

A detailed historical map of the Western Merrimack area, showing a grid of streets and building footprints. The map is oriented with North at the top. Key streets labeled include Northern Blvd, Fr Morissette, James Street, Moody, Spaulding Street, Merrimack, Decatur, Salem, Aiken, Austin, Cabot, Suffolk, Hanover, and Market. Canals are also indicated. The map is rendered in a light, sketchy style with black lines on a white background.

# Western Merrimack Planning Study

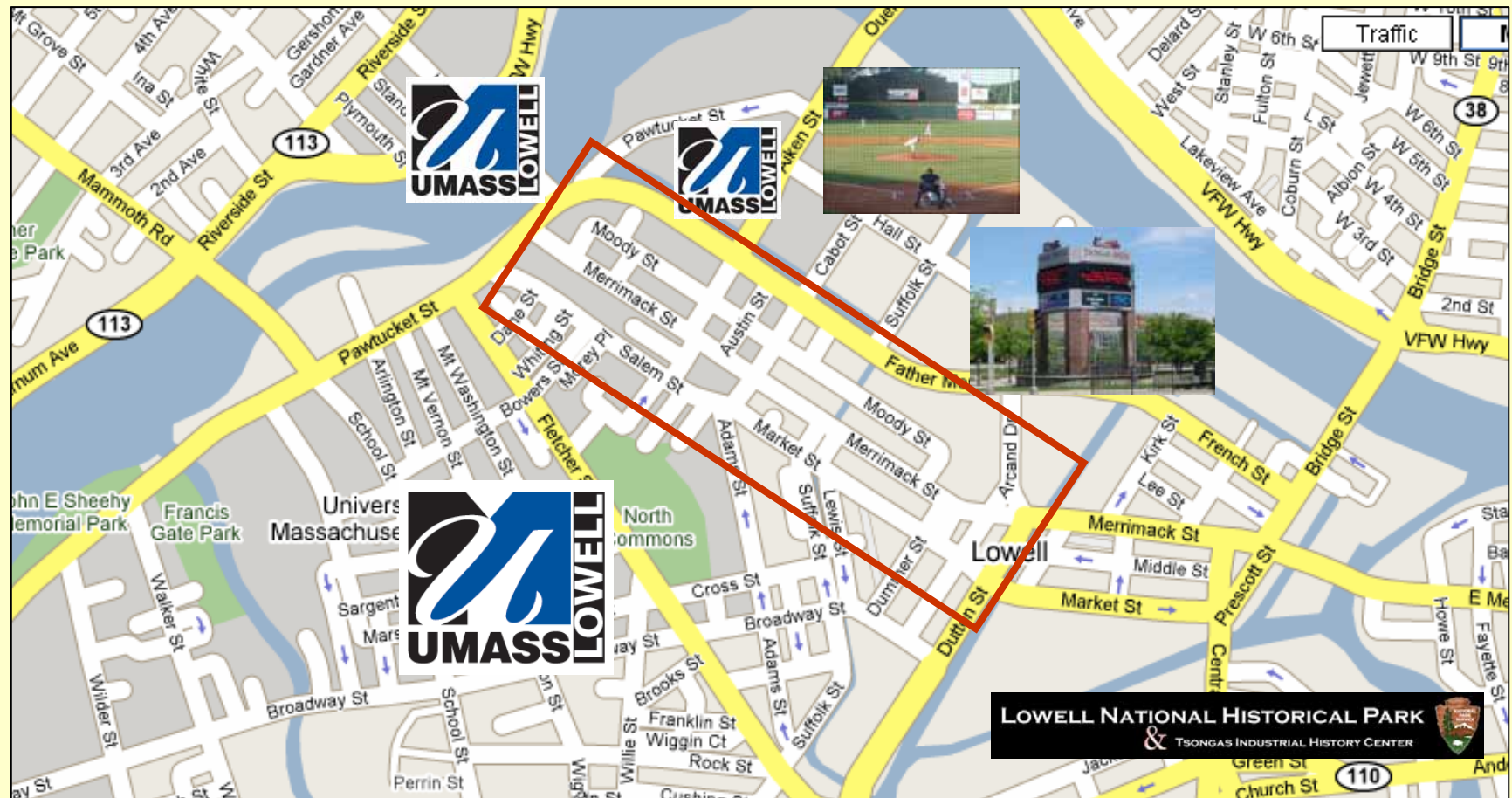
Community Meeting 1  
Mercier Community Center  
October 17, 2007

