



TRUMBULL CORPORATE PARK | IL3 DISTRICT
JUNE 2020



TRUMBULL IL3 DISTRICT PLAN

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LETTER FROM THE FIRST SELECTMAN

I am excited to present this study and recommendations for the Town's IL3 zoning district, better known as the Trumbull Corporate Park. The plan was led jointly by the Town of Trumbull Economic Development and Planning and Zoning Departments in collaboration with our consultant, Stantec.

Trumbull Corporate Park has long served an important role providing jobs and fiscal benefits to our Town. However, in recent years, the Park has faced increased competition for employer-tenants from mixed-use corporate centers and resurging downtowns across the region. Indeed, traditional office parks across the country are approaching a crossroads: adapt to emerging employment and commercial development trends or risk decline.

As a first proactive step toward this necessary adaptation, the Town commissioned this study to foster a collaborative conversation about the future of Trumbull Corporate Park. The process engaged numerous stakeholders within the Park from property owners to employers to employees and achieved meaningful consensus around achievable, impactful strategies to improve the district in ways that benefit both its direct users and the Town at large.

The plan's recommendations include several near-term actions that can create substantial momentum with modest public and private investment. Additionally, the plan highlights opportunities for public-private partnership which will help amplify the impact of taxpayer dollars and cost-benefit scenarios for existing and prospective property and building owners and tenants.

We invite your support and ideas as we celebrate completing this first step look forward to ongoing collaboration with our citizens, employers, and other partners in this effort!

Vicki Tesoro, First Selectman

PROJECT GOALS

PROJECT GOALS

This study's purpose is to evaluate Trumbull's IL3 district (also known as the Trumbull Corporate Park), learn from stakeholders, and develop strategies to:

- Equip the district to compete in today's and tomorrow's real estate and innovation marketplace
- Improve the district's attractiveness to employers and employees
- Enhance physical and economic connectivity between the district, the town, and the region
- Build a stakeholder network and community among existing and future district owners, tenants, and users



STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

FEEDBACK

The planning process began with a series of meetings and interviews engaging as many existing district owners, tenants, and users as possible. Additionally, a focused roundtable and workshop allowed stakeholders to meet and hear from each other, developing a consensus around key issues and opportunities facing the district. The following summarizes the themes and ideas that emerged from these engagement activities:

COMMUNITY

- Difficult to connect with other business in the park
- Don't know the neighbors
- Improve park-wide communication
- Need an innovation ecosystem (State help?)
- Not sure what amenities are available elsewhere in the park
- Corporate Park newsletter?
- Kickball league is active
- Link to networks of universities, startups, etc.
- Introduce a mix of uses
- How does the IL3 serve the regional business community?

APPEARANCE AND IDENTITY

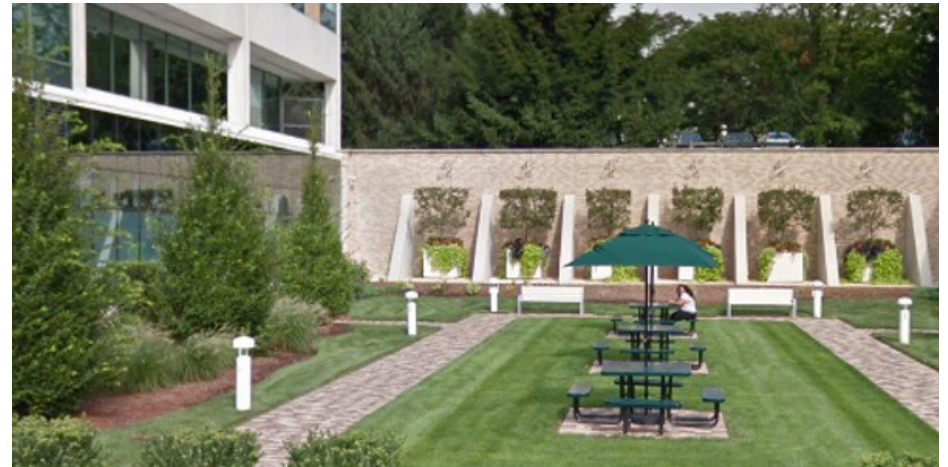
- Too isolated
- More upscale appearance desirable
- Need better signage and visibility: from highways, entry sequence
- Build on innovation identity, "science park"
- Too much class "B", need more class "A"



