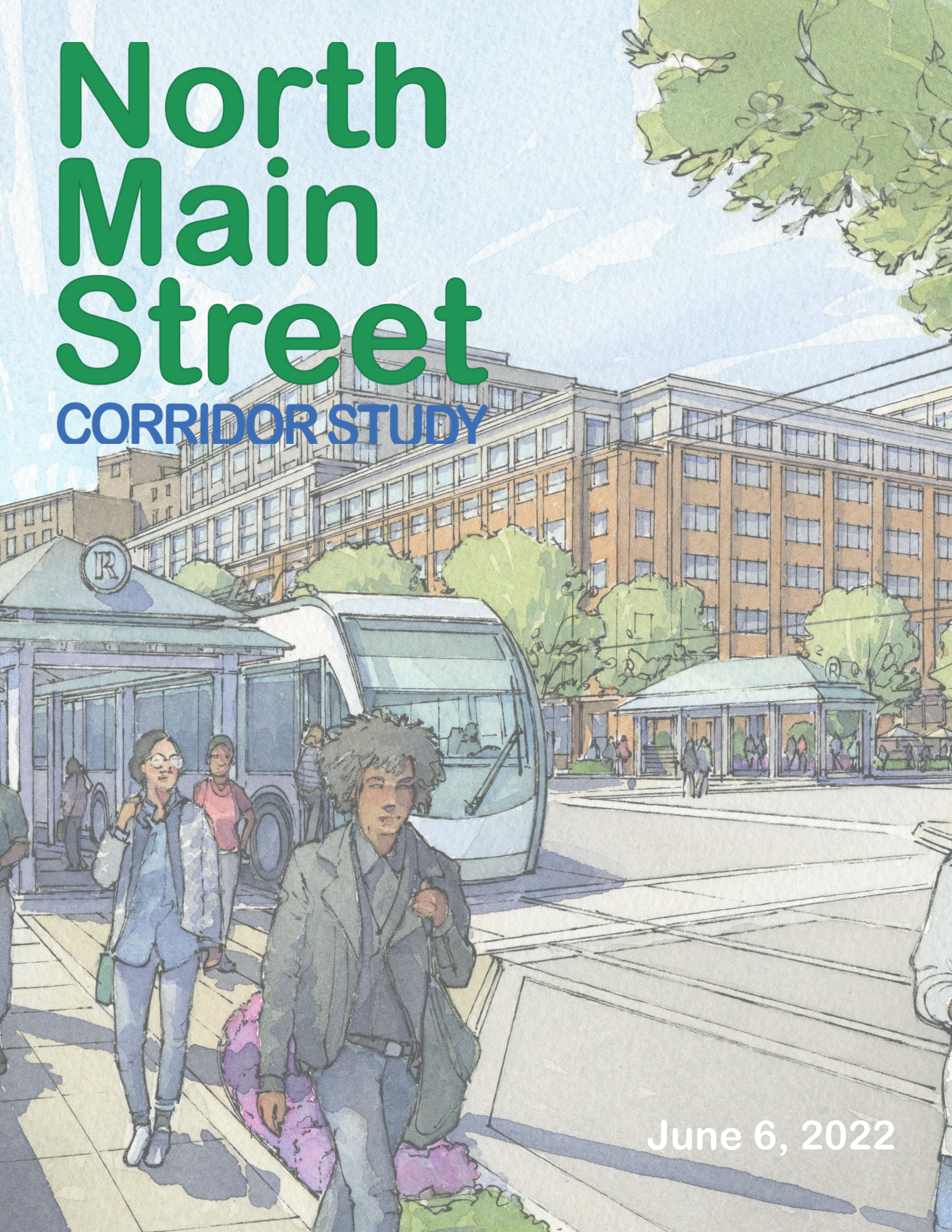


North Main Street

CORRIDOR STUDY



June 6, 2022



PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Mayor Jorge O. Elorza | City of Providence

North Main Street

CORRIDOR STUDY

JUNE 6, 2022





People create great places. We are grateful to all of the residents, business owners, public officials, and elected leaders for providing their time and attention to crafting this corridor study. We are particularly thankful for everyone's involvement, given the global, COVID-19 pandemic that was underway during the creation of this plan.



View of the Moshassuck River Greenway at Printery Street



Department of Planning and Development
Jorge O. Elorza, Mayor | Bonnie Nickerson AICP, Director

June 15, 2022

Dear Neighbor –

After eight months of engaging residents and stakeholders, we are truly excited to present the North Main Street Corridor Study. Stretching from the Roger Williams National Memorial along North Main Street to the Pawtucket city line, this corridor presents an extraordinary opportunity for growth and improvements to mobility, sustainability, and inclusivity. Guiding future development in an environmentally- and socially-responsible way is essential to ensuring that our neighborhoods and diverse communities continue to thrive. This plan creates a blueprint for the city to follow, and also engages our partners at RIDOT and RIPTA to help realize a newly revitalized commercial corridor that is people-centered.

Feedback from residents, business owners, developers, commuters, and other stakeholders created the framework of this plan. The community priorities that we heard are clear: improve accessibility and mobility for all; create a welcoming and hospitable street; build housing attainable to all Providence residents; develop complete neighborhoods with clear centers; and give people reasons to come and to stay.

We're thinking differently about housing and economic development in the corridor by encouraging people to walk, bike, and take transit to help transition from a reliance solely on cars, creating public open space around the Moshassuck River, and making North Main Street a more lively, vibrant neighborhood corridor rather than a pass-through highway. We look forward to continuing our work with you to advance these ideas and to advocate for and allocate resources to fulfill our collective vision for this important part of our great City.

Bonnie Nickerson, AICP
Director, Department of Planning and Development

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Chapter 1

PROJECT BACKGROUND

For many people, North Main Street is a pass-through—a way to get somewhere else. In many ways, it is the antithesis of the main street. Few stores or services line the corridor, and people prefer to live further from the street than closer. Even as a means of travel, people find North Main lacking. The adjacent neighborhoods are pulling away from the corridor even as the demand for new housing is high. Empty storefronts, undeveloped lots, and deferred maintenance create the character of a place that belongs to no one.

And yet, the corridor is not without some substantial assets. The State's most developed transit line—RIPTA's R-Line—runs the length of the street. The North Burial Ground, with monuments from the entire span of the City's history, provides 110 acres of open green space. The Moshassuck River, which winds through the whole length of the corridor, has attracted people for thousands of years. And finally, North Main Street travels adjacent to several of the essential areas of the City, including the downtown, the State Capitol campus, Providence's regional rail station, the oldest part of the City in College Hill, and some of the most desirable residential neighborhoods to the corridor's east.

Conducting the study of the North Main Street corridor during the COVID-19 pandemic required creativity and commitment by all to adapt to a more digital engagement process. Even while many people admitted to avoiding the corridor when they could, recognition of the problems—and, more importantly, ideas for solutions—were readily shared.

The people interested in North Main Street want a better street. They want to be able to cross the street comfortably. They want North Main to connect adjacent neighborhoods rather than separate them. People want a street that attracts people, businesses, and services—especially to areas with a remarkable character. People wish for a corridor that accommodates new and accessible housing. Finally, what people want is a street that serves all of those who use it—not just those who speed through it on their way somewhere else.

Improving the North Main Street corridor is far

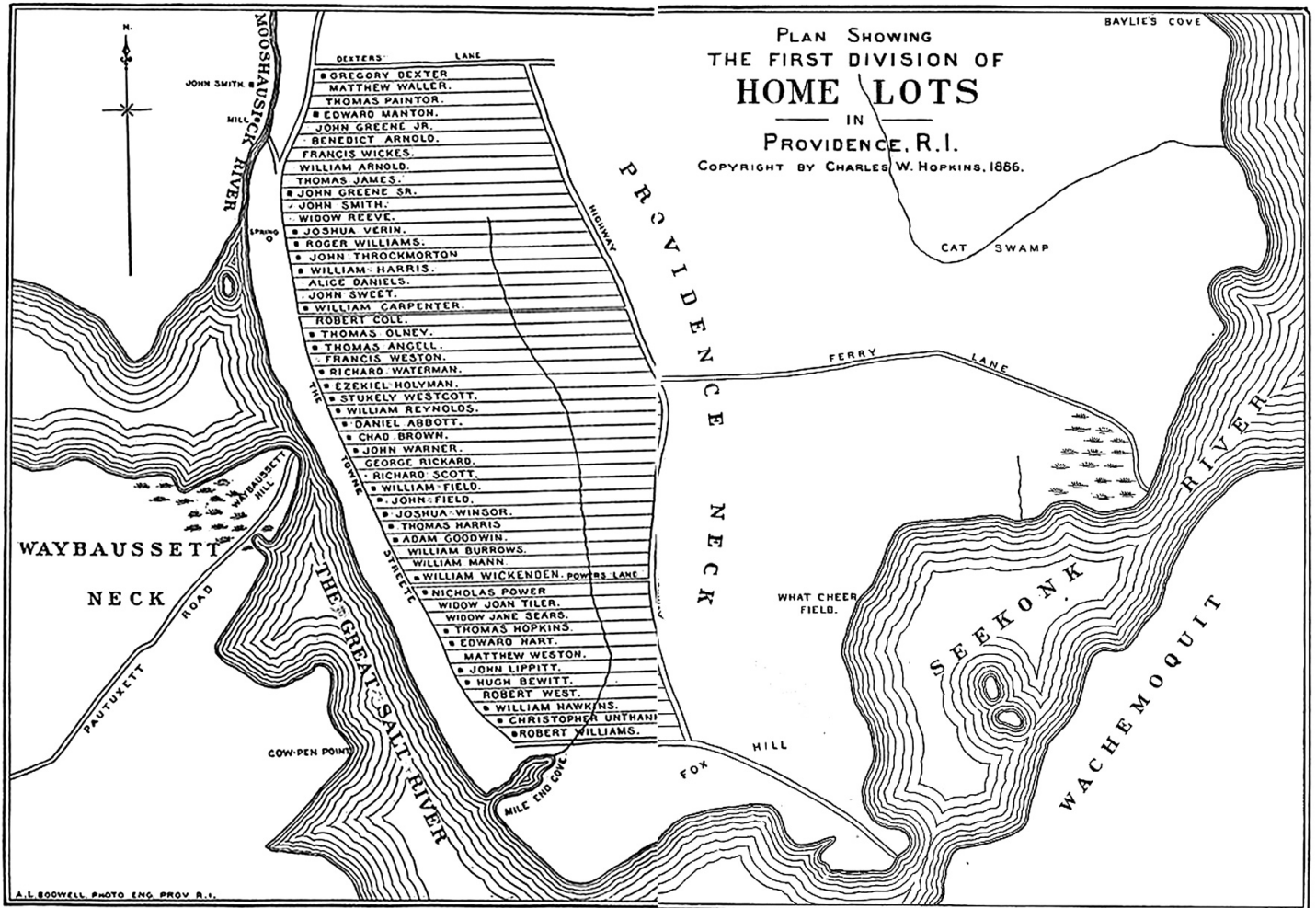
from a new initiative. Implementing the current R-Line and its success has led to additional interest from RIPTA and funding through a RAISE grant to study further improvements. Like many places across the country, housing demand has far outstripped production, and North Main Street's capacity to accommodate new housing in such a well-located transit corridor is an opportunity rarely available to most cities.

Improving the attractiveness of the corridor to potential residents may require more than simply building housing and letting people come. Fortunately, one of the corridor's hidden assets is the Moshassuck River and its potential to incorporate a greenway. Expanding access to greenspace, with connections between existing and potential neighborhood services, can help create the comfortable, attractive character residents seek.

Any improvement to the North Main Street corridor will start with small local efforts that align with the community's larger vision. Attracting new businesses might start with a newly painted storefront, a temporary food-truck rally on a formerly overgrown lot, or a monthly market in some underutilized space. The local people who invest their time and effort in defining a vision for the corridor will ultimately be the ones who are responsible for a revitalized North Main Street and a better tomorrow.



View of north along North Main Street



A copy of a map showing the early layout (circa 1636) of the original homestead in modern day Providence, Rhode Island.

"State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations at the End of the Century" Volume 3, By Edward Field (Mason Publishing Co., Boston: 1902)

As we plan for the future of the North Main Street area, we acknowledge that we are shaping land that was once home to the Nahaganset, Pokanoket, and Wôpanâak people. We respectfully acknowledge the legacies of those indigenous tribes, and submit our recommendations in honor of their historic stewardship of the land on which Providence continues to grow and evolve.

The first colonial settlement in the area was established in 1636 by Roger Williams after his exile from the Massachusetts Bay Colony, under an agreement with the Nahaganset people. That original settlement was located along the Providence River just south of this report's study area. Over time, the settlement spread east and north into what is now the College Hill and Mt. Hope neighborhoods. Many streets in the area are named after colonists who farmed the land.

North Main Street was established as an extension of the settlement's main street as development followed the Providence and the Moshassuck rivers north. After Pawtucket was established in the 1670s, North Main Street served as the main path from Providence to the falls on the Seekonk River. "The beginning of Rhode Island was directly related to the dramatic land loss and demise of the descendants of the aboriginal people who had thrived within the region, dating back more than 15,000 years ago" (A Matter of Truth, City of Providence).

In 1675, war decimated Indigenous people and resulted in the enslavement or banishment of many Pequot and Narragansett people. "As the English aggressively expanded into native territory, European land cultivation increasingly disrupted native life. Growing towns, animal pens, and grazing pigs and cattle interfered with native hunting and access to forests. These strains sparked King Philip's War, an armed conflict that led to the near-extirmination of the Indigenous people in Rhode Island" (A Matter of Truth, City of Providence). After the war, the area was rebuilt and expanded to include more industrial and commercial uses. By the mid 1700's Providence's proximity to the

large natural harbor of the Providence River spurred the town's development into a center for trade. Throughout the 18th Century much of Providence's growth was especially dependent on the trade of enslaved people as well as lumber and dairy.

The 110-acre North Burial Ground was established in 1700 as a municipal cemetery along the western edge of North Main Street. In 1770, Brown University (then Rhode Island College) moved from Warren to its current location in College Hill. At that time, much of the area to the north, including Mt. Hope and Summit (Hope) remained rural or forested. This section of modern day Providence was mainly occupied by farmers and tavern keepers, especially along North Main Street (then known as the Pawtucket Road).

While Rhode Island— and especially Providence— played a large part in the American Revolution, the physical development of the study area was not dramatically impacted. The City continued to grow rapidly after the war, leading to Providence being one of the nation's ten largest cities through the turn of the 19th century.

As development of Providence expanded north along North Main Street, many freed slaves settled in the area. "At the end of the 18th century in Rhode Island and particularly in Providence, a new class of people emerged: the free African heritage resident. According to the first federal Census of 1790, 475 African heritage people lived in Providence, with 427 listed as free people and 48 enslaved. The majority settled in two census districts on the East Side, including the present-day College Hill neighborhood and the northern outskirts of town between North Main Street and the Great Basin. Nearly all of the African heritage working poor lived in substandard housing east of the Providence River on the northwestern edge of town. By the 1820s, it was referred to formally as Addison Hollow. Others called it Hardscrabble" (A Matter of Truth, City of Providence). Regrettably common in American history, aggression and racism toward African-Americans led to race riots in 1824 and 1831, destroying much of Hardscrabble and Snowtown (the name the area took on after the first riot). The 19th Century saw the growth of industry and manufacturing in Providence and within the study area, with mills locating along the Moshassuck River. The growth of manufacturing



Map of the Town of Providence, from an actual survey, by Daniel Anthony, 1823.
 Harvard College Library Digital Imaging Group, 2005. Harvard Map Collection digital maps. Rhode Island.



Photo of a trolley on its way to the "No Main St Car House" near modern day 10th Street. circa 1937

“It already is [a transit corridor] and should continue to be a key transit network spine. And it should become more bike friendly as well.”

at that time created demand for more labor and therefore more housing. While the City rapidly expanded everywhere, growth along North Main Street was swift. In 1875, the growing population in this part of the City justified implementation of a streetcar along North Main Street. Not long after, in 1886, a second streetcar along Camp Street was installed. Construction of these two streetcar lines accelerated the area's transition from rural farms to residential development.

Like much of the industrial northeast, Providence continued to grow through the turn of the 20th century. Mt. Hope and Summit (Hope) saw a large number of Jewish residents move to the area, further contributing to the city's diversity. In 1925, the Cycledrome, a large track and sporting venue was built near the modern Providence-Pawtucket border. While the facility would eventually host a professional football team, by mid-century the space was being used as a drive-in theater. Today, the location is occupied by Ocean State Job Lot and the Peter Pan Bus terminal. Through the 1980s the adjacent area along North Main Street developed a reputation as a commercial shopping center, largely due to the location of a Sears department store which served to anchor other shops in the area.

By the mid-1920s manufacturing had already started to slow in the City and with the Great Depression, over one-third of the City's labor force was left unemployed. There were several Works Progress Administration projects in Providence, including improvements and

maintenance to the North Burial Ground. Even with the post World War II economic boom, Providence's population went into decline after the 1940s, largely due to declining manufacturing facilities, white flight, and suburbanization.

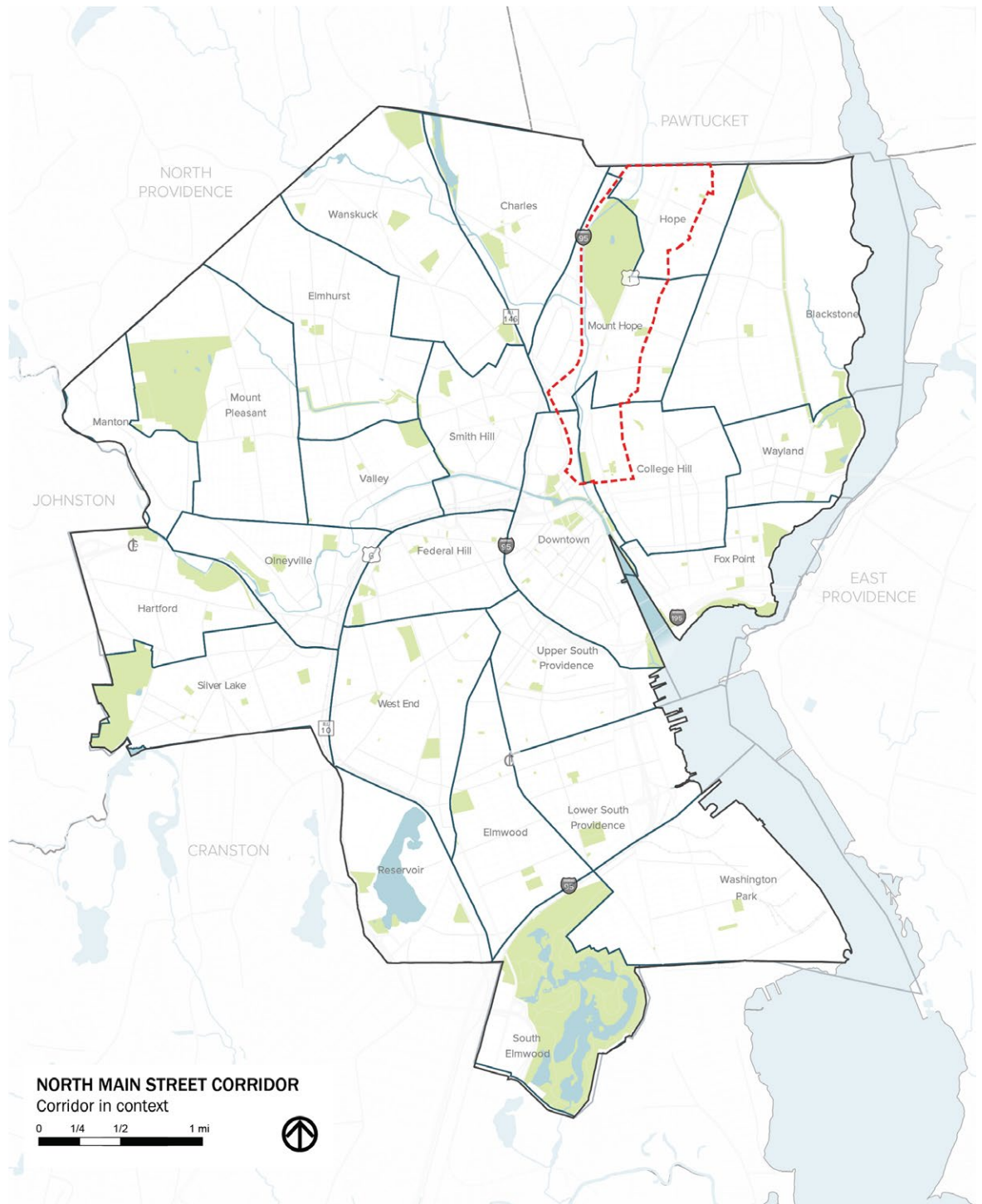
The 1934 Federal Housing Administration Act, 1956 Federal Highway Act, and Rhode Island's 1956 Redevelopment Act led to the destruction of many urban neighborhoods. Discriminatory practices such as urban renewal and redlining (see below definition) effectively reduced low-income housing inventories, and denied people of color from accessing loans, mortgages, and financial resources. In 1935, the Homeowners Loan Corporation (HOLC) identified Providence's neighborhoods of color as “Hazardous or Declining,” including Lippitt Hill and sections of College Hill near North Main Street. To the west of the study area, construction of I-95 cut through the city, separating and demolishing neighborhoods, and reducing community connections and services in that direction. By the 1970s, the Lippitt Hill Redevelopment Project displaced a large number of predominantly African American residents and Black-owned businesses to build what is now University Market Place and the University Heights Apartments.

As the use of automobiles expanded throughout the 20th century, much of North Main Street and its surrounding architecture was transformed to accommodate vehicular traffic. Fortunately, a few historic buildings were preserved—including the armory between Stenton Avenue and Edgehill Road, the historic firehouse on the corner of Doyle Avenue, and the Jeremiah Dexter House (c. 1754)—all of which now contribute to the area's character and quality.

Since the mid-20th Century, a large section of Hope, between North Main Street and Hope Street has been occupied by Miriam Hospital, which has slowly expanded since 1945, taking over more city blocks in the neighborhood.

Redlining: an illegal discriminatory practice in which a mortgage lender denies loans or an insurance provider restricts services to certain areas of a community, often because of the racial characteristics of the applicant's neighbourhood. Redlining practices also include unfair and abusive loan terms for borrowers, outright deception, and penalties for prepaying loans. The term redlining came about in reference to the use of red marks on maps that loan corporations would use to outline mixed-race or African American neighbourhoods. Source: Britanica.com

NORTH MAIN STREET TODAY



The civilian employed population 16 years and over within the three census tracts is 6,464 people. Two-thirds (67%) of this population hold Management, Business, Science, and Arts occupations—especially in the Educational Services, and Health Care and Social Assistance (34%) or Professional, Scientific, and Management, and Administrative and Waste Management Services (10%) industries.

Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimate Subject Tables, Industry By Occupation For The Civilian Employed Population 16 Years And Over, for Providence County, RI, Census Tracts 31, 32, and 33.

Racial Composition

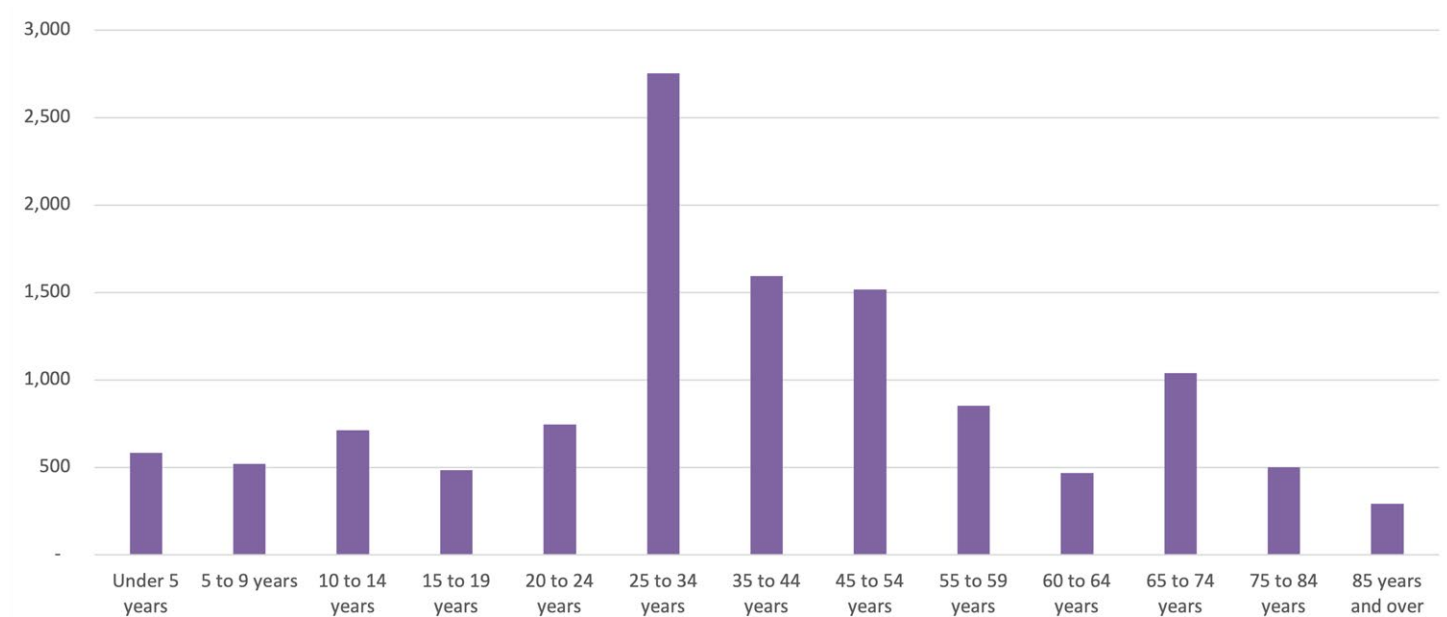
Total Population	12,064	100%
White	9,035	75%
Black or African American	1,343	11%
American Indian and Alaska Native	15	0%
Asian alone	474	4%
Some other race	463	4%
Two or more races	734	6%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	1,022	8%

Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimate Subject Tables, ACS Demographic And Housing Estimates, for Providence County, RI, Census Tracts 31, 32, and 33.

When comparing College Hill, Mt. Hope, and Summit (Hope) with the nation, state, and city we can see a few notable divergences. To begin, these neighborhoods have lower proportions of people under the age of 25 and a relatively higher proportion of people over the age of 35—while the proportion of 25 to 34 year olds is higher in these neighborhoods than that of the nation, state, or city. While the City of Providence has a higher percentage of people between 15 and 34 year old than the State of Rhode Island or the nation as a whole, these three neighborhoods only follow that trend with 25 to 34 year olds and actually seem to have a deficit of people between 15 and 24.

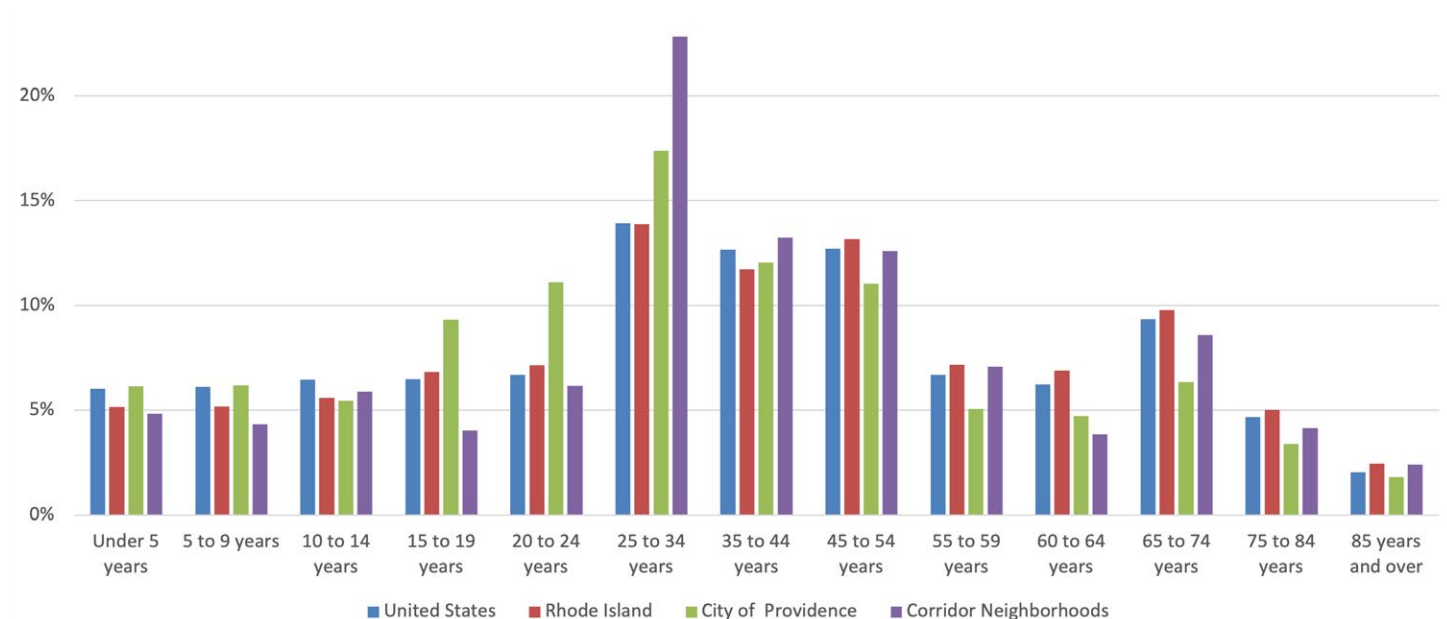
POPULATION COUNT AND PERCENTAGE BY AGE GROUP FOR CORRIDOR NEIGHBORHOODS

Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimate Subject Tables, Age and Sex, for Providence County, RI, Census Tracts 31, 32, and 33.



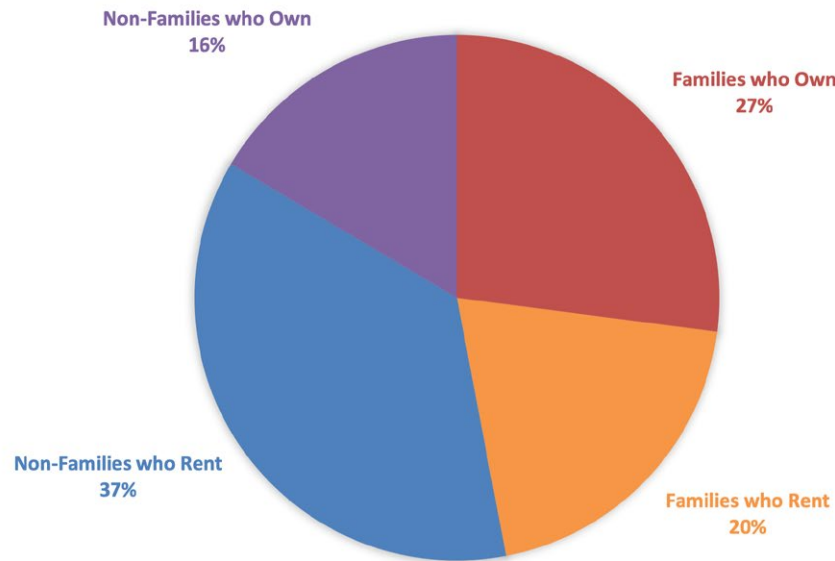
POPULATION COMPARISON WITH THE CITY, STATE, AND NATION

Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimate Subject Tables, Age and Sex, for Providence County, RI, Census Tracts 31, 32, and 33; the City of Providence, RI; the State of Rhode Island; and the United States.



PERCENTAGE OF ALL HOUSEHOLDS BY TENURE AND FAMILY TYPE

Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimate Subject Tables, Households and Families, for Providence County, RI, Census Tracts 31, 32, and 33.



HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimate Subject Tables, Households and Families, for Providence County, RI, Census Tracts 31, 32, and 33.

There were 5,528 households within the three census tracts covering the Study Area.

22% of households included people under the age of 18;

19% of households were roommates (did not live alone, no one under 18, non-married);

17% of households were married couples with no children living with them.

63% of households lived in structures with two or more units.

74% of Female Householder–No Spouse Present–Family Households and

78% of Nonfamily Households lived in structures with 2 or more units.

56% of households rented their housing.

53% of households were non-family households;

35% of households were married couples.

45% of married couples had children under 18 living with them.

47% of households were families.

HOUSING

Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimate Subject Tables, Physical Housing Characteristics For Occupied Housing Units, for Providence County, RI, Census Tracts 31, 32, and 33.

88% of occupied housing units were built before 1980.

55% of occupied housing units were built before 1940.

Only 3% of occupied housing units were built after 2000.

0% of occupied housing units were built after 2014.

35% of occupied housing units are in detached single-family houses.

3% of occupied housing units are in attached single-family houses.

40% of occupied housing units are in 2-, 3-, 4-family houses.

8% of occupied housing units are in multifamily buildings with 5-9 units.

15% of occupied housing units are in multifamily buildings with more than 10 units.

67% of occupied housing units contain either two or three bedrooms.

Only 12% of housing units contain four or more bedrooms.

