

Downtown Brooklyn Pedestrian Study



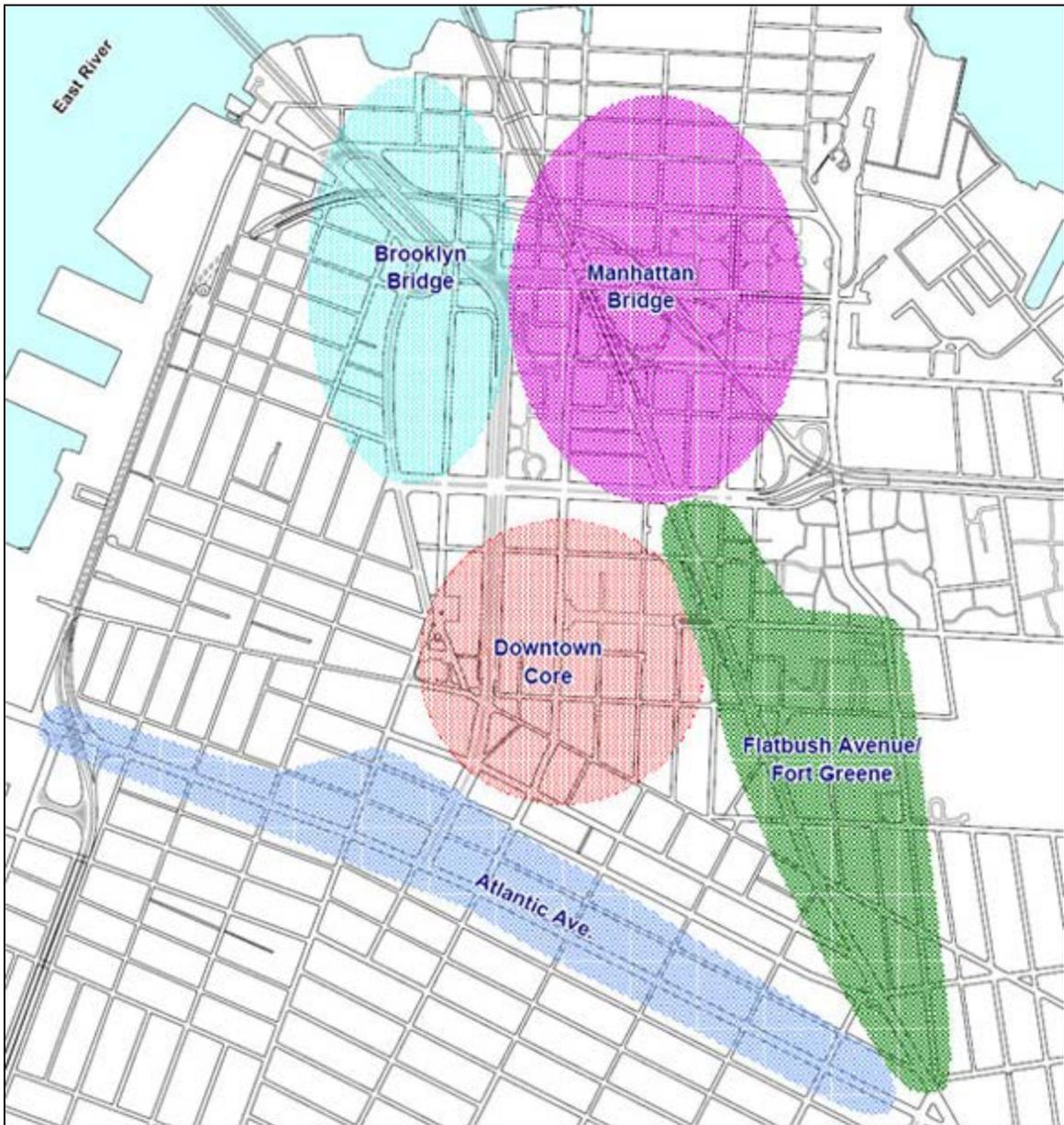
Overview

The Department of City Planning's Downtown Brooklyn Pedestrian Study formulated recommendations for improving the pedestrian experience in Downtown Brooklyn and the surrounding neighborhoods with clearer, easier, more pedestrian-friendly connections. The study area is bounded by the East River to the north and west, Atlantic Avenue to the south, and Ashland Place to the east. Based on differences in land use, neighborhood character and pedestrian activity, the study area is divided into five focus areas: the [Downtown Core](#), the [Manhattan Bridge](#), the [Brooklyn Bridge](#), [Atlantic Avenue](#) and [Flatbush Avenue/Fort Greene](#).

Within the context of related development and streetscape projects in Downtown Brooklyn, and in coordination with the city-sponsored [Downtown Brooklyn Development Plan](#) and [New York City Department of Transportation's Downtown Brooklyn Traffic Calming Project](#), the Downtown Brooklyn Pedestrian Improvement Study (the Pedestrian Project) recommends landscaping, lighting, sidewalk treatment, pedestrian connection and plaza improvements to define a vision for guiding and enhancing future streetscape changes in each focus area.

The project findings and recommendations have resulted in the allocation of city capital funds for streetscape improvements on segments of Flatbush and Myrtle avenues. Detailed priority recommendations for the Flatbush Avenue/Fort Greene focus area were used to develop the project scope for final design and implementation of streetscape improvements to begin construction in 2010.

For more information on the Downtown Brooklyn Pedestrian Improvement Project, please contact the Brooklyn Office of the Department of City Planning at (718) 780-8280.

