

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD  
CITY OF PORTLAND, MAINE**

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**WORKSHOP – ADVISORY REVIEW  
222 ST. JOHN STREET**

**TO:** Chair Sheridan and Members of the Historic Preservation Board

**FROM:** Deborah Andrews, Historic Preservation Program Manager

**DATE:** April 12, 2018

**RE:** April 18, 2018 – **Workshop** – Advisory Design Review of Proposed Parking Garage

**Address:** 222 St. John Street  
(project site is located within 100 ft. of Maine Central Railroad Office Building, an individually designated landmark structure)

**Applicant:** Maine Medical Center (MMC)  
Represented by Jeff Sanders, Chief Operating Officer

**Project Architect:** Mark Wilcox, Winton Scott Architects

**Introduction**

A workshop has been scheduled to review Maine Medical Center’s preliminary proposal for a new freestanding parking garage at 222 St. John Street. The project site is located in close proximity to the landmark Maine Central Railroad Office Building and as such the site plan ordinance’s “100-foot rule” applies. Under this provision, the Historic Preservation Board conducts an advisory review of the project and comments are forwarded to the Planning Board for its consideration, along with a written analysis of the proposed development’s immediate context.

Beyond the required HP advisory review that addresses specifically the compatibility of the proposed development with the adjacent landmark, Planning staff and project consultants are seeking the Historic Preservation Board’s general feedback about the preliminary design direction and material palette while the project is still at an early stage of design development. In this respect, Wednesday’s review session is somewhat unique because most projects are well advanced in terms of design development when they come before the Board for advisory review. As the applicant is not yet scheduled for a first workshop with the Planning Board, Wednesday’s HP workshop provides an opportunity to engage in a discussion about the proposed design direction at a time when the input can be most productive. The Board is encouraged to identify any particular aspects of the preliminary design that might warrant further consideration.

## **Background Information**

The St. John Street garage is proposed by Maine Medical Center for employee parking and is one element of MMC's recently approved "Institutional Development Plan", an overall master plan for expansion and upgrade of the hospital's campus. In December, the City Council formally approved a Maine Medical Center Institutional Overlay Zone (IOZ) that establishes zoning parameters and conditions for MMC's expansion. The proposed employee parking garage is specifically addressed in the IOZ. As such, threshold dimensions for the St. John Street garage have been set by zoning. Under the IOZ, the garage is allowed a maximum height of 100 feet and a maximum building length of 500 feet. Other characteristics of the development are subject to design review.

The garage will be located on a portion of same lot occupied by the former Maine Central Railroad Office Building. The large irregular-shaped lot includes an extensive surface parking area behind and to the south of the historic structure. The garage will be positioned southwest of the railroad office building and approximately 120 feet back from St. John Street. Along the street in front of the proposed parking garage are two privately-owned residential structures and a surface parking lot currently owned by the Eagles fraternal club. The two residential structures will remain and MMC is negotiating with the Eagles to purchase or lease their lot to provide access to the garage. As shown, the principal entrance will be from St. John Street. Secondary access will be from the surface parking lot behind the MCRR office building.

## **Project Context**

The project's immediate and general St. John Street context is decidedly mixed in terms of building type and architectural character and is generally lacking in any strong unifying development pattern, particularly on the west side of St. John where the garage is proposed.

The historic Maine Central Railroad Office Building dominates the western side of St. John Street and is an architecturally impressive three-story Romanesque Revival style brick and stone building with hip roof. Constructed over a 28-year period, the building is not only impressive architecturally, but also in size; it occupies approximately 320 feet of frontage along St. John Street. Its bulk is broken up by its E-shaped configuration. Three distinct building masses project out to the street and are separated by two landscaped courtyards. The building exhibits a distinct sense of solidity and permanence, which is achieved in part by the use of brick and stone and heavy details.

The rear elevation of the MCRR office building--the portion of the historic structure that will have the closest visual relationship to the proposed garage—is an expansive wall of masonry twenty-five bays in width. It is interrupted only by an arched entrance portico of recent construction in the middle of the elevation.

Immediately south of the historic structure are two wood-frame houses that are 1½ and 2½ stories tall. These buildings will be in front of the northern end of the new garage. Beyond these buildings is a surface parking lot with a row of arborvitae at the sidewalk edge. This row of evergreens provides screening for the open lot and continues some sense of street wall. The

brick two-story building that houses the Eagles is the last substantial structure located at the street edge. Beyond this point, the development pattern becomes even more frayed, with several industrial or commercial buildings set back a considerable distance from the street.

The eastern side of St. John Street in the vicinity of the proposed project is predominantly residential and the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century houses are in generally good condition. A one-story autobody garage (located directly across the street from the proposed development) interrupts this otherwise regular development pattern.

### **Proposed Structure**

The applicant's submission includes aerial views of the site, general elevations, renderings and information regarding some of the building materials under consideration. The submission does not include detailed elevations or dimensional information, such as the building's distance from the street, height, length, etc. At staff's request, the applicant has provided several perspective views from various view corridors. These will be instructive in assessing relative visibility and visual impact.

Architect Mark Wilcox will make a more detailed presentation on Wednesday and answer any specific questions not addressed in the enclosed material. He is also prepared to address the project's response to applicable design guidelines.

Note that the principal entrance to the garage will be located off St. John Street. The surface parking lot now occupied by the Eagles will be redeveloped to provide ingress and egress from the garage, as well as other site improvements. A secondary entrance will be located on the building's north elevation, which is accessed from a drive behind the MCRR office building. The north elevation of the garage will have the most direct visual relationship with the landmark structure. Here, the garage is viewed against the rear elevation of the MCRR office building, which is somewhat distinct from the building's more elaborate St. John Street façade.

### **Applicable Design Guidelines**

In reviewing the proposed development under the applicable site plan ordinance provision, the Board should be guided by the following language:

*"When any part of a proposed development is within 100 feet of any designated landmark, historic district or historic landscape district, ...such development shall be generally compatible with the major character-defining elements of the landmark, or portion of the district in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development. ...For the purposes of this provision, "compatible" design shall be defined as design which respects the established building patterns and visual characteristics that exist in a given setting and, at the same time, is a distinct product of its own time."*

The Board should first consider the major design characteristics of the historic MCRR office building and then determine whether the proposed development is generally compatible with one or more of those key characteristics. Design characteristics of the new building need not relate to specific features of the adjacent landmark, such as the use of brick and stone, to achieve compatibility. General characteristics, such as the relative “weightiness” of the historic structure, the tonal range of the building materials, the organization of the elevations, etc. might be considered in evaluating compatibility.

In addition to reviewing the preliminary design proposal under the “100-foot rule” provision, Planning staff and project consultants are interested in the Board’s input on the proposal’s response to design guidelines adopted by reference in the MMC Institutional Overlay Zone (IOZ). These guidelines were reviewed and approved by the Planning Board to guide future development within MMC’s expanded campus. See ATTACHMENT 1 for the IOZ design guidelines. As you will note, the design guidelines address such issues as long views of new buildings, the impact of rooftop appurtenances, the quality of façade materials, etc. In addition to general design guidelines, there are specific guidelines for any parking structures within the IOZ.

### **Preliminary Comments and Questions for Consideration**

\*Given the nature of the building type and the fact that key characteristics of the structure such as its setback from the street, building height and building length have been predetermined by zoning, the parameters of any design review are inevitably constrained. That said, factors such as the organization of the façade, relative transparency vs. solidity of the parking decks, character and combination of exterior materials, treatment of the entry, the presence of any rooftop appurtenances, etc. will play an important role in its overall design expression.

\*Given the position of the garage well back from the street edge and behind other buildings and given its size, is it preferable that it be approached as a “background building” that is relatively recessive in design or should its design be more assertive? To what extent might this building set the tone for redevelopment along this portion of St. John Street?

\*To what extent can/should the building relate to the historic structure, given the offset between the two buildings and the very eclectic nature of the surrounding context?

\*What characteristics of the historic structure are most appropriate to reinforce or respond to in the garage structure?

\*Given the fact that the north elevation of the garage will have the most direct visual relationship with the MCRR office building, how does the new structure relate to the rear elevation of the historic structure? Are there ways that the two elevations might better relate?

Are the proposed exterior materials of high quality and are they likely to age well? Is the color or tone of the material palette compatible with the historic structure and/or larger context?

