



North Adams Rt 2 Overpass Study

FINAL REPORT
Fall 2025



Transsolar
KlimaEngineering



The City of North Adams and the Project Team wish to acknowledge the many partners and stakeholders who supported this project, particularly those who shared their time as part of the Internal Advisory Group. Without their participation, consideration, and efforts, this project would not have been possible.

In addition, the City and the Project Team wish to extend their gratitude to the local community members who shared their thoughts, comments, and aspirations over the course of the project.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Origins and Requirements

This study was made possible by a Reconnecting Communities grant from the federal government, secured by the City of North Adams in partnership with MASS MoCA. The program's intent is to repair the damage done from roadway and infrastructure construction generations ago, which ripped apart communities like North Adams. Notably, national competition for these grants was fierce; North Adams was both one of the only rural communities and the smallest community (population-wise) to receive this grant—a testament both to the hard work put into the grant proposal but also to the compelling need for change in the City.

Through the ensuing process, a team lead by STOSS Landscape Urbanism, Michael Murphy Studio / AMMA Projects, and HNTB was chosen from a highly competitive field of internationally renowned designers and planners, and charged with examining equally and in detail three possibilities for the overpass: REPAIR it in place; REPLACE it with a new overpass; and REMOVE it entirely. The team was also charged to work with the City of North Adams, critical stakeholders led by MASS MoCA, partners that included the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition (nbCC) and the North Adams Partnership; an Internal Advisory Group composed of city officials, regional planners, private developers, and community representatives; and the general public—all to devise design and planning strategies for each option, and to gather feedback that would inform a final recommendation.



Background: The Enduring Harms (and latent potentials) of Urban Renewal

Despite its many positive attributes and remarkable regional setting, North Adams continues to grapple with the long-term consequences of mid-20th-century Urban Renewal planning and engineering decisions. Like many industrial cities, North Adams was profoundly reshaped by the national urban renewal movement, which sought to modernize downtowns in response to the economic shifts from rail-based to truck-based manufacturing and distribution.

While these efforts were intended to stimulate economic and social revitalization, their implementation in North Adams resulted in widespread demolition of historic neighborhoods and downtown fabric, fundamentally altering the city's physical and social structure. Dense, mixed-use blocks that once supported local businesses and community life were replaced with oversized roadways, underutilized parcels, and disconnected circulation patterns that prioritized vehicular traffic over pedestrians.

The reconfiguration severed critical linkages—particularly between Main Street and the Hoosic River—and left extensive tracts of vacant or underdeveloped land where vibrant streets and civic spaces once stood. This loss of connectivity has had enduring implications for economic activity, walkability, and quality of life.

The Route 2 Overpass, a central feature of the urban renewal era, remains one of the most significant barriers to downtown reintegration. It physically divides the commercial core of Main Street from the cultural anchor of MASS MoCA, impedes pedestrian and visual connections, and reinforces a transportation pattern that moves vehicles through the city rather than encouraging engagement within it.

Addressing these legacy conditions—through strategic reinvestment, reconfiguration of infrastructure, and restoration of urban connectivity—is essential to unlocking the city's full potential as a regional hub for culture, innovation, and inclusive economic growth.

The Opportunity: Re-Stitch Downtown and Heal the Community

This project is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to transform the center of North Adams for decades to come. It's an opportunity for the people of North Adams to reconnect with one another, to find places to build and extend community, to connect to hidden resources like the Hoosic River, to find new opportunities to live and work in the center of downtown, to reinforce the vitality and viability of local businesses who are giving so much of their time and energy, and to improve both safety and the overall quality of life. It's also an opportunity to bring new investments to the downtown in ways that increase foot traffic, that make a more walkable and friendly city, to reconnect to the North Adams of the past, and to revitalize North Adams economically.

This Reconnecting Communities study is, finally, the chance North Adams needs to right the wrongs of urban renewal and to place the city on a path towards the thriving, incremental, and entrepreneurial growth it was once promised. Our conclusion, informed by a year of detailed technical, transportation/traffic, financial and urban research, as well as months of community and stakeholder outreach and input, is that the Route 2 Overpass is all that stands in the way of making this future possible. We must remove it to build the North Adams so many have long dreamed of: in the words of one city resident, “Bring North Adams Back!”. And because the REMOVE option was so overwhelmingly supported by the public and stakeholders and supported by the team’s initial research, the second half of this study was able to focus on impacts, outcomes, benefits and future processes that would allow the plan to move forward.

Findings: A Community Ready for Change

The year-long study revealed a wide range of information and foundations for shaping the work ahead:

- North Adams is marked by too many big roads and too many large parking lots, all of which threaten the safety of pedestrians and create an atmosphere of isolation.
- North Adams has a significant parking surplus—according to one study, even at peak times, there are over 1000 too many parking spaces in downtown!
- North Adams is the only place west of Athol where Route

2 is four lanes wide, and then it’s duplicated with four lanes along Main Street; in other cities and towns and villages along the way, two lanes (one in each direction) are sufficient to carry the vehicular traffic that passes along it. The same is true along other roads in the heart of nearby communities, such as Route 7 in Bennington. The streets in North Adams are much wider than they need to be, and were designed for truck volumes that do not exist.

- Many of the traffic issues downtown are created by the road network instituted during urban renewal – where complicated intersections result from (in some cases) five different roads converging. Intersections like Route 2 at Holden Street and Route 2 at Eagle Street utilize a complicated signaling plan that uses multiple signal cycles, increasing vehicle delay and queuing on many approaches
- Due to the incomplete street grid created during urban renewal, large trucks are required to navigate several additional city streets to gain access to the Route 2 overpass westbound – discouraging walking, bicycling, and other community activities in a large section of the City
- Downtown businesses are struggling due to a lack of foot traffic. To increase foot traffic, more people need to feel safe about walking from one part of downtown to another, and more people need to come to downtown to increase overall numbers.



- As made clear through the extensive public engagement involved in this study, the residents of North Adams are ready for good and positive change that benefits their community and helps to address some of the safety and economic issues that plague downtown. This engagement included:

Activation 01: 82 participants over 3 public events (site walks, in-depth interviews, intercepts)

Activation 02: ~70 participants

Activation 03: ~70 participants

Small group meetings: 25 attendees over 4 discussions

Website: 2,780+ views, 1600+ visitors, 284+ contributions

- Residents are also looking for good-quality public spaces in the heart of downtown that can help build community, provide places for gathering, and reinforce personal connections and interactions.
- MASS MoCA's founding just over 25 years ago has seeded arts and culture initiatives that draw on local to international artists, with a growing creative entrepreneur economy coalescing at the museum and surrounding mills; this work, in the creative industry, has clear potential to continue to expand and build momentum, energy.
- There is market demand for housing types not currently available in North Adams, including housing for young professors, housing for the local workforce, housing for elders who are looking to downsize and open to living in

shared situations (apartment and condominium complexes, etc.).

- Most importantly, perhaps, in order to encourage or incentivize private investment in downtown, significant change needs to happen—change in the form of major infrastructure investment from the public sector, and change in terms of a significant move in the community, along the lines of removal of the overpass. Change cannot happen without this first step—and change will not happen through REPAIR or REPLACE strategies, which simply repeat mistakes of the past and cement a legacy of disinvestment in the community for at least another generation or two.

These findings, and the ensuing recommendations, are supported by the extensive research and community input that was gathered during the year-long planning process, and documented in the 500-page appendix to this report.

Recommendations

In a simple phase: *Take that overpass down!*

In order to look forward, we need to look back—back to the smaller scale and integrated street and alley network that was erased by urban renewal. In this sense, the REMOVE option was re-considered and re-framed as a way to RE-STITCH the community back together, starting with the re-extension and right-sizing of the street and road network. This then allows

for dramatic enhancement of pedestrian safety and multimodal mobility improvements; the creation of community gathering spaces, reinforcement of active street edges and walkable streets that help in part to bring people to the front doors of existing businesses; and the delineation of a number of key, desirable redevelopment sites appropriate for residential and mixed uses that would bring more residents and visitors downtown, enliven streets, and, importantly, allow the City to capture this value in the form of new tax revenues that enhance the budget. More specifically:

- **Remove the overpass**
- **Re-Stitch the historic street grid** in order to maximize pedestrian connections throughout downtown, and to heal the scars of urban renewal
- **Re-scale and right-size streets** and rights-of-way to include generous and safe spaces for pedestrians and bicycles, in addition to vehicles; narrow streets, especially the current alignment of Route 2 from Eagle Street to Marshall Street, and enhance with wide sidewalks and ample tree planting; and redesign intersections along a realigned Route 2 corridor with safe crossings to balance mobility modes
- **Transform Center Street at Veterans Park into a pedestrian only plaza** that can support community gathering, can host seasonal programming, and that extends and reinforces the uses of the Park
- **Work with partners like MASS MoCA and others to**

implement new public spaces at the foot of Center Street, along the Hoosic River (with connections to the future bicycle paths and trails), and at the former western end of the overpass, atop the hill, as an overlook to downtown

- **Incentivize mixed use development** for the creative arts, housing, community space, and retail on the publicly owned St. Anthony's parking lot, on MASS MoCA's Marshall Street parking lot, and at the northwest corner of State and West Main Streets
- **Engage local, state, and national electeds** to champion this transformational work, and to work with local partners like MASS MoCA as well as local and regional developers to put in place public and private/philanthropic funding sources to move these efforts forward

*The time for transformative change is **now**—for the benefit of all who have dedicated their lives, and lived their lives, in the unique community that is North Adams. More importantly, perhaps, this is an opportunity for our kids and grandkids to experience all of what North Adams has to offer—socially, economically, culturally, environmentally, emotionally.*

The choice is clear: create a new future for North Adams through transformational change that starts with removing the Overpass and re-stitching the physical fabric and social lives of North Adams; or re-inforce the mistakes of the past through repair or replacement strategies that simply cement the ills and misgivings of urban renewal for generations to come.

We opt for hope and optimism: our work has been data- and research-based, and supported overwhelmingly by the public, critical stakeholders, and elected representatives of this community.

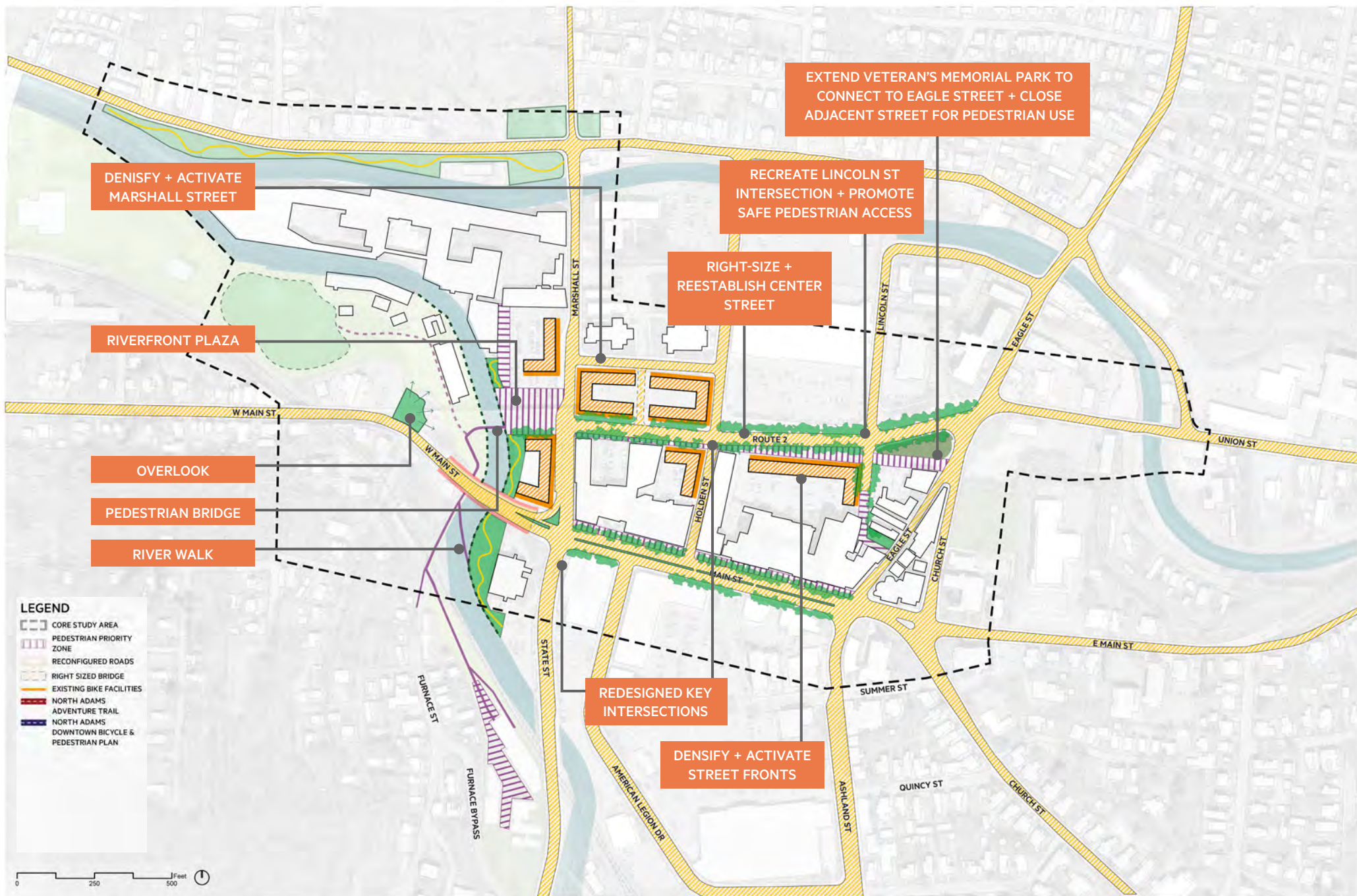
A new future—and a renewed connection to all of what North Adams is and has been—awaits!

Next Steps

Following the completion of this study, we recommend the following steps to maintain momentum and public support for the work:

- Removal of the Route 2 overpass, as soon as possible
- Convening of a planning summit with MassDOT to share the results of this study and to jointly devise strategies for any necessary stabilization work on the Overpass be done in a way so as not to preclude immediate next steps on the overpass removal

- Coordination with electeds at all levels of government to extend support and secure diverse grant funding
- Next stage concept design for critical infrastructure and supportive open space / public realm, including detailed cost estimates and phasing scenarios (4-6 month study)
- Accelerated Phase 1A and 1B Design, Engineering, and Construction (including removal of the overpass and critical road, infrastructure, and intersection improvements to realign Route 2 along redesigned Center and West Main Streets)
- Fundraising and grant allocation for open space and public realm improvements
- Outreach to existing property owners and local and regional affordable housing developers to promote interest in new downtown development
- Preparation of Developer RFP for expanded St. Anthony's lot development
- Coordination with MASS MoCA on Developer RFP's for museum-owned property
- Exploration of leveraging and implementing existing and new development incentive programs, such as Chapter 40R and the Community Preservation Act



MOHAWK

**WELCOME
TO
NORTH ADAMS**

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I. INTRODUCTION + PROJECT APPROACH

I. INTRODUCTION

What is the Route 2 Overpass Study?

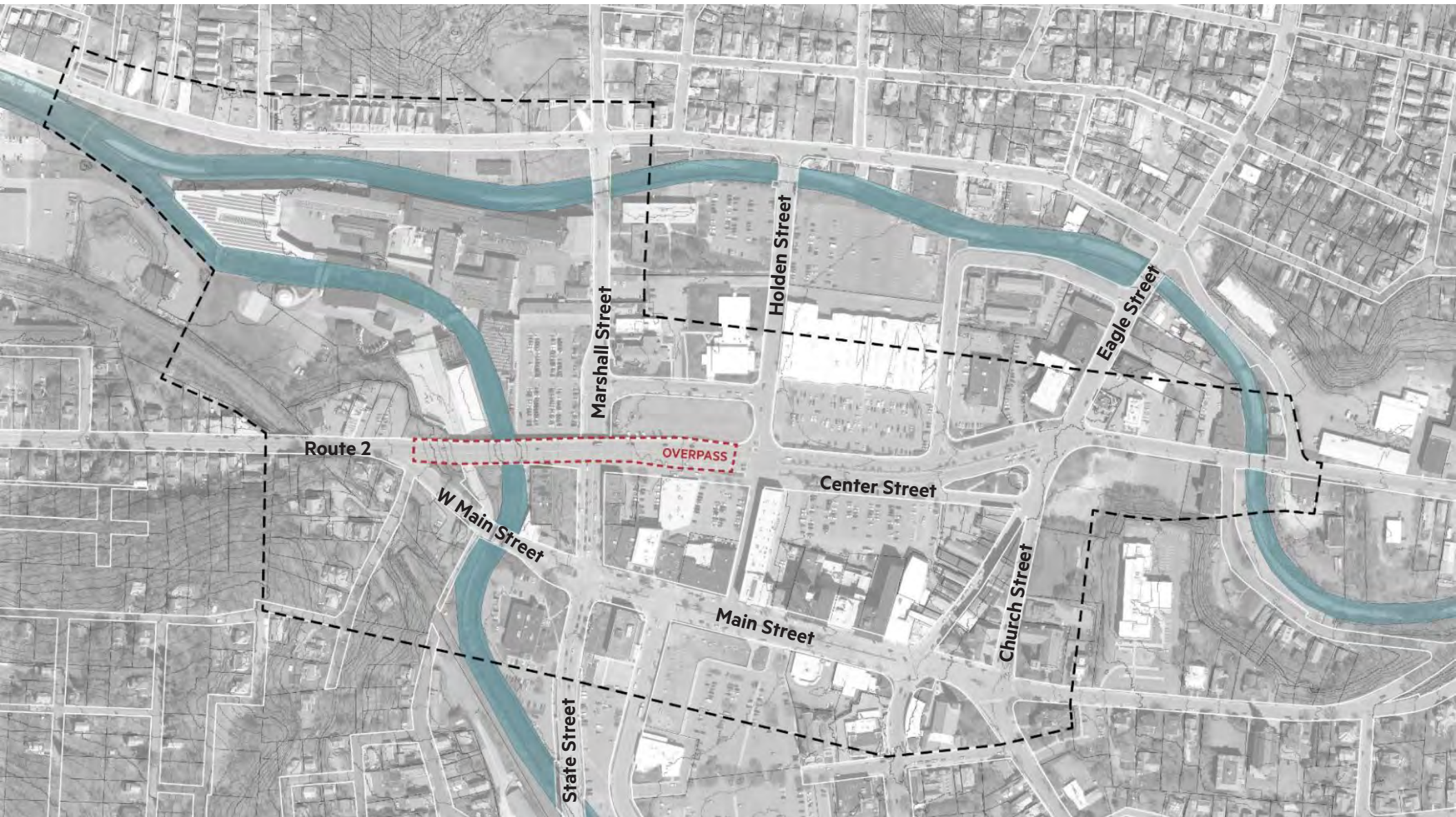
The Route 2 Overpass Study (R2O) is exploring the future of the Route 2 Overpass Bridge in Downtown North Adams, Massachusetts. This stage of the project is conceptual, meaning that this report captures what the possibilities for the future might be. These possibilities include a review of three main approaches: repairing the overpass, replacing it, or removing it entirely. This stage of the project calls for a broad technical understanding of the existing conditions present at the R2O site, including gathering information about traffic patterns and community needs. At the core of the work, however, is a desire to reconnect and re-stitch the urban fabric of North Adams, which is presently separated by the dominant overpass infrastructure. The bridge is characterized not only by its imposing massing, but also by its recent status of being deemed structurally deficient by MASSDOT, a determination which subsequently led to two of its four lanes being closed for the majority of this study. A plan view of North Adams is shown on the facing page for reference, with the overpass highlighted in red and the larger context of the study area shown within the dashed line.

Why now? Why is this work important?

The City of North Adams was awarded \$750,000 from the federal government via the Reconnecting Communities grant

through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act for this work, and, importantly, the awarded grant was pursued by the City in partnership with MASS MoCA and other local organizations. For the past year, a team of Consultants, the City's staff, an advisory group of key stakeholders, and the wider community have been working together to envision the future of downtown North Adams together. A timeline describing the project team's activity is shown on the next page and demonstrates the various tasks associated with the project.

For several decades, the overpass has been identified as a key barrier between downtown and MASS MoCA's campus, including in the City's most recent masterplan, the Vision 2030 comprehensive plan, and MASS MoCA's 2024-2030 Strategic Plan. The R2O work has enabled a series of cross-community conversations about how to re-invigorate the bounty of resources the City already has, and how to reckon with the damages caused by the introduction of the overpass in 1959 as part of what is referred to as 'urban renewal'. In the mid-century, many cities across the United States were offered federal funding for the construction of new automobile-focused infrastructure, such as overpasses and highways, in the hopes of stimulating local economies and eliminating 'blight'. Today the effects of urban renewal are stark--many cities have experienced damage to what was previously a tight-knit series of streets and businesses, only



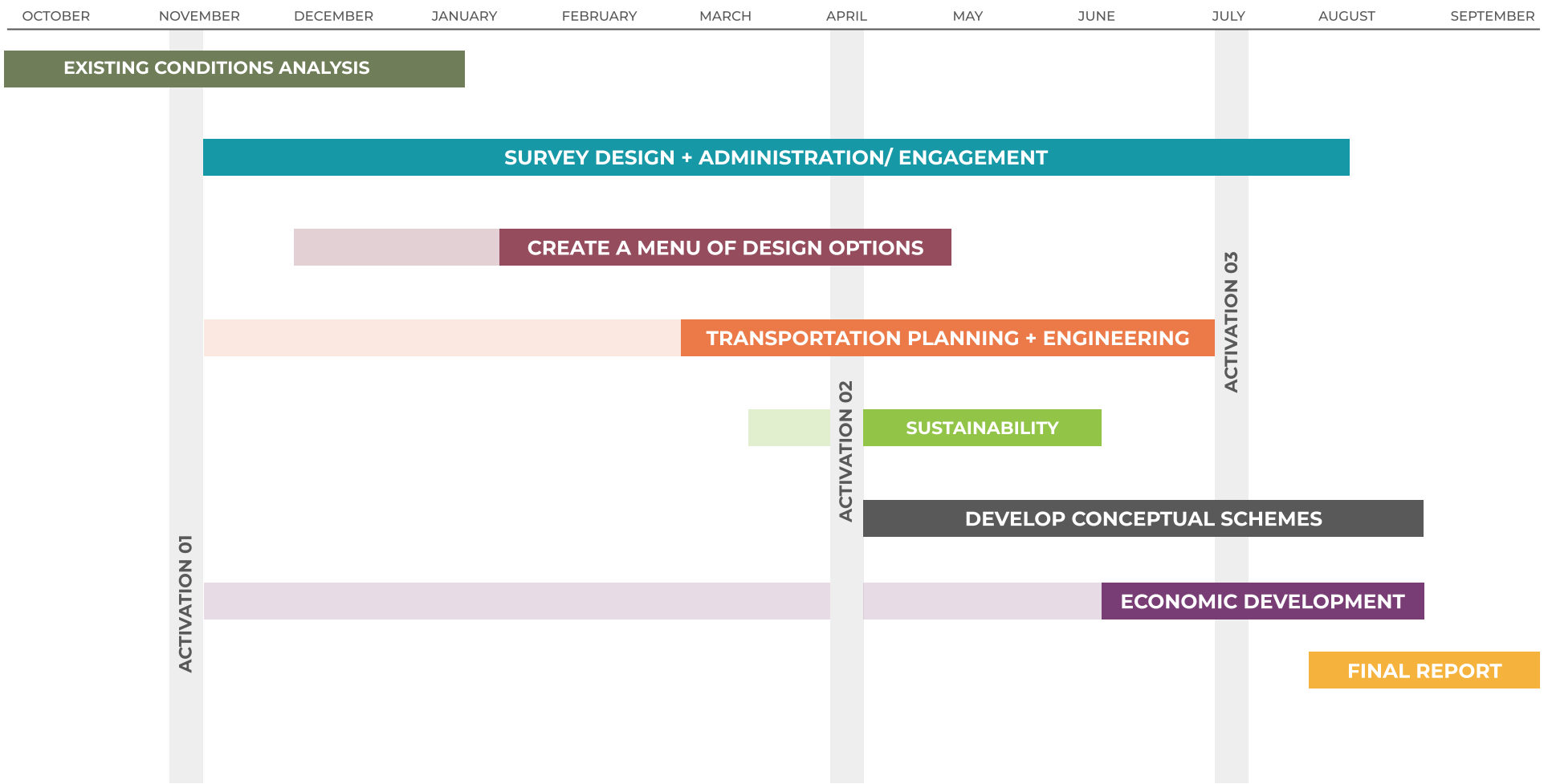
to have large-scale separations introduced mainly to serve cars and shipping. It is also more clearly understood now that most areas identified as ‘blighted’ were home to robust communities, many of which were predominantly composed of minority groups. With this hindsight, the work on the R2O project is more important than ever--the City has an opportunity to not only re-invest in its existing institutions, businesses, and public spaces, but to study ways in which to physically and emotionally restitch the connections lost between areas of the City when the overpass was built.

What is captured in this report, and what are the next steps?

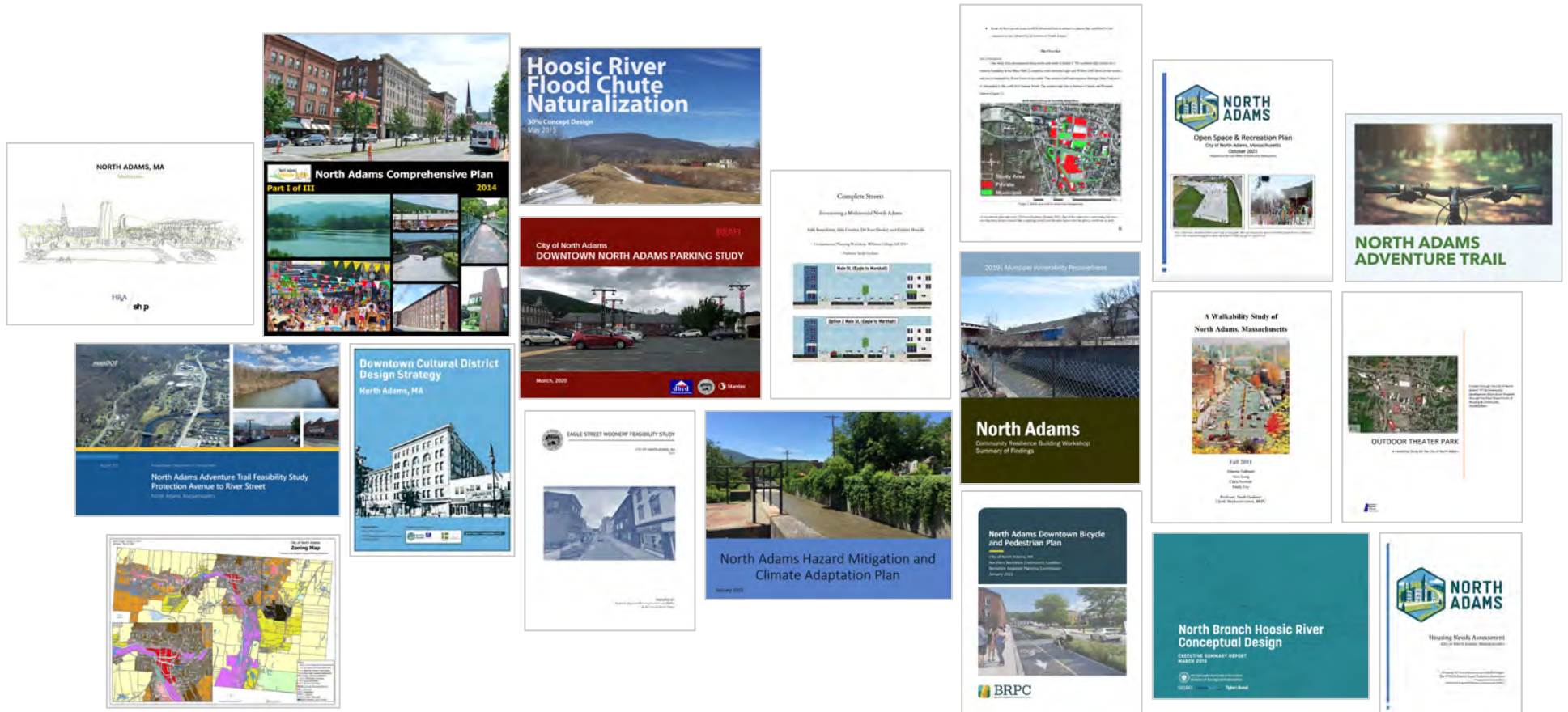
The following sections of this report capture key information generated over the course of the conceptual study phase, and provide further information about the historical context of the work. This document also outlines the approaches utilized for engagement and provides an overview of the key events, activities, and findings. Further, the report outlines the three conceptual schemes (repair, replacement, and removal of the overpass) as well as a recommendation. Technical findings are summarized within the report and more fully expanded in the attached appendices.



