

PA Chapter of the American Planning Association
2024 Annual Conference
October 14, 2024
Session F2



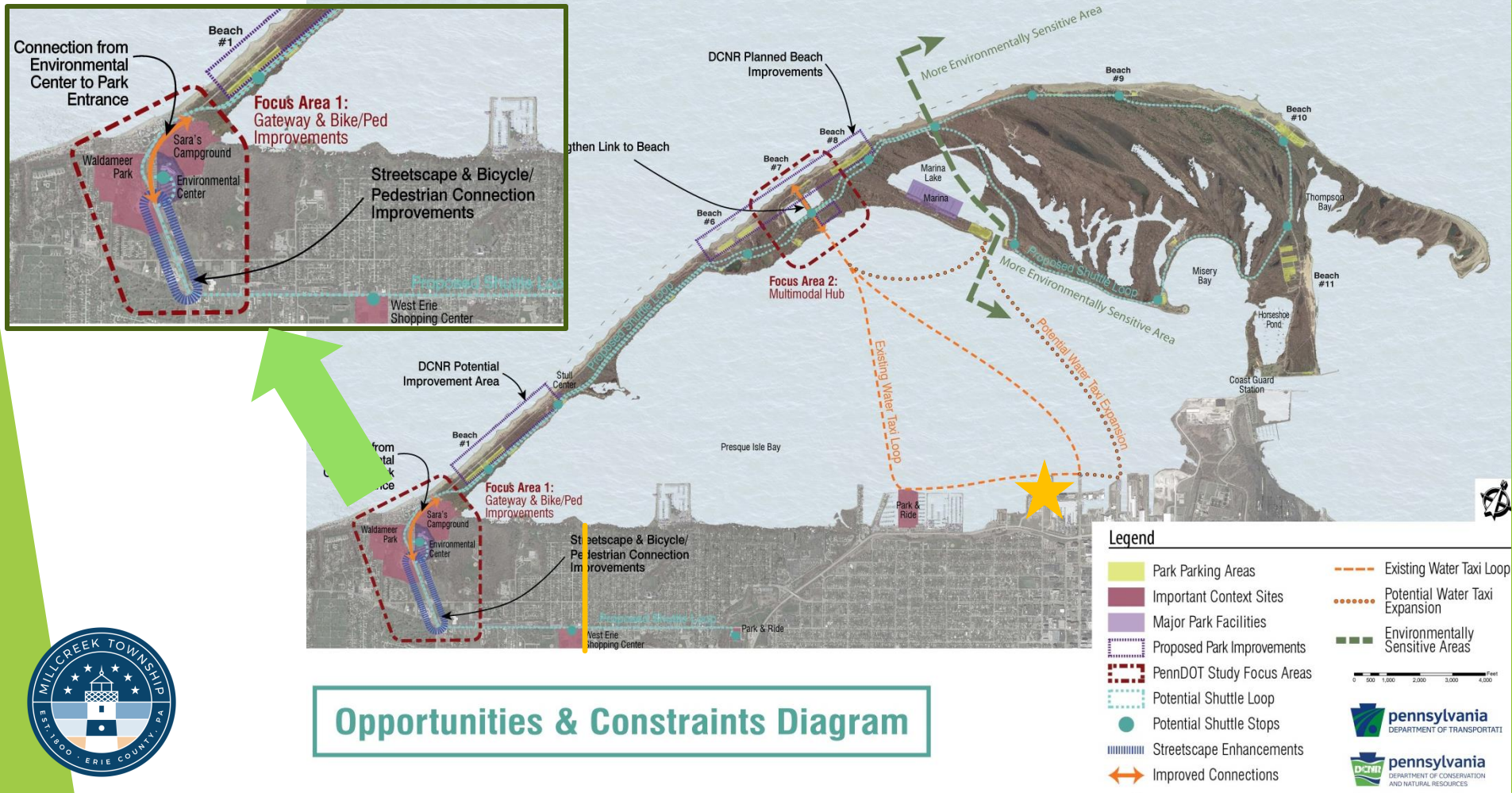
Linking Erie's Bayfront to Presque Isle State Park

Amy Murdock, AICP - Altair Consulting Group
Matthew Waldinger - Millcreek Township



