

NASHUA, NEW HAMPSHIRE

# Nashua Millyard Design Charrette

May 30-31, 2025



# Nashua Community Design Charrette Acknowledgements

Thank you to the individuals who donated their time, energy, and expertise for this charrette. Extra thanks to all the community members who shared their insights about Nashua.

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Development Department

City of Nashua - Economic Development  
Office

## Additional Thank Yous!

The Peddler's Daughter

Pressed Cafe

Jajabelles



**Nashua**  
NEW HAMPSHIRE'S GATE CITY



# Who is Plan NH?

**Plan New Hampshire (Plan NH)**, is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization formed in 1989. Plan NH has a vision of a New Hampshire that is vibrant and healthy for its people, its economies, and the environment. To achieve that vision, Plan NH's mission is to foster excellence in planning, design and development of New Hampshire's built environment, because we believe that what we build, where we build, and how we build anything has a significant impact on that vibrancy and health.

Plan NH champions principles and ideas that balance the built environment - including buildings, roads, bridges, memorials, public sculpture - with:

- the needs of people, including where they live, how they get about, what services are necessary, what they value;
- maintaining a “sense of place” of our towns, cities, and villages that make them unique, including preserving historic assets, open spaces, agriculture, and farming;
- and protecting our air, water, flora, and fauna.

Among our signature programs is the Community Design Charrette Program, a participatory exercise that brings professionals from our membership together with New Hampshire communities to explore design ideas, usually around a village center or other significant neighborhood or community asset. Through recommendations made, Plan NH can demonstrate the role and importance of the principles and ideas noted above in concrete, real examples.





# What is a Charrette?

Simply stated, a charrette is a brief, intense, brainstorming session in which ideas are brought together for the purpose of defining potential planning recommendations and possible design solutions for an identified need. For Plan NH, this is usually related to a town center or other significant neighborhood in a community.

Plan NH's community design charrettes take place over the course of two days: eight hours on a Friday for listening and then another eight hours the next day for brainstorming, crafting recommended solutions, and presenting thoughts to the community.

The process engages planning and design professionals in direct dialog and conversation with each other and with local residents to collect information needed in order to develop good and relevant recommendations about how to address a particular challenge. Plan NH sees this part of the process as a period of discovery: discovering who the community is, what they value, what they really want. This community input is essential and critical to the value of the outcomes.

The results of a Plan NH charrette are general and overarching planning and design recommendations, rather than specific directions. Plan NH does not dictate but suggests. Most often, the outcome of a Plan NH charrette is described as a *vision*, or an expression of how things might be, based on what the team saw and heard and learned.



Sunapee, NH - Apr. 2024



Manchester, NH - July 2023



Brentwood, NH - May 2023



Temple, NH - Oct. 2022

*Charrettes blend the broad experience of planning and design professionals with local citizens' detailed knowledge of their own community to develop recommendations that address challenges and opportunities in the project at hand. These recommendations provide a framework within which more detailed solutions and plans of action can be developed.*



# Why Did Plan NH Come to Nashua?

The Community Development Division for the City of Nashua submitted an application to Plan NH in February 2025 to explore the Millyard District with a focus on the areas indicated in red below. The primary objective for having Plan NH conduct this charrette was to aid in the development of a comprehensive vision for the revitalization of the Millyard with the main strategies including:

- 1 Explore opportunities to reuse and redevelop the Millyard buildings** to create a safer, more welcoming space that forms stronger community connections.
- 2 Develop connectivity and accessibility within the Millyard, integrating into the Downtown** to improve circulation and increase public use of the space.
- 3 Utilize public arts, historical features, and cultural connections** to reflect Nashua's history and sense of place.
- 4 Promote existing recreation and preserve open space to create new recreation opportunities as well** to leverage underutilized spaces and invite the public to this area.

*East-West Boundaries:  
Nashua River, Mine Falls  
Park, and Clocktower Place.  
North-South Boundaries  
Nashua River and Ledge St.*



# Site Tour Observations



**What the Plan NH team saw during our project area tour of Nashua:**

- On the morning of Friday, May 30th, we made several stops around the Millyard and associated areas of downtown Nashua.
- **Our first stop was Mill House Cove Parking Lot.** We observed the many local businesses and city owned properties.
- **From there, our charrette team walked over the Ledge Street Foot Bridge, past Downtown, and to the Picker Building & Old Cotton Mill.** Here we noted the accessibility challenges in the steep slope of the entry point.
- **Continuing in that direction, we walked onto the Nashua River Foot Bridge,** from which we could view the river and the preservation of the city's history in the form of the repurposed mill buildings.
- **Our next stop was the Millyard Technology Park,** consisting primarily of a largely unused parking lot, which we recognized is within the 100-year floodplain.
- **Headed south, we arrived at the NIMCO Site,** an opportunity for redevelopment that can provide much needed housing with complimentary commercial establishments.
- **Finally, we made our way to the Mine Falls Trailhead & Dog Park site,** noting the underutilized public areas and open space of privately owned properties within the project area. These areas were noted as great sources of potential.

*Plan NH would like to thank our wonderful tour guides for our engaging and informative tour of Nashua!*



# What Nashua Told Plan NH

## What Plan NH Heard from Community Leaders

After the tour of the area, the team met with community leaders, including City administrators, several elected officials, local business owners, property owners, members of the Business and Industrial Development Authority, and other key stakeholders. We learned about the challenges and opportunities from their perspectives as those who work in and serve the City of Nashua on a daily basis. The discussion points heard from community leaders are outlined as follows:

### Connectivity and Wayfinding

- Opportunities for more shared-use pedestrian and bike connections.
- Lack of clear, well-lit paths.
- Circulation challenges with roads.
- Better wayfinding and signage would benefit visitors, including a distinction between public and private land.

### Recreation

- Missing recreation for children – playgrounds, fields, courts.
- Looking to redevelop green space near the smokestack into a picnic area.
- Continue to provide public access to river recreation with boat/kayak launch.
- Explore the development of a dog park - public-private partnership.

### Logistical Concerns

- Must be mindful of the floodplain.
- Access for Emergency Services.
- Millyard's infrastructure is currently private -- redevelopment would necessitate infrastructure investment. Potential for public-private partnerships.
- All new utilities should be underground to prevent an obstructed view and increase resiliency.

### A Sense of Place

- Save the history of the Millyard, maintaining mixed-use development.
- Keep the smokestack and potentially repaint the letters.
- Create an overall plan that is cohesive for the Millyard area and that meets the needs of Nashua.
- Potential for commercial development such as a hotel and incubator spaces.



# What Nashua Residents Told Plan NH

Two public listening sessions were held during the afternoon and evening of Friday, May 30. The sessions served as an opportunity for the public to share their comments and ideas about the various challenges and opportunities throughout the project area. Plan NH's process encouraged participation and input from everyone in the room. The residents in attendance shared their opinions about how to improve the wonderful assets that the Nashua community already has. The vibrancy of the community and its residents was evident to the charrette team, and we were excited to explore the possibilities of what the future holds with them.

Throughout these input sessions, community members discussed (1) community strengths, (2) concerns/challenges, and (3) desired improvements. From the common themes, we distilled an overall vision.

## Overall Vision:

- Find opportunities to explore both adaptive reuse and redevelopment in the Millyard with respect to local history.
- Increase connectivity of the Millyard to the Downtown to enhance access to green spaces like Mine Falls.
- Utilize Nashua's history, public art, and greenery to make asphalt-covered areas feel welcoming and safe.





# What Nashua Residents Told Plan NH

*(Continued)*



## Current Conditions

- Some run-down, deteriorating buildings and infrastructure that make the area feel less welcoming.
- Mine Falls and the river are a vital source of recreation.
- Too much pavement and asphalt that overwhelms existing green spaces.
- Lack of signage and connectivity to navigate the Millyard from the rest of Nashua.
- Land and opportunity to shape this gateway to the city.



# What Nashua Residents Told Plan NH

*(Continued)*

## Desired Improvements

### Connectivity and Wayfinding:

- More connectivity for both vehicles and pedestrians to reach the Millyard.
- Have connections between new housing developments and multi-use areas – not a bedroom community.
- More accessibility, lighting, and signage for visitors and residents to know what is in the Millyard.

### New Uses to Bring Community Together:

- New and enhanced recreation opportunities that take advantage of the river, such as kayaking.
- More opportunities for children's recreation – playgrounds and fields.
- Community parks, local grocery stores, and co-ops that bring resources and a sense of place to the Millyard.

### Housing, Development, and History:

- Find ways to respect and acknowledge the history of the Millyard within new development – preserve what can be reused and repurposed.
- Bring communities to the Millyard through housing, and complimentary uses.
- Make housing diverse and affordable for more groups.