TRUMBULL IL3 DISTRICT PLAN

AMENITIES

- Walking paths and loops are valued
- Available if you can find them...
- Share community services?
- Community hub (park users share cost)?
- Restaurants allowed?
- Not clear if amenities such as gyms and cafeterias in other buildings are open to public
- Experiment with programming
- Hotel?
- Bridgeport Ave for lunch (time consuming trek)
- Conference area?



TOWN AND REGULATIONS

- Focus on enhancing ability to do business here, support employee lifestyle
- Too many permitting, zoning, fee, and building code hurdles
- Town could provide code consulting support such as to support building use transitions
- Allow more uses, promote mixing
- Industrial tax rates higher than Shelton
- Consider planned development district for IL3 to streamline development process, manage costs
- Excellent town emergency services



TRUMBULL IL3 DISTRICT PLAN

MOBILITY

- Good location re: highways
- Better transit service needed
- Transit not so relevant
- More than enough parking (perceived or real?)
- Not enough parking (perceived or real?)
- Second access point would be valuable
- Connect to Hawley Lane
- People drive too fast on the roads

COMPETITION

- Shelton office park local competition
- Cheaper than New Jersey

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Fiber optic not reliable, doesn't reach all buildings
- Good internet connectivity
- Reliable electrical loop



**CONTEXT: WHAT DRIVES CHANGE
IN PLACES LIKE THE IL3 DISTRICT?**

CONTEXT

Office parks across the country are grappling with shifting trends in employment. Understanding this changing context can inform how to better position IL3 for future success.

Employees' lifestyle preferences drive employer location decisions

Historically low unemployment rates and a mounting shortage of skilled workers pit today's employers in competition for workforce. Thus, employers must offer workplaces and cultures that appeal to the workforce's prevailing preferences in order to acquire and retain skilled staff.

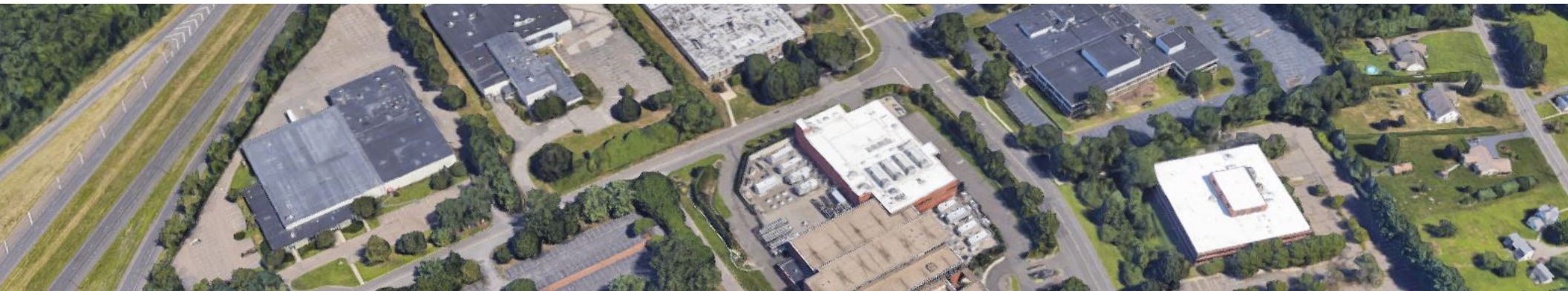
As millennials comprise a growing share of the workforce, their preferences are increasingly shaping where employers locate and how they operate. These younger workers prioritize a more urban lifestyle wherein housing and offices are integrated into diverse communities, walkable neighborhoods, and a variety of retail, restaurant, and service amenities.

