

DOWNTOWN, WEST

*A conversation about strengthening the link between
Downtown, Crown Hill, Elm Park and the Salisbury Cultural District
neighborhoods.*

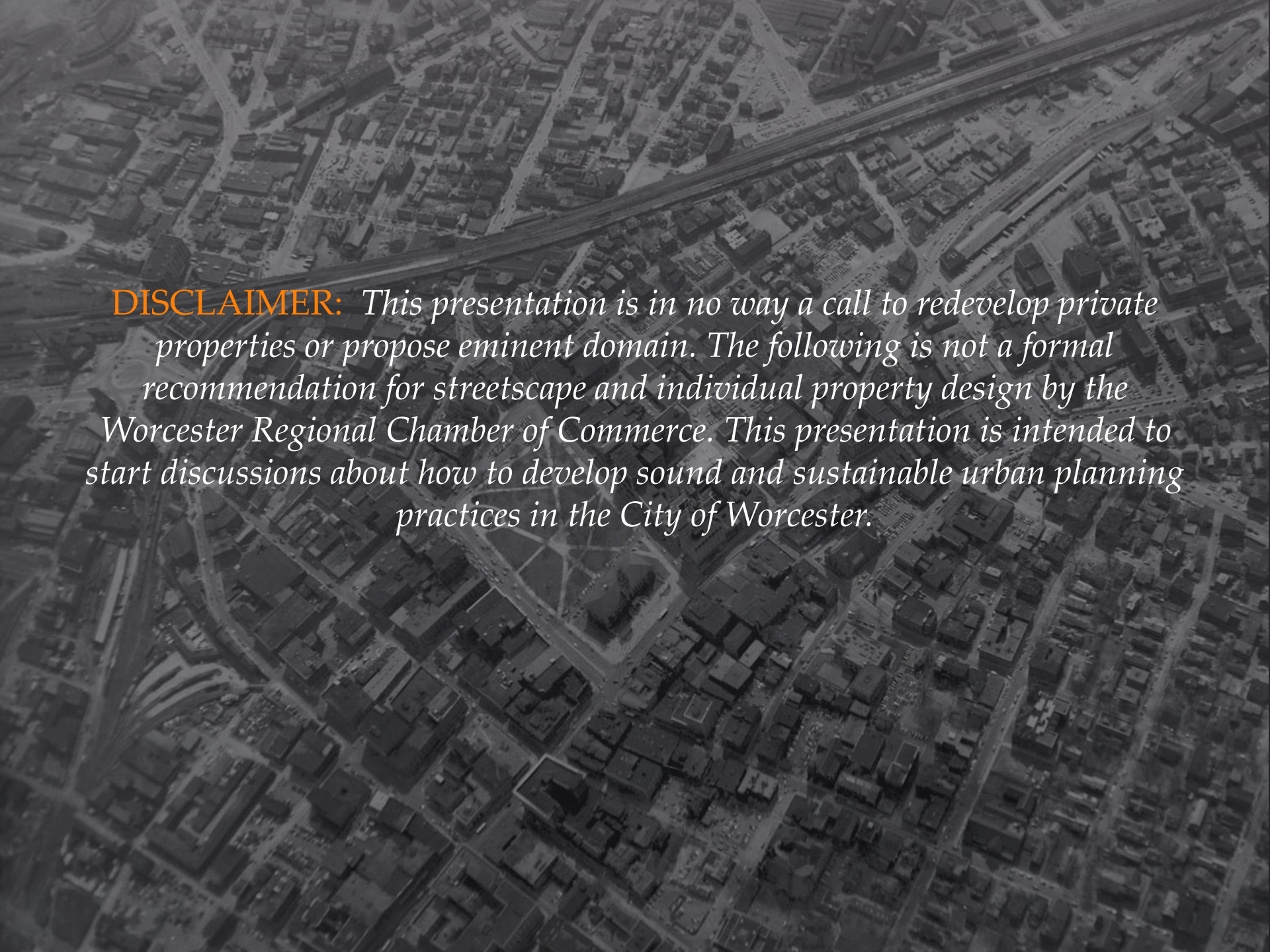
Concepts include:

Potential new infill development (re-establishing urban density)

Creating a pedestrian friendly environment: through street enhancements (complete streets)

Potential new green spaces and pocket parks (urban forest)



An aerial photograph of a city street grid, likely Worcester, Massachusetts. A major highway, possibly I-90, runs diagonally from the top-left towards the bottom-right. The surrounding area is densely packed with buildings and streets. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent dark grey filter.

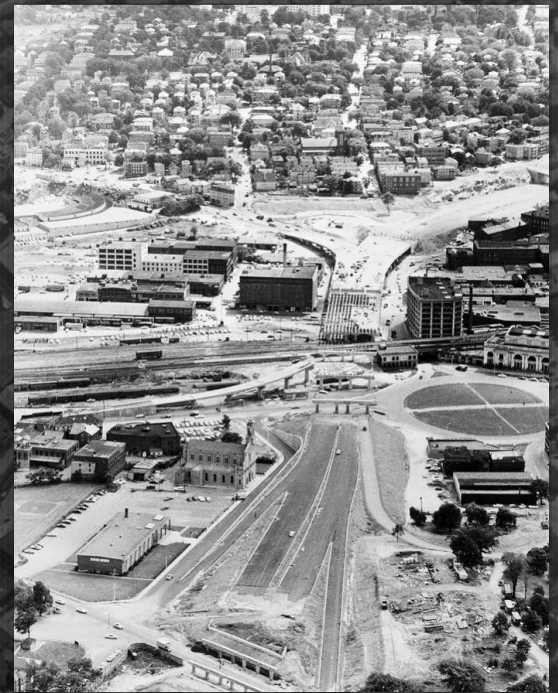
DISCLAIMER: *This presentation is in no way a call to redevelop private properties or propose eminent domain. The following is not a formal recommendation for streetscape and individual property design by the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce. This presentation is intended to start discussions about how to develop sound and sustainable urban planning practices in the City of Worcester.*

URBAN FABRIC/ DENSITY

Worcester Pre-Urban Renewal (*Circa 1950*)



FEDERAL HIGHWAY ACT of 1956



URBAN RENEWAL ACT

Massive Building Demolition
Creating Holes in the Urban Fabric



IN FILL DEVELOPMENT

The new buildings were no longer part of the urban fabric
Each building became an individual / island amongst itself!
Isolated, Inverted / Self Contained



STREETS WERE NO LONGER STREETS

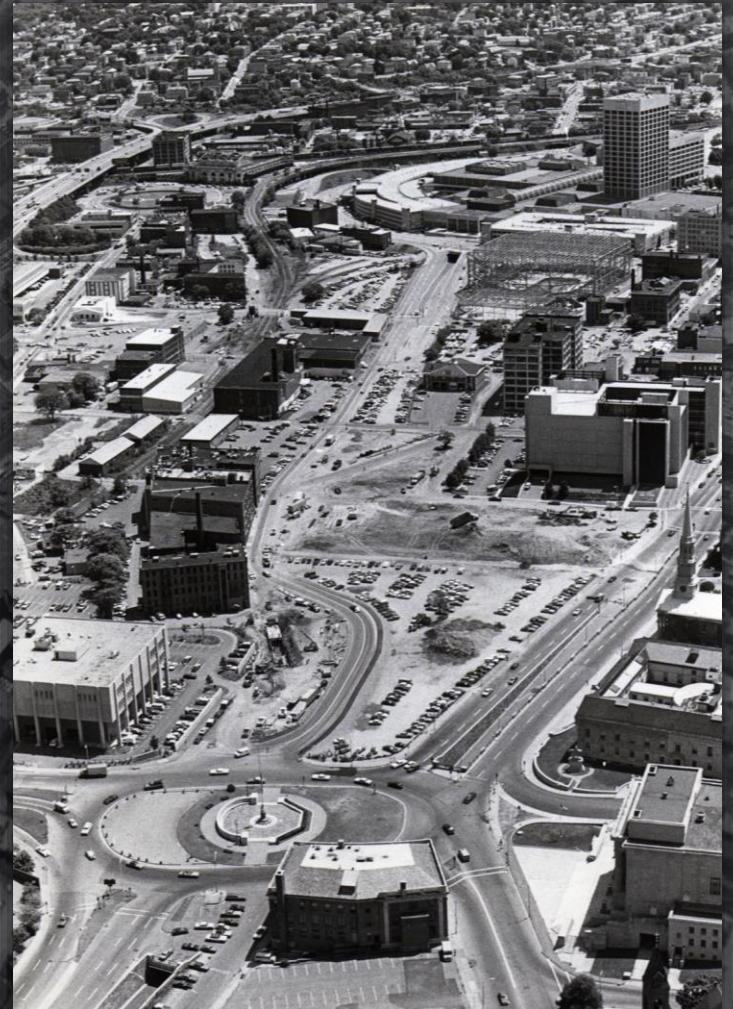
They became *(access roads)*

Designed to process traffic and get you to the parking *(not the buildings)*



HIGHWAY OVERLAY

Widening of roads, wider turning radius of the streets
For the purpose of increasing traffic speeds and increased traffic volume



ALL AT THE EXPENSE OF THE PEDESTRIAN

- Stripped away pedestrian amenities
- Reduced sidewalk widths (*in some cases to non existence*)
- Created Barriers
- Isolated buildings limiting interaction between buildings (*making more islands*)



A NEW APPROACH / RETURN TO THE PAST

Complete Streets: *is approach to planning, designing, building, operating and maintaining streets that enables safe access for all people who need to use them, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities.*



AMENITIES/ BEAUTIFICATION

Pedestrian Friendly Environment



BUILDINGS ARE PART OF THE STREET FORMULA

Commercial Base, Retail (Store Fronts)

Street Life (Activity / Safety)



URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

THE GROUND LEVEL FACADE

Guidelines (The Ground Level is the Primary Zone of Interaction for Pedestrians on the Street, and Includes the Elements of Uses Doorways and Window Transparency)



C.P.T.E.D.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

Guidelines (The placement of windows is defined by the use of the ground floor level. On retail, restaurants, and office buildings, windows should be at street level and should allow pedestrians to see and sense the activity of the building.)



THE STREET WALL

Defining the Territory: (Private) Residential and (Public) Sidewalk/ Pedestrian



PERCEPTION OF SAFETY (PARKING LOTS)

Positive Experience (Positive Space) or Negative Experience (Negative Space)



WEST SIDE ARTERY

Our planning at that time
All about traffic, parking / urban decay (demolition)

"On October 15, 1953 at 8 p. m. in City Hall there will be a public hearing of unusual significance.

"The people of Worcester will be asked at that hearing whether the city should go forward with the important redevelopment program Worcester Housing Authority has presented to the City Council.

"It is important that each citizen know just what this program is all about.

"That includes the benefits—and the cost.

"And that is the purpose of this brochure."

REDEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE

Downtown WORCESTER

Progress or Decay?



TRAFFIC AND PARKING RELIEF



Anyone who drives—or tries to park—in downtown Worcester has a stake in the Salem Street Redevelopment Project.

The twin problems of traffic and parking grow more acute every day. There are 40 per cent more cars in Worcester now than 10 years ago. Existing street patterns were outgrown years ago.

