

CASTONGUAY SQUARE

COMMUNITY
DESIGN
PROJECT



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to all of the community members who contributed their voices and ideas to this exciting project.

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THE CASTONGUAY SQUARE COMMUNITY DESIGN PROJECT

This community design project began in the fall of 2018, bringing together downtown business and property owners, artists and cultural organizations, and city and economic development officials in a series of meetings. The energy and enthusiasm of those first meetings led to a series of public design charrettes held through the fall and winter. These workshops mined the physical and social history of Castonguay Square, exploring the community's aspirations for this vital open space and how it could best serve residents and visitors. More than 150 participants contributed their ideas to the project, resulting in a vision that reflects a diversity of perspectives and experiences. This brochure is a summary of that rich participation — a glimpse of the tapestry of ideas exchanged and the vision generated from this invigorating process.

SIX PLANNING PRINCIPLES — a summary of our community's aspirations for the Square — were debated and revised at each workshop until they fully embodied and balanced the breadth of priorities for the Square's design. These principles will serve as guideposts, ensuring that the resulting design successfully meets the community's foundational goals.

Celebrate the history and heritage
of Waterville



Strengthen the experience of visiting
downtown's small businesses

Be family friendly and welcoming to all



Build in flexibility for daily routines
and larger events



Restore the connection to Main Street
and make a new one to Head of Falls



Provide a peaceful green oasis
in the heart of the city



THE VISION PLAN

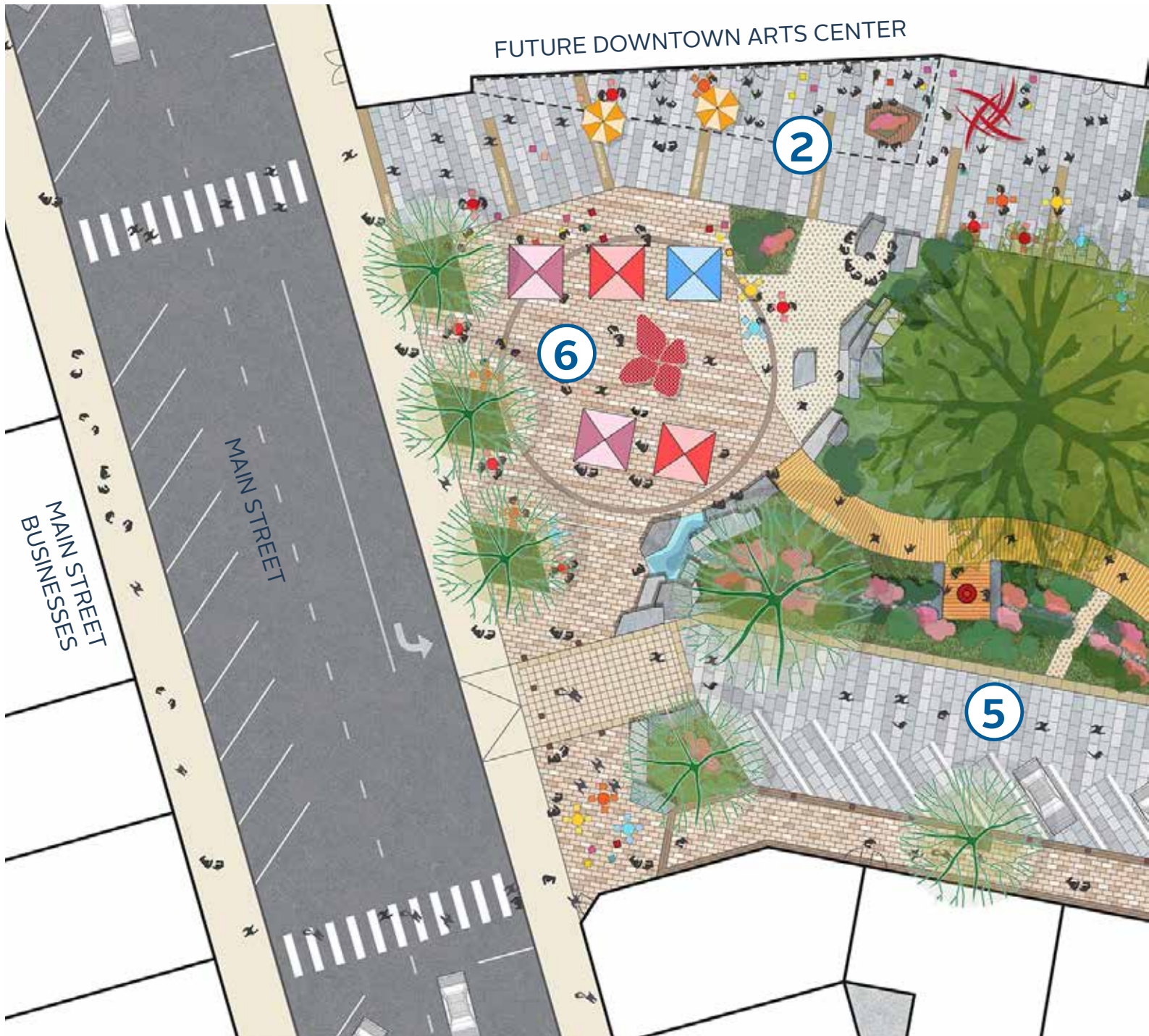
The plan described here is the result of many community voices coming together to envision an exciting design for Castonguay Square that celebrates Waterville's history and culture, provides green space, supports local businesses and special events, and is family-friendly and welcoming to all.