PROJECT TIMELINE



NORTH ADAMS PLANS & STUDIES



PLANNING CONTEXT

The City of North Adams has, over the past several years, undertaken a number of planning efforts to better understand the potential to increase the quality of life in the City. The goal of the R2O project is, likewise, to provide recommendations that could offer an increased quality of life through enhanced pedestrian safety, open spaces, and transportation networks, among others, and to provide the City with actionable recommendations so that this plan does not remain ‘on a shelf’ but instead guides future development. To that end, the work of the R2O project began with a thorough review of existing planning documents from the City and partner organizations. This ensured that the work would not be redundant, but building upon the great foundation already in place. In addition, the project team also reviewed planning efforts relevant to the immediate context of the project site completed by other key stakeholders such as the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, the Hoosic River Revival, the United States Army Corps of Engineers, and MASS MoCA. Proposed work for other streetscape infrastructure like bike lanes and pedestrianized streets have also been reviewed as part of the effort to understand the existing planning context relevant to the R2O project.

KEY FINDINGS

North Adams, MA Masterplan, 2013

The North Adams Masterplan, completed by SHoP Architects and HR&A reviews the various neighborhoods within the City and offers potential paths forward for development. Within the section describing downtown, key takeaways include that a central downtown open space is missing and desirable for activation and community building; riverfront access is an opportunity for the City to activate; and the potential for the overpass to be adapted to include only two lanes of travel and an open space component.

North Adams Comprehensive Plan, 2014

The North Adams Comprehensive Plan offers a fantastic overview of the City’s goals and aspirations for a number of improvements identified within the downtown area. Within this report, key takeaways include the need to reinforce core downtown uses and businesses and to investigate what is referred to as “an important hinge site between downtown and MASS MoCA” at the location of the overpass.



Downtown Cultural District Design Strategy, 2020

The Downtown Cultural District Design Strategy investigates ways to further activate the downtown core. The document covers the immediate study area associated with the R2O project and includes observations that the overpass has left the large lot on St. Anthony's Drive between Marshall and Holden Streets with little use but parking despite its location; the overpass eliminated buildings that turned the corner from Center Street and faced MASS MoCA, therefore eliminating key urban fabric; and the overpass presently creates a wall between the north and south sides of the City. There is a goal to create new anchors in downtown that will draw people into the area and stimulate spontaneous interactions between visitors and residents. This goal is complemented by the desire to improve connections in downtown, to bypass busy intersections, and to create safe and attractive corridors for pedestrians and alternative modes of transportation between downtown, MCLA, and MASS MoCA.

North Adams Housing Needs Assessment, 2020

The North Adams Housing Needs Assessment provides evidence that there is an aging housing stock and lack of new housing production in the City. There is a need for housing

to support an existing population composed of vulnerable groups such as renters who are housing cost burdened and an aging population that requires accessible accommodations.

Downtown North Adams Parking Study, 2020

The Downtown North Adams Parking Study provides a wealth of information regarding parking distribution and use in downtown. Paired with information from the 2013 North Adams masterplan, these documents elucidate that approximately 20% of the downtown land area is surface parking, a figure that far exceeds cities of much larger scales. The Parking Study also identifies that even during peak demand, there are still approximately 1,000 parking spaces still available. The study also notes that there is a perceived lack of parking but abundant supply, and there was not an observed occupancy of more than 45% of the downtown available spaces during the study duration. There is, however, a need to support key events that happen at specific times during the year and that these events have different requirements for parking as opposed to day-to-day use.

North Adams Downtown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, 2021

The North Adams Downtown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan outlines the overall goal of improved multimodal connectivity between neighborhoods, downtown, MASS MoCA, and MCLA. This plan highlights the lack of bike path connections both locally and within the larger regional bike and pedestrian network, particularly those near to the project site including a lack of connection between downtown and the area west of the Hoosic River.

North Adams Open Space & Recreation Plan, 2023

The North Adams Open Space and Recreation Plan documents the relationship of open spaces to the various neighborhoods within the City and their existing resources. Key to the R2O work is the assessment that downtown North Adams lacks significant open space but it is a key hinge in proposed bicycle networks. There is a potential to reinforce connections between MCLA, Downtown, and MASS MoCA through open space connections.

METHODOLOGY + PROJECT GOALS

The R2O planning process began with a review of the existing and projected site conditions at both the immediate project site and within the broader context of downtown. This review

included developing an understanding of not only the physical qualities of the site but the social and economic drivers present. Based on these initial findings, each of the three schemes of replace, repair, and remove were explored from both a transportation engineering and overall urban design and development perspective. This report captures further information for each scheme as well as a more fully detailed recommended design vision and implementation strategy.

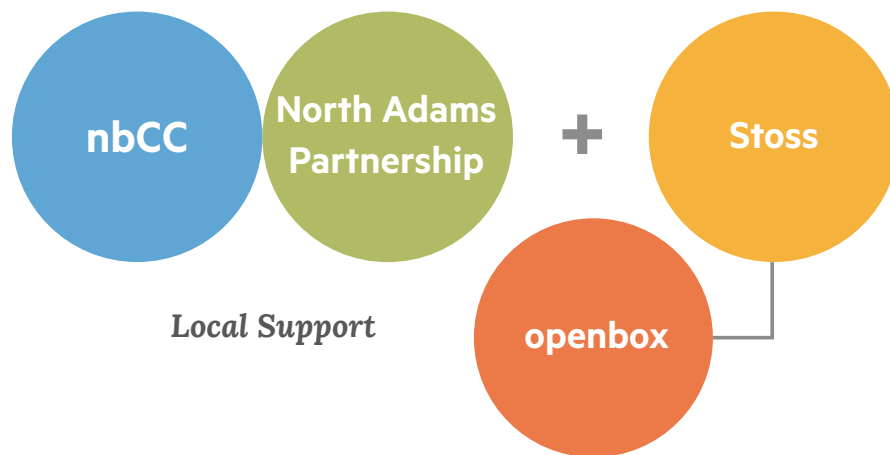
With the initiation of the R2O project, an Internal Advisory Group (IAG) was created to support conversation between key stakeholders, ensuring cross-community coordination and feedback throughout the project. The full list of IAG members is included in the project credits and consists of leadership from local institutions, community groups, and agencies as well as business leaders and City staff. Over the past year the IAG has convened several times to listen and learn together, while collectively guiding the work of the design team. Before considering development of the schemes, the project team, together with the IAG, outlined a series of project guiding principles, which are captured on the facing page.

ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

At the start of the project it was determined that continued and robust engagement with the communities of North Adams and its surrounding context would play a key role in the



success of the Route 2 Overpass conceptual planning process. Before initiating design, the first thing that occurred was a meeting with the community to understand what was desired and why. This initial step in building trust was planned and led by Openbox, a team of community engagement specialists retained for the project in partnership with the local expertise of the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition (nbCC) and the North Adams Partnership.



The engagement team was able to outline how to build a collective confidence in and understanding of the project by meeting the community members where they were and by outlining a few core principles for the wider team, including:

Centering Lived Experiences

While it was important for the engagement team to understand what the community liked/disliked or wanted/didn't want, it was just as meaningful to understand the 'why' behind the 'what'. Personal conversations and interviews allowed for the team to move beyond initial preferences and assumptions and instead to dig deeper into what future improvements could substantially affect the lives of those already living, working, and playing in North Adams.

Emphasizing Clarity and Utilizing Factual Information

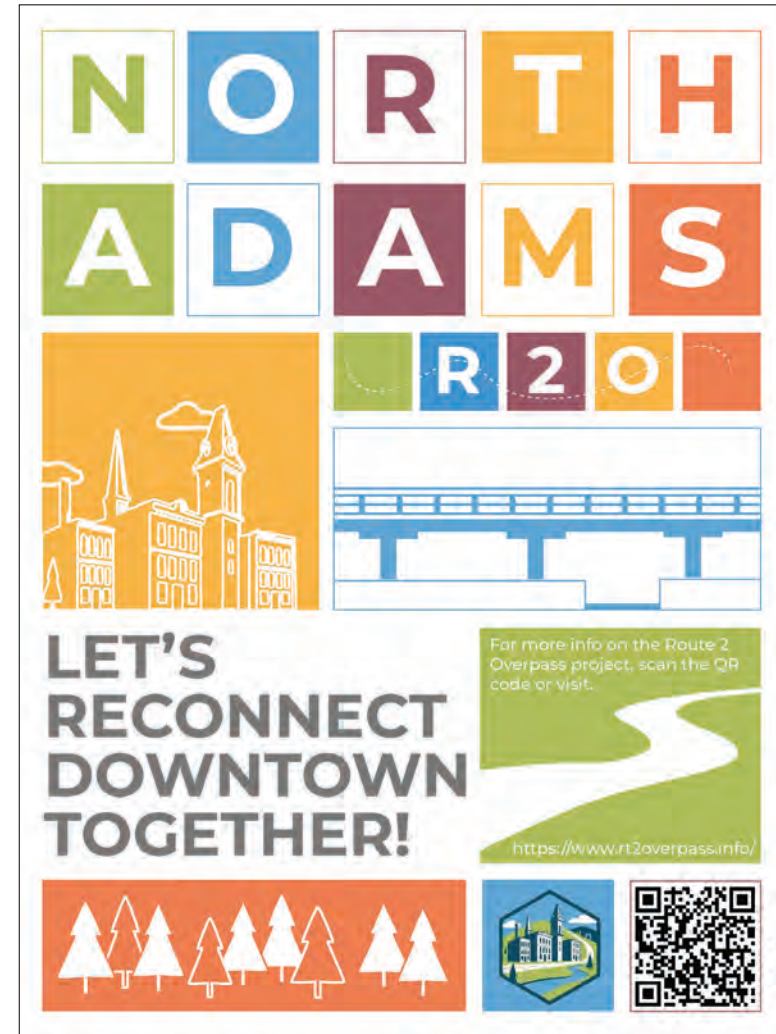
An engagement process cannot be done just to 'check a box'; it needs to be a series of rigorous and coordinated efforts that result in a shared understanding of what is possible to achieve with the project and where there are constraints. The R2O project engagement seeks to gather and share information produced about the project so that the community and stakeholders can understand key opportunities and constraints. It is also necessary to identify how the results of engagement are directly incorporated into the design work at each step in the project so the community can see the real-time relationship of their thoughts and the development of the project.

Accessibility, Inclusivity, and Co-Creation

Given the complexity of the R2O study, it was essential to create multiple forms of communication so that there was an open flow of information that would allow the community to provide meaningful input throughout the process. This meant collectively coming up with communication strategies and ensuring that there was not just one place or line of communication knowing that everyone receives information differently. It was also understood that creating easily shareable graphics and content would allow for a wider audience to be brought into the project.

Excitement, optimism, and shared sense of pride

The R2O study is a project with the potential to create generational change and huge impact in North Adams. To that end, it was key to cultivate a sense of excitement and optimism throughout the study, knowing that this is the first step in a much larger and longer process, but a process that could offer so many positive changes in the experience of public space in the City. In addition to continuing to foster the strong shared sense of pride already present in North Adams, the engagement team also sought to set realistic expectations for the community members and allow time for reflection and feedback.



A further review of the engagement activities and key takeaways can be found in Section IV: Engagement.



ENGAGEMENT TOOLS + STRATEGIES

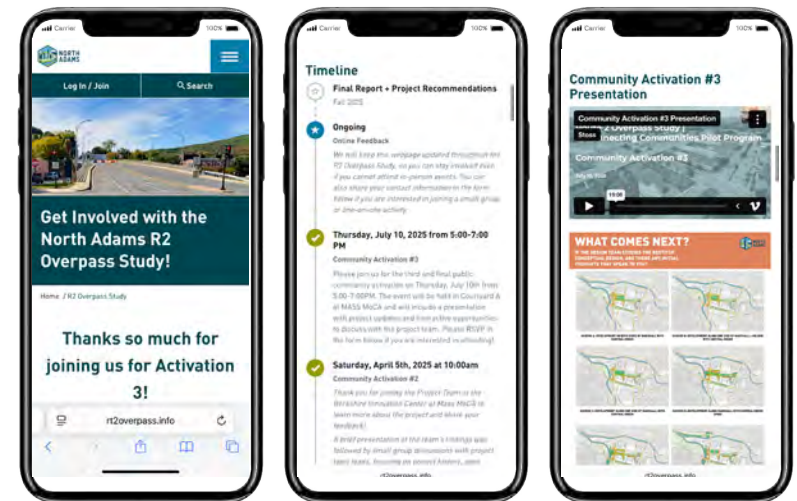
To conduct a robust process and meet the engagement goals, a series of tools and strategies were developed and situated within the project timeline.

Interviews + Intercepts

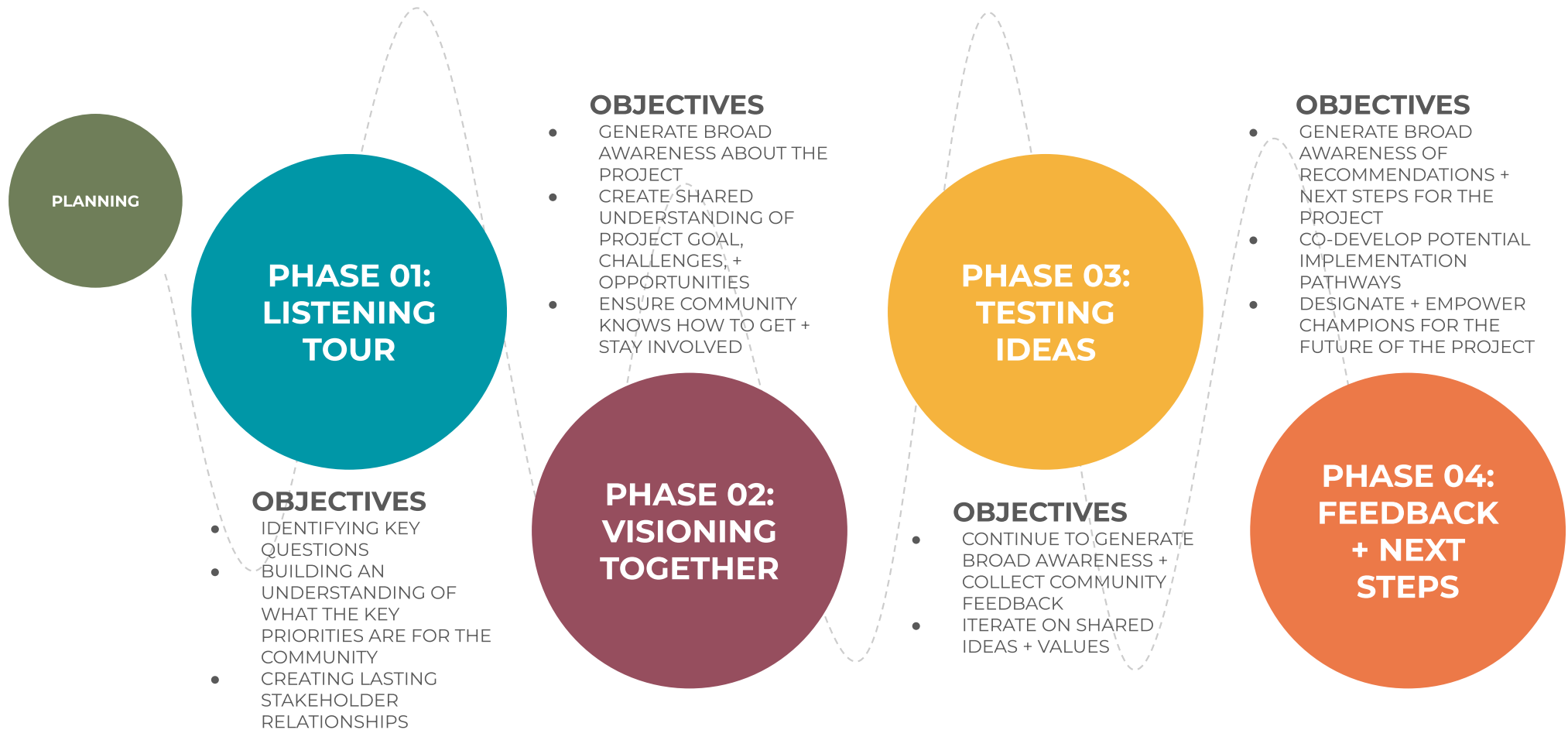
Openbox kicked off engagement with a multi-day in-person series of engagements, including in-depth one-on-one interviews, intercept interviews, and a public gathering which served as Activation 01 (see below). The interviews were strategically targeted to people who do not own or frequently drive a car; or frequently take public transit; or live or work within a 15-minute walk of downtown North Adams. Further, Openbox conducted a series of intercept interviews outside of key gathering areas and near the project site.

Activations + Site Walks

The main way in which the project was communicated to the public was at milestone interactive presentations called Activations. The project featured three activations over the year, one in November 2024, one in April 2025, and one in July 2025. These activations were held in-person at community spaces in North Adams, and were used as a platform for discussion and information sharing. Activation 01 featured a discussion and site walk as the project began, while Activations 02 and 03 shared project development with the public and provided opportunities to talk with the project team about topics such as transportation, urban design, and economic development. Findings from the Activations can be found in Section IV: Engagement Findings.



ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES



Meeting in a Bag

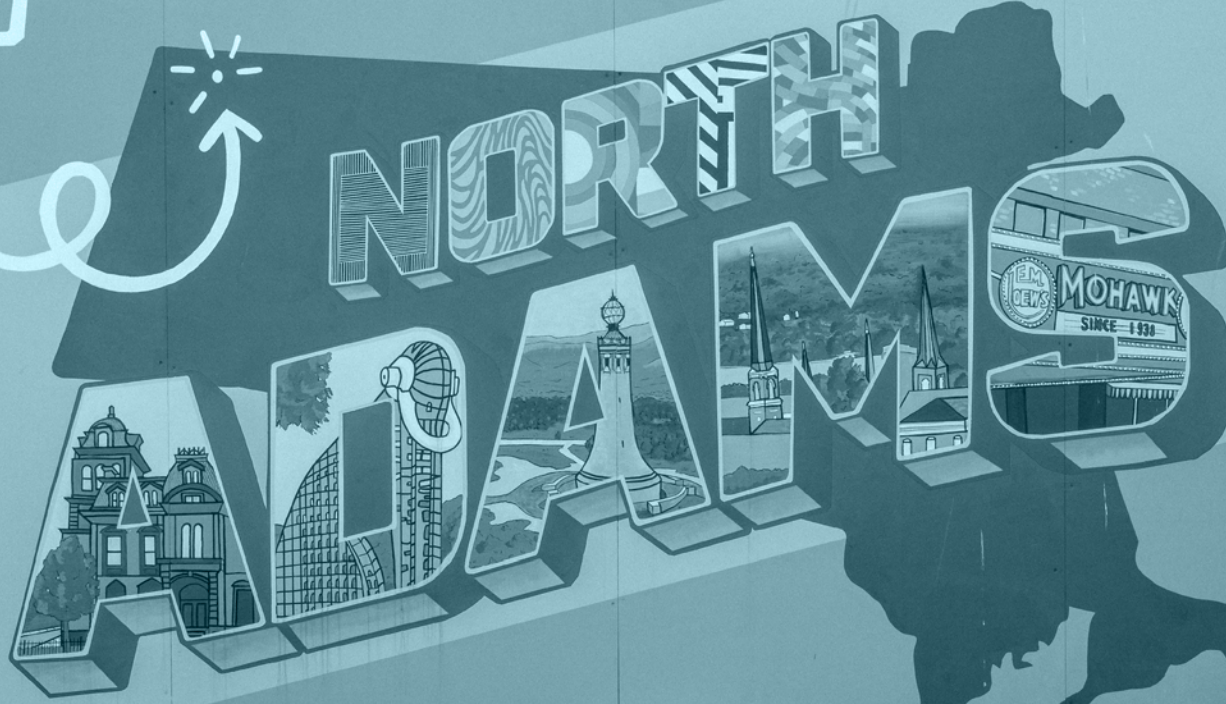
Following Activation 01, the project team identified the need to be able to share updates in smaller group settings, and created the 'Meeting In a Bag' kit. This toolkit included a series of information cards with prompts for conversation as well as links to information online. Jenny Wright from the North Adams Partnership and Amber Besaw from nbCC coordinated and facilitated these meetings at local gathering spaces as requested throughout the project duration.

Social Pinpoint

In keeping with the engagement goal to utilize multiple platforms and methods of communication, the City developed a project-specific webpage that was continuously updated throughout the duration of the study. The website, which can be found at <https://rt2overpass.info/project-home>, served as a main space for the community to share feedback and featured several different interactive activities.



HELLO
from



#NORTHADAMS
@AMYCOONART

II. EXISTING CONDITIONS

A HISTORY OF CHANGE

North Adams has, since its establishment in 1745, been a place of change and reinvention. First settled by the Mohican people, this area of the Berkshires was subsequently occupied in the early 1700s by Europeans and, because of its strategic position along the two branches of the Hoosic River, North Adams became a defensive site during King George's War (1744-1748). This relationship to the Hoosic River also solidified North Adams' continuing identity as a mill town, and what was then a small fort town developed into a thriving economic hub with its incorporation as a city in 1895.

Many of the stately mill buildings, such as the Norad Mill, which solidified North Adams' industrial character still stand today, providing the City with a rich architectural presence. One of the cornerstones of North Adams' growth was and continues to be the series of structures first established as the Arnold Print Works. This campus of buildings situated along the peninsula between the north and south branches of the Hoosic River went on to become the Sprague Electric Company which, at its peak, supported a population of over 4,000 employees in the North Adams area. This stable population as well as an influx of culture and economic stability led to the creation of a vibrant downtown core, with Main Street providing housing, retail, and entertainment opportunities along both its north and south side of the street.

Despite this period of growth, many of the residents of North Adams can still recall another significant change for the City that took place in 1985 when Sprague closed its doors, leading to a period of deindustrialization, loss of population, and an economic downturn. Without Sprague anchoring the workforce and with the implementation of urban renewal funds to clear large swathes of downtown, North Adams once again faced a time of change.

URBAN RENEWAL: A CITY RESCALED TO TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

As described in the report introduction, North Adams, like so many other post-industrial cities in the United States, has had to reckon with the effects of urban renewal planning policies and implementation strategies since the mid century. It is easy enough to understand how appealing federal dollars for new infrastructure would have been, especially when North Adams was a lively factory town. However, the migration of industry and eventual closing of Sprague Electric in the 1980s meant the construction of overpass no longer served a robust shipping and transportation network associated with industry; instead it served as a way to bypass the otherwise beautiful and charming downtown and Main Street.

INDIGENOUS TIMELINE



The Hoosic River Valley is the historic home of the **MUH-HE-CON-NE-OK (MOHICAN)**, now a part of the Stockbridge-Munsee Community

Their original homelands stretched from Lake Camplain south to Manhattan, encompassing parts of New York, Massachusetts, Vermont, and Connecticut

HOOTHIK is the Mohican word for Kettle, hence Hoosic

The Mohican people migrate and settle across the Mahicannituck (Hudson River) valley numbering 25,000 or more

Conflict with the Mowhawk, and diseases brought by European settlers devastates the Mohican population

Mohicans are driven from their territory west of the Mahicannituck by Europeans, moving farther east along the Housatonic River in MA and CT

Stockbridge Mohicans alongside other indigenous peoples support the colonists in the Revolutionary War, losing many lives

Under the Treaty of 1856, Mohicans relocate to Shawano County, Wisconsin, to be joined by a group of Munsee with whom they form the Stockbridge-Munsee Community

1609

Henry Hudson sails up the Mahicannituck into the lands of the Mohicans



1614

The Dutch lay claim to the inhabited valley and establish Fort Nassau on the former Westerlo (Castle) Island to support fur trade

1620's-1700



1700's

1734

John Sargent, a Christian missionary establishes the Stockbridge Mission in Wnahnukuk



1775-83

1780's

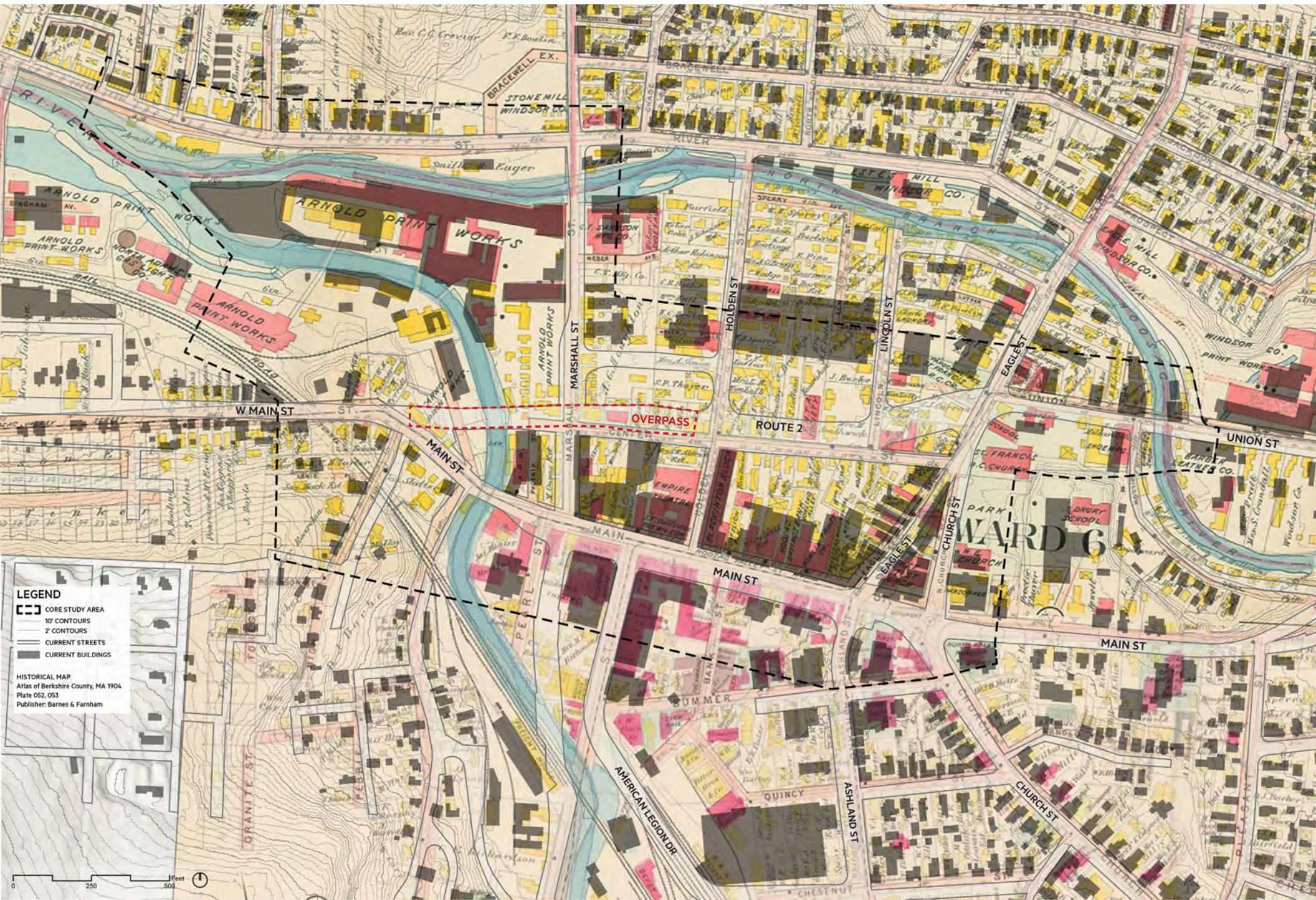
The Mohicans are forcibly removed from their lands, and relocate temporarily to farm and forest land gifted to them by the Oneida in New Stockbridge

1818

The U.S. Government under pressure from land companies moves to remove all indigenous people from the state of New York. Under John Metoxen, 70 Mohicans leave to settle among their relatives the Delaware

1822

MAPPING OVERLAY- EXISTING CONDITION + HISTORIC NORTH ADAMS 1904



Further, the physical footprint of the overpass left a wide scar between downtown and the Sprague campus. To make way for the overpass and the new Route 2, a number of parcels were demolished, a trend that continued into downtown to make way for future development. However, as seen in the image on the facing page, what was once a dense urban fabric with a finer grain composed of smaller blocks and double-loaded streets (yellow and pink building footprints) shifted to accommodate larger, singular structures (current buildings shown in black footprints) and much of the land cleared as part of urban renewal was not rebuilt but instead turned into parking lots. The image to the right highlights in pink the urban fabric that was cleared to make way for urban renewal.

