

Hamilton Town Center & Section 3A Zoning

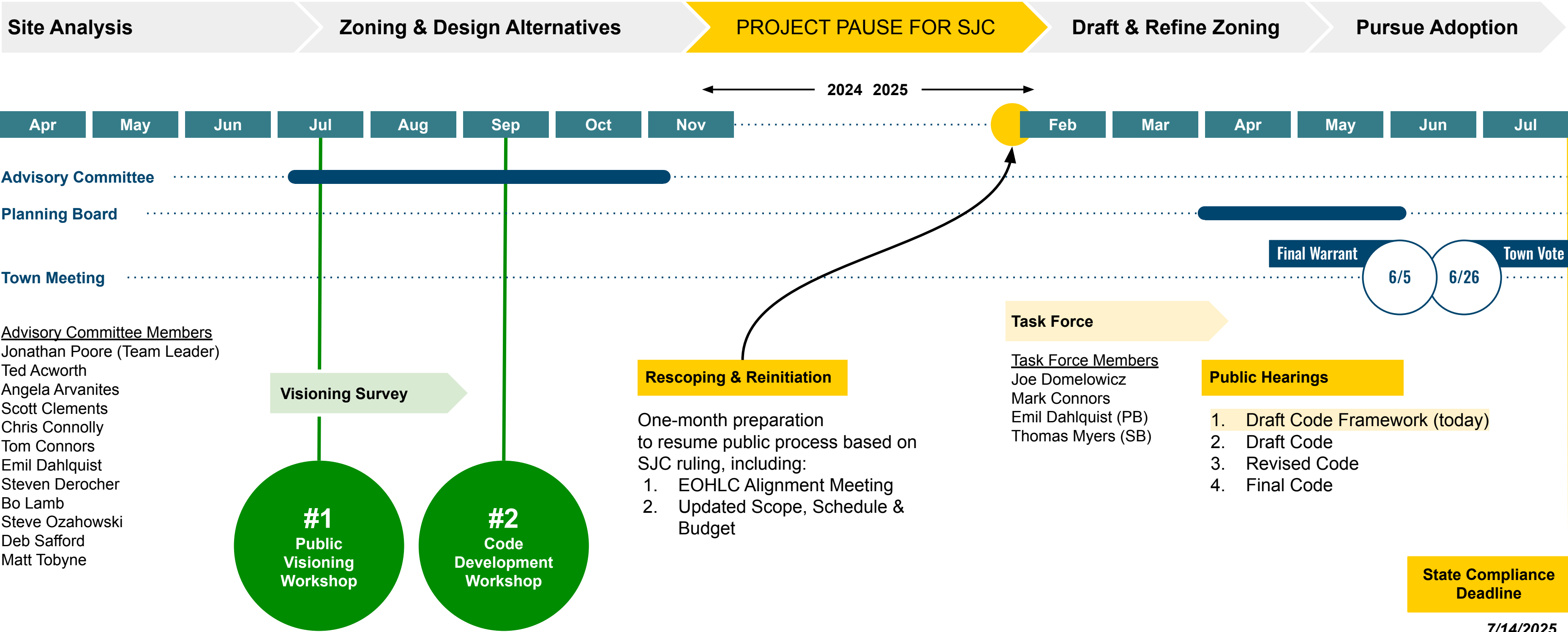
Planning Board Meeting
April 8, 2025

Agenda

Hamilton Town Center & Section 3A Zoning
Planning Board Meeting
April 8, 2025

- 1. **Process Update**
- 2. **District Refresher**
- 3. **Draft Zoning Overview**
- 4. **Town Center Zoning Subdistrict Standards**
- 5. **State Compliance Model Output**
- 6. **Next Steps**

Revised Schedule



commuter rail community that did not submit a district compliance application to EOHLC by December 31, 2024

Remaining Public Process

The development of the draft code framework was completed under the guidance of the Task Force in lieu of the Planning Board with the goal of having a full draft of the code by early April.

1. Draft Code Framework

This Planning Board meeting focused on presenting the draft code framework developed with the Task Force to orient the Planning Board. The first full written draft of the code was shared as a follow-up to the meeting. This was the first opportunity for public comment on the code.

2. Draft Code: today

This will be an opportunity for more detailed feedback from the Planning Board on the full draft code. Public comment will be admitted at this point as well.

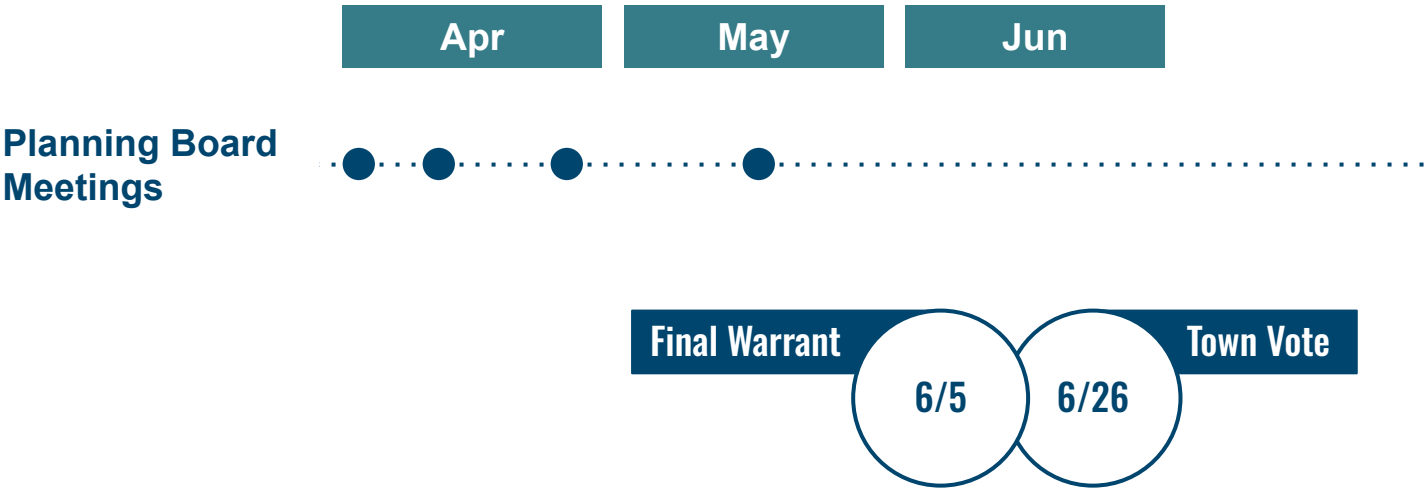
3. Revised Code: late April

A yet-to-be scheduled Planning Board meeting, ideally a joint meeting with the Select Board, will be the final opportunity for Planning Board and public comment on the code.

4. Final Code: mid/late May

A yet-to-be scheduled Planning Board meeting, ideally a joint meeting with the Select Board, will serve as a handoff from the Planning to the Select Board.

Note: code needs to be final and go to warrant by no less than 2 weeks prior to Town Meeting. Suggest 6/5 as a target date.



Help us confirm dates
We will circle back to this at the end of the meeting to confirm dates for the remaining 3 suggested Planning Board meetings.

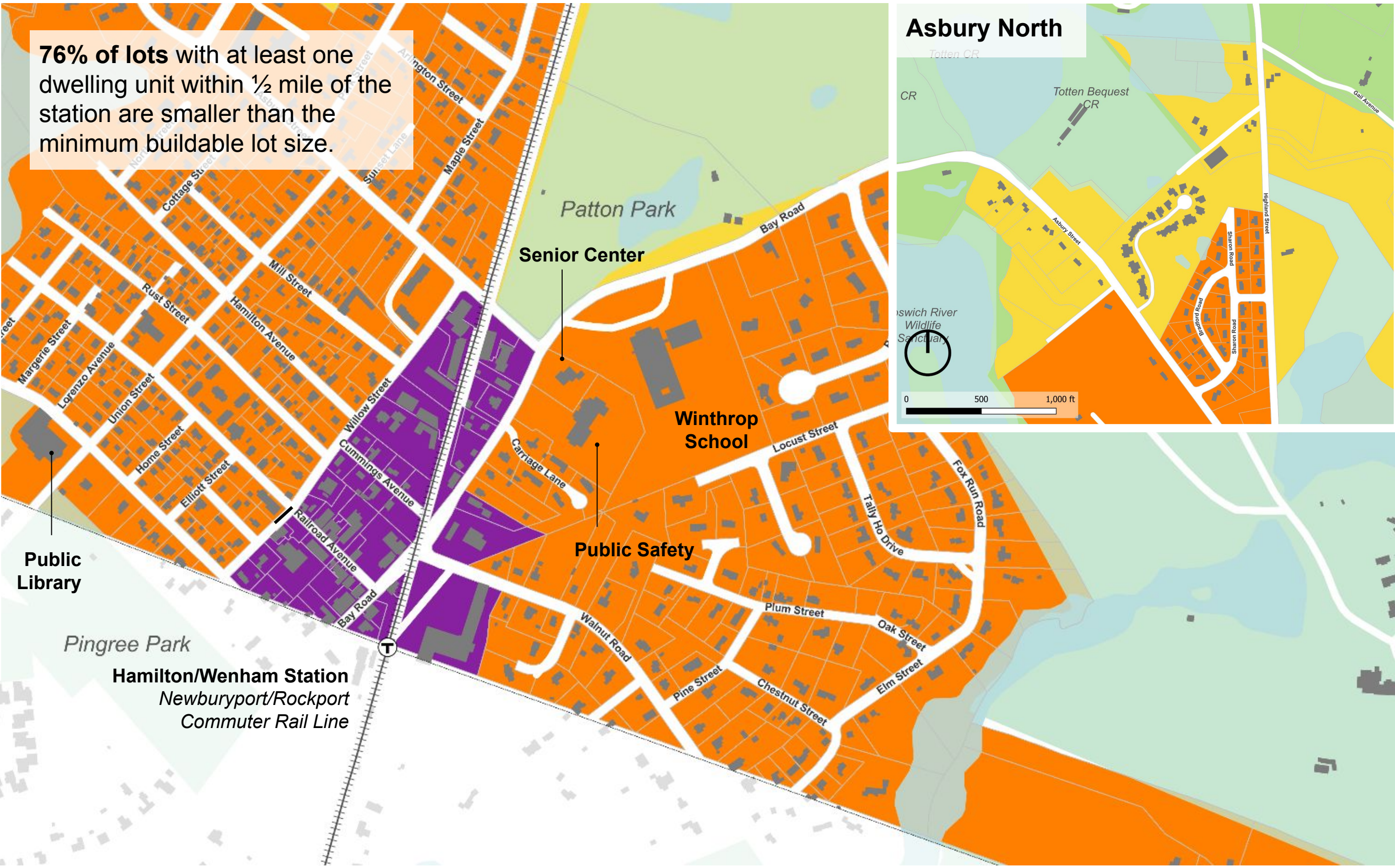
District Refresher

Existing Zoning Subdistricts & Net New Unit Analysis

We will plan to conduct a net new analysis relative to existing buildings, what the [current base zoning](#) allows, and what the proposed zoning would allow.

- B (Business)**
Use: allows MF on upper floors
35' height / 3 stories / 75% bldg coverage
Setbacks & Buildable Lot: ZBA
- R-1A (Residence District)**
Use: Single Family, MF prohibited
20,000sf min lot size / 125' frontage
35' height / 3 stories / 25% bldg coverage
Setbacks (F/S/R): 25' / 15' / 15'
- R-1B (Residence District)**
Use: Single Family, MF prohibited
40,000sf min lot size / 175' frontage
35' height / 3 stories / 25% bldg coverage
Setbacks (F/S/R): 25' / 15' / 15'
- RA (Residence Agricultural District)**
Use: Single Family, MF prohibited
80,000sf min lot size / 175' frontage
35' height / 3 stories / 25% bldg coverage
Setbacks (F/S/R): 25' / 15' / 15'

Note: this is a rough transcription of Hamilton's existing zoning map. It does not include overlay districts and precise boundaries may be slightly off where the boundaries do not align with parcel boundaries.



Town Center Zoning Subdistricts



3A Compliance Approach

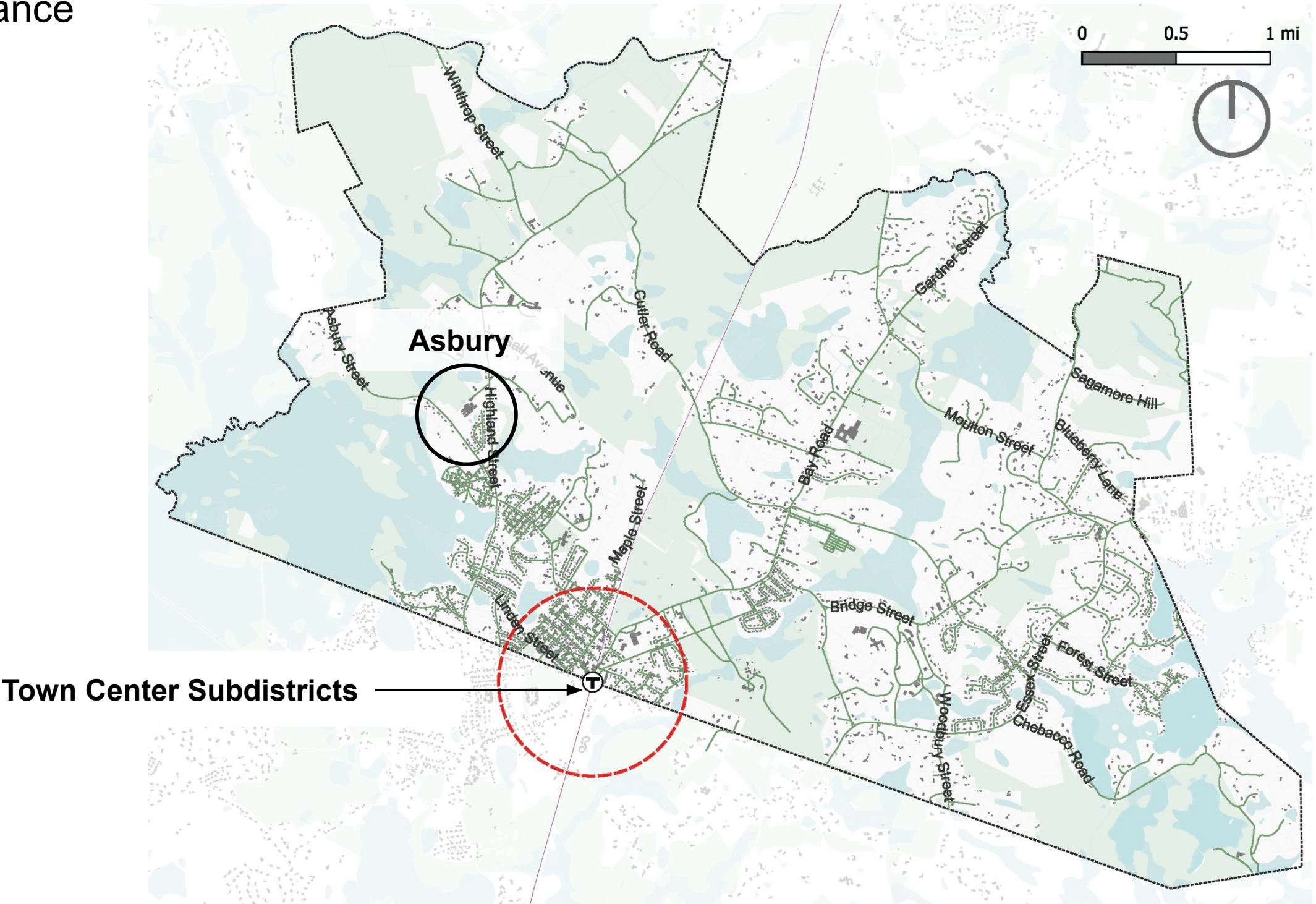
Hamilton is a **Commuter Rail** Community with a compliance deadline of 07/14/2025.

Min. Multifamily Unit Capacity:
731 units

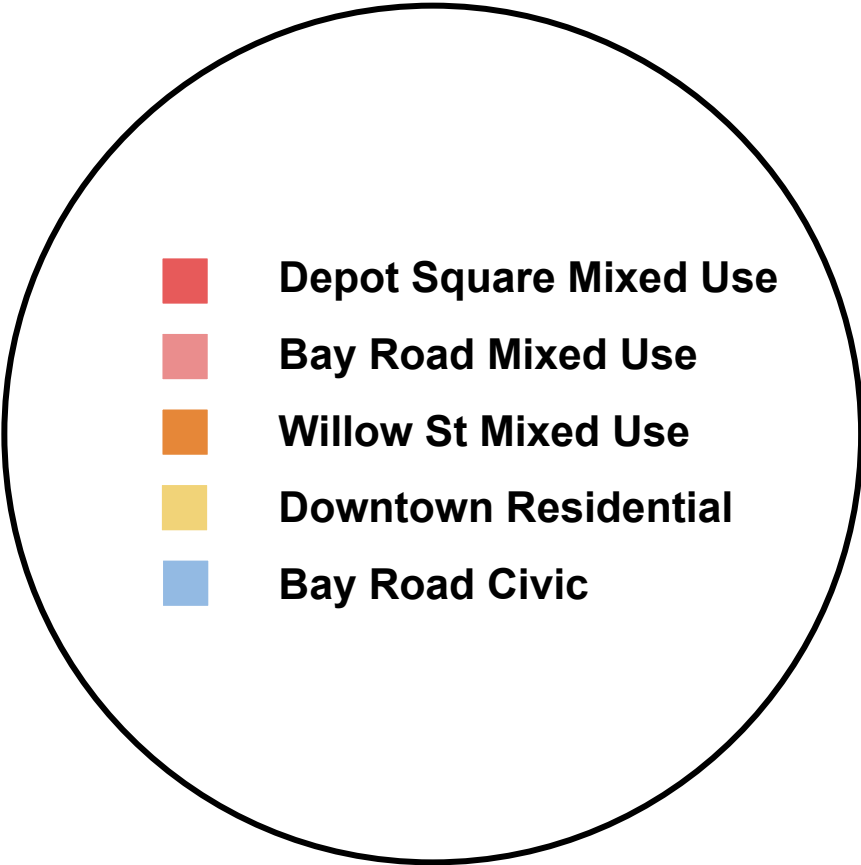
Min. Land Area:
49 acres

Min. Density:
15 units/acre

% of Land Area & Unit Capacity
Within ½ mile Station Area:
20%

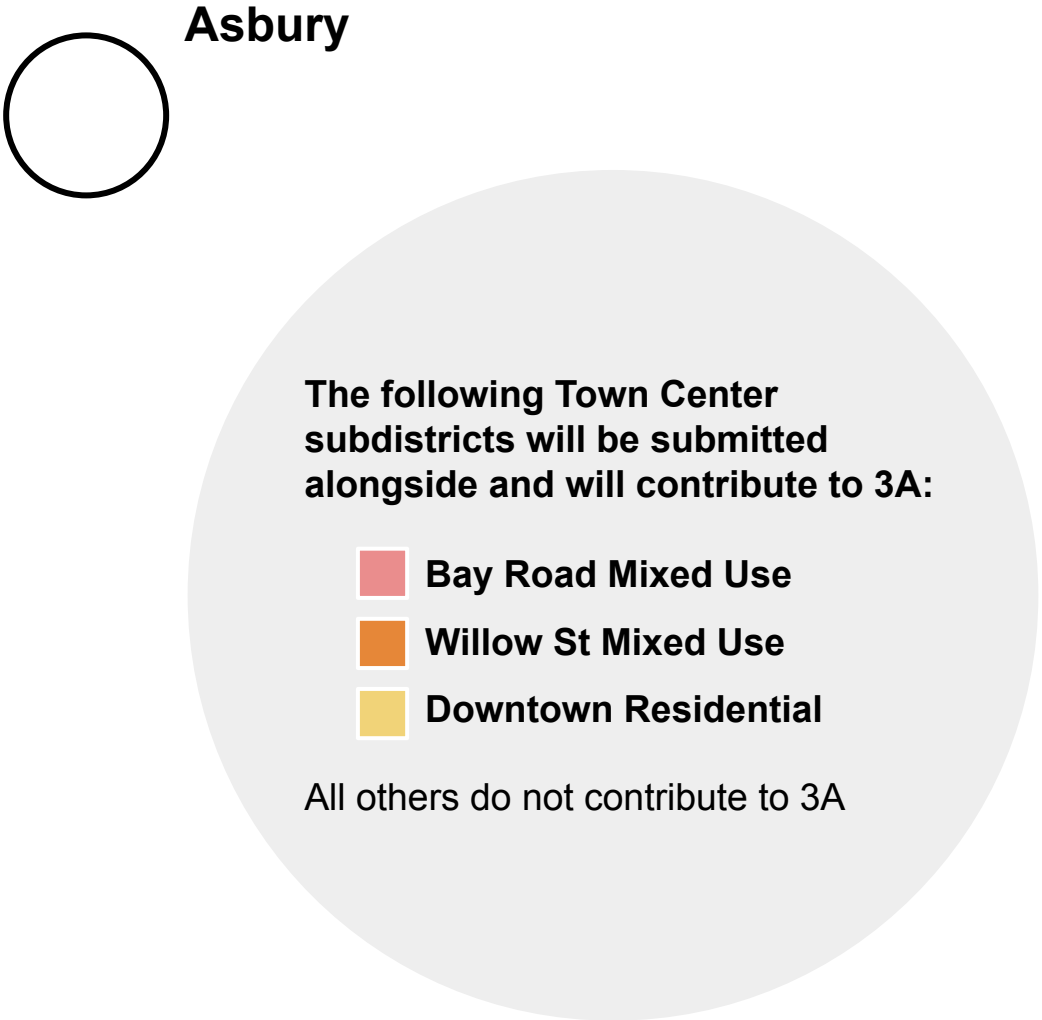


3A Compliance Approach



Town Center Zoning with Design Standards

This to includes 5 subdistricts, each with distinctive patterns and standards. This would replace existing zoning in these areas.



Outlying 3A Overlay District Approach

This relies on 3 of the Town Center subdistricts. The Asbury subdistrict outside of the boundaries of the Town Center provides the final piece of the puzzle to meet 3A requirements. Outside of the Town Center, this would be an alternative to existing zoning.

Draft Zoning Overview

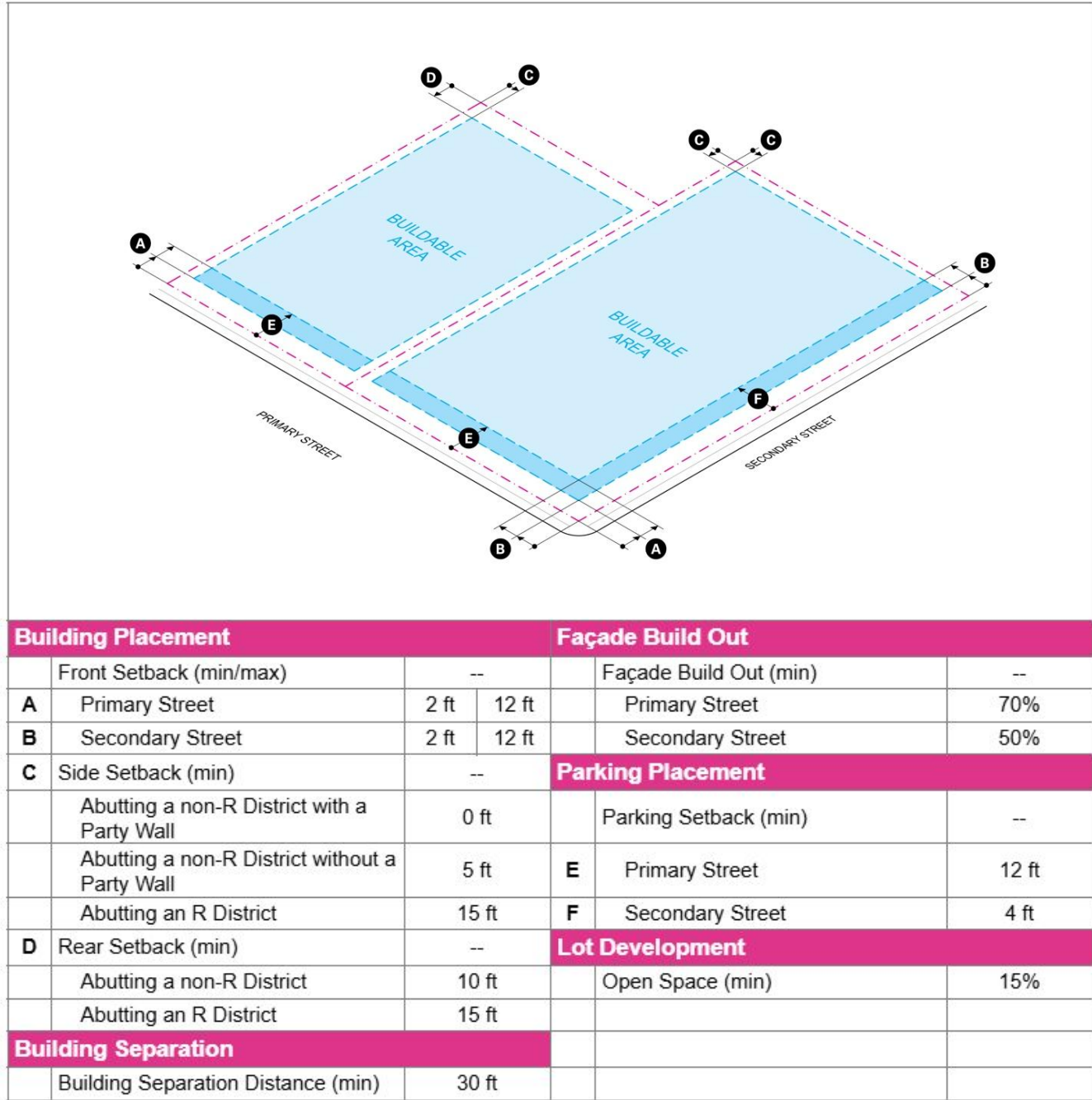
Town Center Zoning Code Structure

1. INTRODUCTION - Purpose, Intent, and Applicability
2. INTERPRETATION - Defining Standards, and Measurements
3. TOWN CENTER DISTRICTS

Metrics per District:
 - Description
 - Lot Standards
 - Building Standards
 - Use Provisions

Design and Development Standards
4. ADMINISTRATION - Process, Roles, and Responsibilities

Example of FBC sheet for each district (numbers are to illustrate structure and do not correspond to any specific district in Hamilton Town Center):



North Asbury 3A-MFOD Key Features

Match underlying R-1B

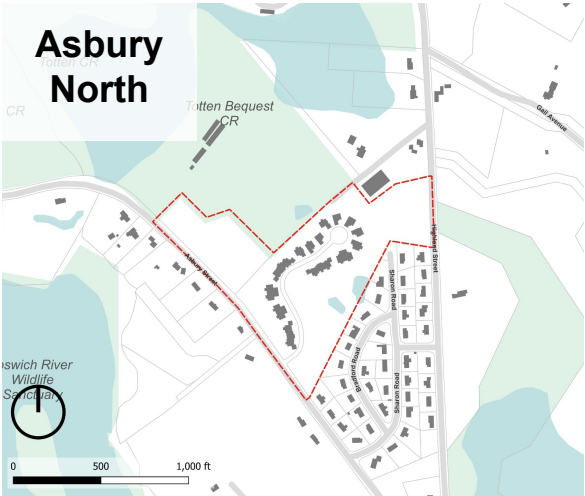
- Dimensional parameters to match underlying R-1B with the addition of FAR
- Manage relationship to other parts of existing code through targeted modifications/additions:
 - Exempt from GPOD Special Permit requirement and minimum lot size per unit requirement
 - Inclusionary requirements in Section 8.3 modified to 10%
 - Additional definition: FAR
 - Expanded definition: Gross Floor Area, Residential

	Asbury North
Minimum Lot Size (ft)	80,000
Minimum Lot Frontage (ft.)	175
Minimum Lot width and depth (ft.) (for Dwellings, see also Sections 4.2.2, 4.2.6 and 4.3)	100 at building
Maximum Building Height (ft.)	35
Maximum Number of Stories	3.0
Minimum Open Space (%)	50
Minimum Front Yard (ft.) (See also Section 4.2.4)	25/50 (note 1)
Minimum Side Yard and Rear Yard (ft.)	15
Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	.45

Townwide Compliance Summary Table

	Key Model Inputs					Model Outputs							
Subdistrict	FAR	Min. Lot Size	Min. Parking Spaces per Unit	Max. Bldg Height (stories)	Min. % Open Space	Unit Capacity	Acreage	Density Denominator	Modeled Density	% Land in Contiguous Subdistricts	% Land in Transit Area	% Units in Transit Area	Zoning Type
Willow St Mixed Use	0.42	3,000	1.0	3.5	70%	115	7.2	7.2	15.9	contributing	100%	100%	Base
Bay Rd Mixed Use	0.40	5,000	1.0	2.5	70%	127	9.5	9.5	13.3	contributing	100%	100%	Base
Downtown Residential	0.40	3,000	1.0	2.5	70%	151	13.3	13.3	11.4	contributing	100%	100%	Base
Asbury North	0.45	80,000	1.0	3.0	70%	339	19.3	16.6	20.5		0%	0%	Overlay
TOTAL						732	49.3	46.6	15.7	60.9%	60.9%	53.7%	n/a
COMPLIANCE TARGET						731	49	n/a	15	50%	20%	20%	n/a

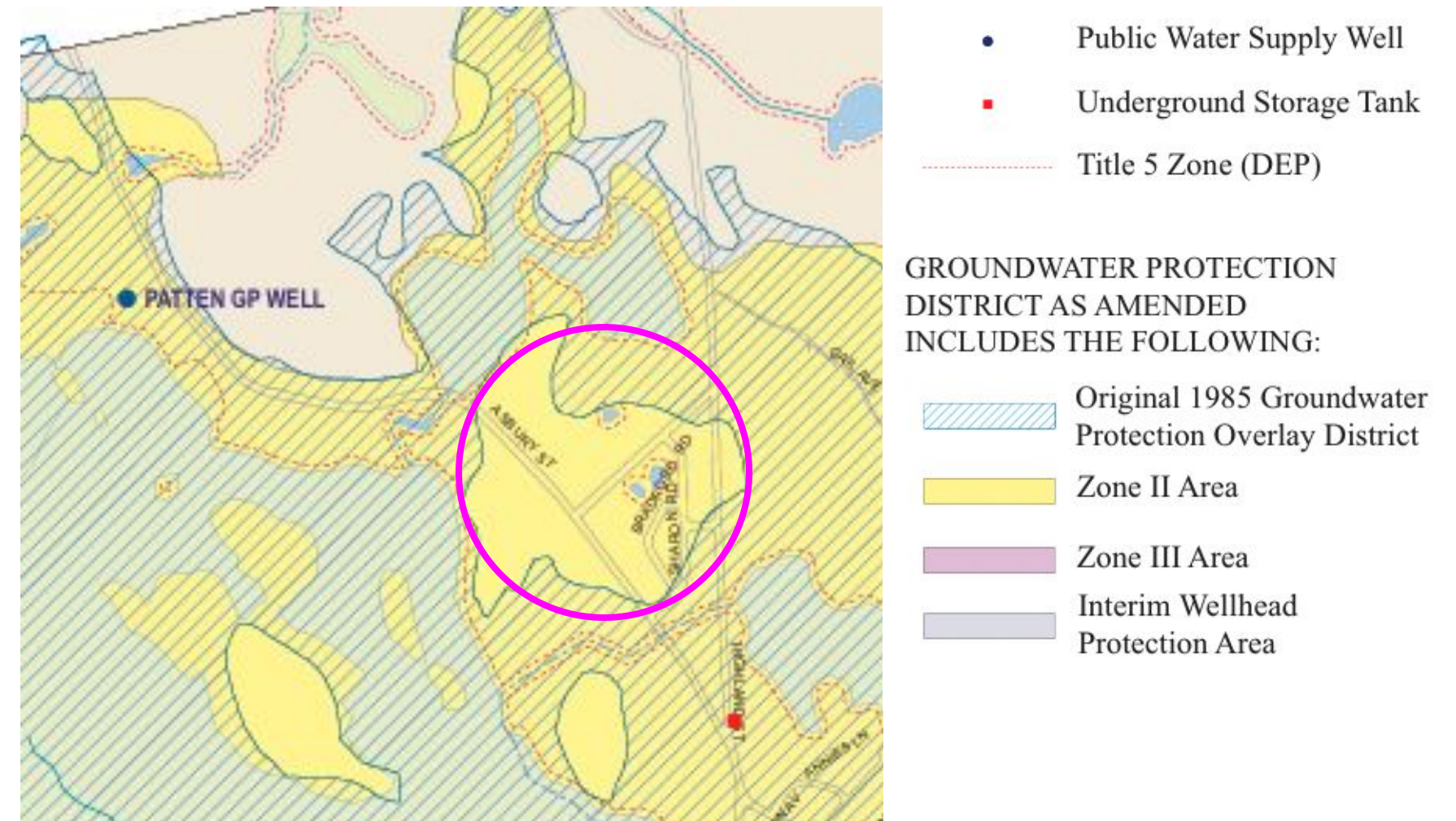
Downtown Modeled
Multifamily Unit Capacity
393



Note: we used 70% open space as a conservative assumption for the compliance model only in order to confirm that it was possible to fit the residential units necessary for compliance while acknowledging the reality that these areas are on septic and therefore may only be developable with substantial open space in excess of what the zoning would require.

Key Discussion Points for Draft Zoning

1. Approach to inclusionary zoning - intend to set at 10%, starting at 10 units. Add Downtown?
2. GPOD Amendment - we will need to exempt the North Asbury district from the amended requirements
3. Sunset clause - confirm if there is desire to include this for both the Town Center and North Asbury or just North Asbury
4. Confirm allowed uses and SPGA



Ground Water Protection Overlay District (GPOD) Interaction

- Includes 1985 GPOD, DEP approved Zone II and IWPA's. The North Asbury District is in the Zone II area, and is largely outside the DEP Title 5 Zone. See [Map](#).
- 80,000 sf minimum building lot area per unit (as amended)
- Special Permit required for any use rendering more than 15% or 2,500sf of the lot area impervious (whichever is greater)

Remaining Public Process

The development of the draft code framework was completed under the guidance of the Task Force in lieu of the Planning Board with the goal of having a full draft of the code by early April.

1. Draft Code Framework

This Planning Board meeting focused on presenting the draft code framework developed with the Task Force to orient the Planning Board. The first full written draft of the code was shared as a follow-up to the meeting. This was the first opportunity for public comment on the code.

2. Draft Code: today

This will be an opportunity for more detailed feedback from the Planning Board on the full draft code. Public comment will be admitted at this point as well.

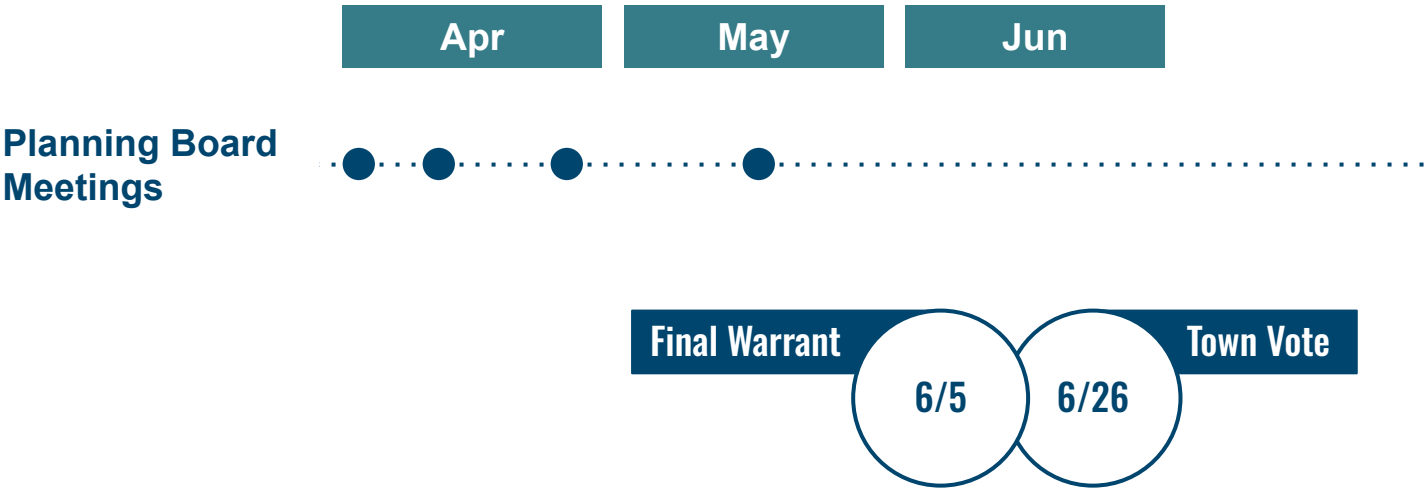
3. Revised Code: late April

A yet-to-be scheduled Planning Board meeting, ideally a joint meeting with the Select Board, will be the final opportunity for Planning Board and public comment on the code.

4. Final Code: mid/late May

A yet-to-be scheduled Planning Board meeting, ideally a joint meeting with the Select Board, will serve as a handoff from the Planning to the Select Board.

Note: code needs to be final and go to warrant by no less than 2 weeks prior to Town Meeting. Suggest 6/5 as a target date.



Help us confirm dates

Let's confirm dates for the remaining 2 Planning Board meetings.

1. Revised Code: late April
2. Final Code: mid/late May

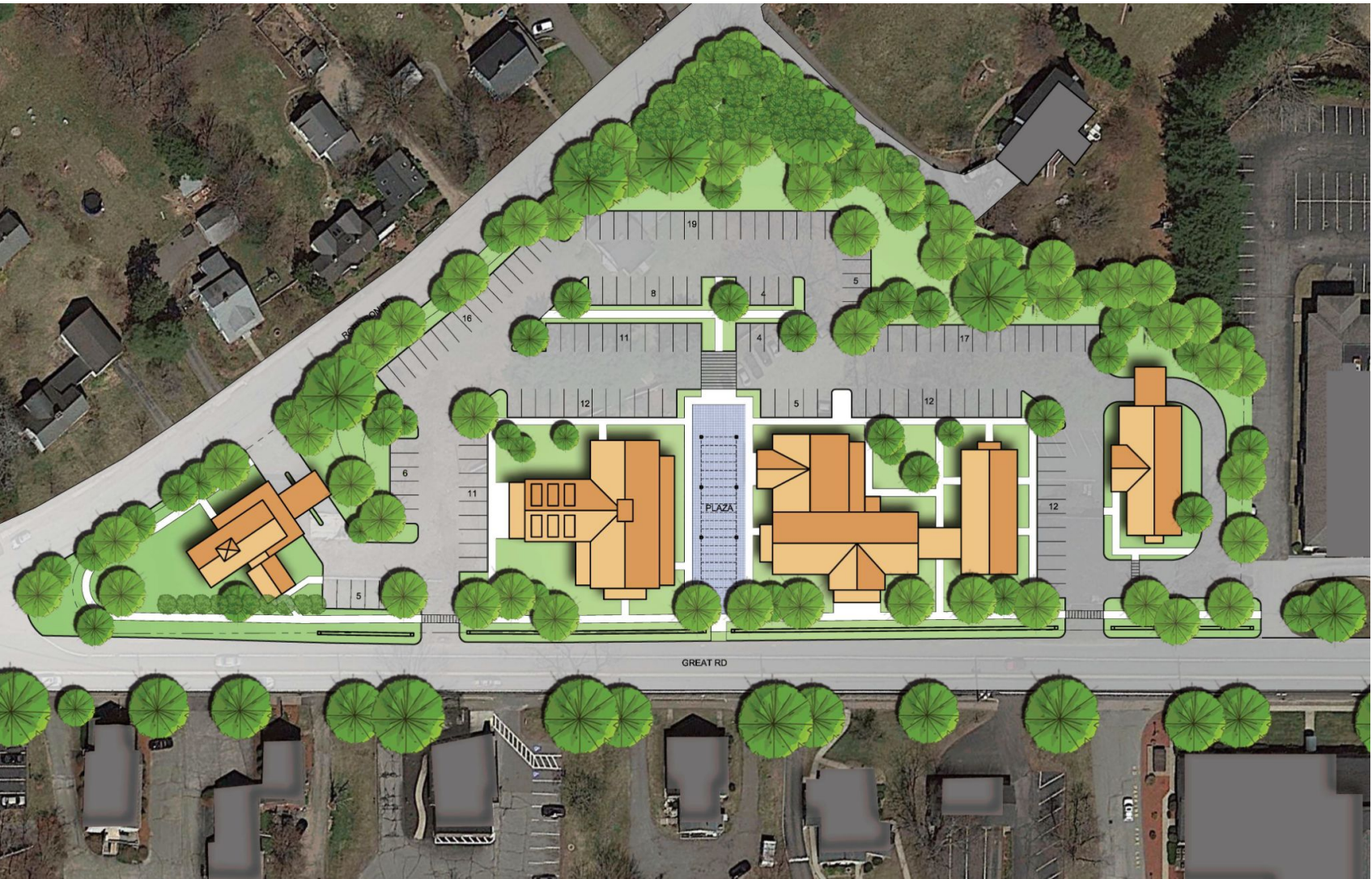
Note: code needs to be final and go to warrant by no less than 2 weeks prior to Town Meeting. Suggest 6/5 as a target date.

An aerial photograph of a suburban town. The image shows a mix of residential houses with grey and brown roofs, interspersed with lush green trees. A prominent road runs diagonally from the bottom left towards the top right. Along this road, there are several commercial or institutional buildings, including a large school building with a dark roof and a large parking lot filled with cars. In the upper right corner, there is a green baseball field with a blue infield. The overall scene is a typical suburban landscape.

Thank you!

Examples of Form-Based Code

Littleton, MA Form-Based Code: Development Proposal



A Primer on 3A & 40B Interaction

Chapter 40B (aka Comprehensive Permit Law)

Chapter 40B is a state statute that aims to increase the supply of affordable housing in the state. It enables local Zoning Boards of Appeals to approve affordable housing developments under flexible rules if at least 20-25% of the units have long-term affordability restrictions. Learn more [here](#).

“Safe Harbor” and the Housing Unit Minimum (10% Rule)

A community can claim “safe harbor” from 40B based on a number of provisions. A key safe harbor option is if at least 10% of a municipality’s total housing units are classified as affordable. [This site](#) has a good overview.

Where does Hamilton stand on its Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) as of June 2023?

- 2,804 Year Round Housing Units (2020 Census)
- 130 total units in developments containing SHI Units
- 114 SHI Units
- **4.07% (SHI Units / 2804 Units)**

How could Gordon Conwell impact this?

- If Gordon Conwell (209 units) had at least 25% affordable to households earning 80% or less of the Area Median Income (AMI), then all 209 could count towards the SHI, bringing Hamilton to 11.5% of total units (2020 census).
- If future housing developments were required to achieve 10% affordability, this would effectively maintain safe harbor

Section 3A (aka MBTA Communities Act)

Section 3A of Chapter 40A is a state statute that aims to enable housing production by requiring communities to allow multifamily housing near transit by right under their local zoning. This is focused on removing barriers to the housing development needed to address the statewide housing crisis.

Can you have inclusionary zoning that requires affordability under 3A compliant zoning?

Yes. There are two pathways depending on the level of affordability:

1. Require 10% or less - this is allowed as part of 3A compliant zoning for all communities
2. Require more than 10% - this is allowed only if an Economic Feasibility Analysis (EFA) following EOHLC guidelines is submitted demonstrating that the affordability requirement would not make projects infeasible.

Appendix

Engagement & Vision Plan

Additional Town Center Vision Plan & Engagement Documentation

Engagement Summary

343 Responses
Public Visioning Survey

- July 25th to September 8th
- Online only
- Minor adjustments were made and an extension was granted to improve user friendliness based on feedback received from a few community members

50 Participants
Public Visioning Workshop Meeting

- July 25th
- Hybrid: In-Person & Zoom
- Hybrid Live Polling
- In-person input via Boards
- In-person input via Handouts

5 Meetings
Advisory Committee

- 2 virtual meetings with consultant team to provide feedback and input on draft work products
- 3 additional in-person independent workshops to shape the Town Center vision and framework plan in order to inform the form based code with resident observations and ideas for the future

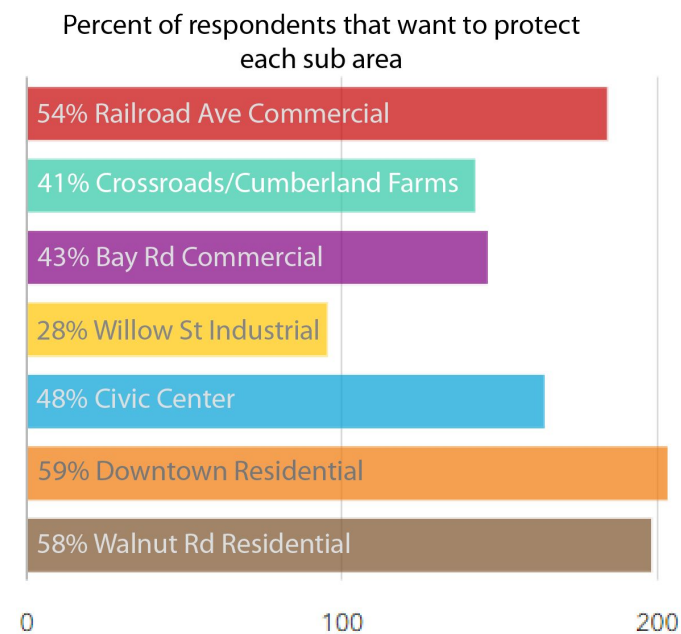
Guiding Principles / Core Values

The following core values have emerged from engagement thus far, and can be considered to be the guiding principles for encouraging gentle, context-sensitive positive change in Hamilton’s Town Center.

Historic Patterns

Preserve the historic character of Hamilton Town Center and the residential neighborhoods surrounding it.

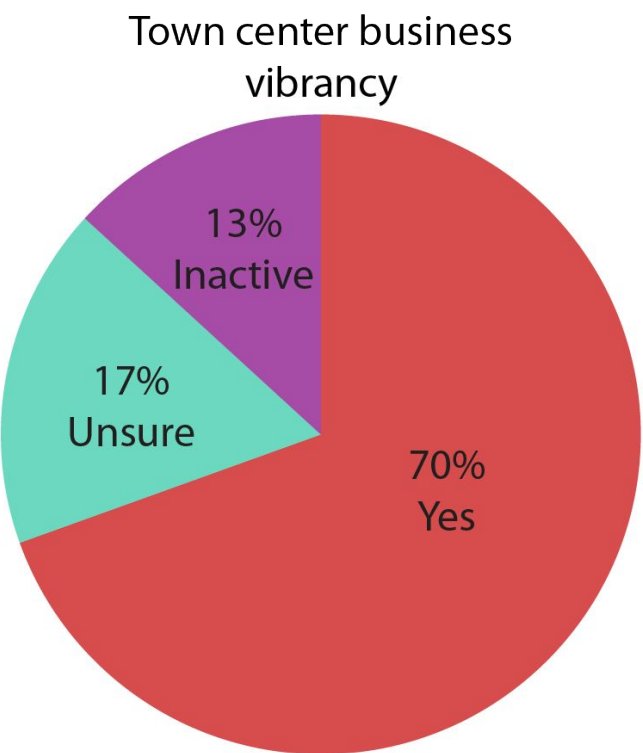
- Over 40% of respondents want to protect all but one of the seven sub-areas



Vibrancy

Support economic vitality and a healthy mix of business.