① CITY HALL PLAZA

A gracious plaza at the steps to City Hall, highlighting its historic architecture, and usable for ceremonies, gatherings, wedding photos.

② WATERVILLE HERITAGE WALK

A path leading to and from City Hall, featuring the Arthur L. Castonguay Memorial at its center, markers of historic events, and future memorial sites set in flowering gardens.



③ WATER PROMENADE

Beginning at the Water Gateway at Main Street, a curving boardwalk that meanders through the park, leading to an improved pedestrian connection to the new Riverwalk at Head of Falls.

④ SERENE GREEN

A peaceful green space that is also able to host larger events, with a central lawn surrounded by lush gardens, a nature-inspired playscape, and Castonguay Square's 150-year old Elm tree and historic horse trough.

⑤ COMMON STREET TERRACE

A reimagining of Common Street that maintains access and parking and connects local businesses to the Square, with alternative paving that makes it feel like a pedestrian plaza when closed for special events.

⑥ CULTURAL PLAZA

A dynamic entrance to the Square from Main Street, activated by local organizations and businesses for arts events, outdoor films, education, food tastings, and unlimited other possibilities.



1 CITY HALL PLAZA

A new civic plaza at the entrance to City Hall is a place to appreciate Waterville's history and participate in public ceremonies and events. The plaza creates a serene space of reflection for the Arthur L. Castonguay Memorial and small gatherings, while larger events utilize a temporary stage facing audience seating in the lawn beyond. Framed by gardens, a new grand staircase to City Hall is reoriented to face the Square, providing a gracious and ceremonial entrance, incorporating an accessible ramp, and showcasing the historic architecture.



CURRENT CONDITION



The existing Arthur L. Castonguay Memorial





2 WATERVILLE HERITAGE WALK

A new stone-paved walkway connecting Main Street to Front Street and the Riverwalk beyond, the Waterville Heritage Walk celebrates the City with a series of historical markers and memorials, anchored by the Arthur L. Castonguay Memorial at its center. Surrounded by gardens and shaded benches, the walk will be a favorite place to stroll and meet neighbors and friends.





3 WATER PROMENADE

4 SERENE GREEN

5 COMMON STREET TERRACE

The Water Promenade is a quiet path winding through the Serene Green, an urban oasis combining lush native plant gardens with a large central lawn. Waterville's 150-year old Elm Tree marks the center of the Green, while new design techniques create a durable soil surface that supports events while protecting plant life. The Water Promenade celebrates the City's founding on the river with a gateway fountain and the reuse of the historic horse trough as a garden feature, finally leading to the Head of Falls beyond.