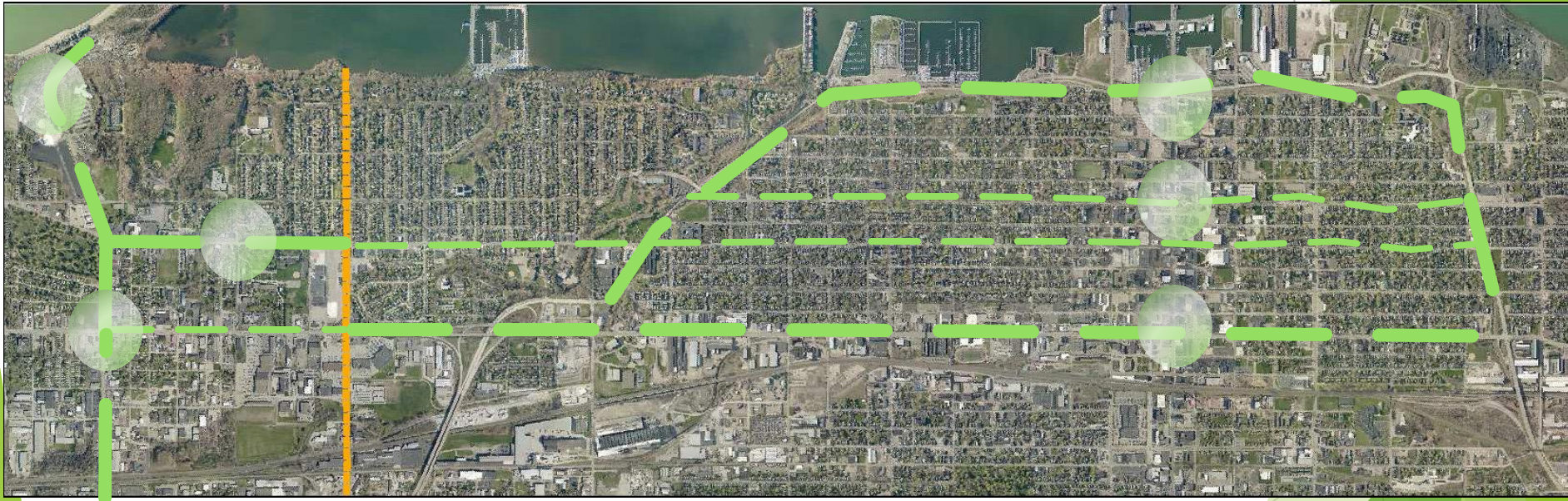
Linking the Downtown Core and the Presque Isle Gateway

PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK IMPROVEMENTS



Opportunities & Constraints Diagram

Coordinated Priorities: Connecting the Downtown Core and Presque Isle Gateway District



Coordinated Priorities

► Erie Active Transportation Plan

ACTIVEERIE TRANSPORTATION PLAN



February 2021

Adopted by the Council of the City of Erie resolution on February 3, 2021



Coordinated Priorities

Presque Isle and Bayfront Connections

- ▶ A recommendation from Erie Refocused - PennDOT and Erie MPO have been working to improve the central bayfront parkway corridor to improve bike/ped access to bayfront
- ▶ Two roundabouts with pedestrian bridges east and west of State Street.
- ▶ Moving through traffic at State Street to old railroad grade, reducing crossing distance at state from 87' to 34'
- ▶ Associated pedestrian and bicycle trails along new alignment