- Most respondents reported that vibrancy in the town center is a mixed bag
- 60% of survey takers report wanting more restaurants and 55% want more specialty retail



Variety

Encourage a variety of forms that respect Hamilton’s building traditions and resist homogeneity.

- In the survey over 50% of respondents indicated that they feel four different housing types fit with the pattern of Hamilton’s neighborhoods.

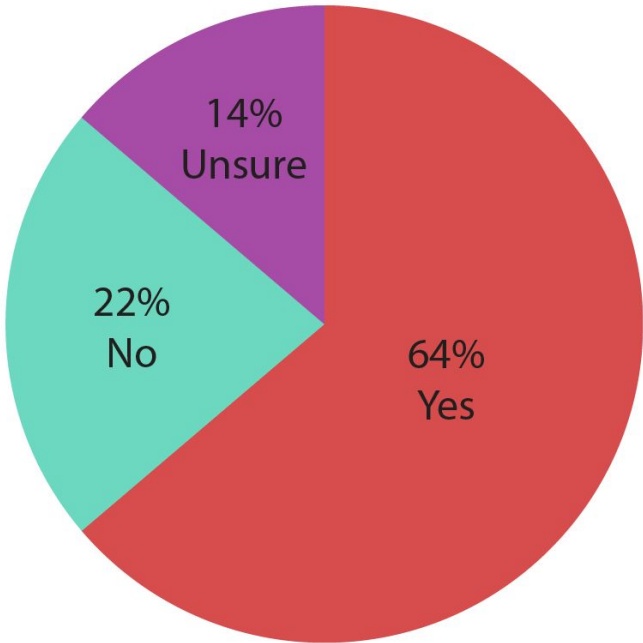


Housing Diversity

Encourage a mix of housing types that support Hamilton residents at all incomes and stages of life.

- 64% of respondents believe that more housing types would benefit the town of Hamilton to some degree.

Would more housing types for smaller households benefit Hamilton?



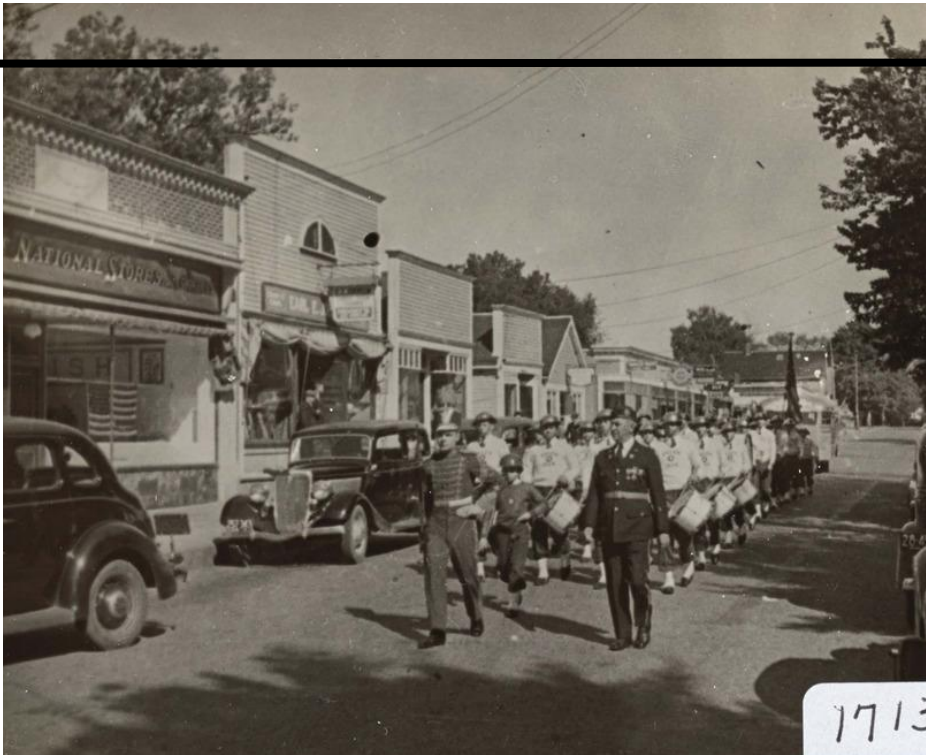
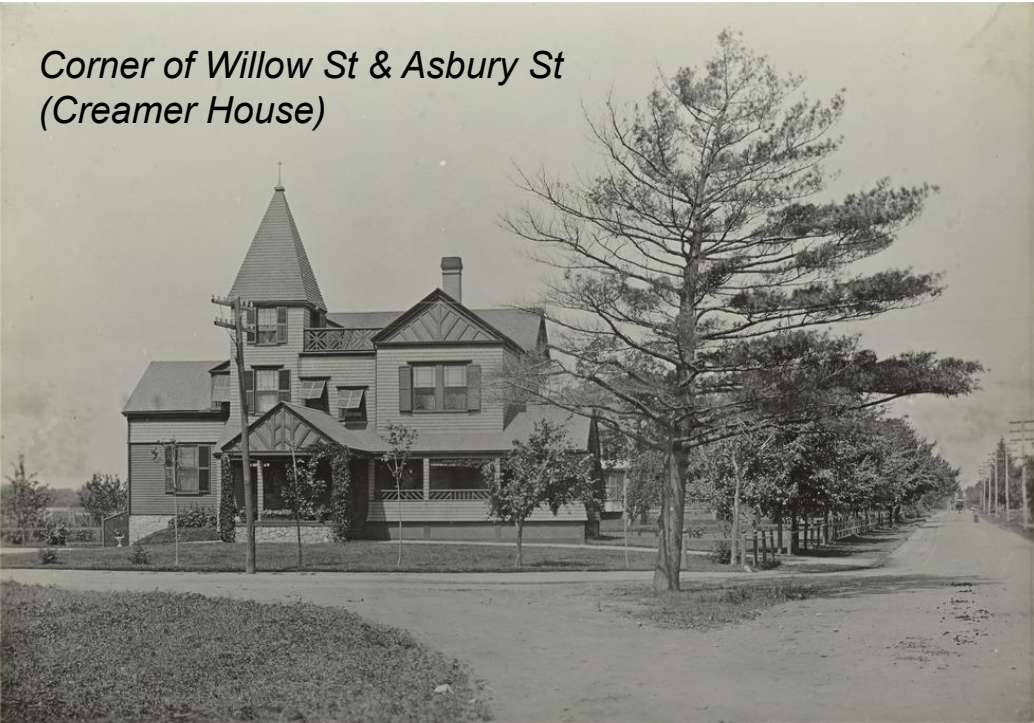
Connected & Cohesive

Encourage a cohesive and walkable downtown area.

- Connection to walkable streets and sidewalks was the most important factor for future housing in Hamilton according to the survey.
- When we asked in the Public Visioning Workshop live polling what features are most important to the patterns of development in the Town Center, most mentioned words were:
 - Sidewalks
 - Trees & Plantings
 - Parks
 - Parking
 - Streets & Traffic
 - Railroad

Building on a Rich and Varied Past

Courtesy of Advisory Committee research and the Hamilton Historical Society. Special thanks to Scott Clements.



Strengthening & Connecting Valued Places

Based on Independent Advisory Committee Workshops



Civic Destinations & Gathering Places:

To be preserved and reinforced through strengthened connections and gateways and appropriate parking.

- Patton Park
- Pingree Park
- The Community House
- Hamilton/Wenham Library

Linear Connections & Experiences:

To be preserved/restored and reinforced/extended.

- Willow St - pedestrian friendly pattern. Potential to extend towards Asbury St and improve traffic and pedestrian safety at key intersections.
- Bay Rd - historic/scenic street pattern. Potential to be a scenic spine and greenway with pedestrian lighting and enhanced walkability.
- Railroad Ave - pedestrian-friendly historic commercial. Potential to enhance walkability, wayfinding, safety, street cohesiveness and connection to commercial across rail and intersection barriers
- Greenway - existing pathway and green corridor could be formally recognized and strengthened/extended to create more robust connection and greenway loop with Bay Rd

Public Realm & Mobility Enhancement Framework

Utile Adaptation of Independent Advisory Committee Workshop Framework

The Town Center can be understood as a loop with a center of gravity at Railroad Ave. Bay Rd, Willow St, Linden St, and Asbury St each play supporting roles to complete the loop and tie it to other park and civic assets like the library, school, etc.

Intersection improvements should be holistic, addressing visual experiences as well as safety and traffic concerns.



Potential to Strengthen Linden St & Union St Connections to Library & Pingree Park

Potential to Strengthen Linden St & Bay Rd / Main St Connections to Pingree Park

Potential for enhanced crossing and park gateway. Explore potential rotary intersection.

Important visual relationship, not a crossing

Strengthen street wall with infill buildings and tree canopy along public Bay Rd frontage

Desire lines are shown to encourage improved vehicular and pedestrian connections throughout the Town Center. The lines shown are not intended to prescriptive solutions but rather suggestive of potential solutions to create a more connective and cohesive street and pathway network to unify the elements that contribute to a vibrant Town Center.

Shared district parking solutions are encouraged along these potential new secondary and side streets.

Town Center Change Feedback

Based on Public Visioning Workshop, Advisory Committee Input & Public Visioning Survey

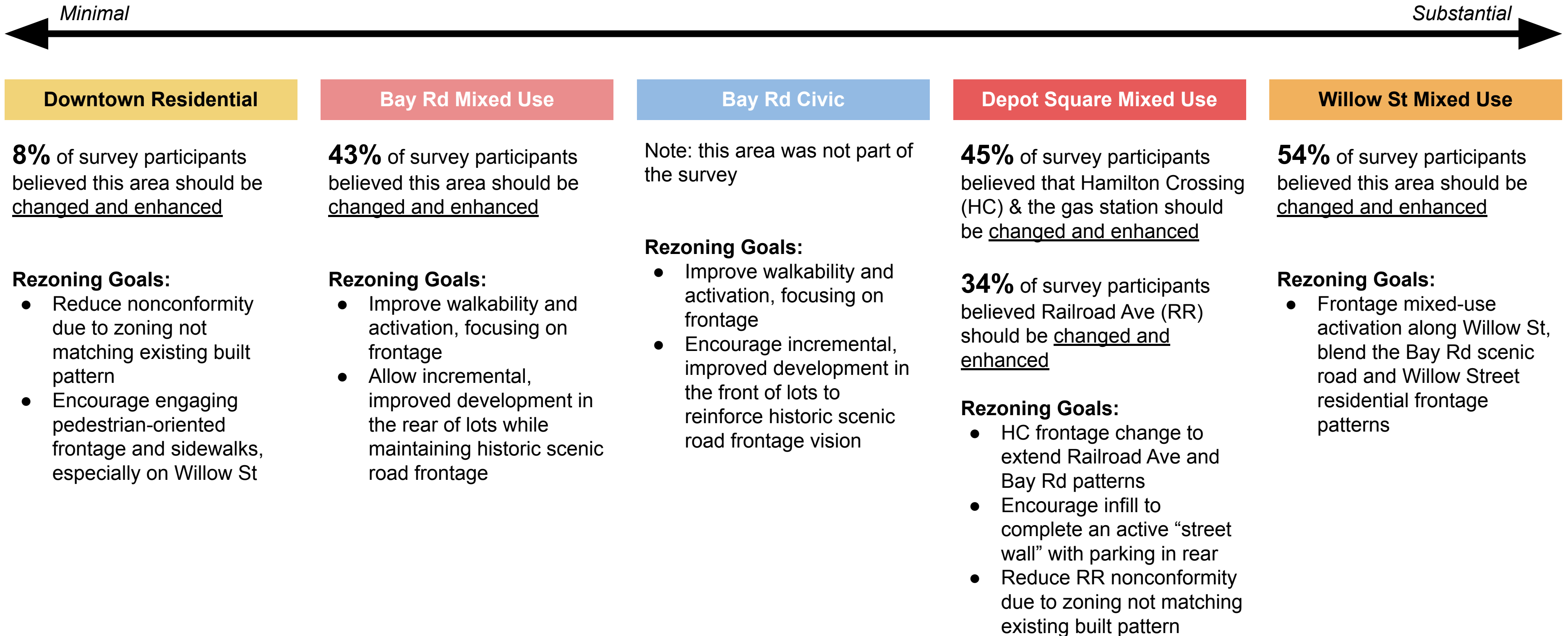


Town Center Zoning Subdistricts



Subdistrict Degree of Change Spectrum

How the subdistricts might change in response to frontage type insights



Understanding the Limits of Zoning

The role of building frontages versus public and infrastructural capital projects

Private Street Frontage

This is the domain of zoning

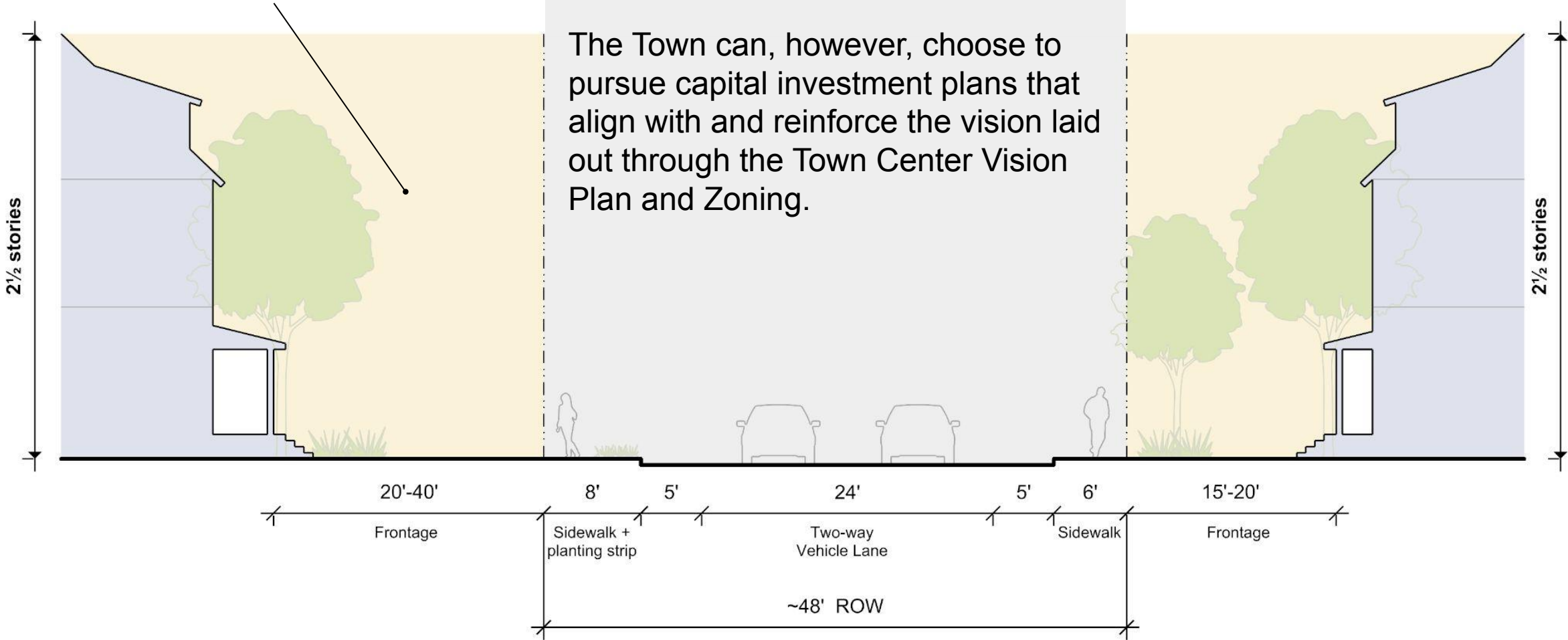
Zoning is very effective at controlling how private property owners design buildings and site elements in relationship to the street. This is referred to as a property’s “frontage” on a street, path or even a rail right-of-way.

Public Right-of-Way

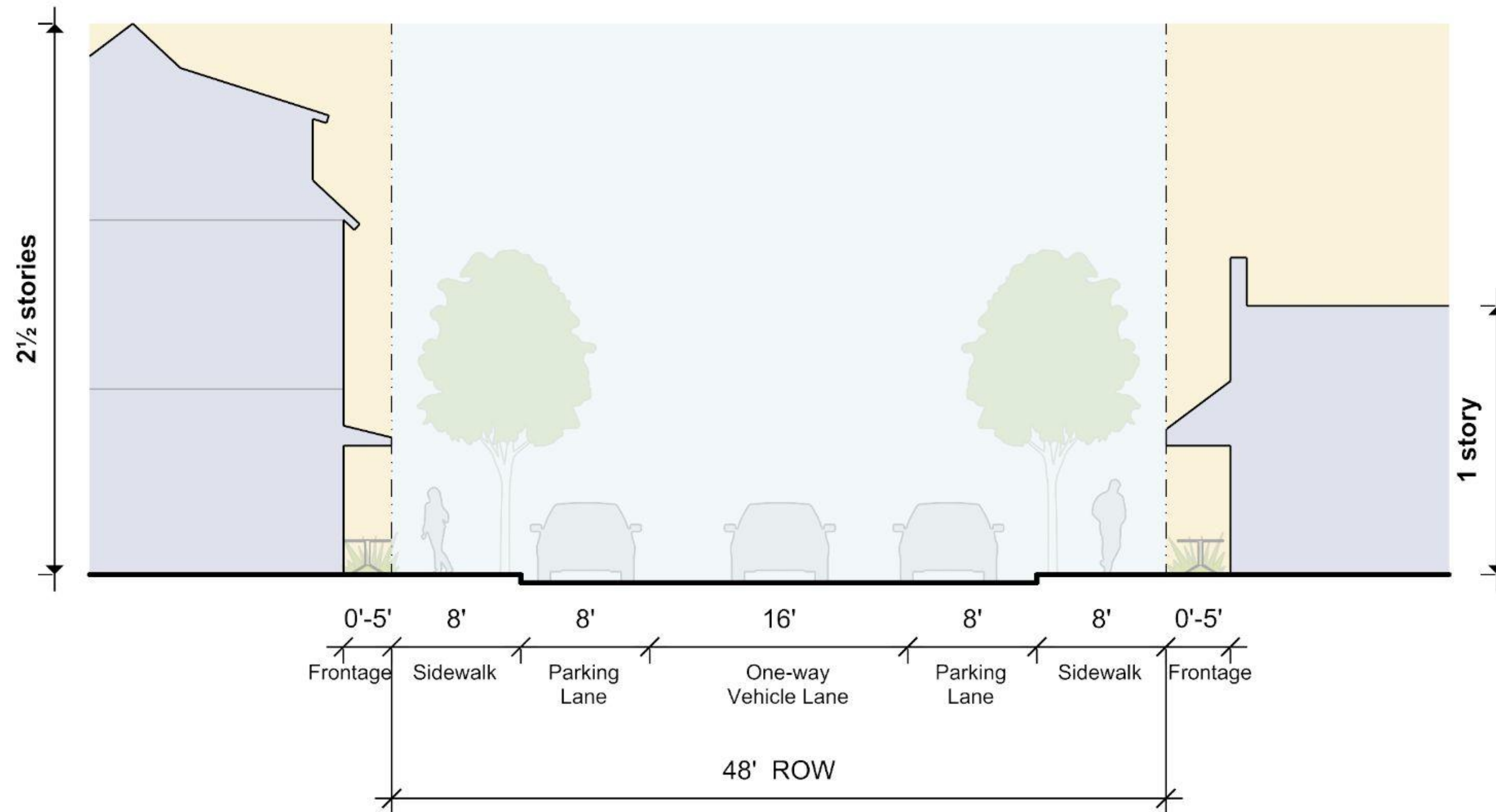
Zoning doesn’t apply here

Zoning cannot control the design of the publicly owned street, nor can it mandate the private or public delivery of infrastructure and services.

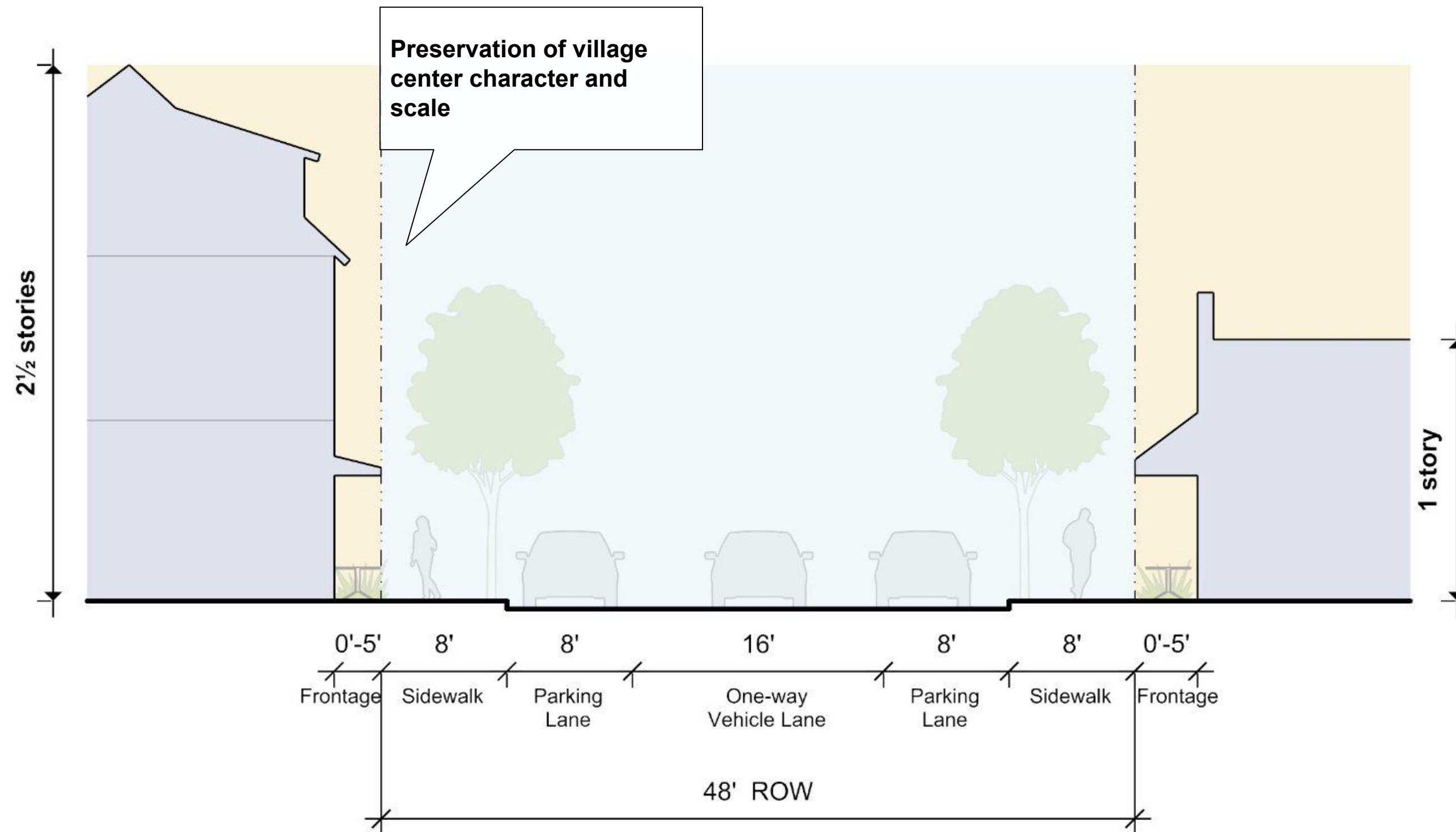
The Town can, however, choose to pursue capital investment plans that align with and reinforce the vision laid out through the Town Center Vision Plan and Zoning.



Railroad Ave Street Section: Existing

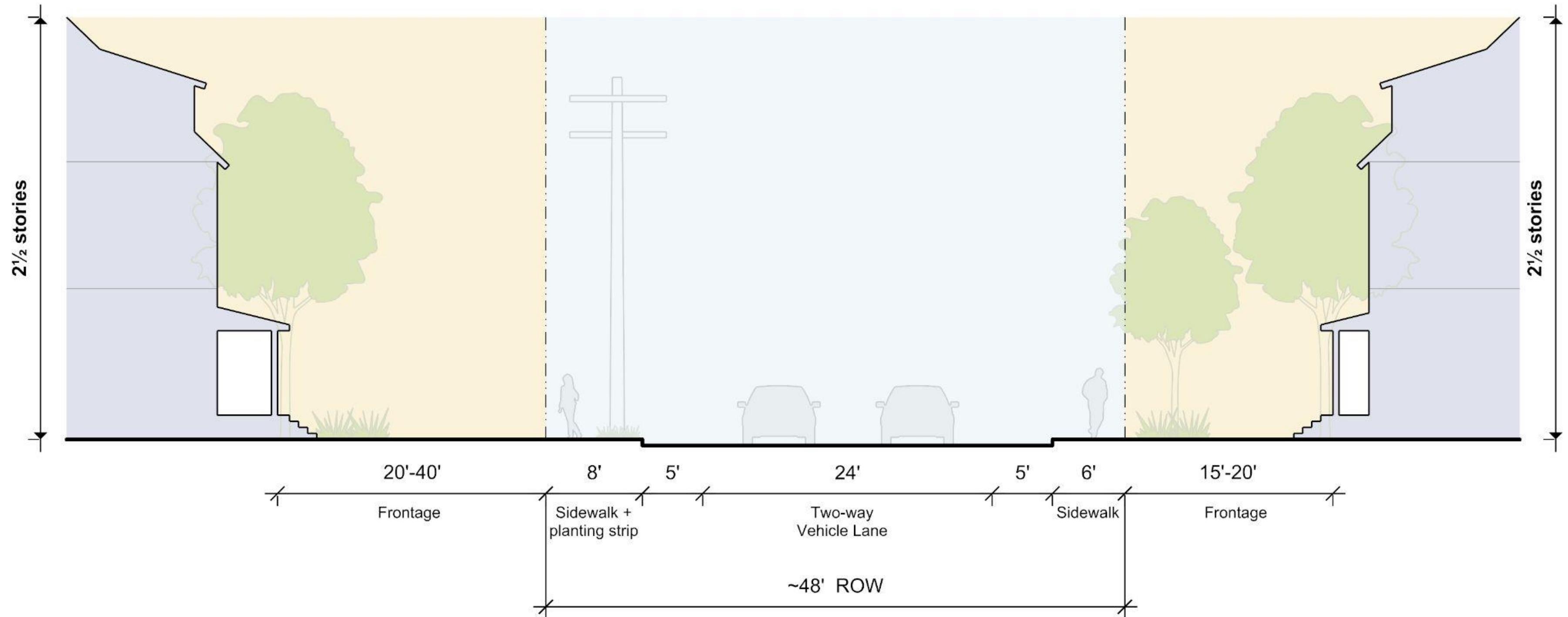


Railroad Ave Street Section: Vision



Bay Road Street Section: Existing

Note: Bay Rd (State Route 1A) changes require rigorous State review.

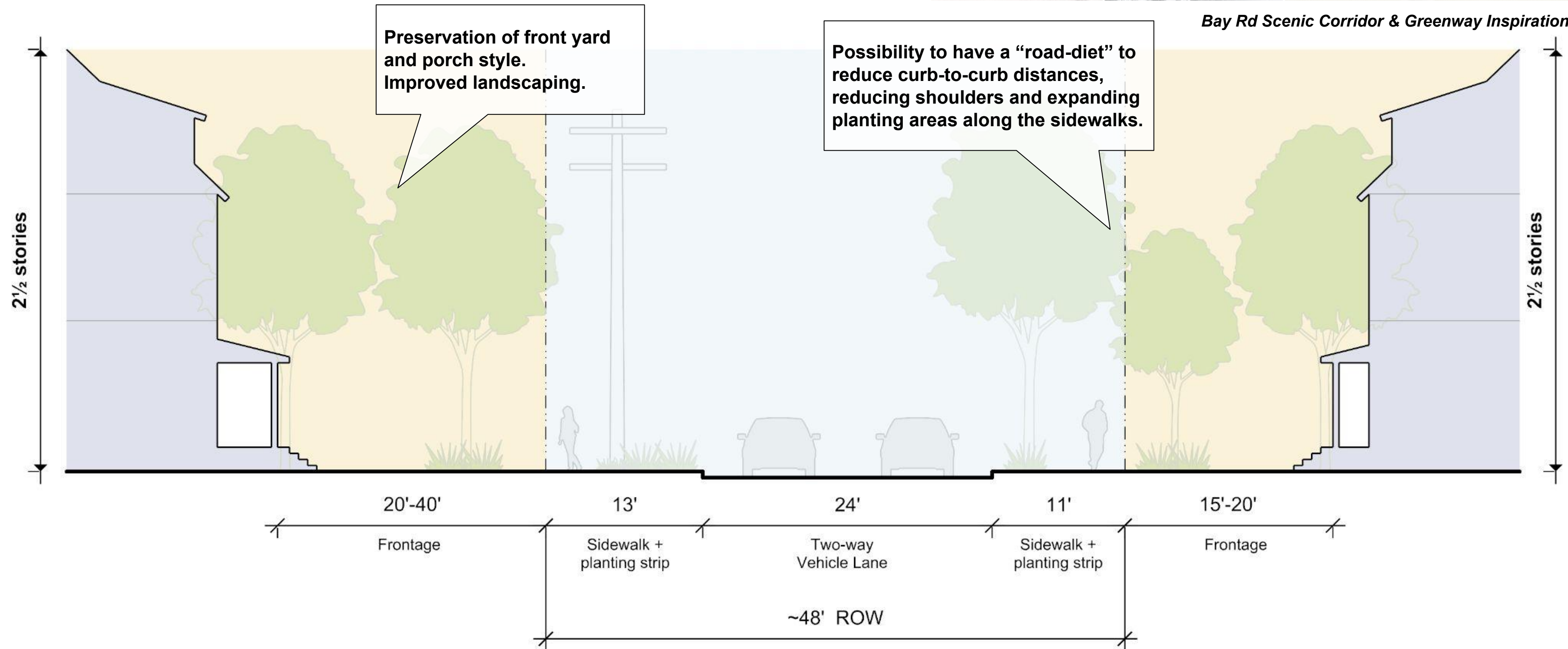


Bay Road Street Section: Vision

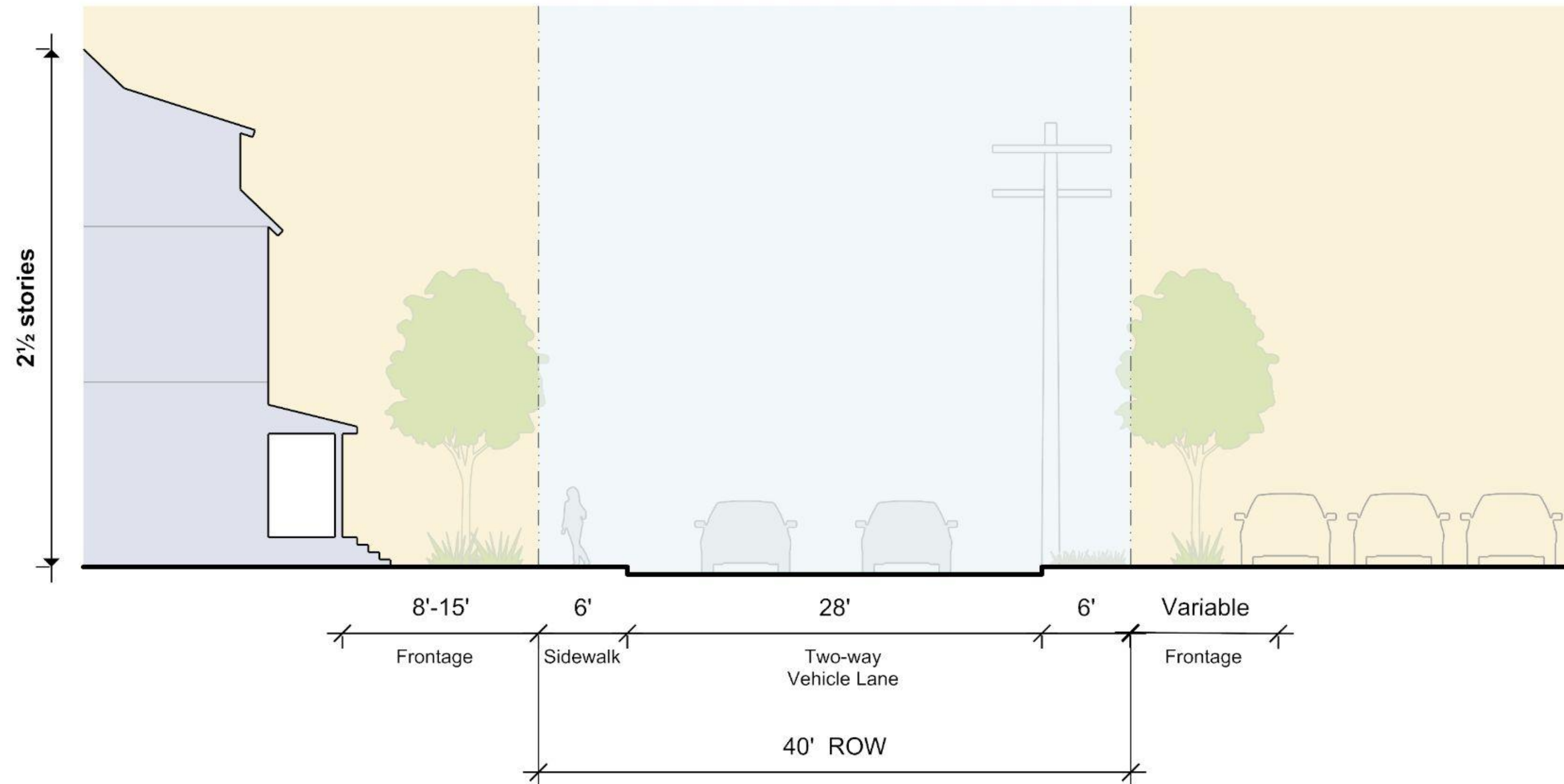
Note: Bay Rd (State Route 1A) changes require rigorous State review.



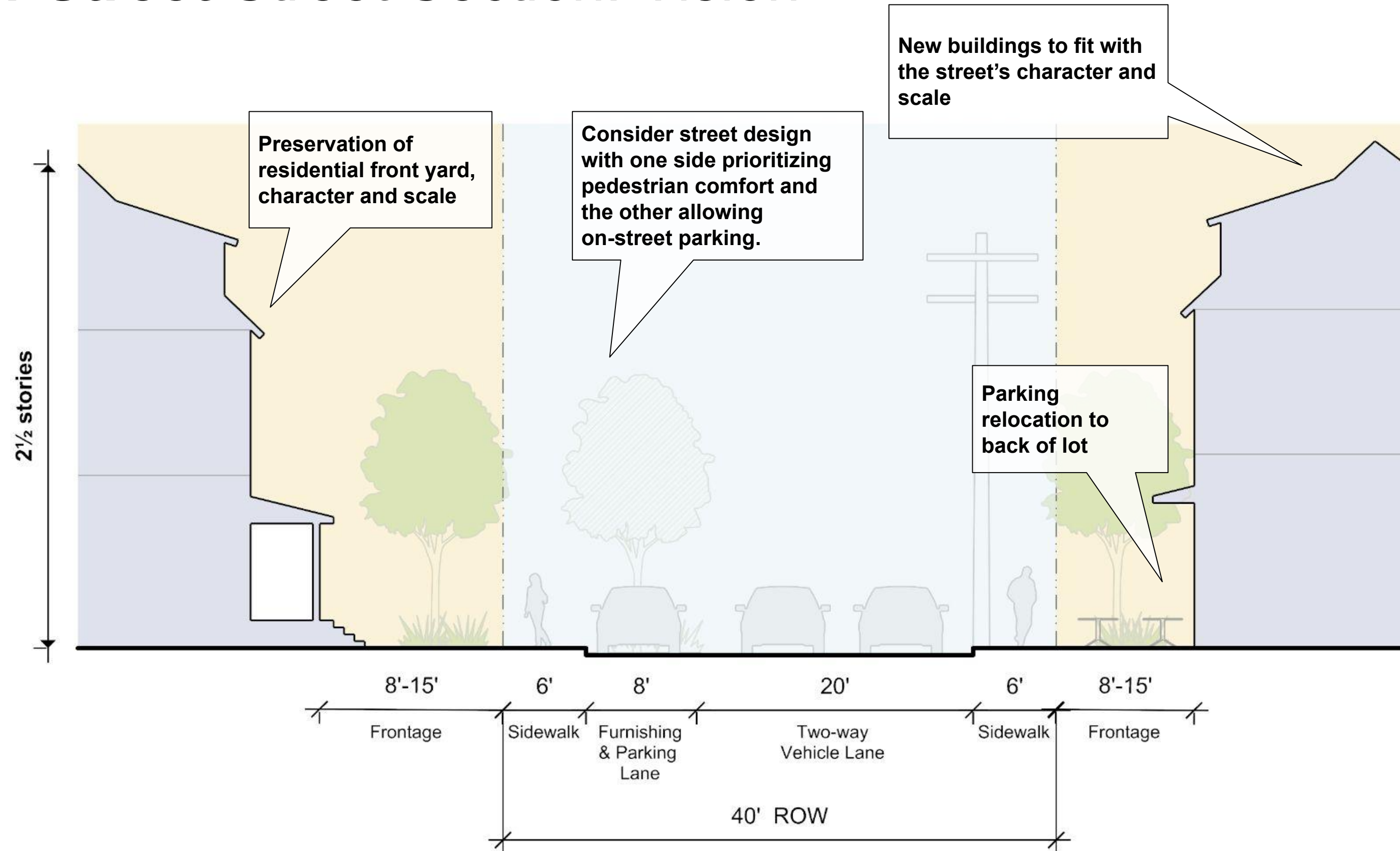
Bay Rd Scenic Corridor & Greenway Inspiration



Willow Street Street Section: Existing



Willow Street Street Section: Vision



Design Standards to Regulate Building Forms

Primary Tools

Deconstructing ways of controlling building forms through zoning

We suggest that future zoning regulate building form through the following principal mechanisms:

1

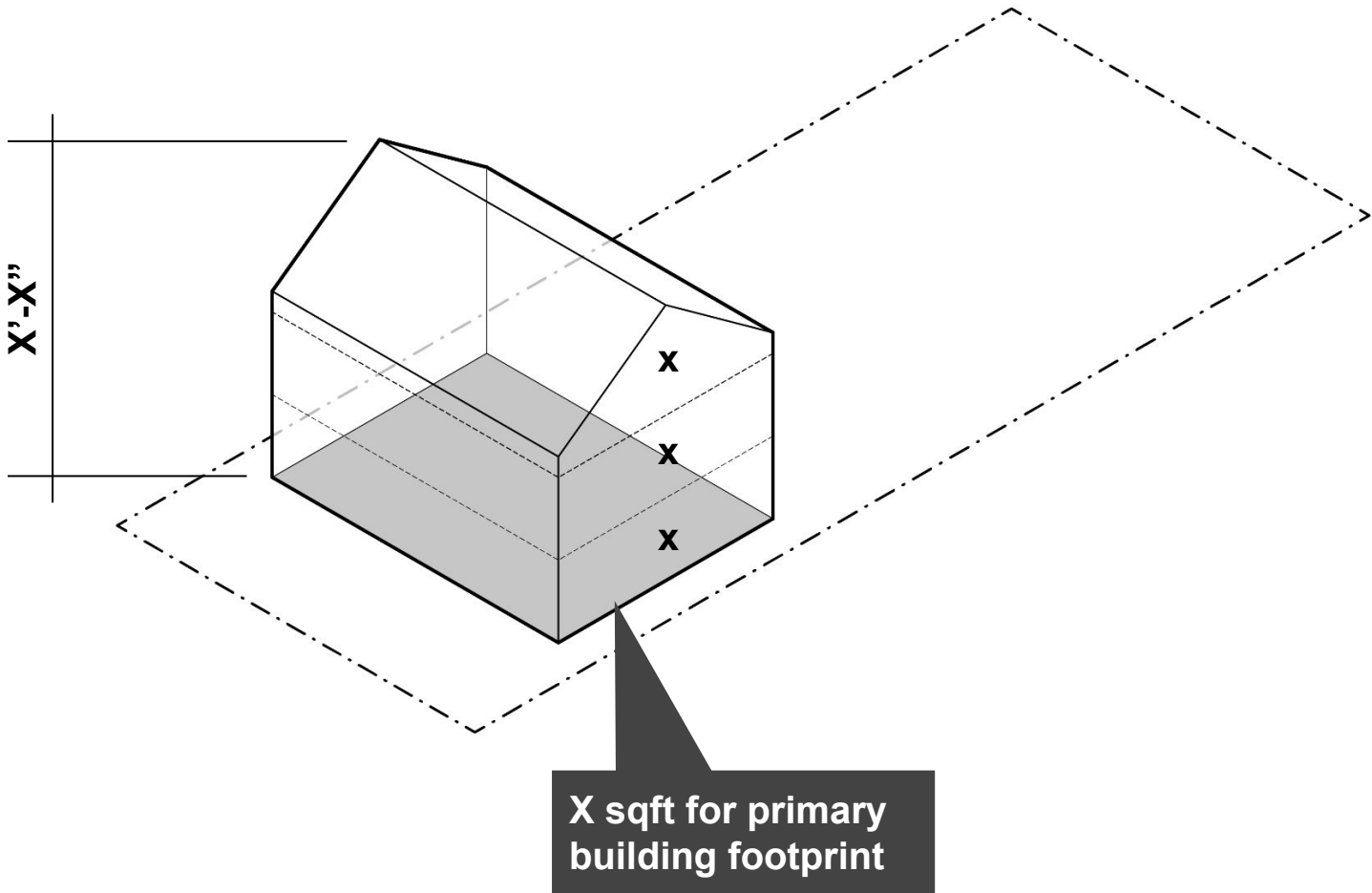
Building Footprint
Sets the maximum area per story

2

Building Height
Sets the maximum height in stories/feet

3

Roof Form
Provides options for a flat or pitched roof half-story



Building Height: Current Definitions

In Hamilton, building height is measured from the average elevation at the front of the building to the highest point of the top story in the case of a flat roof, and to the mean height between the plate and the ridge in the case of a pitched roof.

How Hamilton Measures Height:

From: average elevation of the finished lot grade at the front of the building

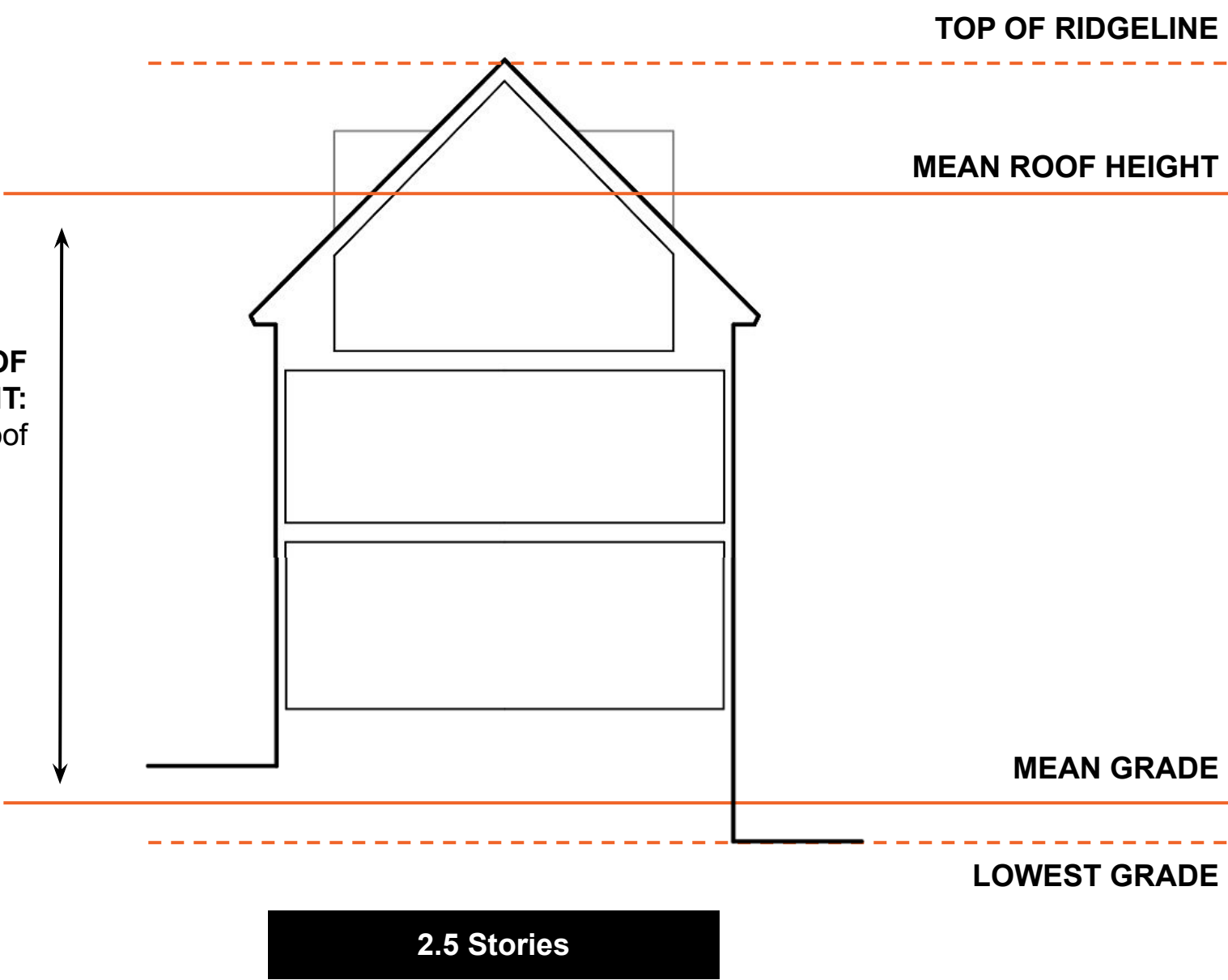
To (varies):

- Flat Roof: highest point of the top story
- Pitched Roof: mean height between the plate and the ridge

Defining stories:

- the portion of a building between the upper surface of any floor and the upper surface of the floor next above
- more than one half of its height must be above the average elevation of the finished grade adjoining the building
- any part of a building between the topmost floor and the roof shall be deemed a half-story

HAMILTON DEFINITION OF BUILDING HEIGHT:
mean front grade → mean roof



Building Height Case Studies



Location:
60 Railroad Ave. Hamilton, MA

Relevant Subdistrict:
Railroad Ave

Building Height:
35 ft - Top of Ridgeline
27.5 ft - Hamilton Definition*



Location:
45 Bay Rd, Hamilton, MA

Relevant Subdistrict:
Railroad Ave

Building Height:
33 ft - Top of Ridgeline
26.5 ft - Hamilton Definition*



Location:
284 Bay Rd, Hamilton, MA

Relevant Subdistrict:
Bay Road Mixed Use

Building Height:
36 ft - Top of Ridgeline
28 ft - Hamilton Definition*



Location:
176 Willow St, Hamilton, MA

Relevant Subdistrict:
Downtown Residential

Building Height:
38 ft - Top of Ridgeline
31 ft - Hamilton Definition*



Location:
Hamilton Town Hall

Relevant Subdistrict:
Willow Mixed-Use

Building Height:
42 ft - Top of Ridgeline
36 ft - Hamilton Definition*

**Hamilton measures height from average elevation of the finished lot grade at the front of the building to mean of pitched roof height.*

Building Height: Suggested Standards

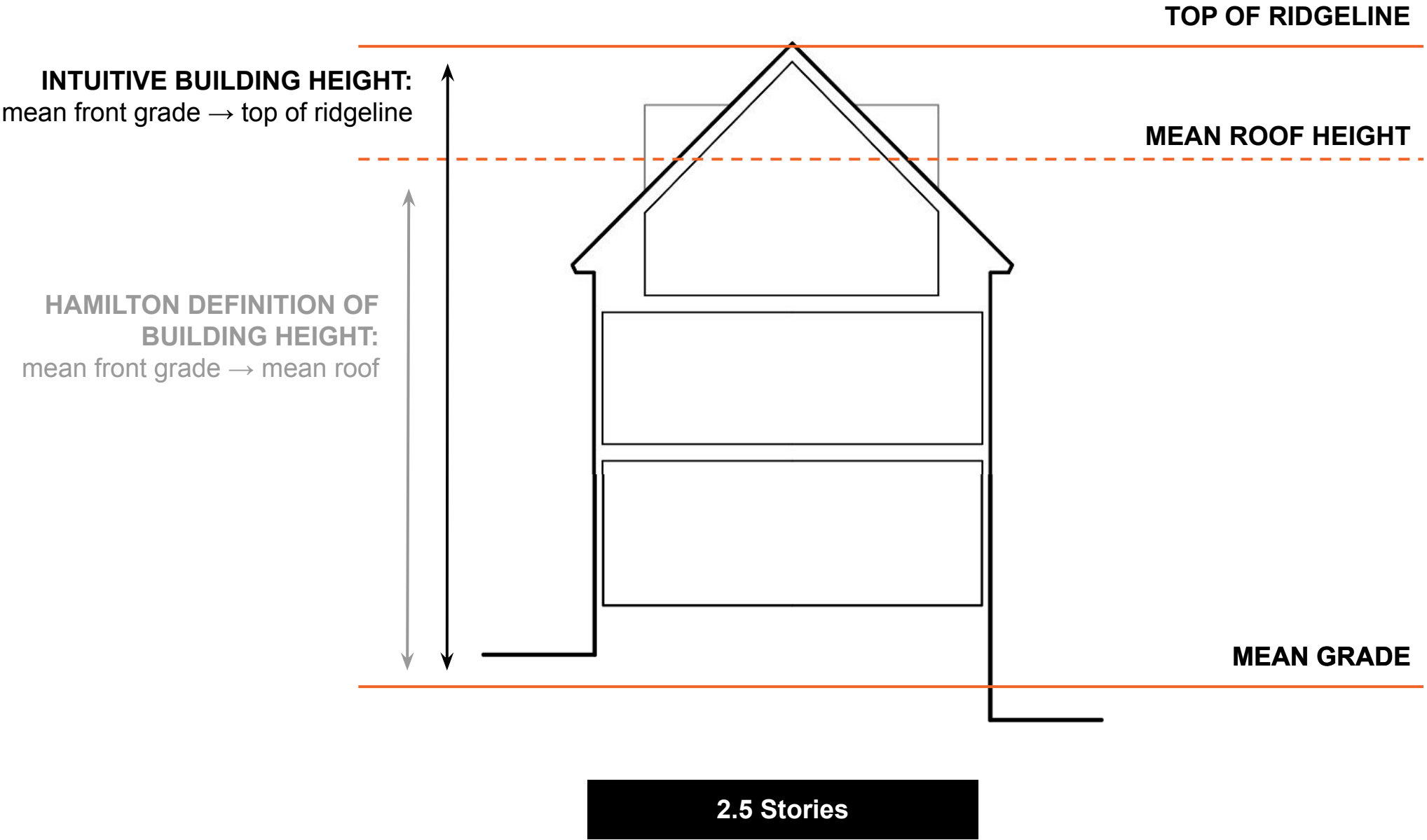
Typical Story Heights:

- Retail/Commercial Ground Floor-to-floor Height: **15'**
- Residential Floor-to-floor Height: **10.5' to 11'**
- Commercial Upper Floor-to-floor Height: **13'**
- Residential Half-Story Height: **14'**

Question: Do you want to consider a ground floor minimum for some or all districts?

