



# Market Square Master Plan

Portsmouth, NH

2025



# Market Square Master Plan

## Table of Contents

- 1** Introduction
- 2** Executive Summary
- 3** Existing Conditions
- 4** Master Plan Recommendations
- 5** Alternative Plan Studies
- 6** References & Resources
- 7** Appendices





THIRSTY  
MOOSE



PAY  
METER  
AT MWSK



## Project Purpose

In November of 2019, the City issued an RFQ to study Market Square. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and a desire to expand the focus of the project, the RFQ was never contracted. The RFP for this project was reissued with an expanded focus to study the area previously identified in 2019 and to incorporate additional corridors with a limited scope of evaluating pedestrian access, outdoor dining on public streets and sidewalks and accessibility.

Market Square has been recognized as one of the “Great Places in America” by the American Planning Association and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Portsmouth Downtown Historic District.

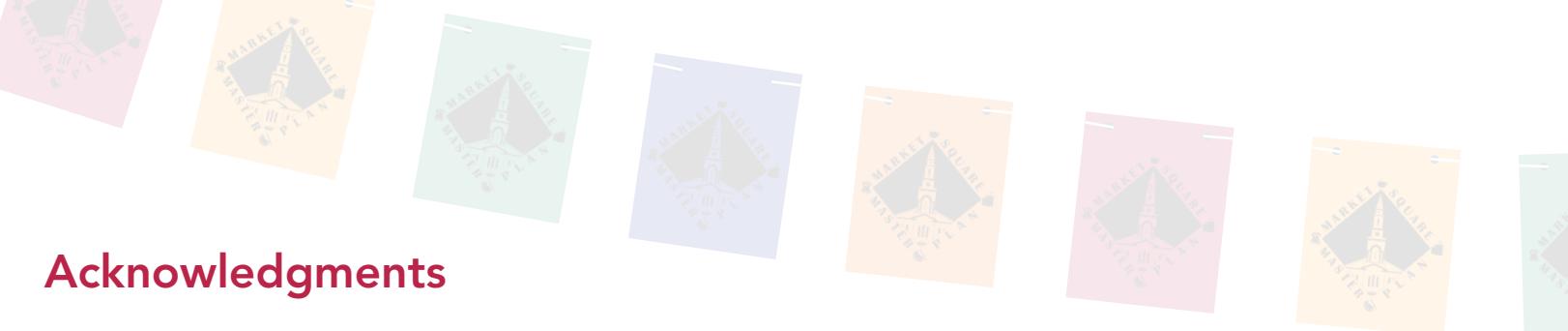
Market Square was paved in 1762. In the 250 years since, the Square and three streets originating from it — Market St., Pleasant St., and Congress St. — have remained the hub of downtown commerce and community life year-round. Portsmouth today is a vibrant regional destination for the arts, dining, and heritage tourism, but, the City’s economy hasn’t always been so robust. Faced with declining industry during the 1950s and ‘60s, the City cleared portions of the downtown through urban renewal. Beginning in the 1970s, creative developers began rehabilitating historic commercial and industrial buildings on Market St. for conversion to a mix of residential, office, and retail uses.

A key step in Portsmouth’s recovery efforts was the revitalization of Market Square beginning in 1978. Once the site of a military training ground, a meeting house, and New Hampshire’s colonial legislature, the renovated Square today features wide brick sidewalks, benches, trees and a fountain.

Over the years, the City has taken meaningful planning steps and followed through with implementation through adoption of location ordinances that encouraged compatible development. Zoning regulations work to ensure the vitality of street-level businesses and to protect valuable historic properties including North Church, a beacon of Portsmouth, visible from most City vantage points. Today, Market Square is a busy intersection and a transportation nexus filled with pedestrians, bicyclists, buses, cars, mopeds, and motorcycles against a backdrop of architecturally distinctive buildings, each with its own history.

Within this context, much of the public infrastructure in and around Market Square - including utilities, sidewalks, roadways, parking structures, street trees, street furniture, and solid waste facilities - is due for an upgrade. The City is therefore prepared to consider how publicly accessible spaces can be improved or adapted in a manner consistent with historic preservation objectives, urban design principles, and the City’s Complete Street, Walk-Friendly, and Bike-Friendly policies.

The first phase in this process will be the development of this shared public conceptual vision plan with preliminary cost projections. Future phases will include preliminary design plans and opinion of project costs, leading to final design and preparation of construction documents for each of the project elements.



## Acknowledgments

This Master Plan was developed with broad based input and support. Many business owners, residents, and visitors gave their time to offer thoughts, hand off sketches, give handwritten notes, respond to the online questionnaire, and provide both written and verbal comments at public workshops regarding the development of the Master Plan. The following individuals, departments, and organizations were central to the planning process.

### City of Portsmouth

Sean Clancy, Assistant City Manager for Economic and Community Development  
 Monte Bohanan, Director of Communications and Community Engagement  
 Peter L. Britz, Director of Planning and Sustainability  
 Peter Stith, AICP, Planning Manager  
 Jillian Harris, Principal Planner  
 Peter H. Rice, Director of Public Works  
 Joseph Almeida, Facilities Manager  
 Dave J. Desfosses, Construction Project Manager  
 Eric B. Eby, PE City Engineer, Parking, Transportation and Planning

### Plan prepared by:

**BETA Group, Inc.**  
 889 Elm Street  
 Manchester NH 03101  
 (844) 800-2382  
[www.beta-inc.com](http://www.beta-inc.com)

John Byatt, PE, Vice President  
 Arek Galle, PLA, AICP, Project Manager  
 Jeff Maxtutis, AICP, Vice President, Transportation  
 Anna Sangree, AICP, Planner  
 Alyssa Gomes, PLA, Landscape Architect  
 Paige Begin, PE, Transportation

### City Planner (retired)

Bob Thoreson, Planning Director, City of Portsmouth  
 1971-1977

### Market Square Working Group

Kate Cook	Patricia Lonergan
Jo Anna Kelley	Amanda Mc Sharry
Steve Alie	Regan B. Ruedig
Rick Chellman	John Singer
Janet Desmond	Kathleen Soldati
Bethany Hayes	Peter Weeks
Nate Hastings	Anne Weidman
Julie Kelley	Erica Wygonik

### The Chamber Collaborative of Greater Portsmouth

Ben VanCamp, Chief Collaborator and President



## "What in the world is wrong with Market Square!?"

This question was asked of the design team at the first public meeting, politely highlighting that the task of identifying a list of improvements to Market Square is an undertaking not to be pursued lightly. Regarded by residents and visitors alike as one of the most interesting and unique downtown spaces on the East Coast and the hub of the City's national register historic district, Market Square is recognized by the American Planning Association as one of 300 Great Places in America.

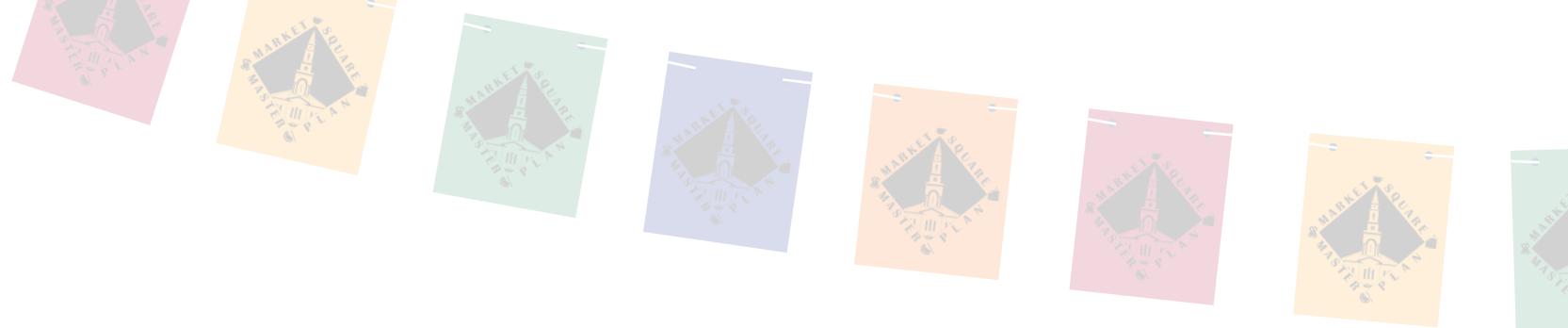
A public lottery in 1762 funded the paving of the Square, formalizing and making a more durable space in which people would be drawn to for commerce, food, and entertainment for over 250 years. The strong draw continues today. From the City's earliest days, the Square has been a hub of activity. Over time the types of activity and uses found at the Square have evolved and along with that, a variation subtle changes to the appearance of the Square have occurred. The change has often been in the form of refinements, adjustments, and rebalancing of public space in response to uses and needs. The most significant and transformative change occurred in the later 1970s with the City's initiative to reduce the influence of the automobile and create wider sidewalks and crosswalks for pedestrians. That effort is the lens in which any future improvements must be viewed.

This Master Plan explores the public realm – this is the public right of way, the space comprised of roadways, sidewalks, alleyways, City owned buildings, and pocket parks. This space contains nearly all the public transportation and utility infrastructure including the potable water, sanitary sewer, stormwater drainage systems as well as the communications, internet, and electrical network that supports people living and working in the Square, as well as visitors to the City.

A central objection of the Master Plan is to reestablish balance in the Square following nearly 50 years of change and modernization in transportation, technology, and patterns of living, working, and leisure. The City anticipates the need to upgrade infrastructure and concurrently upgrade the Square as appropriate. Accordingly, the recommendations of the Master Plan cover the wide range of elements that coalesce to form the Square. Detailed plans and recommendations on a street-by street basis are included in Section 4 of this Master Plan Recommendations.

## "Market Square should not be converted into a quaint downtown theme park."

Public input repeatedly touched on a concern that planned improvements could detract from the authenticity and functionality of the Square, as well as dilute activities in other parts of the City. Various early concepts such as a grassed green space, skating rinks and splash pads garnered only minor interest and support. The majority of the public providing input to the design process saw Market Square as a hardscape, urban space of commerce, where well considered enhancements to the roadways, crosswalks and sidewalk surfaces along with elements such as improved street lighting and public seating at the edges are most needed. A re-think of the Square is in fact a closer look at refinements to the Square that are anticipated to improve functionality and better accommodate users.



If one were to try to identify the less desirable aspects of the Square, noise from cars, trucks, and traffic congestion would be at the top of the list. Continuing efforts to redirect non-essential traffic around the Square, encourage use of off-street parking, and manage delivery trucks, residential food deliveries, and ride service vehicles in the Square is important toward the goal of reducing overall vehicular congestion and limiting idling vehicles. This master planning process identified several areas where a reduction of pavement width would help make pedestrian crossings safer and more efficient and help reduce driver confusion. An added benefit is the creation of additional space for pedestrian use. Coupled with enhanced wayfinding and directional signage, it is anticipated that traffic flow in areas such as where Daniel St., Pleasant St., and Congress St. converge onto Congress St. can be improved and overall congestion reduced.

The Master Plan vision is to refine and update the elements that exist today: Reduce vehicle congestion, reconfigure parking, expand sidewalks, improve pedestrian surfaces and crosswalks, enhance lighting, and add shade trees, as well as expand public seating and amenities, provide space for private outdoor dining, and integrate public art.

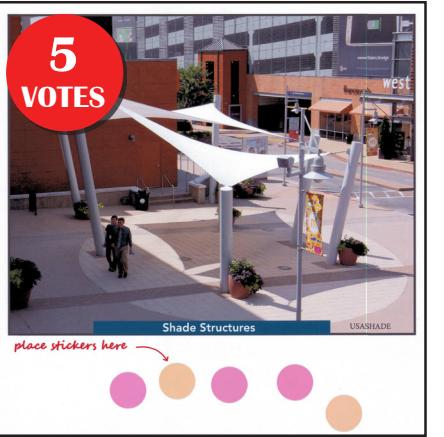
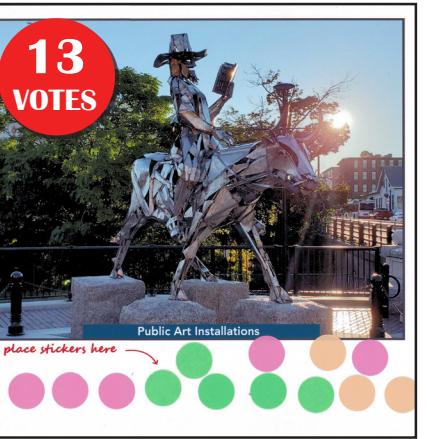
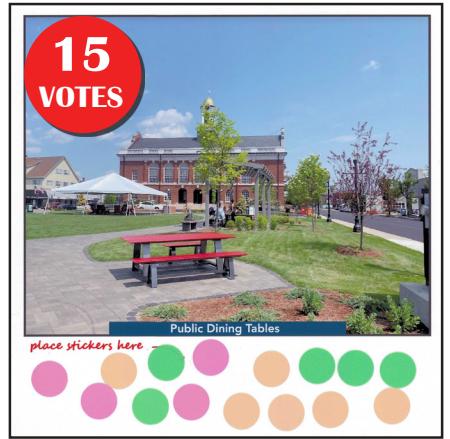
## Master Plan Vision

- Refine and enhance the public realm with improvements that keep with traditional uses and the historic character of the Square.
- Create consistent circulation and parking patterns where possible, proper alignment of vehicle lanes, adequate lane widths, and flexible use areas to accommodate delivery vehicles.
- Design streets flexible and convenient closure to accommodate events, festivals, and outdoor gatherings.
- Expand sidewalk areas with seamless, flush curb transitions to enhance accessibility.
- Upgrade crosswalks featuring textured surfaces for improved safety and aesthetics.
- Add new street trees, site amenities, and expanded areas for public seating and outdoor dining.
- Enhance existing features, including the fountain, to elevate the overall experience.
- Road diet applications to reduce unneeded travel lanes.
- Create designated areas for the display of public art.
- Add improved site and architectural lighting to enhance safety and ambiance.

# Public Process

## Public Workshops

The design process included several forms of engagement with the Public on differing platforms and in different times and locations. The project began with a public workshop and presentation on April 24 of 2024. This event was held at City Hall and attracted over 50 participants that came to hear more about the origins of Market Square and learn about the City's goals and reason for undertaking the project. At this session the public was asked to provide feedback and give input in areas of interest or concern, and to talk about aspirational goals and overall vision of the Square. Participants voted on ideas and visual preferences on topics ranging from the need for public restrooms to additional seating and space for public art. Attendees had an opportunity to ask questions of the design team and make statements and provide vision and design suggestions. The initial meeting was followed up by a meeting in October at the public library at which time the design team reviewed highlights, key takeaways, and visioning concepts developed to date. Early design options and concepts were presented as well.



## Online Questionnaire

At the initial public meeting, a web-based questionnaire was launched with several questions related to Market Square. This page, located on the City's website, gathered responses from 548 individuals. Early in the project, the design team gathered the following comments:

1. Lighting needs to be improved
2. There is little space for people to sit and or eat if you are not eating at a restaurant
3. We are losing the core businesses in this area
4. People live here and vehicular access is essential
5. Parking near businesses and adequate space for deliveries is critical

The web based outreach page was available to the public throughout the spring and summer of 2024

“More pedestrian friendly”

“More outdoor dining”

“More outdoor seating”

## What attracts you to Market Square?

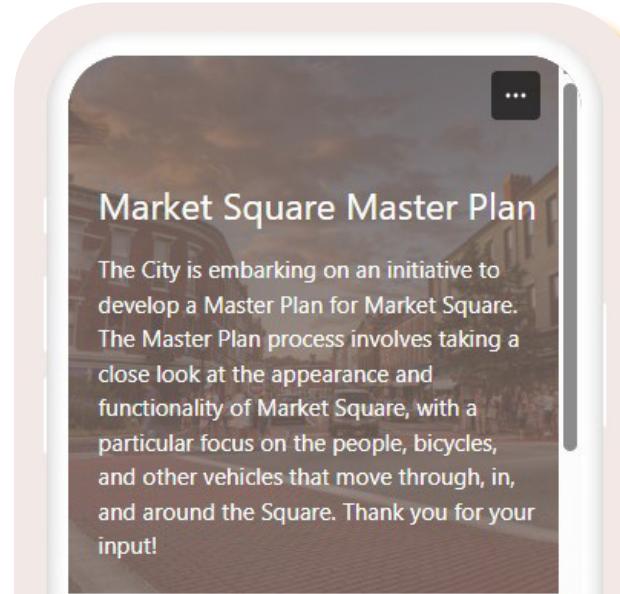
51 respondents (9%) answered people watching for this question.

Restaurants and shopping  
shops and restaurants  
coffee shops  
spaces  
variety of shops  
center of town

people watching

Restaurants and shopping  
shops and restaurants  
outdoor dining  
place  
local shops

Market Square  
walkability  
community  
shops and cafes  
meet people



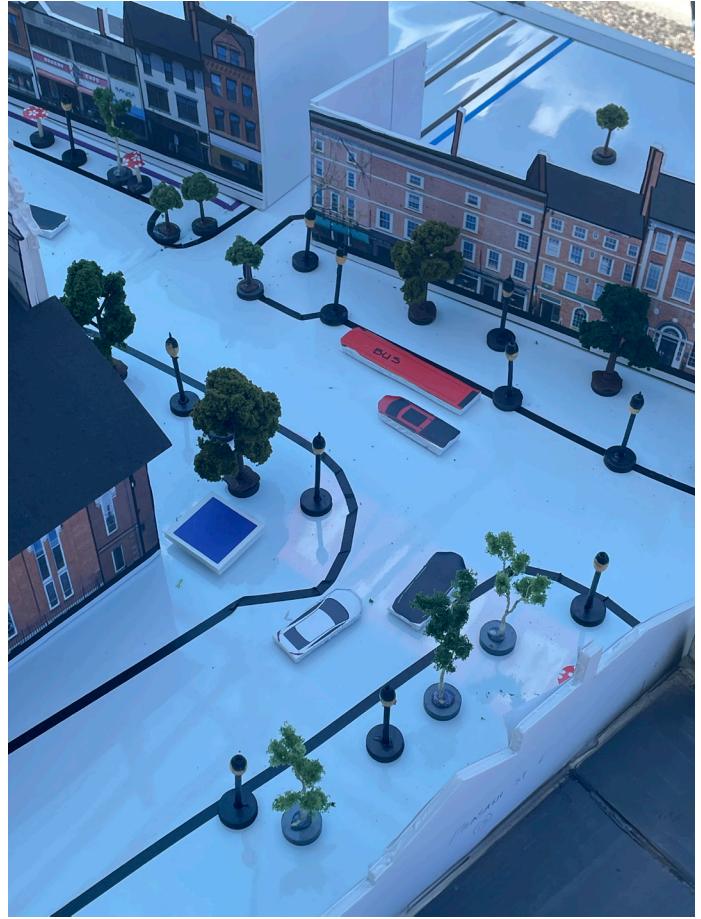


## Farmers Market

The design team held six pop-up sessions at the City's tent at farmers markets outside City Hall over the course of the summer of 2024. These offered a less structured way for the public to interact with the design team on the topic of coalescing a vision for Market Square. Project pop-ups were paired with attendance by the City Manager and Head of Economic Development, encouraging in a multi-faceted engagement to address the wide range of concerns, opportunities, factors, and influences at Market Square. With this format the team was able to engage in these extended conversations, take notes, and collect detailed input on comment cards. The team's presence at markets on a monthly basis allowed for engagement with downtown as well as more broad-based residents, frequent visitors from nearby communities, and summer visitors to the area. These sessions also afforded regulars to the farmer's markets an opportunity for revisiting discussions and expanding on comments or points made earlier.

## Market Square Day

The design team secured a prominent location west of North Church for a different kind of Pop-up / Tabling session to expand project awareness and outreach as part of Market Square Day on June 8, 2024. This event typically is well attended by out-of-town visitors, but the team heard many local voices over the course of the day as well, with the event providing a wide range of perspectives and shedding light on specific areas of interest. The Market Square Master Plan tent featured visual preference graphics and a 3D model of the Square on a white board, with an invitation for the public to stop in, envision, draw, and use a Polaroid camera to photograph their ideas and post them on a collage in real time. The platform drew in children, many eager to rearrange the Square and rethink the spaces for people. Their interest drew in adults and expanded conversations about the Square. The pedestrian-only streets on Market Square Day created a relevant talking point and drew a wide range of perspectives on concepts around ideas regarding parking and temporary and permanent closure of City streets to vehicular traffic.



**Direct Outreach:**  
**Chamber of Commerce & Working Group**  
In addition to the above listed platforms for general public engagement, multiple sessions with diverse and direct stakeholders occurred. Over the course of the project the, design team met with the Chamber of Commerce twice, held three sessions with the 20 person Project Working Group and conducted an in-depth review of the project and work session at City Hall with the City Council in January 2025.



## Takeaways from the Public Process

The process of developing a vision for Market Square entailed layers of public engagement with people of all ages, genders, and backgrounds as outlined in the pages above. When asked about the Square, people held, in some cases, very diverse perspectives and strong opinions. Over the course of the project, some common themes emerged. For many long-time residents of Portsmouth, there is much interest in 'Big Picture' ideas that would serve to restore the range of businesses that once made-up many of the storefronts of the buildings. While it is likely many of the small scale businesses like cobblers and camera shops will never return, the underlying idea behind this thinking perhaps is a desire to see a level of functionality and diversity return to Market Square, creating business offerings that would appeal to in-town locals, residents of the Square as well as attract visitors from out of town and the region. Many people spoke of a small-scale grocery store or corner market as the type of business and activity they saw a need for.

This concept of purposefulness and attractiveness in regard to the Square and its offerings to people of all ages and background, emerged as an important theme to consider when developing master plan recommendations.

### Streets

- Remove all cars
- Businesses need cars passing through & short term parking
- Too many lanes
- Can we have seasonal closure of streets?
- No jersey barriers
- Streets are dangerous
- No more on-road dining

### Safety

- I never feel unsafe in Market Square
- As a pedestrian, I was hit by a car coming out of a parking space
- Traffic accelerates too quickly
- Aggressive panhandling makes me uncomfortable
- Need flashing lights at crosswalks
- Cars and people do not obey the signs and signals
- Market Square is too dark at night

### Sidewalks

- Sidewalks are dangerous
- Need more casual seating
- Need a small performance stage
- Fountain is too small, add water feature
- Like the brick sidewalks in contrast to concrete sidewalks elsewhere

Like a community grocery store, a vibrant Square will need to offer an array of different things to a range of diverse people, in an authentic manner. Examples of the nature and range of comments follow below:

- Sense of loss of Market Square as a community gathering space. Some expressed a loss of community feel, observations that community service and businesses in the Market Square area are limited.
- Sense of privatization of the public realm in and around the Square.
- Growing concern that families with young children have limited attractions and things to do in Market Square.
- Concern over vehicle congestion, safety, noise, and pollution.
- Concern over the possible elimination of vehicles entirely - there are residents and businesses that need 24/7 access.
- Multimodal alternatives need consideration and greater integration.

In regard to vehicles parking and moving through the Square, two clear and opposite opinions were expressed. One group held the view that cars in the Square were out of place and the streets should be converted entirely to pedestrian ways. A second group held an opposite perspective and noted that vehicular access was critical, and served the residents and businesses, creating authenticity and functionality in the Square that needed to be maintained. Removal of vehicles entirely also ignored the seasonality of Portsmouth's climate, and swings in the level of traffic congestion and activity in the Square which differ and contrast greatly between July and February.

One couple interviewed (visitors to the City from another part of the country) advocated for the complete removal of cars followed by the installation of a clear roof structure over the main areas of the Square to fend off inclement weather and make it more pleasant to walk through year-round. This description imagines a less than authentic experience in an historic coastal community.

Anticipating that the City and the residents and visitors to the Square in general enjoy Market Square as it is, with nice sidewalks, some vehicles, and without a sky dome, a key objective of the master plan process is to establish a better balance between transportation needs and people in the Square and with the public realm and privatized spaces at the edges.

The issue of balance within the public realm existed in the 1970's when the initial transformative re-work of the Square was undertaken. The development of this Master Plan follows the objectives of the original plan, looking at current context, usage, and needs to develop a roadmap for refining and updating the Square.

## Looking back to Look Forward

The design team and members of the current Planning and Sustainability Department met with former City Planner Bob Thoreson late in the summer of 2024. Lengthy conversations explored the original goals of the 're-think' of the space he initiated in the mid-1970's, a discussion on the lessons he believed to have been learned over the last forty plus years, and a look at the core objectives that remain to be realized, or at a minimum, addressed as part of this Master Plan effort.

The original planning work sought to embrace the scale and form of the historic buildings, streets and alleyways, with an emphasis on walkability and managing the negative impacts of the automobile. Planning work sought to reinforce the unique sense of place and special urban fabric of the Square.

The former planner identified several desirable, future improvements to the Square that were an extension of the original vision:

- Improve street lighting
- Enhance and expand sidewalk areas
- Improve crosswalks
- Enhance the fountain

In many ways this list is not surprising: It echoes feedback the design team had collected from the public over the preceding months. At the close of the meeting, Bob urged the planning work to continue in the tradition of the original plan, to **"strive for the Ideals of a City and transmit something more beautiful than that which was transmitted to us."**



Daniel St., Congress St., Market St., and Pleasant St. Intersection c. 1975



Detail Plan - 1978 Market Square Plan by Carol Johnson and Associates



Construction of wide brick sidewalks on the north side of Congress St.

## Conclusion

For decades Portsmouth has been regarded as a regional destination and Market Square is the heart of the City. The Square grew from confluence of the river and sea, a nexus of opportunity and commerce. The area is fundamentally a convergence of diverse people with differing backgrounds and interests living and working in a compact, well-ordered humanly scaled space.

Current challenges facing Market Square are like those in many places, where gentrification may threaten to displace important visual and physical pieces of the community. Erosion of the breadth and quality of the public realm would contribute to a distillation of the vibrancy of the space.

Some insight may be gained by looking at communities across the world in places with walkable streets, where historic buildings converge with the modern architecture, mixed uses, and arts and culture, drawing people from all over. This Master Plan seeks to compile the success of the past, and observations of the present, with an implementable vision for the future.

# Master Plan Terminology

This Master Plan includes some specific terminology.

**Master Plan:** The purpose of this Master Plan is to provide a cohesive vision and overall framework for future improvements. Master Plans typically provide the 'Big Picture' objectives along with key recommendations, allowing for subsequent refinement of the design on a block-by-block basis through the Design Development and Final Design process. It is foreseeable that site improvements will be constructed in phases, coordinated with any necessary sub-surface infrastructure/utility work.

**Woonerf:** A woonerf is a term originating in the Netherlands. Translated it is interpreted to mean 'Living Street', with a reference to shared public spaces, a design concept that seeks to create safer, more interactive pedestrian space. A definition from the U.S. based planning organization, Planetizen, identifies a woonerf as 'A type of roadway design that encourages multi-modal transportation and blends pedestrian and vehicle space.' Woonerf design often includes the elimination of vertical curbing, thereby creating a uniform street surface extending from building façade to building façade. Vertical elements such as bollards, planters, site furniture, or colored or textured surfaces often frame the space vehicles may occupy. Woonerf design emphasizes equity between all modes of transportation.

**Neck-downs:** This term describes areas where the curb lining the edge of the street changes directions and effectively narrows the street. Also called bulb-outs, curb extensions, or chokers, neck-downs place opposing curb ramps closer together, shortening the pedestrian crossing distance, and making pedestrians more visible when queuing to cross the street. The physical and visual compression they create helps focus driver attention and regulate traffic speed. While they can complicate snow removal, they enhance safety and create space for streetscape elements such as street trees, public art, or space for site furniture or landscaping.

**Modular Pavers:** Traditional pavers were made of individual 'units' of stone blocks, generally of a size that can be efficiently carried and installed by a single person. Cobblestones are an example of a modular paver people are familiar with. Pavers are frequently referred to as unit pavers, or modular pavers, and today pavers are made of a variety of materials such as brick, stone, or concrete. Many manufacturers create pavers that have a greater compressive strength than typical concrete. Designed for specific applications, such as high-traffic roadways, modular pavers come in a range of thickness and sizes and are typically installed in a repeating pattern, either uniform or irregular. Modern modular pavers offer a uniformity of surfaces, edges and joints, making the paver surface more accessible than their cobblestone predecessors.

