

## EXPANDING THE INNOVATION DISTRICT

Near the geographic center of the Enterprise District, the South End is home to a growing job-focused district, which has become a destination for workers and companies that want to build synergies and create products and technologies. From powering the city; to discovering energy, technology and food innovations; to selling locally-made goods, this part of the South End is a place where Vermont's entrepreneurial ethic is on display. Former industrial buildings, living second, third or even fourth lives, have become centers of innovation. Former parking lots have been converted to new buildings hosting Champlain College's Miller Center, where new technologies are born and adopted by area companies.

Our Plan for the South End is about taking advantage of opportunities to build a beehive of workers and creative companies. What sets this area apart from others in the South End is the significant opportunity for new (and larger) infill, and the creation of a concentrated hub of entrepreneurial activity. Parking lots and vacant sites are reimagined with infill development that houses the next generation of businesses and makers, and expands connectivity for all modes of transportation. This hub of innovation will not only showcase the creative work of its companies—it will also feature creative building and site design, and the highest standards for sustainability and stormwater management.

Just as connectivity and collaboration are a part of the business models of companies in this area, it is an integral design principle for the physical fabric of this part of the neighborhood. New street connections are walkable, bikeable and served by transit. New buildings define important corners and new public spaces, which are designed to showcase the intersections between ideas; the synergy of new and old; and to encourage collaboration, meeting and brainstorming.



### These urban design principles should guide property owners as they reimagine vacant sites and parking lots in this area:

- Multi-story buildings (3-5 stories), building form should define streets/public spaces
- Active ground-level uses along major street frontages
- Utilize both traditional and new materials for buildings
- Structured parking where feasible, no parking lots along major streets

### Uses in this area should be focused on growing and supporting a major employment center:

- Large and small businesses, creative offices, art/maker enterprises
- Limited retail associated with production spaces and to support workers, such as small cafés, market, etc.

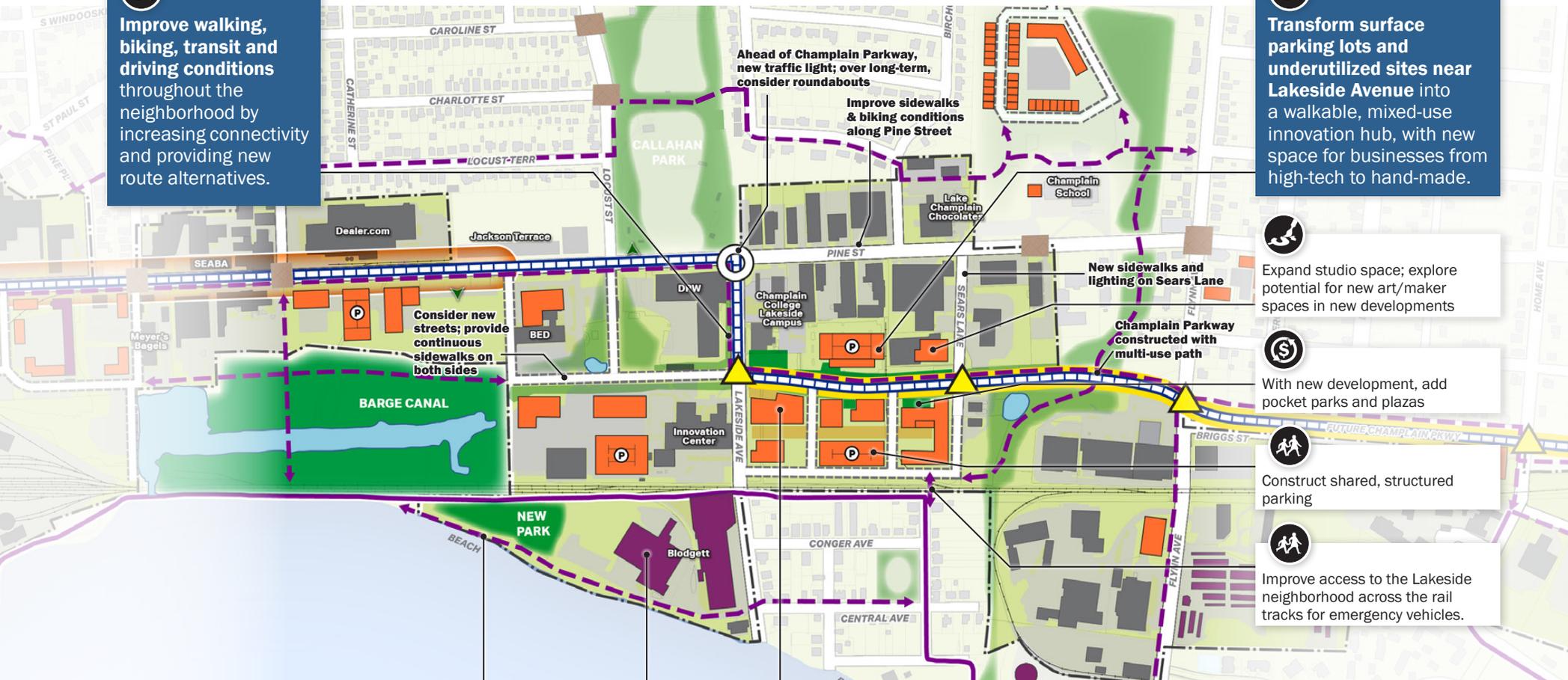
## Key Strategies for Expanding the Innovation District



