





CHAPTER 2

# COMMUNITY PRIORITIES & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES



Artwork by David Allyn

A successful planning initiative hinges on the ability to translate the hopes and dreams of a community into real-world, actionable items that can be taken as individual steps to reaching a common neighborhood vision. This requires an iterative process to continuously evaluate and re-evaluate priorities to ensure they support a unified vision for the neighborhood. The community priorities identified here have been distilled down from the immense volume of individual comments, questions, and feedback collected throughout the planning process.

The following community priorities, or overarching goals of this plan, have been created based on input from hundreds of residents, business and property owners, community leaders, and stakeholders. Each community priority consists of several strategies and associated action items. Together, this collection creates a clear picture of what the vision for the future of the Woonasquatucket Corridor is and how that vision can begin to be implemented.

Improve Sustainability and Resiliency

Support and Grow the Existing Economic Cluster  
around Arts, Food, and Makers

Preserve and Create Affordable Space

Improve Access and Connectivity

Enhance and Maintain Public Spaces and the  
Woonasquatucket River

In order to maintain flexibility throughout the life of this plan, it is important to take each goal on its own merits when pursuing projects and opportunities for implementation and make informed judgements about meeting the intent of a given idea. By its very nature, the aspirational qualities the Vision Plan require it to be greater than the sum of its parts, in much the same way that a neighborhood itself is more than just a collection of individual buildings.







# IMPROVE SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY





2.1.1

# Remediate Catalytic Brownfield Sites

Establishing remediation and redevelopment strategies for six catalyst brownfield sites emerged as a central priority during this planning process. The six catalyst sites were selected for their importance in shaping the future of the Woonasquatucket Corridor and their potential to be transformative if redeveloped in line with both the Corridor-wide community priorities and more specific development principles for each site outlined in Chapter 3.

The accompanying diagram shows the type of contamination found on each site and the recommended action steps required to proceed with development on each site.

Several financial resources are currently available to fund assessment and remediation of brownfields sites in the Woonasquatucket Corridor. In 2014, Rhode Island voters approved a \$5 million bond to fund RIDEM’s Brownfields Remediation and Economic Development Fund. In 2016, two awards were secured specifically for the Project Area: the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank secured an \$820,000 award from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields Revolving Fund and RIDEM secured a \$400,000 award from the EPA Targeted Brownfield Assessment Program. These three programs provide readily-available resources to assess and remediate contaminated soils in the Woonasquatucket Corridor. The City should partner with property owners to take advantage of these financial resources.

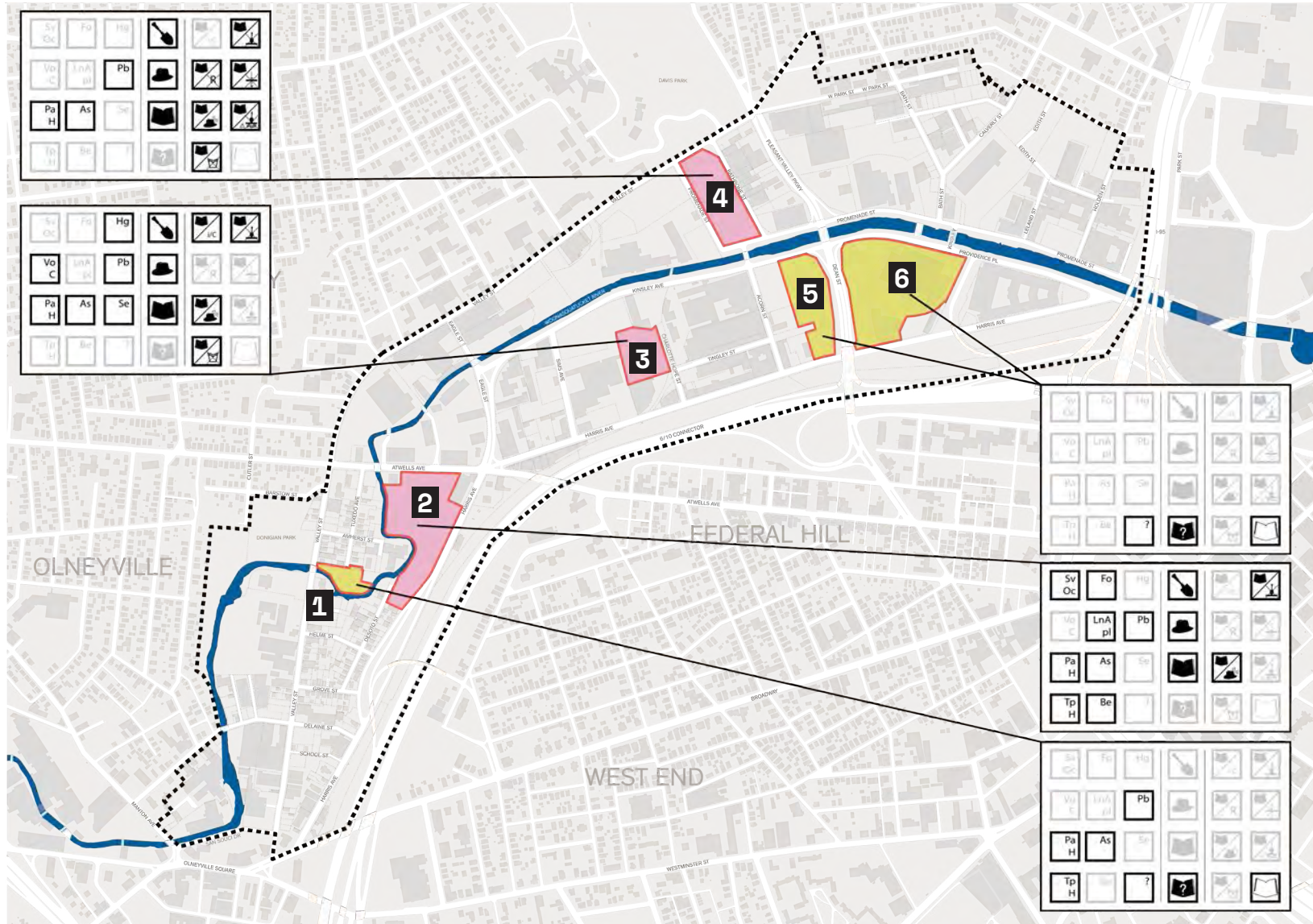
**Action**  
*Pursue additional brownfields assessment and remediation grant opportunities to replenish and sustain current funding levels available to properties within the Woonasquatucket Corridor.*

**Timeframe**  
*Near term*

**Action**  
*Conduct direct outreach to property owners to raise awareness about owner liability and available cleanup resources, and invite owners to participate in the implementation of the Vision Plan. Where appropriate, inform property owners about Limited Design Investigations (LDI) as a means to reduce the cost burden of conducting brownfield assessments.*

**Timeframe**  
*Near term*





### CATALYTIC SITES

- Stable Condition
- Unknown Condition
- Poor Condition

### CATALYST SITES

- 1** NATERENO SALVAGE LOT  
Owner: Caesar Natereno
- 2** GE BASEWORKS  
Owner: General Electric Company
- 3** PRA PARCEL  
Owner: Providence Redevelopment Agency
- 4** NARRAGANSETT BAY COMMISSION  
Owner: Narragansett Bay Commission
- 5** PROVIDENCE JOURNAL WEST  
Owner: The Providence Journal Company
- 6** PROVIDENCE JOURNAL EAST  
Owner: LMG Rhode Island Holdings Inc.

### ICON DESCRIPTIONS

#### CONTAMINANT FINDINGS

<b>Sv</b> <b>Oc</b> Semi-Volatile Organic Compounds	<b>Fo</b> Fuel Oil	<b>Hg</b> Mercury
<b>Vo</b> <b>C</b> Volatile Organic Compounds	<b>LnA</b> <b>pl</b> Light non-aqueous phase liquid	<b>Pb</b> Lead
<b>Pa</b> <b>H</b> Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons	<b>As</b> Arsenic	<b>Se</b> Selenium
<b>Tp</b> <b>H</b> Total petroleum hydrocarbons	<b>Be</b> Beryllium	<b>?</b> Contaminants Unknown (No Records)

#### REMEDIATION STATUS

Soil excavated
Soil capped and/or engineered controls put in place
Environmental Land Use Restrictions created
Remediation Status Unknown (No Records)

#### ENVIRONMENTAL LAND USE RESTRICTIONS

Industrial or commercial use only	Soil disturbance prohibited
Residential use prohibited	Infiltration through contaminated soils prohibited
Maintenance of cap or engineered controls	Subsurface construction above contaminated groundwater prohibited
Drinking of groundwater prohibited	Environmental Land Use Restrictions not applied (No Records)



2.1.2

## Plan for Sea Level Rise and Inland Flooding

The Woonasquatucket River corridor faces increasing threats from nature, both from the daily stresses of tidal influences and the more infrequent shocks of storm events and flooding – both anticipated to worsen over time due to the predicted impacts of climate change and sea level rise. Like many streams and rivers in similar post-industrial areas, much of the Woonasquatucket River was reshaped around the turn of the last century to facilitate industrial uses, constraining and channelizing the river’s formerly natural alignment and cross-section. Rivers that constrain flows within a uniform cross-section cannot realize the natural benefits of flows able to access a floodplain during larger storms. When larger flows are confined to a uniform section, excessive velocities, and associated shear stresses also translate into sometimes damaging conditions to the river’s bottom and lower banks. In addition to manipulation of the cross-section over time, the hardening of vegetated surfaces within the highly sensitive Woonasquatucket riverfront buffer has dramatically altered hydrology, water quality, and wildlife habitat.

The vision for a resilient Woonasquatucket River Corridor is a framework for growth consistent with the community’s vision for its future while minimizing risk from external environmental forces. Strategies to improve the health and resiliency of the Woonasquatucket Corridor were developed by the engineering team during the design workshop, including a range of interventions that could be encouraged at strategic locations along the River.

“Fix the  
flooding,  
please.”

### Low Impact Development, LID

Low Impact Development includes a variety of practices that mimic or preserve natural drainage processes to manage stormwater. LID practices typically retain rain water and encourage it to soak into the ground rather than allowing it to run off into ditches and storm drains where it would otherwise contribute to flooding and pollution problems. - EPA



## Watershed / District: Where should investment be prioritized?

Where possible, direct development and redevelopment investment to higher, safer ground.

Encourage development and redevelopment within the current and predicted future floodplain to utilize adaptive building approaches to prepare for and embrace water, such as raising first floor elevations and critical infrastructure, edge fortification, and floodproofing.

Make in-stream channel improvements to return the Woonasquatucket River to a more meandering pattern, return floodplain areas, and create wetlands.

Identify opportunities for district-scale stormwater management to help manage inland flooding. "Floodplain parks" can provide significant environmental benefit while also providing high value and visibility as usable public open space.

Protect, restore, and reconnect natural resources to revegetate/ reforest riverbank buffers and improve wildlife habitat.

## Block, Street, & Building: How should the corridor grow?

Encourage Low Impact Development (LID) as a preferred site design strategy, minimize impervious surfaces where possible, and utilize green infrastructure (GI) practices such as permeable pavement and bioretention to filter and absorb stormwater.

Integrate depaving, tree planting, and other GI practices into upcoming public infrastructure investments such as the Woonasquatucket River Greenway and other streetscape and park projects.

Coordinate LID design strategies with soil remediation requirements. Typically a "clean cap" of a specified depth of clean fill material is required where soil and/or water contamination from previous land uses is present above specified thresholds. Typically, GI stormwater management practices can function effectively as filters when part of an engineered clean cap—sometimes requiring an impermeable liner with an underdrain to limit infiltration.

Prioritize maintenance of stormwater infrastructure, including more regular inspections and cleaning of catch basins and culverts.





The Woonasquatucket has areas naturally suited for improvements to handle stormwater events, including this area at the bend in the River behind the GE Baseworks Site.

**Action**

Develop a stormwater master plan for the Woonasquatucket Corridor that analyzes existing conditions and provides recommendations for proposed policy updates, regulatory changes, and physical improvements, including conceptual engineering and cost estimates for specific capital projects.

**Timeframe**  
Near-term

**Action**

Incorporate green infrastructure (GI) into extensions of the Woonasquatucket Greenway. Three segments of the Greenway are currently in the planning stage: San Souci Drive, Gotham Greens, and Kinsley/Promenade. These three capital projects are imminent and provide a key opportunity to implement LID strategies on a neighborhood scale.

**Timeframe**  
Near-term

**Action**

Investigate updates to the City's stormwater management requirements, standard details, and Zoning Ordinance to encourage Low-Impact Development and GI practices.

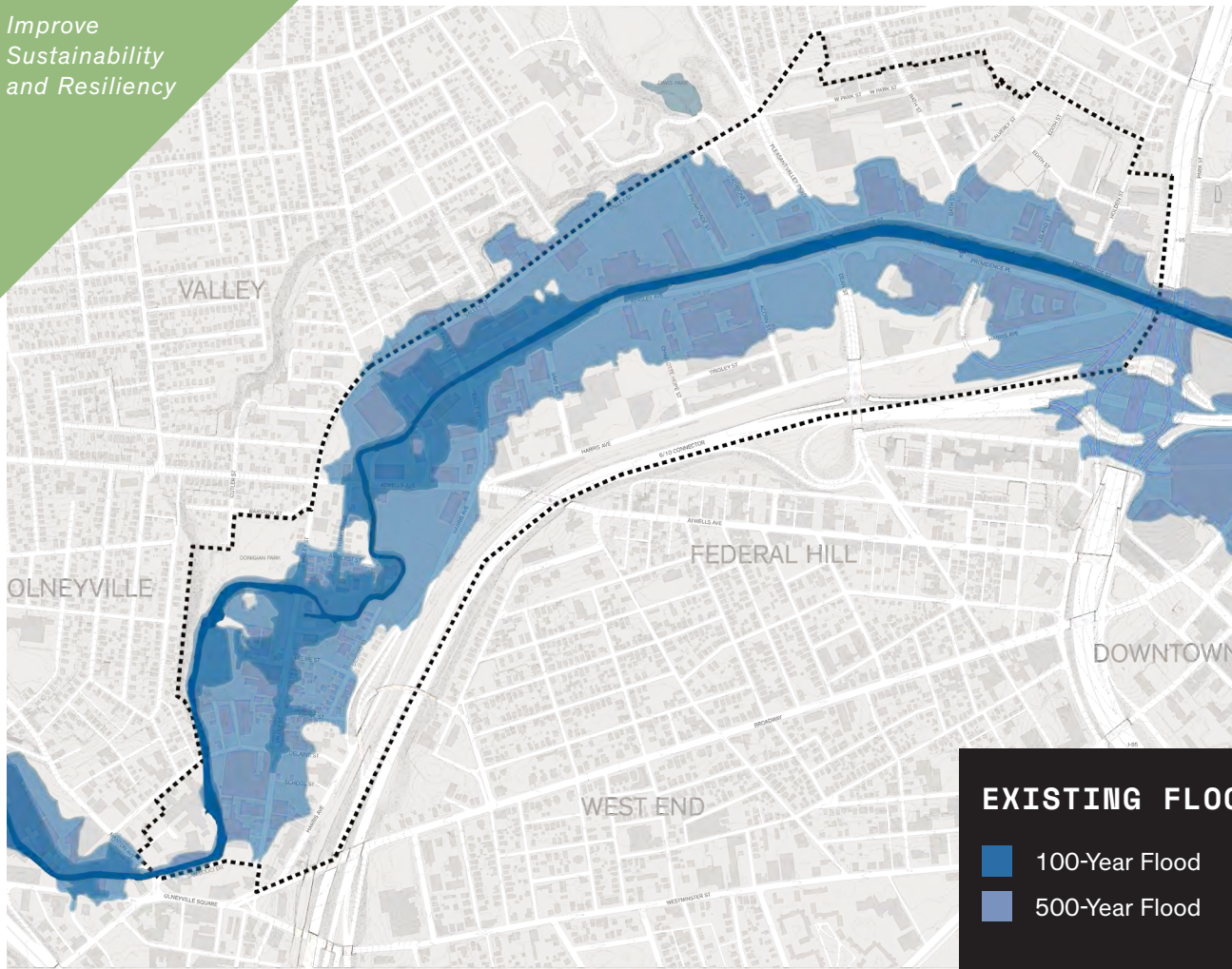
**Timeframe**  
Near-term

**Action**

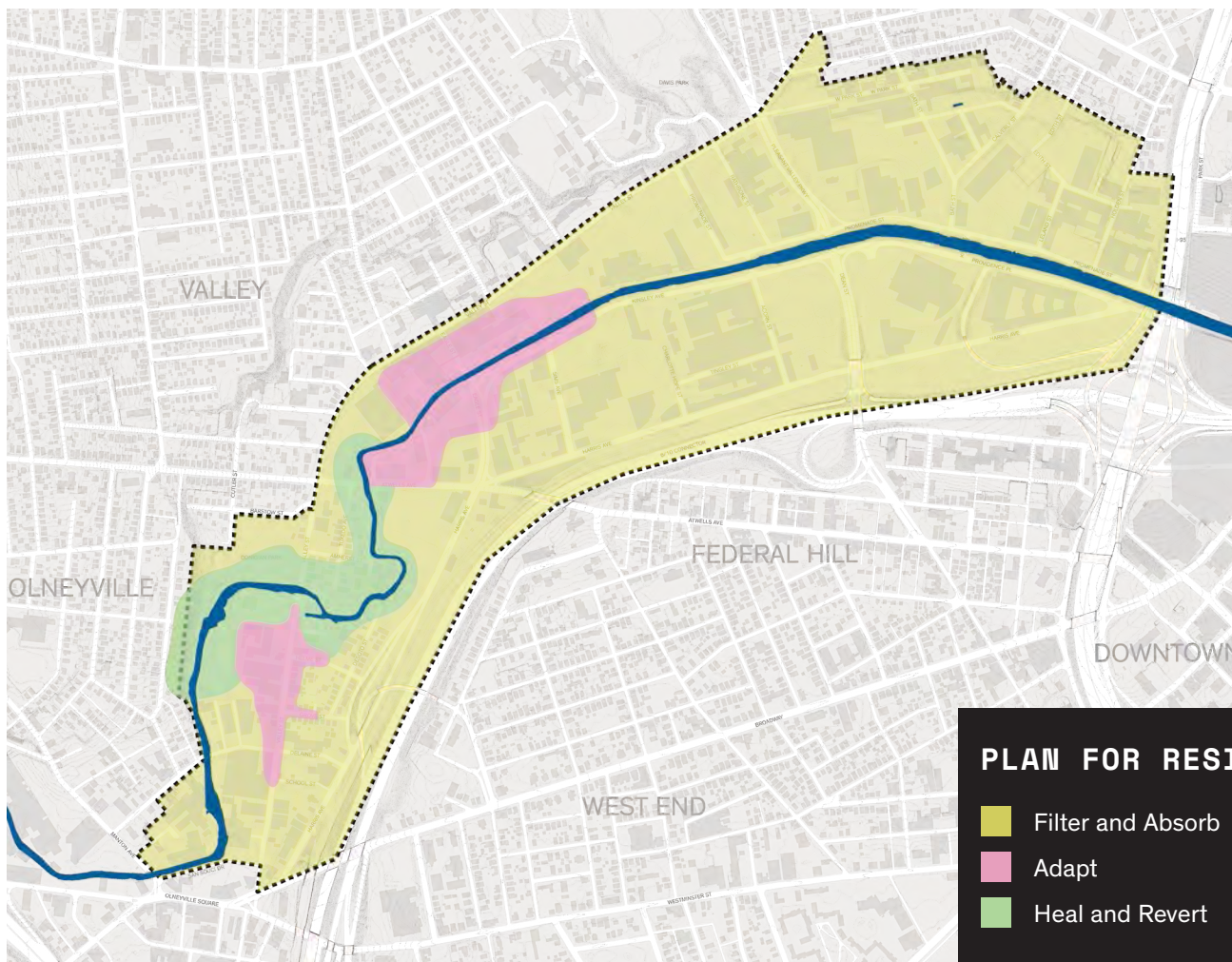
Develop a stormwater maintenance agreement to clarify responsibilities across City departments and identify additional resources necessary to ensure timely maintenance of drainage infrastructure.

**Timeframe**  
Near-term





The incidents and severity of flooding have increased, requiring a more focused response to stormwater management.



This plan for resiliency is based on topography and the locations where storm events have the greatest impact, identifying an approach that responds to these conditions.





The plan above shows the potential impacts if no flooding mitigation is utilized within the district and which buildings will be most at risk with future floods. This plan illustrates where the built fabric of the neighborhood would need to “retreat” from the river if no flood mitigation is constructed.



### 2.1.3

## Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled

Reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) is a measurable target, but one that involves fundamentally improving the availability and quality of transportation choices. Not only does reduction in VMT reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality, but it also means people are choosing more sustainable and healthy methods of moving through a city, including trips that involve walking or biking, even when transit is involved. Making these alternate modes attractive is a big hurdle, often times expensive, and requires both private-sector and public sector investment in streets that feel safe, comfortable, and convenient for everyone.

Improving access and connectivity plays a key role in reducing vehicle miles traveled. See Section 2.4 “Improve Access and Connectivity” for additional strategies and actions that may be applicable to reducing vehicle miles traveled.

#### Action

*Retrofit streets to meet Complete Streets standards, paying particular attention to supporting bicycling, walking, and continued truck access.*

#### Timeframe

*Near-term*

#### Action

*Establish a bike share system and include bike share stations in the Woonasquatucket Corridor.*

#### Timeframe

*Near-term*

#### Action

*Partner with car sharing services such as Zip Car to establish car sharing parking locations at neighborhood centers within the Woonasquatucket Corridor.*

#### Timeframe

*Near-term*

#### Action

*Restore high-quality public transit service to the Woonasquatucket Corridor (see Section 2.4).*

#### Timeframe

*Long-term*

2.1.4

## Increase the Share of Vehicles that are Electric

While Electric Vehicle use is on the rise, the pace of change is slow, partially due to a lack of infrastructure available to support widespread access. The City of Providence can prepare for Electric Vehicles and charging stations by considering best practices for amending local regulations to be more electric car-friendly. These policy changes should reflect that the type and level of a charging stations needed may vary depending on location and estimated electric vehicle-usage. It is important for the City's permitting processes, building codes, and other regulations to support easy installation of charging stations.