Suggested Maximum Building Heights by Use:

Residential Only	
Stories	Height
2.5	36' (2 x 11' story + 14' half-story)
3.5	47' (3 x 11' story + 14' half-story)
Mixed-Use	
Stories	Height
2.5	40-42' (15' ground floor + 11' or 13' + 14' half-story)
3.5	55' (15' ground floor + 2 x 11' or 13'+ 14' half-story)



Note: for more intuitive understanding, we have used the top of the ridgeline for all measurements of height in this table (e.g. building height, half-story height). This will be updated in the final zoning article to be consistent with how Hamilton measures building height.

Roof Form

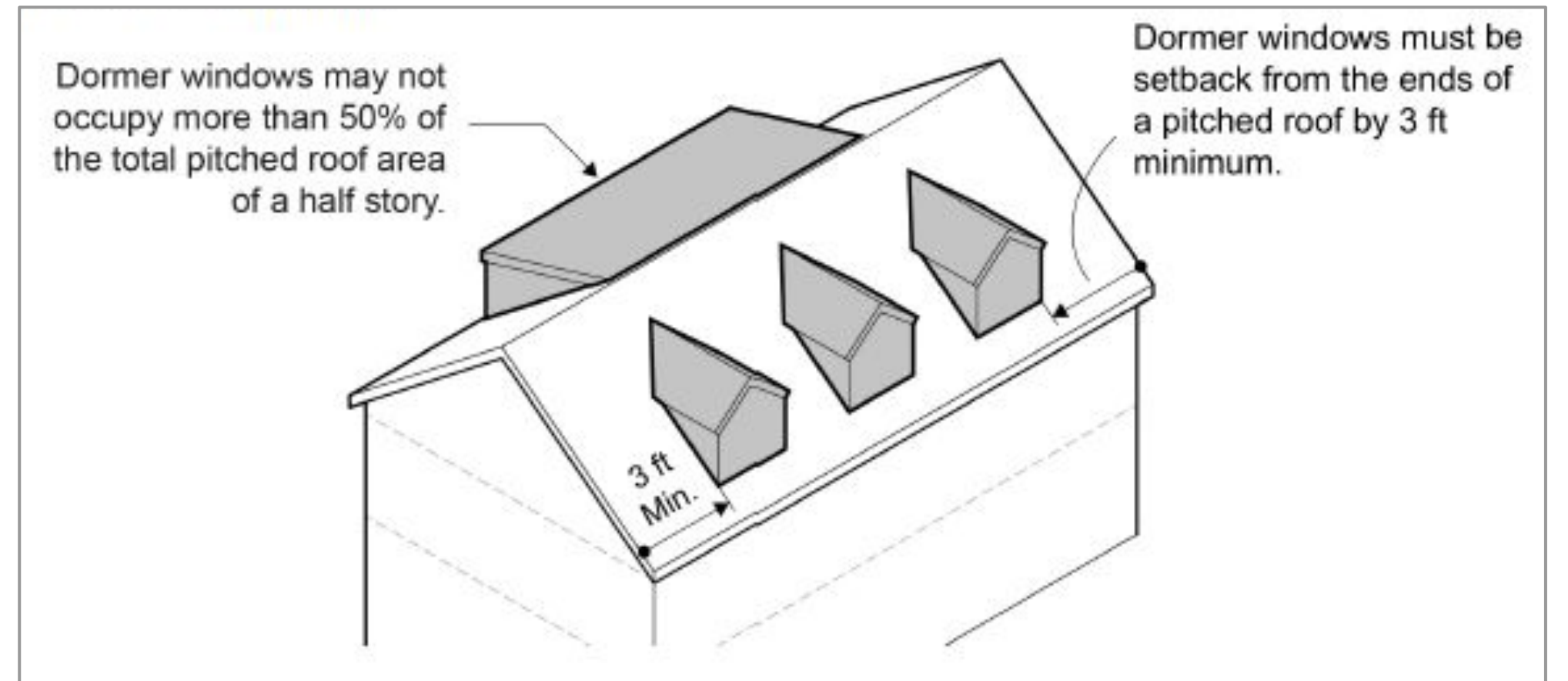
A half story for pitched roofs can be accomplished in many ways....

Your current zoning defines half story as:

“any part of a building between the topmost floor and the roof”

We suggest adding design standards like:

- Maximum slope for roof pitch
- Maximum height for the knee wall
- Dormer requirements, designed to shape the way they are added



Parking Requirements

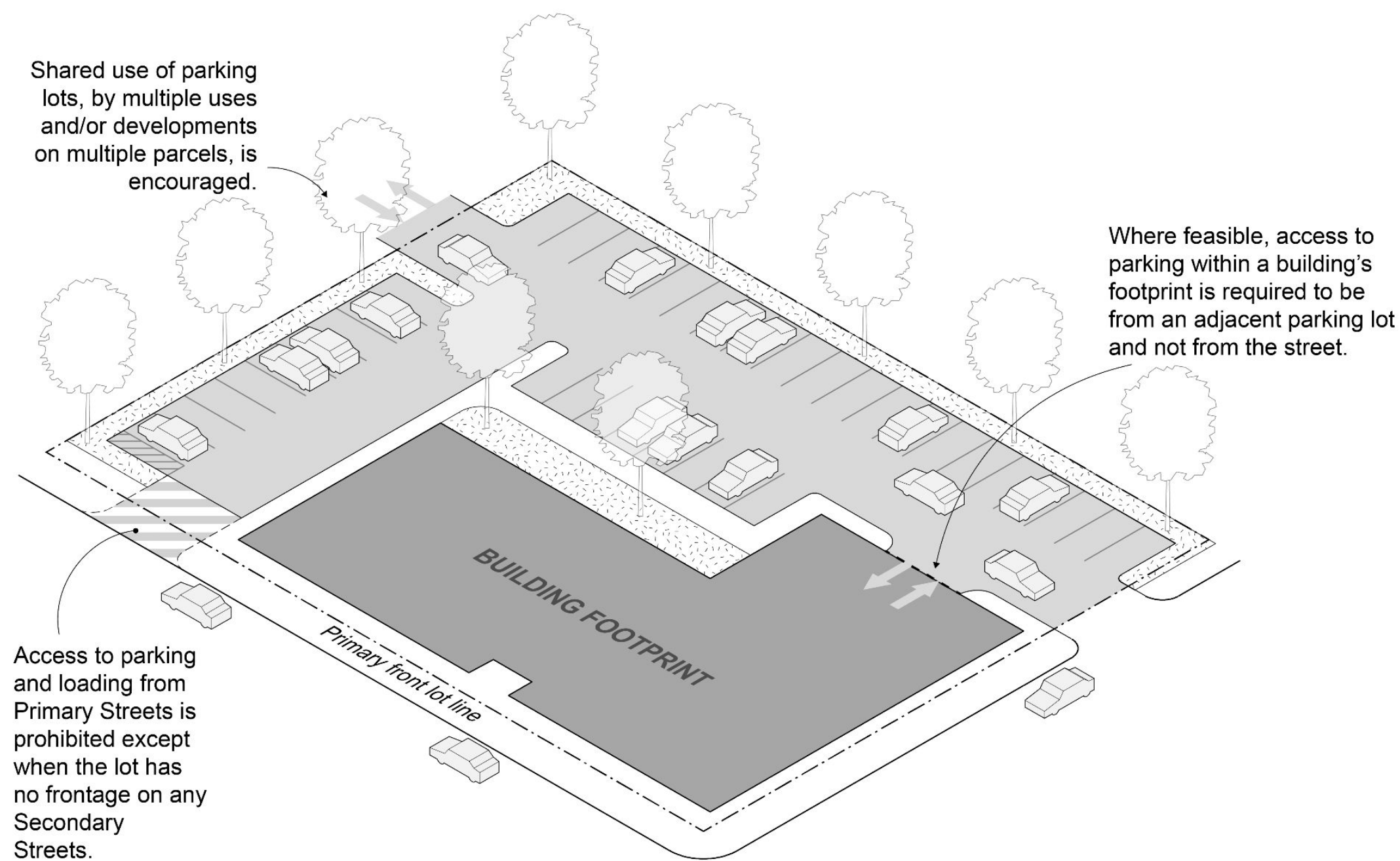
We will include strategies to keep parking out of view and away from the front lot line.

For Example:

Parking Setbacks:

Facing a right of way	12'
Not facing a right of way	4'

- No parking spaces are allowed between the Front Elevation and the Primary Front Lot Line
- Curb cuts are prohibited along the Primary Front Lot Line when access along another lot line is available
- Parking Lots must be separated from the right of way by a building or screening within the parking setback. Screening shall consist of one or a combination of the following:
 - A min. 5'-wide planting strip with planting that provides a buffer from the R.O.W.
 - A wall, barrier, or fence of uniform appearance



Townwide Compliance Summary Table

Downtown + Asbury A

	Key Model Inputs							Model Outputs							
Subdistrict	FAR	Min. Lot Size	Min.. Parking Spaces per Unit	Max. Bldg Height (stories)	Max. % Bldg + Parking Coverage	Max. % Bldg + Parking Coverage	Min. % Open Space	Unit Capacity	Acreage	Density Denomina tor	Modeled Density	% Land in Contiguous Subdistricts	% Land in Transit Area	% Units in Transit Area	Type (Base vs. Overlay)
Willow St Mixed Use	0.40	3,000	1.0	3.5	20%	30%	70%	108	7.2	7.2	14.9	contributing	100%	100%	Base
Bay Rd Mixed Use	0.39	5,000	1.0	2.5	20%	30%	70%	126	9.5	9.5	13.2	contributing	100%	100%	Base
Downtown Residential	0.37	3,000	1.0	2.5	20%	30%	70%	163	15.4	15.4	10.6	contributing	100%	100%	Base
Asbury A	0.42	3,000	1.0	3.0	20%	30%	70%	369	21.7	18.9	19.5		0%	0%	Overlay
TOTAL								809	53.78	51.0	15.01	59.7%	59.7%	51.8%	n/a
COMPLIANCE TARGET								731	49	n/a	15	50%	20%	20%	n/a

Why are special approvals and permits are so common?

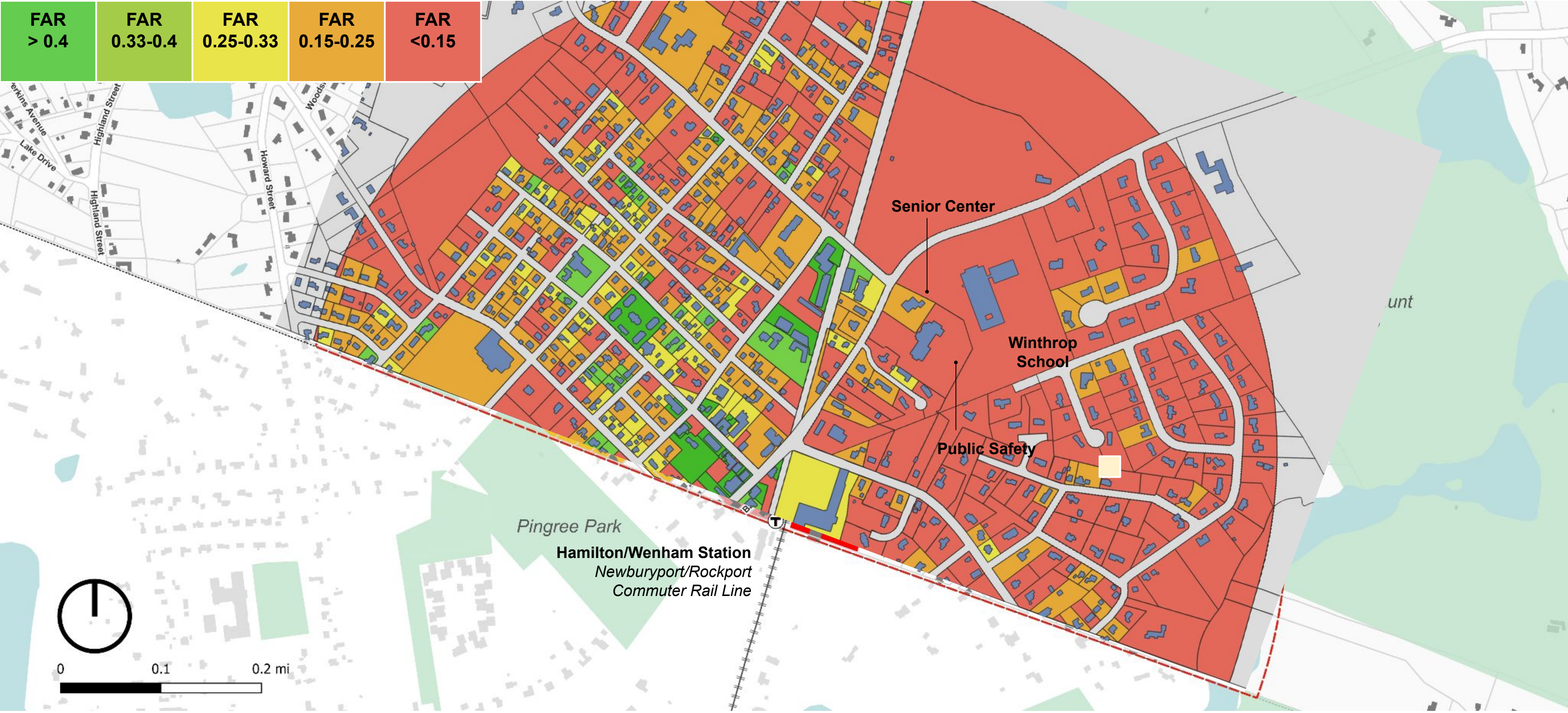


76% of lots in the Study Area are smaller than the minimum lot size for parcels with at least one dwelling unit.

These are all considered “nonconforming lots” because they do not meet current zoning standards.

If you were to consider existing lots with multiple units, it is likely that even more lots are nonconforming.

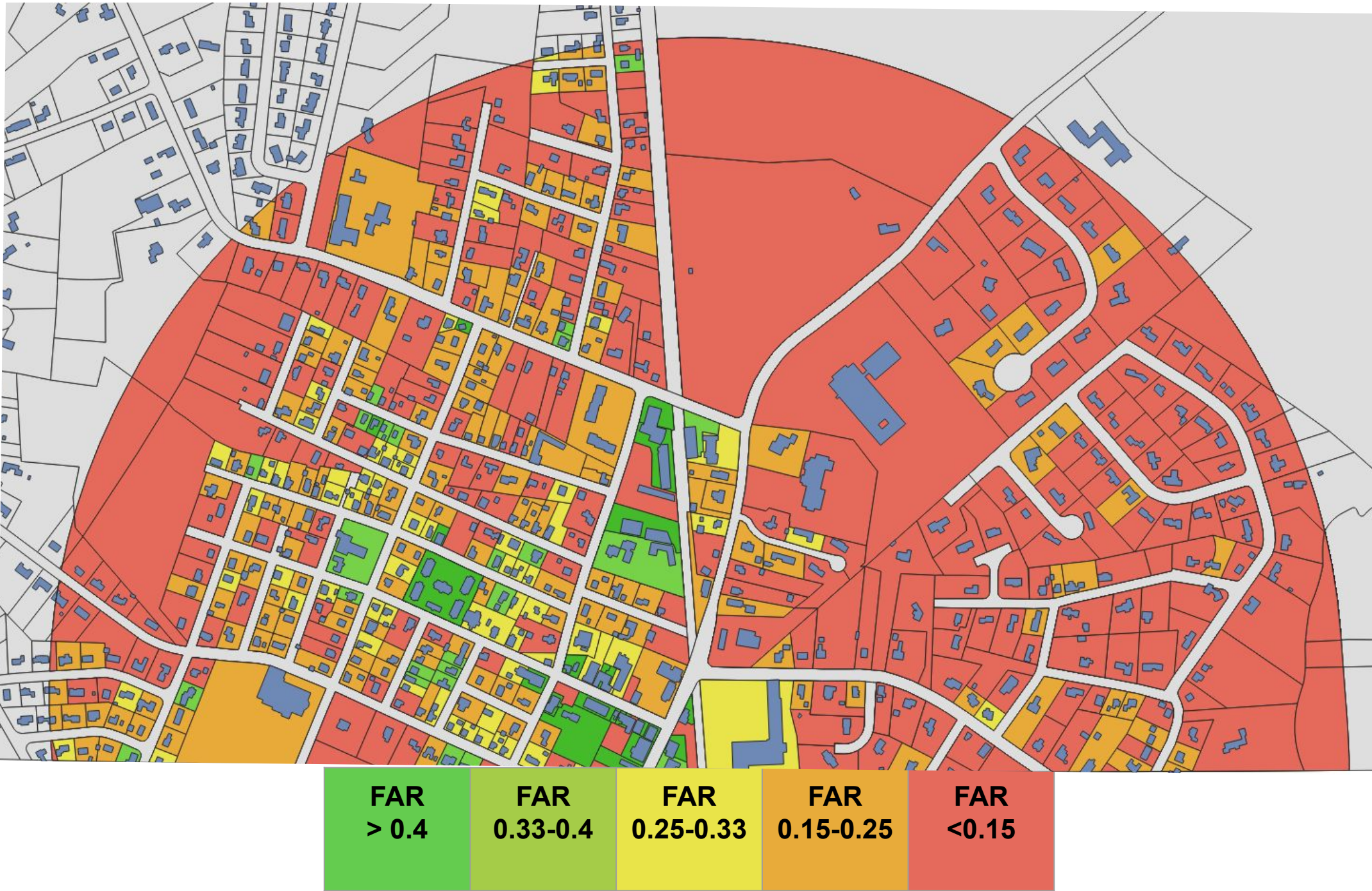
Downtown FAR Analysis



FAR Analysis for Hamilton

The use of Floor Area Ratio allows for analysis of the total floor area of structures in comparison to the parcel of land they are within.

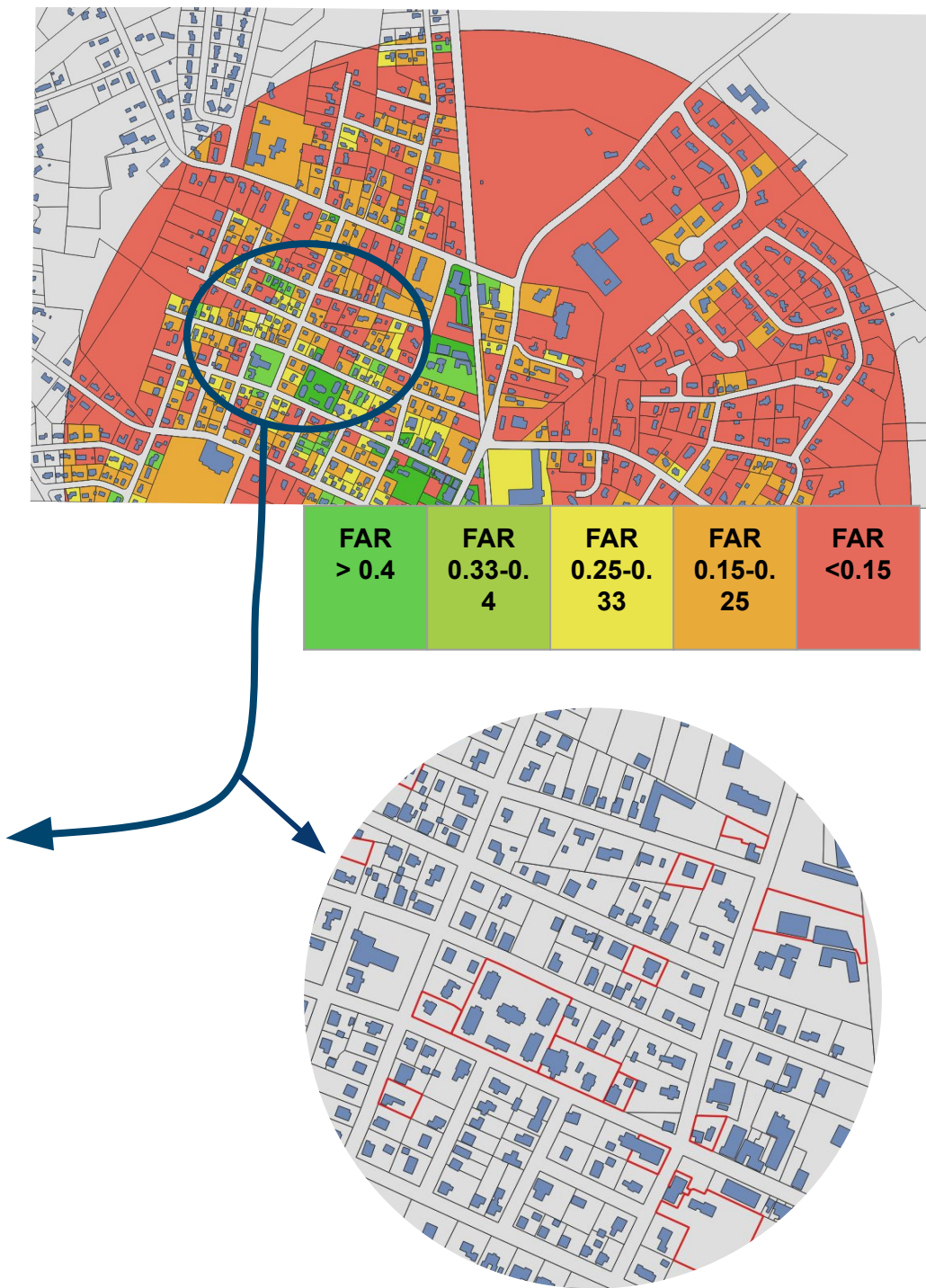
A FAR of 0.33 is roughly representative and comparable to 15 units/acre, therefore we have highlighted all parcels with 0.33 and above in a shade of green to represent presumed plots where the 15 units/acre threshold and requirement for the MBTA Communities Law



FAR Analysis for Hamilton

While the majority of this half mile radius around the train station falls far below the desired FAR threshold, the Willow Street strip shows some promise, especially considering the number of parcels which are above 0.33 or hovering around that threshold.

Complying with the MBTA communities law may not be as big of a stretch in certain areas, such as the Willow Street area, as one may initially think based on this FAR analysis.



The Willow Street Strip

Railroad Ave

Running adjacent to Willow Street, Railroad Ave provides a solid example of parcels and structures which exceed or near the 0.33 FAR which we have set out to find.



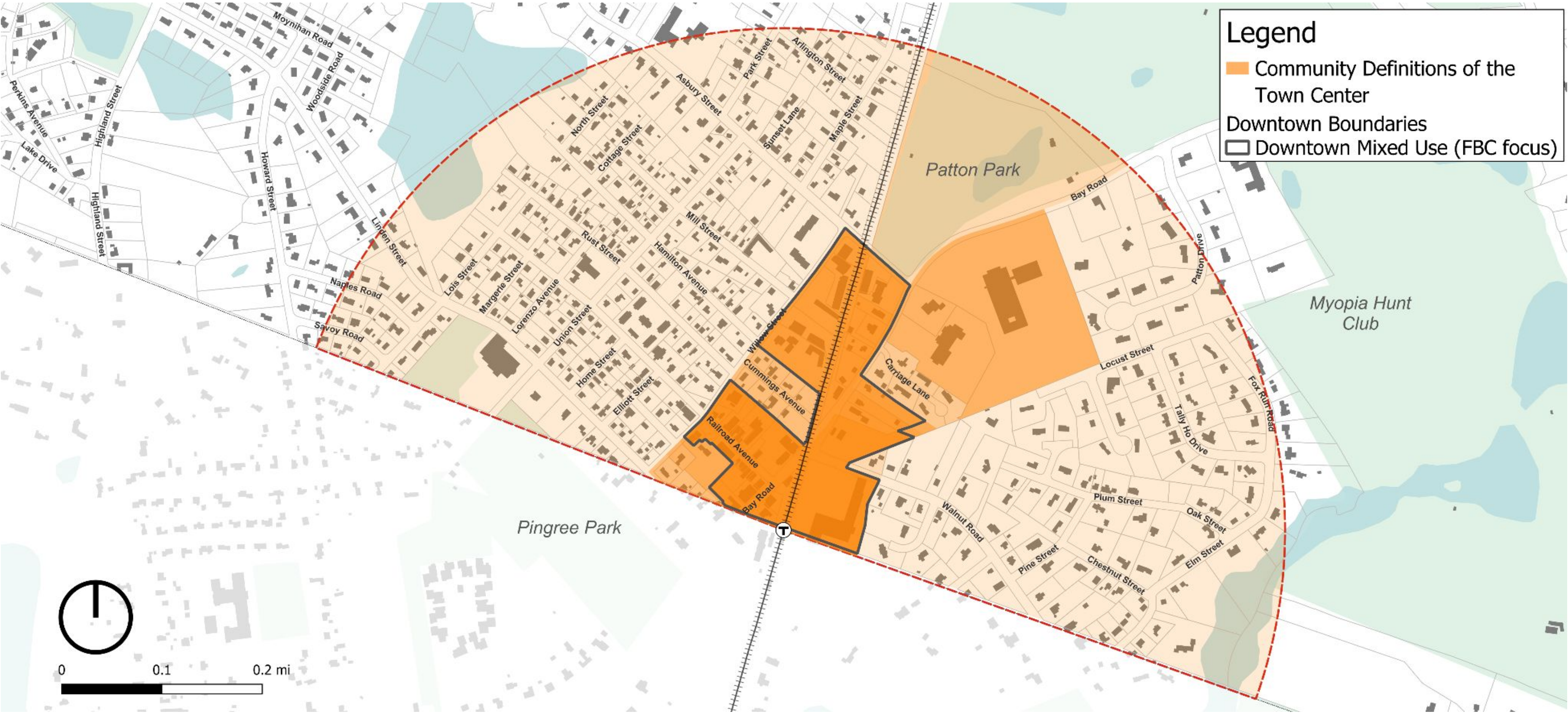
Elliot Street

Running adjacent to Railroad Ave, Elliot Street also houses parcels meeting and hovering close to the 0.33 threshold



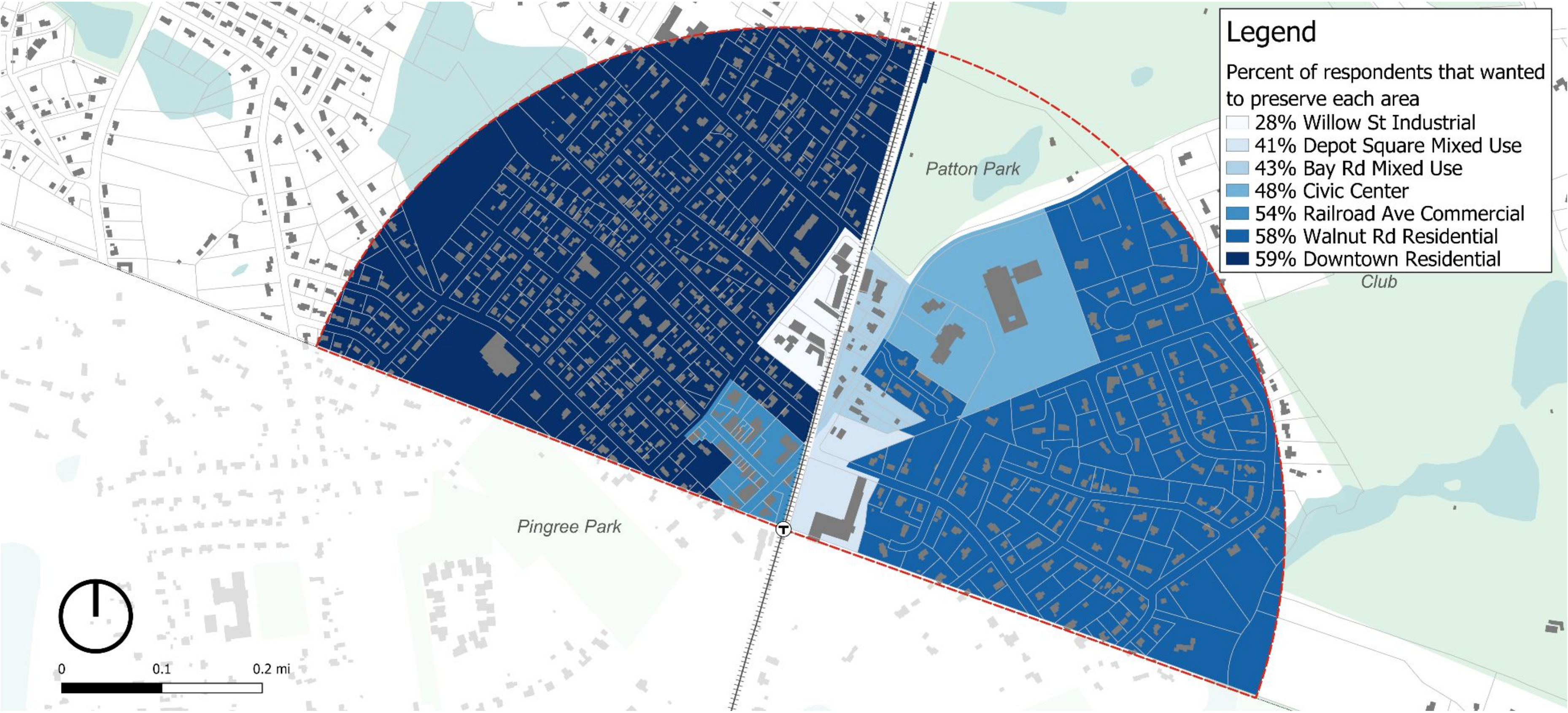
Town Center Boundary Feedback

Based on Public Visioning Workshop, Advisory Committee Input & Public Visioning Survey



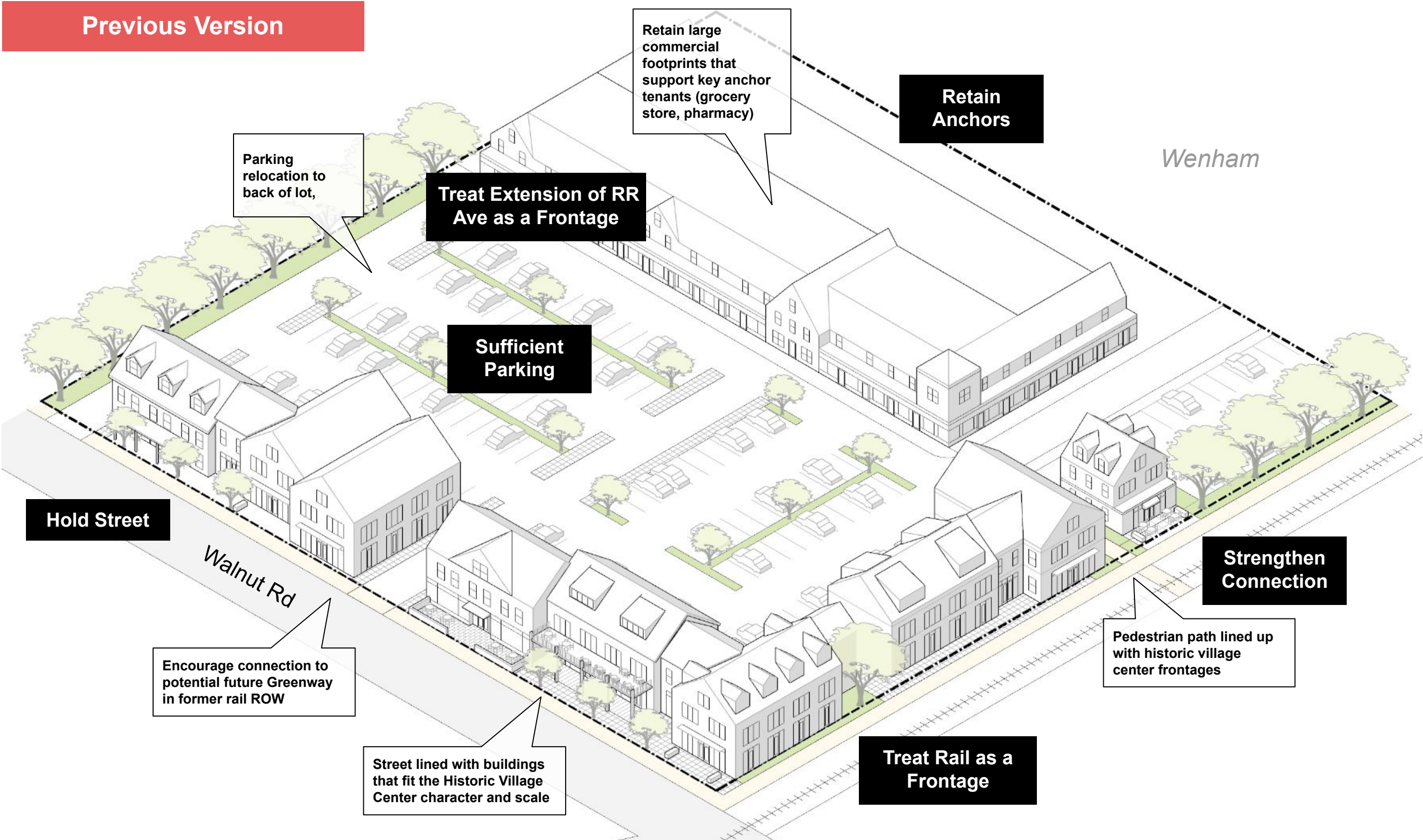
Town Center Preservation Feedback

Based on Public Visioning Workshop, Advisory Committee Input & Public Visioning Survey



Hamilton Crossing Building Form Vision

This is an approximation of the Hamilton Crossing shopping plaza site for the purposes of exploring the building form vision for this subdistrict



Encouraging Adaptive Reuse

Converting existing homes to multi-family has challenges.

These kind of renovations typically require:

- Building Code upgrades for access/egress to each unit, fire protection
- Plumbing chases for new kitchens and bathrooms
- Soundproofing between units
- Separate utility metering for units

Some strategies to incentivize conversion over new builds:

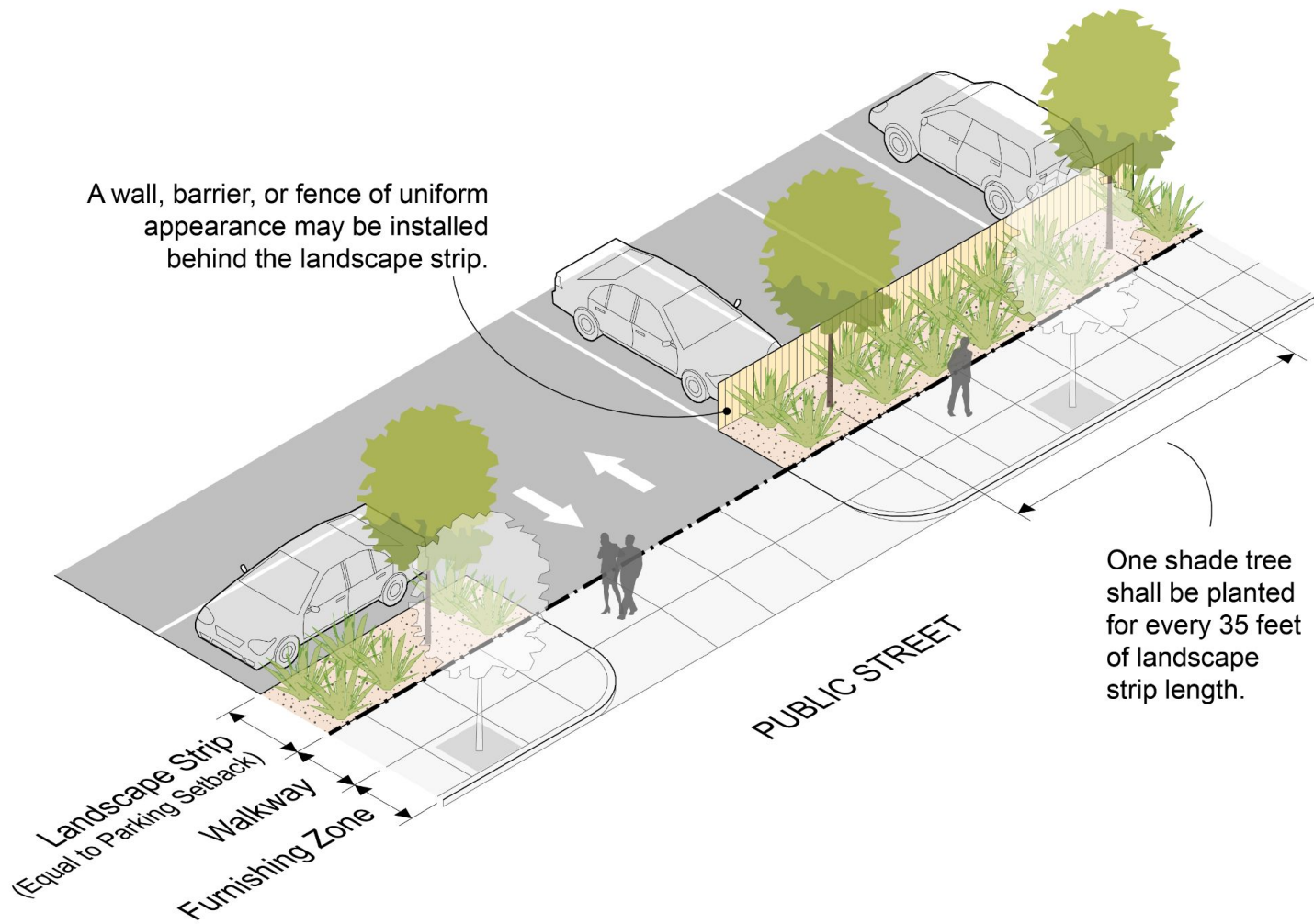
- Allow addition up to 50% of existing footprint
 - Allowed along the rear and side elevations of the existing structure.
 - Additions along the side elevation must be set back at least 20' from the front facade of the existing structure.
- Allow multiple buildings by Site Plan Review

Parking Placement

The draft zoning ordinance keeps parking out of view and away from the front lot line.



28 Austin Street provides parking that is located behind

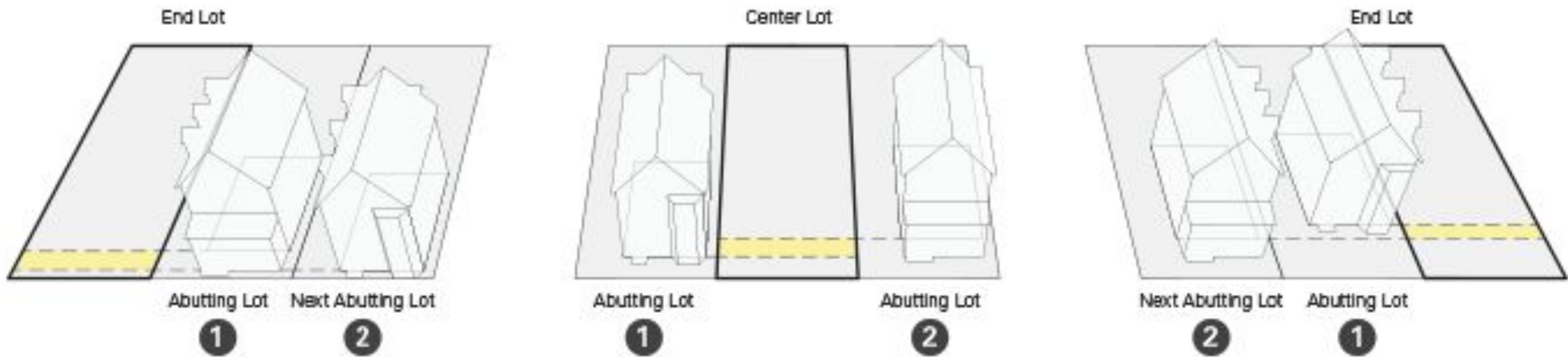


Parking Setbacks:

Facing a right of way	12'
Not facing a right of way	4'

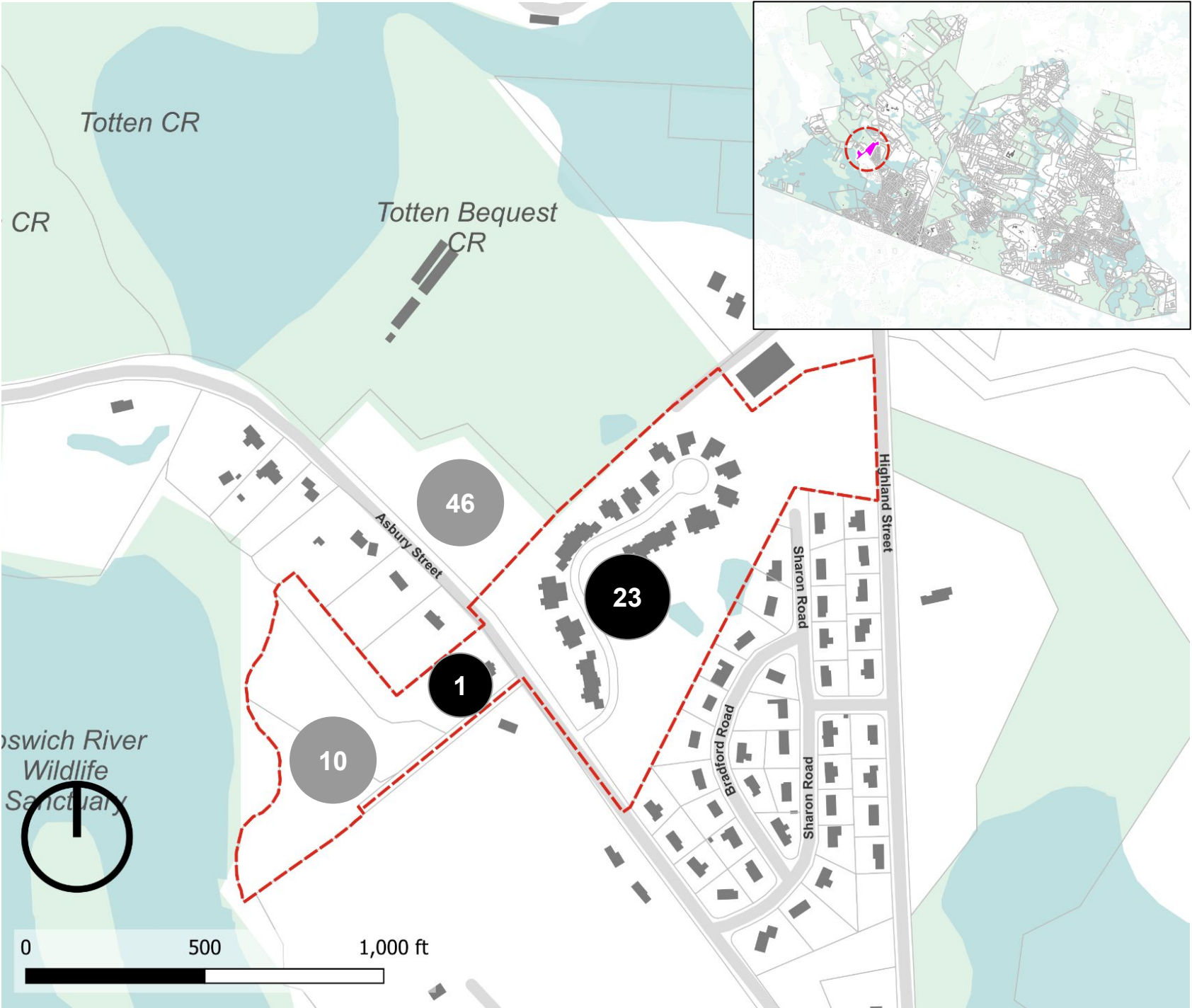
- No parking spaces are allowed between the Front Elevation and the Primary Front Lot Line
- Curb cuts are prohibited along the Primary Front Lot Line when access along another lot line is available
- Parking Lots must be separated from the right of way by a building or screening within the parking setback. Screening shall consist of one or a combination of the following:
 - A min. 5'-wide planting strip with planting that provides a buffer from the R.O.W.
 - A wall, barrier, or fence of uniform appearance

Contextual Front Setback?



