

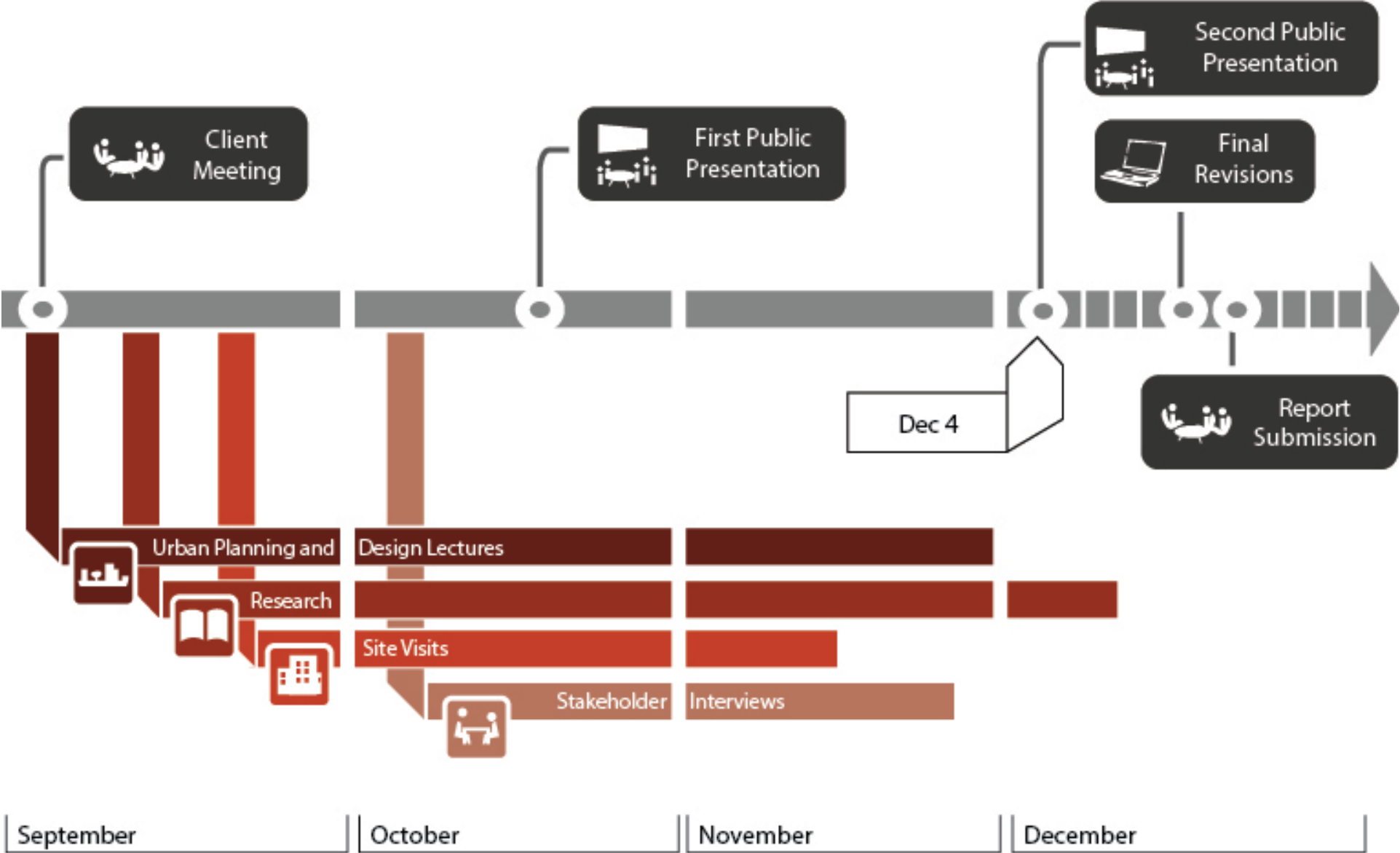
Brickbottom / McGrath Neighborhood Plan

Who We Are



13 students
(12 MIT DUSP
and one Harvard GSD),
enrolled in a semester-long
practicum, who bring
a variety of skills from urban
design to transportation
planning

Process



Presentation Outline

1. Introduction

2. Current Conditions

3. Existing Plans

4. Community Outreach

5. Vision for Brickbottom



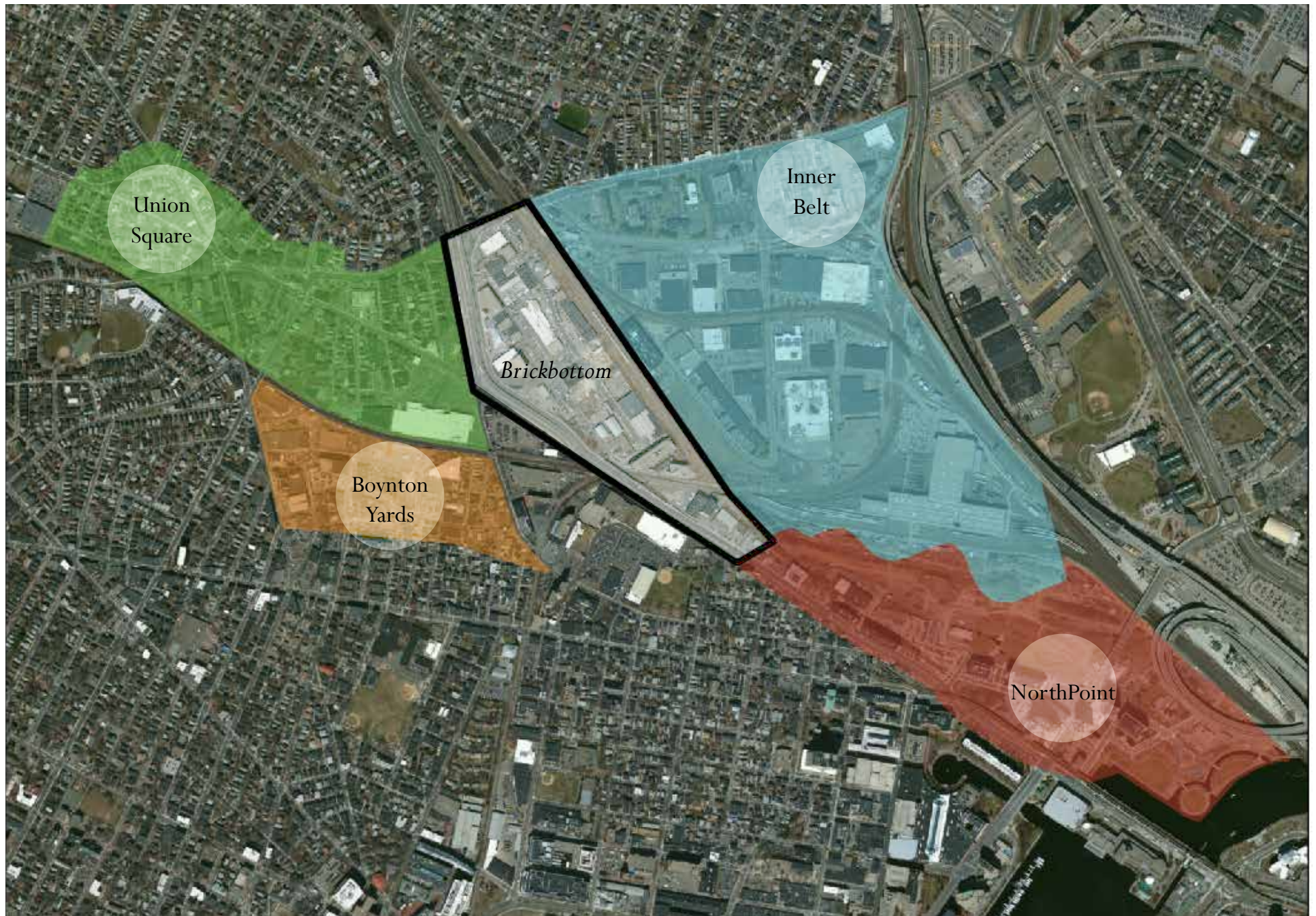
Current Conditions

Brickbottom - Then and Now

- Turn of century: a mixed-use community
- Cleared in 1950s to make way for McGrath Highway
- Today, area is entirely zoned IA (Industrial A)



Surrounding Neighborhood Context



Union Square and Boynton Yards



“Union Square has, as its core, an edgy and interesting retail presence, but the Square and surrounding areas are missing the jobs and the larger commercial base that can only be developed with new transit and TOD.”

- Union Square Revitalization Plan

Union Square has seen commercial activity, streetscape improvements, and regional attention

Boynton Yards envisioned as “mixed-use transit-oriented” area

Green Line station expected to have transformative impact

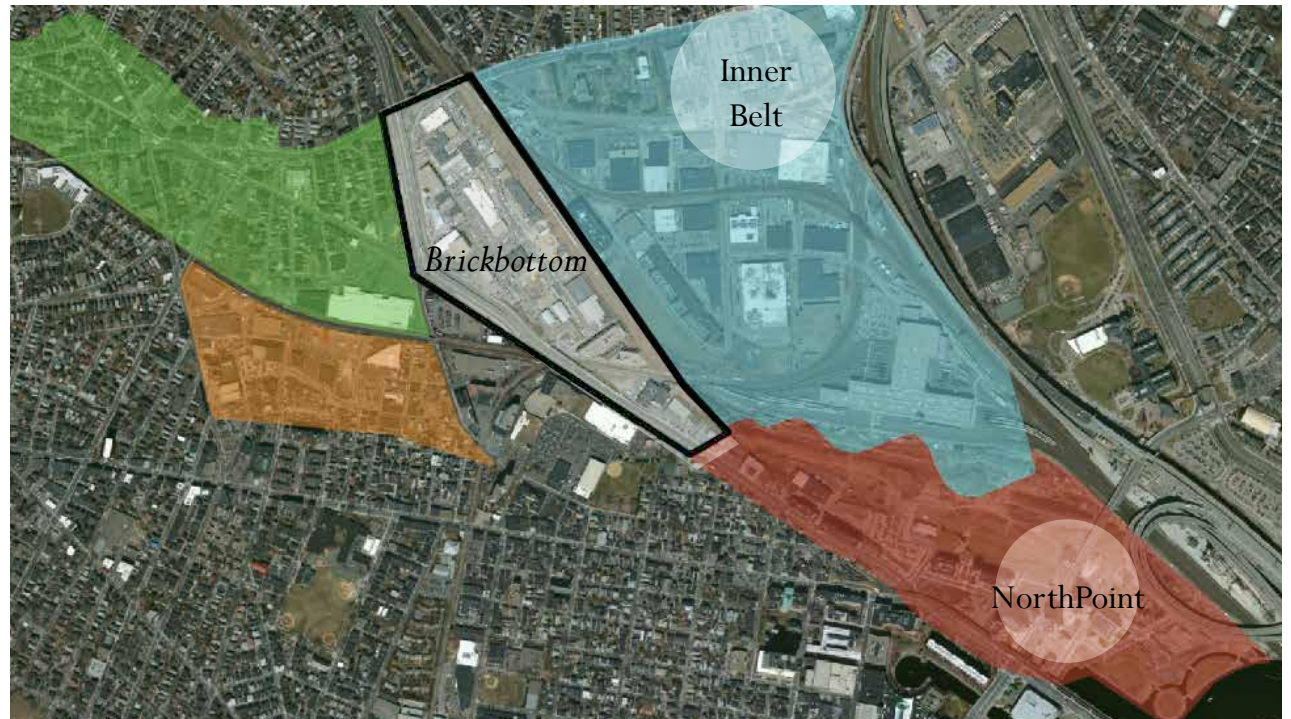


Inner Belt and NorthPoint

NorthPoint to have 200,000 sq ft retail, 2,900 residential units, and 2 million sq ft of office/laboratory space

Inner Belt currently low-rise, low-density office district

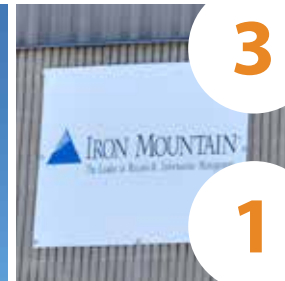
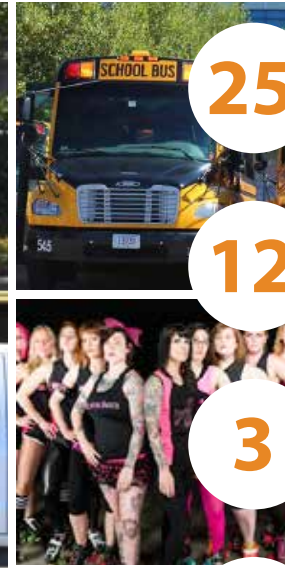
2008 study suggested open space or sports facility for Inner Belt



Transportation Networks Create Site Edges



Who's Here Now



25

12

3

3

1

1

400+

businesses located in area

are auto-related: e.g. fabrication, sales, repair, and parts

moving and storage companies

recreational and fitness establishments

major local utility: NSTAR

engineering prototyping company

jobs altogether

Who's Here Now



150

This doesn't include the nearly 150 artists and artisans who work in the area and pursue:

- Painting
- Drawing
- Sculpture
- Furniture Making
- Photography and Videography
- Cooking Classes
- Sewing Classes
- Bookbinding and Graphic Design
- Drama
- Interior Design
- Architecture
- Jewelry Making
- Luthiery
- Clothing Design and Fabrication

Who's Here Now



150

Sole residential
development:
Brickbottom
Artists Building,
home to nearly 150
condominiums

