

## ARTICLE 17 – BUILDINGS & FACILITIES

### GATEWAY/TOWN CENTER REZONING STUDY

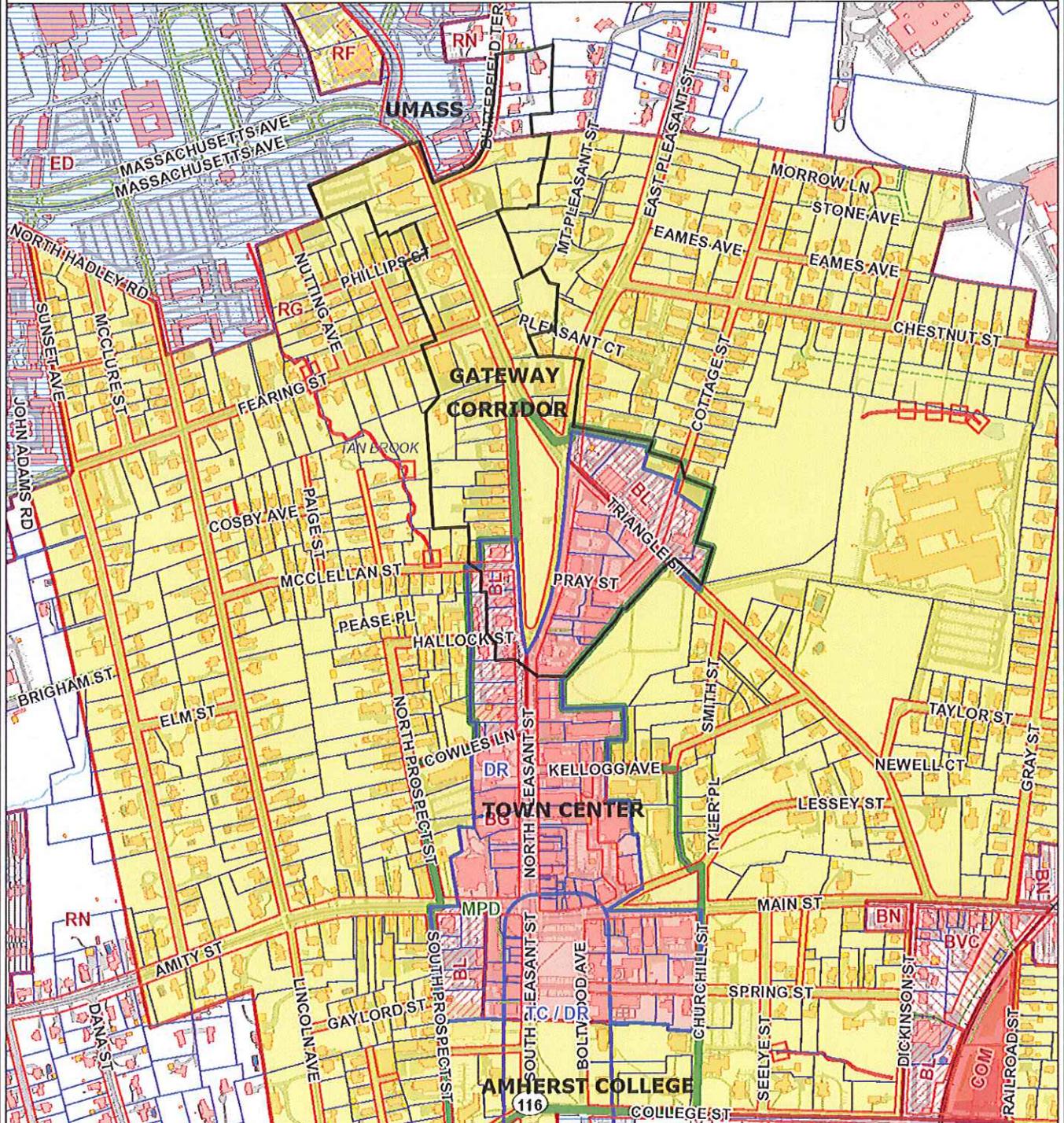
Under Article 17, \$40,000 is requested for consulting services in support of the next phase of implementation of Amherst's Master Plan—the community and rezoning process for Amherst's Town Center and its proposed extension north to the UMass campus—the Gateway Corridor. The Joint Capital Planning Committee, Finance Committee, and Select Board have all recommended appropriation of funding for this project.

In April 2011, the community engaged in a planning design and visioning process for this area. The results, reviewed publicly in May, June, and July, were published in a July 2011 report which included a proposed concept plan for the Gateway Corridor (see attached). The report called for a number of actions steps going forward. Two of those actions were studies: 1) a prospective housing market study, to gauge the potential market for non-student housing, and 2) a traffic study to assess the potential traffic impacts of Gateway Corridor development.

