



Downtown
Worcester
Urban
Renewal

Community Meeting

February 26, 2015





Downtown Worcester Urban Renewal Community Meeting #1 – February 26, 2015 Agenda

- 1. Welcome**
- 2. Introduction of WRA and CAC Members and Their Roles**
- 3. Why an Urban Renewal Plan for Downtown Worcester?**
- 4. Building Upon Recent Studies – Theatre District Master Plan**
- 5. Overview of Proposed Urban Renewal Plan Study Area**
- 6. Project Status/Next Steps**
- 7. Questions**



Worcester Redevelopment Authority

■ Members

- Vincent A. Pedone, Chair
- Steven Rothschild, Vice-Chair
- David Minasian, Secretary
- Robert Diaz
- Jennifer Gaskin

■ Role

- Develop, approve and implement Urban Renewal Plan on behalf of the City of Worcester



Citizen's Advisory Committee

- John Brissette, Chair
- Jill Dagilis, Vice chair
- Jack Donahue
- Frank Carroll
- Paul Demoga
- Alex Dunn
- Stacey Luster
- Michele Johnson
- Hong Tran
- Alec Lopez
- Deborah O'Malley
- Mable Milner
- Linda Cavioli



Role of the Citizen's Advisory Committee

- Acting as a sounding board for URP ideas and actions;
- Providing feedback to WRA staff and BSC Group;
- Attending WRA public hearings related to the URP;
- Touring the proposed urban renewal area to get a feel for the conditions and opportunities present;
- Reviewing/commenting on various elements of the URP, such as goals, actions, (acquisition, rehab, demolition, public infrastructure improvements and public space improvements).



Urban Renewal Plan - Benefits

- Provides a Plan of Action – giving clear blueprint to interested parties.
- Attracts public and private investment, stimulates economic growth, improves conditions.
- Enables land assembly and acquisition when needed and appropriate.
- Allows city redevelopment agency to negotiate sales for property disposition.
- Supports capital improvements for infrastructure to support new development.



What is in an Urban Renewal Plan?

- Solicit Public Input
- Identify Area Needs
- Delineate URP Boundary
- Present Project Data;
(Land use, Zoning,
Infrastructure, Ownership,
Etc.)
- Satisfy Eligibility
Requirements
- Propose Economic and
Community Development
Strategies
- Target Public Improvements
and Investments
- Prepare Plan Budget and
Funding Sources
- Obtain Municipal and State
Approvals



Past Planning Efforts

Primary

- Theatre District Master Plan, December 2012,
CSS – Urban Planning and Design & GLC
Development Resources LLC & Chan Krieger NBBJ

Supporting

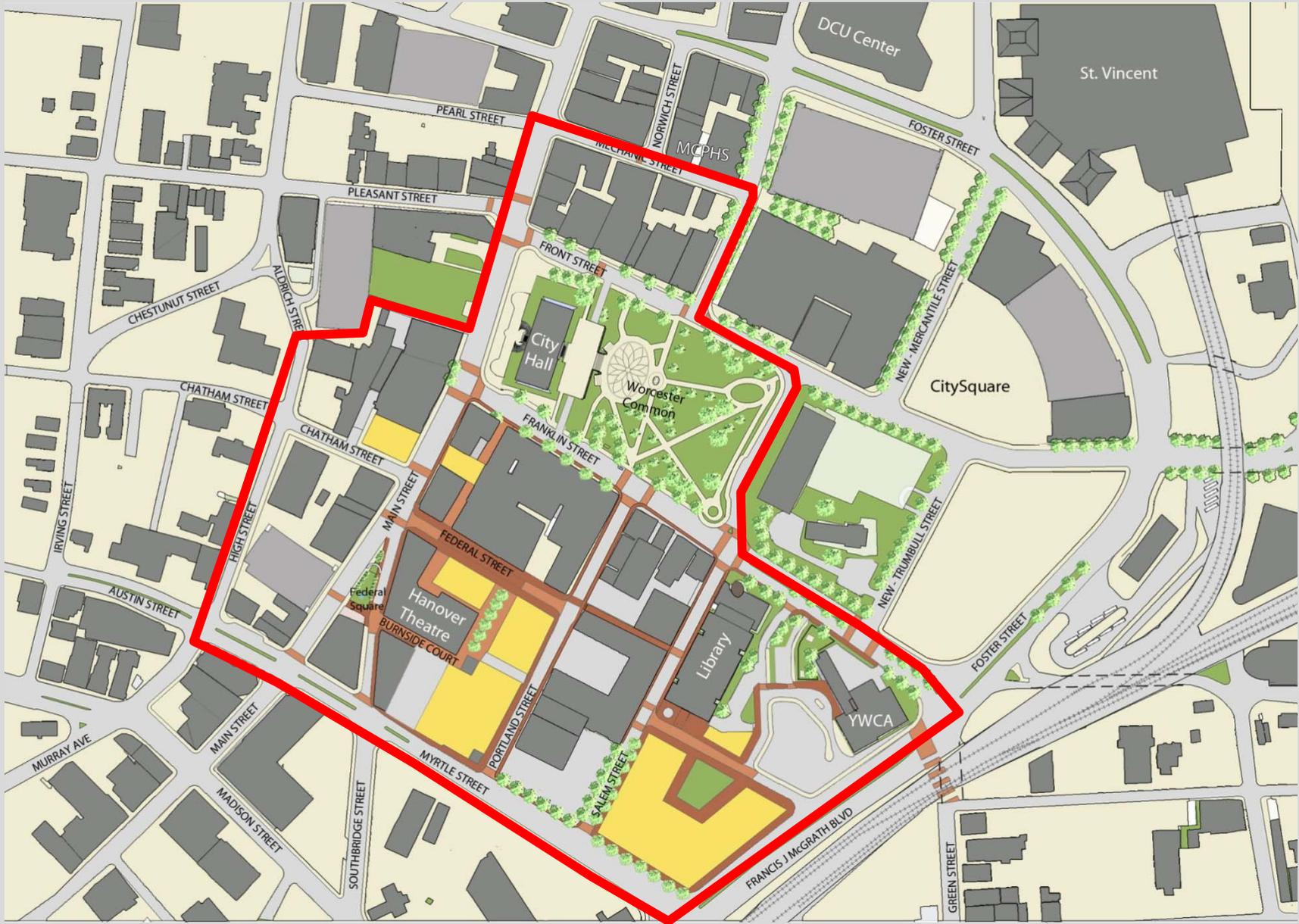
- Worcester College Student Survey, 2014
- Beacon Federal Neighborhood Revitalization Plan, 2009
- North Main Economic Development Strategy Area Study, 2008
- Various Housing Studies



