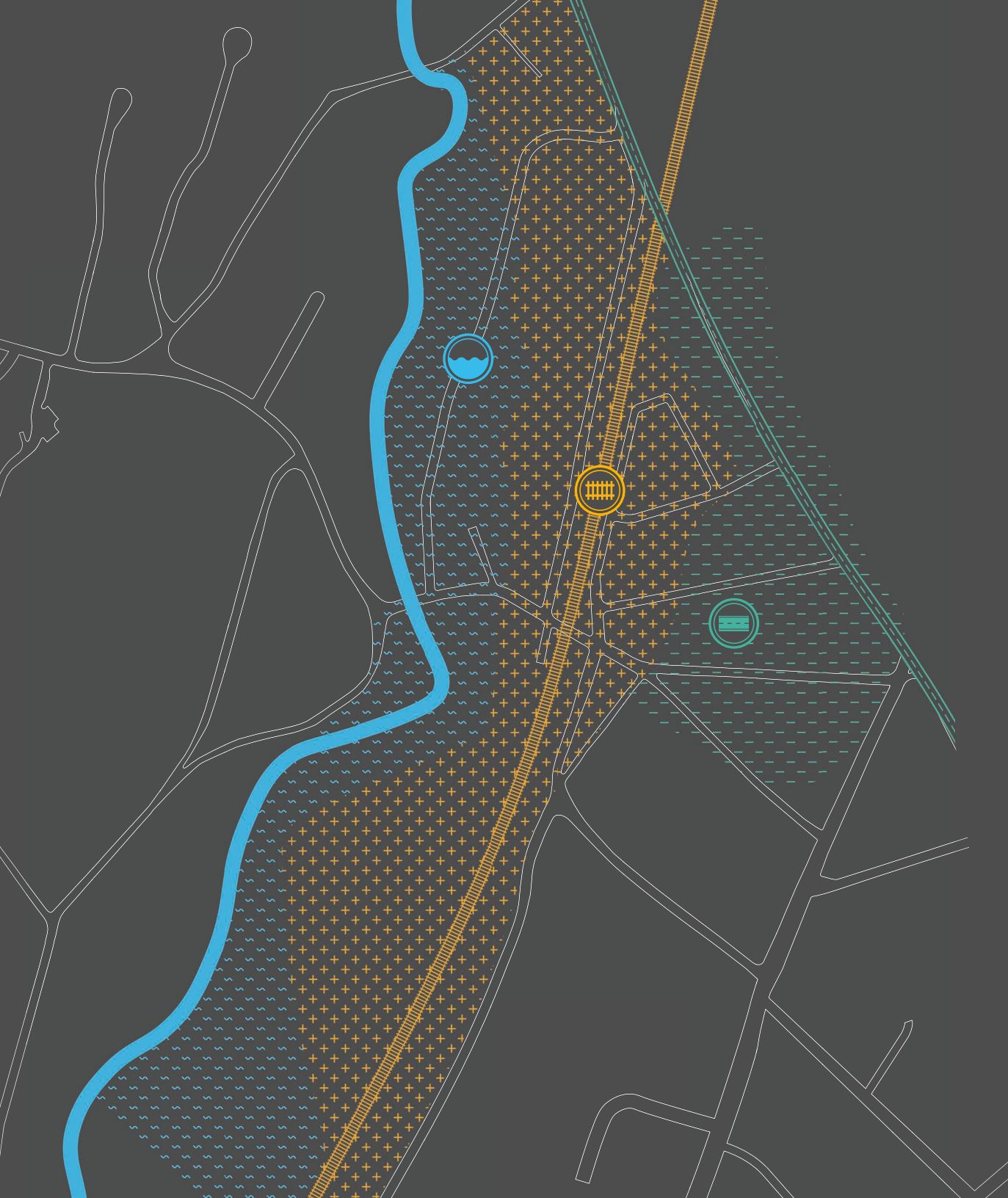




HMD

HISTORIC MILL DISTRICT ANDOVER

Design Guidelines Andover, MA

February 6, 2018

River Rail Road   



architecture
urban design

GAMBLE
ASSOCIATES

Prepared for

Paul Materazzo, Director of Planning
Lisa Schwarz, Senior Planner

Community Development & Planning
36 Bartlet Street
Andover, MA 01810
phone (978)623-8650
email: pmaterazzo@andoverma.gov
lschwarz@andoverma.gov

Prepared by

Gamble Associates
David Gamble, Brian Gregory, Philipp Maué
678 Massachusetts Avenue, Suite 502
Cambridge MA 02139
617-292-9912

Comments / Questions

The Design Guidelines are intended to be a living document that will evolve over time with the changing needs of the Town. In that spirit, the document invites comments and perspectives that will inform the Town of Andover as it updates and amends this work.

Comments on this document may be made to:
Paul Materazzo, Director of Planning
Community Development & Planning
phone (978)623-8650
email: pmaterazzo@andoverma.gov

Purpose of document

These Guidelines address the design of new buildings along Andover's major downtown corridors, along the MBTA Commuter rail tracks and the Shawsheen River. They are intended to enhance buildings, parking and the public realm interface within the Historic Mill District.

Andover's Historic Mill District is a large area. The geography is over 100 acres in size, and the natural topography of the district creates different opportunities for redevelopment depending on its location up or downhill. Some areas of the HMD are already built up, while other areas do not fully capitalize on their proximity to open space, public transit or primary commercial corridors. These Design Guidelines provide guidance for new development and ensure that what gets built in the Historic Mill District happens in a manner that enhances the overall character of the Town. The Guidelines provide clarity about what is envisioned in the future. The criteria pertain to new development on properties that are vacant, or sites that are likely to be redeveloped in the future. Design Guidelines help shape the basic framework of future development like building height, scale, parking, etc. They do NOT define potential uses, per se. Therefore, current property owners and their uses are not restricted by the Design Guidelines.

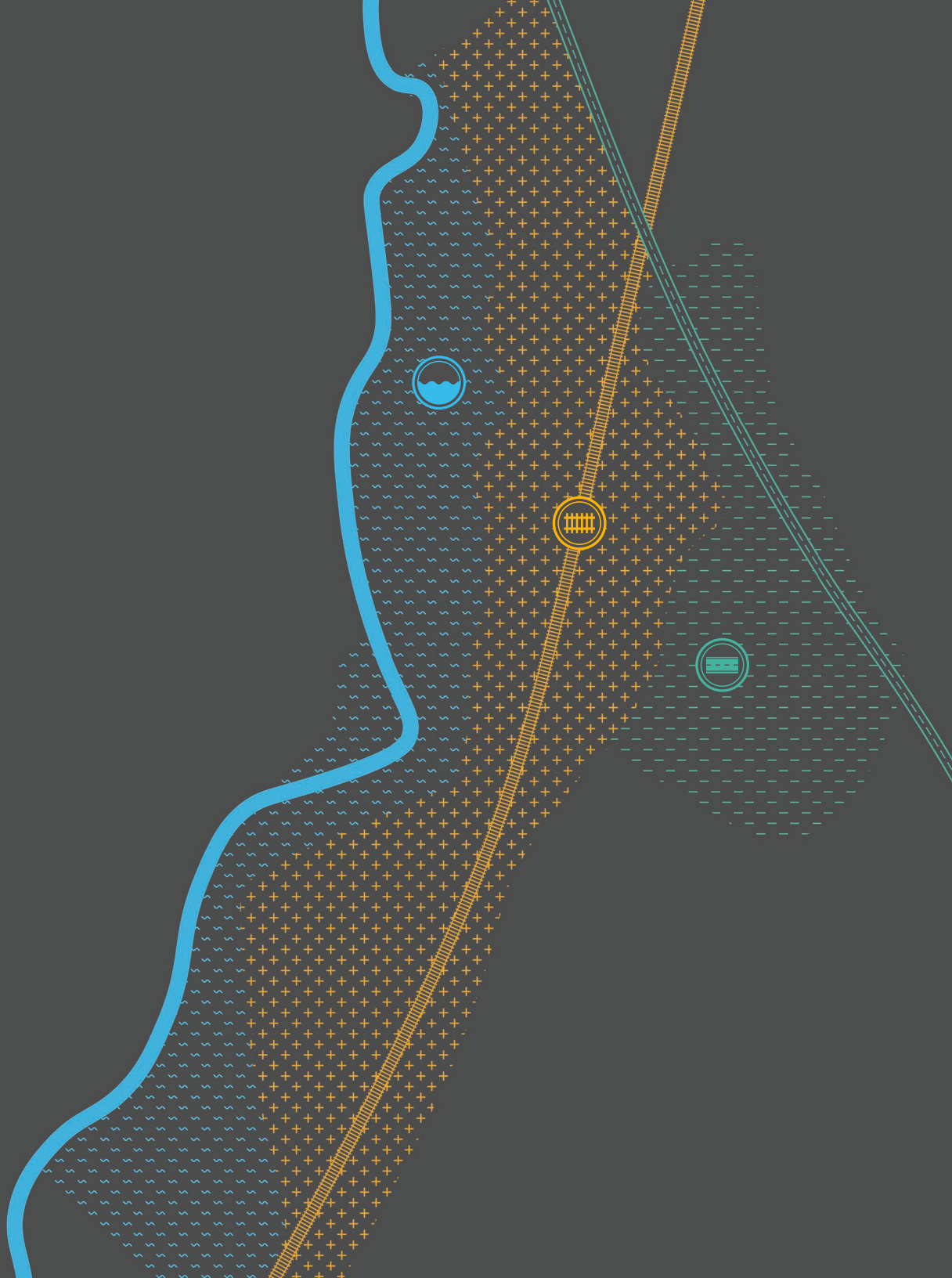


Dundee Park

Table of contents

01	Introduction	5
02	Design Guidelines	19
	River corridor 	25
	Rail corridor 	45
	Road corridor 	65
03	Conclusion / Next steps	85





01

Introduction

What are Design Guidelines?

Why now?

Regional context

Project area

Andover's history

Building in an historic context

Design Guidelines framework

Brinding the downtown together

Traffic challenges

Recommended traffic improvements



MBTA Commuter Rail Station

What are Design Guidelines?

These Design Guidelines address the design of new buildings within Andover's Historic Mill District. New development, if not done well, has the potential to undermine the very quality of place that makes Andover attractive. Design Guidelines address this. At the same time, if design guidelines are too restrictive, they have the potential to thwart redevelopment efforts by lengthening the review process, frustrating constituents and scaring away potential developers. **Finding the right balance of insights and ideas without being too prescriptive lies at the essence of what constitutes a well-crafted set of design guidelines.**

Why now?

Andover's downtown is poised for smart growth. There is a palpable desire to capitalize on the unique characteristics of its historic resources and the advantages of living and working in a walkable, transit-oriented district. While much of the district is already built out, an emphasis on adaptive reuse will bring existing buildings into more productive use and add vibrancy to the Town. Unfortunately, the center of the district is also the area that has the least in common with the physical characteristics of Andover that people cherish. Unsafe street intersections, a prevalence of surface parking and low density, suburban structures signal a preference for car-dependent uses. Establishing guidelines that direct investment to areas that need them most is both timely and essential for Andover to thrive.

Regional context

Andover is located approximately 20 miles north of Boston, MA. The MBTA's commuter rail Haverhill Line runs through Andover and provides connections to downtown Boston which takes about 40 minutes. This public transit connection is crucial to the future development of Andover given the desire of more and more people of all ages to live in close proximity to transit stations.



Project area

The Town of Andover created the Historic Mill District (HMD) in 2015. This new zoning district encompasses an area between Main Street, Dundee Park, the Shawsheen River and Whole Foods Grocery Store. **The purpose of the HMD is to encourage smart growth development in proximity to Andover's regional transit station by fostering a range of housing opportunities within mixed-use development projects that promote compact design, preservation of open space, and a variety of transportation options, including enhanced pedestrian access to employment and nearby transportation systems.**

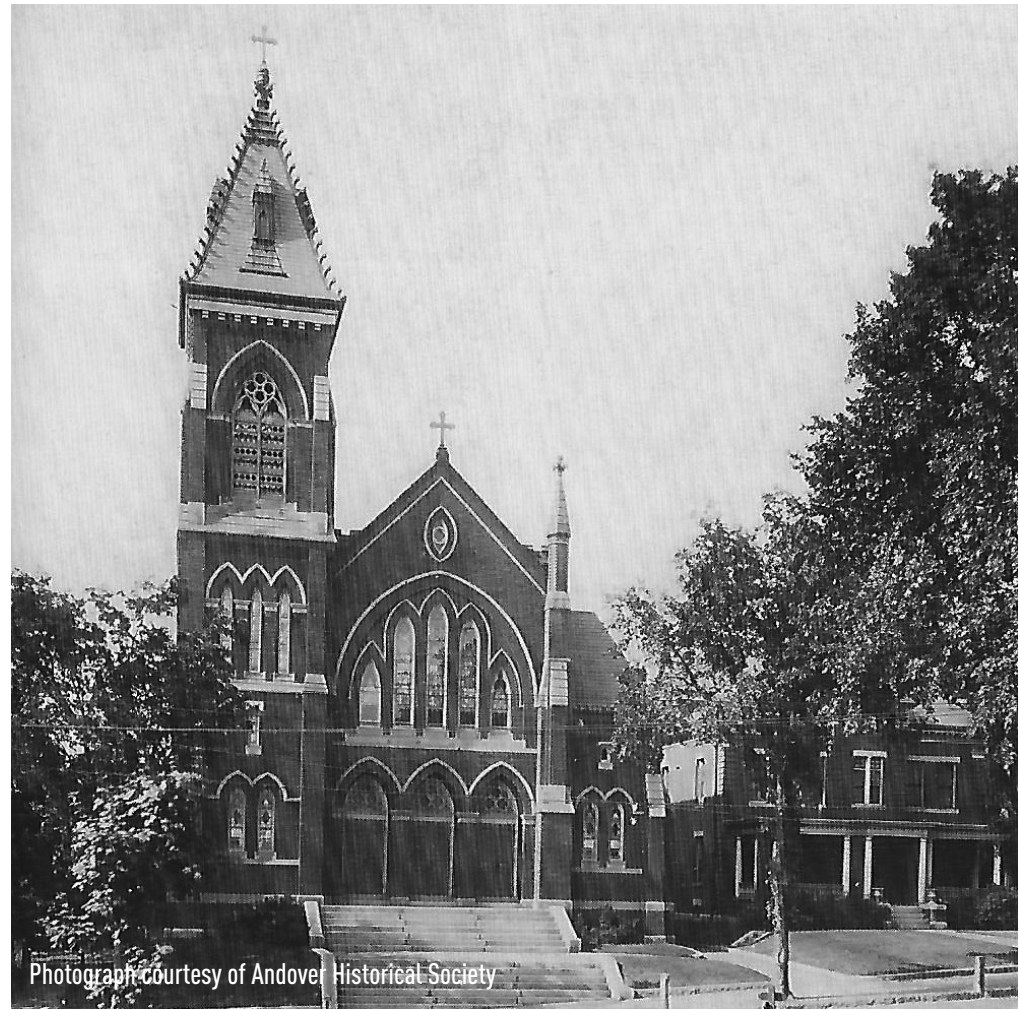
Andover is defined by its vibrant downtown corridors as well as by its relationship to the Shawsheen River and the MBTA commuter rail station with its surroundings. Collectively, these stitch together the various neighborhoods of the Historic Mill District (HMD). The Design Guidelines focus on these links and nodes to guide sustainable future growth. By strengthening the character of these corridors, greater connectivity and a stronger "sense of place" can be achieved.



Andover's history

The Town of Andover grew along the banks of its rivers and transportation networks. So should it today. There are opportunities for recreation, residential, entertainment and economic development throughout the HMD. A 2010 Market Analysis specifically identified a mixed-use opportunity for redevelopment for the Town Yard that could include retail, restaurants and up to 250 residential units (Market Analysis – Andover Town Yard, RKG Associates 2010).

In addition to these uses, the community expressed a desire for a potential arts venue in the area. The creation of an Arts Center within the HMD has a number of synergistic effects. The uses do not detract from the core of downtown, for no such venue currently exists. Artist studio spaces, classrooms, small “black box” theaters and galleries can coalesce together and create a new destination, centrally-located and within walking distance to other attractions. Adding cultural uses to the HMD will form a valuable and interesting educational feature in the life of Andover that recalls the entertainment uses that were prevalent in Town generations ago. (May 2017 Historical Society “Design Notes Wish List”).



Building in an historic context

Historic districts are designated as such because their physical, social or cultural characteristics are valued. The urban design, scale, proportion and material palette of buildings and spaces in historic areas simply resonate with us. At a time when advancements in technology enable contemporary buildings to celebrate the shallow dimension and tautness of their facades, buildings constructed in prior eras have a visual (and literal) weight. Even when the pattern of openings in former industrial buildings like mills are simple and repetitive, the depth of their elevations and quality of their materials creates an interplay of texture and relief that delights.

