



Blanchard/Wheeler

CORRIDOR STUDY + VISION PLAN



February 2023

Contents

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Project Background
3. Instant Polling: Corridor Issues and Opportunities
4. Existing Conditions
5. What Makes a Corridor Successful?
6. Instant Polling: Corridor Goals
7. Group Discussion
8. Next Steps
9. Adjourn

1. Introductions

Planning and Urban Design (PUD) Team from VHB:

- Luke Mitchell, Senior Urban Planner/Designer
- Frank DiPietro, Senior Engineer
- Julia Mintz, Urban Planner
- Jennifer Nelson, Urban Planner



2. Project Background

Statement of Purpose

The Town of Burlington is seeking to prepare a Vision Plan for the Blanchard / Wheeler Road Corridor ("the Corridor"), to achieve the following goals and objectives:

1. Articulate a growth strategy for the future with attention to planning, engineering, and redevelopment considerations
2. Utilize this plan to:
 1. **Attract investment**
 2. **Promote economic development** along the corridor
 3. **Improve streetscapes** with safer roadways that include multi-modal options

This study will include property research regarding existing conditions in the study area and a series of public meetings and interviews with key stakeholders. The Vision Plan will include a vision statement, a list of strategic goals to achieve this vision, and an implementation matrix identifying required specific actions and projects.



2. Project Background

Study Area

- The Blanchard/Wheeler Corridor Study Area is located within a vibrant, active, mixed-use commercial district in southern Burlington.
- The Study Area is approximately 425 acres in size.
- It is bordered by Interstate 95 to the north, Massachusetts Turnpike to the west, and South Bedford Street to the east.



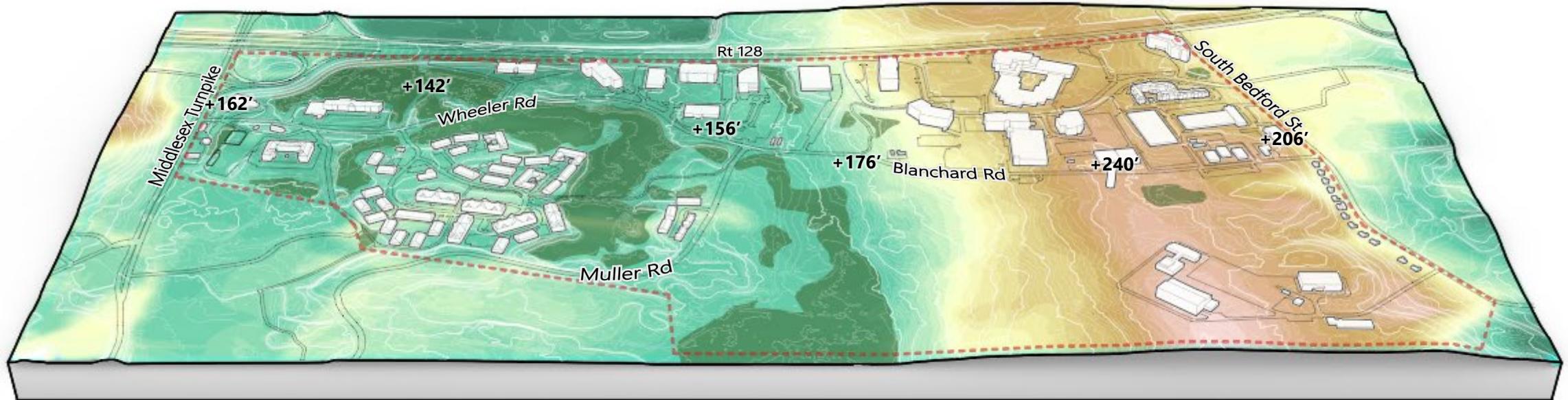
3. Instant Poll: Corridor Issues and Opportunities

1. How often do you travel along Blanchard and/or Wheeler Road?
2. Do you feel the corridor is safe for pedestrians and bicyclists?
3. What are the corridor's strengths that should be preserved or emphasized?
4. What are the corridor's shortcomings that should be addressed?