## ATTACHMENTS

1. Adopted Design Guidelines applicable to proposed development within MMC's Institutional Overlay Zone
2. Cover letter from Jeff Sanders, MMC Chief Operating Officer
3. Existing and proposed aerial view of project site
4. Preliminary elevations, renderings, product information
5. Perspective views of garage in context,

## DESIGN GUIDELINES

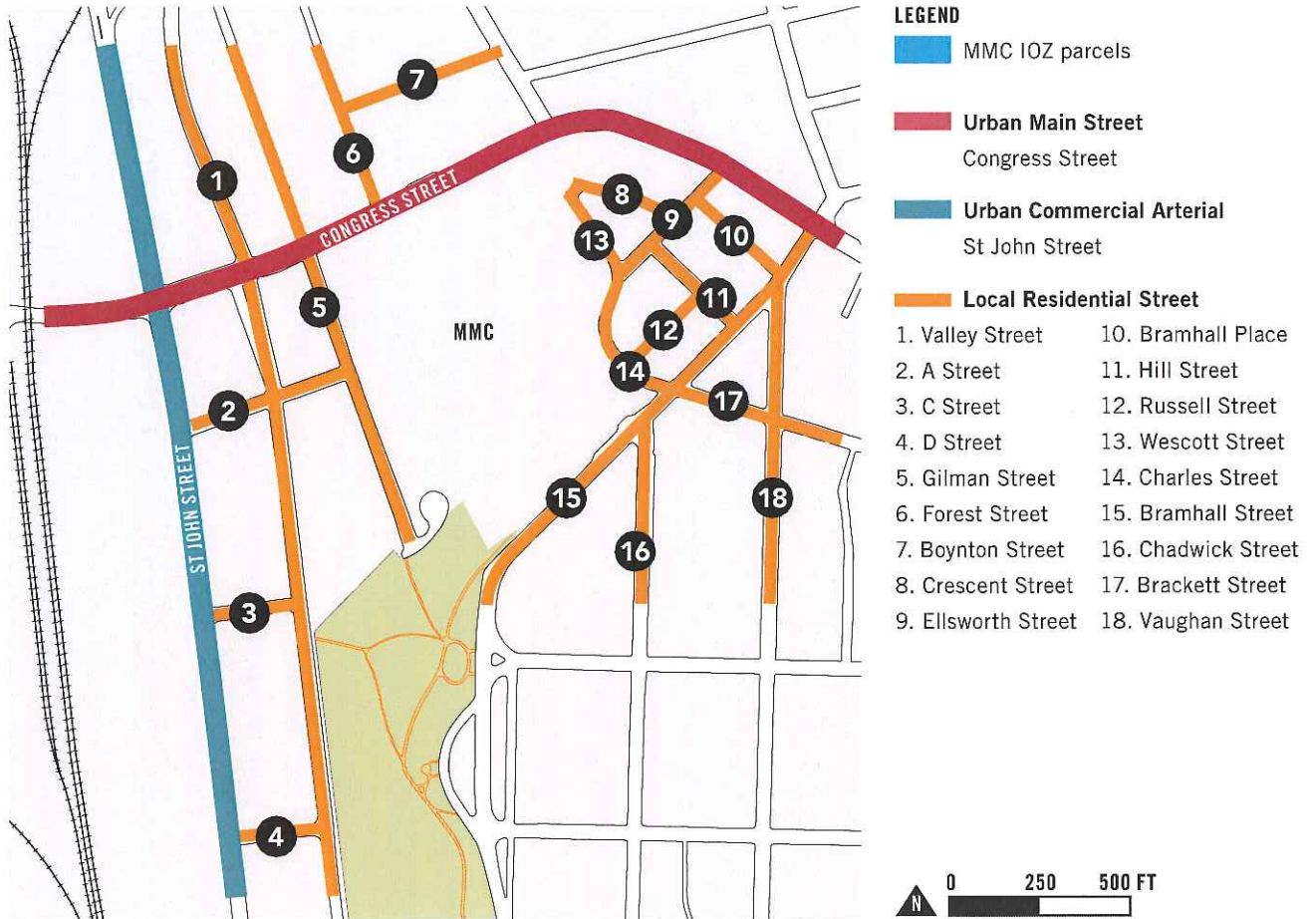
MMC has collaborated with the City of Portland planning staff and sought input from its neighbors to create context-specific "Design Guidelines" for future development within the IOZ boundary. These Guidelines, which are outlined below, are informed by design best practices seen in Portland, and in and around urban hospitals across the US; from City staff recommendations; and from information presented by neighbors in the various public forums held by MMC. They are intended to assist future development in the IOZ to meet the goals and vision for the MMC campus and create context-sensitive buildings.

### GENERAL GUIDELINES

MMC will follow these general guidelines for building design within the IOZ boundary:

1. New buildings will be designed to contribute to the campus vision and organizational goals identified in the Master Facility Plan and the Transportation Plan (see Chapters 2 and 3), and best practice design standards for healthcare.
2. The overall composition and experience of the campus will be considered for cohesive identity from approaches along Congress St and I-295.
3. Building entrances will be oriented toward, located adjacent to, or accessible from, a sidewalk in a public right-of-way to create a pedestrian-oriented environment.
4. Buildings designs will relate to and be compatible with the existing, or—in areas of change—planned character of residential and commercial neighbors. Design elements and characteristics to consider include:
  - » Building placement and relationship to the street
  - » Overall massing and scale
  - » Roof forms
  - » Proportion, directional expression, and composition of facades
  - » Rhythm of solids to voids
  - » Rhythm and proportion of openings
  - » Rhythm of entries and projections
  - » Relationship of materials, texture, and color
5. Façade materials of buildings will be of high quality, and contribute to an attractive public realm.
6. The design process will consider long views of new buildings including roofs and associated structures to minimize visual impacts and provide visual interest. Rooftop appurtenances will be either screened from view or integrated into the building design, and will not be visible from adjacent streets, Western Promenade, or the Congress Street approach. (The helipad cannot be screened for safety reasons.)
7. Vibrant, contributing and sustainable active ground floors will be provided to add activity and a sense of place to the priority node

**Fig.5.14** Typologies of Public Streets in and around MMC IOZ



identified in the City's Comprehensive Plan. **Fig.5.15 on page 118** illustrates zones along Congress St deemed to be most suitable for community-oriented uses / retail.

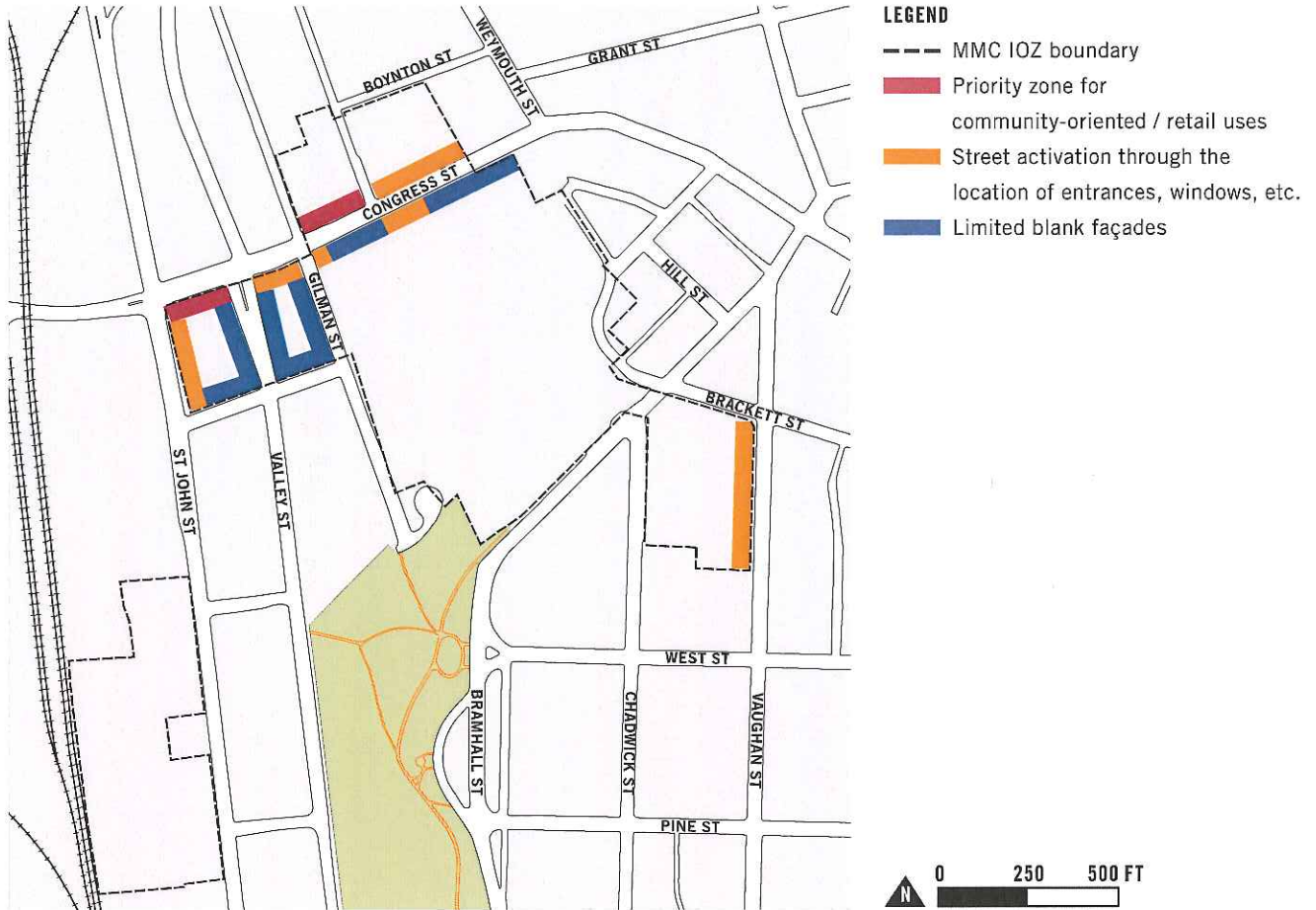
8. In areas where the occurrence of limited blank façades along public right-of-ways are unavoidable due to changes in topography or building use requirements, the following strategies

will be used to mitigate visual impact:

- » providing elements of visual interest along any blank walls facing public streets, and,
- » working with the City of Portland to ensure adequate lighting of public sidewalks to create a safe pedestrian experience.

**Fig.5.15 on page 118** illustrates potential locations of blank walls within the IOZ boundary.

**Fig.5.15** Frontage: Types of Activation



9. Any parking structure within the IOZ will:
- » screen views of cars from public rights-of-way;
  - » provide elements of architectural interest on upper floors to contribute positively to long views and gateway approaches; and,
  - » for garage structures within 20' of the public right-of-way, meet street activation intent according to street type (see **Fig.5.15** above).



## **BUILDING RELATIONSHIP TO PUBLIC STREET**

In walkable urban environments, buildings are designed with pedestrian scale and uses in mind. Buildings contribute to the public realm through the siting and design of street-facing façades, and of lower floors that engage with street-level activity.

