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Boston/New England

ULI Boston/New England Technical Assistance Panel (TAP)

Economic Revitalization of Webster Square

Monday, November 16th

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Panel Co-chairs



Melvin Vieira

Co-chair, RE/MAX Real Estate Center

Real estate consultant covering residential, commercial, and investment properties in Greater Boston. Teaches first-time homebuyer education and urban land planning, with experience advocating on state and local housing policy.



Haril Pandya

Co-chair, SPARC

CEO and founder of SPARC, with experience in mixed-use and multifamily development, adaptive reuse, building repositioning, and urban master planning. Connects architectural design with asset strategy, development approvals, and community context.

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Panelists



Wayne Feiden

UMass Amherst

Leads UMass Amherst's Center for Resilient Metro-Regions. Focuses on downtown revitalization, sustainable transportation, climate resilience, open space, and regulatory processes.



Bob Maloney

Real estate investment and development

Real estate investment and development professional with expertise in acquisitions, capital partnerships, permitting, and redevelopment across industrial, office, and residential markets.



Ashley Tan

Sullivan & Worcester

Advises on real estate transactions, leasing, land use, and development. Handles complex title and permitting matters and represents clients before municipal boards and city councils. Ashley is also a member of the City of Cambridge Planning Board.

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Panelists



Jarred Johnson

Toole Design

Boston Office Director linking equitable transportation with housing and land-use policy. Brings experience in transportation advocacy, nonprofit leadership, and public engagement.



Spencer Beebe

MDLA

Senior project manager and registered landscape architect at MDLA, with experience in mixed-use and multifamily developments, including navigating the permitting processes, improving the public realm, Complete Streets initiatives, and functional outdoor environments for both public and private uses.



Joe Johnson

McClure

Transportation market leader with expertise in traffic analysis, intersection and signal design, roadway reconstruction, traffic calming, multimodal safety, and public engagement.

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Panelists



Greg Contente

Real estate developer

Certified urban planner focused on mixed-use development and placemaking. Guides projects through acquisition, design, entitlements, capital raising, construction, and lease-up.



Sonia Birla

Downtown Boston Alliance

Economic Development Manager supporting business attraction and retention and activating vacant commercial space. Brings experience in revitalization, GIS, and public engagement.



Martin Zogran

Sasaki

Principal and urban designer focused on mixed-use districts, infill, and framework planning. Integrates economic goals, regulatory requirements, and ecological systems.

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Scott Pollack

OppCo, Architect

Retired Arrowstreet principal who led large-scale planning and architecture projects for 35+ years. Consults on people-first planning and serves on nonprofit boards supporting CDCs.

ULI Boston / New England Staff and Support

Michelle Landers
Executive Director

Chelsea Lauder
Outreach Director

Mike Hoban
TAP Report Writer

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ULI – the Urban Land Institute

Mission

To provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide.

ULI is a research and education institution with over 30,000 members worldwide representing the entire spectrum of land use and real estate development disciplines, working in private enterprise and public service.

ULI at the local level

- Boston/New England District Council covers nearly all of New England
- Over 1,200 Members—developers, architects, planners, public officials, financiers, students, etc.

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Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs)

Economic Revitalization of Worcester's Webster Square

ULI Boston/New England is committed to supporting the communities of New England in making sound land use decisions and creating better places. A Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) brings together a group of ULI members with a range of professional expertise to provide focused, collaborative consultation to a local government or qualifying non-profit organization.

- **Sponsored by City of Worcester,** this panel looked at the full range of options from an unbiased perspective.
- Panelists include experts in the fields of architecture, real estate development, land use and zoning law, urban planning, and economic development.
- Panelists have donated their time
- Final Deliverable – written report

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The Process

Briefing

- Panelists met with sponsors and received briefing materials

Site Visit:

- Panelists toured the Webster Square area:
  - Main, Mill, Park, Cambridge, and Stafford Streets

Panel interviewed stakeholders including:

- Neighborhood groups
- Residents
- Business owners
- Worcester Housing Authority
- City officials
- National Grid





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The Panel's Assignment

- Transportation / Infrastructure:
  - Considerations relative to traffic flow, roadway design, parking and potentially other infrastructure such as water / sewer considerations or other sustainable and resilient design elements considering the floodplain.
- Land-use / Zoning:
  - Highest and best-use that also meets the top needs and priorities of the community, including any recommendations relative to the existing zoning in the area.
- Market Feasibility:
  - Considerations relative to the proposed vision or land-use and how that relates to current market conditions both in Worcester specifically and beyond. Also ensuring the vision for economic revitalization strategies is consistent with other adopted plans or goals of the City of Worcester at-large.

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Study Area

Webster Square Commercial Corridor:

- Mill St., Park Ave., Main Street.
- Focus on area around Curtis Ponds, Beaver Brook

Study area was a portion of the broader Webster Square neighborhood.