Coordinated Priorities

Presque Isle and Bayfront Connections



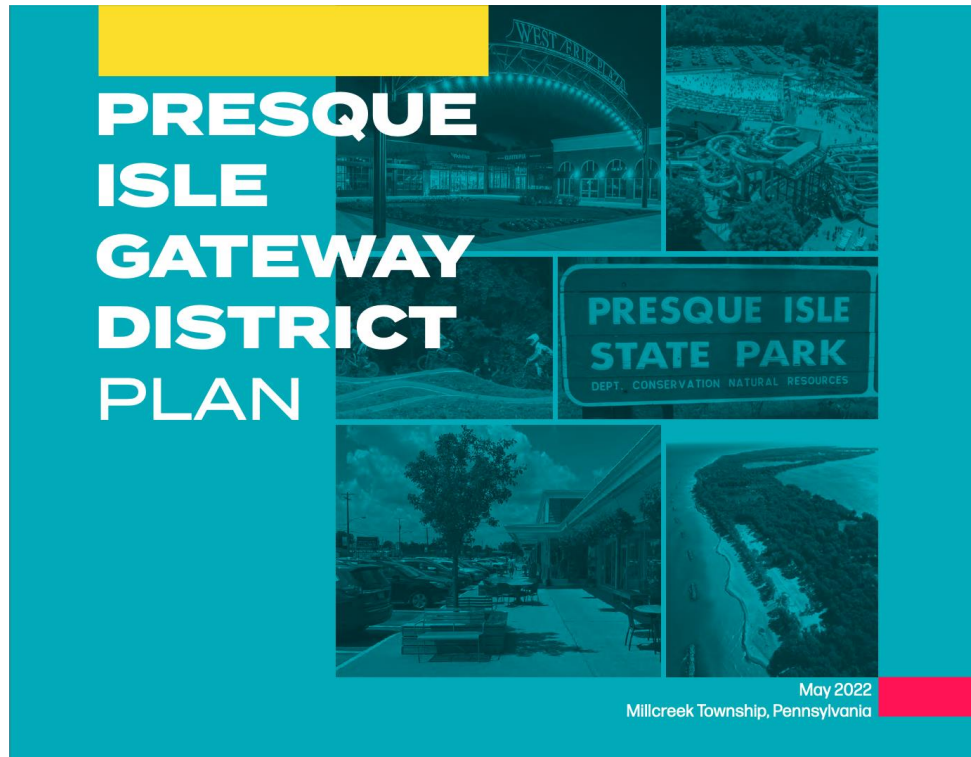
Coordinated Priorities

Presque Isle and Bayfront Connections

- ▶ Additions and improvements to the already strong bike/ped network connecting the Erie and Millcreek
- ▶ Active Erie designates a bikeway along West 6th Street
- ▶ Millcreek has bike lanes that need improvement and has applied for grant funding to complete sidewalk network from Erie to Peninsula Drive
- ▶ Bayfront Parkway to West 8th Street to Peninsula Drive is most direct connection from downtown to the park
- ▶ Erie and Millcreek had had discussions about jointly promoting this “Bayfront to Beach” connection



Gateway District Area Plan



- ▶ Recommendation of Embrace Millcreek
- ▶ Planning process included a Technical Advisory Committee of local agencies, including the City of Erie, to ensure plan was aligned with regional priorities and goals.



Gateway District Area Plan

Millcreek Corridors Redevelopment Plan Considers Shopping Centers

The Millcreek Corridors Redevelopment Plan looked at significant shopping centers in the Township, including two in the District. They are the Shops at Colony Plaza and West Erie Plaza, both with access to W 8th Street. West Erie Plaza also contains a southern access point to W 12th Street.

The Shops at Colony Plaza contains a series of retail and dining establishments that cater to both tourists and community members. The parking area would benefit from physical and aesthetic improvements, including screening and landscaping. The redevelopment plan also identifies deficiencies on W 8th Street, including a lack of sidewalks and the absence of street trees and bike lanes. Furthermore, the plan suggests the need for an overall redevelopment strategy for the W 8th Street corridor that incorporates the Shops at Colony Plaza.

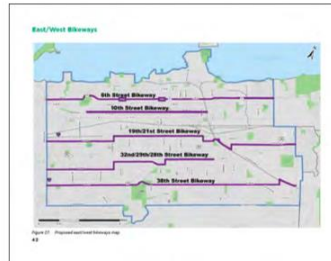
West Erie Plaza is well-positioned to welcome tourists and community members to the district. Renovations were made in 2017 including landscaping, seating, pedestrian-scaled lighting, and a central arch feature. These improvements are a good precedent to providing future pedestrian-scaled improvements in the district, particularly on significant corridors such as W 8th Street. The owners have a master plan for the entire West Erie Plaza site including the redevelopment of key pads sites along W 8th Street and enhancements to the creek.

ActiveErie Encourages New Bikeways Along Key Gateway Corridors

Erie's active transportation plan implores the City to establish the entire West Bayfront as a model for pedestrian and bicycle safety and convenience. It includes 6th Street and Pittsburgh Avenue, important corridors for the District in Millcreek Township.

The active transportation plan identifies 6th Street as an important bikeway. The plan calls for 5' bike lanes on both sides of 6th Street near Millcreek with 10' travel lanes. This bikeway is intended to be a low-stress bike network that should be comfortable for most cyclists. The 6th Street bikeway will rely primarily on pavement markings and signage.

Pittsburgh Avenue is identified as one of 7 important north-south bikeways in Erie. The plan recommends 5' bike lanes and 10' travel lanes for Pittsburgh Avenue south of W 8th Street, and sharrow within travel lanes north of W 8th Street.



Erie is Pursuing Improvements to W 8th Street

In 2020, The City of Erie coordinated with PennDOT to identify streetscape and mobility enhancements for pedestrians and motorists along the W 8th Street corridor. Improvements are planned between Pittsburgh Avenue, immediately adjacent to Millcreek Township, and Greengarden Road in the City. Improvements include - but are not limited to - curb installations, new and improved sidewalk, driveway aprons, ADA curb ramps, pedestrian-level lighting, and street trees.