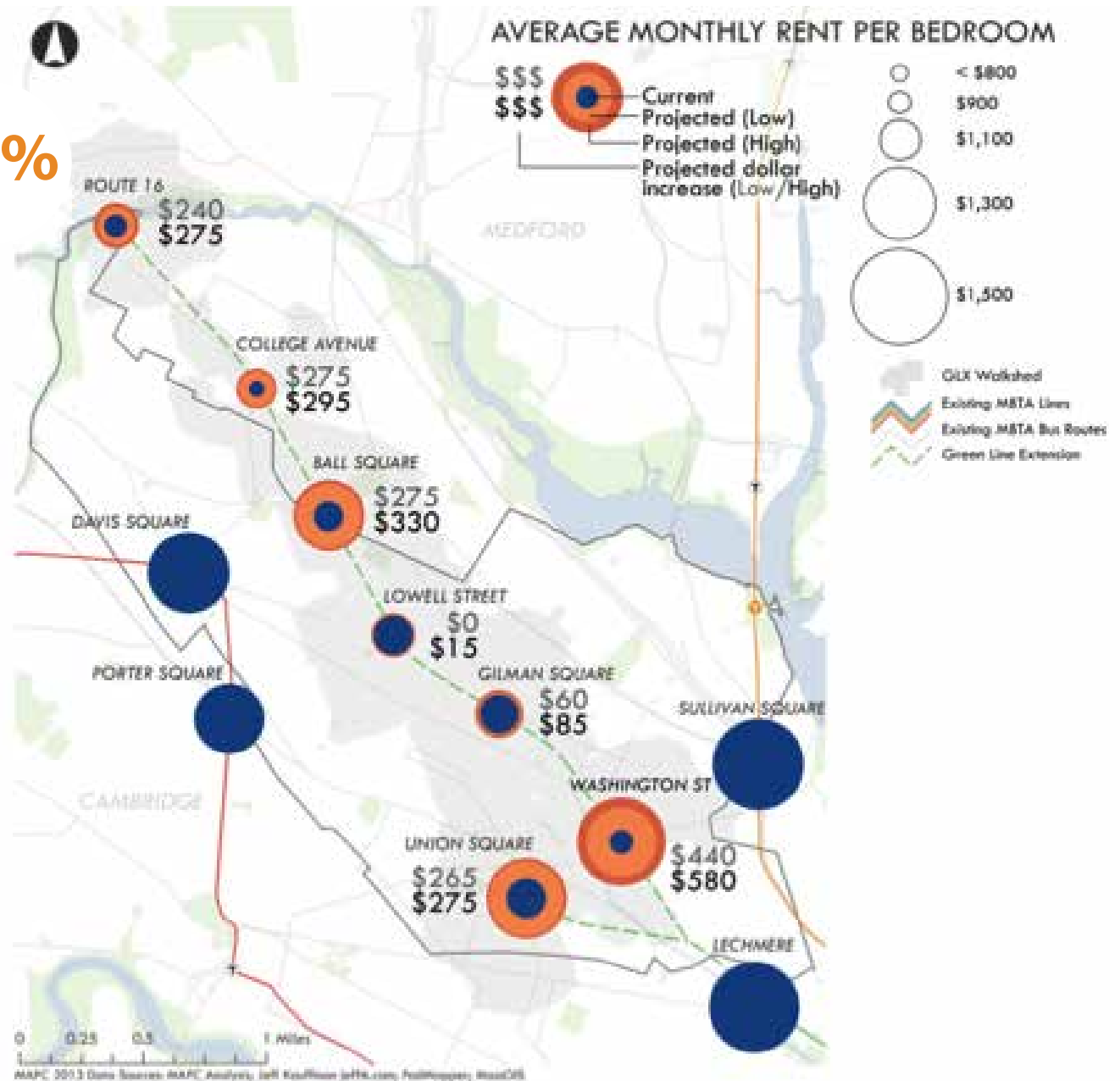
Housing Affordability Challenges

44 percent of renter households in Somerville burdened by housing costs

44%

Demand for affordable housing outstrips existing supply (SCC's St Polycarp Village project received over 1,100 applications for just 31 units)

Dramatic rise in housing costs projected along **Green Line Extension corridor**



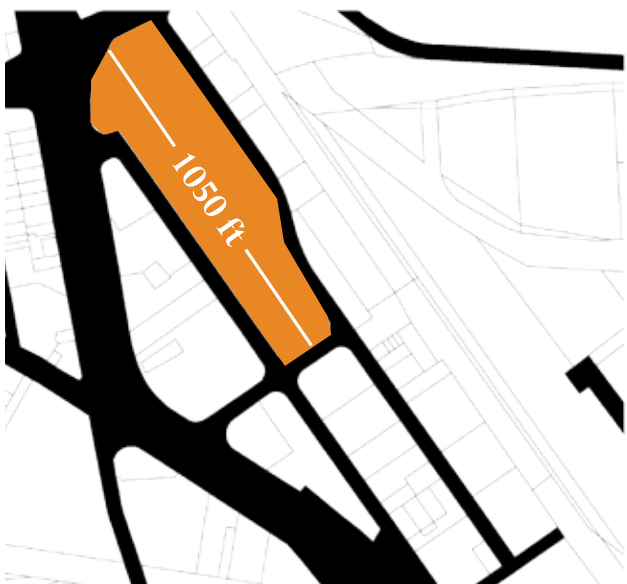
Large Block Sizes and Urban Design Challenges



Winter Hill



Union Square



Brickbottom/McGrath



Property Ownership



3

Existing Plans

Brickbottom should contribute significantly to SomerVision’s goal of 50 percent of new trips via transit, bike, or walking

As “Transformative Area” Brickbottom is planned to accommodate about

13%

of city-wide growth



30,000 New Jobs as part of a responsible plan to create opportunity for all Somerville workers and entrepreneurs



125 New Acres of Publicly-Accessible Open Space as part of our realistic plan to provide high-quality and well-programmed community spaces



6,000 New Housing Units - 1,200 Permanently Affordable as part of a sensitive plan to attract and retain Somerville’s best asset: its people.



50% of New Trips via Transit, Bike, or Walking as part of an equitable plan for access and circulation to and through the City.



85% of New Development in Transformative Areas as part of a predictable land use plan that protects neighborhood character

4500

New jobs

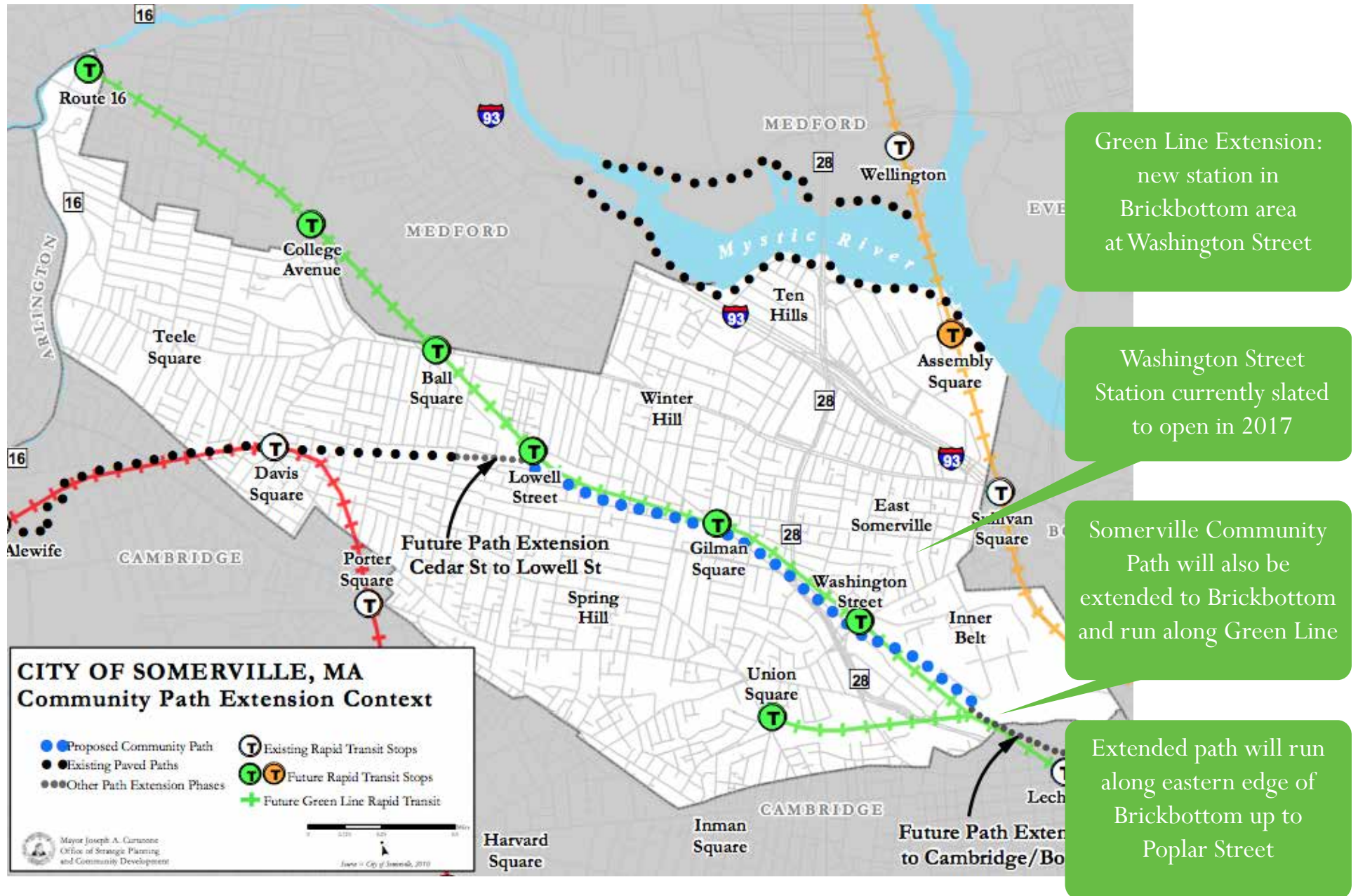
750

Units of housing

16

Acres of open space

Green Line Extension and Community Path



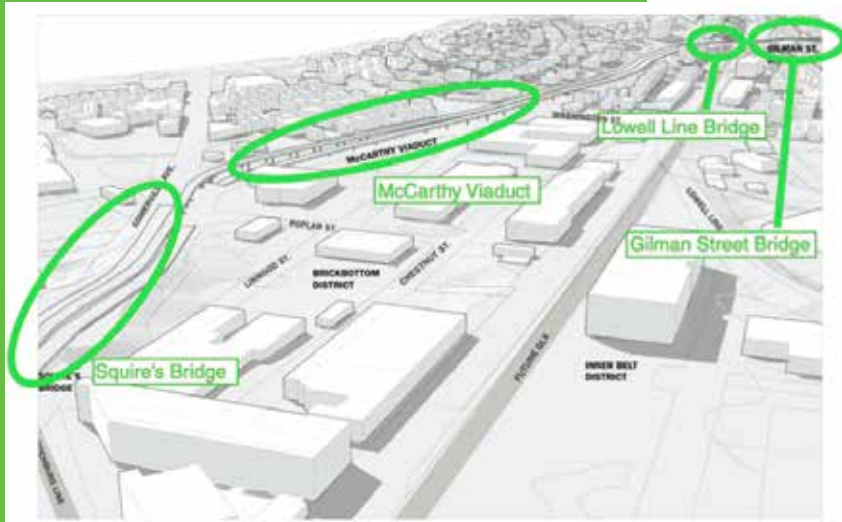
Grounding McGrath

MassDOT plans to de-elevate McGrath Highway between Squire's Bridge and Lowell Line Bridge

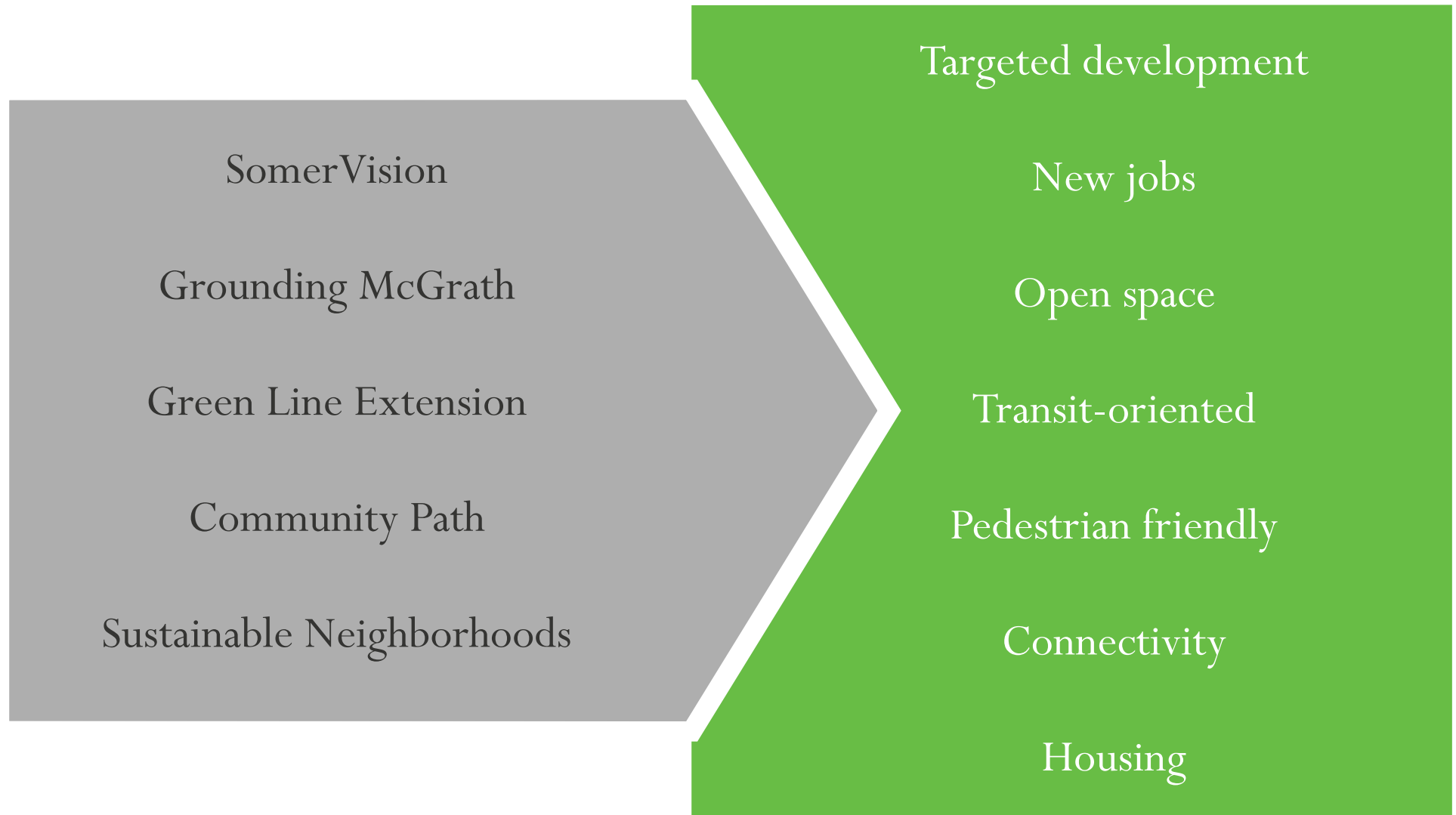
MassDOT has recommended the *Boulevard Alternative* design but is currently revising it, reducing number of lanes from three to two each way