DOWNTOWN WORCESTER

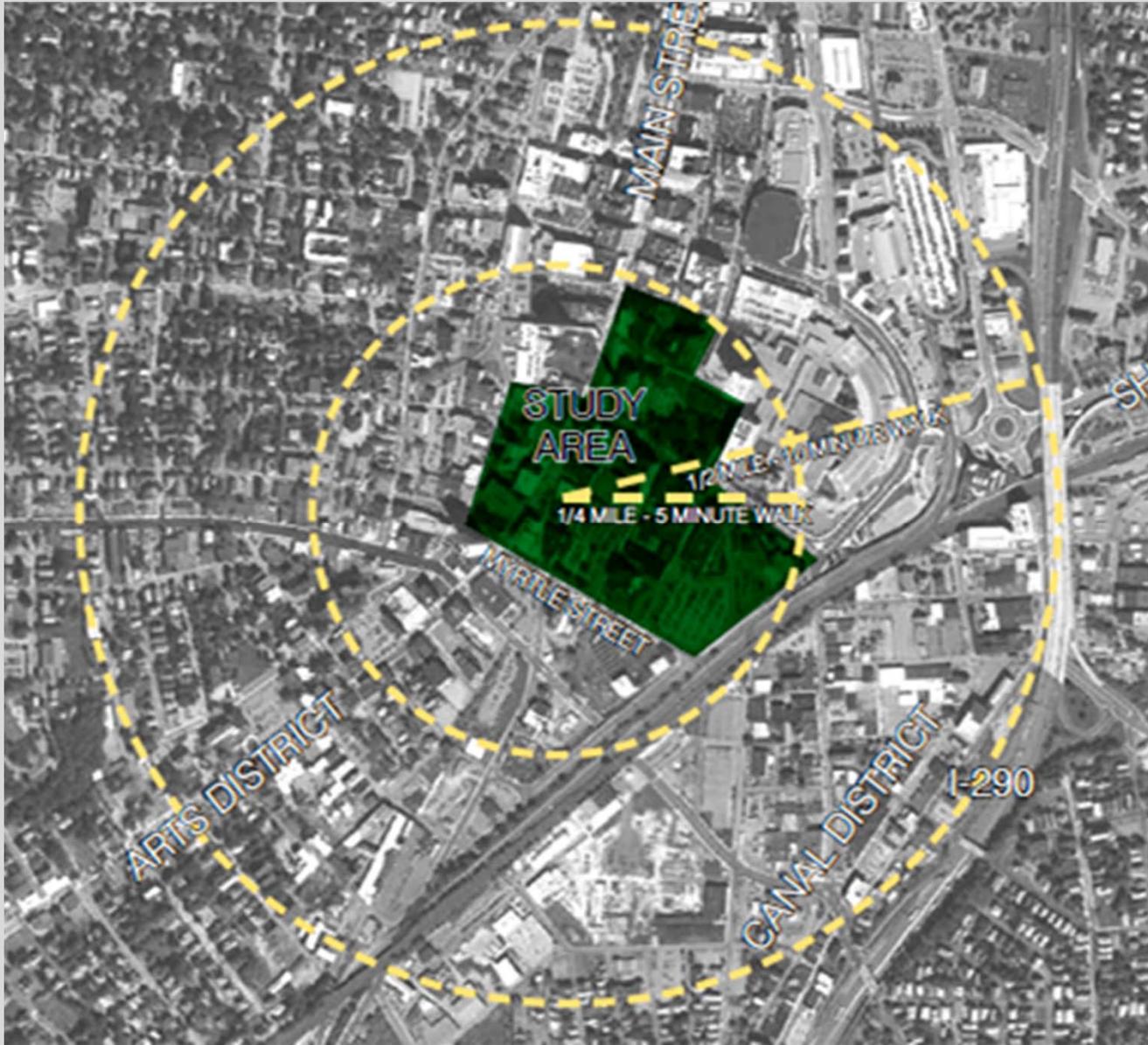
THEATRE DISTRICT MASTER PLAN

DECEMBER 2012



Executive Summary

- Over the past decade, downtown Worcester has witnessed substantial public and private investment.
- The Theatre District Master Plan is a strategic review of the strengths, challenges, and opportunities of an approximately 30 acre area in the downtown.
- The goal: To drive growth and spur private investment by leveraging public improvements with the outcome of activating the street life throughout the District.
- The vision: An active, mixed-use, 18-hour neighborhood with significant institutional growth to support a vibrant entertainment and cultural environment drawing residents, businesses, and visitors to downtown.
 - To achieve these: Create a district identity and a sense of place; identify buildings and sites that provide opportunities for transformation; and outline strategic public improvements and design guidelines to enhance the public realm.



**Study Area
(30 acres within a 5 minute walk from the Hanover Theatre)**

Action Agenda

1. Create a Mixed-Use District Anchored in Institutional Growth.
2. Establish an Entertainment Core Linked to Activity Centers and Open Spaces.
3. Increase Housing Alternatives, including New Market-Rate & Student Housing Options.
4. Attract Private & Institutional Investment.
5. Expand District Connections.
6. Improve Pedestrian Network of Plazas, Alleys, & Shared Streets.
7. Manage & Increase Parking Supply.
8. Program for Live, Work, Study and Play.

Primary Development Opportunities

1. Redevelopment of 20 Franklin Street.
2. New Development and Structured Parking on Former Telegram & Gazette Parking Lot.
3. Renovation and Redevelopment of Midtown Mall as a Creative Economy Incubator.
4. Redevelopment of the Francis J. McGrath Municipal Parking Lot.
5. Renovation/Rehabilitation of the Park Plaza.
6. Renovation/Restructuring of Former Filene's Building as Student-Focused Housing.
7. Redevelopment of PASOW Building as Market-Rate Housing.

