

Burlington 128 District, Burlington, MA

## APPENDIX B

# DESIGN STUDIES

August 2021 to August 2022

# EXISTING CONDITIONS

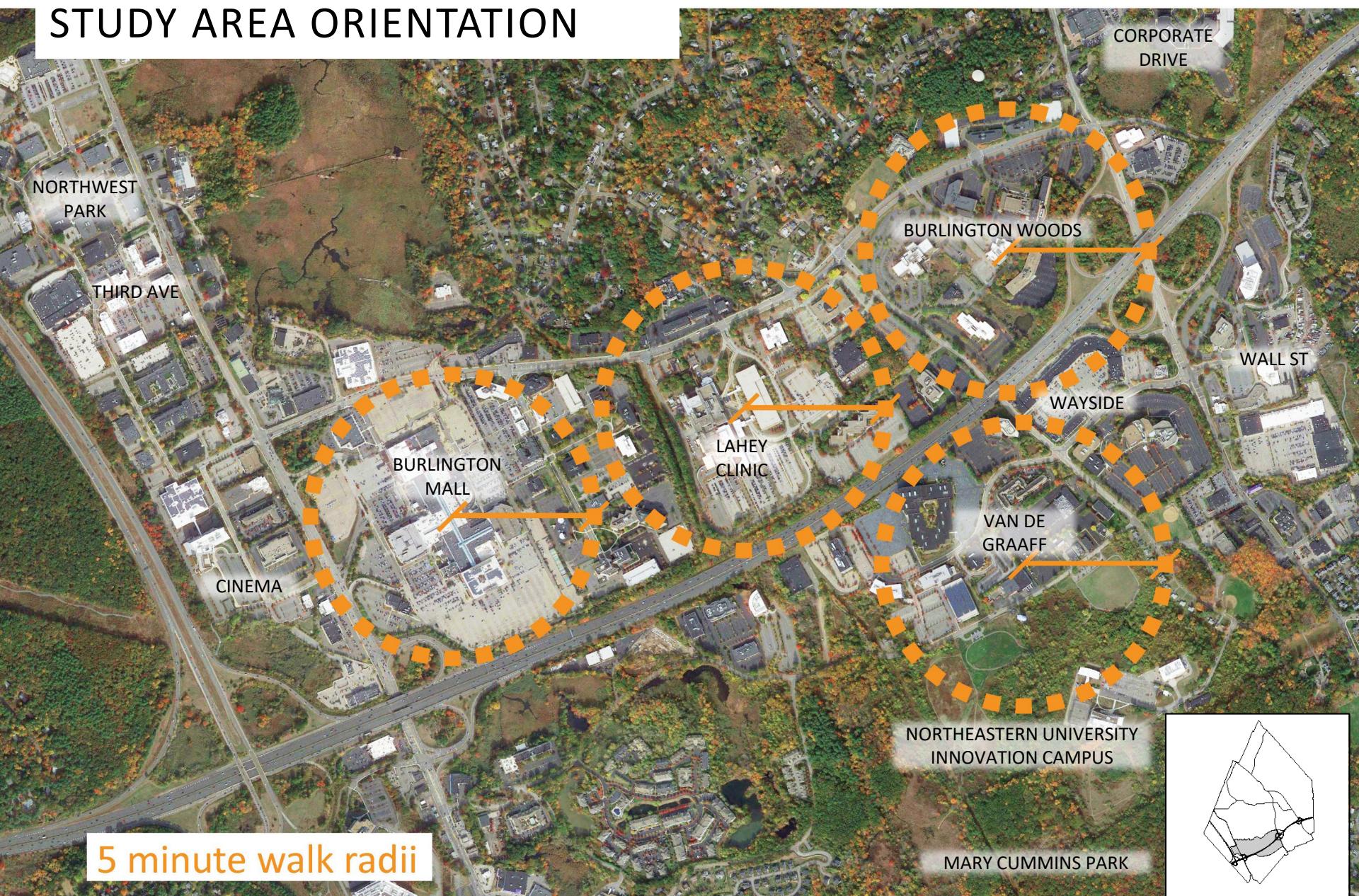


# STUDY AREA ORIENTATION

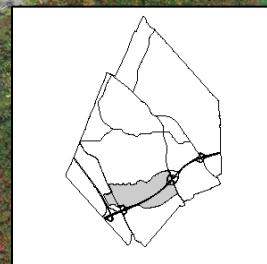


0.1 0.2 0.3 0.4 0.5

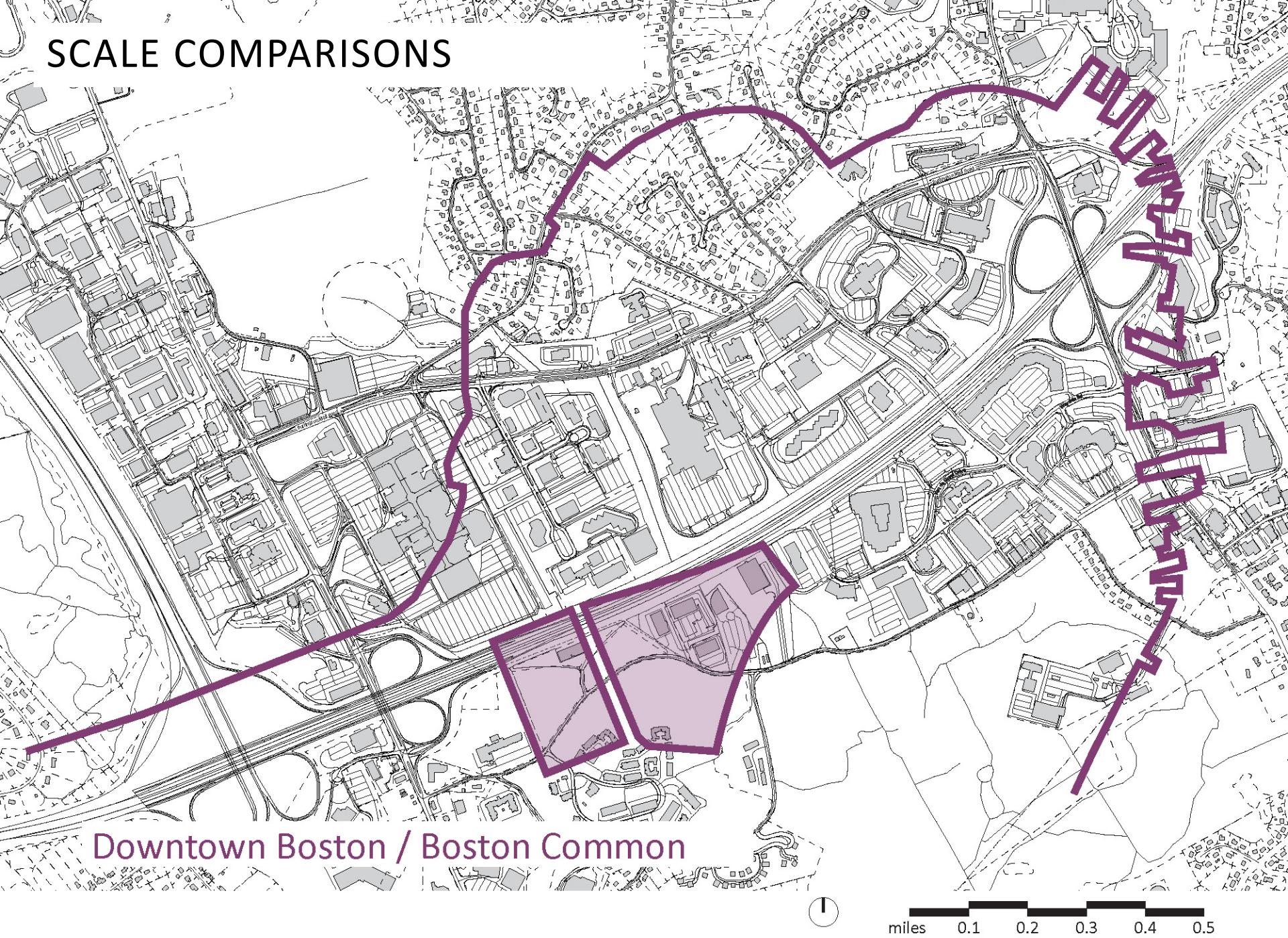
# STUDY AREA ORIENTATION



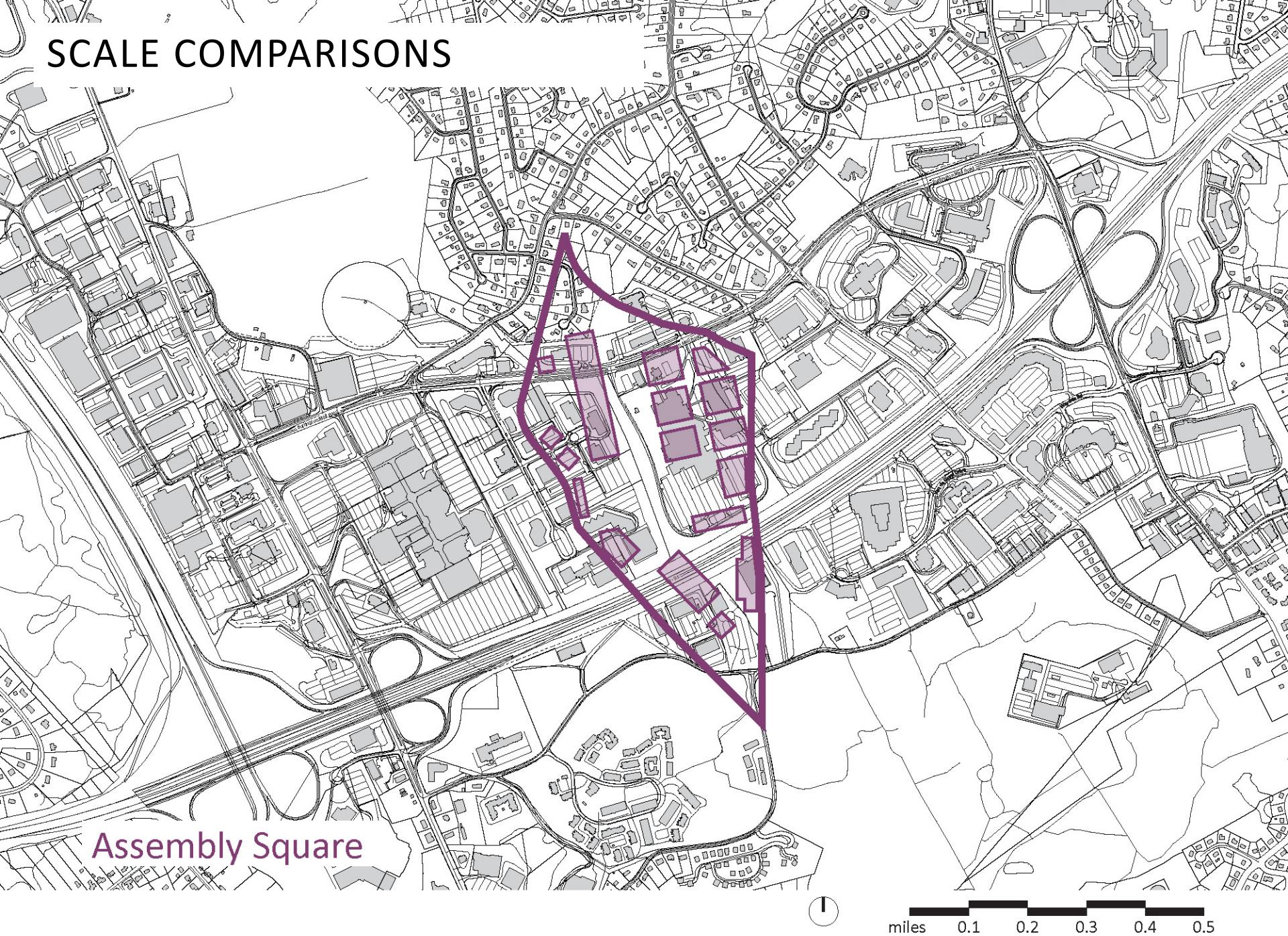
0.1 0.2 0.3 0.4 0.5 miles



# SCALE COMPARISONS



# SCALE COMPARISONS





PROJECT  
**BURLINGTON MALL  
ROAD DISTRICT**  
Location

Burlington, MA

CLIENT  
**MassDevelopment**

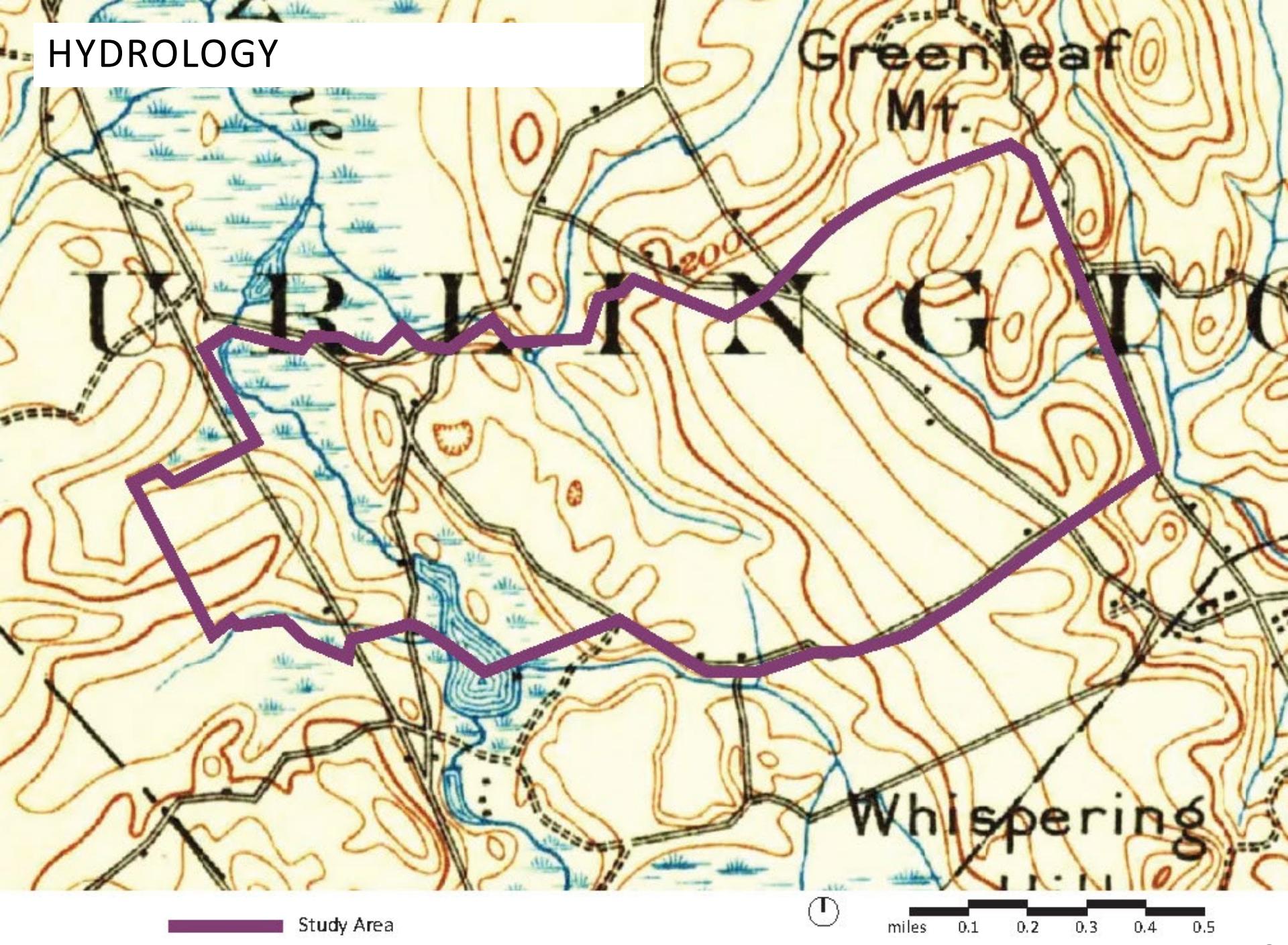
90 High Street, 11th floor  
Boston, MA 02110

URBAN DESIGNER  
**Gamble Associates**

678 Massachusetts Ave, Suite 502  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
[www.gambleassoc.com](http://www.gambleassoc.com)  
617-292-9912