A building's relationship to a public street should be informed by the typology of that street, which in turn is defined by the character of existing or planned development lining the street. MMC has identified three distinct typologies of streets within the MMC's IOZ boundary (see **Fig.5.14 on page 117**). Design guidelines for future redevelopment along these street types are outlined below.

### 1. Urban Main Street (Congress Street)

Congress St is considered by many to be Portland's "main street". The winding street is defined by "zero-lot line" developments that border the sidewalk, and a series of civic monuments and squares distributed along its length. The IDP planning process has identified an opportunity to extend this "main street" feel from the emergent Bramhall Square (at Bramhall and Congress Sts) all the way to the railroad crossing where Congress St emerges from the influence of the I-295 interchange. MMC aims to contribute positively to the regeneration of Congress St in this area by ensuring orderly redevelopment of abutting IOZ parcels.

MMC buildings abutting Congress St will be designed to:

- provide urban-levels of density;
- create an urban street wall that provides a sense of enclosure to the public realm;
- have their primary orientation towards Congress St;
- activate the public sidewalk with building entrances, lobbies, etc.;
- to the extent possible, given programmatic needs, provide visual interest and ensure pedestrian safety with views into and out of the building along the public sidewalk;
- to the extent possible, given programmatic needs, provide space for community-oriented uses such as services or retail that can be shared between MMC users, neighbors and the broader Portland community; and,
- support the existence of neighborhood amenities such as restaurants and other retail uses providing services to local residents and employees both during the day and evening hours.

The topography and orientation of Congress St in this zone, however, poses significant challenges to achieving some of these design goals. The steady, steep climb of the street makes it impractical for large footprint buildings to align ground floor windows with the rising profile of the sidewalk (see

**Fig.5.5 on page 106** for an analysis of building ground elevations). The east-west orientation of the street, combined with the more than 50-ft rise of Bramhall Hill south of Congress St, makes it challenging to provide an urban street wall that does not shade Congress St for most of the time (see shadow studies on page 124). To the extent possible, MMC buildings will utilize the general guidelines related to blank façades to mitigate these conditions (see page 117).

In addition to the guidelines listed above, buildings that have frontage on Congress St and that include parking components will activate portions of or place liner buildings along the ground floor facing Congress St. MMC has no plan to develop a stand-alone garage on Congress St as of the date of this IDP.

### 2. Urban Commercial Arterial (St John Street)

St John St is a significant arterial linking vehicular traffic between I-295 / Park Drive / Congress Street to the north, and Veterans Memorial Bridge / W Commercial Street to the south. The commercially-zoned street is flanked by a wide variety of uses that hint at its railroad-era origins (warehouses and workers' homes) as well as its current-day arterial use (strip centers and fast food restaurants). While it has some elements of a walkable street such as sidewalks and on-street parking, large stretches of the street prioritize the car with frequent curb-cuts, and street-facing parking lots.

MMC's IOZ boundary abuts St John Street between Congress and A Streets. MMC envisions this block to be redeveloped, in the long-term, in accordance with the Congress St design guidelines outlined on the previous pages. The new development will aim to provide architectural definition to the corner of Congress and St John Streets, and—to the extent possible—extend the character developed for the Congress St frontage along St John St.

### 3. Local Residential Street

The MMC IOZ boundary is crossed by and abuts a number of local streets that are lined with a wide variety of residential structures ranging from 3-4 story multi-family apartments on Boynton St to single-family mansions along the Western Promenade. During the IDP process, MMC has worked with the City of Portland planning staff, the Planning Board, and neighborhood representatives to identify a balanced approach to redevelopment along local streets that provides appropriate height transition from institutional to residential character. This approach is outlined in detail under "Transitional Zones" on page 110.

**Fig.5.16** Photographs illustrating existing character of streets in and around the MMC IOZ

**Urban Main Street (Congress Street)**



**Urban Commercial Arterial (St John Street)**



**Local Residential Street**



### CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN (CPTED)

MMC aims to create a safe environment for all in and around its campus. MMC will incorporate the following design strategies that have been demonstrated to deter crime:

- Providing a clean and aesthetically pleasing campus environment that is designed with vandal-resistant materials
- Providing clear and properly-sized signs in safe locations to ensure safe wayfinding
- Ensuring that paths from transit stops, bike storage areas, and parking areas to main pedestrian entrances are well-lit, with clear sight lines
- Designing street-level elevations to minimize potential hideouts
- To the extent possible, given clinical program demands, providing views in and out of building ground floors populated by users to serve as "eyes on the street"
- Generating foot traffic on public sidewalks with pedestrian entrances

### MITIGATING IMPACTS THROUGH DESIGN

MMC is committed to addressing any perceived negative impacts that campus development may have on adjoining neighborhoods. This includes actions to mitigate impacts of daily campus operations, which are discussed under "Operational Sustainability" on page 93. A plan for mitigating construction impacts is outlined, along with a plan for continuous neighborhood input and engagement, in the "Neighborhood Engagement" chapter on page 128. This section summarizes strategies that may be used, as appropriate, to minimize negative impacts of proposed new development.

#### Minimizing Shadow Impacts

In order to understand the potential shadow impact of proposed campus projects on surrounding properties, MMC has prepared detailed shadow studies during the Master Facility Planning process (see **Fig.5.17** through **Fig.5.20** on the following pages). The overall building heights were kept to a minimum to minimize shadow impacts in areas such as Congress St where street alignment and topographic changes contribute to longer shadows. The proposed Congress St Development (see "Short-Term Projects on page 44) was pulled back from the street to the extent possible to minimize this impact, while also providing a more generous public sidewalk that supports pedestrian activity in front of this new gateway structure.

### Context-Sensitive Lighting Design

The location and context of buildings are considered in the design of artificial lighting for new development. While a majority of this work is completed later during the design process and presented during Site Plan review, MMC has already incorporated some preliminary concepts related to lighting intensity into its Master Facility Plan. A key example is the concept design for the Congress St Development, which is intended to animate the Congress St frontage 24/7 with light emanating from its glazed circulation and waiting areas facing the street on the lower floors.

### Mitigating Wind Impact

Upon final design of applicable site plans, MMC will consult with the City of Portland's Arborist to selectively determine the placement of trees or other landscape features on any new landscape areas to minimize any wind impacts created by the mass of new development.

### Preserving and Enhancing Viewsheds

MMC understands the significance of historic and gateway viewsheds to the Portland community. The Maine General Hospital, a landmark civic building situated atop a hill, was designed to complement the sweeping views of the Fore River from the Western Promenade. Likewise, MMC will design new buildings along Congress St to provide an aesthetically pleasing gateway experience for all entering into the peninsula at this point.

MMC embraces the historic Western Promenade as a site from which to take in views of the countryside and the White Mountains, and a valuable open space amenity for campus users as well as for the broader community.

MMC has met with the Parks Department to review the potential impact of the proposed 222 St John St Garage to public views from the Western Promenade towards the White Mountains, and will work to mitigate potential impacts through design. MMC will also work to minimize potential impacts to the Maine Central Railroad Building as a designated historic landmark.

AH.2

# Memorandum Maine Medical Center




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To: Members of the City of Portland Historic Preservation Board

From: Jeff Sanders, Chief Operating Officer, MMC

Date: April 11, 2018

Re: St John St Employee Garage Project Review

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Maine Medical Center (MMC) is pleased to submit its proposed design for the St John St Employee Garage for an advisory review by the Historic Preservation Board.

### BACKGROUND

Maine Medical Center, recognized as a “Best Regional Hospital” by U.S. News and World Report for 2017-2018, is a complete health care resource for the people of Greater Portland and the entire State, as well as northern New England. Incorporated in 1868, MMC is the State’s largest medical center, licensed for 637 beds and employing nearly 8,000 people – roughly 2,000 of whom are Portland residents. MMC’s unique role as both a community hospital and a referral center requires an unparalleled depth and breadth of services, including an active educational program and a world-class biomedical research center. As a not-for-profit institution, Maine Medical Center provides nearly 23 percent of all the charity care delivered in Maine. MMC is a member of the MaineHealth system, a family of health care services in northern New England ([www.mmc.org](http://www.mmc.org)).

In early 2017, Maine Medical Center (MMC) applied for a zoning amendment to create an MMC-specific Institutional Overlay Zone (IOZ) to allow MMC to modernize and expand their overall campus. The IOZ is available to the City’s four major medical and higher education campuses where an improved regulatory structure is needed to facilitate a consistent, predictable growth management process. The IOZ requires eligible institutions to prepare an Institutional Development Plan (IDP), a standalone document that describes the institution’s tentative plans for the future, in addition to identifying a regulatory framework that establishes the parameters to allow each institution to grow as envisioned. In November 2017, the City of Portland City Council adopted an MMC-specific IOZ regulatory framework into the City’s Land Use Code.

### WHY WE’RE ASKING FOR YOUR REVIEW

MMC is preparing to submit a Level III Site Plan application, in compliance with the IOZ regulatory framework, to the City of Portland’s Planning Department for construction of a free-standing employee parking garage at the site of an existing surface parking lot at 222 St. John Street. The proposed employee garage is within 100 feet of the Maine Central Railroad General Office Building located at 222 St. John Street which was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1988.

