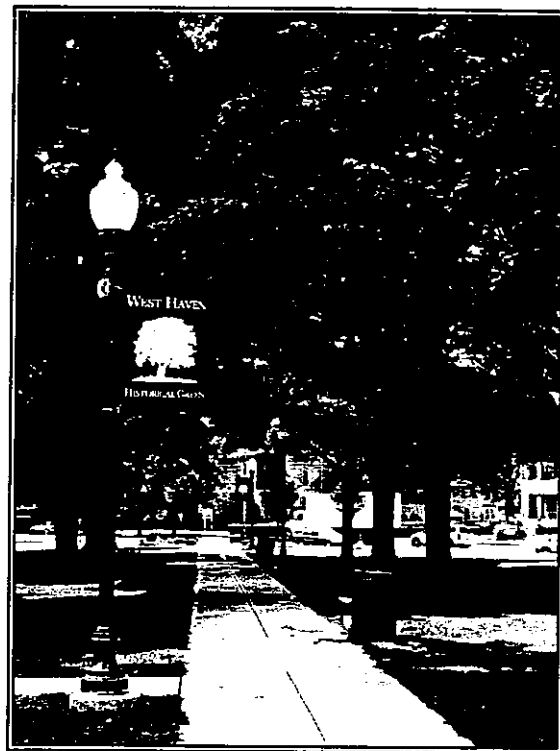
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I. INTRODUCTION

The West Haven Economic Development Corporation, with City support, has acted to create this revitalization plan for Downtown West Haven. The recommendations contained in this report reflect future market support for uses locating in Downtown and a desire to enable Downtown to realize its full potentials. This plan assumes that change is a constant and that a program of continuing, coordinated, incremental actions involving the cooperative efforts of the City, property owners and merchants can effectively manage and influence future change, to Downtown's advantage.

The challenges facing Downtown are not insurmountable. Downtown has important qualities which will carry the day, over time. Downtown is a superior location for many retailing and service businesses because it is surrounded by sound residential neighborhoods. Downtown's pedestrian friendly scale, traditional New England architectural features and attractive streetscape anchored by the "Green," will always be in fashion. Downtown has a significant foundation of business and government activities upon which to grow into the future. With the town green, churches, City Hall, the Post Office, Library, Washington Elementary School and the diversity of stores, businesses, banks and community activities, Downtown will continue to serve as the traditional focal point for the City.



West Haven Green

II. PLANNING ANALYSIS

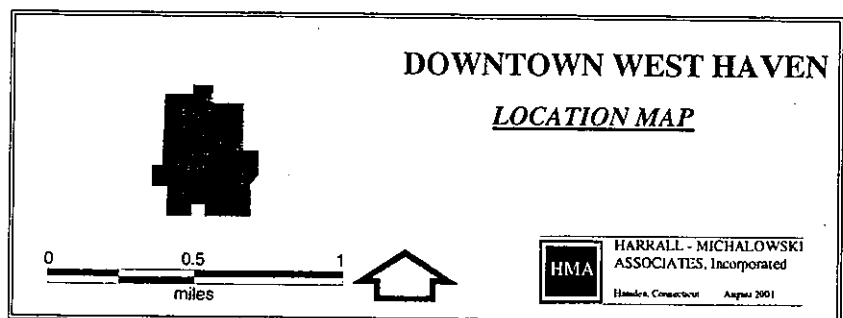
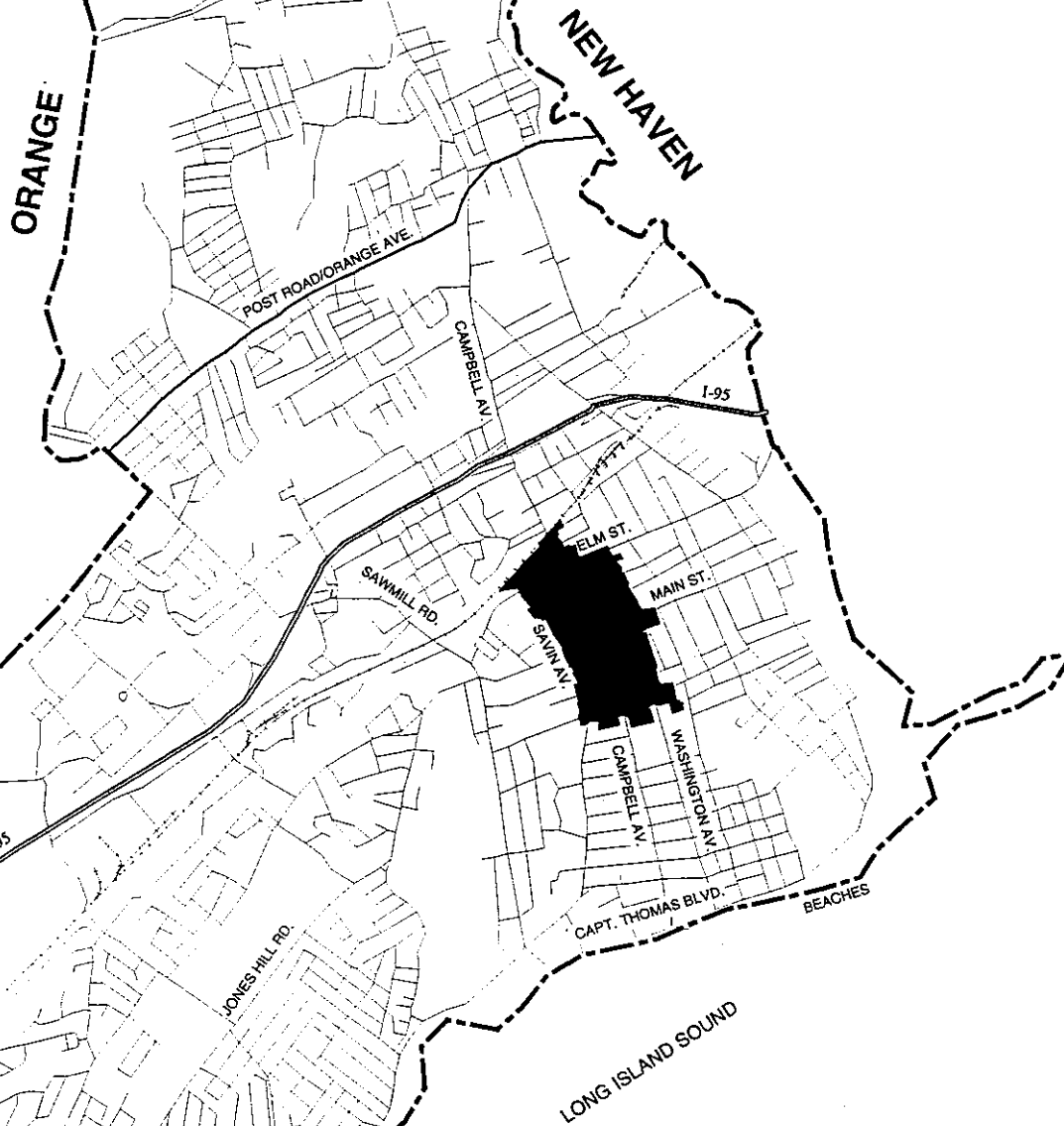
The following is a summary of findings of the planning analysis conducted within the Downtown Study Area.

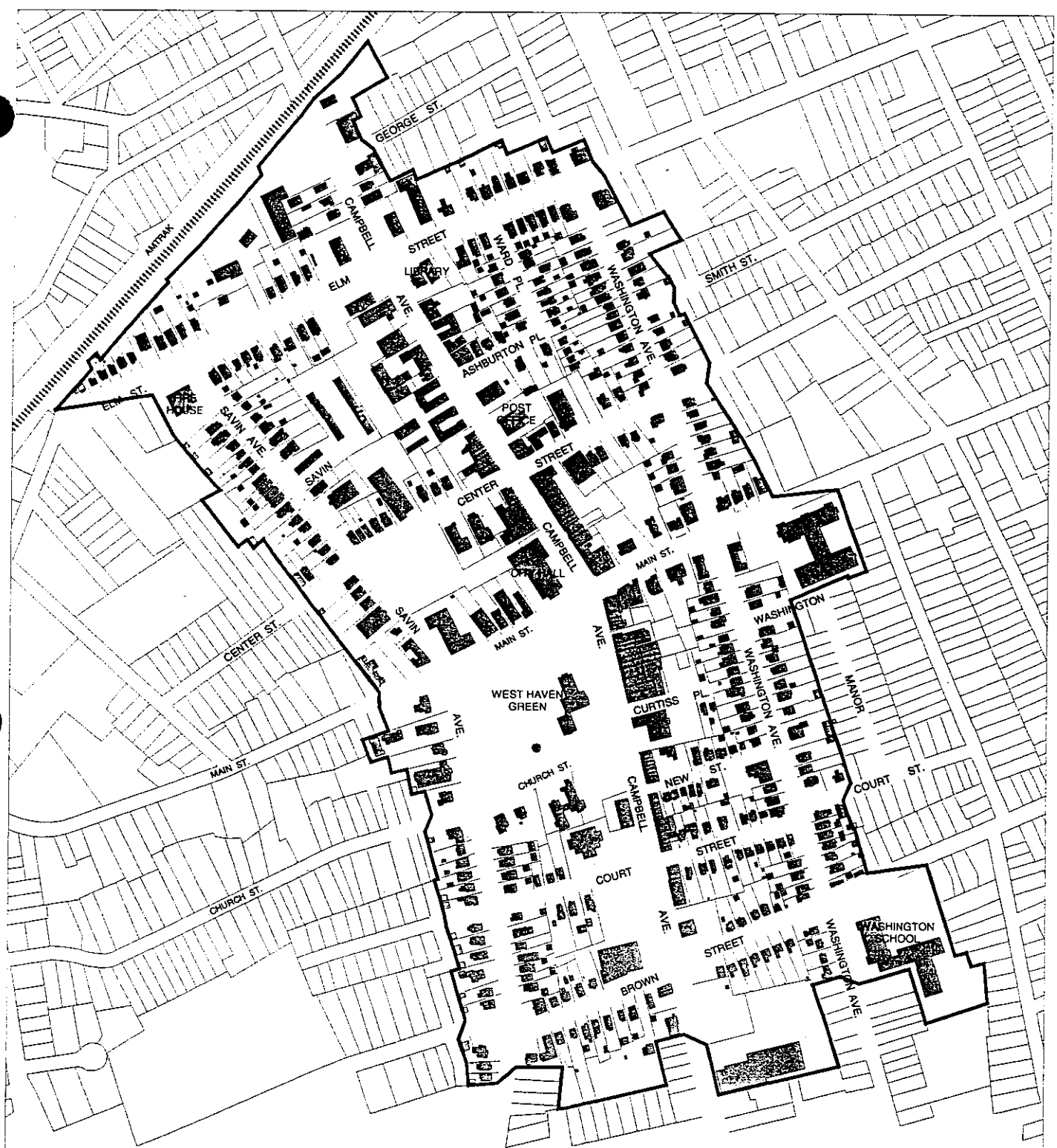
A. Location and Downtown Context

Downtown West Haven is concentrated along Campbell Avenue between the Amtrak overpass on the north and Brown Street on the south, a distance of 3,500 feet. For the purpose of this analysis, the Downtown Study Area extends eastward one block to include Washington Avenue and westward one block to include Savin Avenue. This area contains 138 acres and lies within West Haven's Central Business District Zone. The Downtown Study Area is identified on the following Location Map.

Downtown has historically functioned as the primary business and government center of West Haven. The combination of improvements to Route 1, the construction of I-95, changing suburban

WEST HAVEN, CONNECTICUT DOWNTOWN STUDY AREA





 Study Area Boundary Line

 Parcels and Buildings

STUDY AREA
Downtown West Haven, CT.





HARRALL - MICHALOWSKI
ASSOCIATES, Incorporated

Hartford, Connecticut August 2001

development patterns and the advent of dominating national chain retailers contributed to the dispersal of many of Downtown's core general merchandise and apparel retailing functions to suburban shopping centers. As is the case for most Downtowns in small New England cities, no general merchandise department stores remain in Downtown West Haven to act as anchors for retailing activity.