EDUCATION

Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimate Subject Tables, Educational Attainment, for Providence County, RI, Census Tracts 31, 32, and 33.

49% of the population between 20-24 years of age were enrolled in college or graduate school.

82% of the population between 3-4 years of age were enrolled in school—100% in private schools.

91% of the population over 25 had completed high school (or GED).

64% of the population over 25 had a Bachelor's degree.

32% of the population over 25 had a graduate degree.

POVERTY

Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimate Subject Tables, Poverty Status In The Past 12 Months, for Providence County, RI, Census Tracts 31, 32, and 33.

At least 14% of the population were determined to have earned less than 100% of the poverty level.

20% of individuals earned less than 150% of the poverty level.

46% of individuals earned less than 400% of the poverty level.

21% of the female population were determined to have been living below the poverty level compared to 9% of the male population.

36% of unrelated individual females were determined to have been living below the poverty level compared to 14% unrelated individual males.

52% of the unemployed civilian female population 16 years and older were living below the poverty level compared to 13% of the unemployed civilian male population 16 years and older.

11% of the employed civilian female population 16 years and older were living below the poverty level compared to 2% of the employed civilian male population 16 years and older.

18% of the population 65 years of age or older were determined to have been living below the poverty level.

15% of the population 18 years of age or younger were determined to have been living below the poverty level.

9% of the population who were White alone, not Hispanic or Latino were determined to have been living below the poverty level.

34% of the population who were Black or African American alone were determined to have been living below the poverty level.

47% of the population who were American Indian and Alaska Native alone were determined to have been living below the poverty level.

7% of the population who were Asian alone were determined to have been living below the poverty level.

28% of the population who were Two or more races were determined to have been living below the poverty level.

34% of the population who were of Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race) were determined to have been living below the poverty level.

MOBILITY TODAY



The community desires to make North Main Street safe to walk and bike for people of all ages and abilities.

TRANSPORTATION

Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimate Subject Tables, Means Of Transportation To Work By Selected Characteristics, for Providence County, RI, Census Tracts 31, 32, and 33.

Mode Of Transportation To Work, 16 years +

- 67% drove alone.
- 11% worked from home.
- 8% took public transit.
- 6% walked.
- 5% carpooled.
- 2% bicycled.

Following from above, approximately 27% of workers got to work by some other means than private automobile.

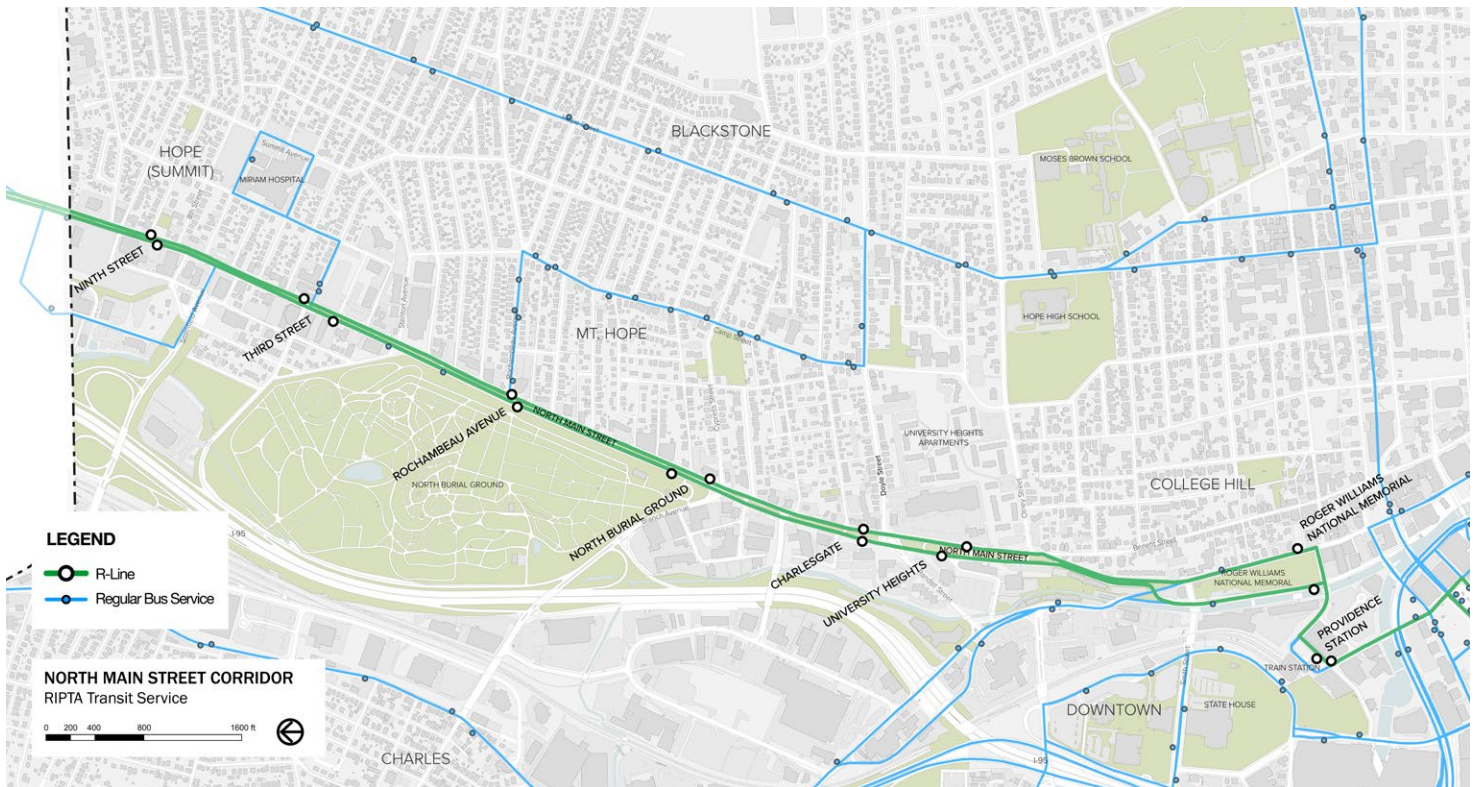
OCCUPATION + INDUSTRY BY MODE OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK

Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimate Subject Tables, Means Of Transportation To Work By Selected Characteristics, for Providence County, RI, Census Tracts 31, 32, and 33.

Residents with Service occupations (13%) and with Sales and Office occupations (10%) are the most likely to commute to work via public transit, where residents with Military Specific occupations (97%) and with Production, Transportation, and Material Moving occupations (79%) are the most likely to commute to work by driving alone.

Residents employed in the Other Services (Except Public Administration) industries (19%), in the Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation, and Accommodation and Food Services industries (14%), and in the Professional, Scientific, Management, and Administrative and Waste Management Services industries are the most likely to commute to work by public transit, where residents employed in the Armed Forces industries (100%), in the Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting, and Mining industries (100%), and in the Transportation and Warehousing, and Utilities industries (96%) are the most likely to commute to work by driving alone.

EXISTING TRANSIT SERVICE



COMMUTE TIME TO WORK

Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimate Subject Tables, Means Of Transportation To Work By Selected Characteristics, for Providence County, RI, Census Tracts 31, 32, and 33.

Commute Time To Work

- 73% took less than 25 minutes.
- 24% took more than 45 minutes.
- 3% live in households with no vehicles.
- 22% take public transit and live in households with no vehicles.



COMMUTE TIME BY MODE

Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimate Subject Tables, Means Of Transportation To Work By Selected Characteristics, for Providence County, RI, Census Tracts 31, 32, and 33.

Commute Time Via Transit

14% who did not work from home and used transit took less than 25 minutes.

68% who did not work from home and used transit took more than 45 minutes.

Commute Time Driving Alone

68% who did not work from home and drove alone took less than 25 minutes.

14% who did not work from home and drove alone took more than 45 minutes.

Commute Time Via Carpool

70% who did not work from home and carpooled took less than 25 minutes.

18% who did not work from home and carpooled took more than 45 minutes.

The population within Providence Census Tracts 31, 32, and 33, grew from 11,362 to 12,064, between 2010 and 2020. Over the same time span, the number of occupied housing units recorded by the 5-Year ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates increased by 23 from 5,505 in 2010 to 5,528 in 2020. This was only a 0.4% increase over the same ten year period. This means that while the area's population grew by 702 people, only 23 new housing units were added—approximately 30.5 new people for each new housing unit.

The three census tracts covering the Study Area grew at a significantly higher rate than either the City or State during the same time period. The population of the City of Providence grew by 1,186 people or 0.7%, from 178,286 in 2010 to 179,472 in 2020 where the population of the State of Rhode Island grew by 1,409 people or 0.1%, from 1,056,389 in 2010 to 1,057,798 in 2020. The population increase within Census Tracts 31, 32, and 33 account for almost 60% of the population growth for the City of Providence and almost 50% of the population growth for the State of Rhode Island between 2010 and 2020.

During the same time period when the population around the North Main Street corridor made up a significant proportion of the City and State's population growth, new housing within the same area accounted for approximately 1% and 0.5% of all new housing within the City and State respectively. While housing units in and near the Study Area only grew by 23 units between 2010 and 2020, the number of housing units in the City and State increased by 2,257 units (3.6%) and 4,425 units (1.1%) respectively. While the area near North Main Street added approximately one new housing unit for every 30 new residents, two housing units were added for each new resident in the City overall and more than three new units were added in the State for each new resident between 2010 and 2020.

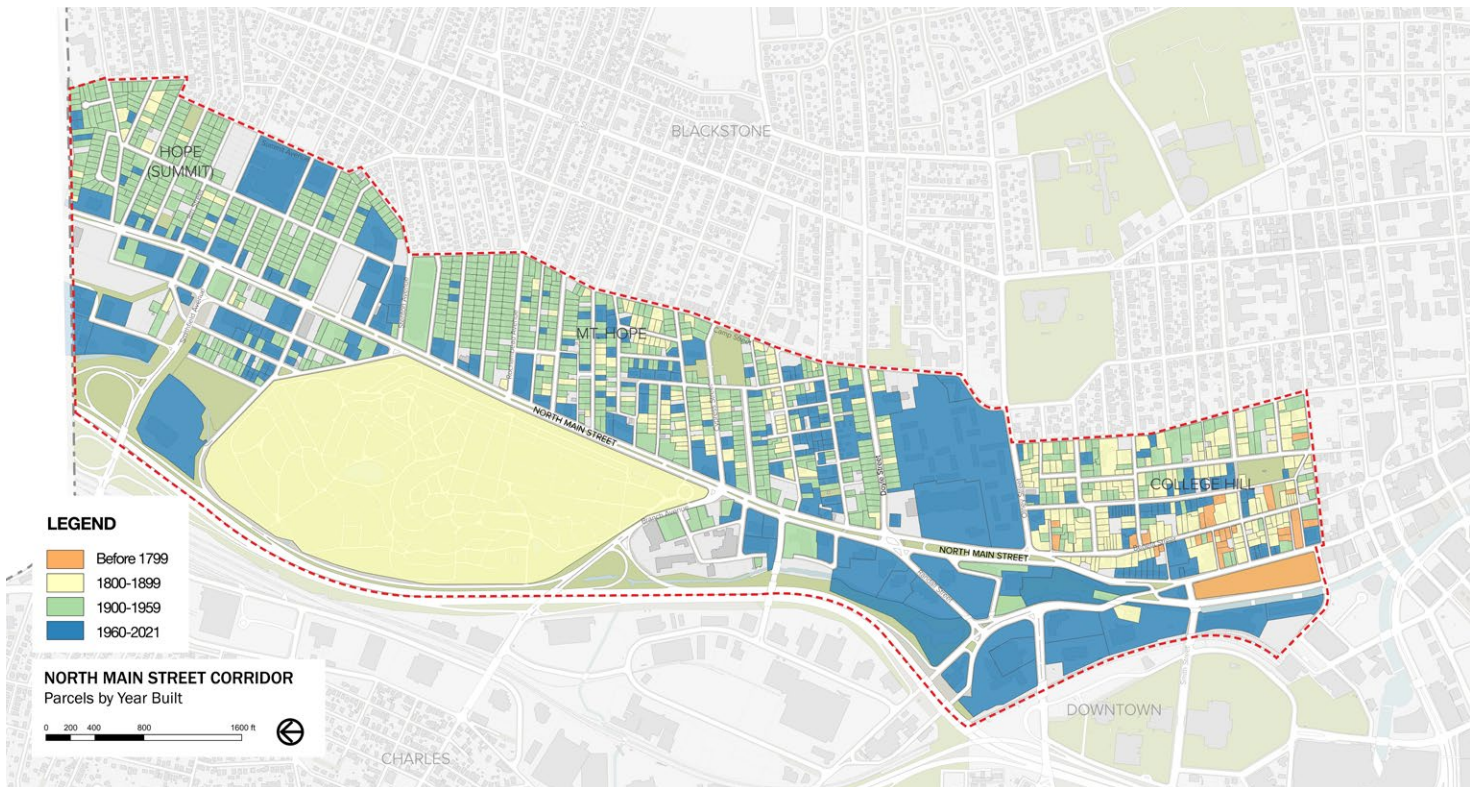


View looking North on Nashua Street



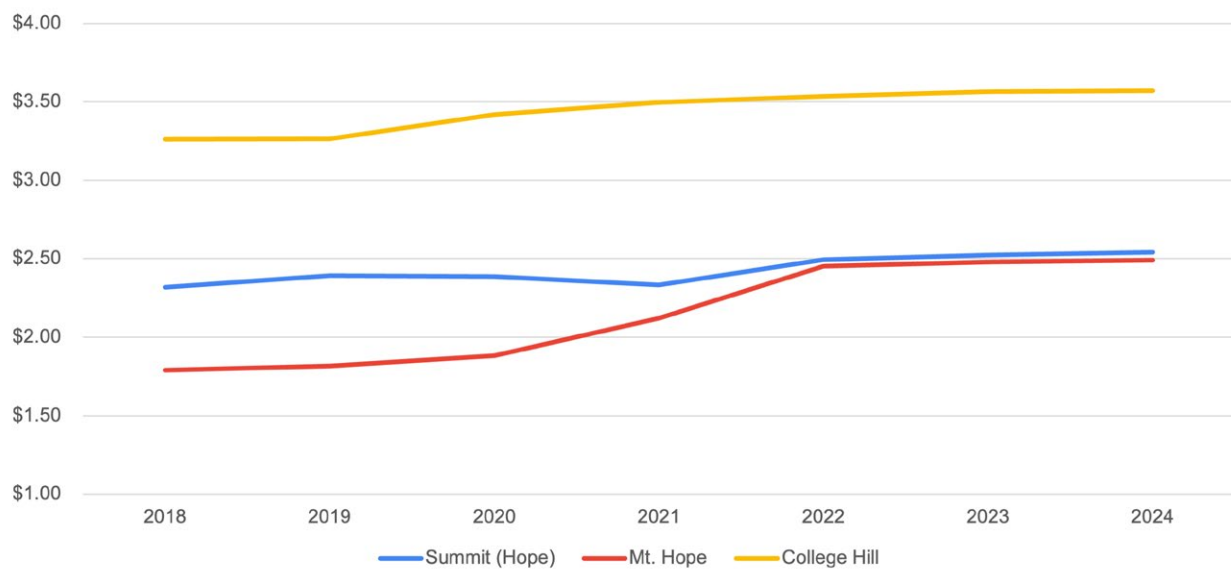
View looking South on Collyer Street

EXISTING HOUSING STOCK



MULTI-FAMILY RENTS PER SQUARE FOOT BY YEAR

Source: CoStar, the U.S. Census Bureau, and ESRI.



Rent for multi-family housing remains highest in the College Hill neighborhood, but rents rose the most dramatically in the Mt. Hope Neighborhood essentially matching those in the Summit (Hope) neighborhood.

Rental Trends

Based on an analysis of data provided by CoStar, the U.S. Census Bureau, and ESRI, rents for multi-family housing in the Mount Hope neighborhood increased 19% from 2018 to 2021, compared to 7% and 1% for College Hill and Summit (Hope) respectively over the same time period. The average rent in the Mount Hope neighborhood increased from \$1.79 per square foot in 2018 to \$2.12 per square foot in 2021 and is expected to increase to \$2.49 per square foot by 2024. This would represent a 39% overall increase between 2018 and 2024, or an average annual increase of 7% per year.

While College Hill saw a 7% increase in the average multi-family rents per square foot between 2018 and 2021, rents are not expected to grow significantly in the following three years. The average rent in the College Hill neighborhood increased from \$3.26 per square foot in 2018 to \$3.50 per square foot in 2021 and is expected to increase to \$3.57 per square foot by 2024. This would represent a 10% overall increase between 2018 and 2024, or an average annual increase of less than 2% per year.

Compared to the 19% increase in Mount Hope and the 7% increase in College Hill, the average multi-family rent per square foot in Summit (Hope) barely changed between 2018 and 2021. The average rent in the Summit (Hope) neighborhood increased from \$2.32 per square foot in 2018 to \$2.33 per square foot in 2021 for an increase of less than 1%. By 2024 average multi-family rent per square foot in Summit (Hope) is expected to increase to \$2.45 per square foot representing a 10% overall increase between 2018 and 2024, or an average annual increase of less than 2% per year.

Even with Covid and other impactful events, the average multi-family rents per square foot in both College Hill and Summit (Hope) are expected to stay fairly stable with average annual growth of about 2% per year for any three to six year span. The average rent per square foot in the College Hill neighborhood is also expected to continue to command a premium of about one dollar per square foot above either the Mount Hope or Summit (Hope)

neighborhoods. There is the potential for rents in both Mount Hope and Summit (Hope) to close this gap with College Hill over the longer term if demand in the area continues to grow but is not met by new housing production.

The increase in average rent per square foot in the Mount Hope neighborhood between 2018 and 2022 will bring rental rates in line with those in the Summit (Hope) neighborhood. The relative discount in average rents per square foot in the Mount Hope neighborhood compared to those within the Summit (Hope) neighborhood may be unlikely to return. Both neighborhoods now average almost \$2.50 per square foot of multi-family housing or about \$2,000 for an 800 square foot two-bedroom apartment. The premium commanded by the College Hill neighborhood is unlikely to be matched within the next ten years as it would require the average multi-family rent per square foot to increase 5% per year faster than rent in College Hill for at least eight years.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING + THE COMPREHENSIVE HOUSING STUDY

Source: Anti-Displacement and Comprehensive Housing Strategy, City of Providence, RI. 2021

Area Median Income (AMI) for the Providence-Fall River region in 2021 for a four-person household was \$81,900 per year.

This translates to a budget of \$24,570 for the year or \$2,047.50 per month to pay for rent or a mortgage and essential utilities. Yet, 64% of households in Providence spend more than \$24,570 for the year on housing, and are housing cost-burdened.

Assuming 25% of the annual housing budget was set aside for maintenance and upkeep, the median four-person household in the Providence-Fall River region in 2021 could afford to buy approximately: a \$320,000 house at 4% interest over 30 years; \$285,000 at 5%; \$256,000 at 6%; \$230,000 at 7%; \$209,000 at 8%.

Over 7,500 new or rehabilitated affordable (“price-appropriate”) housing units are needed by 2030.

The Anti-Displacement and Comprehensive Housing Strategy specifically identifies the North Main Street corridor as an opportunity to add housing, specifically due to the high-frequency transit + potential for transit-oriented development (TOD).

Affordable ownership opportunities are prioritized by the City.

THE ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY, & RESILIENCY

According to Provstat, City of Providence, the 3rd ward—within which the Study Area is located—has a tree canopy covering about 29.6% of its area. This ranks 3rd highest out of all of the City’s wards.

While Providence’s east side generally handles heat well, the North Main Street corridor underperformed the rest of the area. Of particular note is the fact that the larger North Main Street/I-95/railway corridor retains heat after daylight hours and actually remains one of the warmest areas of the entire city through midnight.

As the number of days per year with extreme heat is predicted to continue growing into the future, there are many actions the North Main Street community can take to mitigate the impact of this heat. For example, expanding the urban tree canopy—especially in places where there are large amounts of paving and other hard-scaping. Paved surface parking is an especially impactful use as it not only provides little to no shade on the ground, it also absorbs large amounts of heat which it holds onto into the night and radiates that heat back when the surrounding temperatures drop. Rather than cool pleasant evenings, large paved areas, areas with little shade, and other poorly designed sites can raise nighttime temperatures, keeping air temperatures almost as high at night as they were during the day.

Flooding

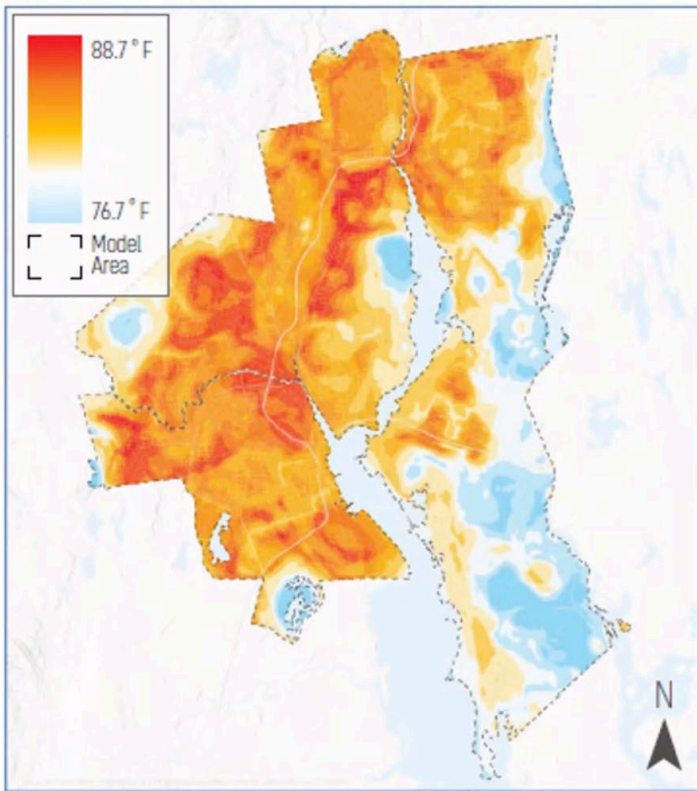
Risk of damage due to storm surges and sea level rise and the resulting inundation of sea water is quite low in this area of the city. The uphill location of most of the North Main Street corridor keeps most buildings and land above the 100 or even 500 year flood plain, although the southernmost sections of North Main Street, below Olney Street risk future flooding due to their lower terrain and proximity to the Moshassuck River. Much of the Moshassuck River is identified as a floodway but some surrounding areas are also at risk of flooding during significant storm events. North Main Street south of Roger Williams National Memorial risks flood levels of more than two feet during 100-year storm events, which are expected to become more frequent due to climate change. Existing greenspaces

such as Collyer Park and “The Wild Place” as well as some adjacent areas of the North Burial Ground are also at risk of flooding. These locations are not a major concern as natural and green spaces recover well from weather events. While the risk of direct impact due to sea level rise and flooding may be minimal for most of the corridor, risks to larger systems and infrastructure which the community relies upon should not be overlooked. North Main Street can and should plan for development which is resilient and able to withstand major natural events by reducing reliance on pump stations for drainage; implementing systems which can function without electricity; and, developing around sustainable transportation networks which use renewable sources of energy or involve walking and biking.

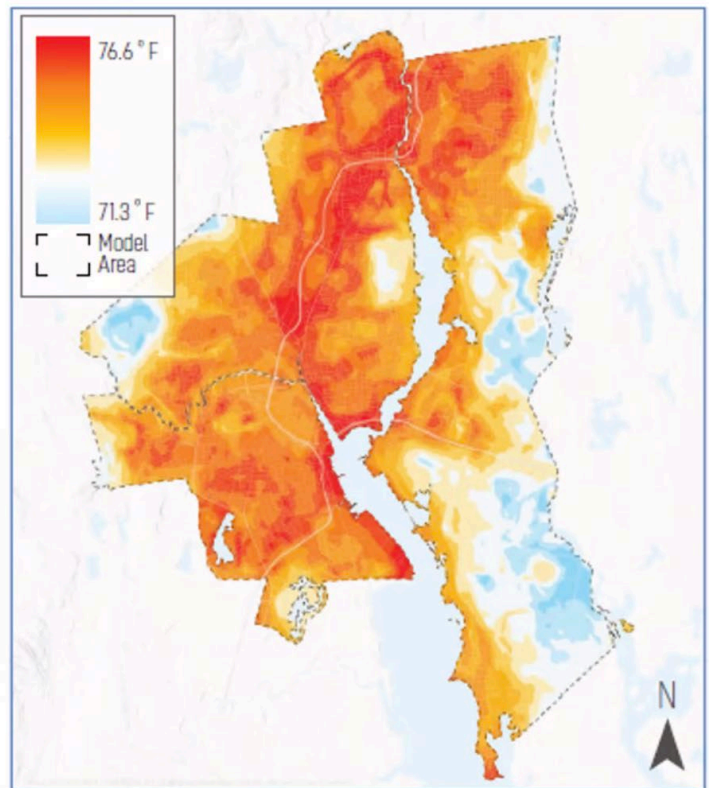
Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions

Per the State’s Executive Climate Change Coordination Council’s 2016 GHG Emissions Reduction Plan, Rhode Island’s most significant GHG source is transportation (40%), within which light-duty passenger vehicles contribute the most. The plan’s baseline forecast shows GHG emissions reaching 10.19M tons by 2050 if a “business-as-usual” approach is taken. Meeting the plan’s established target (an 80% reduction in GHGs below 1990 levels by 2050) requires major changes including a 2% reduction in Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) by 2035 and 10% reduction by 2050, proposed to be achieved by decreasing the number and length of single-occupancy vehicle trips by promoting and investing in alternative transportation and encouraging higher-density development and behavior changes. In 2021, RI passed the Act on Climate which mandates net-zero emissions by 2050 (RIGL 46-6.2). The State’s GHG reduction plan is being updated to reflect this new mandate. The average Providence household creates 14,768 VMT/year, contributing to congestion, noise, physical inactivity, & 5.69 tons/household of GHG emissions from transportation sources/year (CNT’s H&T Index). To improve our environment and reduce VMT and GHG emissions, shifts in how we build and travel are needed through increased use of walking, biking, and public transportation, electric vehicles, use of sustainable construction methods, and retrofitting of existing buildings to make them more energy-efficient.

Evening Area-Wide Predictions (7 - 8 pm)



Midnight Area-Wide Predictions (12 - 1 am)



HEAT-ISLAND

Parts of the North Main Street corridor are predicted to be warmer than much of the surrounding areas both in the evening and in the middle of the night.

Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, 2021

Encouraging sustainable modes of transportation such as walking, biking, and public transportation will have the greatest impact on GHG reduction. In 2014, Providence adopted a progressive zoning ordinance that eliminates parking minimums for many uses & areas, added parking maximums, allows shared parking & flexibilities to reduce parking lots & reliance on cars, requires long- & short-term bicycle parking, strengthens design regulations to ensure dense, walkable, bikeable development, & increases density in already dense, transportation-efficient areas such as North Main Street. As an already high-ridership bus route in RIPTA's system, the City should further take advantage of North Main Street's frequent transit service to encourage higher public transit ridership.

Electric Vehicles

Electric vehicles are becoming more mainstream mainly due to rapidly developing technology and expanding support networks like charging stations. The City should install electric charging stations in public places along North Main Street, require new development to incorporate charging stations, and discourage creation of traditional gas stations.

Sustainable Construction and Energy Efficient Buildings

83% of occupied housing units in the Study Area used utility gas; bottled, tank, or liquid propane gas; or fuel oil, kerosene, etc. to heat their homes. Only 16% utilized electricity. However, 24% of renter-occupied housing units utilized electricity compared with only 6% of owner-occupied housing units. (Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimate Subject Tables, Physical Housing Characteristics For Occupied Housing Units, for Providence County, RI, Census Tracts 31, 32, and 33.)

According to the Environmental and Energy Study Institute residential and commercial buildings are responsible for almost 40% of carbon dioxide emissions across the nation. While a large part of these emissions are due to the use of fossil fuels in the generation of the electricity which powers these buildings,

making buildings more energy efficient can result in significant reductions in carbon dioxide emissions through the entire system. Requiring new development to implement current best practices can help prevent further contribution to the problem, but retrofitting and updating existing buildings will be needed if we are to begin to reduce the impact our buildings have on the local and global air quality. In addition to the energy needed to illuminate, heat, cool, and operate our buildings, the construction, manufacture, and transport needed to develop them accounts for an additional eight percent of carbon dioxide emissions nationally. By both building more sustainable buildings and by using sustainable construction methods, the development of our neighborhoods and cities can be an opportunity to significantly reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

Overall Resiliency

Development patterns tend to remain in place for decades if not centuries or longer, highlighting the need to plan places where we live and spend time with an appreciation for the longer timeframe they will impact. Walkable, complete neighborhoods are more resilient to natural and physical disruptions, allowing residents to meet their needs where they live and boosting individual and collective community investment.

The Environment, Sustainability, & Resiliency





WHY PLAN NOW?

As the City of Providence continues to grow and adapt to changing circumstances, different areas of the city will evolve in different ways. For the North Main Street corridor and the neighborhoods of College Hill, Mt. Hope, and Summit (Hope), one major aspect of this change is improvement and expansion of mass transit. The implementation of the R-Line has been a success by many metrics and has been received well by people throughout the City. The City and State recognize the need and opportunity to leverage transit along North Main Street even further. While the form of a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) or a Light Rail Transit (LRT) system is still being considered, both public and private investment in the corridor is expected to grow in the future. As RIPTA moves forward with their recently announced RAISE grant funding to explore BRT or LRT, the North Main Street community has an opportunity to attract investment and guide the future of their neighborhoods.

Much of the corridor's recent growth has largely been in alignment with regional and national trends. The recognition of a need to rebalance both the mix of activities and uses as well as prioritization of mobility within and between neighborhoods is having a profound effect on where people live. The North Main Street corridor has been managed largely as a highway between Downtown Providence and Downtown Pawtucket, often at the expense of those living near it. The City and many residents have begun to reassess the potential of North Main Street to be both a vital transportation artery and a destination—a revitalized extension of multiple neighborhoods with new uses, added services, and expanded amenities.

Finally, this study provides the opportunity to address the area's growing housing shortage and rising household, housing and transportation costs—and to manage the potential impacts from the development of significant new housing. The North Main Street corridor represents a major opportunity for the City to add to the housing stock. The potential to attract market-rate development and encourage subsidized and supportive housing, especially along a well served transit corridor, is both valuable and rare. While the community has the chance to add housing, it also must recognize and manage the challenge of increasing demand, rising rents, displacement and gentrification. Through the pursuit of this study, the community can influence and manage the way in which the corridor, and all of the neighborhoods along it, evolve in the future.



View looking West from Canal Street. The community desires to calm the traffic along the North Main and develop a corridor-wide streetscape standard that prioritizes people walking and biking.



North Main Street walking tour with Councilwoman Nirva R. LaFortune.

Timeline of Community Involvement

Event	Date
Project Kick-Off + Team Site Tour	August 6, 2021
Background Research	Summer 2021
Public Survey (Online)	Fall 2021
<i>Surveys gathered responses online through late Oct.; 263 surveys completed.</i>	
Virtual Public Meeting #1	October 4, 2021
<i>Introduction of the project to the public and initial live feedback and conversations about the corridor.</i>	
Targeted Stakeholder Interviews	Fall 2021
<i>Various meetings with local business owners, property owners, developers, local institutions, and public officials.</i>	
Market Research + Site Specific Studies	Winter 2021
<i>An analysis of the local real estate market, projected trends, and an assessment of potential development opportunities for specific sites.</i>	
Virtual Public Meeting #2	January 26, 2022
<i>Initial findings and feedback presented to the public, along with additional conversations about the character and potential of the corridor.</i>	
Consolidate Research/Feedback; Finalize Studies	Winter/Spring 2022
Present Final Report + Recommendations	May, 2022

A corridor study is a guide to assist future decision-making regarding a specific area—in this case the area along North Main Street from the Roger Williams National Memorial north to the border of Pawtucket. This report brings together and expands upon citywide policies and goals with input from community members; it is the result of a year-long engagement program led by the City of Providence Department of Planning and Development and the Principle Group, and informed by the participation of community members and other stakeholders.

Like the City's Comprehensive Plan and other plans, reports, and studies, this study is intended to be used by the City to inform discussions about public investments and guide private development to align with the community's priorities.

How Was The Study Developed?

The North Main Street Corridor Study process took place from mid 2021 through 2022, and involved many people in developing ideas and refining the vision for the area along North Main Street. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, community members participated in large virtual events, small virtual meetings, and by providing their thoughts through online surveys. Community input forums were structured to collect input from as broad a range of stakeholders as possible, and for participants to provide feedback in a range of settings to ensure that as many voices as possible could be heard. Community input has been reviewed along with a study of existing conditions, planning and design best practices, and the current real estate market to create this corridor study.

The process concluded with the North Main Street Corridor Report which includes an assessment of the area, visions for a potential future, and recommendations and goals to make this vision a reality.

Meet The Community Where It Is

The City maximized opportunities for community engagement and input throughout the duration of the planning process. The knowledge and experience of people who live and work in the community is the most important element of creating a valid and useful report. The inclusion of those most impacted by the potential resulting decisions is critical for the eventual implementation of any ideas or recommendations of a plan. The community's input established the priorities which this study aims to further and help realize.