# Western Merrimack Planning Study

- CONNECTIONS AND ACCESS
- Merrimack Street
- Housing and Neighborhood

# NEIGHBORS

## Nearby Institutions



Study Area



# NEIGHBORS

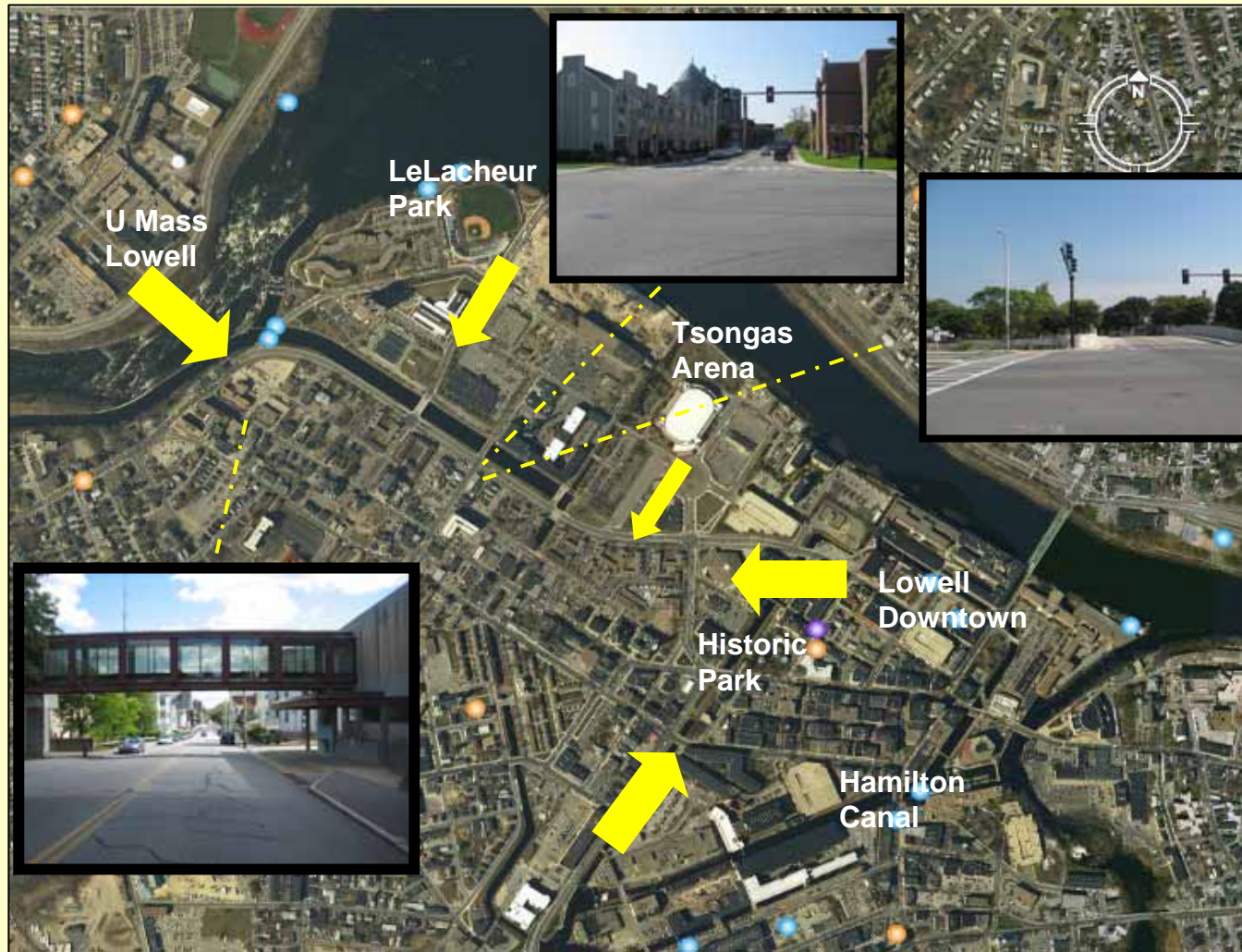
What could the area look like?





