



MANCHESTER CONNECTS

A MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION + LAND USE PLAN
FOR THE MILLYARD, RIVERFRONT, AND DOWNTOWN
MANCHESTER, NH

June 2017



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experts in place



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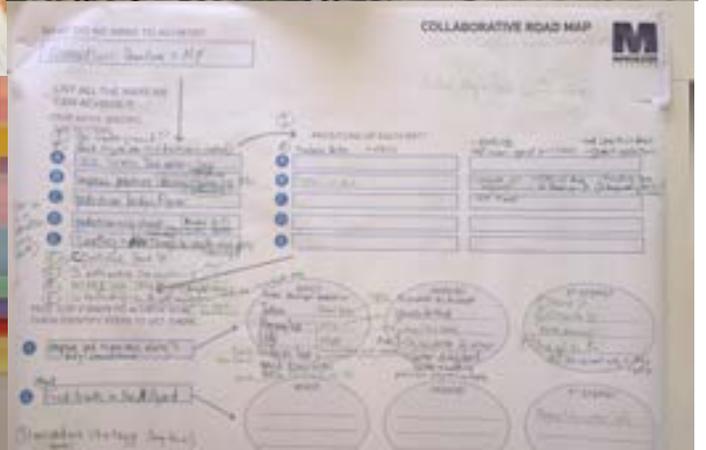
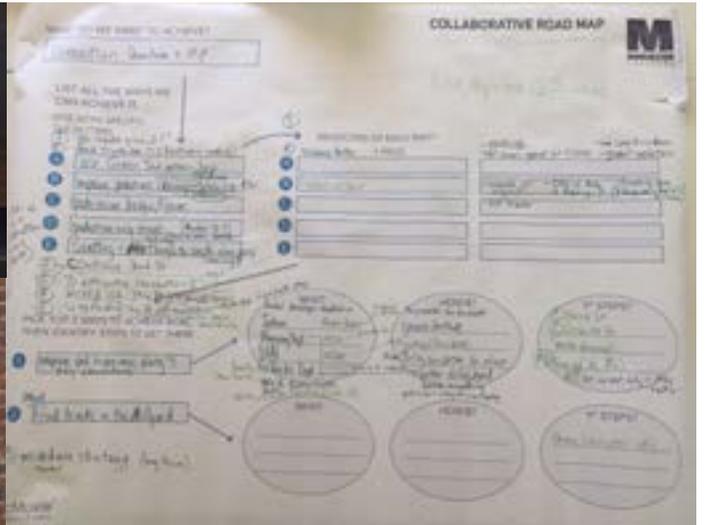
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MANCHESTER CONNECTS

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FOR THE MILLYARD, RIVERFRONT, AND DOWNTOWN
MANCHESTER, NH

Manchester is ripe with opportunity. The 19th Century Millyard that put Manchester on the map as a bustling northern New England industrial city currently houses numerous companies at the cutting-edge of 21st Century technology. The Millyard and Downtown host the core of the city's knowledge workers and account for 28% of the city's businesses and almost 31% of its payroll.

Manchester businesses, residents, and employees are in the midst of the Millyard's rebirth as a high-tech and educational magnet. The city's residents, businesses, and visitors enjoy the historic city core and Millyard while maintaining easy access to the Merrimack River and surrounding natural areas.

This project---Manchester Connects---identifies ways to ensure people, places, and programs are better connected and that the city and residents have what is needed to ensure a high quality of life, healthy tax base, and amenities that draw businesses and visitors alike.



OVERVIEW

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MANCHESTER CONNECTS



MANCHESTER
C O N N E C T S

Manchester Connects is more than this planning process. Manchester Connects leverages, grows, and sustains Manchester's innovative community, rich history, and natural amenities by ensuring that people, places, and ideas are connected and have the support they need. A fifteen-month process culminated in this report, but this report is only the start of Manchester Connects...



More than 200 people participated in Manchester Connects public meetings and workshops

Source: CivicMoxie

The Manchester Connects Study Area encompasses the Millyard and Downtown; it also includes portions of the West Side.



Source: CivicMoxie

...A confluence of collaborators and trends presents the right time for planning and to make bold plans for the city's future. This project focuses on ensuring Manchester can capture the positive momentum the city is experiencing in Millyard growth, jobs added, and quality of life improvements to its best advantage. Manchester's success as a 21st Century city depends on its ability to adapt and thrive under new conditions and trends.

