

## WEST END COMMERCIAL DISTRICT – DENISON TO WHITNEY

### A Vibrant Shopping and Dining Destination

This is the commercial heart of the West End. This section of Farmington Avenue presents a mix of residential and commercial uses, as well as a mix of structures and architectural styles with little contextual relationship. Buildings vary from one-story, stand alone auto-oriented structures, to multi-story residential buildings with ground-floor retail, to turn-of-the-century houses with porches converted to office and retail uses.

### Key Design Problems

- Disjointed and chaotic appearance;
- Congested traffic during peak hours, fast-moving during off-peak;
- Difficult, disconnected pedestrian circulation with sidewalks away from store windows;
- Narrow sidewalks in poor condition;
- Frequent, wide driveways and curb-cuts, leading to unattractive front parking areas;
- Signage often unattractive and chaotic;
- Crosswalks too far apart, encouraging mid-block jaywalking;

### Existing Zoning

The zoning of the West End commercial area is not entirely consistent with the existing land use pattern. The area has a mix of B3 Linear Business and B4 Neighborhood Business zoning. The B4 zone provides for neighborhood-oriented businesses and a pedestrian-oriented character in the shopping district. It allows a wide variety of retail, service, and eatery uses, while prohibiting automobile uses. In contrast, the B3 zone allows automobile uses, and certain quasi-industrial uses.

### Key Opportunities

#### Street Design Features

- Transform the roadway into a three-lane section with a center turn lane/median.
- Provide a flush textured median with raised planted sections where appropriate.
- Build a modern roundabout at Sisson Avenue/Sherman Street.
- Build a side access road with diagonal parking on both sides of the street where possible.
- Install landscaped islands buffering side access roads.
- Provide striped bike lanes at curb.



## Streetscape and Placemaking

### Sidewalks

- Create wider sidewalks in front of retail stores.
- Assure continuity of sidewalks.

### Crosswalks

- Provide more crosswalks.
- Install raised crosswalks and speed-tables at Kenyon/Evergreen Streets and on residential side streets.
- Create safety islands at crosswalks near roundabout.

### Public Spaces

- Create mini-plazas on both sides of the Sisson Avenue roundabout, connecting to the front of the Colonial Theater.

### Bus stops

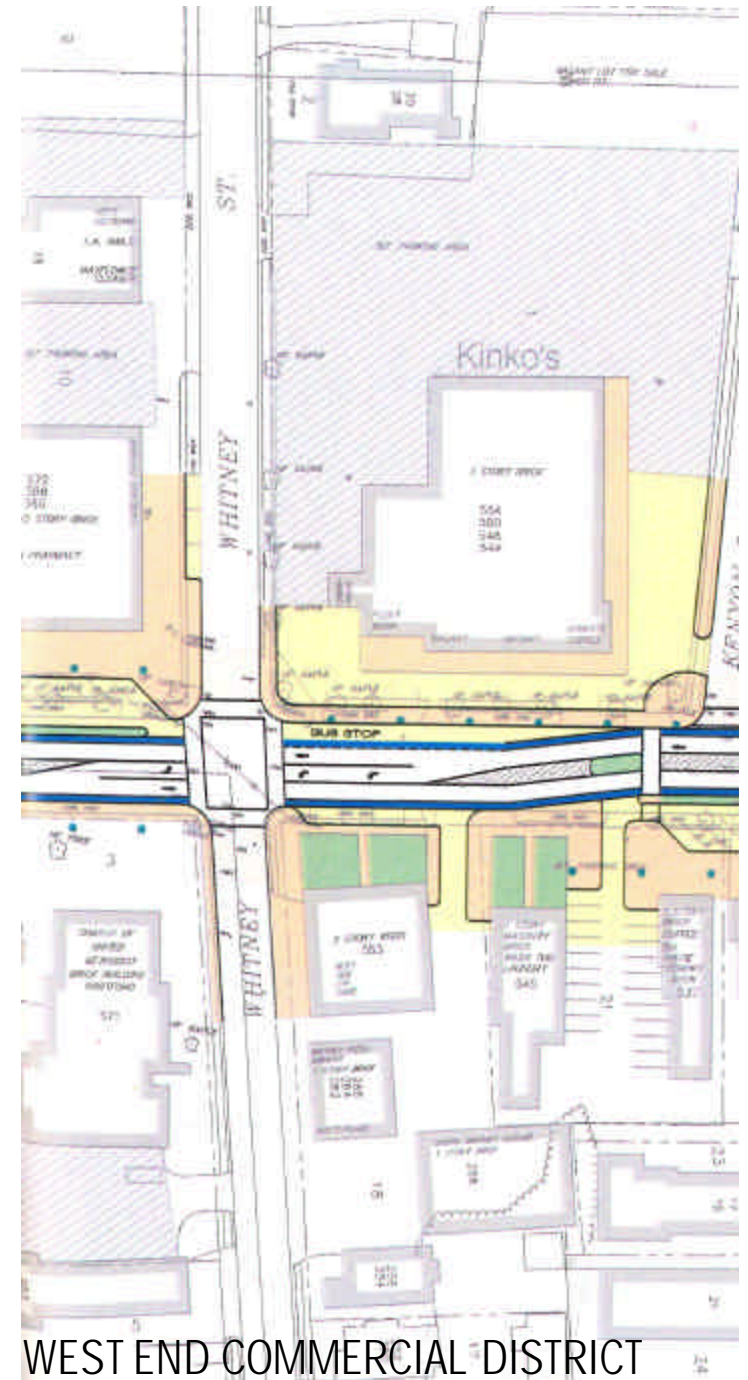
- Clearly mark bus stops with better signage.
- Provide shelters, seating and other amenities at bus stops