The Redevelopment Project offers major corrections on both counts. It will:

Add hundreds of new parking spaces.
Open a path for north-south traffic with an 80 foot-wide highway along the NY, NH, & H Railroad tracks.

Eliminate the constant traffic snarl at Southbridge, Madison and Portland streets by abolishing that end of Portland street.

Ease congestion at Trumbull square by re-routing Washington street and widening Franklin street.

Abolish old, inadequate streets such as Orange and Salem streets.

Widen sections of Madison, Southbridge and Myrtle streets and connect the latter to the new highway.

Guard against future congestion in the area by requiring loading berths and parking space for all new buildings.

The Redevelopment area is only a small part of Worcester. But it's been planned with an eye to the city as a whole.

The city's Off-Street Parking Board recognized the project in its plans for downtown municipal parking lots. Plans call for two big public parking areas inside the area—one at the rear of the former Brockelman Bros. market and the other near the present Glenwood Building.

These areas will be in addition to parking space required for new buildings.

At present there are about 650 parking spaces in the area. After redevelopment there will be 1200 to 2000.

The city's Planning Board and a citizens advisory committee have studied the street layout to make sure it dovetails with over-all city plans.

The citizens committee published its findings 10 months ago covering three major points—the Lincoln square project, and two arteries parallel to Main street, one on the west and the other on the east.

The Redevelopment Project ties in directly with the eastern artery. From a point on Southbridge street near Hermon street, a new Salem street will be built. Eighty feet wide, it will run along the railroad tracks, passing over Madison street with a bridge and access ramps, and it will exit at Salem square.

Future city plans call for extending this artery to Lincoln square by widening Church and Union streets.

The western artery and the Lincoln square project are near the construction stage. Both will be done by the state. The Salem Street Redevelopment Project is the next big link in the system that will open up the heart of the city.

WHAT IS THE WEST SIDE ARTERY?

Connection of existing streets
from Salisbury St. to Chandler St.

Northbound
Lane
Murray Ave.
High St.
Alderich St.
Chestnut St.
Morris Sq.
Harvard St.
Tuckerman St.



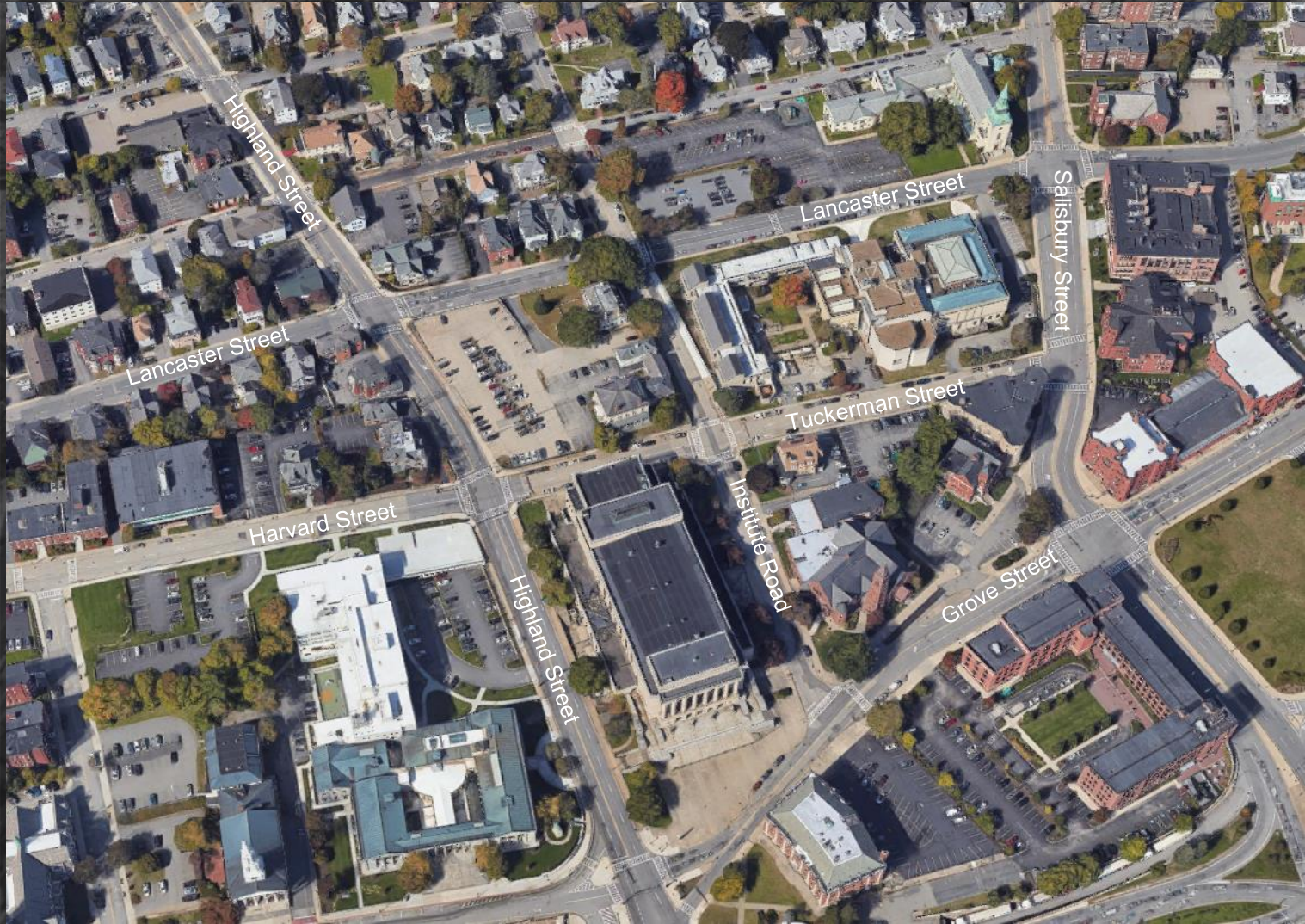
Southbound
Lane
Lancaster St.
Linden St.
Irving St.

THE WEST SIDE ARTERY

Highway overlay / converted city streets into state highways



SALISBURY CULTURAL DISTRICT BLOCK



MORRIS SQUARE

Connected streets that didn't align.

(No thought to view corridors/ building site lines)

Wide turning radius for higher speeds of travel

Spread of surface parking lots *(building demolition, creating large gaps in the urban fabric)*



CHANNING BLOCK

(Lower) Chestnut Street

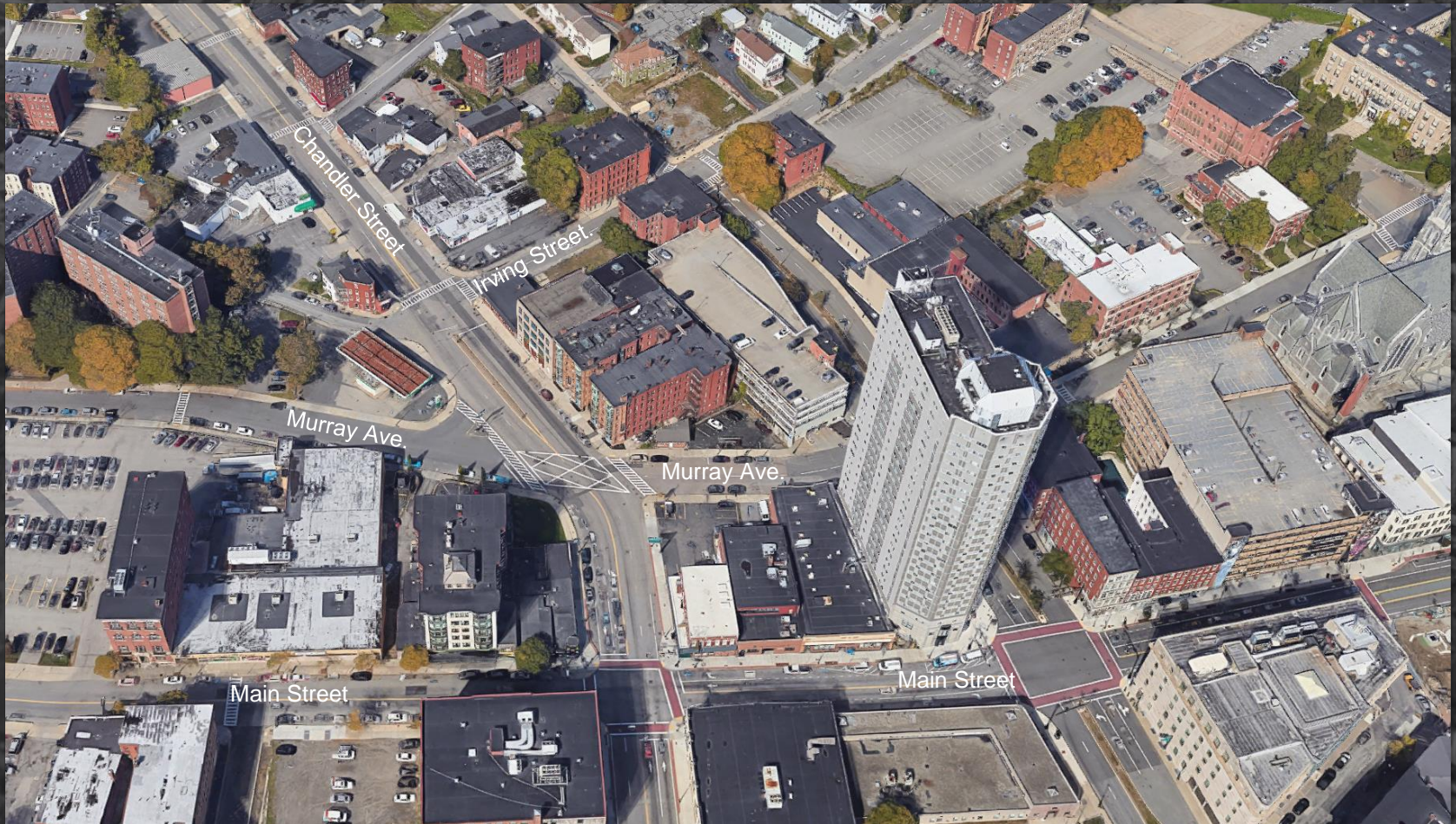
Remnant from the past urban renewal/ highway overlay era

Does this even have a purpose any more?



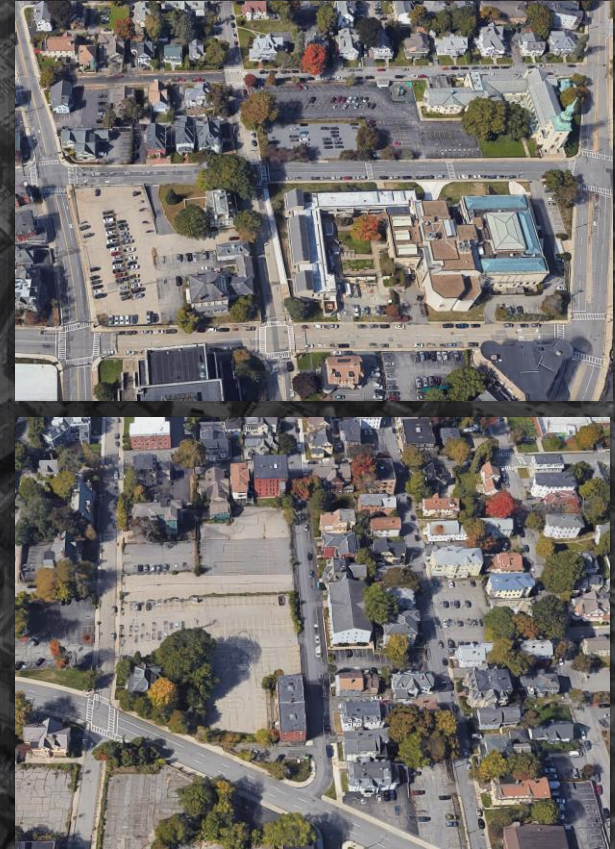
Chandler Street/Murray Ave.