MMC is submitting the proposed design to the Historic Preservation Board for an advisory review to assist the Planning Board in compliance with Article 5 of the City of Portland Land Use Code, Section 14-526 (d).5.b Design Standards, Historic Resources, Adjacency which states:

*“Development adjacent to designated landmarks, historic districts or historic landscape districts: when any part of a proposed development is within one hundred (100) feet of any designated landmark, historic district.... or historic landscape district, such development shall be generally compatible with the major character-defining elements of the landmark... “compatible” design shall be defined as design which respects the established building patterns and visual characteristics that exist in a given setting and, at the same time, in a distinct product of its own time...to aid the planning board in its deliberations, historic preservation staff shall provide a written analysis of the proposed development’s immediate context, identifying the major character-defining elements and any established building patterns that characterize the context.”*

Our presentation on April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018 will detail how the proposed project is generally compatible with the major character defining elements of the designated landmark. The Historic Preservation Board is requested to provide a review and written summary of the project to the Planning Board. Attached to this memo is a part of our presentation that includes renderings of the proposed St John St employee garage for your consideration prior to the April 18<sup>th</sup> presentation.

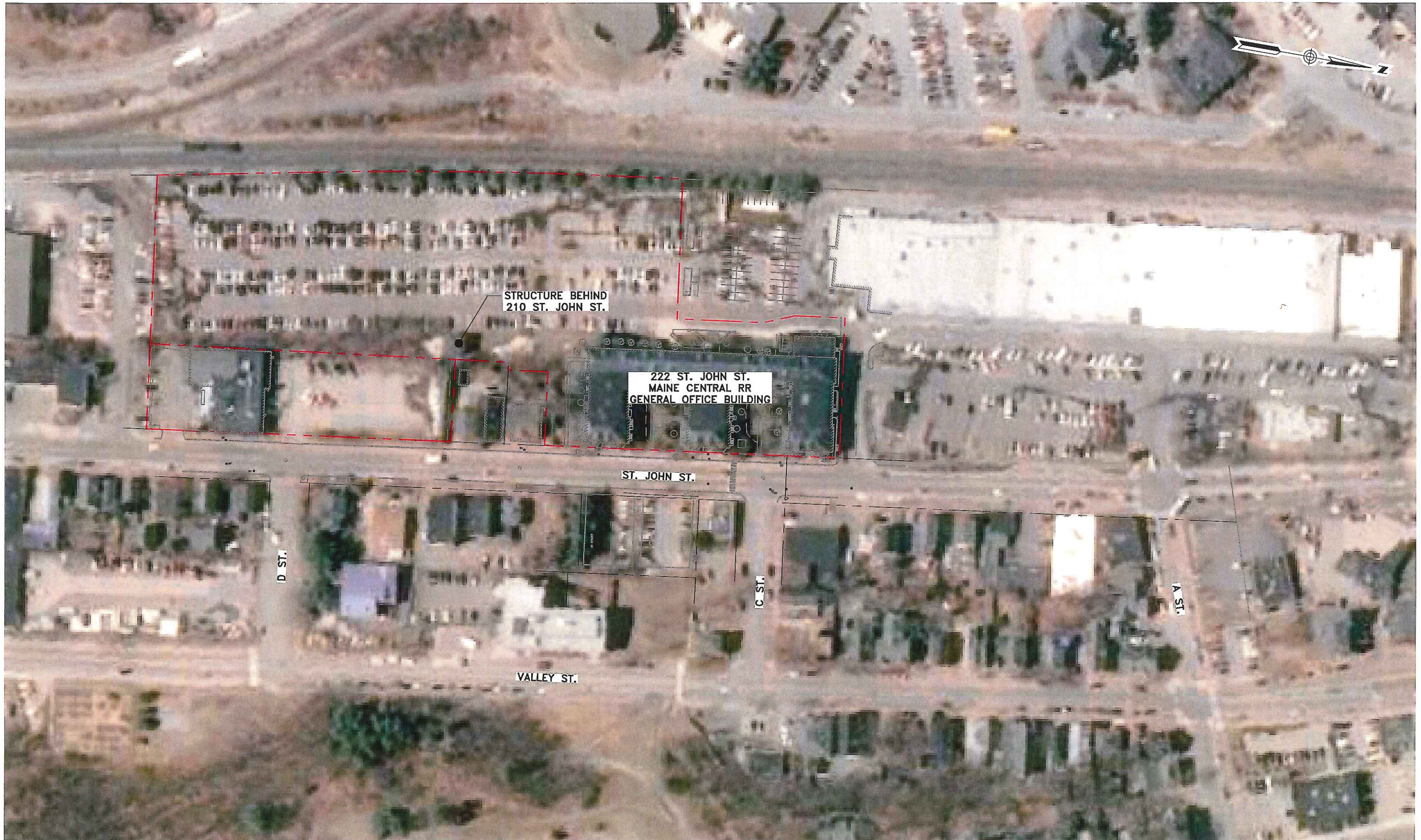


FIGURE 1 EXISTING CONDITIONS



FIGURE 2 PROPOSED CONDITIONS

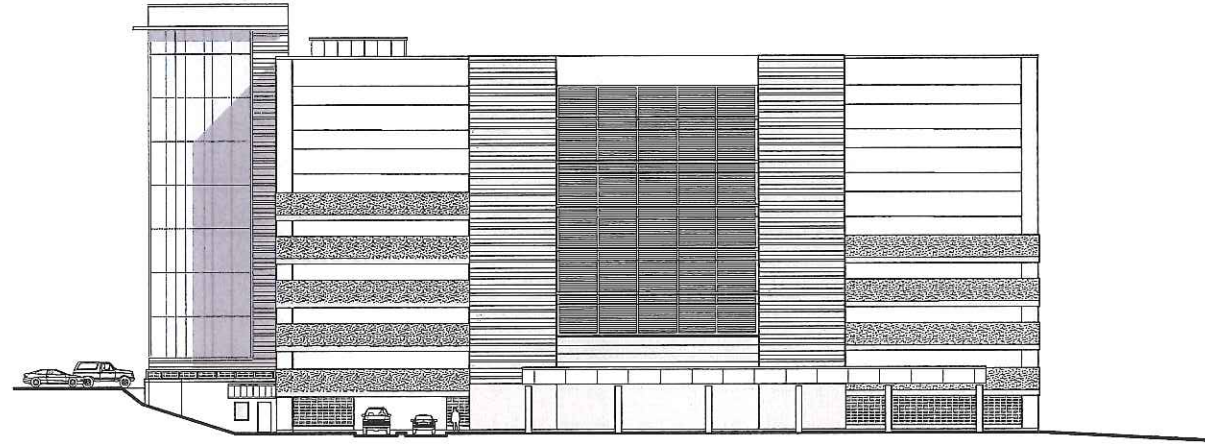
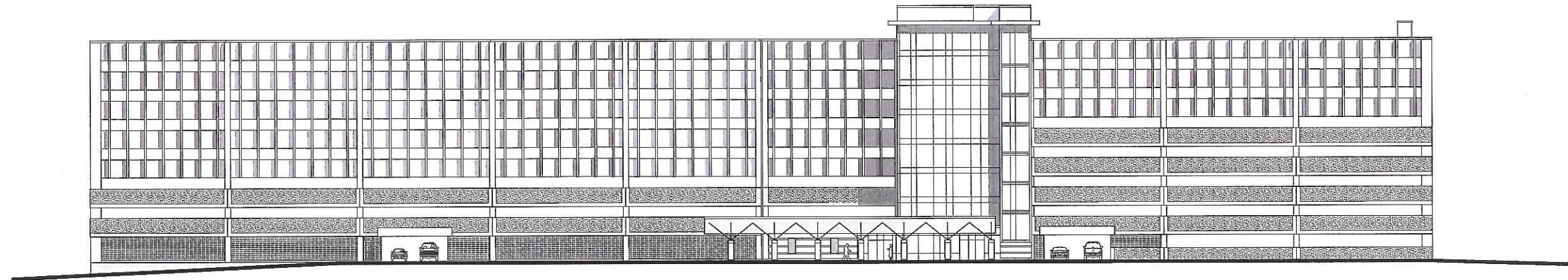


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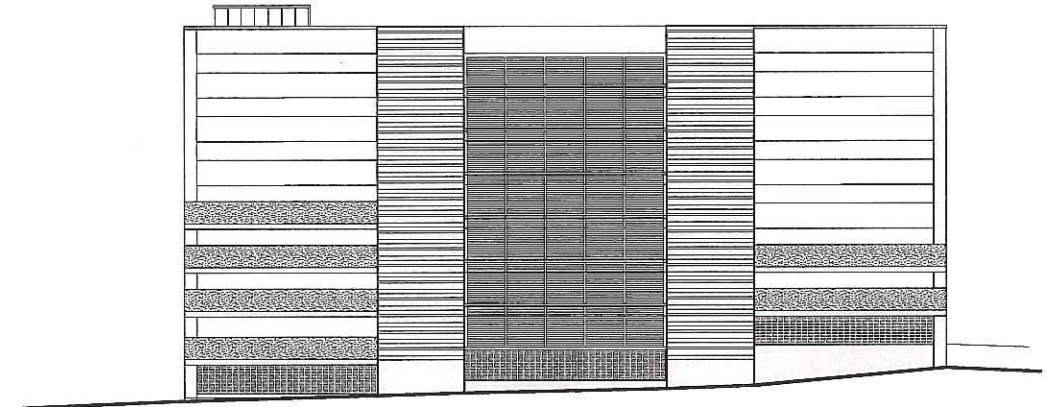
Winton Scott Architects  
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207 774 4811  
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EAST