View from Main Street

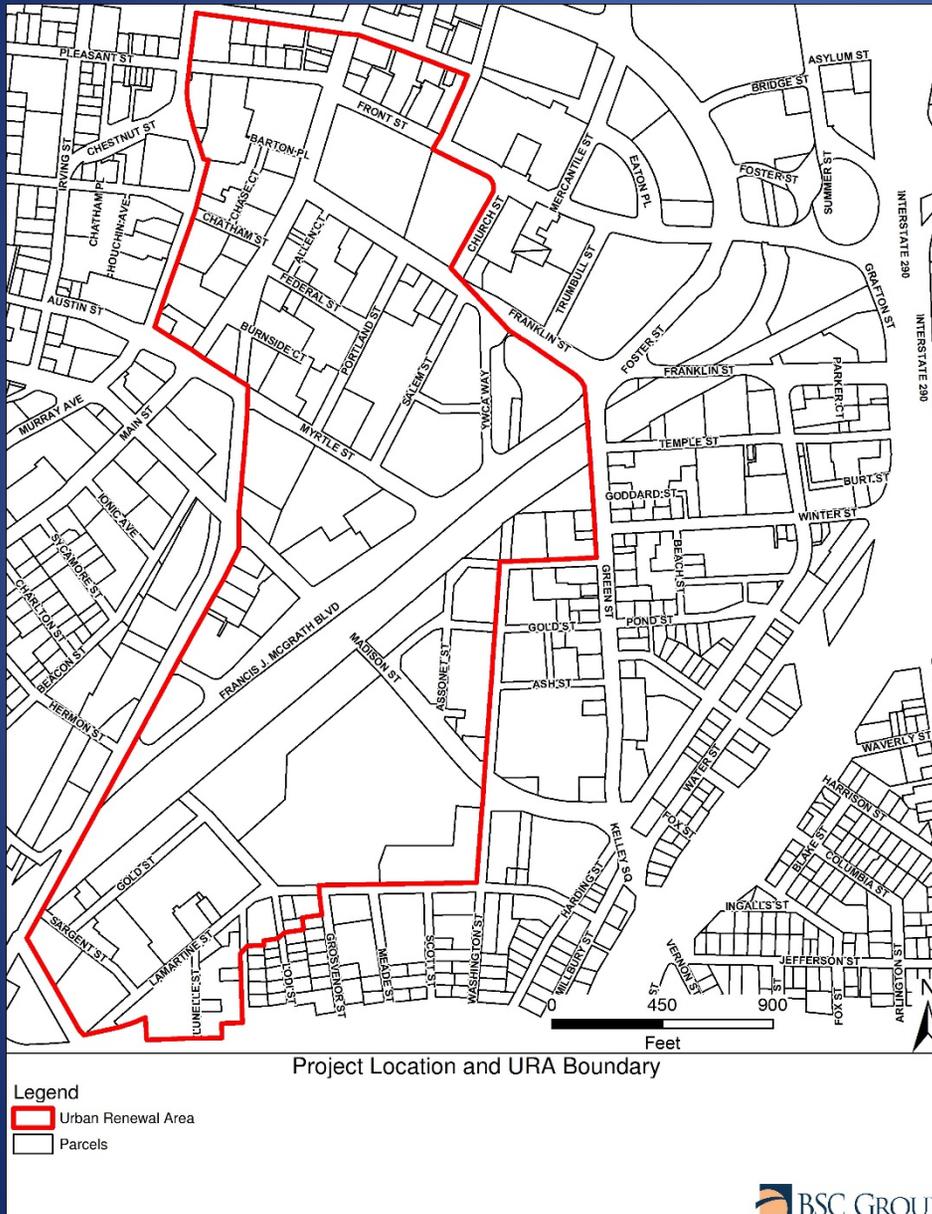




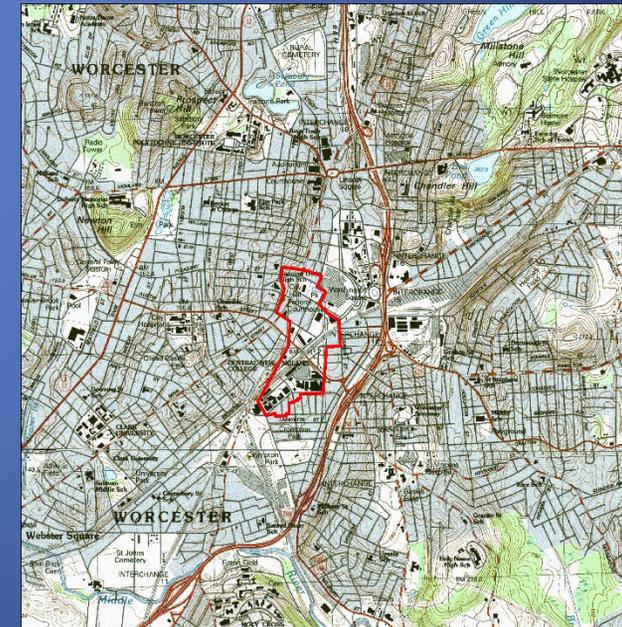
The Next Step – An Urban Renewal Plan

- Will be an implementation strategy for the Theatre District and adjacent areas that are struggling economically
- To be prepared in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 121B, then reviewed and approved by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) – will function as a State-approved master plan.
- To be prepared with public input