Manchester Connects began as a project of collaborators connecting over their passion for the city they love. Started in spring 2016, this planning initiative builds upon earlier efforts to expand and reimagine the Riverwalk, as well as ongoing work by civic leaders, businesses, and institutions to improve places and connections Downtown, in the Millyard, and West Side. This planning effort was supported by the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission (SNHPC), which provided funding through its Unified Planning Work

Program (UPWP) agreement with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation.

WHY ARE THE MILLYARD AND DOWNTOWN SO IMPORTANT?

Over the past several decades, Manchester and Southern New Hampshire have attracted many expanding and relocating Boston businesses and entrepreneurs with the area's lower costs, transportation infrastructure, and quality of life. The availability of affordable and highly adaptable mill buildings in Manchester's Millyard has been an important asset in attracting and growing these enterprises. Consequently, Manchester and the surrounding region are now home to a large and multi-faceted mix of knowledge-intensive and high technology businesses.

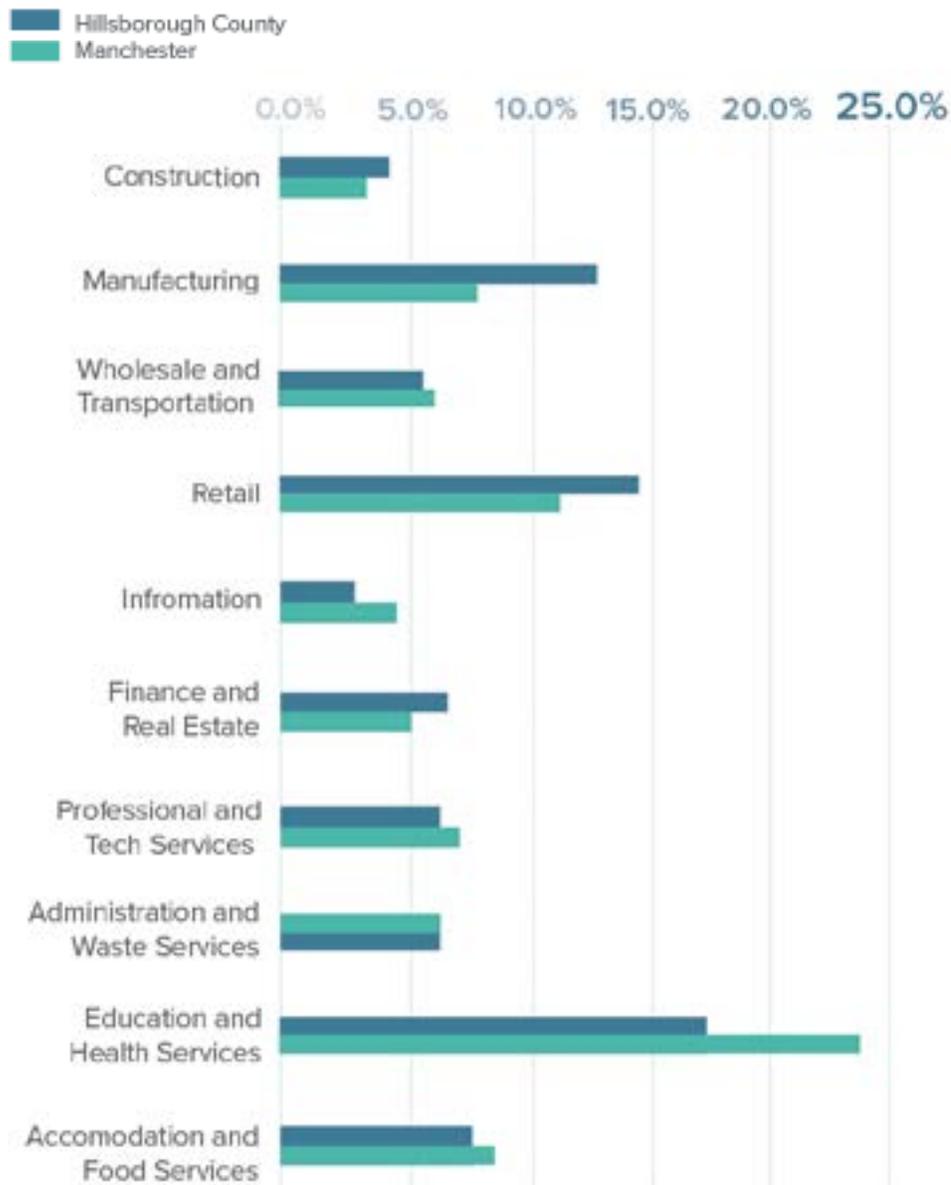
In Hillsborough County, knowledge-based sectors that include Information,



Amoskeag Millyard, Canal Street in 1967.
Source: www.loc.gov/resource/hhh.nh0041.photos/?sp=18

A survey of 150 founders of the fastest growing US companies conducted in 2013 found that access to talent was the most frequently cited location factor for their firms¹.