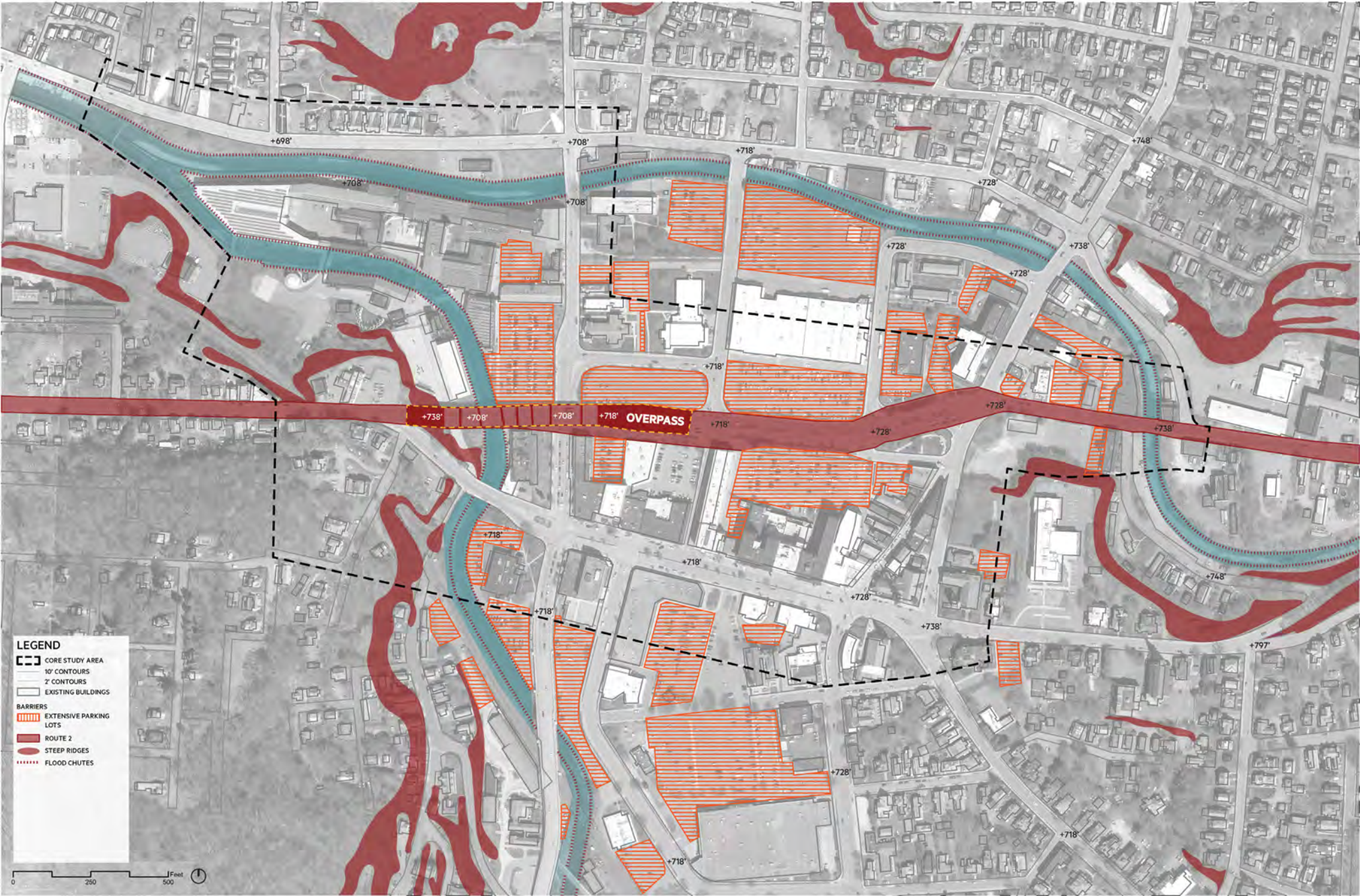
North Adams has continued to reinvent itself, though, and in 1999 the former Sprague campus gained a new identity, this time with the founding of MASS MoCA. Together with the conversion of the existing river-adjacent buildings into the largest contemporary art museum in the United States and the introduction of music events, MASS MoCA reestablished North Adams as a lively hub within the Berkshires, this time one focused on a tourism and event economy. Together with MASS MoCA an emerging creative economy continues to develop, bringing innovation and new ideas to the region.

Even with the re-opening of the Sprague campus as MASS MoCA, the overpass continues to divert cars and traffic along Route 2 rather than bringing them into the city. The overpass functions as a way to move visitors **through** and not **to** North Adams' most popular attractions and institutions, therefore limiting economic development and the tourist economy.



Above: The area in pink is the swath of land cleared for urban renewal and the construction of the overpass.

SITE ANALYSIS: DOWNTOWN BARRIERS



SITE ANALYSIS SUMMARY

North Adams is a place of rich history, layered social characteristics, and dynamic features. As part of this study, a desktop analysis was conducted to understand the existing conditions within the study area and to define the opportunities and constraints for the project. Key constraints that the project faces include infrastructural and traffic issues, multimodal and accessibility issues, and environmental and regulatory constraints. A detailed report of the site analysis can be found in the Appendix.

Infrastructure and Traffic Issues

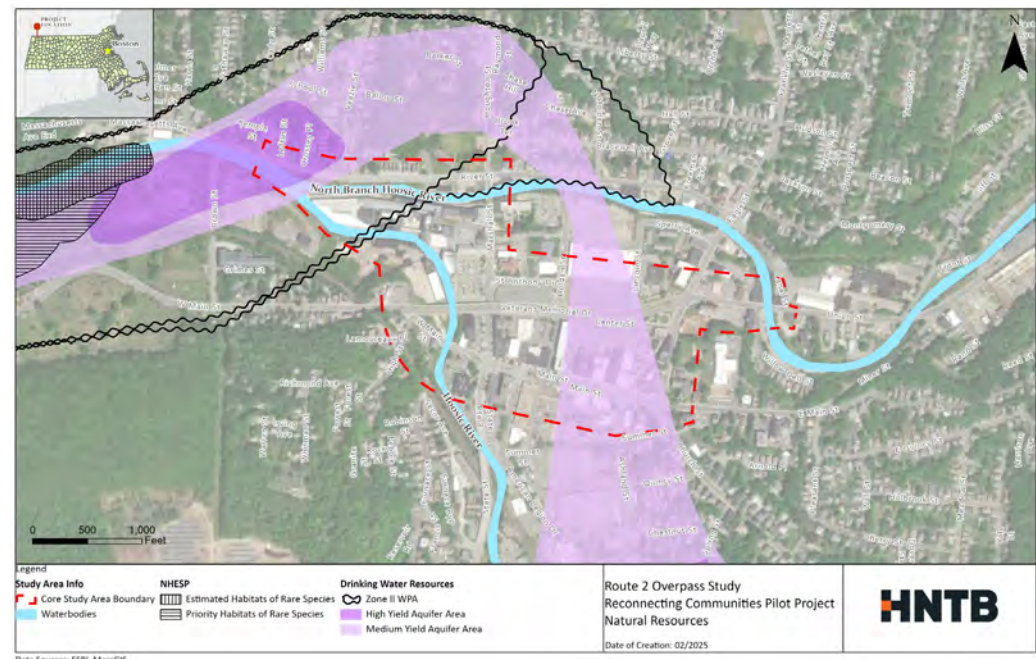
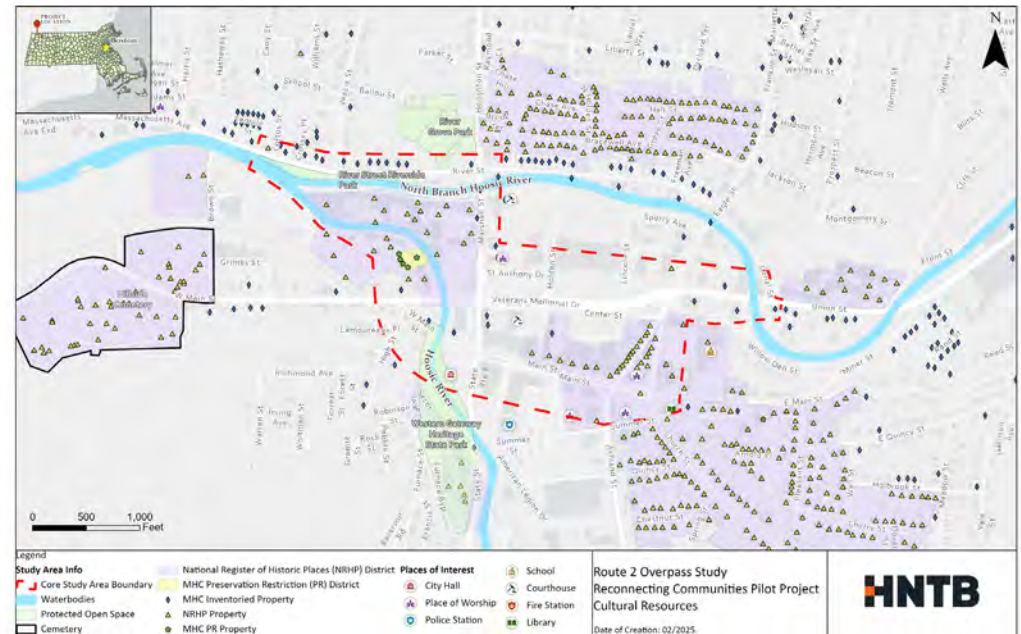
- The existing Route 2 overpass is in poor condition, with significant structural deficiencies requiring urgent repairs
- Two of the intersections within the study area are approaching poor vehicular operating conditions and are operating under poor conditions overall.
- High accident rates at major intersections indicate safety risks.

Multimodal and Accessibility Issues

- Route 2 creates a physical and psychological barrier between downtown and key institutions
- Limited pedestrian frequency, bicycle infrastructure, and bus frequency reduces mobility options

Environmental and Regulatory Constraints

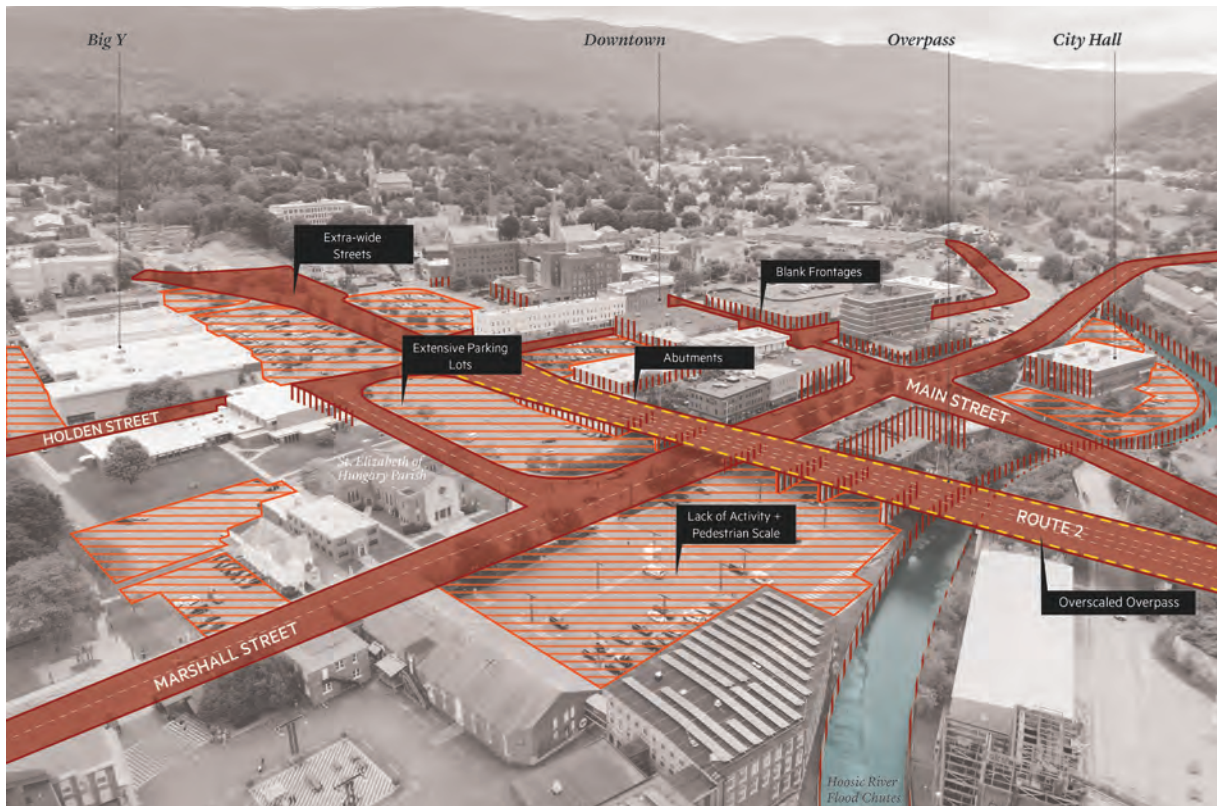
- Presence of historic properties and districts requires compliance with preservation regulations
- High flood risks



- Environmental justic (EJ) populations are present in the area, necessitating equitable planning practices
- Current land use includes underutilized industrial areas and disconnected land uses

Opportunities to embrace, however, also include the similar factors such as infrastructure and connectivity improvements, multimodal and accessibility network enhancements, the potential for economic redevelopment, and resilience strategies.

LAYERED BARRIERS



Infrastructure and Connectivity Improvements

- Road diets and bike lane integration could improve safety and mobility
- Intersection redesigns and vehicular routing strategies could reduce congestion and improve traffic flow

Multimodal and Accessibility Enhancements

- Opportunities for complete streets
- Connections into other regional planning efforts for bike infrastructure

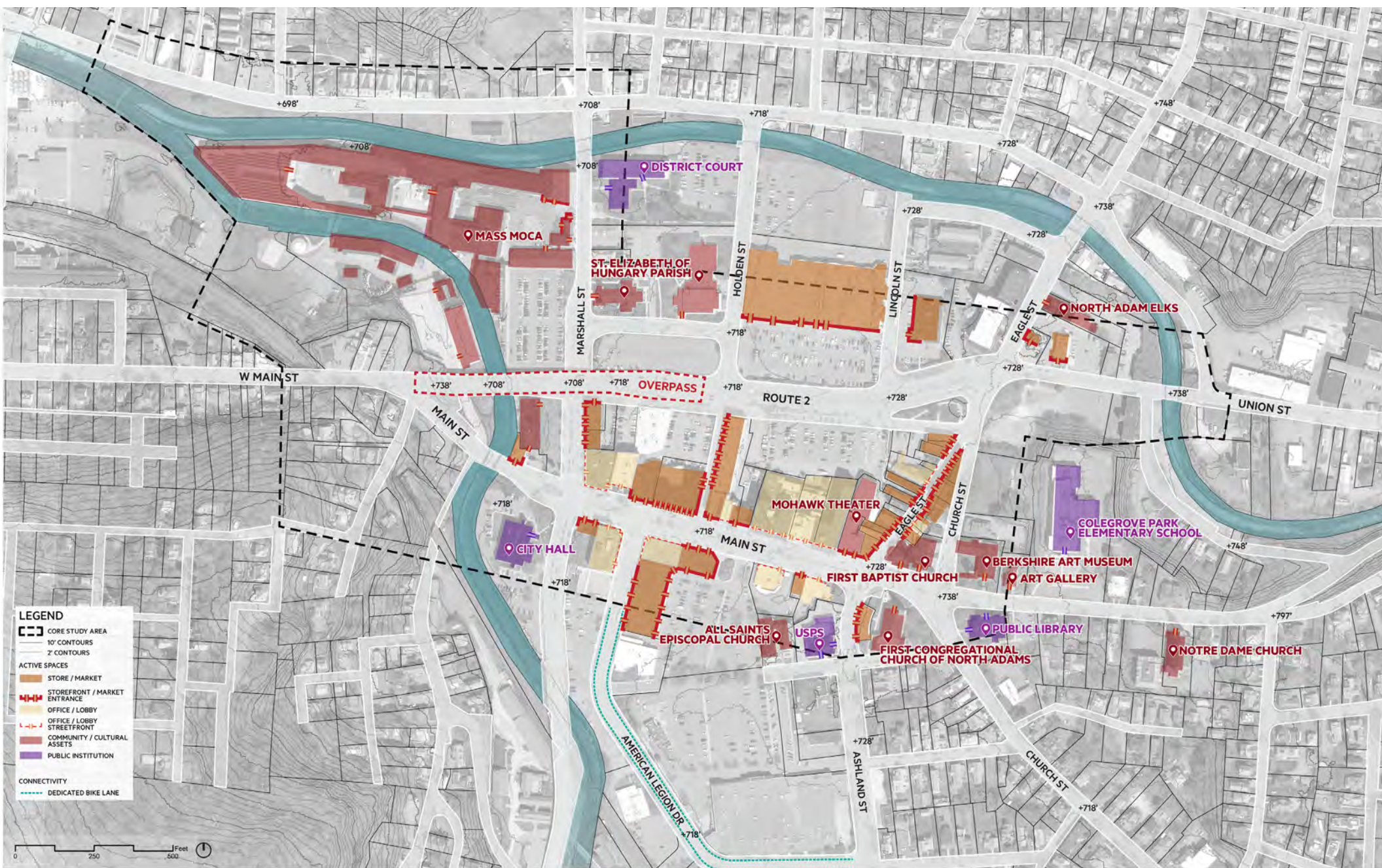
Economic Development Potential

- Possible elimination of underutilized parking lots and multi-lane roads could improve land costs
- Mixed-use developments could enhance walkability and economic vitality

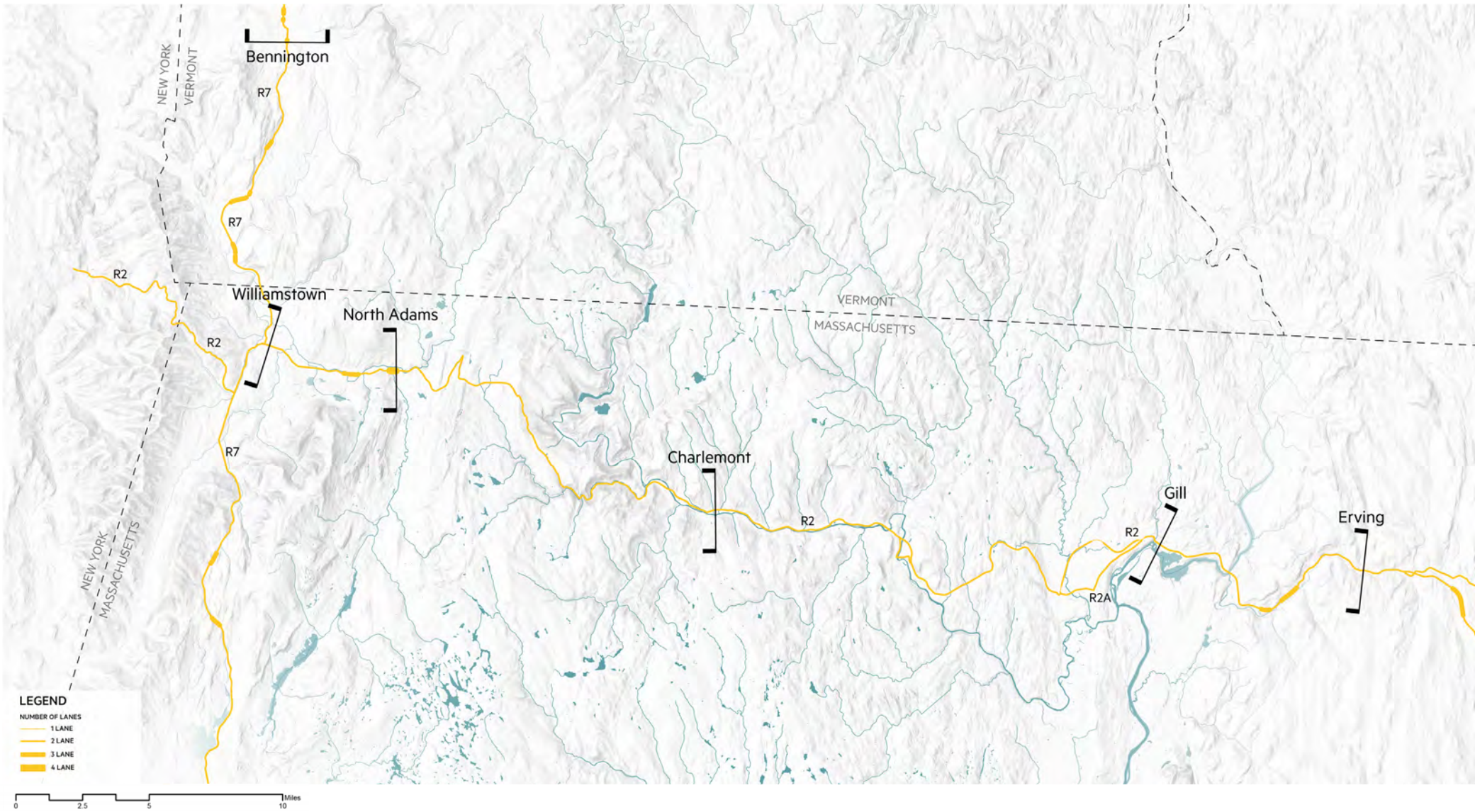
Environmental and Resilience Strategies

- Potential to integrate flood resilience methods
- Historic preservation efforts could contribute to heritage tourism and cultural district enhancements

ACTIVE SPACES

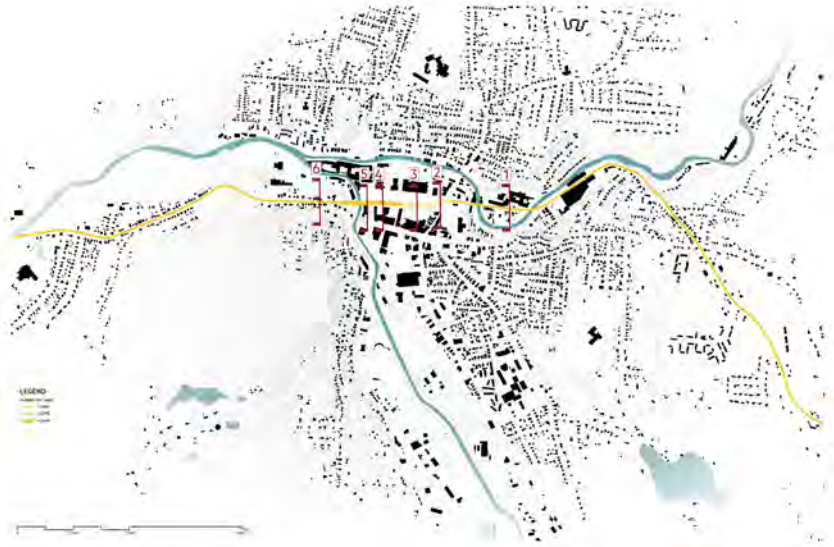


REGIONAL CONTEXT

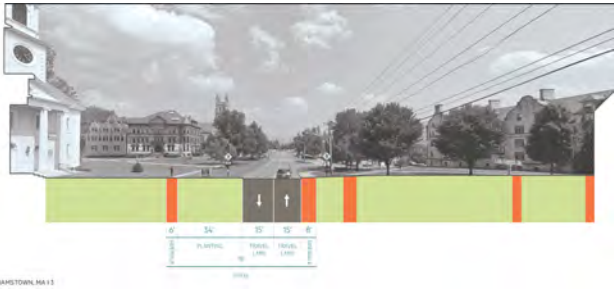
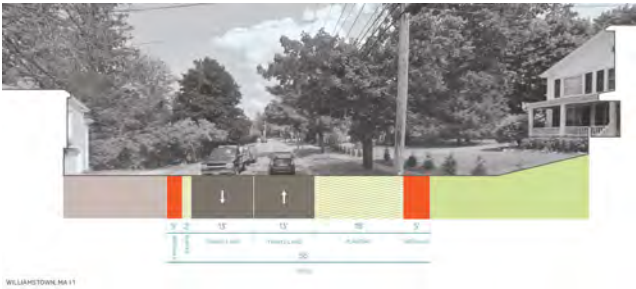


REGIONAL SCALE ASSESSMENT

As the project team analyzed the existing conditions including the roadways on the overpass and within the adjacent context, it became clear that not only does the infrastructure feel too big for North Adams, it might feel oversized for the region. With that inclination, a study was developed to understand where else along Route 2 the road profile was similar to that of North Adams. In other words, where else along Route 2 were there four lanes of traffic? Where were there four lanes of traffic that ran right through the middle of a city or town? As seen here and on the following pages, a series of sections were created through the roadways in several nearby locations to



WILLIAMSTOWN



CHARLEMONT



BENNINGTON



GILL



ERVING



demonstrate that there are no points along Route 2 moving eastbound or even along Route 7 moving north towards Bennington, VT where the number of lanes increases from two lanes to four full lanes for traffic while passing through the central district of a populated area.

With this finding, it was then asked how appropriate is it to have four lanes of traffic cutting right through North Adams' main business district? Why here? Is this the right- size for the roadway infrastructure in a city of this size? As noted in the earlier portion of this report section, urban renewal was often sized for a projected future condition guided by automobile and truck traffic but would often result in a mismatch of scales between the rest of the city fabric and its transportation infrastructure.

PRELIMINARY STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS SUMMARY

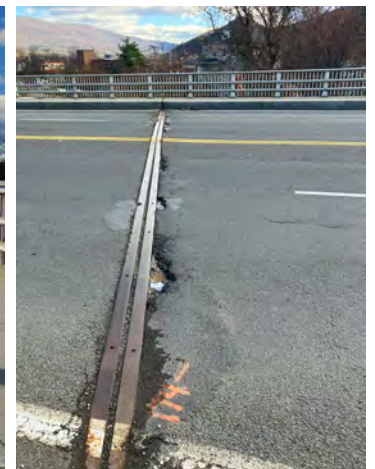
Originally constructed in 1959 and rehabilitated in 1992, the overpass bridge carries State Route 2 traveling east and west over State Route 8 (State Street), the Hoosic River, and an access road to MASS MoCA. The structure of the overpass is approximately 560 feet long and consists of nine spans.

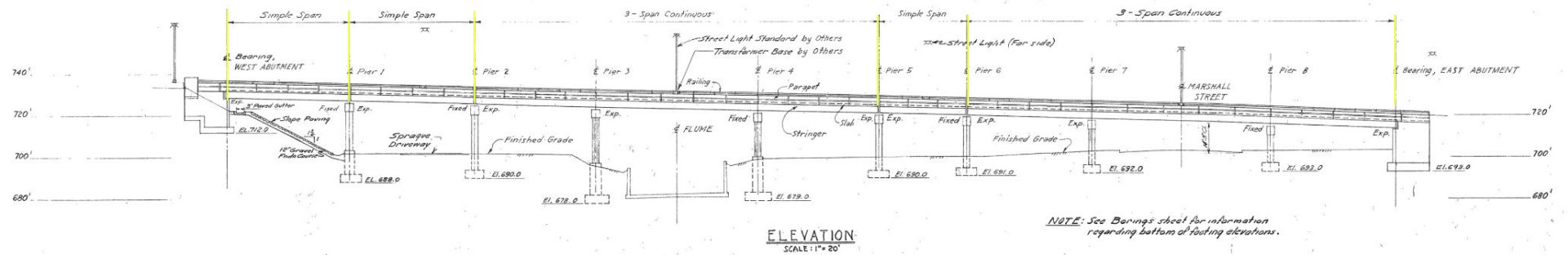
The roadway is comprised of four 12'-0" wide lanes (two in each direction) with 2'-0" minimum shoulders and 6'-7 1/2" for sidewalks and the metal bridge railing.

A previous rehabilitation completed in 1992 consisted of a replacement of the bridge deck, sidewalks, joints, and barriers. In addition to the deck replacements, repairs were made to one of the beams and the substructure underwent repairs

in areas of failed concrete. A full assessment of the overpass existing conditions can be found in the Appendix.

In late 2023, nearly a year before the R2O project began in the fall of 2024, the Route 2 overpass bridge was deemed structurally deficient by MASSDOT. Due to deteriorating conditions, MASSDOT implemented a weight limit restriction, leading to the rerouting of large trucks and vehicles as well as a closure of two of the four lanes. Although this narrowing of the bridge was perceived by some as an inconvenience, it allowed the R2O study to advance with not only a new urgency but also with an ability to study the effects of rerouted truck traffic and a two-lane roadway more in keeping with the observed character of the surrounding Route 2 relationship to other towns and cities.