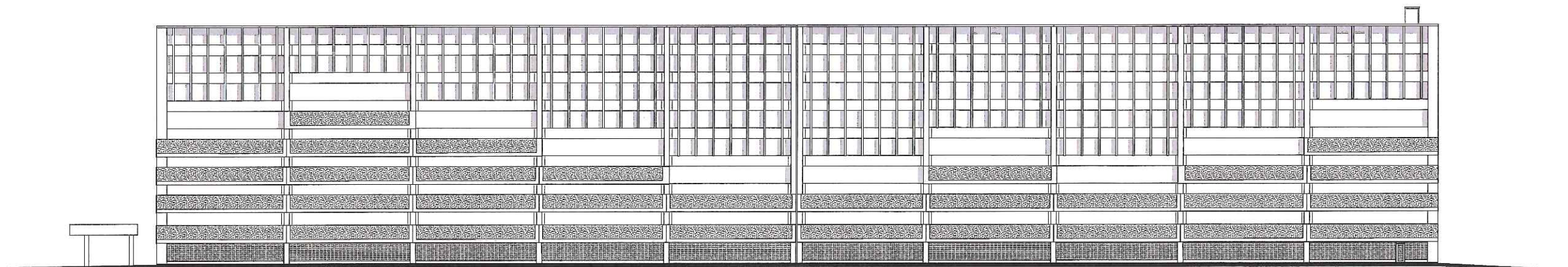


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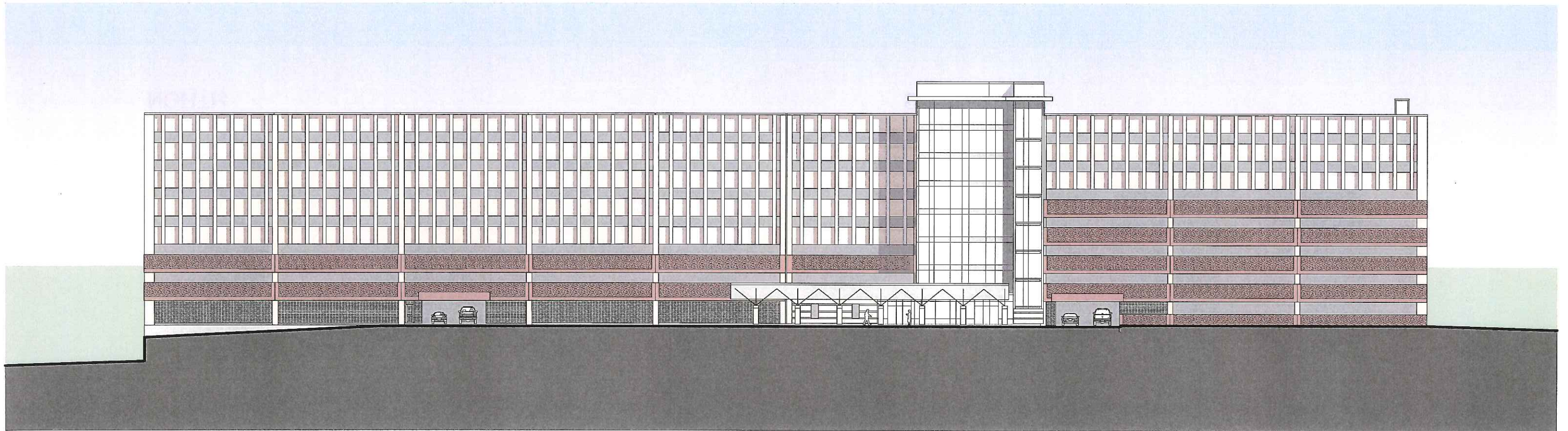


WEST

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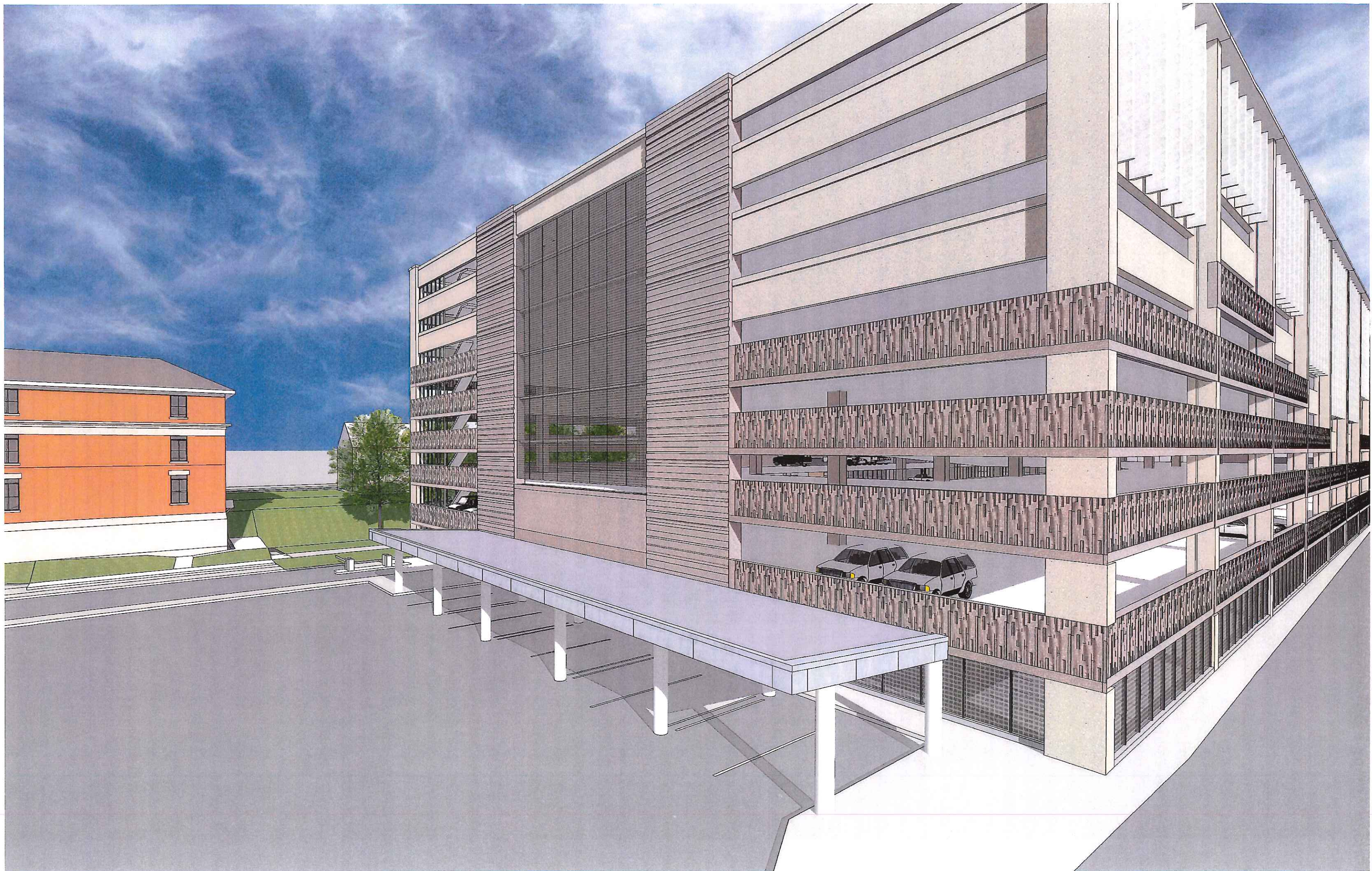
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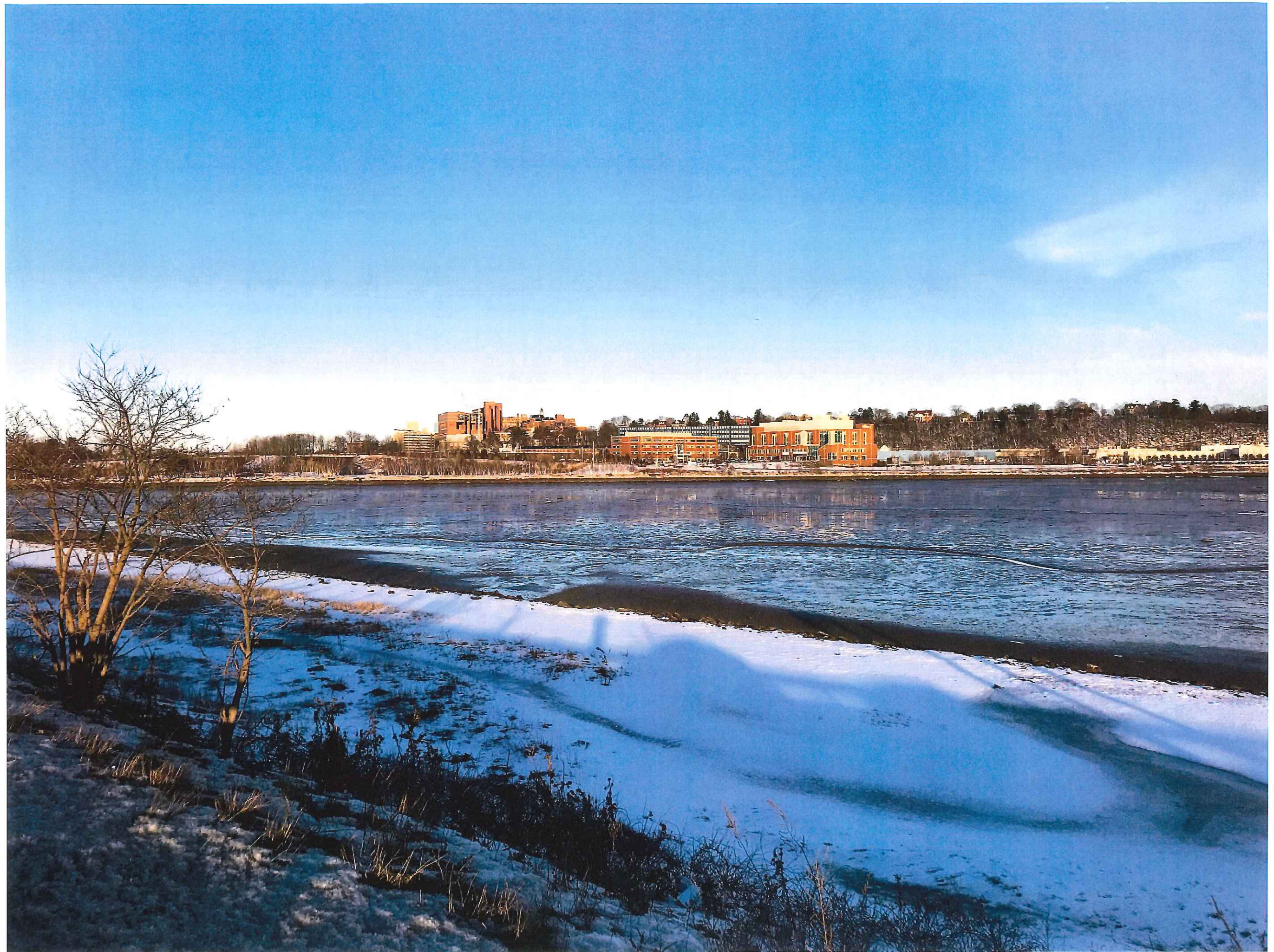
EAST ELEVATION





