



SOUTH BURLINGTON CITY GREEN FEASIBILITY STUDY

CITY COUNCIL MEETING PRESENTATION:

October 21, 2024



southburlington
VERMONT

WHLA
WAGNER HODGSON

PROJECT SUMMARY

FEASIBILITY STUDY: This study explored the viability of a potential ‘City Green’ (downtown park) in the heart of South Burlington (SB).

GOAL:

- Identify the preferred potential ‘City Green’ location/s that accommodate the needs of its residence, visitors & city officials & develop Conceptual Park Design/s & Recommendations for these locations to help inform the City moving forward with future development.

PROCESS:

- **Researched city center public parks**
- **Identified potential ‘City Green’ locations (6)**
- **Defined what makes a Great Public Space**
- **Identified common ‘City Green’ Uses & Activities**
- **Gathered public input** - Two (2) public meetings & (1) Online questionnaire
- **Analyzed the potential City Green locations:**
 - Based on the public feedback
 - What makes a great public space’
 - Program fit accommodations
- **Developed Conceptual City Green Site Design/s & Recommendations:** Prepared Conceptual Site Designs & Recommendations, which were revised based on public feedback and will be presented to City Council. The final Designs & Recommendations will be summarized in a document.

PROJECT CONTEXT

City Center Form Based Code District

T-4



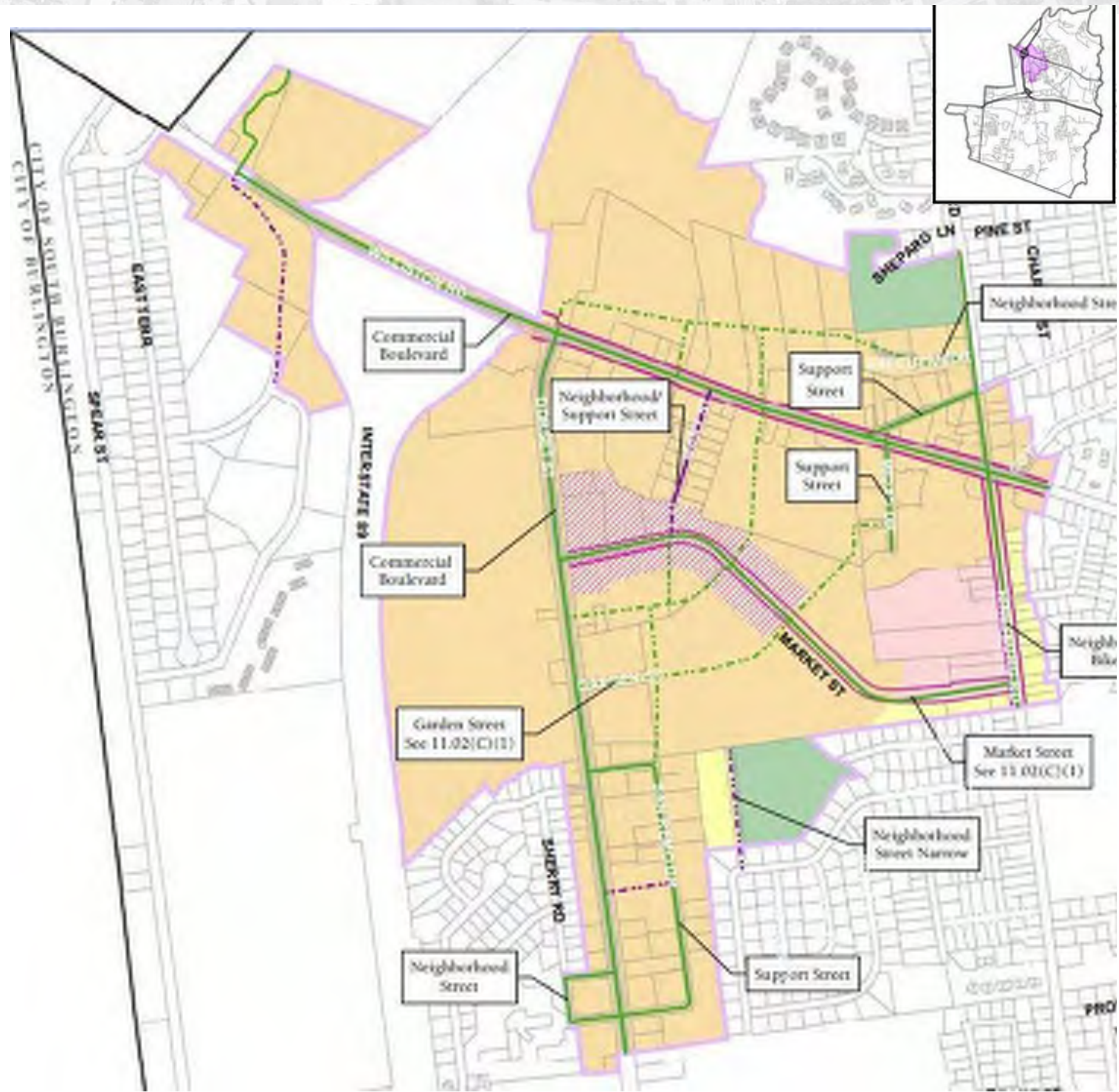
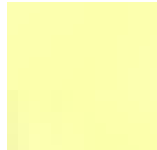
T-5



T-3



T-3+



DOWNTOWN PARKS

HISTORICALLY

- Common green space was at the center of small agricultural settlements and was used for grazing and community events.
- Evolved into open flexible green spaces (trees & lawn) for more social gatherings & respite.
- Integrated fountains, memorials, monuments & bandstands to accommodate growing public needs & functions



DOWNTOWN PARKS

GREEN - VILLAGE, TOWN OR COMMON

‘Vermont’s village greens (and commons) serve as the physical, historic and cultural heart of many communities, hosting concerts, fairs, parades, seasonal festivals and farmers markets. Integral to the Vermont brand and quality of life, village greens provide residents and visitors with a place to gather, exercise, recreate, celebrate, and engage in commerce and community’.

State of Vermont - Agency of Commerce & Community Development



COLLEGE PARK . Middlebury, VT



‘THE GREEN’ . Woodstock, VT



CITY PARK . Vergennes, VT

DOWNTOWN PARKS

TOWN SQUARE

Represent the center point for civic life in the city. They shape its image and provide flexibility and open-ended activities. Typically, but not always linked to civic buildings.



