



Blanchard/Wheeler

CORRIDOR STUDY + VISION PLAN



April 2023

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1. Introductions

Planning and Urban Design (PUD) Team from VHB:

- Luke Mitchell, Senior Urban Planner/Designer
- Frank DiPietro, Senior Engineer
- Julia Mintz, Urban Planner
- Jennifer Nelson, Urban Planner



1. Project Background

Statement of Purpose

The Town of Burlington is seeking to prepare a Vision Plan for the Blanchard / Wheeler Road Corridor ("the Corridor"), to achieve the following goals and objectives:

1. Articulate a growth strategy for the future with attention to planning, engineering, and redevelopment considerations
2. Utilize this plan to:
 1. **Attract investment**
 2. **Promote economic development** along the corridor
 3. **Improve streetscapes** with safer roadways that include multi-modal options

This study will include property research regarding existing conditions in the study area and a series of public meetings and interviews with key stakeholders. The Vision Plan will include a vision statement, a list of strategic goals to achieve this vision, and an implementation matrix identifying required specific actions and projects.



1. Project Background

Study Area

- The Blanchard/Wheeler Corridor Study Area is located within a vibrant, active, mixed-use commercial district in southern Burlington.
- The Study Area is approximately 425 acres in size.
- It is bordered by Interstate 95 to the north, Massachusetts Turnpike to the west, and South Bedford Street to the east.



**PUBLICREALM
GREENSPACE
VERNALPONDS
ACCESS
COMMUNITY
CONNECTIVITY
OPENSPACE
WETLANDS
MARYCUMMINGSPARK
VIEWS
WOODEDAREAS
RURALNATURE
NATURALRESOURCES
ECONOMICVITALITY**

LACK OF SHOULDERS
FLOODING **TRAFFIC CONGESTION**
NARROW ROADWAYS
POOR BIKEABILITY **LACK OF BOARDWALKS**
POOR WALKABILITY
LACK OF CONNECTIVITY
SPEEDING **ICING** **STORMWATER**
POOR LIGHTING **UNSAFE ROADWAYS**
LACK OF MASS TRANSIT

3. Vision Statement

The Corridor along Blanchard and Wheeler Road has seen significant development over the past 25 years. The Corridor will continue to be an excellent place to live and a vital mixed-use hub for research, technology, and recreation. Offering employment and a rich natural environment, the Corridor will continue to foster economic growth, accessibility, and improved connectivity with safe streetscapes and multi-modal pathways. Through community dialogue, residents and stakeholders within the Corridor have reflected and explored a vision for the future.

The Corridor will be...

Connected – The Corridor will provide pathways connecting its employees, residents, and visitors to destinations within the Corridor and surrounding districts. Through creative placemaking, the Corridor will reflect the character of its population, history, and natural environments. Future planning initiatives will involve relevant local and regional stakeholders, including residents, business owners, and institutional leaders.

Multi-modal – The Corridor will serve a range of modal options, supporting complete streets that accommodate all roadway users, including motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists. Roadway improvements and enhanced walkability will provide a safe and enjoyable environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

Sustainable – Future development along the Corridor will be sensitive to environmental impact and support public health and wellness. The Corridor will enhance critical natural resources that aid flood management and contribute to recreational opportunities, including wetlands and open space.

Resilient – The Corridor will be adaptable to changing economic and regional trends by incorporating new innovative approaches to infrastructure, land use, and open space planning.

Balanced – The Corridor will balance new development with the preservation of natural resources, as well as establish a mix of uses that support a vibrant district. It will offer a wide variety of amenities that support all its users and expand the public realm.

Vibrant – The Corridor will be a hub for employment and economic activity, supporting services and thriving businesses both large and small.

GOALS

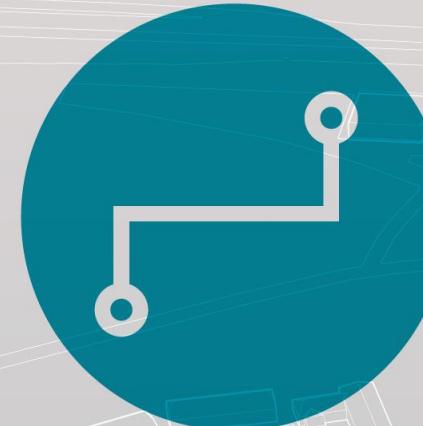
Maintain a Dialogue with Stakeholders

throughout the Corridor, including residents, business owners, and institutional leaders, to **determine priorities** and needs for future planning