Traffic Bottleneck ?



PARKING

Parking: occupies 35 % of their study area
(Does not include portions of our study area)



Parking Reform Network

PARKING REFORM

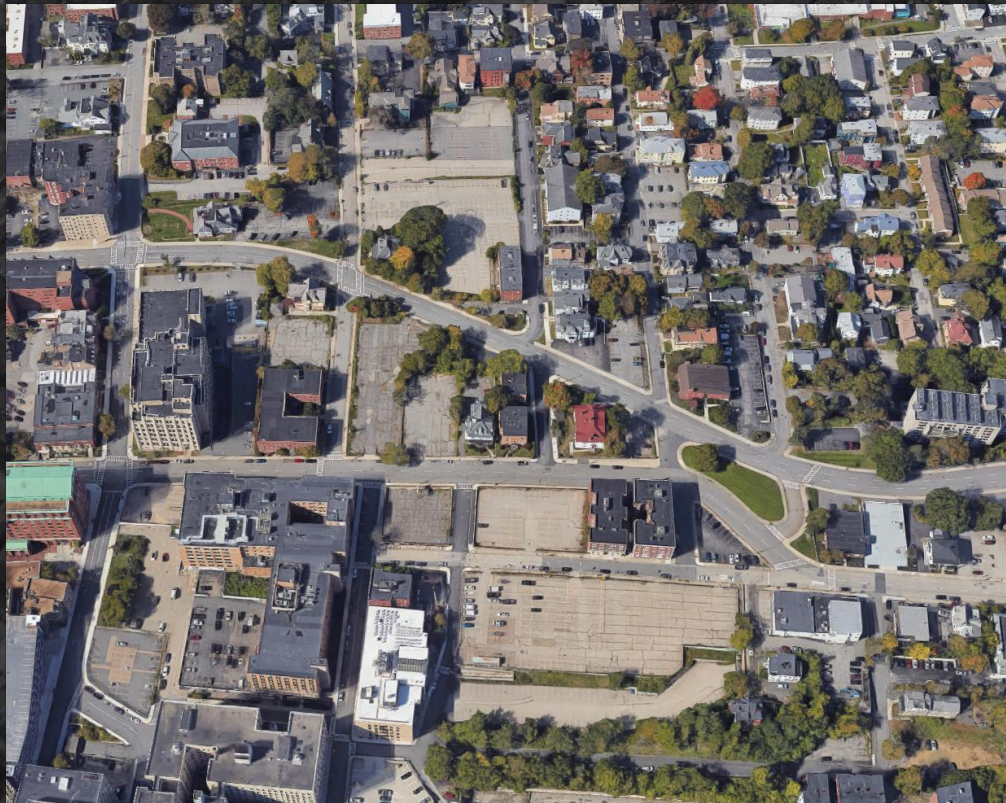
Is it time to rethink / update parking requirements ?
Adjusting for today's needs ?

Post COVID/ Hybrid Work Force: *Office Requirement Amount Needed*

Electric Vehicles: *Weight Difference, Thermal Runaway*

Climate Change/ Environmental Issues: *Flooding/Water Runoff vs. Ground Water Recharge*

Urban Density: *Combatting Spread of Large Surface Lots / Redensification*

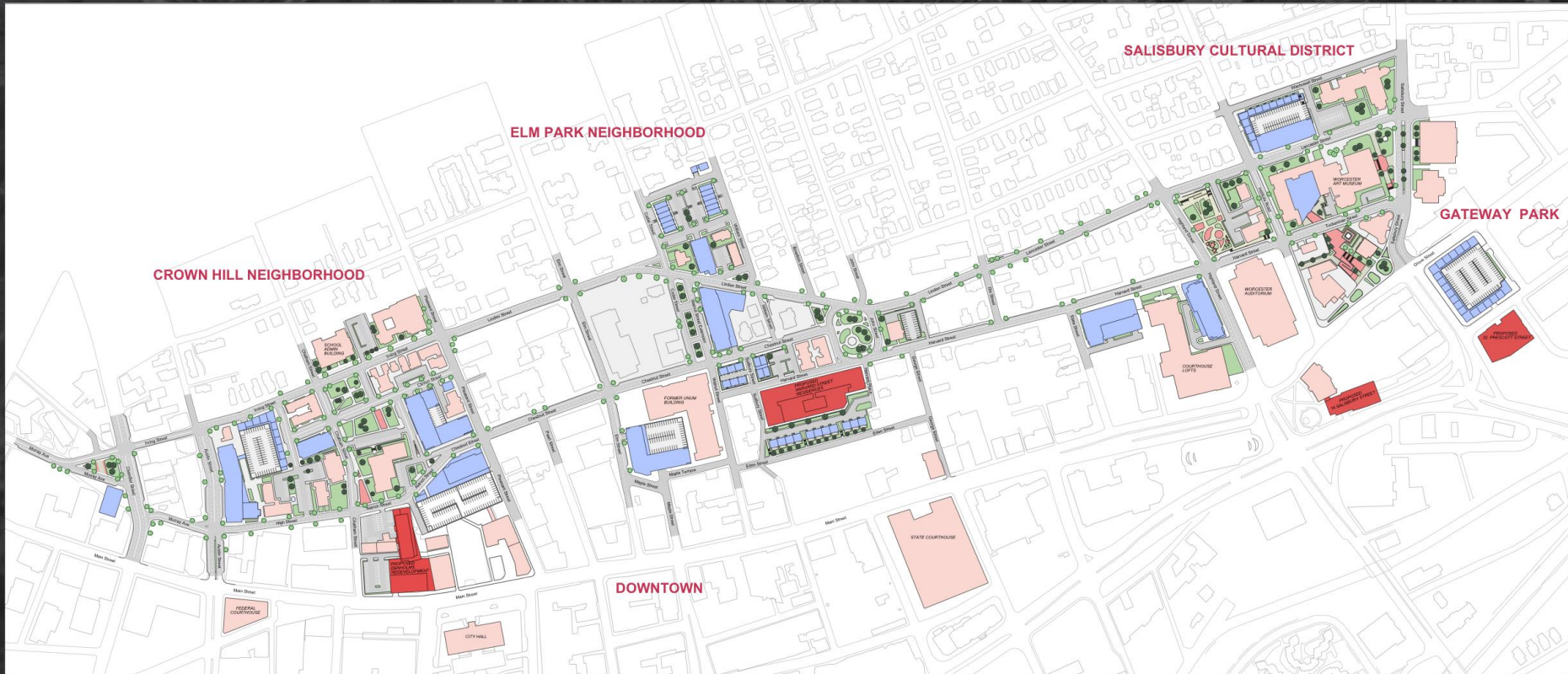


PATCHING THE URBAN FABRIC

Targeting remnants from the urban renewal era

Linking: The Crown Hill, Elm Park, Salisbury Cultural District
Neighborhoods with the Downtown.

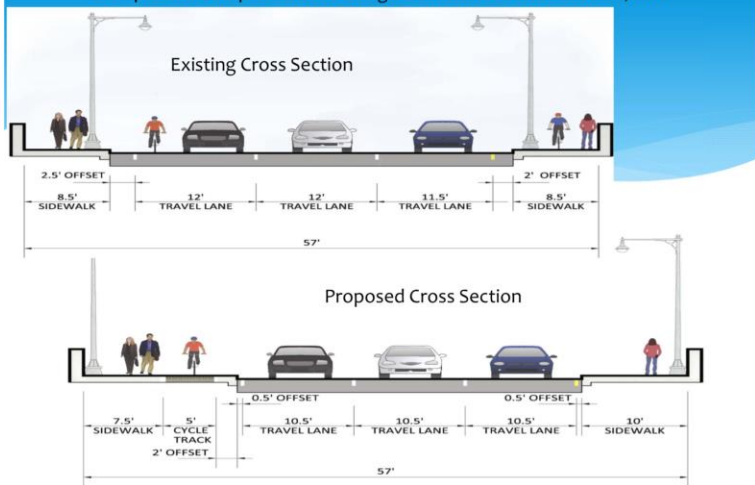
Seamless Connection.



COMBINING THE TWO PROGRAMS

Complete Streets (*Street Tightening*) along with The Urban Design Guidelines

Example of a Complete Street Design – Western Avenue Boston, MA



CITY OF WORCESTER
URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

NOVEMBER 2012

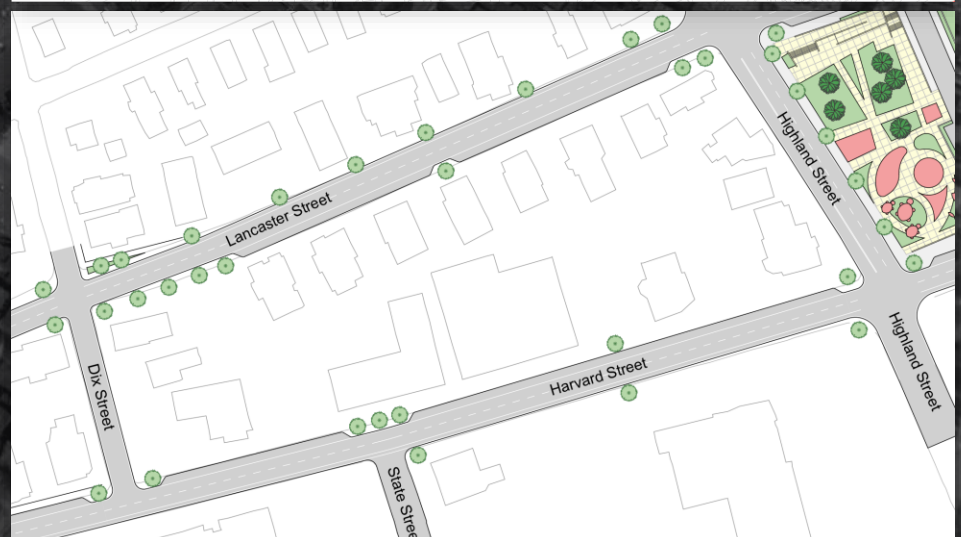
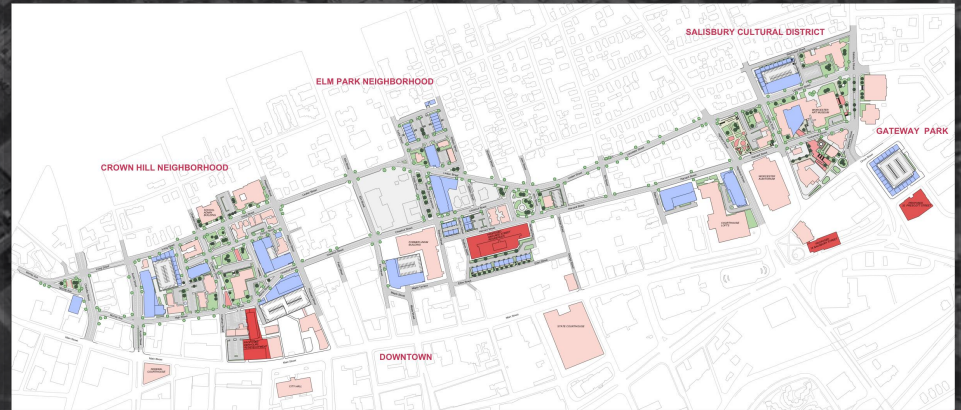