# NEIGHBORS

## Gateways to the Neighborhood



# NEIGHBORS

## Potential Gateways

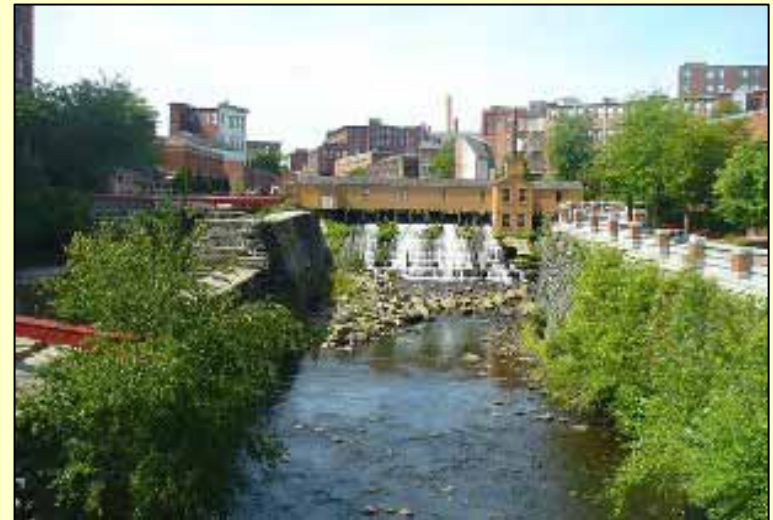




# CANAL AREA OPPORTUNITIES

## Comparing the Canals

Opportunities for improved public open spaces based on existing models in other parts of Lowell



# CANAL AREA OPPORTUNITIES

## Potential Open Space Improvements



- Potential for improved pedestrian routes and public open space
- Potential for improved pedestrian street crossings
- ... Potential for significant pedestrian-oriented designs



# CANAL AREA OPPORTUNITIES

## The Northern and Western Canals: Recreational Opportunities

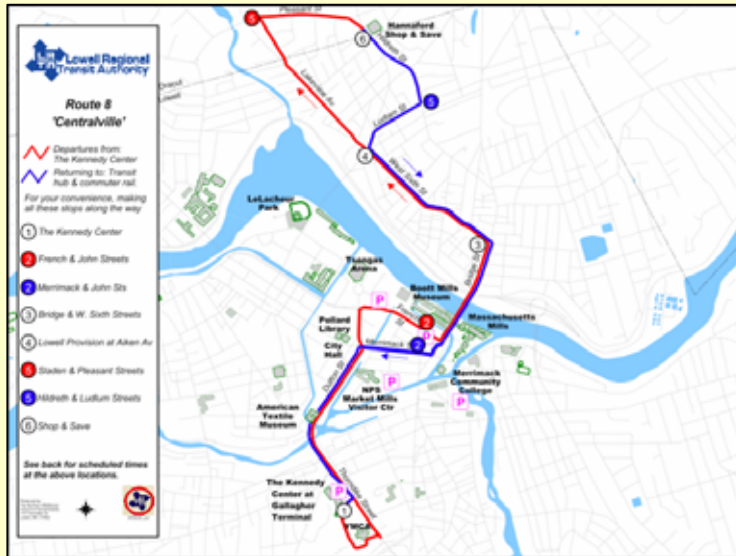


### Possible goals:

- Safe and pleasant pedestrian routes
- Incorporation with the existing National Historical Park walking routes
- Enjoyable outdoor spaces for use by Western Merrimack Neighborhood residents

