

Cultural Districts, Heritage Areas, Tourism and Branding: If you Name it, Will They Come?

*Question of the Day: How can urban
designers, developers and planners
create new economic value for
historic places and inner cities?*

What have we learned?

- 1. All places have value**
- 2. Stories matter**
- 3. Re-use industrial environments**
- 4. Build regional networks**

Designing Arts Districts

How can urban designers create new economic value by supporting and encouraging culture and the arts?

Why Arts Districts?

- **Blighted areas provide suitable low-cost housing and work space for a “trendy” clientele**
- **Artists are urban pioneers – will go where others fear to tread**
- **Successful arts districts can provide a boosted image to neighborhoods and to cities.**
- **Often used as a link between disconnected parts of the city**
- **Economic stimulus for business**
- **Attraction of visitors with disposable income**
- **Historically significant buildings can find new uses**

New England's Creative Economy

The Creative Economy Initiative of the New England Council (NEC) commissioned a three-year study by the NEC to document the benefits to be derived from supporting arts and culture in our cities and towns, sharing ideas with other districts in the region, and coordinating efforts.

The NEC endeavor, entitled

The Creative Economy Initiative: The Role of the Arts and Culture in New England's Economic Competitiveness

demonstrates the dramatic positive impact of cultural arts on the region's economy:

New England's Creative Economy

What we found startled even those who have long supported the notion that New England's rich cultural assets constitute a powerful economic force. In a report released one year ago, we expanded analysis of the sector to include nonprofit cultural organizations as well as commercial enterprises and individual artists. We found that 245,000 New Englanders, or 3.5% of the region's total workforce, are employed in what we call the "creative economy." Moreover, the occupations that comprise this sector are growing at a faster rate than other occupations in the general economy. We also found that the creative economy is responsible for generating annually \$6.6 billion in tourism revenue alone.

*A Blueprint for Investment in New England's
Creative Economy, 6/01*

New England's Creative Economy

Unlike more traditional, cohesively organized industrial sectors, the creative economy functions as a connective tissue that unifies a diverse range of individuals and organizations. Surrounding this core creative cluster is a rich infrastructure of public and private entities that both supports and benefits from the existence of a vital creative economy. These support organizations provide the skills and training, technology, financing, physical facilities, and regulatory and business climate necessary to sustain the cluster.

*A Blueprint for Investment in New England's
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What is an Arts District?

- An area designated by a city or town – usually through an amendment to the zoning ordinance
- Created to improve the community and promote arts and crafts activities
- Allows all uses permitted in business, residential, and manufacturing zones

What does an Arts District do?

- Ensures affordable housing for artists and other residents
- Tailors zoning to suit artist-related needs and allows artist live/work spaces
- Puts existing vacant properties back on the tax rolls
- Creates a strong image for artists, other district businesses, and area colleges

What does an Arts District NOT do?

- Dictate where artists must live or work
- Limit benefits to only those artists living or working in the District
- Force out existing businesses or residents
- Stifle cultural events and activities planned for other parts of the city
- Create a “cookie cutter” approach to neighborhood revitalization
- Offer an instant success story... but it will support incremental change over time.

Some Success Stories ...

Lowell, MA

- **1998 City of Lowell's Artist Overlay District created in 1998 is a component of the city's zoning ordinance**
- **Special permitting for artist live-work space**
- **Four tax foreclosed, city-owned properties sold to developers for 76 loft units**
- **Economic development funds used for low interest loans and capital improvement grants**
- **City recruitment of artists & cultural organizations**

New Bedford, MA

- **Regional cultural congress coalesced arts**
- **Key partners: Cultural and historical organizations; artists; National Park, Standard-Times, City and Mayor**
- **AHA! open house a huge success**
- **U-Mass Art School moved downtown**
- **Artist housing in historic district & waterfront**