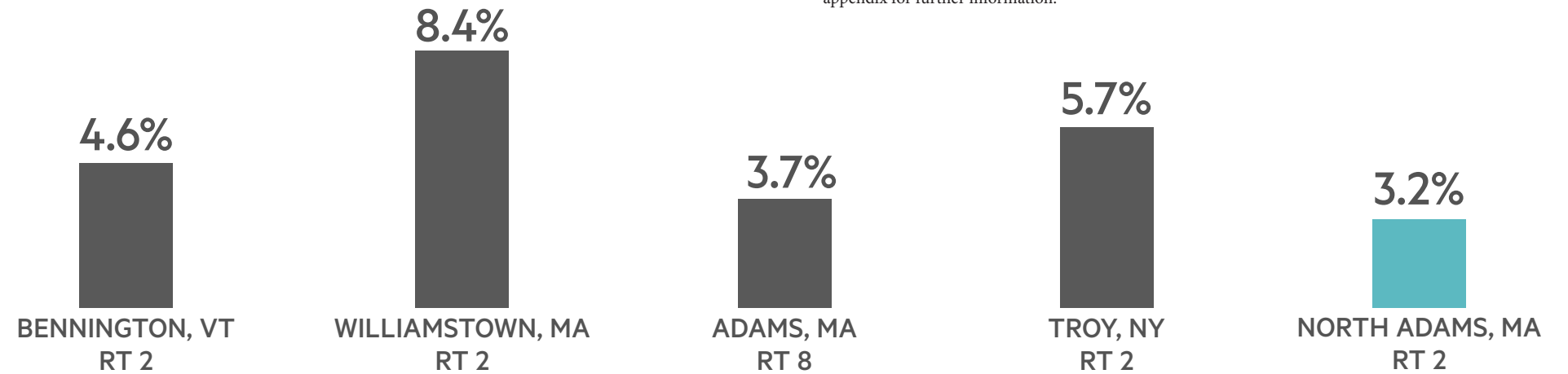




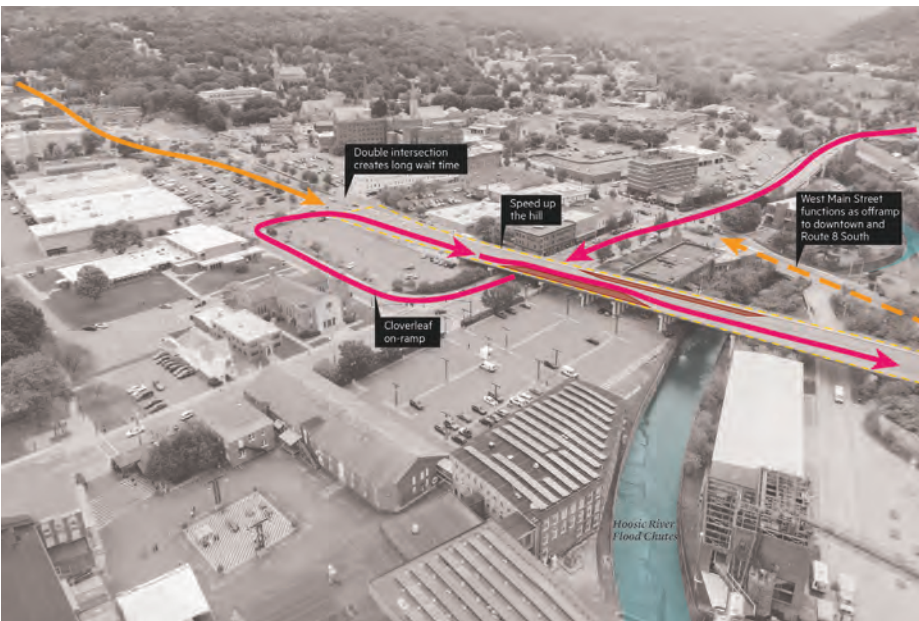
TRAFFIC FINDINGS SUMMARY

The primary function of the Route 2 overpass is to move traffic in and out of North Adams without moving directly through downtown. The current configuration of Route 2 has facilitated what is essentially a cloverleaf traffic pattern meant to quickly move trucks and other traffic that is coming from the south through North Adams and to the west towards Albany. This motion, especially when taken by large trucks, requires rapid acceleration to move up the base of the overpass and over the bridge, creating an unsafe and uncomfortable crossing and street condition for pedestrians and cyclists. The movement of trucks in such a visible location also heightens the feeling of a large volume of truck traffic in North Adams, while it is statistically a smaller proportion of overall traffic than the surrounding towns and cities. Further traffic findings are summarized within later sections of this report and detailed in the Appendix.

TRUCK TRAFFIC AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL TRAFFIC

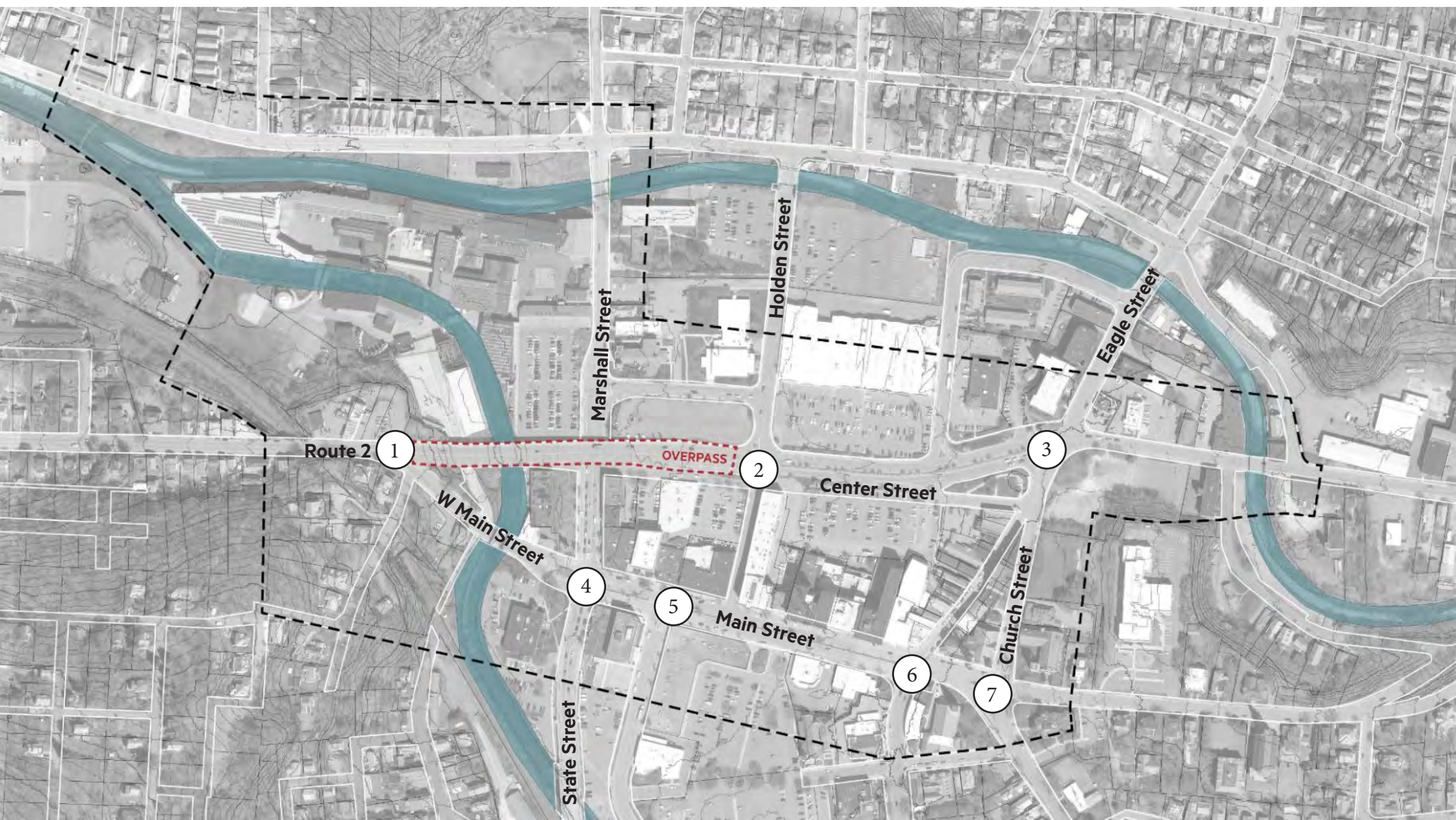


VEHICULAR BARRIERS - WEST BOUND



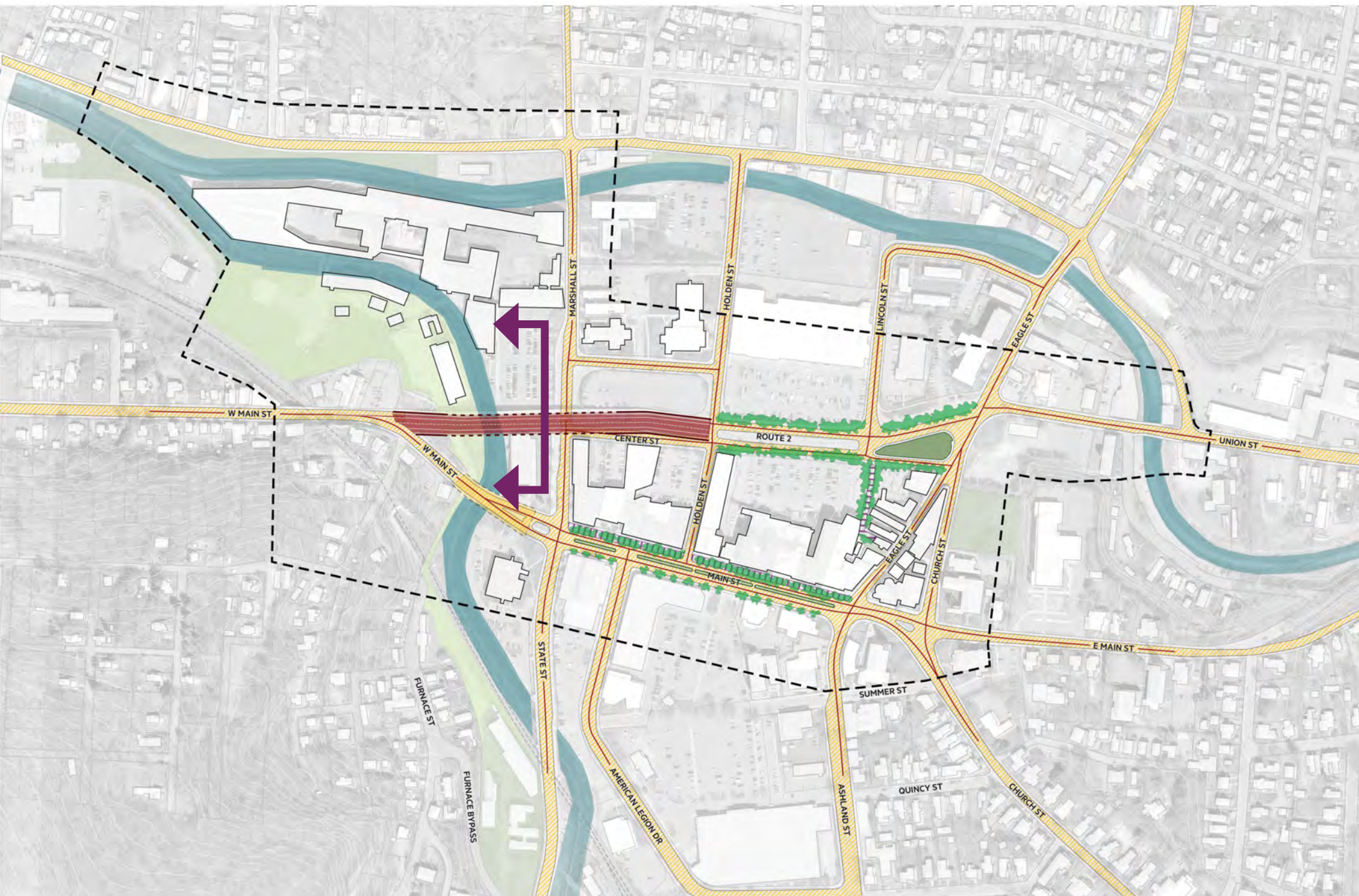
Above: The ‘cloverleaf’ created by traffic moving from Rt 8 to Rt 2
Right: The numbers indicate the intersections at which traffic counts were gathered for the project. See the appendix for further information.

TRAFFIC COUNT INTERSECTIONS





III. SCHEME OVERVIEWS



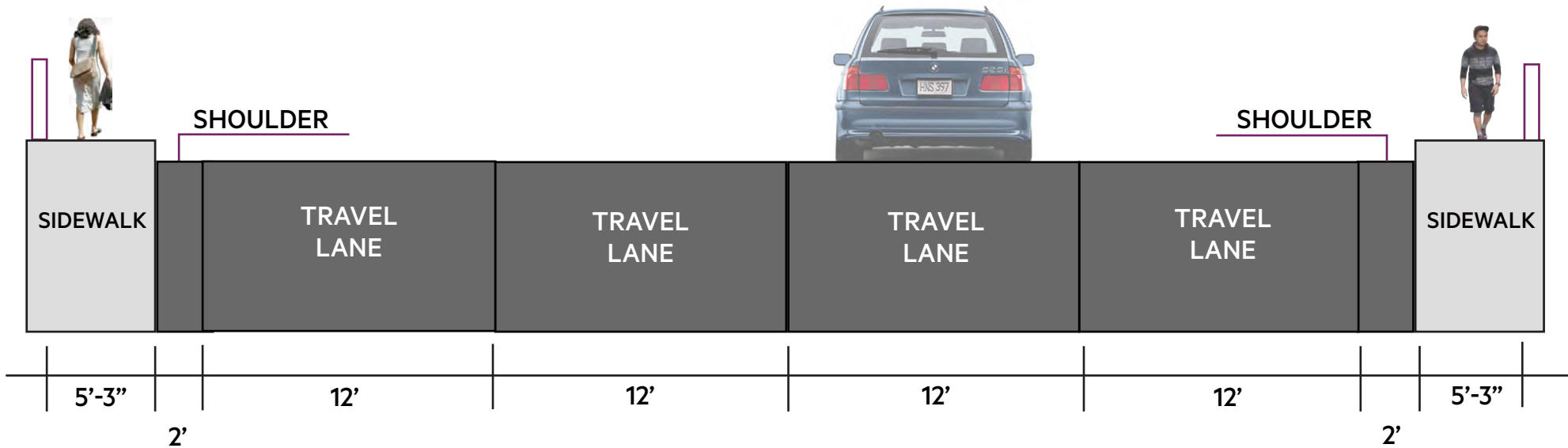
CONCEPTUAL DESIGN SCHEME I: REPAIR

The first approach to the overpass is a repair of the existing structure. Since its addition to the structurally deficient bridge list, the Route 2 overpass has been temporarily closed and functioned as a two lane bridge with the two central lanes open to traffic. The deficient structure is being considered for repair by MASSDOT and is currently being advanced through design and engineering. In 2025 the City authorized the installation of additional shoring to allow the bridge to reopen the additional lanes and restore use to the full four lanes. In July 2025, MASSDOT shared in more detail

plans to preserve the existing structure and therefore extend the service life of the overpass for approximately 25 years.

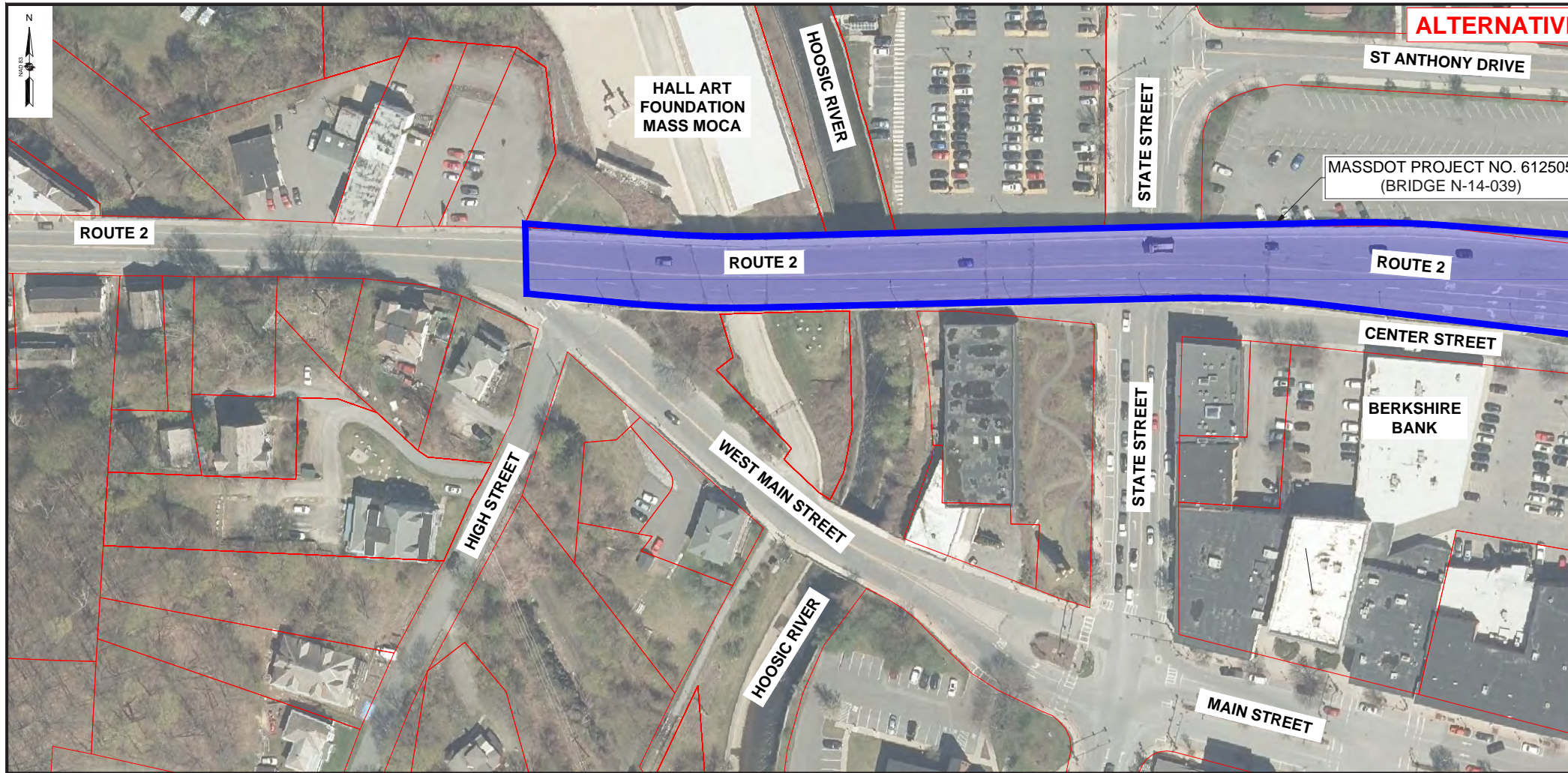
This strategy, while effective for maintaining the safety of the bridge, does not incorporate any work outside of the footprint of the overpass and therefore does not enhance the overall street network or intersection designs. Further, this scheme does not propose any modifications or improvements to the bicycle or pedestrian infrastructure within the site area but focuses solely on extending the service life of the current configuration.

PROPOSED SECTION



TRAFFIC

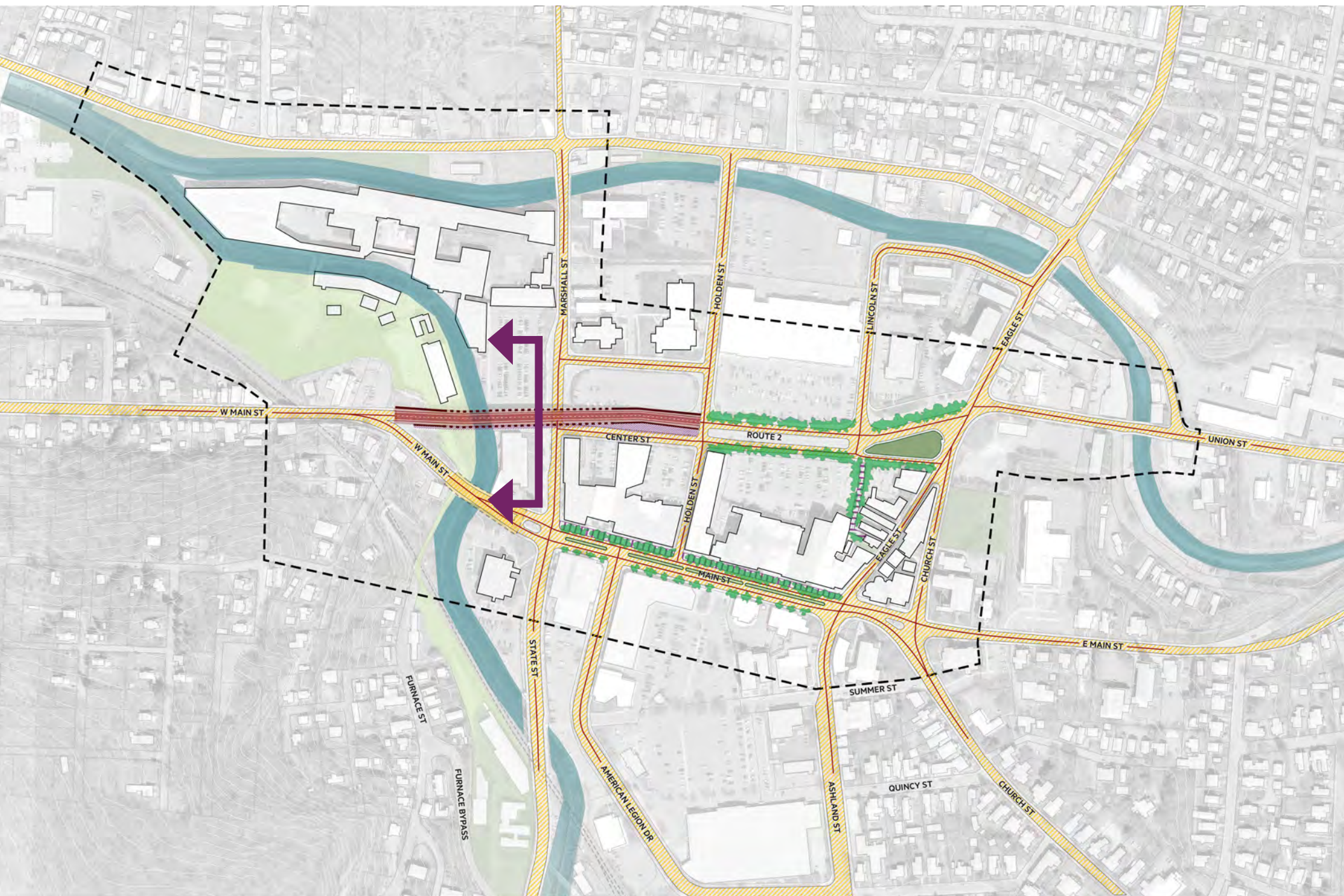
Because there would be no modification to the overall configuration of the Route 2 overpass in the Repair scheme, no modifications would be proposed to the roadways and their associated intersections. The existing signalization at intersections as well as their approach and timing could be modified to provide an improved level of service, but these efforts are not presently incorporated into this scheme. A full review of the existing traffic conditions and the proposed future condition should this scheme be adopted is captured in the Appendix.



The footprint of the repair extents is shown in blue below, and no associated improvements to the pedestrian or bike infrastructure are proposed as part of this scheme, in keeping with the MASSDOT project.

No future development is shown as part of this scheme as there is no change to the present condition, thus no further incentives to develop beyond what is currently available.





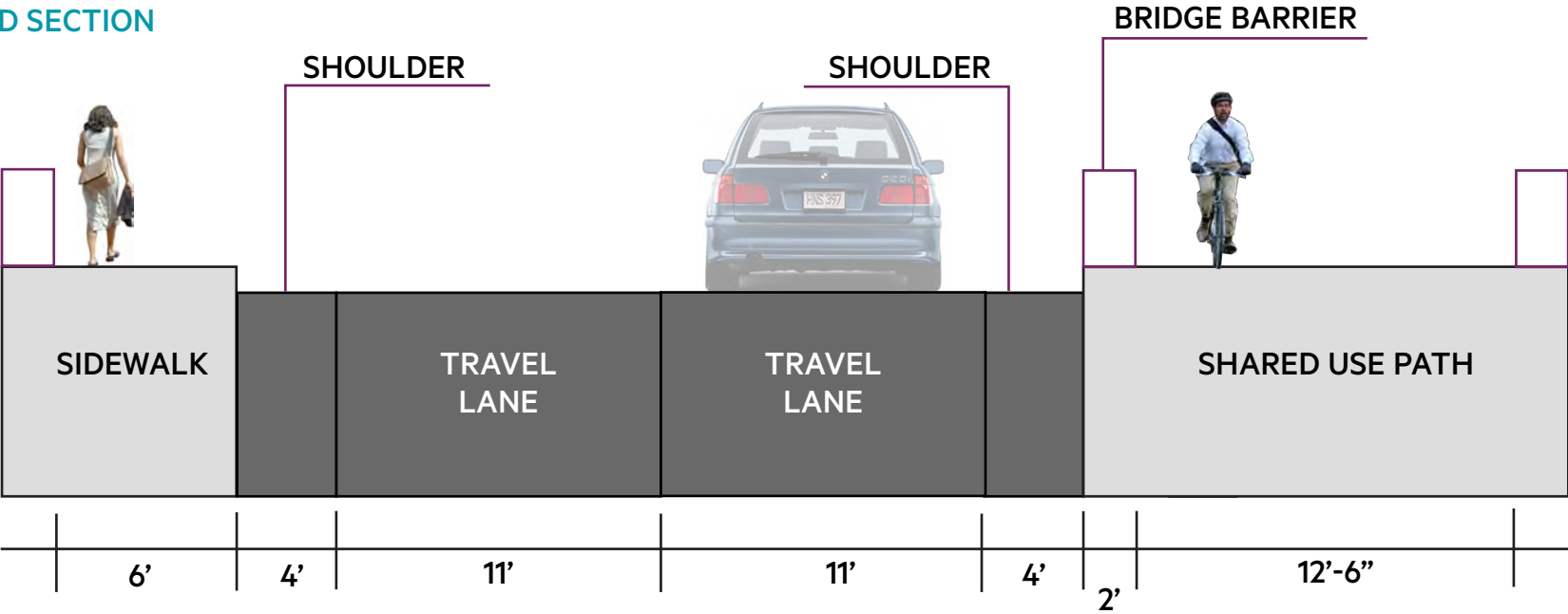
CONCEPTUAL DESIGN SCHEME II: REPLACE

The second conceptual design scheme considers the replacement of the entire Route 2 overpass bridge structure. This option would require the full demolition of the existing overpass and a reconstruction of an entirely new bridge structure. Although this scheme would be a major intervention, there are design opportunities to consider. As seen in the section below, instead of restoring the bridge to its current four lanes and dimensions, a new bridge could be composed of two travel lanes, an enhanced sidewalk, and a new shared use path for bikes and pedestrians at the northern side.

In order to meet current design standards, though, the bridge section overall would not be significantly reduced, therefore there is not a major change to the space surrounding the overpass or to the potential environment for development.

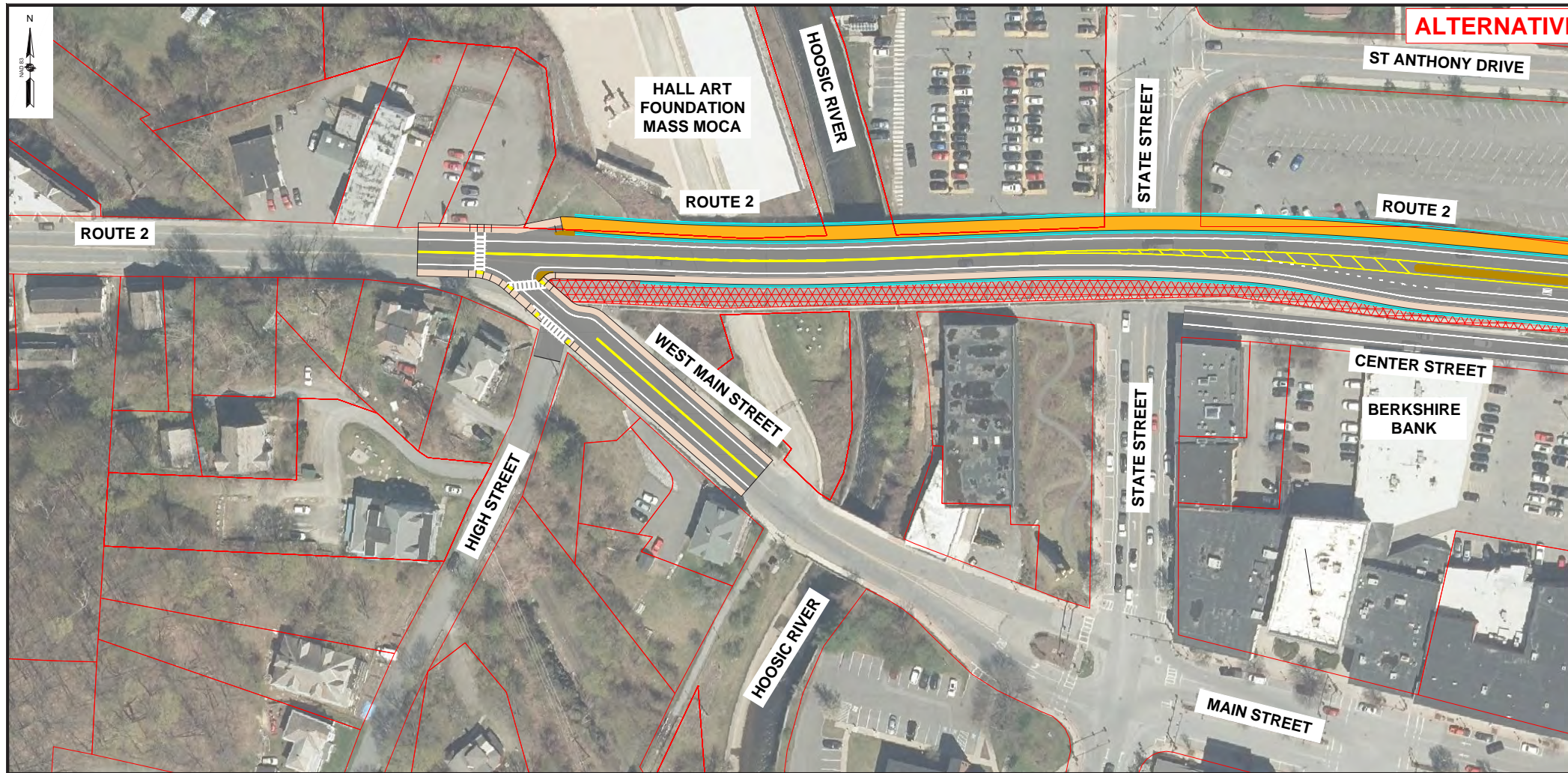
Due to the change in elevation between the start and end of the bridge, the overpass cannot be relocated or dramatically shortened without creating a bridge with poor visibility, steep slopes, and major impact on the Hoosic River.