Perhaps the greatest under-appreciated asset of older buildings is their adaptability for new use. When a building is constructed with quality materials, it lasts longer, and what was once a 19th century textile mill can be converted into funky 21st century apartments, offices or restaurants. Building uses change, but a building's form endures. For this reason, zoning by use is simply too blunt an instrument to create the kind of vibrant, mixed-use places we seek.

What then, does it mean to construct a new building in an area surrounded by old ones? Does a new building built in an historic area really need to look old? The HMD is comprised of a wide range of building types and architectural styles that have accrued over many years. Building styles within the district span from Post Modern (Public Safety Center) to Greek Revival and Pre-Railroad. The area lacks an overarching design aesthetic, and this is a good thing. It adds variation and diversity to the experience. While many of the structures in Dundee Park and along the river are former industrial buildings, others are not. The residential neighborhoods surrounding the former Town Yard are a different scale, material and use than the

former industrial buildings. Therefore, identifying a single architectural style for new buildings limits creative opportunities and places a value judgement which prioritizes one era over another.

Style is subjective and trends change. One person's idea of an authentic or appropriate design can be derided by another, and each generation seems to think that the aesthetic judgements of the prior generation were misguided. Victorian architecture may be widely admired today, but during its time it was criticized for flamboyance! So, when a new building is built adjacent to an old one, it inevitably draws a comparison. These then are the attributes that are most essential in establishing Design Guidelines for new construction in Andover's Historic Mill District: building height, massing, setbacks and materials. The public interface with the building edge matters a great deal, as well as the linkages through a site. The location of parking and signage is also addressed in this document. At the end of the day, it's quality that counts.

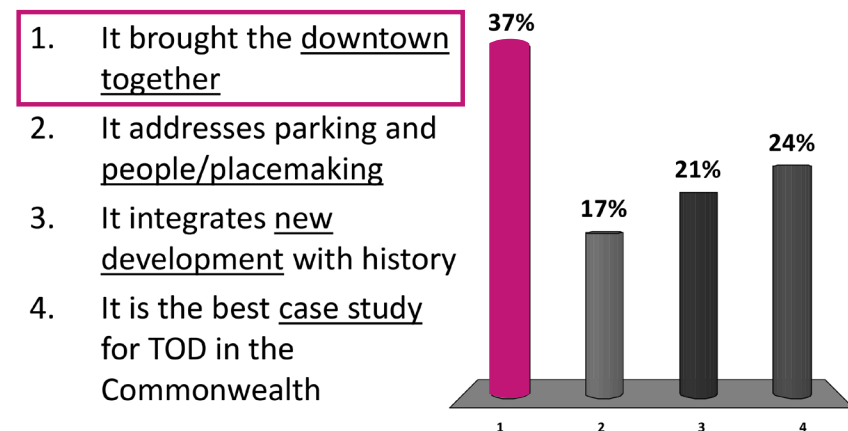
By establishing Design Guidelines for the Historic Mill District, the Town of Andover will attract private investment, create opportunities for new businesses and jobs, increase tourism and the sense of community pride, forge compatible land use patterns, increase property and sales taxes and reduce the amount of underutilized areas downtown. After nearly a century of suburban preferences, we are placing increased importance on the value of older places. The Historic Mill District provides a connection to the past, and when complemented with new development, the area will be injected with new life.

Design Guidelines framework

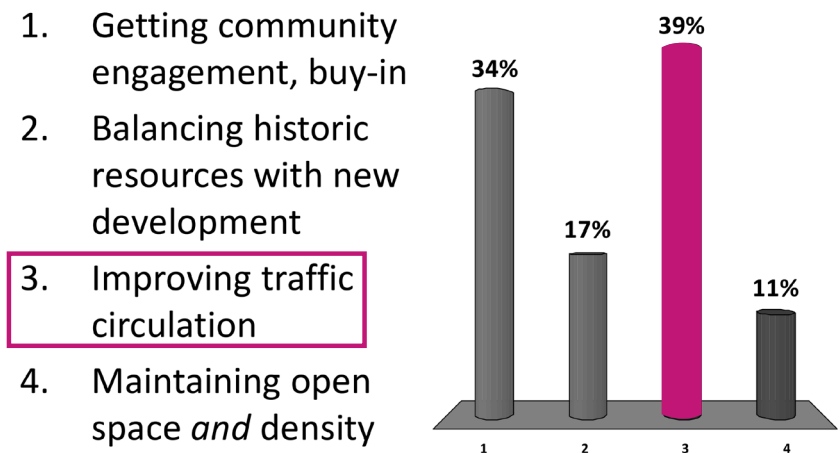
In May and July of 2017, two public meetings were held at Memorial Hall Library to discuss the aspirations for the Design Guidelines. In these meetings, two main challenges were identified: bringing the downtown together and improving traffic circulation. The Design Guidelines have been developed to provide a level of clarity for development of private property and the interface with the public realm. As such, they cannot directly address traffic circulation. Nevertheless, improvements to the street network must be made to facilitate redevelopment of underutilized sites and enhance connectivity within the HMD. Circulation in and around the district is challenging today for a variety of reasons, including the fact that the area evolved slowly over time and in a more industrial age.

Andover's 2012 Master Plan reinforced a vision for a vibrant downtown that established principles by which the Town should evolve. The community reinforced a desire to continue to acquire and protect open spaces like the Shawsheen River and Greenway. Protecting and promoting Andover's small-town character, historical heritage and landmarks is essential, as is preserving the town's layout and scale. There is an ambition to maintain the town center with a mix of commercial and public activities, a range of housing options, historical elements and parks. The community wants to strengthen opportunities for regional transit, and improved connections with mass transit hubs in addition to other goals. (Source: Andover Master Plan (2012) What is the Vision for Andover?, Section 1, Page 4). The Design Guidelines for the Historic Mill District have been established with these goals in mind.

What statement would you be most proud to hear about the Historic Mill District?



What is the greatest challenge in implementation of Design Guidelines?



Bringing the downtown together

Barriers

While the Historic Mill District is branded as one place, it is actually a variety of sub-districts. The Study Area is divided by natural and man-made barriers. Most noticeably, the topography slopes 120 feet from east to west and the north-south rail line bifurcates the site in the other direction. Sidewalks are not continuous and the street grid is broken around the Town Yard which has had limited public access for generations. The prevalence of surface parking lots throughout disrupt the continuity of a well-defined public realm. Even the Shawsheen River is largely inaccessible and hidden from view. The result of these conditions is that the distance between destinations seems bigger than it really is.

“Bringing the downtown together” means that there are infrastructural improvements that need to be made to better serve the needs of the Andover community. Investments in continuous sidewalks, new street trees and pedestrian-scaled lighting will enhance walking circuits, improve safety and security, and more effectively manage storm-water. A more rationalized street grid that incorporates on street parking will make private development more attractive.



Bringing the downtown together

Potential Connections

Andover's West Middle School and High School bring pedestrians, cars and buses through the HMD. For students, the path from school to Main Street (Route 1) is challenging. Upgrades are needed in both sidewalks and street crossings to ensure safe passage between destinations.

Route 2 indicates a potential, future connection that reinforces the close proximity between Main Street and the Shawsheen River. A number of physical barriers would need to be overcome to foster this connection. Sidewalk improvements on both sides of Lewis Street will make the former Town Yard site more accessible for people of all ages and abilities. Considerations should be made for a pedestrian bridge over the MBTA tracks at the location of the current train platform. The bridge has the potential to act as a gateway into town, improving access to the tracks and uniting the MBTA property on the one side of the tracks to the former Town Yard site on the other side.

With a series of ramps and stairs, a link between the MBTA parking lot and a potential open space along the Shawsheen River could be established. Along this trajectory, new buildings, spaces and programs can add vibrancy to the district while navigating the steep topography that separates these areas.



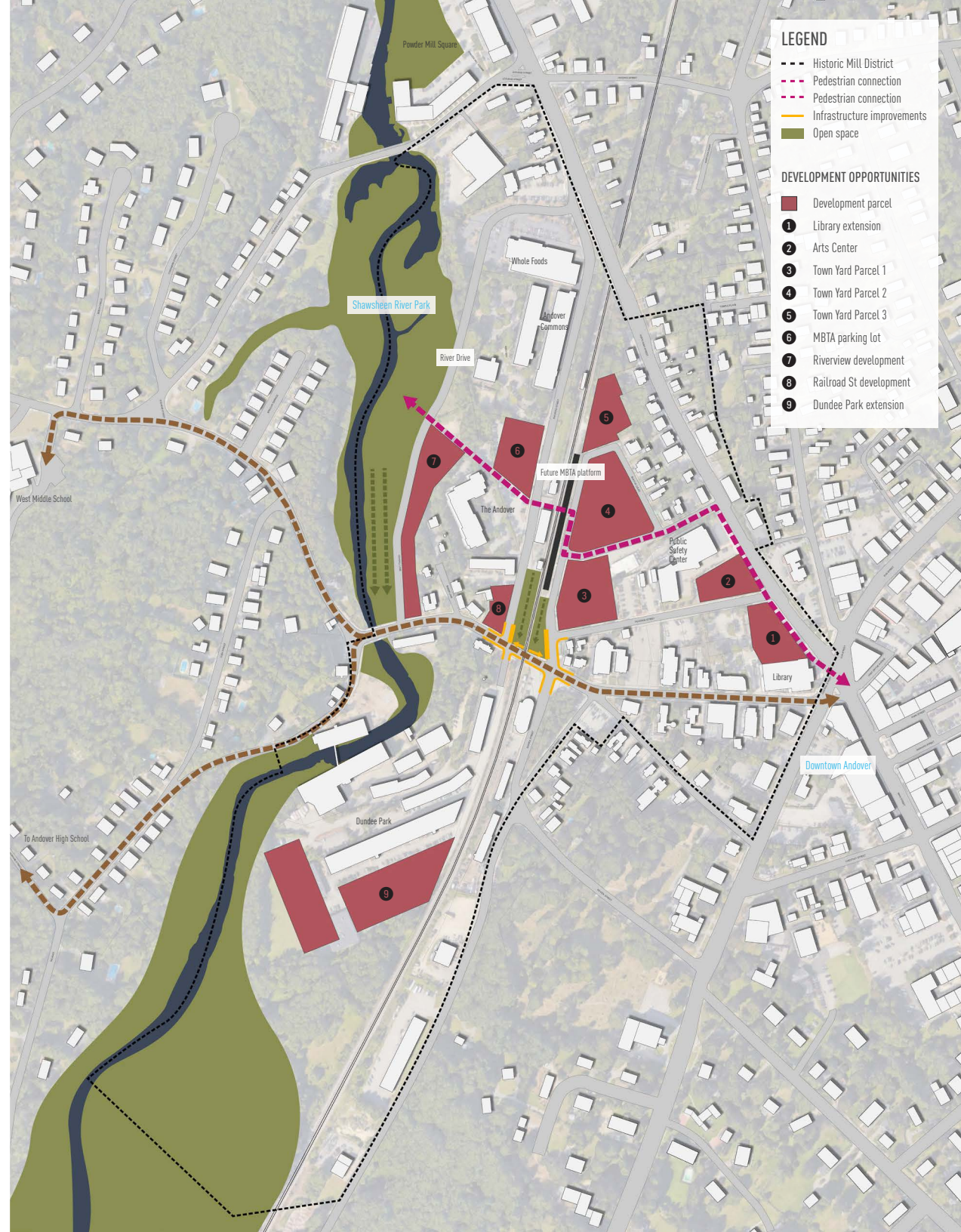
Bringing the downtown together

Conceptual approach

- Historic Mill District
- Pedestrian connection
- Pedestrian connection
- Infrastructure improvements
- Open space

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Potential development parcel
- ① Library extension
- ② Arts Center
- ③ Town Yard Parcel 1
- ④ Town Yard Parcel 2
- ⑤ Town Yard Parcel 3
- ⑥ MBTA parking lot
- ⑦ Riverview development
- ⑧ Railroad St development
- ⑨ Dundee Park expansion.



LEGEND

- Historic Mill District
- Pedestrian connection
- Pedestrian connection
- Infrastructure improvements
- Open space

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Development parcel
- ① Library extension
- ② Arts Center
- ③ Town Yard Parcel 1
- ④ Town Yard Parcel 2
- ⑤ Town Yard Parcel 3
- ⑥ MBTA parking lot
- ⑦ Riverview development
- ⑧ Railroad St development
- ⑨ Dundee Park extension



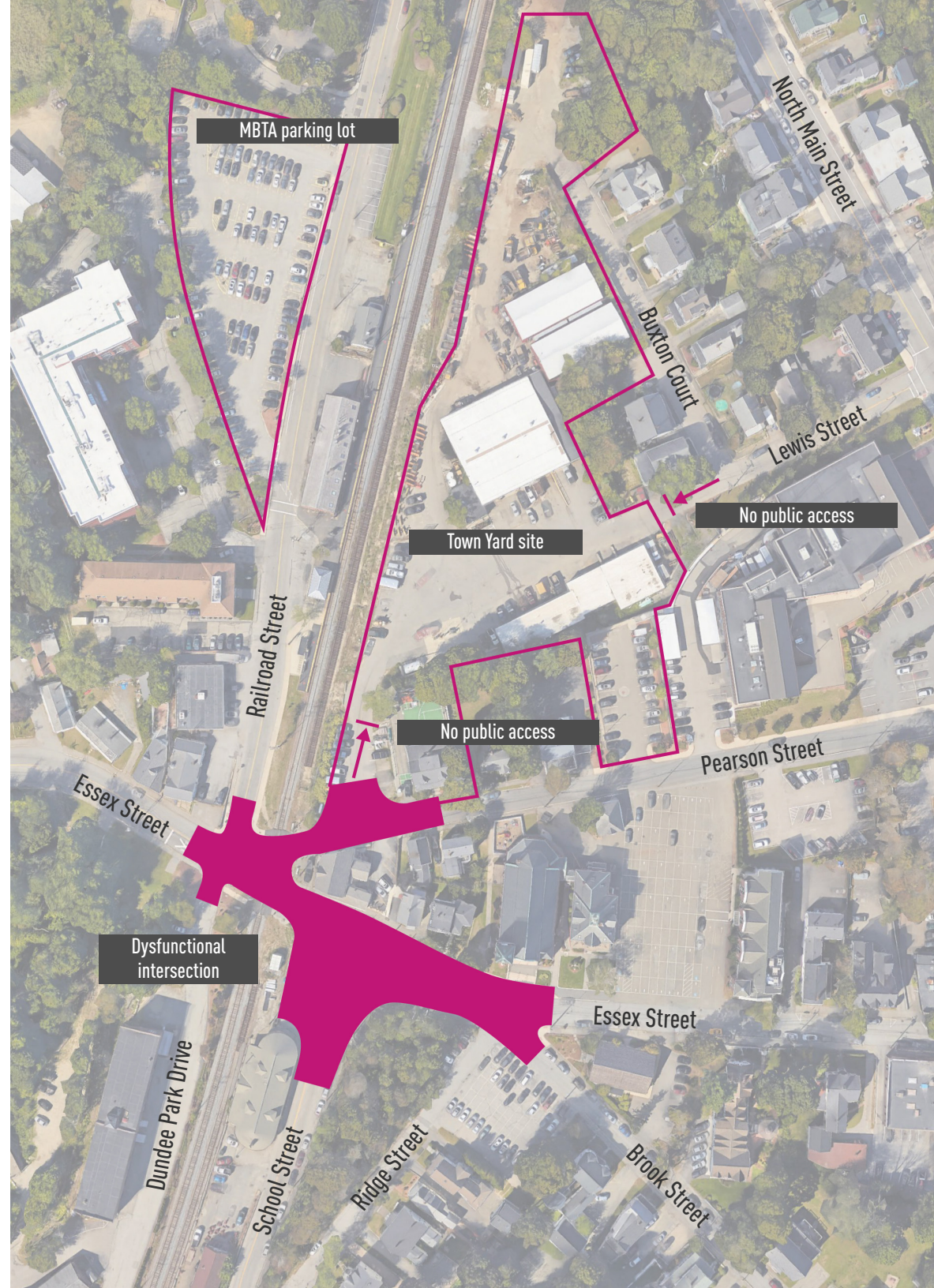
Intersection with MBTA tracks

Traffic challenges

The intersection at Essex, School and Pearson Streets is dysfunctional and hinders flow through the HMD for both cars and pedestrians. According to the Andover Police Department, the intersection of 49 Essex Street/10 Railroad Street has some of the highest crash rates. For pedestrians, crossing the train tracks is not so demanding, but navigating the intersection is because of the excessive amount of pavement and poorly marked crosswalks. These observations have been identified in previous transportation studies. (Source: Essex Street Corridor Study 2005, VHB).

