



MERIDEN TOD



THE HUB – MERIDEN'S DOWNTOWN CENTRAL PARK

Milone & MacBroom, Inc., with the assistance of AECOM and the City of Meriden, is currently developing plans for the 14-acre Hub property that balance the need for economic redevelopment with flood control.

The area known as "The Hub" was constructed in the 1970s in a low-lying area bounded by State, Pratt, East Main, and Mill Streets in central downtown Meriden, in the heart of the Harbor Brook floodplain. Demolition of a 230,000 square foot former shopping mall building took place in spring 2007, providing the city with a "clean slate" to begin its redevelopment work.

The Hub Reuse Committee was formed by the city and consists of city staff, members of the city's Flood Control Implementation Agency, politicians, and local business leaders interested in the city's economic redevelopment. The city's Hub Reuse Committee was tasked with coordinating and balancing the needs for flood control with economic redevelopment for the city.

The proposed Hub redevelopment plan incorporates planned development pads that will be reserved for future economic redevelopment opportunities that may include commercial office space, downtown upscale housing, and urban streetscape elements, all of which will serve to connect key elements in downtown Meriden. These future development pads are plots of land within the park to be temporarily developed as community spaces that will have the ability to host a variety of activities including craft/art fairs, farmers' markets, and seasonal ice skating. The river, which is proposed to be removed from the underground concrete culvert in which it is currently housed and restored into an open channel stream habitat, will become a feature of the new park. A network of walking trails, intermediate walking or jogging loops, and a designated multiuse path portion of the Harbor Brook linear trail system will be slightly depressed into the terrain and carefully planned to promote the use of the park by multiple user groups. Several entrance gateways into the park are proposed, including an overlook plaza at East Main Street that will provide views of a proposed architectural pedestrian bridge and "great lawn." The "great lawn" will be set approximately five feet below the grade of the surrounding streets. This lawn area will be primarily used as a passive recreational area for picnicking and relaxing and is also dimensionally suitable to accommodate temporary events such as the recently popular "Big Top Circus" venue.

The proposed pedestrian bridge will provide a mid-block crossing over the newly created flood control park and stream channel, creating a connection from Pratt Street to the future location of a new intermodal transportation center on State Street. A main entrance plaza to the park will be strategically located at the five-way intersection of Pratt Street and East Main Street, potentially incorporating a whimsical and historical take on the silver plating industry that once dominated this area with the transformation of historic machinery into modern-day sculpture.

An "International Plaza" at the corner of Pratt and Mill Streets will celebrate Meriden's diversity while providing flood storage elevations through a series of curve-linear oversized seating steps that define a unique urban plaza space. A lawn amphitheater and outdoor performing arts center is proposed for the State Street and Mill Street quadrangle of the park and will serve as a main attraction for the newly created open space. Also to be constructed as part of the project is an attractive area for parking proposed along Pratt Street to accommodate park/event users.