Portland, ME

- **Arts District connected two neighborhoods**
- **Key partners in District are Maine College of Art & Portland Museum of Art**
- **Downtown Arts District Assoc. (DADA) holds monthly evening gallery Art Walk**
- **Community Cultural Plan links District to neighborhoods**

Peekskill, NY

- **City Master Plan supports 100 artists in downtown live/work space**
- **Zoning converted vacant upper floors**
- **College arts annex a major catalyst for students and visitors**
- **Computer design & media firms employ artists and complement district**

Worcester as a Case Study

- Blighted area of Main Street between downtown core and Clark University
- Over 2000 artists in the area
- Escalating rents and sale prices
- Conflict between zoning/public safety and artists' needs
- City trying to carve out niche and image for itself within the region
- Establishment of the Cultural Coalition (more than 40 arts and educational organizations and institutions)
- Funding of a cultural development officer in the Mayor's Office

The Arts Overlay District

- Adopted April 2, 1991 as an ordinance amending the Worcester Zoning Ordinance
- Created to promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the community; promote the expansion of commercial art and craft activities as a compatible land use; enhance the environment and improve site opportunities for commercial art and craft activities
- Allows all uses as permitted in the manufacturing, business, or residential zones



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The Arts District

- Vacant buildings and lots provide redevelopment opportunities



Junction Shop Manufacturing District

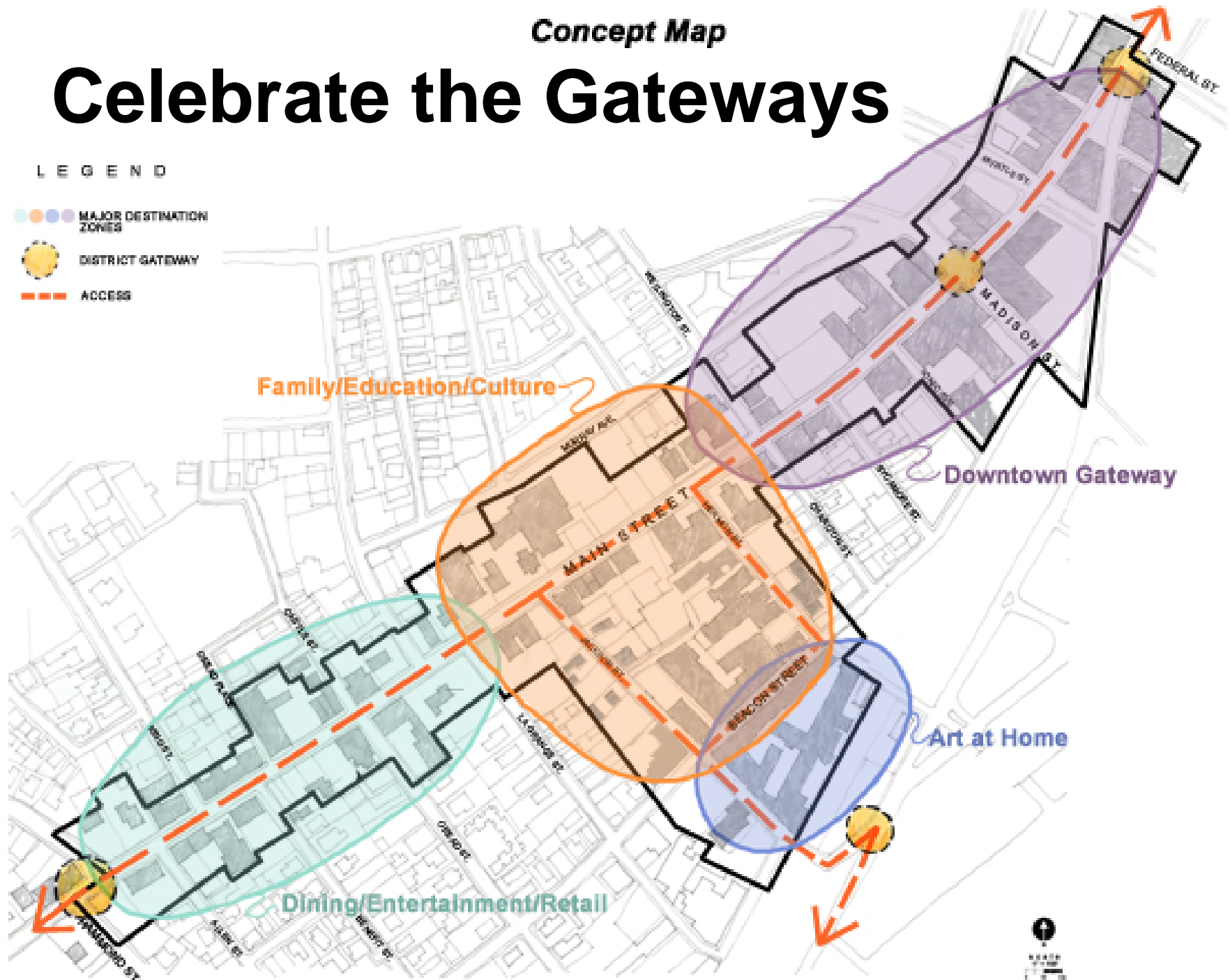
- Adds over 537,000 square feet of historic, high-ceiling, large floor buildings
- Striking image of area
- Historic significance to the city
- Low acquisition costs
- Good visibility from new Route 146/
Southbridge St.
gateway