Asbury A

Additional 3A Sites Beyond Town Center



3 Multi-family homes along Asbury Street
80 units in planned and existing projects

Key Stats	
Acres	21.7
Density Denominator	18.9
Existing/Planned Units	44 (23 + 10 + 1)
Existing Density (with DD)	2.3 units per acre
Current Use	Housing
Current Ownership	Private
Potential Issues	
Groundwater Protection Overlay District (GPOD) Interaction	<i>All Parcel Have Some 1985 + Fully Zone II</i> Min lot size 80k sf per unit Impervious surface 15% / 2,500sf triggers SP
Developable Land	n/a
40B Interaction	n/a

- Notes:**
- TBD

Agenda

Hamilton Town Center & Section 3A Zoning
Planning Board Meeting
April 1, 2025

1. Overall Approach

- a. Process & Engagement Overview
- b. Envisioned Compliance Approach
- c. Town Center Zoning Subdistricts

2. Town Center Vision Plan

3. Town Center Zoning Subdistrict Rules

4. Outlying 3A Overlay Subdistricts

5. Compliance Options

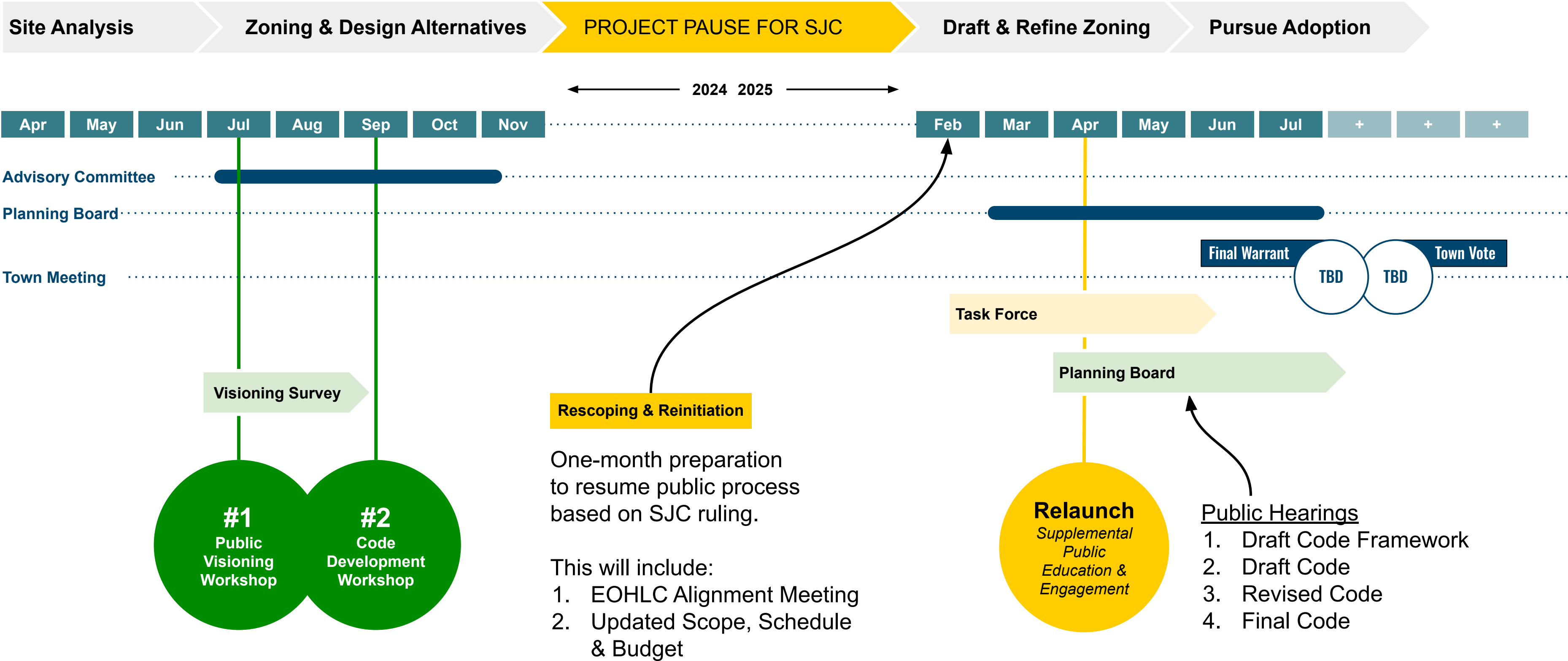
6. Next Steps

Appendix

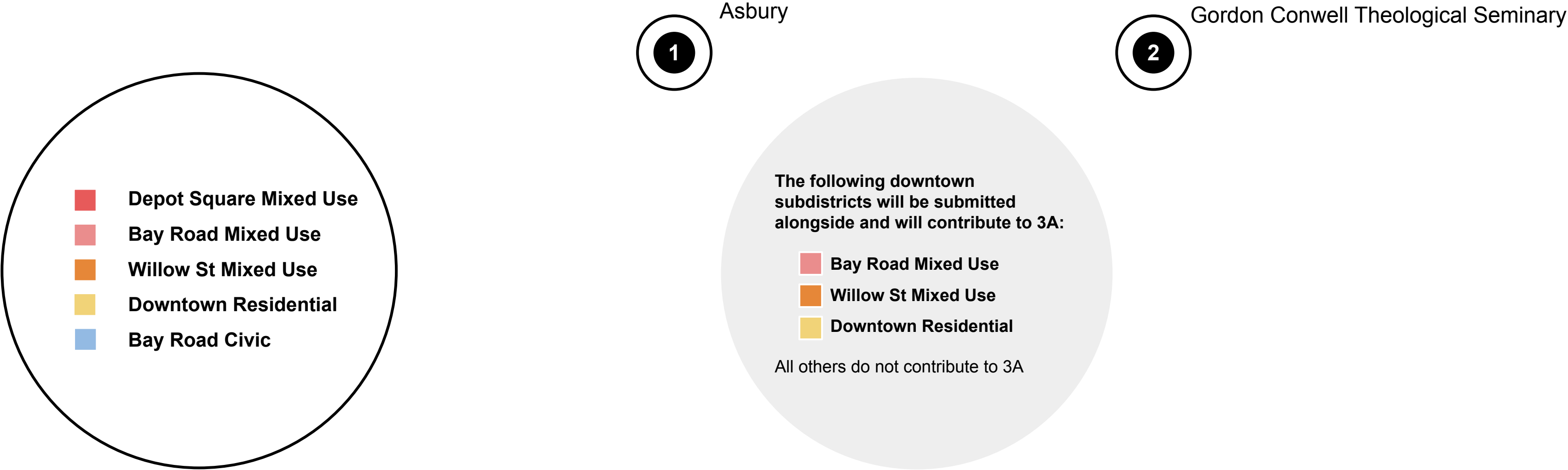
Materials available for reference, will not be presented and discussed.

- a. Additional Town Center Vision Plan & Engagement Documentation
- b. Design Standards to Regulate Building Forms

Suggested Revised Schedule



Envisioned Compliance Approach



Town Center Zoning with Design Standards

We expect this to include 4-5 subdistricts, each with distinctive patterns and standards. This would replace existing zoning in these areas.

Outlying 3A Overlay District Approach

This relies on 3 of the Town Center subdistricts. This vote would be to adopt a 3A overlay covering 2-3 subdistricts outside of the boundaries of the Town Center. Outside of the Town Center, this would be an alternative to existing zoning.

Town Center Zoning Subdistricts



Town Center Vision Plan

The vision and framework guiding the zoning approach for the Town Center

Proposed Street Frontage Types

5 frontage types



Proposed Frontage Types

Awning and signage improvement

Storefront furnishing zone

Commercial signage improvement

Preservation of front yard and porch style for residential front

Parking relocation to back of lot

Separated residential entry

Storefront furnishing zone

Parking relocation to back of lot

Densely landscaped frontage

Minimal roadway

Secondary frontage access for parcels with next to the Greenway

Parking relocation to back of lot

Historic Village Center
Existing Pattern

Bay Rd Scenic Corridor
Existing Pattern

Willow St Mixed Use
New Pattern

Greenway
New Pattern

Willow St Residential
Existing Pattern



Town Center Zoning Subdistrict Rules

Suggested subdistricts and dimensional rules for the Town Center zoning

Town Center Subdistricts NOT Contributing to 3A

These two Town Center Subdistricts will NOT contribute to 3A, and therefore are independent of the constraints of 3A.

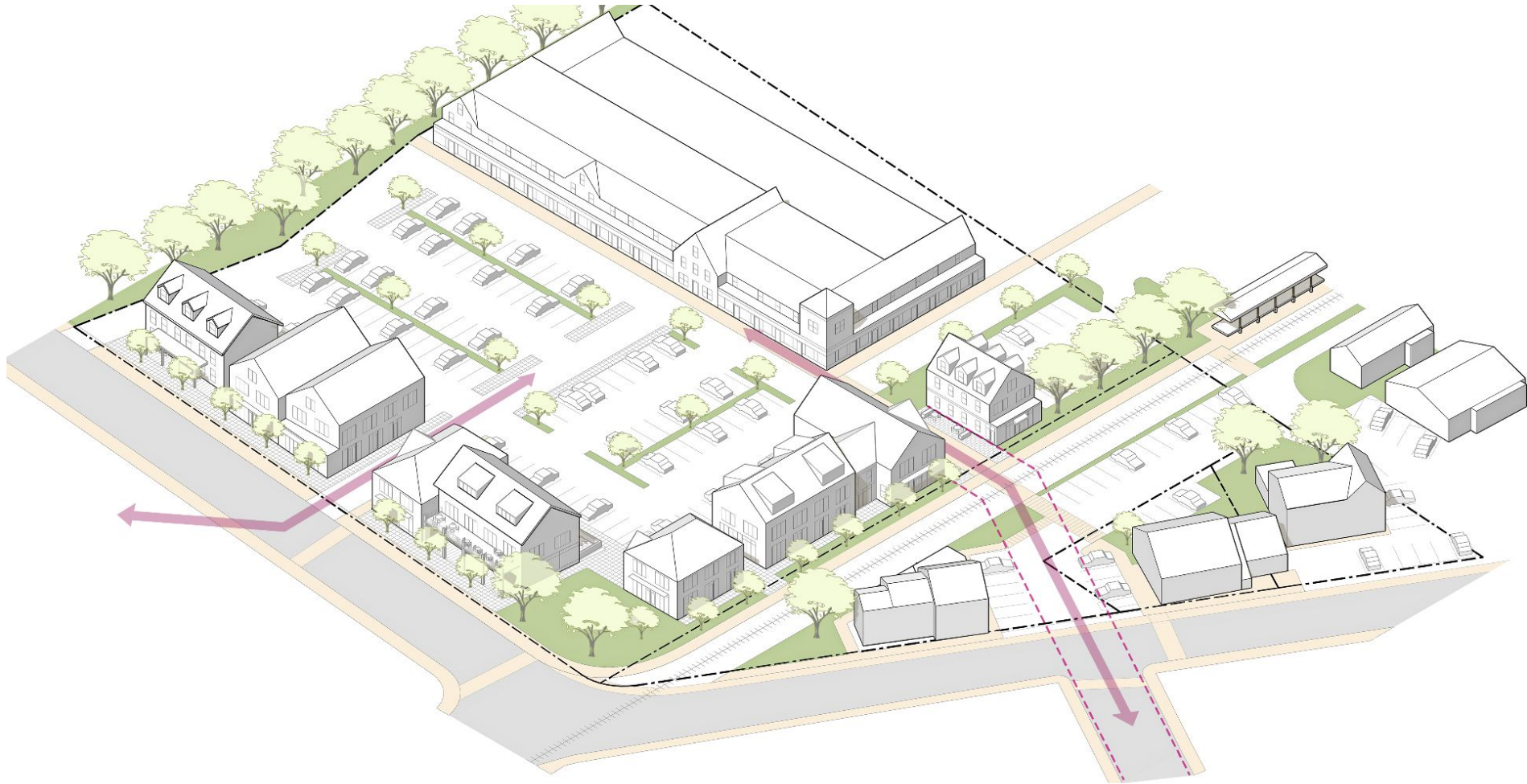
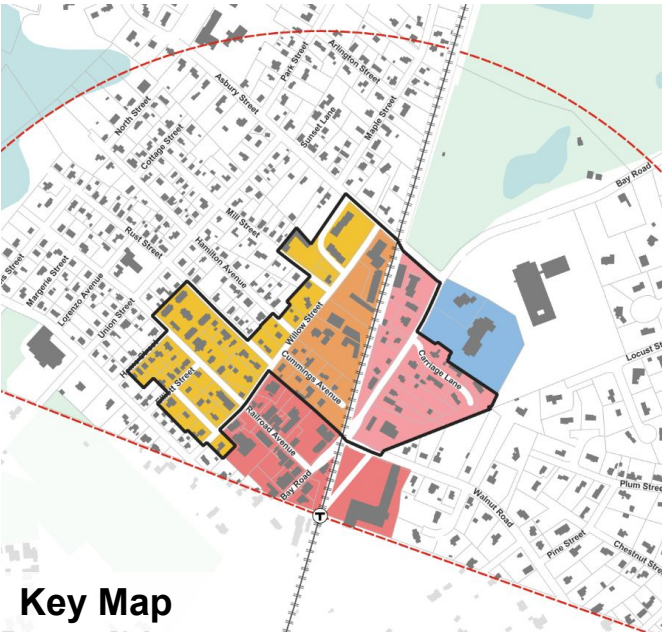
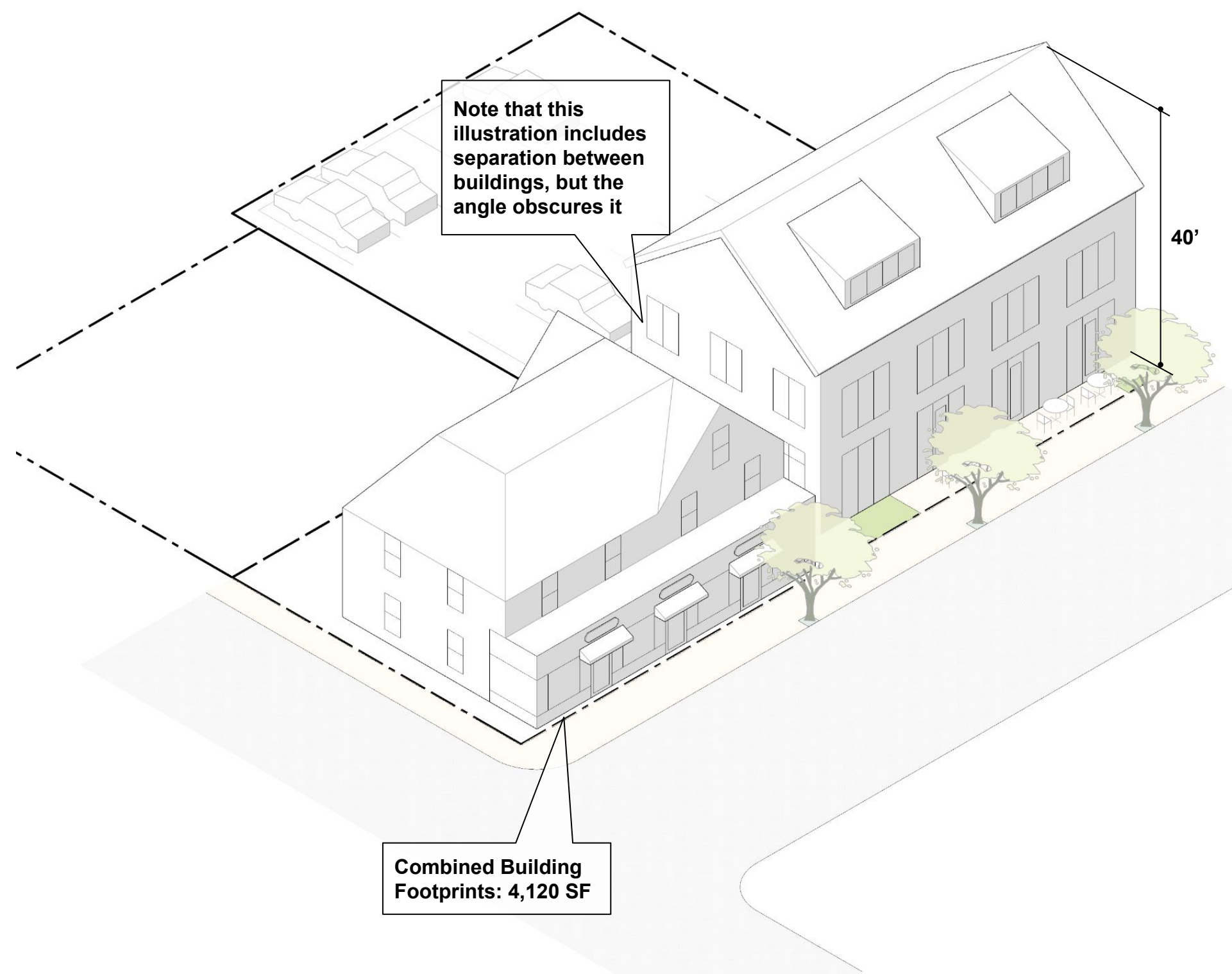


Illustration in Progress

■ Depot Square Mixed Use

■ Bay Rd Civic

Railroad Ave Building Form Vision



Relationship to 3A:

- This subdistrict does not contribute to 3A.

Potential Special Massing Rules:

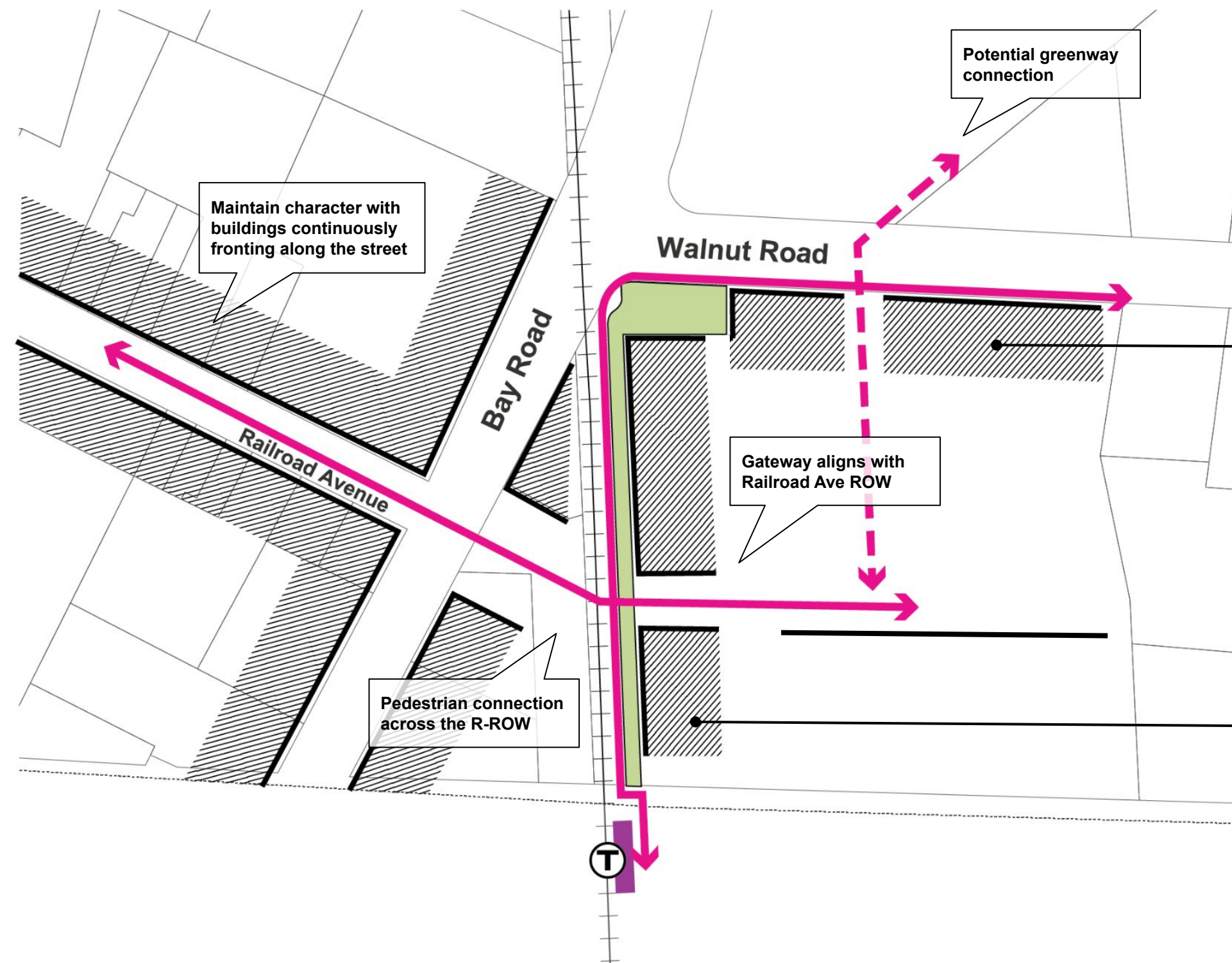
- We are considering allowing flat roofs in this subdistrict given it is already present
- Different rules for first 60' vs rear buildings
- Parcels over a certain size trigger a special permit process

Dimensional Standards	
Building Footprint, max.	5,000 SF
Building Height, max.	42' / 2.5 stories
Ground Floor Height, min/max.	13' / 15'
Half-Story Height, max.	14'
Setback - Front, min/max.	0' / 10'
Setback - Side, min.	0'
Setback - Rear, min.	10'
Open Space, min.	0%

Note: for more intuitive understanding, we have used the top of the ridgeline for all measurements of height in this table (e.g. building height, half-story height). This will be updated in the final zoning article to be consistent with how Hamilton measures building height.

Hamilton Crossing Urban Design Framework

Frontage Approach



Overall Approach

- Merge Hamilton Crossing parcel with Railroad Ave subdistrict to form unified “Depot Square” Subdistrict
- Control frontage heavily for first 60’ then have lighter formal controls for rear buildings
- Require any parcel over a certain square footage to go through a special permit process

Walnut Road Frontage

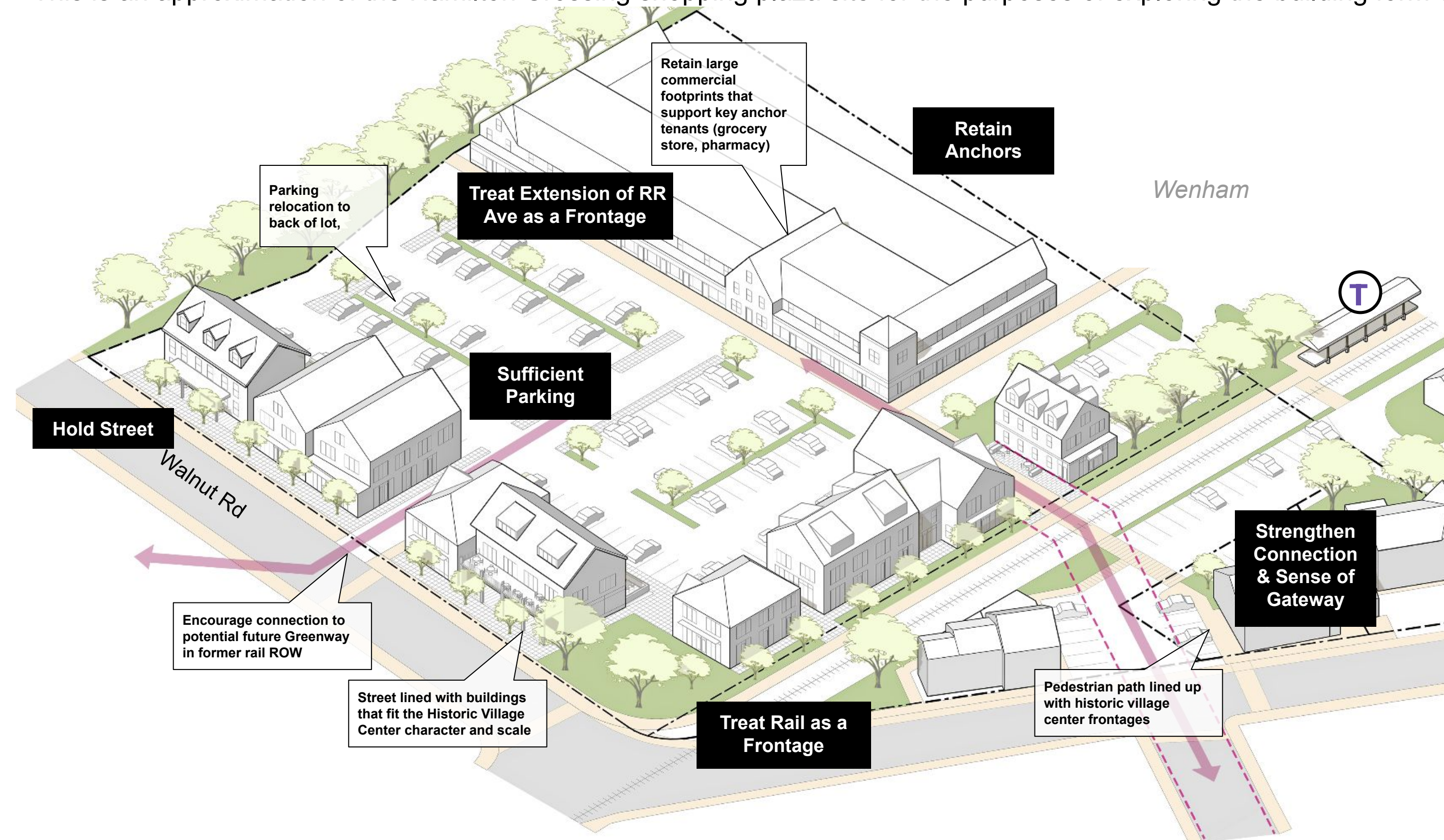
- Residential scale (up to 2.5 stories)
- Setback transition to residential pattern to the east
- Looser building clustering with landscaping and breaks in massing
- Create clear opening for potential future greenway connection

Railroad Track Frontage

- Residential scale (up to 2.5 stories)
- Match Railroad Ave frontage type, but with more pedestrian cut-throughs to rear parking and mall area
- Create clear gateway that aligns with Railroad Ave

Hamilton Crossing Building Form Vision

This is an approximation of the Hamilton Crossing shopping plaza site for the purposes of exploring the building form vision for this subdistrict



Key Features:

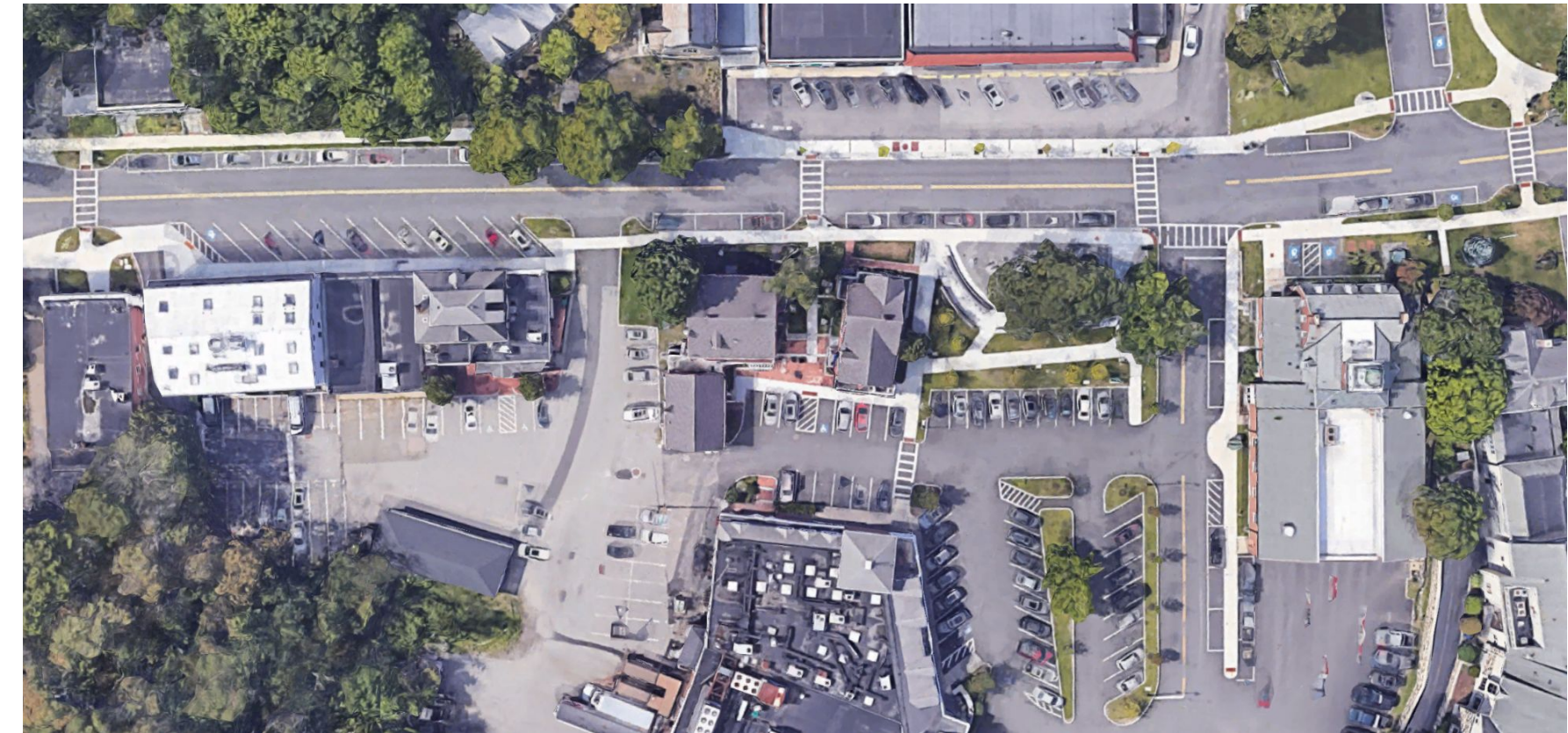
1. Retain existing landscaped corner at Walnut & Bay
2. Create gateways that encourage pedestrian through connections in alignment with Railroad Ave and potential future Greenway connection
3. Emulate Railroad Avenue frontage along rail line but with more generous setback, and along Walnut Rd with less intensity
4. Allow for connected building forms to encourage variety in the massing while still providing larger commercially viable tenant spaces. Encourage cut-through pedestrian alleys to access the parking lot and rear lot uses.
5. Allow for larger footprint buildings set back from the street

Hamilton Crossing Building Form Vision

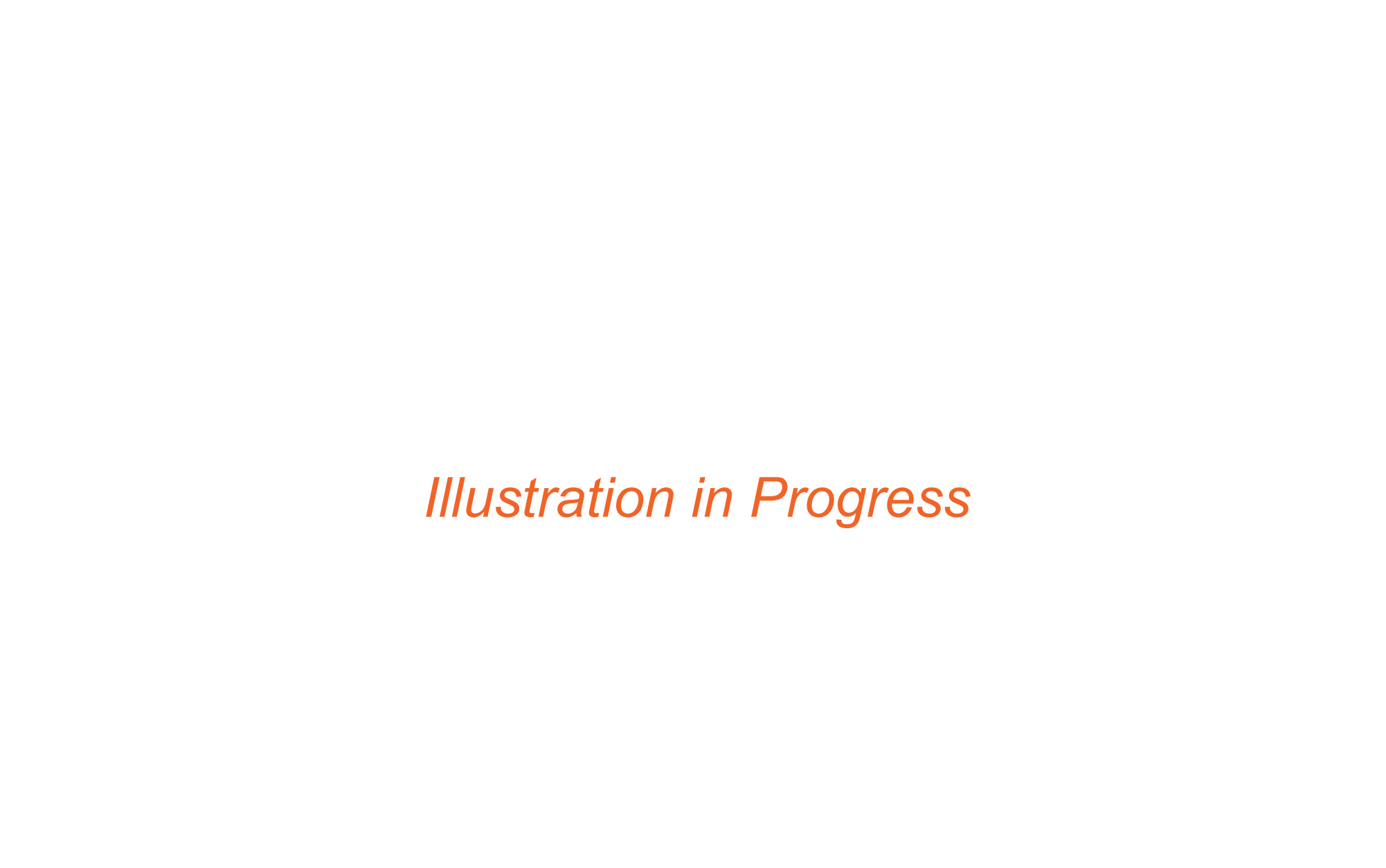
This is an approximation of the Hamilton Crossing shopping plaza site for the purposes of exploring the building form vision for this subdistrict



Weston Town Center
Weston, MA



Bay Road Civic Building Form Vision



Contextual Building Height Research:
Currently 30’ - 35’
Most commercial businesses are using residential building forms.

Relationship to 3A:

- This subdistrict does contribute to 3A.

Potential Special Massing Rules:

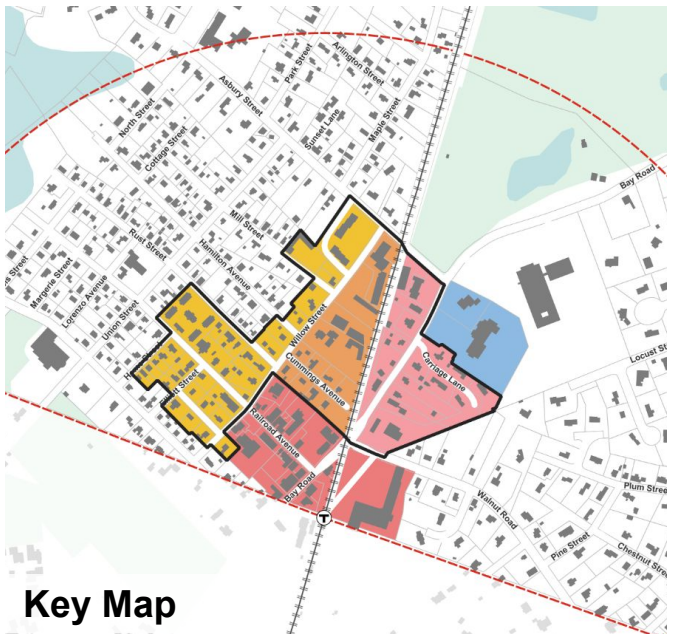
- *Work in progress*

Dimensional Standards - <i>work in progress</i>	
Building Footprint, max.	# SF
Building Height, max.	#’ / # stories
Ground Floor Height, min/max.	#’ / #’
Half-Story Height, max.	#’
Setback - Front, min	#’ or Average
Setback - Side, min.	#’
Setback - Rear, min.	#’
Open Space, min.	#%

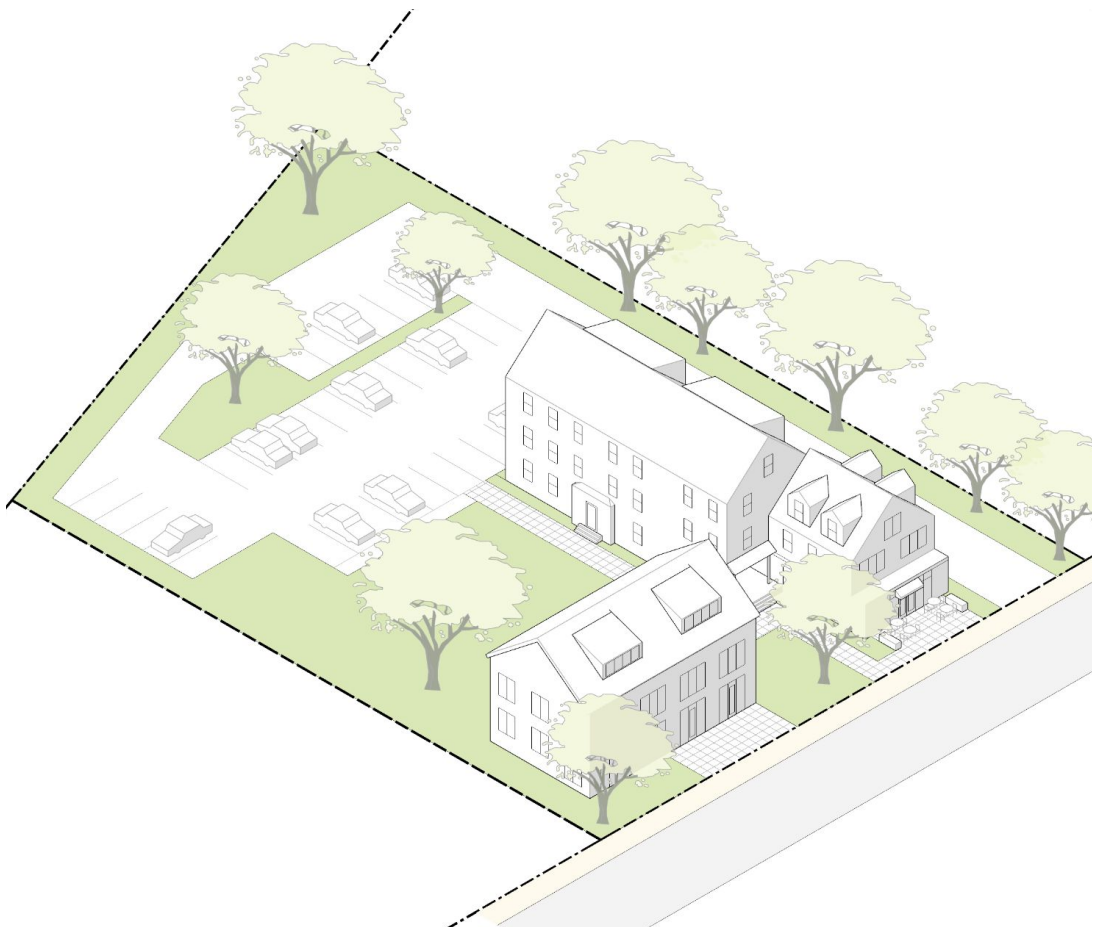
Note: for more intuitive understanding, we have used the top of the ridgeline for all measurements of height in this table (e.g. building height, half-story height). This will be updated in the final zoning article to be consistent with how Hamilton measures building height.

Town Center Subdistricts Contributing to 3A

All three of these, as shown, can contribute to 3A compliance, when combined with other 3A overlay subdistricts outside the Town Center.



■ Bay Rd Mixed Use

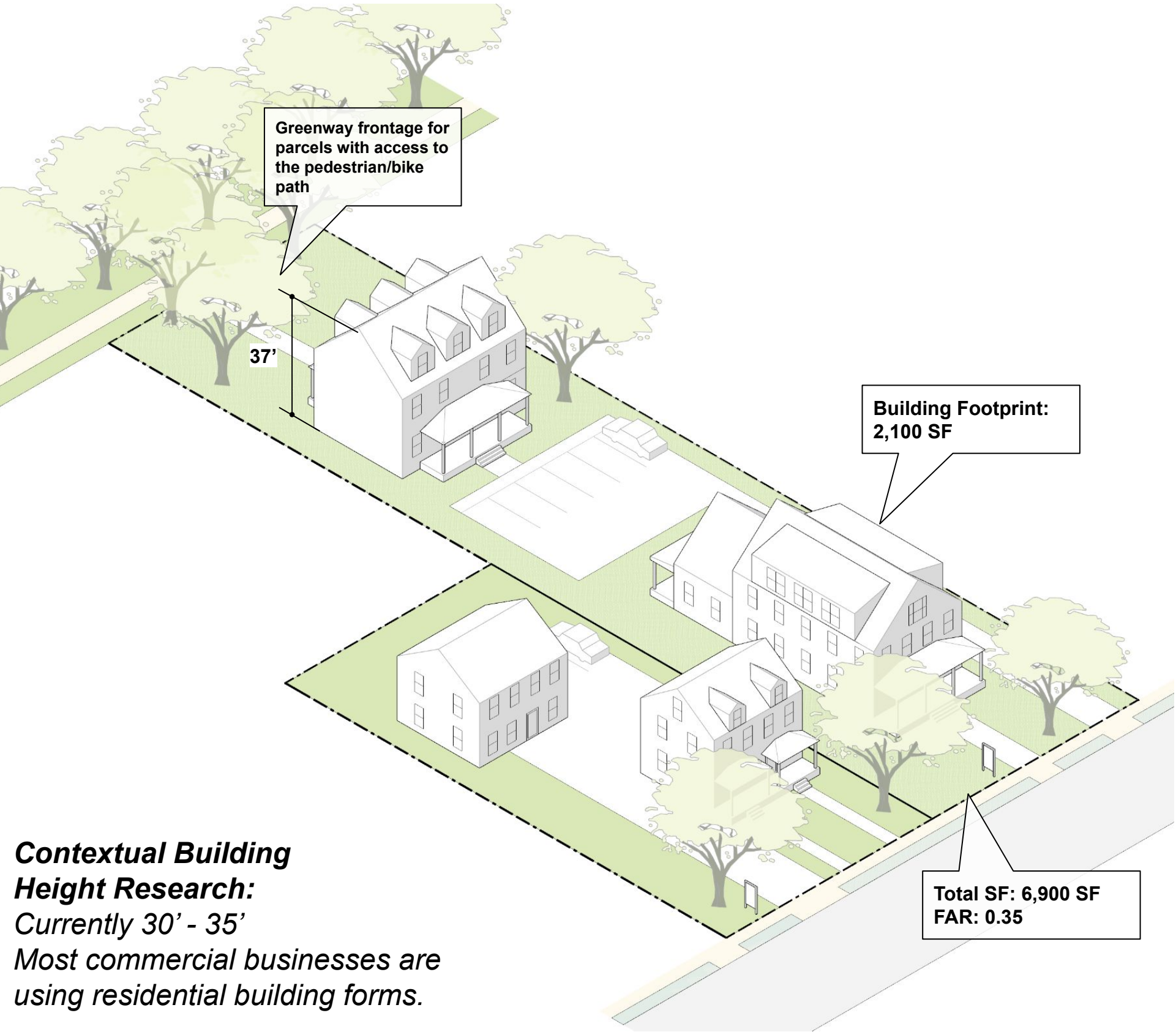


■ Willow St Mixed Use



■ Downtown Residential

Bay Road Scenic Corridor Building Form Vision



Contextual Building Height Research:
Currently 30' - 35'
Most commercial businesses are using residential building forms.

Relationship to 3A:

- This subdistrict does contribute to 3A.

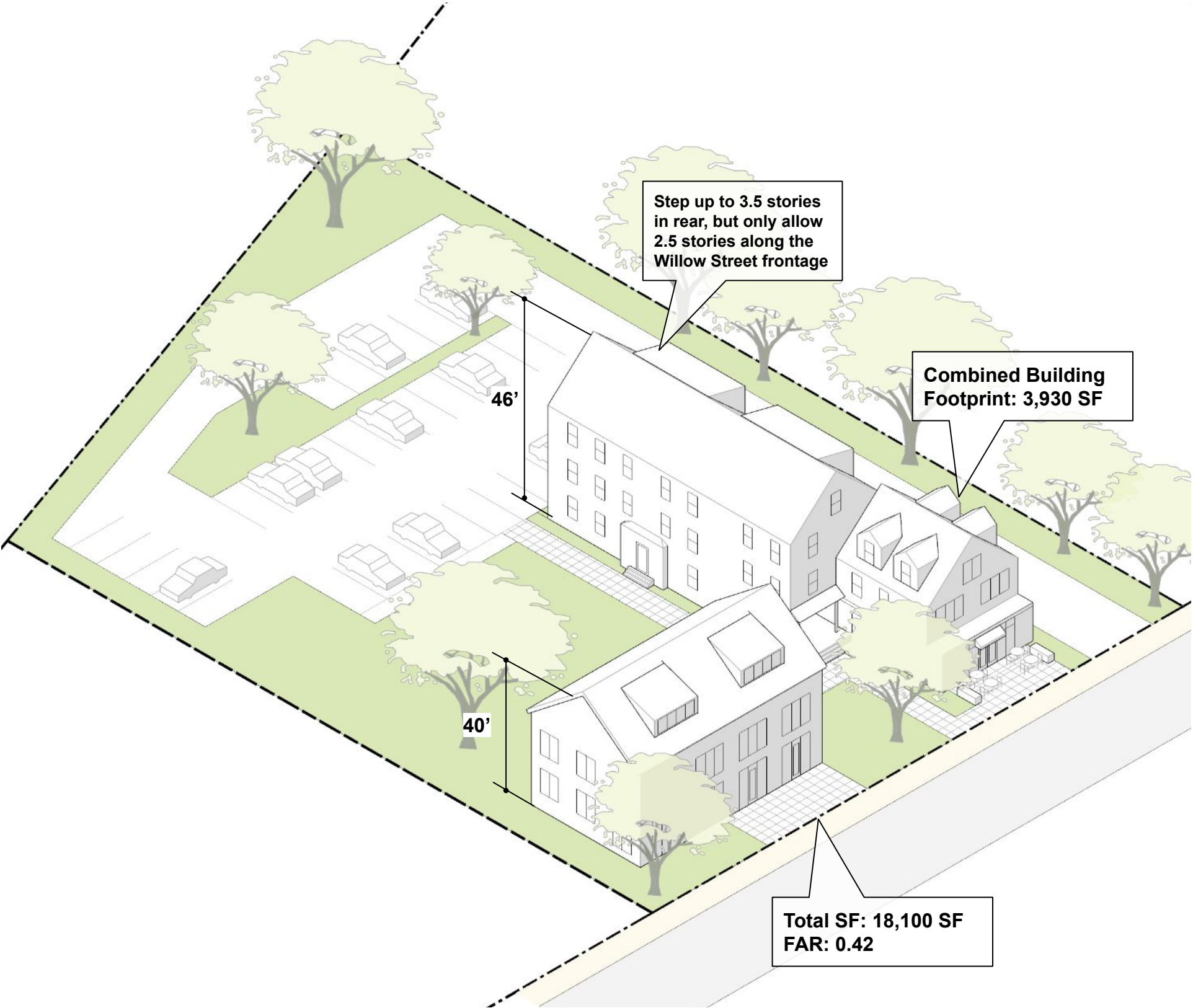
Potential Special Massing Rules:

- We will include rules around the relationship of a second accessory structure to the primary structure (e.g. minimum distance between primary and secondary structure)

Dimensional Standards	
Building Footprint, max.	3,000 SF
Building Height, max.	42' / 2.5 stories
Ground Floor Height, min/max.	13' / 15'
Half-Story Height, max.	14'
Setback - Front, min	15' or Average
Setback - Side, min.	5'
Setback - Rear, min.	20'
Open Space, min.	15%

Note: for more intuitive understanding, we have used the top of the ridgeline for all measurements of height in this table (e.g. building height, half-story height). This will be updated in the final zoning article to be consistent with how Hamilton measures building height.