**Action**

*Amend the Zoning Ordinance to require parking facilities associated with large development projects to be wired for a certain number of electric charging stations.*

**Timeframe**

*Near-term*



### 2.1.5

# Establish Incentives and Standards to Encourage Green Building Practices

Ensure that major building projects: are planned, designed, constructed, and managed to minimize adverse environmental impacts; conserve natural resources; are resilient to climate change; promote a more sustainable city; and enhance quality of life. A first step in this effort is to establish requirements that utilize current industry best practices such as the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system and facilitate property owners and developers to consider these issues when planning their projects. This is most critical in regards to assessing the risks associated with climate change. For example, a Resiliency Checklist should be established that provides a framework and specific resiliency targets for assessing project vulnerabilities and adverse impacts. Projects would be required to identify initial (first build) strategies for reducing vulnerabilities and adverse impacts as well as future adaptation strategies for meeting or exceeding resiliency targets and further reducing vulnerabilities and adverse impacts due to future climate conditions.

#### Action

*Require permit applicants to complete a Climate Change Resilience and Preparedness Checklist, regardless of whether this is required for approval.*

#### Timeframe

*Near-term*

#### Action

*Engage in the current State process for creating a Rhode Island Stretch Code that will help to push new development to achieve greater energy efficiency.*

#### Timeframe

*Near-term*



2.1.6

# Build Ongoing Capacity around Resiliency

As a waterfront city, Providence can and should be a leader in proactively addressing the challenges that face us from a changing climate.

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**Action**

*Establish a resiliency task force to set priorities and measure results.*

**Timeframe**

*Near-term*

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**Action**

*Host a Climate Change and Resilience Convening with civic and business leaders from Providence to begin a community conversation about these issues and create initial recommendations to prepare Providence for climate change.*

**Timeframe**

*Near-term*



# SUPPORT AND GROW ARTS, FOOD & MAKERS ECONOMIC CLUSTER



2.2.1

## Establish an Innovation District Focused on Supporting the Arts, Food, and Makers within the Woonasquatucket River Corridor

The City of Providence is in the process of implementing an economic development framework that will stimulate innovation and strengthen the City's creative culture to drive investment and economic growth that is inclusive, equitable, and resilient within the Woonasquatucket Corridor. The Brookings Institute defines innovation districts as "geographic areas where leading-edge anchor institutions and companies cluster and connect with start-ups, business incubators and accelerators. They are also physically compact, transit-accessible, and technically-wired and offer mixed-use housing, office, and retail." The Woonasquatucket Corridor has the potential to accommodate all of these economic, physical, and networking assets. As an innovation district focused on the arts, food, and makers, the formal establishment of this area as an Innovation District will likely require some creative innovation itself to ensure that housing, higher-rent office space, and incompatible land uses are not located in close proximity or displace existing operations located at the core geography which currently defines this area as a center for the creative, fabrication, and food economies.

The resulting Innovation District in the Woonasquatucket River Corridor needs to possess several key characteristics to be best positioned for success. The district must be walkable, bikeable, and have good access to transit and support the co-location of firms, research centers, universities and other institutions of excellence so that workers are in close proximity to each other. Innovation Districts must be competitive places that drive economic growth as well as possess cool spaces within them to establish an identity and culture that sincerely connects all those working within the district. Innovation Districts are being used throughout the globe as this centuries "productive geography" much like the historic mill structures found throughout the Woonasquatucket River valley are remnants of the last centuries productive geography. It is fitting that these structures now be repurposed to further economic, cultural, and social pursuits.



The new Innovation District must take advantage of activating the underutilized, privately-owned spaces found throughout the study area such as Paragon Mills, Capitol Records, and the Max Pollock building. DIY fabrication, small batch manufacturing, and independent commercial studios are already established in the district and should be further supported, protected, celebrated, and provide an anchor within the Innovation District. These existing facilities can be augmented with additional programming that supports the continued development of the district such as coworking space, incubators, accelerators, conversations, lectures, classes, workshops, conferences, convenings, and business plan competitions. Providence also has a constellations of colleges and universities that could benefit from satellite facilities that could co-locate within the Woonasquatucket River Corridor.

**Action**

*Develop a physical space as an Innovation Center for the creative and food economies that is open to the public and is a physical expression of the larger Innovation District. The space should be staffed and funded to support innovation within the business sectors of the Innovation District and establish business to business programs and systems that help these industries prosper.*

**Timeframe**

*Long-term*

**Action**

*Establish and build a collaborative leadership network of existing innovation drivers to cooperate on the design, delivery, marketing, and governance of the District. This leadership network should include key institutions, firms, and sectors (United Natural Foods, The Steel Yard, WaterFire, TellArt, and others) to provide input on the Innovation District strategy.*

**Timeframe**

*Near-term*

**Action**

*Establish a strategic plan to support “innovation cultivators” (companies, organizations, or groups that support the growth of individuals, firms, or ideas) within the Woonasquatucket Corridor. These cultivators might include incubators, accelerators, shared workspaces, job training firms, and community colleges.*

**Timeframe**

*Near-term*

**Action**

*Ensure that the physical spaces within the Woonasquatucket Corridor support the development of the Innovation District. These spaces need to be digitally-accessible and encourage people to spend time allowing for casual networking to occur. Look for opportunities to engage the streets, parks, and squares as living labs within the District to test new ideas, install art, and demonstrate the innovations being created by people in the surrounding blocks. Give priority to civic spaces that are in close proximity to the creative uses already happening or in development. Building from these investments will help to establish physical places that represent the Innovation District and reinforce continued investment by other businesses and institutions that can gain value from existing activity.*

**Timeframe**

*Near-term*

**Action**

*Establish a working group to explore co-operative models for business services, procurement, and logistical support for the creative economy business working within the Innovation District.*

**Timeframe**

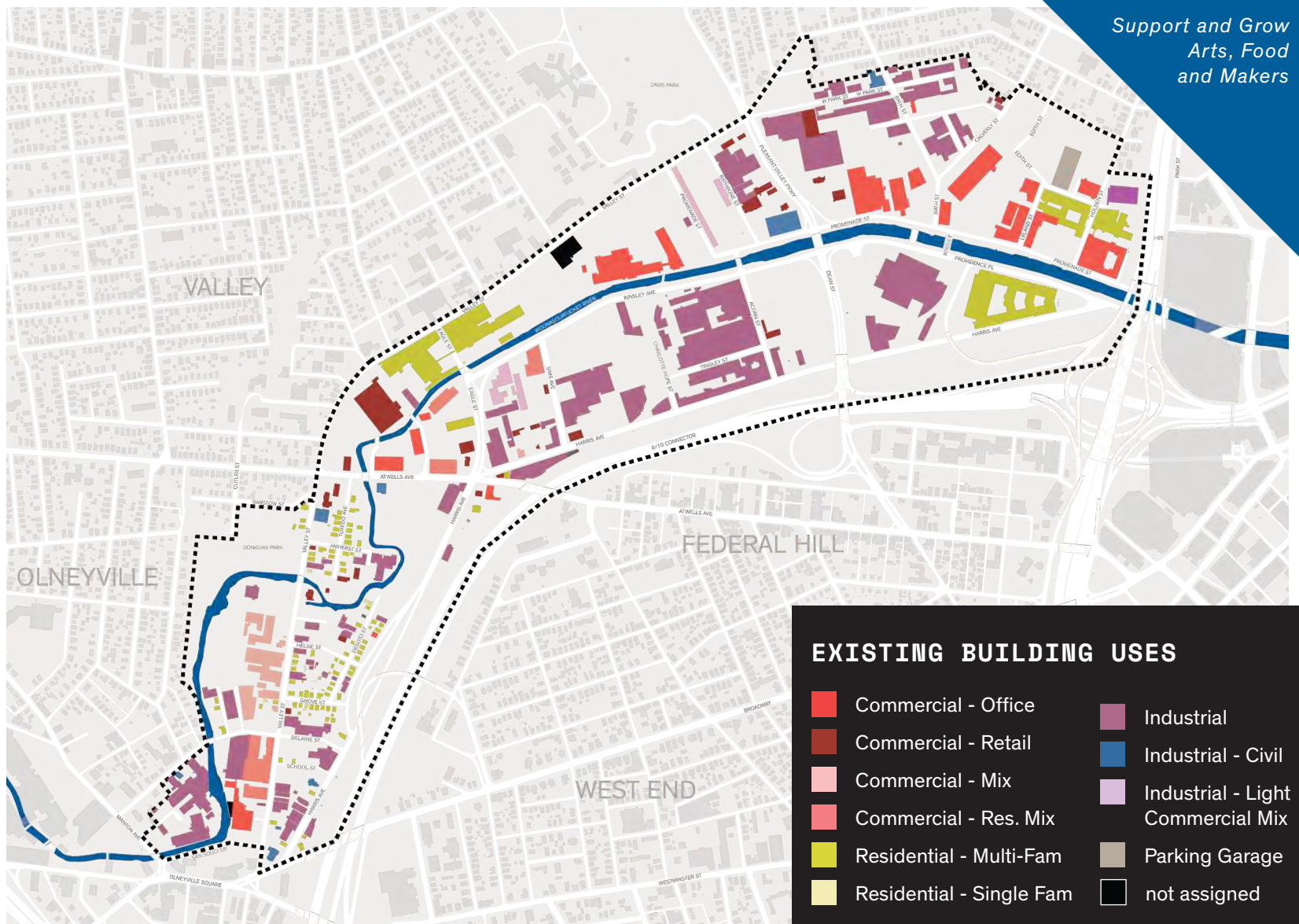
*Long-term*

**Action**

*Continue to engage the City’s anchor institutions (Brown, URI, RISD) to implement specific innovation projects and satellite facilities in the Woonasquatucket Corridor.*

**Timeframe**

*Near-term*



**EXISTING BUILDING USES**

- Commercial - Office
- Commercial - Retail
- Commercial - Mix
- Commercial - Res. Mix
- Residential - Multi-Fam
- Residential - Single Fam
- Industrial
- Industrial - Civil
- Industrial - Light Commercial Mix
- Parking Garage
- not assigned

**Action**

Promote inclusive growth by identifying clear educational, employment, and other opportunities produced by the Innovation District for low-income residents of the city.

**Timeframe**

Near-term

**Action**

Support a team of community art rangers who lead tours, answer questions about the neighborhood, and pass on important cultural information between segments of the community, including responsible use of industrial buildings and public space.

**Timeframe**

Near-term

The Woonasquatucket accommodates a broad range of uses that define this area as a rich neighborhood for commercial and jobs activity.

**Action**

Establish a means by which to quantitatively and qualitatively measure the results of the Innovation District strategy to provide clear feedback and guidance to the District leadership. Quantify the starting assets of the District and establish a baseline to measure against in the future.

**Timeframe**

Near-term

“Add buildings that help small businesses through shared services.”



## 2.2.2

# Provide More Access to Local Food and Fresh Produce

The City of Providence and Rhode Island Commerce Corporation have both identified food production and the arts as priority sectors targeted for growth and enhancement within the Woonasquatucket Corridor. By treating this area as an innovation center for these industries and focusing on the benefits of co-location and shared-district amenities, the City and its partners within the community can work together to grow this market and strengthen the Corridor as a center of business for the food and arts.

Farm Fresh RI's campus and Gotham Greens development at the G.E. Baseworks Site are both investments that have grown out of the city's ongoing Urban Innovation Strategy. These companies will further advance the Woonasquatucket River Corridor as a targeted food economy and provide greater access to fresh food by the creations of this new food hub and the hosting of farmers markets. Efforts should continue to further leverage this co-location strategy to attract additional anchor institutions to the district.

### Action

*Work with Farm Fresh RI and Gotham Greens as well as existing food sector businesses in the Woonasquatucket Corridor to develop a list of potential business that would benefit from co-locating in the area. Establish a direct marketing and recruitment campaign for these identified business and segments of the industry.*

### Timeframe

*Near-term*

### Action

*Find a way to scale up the ongoing and successful Urban Innovation Strategy for the Woonasquatucket Corridor targeting food and design clusters.*

### Timeframe

*Near-term*

### Action

*Identify and recruit an institutional partner working in the food sector to anchor the innovation district.*

### Timeframe

*Near-term*

“Lots of food options!”

# Improve Requirements in the City's Zoning Ordinance for Site Design and Building Form

Planning for and incentivizing a built environment that supports economic development and a vibrant public realm is critical to the community and ensuring the resilience of the Woonasquatucket Corridor. New development projects should be required to respond to the unique industrial, maker, and artistic character of the area through attention to appropriate site design that supports the definition of the street, building massing that is consistent with the industrial character of the Corridor, quality building materials, authentic design, and integration of art into all facets of the built environment. New buildings should be required to face outwards onto existing public streets to remain open to the community and provide eyes on the street. Currently, the MM-U design standards allow for the creation of automobile oriented site design that is not characteristic of the Corridor. This can detract from the community's goals of making the Corridor more economically viable through design that invites human activity and commerce. Basic design standards for the M-1 district should also be considered so that site design and building massing for these uses support a walkable, pedestrian-oriented public realm. To the extent possible and through creative means, buildings should provide ground-floor publicly accessible spaces, which could be accomplished through provision of incubator space for retail, artist, and maker activity.

## Action

*Adjust the standards in the existing zoning districts within the Woonasquatucket River Corridor to establish key form-based standards that support the goals of this plan. Recommendations for those standards to be considered are as follows:*

- *Establish a minimum ground story fenestration on the front facade of 50% and on the side facade of 20%.*
- *Establish a minimum upper story fenestration of 20% and a maximum of 50%.*
- *Allow blank walls for a maximum of 50 feet.*
- *Establish build-to requirements for front and side streets and adjust the facade build out on the front street and side street to be a minimum of 65%.*
- *Establish a set of parking setbacks that at a minimum are 20 feet back from the primary building facade.*
- *Establish a requirement for commercial space to occupy the ground floor for a minimum depth of 30 feet before garage parking or tuck-under parking occurs. This ensures that there is an active facade facing the public realm and not blank walls enclosing parking.*
- *On key streets within the Corridor, such as Kinsley Avenue, Dean Street, and Atwells Avenue, establish a requirement that buildings have entrances spaced at a maximum distance of 30 feet to ensure that long facades have some life and interact with the street.*

**Timeframe**  
Near-term



# PRESERVE AND CREATE AFFORDABLE SPACE



### 2.3.1

## Preserve and Create Affordable Spaces for the Arts, Food, and Manufacturing Sectors

The Woonasquatucket Corridor has long been host to a unique array of affordable working spaces that have contributed to the incubation of a dynamic fabrication culture associated with small, local, light industrial businesses and the creation of art. The special economic situation that enabled these uses to flourish has long been under threat as real estate prices increase and development pressure causes the inventory of available industrial space to decrease.

In order to maintain affordability in the area, two primary things need to happen. First, existing tenants should increase the level of tenant control over fabrication space within the Woonasquatucket Corridor. Thought should be given to how ownership options for buildings and spaces could be included in redevelopment projects. Second, the inventory of available industrial space should be kept high enough to maintain low prices within the area. New construction of appropriately scaled infill structures should be explored to produce a scalable solution to both problems, by increasing tenant ownership and the overall inventory of space.

Existing regulations should also be carefully explored with businesses, developers, and residents to understand where there are extra steps and friction for uses that should be incentivised to locate in the Corridor. Removing potential conflicts as well as any other regulatory

**“An active celebration of the history of the industrial revolution mixed with a celebrated embrace of art chaos — give everyone cheap space and inspiration.”**



hurdles will help the arts, food, and manufacturing sectors thrive in the Woonasquatucket Corridor. There is also a challenging history relating to unsanctioned artist and maker space and also a desire to provide permanence for artists and a diversity of affordable artist spaces.

**Action**

*Review M-1 and M-MU zoning uses to ensure specific use types that align with key innovation district activities are clearly allowed, such as artisan production, art galleries, arts studios, arts exhibition, arts sales and services, coworking, design services, shared workspaces and arts education, work/live creative studios, food halls, food production, plant agriculture, permanent farmers markets, and food markets.*

**Timeframe**

*Near-term*

**Action**

*Reduce or eliminate required vehicle spaces for key creative economy uses and provide district parking solutions for these uses. For example, the Industrial - Artisan use has a minimum vehicle space of 1 per studio which is likely excessive for this use type and is also limiting the ability for properties to be used for arts activities due to parking inadequacies.*

**Timeframe**

*Near-term*

**Action**

*Incorporate the provision of commercial spaces and small-scale incubator spaces for the creative economy, arts, and food sector into scoring criteria for the Tax Stabilization Agreement process and other incentive programs.*

**Timeframe**

*Near-term*

**Action**

*Identify impediments to creative economy and fabrication uses. Convene a task force to identify and remove barriers for businesses, including local and state land use regulations and building codes.*

**Timeframe**

*Near-term*

**Action**

*Set up a task force to investigate the impact of taxes on businesses, including the tangible tax, affordable spaces, and other taxes. Consider allowing artisan districts and affordable spaces to be exempt from tangible taxes.*

**Timeframe**

*Near-term*

**Action**

*During the planning process it was communicated that multiple spaces that we not occupied and laying vacant because the improvements to life safety were difficult or impossible given the existing tenancy of the buildings. Establish multiple paths forward for an existing structure or space to be brought up to an acceptable level of life safety. Consider using an affidavit system or performance based solution to supplement the prescriptive requirements of the current codes.*

**Timeframe**

*Near-term*

“Don’t kick the artists out! Help them create permanence.”

“Don’t make it too pretty. Keep the artist.”

## Support Construction of New Maker Building Types

Much of the cultural significance of the Woonasquatucket Corridor is associated not only with the historical architecture and heritage of the industrial revolution, but also with the artists and creative community that work and live in the area today. The City has a long history of working to support Providence's artistic community; however, opportunity exists to further allow creative pursuits to be incubated within the Woonasquatucket Corridor.





A number of unique typologies for building new spaces were developed during the public process for this Vision Plan. A range of building configurations that can be built affordably have been studied and are discussed at length in the Extras Affordable Maker Building Toolkit at the end of this Plan.

Care should be given when creating redevelopment plans to include a variety of structures with a range of sizes to support the continued growth of the creative, fabrication, and food economies within the Woonasquatucket Corridor. Providing additional artists spaces and small incubator spaces will help maintain ongoing supply and keep a range of price points and affordability within the Woonasquatucket Corridor.

In addition to small incubator space, live/work studios and maker compounds should be allowed and encouraged to provide a rich diversity of spaces to attract and retain artists, and provide options as people's businesses grow or change.

**Action**

*Partner with land owners to build new affordable inventory of maker space through lighter, quicker, cheaper models, such as those included in the Extras Affordable Maker Building Toolkit at the end of this Plan.*

**Timeframe**

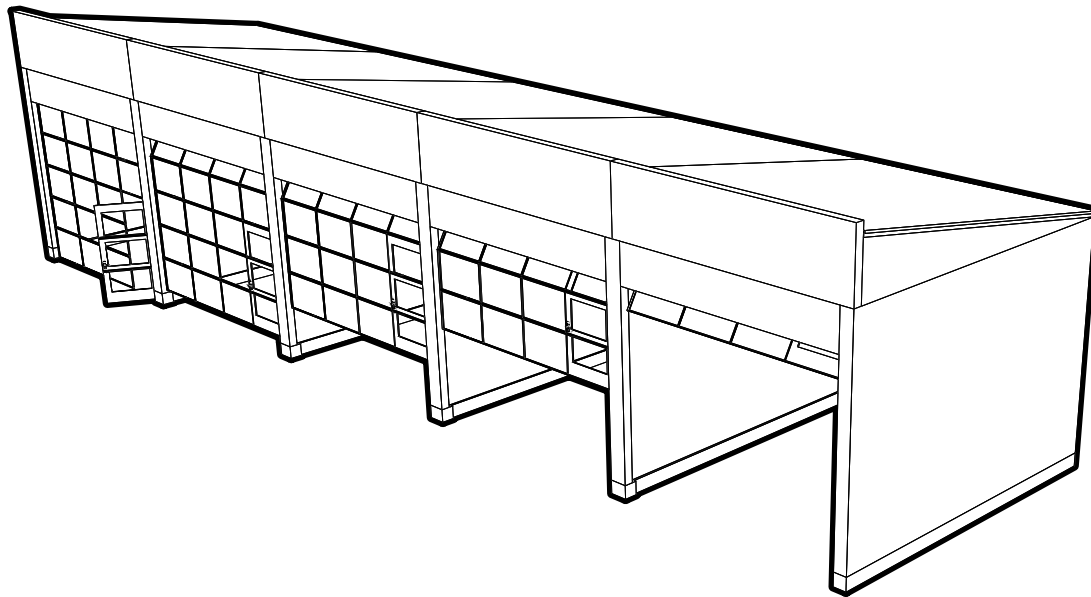
*Near-term*

**Action**

*Review M-1 and M-MU zoning to require large projects to provide a certain amount of small street-level incubator spaces.*

**Timeframe**

*Near-term*



## Reduce Conflicts between Existing Activities and Economic Growth to Minimize Displacement

Cities throughout the northeast are under increasing pressure to provide housing in walkable neighborhoods with multi-modal access to jobs. Providence is well positioned to capture the growing demographic looking for the character, sense of place, and convenience that Providence's walkable neighborhoods provide. The Woonasquatucket Corridor, with its proximity to Downtown and supply of underutilized land, could become increasingly more popular for housing development.

As land becomes less available and the cost of housing increases across the city, housing will need to be incentivized in mixed-use areas appropriate for large numbers of new residential units, such as Downtown. Additionally, the City should explore adjustments



**“Artists are pioneers and we need to create cheap pioneer space for them...”**



to locations of M-1 Light Industrial districts on the Zoning Map to restrict new residential development from priority fabrication zones, or creation of new zoning districts that more effectively protect artists and fabricators from residential development pressure and the inherent conflicts between industrial and residential activity.

Managing the demand for housing and its effect on land values within the Woonasquatucket Corridor is critical to maintaining the long-term viability of the creative economy, food economy, and manufacturing sector.