**Improve walking, biking, transit and driving conditions** throughout the neighborhood by increasing connectivity and providing new route alternatives.



**Transform surface parking lots and underutilized sites near Lakeside Avenue** into a walkable, mixed-use innovation hub, with new space for businesses from high-tech to hand-made.



**Extend the bike path along the waterfront to Lakeside Ave.**



Work with property owners to reuse Blodgett buildings for creative enterprise businesses



Infill development to support business, maker growth

**MAP LEGEND**

- Focus Area
- Existing Buildings
- Potential Expansion of Existing Buildings
- Potential Infill Development
- Potential Reuse of Existing Buildings/Sites
- New or Improved Park/Open Space
- Pine Street Linear Arts Park/Corridor
- Potential New Street Connection
- Planned Champlain Parkway Route
- Existing Bike Path/Bike Routes
- Proposed New/Improved Bike & Pedestrian Routes
- Potential Bus Route
- Raised/Textured Intersection/Crosswalk
- Proposed Traffic Signal (as part of Champlain Parkway Plans)
- Intersections to Study for Potential Improvements

Skip to the plan section of the corresponding icon for more specifics.



## **INNOVATION DISTRICTS + ARTS DISTRICTS + THE SOUTH END**

The South End is an **innovation district**—a mixed-use urban place where companies and institutions cluster and connect. Innovation districts are places of start-ups, business incubators, and established anchor businesses or institutions. They tend to be compact and transit-accessible. Many include mixed-use housing, office and retail space. “Our most creative institutions, firms and workers crave proximity so that ideas and knowledge can be transferred more quickly and seamlessly,” notes the Brookings Institution in a recent report called *The Rise of Innovation Districts: A New Geography of Innovation in America*.<sup>1</sup> South End entrepreneurs say it’s just this proximity between businesses—from design firms, to engineering firms, to coffee roasters, to breweries—that makes the South End a great neighborhood in which to grow their company.

The South End is also an **arts district**, home to a critical mass of places where artistic and creative production, consumption, and collaboration thrive. Arts districts feature cultural facilities, arts organizations, individual artists, art-based business, and ancillary merchants. They tend to be unique, with their own character, community, and local resources. They also can have significant impact on their local economy, sparking improved livability, and attracting businesses and residents. South Enders care passionately about the arts community that’s grown within the South End.

**The South End’s role as both an arts and innovation district is a distinctive strength—a powerful economic and creative foundation for the South End moving forward.**

<sup>1</sup> For more information on innovation districts, see: <http://www.brookings.edu/about/programs/metro/innovation-districts>

### **What makes great innovation districts and arts districts tick?**

Turns out they have a lot of characteristics in common:

- Creativity/innovation
- Collaboration
- Connectivity
- Diversity
- Anchors and multiple small players
- Non-profits and for-profits
- Places that offer serendipity/delight
- Intensity and density of uses
- Kick-start investment
- Coordinated efforts/programming/management