CITY HALL PARK . Burlington, VT



POST OFFICE SQUARE . Boston, MA

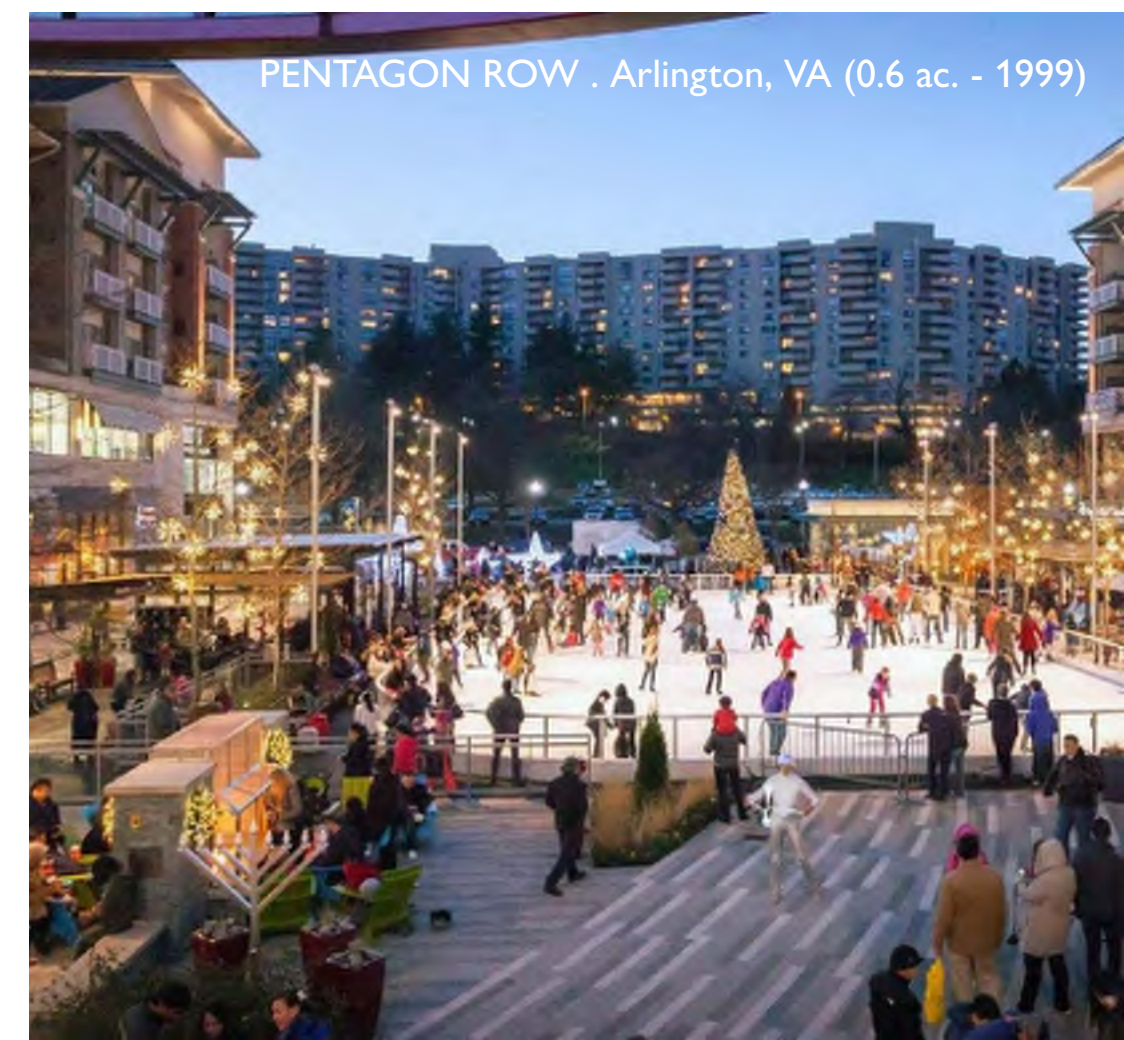


PULASKI PARK . North Adams, MA

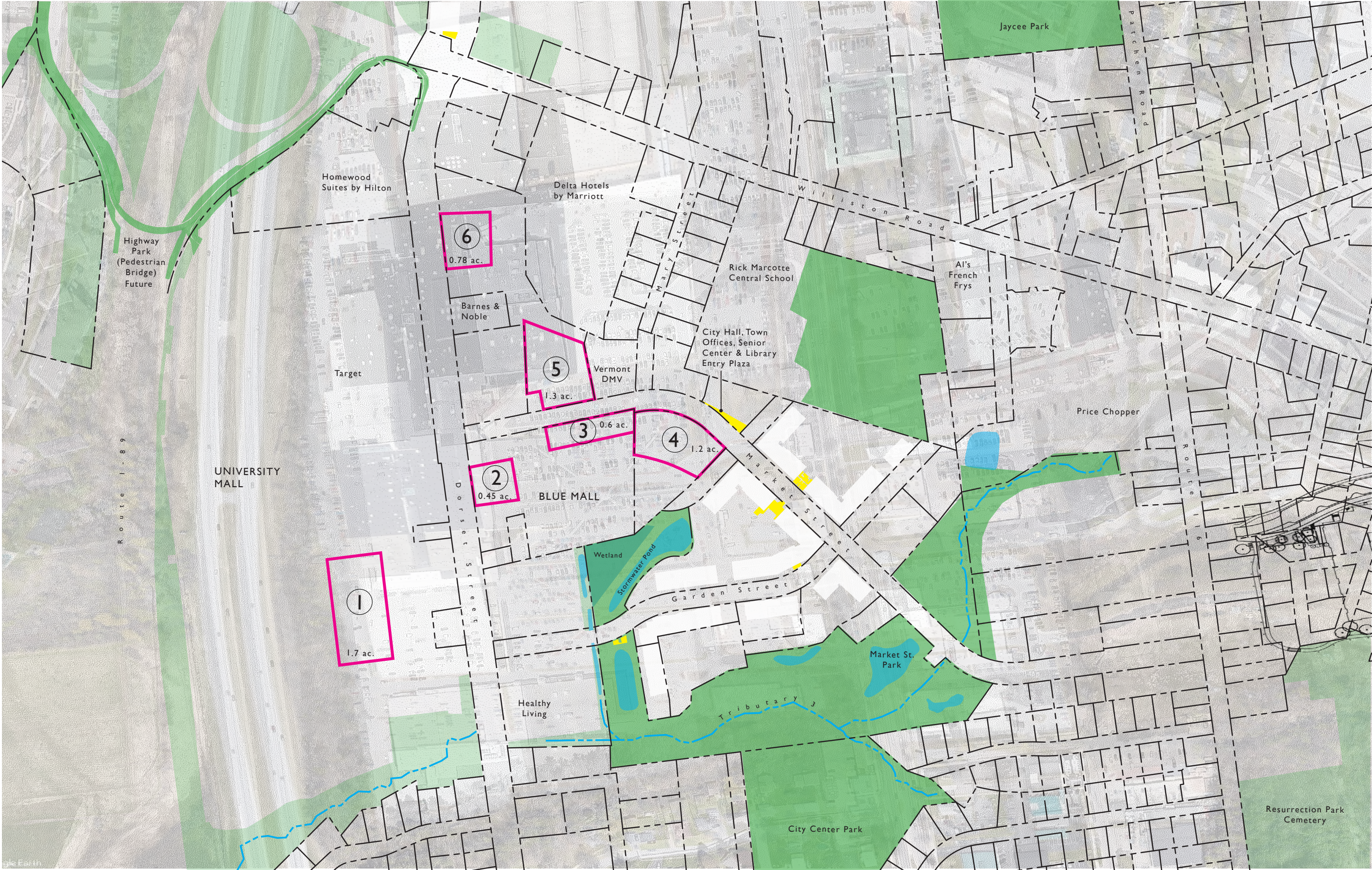
DOWNTOWN PARKS

PUBLIC/ PRIVATE (PARTNERSHIPS) PARKS

Typically, a smaller-scale park at the heart of a mixed use development. Highly programmed urban green space that is often privately owned, but open to the public.



POTENTIAL 'CITY GREEN' LOCATIONS STUDIED



- POTENTIAL PARK LOCATION FOR FUTURE STUDY
- PUBLIC/ SEMI-PUBLIC PLAZAS & COURTYARDS
- EXISTING PUBLIC OPEN SPACE
- EXISTING PRIVATE OPEN SPACE
- STORMWATER FEATURE
- STREAM
- PARCEL LINE

WHAT MAKES A GREAT PUBLIC SPACE?

ACCESS & CONNECTIONS

‘A successful public space is easy to get to and get through; it is visible both from a distance and up close. The edges of a space are important as well: For instance, a row of shops along a street is more interesting and generally safer to walk by than a blank wall or empty lot.’

COMFORT & IMAGE

The visual perception of a place is key to its success. Whether the place feels safe, clean and inviting to the user all play into its popularity.

SOCIABILITY

It is a characteristic of a place that promotes community and a sense of belonging. It is a place where people see their friends, meet their neighbors, feel comfortable interacting with strangers.