Celebrate the Gateways

LEGEND

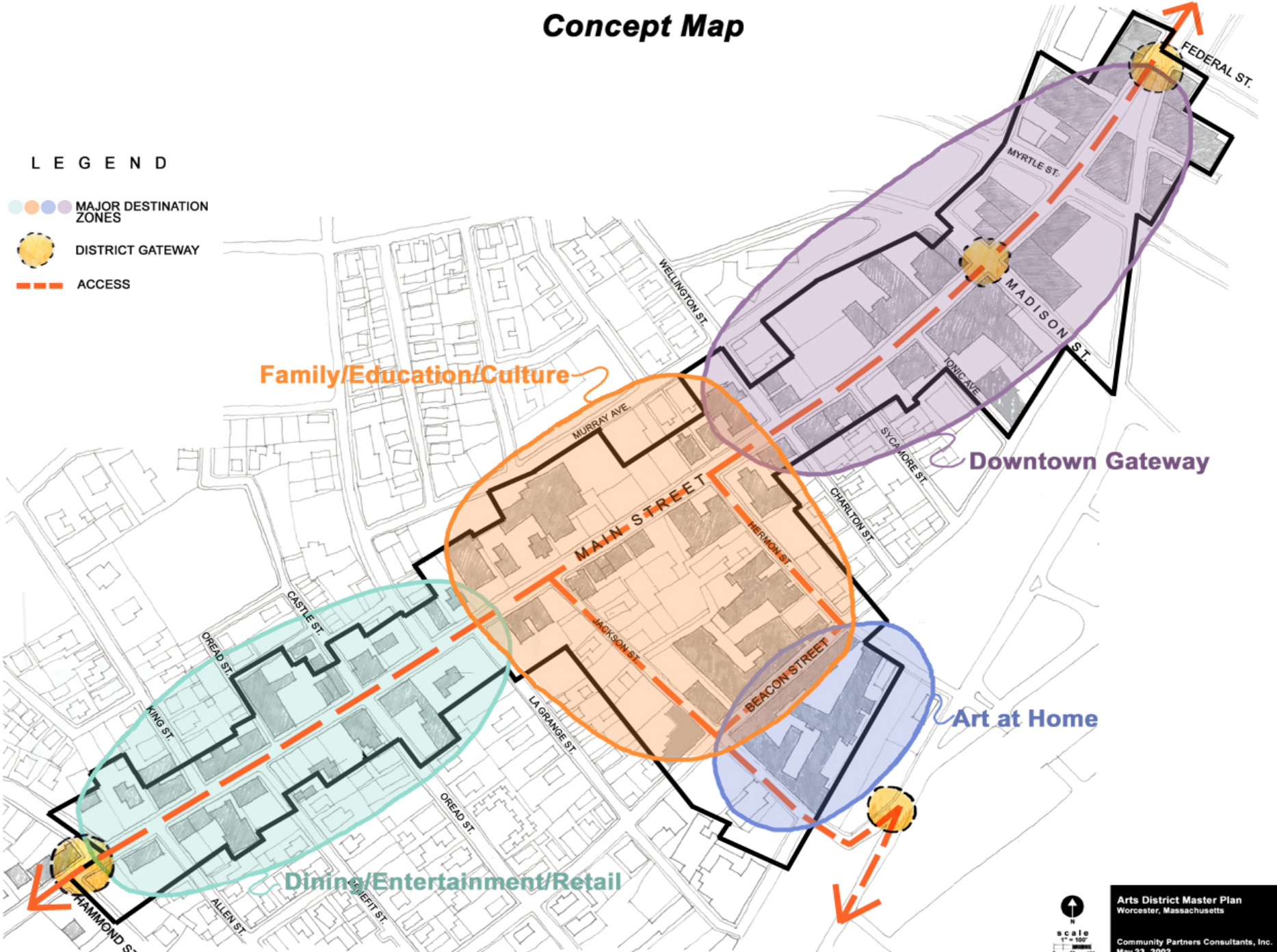
- MAJOR DESTINATION ZONES
- DISTRICT GATEWAY
- ACCESS



Concept Map

LEGEND

- MAJOR DESTINATION ZONES
- DISTRICT GATEWAY
- ACCESS



Manufacturing District Transformed

MAJOR DESTINATION ZONES



DISTRICT GATEWAY

ACCESS

DISCOVER! TRAIL AND DESTINATIONS



Town Gateway

Home

Dining/Entertainment/Retail



Arts District Master Plan
Worcester, Massachusetts

Community Partners Consultants, Inc.
May 23, 2002

Manufacturing District Transformed

MAJOR DESTINATION ZONES



DISTRICT GATEWAY

ACCESS

DISCOVER! TRAIL AND DESTINATIONS



town Gateway

Home

Dining/Entertainment/Retail



Art at Home

- Up to 100,000 square feet of retail space within the historic manufacturing district
- Regional destination for home improvement specialty items created by artists and craftspeople