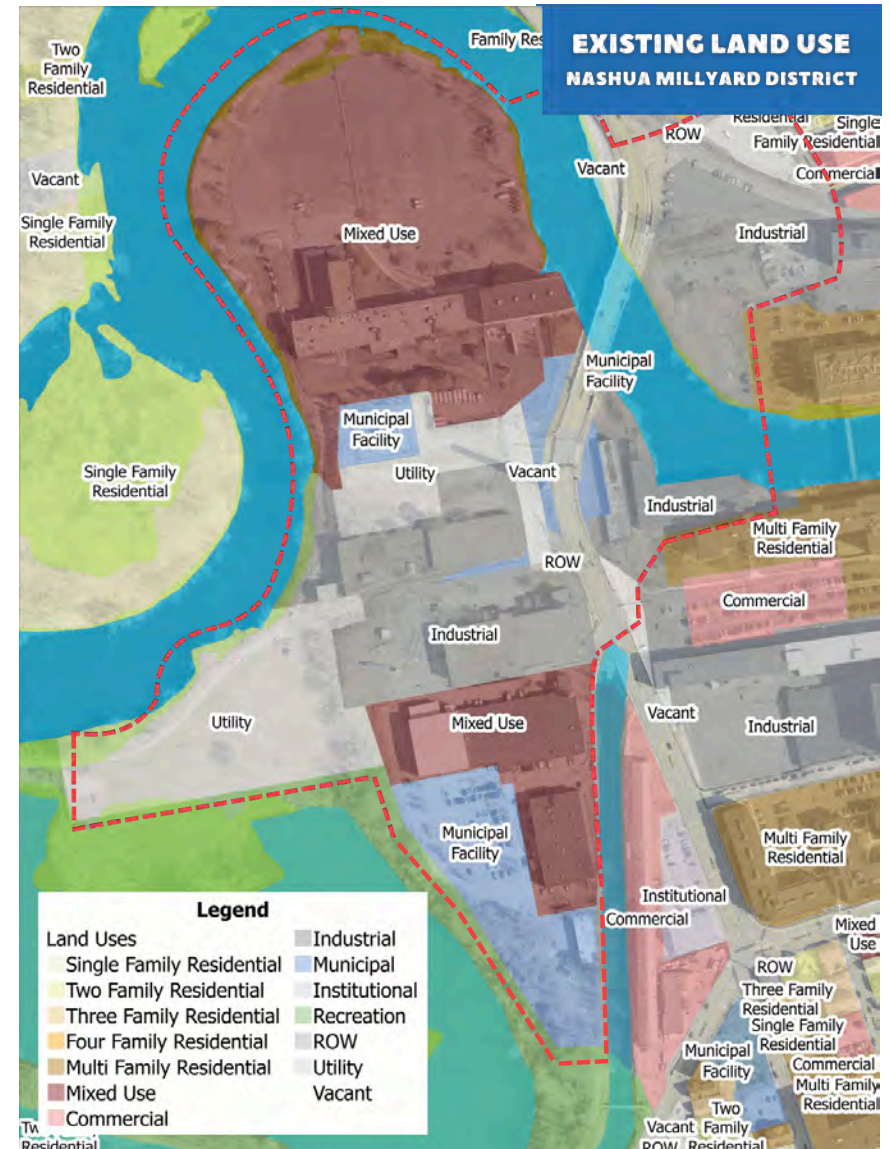




# Constraints

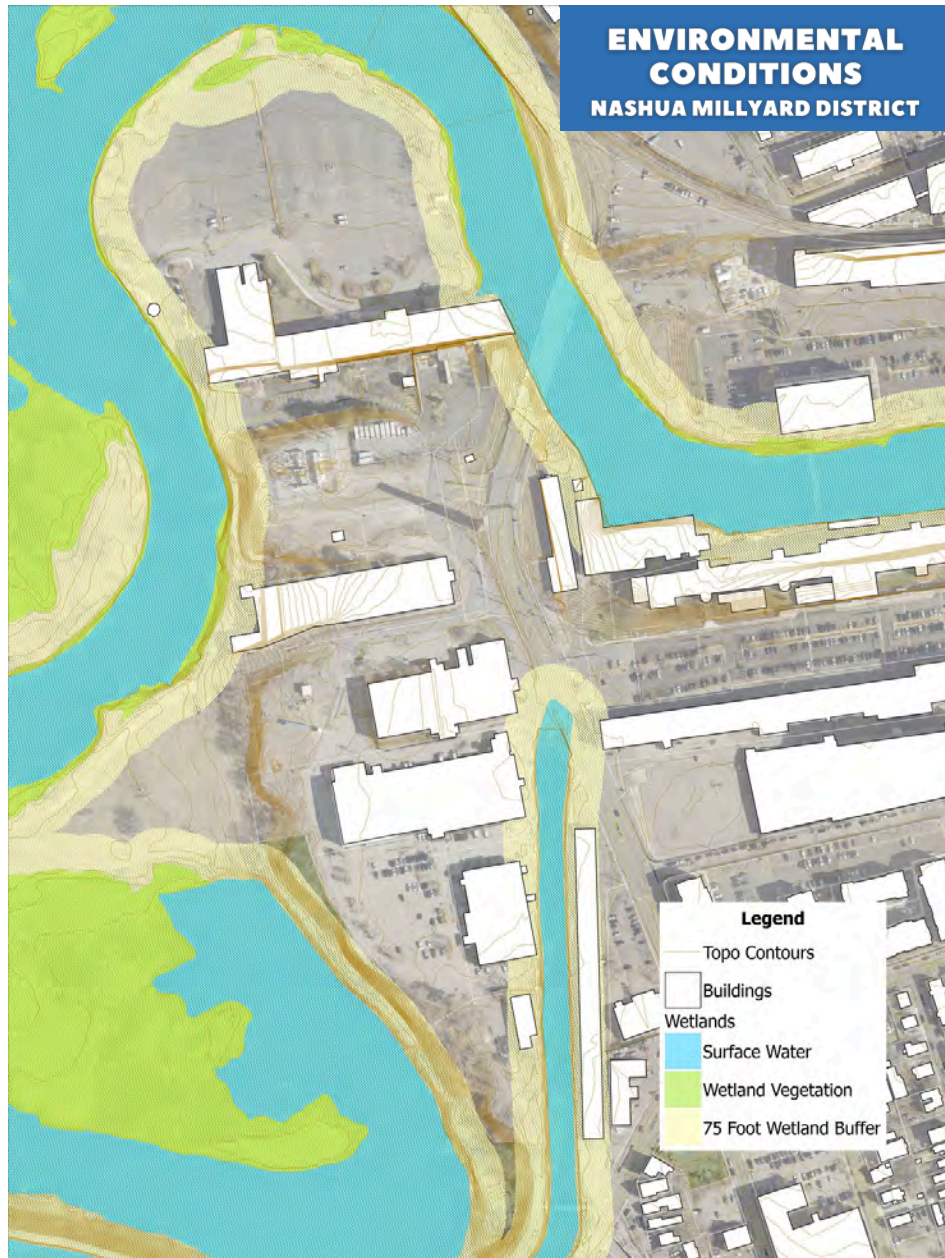


While Nashua is currently going through a zoning rewrite, there are still opportunities and constraints between the public and private ownership of the area





# Constraints





# Recommendations

Based on what the Plan NH Charrette Team learned from our walking tour and the stakeholder and community listening sessions, we developed a series of custom recommendations meant to address the concerns we heard about the project area. These recommendations were presented in-person to the community on Saturday, May 31, and are included in more detail in this report.

The following is a list of the recommendations developed by the Charrette Team for potential ways to address the community's vision. Each topic area was developed and presented individually – more detail regarding each recommendation is provided on the following pages.