USES & ACTIVITIES

Activities are the backbones of great places. They make places special and one worth revisiting. The more uses and activities a place has the more participation and potential diversity it will be experienced within it.



USES & ACTIVITIES



FLEXIBLE GREEN SPACE Typically centrally located & serving a variety of uses throughout the seasons.



POST OFFICE SQUARE . Boston, MA



COLLEGE PARK . Middlebury, VT



WINTER FESTIVAL ON THE GREEN . Woodstock, VT



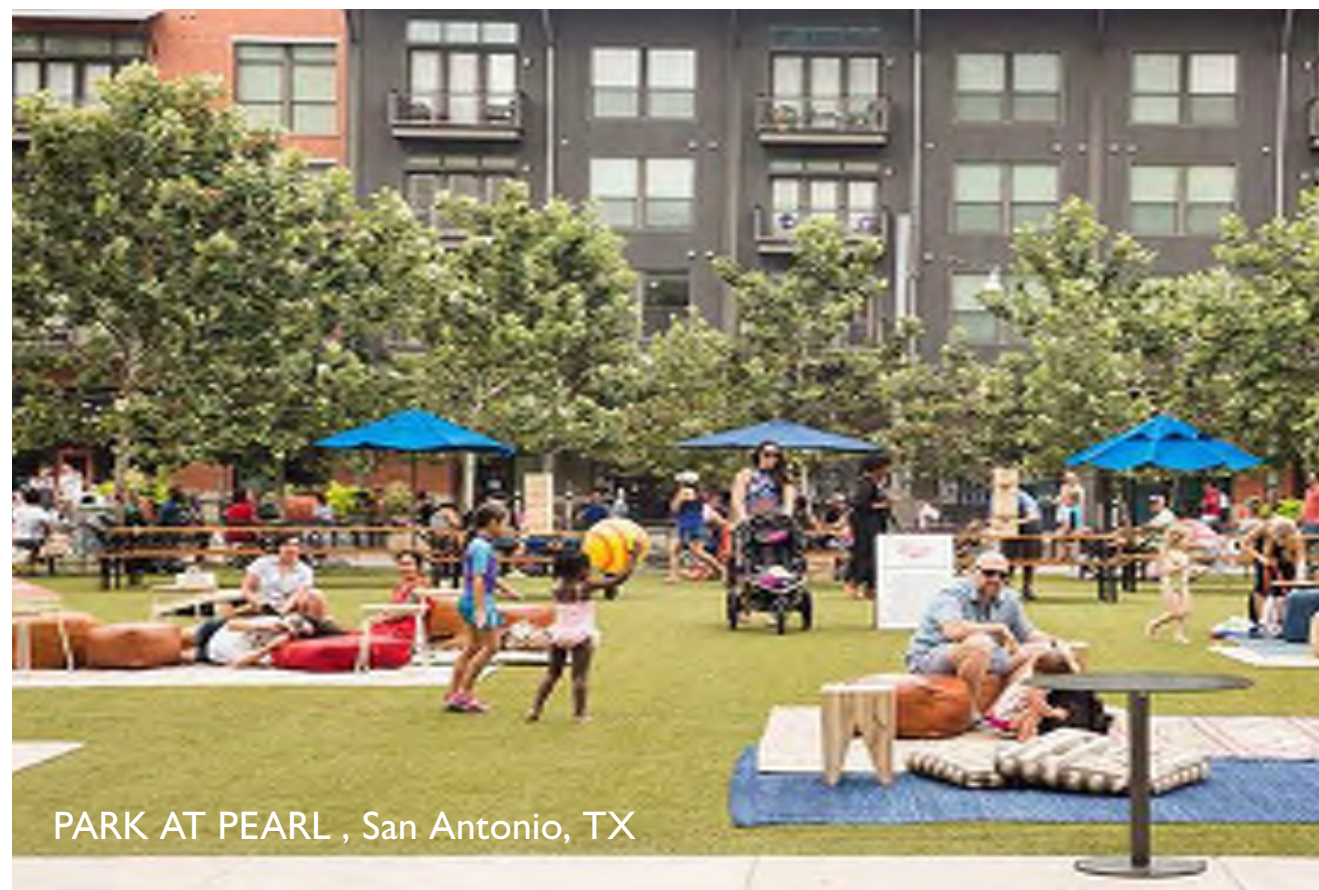
PENTAGON ROW . Arlington, VA



PENTAGON ROW . Arlington, VA (Winter)

USES & ACTIVITIES

VARIETY OF SEATING formal, informal, attached, moveable & playful



USES & ACTIVITIES

WALKWAYS & SHARED-USE PATHS Accessible walking & shared-use paths, pedestrian streets and bikes rentals



STRAWBERRY PARK . Merrifield, VA



LURIE GARDEN . Chicago, IL



PARK AT PEARL , San Antonio, TX



PENTAGON ROW . Arlington, VA



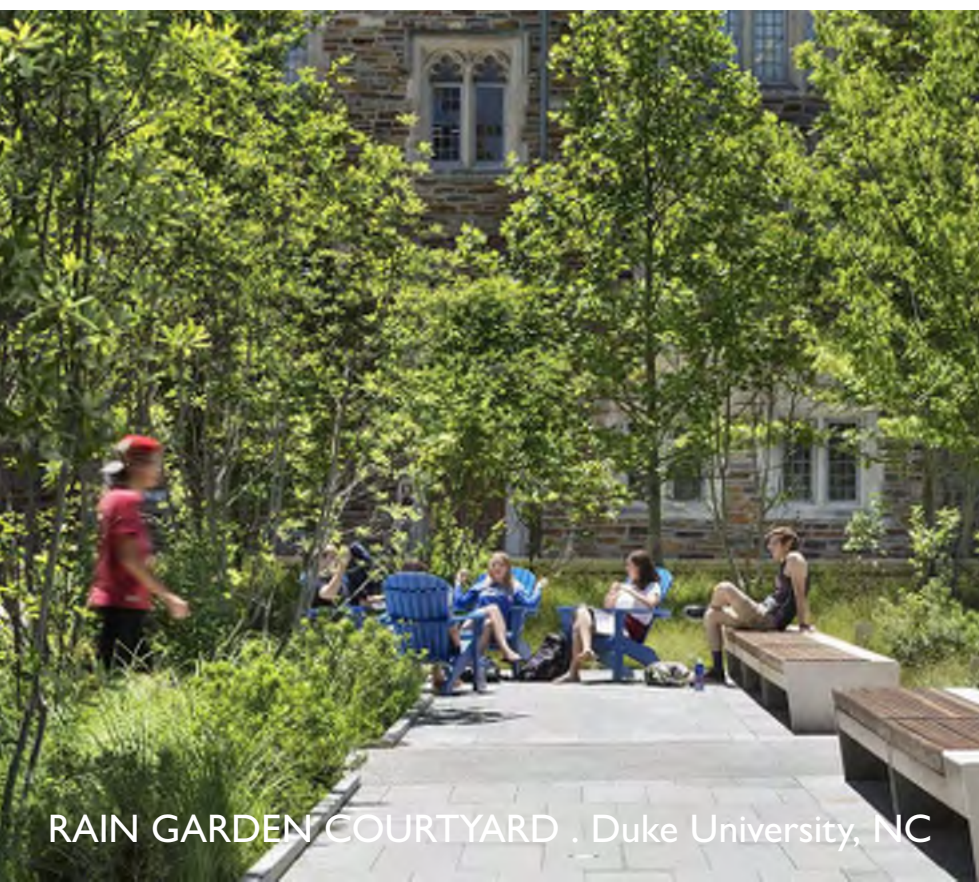
HOOD PARK . Charlestown, MA



BIXI BIKE RENTAL - Montreal

USES & ACTIVITIES

SOCIAL GATHERING SPACE Variety of sizes, formality, seating, shade and lighting



USES & ACTIVITIES

ART & CULTURE Architecture, Interactive artwork, temporary installations, memorials and monuments.