CONVERTING THE HIGHWAYS BACK INTO STREETS

(Complete Street)

3 Traffic lanes, approximately 38' wide
Reconfigured within the existing curb lines

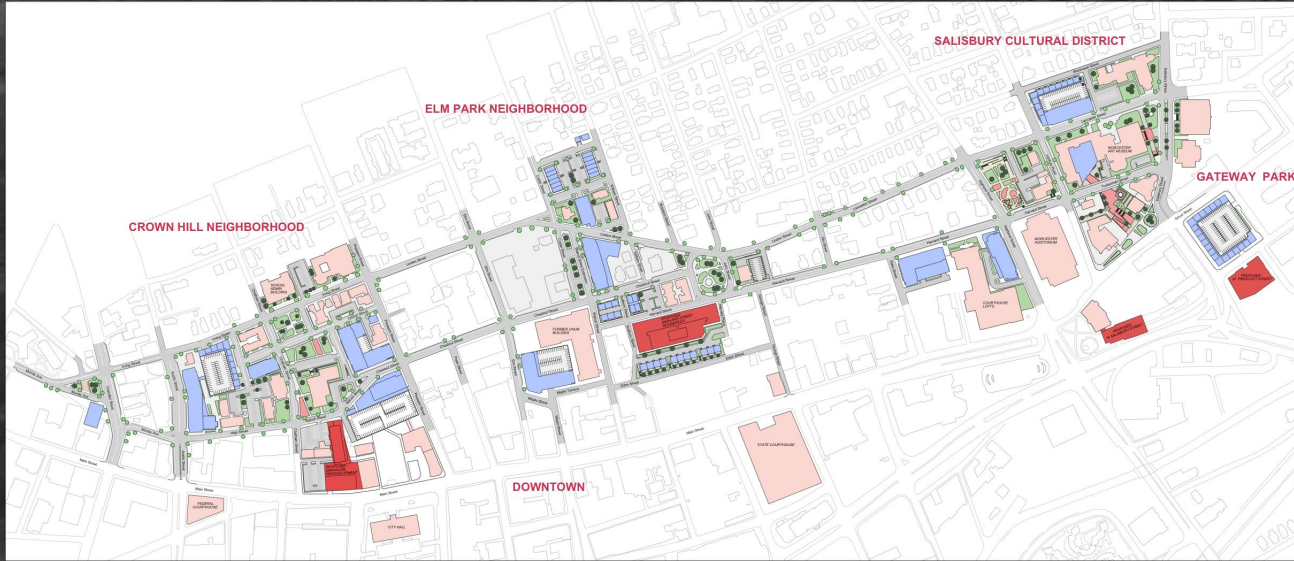
- 2: 11' Travel lanes
- 2: 1' Shoulders
- 1: 8' Parking lane
- 1: 4' Bike lane.



URBAN FOREST

Pocket Parks/ Green Space/ Trees

(City of Worcester Urban Forest Master Plan 2023)



OPPORTUNITY ZONE



NODE (1)

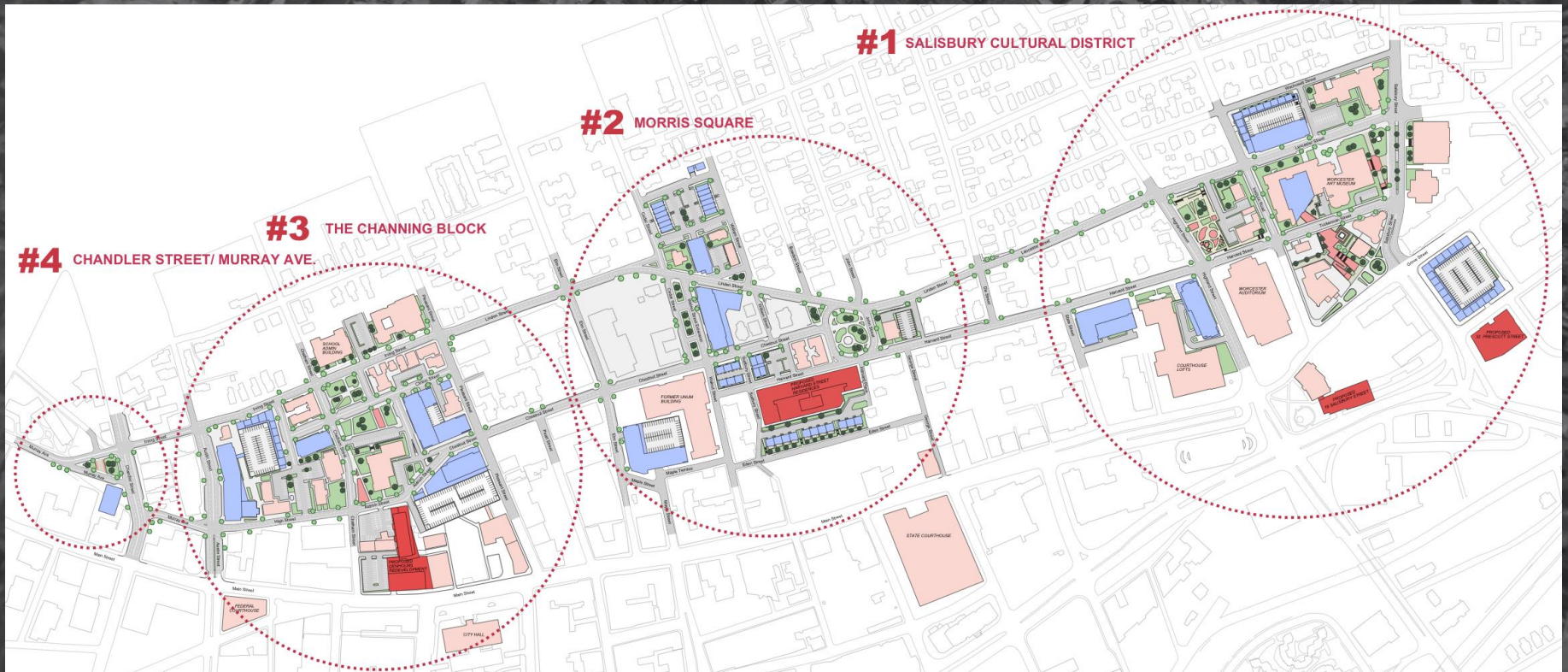
Salisbury Cultural District

Node #1 Salisbury Cultural District Block

Node #2 Morris Square

Node #3 The Channing Block

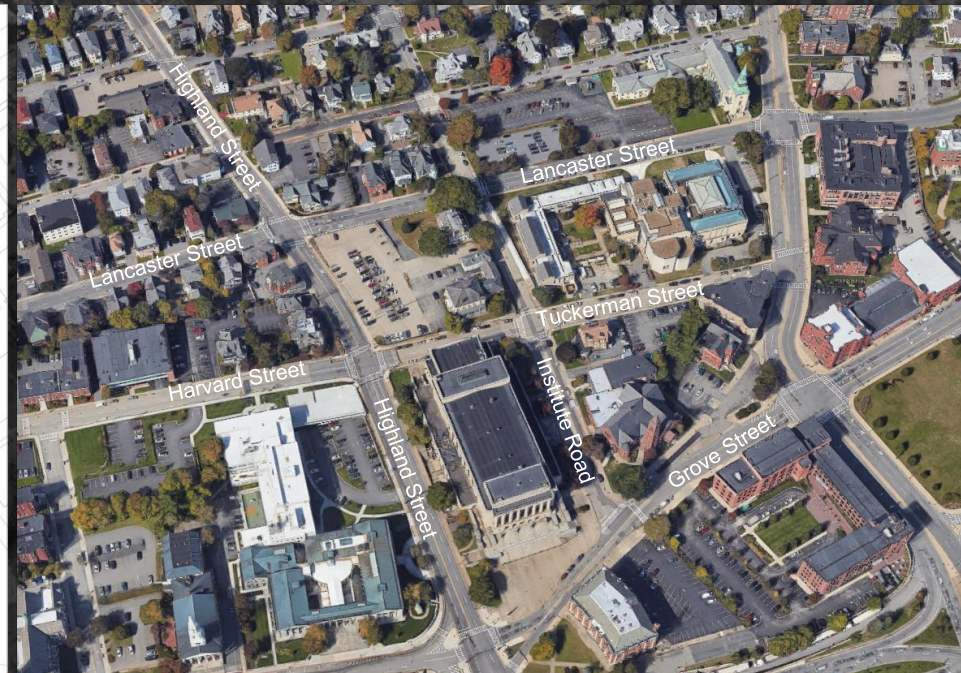
Node #4 Chandler Street/Murray Ave.



NODE #1

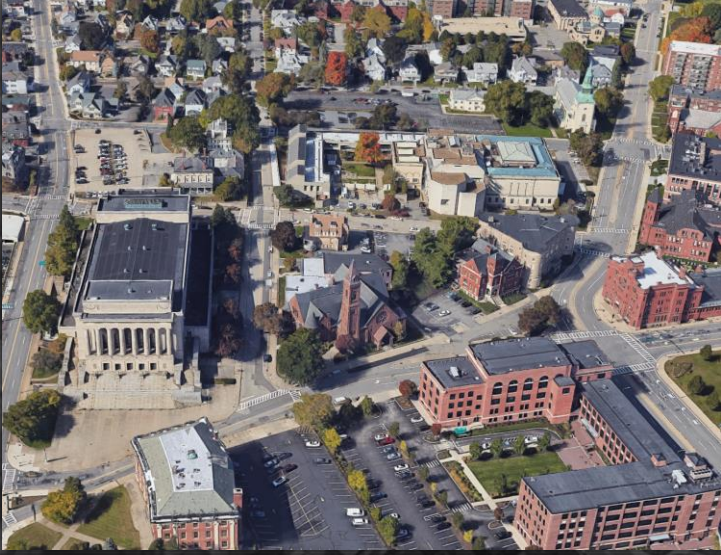
Salisbury Cultural District Block

Building/Enhancing with what's there!