## **1. Planning Considerations**

## **2. Housing**

## **3. Public Art**

## **4. Connectivity Improvements**

## **5. Open Space and Recreation**

## **6. Adaptive Reuse**

## **7. Redevelopment Opportunities**

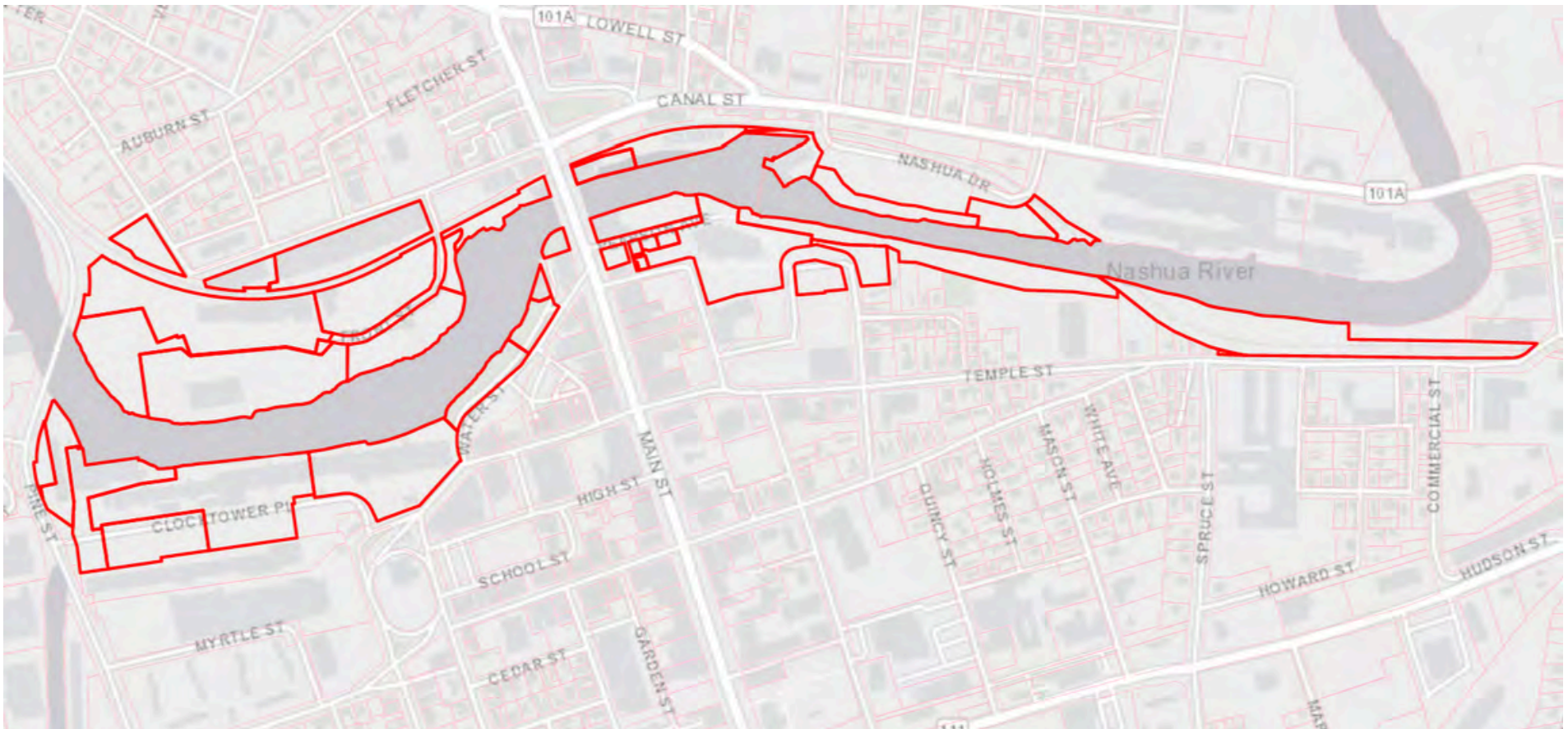


# Planning Considerations

This Charrette has created a potential vision for what the future of Nashua can look like; however, many of these recommendations require a foundation of zoning changes, land use code alterations, and other planning considerations which can make this vision of affordable housing, safe and beautiful streets, and welcoming greenspaces – possible to create.

## **Expand the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District to include the Millyard properties to assist with revitalization.**

- New property tax revenue created by proposed development used to offset cost of public improvements (infrastructure, services, life & safety, etc.)



*Nashua's current suggestion to expand the boundaries of the TIF District in the Millyard.*



# Planning Considerations

## Master Plan Goals

A hallmark of successful planning is when the desires and concerns of the public adequately align with the goals of a City's guiding planning document. Throughout this Charrette, it was clear that Nashua has done the work to make the needs and wants of the public prevalent in the goals for the City.

The top goals of Nashua's Master Plan, Imagine Nashua (2021), that speak to key themes and focuses the public brought to this Charrette:

- **Equitable & Connected Transportation Networks**
- **Redevelopment Opportunity**
- **Housing Accessibility**

## Current Land Use Code Rewrite

Another aspect to keep in mind is the power zoning and land use codes hold over what Nashua and the Millyard can look like. Nashua is currently undergoing a comprehensive land use code rewrite, where parts of the Millyard could be rezoned and requirements for design styles and building types can be changed. To make objectives like affordable housing more possible, the Charrette team recommends considering the following in this rewrite:

- **Allow for Innovative Building Designs**
- **Reduce Parking Minimums**
- **Increase Density**

## Environment, Branding, and Collaboration

Lastly, throughout all of the great projects Nashua is taking on, the Charrette team wants to emphasize the importance of a cohesive district branding approach, a focus on environmental remediation and cautiousness towards potential contamination, and coordination between all parties involved in improving Nashua's Millyard.

By working with each other (and the environment!), Nashua can reimagine the Millyard as a place that celebrates the City and the great people that live and work in New Hampshire's Gate City.

The logo for "Imagine Nashua" features the word "Imagine" in white serif font and "Nashua" in white sans-serif font, both set against a dark blue rectangular background.

# Planning Considerations - Housing

## InvestNH

As part of Governor Sununu's \$100 million InvestNH initiative, a total of \$7.9 million was allocated to the Municipal Planning and Zoning Grants Program to increase opportunities for housing development. The NH Department of Business and Economic Affairs contracted with New Hampshire Housing to administer this program.

## HOP Grant

The Housing Opportunity Planning (HOP) grant program was launched in August 2022 as a partnership of New Hampshire Housing, UNH Cooperative Extension, and Plan NH. The HOP grant program provided funding to municipalities to study zoning or other regulatory barriers to affordable housing, identify potential changes to local land use regulations, and update those regulations based on their findings. In total, 104 HOP grants were awarded to 73 communities.

In 2025, New Hampshire Housing and Plan NH strategized to leverage Plan NH's signature community design charrette program to further support communities tackling the housing crisis. The Nashua Community Design Charrette is one of six no-cost charrettes available to grantee communities as part of the HOP grant program.





# Housing

The City of Nashua has taken strides to meet its fair share of housing and support the region's housing needs through the following actions:

1. Nashua was designated a "Housing Champion" by the NH Department of Business and Economic Affairs last year. As a result, Nashua received unrestricted funds from the per-unit grant program.
2. Nashua has a housing revolving fund to support additional housing.
3. Nashua was awarded two Housing Opportunity Planning Grants (HOP) from New Hampshire Housing for technical assistance. The first HOP grant enhanced the housing components and community engagement of the Nashua re-CODE project; the second will support the comprehensive update to the subdivision and site plan regulations and create pre-approved housing plans to support the creation of Accessory Dwelling Units. This charrette was part of the HOP grant program.



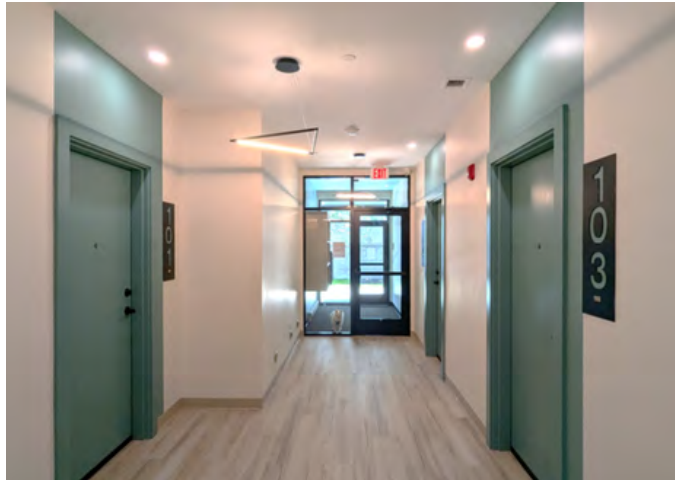
Monahan Manor, rental apartments in  
Downtown Nashua.





# Housing

Jackson Square is an example of smaller scale affordable housing in Nashua. It offers 24 units of either one-bedroom or two-bedroom apartments for rent





# Housing

During the community listening sessions, there were significant concerns about displacing the unhoused population in the Millyard District and the potential for gentrification when the area is redeveloped. The recommendation from the charrette team was engage with partners to explore strategies to minimize displacement.

If Nashua leaders opted to prioritize transitional housing in the redevelopment of the Millyard District, there is funding available. In addition to the City's award from the per-unit grant program, housing revolving fund, and Community Development Block Grant program, New Hampshire Housing offers funding that could support a transitional housing development, including the Multifamily Supportive Housing Finance Program and Opioid Use Disorder Supportive Housing Capital program. *Please note the resources and funding at the end of the report.*



New Hampshire Housing provided funding for the renovation and expansion of 323 Manchester Street, Manchester, NH, increasing the number of single room occupancy units from 16 to 22.