PROPOSED SECTION



TRAFFIC

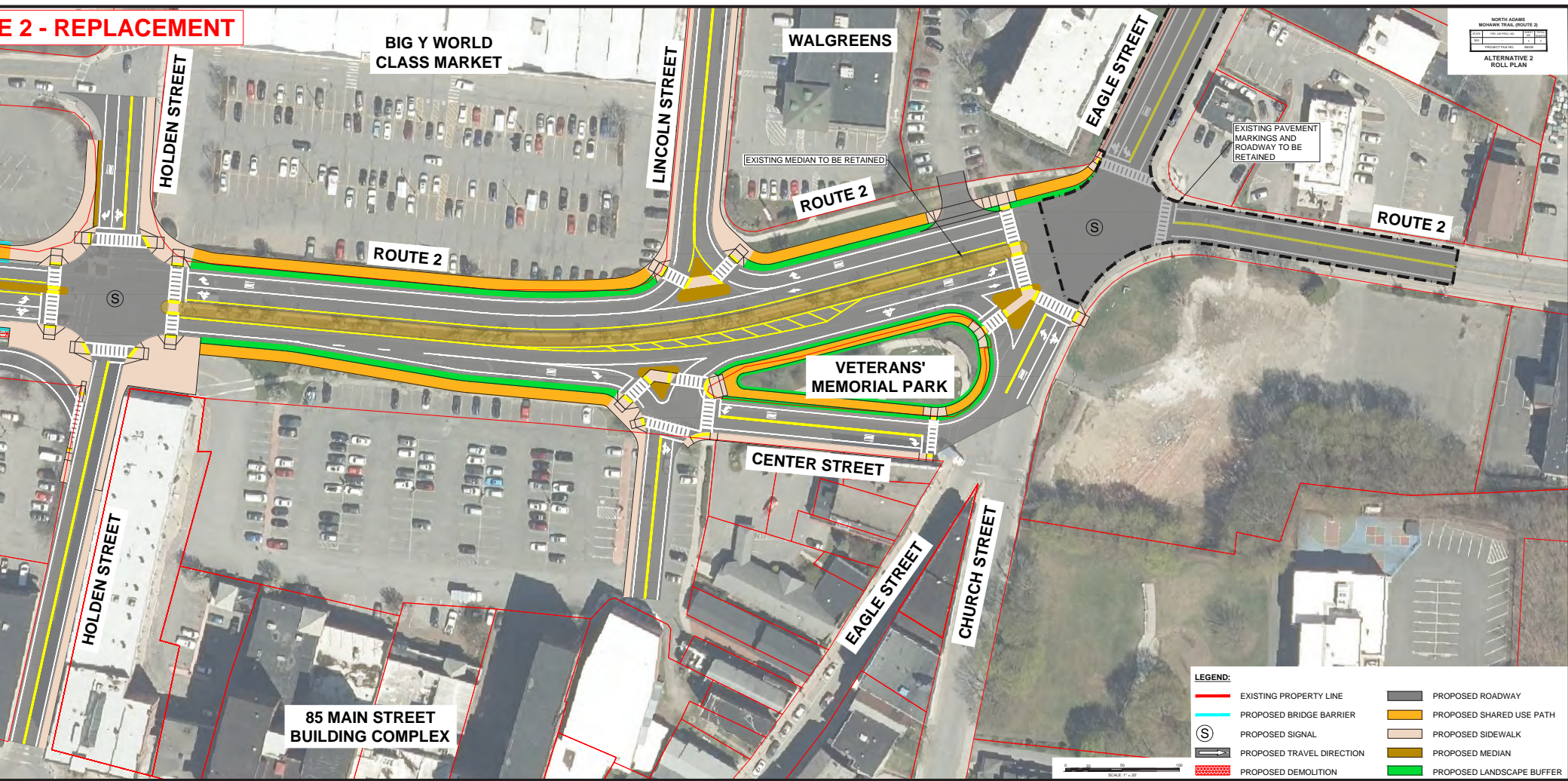
In addition to providing a bridge profile that meets present-day design standards, the City could also choose to invest in signal and intersection updates as part of the Replace scheme to enhance the level of service. The key intersection effected by this work would be the Route 2/ Holden Street intersection as well as the circulation near to and around Veteran's Memorial Park. A full review of the existing traffic conditions and the proposed future condition should this scheme be adopted in captured in the Appendix.

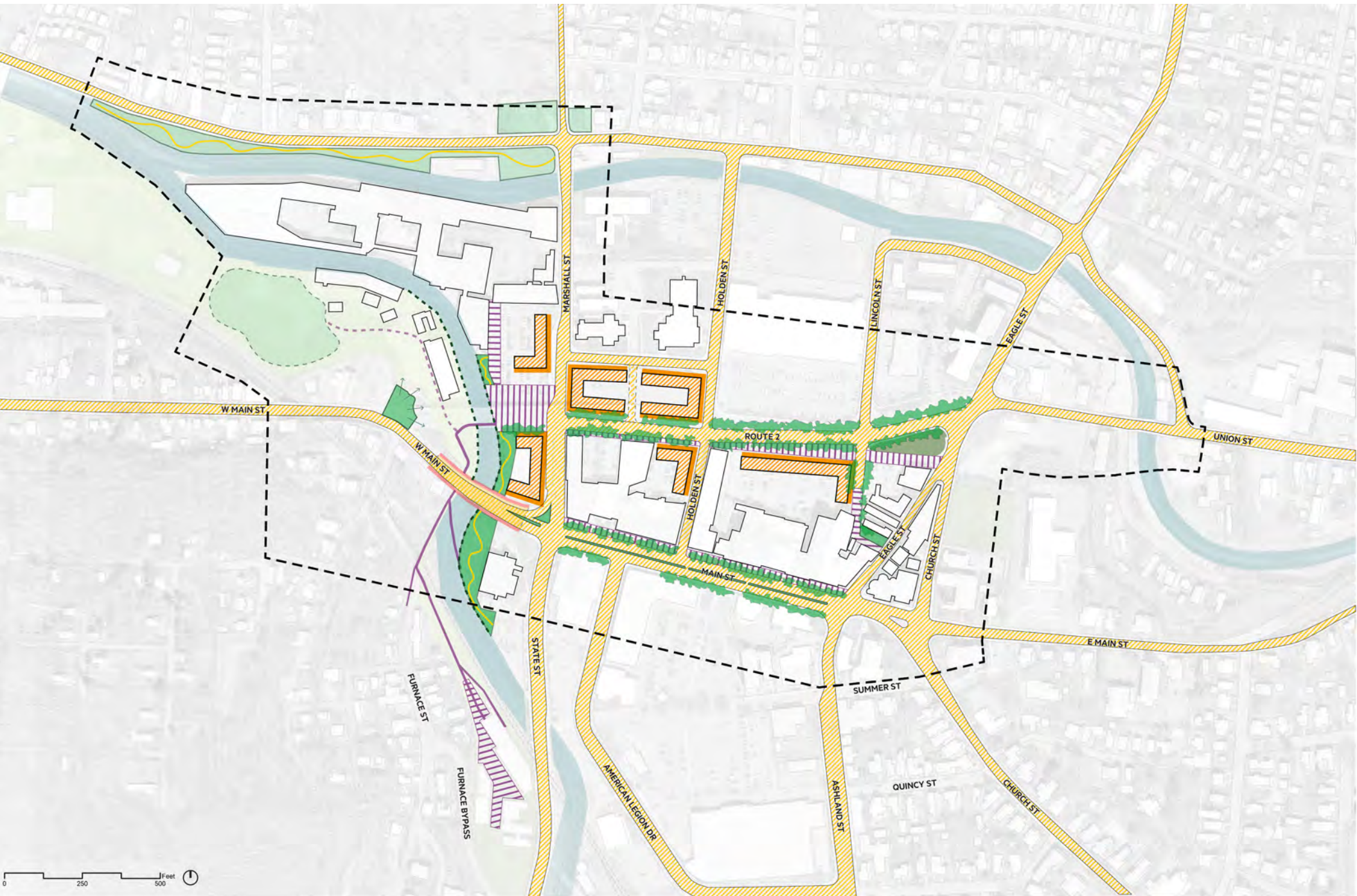


PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS

A new bridge could enhance the public realm by providing new connections to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. As seen on the previous page, the proposed bridge section includes an enhanced sidewalk at the south side as well as a new pedestrian and cyclist shared use path to the north.

These installations could be complemented by a realignment of pedestrian and cyclist facilities along Route 2 and Center Street moving eastbound from Holden Street to the Eagle/ Church Street intersection.





CONCEPTUAL DESIGN SCHEME III: REMOVE/RESTITCH

The third conceptual scheme proposes a removal of the entirety of the overpass structure as well as a restructuring of Route 2 and Center Street into a unified streetscape. By removing the overpass, a series of new spaces are opened up with the potential for redevelopment, safer traffic patterns, and an enhanced public realm. This scheme seeks to create a transformative environment, one that will spur development and lead to the creation of a finer urban grain not unlike that which was formerly present in North Adams before the devastation of urban renewal.

As seen in the plan on the facing page, a realigned Route 2/Center Street consolidates the existing series of roadways and multi-directional intersections, primarily at Holden Street and eastward to Church Street. Here there is an opportunity to create a unified streetscape that features development and activation on both the north and south sides of the street. Conceptually this plan depicts new potential development in orange hatches that could serve as new housing for a revived downtown population. Housing could be accompanied by commercial uses such as retail, dining, and office spaces, all of which were identified as viable development opportunities should the context for redevelopment be made available.

PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS

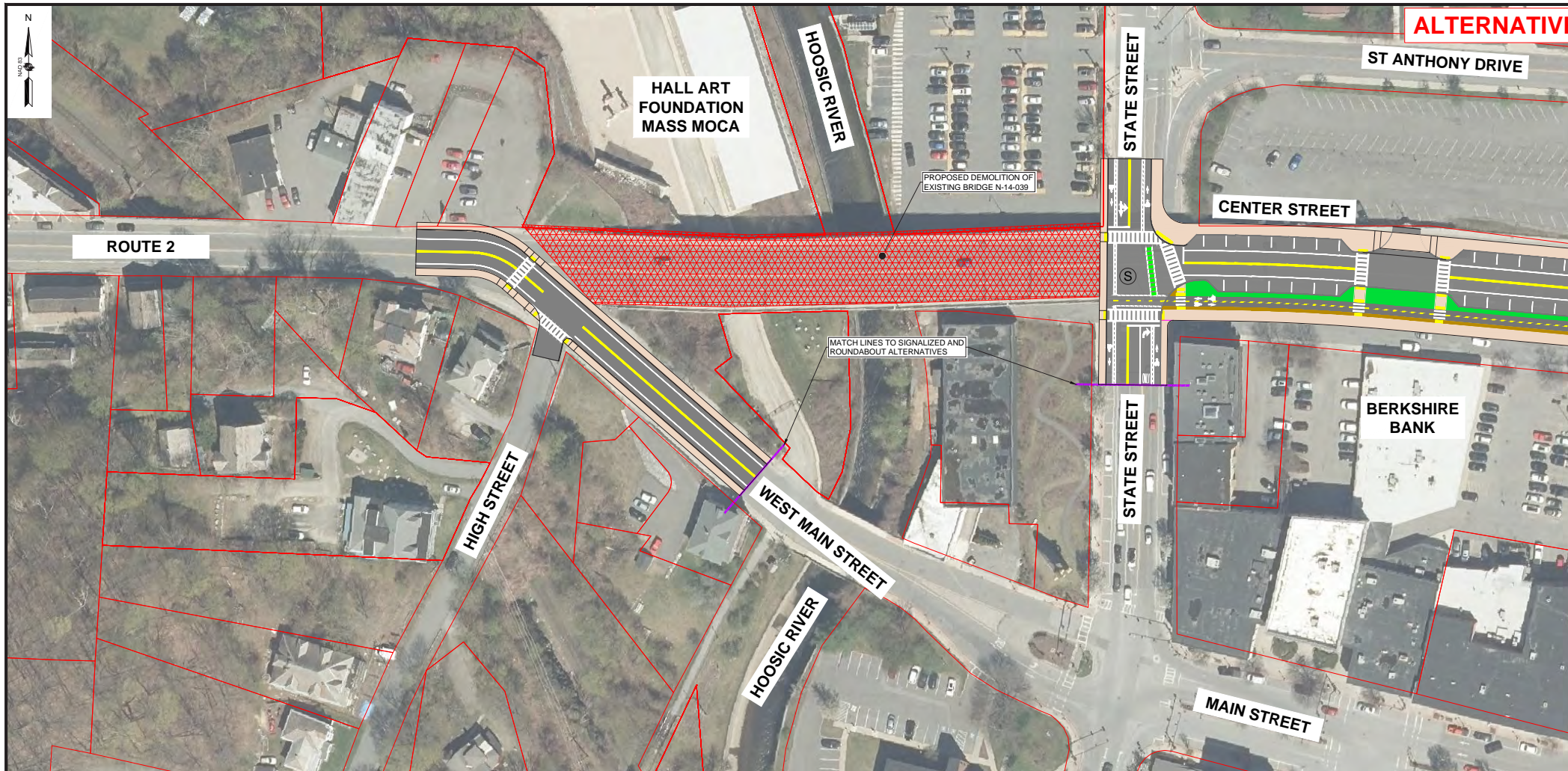
In the Restitch scheme, connections to North Adams' existing open spaces and natural resources are strengthened by the introduction of public plazas and gathering spaces, shown in a purple hatch on the framework plan to the left. Instead of allowing the Hoosic River to be separated from downtown by the overpass structure and parking lots, this scheme seeks to provide a public plaza at the water's edge with the potential to create a new riverfront open space extending south to City Hall. This network of open space could be physically connected to Western Heritage State Park to the west via a series of walking paths and a pedestrian bridge while serving as a community for events held between downtown and MASS MoCA's campus.

This scheme also proposes the transformation of Center Street east of Holden Street into a pedestrian plaza and a continuous connection between this new linear plaza and the Eagle Street pocket park. This new network of open spaces could tie directly into Veteran's Memorial Park at the eastern end of Route 2, enhancing an already ideal open space that is presently surrounded by traffic.

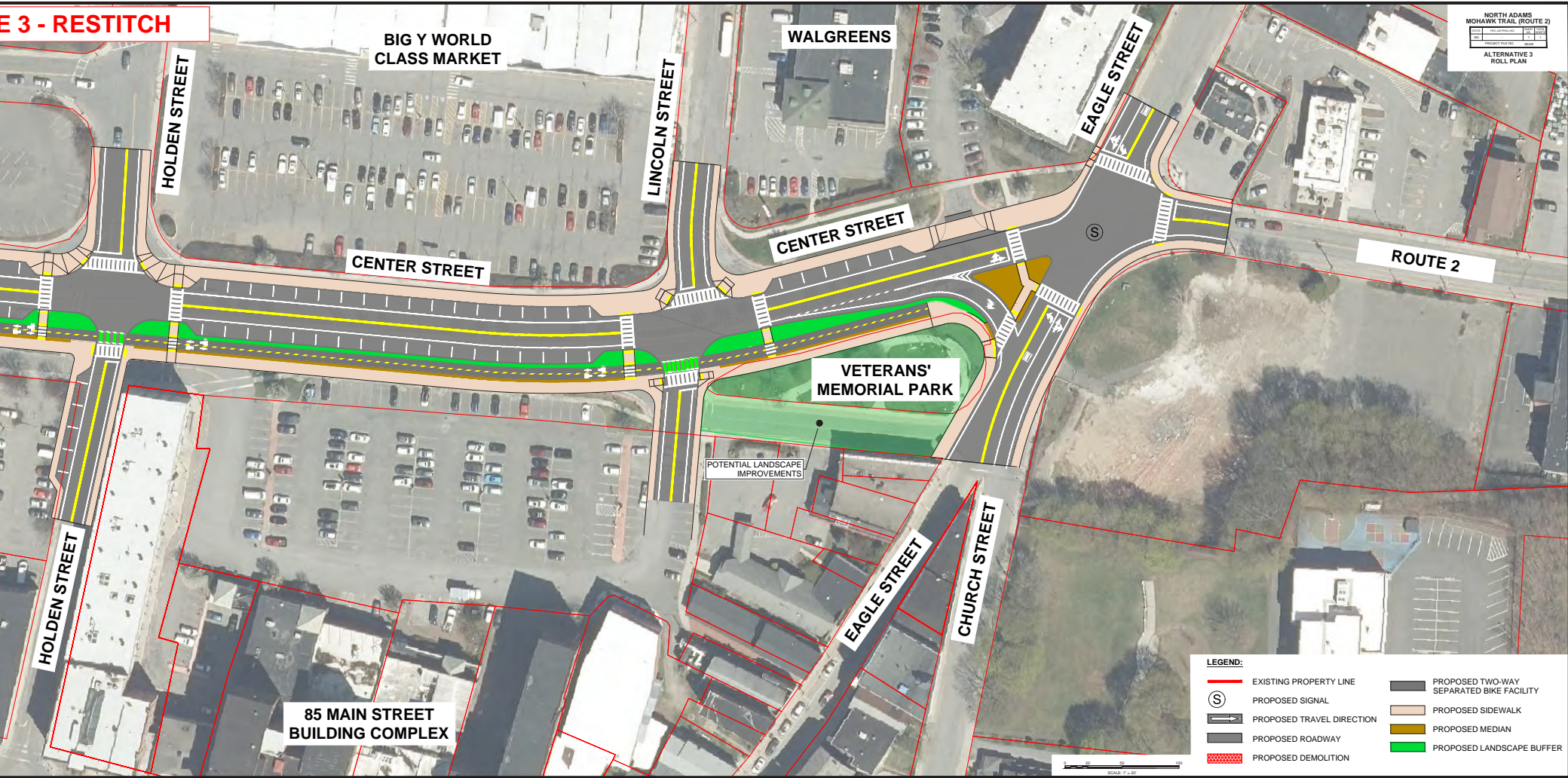
New and enhanced planting could be implemented alongside the new Route 2/Center Street alignment as well as along the proposed plaza spaces to enhance outdoor comfort and alleviate the effects of urban heat island.

TRAFFIC

In the Restitch scheme, what was formerly four lanes of traffic wide is now reduced to two, with street parking available on either side. This scheme also proposes new pedestrian crossings supported by bump outs at major intersections as well as a protected multi-use pedestrian and cyclist path. A full review of the existing traffic conditions and the proposed future condition should this scheme be adopted is captured in the Appendix.



The consolidation of Route 2 and Center Street proposes a new street configuration that is properly scaled to North Adams and not unlike Main Street directly to the south. The restructuring of Route 2 could support development on both the north and the south side of the street, with the goal of producing active street walls and mimicking the urban fabric found currently along the north side of Main Street. Instead of thinking of the south side of Route 2 as being composed of the 'backs' of buildings, this arrangement could create a new relationship to the street and attract more businesses and residents.



NEXT STEPS + POTENTIAL PATHS FORWARD

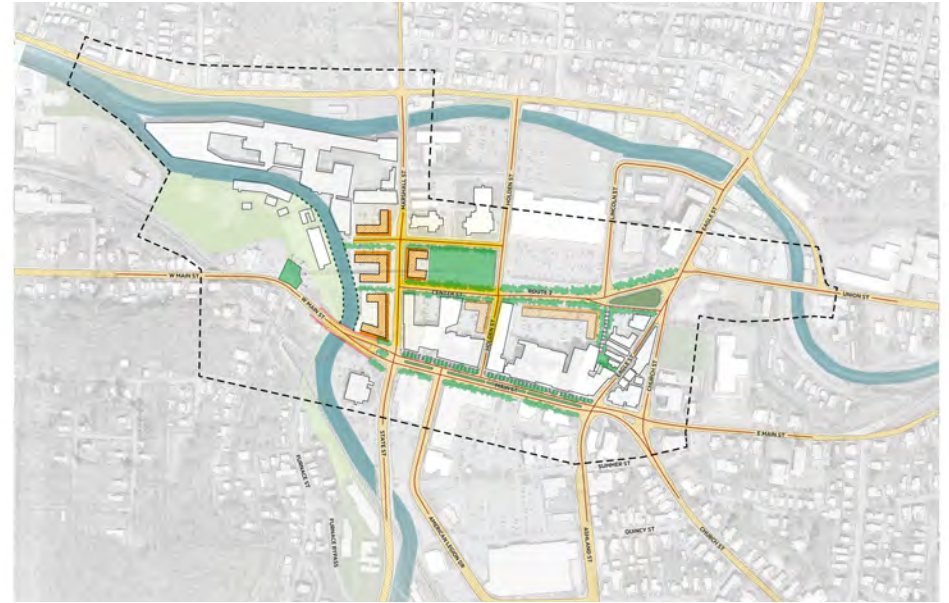
The Restitch scheme offers a wealth of possibilities for advancing an enhanced public realm, safer traffic intersections, and opportunities for redevelopment. As seen in the images to the right, this scheme could take many forms and be composed of different configurations of open spaces. However, all of the variations on this scheme rely on the removal of the existing overpass to generate a reconnected downtown to spur development.

POTENTIAL FOR DEVELOPMENT

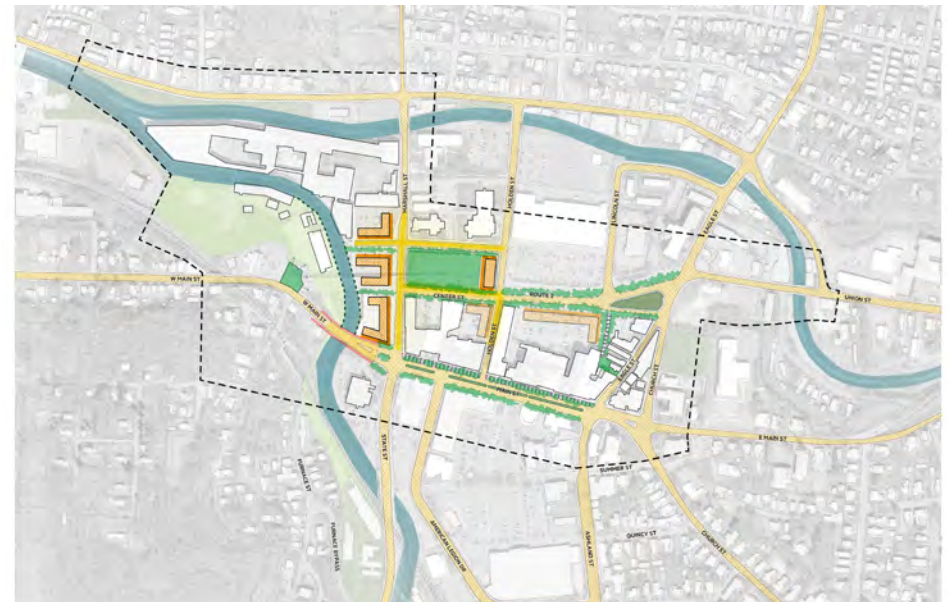
In evaluating the existing context and environment for new and/or continued investment and development in North Adams, several key elements emerged as desirable to advance in the recommended approach. These priority items are directly tied to changes in the urban environment, and are summarized as the following:

Active Street Life and Placemaking

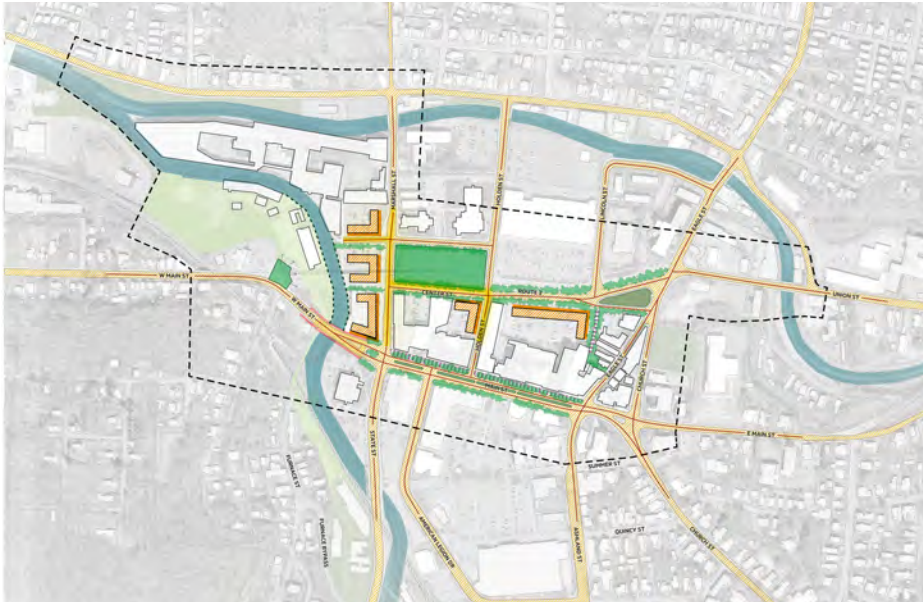
A steady stream of pedestrian activity throughout the day (and year) can create vibrancy in a place. This can be supported through the implementation of complete street elements such as generous sidewalks, street trees, and multimodal transportation options, as well as a healthy mix of uses at ground level on both sides of the street.



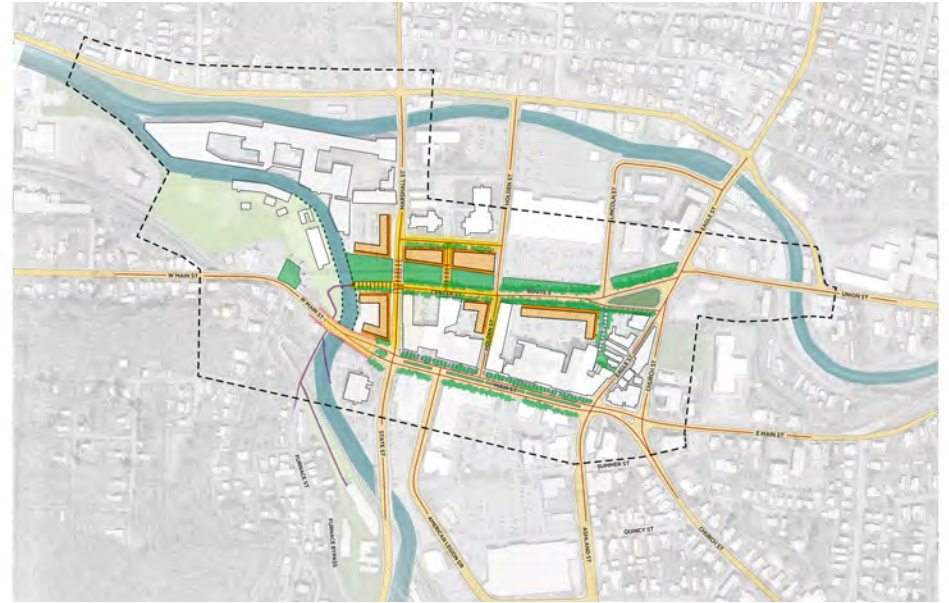
SCHEME A: DEVELOPMENT ON BOTH SIDES OF MARSHALL STREET + A NEW CENTRAL GREEN



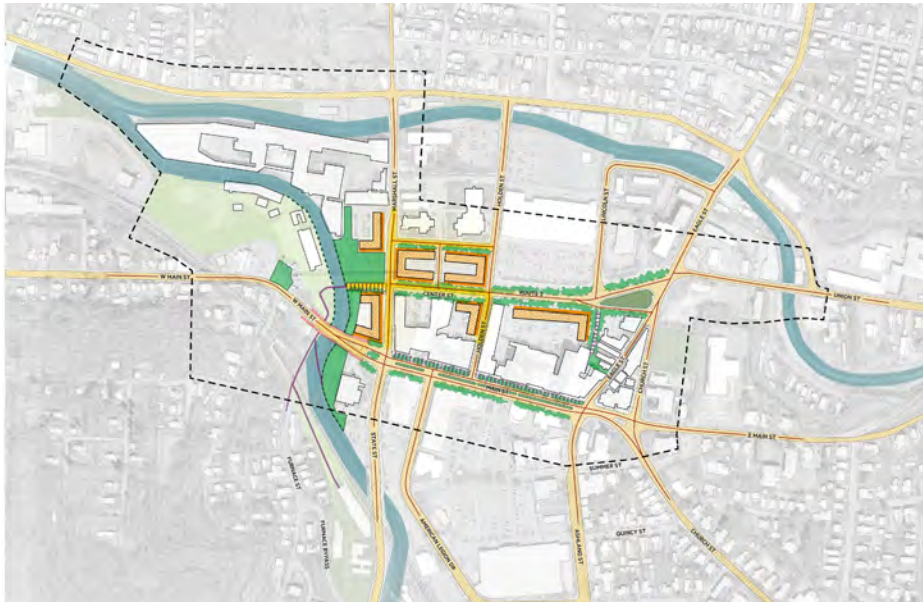
SCHEME B: DEVELOPMENT ON BOTH SIDES OF MARSHALL + HOLDEN STREETS + A NEW CENTRAL GREEN



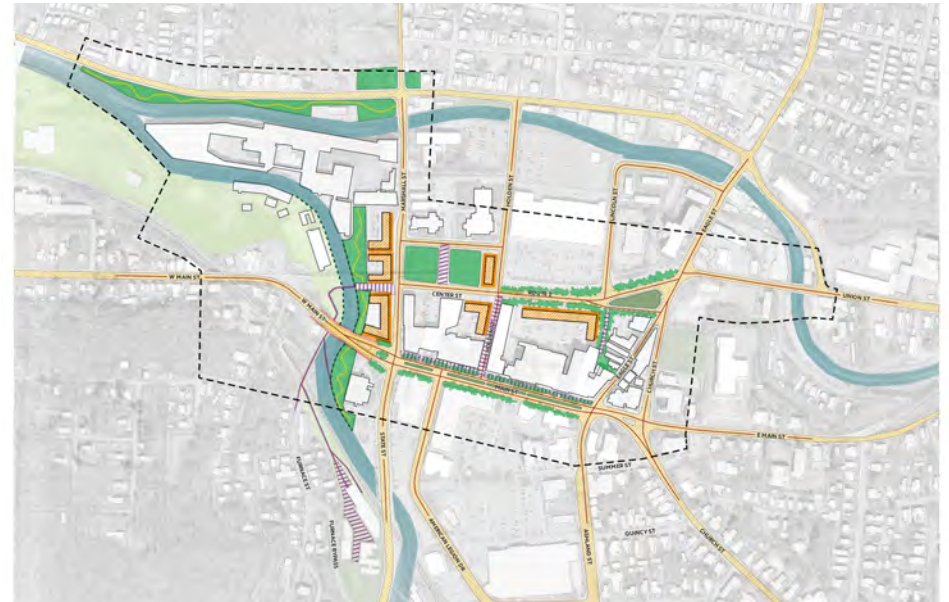
SCHEME C: DEVELOPMENT ALONG ONE SIDE OF MARSHALL STREET + A NEW CENTRAL GREEN



SCHEME D: DEVELOPMENT ALONG MARSHALL STREET + A NEW GREEN CORRIDOR ALONG CENTER STREET



SCHEME E: DEVELOPMENT ALONG MARSHALL STREET + A NEW RIVERWALK



SCHEME F: DEVELOPMENT ALONG MARSHALL STREET + A NEW RIVERWALK + CENTRAL GREEN

A Mixed Use Downtown

Incorporating multiple uses so that there are a variety of reasons for people to visit an area can also strengthen the urban environment. In North Adams, the downtown could benefit from additional commercial spaces as well as a healthy mix of residential use so that people are present at all times of the day.

