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**GAMBLE  
ASSOCIATES**

# Bridge Street Corridor Plan

DESIGN GUIDELINES & ZONING RECOMMENDATIONS

DECEMBER 2024



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## PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The objective of this plan is to develop a future vision for the Bridge Street corridor in Dedham, MA. To achieve this vision, zoning recommendations and Design Guidelines have been developed to promote the types of improvements desired in the corridor, based on input from the public and with consultation from the Bridge Street Corridor Plan Advisory Committee. The Bridge Street Corridor Plan provides a roadmap to the community on how to preserve the attributes that are valued while also embracing changes that will enable growth, foster fiscal stability and health and meet the needs of residents and businesses into the future.

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ALL QUOTES SHOWN IN ITALICS:  
“COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT QUOTE”  
ARE FROM DEDHAM RESIDENTS FROM THE  
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

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*Bridge Street Streetscape*

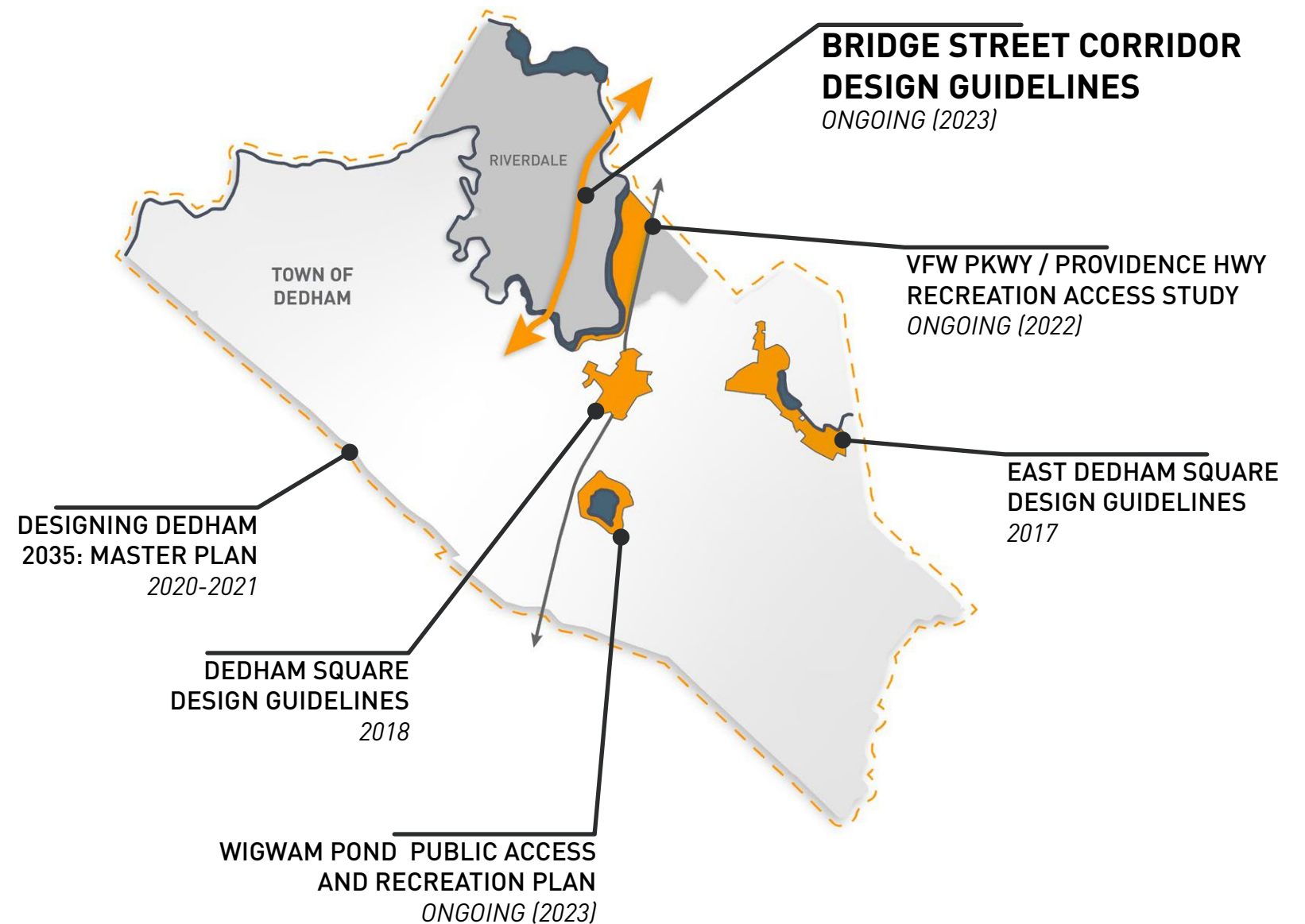
This urban design and planning effort concentrates on Bridge Street in Dedham, Massachusetts, a heavily traveled, mixed-use corridor approximately one mile in length. The corridor is experiencing development pressure, and recent public infrastructure investments in the form of new sidewalks and curbs, paving and street crossings anticipate new growth. As with many towns and cities, the underlying, existing zoning is a patchwork and does not accurately reflect the community's aspirations for its future.

The recommendations advanced in this document seek to better align the community's aspirations with regulations to clarify expectations for new development. Design Guidelines cannot depict every possible building configuration. Therefore, prototypical building forms are represented. Architectural style is subjective and advancing a singular design aesthetic for the corridor is neither viable nor desirable.



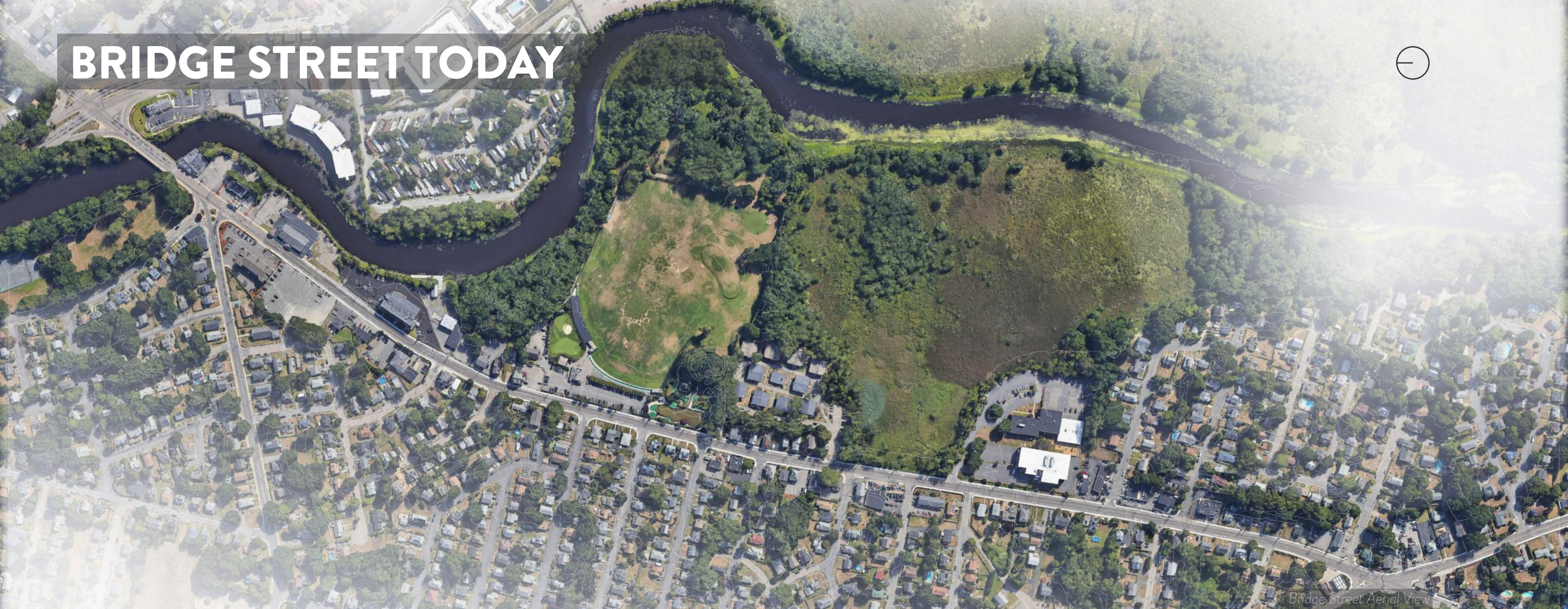
These Design Guidelines have not been developed in a vacuum. A good deal of planning has already taken place, including the Town's Designing Dedham 2035 Master Plan. Examples of other initiatives are shown on the diagram to the right. Based on previous work and community conversations, the public has a good understanding of what Dedham's future should look like. **The community envisions walkable neighborhoods to help reduce traffic congestion, an enhanced streetscape with improved lighting, a higher architectural quality of new development, more open space, and a greater diversity of uses along the commercial corridors.**

This document was crafted to enhance the economic vitality of the corridor through attractive design. By following these guidelines, each new development project can complement another, resulting in more cohesive physical form. This document provides a direction for the design of new infill development while acknowledging that existing buildings that have retained cultural or architectural significance can also form the basis for growth. They define expectations for quality while allowing for flexibility. An overarching goal is to recognize the potential for architectural diversity while at the same time adhering to fundamental urban design principles.





# BRIDGE STREET TODAY



Bridge Street today is dominated by the vehicular traffic that cuts through the neighborhood en route to somewhere else. However, the community aspires to leverage the relationships it has with the Charles River, a remarkable but largely hidden resource and create a destination. Although there are sidewalks and pedestrian-scaled lights, the street itself can be challenging for pedestrians to navigate. The corridor is anchored on two ends by mixed-use buildings with a good deal of surface parking around them, consistent

with auto-dependent uses. A good deal of the land close to the river resides within a flood plain and cannot be built upon. Nevertheless, development pressures surrounding Riverdale suggest that new growth is coming. By developing Design Guidelines and making zoning recommendations, that growth can be directed towards areas that need investment and in a form that complements the existing character of the largely residential neighborhood.

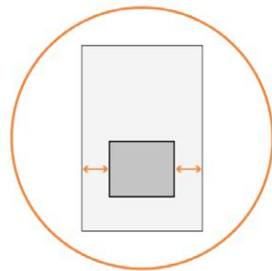




# **OVERVIEW OF ZONING CHARACTERISTICS AND RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY**



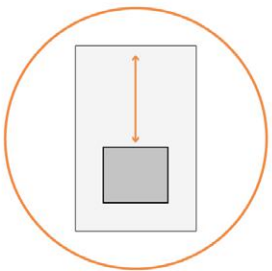
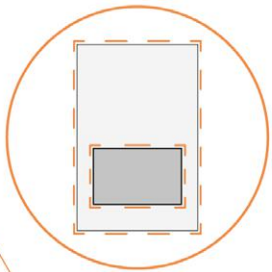
# Zoning Dimension Terminology



## SIDE SETBACKS

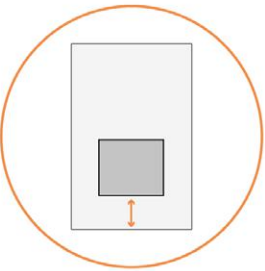
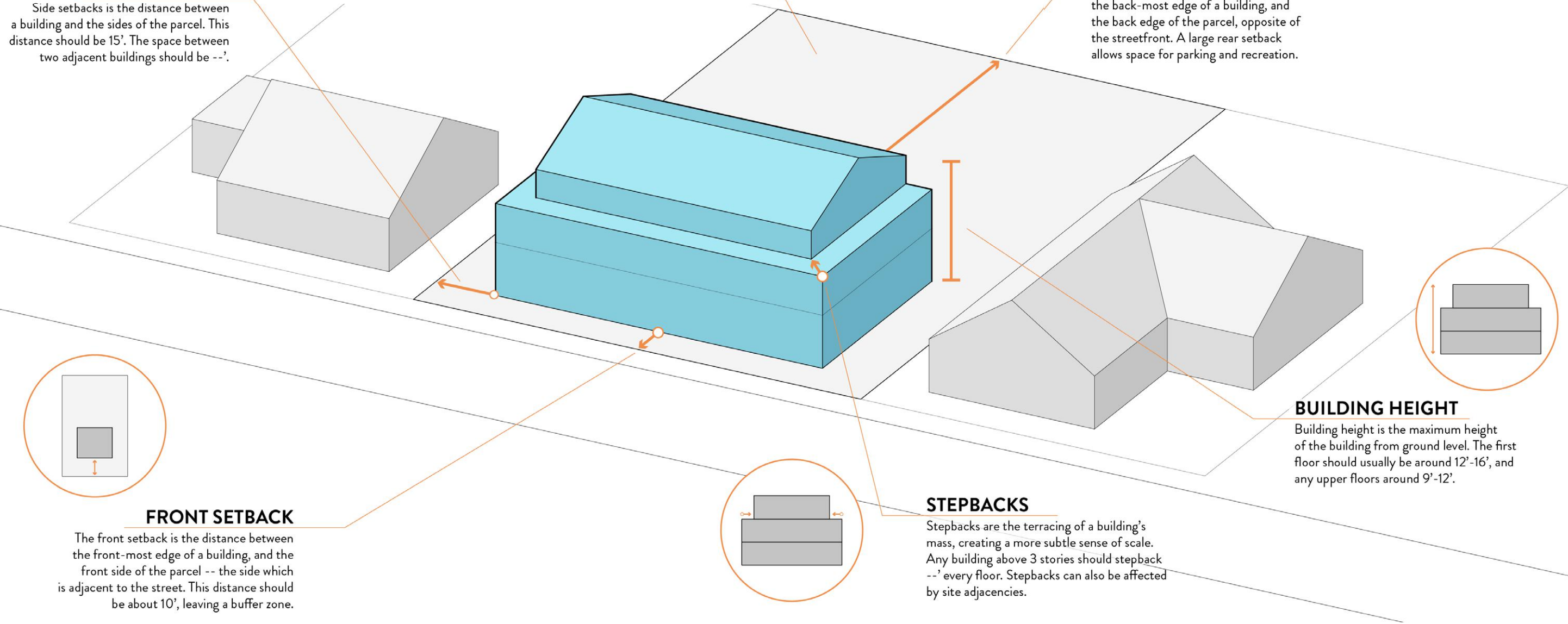
Side setbacks is the distance between a building and the sides of the parcel. This distance should be 15'. The space between two adjacent buildings should be --'.

**LOT COVERAGE & FAR**  
Lot coverage is the percentage of the total lot area taken up by the buildings footprint. It should not exceed --%. FAR (Floor-Area Ratio) is the total, gross square footage of the building over the total lot area. This number should approach 1.0, or rather the building's gross square footage should be close to the lot's area.