Foster Economic Growth & Resilience

along the Corridor while maintaining a **mix of uses** and **preserving its scale and character**



Enhance Connectivity

within the Corridor & with surrounding districts by establishing **pathways to destinations**



Establish Multi-Modal Transportation

throughout the Corridor with a **focus on safety**



Expand the Public Realm

by enhancing and improving **access to existing open space** and establishing **new publicly accessible spaces**

Preserve Existing Wetlands

in balance with **future development**

Goal 1:

Enhance Connectivity

within the Corridor & with surrounding districts by establishing *pathways to destinations*

Design and implement *multi-modal pathways* from Muller Rd to Middlesex Highway

Determine a preferred *regional bus connection plan* and advocate for that plan with the MBTA

Create a *connected bicycle lane network* of off-street and on-street pathways

Identify solution for *bicyclists needing to cross Blanchard* safely between Muller Rd and Van de Graaff bike path

Perform *deferred maintenance* on the existing off-street bike paths located in Seven Springs

Diversify and improve *dining and retail* options for people who work and live in the Corridor

Improve *pedestrian and bike connectivity* between the Northeastern Innovation Campus and the Van de Graaff commercial district

Goal 2:

Establish Multi-Modal Transportation

throughout the Corridor with a *focus on safety*



Address *blind spots* throughout the Corridor, especially at curving points. Prioritize roadway space for bicyclists.

Determine locations where *shoulders* could be widened

Strengthen *TDM (traffic demand management)* requirements

Design and implement *traffic-calming measures* (including potentially sharrows, signalized crossings, and bumpouts)

Conduct an updated *traffic analysis* of Blanchard-Wheeler in light of post-pandemic activity

Study current parking activity district-wide and develop a *district parking plan*

Perform a *complete streets analysis* of the Corridor to determine where bike and pedestrian infrastructure could be added



Goal 3:

Expand the Public Realm

by enhancing and improving *access to existing open space* and establishing *new publicly accessible spaces*

Build out an *inventory of existing recreational paths* and determine possibility of improvements

Identify existing *bicycle parking* and *docking/charging equipment* Corridor-wide and plan for improvements

Create *placemaking* measures throughout the Corridor that help brand the district

Create *pocket parks* and *public gathering spaces* throughout the Corridor that incorporate landscaping and amenities



Goal 4: Preserve Existing Wetlands

in balance with *future development*

Improve *drainage* at points throughout the Corridor that experience frequent flooding and icing in winter months

Protect *existing wetlands* as a natural resource and tool in flood management

Incentivize best management practices for *stormwater management* on *private residential properties*

Restore *wetlands in developed areas* where possible

Convert *underutilized hardscapes* to naturalized or pervious surfaces

Prioritize *groundwater recharge* where possible

Goal 5:

Foster Economic Growth & Resilience

along the Corridor while maintaining a *mix of uses* and *preserving its scale and character*



Conduct review of *Zoning Bylaws* to determine whether regulations support a variety of *infill development* projects. Add incentives where possible (i.e. parking reductions, density rewards)

Retrofit existing developments in response to changing work trends, including a higher percentage of employees working from home

Explore *alternative uses of office space* and parking lots in light of hybrid work model

Explore the feasibility of incorporating *complementary land uses* such as cafés, restaurants, retail, etc.

Repurpose *underutilized parking* to create new public space, amenities, infill development etc.



Goal 6: Maintain a Dialogue with Stakeholders

throughout the Corridor, including residents, business owners, and institutional leaders, to ***determine priorities*** and needs for future planning

Build partnerships among residents, businesses, landowners, institutions, and the Town for the long-term mutual benefit associated with sharing interests

Coordinate and ***synchronize ongoing and future planning*** efforts to avoid redundancy or conflict

Establish ***semi-annual meetings*** about community building efforts and business development in the Corridor

7. Group Discussion

Discussion Topics

Based on our draft vision statement and goals, we would like to engage in a discussion addressing the following topic:

- What are your reactions to the draft vision and goals?
- What are we missing?



What is a Vision Statement?

A project vision statement is a **description of what an organization or project team wants to obtain or accomplish** upon the completion of a project.

It needs to be **clear, concise, and descriptive** of the big picture.

Source: jcomp on Freepik



8. Next Steps

1. Finalize Implementation Plan
2. Finalize documentation to submit to the Town