A District Grounded in Arts and Culture

There are already fantastic resources in North Adams that ground the downtown in a distinct identity. Beautiful existing buildings with upper floors for residential units and ground floor spaces for retail lend an architectural charm and create a comfortable scale. These existing spaces can be complemented by new development to support the existing creative economy already in place that is centered around MASSMoCA and other artist spaces.

FEEDBACK FROM STAKEHOLDERS

Through conversations with stakeholders and an analysis of the regional context, the following needs were also identified:

Housing and Business Activity

- Strong demand for housing dedicated to aging in place, creatives, and young professionals, yet a present lack of

housing options in downtown and greater North Adams

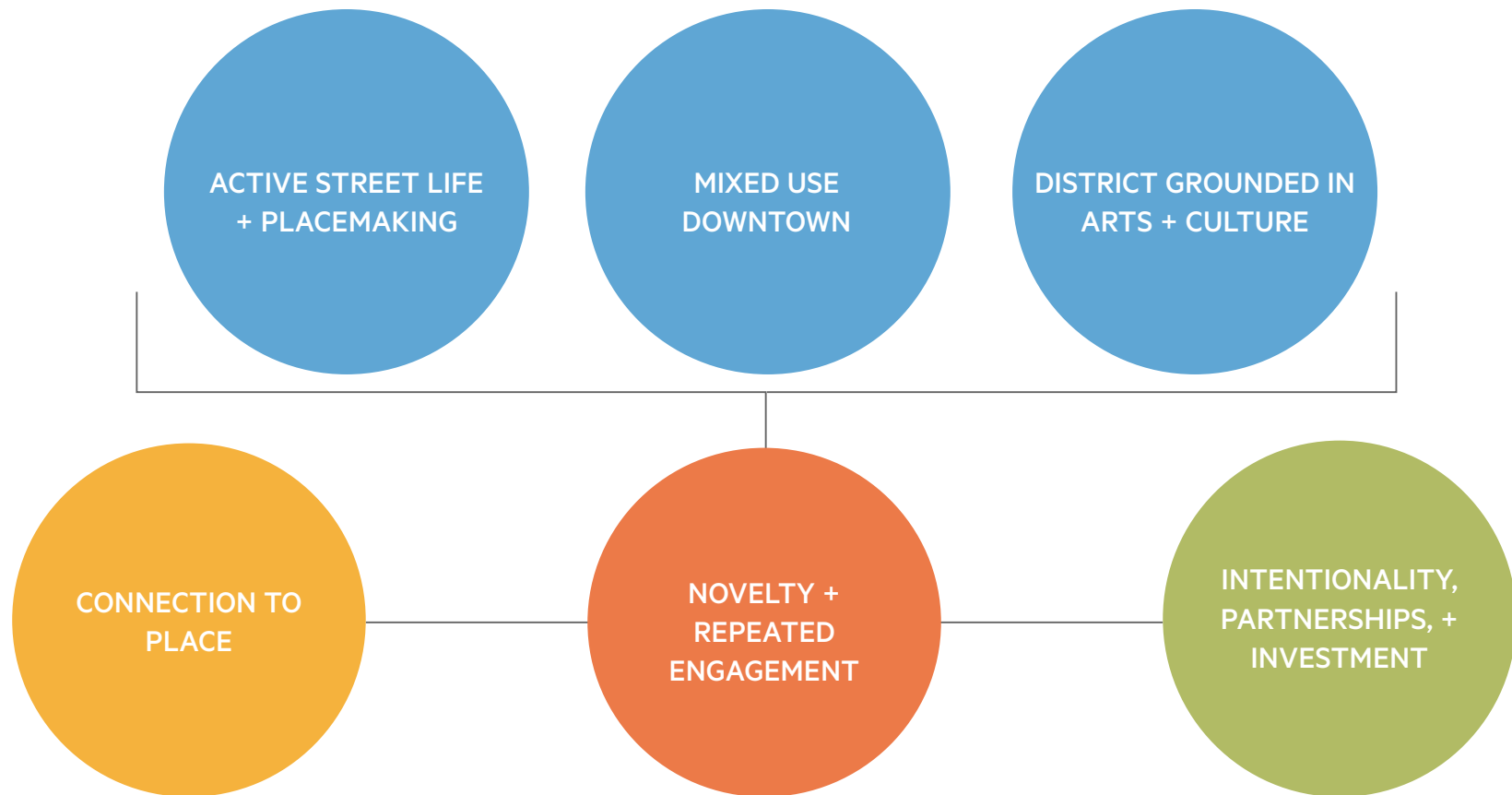
- Opportunity to bring approximately 150 units of housing to the downtown area
- Opportunity to reuse and adapt existing buildings and further enhance the character of North Adams
- Need for small business support and engagement for additional ground and upper floor activity

Creative Economy

- Opportunity to support and intentionally grow the existing creative economy
- Need for better mobility connections to capture energy to/from MASSMoCA and other cultural assets

Neighborhood Programming

- Goal to be an events-based city, building off of the existing vibrant programming and creating opportunities for growth of an experiential economy
- Opportunity for more open spaces and better connections to existing parks, open spaces, and the Hoosic River



- Transform existing assets-- vacant buildings + parking lots-- into productive reuse that strengthens + leverages the existing events, arts, + placemaking culture
- Incorporate ideas + feedback from existing residents, small business owners, + others

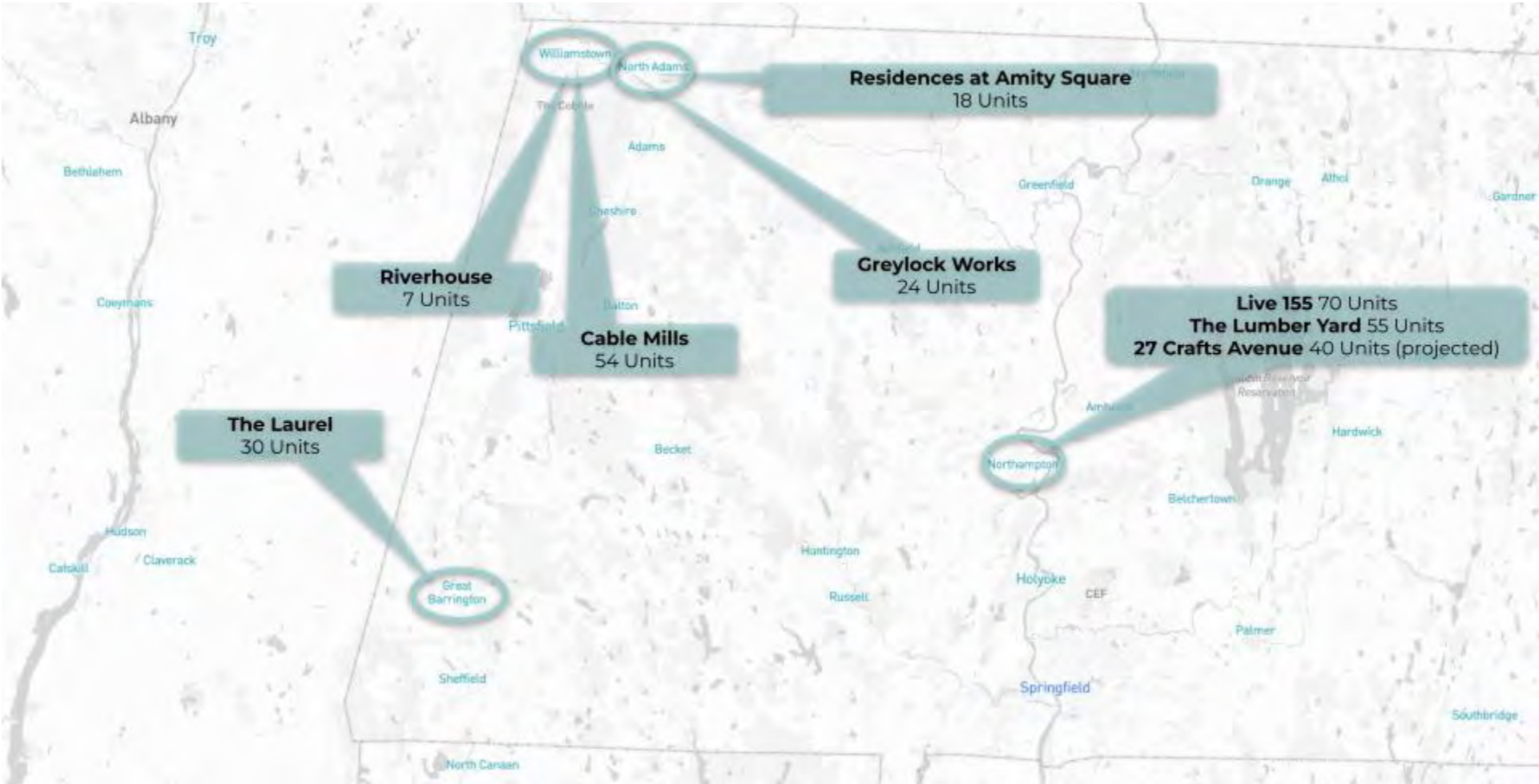
- Create dynamic spaces that integrate retail, housing, + entertainment options
- Commit to small business development opportunities to bring people Downtown to live, work, + play
- Design walkable loops that connect key landmarks + open spaces

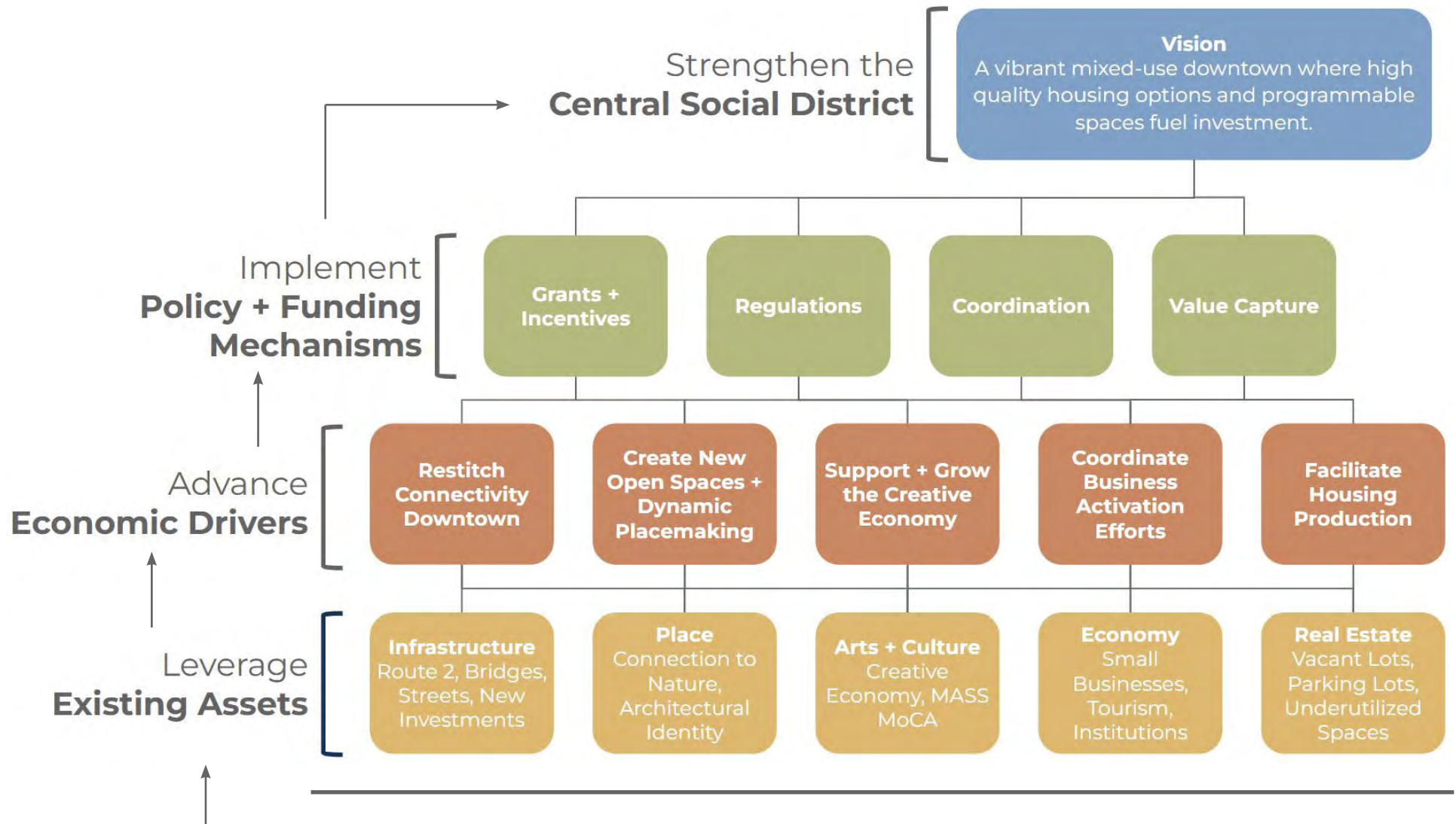
- Explore existing + new tax credits, grants, + other incentives to encourage residential + business growth
- Build public-private partnerships with the state, nonprofits, + private sector to fund infrastructure, capital projects, + community benefits

Recent regional residential developments point to the growing trend of adaptive reuse, with minimal new, ground up construction in the Berkshires. To better understand scale comparisons, if North Adams had the same population

share as Northampton living in downtown, over 1,500 residents would live in downtown North Adams..

RECENT MULTI- FAMILY HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS





What are the major economic drivers for North Adams and how can they be harnessed to strengthen what is already here?



IV. ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

WHAT WAS HEARD

Over the course of the project, the community made clear their thoughts, questions, concerns, and desires as related to the overpass and its scheme variations. The population of North Adams was generally not only very eager to bring opinions to the table, but to maintain an openness that generated discussion.

At each of the Activations and other engagement events, feedback was collected and summarized, with the following key points capturing public sentiment towards the three schemes:

- The Repair option was viewed as falling short of meeting community needs and potential,
- The Replace option generated a few more questions but still was majority negative in its feedback.
- Restitch sparked curiosity and interest, and was the overwhelming favorite.

Overall, the community showed a willingness to explore bold ideas, with good questions and insights about how the schemes might work and be implemented. There is deep local pride and a shared urgency to revitalize downtown by reconnecting its divided core, improving walkability and safety, supporting small businesses and housing, and creating inclusive public spaces – all grounded in a desire for sustained community involvement, economic opportunity, and a future that reflects the city's history, character, and potential.



30

SCHEME A- REPAIR: MAINTAIN THE EXISTING OVERPASS

POTENTIAL TO NARROW FROM FOUR LANES TO TWO LANES

This could be addressed at ANY TIME

Easiest but crappiest

BULK OF WORK LIMITED TO THE OVERPASS ITSELF BUT WOULD REQUIRE LOGISTICS SPACE, BRIDGE CLOSURE + TRAFFIC REDISTRIBUTION WHILE BRIDGE IS CLOSED

Noise and intensity of repair will definitely keep tourists and residents walking between MoCA and downtown for ~2 years.

Possible Streetscape / Intersection Improvements Not Included; Additional Funding Could Be Sought

LITTLE INCENTIVE TO ATTRACT INVESTMENT AS NOT ENOUGH HAS CHANGED

FLEXIBILITY - Adaptability + responsiveness to North Adams needs

● ● ● ● ●

TIME NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT - Duration of construction, impact of noise + traffic redistribution

● ● ● ● ●

COST - Overall cost of implementation, need for additional funding sources, return on investment

● ● ● ● ●

ENHANCEMENT OF ACCESS - Potential for connection back to the river + open spaces; potential to create new pedestrian access points

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

ATTRACTION AND QUALITY OF DOWNTOWN - Brings people Downtown with housing, jobs, and activities

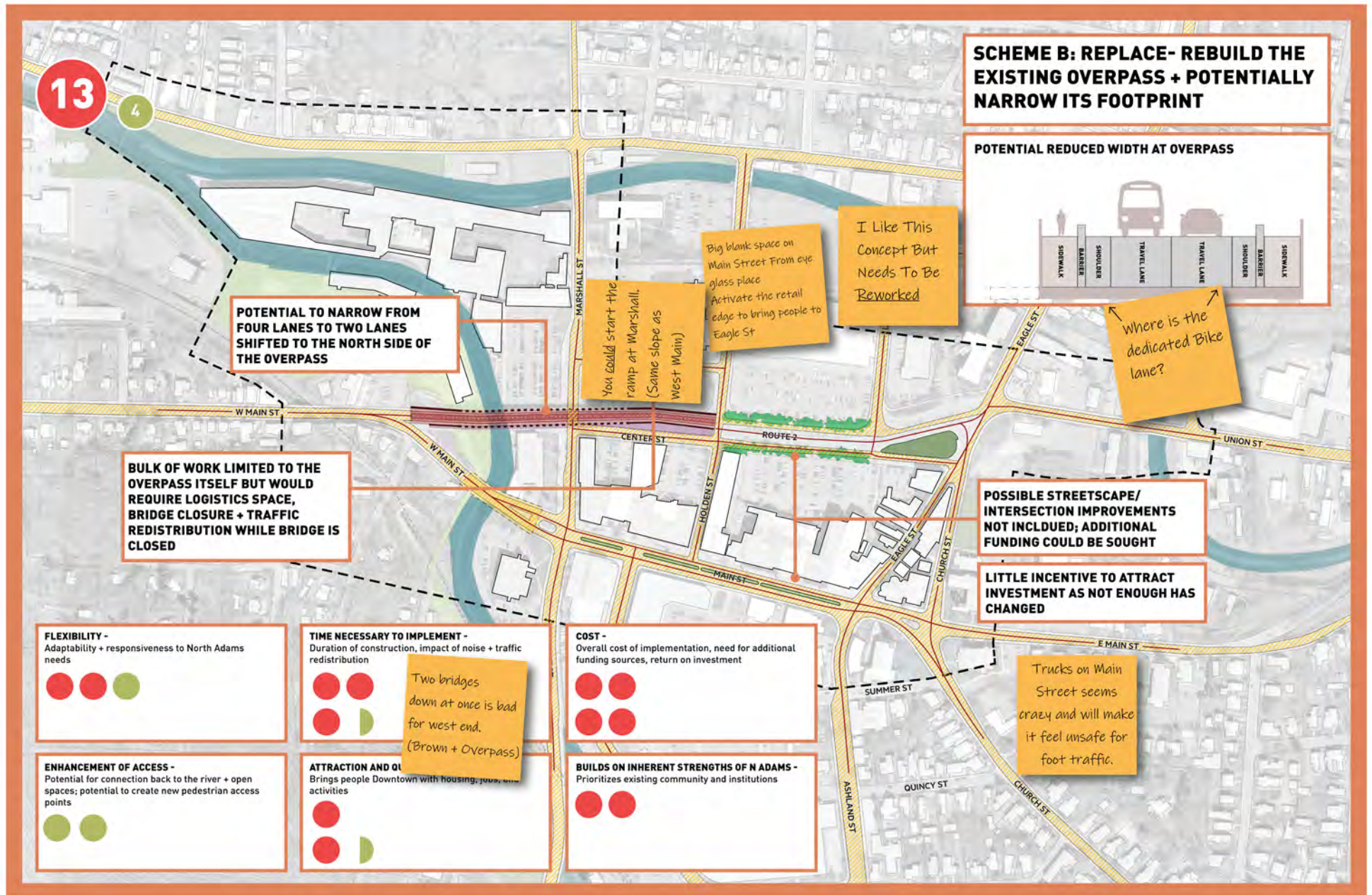
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BUILDS ON INHERENT STRENGTHS OF Prioritizes existing community and instill

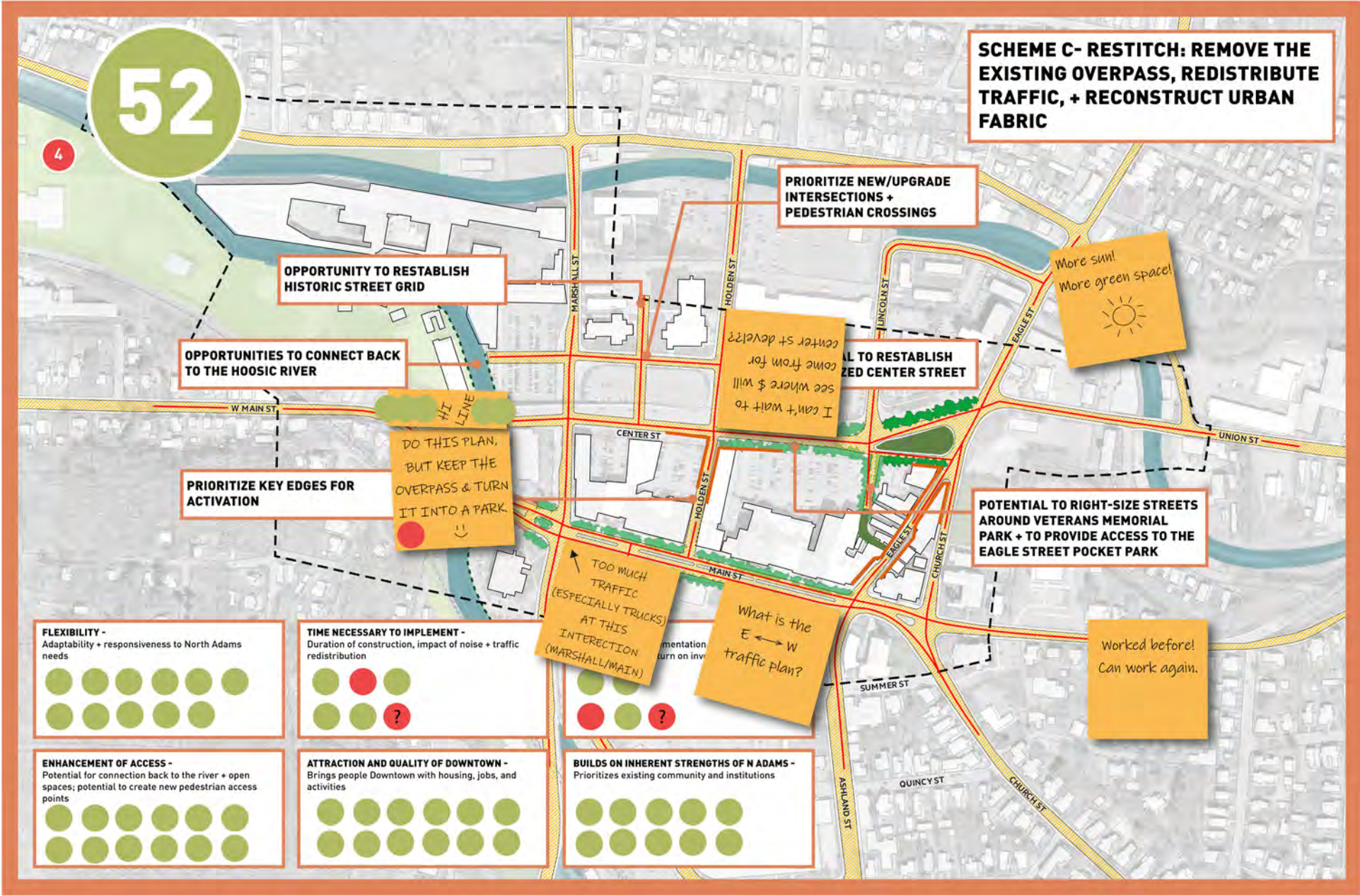
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Repair is only temporary.
Costs will continue indefinitely yes

REPAIR 4 POSTIVE COMMENTS VS 13 NEGATIVE COMMENTS



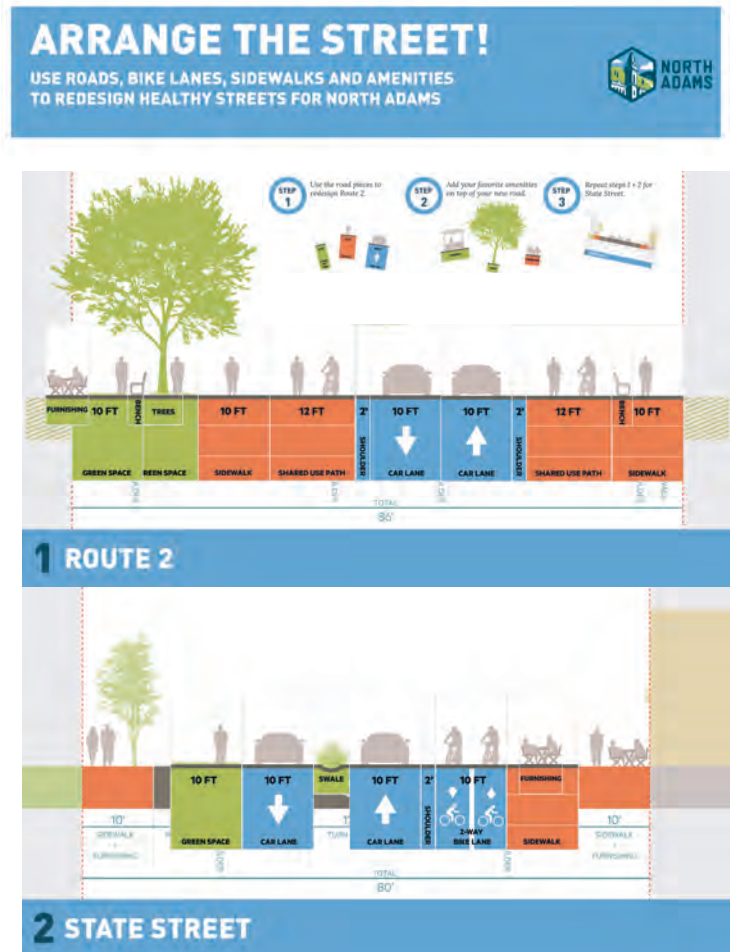
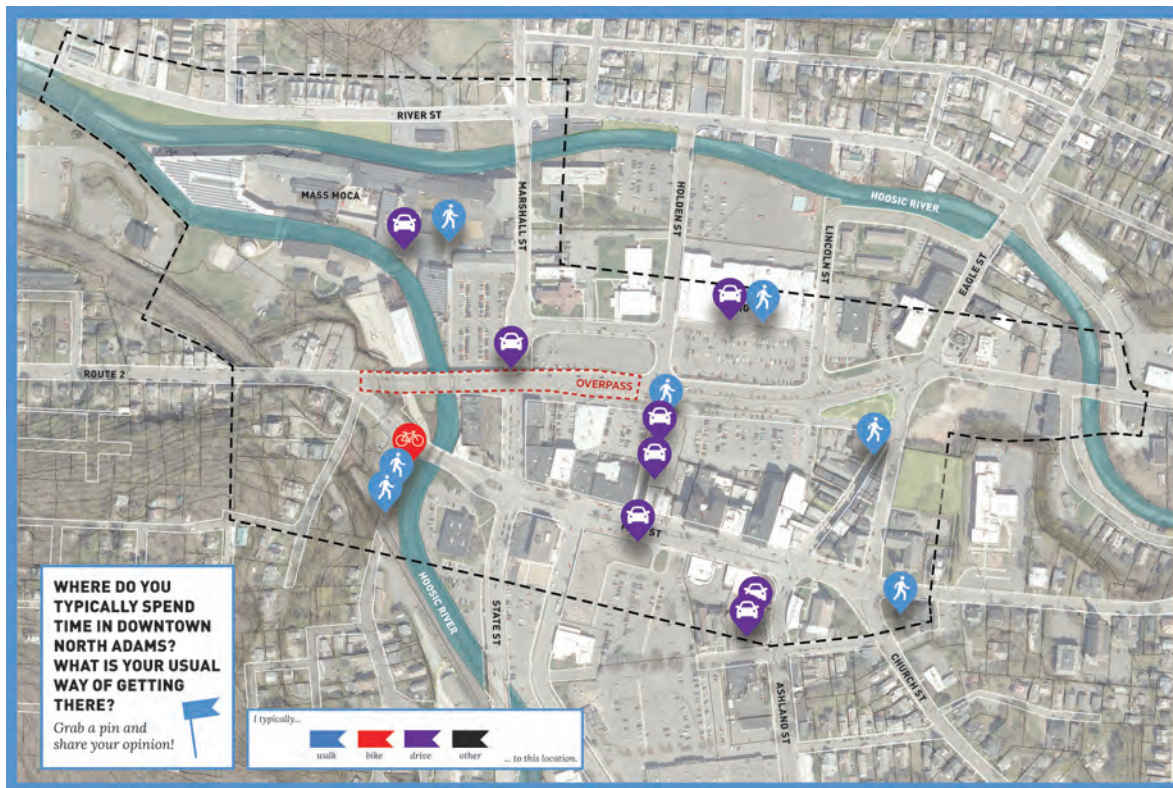
REPAIR 52 POSTIVE COMMENTS VS 4 NEGATIVE COMMENTS



PEOPLE ARE INTERESTED IN RECLAIMING SPACE

Through this in-person mapping exercise completed at Activation 02, nearly equal numbers of people indicated their primary means of transit was walking or driving. The pedestrian bridge was identified as a popular space because it provides safe access for bikes and people. Popular destinations

like MASS MoCA, the library, and local shops were identified to be often accessed without a car. Many of the community members who participated in these activities were surprised by how wide the existing streets are.