In addition, the former Town Yard site is isolated. For generations, access through the property has been limited to service vehicles. With the relocation of this maintenance facility, integration of the property to the rest of the roadway network is warranted.

On the opposite side of the tracks, the MBTA lot functions solely as a surface parking lot for commuters. Redevelopment of this site - in tandem with the Town Yard property - has the potential to integrate both sides of the tracks into a cohesive, transit-oriented development. The Train Station and the Town Yard need to be made accessible and integrated.





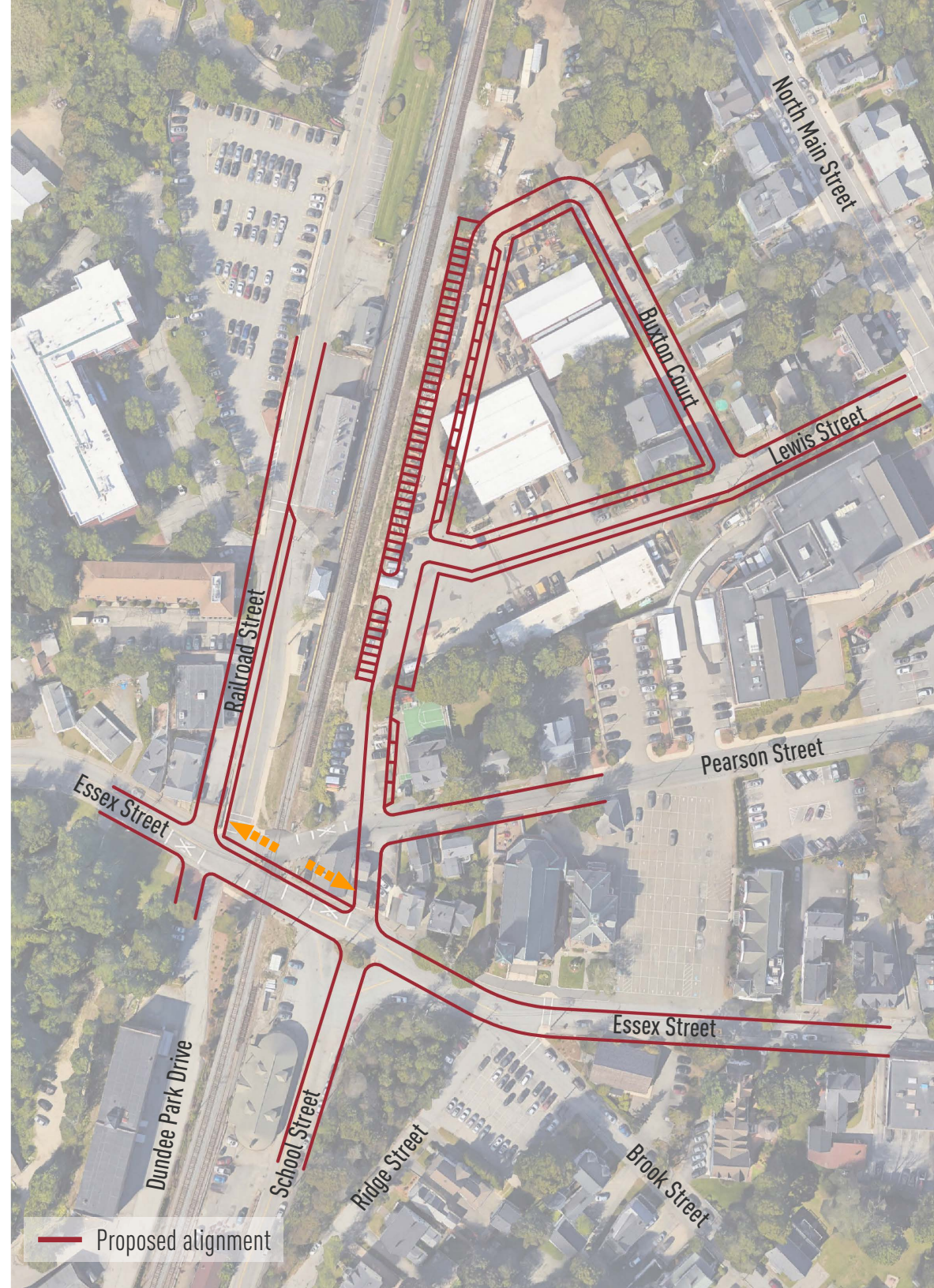
Recommended traffic improvements

There is an array of public sector investments that need to be made to facilitate redevelopment. The most pressing issue is the existing alignment of School Street with Essex Street. In addition, congestion is created at the intersection of Railroad Street and Essex Street, and there is only way in and out of Dundee Park. The Town Yard site lacks a coherent circulation system that integrates it into the surrounding areas. **Rationalizing the street circulation patterns will foster greater pedestrian movement and forge a safer physical realm for people and cars at the crossing with the rail tracks.**

Recommendations:

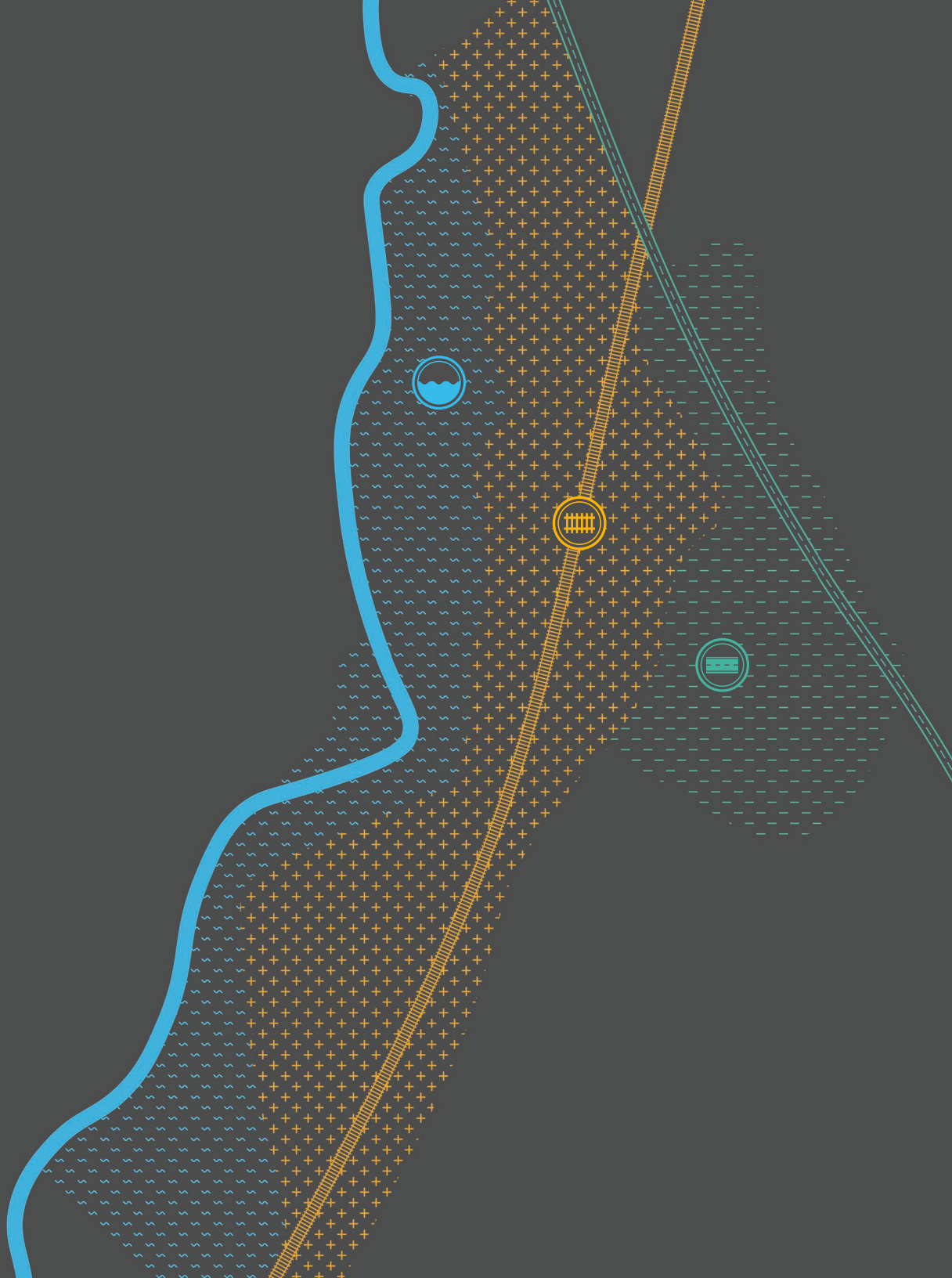
- Straighten School Street and reduce excess roadway pavement
- Extend School Street across Essex Street towards the former Town Yard site*
- Straighten Railroad Street, thereby increasing distance between the intersections of Railroad Street and School Street*
- Realign Lewis Street so that it intersects School Street at a right angle
- Extend Buxton Court (which currently comes to a dead-end) around the Town Yard property to link with School Street.
- Seek MBTA approval for a second means of egress into Dundee Park across the tracks (location TBD).

*Note: These are long term investments and adversely affect a number of private properties.





Dundee Park



02 Design Guidelines

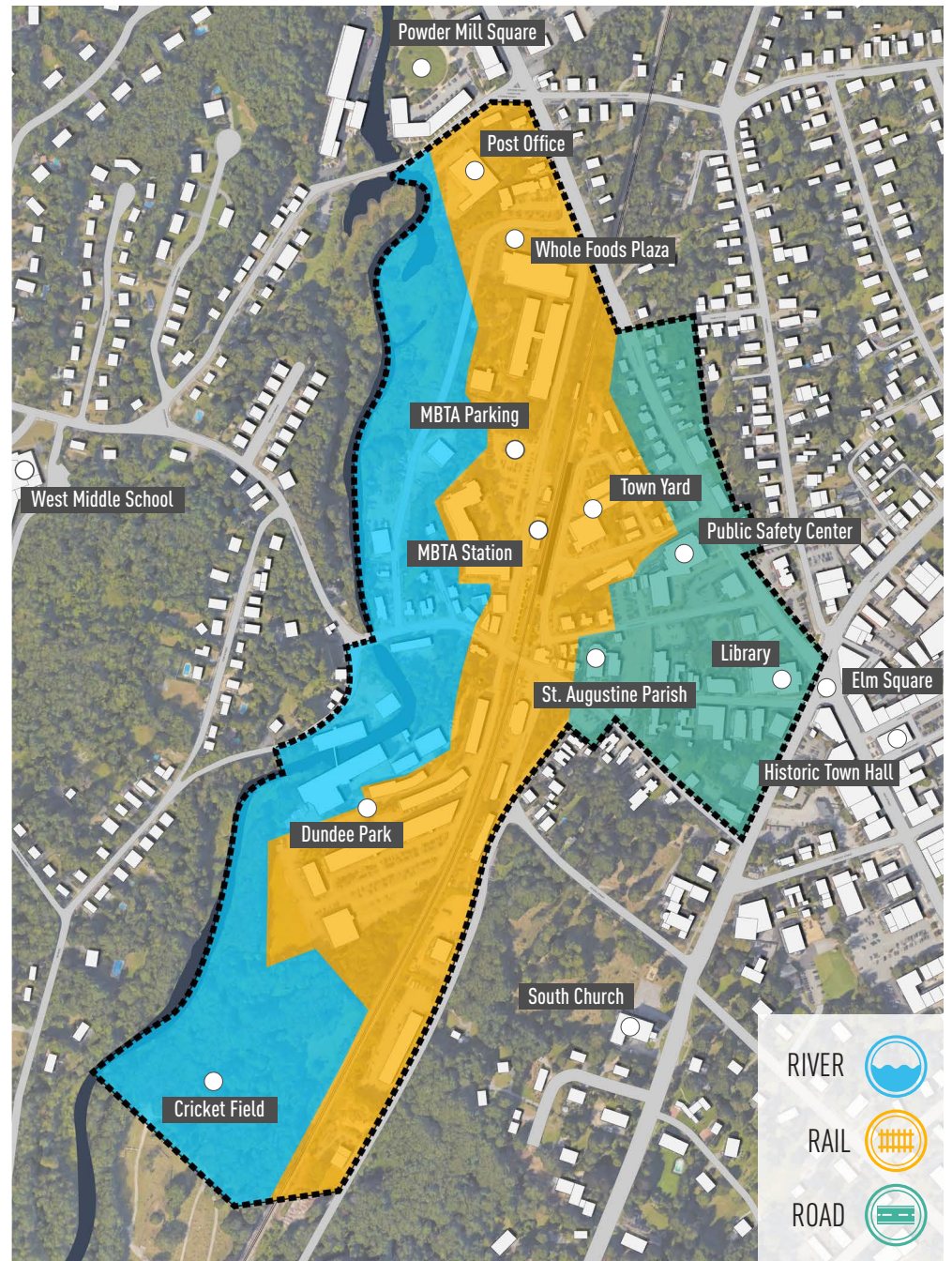
Three corridors

Andover's Design Guidelines are divided into three (3) different corridors that acknowledge the distinct qualities of each.

 **RIVER CORRIDOR** Sites located along the Shawsheen River and Greenway

 **RAIL CORRIDOR** Sites proximate to the MBTA commuter rail line

 **ROADWAY CORRIDOR** Sites along Main Street and the Downtown Center



Within this document structure of three corridors, physical attributes such as building scale, parking and site access vary. **In general, greater density is envisioned along the rail line where opportunities for larger-scale, mixed use projects capitalize on a transit-oriented development approach.** The Town Yard Site, which will become available for redevelopment after the completion of the new Municipal Services Facility on Campanelli Drive in 2019, and Dundee Park fall within this corridor. New growth along the Shawsheen River needs to acknowledge the particular challenges and opportunities faced when building adjacent to a natural resource. While there are not many sites large enough for redevelopment along the river, the low-lying area adjacent to the river may provide one such opportunity if access to this area can be enhanced. Finally, Andover's Main Street is a unique and enviable asset that demands exceptional architecture commensurate with its role as the commercial center of town. Areas within the Road corridor include the Memorial Hall Library and its surroundings, the Public Safety Center, the two gas stations along Main Street and surface parking lots associated with the St. Augustine Parish.

Each corridor contains seven (7) topics:

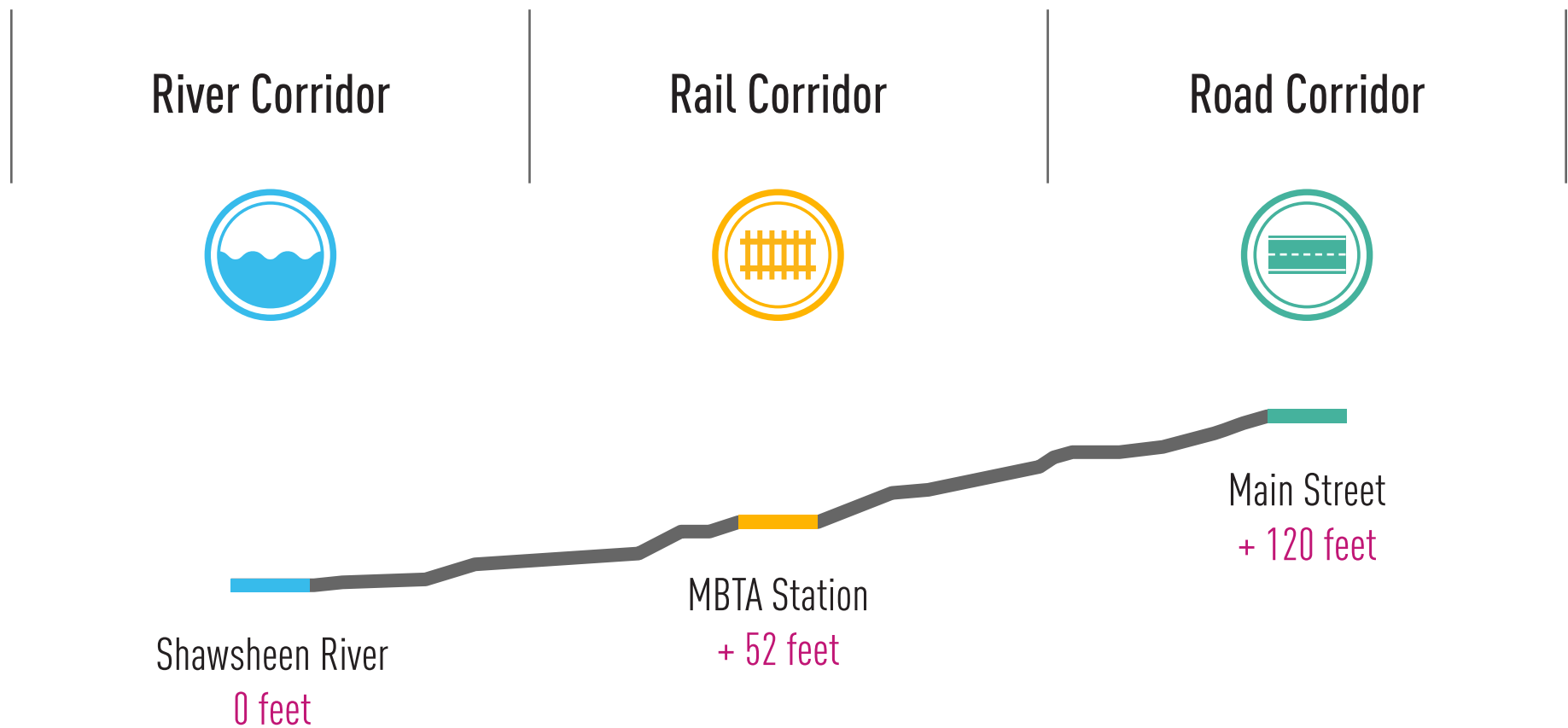
- ① **BUILDING HEIGHT**
- ② **BUILDING MASSING**
- ③ **PUBLIC INTERFACE**
- ④ **PARKING + ACCESS**
- ⑤ **LINKAGES + NETWORKS**
- ⑥ **FACADE + MATERIALS**
- ⑦ **SIGNAGE + WAYFINDING**



Dundee Park

Andover HMD topography

Hypothetical section demonstrating the change in topography between the river and the center of town.