Design leaves significant unused space along eastern edge of McGrath's right-of-way

Boulevard Alternative



Takeaways



4

Community Outreach

What We've Heard

Strengths

Central location
Artist presence
Functioning mix of uses
Potential for development

Weaknesses

Poor transportation
and circulation

Increase tax base with mix of uses (commercial office,
housing, dining, and entertainment)

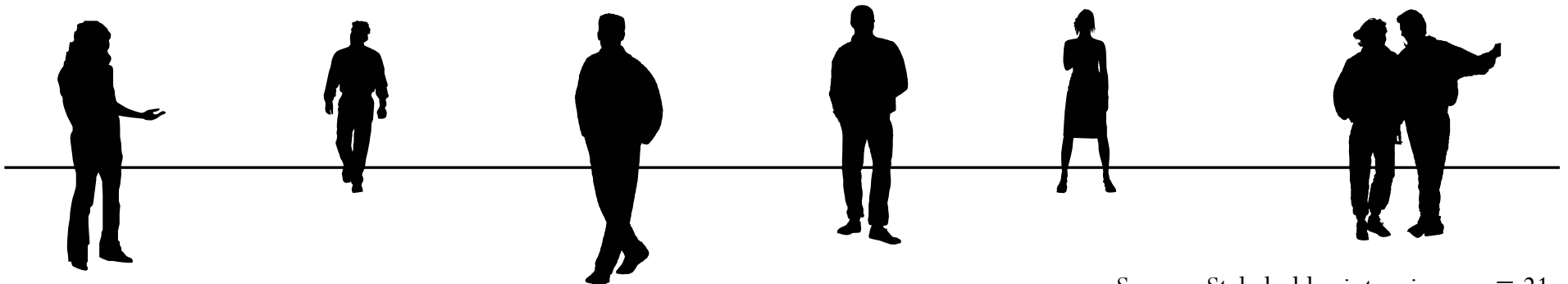
Build upon current uses and “creative energies” of
artists and innovators

Opportunities

Threats

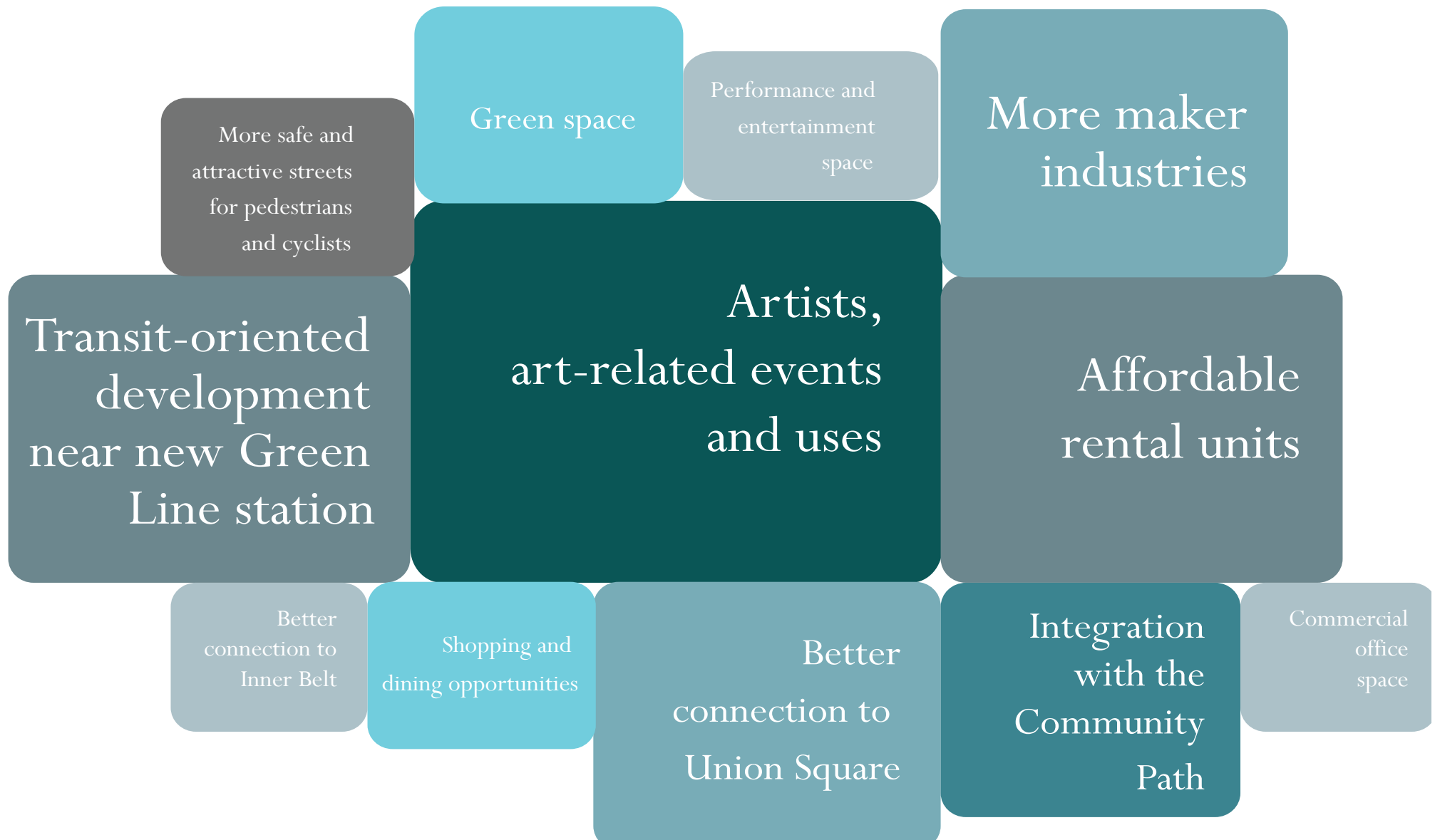
Displacement
Another Assembly or Kendall Square
Poorly coordinated plan
Loss of cultural identity

Threats



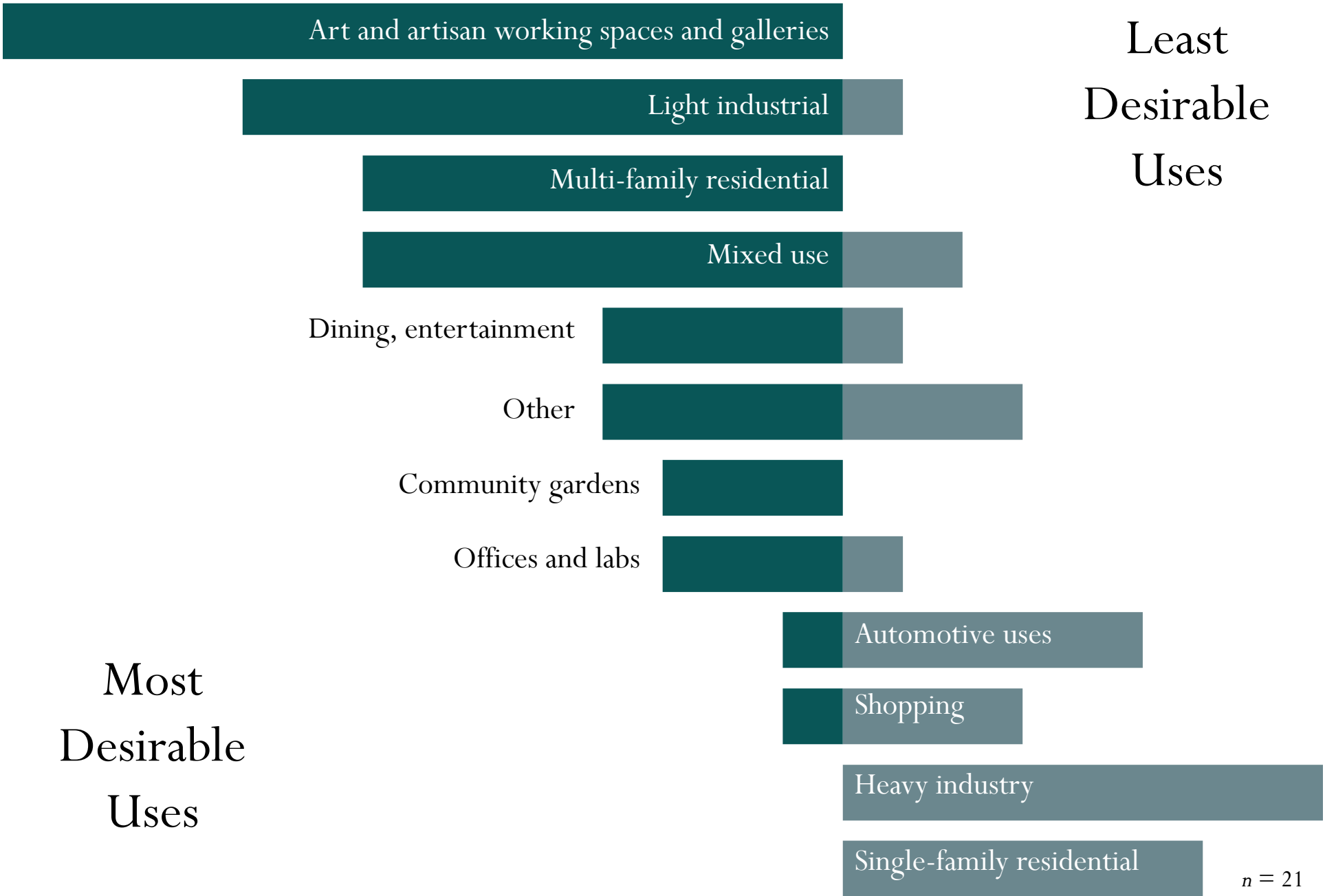
Source: Stakeholder interviews; n = 21

Important Elements and Land Uses for the Success of Brickbottom



Source: Stakeholder interviews; n = 21

Important Elements and Land Uses for the Success of Brickbottom



5

A Vision for Brickbottom

Our Goals

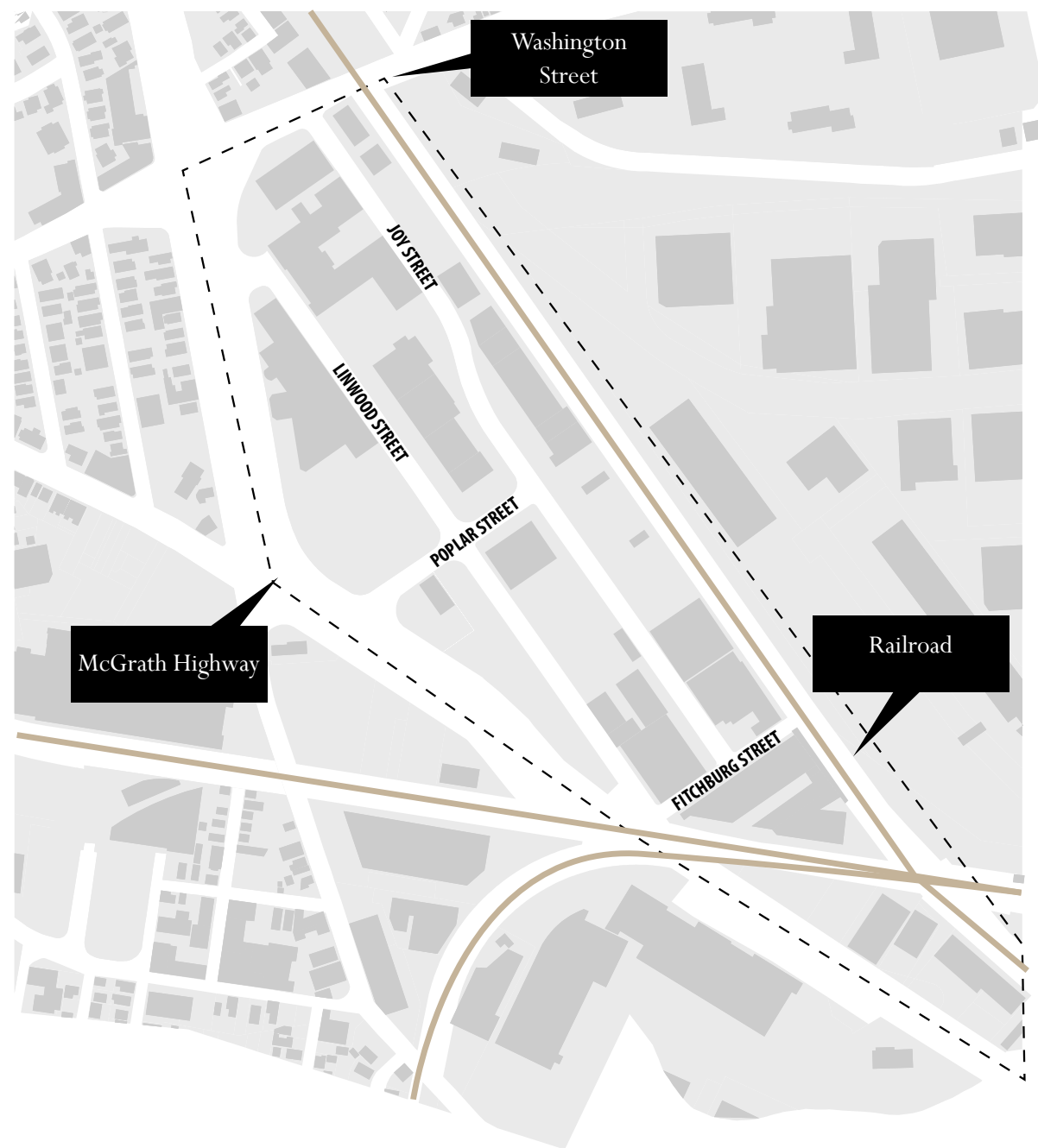
Create mixed-use district with focus on industry and arts