4. Existing Conditions

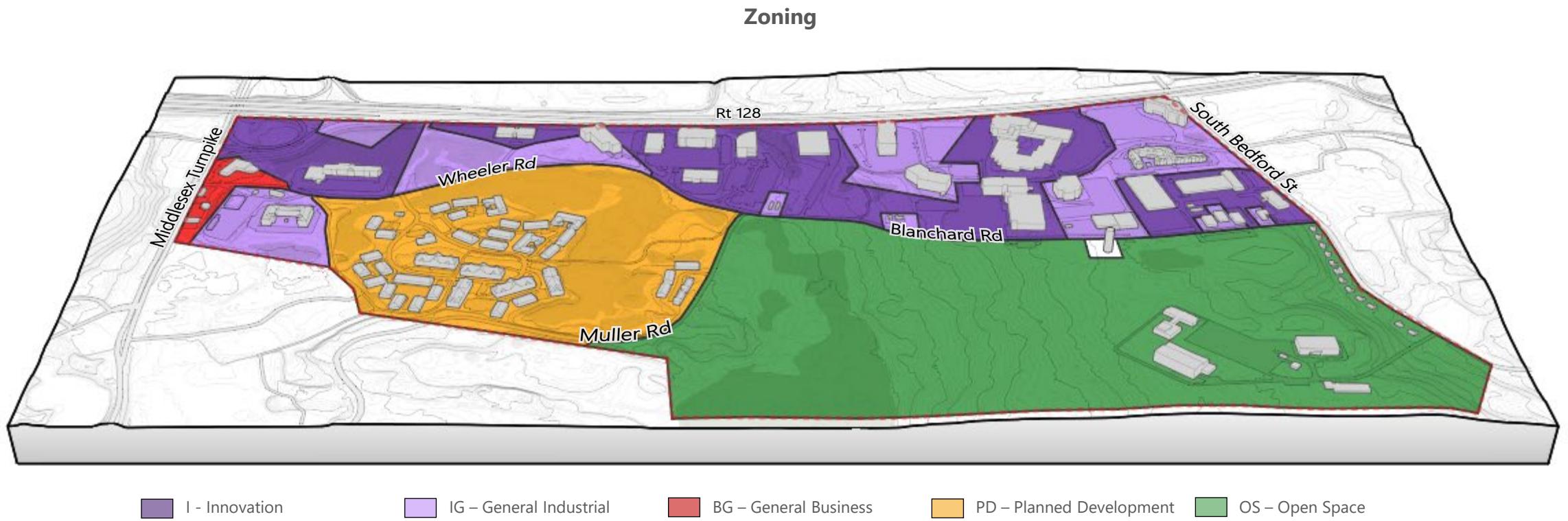
As part of VHB's background research, we have collected data on natural and built conditions.

Hydrology



4. Existing Conditions

As part of VHB's background research, we have collected data on natural and built conditions.



I - Innovation

IG - General Industrial

BG - General Business

PD - Planned Development

OS - Open Space

4. Existing Conditions

Residential and Hospitality

The Arborpoint residential development (aka Seven Springs) has 425 units, including 93 condos and 332 apartments.

