



Diane Nichols Tradd
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Kevin E. Coughlin
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Kevin J. Murphy, City Manager

FROM: Diane N. Tradd, Assistant City Manager/DPD Director

SUBJECT: COUNCIL MOTION OF 10/3/17 BY COUNCILOR SAMARAS
 REQUEST CITY MANAGER HAVE DPD CREATE A STUDY ON HOW TO RESTRUCTURE
 MIDDLESEX STREET BETWEEN CENTRAL STREET AND THE LORD OVERPASS

Although the creation and development of the Hamilton Canal Innovation District (HCID) has been the focus of redevelopment planning in the Jackson/Appleton/Middlesex (JAM) Urban Renewal Area over the past decade, the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) continues to research and identify potential zoning, land use, and infrastructure interventions for both Middlesex and Appleton Streets in furtherance of the JAM Urban Renewal Plan. The JAM Plan lists many detailed objectives to guide decision-making and encourage transformative neighborhood development, including:

- Enhance the marketability and promote the development of under-utilized property in the area;
- Support existing businesses and attract new businesses to development sites;
- Enhance the transportation system and create new and alternative access to the area; and
- Develop adequate parking for existing and proposed development.

The City has invested significant funds and planning efforts into implementation of the JAM Plan exclusive of the HCID, and the following sample of projects support the urban renewal vision of neighborhood transformation with regard to Middlesex Street:

Project	Type of Improvement (Comments)
Middlesex Street Two-Way Conversion (2007)	Infrastructure change to improve JAM Plan access
Early Garage Construction (2008)	Major investment in a first-class parking facility
Lord Overpass – Infrastructure Phase I (2018)	Improvements for pedestrians and to traffic signals

These planning and infrastructure investments, especially construction of the Early garage, have led to many successful adaptive reuse projects in the JAM area including the Lowell Community Health Center building and expansion and the construction of hundreds of housing units. The positive economic impacts of these public and private investments are beginning to extend to Middlesex Street where recent property transfers and use of vacant property for neighborhood amenities could serve to encourage further development. For example, Mill City Grows has installed a community garden at 230 Middlesex Street and the Lowell Community Charter School recently acquired 278-338 Middlesex Street for future expansion. A representative from DPD regularly attends monthly neighborhood meetings to stay apprised of the Charter School’s plans for the parcels. Additionally, key properties on the JAM section of Middlesex Street have recently come on the market, priming them for redevelopment.

DPD has proactively included Middlesex Street in the recently proposed “Downtown Overlay District” which allows “9-5” business uses such as medical offices at the street level by special permit only, and not by-right, in order to encourage neighborhood retail, cafes, and restaurants. Moreover, DPD continues to explore other creative and emerging opportunities to leverage the assets of the JAM Plan for redevelopment consistent with the plan’s original vision and new priorities. DPD will submit an application to MassDevelopment to designate a large portion of the JAM/HCID Plan area including Middlesex Street as part of their Transformative Development Initiative (TDI). The designation will provide new investment opportunities through MassDevelopment’s TDI Equity Investment fund to the selected sites across the state.

DNT/ns
 11/2/17

cc: Claire Ricker, Chief Design Planner
 Joe Giniewicz, Urban Renewal Project Manager