TITLE  
PROJECT NO.  
DRAWN BY  
JC/AB  
DEG  
SCALE  
DATE  
10/18/21

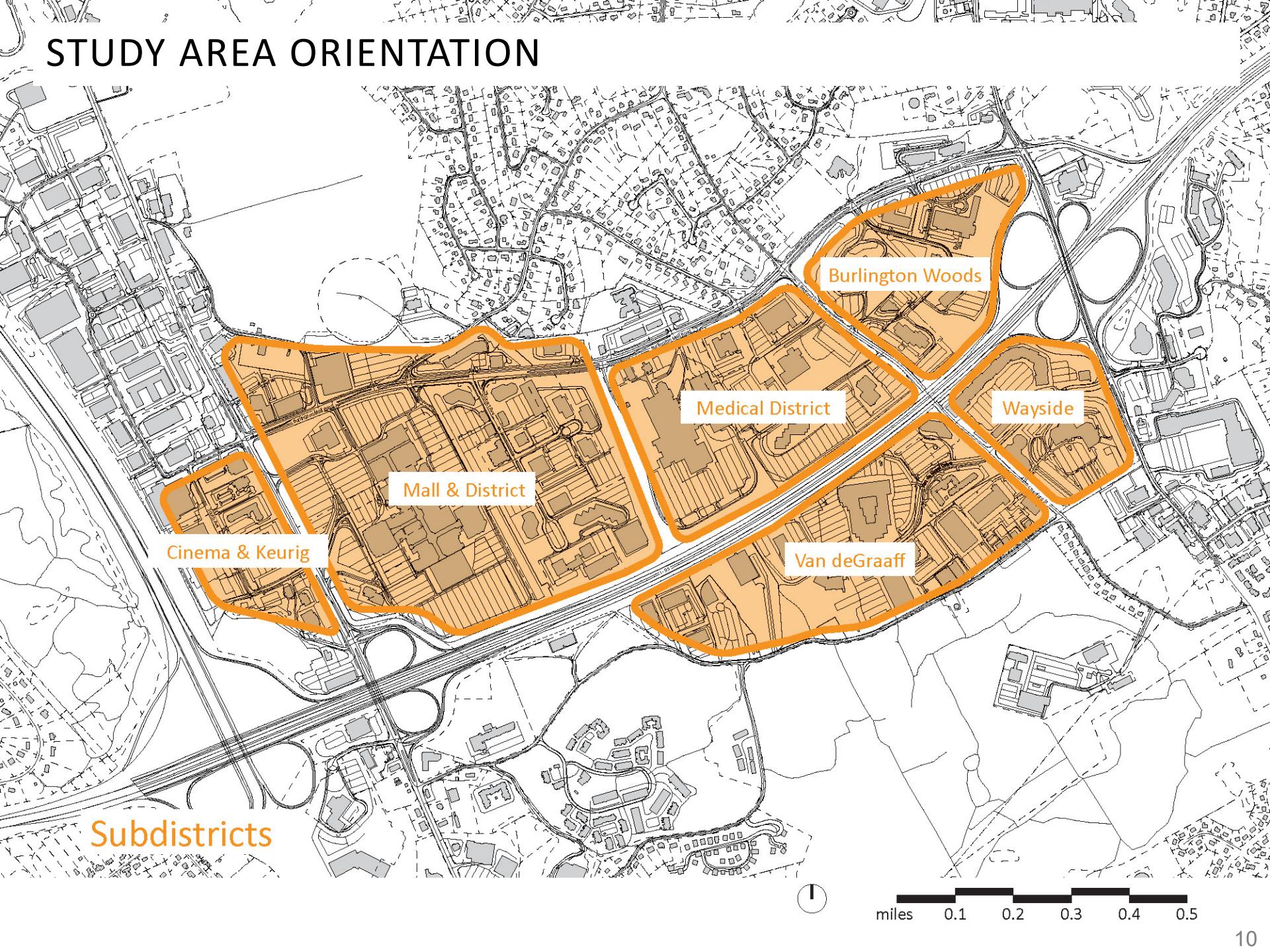
## HYDROLOGY



# HYDROLOGY



# STUDY AREA ORIENTATION



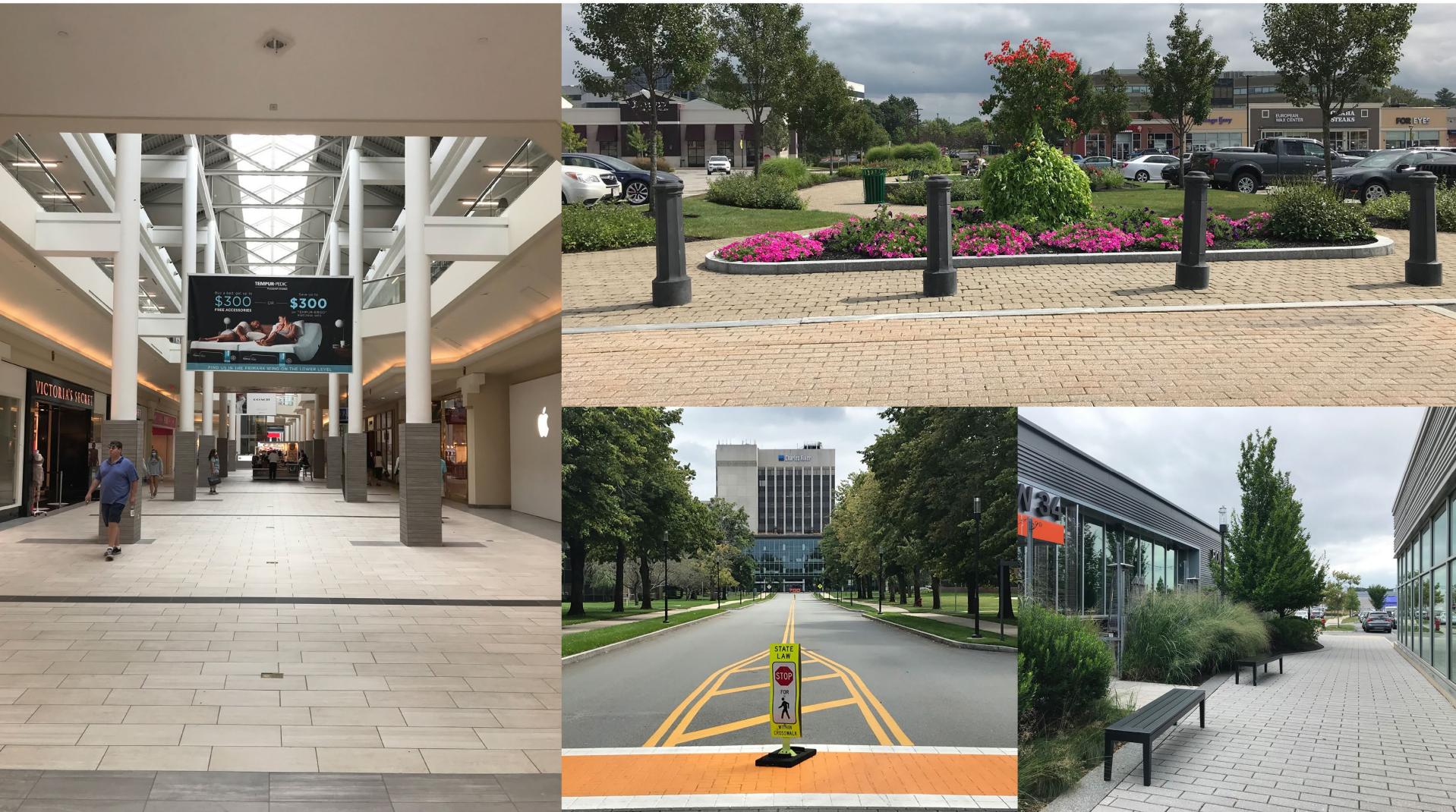
Subdistricts

0.1 0.2 0.3 0.4 0.5 miles

# 1 Natural Systems & Landscape



## 2 Connectivity & Public Realm



# 3 Transit & Infrastructure



## 4 Branding, Signage & Wayfinding



# PROGRAM EXPLORATIONS



# PROGRAM EXPLORATIONS: EXISTING DENSITIES



700 District Avenue, Burlington:  
FAR 1.2



2400 District Avenue, Burlington:  
FAR 1.2



Keurig Headquarters, Burlington:  
FAR 1.6



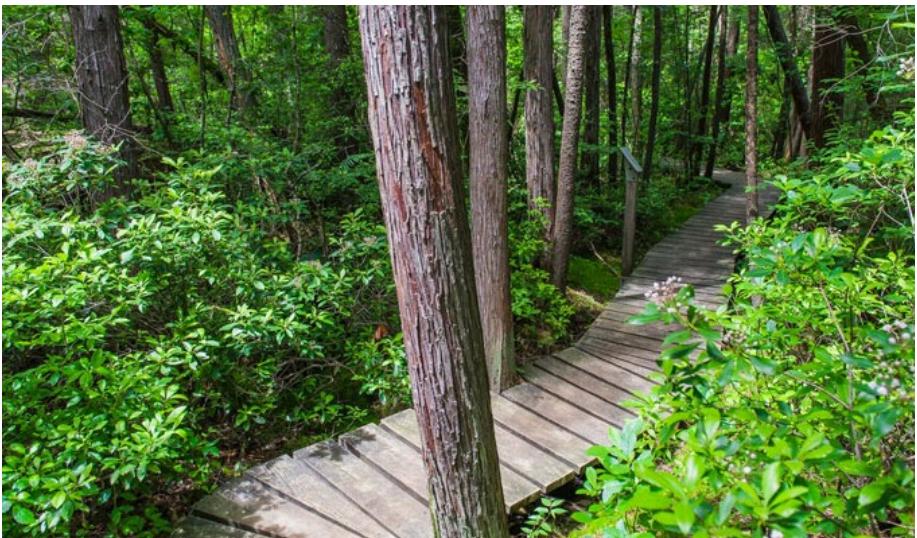
25 Burlington Mall Road, Burlington: FAR 0.4

**0.4**

AVERAGE EXISTING FAR  
RANGE BY PARCEL

0.1 – 1.6

# PROGRAM EXPLORATIONS: OPEN SPACE + AMENITIES



# PROGRAM EXPLORATIONS: PUBLIC INVESTMENT



# PROGRAM EXPLORATIONS: 15-MINUTE NEIGHBORHOODS



Tremont, Burlington: 180-units, 5.7 acres; 32 units/acre



Trolley Square, Cambridge:  
40-units, 0.86 acres; 46  
units/acre



Box Works Homes, Chelsea, MA: 26 units, 0.9-acres; 28  
units/acre



Auburn Court, Cambridge, MA: 86 units, 2.54 acres, 34 unit/acre

# PROGRAM EXPLORATIONS: MIXED USE / INNOVATION



Third Avenue/Northwest Park, Burlington: Office/lab, hotel, retail, restaurants, housing (140 acres)

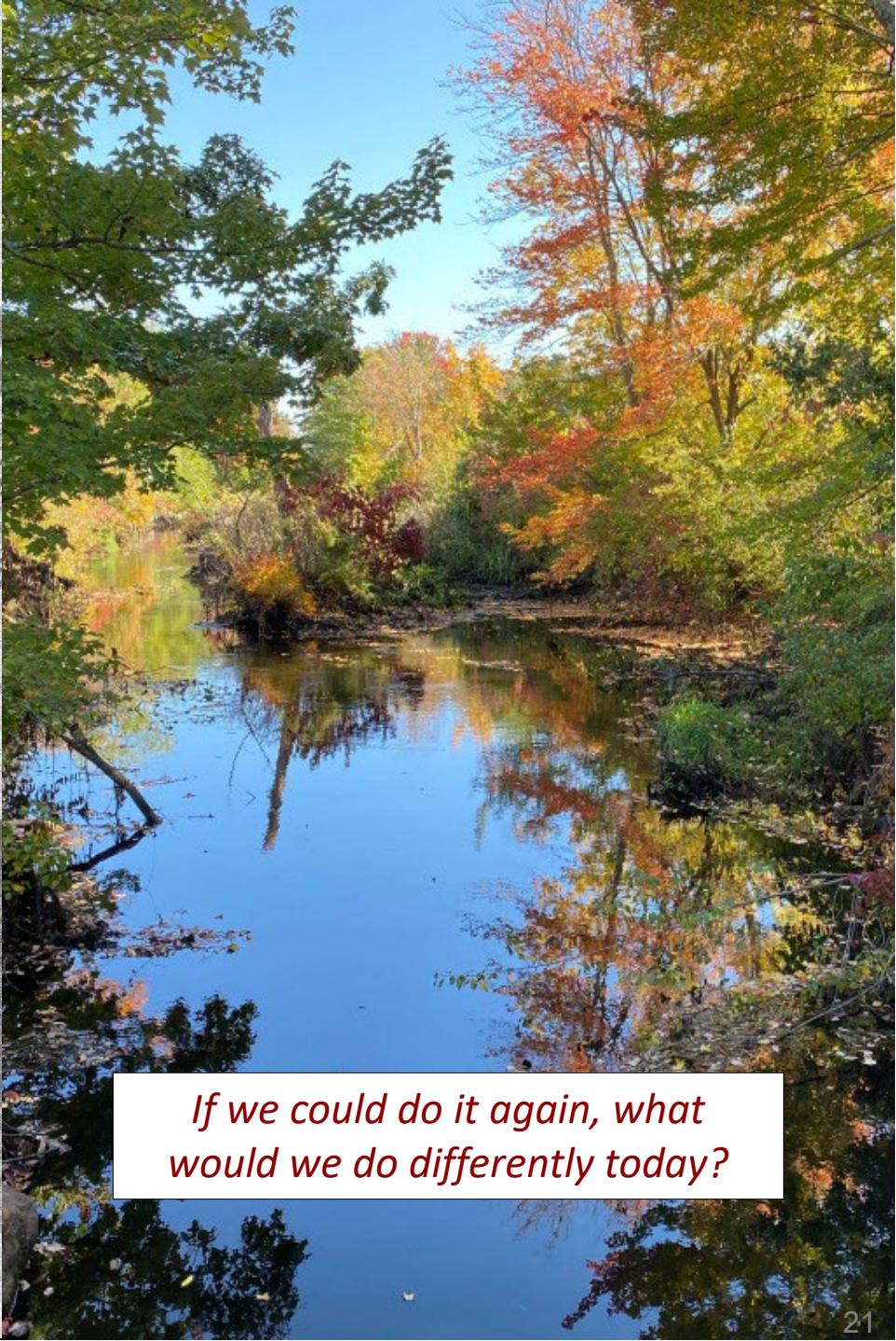


Arsenal Yards, Watertown: Office/lab, hotel, retail, restaurants, housing and parks (23 acres, FAR 1.0)



Assembly Row, Somerville: Office/lab, hotel, retail, restaurants, housing and parks (45 acres, FAR 2.5)

# INSPIRATIONS



*If we could do it again, what would we do differently today?*

# INSPIRATIONS: NATURAL SYSTEMS

Muddy River, Fenway, Boston



# INSPIRATIONS: CIVIC SPACES

Suburban Square, Ardmore, PA



# INSPIRATIONS: CONNECTIVITY

Assembly Square, Somerville, MA



# INSPIRATIONS: MOBILITY

Bike Paths, Cambridge, MA



# INSPIRATIONS: ADAPTABLE, MULTI-PURPOSE PLACES

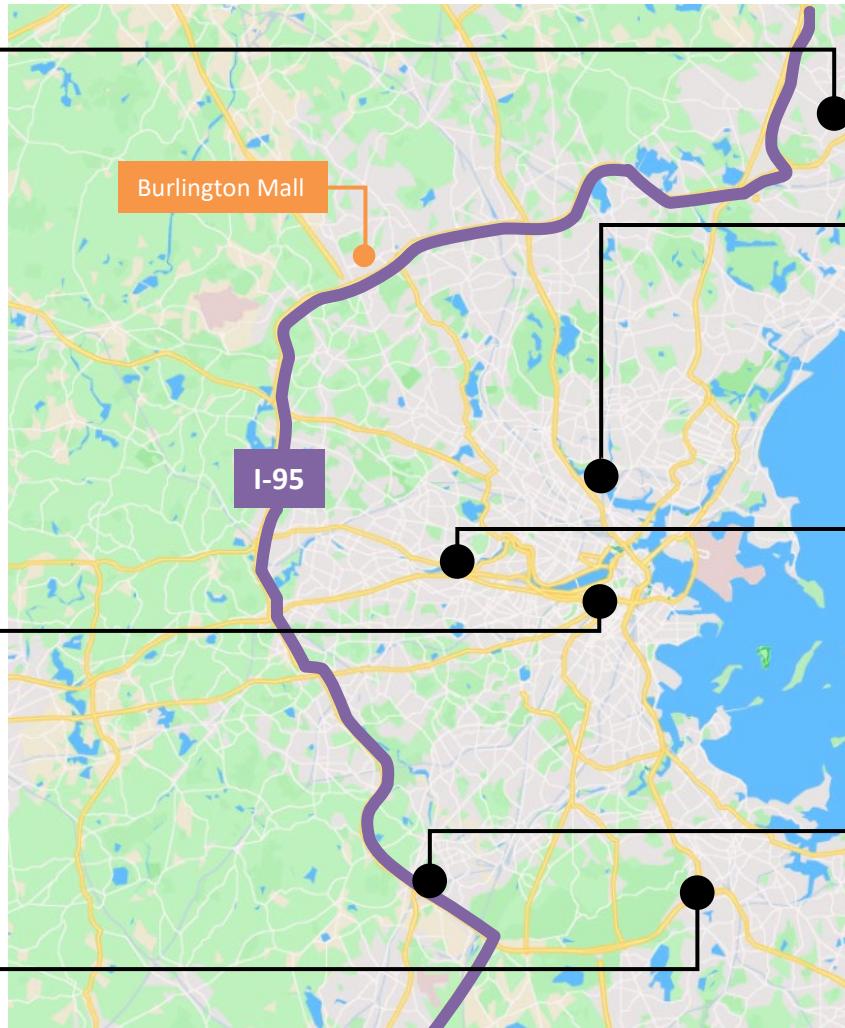
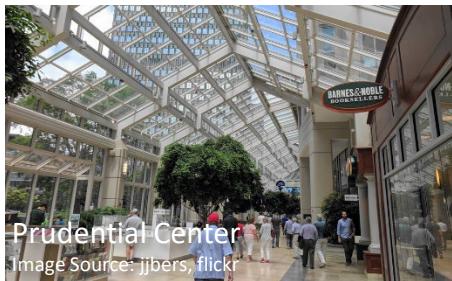
Arsenal Yards, Watertown, MA



