

# THE ~~South End~~ Railyard district

Located in the southwest quadrant of downtown, the ~~South End District~~—or ~~Railyard District~~—is currently a mix of industrial and commercial uses located near the regional rail yard and historic barge canal. The area is strategically located as the southern gateway of the City. Primarily a Brownfield today but poised to evolve into an economic engine for the City, the South End should be encouraged is imagined to continue to emerge as an arts and creative enterprise district.

## 1. CONNECTIVITY OF THE URBAN GRID

As the Mall area to the North presents navigation challenges and a disruption in Burlington's urban grid, the South End District also has its share of connectivity issues and opportunities. This master plan proposes to integrate the southern end of Battery Street and South Champlain Street into the existing grid. These key connections will open up numerous opportunities for travel around the southwestern quadrant of the City, help to better distribute traffic going to and from the Pine Street corridor, and create significant new opportunities for redevelopment.

## 2. RETAINED BUT REORGANIZED RAIL FUNCTIONS

Rail is an important part of Burlington's past and its future. The more goods that can be transported by rail, the more we can reduce fuel consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, and truck traffic on our highways and in our neighborhoods. It is crucial to retain these types of "back of the house" functions within the city to maintain important services such as fuel delivery and the potential for greater utilization of rail for freight movement as an alternative to trucks. However, Burlington's current rail functions could be reorganized for better efficiency and to provide space for redevelopment. Re-organization of the railyard also creates the opportunity to extend the urban street grid and improve traffic flow in this part of the City.

## 3. STRATEGIC URBAN INFILL AND LINER BUILDINGS

With the reorganization of the railyard and extension of the street grid, numerous opportunities exist emerge for strategic infill and liner buildings in this area of the City. Such mixed-use structures should help to reinforce the urban street wall and have active ground floor uses that promote a vibrant streetscape. The Burlington Fire Department has identified this area as a potential for the location of a new fire station that would consolidate the existing stations 1 and 5, with prime access to the downtown and the south end of the city.

## 4. FLEX-SPACE/ LIVE-WORK UNITS

Burlington already has the distinct regional advantage of a strong creative culture. This should continue to be embraced and capitalized on, particularly in this part of the downtown. Significant efforts should be made to provide inexpensive-affordable commercial, office, manufacturing and retail incubator space. In addition, opportunities should be created to enable emerging artists and entrepreneurs to both live and create within the same location. Live-work buildings have the benefit of providing a single-mortgage property that can accommodate living and working, significantly reducing the overall cost of housing, transportation and business incubation. These kinds of spaces foster and support creative and innovative businesses and will help to shape the evolving economic base and identity of the City.

## 5. Periphery Parking

Various parking options must exist around the periphery of the downtown, close enough to park and walk to multiple destinations, yet far enough outside of the core to efficiently disperse traffic congestion. The

South End District is well suited for locating wrapped parking structures because of its inherently larger parcels as well as the compatibility with existing large buildings. A parking structure is recommended at the southern end of an extended South Champlain Street to service the South End and the expanding Pine Street arts district. This garage would help anchor redevelopment within the expanded urban grid, and accommodate liner buildings, which would hide the structured parking from the street and muffle noise.

#### 6. Streetscape improvements

The master plan calls for streetscape improvements along all streets in this area with particular emphasis on King and Maple Streets. This, in combination with the expansion of the street network, will strengthen the North-South connection in this part of the City. Improvements should include sidewalk enhancement, street lamps, street trees, benches, and civic art.

#### 7. TRAIL / BIKE PATH CONNECTION

There is no access to the Bike Path between Maple Street and Lakeside Avenue because of a lack of interconnecting streets, the barge canal, and several industrial land uses. With an expansion of the street grid, as described above, there is an opportunity to create an east-west trail or bike path across the northern end of the barge canal with a bridge over the train tracks to connect Pine Street with the waterfront bike path.

#### 8. embrace the barge canal

The former Barge Canal creates a significant open space immediately adjacent to the urban core, and affords a valuable opportunity for public access and passive recreation. This open space can be significantly enhanced with a network of trails and boardwalks providing controlled access to the remediated Superfund site. Improvements should also include interpretation and education regarding this site's important role in waterfront history, underwater archeology, and the remediation of contaminated sites.

### Artisan Industrial Living

As part of planBTV, **THE RAILYARD** is reimagined and transformed from a fringe area noticed and appreciated by few, to a central driving force behind a new creative center for artisan industrial activity. This reinvigorated neighborhood within the City will may not appeal to everyone, with the noise and activity of an active rail yard, trucking, and other soft industrial activities grounding-linking it to the Ccity's working roots. But for others, this gritty backdrop will provide the inspiration and vitality to inspire creativity and new ideas. **THE RAILYARD** will tie together the downtown and the emerging high tech Pine Street corridor, with a new network of streets that extend the existing grid pattern.

These new streets will have the benefit of relieving traffic backups on Pine, King and Maple Sstreets, but more importantly, these streets will become new places for business, housing, biking, walking, and for observing industry and things being made.

Local start-ups and new businesses form the foundation of a community by generating both financial and social capital. Local businesses serve as a morale booster that helps bolster the local economy and create the entrepreneurial spirit and buzz that attracts other creative types and an increase in tourism activity.

The process of encouraging new business development can be spurred by incentives for low cost incubator space as well as more permanent artisan industrial space at **THE RAILYARD**, where it and values are currently lower in the area than those incompared to the downtown and waterfront, and if one of the objectives is to maintain creative

live/work art spaces, requirements should be put in place to ensure that gentrification of the neighborhood will not occur over the years. Incubator spaces can even be light weight structures that are modular and moveable, with modest rents. These spaces are often anticipated to be temporary in nature, but often times become permanent and loved buildings within a community. Artisan industrial live/ works are single income properties that can have residential units upstairs and areas for light or artisan industrial activities on the ground floor, where work can be observed by people passing by. These buildings can also be used for artist studios and other creative types.

#### NOTES to TPU DC

- Show the bike path along the water on the map on page 101
- Potential Buildings NOT proposed