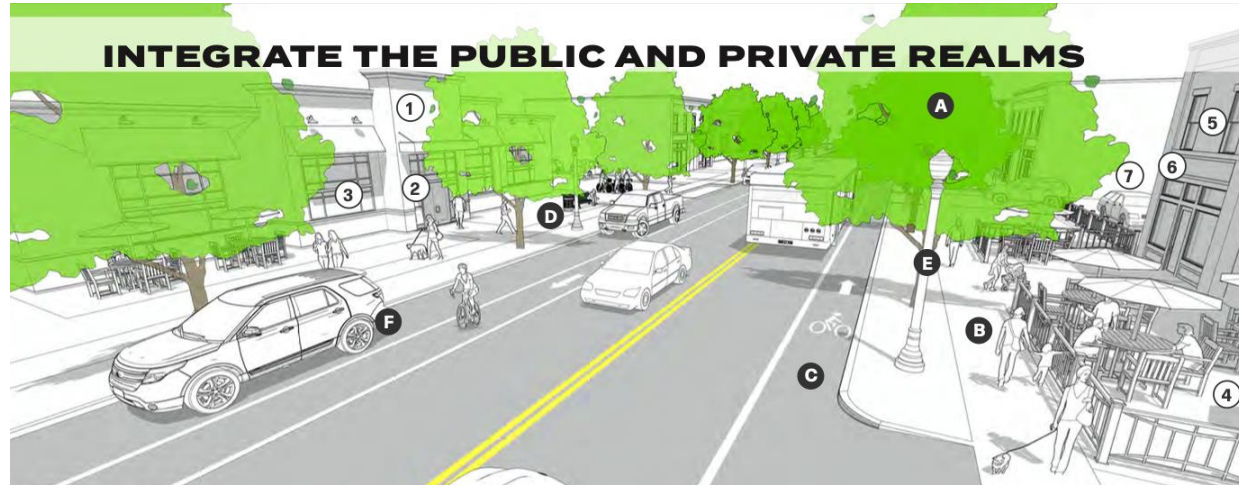
Gateway District Area Plan



Figure 6: Conceptual Framework



Gateway District Area Plan



Private Realm Components

- ① Main Street buildings - (22'-35' high)
- ② Entrances that front the street
- ③ First floor transparency
- ④ Pedestrian oriented first floor uses (e.g. restaurant)
- ⑤ Upper floor residential and office uses
- ⑥ Articulated building facades
- ⑦ Parking at the side or rear of buildings

Millcreek Township envisions W 8th Street as a "Main Street" for the Presque Isle Gateway District. The streetscaping components included in the concepts for W 8th Street on the previous pages focus primarily on public realm components - travel lanes, shoulders, bike lanes, sidewalk, tree lawns and street trees. Improving the public realm is entirely necessary to cultivating a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere that is reflective of a successful Main Street. Integrating the public realm into the private realm is equally important to establishing a successful Main Street atmosphere. There are numerous public realm and private realm components that must work together to create a distinct street experience. Standards for private realm components should be included in the local land development regulations or zoning code and standards for the public realm components should be included in the local public works/engineering specifications.

Public Realm Components

- A Street trees
- B Sidewalks (5'-12')
- C Bike lanes or sharrows
- D Street furniture (e.g. benches)
- E Pedestrian level lighting
- F On-street parking

A consistent building street wall, sidewalks, tree canopies, inviting storefronts, well-maintained buildings and streets, and land uses that stimulate pedestrian traffic all contribute to the vibrancy on a great street. Creating a memorable experience has as much to do with how a place feels as it does with how a place looks. One or two of those characteristics mentioned above will not create that experience. It takes all of them working together to form an exciting sense of place. These components working together are the integration of the public and private realms. Close attention must be paid to each development project and public improvement so that, over time, more of those characteristics are brought together throughout the W 8th Street corridor. It takes focus and steadfast determination, but over time, it leads to a more viable and successful Main Street.

Gateway District Area Plan

16. Encourage Redevelopment in Key Area

There are numerous vacant and/or underutilized properties fronting W 6th Street, W 8th Street and Peninsula Drive between Lowell Avenue and Peninsula Drive. These properties are particularly significant because the general area is the most important gateway for the Presque Isle Gateway District. Peninsula Drive carries significant traffic through this area making it highly visible to visitors and residents that draw conclusions about the District as a whole based on what they see in this area. Attention and focus should be placed on developing a strategic revitalization plan for this area, now referred to as Presque Isle Place.

Collaboration with existing property owners is the first step in revitalizing Presque Isle Place. Emphasis should then be placed on encouraging and requiring a level of development that engages the street and public realm. Both horizontal and vertical mixed use development should be encouraged. Buildings should front and engage the street with ground-floor uses activating the first floor. Parking should not front the street and, when possible, should be located in central locations between buildings in order to maximize share-ability. Buildings and uses not directly benefiting from a street frontage should be located deeper in sites. This could include office / medical buildings, residential only buildings, etc. Special attention should be paid to creating a comprehensive circulation plan for all users - pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists. This will maximize connectivity with surrounding developments within Presque Isle Place and to District.