# INSPIRATIONS AND POTENTIAL

## Precedents in the Greater Boston Area

### Traditional Shopping Malls:



### Lifestyle Centers:



# DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES - *DRAFT*

- **Natural Systems:** Strengthen the network of natural systems and open spaces
- **Complete Streets:** Reconfigure street corridors to accommodate pedestrians, bikes, cars, and transit
- **Subdistrict Character:** Foster the character of each subdistrict while strengthening interconnections
- **Mixed Use:** Create walkable districts that integrate work and home, close to shops and services
- **Social Gathering:** Incorporate destinations for social gathering, food, and cultural events
- **Shared Parking:** Promote shared parking and alternative modes of transportation to reduce traffic and parking demand



# DESIGN/DEVELOPMENT SCENARIOS





# VISION FOR THE FUTURE

## Traditional Uses

PARKING LOT

OFFICE

RETAIL

HOSPITAL

## Mix of Uses

PARKING LOT

PARKING GARAGE

OFFICE

HOUSING

RETAIL

MARKET

LAB/RESEARCH

HOSPITAL

NATURALIZED AREA

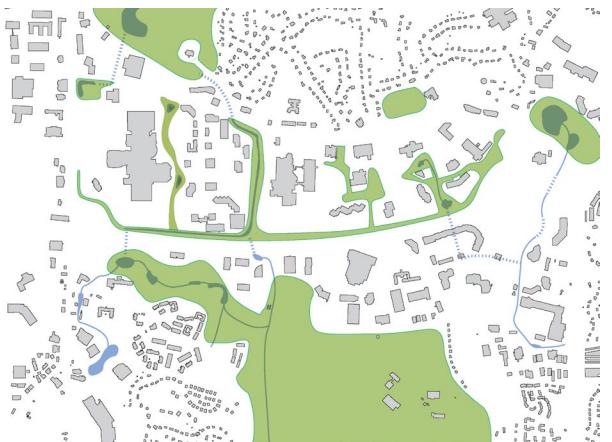
TRAILS

PARK

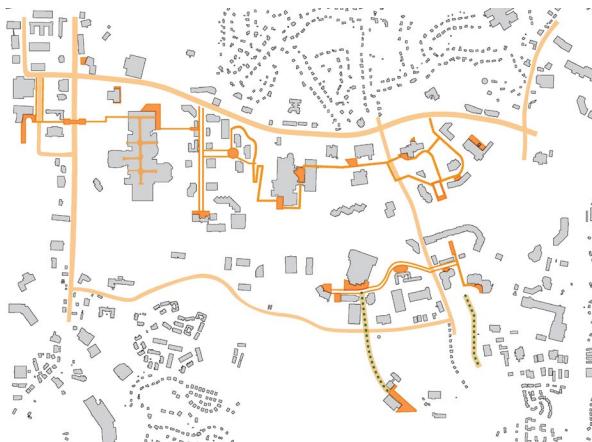
CULTURAL

... not just the mix of uses, but also the form, clustering and integration of activities ...