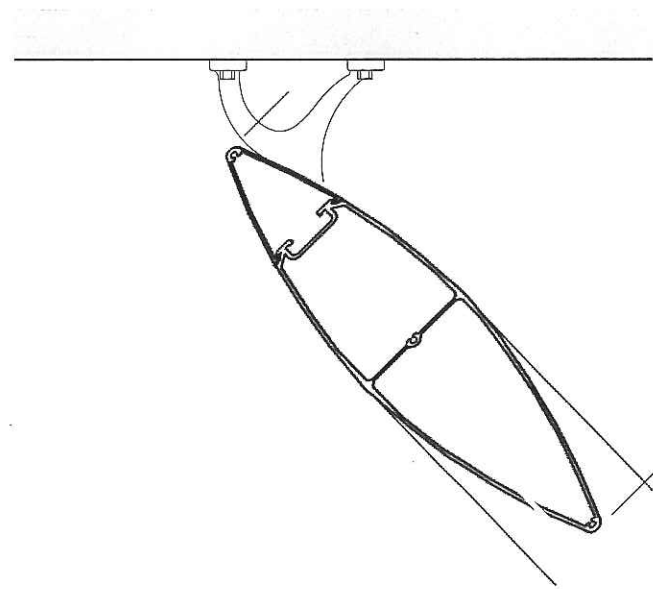




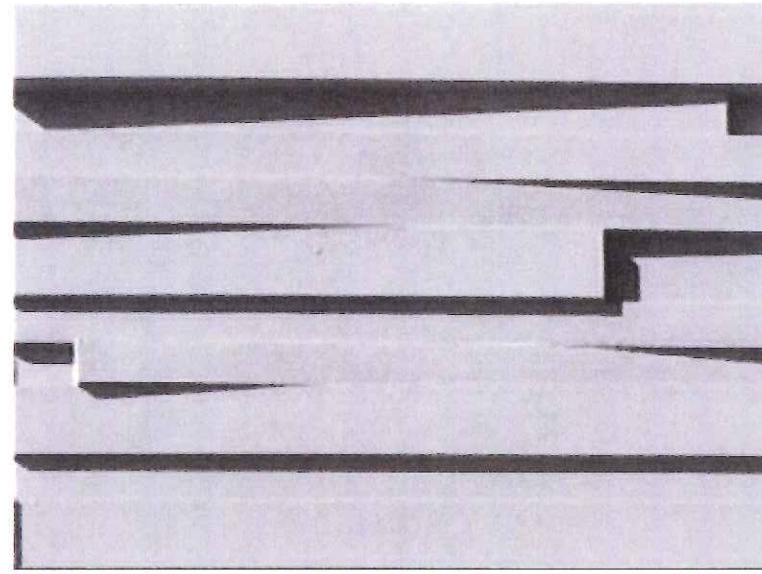




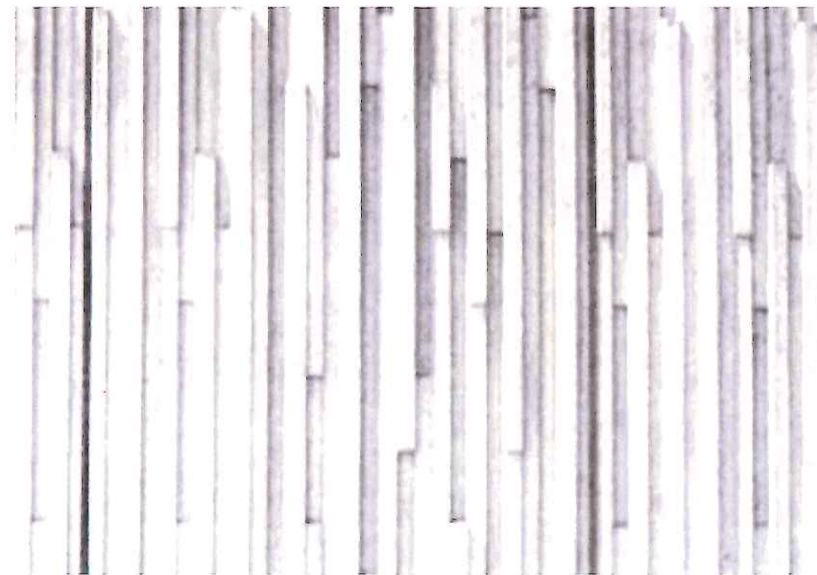




SUN CONTROL FIN



SHEAR WALL TEXTURE



LOWER SPANDRELS TEXTURE



SECURITY GRILLES

# 222 St. John Street Employee Garage Views & Context

**Mark Wilcox**

Maine Registered Architect

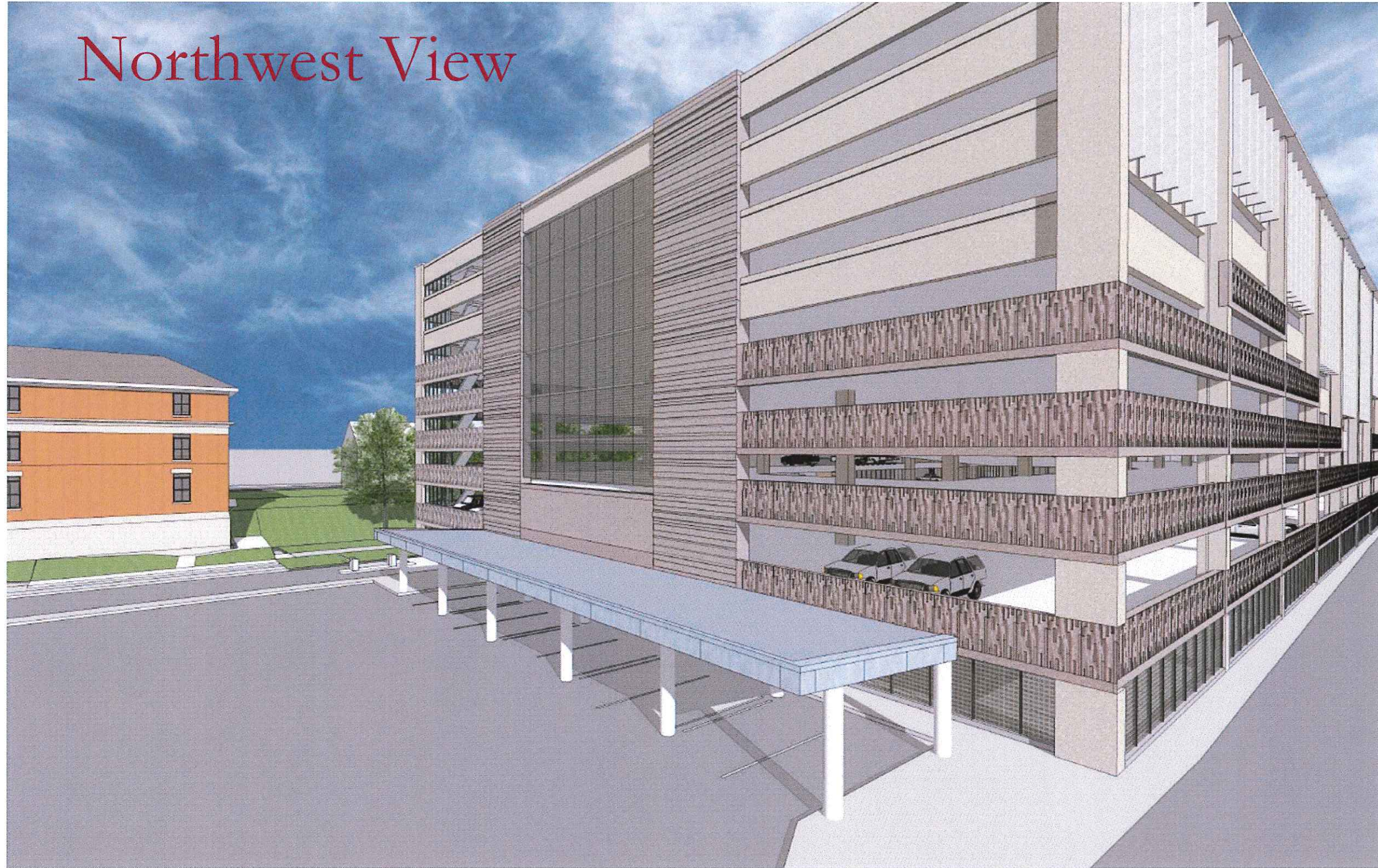
Winton Scott Architects

**Be a role model. Take responsibility. Set high  
Embrace change. Be an active listener. standards.  
Act with kindness and compassion.**