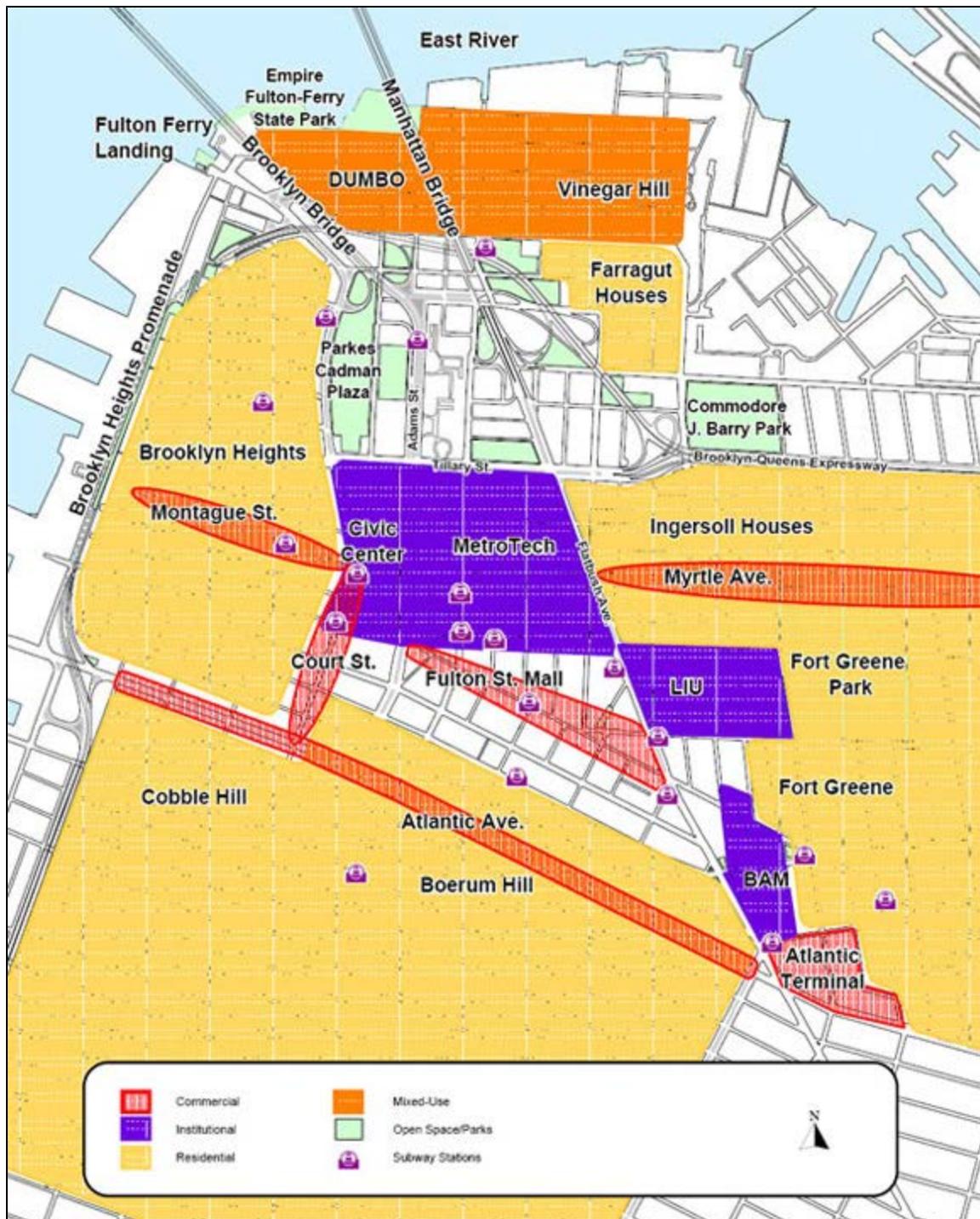


Focus Areas

Downtown Brooklyn Pedestrian Study

Overview

Downtown Brooklyn, the third largest business district in New York City, offers a variety of destinations that attract pedestrians. Within the five focus areas there are commercial, institutional, residential, and mixed commercial/industrial/residential uses, as well as open space and transportation services. Each generates pedestrian trips by residents, workers and visitors.



Pedestrian Generators

Downtown Brooklyn Pedestrian Study

General Streetscape Recommendations



While the five focus areas have distinct characteristics that warrant individual evaluation, they also share many pedestrian-related issues. The general elements that would improve the pedestrian environment throughout the study area are sidewalk treatment, lighting, landscaped medians, prominent street crossings, welcoming entries, plazas and attractive underpasses. Materials and treatments should be chosen for their aesthetic qualities, but should also be affordable to install and maintain. Materials that meet city standards should be used in creative and attractive ways where possible to minimize costs. Where materials are not standard, a maintenance agreement with a non-city entity will be required.

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General Streetscape Recommendations

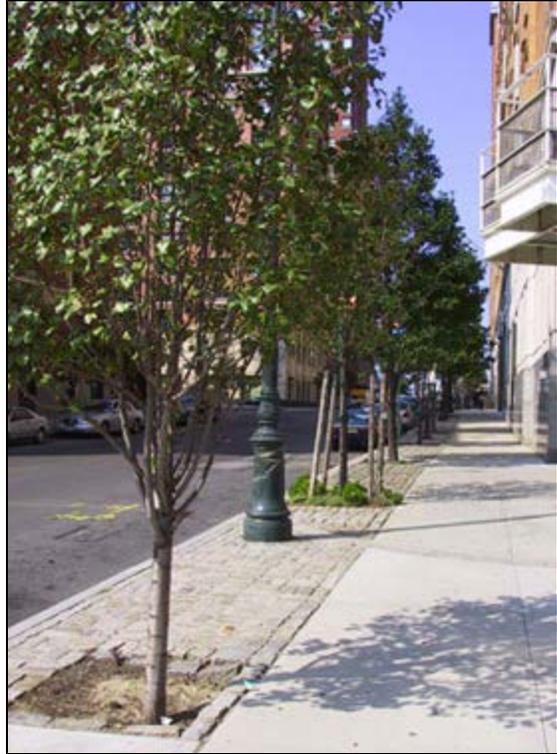
Sidewalk Treatment



Install inexpensive, easy-to-maintain and attractive paving.



Use flat tree grates on streets with heavy pedestrian activity to avoid diminishing the walkable surface of the sidewalk.



Use decorative amenity strips on major streets for organizing streetscape elements and separating pedestrians from the roadbed.

Downtown Brooklyn Pedestrian Study

General Streetscape Recommendations

Lighting Fixtures

Use interesting lighting fixtures common to Downtown Brooklyn. Mix fixtures oriented towards both pedestrians and vehicles to provide sufficient lighting for all users.



Downtown Brooklyn Pedestrian Study

General Streetscape Recommendations

Medians and Crossings

On major boulevards, create street identity with substantially landscaped medians.

Create a prominent pedestrian presence at crosswalks with attractive paving treatment and substantial medians that provide comfortable separation from the surrounding vehicles.



Existing Landscaped Median on Adams Street



Vision for Median and Crosswalk Treatment

Downtown Brooklyn Pedestrian Study

General Streetscape Recommendations

Entry Points and Plazas

Treat areas at gateways into Brooklyn, such as off the Brooklyn Bridge pedestrian and bicycle path, with signage, special lighting, sculpture, paving, landscaping, etc. to provide an aesthetic and informative welcome to the borough.

Create plazas for casual gathering where possible with landscaping, seating and tables. Focal elements, such as sculpture or fountains, would provide visual interest and provide neighborhood landmarks. The edges between plazas and sidewalks should be defined with a row of trees to separate pedestrians moving through the space from those sitting in the plazas.



Example of Sculpture in Plaza



Example of Well-Defined Plaza and Sidewalk

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General Streetscape Recommendations

Underpasses



Artwork Mounted to Overpass (Chicago)

Enhance underpasses formed by the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway and the Manhattan and Brooklyn bridges to create gateways between neighborhoods. Artwork and signage could be mounted on the face of the structures to announce transitions between neighborhoods. Providing better lighting in the underpasses would make them safer and could be done in a creative way that would highlight the aesthetic qualities of the structure.