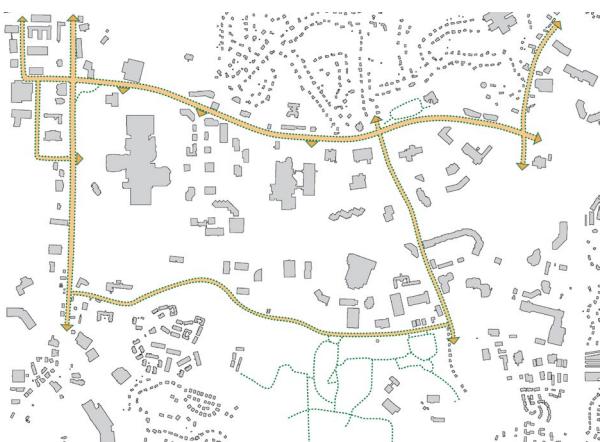
# PHYSICAL FRAMEWORKS: OVERVIEW



NATURAL SYSTEMS



PUBLIC REALM CONNECTIVITY



CORRIDORS



DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

## EXISTING CONDITIONS



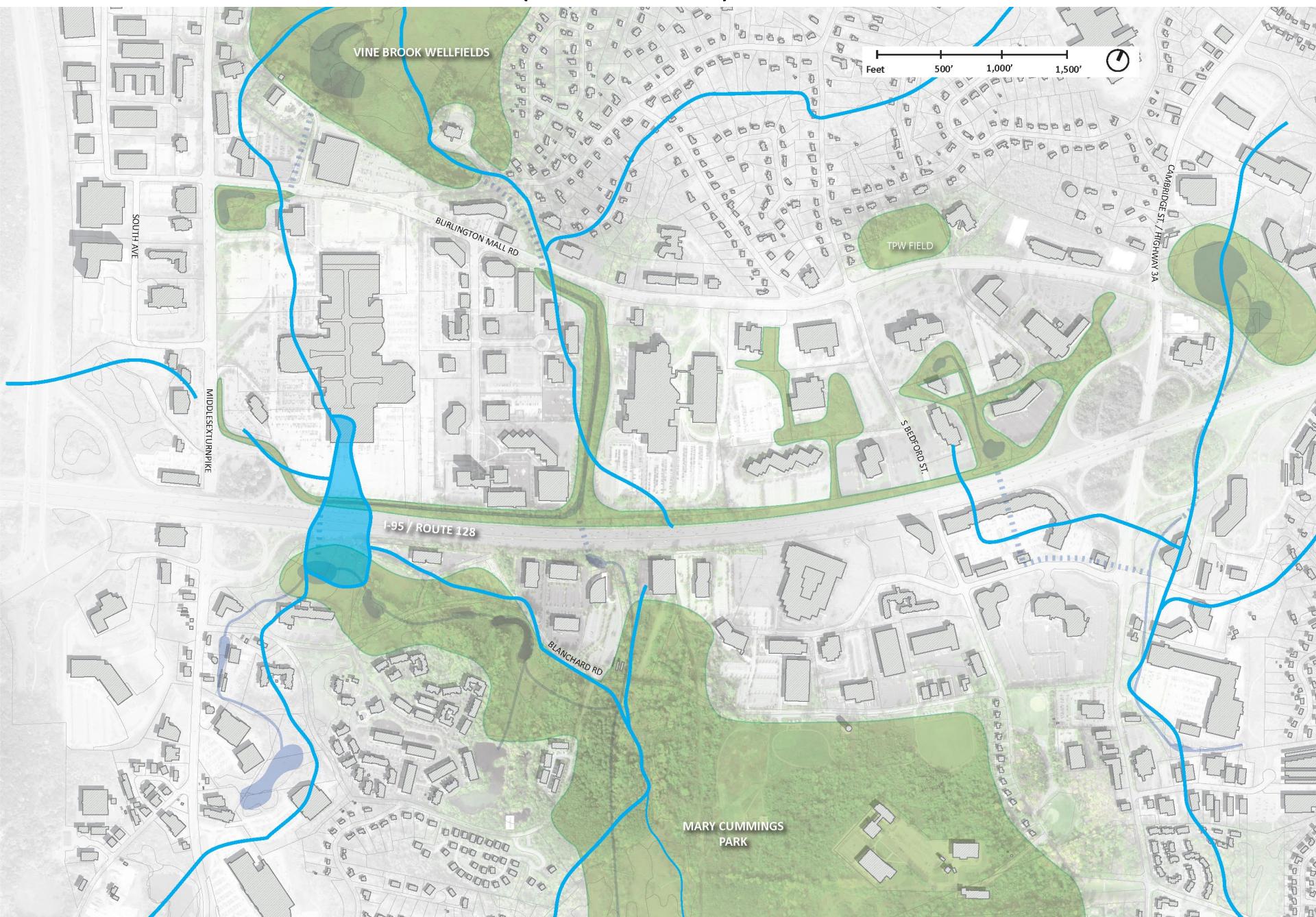
## EXISTING CONDITIONS



## EXISTING CONDITIONS



# HISTORIC WATERWAY PATHS (CIRCA 1900)



# WATERWAYS TODAY



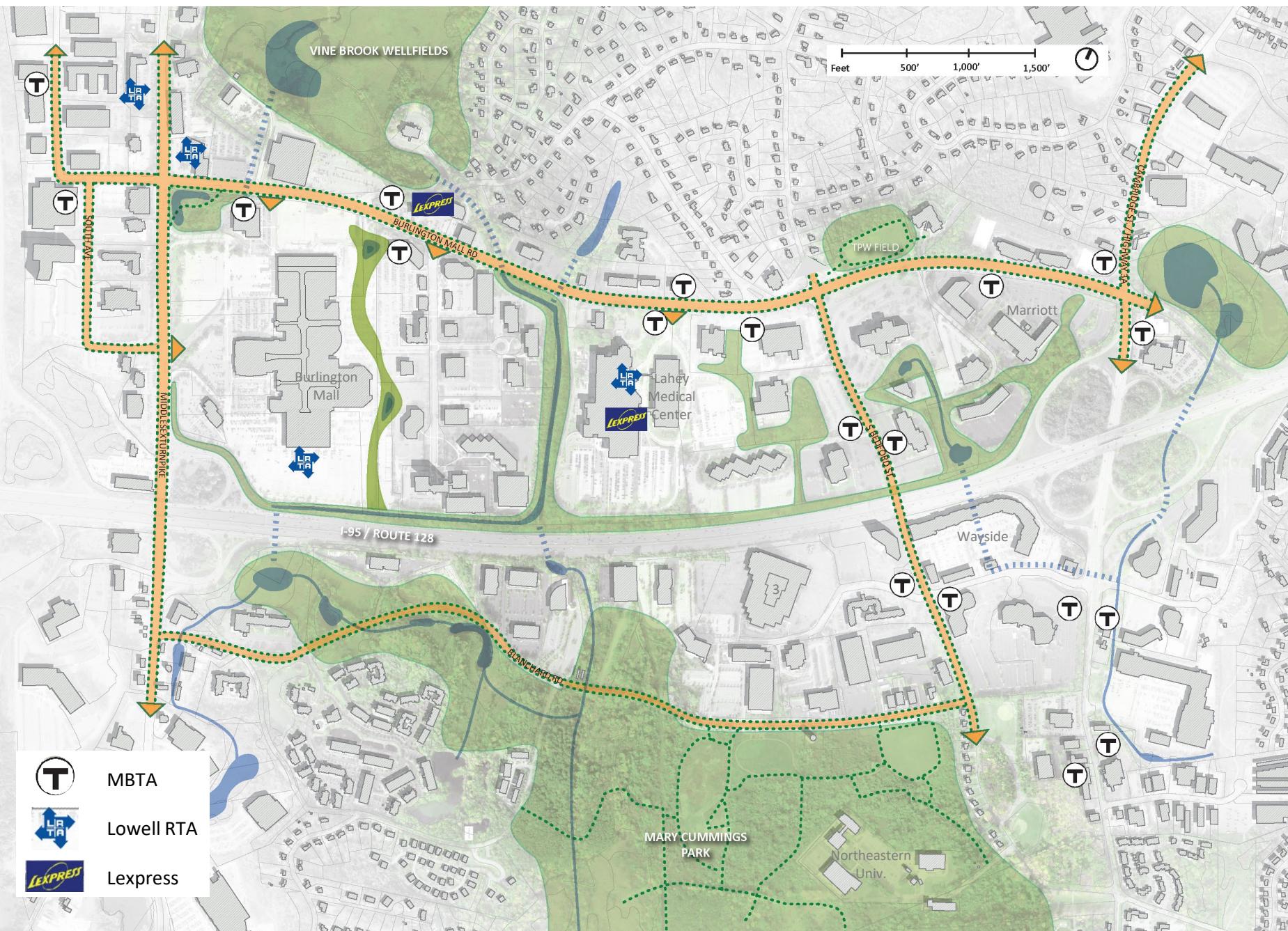
# PROPOSED NATURAL SYSTEM FRAMEWORK



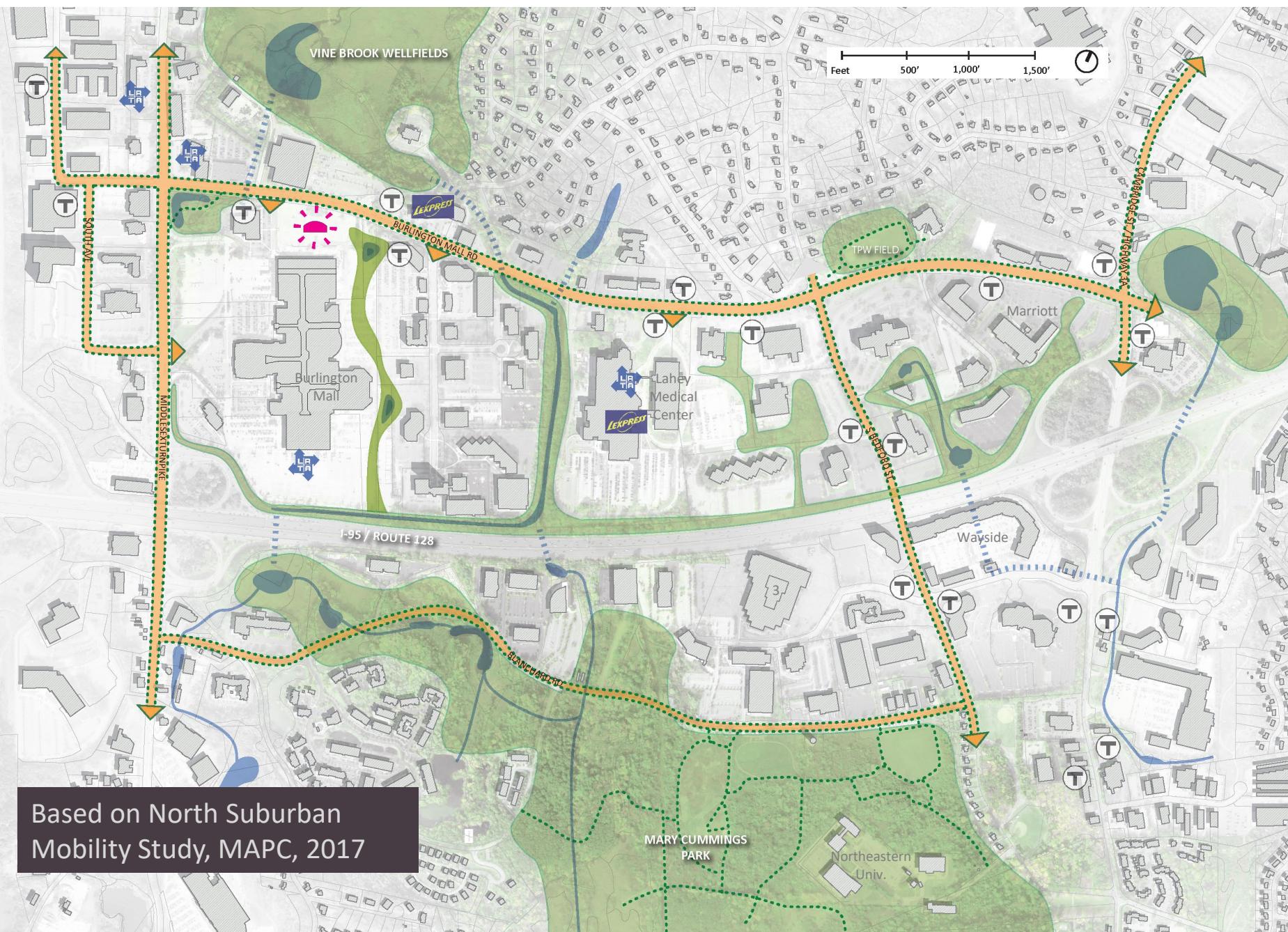
# PROPOSED COMPLETE STREETS CORRIDORS



# EXISTING BUS STOP LOCATIONS



# PROPOSED TRANSIT HUB



# PROPOSED STREET CONNECTIONS



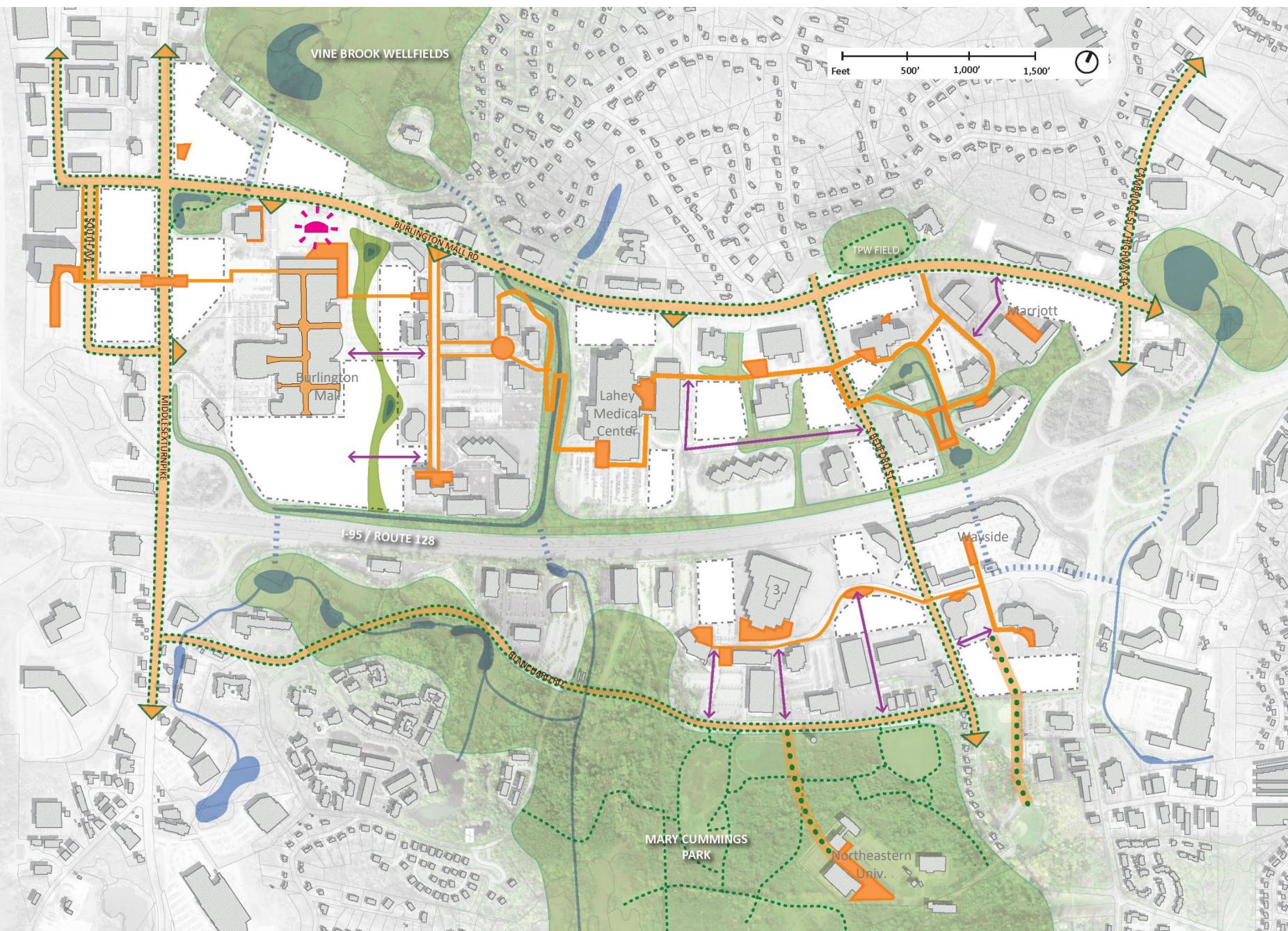
# EXISTING LANDSCAPED/GATHERING SPACES



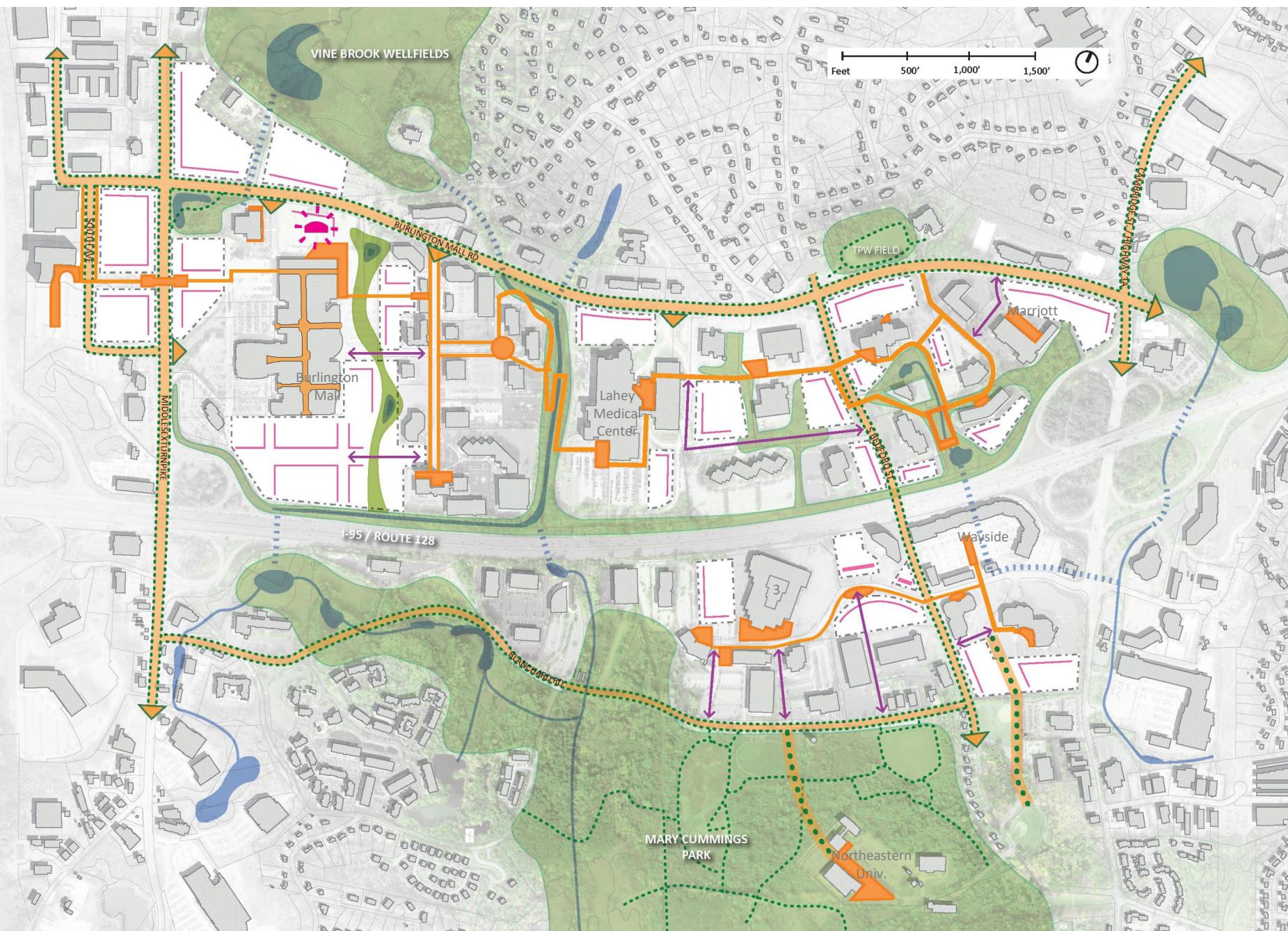
# PROPOSED ADDITIONAL NODES AND INTERCONNECTIVITY



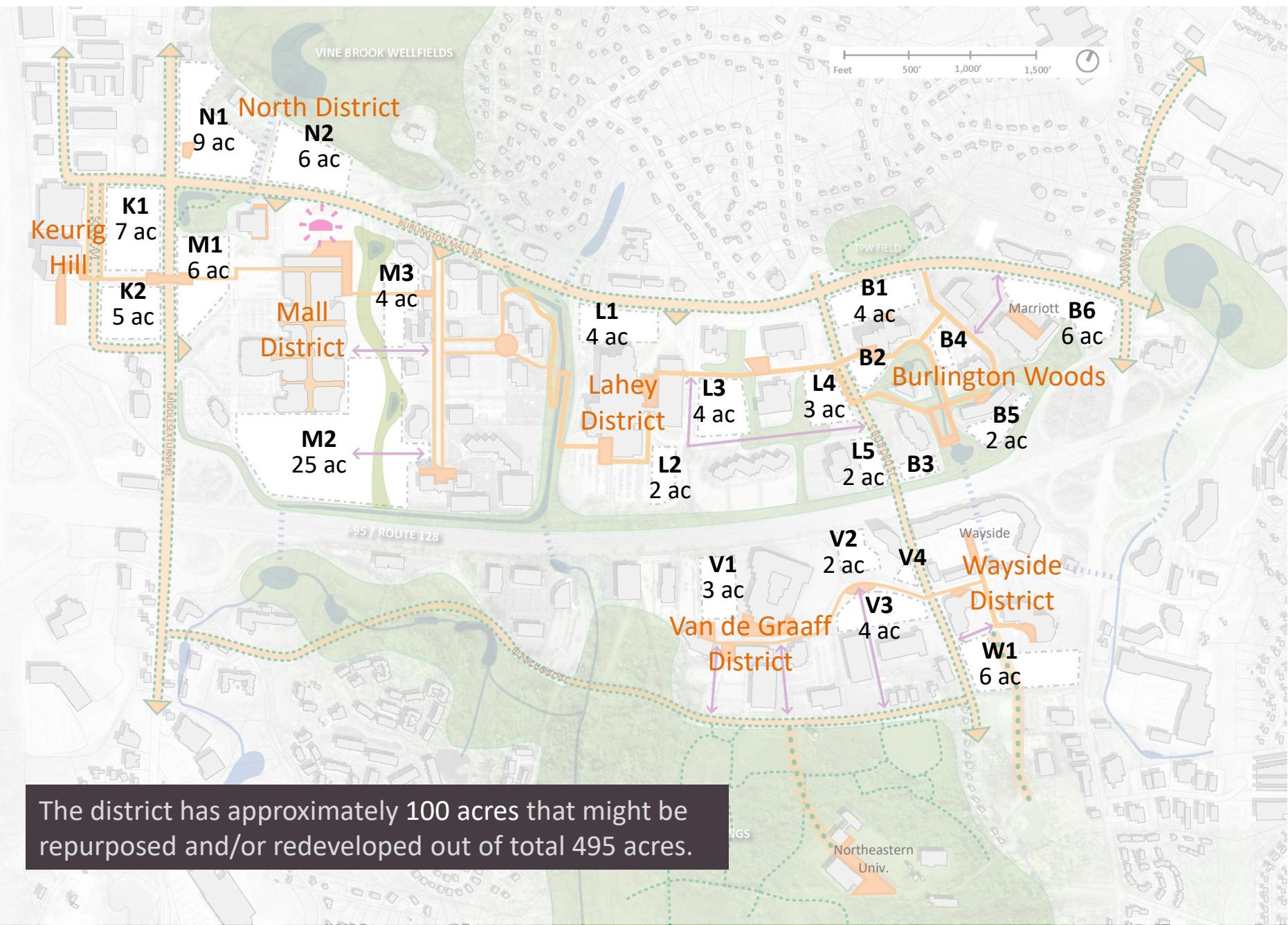
# PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY AREAS



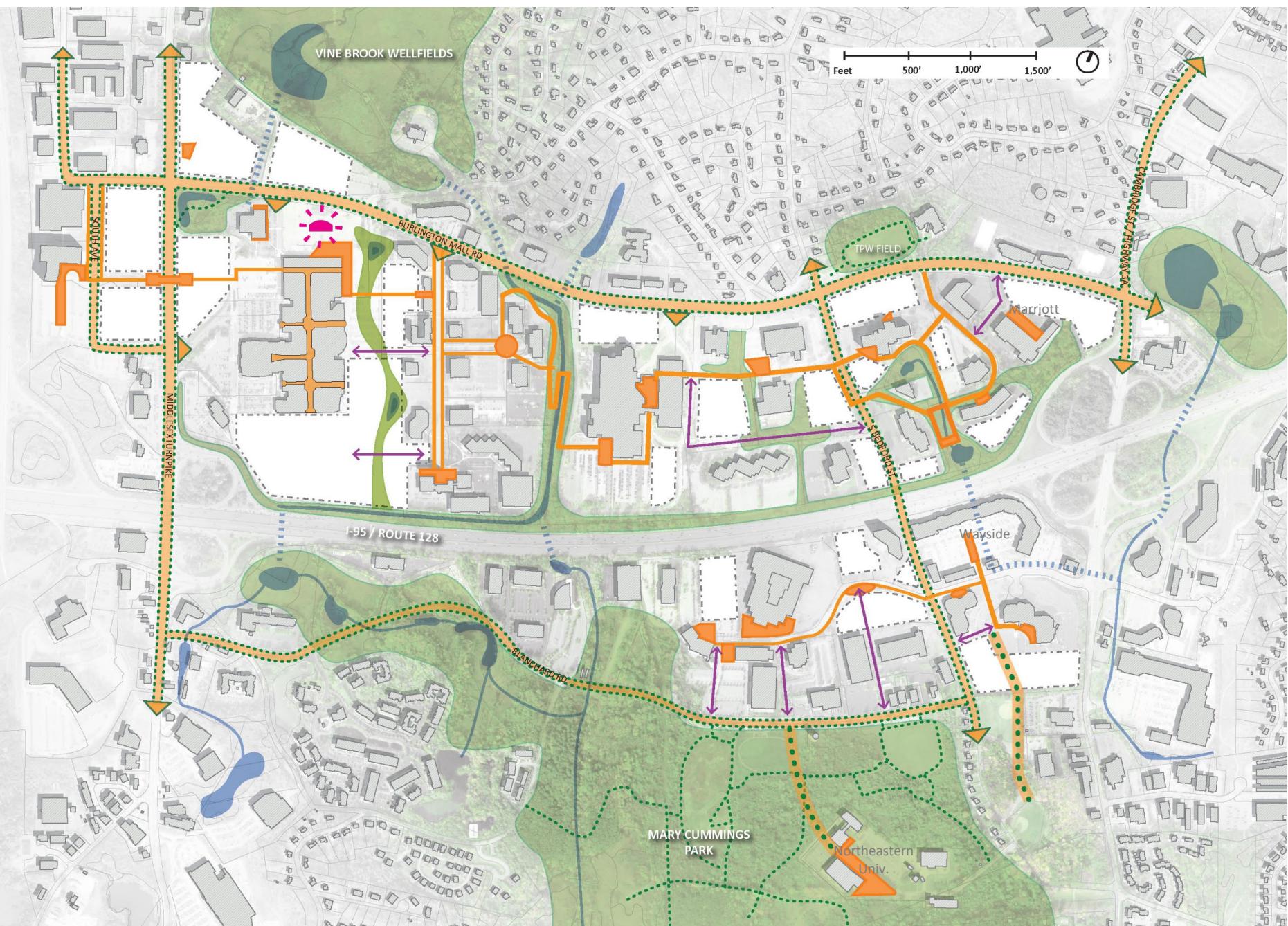
# PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT FRONTAGE