Figure 1 - Manchester and Hillsborough Employment and Wages



Source: New Hampshire Employment Security, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (ES-202 Data Series)

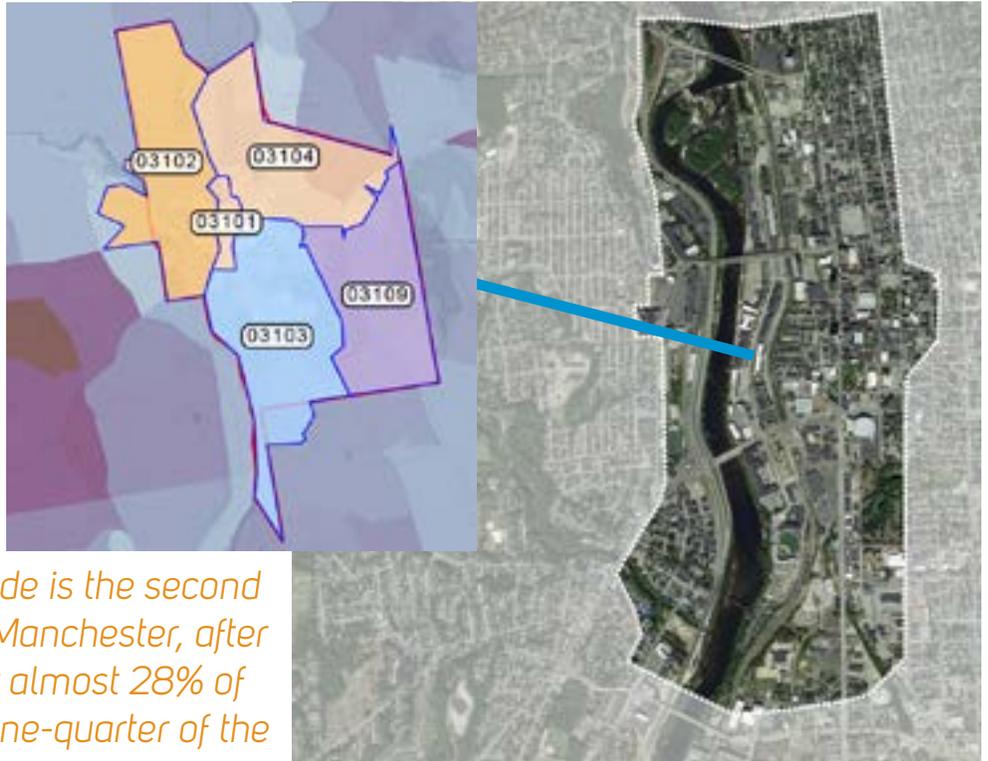
^{1,2} Cited in Place Matters: The Role of Placemaking in Economic Development, International Economic Development Council, p. 7.

Professional and Technical Services, and Education and Health Care account for 26.5% of total employment (see Figure 1). When high technology components of Manufacturing are added, the share of jobs increases to one-third of all employment. Manchester's employment is more heavily concentrated in knowledge-based industries with Information, Education and Health Care, and Professional and Technical Services together accounting for 42.2% of employment. The share of each of these sectors is larger for Manchester than the county (See Figure 1).

In the post-recessionary period, Manchester has outperformed Hillsborough County in job growth while knowledge-intensive sectors, especially Education and Health Care, have driven both the city and county's economic growth. Moreover, employment became more concentrated in Manchester, which alone added more jobs than the entire rest of the county. While Hillsborough County added 866 net new jobs and 1,595 private sector jobs from 2008 to 2015, job growth in Manchester totaled 1,213 with the private sector expanding by 1,735 positions.

Manchester is the county leader in knowledge-intensive job growth with employment becoming more concentrated in Manchester, which added more jobs between 2008 and 2015 than the entire county.

The economic data illustrates the importance of Manchester to the regional economy. Within the city, the Milliard and Downtown constitute a large part of the city's economy. Based on 2015 County Business Patterns zip code data, the Milliard/Downtown zip code is the second largest employment center in Manchester, after the airport area, accounting for almost 28% of business establishments and one-quarter of the city's employment.