Historic image of the horse trough in the Square





6 CULTURAL PLAZA

Connecting Castonguay Square to Main Street and the planned Downtown Arts Center, the Cultural Plaza is a dynamic multi-use space, activated by diverse programming throughout the day and evening, all year round. With built-in infrastructure to support events, the Plaza will enliven the Square with Waterville's cultural, arts, community and educational activities, from sculpture installations to outdoor classes, music festivals to food tastings. The Plaza will become a must-see destination for Downtown visitors.



CURRENT CONDITION



Children's arts programming in the Square





6 CULTURAL PLAZA

Designed for all-season use, the Cultural Plaza is equally active in the evening and wintertime as on a summer day. Winter festivals, including the Parade of Lights and Kringleville, holiday markets and celebrations, and cultural events with night lighting designed by artists will make the Plaza welcoming and lively on cold evenings. Plaza activities, complementing nearby arts, film, and food destinations, will draw shoppers to Downtown to experience winter in Waterville.



Holiday Market at Boston City Hall plaza





6 CULTURAL PLAZA

The Cultural Plaza strengthens Castonguay Square's place as the heart of Waterville. With artistic lighting, a gateway fountain recalling the fountains that once graced the Square, and active programming, the Plaza creates a vibrant and imaginative entrance to the Square. From the Plaza, visitors will discover the future Arts Center, City Hall and the Waterville Opera House, explore history along the Waterville Heritage Walk, and enjoy shopping and dining at local businesses around the Square and on Main Street. The Cultural Plaza celebrates both the history and future of Waterville.



CURRENT CONDITION



Waterville Rocks! event





HISTORY OF THE SQUARE

For almost 180 years, Castonguay Square has been the civic and cultural heart of Waterville. The timeline below highlights a few key events in the Square's history, from military parade ground to critical water infrastructure to community gathering space. With the last renovation of the Square over 30 years ago, and big plans for the surrounding area, the time is ripe for the next chapter in the Square's evolution.



Castonguay Square gateway from Main Street

The original Opera House sign welcomed visitors at the Square's southwest corner, as they approached northward on Main Street (then a two-way street).



Children play in a fountain in the Square



Historic photo of the Square. Credit: City of Waterville



1921



Fire Brigade water cistern

Dedication of the Square in memory of First Sergeant Arthur L. Castonguay, World War I.

1800s

"... the land hereby granted shall be forever kept and appropriated to public use only as a promenade or place for military parade..."

-original land deed May 1, 1840

1900s

Buried below the Square today are the remains of a water cistern used by the City's fire brigade.

1986



The prior Castonguay Square renovation

The last major renovation of the Square occurred in 1986 and began the reclamation of the Square as a pedestrian space.

2018



Proposed Arts Center;
Image by Susan T Rodriguez and GO Logic



Roadway across the front of City Hall



2016 Downtown Concept Plan

2000s

In the mid-20th century, the front of City Hall was dominated by a roadway and parking area.

The 2016 Downtown Concept Plan provides a framework for reinvestment in the downtown, of which Castonguay Square is a central feature.

COMMUNITY DESIGN PROCESS

The Community Vision Project was a five-month process that involved over 150 participants. The process included three highly interactive workshops that enabled participants to have a direct voice in shaping the outcome of the vision. The community ideas, concerns, and feedback that the design team collected was used to develop the final community vision plan.

WORKSHOP 1 **SHARING "WHAT THE SQUARE MEANS TO YOU"**

WORKSHOP 2 **CREATING COLLAGES TO EXPLORE THE SQUARE'S DESIGN**

WORKSHOP 3 **EVALUATING DESIGN OPTIONS**



"It's the place where people come to see their neighbors, and play in the grass with their kids."



"Waterville history is built right into (and under) the Square."