# DEVELOPMENT AREA KEY PLAN



# DEVELOPMENT AREA KEY PLAN

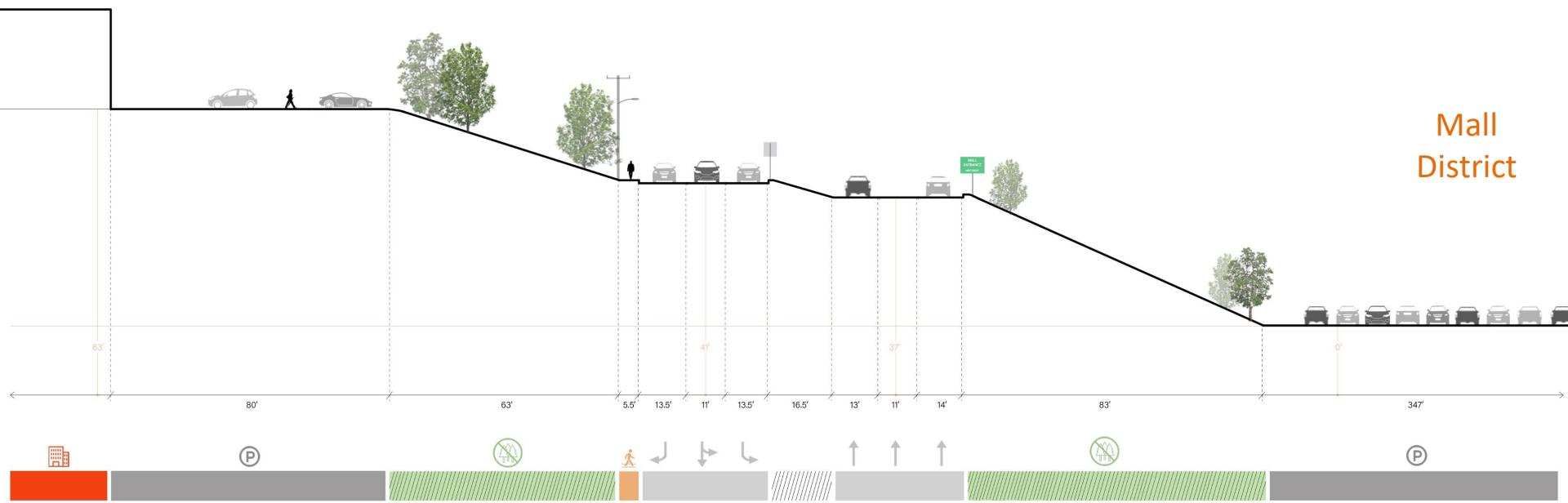


# EXISTING CONDITIONS – MIDDLESEX TURNPIKE (LOOKING NORTH)



Keurig Hill

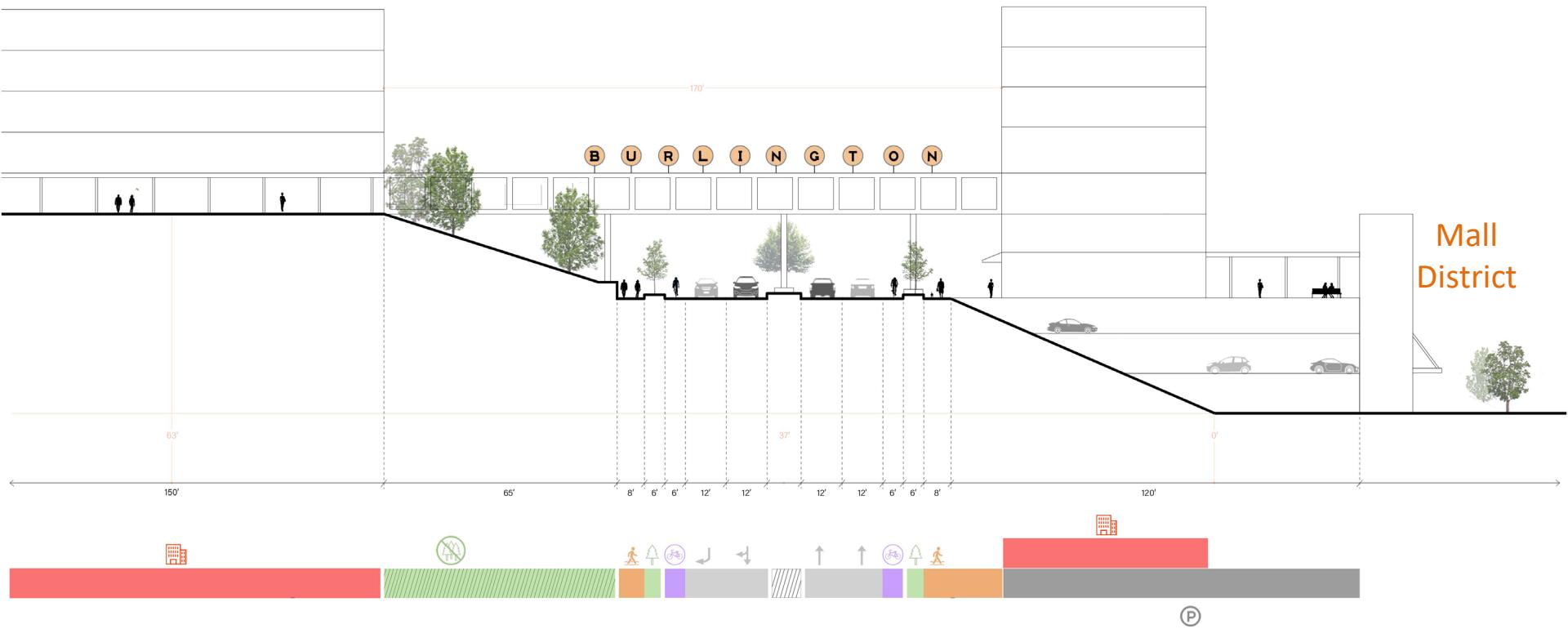
Mall  
District



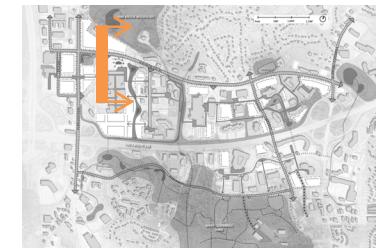
## FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL – MIDDLESEX TURNPIKE (LOOKING NORTH)