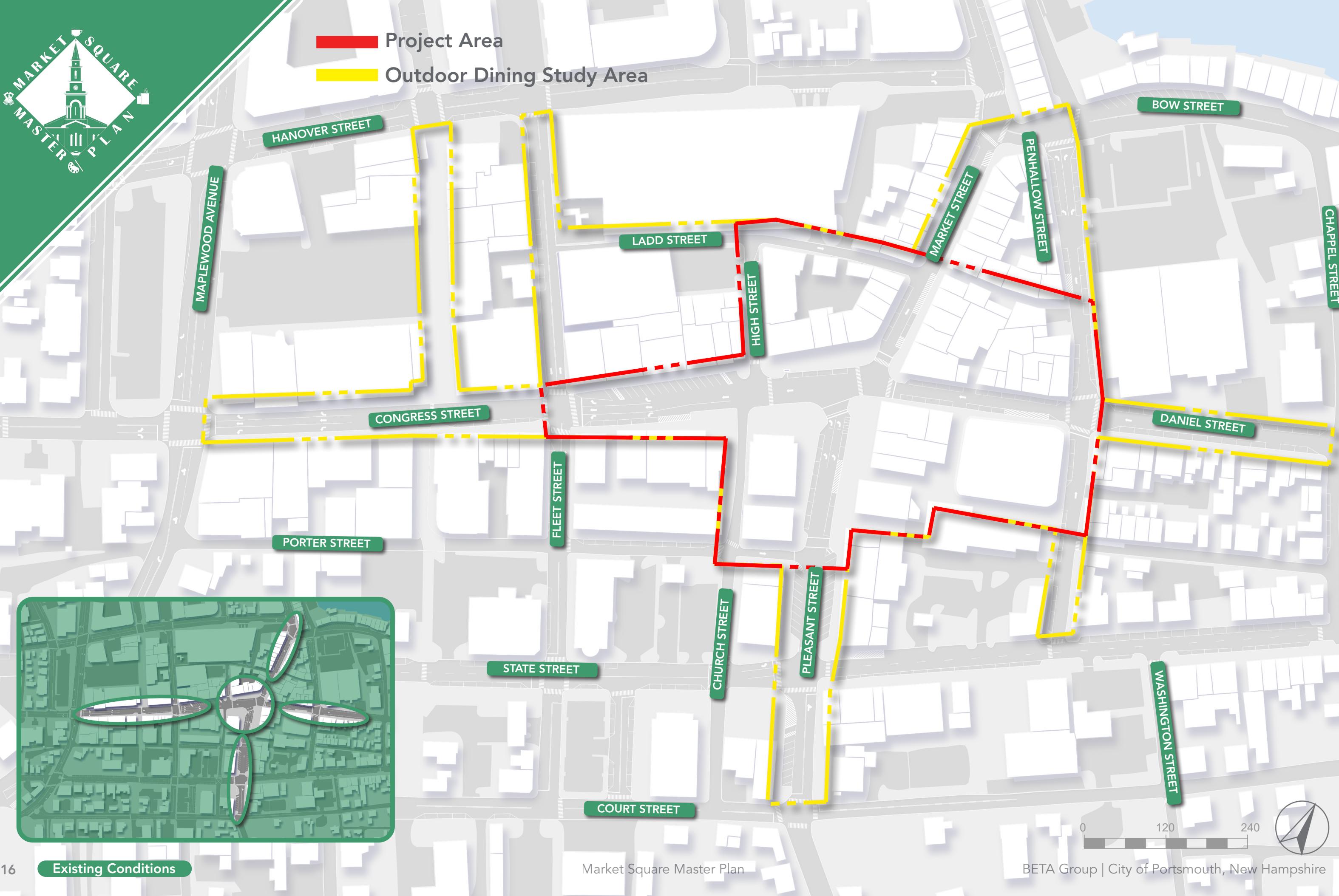
**Outdoor Dining:** This Master Plan identifies Outdoor Dining as dining associated with a restaurant which includes wait service. Typically areas for outdoor dining are defined by barriers, planters, or similar, and these spaces are only available to patrons.

**Public Seating w/Tables:** The Master Plan identifies areas that are suggested to be accessible to the general public without cost. The recommendations include creating areas with flexible types of seating and tables that are available and open for public use without wait-staff service.

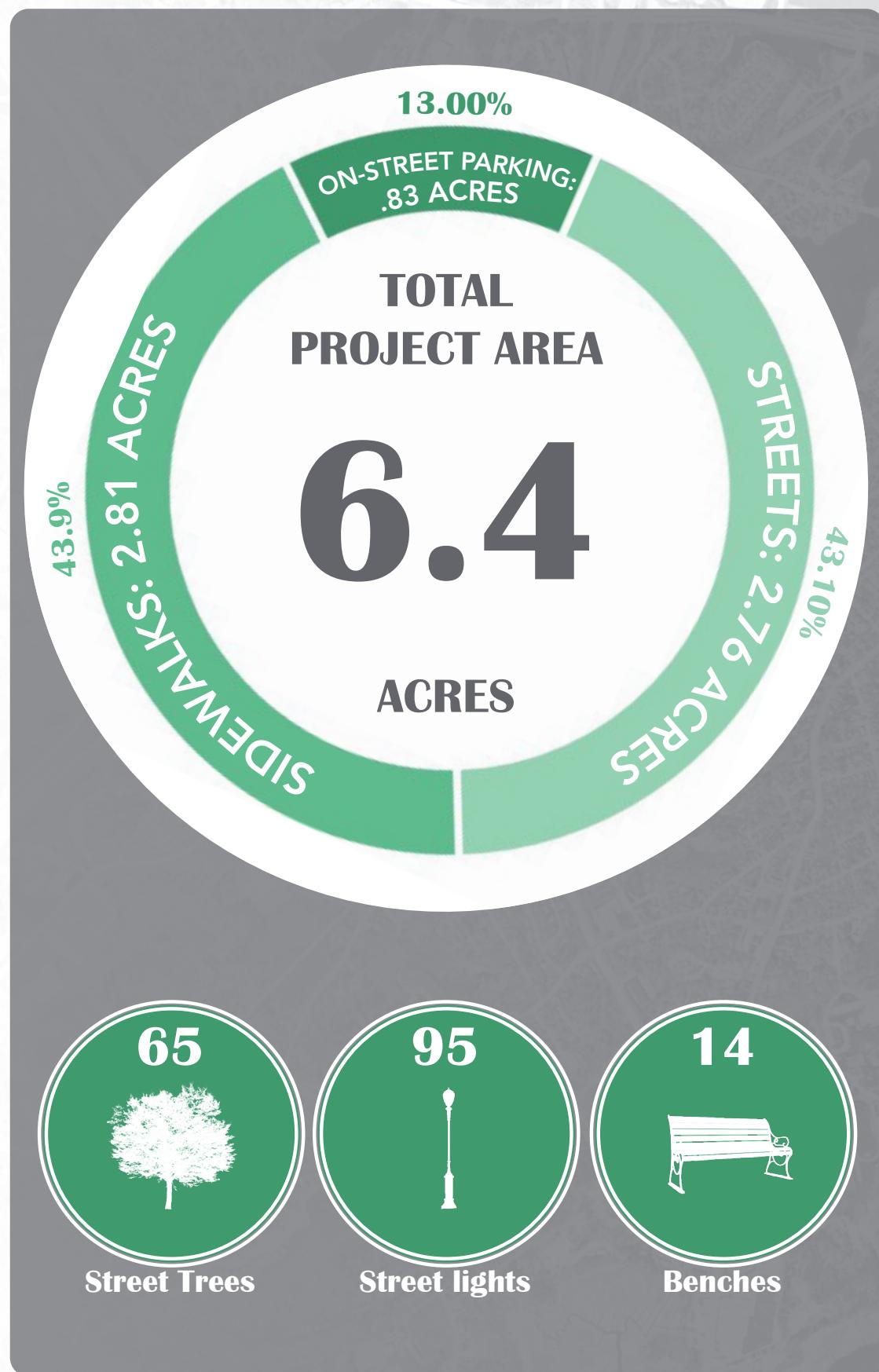




Project Area  
Outdoor Dining Study Area



## Existing Conditions



# Existing Conditions

The present-day existing conditions found within the project area were inventoried and assessed. A detailed review is included in Appendix A. Key observations and takeaways include:

## Excessive Pavement, Vehicles, and Long Crossings in the Center of the Square

Vehicles and the space allocated to vehicle travel have frequently been noted as a major issue in the Square. Congress St. provides overabundant travel space right at the core of the Square. The road is between 45 to 60' wide in this section. Three cars can be seen traveling side by side, but no lanes are officially marked. The roadway configuration presents confusion, particularly at pedestrian crossings where people walking need to watch for multiple cars to stop. The abundance of asphalt divides the pedestrian spaces on either side of Congress St. and does not allow for fluid pedestrian crossing between both sides of the street.

## Vehicle-oriented Access to and From the Square for Residents and Visitors

Most people coming to visit Portsmouth's Market Square drive from surrounding communities. Some people do take public transport, but public respondents note this is not the most practical mode for many people due to the lack of rail service. As many people drive, the area must accommodate vehicular access and the public notes the importance of parking supply near the Square.

## Few Resident Services Within the Square

Adding to the vehicular access problem, residents note that the Square does not have many stores providing services for resident's daily needs, like a grocery store, hardware store or pharmacy, meaning many residents living in the Square drive outside the area to get things they need.

## Lack of Bicycle or Micro-mobility Facilities

Market Square has minimal dedicated facilities for people bicycling or using other micro-mobility services, despite many people choosing to travel in this way through the area. A worker at one of the businesses in the area noted some workers park further away and use scooters to get to their jobs, emphasizing the need for safely connecting the area to other parts of the City. Other than bike racks in the Square, Maplewood Avenue to the north of Market Square provides the nearest existing bicycling facility. Other public respondents noted the need for additional bicycle and scooter parking as well as a desire for bike share options in the area.



## Areas of Narrow and Poor Sidewalks

While many sidewalks in Market Square are wide (10' or higher), the high number of pedestrians using the space means the sidewalks can still become congested with people and not provide sufficient space for movement. NACTO recommends that the accessible pedestrian through zone in commercial areas, excluding areas for street furniture, be 8-12' wide. There are pinch points and segments among the existing sidewalks that do not meet this width. The public notes that sidewalk signs and tree pits can interrupt the pedestrian through zone and not allow for sufficient walking space, particularly on Congress St. Sidewalks on Daniel St. are approximately 8' wide, including street furniture. Church St. and Penhallow St. both provide narrow sidewalks at around 5' wide, lower than recommended for a downtown area.

In addition to the width of sidewalks, sidewalk condition has been noted as an issue. The brick segments can sometimes be uneven. Penhallow St. and Fleet St. both have severe sidewalk cracking.

## Pedestrian Signals Are Not Accessible and Do Not Adequately Serve Volumes

The signals in the Market Square area do not consistently provide Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS) serving people with disabilities. In addition, pedestrian signal timing at the Fleet St. and Congress St. intersection does not adequately serve the pedestrian demand at the intersection, resulting in people typically walking without a walk signal. The current signal configuration requires people to push a button and then cross on an exclusive phase, but people typically walk concurrently with through vehicles.

## Insufficient Nighttime Lighting

The street lighting in Market Square is provided by pedestrian-scale, historic-style streetlights. The City and residents have noted an appreciation for the lighting, but also note, particularly in the wintertime, the lighting does not adequately illuminate the roadways and the area is very dark. Given the long winter nights in New Hampshire, this can present a safety concern. Residents note a need for additional lighting while also balancing a desire for the historic and friendly feel of the area.

## Space Allocation for Outdoor Dining

As the sidewalks and pedestrian spaces are currently configured, there is limited space for sidewalk dining. Some businesses offer outdoor seating in on-street parking spaces. Some public respondents expressed displeasure with the aesthetic look of the jersey barriers used to delineate the outdoor dining. Other residents have noted that dining provided on sidewalks cramps the sidewalk walking area.

### Limited Public Bathroom and Drinking Water Access

Market Square 'proper' does not have public bathrooms or water refilling stations for people to use. Some private businesses allow the public to use their restrooms. Public restrooms do exist on the north side of the Hanover St. Parking Garage. Access is via Ladd or High St., to the garage's south stair tower, then along a narrow alleyway along the east side of the building. Access requires navigation of a ramp or stairs into the interior of the garage where there are male and female, single occupancy, facilities. While limited signage does exist, many people interviewed over the course of the project have noted it is hard to describe the specific route to be followed to reach the restroom facilities in the garage.

### Parking for Employees

Employees who work at Market Square businesses often park relatively far away from the Square or pay high parking prices if within the Square, as they often park for longer shifts than shorter term visitors. Businesses encourage parking further from the Square to maximize spaces available to shoppers and those doing business at the Square.



## Vehicular Circulation & Parking

The spokes of the one-way streets that feed into Market Square -Market St., Daniel St. and Pleasant St. - all direct traffic into the center 'hub' that is the heart of the Square, the dynamic and interesting center of the City. Based on observation, it appears that for those operating the vehicles that enter the Square, arrival at North Church brings excitement, eagerness to explore or shop, and for many, the expectations that on-street parking will be available.

There are 185 on-street parking spaces within the project area. For the past several years this number has dropped by 20 to 25 spaces seasonally due to displacement associated with outdoor dining.

As drivers arrive at the center of Market Square, parking options become more limited. Congress St. offers just less than 20% of the total on-street parking available within the project area. Most drivers entering Congress St. have already passed by available parking spaces in outlying lots, garages or on-street as they follow the flow of traffic to the Square. For those seeking to park, particularly 'in-season, available and open spaces within the Square are limited. Drivers intent on securing parking in the center of the Square often begin to circulate in loops along the one-way streets, creating traffic congestion as drivers search for a parking space to become available.

Approximately 33% of the 134 parking spaces in the project area are diagonal spaces. These spaces allow for convenient nose-in parking, allowing vehicles to move out of the flow of traffic rapidly. This contrasts with parallel parking where maneuvering into a space requires the driver to take more time and typically stops or slows traffic flow. Exiting the diagonal spaces, however, requires more driver effort and patience and often relies on the courtesy of other drivers. Typically, vehicles backing out are accommodated by vehicles seeking to pull into the parking space.

Accommodating deliveries to businesses in many ways is as essential as providing on-street parking. There are nine dedicated loading zones, and except for Fleet St., there is at least one loading zone per street. Some loading zones are signed to convert to parking within certain hours, expanding the on-street parking capacity for the afternoon and evening hours. Increasingly, pressure from non-regularly scheduled deliveries such as food delivery services (Door Dash or Grub Hub) as well as on-demand delivery from Amazon or similar services from Big Box retailers utilize the delivery zone spaces, competing with the regular deliveries or occupying parking spaces. In some cases, delivery zones are double-parked with secondary delivery vehicles aligned with the space but in the roadway. Services like Uber and Lyft exert added pressures to use of the delivery zones as well as the on-street parking and contribute to circulation of vehicles in and around the Square.

The City has developed an exceptional array of parking options in nearby locations available to drivers. Increasingly drivers in the City appear to be more aware of these options due to user-friendly branding and wayfinding signage. The nearby parking lots offer important options, but on-street parking with both diagonal and parallel spaces are likely to remain an important component of how the Square functions.

### Congress St & Daniel St

**76**  
On-street  
parking  
spaces



### Penhallow St

**31**  
On-street  
parking  
spaces



### Pleasant St

**45**  
On-street  
parking  
spaces



### Market St

**20**  
On-street  
parking  
spaces



### High St

**5**  
On-street  
parking  
spaces



### Fleet St

**8**  
On-street  
parking  
spaces



## Existing Parking Overview

Park Mobile Regulated Spaces

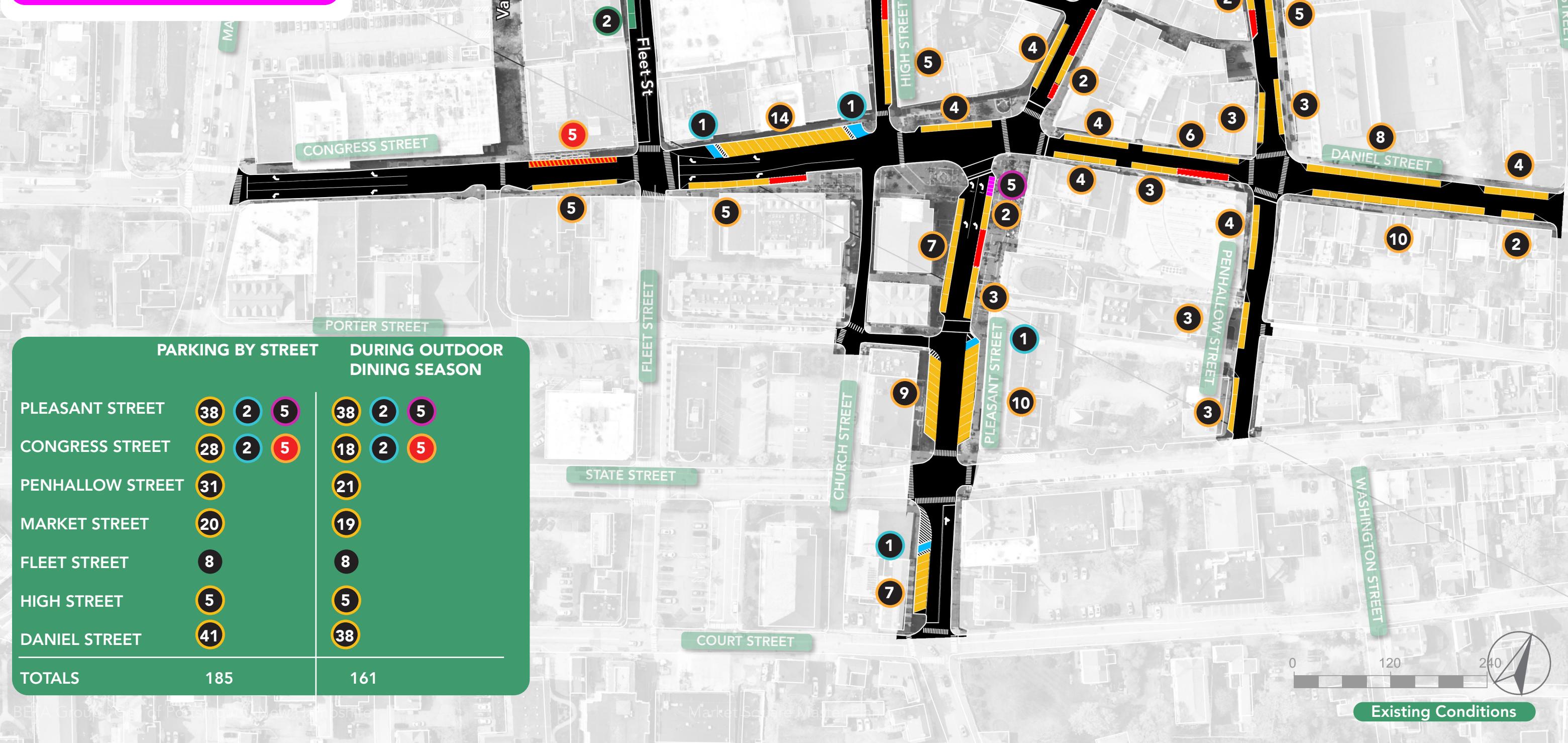
Loading / Delivery

Loading/ Delivery in AM - Parking in PM

3 Hour General

Accessible Space

Motorcycle Parking



## Outdoor Dining



## Outdoor Dining

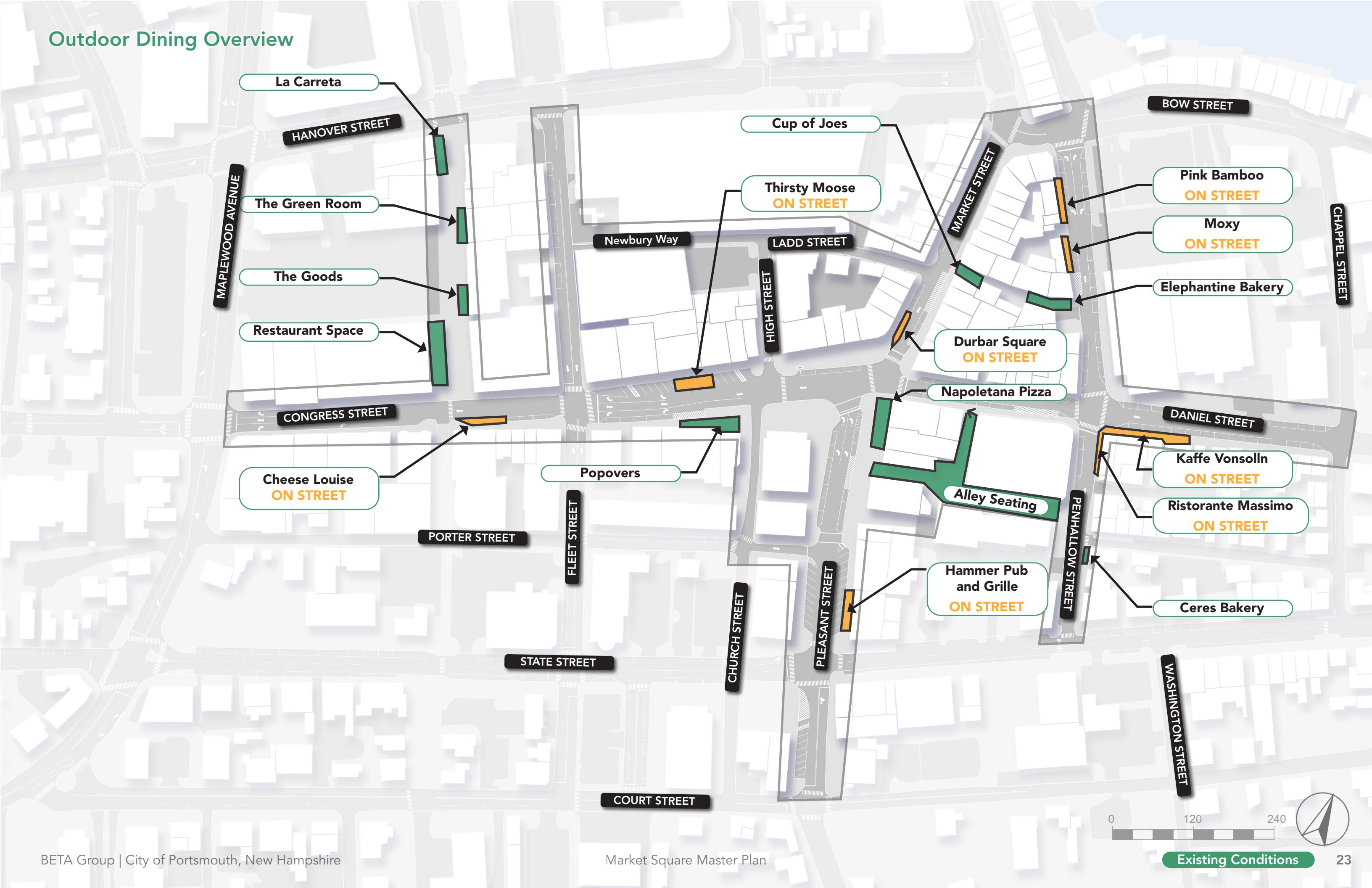
The COVID pandemic in 2020-2021 sparked a surge of interest in outdoor dining, which has not appreciably declined in the subsequent years. The outdoor dining program has undergone refinements, including an ordinance update in 2024, which incorporated more formal organizational requirements. The current program allows for the displacement of existing on-street parking spaces to accommodate outdoor seating for customers of the restaurants, coffee shops, and bakeries.

The figure on the facing page illustrates the locations of permitted outdoor dining in 2024. The blue shaded spaces indicate where on-street parking is displaced to allow for outdoor dining. In many instances there is not an available sidewalk area to accommodate outdoor dining otherwise. In 2024, 24 parking spaces were seasonally displaced. This represents approximately 13% of the total parking within the study area.

The design team was not able to observe significant impacts attributed to the seasonal reduction in parking. The lack of curbside parking was offset by other easy to find, convenient parking within walking distance of the Square.

The displacement of parking effectively generates new space within the public realm, once occupied by empty cars, now occupied by tables, planters, colorful umbrellas, and most importantly people. These elements add significant interest and animate the Square, drawing people to the space, and providing an inviting opportunity for people to stroll, dine and sit, and enjoy the attractions in the area.

# Outdoor Dining Overview



## Outdoor Dining



The outdoor dining areas in Market Square are, mostly associated with private restaurants. Overarching concerns regarding a broad-based 'privatization' of public areas, or public realm were voiced in many in different ways at the public engagement sessions. Public perception was generally that to sit in the Square one needed to be a patron at a specific restaurant, café, bakery, or coffee shop. The City has deployed several picnic tables in the Square in an effort to address the need for unrestricted seating and places to gather and eat. This seating is configured as picnic tables and is seemingly well utilized, but lacks integration and some of the aesthetic treatments offered by the private dining areas. The idea of providing more public dining areas is well supported based on feedback and input from the outreach sessions.

In areas where the on-street parking is replaced by seating and tables, patron seating is protected from vehicles by barriers. Minimally these are located on the side of the dining area that vehicles approach. The City has made available concrete 'Jersey Barriers' to afford this protection. While functional, the concrete barriers are typically large in scale (10' or 12' long) weighing 4,000 to 5,000 lbs. and during the public outreach process it was made clear by many that their form and composition detracts aesthetically from Market Square. There may be several reasons for this, notably that the concrete barriers differ greatly from the historic structures, materials, and scale of the Square; the barriers have strong horizontal lines and streamlined geometries visually 'flattening' the architectural detail of storefronts, windows, entry doors and stoops they encircle and conceal to passers-by. The barriers are designed to protect vehicles on highways from striking objects when traveling at high speed, and are not configured for historic downtown settings, or designed with traditional aesthetic considerations.

Several businesses have painted, concealed, clad, or added planters to the tops of the concrete barriers to create a more pleasing and 'green' edge to the seating, with varying degrees of success. In 2021, a team of local designers and business owners developed a set of recommendations on how to address aesthetic challenges and ADA accessibility issues, which were thoughtfully developed and well crafted.

In addition to the aesthetic challenges associated with creating safe protected areas to sit, the topography of Portsmouth creates situations where dining spaces are on sloping terrain, creating challenges for leveling tables and chairs. Penhallow, Congress, and Pleasant Streets all have notable changes in grade that require consideration as more permanent approaches to creating outdoor dining areas are developed.

## Outdoor Dining

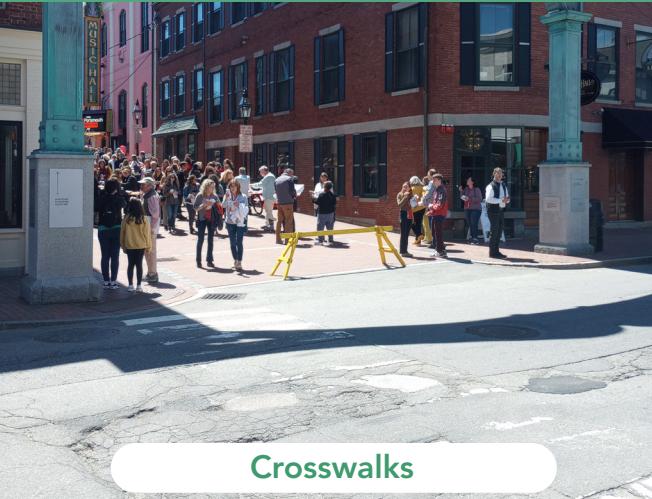


## Existing Site Features

In Market Square one is surrounded by layers of history. Framed by historic buildings, the pedestrian experience is unique and engaging, with much to look at in the public realm. The surfacing materials are traditional; concrete in areas, but predominantly brick sidewalks, with areas of granite banding, and bituminous asphalt paved streets, framed by granite curbing. The sidewalks found on several of the streets on the outer edges of the Square, such as Fleet St. and Penhallow St. are bituminous asphalt, some with tight clearances, making bi-directional travel difficult. Several crosswalks are comprised of stamped, colored concrete, some are pavers, and many are painted. A few corner intersections have ADA compliant accessible curb ramps; however many corners have ramp configurations that no longer meet design standards, or in some areas are missing ramps entirely. Accent elements include granite bollards, low walls and a central fountain, bordered in granite. There are over 60 street trees, and ornamental lights that are evocative of the original gas lights. Site furnishings include benches, a few metal picnic tables, bike racks, and trash receptacles. Wayfinding and directional signage, appear to be a layered series of installations, in some areas depicting seemingly redundant information and in other areas, creating visual clutter with multiple vertically stacked signs.