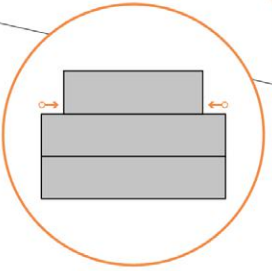
## REAR SETBACK

Rear setback is the distance between the back-most edge of a building, and the back edge of the parcel, opposite of the streetfront. A large rear setback allows space for parking and recreation.



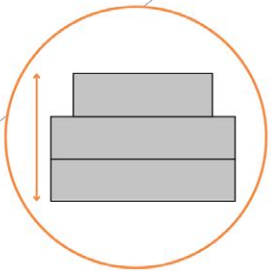
## FRONT SETBACK

The front setback is the distance between the front-most edge of a building, and the front side of the parcel -- the side which is adjacent to the street. This distance should be about 10', leaving a buffer zone.



## STEPBACKS

Stepbacks are the terracing of a building's mass, creating a more subtle sense of scale. Any building above 3 stories should stepback --' every floor. Stepbacks can also be affected by site adjacencies.



## BUILDING HEIGHT

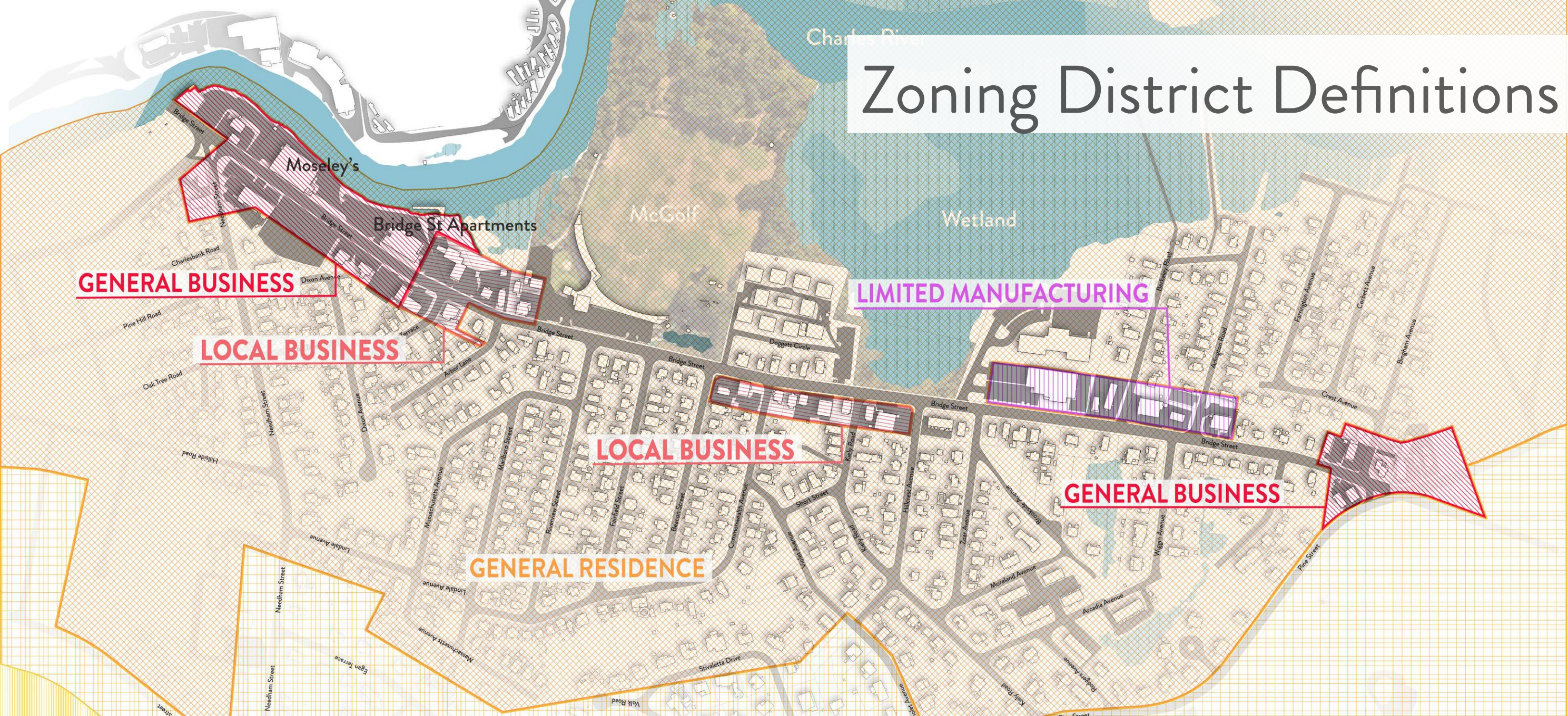
Building height is the maximum height of the building from ground level. The first floor should usually be around 12'-16', and any upper floors around 9'-12'.





# Zoning District Definitions

Z



## Local Business (LB)

Smaller scale, neighborhood commercial district that allows uses such as banks, medical office, general office, small retail business, personal services (beauty related), and restaurants. Other uses that could create negative impacts are allowed with permission by the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) and/or the Planning Board. Single family dwellings are allowed in a LB Zoning District. **The LB Zoning District is in two areas along Bridge Street.**



## General Business (GB)

Allows for more types of businesses than the LB Zoning District. In addition, general services (gyms, yoga studios, music schools, bicycle repair, etc.), and trade shops are allowed. Single-family and two-family dwellings are allowed in a LB Zoning District. **The GB Zoning District “bookends” Bridge Street, with nodes at the northern and southern ends encompassing mostly commercial uses.**



## Limited Manufacturing (LM)

A less intense industrial/commercial district, the LMA allows many uses from a GB, as well as automotive related uses (gas stations, repair, etc.) Light manufacturing uses such as printing press, R&D, and commercial storage are allowed. **There is one LMA Zoning District along Bridge Street with office, veterinary, some residential and auto-related uses.**

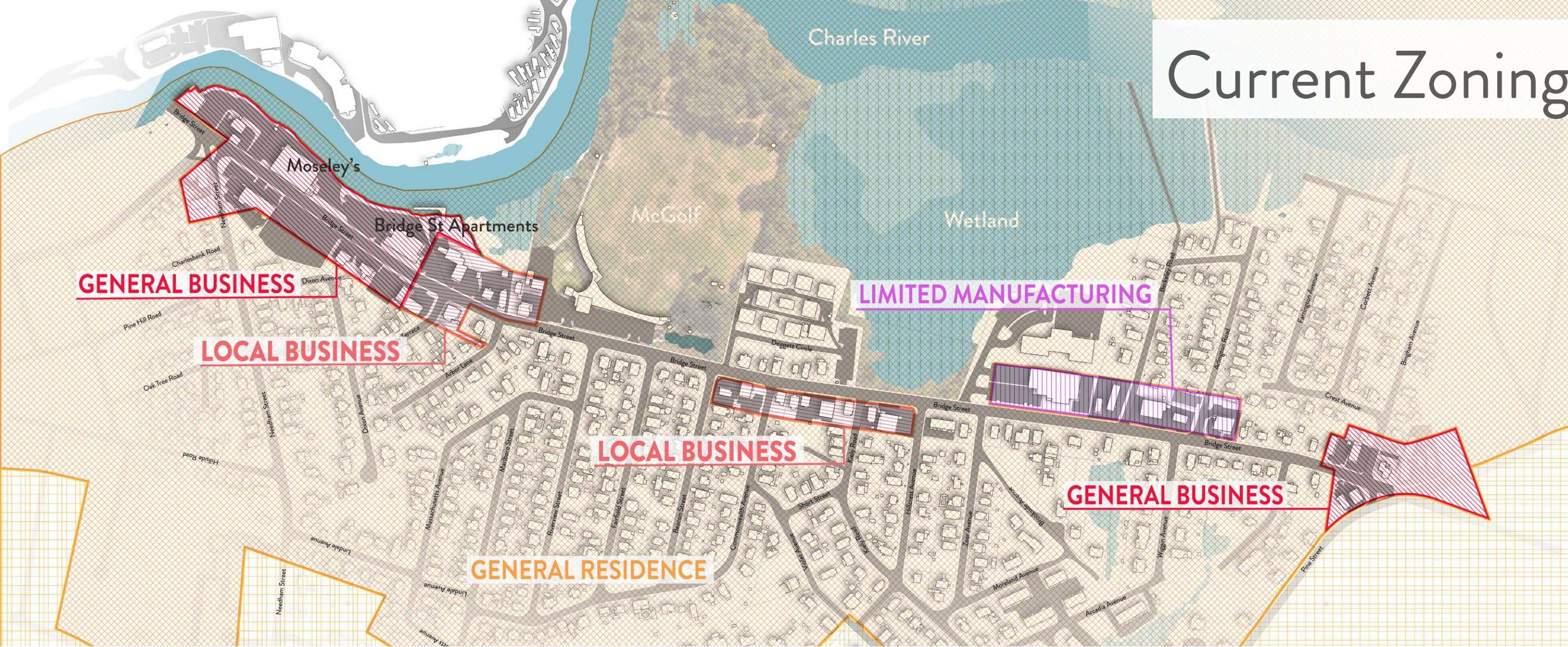


## General Residence (GR)

A residential zoning district which primarily allows single family and two-family dwellings. Uses such as churches, schools, and child-care centers are allowed per state law (and allowed in any zoning district/Town-wide). **This use is the prominent residential zoning district found along Bridge Street and the Riverdale neighborhood.**







# Current Zoning



	General Residential	Local Business	Limited Manufacturing	General Business
--	---------------------	----------------	-----------------------	------------------

Setbacks (in feet):

Front	20 ft	20 ft	30 ft	2 ft
Side	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	
Rear	25 ft	25 ft	25 ft	
Between Buildings	10 ft	10 ft	15 ft	15 ft
Max Lot Coverage	30%	40%	50%	80%
Max FAR	0.9	0.4	0.35	0.4
Height	38 ft	45 ft	45 ft	45 ft



# Proposed Changes

## Selected Areas



### Overall Recommendation for Map Changes:

The major proposed changes to the zoning districts along Bridge Street are the rezoning of portions of lots which are currently located in both Commercial and Residential Zones (commonly known as “split lots”). Properties that have “split lots”, namely where a property is located in two different zoning districts, often present challenges due to the need to address different zoning regulations for the commercial and residential portions of the “split lot”.

The changes will allow for more neighborhood appropriate development by eliminating some of the complexities posed by the existing “split lots”. The changes will allow for new development on these lots to be built with flexibility and to meet design guidelines contained in this plan.

 **Recommendation 1:** see page 11

 **Recommendation 2:** see page 12






 **Recommendation 3:** see page 13

 **Recommendation 4:** see page 14





## Existing Zoning

-  GB
-  LB
-  GR
-  Area to be updated: inside boundary
-  Area to be updated: outside boundary

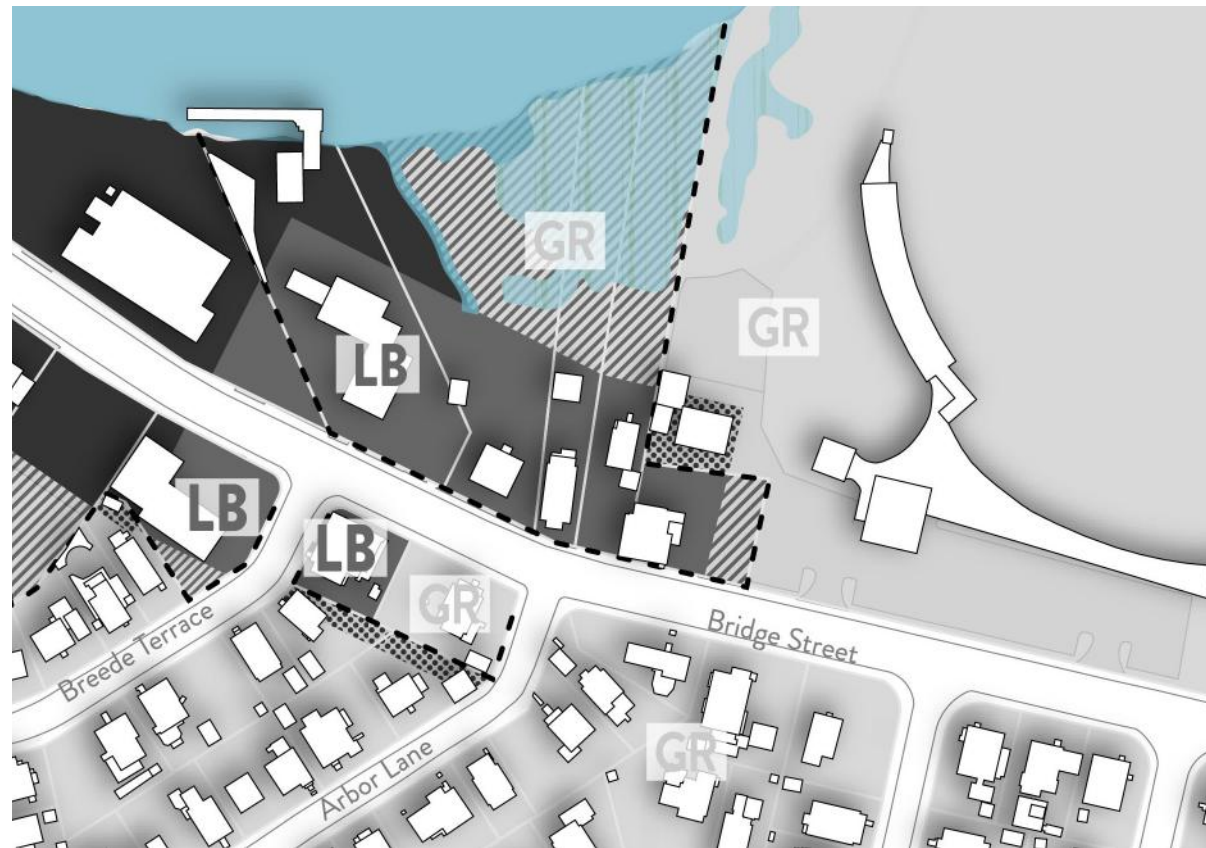
## Recommendation 1:

Update GB Zoning District boundaries (northern Bridge Street)  
*Changes to the existing GB Zoning District boundaries will remedy existing split lots.*