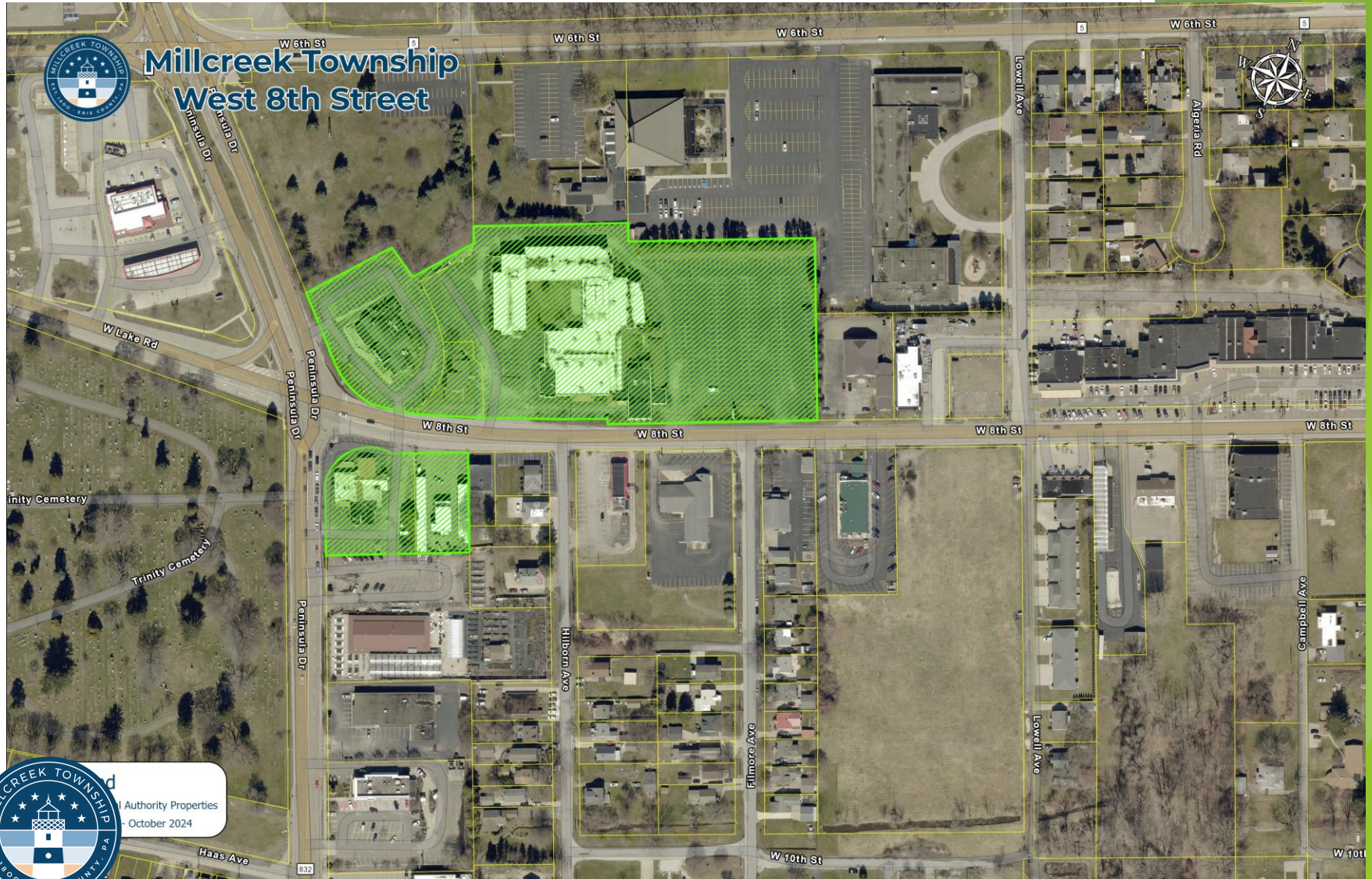
Figure 33: Key Parcels

Above is map of key parcels intended to guide Millcreek in developing Presque Isle Place. These properties should embrace the public realm, include opportunities for shared parking and, above all, contribute to a pedestrian-friendly corridor and a desirable Main Street aesthetic.