USES & ACTIVITIES

INTERACTIVE FOUNTAINS & PLAY AREAS A variety for all ages.



USES & ACTIVITIES

SITE STRUCTURES: Pergolas, bandstands, food/coffee kiosks & multi-functional stages



CITY HALL PARK . Burlington, VT



POST OFFICE SQUARE . Boston, MA



PENTAGON ROW . Arlington, VA



KLYDE WARREN PARK . Dallas, TX



SANTANA ROW . San Jose, CA



MADISON SQUARE PARK . NYC

USES & ACTIVITIES

INTEGRATION OF RETAIL, DINING & RESIDENTIAL USES



USES & ACTIVITIES

EVENTS & FESTIVALS: Weekly, monthly & yearly activities (farmers markets, yoga, music, movies, etc...)



SALSA ON THE SQUARE . Rockville, MD



CITY HALL PARK . Burlington, VT



COLLEGE PARK . Middlebury, VT



KLYDE WARREN PARK . Dallas, TX



FARMER'S MARKET . Burlington, VT



CITY HALL PARK . Burlington, VT

USES & ACTIVITIES

STORMWATER & GARDENS:

Rain & pollinator gardens, shade trees, seasonal plantings and planters and interpretive signage/ sculpture.



WHAT DO YOU WANT IN YOUR CITY GREEN?

PLEASE SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON:

What are your three favorite things you've ever done in a park?

Imagine you are going to the park with a friend, what would you do there?

When I was little, the best part of the park was the ...

When it is just me in the park, I like to ...

What do you like to do in the park in the winter?

When I go to the park I feel ...

What kind of park space is missing in South Burlington?

What time of day would you go to the park?

I would go to a City Green for ...



ANALYSIS

POTENTIAL CITY GREEN LOCATIONS

Desired Program/ Needs (Public feedback)

Great Public Space Criteria Matrix

Program Fit Accommodations

PUBLIC FEEDBACK

- 20 Participants
- (6) Boards - Downtown Plan & Uses & Activities Precedent Images & (1) Questionnaire
- Interpreting input is an art as much as it is a Science
- Beginning Phase of the project
- Was not conclusive but definitely INDICATED clear PREFERENCES



PUBLIC FEEDBACK SUMMARY

LIKED USES & ACTIVITIES (Desired Program)

FLEXIBLE GREEN SPACE

- Open lawn for Informal play & gathering
- Ice skating rink

SOCIAL GATHERING SPACE

- String lite terrace with movable seating & facing benches

VARIETY OF SEATING

- Picnic tables
- Seatwalls at edges
- Movable tables & chairs
- Temporary lounge seating

WALKWAYS & SHARED USE PATHS

- Central walking path with pavers
- Promenade with shaded terrace

INTERACTIVE FOUNTAINS & PLAY

- Interactive play fountain
- Ice skating rink
- Informal play elements

STORMWATER & RAIN GARDENS

- Rain gardens at park entrance
- Linear bioretention basins
- Perennial gardens

RETAIL INTEGRATION

- Restaurants, cafes, shops with residential above
- Farmers/Artists market to surround green

SITE STRUCTURES

- Flexible performance space with infrastructure (Strongly liked)
- Food kiosk to activate park

EVENTS & FESTIVALS

- Movie nights, Morning yoga, Festival of fools, Farmer's markets, etc..

ARTS & CULTURE

- Large Interactive Play Sculptures (especially the bird's eye view)

PUBLIC FEEDBACK SUMMARY

ADDITIONAL DESIRED PARK PROGRAM

Cafe/ Coffee kiosk/ Ice cream/ Food trucks

Event Space - music, concerts, art, farmer's market (Gazebo)

Picnicking/ outdoor dining

Ice Skating

Communal gathering space - small quiet niches (reading & Meditating) & larger spaces for meeting friends (& their dogs & or children)

Shade trees & natural areas

Strolling/ walking

Play fountain/ swimming pool

Informal Green Space - soccer, volleyball, frisbee

Children & Teens - Creative play, swings & climbing structures

* Skiing, swimming, feeding ducks, theater, playgrounds, bike riding - Accommodated in other City parks or too large a use.

PLEASE SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

What are your three favorite things you've ever done in a park?

- Meet up with friends
- Let kids run around
- Free "no adults around" time with classmates as a teenager

When it is just me in the park, I like to ...

- Relax, listen to music
- People watch
- Rest
- Walk

What kind of park space is missing in South Burlington?

- In City Center, a park that provides both shade and open space big enough to throw a ball/frisbee etc.
- Mature trees!!

Imagine you are going to the park with a friend, what would you do there?

- talk, drink coffee, walk

The most boring part of a park is ...

- When there's nothing going on - no people, no birds, etc. (happens more in winter)
- When it isn't connected to anything else (a drive-to park, no retail or civic fronting on)

What time of day would you go to the park?

- Weekend daytime
- Afternoons + evenings midweek
- Early AM after/before a run or bike ride.

When I was little, the best part of the park was the ...

- Playground
- Novelty - doing something different
- Treat vendors!!

The most exciting part of a park is ...

- Surprise - discovering there is something new or different
- Special events + happenings.

I would go to a 'City Green' for ...

- A place to take my coffee after getting it in City Center
- A destination for an after-dinner walk with family.

SOUTH BURLINGTON DOWNTOWN PARK FEASIBILITY STUDY | PUBLIC INPUT ON PARK PROGRAM

WHLA

POTENTIAL 'CITY GREEN' LOCATIONS STUDIED



POTENTIAL 'CITY GREEN' LOCATIONS STUDIED



POTENTIAL 'CITY GREEN' LOCATIONS STUDIED



LOCATION ANALYSIS PER 'GREAT PUBLIC SPACE' CRITERIA

ACCESS & LINKAGES

(Connected, Walkable & Accessible)

1. Street Adjacency & Vehicular Connection
2. Access to Parking (Street or Neighboring Lot)
3. Shared-Use & Pedestrian Path Connections

COMFORT & IMAGE (Safe, Green & Inviting)

4. Surrounding Environment (Vehicular Noise Adjacency)
5. Adds green space where lacking in the Downtown area

USES & ACTIVITIES (Program Accommodation)

6. Adaptability to desired site program
Ice rink (50'x145'), Flexible Lawn (0.1-0.3 ac), Integrative Fountain (30' dia,) & Stage (20'x40')
7. Retail Integration
 - A. Proximity to existing front facing retail
 - B. Good retail development potential