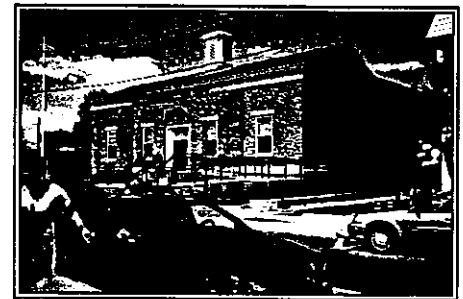
Silver's Drug Store



West Haven City Hall

Many of West Haven's municipal uses, religious institutions and fraternal organizations are concentrated in the heart of the Study Area, establishing Downtown's preeminent position as the civic heart of the City. Located at the core of Downtown is the West Haven Green, owned by the First Congregational Church and maintained by the City. Community events, such as the summer community concert series, occur on the Green. Also located at the

historic core of Downtown is City Hall, an attractive civic building fronting on the Green. The City's Police Department, currently located in City Hall, is relocating to a new facility outside of Downtown, on Saw Mill Road. Numerous churches, fraternal organizations and other public buildings, including the West Haven Public Library, the Elm Street Fire Station, the Washington School and the Post Office, are located within Downtown.



Downtown Post Office

There are many historical and several architecturally significant buildings located around the West Haven Green and throughout the Study Area. The Green and twenty-one surrounding properties have been designated the West Haven Green Historic District and nearly half (201 of 406) of the buildings located within Downtown have been identified by the City as historic. These historic buildings and the West Haven Green Historic District are described on the accompanying map.



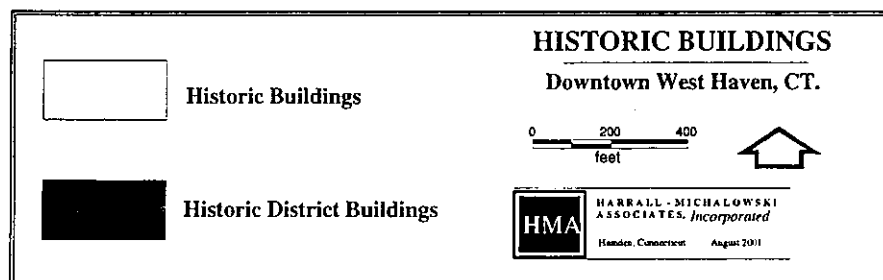
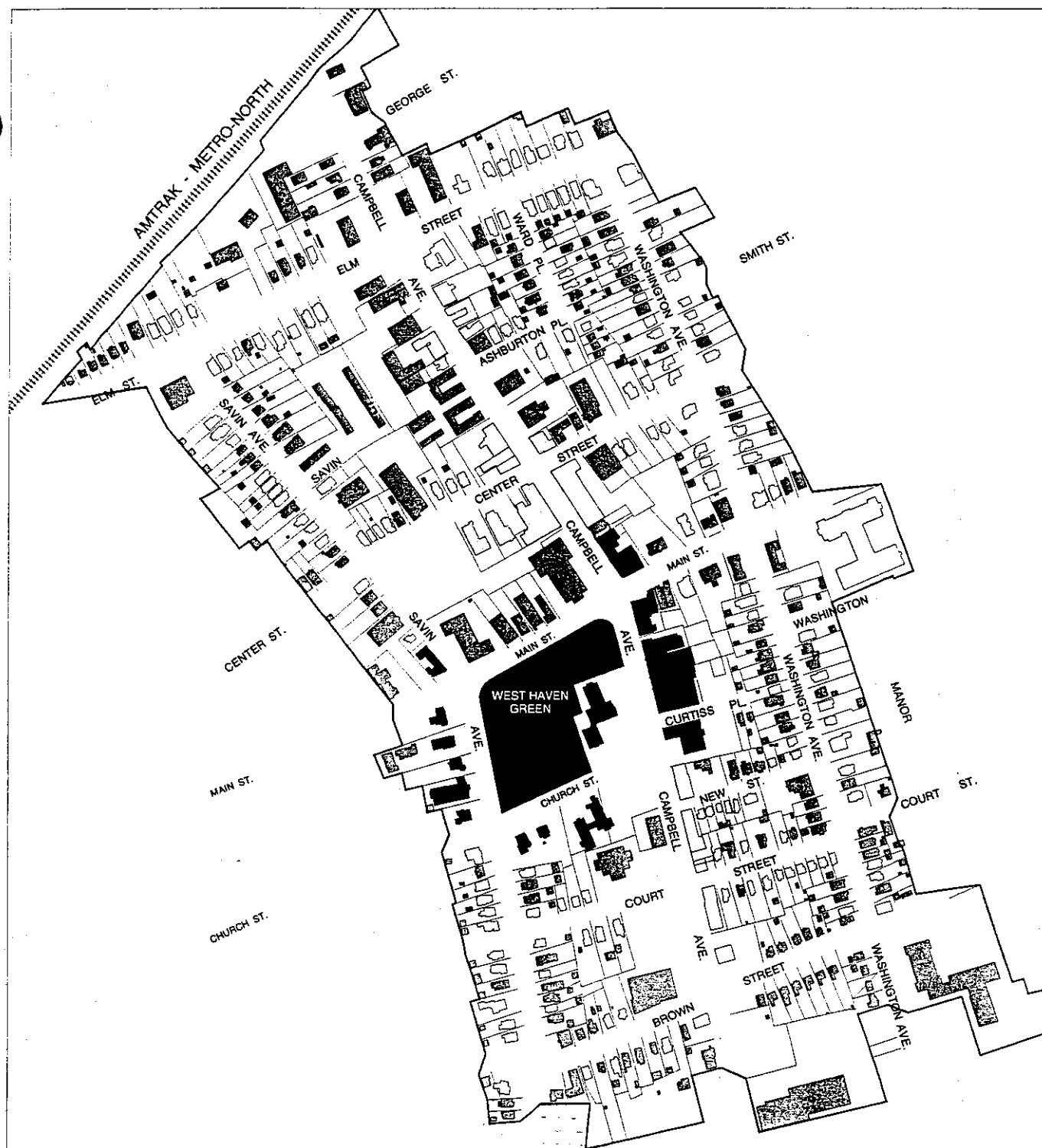
First Congregational Church
"On the Green"

The largely unbroken blocks of store fronts of a traditional walkable downtown, populated by several architecturally-significant buildings, the beautiful Green and the surrounding neighborhoods housing many attractive and well kept homes are notable aesthetic qualities of the area.

A significant feature of Downtown is its accessibility relative to the surrounding residential neighborhoods and the City as a whole. It is estimated that 8,500 people live within a 5 minute walk of Campbell Avenue along the length of the Study Area and 20,000



Campbell Ave. Retailing



people live within a five minute drive of Downtown. Downtown can be easily reached from the remainder of the City. I-95 is within five minutes of Downtown, providing good access to regional markets.

B. Land and Building Use Characteristics

The gross building area of all structures located within the Downtown Area, as defined by West Haven tax assessment records, is estimated at 1,965,573 square feet. The largest categories of overall building space usage are retail, office and municipal uses at 31.4%, 28.1% and 19.9% respectively.

From a retailing perspective, Downtown functions as both a "community" shopping center and a "neighborhood" shopping center. In addition to convenience goods, West Haven's Downtown offers a range of stores for the sale of shopping goods including apparel, furniture and specialty items. In contrast to suburban shopping centers, Downtown performs a much broader role within the City by combining retail services with those services provided by office space users, financial institutions and government operations.

Ground floor or street level uses typically define the character of a Downtown. In West Haven, retailing and office uses are the largest occupiers of private sector ground floor building space. Retail uses constitute 29.3% of non-residential, non-governmental ground floor building space, while private sector office space uses make-up 41.0% of ground floor building area. Vacant ground floor building space totals 3.4%. The following table illustrates the distribution of building space among the non-residential, non-governmental ground floor uses within the Downtown Study Area.

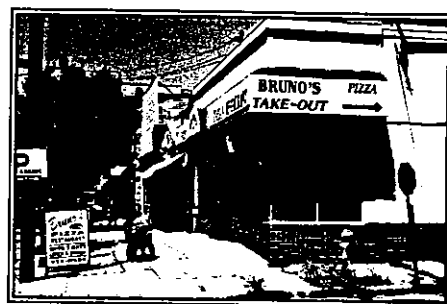
1. Ground Floor Retail Uses

Table 1 summarizes the occupied ground floor area of businesses located in the Downtown Study Area. Combined, these uses total 363,000 square feet of occupied, ground floor building space.

Like most smaller New England Downtowns, the store mix lacks a traditional anchor department store to attract shoppers and generate ancillary retailing activity. Today, the two principal generators of retail activity in Downtown are Silver's Drug Store and Walgreen's. These two pharmacy stores constitute 39% of Downtown's non-food and non-auto retail space. Restaurants occupy nearly 30,000 square feet of space and food, convenience



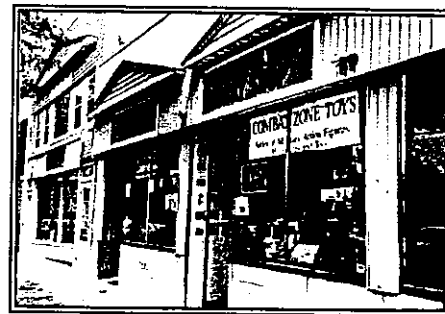
Walgreens on Campbell Ave.



Campbell Ave. - Curtiss Place



Campbell Ave. Services



New Campbell Ave. Retailer

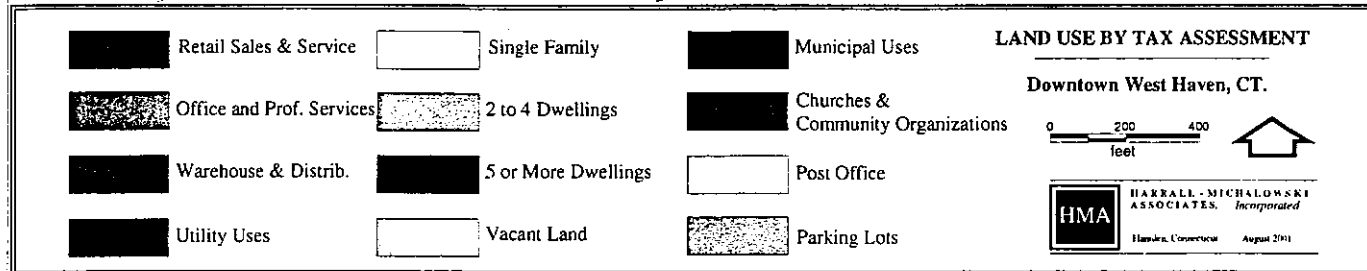


Table 1
DOWNTOWN WEST HAVEN
ANALYSIS OF GROUND FLOOR
BUILDING SPACE USE

Business Type	Number of Establishments or Locations	Ground Floor Sq. Ft.	Distribution of Ground Floor Bldg. Space	Sub Total S.F.	Sub Total %
Apparel & Accessory	4	9,000	2.4%		
Gifts & Speciality	4	4,450	1.2%		
Jewelry	3	5,550	1.5%		
Footware	1	600	0.2%		
Furniture & Furnishings	2	5,000	1.3%		
Appliances & Electronics	2	2,225	0.6%		
Pharmacy	2	22,610	6.0%		
Miscellaneous Retail	8	8,900	2.4%		
				58,335	15.5%
Food Stores	7	11,175	3.0%		
Convenience Stores	3	7,550	2.0%		
Restaurants	13	25,915	6.9%		
Fast Food- Drive Thru	1	3,720	1.0%		
Liquor Stores	2	3,640	1.0%		
				52,000	13.8%
Dentist Offices	7	25,401	6.8%		
Other Medical Offices	9	32,906	8.7%		
Medical Rehab Facility	3	24,425	6.5%		
				82,732	22.0%
Legal Services	5	11,900	3.2%		
Banks	5	22,515	6.0%		
Business Services	4	8,750	2.3%		
Personal Services	15	28,415	7.6%		
				71,580	19.0%
Hair Services	15	12,390	3.3%		
Nail Services	4	3,000	0.8%		
				15,390	4.1%
Funeral Homes	3	18,010	4.8%		
Wholesale & Warehouse	3	19,815	5.3%		
Automotive Sales & Service	1	35,775	9.5%		
Automotive Service	1	865	0.2%		
SNET Building	1	9,000	2.4%		
				36,640	9.7%
Vacant Space	8	12,662	3.4%		
TOTALS	136	376,164	100.0%		

Source: HMA Field Survey, September 2001 and June 2002

and package stores occupy an additional 22,000 square feet of ground floor retail space.

