

# New Britain - Hartford Busway Station Area Planning Project

## Executive Summary: Flatbush Station Area

### What Do “Transit Oriented Development” (TOD) Districts Look Like?

Successful TOD districts have a blend of housing, retail, and/or office and a good measure of density, whether job density or housing density. Development is more compact and less dependent on parking and auto use. Infrastructure costs for streets, water, sewer, and utilities are reduced while property values are typically increased.

Other key elements include an attractive, safe and inviting pedestrian environment as well as public space integrated with the transit station and commercial space to create a “sense of place.” Buildings are located near the street edge with several windows and doors on the ground floor. Public streets and walkways are organized in a grid pattern that creates comfortably sized blocks. The districts are usually within a ¼ to ½ mile radius around a station, or a comfortable five to ten minute walking distance.

### Municipal Advisory Committees

Robert Painter, Committee Chairperson - Hartford City Council

Gerry Maine - Planning Department, City of Hartford

Stephen Jewett - Commission on the City Plan, City of Hartford

Kevin Burnham - Public Works Department, City of Hartford

Glenn Geathers - Hartford Economic Development Commission

John Shemo - MetroHartford Regional Economic Alliance, Inc.

David Morin - Parkville NRZ

Jennifer Cassidy - Asylum Hill NRZ

Joseph Barber - North Frog Hollow NRZ

Jackie Fongemie/Shawn Holloway - Behind The Rocks

Carlos Mouta - Parkville Business Association

Susan McMullen - Hartford Director of Constituent Services

Ron Van Winkle, Committee Chairperson - West Hartford  
Director of Community Services

Jeffrey Daniels - West Hartford TP&Z Committee

Rob Rowilson - West Hartford Business Development Officer

Marcia Lewis - West Hartford Faxon Branch Library

Tim Parola - West Hartford Vision Inc.

Rick Liftig - WH Vision/Elmwood Business Association

### Capitol Region Council of Governments

241 Main Street • Hartford, CT 06106-5310 • [www.crcog.org](http://www.crcog.org)

For more information or to see the full report contact CRCOG at 860-522-2217 or go to CRCOG's, Hartford's or West Hartford's websites: [www.crcog.org](http://www.crcog.org); [www.hartford.gov](http://www.hartford.gov); [www.west-hartford.com](http://www.west-hartford.com)

CROSBY | SCHLESSINGER | SMALLRIDGE LLC

### Implementation

The implementation strategy focuses on the City of Hartford and the Town of West Hartford working cooperatively to encourage developers to create the transit plaza, and to adopt zoning regulations that encourage long-term redevelopment of more transit-supportive uses. The following summarizes the phasing of the key development components:

