

The Burlington Town Center Mall occupies much of the downtown between the northern waterfront and Church Street. The large superblocks created by its original layout can be punctuated and activated in order to enable pedestrian and vehicular flow and thereby restoring the urban grid.

1. Downtown Housing

There is a significant unmet demand for housing throughout the city (as discussed in the Housing Nut), but particularly affordable and moderately-priced housing downtown. Downtown workers, young professionals, and empty-nesters all want to live close to where they work, shop and recreate. With ~~larger parcels available for redevelopment, significant~~ undeveloped air space above the mall, and a relatively high and flat area of the City that has little impact on prominent views, this quadrant of the downtown is well suited for larger residential structures. The plan suggests the addition of larger residential, mixed-use buildings by redeveloping underutilized parcels, essential for addressing citywide housing needs, reducing traffic congestion and parking demand, and supporting the continued vitality of our downtown economy.

2. RESTORING CONNECTIVITY OF THE URBAN GRID

The large, contiguous footprint of the mall is out of character with the intimate and finer grained urban fabric of the City. When it opened in 1982, the Burlington Town Center Mall clipped both Pine Street and St. Paul Street, ~~inhibiting north-south movement in this quadrant of the City, the~~ The Mall acts as a barrier that forces additional vehicular traffic onto Battery and South Winooski, which lessens their attractiveness to pedestrians and bicycles. Today, older malls around the country are redefining themselves by embracing the surrounding urban environment and becoming less insular. In Burlington's case, this presents an opportunity to open the street level of the mall at Pine and St. Paul streets to create a public plaza and re-establish north-south traffic flow for pedestrians and bikes. These could become places for street-level retail and cafes, as well as places for community events with pop-up stages for Discover Jazz or Festival of Fools. Additionally at Pine Street, the underground ramp that provides access to the Burlington Town Center (BTC) parking garage could be continued through to Cherry Street, thereby re-establishing north-south traffic flow for vehicles and reducing congestion on Battery and Winooski.

3. STRATEGIC URBAN INFILL AND LINER BUILDINGS

The BTC occupies a significant footprint in this quadrant of the City. Yet numerous opportunities exist for strategic infill and liner buildings along Cherry, Pine and Pearl Streets. Such structures should be designed to reinforce the urban street wall and provide active ground floor uses to promote a vibrant streetscape. ~~Even the BTC can open itself to the outside streets and create a much stronger street presence. Activating these east-west streets for pedestrians through imaginative urban design and active street-level uses is essential to building connections between Church Street and the waterfront.~~

4. STREET LIFE

~~For those of~~ When you've walked along Cherry Street, and parts of Bank Street, between Church and Battery streets you have certainly experienced this sense of urgency; the urgency of moving quickly past the desolate, bland and non-inviting building facades or lack thereof. All along Cherry Street there are tremendous numerous opportunities for activating the street by turning the mall inside out, - bringing retail and others activity, eyes and human presence back to the street. Strategic infill development, innovative building renovations, streetscape improvements such as trees and outdoor seating would bring back life on the street. Expanding the Church Street experience to the side streets and the rest of the downtown and waterfront will ultimately help the economic vitality, create new jobs and bring more visitors.

NOTES for TPUDC

- Map on page 97 – Show the streets connections through the mall as shaded or just like Church Street, something that will make them stand out
- Again “Potential Buildings” versus proposed
- Show more green roofs, street trees on the Mall renderings page 98-99 and ADD street names for orientation
- Move aerial on page 97 to page 98