BUILDING ON OUR STRENGTHS

Cultural / Institutional



WORCESTER MEMORIAL AUDITORIUM

Redevelopment /Renovation



Architect : DBVW Architects

WORCESTER ART MUSEUM PARK/ SQUARE

Tuckerman Hall, Art Museum, Trinity Lutheran Church, North High Gardens



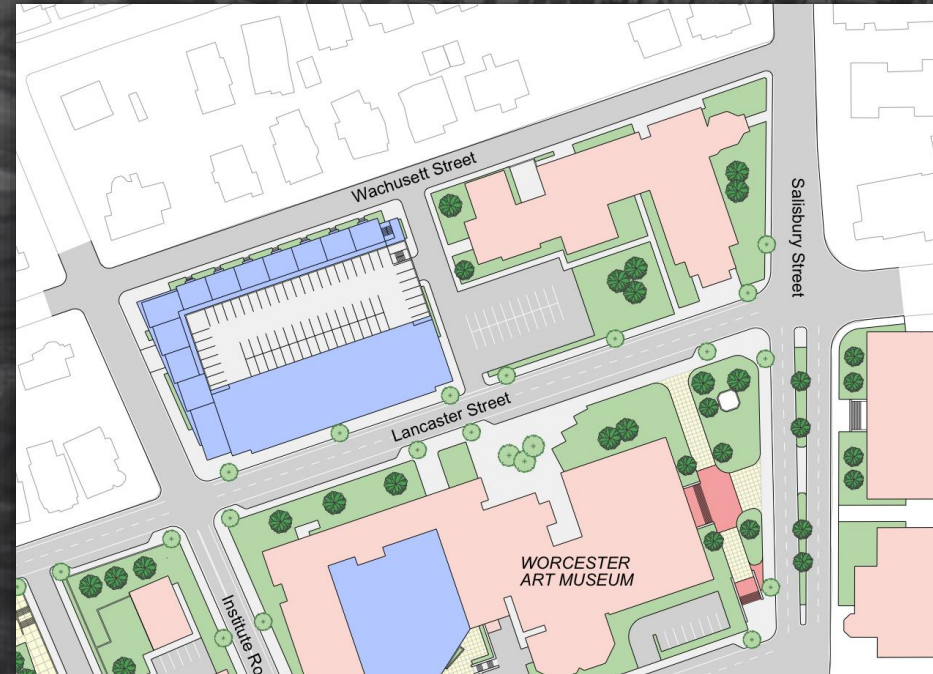
BUILDING ON OUR STRENGTHS

Uplighting Buildings /Inspiring Public Art



IN FILL DEVELOPMENT

Lost Density/ Restoring the Urban Fabric



HIGHLAND PARK

Converting the Municipal Parking Lot into a Pocket Park/ Playground



HIGHLAND PARKING LOT

Blight Issues



HIGHLAND PARK

Converting the municipal parking lot into a pocket park / playground



IN FILL DEVELOPMENT

Courthouse Lofts



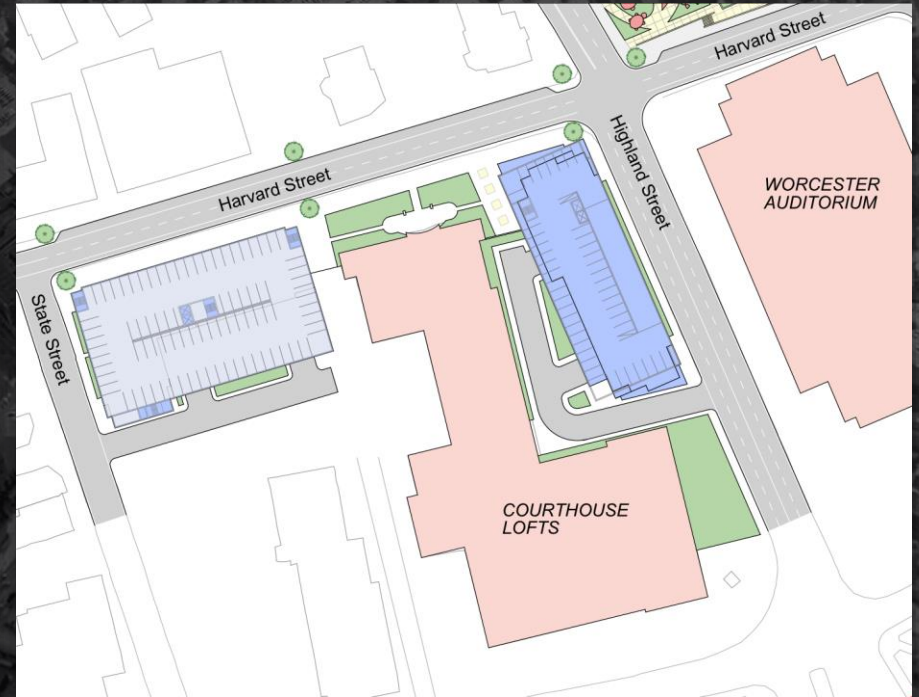
IN FILL DEVELOPMENT

Courthouse Lofts Parcels
(Re-establish the street wall)



IN FILL DEVELOPMENT

Courthouse Lofts



IN FILL DEVELOPMENT

Residential / Office / Laboratory / Mixed Residential Parking Garage



RETAIL / MERCHANDISE PLAN

Ancillary convenience retail, restaurants and coffee shops



PUBLIC ART

Thought Provoking / Fun / Amazing



NODE #2

Morris Square Block

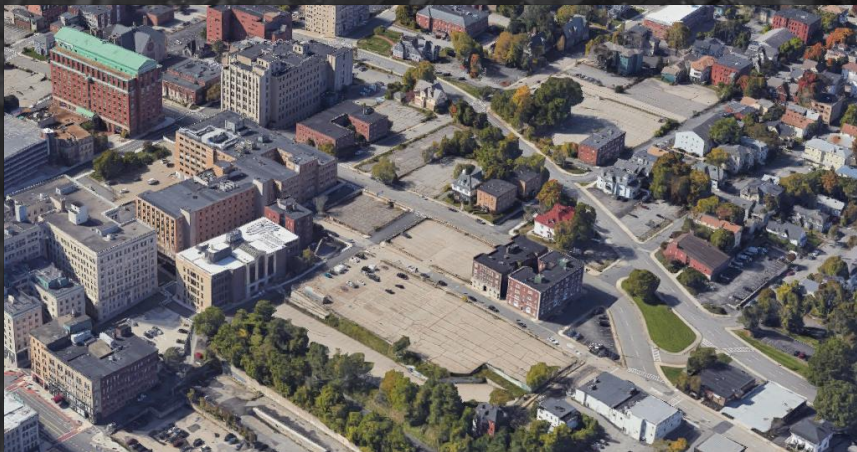
Reducing traffic speeds through street improvements, beautification, street alignment / view corridors, creating more public space, infill development/ redensification



8 HARVARD STREET (proposed)

Owner : 13 Sudbury Realty LLC

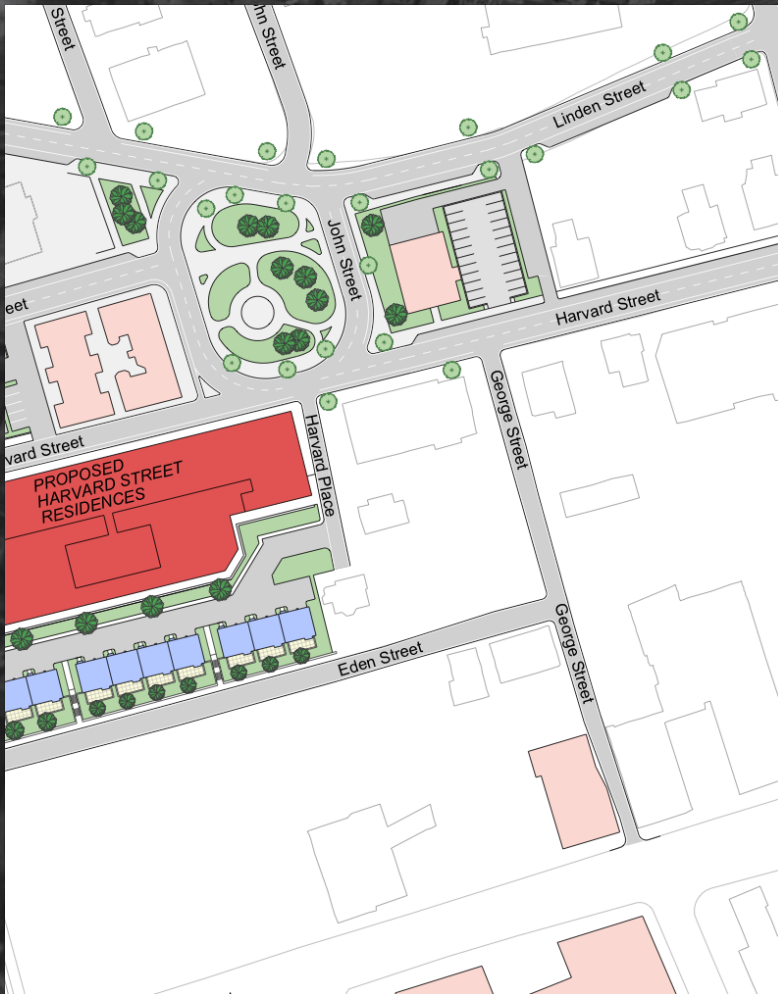
Architect : Khalsa Design Inc.



MORRIS SQUARE PARK/GEORGE STREET

Worcester's Lombard Street ?

George Street Bike Challenge for Major Taylor



GEORGE STREET

Worcester's Lombard Street?
George Street Bike Challenge for Major Taylor



EDEN STREET

Infill (Size and Scale / Townhouses)