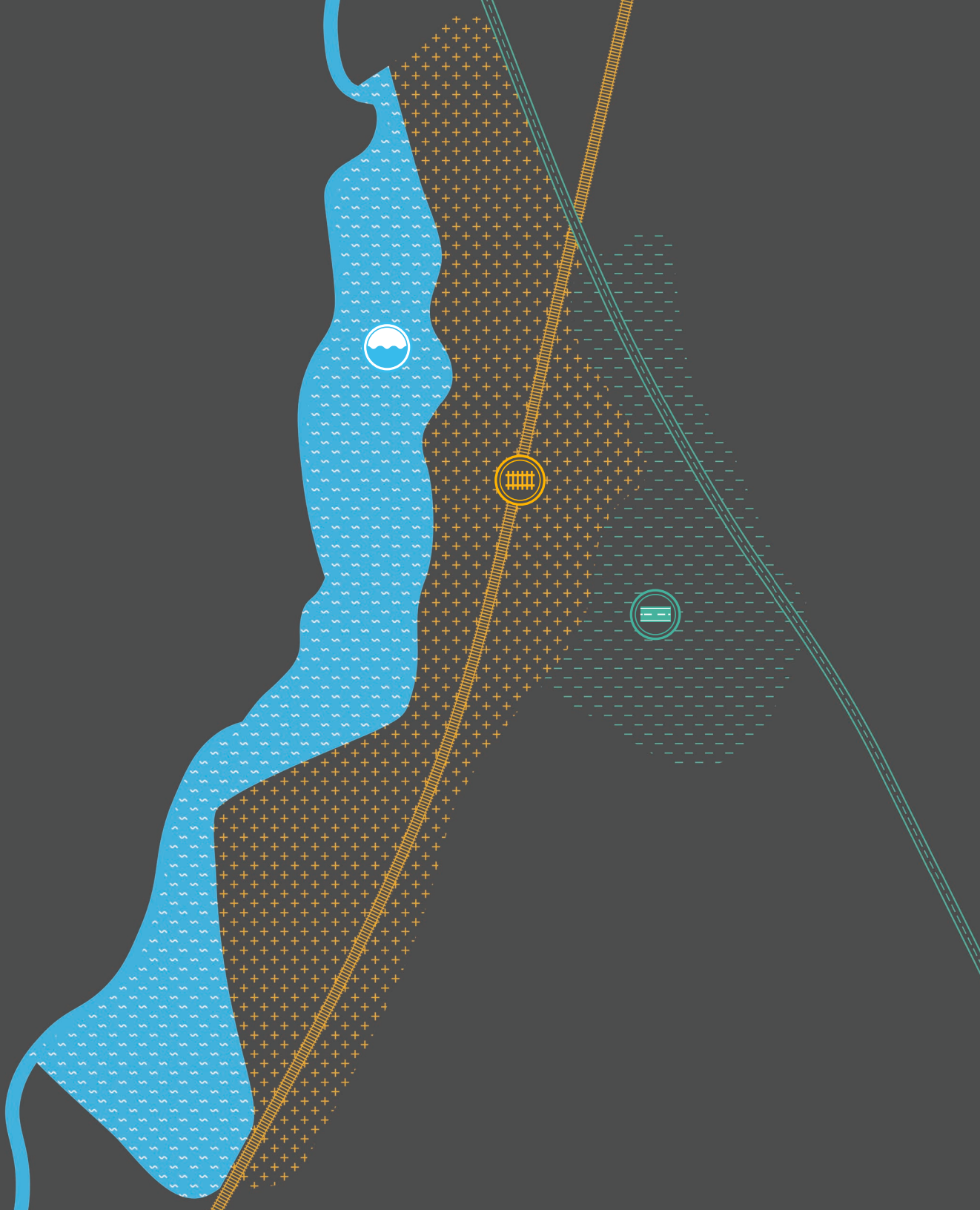




Grade change at Lewis Street



People are returning to riverfronts today - not for industry, as in eras past but - for quality-of-life. Andover's portion of the Shawsheen River is undergoing greater recognition and visibility through the advocacy of many people. At the same time, the Town has yet to fully embrace its River as a resource and economic development opportunity. There are a few prospects for new development in the Historic Mill District along the water's edge that leverage the open space as a catalyst and amenity.



River Corridor

River corridor

- 1 Henry's Automotive
- 2 Dundee Park # 18 | Oak + Iron Brewery
- 3 Dundee Park # 12
- 4 Dundee Park # 14
- 5 Dundee Park # 18
- 6 To Cricket Field





Building Height

The Historic Mill District has a wide range of building scales and typologies. The former industrial buildings along the river range from two to four stories. Smaller, residential buildings range from one to three stories. **However, the perception of scale depends a great deal on the surroundings; changes in topography affect how buildings are perceived.** Building height is also impacted by the type of construction, floor to floor dimensions and how height is actually measured relative to the surrounding site topography.

New development along the river should be sensitive to its location proximate to a natural resource. The river corridor is also in the low-lying areas of the town, and new development should avoid blocking views of the river from higher elevations.

- 2-3 stories
- Lower elevations towards the Shawsheen River
- Include step-backs to diminish building height





Building Massing

Massing includes building height, but also refers to volume and scale. Differentiation of the Historic Mill District into three distinctive corridors suggests that new development in each corridor entails variation of building mass in each. At the same time, the existing former industrial buildings along the river have a very different mass than other areas along the waterway which may be attractive for new development and should be sensitive to adjoining single-family residential structures.

In areas that are envisioned for lower density with no commercial ground uses, an increased setback from the public right-of-way is envisioned.

- Lower scale building volumes
- Variation in building facades by adding bays or terraces
- Balconies to capitalize on river views





Public Interface

In the 19th century, Andover's industrial buildings had an intimate relationship to the Shawsheen River. The water provided power to the mills that enabled the Town to prosper. As the needs of industry changed, public access to the water's edge for recreation and enjoyment have also changed. The desire for river access needs to be balanced against the vulnerability of building close to a fluctuating, natural resource.

There are only a few areas along the river in the Historic Mill District where new construction can occur. In these instances, the character of the space between the building edge and the public-right-of-way is essential. The scale of the sidewalk or future Riverwalk plays an important role in the ability of a development to enhance or detract from the public's experience. Landscape buffer zones between a street or sidewalk will provide a transition space between the public and private realms. Along the existing mill buildings, a continuation of a public experience should be advanced in tandem with the respective building renovations.

- Connectivity between buildings and river
- Intimate relationship between private/public space
- Wider public path in front of buildings – Riverwalk





Connectivity between buildings and river

Intimate relationship between private / public space



Parking + Access

The success of the recent repositioning of a former industrial building along the Shawsheen River into an entertainment and commercial venue (Oak + Iron Brewing Company) demonstrates the need to address customer parking. **Even as consumer preferences evolve - and more and more people see pedestrian-oriented environments as viable alternatives to driving - parking along the river corridor needs to be accommodated.** This is particularly true as additional attention is placed on the waterway as a social and cultural amenity.

Parking along the river is best located on the side, rear, or when possible, below the building. Parking lots should be visually screened by landscape buffers like native trees and plants. Considerations should be given to shared parking opportunities where day and night uses do not overlap to reduce the amount of space dedicated to surface parking needs.

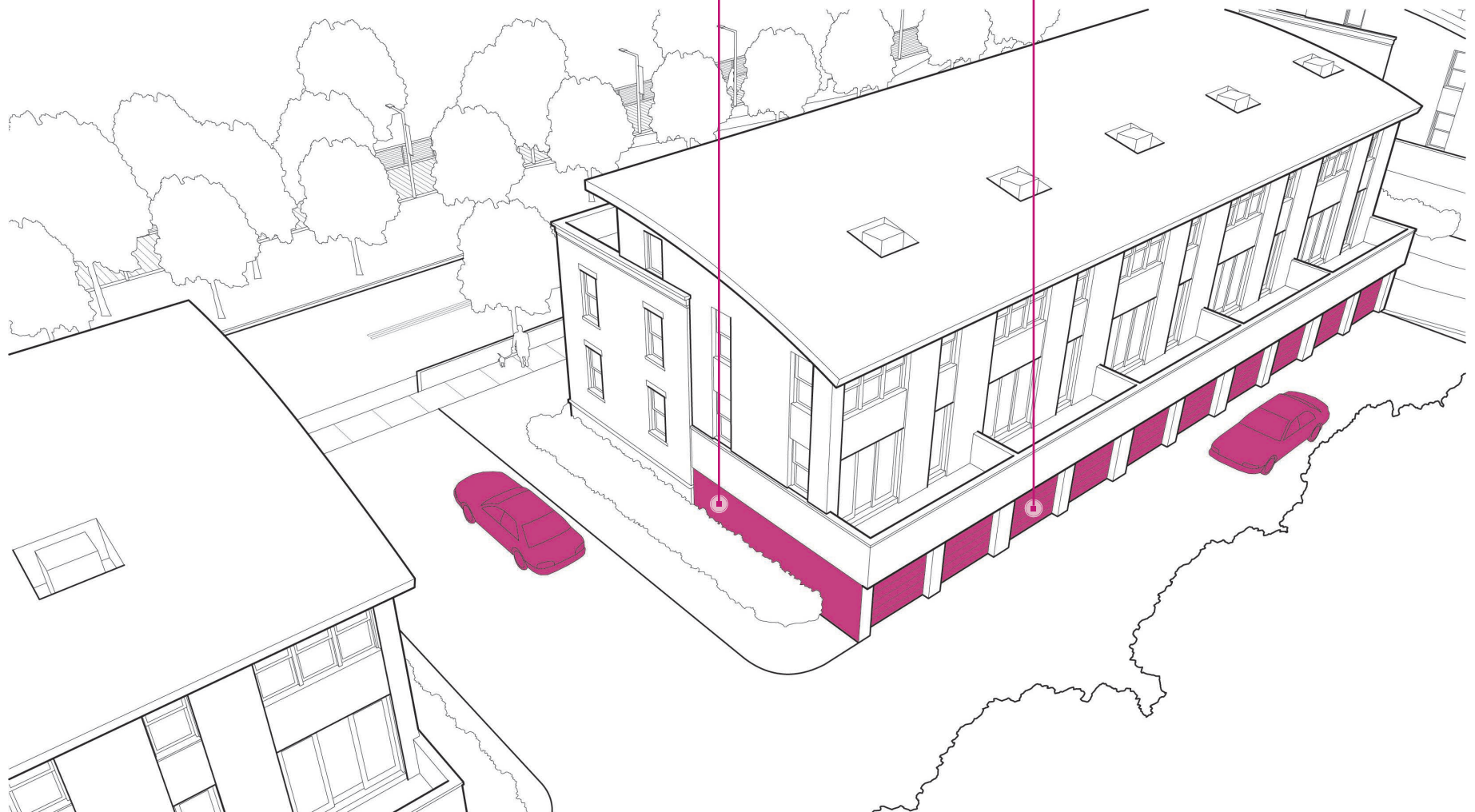
- Parking in rear of building
- Visually shield surface parking
- Parking below buildings or in floodable garages





Parking in rear of building

Parking below buildings or in floodable garages



Linkages + Network

The three corridors of river, rail and road represent Andover's primary locations for recreation, transportation and commerce. The inter-relationships between them is essential. The corridors should not be viewed as separate lines but rather as areas with perpendicular connections linking them together and to adjoining amenities, open spaces and community assets. The design and scale of these perpendicular connections are important to reduce the perception of long distances between them which is amplified by the change in elevation.

A well-designed network of paths, bridges, ramps, stairs and plazas, that links the river to Main Street will form an extraordinary public space of its own. Only if these connections are envisioned at the outset will they fully be integrated into the fabric of Andover.

- Foster public access to the river
- Performative open spaces to address runoff
- Sustainable techniques to reduce flooding



Foster public access to the river

Performative open spaces address runoff



Facades + Materials

The aesthetics of a building depends on many factors: the proportion and orientation of doors and windows, the color, material and patterning of the exterior as well as the overall composition of the elements. Durable, high-quality materials add a level of sophistication to a large and minimally detailed façade, whereas inexpensive materials make a nicely-proportioned building look cheap. A building's elevation or facade says a lot about the quality of a development and the community in which it is situated.

There is a direct connection between material choice and environmental stewardship. New development along the river should be built with natural and sustainable materials that are durable and easy to maintain. There are numerous existing buildings within Andover's Historic Mill Yard, some of which were built in brick while others were built and clad in wood.

- Ground floor interaction with Riverwalk
- "Natural and sustainable" material palette
- Balconies provide river views





Balconies provide river views

"Natural and sustainable" material palette



Signage + Wayfinding

The Shawsheen River corridor (as well as the Historic Mill District as a whole) will benefit from a distinctive and memorable wayfinding system. As the river corridor increases in visibility and begins to be understood as a linear system, the need to reinforce a continuous path for a Riverwalk becomes increasingly important. Bringing together the various information needs – identity, regulatory, orientation and conservation/interpretation – into a consistent graphic format improves access and reduces “sign pollution” that compromises an otherwise attractive space.