Existing Brooklyn Bridge Underpass

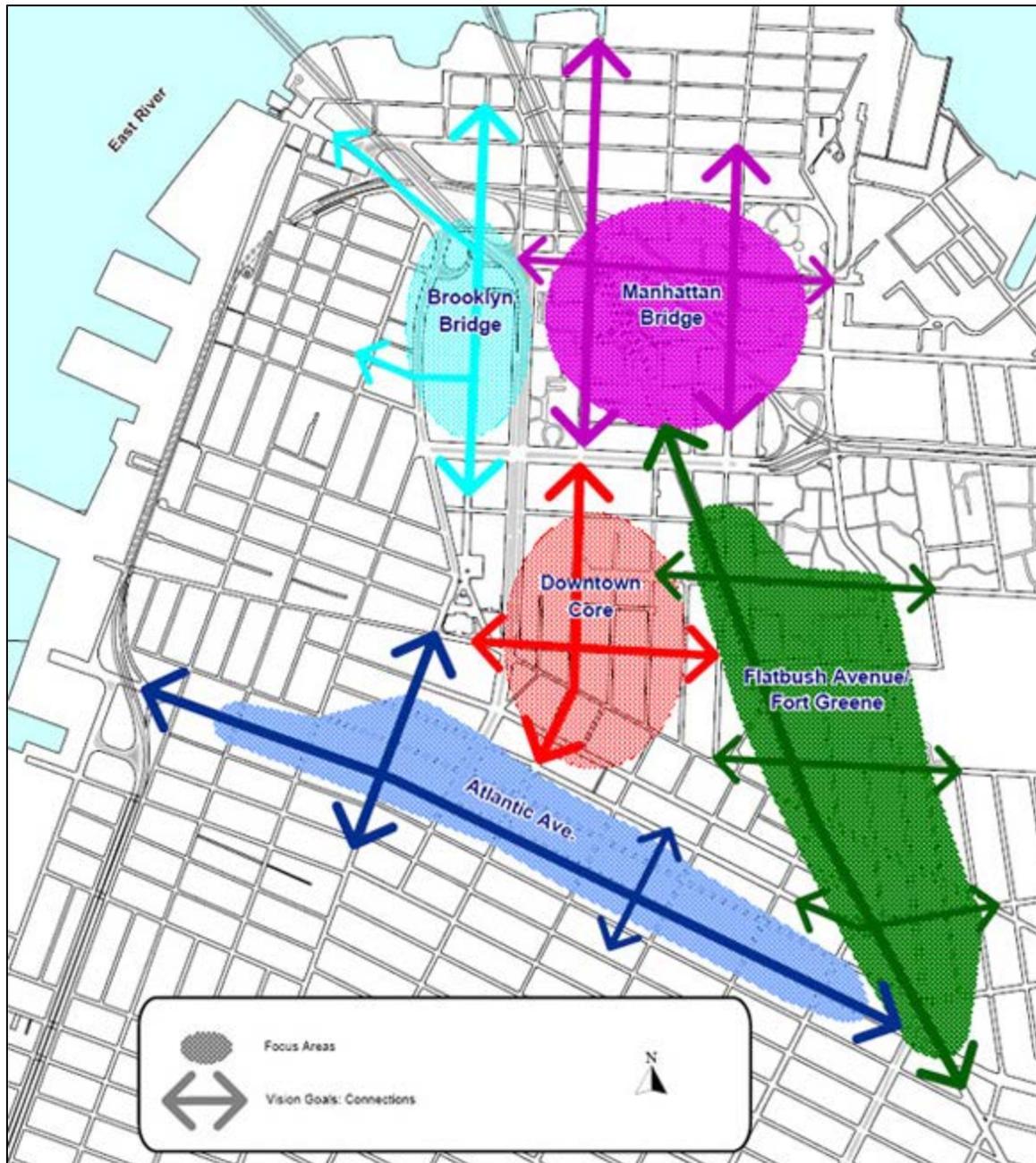


Vision for Brooklyn Bridge Underpass with Lighting

Downtown Brooklyn Pedestrian Study

Focus Area Visions

The visions developed for each of the five focus areas, based on their land uses, transportation, geography and historic characteristics, relate largely to improved connections and streetscape identity.



Focus Area Goals

Downtown Brooklyn Pedestrian Study

Focus Area Visions

Downtown Core

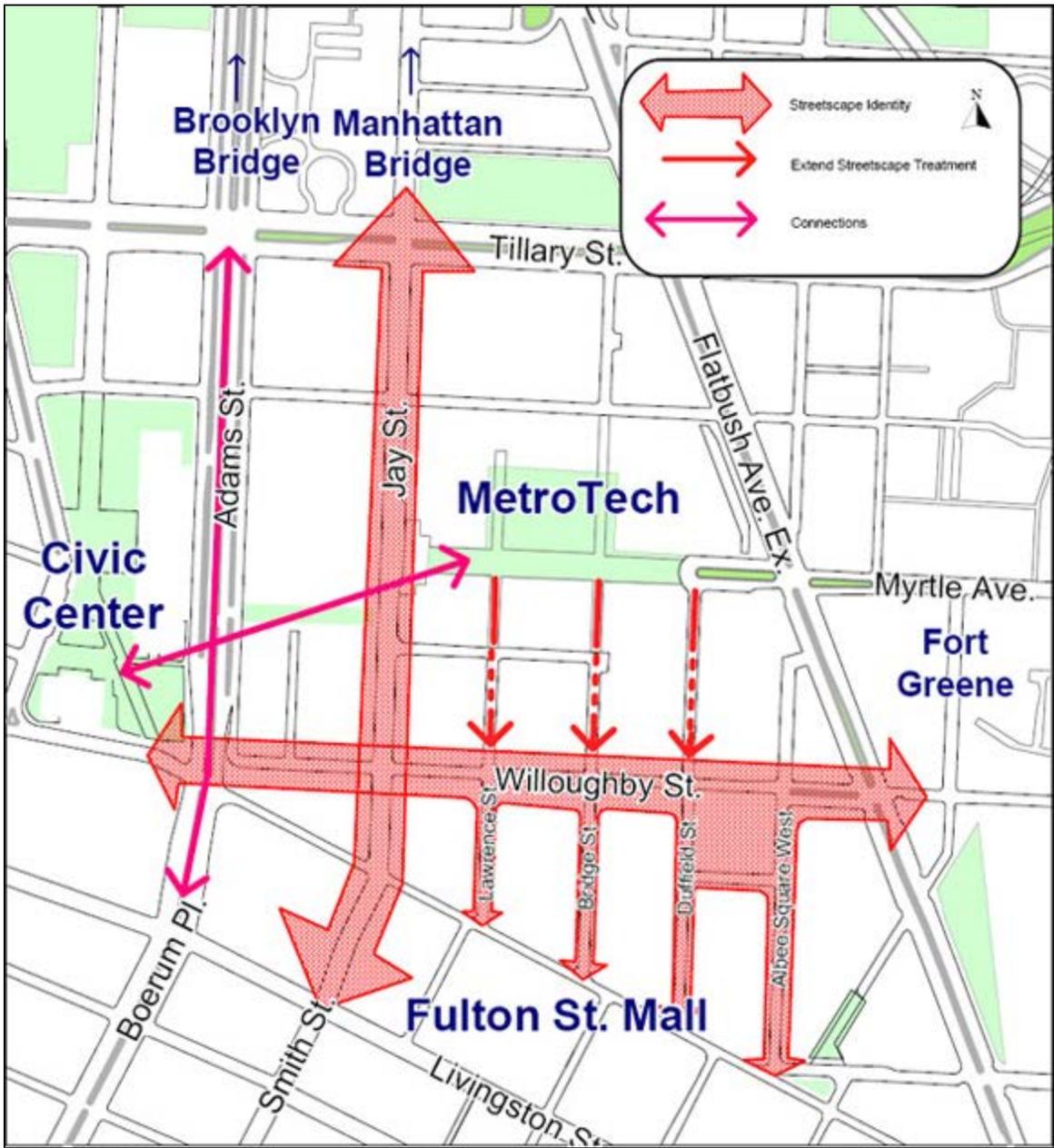


Existing Pedestrian Crossing at Adams Street

The Downtown Core has major thoroughfares and unusual street grid configurations that make connections between its three main areas--the Civic Center, MetroTech and the Fulton Mall--confusing and potentially unsafe. All three areas would also benefit from improved connections with the waterfront and other focus areas.