# View from Rear Parking Lot



# Northwest View



# View from Shopping Center



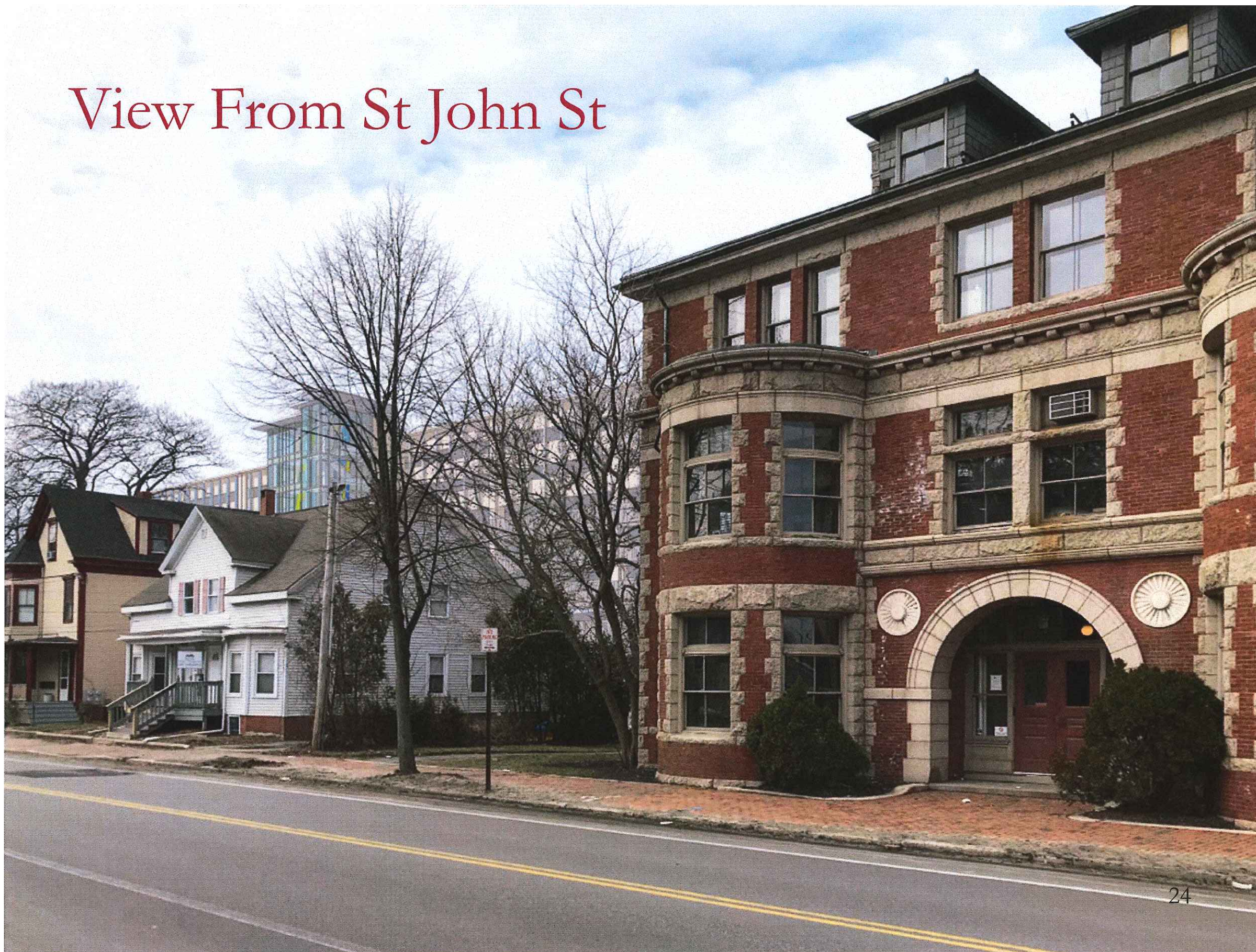
View From A St & St John St



View From St John St @  
METRO Garage

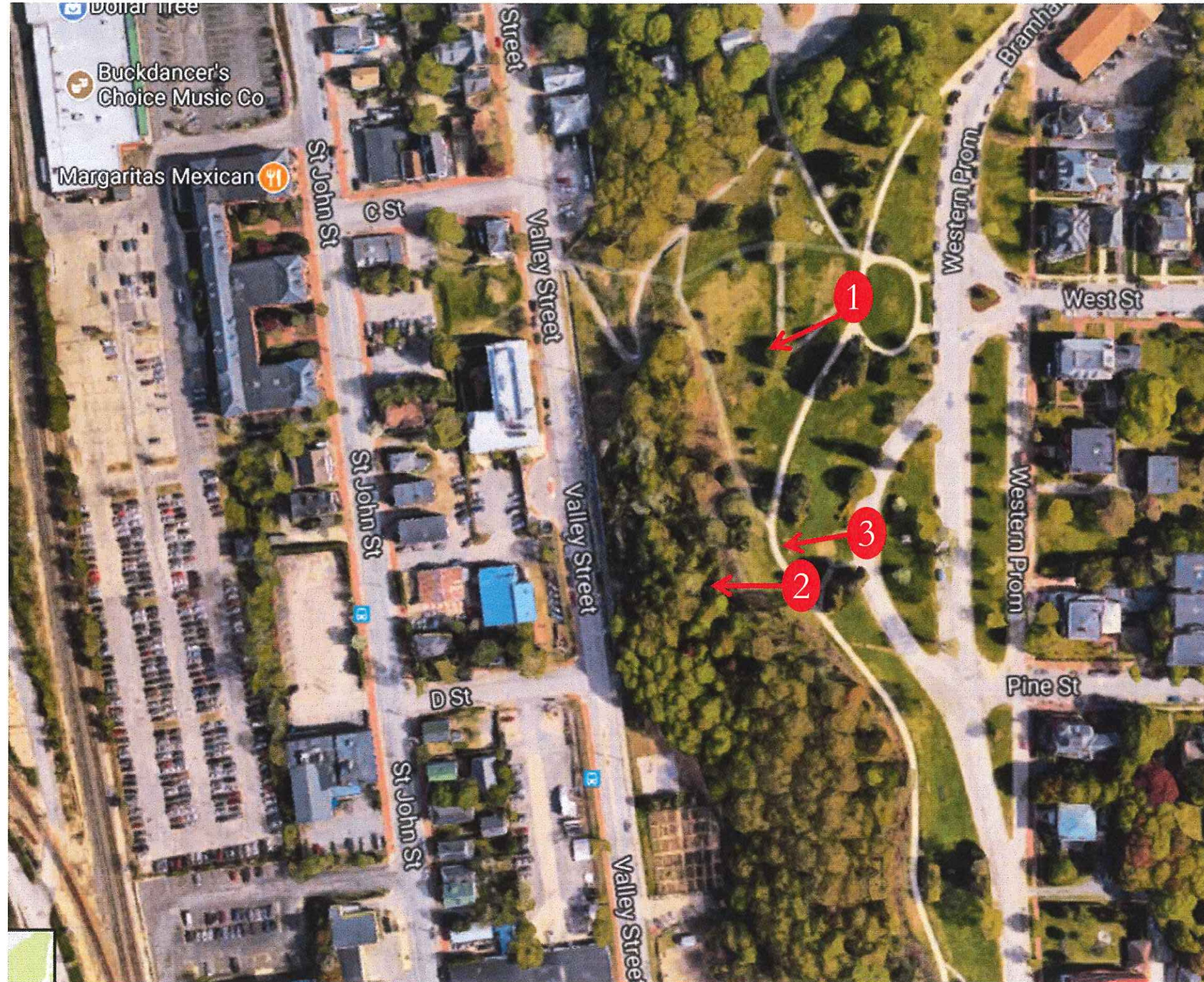