# Keurig Hill

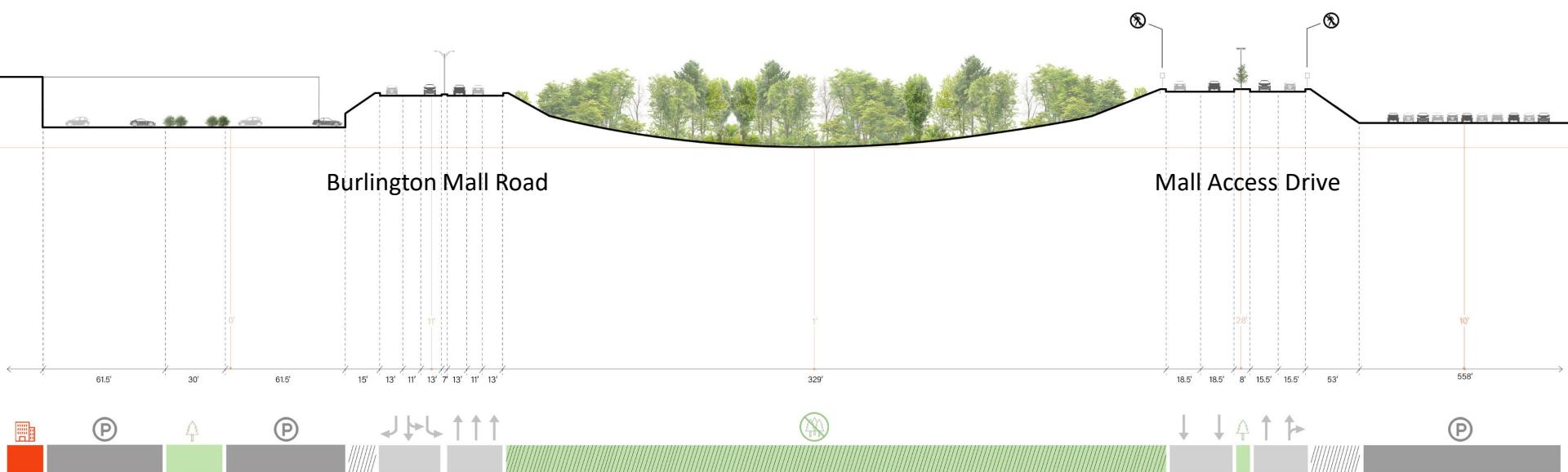


# EXISTING CONDITIONS – BURLINGTON MALL ROAD (LOOKING EAST)

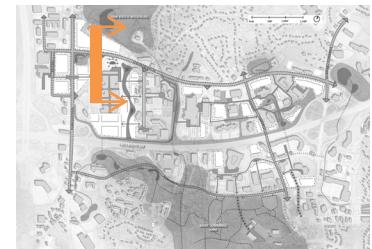


North  
District

Mall  
District

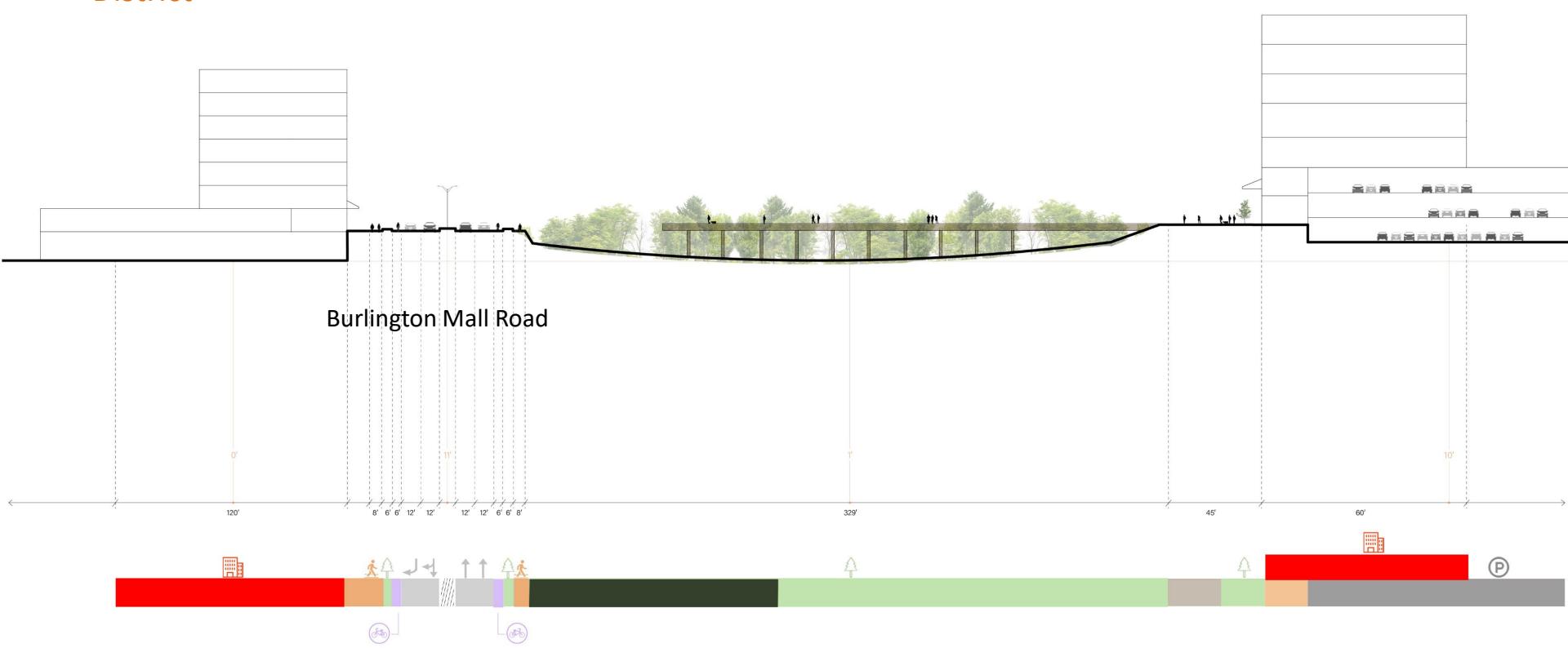


# FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL – BURLINGTON MALL ROAD (LOOKING EAST)



North  
District

Mall  
District

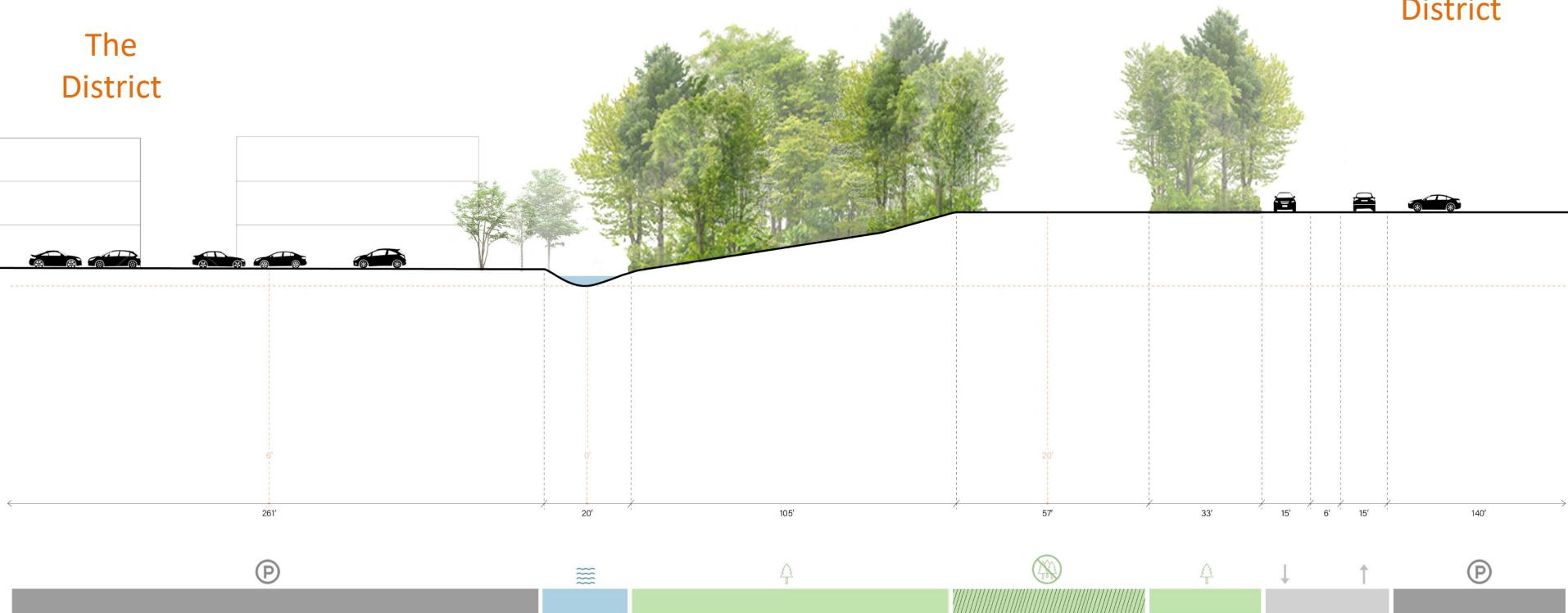


# EXISTING CONDITIONS – VINE BROOK CORRIDOR (LOOKING NORTH)

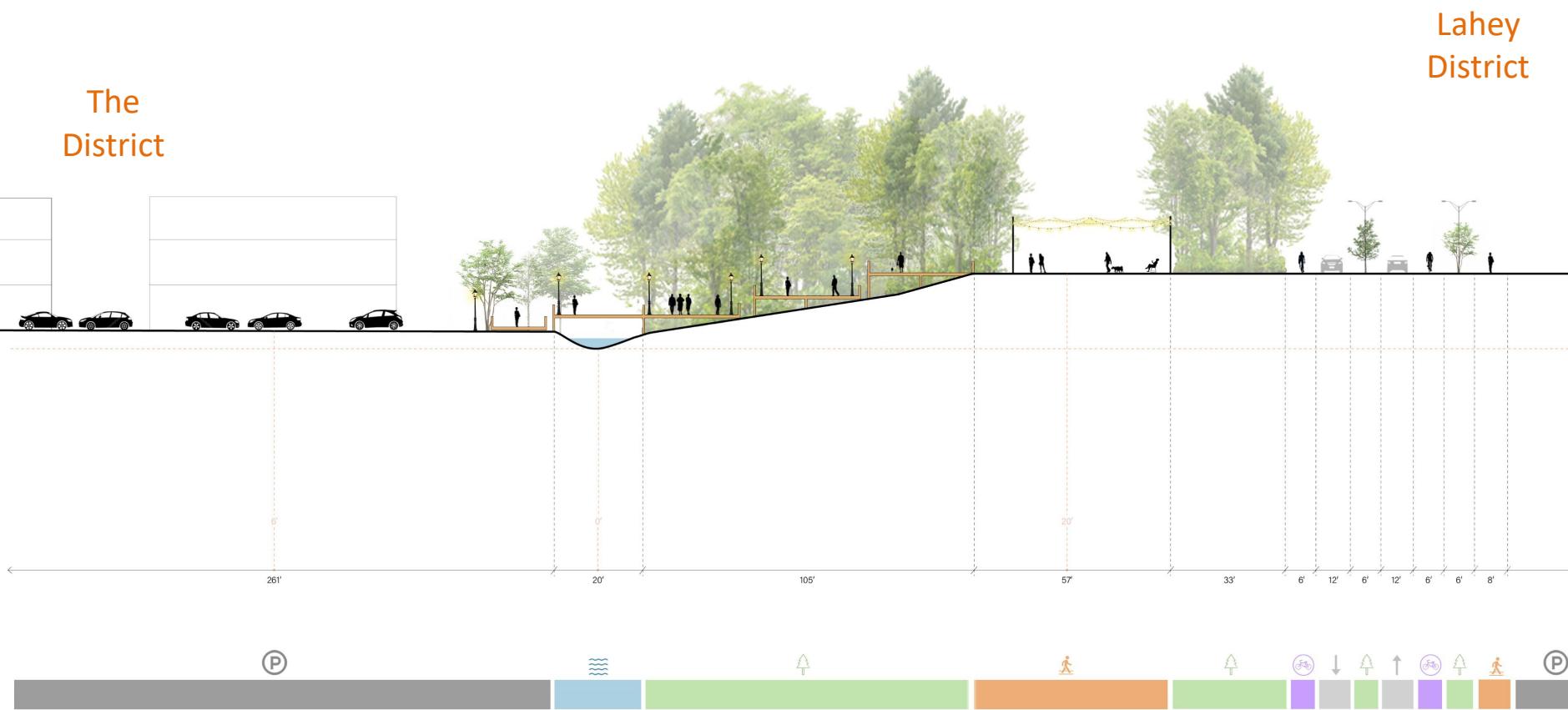
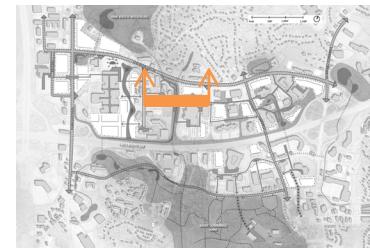


The  
District

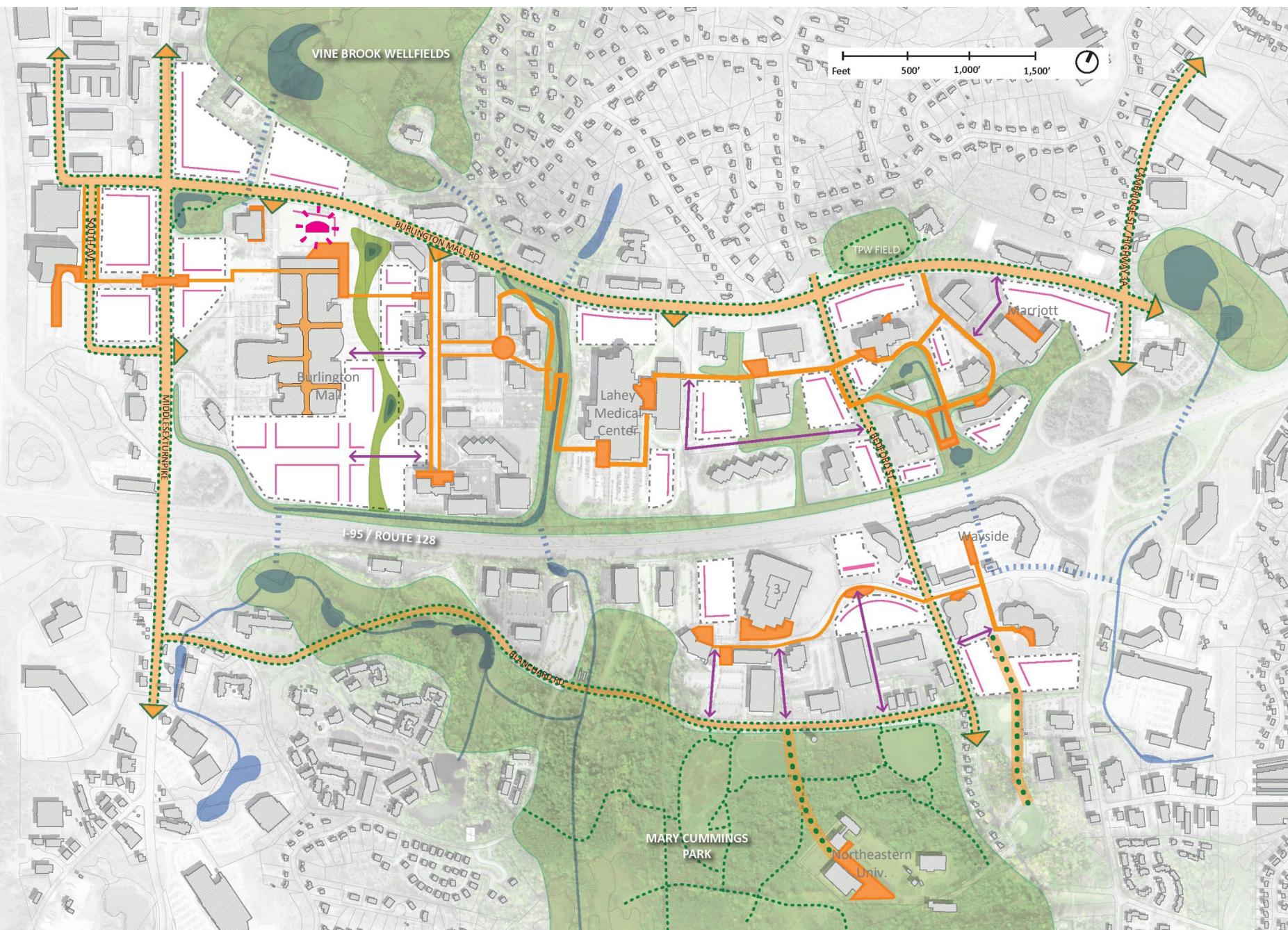
Lahey  
District



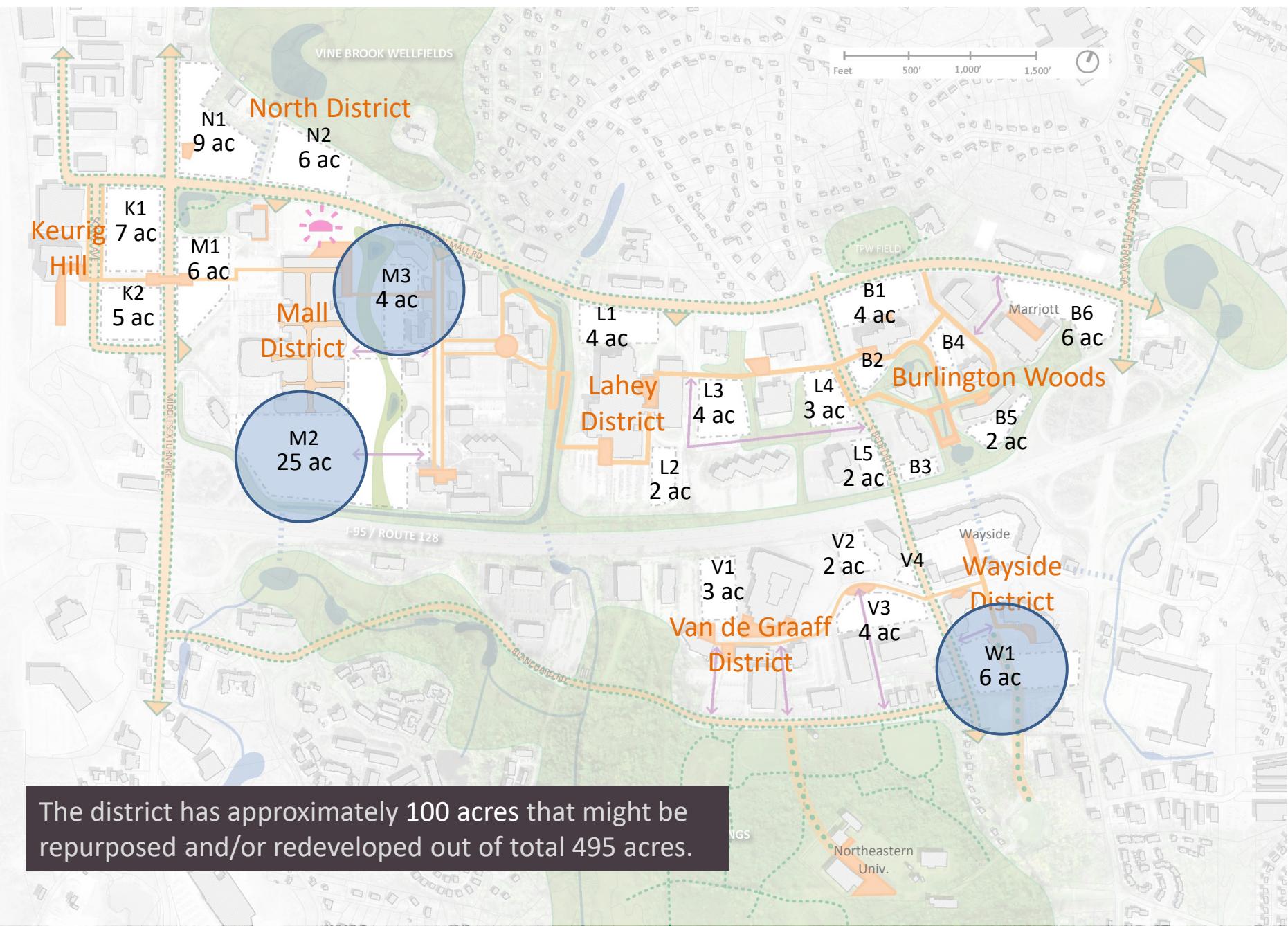
# FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL – VINE BROOK CORRIDOR (LOOKING NORTH)



# PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



# POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AREAS

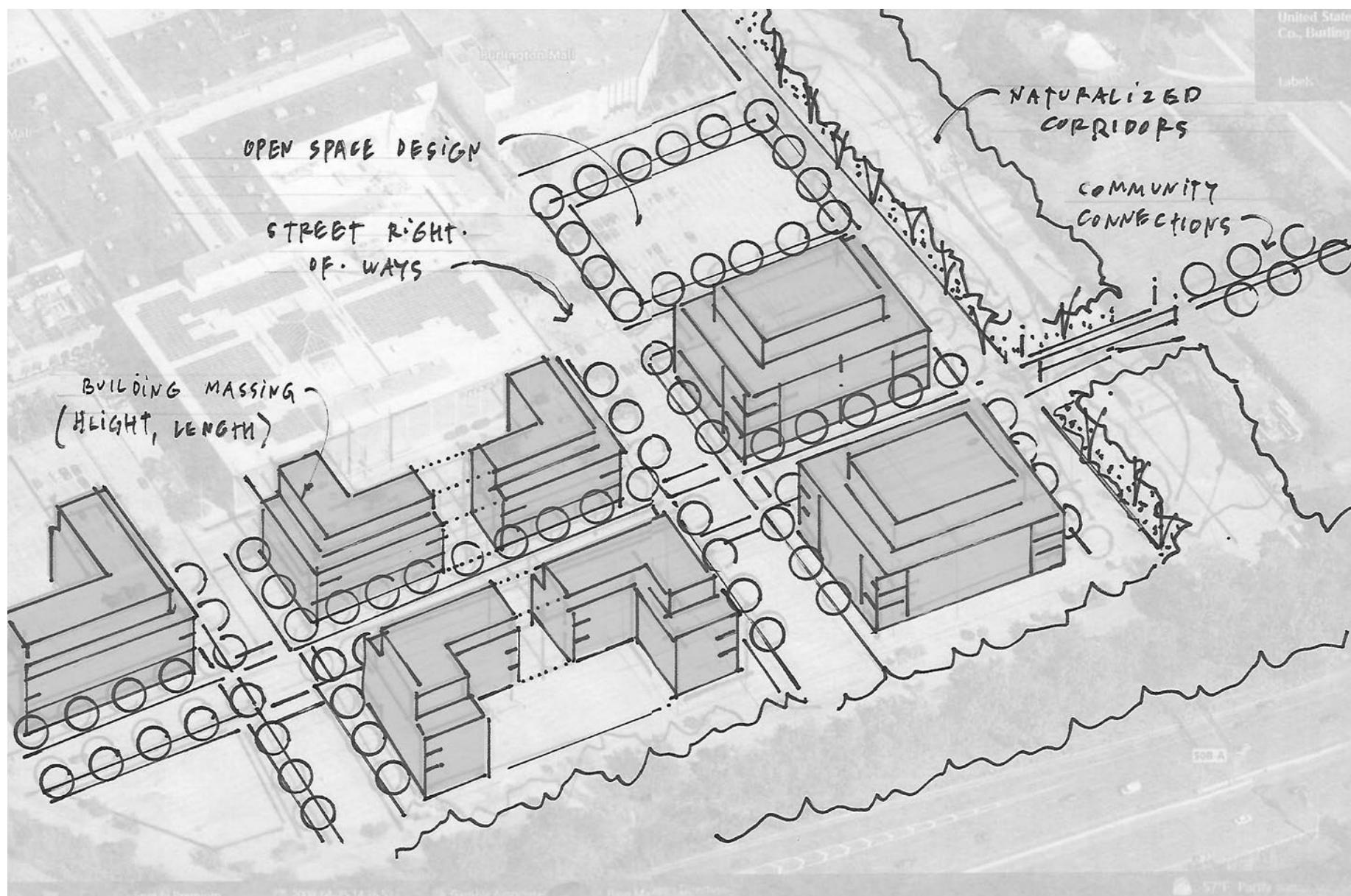


# AERIAL PERSPECTIVE AT MACY'S: EXISTING



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United States  
Co., Burlingt  
Labels

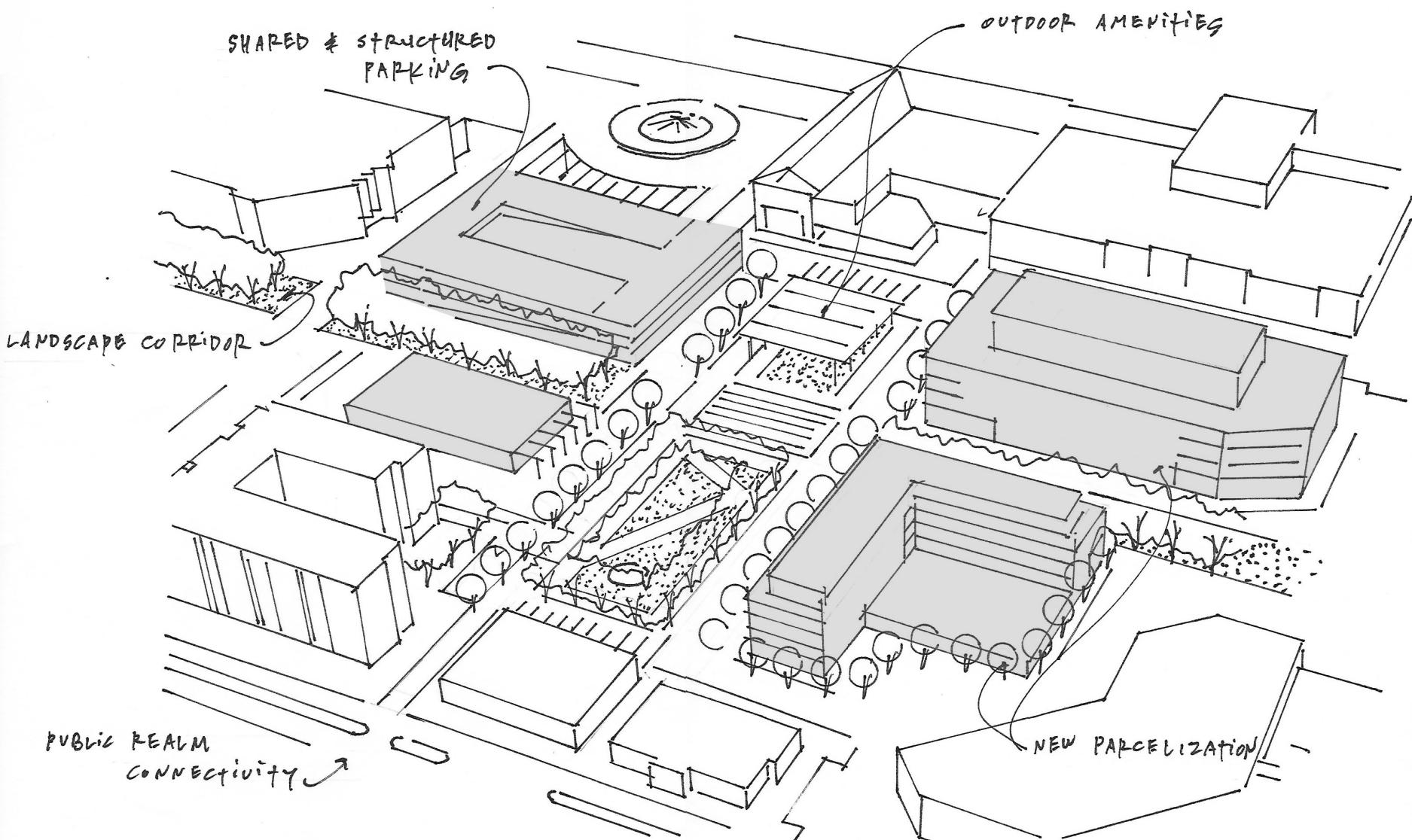
# AERIAL PERSPECTIVE AT MACY'S: POTENTIAL