### Parking

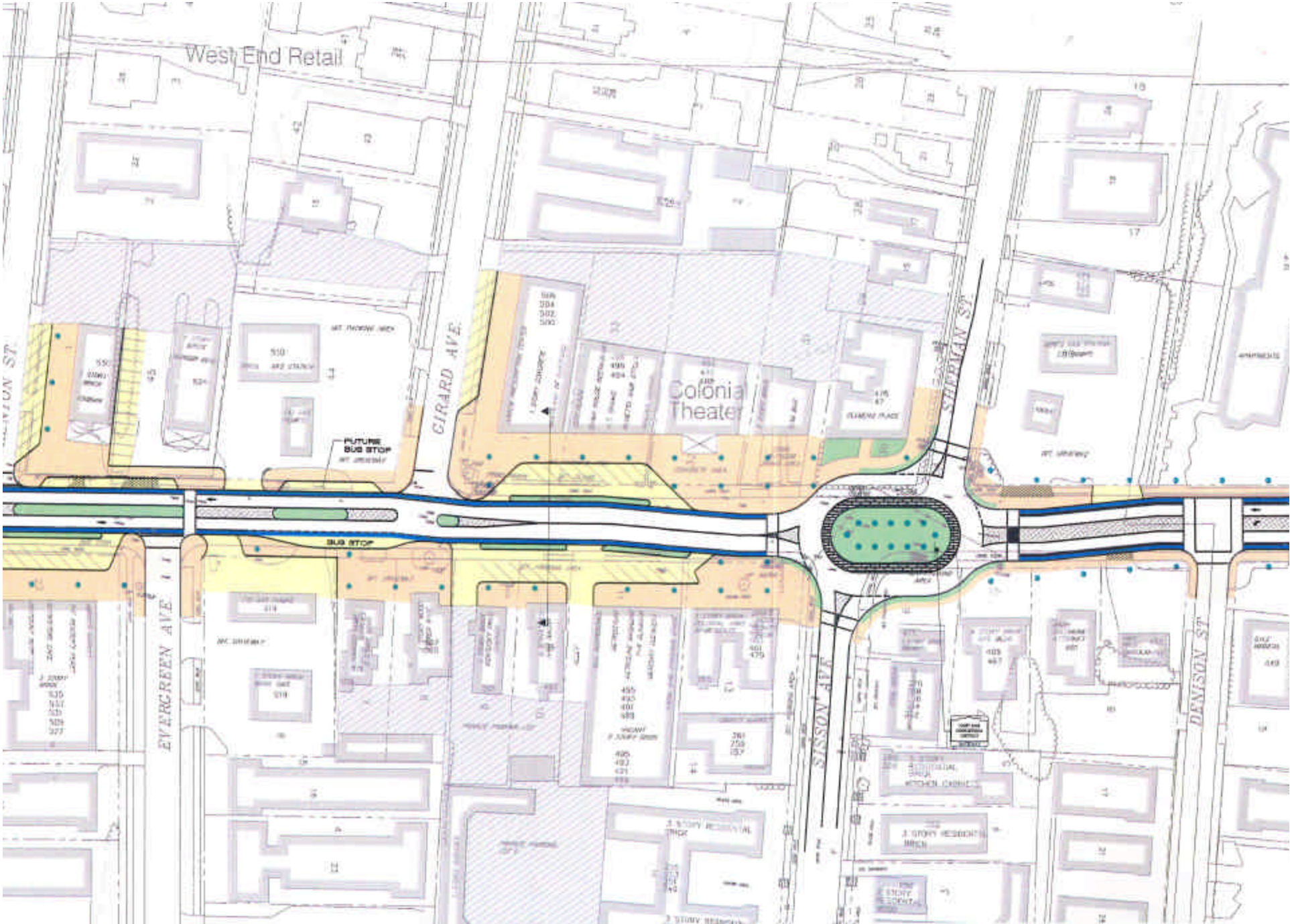
- Consolidate rear parking lots and provide access from side streets in order to reduce curb cuts on Farmington Avenue.
- Provide sufficient lighting in rear parking lots.
- Provide diagonal or parallel parking in front of businesses where appropriate with or without side access road.
- Provide diagonal parking on side streets where appropriate.