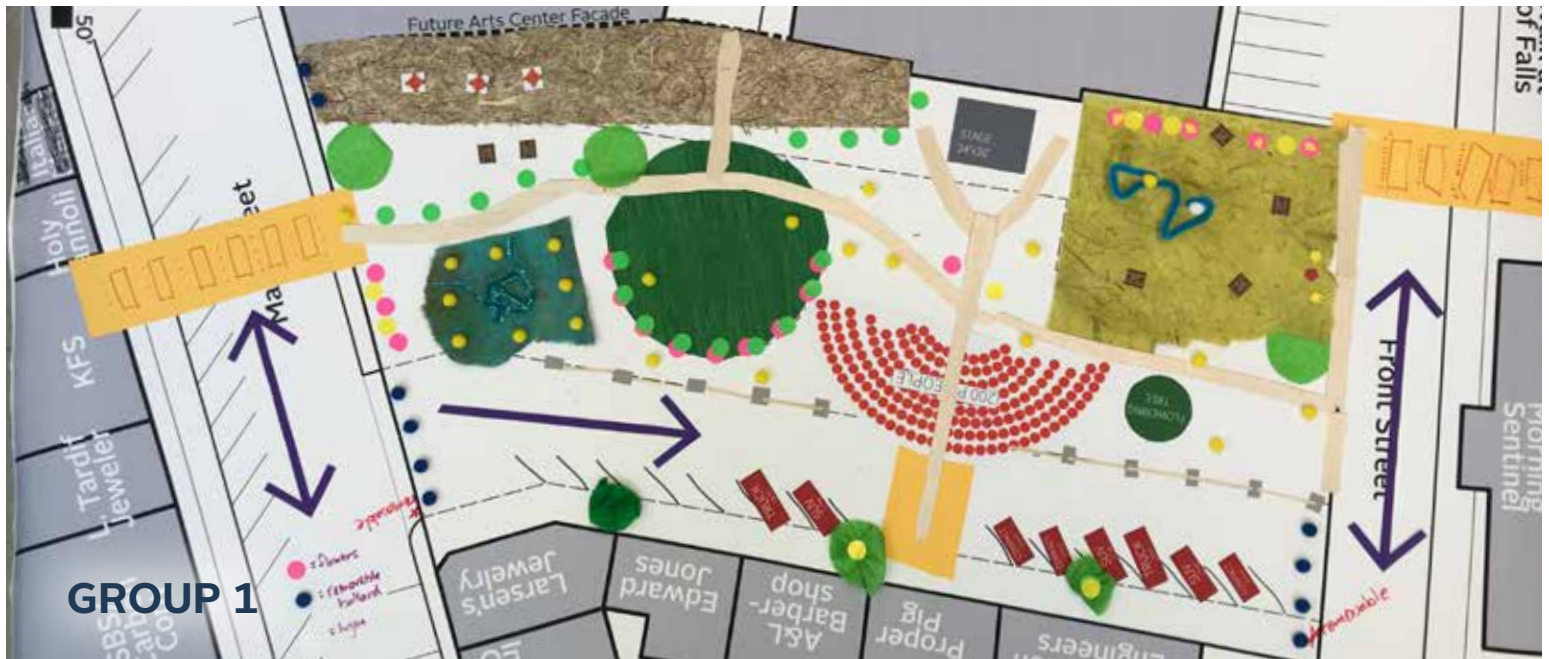
"It provides much needed green space in the downtown."