Suburban office parks are losing their competitive edge

Whereas previous generations were drawn to manicured office parks in suburban environments, today's predominant working age cohort is attracted to offices in urban environments such as downtowns and town centers. As such, employers are relocating accordingly, pushing office rents and value up in urban environments and down in suburban settings.

Adapting to compete

Confronted with stagnant or dropping rents and growing vacancy rates, office park communities must double down on their remaining inherent strengths and adapt where possible to improve their competitive foothold relative to more urban workplace choices.



STRATEGIES

Across the country, places like the IL3 District are deploying policy and investment strategies to reposition themselves to attract a new generation of tenants and users, such as:

- Adding amenities that reflect the lifestyle preferences of today's workforce
- Building community among tenants and users
- Retrofitting into more connected, walkable environments
- Leveraging built-in advantages urban environments cannot provide



TRUMBULL IL3 DISTRICT PLAN

Add amenities

- Daily conveniences
- Food and beverage
- Gathering Places
- Recreation
- Housing



Improve mobility and connectivity

- Walkable streets
- Permeability (pedestrian paths, parking lots, etc.)
- Transit
- Shared parking
- New/improved vehicular, bike, and pedestrian connections



Build community

- Social and cultural programming
- Collaborative network of owners, employers, employees, and other users
- Shared sense of identity and purpose



Leverage built-in advantages

- Diverse mix of building types
- Opportunities for creative retrofitting
- Strategic location and proximity to highways
- Local quality of life, schools
- Town as a willing partner
- Access to regional workforce



FRAMEWORK PLAN

FRAMEWORK PLAN

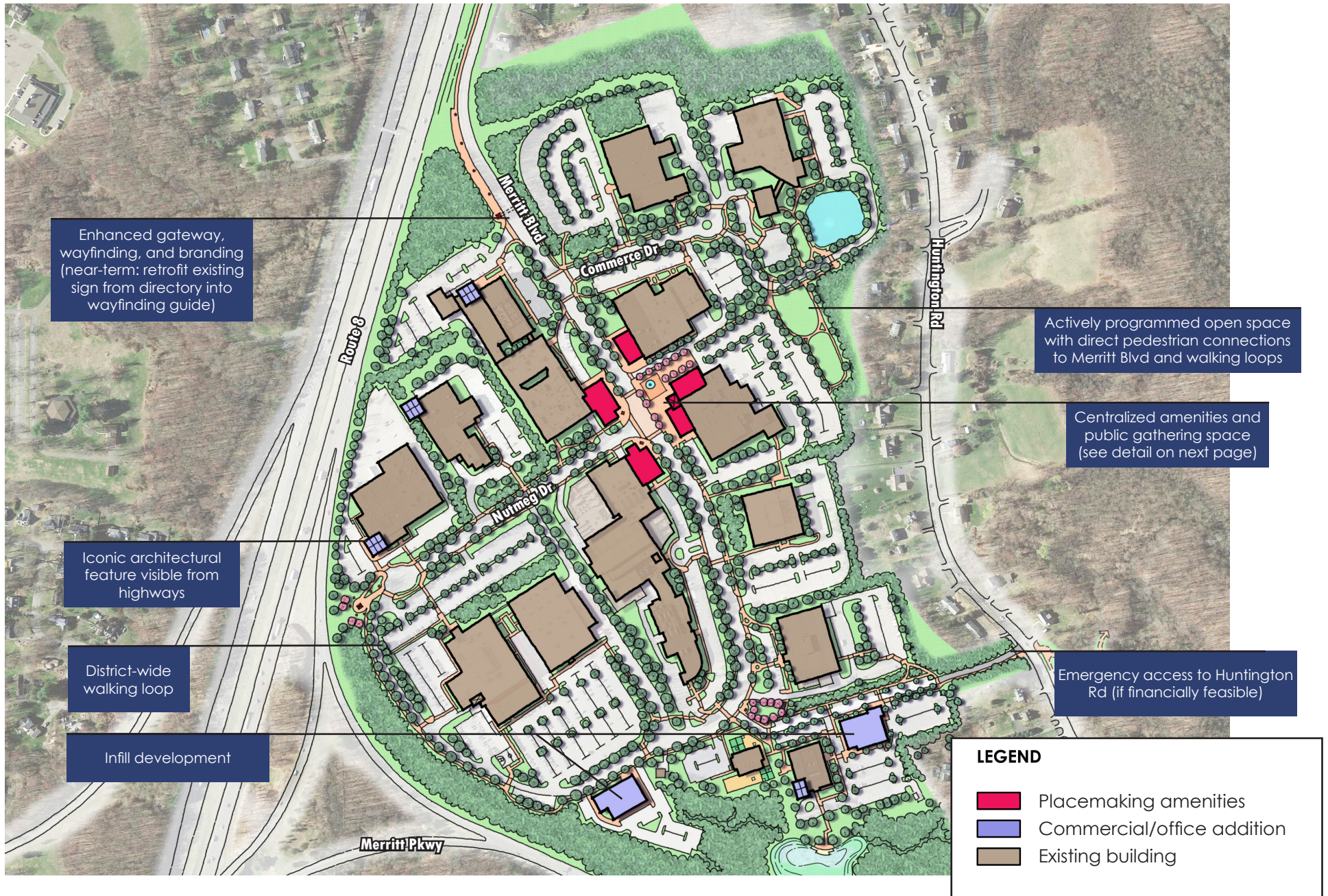
Through direct collaboration with a broad representation of the district's key stakeholders, this process has established a shared vision marked by a stronger sense of community, better visibility within the region, and an updated brand and identity. Perhaps the most important and promising outcome of the process so far, an independent council of district stakeholders has taken shape and now meets regularly to discuss and collaborate around shared ideas and priorities for the district.