AFFORDABILITY

8. Additional project costs required



CRITERIA ANALYSIS MATRIX	① 1.7ac.	② 0.45ac.	③ 0.6 ac.	④ 1.2 ac.	⑤ 1.3 ac.	⑥ 0.8 ac.	ASSUMPTIONS
<u>ACCESS & LINKAGES</u>							
(Connected, Walkable & Accessible)							
1. Street Adjacency & Vehicular Connection	●	●	●	●	●	●	• Good access, City owned street, high control • Moderate access, Private street with limited City control • Poor access, Private land, no street, Min. City control
2. Access to Parking (Street or Neighboring Lot)	●	●	●	●	●	●	• Underutilized (<60% full) adjacent parking lot, High availability *1 • Utilized (>60% full) adjacent parking lot, Moderate availability *1 • No neighboring parking lot, No availability *1
3. Shared-Use & Pedestrian Path Connections	●	●	●	●	●	●	• Good access - A shared use path and or a pedestrian walk exist • Moderate access - No shared-use or walk exist but could be created • No access - No shared-use or walk can exist in the future.
<u>COMFORT & IMAGE</u> (Safe, Green & Inviting)							
4. Surrounding Environment (Vehicular Noise Adjacency)	●	●	●	●	●	●	• Adjacent to moderately busy environment - Along primary street with on street parking to buffer noise. • Adjacent to busy environment that can be easily mitigated w/ future design - Primary road without parallel parking to buffer noise. • Adjacent to very busy environment that would be costly to mitigate - Primary road without parallel parking to buffer noise.
5. Adds green space where lacking in the Downtown area	●		●	●	●		• Site located within a sea of pavement, negligible green space. Developing this site would improve green space distribution throughout the Downtown Core. • Site is located adjacent to existing fragmented green space. • Site is located adjacent to existing green space.
<u>USES & ACTIVITIES</u> (Program Accommodation)							
6. Adaptability to desired site program	●		●	●	●		• Site will accommodate all desired program elements • Site will accommodate most desired program elements • Site will not accommodate most desired program elements
Ice rink (50'x145'), Flexible Lawn (0.1-0.3 ac), Integrative Fountain (30' dia,) & Stage (20'x40')							
7. Retail Integration							• Low development cost - Surrounding retail/ public exists and is compatible and easy to integrate • Moderate development cost - Surrounding retail/ public exists although is not compatible or requires a moderate amount of investment • High development cost - Surrounding retail/ public does not exist and would require high investment cost to integrate.
A. Proximity to existing front facing retail	●			●	●		
B. Good retail development potential	●			●	●		• High potential to accommodate desired retail development. No current surrounding buildings or retail exists • Moderate potential to accommodate desired retail development Surrounding buildings exist & need to be converted • Low potential to accommodate desired retail development. Buildings & Stormwater facilities exist & are difficult to convert
<u>AFFORDABILITY</u>							
8. Additional project costs required	●			●	●		• Min. project cost due to site demo or inclusion of future public infrastructure. (No future road connector required). • Moderate project cost due to site demo or inclusion of future public Infrastructure. (Ex. building removal or future road connector required) • High project costs due to complex site demo and inclusion of future public infrastructure.

* (1) Assumptions based on the Parking Utilization Data provided in the ‘City Center Parking & Movement Plan, 2020