Urban Renewal Plan Study Area



Downtown Theatre District to Wyman Gordon Property



Study Area 1897- 2005

1897



Study Area 1897- 2005

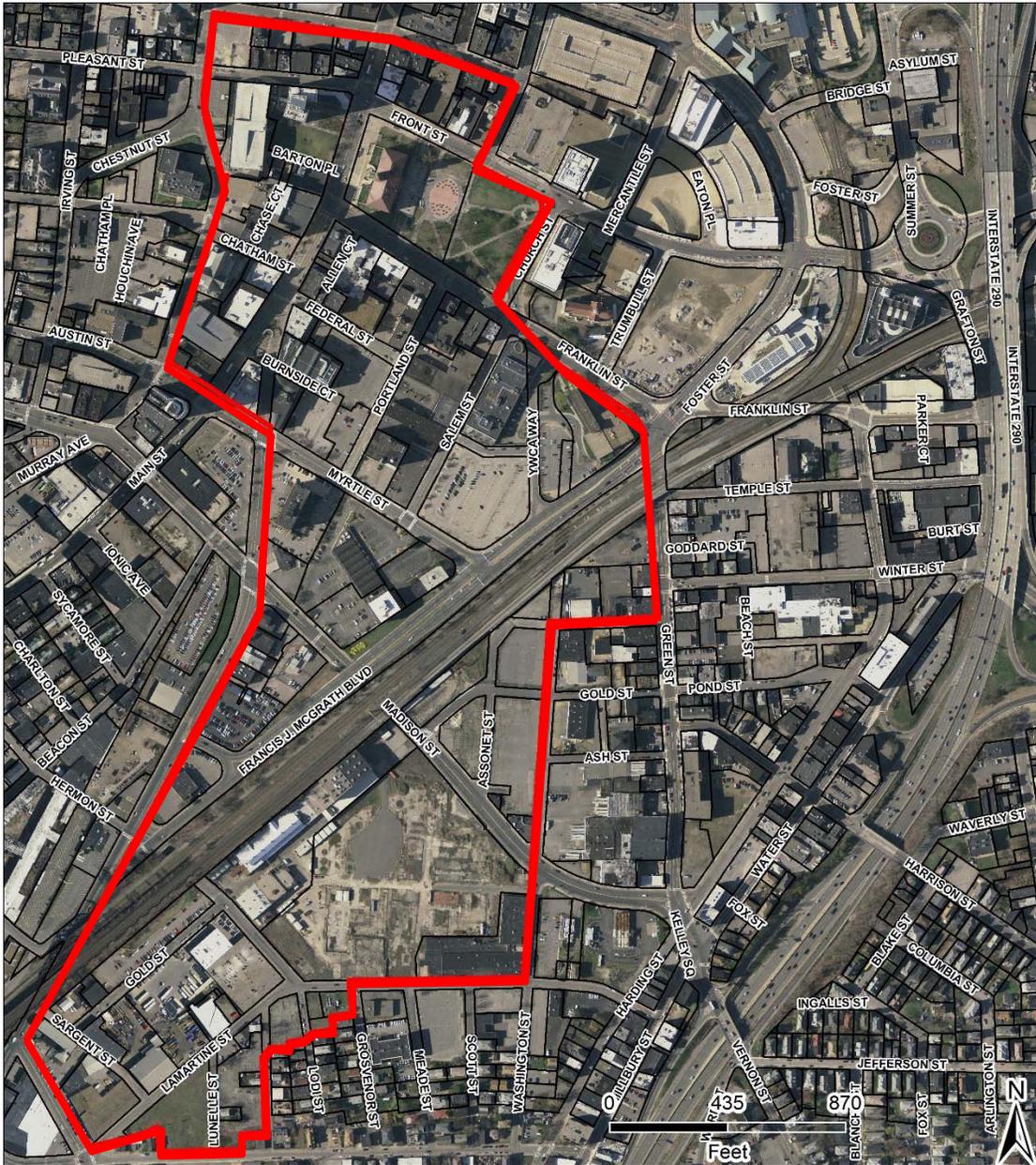
1938





Study Area 1897- 2005

2005



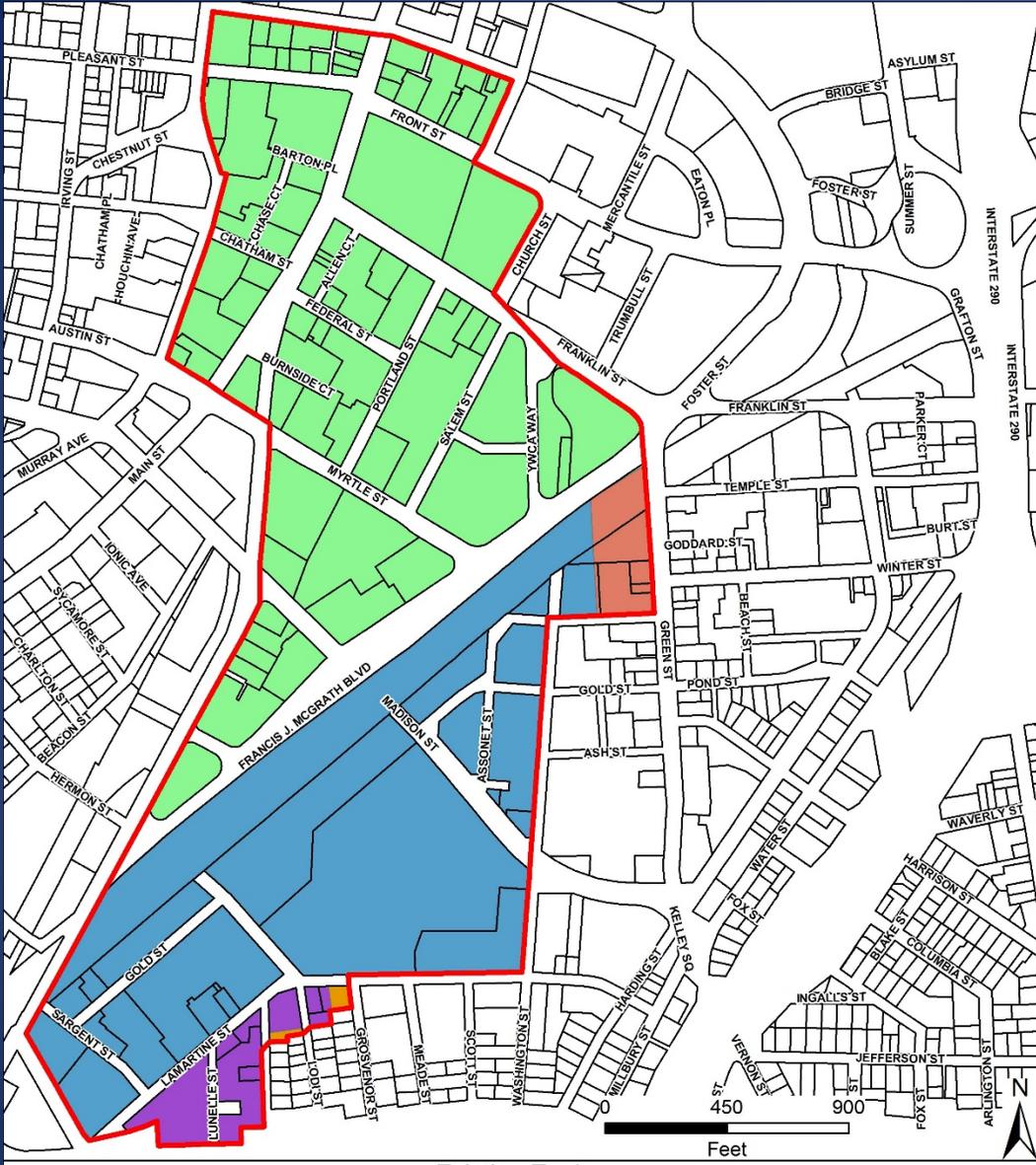