Roadways



Crosswalks



Sidewalks



Stamped Concrete



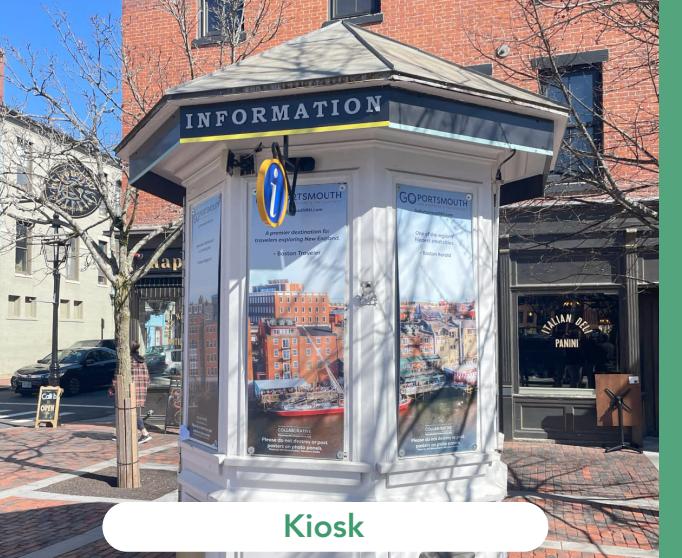
Ornamental Lighting



Fountain



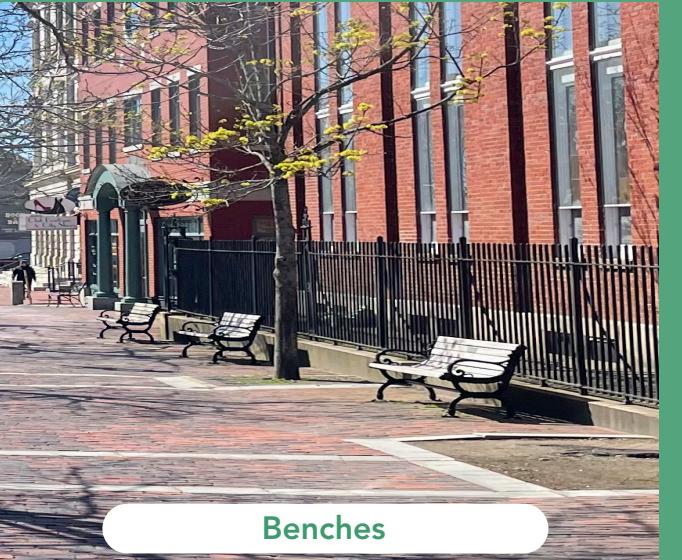
Bus Shelter



Kiosk



Street Trees



Benches



Mile Marker



Granite Bollards



Parking Meter



Parking Kiosk



Granite Seat-wall



Granite Stairs



Signage



Signage



Multi Bike Rack



Single Bike Rack



Picnic Tables



Trash Receptacles



## Pleasant St. / Market St. Intersection at Congress St. Curb Neck-down



### Streets and Transportation

The current network of Market Square streets is a pattern that was established centuries ago and when combined with historic structures that line the streets it is what make the geometry of the public realm unique and interesting. The streets within the study area perform functionally and offer adequate capacity to support the uses. Predominantly organized as one-way streets radiating in to and out of the 'hub' of North Church, most of the circulation pattern is uniform and understandable to drivers. Areas of excess roadway pavement add a level of ambiguity to some intersections such as where Daniel St., Market St. and Pleasant St., and Congress St. meet. Removal of excess pavement is recommended to reduce driver confusion, and in this location, elimination of one of the Pleasant St. left turn lanes is suggested. In other areas the elimination of excess asphalt adds needed width to sidewalks and further defines areas of vehicular travel. Recommend travel lanes are 11'-0" to 13'-0" for a pair of lanes within a road corridor, or 16'-0" to 18'-0" for a single lane. Uniformity of lanes is important as well as establishing block to block continuity. Curblane neck-downs are important features to create scale and slow traffic while improving pedestrian safety. The use of modular pavers or other textural treatments in the road surface further slows cars. This is important as the relatively narrow streets of Market Square do not support separated bicycle facilities, so within the Square, cyclists and vehicles must share the roadway.

Flexibly managing vehicular traffic on the streets was supported by many people as an important concept. Closing specific streets to vehicle traffic at predictable times is an important part of this plan and the community's long-term vision for the Square. It is important that the system of controls is easy to deploy and maintain and appears uniform and integrated. Retractable or removable bollards are recommended on certain streets, in key locations, to afford site-specific levels of control. Pleasant Street has a history of temporary closures to accommodate events. Removable bollards at State St., Porter St. and at the intersection of Congress St. would create the ability to accommodate regular full or partial closure of the street. Converting the eastern-most block of Porter St. to be bi-directional will allow Pleasant St. closure to be managed on a block-by-block basis. Closure of Pleasant St., Market St., or the western-most block of Daniel St. to vehicular through traffic appears to be viable on a day long or partial day/evening/night schedule. It is probable that the closure schedule is seasonal.

### Parking

Nearly all the major streets have parallel on-street parking. It is suggested that the diagonal parking on Congress St. be converted to parallel parking. This approach would result in a consistent parking treatment and would allow for the expansion of sidewalk space along Congress St. for outdoor dining and shade tree plantings. The southern block of diagonal parking on Pleasant St. could remain as currently configured to support capacity in the Square.

### Curb-less Streets (Woonerf)

European cities have a long-held design approach to slowing streets by incorporating textural and color changes in the surface of the roadway, integrating stormwater drainage and eliminating curbing to provide a more accessible and equitable pedestrian environment. The City already has already employed this approach at Sheafe St. and Chestnut St. with great success. Continuing this approach to street design on key streets that may be regularly closed to vehicles such as Pleasant St., Ladd St., High St., and Porter St. is proposed as a starting point. Additional streets such as Market St. or Penhallow St. may be good candidates as well for this treatment, either entirely or on block by block/segment basis.



### Crosswalks

The original Market Square Master Plan included 'Granite' crosswalks. This approach to enhancing crossings should be continued and expanded. The texture and color change slows vehicle speed. Replacement crosswalks made of stamped and colored concrete have not held up well and the material detracts from the surroundings. Any new crosswalks should be made of modular pavers designed for heavy vehicle travel or thick, large scale granite slabs on structural base are most appropriate. All curb ramps should be configured to be ADA accessible. Consider concrete ramps to ensure control and conformity.

### Sidewalks

Continue and expand the use of brick or similar modular pavers. Introduce brick to sidewalk areas that comprise the pedestrian experience associated with the Square. Utilize granite banding or other authentic accent materials. Limit perpendicular banding to ensure smooth transitions. Install granite bases for 3D art installations.

### Lighting

The period light poles are a signature element of the Square. Invest in the development of an efficient LED luminaire retrofit that enhances the level of lighting provided and are more cost effective to maintain and operate. Supplement ornamental light poles with discrete modern and efficient lighting such as in use at City parking lots. Encourage private sector architectural lighting of building facades to add interest to the Square. Install catenary lighting on side alleys and areas with narrow widths.

### Street Trees

Protect the existing healthy street trees. Expand the existing tree pits and invest in tree root aeration and fertilization. Coordinate with planned utility work and install new street trees, particularly in areas where few exist. Continue use of a diverse plant palette. Invest in silva-cell technology or utilize structural soils to promote root growth and development for all new trees planted.

### Planters

Create integrated seating in areas with seat walls defining planter areas. Install flowering shrubs or perennials in limited permanent bed areas to soften and accentuate the streetscape. Select planters that offer crash protection where appropriate to reduce the use of jersey barriers. Utilize isolated container planters to create interstitial spaces in sidewalk areas.

### Site Furniture

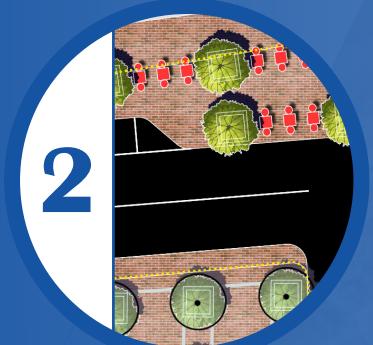
Provide an array of public seating options. Ensure universal accessibility and companion spaces. Provide tables in flexible configurations for public use. Create arrangements of site furniture that promote conversations – configure 'L' shaped or "U" shaped arrangements as well as individual benches. Consider individual chairs as accents. Develop granite cube and block style bench seating in flexible configurations and integrate planters. Provide trash and recycling receptacles.

### Fountain Enhancements

Develop a range of enhancements to the existing fountain to increase the feature's presence in the Square. Enlarge the size and raise the height of the edges to accommodate seating around the sides and increase the height of the center jet. Configure interactive controls such that the spray height is adjustable to add interest.



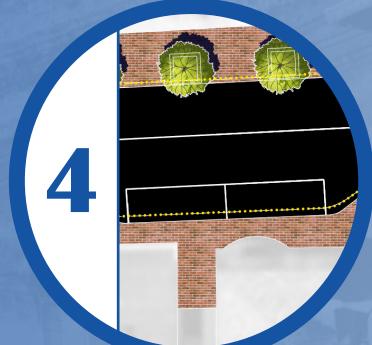
1 Eliminate Excess Street Width / Turn Lanes



2 Expand Sidewalk Area



3 Create Wide Pedestrian Crossing with Modular Pavers



4 Replace Diagonal Parking with Parallel Parking



5 Eliminate Some On-street Parking to Widen Sidewalks



6 Create Curb 'Neck-downs'



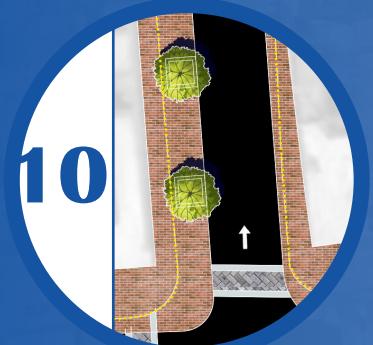
7 Install Modular Paver Crosswalks



8 Install Modular Pavers in Roadway Surface



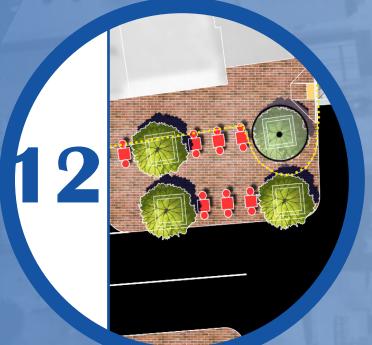
9 Install Removable Bollards for Street Closure



10 Plant Street Trees



11 Create Outdoor Dining



12 Install Bike Racks



13 Construct Public Restrooms



14 Create Bike Storage



15 Enhance Fountain



16 Enhance Kiosk

## Shared Vision - Recommendations

The Master Plan process identified several themes that suggested an array of different types of improvements that are desirable and, in many instances, necessary. These themes are broadly applied to the Master Plan and should be considered basic design requirement of any future work.

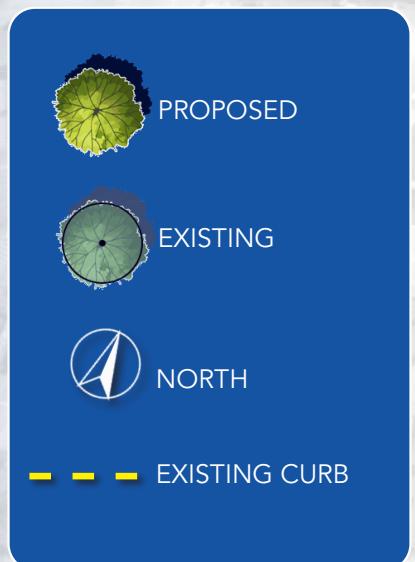
### 'Big Picture' themes include:

- Infrastructure: Coordinate necessary infrastructure (Water, Sewer, Stormwater, Electrical Grid, Data) with roadway and sidewalk improvements in an integrated manner. Curb line adjustments such as the reduction of lanes, the creation of neck-downs, or the construction of curb-less, flush surfaced 'woonerf' style streets require drainage infrastructure improvements.
- Vehicles: Vehicular congestion at certain times of the year/times of day negatively affects drivers as well as pedestrians. Expansion of off-street public parking offerings is critical to establishing balance on the streets and keeping Market Square unique and inviting.
- Bicycles: Narrow Right of Ways frame the corridors that feed into the heart of market square. Continuous, dedicated bike lanes is not feasible within the Square and as such balancing different modes of transportation requires vehicles to share the streets with bicycles. Creating predictable vehicle movements at low speed is essential.
- Lighting: Improved lighting levels, efficiency and output from existing ornamental lighting fixtures. Provide supplemental street lighting as well as architectural accent or feature lighting as appropriate
- Signage: Improve and integrate wayfinding signage. Simplify signage and reduce visual clutter where possible
- Accessibility: Any improvements shall establish universal accessibility. Comply with PROWAG (Public Right of Way Accessibility Guidelines) regarding the use and access to sidewalks, streets, crosswalks, curb ramps, pedestrian signals, on street parking and other elements within the public Right of Way.

A list of recommendations has been developed for each street corridor. Many of these ideas are applicable to multiple corridors. The legend at left identifies different actions, coded with a number. The coded numbers and corresponding recommendation are keyed into the overall Master Plan on the opposing pages as well as the detailed corridor plans on the following pages.



# Master Plan



## Existing Parking

## Park Mobile Regulated Spaces

## Loading / Delivery

## Loading/ Delivery in AM - Parking in PM

## 3 Hour General

## Accessible Space

## **Motorcycle Parking**

PARKING BY STREET			DURING OUTDOOR DINING SEASON		
PLEASANT STREET	38	2	5	38	2
CONGRESS STREET	28	2	5	18	2
PENHALLOW STREET	31			21	
MARKET STREET	20			19	
FLEET STREET	8			8	
HIGH STREET	5			5	
DANIEL STREET	41			38	
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>185</b>			<b>161</b>	