Clearer connection and safer crossings are needed between the Civic Center and MetroTech at Adams and Jay streets. This could be accomplished with changes to signal timing, crosswalk locations and landscaping design where crosswalks meet sidewalks. Bicycle lanes along Adams Street should be redesigned to prevent cars from parking in them.

The MetroTech streetscape treatment should be extended south to Willoughby Street to create a unified streetscape for the space between MetroTech and the Fulton Street Mall. A unified streetscape along Jay Street, extending from Livingston Street north to Tillary Street and into the Manhattan Bridge focus area, would encourage pedestrian movement toward the waterfront.



Vision: Downtown Core

Downtown Brooklyn Pedestrian Study

Focus Area Visions

Manhattan Bridge



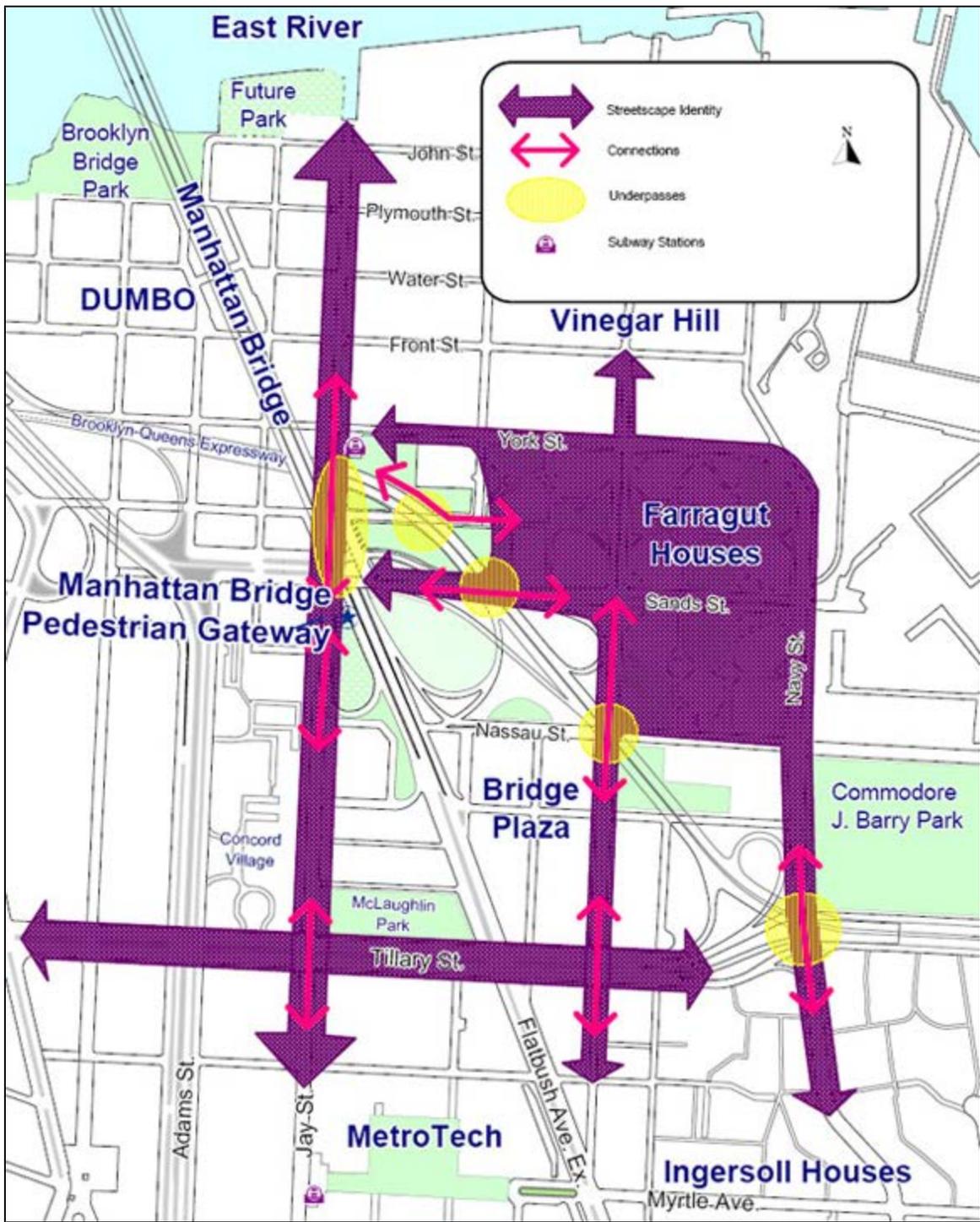
Existing Manhattan Bridge Underpass at Sands Street

A unified streetscape along Jay Street would enhance its importance as the main street in the focus area, and visually connect the Downtown Core to the Manhattan Bridge and the waterfront in DUMBO. This could be accomplished through sidewalk treatment, lighting and landscaping. A similar treatment, including median improvements, along Tillary Street would make the pedestrian crossing more convenient, safe and pleasant.

Streetscape improvements are also needed to better integrate Farragut Houses with surrounding neighborhoods and transportation options.

Underpasses should be improved with lighting and clear pathways to improve safety and the transition between neighborhoods. Signage or artwork either within or on the face of underpasses would create a gateway effect, welcoming pedestrians to the various neighborhoods.

Improved pedestrian access around bridge and expressway on- and off-ramps--such as signage and landscaping--is also needed.



Vision: Manhattan Bridge

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Focus Area Visions

Brooklyn Bridge

Pedestrians navigating between the Civic Center and the pedestrian stairwell at Cadman Plaza East would be assisted by improved visual guides. The bridge underpass where the stairwell meets the street needs improved lighting and both informational and directional signage. Distinct lighting fixtures, banners and artist-designed plaques in the sidewalk along Cadman Plaza East would create visual connections between the bridge and the Civic Center.

Between the pedestrian stairwell and the waterfront to the north, improved streetscape landscaping and paving is needed in addition to lighting and signage. The Brooklyn-Queens expressway underpasses present an opportunity to create gateways between neighborhoods with artwork mounted on the faces of the underpasses.

The Brooklyn Bridge pedestrian/bicycle path on Adams Street should be redesigned to provide better visual interest, minimal protection from weather, and visual and auditory separation from the surrounding traffic. This could be accomplished with decorative screens, trellises or creative landscaping.