Aerial Photography with URA Boundary

Legend

- Urban Renewal Area
- Parcels

Study Area Now

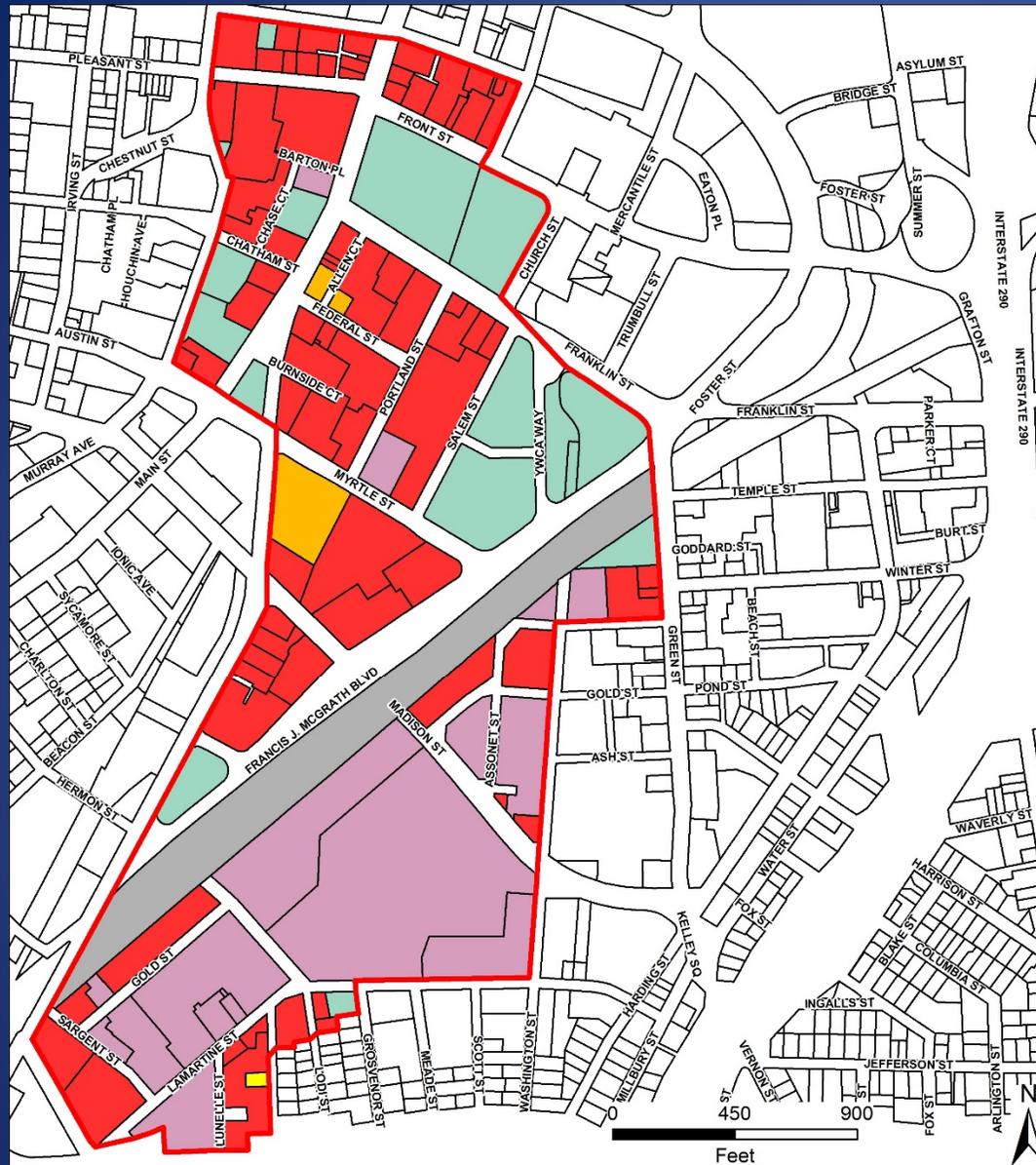
Current Conditions – Existing Zoning



Existing Zoning

Legend	
	Urban Renewal Area
	Parcels
	GENERAL BUSINESS USES 3-1 MAXIMUM FAR RESIDENT USE