**Action**

*Review the City's Zoning Map to ensure M-MU Mixed-Use Industrial and M-1 Light Industrial zoning districts are in the best locations to allow or disallow residential development within the Woonasquatucket Corridor and remove market pressures on properties from being converted to multi-family dwellings. Balance investment and displacement by carefully allowing residential development in areas of the Woonasquatucket Corridor that won't adversely impact commercial and artist activities and rents. This will require keeping housing out of areas where noise, odor, and bright lighting is a part of the current industrial and artist operations.*

**Timeframe**

*Near-term*

**Action**

*Consider form-based regulations that protect the existing scale and intensity of areas intended for on-going affordable maker, artist, and industrial space. This might include adding building types to the zoning code that provide for a nuanced range of recognizable buildings, with standards related to scale, shape, roof design, use, and other items that help protect and promote diversity within a narrow range of common typologies.*

**Timeframe**

*Near-term*

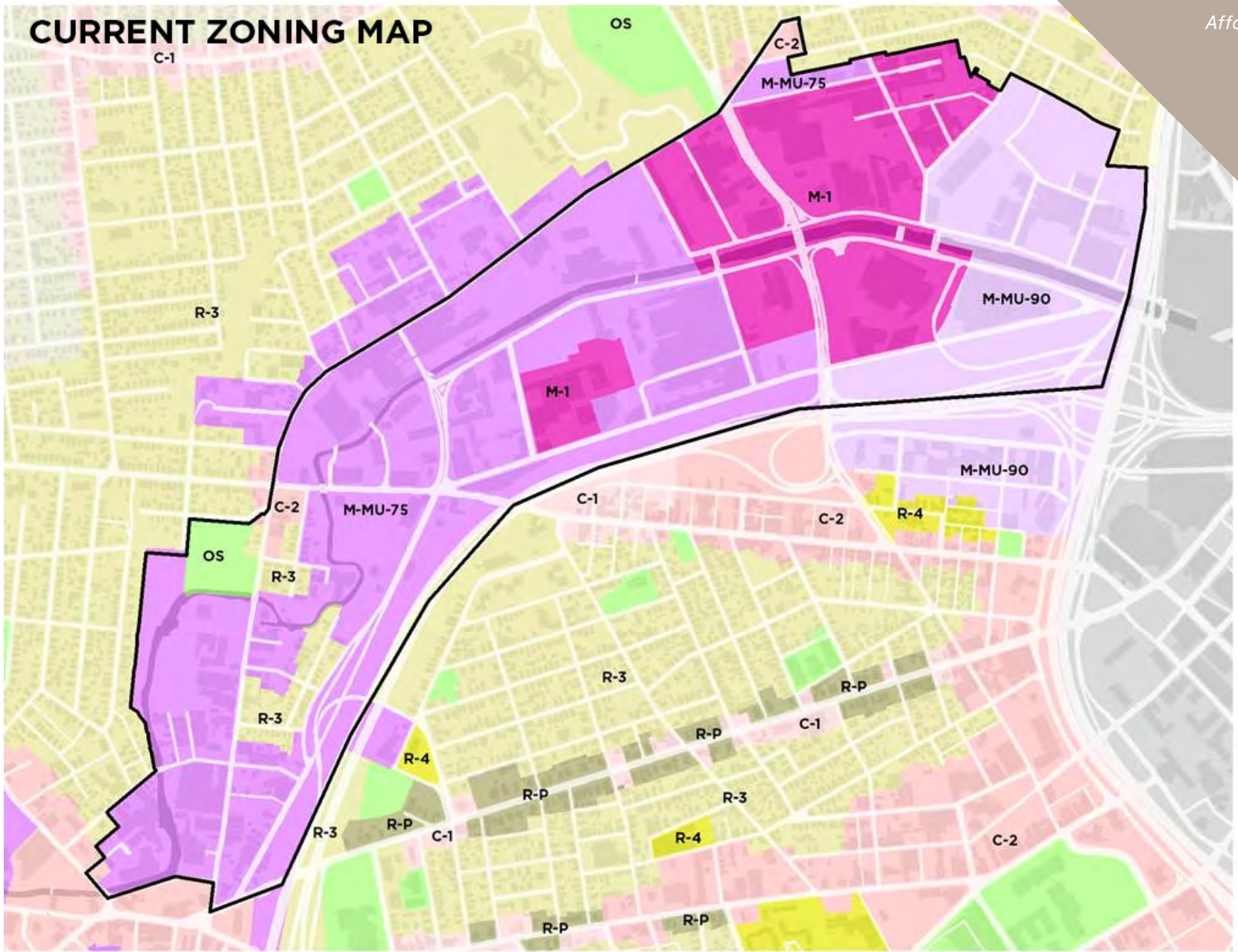
**Action**

*Consider strategies for removing barriers to investment, such as pre-approved building types that allow for a quick path to building permits, removal of fees, and elimination of off-street parking requirements in neighborhoods to encourage development of residential units throughout areas of the City that are appropriate for development, infill, and redevelopment.*

**Timeframe**

*Near-term*

“I would move here  
but don't want  
to contribute to  
gentrification.”



*The vision for the Woonasquatucket Corridor is largely based on the idea of balance and restraint. The Vision Plan recommends careful adjustments to existing regulations, including changes to the City's Zoning to: help preserve affordable space by limiting residential uses within areas where makers, artists, and warehousing currently exists in high concentration; allow for mixed-use mill redevelopment in areas where historic mills and contextual infill development, including residential units, would be appropriate; promote high-density mixed-use development in areas that could benefit from a more intensive land use pattern; and protect existing residential areas that currently exist in small pockets of the Woonasquatucket Corridor.*

**“Improve without  
displacement”**



### 2.3.4

## Preserve and Create Affordable Housing

Affordable housing within the area surrounding the Woonasquatucket Corridor is, for the most part located on the hillsides surrounding the industrial corridor in historic triple decker neighborhoods. In places where residential development already exists and is deemed to be appropriate, all efforts should be made to allow the development of new affordable units. Partnerships with local Community Development Corporations (CDCs) in surrounding neighborhoods should be facilitated so that affordable housing can be stabilized and increased. Further emphasis should be placed on prioritizing infill sites in surrounding neighborhoods for residential development, while working with community partners to ensure new construction behaves in a matter compatible with the existing character of neighborhoods in which it is proposed.

During the public process, there was an interest in more affordable housing opportunities for a variety of household types. People wanted to see quality affordable housing options with safe outdoor space,



storage, and yards, as well as a focus on homeownership that would lend to greater permanence. Both the public and private sectors can play a role in providing a greater diversity of housing to meet the needs of the area and supplement existing housing stock provided within surrounding neighborhoods.

**Action**

*Leverage the Special Redevelopment Plan (ORD-2017-49) to acquire abandoned properties and redevelop them as affordable housing in and around the Woonasquatucket Corridor (Note: The City of Providence's Special Redevelopment Plan gives preference to developers who building housing that is affordable to households earning 60% of Area Median Income).*

**Timeframe**

*Near-term*

**Action**

*Establish an Affordable Housing Trust Fund (potentially funded through budget allocations, CBAs, linkage fees, and donations) to support construction, acquisition, and maintenance of affordable housing.*

**Timeframe**

*Near-term*

**Action**

*Encourage naturally occurring affordable housing, including tiny homes, accessory units, and micro-units, in residential areas adjacent to the Woonasquatucket Corridor. Identify and address any barriers to building these affordable units.*

**Timeframe**

*Near-term*

**Action**

*Continue to advocate for affordable housing bonds at the state level. Support a successor bond to the 2016 \$50M Housing Bond.*

**Timeframe**

*Near-term*

**Action**

*Establish an inclusionary zoning policy that requires or incentivizes the construction of affordable housing or a linkage fee to an affordable housing trust fund.*

**Timeframe**

*Near-term*

**Action**

*Partner with local Community Development Corporations to acquire properties for and build affordable housing in and around the Woonasquatucket Corridor.*

**Timeframe**

*Near-term*

**Action**

*Establish an artist registry to qualify for artist housing opportunities.*

**Timeframe**

*Near-term*

“Homes are falling apart — we need to increase home ownership, less abandoned properties.”



### 2.3.5

## Connect Existing Residents and Businesses to Job Opportunities

The City should support the work of Building Futures, located on Acorn Street, and other organizations supporting programs that include training and accelerate career pathways. Increasing vocational training, arts mentorships, and other programs to help train workers for the kinds of jobs that are clustered within the Woonasquatucket Corridor will help support its economic resiliency. The City should also help minority and women owned businesses to more effectively compete within the market by providing training on how to enroll in the program.

A diverse community of people currently run many small and multicultural businesses in the Woonasquatucket Corridor. It is important for the future of the district that these business have support and are encouraged to grow. The community has a deep interest in prioritizing home grown, local, family-owned businesses. There was also an interest in welcoming in new businesses into the area that would make for a more livable and vibrant neighborhood. These additional shopping and service uses might include restaurants, bodegas, grocery stores, arts supply stores, hardware store, and other services that would support the neighborhoods within the Woonasquatucket River Corridor as walkable places with easy access to daily needs.

#### Action

*Host registration workshops to encourage more people to sign up for WBE/MBE Registry.*

#### Timeframe

*Near-term*

#### Action

*Advertise the Providence Business Loan Fund to local businesses to grow their businesses in the Woonasquatucket Corridor.*

#### Timeframe

*Near-term*

#### Action

*Find more effective ways to make referrals to job training programs (such as Building Futures, Real Jobs RI, and RWU's Business Skills for the Construction Trades).*

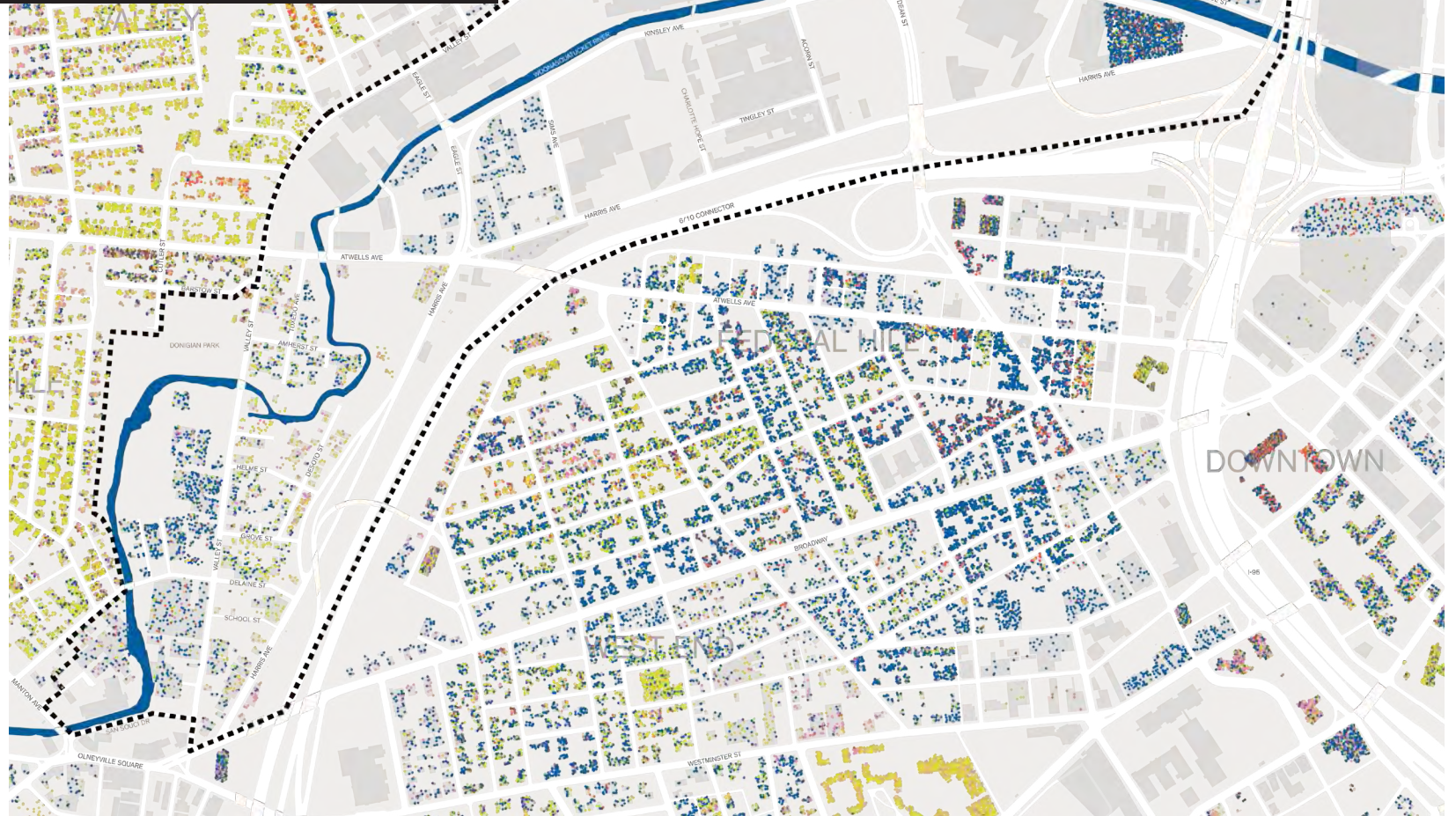
#### Timeframe

*Near-term*

## DEMOGRAPHICS

- Non-Hispanic White
- Non-Hispanic Black
- Non-Hispanic Asian
- Hispanic

1 dot = 1 person (2016)



“It would be great to facilitate connections between different cultural and work groups.”



# IMPROVE ACCESS AND CONNECTIVITY



“I wish, if anything, that there was better bike transit.”



#### 2.4.1

## Make Complete Streets a Standard Practice

Complete Streets prioritize safety for people of all ages and abilities and re-balance a system that, currently, overwhelmingly supports automobiles. Streets and intersections within the Woonasquatucket Corridor should be designed in a way that slows vehicular speeds to allow for safe and comfortable use of streets so that more people can safely walk, bike, and use public transit throughout the area and travel to and from other parts of the city.

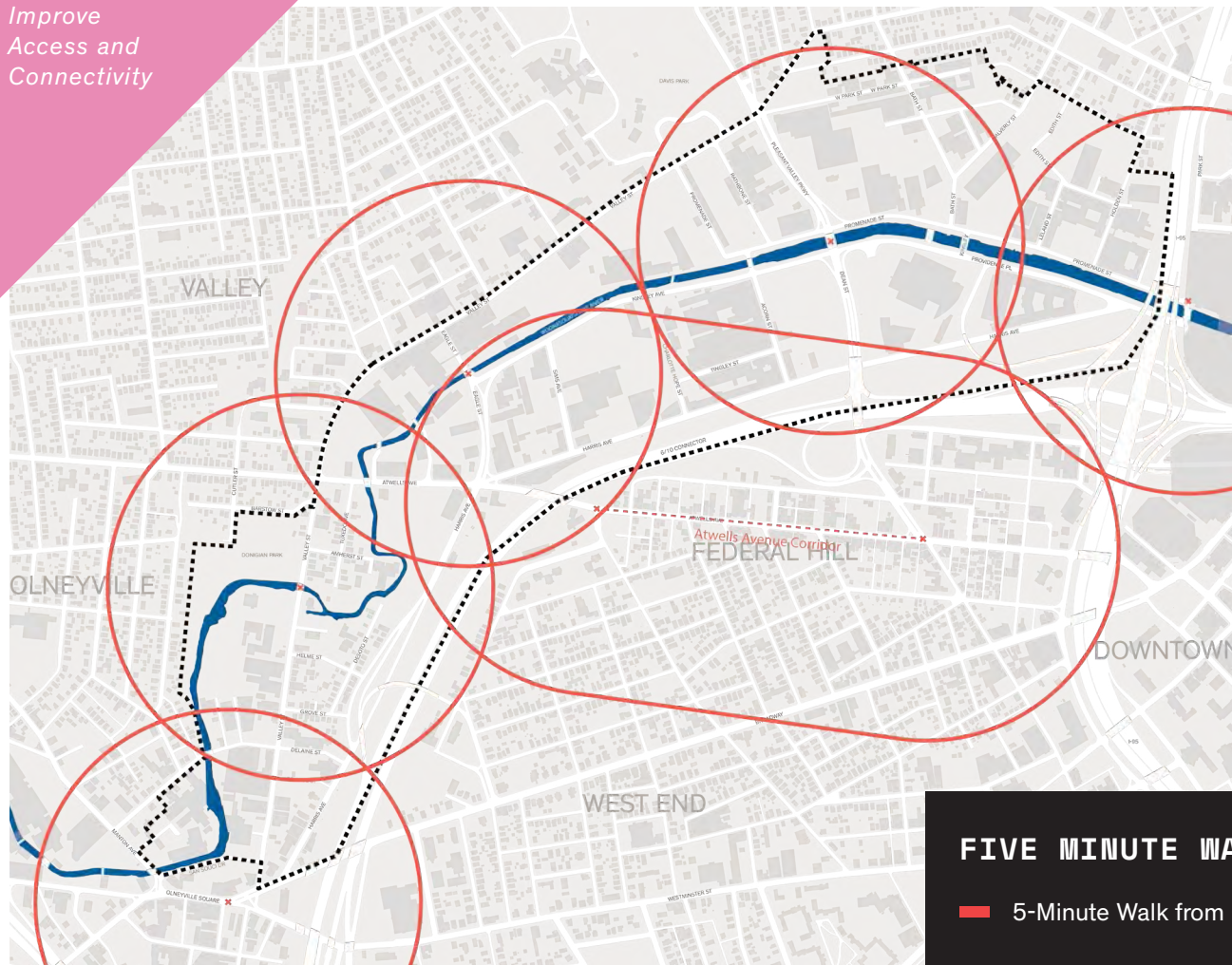
Key streets and intersections were identified by participants during the planning process as needing complete street interventions. While a number of ideas and different approaches were discussed, an overwhelming number of people consider street quality and safety to be a high priority. In particular, a number of locations were identified as being extremely hazardous for people on foot or bicycle.

This plan proposes a new system of on street and off street routes to create a friendlier bicycle network for people of all ability levels. Bicycle travel times across the Corridor will improve dramatically once infrastructure is upgraded, which will in turn improve the attractiveness and convenience of riding a bicycle for residents, visitors, and commuters.

The current quality of the pedestrian experience through the Woonasquatucket Corridor is almost universally low, and this contributes to a lack of desirability to walk for any distance. Improvements to the pedestrian realm should be made on all streets but special attention should be paid to priority the priority corridors in this Plan.

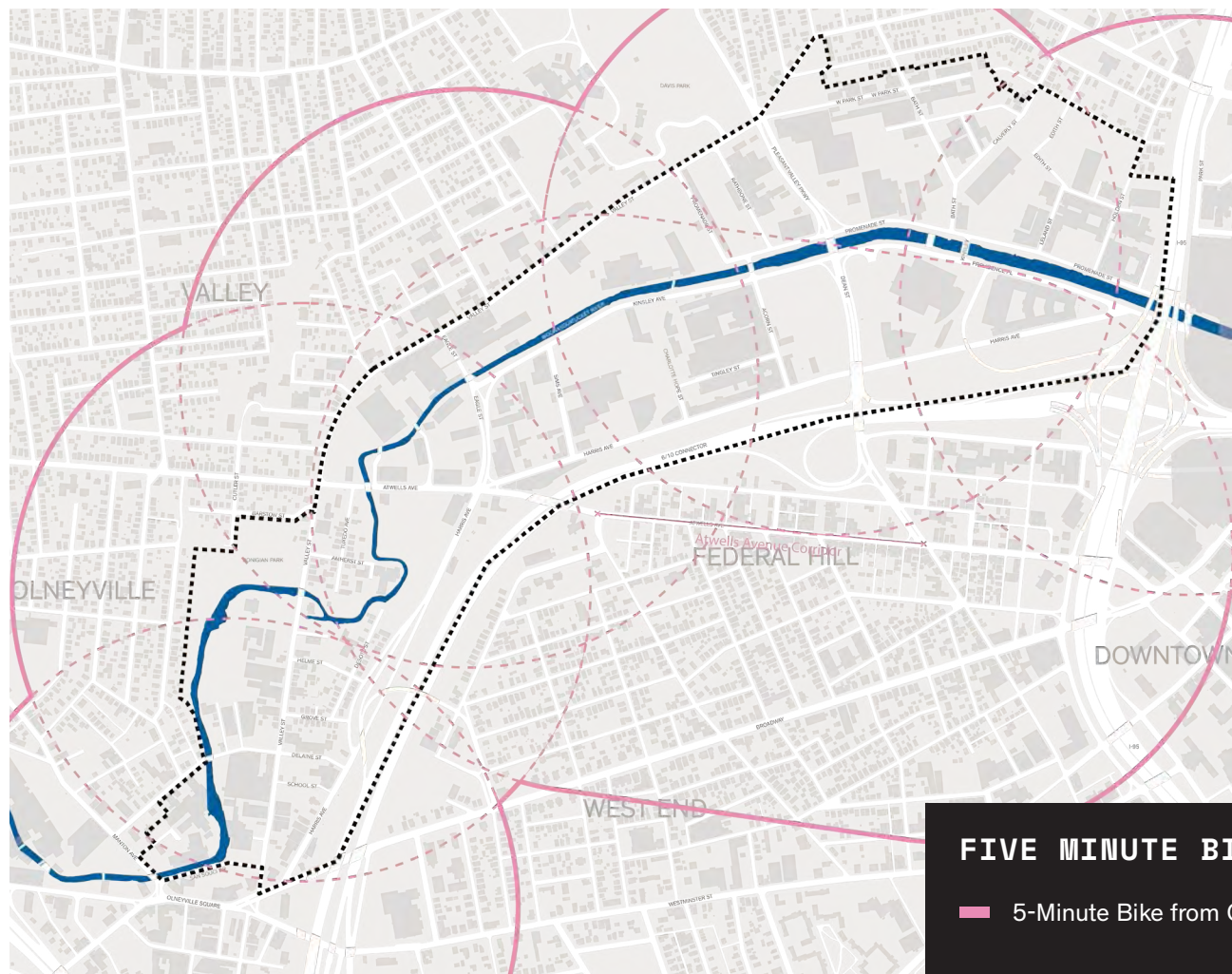
**“There are not enough bike paths or walkable streets.”**





**FIVE MINUTE WALK**

— 5-Minute Walk from Center



**FIVE MINUTE BIKE**

— 5-Minute Bike from Center

*For planning purposes, walkable and bikeable distances are generally considered to be equivalent in size to a five-minute walking or five-minute biking radius. This unit, referred to as a “ped-shed” and “bike-shed”, have been drawn as an abstract circle to analyze the existing neighborhood structure and determine where deficiencies exist in the Woonasquatucket Corridor.*

**Action**

Allocate and prioritize funding to build Complete Street improvements, including funding from the City's Capital Improvement Plan, the State Transportation Improvement Plan, and through a possible Tax Increment Finance District for the Woonasquatucket Corridor for all modes of transportation.