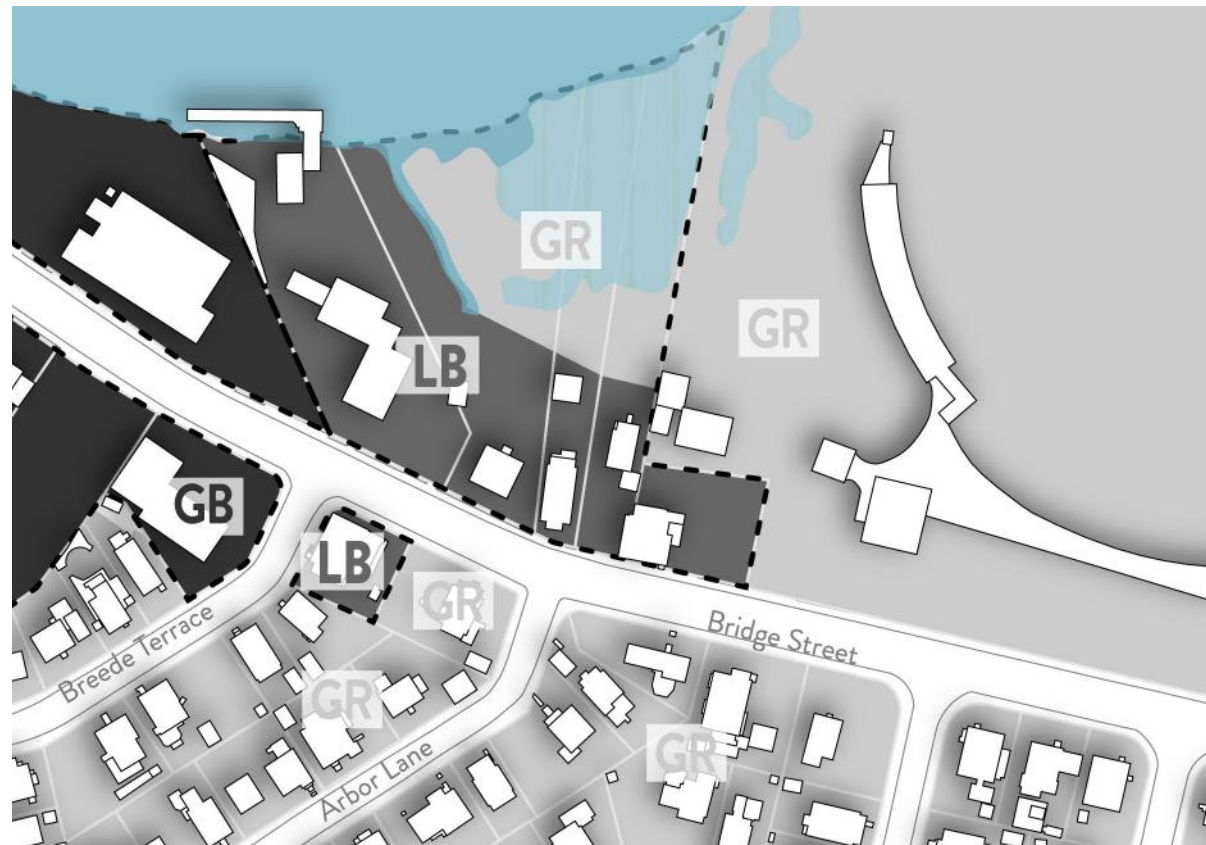




Existing  
Zoning



Proposed  
Changes



## Zoning Key



GB



LB



GR



Area to be updated: inside boundary



Area to be updated: outside boundary

## Recommendation 2:

Update LB Zoning District  
boundaries

(northern Bridge Street)

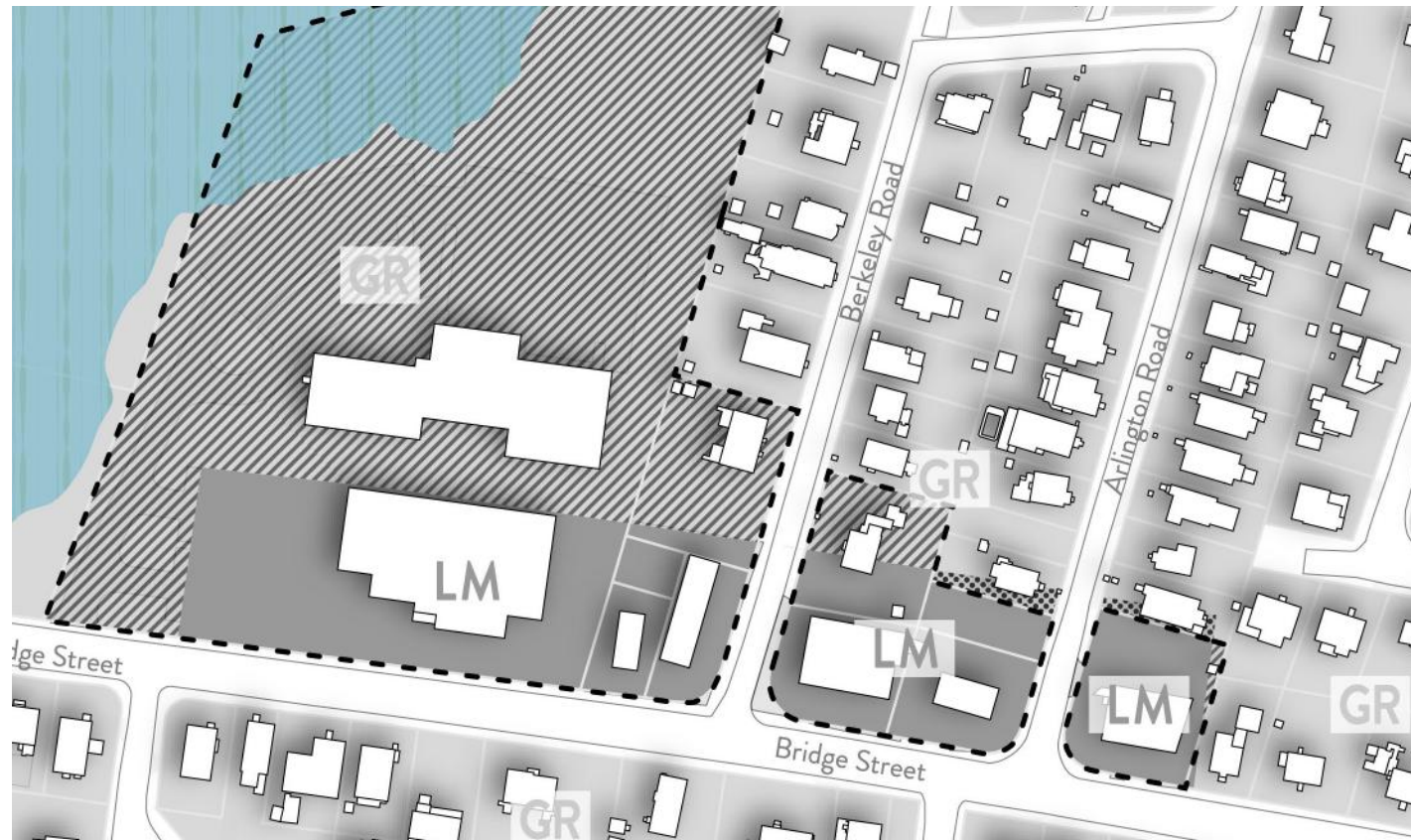
*Changes to the existing LB Zoning  
District boundaries will remedy existing  
split lots.*

Z





Existing  
Zoning



Proposed  
Changes



## Zoning Key



## Recommendation 3:

Change LMA Zoning District to GB Zoning District

Changing the zoning from LMA to GB will be consistent with the existing uses (office, restaurant, etc.) of this zoning district. In addition, the future vision of the corridor is discouraging automotive related uses that are allowed by right in the existing LMA zoning district.










## Existing Zoning



## Zoning Key

-  GB
-  LB
-  GR
-  Area to be updated: inside boundary
-  Area to be updated: outside boundary

## Proposed Changes

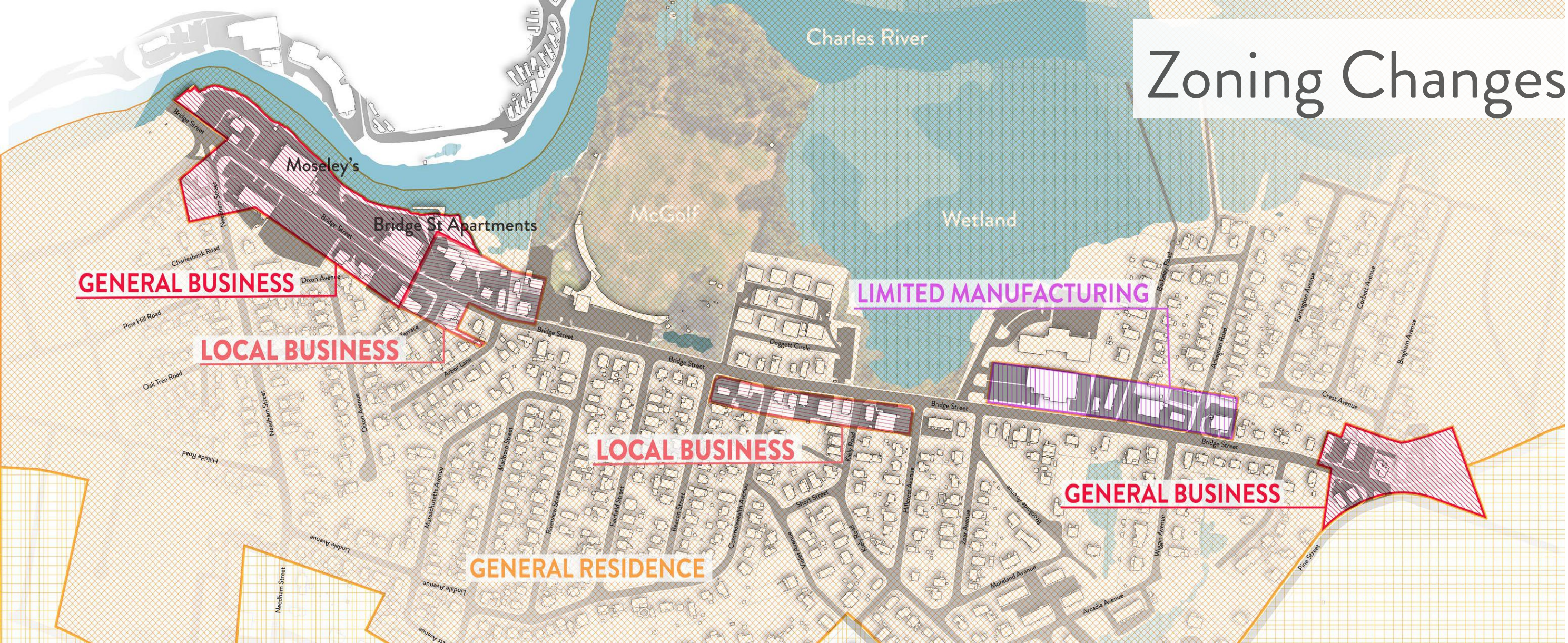


**Recommendation 4:**  
Update GB Zoning District boundaries (southern Bridge Street)  
*Proposed changes to the existing GB Zoning District boundaries will remedy existing split lots.*





# Zoning Changes



	Local Business	General Business	Changes (ALL)
Setbacks (in feet):			
Front	20 ft	2 ft	5-10 ft
Side	15 ft		no change
Rear	25 ft		no change
Between Buildings	10 ft	15 ft	no change
Max Lot Coverage	40%	80%	80%
Max FAR	0.4	0.4	1.5
Height	45 ft	45 ft	no change





# PROCESS, ENGAGEMENT, & CONTEXT

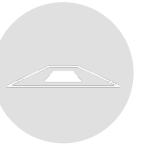
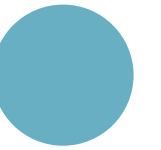


# THE HISTORIC BRIDGE STREET



Consistent with many corridors, the character of Bridge Street has evolved over time. While there are still a great deal of charming, single-family homes in the neighborhood, the buildings that line Bridge Street have, over time, become more auto-dependent. Commercial uses have replaced residential buildings along the stretch and some homes have been converted to businesses.

Moreover, despite the close proximity to the Charles River, there are few opportunities to enjoy it. Historically, there was a much more intimate relationship between the land and water. Many boathouses fronted the riverfront. While that relationship has changed over time, the public increasingly desires access to natural amenities and recreational opportunities that Dedham provides.





# PLANNING PROCESS

The corridor's aesthetic reflects a street in transition. There are sites with multiple curb-cuts and a lot of surface parking. There are numerous auto-dependent uses interspersed with a mix of one and two-story homes. Some of these smaller-scale residences have transitioned to commercial uses. A popular open space is located at the midpoint of the corridor (McGolf, a golf driving range) although much of that property lies within the Charles River 100-year flood plain. Although the river forms a strong boundary to the corridor, the watershed is barely visible and public access is very limited. Larger parcels at the ends of the corridor are well positioned for redevelopment.

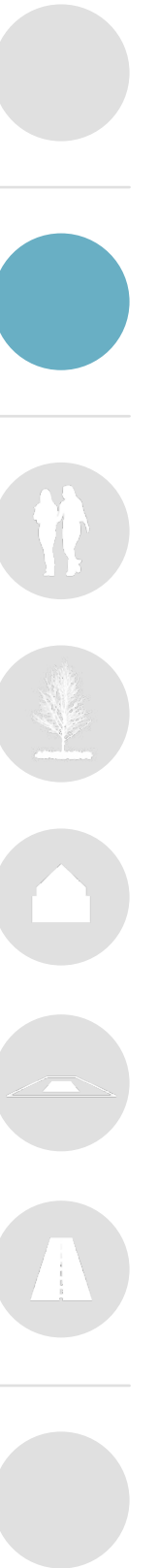
This year-long effort included a large public forum as well as six (6) Advisory Committee meetings. This document summarizes those conversations and recommends Design Guidelines and Zoning changes to create a physical environment that anticipates change and channels it towards desired community outcomes.

There is often a disconnect between resident aspirations and market forces. Residents generally wish to retain the character and scale of their existing neighborhood and limit traffic and other adverse impacts of new growth. For the Riverdale community, this translates to smaller-scale development on par with its historical origins.

On the other hand, high costs of land and construction, as well as complex permitting and approval processes leads developers to maximize density. These Guidelines are crafted to bridge this gap. The following principles emerged from community conversations with Dedham residents. Collectively, they inform the Design Guidelines and Zoning recommendations that follow.