- Antique stores and small-scale furniture makers located here
- Attracts visitors with disposable income – a necessary ingredient for a successful arts district



Dining, Entertainment, Retail

- Smaller scale buildings
- Storefronts
- Proximity to Clark University
- Entertainment destinations such as Gilrein's
- Eclectic mix of shops, restaurants, and galleries



Main Street Transformed

LEGEND

MAJOR DESTINATION ZONES



DISTRICT GATEWAY

ACCESS

DISCOVER! TRAIL AND DESTINATIONS



Gateway



Main Street Transformed

LEGEND

MAJOR DESTINATION ZONES

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DISCOVER! TRAIL AND DESTINATIONS



Gateway

Dining/Entertainment/Retail



A Building Transformation in the Arts District

LEGEND

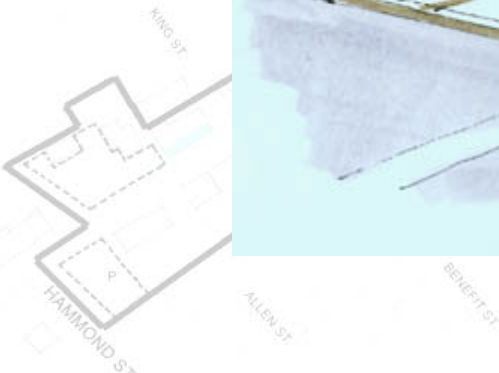
-  POTENTIAL SITES FOR DEVELOPMENT
-  SITE REFERENCE NUMBERS
-  PARKING LOTS
-  POTENTIAL SITES FOR FACADE IMPROVEMENT