Provide affordable space in which to work and live

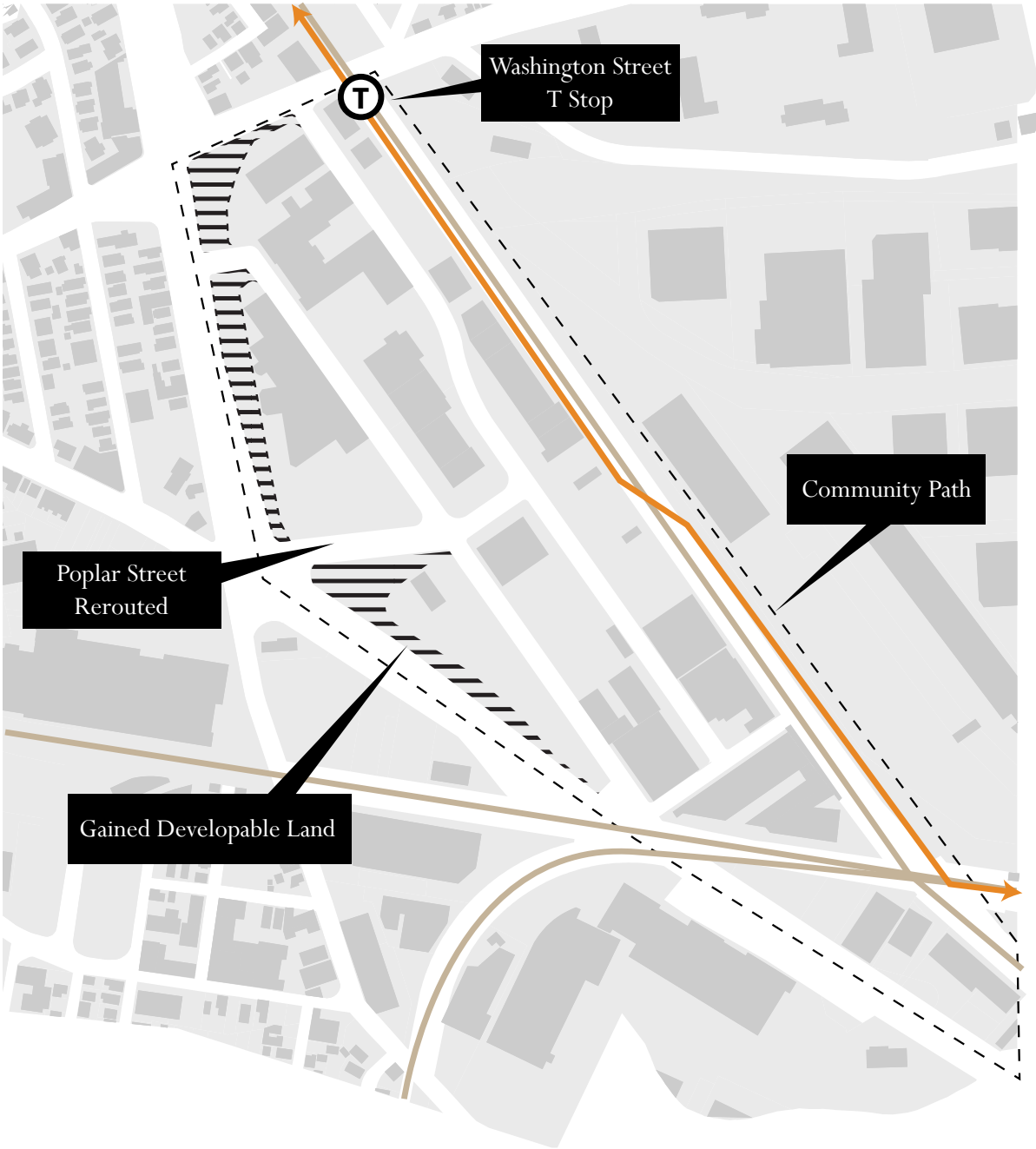
Create vibrant and walkable public realm

Increase density to leverage opportunities created by grounding of McGrath and new T stop