#### Short-Term: 2004-2009

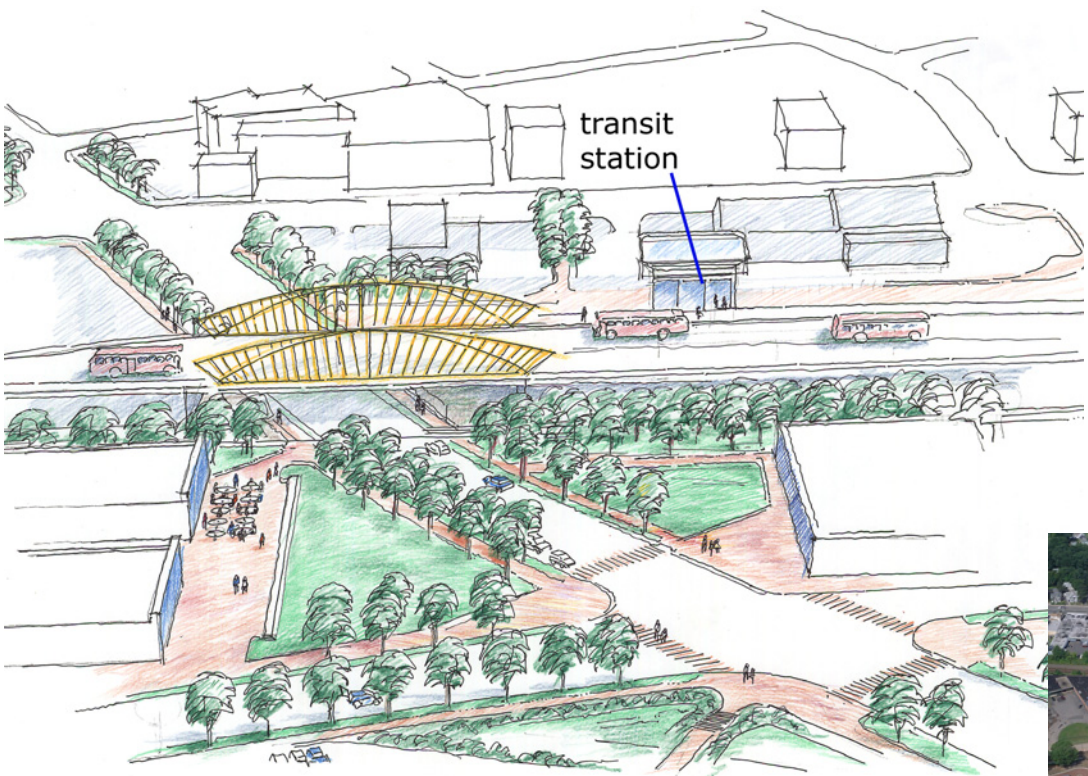
- Consider incorporating station area plan in Hartford and West Hartford Plans of Conservation and Development
- Conduct design review to achieve modifications of Charter Oak Marketplace out-parcels at the Newfield Avenue/ Flatbush Avenue intersection
- Consider adoption of TOD zoning changes as outlined in Appendix C. These changes would encourage uses that create employment and restaurant density, and enhance the pedestrian environment.
- Develop urban design criteria for the bridge structure over Flatbush Avenue to ensure that the bridge functions as a handsome icon and gateway to the area
- Initiate discussions with property owners of linear parcels north of Flatbush Avenue and gauge developer interest in development of an indoor sports facility
- Work with ConnDOT to ensure creation of the best possible pedestrian environment both at the station and from the station to the corner of Flatbush Avenue and Newfield Street. Also work with ConnDOT on the design of the busway bridge over Flatbush Avenue.
- Identify sources of funds for capital improvements

#### Medium and Long-Term: 2010-2025

- Continue design review and suggest appropriate modifications for development of parcels on Flatbush and New Park Avenue
- As parcels redevelop along New Park Avenue, continue design review and work with developers and property owners to enact shared parking agreements to reduce overall parking requirements and to create a plaza-like atmosphere at Newfield and Flatbush Avenues
- Assist property owners and developers in relocation activities required for redevelopment of parcels along New Park Avenue

Prepared in cooperation with citizens, the Cities of New Britain and Hartford, the Towns of West Hartford and Newington, the Capitol Region Council of Governments, and the Connecticut Department of Transportation. The opinions, findings and conclusion expressed in this publication are those of the respective Municipal Advisory Committees that served on the project and do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the Connecticut Department of Transportation and/or the U.S. Department of Transportation.

**Suggested Citation:** Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG), 2004. *New Britain - Hartford Station Area Planning Project Executive Summary: Flatbush Station Area*. CRCOG, 241 Main Street, Hartford, CT 06106. [www.crcog.org](http://www.crcog.org).



New plazas at corner of Newfield Ave. and Flatbush Ave. connect the station (in background) to Charter Oak Marketplace. The busway bridge over Flatbush Avenue provides a gateway to the area.



Existing view of Flatbush Ave. at Newfield Ave. (facing west); station location shown in red.

### Station Area Planning Project

The Capitol Region Council of Governments, working with citizens and the City of Hartford and Town of West Hartford, has developed plans for the areas near stations for the New Britain - Hartford busway.

Please examine the development plans shown here to learn how the Flatbush station area could change. The ideas presented here are designed to make the most out of the proposed transportation investment and are intended to stimulate discussion.