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Challenges

Transportation & Connectivity
- Traffic congestion
- Lack of walkability
- Inadequate public transit
- Private streets (20%)

Land Use & Development
- Underutilized properties
- Lack of diversified retail (auto-centric uses)
- Lack of diverse housing typologies
- Zoning overlay

Public Realm & Sense of Place
- Lack of sense of place or anchor destination
- Paved surfaces, lots of concrete
- Limited access to natural waterways

Environmental
- Floodplain
- Environmental clean-up and contamination

Partnerships & Organization
- Lack partnership between the City and property owners
- No business association / Main Streets or improvement district

Planning & Community
- Planning fatigue, skepticism

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Assets/Opportunities

Transportation & Connectivity
•Streets with opportunity to rework traffic flow
•High vehicular traffic (selling point to retailers); major artery and connection point
•Existing wide streets
•Regular and multiple bus routes
•Nearby local airport

Land Use & Development
•Developable land
•Favorable zoning timeline
•Destination retail (Breens Cafe, Wooden Bar)

Neighborhood & Community
•Active and engaged neighborhoods and stakeholders, strong residential base
•Low crime rate and available social services
•Economic and cultural diversity
•Adjacencies to intact vibrant neighborhoods and Clark University

Natural Resources
•Existing waterways

Partnerships & Investment
•City engagement and attention to neighborhood
•Existing national and local investments

Recommendations

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Transportation & Mobility – Joe and Jarred

- Few key intersections that can be simplified by removing movements.
- Multi-modal accommodations
  - Utilize wide streets to enhance multi-modal transportation
  - Increase public transit

- Changing movement of traffic flow
  - Mill Street, Park Ave., Main Street
    - Mill St., at Park Ave
    - Mill St., at Main Street
    - Main Street at Park Ave
  - Cambridge St., at Main Street
  - Webster St. at Mill St. Ext.

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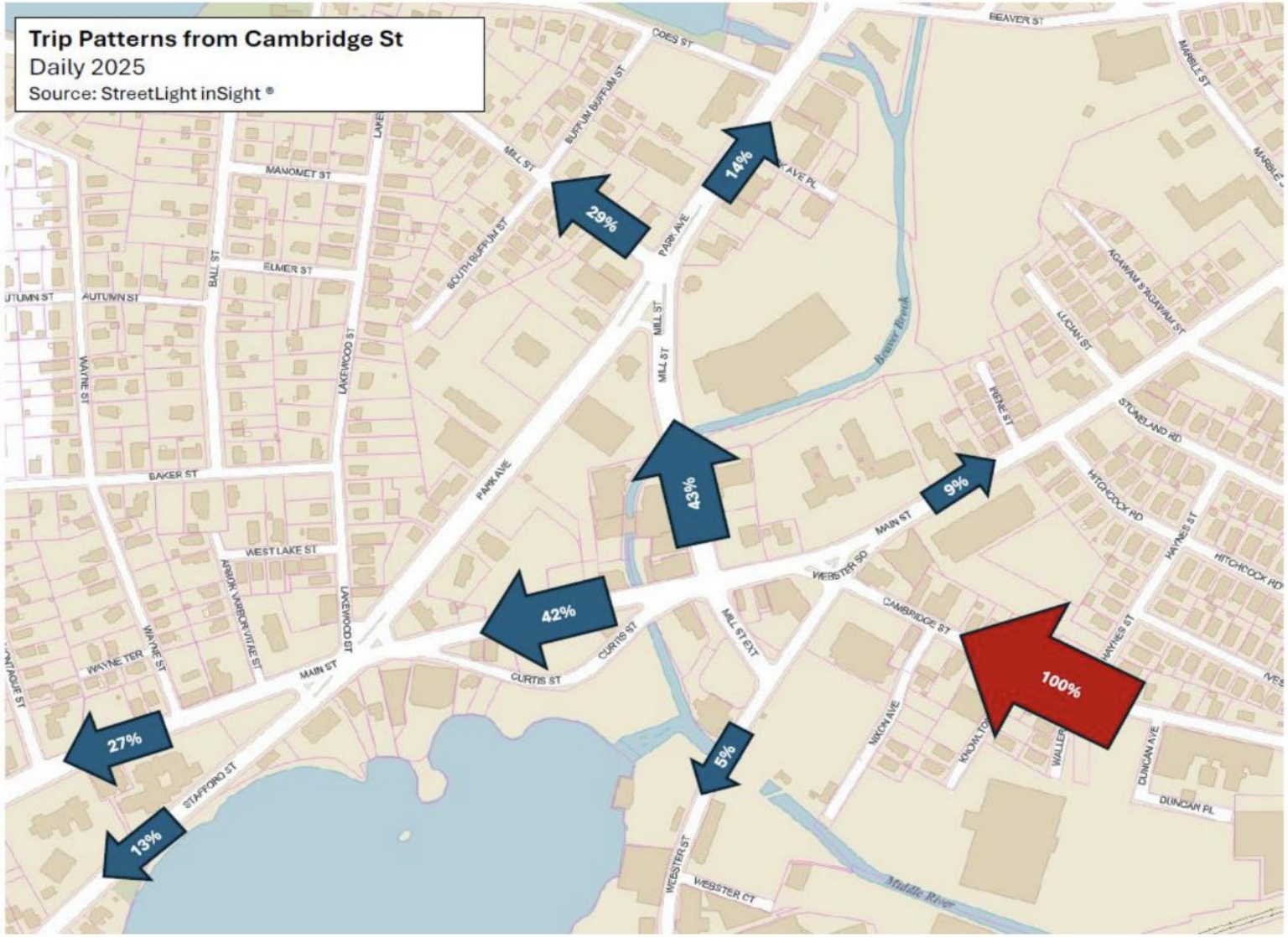
Existing traffic patterns




CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
DCU Center
Worcester
COLUMBUS PARK
Acoustic Java Roastery & Tasting Room
College of the Holy Cross
Chick-fil-A
Google Earth
N



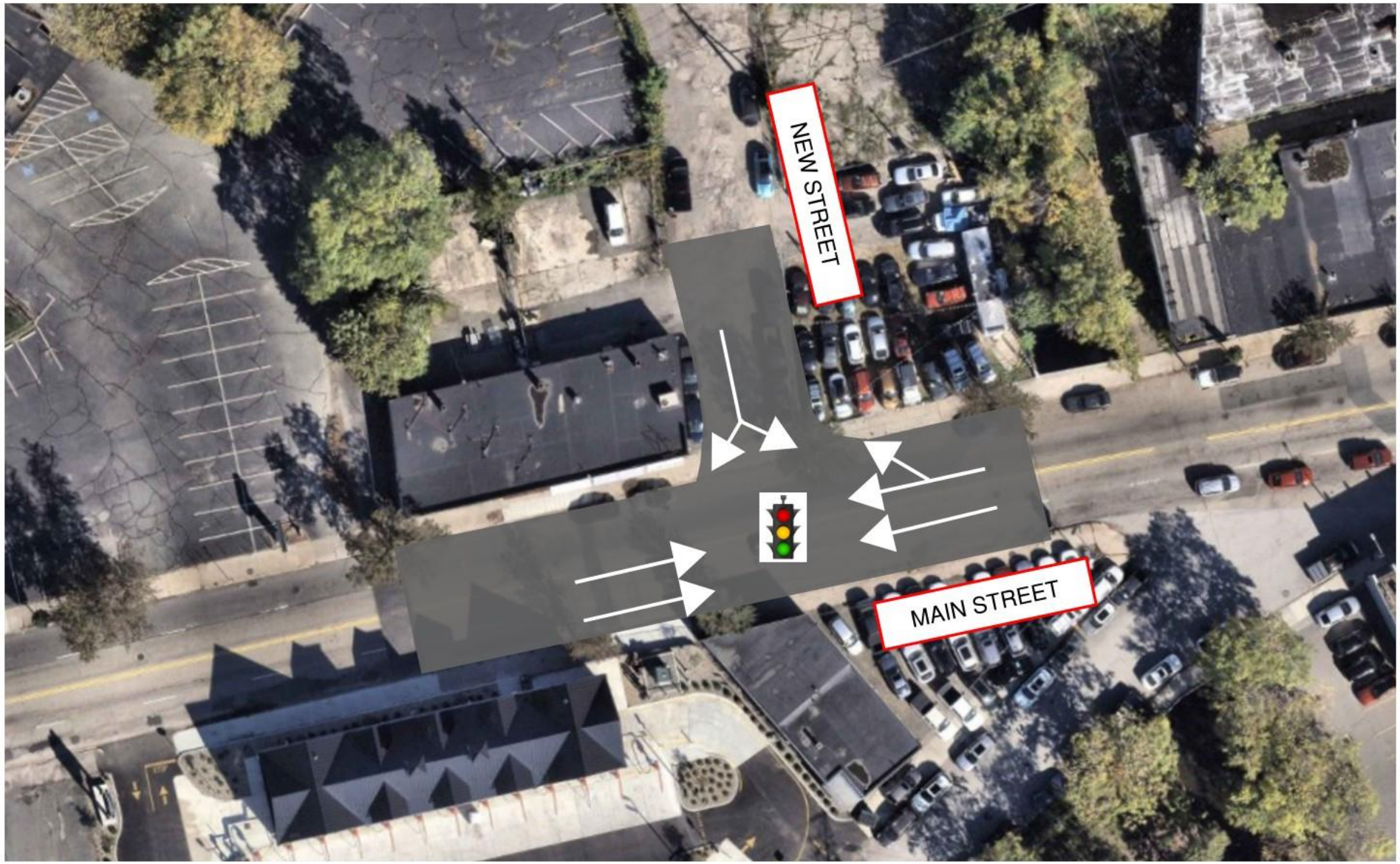


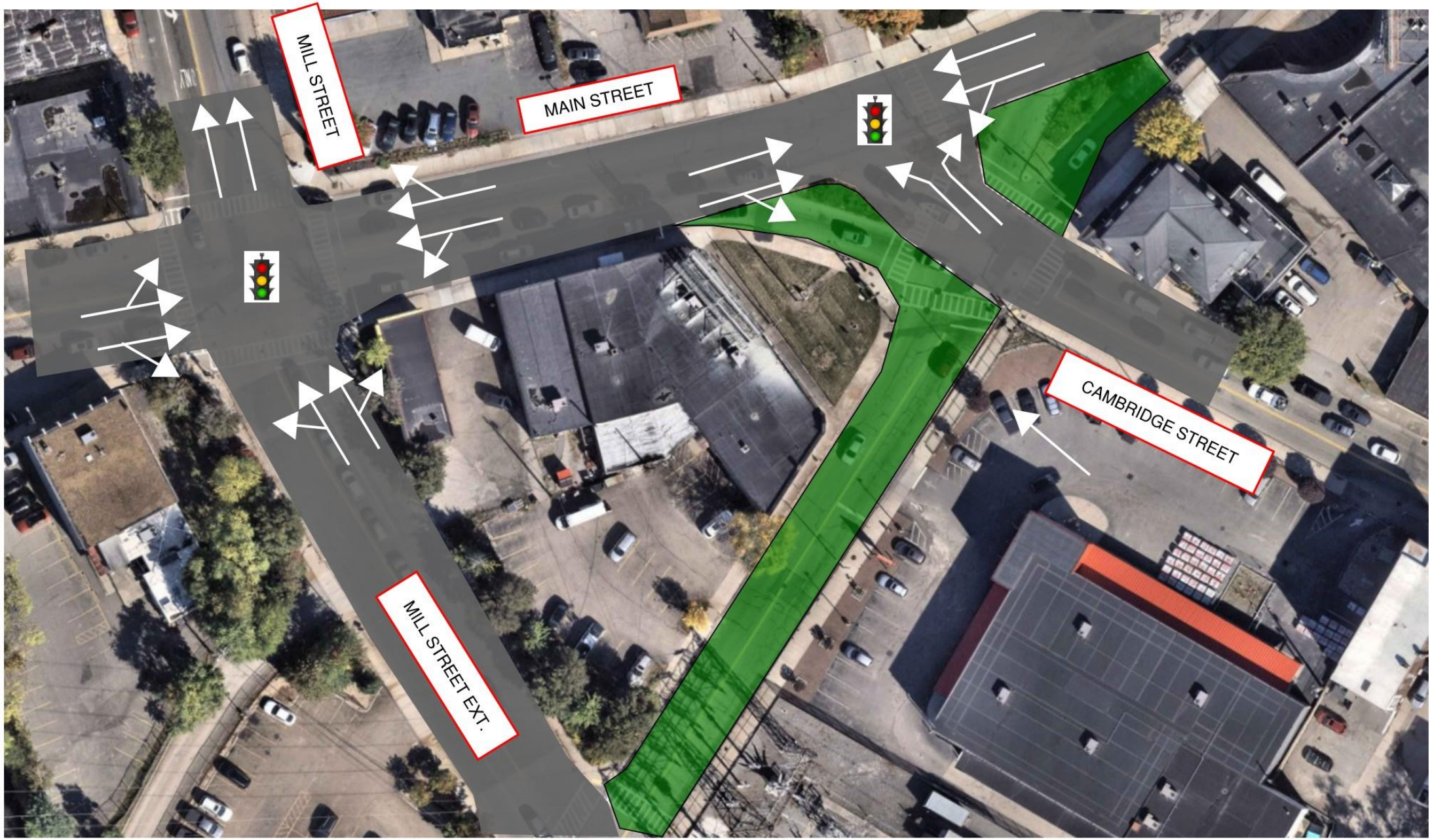


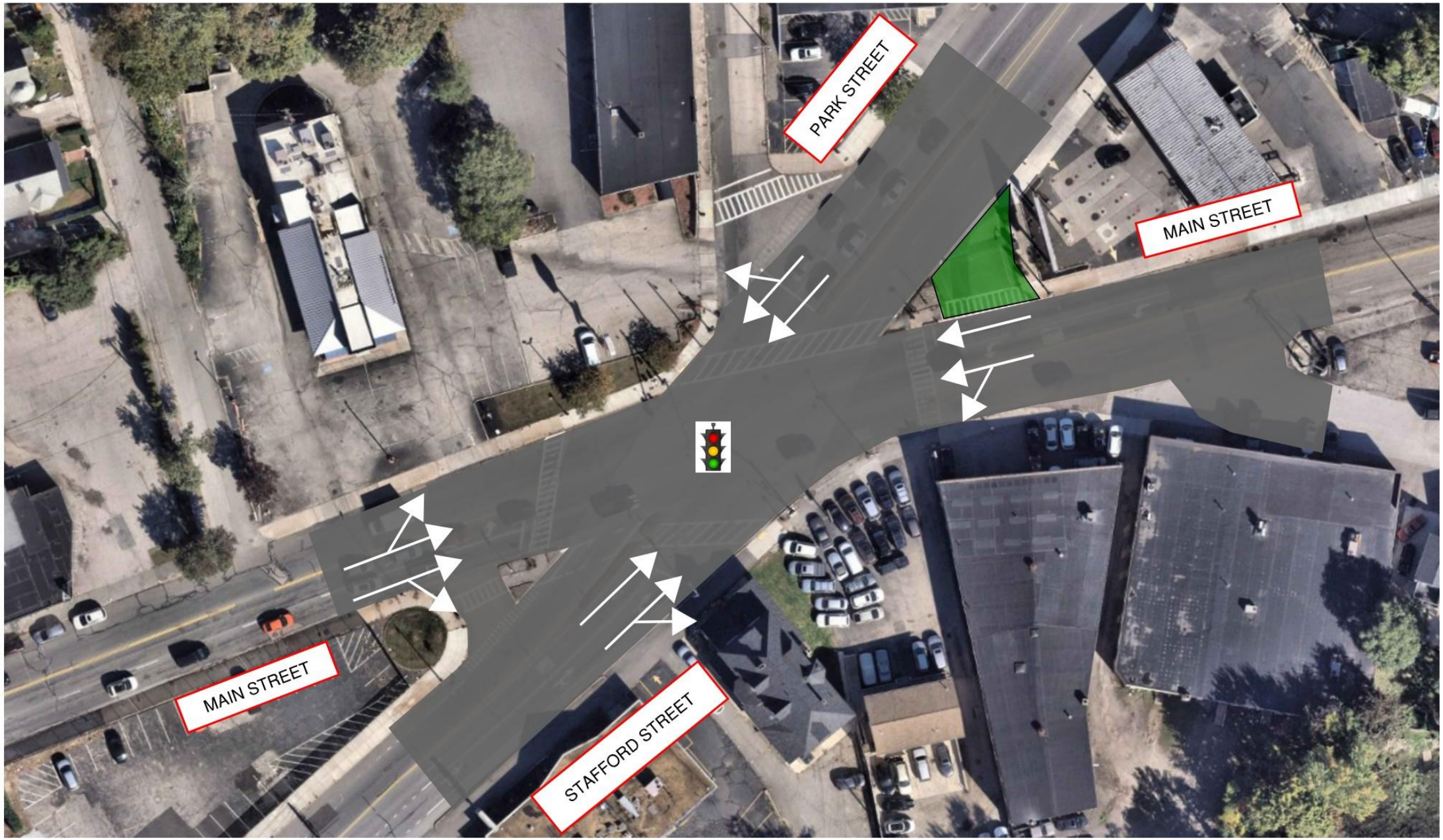

Beaver Brook
Clark Athletic Field
Park Ave + Coes St
Mill St at Gates
Coes St at Buffum
Mill St at 103 Mill
Mill St at St Buffum
Manomet St
Wayne St
Gates Rd
Gates Ln
Roseville Ln
Montague St
Autumn St
Elmer St
Ball St
Lakewood St
S Buffum St
Buffum St
Coes St
Park Pl
Brookline St
Wentworth St
Bishop Ave
Baker St
Catalpa St
Catalpa Cir
W Lake St
Tallawanda Dr
Holland Rd
Main St + Wayne St
Main St at Montague
Stafford St + Webster Sq
Main St + Young St
Webster Square Plaza
Stafford St
Curtis St
Webster St
Webster Ct
Knowlton Ave
Cambridge St
Cambridge St + Price Chopper
Cambridge + Main
Main St + Arena Plaza
Main St + Hitchcock Rd
Main St + Lucian St
Main St + Lowell St
Irene St
Lucian St
Agawam St
Marble St
Tirrell St
Stoneland Rd
Haynes St
Hitchcock Rd
Ives St
Sat Oct 3 2026
Imagery © 2026 Nearmap, HERE
Nearmap