The planning team and Town's collaboration with this council has generated and endorsed the following top priorities:

1. **Gateway Improvements** - includes significant signage at the entrance to Merritt Blvd at Huntington Road and also includes safe and separated walking areas, street directories, etc. We are defining the gateway as the area on Merritt Blvd from the traffic light at Huntington Road to the traffic light at Commerce Drive ("Traffic Light to Traffic Light").
2. **New Name and Branding** - the "Corporate Park" image is outdated. We think that it is imperative that we re-brand the Park with a new name, logo and tag line which will be prominently displayed throughout the Park and included in all of our outreach marketing including social media, etc.
3. **Build Sense of Community within the Park** - we want businesses and employees who work within the Park to feel connected to each other through various events, community spaces, etc.

The illustrative plan on the next page translates these priorities into a framework of infrastructure improvements and placemaking investments.

TRUMBULL IL3 DISTRICT PLAN



TRUMBULL IL3 DISTRICT PLAN



Merritt Blvd entry experience

Creating a destination: The "placemaking amenities" indicated by red "boxes" on the illustrative plan represent a number of different placemaking options that could range from hardscape improvements to shading structures to built improvements within or added onto existing buildings. Physically, the goal is to create a sense of "arrival" and human scale "enclosure" that makes pedestrians feel comfortable and encourages the community to gather and interact in a centralized location. Programatically, amenities might include leisure and dining options from periodic food trucks to "pop-up" recreation events to full-time cafes.