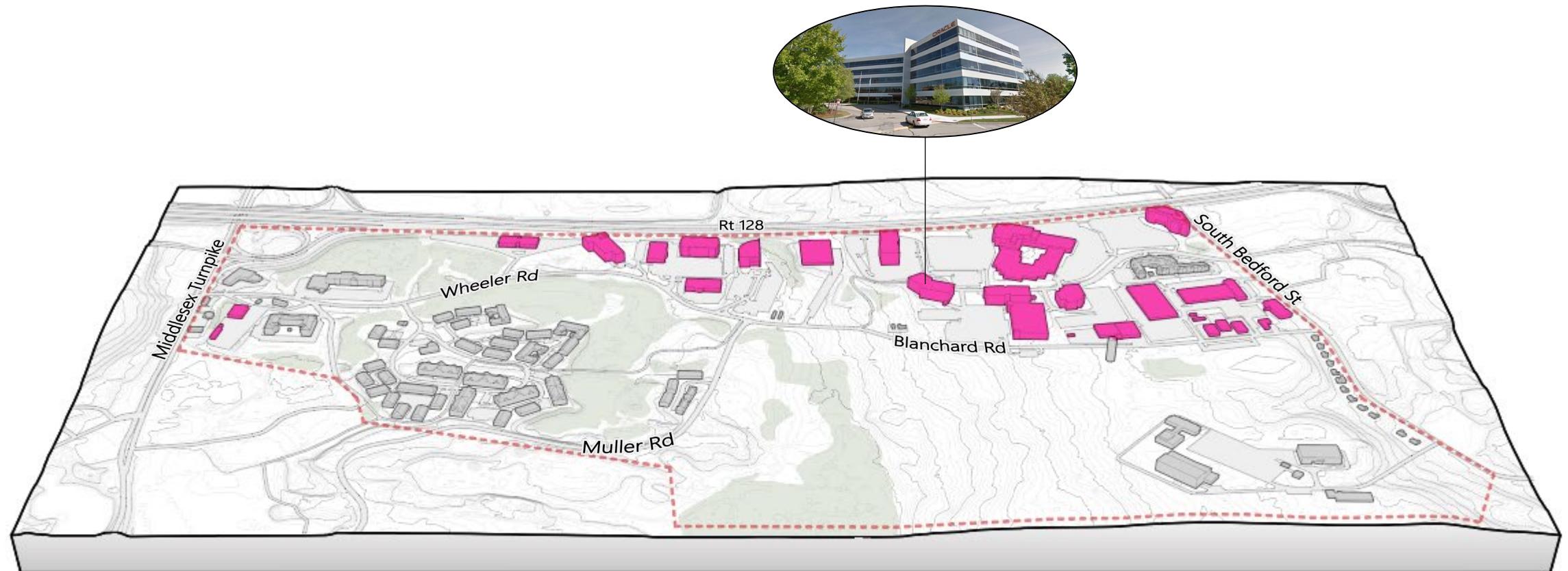


4. Existing Conditions

Office, Lab, and Industrial

Approximately **5,000 people** work within the corridor.

The largest workplace in the corridor is Oracle, with approximately 1,500 employees.