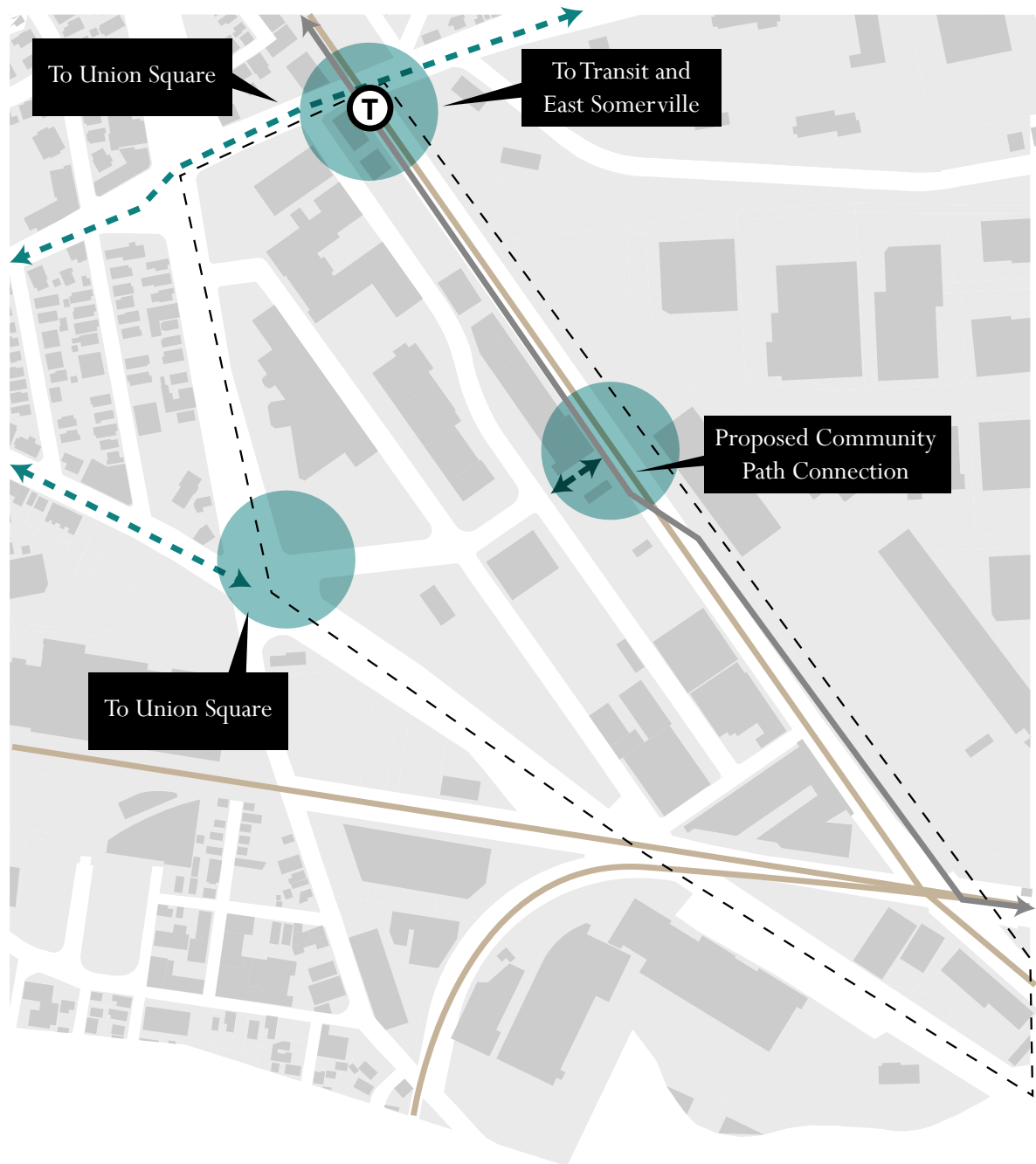
Existing Conditions



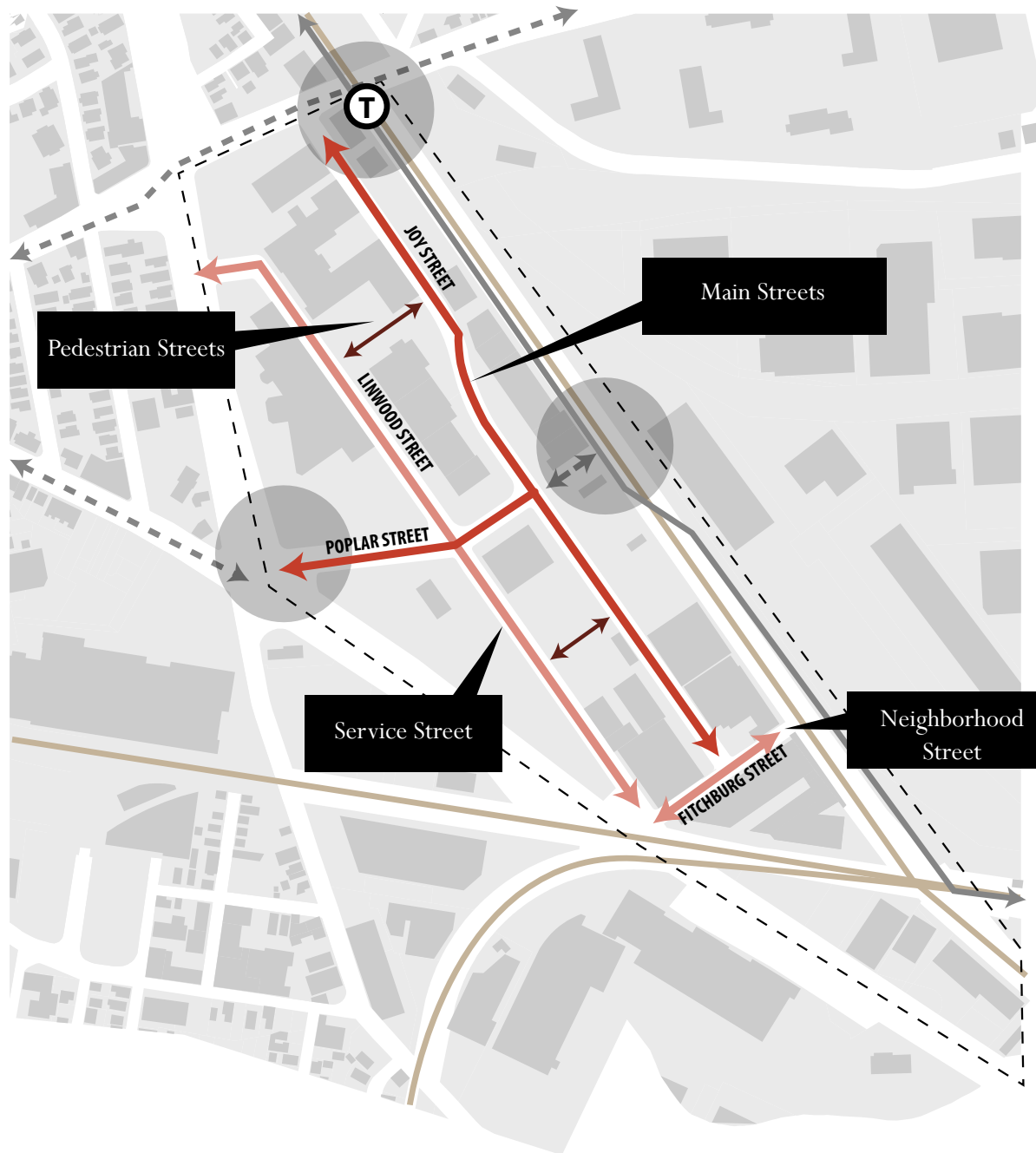
Planned Changes



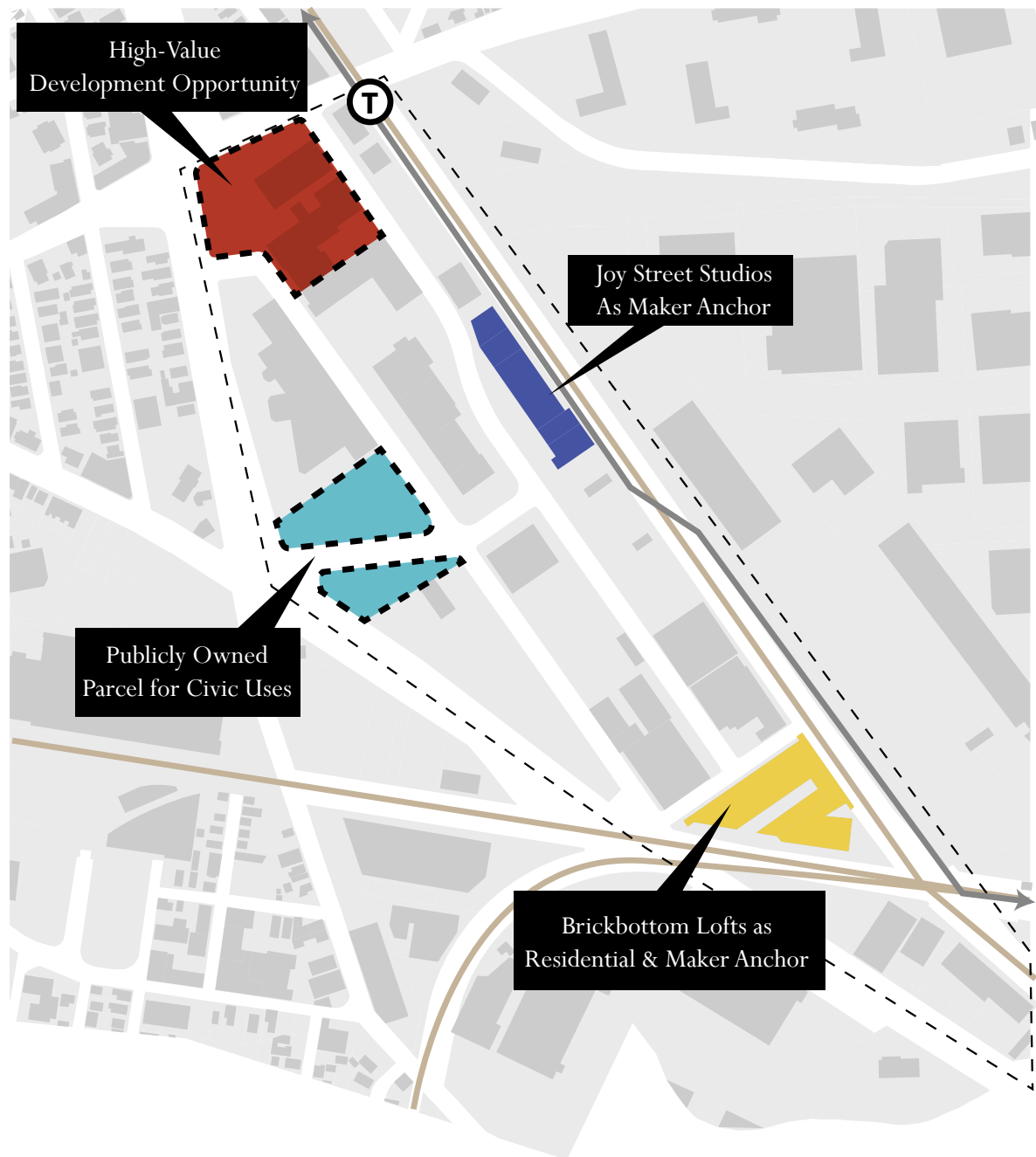
Vision: Site Access



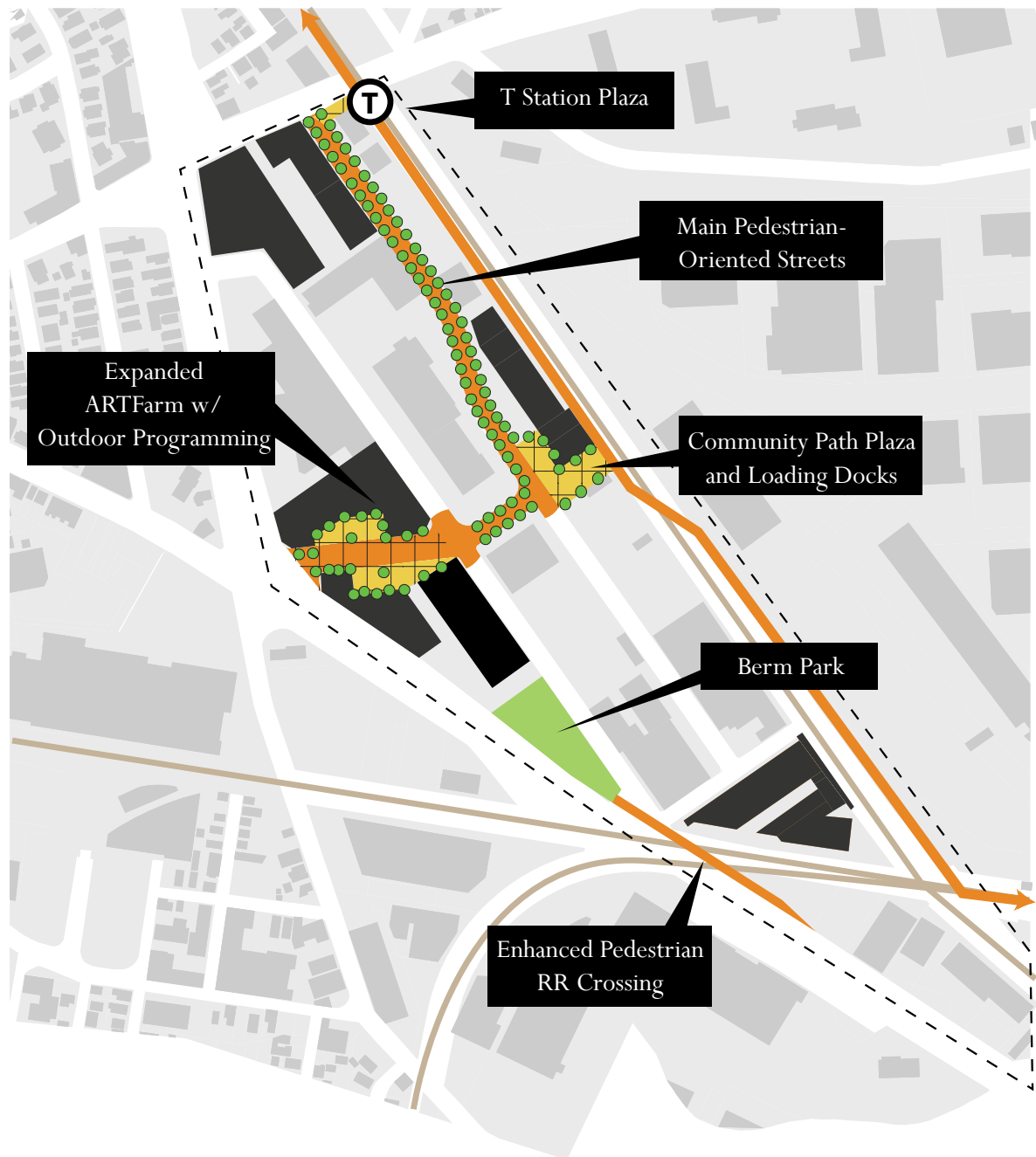
Vision: Street Priorities



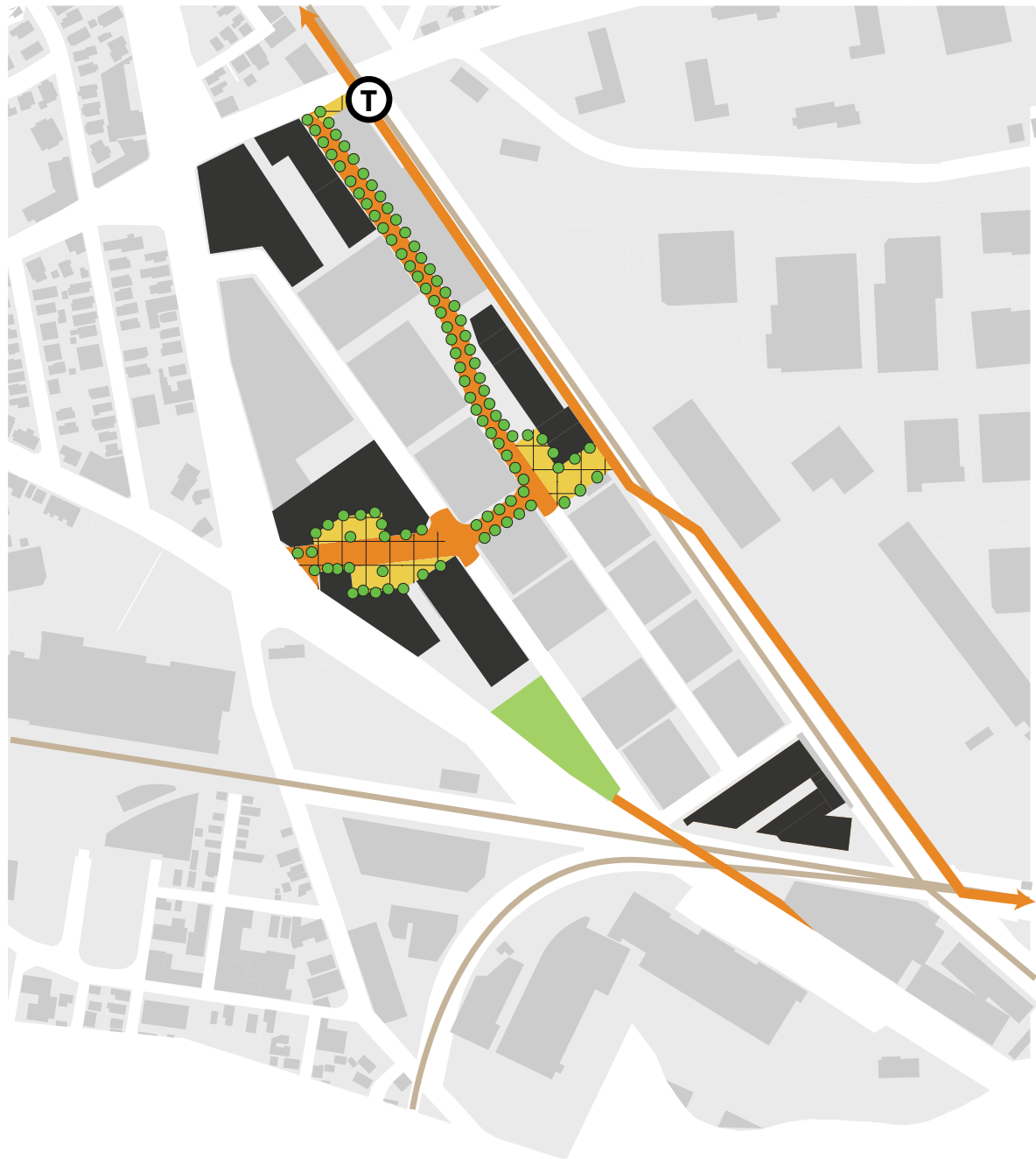
Vision: Anchor Parcels



Vision: Public Realm and Key Sites



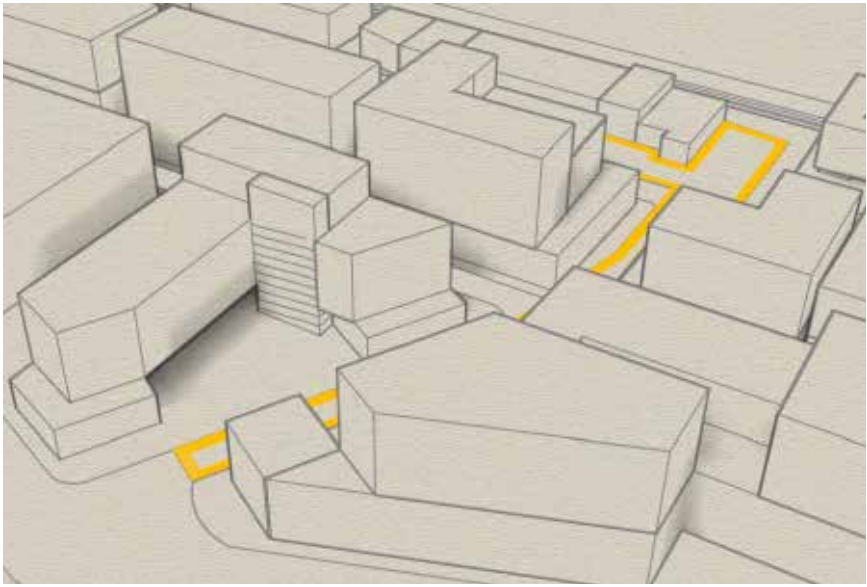
Vision: Long-Term Build-out



Urban Industrial Character



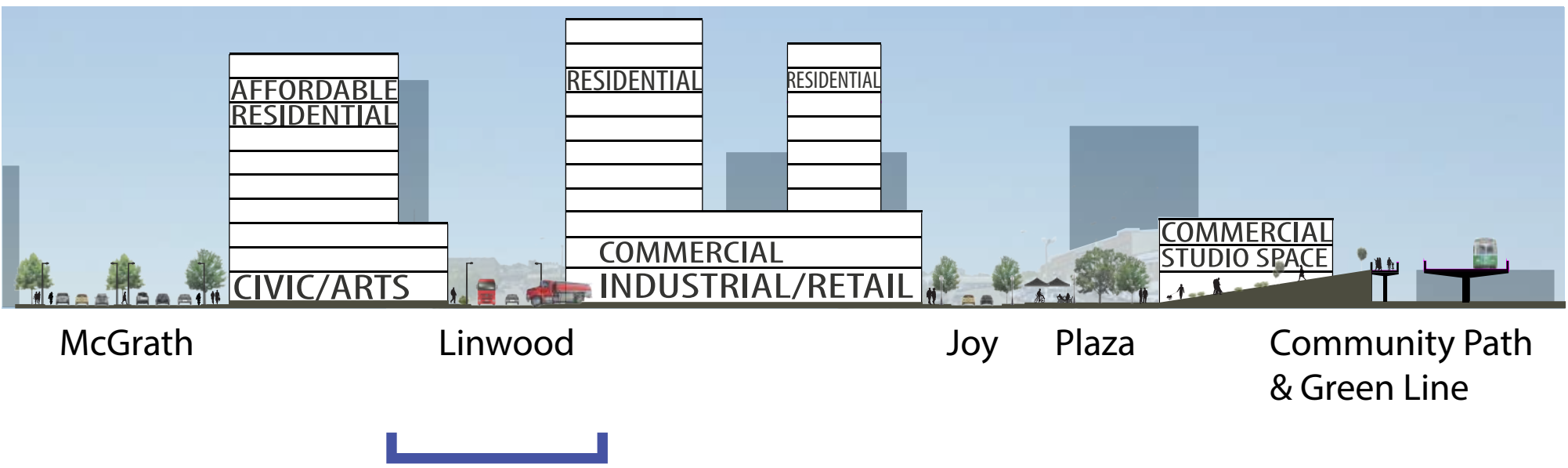
Poplar Street Entrance



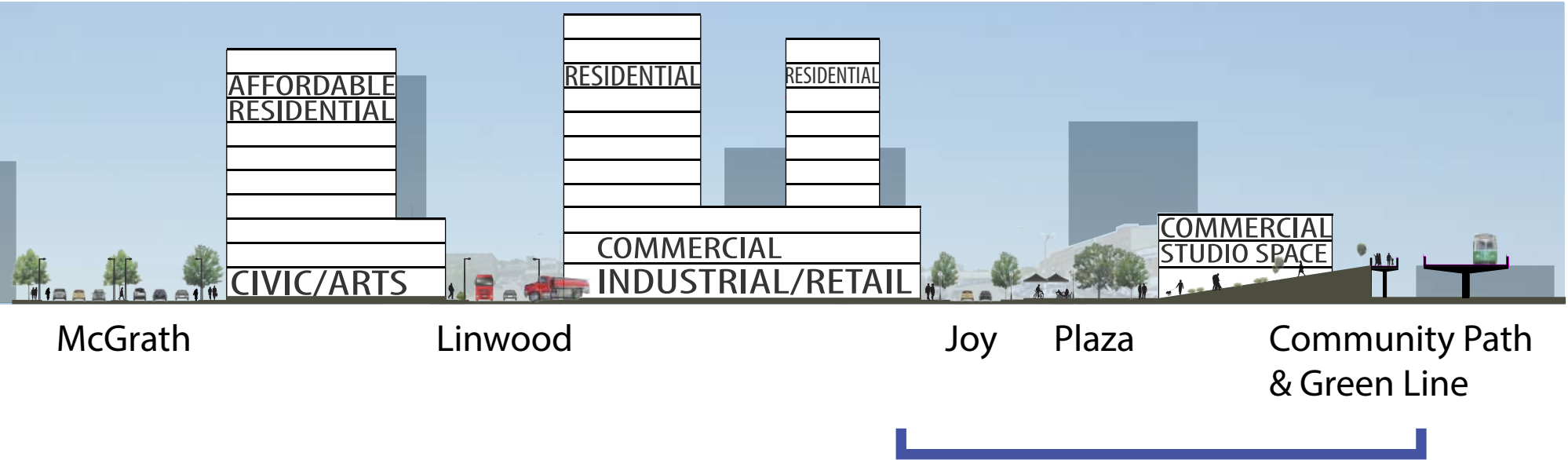
Poplar Street Section: McGrath



Poplar Street Section: Linwood



Poplar Street Section: McGrath



Transportation and Circulation Recommendations

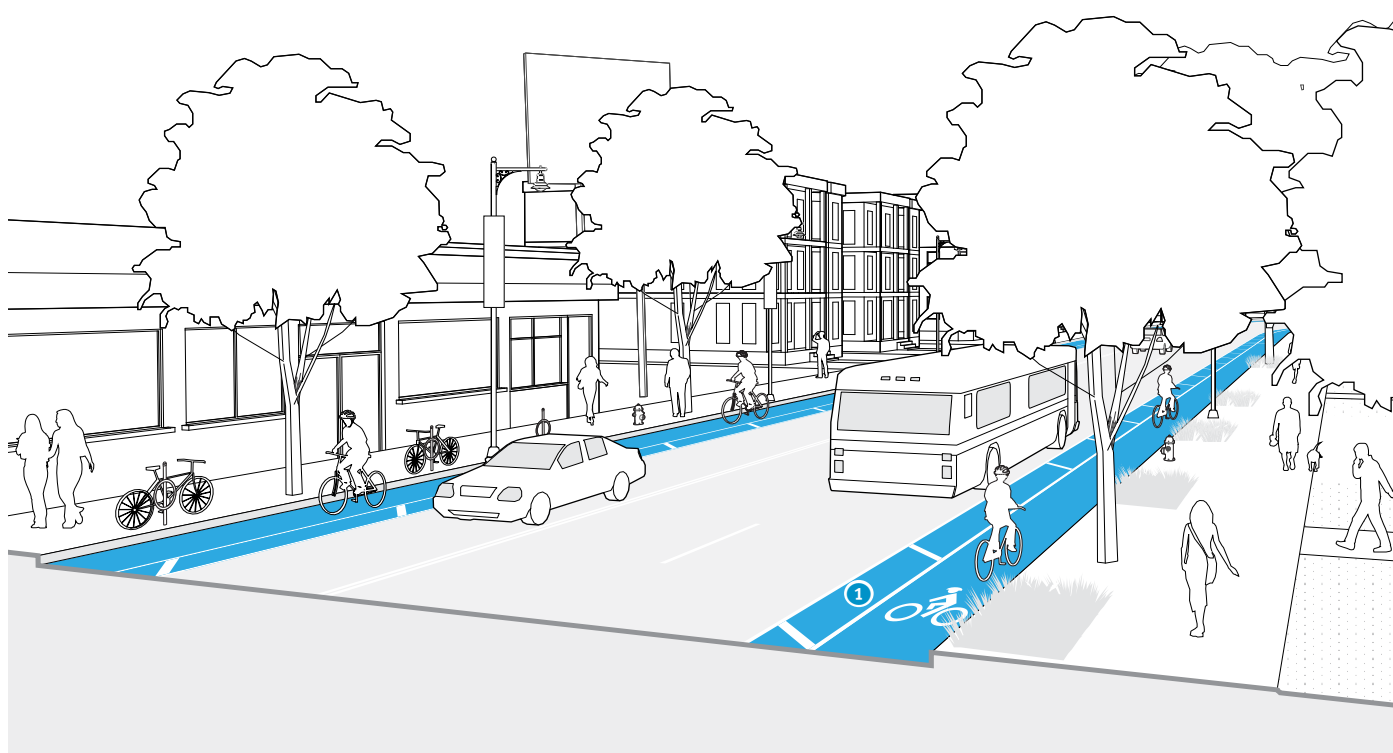
Two Transportation Objectives

1. Increase multimodal circulation and access:

- Pedestrian
- Bicyclist
- Transit
- Automobile and parking