**Timeframe**

Near-term

**Action**

Return Kinsley to two-way traffic from Acorn Street to Park Street, with on-street parking and bike facilities. Install crosswalks at each intersection to allow for pedestrians to access the bridges.

**Timeframe**

Short-term

**Action**

Create a Public Realm Guide and codify it as the standard for how the City designs its streets.

**Timeframe**

Near-term

**Action**

Redesign and reconstruct the intersections of Eagle Street at Atwells and Kinsley Streets to Complete Streets standards and in keeping with this Plan.

**Timeframe**

Short-term

**Action**

Retrofit Harris Avenue to meet Complete Streets standards. Pay particular attention to supporting this corridor as a commuter route for bicyclists.

**Timeframe**

Near-term

**Action**

Redesign Atwells Street to Complete Streets standards to connect the Corridor with adjacent neighborhoods.

**Timeframe**

Short-term

**Action**

Redesign Dean Street to Complete Streets standards so that bike and pedestrian connections can be made to Federal Hill, Downtown, and the West Side.

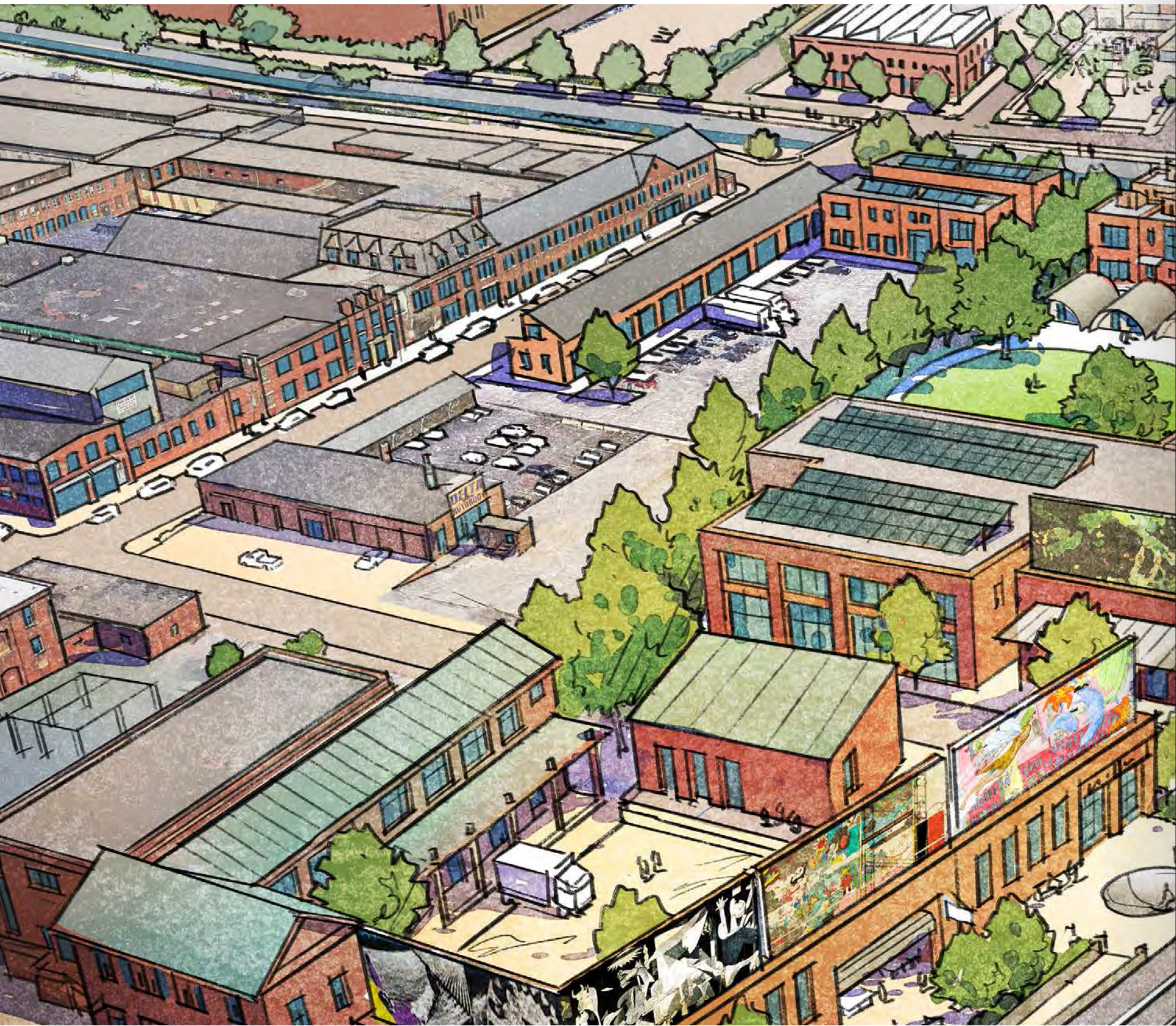
**Timeframe**

Long-term

**COMPLETE STREETS**

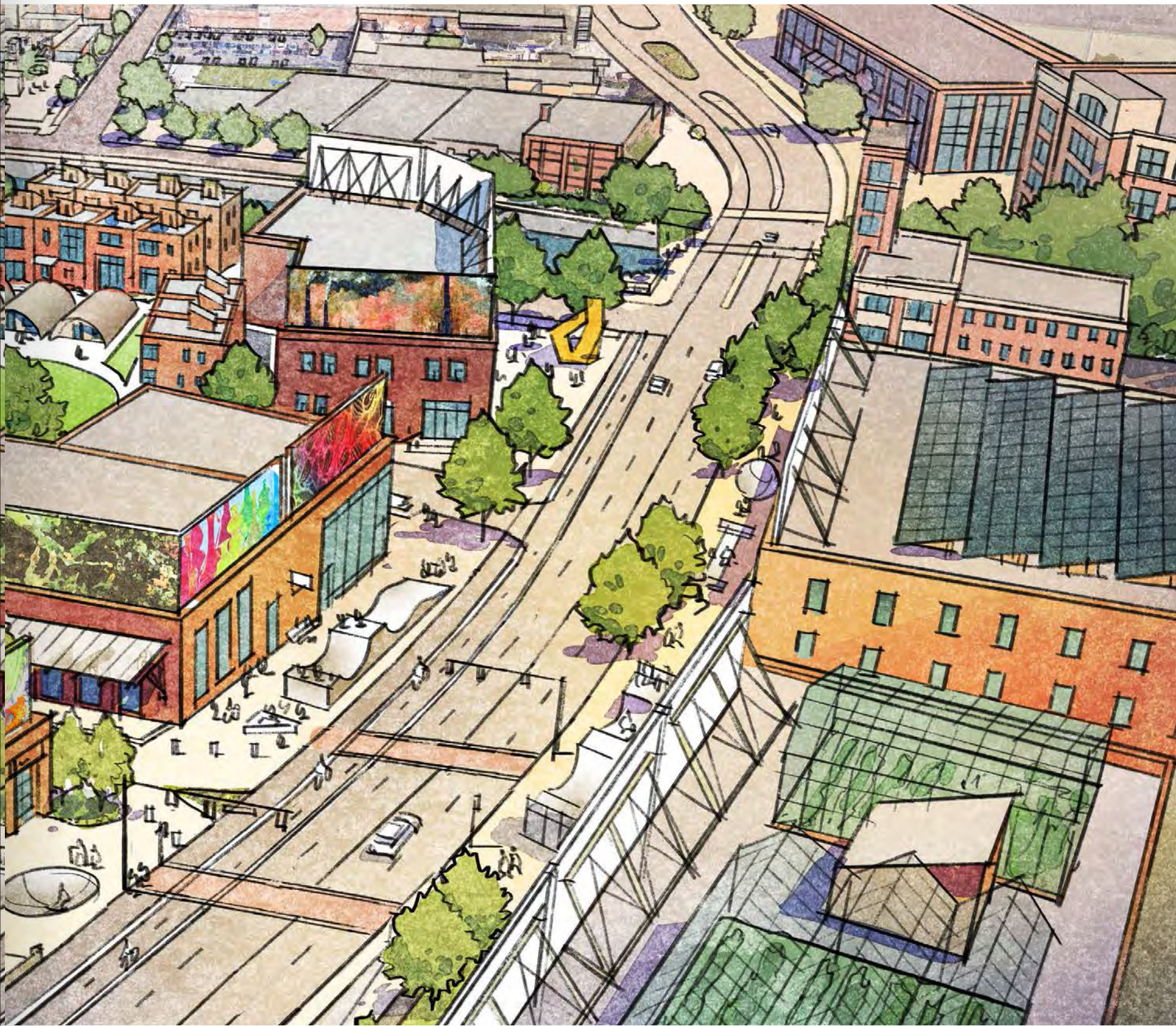
Complete Streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. There is no singular design prescription for Complete Streets; each one is unique and responds to its community context.





*The proposal for Dean Street shows a narrowed street, with travel lanes reduced in width and other excess space making way for a two-way protected bicycle lane to help connect the Woonasquatucket Corridor with Federal Hill and Smith Hill.*

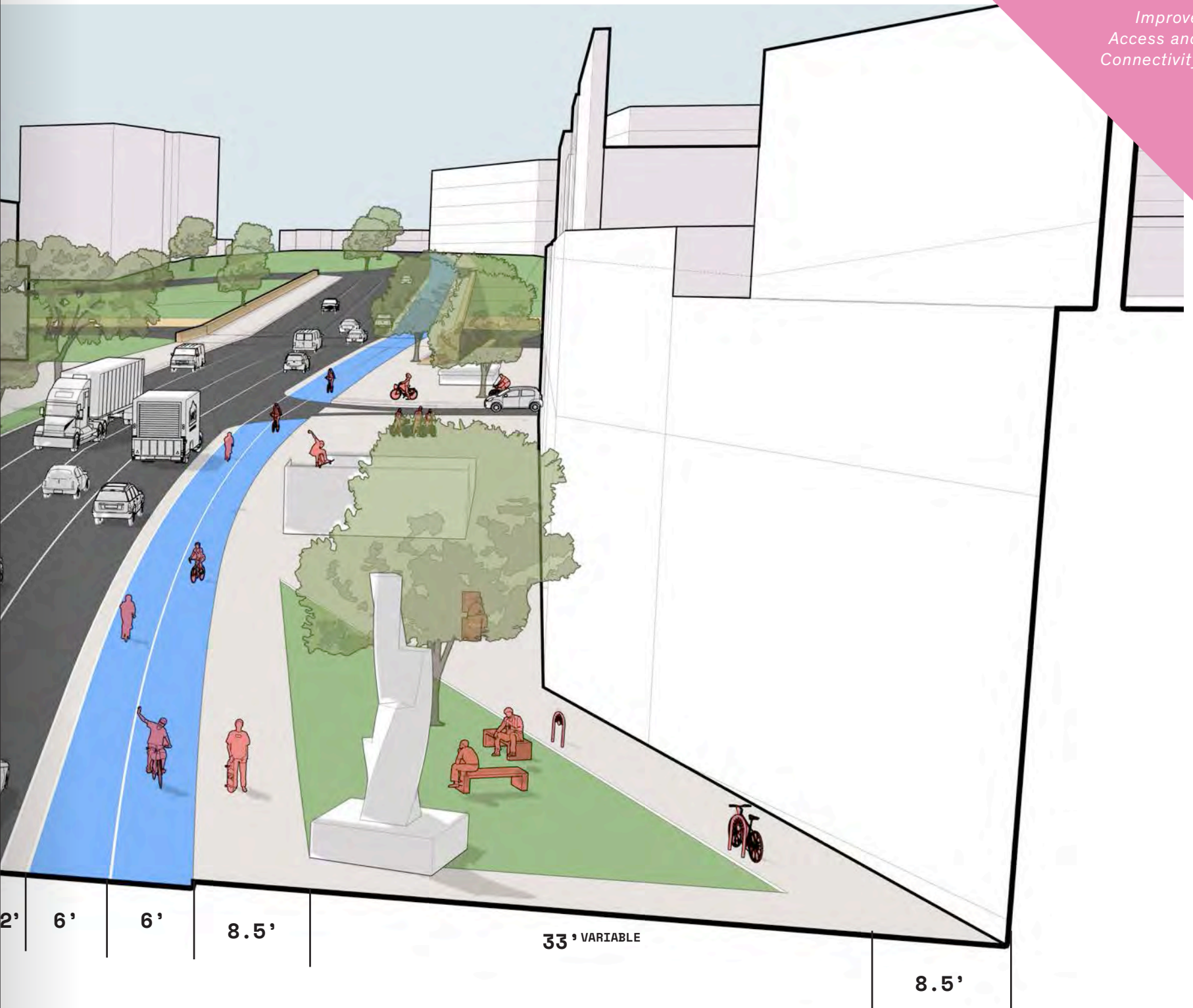




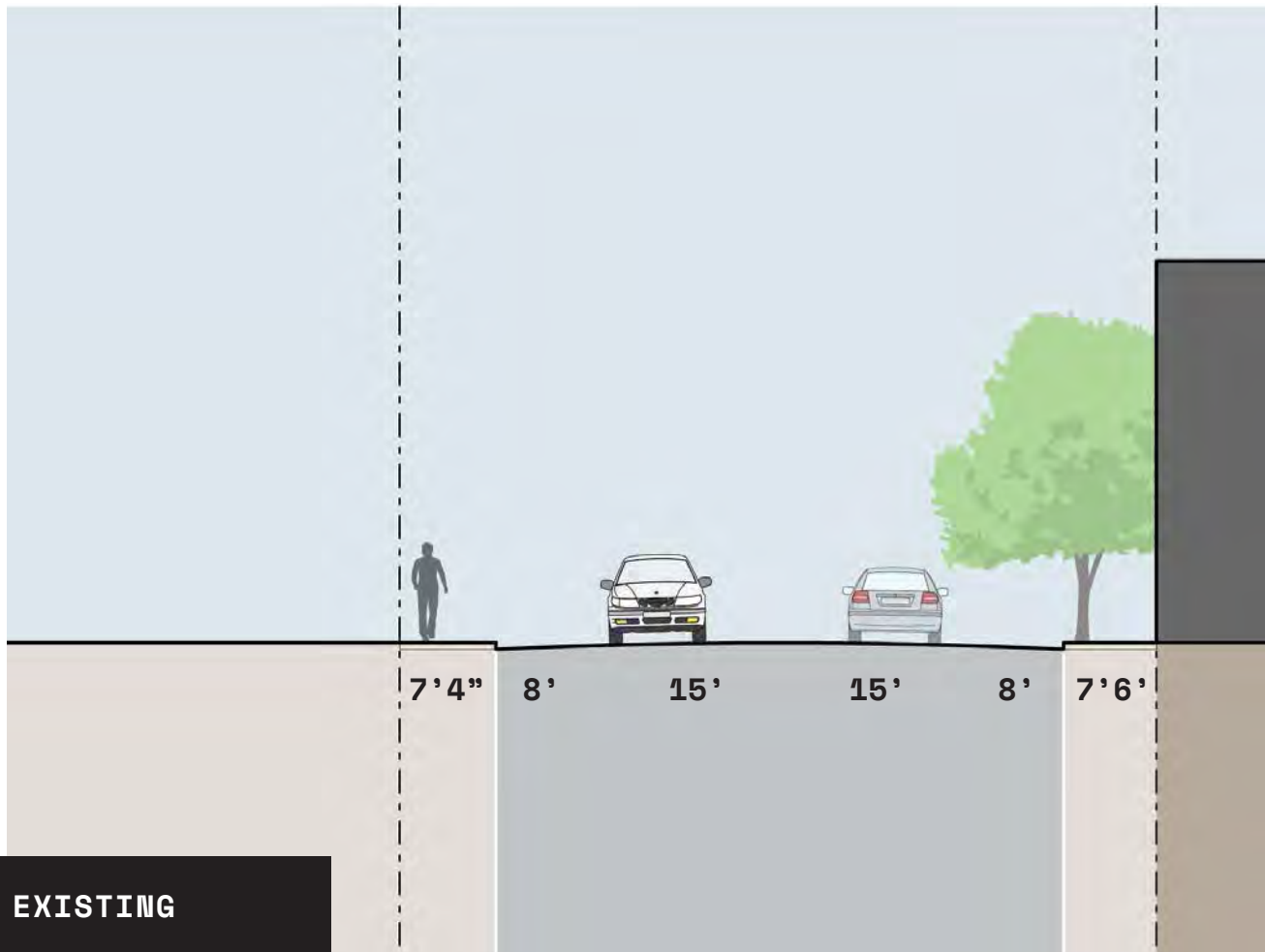




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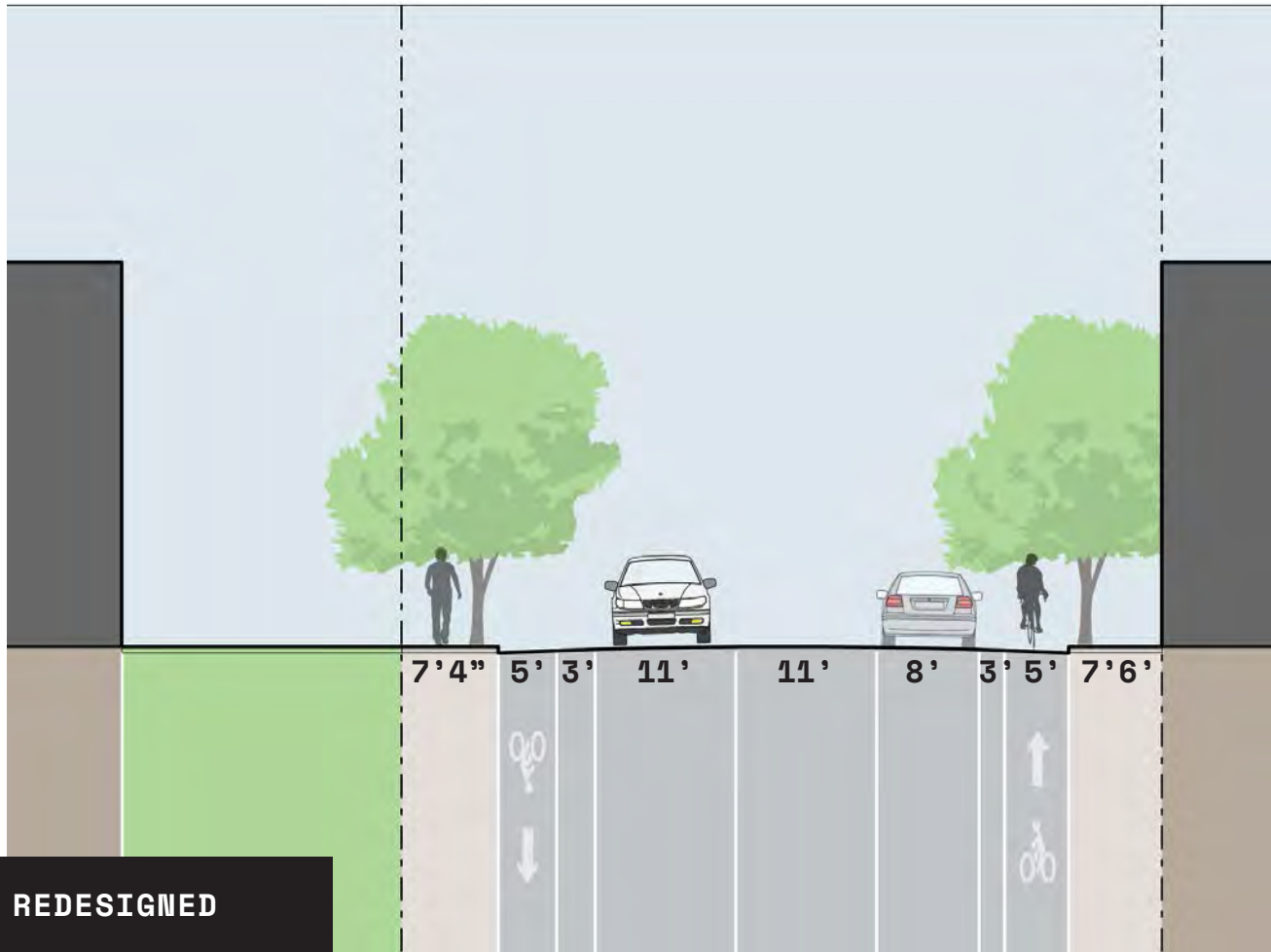




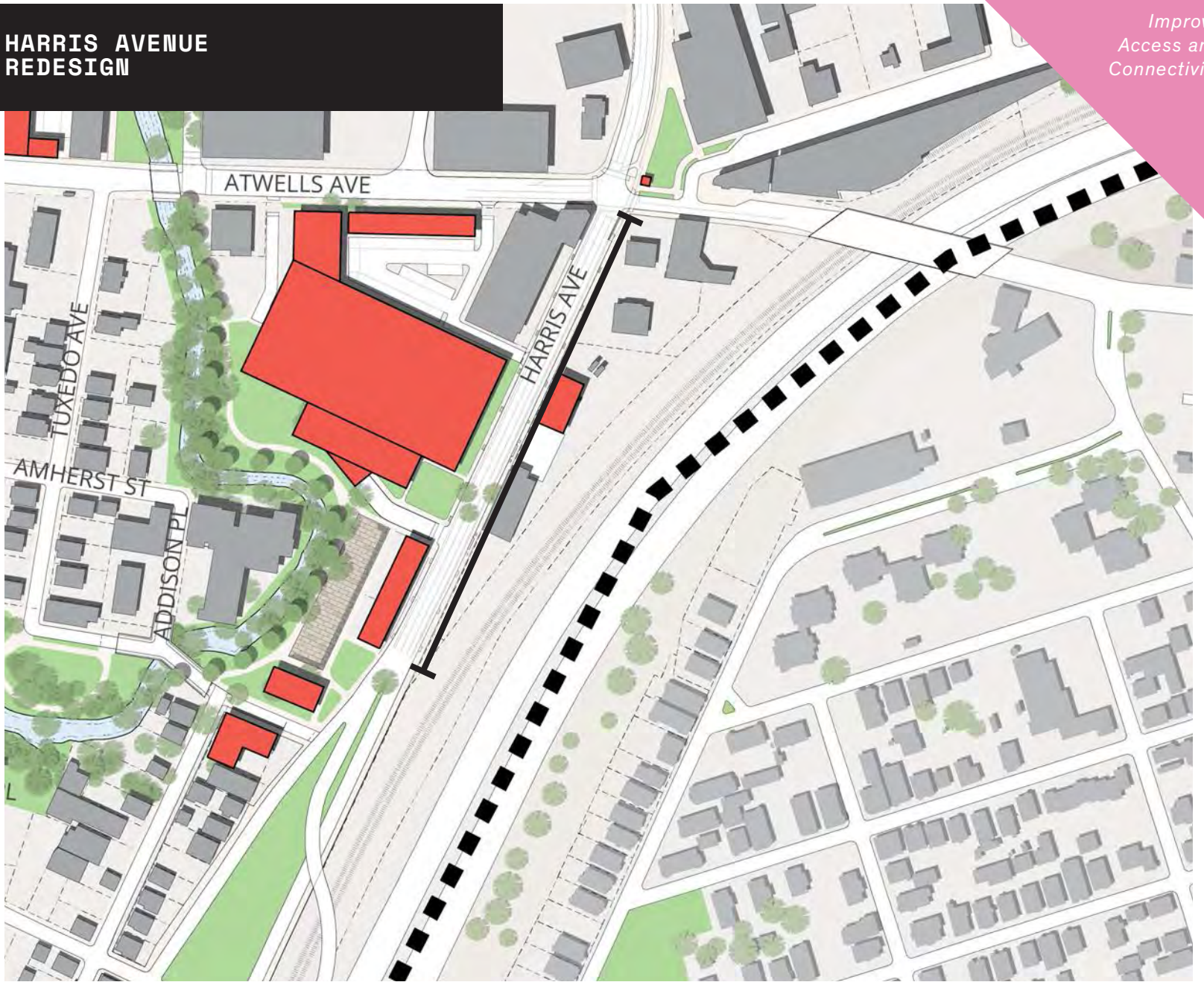


**HARRIS AVENUE - EXISTING**

Harris Avenue is currently a high speed road, characterized by its lack of defined space and friction, allowing drivers to travel at high speeds. While this road will continue to be a major truck route, the goal is to also allow bicyclists to safely use this direct connection from points west to downtown Providence. The proposed street section maintains a lane of parking, creates 11 ft marked travel lanes, and add protected bike lanes to help define safe space for bicycle travel.