## Zoning and Urban Design

- Rezone areas zoned B3 to B4, prohibiting automobile uses to promote a neighborhood-style commercial district.
- Impose standards for building design promoting a pedestrian-friendly environment, such as:
  - Require building entrances to face Farmington Avenue;
  - Require front facades to be built at the front building line;
  - Require a minimum percentage of the front wall to be designed with windows;
  - Permit awnings over retail windows.
- Prohibit drive-through windows, fast-food restaurants, and offices if they are located in storefronts
- Encourage sidewalk cafes and other pedestrian-friendly businesses.









West End illustrative plan with new pedestrian destination and modern roundabout at Sisson Avenue.





West End Avenue at Sisson today. Colonial Theater and Roo Bar buildings.



West end at Sisson Avenue. Colonial Theater with new plaza and diagonal parking area.

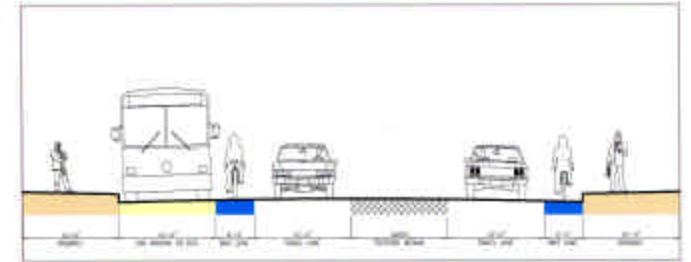
## WEST GATEWAY- WHITNEY TO PROSPECT

### A Welcoming Entrance to Farmington Avenue

The West Gateway is a mixed-use area with both residences and offices, which are often located in converted residential buildings. The area is graced by ample front lawns and many mature trees. Most of the apartment buildings are three to four stories in height, with attractive masonry facades, dating from the turn of the 20th century.

### Key Design Problems

- Lack of sense of arrival from West Hartford;
- Fast moving traffic;
- Difficult pedestrian circulation;
- Narrow sidewalks in poor condition;
- Too many curb-cuts;
- Too many driveways;
- Lack of crosswalks;
- On street parking needed in front of some offices.



### Existing Zoning

This area is zoned RO2, for residential and office uses at low density. Although permitted office uses include financial, insurance and real-estate offices, this zoning also allows brew pubs, bars, and restaurants, including fast-food restaurants.

### Key Opportunities

#### Street Design Features

- Transform roadway into a three-lane shifting section with central left turn lane.
- Install a raised planted median where appropriate.
- Allow for on-street parking which alternates with bus stops in a dedicated lane.
- Build a side access road with parallel parking in front of CVS pharmacy.
- Provide striped bike lanes at curb in both directions.

### Streetscape and Placemaking

#### Gateway

- Create a Gateway at the corner of Prospect and Farmington Avenues, taking advantage of the large tree on the southeast corner.
- Introduce other gateway elements – banners, signs, landscaping.

*Sidewalks*

- Widen sidewalks by eliminating the often poorly maintained grass strip between the sidewalk and the curb.

*Crosswalks*

- Provide more crosswalks.
- Install raised crosswalks and speed-tables at residential side street intersections.