A Building Transformation in the Arts District

LEGEND

-  POTENTIAL SITES FOR DEVELOPMENT
-  SITE REFERENCE NUMBERS
-  PARKING LOTS
-  POTENTIAL SITES FOR FACADE IMPROVEMENT



Discover! Worcester Trail

LEGEND

- Celebrate cultural, historical, architectural destinations in the Arts District, and the City of Worcester
- Artist-designed markers to highlight sites on the Trail
- Collaborative effort to identify and interpret sites
- Celebratory events with installation of each marker



Concept Map

Discover! Worcester Trail

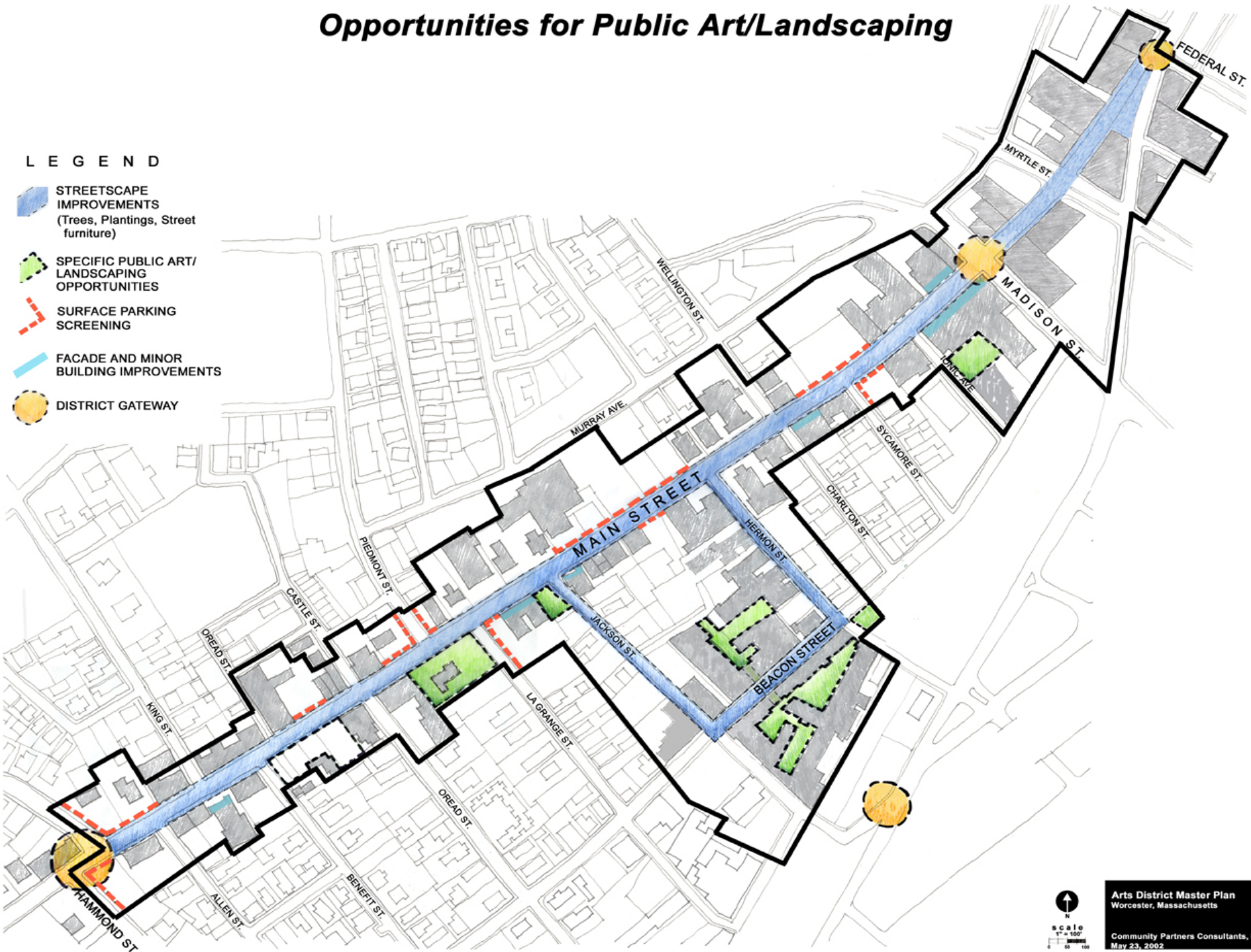
LEGEND



Opportunities for Public Art/Landscaping

LEGEND

-  STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS
(Trees, Plantings, Street furniture)
-  SPECIFIC PUBLIC ART/
LANDSCAPING OPPORTUNITIES
-  SURFACE PARKING SCREENING
-  FACADE AND MINOR BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS
-  DISTRICT GATEWAY



A Vacant Lot Transformed

- STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS (Trees, Plantings, Street Furniture)
- OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC LANDSCAPING
- SURFACE PAVEMENT SCREENING
- TRAILSIDE AND BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS
- DISTRICT GATEWAY



A Parking Lot Transformed

LEGEND

STREETSCAPE
IMPROVEMENTS
(Trees, Plantings, Street
Furniture)