*Bridge Street Corridor Public Meeting 1*

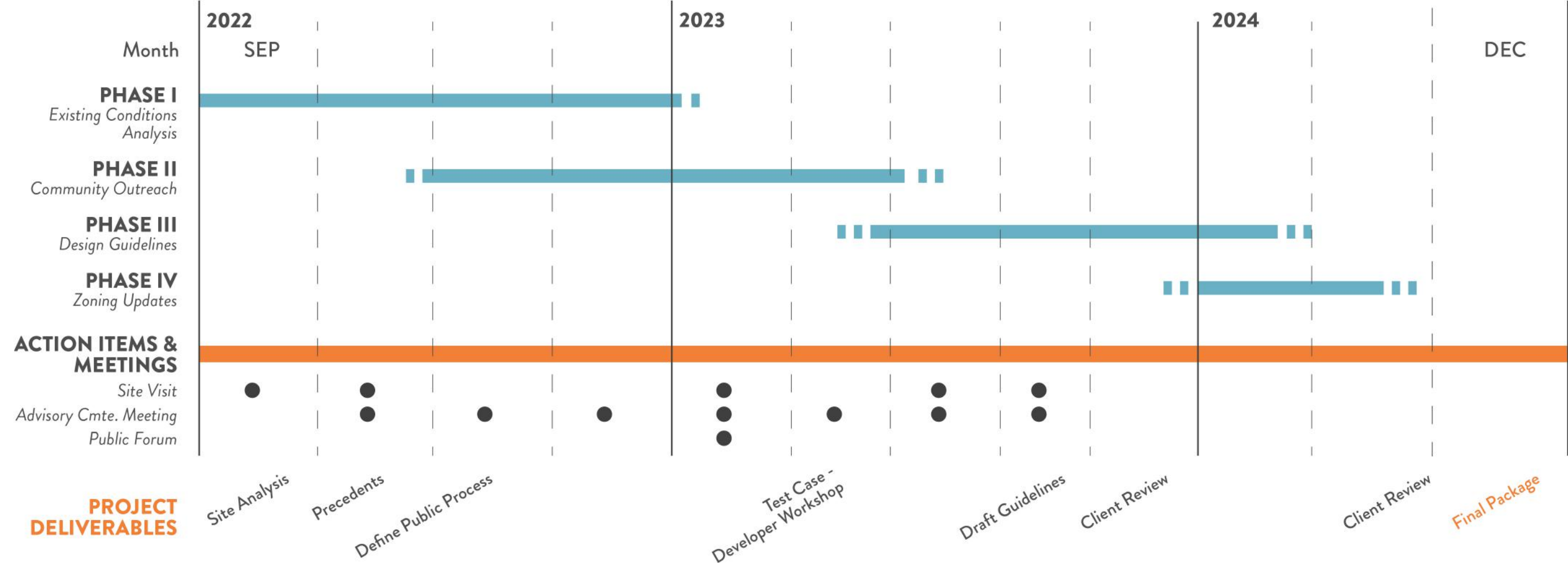




# TIMELINE



Bridge Street Corridor Public Meeting 1





# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TAKEAWAYS: 5 PRINCIPLES

- I. Enhance public access and pedestrian connections to the Charles River and trails
- II. Mitigate building heights and blend new development into the existing neighborhood by leveraging changes in topography
- III. Beautify Bridge Street and increase landscape requirements
- IV. Address traffic impacts and ensure sufficient parking
- V. Incorporate building setbacks and stepbacks for new development



Bridge Street Corridor Public Meeting 1





# DESIGN GUIDELINES



The Design Guidelines are structured according to five levels of scale.





Each scale level corresponds to a unique, yet interconnected aspect of a street’s design.



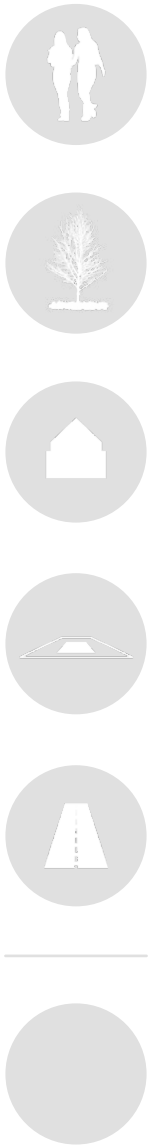
Strengthening and connecting the compact and walkable places of each neighborhood to build vibrancy is a priority. These guidelines put the pedestrian in the center and place greater attention to details at the street level.

The buffer zone is the public realm interface between the edge of the sidewalk and the front of a building. Along Bridge Street, the narrow sidewalks make this zone a priority for a successful public realm.

A building’s design is impacted by many factors, including its height, length, depth, the amount of space it occupies on the property, and setbacks that dictate the amount of space to a street, right-of-way, or another property.

Site design entails the relationship of the building to its property and neighbors and includes vehicular access and parking, resilient landscapes, mature landscaping and connections to neighborhood amenities.

The corridor is the whole of Bridge Street, as no site exists in isolation. This covers connections between sites, the design nature of the whole corridor, and linkages to nearby features such as the Charles River or Emerald Necklace.







## **I. PEDESTRIAN**

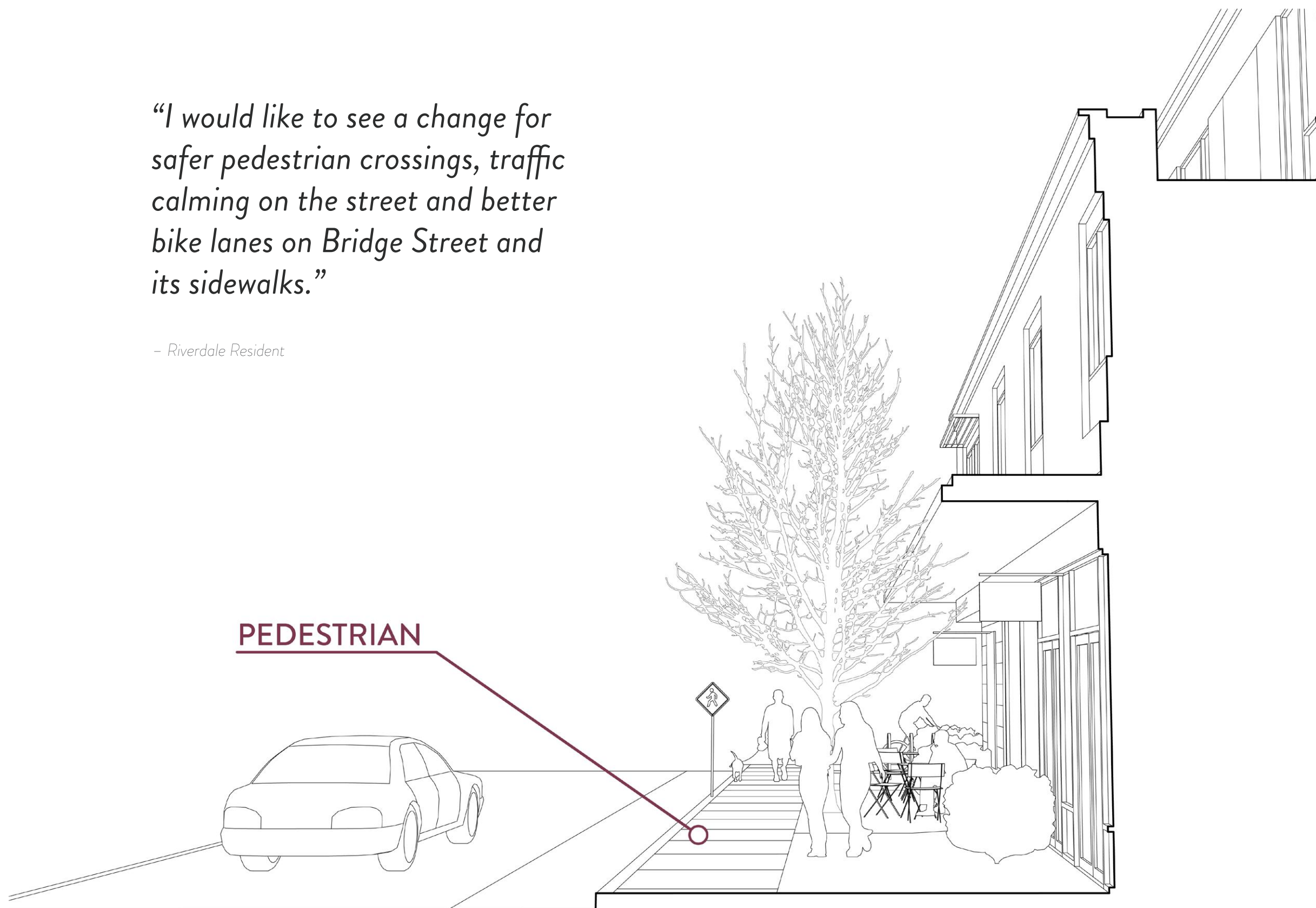
### *ENHANCE PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE*

Strengthening and connecting the compact and walkable places of each neighborhood to build vibrancy is a priority. These guidelines put the pedestrian in the center and place greater attention to details at the street level.

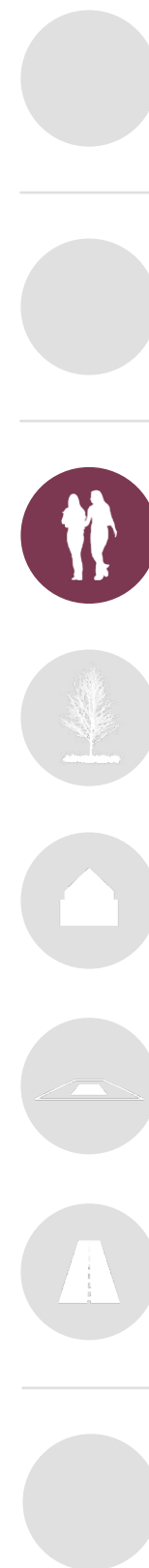


*“I would like to see a change for safer pedestrian crossings, traffic calming on the street and better bike lanes on Bridge Street and its sidewalks.”*

*– Riverdale Resident*



*Bridge Street Corridor Categories Section*



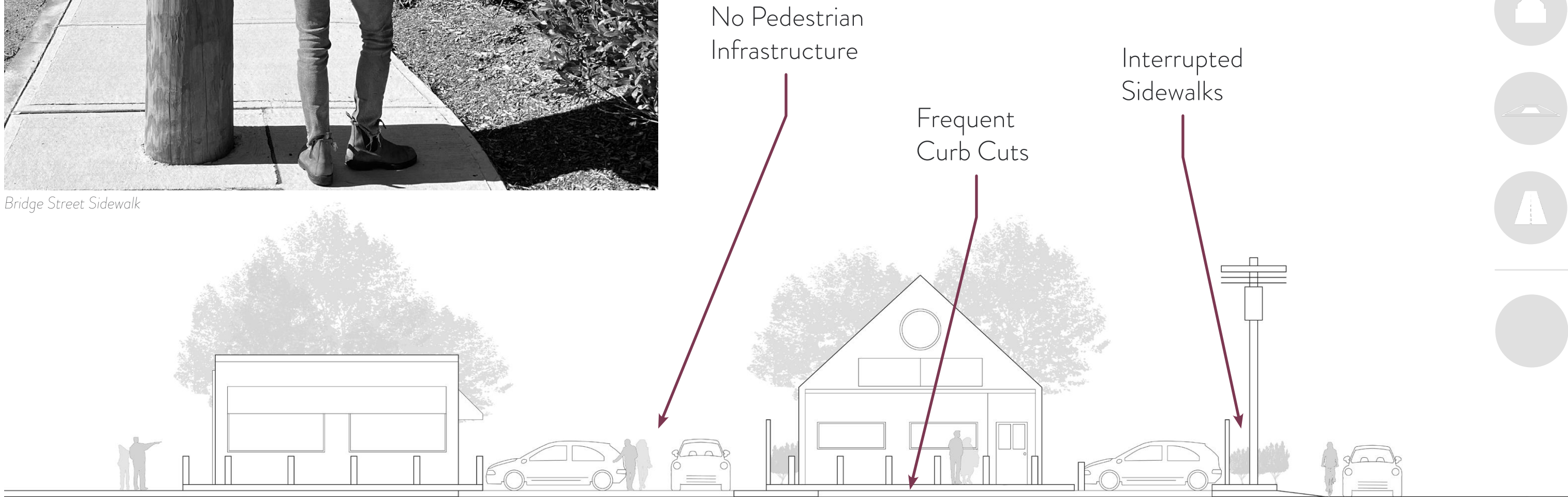




Bridge Street Sidewalk

# TODAY

Bridge Street today is dominated by vehicular movement. Despite recent infrastructure investment in the form of new sidewalks and pedestrian crossings, the corridor lacks sufficient tree canopy and a sense of identity.







Greensburg, Kansas

# THE VISION

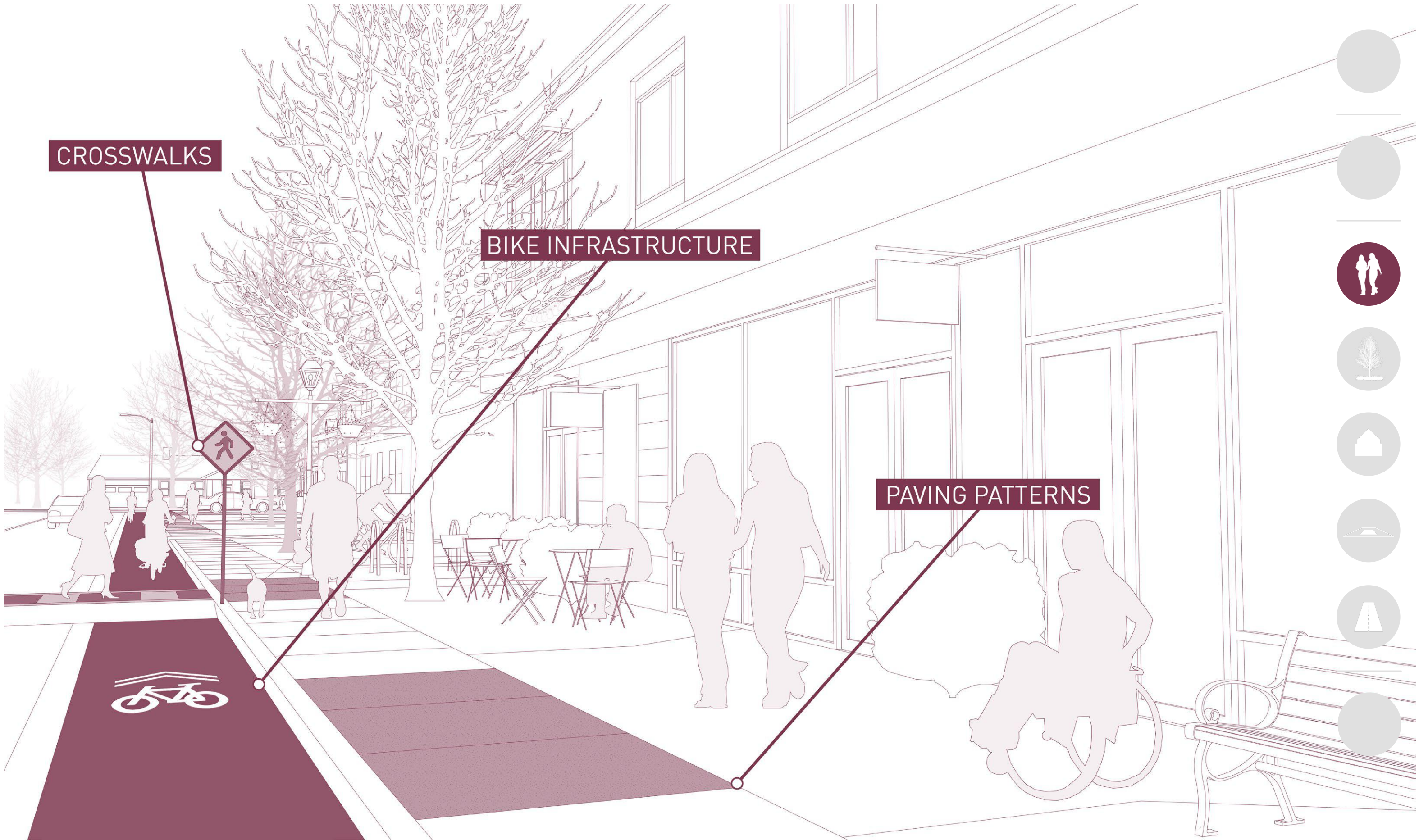
Public realm improvements and amenities scaled for the pedestrian (and not in service of the car) result in a more vibrant and mixed-use setting as a backdrop for civic life.