The Millyard/Downtown zip code is the second largest employment center in Manchester, after the airport area, accounting for almost 28% of business establishments and one-quarter of the city's employment.

Source: CivicMoxie

Reflecting its role as a center for higher paying technology- and knowledge-intensive businesses, it generates a significantly larger share of Manchester's total payroll, at 30.9%.

decisions among firms and entrepreneurs. A survey of 150 founders of the fastest growing US companies conducted in 2013 found that access to talent was the most frequently cited location factor for their firms².

WHERE DOES MANCHESTER CONNECTS FIT INTO THIS PICTURE?

The knowledge-intensive Manufacturing (high technology), Information, Professional and Technical Services, and Education and Health Care sectors all share a need for talent and highly skilled and educated workers. Access to highly educated and skilled labor is becoming increasingly important for knowledge-based firms--often outstripping business cost as a driving factor for location

Since high skilled knowledge workers, especially the "millennial" generation of newly educated workers, are in demand and able to obtain good employment throughout the nation and world, they are attracted to cities and communities with a high quality of place and rich amenities. One recent study found that two-thirds of college graduates choose where they want to live before looking for a job³. Moreover, many younger workers are attracted to cities and urban living rather than living in suburban areas.

^{2,3} Cited in Place Matters: The Role of Placemaking in Economic Development, International Economic Development Council, p. 7.

Cities that focus on creating attractive and high quality urban centers with rich amenities and quality of place will improve their competitiveness in attracting high skilled workers, growing their high value business base that relies on these workers, and attracting firms that seek the benefits of a location in an urban center.

Moreover, the higher wages associated with a strong and growing knowledge-intensive employment sector has multiplier effects for the entire Manchester region as these jobs and higher incomes expand the spending and investment that supports the construction, retail, arts, business services, and food sectors.

The Millyard is not an island. While it is tempting to think of the area of the former Amoskeag mill buildings as an isolated spot of relatively few landowners that can meet challenges on its own, the economic data, sheer numbers of employees, and contribution to the image of Manchester mean that the Millyard is “everyone’s Millyard” and should not be taken for granted. The City’s ability to react to trends and meet new challenges head-on and ride the wave of change will determine whether the Millyard keeps pace (or runs ahead of) the competition in Concord, Nashua, and

Portsmouth and whether Downtown can reinvent itself as a destination for empty nesters, millennials, and others looking for a unique and walkable place to live, work and play.

The challenges facing the Millyard and Downtown include:

1. New Trends in Urban Living
2. Changing Competition: The Rise of Innovation Districts
3. Parking vs. People
4. Parking has varied ownership, policies, prices
5. An Asphalt Riverwalk
6. Lack of Complete Streets, Existing Single Mode Travel + Weak Connectivity
7. Lack of “Third Places”
8. Mix of Uses is Weak and Active Ground Floor Uses are Missing
9. The Municipal Tax Cap

These challenges represent a combination of factors – some external, and some internal to Manchester. Changing trends mean that the Millyard is competing not only with suburban office parks, but also with urban innovation districts (such as



Manchester is home to a variety of knowledge-based and high technology businesses

Source: CivicMoxie

MANCHESTER CONNECTS GOALS

The Manchester of the Future...

...celebrates public space, placemaking, and innovation



...is host to a world-class Riverwalk and iconic pedestrian bridge



...embraces the "complete streets" philosophy of city design



...encourages a mix of land uses and supports innovative parking strategies



...is powered by Manchester Connects



Sources, clockwise from top left: commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Zuccotti_Park_at_night_October_2014.JPG, www.urban75.org/london/images/london-jan08-22.jpg, www.bostonglobe.com/business/2016/05/18/will-kendall-square-finally-feel-like-real-neighborhood/hlv1mwIS18WuheSfluA74M/story.html, CivicMoxie, www.peopleforbikes.org/blog/entry/portland-tests-crosswalks-bike-lane-and-transit-island-to-boost-business



This map highlights the potential placemaking places Downtown and in the Milliard. The majority of events and activities that now take place are located in Downtown and this planning initiative focuses on the Milliard for additional initiatives to ensure lively spaces and weekend destinations that can transform vacant parking lots into people places.

Source: CivicMoxie

those in Lowell, MA), and with other urban areas, for knowledge companies and the workers they employ.

Innovation districts are sprouting up throughout the northeast and combine a density of innovative companies and high-tech incubators with urban amenities such as ground floor retail and dining, walk to work options, multiple modes of transportation, and gathering places such as coffee shops, open space seating, and entertainment spots that are known as “third places” (neither home nor work).