Centralized amenities and gathering spaces

TRUMBULL IL3 DISTRICT PLAN

Trumbull Regional Business Park

Trumbull Regional Business Center

Trumbull Regional Innovation Center

Trumbull Regional Innovation Park

Trumbull Merritt-8 Innovation Park

Trumbull Innovation District

Trumbull Innovation Park

Trumbull Innovation Center

**Trumbull Innovation and Community
Business Park**

**Trumbull Regional and Community
Business Center**

**Trumbull Center for Innovation,
Vocations and Community
Advancement**

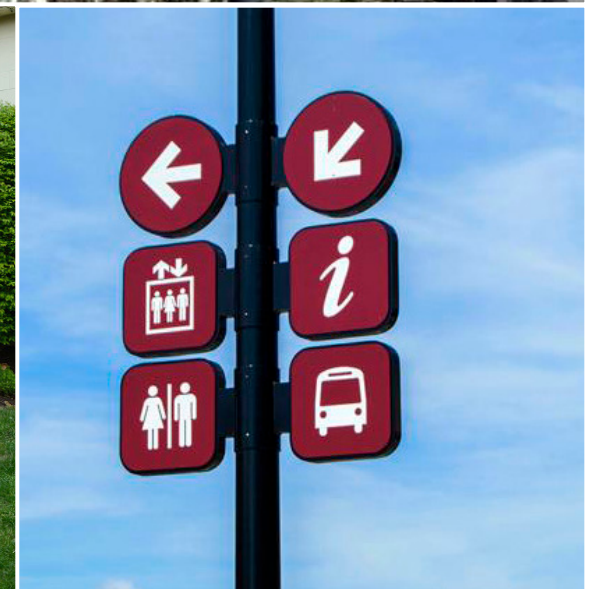
**Trumbull Professional, Trades, and
Wellness Park**

**Trumbull Regional Innovation and
Business Park**

**Park identity and branding
ideas to build on**



Signage examples for entry and gateways



Wayfinding signage examples

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations translate this plan's strategies into action items in support of this project's goals and the service of the direct stakeholders' vision for the future of the district.

- Build community among stakeholders
- Share community with the rest of Trumbull and the region
- Brand the district
- Expand connections and mobility
- Add amenities and services
- Fuel economic development
- Network and share community resources
- Adapt zoning and other regulations

RECOMMENDATIONS

Build community among stakeholders

- Help launch a district stakeholder council or other system of governance (but let it run independently once established).
- Build, publish, and promote a district directory with designated points of contact at large employers.
- Foster an ecosystem of interconnected businesses with supportive networking, promotion, policy guidance, coordination, business services etc. that adapts to the stakeholder community's evolving needs, strengths, and opportunities.

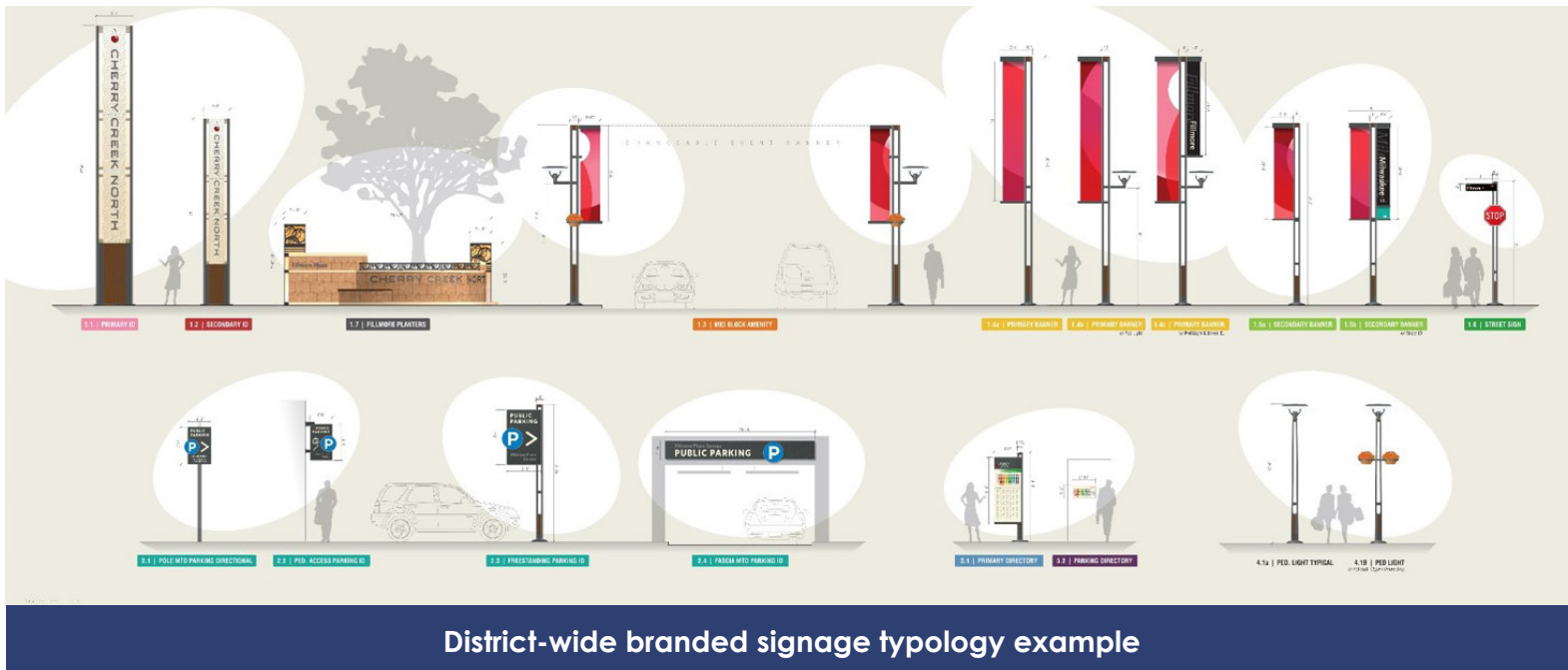
Share community with the rest of Trumbull and the region