2. Office Uses

Office space uses in Downtown, including, medical, legal, banks and other personal and business serving establishments total 154,000 square feet of building space. Medical and dental offices and medical rehabilitation facilities are the largest private sector ground floor office uses in Downtown, totaling nearly 83,000 square feet of building space.



Campbell Ave. Medical Offices

3. Other Uses

Three funeral homes are located in Downtown West Haven. Each is well maintained, represents an attractive asset to Downtown and provides an essential service to the community.



Main St. Office Building

Downtown also contains several wholesale and warehouse distribution businesses. These uses constitute about 5.3% of the ground floor private sector building space in Downtown. In their current condition, the public face of these businesses and the general absence of pedestrian activity, combine to detract from the desired image of a vibrant Downtown.

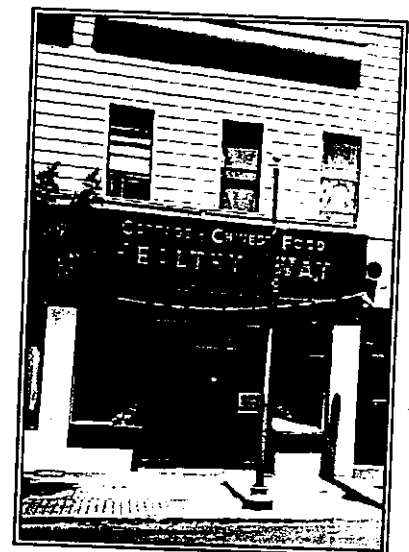
4. Vacant Space

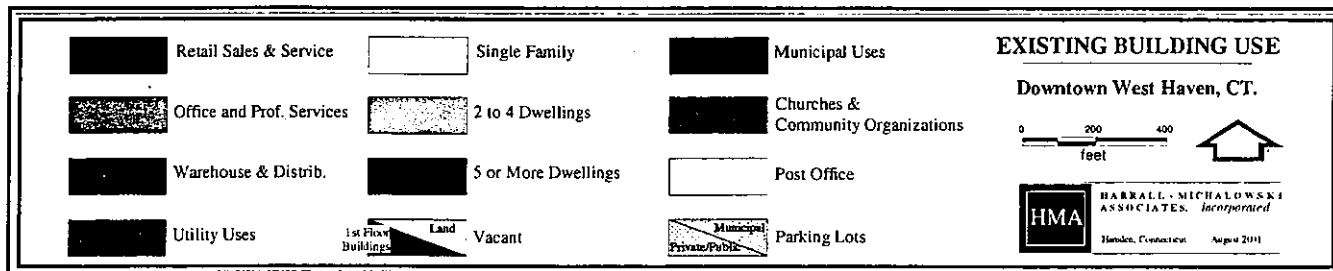
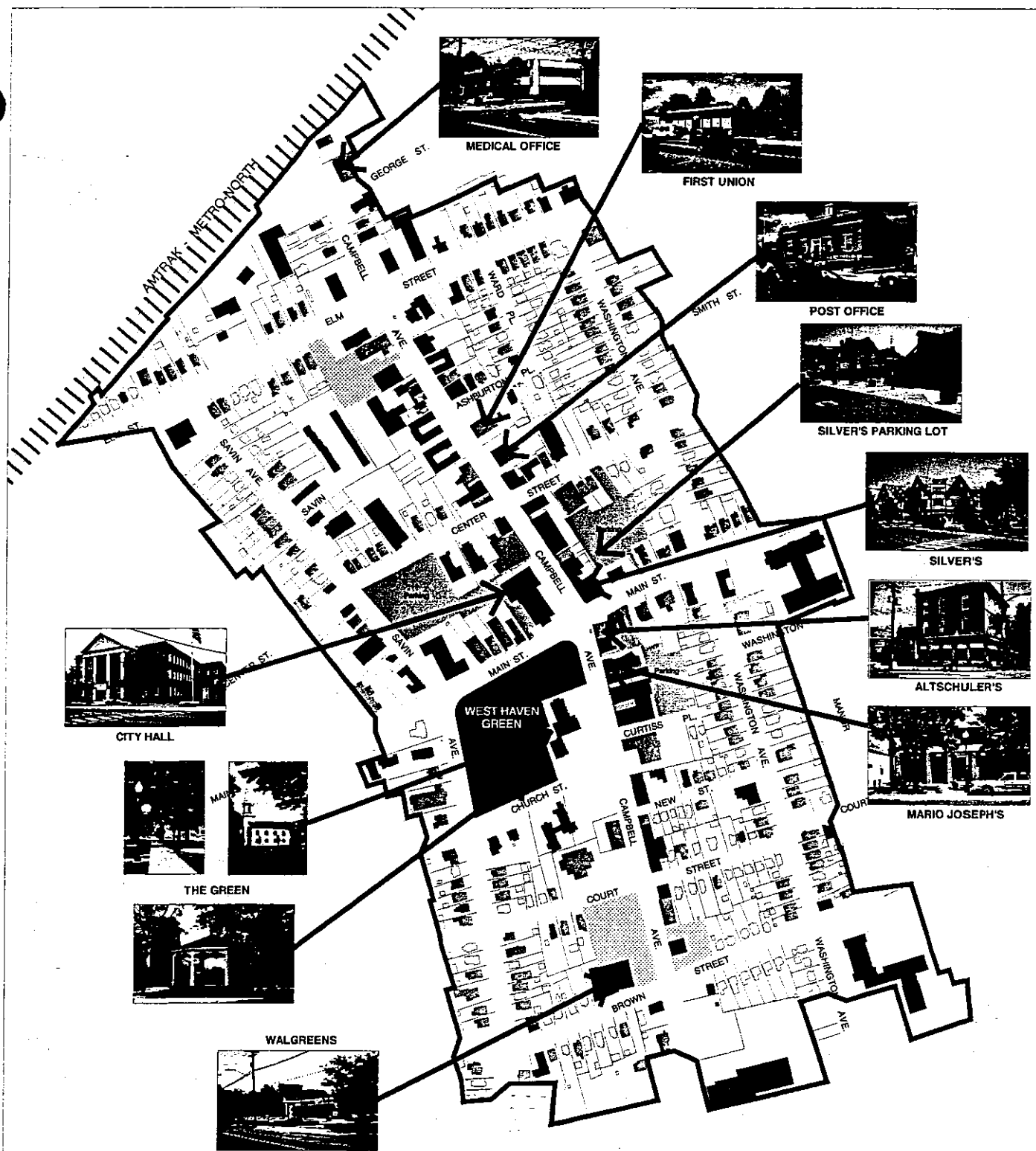
Vacant "store-fronts" affect the public's perception of the "health" of any retail center. This is especially true of New England's downtowns, as building storefronts are located right at the edge of the street where people walk and drive-by on a regular basis and form an impression of the "vitality" of the area. Vacant downtown storefronts are dark empty spaces, which often contain some type of bold signage, advertising the vacancy and availability of the space. West Haven's Downtown currently has 8 vacant ground floor storefronts, totaling 13,000 square feet.



Main St. Office Building

While this is a significant number, it should be noted that these vacancies represent only 3.4% of the private sector ground floor building space in Downtown. This is an improvement over the vacancy levels of 11 storefronts totaling 5.7% recorded in the Fall of 2001. To increase the on-the-street vitality of Downtown, vacant and underutilized ground floor building space should be used for retail purposes whenever possible.





C. Downtown Residential Uses

The health of any downtown is largely dependent on the health of its surrounding and supporting neighborhoods. The future health of the residential neighborhoods surrounding Downtown West Haven will have a significant impact upon its future. Residential neighborhoods provide close-in markets for a variety of shopping and service needs and help to define the overall character of Downtown.

The residential neighborhoods within and surrounding Downtown are relatively dense and in generally sound condition, a circumstance not often found in downtown areas and a testament to private sector maintenance and the City's progressive code enforcement efforts. Housing types range from owner occupied single family detached housing to rental units in apartment buildings. Housing densities vary throughout the Downtown, reflecting the range of housing types within Downtown. Housing prices and rental rates provide for a diversity of housing choices in Downtown.

Residential structures account for over two thirds (69%) of the total buildings in the Downtown Study Area. The 118 single family homes located within the Downtown Study Area account for 29% of all the buildings located within Downtown and their presence has a positive influence on the visual character of the area. Over half (53%) of the housing units in Downtown are located in apartment buildings containing 9 or more units. Downtown also has a limited amount of housing units located on upper floors over ground floor retail and office uses.

It is estimated that 8,500 people live within a 5 minute walk of Campbell Avenue along its Study Area length. This population represents a very important marketing opportunity for Downtown merchants and the resulting pedestrian activity within Downtown that brings life and vitality to Downtown's street scene. The existence of a significant residential population within and surrounding Downtown is an important element for developing and maintaining a healthy retail sector. This relationship needs to be further developed from a retailing perspective. (See attached Quarter Mile Market Area Map)

D. Traffic Circulation, Parking and Access

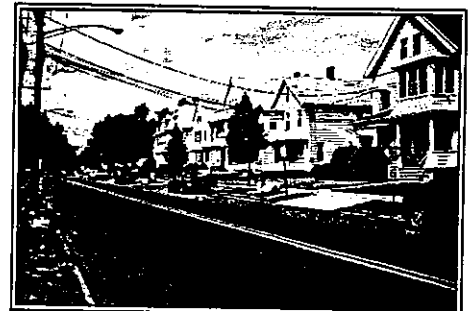
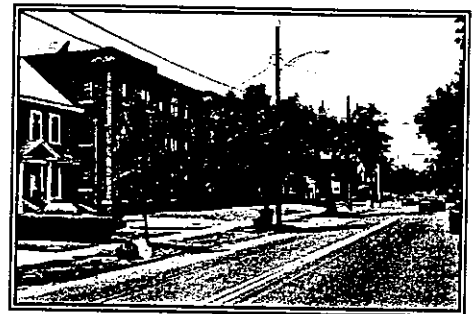
1. Vehicular circulation is one of Downtown's strengths. The grid