# Public Art - Wayfinding and Sense of Place

The City of Nashua has an incredibly vibrant art scene that includes the Nashua International Sculpture Symposium, the many murals created by Positive Street Art and others, and interactive and functional art, like the bench, pictured below. Durable sculptures can double as play structures – the example below from the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Mall in Denver, Colorado – is both an art piece and a playground. During the listening sessions, attendees expressed a desire to ensure the Millyard District is integrated into the downtown – extending the great art from the downtown into the target area is one way to ensure the transition feels cohesive. Public art can also support wayfinding, create a “grand entrance” into the district, and encourage engagement and interaction.





# Public Art - Wayfinding and Sense of Place

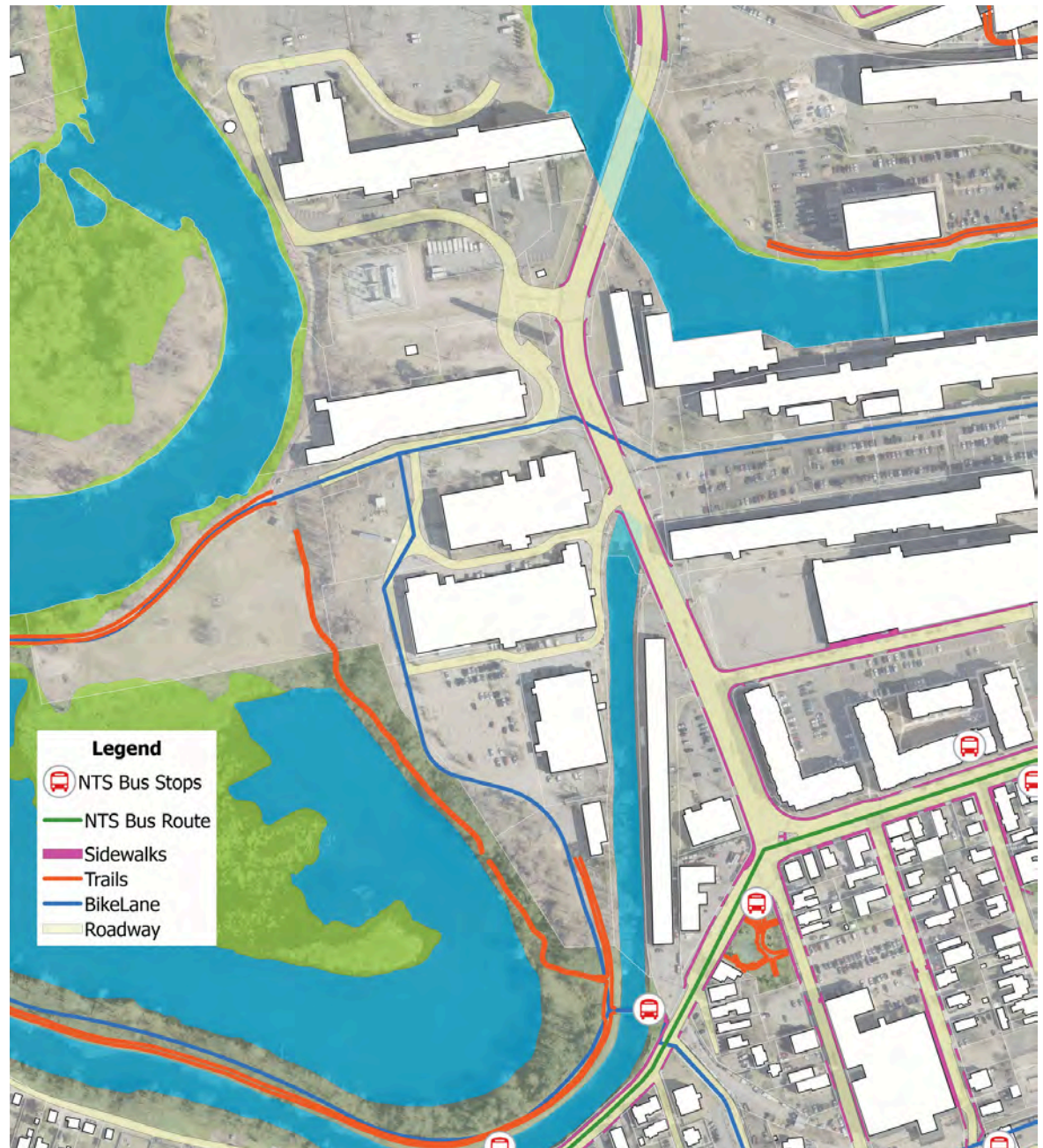
For example, painting the pedestrian bridge(s) doubles as wayfinding (visually drawing pedestrians to the trail) and helps to create a “grand entrance”. The trail(s) can be blazed in fun ways, like the alphabet, or by “yarn bombing” trees or utility poles. A sort of scavenger hunt is also helpful to engaging and energizing residents and visitors. The Googly Eyes, pictured below, was an artist-driven project in Durham, NH encouraged residents to wander downtown and drew people to downtown businesses.





# Connectivity - Existing Concerns

Connectivity for both pedestrians and vehicles to access the Millyard was a major issue brought up during this charrette. Creating opportunities for all modes of travel to freely flow between the Millyard and other parts of Nashua would be a significant improvement to the usability of the area. Before outlining specific recommendations, the Charrette team catalogued existing concerns and deficiencies in connectivity around the Millyard.



Current connectivity of the  
Nashua Millyard district



# Connectivity - Existing Concerns

## Motor Vehicle Travel:

There is currently a confusing network of roads, driveways, and parking areas within much of the Millyard District. The lines between private parking lots, driveways, and roads are often unclear. Pine Street Extension is the primary signalized approach to Pine Street. It turns abruptly to the north on Technology Way, and to the south as Pine Street Extension upon entering the site, leaving a very short stacking area for vehicles leaving the site at the signal. The unsignalized southern site entrance enters Pine Street at an offset from the Clocktower Place approach and has a very skewed approach to Pine Street due to the close proximity of the adjacent buildings. Pine Street Extension dead ends at the southern end of the Millyard site.

## Non-Motorized Travel:

There are currently only two pedestrian crosswalks across Pine Street in the vicinity of the Millyard site. There are no sidewalks leading into the site from the intersection, however. There is bike and pedestrian demand between Pine Street, the trail to Mine Falls Park, and the rest of the Millyard; however, there are no designated routes or facilities to accommodate pedestrians. Pedestrians either share the internal roadways, walk through parking fields, or walk in informal paths or vegetated areas.

A path at the southern end of the Millyard has been closed by the City due to personal security concerns related to the housing encampments that have formed in the woods in that area. The pedestrian bridge that connects to Ledge Street remains open.



Fire access lane behind the Nimco site.



Right in, right out, access point into the Millyard along Pine Street.

# Connectivity - Recommendations

Based on the input from key property owners that attended the Charrette, the following recommendations are based on retaining the existing historic buildings with the exception of the NIMCO building since it is being redeveloped. Our understanding is that the NIMCO owner may be open to creative building layouts that support better site connectivity and circulation. The rectangular layout that was displayed does not improve some of the motor vehicle or pedestrian concerns listed above.



*Layout including commonly suggested connectivity and redevelopment goals for the Millyard: dog park, ADA infrastructure, roadway changes.*

This layout (left) includes features that have already been commonly discussed as connectivity needs and solutions for the area: a dog park, shared roads, ADA accessible infrastructure.

While it does highlight desired outcomes from the community, the Charrette team used more public input to reexamine and expand the potential for the area as it redevelops.