Ohringen, DE



Victoria, BC



Sydney, NSW

## UTILITIES

Where possible, bury overhead utilities such as telephone poles and wires below ground, especially those that restrict the public right-of-way. Integrate utilities into the building façade so that their scale and placement is intentional.

## STREET TREES

Shade protects people's health by providing shelter and reducing heat islands. Incorporate large caliper trees with sufficient soil depth. Landscaping should address stormwater with rain gardens and areas of impervious pavement.

## ACCESSIBILITY

Spaces should follow universal design; the composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used, to the greatest extent possible, by all people regardless of their age, size or ability.



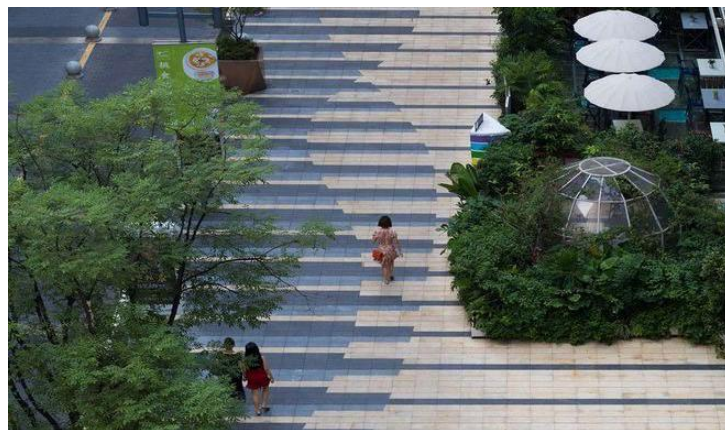




Cary, NC



Brooklyn, NY



Tokyo, Japan

## CROSSWALKS

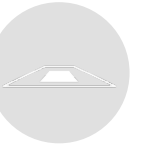
Bridge Street is a busy thoroughfare. Pedestrian connections should be provided to adjacent properties that reflect movement patterns and the desire lines that link neighborhood amenities.

## BIKE INFRASTRUCTURE

Non-vehicular access should be given equal priority to cars. Include a combination of bike infrastructure with bike racks and bike storage to encourage cycling.

## PAVING PATTERNS

Extend the public realm interface between the sidewalk and the building and vary the paving patterns through the use of colored concrete, pavers, and other materials. Reinforce an identity for the corridor.







## II. BUFFER ZONE

### *CREATE A WELCOMING PLACE*

The buffer zone is the public realm interface between the edge of the sidewalk and the front of a building. Along Bridge Street, the narrow sidewalks make this zone a priority for a successful public realm.



*“My vision is of a bustling,  
vital street with restaurants,  
shopping and green space.  
It should be a walkable and  
livable neighborhood.”*

*– Riverdale Resident*

**BUFFER ZONE**







Moseley's Site

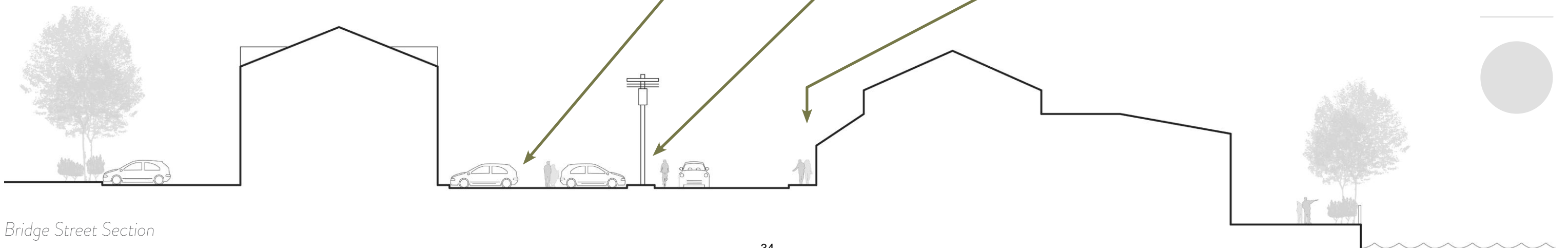
## TODAY

Much of urban design and how a space feels has to do with the space between a building and the sidewalk or street. Bridge Street has an evolving and inconsistent character along its length.

Oversized  
Parking Lots

Little  
Greenery

No Public  
Realm



Bridge Street Section







Cary, NC

## THE VISION

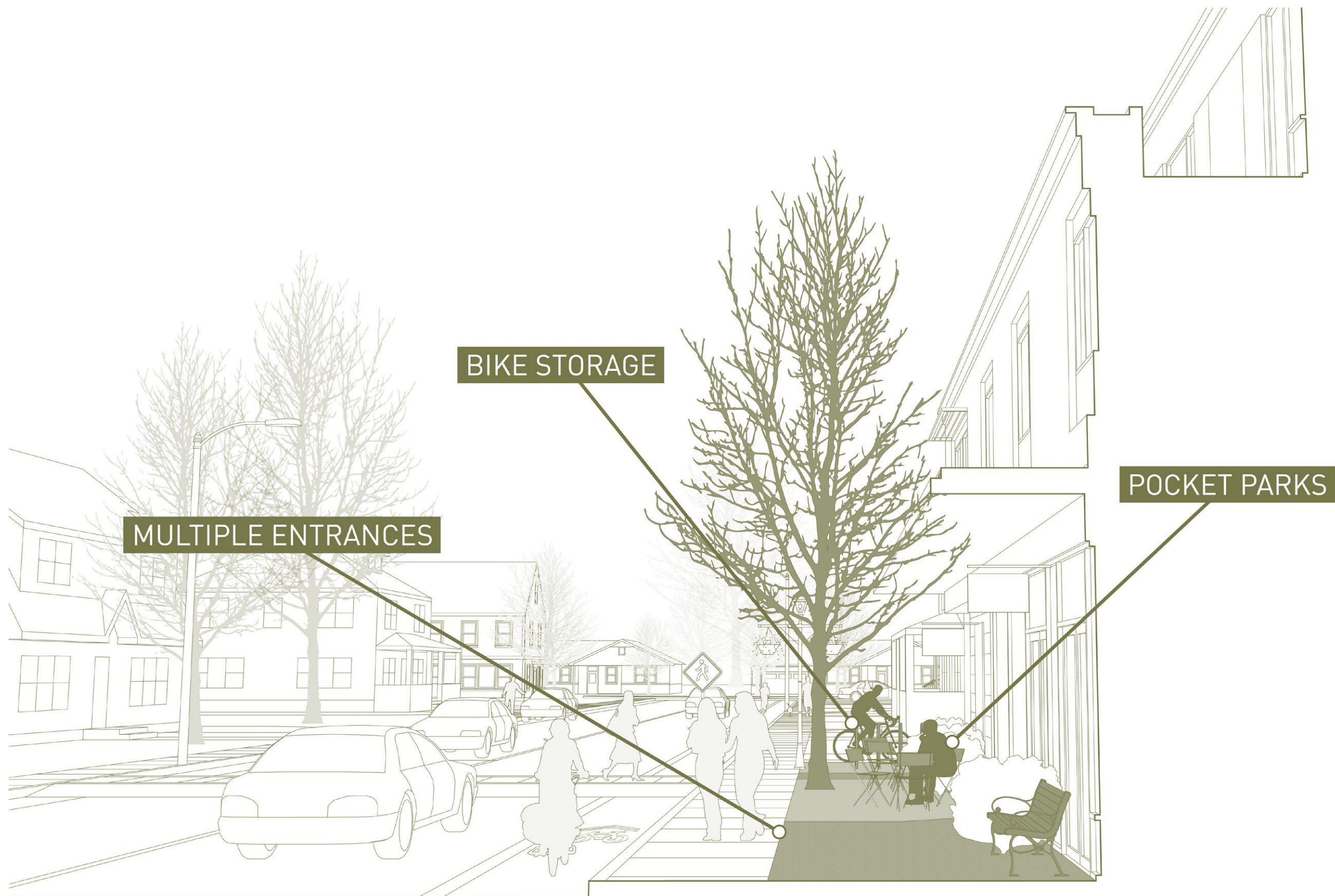
Along Dedham's Bridge Street modest and well-landscaped setbacks from the sidewalk will increase the public realm and create space for ground floor commercial uses to flow outside.















Cary, NC



Northbrook, IL



Brookline, MA

## PUBLIC REALM INTERFACE

Commercial corridors are most successful when the street edge is defined with active ground floor uses with a high degree of transparency. Efforts should be made to expand the space of the sidewalk to incorporate the building setback.

## LANDSCAPE BUFFER

Include a mix of native deciduous and non-deciduous plantings to visually screen surface parking lots and building mechanical areas.

## STREET FURNITURE

Benches, trash receptacles, pedestrian lighting, and other types of street furniture should make a welcoming pedestrian realm that is easy to maintain and invites people to linger.







Portland, OR

## MULTIPLE ENTRANCES

Frequent building entries enliven a corridor. Building entrances should be at grade, easily seen and aid in pedestrian comfort, safety, and orientation.



Boston, MA

## BIKE STORAGE

Developments should include externally located bike racks easily accessible from the public way as well as covered, protected and secure bike storage inside.



Boston, MA

## POCKET PARKS

Plazas, outdoor seating spaces and pedestrian walkways enliven the public realm. Well designed, appropriately scaled and accessible exterior spaces create an inviting transition between interior and exterior.







### **III. BUILDING**

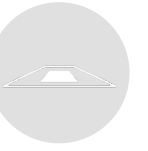
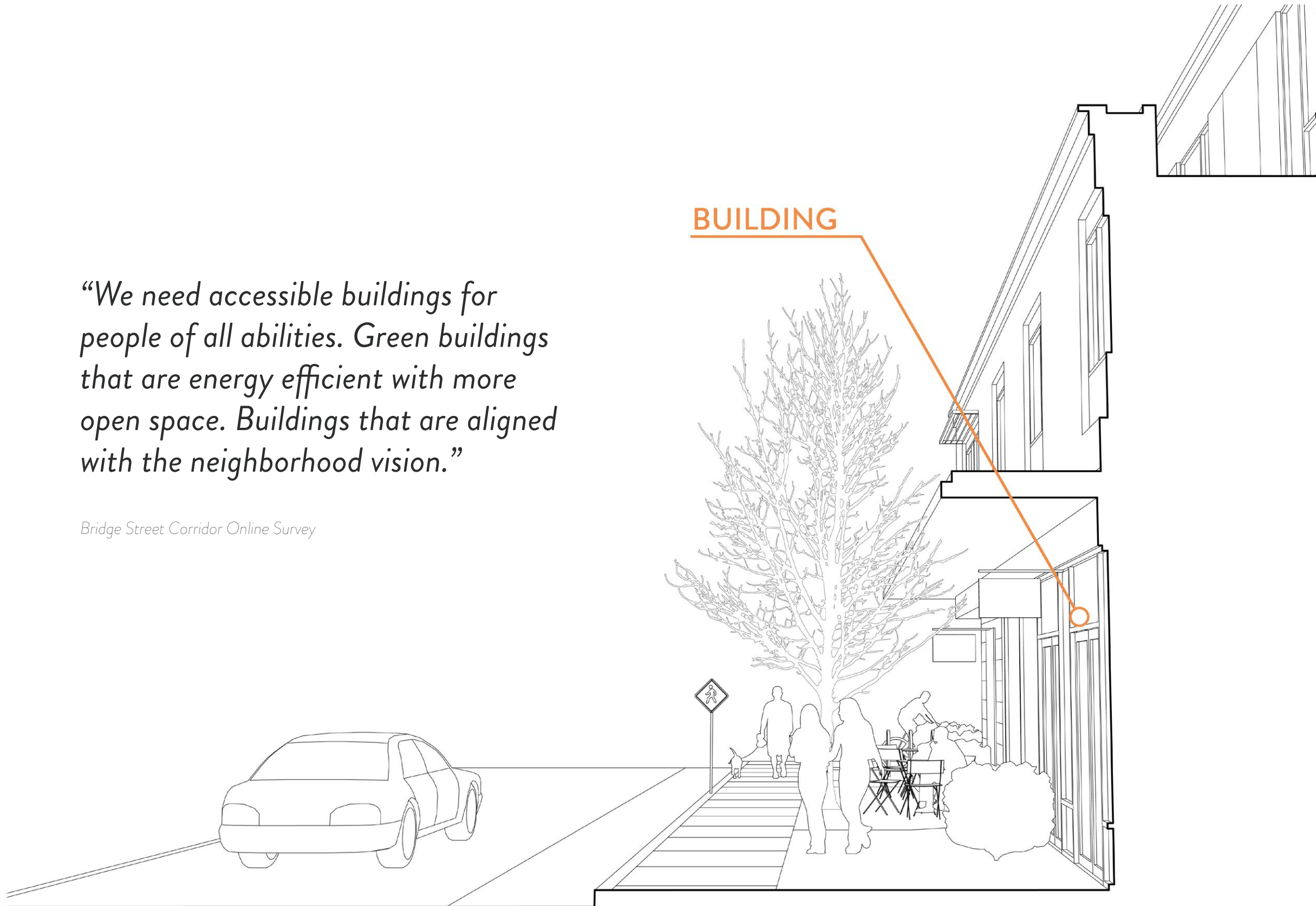
#### *ENSURE DESIGN EXCELLENCE*

A building's design is impacted by many factors, including its height, length, depth, the amount of space it occupies on the property, and setbacks that dictate the amount of space to a street, right-of-way, or another property.