Willow Street Mixed Use Building Form Vision



Relationship to 3A:

- This subdistrict does contribute to 3A.

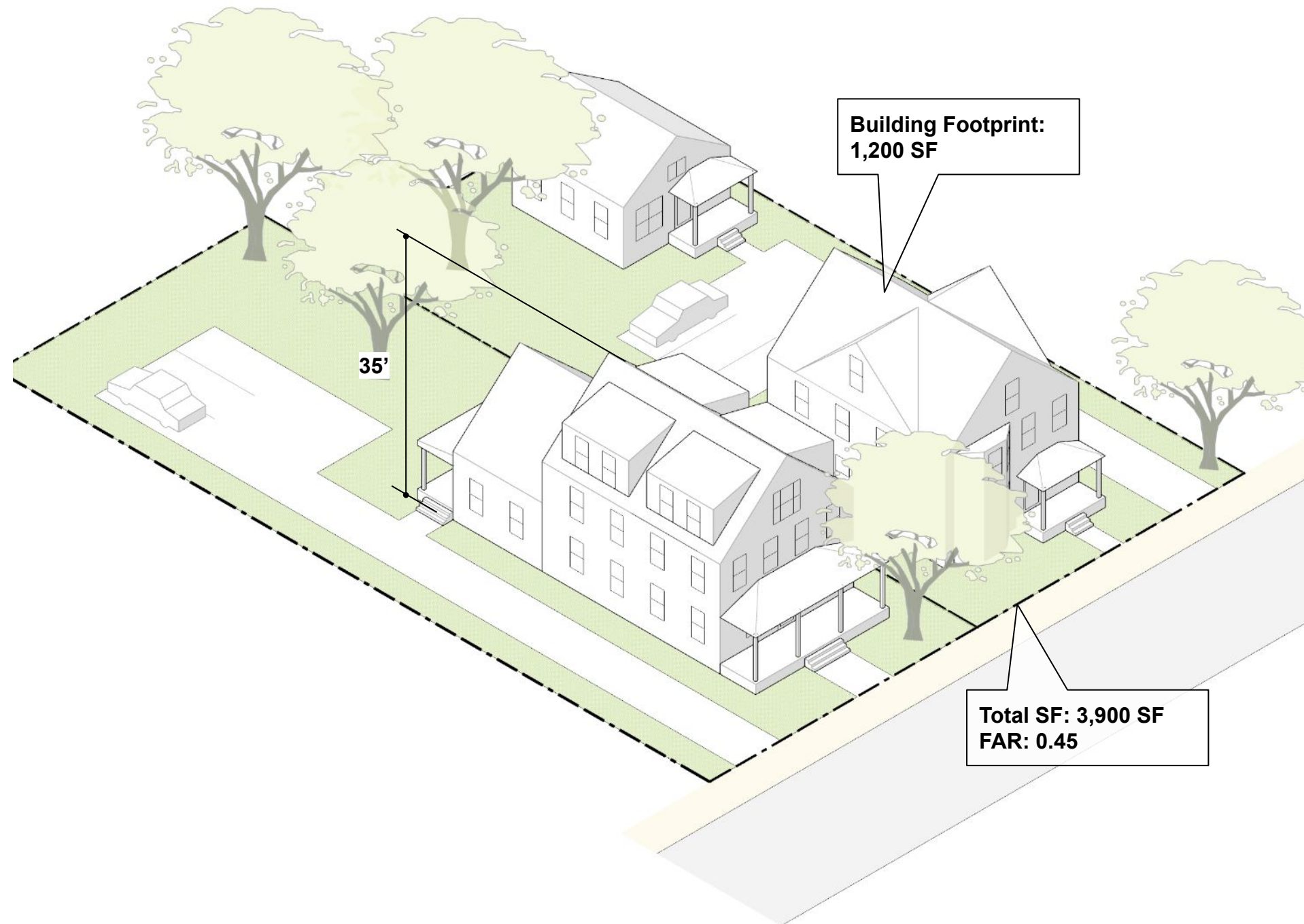
Potential Special Massing Rules:

- Building height may increase to 3.5 stories after setback of 60' from the front lot line

Dimensional Standards	
Building Footprint, max.	5,000 SF
Building Height, max.	40' / 2.5 stories
Building Height after 60' setback, max	51' / 3.5 stories
Ground Floor Height, min/max.	13' / 15'
Half-Story Height, max.	14'
Setback - Front, min.	15' or Average
Setback - Side, min.	5'
Setback - Rear, min.	20'
Open Space, min.	15%

Note: for more intuitive understanding, we have used the top of the ridgeline for all measurements of height in this table (e.g. building height, half-story height). This will be updated in the final zoning article to be consistent with how Hamilton measures building height.

Downtown Residential Building Form Vision



Relationship to 3A:

- This subdistrict does contribute to 3A.

Potential Special Massing Rules:

- Adaptive reuse standards allow an addition along the rear and side elevations of the existing structure, up to 50% of the footprint of the existing structure.
- Additions along the side elevation must be set back at least 20' from the front facade of the existing structure.

Dimensional Standards	
Building Footprint, max.	1,500 SF
Building Height, max.	36' / 2.5 stories
Ground Floor Height, min/max.	—
Half-Story Height, max.	14'
Setback - Front, min.	10' or Average
Setback - Side, min.	10'
Setback - Rear, min.	20'
Open Space, min.	15%

Note: for more intuitive understanding, we have used the top of the ridgeline for all measurements of height in this table (e.g. building height, half-story height). This will be updated in the final zoning article to be consistent with how Hamilton measures building height.

Outlying 3A Overlay Subdistricts

Key Compliance Metrics for Hamilton

Outlying Subdistricts Considered

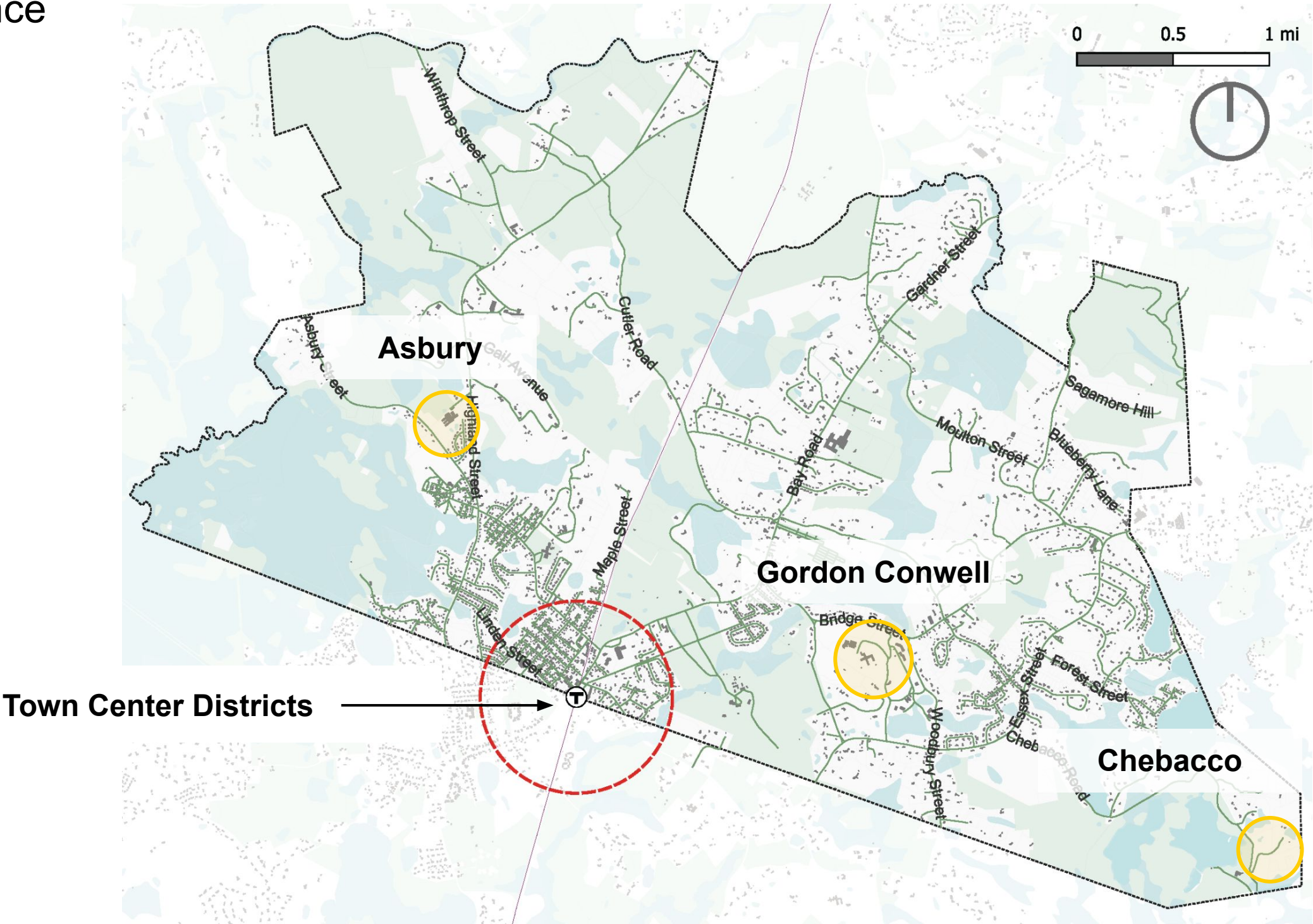
Hamilton is a **Commuter Rail** Community with a compliance deadline of 07/14/2025.

Min. Multifamily Unit Capacity:
731 units

Min. Land Area:
49 acres

Min. Density:
15 units/acre

% of Land Area & Unit Capacity
Within Station Area:
20%



Chebacco Rd - Eliminated

Additional 3A Sites Beyond Town Center



Key Stats	
Acres	15.5
Density Denominator	8.1
Existing/Planned Units	0
Existing Density (with DD)	0
Current Use	Abuts Gun Club, Solar
Current Ownership	Town of Hamilton
Potential Issues	
Groundwater Protection Overlay District (GPOD) Interaction	<i>All Parcels Mostly Within 1985 Boundary</i> Min lot size 80k sf per unit Impervious surface 15% / 2,500sf triggers SP
Commercial Overlay District	Would have to be eliminated or modified for compliance
Developable Land	Town Ownership, included in HPP
Parcelization	Some parcels are below 80k sf
40B Interaction	n/a

Notes:

- Eliminated due to GPOD and COD interaction

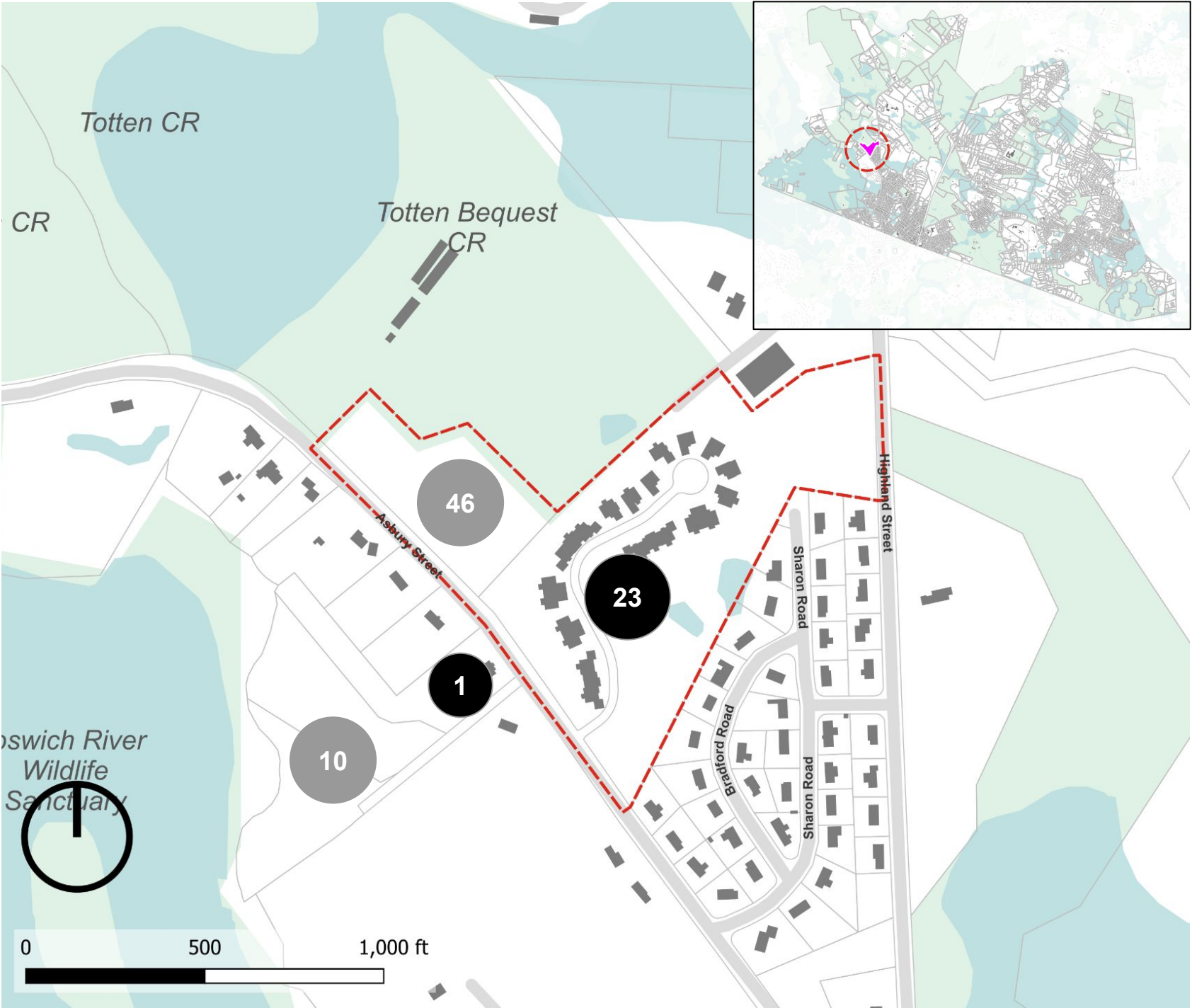
2

Town-Owned Land on Chebacco Rd

No existing units, but would increase town control, if the State considers it to be “Developable Public Land”, GPOD interaction

Asbury North

Additional 3A Sites Beyond Town Center



Multi-family homes along Asbury Street

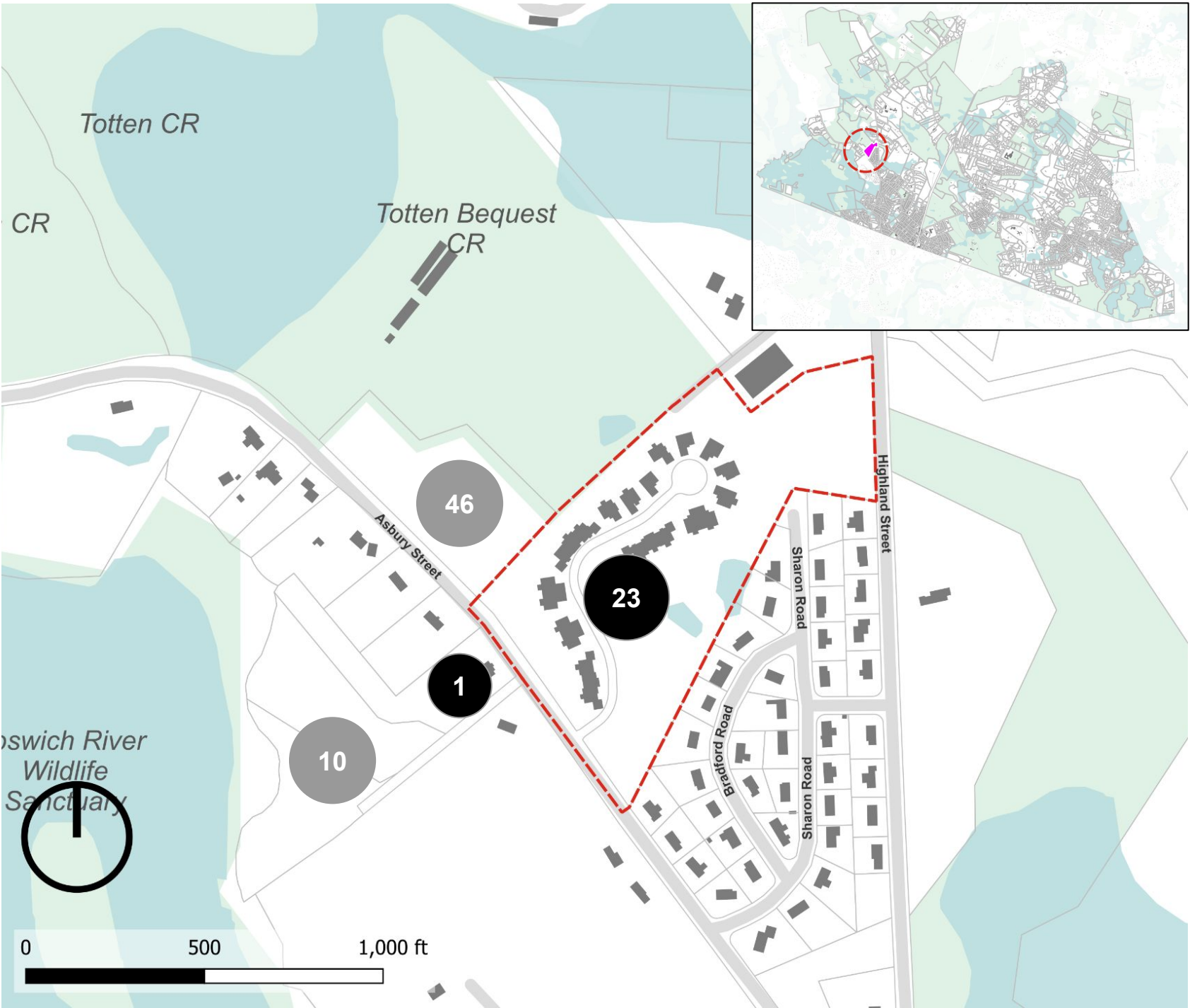
69 units in planned and existing projects

Key Stats	
Acres	19.1
Density Denominator	16.4
Existing/Planned Units	69
Existing Density (with DD)	4.2 units per acre
Current Use	Housing
Current Ownership	Private
Potential Issues	
Groundwater Protection Overlay District (GPOD) Interaction	<i>All Parcel Have Some 1985 + Fully Zone II</i> Min lot size 80k sf per unit Impervious surface 15% / 2,500sf triggers SP
Developable Land	n/a
40B Interaction	n/a

- Notes:
- none

Asbury B

Additional 3A Sites Beyond Town Center



Multi-family homes along Asbury Street

23 units in planned and existing projects

Key Stats	
Acres	14.7
Density Denominator	11.9
Existing/Planned Units	23
Existing Density (with DD)	1.9 units per acre
Current Use	Housing
Current Ownership	Private
Potential Issues	
Groundwater Protection Overlay District (GPOD) Interaction	<i>All Parcel Have Some 1985 + Fully Zone II</i> Min lot size 80k sf per unit Impervious surface 15% / 2,500sf triggers SP
Developable Land	n/a
40B Interaction	n/a

- Notes:
- none

Compliance Options

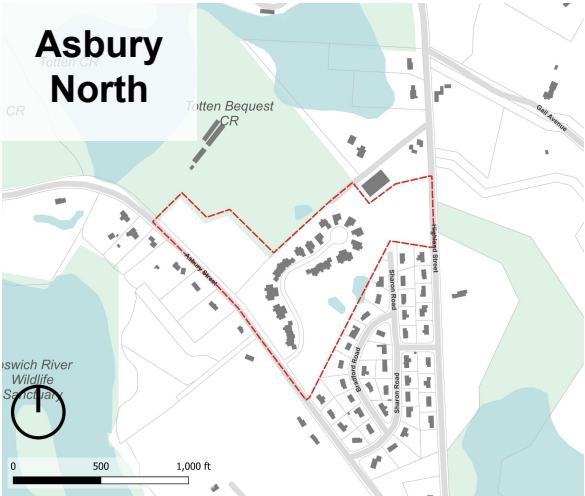
Townwide Compliance Summary Table

Downtown + Asbury North

	Key Model Inputs							Model Outputs							
Subdistrict	FAR	Min. Lot Size	Min.. Parking Spaces per Unit	Max. Bldg Height (stories)	Max. % Bldg + Parking Coverage	Max. % Bldg + Parking Coverage	Min. % Open Space	Unit Capacity	Acreage	Density Denominator	Modeled Density	% Land in Contiguous Subdistricts	% Land in Transit Area	% Units in Transit Area	Zoning Type
Willow St Mixed Use	0.42	3,000	1.0	3.5	20%	30%	70%	115	7.2	7.2	15.9	contributing	100%	100%	Base
Bay Rd Mixed Use	0.40	5,000	1.0	2.5	20%	30%	70%	127	9.5	9.5	13.3	contributing	100%	100%	Base
Downtown Residential	0.40	3,000	1.0	2.5	20%	30%	70%	151	13.3	13.3	11.4	contributing	100%	100%	Base
Asbury North	0.45	3,000	1.0	3.0	20%	30%	70%	339	19.3	16.6	20.5		0%	0%	Overlay
TOTAL								732	49.3	46.6	15.7	60.9%	60.9%	53.7%	n/a
COMPLIANCE TARGET								731	49	n/a	15	50%	20%	20%	n/a

Downtown Unit Capacity

393

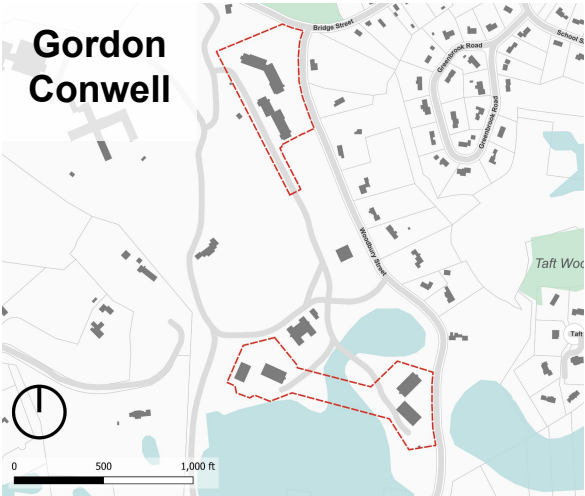
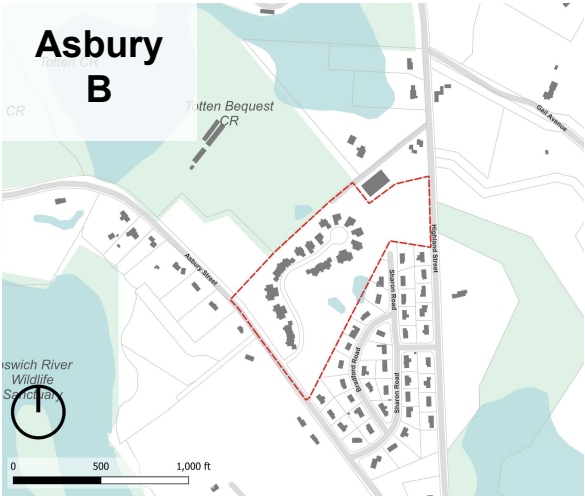


Townwide Compliance Summary Table

Downtown + Gordon Conwell + Asbury B

	Key Model Inputs							Model Outputs							
Subdistrict	FAR	Min. Lot Size	Min.. Parking Spaces per Unit	Max. Bldg Height (stories)	Max. % Bldg + Parking Coverage	Max. % Bldg + Parking Coverage	Min. % Open Space	Unit Capacity	Acreage	Density Denominator	Modeled Density	% Land in Contiguous Subdistricts	% Land in Transit Area	% Units in Transit Area	Type (Base vs. Overlay)
Willow St Mixed Use	0.42	3,000	1.0	3.5	20%	30%	70%	115	7.2	7.2	15.9	contributing	100%	100%	Base
Bay Rd Mixed Use	0.33	5,000	1.0	2.5	20%	30%	70%	111	9.5	9.5	11.7	contributing	100%	100%	Base
Downtown Residential	0.32	3,000	1.0	2.5	20%	30%	70%	115	13.3	13.3	8.6	contributing	100%	100%	Base
Asbury B	0.41	3,000	1.0	3.0	20%	30%	70%	239	14.8	12.1	19.8		0%	0%	Overlay
Gordon Conwell	0.40	3,000	1.0	3.0	20%	30%	70%	211	12.1	10.6	20.0		0%	0%	Overlay
TOTAL								791	57.0	52.7	15.0	52.6%	52.6%	43.1%	n/a
COMPLIANCE TARGET								731	49	n/a	15	50%	20%	20%	n/a

Downtown Unit Capacity
341



Note: this relies on the State modifying regulations to accept Gordon Conwell as developable land. Under the emergency regulations issued it would not be eligible due to institutional ownership.

Draft Elements for Asbury/GC 3A-MFOD

Match underlying R-1B

- Exempt from GPOD lot size minimum and Special Permit requirement
- Dimensional parameters to match underlying R-1B with the addition of FAR
- Inclusionary requirements default to existing requirements in Section 8.3
- Additional definition: FAR
- Expanded definition: Gross Floor Area, Residential

	Asbury St.	Gordon Conwell
Minimum Lot Size (ft)	3,000	3,000
Minimum Lot Frontage (ft.)	175	175
Minimum Lot width and depth (ft.) (for Dwellings, see also Sections 4.2.2, 4.2.6 and 4.3)	100 at building	100 at building
Maximum Building Height (ft.)	35	35
Maximum Number of Stories	3.0	3.0
Maximum Building Coverage (%)	20	20
Minimum Front Yard (ft.) (See also Section 4.2.4)	25/50 (note 1)	25/50 (note 1)
Minimum Side Yard and Rear Yard (ft.)	15	15
Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	0.38	0.40

Next Steps

1. Draft Code Framework

Addressed with the Task Force in lieu of the Planning Board with the goal of having a **full draft of the code by the end of March**

2. Draft Code

First Planning Board meeting, April 1st meeting with Select Board in attendance.
This would be the first opportunity for public comment on the code.

3. Revised Code

Second April meeting of the Planning Board towards the **middle or end of April** for this milestone, invite the Select Board to attend for awareness and Q&A opportunity. Public comment could be admitted at this point as well.

4. Final Code

Planning Board early May, invite the Select Board to attend.

- State Review & Legal Process Suggestions
1.

Request formal confirmation from HLC of whether Gordon Conwell can be considered developable land, and what documentation would be needed
2.

Get BBHS and Town Counsel opinion on any spot zoning risks for outlying 3A districts
3.

Resolve intended approach to manage interaction with GPOD
4.

Resolve intended approach to manage interaction with 40B (Gordon Conwell)
5.

Submit 2 compliance options for State pre-adoption review ASAP

An aerial photograph of a suburban town. The image shows a mix of residential houses with grey and brown roofs, interspersed with lush green trees. A prominent road runs diagonally from the bottom left towards the top right. Along this road, there are several commercial or institutional buildings, including a large school building with a dark roof and a large parking lot filled with cars. In the upper right corner, there is a green baseball field with a blue infield. The overall scene is a typical suburban landscape.

Thank you!

Appendix

Engagement & Vision Plan

Additional Town Center Vision Plan & Engagement Documentation

Engagement Summary

343 Responses
Public Visioning Survey

- July 25th to September 8th
- Online only
- Minor adjustments were made and an extension was granted to improve user friendliness based on feedback received from a few community members

50 Participants
Public Visioning Workshop Meeting

- July 25th
- Hybrid: In-Person & Zoom
- Hybrid Live Polling
- In-person input via Boards
- In-person input via Handouts

5 Meetings
Advisory Committee

- 2 virtual meetings with consultant team to provide feedback and input on draft work products
- 3 additional in-person independent workshops to shape the Town Center vision and framework plan in order to inform the form based code with resident observations and ideas for the future

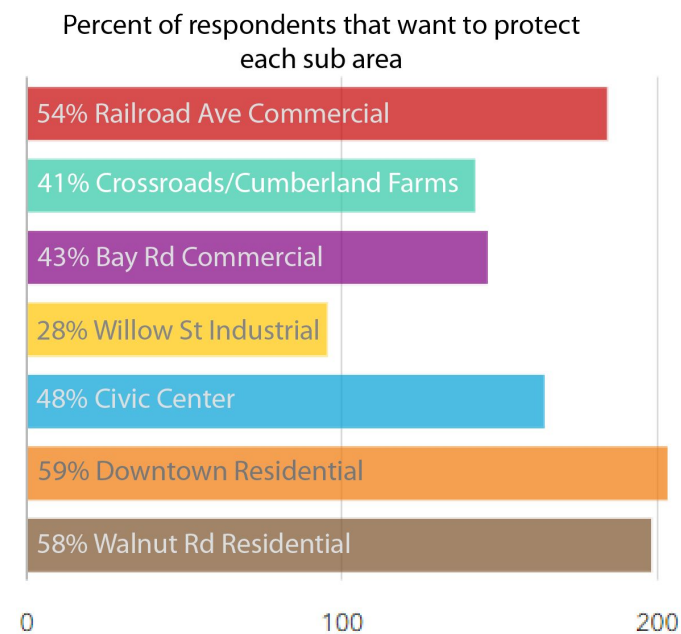
Guiding Principles / Core Values

The following core values have emerged from engagement thus far, and can be considered to be the guiding principles for encouraging gentle, context-sensitive positive change in Hamilton’s Town Center.

Historic Patterns

Preserve the historic character of Hamilton Town Center and the residential neighborhoods surrounding it.

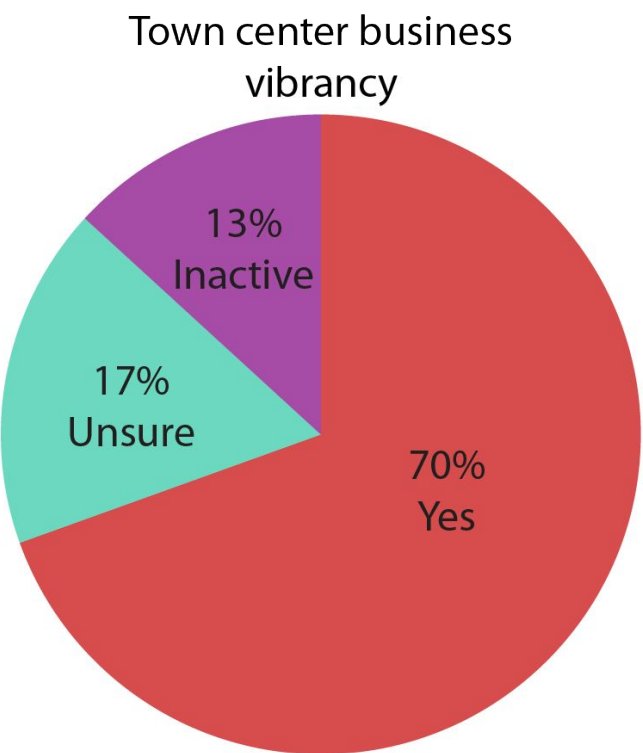
- Over 40% of respondents want to protect all but one of the seven sub-areas



Vibrancy

Support economic vitality and a healthy mix of business.

- Most respondents reported that vibrancy in the town center is a mixed bag
- 60% of survey takers report wanting more restaurants and 55% want more specialty retail



Variety

Encourage a variety of forms that respect Hamilton’s building traditions and resist homogeneity.

- In the survey over 50% of respondents indicated that they feel four different housing types fit with the pattern of Hamilton’s neighborhoods.

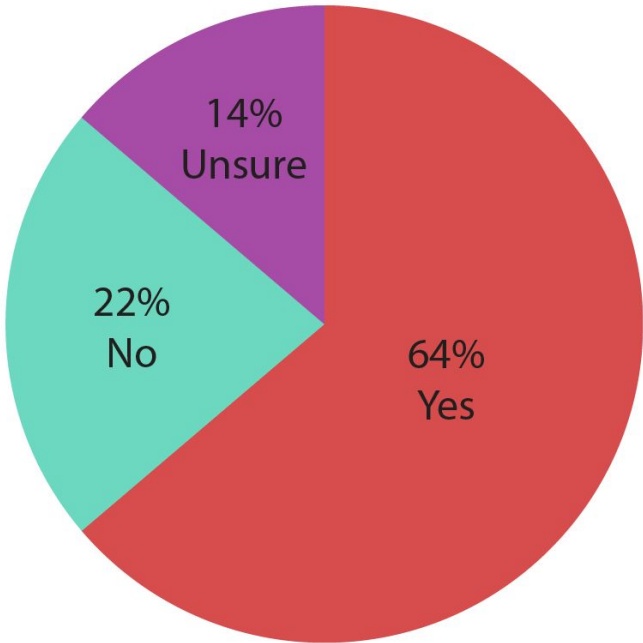


Housing Diversity

Encourage a mix of housing types that support Hamilton residents at all incomes and stages of life.

- 64% of respondents believe that more housing types would benefit the town of Hamilton to some degree.

Would more housing types for smaller households benefit Hamilton?



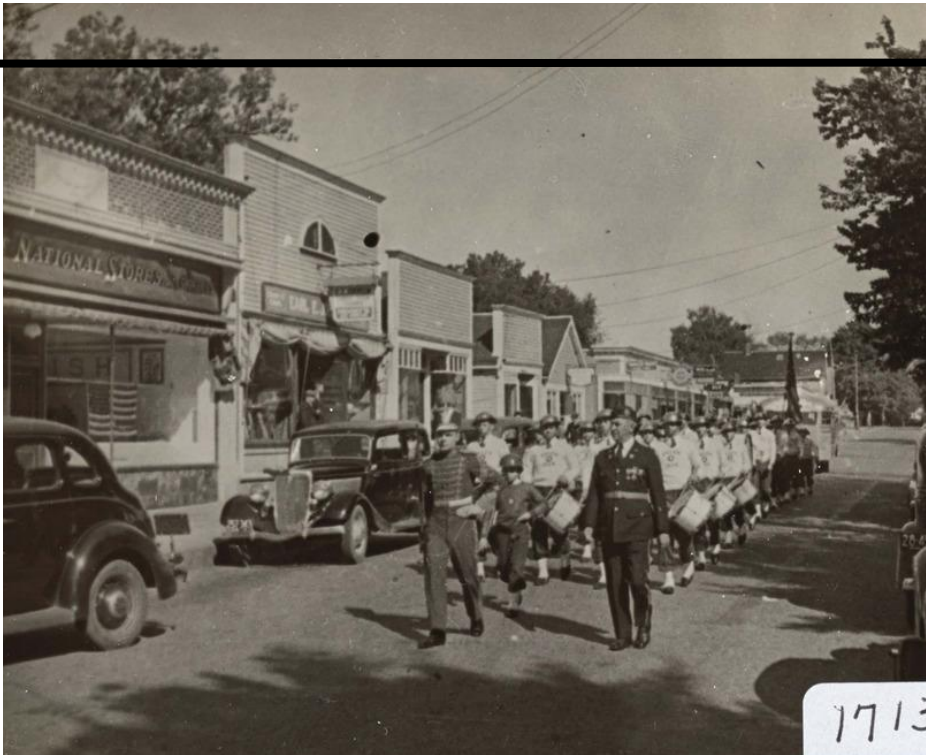
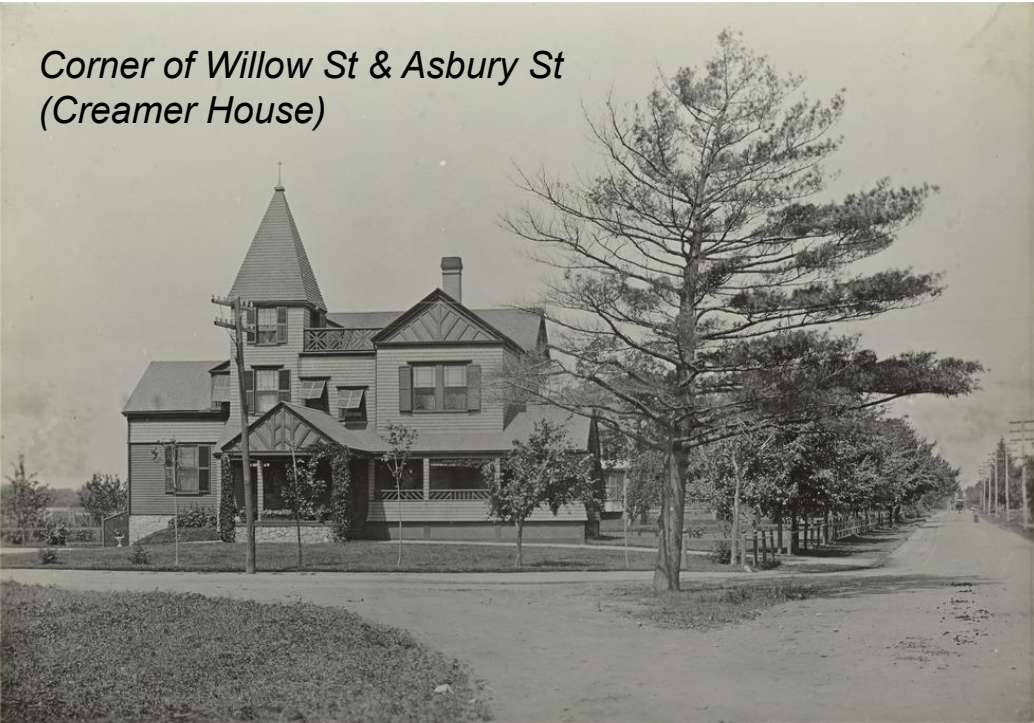
Connected & Cohesive

Encourage a cohesive and walkable downtown area.

- Connection to walkable streets and sidewalks was the most important factor for future housing in Hamilton according to the survey.
- When we asked in the Public Visioning Workshop live polling what features are most important to the patterns of development in the Town Center, most mentioned words were:
 - Sidewalks
 - Trees & Plantings
 - Parks
 - Parking
 - Streets & Traffic
 - Railroad

Building on a Rich and Varied Past

Courtesy of Advisory Committee research and the Hamilton Historical Society. Special thanks to Scott Clements.



Strengthening & Connecting Valued Places

Based on Independent Advisory Committee Workshops



Civic Destinations & Gathering Places:

To be preserved and reinforced through strengthened connections and gateways and appropriate parking.

- Patton Park
- Pingree Park
- The Community House
- Hamilton/Wenham Library

Linear Connections & Experiences:

To be preserved/restored and reinforced/extended.

- Willow St - pedestrian friendly pattern. Potential to extend towards Asbury St and improve traffic and pedestrian safety at key intersections.
- Bay Rd - historic/scenic street pattern. Potential to be a scenic spine and greenway with pedestrian lighting and enhanced walkability.
- Railroad Ave - pedestrian-friendly historic commercial. Potential to enhance walkability, wayfinding, safety, street cohesiveness and connection to commercial across rail and intersection barriers
- Greenway - existing pathway and green corridor could be formally recognized and strengthened/extended to create more robust connection and greenway loop with Bay Rd

Public Realm & Mobility Enhancement Framework

Utile Adaptation of Independent Advisory Committee Workshop Framework

The Town Center can be understood as a loop with a center of gravity at Railroad Ave. Bay Rd, Willow St, Linden St, and Asbury St each play supporting roles to complete the loop and tie it to other park and civic assets like the library, school, etc.

Intersection improvements should be holistic, addressing visual experiences as well as safety and traffic concerns.



Potential to Strengthen Linden St & Union St Connections to Library & Pingree Park

Potential to Strengthen Linden St & Bay Rd / Main St Connections to Pingree Park

Potential for enhanced crossing and park gateway. Explore potential rotary intersection.

Important visual relationship, not a crossing

Strengthen street wall with infill buildings and tree canopy along public Bay Rd frontage

Desire lines are shown to encourage improved vehicular and pedestrian connections throughout the Town Center. The lines shown are not intended to prescriptive solutions but rather suggestive of potential solutions to create a more connective and cohesive street and pathway network to unify the elements that contribute to a vibrant Town Center.

Shared district parking solutions are encouraged along these potential new secondary and side streets.

Town Center Change Feedback

Based on Public Visioning Workshop, Advisory Committee Input & Public Visioning Survey

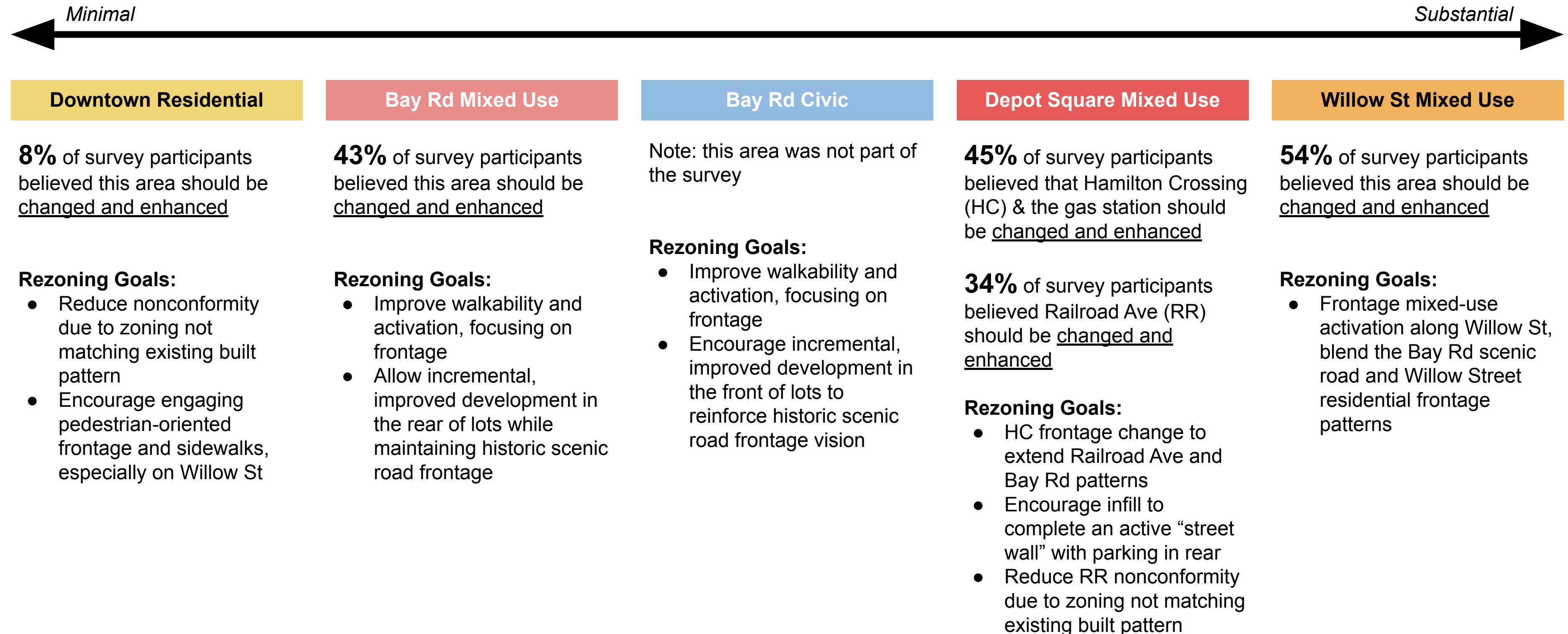


Town Center Zoning Subdistricts



Subdistrict Degree of Change Spectrum

How the subdistricts might change in response to frontage type insights



Understanding the Limits of Zoning

The role of building frontages versus public and infrastructural capital projects

Private Street Frontage

This is the domain of zoning

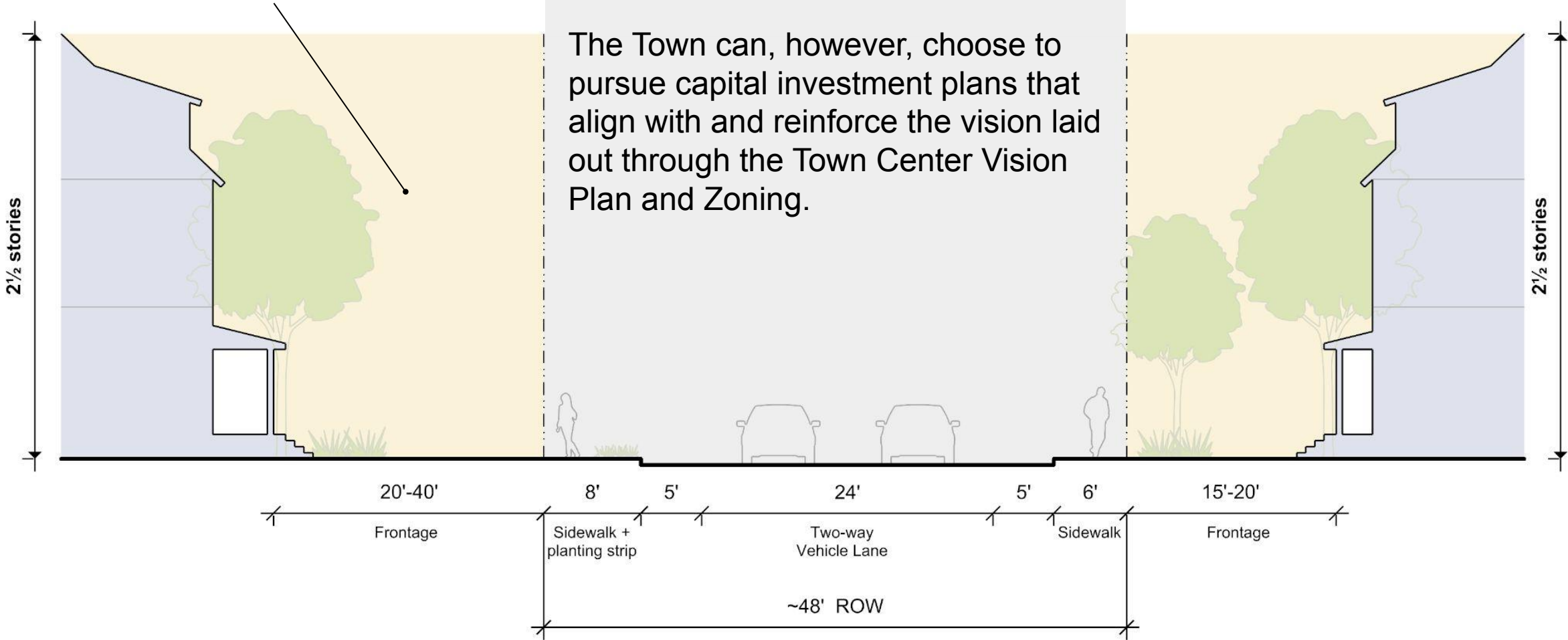
Zoning is very effective at controlling how private property owners design buildings and site elements in relationship to the street. This is referred to as a property’s “frontage” on a street, path or even a rail right-of-way.