# TRANSIT ACCESS

## Opportunities for Improvement

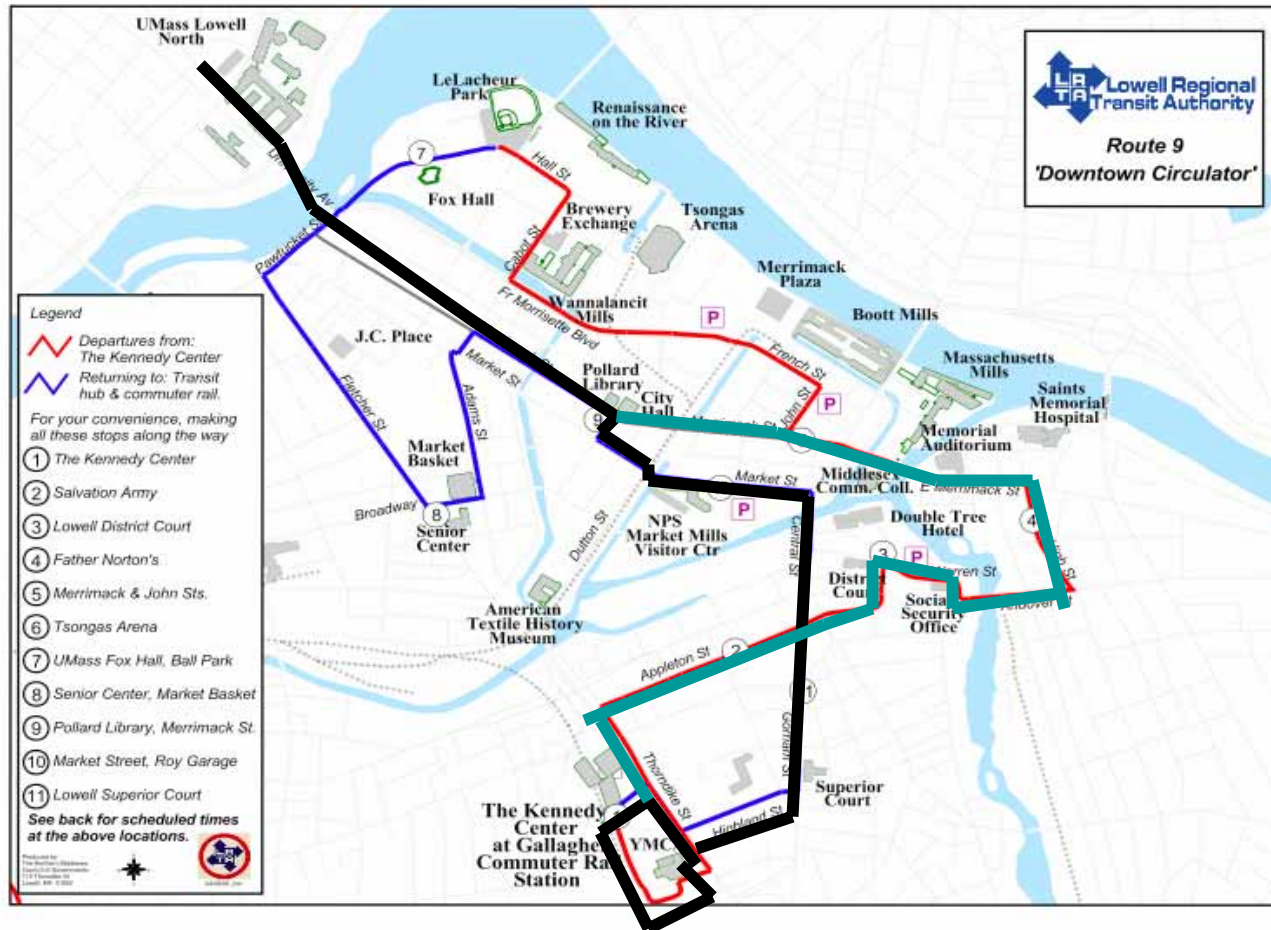


Routes travel around the neighborhood, not through it



# TRANSIT ACCESS

New Bridge --> New Routes & Improved Service?