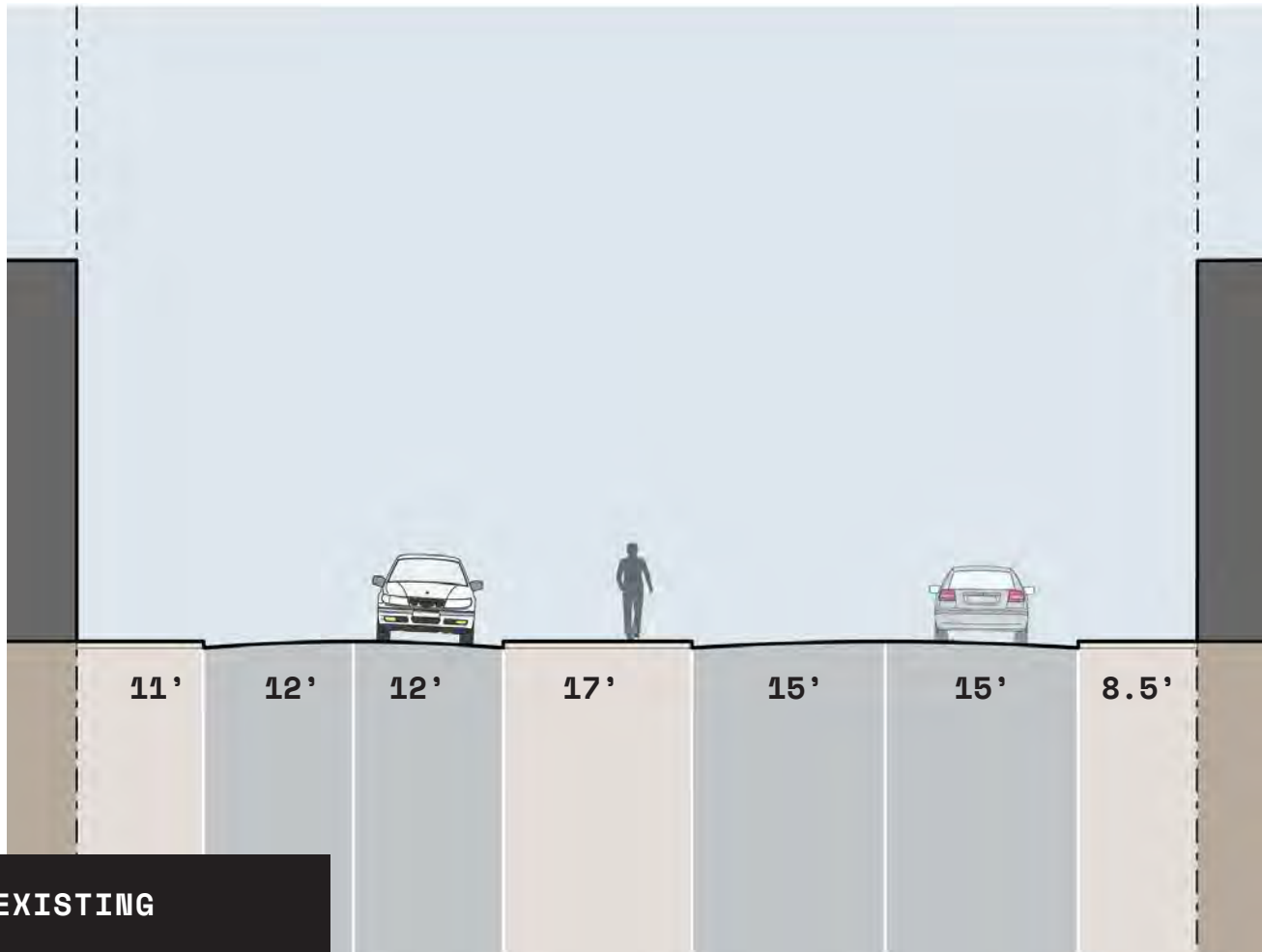


**HARRIS AVENUE - REDESIGNED**

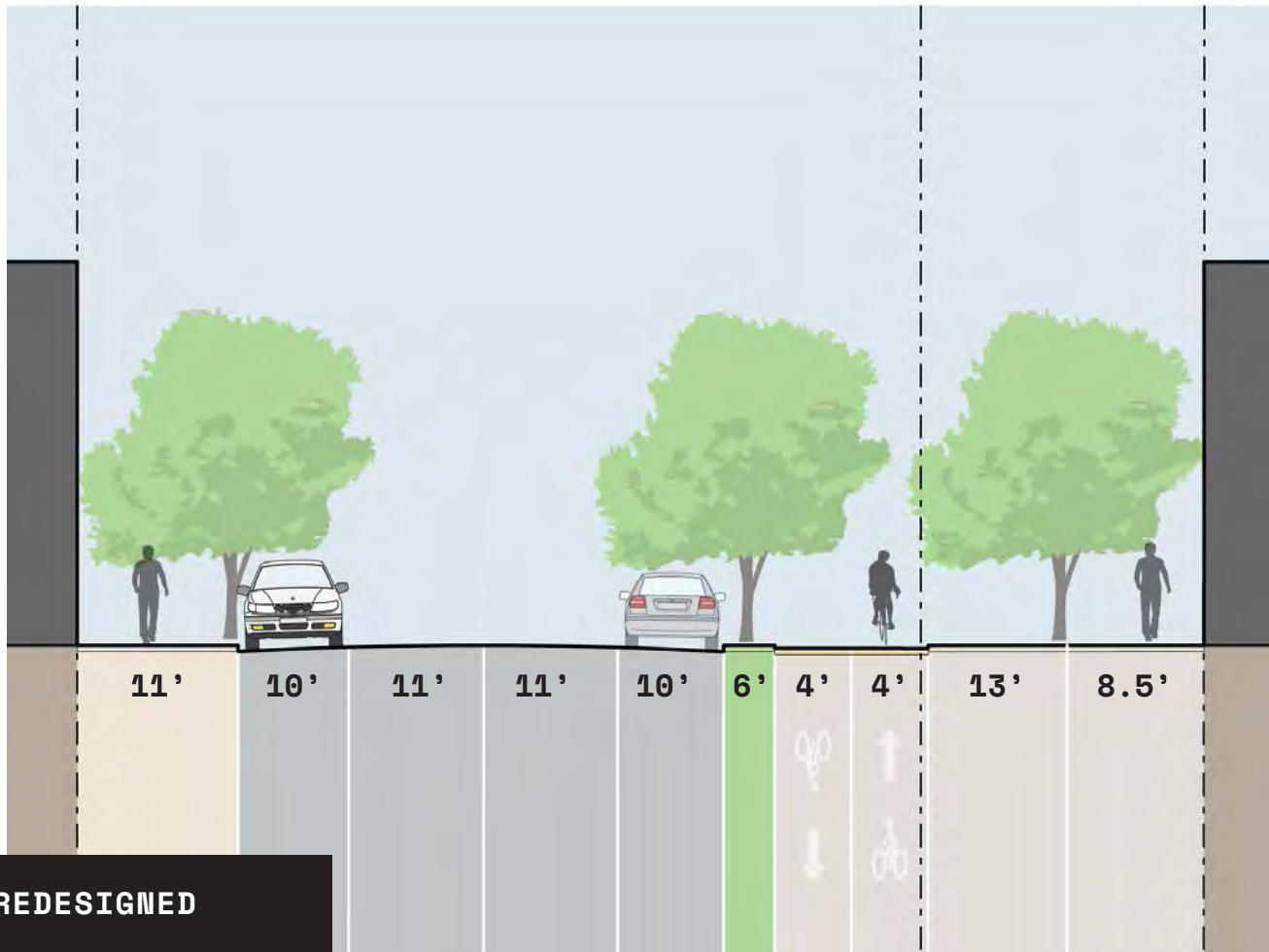


*Harris Avenue is redesigned to slow traffic as it approaches the intersection with Atwells and areas where pedestrian and bicycle activity is occurring and should be promoted. Techniques such as defining and narrowing travel lanes and providing buffered or protected bike lanes helps to define safe space for cyclists and slow vehicular travel speeds.*





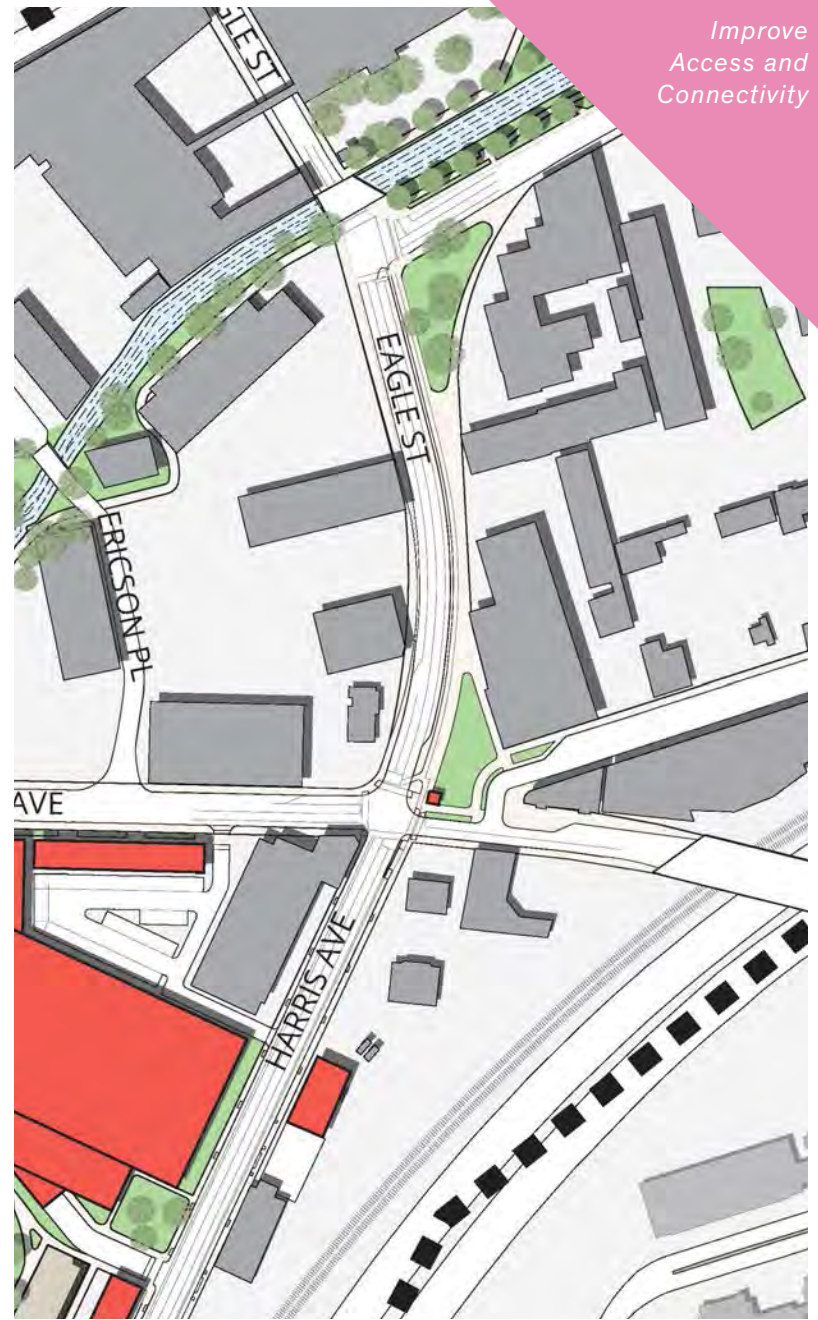
**EAGLE STREET - EXISTING**



**EAGLE STREET - REDESIGNED**

# EAGLE STREET INTERSECTION REPAIRS

Improve  
Access and  
Connectivity



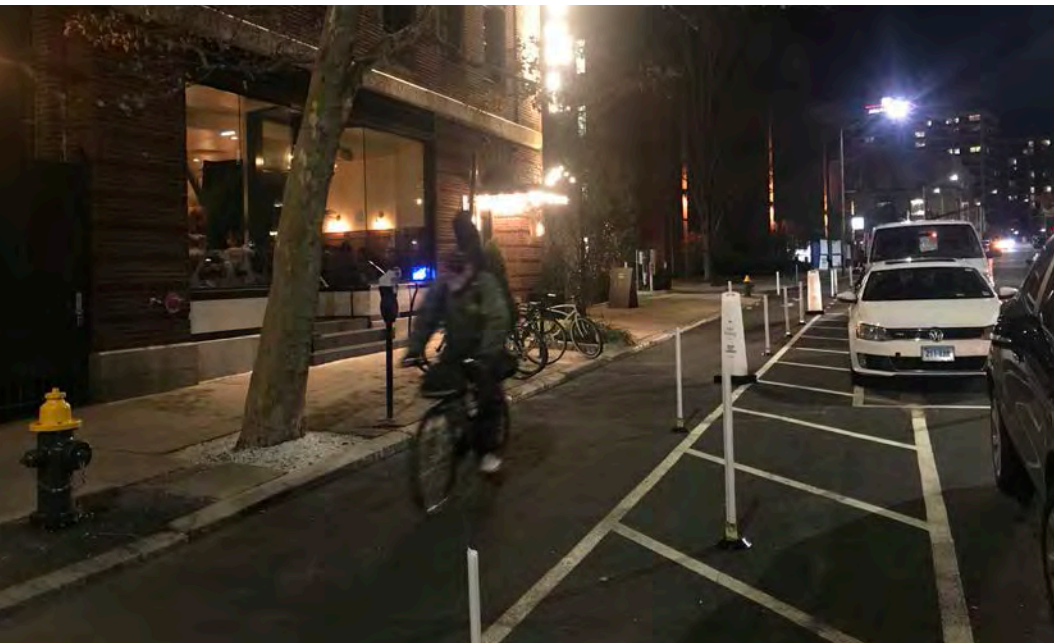
The intersections of Eagle Street with Atwells Ave and Kinsley are currently prioritized for vehicular movement at the expense of bicycle and pedestrian safety. The proposed plan provides alternative intersection designs that allow traffic to continue to move efficiently, but at a slower speed to minimize conflicts between all people using the streets.



## 2.4.2

# Use Demonstration Projects to Quickly and Inexpensively Improve Street Safety

Cities across the country are changing their approach to street design and implementation, embracing a test-before-you-invest mantra. When it's feasible, testing changes to the redesign of a street provides real life feedback that takes into account unexpected human behavior and leaves room for adjustment before significant money is spent on a permanent change. This approach also gives users and elected officials a chance to see an idea in action before having to make a final decision. Taking an incremental and temporary approach to street modifications is also more affordable, which means more dangerous streets and intersections can be addressed quickly. Providence recently used temporary and inexpensive materials (striping and easily removable flexible delineator posts) to build a protected bike lane on Fountain Street in Downtown. A similar approach should be applied within the Woonasquatucket Corridor. To slow traffic, improve pedestrian and bicycle safety, and generally improve the comfort and function of local streets, the City should explore: Adding on-street parking where it doesn't currently exist to slow traffic and provide physical barrier between traffic and pedestrians, using planters to slow traffic and create sense of place; replacing traffic lights with stop signs to reduce intersection conflicts and fatalities; and reducing travel lane width and assigning more space to protected bike lanes.



### Action

*Use inexpensive and temporary / semi-permanent materials to test Complete Streets improvements tied to the City's restriping and repaving schedule, including on Harris Avenue.*

### Timeframe

*Near-term*

### Action

*Make changes to the intersections of Dean at Promenade and Kinsley to address the extremely dangerous blind crosswalks.*

### Timeframe

*Near-term*

2.4.3

# Design Streets to Balance Industrial Needs with Safety for all Users

The Woonasquatucket Corridor is and will remain an industrial center within the City of Providence. Creative approaches are needed to balance on-going trucking activities with other users and maintain the culture of a truly mixed industrial and arts neighborhood. A network of slow-flow, shared streets will be critical to efficient movement of goods and safe travel by those on foot and on bike. The specific techniques used should ensure adequate room for maneuvering large trucks. Interventions should be tested using paint and temporary or semi-permanent materials to test performance and results, prior to making more permanent investments in alternative street designs. Criteria for evaluating success should include vehicular travel speeds, trip counts for all modes, and interviews of pedestrians, bicyclists, and truck drivers.

**Action**

*Test a shared street design that maintains truck access along Charlotte Hope Street, but allows the space to transform into a welcoming pedestrian plaza for events and celebrations.*

**Timeframe**

*Long-term*

**Action**

*Create a truck route map for the Woonasquatucket Corridor that identifies shared shipping streets and prioritizes pedestrian streets. Coordinate infrastructure improvements based on these categories to ensure all modes of travel are accommodated in a coordinated fashion.*

**Timeframe**

*Long-term*

**Action**

*Narrow painted travel lanes to 10 feet, strategically apply textured materials to the street, and use other subtle design strategies that create more friction within the street. This greater friction will create a dynamic that relies on eye contact between drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists.*

**Timeframe**

*Long-term*



#### 2.4.4

## Improve Pedestrian Safety and Comfort

Many people from the community indicated that more needs to be done to improve the safety and comfort of streets through better maintenance and lighting. A number of areas feel extremely unsafe because of trash and debris or poor lighting at night. Keeping streets clear of snow and debris was also a high priority for many people who would like to walk or bike, but can't because of a lack of clear roads and sidewalks.

There are a number of elevated bridges that create dark underutilized spaces along underlying streets, including bridges associated with I-95, the Dean Street bridge, Harris Avenue, and the Route 6/10 on ramp along Harris Avenue. Making these spaces safer and more comfortable for people who are walking and biking is critical to many people in the community. Improvements to these areas should be explored through a collaborative public / private effort to envision and design a strategy for enlivening each of the areas, through art, civic space design, and lighting.