MILL STREET
PARK STREET
PARK STREET
MILL STREET

PARK STREET
PARK STREET
NEW STREET


NEW STREET
MAIN STREET

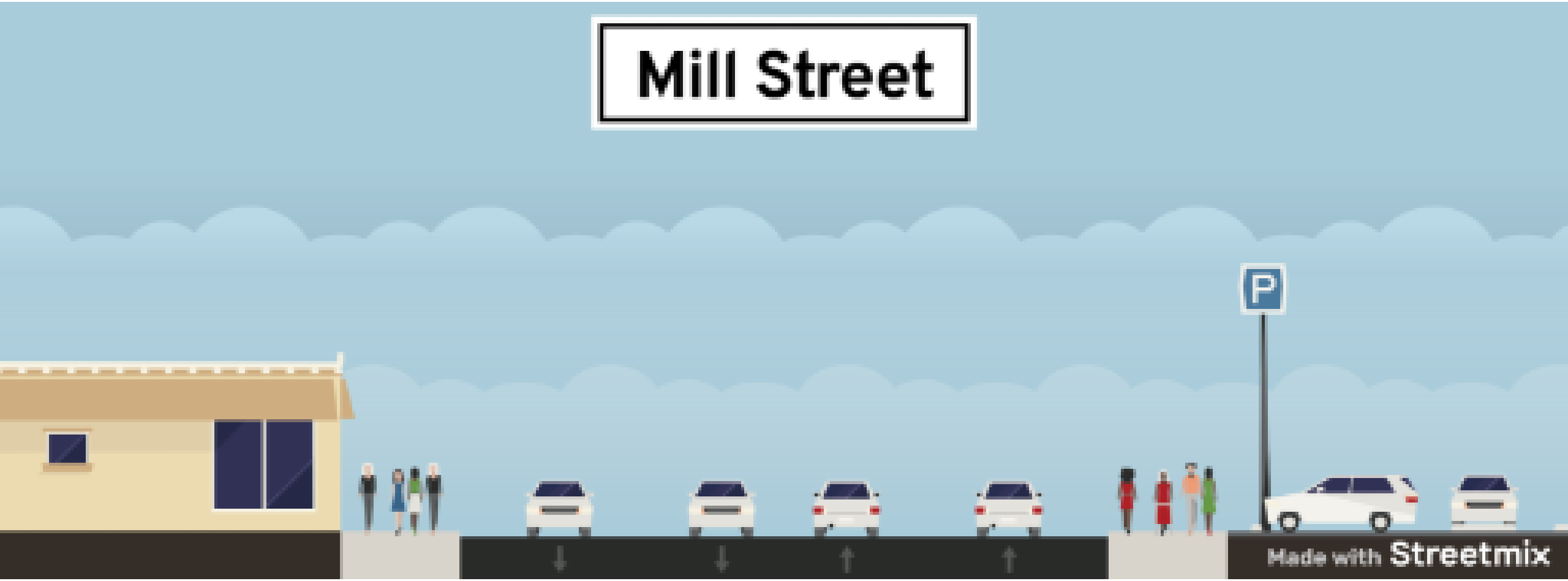

MILL STREET
MAIN STREET
CAMBRIDGE STREET
MILL STREET EXT.


PARK STREET
MAIN STREET
MAIN STREET
STAFFORD STREET


Park Ave
P
Made with Streetmix


Park Ave
Made with Streetmix


Park Ave
Made with Streetmix


Mill Street
P
Made with Streetmix


Mill Street
Made with Streetmix


Mill Street
Made with Streetmix

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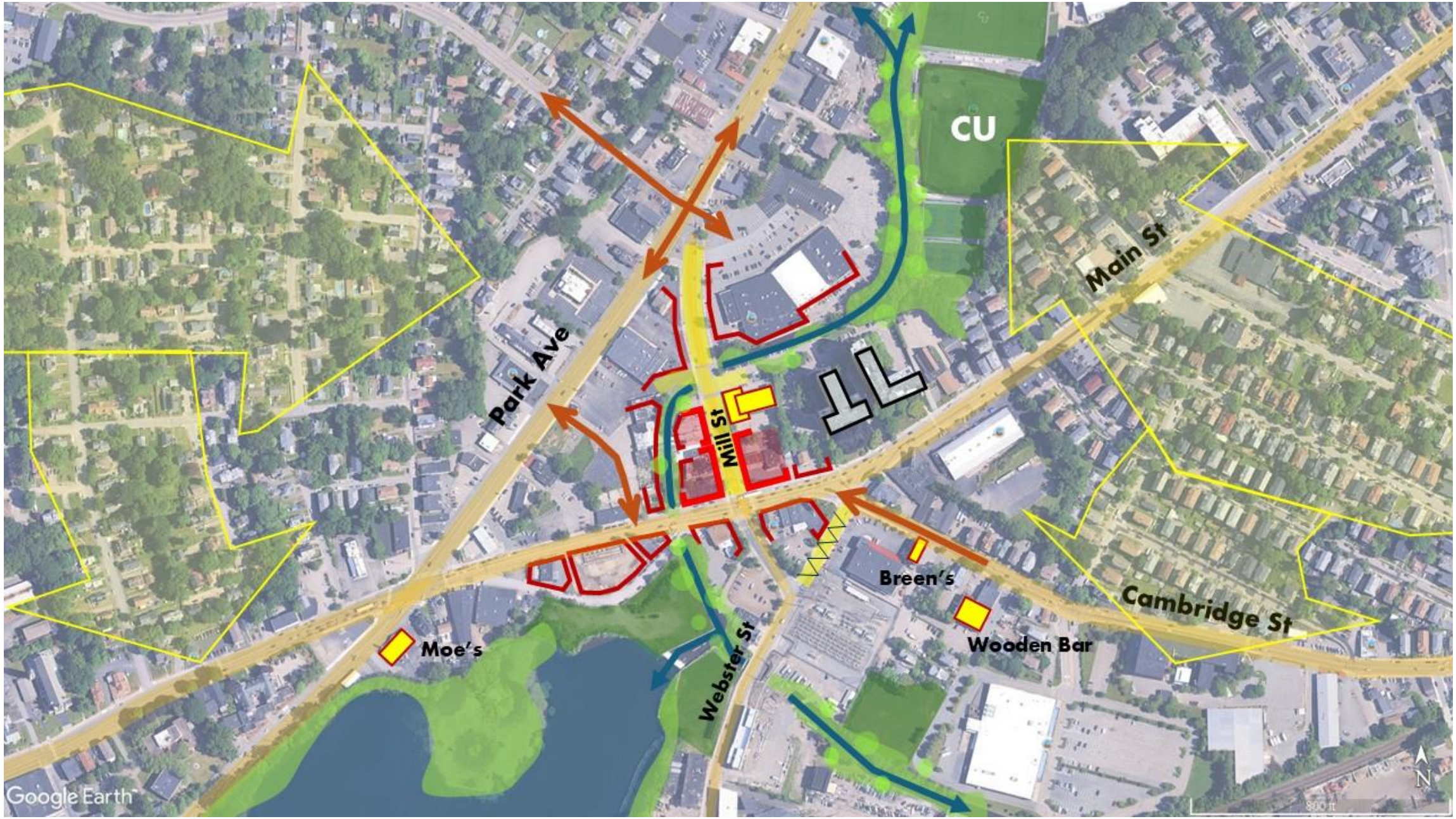
Placemaking and Public Realm