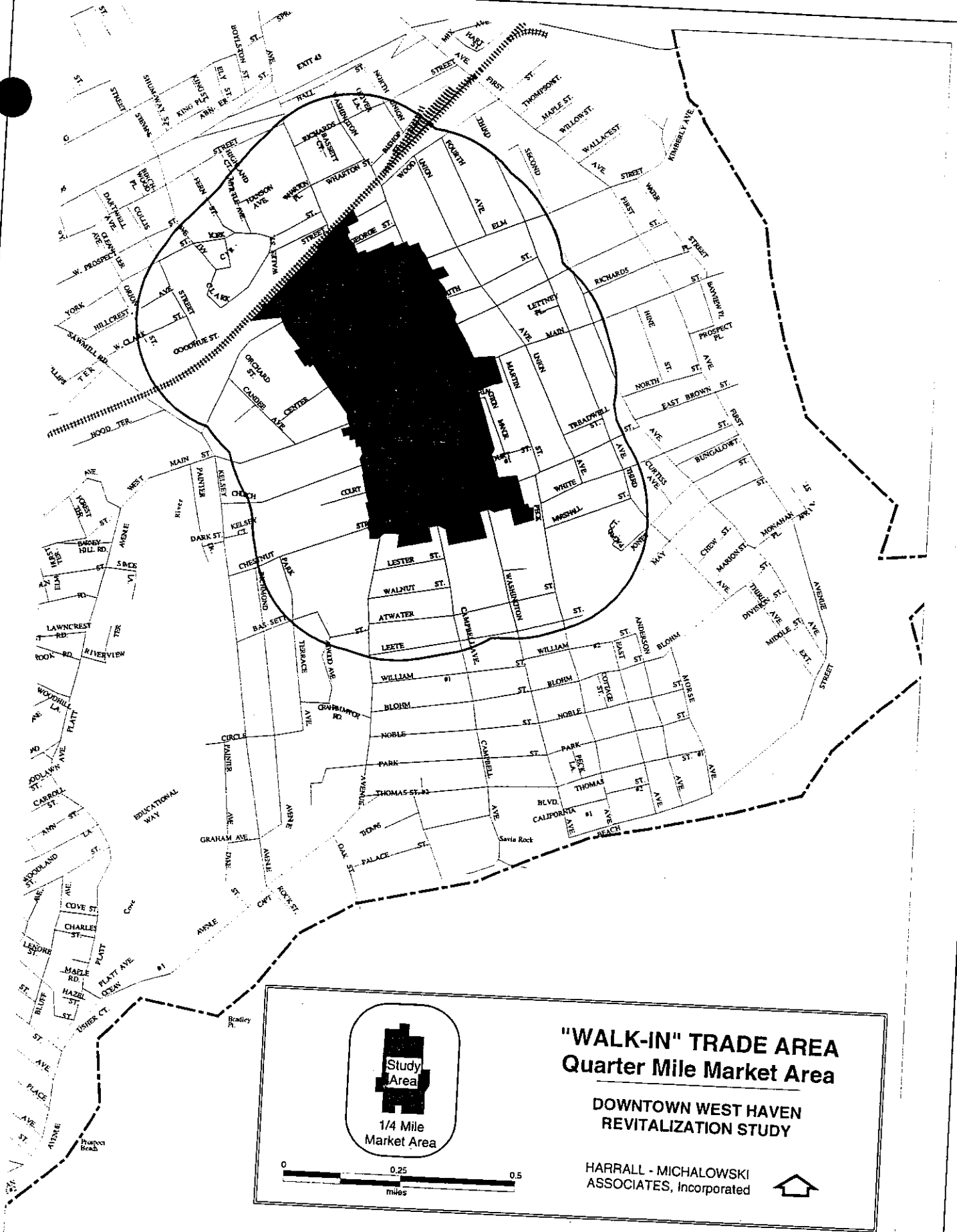


Downtown Residence



Downtown Apartments





street system serving the area provides excellent accessibility and visibility for Downtown's many businesses and institutions. The grid street system also provides excellent connectivity to surrounding residential neighborhoods and to the balance of the City. Downtown's grid street system provides motorists with several travel route alternatives, resulting in a more even flow of traffic and opportunities to avoid points of congestion.

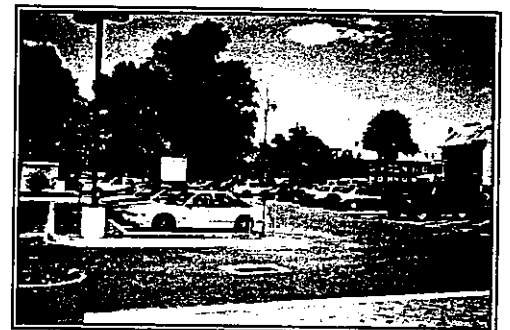
2. Pedestrian circulation in Downtown is good. Downtown is a pedestrian friendly environment with no hills to discourage walking and stores fronting on wide sidewalks. Signalized intersections are equipped with pedestrian chirping signals to assist those with impaired vision. Downtown is used as a training area where persons with various physical impairments are taught to achieve greater personal mobility and independence.



3. Bus mass transit service within the Downtown area is good. The Connecticut Transit system runs buses along the full length of Campbell Avenue and Main Street, as well as portions of Elm, Church and Court streets. Bus shelters are located in the heart of Downtown, serving the areas non-driving patrons. Downtown is also served by the Savin Rock Trolley.

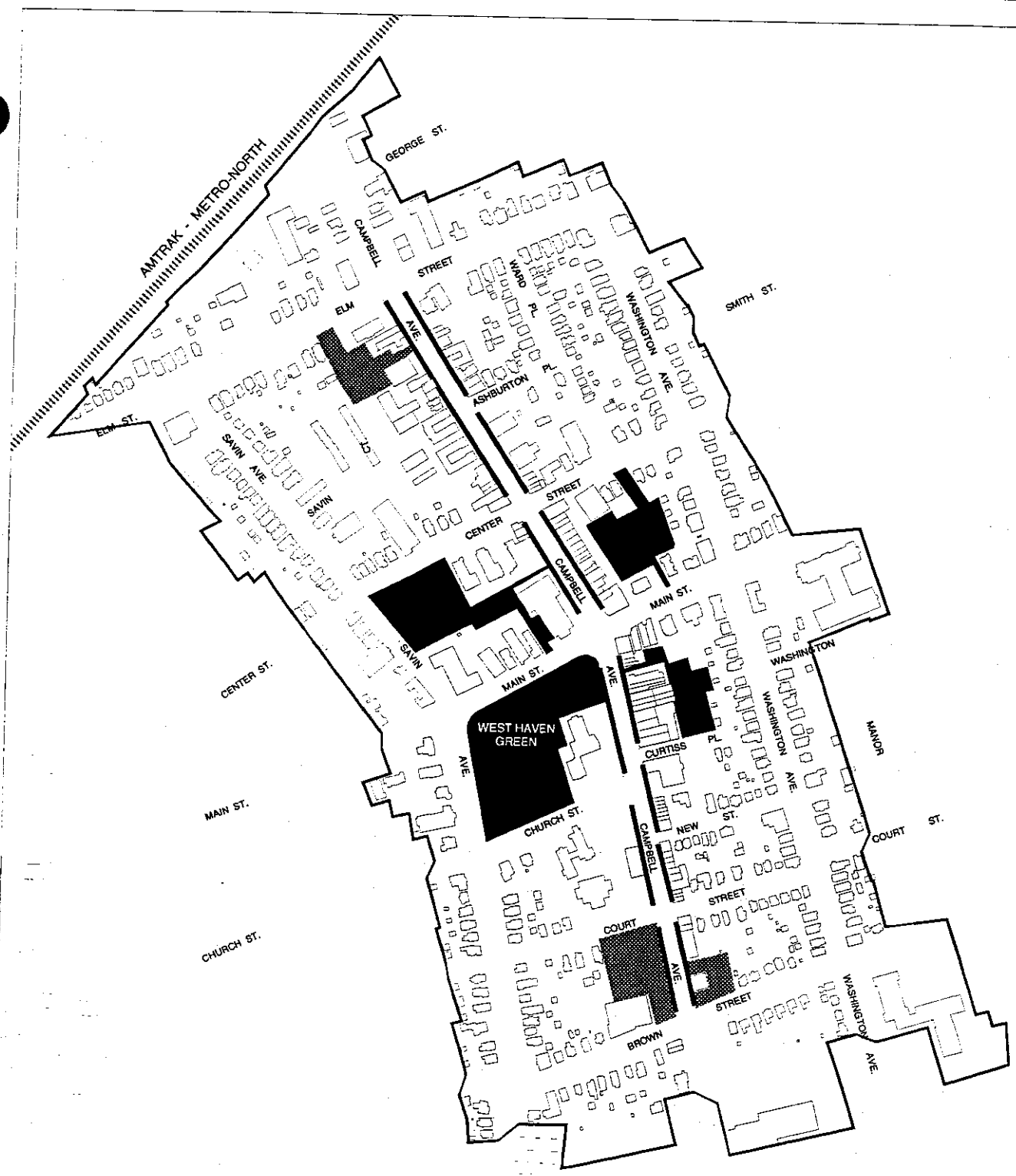


4. Parking is another Downtown asset. The combination of Downtown's grid street system and on-street parallel parking enables many Downtown shoppers to view the store or business they desire to visit from their car and park nearby. There are 152 on-street parking spaces along Campbell Avenue between Elm and Brown streets and an additional 118 on-street parking spaces on side streets within one block of Campbell Avenue. These 270 on-street parking spaces are complemented by three municipal parking lots located near the center of Downtown, containing nearly 300 parking spaces. These 566 municipal parking spaces are complemented by several parking lots associated with individual businesses and institutions, including among others, the Post Office, Downtown's five banks, Walgreen's parking lot, with 109 parking spaces, and the parking lot extending behind Recovery Alliance, HUB Bank and Burger King at the north end of Downtown, which contains 48 parking spaces.



Municipal Parking Behind Silver's





Municipal Parking Lots

Private/Public Parking Lots

Campbell Avenue On-Street Parking

PARKING ANALYSIS

Downtown West Haven, CT.

0 200 400

feet

HMA

HARKALL-MICHALOWSKI
 ASSOCIATES, Incorporated
 Hamden, Connecticut August 2011

The City of West Haven has taken a very progressive approach to providing accessible, attractive and safe parking within Downtown. The City recognized the inefficiencies of disconnected individual parking lots located to the rear of many Campbell Avenue businesses and worked with property owners to acquire easements and property for the creation of the two major municipal parking lots located behind "Silvers" and Curtiss Place.



Municipal Parking-
Rear Building Facades

The City is in the process of implementing the recommendations contained in a site plan for an upgraded Curtiss Place parking lot. These two municipal parking lots have, or will have at completion, new pavement and line markings, screened dumpster areas, lighting, landscape planters and attractive pedestrian walkways to Campbell Avenue and connecting side streets. In addition, the City has worked with property owners to improve the rear facades of the buildings in the Silver's municipal parking lot, including some rear building entrances. The same approach is proposed for the Curtiss Place parking lot.



Curtiss Place Lot-
Proposed for Improvement

Responses to a survey of Downtown merchants indicated a need for additional parking. With the relocation of the West Haven Police Station to a new facility on Saw Mill Road, additional parking spaces in the municipal parking lot behind City Hall should become available to support Downtown uses, especially those businesses located on the west side of Campbell Avenue.



City Hall Parking Lot-
Police Cars

E. Problems and Weakness

Understanding Downtown's problems and weaknesses is important to formulating revitalization strategies which will address current conditions. The following is a summary of problems which need to be recognized and dealt-with:

- Entries into Downtown are not well defined. Little signage exists to let the potential patron know that they are approaching Downtown;
- Several breaks in the historic building wall fronting on Campbell Avenue act to disrupt the cohesive visual qualities of Downtown;
- Downtown lacks building mass and activity at its important northern gateway- around the intersection of Campbell



Downtown Entry-
Campbell & Elm

Avenue and Elm Street. With the exception of the library, buildings located at this intersection are set-back from the street, with parking between the buildings and the sidewalk edge;

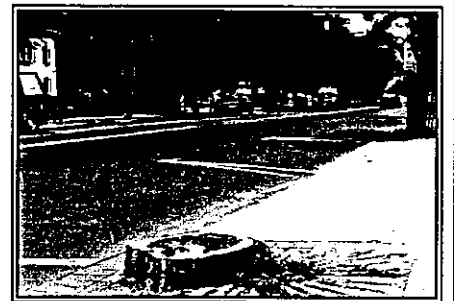
- Parking lots which front on Campbell Avenue are out of character with the historic building wall which characterizes Downtown's streetscape;
- Ground floor office uses, warehousing and storage businesses tend to reduce pedestrian activity in Downtown;
- Some Downtown storefronts could benefit from facade and signage improvement guidelines;
- The Curtiss Place municipal parking lot and the rear of the buildings in this lot are not visually attractive. Proposed improvements need to be implemented;
- The pedestrian walkways between the Curtiss Place municipal parking lot and Campbell Avenue and Main Street are functionally weak and unattractive;
- Some Downtown sidewalks are in need of repair and most sidewalk areas need to be cleaned more often, especially during the Fall and Winter months;
- Missing and dying street trees detract from the Downtown streetscape and should be replaced;
- Downtown lacks a coordinated and focused retail merchandising program;
- The Downtown merchants organization needs to be reinvigorated to address Downtown issues on a united front;
- Retail store hours should be competitive with suburban shopping centers;
- Some zoning provisions concerning the conversion of residential dwellings on adjacent streets to commercial uses may be detrimental to Downtown revitalization efforts;



Campbell & Elm



Curtiss Place Parking Lot-
Proposed for Improvements



Vacant Lot - Northern Gateway

F. Strengths and Opportunities

In addition to understanding the weaknesses of Downtown, identifying elements that are sound and represent the strengths of the area is equally important. These strengths become the foundation upon which a revitalization strategy can build upon. The following are important strengths of Downtown West Haven:

- Good vehicular access and location relative to the surrounding residential neighborhoods and the balance of the City;
- Downtown contains an interesting collection of commercial architecture;
- Churches bring people into Downtown and can enhance the visual quality of the neighborhood;
- Civic functions and community organizations, including City Hall, the soon to be renovated Library, the Post Office, and the American Legion and Knights of Columbus, each bring people to Downtown;
- Several long-established Downtown merchants and restaurants whose markets have remained reasonably strong in the face of changing demographics and shopping habits;
- A reasonably good mix of existing retail businesses upon which to build a revitalization program;
- A very strong concentration of medical office businesses which create significant Downtown activity;
- A good parking inventory to support Downtown uses;
- Attractive surrounding residential neighborhoods.
- Attractive pedestrian environment.