The following layout was developed to focus on easier access to Mine Falls, well-defined roadways and paths, and clear entrances. In addition to these overview goals, the team also wanted to emphasize the need to:

- Add wayfinding signs to improve pedestrian and motor vehicle access to and within the Millyard site.
- Maintain restricted vehicle access to the Spine Road entrance to Mine Falls for authorized park maintenance vehicles, as needed
- Create a clear, safe, straightforward route to Mine Falls for cyclists and pedestrians

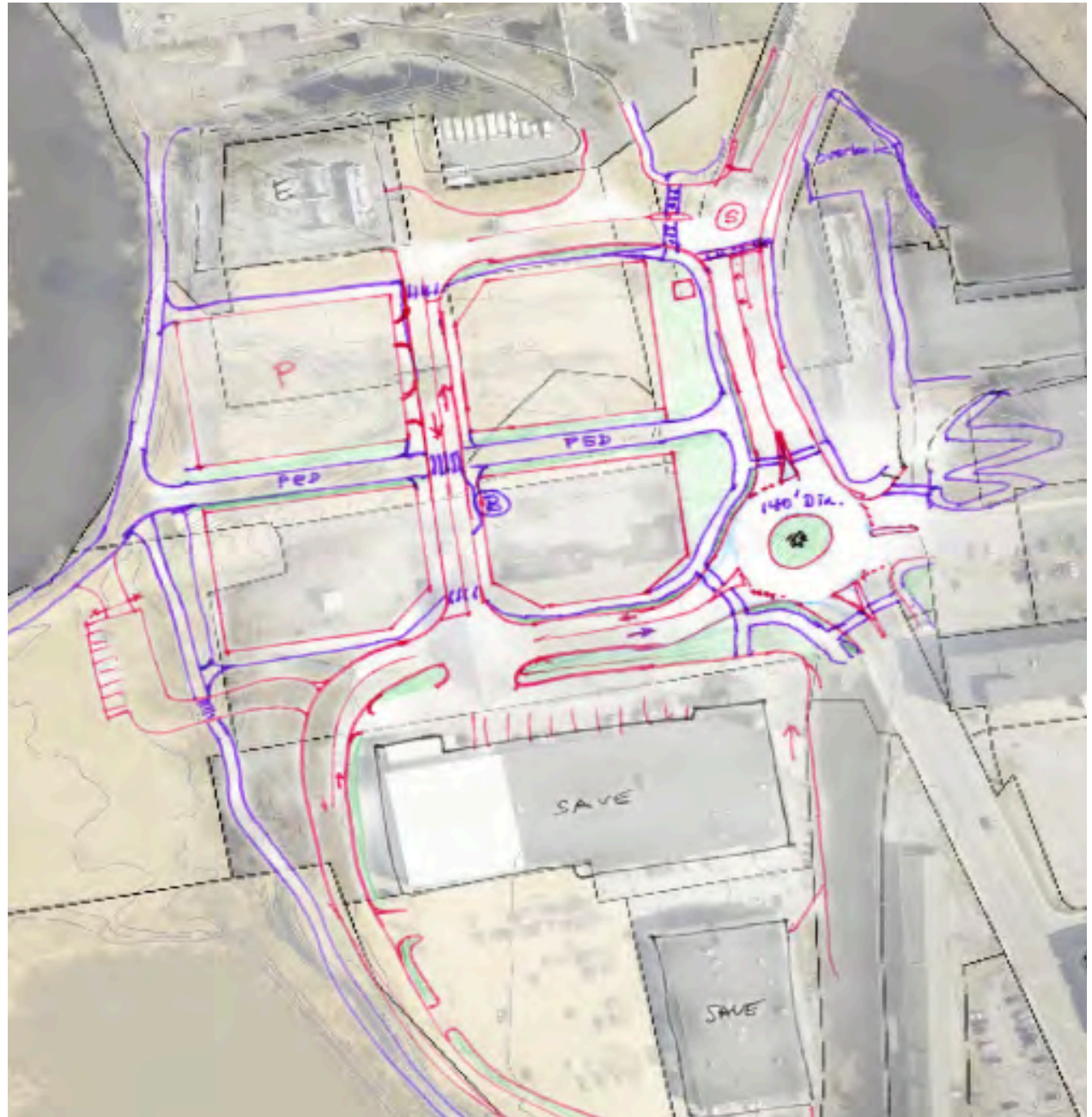


# Connectivity - Recommendations

A suggested four building NIMCO redevelopment shown on the second connectivity plan provides an opportunity to create an internal north-south roadway for cars and pedestrians, and a pedestrian-only east west connection that would serve the Millyard and provide a direct connection between Pine Street and Mine Falls Park.

Repositioning the NIMCO building in such a way provides an opportunity to improve the southern site entrance opposite Clocktower Place. It appears a single lane roundabout may serve that location well since a traffic signal may not be warranted and it will calm traffic, manage pedestrians, and provide good traffic flow. The City would want to ensure that vehicles do not queue back from existing signalized intersection into the roundabout.

Pedestrian access to the City's Riverwalk project from Pine Street should be improved adjacent to the very steep Factory Street Extension by constructing a walkway with a series of switchback ramps up the adjacent slope to sidewalks on Clocktower Place and Pine Street.



*Layout including four-building NIMCO redevelopment with added connectivity.*

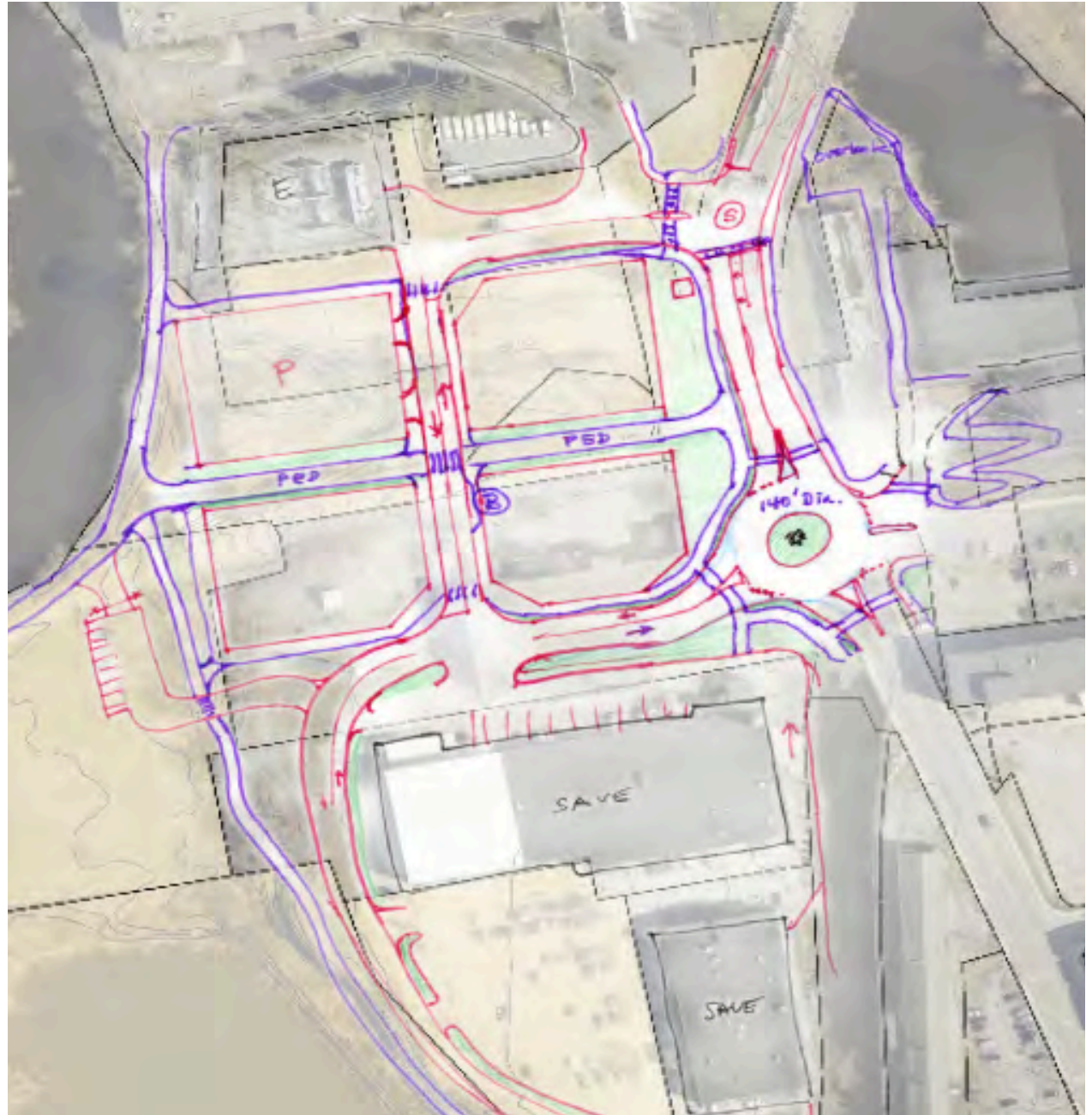
# Connectivity - Recommendations

Pedestrian access between Millyard Technology and Office Park to the trail to Mine Falls park should be provided by improving the informal unimproved path that people are currently using.

The path along the southwest side of the site that is currently closed due to the encampment could be relocated up close to the existing roadways to add a sense of security.

There is currently no bus service within the Millyard site, but it should be considered with future redevelopment plans if the internal roadways and circulation can be made more efficient and if development on site increases demand.

The driveway to the back parking lot of the Millyard Technology and Office Park is too narrow for a sidewalk and is constrained by the building on one side and steep slopes and utility poles on the other. It may be necessary to build a short segment of wall or boardwalk to support a sidewalk to provide the needed safer access, otherwise bikes and pedestrians will continue to share the drive with motorists.