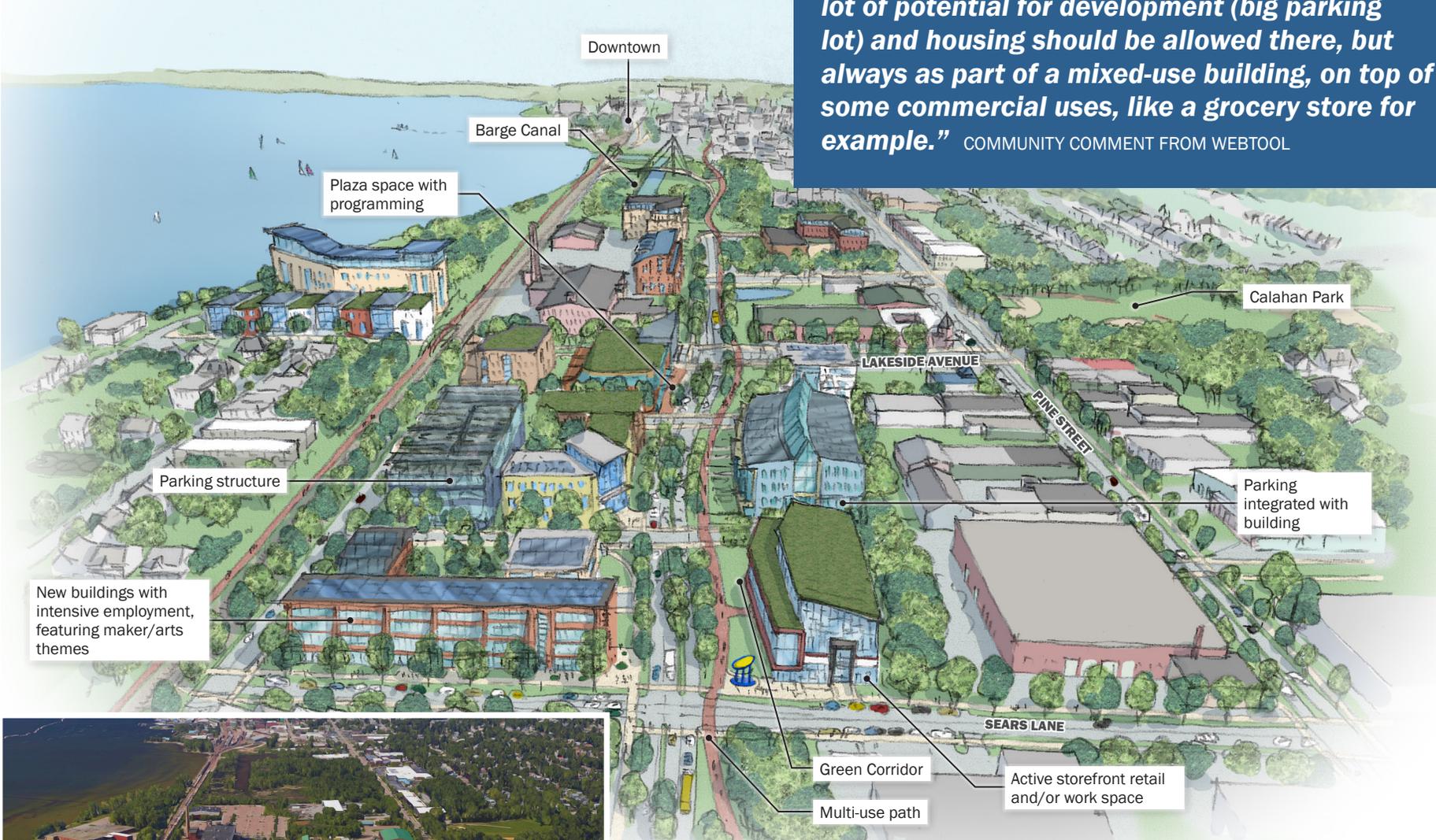
### **What kinds of spaces do these districts need?**

<b>INNOVATION DISTRICTS</b>	<b>ARTS/CULTURAL DISTRICTS</b>
Proximity to other innovators and places to interact	Proximity to other artists and places to interact
Knowledge spillover opportunities	Knowledge spillover opportunities
Collaborative/shared spaces	Collaborative/shared spaces
Production spaces	Production, consumption, interactive spaces
Flexible spaces with range of affordability	Affordable spaces
Ancillary and support uses and services	Ancillary and support uses and services
Experience-rich	Experience-rich
Density and intensity of uses	Density and intensity of uses
Walkability	Walkability
Diversity	Diversity
Space for anchors and multiple small players	Space for organizations, consumption (galleries, theatres, ancillary AND individual artists)
Non-profit and for-profit	Non-profit and for-profit
Start-up public investment (infrastructure, programming, management, marketing)	Start-up public investment (infrastructure, programming, management, marketing)