2. Capitalize on McGrath de-elevation and Green Line Extension:

- Maximize McGrath right-of-way for use as new developable space
- New Hubway station

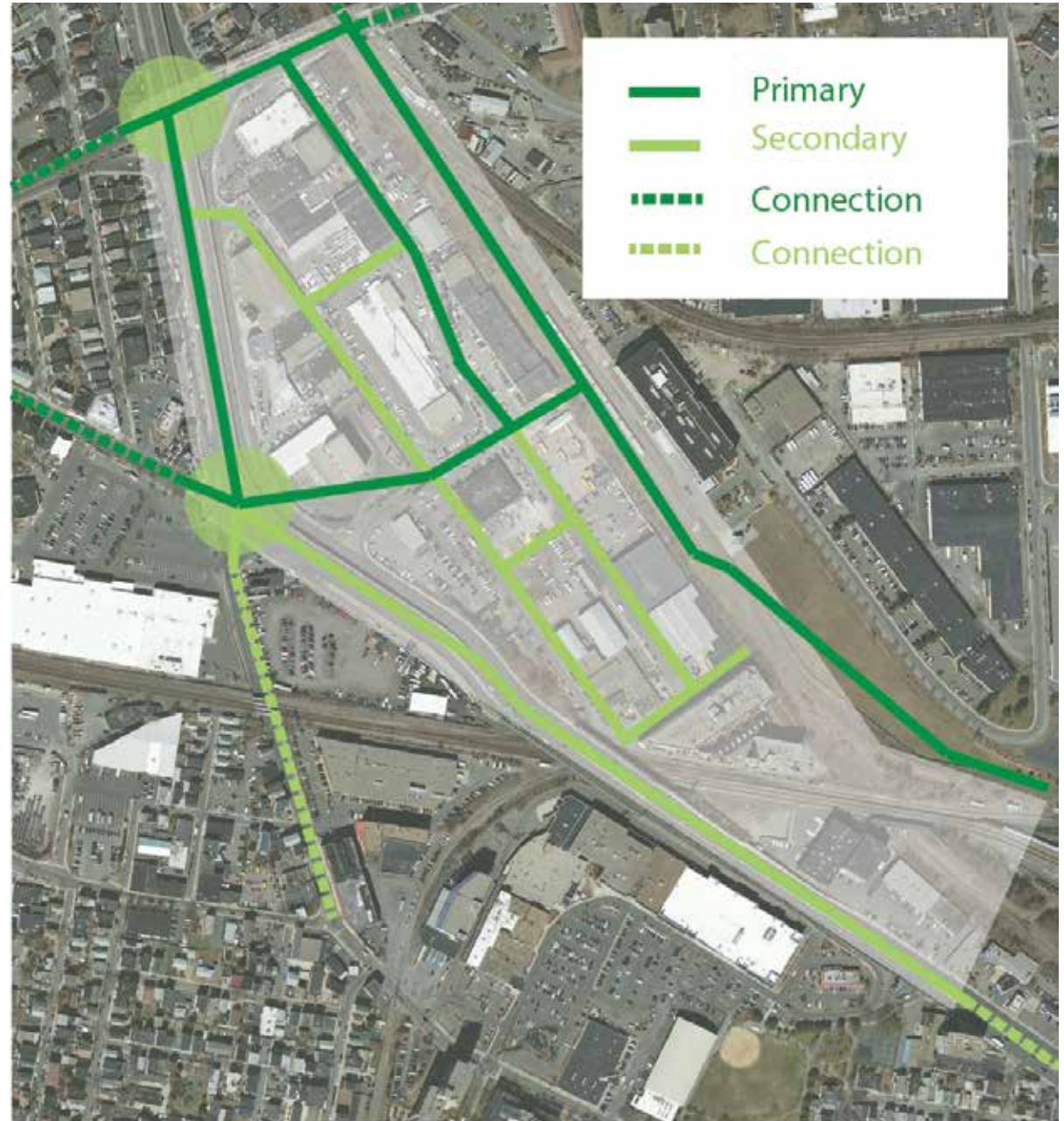


Source: Boston Complete Streets Guidelines

Pedestrian Recommendations

- Provide safe and comfortable sidewalks throughout area, wider sidewalks along primary pedestrian corridors
- Provide safe crosswalks at key intersections (circled in map) to enhance access
- Create smaller block sizes via pedestrian alleys in northern Brickbottom to walking

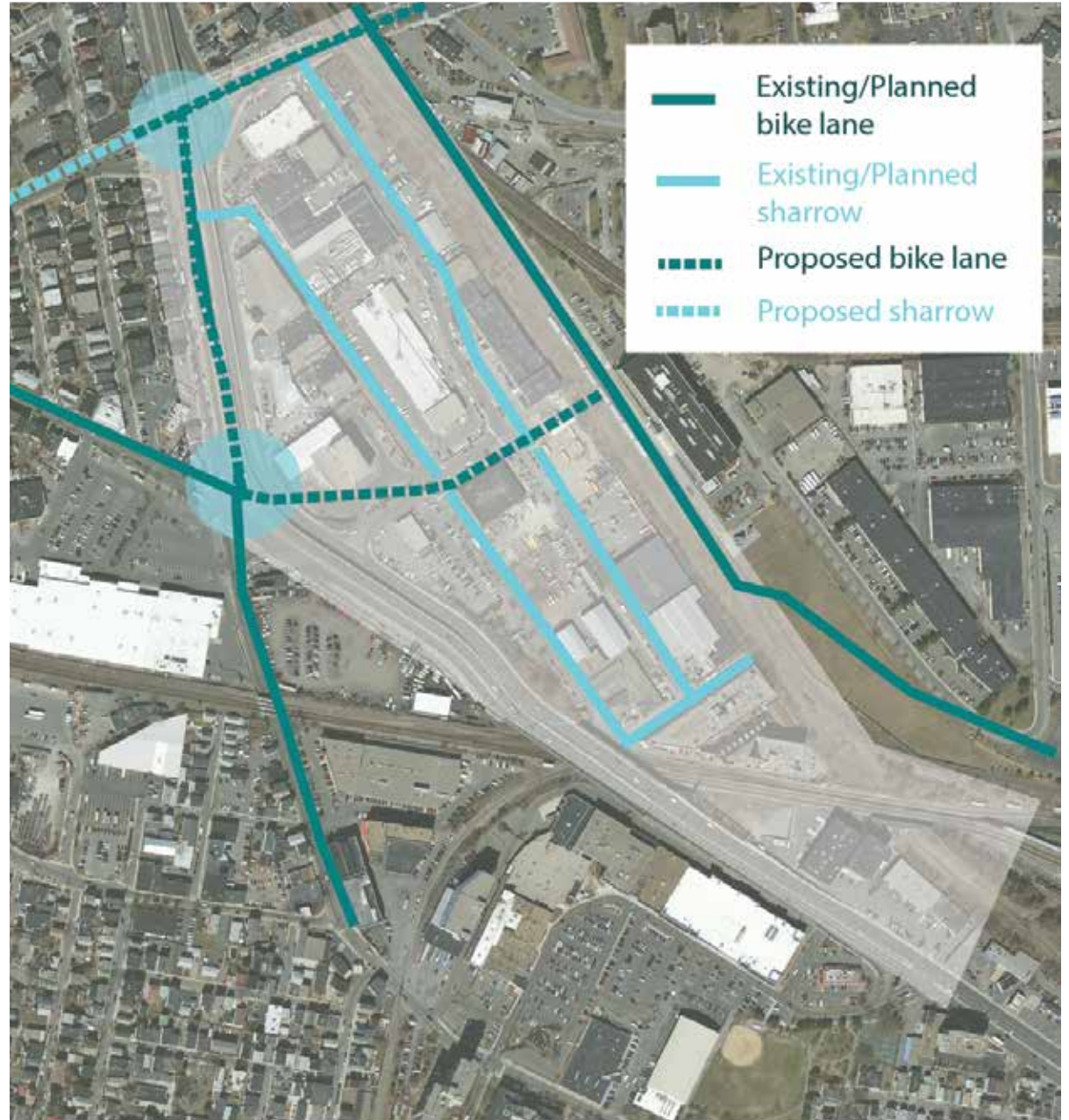
Pedestrian Circulation and Hierarchy Diagram



Bike Recommendations

- Add bike lanes to connect area to existing and proposed regional bike infrastructure
- Add bike parking, in particular along Poplar Street leading to Community Path and at new Washington Street station
- Advocate for new Hubway station at Washington Street Station to facilitate switching modes