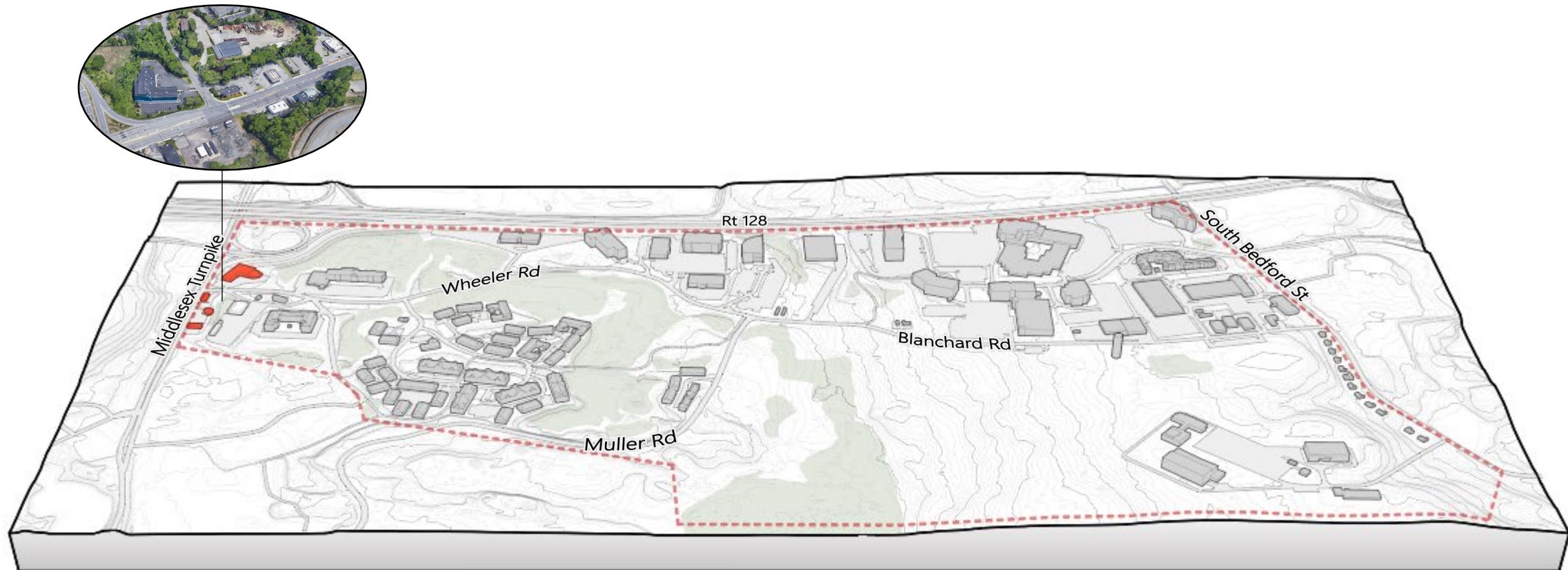


4. Existing Conditions

Restaurant and Retail

The corridor is home to only **4 restaurant/retail properties**, all located along Middlesex Turnpike.

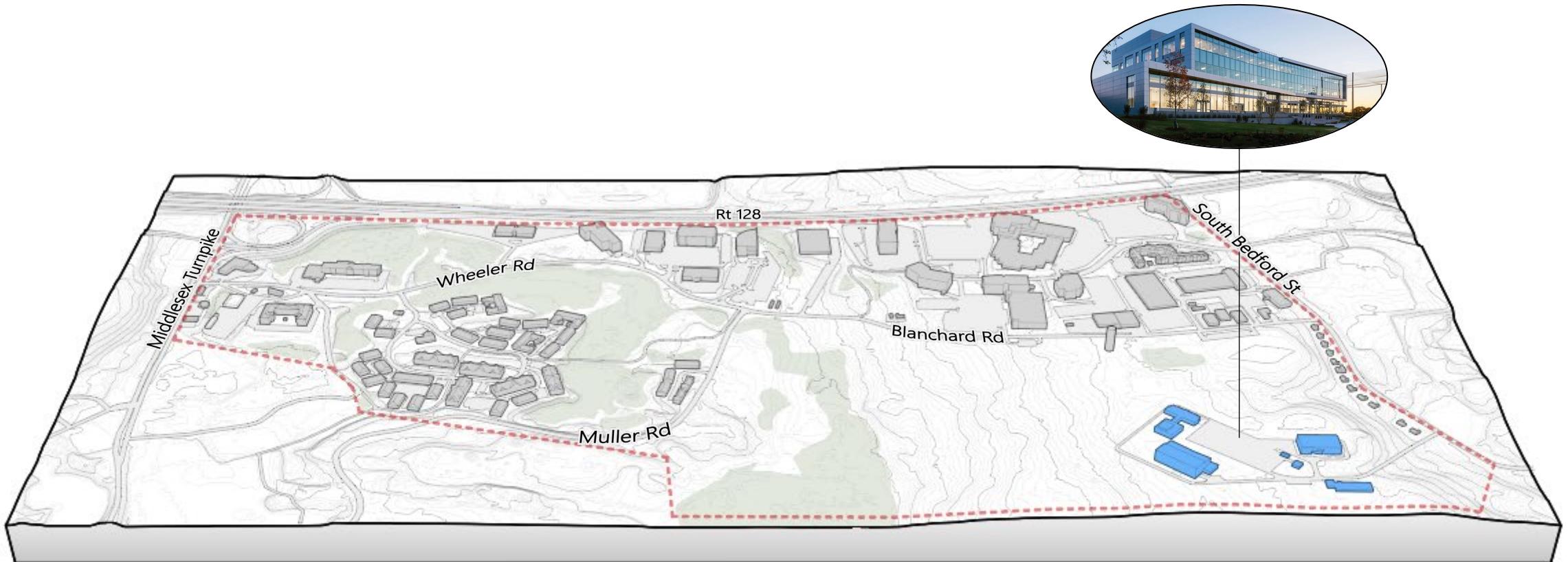
One of these properties (formerly D'Angelo's) is vacant. A second (formerly Ski Haus and NOTB Snowboards; it is also the largest property) is currently being redeveloped into a two-story retail and commercial structure to be called "Gateway Burlington."