# View From St John St

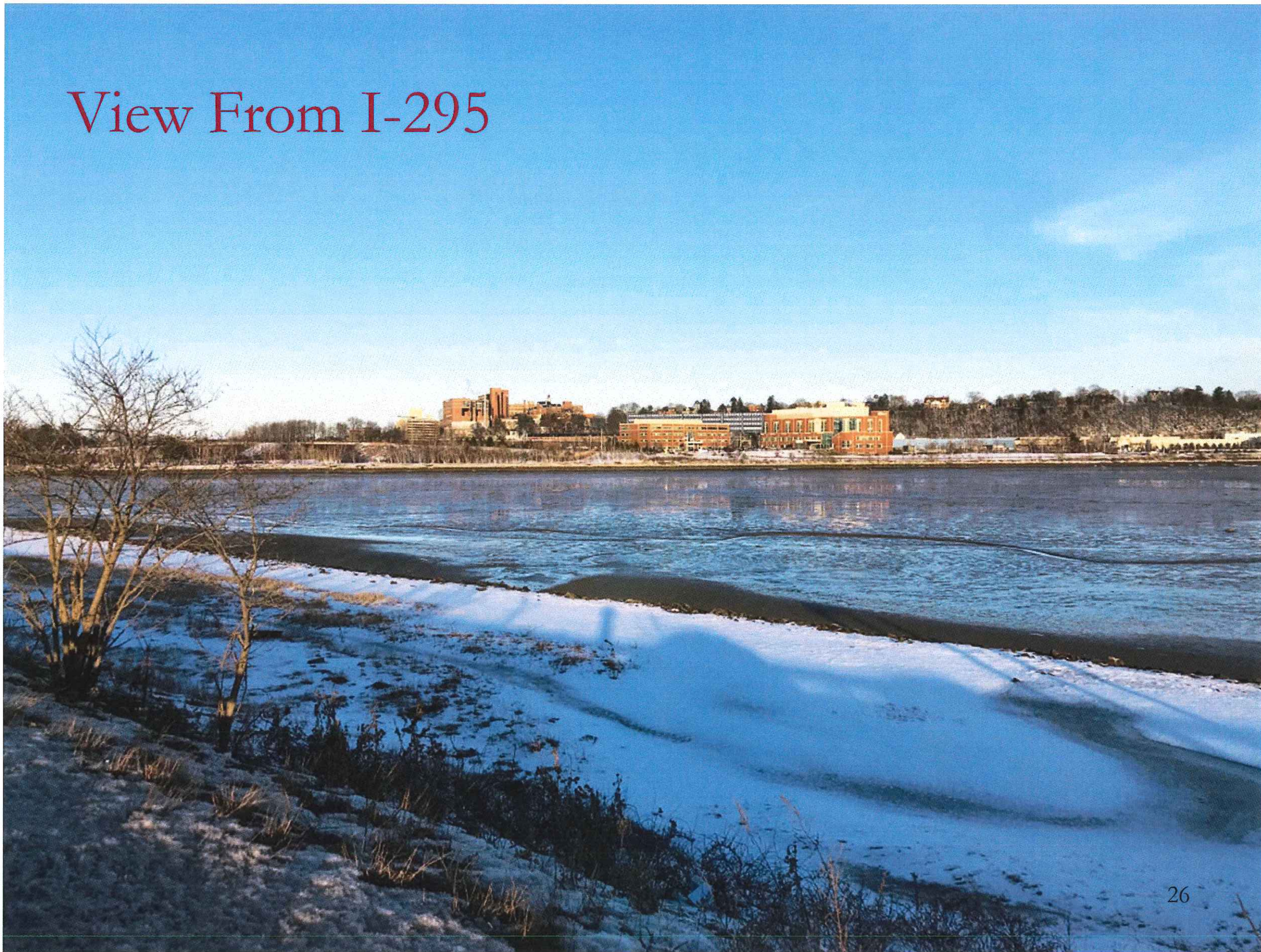




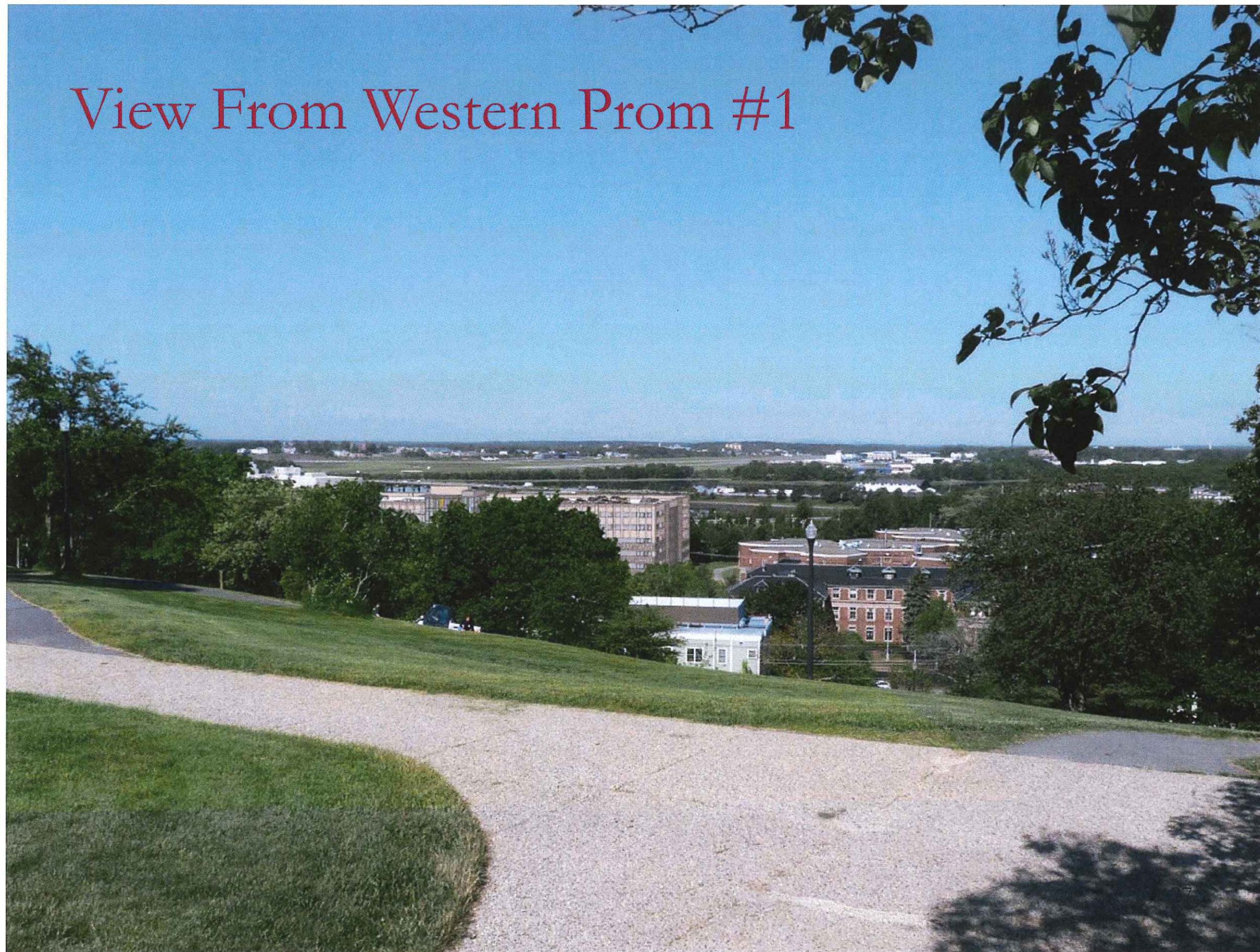
# West Prom Views



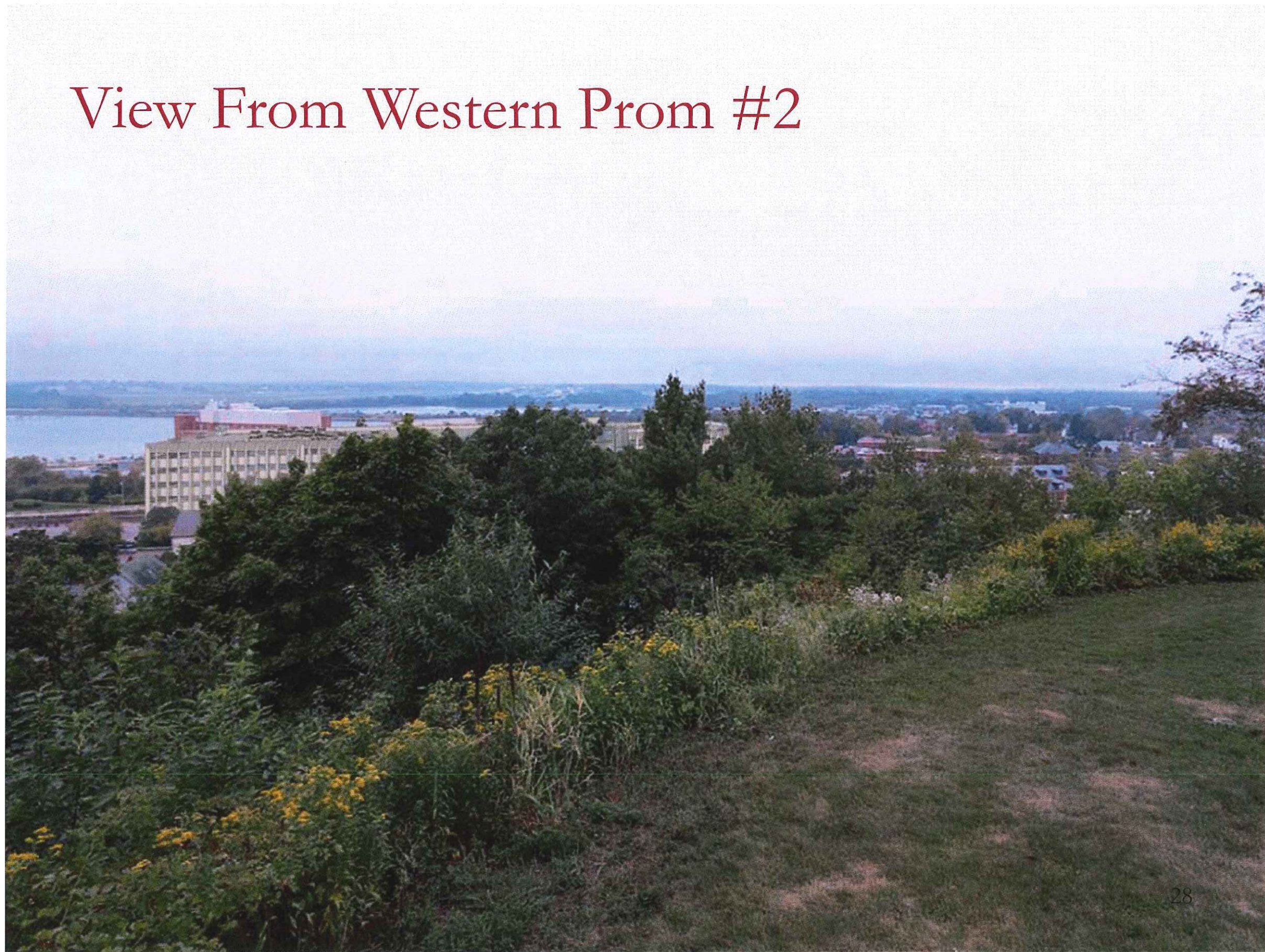
# View From I-295



View From Western Prom #1



# View From Western Prom #2



# View From Western Prom #3