# Proposed Parking

Park Mobile Regulated Spaces

Loading / Delivery

Loading/ Delivery in AM - Parking in PM

3 Hour General

Accessible Space

MAPLEWOOD AVENUE

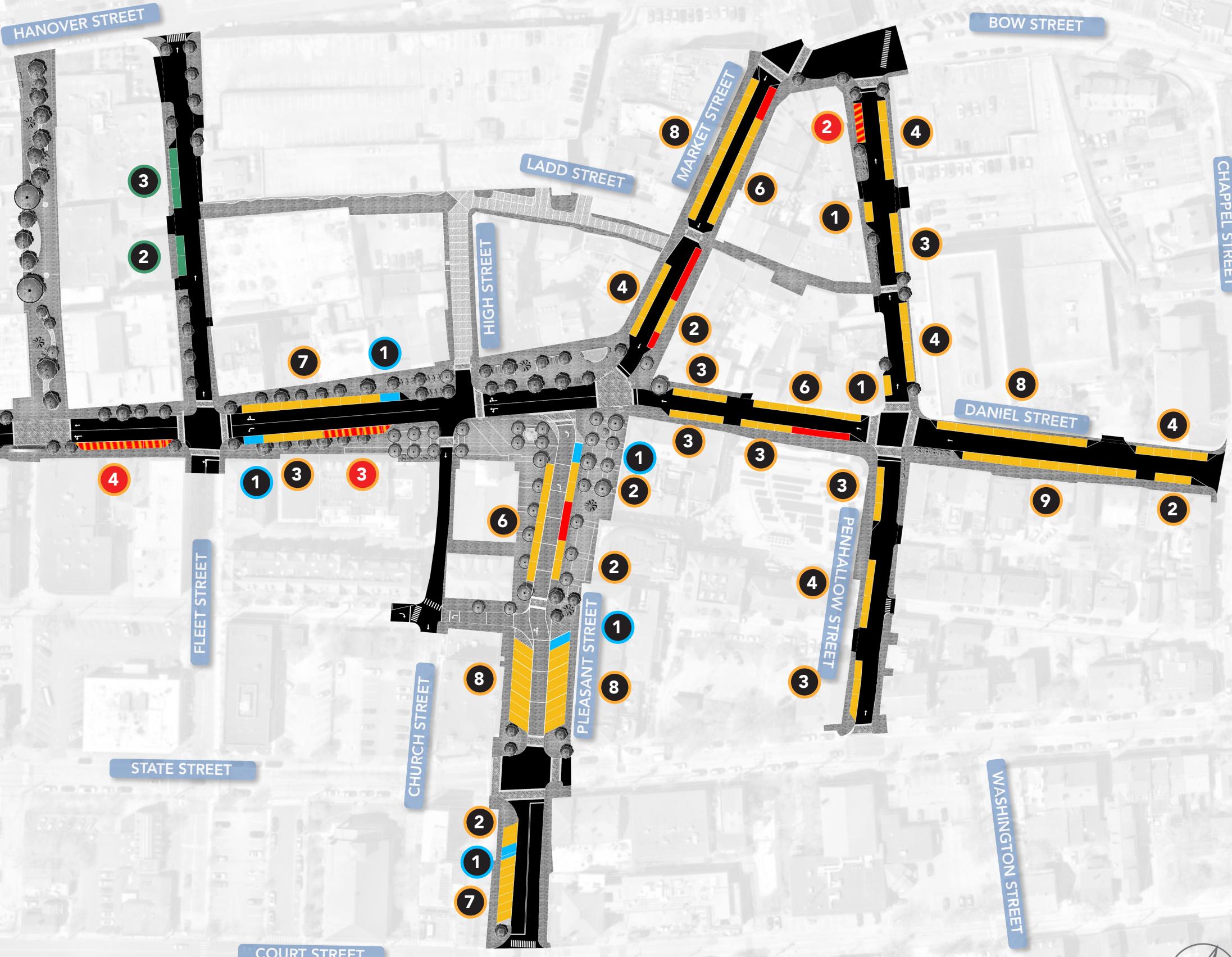
CONGRESS STREET

PORTER STREET

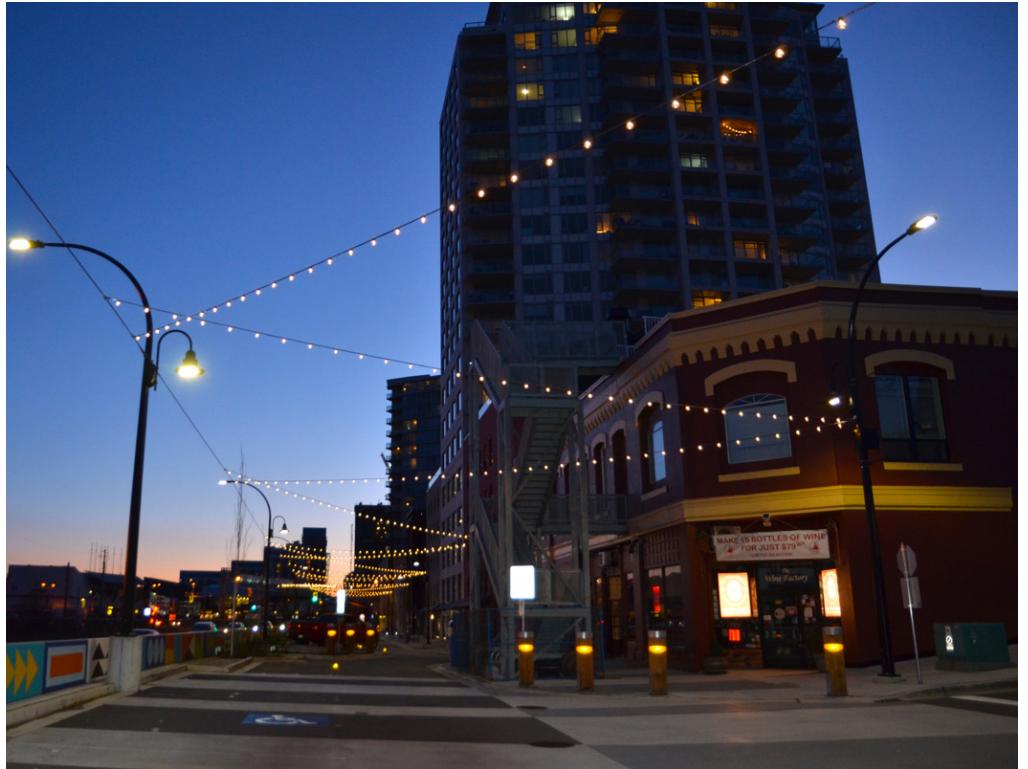
## PARKING BY STREET

PLEASANT STREET	35	3
CONGRESS STREET	12	2
PENHALLOW STREET	23	2
MARKET STREET	20	
FLEET STREET	5	
DANIEL STREET	38	

TOTALS 147



## Design Imagery Examples



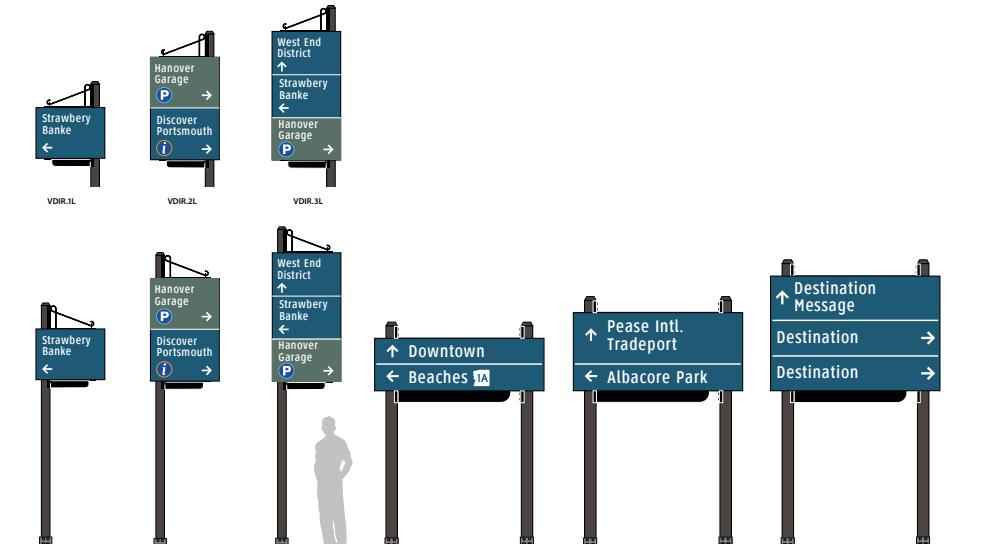
Catenary Lighting



Bosque of Trees



Urban Bioswale



Wayfinding



ADA Tree Pit Surfacing



Street Tree



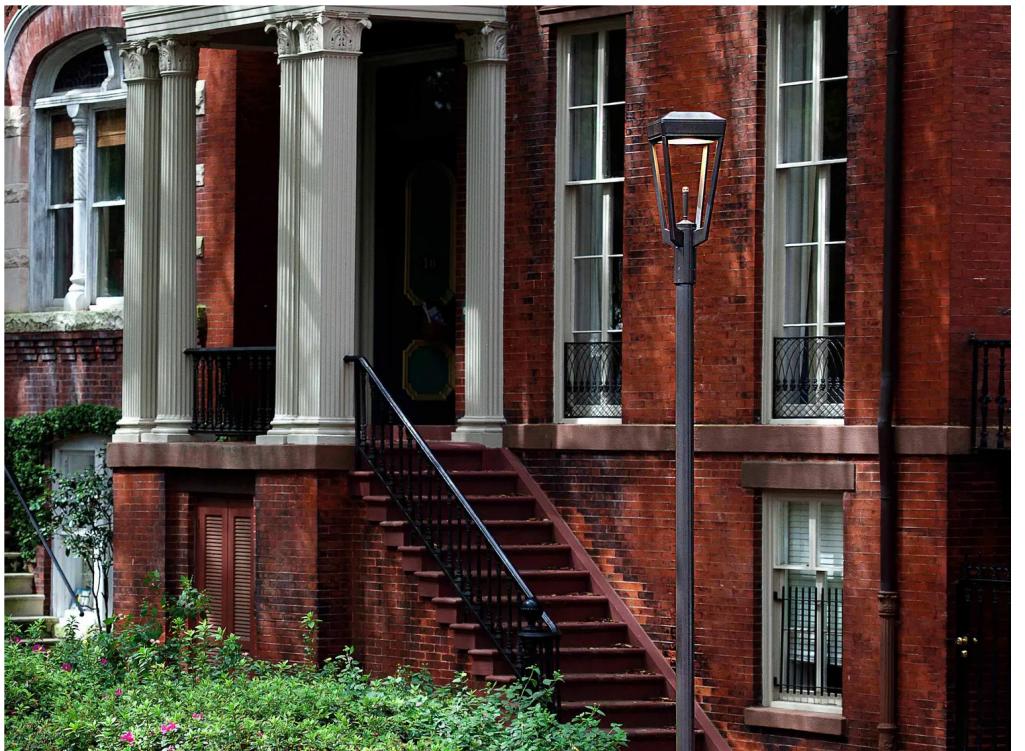
Fixed & Removable Bollards



Enhanced Fountain



Public Seating w/ Tables



Enhanced Lighting



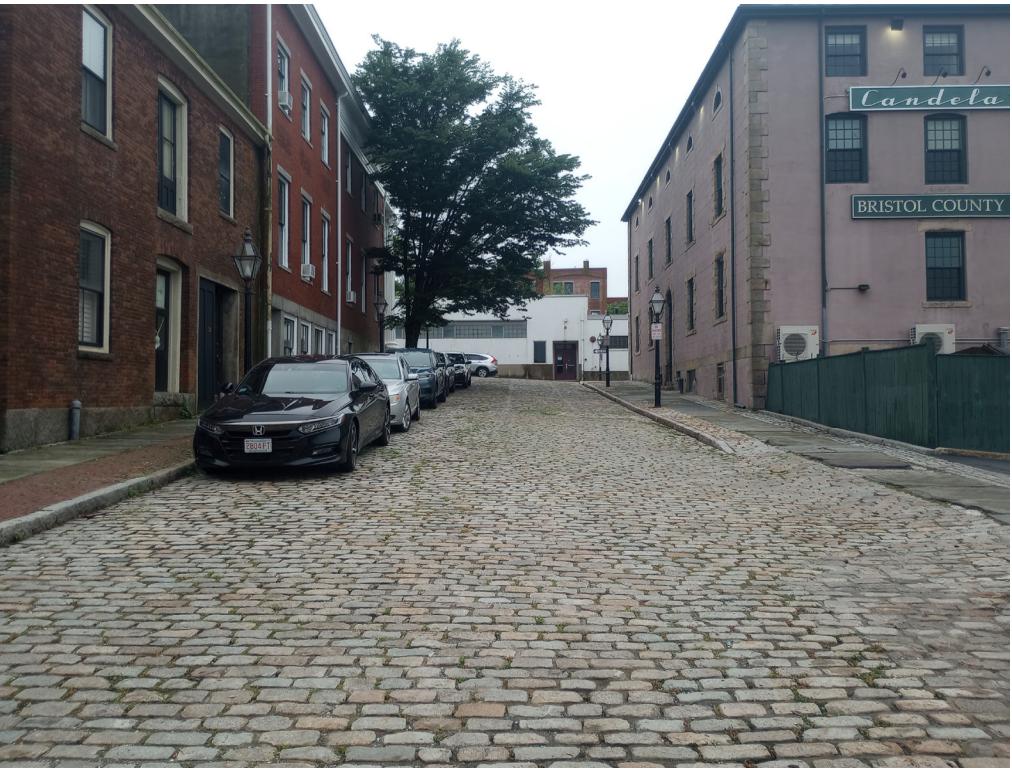
Bike Amenities



Base for Artist Installations



Granite Seat wall



Paver Roadway



Public Tables and Seating



Brick Pavers



Granite Paving Slabs



Public Waste and Recycling Receptacles



Performance Area



Raised Planting Areas



Public Seating



Enhanced Kiosk



Paver Delineated Parking



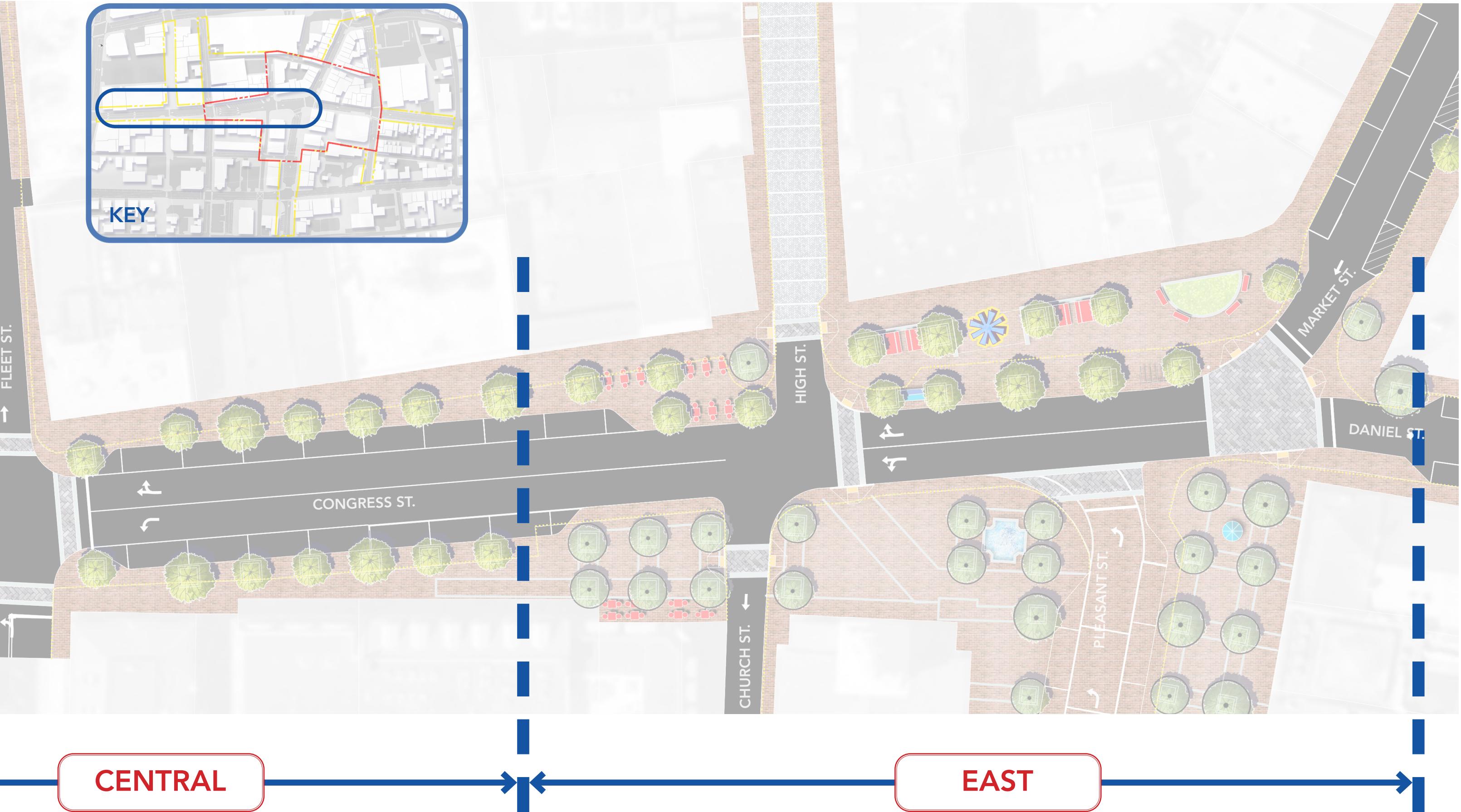
Paver Crosswalks



### Design Approach

- Reduce pavement width at North Church where Daniel St. and Pleasant St. enter the Square.
- Eliminate excess pavement by utilizing 11-foot to 13-foot lanes and increase sidewalk width where possible.
- Re-organize the street corridor by establishing more consistent vehicular travel lane configuration.
- Eliminate the third travel lane between Church St. to Fleet St.
- Coordinate lanes with Fleet St. improvements: Create Through and Turn Lane at Fleet St . as appropriate.
- Convert diagonal parking spaces into parallel parking spaces.



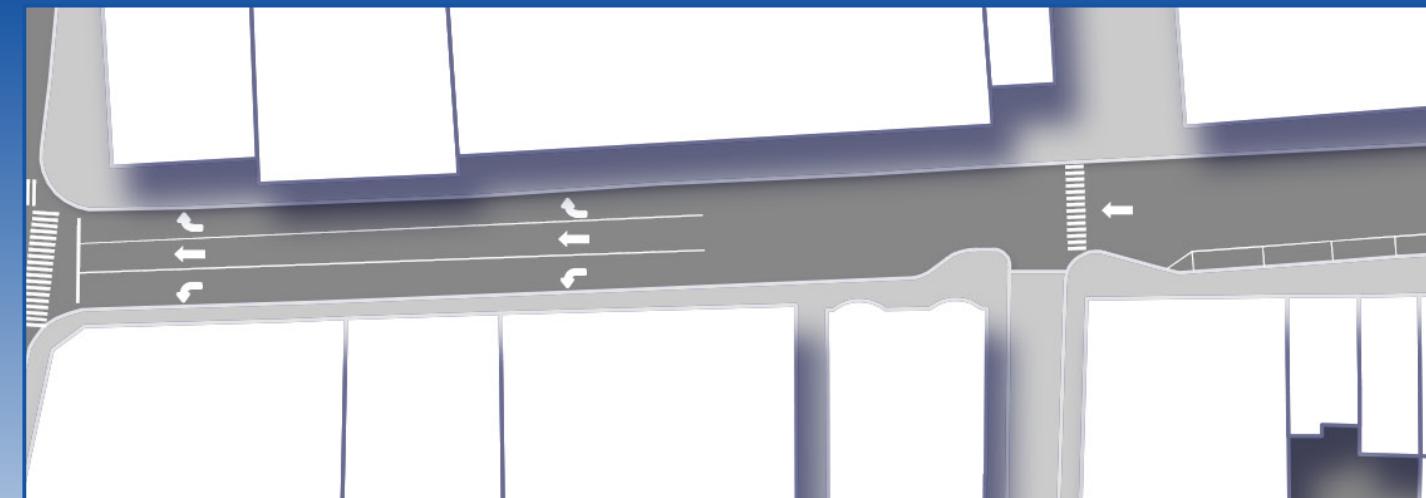




## Challenges

- Narrow sidewalks on the south side of the street
- Constricted sidewalks at Southwest corner of Congress St.
- Fast moving traffic
- Limited delivery space
- Major pedestrian crossings at Vaughn Mall and Maplewood St.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

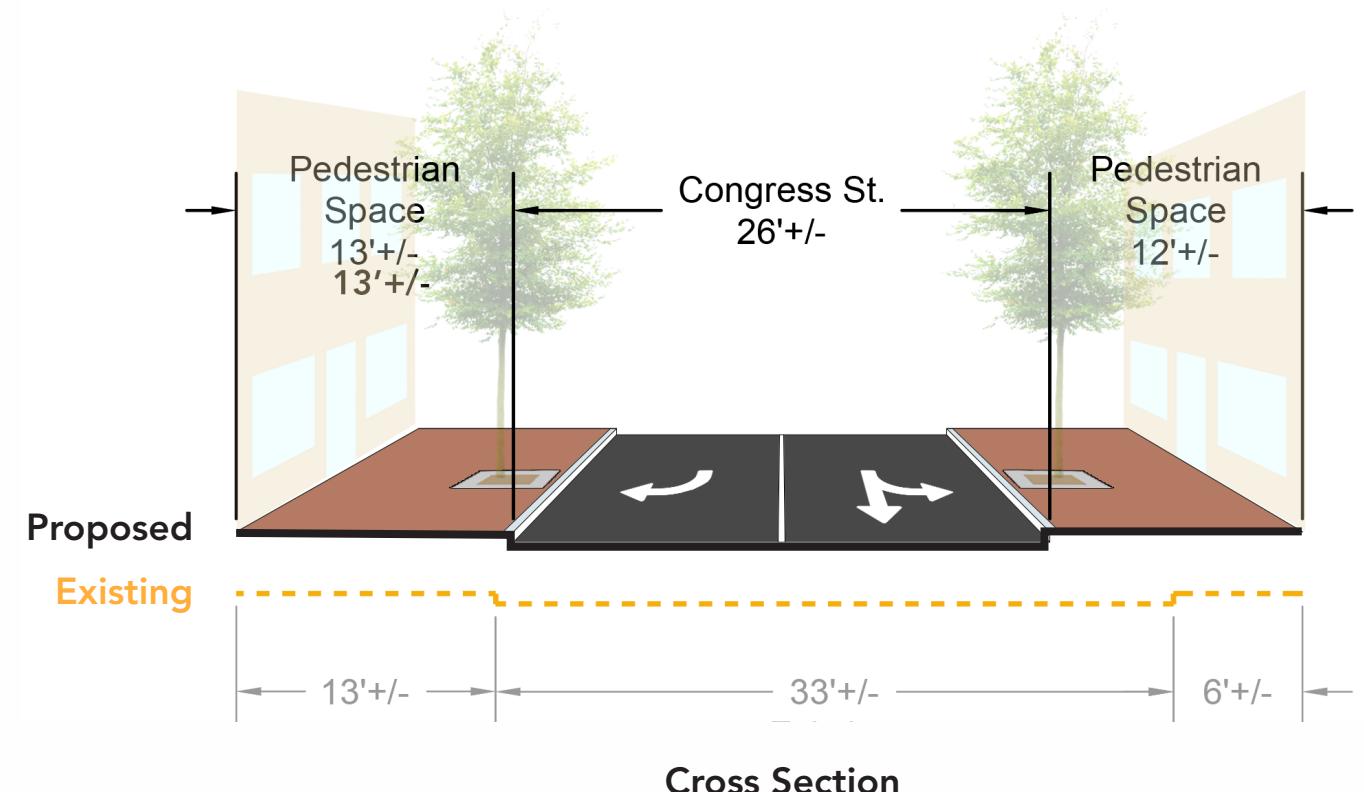


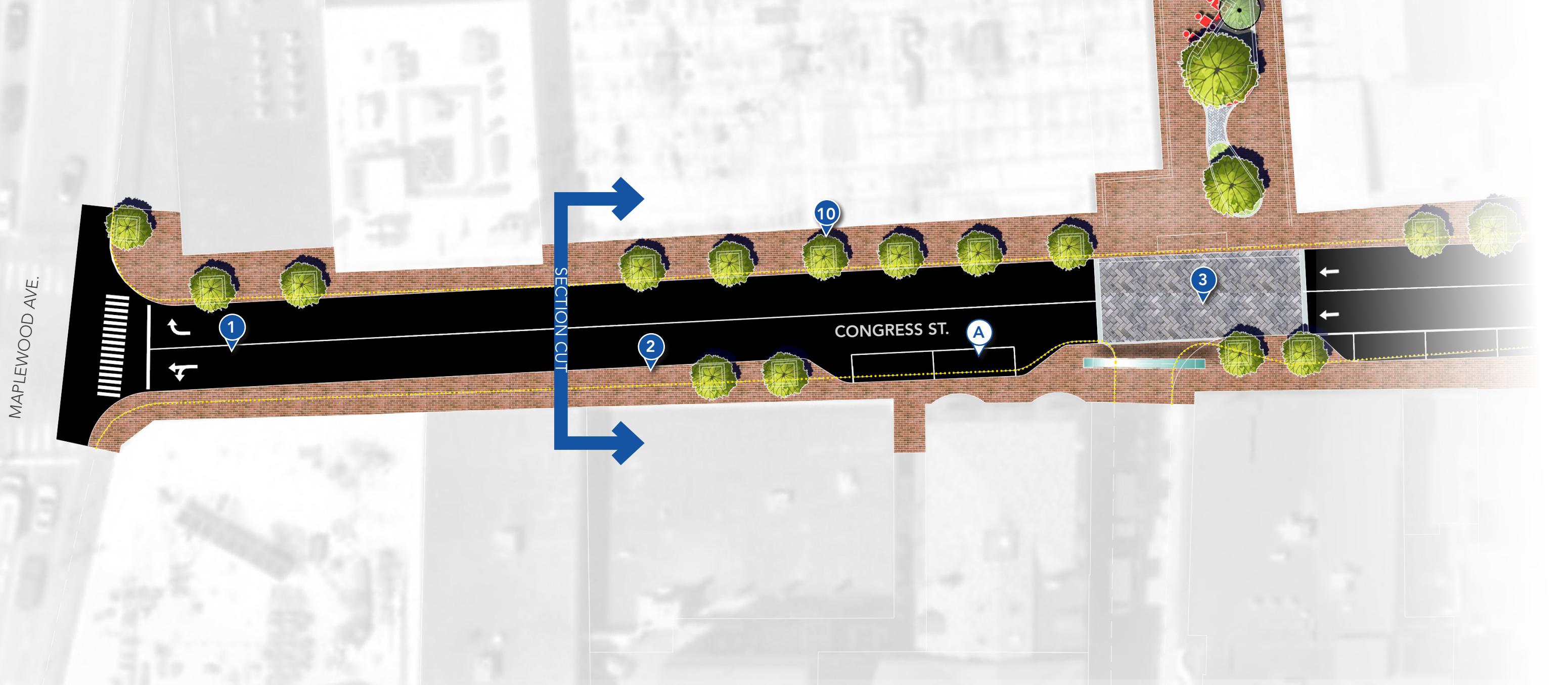
## Opportunities

- Mid-block pedestrian crossing to calm traffic
- Excess roadway pavement width
- City drainage improvement project underway
- Additional street trees
- Favorable solar orientation

## Recommendations

- Maintain existing northern curbline. Realign street
- Reduce existing vehicular travel lanes to 13'-0"
- Highlight the mid-block pedestrian crossing to calm traffic
- Plant new shade trees
- Install improved site lighting
- Install improved wayfinding and directional signage



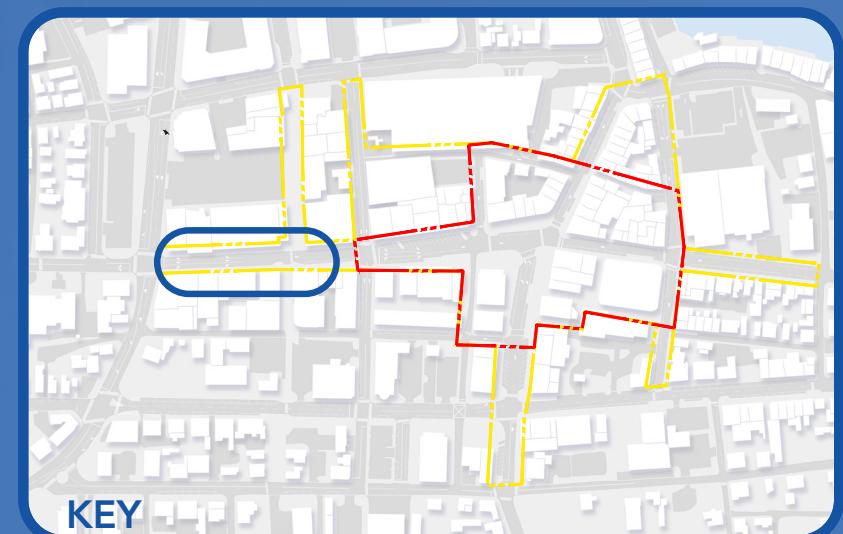


### Recommended Site Improvements

- 1 Eliminate Excess Street Width / Turn Lanes
- 2 Expand Sidewalk Area
- 3 Create Wide Pedestrian Crossing with Modular Pavers
- 10 Plant Street Trees

### Additional Street-Specific Improvements

- A Add 2 Parallel Parking Spaces





## Challenges

- Narrow sidewalks on the north side of the street
- Highest volume of pedestrians is on the north side of Congress St.
- Pedestrian crosswalk signals difficult for users and drivers to see
- Three lanes of traffic at Fleet St./ Congress St. intersection
- Diagonal parking impacts sidewalk space due to hoods of cars
- Diagonal parking is difficult for many users to back out of
- Longitudinal slope is + 5% in some areas.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

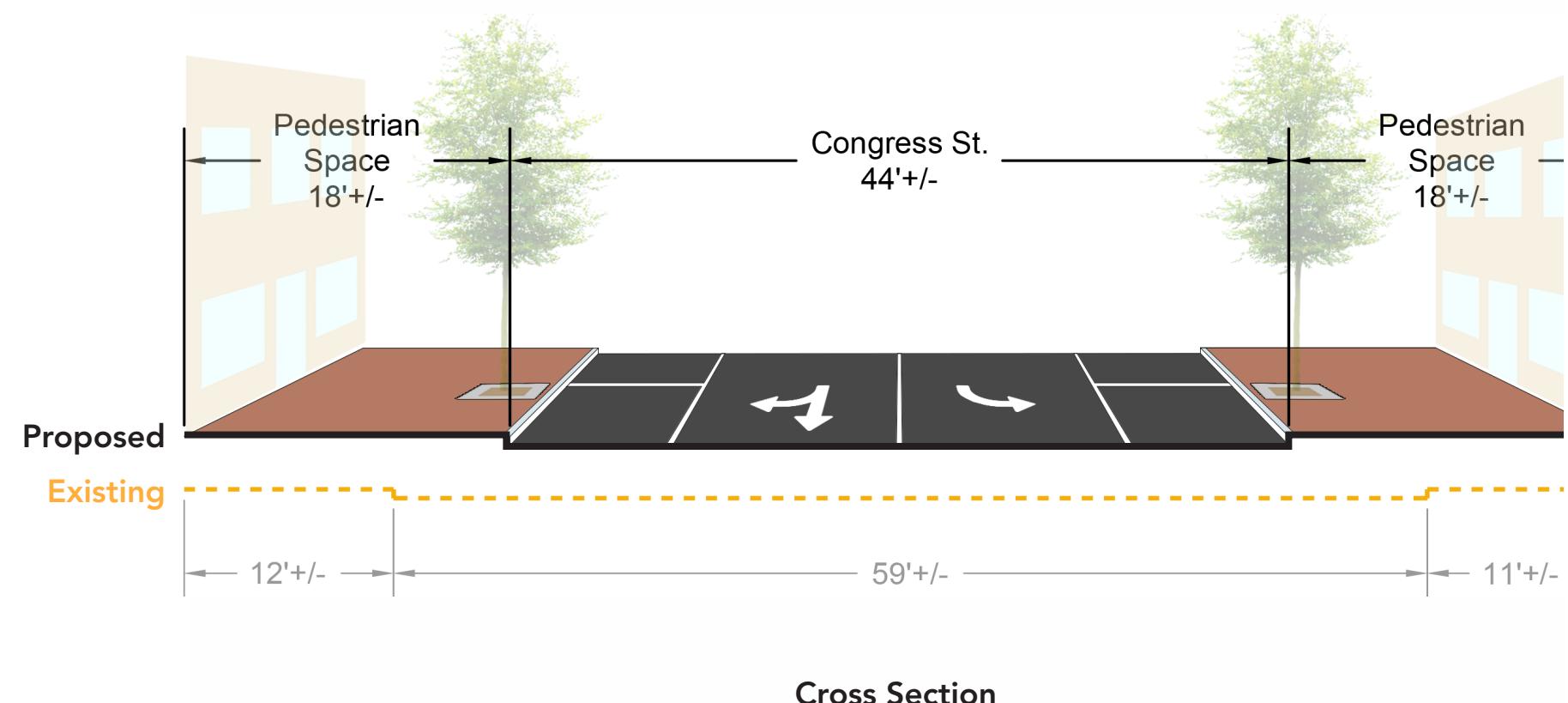


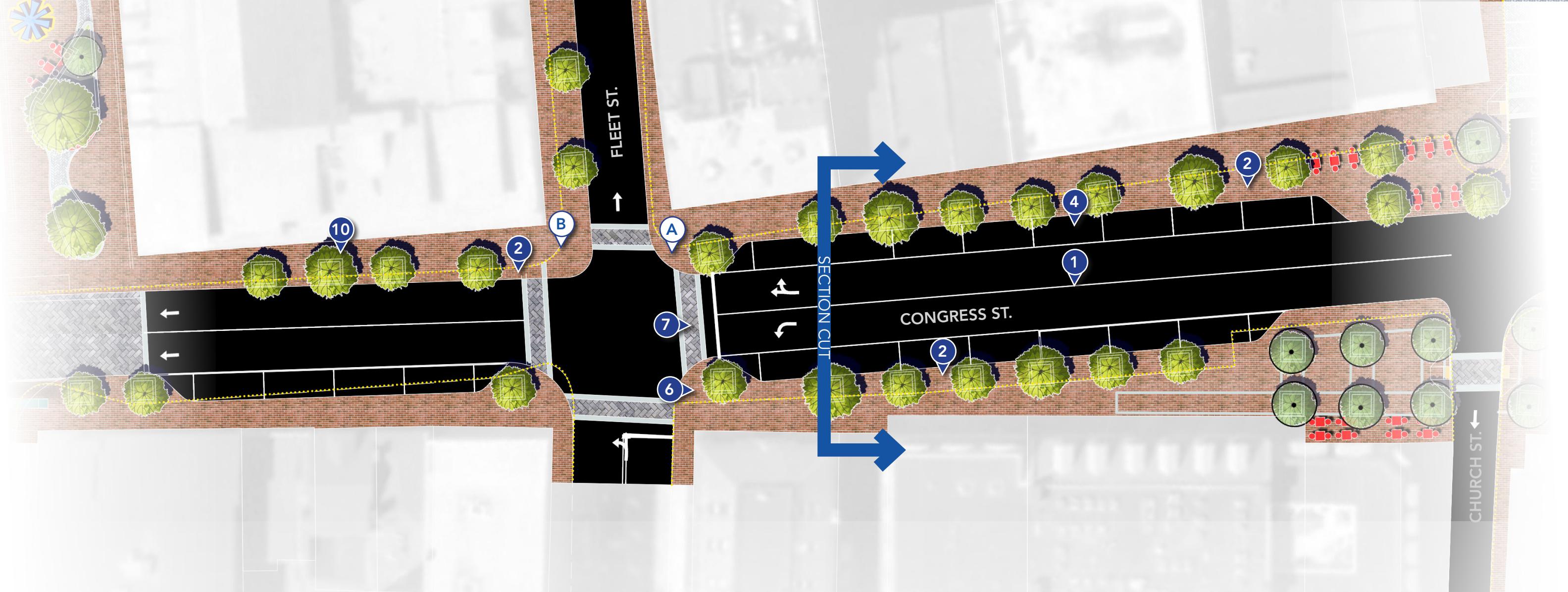
## Opportunities

- Excess roadway pavement width
- City drainage improvement project underway
- Additional street trees
- Favorable sun orientation

## Recommendations

- Reduce travel lanes to two (2) 13'-0" lanes
- Reconfigure diagonal parking to be parallel parking on the north side of the street
- Establish new centerline, realign street, reconfigure neck downs.
- Upgrade pedestrian crossing signals
- Plant new shade trees
- Install improved site lighting
- Install improved wayfinding and directional signage



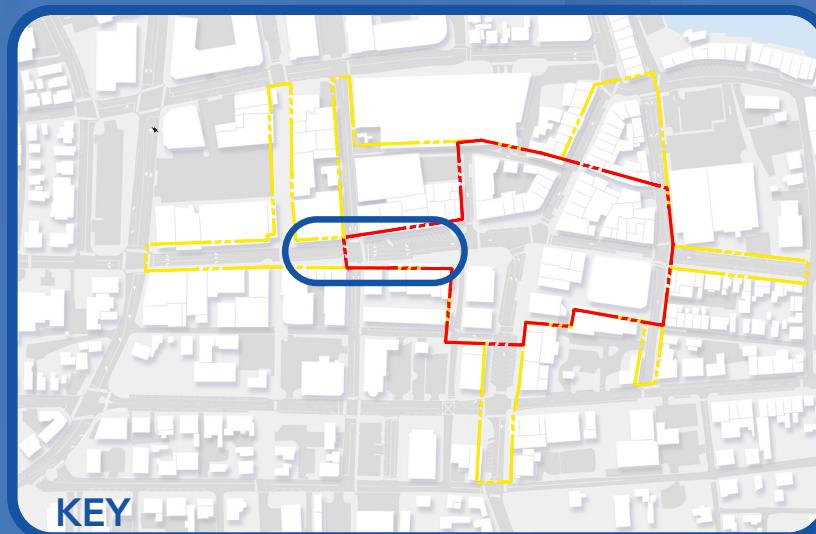


### Recommended Site Improvements

- 1 Eliminate Excess Street Width / Turn Lanes
- 2 Expand Sidewalk Area
- 4 Replace Diagonal Parking with Parallel Parking
- 6 Create Curb Neck-downs
- 7 Install Modular Paver Crosswalks
- 10 Plant Street Trees

### Additional Street-Specific Improvements

- A Improve Pedestrian Crosswalk Signals
- B Wayfinding Signage





## Challenges

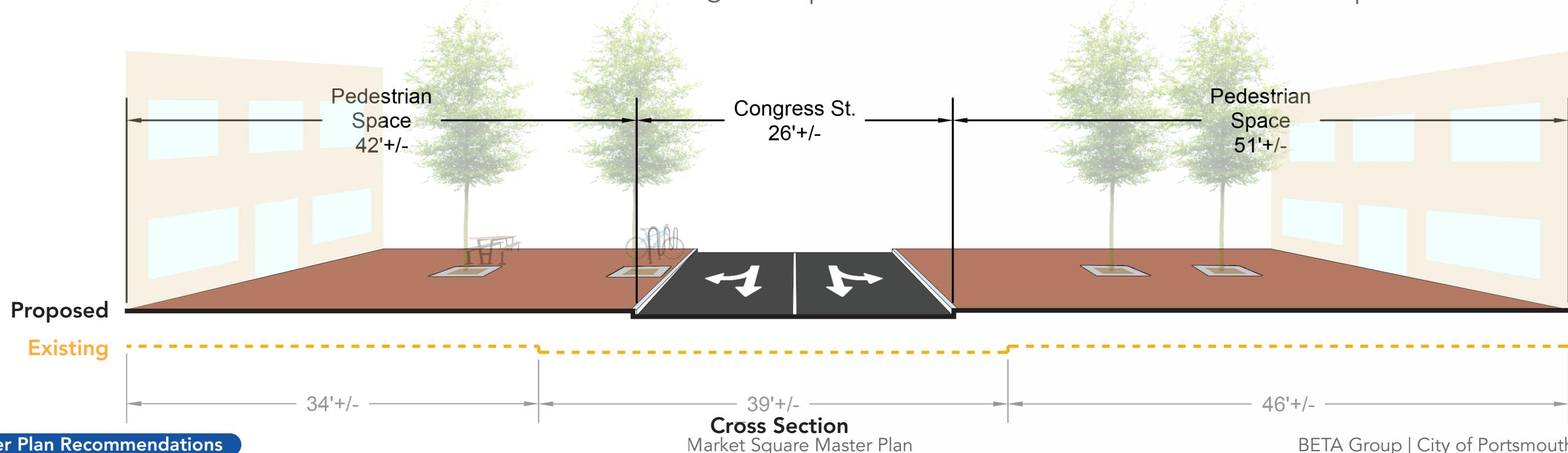
- Wide and undefined convergence of travel lanes
- Parking on north side of street contributes to confusion
- Open areas of sidewalk contain granite stairs, seating
- Diagonal on-street parking is difficult for many users to back out of