Where Is This Plan Applicable?

North Main Street stretches from north to south along the west side of Providence's East Side from the College Hill neighborhood north into Pawtucket, generally connecting the two cities' downtowns. The corridor follows a fairly straight, flat route which passes through the western parts of the neighborhoods of College Hill, Mt. Hope, and Summit (Hope) before continuing on into Pawtucket. This corridor study considers priorities for all areas within ¼-mile of North Main Street from Roger Williams National Memorial to the border with Pawtucket.

Major landmarks include University Market Place, the Charlesgate complex, largely industrial businesses near Branch Ave and Cypress Street, the North Burial Ground and Randall Park, Rochambeau Ave, the RI Army National Guard Readiness Center at the Armory, Smithfield Ave, and the Ocean State Job Lot shopping plaza.

How Will This Plan Be Used?

The North Main Street Corridor Study should serve as a basis for future decision-making by the City and decision-making bodies. Many of the ideas considered in this study, including the public investments proposed, require additional discussion by the City before they can be implemented. The Department of Planning and Development, along with other City staff will carry the conversation forward in the coming months and years. The City will also be able to use this study to guide decision making on proposed private and non-profit development projects. Project proponents should be encouraged to use this corridor study when preparing proposals along North Main Street in order to align with the community's vision.

This corridor study can also be used to shape zoning for this portion of North Main Street. As the zoning ordinance and comprehensive plan are updated, this corridor study should serve as a guiding document.

Whether informing zoning updates or guiding a single proposed project, a particularly useful component of the North Main Street Corridor Study is a series of site studies showing potential development scenarios that could inform or inspire publicly or privately led projects.

“The Street has lots of pedestrians, but is unfriendly with no development and no sense of place.”

Virtual Community Meeting (Meeting #1)

On October 4th, 2021 the City of Providence, led by Councilwoman Nirva R. LaFortune and Bonnie Nickerson, Director of Planning + Development, along with the City’s planning consultant team Principle Group, held a virtual community meeting for the North Main Street Corridor Study. This meeting provided a formal introduction of the project to residents and members of the community as well as outlined project objectives, reviewed the planning context, and laid out the process. At the end of the virtual meeting, attendees were invited to ask questions and share comments. These questions and comments from the public helped to establish priorities for the study, and to define the scope of potential recommendations.

Current Character

The North Main Street corridor often feels unfriendly to people walking, biking, and using other mobility devices, mainly due to high traffic volumes and speeds. Participants described the area as “industrial” even while there are few industrial uses along the street, likely due to the presence of underutilized deteriorating buildings and significant paving and property fencing. This speaks to the generally auto-oriented and non-human-scaled nature of the area.

People also feel disconnected from North Main Street, likely due to the area’s unwelcoming physical character and lack of safe options for walking and biking. People noted that bike lanes—where they do exist—do not connect well to the larger network. Despite the City and State’s recent investment in the R-Line, public transit is seen by many as inefficient, infrequent,

and poorly maintained. Private property maintenance in general is something that many people feel could be improved.

Hurdles

People noted that there have been many studies and plans completed for the area, but implementation has not always followed. It seems that existing plans do have public support, but many people feel that various levels of government and their numerous agencies are unable to cooperate in carrying plans through to reality. There is also a perception that landowners are land banking, and leaving properties ill-maintained and undeveloped.

While many people seem open to and even encouraged by potential redevelopment, some feel there could be significant pushback from residents. Transit-oriented development (TOD) initiatives seem to have strong support, yet many people think it will be a challenge to change the auto-centered thinking of some groups of people. New housing and additional infrastructure and services that may then be needed to support it is also seen as a potential friction point.

Potential Interventions

Overall, feedback was positive and constructive. People feel that new and updated infrastructure for walking and biking would improve the corridor and catalyze further growth. Public transit is seen as an asset. Negative comments about public transit suggest demand for expanded service and additional investment rather than removal or interventions to facilitate private vehicle throughput.

Additional housing and an increased variety of uses also seems to have solid support. While some are concerned about conflicts between

residential and off-hours commercial uses, the community sees the future need for a generally mixed-use neighborhood. People want to see new private investment, but also suggested that investment in public amenities would help create a vibrant corridor. Randall Park (the section of North Burial Ground closest to North Main Street) may be the most obvious and favored location for public amenities, with preferences for upgrades to the public realm along the Moshassuck River and the entire corridor.

Placemaking Survey

Concurrent with the first public workshop, an online survey was conducted to gather feedback on how people use the North Main Street corridor—and how they feel about it. The responses provided insights about how people interact with the corridor itself as well as what people value in their community and in the larger city.

People identified outdoor spaces, green spaces, and public space as some of their favorite locations to spend time. Some of the specific places identified for their views, access to nature, and accessibility to the public included the Van Leesten Pedestrian Bridge, Blackstone Boulevard, Prospect Park, India Point, and Swan Point Cemetery.

Hope Street, Westminster Street, and Benefit Street were also identified as favorite places due to their activity, interesting shops, restaurants, architecture, and connection to culture and history.

Places identified among city favorites align well with responses about favored places within the North Main Street corridor. The North Burial Ground was named as a particularly well-loved space, with people recognizing the open green space and historical importance among the area's most valuable assets. Several businesses, including Green Line Apothecary, Sandwich Hut, Providence Bagel, and The Parlor are recognized as contributing to the corridor, and as footholds for future growth.

When asked where people spent the most time in the corridor, respondents named some of the favorite places identified above, and added functional places like the gym, gas stations, pharmacies, other stores, and especially the Whole Foods grocery store. This list starts to inform an understanding of the two main lenses through which people view North Main Street to consider it both functional and underutilized.

Respondents highlighted a need to address their impression that North Main Street's character is generally unpleasant, due in large part to its auto-oriented street design. One-quarter of respondents stated that traffic (too many cars) was the corridor's biggest challenge, with an additional one-quarter citing auto-orientation as a hindrance to pedestrian use. On the other hand, empty or underutilized lots, lack of greenery, and an overall lack of investment were raised as major issues which are often seen as a result of the traffic and auto-orientation raised above.

It is important to note that most respondents saw abundant potential in the corridor. While people identified local businesses, bus service, and trees as preservation-worthy features, survey results and conversations often addressed interventions and changes that could improve the corridor and adjacent neighborhoods. Improved housing was among the needs most commonly cited—with specific reference to the type,

availability, and cost. While many respondents suggested the corridor could be well suited to accommodate additional housing, most felt significant change to North Main Street's character was essential to improving its residential appeal. Over 60% of respondents could not see themselves living along the corridor even if more housing was made available. Fortunately, other responses to the survey provide insight into the kinds of improvements people would most appreciate.

Respondents commonly cited walkability, bike infrastructure, and spaces for people among the corridor improvements they'd most like to see. This input suggests a strong desire to improve accessibility and protect existing local businesses—all pointing to a preference for human-scaled, locally-oriented, and complete neighborhoods.

Finally, the community survey asked participants about their experiences and views on transportation within the corridor. The overwhelming majority of respondents (more than 70%) indicated that they moved within and along the corridor by private automobile. In contrast, even with the best transit service in the state, less than 5% of respondents indicated that they ride the bus and less than 15% say they walk. The almost 10% of respondents indicating that they bicycle in the area was more than expected considering the environment and lack of safe bicycle infrastructure. When asked how safe they felt traveling on North Main Street, the rating for every mode of transportation was relatively low. Bicycling along North Main Street was seen as especially unsafe, followed by walking, then by public transportation. Especially interesting was the low rating driving received for feeling safe, as this indicates the character of the corridor is seen as so hostile, even those protected by their own private vehicle feel that safety could be improved.

As our conversations showed, the speed and volume of automobiles, along with limited space provided to people walking and absence of bicycle infrastructure makes all people feel that the space is neither welcoming nor pleasant to linger in. The environment encourages people to drive fast and offers little to no protection to non-drivers.

Virtual Public Workshop (Meeting #2)

On January 26, 2022, the City of Providence's Department of Planning and Development, led by Martina Haggerty, Director of Special Projects and Jessica Lance, Principal Planner, along with a team from the Principle Group convened a virtual public workshop to update the public and encourage additional input. The meeting began with a project overview, an update of the project's progress, a presentation of the initial vision based on conversations with the community—culminating with an opportunity for additional feedback and further discussion.

The second part of the meeting was devoted to breakout group discussions, with a focus on four main topics: Public Space, Mobility, Housing, and Land Use & Development. The workshop concluded with each group reporting back the highlights of their discussions and direction to the Big Ideas survey.

Most Exciting Ideas

- Create More Housing (+other uses, especially affordable housing)
- Make Short-Term Interventions (like pop-ups and demonstration public spaces to activate the street.)
- Redesign The Roadway (to be safer (slow cars down), better crossings, protected bike lanes.)
- Improve Green Space (longer hours for North Burial Ground, easier access, use Randall Park.)

Ideas Needing Attention

- Maintain + Improve Public Space (Clean up trash, fix/add lighting, fix sidewalks, etc)
- Balance Cars And People (Traffic still needs to flow, but walking, biking, + transit should be safe)
- Ensure Character + Scale Are Right (Area can handle some height, but human scale is important.)
- Determine How This Plan is Implemented (Not the first effort. What tools can the City use?)

The Main Ideas

Use the City's existing tools to ensure new development is pedestrian-friendly and considers services people need such as

grocery stores, pharmacies, schools, banks, reliable transit, and safe public space (zoning, incentives).

Improve open space by adding more trees (especially north of the Armory), better maintaining existing trees, and improving North Burial Ground + Randall Park with better hours, more entry points, more uses like gardening, playgrounds, and seating, moving the fence along North Main Street, and improving connectivity to the Moshassuck River.

Improve mobility by improving connections for people walking and biking (crosswalks, sidewalks, lighting, protected bike lanes) and create more places for people to stop along the corridor to break up its long length. Add more housing along North Main Street to address needs for more affordable and market rate housing and attract new businesses.

Big Ideas Survey

The Big Ideas online survey was open for 17 days from January 26, 2022 through February 11, 2022. In total, 49 respondents shared their feedback through a combination of rating their agreement with each Big Idea statement and open ended feedback. Each Big Idea was presented and participants were asked to rank how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the statement on a scale of 0 - 5. After each statement, participants were given the opportunity to provide open-ended feedback on that Big Idea. This structure enabled a quantitative evaluation on how strongly respondents agreed (or disagreed) with the Big Idea statements created from all of the conversations, interviews, and public outreach. In addition, the open-ended responses people provided allowed greater insight and a more detailed understanding of the nuances in people's views.

Stakeholder Interview Takeaways

Most interviewees identified automobile traffic as the root cause of the challenges facing the North Main Street corridor. The corridor was described as unpleasant—especially when not in a car. Several people felt that the corridor prioritized vehicle travel at the expense of other users and activities. The mobility North Main Street provides was valued by interviewees, but

“North Main Street is a primary link between Providence and Pawtucket, and it should provide safe and easy travel for pedestrians, bicycles, public transit and automobiles.”

many felt that the condition and character of the street can still be significantly improved even with limited change to how the space on the street is allocated amongst car and pedestrian/bicyclist.

Respondents agreed that few people choose to walk along North Main Street, which, in addition to high automobile traffic volume, is seen as poorly maintained, and marred by challenging topography, limited pedestrian infrastructure like crosswalks, and a general lack of human activity. As one resident stated during an interview: “There needs to be activity to attract activity”.

Interviewees also cited discomfort with the corridor’s social challenges—including crime and unhoused people. While these issues were frequently raised together, most people identified separate causes, impacts, and responses. The area’s poor condition was seen as the most significant factor in the area’s low pedestrian use. Property crime has been reported in the area and identified as a challenge for the corridor, but it was also seen as less of an issue around North Main Street than most other areas of the city. Both perceptions of crime and actual crime prevention were identified as important aspects of achieving North Main Street’s higher potential. A few interviewees raised the presence of unhoused people within the corridor as a concern. It is seen as a component—or

result—of several larger issues, including a lack of affordable housing. Residents, property owners, and business operators all raised concerns, as well as potential solutions to address the corridor’s challenges, but additional support from the City and State was seen as essential to address the larger issues.

North Main Street is recognized as providing several services to the surrounding communities—with abundant potential to provide more. All interviewees identified mobility as an essential function of the corridor, especially the public transit service. In addition to the mobility provided along North Main Street, the proximity and connections to the Providence train station and I-95 are seen as significant area assets. Quick access to I-95 has recently drawn some businesses and developers to the area, offering a short commute to areas further afield. However, I-95 was also seen as a nuisance during periods of high traffic volume, when I-95 congestion drives people to the corridor as an alternate route—and overwhelms North Main Street with traffic. The proximity to a regional rail station was viewed by people to be a convenience, but most developers did not see this as an amenity that would impact development potential. Being close to Downtown Providence is considered a very valuable characteristic of the corridor and improving that connection was desired by residents and developers.

North Main Street Q+A



potential opportunity to rehabilitate the physical character of the corridor.

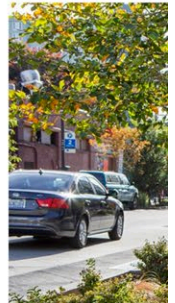
Unfortunately, many stakeholder interviews described a lack of interest on behalf of property owners along the corridor in regards to investing or rehabilitating the condition of the corridor. While some developers or property owners felt that the best opportunities the corridor offered were auto-oriented or aimed at those passing through the corridor, most developers, business owners, and property owners felt that with appropriate investments and action, North Main Street could be an attractive place to live and do business. High land prices, small existing parcel sizes, and high labor and material costs were all identified by interviewees as potential hindrances to new development. Some interviewees proposed potential changes to regulations or suggested incentives may be needed to make development possible under existing conditions. Most people did feel that the City would need to encourage development in the area initially, but that in the long term the corridor does have significant potential.

Lots of pedestrian un-friendly development. no sense of place.

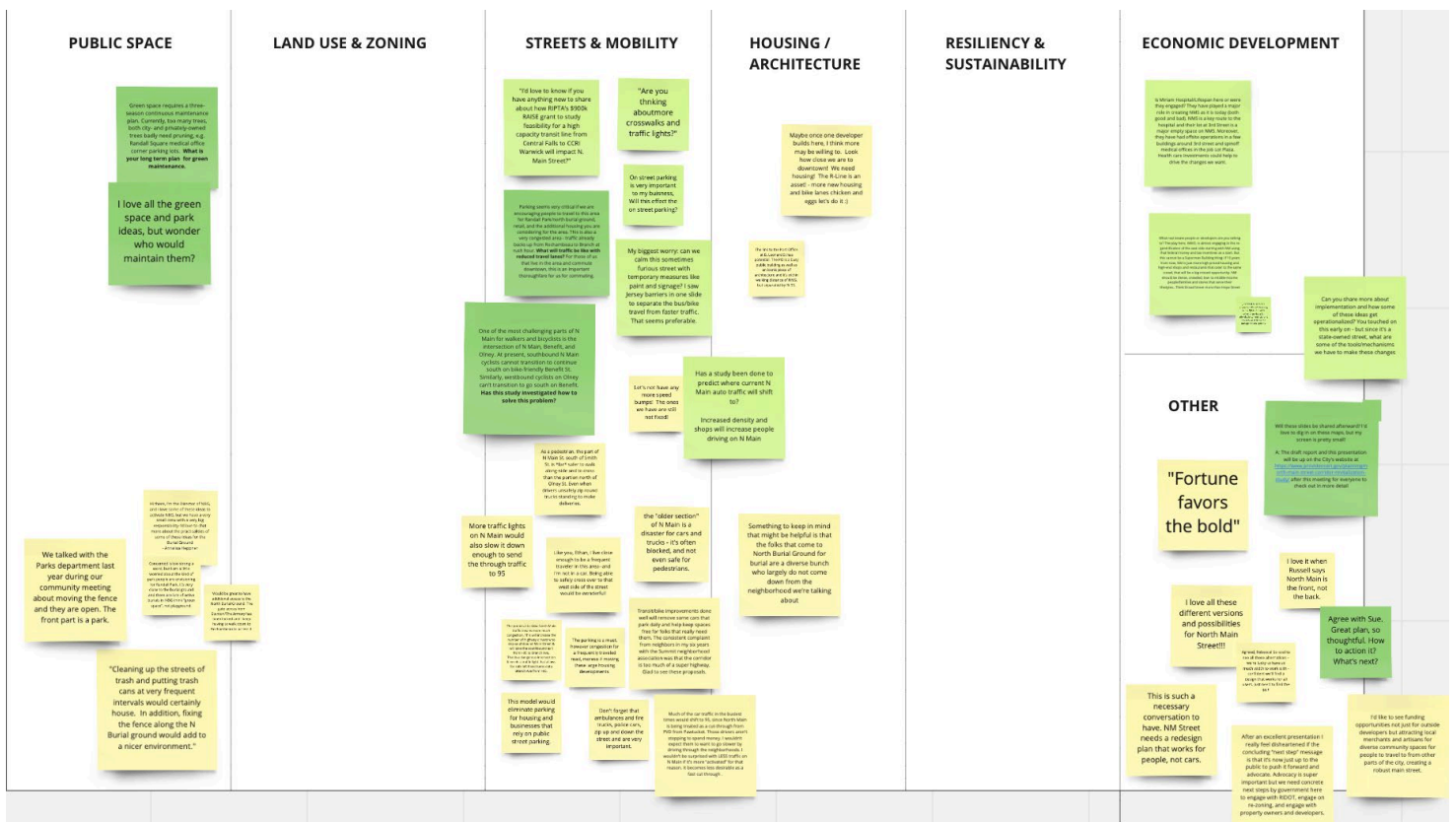
Greggs is a destination but is isolated/not integrated.



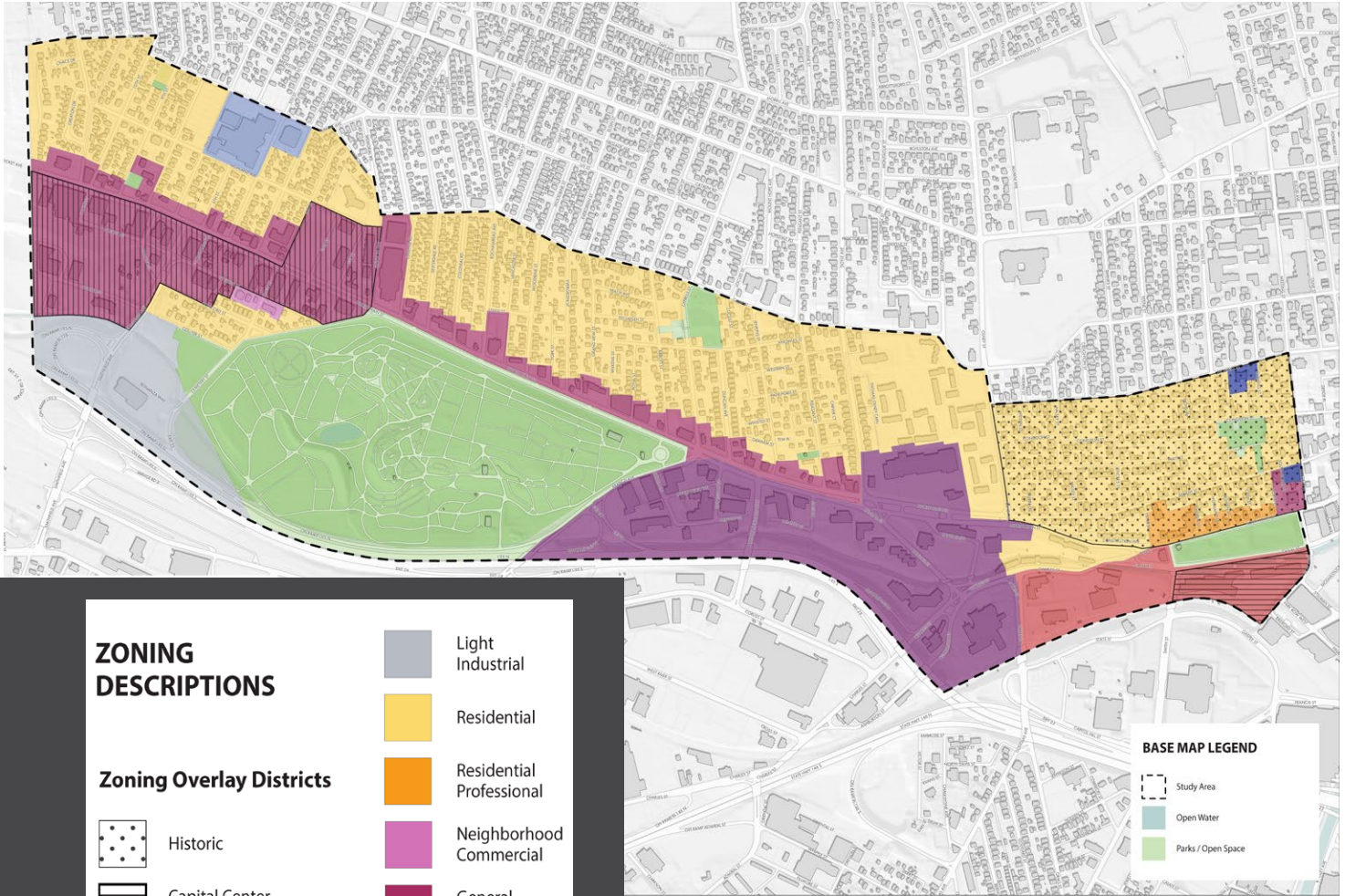
There are spots that are nice. -- Armory is a nice space. How can we build off of what we do have?



Screenshot of the virtual whiteboard from Workshop #2



Screenshot of the virtual whiteboard from the Final Presentation.



ZONING DESCRIPTIONS

Zoning Overlay Districts



Historic



Capital Center
Special Development



Transit-Oriented
Development

Zoning Districts



Open Space



Light
Industrial



Residential



Residential
Professional



Neighborhood
Commercial



General
Commercial



Heavy
Commercial



Educational
Institutional



Healthcare
Institutional



Downtown

BASE MAP LEGEND

Study Area

Open Water

Parks / Open Space

LAND USE + ZONING CONSIDERATIONS

The North Main Street corridor and the specific bounds of the Study Area include several different zoning districts, ranging from single-family residential to light industrial. While the majority of the Study Area is zoned for residential uses, the properties along North Main Street itself mainly fall into commercial zones. One major landmark and a significant influence on the corridor is the North Burial Ground which is zoned as Open Space. It should be noted that while three of the districts that fall within the Study Area are referred to as 'Commercial', a mix of uses are permitted within them including residential uses. In fact, land within the C-1, C-2, and C-3 districts represent the majority of unrealized residential development potential under current zoning regulations.

Residential

- Residential District (R-1)
- Residential District (R-2)
- Residential District (R-3)
- Residential District (R-4)
- Residential Professional District (R-P)

The various residential districts located within the study area represent increasing amounts of development and number of units, from R-1 single family lots to more dense multifamily lots. The districts also allow different types of housing including duplexes, triplexes, rowhomes, and multi-family buildings. In addition to lot coverage and build-to and setback regulations, much of the character of these districts is determined by their height regulations. In the R-1, R-2, and R-3 districts, buildings are limited to a maximum of three stories where the R-4 and R-P can accommodate up to four stories.

Commercial Districts

- Neighborhood Commercial District (C-1)
- General Commercial District (C-2)

- Heavy Commercial District (C-3)

The three commercial districts around the corridor cover most of the west side of the Study Area. The properties fronting along the east side of North Main Street as well as a significant area north of the North Burial Ground are largely within the C-2 district. Much of this northern section of the C-2 district is also included in the Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Overlay District which allows for additional density and reduced parking requirements. Directly south of the North Burial Ground is the C-2 district which spans from I-95, east to North Main Street and covers the University Market Place commercial center (which includes the Whole Foods grocery store). The commercial districts are largely characterized by low-scale, auto-oriented development common along the sides of highways. Perhaps the single most common land use is surface parking, largely on under- or undeveloped lots. While the C-1, C-2, and C-3 districts are named 'Commercial' they permit perhaps the widest range of uses in the City, including residential. In addition to the permissive use regulations, these districts also have relatively minimal lot and bulk standards. That being said, outside of the TOD Overlay District buildings are limited to 45 or 50 feet in height, resulting in buildings remaining under five stories.

Open Space, Manufacturing, and Healthcare Institutional

Open Space District (OS)

One of the major defining features of the North Main Street corridor is the North Burial Ground which falls within the Open Space District. While this district does allow for buildings, permitted uses are restricted to things like parks, playgrounds, agriculture, amusement, and temporary uses.

Light Industrial (M-1)

The Light Industrial or M-1 district is described as being “intended for light industrial and office park uses” which can include manufacturing, assembly, and storage, but specifically prohibits any uses that could be a hazard. No residential uses are permitted in the M-1 district but office uses, R+D, entertainment, restaurants, bars, and retail establishments are allowed. The only area within the Study Area which is included in the M-1 district is directly north of the North Burial Ground along I-95 and is largely entangled by on- and off-ramps.

Healthcare Institutional (I-1-75)

A small section of the Study Area is governed by the Healthcare Institutional District or I-1-75 district which is a specialized zone intended to manage health care facilities. This district is occupied by the Miriam Hospital facility and only covers an area equal to about two and a half blocks. While uses other than solely health care are permitted, the district regulations are tailored to medical and associated uses.

Overlay Districts

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Overlay District

A significant number of parcels in the C-2 district, at the northern end of the corridor, are also included in the TOD overlay district. The stated intent of this overlay district is to allow additional height and reduce parking requirements in an effort to take advantage of current high-frequency transit which runs along North Main Street. These regulations allow buildings up to 70 feet in height or

approximately seven stories compared to the underlying C-2 district’s four-story limit. Additionally, rather than requiring at least one automobile parking space per housing unit, the TOD district has no minimum requirement and limits parking to no more than one space per unit.

Historic District (HD) Overlay District

A large part of the southern end of the Study Area falls under the City’s Historic District Overlay District. Given Providence’s long history, especially in the College Hill neighborhood, it is not surprising that the entirety of the area south of Olney Street and east of North Main Street is regulated by the HD overlay. In addition to the substantial district, several buildings throughout the corridor are individually designated and addressed by this overlay. The stated intention of the HD Overlay is “to preserve structures of historic and architectural value” which is managed through a development review and approval process. An historic district commission regulates any changes to the exterior of a building within the HD Overlay which, would largely apply only to the design and form of a building leaving uses to be regulated by the underlying zoning.

Individually identified buildings included in the HD Overlay:

- 125 Charles Street
- 653 North Main Street, An 1866 building currently occupied by Jerry’s Artarama
- 23 Dryden Lane, The Dryden Mill
- 12 Woodbine Street
- 957 North Main Street, Jeremiah Dexter House
- 1106 North Main Street, formerly Atlas Music



23 Dryden Lane. The Dryden Mill



12 Woodbine Street. Cutler, Susan S. & Edward J. House



653 North Main Street



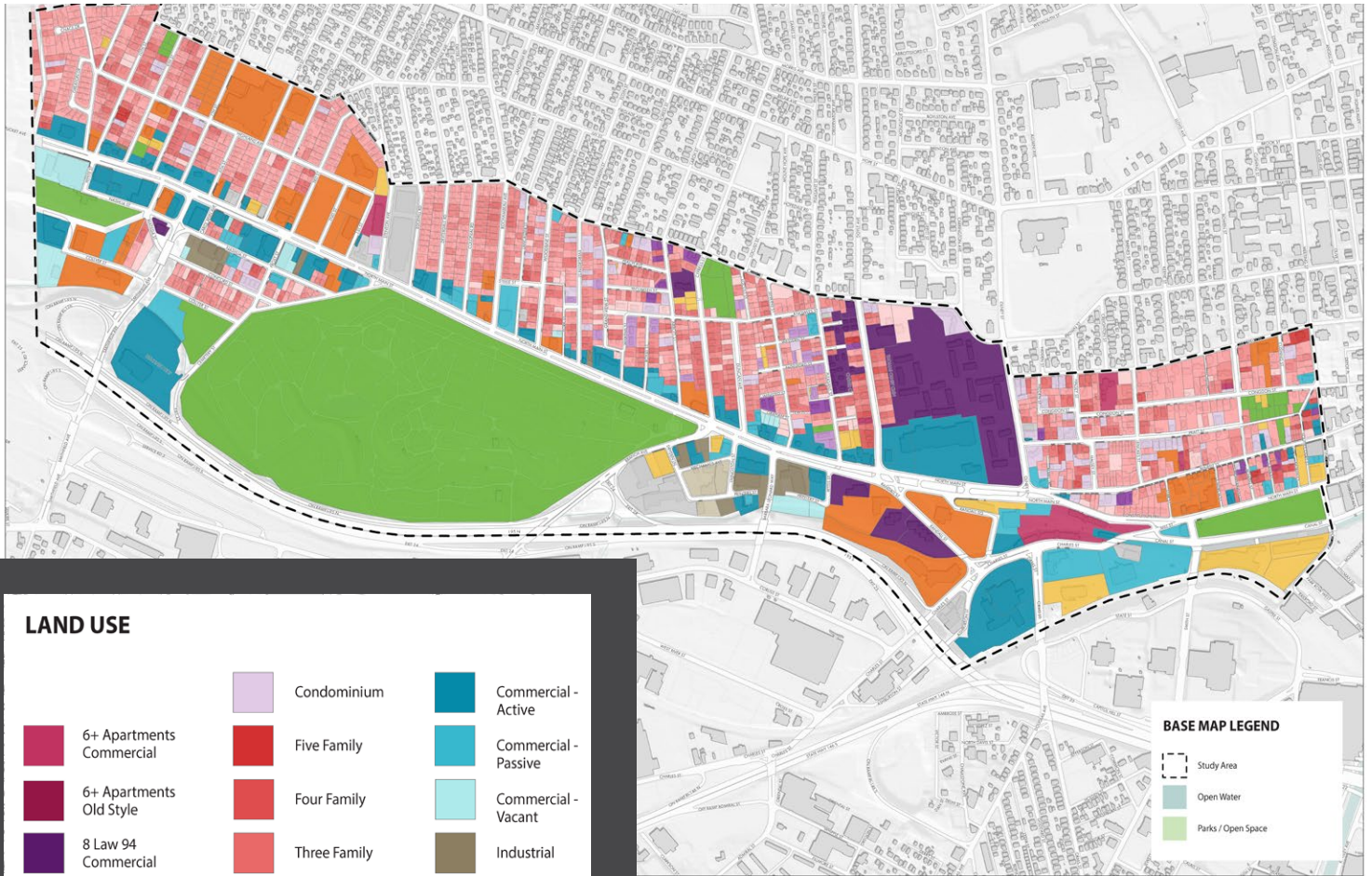
125 Charles Street. Canal House Apartments