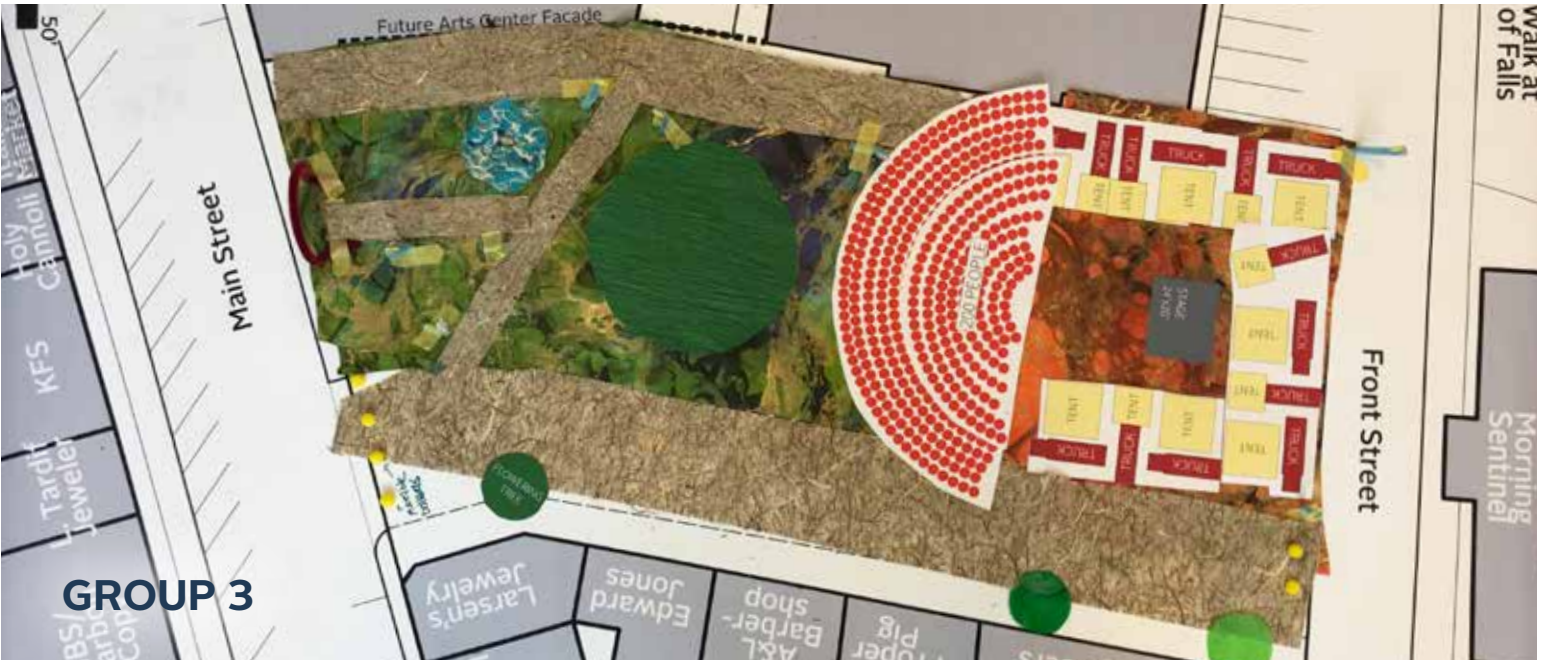


"It's the place for Waterville Rocks, Kringleville, and other cultural events."

COMMUNITY-MADE COLLAGES

The five collages shown here are the creative outcomes of the community “collaging” workshop. Over 40 people collaborated to create these visions for the future of the Square. After working in groups, each group presented their ideas to the entire room of participants, sharing their priorities and goals. These collages then became the basis for three different design concepts developed by the Design Team and discussed at the subsequent community workshop in order to decide on a final direction for the Square.