This in-person mapping exercise also completed during Activation 02 captured preferences for where the community most desired open space in downtown. The results showed that the public favored flexible, open spaces and shared




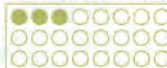

















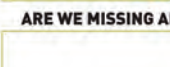

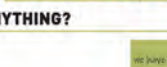
ENVISION!

WHAT KINDS OF SPACES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE DOWNTOWN?

STEP 1 Take your clipboard, pen and pencils - draw markers.

STEP 2 Place your markers on one thing you like or dislike.



GATHERING		RECREATION		SOCIAL & CIVIC	
 PAVILION 	 AMPHITHEATER/PERFORMANCE 	 SEATING + PLANTING 	 FLEXIBLE COMMON GREEN 	 PICNICKING/ BBQ 	 MULTI-USE PATHWAYS 
 YOUTH ACTIVITIES 	 PLAY FOR ALL 	 POP UP INSTALLATIONS 	 COMMUNITY GARDEN 	 DOG PARK 	 SHARED STREETS 

ARE WE MISSING ANYTHING?

25 June, 2025

Anonymous says:

"Integrate plans and services for persons without cars in our area."



25 June, 2025

Anonymous says:

"Coordinate these plans with the plans to return rail service from Boston, and maybe on to Albany."



25 June, 2025

Anonymous says:

"Consider ways of discouraging motorcycle noisemaking and truck brake imposed noise approaching the town in residential areas & downtown."



25 June, 2025

Anonymous says:

"Consider ways of slowing down the traffic coming down hill from the hairpin turn as it approaches town, reducing danger of collisions."



25 June, 2025

Anonymous says:

"Pay careful attention to how to handle the intersection by rt. 2 and dunkin' to avoid congestion and confusion."



25 June, 2025

Anonymous says:

"Get rid of the overpass and have the traffic come right down main street. Make all other traffic, pedestrian & parking decisions accordingly"



25 June, 2025

Anonymous says:

"Friday evenings on Eagle Street should be the go to become the go to place for visitors and townspeople to gather, chill, see art, & eat."



23 April, 2025

Anonymous says:

"Downstreet North Adams needs more store for shopping. There is nothing to do downstreet at all."



23 April, 2025

Anonymous says:

"Some way to draw tech sector business. Increased "fun stuff" to do around town like movie theaters, arcades, indoor shooting range, etc."



23 April, 2025

Anonymous says:

"The infrastructure to get anywhere in the downtown is dysfunctional & hazardous. We need more walkable paths & intentional planning design"



8 April, 2025

Anonymous says:

"Fix the overpass and have Mass Moca make a walking bridge from behind subway toward Main Street or something. Main Street needs more shops"



7 April, 2025

Anonymous says:

"Connecting Main St. to Mass MoCA by removing the imposing and unnecessary overpass"





V. RECOMMENDATION

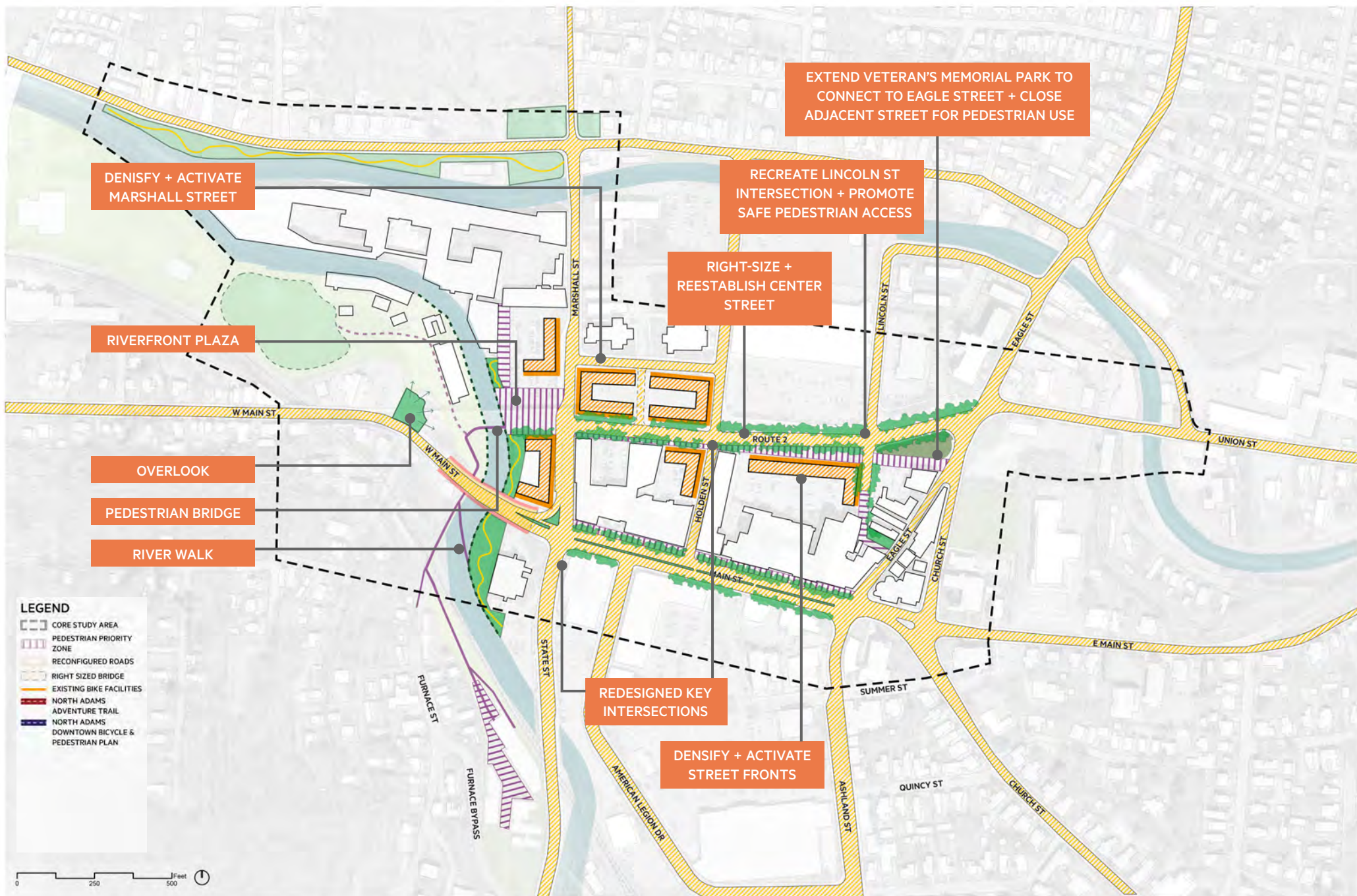
RECOMMENDATION

Following Activation 02 and hearing from the community the great interest in the Restitch scheme, it was determined that further study would be attributed to exploring the possibilities inherent in the removal of the overpass and to better understand how a scheme like this might be achieved, funded, and implemented.

This section of the report captures a version of the Restitch scheme that was more thoroughly developed, and the following pages provide visuals for a possible future condition, many of which are posed as ‘before and after’ images.

Also included in this section is additional summary of the proposed traffic conditions anticipated should the Restitch scheme be pursued in this configuration. Further detail about traffic volumes have been provided in the Appendix. The section concludes with a proposal for implementation phasing.





CENTER STREET/ROUTE 2 - EXISTING CONDITION

As seen in the image below, the immediate area surrounding the existing overpass structure does not provide a friendly or robust urban experience for pedestrians or cyclists. It has been described by the community as “dark”, “noisy”, and even “apocalyptic” due to the imposing and oversized structure, lack of light penetration, and proximity to traffic. The

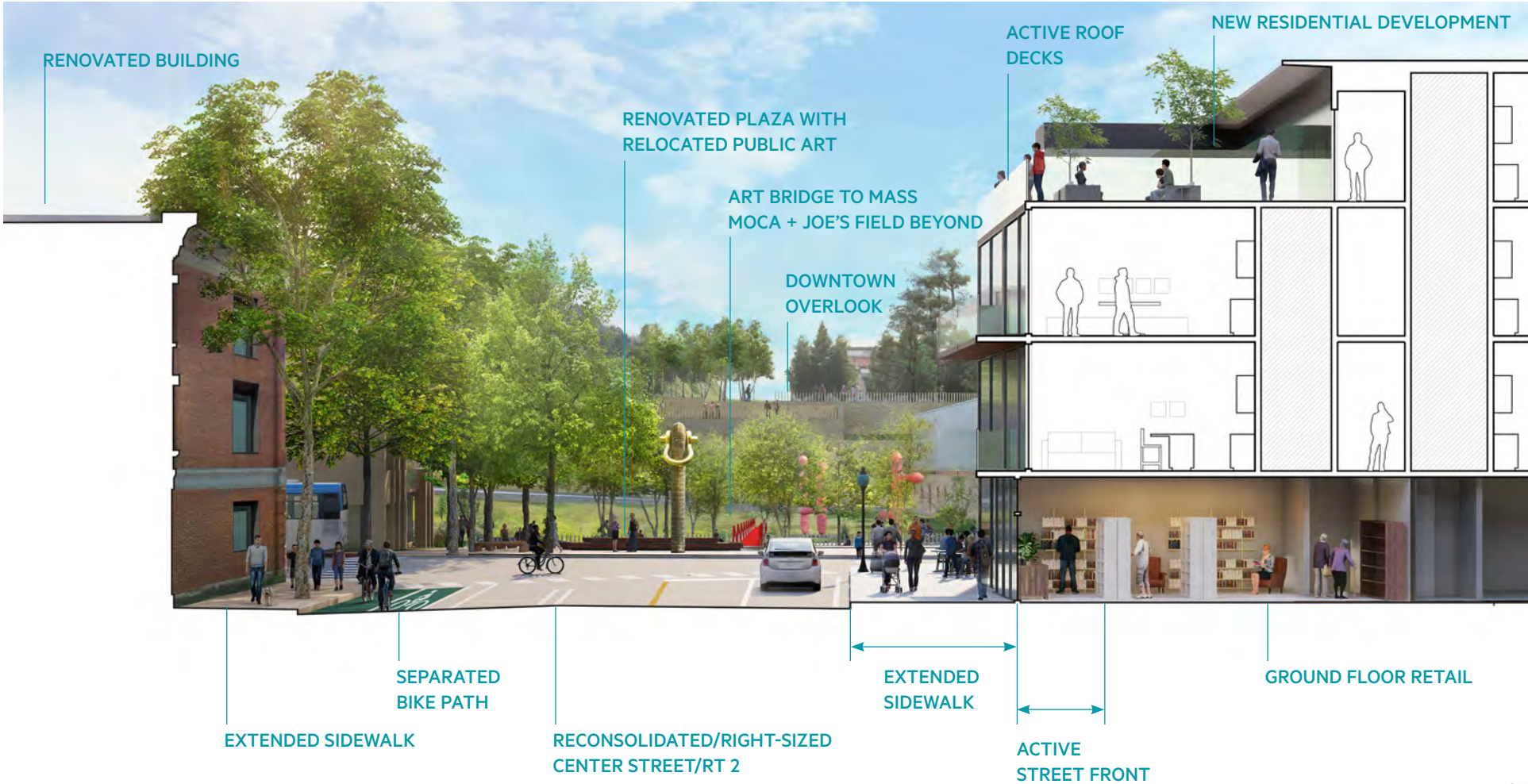
overpass presently physically severs the connection between MASS MoCA and Main Street, but it is also communally perceived as an impediment to direct walkable access between the two areas. A lack of street wall and the presence of adjacent parking lots further enhance the feeling of a space meant to serve cars and not people.



CENTER STREET/ROUTE 2 - RE-STITCH PROPOSED CONDITION

Below is a vision for a future proposed condition where the Route 2 overpass structure has been removed. As noted, a restructuring of Route 2 and Center Street could result in a right-sized street more in keeping with the scale of the existing urban fabric of North Adams. In the background of the image, a new public plaza for gathering is proposed adjacent to the Hoosic River. In the foreground of the image,

new development with active street front retail at the ground floor and new residential spaces above could provide not only places for folks to live downtown, but the energy required to reactivate the streets and public spaces. In this proposal, the connection between MASS MoCA and downtown features shade via planting, a lively street with visual interest, and places to stop and take in the beauty of the surrounding landscape.



VETERAN'S MEMORIAL PARK - EXISTING CONDITION

Veteran's Memorial Park is presently a green space isolated by a series of traffic intersections. The community has observed that this area is, like many other intersections along Route 2, not pedestrian-friendly; sidewalks are narrow and cars are dominant. It is, however, a very valuable open space as not only does it provide a space of honor and remembrance, but

it has several canopy trees and is well-located to the major spaces in downtown, including Main Street, MASSMoCA, Eagle Street, and the shopping mall. It also creates the eastern edge of a linear promenade from Eagle Street to the Hoosic River.



VETERAN'S MEMORIAL PARK - RE-STITCH PROPOSED CONDITION

In the Restitch conceptual scheme, Veteran's Memorial Park remains in its existing condition but is complemented and enhanced by pedestrianizing Center Street. Because of the realignment of Center Street and Route 2, the area between Eagle and Holden Streets could accommodate a lively pedestrian atmosphere with opportunities for

additional planting, street furnishings, and gathering spaces. This new pedestrian plaza could support the already robust programming that happens along Main and Eagle Streets such as the Eagle Street Beach Party and Motorama.



MARSHALL STREET - EXISTING CONDITION

When viewing the Route 2 overpass from the north towards City Hall and Main Street, it becomes easy to see why the community has described this infrastructure as a barrier. Its presence is wall-like and domineering against a skyline of modestly scaled existing buildings, many with striking visual interest.

Seas of parking on either side of Marshall Street at the St. Anthony's lot and MASS MoCA's campus further highlight the mismatched scale of the infrastructure and do little to buffer the traffic noise or pollution.





MARSHALL STREET - PROPOSED RESTITCH CONDITION

In a scenario where the overpass structure is removed and Route 2 and Center Street are realigned, the space between MASS MoCA and Main Street presents opportunities for an enhanced urban realm. In the image below is a visualization of what a section through Marshall Street might look and feel like with a series of enhancements, including a new street wall along the eastern side of Marshall Street activated by ground

floor activity and housing above; an extended sidewalk and enhanced multimodal infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians; enhanced and additional planting for shade and the reduction of urban heat; and a new relationship with the Hoosic River through a public plaza that creates visual access and gathering space.





RESTITCH: TRAFFIC FLOWS

The project studied how traffic flows might be impacted throughout the larger downtown area should the Restitch scheme be implemented. As noted in the existing conditions review and in the community feedback, there is a type of ‘cloverleaf’ interchange that is created by the movement of traffic moving north from Route 8 and turning onto Route 2 to move west towards Albany with the removal of the overpass, this maneuver would be eliminated, and traffic moving from the south going westbound would only need to perform a simple left turn onto West Main Street. This simple reconfiguration could alleviate several key pedestrian crossings from exposure to high-speed traffic, including large trucks that presently need to accelerate up the slope of the overpass bridge. In the Restitch scheme, traffic patterns are simplified; westbound traffic flows along the realigned Route 2, and eastbound traffic flows along Main Street. A full review of the existing and projected traffic conditions can be found in the Appendix.

In addition, there was community interest in understanding what benefits might be available by implementing a traffic circle. On the following pages are two scenarios for the redesign of the West Main Street/State Street intersection,

one documenting a traffic circle and the other documenting a restructured signalized intersection. At the West Main Street/State Street intersection, a traffic circle could effectively manage and slow traffic, but due to the projected volume of traffic anticipated at the roundabout, a two-lane installation would be required. As seen in the draft drawing on the next spread page left, this scale of roundabout is a larger footprint and will require careful consideration of the siting, should it be pursued. Further, the introduction of a roundabout will require the design and installation of a new bridge at West Main Street to support the reconfigured intersection and to work with the roundabout footprint.

An improved signalized intersection could also serve future traffic volumes including right-turning trucks. This proposed intersection redesign would fit more closely within the existing right of way and would likely not necessitate the replacement of the West Main Street bridge. In this scenario, the City could continue to utilize the existing West Main Street bridge with the potential to append a pedestrian and cyclist shared use path to the northern side for enhanced multimodal mobility.

EAST+SOUTH-BOUND TRUCKS

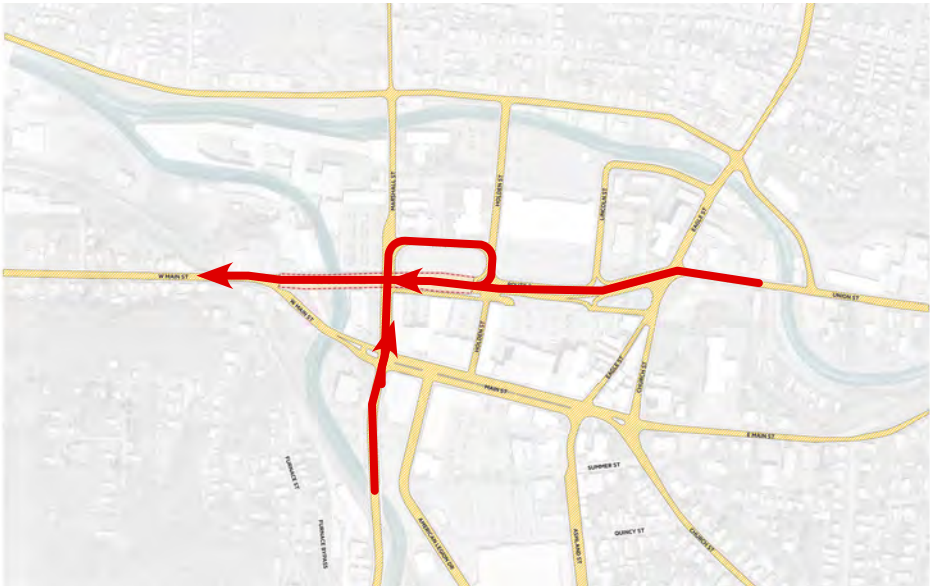


EXISTING STREET GRID

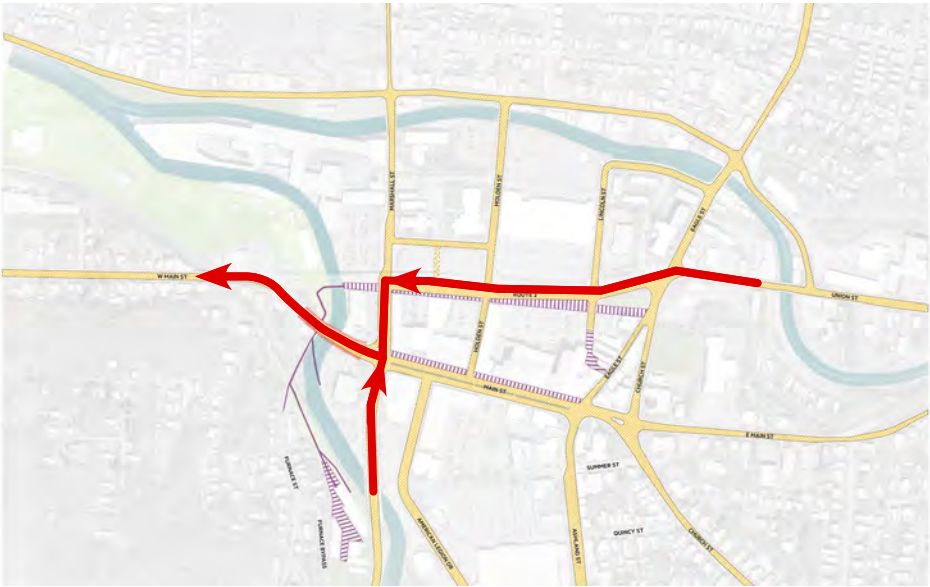


RECOMMENDED STREET GRID

WEST-BOUND TRUCKS



EXISTING STREET GRID

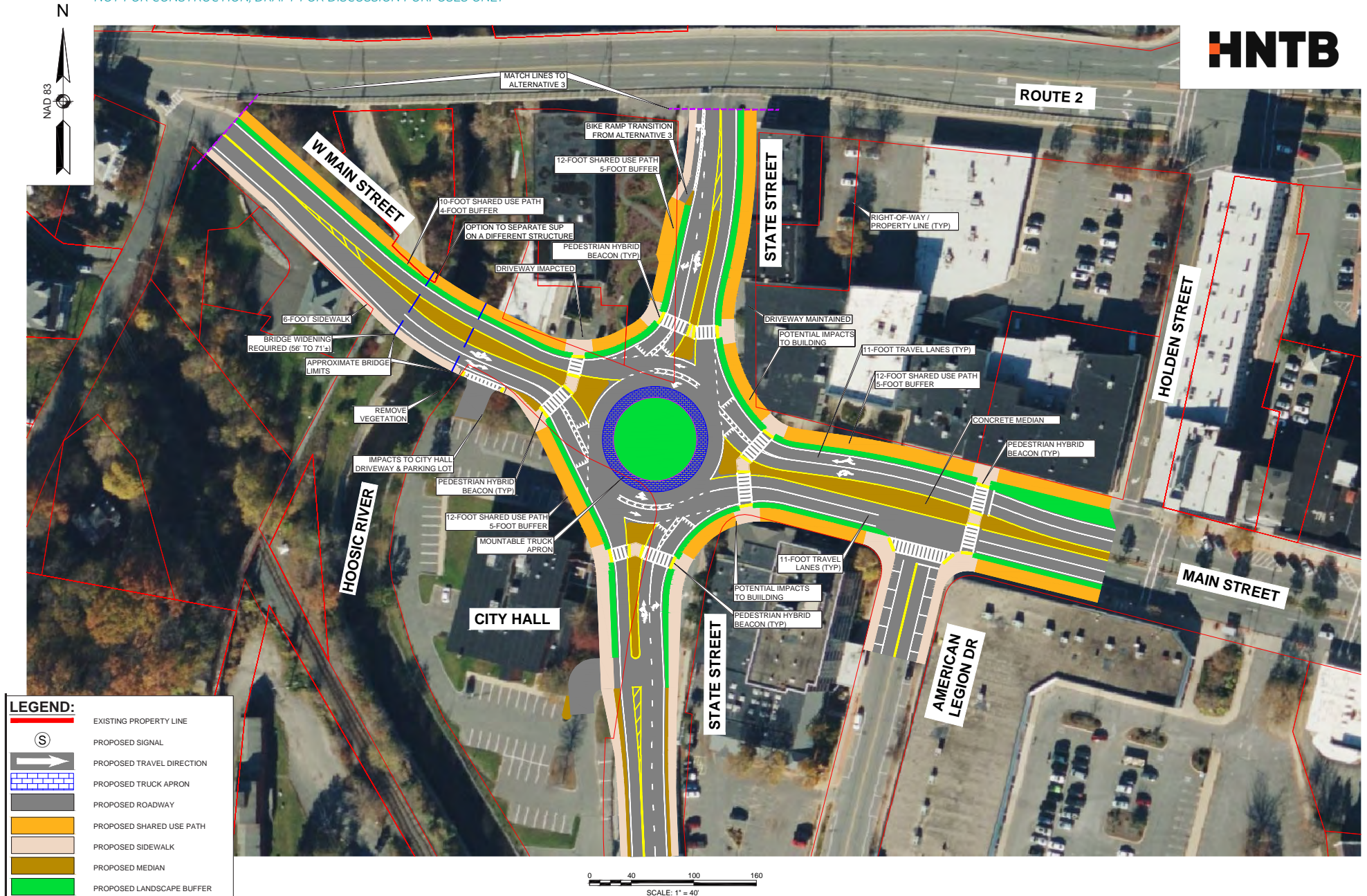


RECOMMENDED STREET GRID

INTERSECTION ROUNDABOUT AT W MAIN STREET + STATE STREET

NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION; DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

HNTB



SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION AT W MAIN STREET + STATE STREET

NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION; DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY



LEGEND:	
	EXISTING PROPERTY LINE
	PROPOSED SIGNAL
	PROPOSED TRAVEL DIRECTION
	PROPOSED TRUCK APRON
	PROPOSED ROADWAY
	PROPOSED SHARED USE PATH
	PROPOSED SEPARATED BIKE LANE
	PROPOSED SIDEWALK
	PROPOSED MEDIAN
	PROPOSED LANDSCAPE BUFFER

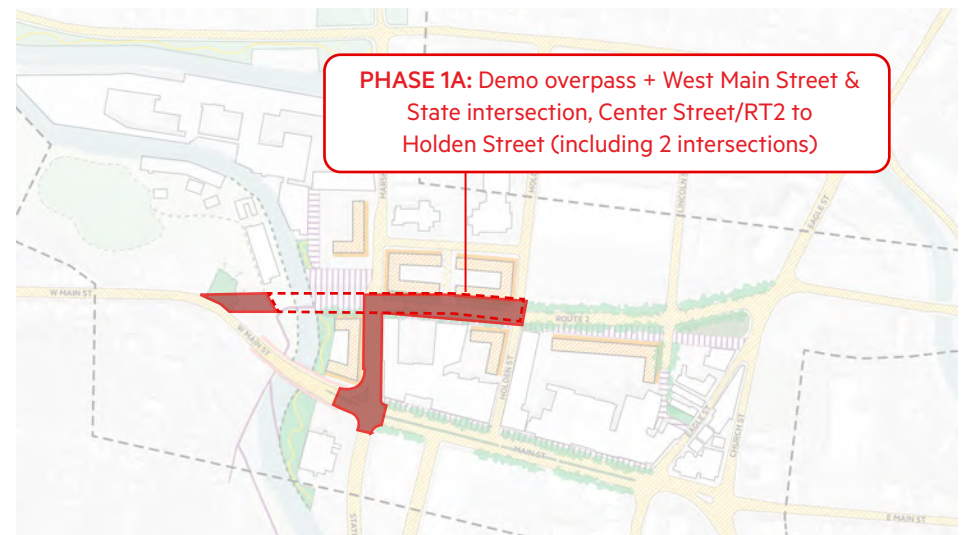
POTENTIAL PHASING

Because the recommended Restitch scheme envisions a fairly substantial change in the fabric of North Adams, outlining a strategy for potential phasing attempts to create a path for smaller portions of the scheme to be implemented at different times. A phased approach could allow for the initial work to occur while the City evaluates next steps and funding sources. It is acknowledged that any of the schemes will require careful planning, design, and coordination even before construction begins, so partitioning the overall larger scale project into phases could support a series of projects running simultaneously.