# IMPROVED PARKING

## Parking Lots Leave Holes in Neighborhoods

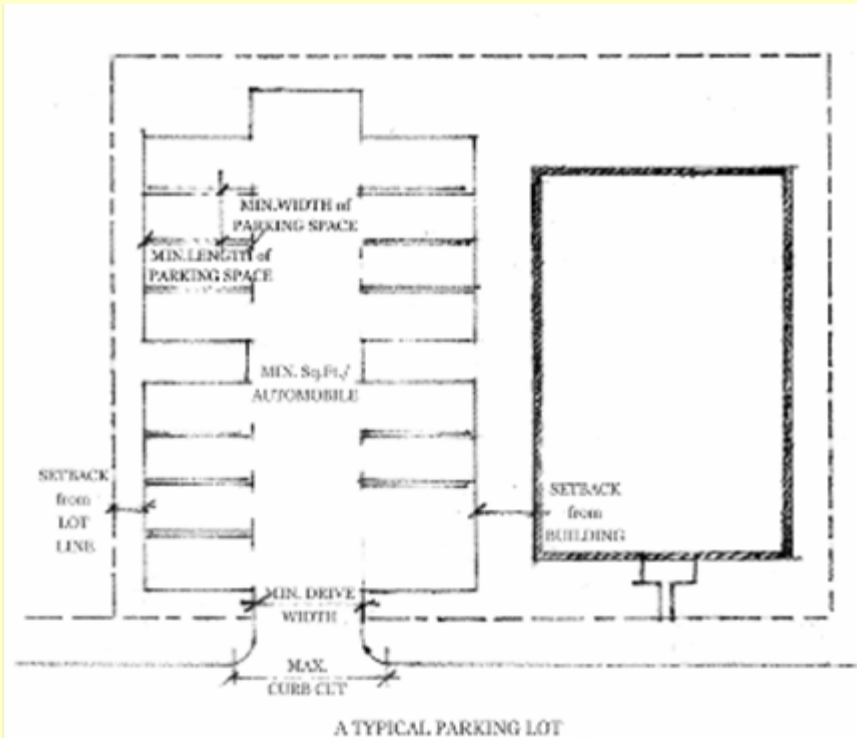


Image from City of Lowell Zoning Code



Parking lots between Moody and Salem streets



# IMPROVED PARKING

## Vibrant Streets Have Continuity



# IMPROVED PARKING

## Street Parking Shelters Sidewalks



Sheltered sidewalks are more comfortable and inviting places



# UNIVERSITY AVE BRIDGE

## Current Bridge Access and Movement



- Poor physical condition



- Traffic congestion
- Unpleasant for pedestrians

# UNIVERSITY AVE BRIDGE

## Intersection of Pawtucket and Merrimack Streets



- Location of bridge re-alignment
- Entrance to Merrimack Street
- Two buildings will be torn down
- Unpleasant for pedestrians