1106 North Main Street. Formerly Atlas Music

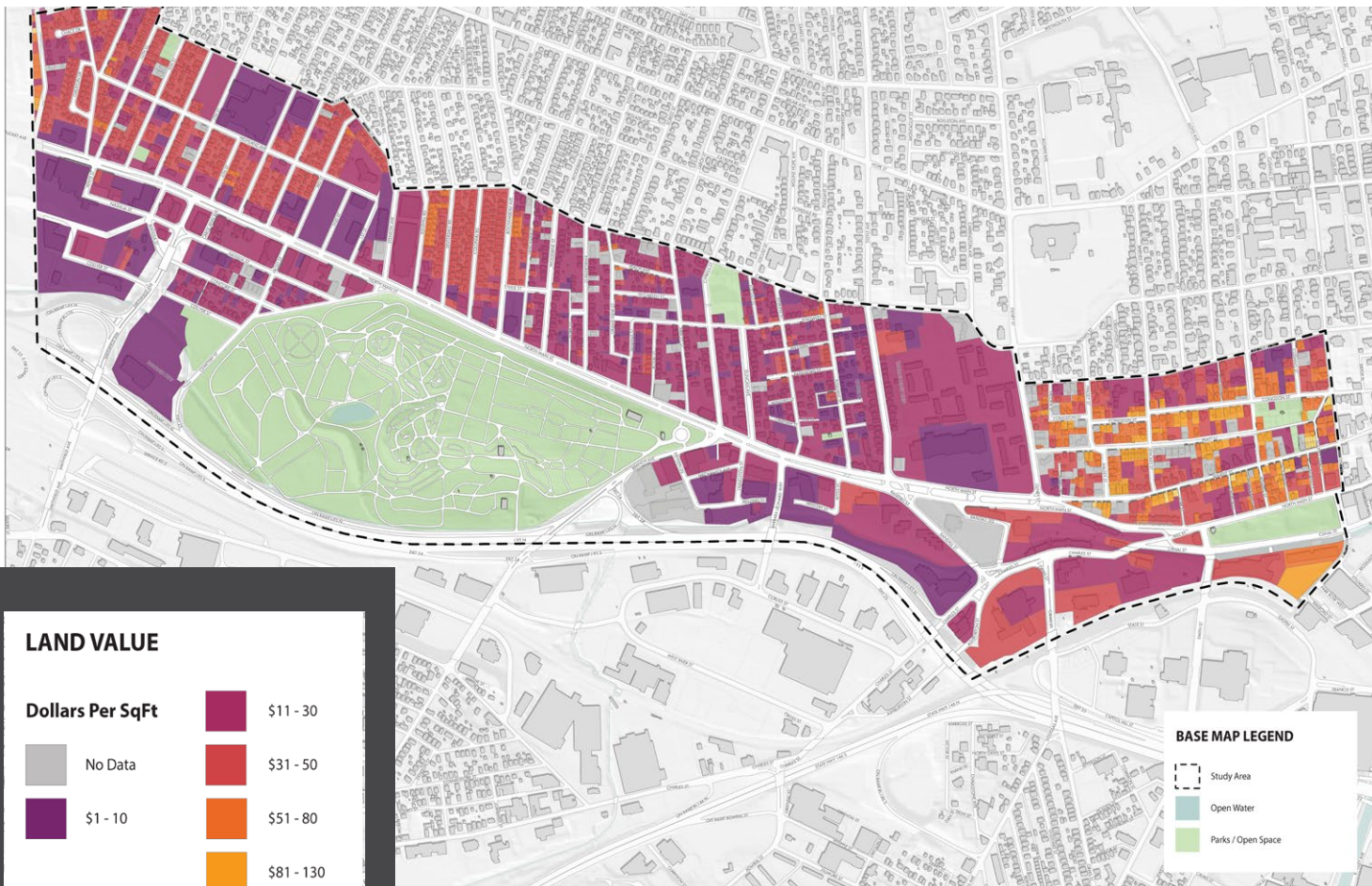


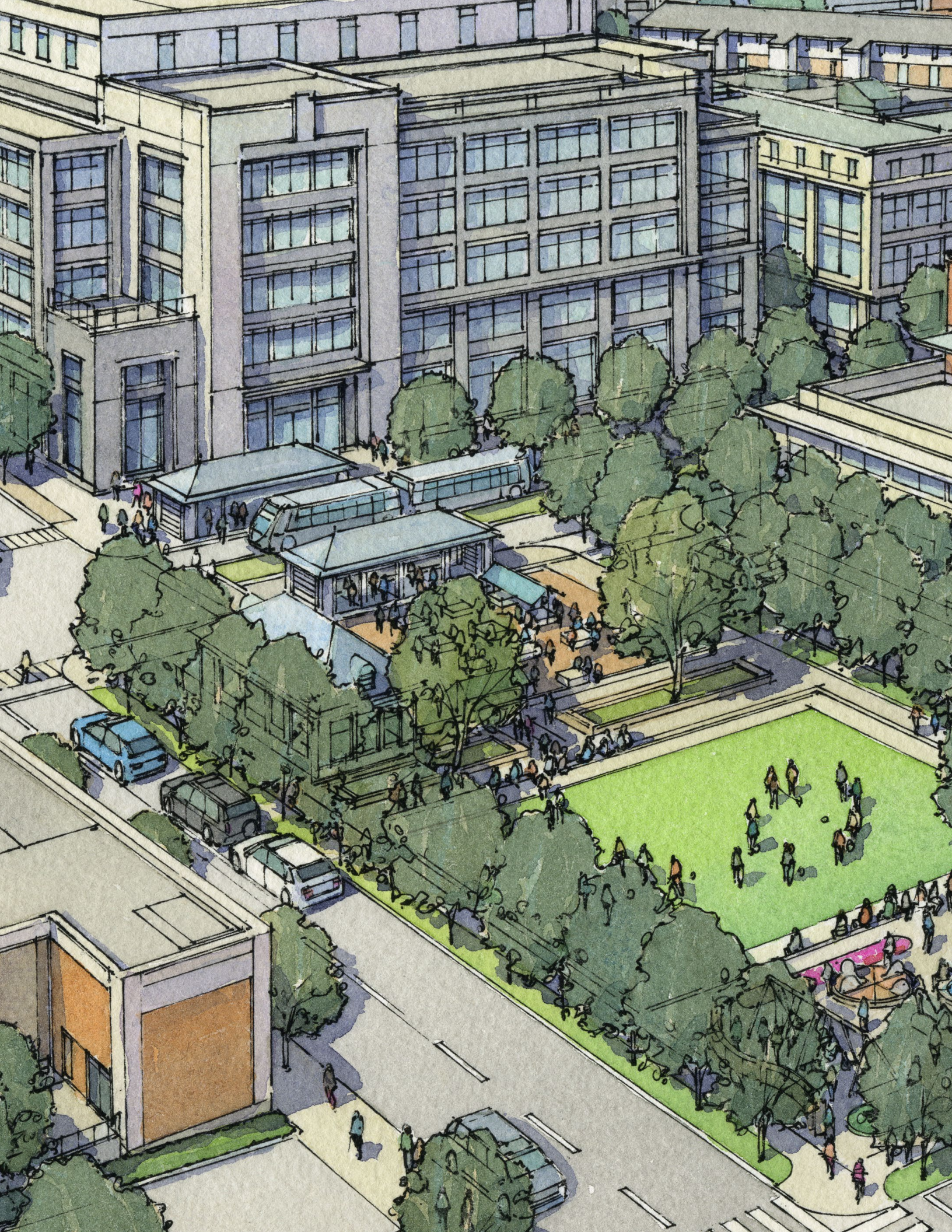
957 North Main Street. Jeremiah Dexter House



Existing Land Uses

Neighborhoods and land uses are divided in the corridor both east from west by North Main Street, as well as north from south by large developments, significant roads or bridges, and by the North Burial Ground.







Chapter 2

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

INTRODUCTION TO THE BIG IDEAS

Feedback gathered from conversations, public meetings, surveys, and stakeholder interviews was consolidated into several Big Ideas. While specific concerns varied from person to person and group to group, many issues intersected around more than one theme. Once statements were refined to reflect the core of the community's perspective, draft statements were shared with the community. Through a public survey, participants were asked to rate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the statements and to provide feedback. The statements, which are included below, were rated on a scale from 0 ('Strongly Disagree') to 5 ('Strongly Agree'). While finding that these statements were overwhelmingly in line with the community's values, reviewing the feedback provided additional depth and nuance to the issues.

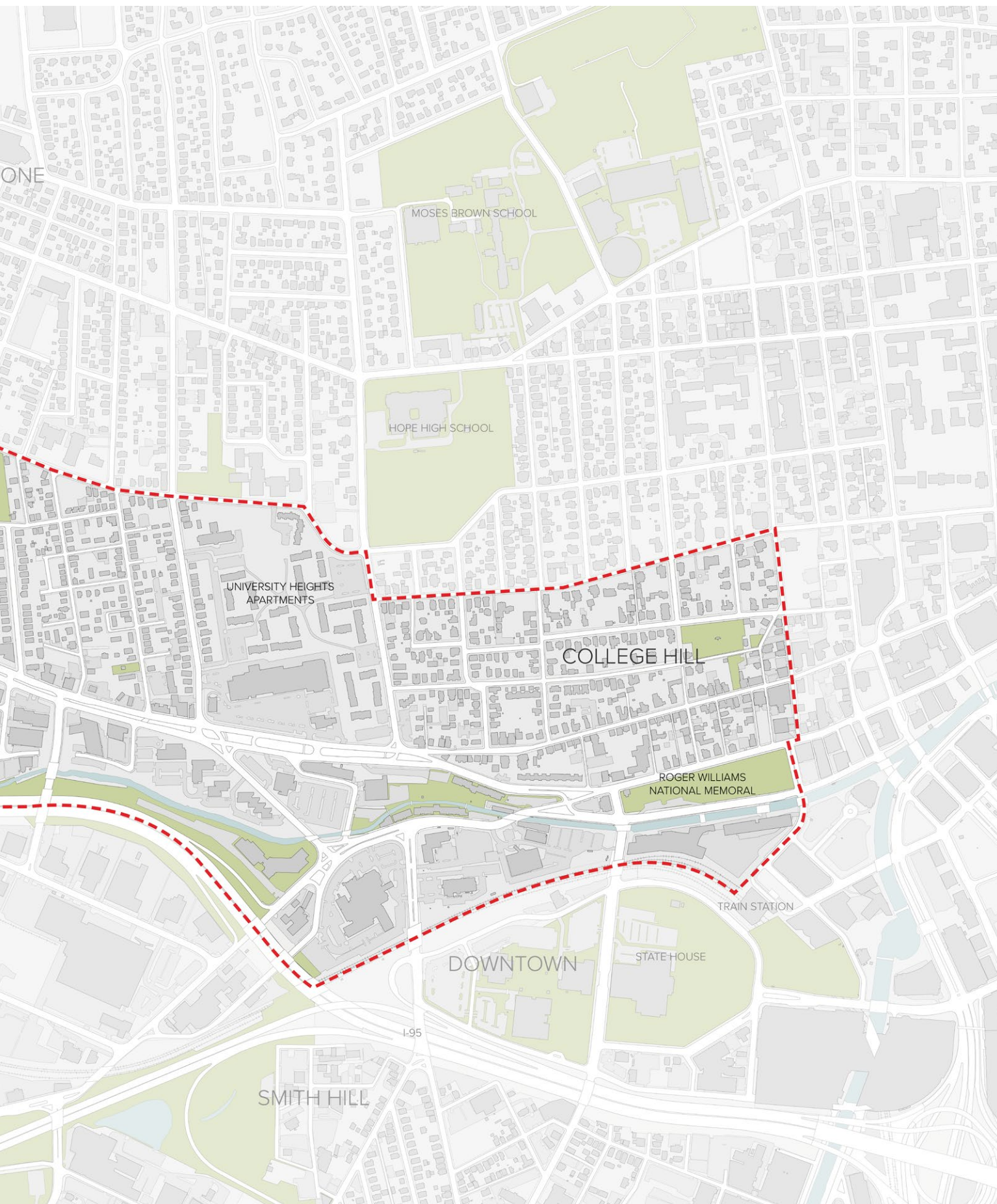
The Big Ideas provide long range guidance and some rules-of-thumb when considering and implementing changes in the corridor. It will require numerous incremental steps to achieve the community's vision. Some actions may not align perfectly with others, but by referencing the Big Ideas, it's possible to chart meaningful progress towards the community's overall vision.

Each Big Idea is set forth with a supporting narrative to frame the issue and provide context. As should be done when considering any planning issue in the corridor, each Big Idea was considered when determining the goals and recommended actions.



The Existing Conditions





Big Idea #1: **IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY AND MOBILITY FOR ALL**



Safe Multimodal Transportation

The community recognized mobility as an essential function of North Main Street but felt that the needs of all users were not being met. Many people feel that the sidewalks and pedestrian infrastructure are inadequate, cycling infrastructure is needed, and existing transit service is difficult to access.

When presented with the statement ‘Prioritize walking to help create the most functional, inclusive, and enjoyable mobility network for people of all ages and abilities along the corridor,’ 92% of participants agreed or strongly agreed.

When presented with the statement ‘Redesign North Main Street to be a main spine in a strong regional transit and cycling network,’ 90% of participants agreed or strongly agreed.

Action
Locate well served, substantial, and well designed transit stops within neighborhood centers.

Timeframe
Near term

Action
Coordinate mobility networks so that mode switching happens within neighborhood centers.

Timeframe
Near term

Action
Work with RIPTA to develop an “adopt-a-spot” program for nearby businesses to support and take ownership of transit stops.

Timeframe
Near term

Action
Ensure all transit stops are fully accessible and well connected to surrounding neighborhoods through a well-maintained network of accessible sidewalks and crosswalks.

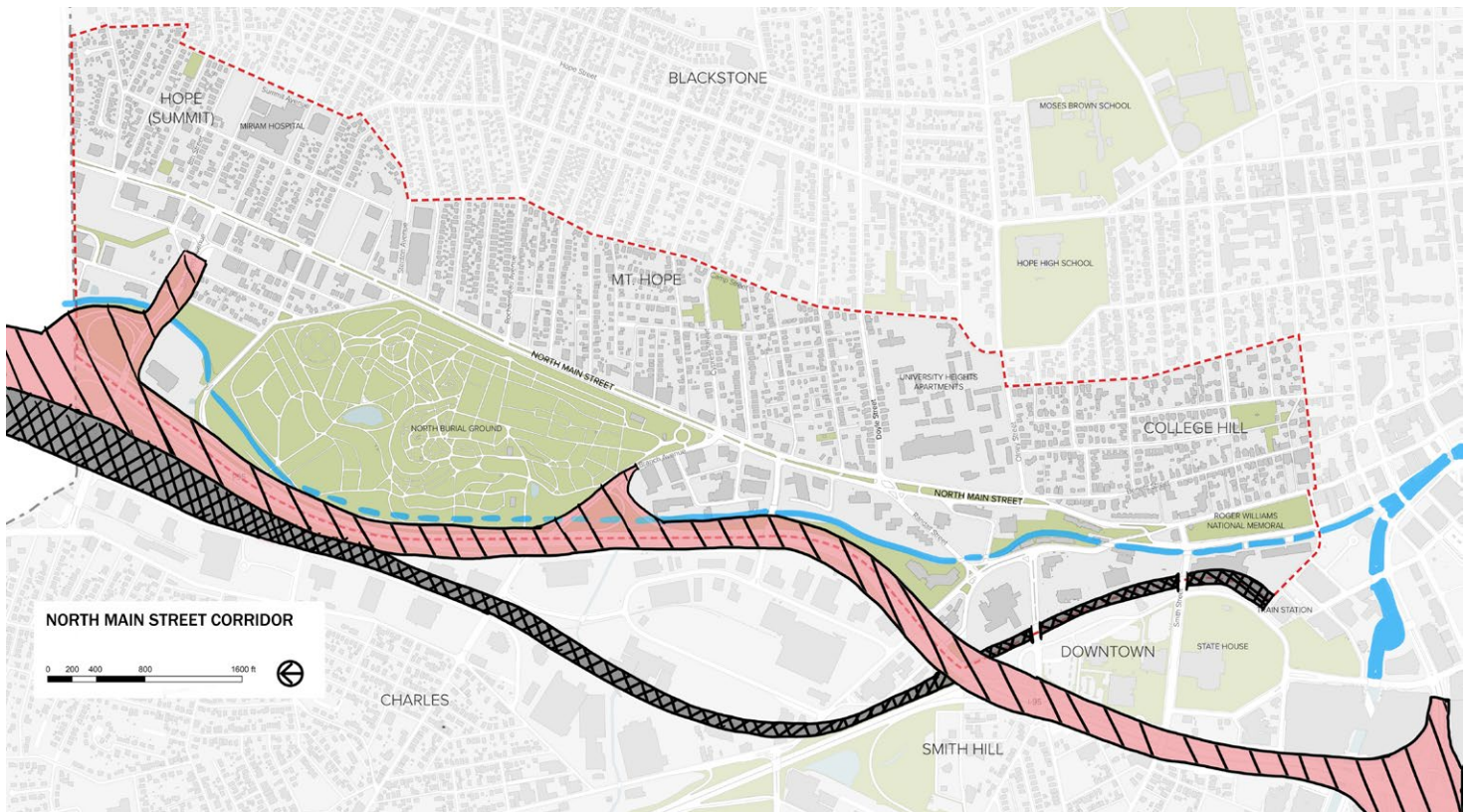
Timeframe
Near term

Action
Provide appropriate dedicated space for transit, bicycles, and pedestrians.

Timeframe
Near term

Action
Invest in bicycle infrastructure for people of all ages and abilities and the larger active transportation network as part of the Urban Trail Network.

Timeframe
Near term



Several physical barriers separate North Main Street from neighborhoods to the west—The Moshasuck River, Interstate 95, and the railroad tracks.

Move The Barrier

In many ways the street itself serves as a barrier to the people who live nearby. The volume and speed of the passing cars is uncomfortable to be around and feels unsafe. The street lacks sufficient crossings for either pedestrians or people driving locally. Many of the local streets that connect to North Main Street from the east do not have crosswalks and do not allow left hand turns. While there is no physical wall preventing people from crossing, addressing the issues that make North Main Street hard to cross will do much to bring the two sides of the corridor together.

Make North Main Street Safe To Walk And Bike For People Of All Ages And Abilities.

Action
Increase the number of pedestrian crossings along North Main Street.

Timeframe
Near term

Action
Increase the number of signalized intersections along North Main Street between Branch Avenue and Frost Street.

Timeframe
Long term

Action
Ensure all crossings are ADA compliant and well maintained.

Timeframe
Near term

Action
Continue to pursue and implement recommendations from the Great Streets Master Plan, especially those addressing walkability, and network connectivity.

Timeframe
Mid term

Encourage Development And Create Destinations West of North Main Street

Action
Balance the intensity of development on both sides of the corridor.

Timeframe
Mid term

Action
Create reasons to cross North Main Street.

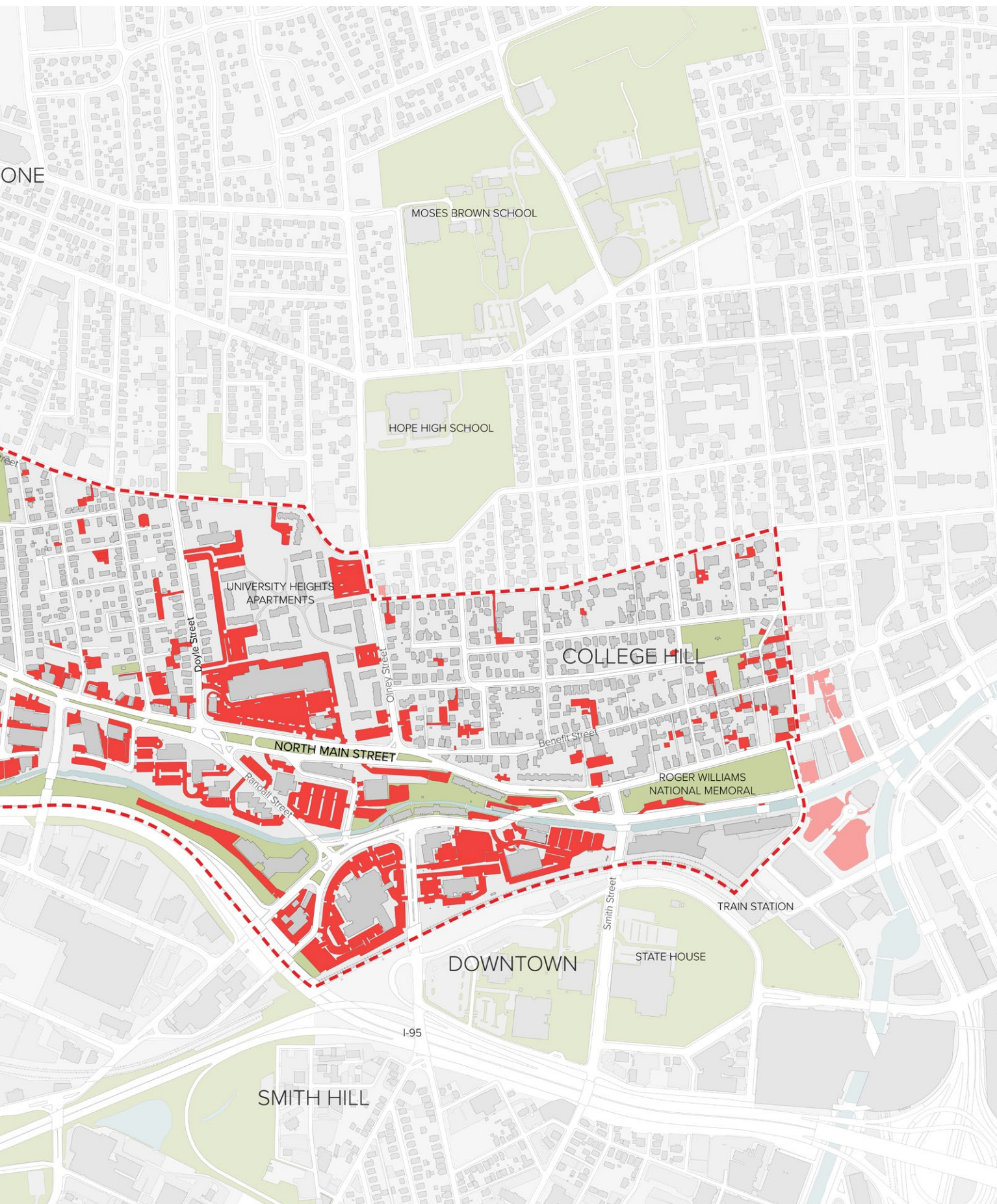
Timeframe
Near term

Action
Make sure there are a variety of options for getting to and getting around the corridor.

Timeframe
Near term

Calm the Traffic







Calm the Traffic

An intersection standard should be developed for the residential streets that meet North Main Street. The design should provide a continuous sidewalk along North Main Street that will help establish North Main Street as a friendly street to walk upon and give people walking a pleasant route to stroll near their homes. Work should also be done to install other traffic calming devices on the residential streets so that people driving naturally slow down when traveling down the hill toward North Main Street.

As new development is attracted to the corridor, parking should be addressed in a coordinated manner. By combining parking into shared lots and structures, less land needs to be devoted to storing private automobiles and can be used for housing, businesses, or amenities. This strategy can also encourage people to spend more time in the area and visit more stores. Once a person parks once, they will have access to a variety of businesses making for a more convenient trip.

Action

Develop a corridor-wide intersection standard that prioritizes people walking and biking.

Timeframe

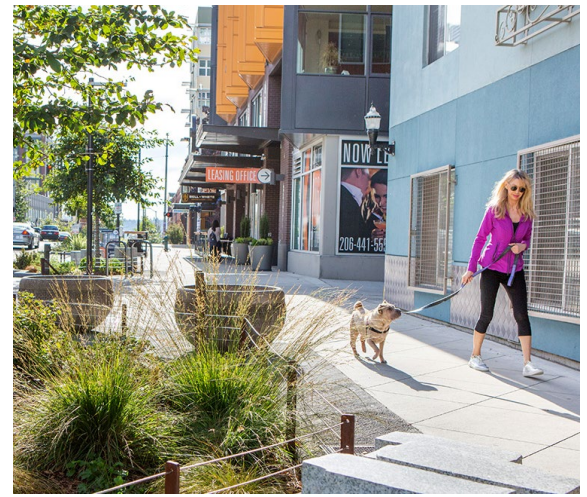
Near term

Action

Develop a district-wide parking coordination plan.

Timeframe

Near term



Address The Physical Design

Buildings help define space and contribute to a sense of place. Empty lots are a void along the corridor which can make the area seem incomplete or uncared for. Walking along a stretch of sidewalk with fast traffic on one side and an empty lot on the other, people can feel vulnerable. When many buildings are missing, it almost feels as though even the neighborhood is retreating from the street.

In many districts throughout the City, buildings are required to ‘build-to’ or near the sidewalk. In some places, buildings are even required to be at least a certain height. In many industrial areas, these kinds of standards are often eliminated as unnecessary but in neighborhoods they are very important and let people know that the area is designed for people, rather than large machinery.

Action
Encourage infill development

Timeframe
Near term

Action
Require site design that addresses the street

Timeframe
Near term

Create A More Robust Transit System Along North Main Street

As a significant regional transit corridor, North Main Street has the potential to host more reliable, higher capacity, and more convenient transit in the future. This commitment to mass transit and bicycle infrastructure along the corridor will directly change the real and perceived character of the street, ultimately leading to more people choosing to locate businesses and invest in new or renovated housing. While the R-Line has convenient stops within a 10-minute walk of each other, this service has not generated significant investment along the corridor to date. At the most basic level, these are still bus stops situated along a street dedicated entirely to moving automobiles. Currently, North Main is not a walkable, bikeable transit corridor. It functions more like an extension of I-95 than as a mixed-use “high” street that connects uniquely different neighborhoods. The transit system’s design should utilize each station to anchor each neighborhood as a particular destination in balance with maintaining proper transit headways. These stations should be inviting and comfortable and establish iconic civic centers in these distinct neighborhoods. At its core, these stations represent a fundamental shift from prioritizing vehicle travel to prioritizing people walking, biking, and using transit on North Main Street.



Action

Minimize headway times

Timeframe

Mid term

Action

Build more permanent, identifiable, and comfortable transit stations that signal permanence to riders and developers. Comfortable stations make using transit less of a compromise and speeds boarding + overall system efficiency.

Timeframe

Long term

Action

Consider dedicated and separated lanes with priority signaling.

Timeframe

Long term

Action

Expand one-seat trip destinations.

Timeframe

Mid term

Action

Implement wait time + status information boards.

Timeframe

Near term

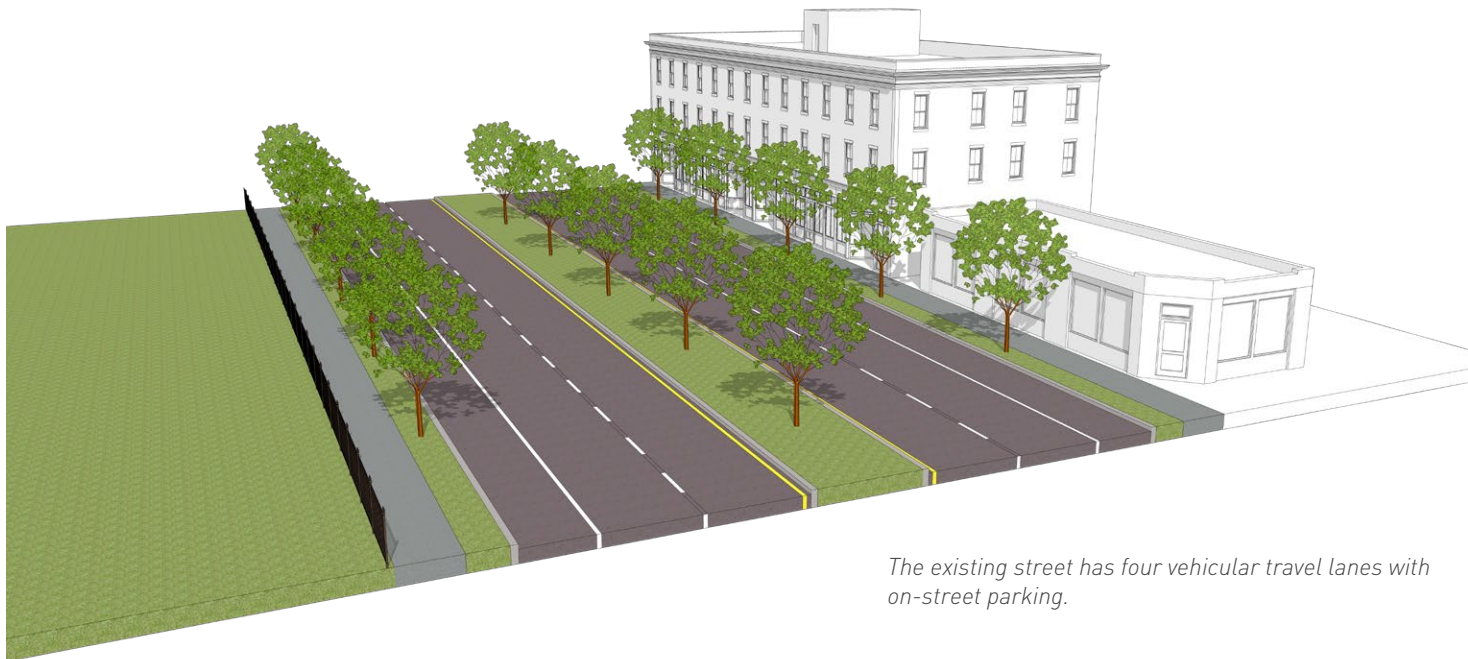
Action

Provide amenities for multi-modal users, like bike lockers, and bike racks on the bus/train.

Timeframe

Near term

TYPICAL EXISTING STREET DESIGN



The existing street has four vehicular travel lanes with on-street parking.

4 LANES WITH BUS RAPID TRANSIT (BRT)



This option has a continuous center island that can accommodate transit stations. The street includes protected bike lanes on each side and maintains four vehicular travel lanes.

PROTECTED BRT & BIKE LANES



This option includes a continuous center island with dedicated "Protected" Bus-Bike Lanes in each direction. The Bus-Bike lane barriers create challenging crossing opportunities in exchange for bicyclist safety. There are four vehicular travel lanes but no street parking.

2 LANES WITH BUS RAPID TRANSIT



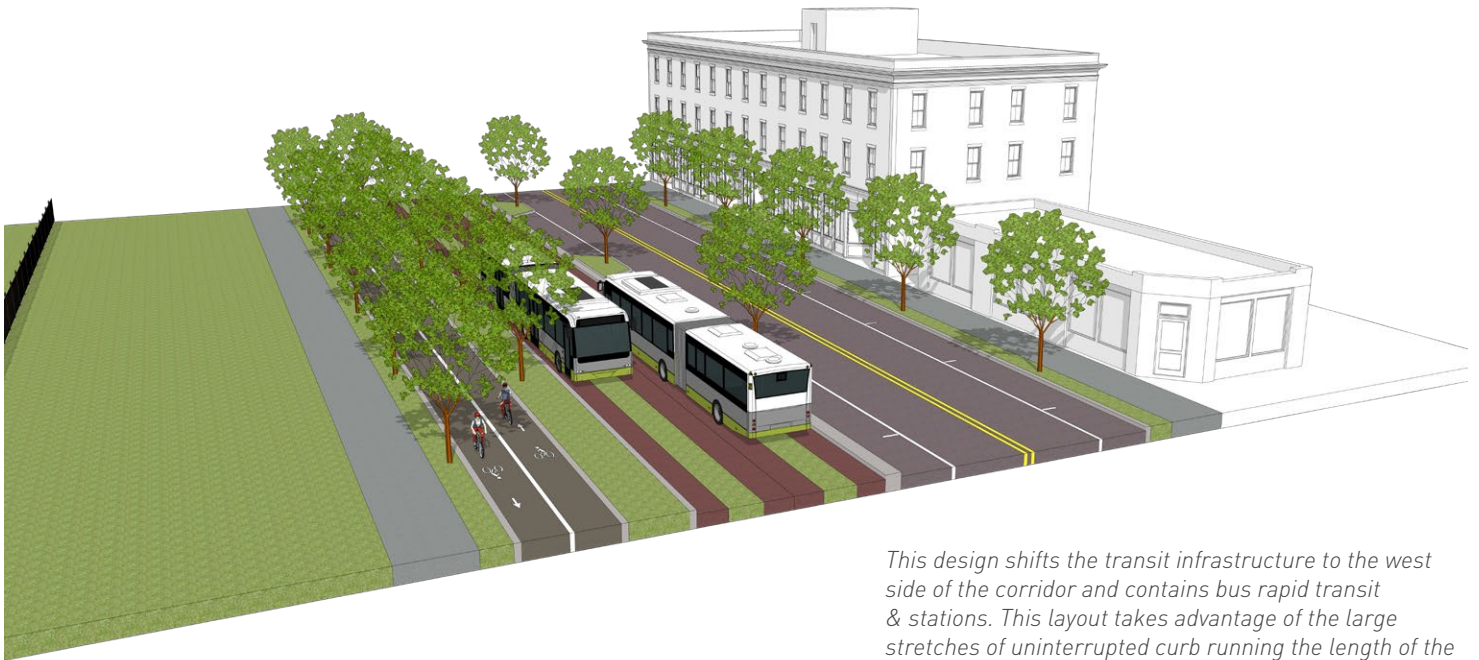
This option includes a continuous center island that can accommodate transit stations. There are bus-only lanes adjacent to the median that travels in both directions. This design incorporates on-street parking on one side and protected bike lanes on both sides of the street.

2 LANES, BRT, & BIKE LANES



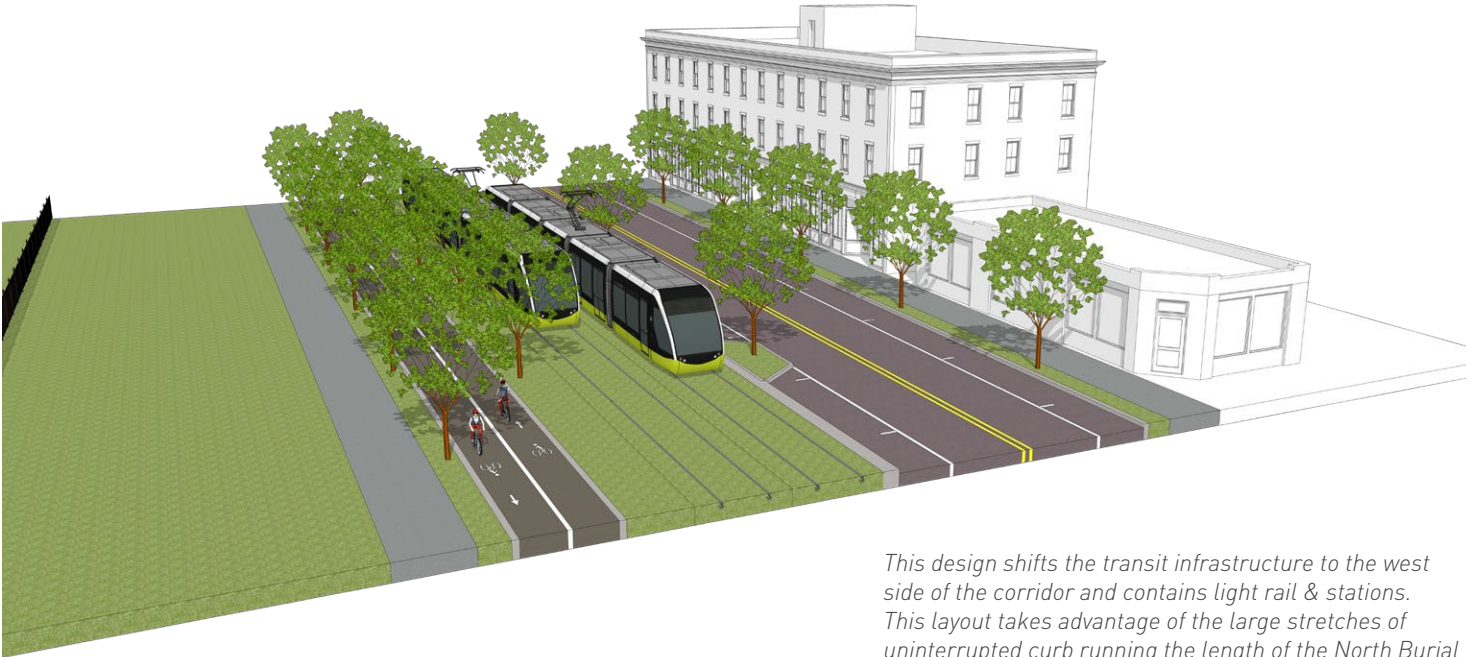
This design reduces the street to two vehicular travel lanes to prioritize the use of the right of way for other modes. This option provides protected bike lanes and bus-only lanes on each side of the street. It also maintains on-street parking on both sides with additional space for landscaping and street trees.