#### Action

*Analyze the study area for inadequate walking infrastructure, such as poor lighting or buckling sidewalks, and put in place a capital plan to repair these basic elements that will help make walking in the Woonasquatucket Corridor safer and more appealing.*

#### Timeframe

*Near-term*

#### Action

*Work with community groups to plan clean ups of the Woonasquatucket Corridor to reduce trash and debris.*

#### Timeframe

*Near-term*

#### Action

*Purchase snow removal equipment that is designed for narrow bicycle and pedestrian thoroughfares.*

#### Timeframe

*Near-term*

#### Action

*Organize winter snow removal staff training for best practices for snow-removal on pedestrian and bicycle facilities.*

#### Timeframe

*Near-term*

#### Action

*Enforce existing snow removal ordinance through the issuing of tickets.*

#### Timeframe

*Near-term*



**Action**

*Launch a media campaign to encourage reporting of snow violations through use of the 3-1-1 app.*

**Timeframe**

*Near-term*

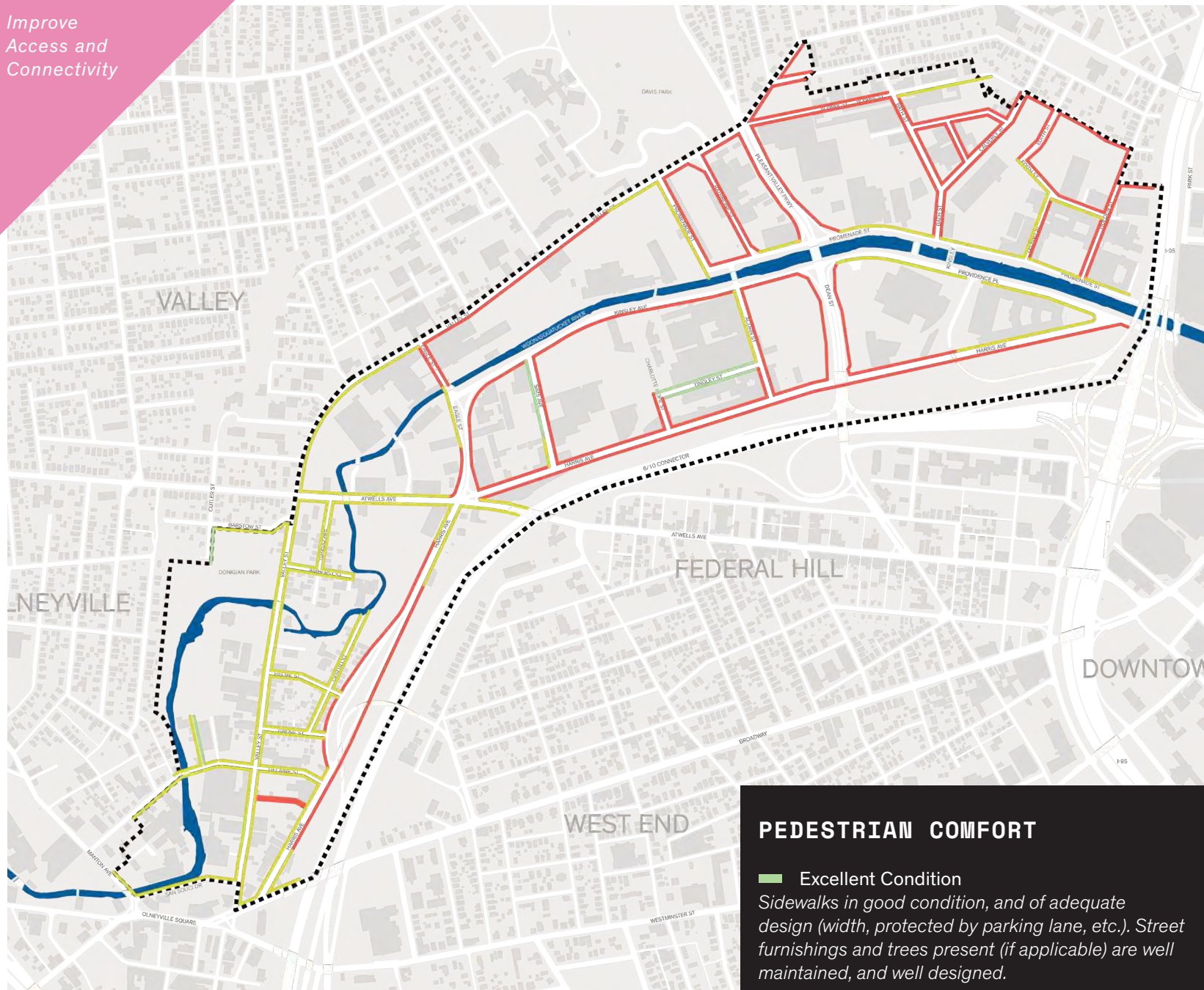
**Action**

*Issue a call for proposals for improvements to the Dean, Tobey and I-95 underpasses and secure funding for construction of the winning design.*

**Timeframe**

*Near-term*





### PEDESTRIAN COMFORT

**— Excellent Condition**

*Sidewalks in good condition, and of adequate design (width, protected by parking lane, etc.). Street furnishings and trees present (if applicable) are well maintained, and well designed.*

**— Acceptable Condition**

*Sidewalks in fair to good condition, and of adequate design (width, protected by parking lane, etc.). Street Furnishings and trees absent or in poor condition, or of substandard design (if applicable).*

**— Needs Improvement**

*Sidewalks absent or in poor condition, and/or of substandard design (width, unprotected by parking lane, etc.). Street Furnishings and trees absent (if applicable).*



## Rehabilitate and Build Bridges Across the River

In order to facilitate cross-neighborhood connections, it is critical to look closely at river crossings. During the public process, it became apparent that the community and City share similar ideas for which river crossings were highest priority. Work should be done to rehabilitate existing bridges and build new bridges across the River.





**Action**

*Rehabilitate the two abandoned railroad bridges over the River near Charlotte Hope Street (between Kinsley Avenue and the ALCO site) into pedestrian and bicycle only bridges/mini-pocket parks.*

**Timeframe**  
*Near-term*

**Action**

*Construct a new bridge at Sims Avenue for automobile, pedestrian, and bicycle travel across the River. Coordinate with the US Rubber Lofts, WaterFire Arts Center, and ALCO to establish shared use of the parking facilities on the properties north of the River with seasonal and event based parking demands created in nearby areas of the Corridor.*

**Timeframe**  
*Near-term*

**Action**

*Construct new bridges at Holden Street and at Leland Street for automobile, pedestrian, and bicycle travel across the River.*

**Timeframe**  
*Near-term*

**Action**

*Construct a new bridge from San Souci Drive to the Cathedral Arts property for bicycle and pedestrian travel across the River.*

**Timeframe**  
*Near-term*

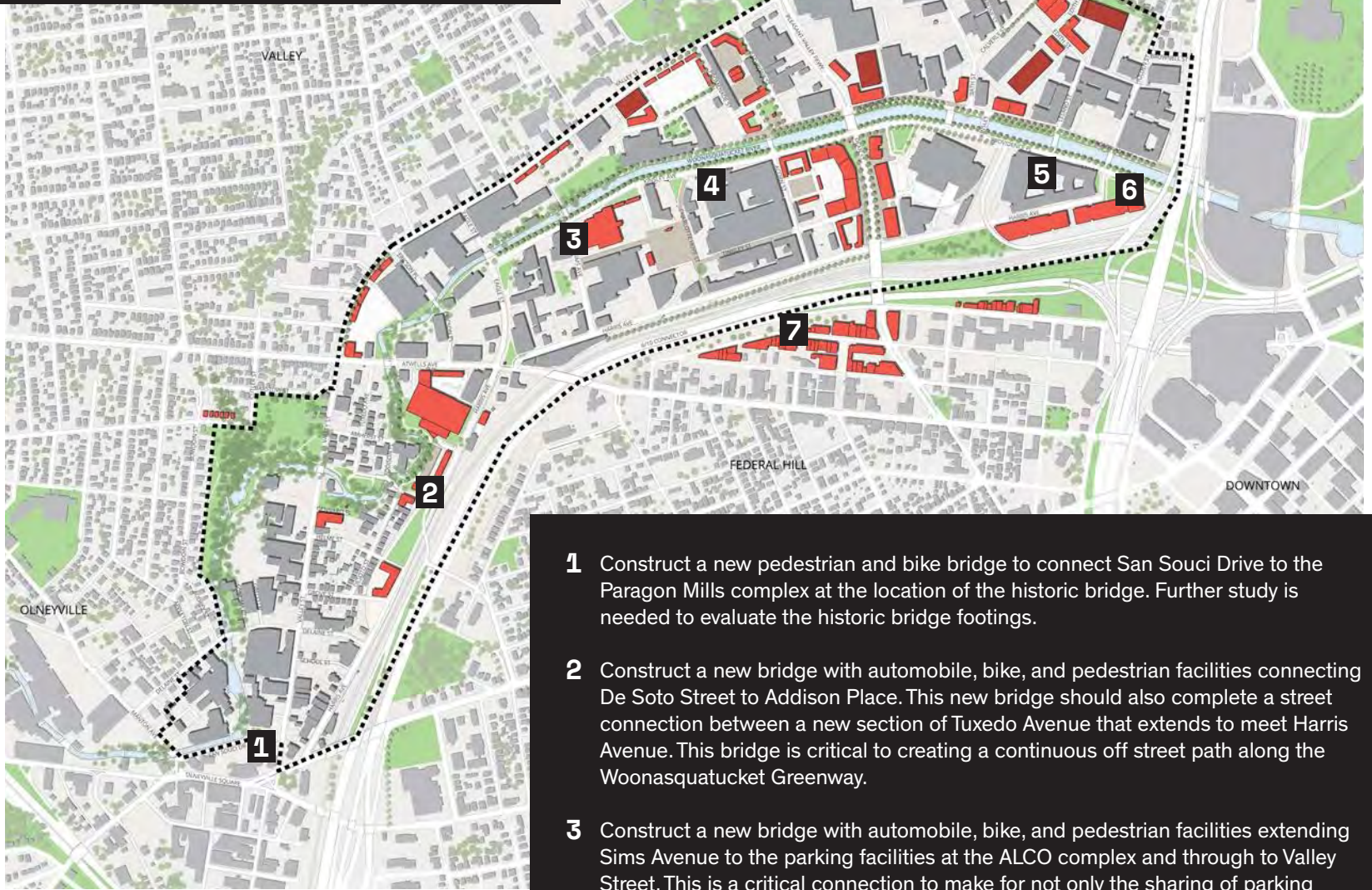
**Action**

*Construct a new bridge that connects De Soto Street to Addison Place for automobile, bicycle, and pedestrian travel across the River.*

**Timeframe**  
*Long-term*

“The number of bridges cutting this neighborhood off from the rest of the city really make walking and biking unattractive in this area.”

## REHABILITATED AND PROPOSED BRIDGES



- 1** Construct a new pedestrian and bike bridge to connect San Souci Drive to the Paragon Mills complex at the location of the historic bridge. Further study is needed to evaluate the historic bridge footings.
- 2** Construct a new bridge with automobile, bike, and pedestrian facilities connecting De Soto Street to Addison Place. This new bridge should also complete a street connection between a new section of Tuxedo Avenue that extends to meet Harris Avenue. This bridge is critical to creating a continuous off street path along the Woonasquatucket Greenway.
- 3** Construct a new bridge with automobile, bike, and pedestrian facilities extending Sims Avenue to the parking facilities at the ALCO complex and through to Valley Street. This is a critical connection to make for not only the sharing of parking resources, but also to promote comfortable walking and bicycling between the WaterFire Arts Center, ALCO, the Steel Yard, and, the in development Farm Fresh RI site.
- 4** Rehabilitate the pedestrian and bike bridge connecting Charlotte Hope Street across to the ALCO complex using a historic rail bridge. This is currently utilized by parts of the community as a short cut for walking and should be improved to formalize and celebrate this connection.
- 5** Construct a new bridge with automobile, bike, and pedestrian facilities connecting Leland Street to Providence Place. This bridge will not only help to establish stronger walking and bicycling connections over the River, but will also support the traffic improvements to the District which will be needed to create the Woonasquatucket Greenway Promenade that is envisioned to run along what is now Promenade Street.
- 6** Construct a new bridge with automobile, bike, and pedestrian facilities connecting Holden Street to Providence Place. This bridge offers the same improvements as Bridge #5.
- 7** Construct a new pedestrian and bike bridge connecting the Spruce Street at McAvoy Street over the 6/10 Highway and rail corridor to Harris Avenue. This new bridge offers the opportunity to knit together the neighborhoods of Federal Hill and West Side to the Woonasquatucket River Valley as well as create an iconic new gateway to Providence.



## 2.4.6

# Improve the Mall Area Connection

One of the more dramatic barriers between the Woonasquatucket Corridor and Downtown is the massive bulk of the Providence Place Mall, as it bridges over both the Woonasquatucket River and Northeast Corridor rail line below. Although a pedestrian underpass exists beneath I-95 and the Mall, the pendulous bulk of the Mall provides a dark and seemingly unsafe experience for anyone attempting to walk or bike below. Riding a bicycle on the existing ramp up and under the Mall to Francis Street is also an uncomfortable experience due to the tight turns in the ramp. At a minimum, the City should improve and activate the pedestrian underpass to make it safe and inviting. More ambitious concepts for an artistic pedestrian and bicycle bridge suspended from the highway piers and mall structure above have been developed by Barnaby Evans. This concept would make for an interesting entrance to the Woonasquatucket Corridor and give priority to pedestrians and bicyclists. This area should further be improved by redevelopment of the former Providence Fruit and Produce Warehouse site, which should frame a new public space at the intersection of Harris and Kinsley and, coupled with other atmospheric, lighting, and public art improvements, make the underpass area beneath I-95 and the Mall a definite gateway to the Woonasquatucket Corridor.

### Action

*Design and construct improvements to the existing underpass under the Mall and I-95 to improve the safety and attractiveness of this important connection.*

### Timeframe

*Near-term*

### Action

*Secure funds to engineer and construct an artistic "gateway" pedestrian and bicycle bridge suspended from the highway piers and mall structure.*

### Timeframe

*Long-term*

### Action

*Work with the owner's of Providence Place Mall to activate the underpass area and explore new storefront openings onto the underpass.*

### Timeframe

*Long-term*



**Action**

*Work with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation to ensure that the Northbound I-95 Viaduct project includes improvements under I-95 that enhance safety and attractiveness along Promenade Street and Providence Place.*

**Timeframe**  
*Near-term*

**Action**

*Implement the WRWC's signage and mural designs around and underneath the I-95 underpass and the Mall.*

**Timeframe**  
*Near-term*



## 2.4.7

# Reduce Block Sizes

The Woonasquatucket Corridor's inventory of large impenetrable mega-blocks, or blocks with a perimeter greater than 1/4 mile, should be reduced by breaking them up with interior streets and lanes. The resulting increase in permeability will make it easier and more attractive for walking and provide network efficiency for cars and bikes as well. The illustrative plan for the project area shows where key connections, either streets, or pedestrian or bicycle only paths should be prioritized within the Corridor.

### Action

*Update the Zoning Ordinance to create maximum block sizes and the creation of additional thoroughfares when new development or redevelopment occurs.*

### Timeframe

*Near-term*

### Action

*Conduct a site planning study of the Kinsley, Dean, Harris, and Sims megablock to determine landscape strategies for the PRA site as well as new intra-block connections.*

### Timeframe

*Near-term*

### Action

*Explore partnerships with land owners and developers to create new connections through mega-blocks. This includes working with the Foundry and surrounding landowners to open up additional street connections at key locations where the Foundry campus connects with the surrounding neighborhood. For example, open Edith Street to connect with Calais Street and connect Edith Street with a new connection to Caverly Street.*

### Timeframe

*Long-term*

### Action

*Work with the Coca-Cola Company and the owners along Bath Street to formalize a through block connection from Pleasant Valley Parkway to Bath Street that would help to right-size this mega-block.*

### Timeframe

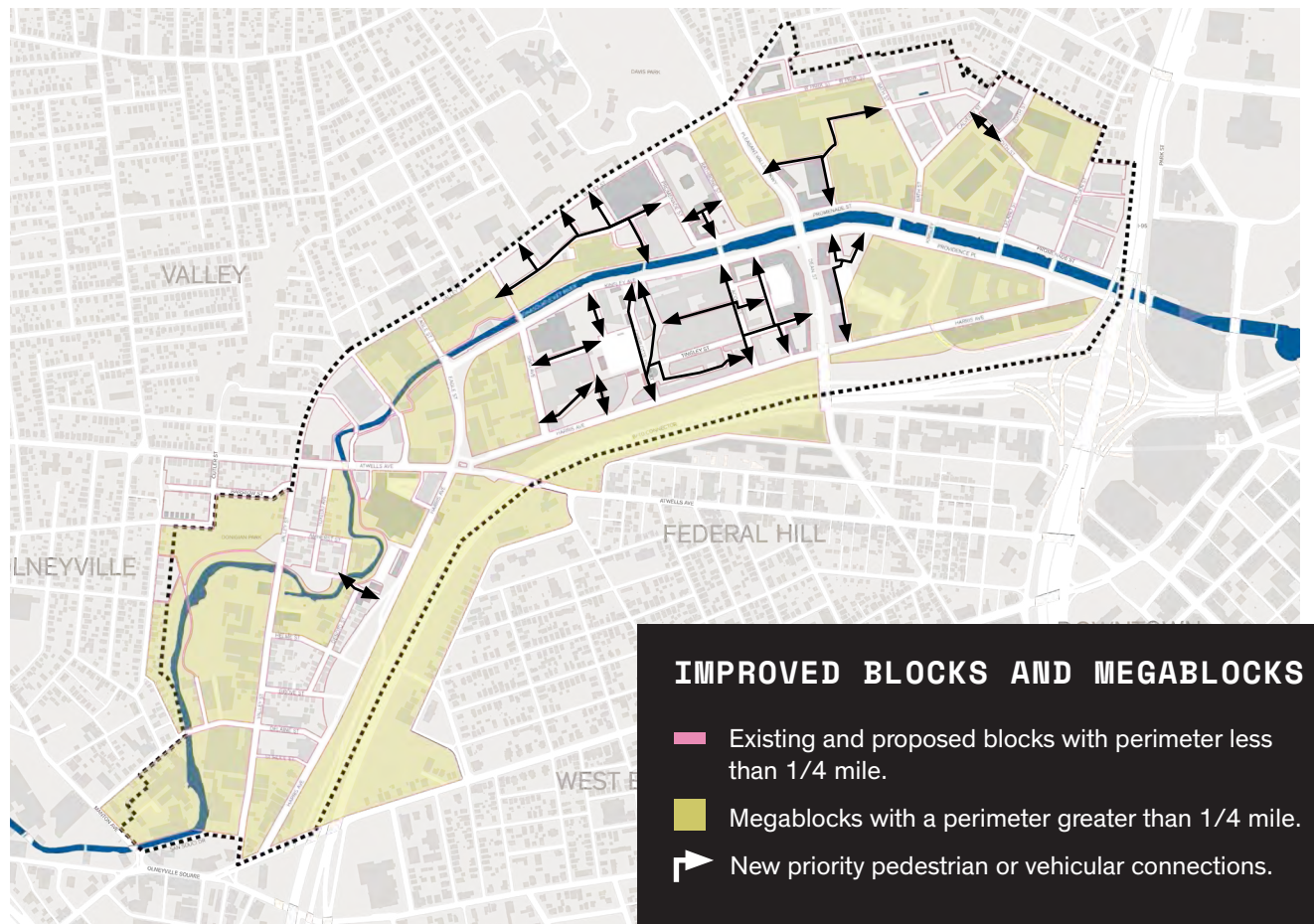
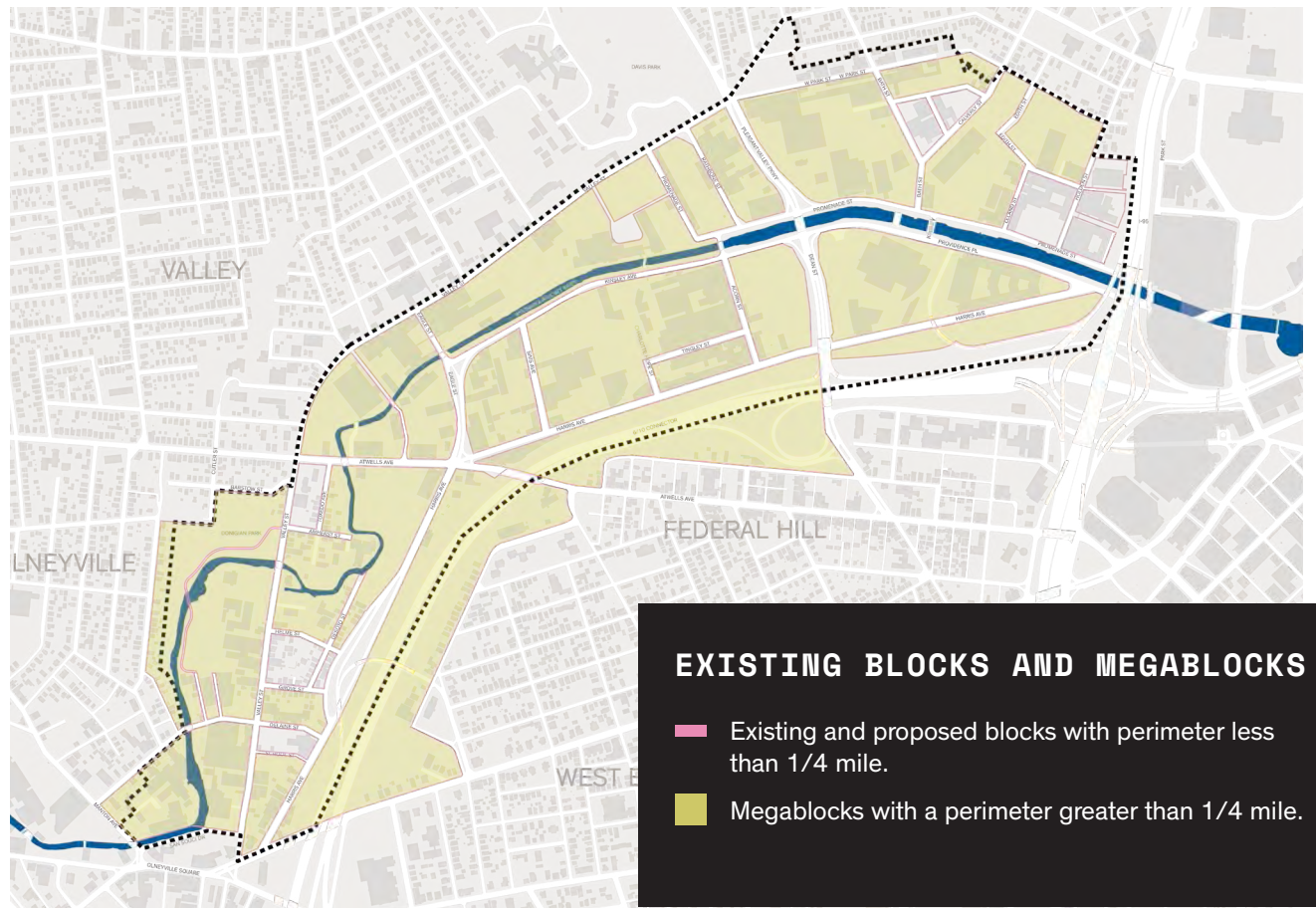
*Long-term*

### Action

*Explore the feasibility of reconnecting West Park Street between Bath and Calverly streets.*

### Timeframe

*Long-term*



*Blocks with a perimeter distance greater than 1/4 mile have been shown to act as a barrier to pedestrian movement. Because of the industrial heritage of the Woonasquatucket Corridor, the area has a majority of mega blocks, which has been a challenge for walkability and transit ridership. A key to strengthening the neighborhood is to create more safe connections through blocks with vehicular or pedestrian connections.*



## 2.4.8

# Improve Public Transit Service

Currently, there is no public transit service available between Chalkstone Avenue and Atwells Avenue, leaving a ½- to ¾-mile swath of the Corridor without access to any form of public transit. One of the key reasons cited by Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) for discontinuing Route 26 bus service through the Corridor was the inability for riders to easily walk from areas south of the River to bus stops located north of the River on Promenade Street and Kinsley Avenue. For future public transit service to be successful, steps must be taken to improve the permeability and walkability of of the Corridor.