*Layout including four-building NIMCO redevelopment with added connectivity.*



# Open Space and Recreation Opportunities





# Open Space and Recreation Opportunities

## 1. Gateway Feature:

- Create a distinctive Millyard gateway that celebrates the area's industrial heritage and establishes a strong sense of arrival. This can be achieved through enhanced streetscapes and integrated site features such as light poles with banners, signage, the historic Millyard chimney, expressive lighting, sculptures, and other visual and public art elements.

## 2. Connectivity:

- Improve pedestrian safety by providing crosswalks and sidewalks that connect to adjacent neighborhoods.
- Develop a riverwalk trail that links to existing trail networks in the surrounding area.
- Clearly define roadways and parking areas within the site to enhance vehicular circulation.

## 3. Buildings:

- Construct two new residential buildings with integrated parking garages on the lower levels.
- Develop three mixed-use buildings to provide supportive services for the community, including services for individuals experiencing homelessness.





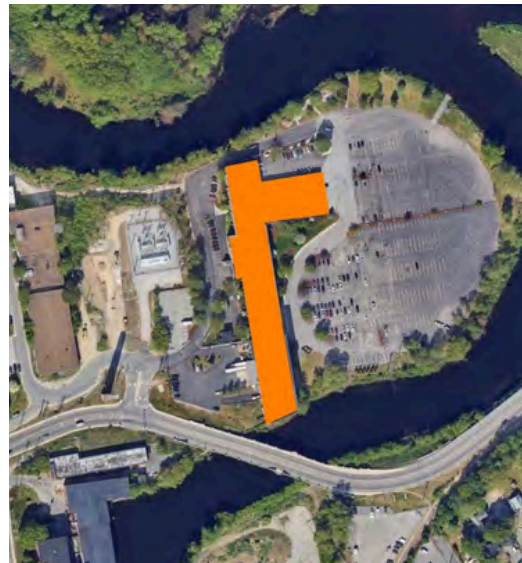
# Open Space and Recreation Opportunities

## 4. Open Space:

- Transform the underutilized riverfront parking lot into a community open space. It is recommended that the City collaborate with private landowners to develop this area into a space for gatherings and events, benefiting both the community and the landowners. The design team recommends looking at Thompson's Point in Portland, Maine as a precedent for successful programming and development on a similar site. Its mix of cultural, recreational, and commercial uses has transformed a former industrial area into a vibrant, year-round destination
- Enhance the river walk and activate green space to provide more public gathering areas and support adjacent retail uses.
- Expand connections to Mine Falls Park by introducing new amenities such as a dog park, parking lot, boat launch, and trails, allowing residents to better enjoy the area's natural assets.



*Thompson's Point  
in Portland, Maine*



*The Millyard  
in Nashua, New Hampshire*





# Open Space and Recreation Opportunities

Franklin New Hampshire is another former mill town that now uses its river access as a space for recreation and community entertainment.



Franklin, NH's Mill City Park





# Adaptive Reuse Opportunities



Overview rendering of adaptive reuse opportunities in the Millyard.



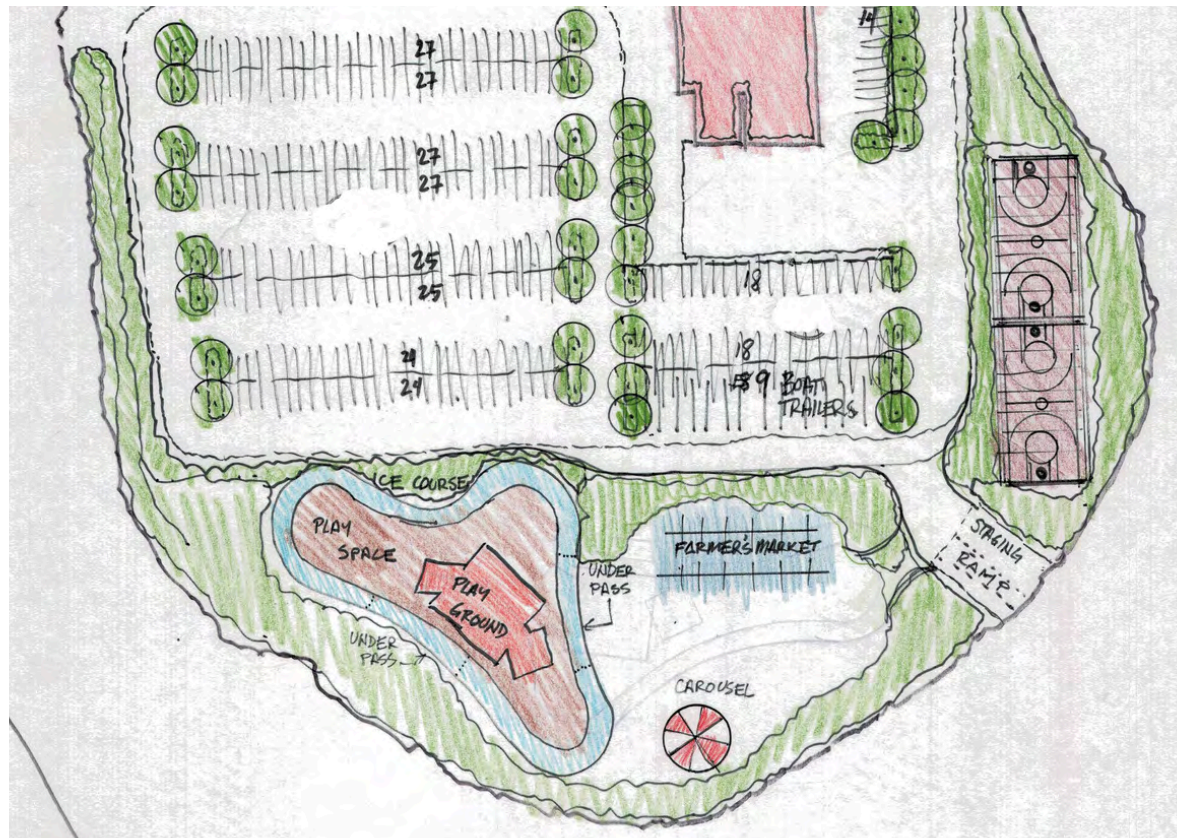
# Adaptive Reuse Opportunities

The Charrette team envisioned many potential ways to program and activate the riverfront area:

- Winter ice skating / summer roller skating: a closed course with hills and turns, skate rentals, and café.
- A safe and enclosed playground at the interior of the skating course – access beneath a skating overpass.
- Three-season carousel
- River walk along entire peninsula
- Basketball courts
- Public boat launch
- Community garden plots and farmer's market

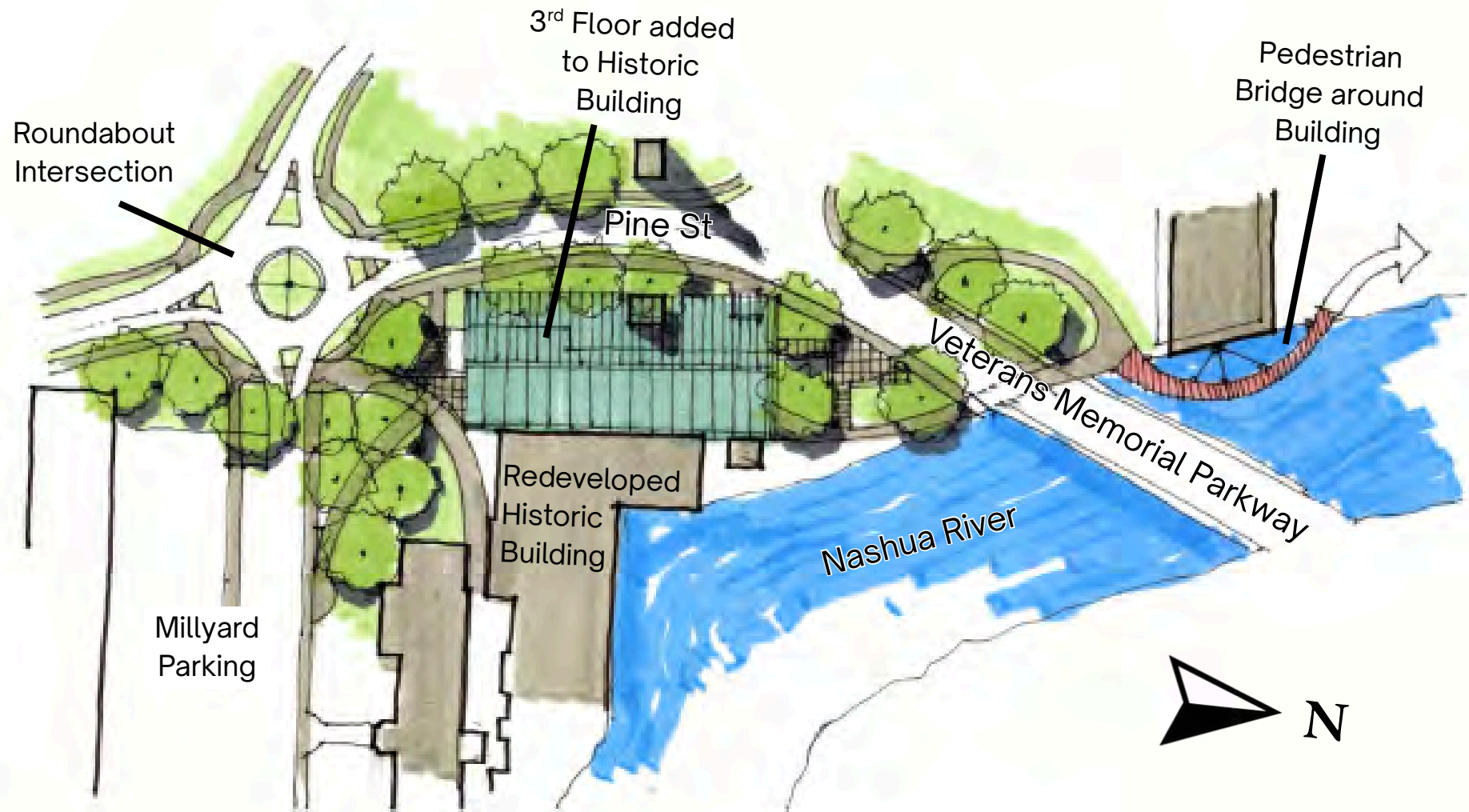
In addition, the existing large parking lot supports these uses by providing:

- Public short term trailer parking for the boat launch
- Parking sufficient for dynamic commercial use of the existing building to remain
- Loading bays and semi-trailer access and short term truck parking



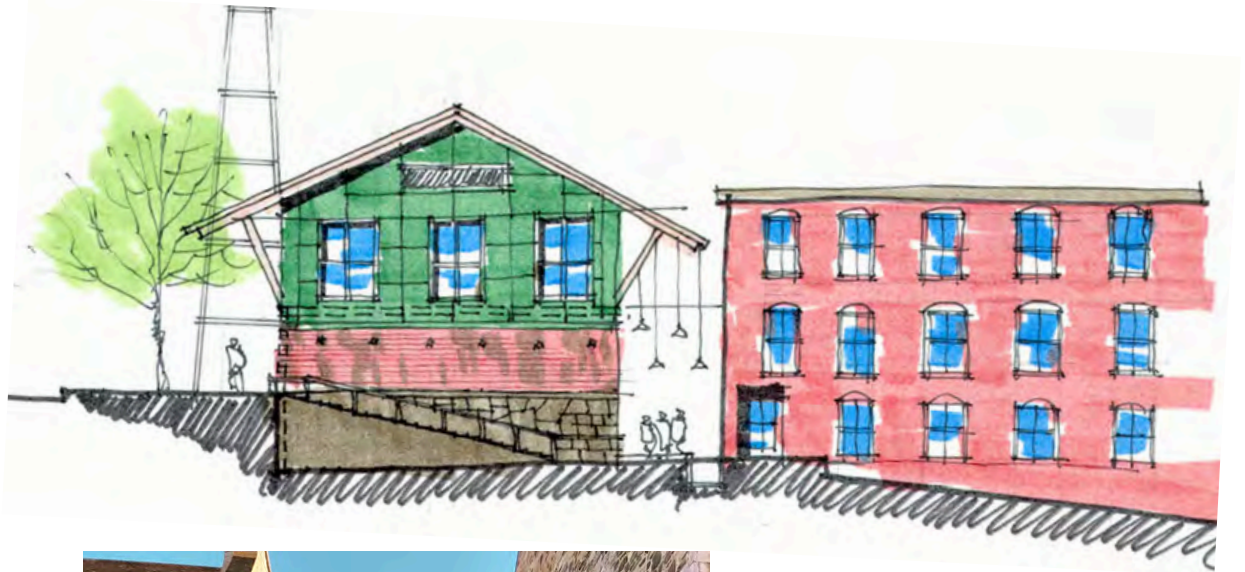


# Adaptive Reuse Opportunities



While some buildings in the Millyard may be tired or dilapidated, many still retain the beautiful and historical skeletons of the brick mill buildings that anchored the city. In the following pages, the Charrette team outlines additions and designs to revitalize the area without tearing down what already exists.

# Adaptive Reuse Opportunities



Across the street from the Millyard, the space depicted at top left can function as a major connector to the beauty of the Millyard. The building on the left has a stone base and a brick first floor. In this design, a modern building is effectively added on top of the existing building. This option would create additional square footage in the building to make it a more worthwhile investment to renovate the building as a whole with the new addition.

This new construction would be made in scale and character of the surrounding industrial architecture. This would create a courtyard entrance to the river.



The space between these two buildings can be animated by public art installations, such as these canoes in Quebec.



# Adaptive Reuse Opportunities



This design focuses on marrying the historical with new construction by retaining the ‘bookends’ of existing buildings and redefining the space in the middle with a new ‘spine’ or cross street to enhance connectivity.

The building drawn at left is fully preserved but takes advantage of new uses, such as parking at the basement level. This option may also create an opportunity for more residential at upper floors.

The building drawn at right would be new construction, attached to the original building facing the street. By adding on to the existing building, more height can be added to the structure to maximize potential of the space.



# Adaptive Reuse Opportunities



The design at left focuses on repurposing a run-down building to not only restore its outward aesthetic, but offers a greater purpose. The existing building can be rehabilitated to provide community services to vulnerable and unhoused members of the community, and a new residential building can be constructed adjacent to provide transitional housing. *See additional suggestions and information in the Housing section.*



Simple changes, such as creating windows out of covered-over garage doors, can make this building more welcoming and cohesive with the rest of the Millyard.



# Redevelopment Opportunities

In this scenario, the Charrette team focused on the following considerations based on field work and public input.

## Community and Economic Sustainability

- Retain a mixed-use community supporting residential, commercial, and light industrial functions.
- Prioritize job retention and the creation of employment opportunities across a variety of sectors.
- Introduce essential services such as fitness facilities, healthcare, grocery, as well as retail services (cafés, sandwich shops, yoga, etc.).

## Transit and Accessibility Enhancements

- Rework traffic patterns to prioritize pedestrian access and safety, including traffic calming measures, pedestrian-first intersections or bridging, and reduced vehicle speeds in the area.
- Add transit stops along the perimeter of the mill area to strengthen regional and local connectivity.
- Improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to ensure safe, convenient movement throughout the site.



## Long-Term Planning Framework

- Establish 1-year, 5-year, 10-year, and 20-year development plans to guide phased growth, adaptive reuse, and context-sensitive new construction.

## Riverfront Activation

- Leverage the river as a defining asset for community engagement and economic development.
- Explore water taxis, kayak and canoe launch points, and dock installations to support river-based recreation and alternative mobility options.



# Redevelopment Opportunities

## Historic and Contextual Development

- Embrace the location as the gateway/beacon to the city.
- Preserve and rehabilitate existing brick mill buildings where feasible to maintain architectural character and heritage.
- Assess non-brick structures for adaptive reuse or sensitive replacement that aligns with the site's historic context.
- Ensure new development respects the scale, materials, and character of the mill area.
- Design buildings to be inclusive, community-oriented, and architecturally engaging.
- Consider incorporating a visitor center, local museum, or innovation center into the site's programming.

## Cultural and Recreational Integration

- Integrate public art, cultural installations, and recreational amenities that reflect the community's appreciation for creativity and active lifestyles.
- Design flexible public spaces that accommodate markets, festivals, performances, and seasonal events.

## Healthy Living and Wellness-Oriented Design

- Promote healthy, active living through walkable neighborhoods, nearby wellness services, and accessible outdoor spaces.
- Incorporate community gardens, greenways, and trail networks.

## Wayfinding and Park Experience

- Develop a cohesive wayfinding strategy to enhance navigation throughout park and trail areas.
- Improve physical and visual connections between the mill area and downtown (main street).
- Emphasize universal accessibility, safety, and educational signage that communicates the site's natural and cultural history.





# Redevelopment Opportunities

This proposal balances **new development and adaptive reuse** to create a mixed-use, mixed-income, culturally rich, and accessible waterfront district. The selections support long-term sustainability, economic diversity, and a high quality of life through smart infrastructure, activated & high visibility public spaces, and community-oriented services. Our images included an AI generated image for the innovation/grocery hub (p. 43), a programmatic site plan (below). And examples of some of the key elements of our design concept.