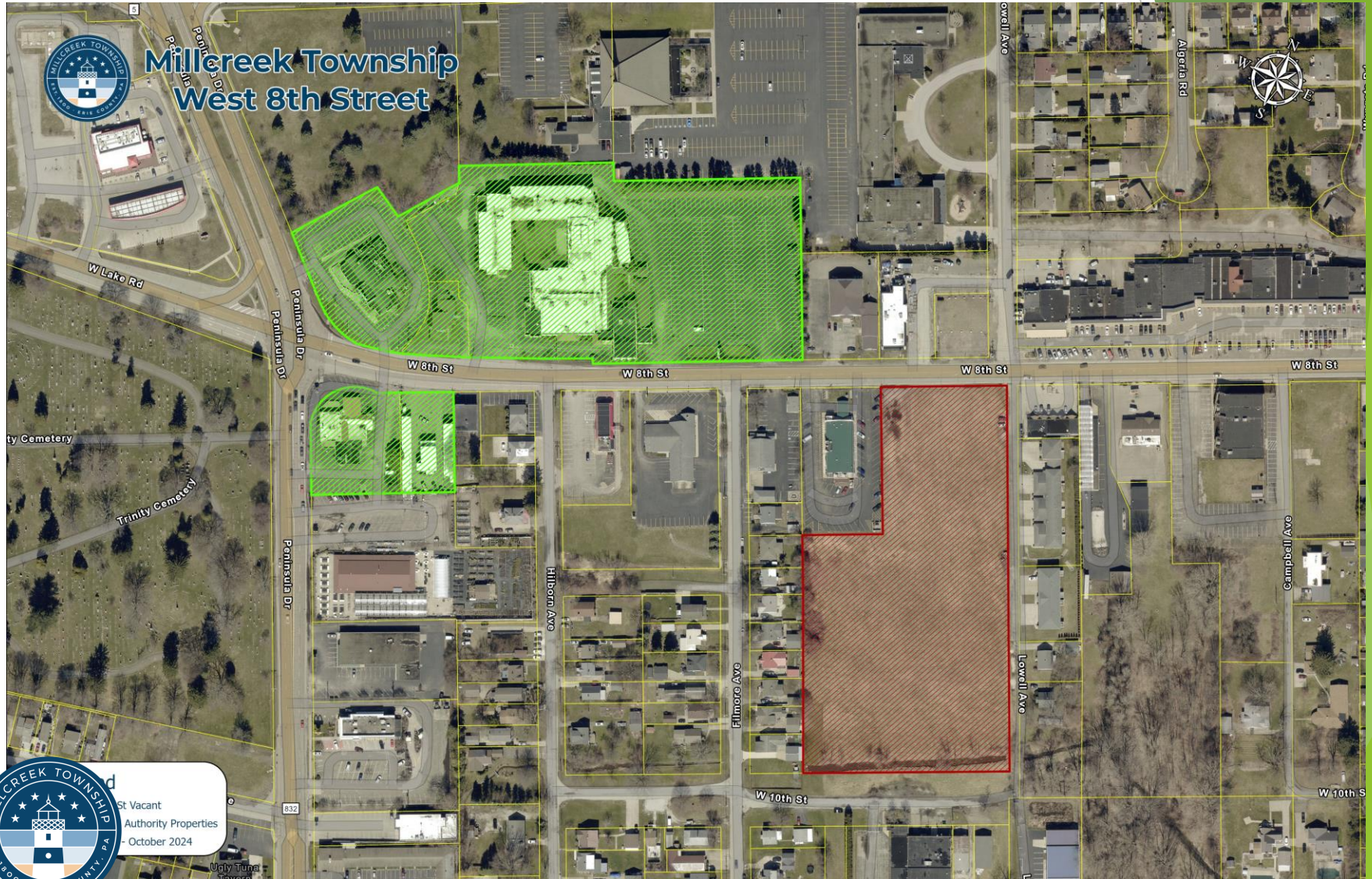
The revitalization plan should consider appropriate densities and a mix of land uses to best incentivize successful redevelopment. In exchange, design expectation on behalf of the Township and residents should be high in regard to modern-day mixed-use pedestrian oriented development. Because the Erie area has not benefited from such development, redevelopment might require developers from outside the Erie area that are familiar with this type of mixed-use development.