- Signage sensitive to natural river corridor
- Wayfinding orientation to downtown, Dundee Park and parking







1 BUILDING HEIGHT

2-3 stories
Lower elevations towards the river
Include Step-backs to diminish the effect of building height

2 BUILDING MASSING

Lower scale building volumes
Variation in building facades by adding bays or terraces
Balconies to capitalize on river views

3 PUBLIC INTERFACE

Connectivity between buildings and river
Intimate relationship between private/public space
Wider public path in front of buildings – Riverwalk

4 PARKING + ACCESS

Parking in rear of building
Visually shield surface parking
Parking below buildings or in floodable garages

5 LINKAGES + NETWORKS

Foster public access to the river
Open space to address stormwater runoff
Sustainable techniques to reduce flooding

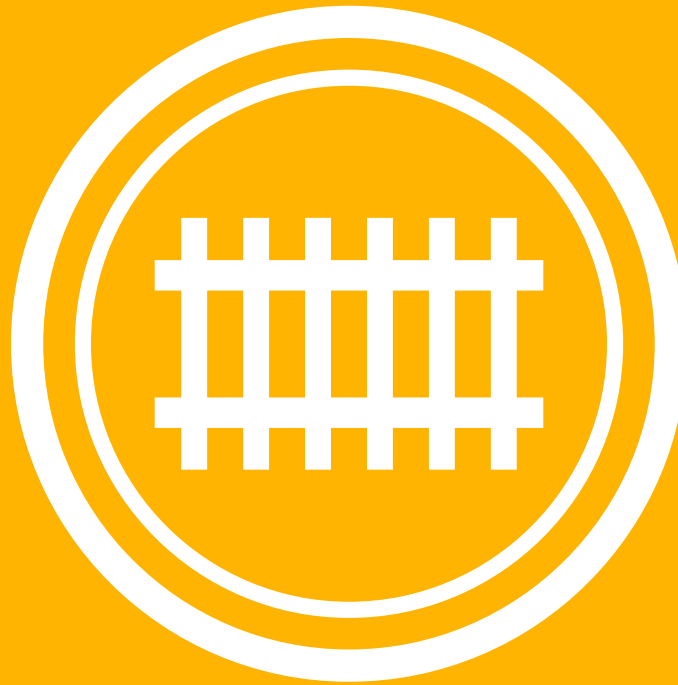
6 FACADE + MATERIALS

Ground floor interaction with Riverwalk
“Natural and sustainable” material palette
Balconies to provide river views

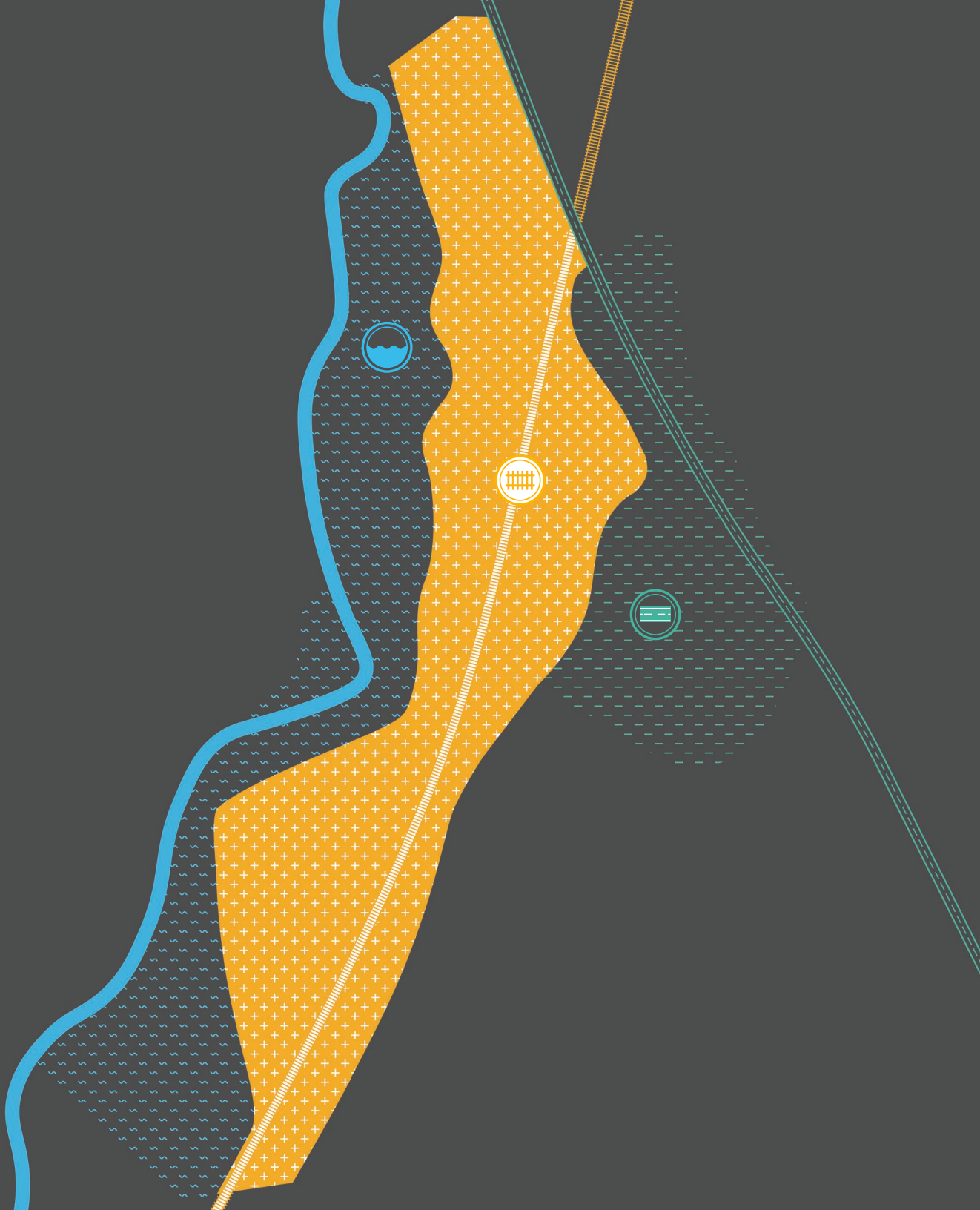
7 SIGNAGE + WAYFINDING

Signage sensitive to natural river corridor
Wayfinding orientation to downtown,
Dundee Park and parking





Proximity to public transit is increasingly important for economic revitalization in Towns large and small. Andover's MBTA Commuter Rail station provides direct access to Boston's Inner Core, but the areas around the train station are an assortment of surface parking lots, low density uses (like the Town Yard) and automobile-dependent industries. There are a number of properties in the center of the Historic Mill District and along the rail line that will benefit from transformation as greater development pressures ensue.



Rail Corridor

Rail corridor

- | | | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| 1 Andover Commons | 3 MBTA Commuter Rail station | 5 Depot Pizza | 7 Dundee Park #3 |
| 2 The Andover | 4 Town Yard Site | 6 Historic train station | 8 Dundee Park #1 |





Building Height

Transit-oriented development capitalizes on a site's proximity to public transportation with a goal of diminishing reliance on the car. Fostering greater density adjacent to transit enables greater access for more people. Greater density means increasing the allowable building height in the center of the HMD. A height of four (4) to five (5) stories is envisioned for Dundee Park and the properties adjacent to the rail line. It makes economic sense to increase development adjacent to the MBTA commuter rail.

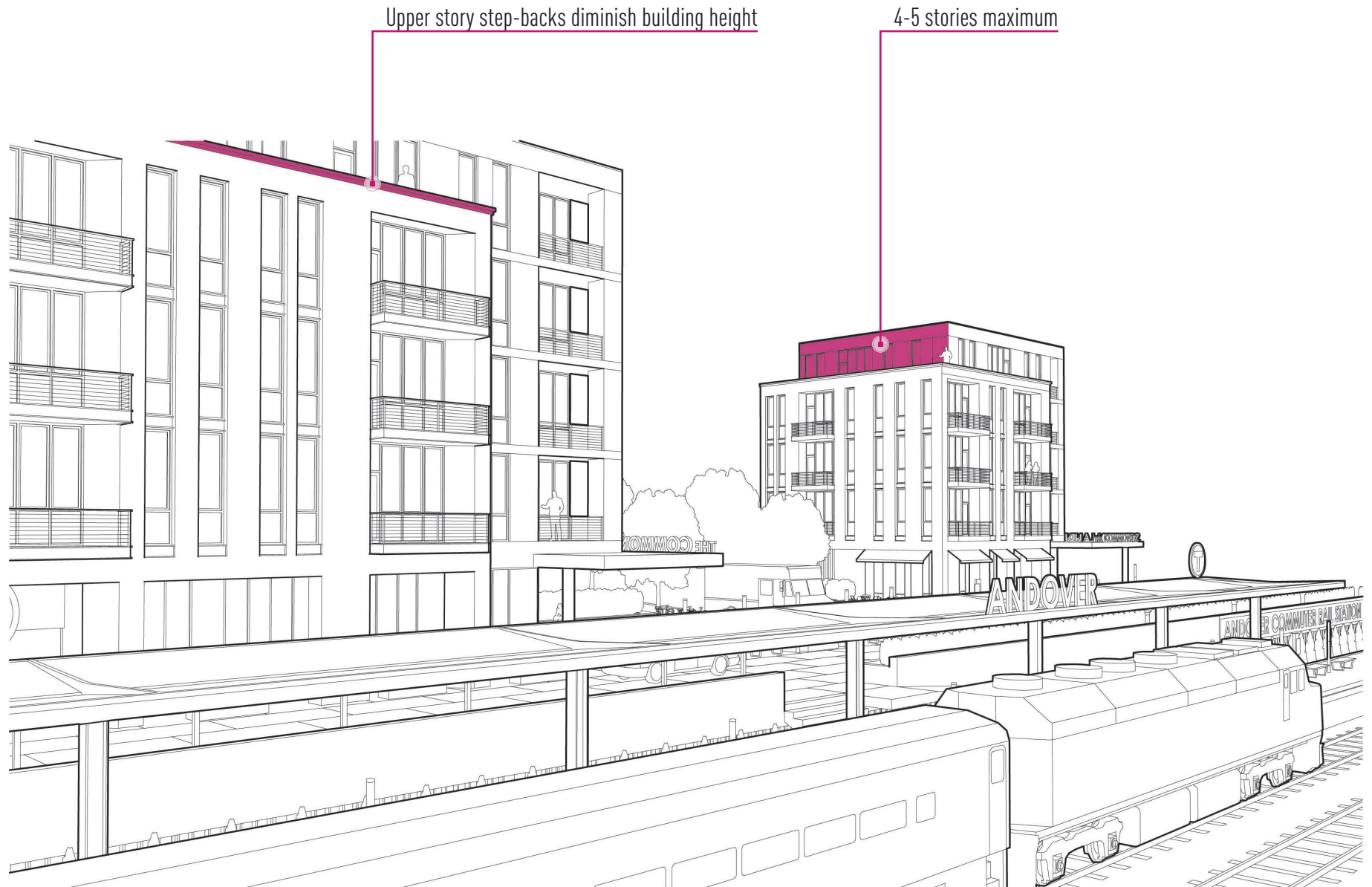
Allowing or incentivizing additional building height can also achieve another goal, which is to diminish the amount of surface parking in the historic downtown. Building parking below grade is an expensive endeavor, but the costs can be offset with additional development density and building height. Building heights can also be tapered down to more closely match the scale of existing homes on adjoining properties.

- Larger building volumes
- Taper scale adjacent to existing residential areas





Building Height



Building Massing

There are a number of large properties in close proximity to the rail line. Large sites can also be subdivided with the insertion of roads, drives and public spaces. Building masses should be broken up into a variety of building forms.

- Higher building volumes adjacent to the rail
- Step-backs to diminish the height adjacent to existing homes





Building Massing

Balconies provide views

Modulate larger building masses

Recesses create depth and variety



Public Interface

In prior eras, rail stations played a civic and celebratory function in the life of a community. They welcomed visitors into the town and provided memorable departure experiences. Contrary to the Shawsheen River corridor - where the relationship between the building edge and the public realm should be more naturalized - the public realm interface of the rail corridor should be urban.

Across the Commonwealth, most commuter rail platforms are long, isolated spaces surrounded by vast surface parking lots. The promise of new development along the rail corridor in Andover is the ability to enhance the connection between the station and adjacent mixed-use development.

- Transition zone between tracks and new development
- Considerations for new transit platform
- Series of public plazas





Incorporate plazas that don't turn their back on the tracks

Performative landscapes

Locate public amenity spaces at entryways



Parking + Access

In attractive and walkable downtown settings, parking is provided but seldom in the most convenient location possible. Opportunities for enhanced density can enable below-grade parking costs to be absorbed into the development plan when the site conditions allow and the project is of a sufficient scale. Adequate vehicular parking and good pedestrian access need not be mutually exclusive ambitions. A wise and efficient plan for parking plan facilitates movement for cars and people alike.

American attitudes towards our car-dominated culture are slowly shifting. While market-based realities require on-site parking, simply providing the maximum amount of it on a parcel by parcel basis undermines the ambition to foster a walkable, downtown environment. Change is already happening. In the not-so-distant-future, car and ride sharing, driverless cars, alternate modes of transport and more frequent public transit will radically alter the amount of space that is dedicated for parking, especially in such close proximity to public transit.

- Parking towards rail line
- Utilize grade change for lower-level parking
- Combine parking in structures or plinths





Parking + Access

Shield parking with visual buffers

Utilize grade change for lower-level parking

Integrate MBTA parking into new development



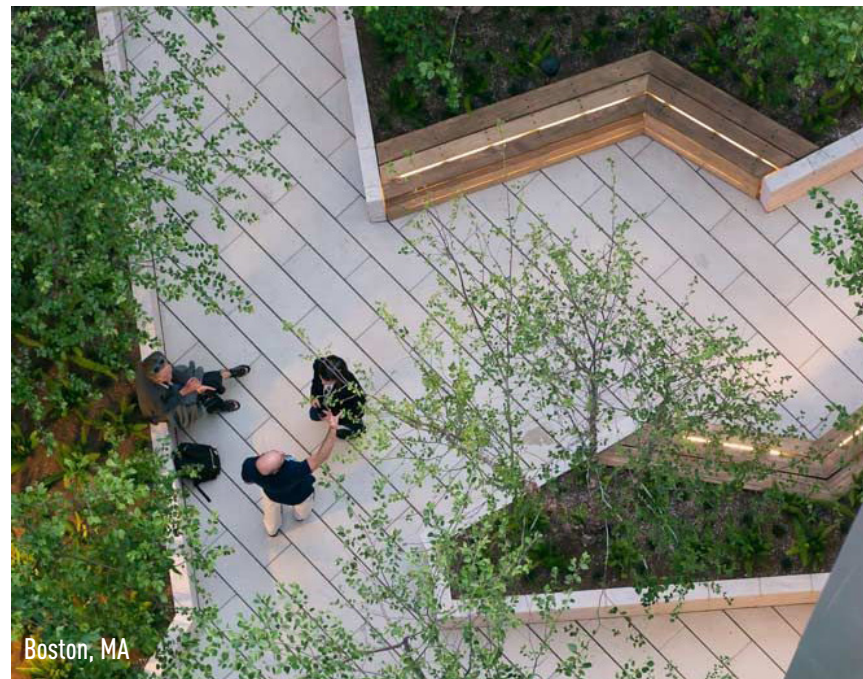
Linkages + Network

Addressing traffic circulation is a consideration for any new development in the Historic Mill District. The area around the former Town Yard and intersections of Railroad, Essex, School and Pearson Streets are particularly hazardous for cars and people alike. The confluence of multiple intersections, excessive pavement and topographic change create poor sight lines where the train crosses that creates congestion, resulting in a higher frequency of traffic accidents at this important location.

A more rationalized circulation system that clarifies vehicular movement can address these issues, but it is challenging to deal with them on a parcel-by-parcel basis. A comprehensive overview is needed.

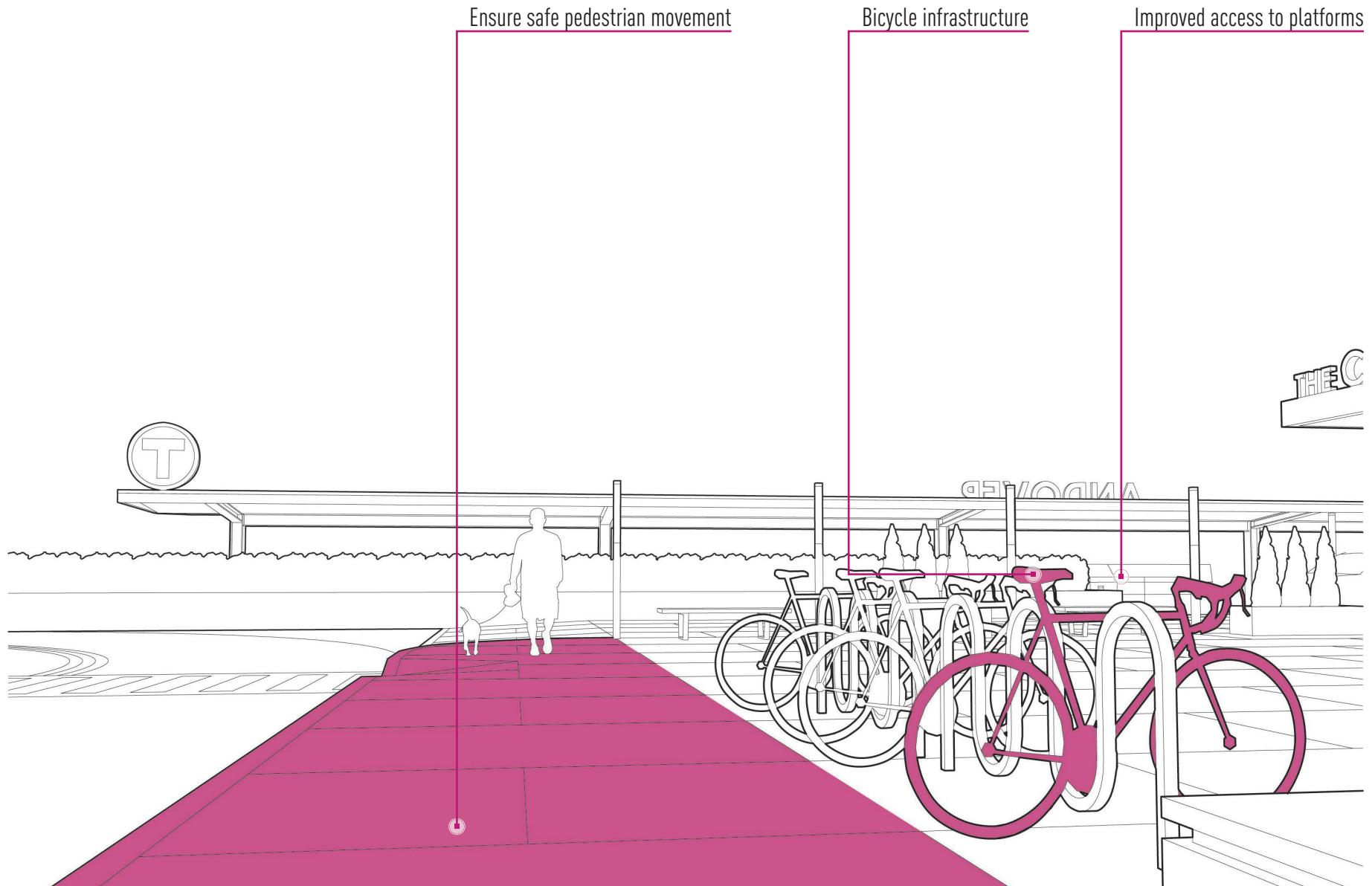
Linkages between the Shawsheen River and Main Street will be enhanced when new development along the rail corridor overcomes the transportation barriers and activates the public realm through a networks of public spaces. Performative landscape areas, public plazas and pathways should integrate the new development into the fabric of the community and provide place-making opportunities.