2 LANES WITH BRT & BIKE EDGEFRONT



This design shifts the transit infrastructure to the west side of the corridor and contains bus rapid transit & stations. This layout takes advantage of the large stretches of uninterrupted curb running the length of the North Burial Ground and therefore minimizes conflicts with cross streets. The design includes protected, bidirectional bike lanes and on-street parking lanes on both sides with space for street trees.

LIGHT RAIL & BIKE EDGEFRONT



This design shifts the transit infrastructure to the west side of the corridor and contains light rail & stations. This layout takes advantage of the large stretches of uninterrupted curb running the length of the North Burial Ground and therefore minimizes conflicts with cross streets. The design includes protected, bidirectional bike lanes and on-street parking lanes on both sides with space for street trees.

LIGHT RAIL CENTER ISLAND



This option includes two vehicular travel lanes and a continuous center island to accommodate transit stations. Light rail lines are running within the median. This design incorporates on-street parking on one side and protected bike lanes on both sides of the street.

TRAFFIC CALMING OVERVIEW

Three core elements of street space

Several issues impact the character of a thoroughfare. While the design can often devote significant amounts of space to the roadway, including travel lanes, shoulders, medians, and parking spaces, the organization of these elements and their size and orientation can vary widely. It is challenging to mitigate large volumes of high-speed traffic even with generous sidewalks providing buffering planted areas and other pedestrian amenities.

When the distance from building to building across the street approaches or exceeds 80 feet, it begins to be difficult for people on one side of the street to relate to the other side. Seeing what might be in a storefront display becomes impractical, crossing the road is a burden, and people tend to limit themselves to utilizing only one side of the corridor. Shopping districts should be especially aware of this aspect of scale. However, all commercial streets which intend to be comfortable for people walking and rolling should consider this human scale.

Sidewalks, Plantings, And Pedestrian Amenities

The areas typically occupied and traveled by pedestrians need to receive a great deal of attention in the design of a street. In many situations, the space allocated for automobiles can far exceed the space available for other aspects of public life on the road. While it may be possible for a person to walk or roll along a three-foot-wide sidewalk, it is not exceptionally comfortable, especially when passing or walking alongside another person. Six feet is considered a minimum outside of low-density residential areas, with 12, 15, or even 20+ feet of clear, unobstructed space providing comfortable travel in busier, mixed-use locations.

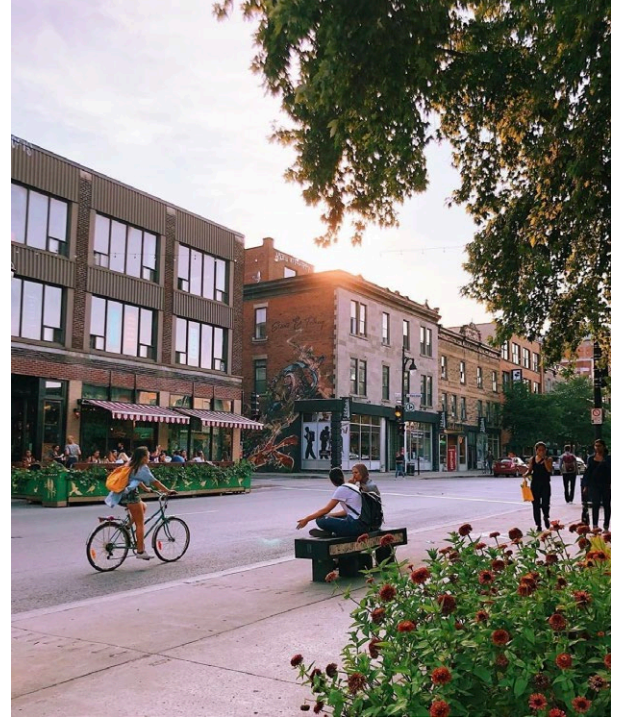
In addition to the sidewalk space needed for comfortable walking or rolling, an area for street trees, plantings, and other greenery are desirable for creating a pleasant corridor. In addition to adding beauty to the street, particular flora protects against noise and air pollution from passing vehicles. Trees primarily can provide a sturdy physical barrier and many other benefits, including shade, habitat, and beauty. Incorporating elements like trees into a street's design has also been found to reduce and stabilize traffic speed. Street trees create a more narrow feeling street and help reduce traffic speed by delineating a narrow field of vision for an automobile driver, providing an uncomfortable experience resulting in slower travel speeds. Other objects can serve similar purposes in this capacity, like occupied curbside parking, utility poles, street lights, or even bollards. However, few things are as pleasing or provide as many other benefits as street trees.

Street furniture and other amenities like streetlights, planters, store displays, and outdoor dining also contribute to the quality of a street and affect how all users behave. Amenities in the public realm invite people to use and occupy the space, activating it and creating vibrancy. Even during off-hours when few or no people might be around, the presence of street furniture and elements catering to people walking indicates that pedestrians use the space and that the corridor is a space to be shared. Similar to how the design of buildings can suggest appropriate speed or behavior to people driving, the form of sidewalks, street furniture, and other amenities can complement that message.

Design Of The Roadway

Not all streets need to devote most of their space to the automobile. Most activities along most city streets are non-automobile activities. Vehicle travel may be the most visible activity, but people carry out a range of activities within adjacent buildings requiring various services that the corridor must accommodate.

Even when focusing specifically on the accommodation of automobile travel, the design of a roadway can vary widely. A typical traffic lane can be nine to 12 feet or more. Wider travel lanes, whether intended or not, allow higher travel speeds. Arterial avenues measuring up to 130 feet from curb to curb are rarely hospitable to people not riding in vehicles. More appropriate for



streets like North Main Street, ten- to eleven-foot wide vehicular travel lanes provide more than enough space for cars and trucks while ensuring safer speeds.

Buildings + Development Along The Corridor

Setting buildings nearer to the roadway can help reduce the speed and unpleasantness of automobile traffic. This “streetwall” of buildings can help enclose the space and indicate to drivers that this area is intended for multiple users, not solely as a freeway. Pedestrians often feel more comfortable when they can occupy space nearer the buildings than the passing traffic. In addition to the relative unpredictability and unpleasantness of being near the path of giant, briskly moving metal boxes, being nearer to buildings can provide a sense of security. People tend to sit with their backs to buildings, as the structure limits the likelihood of anything approaching from behind and can potentially provide shelter if needed.

The quality and design of buildings along a corridor are essential. A blank, windowless wall can feel as unwelcoming and inhospitable as the roadway. Street-level windows into shops or businesses can allow passersby to see that other people are present, the space is used and cared for by others, and that where they are is intended for people to use. Even when storefronts are closed for the night, they can provide lighting and indicate that others use the space. Residences can offer similar services to the public realm by providing activity and signs of used and cared for areas. As social creatures, humans have a sense of comfort knowing that others are around and could assist us if needed. Being watched certainly can be uncomfortable too, but in general, occupying a public space that we feel is cared for and paid attention to by others can support a feeling of comfort.

Building height is an often discussed aspect of urban design, but often people are only paying attention to the first 20 vertical feet of a building’s facade. When upper stories step back from the street level facade, the relationship between the street’s width and building facade height is what people respond to subconsciously. The wider a street (building-to-building), the taller the buildings need to be in order to feel proportional. People have indicated preferences for building height-to-street width ratios that gravitate toward round numbers like 1:1, 1:2, or 2:1. Essentially, people enjoy corridors where buildings are one-half, equal, or twice as tall as the street is wide.

Big Idea #2: **CREATE A WELCOMING AND HOSPITABLE STREET**



Placemaking

A redesign of North Main Street may be needed to create a corridor which can meet peoples' expectations. Even with significant support, waiting for an overhaul of the streetscape or creation of new public space may require too much time when there are so many issues to be addressed.

When presented with the statement 'Prioritize first the redesign of the streetscape and the creation of new open spaces along North Main Street,' 82% of participants agreed or strongly agreed.

Action

Seek out ways for each neighborhood center to create a unique sense of place.

Timeframe

Mid term

Action

Ensure all public space is comfortable, sustainable, and healthy.

Timeframe

Near term

Action

Mitigate the impact of through-traffic.

Timeframe

Near term

Action

Require all housing development to address the street and be primarily accessed via front sidewalks, pathways, and transit.

Timeframe

Mid term

Action

Install location appropriate street and public realm lighting.

Timeframe

Near term



Paley Park, New York, NY



Vester Voldgade, Copenhagen



Frame Park in Waukesha, WI



Ballfields Cafe, New York



Biergarten Augustiner Keller Munich

The modest sidewalk can easily be overlooked when considering a place. Often taken for granted, the quality of sidewalks can have a major impact on how people perceive, use, and enjoy a space. Sidewalks are primarily functional and intended to provide a clean, even, comfortable surface for people to traverse, but the details of their design can range from utilitarian to luxurious. Sidewalk widths in many places in America are insufficient for even two people to walk side by side. In addition, maintenance of sidewalks is often deferred to a point where they can be inconvenient or dangerous, especially for people using wheelchairs, walkers, or even canes.

Seating

Seating is a simple but very effective way to improve an outdoor space and attract people. Providing people with a place to sit—whether it is a fixed bench, movable chair, or even a ledge of the right height—can let people know the space is for them and meant to be enjoyed.

Playgrounds

Playgrounds and other public spaces designed for children's play are valuable to communities in a number of ways. In addition to their core function of providing safe, enjoyable play space for children, they can help activate public space and encourage social interaction for both children and their parents/caregivers. When considering the qualities and functions playgrounds and public play space should address, the Center for Outreach, Research & Education have identified five central aspects of a child's development to address: physical, social-emotional, sensory, cognitive, and communication. By recognizing and developing play space around inclusive characteristics, these most valuable of public spaces can enrich and enhance the lives of as wide of a range of children and their parents/caregivers as possible.

Community Gardens

Community gardens can be a beautiful and functional way to bring neighbors together, teach people about plants and nature or to simply utilize unused space. Providing planting boxes or raised beds is often inexpensive and can easily be removed if needs for the space change. The reasons and types of plants grown can range from flowers to admire and smell to herbs, fruits and vegetables to eat or sell.

Cafés, Newsstands

Enhancing public space with convenient places to purchase a snack or refreshment can attract people to use the space and extend the amount of time people are able to spend there. Cafes and newsstands are also convenient places to locate restrooms and if operated by a business they can provide additional services like monitoring or maintaining the site. These can be convenient places along people's morning commute to grab a coffee or newspaper or they can be space for people to spend a Sunday afternoon with their community.

Biergartens

Outdoor spaces to enjoy the company of others along with a beverage have been traditional parts of towns and cities in some parts of the world for generations. Leveraging public green space to provide an attractive and communal place for people to gather outside is often quite popular. Some biergartens can justify their own large dedicated grounds with kitchen, games and lighting, where smaller operations are popular but limit their footprint to a modest area and help support a concessions stand.

Fountains

Fountains are one way to embellish a space that can not only be beautiful to look at, but can provide an enjoyable audible component, especially in busy or urban areas. The sound of water can pleasantly drown out the noise of traffic, and allow a temporary escape from the hustle and bustle of a city. They can be especially dramatic when lit at night.



Activate Public Spaces

Much of public life can happen on sidewalks, in front of buildings, and generally along the street, but some activities are better suited to larger, flexible spaces which are set aside to serve as dedicated civic space. Healthy places need parks and plazas for people to get together for markets, strolls, demonstrations, or any number of other civic activities. While North Main Street has an abundance of undeveloped green space in the North Burial Ground, dedicated, flexible spaces along the corridor are limited. Investing in or rehabilitating public spaces will attract people to come to the corridor and encourage them to spend more time in the area.



Consolidate Parking Away from Public View

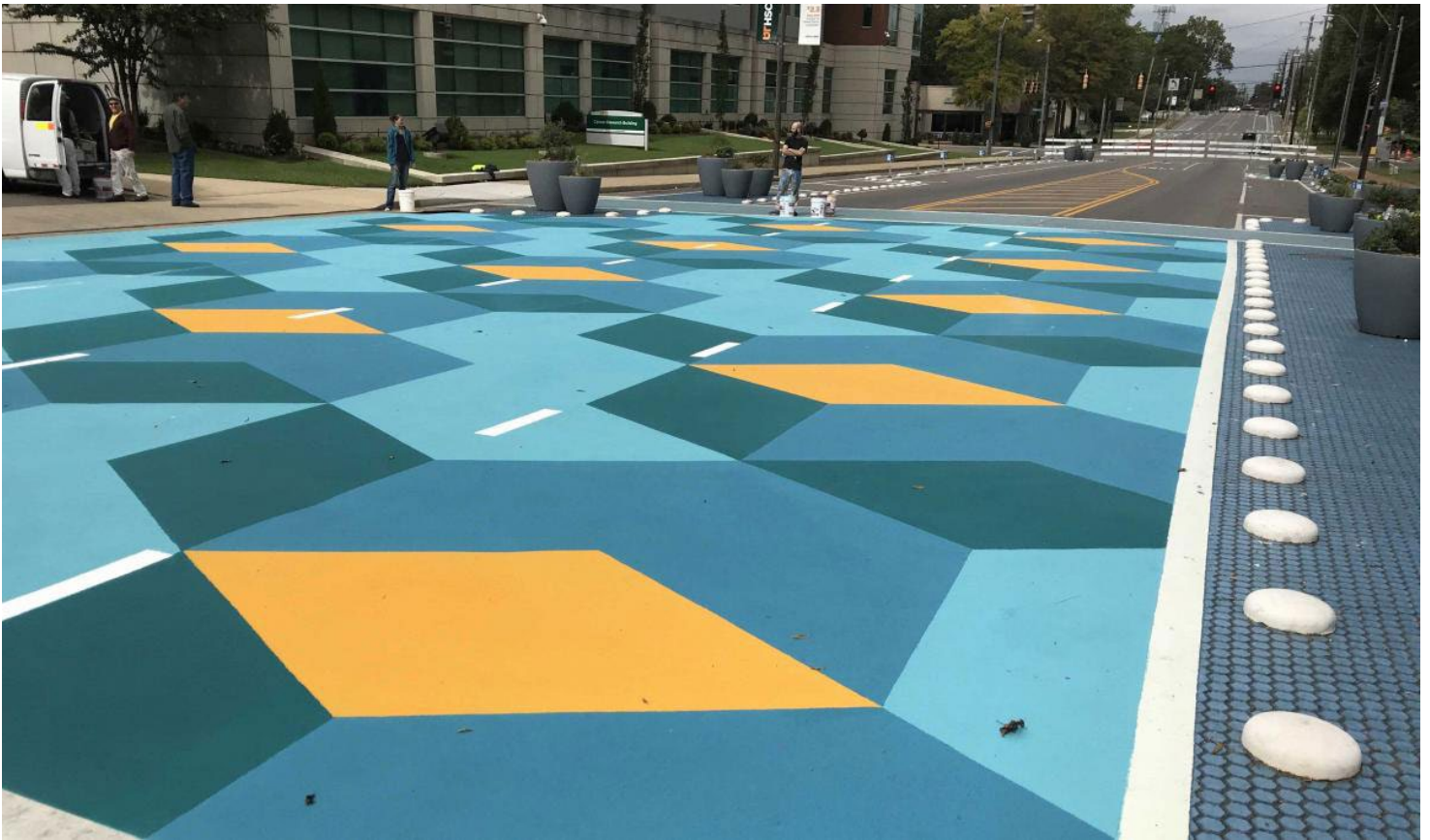
Along North Main Street, there is an abundance of parking located in front yards or near property lines. The corridor should work to consolidate parking into lots behind buildings where it can be accessed by a single shared driveway. Reducing the number of curb-cuts can help minimize conflicts between people pulling in or out of a driveway and people biking or walking by. Parking lots do not contribute to the character of an area and the land used for parking lots could be better used. The amount of land along North Main Street used for surface parking is land that is not being used to add housing to the neighborhoods which desperately need it.

Start Now, Get Tactical

There are any number of projects and activities that can help activate areas of the corridor and lay the groundwork for next steps and larger undertakings. Many cities have realized the power well placed paint can have to highlight crossings, bike lanes, neckdowns, or any kind of temporary tests for new ideas. Working with property owners to clean up or activate an unused site can have a significant impact on the surrounding areas.

North Main Street has several successful, beloved local businesses that have worked out a winning strategy for the corridor. The community and the City need to work with potential new businesses to determine what it will take to get the next great business up and running and work to support these start-ups.

While many people do feel that the corridor lacks a sense of ownership, there are several organized groups, in addition to the institutions that are active and want to help build up North Main Street. The pandemic has had a significant impact on being able to meet, but as we emerge towards a new normal, it will be essential for residents, property owners, business owners, and any one else who cares about the corridor to reorganize and get back to the work of rebuilding North Main Street.



Temporary intersection installation in the Memphis Medical District

Action

Implement short term projects that will activate locations along the corridor

Timeframe

Near term

Action

Seek out and incubate new businesses.

Timeframe

Near term

Action

Create or reconvene local neighborhood groups interested in North Main Street's success.

Timeframe

Near term

Big Idea #3: **BUILD HOUSING THAT IS ATTAINABLE TO PEOPLE OF ALL INCOME LEVELS**



Remove Housing Production Barriers

The demand for housing in Providence is an acute problem which needs to be addressed and one in which the North Main Street corridor may present an opportunity. Additional housing—especially that which can meet a range of income needs—is especially agreeable and appropriate along the corridor.

There is significant demand for housing all across Providence. A considerable amount of housing development can occur on the land around North Main Street, especially sites to the west between North Main and the Moshassuck River. Adding housing to meet the growing demand is a simple, straightforward way to bring people to the corridor.

When presented with the statement ‘The North Main Street corridor is an opportunity to locate affordable and/or supportive housing for Providence residents,’ 88% of participants agreed or strongly agreed.

Action

Add housing in highly walkable, well serviced areas—especially in neighborhood centers along North Main Street.

Timeframe

Mid term

Action

Ensure neighborhood centers maintain a healthy balance of residential and commercial uses.

Timeframe

Mid term

Action

Provide financial incentives and density bonuses to attract needed housing types such as affordable housing.

Timeframe

Near term

Allow Additional Density Near Transit Stations

With demand for housing relatively severe across the City, building housing anywhere might bring some benefits to residents. Building housing in a sustainable, efficient way and allowing for a high quality of life should be baseline standards for Providence and the North Main Street corridor. Rather than building far from the places people want to be or away from transit and services, development of housing along North Main Street—with some coordination and consideration—can bring several benefits. People will be able to live more sustainably, access more of the services and amenities they enjoy, and contribute to the community in which they are a part.

POTENTIAL FOR NATURALLY OCCURRING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Increasing allowances for and encouraging creation of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and allowing flexibility in the maximum number of units permitted on a lot in residential zoning districts could increase density and housing supply. This could allow or encourage smaller, and therefore more affordable units. Under current zoning regulations, a 2,000 square foot building in the R-2 District is only allowed two units; they could provide two 1,000-square foot units or one 600-square foot unit and one 1,400-square foot unit. 1,400 square feet could accommodate 3-4 bedrooms or more but might cost between \$3,500 - \$4,900 per month. The 1,000-square foot units would rent for between \$2,500 - \$3,500 per month and the 600-square foot unit for between \$1,500 - \$2,000.

The trade off this raises is balancing larger units—likely with more bedrooms—against more affordable units. Affordable units, larger units, and perhaps especially larger, affordable units are all needed in the area.

One issue which would need to be considered would be minimum unit size. While existing zoning regulations do not limit the size of residential units—either maximums or minimums—micro units still do not appear to be attractive to developers. Even so, setting a minimum residential unit size—maybe around 400 or 500 square feet—could be one way to protect against excessive numbers of units in what are currently 1-, 2-, and 3-unit neighborhoods.

Overhaul ADU Regulations

Expanded allowance of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) presents a significant opportunity to allow development of new housing throughout the City. The addition of individual ADUs have a minimal impact on the physical character of neighborhoods but can still add density—just in a highly granular way. Having a unit which homeowners are able to rent out can provide a new source of income which may help residents to afford increasing housing costs, reinvest in their property, and create new affordable units.

Currently, Accessory Dwelling Units may only be located within primary structures and must be occupied by people older than 62, with disabilities, and related to the property owner. These tight restrictions have resulted in a limited number of these units being created.

Action

Remove familial + age restrictions from ADU regulations.

Timeframe

Near term

Action

Improve building form standards

Timeframe

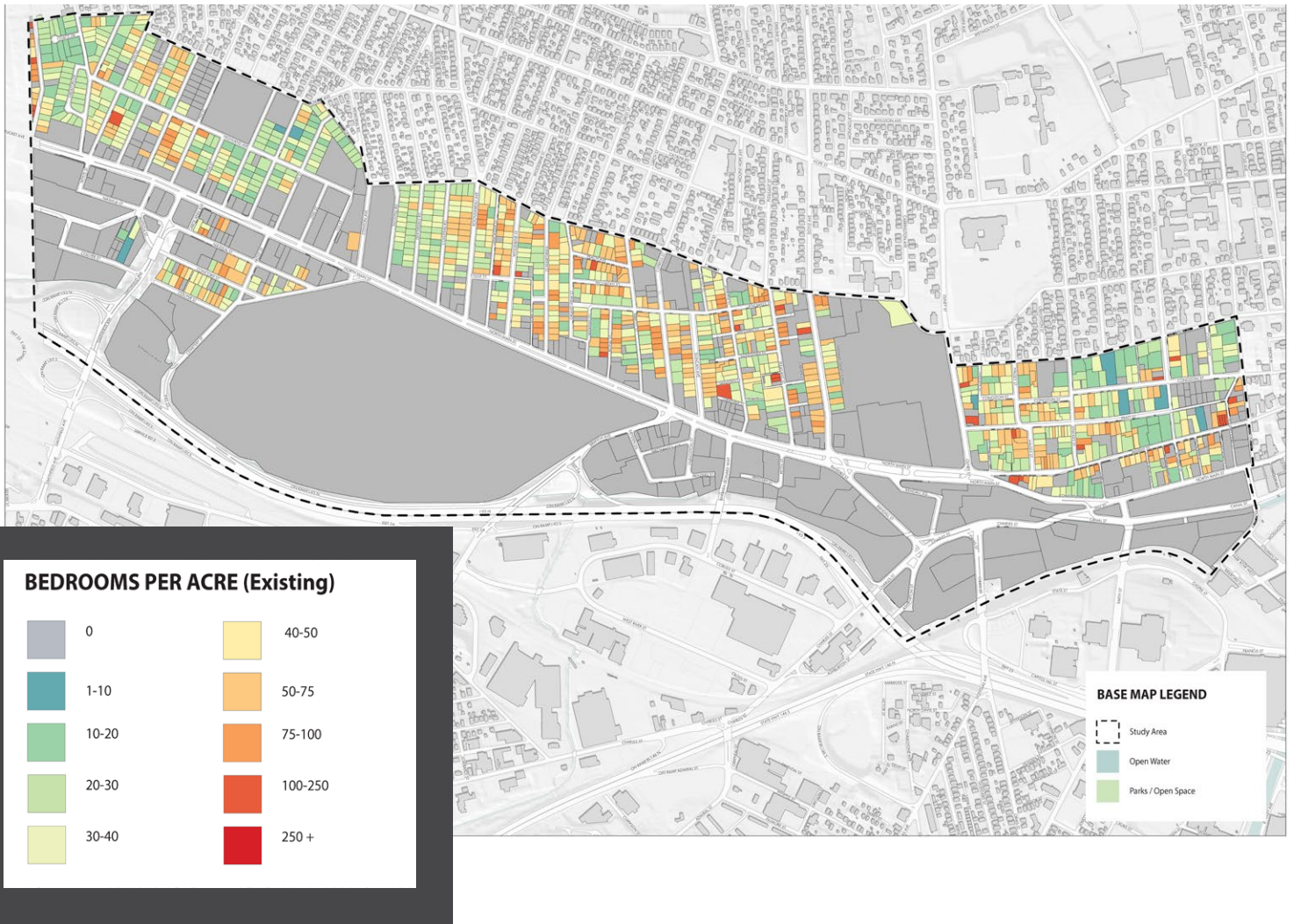
Near term

Action

Establish form standards that have a clear relationship between primary building and additional dwelling unit.

Timeframe

Near term



Plan for the Future

Throughout the corridor, a significant number of properties lie undeveloped or underdeveloped. Encouraging development will not only bring new residents, businesses, jobs, and activity, but additional tax revenue for the City. Empty lots or surface parking lots provide little revenue to the City compared to office buildings and apartments. As property owners invest in their properties, new revenue taken in by the City should be directed back into the neighborhood to install or maintain things like street lights, landscaping, sidewalks, pedestrian safety improvements, transit improvements, bike lanes, or public space.

Getting involved and staying active in the processes where decisions are made is essential to getting the help North Main Street needs. The process can often be long or hard to follow, but working with public officials and the offices and agencies they represent is how long term improvement happens. Work with elected officials, hold community meetings, and rally around the issues your community feels are important.

Action

Grow the City's tax base by encouraging development

Timeframe

Long term

Action

Work with City and State offices and agencies

Timeframe

Near term

Big Idea #4: DEVELOP COMPLETE NEIGHBORHOODS WITH CLEAR CENTERS



Foster Community

Locating more intense development and services in and around neighborhood centers will be necessary for the success of any transit investments. People support this strategy of focusing development and fostering clear concentrated centers around which people, businesses and services can cluster.

When presented with the statement ‘Encourage more intense development near neighborhood centers with well-served transit.’ 94% of participants agreed or strongly agreed.

Action

Develop neighborhood centers along North Main Street with a range of businesses, services, and entertainment to attract people throughout the entire day.

Timeframe

Long term

Action

Seek out and encourage businesses and services to cluster in and near neighborhood centers along North Main Street.

Timeframe

Near term

“I believe it is best to make North Main Street serve the adjacent neighborhoods as the commercial parallel to the non-commercial Blackstone Blvd.”





Inviting Storefronts and Street-facing Private Space

Buildings' frontages are a critical component of our public space, even though in many cases they are privately owned. The City can regulate some aspects like the amount of glass or the number and spacing of windows and doors, but ultimately caring for most building frontages is the domain of the property or business owner. A mix of enforcement and incentivizing maintenance and reinvestment can result in storefronts which are inviting, attractive, and functional.

15 - MINUTE CITY

Any one day in the average person's life requires travel to and from a number of different locations. Beginning the day at home, a person may need to take their child to school on the way to work. On this day maybe they leave work a bit early for a doctor's appointment after which they pick up a few items for dinner before picking up their child from school and returning home. Depending on the kind of neighborhood this person lives in, the travel time alone could range from 20 or 30 minutes, to well over two hours. While destinations and individuals' needs vary, being able to get to where one is going is an essential part of people's lives. The 15-Minute City is a concept referring to the ability of people to access the places they need- and many of the places they want- within 15 minutes of their home.

In response to longer and longer hours many people are spending behind the wheel on a daily basis, many are starting to seek out places where they are able to satisfy their needs all within their neighborhood and by foot. As our most basic means of travel, designing our built environment to be accommodating and accessible to people walking can provide a range of benefits. Even with pedestrians at the center of our transportation system, there will always be room and need for other modes, ranging from bicycles, to automobiles, to buses, and trains. The key is to ensure our neighborhoods and the places we frequent are built at the scale of the human, not the automobile.

Encouraging the development of neighborhoods and cities which can meet residents' needs within a 15 minute walk of their home can result in a number of positive outcomes. First, many people have found that their daily lives are more enjoyable, more productive, and more affordable when they live in these kinds of communities. They know more people in their neighborhood, their children can be more independent, travel times are shorter, and ownership of a vehicle is more of a luxury than necessity.

When car ownership is not a necessity for getting to work or meeting daily needs, that cost can be removed from one's budget if needed, reducing household transportation costs (the second highest household expense after housing).

Additionally, less space devoted to parking means there is more space for everything else a community might want, like housing or parks. This can easily translate into more and different types of housing, accommodating people at different price points or with different lifestyles.

An efficient one-bedroom apartment may be exactly what a young couple needs if they plan to be out and about often. A comfortable two-bedroom is exactly what a pair of empty-nesters would like to downsize to now that their kids have settled down in the next town over. High quality, reasonably priced, convenient housing is at the core of a diverse and equitable community. People at all stages of life and of all incomes should be able to afford and meet their daily needs within a 15-minute city.

The kind of lifestyle which is possible in a 15-minute city is also likely a healthy one. Walking is an inherently accessible activity which is good exercise without being too strenuous. By making this kind of activity part of our daily routine- or simply an easy option when one has time- fitting physical activity into one's daily life becomes the default rather than a chore. Additionally, when people are out and about walking through their neighborhood, they begin to recognize people and notice the rhythm and routine of the community. People get to know their neighbors and local store owners or workers. Connections to others and to the community are necessary parts of our lives. The "small-town" community we can foster in 15-minute cities is as important for our health as the daily walk or exercise we can get.

Lastly, the kind of places closest to the idealized 15-minute city are also inherently environmentally sustainable. Walking is significantly more efficient and less polluting than automobiles. Providing utilities and services to neighborhoods designed at the human scale rather than for automobiles is much more efficient. The land used to accommodate the same number of people as suburban sprawl is far less for walkable communities, allowing more space locally for open space and amenities as well as saving

rural and wild lands around the city from expanding development.

The physical layout of a 15-minute city can vary widely depending on many factors like environment, topography, infrastructure, culture, and economics.

Generally, people walk about $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile in

five minutes or can go about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile in 15 minutes.

A circle with a radius of $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile has an area of just over 1,000 acres.

With eight units per acre and 2.6 residents per housing unit, the conceptual 15-minute city could accommodate at least 20,000 residents.



Interestingly, the areas within the Mt. Hope and Summit (Hope) neighborhoods east of North Main Street have densities close to those prescribed by the 15-minute city above. What we heard from the community largely indicates that the North Main Street corridor lacks the non-resident components of the 15-minute city, especially the recreation and entertainment places. Accessible outdoor space is sparse, restaurant options are minimal, and music, performance, or other social venues are limited.

Big Idea #5: GIVE PEOPLE REASONS TO COME AND TO STAY



Compelling Places

The large areas of Randall Park and the North Burial Ground have potential to contribute significantly to the corridor.

People already love these spaces but feel making them more accessible and adding new uses—especially to Randall Park—will enhance the corridor greatly.

When presented with the statement ‘Invest in and activate the North Burial Ground and Randall Park as welcoming public green spaces for all,’ 92% of participants agreed or strongly agreed.

GREENWAY FRAMEWORK DIAGRAM

Multi-use Path Enhanced Street Landscape Civic Space



Make North Main Street a Great Street

Main Streets are attractive and desirable because they serve a variety of people's needs in a consolidated convenient location. Not every person needs every store or service every day, but by consolidating and balancing the larger community's needs, main streets can thrive and support the people who need them. North Main Street has become unbalanced and focuses on serving one group—drivers—often at the expense of several others. The lack of non-drivers, buildings, and businesses along the street serve as evidence that as a main street, North Main Street falls short.

Action

Construct and maintain high quality public spaces people will seek out and want to linger.