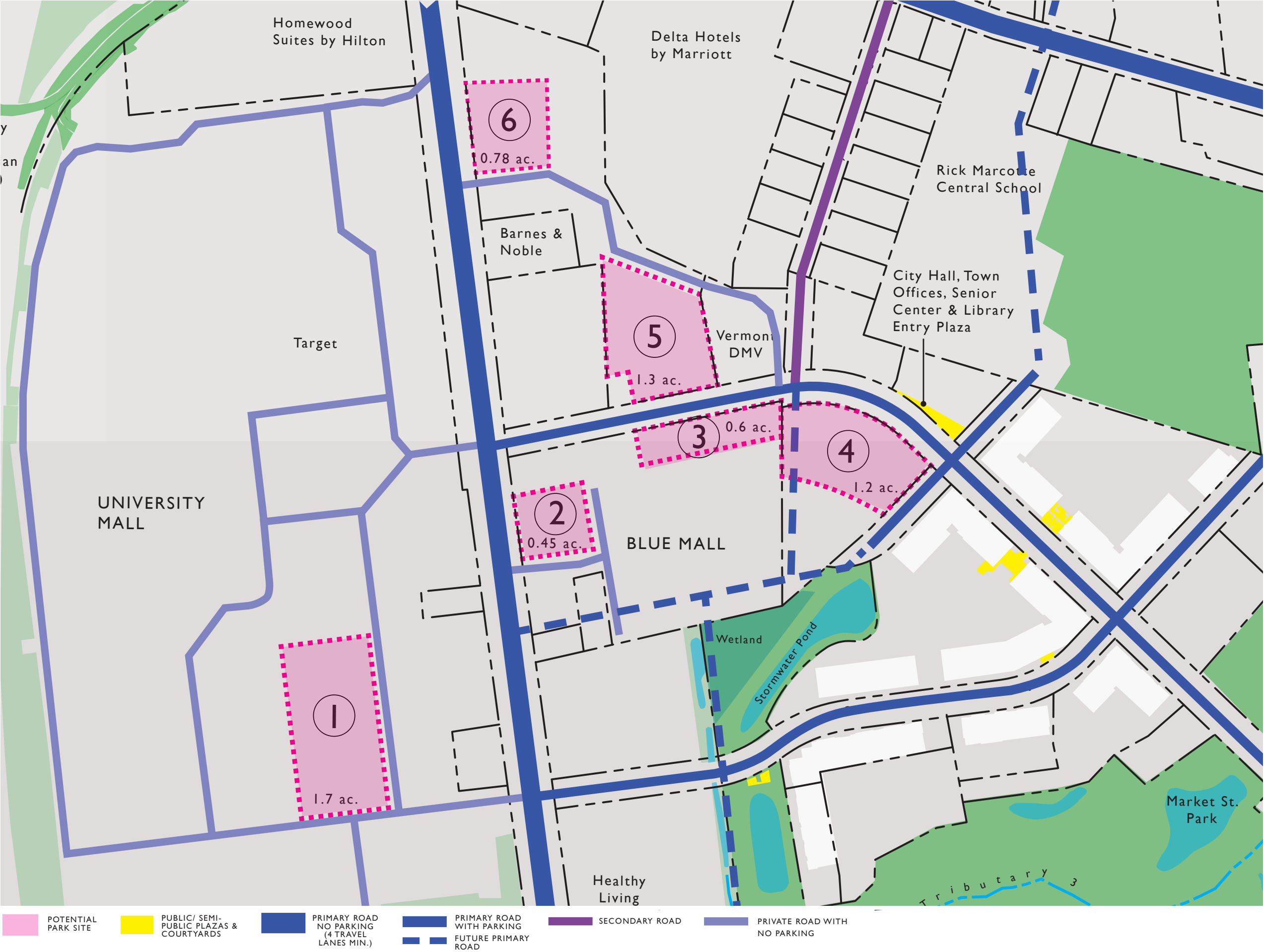
CRITERIA ANALYSIS

Street Adjacency & Vehicular Connections

All SITES have GOOD Street Access

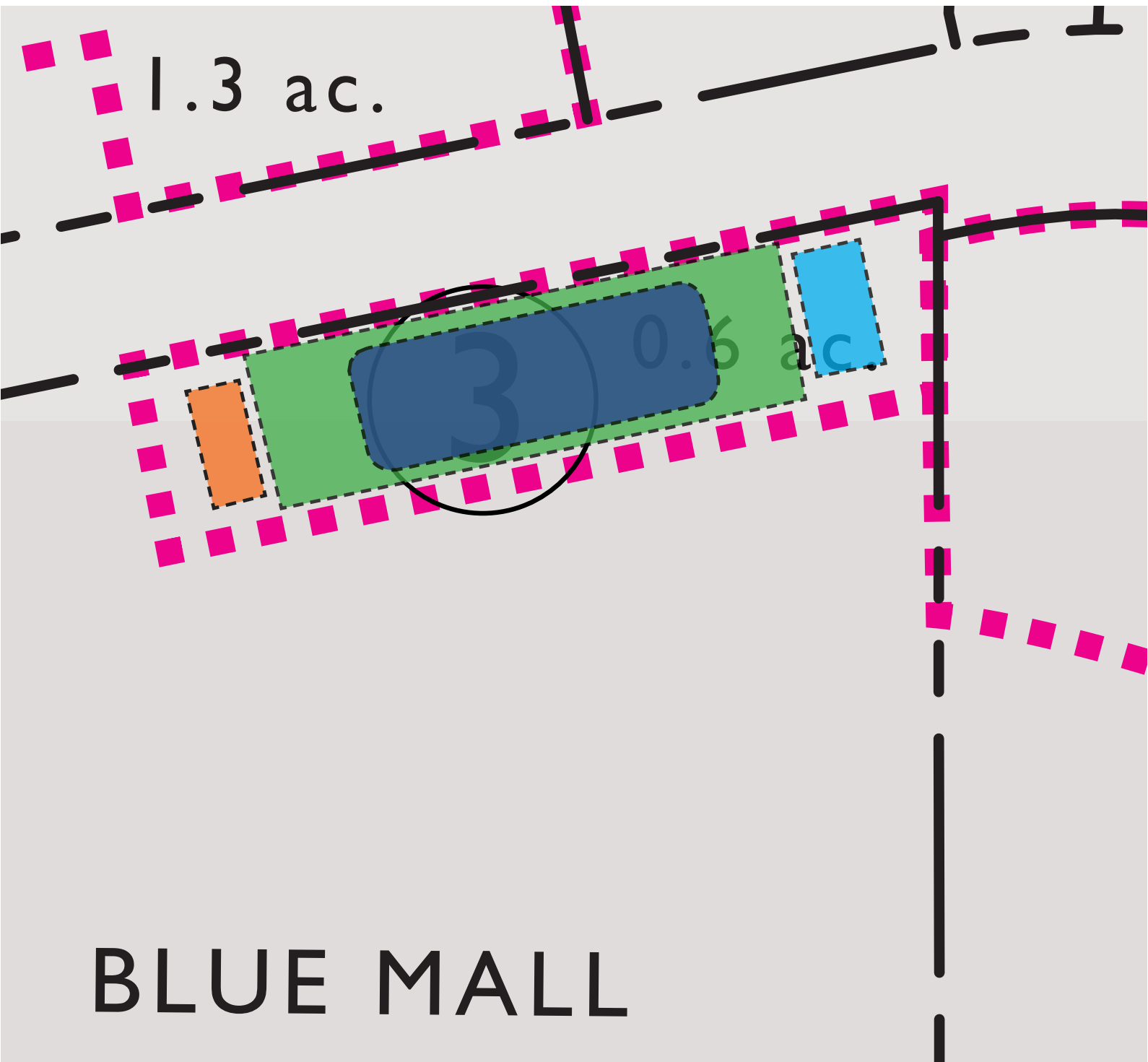
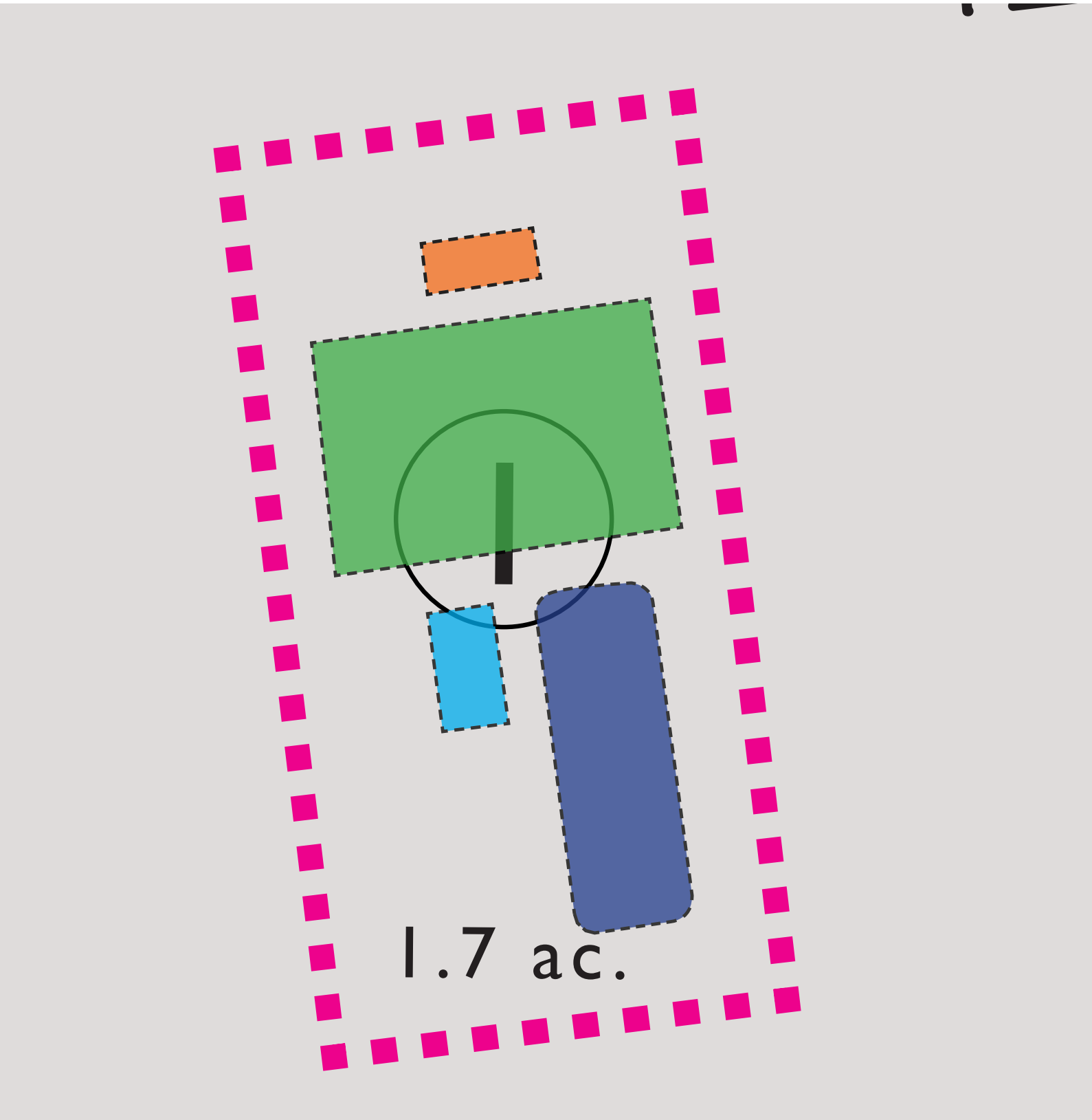
SITE 4 requires accommodating future road infrastructure.

SITES 2 & 6 are located on Dorset Street which is very LOUD & BUSY

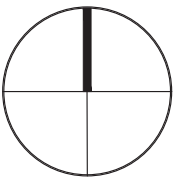


CRITERIA ANALYSIS

Uses & Activities (Program Accommodation)