- Improved access to MBTA station platforms
- Ensure safe crossing of tracks





Linkages + Network



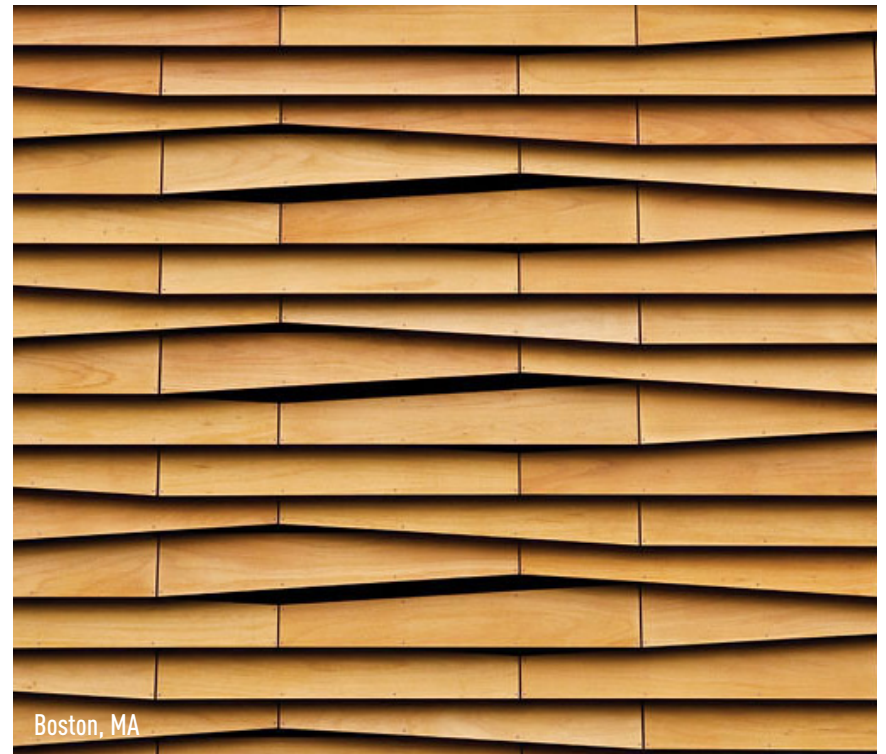
Facades + Materials

The ability for a building to become a cherished part of the Town has to do in part with changing societal tastes and aesthetic preferences. It also has to do with the economic climate in which the building was constructed and how resilient the structure is against deterioration. The material choices for the facade of a building plays a critical role.

Great care should be taken to specify durable, beautiful, natural materials that work harmoniously with one another and project value. Façade materials should be chosen that are resilient, easily sourced and repaired, resist aging poorly, and are natural and sustainable. Examples include brick, stone and metal panels. Cheap, non-durable cladding and finishes age poorly, require frequent maintenance, and fail to add visual richness to the public realm.

Creating depth in a facade adds visual interest through the interplay of light and shadow, as well as visually breaking down the massing. This can be achieved through additive or subtractive means. Balconies are additive elements that need to be carefully integrated into the architecture so as not to appear “tacked-on”. Terraces act in the opposite way, carving out volume from a building to provide exterior spaces. These appear as voids if subtracted from the middle portion of a building, and as stepbacks if carved from uppermost levels.

- Materials that celebrate industrial past
- Brick, steel, concrete





Recesses create depth and variety

Use materials that celebrate industrial past



Signage + Wayfinding

Signs along the Rail corridor will vary according to what they are signifying and the aesthetics of the buildings or spaces they address. However, there should be general consistency in size, scale and placement. Signage needs to be integrated into a building's design, not an afterthought. Discordant, randomly-placed, and poorly designed signage should be avoided.

Effective signage is appropriately scaled to the viewer. For example, building directories - read by stationary pedestrians at close proximity – need to be much smaller in font size than those directing vehicles, which need to be seen from farther away and while in motion. Materials such as carved wood or raised metal letters are preferable due to their durability and timelessness. While variety is encouraged to add visual interest, material choices for signs should be consistent with the building to which they are affixed.

Pole signs and other auto-centric signs that are not attached or related to their building are not allowed. These signs have the appearance of being an afterthought, and are typically out of scale with the pedestrian environment. In addition, internally lit signs project light beyond the property and are frequently composed of inexpensive, non-durable materials. Mass-produced neon and fluorescent signage, such as the ubiquitous “open” sign, and similar styles are also inappropriate to the HMD.

- Pedestrian connection signage
- Enhance wayfinding
- Integration of signage into architecture of the building



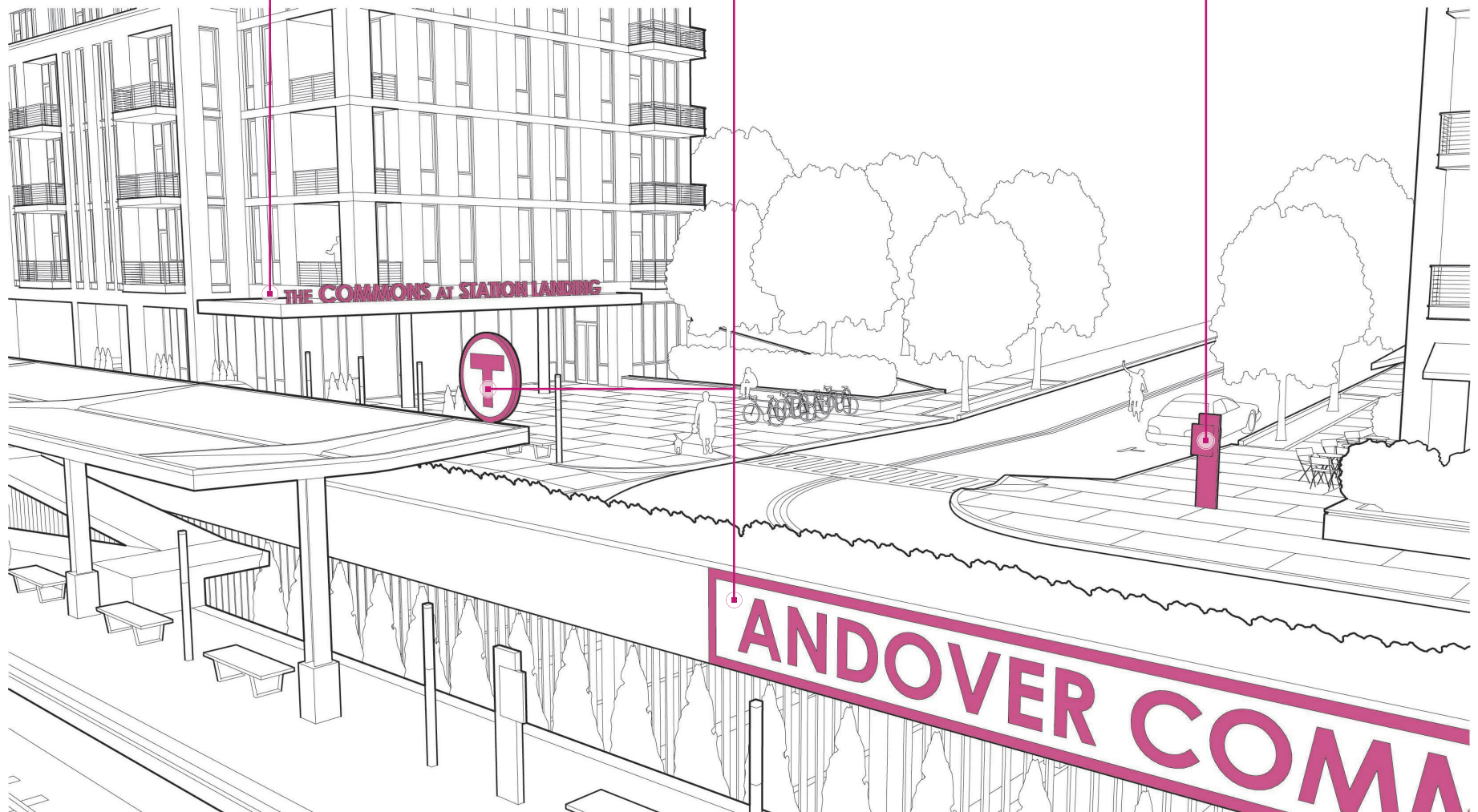


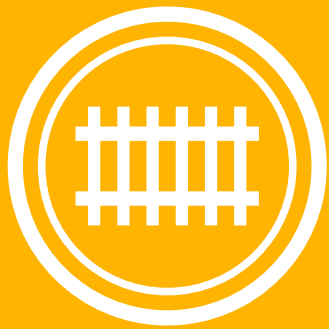
Signage + Wayfinding

Projecting signage provides orientation

Reinforce branding of the site as TOD

Increase legibility of the circulation network





1 BUILDING HEIGHT

4-5 stories
Larger building volumes
Taper scale adjacent to existing residential areas

2 BUILDING MASSING

Higher building volumes adjacent to the rail
Step-backs to diminish the height adjacent to existing homes

3 PUBLIC INTERFACE

Transition zone between tracks and new development
Considerations for new transit platform
Series of public plazas

4 PARKING + ACCESS

Parking towards rail line
Utilize grade change for lower-level parking
Combine parking in structures or plinths

5 LINKAGES + NETWORKS

Improved access to MBTA station platforms
Ensure safe crossing of tracks

6 FACADE + MATERIALS

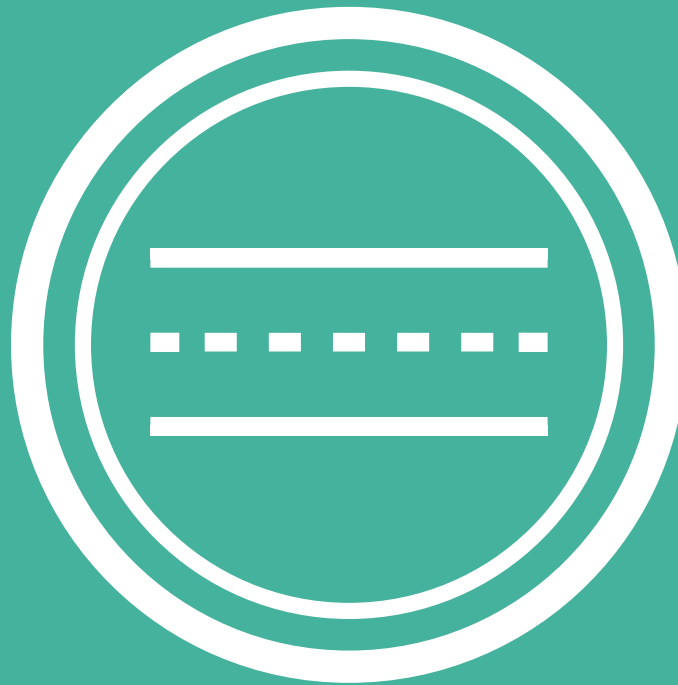
Materials that celebrate industrial past
Brick, steel, concrete

7 SIGNAGE + WAYFINDING

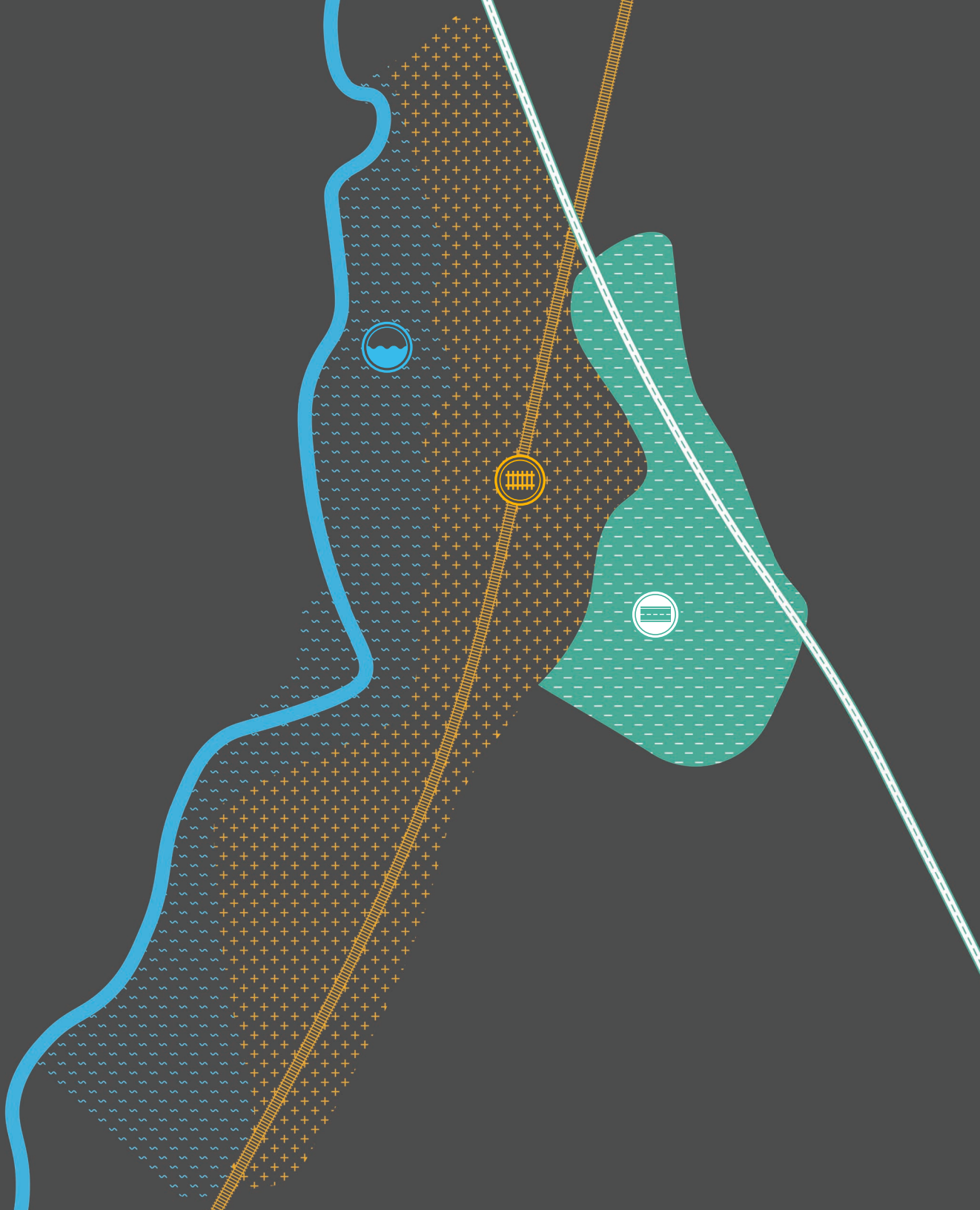
Pedestrian connection signage
Enhance wayfinding
Integration of signage into architecture of the building



Photograph courtesy of Andover Historical Society (AHS #1987.598.97)