Public Right-of-Way

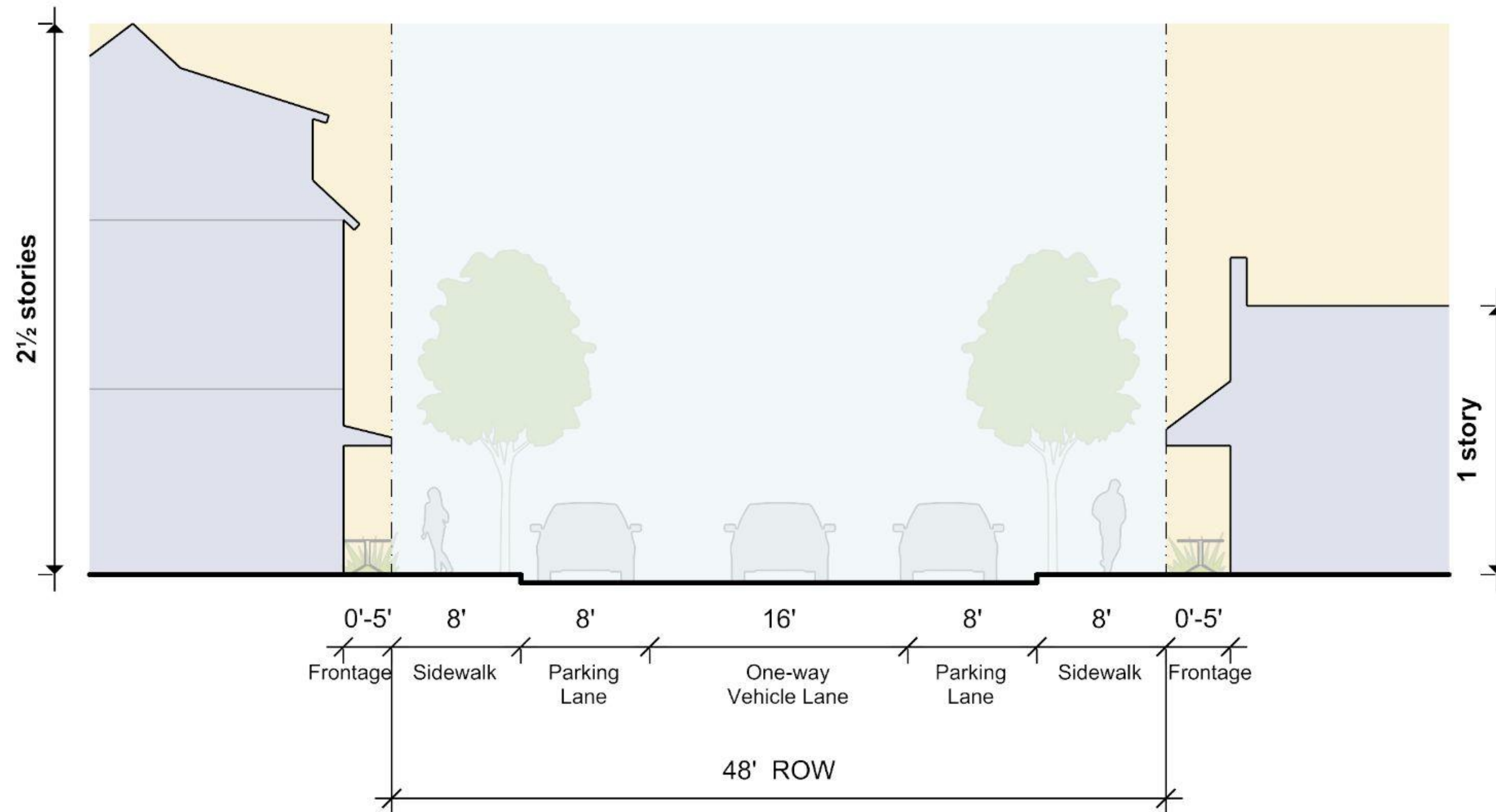
Zoning doesn’t apply here

Zoning cannot control the design of the publicly owned street, nor can it mandate the private or public delivery of infrastructure and services.

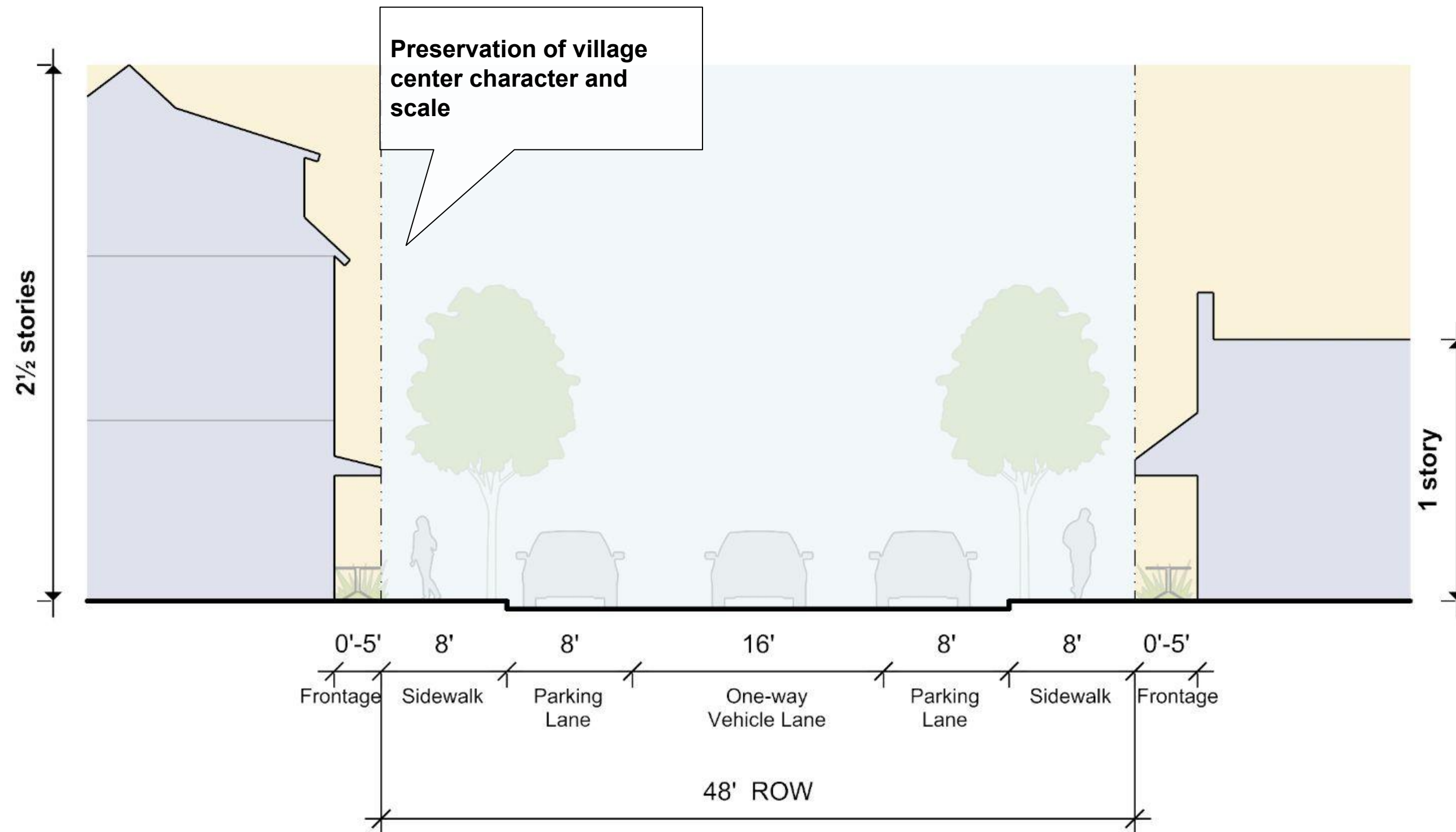
The Town can, however, choose to pursue capital investment plans that align with and reinforce the vision laid out through the Town Center Vision Plan and Zoning.



Railroad Ave Street Section: Existing

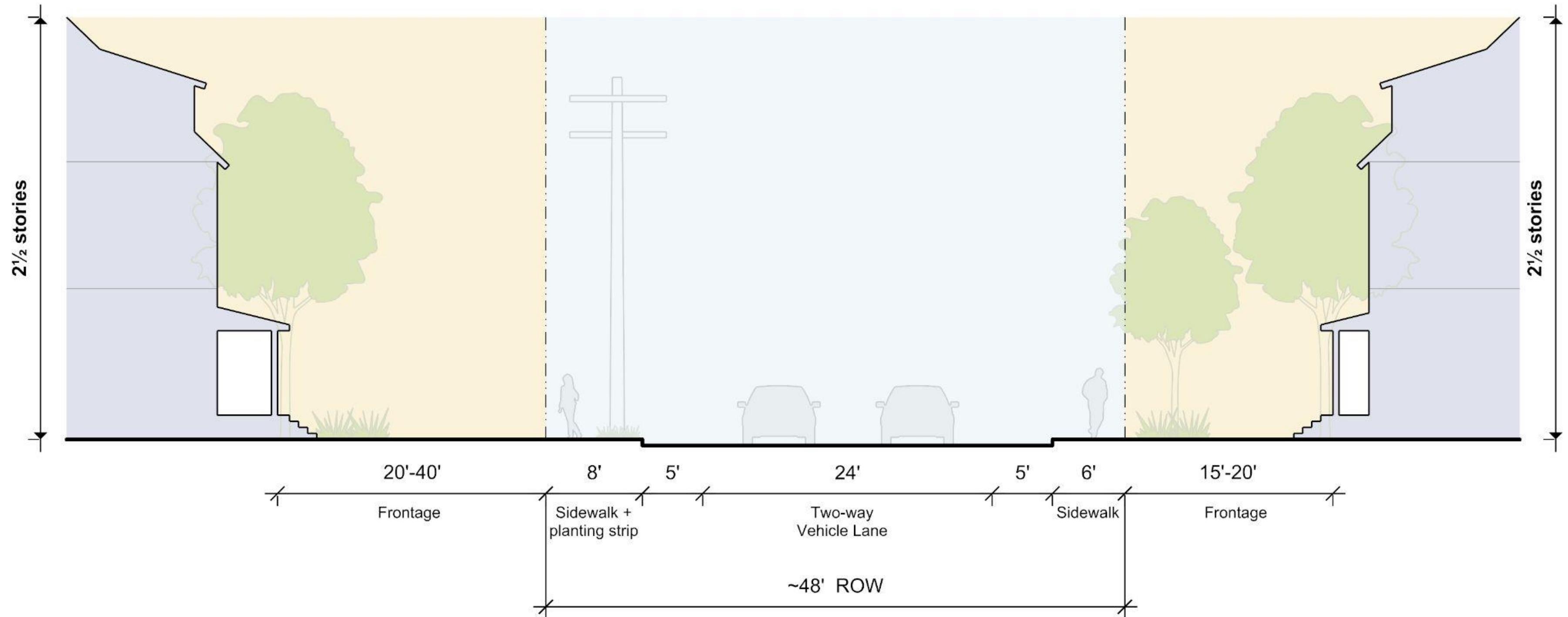


Railroad Ave Street Section: Vision



Bay Road Street Section: Existing

Note: Bay Rd (State Route 1A) changes require rigorous State review.

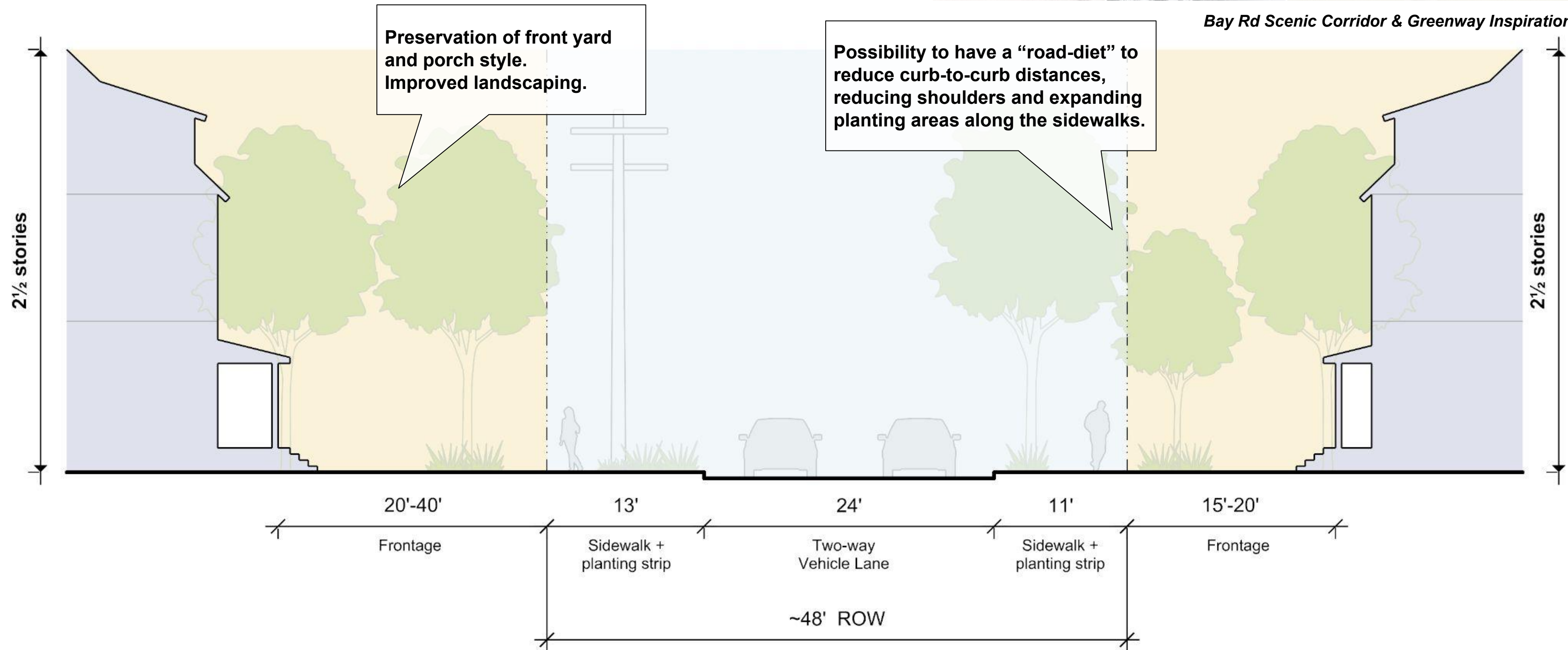


Bay Road Street Section: Vision

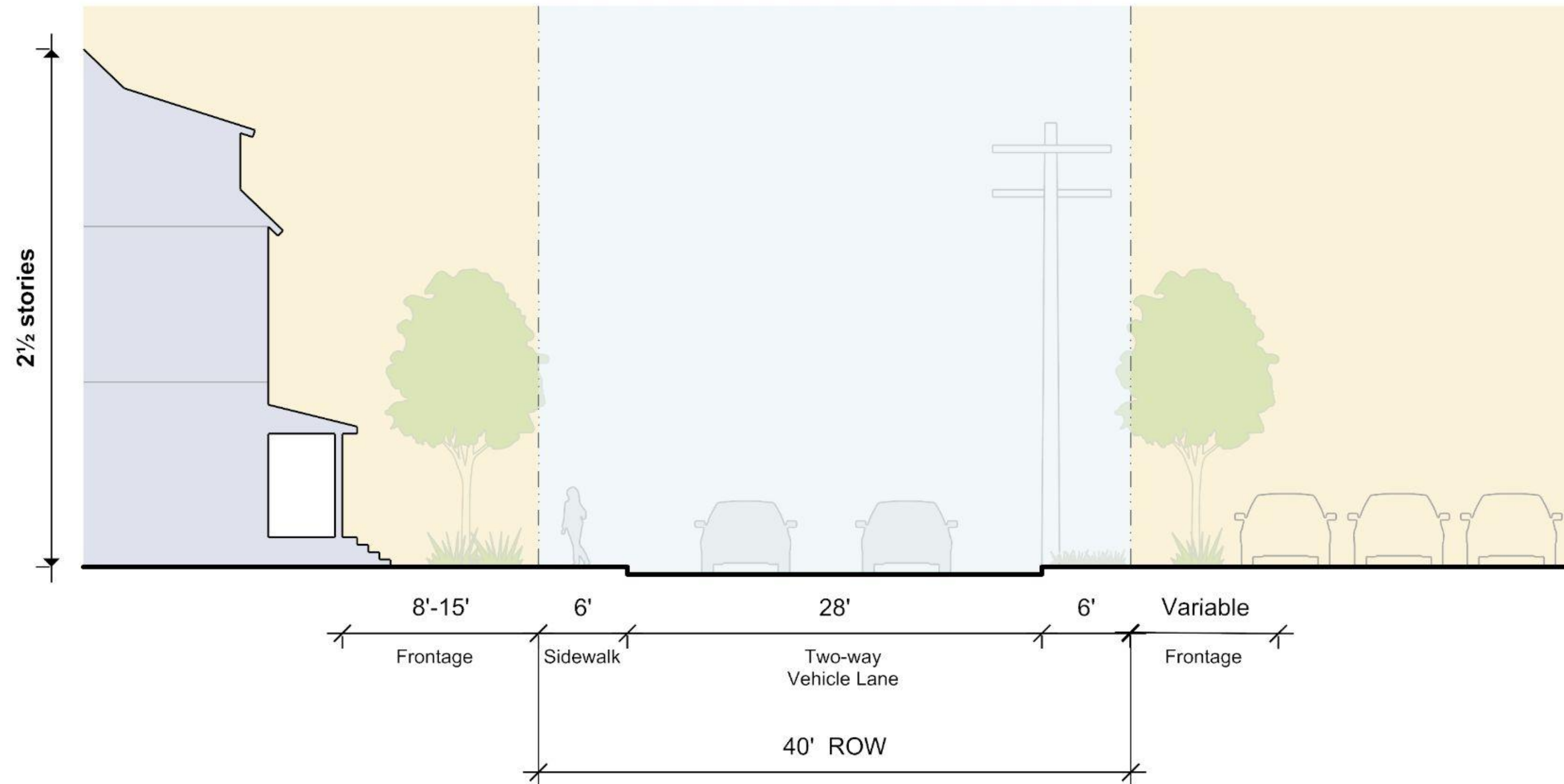
Note: Bay Rd (State Route 1A) changes require rigorous State review.



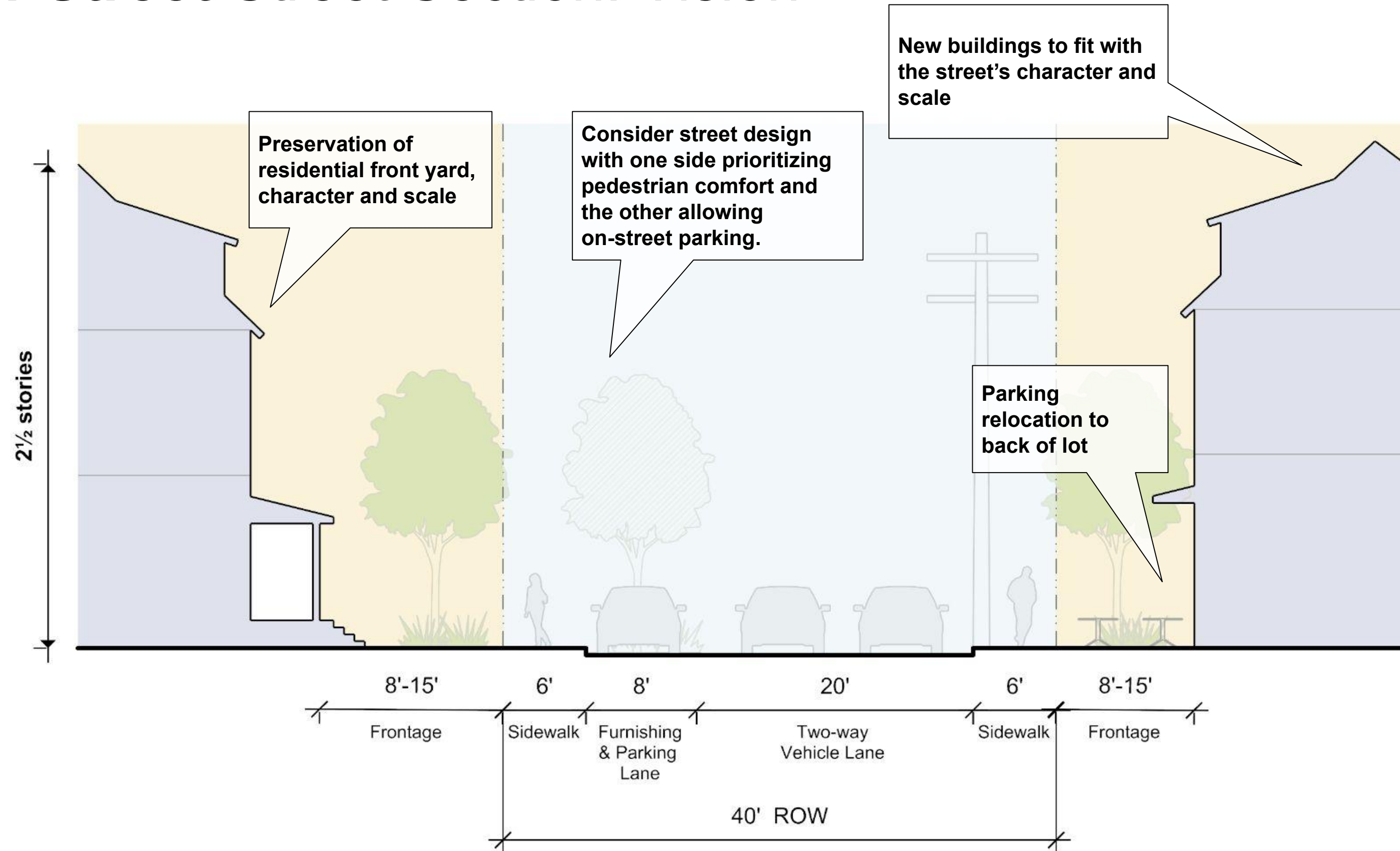
Bay Rd Scenic Corridor & Greenway Inspiration



Willow Street Street Section: Existing



Willow Street Street Section: Vision



Design Standards to Regulate Building Forms

Primary Tools

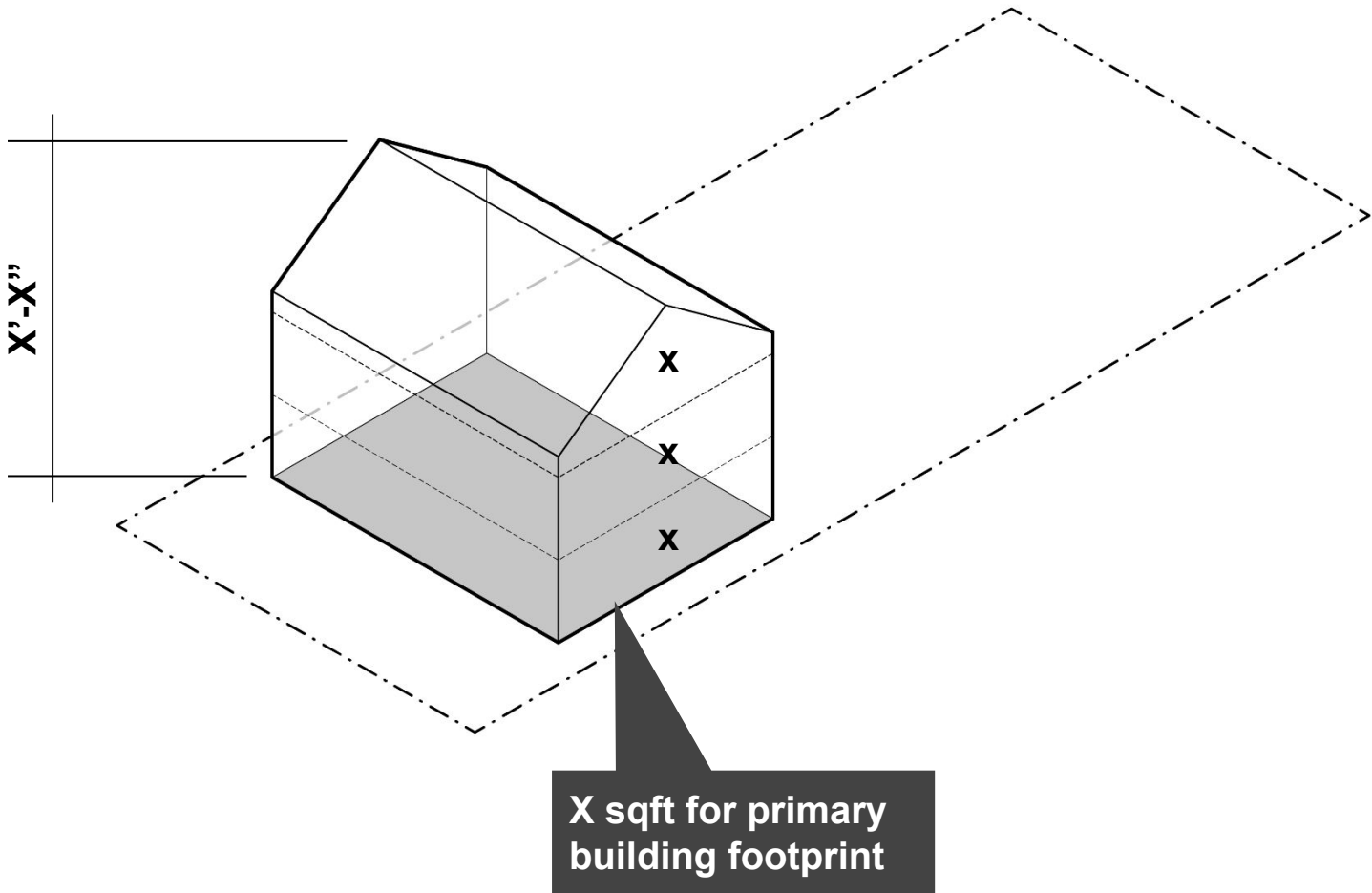
Deconstructing ways of controlling building forms through zoning

We suggest that future zoning regulate building form through the following principal mechanisms:

1 Building Footprint
Sets the maximum area per story

2 Building Height
Sets the maximum height in stories/feet

3 Roof Form
Provides options for a flat or pitched roof half-story



Building Height: Current Definitions

In Hamilton, building height is measured from the average elevation at the front of the building to the highest point of the top story in the case of a flat roof, and to the mean height between the plate and the ridge in the case of a pitched roof.

How Hamilton Measures Height:

From: average elevation of the finished lot grade at the front of the building

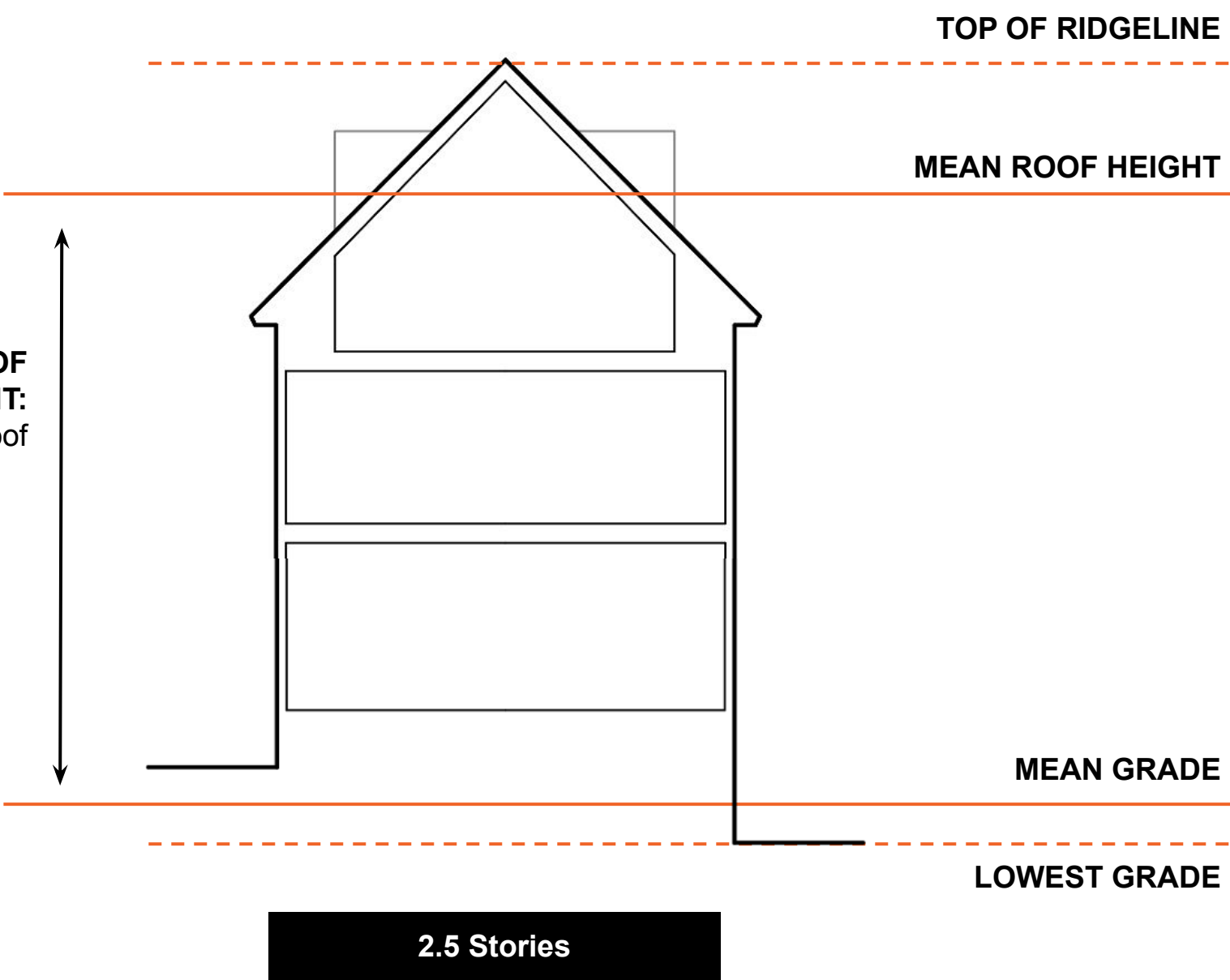
To (varies):

- Flat Roof: highest point of the top story
- Pitched Roof: mean height between the plate and the ridge

Defining stories:

- the portion of a building between the upper surface of any floor and the upper surface of the floor next above
- more than one half of its height must be above the average elevation of the finished grade adjoining the building
- any part of a building between the topmost floor and the roof shall be deemed a half-story

HAMILTON DEFINITION OF BUILDING HEIGHT:
mean front grade → mean roof



Building Height Case Studies



Location:
60 Railroad Ave. Hamilton, MA

Relevant Subdistrict:
Railroad Ave

Building Height:
35 ft - Top of Ridgeline
27.5 ft - Hamilton Definition*



Location:
45 Bay Rd, Hamilton, MA

Relevant Subdistrict:
Railroad Ave

Building Height:
33 ft - Top of Ridgeline
26.5 ft - Hamilton Definition*



Location:
284 Bay Rd, Hamilton, MA

Relevant Subdistrict:
Bay Road Mixed Use

Building Height:
36 ft - Top of Ridgeline
28 ft - Hamilton Definition*



Location:
176 Willow St, Hamilton, MA

Relevant Subdistrict:
Downtown Residential

Building Height:
38 ft - Top of Ridgeline
31 ft - Hamilton Definition*



Location:
Hamilton Town Hall

Relevant Subdistrict:
Willow Mixed-Use

Building Height:
42 ft - Top of Ridgeline
36 ft - Hamilton Definition*

**Hamilton measures height from average elevation of the finished lot grade at the front of the building to mean of pitched roof height.*

Building Height: Suggested Standards

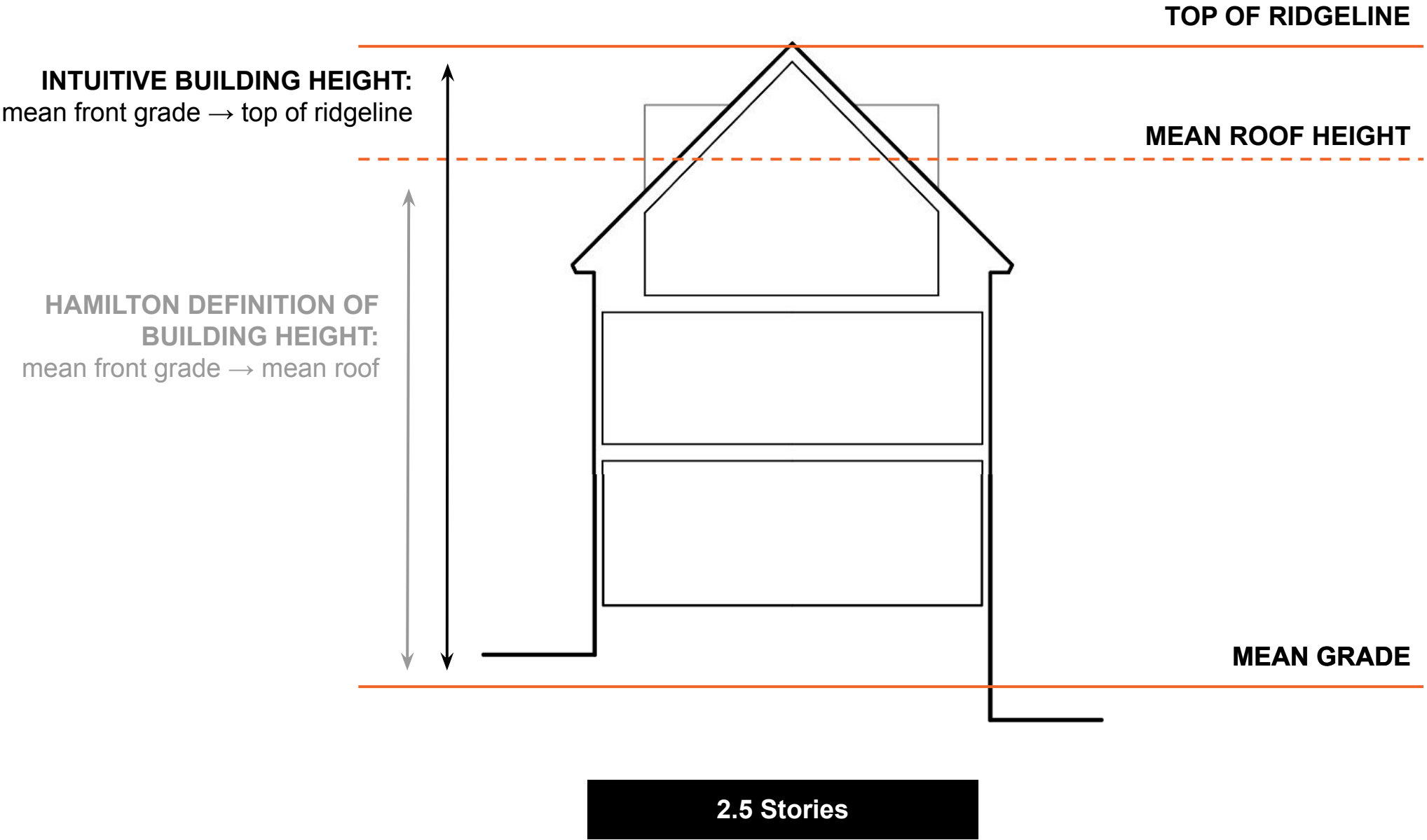
Typical Story Heights:

- Retail/Commercial Ground Floor-to-floor Height: **15'**
- Residential Floor-to-floor Height: **10.5' to 11'**
- Commercial Upper Floor-to-floor Height: **13'**
- Residential Half-Story Height: **14'**

Question: Do you want to consider a ground floor minimum for some or all districts?

Suggested Maximum Building Heights by Use:

Residential Only	
Stories	Height
2.5	36' (2 x 11' story + 14' half-story)
3.5	47' (3 x 11' story + 14' half-story)
Mixed-Use	
Stories	Height
2.5	40-42' (15' ground floor + 11' or 13' + 14' half-story)
3.5	55' (15' ground floor + 2 x 11' or 13'+ 14' half-story)



Note: for more intuitive understanding, we have used the top of the ridgeline for all measurements of height in this table (e.g. building height, half-story height). This will be updated in the final zoning article to be consistent with how Hamilton measures building height.

Roof Form

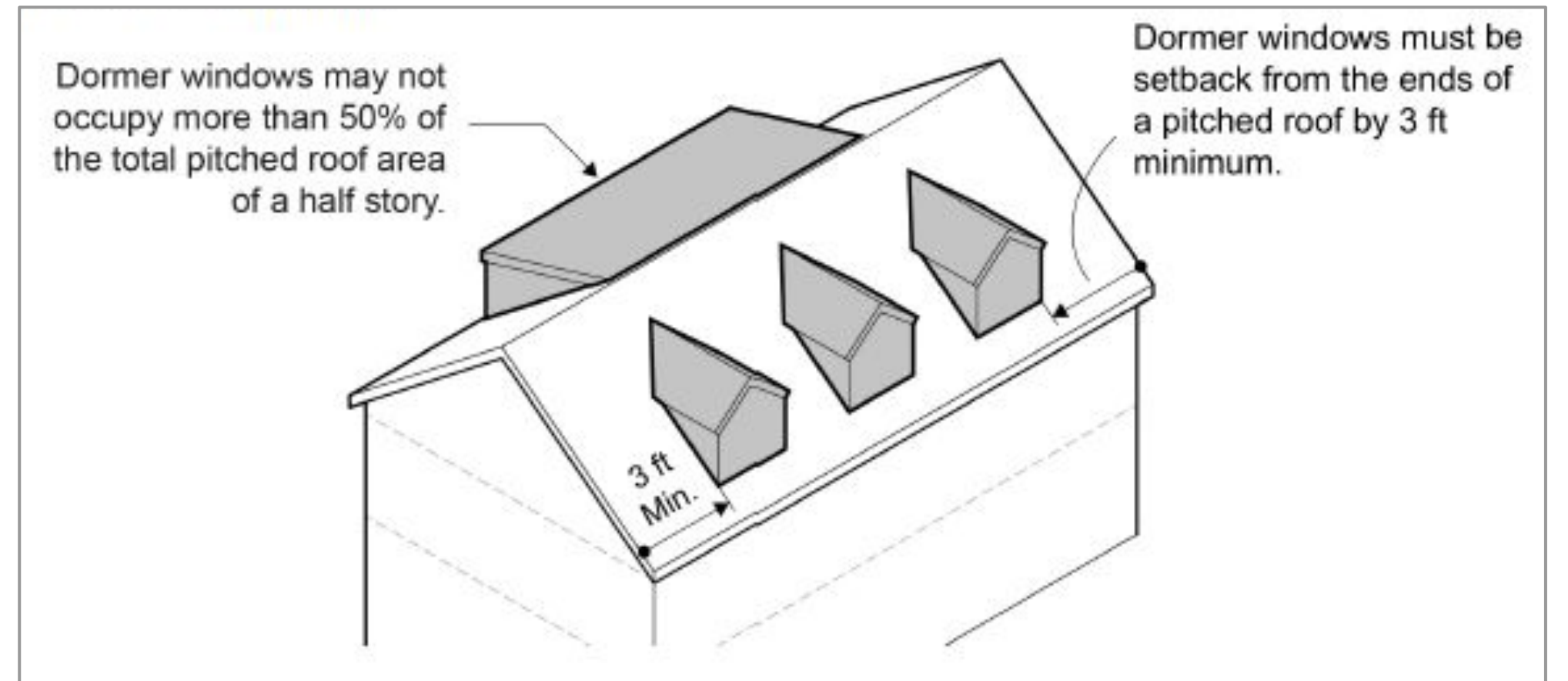
A half story for pitched roofs can be accomplished in many ways....

Your current zoning defines half story as:

“any part of a building between the topmost floor and the roof”

We suggest adding design standards like:

- Maximum slope for roof pitch
- Maximum height for the knee wall
- Dormer requirements, designed to shape the way they are added



Parking Requirements

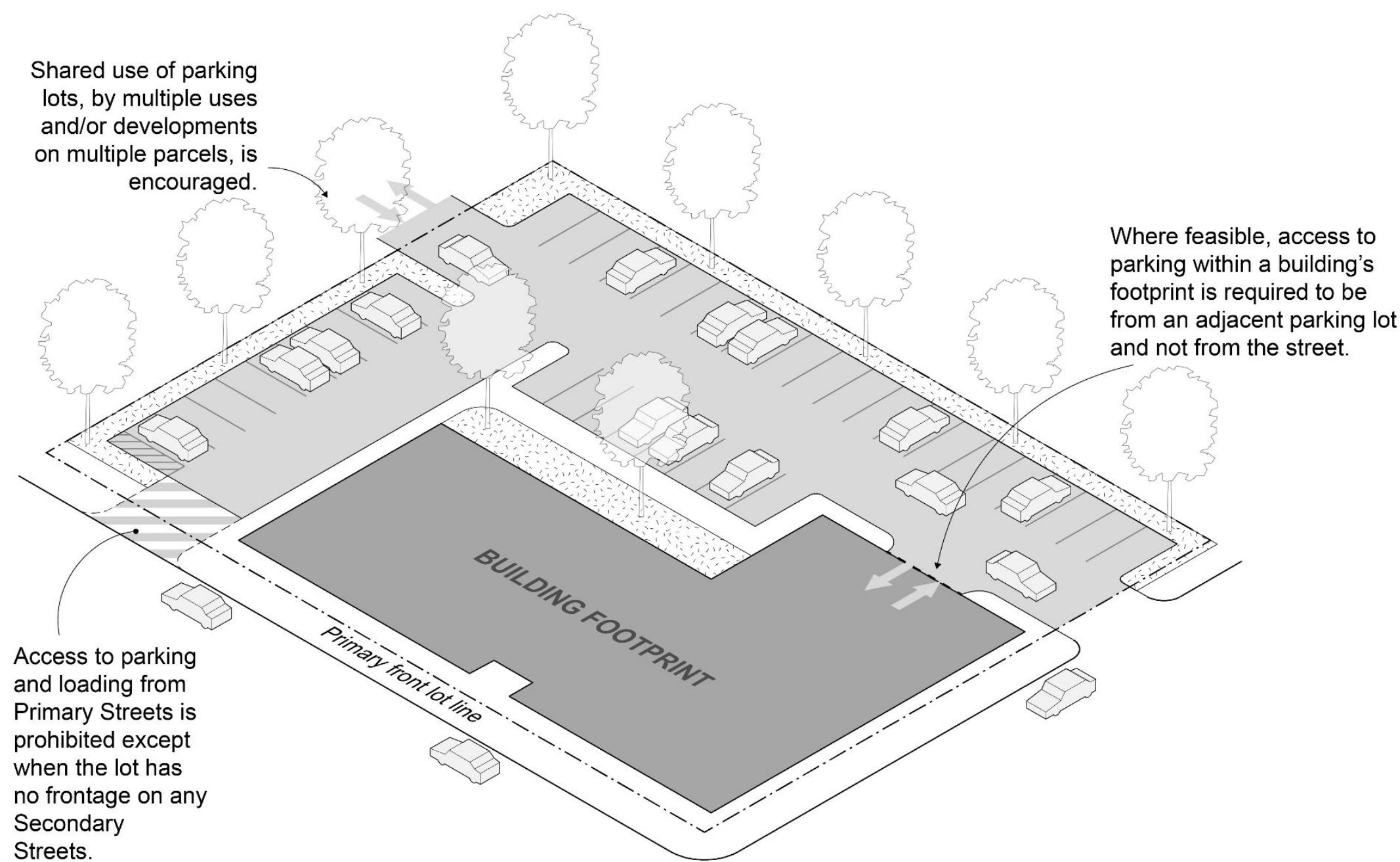
We will include strategies to keep parking out of view and away from the front lot line.

For Example:

Parking Setbacks:

Facing a right of way	12'
Not facing a right of way	4'

- No parking spaces are allowed between the Front Elevation and the Primary Front Lot Line
- Curb cuts are prohibited along the Primary Front Lot Line when access along another lot line is available
- Parking Lots must be separated from the right of way by a building or screening within the parking setback. Screening shall consist of one or a combination of the following:
 - A min. 5'-wide planting strip with planting that provides a buffer from the R.O.W.
 - A wall, barrier, or fence of uniform appearance



Why are special approvals and permits are so common?