Altschuler Building-
Main & Campbell



Mario - Josephs

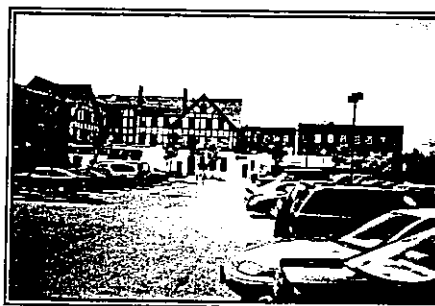


Silver's Drug Store



Pedestrian Scaled Environment

West Haven, Connecticut



Convenient Parking

Downtown Revitalization Plan



Attractive Residential Neighborhoods

III. RECOMMENDED REVITALIZATION PLAN

A. Visions for Tomorrow

The recommendations contained in this report are based on a set of assumptions about the role of Downtown in West Haven's future. Downtown West Haven has experienced many changes over the years and will continue to do so in the future. The following summarizes the visions for the future of Downtown:

- Downtown West Haven will be the principal focal point for many social, governmental and cultural activities for the full spectrum of West Haven's population;
- Downtown will be characterized as a welcoming environment which embodies and honors the ethnic, racial, cultural, age and economic diversity of the City's residents.
- Downtown will have clean streets, gutters and sidewalks;
- Downtown will be characterized by a greater sense of vitality through improvements to the diversity and intensity of activities;
- Downtown will have upgraded, attractive storefronts which are well maintained by owners and merchants, indicating a sense of pride of ownership;
- Downtown will offer additional off-street parking which is convenient, safe, attractively signed, well maintained and screened from Downtown's streets;
- The upgrading of Downtown's distinctive buildings will create a diverse and interesting environment for residents and shoppers who value tradition, variety and personal service over the often indifferent offerings of suburban shopping centers.
- Downtown merchants and service providers will offer merchandise in their establishments which targets available markets in an attractive manner and setting, while emphasizing personal service and strong knowledge of product;
- Downtown's role as a community gathering place will be obvious because people will be there. Pedestrian activity will be fostered by a broad mix of retail, service, cultural, social and institutional uses and attractive public spaces that only a Downtown can provide. These elements provide the opportunity for the social interaction needed to enrich both the Downtown as a place to do business and as a place to be.

B. Operating Principles

The Setting

The plan for revitalization builds on Downtown's many strengths. Downtown is surrounded by sound residential neighborhoods and represents a superior location for many population based retailing and service businesses. When compared to its suburban competition, Downtown is a pedestrian friendly place with underlying traditional New England characteristics. Downtown has a very significant foundation of business and government activities. With its diversity of stores, businesses, banks and government facilities and services and the "Green," Downtown continues to serve as the traditional focal point for the City. This plan provides a strategy to maintain and reinforce Downtown role as the dominate mixed-use center for the City.

Change

The revitalization plan for Downtown West Haven is intended to be a management tool for change. The plan ties a series of recommendations to the collective visions for Downtown.

The revitalization plan focuses on providing needed goods and services for City residents; retaining an important segment of the City's tax base; maintaining an attractive business investment climate and supporting the residential areas surrounding Downtown. The strategy is intended to encourage new investment within Downtown, without infringing on the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Change is a constant for every neighborhood of West Haven. As has been the case since its founding, the characteristics (age, wealth, buying habits and need for services) of West Haven's residents are always changing. Downtown's retail and service uses need to be sensitive to these changes, which should be reflected in the merchandise and services available in Downtown.

Change is also a constant in the retail and service sectors of our economy. Suburban development patterns and the advent of national chain retailers has significantly altered the manner and location in which many retail services are offered. Downtown retailing needs to become better organized to compete in this changing world.

The revitalization plan is structured to benefit Downtown's existing merchants and businesses. The intent is to strengthen the existing retail base and to fill vacancies and guide future development to upgrade the business mix and physical character in the Downtown.

The plan expects to see continual changes to Downtown's business mix and retail activity as well as the physical condition of buildings over-time. The plan encourages direct, achievable actions, to be initiated as soon as possible, to build the momentum needed to sustain positive change and keep Downtown successful overtime.

The plan recognizes that change and growth must be accompanied by improved support facilities, such as parking. The City has been an innovator in converting individual, unconnected and

unattractive parking lots into functional and attractive municipal parking lots serving the Downtown area. Downtown parking should be viewed as a system with all users having equal importance. Addressing parking needs to the extent practical, without resorting to the removal of buildings fronting on Downtown streets or paving-over adjacent neighborhoods is a key objective. Wider participation by property owners and merchants in developing a shared parking strategy is fundamental to meeting Downtown's parking needs.

Team Work

The plan is not static. It will need to evolve as circumstances warrant. Ongoing evaluation of the revitalization process by those with a stake in the future of Downtown is required. To ensure Downtown's long-term success, a revitalization team with the necessary resources needs to be formally created and assigned the responsibility for the plan's implementation and to respond to Downtown's changing circumstances.

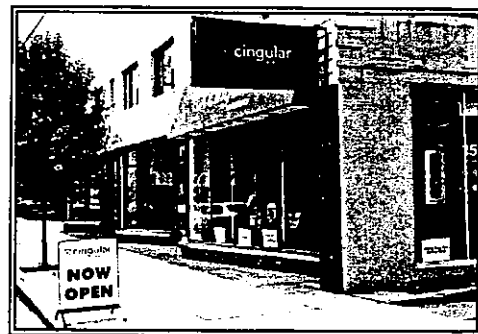
The Revitalization Plan for Downtown West Haven follows a framework established by the operating principles for revitalization and a vision for the future of the area. Efforts to upgrade the existing fabric of Downtown are proposed in the following six functional areas: land use and building use, circulation and parking, urban design considerations, development opportunity areas, rehabilitation opportunity areas and public improvements. Each of these areas is essential to upgrading the whole and each relies upon the implementation strategies discussed below.

C. Recommendations for Land and Building Uses

An important goal of the revitalization plan is to foster a greater sense of vitality by increasing the variety and intensity of uses in Downtown. A downtown gains its vitality and personality from the interplay among the many uses within the area. As the density and diversity of uses increases, Downtown will become the dominate focal point of the community.

Downtown West Haven contains a broad range of land uses which establish the essence of its character. Promoting a greater intensity of these uses and supporting them with necessary infrastructure is a key ingredient for generating increased retail activity in the area. Specific land and building use objectives of the Plan include:

- Promote retail uses on ground floor Downtown buildings to develop more visual interest for pedestrians and visitors to the area;
- Promote professional office and small service business users for upper floors along Campbell Avenue and as stand alone uses in the northern gateway area;



Recent Addition to Downtown

- Converting vacant upper floor commercial office space to residential uses should be viewed as an option to bring additional pedestrian activity and buying power into Downtown;
- Encourage the conservation of the residential neighborhoods surrounding Downtown and resist actions to convert residential structures to commercial uses which would compete with Downtown's existing commercial space;

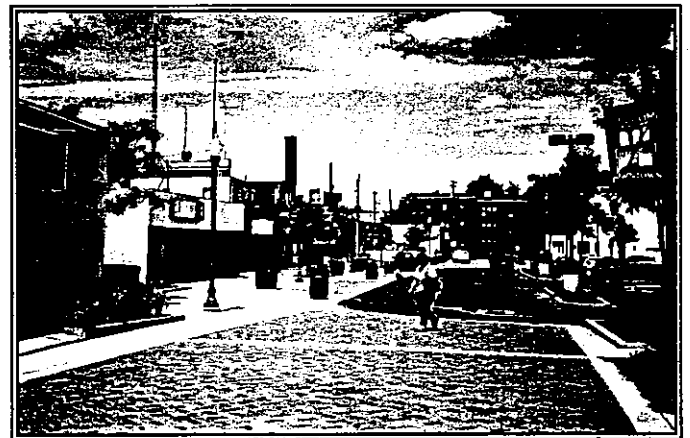


Conservation of Residential Neighborhoods

D. Circulation and Parking

Vehicular and pedestrian circulation and access are important Downtown assets. The following recommendations are offered to strengthen these resources:

- The parking demand for businesses located along the east side of Campbell Avenue between the SNET building and Brown Street can not be satisfactorily met by on-street parking alone. The City is encouraged to pursue the possibility of creating additional municipal parking to serve these businesses.
- Looking to the future, the City should consider increasing the supply of municipally managed parking in the northern end of Downtown as both a means of promoting business development and in anticipation of future parking demands brought about by the expansion of business activity.
- The City has developed visually appealing walkways which connect the "Silver's" municipal parking lot with upgraded rear store entrances and with Main and Center streets connecting to Campbell Avenue. These walkways have attractive lighting, textured pavement, landscape planters and shielded dumpsters. The City has also developed similar plans for the Curtiss Place municipal parking lot serving businesses on Campbell Avenue and Main Street. Directional signage to municipal parking lots exists but could be enhanced to better guide first time patrons to Downtown's parking resources.



Pedestrian Access to Silver's Parking Lot

E. Urban Design Considerations

Downtown possesses the essential ingredients to create a distinctly attractive visual sense of place. By improving its visual appearance, Downtown will boost its market appeal to the many motorists who daily pass through Downtown on Campbell Avenue as well as the other streets serving Downtown, including heavily traveled Elm Street, Savin Avenue, Washington Avenue, Center

Street, Main Street and Brown Street. The following are recommendations for improving the visual appeal of Downtown. These improvements can be accomplished over time, as resources permit. Recommendations include:

1. Gateways to Downtown

By defining the physical limits of Downtown, the area can significantly improve its identity within the marketplace. One means to help establish this identity is to create gateway entrances into Downtown.

The most important gateway in need of attention is the intersection of Campbell Avenue with Elm Street. This is the busiest intersection within the Downtown area and presents an opportunity to make a positive visual statement to let motorists know that they have entered Downtown West Haven. When completed, the rehabilitated Library at this intersection will become a major institutional element for this entryway into Downtown.

Three of the four corners of this intersection are occupied by businesses whose public front is a parking lot, accompanied by large scale signage. Each of these businesses has created attractive landscaped islands facing the street and sidewalks. However, the signage for these three businesses overshadow any visual benefits resulting from these investments in landscaping.

Gateway Signage: The intersection of Campbell Avenue and Elm Street is a high volume (nearly 20,000 vehicles per day), slow speed (8 mph average speed) intersection. The signage serving the businesses at this intersection is more appropriate for a suburban strip commercial location where motorists are passing-by at a much higher rate of speed.

Recommendation: Work with business owners to develop signage which is more appropriate for a downtown location, smaller, lower to the ground and in-scale with Downtown's pedestrian streetscape.

Gateway Landscaping: Asphalt parking lots are located in front of the three businesses at this intersection.

Recommendation: The three businesses at this gateway into Downtown should be encouraged to enhance existing landscaping which screens the view of parking lots and asphalt areas from Campbell Avenue and Elm Street. Such landscaping could also be used to better define the entrances and exits for these businesses, while maintaining essential sightlines.

Gateway Entry Plaza: Consideration should be given to developing a pocket entry plaza on City owned land. Located at the southeast corner of Campbell Avenue and Elm Street, the mini-plaza could contain an attractive "Welcome to Downtown West Haven" sign, with four season landscaping to improve the visual appeal of this area.

2. Cohesive Visual Appearance

By creating a more cohesive visual appearance through the upgrading of building facades,

Downtown could develop a greater sense of place and a more positive public identity.