Planning around transit (bus or rail) stations is known as Transit Oriented Development and it has been successful throughout the country. The Pittsburgh busway and the Washington D.C. Metro are examples where districts surrounding the rapid transit systems thrive, adding to the quality of life in these communities.

The New Britain-Hartford Busway Project is a new rapid transit facility being built by the Connecticut Department of Transportation. It is an exclusive 9.4-mile long busway, linking downtown New Britain with downtown Hartford's Union

Station. The busway has stops in New Britain, Newington, West Hartford and Hartford.

The goal of this Station Area Planning project is to coordinate transportation and land use planning for the areas around proposed stations in order to enhance economic benefits to Hartford and West Hartford while increasing ridership. Development concepts are focused on strategies to create vibrant walkable districts with easy access to regional transit.

This summary provides an overview of the plan for the Flatbush station area.

#### Why Flatbush?

Flatbush was one of six station areas chosen for detailed study. The need for improved pedestrian access and a more pedestrian-friendly environment around this station will require proactive involvement and cooperation between the City of Hartford and the Town of West Hartford.

The Bones / Key Development Principles

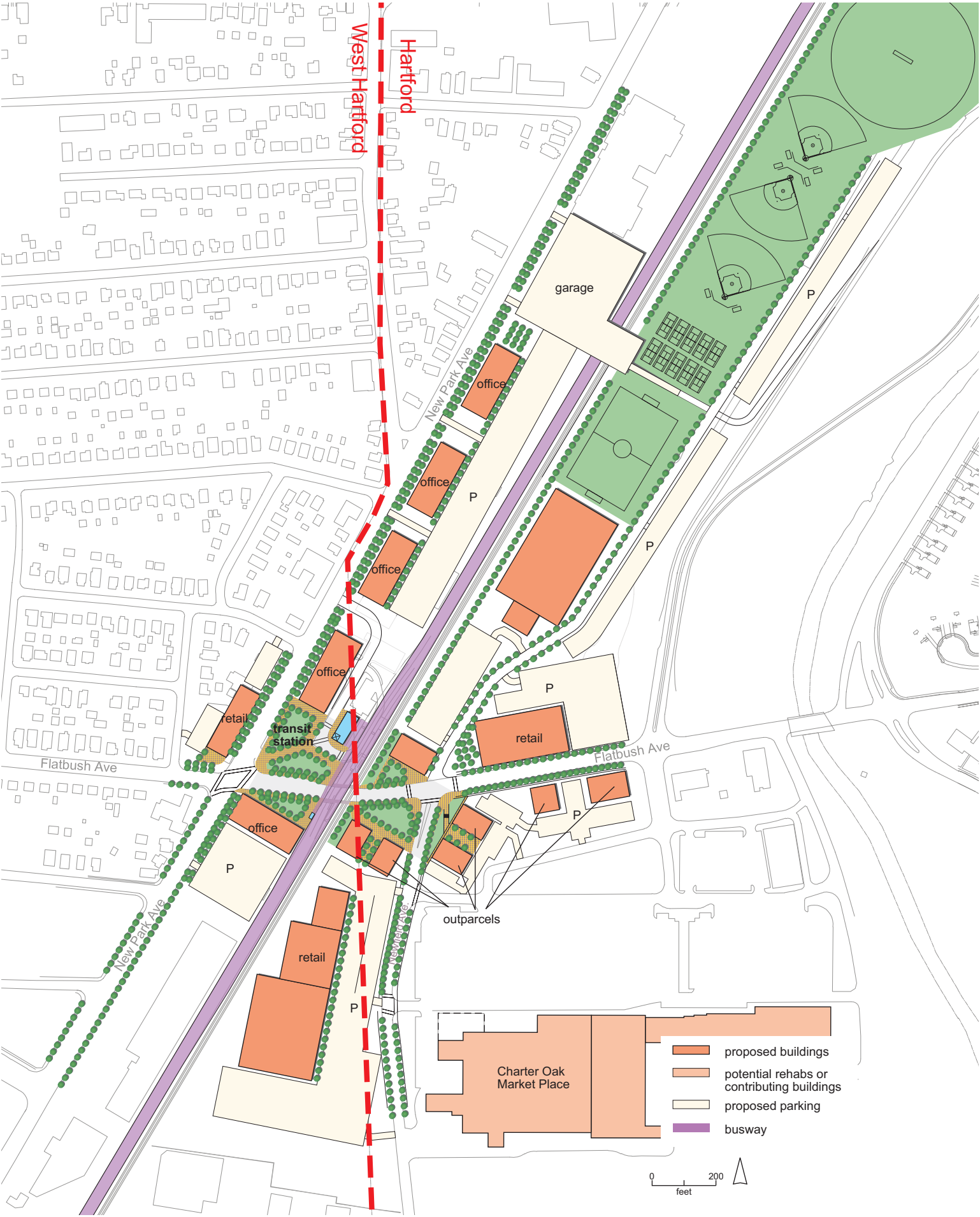
The Plan shown here is conceptual. As individual projects evolve over time in response to market conditions, funding opportunities and parcel availability, it will be important that the project designs adhere to the following guiding principles - “the bones” - of the plan:

- Create pedestrian friendly plazas at the station and on the corner of nearby parcels as they are redeveloped.
- Provide safe pedestrian access to large Charter Oak Marketplace.
- Encourage long term redevelopment of New Park Ave. for denser commercial uses
- Develop industrial property north of Flatbush into transit-supportive uses
- Design the station and busway bridge over Flatbush Ave. to create a gateway into the area for pedestrians and drivers.
- Housing density should be a minimum of 12 units/ acre; research shows that starting at this density, the dependence on the automobile begins to decline.

Development Summary Table

Use	Total
Office	360,000 sq. ft.
Playing Fields	16 acres
Retail	310,000 sq. ft.
Parking	2,700 spaces

One idea for long-term redevelopment could include public and private indoor and outdoor recreation facilities east of the busway and office development along New Park Avenue.



Development Concept: Putting Pedestrians First

Although many existing and planned uses in the station area are auto-oriented and/or auto-dependent, there will be a number of pedestrians, including many area employees, walking to and from the transit station. The Plan is designed to create an active, safe and attractive environment with an emphasis on pedestrians but also appealing to those arriving by car.

The Station Area Plan provides a way to phase in a transit supportive environment while still recognizing that the current land use market is focused on auto-oriented, big box retail. Places evolve and the goal is to orient the framework now towards that evolution.

The Transit Plaza

A transit plaza (or series of plazas) extending from the Flatbush Station on New Park Avenue in West Hartford to the southwest corner of the Charter Oak Marketplace in Hartford provides a transit/pedestrian-friendly environment connecting the Charter Oak Marketplace and other potential redevelopment parcels with the station and creates a gateway into the Flatbush Station area from both Hartford and West Hartford. The series of plazas will help to maintain an unobstructed line of sight from Charter Oak Marketplace to the Transit Station. Because the busway is on a bridge in this location, the station will be two stories, making it even more visible from the Marketplace. The station, busway bridge and transit plaza can, together, create an identifiable image for the station area.

The plazas on private property will have to occur over time. As the Charter Oak Marketplace is a new development, it is an opportunity to begin to set this transit-supportive framework of plazas. As subsequent development occurs on other corners of the Flatbush Avenue/ Newfield Ave. intersection, the series of plazas can be completed.

Long-Term Redevelopment

The linear parcelization of the land north of Flatbush and east of the busway makes for a more problematic program of transit-oriented development. The plan shows the introduction of public and private recreational opportunities including indoor and outdoor soccer facilities that provide some synergy with the nearby theater on New Park Ave., providing multiple entertainment opportunities for kids, teenagers and families, as well as shoppers.

Given the strong market for existing uses, redevelopment of parcels now in auto-oriented uses along New Park Ave. is a longer term proposition. The concept plan involves long-term relocation of two automobile dealerships and an auto parts store flanking Flatbush Ave. to allow long-term redevelopment for mixed-use office and retail. This change in use is not likely to occur until property values rise, in part due to the busway, and the retail market changes.