The Milliard will never be able to provide the free parking provided by suburban office parks. However, given today’s preference for urban living, the Milliard can capitalize on its Downtown location to attract knowledge workers and creative companies who prefer the amenities and convenience of an urban location.

The mostly-office Milliard is lacking in the mixed-use vitality and connectivity to Downtown and open space recreation that is a draw for knowledge workers. The large expanses of asphalt and constant focus on parking capacity have limited the ability to transform the Milliard to modern needs. Manchester Connects addresses these trends and challenges through a series of five goals.

The goals are intended to jump-start short term action and address longer-term change.

Goal #1: Create Vibrant Public Spaces

People will go where there are things to do, places to see, and people to meet.

Chock full of employees and full parking lots during the week, the Millyard is almost empty after working hours and on weekends. Elm Street has existing businesses, vacancies, and underutilized spaces that could be supported by more foot traffic and activity. Placemaking turns an uninteresting street corner into an attractive park, it brings children and adults together to swing and blow bubbles, and it provides an opportunity for individuals, cities, and organizations to try out ideas without committing years' worth of planning and significant funding. Creating a variety of destinations within Downtown, the Millyard, and West Side encourages people to move throughout the community, bringing eyes on the street, activity, and foot traffic to local businesses.

Manchester Connects is committed to:

- Employing tactical urbanism to create temporary and pop-up events and enhanced public spaces.
- Identifying private property owners who will "host" placemaking projects.
- Working with existing entities including Intown Manchester, Millyard businesses, and others to support their events and activities.
- Working with the strong arts and cultural community on placemaking strategies.
- Embracing innovation in lighting and street furniture and art.
- Promoting and managing events, activities, and programs in public spaces and interior common spaces in the Millyard and along the Merrimack.
- Ensuring accessibility and connectivity.

Goal #2: Promote Complete Streets Design and Multimodal Transportation Choices

Research shows that the more street intersections that exist, the more

The mostly-office Millyard is lacking in the mixed-use vitality and connectivity to Downtown and open space recreation that is a draw for knowledge workers.

opportunities there are for human interaction and vitality—key attributes of great places to live and work¹. At a base level, street intersections are a good indicator of a pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly environment because they allow people to take a short path from their origin to their destination. With over 98% of Millyard employees driving to work alone or in a carpool, the adoption of strategies to make streets that can be used by everyone—pedestrians, automobiles, bicycles, and transit—can support alternative transportation in the Millyard and Downtown and put people on the streets, adding to vitality and providing foot traffic to support local businesses while also easing demand on parking.

Manchester Connects is committed to:

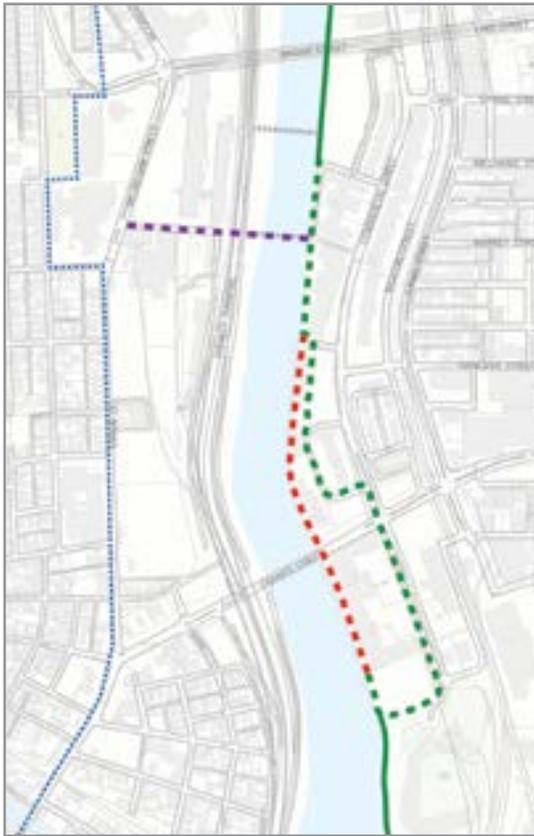
- Increasing transportation options and enhancing access and convenience of these options to get to, and move within, the Millyard, Downtown, and West Side.



Multimodal facilities, streets that are friendly to cars, pedestrians, cyclists, and transit, and associated placemaking standards are the new standard for urban areas.