- Create a cohesive visual quality for Downtown through facade restoration of existing buildings and an expansion and upgrade of the City's well designed streetscape program.
- The City's existing Design Guidelines for CBD Development function as an effective guide for creating a distinctive sense of place that celebrates Downtown's heritage as the heart of the City. Additional building rehabilitation guidelines currently being considered by the City will add to these design resources.
- Incorporate new streetscape elements that enhance the quality of the pedestrian environment. The upgrading and expansion of Downtown's street furniture, directional and informational signage and the buffering of parking lots fronting on streets will improve the accessibility and marketability of Downtown as a distinct and attractive place.
- Consider the development of a visual design program for signage and street furniture which features a distinct character that can be identified as indigenous to Downtown West Haven, without becoming too "cute."

IV. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES FOR DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

Carrying out a revitalization scheme is an involved and time consuming process. The many interests in Downtown need to be blended together and organized to create the resources and positive attitude that will result in a successful revitalization effort. Since neither the public nor private sector holds all the keys to success, collaboration and coordination of efforts are essential to realize area improvement. Measured improvements occurring on many fronts within the scheme of an overall revitalization program are fundamental to gathering the momentum needed to move this effort forward. Public and private efforts will need to achieve a certain "critical mass" before sufficient momentum has been generated to sustain the level of improvement activity.

In order to reach a "critical mass" of revitalization activity, Downtown stakeholders must be committed to carry out their portion of the revitalization strategy. The City, local merchants, service business, building owners, area residents and institutions each have an important role to play in the successful revitalization of Downtown. Success will be achievable only when all parties are committed to contributing the essential resources and personal efforts needed to implement the revitalization strategy.

The revitalization plan for Downtown West Haven aims to strengthen existing businesses and to improve the image and marketability of the area. A variety of actions are required to implement this program. Some actions relate to the implementation of physical improvements and development opportunities, while others are organizational and service oriented. Simultaneous, interrelated actions along several fronts are required to promote a positive climate for the revitalization of Downtown. The following is a description of implementation strategy actions recommended for revitalizing Downtown West Haven.

A. Land and Building Uses

The goal of developing a greater sense of vitality in Downtown can be addressed in part by focusing on the make-up of the areas land uses and building uses. Actions should promote a greater intensity of uses, accompanied by essential supporting infrastructure. Specific land and building use actions include:

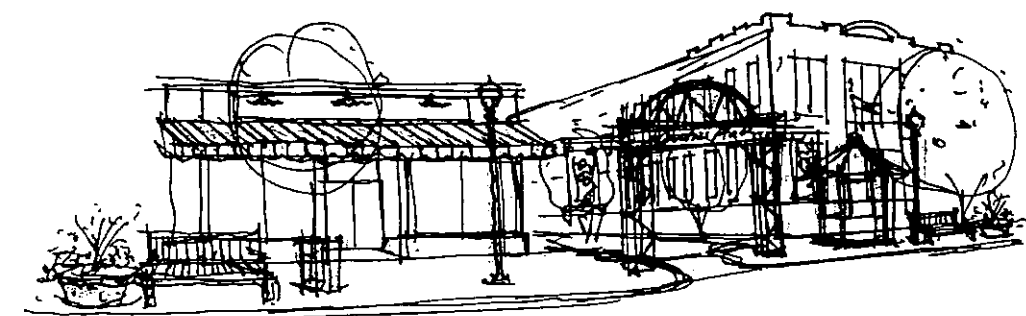
1. When considering land use and building use changes, recognize and reinforce Downtown's traditional role as the City's center for municipal, retail, office, service and cultural uses;
2. As businesses "turnover" in Downtown, the Merchants Association, working with area property owners and the City, should promote a strategy to encourage the location of retail uses at the ground floor level in Downtown to develop more visual interest for shoppers, pedestrians and visitors to the area;
3. Recognize and strengthen Downtown's position as West Haven's center for health care service providers. Market this feature to develop additional professional uses and to promote the Downtown location of businesses which are ancillary to this core activity cluster;

4. Building reuse strategy should encourage the location of professional offices and service businesses on the upper floors of commercial buildings in Downtown. The development of the vacant lot located on the west side of Campbell Avenue north of Elm Street should include uses and a visual appearance that support Downtown revitalization efforts;
5. The conversion of vacant upper floor commercial space to residential uses should be encouraged as a second option. Residential uses can bring additional pedestrian activity, vitality and buying power into Downtown;
6. The Farmers Market is an important Downtown asset. It adds to the area's seasonal vitality and provides another reason for shoppers to come into Downtown. Consideration should be given to operating the market more frequently than one day per week.

Gateway to Curtiss Place Parking Lot



Existing Curtiss Place entry to rear parking lot



Proposed View of Curtiss Place Entry to Municipal Parking Lot

*Gateway Entrance to Curtiss Place - pedestrian-friendly street/outdoor dining leading to rear parking lot
Retail/Restaurant with outdoor dining in attractive streetscape, increase activity- Campbell to parking lot
Consider as entrance to relocated Farmers Market. Tie the Telephone building to the retail block and strengthen the streetscape with trees, seating, lighting, signage and a kiosk to tie-into band shell design on the 'Green.'*

In addition to expanding the Market's hours of operation, consideration should also be given to relocating the Market to another area within Downtown to permit its physical expansion and to free-up the valuable on-street parking currently used by market vendors. While a number of locations are available for consideration, the recommended site for the relocated market is Curtiss Place and the soon to be renovated Curtiss Place municipal parking lot. Curtiss Place is

very wide and vendors could set-up on the north side of the street, beginning at Campbell Avenue and extend into the parking lot, where there would be ample parking.

The relocated Market would be visible from Campbell Avenue, near the heart of Downtown. An attractive gateway entrance to Curtiss Place could be developed at Campbell Avenue, as depicted in the accompanying sketch, to create a focal point for the Market as well as an attractive entry to the municipal parking lot. Such a feature might also act to encourage building owners and merchants to develop attractive rear entryways to the complex of deep buildings which are served by this parking lot.

7. Encourage the development of Non-Population Dependant Activity Clusters. The population of Downtown's market area is not projected to grow in the near future. To expand Downtown retailing opportunities, consideration should be given to the development of businesses and activity generators in Downtown that are not directly dependant on the resident population of the immediate market area. Areas for consideration include:

Destination Attractions- Downtown West Haven is easy to get to, from a regional perspective, and possesses areas that are both visually appealing and pedestrian friendly; key ingredients for the development of tourist attractions. Within this attractive environment, Downtown has several features which could be marketed as tourist oriented historic attractions.

- Downtown currently has one historic museum, the Ward-Heitman House, which is undergoing restoration. This is a very attractive, Colonial era structure. The Ward-Heitman House also has a very unusual feature. A tunnel runs from the house's massive chimney-base, across Elm Street and Campbell Avenue. Perhaps a portion of the tunnel could be restored to add to the tourist promotional appeal of this historic museum?
 - Consider the utilization of the American Legion building on Main Street for the location of a major War Memorial Museum. This museum might utilize the historical collection of military materials and memorabilia currently stored in the New Haven Armory. Such an educational museum use would function as a tourist attraction, bringing new patrons into Downtown.
 - The Downtown Green and adjacent area is a designated Historic District. Market the unique charm of a historic New England Downtown by staging annual Downtown House Tours. This function could feature the Ward-Heitman House and other homes located in and around Downtown which represent different architectural styles. Like most events of this type, it would start on a small scale and expand over time. It might be used as a community fund raising event for a particular organization. Downtown merchants could benefit by catering to the additional potential patrons brought to Campbell Avenue.
8. Consider creating a Downtown Center for the Arts to encourage the development of a cluster of artist and artisan uses. The presence of several affordable vacant storefronts, vacant second-

story space in commercial buildings, marginal warehouse space uses and adjacent affordable housing, all located in a physically attractive and pedestrian friendly environment that is convenient to area educational institutions and close to downtown New Haven, are ingredients which might be used to support a cluster of artists, artisans and associated uses.

This type of activity cluster has proven to be very successful at leading revitalization efforts in other communities across America. A cluster of artists studios would eventually be "discovered" and attract gallery shops and ancillary uses to Downtown and generally act to uplift the area. As a start, this concept could be tested with area artists and artisans and with faculty and students associated with the six area colleges and universities located within 15 minutes of Downtown West Haven.

Proposed Downtown Center for the Arts



Existing Conditions



Proposed Downtown Center for the Arts

*Transform warehouse space into a Downtown Center for the Arts and Restaurant;
Creates an activity generator for north end of Downtown;
Good proximity to I-95, future train station, renovated Library...;
Utilize existing billboard as signage for Center for the Arts;
Outdoor dining, street trees, traditional light poles, "gateway" entrance to rear parking.*

9. Consider the vacant Masonic Temple on Center Street as an opportunity to create an attractive and functional facility supporting community performing arts activities. Such a facility would add new life and vitality and bring patrons into Downtown, with the potential for linkage with Downtown special merchant promotions.

10. The good health of the residential neighborhoods surrounding Downtown is important to the future of Downtown. The City should continue municipal efforts to promote the conservation of residential neighborhoods surrounding Downtown and resist actions to convert residential structures to commercial uses that might compete with existing Downtown commercial space.

B. Retail Revitalization Strategy

The primary retailing goal for Downtown is to strengthen its position as a major community center which services the retailing and service needs of its surrounding Primary and Secondary Market Areas. With nearly one billion dollars in disposable income, these market areas represent very significant opportunities for retailers and service providers located in Downtown.

Downtown offers the shopper a physically attractive setting and a pedestrian friendly environment. While parking is not as convenient as most suburban centers, parking opportunities are good and will continue to improve. The theme upon which to build a retailing revitalization strategy should flow from Downtown's strategic location in the center of a significant market area and its traditional service role in the community, marketed through a complimenting mix of merchants who emphasize personal, friendly service and excellent product knowledge. Retail uses requiring a large amount of store space and parking have little potential to be attracted into Downtown. These types of retail uses typically desire a suburban location, along roads with high traffic volumes, surrounded by a sea of parking.

The recent Market Study for Downtown concluded that the current mix of stores in Downtown is a good base upon which to build a revitalization program. In addition to improvements to building facades and store interiors, upgrades to the merchandise offered will help to establish Downtown as a primary retailing district in the City.

1. Business Retention and Improved Merchandising: Downtown's primary merchandising theme should emphasize the traditional benefits of shopping in an attractive, pedestrian scaled environment characterized by personal service and product knowledge provided by friendly, independent merchants in the historic heart of the City. Some suggestions offered include:

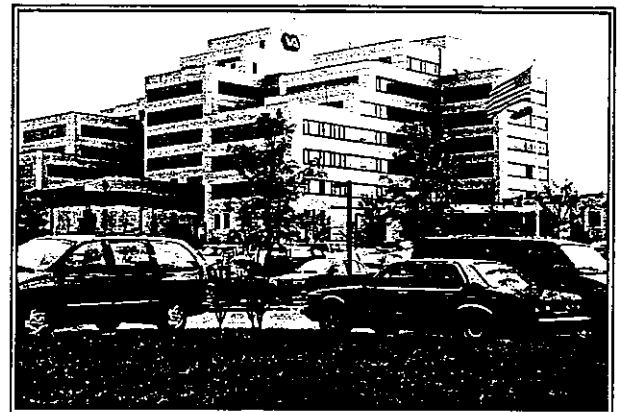
- Strengthen efforts to upgrade the presentation of merchandise. The Downtown Merchants Association is the most logical vehicle to lead this effort. The merchants association could become a clearinghouse that provides informational merchandizing resources to Downtown retailers for their consideration and use.
- Design, Display and Retail Imagery – Consider incorporating a local historic theme into exterior improvements to Downtown buildings. When possible, consider incorporating the buildings structural materials (wooden beams, brick walls, ceiling joists, antique metal ceilings, wood floors, etc.) to enhance the display setting for store merchandise. Letter style and art work in displays, signs and advertising could employ attractive images of Downtown's past.

- Strengthen the Downtown Merchants Association. Broad based participation is essential to a successful retailing community. Joint action on merchandising, promotion and other issues requires an organizational framework to coordinate actions.
- Work to develop Downtown business hours that provide consumers with retailing opportunities comparable to competing retail shopping centers.
- When feasible, set-aside limited portions of the sidewalk adjacent to existing restaurants to accommodate seasonal seating and tables. This concept can be as simple as setting-out seating and tables adjoining the storefront and may include colorful canopies, umbrellas, awnings and establishing a temporary perimeter. Careful location with respect to neighboring uses and pedestrian flows are important considerations. Outdoor dining can enhance the vitality of the street scene and increase restaurant capacity on a seasonal basis, at minimal costs to business owners.