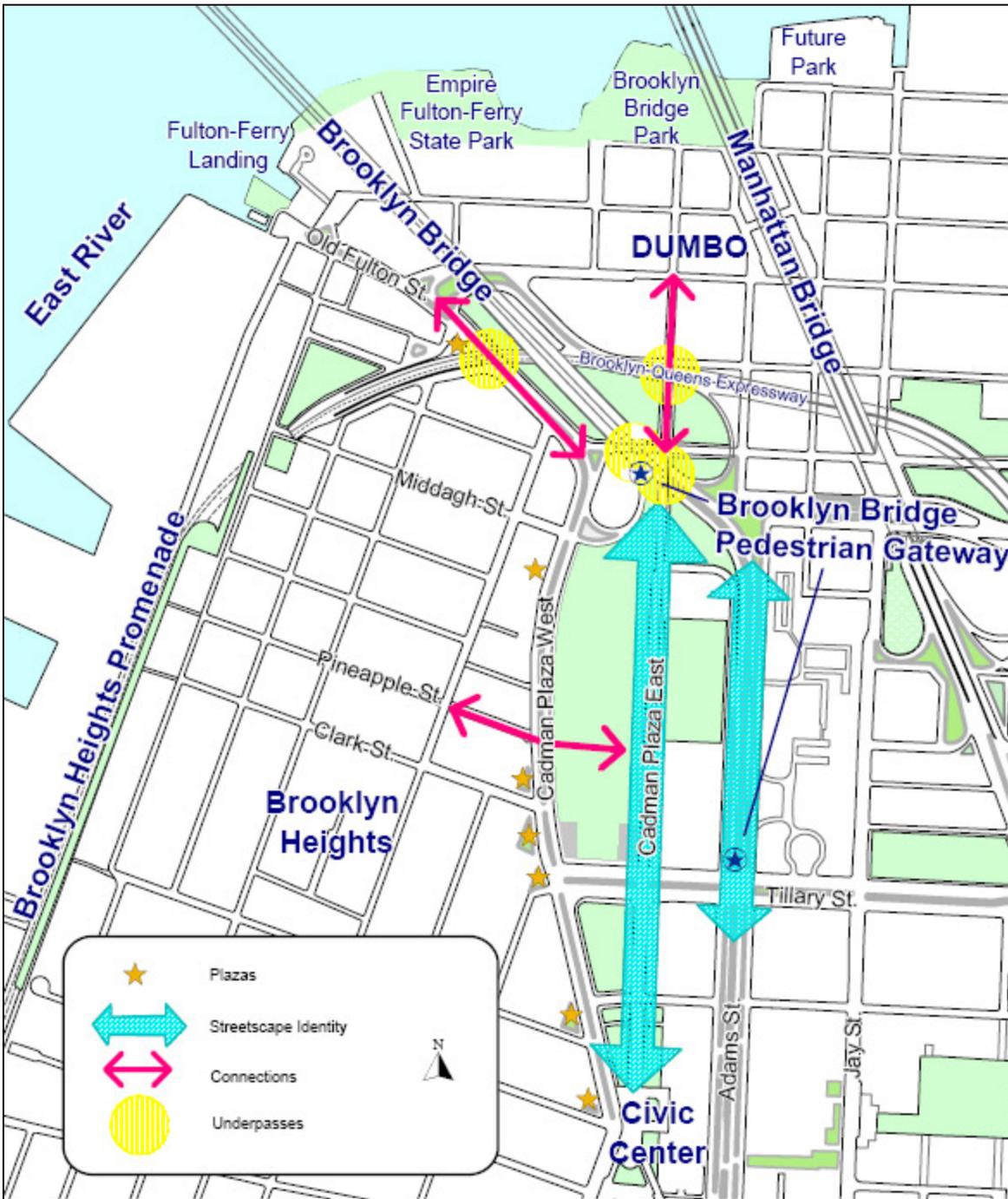
There are many opportunities for improved open space throughout the Brooklyn Bridge area. City-owned property that is currently used for parking lots or vehicle maintenance could be redeveloped with visitor welcome centers and landscaped plazas. In addition, the various publicly and privately owned spaces created by the diagonal orientation of Cadman Plaza West should be enhanced to create a chain of plazas.



Existing Cadman Plaza East Streetscape



Vision for Cadman Plaza East Streetscape



Vision: Brooklyn Bridge

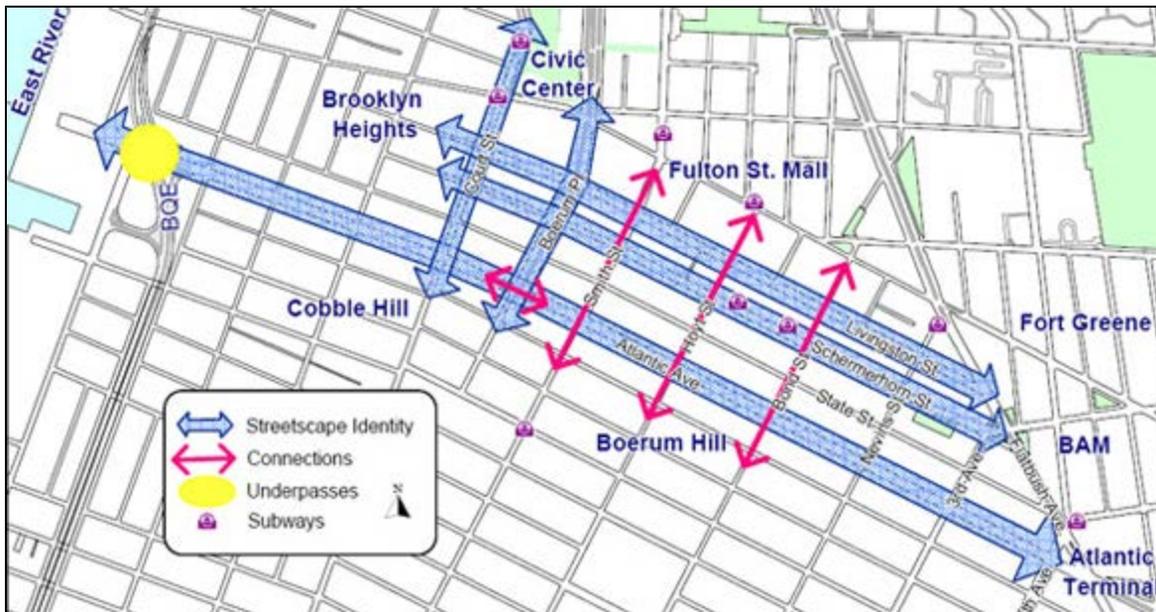
Downtown Brooklyn Pedestrian Study

Focus Area Visions

Atlantic Avenue

The streetscape elements on Atlantic Avenue should be supplemented and unified to enhance the area's historic identity. A unified streetscape identity-- including trees, lighting, and sidewalk paving--is also needed along Livingston, Schermerhorn and Court streets, and the lighting and median improvements installed on Adams Street in the 1990's should be extended south to Boerum Place.

The portion of Atlantic Avenue near the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway should be enhanced to visually strengthen Atlantic Avenue as a major arterial gateway and to improve pedestrian safety and connections, by using creative lighting and signage at the BQE underpass. North-south connections should also be improved for pedestrians in Boerum Hill. Streetscape improvements along Smith, Hoyt and Bond streets would improve visual connections, and improved crossing treatments at Atlantic Avenue would improve safety.