### Action

*Work with RIDOT to explore and test new public transportation options including an Autonomous Shuttle between Olneyville Square and Providence Station via the Woonasquatucket Corridor.*

### Timeframe

*Near-term*

### Action

*Work with RIPTA to locate potential bus stops and prioritize improvements to the streets within a 5-minute walk of the bus route in order to make walking to the bus safer and more attractive.*

### Timeframe

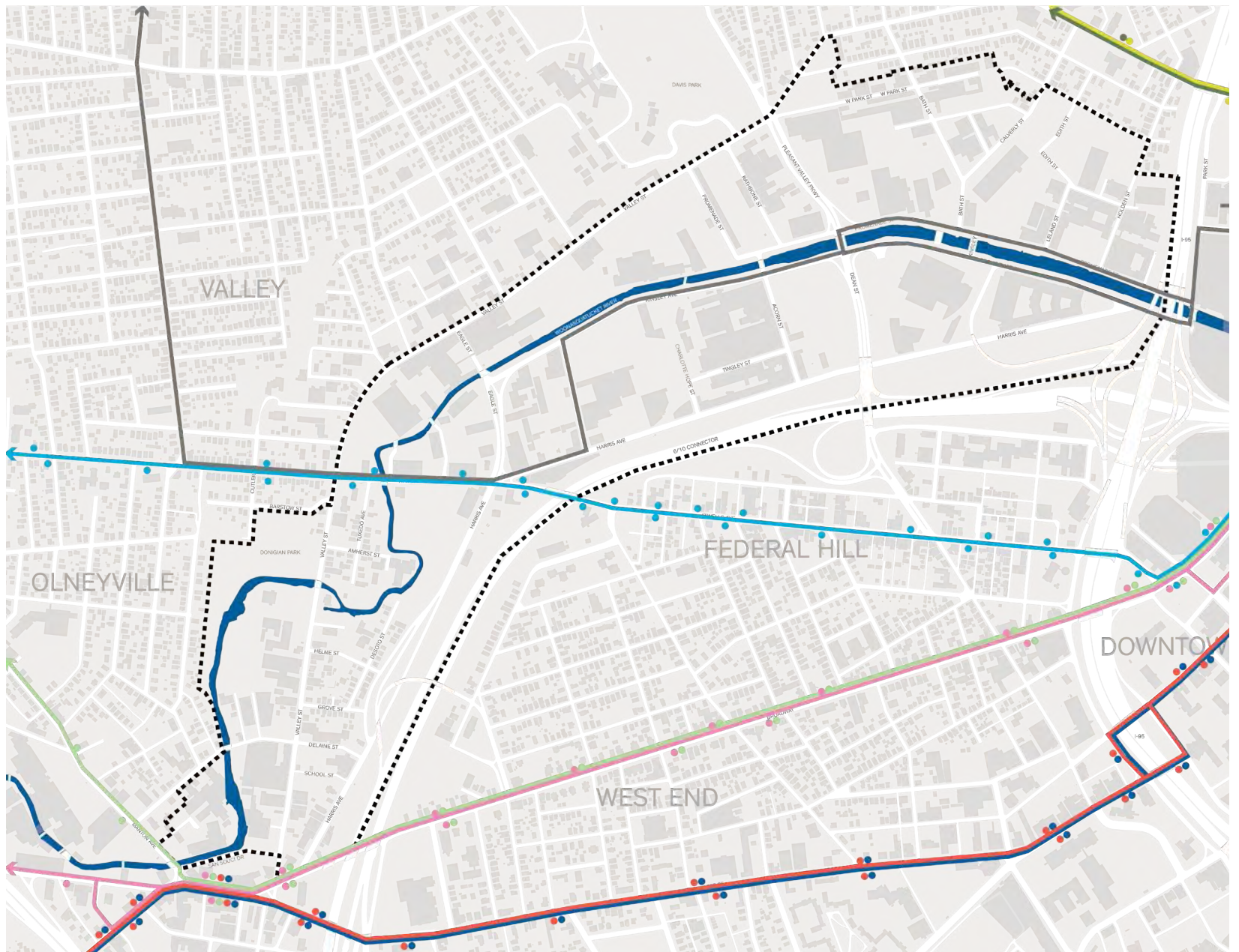
*Near-term*

### Action

*Work with RIPTA to explore additional opportunities for new transit routes through the Woonasquatucket Corridor.*

### Timeframe

*Near-term*



**RIPTA KEY CORRIDOR BUS ROUTES**

- Route 27: Broadway / Manton
- Route 28: Broadway / Hartford
- Route 56: Chalkstone Ave.
- Route 92: RI College / Federal Hill / East Side

**RIPTA URBAN SERVICE BUS ROUTES**

- Route 17: Dyer / Pocasset
- Route 19: Plainfield / Westmister
- Route 57: Smith Street

**DISCONTINUED BUS ROUTES**

- Route 26



## 2.4.9

# Tie Into Citywide and Statewide Bike Routes

Currently, the street network within the Woonasquatucket Corridor is unsafe and uncomfortable for people travelling by bicycle. Most importantly, the main routes that connect the Corridor to surrounding neighborhoods -- Atwells Avenue and Dean Street -- should be prioritized for improvements. The City should also prioritize extending and connecting the Woonasquatucket River Greenway Bike Path to the Downtown, to surrounding neighborhoods, and to the Washington Secondary bike path. While several projects to fill in gaps are planned or underway (including the San Souci Greenway segment, the Promenade/Kinsley project, and the Gotham Greens Greenway segment), gaps still exist in other locations including between the planned San Souci Greenway segment and Riverside Park to the west and Donigian Park to the north and between Donigian Park and Eagle Square. Advancing construction of the planned projects and funding design and construction to fill in remaining gaps should be prioritized.

### Action

*Create an additional connection across the 6/10 Connector and Northeast rail corridor by creating a new bridge for pedestrians and bicyclists from Spruce Street in Federal Hill to Harris Avenue.*

### Timeframe

*Long-term*

### Action

*Connect the planned Washington Secondary Trail Extension to the Woonasquatucket Greenway via the Tobey Street Bridge that will be constructed as part of the 6/10 Connector project.*

### Timeframe

*Near-term*

### Action

*Create a continuous safe route for bicyclists along Pleasant Valley Parkway and Dean Street to connect surrounding neighborhoods to the Corridor and to the Woonasquatucket Greenway.*

### Timeframe

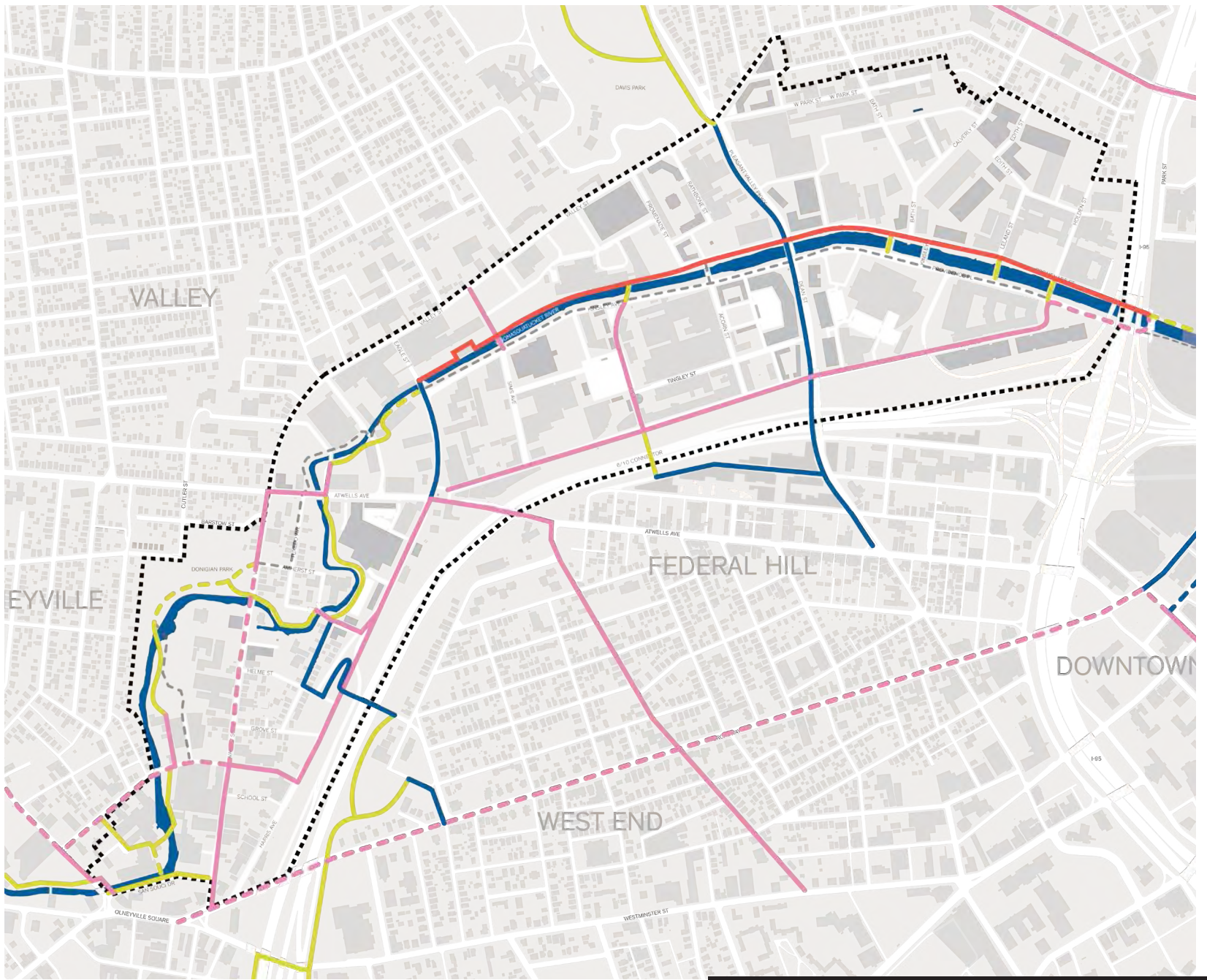
*Near-term*

### Action

*Fill in gaps in the Woonasquatucket Greenway Bike Path to provide a continuous off-road bike path through the Corridor. Priority should be given to the gap from Donigian Park to Eagle Square as well as the significant stretch along both Kinsley Avenue and Promenade Street running from Eagle Street to the Providence Place Mall.*

### Timeframe

*Near-term*



### BIKE ROUTES

- Proposed Shared Space, Promenade
- Proposed Bike Lanes, On Street
- Existing Bike Lanes, On Street
- Proposed Protected Bike Lane
- Proposed Off-Street Multi-Use Path
- Existing Off-Street Multi-Use Path
- Existing Bicycle Infrastructure Removed



2.4.10

# Improve the Identity of Gateways to the Woonasquatucket Corridor

The Woonasquatucket Corridor should be identified at its various major points of entry through art and wayfinding. Creative installations that provide visual cues that people are entering a place worthy of notice should be supported. The City should work with local artists for a call for entry to generate a cohesive but unique installations that respect the Corridor's creative and industrial heritage. It will be critical to avoid a corporate, sterile approaches to this effort, so that the gateways truly reflect the spirit of the local people and energy. Wayfinding signage should also be incorporated throughout the Corridor.

**Action**

*Implement the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council signage and wayfinding plan.*

**Timeframe**

*Near-term*

**Action**

*Issue a call for entry to artists and fabricators for design and construction of gateway elements, including at the intersection of Dean Street with Promenade and Kinsley, under the Providence Place Mall, at the intersection of Dean and Valley Streets, and at the intersection of Atwells and Greenway Path next to the existing Fire Station.*

**Timeframe**

*Near-term*

2.4.11

# Retain Neighborhood Jobs and Housing Patterns

There is a strong historic and ongoing connection between surrounding residential neighborhoods (including Olneyville, Mount Pleasant, Elmhurst, Smith Hill, and Federal Hill) and the jobs center down in the valley along the Woonasquatucket River. For generations people walked or took public transportation to and from from these neighborhoods to work in the Woonasquatucket Corridor. The proximity and accessibility between home and work was historically an important part of the success and growth of the area. There is a strong desire among community members to better support connectivity between housing in the surrounding neighborhoods and jobs in the Woonasquatucket Corridor. The City should reinforce and support this relationship by improving streets to make walking and biking a safe and convenient option, supporting better public transportation, and encouraging affordable housing in surrounding neighborhoods within walking distance of the Woonasquatucket Corridor.

**Action**

*Prioritize Complete Streets upgrades on streets that will improve access to jobs centers in the Corridor for people walking and riding bicycles from surrounding neighborhoods, including Dean Street to the south and north up Pleasant Valley Parkway; Valley Street going East at Pleasant Valley Parkway to Orms Street connecting to Smith Street; Atwells (both east over the highway and west into the neighborhood); and River Avenue up to Chalkstone Avenue.*

**Timeframe**

*Near-term*

**Action**

*Improve connectivity as a way to support public transportation to help increase convenient, non-vehicular travel between the neighborhoods and the Woonasquatucket Corridor.*

**Timeframe**

*Near-term*

**Action**

*Remove barriers to affordable housing within adjacent neighborhoods in a manner that is compatible with local character, including increasing the number of residential units allowed where appropriate (while protecting the scale of neighborhoods) and increasing flexibility for accessory dwelling units.*

**Timeframe**

*Near-term*

“The valley should return to providing good paying jobs to workers walking to and from home.”



2.4.12

# Implement a Park Once Strategy for the District

On street parking is generally underutilized in the Woonasquatucket Corridor. Use of on-street parking and shared parking should be encouraged to minimize creation of off-street parking lots and increase foot traffic, ultimately creating safer streets and allowing for more productive use of land. Parking ratios should also be examined to make sure that an oversupply of parking is not created in the Corridor. Studies have found that too much parking can significantly impair the economic development of an area.

The current cost of new construction in the region coupled with high parking ratios expected by the market have conspired to damage the overall development value of many sites. In numerous cases, buildings that can not be replaced with new construction in an economical way, have been demolished to make way for surface parking. This has contributed to degradation of the urban fabric and suburbanization of new business developments within the Woonasquatucket Corridor.

A unified parking plan will help leverage necessary increases in the intensity and diversity of uses in parts of the Woonasquatucket Corridor and service adjacent high value parking areas such as Federal Hill. After successful deployment of such a policy, large areas of the Woonasquatucket Corridor could potentially be open for sensitive and dynamic infill development, helping justify some potential public investment in the creation of this shared resource.

**Action**

*Require parking to be unbundled from rents and leases to allow the true cost of parking to be presented and reduce parking demand.*

**Timeframe**  
*Near-term*

**Action**

*Help broker shared parking agreements for private lots.*

**Timeframe**  
*Near-term*

**Action**

*Appropriately sign and stripe on street parking throughout the Woonasquatucket Corridor to encourage better utilization of on street parking and reduce demand for surface lots.*

**Timeframe**  
*Near-term*

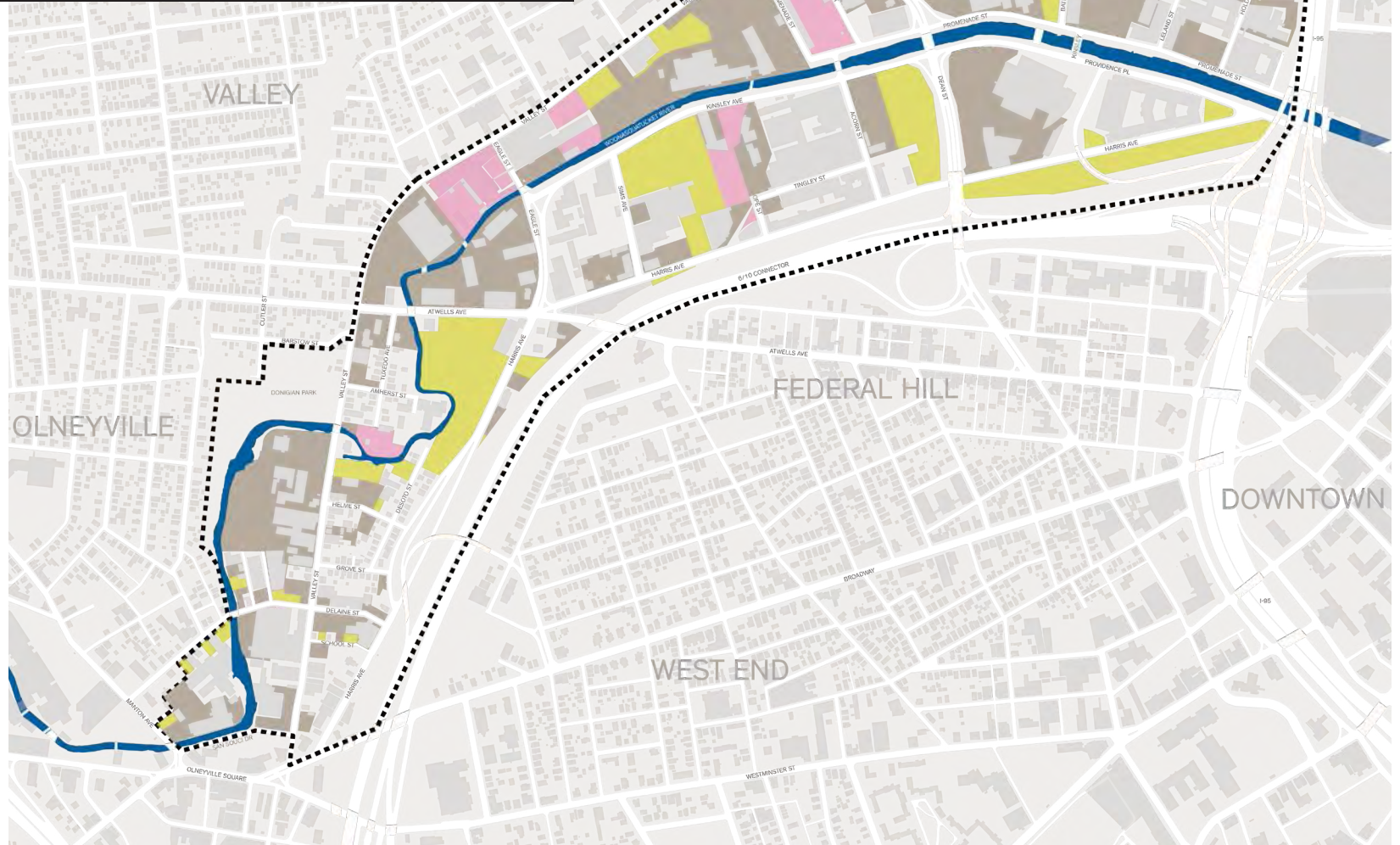
**Action**

*Develop a snow emergency plan that provides more access to on-street parking, even in snow emergencies.*

**Timeframe**  
*Near-term*

## UNDERUTILIZED LANDS

- Parking Lots
- Work Lots
- Vacant Land



### Action

Commission a comprehensive mobility study that looks at establishing mode share targets to guide transportation planning and policies. This study can inform the creation of parking maximums and should also ensure that improvements are made in parallel to encourage shifts in behavior and the establishment of comprehensive transportation demand management plans for larger commercial uses within the Corridor.

### Timeframe

Near-term

### Action

Increase the supply of on-street parking spaces by adding parking spaces where feasible to help narrow streets and slow traffic.

### Timeframe

Near-term

### Action

Create and implement a district-wide integrated parking plan with provisions made to produce more centralized parking infrastructure, encourage shared parking, and prevent clearance of land for more surface parking lots.

### Timeframe

Long-term

### Action

Relax minimum parking requirements in the City's Zoning Ordinance for all uses that deal with fabrication, making, arts, and food production, processing, packaging, or related activities to reduce surface parking and allow land-owners to determine parking based on market demand.

### Timeframe

Near-term

The value of buildings for reuse and future commercial activity far outweighs the benefits of surface parking lots, which in many cases have overestimated the peak usage required in their design. As demonstrated above, the vast majority of open land within the Woonasquatucket Corridor has already been converted to parking for a few hours each day, further contributing to the perception that areas are vacant and unsafe because of the inherently antagonistic relationship between pedestrian experience and surface parking.



# ENHANCE AND MAINTAIN PUBLIC SPACES AND THE RIVER





## Enhance the Woonasquatucket River

The Woonasquatucket River is the natural, spiritual, and historical fiber that weaves together many varied parts of the industrial corridor. Indeed, without the River it is doubtful that any of the the surrounding industrial fabric would ever have been built at all. You wouldn't assume the River's importance upon seeing it, however. That is, if you could even see it beyond the overgrown riverbanks that, during summer, make it nearly impossible to even catch a glimpse of running water for much of its length. This is not the legacy this river deserves.

The Woonasquatucket River is used at various times of the year by people for recreational boating. These kayak trips are typically only possible during high tides or when the River is full because of up stream storm run off. There is a great opportunity and local interest in increasing access to the water, with a strong desire for more boat launches, as well as tide clocks, storage spaces, and rental facilities.

In order to celebrate the River's natural beauty and historical importance, it deserves a more fitting tribute in the manner of its care and accessibility. This Plan calls for a dramatic change to the River with the creation of a riverfront automobile-free promenade fully replacing the aptly name Promenade Street. Car traffic should be relocated to Kinsley Avenue, which should be converted to a two-way street.

**“Have street art  
and sculptures to  
make the community  
feel that any place  
is a good place to  
gather.”**



Several new bridges will be required to bring North-South oriented automobile traffic across the River. These bridges should be built at Holden Street, Leland Street, and Sims Avenue. The two abandoned railroad bridges near Charlotte Hope Street should be rehabilitated to serve as pedestrian/bicycle bridges to connect into the promenade. An additional new automobile bridge is also being proposed further south unrelated to the promenade, connecting Harris Avenue across the River to the Natareno Salvage Site.

The promenade itself should be built with flood mitigation infrastructure in mind, and may alter in section to support stormwater mitigation strategies utilized on adjacent sites.