2. Targeted Marketing Opportunities: In addition to the significant consumer base existing within the Primary and Secondary Market areas, Downtown merchants and service providers have the opportunity to market to the very significant workforce concentrations found within close proximity to Downtown.

- Targeted Market- Lunch Hour: Establish a marketing program offering lunch hour dining and merchandizing specials to encourage the patronage of the several thousand employees who work within a mile of Downtown. Complement this marketing effort by maintaining full staffing during lunch hours to provide superior service. Consider instituting lunch hour trolley/shuttle service to link potential patrons located at the several major employment sites with Downtown merchants in a convenient and timely manner.

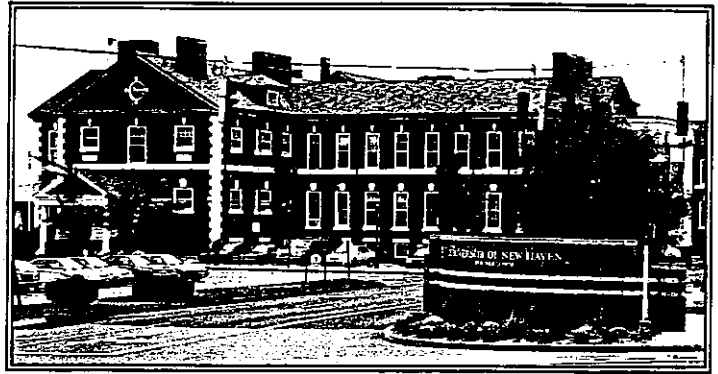
- Targeted Market-Veteran's Administration Facility: Encouraging area employees to shop Downtown should be a priority. Focus retailing services on the 2,100 employees who work at the Veteran's Administration complex, located on Campbell Avenue, within one mile of the heart of Downtown. Downtown has the opportunity to market itself as the closest major community center to provide retail, restaurant and service functions to this significant workforce.



- Targeted Market- VA Visitors: In addition to having a large workforce, the Veteran's Administration facility is host to over 400,000 annual outpatient visits. Many of these trips are of a repeat nature and there may be opportunities for Downtown merchants and service

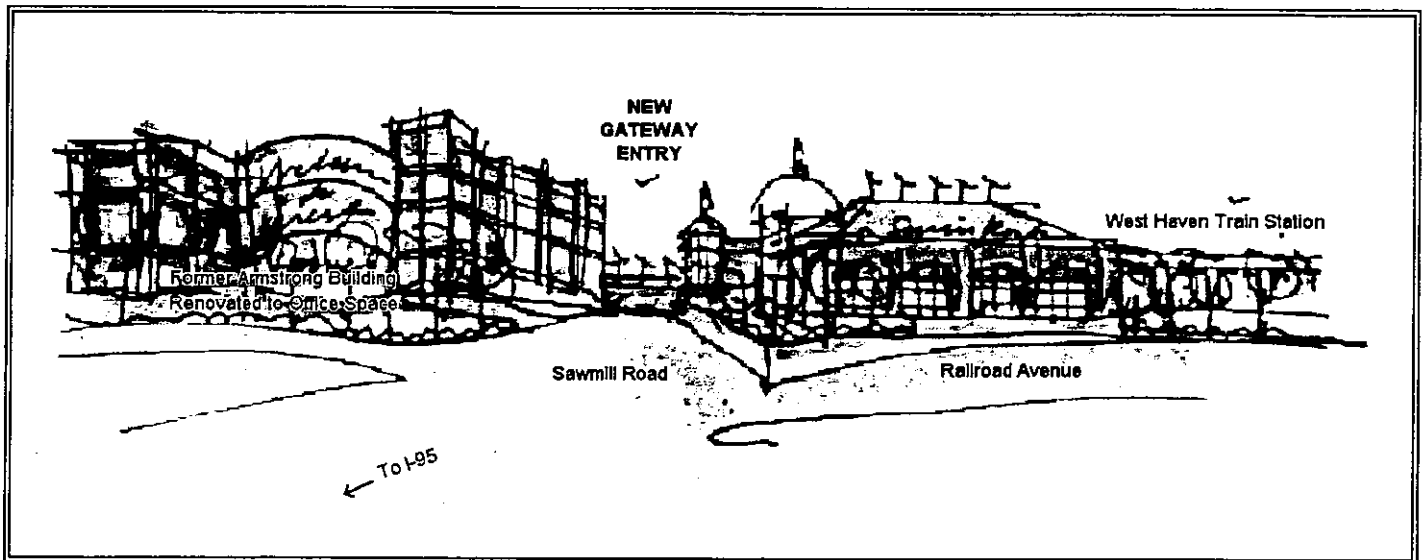
businesses to target market to this consumer opportunity.

- **Targeted Market- UNH:** The University of New Haven is located on Campbell Avenue within 1.5 miles of Downtown. This facility has 3,200 commuter students, 1,100 residential students and 1,400 employees. There may be opportunities for Downtown merchants and service businesses to benefit from marketing to this consumer segment.



- **Targeted Market- West Haven Train Station:** The construction of the proposed West Haven Train Station is likely to lead to the creation of a significant amount of office space containing 2,000 to 3,000 employees. This concentration of potential customers will be located within a five to ten minute walk of the center of Downtown. Meeting the needs of these new businesses and their employees will present unprecedented market opportunities for Downtown merchants and service providers.

The construction of the new train station and the development of new office space is several years away. This provides the Downtown Merchants Association with the time to focus on the creation of a Downtown retail mix that will satisfy the retailing and service needs of this new market presence.



3. **Retail Store Mix and Business Recruitment:** The visual appearance of storefronts along Campbell Avenue and the mix of store uses establishes the perception of Downtown by potential patrons. Downtown is fortunate to have few storefront vacancies. However, vacancies which do exist should be addressed, as any vacant storefront on Campbell Avenue presents a negative visual

impression of the health and vitality of Downtown. The "turnover" of businesses in any downtown is a natural business occurrence. Vacant storefronts and business turnovers present an opportunity for Downtown's merchants to work together with building owners and their agents to recruit new merchants who will best complement the existing mix of stores and strengthen the retailing presence of Downtown. A vibrant Downtown is in the best interests of both building owners and merchants.

To accomplish a focused retailing mix, the Merchants Association should formalize efforts to develop a targeted approach to retail recruitment, in cooperation with the owners of Downtown properties. An inventory of vacant and underutilized building space should be kept current. Candidate independent retailers from the greater New Haven area should be identified and provided to the agents of vacant building space in Downtown. The Merchants Association could also consider the preparation of a master lease for use by Downtown property owners. The master lease would address such retailing issues as hours of operation, joint advertising and promotions, membership in the Merchant's Association, etc. The following is a suggested list of store types that would be complementary to existing retailers in Downtown:

1. casual and specialty apparel and accessories stores (family and women's)
2. gift shops
3. hobby and leisure time shops (a Downtown cluster)
4. antique and second hand home furnishings shops (a cluster)
5. ethnic restaurants
6. ethnic food markets
7. ethnic green grocer
8. ice cream/frozen yogurt/Italian ice shop
9. ethnic and specialty book stores (with coffee/tea bars)
10. auto parts store

Once the construction of the West Haven Train Station becomes a certainty, this list should be expanded to include the types of retail and service businesses needed to serve the needs of the large concentration of office businesses and employees who will be located next to Downtown.

4. Promoting Downtown: Merchants should consider a more intensive program to promote Downtown retailing. Recommendations to improve promotional activities include:

- Establish a monthly Downtown marketing theme event. Expand upon the existing base of marketing and community events which bring potential patrons into Downtown.
- Encourage efforts aimed at cooperative advertising and marketing.
- Develop promotions with special groups and organizations within the community, including church groups, tenants at nearby apartments, the University of New Haven, the Veterans

Administration facility, Notre Dame High School, Bayer and other major employers.

- If the Masonic Hall located on Center Street is re-used as a permanent home for community theatre productions, market this new activity as an important component of Downtown's unique blend of goods, services and cultural events. Consider linking performances to special Downtown promotions and consider Downtown's sponsorship of community theater productions. The operation of this facility would bring new vitality to Downtown and generate new marketing opportunities; before and after rehearsals and on the evenings of theater events.
- Consider developing an annual "First Night" Downtown New Years Eve event. First night events in other communities have been quite successful at bringing a community together to celebrate the arrival of a new year.
- According to census information, a significant portion of the population changes residence each year. To reinforce its role as the primary retail, service and cultural center of the City, Downtown should make continuing efforts to welcome new residents to West Haven. "Welcome Neighbor" mailings and invitations to shop Downtown will help to build "Place" recognition and increase the shopper base.
- The Merchants Association, in association with City efforts to upgrade Downtown's streetscape, should consider locating informational signs or kiosks in Downtown to provide helpful information for Downtown patrons. Businesses would be listed by category and keyed to a map of Downtown, indicating the location of businesses and parking facilities.

Striving to produce and reinforce a unique retailing and service environment for Downtown requires continued attention to repeating the theme of convenient, customer care service in as many elements in the Downtown as possible. Attractive and creative storefront presentation is an important ingredient to reinforcing these themes. Encouraging the merchant community to carry forth these themes in their storefront presentations, merchandising and advertising is a continuing requirement. Lacking the central management control of a commercial shopping center, Downtown's mix of multiple-ownership and independent merchants suggests an incremental strategy with a proactive merchants association using persuasion and incentives to advance retailing in Downtown.

C. Development Projects

The City is very fortunate in that the only vacant lot fronting on Campbell Avenue is located at the far northern end of the Downtown study area. This vacant parcel is located just south of the railroad overpass on Campbell Avenue, on the west side of the street. As seen from the accompanying photograph, this parcel has a history of supporting a variety of significant



economic activities. The rear portion of this lot is currently in use for wholesale distribution uses and the front portion, which fronts on Campbell Avenue, is vacant. Development of the portion of this property fronting on Campbell Avenue has the potential to contribute to the appearance and functionality of Downtown's northern gateway and the intensification of Downtown business activity.

While all buildings in the Downtown core should be encouraged to develop as mixed-use structures with retail on the ground floor and offices or residential above, this site is at the edge of Downtown, adjacent to railroad tracks, where it would also be appropriate to develop a single-use building supporting either retail or office activities. Pursuit of new development on this property should be viewed as a long term objective, to be accomplished as private interests and market opportunities permit. New construction should abut the street sidewalk, with off-street parking to the rear of the building. On-street parking is not permitted in this block of Campbell Avenue. The City's Design Guidelines for CBD Development should be utilized to manage the design and development on this site near Downtown's northern gateway. The development of this parcel will lead to an intensification of activity on Campbell Avenue north of Elm Street and contribute to this important gateway to Downtown.

D. Rehabilitation Projects

The public face of the buildings located in Downtown establish the visual character of Downtown. Buildings in need of maintenance or a facelift detract from the goal of creating a visually attractive setting for Downtown retailing and service activities. Many Downtown buildings are in need of physical improvements. It is a priority recommendation of this plan that the City work with property owners and merchants to focus on upgrading the safety and appearance of Downtown buildings as part of the process of business retention and new business and jobs development. This could be accomplished through a series of City sponsored program efforts that might include the following:

1. Facade Improvement Program: West Haven has a successful history of developing creative incentive programs and funding mechanisms to promote building facade improvements in Downtown. The City is currently in the process of re-establishing a limited scale facade improvement program and is strongly encouraged to do so, as a recommendation of this plan. While the improvement of building facades which face public streets will have the greatest visual impact on Downtown, the facade improvement program should also address all sides of a building with a public face, including those buildings served by municipal parking lots located to the rear. Patron entrances located in these rear parking lots should also be improved as part of this program.
2. Sign Improvement Program: The City should consider the establishment of a Downtown sign improvement program, as funding resources permit. For a variety of reasons, some Downtown properties may not participate in the facade improvement program. The sign improvement program would enable merchants located in buildings not receiving facade improvements to participate in the overall revitalization program and add, in a very visible and immediate manner, to the creation of a critical mass of Downtown improvements.