- Inaugurate one or more recurring community events or festivals, taking advantage of the large parking lots and low occupancy on evenings and/or weekends. Programming could be coordinated with other Town events such as at Hillcrest Middle School and Trumbull High School.
- Provide a mechanism to reach broader Trumbull population for announcements, promotions, etc. such as via Town social media channels and local news and entertainment services.
- Advertise sponsorship opportunities for district non-profits (St. Vincent's, Make-a-Wish, etc.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Brand the district

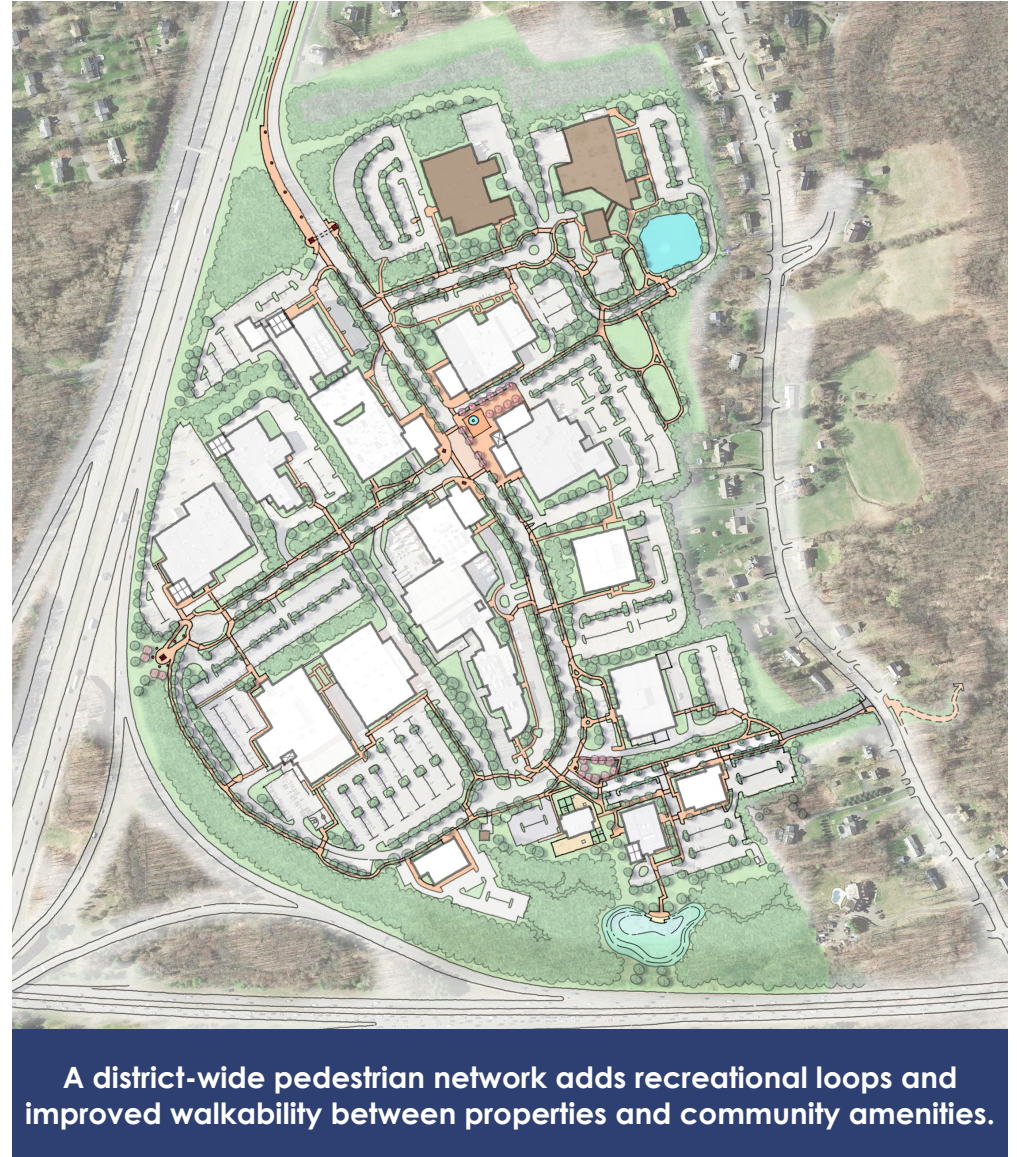
- Commission a new name and branding style sheet that communicates an innovative vision and forward momentum (crowdsource ideas from current companies/tenants, etc.; governance body)
- Introduce improved and more prominent signage announcing arrival and leveraging visibility from adjacent highways
- Deploy a wayfinding and identity system within the district that improves navigability and integrates the new brand in signage, streetscape, landscape, and other facilities and amenities.
- In the near-term, retrofit the existing entry sign on Merritt Boulevard just north of Commerce Drive from a directory into a wayfinding guide.
- Establish web and social media presence streaming information about events and happenings.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Expand connections and mobility