*“We need accessible buildings for people of all abilities. Green buildings that are energy efficient with more open space. Buildings that are aligned with the neighborhood vision.”*

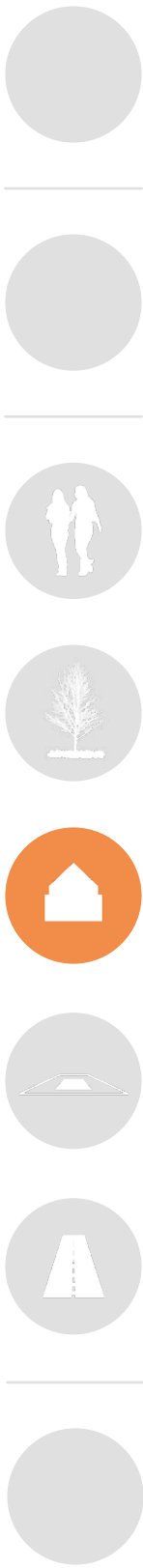
*Bridge Street Corridor Online Survey*







*Buildings on Bridge Street*







## TODAY

The corridor is evolving from a largely residential neighborhood to one with more commercial uses and larger buildings. New development needs to help define the street but not overwhelm it. There are underutilized sites, many auto-dependent uses and large surface parking lots.



*Buildings on Bridge Street*





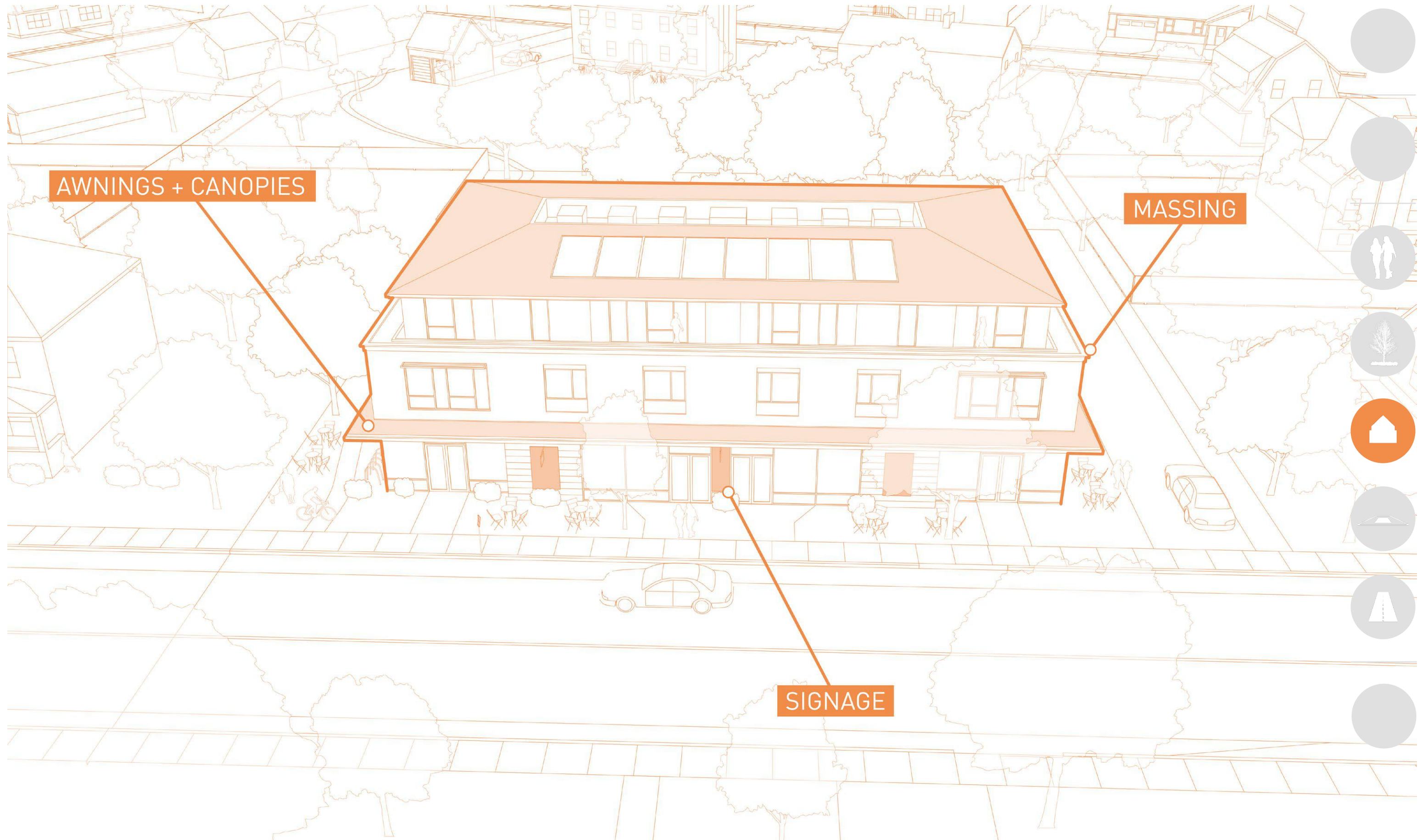
Boston, MA

## THE VISION

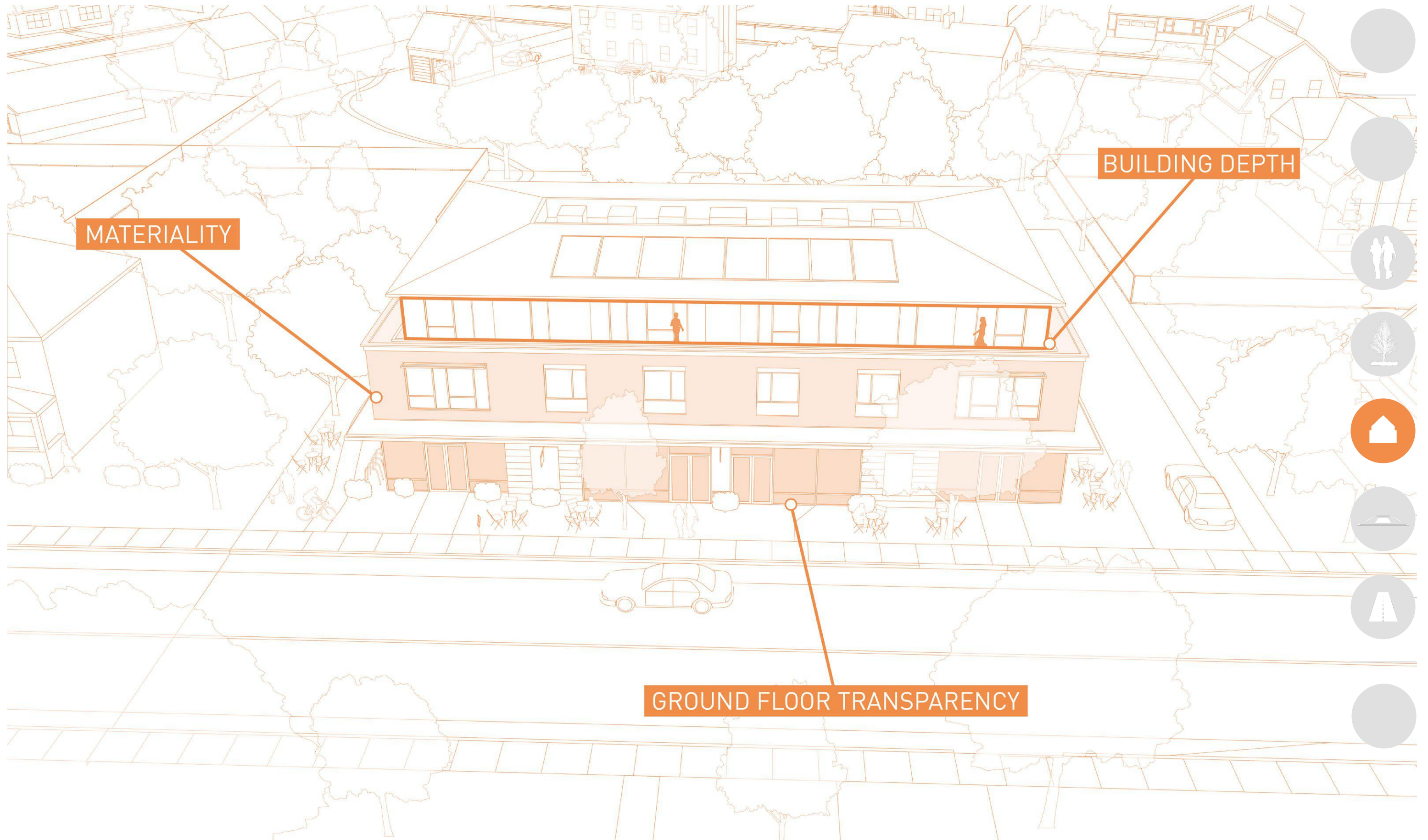
A building's use, massing, orientation and design influences how it relates to its context. If a mixed-use building is too close to the street, it can overwhelm it. Too gracious of a setback and the corridor's character loses definition. New development should strengthen the economic vitality and character of Bridge Street.















Richmond, VIC



Baltimore, MD



Rockport, MA

## AWNINGS + CANOPIES

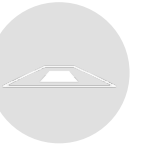
Building projections should be carefully designed to complement the building, be high enough not to interfere with pedestrian movement and be scaled for the pedestrian experience.

## SIGNAGE

Commercial establishments need to advertise. Signs should be effective and appropriately scaled without contributing to visual clutter. Building signage should be integrated into the design.

## MASSING

Building massing is the proportion of a structure, including its height, length and width. As new mixed-use development gets closer to existing residential areas, a building's mass should taper to relate more closely with the residential neighborhood.







Chattanooga, TN



New York, NY



San Francisco, CA

## MATERIALITY

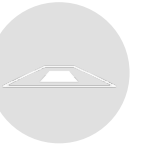
Building products and materials should be chosen with respect to their performative, sustainable qualities rather than trends or aesthetics. Materials should have a low embodied energy content and be recyclable.

## GROUND FLOOR TRANSPARENCY

Ensure a high degree of glass for ground floor commercial spaces. Activating the public realm is a metric of success along mixed-use commercial corridors. Large expanses of glazing should spill out onto the sidewalk.

## BUILDING DEPTH

Creating depth in a façade visually breaks down the scale of a building and adds visual interest through the interplay of light and shadow. Exterior overhangs and projections protect pedestrians from the elements and reinforce entrances.







## **IV. SITE**

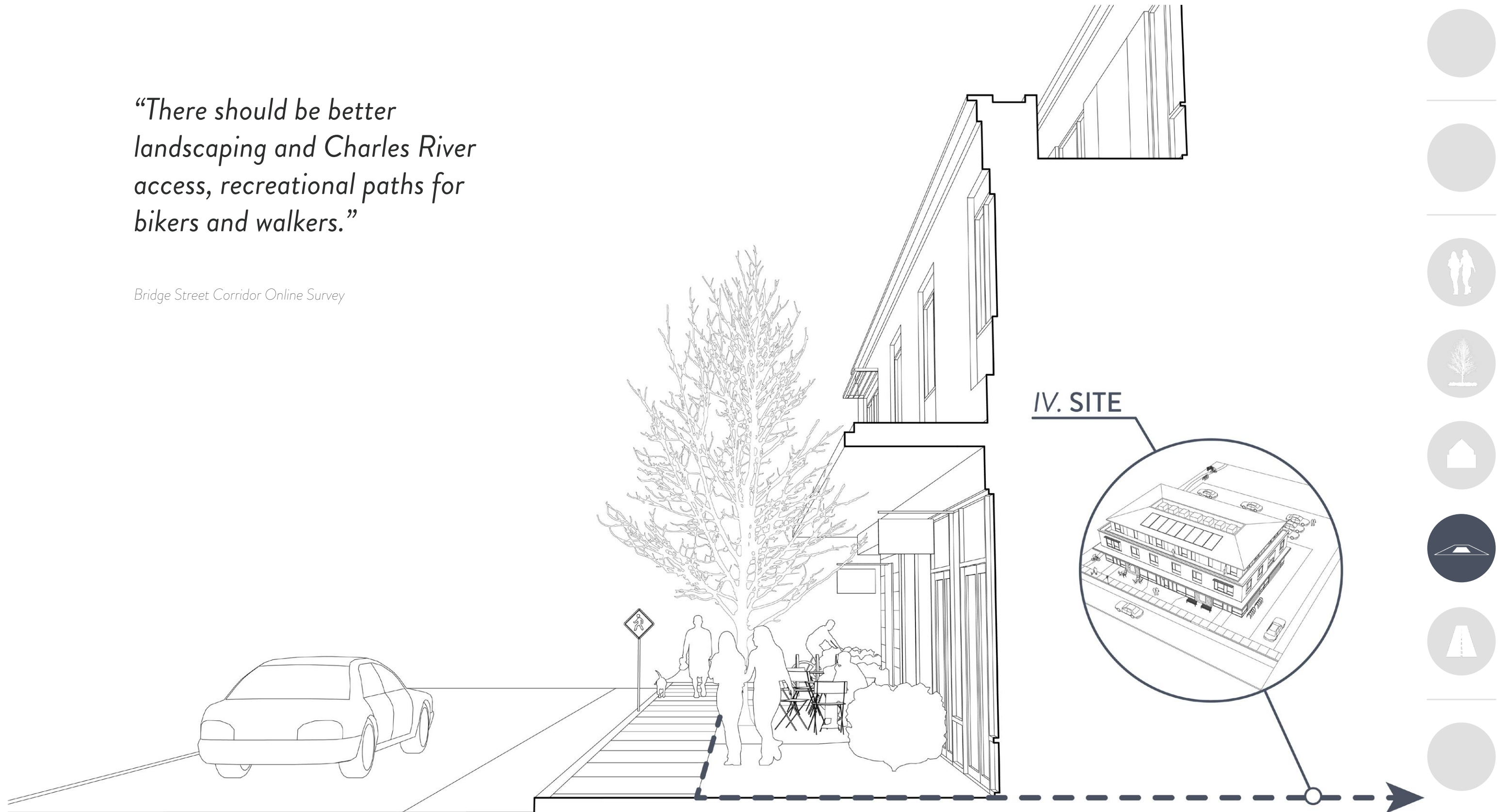
### *CONTEXTUALIZE THE PROJECT*

Site design entails the relationship of the building to its property and neighbors and includes vehicular access and parking, resilient landscapes, mature landscaping and connections to neighborhood amenities.