## Opportunities

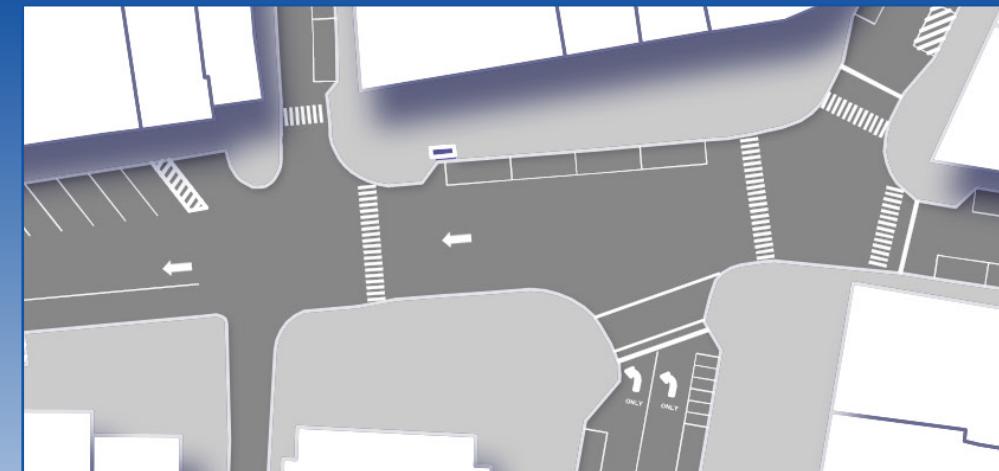
- Excess roadway pavement width
- City sewer separation/drainage improvement project underway
- Favorable sun orientation

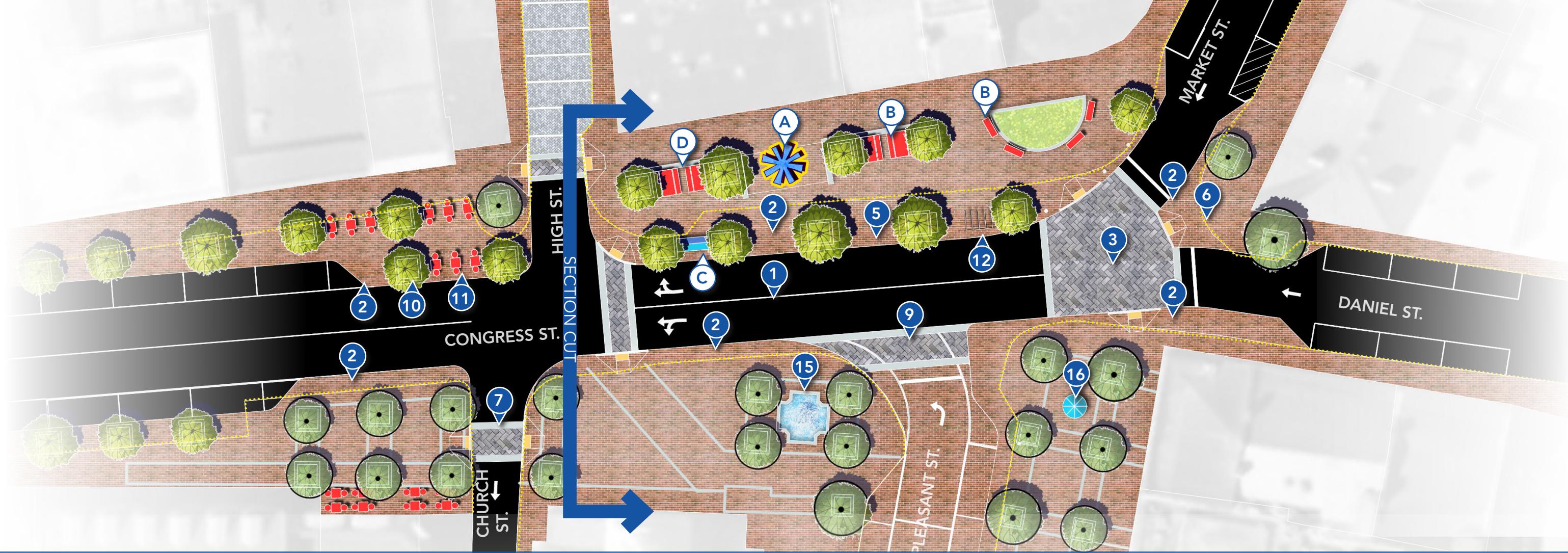
## Recommendations

- Reduce travel lanes to two (2) 13'-0" lanes
- Eliminate parking on north side of street - High St. to Market St.
- Establish new centerline, realign street, re-configure neck downs
- Install modular paver crosswalk/plaza at intersection
- Install an array of types of public seating and tables
- Create raised planters with seat walls
- Protect existing trees, plant new shade trees
- Install improved site lighting
- Install improved wayfinding and directional signage
- Enhance existing fountain
- Enhance existing kiosk
- Enhance bus stop shelter



## EXISTING CONDITIONS





### Recommended Site Improvements

- 1 Eliminate Excess Street Width / Turn Lanes
- 2 Expand Sidewalk Area
- 3 Create Wide Pedestrian Crossing with Modular Pavers
- 5 Eliminate Some On-street Parking to Widen Sidewalks
- 6 Create Curb Neck-downs
- 7 Install Modular Paver Crosswalks
- 9 Install Removable Bollards for Street Closure
- 10 Plant Street Trees

### Additional Street-Specific Improvements

- 11 Create Outdoor Dining
- 12 Install Bike Racks
- 15 Enhance Fountain
- 16 Enhance Kiosk



Public Art



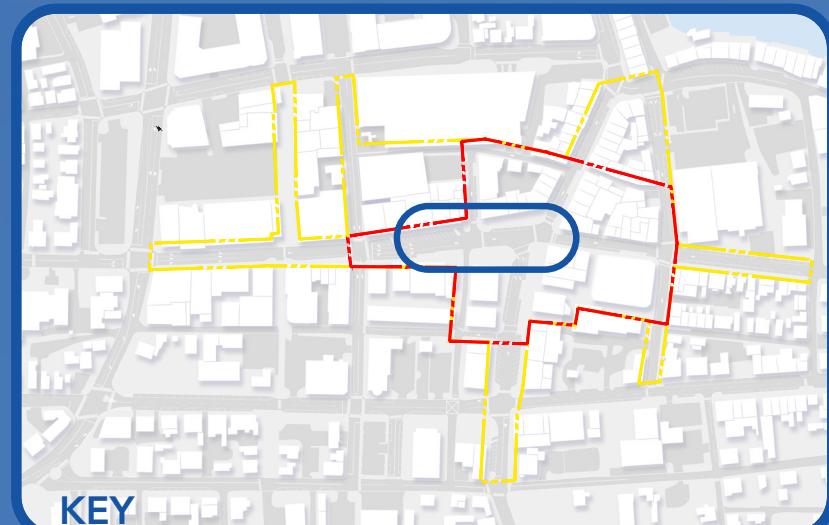
Public Seating/Tables



New Bus Shelter



Granite Seat Wall

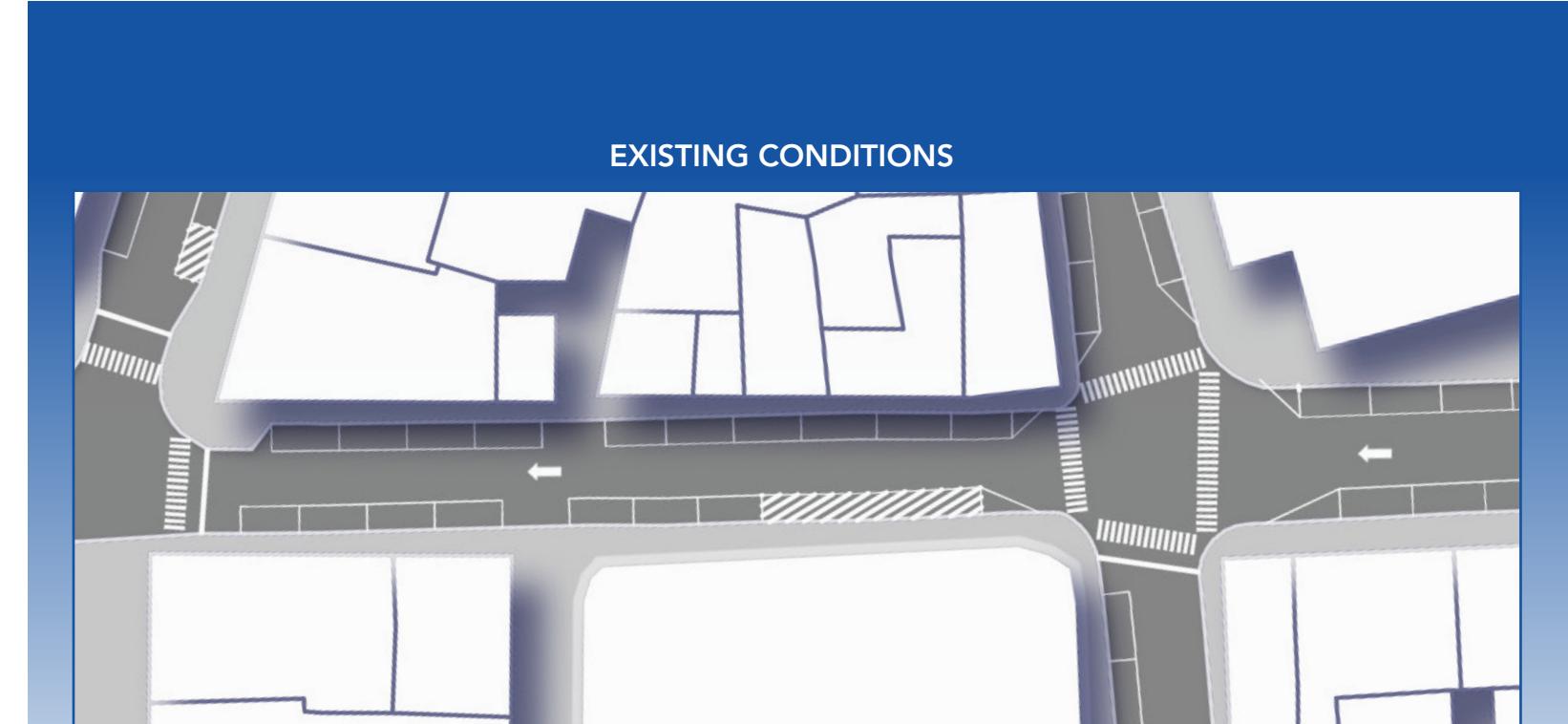




## DANIEL STREET

### Challenges

- Major arterial street carries much of the through traffic
- Setting sun glare impacts drivers negatively at certain times of year
- Traffic speed is higher than on other streets in study area.
- Sidewalks are narrow, some are not brick
- No seating or other site amenities, few street trees
- Non-commercial uses, vacant buildings create a visual imbalance

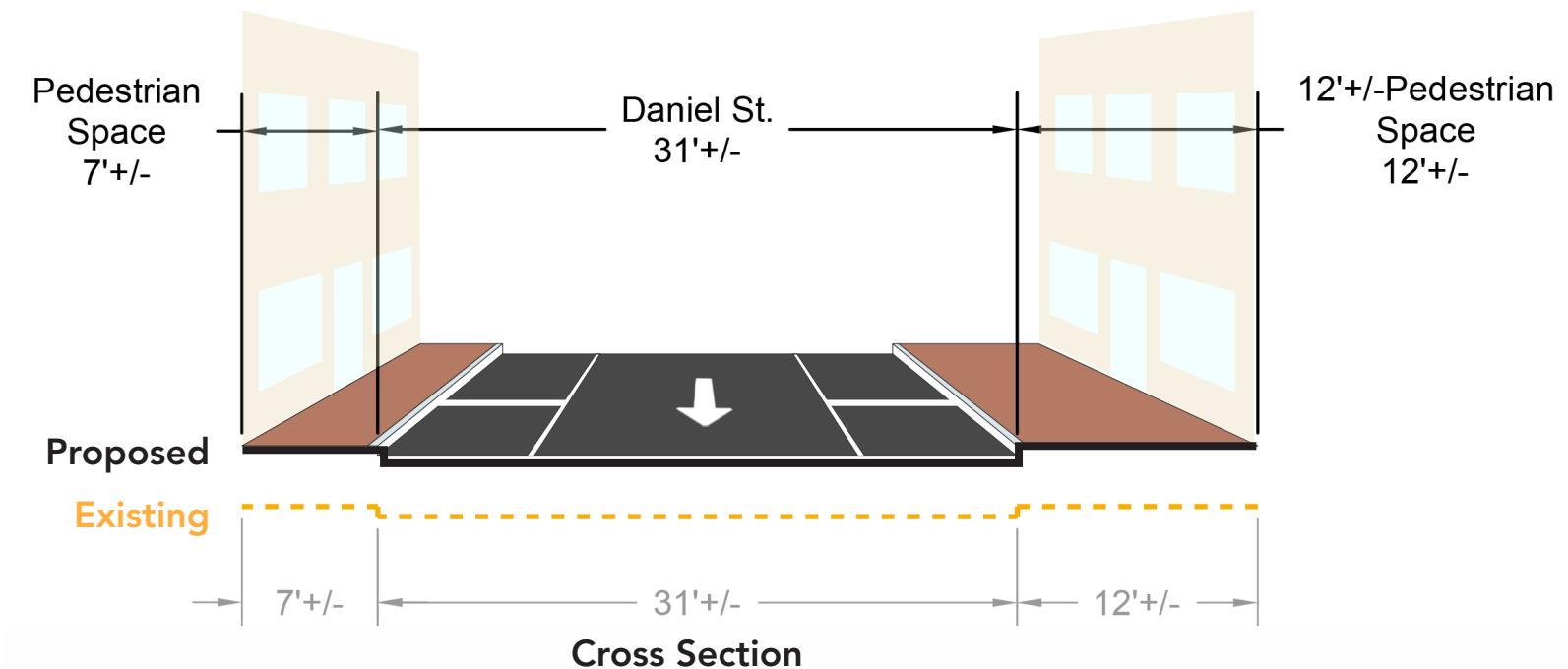


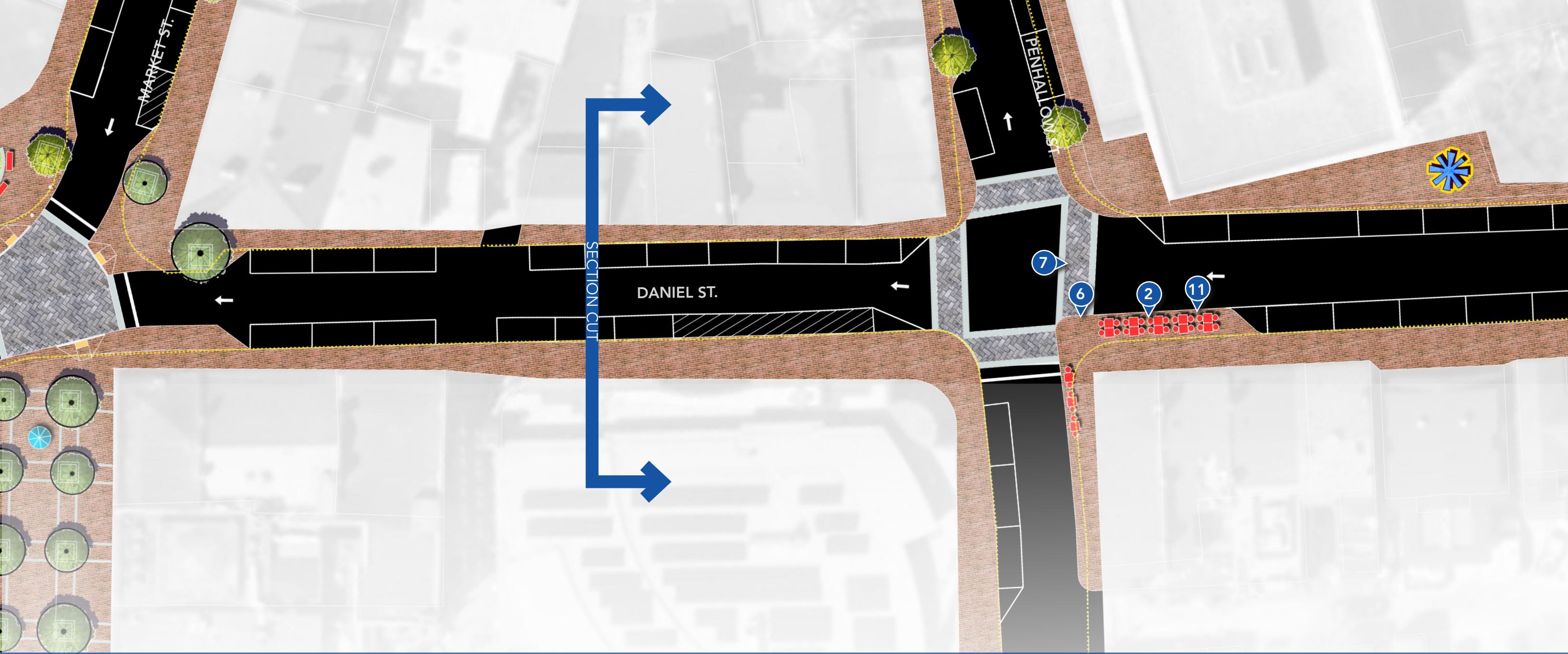
### Opportunities

- Busy pedestrian corridor between the Square and the Memorial Bridge parking lot
- Vibrant businesses on the south side of street
- Favorable sun orientation

### Recommendations

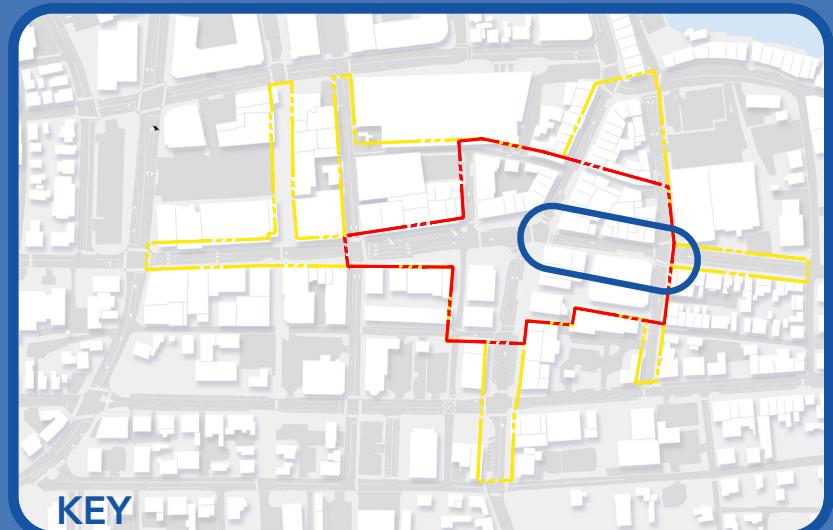
- Reconfigure and add neck downs
- Provide areas for outdoor seating /dining
- Install enhanced crosswalks at Penhallow Street
- Protect existing trees, plant new shade trees
- Install improved site lighting
- Install improved wayfinding and directional signage





### Recommended Site Improvements

- 2 Expand Sidewalk Area
- 6 Create Curb Neck-downs
- 7 Install Modular Paver Crosswalks
- 11 Create Outdoor Dining

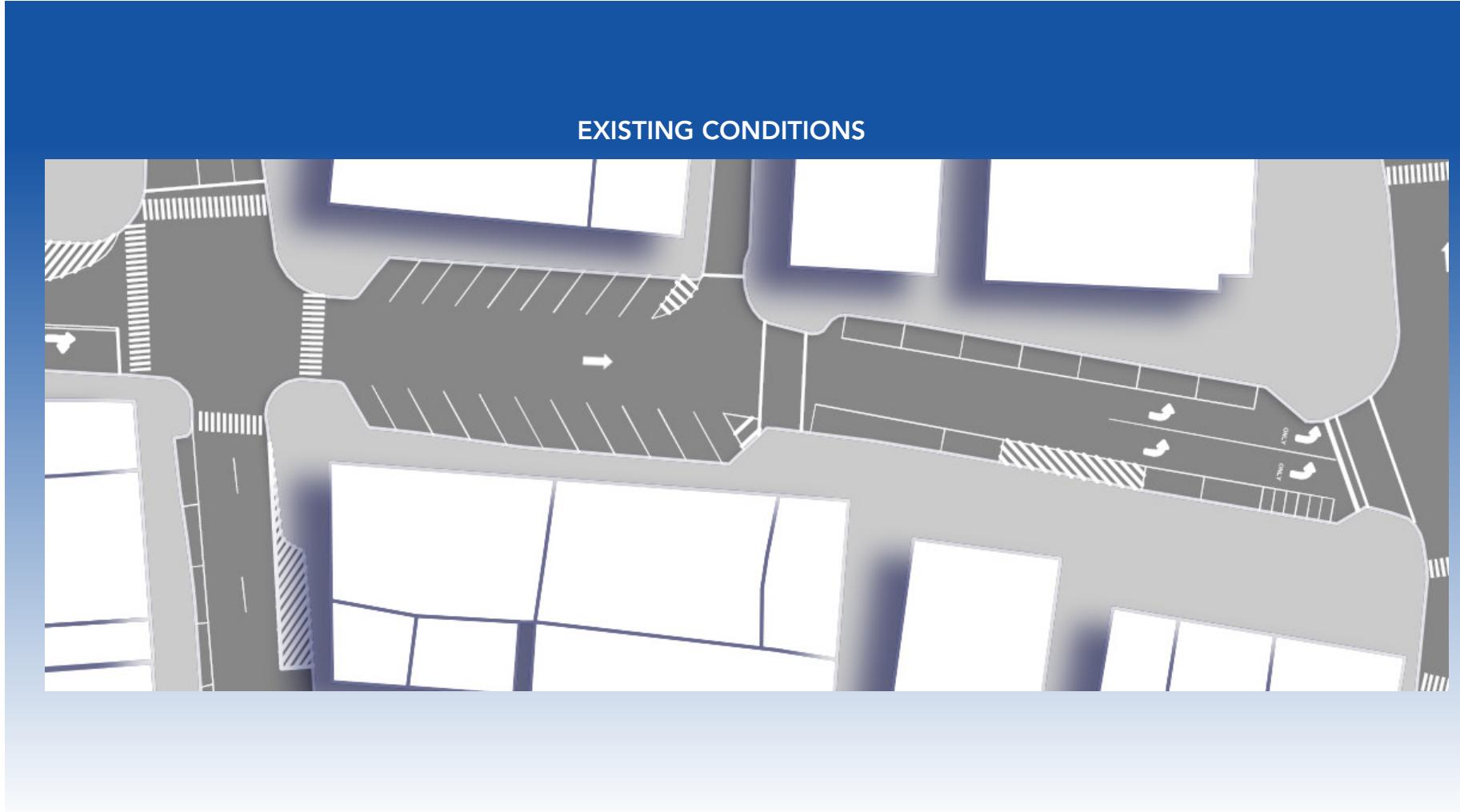




# PLEASANT STREET

## Challenges

- Corridor is the most-direct vehicular connection from State St. into Market Square, as well as to the Hanover St. Garage
- Two-block long corridor is used as northbound link to make connection to travel westbound on Islington St.
- Intersection of Congress St., Daniel St., Market St. is difficult for drivers to navigate



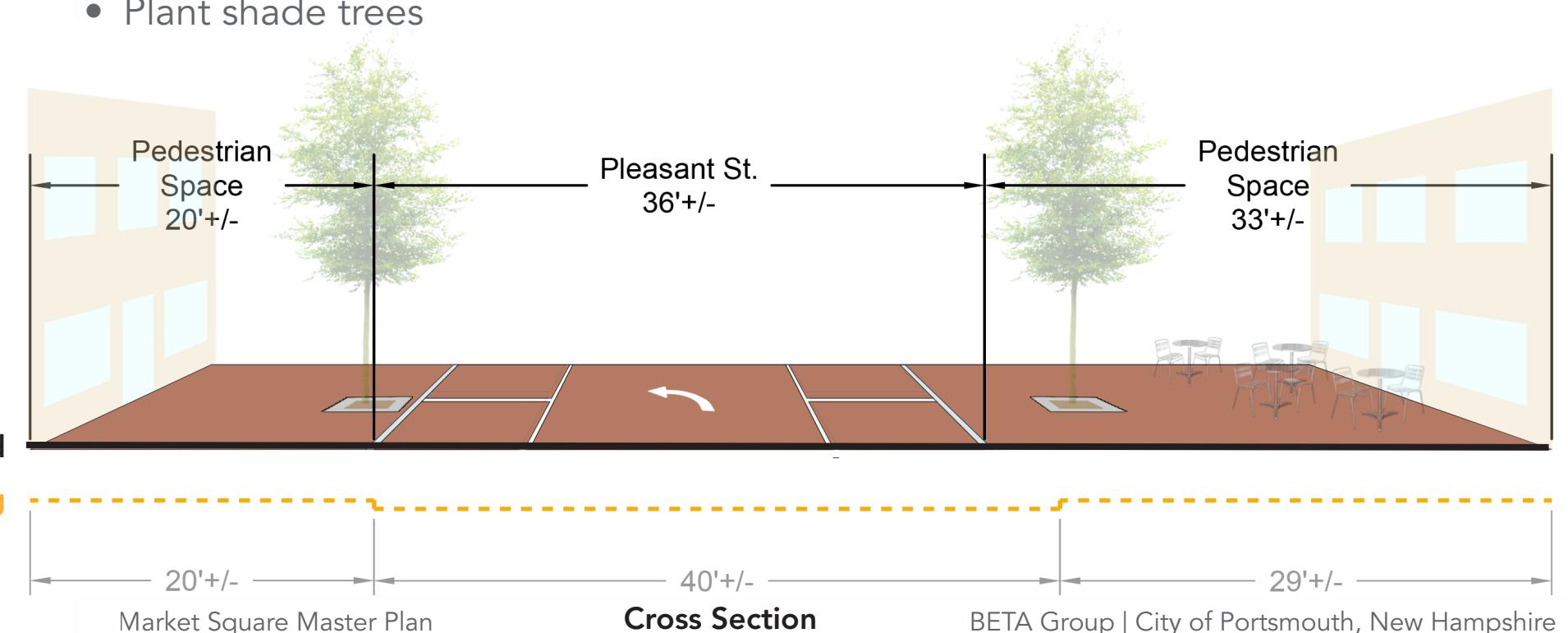
## Opportunities

- Corridor has extensive on-street parking
- Sidewalks are a primary walking route between Square and City Hall

- Install modular paver or similar textured surface
- Re-profile roadway to eliminate vertical curb transitions
- Install improved site lighting
- Install improved wayfinding and directional signage
- Plant shade trees

## Recommendations

- Create curbline neck-downs at State St.
- Enhance crosswalks at State Street
- Eliminate one left turn lane at Congress St. intersection
- Realign street. Create one 18'-0" travel lane north
- Reconfigure parallel parking spaces as well as diagonal spaces
- Widen sidewalks, provide areas for seating/dining
- Install removable bollards for flexible street closure at State St. Porter St. and Congress St.