# BURLINGTON MALL AND THE DISTRICT: EXISTING



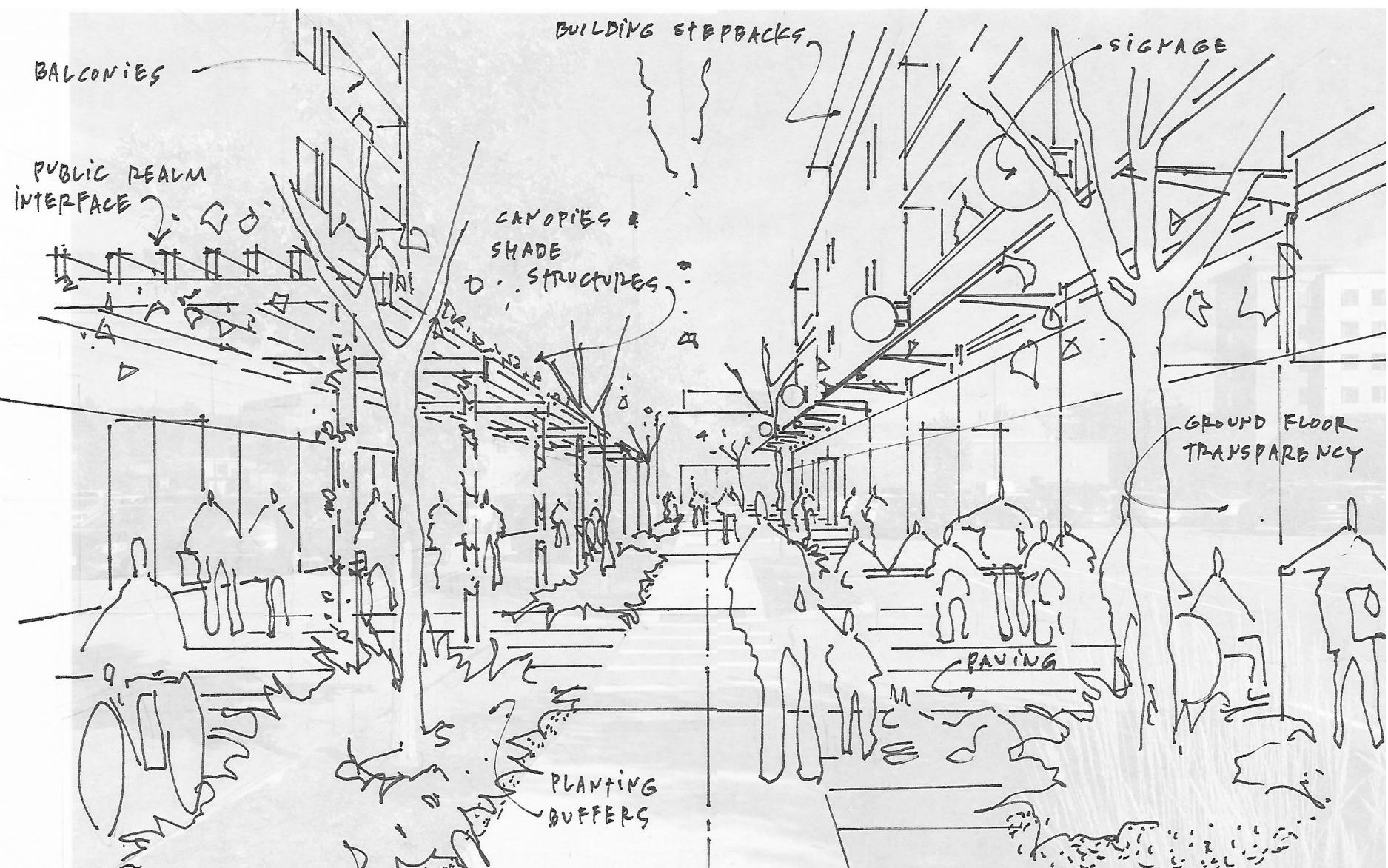
# BURLINGTON MALL AND THE DISTRICT: POTENTIAL



# BURLINGTON MALL AND THE DISTRICT: EXISTING



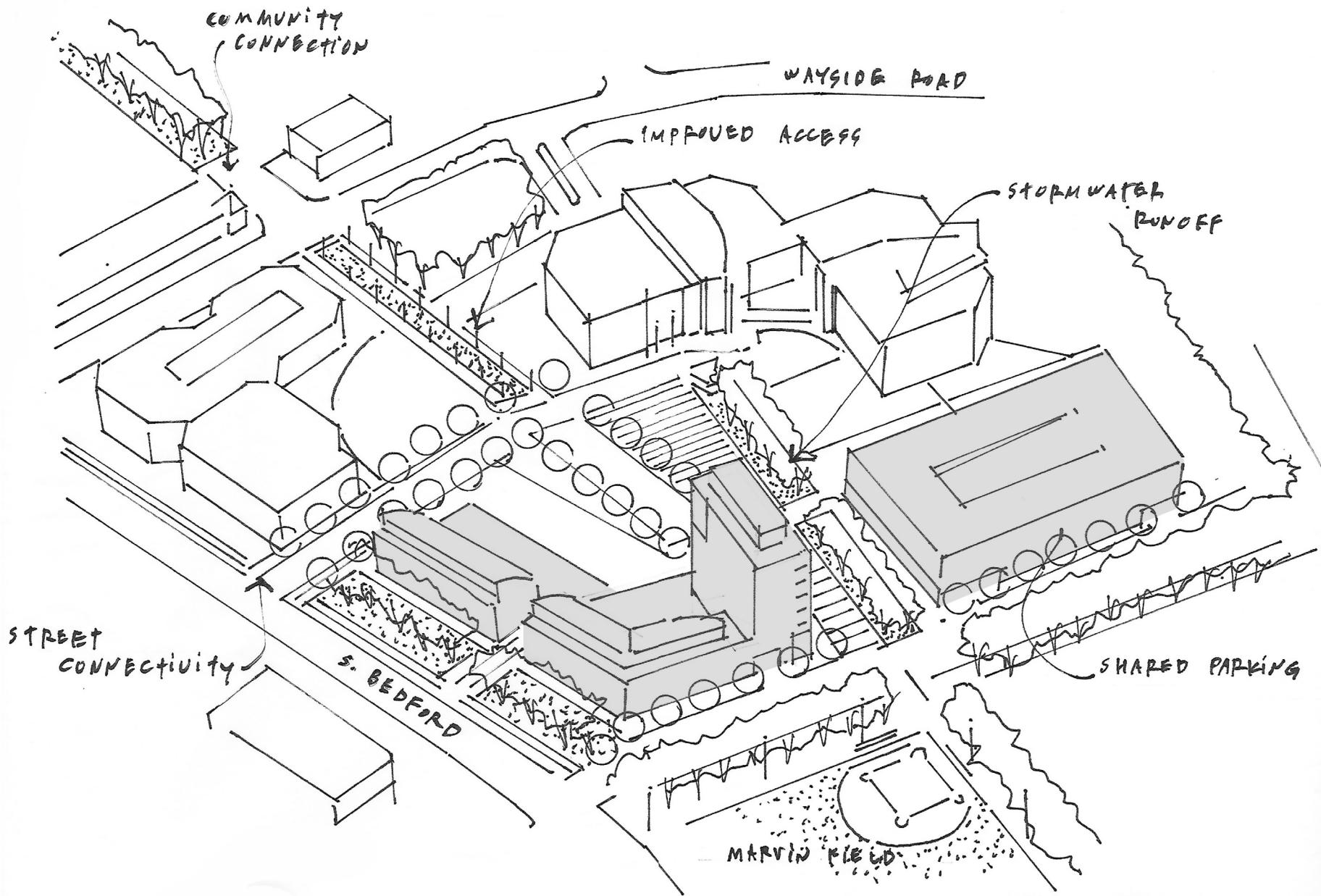
# BURLINGTON MALL AND THE DISTRICT: POTENTIAL



# MICROSOFT/NUANCE SITE: EXISTING



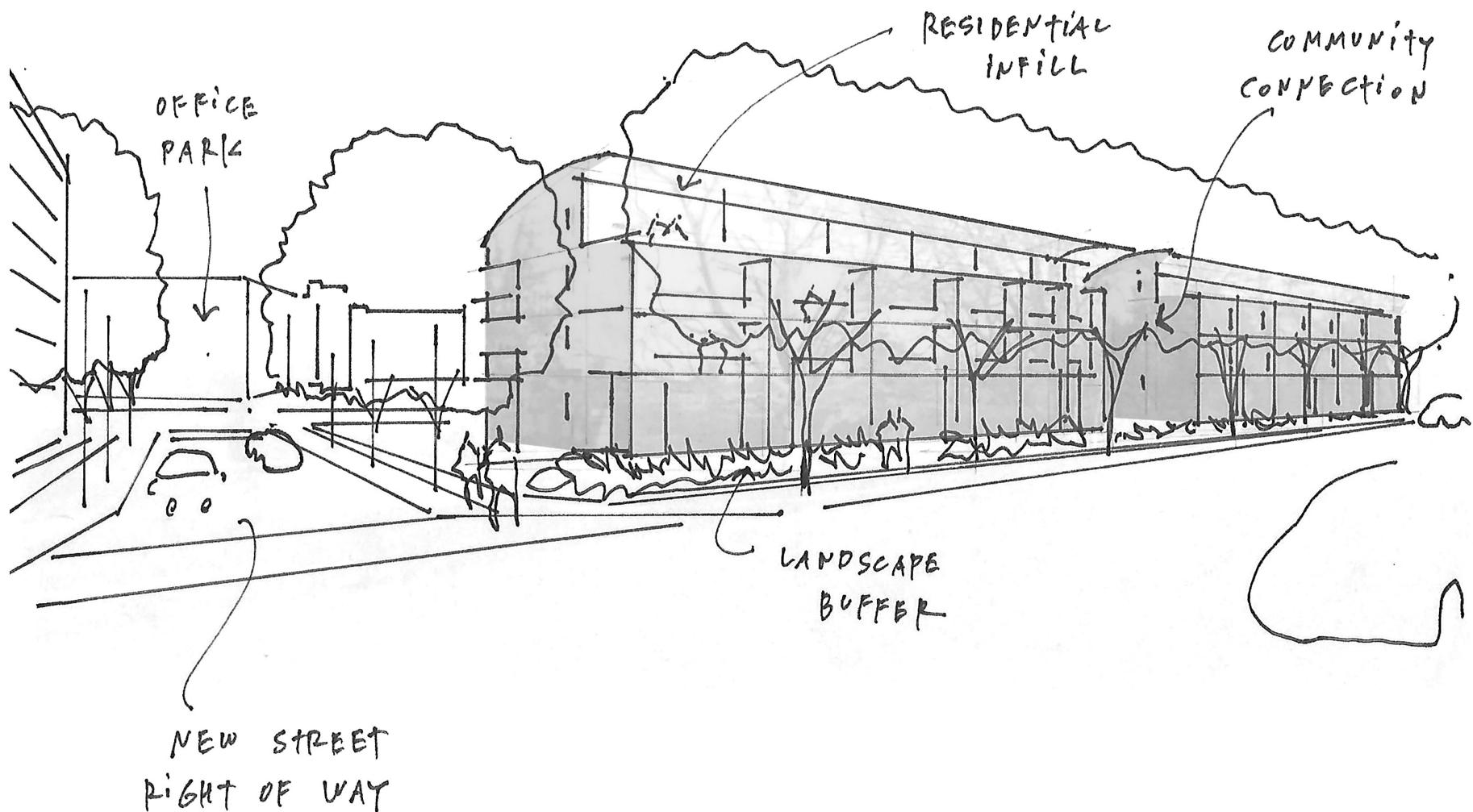
# MICROSOFT/NUANCE SITE: POTENTIAL



# MICROSOFT/NUANCE SITE: EXISTING



# MICROSOFT/NUANCE SITE: POTENTIAL







678 Massachusetts Avenue Suite #502 Cambridge, MA 02139

September 29, 2021

### **SITE MEMO: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

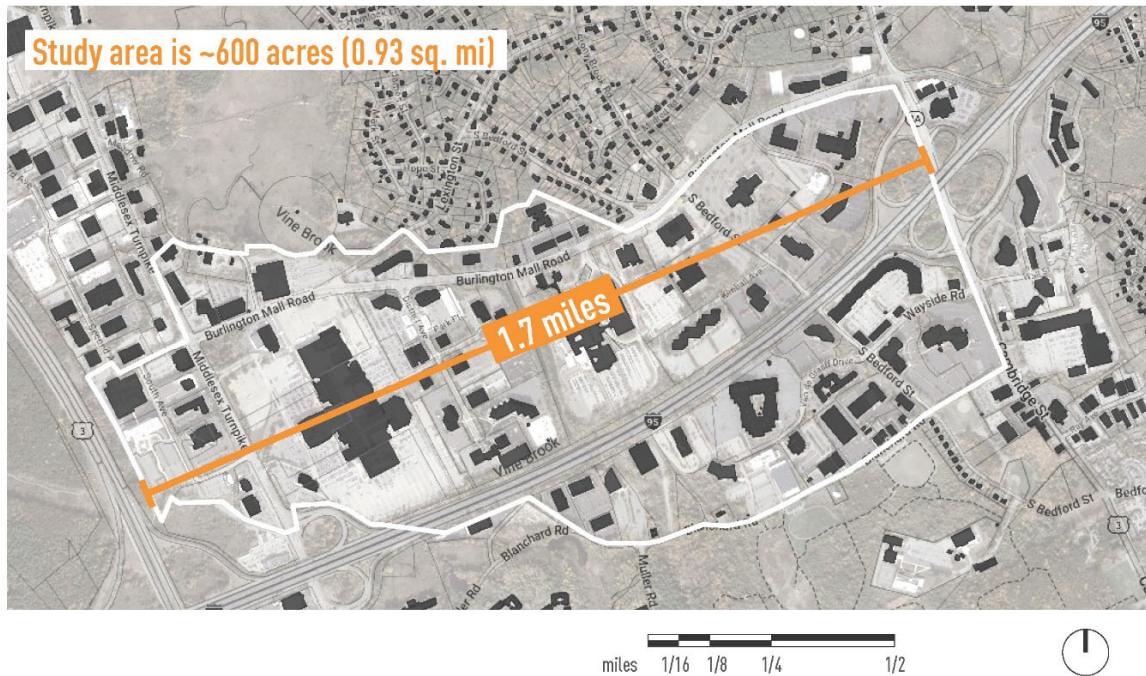
**(Revised 9/29)**

**BURLINGTON MALL ROAD DISTRICT, BURLINGTON, MA**

#### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Like many suburban commercial and office centers, the Burlington Mall Road Study area is characterized by vast parking lots, sweeping suburban boulevards, varying types and sizes of commercial retail concentrations (including the 1.3 million square foot Burlington Mall), and a mix of office, recreational, and institutional buildings. The geography is well served by the transportation corridors of US-3 and I-95 which divide the site.