Sources, top to bottom: www.fatpencilstudio.com/mobility-hub, www.transformkc.org/project/bike-station-long-beach

¹Allan Jacobs, Great Streets, 1995



- Existing Riverwalk
- - - Proposed Riverwalk
- - - Future Cantilever Riverwalk
- - - Future Pedestrian Bridge



The map above illustrates the existing and proposed sections of the Riverwalk. The Millyard is the only break in the Heritage Trail as it runs through the city. The northernmost trail shown on this map is the existing Riverwalk, which is part of the Heritage Trail. The section of existing Riverwalk at the bottom of this map is the continuation of the Heritage Trail.

Below, a conceptual rendering of what an iconic pedestrian bridge could look like. The bridge shown is the Lucky Knot bridge.

Source: CivicMoxie

- Enhancing pedestrian connections with near-term tactical urbanist approaches.
- Supporting additional connections to regional trail systems and green spaces.
- Encouraging collaboration between entities to achieve more efficient and cost-effective transportation alternatives.
- Promoting mixed land uses that support walkability and promote multimodal transportation.
- Supporting existing transit services and the creation of innovative transit options.
- Educating the public and advocating for proactive land use, parking, and economic development policies that will keep the Millyard vibrant.

Goal #3: Develop a World-class Riverwalk and Iconic Pedestrian Bridge

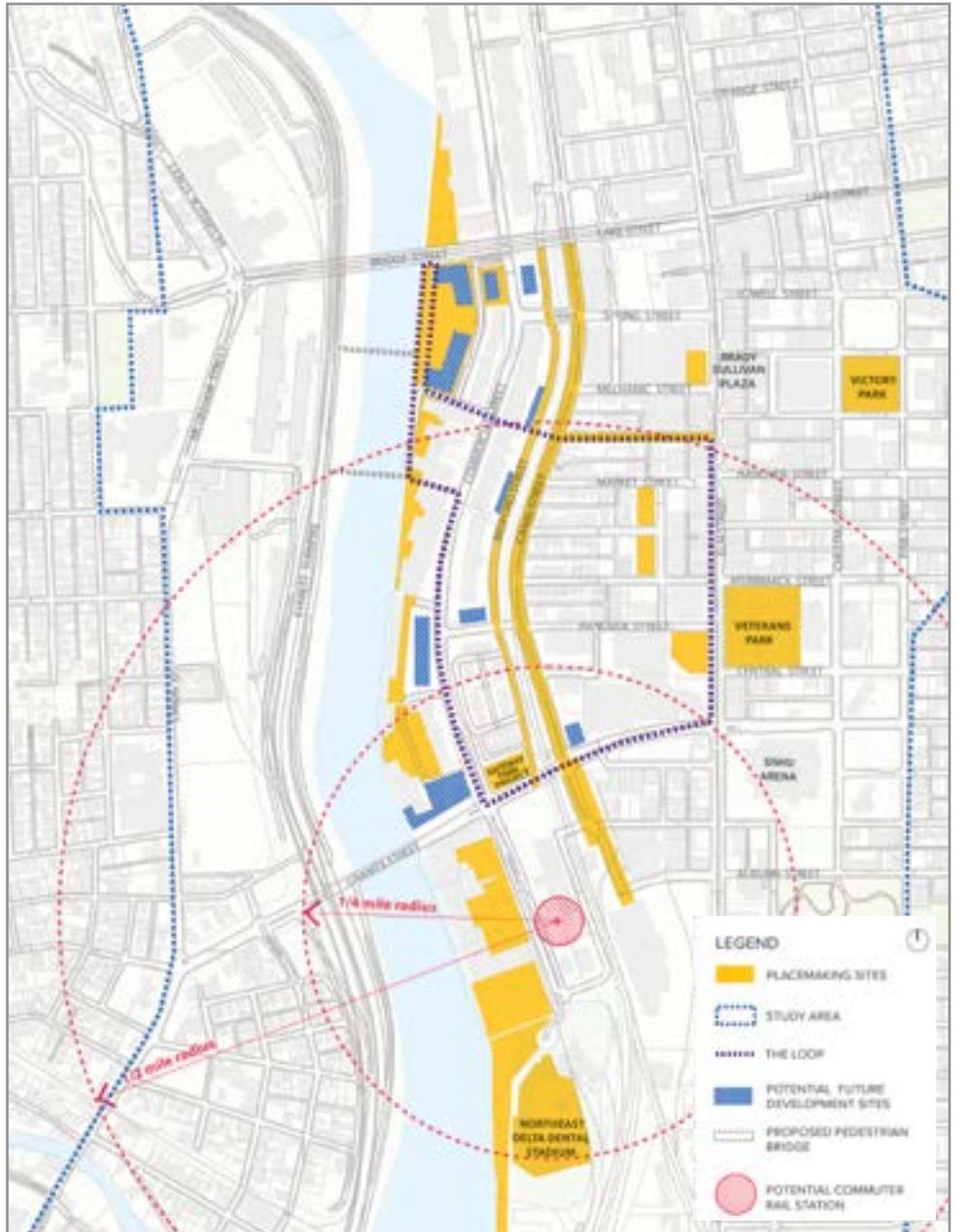
Active and well-designed urban waterfronts around the world support economic development and enhance livability. Waterfront walkways provide healthy living alternatives for exercise, support wintertime and summertime festivals, and provide social spaces for communities to come together to dine, play, and learn. Manchester's Merrimack Riverfront was a working space during the 19th Century and the river was a power source, not recreation area. Near-term pilot projects can jumpstart a re-imagining of the riverfront as an integral part of the Millyard and Downtown. In doing so, the community can begin to dream and set the stage for an iconic project that can reconnect west and east with a pedestrian bridge. This type of initiative could provide significant benefits to the city by creating a local as well as regional destination.