Timeframe

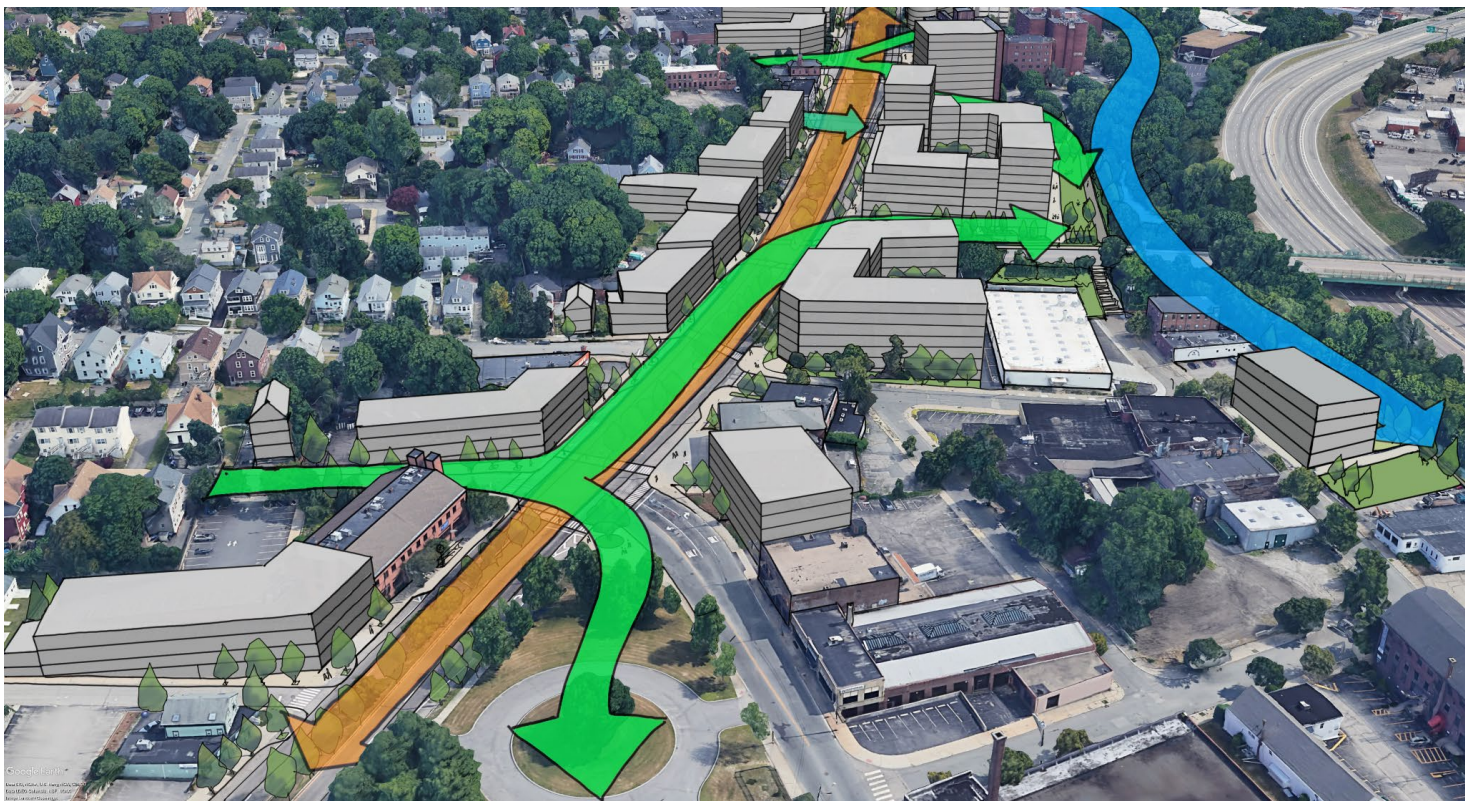
Mid term

Action

Design public spaces to be human scaled, accessible, and comfortable for all.

Timeframe

Near term



Attract People

Large, well maintained sidewalks are a minimum requirement for drawing people to an area. Commercial districts regularly have sidewalks 10 to 15 feet wide or more. When considering a street's overall design, the buildings, street width, and sidewalks should all be proportional.

Sidewalks should be more than just flat, wide spaces between a roadway and the buildings. Street trees should be planted regularly to provide shade, add some greenery, and to help separate the sidewalk from the roadway. Planters or planting strips can function in largely the same way but might include other plants or flowers and increase permeability for rain water.

Action

Improve sidewalks and the streetscape

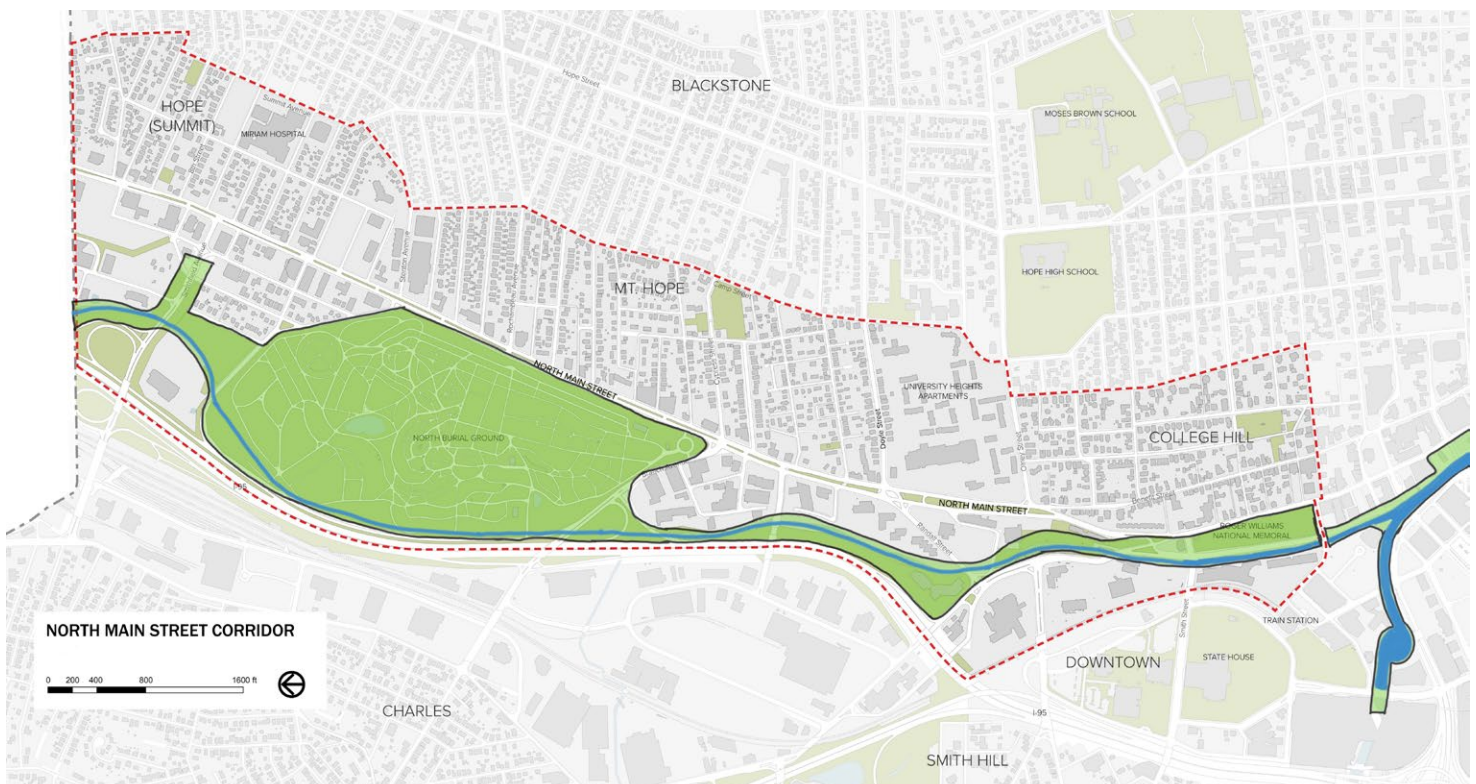
Timeframe

Mid term

Create a Corridor-Long Greenway Along The Moshassuck River

A corridor-long greenway following the general path of the Moshassuck River should be incorporated into development plans, providing a unique amenity. The greenway should serve as a connection to and through the corridor and as an attraction for both people and development. It will be vital to ensure new development has active uses fronting on this greenway. Features including residential entries, unique retail or restaurant locations will help activate the space and provide amenities for those using the path.

EXISTING GREEN CORRIDOR









Chapter 3

A VISION FOR TOMORROW

Neighborhood centers can embrace and share fundamental characteristics—while maintaining unique identities. Well planned and integrated rapid transit, active storefronts with services and businesses, and high-quality housing should play a role in all functional neighborhood centers—but the amount and character of these and other components will vary from center to center.

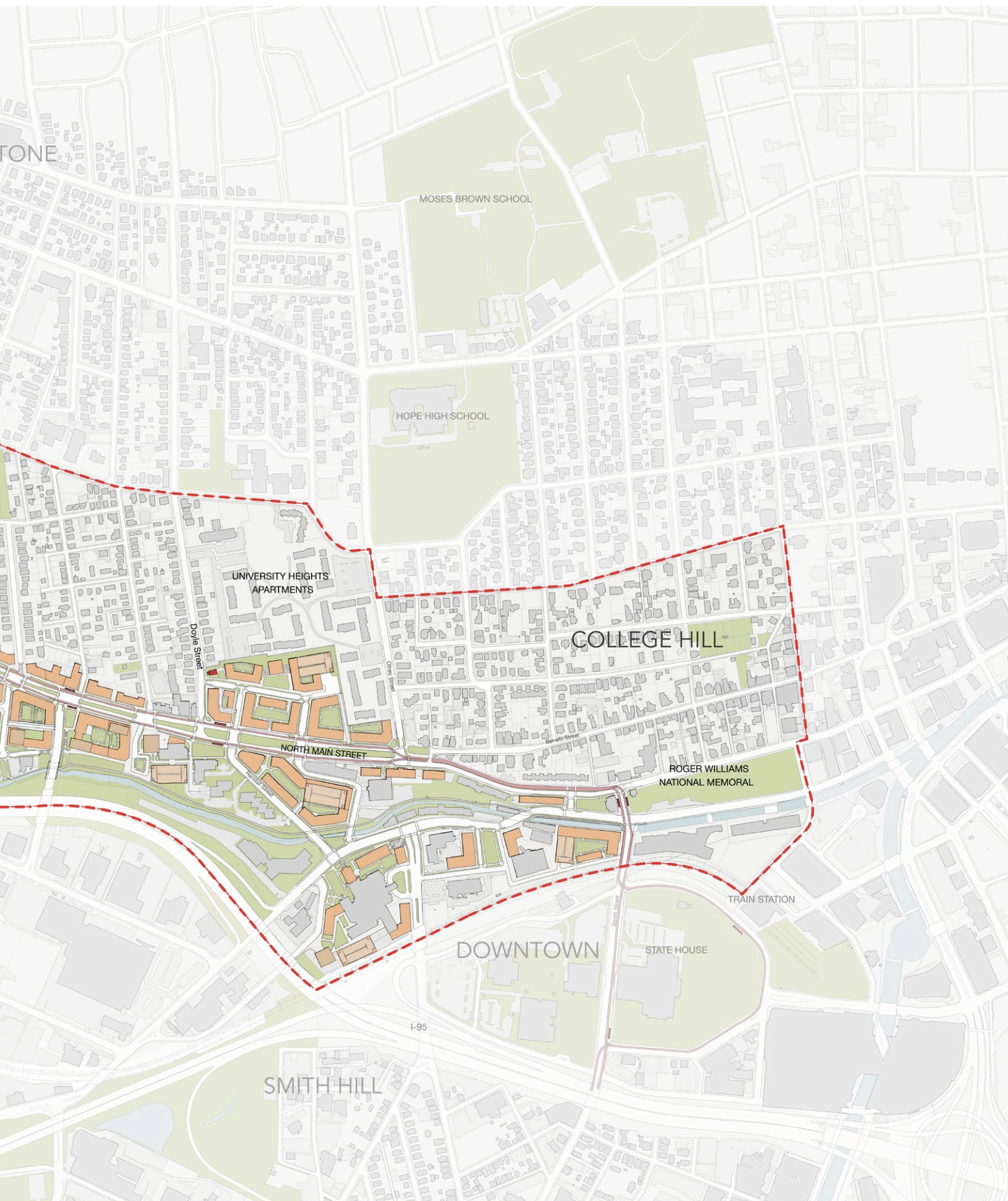
Near Randall Street, the retail businesses may mix regional and local offerings, whereas Frost Street may have an abundance of unique local stores. There may be limited office space near Rochambeau Avenue, and Smithfield Avenue may draw the bulk of new medical and professional development. Each neighborhood should focus on improving the corridor appropriately for its location.

The following studies illustrate the physical potential for each neighborhood center along North Main Street. These conceptual designs convey how North Main can change to help to accomplish the community's priorities.



Illustrative Site Plan





ROGER WILLIAMS NATIONAL MEMORIAL AREA



This area represents an opportunity to reestablish the character of the area surrounding the Roger Williams National Memorial. As North Main Street extends out from Providence's historical original core the character of the route is compromised in several fixable ways. The open green space of Roger Williams National Memorial has the potential to be an iconic space in the City. As it relates to this study, this area is reconsidered to be a starting point for a reimagined North Main Street corridor and the reevaluated natural asset of the Moshassuck River.



Existing view at Mill Street Intersection.

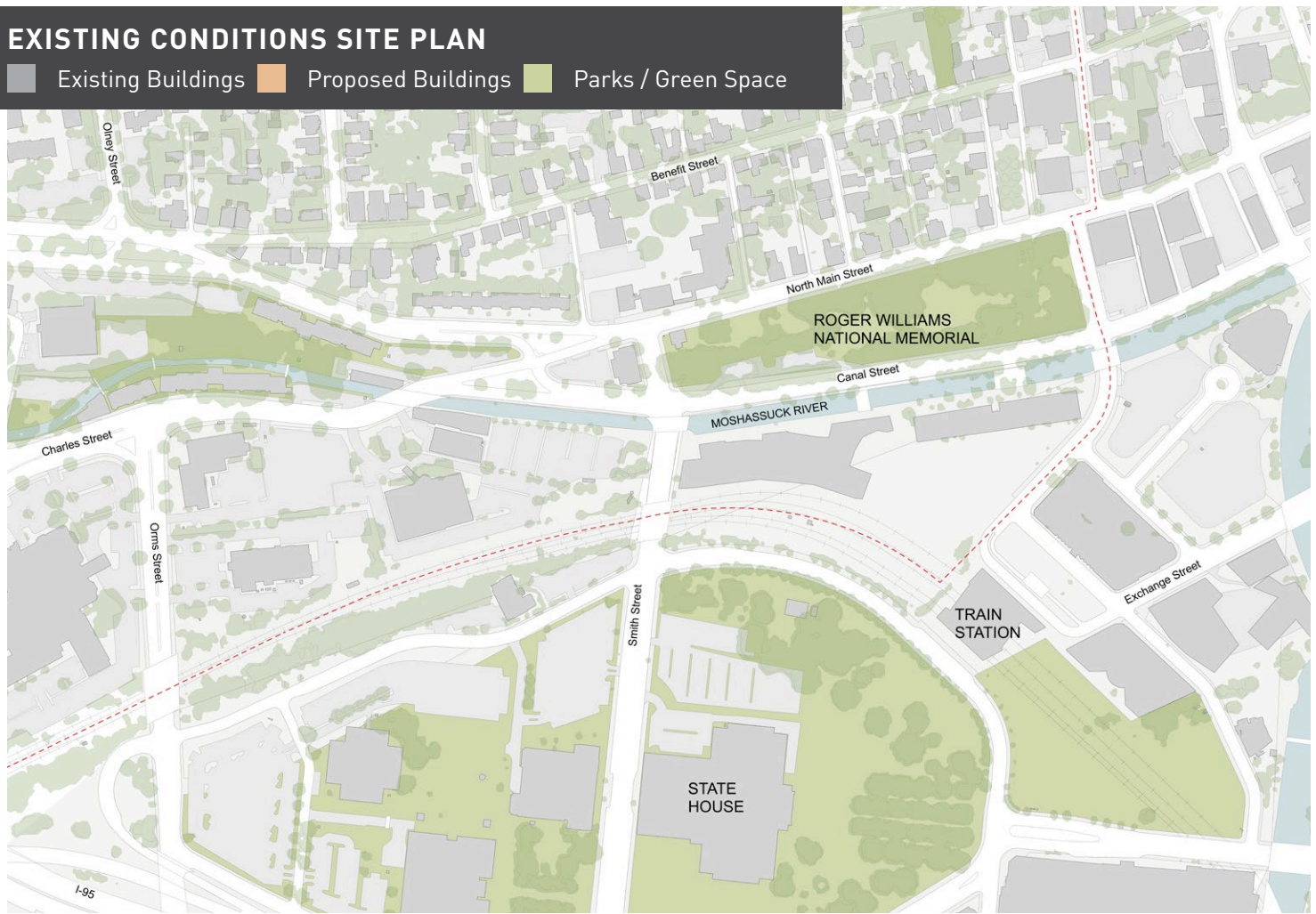


Rendering of the Potential Improvement.

Infill building at the existing parking lot. Landmark for the trailhead of the Greenway. New park created from excess street right of way. The reclaimed vehicle travel lanes become a new public park.

EXISTING CONDITIONS SITE PLAN

Existing Buildings Proposed Buildings Parks / Green Space



Develop A Unique Identity and Character Worthy of the National Monument

The area around Smith Street and North Main Street is a vital gateway for those traveling from Downtown Providence, College Hill, and Fox Point to points north, especially in or near the North Main Street corridor. A simplified street network will allow for additional improvements intended to create a pleasant enjoyable space people will want to visit. Existing surface parking, especially west of the Moshassuck River, should be consolidated to free land for uses that will contribute to the area.

New infill development sensitive to the historic physical context will transform the space to be complementary to the National Monument. Locating a new central building aligned with the green space would address the intersection and further establish the space as a local gateway and a nationally important location.

Redesign the Intersection to be Clear and Manageable For All Users

The street network in this location should be reworked to be simpler and easier to navigate for users of all modes of transport. Attention should be given to ensure pedestrians can travel around and through the area safely and comfortably. Safe manageable cycle infrastructure should be located along North Main Street and integrated into the larger bicycle network envisioned in the Great Streets Master Plan. A simplified intersection should anticipate transit improvements and plan for people to access and disperse from any stops or stations easily.

Return Two-Way Traffic to North Main Street

While the tightly developed historic fabric and topography are challenges, options for



converting currently one-way sections of North Main Street and Canal Street into two-way streets should be explored. Encouraging alternative modes of transportation as well as identifying and improving alternative routes for driving to the Downtown can help reduce the traffic attempting to navigate this complex area. This kind of conversion would return the area's circulation back to its historic walkable pattern and create a more pleasant and usable environment for pedestrians.

More Elegantly Resolve the Intersection of Benefit Street With North Main Street

The area where Benefit Street meets North Main Street should be reimagined as a gateway and landing spot for the College Hill Neighborhood. A redesigned intersection can better balance the needs of people walking and biking with those of people driving. The redesigned street network needs to create a

practical way for people using Benefit Street or Olney Street to cross North Main Street or head north or south, regardless of their mode of transportation. Dedicating land between Olney Street and Burrs Lane to a new civic space would anchor and enhance this end of historic Benefit Street. The new public space will provide nearby residences with separation from North Main Street traffic while also attracting people and investment to this tricky part of the corridor.

NORTH MAIN STREET @ DOYLE AVENUE



The existing landscape in the vicinity of North Main Street at Randall Street and Doyle Avenue is a particularly hostile area for pedestrians. The street and intersection design favor high speed automobile traffic at the expense of other modes of transport. Almost all of the buildings are set far from the street and are surrounded by surface parking. The area does have significant potential new development while still accommodating existing uses and users. However, with a significant increase in density in this area, it becomes that much more important that public space and amenities are provided and well designed.



Existing view of North Main at University Market Place

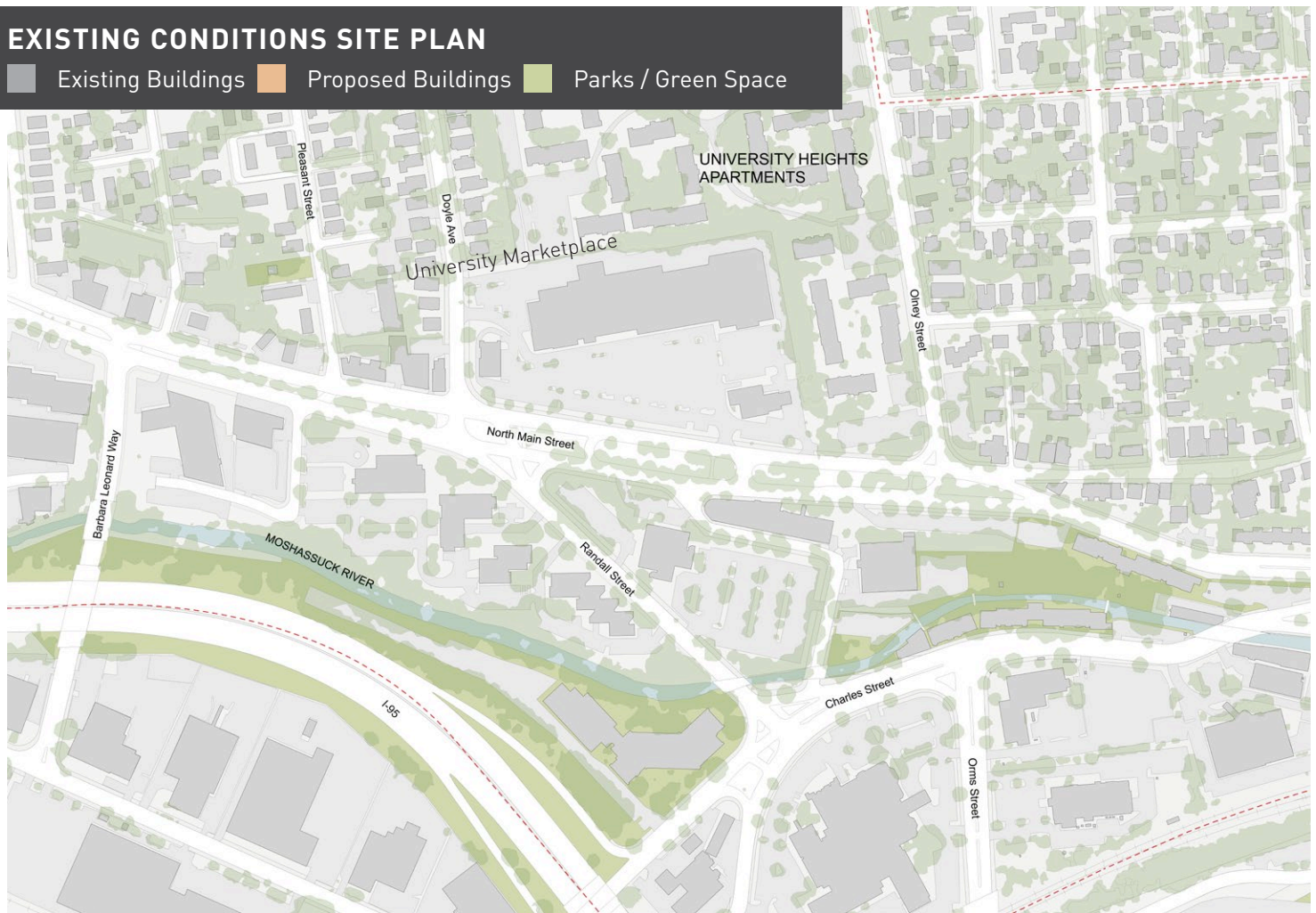


Rendering of the Potential Improvement.

Protected bike path on linear park. Mixed-use development lining shared parking garage and grocery store.

EXISTING CONDITIONS SITE PLAN

Existing Buildings Proposed Buildings Parks / Green Space



Have Buildings Address the Street

Development along the corridor needs to be more hospitable to people walking and biking. Buildings that address the street and street design which is comfortable for all users are minimum requirements for vibrant neighborhood centers. Ensure that build-to lines, minimum height requirements, and other standards already in effect in some areas of the corridor, are implemented in all neighborhood centers.

Retrofit University Market Place

The long-term retrofitting of University Market Place should result in a series of mixed-use city blocks that better reflect the community's goals. This kind of development can also produce more long-term value for the landowner and new tax revenue for the City. Special attention should be paid to the surrounding context and transitioning the scale of new buildings on the University Market Place site to fit with the existing scale of Doyle Avenue. Successful redevelopment of University Market Place will

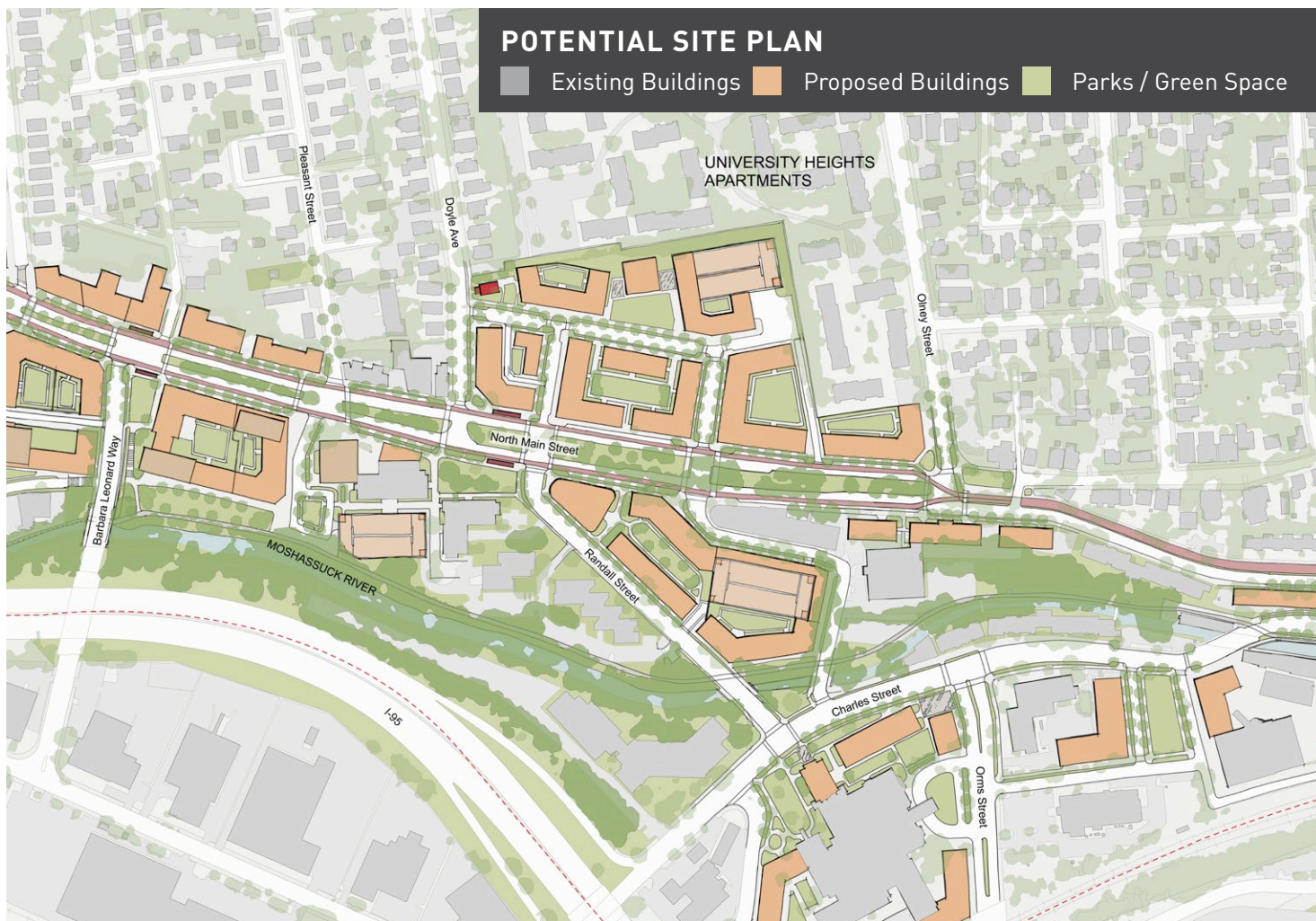
require a combination of phasing and value creation. The best tactic is to allow much of the existing commercial uses to continue to function even as redevelopment begins.

Consolidate the Surface Parking

Construction of a new parking structure will allow the large amount of land now dedicated to surface parking to be developed into more productive uses for the neighborhood. Because no parking will be removed before new parking is made available, little disruption to existing businesses should result. Development of housing should be included around or above the parking structure and space for a relocated grocery store on the ground floor would also add to the area and open additional opportunities.

New Public Amenities

The next phase of the redevelopment of University Market Place should include development of a new neighborhood scale park. This will provide new amenities for existing residents in the area as well as new residents of



the redeveloped center. This new public space would be internal to a new block structure and create a focal point and attraction for new retail and residential development.

Bring the People

This area should become the focus of a transit oriented neighborhood center, with significant residential density, neighborhood and regional businesses and services, and public spaces and amenities suitable for such a center. Attracting the necessary residential density to create a self-sustaining neighborhood center will require effort at first, but will eventually attract people and businesses without assistance. Working closely with the community will be necessary to explore appropriate locations for taller buildings on this side of the corridor. Due to the initial challenge of retrofitting this type of auto-oriented shopping mall, increased density will be necessary to catalyze development and create something which will contribute more significantly to this area of North Main Street.

Infill Gaps in Mixed-Use or Non-Human Scale Development

Directly to the south of University Market Place, at the corner of North Main Street and Olney Street, new development can replace what is currently surface parking with a mixed use building. The existing parking would be incorporated into a new parking within a redeveloped University Market Place and the new building would add housing as well as neighborhood services. By locating the building near the sidewalk and addressing the neighborhood through its design and scale, the site can contribute to a more comfortable environment.

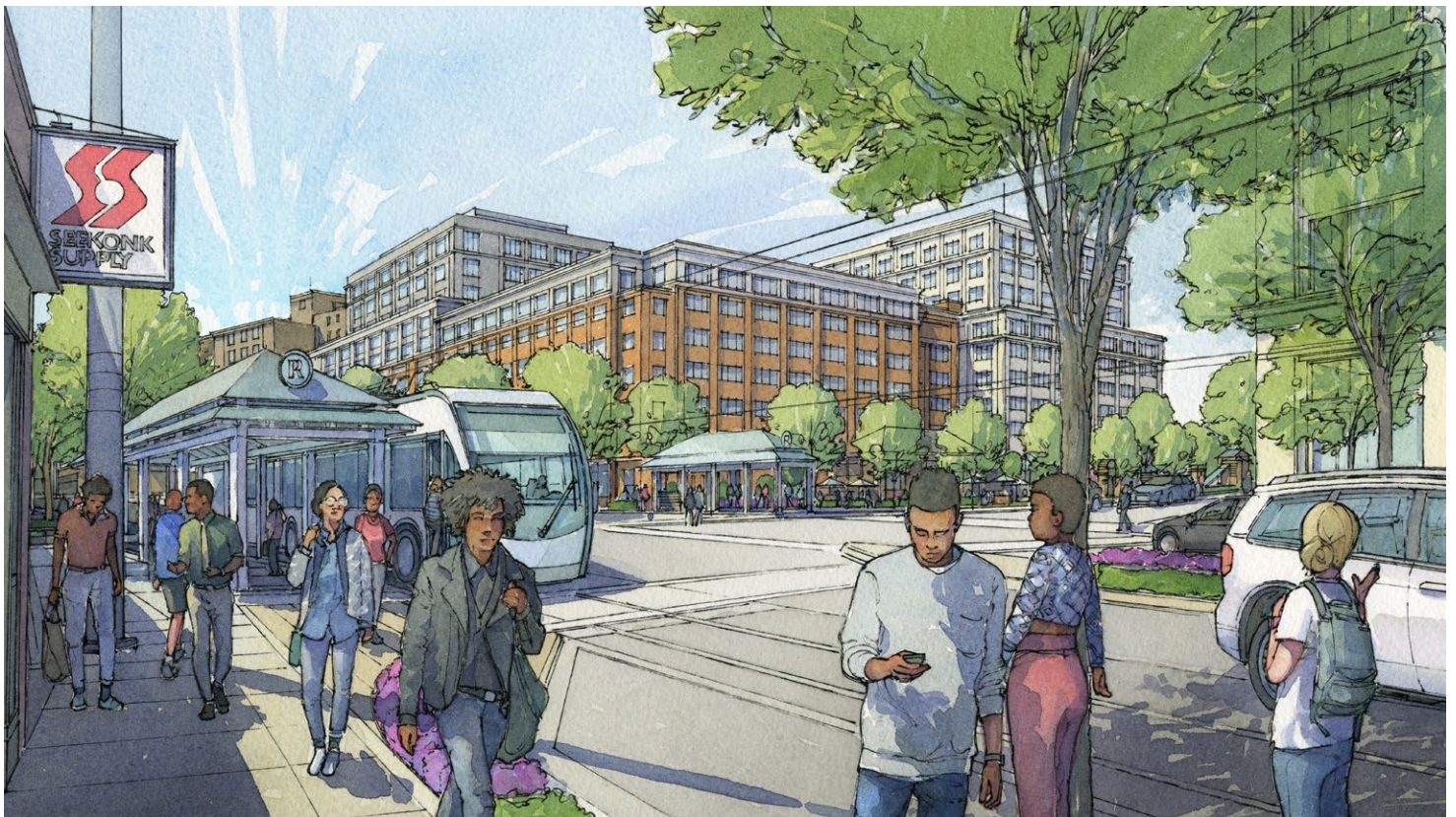
NORTH MAIN STREET @ BRANCH AVE & BARBARA LEONARD WAY



The Moshassuck River comes closest to North Main Street near Barbara Leonard Way. While this stretch of North Main Street has significant potential to develop into a more vibrant neighborhood center even without the added benefit of the Moshassuck River, leveraging this local asset can produce something special and truly unique.