The housing market study, funded by last fall's Special Town Meeting, has been coordinated with an Affordable Housing Needs Assessment/Housing Production Plan (required by the state and to be paid for using CDBG funds) to enable an examination of a full range of the community's housing needs and opportunities. A final draft Request for Proposals (RFP) for the study is being reviewed by the Planning Board and Select Board and will go out in mid-May. The traffic study is being conducted jointly with UMass's traffic planning for its own campus Master Plan. Both studies will be completed this summer.

The next step recommended by the July 2011 Gateway report was “Develop a form-based code overlay for the project area”—i.e., conduct final planning and community visioning, and produce new zoning for the area. In the context of the Master Plan's emphasis on planning for Amherst's centers, it only made sense to expand planning for the Gateway Corridor (an extension of the Town Center north to UMass) with new planning and rezoning for the entire Town Center, including the proposed Gateway Corridor.

Citizens engaged in the public workshops and meetings regarding the Gateway Corridor, North Amherst, and Atkins Corners center planning efforts—including citizens opposed to proposed changes in those areas—have repeatedly stated that the Town should focus its efforts at new planning and zoning on existing developed mixed use centers. This project responds to that request, as well as the longstanding need to create coherent form-based zoning regulations for Amherst's most important center.



Horizontal Datum: MA Stateplane Coordinate System, Zone 4151, Datum NAD83, Feet  
 Vertical Datum: NAVD83, Feet

Planimetric & topographic basemap features compiled at 1"=40' scale from April, 2009 Aerial Photography. Parcels compiled to match the basemap; revisions are ongoing.

The information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. It may not be adequate for legal boundary definition, regulatory interpretation, or property conveyance purposes. Utility structures and underground utility locations are approximate and require field verification.

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**Zoning Ma**

- FPC Stream Setbacks
- 25' Setback
- 50' Setback
- Zone Overlay
- Design Review Board Jurisdi
- Municipal Parking District

**Zoning**

- R-ED: Low Density Residence
- R-F: Fraternity Residence
- R-O: Outlying Residence
- R-N: Neighborhood Residence
- R-VC: Village Center Residence
- R-G: General Residence
- B-VC: Village Center Business
- B-L: Limited Business
- B-N: Neighborhood Business
- B-G: General Business
- OP: Office Park
- COM: Commercial
- PRP: Professional & Research
- LI: Light Industrial
- ED: Educational
- FPC: Flood-Prone Conserva



1" = 660 ft



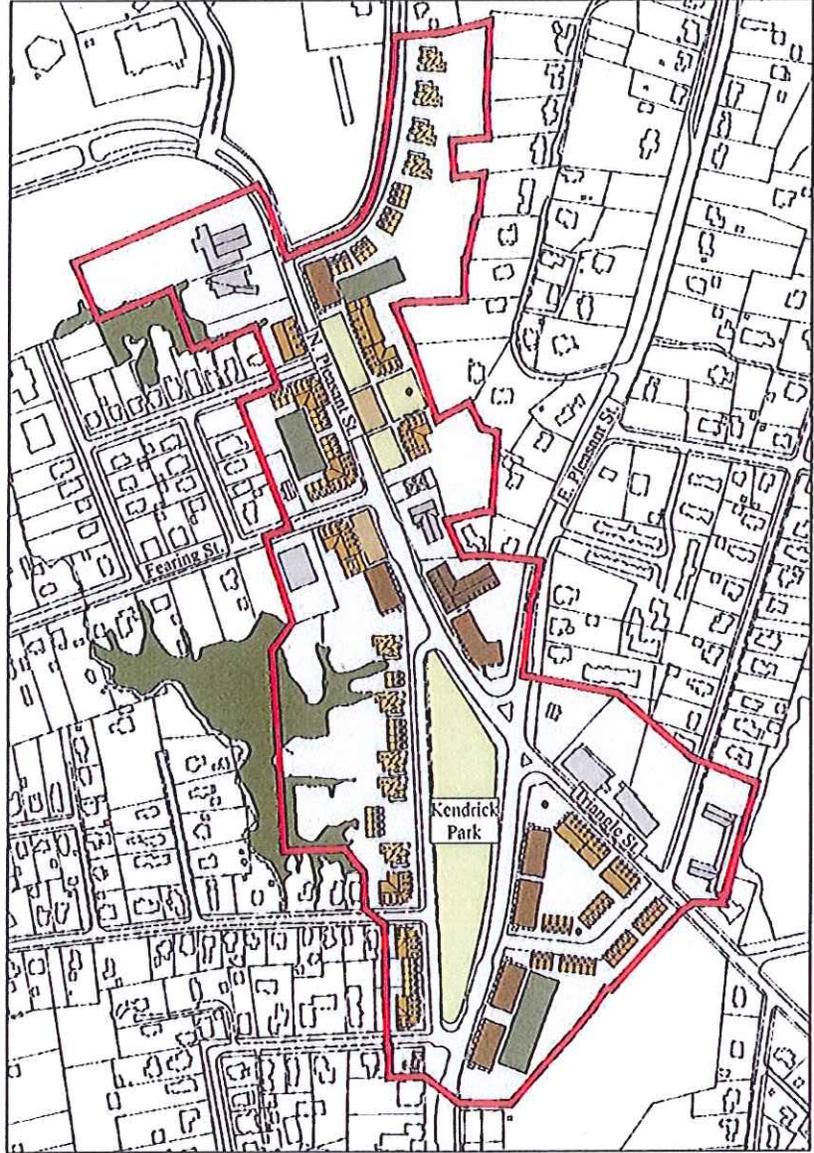
**REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPT**