4. Existing Conditions

Institutional

The Northeastern Innovation Campus is a **14-acre, 4 building academic and entrepreneurial hub** built to "accelerate innovation and discovery in emerging fields, from cybersecurity and nanomedicine to network science and life sciences."

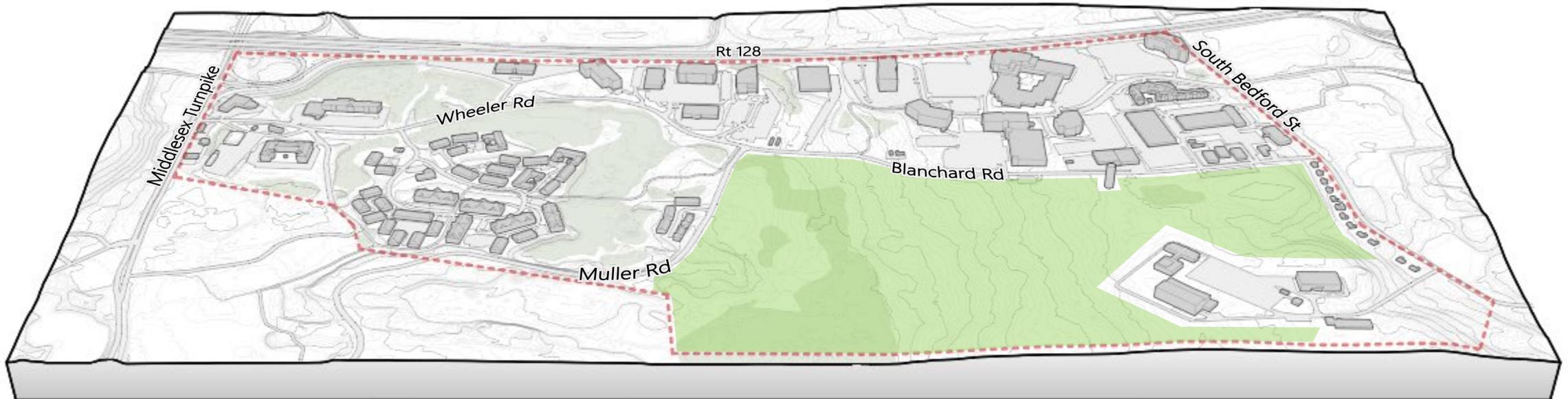


4. Existing Conditions

Open Space

Mary Cummings Park features 166.5 acres of land in Burlington and 46.5 acres of land in Woburn.

Now managed by The Trustees of Reservations, Mary Cummings Park was founded in 2007 with a mission to keep the park "forever open as a public park and playground; to promote recreation consistent with the historic uses of the park and to promote the protection of wildlife habitat and watershed" (MaryCummingsPark.org).