# UNIVERSITY AVE BRIDGE

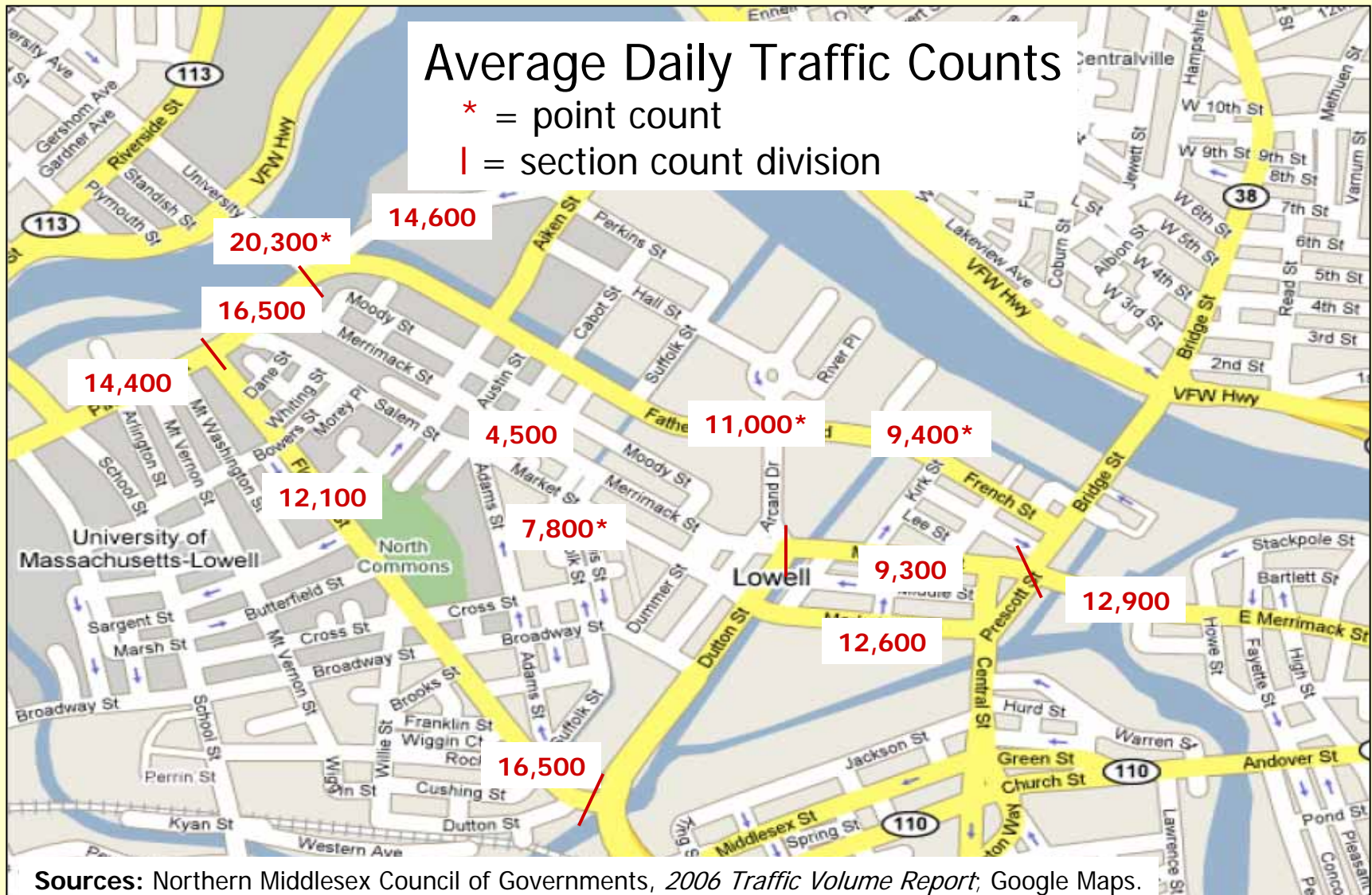
## New Gateway to Western Merrimack Neighborhood?



- Separate people and bikes from traffic
- Fence and lighting design are important to neighborhood image
- Potential for viewpoint or monument at bridge entrance



# NEW UNIVERSITY AVE BRIDGE



# TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES

## Slow Traffic and Increase Safety Using Urban Design



# Western Merrimack Planning Study

- Connections and Access
- MERRIMACK STREET
- Housing and Neighborhood



# MERRIMACK STREET

## Existing Conditions



# MERRIMACK STREET



# MERRIMACK STREET

## Area 1: Bridge Gateway



### Strengths:

- Gateway
- Existing large structures and unused land
- Pedestrian traffic

### Challenges:

- Zoning
- Pedestrian experience
- Aging building stock





# MERRIMACK STREET

## Area 1: Bridge Gateway

### Opportunities:

- Proximity to UMass Lowell Northwest
- Gateway to the neighborhood

### Ideas:

- Institutional-anchored mixed use
- Office, convenience/service, retail, restaurant
- Residential
- Adjust zoning from UMF to TMU



Moody Street bridge, Waltham



# MERRIMACK STREET

## Area 2: Mid-Merrimack

### Strengths:

- Existing historic structures
- Open space
- Existing community center
- Intersection/access

### Challenges:

- Vacancies
- Parking
- No economic anchor



# MERRIMACK STREET

## Area 2: Mid-Merrimack

### Opportunities:

- Critical mass of underutilized buildings and parcels
- Open space
- Existing community center  
Intersection/access

### Ideas:

- Public park
- Charter school
- Artist live/work/performance space
- Fitness center
- Small cinema
- Student amenities





# MERRIMACK STREET

## Area 3: Business District

### Strengths:

- Concentration of local businesses
- Proximity to downtown
- Existing civic destination