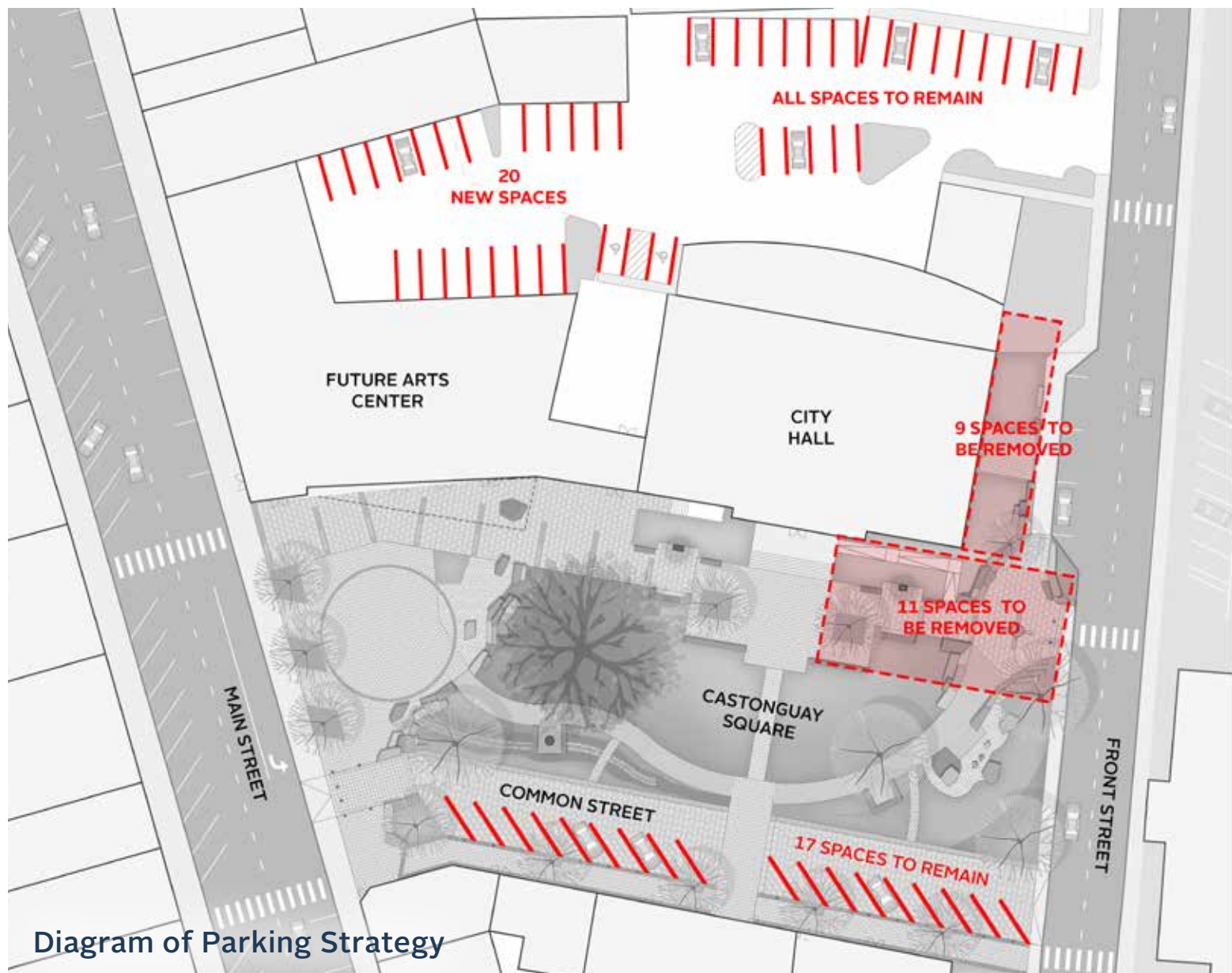


PARKING STRATEGY

Parking was explored at length during the visioning process in order to ensure all voices were heard, including the local business community, residents, and employees. The proposed parking plan shown below ensures there will be no net loss of parking in the vicinity of the Square. This plan enables customer access to existing businesses and improves handicapped accessible parking for City Hall, while creating a pedestrian-friendly environment in the heart of the Square.

Parking for existing businesses along Common Street is maintained but with alternative paving and a curbless design allowing the street to feel like a pedestrian-plaza extension of the Square when closed for temporary events.