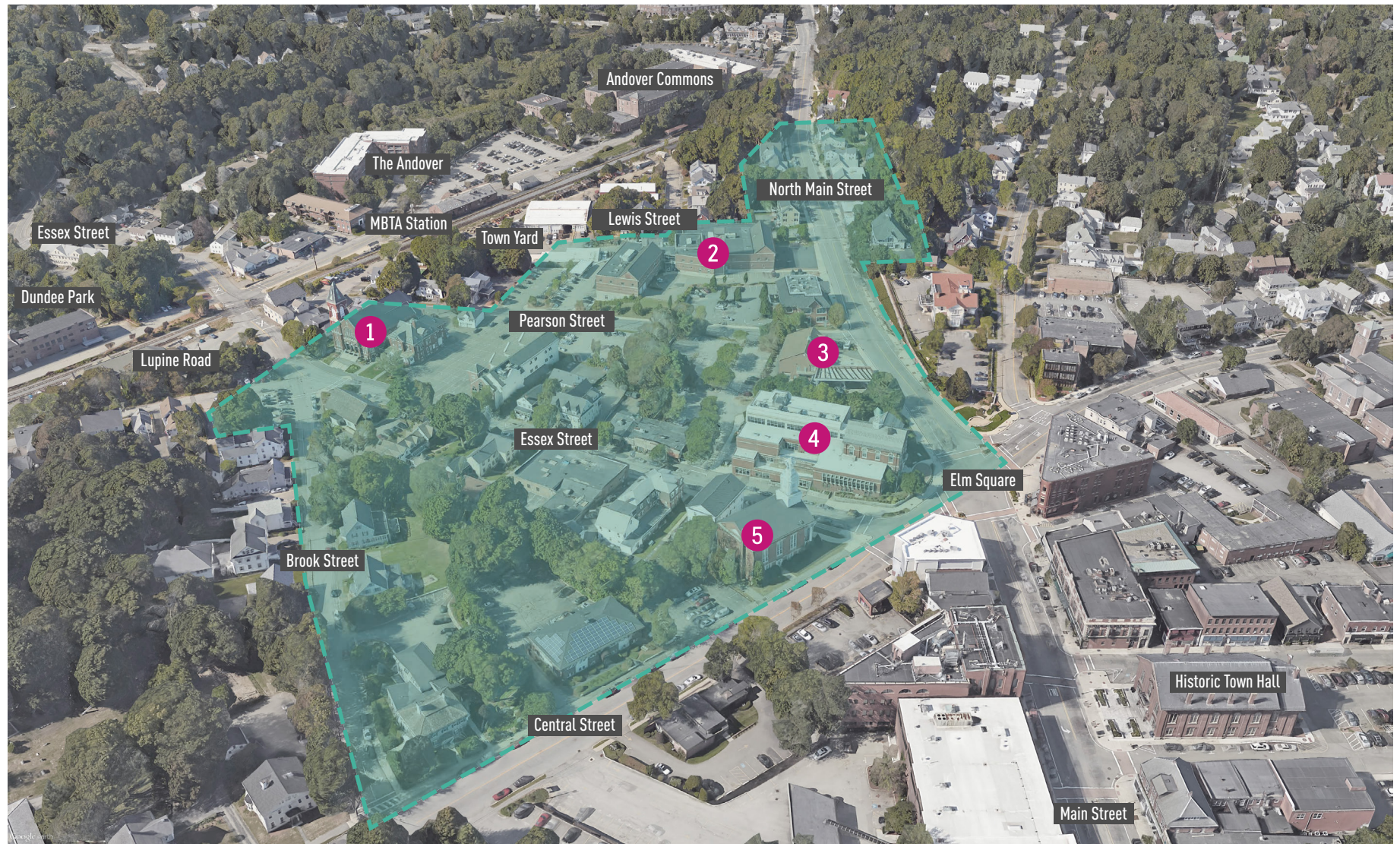
Historic preservation is a tool for economic development tool. After a half century of suburban preferences, more and more people are looking to live and work in walkable, downtown settings surrounded by historic buildings. Andover is fortunate to have a remarkable legacy of buildings in close proximity to one another that reflect the Town's rich cultural and social heritage. At the same time, there are gaps in the downtown fabric that will benefit from new investment and diminish the perceived distance between Main Street, the MBTA Commuter Rail Station and the Shawsheen River.



Road Corridor

Road corridor

- 1 St. Augustine Parish
- 2 Public Safety Center
- 3 Mobil gas station
- 4 Library
- 5 Andover Baptist Church





Building Height

Andover developed over hundreds of years. As such, the center of downtown is lined with an eclectic mix of building typologies, styles and scales. “Road” corridors are the primary commercial streets that lead towards Main Street at the top of the hill, which has the highest amount of commercial activity and concentrations of cultural, civic and religious institutions.

Mixed-use buildings need a higher floor to floor dimension at the base of the building to provide flexibility for ground floor uses like restaurants. On the upper floors, there are ways to diminish the perceived height of a building. Step-backs push back upper stories of a building so that they are no longer visible, or barely visible, from the public right-of-way. Step-backs also create opportunities for outdoor terraces on these levels. A step-back of eight (8) to ten (10) feet is typically sufficient.

A datum of three (3) to four (4) stories is encouraged along these corridors to reinforce the streetwall. However, there are instances when additional height may be considered if the site for future development provides a visual terminus for a major street or marks an important intersection.

- 3 - 4 stories
- Step-backs to diminish the effect of building height
- Setbacks to address appropriate relationship to surroundings





Building Massing

Residential areas are nestled close around the downtown core of Andover. One and two-family homes line streets perpendicular to Main Street including Buxton Court, Lewis Street, Pearson Street and Essex Street. In most cases, the building fabric is residential. In other cases, the former residential buildings have been converted into small businesses. Nevertheless, while their uses may have changed, their form endures. When developing in close proximity to historic residential areas, building massing needs to address transitions in scale.

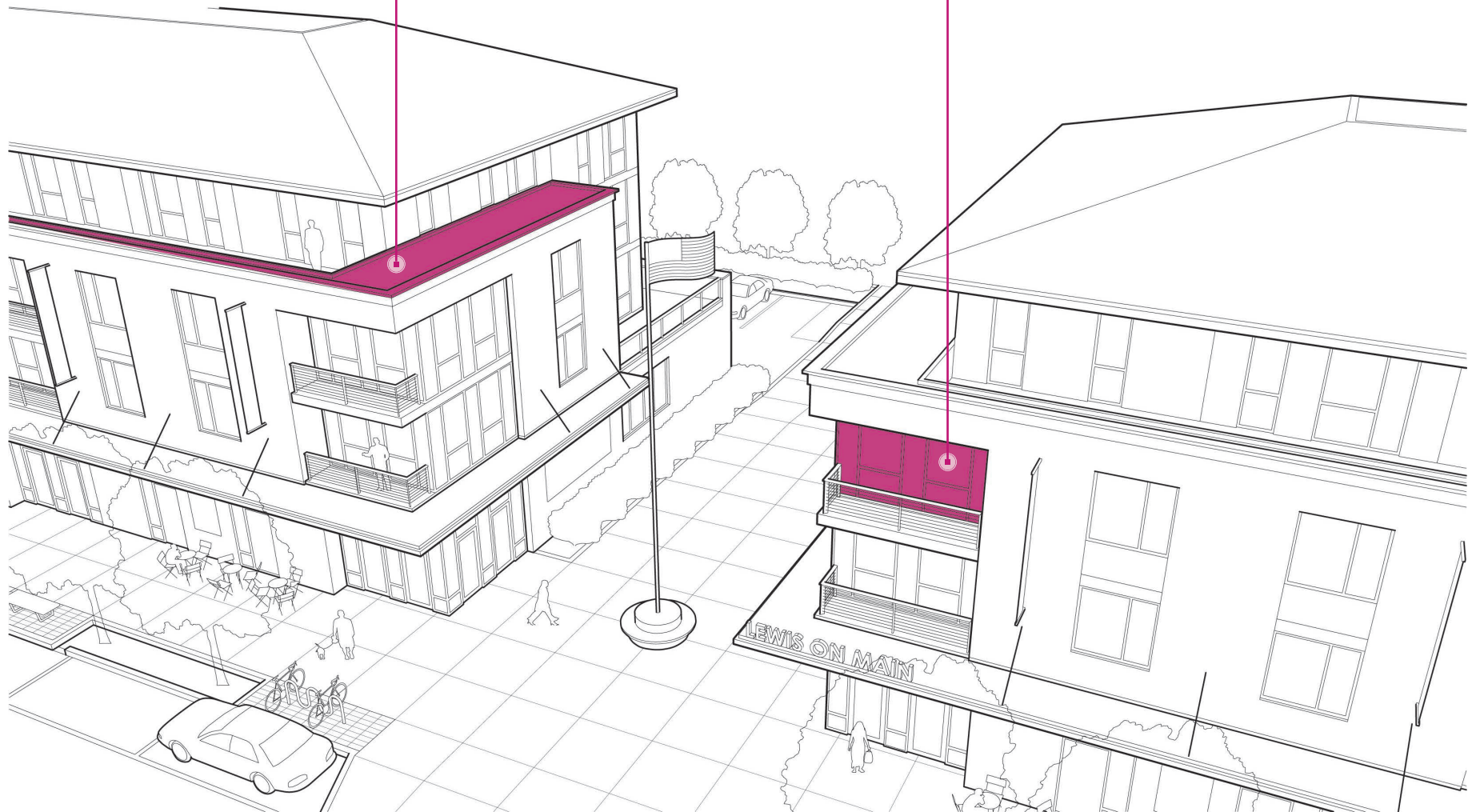
Upper level setbacks mitigate scale variations. Modulating a building's volume alters the relationship between neighboring structures.

- Façade variation – diminish long elevations by providing visual relief
- Break down large building masses into component elements



Upper story step-backs provide facade variations

Diminish long elevations by providing visual relief



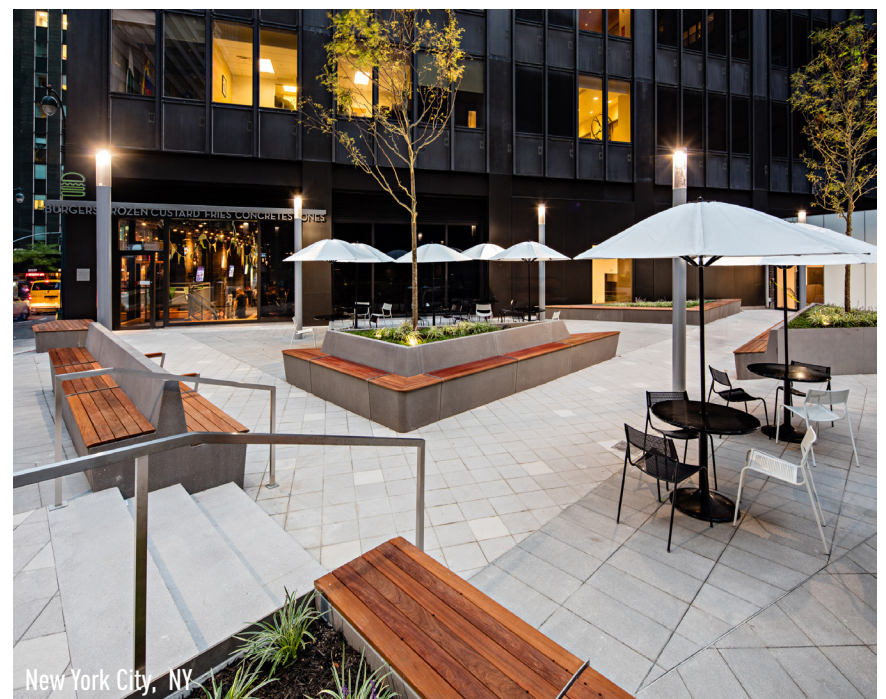
Public Interface

Main Street is the most urban setting within the HMD. Buildings should be built to the property line with no, or limited, building setback. The width of sidewalks should be calibrated to the anticipated amount of pedestrian traffic, the height of building that fronts it and the width of the adjacent street. Street furniture and plantings should also be scaled to the sidewalk environment and they should have coherence with the historic character of the rest of downtown Andover.

The relationship of the building to the street and sidewalk plays an essential role in the ability of a development to enhance or detract from the public's experience. Commercial and mixed-use developments are most successful when the street edge is defined with active ground floor uses and a high degree of transparency. A vibrant public realm, achieved by a successful interface of the building with the public, is essential for a downtown center.

While aligning a building's elevation to the property line is most often the appropriate response for a building in a commercial area, there are instances where some spatial relief is needed, and a building setback could be included as part of a property's redevelopment. Occasionally, pocket parks with outdoor seating should be incorporated into the new development. Modestly-scaled open spaces enable the public to access mixed uses of a project which adds vitality to the public realm.

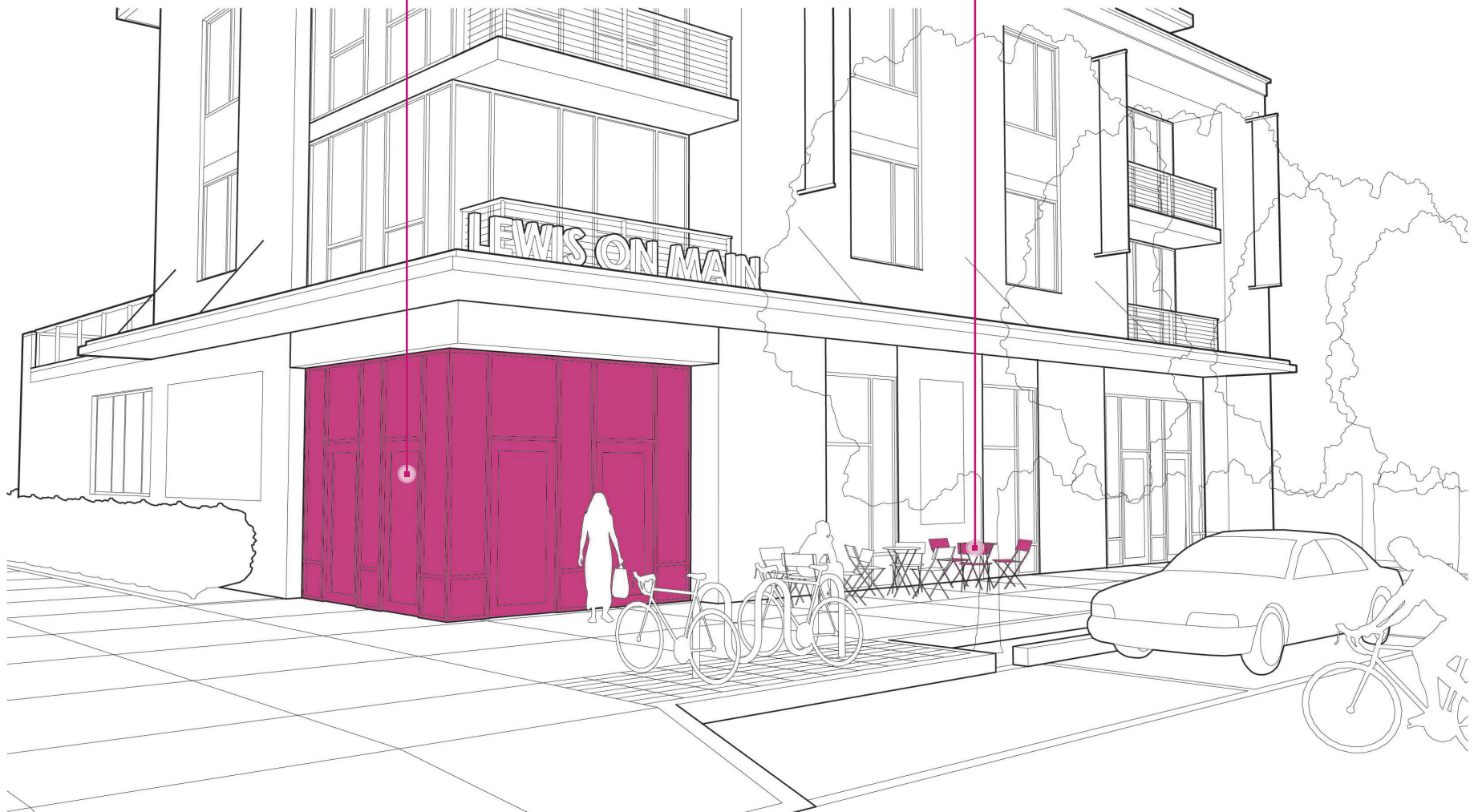
- Outdoor seating areas
- Commercial ground floor uses with frequent entries
- Public art opportunities





Commercial ground floor uses with frequent entries

Outdoor seating



Parking + Access

Andover is a popular cultural and commercial destination. It therefore places pressure on parking demands as the majority of people drive downtown to shop. The Town currently has 1,800 parking spaces within a five minute walk of Main Street. Parking is located in surface lots fairly evenly distributed; there is no underground or structured parking. As new infill development emerges on sites that are underutilized, a balance needs to be struck between accommodating surface parking and ensuring the development adequately defines the street.

The location for parking on a site has a significant impact on the public experience. When parking is located in front of buildings, it often requires multiple curb-cuts and results in an environment that favors vehicles at the expense of pedestrians, cyclists, and public transit. As evidenced in a number of locations along Main Street, surface parking lots located in the front of commercial uses are a danger for pedestrians and sever the connection with the public realm.