- Re-establish an open space network
- Increase/improve walkability while enhancing public realm
- Address resiliency and floodplain concerns
  - Green infrastructure
- Greenways along waterways
  - North at Clark University fields to the National Grid site to the south
- Branding and placemaking
  - Establish the "there" there
  - Establish an "entrance" via banners, light posts, signage

Spencer


Placemaking
& Identity
Elm Park
Enhanced Vehicular Arteries
Clark University/Worcester
Park Ave
Main St
Improved Pedestrian Realm
Holy Cross
Leicester

Martin


CU
Main St
Park Ave
Mill St
Breen's
Cambridge St
Moe's
Webster St
Wooden Bar
Google Earth
N

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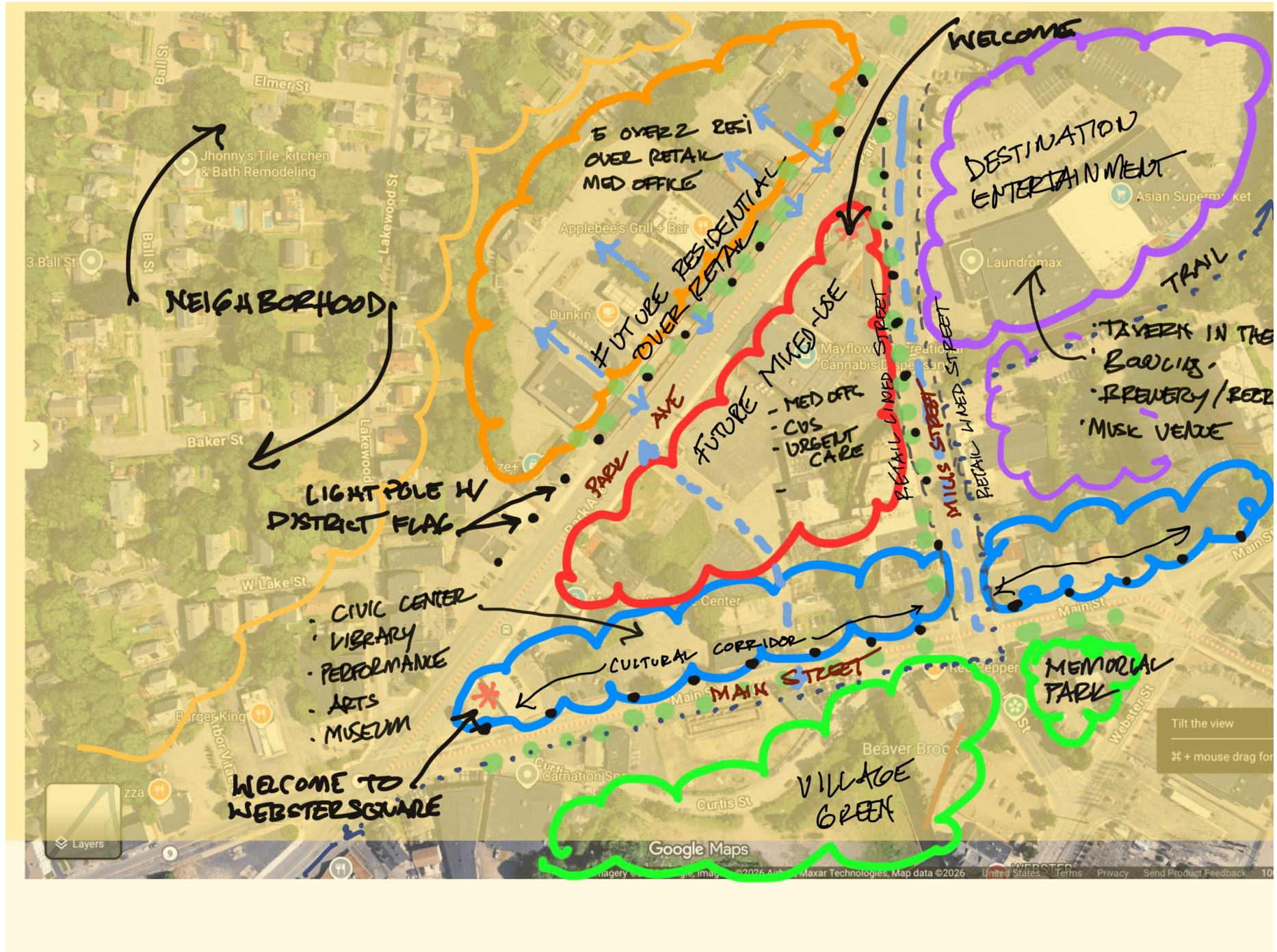
Revitalization & Development Potential – Haril, Greg, Ashley