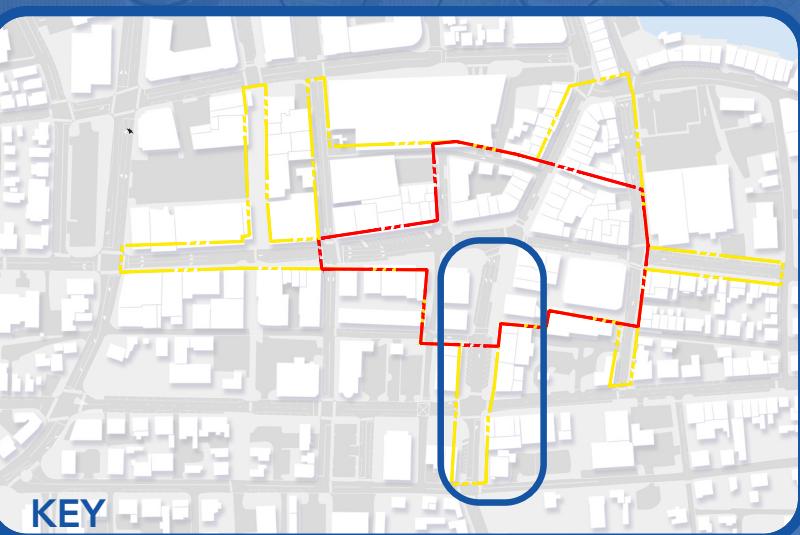


### Recommended Site Improvements

- 1 Eliminate Excess Street Width / Turn Lanes
- 2 Expand Sidewalk Area
- 6 Create Curb Neck-downs
- 7 Install Modular Paver Crosswalks
- 8 Install Modular Pavers in Roadway Surface
- 9 Install Removable Bollards for Street Closure
- 10 Plant Street Trees

### Additional Street-Specific Improvements

- A Catenary Lighting
- B Public Art
- C Wayfinding Signage





# MARKET STREET

## Challenges

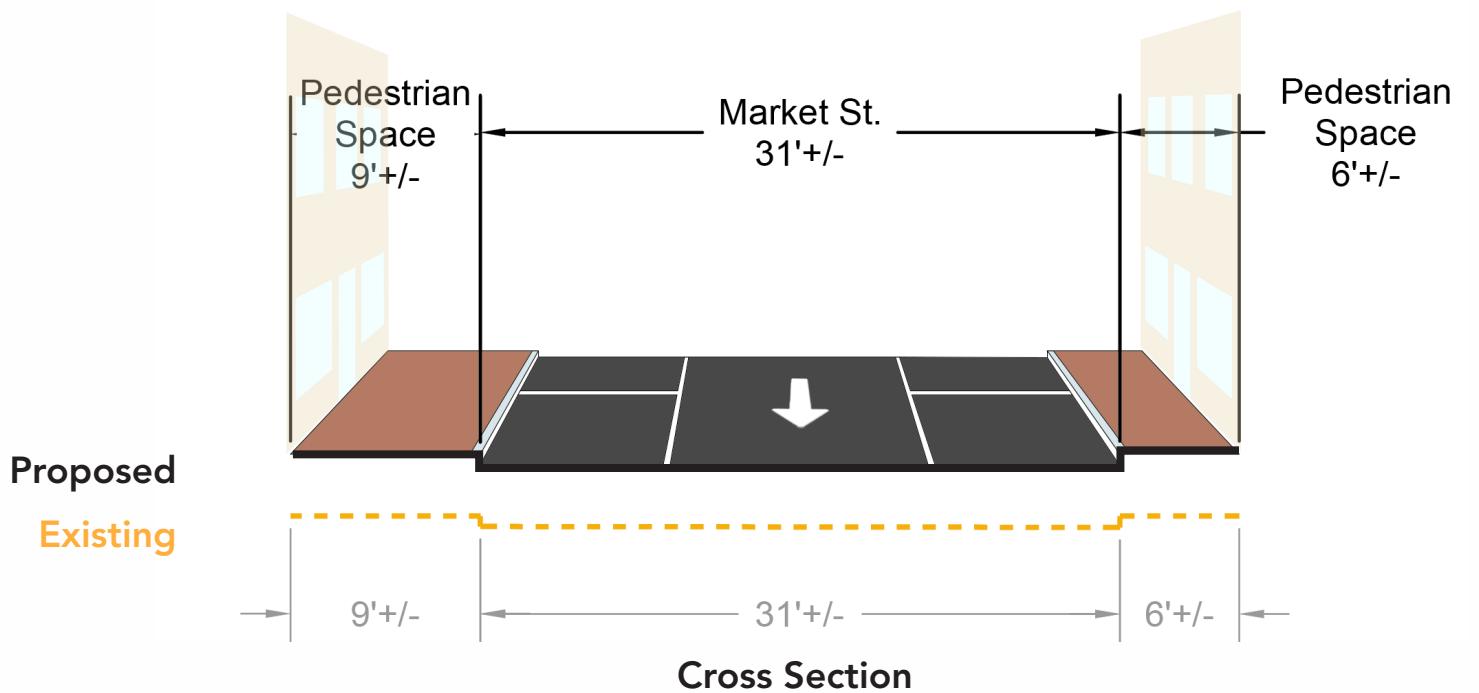
- Default route/primary street carrying visitors into the Square
- Street carries much of the south-bound through traffic
- Sidewalks are narrow
- No public seating or other site amenities

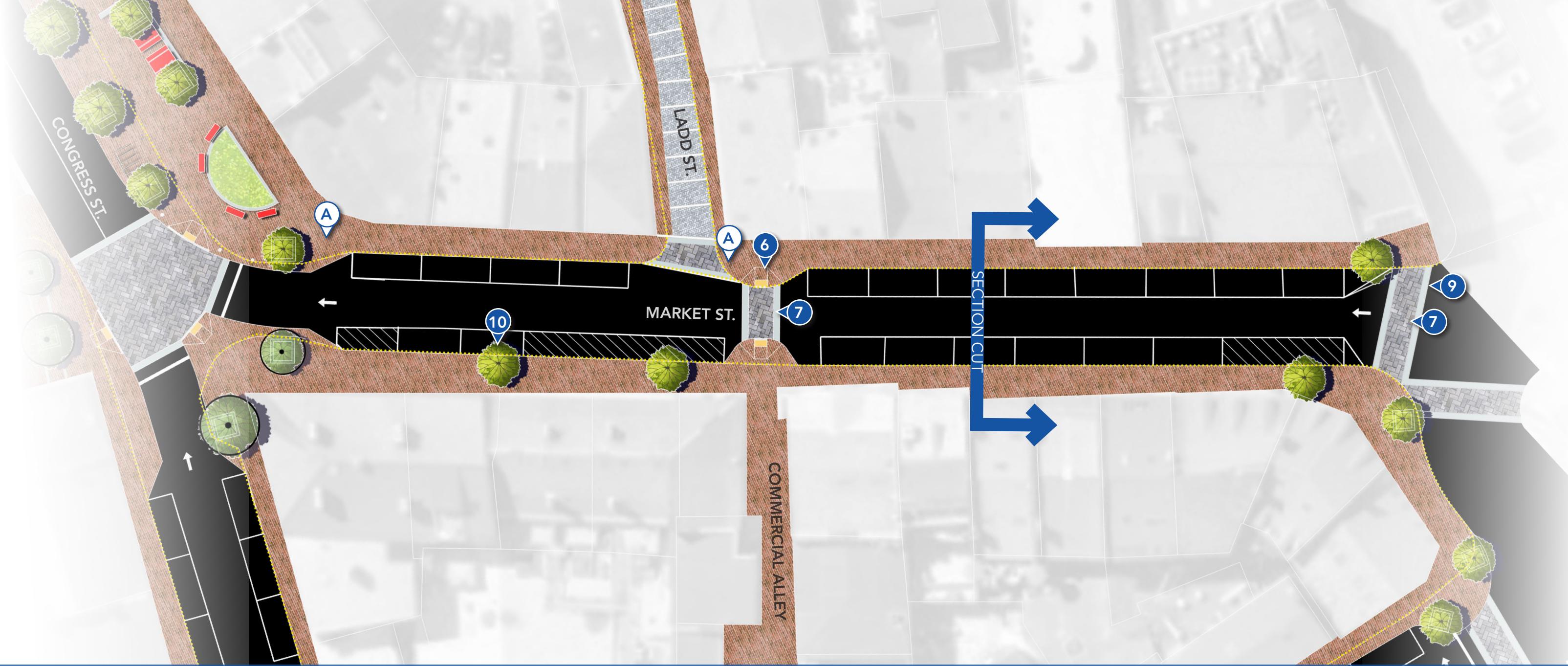
## Opportunities

- Interesting buildings, signage, brick sidewalks, period lighting, and the vibrant businesses and restaurants create a signature 'gateway' to the City
- Direct, walkable access mid-block via Commercial Alley

## Recommendations

- Reconfigure parallel parking
- Enhance Bow St. intersections
- Enhance Commercial Alley mid-block crosswalk
- Reconfigure curb-line neck-downs at Congress St.
- Install removable bollards for street closure.
- Install improved site lighting
- Install improved wayfinding and directional signage
- Plant shade trees



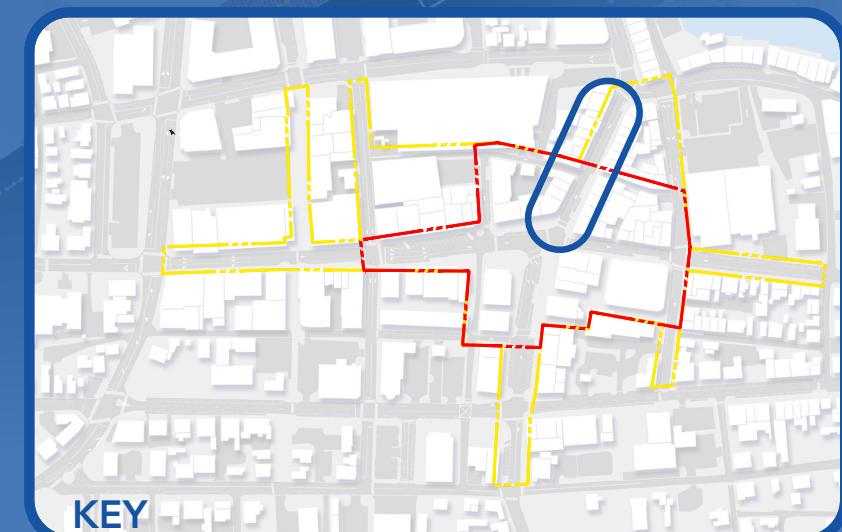


### Recommended Site Improvements

- 6 Create Curb Neck-downs
- 7 Install Modular Paver Crosswalks
- 9 Install Removable Bollards for Street Closure
- 10 Plant Street Trees

### Additional Street-Specific Improvements

- A Wayfinding Signage





## Challenges

- Street carries northbound through traffic bypassing Square
- Sidewalks are narrow, some are not brick
- No seating or other site amenities
- Non-commercial uses, vacant buildings create a visual imbalance

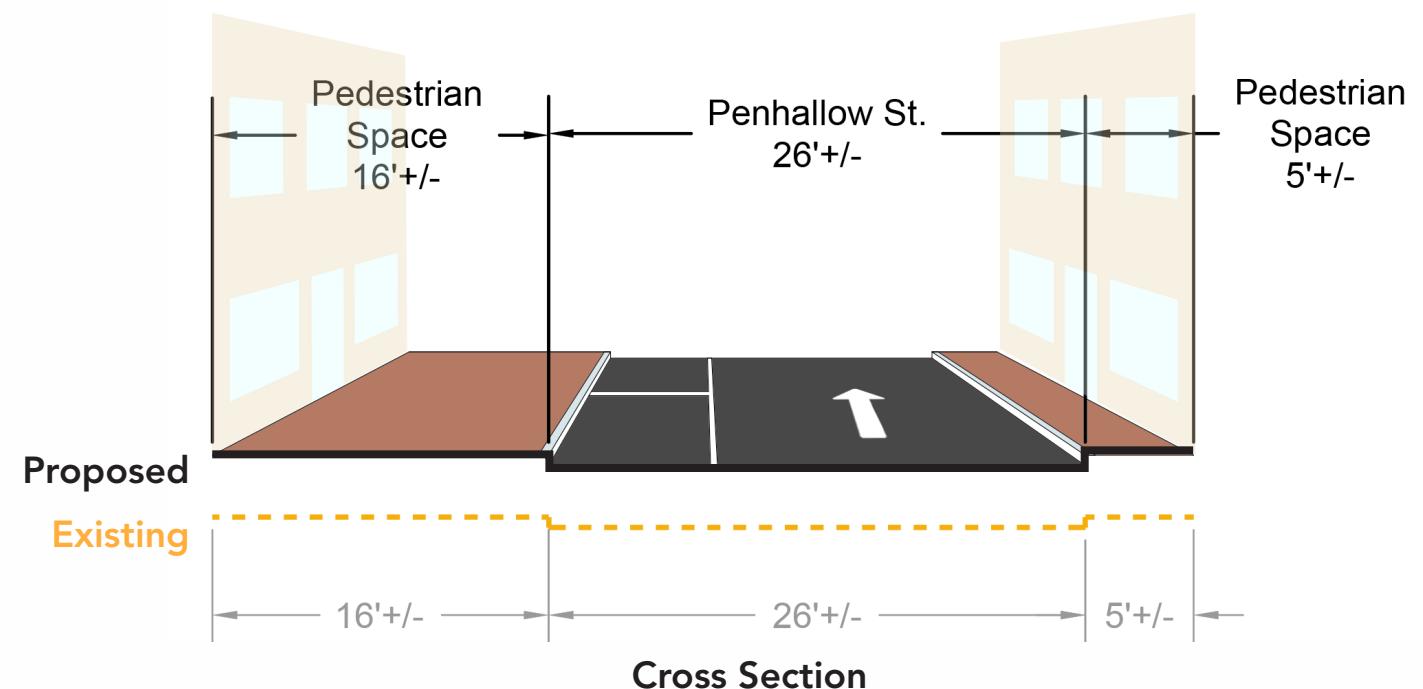
## Opportunities

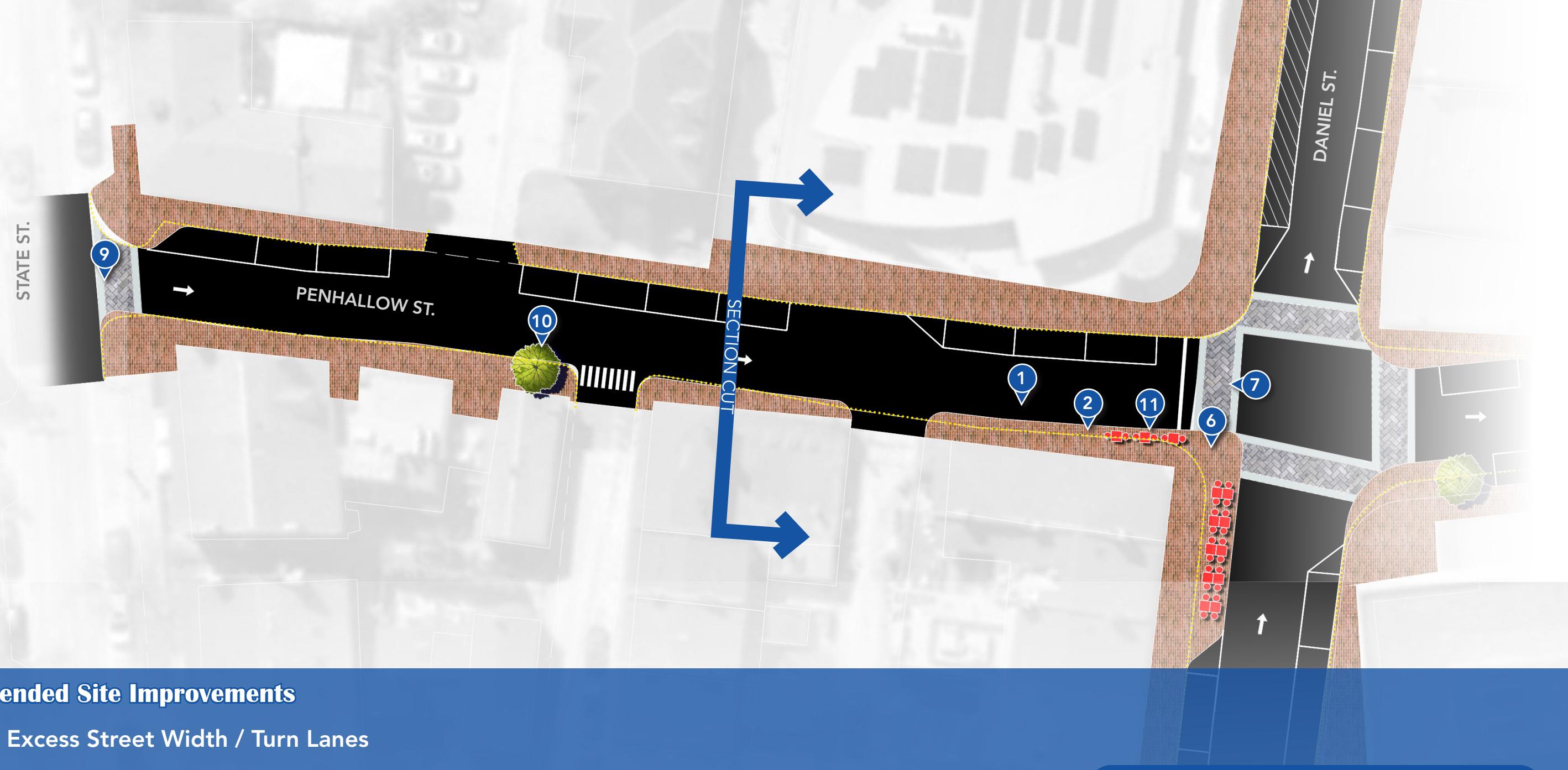
- Waterfront views to the north
- Vibrant businesses on the west side of the street
- Direct walkable access mid-block via Commercial Alley to Square

## Recommendations

- Eliminate one turning lane at the north end of the street
- Realign street and establish one 18'-0" wide travel lane
- Reconfigure parallel parking to east side of street
- Widen western sidewalk, provide areas for outdoor seating/dining
- Install improved site lighting
- Install improved wayfinding and directional signage
- Relocate electric lines underground
- Plant shade trees

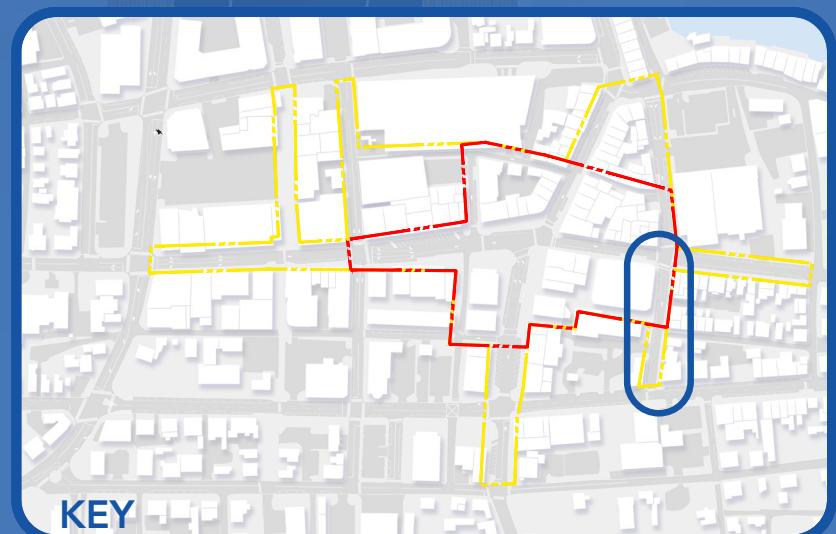
### EXISTING CONDITIONS





### Recommended Site Improvements

- 1 Eliminate Excess Street Width / Turn Lanes
- 2 Expand Sidewalk Area
- 6 Create Curb Neck-downs
- 7 Install Modular Paver Crosswalks
- 9 Install Removable Bollards for Street Closure
- 10 Plant Street Trees
- 11 Create Outdoor Dining





## Challenges

- Street carries northbound through traffic bypassing Square
- Sidewalks are narrow
- No seating or other site amenities
- Non-commercial uses, vacant buildings create a visual imbalance

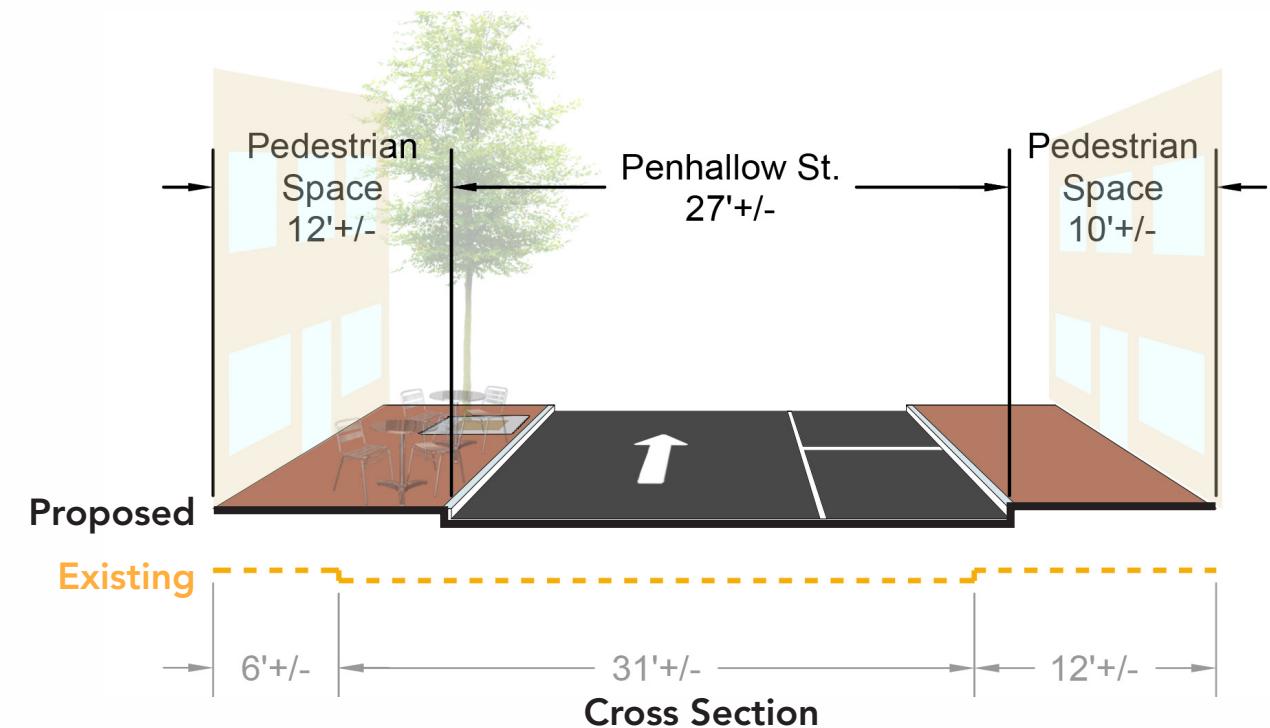
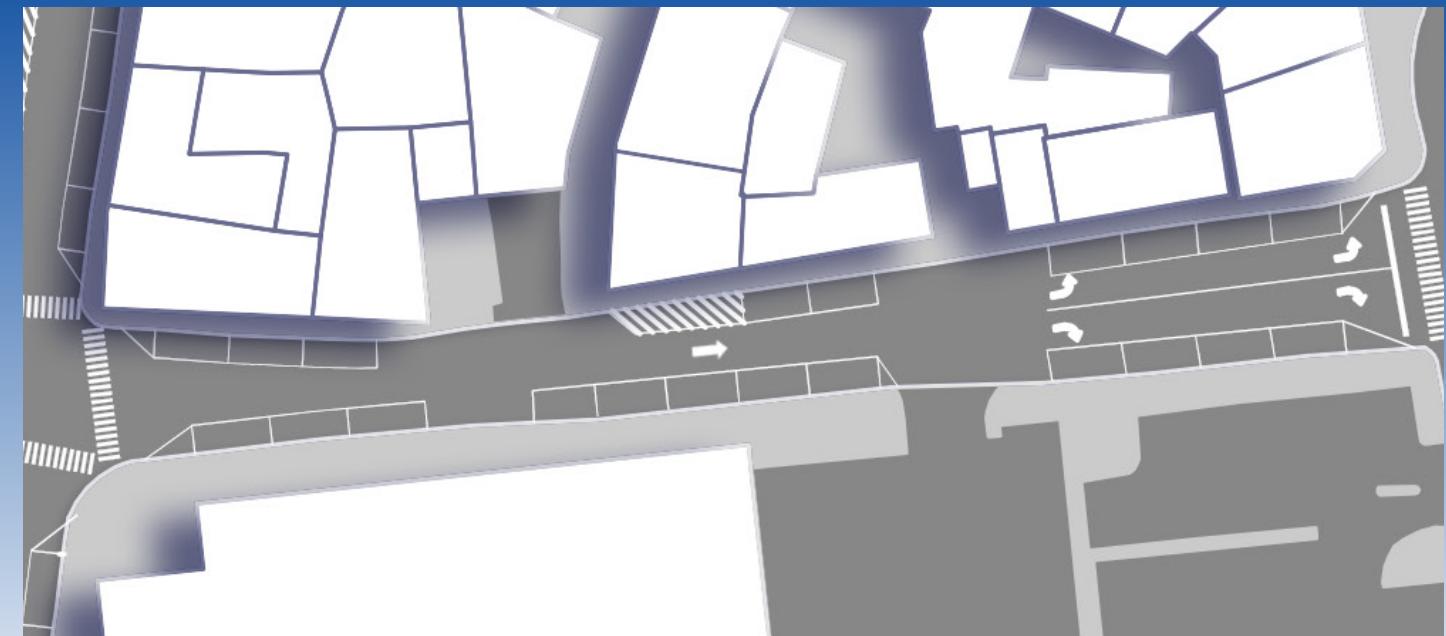
## Opportunities

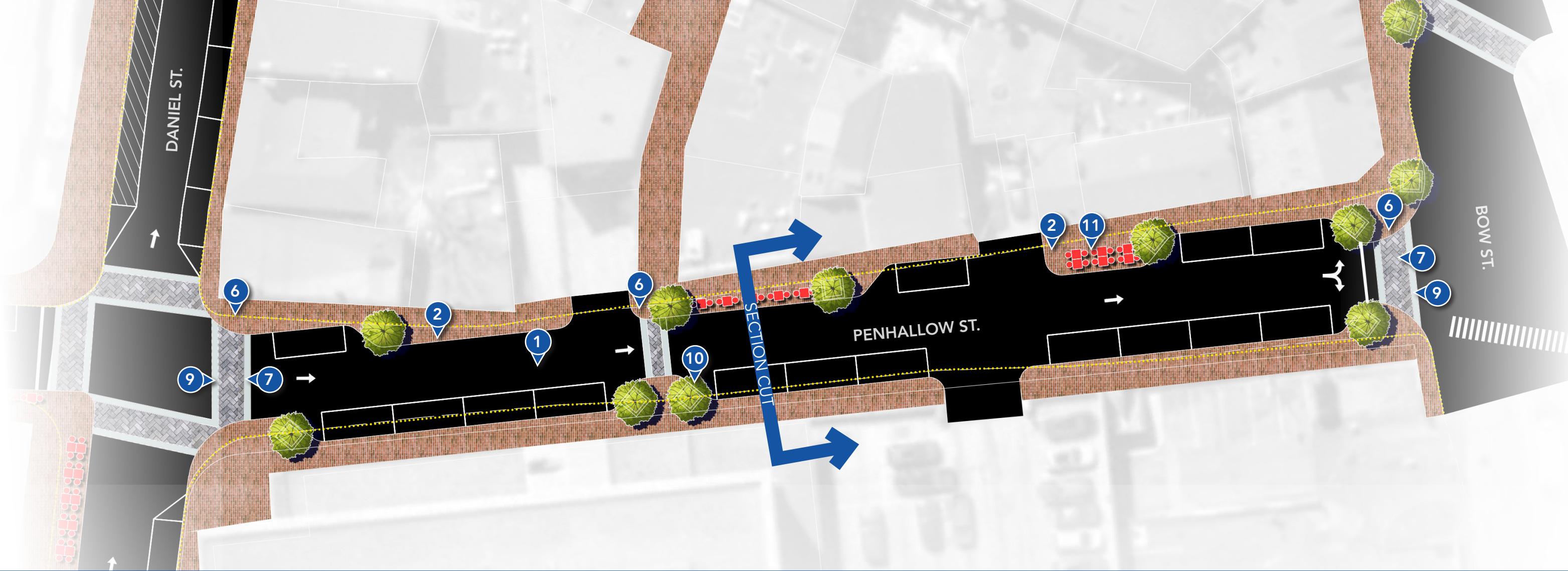
- Waterfront views to the north
- Vibrant businesses on the west side of the street
- Direct walkable access mid-block via Commercial Alley to Square

## Recommendations

- Create neck-downs at Daniel St. intersection and Bow St. intersection
- Install improved site lighting
- Install improved wayfinding and directional signage
- Relocate electric lines underground
- Partner with McIntyre building redevelopment project to obtain wider sidewalks on the east side of the street
- Plant shade trees