Parking is best located on the side, in back of, or under the building. Parking lots should be visually screened by generous landscape buffers. Consideration should be given to shared parking opportunities where day and night uses do not overlap in order to reduce the amount of space dedicated to parking. Development should take into account the pedestrian first, then the bicyclist, transit rider and then the driver.

- Advance shared parking opportunities with adjacent property owners
- Employ plantings of adequate height and density to visually buffer parking
- Locate surface parking lots behind buildings at the rear or middle of blocks





Parking + Access



Linkages + Network

The three corridors represent Andover's primary locations for commerce (road), transportation (rail) and recreation (river). The inter-relationships between them are, therefore, essential. The corridors should not be viewed as separate lines but rather as sub-zones with perpendicular connections linking them together and to adjoining neighborhoods, community assets and open spaces. These linkages are vital to reduce the perception of long distances between the three corridors, a dimension that is increased by the change in elevation between them. The distances seem farther than they really are.

Through a network of paths, bridges, ramps, stairs, and plazas, these linkages have the potential to overcome infrastructural barriers and become extraordinary public spaces themselves. Only if these connections are anticipated beforehand and implemented in a meaningful manner will people actually use them.

- Walkways for pedestrian connections
- Anticipate greater role for bike transportation
- Overcome limitations of rail infrastructure and excessive roadway width

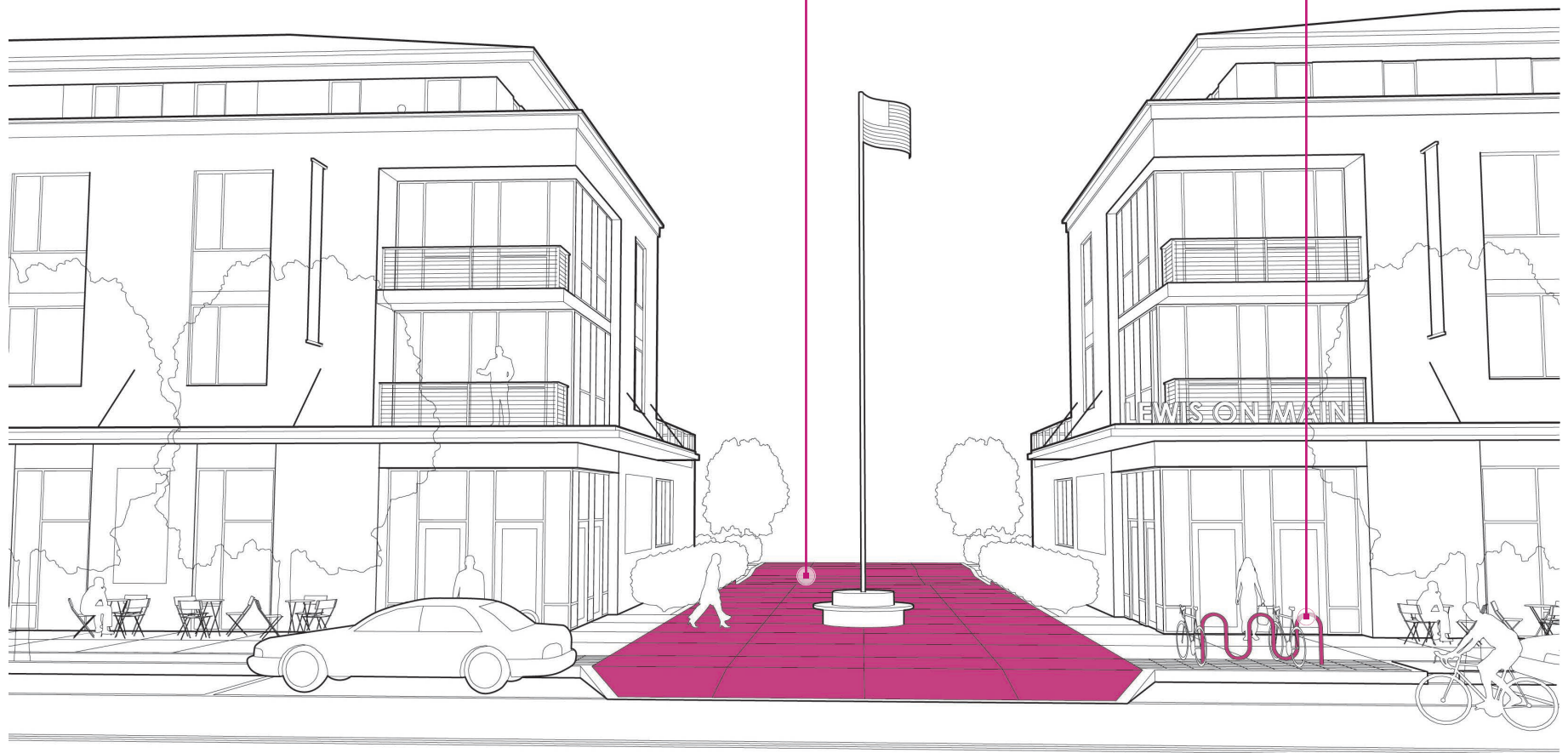




Linkages + Network

Walkways for pedestrian connections

Bike infrastructure



Facades + Materials

Andover is fortunate to have as many existing, historic buildings as it does. Other communities were not so fortunate in the urban renewal era of the 1960's and 1970's. Many historic, smaller scale structures were removed in the mid- 19th century in favor of more car-dominated development. While some areas of the downtown fell victim to these dynamics, much of downtown remains intact. This impression can be attributed, in large part, to the character and materials and quality of the buildings that define Andover's streets.

Public uses such as retail stores, restaurants, cafes, lobbies, galleries or performance spaces should be concentrated on the ground level adjacent to the public way. These uses contribute to life on the street and they will synergize with adjacent properties. Generally speaking, the lowest level of a building should have the highest degree of transparency to animate the adjacent public realm. Large expanses of glazing, storefront windows and retractable facades will contribute to a vibrant pedestrian experience and engender the building with a public expression. Entrances need to be located frequently along the primary public right-of-way. They should be clearly demarcated with appropriate signage and designed in a manner that is welcoming to the public. Overhead projecting surfaces such as awnings and canopies break down the overall massing of a façade and create an exterior “ceiling” to the adjoining public realm.

- Increase transparency at ground floor
- High-quality, durable and natural materials
- Appropriate relationship to surrounding buildings





Facades + Materials

High-quality + natural materials

Ground floor transparency



Signage + Wayfinding

What is appropriate for a suburban mall - where cars drive by quickly and pedestrians are few - is inappropriate for a commercial center or historic area with many pedestrians and slower moving traffic. The Historic Mill District will benefit from an easily recognizable, unique, and memorable signage and wayfinding system. Deploying a consistent design language across the 100 acres will connect the area together and build greater recognition.

However, tying together the various information needs - identity, regulatory, orientation, and conservation/ interpretation - into a consistent graphic format is challenging in that each corridor has a slightly different character. The river corridor is closest in proximity to the industrial mills and the recreation corridor. The rail corridor is dominated by the MBTA commuter station and flows of traffic to Dundee Park and the grocery. Signage for the Road corridor is most proximate to the religious, cultural and commercial uses along Main Street. Therefore, greater sensitivity needs to be placed with regards to history.

- Opportunities to interpret history and enhance wayfinding
- Branding of cultural district
- Signage to parking and River Walk





Branding of cultural district

Projecting signage creates identity





1 BUILDING HEIGHT

3 - 4 stories
Step-backs to diminish the effect of building height
Setbacks to address appropriate relationship to surroundings

2 BUILDING MASSING

Facade variation – diminish long elevations by providing visual relief
Break down large building masses into component elements

3 PUBLIC INTERFACE

Outdoor seating areas
Commercial ground floor uses with frequent entries
Public art opportunities

4 PARKING + ACCESS

Shared parking opportunities with adjacent property owners
Plantings of adequate height and density to visually buffer parking
Surface parking lots behind buildings at the rear or middle of blocks

5 LINKAGES + NETWORKS

Walkways for pedestrian connections
Anticipate greater role for bike transportation
Overcome limitations of rail infrastructure and excessive roadway width

6 FACADE + MATERIALS

Increase transparency at ground floor
High-quality, durable and natural materials
Appropriate relationship to surrounding buildings

7 SIGNAGE + WAYFINDING

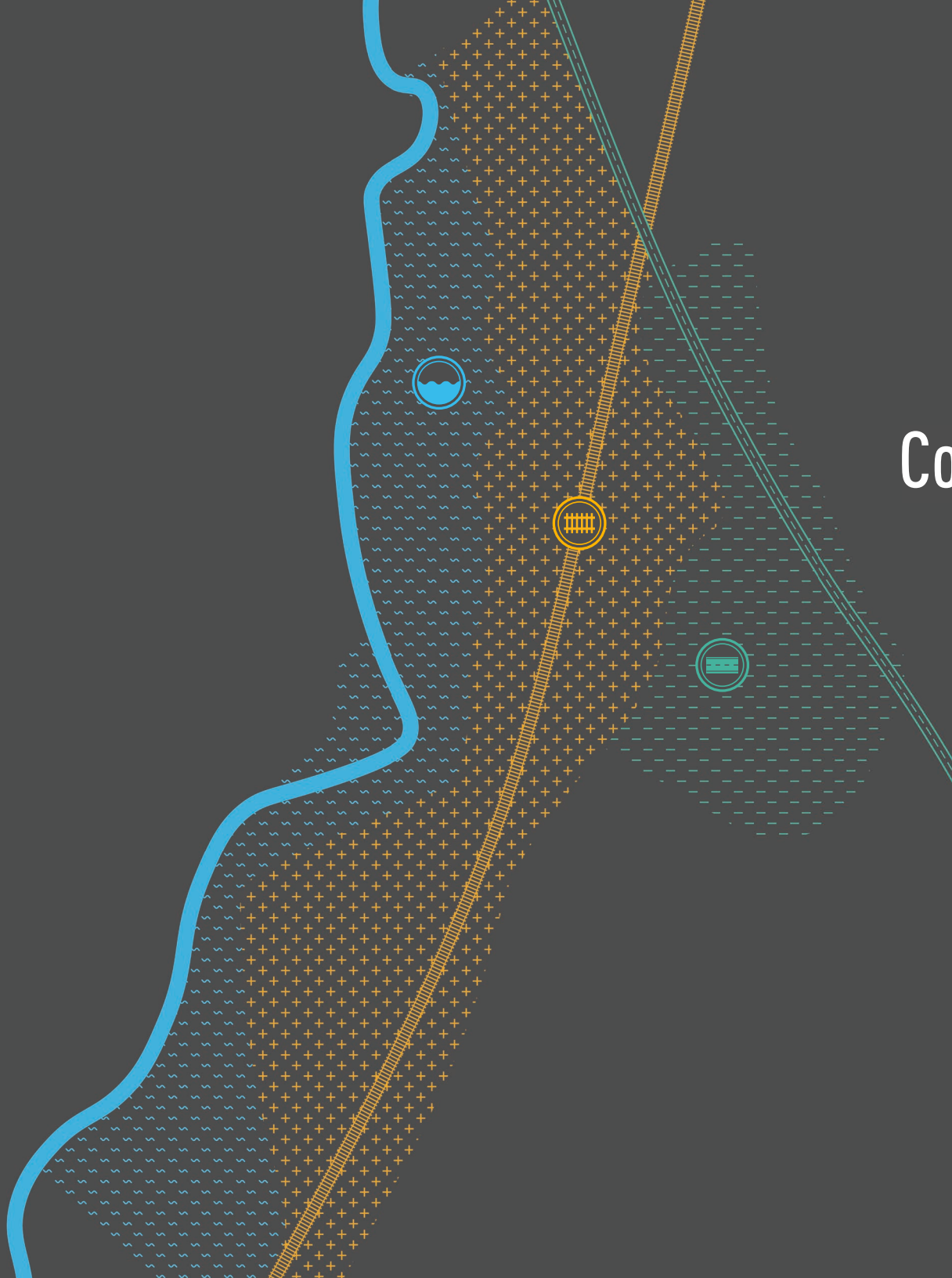
Opportunities to interpret history and enhance wayfinding
Branding of cultural district
Signage to parking and River Walk



Photograph courtesy of Andover Historical Society (AHS #1994.014.1)



Railroad Street



03 Conclusion / Next steps

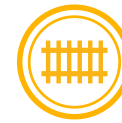
Design Guidelines

Andover, MA

October 2017



RIVER



RAIL



ROAD

1 BUILDING HEIGHT

2-3 stories
Lower elevations towards the river
Include Step-backs to diminish the effect of building height

4 - 5 stories
Larger building volumes
Taper scale adjacent to existing residential areas

3 - 4 stories
Step-backs to diminish the effect of building height
Setbacks to address appropriate relationship to surroundings

2 BUILDING MASSING

Lower scale building volumes
Variation in building facades by adding bays or terraces
Balconies to capitalize on river views

Higher building volumes adjacent to the rail
Step-backs to diminish the height adjacent to existing homes

Facade variation – diminish long elevations by providing visual relief
Break down large building masses into component elements

3 PUBLIC INTERFACE

Connectivity between buildings and river
Intimate relationship between private / public space
Wider public path in front of buildings – Riverwalk

Transition zone between tracks and new development
Considerations for new transit platform
Series of public plazas

Outdoor seating areas
Commercial ground floor uses with frequent entries
Public art opportunities

4 PARKING + ACCESS

Parking in rear of building
Visually shield surface parking
Parking below buildings or in floodable garages

Parking towards rail line
Utilize grade change for lower-level parking
Combine parking in structures or plinths

Shared parking opportunities with adjacent property owners
Plantings of adequate height and density to visually buffer parking
Surface parking lots behind buildings at the rear or middle of blocks

5 LINKAGES + NETWORKS

Foster public access to the river
Open space to address stormwater runoff
Sustainable techniques to reduce flooding

Improved access to MBTA station platforms
Ensure safe crossing of tracks

Walkways for pedestrian connections
Anticipate greater role for bike transportation
Overcome limitations of rail infrastructure and excessive roadway width

6 FACADE + MATERIALS

Ground floor interaction with Riverwalk
"Natural and sustainable" material palette
Balconies to provide river views

Materials that celebrate industrial past
Brick, steel, concrete

Increase transparency at ground floor
High-quality, durable and natural materials
Appropriate relationship to surrounding buildings

7 SIGNAGE + WAYFINDING

Signage sensitive to natural river corridor
Wayfinding orientation to downtown
Dundee Park and parking

Pedestrian connection signage
Enhance wayfinding
Integration of signage into architecture of the building

Opportunities to interpret history and enhance wayfinding
Branding of cultural district
Signage to parking and River Walk

Conclusion

Andover's Design Guidelines were crafted to enhance the economic vitality of the areas surrounding the river, rail and center of downtown through attractive design. By following these guidelines, each project can complement another, resulting in more cohesive urban design. The guidelines provide 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. The guidelines define expectations while allowing for flexibility and fostering high quality. An overarching goal is to recognize the potential for architectural diversity while at the same time adhering to fundamental design principles.

Design Guidelines cannot depict every possible building configuration. Rather, prototypical building forms are shown in a manner that can accommodate conditions that are likely to be met within the geography of the 100 acres. The massing and scale of new development is intended to be general enough to allow for a range of uses, but specific enough to highlight the critical areas of concern. Even when closely following these guidelines, each new development in the Historic Mill Yard will take its own form and character that will differ from these examples. Advancing a singular design aesthetic in Andover's Historic Mill District is neither viable nor desirable.

Next steps

1. Traffic Study

- Engage a transportation firm to build off of Essex Street Transportation Study to investigate traffic improvements and street modifications

2. Update HMD Zoning Ordinance

- **8.7.5 Permitted Uses:** Include cultural/arts uses as a non-residential use
- **8.7.7 Dimensional Regulations:** Simplify height limits to allow for more flexibility

3. Draft RFI/RFP for Town Yard

4. Initiate discussions about potential Shawsheen Riverfront Park



Historic Mill District Task Force members

Austin Simko & Ann Knowles	Liaison from Planning Board
Charles Kendrick & Chip Stella	Two at large residents
Elaine Clements	Andover Historical Society
Ellen Townson	Member from Conservation Commission
John Fenton	Member of the Economic Development Council
John Mangiaratti	Designee from the Town Manager
Karen Herman, alternate Leo Green	Member of the Preservation Commission
Paul Salafia	Liaison from Board of Selectmen
Robert Daidone	Resident located in the HMD
Ronnie Abraham	Representative of Business located in the HMD
Suzanne Korschun	Member of Design Review Board
Tom Childs	Designer / Builder



Gamble Associates
David Gamble, Brian Gregory, Philipp Maué
678 Massachusetts Avenue, Suite 502
Cambridge MA 02139
617-292-9912

Comments on this document may be made to:
Paul Materazzo, Director of Planning
Community Development & Planning
phone (978)623-8650
email: pmaterazzo@andoverma.gov