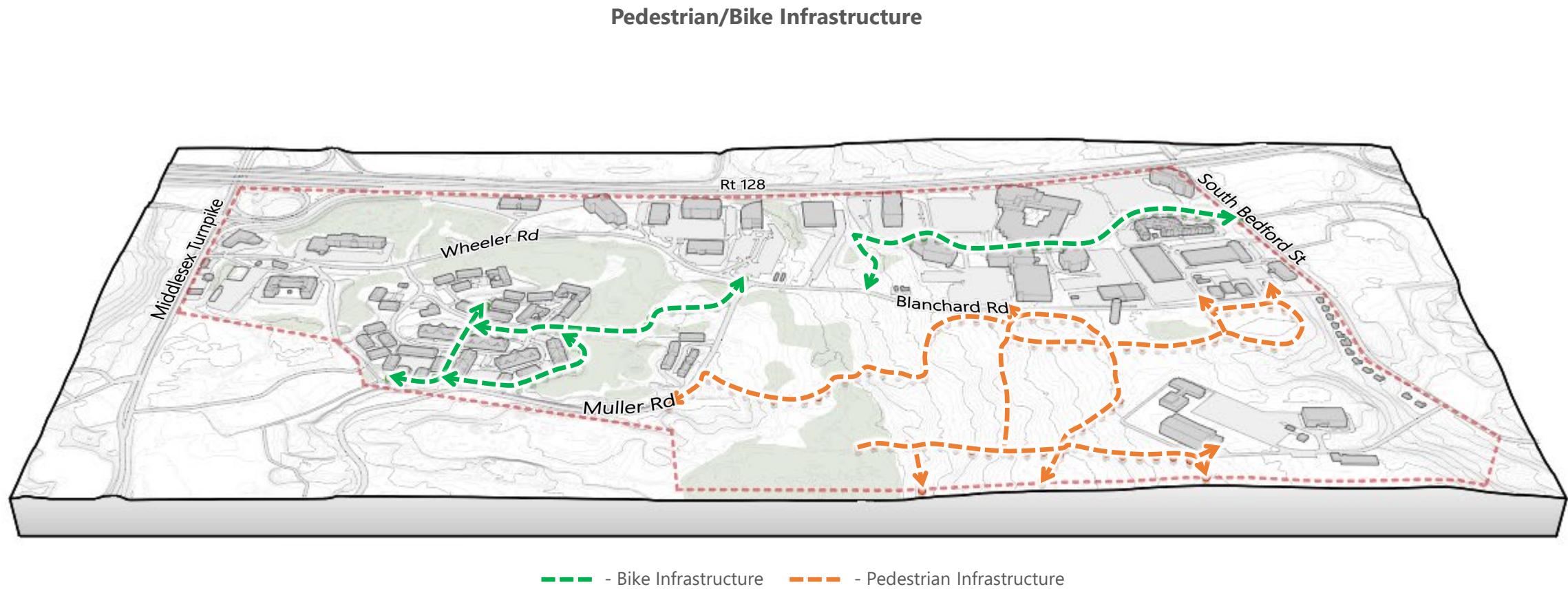


4. Existing Conditions

We have also investigated existing pedestrian and bike infrastructure.

Bike paths (green) exist within the Seven Springs development and along Van de Graaff Drive.

Pedestrian infrastructure (orange) weave throughout Mary Cummings Park, connecting this open space with neighborhoods to the south and west, with Northeastern's Innovation Campus to the east, and with businesses to the north.



5. What Makes a Corridor Successful?

A “Complete Street”

describes a roadway that provides increased access to jobs, health care, shops, and schools while achieving economic, environmental, and public health benefits ([National Complete Streets Coalition](#)). By narrowing or shifting vehicle lanes, planners can improve alternative transportation options with sidewalks, bike lanes, bus lanes, safe transit stops, crosswalks, or median islands.



The District in Burlington, MA. Photo by National Development.

5. What Makes a Corridor Successful?

Levels of Street Treatments

Sidewalk Only



Sidewalk with pedestrian signs. Source: City of Chilliwack

Sidewalk and On-Street Bike Lane



Bike lane in Cambridge, MA. Source: City of Cambridge

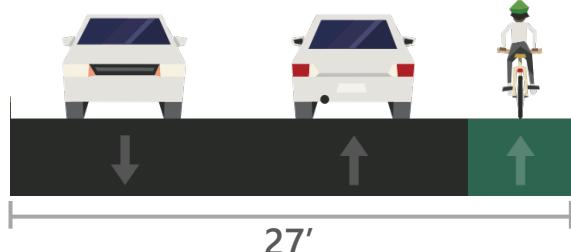
Multi-Use Path



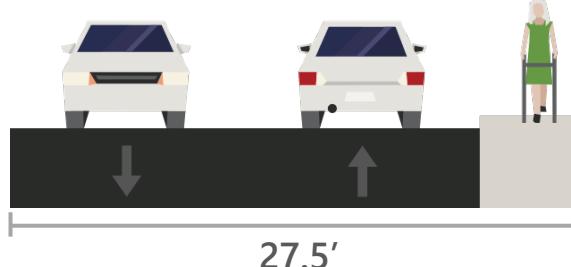
Multi-Use Trail in Waterloo, Ontario. Source: Global News