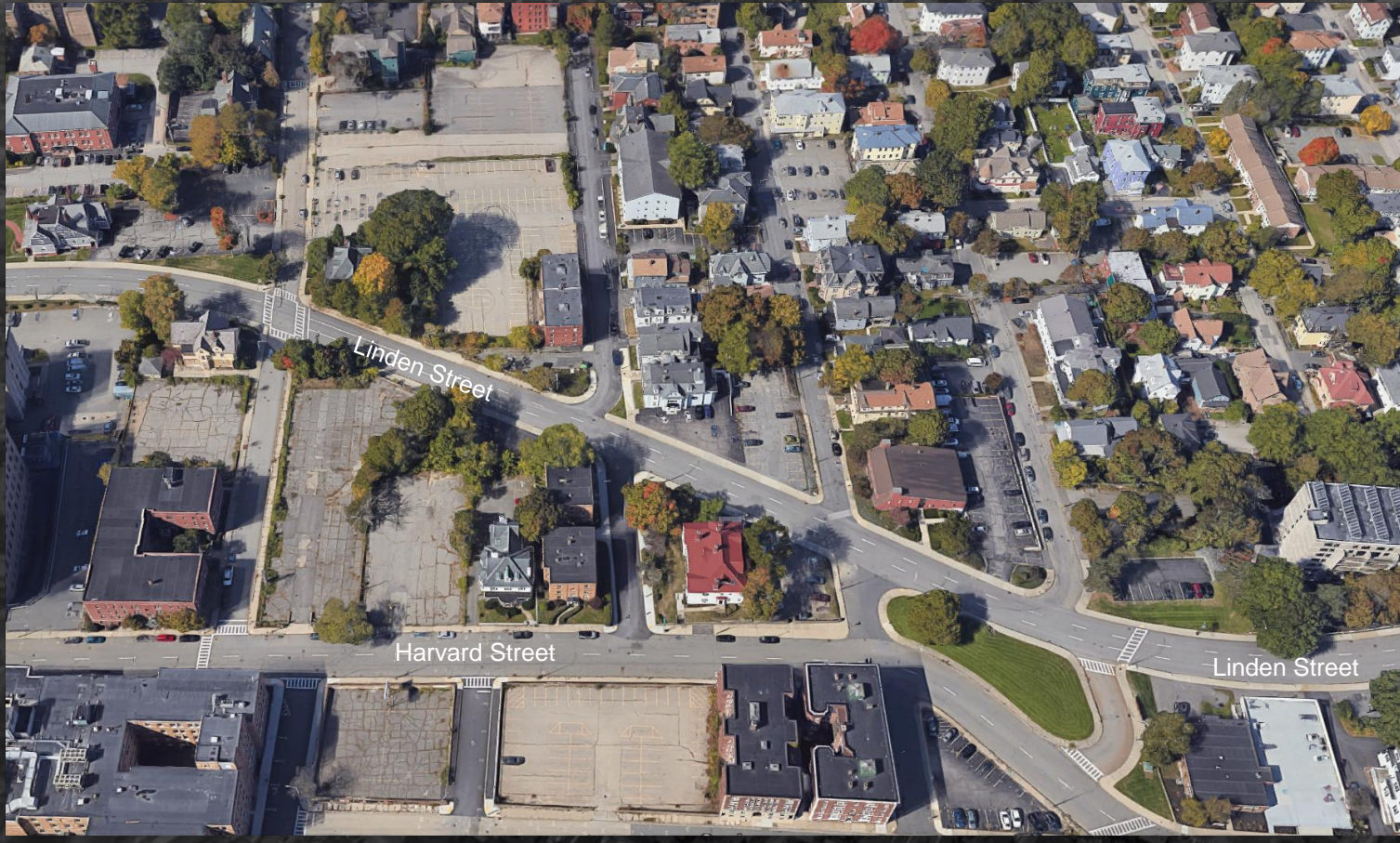
MORRIS SQUARE PARK/GEORGE STREET

Traffic Oval/ Public Space

The Cap to the George Street Bike Challenge



FORMER UNUM BUILDING SURFACE PARKING LOTS



LANDSCAPING/BEAUTIFICATION

Blighted Condition / C.P.T.E.D.



IN-FILL DEVELOPMENT

Patching the urban fabric with the appropriate scale (*stacked townhouses*)



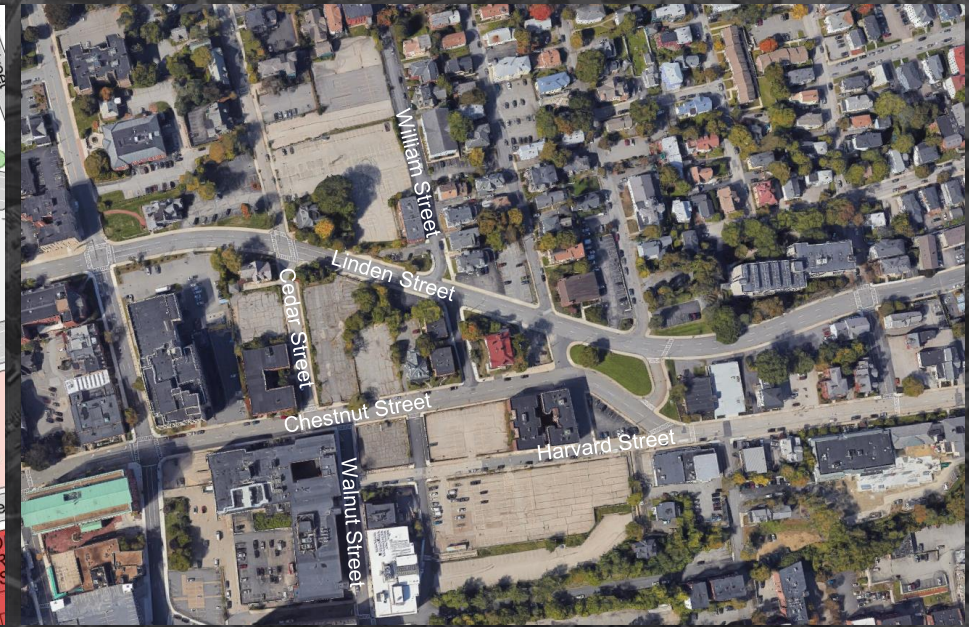
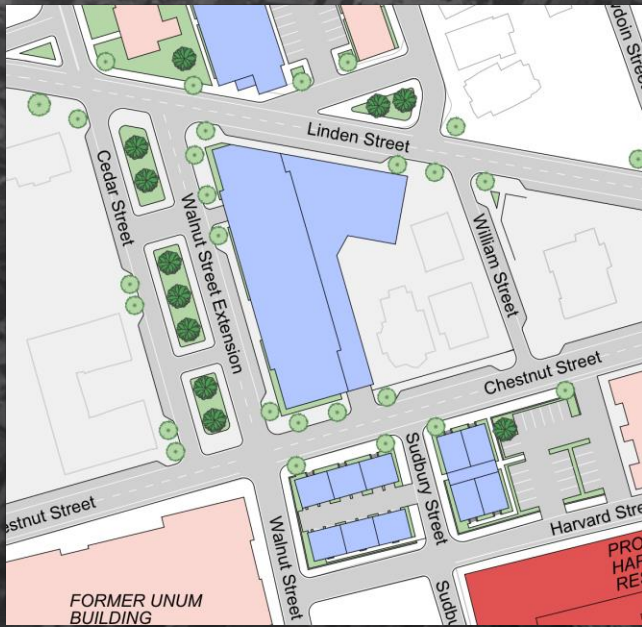
IN-FILL DEVELOPMENT

Option #2 Townhouses (New Urbanism)



WALNUT STREET EXTENSION

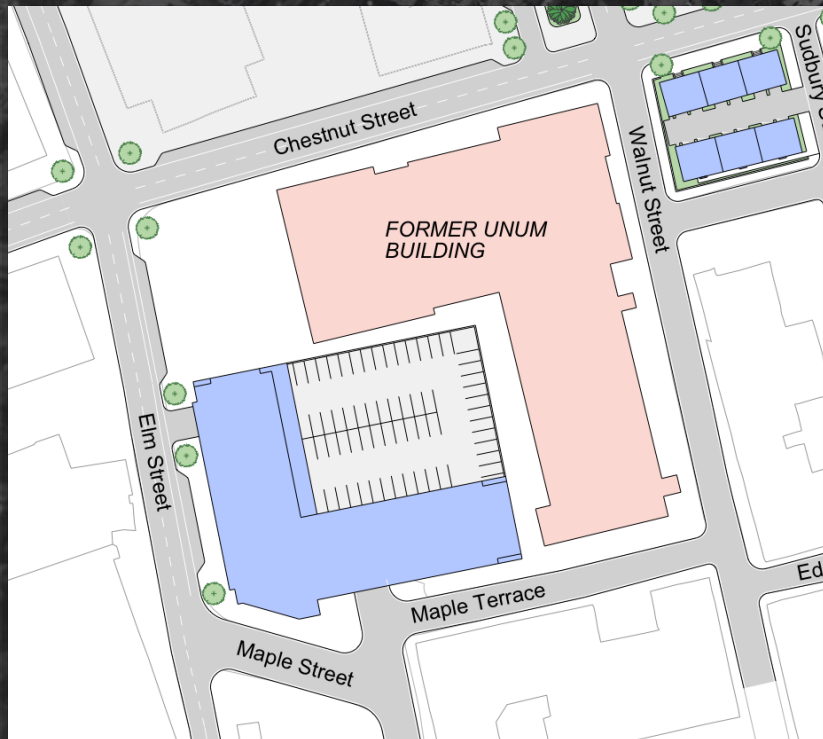
Pocket Park (Greens Space) Infill Development



FORMER UNUM BUILDING PARKING

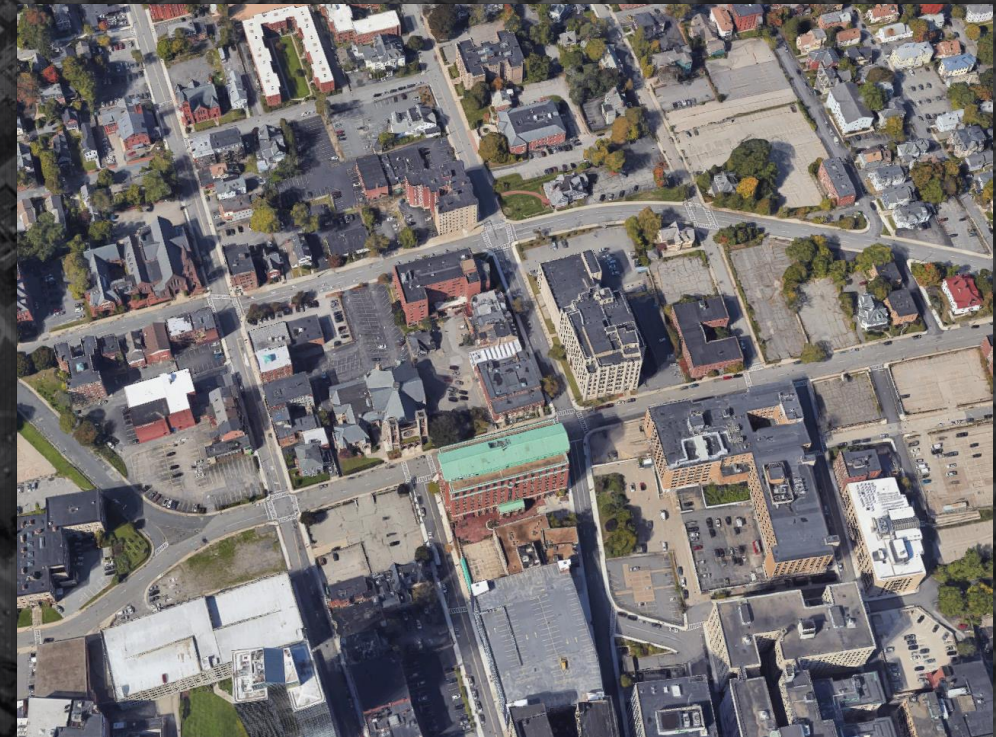
Surface Lots: Potential for Infill Development (Redensification)

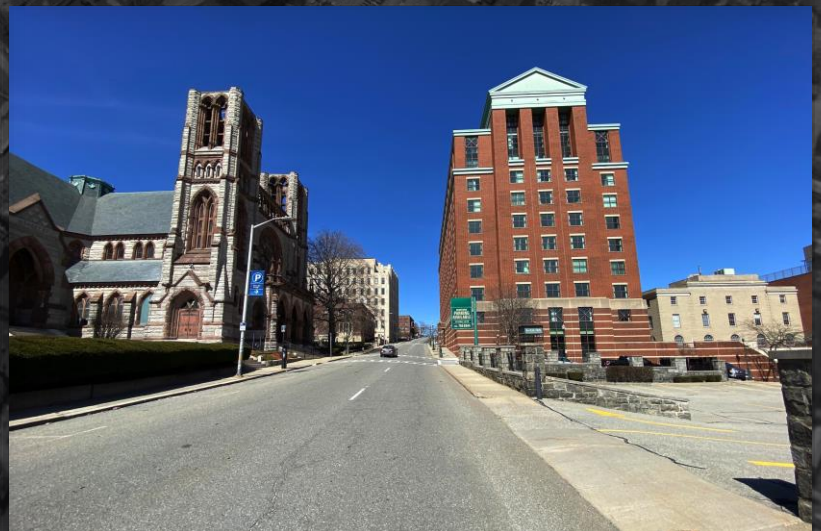
Existing Building: Parking Replacement



MORE STREET TIGHTENING

Linden, Elm and Chestnut Street area
*Working with what's there! Complete Streets, Beautification,
Urban Design Guidelines*