OPPORTUNITIES FOR
PUBLIC LANDSCAPING
OPPORTUNITIES

SURFACE PAVING
SCHEMES

TRUCK AND BUS
LOADING ZONES

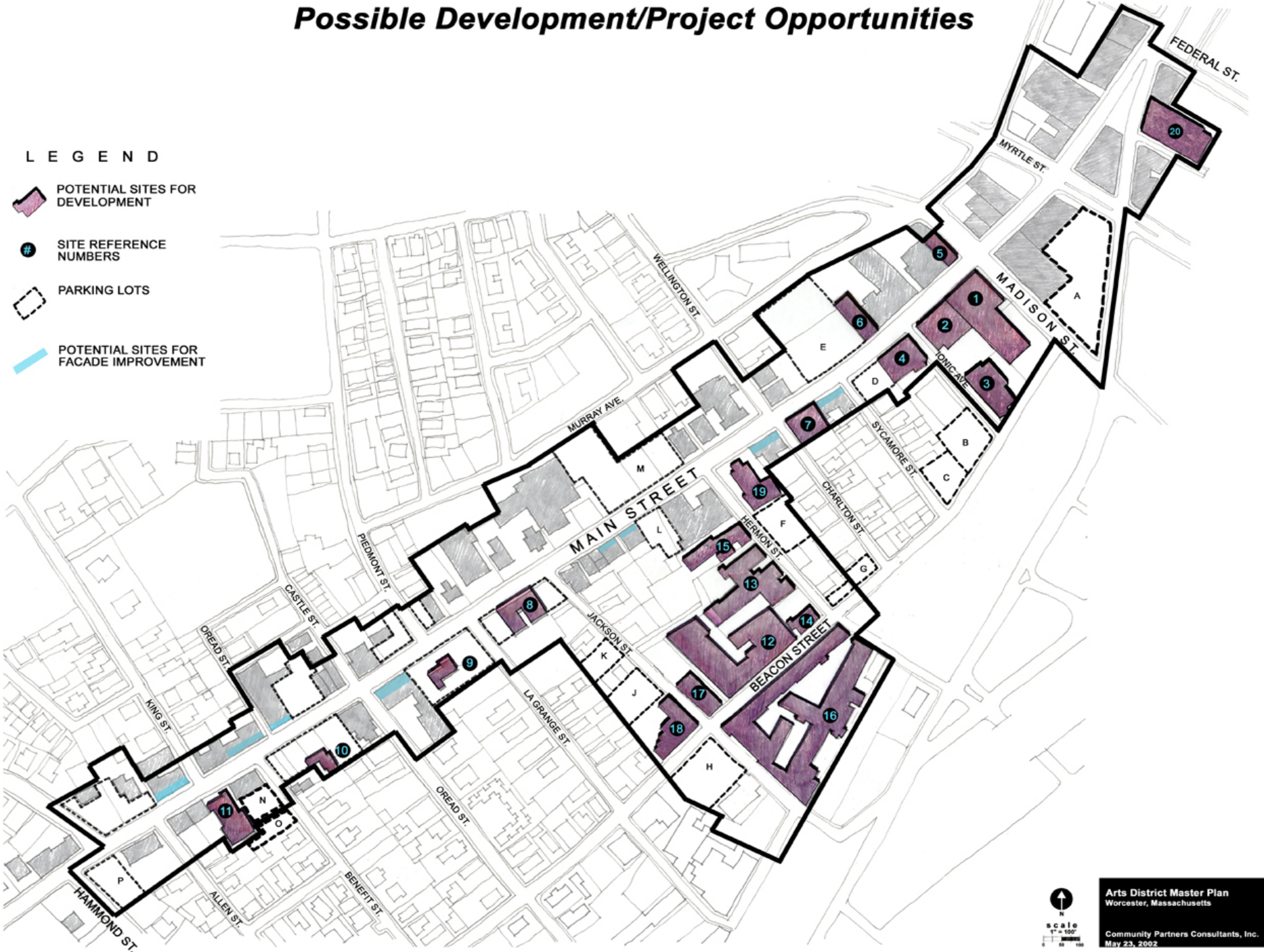
DISTRICT BOUNDARY



Possible Development/Project Opportunities

LEGEND

-  POTENTIAL SITES FOR DEVELOPMENT
-  SITE REFERENCE NUMBERS
-  PARKING LOTS
-  POTENTIAL SITES FOR FACADE IMPROVEMENT



Potential Uses and Activities in the Arts District

LEGEND

POTENTIAL SITES FOR DEVELOPMENT

SITE REFERENCE NUMBERS

PARKING

POTENTIAL SITES FOR FACADE IMPROVEMENT

Space Available for development:	820,000 sf
Artist live/work:	70 units
Market Rate Housing:	195 units
Mixed-income housing:	135 units
Art at Home:	100,000 sf
Art Museum Annex:	50,000 sf
Crafts Center/ other schools:	25,000 sf
General Commercial:	46,000 sf
Retail/ Restaurant:	60,000 sf
Parks/ Green Space	
Street Vendors	
Festivals/ Pedestrian Days	

In addition to : Existing commercial, retail, restaurants

What are the Potential Economic Benefits of the Master Plan?

- 800,000+ SF of development opportunities
- Importance of identifying anchors and creating critical mass
- This is incremental: 15 - 20 year horizon
- \$35 - \$40 million investment in new housing
- 600 new households generate \$24 million in new income
- \$16+ million in new commercial investment
- 1000 jobs generate \$2 million in annual retail spending
- Detailed feasibility testing required

The Role of Naming in Community Revitalization

- DUMBO (Down Under the Manhattan Bridge Overpass), Brooklyn, New York
- Hudson Yards (Hell's Kitchen South), Manhattan, New York
- Ladder District (Downtown Crossing), Boston, Massachusetts

Hell's Kitchen

- In the 1960s, in an effort to smooth its rough-and-tumble image, some community groups supported renaming the neighborhood Clinton. (The community already had a park and high school named in honor of De Witt Clinton, former New York mayor and governor.) However, a vibrant name like Hell's Kitchen has not been extinguished and continues to be used as often as Clinton, both on the street and in the media.
- Hudson Yards is new name...

What's in a Name?