*“There should be better landscaping and Charles River access, recreational paths for bikers and walkers.”*

*Bridge Street Corridor Online Survey*



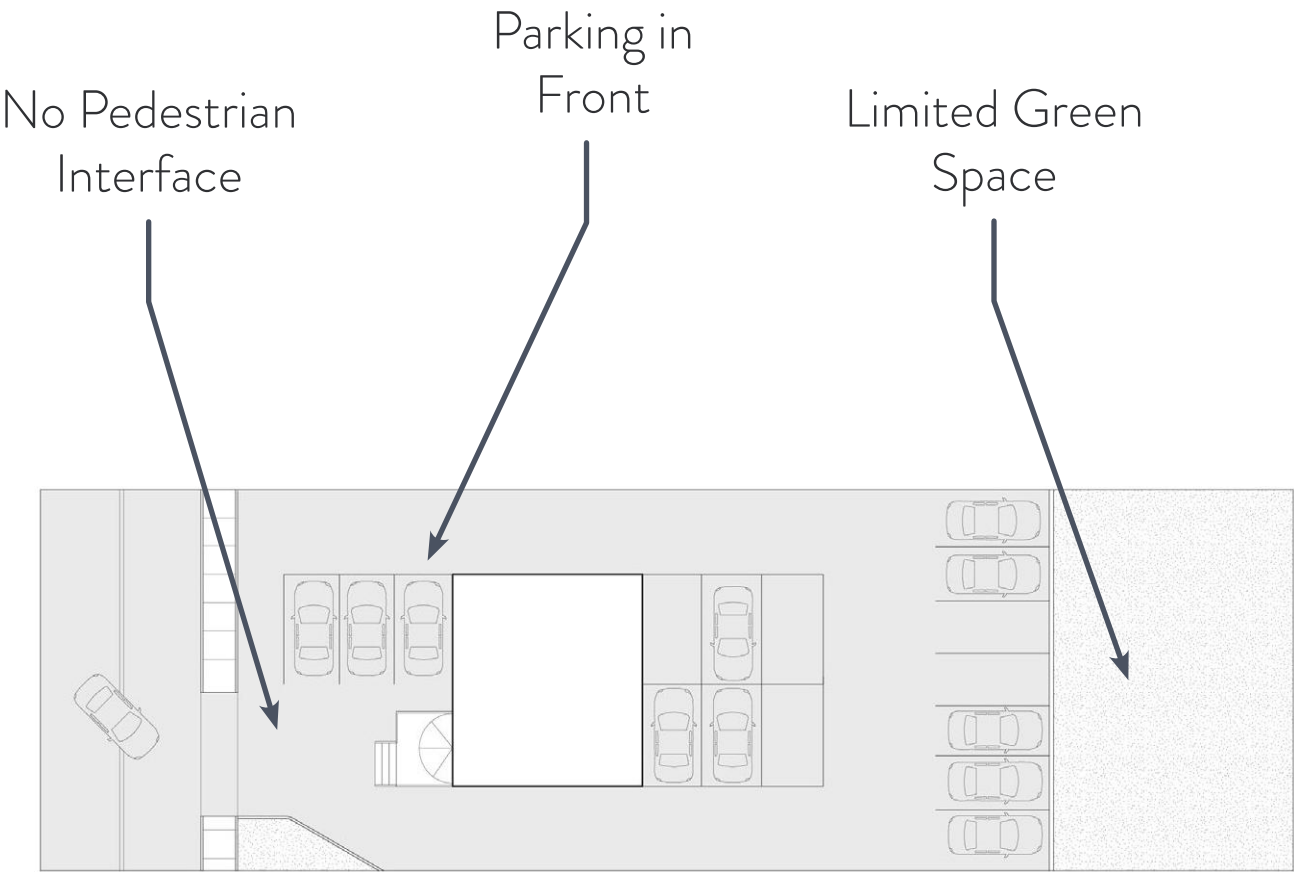




Dedham, MA - - Existing Conditions

# TODAY

When every parcel seeks to address parking and circulation demands within its own boundaries, opportunities for neighborhood cohesiveness and a superlative public realm are undermined.



Bridge Street Parcel Plan







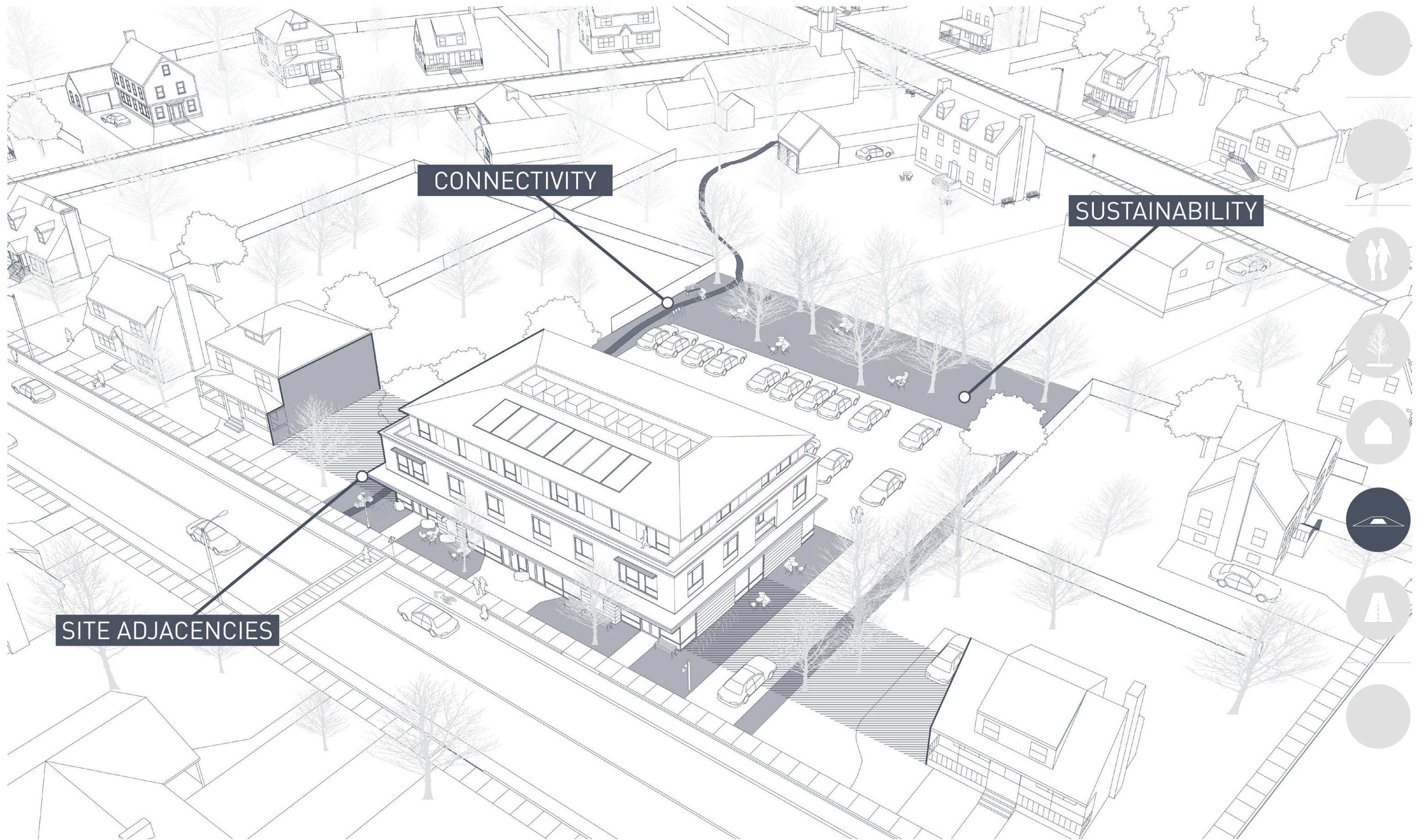
Washington, DC

## THE VISION

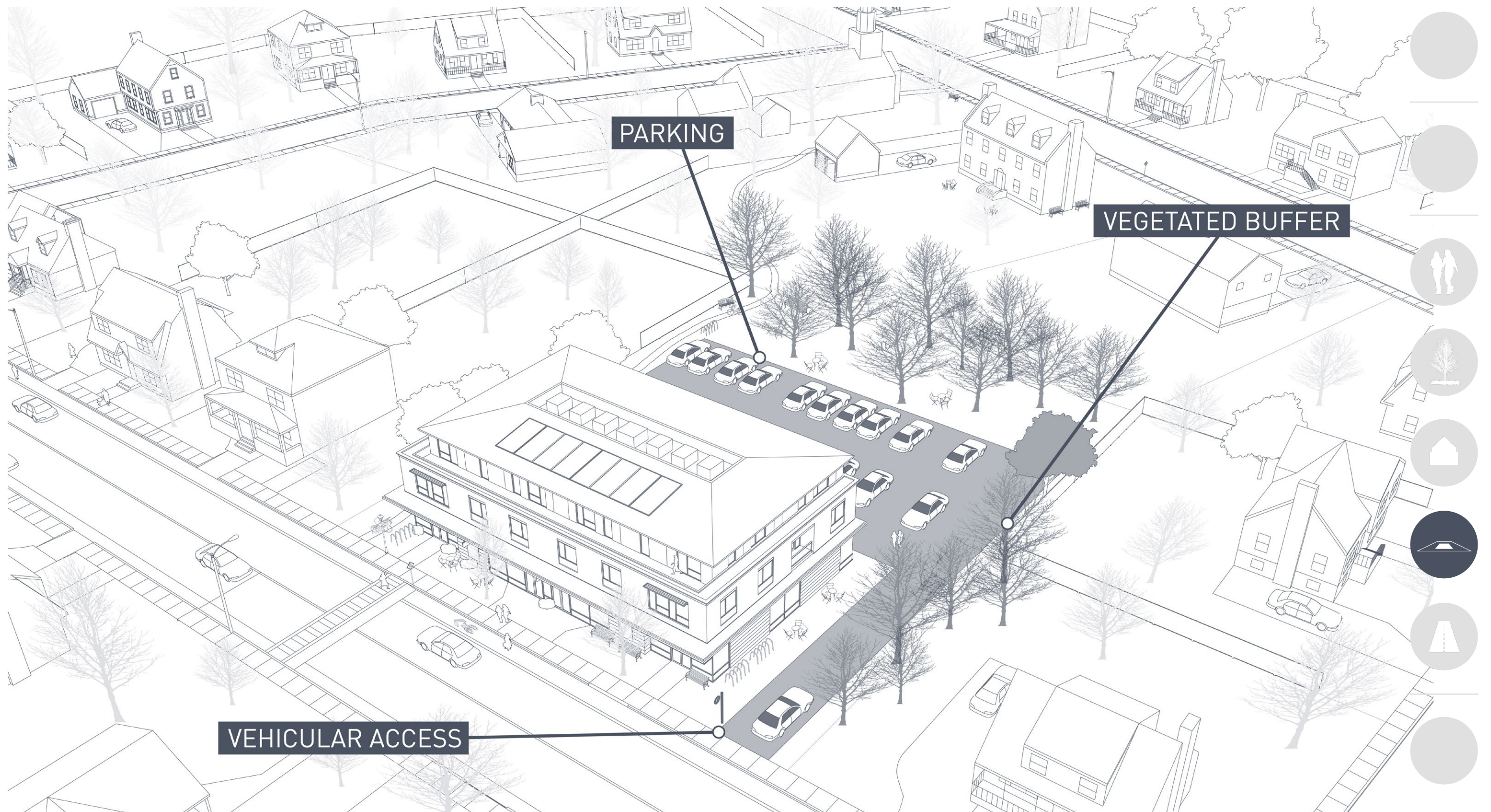
A sustainable site is one where environmental responsibility is an integral part of the site's development. The incorporation of landscape buffers, exterior landscaping and low-impact development is needed.















Somerville, MA



Boston, MA



Greensburg, KS

## SITE ADJACENCIES

New development should be sensitive to adjacent residential areas by transitioning from taller heights along the commercial corridors to a more residential scale. Gradually stepping down height reduces discordant changes in scale.

## CONNECTIVITY

In order to decrease the dependency of accessing a site solely by car, greater emphasis needs to be placed on pedestrian and cycle connections from the site to the larger Riverdale context. Seek linkages to adjacent open spaces and trails.

## SUSTAINABILITY

A sustainable design approach balances environmental and aesthetic concerns. Pursue renewable energy sources in the form of solar, wind and geothermal, incorporate green roofs, and green infrastructure.







Paris



Atlanta, GA



Boston, MA

## VEHICULAR ACCESS

Minimize the number of curb cuts from the street for cars. Loading zones and docks should be located so as not to be visible from the primary public way and shielded with high quality fencing or native grasses.

## PARKING

Surface parking lot should be located at the middle or rear of site and shielded from the public right-of-way by the building and vegetated buffers. Underground parking should be prioritized if financially viable. Pursue opportunities for shared parking between sites and visually screen surface parking areas.

## VEGETATED BUFFER

Street trees and low plantings visually soften a building, create a permeable barrier between the street and sidewalk, reduce solar gain, provide shade, and create a more appealing environment.







## **V. CORRIDOR**

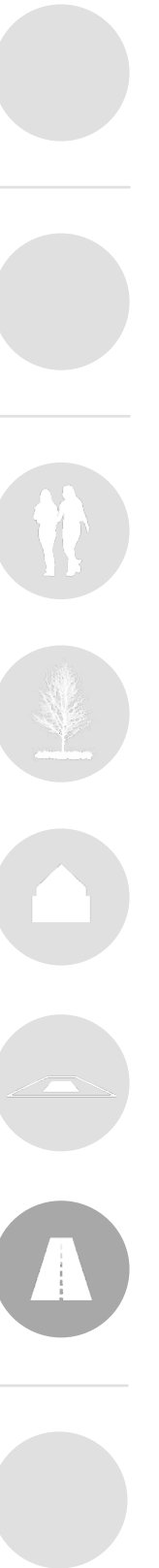
### *CONNECT EVERYTHING TOGETHER*

The corridor is the whole of Bridge Street, as no site exists in isolation. This covers connections between sites, the design nature of the whole corridor, and linkages to nearby features such as the Charles River or Emerald Necklace.