Current Progress



Current Progress



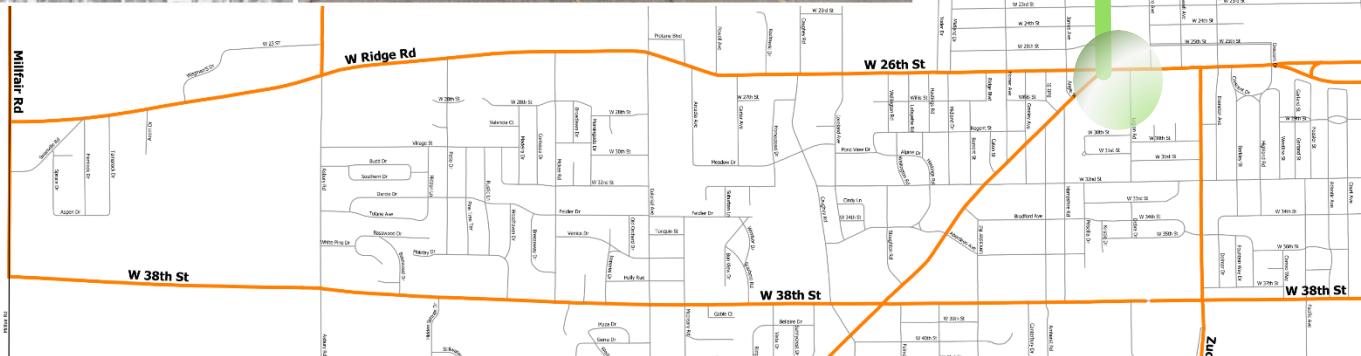
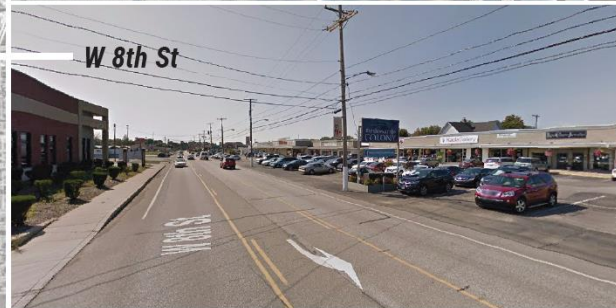
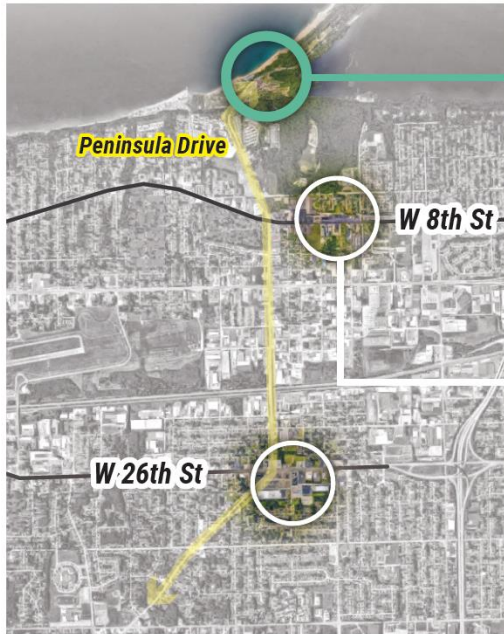
Before



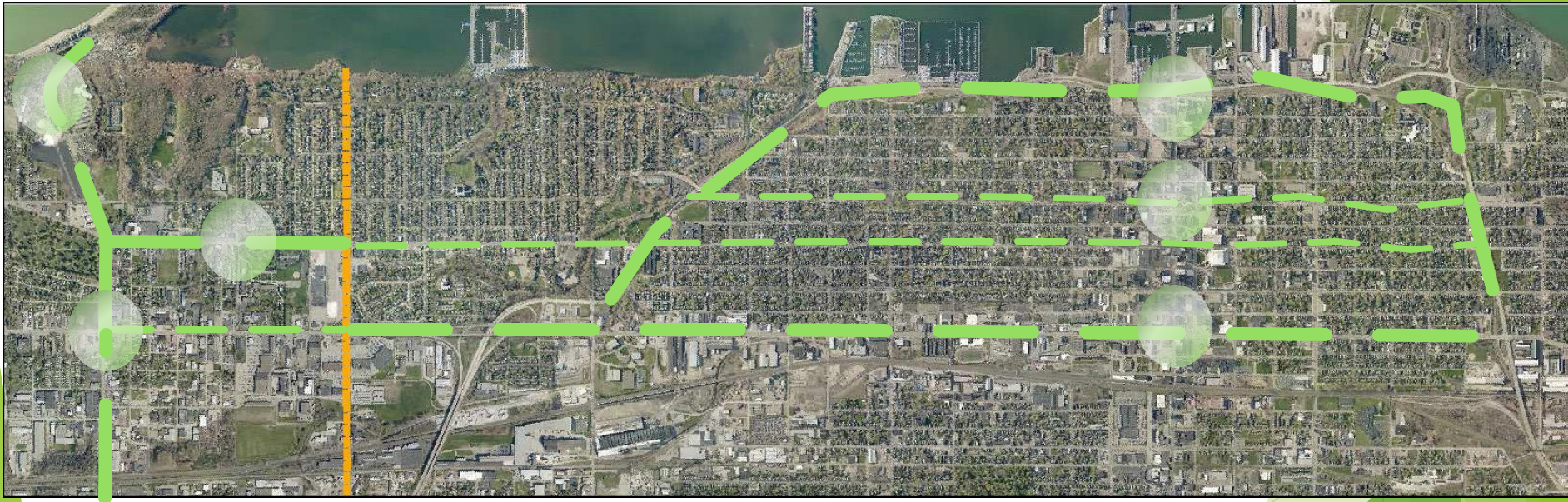
Current Progress



Millcreek Township Priorities: Gateway to Presque Isle



Coordinated Priorities: Connecting the Downtown Core and Presque Isle Gateway District



Coordinated Priorities: Downtown Core

Planning as a Catalyst for Investment

2016

The City's
Comprehensive Plan,
Erie Refocused, is
completed.