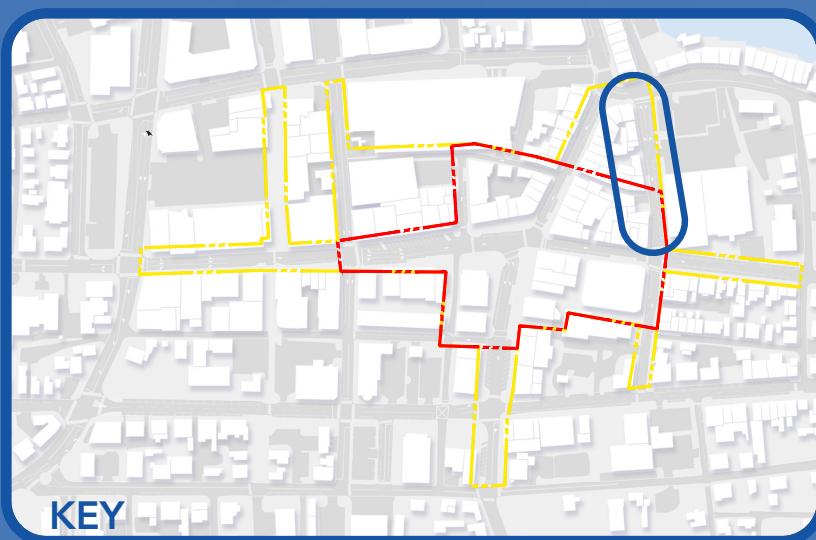
### EXISTING CONDITIONS





### Recommended Site Improvements

- 1 Eliminate Excess Street Width / Turn Lanes
- 2 Expand Sidewalk Area
- 6 Create Curb Neck-downs
- 7 Install Modular Paver Crosswalks
- 9 Install Removable Bollards for Street Closure
- 10 Plant Street Trees
- 11 Create Outdoor Dining





## FLEET STREET

### Challenges

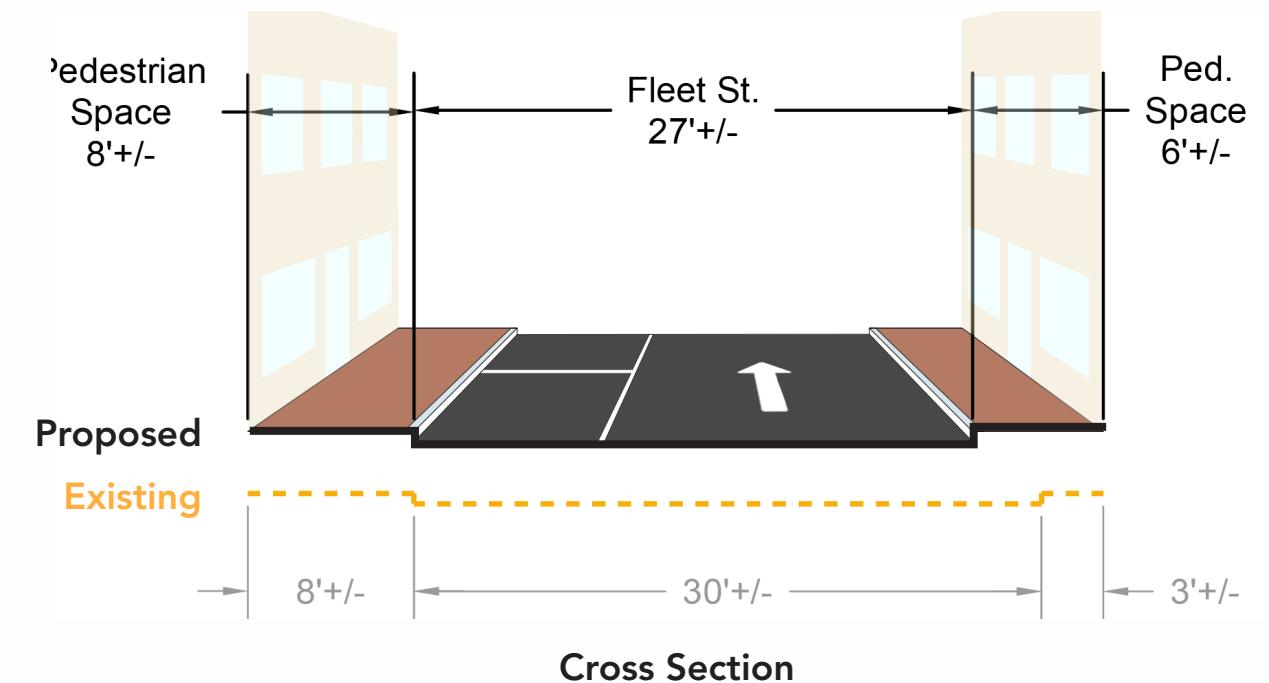
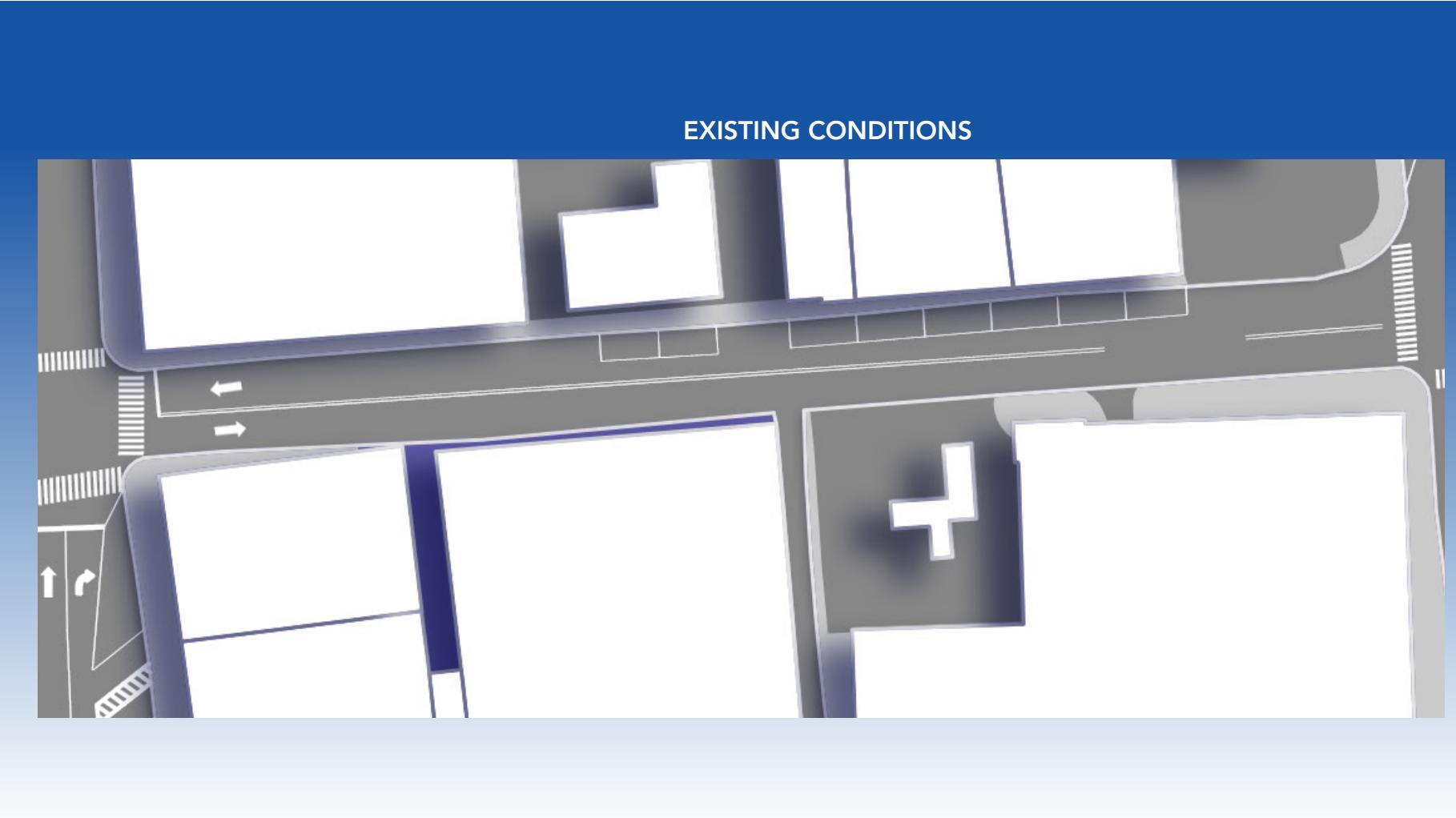
- Popular pedestrian route between restaurants and hotels, Hanover St., Garage and the Square
- Narrow street
- Narrow sidewalks

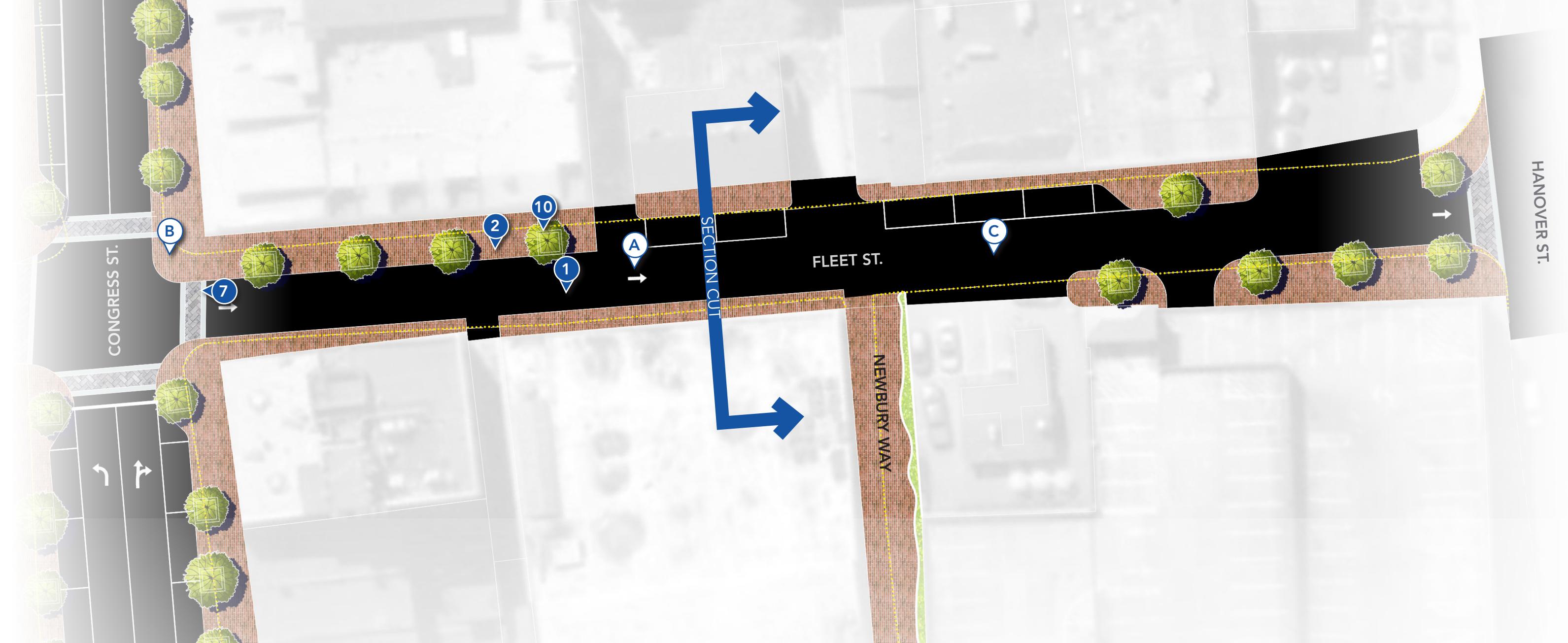
### Opportunities

- Existing signalized intersections for vehicles and pedestrians
- City Sewer Separation/Drainage Improvement Project 2025-2027
- Private development investment and hardscape improvements

### Recommendations

- Coordinate with Sewer Separation Project preferred design alternate to create one-way street pattern
- Create one 18'-0" travel lane north
- Reconfigure parallel parking spaces
- Install removable bollards for flexible street closure
- Widen eastern and western sidewalks
- Create areas for outdoor seating/dining
- Install improved site lighting
- Install improved wayfinding and directional signage
- Plant shade trees



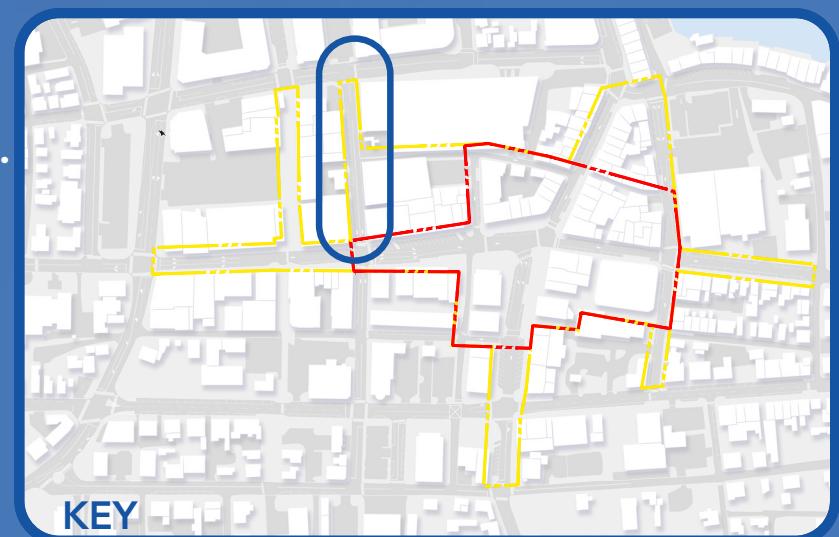


### Recommended Site Improvements

- 1 Eliminate Excess Street Width / Turn Lanes
- 2 Expand Sidewalk Area
- 7 Install Modular Paver Crosswalks
- 10 Plant Street Trees

### Additional Street-Specific Improvements

- A Single Northbound Travel Lane
- B Reconfigure Pedestrian Crossing Signals at Congress St.
- C Catenary Lighting





## Challenges

- Narrow street and sidewalk width
- High St. is the direct (pedestrian and street) access to the Hanover St. Garage
- No public seating or other site amenities
- Streets must provide residential vehicle access

## Opportunities

- Hanover St. Garage affords direct access to Market Square
- Pedestrian access through and around east and west to Hanover St.
- Direct, walkable access east-west between Fleet St. and Penhallow St. via Comm. Alley and Newbury Way
- Private development investment and hardscape improvements

## Recommendations

**(Implement approved plan improvements)**

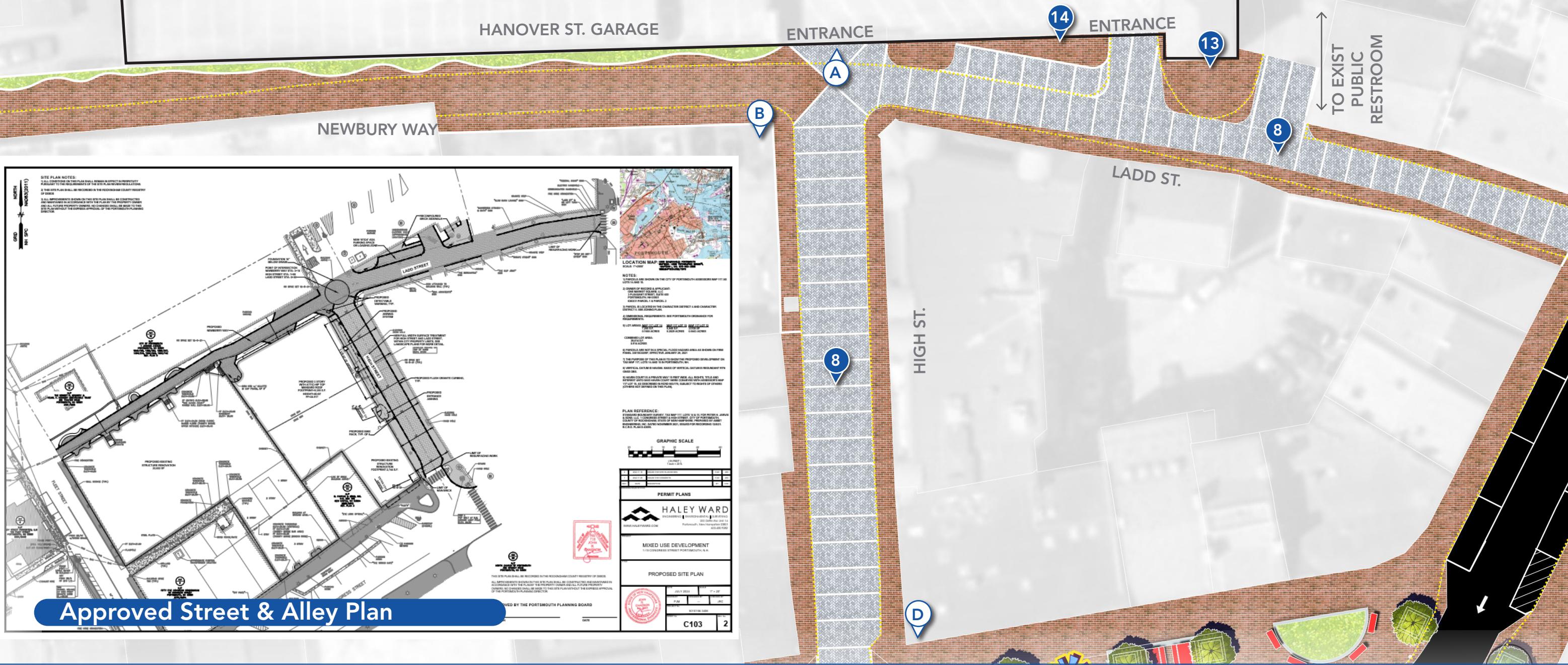
- Create human scale improvements to garage facade and pedestrian access
- Reconfigure the south side of garage to provide public restroom facility, bike storage, bike lockers, E-Bike charging, etc.
- Install improved wayfinding and directional signage

## EXISTING CONDITIONS



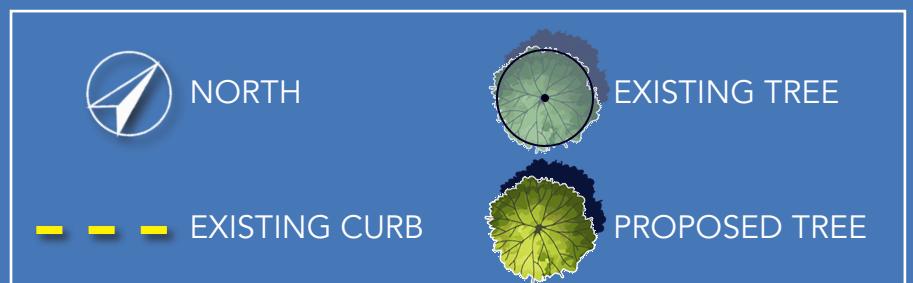
Create Human Scale Improvements - Enhance Garage Facade & Access





## Recommended Site Improvements

The City has approved a plan to reconstruct the streets and alley above. The design approach is aligned with the Master Plan objectives to improve connectivity and enhance the pedestrian experience. Improvements will include a 'woonerf' or curb-less street, surfaced with modular pavers. Catenary lighting will be installed overhead.

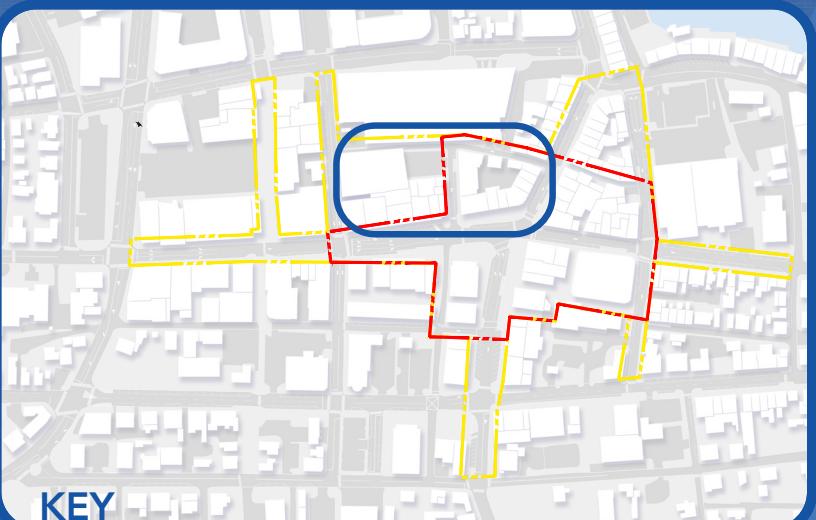




- 8 Install Modular Pavers in Roadway Surface
- 13 Construct Public Restrooms
- 14 Create Bike Storage

## Additional Street-Specific Improvements

- A Enhance Pedestrian Access in/ out of Garage
- B Install Wayfinding Signage



## Challenges

- Important and well-used pedestrian route between Worth Parking Lot restaurants and hotels, Hanover St., and Chestnut St. as well as the Square
- Visually 'disconnected' to the Square, yet is an essential pedestrian corridor
- Modern buildings and surfaces visually differ from historic appearance associated with the Square

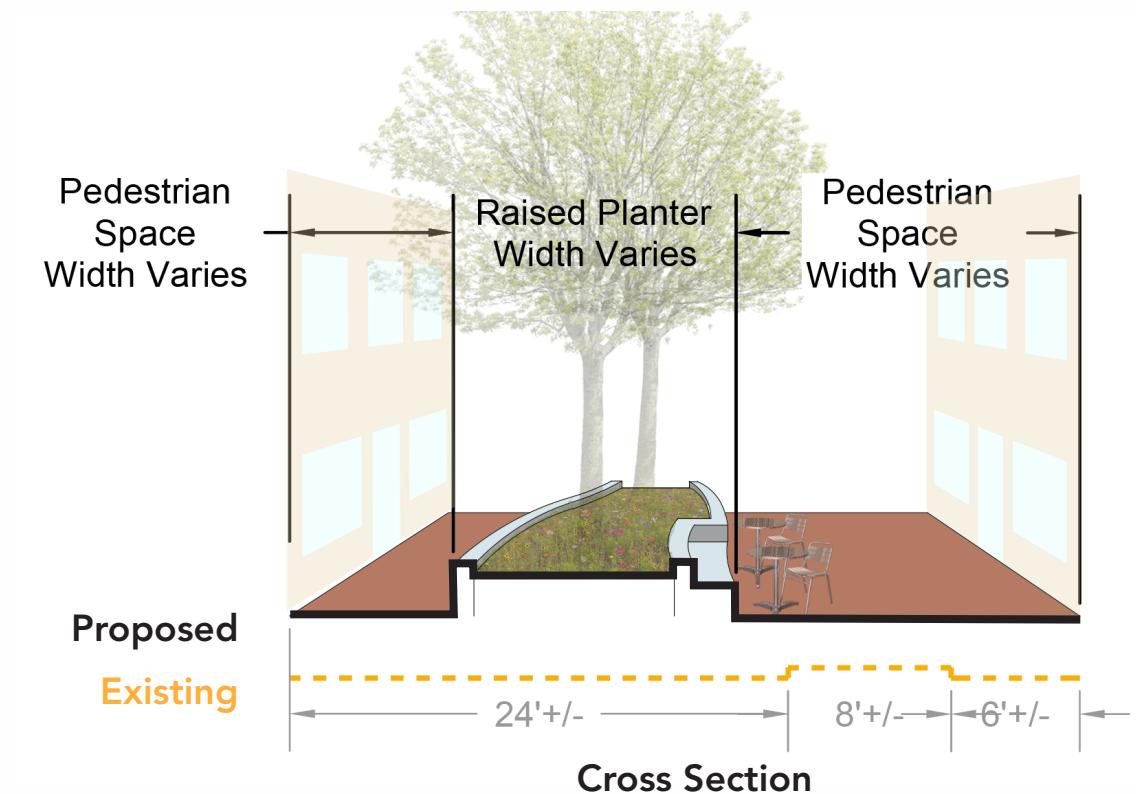
## Opportunities

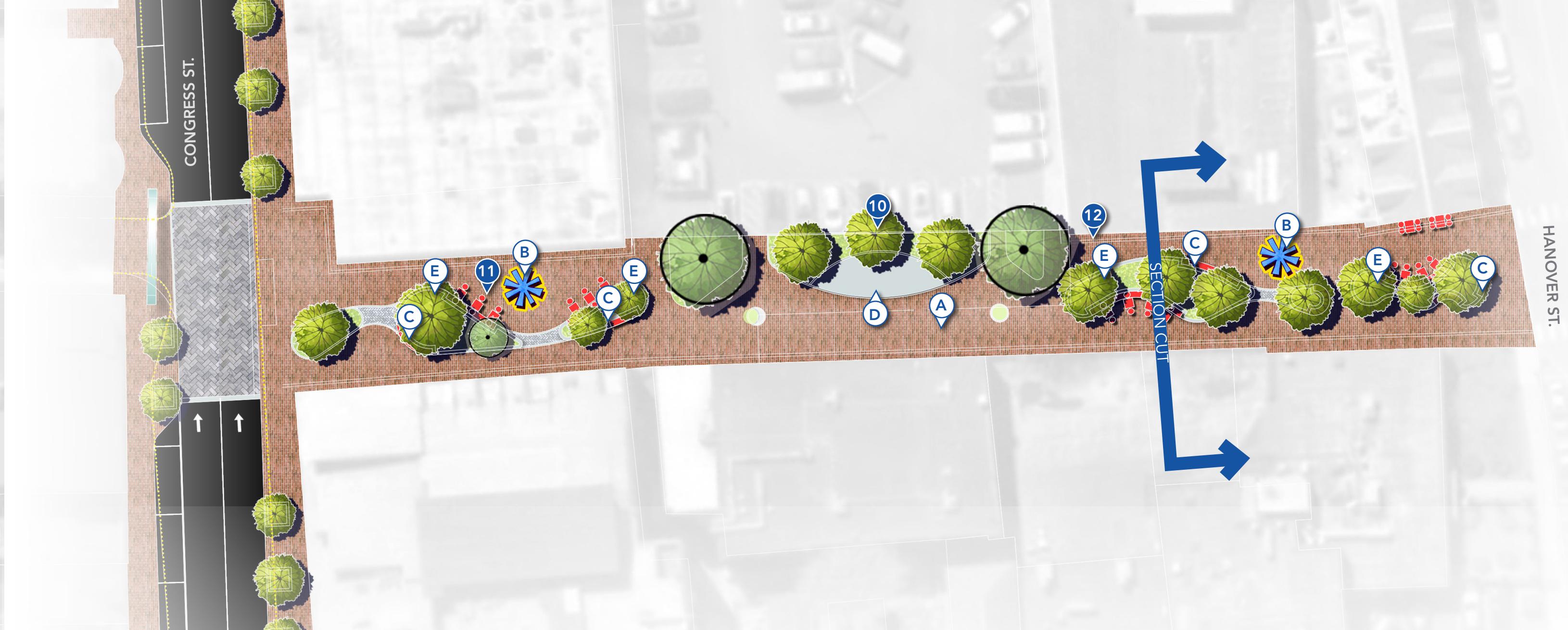
- Corridor is nexus between many destinations
- Wide alleyway is a pedestrian-only corridor
- City Sewer Separation/Drainage Improvement Project

## Recommendations

- Coordinate improvements with City Sewer Separation Drainage Improvement Project
- Provide raised planters for installation of trees
- Create small performance stage with theatrical lighting
- Provide integrated screening with stage for cars in Worth Lot
- Expand urban design features utilized on Chestnut St. here
- Install overhead catenary lighting, install uplights for trees
- Create areas for public outdoor seating/dining
- Provide bases/create opportunities for public art installations
- Install improved site lighting
- Install improved wayfinding signage
- Plant shade trees with understory plantings