Existing view of North Main north of Charlesgate Complex at Barbara Leonard Way



Rendering of the Potential Improvement. Higher density housing abutting a new neighborhood park. Shopfront and wide sidewalks for pedestrians and public life. Shopfront and wide sidewalks for pedestrians and public life. New housing can coexist with existing businesses.

EXISTING CONDITIONS SITE PLAN

Existing Buildings Proposed Buildings Parks / Green Space



Allow Additional Height

Buildings taller than four stories—and some taller than seven stories—are appropriate in this area. The intensity will support the improved transit and additional taller buildings can compliment or improve the existing towers of the Charlesgate complex.

New development of this kind should include structured parking which would consolidate the existing surface parking and allow that land to become part of the proposed Moshassuck River Greenway. In addition to adding density to support improved transit and expanding green space, new high-rise buildings can help improve the existing skyline of the Charlesgate complex.

Mitigate the Design of the Charlesgate Complex

The design of the Charlesgate complex does not relate to its surroundings—either in the scale of the buildings or in the way the buildings address their surroundings. While the large buildings do consolidate development to a smaller area,

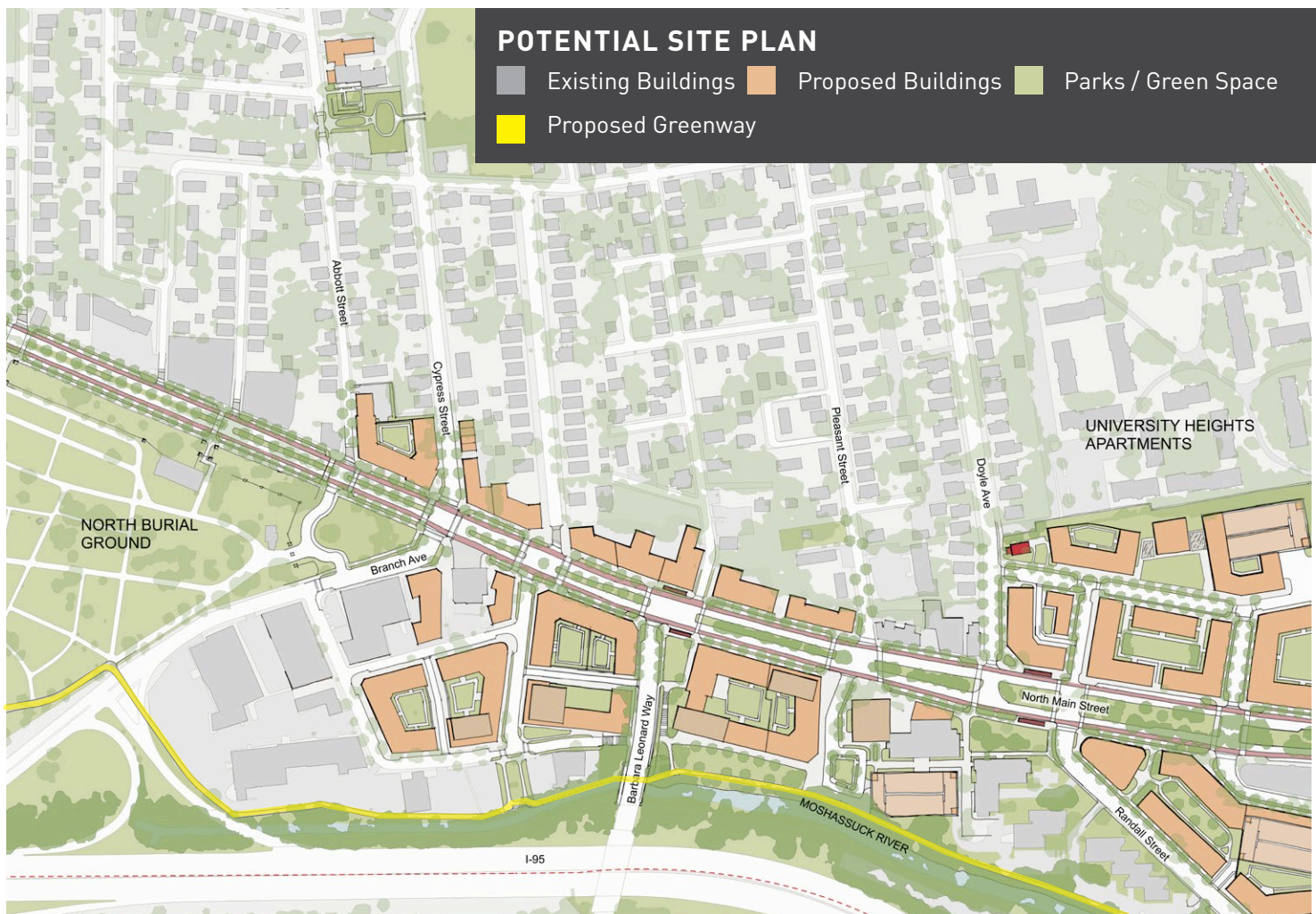
much of the unbuilt land has been paved over to accommodate surface parking, or landscaped with low functioning lawn space. Development needs to address its surroundings, especially greenspace and streets, to help activate the area and create a cohesive neighborhood.

Protect View Corridors to the Rhode Island State Capitol Building

Views to the State Capitol building are a feature enjoyed by both residents and visitors to the area. Preservation of these view corridors should be considered for all buildings south of the North Burial Ground. New tall buildings should be clustered with the existing Charlesgate towers and their design should be sensitive to the immediate environment as well as their regional one.

Develop an Urban Greenway Along the Moshassuck River

A natural feature in an urban area, like the Moshassuck River, can be a valuable asset. Natural space like this should be protected



but also leveraged to enhance the surrounding areas. Preserved green space and wild habitats can coexist with a well integrated mixed-use public pathway. Investing in such a project would expand the accessible open space and create additional connections through and to the corridor.

Create Many Connections Between North Main Street and the Proposed Moshassuck River Greenway

The City should work with the various landowners adjacent to and near the Moshassuck River to create several ways to access the greenway. These connections can be opportunities for the green and natural elements of the greenway to extend out and into the adjacent neighborhoods. Because the entirety of the corridor lacks adequate public greenspace, every opportunity to add or improve access to nature should be seized.

Design Branch Avenue to Accommodate All Users

Coordination with the various property owners will be necessary for the redevelopment south of Branch Avenue to accommodate higher densities, a mix of uses, and an attractive environment. Elements of the older buildings existing in the area should be preserved and incorporated into new, more intense mixed-use development. The smaller scale street network and historical architecture will lend themselves to a unique character for this section of the corridor.

Tighten intersection of Branch Avenue with North Main Street

As a major connection over I-95 and the rail corridor to North Main Street from the west, improvements to Branch Avenue must balance the needs of all of its users, including trucks and larger vehicles. Tightening the intersection of Branch Avenue with North Main Street is important to improve pedestrian access and

comfort, calm traffic, and transform the larger area. Turning radiuses must still accommodate the wider turns of larger vehicles.

Create a Gateway to Randall Park

Reclaiming the driveway alongside intersection improvements to calm traffic at North Main Street and Branch Avenue allows for a strongly-defined gateway to the park.

Calm Automobile Traffic and Accommodate People Biking and Walking

Traffic on Branch Avenue, especially exiting and entering I-95 should be calmed so that the people using the potential Moshassuck River Greenway can safely cross and connect to the existing cart path in the Burial Ground. A new gate to allow access to the North Burial Ground gate should be located to allow direct access from the Greenway on to the Burial Ground's cart path network.

Expand Access to the North Burial Ground

In addition to expanding the hours the gates to the North Burial Ground are open, a new entrance needs to be created along Branch Avenue to allow the proposed greenway to continue north where the Moshassuck River is diverted underground. Ideally the greenway will be accessible 24 hours a day, 365 days a year meaning the North Burial Ground also will also need to remain open.

Invest in Civic Space at the Main Entrance of the North Burial Ground

The open space in front of the main entrance to the North Burial Ground has the potential to be an iconic civic space for the City and serve as a gateway marker. The open space should be preserved but rather than functioning only as a circular driveway, the area should provide seating and amenities to attract people and serve as a meeting spot.

Coordinate Parking Strategies for Development on Both Sides of North Main Street

Along this stretch of North Main Street, plans for shared parking facilities on the larger lots west of the street should include the smaller redevelopment projects on the east side of the

Street. By allowing parking for the smaller lots to be located nearby but off-site, designs can be more efficient, making redevelopment more achievable. Balancing the intensity of development on both sides of North Main Street is especially important in areas like this because connections across the corridor will allow access to new amenities, businesses, and services.

On the eastern side of North Main Street between Doyle and Duncan avenues, smaller mixed-use buildings that can create a continuous shopfront experience should be encouraged. This type of redevelopment would help existing businesses along this stretch of the street and establish this location as a unique and identifiable neighborhood center. Little to no on-site parking should be included on these sites so businesses can use the side yards, back yards, and unbuilt portions of the lots for more productive outdoor activities like dining courtyards, seating terraces, or other unique uses. A coordinated shared parking plan should be implemented to accommodate development within a few blocks of these sites that people can access in a short walk.

Connect to the Greenway

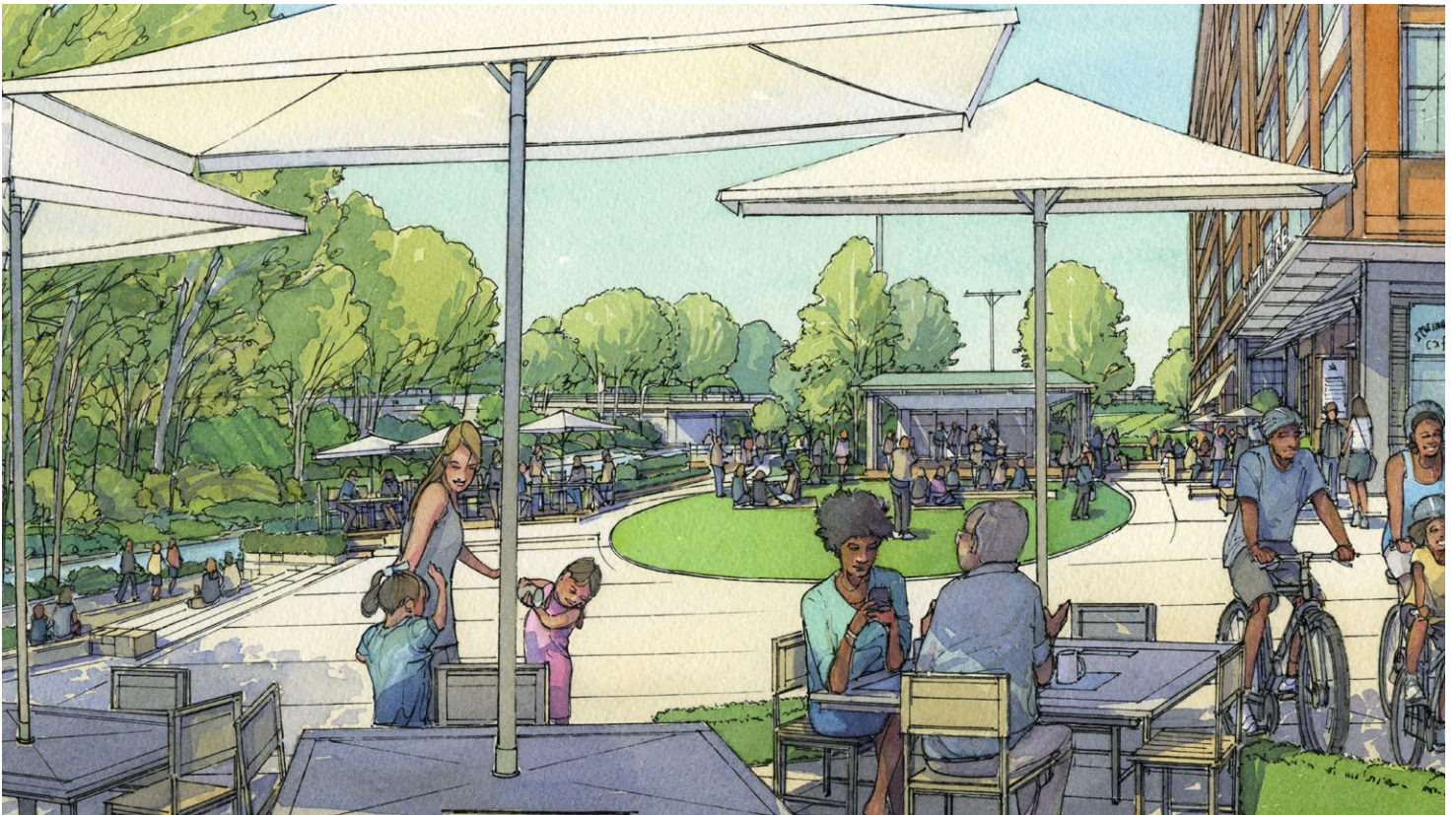
Complementary, but independently necessary to new development in the area, expanded greenspace and quality access to and across or under the bridge supporting Barbara Leonard Way will be vital.

The City should develop a continuous greenway along the Moshassuck River and provide multiple paths for traversing the Barbara Leonard Way Bridge. One possible design could utilize a deck suspended under the bridge to allow a continuous trail to run along the bank of the River. An alternative design might create a monumental stair that brings people down from Barbara Leonard Way to the greenway.

The creation of a new park that will both physically and conceptually connect the Moshassuck Greenway to North Main Street should be pursued in the vicinity of Barbara Leonard Way. This is one of the areas where the Moshassuck River is closest to North Main Street allowing people to easily and quickly access the greenway.



Existing view of Moshassuck River at Printery Street



Rendering of the Potential Improvement. New park and performance venue. Create opportunities to see and enjoy the water of the River. Path travels below the bridge along the River. Neighborhood scale restaurant or cafe enjoys being on the Greenway.

NORTH MAIN STREET @ ROCHAMBEAU AVE



Along North Burial Ground is a significant amount of space and stretches long enough to include generous improvements for circulation from wider sidewalks to shared-use paths. The frontage along Randall Park could function as a more passive stretch for people to stroll and enjoy a more relaxed environment and is an ideal area to locate play areas or playgrounds for children. The area near North Burial Ground's entrances could accommodate public amenities such as bathrooms, cafes, newsstands, or other light services the community desires. Because of the size of Randall Park, additional uses can also be considered ranging from passive green space or community gardens, to spaces designed for community members to gather.



Existing view of Rochambeau Avenue at North Main



Rendering of the Potential Improvement. Open more entries to the green space & celebrate these with pavilions & monuments. Elevate crossing for people walking and biking. Reduce vehicle speeds & enhance tree canopy. Invest in transit stations as landmarks for the neighborhood.

EXISTING CONDITIONS SITE PLAN

Existing Buildings Proposed Buildings Parks / Green Space



Relocate the Burial Ground Fence

Relocate the North Burial Ground fence away from North Main Street and closer to the border between Randall Park and North Burial Ground. This change will allow access to Randall Park at any time of day and essentially create a completely new mile-long public green space.

Program Randall Park

The length of Randall Park will allow the space to accommodate a wide range of activities and users. Some sections should be designed to be passive and include things like flower gardens and seating while other sections can be improved for active recreation like playgrounds, open lawn space, or even small cafes and newsstands.

Design Both Sides of the Street to be Cohesive

The blocks opposite to the North Burial Ground should be complementary to the street frontage along the North Burial Ground. With only one commercially active side of the street, this stretch of the corridor will remain quieter than most other areas, but it will also require context specific support. Existing commercial users and potential new businesses will benefit from larger sidewalks along the east side of North Main Street. Between Branch Avenue and Stenton Street, the frontages along North Main Street need to be comfortable and inviting, with wider sidewalks, street furniture, lighting as well as shade trees and plantings.

Prioritize Local Users and Local Circulation

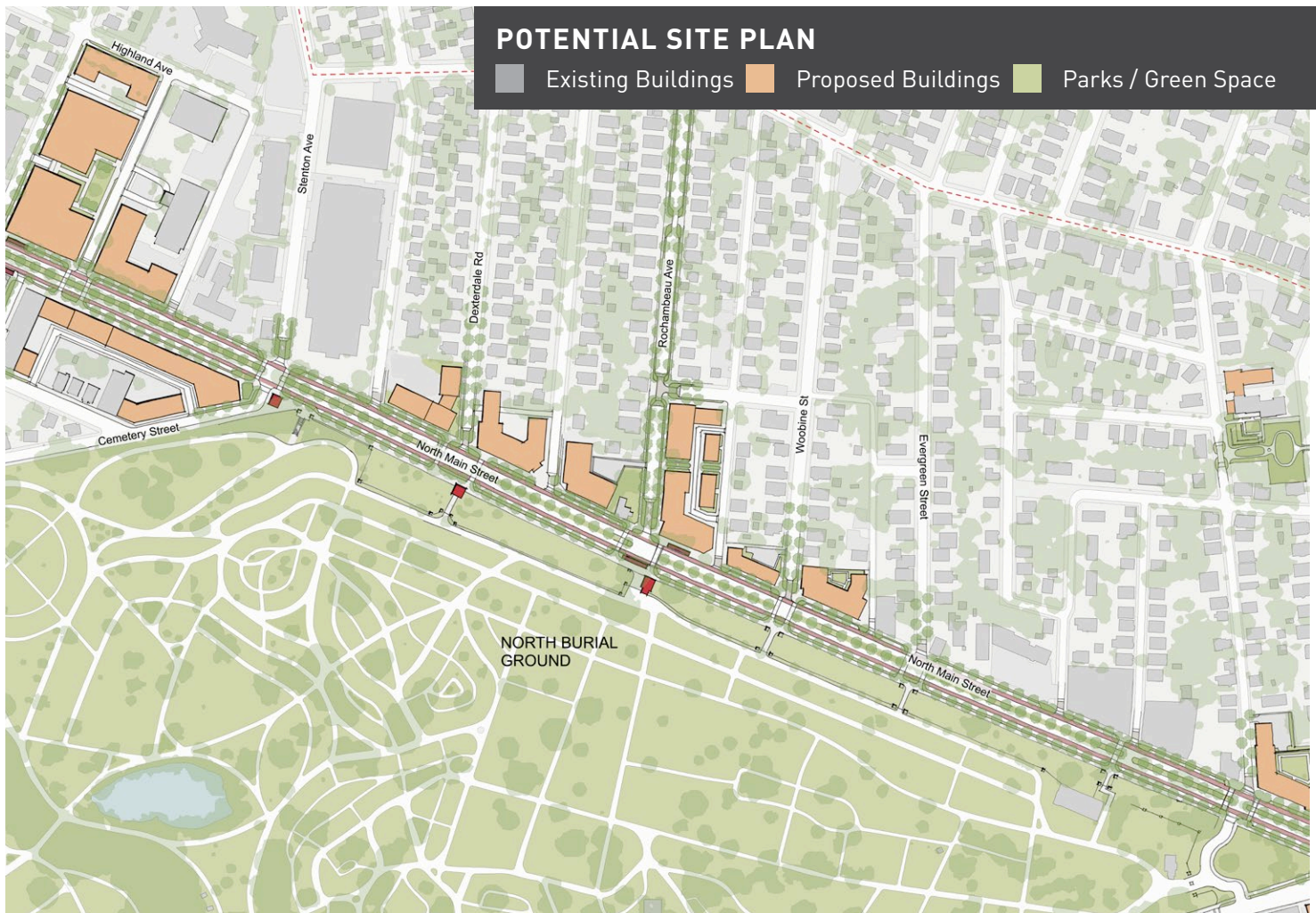
The stretch of North Main Street along the north burial ground, from Branch Avenue to Frost Street, needs to balance the regional needs of through-traffic with the needs of the people who live along the corridor.

Add More Crosswalks

Rehabilitating North Main Street to become less of a barrier, crosswalks should be located every 400 to 600 feet along the Street. This will allow easier access to and from transit on both sides of the street and as well as to and from Randall Park and the North Burial Ground. These new gateways should be integrated with traffic calming along North Main Street to make crossing the street comfortable and safe for people walking and biking.

Increase Turning Movements to and from Local Streets

The current street design only allows limited left turns onto and off of local streets from North



Main Street. A redesigned North Main Street should allow people walking, biking, or driving to cross or make left and right turns at more intersections.

Redesign Local Streets to be Safer and More Useful for all Users

Improvements to the streets which terminate at North Main Street should be designed to slow people driving and allow for neighbors to safely use their streets for a range of activities. Neck downs, speed lumps, and other interventions can help these areas stay connected while also balancing the needs of all users.

Invest in Rochambeau Avenue as a Primary Unique Residential Thoroughfare

As a key connection with North Main Street, Rochambeau Avenue should receive landscape improvements to calm the traffic and create a comfortable walking and biking route. The landscape improvements need to include a more robust tree canopy and lush plantings that

can help visually and physiologically connect Randall Park and the North Burial Ground to blocks further east.

Connect the Greenway Through the North Burial Ground

In coordination with the Parks Department and through outreach to the community, a route for the Greenway should be established through the Burial Ground that minimizes potential conflicts. Making sure people are able to easily connect with nature and that the area is well activated.

North Main Street will need interventions to improve all modes of travel, such as neckdowns, coordinated traffic signals, additional pedestrian crossings, protected bike lanes, and bus lanes.

Easy access to Randall Park will be vital to the success of the park and the areas around it. The City should expand North Burial Ground's hours of operation and consider creating new access points aligned with the side streets to the east.

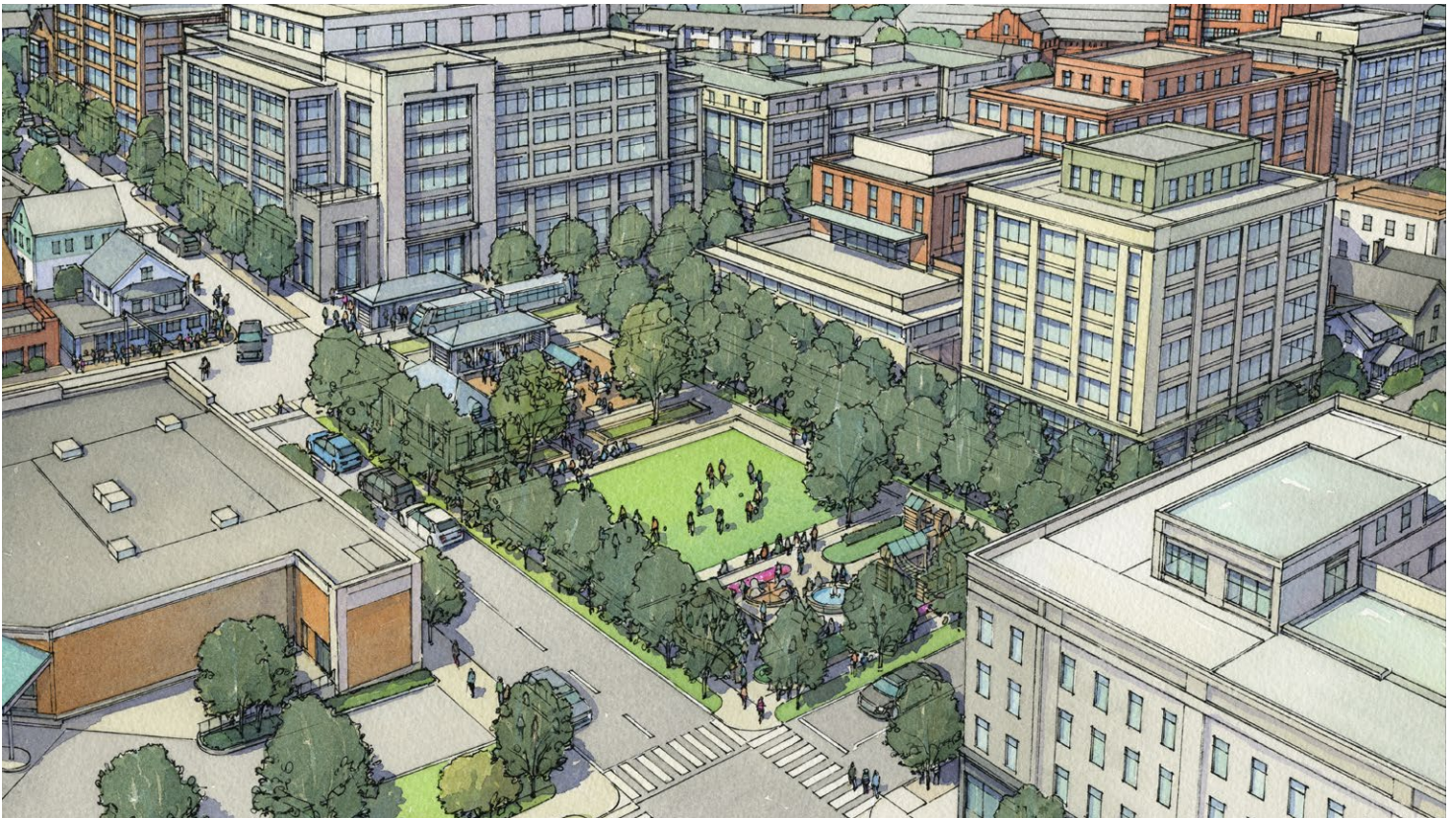
NORTH MAIN STREET @ FROST STREET



The Hospital is a valuable source of employment, especially in a field that is expected to continue growing in the coming decades. Rather than preventing the Miriam Hospital's growth, work with the institution to guide and direct its growth in ways that benefit the community and mitigate any negative impacts. Larger buildings containing medical offices, laboratories, or other medical uses may be more appropriate along North Main Street rather than directly adjacent to the existing Miriam Hospital site. Private medical or laboratory buildings often contribute significantly to the tax base.



Existing view of Frost Street looking toward North Main



Rendering of the Potential Improvement. Existing local businesses can thrive by creating new customers and neighborhood attractions such as a new park. New park and plaza that can accommodate a variety of functions and events. Adaptive reuse of historic building. New mixed-use infill buildings surrounding the park.

EXISTING CONDITIONS SITE PLAN

Existing Buildings Proposed Buildings Parks / Green Space



Balance Development on Both Sides of North Main Street

Encourage more residential development west of North Main Street, especially near neighborhood centers.

Focus and encourage more neighborhood commercial services east of North Main Street near neighborhood centers.

Guide the Hospital's Growth

Identify locations appropriate for specific uses the hospital would like to expand.

Encourage development that compliments medical uses as well as the larger neighborhood like:

Nearby housing that is attractive to those working in and adjacent to the medical fields.

Medical office space suitable for doctors and other professionals affiliated with the hospital but not employed by it.

Increase density Around Transit Stations

Transit planning is land use planning. Multi-family development should be allowed by right in the vicinity of transit nodes.

Mixed-use development fronting onto North Main Street should be allowed by right along the entirety of the corridor.

Along North Main Street, south of Smithfield Avenue, the community should work with institutional partners to plan a catalytic redevelopment project to anchor this section of the neighborhood. Any larger institutional buildings should be designed with shared parking that can be utilized by other nearby properties. Coordinating and consolidating parking in this way will allow parking for offices which may only be full during the day, to be used by residents or restaurants at night.

POTENTIAL SITE PLAN

Existing Buildings Proposed Buildings Parks / Green Space



The several undeveloped blocks and lots along North Main Street can accommodate large institutional uses as well as a mix of commercial uses, allowing the space away from North Main Street to maintain or restore its residential character. North Main Street can return to its past function as a shopping or neighborhood business district providing services and amenities to people in the nearby residences.

A neighborhood park and plaza should be created next to the historic Atlas Music building between North Main Street, Nashua Street, and Frost Street. In addition to providing public space and a focal point for the neighborhood, incorporation of a transit station should be pursued. This public space should be flexible and designed to serve the needs of the businesses, workers, and residents of the neighborhood. When implementing this plan for a new public space, the City should work with area businesses and residents to ensure that

the creation of this space will support the types of activities and uses the community needs.

The connection between the neighborhood just north of the Burial Ground and the North Burial ground should be strengthened. The existing stair and gate at North Main Street and Cemetery Street should be repaired and reopened. The intersection should also be reconfigured to create a gateway plaza for the Burial Ground. The design for this northern end of Randall Park should include a park pavilion or other civic oriented building that can provide services, such as concessions, bathrooms, or functional spaces for park operations.

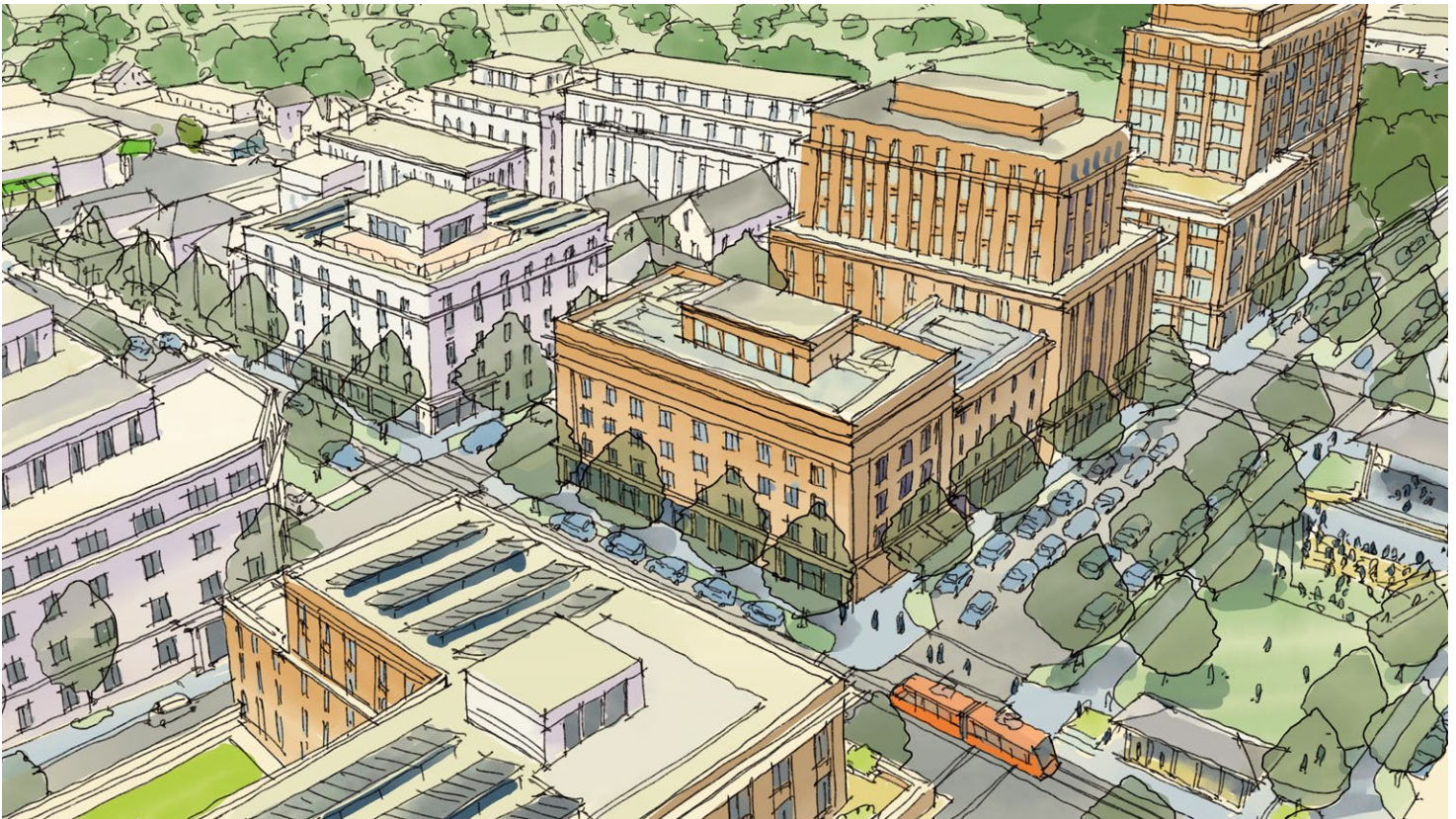
SMITHFIELD AVENUE SPRAWL REPAIR



Initiate development of the Moshassuck River Greenway by investing in and protecting Collyer Park and the Wild Place. Investment into the greenspace near where the Moshassuck River passes under Smithfield Avenue needs to accomplish several things: Establish a connection to North Main Street to allow access to and from the greenway; Connect the greenway under Smithfield Avenue.



