

Pearl Street

Downtown's northern boundary, Pearl Street, often acts as a barrier between the central business district and the lively mixed neighborhood of the Old North End (ONE). Several opportunities exist for the street to instead serve as a "zipper", linking the downtown and the ONE, bringing focus to the wonderful diversity and culture of this vibrant Burlington neighborhood.

ELEMENTS OF THE PLAN

1. Zipping Together the ONE and Downtown

A **zipper** is a commonly used device for binding two edges. The urban fabric of a city, similarly to a piece of clothing or bag, can also be brought together with appropriately scaled, context sensitive interventions. To make a more seamless connection between the Old North End and the downtown, Pearl Street could use a few more "teeth in its coil". Strategic infill development, active uses at the street level, and pedestrian improvements to major intersections will improve Pearl Street's appeal and play an important role in providing this enhanced link.

Tool: Develop zoning regulations that emphasize building form, facilitate infill and activate the streetscape for pedestrians. (Planning & Zoning Department)

2. Showcase the Culture of the ONE

Several opportunities exist for infill development along the Pearl Street corridor, especially at key intersections like Winooski Ave and North Champlain Street, where space for new local businesses, retail, restaurants, and offices could be provided. Bringing more life and activity to this area, supported by additional community spaces and housing opportunities would activate this edge of our downtown and showcase the rich myriad of cultures that call the Old North End (ONE) home. New buildings will help reinforce the urban street and provide a more continuous pedestrian environment that is attractive, vibrant, and better reflects the local culture.

Tool: Develop a local business/incubator program that would encourage, provide assistance to and nurture culturally and ethnically diverse businesses. (CEDO)

3. Pearl Street Overlook (Move from North Waterfront Section)

The Master Plan calls for the Pearl Street Overlook, located at the western termination of the street, to be lowered in elevation to open views to the lake and mountains beyond. Currently, the raised viewing platform and fountain block any view of the lake as you approach the lake from downtown. The Battery Park Extension along the west side of Battery Street should also be redesigned to reduce the continuous berm that blocks views of the water.

Tool: Develop a Parks Master Plan for Battery Park and the Extension and redesign the overlook at that time. (Department of Parks and Recreation)

4. CCTA Transit Center

With over 1/3 of all boardings in the CCTA system occurring in downtown Burlington, and most of the regional transit system routes starting or ending in the city center, a downtown location for the

main transit hub is essential. A new transit mall is proposed for St. Paul Street between Cherry and Pearl Streets to replace the existing and inadequate Cherry Street transit station. A new modern passenger facility will provide an improved customer and employee experience, meet both the short and long-term needs of CCTA, and provide Burlington with a “first-class” Transit Center.

Tool: Continue to support CCTA in the development and construction of the new transit center.
(Department of Public Works)

5. Streetscape improvements

The master plan calls for streetscape improvements throughout the downtown to improve the pedestrian and cyclist experience and safety. Along the Pearl street corridor, sidewalk improvements have been in the works for the past year for the blocks between Winooski Avenue and St-Paul Street. Expansion of this work all the way to Battery Street would ensure continuation of the pedestrian experience. Other improvements are needed for the entire length of Pearl; better lighting, more street trees, benches, and civic art. Pearl Street, with its connection to Colchester Avenue is one of our main East-West thoroughfares, moving people in and out of the downtown. As such, Pearl Street, just like Main Street, could provide a second continuous bike route through the city.

Tool: Continue to implement the Complete Streets Design Guidelines adopted as part of the 2011 Transportation Plan. (Department of Public Works)