The redevelopment concept for the corridor transforms a characterless transitional area into a new distinctive address for the Town. It does so by introducing a rich mixture of residential and mixed use buildings, protecting natural areas, and adding a variety of public gathering areas and new green open space.

The concept deliberately respects the dominant character of the areas it crosses. It maintains the strong mixed-use character of downtown to the south. It creates a dramatic gateway at the crossing of North Pleasant, East Pleasant and Triangle Streets. And, it reaffirms a strong residential character along North Pleasant Street.

The concept adds a total of 290 residential units, 159,287 square feet of retail, 47,970 square feet of office, 44,460 square feet of lodging, and 3.52 acres of open space. The new units are intentionally conceived to be small to attract a desirable mix of tenants—retirees, young couples, faculty, and graduate students. The office and retail mix have the potential to enhance the Town tax base and provide new jobs. The additional open space and the walkable, human scaled nature of the place enhance the quality of life in the surrounding neighborhoods and provide amenities not currently available.

The implementation of the concept is likely to be incremental, and responsive to market and demographic changes. The urban renewal assessment revealed that “nothing in the area demonstrates an unambiguous and obvious case for designation of the area as a urban renewal area.” Therefore, implementation of the vision for the Gateway corridor will require a sustained collaboration between public sector, institutions, businesses, and the community.

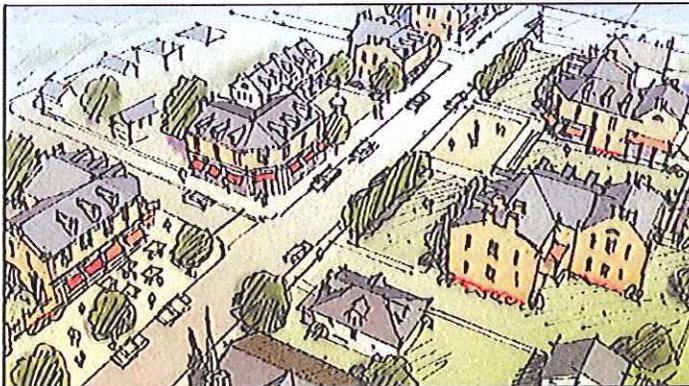
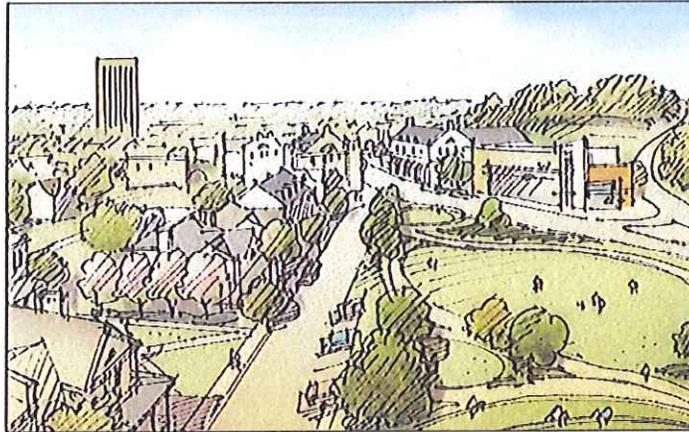


*The illustrative map of the Gateway corridor plan.*

**WHY THIS PLAN?**

There are many reasons why the *Urban Renewal Assessment, Vision and Action Steps for the Gateway Corridor Project* is timely and beneficial. These reasons are listed below. The Gateway corridor plan will:

- » Strengthen the Town/University relation both physically and operationally;
- » Attract a different and more adult population to the area;
- » Displace, overtime, sources of nuisance, noise, and problems for the surrounding neighborhoods;
- » Provide neighborhood services, housing choices, employment opportunities all within walking distance of the downtown and the University;
- » Strengthen code enforcement; and
- » Creates a vibrant and diverse signature place.



The three renderings illustrate the type of redevelopment proposed for the corridor.