SITE 3 - TOO NARROW
to accommodate desired
program & trees



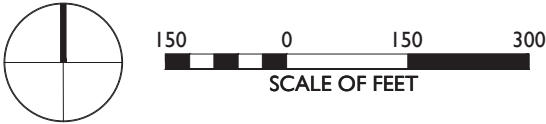
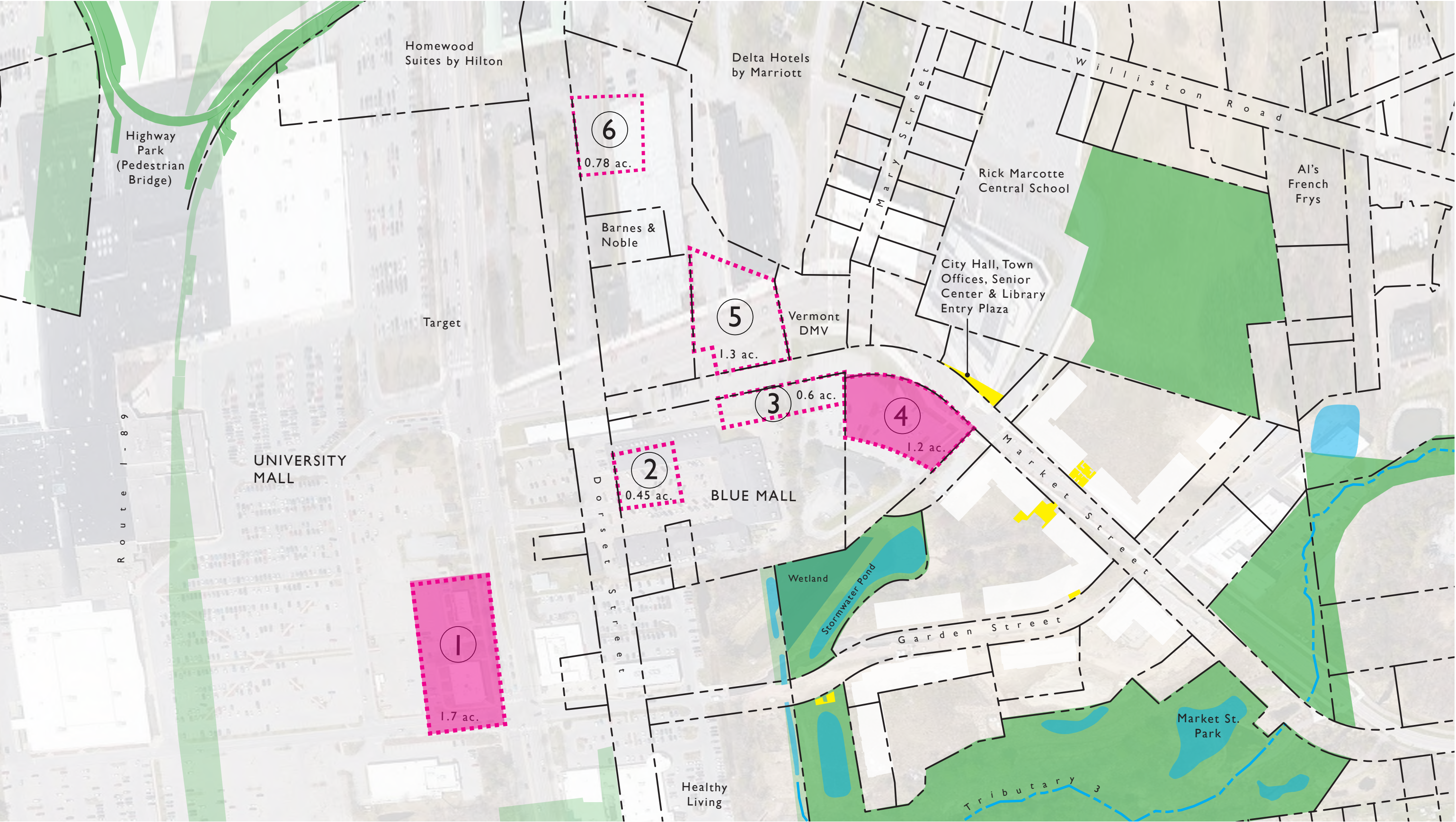
-  FLEXIBLE GREEN SPACE (0.3 ac, Event Capacity -1300 people)
-  ICE RINK (50'X145')
-  INTERACTIVE FOUNTAIN (30'x50')
-  FLEXIBLE STAGE (20'X40')

CRITERIA ANALYSIS MATRIX	① 1.7ac.	② 0.45ac.	③ 0.6 ac.	④ 1.2 ac.	⑤ 1.3 ac.	⑥ 0.8 ac.	ASSUMPTIONS
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COMFORT & IMAGE (Safe, Green & Inviting)							
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USES & ACTIVITIES (Program Accommodation)							
6. Adaptability to desired site program Ice rink (50'x145'), Flexible Lawn (0.1-0.3 ac), Integrative Fountain (30' dia,) & Stage (20'x40')	●		●	●	●		- Site will accommodate all desired program elements - Site will accommodate most desired program elements - Site will not accommodate most desired program elements
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AFFORDABILITY							
8. Additional project costs required	●			●	●		- High potential to accommodate desired retail development. No current surrounding buildings or retail exists - Moderate potential to accommodate desired retail development Surrounding buildings exist & need to be converted - Low potential to accommodate desired retail development. Buildings & Stormwater facilities exist & are difficult to convert
	7			7	6		

* (1) Assumptions based on the Parking Utilization Data provided in the ‘City Center Parking & Movement Plan, 2020

RECOMMENDED SITES

Sites 1 4



CONCEPTUAL 'CITY GREEN' SITE DESIGN SITE 1

Access & Image



CONCEPTUAL 'CITY GREEN' SITE DESIGN SITE 1

Uses & Activities

Existing Mall (Kohl's)



New Building
(Retail Below
Housing Above)

New Building
(Retail Below
Housing Above)

Picnic Grove

Creative
Children's
Play Area w/
Interactive
Sculpture

Flexible
Lawn

Terrace

Pedestrian Oriented
Street - Close during
Events (Food Trucks/
Artisan Booths)

Coffee/ Food Kiosk
w/ Outdoor Seating &
Potential Bathrooms

Interactive Fountain

Tree-line Street w/
Parallel Parking &
Bus Stop

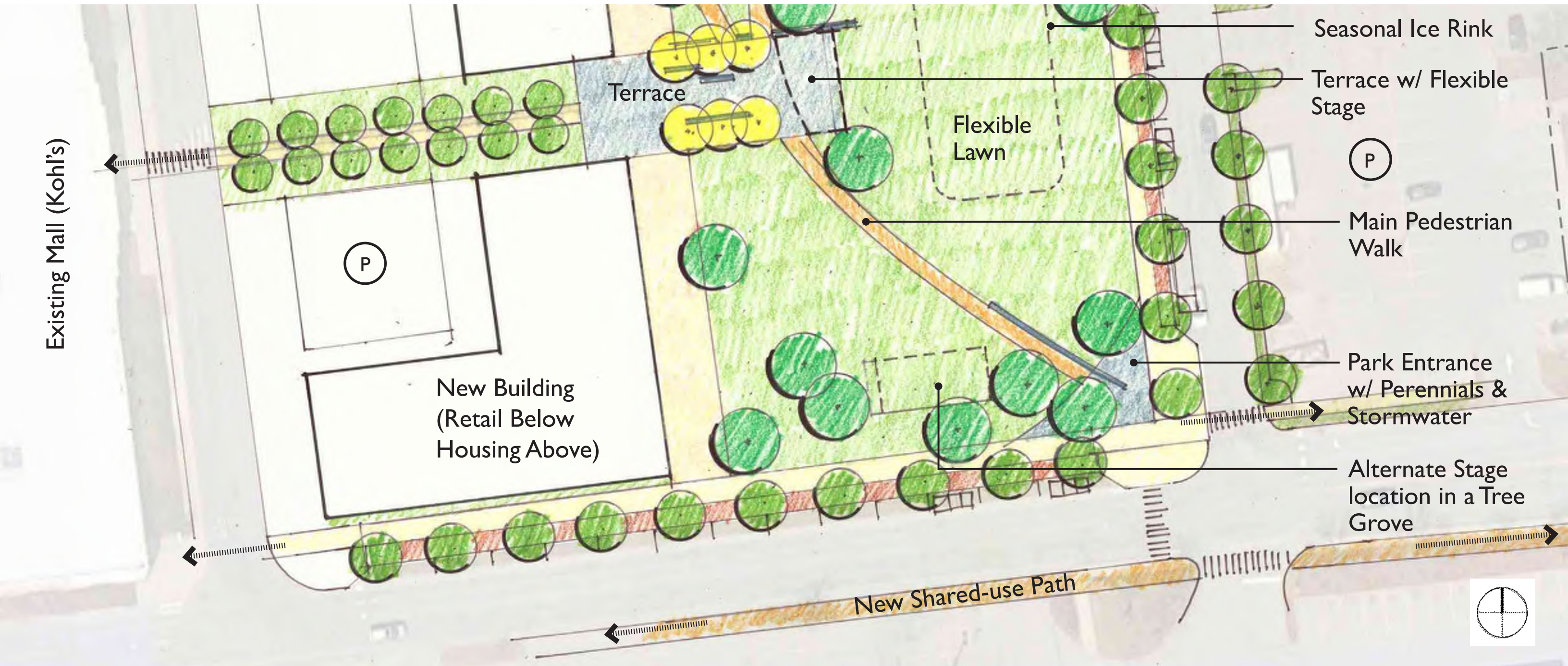
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Seasonal
Ice Rink