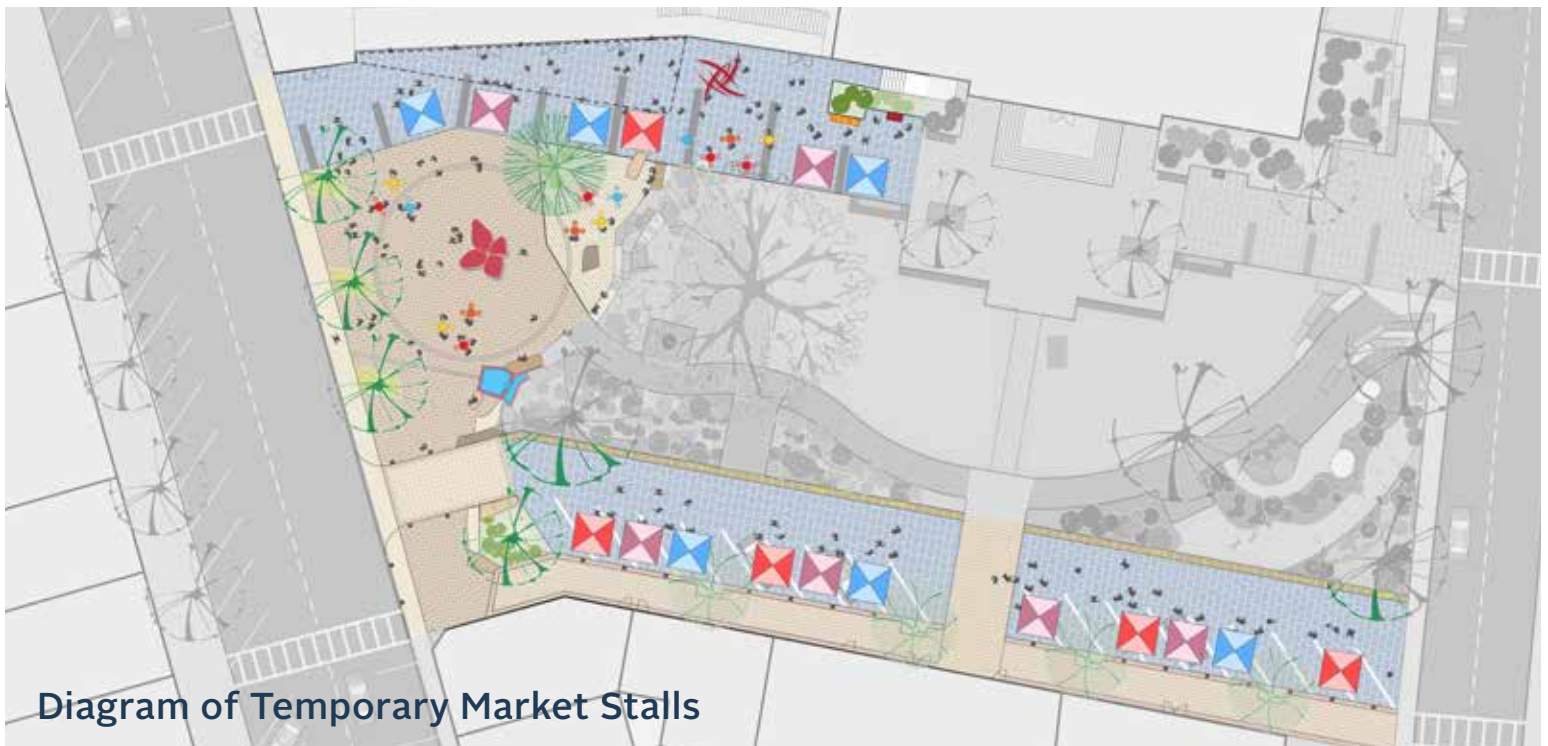
To maintain parking capacity, 20 new spaces are created behind the future Arts Center, replacing the City Hall parking lot thus creating a new pedestrian space that expands the Square and improves the connection to Head of Falls. The parking plan also provides new handicap spaces closer to City Hall's accessible entrance. In the event that the parking strategy shown here is not feasible, an alternate plan that retains some parking at the front of City Hall was also developed.



FLEXIBLE & TEMPORARY EVENTS

Flexibility for programming emerged as a priority in the community's vision for the Square. The Vision Plan has been designed to accommodate a range of events for large and small audiences in spaces that are both flexible and durable and minimize impacts on the historic Elm tree.

The diagrams below show two potential event arrangements in the Square: a temporary stage at the steps to City Hall with audience seating on the plaza and overflow seating on the grass; and a market or festival with stalls along the Cultural Plaza and along Common Street (with temporary event closure of the roadway). With the roadbed of Common Street raised to curb height, the entire Square, from the future Arts Center to the Common Street businesses, will function as one unified and uninterrupted space.







IMPLEMENTATION & NEXT STEPS

The outcome of the Castonguay Square Community Design project is a shared community vision for the design of downtown Waterville's central green space. This concept will require additional design work to develop final plans for construction. As a result of its successful BUILD grant award, the City of Waterville has funds available for the next phase of design and for construction. The timing of these next steps is dependent on a variety of factors, including other projects planned for the downtown. For updates on downtown revitalization efforts, visit the city website at www.waterville-me.gov.