1. New - Boat Launch in Canal & Near Dog Park
2. New - Innovation Hub/Grocery/Market-Rate Res.
3. New - Art Walk/ Hardscape Event Space (Food Trucks, Small Concerts, etc.)
4. Adaptive Re-Use – Services (Healthcare, Gym, Childcare, Yoga, Coffee Shop)
5. New - Canal Walk/ Outdoor Seating
6. New - Public/Private Garage
7. New - Dog Park
8. New - Playground/ Outdoor Event Area
9. New - Mixed-Use Residential Tower/Light Commercial (Ice Cream, Sandwiches, etc.)
10. New - Residential over Parking Garage w/ elevated green space/pool deck
11. New - Pedestrian Bridge/ Welcome Center/Transit Stop, ADA Ramp
12. Adaptive Re-use - Maker Art Space & Artist in Residence
13. Adaptive Re-use - Museum
14. Existing – Utility (Electrical Service)
15. Existing – Tech Park



# Redevelopment Opportunities

The following pages break down the concept recommendations in order – for a map overview of all parts please refer to the diagram on page 39. *Note: Numbers refer to their proposed location on the diagram.*

## Waterfront Activation and Connectivity

**1. Boat Launch in Canal & Near Dog Park** activates the waterway for recreation, encouraging small-scale boating, kayaking, and seasonal events. Located near recreational assets to create synergy and draw more foot traffic.

**5. Canal Walk / Outdoor Seating** establishes a continuous, walkable promenade that encourages public interaction with the waterfront. The seating areas invite people to linger and enjoy the scenery, increasing dwell time in the area.

**11. Pedestrian Bridge / Welcome Center/Transit, ADA Ramp** improves accessibility and provides a formal entry point to the district. The welcome center can serve as an orientation hub for visitors while highlighting local history or businesses.



## Mixed-Use Development and Mixed-Income Housing

**2. Innovation Hub / Grocery / Market-Rate Residences** introduces a multi-purpose anchor development combining job creation (through innovation space), essential services (grocery), and high-end housing. A catalyst for attracting investment and fostering a live-work-play environment.

**9. Mixed-Use Residential Tower / Light Commercial (Ice Cream, Sandwiches, etc.)** provides additional housing while supporting small-scale retail that activates the street level and serves residents and visitors alike.

**10. Residential Over Parking Garage with Elevated Green Space / Pool Deck** maximizes land use by integrating structured parking with residential living and shared green amenities. Elevated green space creates a semi-private retreat and adds aesthetic value to the built environment.

**6. Public/Private Garage** offers flexible parking solutions to support the growing residential, commercial, and event-based uses in the district. Strategically placed to reduce parking pressure and support walkability.



# Redevelopment Opportunities

## *Arts and Culture Integration*

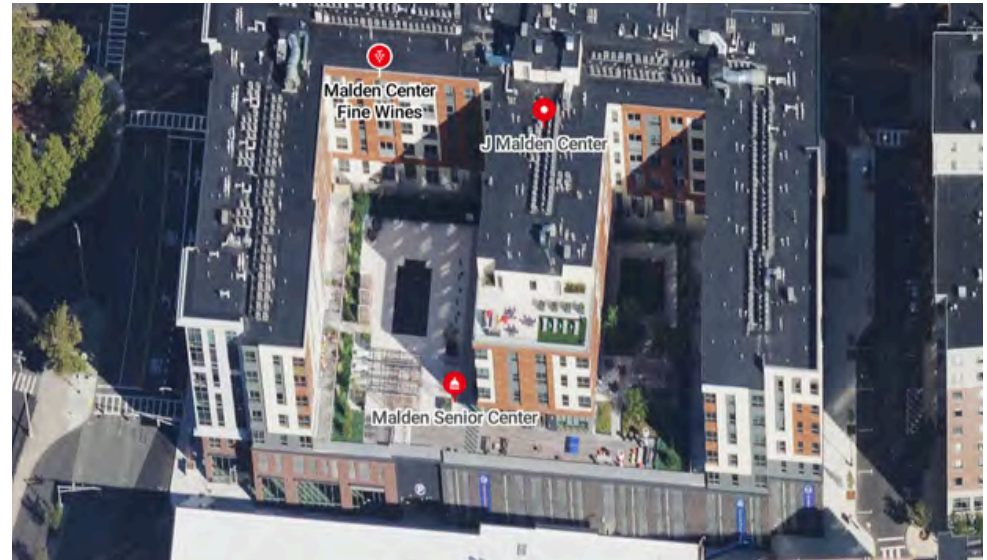
**3. Art Walk / Hardscape Event Space (Food Trucks, Small Concerts, etc.)** designed to be flexible and multifunctional. Enhances the cultural identity of the area while offering a venue for temporary events, drawing consistent foot traffic.

**12. Adaptive Re-Use - Maker Art Space & Artist-in-Residence** supports the local creative economy through studio space, maker zones, and residency programs. Brings continuous creative energy to the district and encourages public engagement with art.

**13. Adaptive Re-Use - Museum** reinvigorates an existing building to showcase local history or culture. Adds a permanent draw for residents and tourists while supporting education and cultural tourism.

## *Health, Wellness, and Everyday Services*

**4. Adaptive Re-Use – Services (Healthcare, Gym, Childcare, Yoga, Coffee Shop)** offers necessary daily services that make the district livable and attractive for diverse user groups including families, professionals, and seniors. Builds an ecosystem that supports long-term residency and frequent visits.



*A Senior Center included in multi-use housing development.*



*Her Rays Illuminate The Whole Earth - Evan Morse*

# Redevelopment Opportunities

## *Recreation and Community-Oriented Spaces*

**7. Dog Park** responds to demand for pet-friendly amenities. Encourages casual social interaction and supports walkable, neighborhood-centered planning.

**8. Playground / Outdoor Event Area** serves families and children while providing flexible space for seasonal events or gatherings. Adds vitality and intergenerational appeal to the area.

## *Infrastructure and Employment Anchors*

### **14. Existing – Utility (Electrical Service)**

acknowledging the location of existing utilities is essential for infrastructure planning. Potential for integration into public realm enhancements or screening with landscape.

**15. Existing – Tech Park** acts as an existing employment node. Potential for coordination with new innovation-oriented developments, such as the proposed innovation hub, to build a more cohesive economic strategy.





# Redevelopment Opportunities

- Residential
- Commercial
- Restaurant
- Market
- Public Space
- Recreation



Midjourney AI Concept Rendering

AI Concept Rendering of Millyard Redevelopment Vision

# Visioning for the Future: *It is Up to You!*

**Nashua** is a wonderful city with residents that are passionate about finding ways to reimagine the Millyard to highlight the best of what the city has to offer its growing and diverse community. How you choose to do that is up to you!

This report provides recommendations, not mandates, which are for you to explore, evaluate, and discuss. Ultimately, the choice of where to take Nashua is up to its community members - **and that means all of you!**

We recommend that you circulate this report to all residents and community members of Nashua, so that anyone interested can come together for a general review of the recommendations and a discussion about what's next.

Further, as recommendations from this charrette are further developed, we recommend that interested people be fully welcomed in for both the planning and implementation. Nashua is already in a great spot with a collaborative spirit that will guide your future.

Good luck!



*What is next for Nashua? Instead of focusing on challenges, think about possibilities!*



# Resources & Funding

## Community Design & Placemaking:

- [Creative Placemaking Public Resources Guide](#)
- [National Endowment for the Arts, Our Town](#)
- [New Hampshire State Council on the Arts Grants](#)
- [UNH Cooperative Extension, Characteristics of a Vibrant Downtown](#)
- [New Hampshire Preservation Alliance Historic Preservation Grants](#)

## Economic Development:

- [UNH Cooperative Extension](#)
- [Regional Economic Development Center](#)
- [New Hampshire Community Development Finance Authority](#)

## Housing, Planning, & Zoning:

- [Plan NH Community Design Charrette Program](#)
- [New Hampshire Housing Grant Program](#)
- [New Hampshire Housing Toolbox](#)
- [Housing Champions Program](#)
- [New Hampshire Community Development Finance Authority Planning Grants](#)
- [New Hampshire Preservation Alliance Planning Grants](#)

## Transportation, Traffic Calming, Parking:

- [NH Department of Transportation Transportation Alternatives Program](#)
- [Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission](#)
- [DOT Navigator](#)

## Other Resources/Funding Opportunities

- [AARP Livable Communities Resources & Grants](#)
- [New Hampshire Charitable Foundation Community Grants Program](#)





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