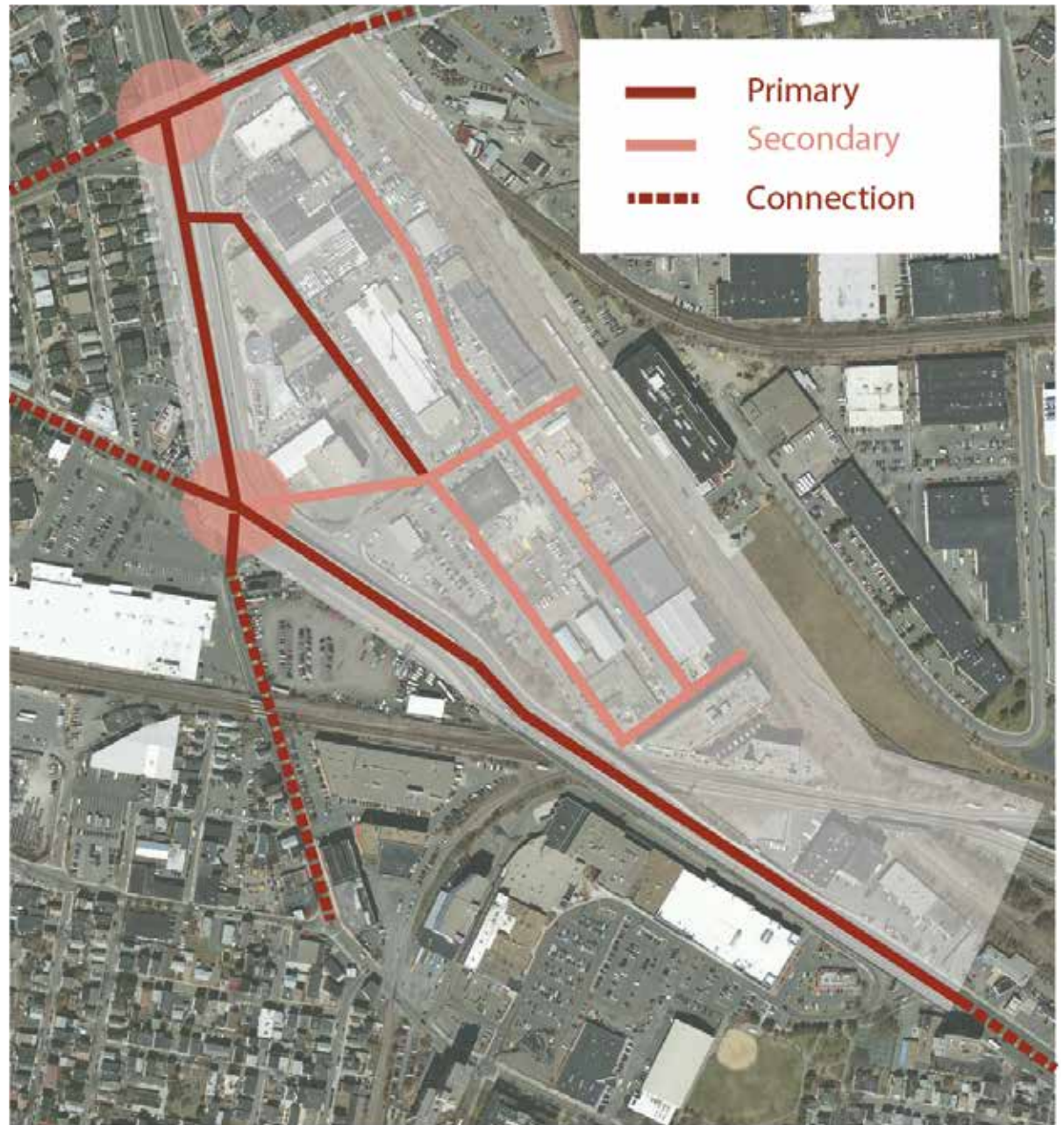
Bike Circulation and Hierarchy Diagram



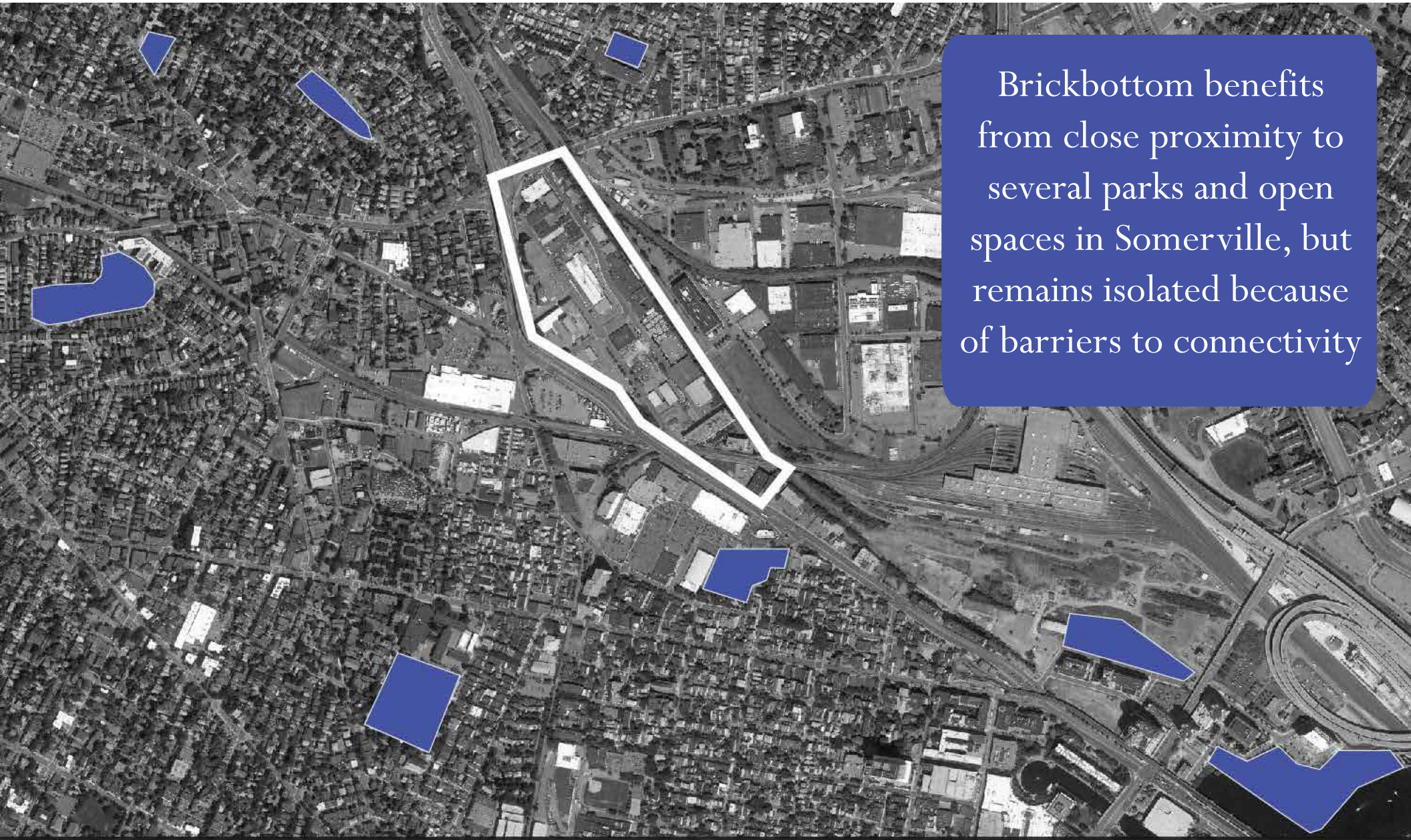
Automobile and Parking Recommendations

- Preserve automobile mobility by maintaining two-way traffic on all interior streets
- Create metered parking in northern half of Brickbottom
- Designate north Linwood Street as automobile- and service-oriented street to facilitate deliveries
- McGrath recommendations:
 - Support Boulevard Alternative: two travel lanes in each direction, intersection configurations
 - Maximize unused right-of-way on eastern side of McGrath for development

Automobile Circulation and Hierarchy Diagram

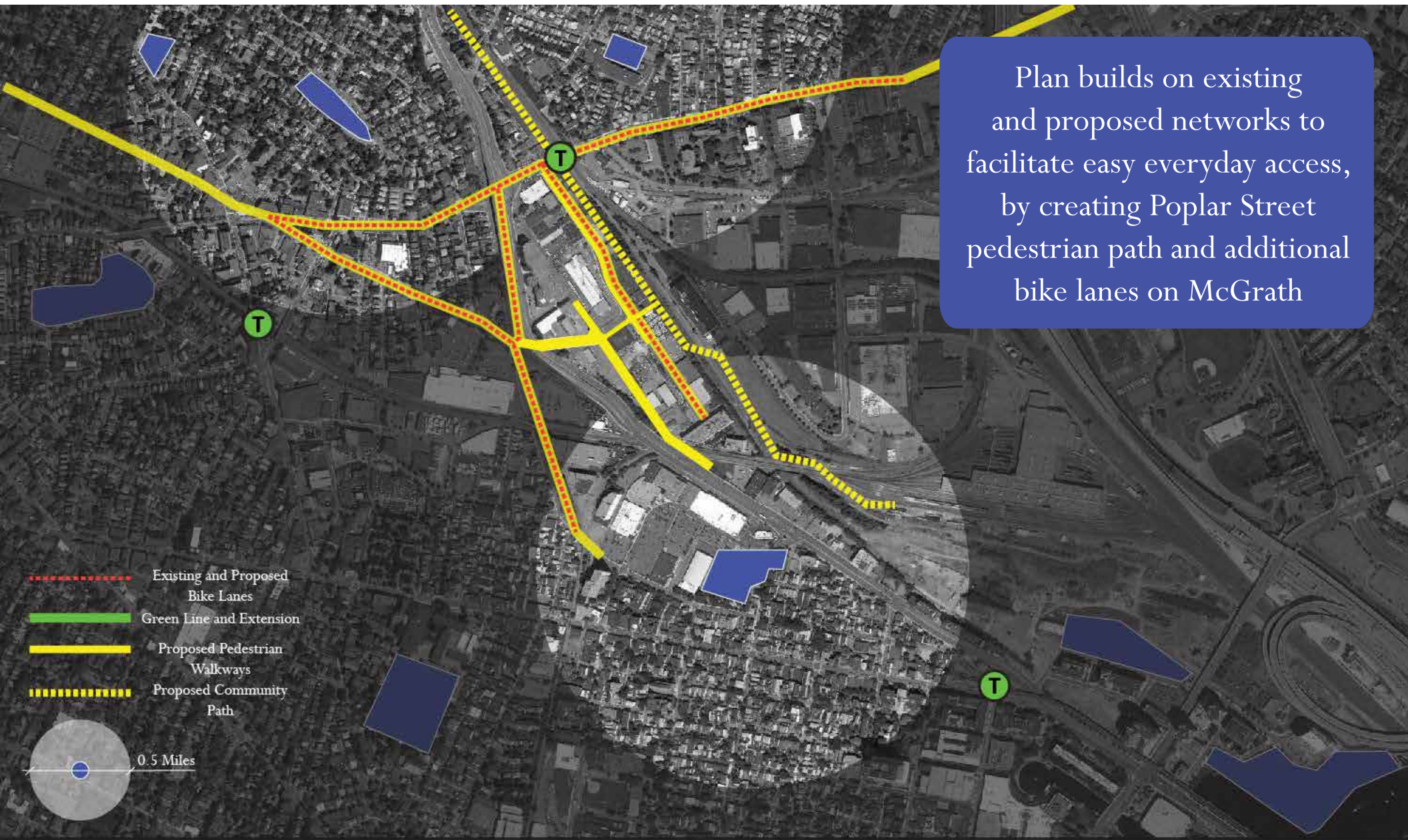


Open Space Network



Brickbottom benefits from close proximity to several parks and open spaces in Somerville, but remains isolated because of barriers to connectivity

Open Space Network



Sidewalk Recommendations



Small scale,
dispersed
rain gardens
improve
pedestrian
experience and
aid stormwater
management



Sidewalk Recommendations



Parklet



Union Square benches provided through the ArtsUnion Project

Street furniture and parklets are simple interventions to improve pedestrian realm; can showcase local talent in Brickbottom



Cyclehoop bicycle parking in London, UK



Public Art in Union Square through the ArtsUnion Project

Re-zoning For Industrial Mixed Use & TOD

New Transit-Oriented Development zone to catalyze development

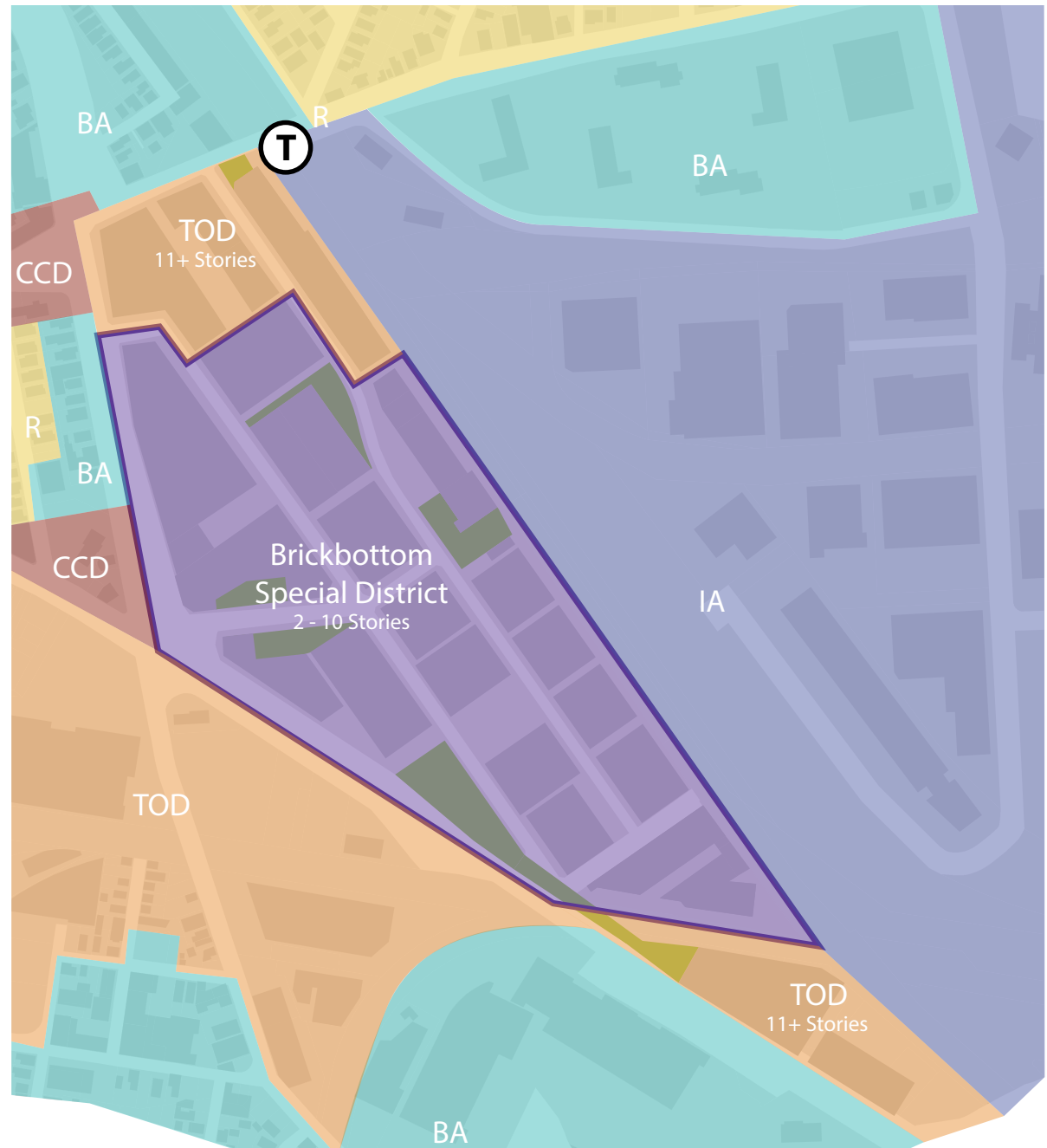
Incentivize industrial uses through Brickbottom Special District