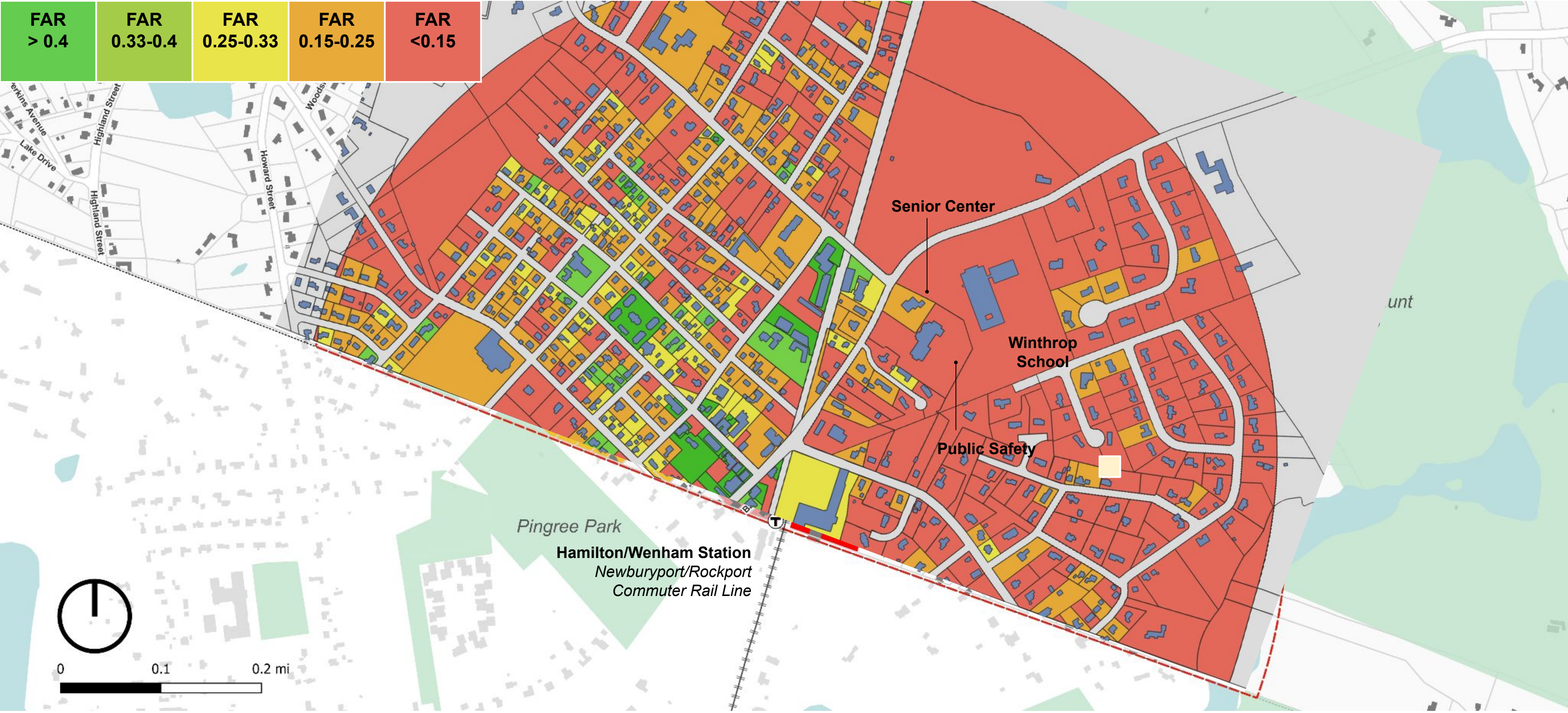


76% of lots in the Study Area are smaller than the minimum lot size for parcels with at least one dwelling unit.

These are all considered “nonconforming lots” because they do not meet current zoning standards.

If you were to consider existing lots with multiple units, it is likely that even more lots are nonconforming.

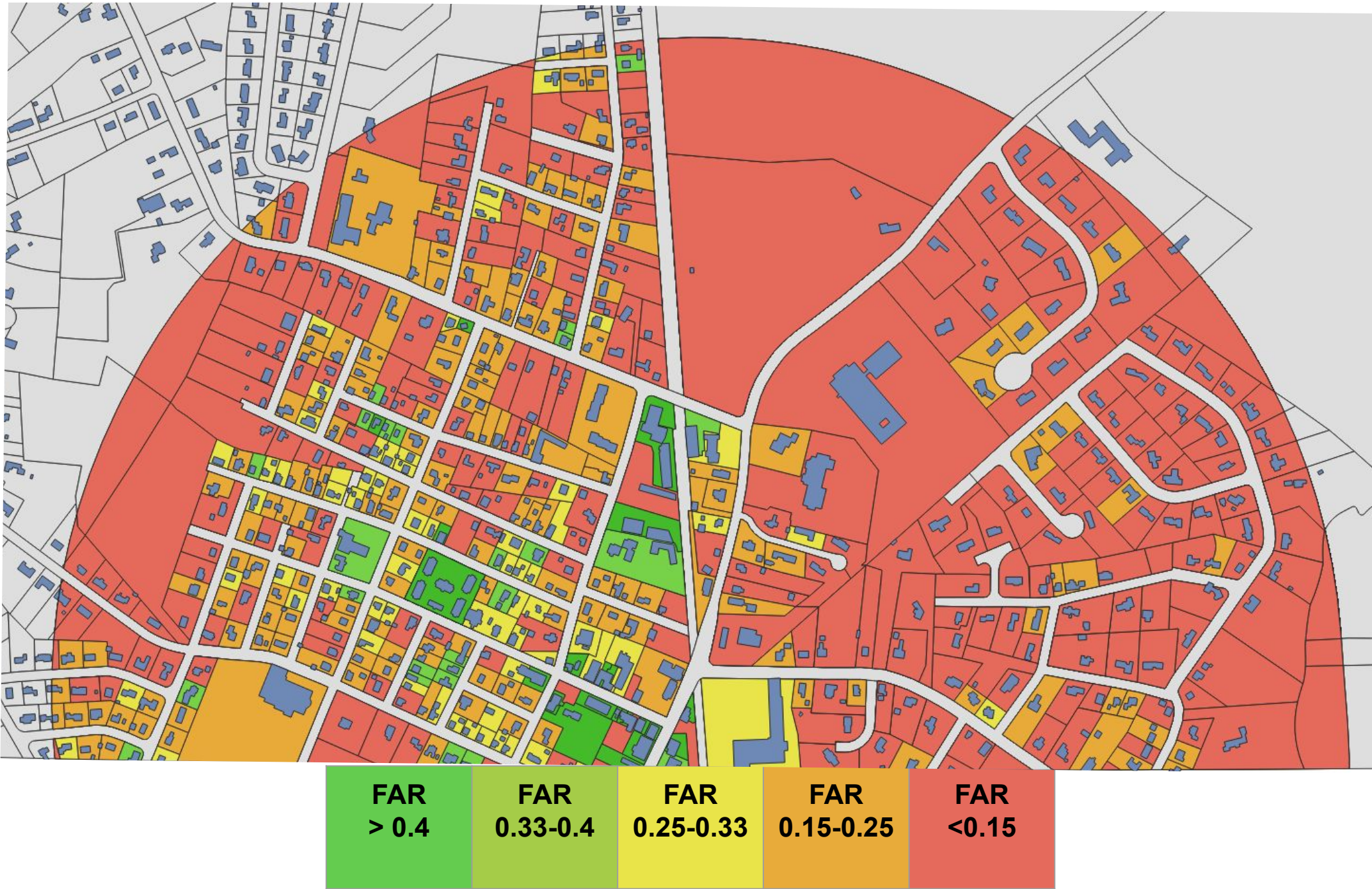
Downtown FAR Analysis



FAR Analysis for Hamilton

The use of Floor Area Ratio allows for analysis of the total floor area of structures in comparison to the parcel of land they are within.

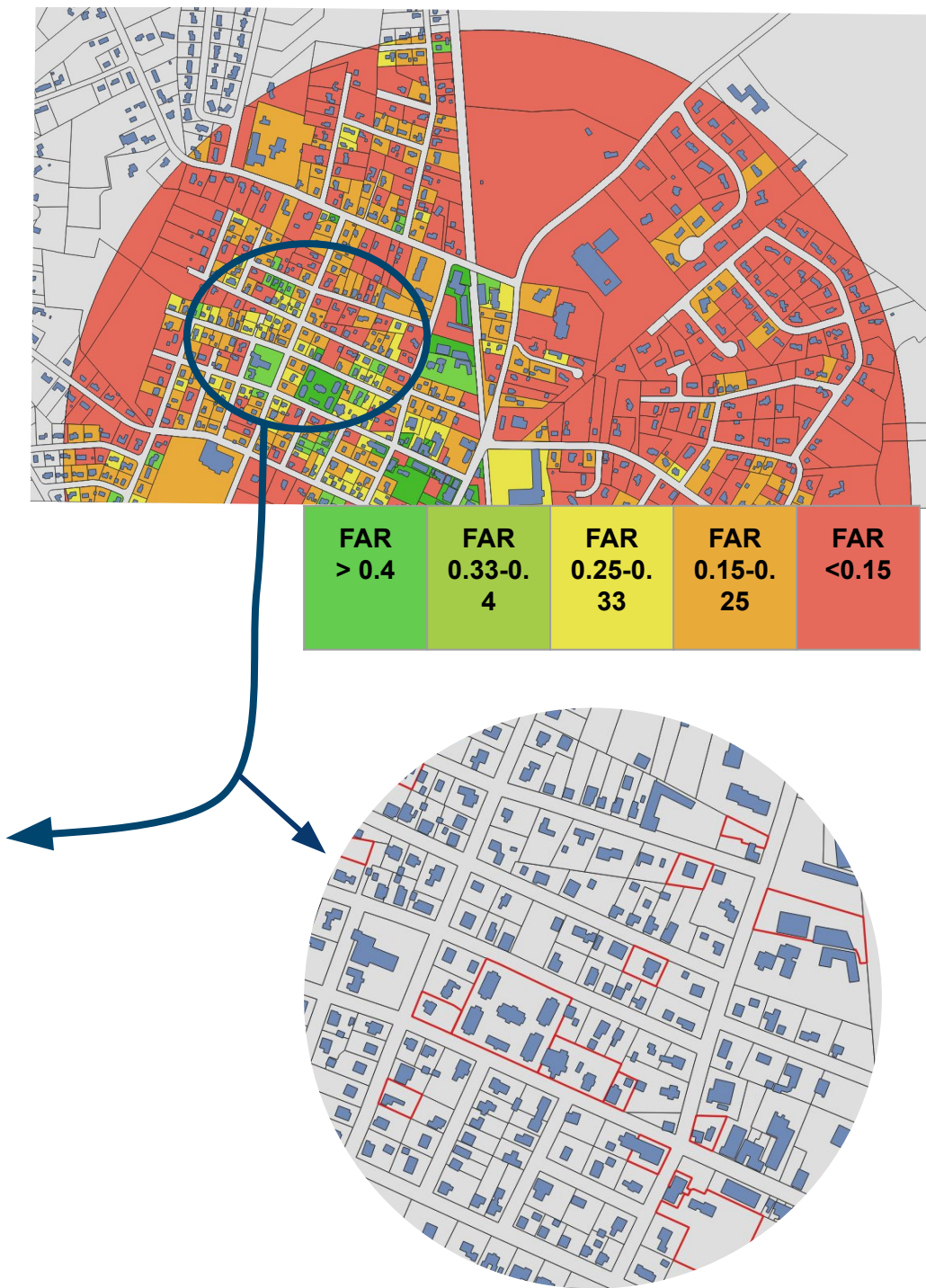
A FAR of 0.33 is roughly representative and comparable to 15 units/acre, therefore we have highlighted all parcels with 0.33 and above in a shade of green to represent presumed plots where the 15 units/acre threshold and requirement for the MBTA Communities Law



FAR Analysis for Hamilton

While the majority of this half mile radius around the train station falls far below the desired FAR threshold, the Willow Street strip shows some promise, especially considering the number of parcels which are above 0.33 or hovering around that threshold.

Complying with the MBTA communities law may not be as big of a stretch in certain areas, such as the Willow Street area, as one may initially think based on this FAR analysis.



The Willow Street Strip

Railroad Ave

Running adjacent to Willow Street, Railroad Ave provides a solid example of parcels and structures which exceed or near the 0.33 FAR which we have set out to find.



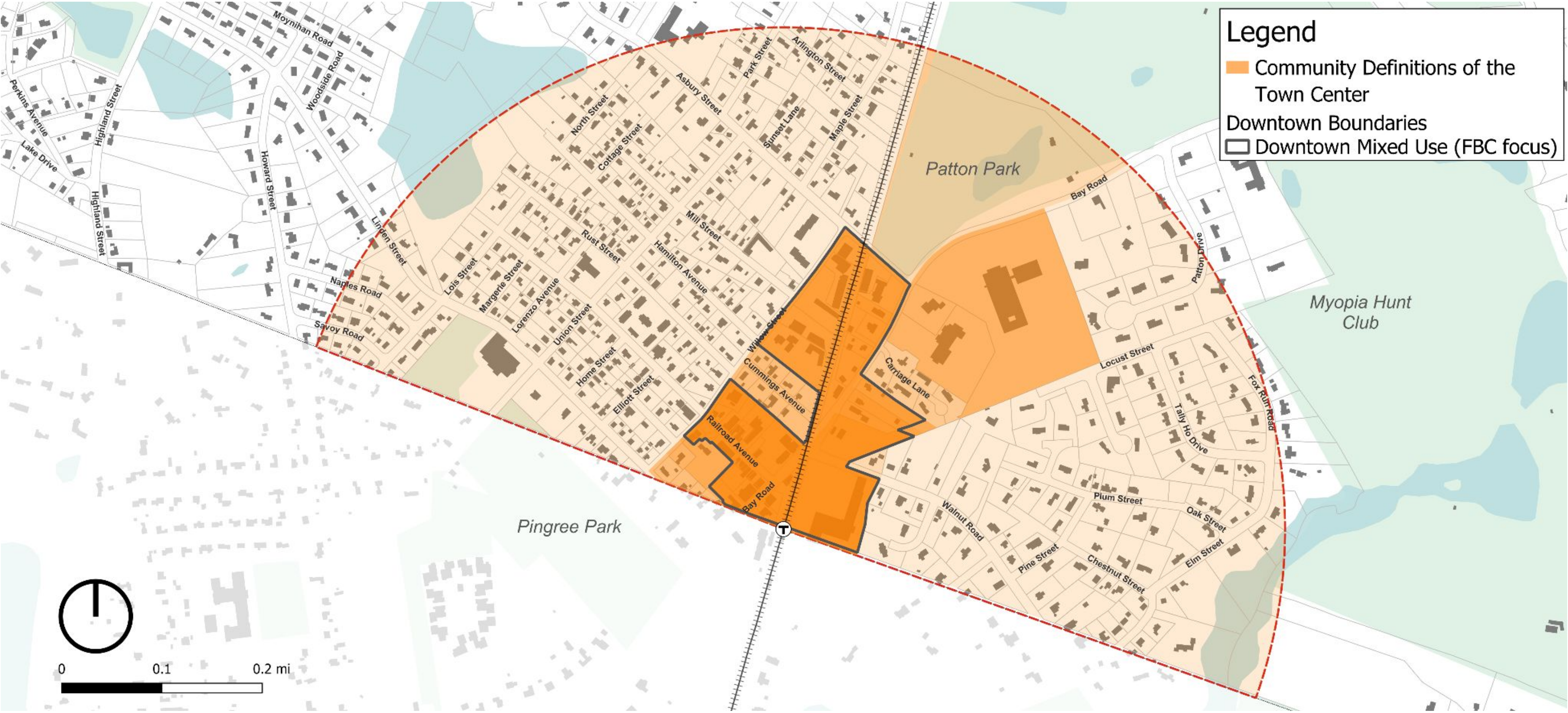
Elliot Street

Running adjacent to Railroad Ave, Elliot Street also houses parcels meeting and hovering close to the 0.33 threshold



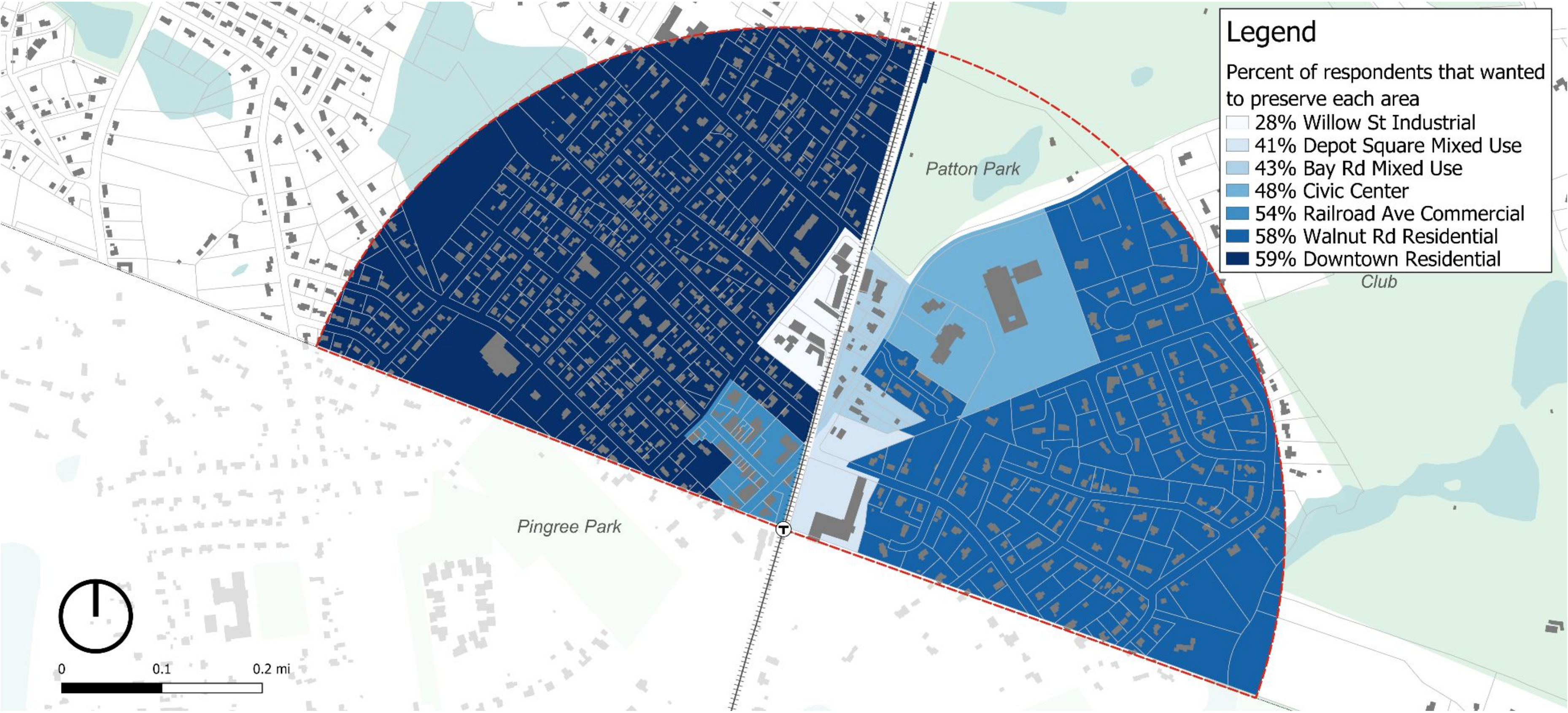
Town Center Boundary Feedback

Based on Public Visioning Workshop, Advisory Committee Input & Public Visioning Survey



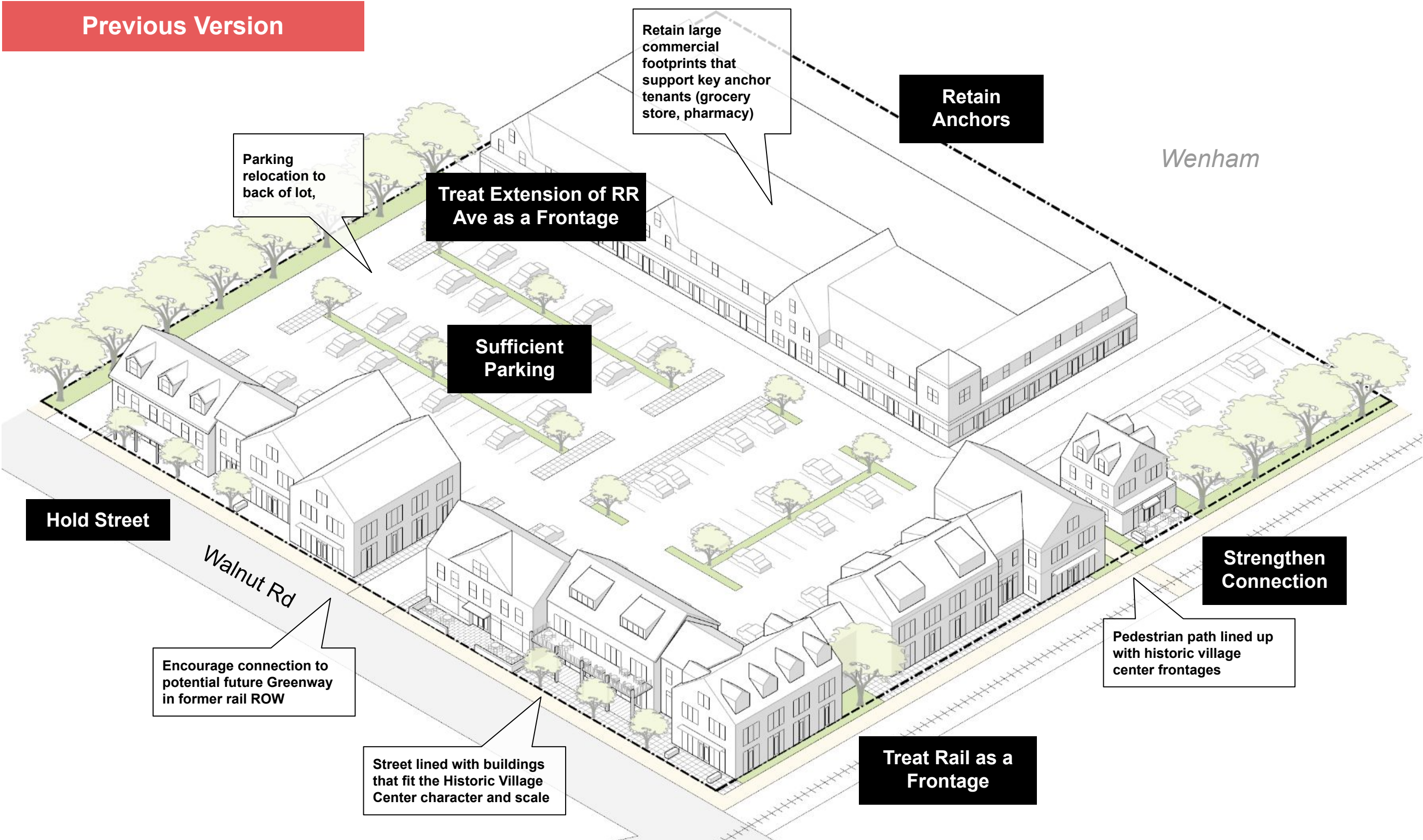
Town Center Preservation Feedback

Based on Public Visioning Workshop, Advisory Committee Input & Public Visioning Survey



Hamilton Crossing Building Form Vision

This is an approximation of the Hamilton Crossing shopping plaza site for the purposes of exploring the building form vision for this subdistrict



Draft Elements for Asbury/GC 3A-MFOD

Match underlying R-1B

- Exempt from GPOD Special Permit requirement
- Dimensional parameters to match underlying R-1B with the addition of FAR
- Inclusionary requirements in Section 8.3 modified to 10%
- Additional definition: FAR
- Expanded definition: Gross Floor Area, Residential

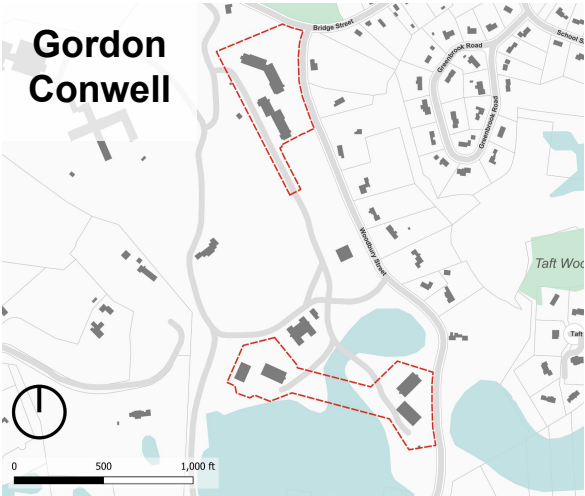
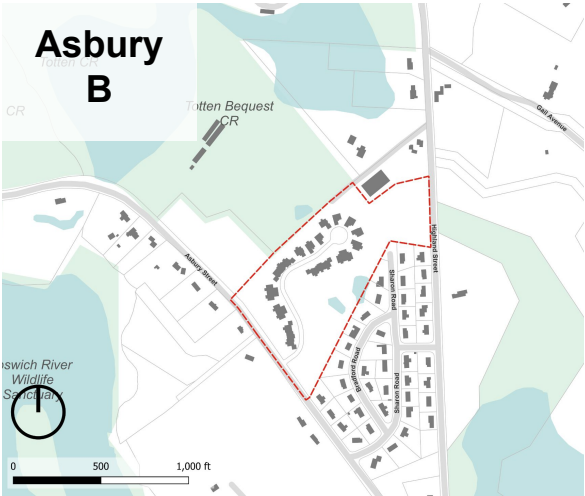
	Asbury St.	Gordon Conwell
Minimum Lot Size (ft)	80,000	80,000
Minimum Lot Frontage (ft.)	175	175
Minimum Lot width and depth (ft.) (for Dwellings, see also Sections 4.2.2, 4.2.6 and 4.3)	100 at building	100 at building
Maximum Building Height (ft.)	35	35
Maximum Number of Stories	3.0	3.0
Maximum Building Coverage (%)	20	20
Minimum Front Yard (ft.) (See also Section 4.2.4)	25/50 (note 1)	25/50 (note 1)
Minimum Side Yard and Rear Yard (ft.)	15	15
Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	.40-.45 TBD	0.40

Townwide Compliance Summary Table

Downtown + Gordon Conwell + Asbury B

	Key Model Inputs							Model Outputs							
Subdistrict	FAR	Min. Lot Size	Min.. Parking Spaces per Unit	Max. Bldg Height (stories)	Max. % Bldg + Parking Coverage	Max. % Bldg + Parking Coverage	Min. % Open Space	Unit Capacity	Acreage	Density Denominator	Modeled Density	% Land in Contiguous Subdistricts	% Land in Transit Area	% Units in Transit Area	Type (Base vs. Overlay)
Willow St Mixed Use	0.42	3,000	1.0	3.5	20%	30%	70%	115	7.2	7.2	15.9	contributing	100%	100%	Base
Bay Rd Mixed Use	0.33	5,000	1.0	2.5	20%	30%	70%	111	9.5	9.5	11.7	contributing	100%	100%	Base
Downtown Residential	0.32	3,000	1.0	2.5	20%	30%	70%	115	13.3	13.3	8.6	contributing	100%	100%	Base
Asbury B	0.41	80,000	1.0	3.0	20%	30%	70%	239	14.8	12.1	19.8		0%	0%	Overlay
Gordon Conwell	0.40	80,000	1.0	3.0	20%	30%	70%	211	12.1	10.6	20.0		0%	0%	Overlay
TOTAL								791	57.0	52.7	15.0	52.6%	52.6%	43.1%	n/a
COMPLIANCE TARGET								731	49	n/a	15	50%	20%	20%	n/a

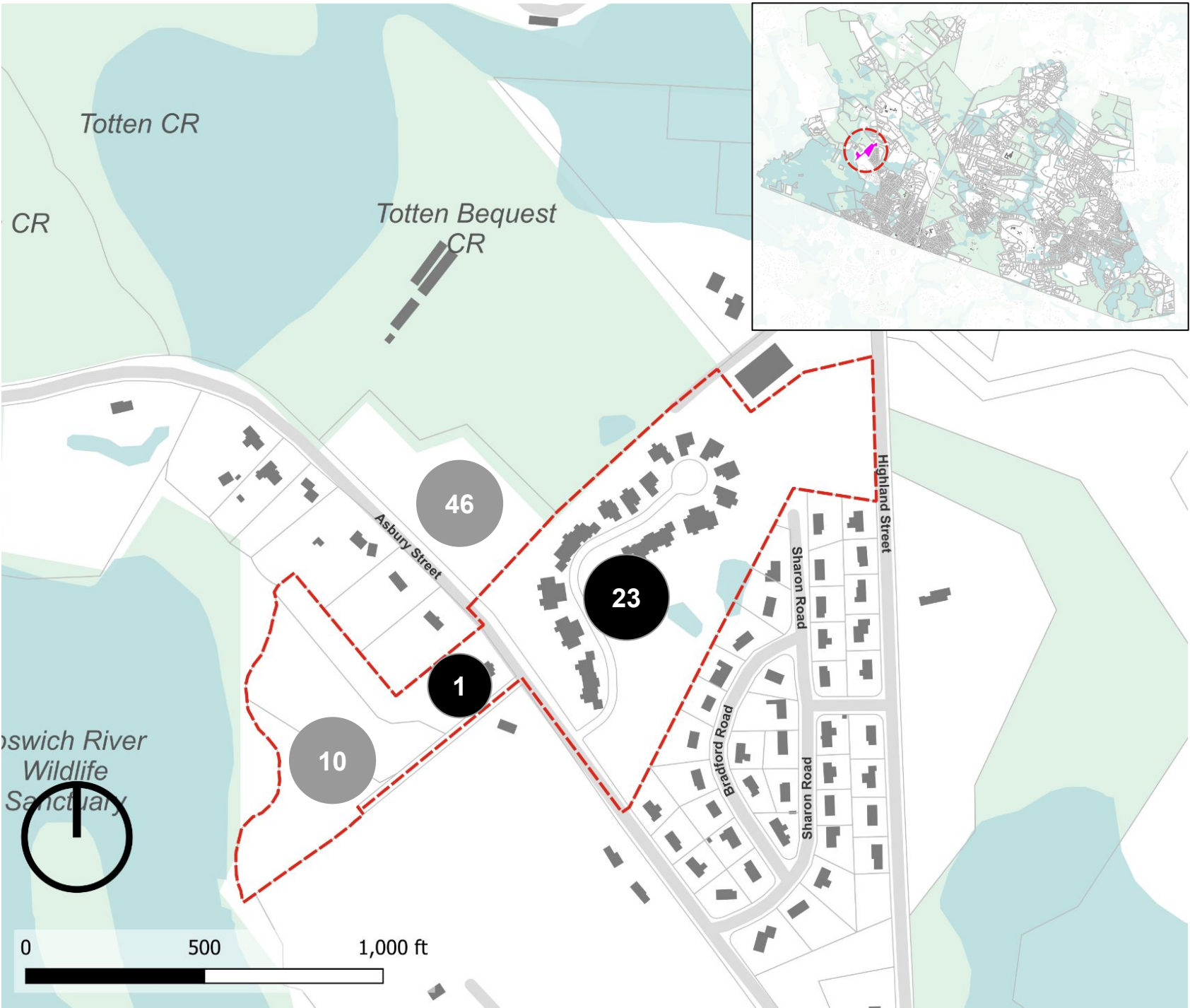
Downtown Unit Capacity
341



Note: this relies on the State modifying regulations to accept Gordon Conwell as developable land. Under the emergency regulations issued it would not be eligible due to institutional ownership.

Asbury A

Additional 3A Sites Beyond Town Center



3 Multi-family homes along Asbury Street
80 units in planned and existing projects

Key Stats	
Acres	21.7
Density Denominator	18.9
Existing/Planned Units	44 (23 + 10 + 1)
Existing Density (with DD)	2.3 units per acre
Current Use	Housing
Current Ownership	Private
Potential Issues	
Groundwater Protection Overlay District (GPOD) Interaction	<i>All Parcel Have Some 1985 + Fully Zone II</i> Min lot size 80k sf per unit Impervious surface 15% / 2,500sf triggers SP
Developable Land	n/a
40B Interaction	n/a

- Notes:**
- TBD

Townwide Compliance Summary Table

Downtown + Asbury A

	Key Model Inputs							Model Outputs							
Subdistrict	FAR	Min. Lot Size	Min.. Parking Spaces per Unit	Max. Bldg Height (stories)	Max. % Bldg + Parking Coverage	Max. % Bldg + Parking Coverage	Min. % Open Space	Unit Capacity	Acreage	Density Denomina tor	Modeled Density	% Land in Contiguous Subdistricts	% Land in Transit Area	% Units in Transit Area	Type (Base vs. Overlay)
Willow St Mixed Use	0.40	3,000	1.0	3.5	20%	30%	70%	108	7.2	7.2	14.9	contributing	100%	100%	Base
Bay Rd Mixed Use	0.39	5,000	1.0	2.5	20%	30%	70%	126	9.5	9.5	13.2	contributing	100%	100%	Base
Downtown Residential	0.37	3,000	1.0	2.5	20%	30%	70%	163	15.4	15.4	10.6	contributing	100%	100%	Base
Asbury A	0.42	3,000	1.0	3.0	20%	30%	70%	369	21.7	18.9	19.5		0%	0%	Overlay
TOTAL								809	53.78	51.0	15.01	59.7%	59.7%	51.8%	n/a
COMPLIANCE TARGET								731	49	n/a	15	50%	20%	20%	n/a

Encouraging Adaptive Reuse

Converting existing homes to multi-family has challenges.

These kind of renovations typically require:

- Building Code upgrades for access/egress to each unit, fire protection
- Plumbing chases for new kitchens and bathrooms
- Soundproofing between units
- Separate utility metering for units

Some strategies to incentivize conversion over new builds:

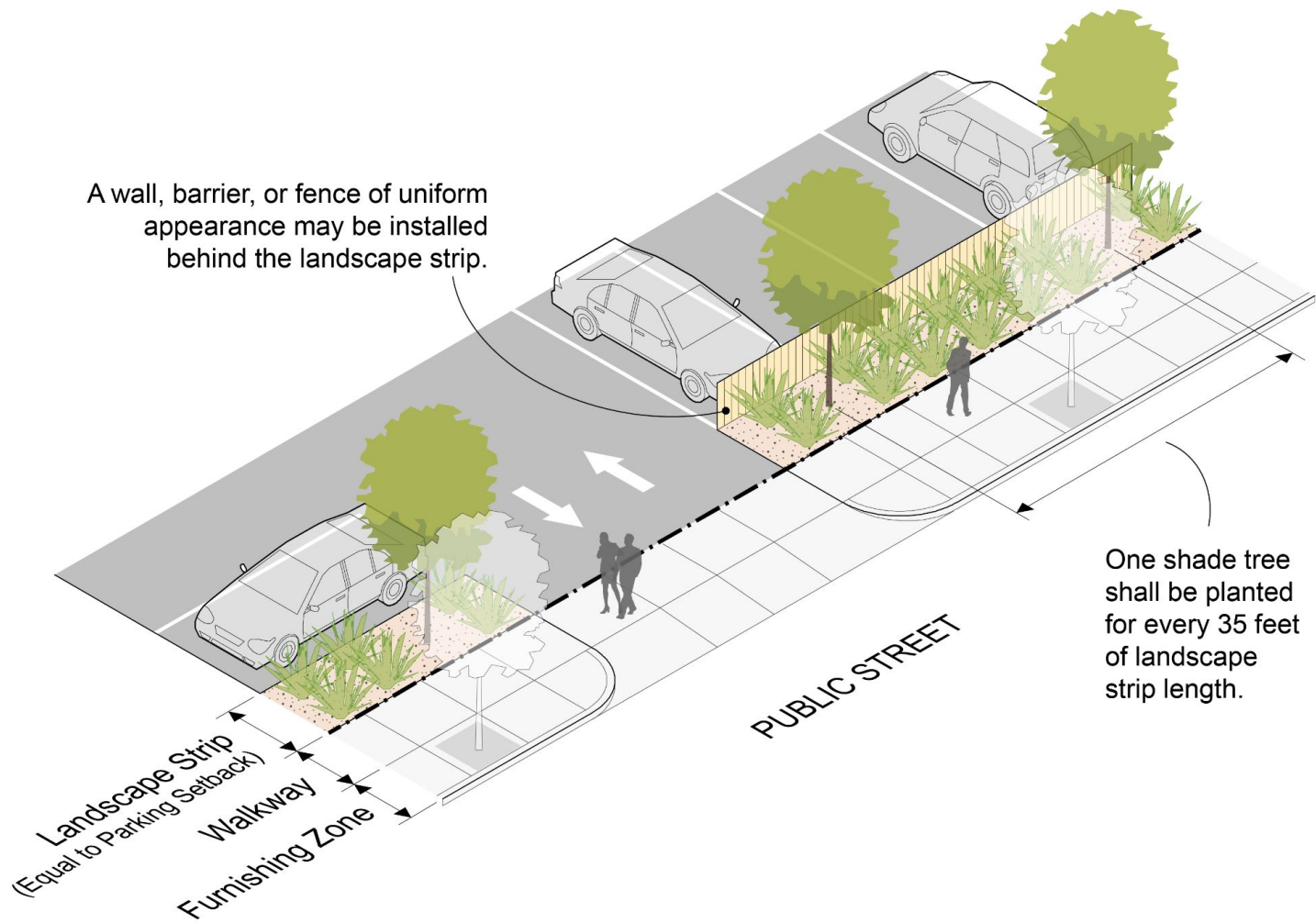
- Allow addition up to 50% of existing footprint
 - Allowed along the rear and side elevations of the existing structure.
 - Additions along the side elevation must be set back at least 20' from the front facade of the existing structure.
- Allow multiple buildings by Site Plan Review

Parking Placement

The draft zoning ordinance keeps parking out of view and away from the front lot line.



28 Austin Street provides parking that is located behind

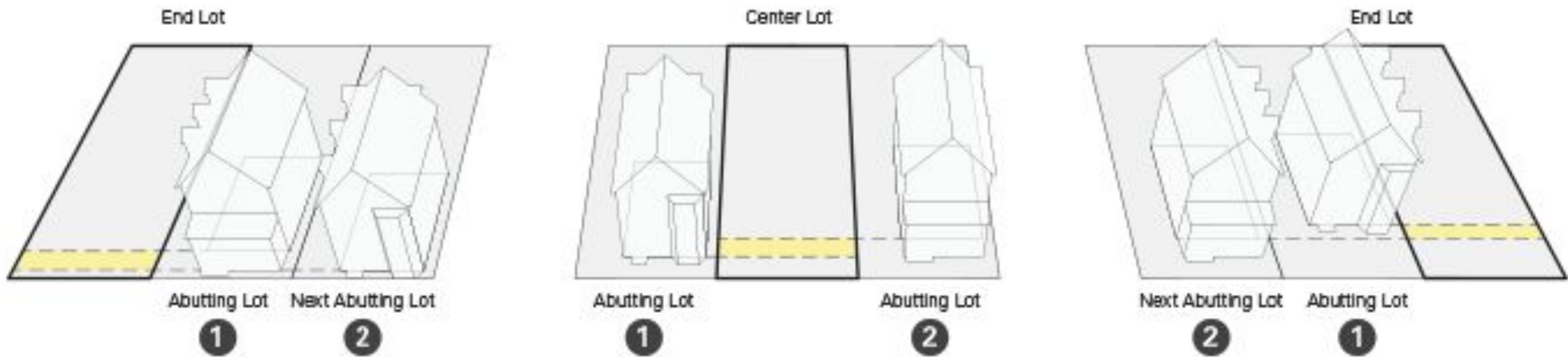


Parking Setbacks:

Facing a right of way	12'
Not facing a right of way	4'

- No parking spaces are allowed between the Front Elevation and the Primary Front Lot Line
- Curb cuts are prohibited along the Primary Front Lot Line when access along another lot line is available
- Parking Lots must be separated from the right of way by a building or screening within the parking setback. Screening shall consist of one or a combination of the following:
 - A min. 5'-wide planting strip with planting that provides a buffer from the R.O.W.
 - A wall, barrier, or fence of uniform appearance

Contextual Front Setback?



Town Center Vision Plan

The vision and framework guiding the zoning approach for the Town Center

Proposed Street Frontage Types

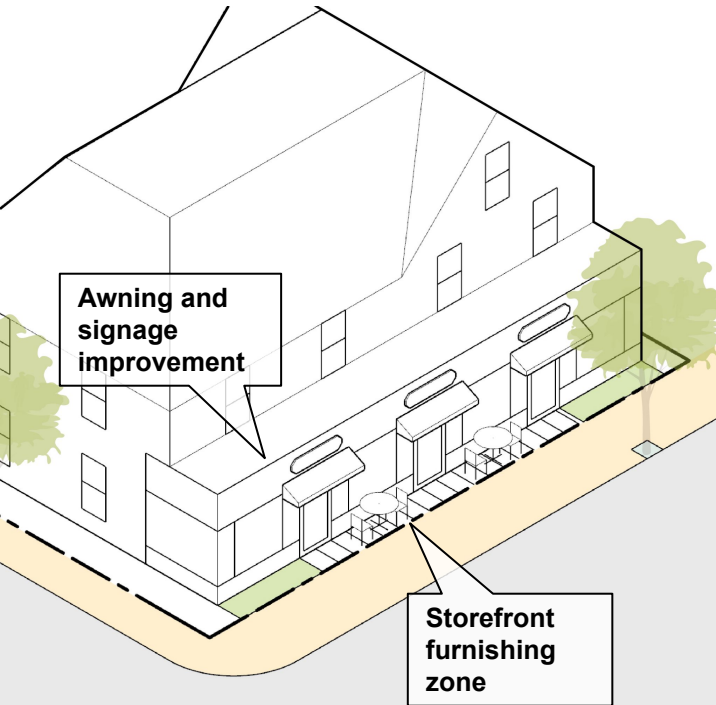
5 frontage types



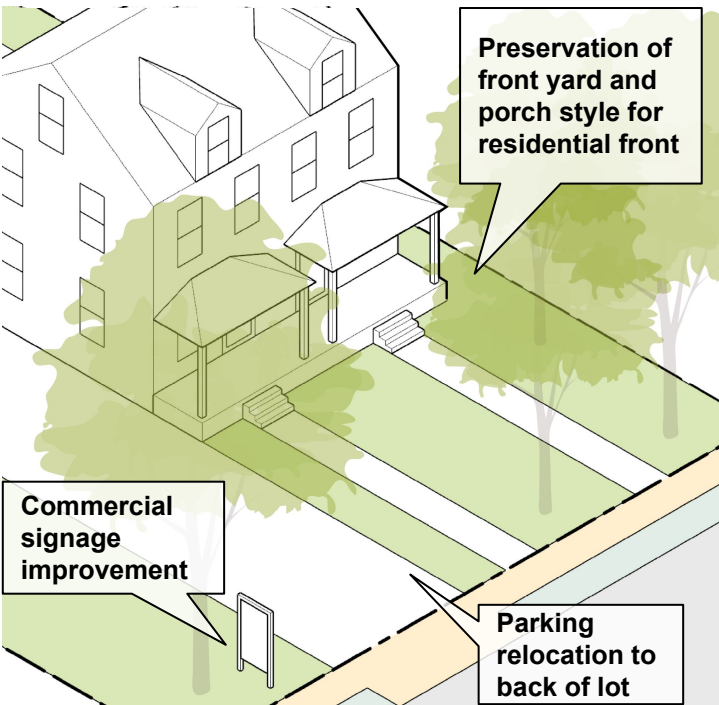
Bay Rd Scenic Corridor & Greenway Inspiration



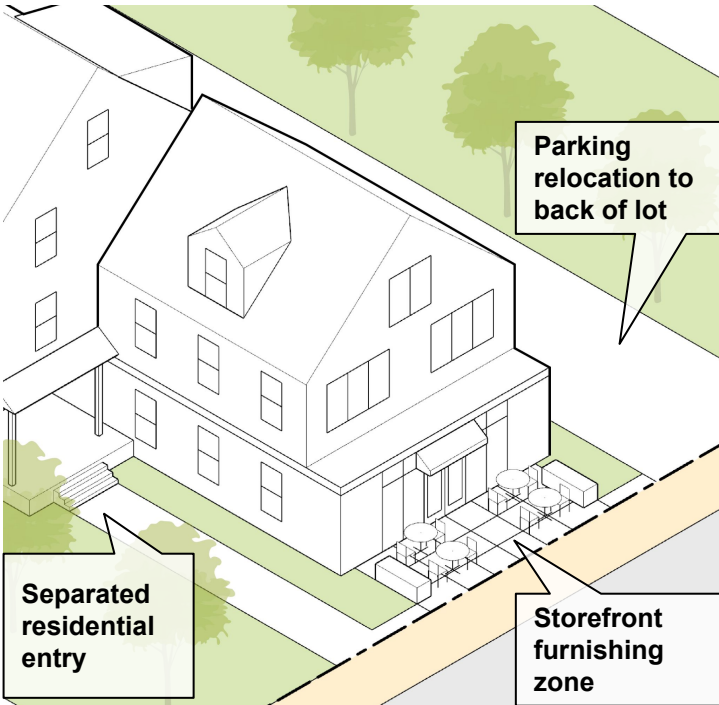
Proposed Frontage Types



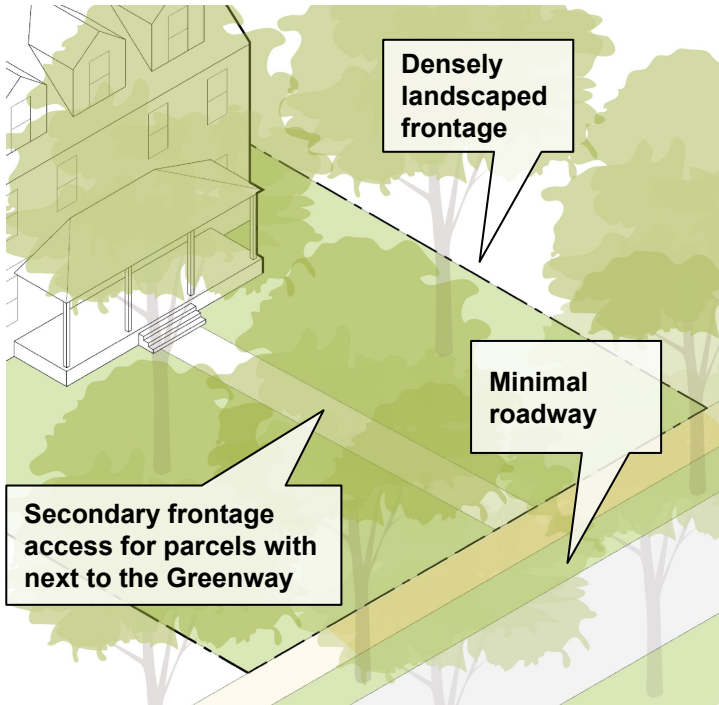
 **Historic Village Center**
Existing Pattern



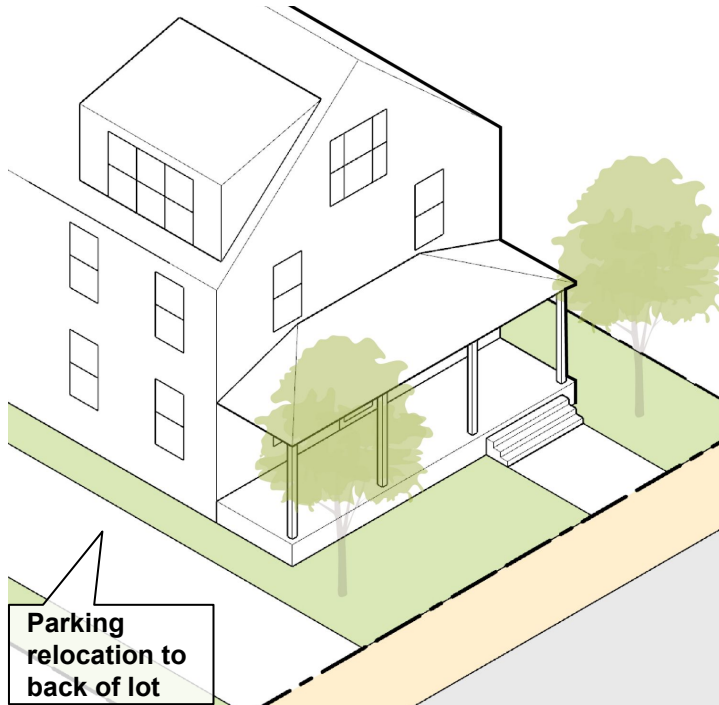
 **Bay Rd Scenic Corridor**
Existing Pattern



 **Willow St Mixed Use**
New Pattern



 **Greenway**
New Pattern



 **Willow St Residential**
Existing Pattern

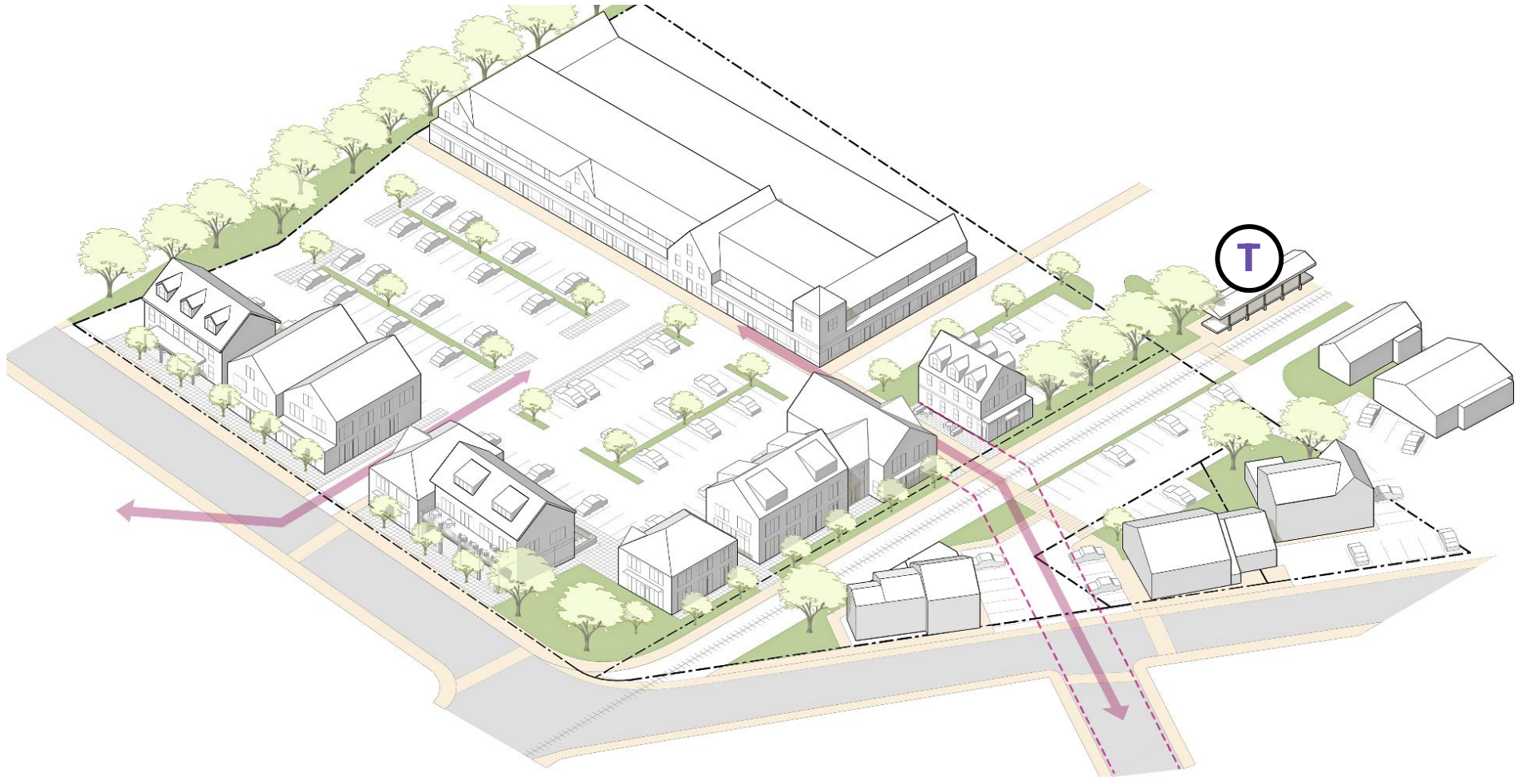
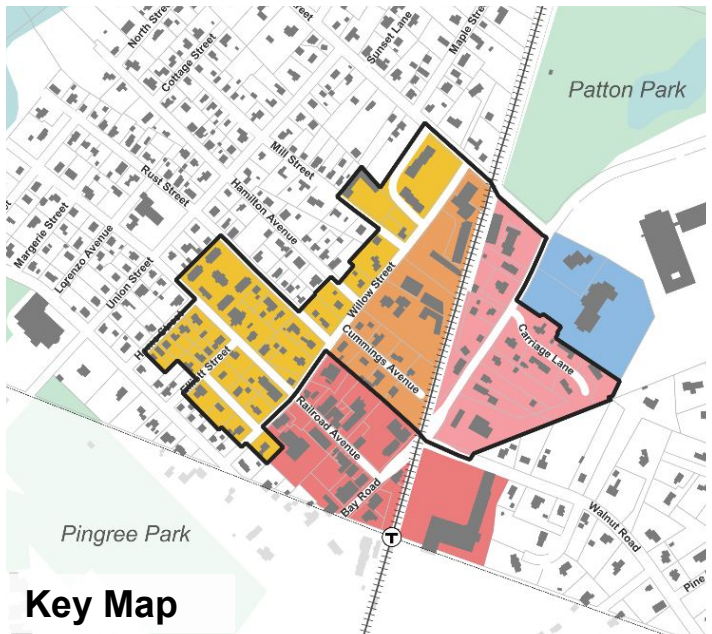


Town Center Zoning Subdistrict Standards

Suggested subdistricts and dimensional standards for the Town Center zoning

Town Center Subdistricts NOT Contributing to 3A

These two Town Center Subdistricts will NOT contribute to 3A, and therefore are independent of the constraints of 3A.