*River flood improvements - hard edge*



*River flood improvements - soft edge*

**Action**

*Build the Woonasquatucket Greenway Extension between Eagle Street and Providence Place Mall. Develop a phasing and implementation plan to make a riverfront automobile-free promenade that fully replaces Promenade Street.*

**Timeframe**

*Near-term*

**Action**

*Acquire and create a public park on the Natareno Salvage lot and connect the Greenway through the Natareno Salvage lot.*

**Timeframe**

*Long-term*

**Action**

*Advance design and construction of the San Souci Greenway segment between Valley Street and Manton Avenue.*

**Timeframe**

*Near-term*

**Action**

*Prioritize sites and secure funding to construct boat launches for kayaks and other non-motorized boats, tide clocks, and storage spaces along the Woonasquatucket River to increase access to the River.*

**Timeframe**

*Long-term*

**Action**

*Advance design and construction of the Greenway Easement along the River through the former GE Baseworks site.*

**Timeframe**

*Near-term*

**Action**

*Prioritize sites and create pocket parks along the River.*

**Timeframe**

*Near-term*



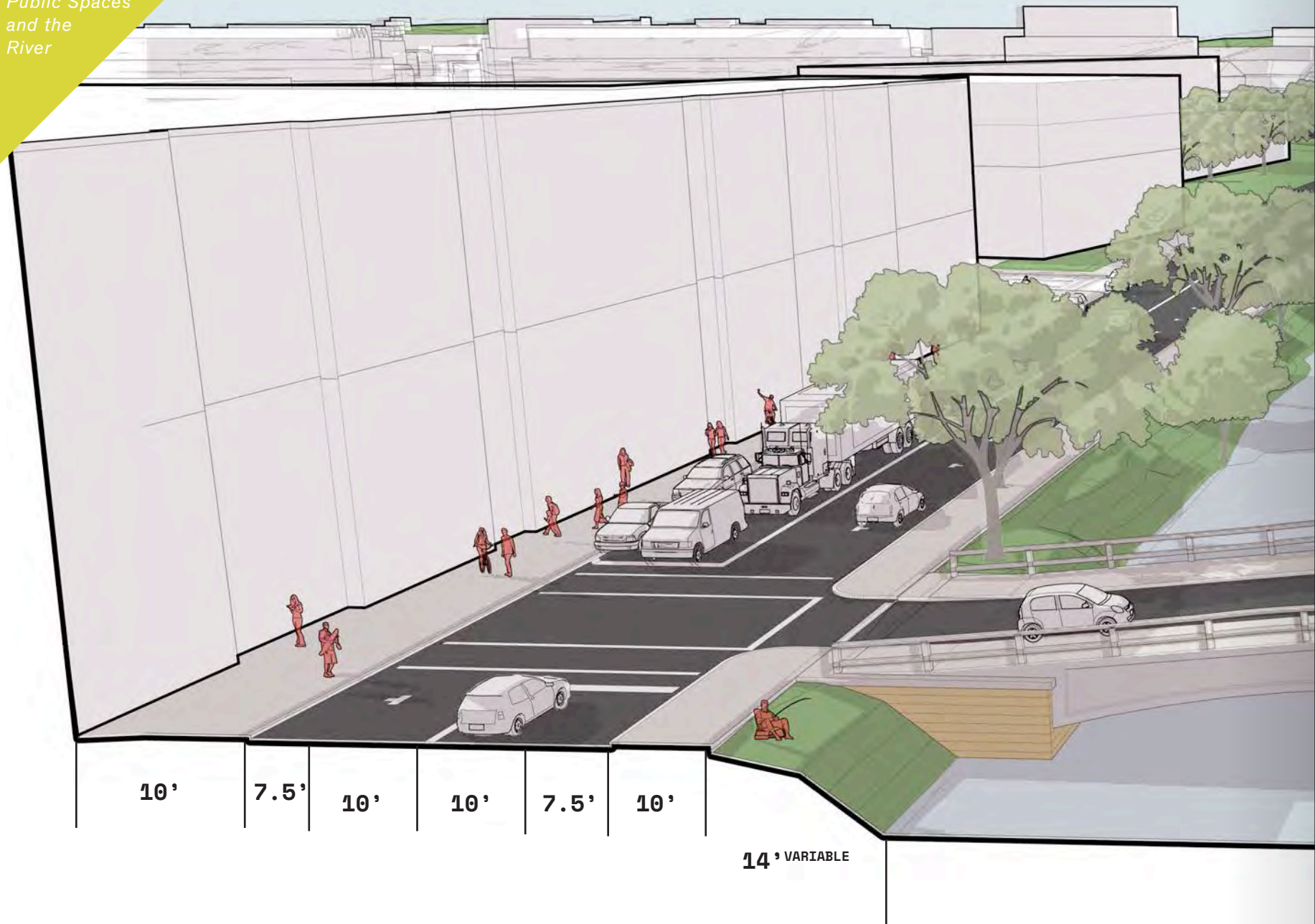


*This view east up a transformed Promenade Street toward the Paul Cuffee School and the Acorn Street Bridge. The Woonasquatucket Greenway is envisioned as not just a riverfront park, but an integrated shared space that treats the River as a central and celebrated asset within the community. The space is designed to prioritize pedestrians and bicyclists, while some limited traffic is permitted. Public art is intergrated into the shared space as well as trees, landscaping, and seating.*



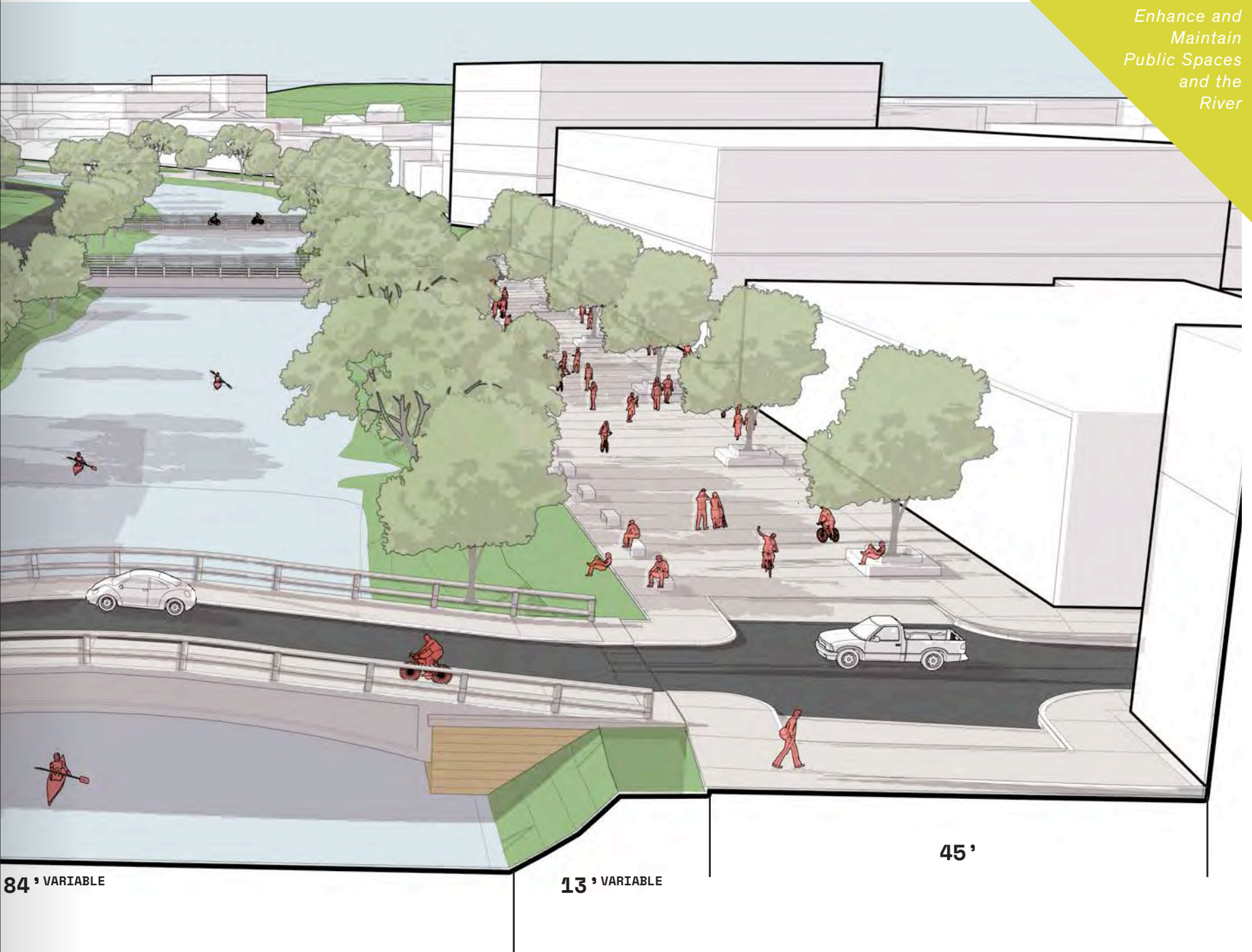






## KINSLEY PROMENADE REDESIGN

*A new vision for Promenade was developed during the public process to create a bold new shared use space along the Woonasquatucket River. Vehicular traffic is shifted to the south side of the River along Kinsley Avenue with a wide, human-prioritized street along the north side of the River, in the current location of Promenade Street. Cross streets will continue to flow north / south. This investment in a high-quality, safe shared-street environment will capitalize on the presence of the River and create a strong connection between the urban neighborhoods and nature.*





## 2.5.2

# Create Flexible and Multi-Functional Civic Spaces

The civic spaces proposed for various catalyst sites and other parts of the Woonasquatucket Corridor have unique constraints that differentiate them from run of the mill green parks. Most civic spaces will need to be flexible in how they are used from day to day or even hour to hour. Many public spaces will be required to recognize their location in an industrial working context, and must serve double duty as loading and work yards as required. Spatial flexibility may extend to a given space starting the day as a parking plaza, in the afternoon being used for the loading and unloading of equipment and trucks, on the weekends hosting an impromptu soccer match, and at various times throughout the year be set up as one of the venues of a music festival.

In areas of less intense industrial activity, a civic space may not be required to function as a work yard, however, it will almost certainly at the very least have to integrate advanced stormwater controls, swales, and retention areas in line with the strategy for resiliency and flood mitigation discussed earlier.

There is an opportunity and desire within the Woonasquatucket Corridor for a more diverse range of civic spaces that support community life and provide flexible space for work and play. These spaces can and should be anchored by the arts and provide places for safe outdoor activity and gathering. The community indicated a preference for recreation corridors, play spaces, skate parks, playgrounds, and ample green spaces to balance the gritty hardscape that people love about the area. Hardscape plazas that support retail and artists space were also desirable, as well as more seating, benches, and places to rest.

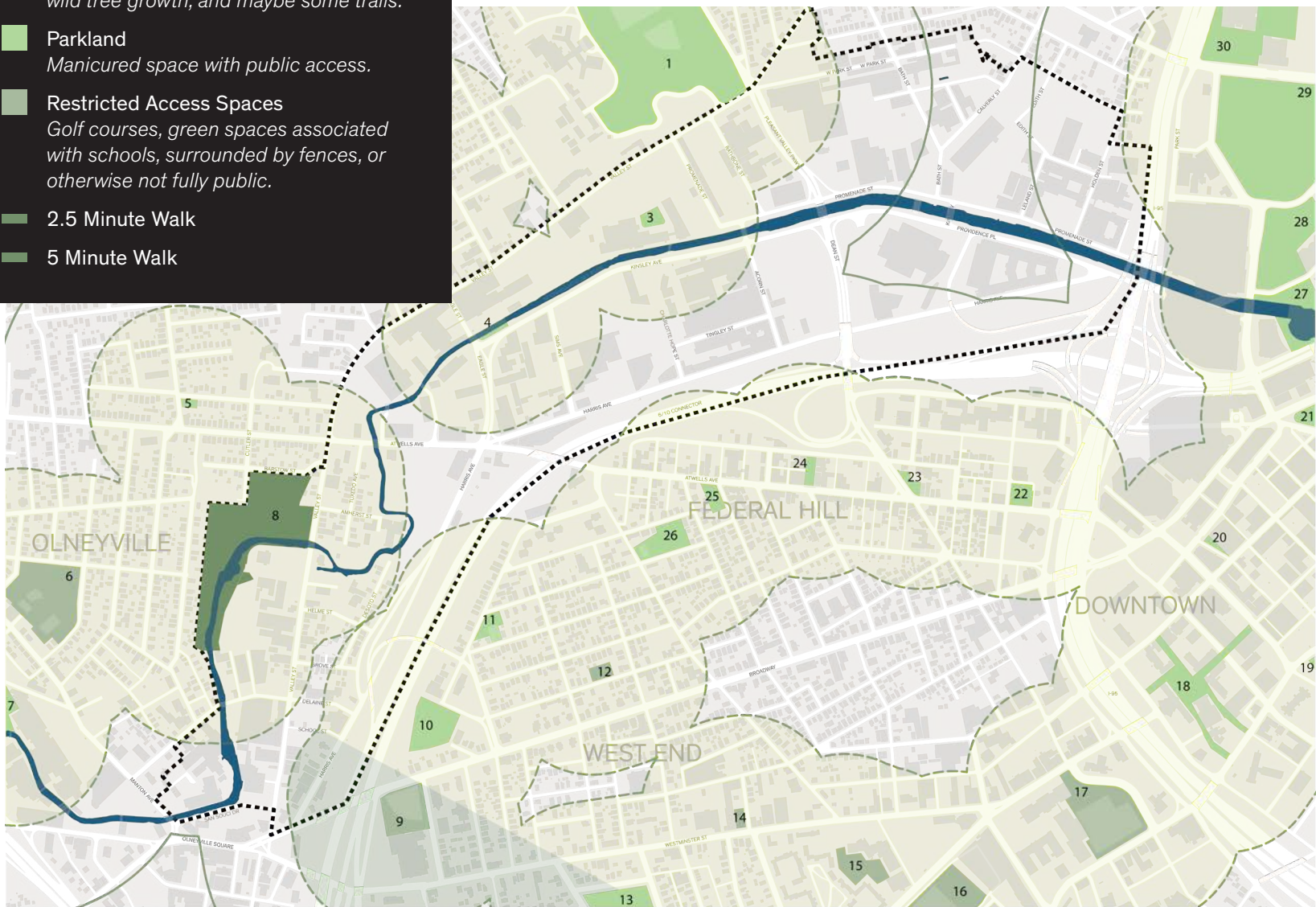
*Flexible public space at the Wurks accomodates a variety of community activities.*





## EXISTING PUBLIC SPACE

- Urban Wild**  
*No paved paths or large manicured lawns, wild tree growth, and maybe some trails.*
- Parkland**  
*Manicured space with public access.*
- Restricted Access Spaces**  
*Golf courses, green spaces associated with schools, surrounded by fences, or otherwise not fully public.*
- 2.5 Minute Walk**
- 5 Minute Walk**



### Action

*Amend the Zoning Ordinance to incentivize development projects to provide publicly-accessible pocket parks, plazas, and other civic spaces.*

### Timeframe

*Near-term*

### Action

*Design and build flex public space at the PRA / Umicore Site to draw people into the center of the block for a variety of activities that support adjacent economic and cultural activities.*

### Timeframe

*Near-term*

### Action

*Work with property owners at key locations to create new publicly accessible open space where there is a currently deficiency in available open space as illustrated on the existing open space network map. Provide incentives for density bonuses or tax breaks for open space contributions, or change zoning to require parcels above a certain size to create open space when developed or require developers to pay into an open space fund to purchase land and build public open space.*

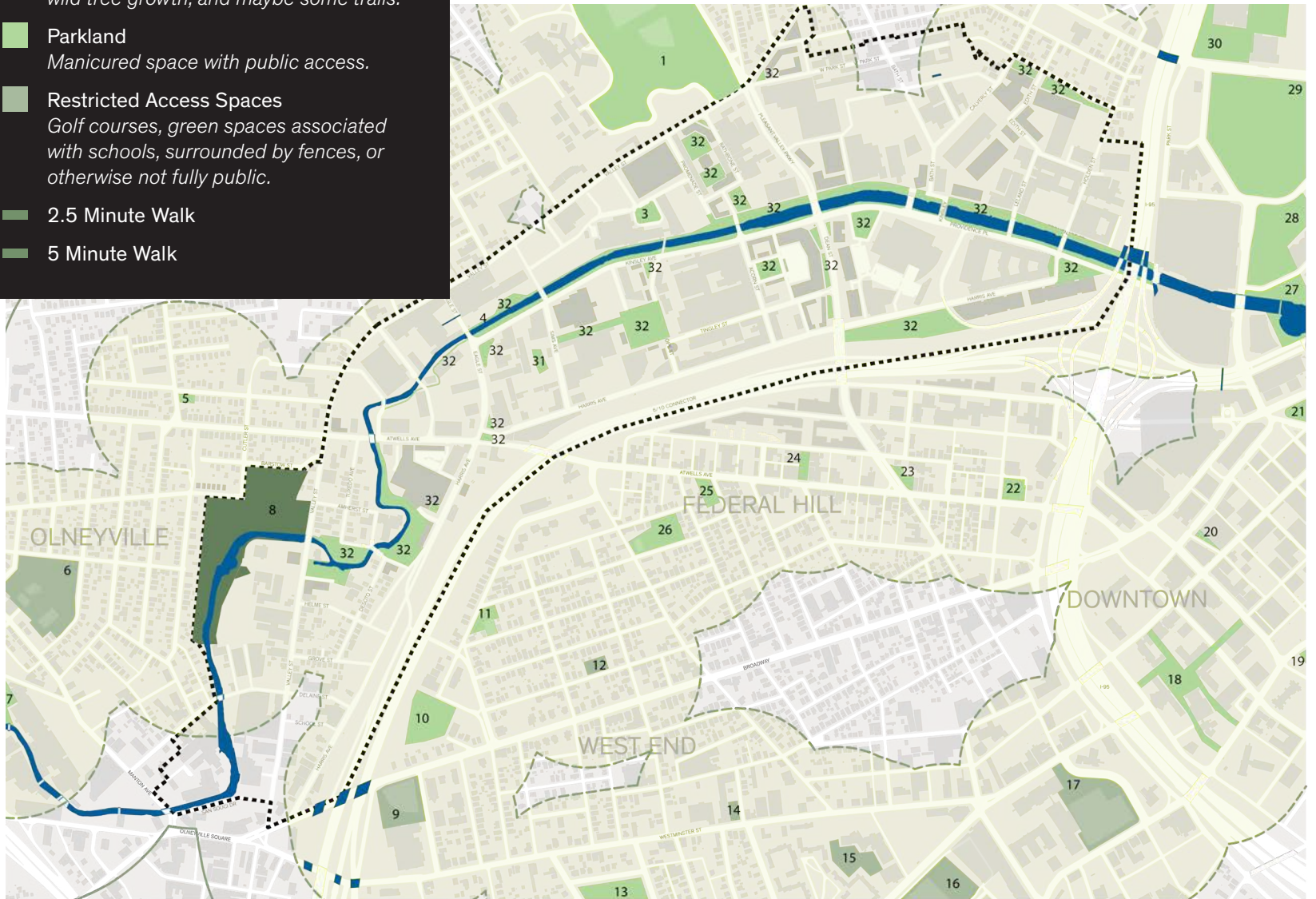
### Timeframe

*Near-term*



## PROPOSED PUBLIC SPACE

- Urban Wild**  
*No paved paths or large manicured lawns, wild tree growth, and maybe some trails.*
- Parkland**  
*Manicured space with public access.*
- Restricted Access Spaces**  
*Golf courses, green spaces associated with schools, surrounded by fences, or otherwise not fully public.*
- 2.5 Minute Walk**
- 5 Minute Walk**



### Existing Parks

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Davis Park</li> <li>2. John J. O'Brien Memorial Park</li> <li>3. ALCO Pocket Park</li> <li>4. Woonasquatucket Greenway Pocket Park</li> <li>5. Mount Pleasant Memorial Park</li> <li>6. Joslin Rec Center Grounds</li> <li>7. Riverside Mills Park</li> <li>8. Donigian Park</li> <li>9. Asa Messer Grounds</li> <li>10. Franciscan Park</li> <li>11. Ridge Street Playground</li> <li>12. Grove Street Garden</li> <li>13. Dexter Training Ground</li> <li>14. Bridgham Street Community Garden</li> <li>15. Wiggin Village Grounds</li> <li>16. Hoyle Square</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>17. Classical Grounds</li> <li>18. Cathedral Square</li> <li>19. Abbot Park</li> <li>20. Adrian Hall Skate Park</li> <li>21. Burnside Park</li> <li>22. Garbaldi Square</li> <li>23. Mount Carmel Grounds</li> <li>24. DePasquale Square</li> <li>25. St. John's Park</li> <li>26. Zuccolo Rec Center Grounds</li> <li>27. WaterPlace Park</li> <li>28. Station Park</li> <li>29. Rhode Island State House Grounds</li> <li>30. Rhode Island State Office Grounds</li> <li>31. The Steel Mill</li> <li>32. Proposed Public Spaces</li> </ul> |
|---|---|



### 2.5.3

## Celebrate Art in Public Space

Through the public engagement process, many people expressed a strong interest in seeing more art within the Woonasquatucket Corridor. Public art can be used as a way to call out gathering spaces, to notify people they are entering the district, or to create visual interest in underutilized spaces. Two unique tracks for installing art in public spaces should be considered - one more formal and juried and a second that is informal and administrative. The formal process should focus on high-profile, prominent locations within the area and tie into the City's large efforts to fund public art. The informal process should make it easy for local people to quickly and easily incorporate art within the neighborhood, so it can occur relatively organically at the hands of local artists and makers. A simple protocol should be developed and communicated to the arts and maker community to make it easy for people to program existing and new civic spaces.

#### Action

*Partner with property owners and arts organizations to commission muralists to paint art walls throughout the Woonasquatucket Corridor.*

#### Timeframe

*Near-term*

#### Action

*Identify locations on public land for temporary art installations and provide this information to local arts groups to manage independently.*

#### Timeframe

*Near-term*

#### Action

*Review the existing process required for installing art in public spaces. Pay specific attention to how the City promote more public art projects by streamlining this approval process.*

#### Timeframe

*Near-term*

#### Action

*Ensure the continued maintenance of long-term, permanent art pieces.*

#### Timeframe

*On-going*

#### Action

*Coordinate public art proposals with the Art In City Life Commission and incorporate the recommendations of the Public Art Master Plan into the implementation of the Woonasquatucket Vision Plan.*

#### Timeframe

*Near-term*



*Public art mixes with a historic smoke stack at The Plant on Valley Street, a brownfield redevelopment project.*