Manchester Connects is committed to:

- Employing tactical urbanism to create a Riverwalk now, without waiting for bricks and mortar.
- Supporting a collaborative effort to provide signage, create maps, and generally make the Riverwalk more visible.
- Working with private property owners and the City to identify locations for placemaking.
- Working with a range of advocacy groups to envision programming, educational opportunities, and public art along the water's edge.
- Exploring longer-term options for rebuilding a pedestrian bridge across the Merrimack.
- Identifying a range of funding options.

Goal #4: Support Mixed Land Uses and Smart Parking Strategies

Companies and knowledge workers, as well as residents, are looking for amenity-rich environments in which to live, work, and play. Both millennials and empty nesters are driving urban residential markets. The rise of innovation districts (see the inset on pages 34 through 37) has mirrored the resurgence in interest in cities and a mix of land uses that brings 24/7 activity, offers amenities for workers after hours, and allows employees to walk or bike to work. These mixed-use communities are the desired environment for businesses and knowledge workers. The Millyard is predominately office and educational land uses. Dining options are few and while there are some residential buildings, they don't provide enough residents to support the range of active ground floor uses that would draw more activity and animate the street life of the area. An integrated solution to land uses and parking strategies can help solve some of the challenges of an inactive ground floor and put more property into economic use.



This map highlights the opportunities for increasing density in the Millyard. The Millyard once was far more built up than it is today. To create the vibrancy and sense of activity that the Millyard needs to support the knowledge-based businesses and employees it is seeking to attract, it will be important to add a mix of uses. These uses should be integrated into the existing buildings, but can also be located in new buildings at these key locations.

Source: CivicMoxie



Manchester Connects is committed to:

- Supporting short-term and longer-term solutions to the parking challenges in the Millyard.
- Advocating for redevelopment of Millyard and adjacent vacant property and parking lots when responsible development solutions of mixed-uses and integrated parking are found to be viable.
- Advocating for Transit-oriented Development (TOD), walkable mixed-use development that is located near reliable public transit, to create the density necessary to support existing businesses and attract new residents, economic development, and visitors.
- Advocating for smart land use that can prepare the city for possible future Capitol Corridor rail service.
- Balancing the need for parking and vehicular access with a desire to use valuable land for more active uses.



Goal #5: Create the Organization “Manchester Connects”

Good things happen because leaders come forward to advocate for change and people, institutions, and businesses collaborate to put their knowledge, political capital, and resources to work. Transformative change in cities can almost always be traced to visionary leaders and public, private and non-profit partnerships. Manchester and the region is teeming with entrepreneurs, civic leaders, collaborators, and energy. This planning initiative has seen an outpouring of support from the public, private, and non-profit sectors who are eager to translate plans to action. As Manchester Connects grows from this planning process, the people who love Manchester need to stay connected with one another and with local organizations and businesses that are interested in improving the city as well. Manchester