**ERIE
REFOCUSED**

City of Erie, Pennsylvania
Comprehensive Plan and Community
Decision-Making Guide

MARCH 2016



2017

EDDC is formed
Downtown Erie is undergoing massive
transformational change. **Visionary
business, philanthropic and
community leaders formed the EDDC
in 2017, to transform the city of Erie's
downtown core and spark
revitalization across the region.**



2023

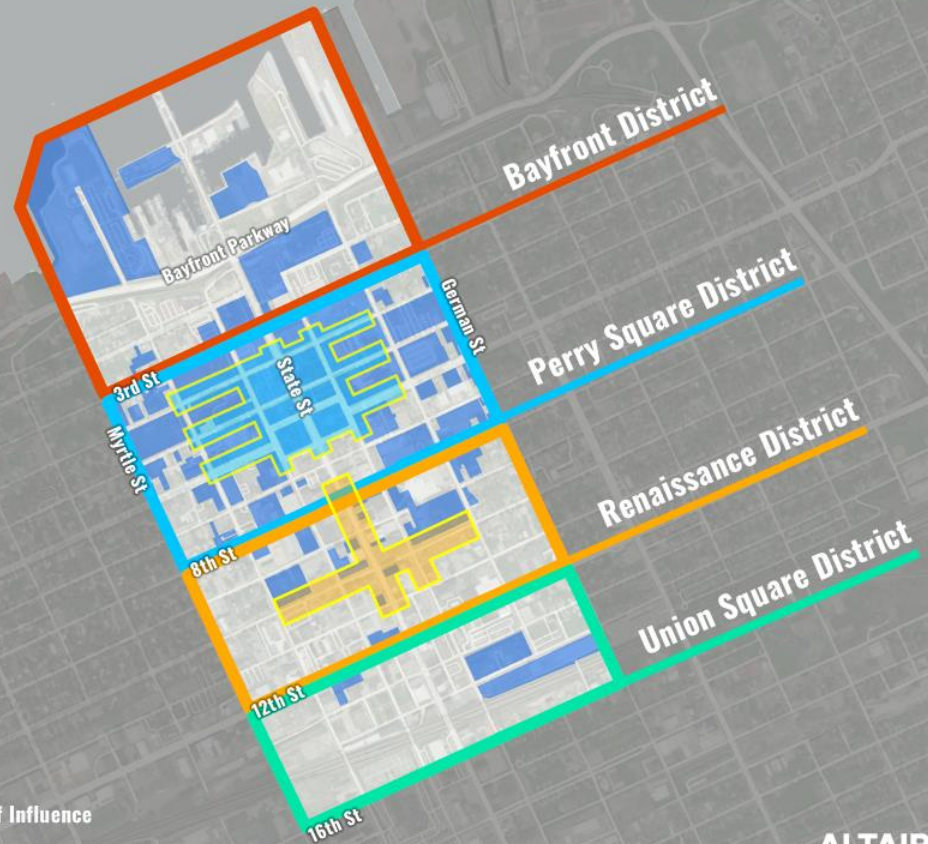
1001 State Purchased
by OZ Operator



Coordinated Priorities

Market Momentum

In the last five years, there has been **\$706.2M** of targeted investment activity in Erie's Central Business District (CBD). In the Erie downtown, the majority of investment occurs North of 10th Street, and the area surrounding 1001 State lacks the same institutional commitment present in the Bayfront and Perry Square Districts. The Renaissance Center is a key anchor investment for the City's Mid-Town.



■ Institutional Investment ■ EDDC Zone of Influence ■ 1001 State Zone of Influence

ALTAIR
CONSULTING GROUP

Successful Project Funding through Planning

- ▶ \$2.5 million PennDOT MTF grant for West 8th Street Improvements in Erie
- ▶ \$2.5 million DCED MTF grant for Presque Isle Multipurpose Trail extension
- ▶ Up to \$5 million in PennDOT turnback funds for West 8th Street roadway in Millcreek
- ▶ \$3.5 in RACP grants for streetscaping and development preparation in Gateway District
- ▶ \$1 million grant for demolition funds from the Erie County Land Bank

Momentum for the Gateway District



05 Next Steps

Potential Scenarios

Our desire is to find a development partner that will either develop the entire parcel, including **hospitality, multi-family, and retail** or to find multiple developers, one that would focus on hospitality on the south side or retail / multi-family on the South Side.

1. Master Development Agreement
2. South Side Development Plan
3. North Side Development Plan



Source: Presque Isle Gateway District Plan 2022