

Team Notes from 11/15/03 DCP Downtown Design Workshop
Section 3 - Northampton Street to Market Street

From the Susquehanna River to Wilkes-Barre Boulevard, Section 3 is a mix of building types of varied massing in assorted stages of repair. In addition to the recommendation to preserve and maintain a critical mass of older buildings to sustain architectural diversity and proposing site sensitive and contextual infill throughout the section, the team focussed on issues of gateways, edges, visual axis, greenspace and movement within and between adjoining sections.

The team studied pedestrian and vehicular desire lines and how these patterns promote office, commercial and residential uses within different blocks in the section. The Army Corps of Engineers' proposed portal through the levee, on axis with Northampton Street, will cultivate pedestrian activity along Northampton Street; this, in turn, could support retail and restaurant space at the ground level with housing or office space above. The team emphasized 'the gateway' to the city from the west by proposing an office building on the existing GUARD parking lot. This office building, of similar mass and height to the existing Sterling Hotel, would bracket Market Street. The relationship of this section to Public Square should be strengthened with pedestrian 'sight lines' linking the square to conveniently located mid-block parking.

Proposed interventions throughout Section 3 include the following (from west to east):

First Block:

- Create through-block pedestrian links
- Construct a mid-block parking garage on the site of the existing GUARD office annex, linking the garage to the following two large-floorplate office development sites:
 - An 8-10 story mid-rise office building on the GUARD Center parking lot at South River and West Market Streets; and
 - A 3-5 story infill office building, set between St. Stephen's Park and 15 South Franklin Street.

Second Block:

- Construct a mid-block parking garage behind Midtown Village
- Develop low-rise retail with housing above, on West Northampton Street
- Restore the vacant buildings, such as the Engel Building, along the west side of South Main Street

Third Block:

- Demolish Park & Lock Central
- Construct a new parking garage at the former location of Dyer Lane
- Combine site of former Park & Lock Central with the former Percy Brown's site for the development of the multiplex movie theater; consider main entrance in vacant lot on South Main Street

- Restore the vacant buildings, such as the GoldE and J.S. Raub Buildings, along the east side of South Main Street
- Develop low-rise (three-story) retail with housing above on the northwest corner of East Northampton and South Washington Streets
- Develop low-rise (three-story) retail with housing above on the “Hole in the Ground” along South Washington Street

Fourth Block:

- Expand existing townhouse development on Jefferson Place to include 30 additional units
- Provide landscaped buffer/park for CYC and Heritage House
- Construct a car drop-off/pickup lane on S. Pennsylvania Boulevard for the CYC

Fifth Block:

- Establish a landscaped parking lot on the west side of the existing railroad tracks
- Locate the proposed Intermodal Center to the east of the existing railroad tracks
- Create a physical link between the proposed Intermodal Center and the former New Jersey Central railroad station – the gateway to Downtown Wilkes-Barre
- Create a “land bank” on the remaining portions of the block