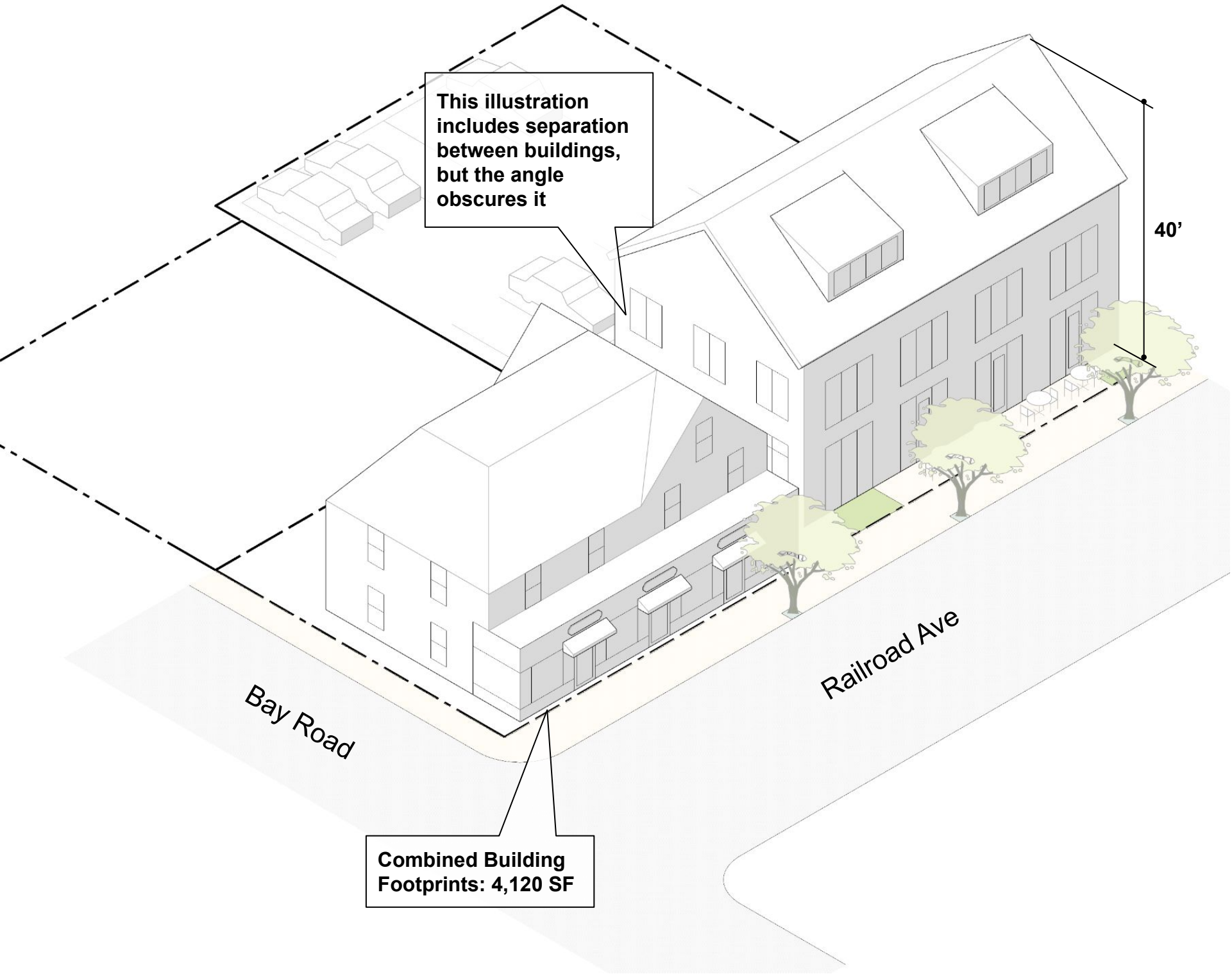


■ Depot Square Mixed Use



■ Bay Rd Civic

Railroad Ave Building Form Standards



Relationship to 3A:

- This subdistrict does not contribute to 3A.

Special Massing Rules:

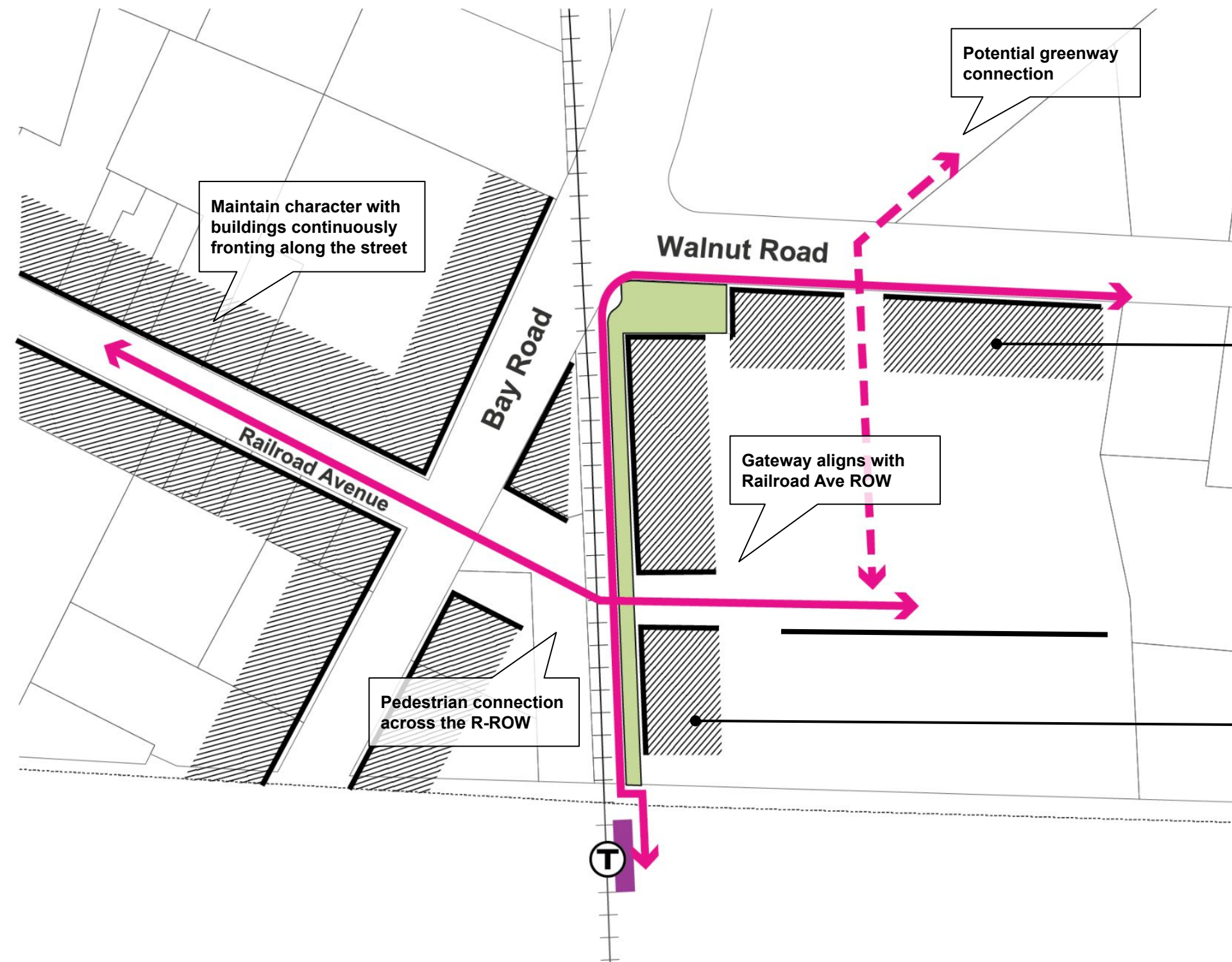
- We are considering allowing flat roofs in this subdistrict given it is already present
- Different rules for first 60’ vs rear buildings
- Parcels over a certain size trigger a special permit process

Dimensional Standards	
Building Footprint, max.	5,000 SF
Building Height, max.	42’ / 2.5 stories
Ground Floor Height, min/max.	13’ / 15’
Half-Story Height, max.	14’
Setback - Front, min/max.	0’ / 10’
Setback - Side, min.	0’
Setback - Rear, min.	10’
Open Space, min.	0%

Note: for more intuitive understanding, we have used the top of the ridgeline for all measurements of height in this table (e.g. building height, half-story height). This will be updated in the final zoning article to be consistent with how Hamilton measures building height.

Hamilton Crossing Site Design Framework

Frontage Approach



Overall Approach

- Merge Hamilton Crossing parcel with Railroad Ave subdistrict to form unified “Depot Square” Subdistrict
- Control frontage heavily for first 60’ then have lighter formal controls for rear buildings
- Require any parcel over a certain square footage to go through a special permit process

Walnut Road Frontage

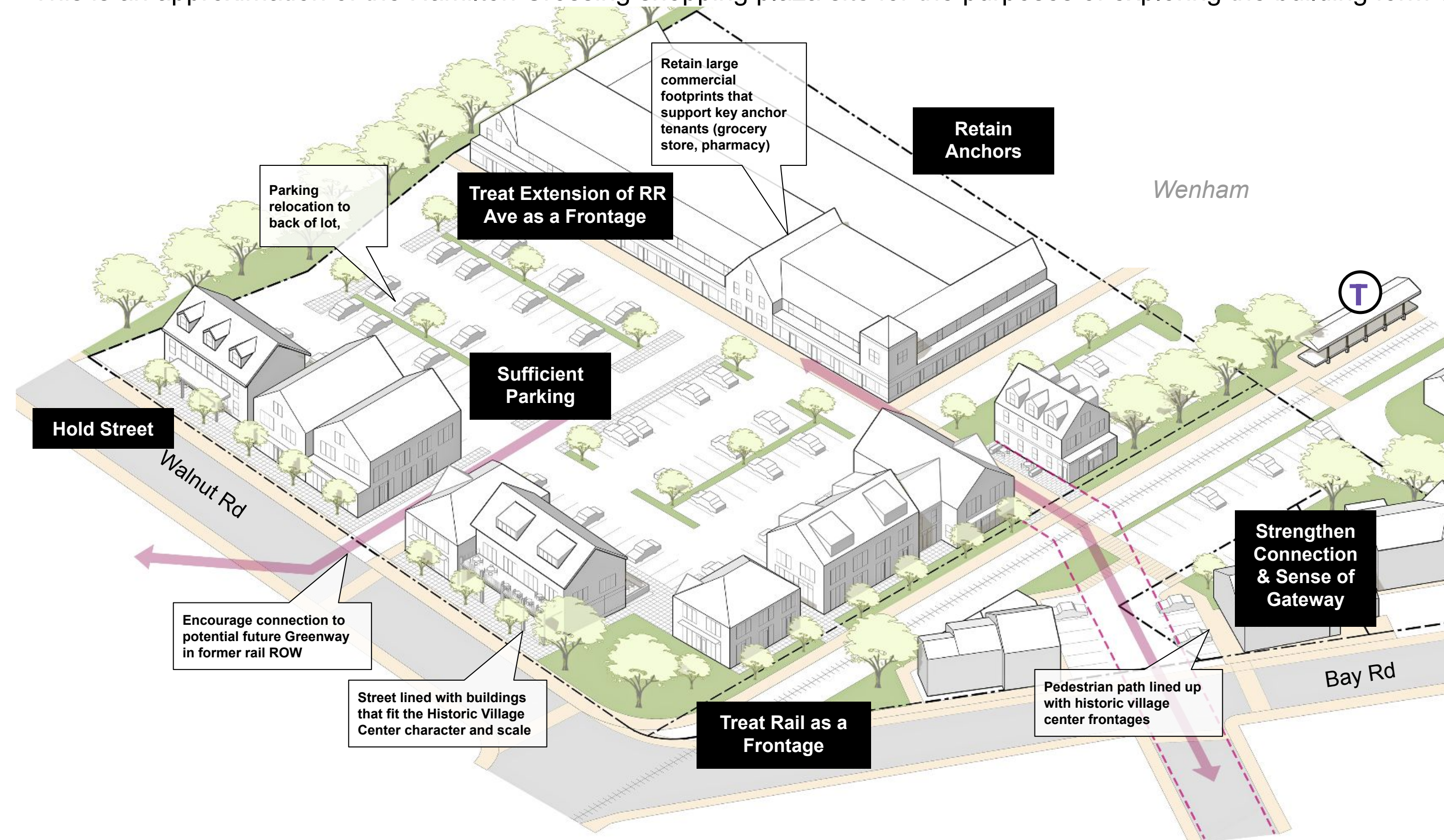
- Residential scale (up to 2.5 stories)
- Setback transition to residential pattern to the east
- Looser building clustering with landscaping and breaks in massing
- Create clear opening for potential future greenway connection

Railroad Track Frontage

- Residential scale (up to 2.5 stories)
- Match Railroad Ave frontage type, but with more pedestrian cut-throughs to rear parking and mall area
- Create clear gateway that aligns with Railroad Ave

Hamilton Crossing Building Form Framework

This is an approximation of the Hamilton Crossing shopping plaza site for the purposes of exploring the building form vision for this subdistrict



Key Features:

1. Retain existing landscaped corner at Walnut & Bay
2. Create gateways that encourage pedestrian through connections in alignment with Railroad Ave and potential future Greenway connection
3. Emulate Railroad Avenue frontage along rail line but with more generous setback, and along Walnut Rd with less intensity
4. Allow for connected building forms to encourage variety in the massing while still providing larger commercially viable tenant spaces. Encourage cut-through pedestrian alleys to access the parking lot and rear lot uses.
5. Allow for larger footprint buildings set back from the street

Hamilton Crossing Precedent

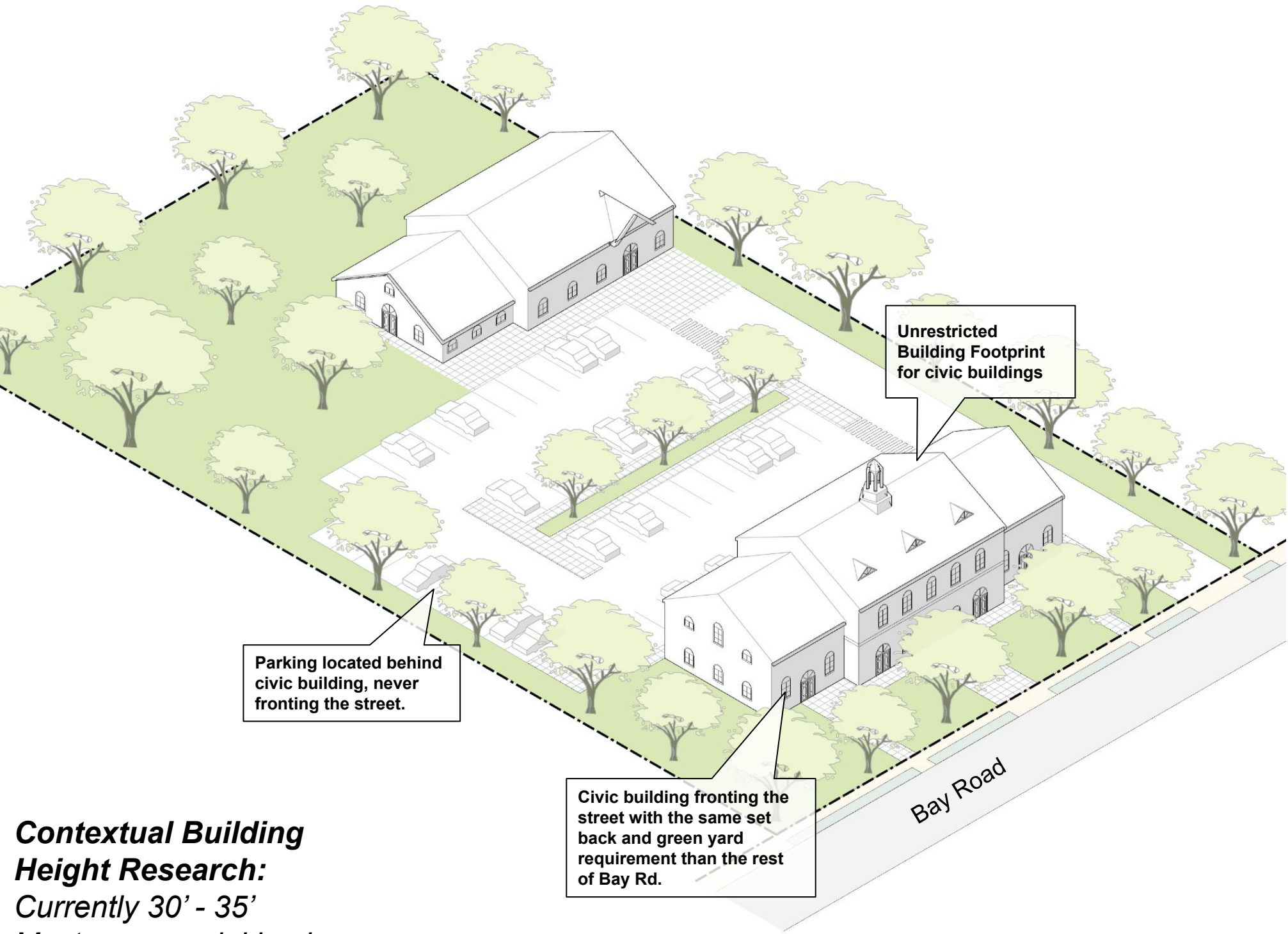
This precedent from Weston, MA shows an example of how a shopping plaza can be successfully integrated into a traditional town center pattern.



Weston Town Center
Weston, MA



Bay Road Civic Building Form Standards



Contextual Building Height Research:
Currently 30’ - 35’
Most commercial businesses are using residential building forms.

- Relationship to 3A:**
- This subdistrict does not contribute to 3A.

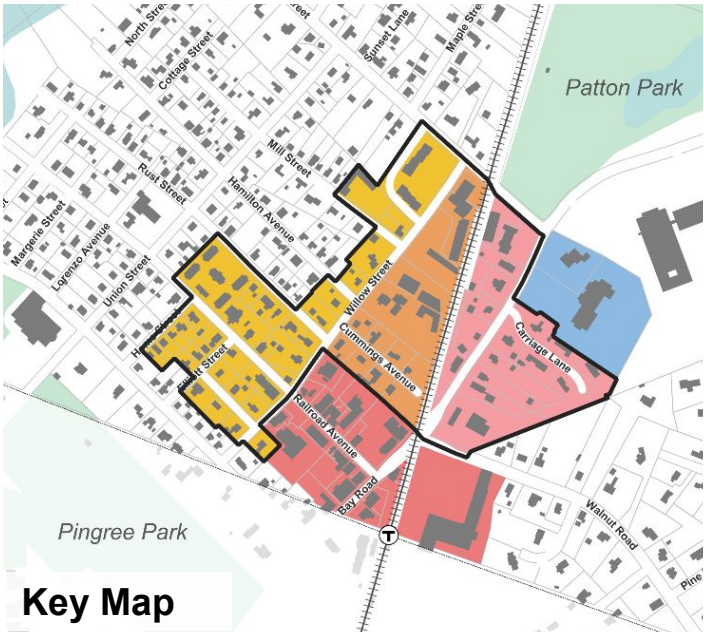
- Special Massing Rules:**
- Civic buildings are allowed to have more freedom of form and massing.
 - Allow flat roofs for rear buildings only.

Dimensional Standards	
Building Footprint, max.	—
Building Height, max.	2.5 stories
Ground Floor Height, min/max.	13’ / 15’
Half-Story Height, max.	14’
Setback - Front, min/max	30’ or Average / 40’
Setback - Side, min.	5’
Setback - Rear, min.	20’
Open Space, min.	—

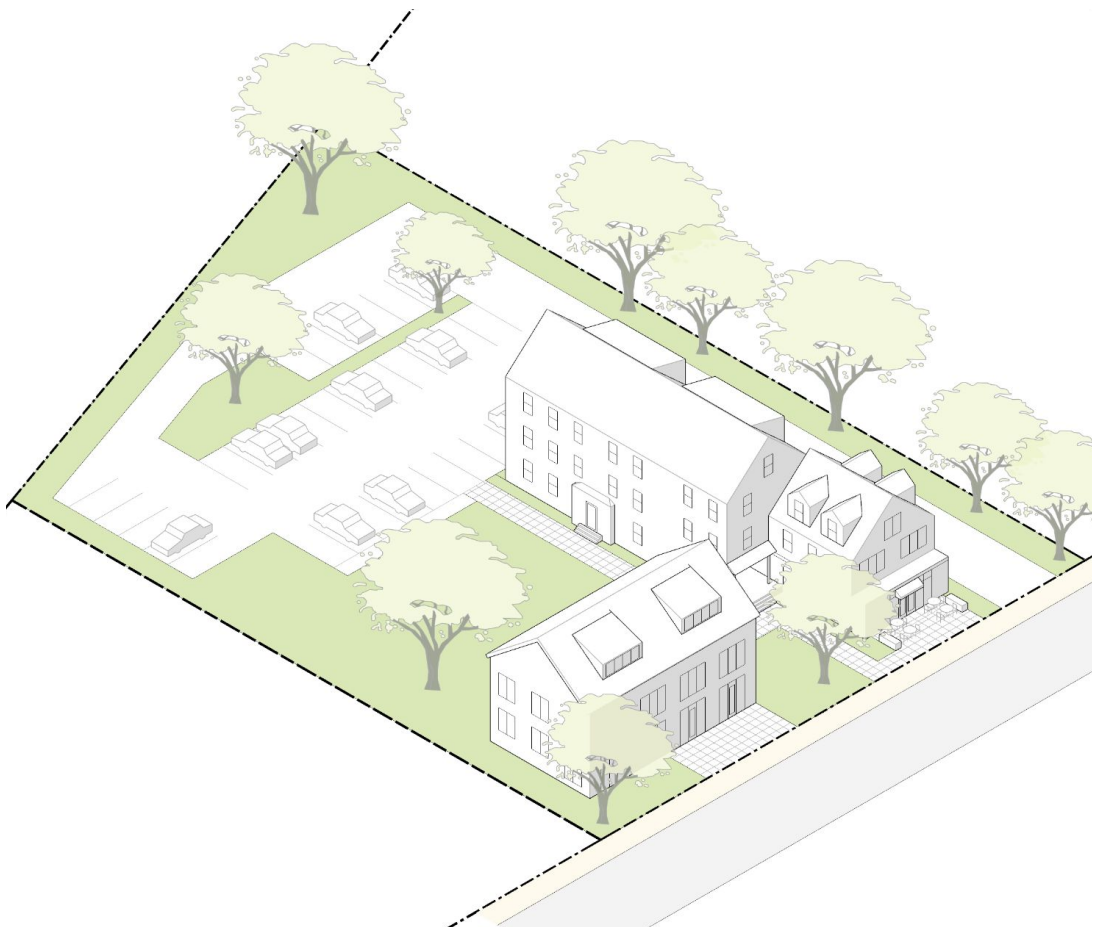
Note: for more intuitive understanding, we have used the top of the ridgeline for all measurements of height in this table (e.g. building height, half-story height). This will be updated in the final zoning article to be consistent with how Hamilton measures building height.

Town Center Subdistricts Contributing to 3A

All three of these, as shown, can contribute to 3A compliance, when combined with other 3A overlay subdistricts outside the Town Center.



■ Bay Rd Mixed Use

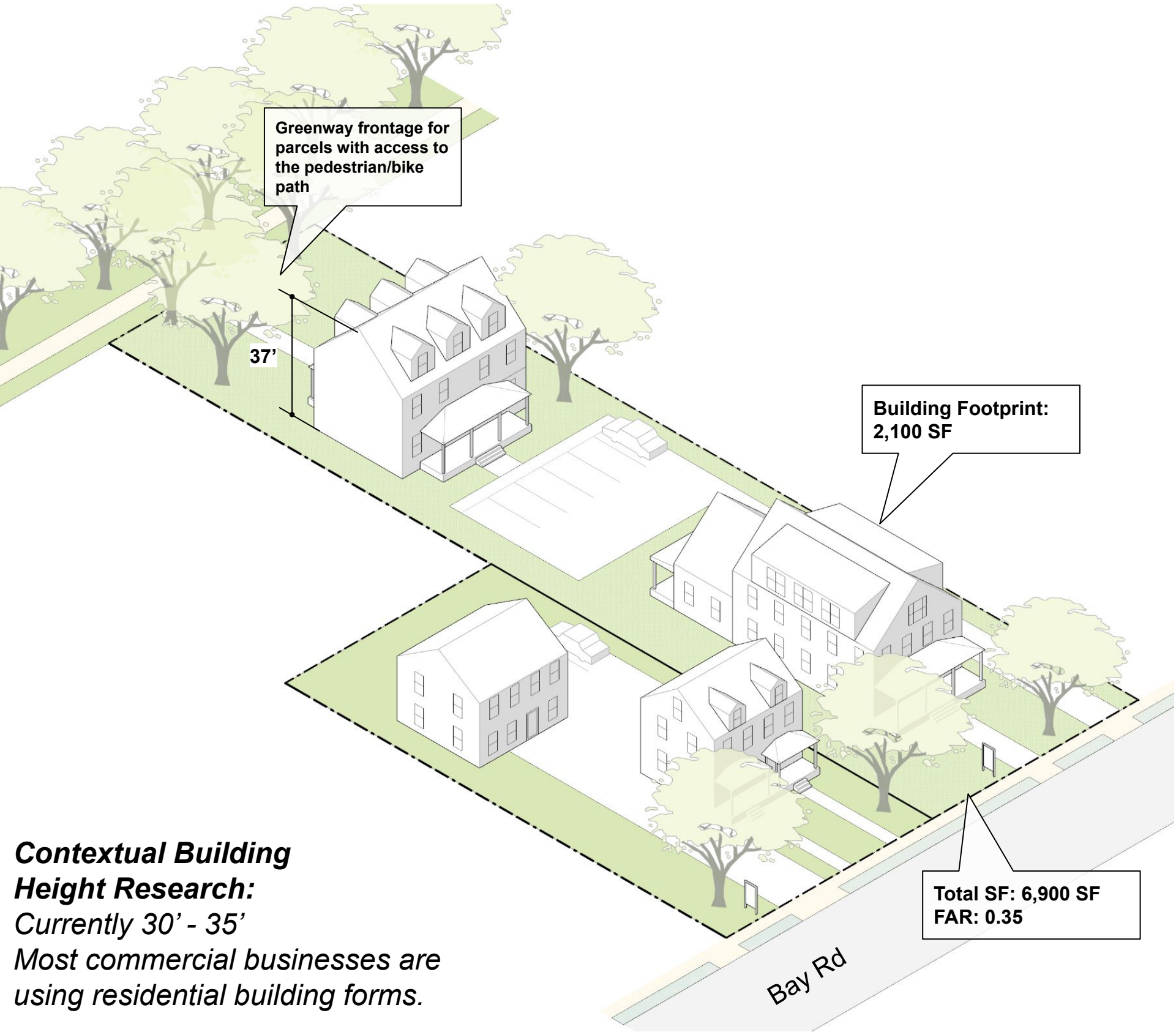


■ Willow St Mixed Use



■ Downtown Residential

Bay Road Scenic Corridor Building Form Standards



Contextual Building Height Research:
Currently 30' - 35'
Most commercial businesses are using residential building forms.

Relationship to 3A:

- This subdistrict does contribute to 3A.

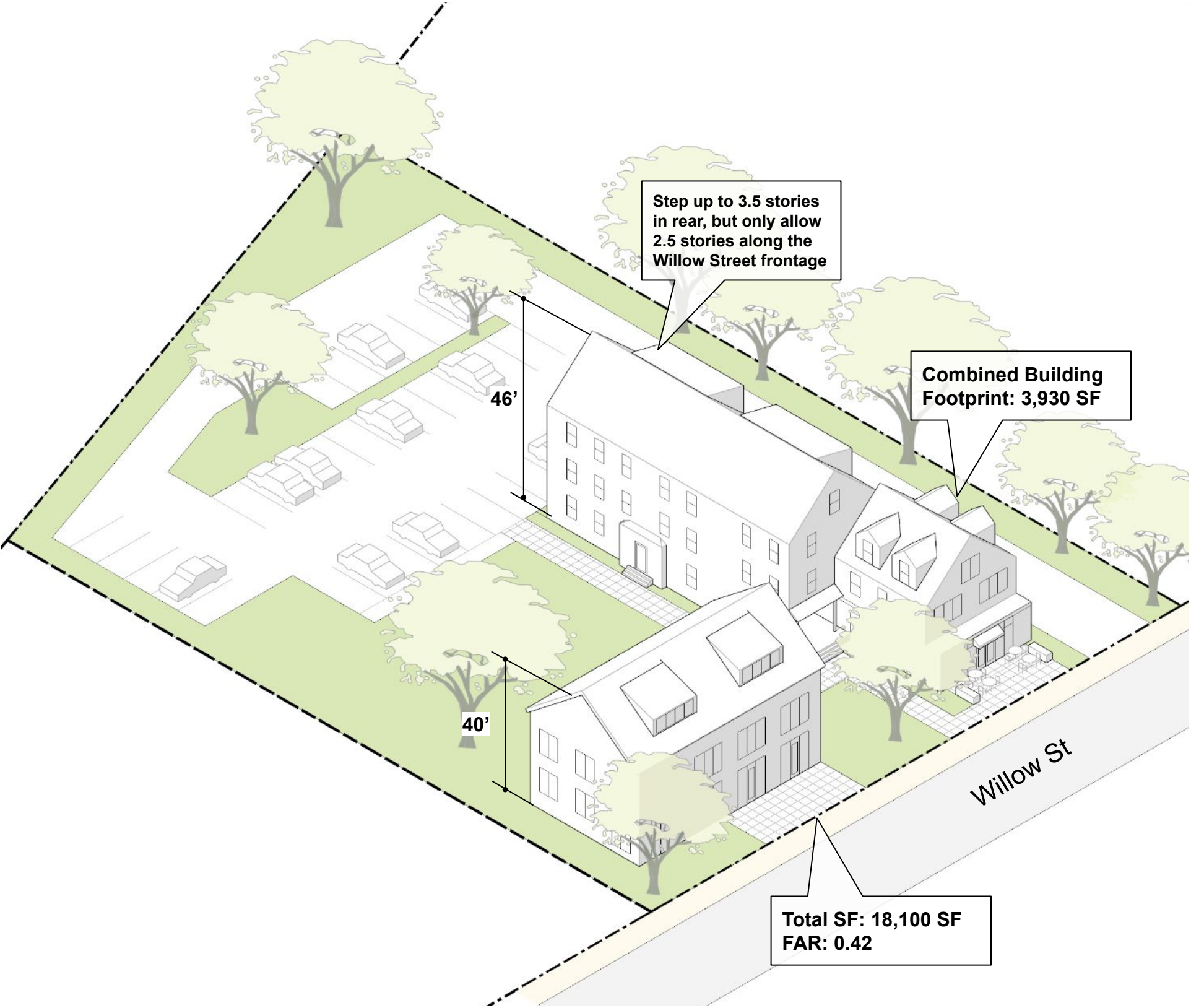
Special Massing Rules:

- We will include rules around the relationship of a second accessory structure to the primary structure (e.g. minimum distance between primary and secondary structure)

Dimensional Standards	
Building Footprint, max.	3,000 SF
Building Height, max.	42' / 2.5 stories
Ground Floor Height, min/max.	12' / 15'
Half-Story Height, max.	14'
Setback - Front, min/max	30' or Average / 40'
Setback - Side, min.	5'
Setback - Rear, min.	20'
Open Space, min.	30%

Note: for more intuitive understanding, we have used the top of the ridgeline for all measurements of height in this table (e.g. building height, half-story height). This will be updated in the final zoning article to be consistent with how Hamilton measures building height.

Willow Street Mixed Use Building Form Standards



Relationship to 3A:

- This subdistrict does contribute to 3A.

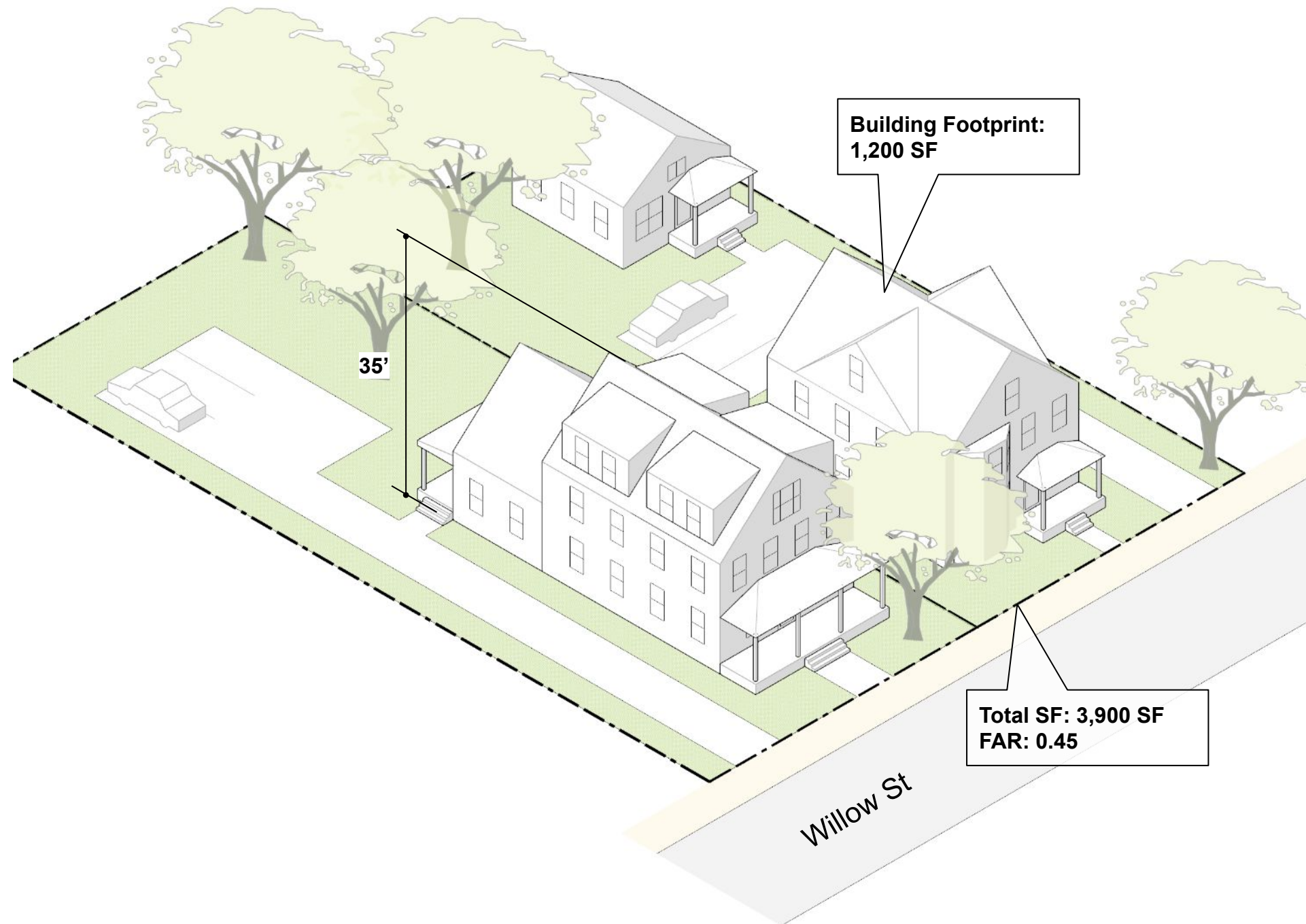
Special Massing Rules:

- Building height may increase to 3.5 stories after setback of 60’ from the front lot line

Dimensional Standards	
Building Footprint, max.	5,000 SF
Building Height, max.	40’ / 2.5 stories
Building Height after 60’ setback, max	51’ / 3.5 stories
Ground Floor Height, min/max.	12’ / 15’
Half-Story Height, max.	14’
Setback - Front, min/max	15’ or Average / 25’
Setback - Side, min.	5’
Setback - Rear, min.	20’
Open Space, min.	30%

Note: for more intuitive understanding, we have used the top of the ridgeline for all measurements of height in this table (e.g. building height, half-story height). This will be updated in the final zoning article to be consistent with how Hamilton measures building height.

Downtown Residential Building Form Standards



Relationship to 3A:

- This subdistrict does contribute to 3A.

Special Massing Rules:

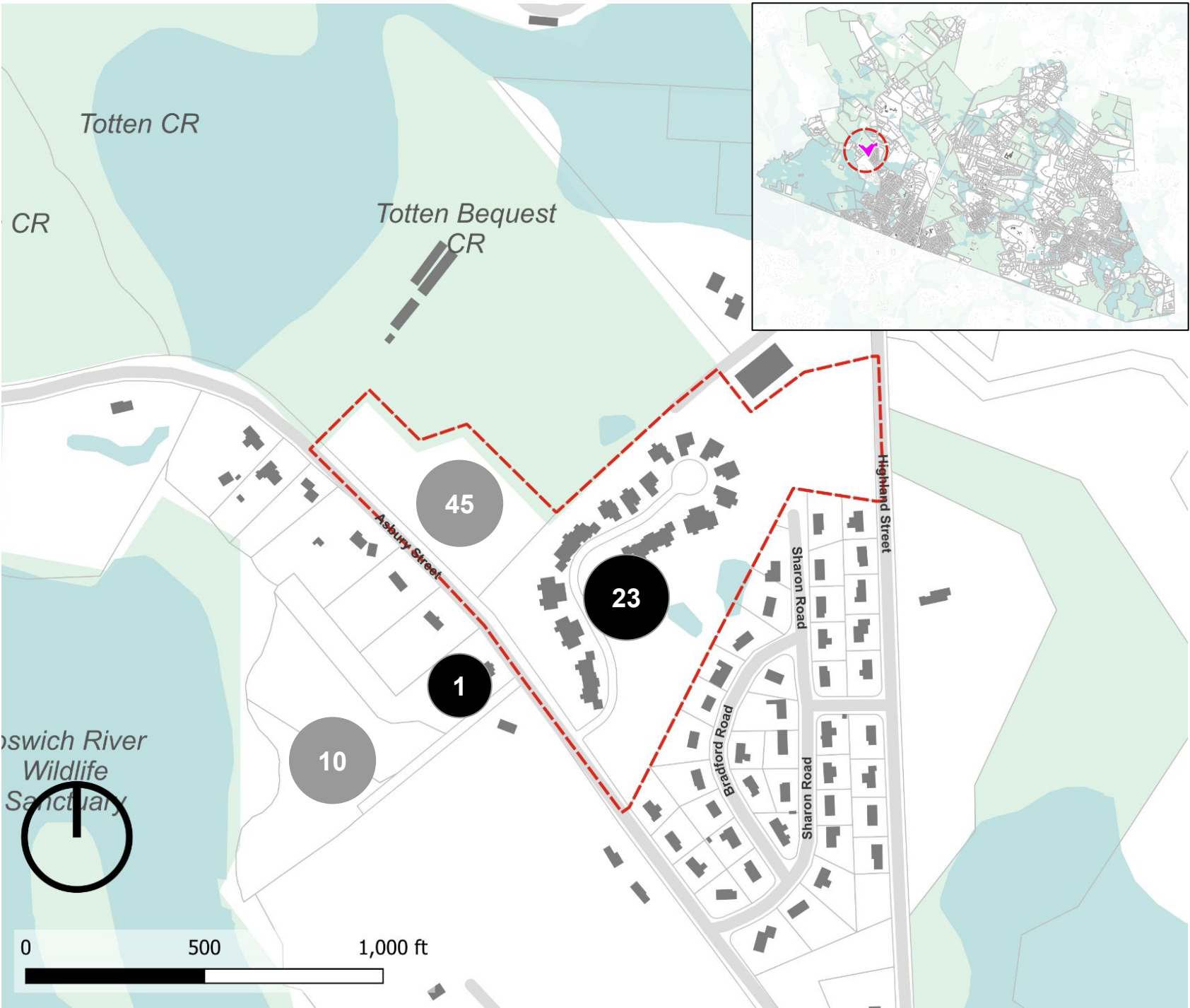
- Adaptive reuse standards allow an addition along the rear and side elevations of the existing structure, up to 50% of the footprint of the existing structure.
- Additions along the side elevation must be set back at least 20' from the front facade of the existing structure.

Dimensional Standards	
Building Footprint, max.	1,500 SF
Building Height, max.	36' / 2.5 stories
Ground Floor Height, min/max.	—
Half-Story Height, max.	14'
Setback - Front, min./max.	10' or Average / 20'
Setback - Side, min.	10'
Setback - Rear, min.	20'
Open Space, min.	40%

Note: for more intuitive understanding, we have used the top of the ridgeline for all measurements of height in this table (e.g. building height, half-story height). This will be updated in the final zoning article to be consistent with how Hamilton measures building height.

Asbury North

Outlying 3A Overlay Subdistrict



Multi-family homes along Asbury Street

69 units in planned and existing projects

Key Stats	
Acres	19.1
Density Denominator	16.4
Existing/Planned Units	68
Existing Density (with DD)	4.1 units per acre
Current Use	Housing
Current Ownership	Private
Potential Issues	
Groundwater Protection Overlay District (GPOD) Interaction	<i>All Parcel Have Some 1985 + Fully Zone II</i> Min lot size 80k sf Impervious surface 15% / 2,500sf triggers SP
Developable Land	n/a
40B Interaction	n/a

Notes:

- 23 existing condo units on one parcel, 45 units permitted via 40B are moving into construction on the other parcel