Terrace w/ Flexible
Stage

CONCEPTUAL 'CITY GREEN' SITE DESIGN SITE 1

Uses & Activities



CONCEPTUAL 'CITY GREEN' SITE DESIGN SITE 4

Access & Image



CONCEPTUAL ‘CITY GREEN’ SITE DESIGN

SITE 4

Uses & Activities





CONCEPTUAL 'CITY GREEN' PRECEDENT IMAGERY



Flexible Lawn Space for Events & Informal Play/ Relaxation



Informal Terrace with Movable Tables & Chairs & String Lights



Flexible Lawn Space for Community Events



Seasonal Ice Rink



Food Kiosk



Seating Steps

CONCEPTUAL 'CITY GREEN' PRECEDENT IMAGERY



Pedestrian Oriented Street



Flexible Performance Space with in-grade infrastructure



Interactive Play Fountain



Interactive Play Sculpture



Farmers Markets



Space for Pets



Rain Garden at Park Entrance with Perennials

PUBLIC FEEDBACK FROM MEETING #2

ATTENDANCE - 20 people (incl. online)

GENERAL COMMENTS

Overall strong support for location #4. May want to consolidate with Site 3 for a larger park.

Additional needs/ concerns discussed included:

- Children's play area - currently very limited in downtown
- Public Restrooms
- Accessibility
- Existing traffic congestion on Market Street

Few people wanted minimal program including only, trees, lawn, landscaping, pathways & benches

ONLINE PUBLIC FEEDBACK

- City Website - Open for 6 wks.
- 28 Responces
- Majority of participants did not attend either public meeting
- Majority of participants live in S.B. & visit the City Center
- 64% want a City Green, 43%, Full Recommendations & 21% only green space, paths & benches.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Overall Concerns

- Insufficent Parking if Site #4 were developed
- General park safety & maintenance
- Accessiblility, especially any playground

More green space is not needed and City should focus on maintaining existing parks (a couple responce).

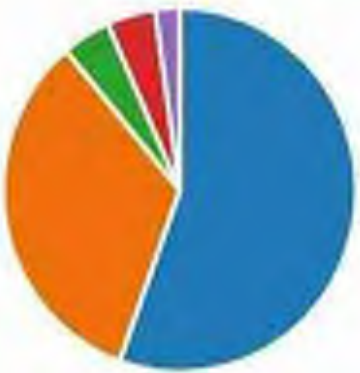
1. Please select all of the statements that apply to you:

- I attended the May City Green... 3
- I attended the August City Gre... 4
- I was not at either workshop 23



2. Tell us a bit about yourself:

- I live in South Burlington 25
- I visit/shop in City Center 15
- I live in City Center 2
- I work in City Center 2
- I invest in/own a business in C... 1



3. I reviewed the presentation with recommendations for the City Green. The statement that best matches my thoughts on the proposed concept for a City Green is (select other to add or build on recommendation):

- Wow, those recommendations... 13
- I support only options like gra... 6
- Another park is not my priorit... 5
- Other 5



FINAL CONCEPTUAL SITE DESIGNS & RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCEPTUAL ‘CITY GREEN’ SITE DESIGNS



SITE AREA	1.7 ac.
BUILDING (Kiosk)	949 sf (1%)
GREEN SPACE	0.94 ac (58%)
HARDSCAPE	0.74 ac (41%)
CIRCULATION (Part of Hardscape)	0.32 ac (19%)

1.2 ac.
805 sf (1.5%)
0.6 ac. (53.5%)
0.53 ac. (45%)
0.19 ac. (16%)

DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consider Sites 1 & 4 for further study for a potential 'City Green' due to their highest score on the Site Location Analysis Matrix.
- Site 1 should only be implemented in conjunction with a larger mixed use development (including retail/restaurant with residential above)
- The final location for Site 1 may vary within the U-Mall parking lot depending on the overall project program and desirable adjacencies.
- Site 4 could be developed solely by the city, due to its close proximity to compatible building program (ie. - City Hall, Public Library, Senior Center and extensive residential housing).
- Any development of Site 4 should consider the future planned road location.
- Parking and traffic issues should be considered external factors and addressed separately as a larger city wide issue.
- All future designs should include site lighting and signage to improve overall safety, visibility, and accessibility.

Both sites should incorporate the following program elements into the design moving forward:

- Flexible Lawn Space (0.1-0.3 ac.)
- Seasonal Ice Skating Rink (50'x145')
- Flexible Performance Space with Potential Shade Structure (0.1-0.3 ac.) (Structure could be phased)
- Interactive Play Fountain
- Coffee/Food Kiosk with terrace, movable table & chairs (Could be phased)
- Creative Children's Play Area with Interactive Sculpture
- Shared-use Paths/ Connections
- Accessible Walkways, Site Features & Play Structures
- Access to Parking
- Pedestrian-Oriented Street to Accommodate Events
- Shade Trees & Landscape Areas (Incl. Perennial Gardens)
- Public Restrooms
- Stormwater/ Rain Gardens
- Site Lighting & Signage
- Accommodations for Pets

Precedents



CITY HALL PARK (2020)

Size: 1.7 ac.

Cost per Acre - \$ 3.8 Million/ac. (2024 Price)

(Includes Structures, Special Paving & Fountain)

ESTIMATE OF PROBABLE COST

Site Options



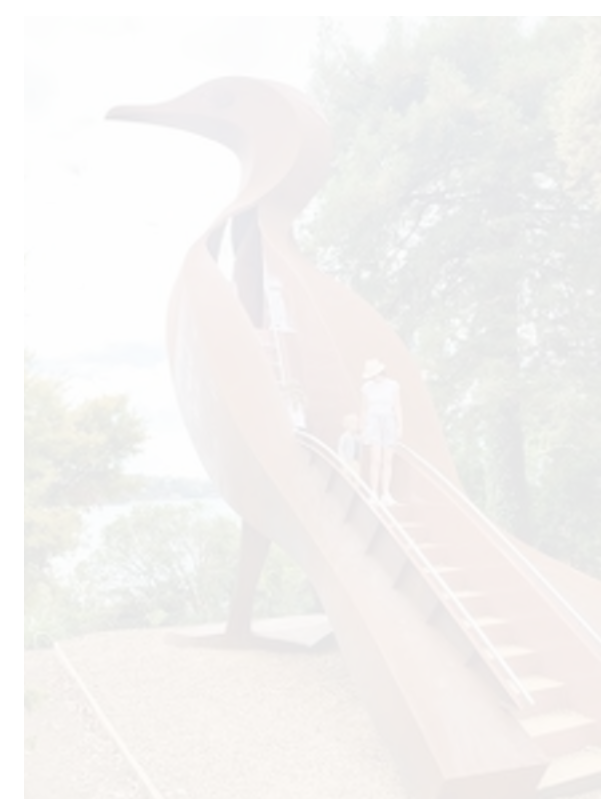
SITE OPTIONS

Size: 1.2 - 1.7 ac.

Cost per Acre - \$ 1.6 Million (with Trees, Benches, Walks & Stormwater)

Cost per Acre - \$ 3.7 Million (Plus a Combo of Fountain, Play Structure, Pergola, or Bandshell & Special Paving)

Excludes: Land Cost, Adjacent Roadways & Other Neighboring Improvements



DISCUSSION