NODE (3)

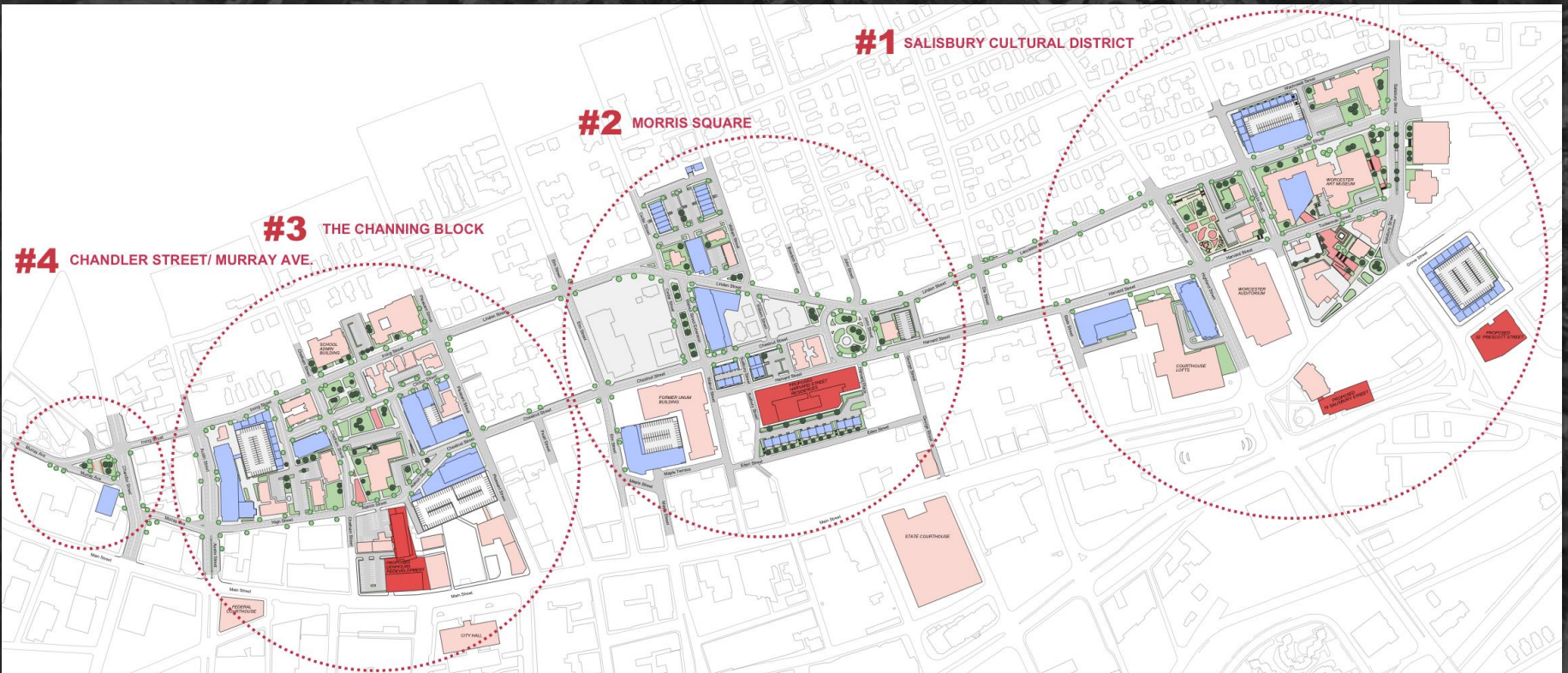
The Channing Block

Node #1 Salisbury Cultural District Block

Node #2 Morris Square

Node #3 The Channing Block

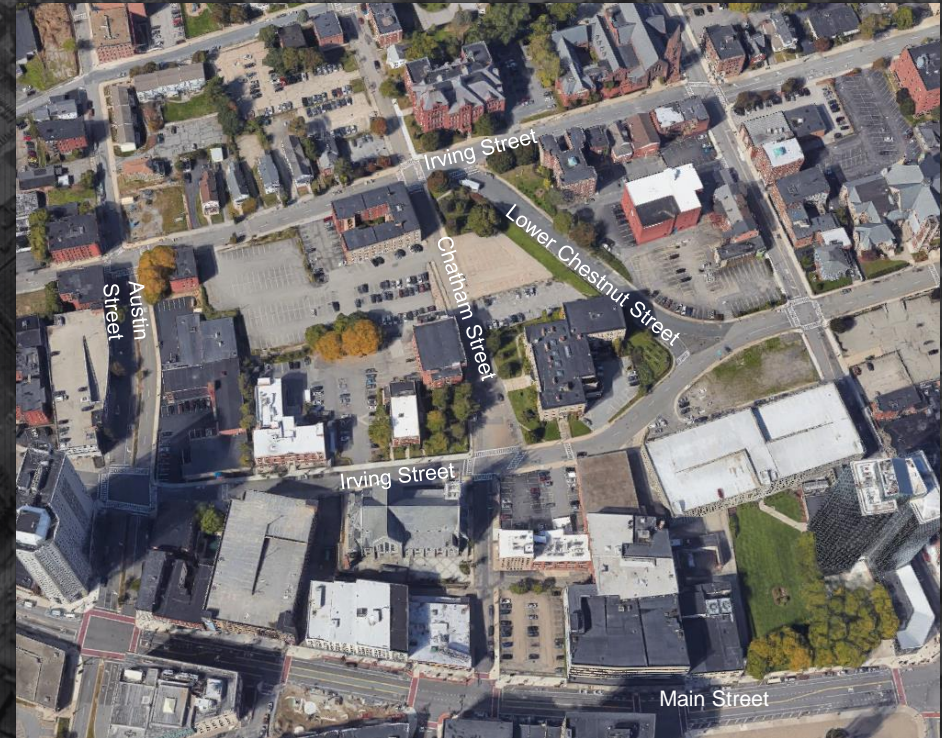
Node #4 Chandler Street/Murray Ave.



NODE #3

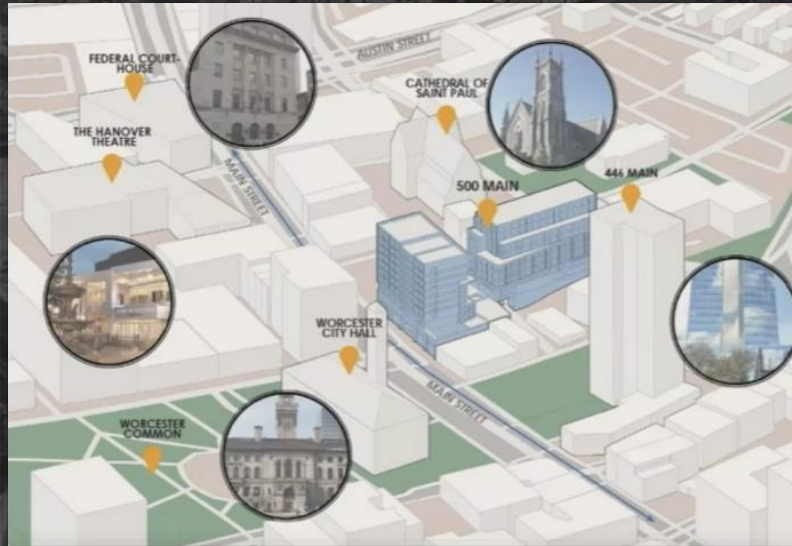
New street alignments, infill development

Master Planning the block / undoing past highway overlay



DENHOLMS REDEVELOPMENT

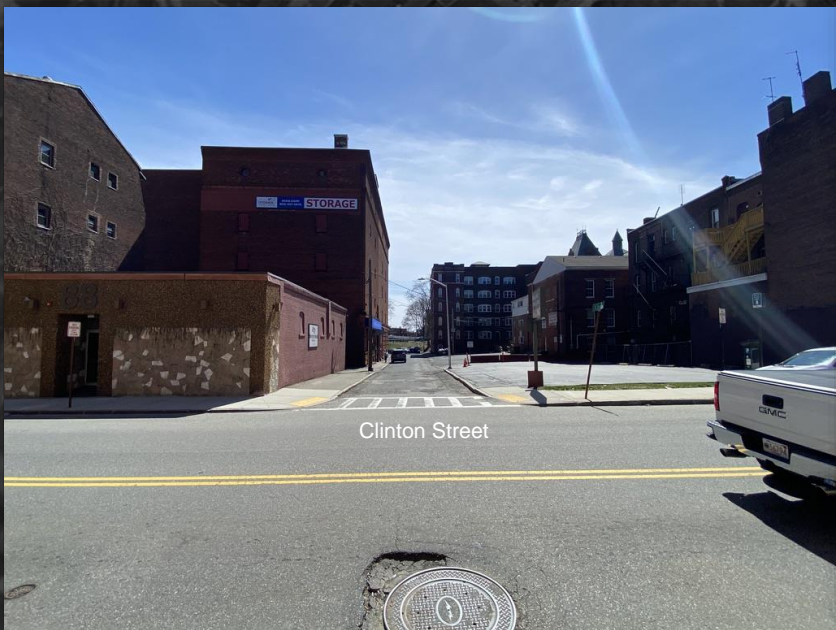
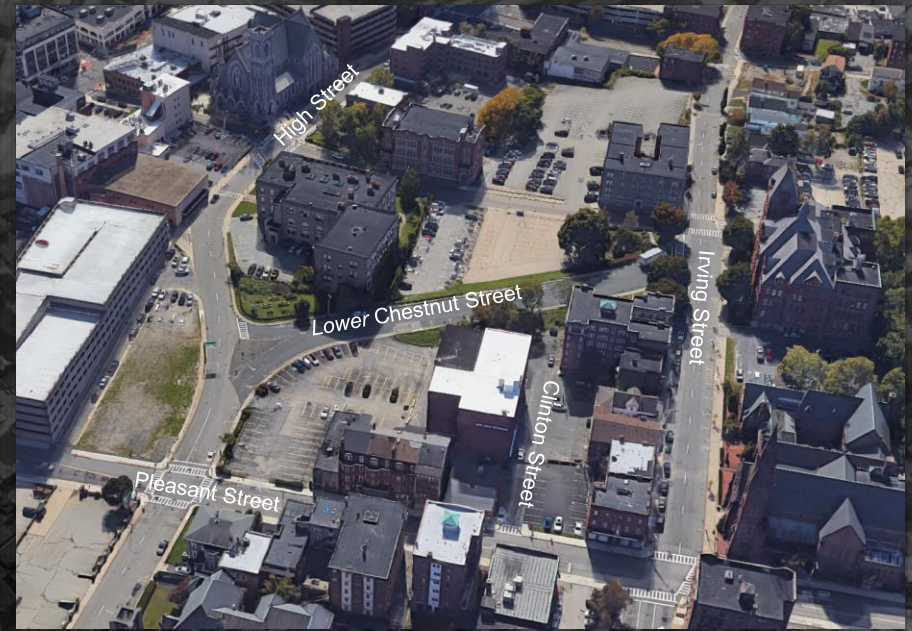
Developer : *Menkiti Group*
Architect : *ZDS Architecture and Interiors*