### EXISTING CONDITIONS





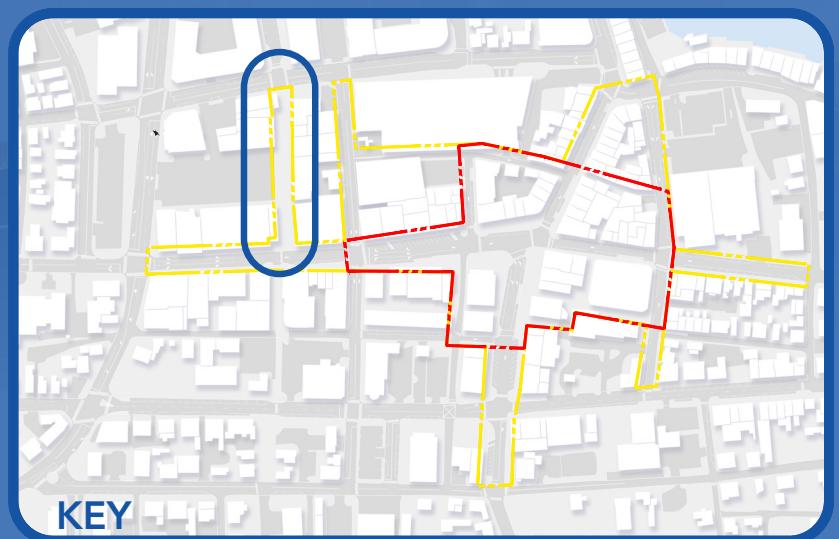
### Recommended Site Improvements

- 10 Plant Street Trees
- 11 Create Outdoor Dining
- 12 Install Bike Racks



### Additional Street-Specific Improvements

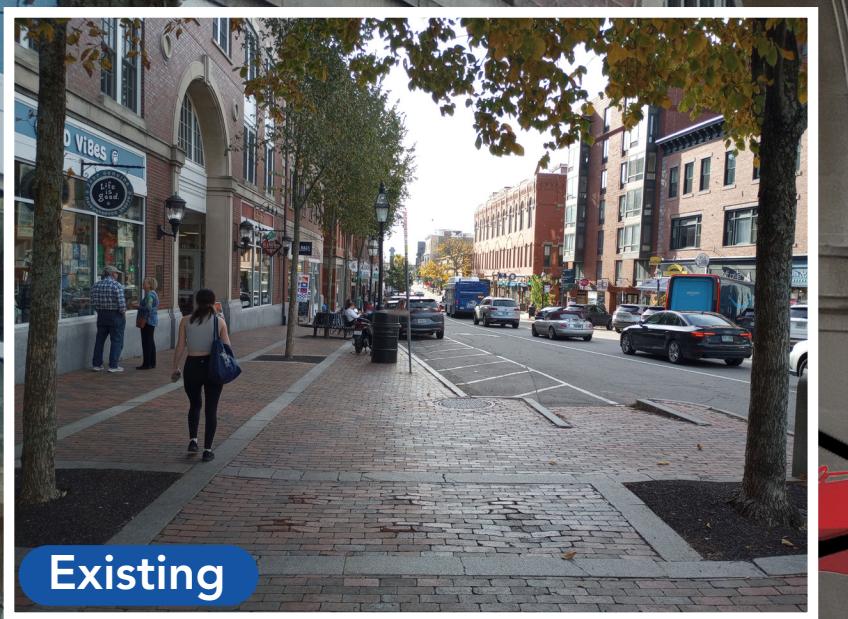
- A Catenary Lighting
- B Public Art
- C Public Seating/Tables
- D Performance Stage
- E Granite Seat Wall to Create Raised Planters





## CONGRESS STREET

## CENTRAL



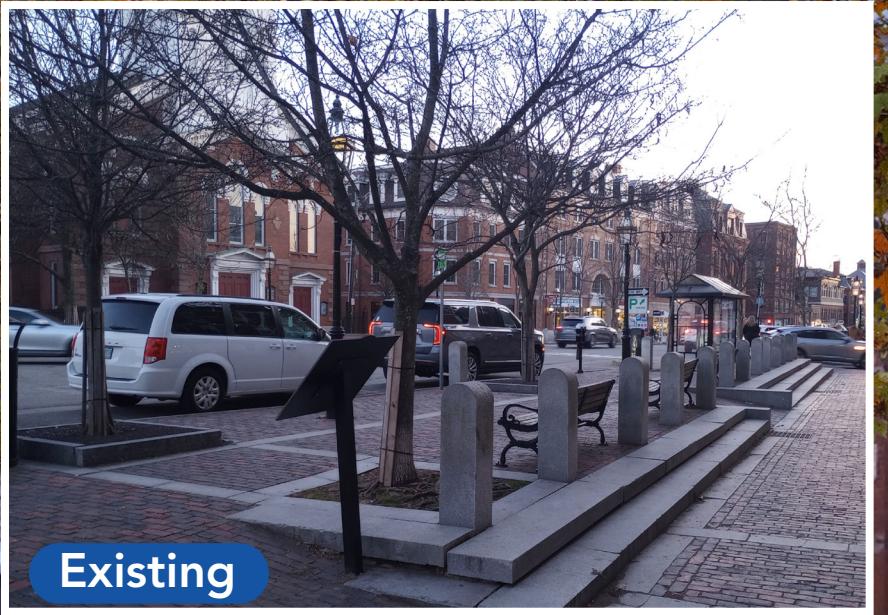
Existing





## CONGRESS STREET

## EAST



Existing



Site Amenities

POST AND RAIL SYSTEMS



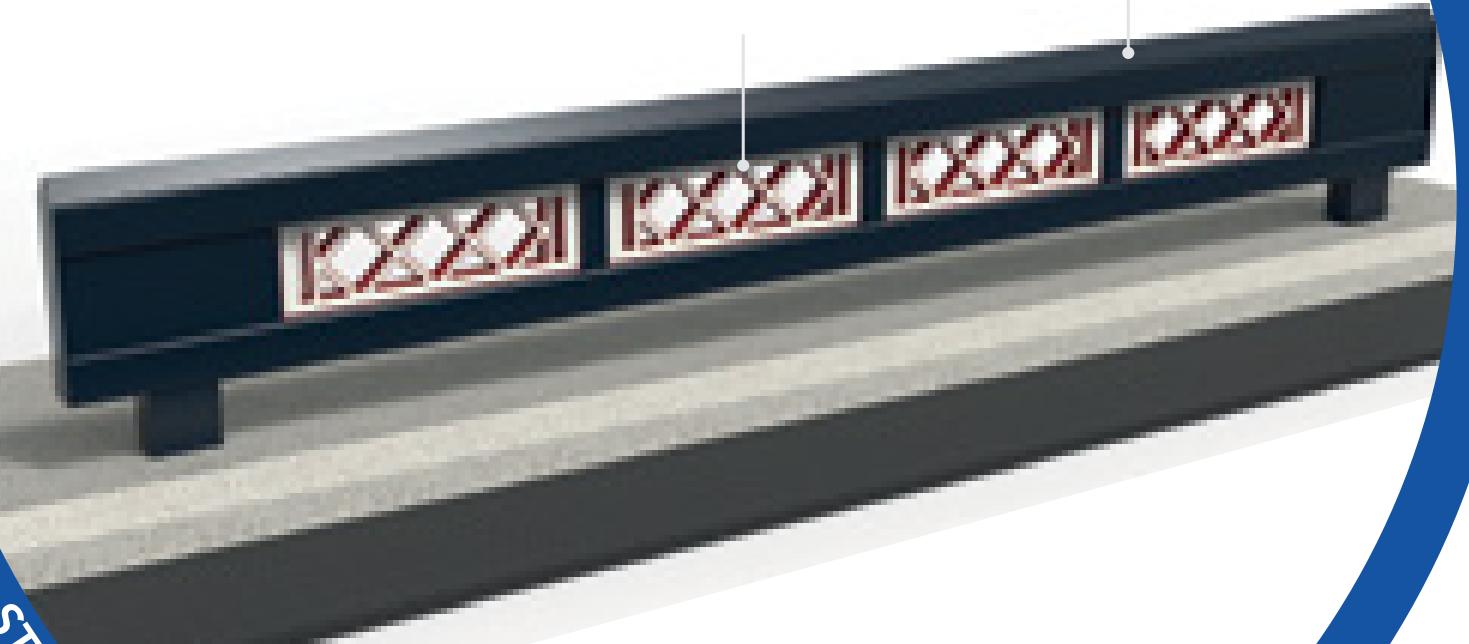
BOLLARD SYSTEMS



GRANITE BLOCK WAYFINDING



ORNAMENTAL STEEL BARRIER BEAM



CITY-SPECIFIC GRANITE BLOCK BARRIER WITH INSERT PLANTER



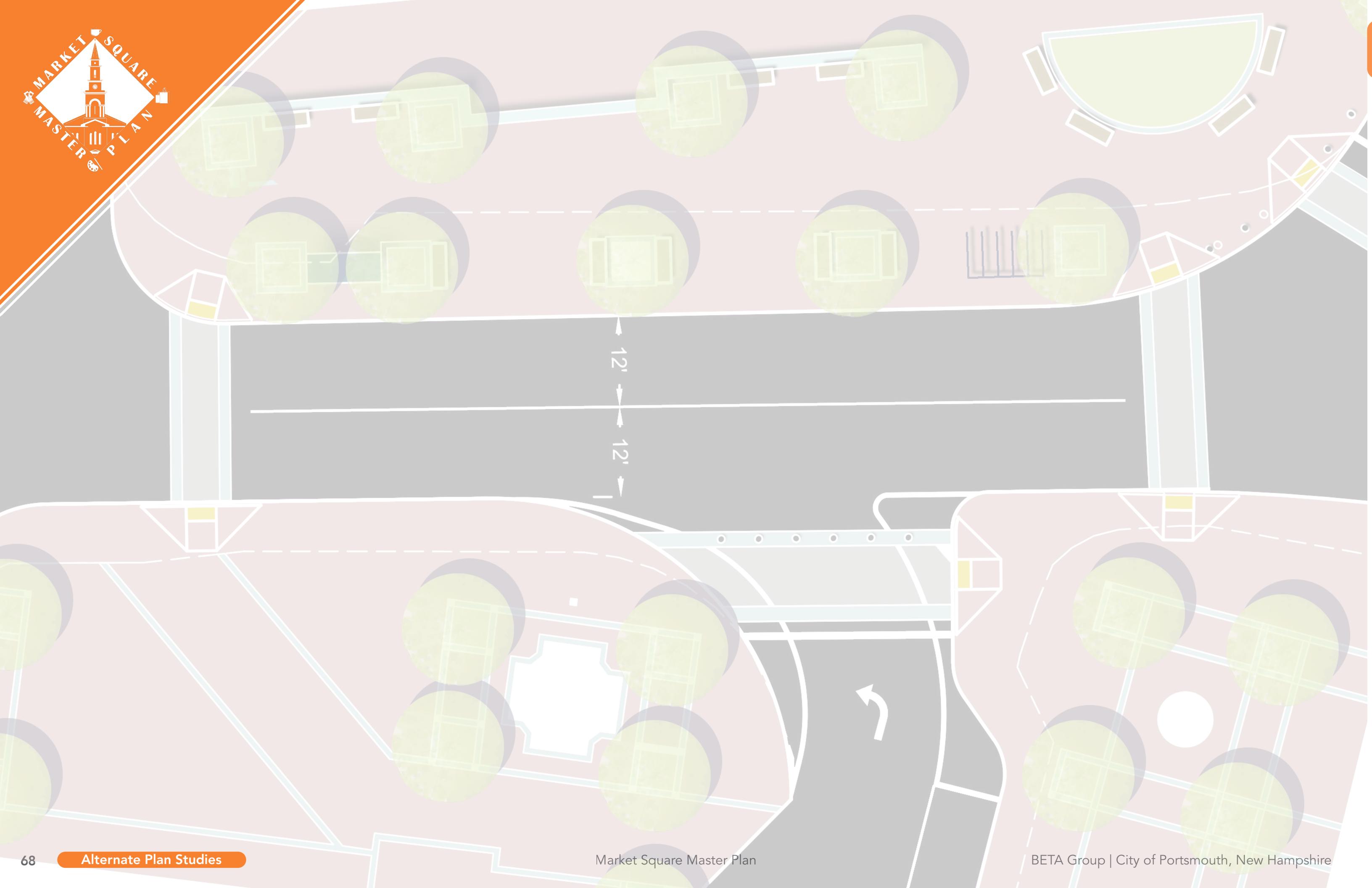


## Site Amenities

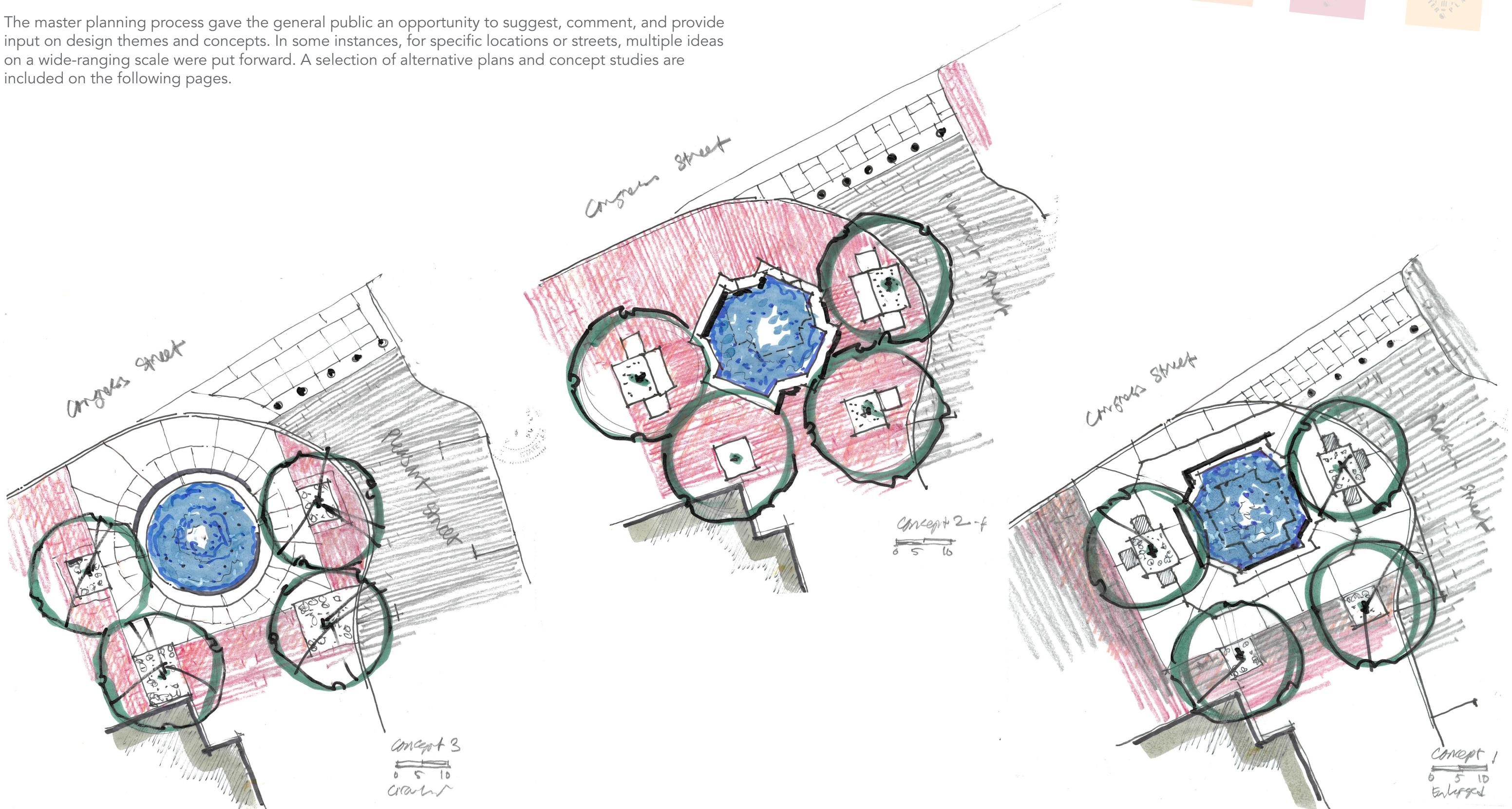


## Opportunities for Public Art





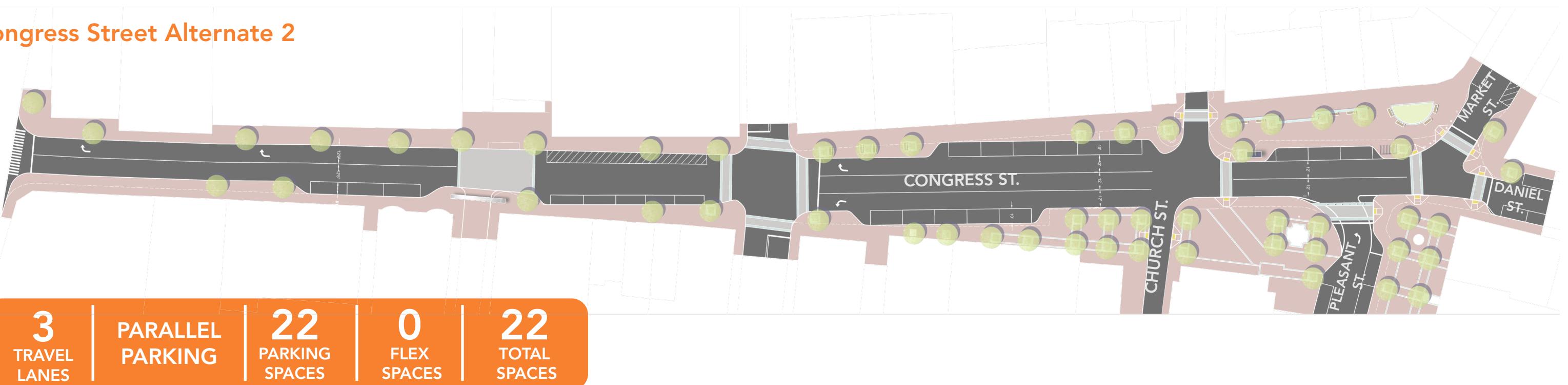
The master planning process gave the general public an opportunity to suggest, comment, and provide input on design themes and concepts. In some instances, for specific locations or streets, multiple ideas on a wide-ranging scale were put forward. A selection of alternative plans and concept studies are included on the following pages.



## Congress Street Alternate 1



## Congress Street Alternate 2



## Penhallow Street - North Alternate 1

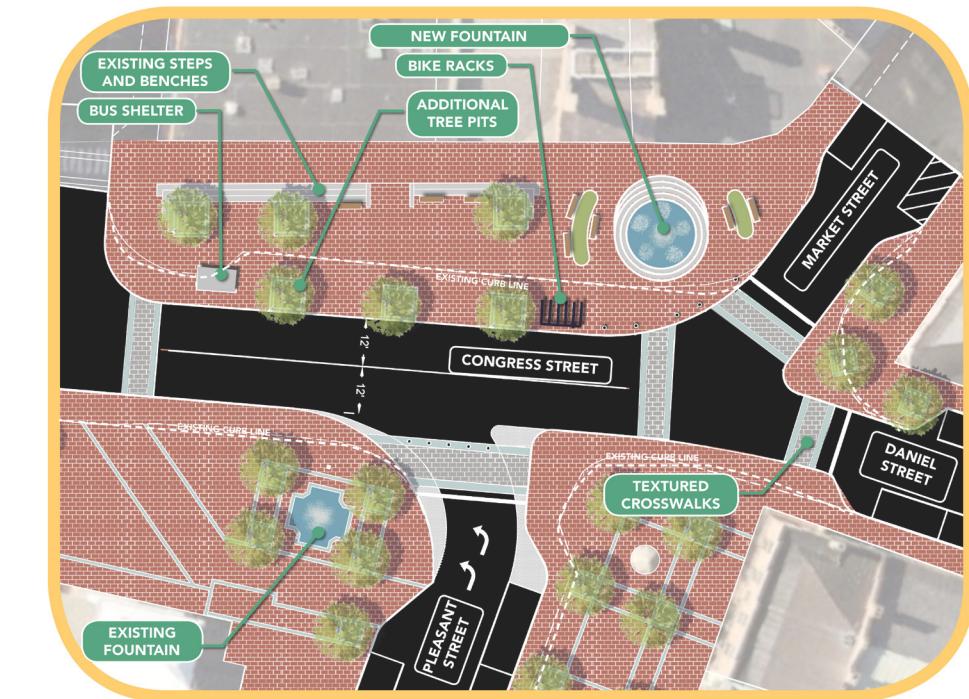


2  
TRAVEL  
LANES

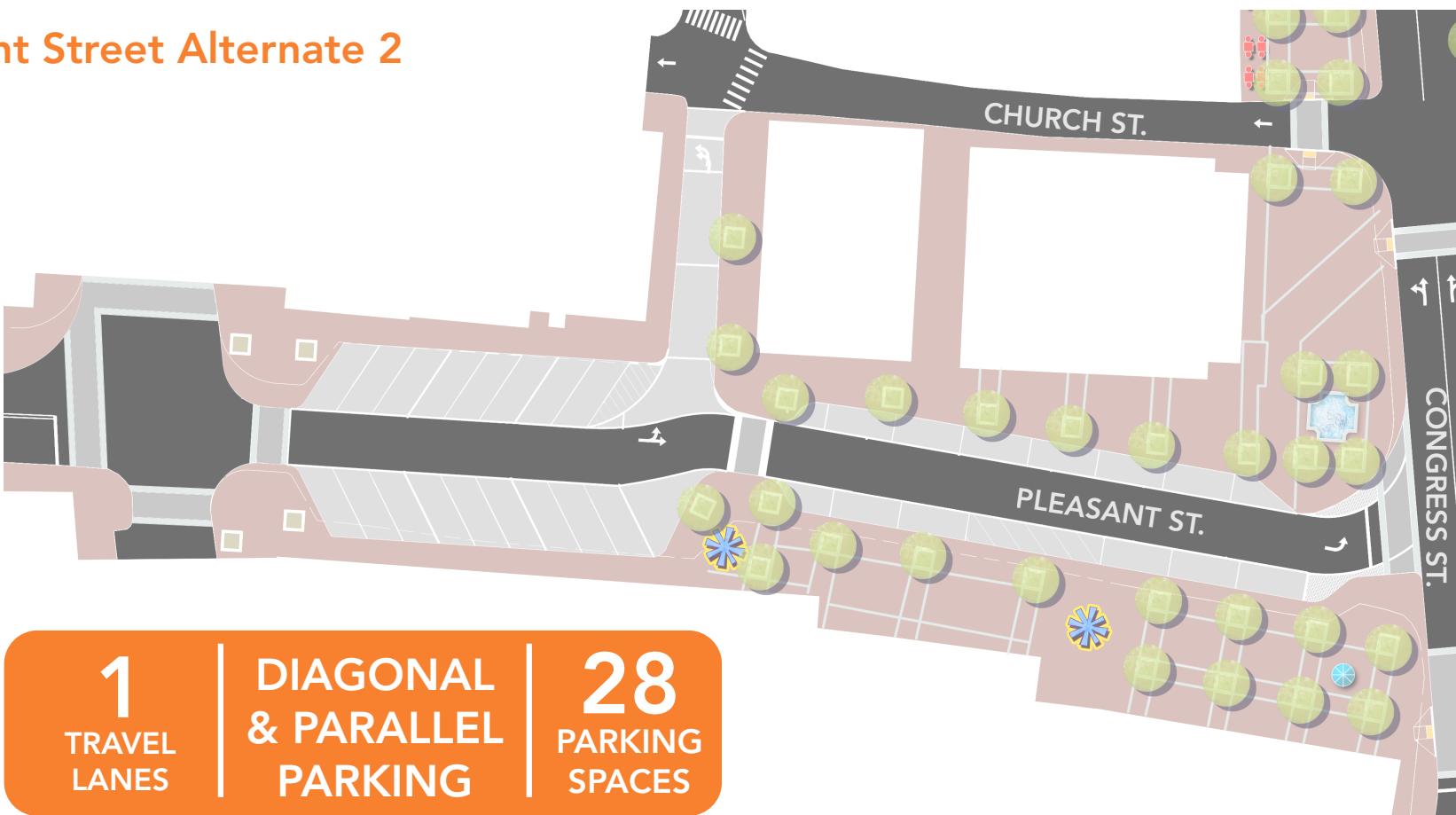
PARALLEL  
PARKING

11  
PARKING  
SPACES

## Congress Street Intersection Alternate 1



## Pleasant Street Alternate 2

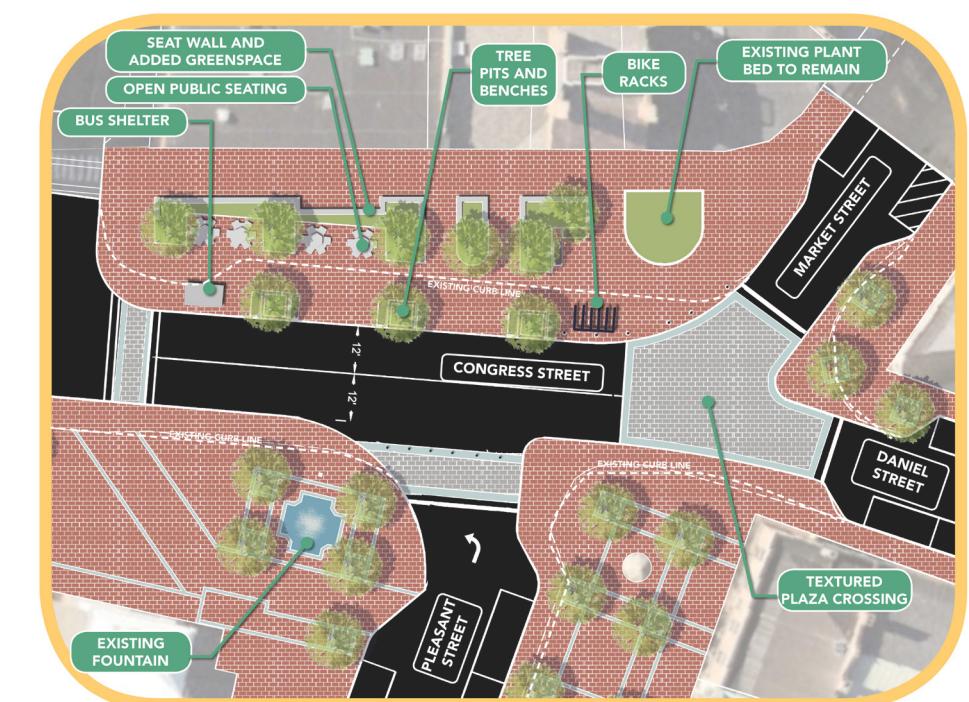


1  
TRAVEL  
LANES

DIAGONAL  
& PARALLEL  
PARKING

28  
PARKING  
SPACES

## Congress Street Intersection Alternate 2





## References

The City is involved in several on-going or recently completed initiatives. Portions of a variety of reference documents provide relevant project context and are listed below.

1. Climate Action Plan
2. 2025 City of Portsmouth Master Plan
3. City of Portsmouth Zoning Standards
4. City of Portsmouth Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan
5. Portsmouth NH Wayfinding and Signage System
6. 2022 Housing Market Study
7. 2020 Open Space Plan

## Resources

1. <https://www.nearmap.com/>
2. <https://nacto.org>
3. <https://www.reliancefoundry.com/>
4. <https://citydays.com/places/russell-square#pid#5>
5. <https://www.marshalls.co.uk/landscaping>
6. <https://www.puremodern.com>
7. <https://www.landscapeforms.com>



IMPROVING COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

SHARE YOUR DESIGN  
IDEAS FOR MARKET  
SQUARE!

Outdoor Di

MOMS  
DEMAND  
ACTION

SHARE YOUR DESIGN  
IDEAS FOR MARKET  
SQUARE!

SKETCH YOUR  
IDEAS!

INTERACT  
WITH VOTING  
BOARDS!

TAKE THE  
SURVEY!



Where do you spend the most  
time in Market Square?



## BETA Group

1. Market Square Existing Conditions Report
2. Market Square Community Input & Public Workshop Summaries
3. Market Square Public Survey Results
4. Existing Roadway Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation
5. Existing Roadway Section Graphics

## Other

6. Proposal for Permanent Outdoor Dining, Singer & Kennedy, 2023
7. Portsmouth Parking Supply and Demand Study 2024, SLR
8. Fleet Street Area Study and Design, Underwood Engineering
9. State Street -Two Way Traffic Study, Wall Consulting Group
10. AMBIT High St., Ladd St. & Newbury Way Improvements
11. City of Portsmouth Historic Photos
12. 1981 Market Square Master Plan



899 Elm Street  
Manchester, NH 03101  
[www.beta-inc.com](http://www.beta-inc.com)

# MARKET SQUARE MASTER PLAN