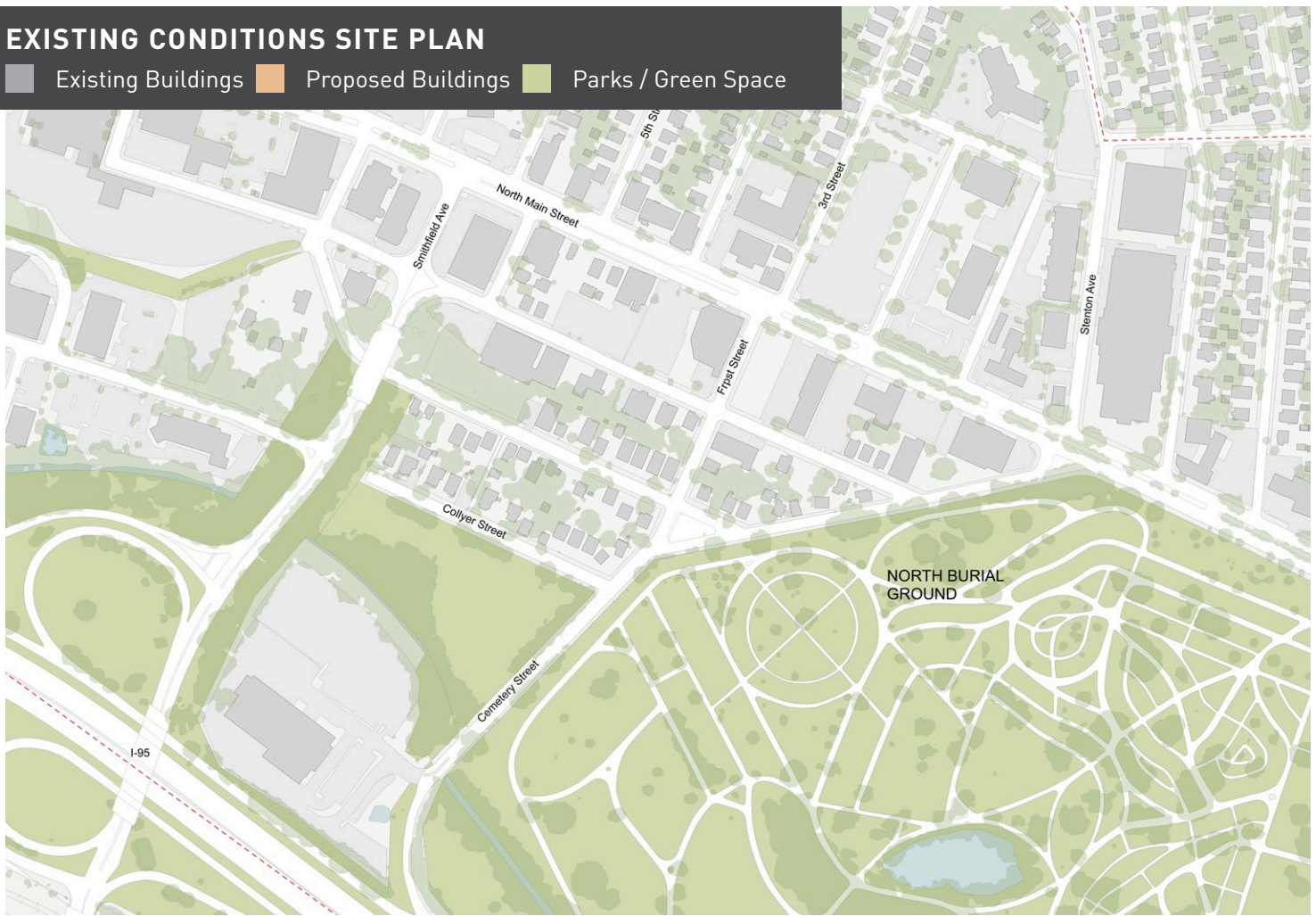
Existing view of Smithfield Ave looking Southwest



Rendering of the Potential Improvement.

EXISTING CONDITIONS SITE PLAN

Existing Buildings Proposed Buildings Parks / Green Space



Invest in Green Space to Initiate Development of the Moshassuck River Greenway

This area could be a vital link in the Moshassuck River Greenway as it connects the greenways coming from the North Burial Ground to new development and Pawtucket to the north. As the Moshassuck River and the proposed greenway pass under Smithfield Avenue, the City must facilitate the creation of a connection to allow access between the greenway, the Wild Place, Collyer Park, and Smithfield Avenue above.

Green space should be preserved and enhanced along the Moshassuck River as part of a future greenway that could serve as a significant asset to the whole area.

Encourage Redevelopment of the Peter Pan Bus Terminal into a High-Density, Mixed-Use Project

The Peter Pan bus terminal property could be redeveloped into a series of high-density, mixed-use city blocks. This project could maintain the

bus terminal and storage by incorporating these functions into an oversized ground level garage. Above the multipurpose garage and elsewhere on the site, housing and other uses could add vitality and much-needed homes to this area.

Partner with Pawtucket to Stimulate Investment and Redevelopment of the Ocean State Job Lot + Collyer Street Site into a New Neighborhood Center

North of Smithfield Avenue, constructing a shared parking structure made available to nearby property owners could initiate redevelopment of the other sites within this neighborhood. The area could build off of existing daytime activity with the existing office buildings. New green space or other amenities could help maintain office uses while also attracting residential development, eventually leading to a complete neighborhood as retail businesses reestablish along North Main Street.

The City and private partners could combine any needed additional infrastructure upgrades with



land-use changes and value capture with new development.

The site's quick access to and from I-95 should allow the area to attract workers arriving by car in the short term. At the same time, the expansion of transit service and the creation of a transit station nearby could anchor new development around a revitalized neighborhood center in the long term.

The end of Collyer Street north of Smithfield Ave is currently closed because of a structural failure of the retaining walls at the embankment supporting Smithfield Avenue.

Redevelop the Peter Pan Site

As more critical local sites to the north and along I-95 redevelop and attractive new amenities like expanded open space and improved transit, property owners of smaller, interior neighborhood lots will likely reinvest in their property. Demand for housing is already strong, but as the area redevelops and becomes more livable, additional accommodation will follow.

Smithfield Ave Street Repair & Neighborhood Civic Space

Smithfield Avenue should be invested in to transform it from an isolated highway overpass into an urban boulevard. As approaching North Main Street from the west, either after exiting the highway or from further north on Smithfield Avenue, the updated street design should signal to drivers that they are entering a neighborhood center. Buildings adjacent to Smithfield Avenue should address the street and pedestrian and bicycle networks along Smithfield Avenue should connect with Collyer Street, Matilda/Concord Street, and Nashua Street.



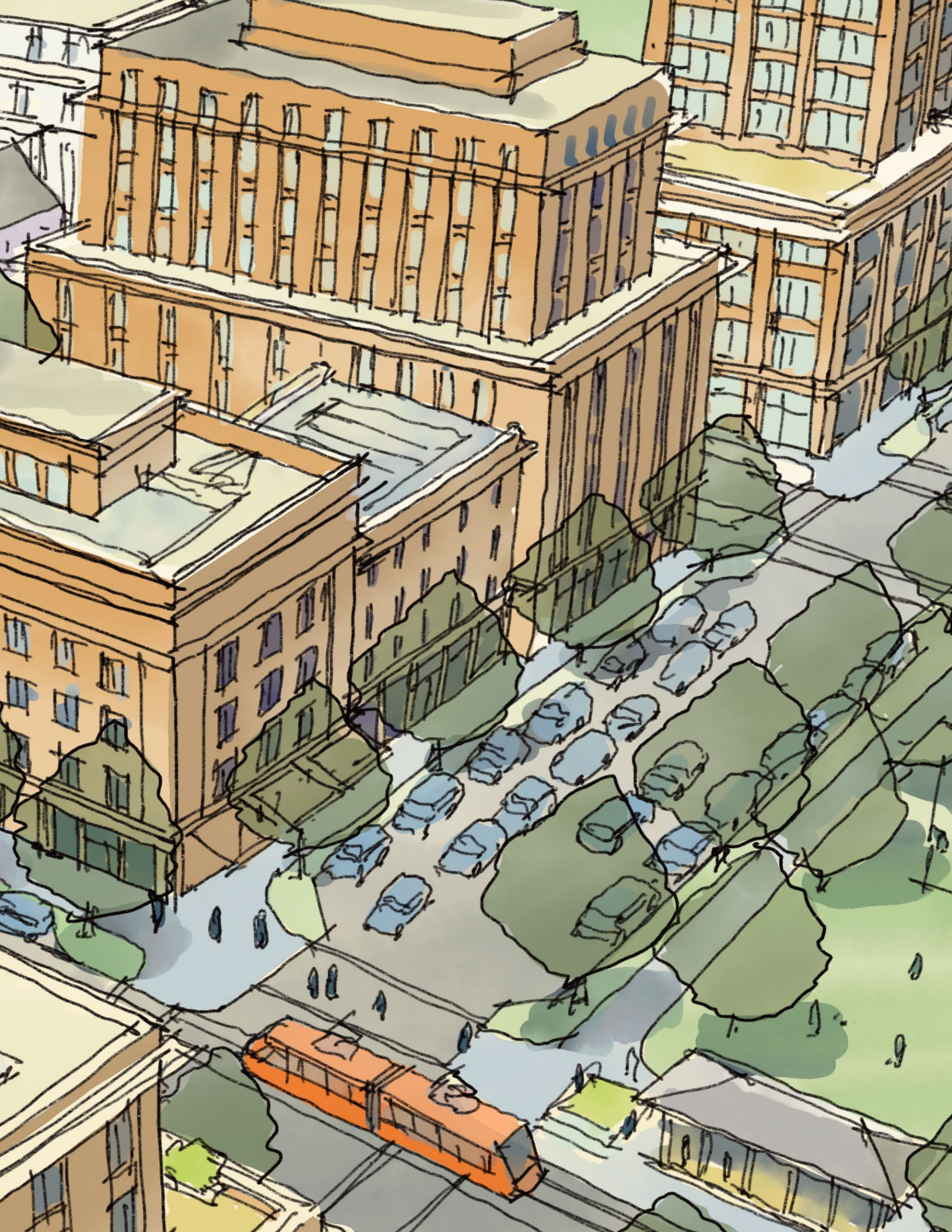
Birdseye View of Existing Looking South to Smithfield Ave. This area boarding the City of Pawtucket has excellent potential for redevelopment. Pawtucket should be encouraged to create a plan to guide the transformation of this single-story retail center into a series of mixed-use neighborhood blocks with higher density residential above the shops.

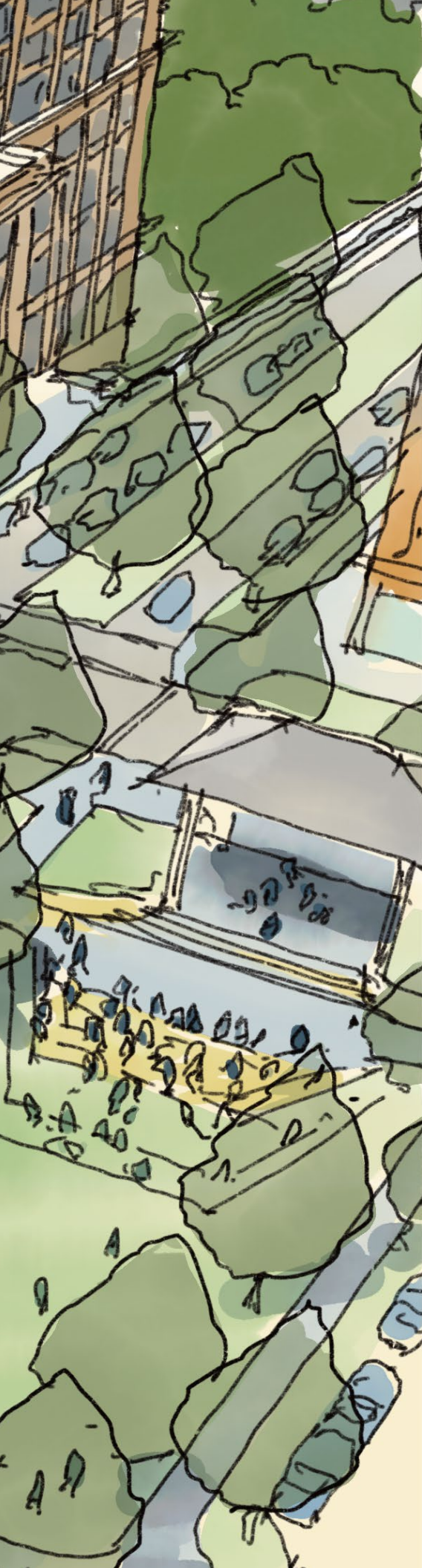


Existing birdseye view of Collyer Street



Rendering of the Potential Improvement.





Chapter 4

IMPLEMENTATION



Dryden Lane existing conditions.

The vision described in this study is intentionally broadly defined. The ideas set forth in this document will likely need adjustment over time as the City studies their feasibility, proceeds with implementation, and explores new ideas to meet the community's objectives. Prioritizing the community's goals of broad accessibility, a more balanced transportation mix, more market rate and affordable housing, complete neighborhoods, and transforming the corridor into a place people want to be should be included in purpose statements for activities resulting from this study. This will ensure recognition of North Main Street's potential is revisited whenever those projects are being implemented.

Engage the Community at Key Touchpoints

The development of this study benefited immensely from the involvement of community members who live and work near North Main Street. The community conversations at the virtual meetings and in stakeholder interviews provided essential input for the process.

Many of the ideas described in this study will need substantially more discussion in the future, and there is an expressed desire for the community to play a role in any major implementation of projects. At key touchpoints, the community should be asked again to share their ideas and perspectives as their vision is implemented.

One of the major topics that came up during conversations with community members was continuing to pursue interventions and working towards the vision for North Main Street's future. Conversations during the process often centered around past, existing, and future neighborhood and community organizations which can continue to lobby and press for change even after this study and process have

formally concluded. At the same time that the Big Ideas were presented to the community for feedback, an additional idea was presented and received considerable favor. 92% of respondents agreed and almost ⅔ strongly agreed, with the following statement:

Support Local Groups and Organizations, Encouraging them to Assist and Ensure the Implementation of the Community's Vision

Establish Equity as an Essential Consideration.

Recognizing and maintaining North Main Street's diversity was an essential objective throughout producing this study. As new public and private development opportunities present themselves, the equity impacts of implementing these projects should always be considered.

Identify and Pursue Funding Sources

Leverage all sources of financial assistance to encourage developers to build new housing along North Main Street.

Early Action

As implementation advances, the City should incorporate the collection and monitoring of data related to projects to help understand how the corridor changes over time and inform any needed adjustments in strategy. Relevant data should be collected around transportation usage, housing costs, land values, changes in land usage, public revenue and expenditures, and environmental and public health conditions.

Potential Early Action Projects

Some early actions to consider for the first 6-18 months after completing this study, include:

- Develop detailed concept designs for multi-modal street improvements.
- Develop a corridor-wide parking management strategy.
- Identify and explore sources of financial assistance.
- Coordinate with state and federal agencies to ensure other plans align with this study.
- Implement temporary interventions to test street design improvements, activate underutilized lots, and bring the community together.

Neighborhood Components

All neighborhoods are made up of a combination of elements ranging from basic services to more complex institutions. Different communities will have their own unique makeup but all communities tend to have some amount of the following components.

Food

These are the places where residents are able to access food. At the most basic, they provide the food we all need to survive like unprocessed produce, grains, meats, beans, and dairy. These types of food can typically be purchased at grocery stores, markets, or obtained from community pantries. Moving beyond accessing the food which people need to survive, healthy communities have a variety of restaurants or other establishments which serve prepared food and similar services.

- Grocers + Food Markets, Pantries
- Restaurants, Takeout, Delivery, Catering

Retail

Beyond access to food, people need to obtain items like clothing, equipment, supplies and other goods that make our lives comfortable and functional. Retail sales can range from household consumables, to luxury goods, to office and business supplies to hardware. In some cases, retail services can be available alongside the sale of goods or may be offered in fully separate businesses. Barbers, mail and delivery, attorneys, or any number of services are required to make the average person's day possible.

- Sales
- Services

Wholesale/Business-to-Business

In the same way that the average person requires a range of goods and services to make their lives possible and comfortable, businesses serving other businesses are an essential part of keeping most any community functional.

- Sales
- Services

Accommodation

Perhaps the most personal component in most people's neighborhoods are their homes. Private residences make up a large portion of the physical area of our communities and there can be a large range in the form our homes take. While single family houses may be most common in some areas, duplexes, townhouses, multi-family housing among many more make up large portions of many communities. Many communities have found the need to pay more attention to short-term housing, especially in areas with a lot of tourism which can range from bed-and-breakfasts to large hotels. Other forms may include dormitories, assisted care facilities, controlled access facilities, and others.

- Residential (Long-Term, >30 days)
- Short-Term (<30 days)
- Institutional

Healthcare + Services

Some of the most essential services we find in our communities address our physical and mental health. This can take the form of small private offices to large sophisticated facilities like hospitals or research institutions. In addition to active services and those that directly address our health, our neighborhoods need to include places we can be outside, or be active. Recreational activities often support our physical health as much as our mental health.

- Medical in-patient
- Medical out-patient
- Professional Services
- Recreation + exercise

Education

One of the largest functions our local government handles is that of education. Primary and secondary education is at the core of many communities and is an essential aspect of most younger people's lives. In the constantly changing world most people live in, education rarely stops at adulthood or even when one leaves school. Universities, libraries, and other institutions can have a major impact on individual lives as well as the character of a community.

- Primary (k-12)
- Secondary
- University+
- Professional, Continuing, Adult
- Civic (Libraries +)

Public + Civic Space

A highly valued component of most neighborhoods is their public and civic spaces. Green and natural spaces are often especially favored, but small plazas, parks, and play areas are also essential to livable communities.

- Plazas + Urban spaces
- Parks + Green Space
- Natural + Wild

Production

All of the goods and materials that we use and interact with on a daily basis must be grown, harvested, mined, fabricated, built, or processed in some way. Some of this can happen within the core of our neighborhoods while some may happen far from the eventual destination. Production, especially manufacturing and industrial production are essential to making our communities function but integrating these uses into our neighborhoods is often a challenge.

- Agriculture
- Manufacturing
- High-tech
- Utilities

Mobility

Movement is a component of our lives that can be simple, pleasant, and convenient or complex, unpleasant, or even dangerous. The most fundamental form of mobility revolves around walking and other self-powered modes. While people can accomplish a lot as pedestrians, our societies often must implement mass-transit systems, bicycle infrastructure, public highway infrastructure, or other complex infrastructure to get us and our goods and materials where we need them.

- Pedestrian
- Human Powered
- Mass-Transit
- Private

Cultural/Institutional

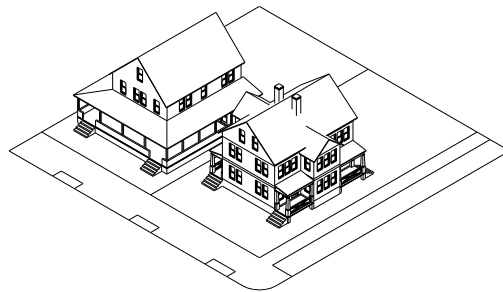
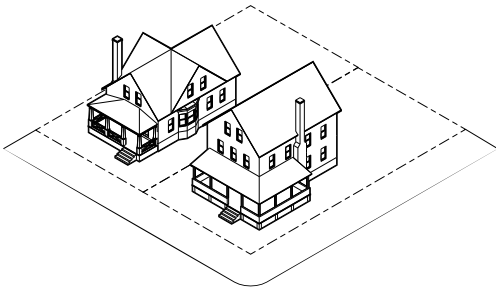
- Arts + Creative
- Private Interest, Clubs

Building Types

All neighborhoods have a combination of different types of buildings. The replicated building forms, site standards, and architectural patterns are generally a solid foundation for a neighborhood center.

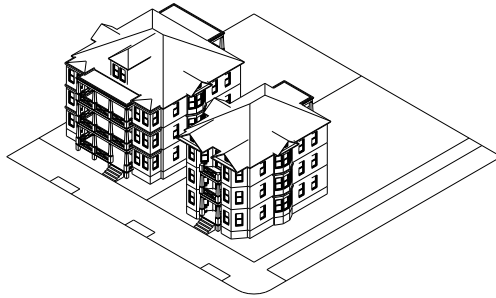
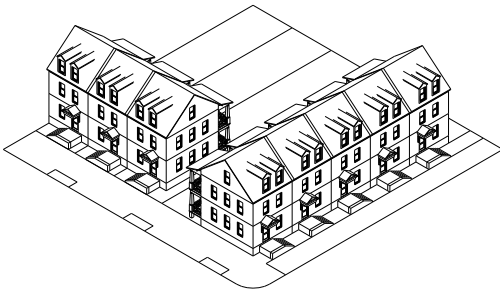
Residential

Building types intended for the sole use of generally long-term residential accommodation. In some cases, semi-public and non-public businesses may be located in these types of buildings (home-office, artist studio, small medical offices like therapists or dentists).



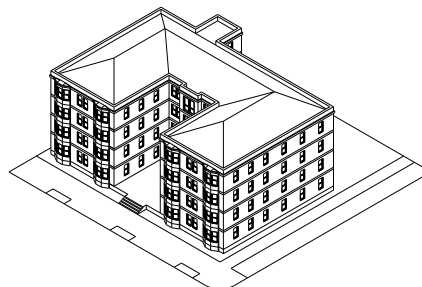
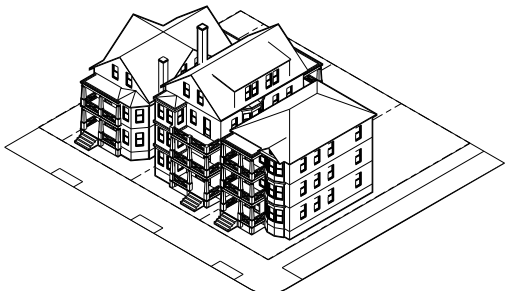
Row House

Apartment Building



Apartment House

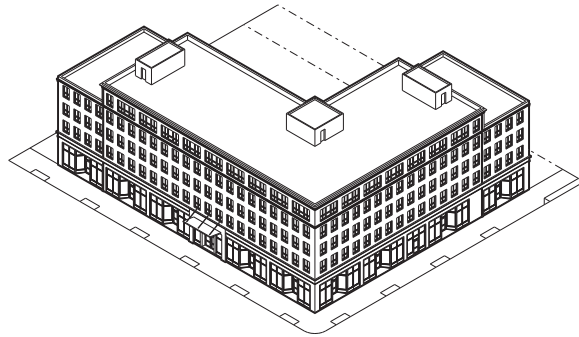
Apartment Terrace



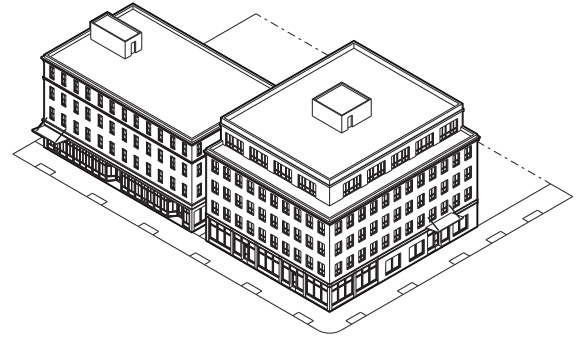
Mixed-Use

All of these buildings can be entirely residential, commercial (office, services, retail), civic, or institutional - or a mix of any (with reasonable separation and or accommodations).

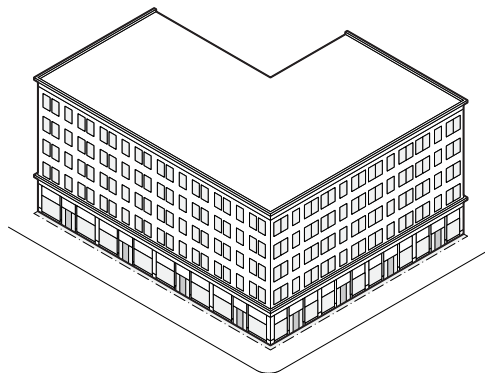
General Building



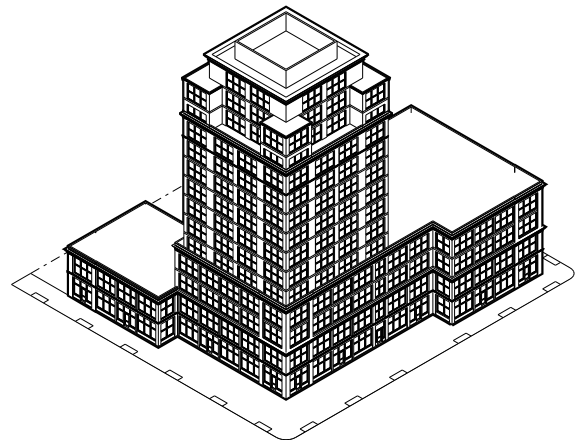
Main Street Building



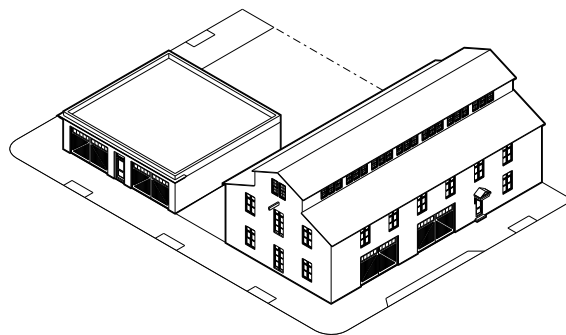
Mid-Rise General Building



High-Rise Building



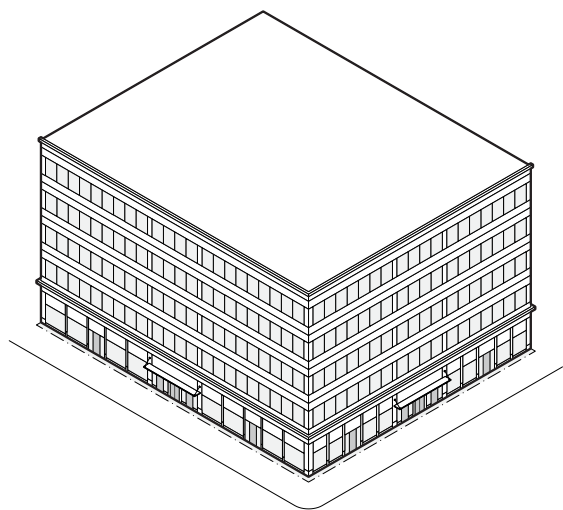
Fabrication



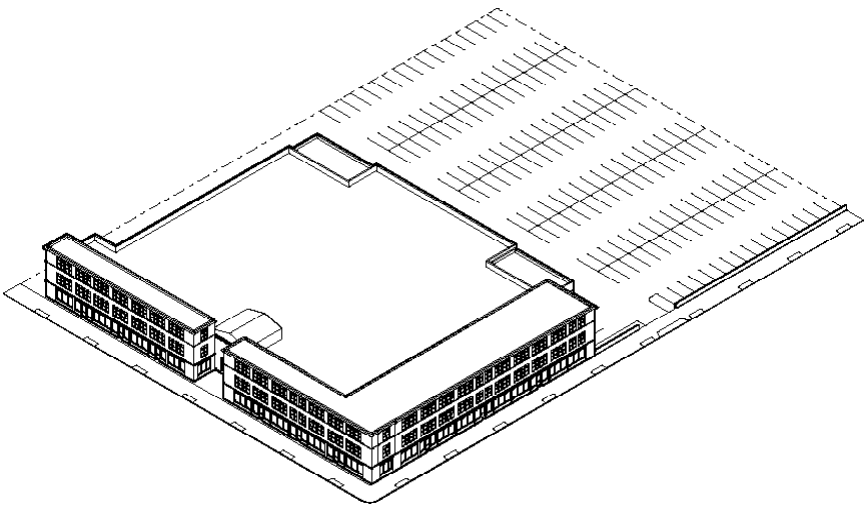
Commercial

Not intended to accommodate residential, at least not without reasonable conversion.

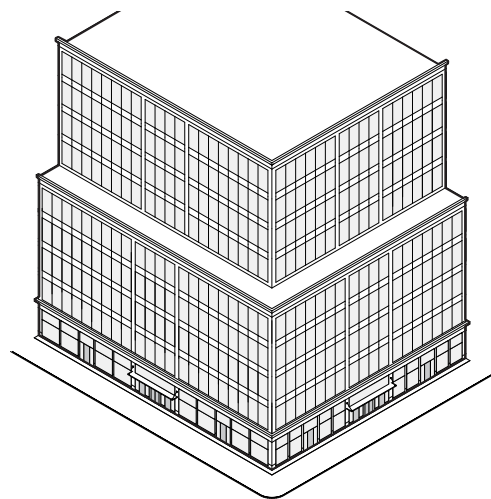
Commercial Building



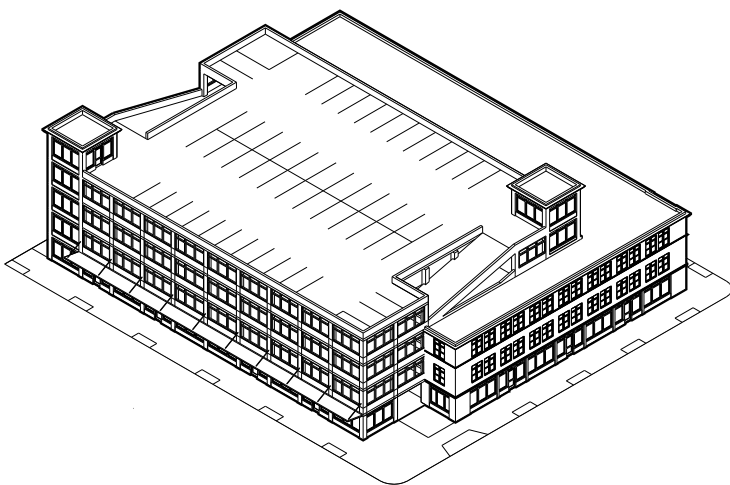
Commercial Box

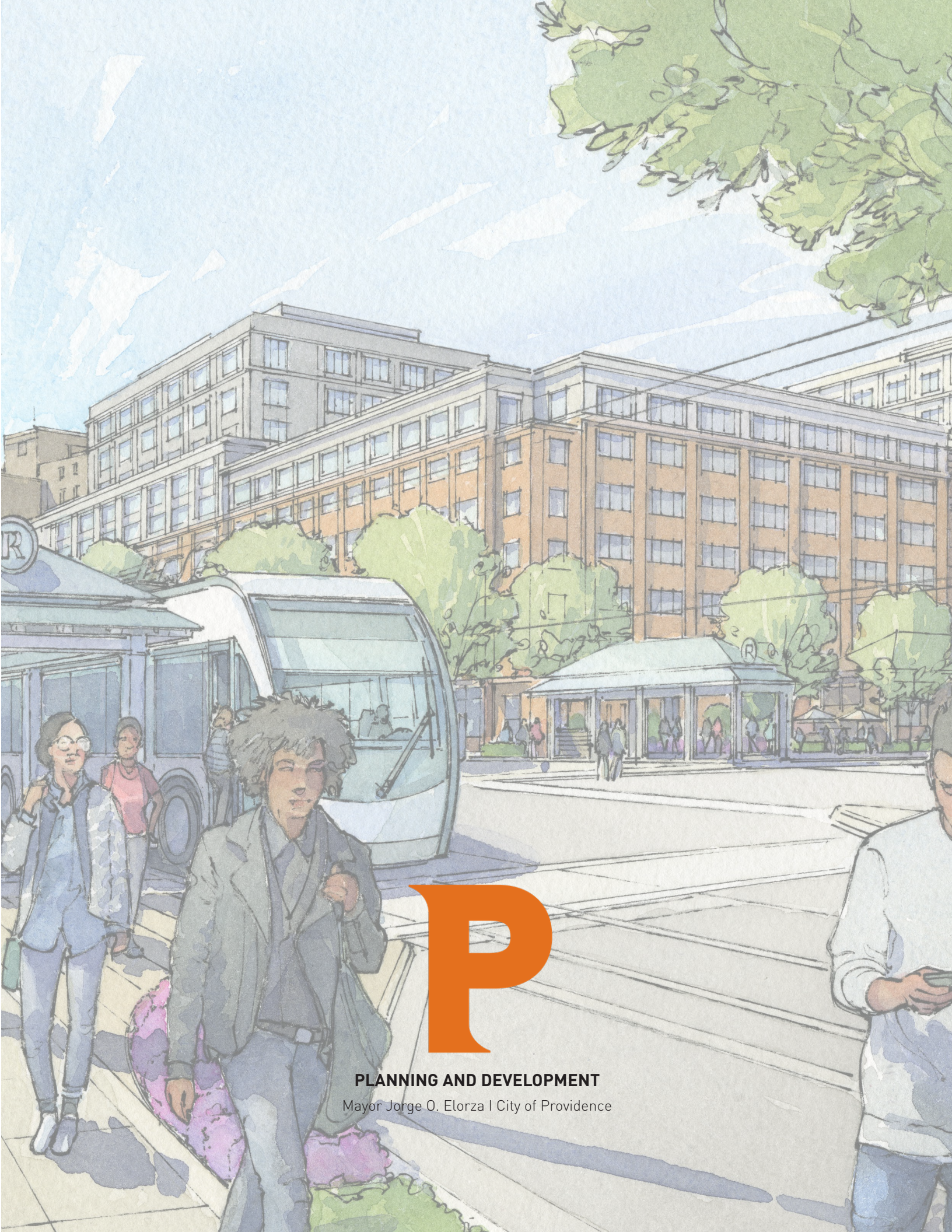


Lab Building



Mixed-use Garage





P

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Mayor Jorge O. Elorza | City of Providence