- Develop comprehensive master plan and action agenda
  - Expand overlay district, allow flexibility in density
  - Recommend completion of a study and update the floodplain maps
- Create anchors for the neighborhood – retail, entertainment, civic, cultural - for all ages
- Balance streetscape and public realm with development
- Revitalize the Webster Square Business Association


WELCOME
DESTINATION ENTERTAINMENT
5 OVER 2 RESI OVER RETAIL MED OFFICE
FUTURE RESIDENTIAL OVER RETAIL
FUTURE MIXED-USE
- MED OFFC
- CVS
- URGENT CARE
PARK AVE
RETAIL LINED STREET
MAIN STREET
TRAIL
: TAVERN IN THE
· BOWLING ·
· BREWERY / BEER
· MUSIC VENUE
NEIGHBORHOOD
LIGHT POLE W/ DISTRICT FLAG
· CIVIC CENTER
· LIBRARY
· PERFORMANCE
· ARTS
· MUSEUM
CULTURAL CORRIDOR
MAIN STREET
MEMORIAL PARK
WELCOME TO WEBSTER SQUARE
VILLAGE GREEN
Jhonny's Tile ,Kitchen & Bath Remodeling
Elmer St
Ball St
Lakewood St
Baker St
W Lake St
Applebee's Grill + Bar
Dunkin'
Laundromax
Asian Supermarket
Main St
Curtis St
Webster St
Tilt the view
Layers
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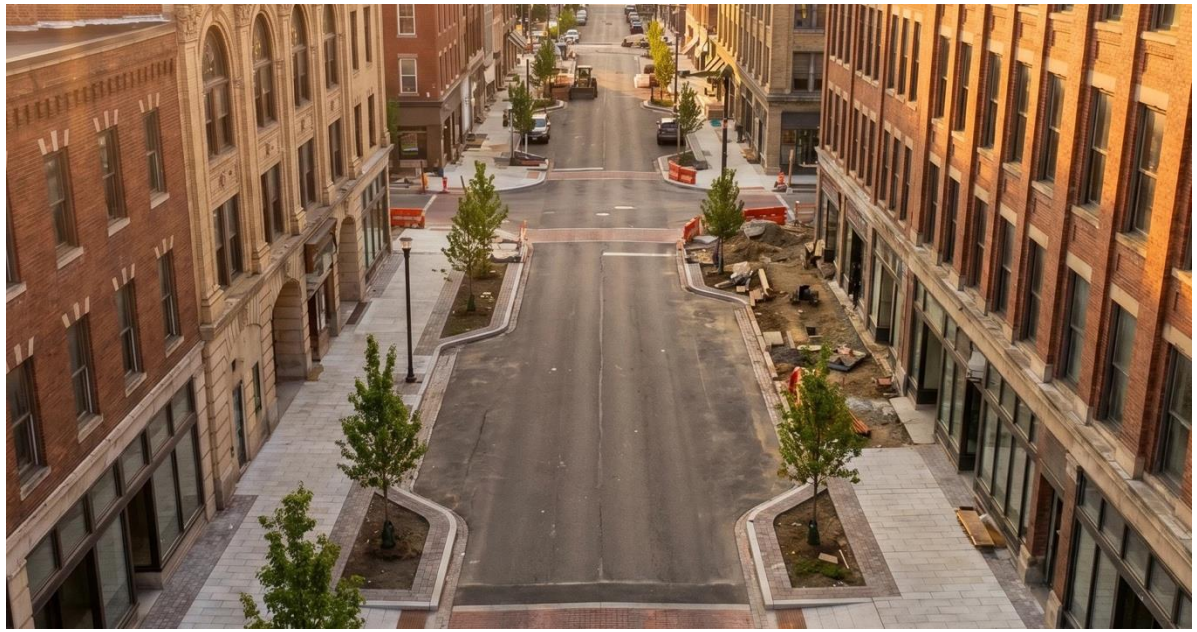
Privacy
Send Product Feedback


O'BRIEN
PAINTS
COLOR WHEEL
CORP.
Roberts


CONSERVATORY
THE HANOVER
Theatre


GALLERIES
200



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Next Steps: Short Term

- Request updated traffic study and analysis, expand sidewalks
- Streetscape and beautification
- Zoning
- Flood maps
- Conversations with National Grid about Curtis Pond access
- Engage the business community
- Encourage businesses to use the current façade improvement grants
- Pop-up markets

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Next Steps: Medium Term

- Explore stormwater storage opportunities at Coes pond
- Work with WRTA to increase public transit frequencies and build infrastructure
- Partnership with WPI and Clark (and other universities) on engineering challenges
- Recruit new employers to Webster Square
- Allocate capital for immediate street improvements

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Next Steps: Long Term

- Extend the Worcester train line and bus network redesign
- Solicit developer RFP – explore new incentives for developers
- Realign street network
- Expand greenway network
- Revisit / expand façade improvement grants

Questions?