*“Design Bridge Street  
for people, not cars or  
corporations. I would like to  
see enhanced recreation for  
residents and a riverwalk.”*

*Bridge Street Corridor Online Survey*







Dedham, MA - - Existing Conditions

# TODAY

Bridge Street has multiple identities with modest commercial buildings, historic homes (some of which have been converted into businesses), large office buildings, recreational spaces and numerous auto-dependent businesses.



Key Features of Bridge Street







Bridge Street North Anchor



Bridge Street South Anchor

## BRIDGE STREET ANCHORS

The Bridge Street corridor is terminated on either end by a concentration of commercial uses that are largely auto-dependent and surface parking lots that serve them. The areas function as gateways into the neighborhood. However, the sites are generally suburban in character today, requiring ap-

propriately-scaled redevelopment and sound urban design strategies to fit into their context and stimulate pedestrian activity.





Plymouth, MA

## THE VISION

A vibrant and diverse future for Bridge Street will build on the rich foundation of the neighborhood, increase pedestrian-scaled commerce and foster stronger connections to the Charles River watershed.



Bridge Street Vision Diagram







Aerial View of the Bridge Street Vision





Toronto, ON



Boston, MA



Seaside, FL

## STREET WALL

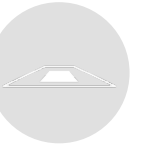
Bridge Street should have buildings that reinforce the continuous nature of the street while recognizing that the distance between buildings and the sidewalk will naturally vary. Efforts should be made to form landscapes that facilitate connectivity between sites.

## RIVER LINKS

Pocket parks, pedestrian linkages and bike paths should reinforce connections between the Bridge Street corridor, the Charles River, and greater Dedham community. These connections should be fully accessible for people of all abilities.

## DEVELOPMENT ANCHORS

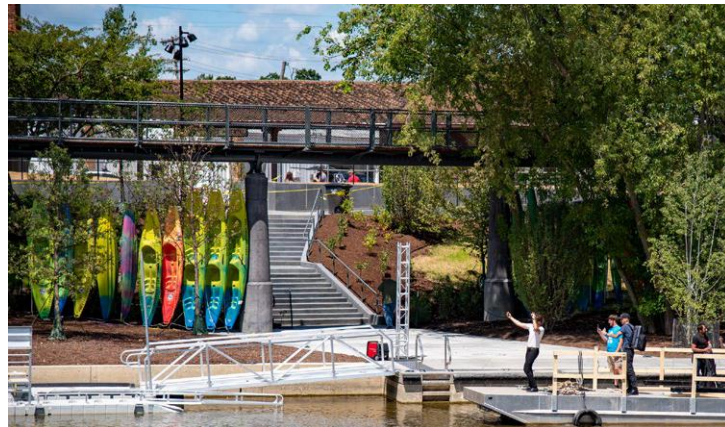
Larger properties along the corridor hold the potential for new economic development. However, larger buildings also increase demand and traffic. Balance economic benefits with the impacts associated with increased traffic to a site.







Atlanta, GA



Fort Wayne, IN



Newburyport, MA

## OPEN SPACE NETWORK

Well designed, appropriately scaled, and publicly accessible exterior spaces create an inviting public realm that becomes an integral part of the neighborhood and can be enjoyed by the widest range of users.

## VIEW CORRIDORS

Reinforce Riverdale's natural amenities. Connections between Bridge Street and the Charles River should be formed by the alignment of buildings and the incorporation of paths or open spaces to leverage the appeal of the riverfront.

## GATEWAYS/BRANDING

Buildings in prominent locations should have distinct profiles to serve as landmarks which are important for orientation. Prominent locations include building facades that terminate view corridors, corners, and elevations that front parks.







# **APPENDIX**

## *PUBLIC MEETING 1 / COMMENTS*



# PUBLIC MEETING 1

## Community Workshop Comments

Saturday, February 11, 2023  
Riverdale Elementary School

### ACTIVITY

After a short presentation, participants were asked to gather in groups around a table and talk about Bridge Street, what is working and what isn't, what changes would they like to see and what characteristics should be preserved. After a 30 minute conversation, each group chose one person to report back and summarize the comments, which we wrote on the large post-it notes on the wall. Each group was asked to create a vision statement based on their conversation and most relevant comments.

As a final exercise, each participant was asked to choose a comment and/or a vision statement that they agreed with and place a dot next to it.

### ONE dot:

- Connect to trails, river trails.
- Add landscape requirements.
- Beautification of roadway, greenspace.
- Use topography to diminish (building) height.
- Get parking off street view (put in the back).
- Design to encourage walkability, bikeability, reduce speed limit.
- Destination parking – park in a public/private parking lot, then walk along corridor.
- Encourage residents to plant trees. Dedham is a “tree city”.
- Needham St intersection: design for traffic calming.
- ADA accessibility.
- More trees/green space.
- More green space, less traffic.
- How are sidewalks exempt from OSHA and ADA regulations?
- Maintain a residential neighborhood.
- Safety.
- Keep neighborhood feel.
- Consistency (size, setbacks).
- More trees: buffer.







Public Meeting 1



Public Meeting 1

## TWO dots:

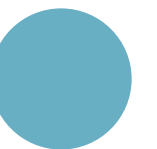
- Low profile (buildings), blending with existing neighborhood.
- River access: tie-in river walkway.
- Wider sidewalks in front of all NEW development.
- Encourage small (not chain) businesses (retail, not services like medical or autobody), like a small grocery or coffee bar.
- Save passage to walk/bike.
- River access from Moseley's.
- Beautify water access.
- Coordinate with Route 1 Bike Trail.

## THREE dots:

- Traffic impacts/sufficient parking.
- Zoning changes to limit height, promote community feel, river access and achieve community/village feel.
- More shops (neighborhood feel). Encourage commerce.
- Public transportation: expand bus 36, sheltered bus stops.
- Restrictions on buildings (step back upper floors, etc.)

## FOUR dots:

- Public access to potential “green spaces”.
- Respond to local residents needs/wants –locally owned coffee shop, bakery, shops.
- Maintain our green space and neighborhood characteristics.







Public Meeting 1



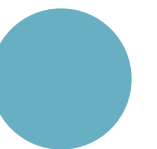
Public Meeting 1

## FIVE or more dots:

- Access to river. Walking loop – bridge Ames (?) to connect to Route 1 Providence Highway Plan.
- Public transportation options on/through the corridor (a little town bus, for example?).
- Scale of re-development: keep small scale, design continuity.
- Family-oriented business and connections to playgrounds: food store, coffee shop, bakeries.
- Walkability and connection to the river and existing parks.
- A safe and accessible corridor with green space, river access, and controlled business type and size.

## Some VISION STATEMENTS were popular:

- To improve the safety, connection, and accessibility while developing a community and family-friendly environment.
- We want the corridor to be more of a destination for people to visit for its community vibes and aesthetically pleasing landscape and architecture. We want to encourage walkability, river connectivity, and community-oriented businesses (i.e., stuff like coffee shops where people can hang out, retail).
- Connectivity, cohesion, and flow between residents and businesses to keep scale proportional.







# **APPENDIX**

## *HISTORICAL PHOTOS*



# AERIAL PHOTOS

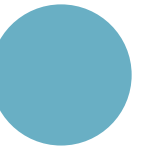
*Courtesy of the Dedham Museum & Archive*



*Bridge Street circa 1930-1935*



*Bridge Street in 1975*





# GROUND LEVEL PHOTOS

*Courtesy of the Dedham Museum & Archive*



*Bridge Street circa 1930-1935*



*Bridge Street circa 1970*



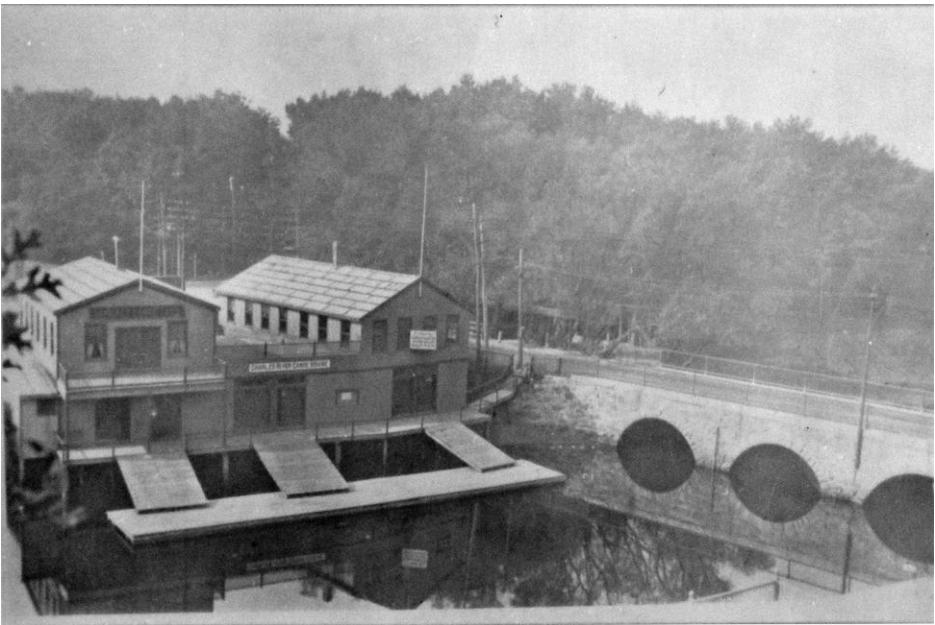
*Bridge Street circa 1930-1935*



*Bridge Street circa 1980*



*Bridge Street circa 1980*



*Bridge Street circa 1930-1935*





# NEWSPAPER CLIPS

Courtesy of the Dedham Museum & Archive

## Riverdale: An island community

*(This is the third in a six-part series on the neighborhoods of Dedham, illustrating the character and vitality of the Town, while recognizing both its colonial heritage and its contemporary history.)*  
by Liz Taurasi

To many Dedhamites the word Riverdale connotes a neighborhood in which a cohesive group of families live; to others it is the fancy name for an area of Town which used to be called either "Cow Island", or "Great Island."

Ellen Aldous says she has seen tremendous changes in Riverdale in the forty years since she moved from Boston. When she first arrived it was like being in the middle of Iowa. "There were no sidewalks for me to push the baby carriage on," she said, "but even with all the changes and the new houses, it still has that same groupie feeling, and the neighborliness I first found. I guess I've become a Riverdale person."

The land now called Riverdale was bounded on three sides by the Charles River. It became a 'true' island in the 1600's when the settlers dug Long Ditch, linking two loops of the River. The Ditch was a canal meant to alleviate flooding problems.

Most of Riverdale was originally farmlands or woodlands, and some low-lying wetlands. There were three large farms located in the central high ground of the island:

Riverdale  
Continued on page 9



Several boathouses dotted the banks of the Charles River more than 50 years ago. The Samoset Canoe Club, along Bridge Street, was renowned for its club races. Francis "Bucko" Bingham of Riverdale (above) is shown winning the second annual 26-mile canoe marathon with the time of 4 hours and 31 minutes. The "Samos" were North American champions, and sent teams to the Olympics.  
Photo courtesy of West Roxbury Historical Society

Dedham Historical Society  
P.O. Box 215  
Dedham MA 02026

Bulk Rate  
U.S. Postal Paid  
Permit #44  
Dedham, MA  
02026


## RIVERDALE:

### The island neighborhood



PHOTO BY SEAN BROWNE

The newly rebuilt Bridge Street Bridge is a landmark in the Riverdale neighborhood.



From the files of Dedham, MA Historical Society

## WESTERLY TIMES

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WEST ROXBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Volume I, Number 3 Spring, 1993

1961 Centre Street, West Roxbury, Massachusetts 02132 (617) 327-6331

### CANOE RACING ON THE CHARLES RIVER

by David Noyd

In the 1920s and 1930s the Samoset Canoe Club was located on the West Roxbury side of the Charles River near the Spring Street bridge. This club and others, coupled with the canoeing fad of the times and easy access by streetcar from Forest Hills, made this section of the river very popular for both recreation and very serious racing. Today, in sharp contrast, canoes are seldom seen here.

The Volk brothers from Dedham joined the Samoset Canoe Club of West Roxbury in the late 1920s. Al Volk, now in his eighties, remembers well the glory days of canoe racing on the Charles. The Samoset boathouse was situated diagonally across the river from the present "Old Irish Ale House" (formerly Gagliardi's Cafe). The Dedham Transcript of June 1, 1928 reported the Samoset Club's motto: "Without halting, without rest, lifting better up to best."

The three Volk brothers and their fellow Samoset


Canoe Club members raced against clubs such as the "Nite Owls," which was situated next door at Lent's Boat House, and "Breed's" located next to the present Moseley's. And there were many other canoe clubs on the Charles River, including the Needham, Spring Street, Dedham, Crescent, and Omicron Delta canoe clubs.

The many canoe clubs engaged in fierce competition with racing throughout the warmer months. Races were held for single-man canoes, doubles, four-man canoes, and the "war boat" which was paddled by nine men. Single-blade paddles were used in all boats, and there were also double-blade paddles for racing except in the war boat. Most of the races were over distances of 500 yards, one mile, and four miles. The racers knelt on one knee and put all their upper body and arm strength into their paddling.

A major event each year was the 26 mile canoe marathon, sponsored by the Samoset Club, which began in Medfield and ended in West Roxbury just upstream from the Spring Street bridge. There were two "carries" at dams. The second annual marathon took place in June of 1928. That race was won by the strongest Samoset paddler, Francis "Bucko" Bingham, in the time of 4 hours, 31 minutes. In the 15 canoe marathons from 1927 through 1941, Samoset Club members won five times. Over the first 15 years of the race the record time was 4 hours, 19 minutes and 28 seconds (under 10 minutes per mile!), set by Ted Blackman of the Needham Canoe Club in 1940.

In addition to the highly competitive races, thousands of women and men canoed for pleasure here on the Charles River early in this century. Many restaurants catered to them, including Gagliardi's Cafe, the Dew Drop Inn, and the Waiting Room Spa.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**  
David Noyd, who grew up in Dedham and now lives in West Roxbury, researches and paints early-1900s scenes of the area.



DAVID NOYD'S WATERCOLOR PAINTING DEPICTING THE START OF A CANOE RACE NEAR THE SPRING STREET BRIDGE, LATE 1930s