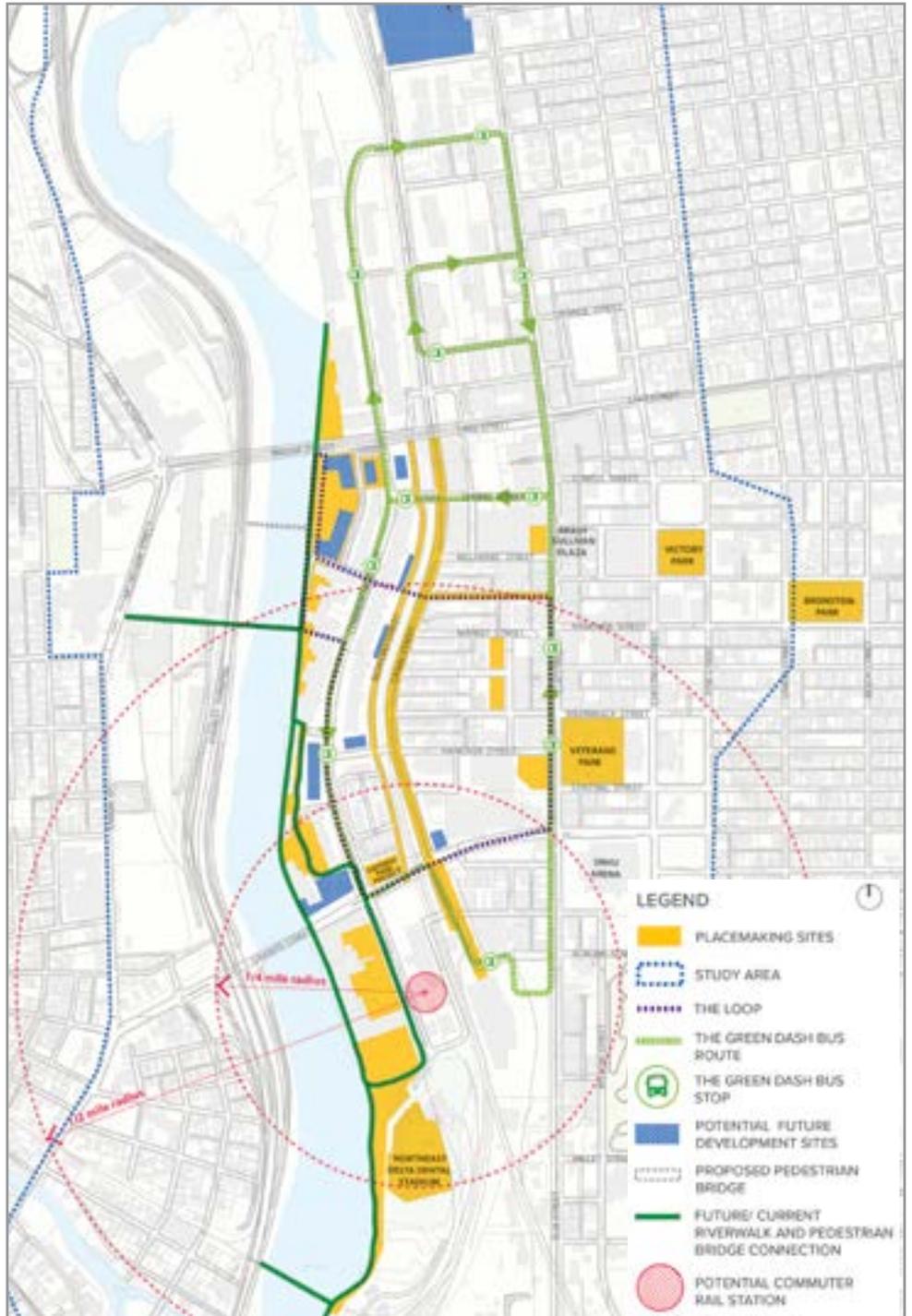
*Manchester and the region is teeming with entrepreneurs, civic leaders, collaborators, and energy.
Source: CivicMoxie*

Connects needs to foster a collaborative environment that helps match people, ideas, and capacity with each other.

Manchester Connects is committed to:

- Creating an inclusive platform of ideas and action that welcomes ideas and energy.
- Building capacity by bringing people together to work on common challenges and to identify collaborative solutions.
- Serving as an umbrella of support for existing and future initiatives.
- Communicating ideas and goals clearly and compellingly to build widespread support within the community.
- Providing the initiatives, “brand,” and buzz to help recruit businesses and entrepreneurs to call the city home.
- Embracing innovation and creativity to solve difficult challenges.

The momentum created by the Manchester Connects planning initiative is just beginning. Specific actions in support of these five goals are already underway and the group is committed to achieving early successes. Taken together, these five goals are a powerful, integrated approach to ensuring that Manchester is a competitive and compelling city in the 21st Century.



This composite map illustrates Manchester Connects' longterm vision for the Millyard and Downtown. Each of the recommendations included in this plan work together and are part of the larger, cohesive vision.

Source: CivicMoxie