3. Building Facade and Sign Design Guidelines: The City is considering the development of architectural design guidelines for existing buildings, as well as for as new construction. These guidelines would address acceptable storefronts, signs, window and door types, approved siding materials, masonry repair, replacement or highlighting of trim, cornices and other architectural details and the selection of appropriate colors. The utilization of design guidelines, crafted to reflect Downtown's existing architectural heritage, would ensure sensitive treatment of building facades and signage in Downtown. These guidelines should be developed with the involvement of the Downtown Merchants Association.
4. Design Assistance: Architectural design assistance for proposed exterior renovation of Downtown buildings is a service which the City might consider as a part of the facade and sign improvement programs. Providing property owners and merchants with preliminary design assistance to help visualize the type of improvements that could be made to their properties would help to both stimulate Downtown rehabilitation activity and lead toward the achievement of a high level of design quality and consistency of approach.

Building Facade Improvements



Existing: Rehabilitation Center



Example of Re-cladding: Rehabilitation Center Building

*Facade design guidelines to include signage band, uniform storefront height to include base and cornice, building/signage lighting, uniform canopies(retractable), street trees, benches, planters and traditional light poles;
Emphasize horizontality;
Consider future 2nd story addition to the north-end of the block, when market conditions warrant.*

5. Revolving Loan Program: The City should consider the establishment of a low interest rate revolving loan program to enable Downtown property owners to make needed repairs to their

buildings, as funding resources permit. The City's code enforcement program could be utilized to identify and prioritize those properties that would be encouraged to participate in this ongoing improvement program.

A mechanism should be developed which links public financing of facade improvements to adherence to architectural design guidelines established by the City. This will help ensure that the end product of facade improvements will contribute to the enhancement of an attractive setting for Downtown retailing and service activities.

6. Streetscape Improvements: The City has made significant strides to improve Downtown's public streetscape, with attractive and functional sidewalk improvements, street furniture and street trees. These improvements have added to the attractiveness and pedestrian friendly qualities of Downtown. The City should develop a staged program to upgrade and expand streetscape improvements to cover all of Downtown, as funding resources permit.
7. Additional Parking: Parking is Downtown's most important support infrastructure. While Downtown is fortunate to have a significant walk-in customer base, it functions as a retail, service and civic core for the entire City of West Haven and therefore must be able to provide sufficient, conveniently located parking for Downtown's patrons. The City has been very progressive in its efforts to develop municipal parking in the heart of Downtown, with the creation of the Silver's and Curtiss Place municipal parking lots. The City is encouraged to pursue the following opportunities to develop addition parking resources, targeted to help specific areas of Downtown:
 - Consider the possibility of working with the owners of the properties located on the east side of Campbell Avenue, south of the SNET building and north of New Street, to create an off-street public parking lot behind this block of buildings. This parking would serve the needs of the businesses located along the east side of Campbell Avenue, using the same successful municipal approach taken with the creation of the "Silvers" and "Curtiss Place" parking lots.
 - The parking needs of the businesses located along the east side of Campbell Avenue, between New Street and Brown Street, is not satisfactorily met by on-street parking alone. These properties do not have the potential to develop additional off-street parking to the rear without negatively impacting adjacent residential properties. There are underutilized, privately owned parking lots fronting on Campbell Avenue in this area. It is recommended that the City pursue the possibility negotiating an agreement with the owners of these lots to permit the public use of these parking facilities, while respecting the parking requirements of the affected businesses.
 - The City should consider providing additional parking in the northern area of Downtown near the intersection of Campbell Avenue and Elm Street. As vacant and underutilized building space in this area becomes fully occupied and the Library is reopened, there will be a need for additional off-street parking. The development of a municipal lot in this area could act to spur revitalization of the vacant and underutilized space in this area of Downtown.

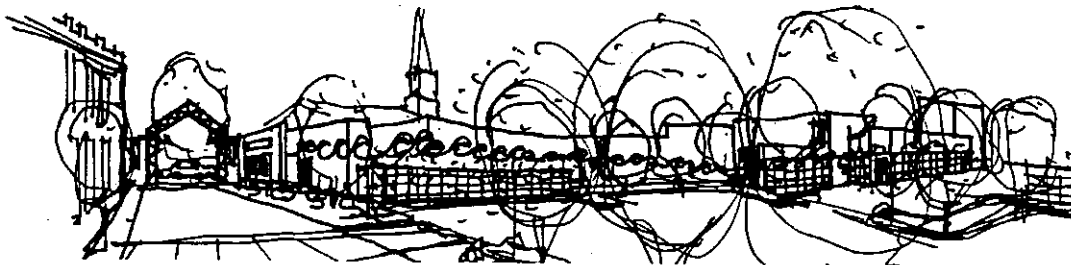
The future demand for additional parking in this area of Downtown might be accommodated through a municipal agreement with the owners of the parking lots extending behind the Recovery Alliance, HUB Bank and Burger King properties. This lot is striped for 48 parking spaces, has access to Campbell Avenue and Elm Street and was observed to be less than 50% utilized during its busiest period. This lot may also have the potential to be expanded to the south, if needed.

8. Parking Appearance: The City has worked with property owners to undertake rear facade treatments for buildings affected by the "Silvers" municipal parking lot. Similar rear facade treatments are planned for buildings affected by the Curtiss Place municipal parking lot. Continuing to improve rear yard image and pedestrian access from rear parking lots is another important component of revitalizing Downtown. Rear facade treatments in conjunction with rear entrance and parking improvements provides shopper convenience and will enhance Downtown's image.

Curtiss Place Parking Lot



Existing rear parking lot at Curtiss Place



Proposed View of rear Municipal Parking Lot at Curtiss Place

Pedestrian-friendly entrance and streetscape to Curtiss Place parking lot from Campbell. Outdoor dining, street trees, building murals by community to celebrate West Haven (ie. beach, local heroes). Special design treatment for rear building entrances, screen fencing for rear service areas. Consider as site for relocated Farmers Market.

Privately owned parking lots which front on downtown streets without an effective landscaped buffer between the lots and the sidewalk visually detract from the desired character of an uplifted Downtown. Parking lots represent an important Downtown asset and the City is encouraged to

work with the owners of such parking lots to develop landscape buffers which visually screen parking lots from the street and sidewalk so as to enhance Downtown's streetscape appearance and the pedestrian experience.

9. Parking Management: Three recommendations dealing with the management of Downtown's existing parking resources are suggested.

- Free parking is a major Downtown asset which should be preserved to help Downtown remain competitive with its suburban competition.
- Employee Parking The City should consider the development of a strategy to relocate long-term and all-day employee parking to designated areas of the municipally controlled parking lots. Designated parking for Downtown employees should be convenient to their place of work.
- Short-Term Parking: The action of creating designated employee parking is designed to free-up the "close-in" parking spaces in municipal parking lots as well as all on-street parking spaces to support the short-term parking needs of Downtown patrons. The development and enforcement of this parking strategy is needed to maximize the utilization of existing parking resources to the benefit of Downtown businesses and to make Downtown as user friendly as possible. The City should lead the way in developing this parking management strategy, with the involvement of Downtown property owners, merchants and Downtown residents.

E. Financing

Limited public funding resources are available to help fund recommended improvements. By combining public funding resources with private funding, it will be possible to create a viable program to stimulate and fund Downtown revitalization activities. The largest capital improvement expenses associated with the revitalization of Downtown will be the costs of facade and building improvements and the costs of municipal parking improvements and streetscape enhancements.

The City of West Haven is in the process of using Community Development Block Grant funding to re-establish a Downtown building facade improvement program and is considering the preparation of design guidelines to be used to guide rehabilitation efforts in Downtown. To be successful, property owners will need to be convinced that upgrading their buildings, in conformance with the City's architectural design guidelines, is in their best financial interests. A property owner responsibility, facade and building rehabilitation programs need to be created with incentives for property owner/merchant participation. Low interest rate loans, matching grants and direct grants are all tools used in Connecticut to spark investments in Downtown property improvements by lowering the effective rehabilitation costs.

The improvement of Downtown properties will result in increased tax assessments and higher property taxes for building owners, which will be passed-on to those renting the affected properties. The phasing-in of increased tax assessments on Downtown properties participating in the

revitalization process is one approach that can be used to help remove the disincentive of higher property taxes immediately following building upgrades. Phased-in tax assessments can also remove the need for building owners to immediately increase the rents charged to Downtown merchants. It is suggested that any City program to phase-in tax assessment increases resulting from Downtown building improvements be tied to a contractual pledge from participating property owners to phase-in rent increases in a corresponding manner.

F. Development Regulations

The primary City regulation impacting development in the Downtown Study Area is the City's zoning code. It governs the allowed mix of uses that are possible and the bulk and siting of buildings. Article XII of the zoning regulations provides design guidelines for specific zoning districts within the City. Chapter 2 of this article provides design guidelines for "Central Business District Development," which includes the Downtown Study Area. These guidelines are very progressive regarding the types, siting and scale of uses and streetscape improvements that should be encouraged in Downtown.

The City recognizes the role which good design can play in the process of revitalizing Downtown and is currently considering the creation of new architectural design guidelines which would focus on the architectural characteristics of Downtown development and redevelopment activities. These actions should be encouraged.

It will remain important to respect Downtown's architectural heritage and ensure that rehabilitation activities and new building construction blend harmoniously with the area's landmark buildings.

G. Downtown Revitalization Management

There are presently four organizations that are concerned with the future viability of Downtown West Haven. They are the City government, the West Haven Economic Development Corporation which is funded by the City, the Downtown Merchants Association and the West Haven Chamber of Commerce. Historically, the City of West Haven government has taken the lead in implementing efforts to improve Downtown, including building facade improvements, streetscape improvements, parking improvements and code enforcement activities.

An organizational focus for Downtown revitalization is crucial to the successful implementation of the recommended plan elements and should be pursued immediately. It is recommended that a Downtown Implementation Coalition, consisting of property owners, merchants, residents and the City, be created to help coordinate and facilitate the implementation of the recommended revitalization plan. It is further recommended that the City, operating through the West Haven Economic Development Corporation, manage the implementation of those recommended revitalization program elements which involve the utilization of municipal resources.

Efforts should be made to strengthen the organizational capabilities of the Downtown Merchants Association. The Merchants Association is in a position to play a significant role in the

revitalization of Downtown. Broad based merchant endorsement and participation in recommended revitalization activities is essential to achieving meaningful improvements for the retailing community. Joint action by the Merchants Association on merchandising, promotion, recruitment and other key issues requires an organizational framework with the ability to coordinate individual actions.

H. Revitalization Plan Phasing

The proposed implementation strategy for the revitalization of Downtown West Haven is viewed as an on-going, multi-faceted process. It should be anticipated that implementation program emphasis will evolve over time in response to new development opportunities, market shifts in the retail, office and residential sectors and the ability to secure funding in support of revitalization efforts.

To launch the Downtown Revitalization Program and to demonstrate the united and coordinated support for revitalization activities, efforts should begin immediately on those elements of the program that can be accomplished quickly. Activities of little or no cost and actions of high visibility should be pursued immediately. Such actions include:

- Formal adoption of the Downtown Revitalization Plan and Implementation Strategy by the City the Downtown Merchants Association and the Chamber.
- Creation of the Downtown Implementation Coalition as an immediate action step to bring an organized focus to the task of implementing the elements of the recommended revitalization program.
- Preparation of architectural design guidelines by the City to help manage the physical consequences of Downtown building improvements.
- Announcement of the re-establishment of the Downtown building facade improvement program, using Community Development Block Grant funding, as a key element of the Downtown Revitalization Program.
- Initiation of facade and sign improvement work with three or four interested property owners and merchants to demonstrate immediate progress in the Downtown Revitalization Program.
- Implementation of the Curtiss Place municipal parking lot improvement program, as part of the Downtown Revitalization Program.
- Initiation of efforts with affected property owners and the City to prepare plans and specifications for the Campbell Avenue – Elm Street entry gateway to Downtown.
- Relocation and expansion the Farmers Market to Curtiss Place and the Curtiss Place Parking Lot.
- Initiation of cooperative efforts aimed at promoting and advertising Downtown.

These immediate action items should be pursued in a very public manner, so as to bring a positive focus on coordinated efforts to revitalize Downtown.