	GENERAL BUSINESS USES 4-1 FAR RESIDENT USES
	GENERAL BUSINESS USES 6-1 MAXIMUM FAR RESIDENT USE
	GENERAL MANUFACTURING 2-1 FAR BUSINESS USES
	GENERAL RESIDENTIAL 5000 SQ FT LOT MINIMUM

Current Conditions – Existing Land Use

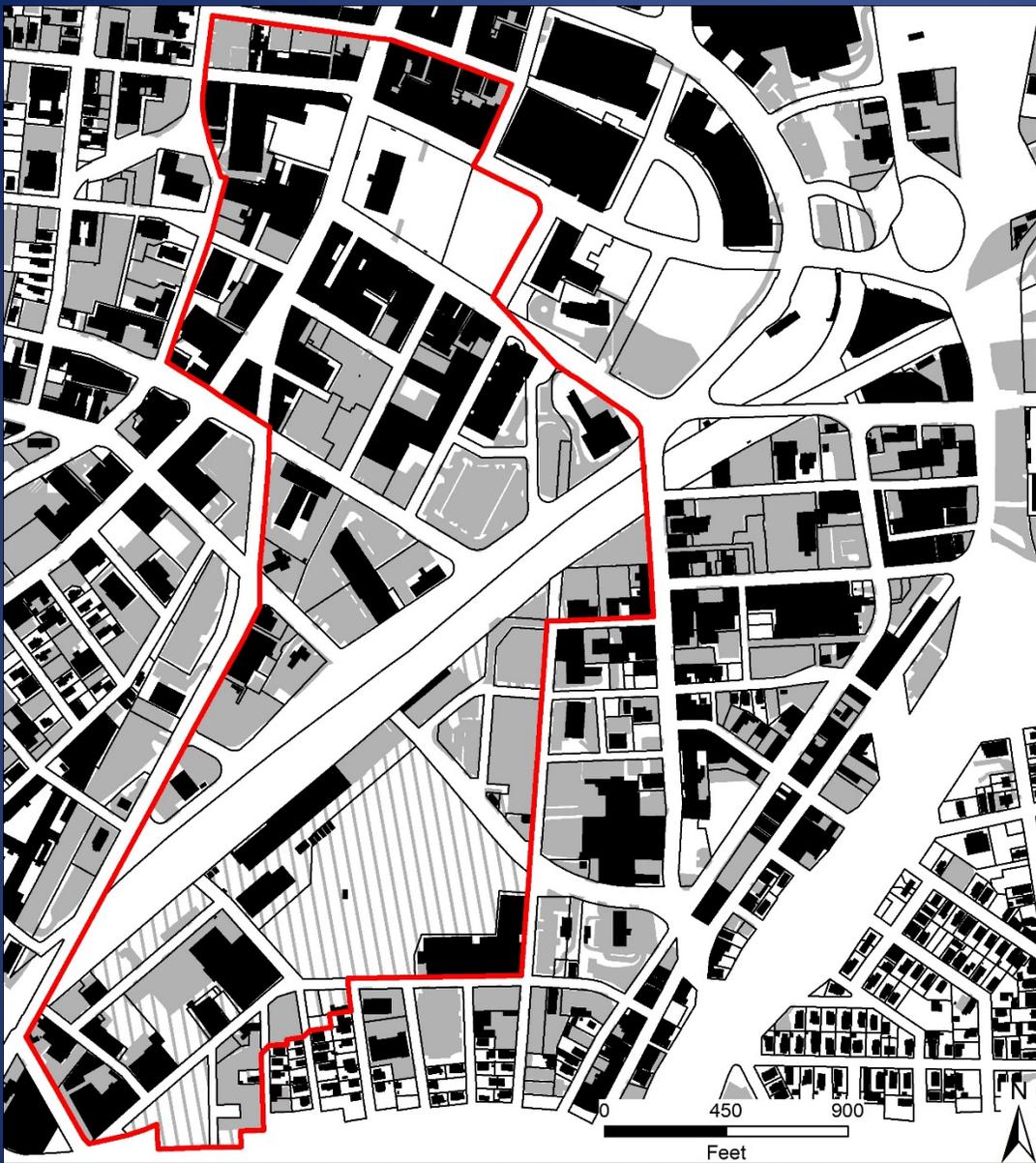


Existing Land Use

Legend

- | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| Urban Renewal Area | Residential | Commercial |
| Parcels | Single Family Residential | Industrial |
| | Urban Public/Institutional | Transportation |