Vision: Atlantic Avenue

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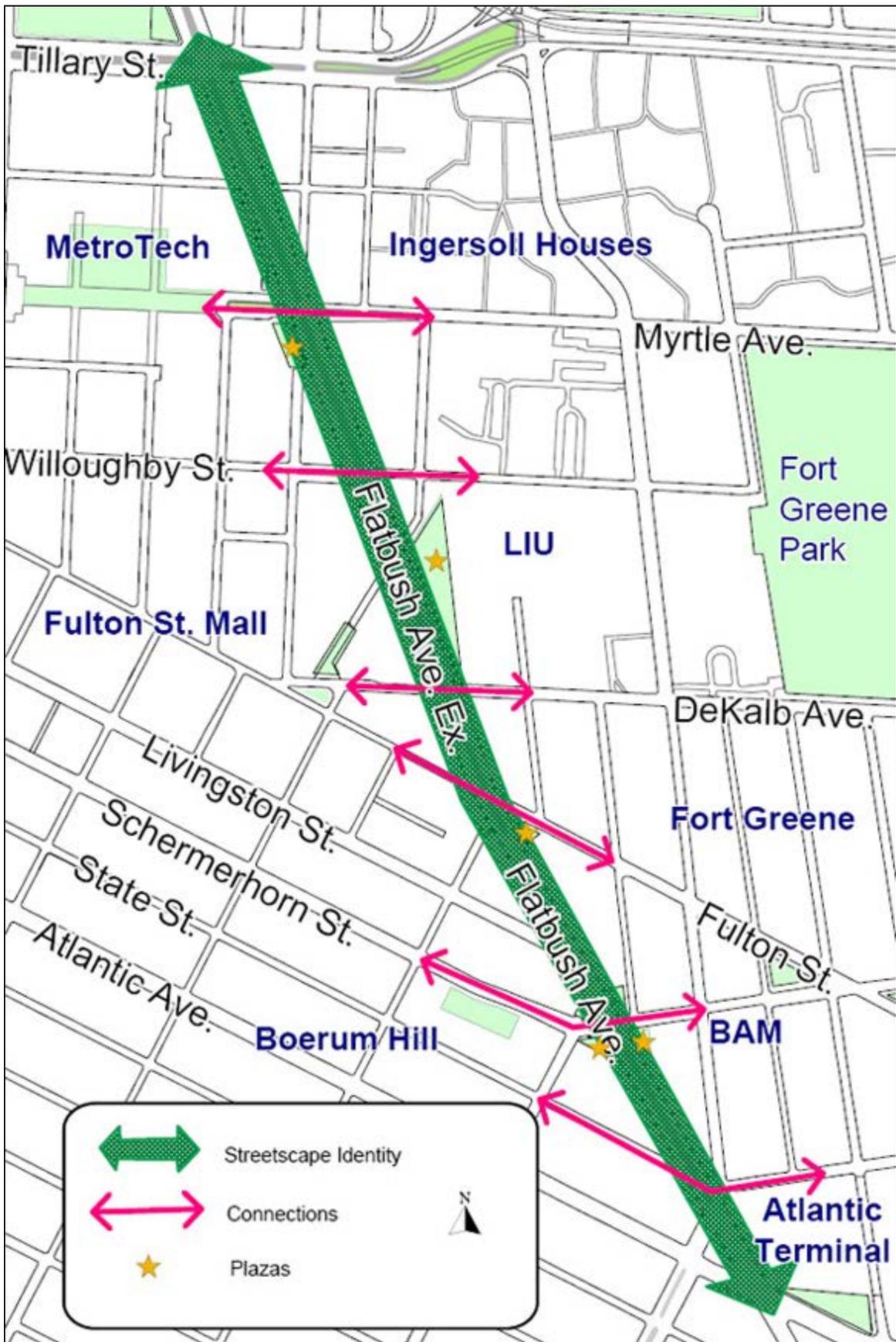
Focus Area Visions

Flatbush Avenue/Fort Greene

The two main objectives of streetscape improvements on Flatbush Avenue are to create a cohesive identity for Flatbush Avenue as a pedestrian destination, and to remove any barriers for pedestrians crossing Flatbush Avenue between Fort Greene and the Downtown Core.

Flatbush Avenue, between Tillary Street and Hanson Place, will be undergoing new development over the next decade. Streetscape improvements would complement the development, create a suitable pedestrian environment, and establish Flatbush Avenue as a destination rather than a thoroughfare to quickly move through. Unified and interesting sidewalk treatment, lighting, landscaping, and substantially landscaped medians can accomplish this. Additionally, a series of enhanced open spaces along the length of Flatbush Avenue, providing comfortable resting and gathering places, would activate the pedestrian presence on the street.

Flatbush Avenue currently divides the residential neighborhood of Fort Greene and the commercial Downtown Core. It is perceived as difficult and dangerous to cross, it is unattractive, and it has few appealing destinations. By creating easier, safer and more attractive street crossings, in conjunction with new development, Flatbush Avenue would knit together the neighborhoods that lie on either side of it.



Vision: Flatbush Avenue

Downtown Brooklyn Pedestrian Study

Priority Recommendations: Flatbush Avenue

Fulton Street to Hanson Place

Due to right-of-way width constrictions and the design of the Nevins Street subway station, the block of Flatbush Avenue between Fulton Street and Lafayette Avenue cannot accommodate a median. However, the unified treatment proposed for all of Flatbush Avenue could be maintained along this block by enhancing existing open space at the northern and southern ends of the block. Fox Square, to the north, should be enhanced with benches, trees along the sidewalk and in the seating area, special pavement treatment, and a focal element, such as a sculpture.

A community garden, plaza space and Temple Square provide green space at the southern end of the block. The improvement of each of these spaces is currently planned as part of related projects. The community garden is in need of an attractive fence and lighting to improve pedestrian enjoyment and safety at night. The plaza and Temple Square both need updated landscaping, paving, street furniture and lighting.

Temple Square lies at the intersection of four streets that can be confusing for pedestrians and drivers alike to navigate. Extending Temple Square to the south into the roadbed of Schermerhorn Street could reduce the confusion and create a more substantial plaza. Temple Square would benefit from dedicated maintenance by the Brooklyn Academy of Music LDC.

South of Lafayette Avenue, a landscaped median can be accommodated in place of the existing striping.



Existing Fox Square Conditions



Vision for Fox Square

Downtown Brooklyn Pedestrian Study

Priority Recommendations: Flatbush Avenue



Vision for Flatbush Avenue Streetscape from Tillary Street

An in-depth analysis was undertaken to generate site specific recommendations for Flatbush Avenue. The Downtown Brooklyn Development Plan has created opportunities for new commercial and residential development along Flatbush Avenue. New development will result in increased pedestrian use and opportunities to create a pedestrian-oriented streetscape. While each block of Flatbush Avenue within the study area has different issues and opportunities, it is important for the length of the street to have a unified streetscape identity. The following recommendations for each individual block reflect the design framework for the street as a whole.

Downtown Brooklyn Pedestrian Study

Priority Recommendations: Flatbush Avenue

Tillary Street to Myrtle Avenue

Flatbush Avenue is an arterial gateway to Brooklyn. As such, it should be enhanced with a substantial landscaped median. This is especially true at the location where people first encounter Flatbush Avenue from the Manhattan Bridge, at Tillary Street. The right-of-way must meet a variety of competing needs: sidewalk space, roadbed and median. A traffic analysis is necessary at this location in order to accommodate a widened median without reducing vehicle capacity or sidewalk width.