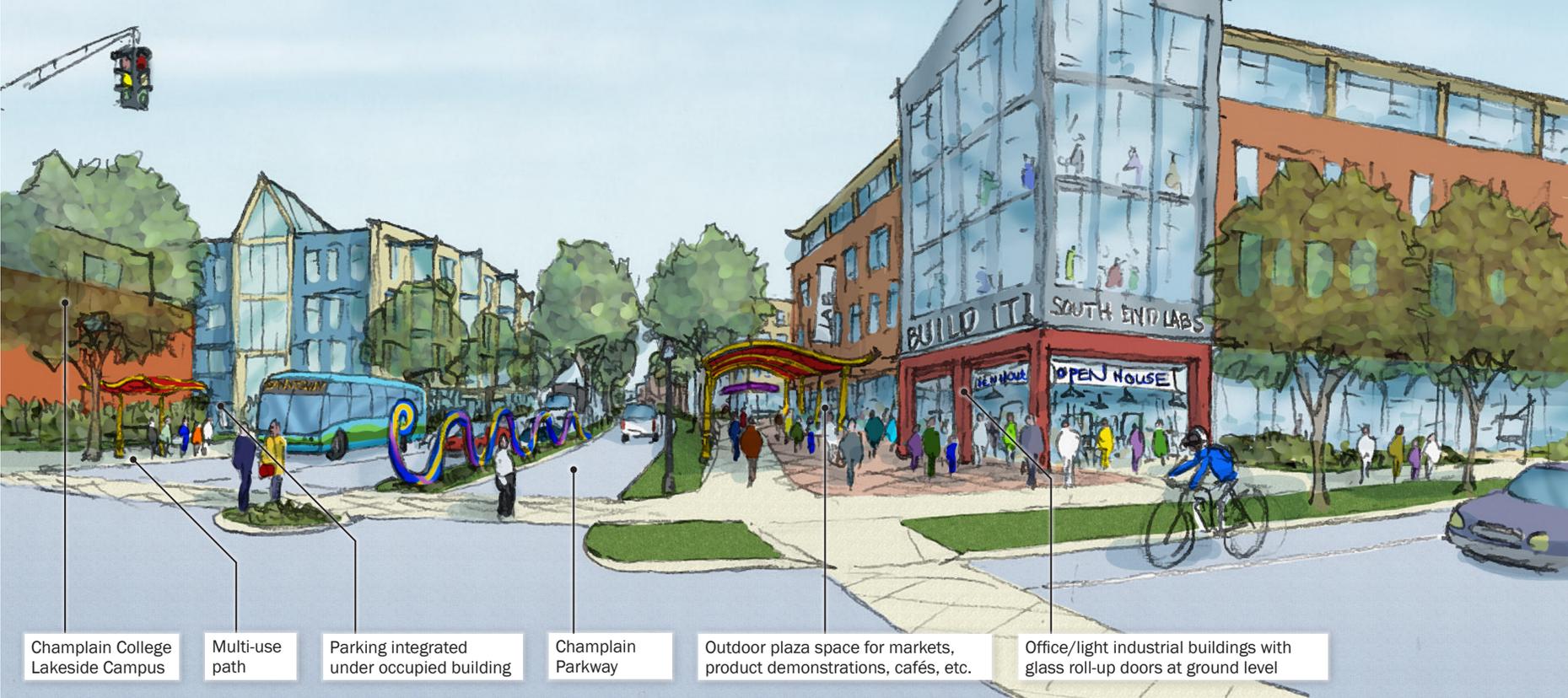
### **What are the common elements in success stories?**

- Strategic action by cross-sector partners (not us vs. them, nor working in silos)
- Place-based orientation that is human-scale
- Core of creative and innovative businesses, activities and programming
- Diverse coalition of private, general public, developers, policy makers, and government officials
- Public/private participation and communication
- Artists engaged in their community—communities much larger than just arts and cultural uses and users
- Variety of spaces

*“I think that the area around Lakeside has a lot of potential for development (big parking lot) and housing should be allowed there, but always as part of a mixed-use building, on top of some commercial uses, like a grocery store for example.”* COMMUNITY COMMENT FROM WEBTOOL



 Transform surface parking and underutilized sites and expand connectivity to create a walkable, mixed-use innovation hub for businesses and maker activities. Incorporate parking in shared structures, new pocket parks and plazas, a “green corridor” along both sides of the Champlain Parkway, and better link Pine Street to the Lake.



 Multi-story buildings should define streets and public spaces, and the energy of the large and small companies and creative enterprises within them should spill out into the public realm.



Ⓢ Permit multi-story infill development to accommodate additional art and maker space, offices for innovative businesses; work with property owners to explore opportunities for reusing existing buildings, such as the Blodgett Site.



🚶 Improve walking, biking, transit and driving conditions through new street connections and improvements along Lakeside Avenue, Sears Lane and Pine Street. Provide continuous sidewalks, green planted buffers between the road and the sidewalk, and incorporate low-impact stormwater management



Ⓢ For new and infill development, encourage a mix of traditional and modern materials and best practices for site and building design. *PHOTO BY LEE KROHN*



Ⓢ With infill development, create new pocket parks and plazas that provide space for collaboration and events, and double as stormwater management features.