### Challenges:

- Vacant storefronts
- Retail mix
- Infrastructure needs attention



# MERRIMACK STREET

## Area 3: Business District

### Opportunities:

- Concentration of local businesses

### Ideas:

- Encourage development of existing surface parking lots
- Densify



# Western Merrimack Planning Study

- Connections
- Merrimack Street
- HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD



# EXISTING HOUSING TYPES

## Large Apartment Buildings



# EXISTING HOUSING TYPES

## Public Housing





# EXISTING HOUSING TYPES

## Detached Single and Multi-family Housing





# HOUSING GOALS AND IDEAS

## GOALS:

- Encouraging consistent maintenance and upkeep
- Maintaining Affordability
- Optimal land uses for existing historic buildings
- Community co-existence of students and families

## IDEAS:

- Code enforcement policy
- Provide ownership mechanisms for existing tenants
- Affordability through partnering with developers for mixed income housing
- University housing designed similar to existing housing stock and houses both faculty and students in a communal environment

# HOUSING GOALS AND IDEAS

## Existing Housing Next to Vacant Lot



# HOUSING GOALS AND IDEAS

## New Housing Occupying Vacant Lots



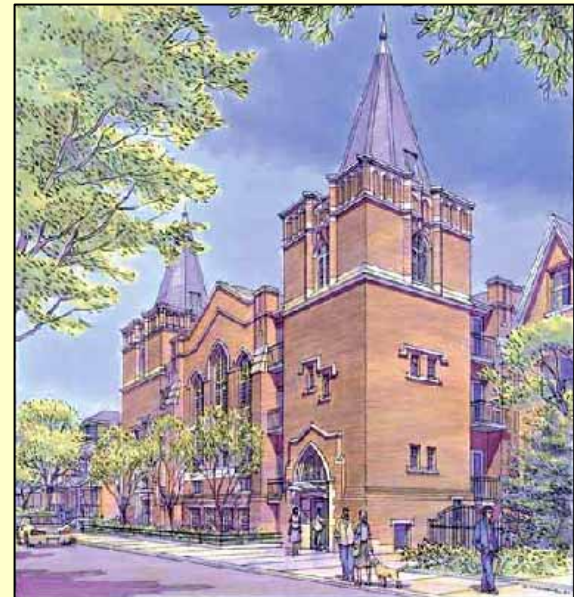


# HOUSING POSSIBILITIES



# HOUSING POSSIBILITIES

## Historic Re-use





# HOUSING POSSIBILITIES

## Church of the Blessed Sacrament in Jamaica Plain





# EXISTING NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES

## Neighborhood Businesses



# EXISTING NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES

## Education, Health Care, Community Centers





# EXISTING NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES

## Open Space and Recreation





# EXISTING NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES

## Addressing Concerns: Underused Open Space



- Understand concerns of the community
- Develop solutions which address those concerns

# AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

## Underused Parcels





# AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

## Programming for Success




- Creating spaces programmed and designed to serve the community
- Coordination of local garden, park and neighborhood organizations
- Ensure spaces that meet the needs of children, adults and the elderly



# QUESTIONS FOR THE NEIGHBORHOOD

- What do you envision?
- What would you like to see built?
- What type of housing is in demand in your community?
- What is the biggest concern related to housing for the neighborhood?
- What open spaces and recreation facilities do you and your families use?
- What other recreation opportunities would you like to see?
- What businesses do you frequent? What more would you like to see?

A detailed historical map of the Western Merrimack area, showing a grid of streets and building footprints. The map is oriented with North at the top. Key streets labeled include Northern, Canal, Blvd, James Street, Moody, Austin, Cabot, Suffolk, Hanover Street, Market, Decatur, and Salem. The title 'Western Merrimack Planning Study' is overlaid in large blue text.

# Western Merrimack Planning Study

MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning  
11.360 Community Growth and Land Use Planning

Please e-mail [11.360@mit.edu](mailto:11.360@mit.edu) with any  
questions or comments

Website: [web.mit.edu/11.360/www/](http://web.mit.edu/11.360/www/)