CHANNING BLOCK

*(Lower) Chestnut Street
Remnant of the past (has no purpose)*





WORCESTER PLAZA (446 MAIN STREET)

Back Side / Garage lot



SURFACE PARKING LOTS

Contrast in Conditions / Land Banking



TREATMENTS AND BEAUTIFICATION

Pedestrian Experience



GARAGE PARCEL (FRONTAGE BUILDING)

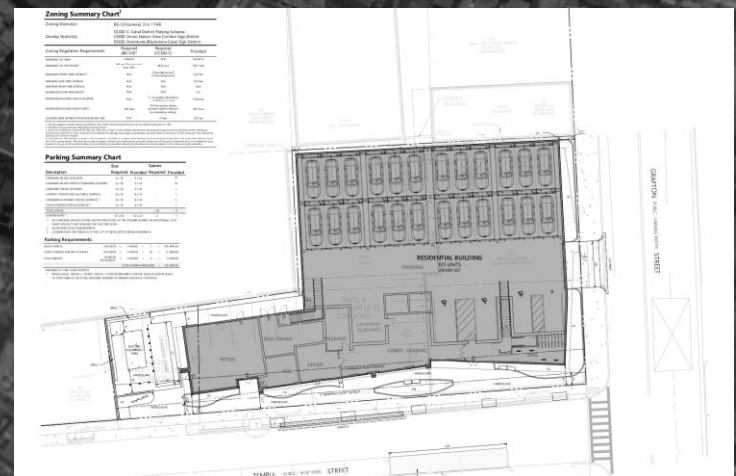
Example : Proposed Building for 44 Grafton Street

Developer : Akros Development LLC

Architect : Rode Architects Inc.



*High Density Parking System
Semi-Automated*



RECONFIGURATION

New Street Alignments, Infill Development
(Master planning the block / undoing past urban renewal)





PLEASANT STREET / CHATHAM STREET BLOCK

Tremendous amount of undeveloped land
New street alignments / infill development / pocket parks



AUSTIN STREET / CHATHAM STREET BLOCK

New street alignments / infill development of the surface lots



FUTURE DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Planning for that future



OPTIONS / OPPORTUNITIES

Evaluating potential repurpose / re-use



NODE (4)

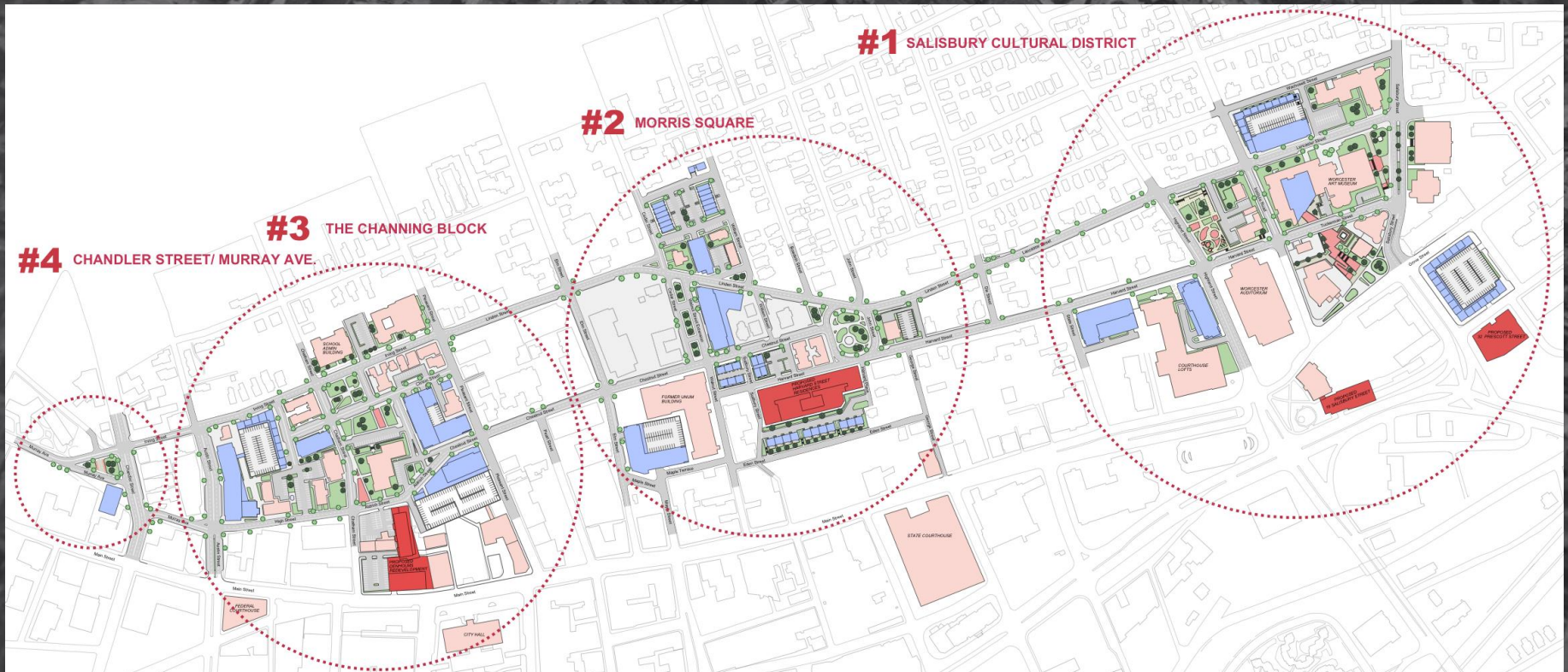
Chandler Street / Murray Ave

Node #1 Salisbury Cultural District Block

Node #2 Morris Square

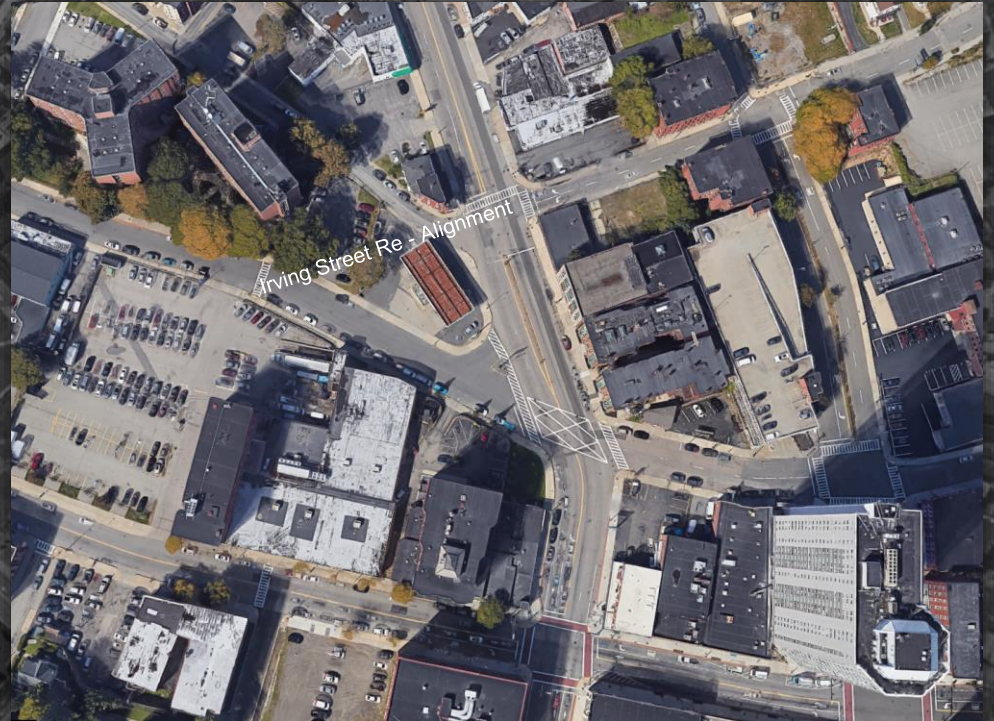
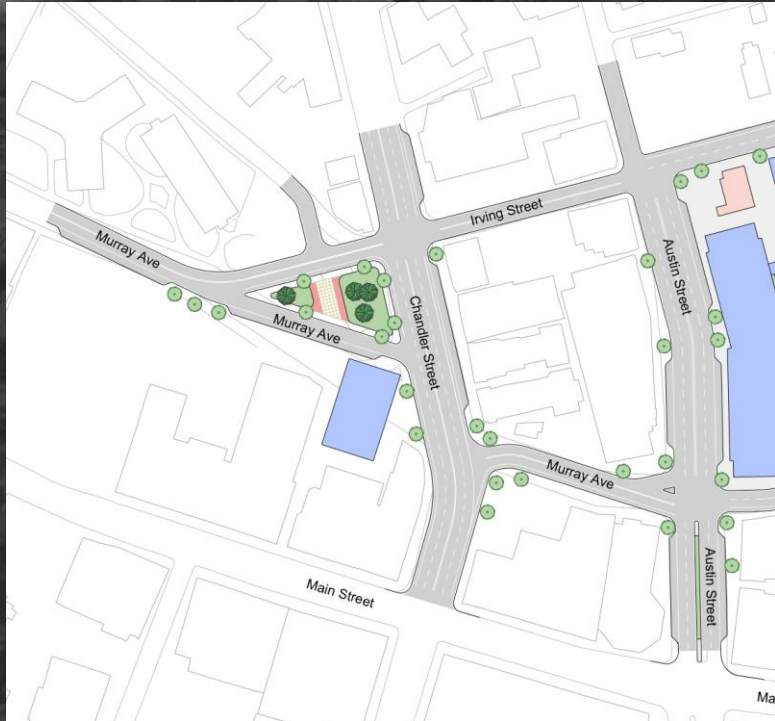
Node #3 The Channing Block

Node #4 Chandler Street/Murray Ave.



NODE #4

Chandler Street/Murray Ave. Crossing
Irving Street Re-Alignment (*Existing Signaled Intersection*)



NODE #4

Chandler Street/Murray Ave. Crossing Irving Street Re-Alignment (Options)



DOWNTOWN, WEST

*A conversation about strengthening the link between
Downtown, Crown Hill, Elm Park and the Salisbury Cultural District
neighborhoods.*



An aerial, grayscale photograph of a city street grid. A large stadium with a distinctive diamond-shaped field is visible in the center-left. The text 'THANK YOU' is overlaid at the top in white, serif font. Below it, the name 'Stephan Mita' and email 'stmita@verizon.net' are overlaid in an orange, sans-serif font.

THANK YOU

Stephan Mita
stmita@verizon.net