Another concern is the need for security around the perimeter of the 911 Call Center and the Fire Department headquarters. Streetscape improvements should include pedestrian-friendly security devices designed in conjunction with the Police Department and the Fire Department. A service road adjacent to the Fire Department headquarters, which diminishes the pedestrian environment, could be improved by enhancing both edges of the sidewalk. An amenity strip, trees and lighting would separate pedestrians from vehicles on Flatbush Avenue and in the service road.



Vision for Sidewalk at FDNY Headquarters

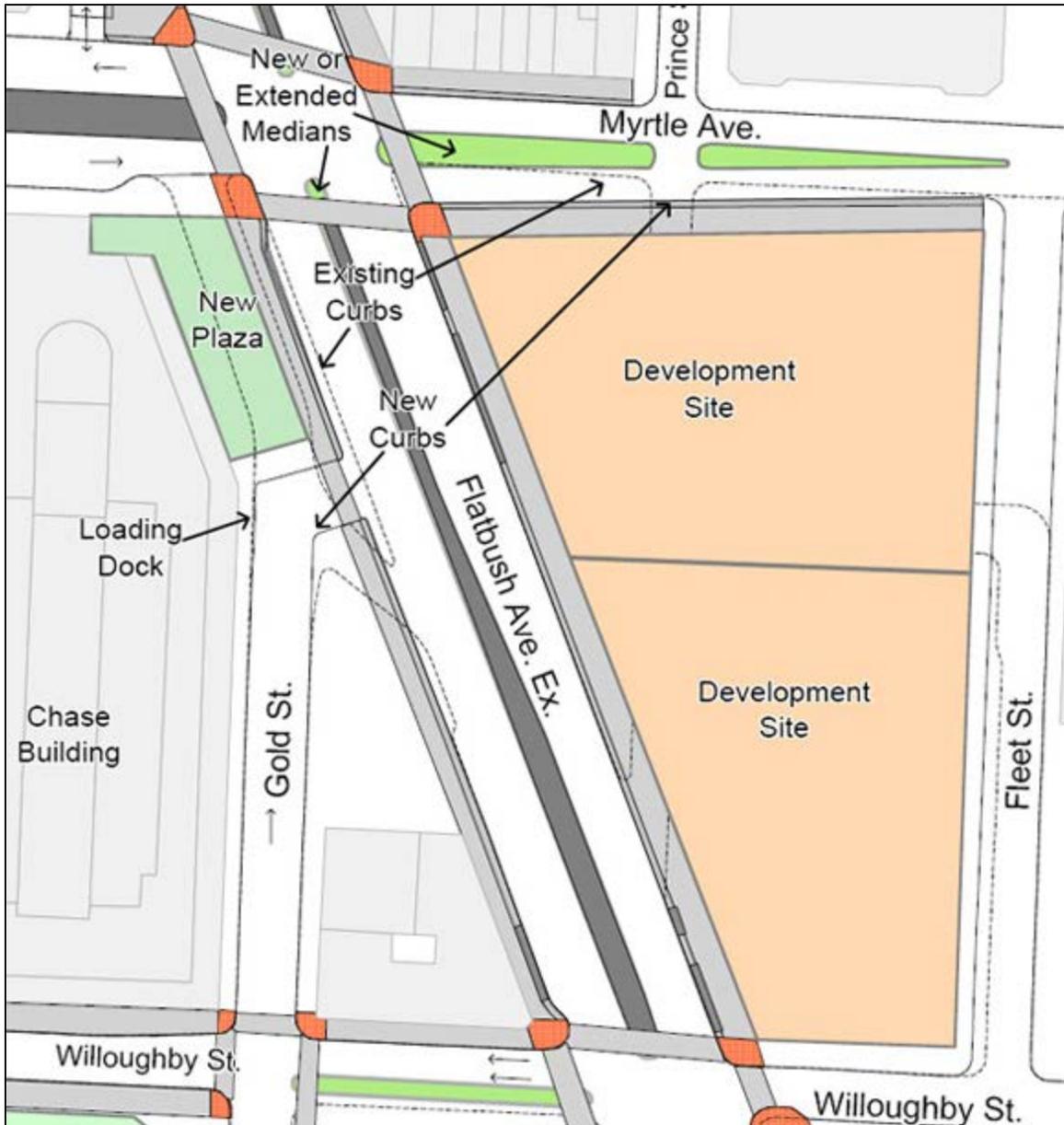
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Priority Recommendations: Flatbush Avenue

Myrtle Avenue to Willoughby Street

In conjunction with future development of the block south of Myrtle Avenue on the east side of Flatbush Avenue, Myrtle Avenue will be widened to accommodate a landscaped median, complementing the new development and creating a gateway to Myrtle Avenue and Fort Greene.

On the southwestern corner of Flatbush Avenue and Myrtle Avenue, the existing service road should be closed and reconfigured as a plaza in front of the Chase Building. This will reinforce the pedestrian environment on Flatbush Avenue by making the pedestrian route clearer and safer.