5. What Makes a Corridor Successful?

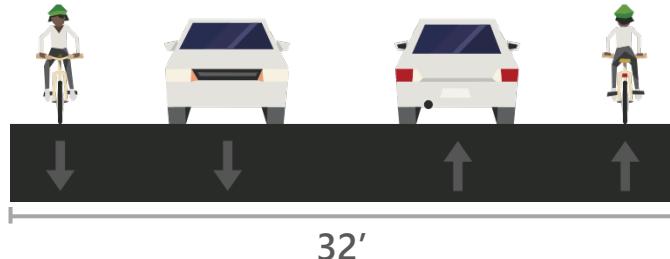
Alternative Streetscape Options



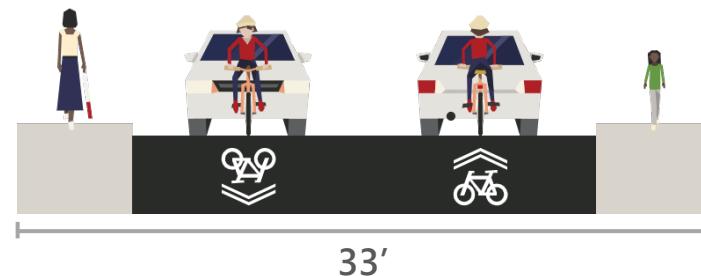
- 2 vehicle lanes
- 1 bike lane



- 2 vehicle lanes
- 1 sidewalk



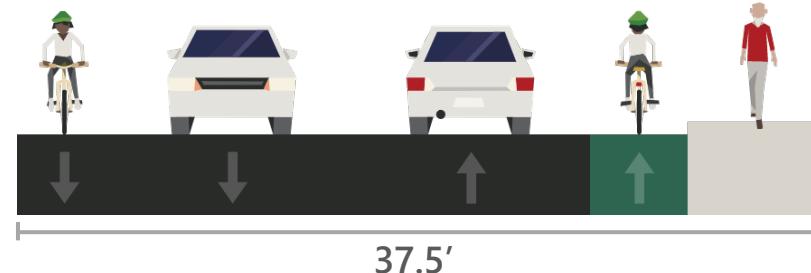
- 2 vehicle lanes
- 2 bike lanes



- 2 vehicle lanes
- 2 sidewalks
- 2 sharrows



- 2 vehicle lanes
- 1 planted buffer
- 1 multi-use path



- 2 vehicle lanes
- 2 bike lanes
- 1 sidewalk

5. What Makes a Corridor Successful?



3rd Ave in Burlington, MA. Photo by Bill Horseman / Tighe & Bond Studio.



“Placemaking”

refers to a community-based design approach that strengthens the connection between people and public spaces. The most successful placemaking efforts highlight unique physical, historical, and cultural identities that define neighborhood, town, or city ([Project for Public Spaces](#)).

5. What Makes a Corridor Successful?

Amenities

Gyms



Movement Workshop in Burlington, MA. Source: Google

Cafés and Coffee Shops



Pressed Café in The District in Burlington, MA. Source: Google

Shared Workspaces



WeWork in Cambridge, MA. Source: Google

Pocket Parks



Pocket park in Burlington, MA. Source: National Development

Playgrounds



Rahalis Park in Burlington, MA. Source: Seattle Times

Plazas



Constitution Wharf in Boston, MA. Source: National Development

6. Instant Poll: Corridor Goals

1. What additional amenities do you think would benefit the corridor? (ex: café, gym, etc.)
2. How could the Town improve connectivity along the corridor? (ex: between businesses on Van de Graaff and Seven Springs)
3. Are there other improvements that you think would benefit the corridor?



7. Group Discussion

Discussion Topics

Based on our preliminary research and your first-hand experience on the corridor, we would like to engage in a discussion addressing the following topics:

1. Issues and Opportunities for the Corridor

- What are major issues within the corridor?
- What needs improvement?

2. Formulating a Vision Statement

- What should be VHB's focus for the planning process?



What is a Vision Statement?

A project vision statement is a **description of what an organization or project team wants to obtain or accomplish** upon the completion of a project.

It needs to be **clear, concise, and descriptive** of the big picture.

Source: jcomp on Freepik



8. Next Steps

VHB will take the thoughts of the community into consideration as they begin planning alternate options for the corridor.

1. Prepare Vision Statement
2. Explore options for placemaking
3. Explore enhanced connectivity
4. Reconvene with the community to confirm Vision Statement and present preliminary recommendations