The most effective site analysis leads to new insights about the potential for transformation. This memo reflects *initial urban design impressions* and is organized into two parts. First, an assessment of the challenges and opportunities currently apparent to us. Second, initial considerations for planning and urban design principles that could guide future redevelopment. In addition, a few diagrams showing the general boundary and size of the site along with scale comparisons to Downtown Boston and Assembly Row are provided for reference.

SITE AREA AND SCALE COMPARISON DIAGRAMS

## Scale Comparisons



## Scale Comparisons



## CHALLENGES

- The built environment is nearly completely dominated by vehicular parking and latent infrastructure, much of which is underused,
- The pandemic has exacerbated underutilization with online shopping becoming formidable competition for brick-and-mortar retail at Burlington Mall and other shopping centers,
- Vast office spaces are virtually empty with many employees working remotely,
- There is limited connectivity with few connections between public throughways,
- Vehicular infrastructure subverts pedestrian infrastructure,
- Land parcels are immense, and mostly privately owned,
- Individual parcels accommodate parking on their own site; there is little shared infrastructure or public open space.

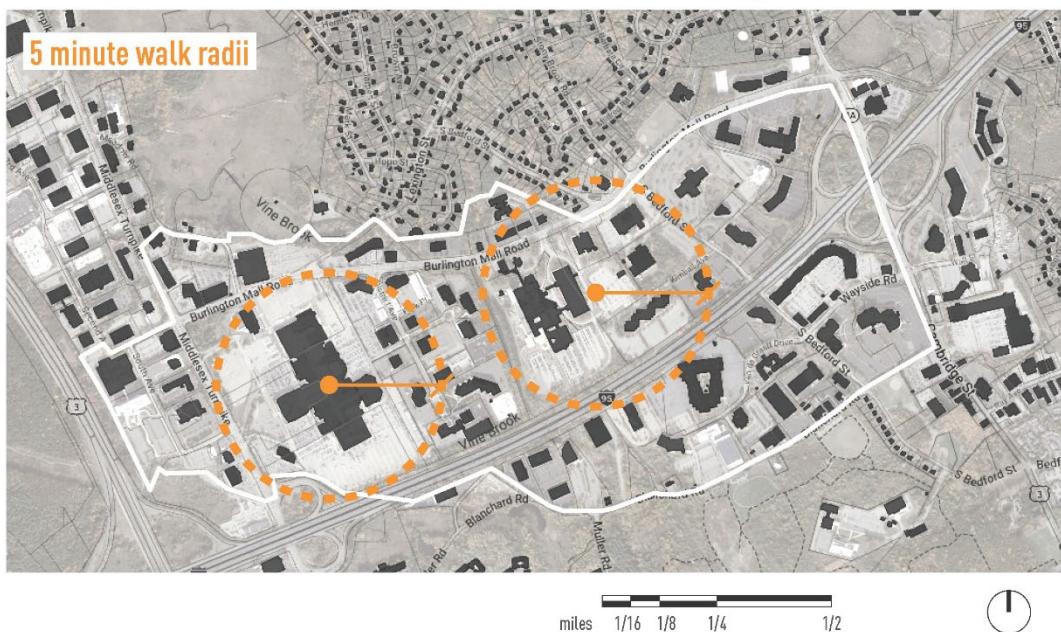
## OPPORTUNITIES

- The study area has a great deal of underused, imperious land that has redevelopment potential
- Traces of former waterways (now rerouted and hidden) signal the potential for a more environmentally-friendly landscape that can have performative characteristics,
- The graphic and visual identity of the area can be capitalized on to advance effective tactical strategies in placemaking in the near term,
- The prevalence of many interstitial spaces suggests new kinds of potential infill development that serve contemporary needs,
- The wide variety of existing uses suggests overlapping concentrations of people that could be leveraged to foster a critical mass.

## **NINE URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **1. CREATE AND ENHANCE PEDESTRIAN LINKAGES**

Enhance connections between buildings, green spaces and programmed outdoor areas by providing more pedestrian oriented connections *between* parcels. Providing better pedestrian infrastructure that crosses physical barriers and parcel boundaries will improve comfort and reduce incentives for using vehicles for shorter trips in the area.



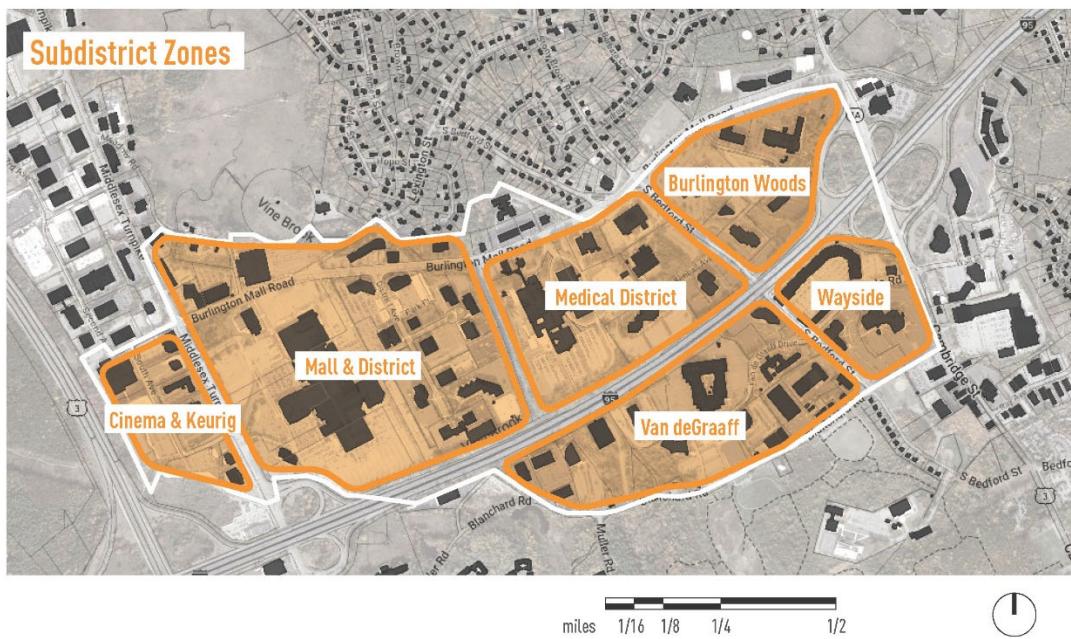
*Quarter-mile (5-minute walk) radii here indicate that certain areas within the study area have the potential to be better connected within pedestrian friendly “walk-zones”. For example, the center of Burlington Mall is about 5 minutes away from District Ave, a natural adjacency with potential for a more robust connection.*

### **2. IDENTIFY AND STRENGTHEN SUBDISTRICTS**

The study area is not homogenous. Due to its range of real estate types, building sizes, and other spatial characteristics, at least six “subdistricts” are apparent. The AMC theater and Keurig headquarters sit higher in elevation to the west of Middlesex Turnpike. Moving east, the Burlington Mall and District Development occupy a large zone that has the potential to be better internally connected. Leahy Clinic is a medical district that functions like a small campus. Other apparent subdistricts based around shopping centers and office parks are identified in the map below.

Ultimately, the subdistrict boundaries serve as a framework for thinking about how future development might happen in different ways across the study area. Given varying

building types and different ambitions for transformation, physical transformation is likely to take different forms in different subdistricts. Within subdistricts, interventions may have similar themes.



### 3. CONNECT, BLEND, AND INTEGRATE INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR CIRCULATION

Burlington's four-season climate makes interior circulation attractive. Climate-controlled pedestrian circulation is apparent in a few locations, most notably in the interior hallways in the Burlington Mall, but also in places where enclosed bridges connect buildings to parking garages. Currently disjointed, these interior routes can be reconceived within a bigger indoor/outdoor circulation network. This network presents additional opportunities for more gracious transitions between indoor to outdoor space. Outdoor circulation areas may benefit from being more protected with canopies or shading devices. Conversely, traditional indoor circulation environments could be redesigned as semi-conditioned spaces that introduce natural light and air into otherwise hermetic environments.



*Two corridors in the Burlington mall present both a model for pedestrian movement but also invite speculation on potential transformation.*

#### 4. STRENGTHEN THE PRESENCE OF NATURAL SYSTEMS

Leverage the presence of existing waterways and wetlands (often marginalized, covered over or hidden) and expose the network to reinforce a sense of place and address stormwater.



*This fascinating map, highlighted in the 2018 Burlington Master Plan, depicts the area of the mall in 1874 (Check date). While grainy, the image clearly shows the how prominent Vine Brook was in the area compared to today. Source: J.B. Beers and Co.*



*This photograph, taken just off of Blanchard Road, shows the northwest side of Mary Cummings Park. Just adjacent to the south edge of the study area, the naturalized view is a stark contrast with the more developed and impervious surroundings.*

##### 5. COMPREHENSIVELY REASSESS PARKING AND VEHICULAR INFRASTRUCTURE

Parking dominates the Study Area and will continue to dominate the outdoor space for many years to come. Given this reality, a number of strategies may be used to mediate the extent of surface asphalt that occupies the properties. On one end of the spectrum, parking garages shrink parking footprints, provide space protected from the elements, and potentially reduce travel times. If surface parking is to be left in place, more tactical measures such as surgical planting, pervious paving, and screening can be considered. Larger scale planning maneuvers such as placing parking inside blocks – rather than on the periphery – should be kept in mind for new development.

In addition, the post-pandemic world invites reconsideration of parking from a demand perspective. Working from home and higher vacancy rates in traditional office spaces suggests less commuting and invites the potential for tighter-knit work/live environments. If planned for, these hybrid environments offer the potential for smaller scale places that prioritize pedestrian commuting over vehicular commuting.



*The Keurig/Dr Pepper office building integrates some structured parking within the building footprint which allows for lawns and preserves the landscape. Building above garages also increases the building height, making the tower visible from the highway.*



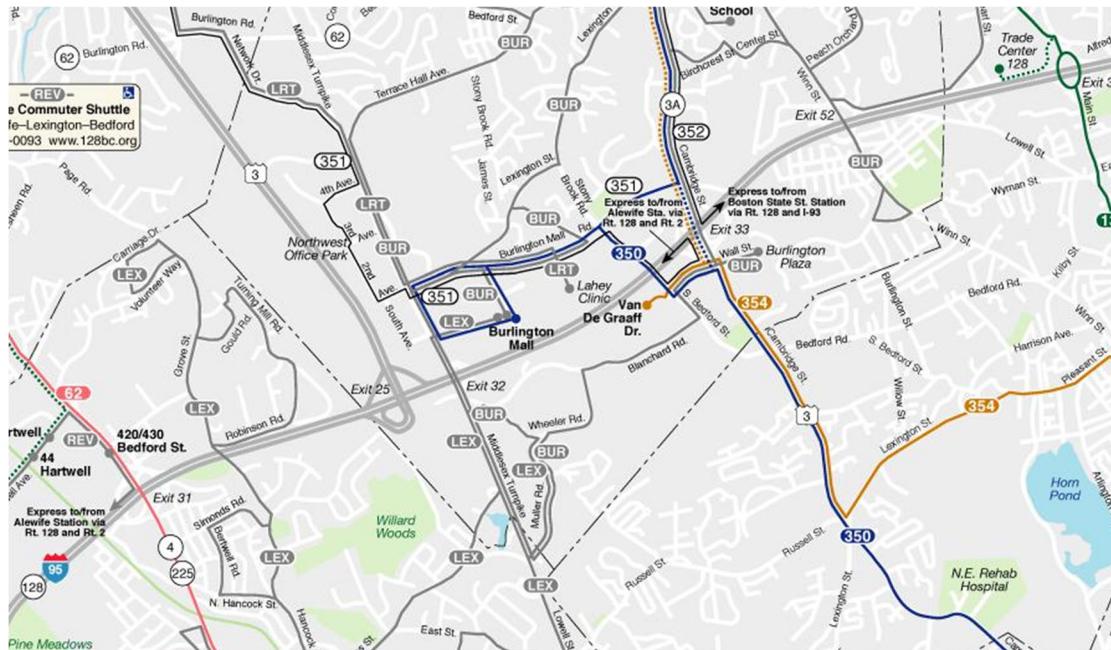
*Parallel street parking is another strategy that creates a more traditional “downtown” retail streetscape atmosphere. This photo was taken on 3rd Avenue, just north of the study area.*



*Still, much of the study area is characterized by endless rows of double loaded parking, much of which is greatly underused for most of the year.*

## 6. ENCOURAGE AND PLAN FOR ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF TRANSIT

The site has the potential for non-vehicular transit improvements that operate regionally and locally. Currently, several MBTA bus lines have stops within the study area. Additional stops with improved facilities (i.e. canopies and platforms) would provide more local connectivity and strengthen ridership regionally. Other forms of transit such as cycling could be strengthened to better connect adjacent neighborhoods and towns.



While the vast majority of visitors access the site via car, this portion of MBTA's regional map shows a modest presence of bus routes in the area (source: [https://old.mbta.com/uploadedFiles/Schedules\\_and\\_Maps/System\\_Map/MBTA-system\\_map-back.pdf](https://old.mbta.com/uploadedFiles/Schedules_and_Maps/System_Map/MBTA-system_map-back.pdf)).

## 7. IMPROVE SPATIAL DEFINITION AND CHARACTER OF THE PUBLIC REALM

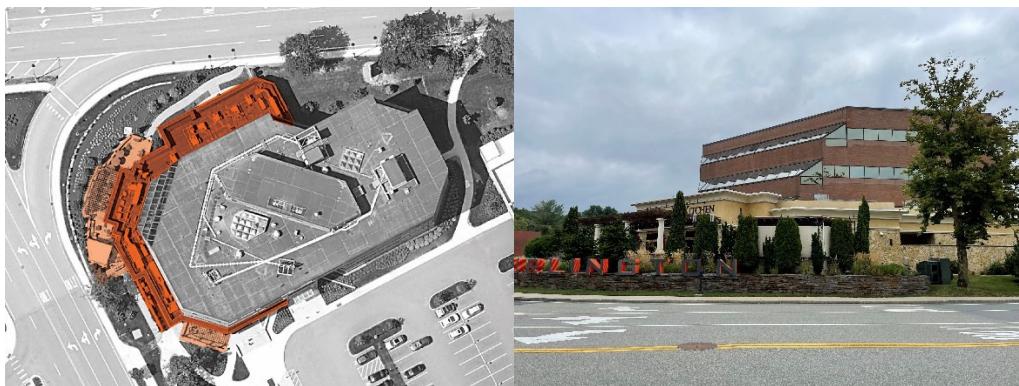
Foster a stronger sense of place at the confluence of parcels by better defining and reinforcing the public realm. Currently, smaller scale outdoor areas that include landscaped areas and outdoor café seating appear to be well used. There may be opportunities to both create more environments like this and – pairing with other strategies mentioned here – better connect existing ones together.



*This relatively narrow pedestrian thoroughfare is one of the better examples of a higher quality public realm. The smaller distance between buildings - combined with the use of paving, light fixtures, and planting – foster a comfortable outdoor environment.*

**8. INCREASE DENSITY THROUGHOUT THE STUDY AREA WITH DIFFERENT SIZES AND TYPES OF INFILL**

Increase development intensity, where appropriate, to forge a livelier public realm interface. Underused spaces in the Study Area take many different shapes and sizes and have the potential to facilitate a range of different building types.



*The 2014 Tuscan Kitchen “wrapper” is a good example of how infill development can provide alternative uses, make better use of empty space, and improve the streetscape.*



*The above diagram highlights how new development could reinforce the street edge where large building setbacks currently reside.*

## 9. ENHANCE VISUAL IDENTITY THROUGH GRAPHICS AND WAYFINDING

Consider a comprehensive signage, wayfinding, and graphics strategy that bring visual consistency and spatial orientation to an otherwise large and disparate group of places.



*There is an absence of a collective identity in most of the Study Area. However, this painted façade on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave development is an interesting exception, as is the District's entry signage and branding.*

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

The best retrofits reestablish a vital connection to place. There is the potential for low-impact and landscape engineering solutions for managing storm water, including pervious paving, bioswales, planting strips, rain gardens and constructed wetlands that reduce the amount of pavement and can form a collective armature. Revitalizing the ecology of the site and introducing compelling public spaces will incentivize private development and enable the Study Area to become a more vibrant node. A more active and mixed-use environment is needed that will reposition the geography from a collection of isolated buildings into a more compact and connected place.

*End of memo*

9/29/21