*Bus stops*

- Clearly mark bus stops with better signage.
- Provide shelters, seating and other amenities at bus stops

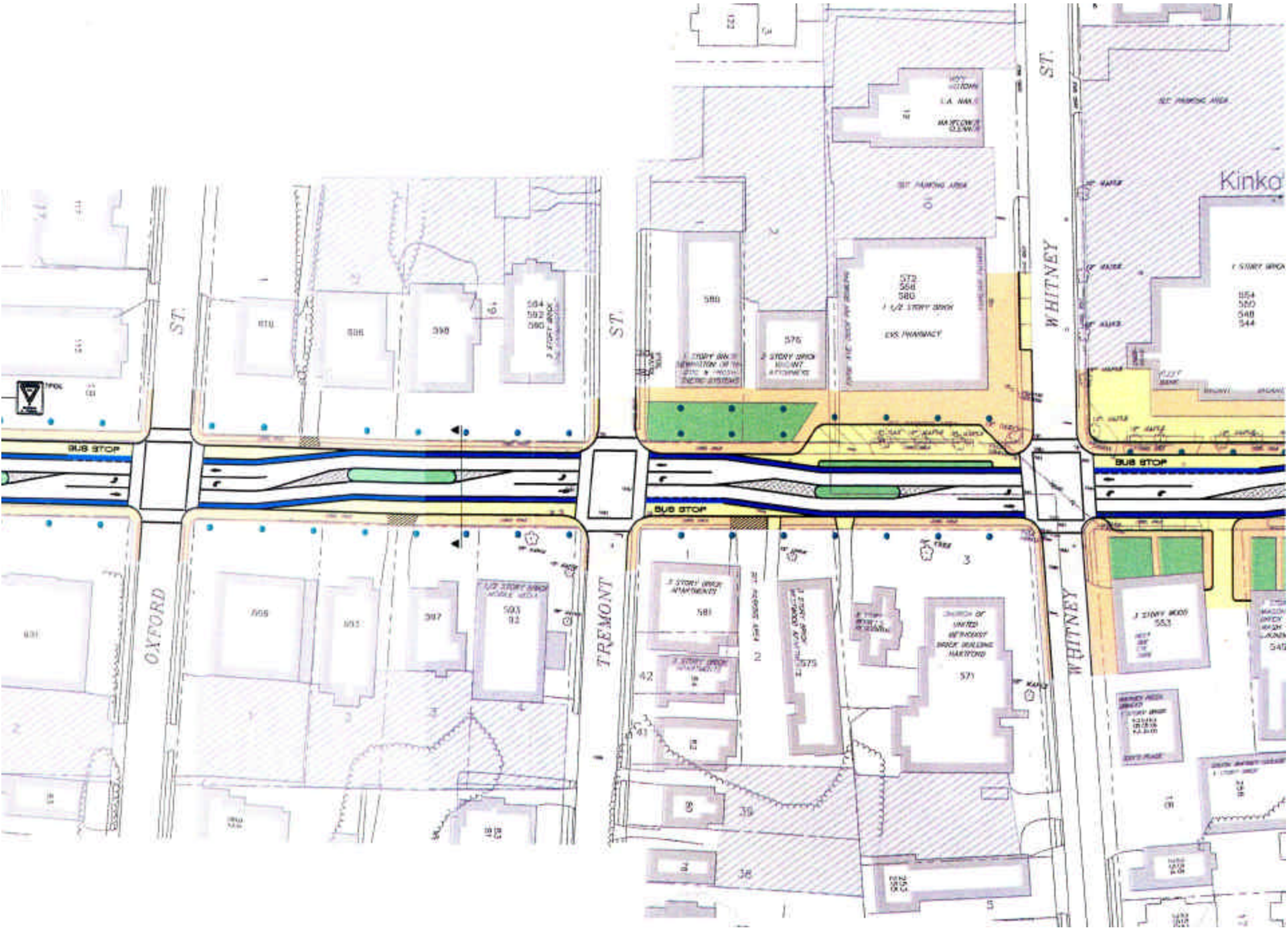
*Parking*

- Consolidate rear parking lots and provide access from side streets in order to reduce curb cuts on Farmington Avenue.
- Provide sufficient lighting in rear parking lots.



WEST GATEWAY







### Zoning and Urban Design

- Continue to promote the existing mix of apartment buildings and small offices.
- Prohibit large-scale office development.
- Impose limitations on office size and height.
- Reduce the allowable F.A.R. to 1.0.
- Eliminate brew pubs, bars, restaurants, fast-food restaurants, and convenience stores from the list of allowable uses.
- Allow rear-yard parking, but require additional rear-yard setbacks and buffers in areas adjacent to R5 or R7 zones.
- Preserve the scale and contextual character of the buildings.
- Impose height and lot coverage limitations.
- Prohibit installation of aluminum or vinyl siding on existing structures.
- Reinforce historic contextual streetscapes.
- Preserve front lawns and existing landscaping.
- Prohibit enclosing front porches.
- Prohibit parking lots from being built in front of buildings.