Commercial and residential development “unlocked” only through industrial mixed use

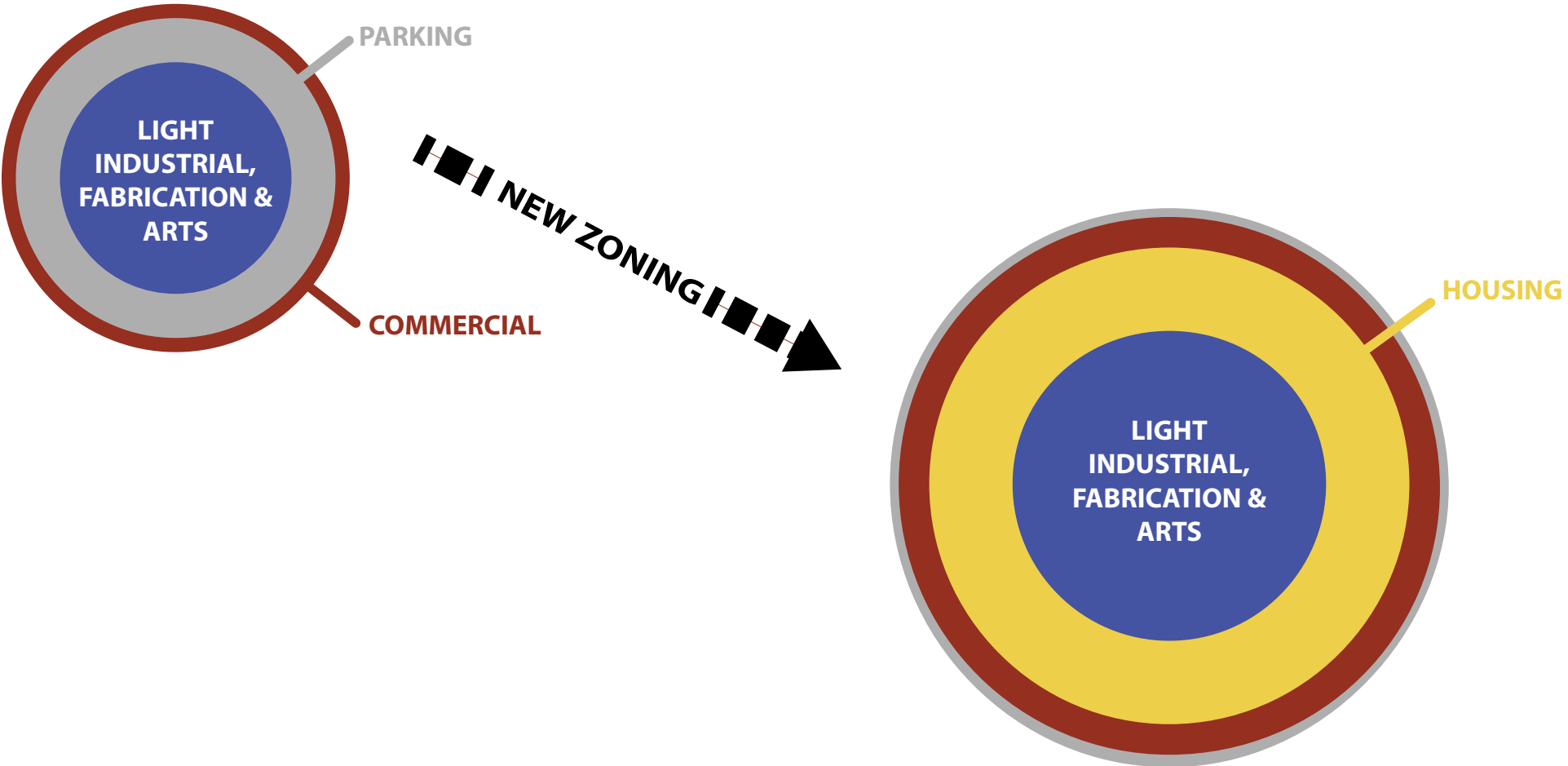
Increased allowed height from 50 to 100 feet, with stepbacks

“TODs are designed to be responsive to changing market conditions while maintaining high standards for building design and construction.”

- Somerville Zoning Ordinance



Re-zoning For Industrial Mixed Use & TOD



Integrating Light Industry, Commercial, and Residential



Housing Recommendations



Mix market-rate and affordable housing

Prioritize low- to middle-income households, families, and artists



Economic Development Recommendations

Preserve light industrial uses to meet need for middle-skill jobs

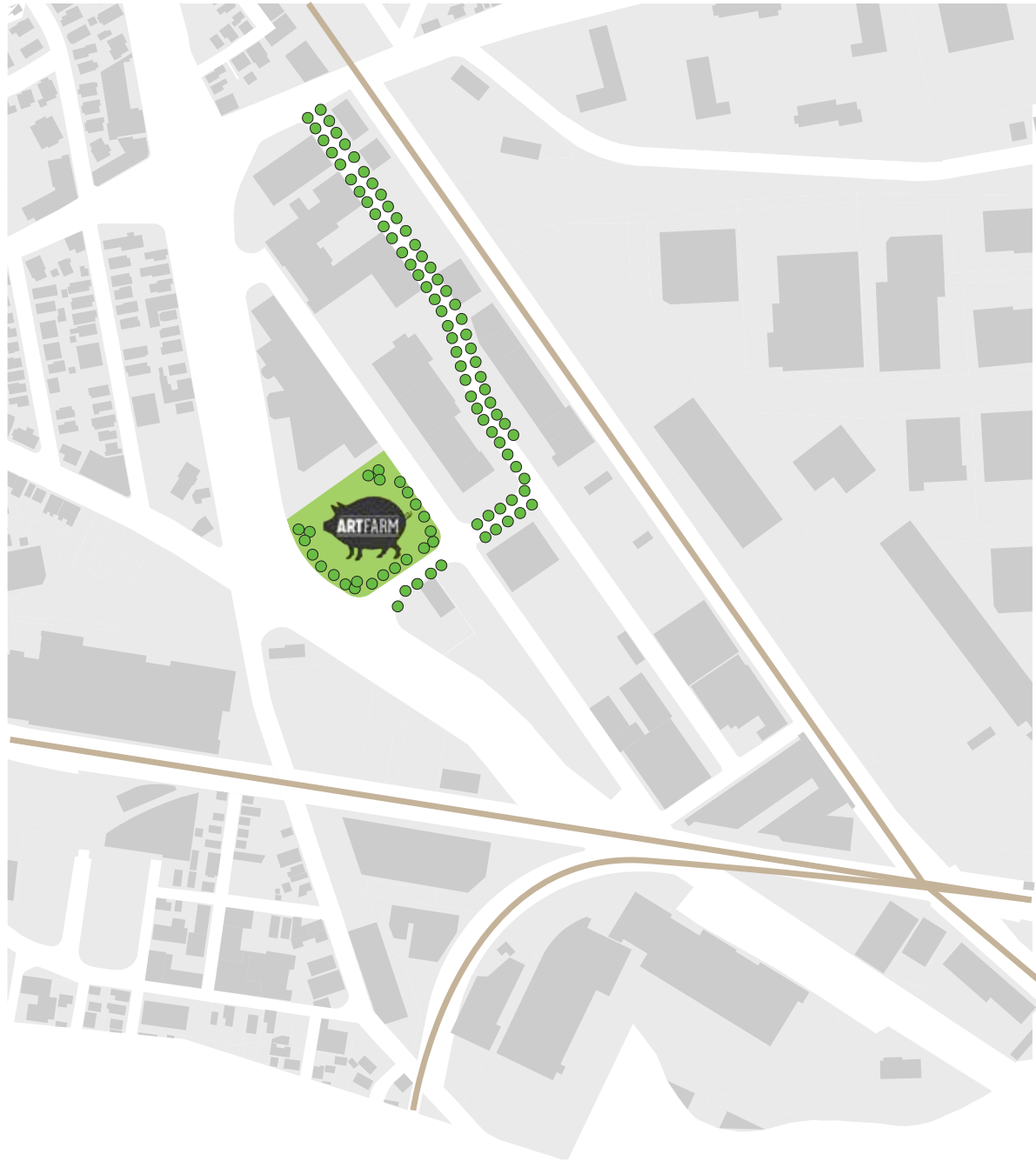
Strengthen city tax base through mix of uses

Create incentives for affordable startup and “step-up” office space

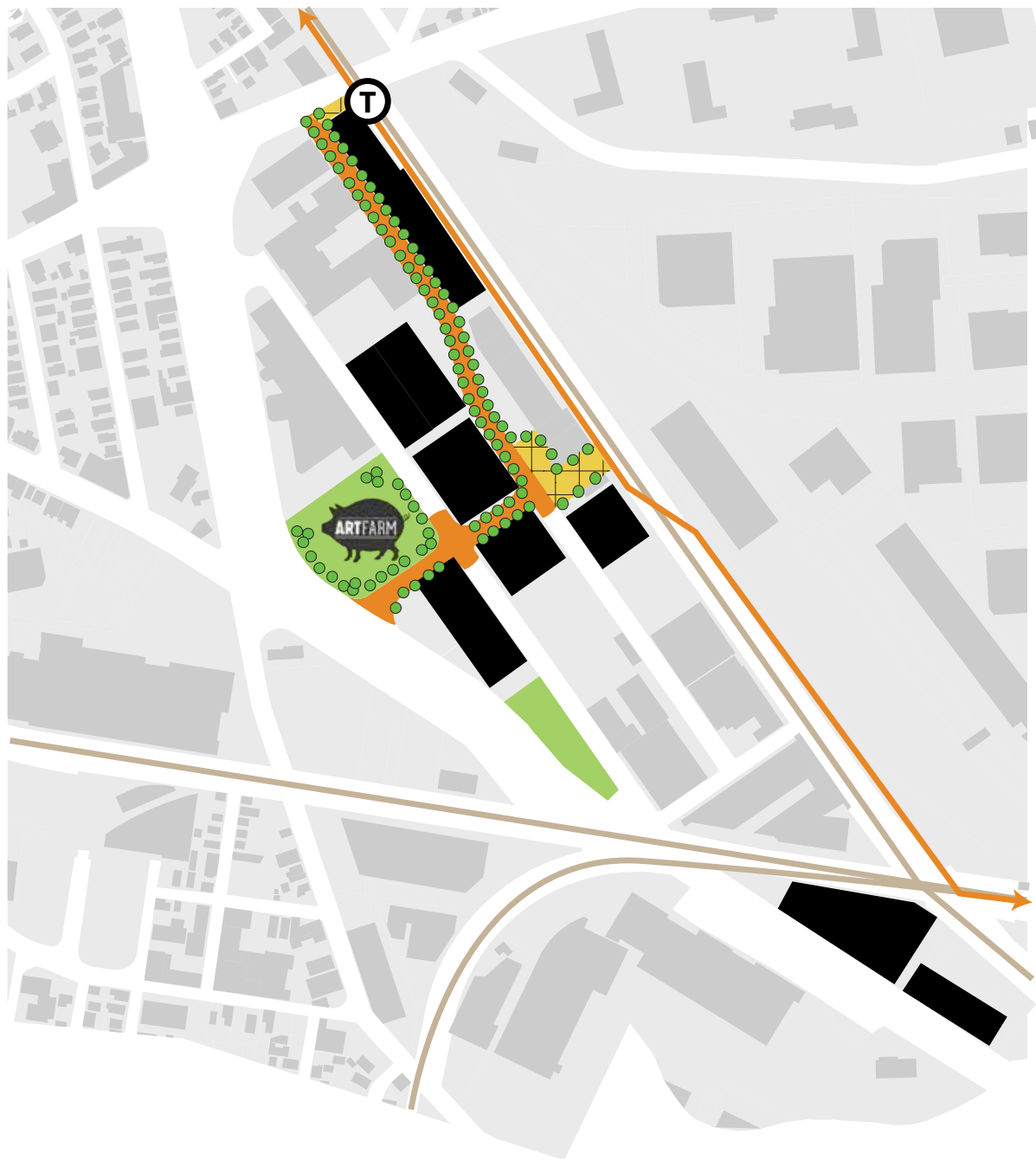
Enact Somerville’s Jobs Trust linkage fee proposal for job training programs



Phasing: Near-Term



Phasing: Medium-Term



Phasing: Long-Term



Our Goals

Create mixed-use district with focus on industry and arts

Provide affordable space in which to work and live

Create vibrant and walkable public realm

Increase density to leverage opportunities created by grounding of McGrath and new T stop

Thank you!

Email us at ***11.360@mit.edu***