Current Conditions – Building Footprints

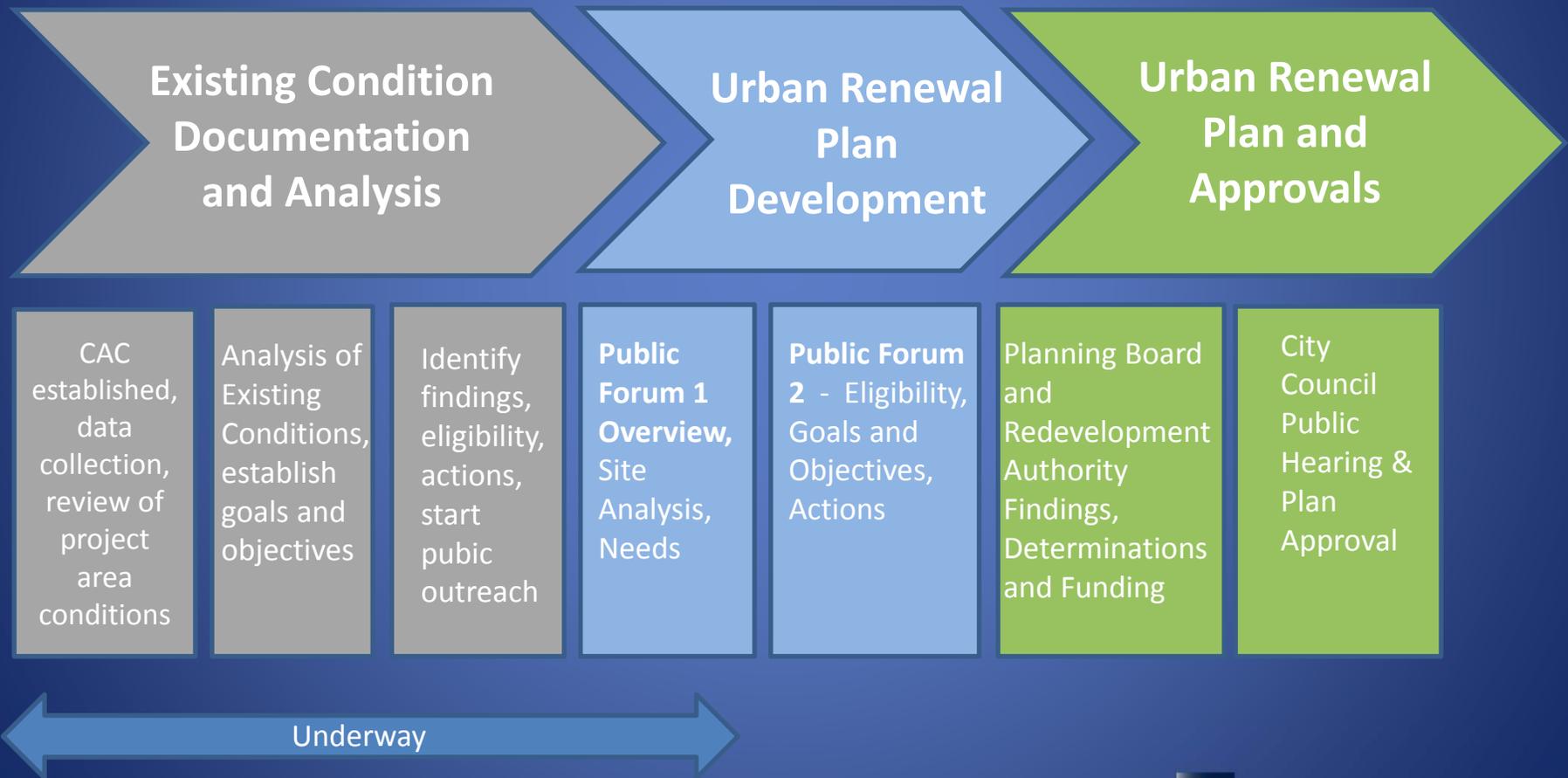


Existing Property Lines, Building Foot Prints and Parking Areas

- Legend
- Urban Renewal Area
 - Vacant Parcels
 - Parcels
 - Building Foot Prints
 - Existing Parking Areas



Downtown Worcester Urban Renewal Planning Process





Property Inspections

- Exterior inspections of all properties is required for URP.
- Properties are categorized into one of five categories:
 - Acceptable
 - Serviceable
 - Moderate Disrepair
 - Severe Disrepair
 - Vacant/Unimproved



The Next Steps

- **Complete Parcel Assessments and Site Analysis**
- **Determine Eligibility of Urban Renewal Area**
- **Develop Goals and Objectives for Urban Renewal**
- **Continue Public Input Process**
- **Develop Draft Urban Renewal Plan**
- **Obtain Requisite Local Approvals**
- **Submit to State for Formal Approval**



Questions?