- Advocate for improved transit service
- Open second vehicular access point (emergency only) to Huntington Road if financially feasible.
- Consider stronger link to Hawley Lane to streamline access to existing restaurant and shopping options.
- Expand internal walkability with more sidewalks, paths, connections, etc. Consider marking popular walking and recreation loops.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Fuel economic development

- Designate the district as an innovation district
- Facilitate connections and collaboration with regional innovation-driving institutions such as Yale, UConn, Fairfield University, SHU, etc. Additionally, consider small, land-constrained colleges with substantial online and adult learning programs such as Albertus Magnus and University of New Haven
- Perform a market analysis to define differentiation opportunities (i.e. how to stand out in the region as a business and innovation destination; what are potential tenants and users looking for that this location could provide better than others)
- Consider geographic advantages and industries that would be well-served in this location
- Expand permitted uses considering innovations in traditional land uses

Network and share existing community resources

- Build a directory of publicly accessible amenities (fitness, food, etc.) with e-cards, etc.
- Promote the districts existing service and recreational businesses to local employers, employees, and visitors (daycare, D-BAT, etc.)
- Maintain a sense of general security outside workday hours to help encourage people to patronize district services and amenities before/after work.
- Support programming, events, and activities within and outside the workday utilizing existing community-oriented facilities (such as Make-a-Wish community room) and stakeholder-driven concepts (such as Unilever's Fooda" program)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Adapt zoning and other regulations

- Food truck area designation
- Streamline regulations, permitting for new construction and adaptive reuse (work in “as of right”) – building additions and expansions are allowable by right even if existing building had a special permit
- Help parse liability issues associated with sharing facilities, providing public access, etc.
- Address financial risks related to shared parking facilities and per lot parking compliance
- Redefine what is permitted in the IL3 District (maximize flexibility and mixed-uses)
- Modify setback, lot and frontage berm requirements (unlock developable area; create relationship and interactivity between buildings and street/sidewalk)
- Ease height restrictions



Adapting zoning to accommodate flexible and temporary uses such as food trucks would help animate the park and add amenities in the near term.