Priority Recommendations: Myrtle Avenue to Willoughby Street

Downtown Brooklyn Pedestrian Study

Priority Recommendations: Flatbush Avenue

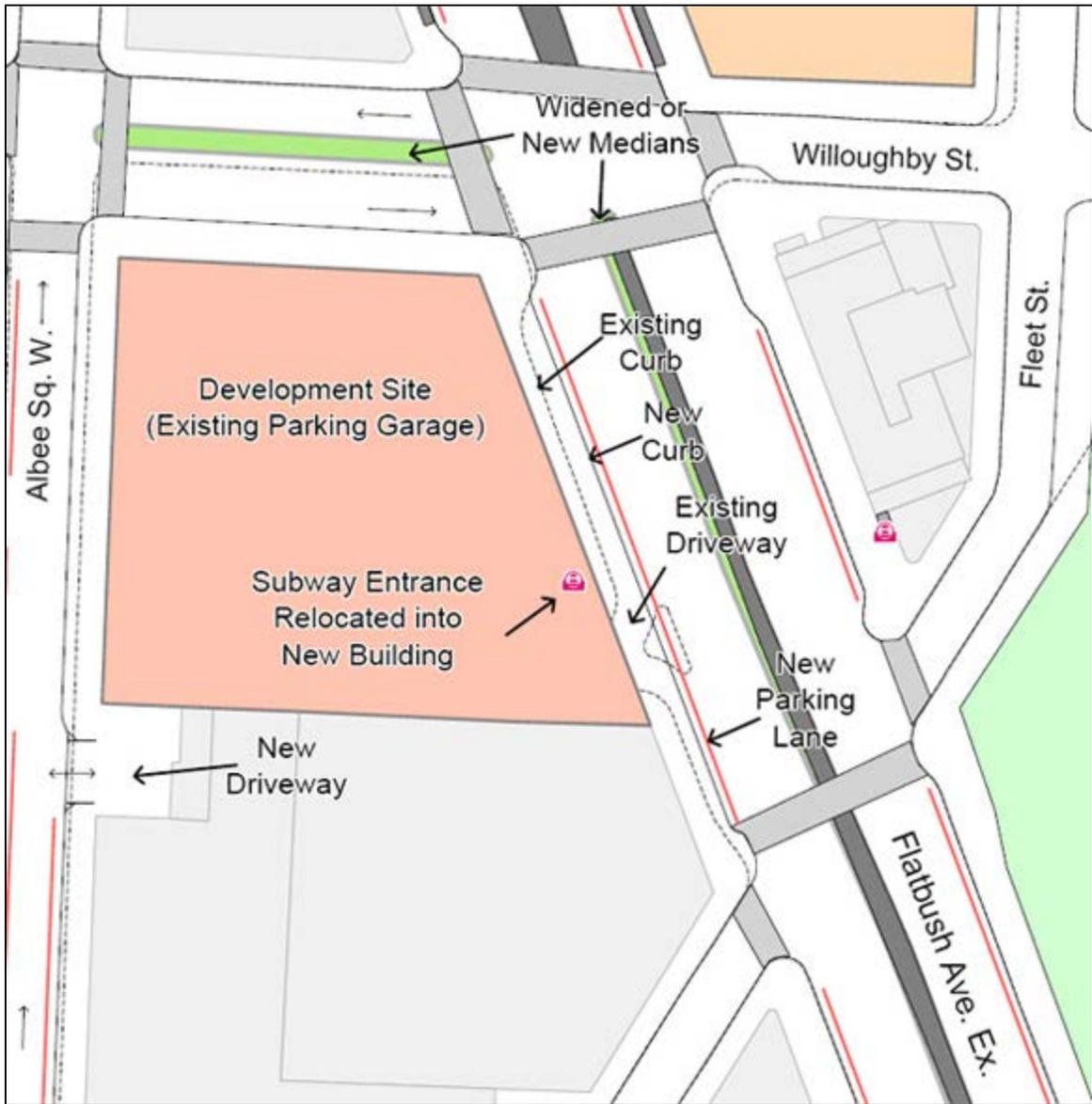
Willoughby Street to Fleet Street



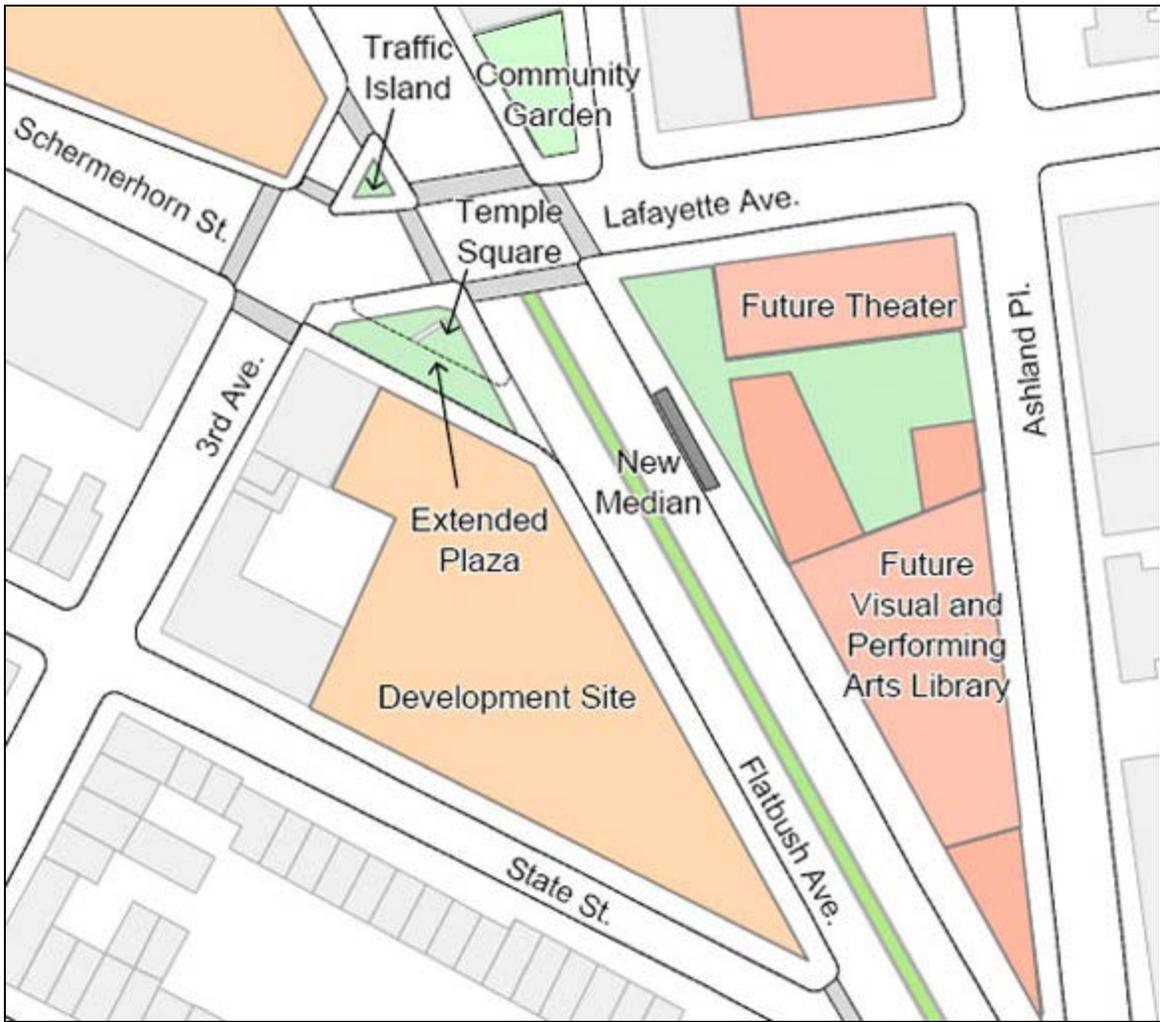
Garage and Driveway at Flatbush Avenue and Willoughby Street

A development site on the southwest corner of Willoughby Street and Flatbush Avenue will also allow for improved pedestrian conditions along Flatbush Avenue. The existing parking garage includes a driveway on Flatbush Avenue that brings vehicles across the pedestrian path on an irregular sidewalk. The vehicular entrance to the future building will have to be relocated to Gold Street/Albee Square West, allowing for the removal of the existing driveway on Flatbush Avenue and the realignment of the curb to accommodate a straight, 19-foot sidewalk, a parking lane, and a widened median. Relocating the subway entrance on the west side of Flatbush Avenue into the new building will further improve pedestrian flow on the sidewalk.

In conjunction with the reconstruction of Willoughby Street and the redevelopment of the parking garage, the right-of-way of the first block of Willoughby Street west of Flatbush Avenue will be widened to accommodate a 10-foot median. The median will provide a prominent entrance to the Downtown Core.



Priority Recommendations: Willoughby Street to Fleet Street



Priority Recommendations: Lafayette Street to Hanson Place

Related Notes

-  Items accompanied by this symbol require the [free Adobe Acrobat Reader](#).
- Brief explanations of terms in *green italics* can be viewed by [visiting glossary page](#). Words and phrases followed by an asterisk (*) are defined terms in the Zoning Resolution, primarily in Section 12-10. Consult the Zoning Resolution for the official and legally binding definitions of these words and phrases.