Phase 1A This phase proposes the first major steps of the Restitch scheme, the removal of the existing overpass structure and the reconstruction of two major intersections. Demolition of the overpass will also require reworking of the existing roadways at the top of the grade as indicated by the red highlight at the western end of the overpass. It is proposed that this phase would include reconstruction of the intersection outside of City Hall at West Main Street and State Street and that reconstructive work would also be required north to where the overpass would have spanned. This phase assumes the introduction of a signalized intersection at the

West Main and State intersection. The work to combine Center Street with Route 2 will require restructuring the roadways from State Street east to Holden Street and a revision to the Holden Street intersection.

Phase 1B Following the realignment of Route 2 and Center Streets, the next phase of work introduces two main components, the extension of roadway realignment east to Veteran's Memorial Park and the introduction of a new shared use bike and pedestrian bridge at the existing West Main Street bridge.

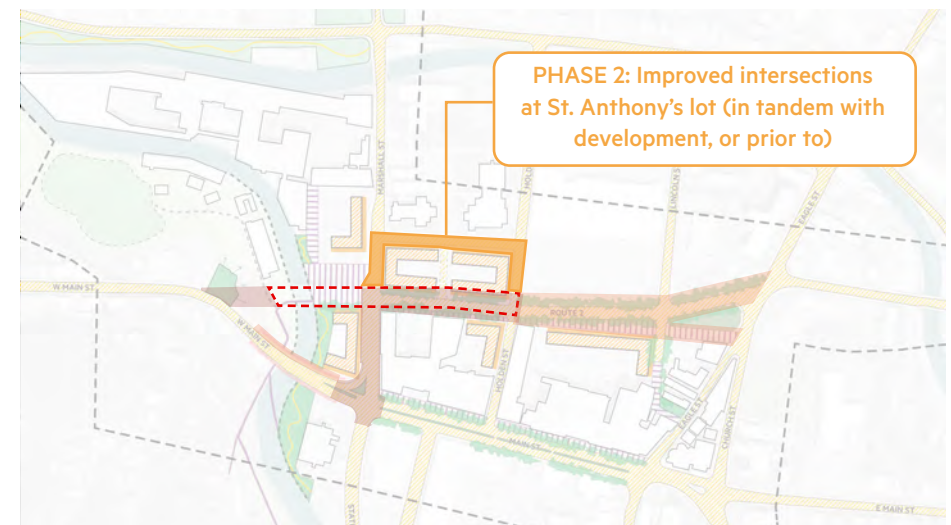
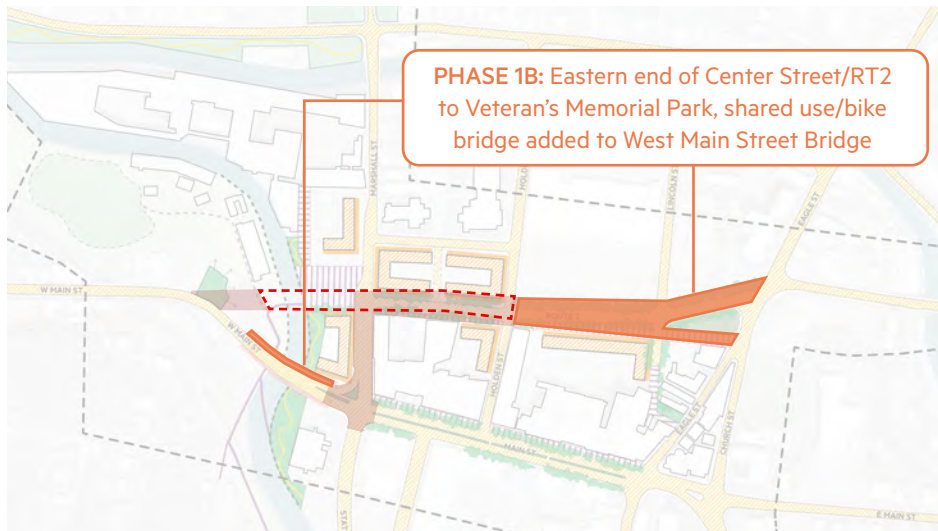


The extended work to the east along Route 2 proposes not only new roadways but the creation of a pedestrian plaza adjacent to the park in order to capitalize on the existing open space at the center of downtown.

The new shared use bridge would offer further connection of multimodal transit through downtown and be integrated into the new bike and pedestrian infrastructure proposed along State Street. Due to the width of the existing W Main Street bridge, it is proposed that a new separated bridge exclusively

for bikers and pedestrians is appended to the existing structure rather than a full replacement of the bridge.

Phase 2: With the base roadway and intersection work complete, Phase 2 suggests the improvement of intersections around the St. Anthony's lot. This work could be performed in tandem with a future development on the St. Anthony's parking lot site or could be completed independently.

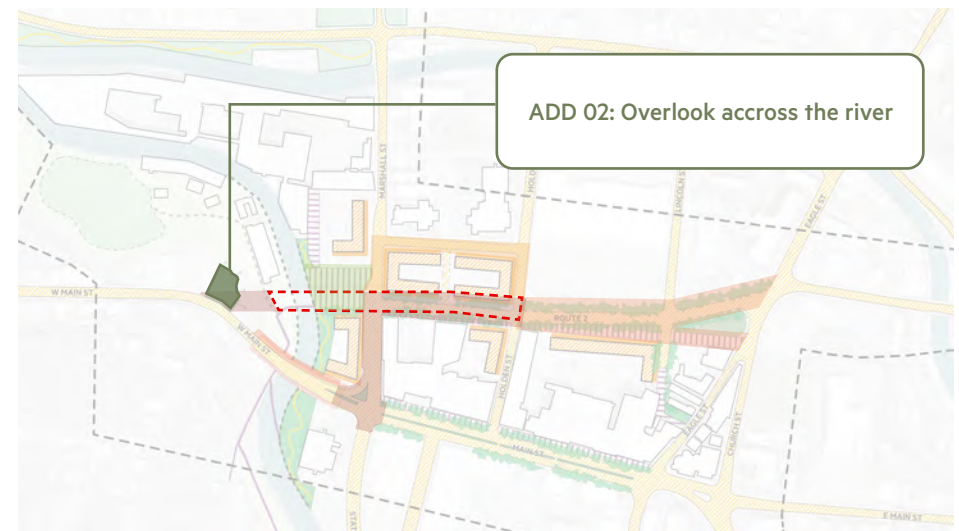
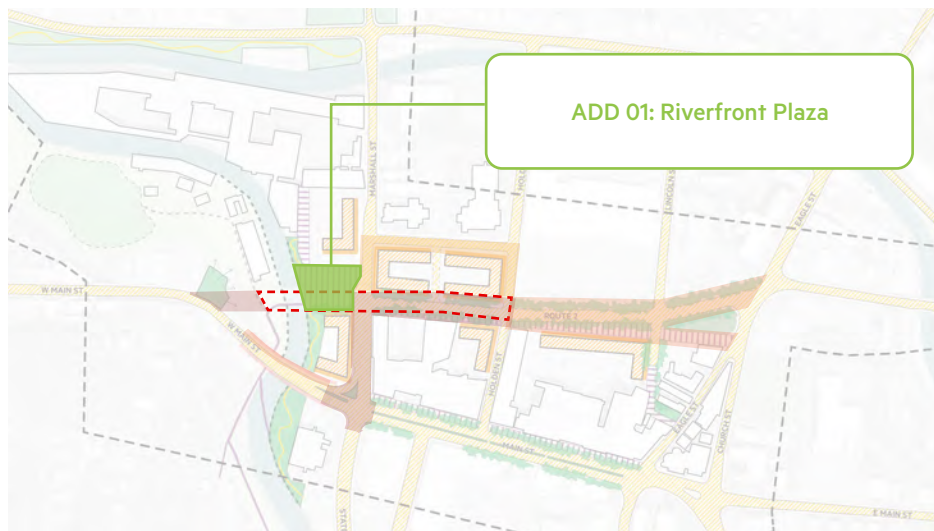


Following the implementation of Phases 1 and 2, there are a suite of opportunities for additional work to enhance the public realm. As seen in the rendered images of the proposed conditions, these improvements could include the introduction of a new riverfront plaza, a new overlook at the top of the hill across the river, or additional planting along Main Street.

The inclusion of a riverfront plaza (**Addition 01**) offers the opportunity to coordinate with the work the Hoosic River Revival group is already envisioning along with the efforts of

the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) as they study the effects of chute removal and river naturalization. As documented in the existing conditions report in the Appendix, next steps should this be a desirable outcome will need to include a full technical review of the jurisdictional requirements and environmental permitting processes associated with working adjacent to a river.

Addition 02, the overlook, was identified as an aspirational public gathering space after hearing that much of the community loves the overpass for the view it offers to the

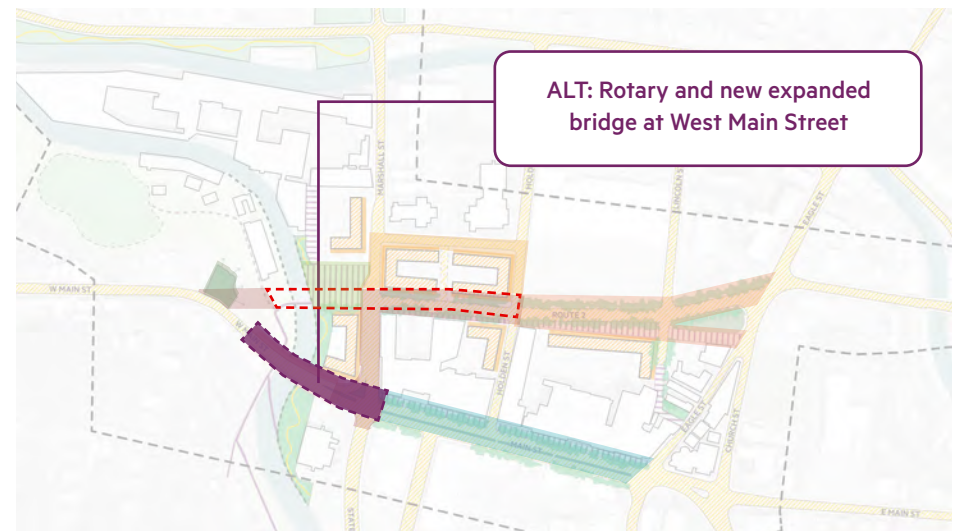
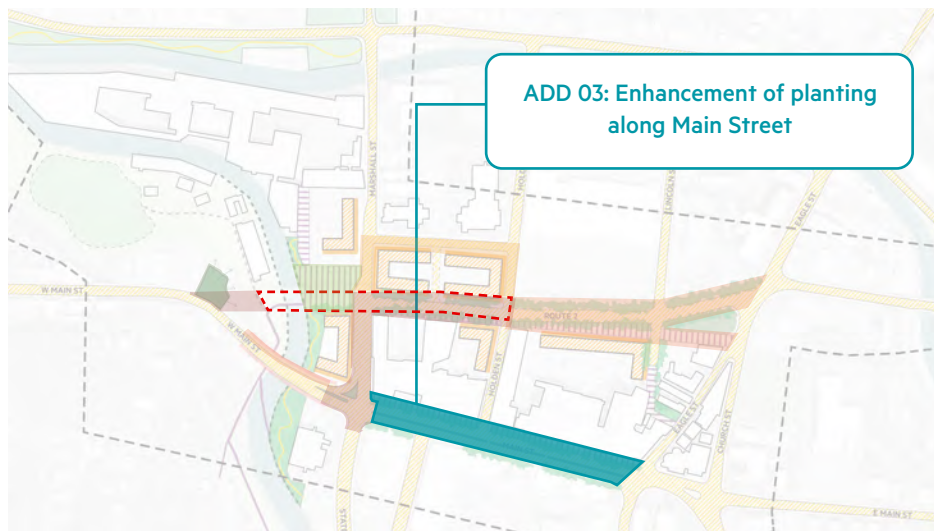


mountains and over the City, if nothing else. Should the overpass be removed, the remaining space available at the top of the slope to the west of the river might offer a place to continue to take in the beautiful scenery while incorporating furnishings, plantings, etc.

Addition 03 seeks to complement the other work that could be implemented along Center Street/ Route 2 by providing an enhancement to the existing conditions of Main Street.

Finally, should the desire to install a roundabout as outlined previously be desired (**Alternative**), further roadway and

structural work would be required, namely the expansion of the existing W Main Street bridge. If a signalized intersection is implemented, there is no immediate need to reconfigure the existing W Main Street bridge as it is wide enough to accommodate the anticipated traffic flows. However, the orientation of a roundabout has been studied and indicates that at a conceptual level a new approach and access to the bridge would need to be designed. Should a new bridge be installed, this structure could accommodate a shared use path rather than requiring an appended bridge as outlined in Phase 1B of this sequence.

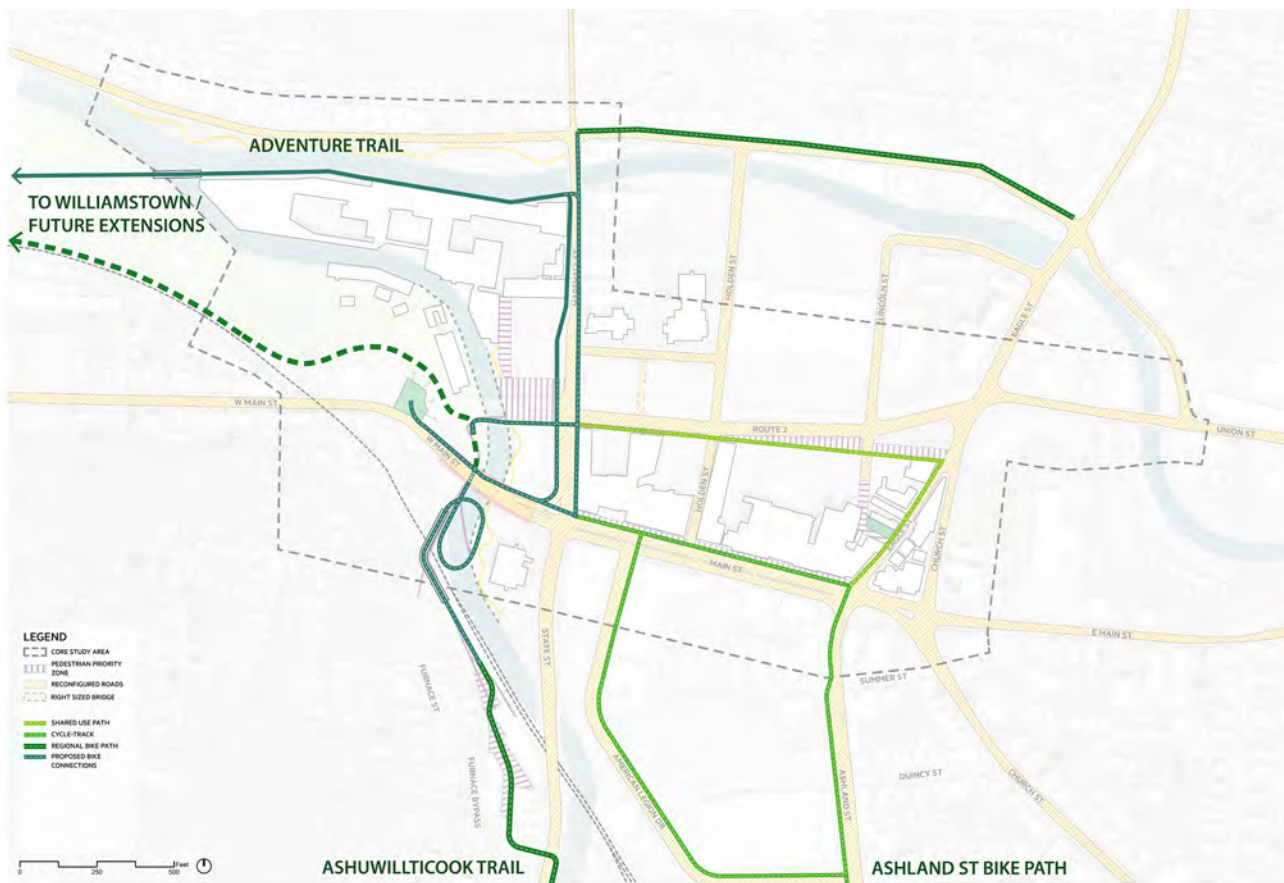


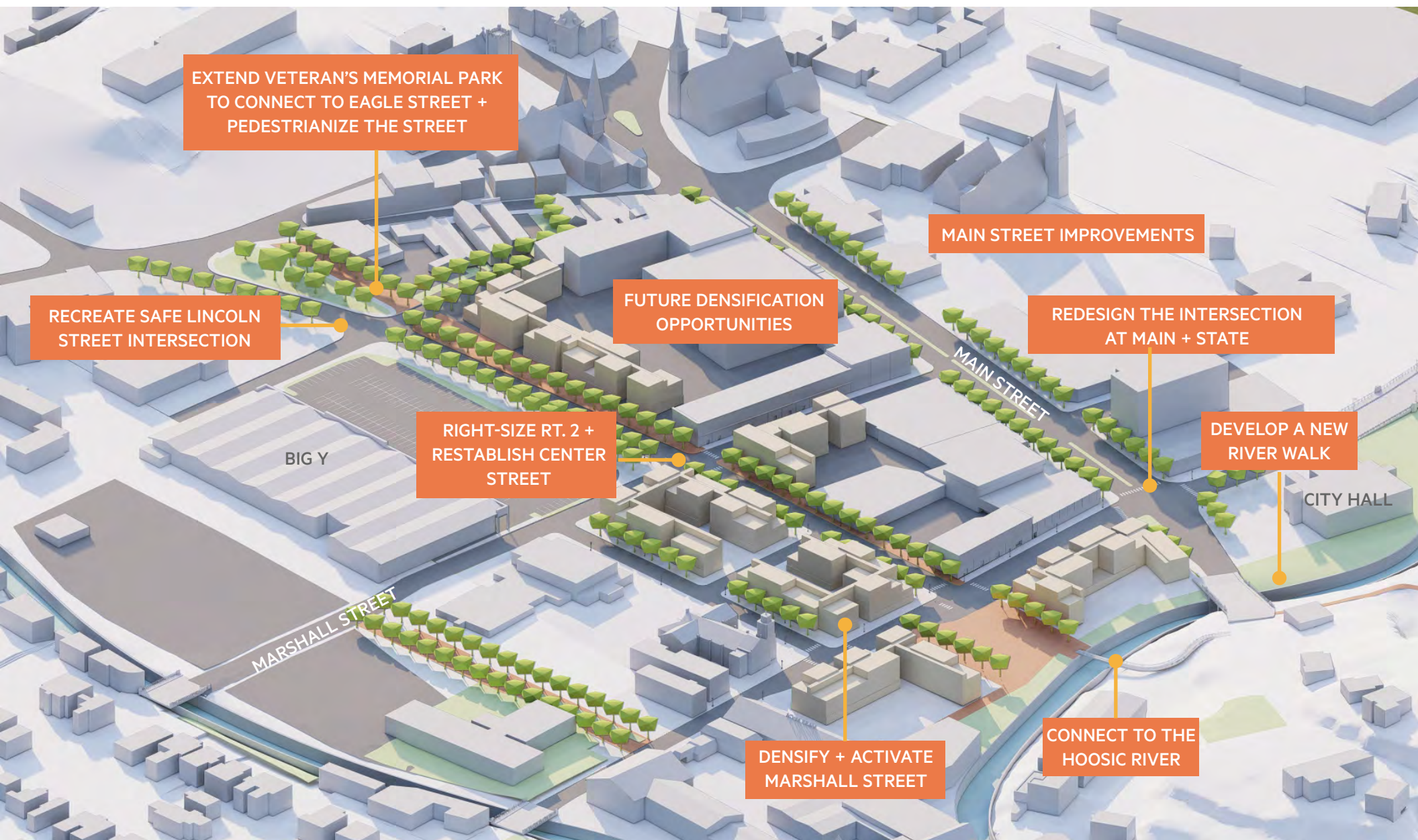
A STRONG, VIABLE PLAN FOR TRANSFORMING THE CITY

In conclusion, the Restitch scheme presents a generational opportunity for North Adams to reconsider its current urban fabric and to understand the potential conditions created by removing the Route 2 overpass structure. Without an imposing piece of large-scale infrastructure physically dividing Main Street from MASS MoCA as well as

the Hoosic River, there is opportunity to spur new development, including housing and open space, to support a desirable population of people living in the downtown core. Realigning Route 2 and Center Streets offers the ability to strengthen existing and proposed multimodal infrastructure improvements and to further enhance pedestrian safety and experience at the street. A transportation overview indicates that traffic volumes can be effectively managed and intersections improved without the overpass.

Few cities offer the scale, amenities, access to cultural and natural resources, and creative economy like North Adams, and the ability to restore the city's grid to a denser more robust structure can be considered a strong, viable plan for transforming the city.







**NORTH
ADAMS**

North Adams Rt 2 Overpass Study

**APPENDIX
Fall 2025**

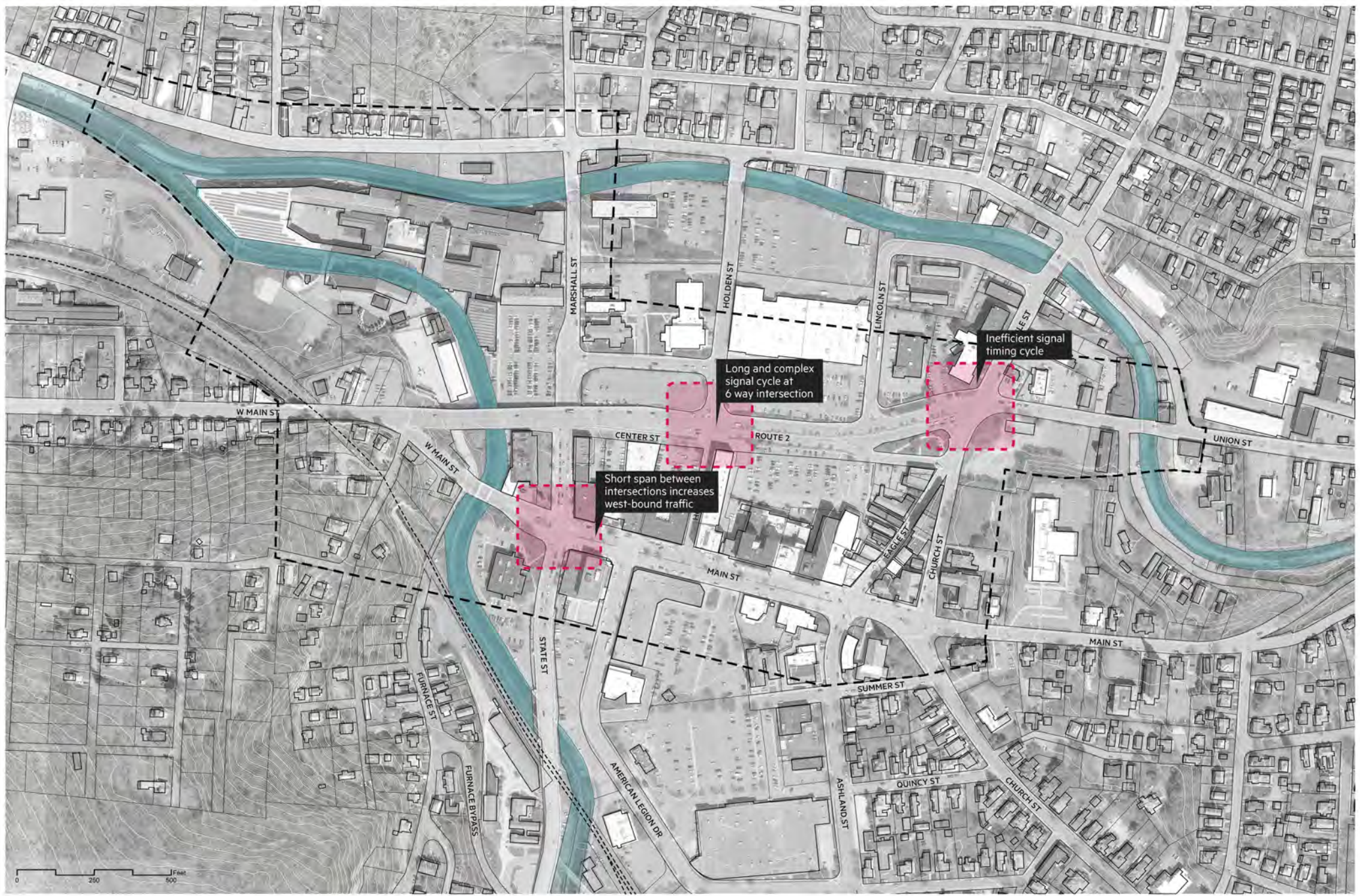
APPENDIX: TRANSPORTATION

APPENDIX: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

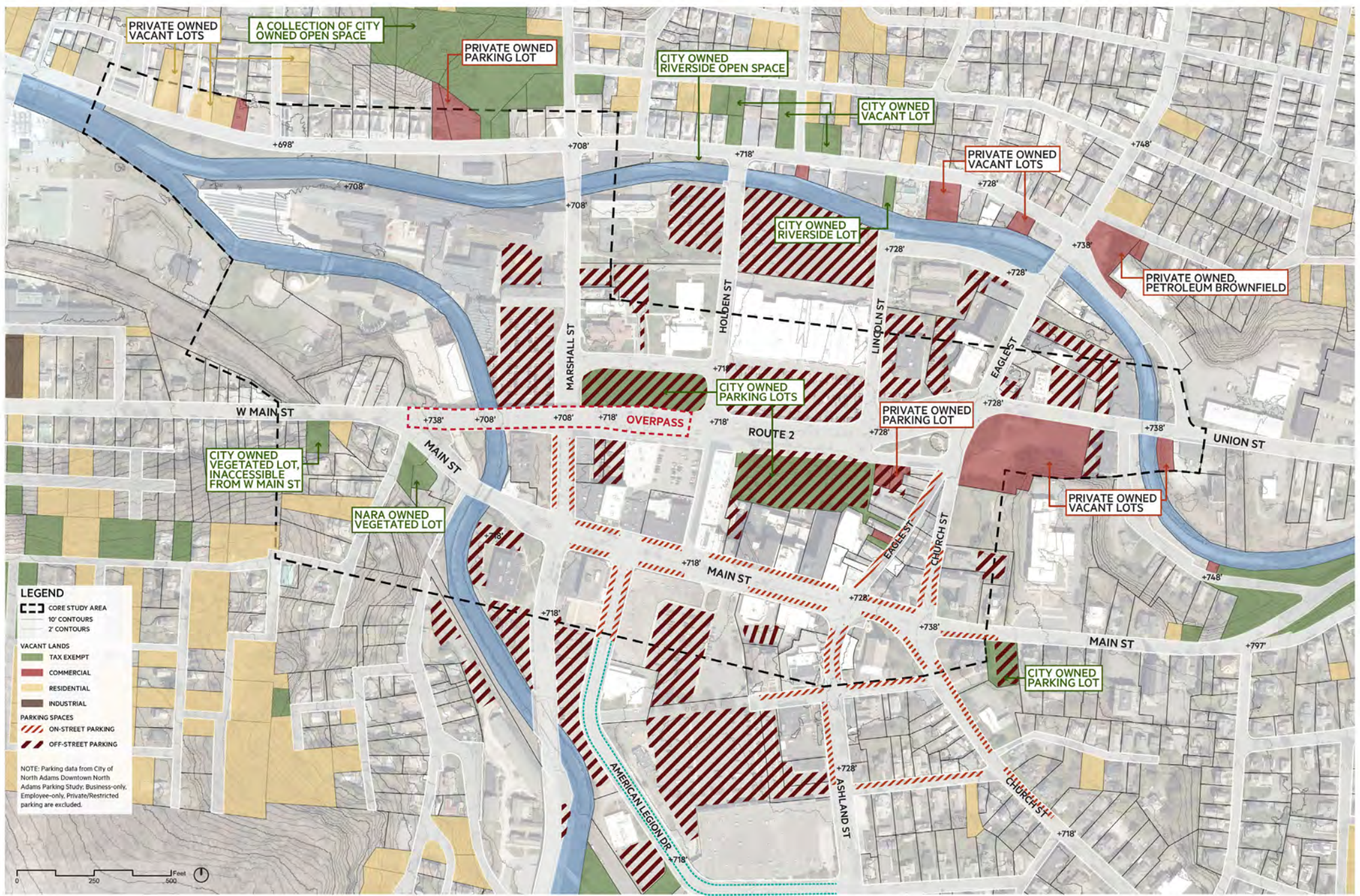
APPENDIX: ENGAGEMENT

APPENDIX: SUSTAINABILITY

SITE ANALYSIS: INTERSECTIONS



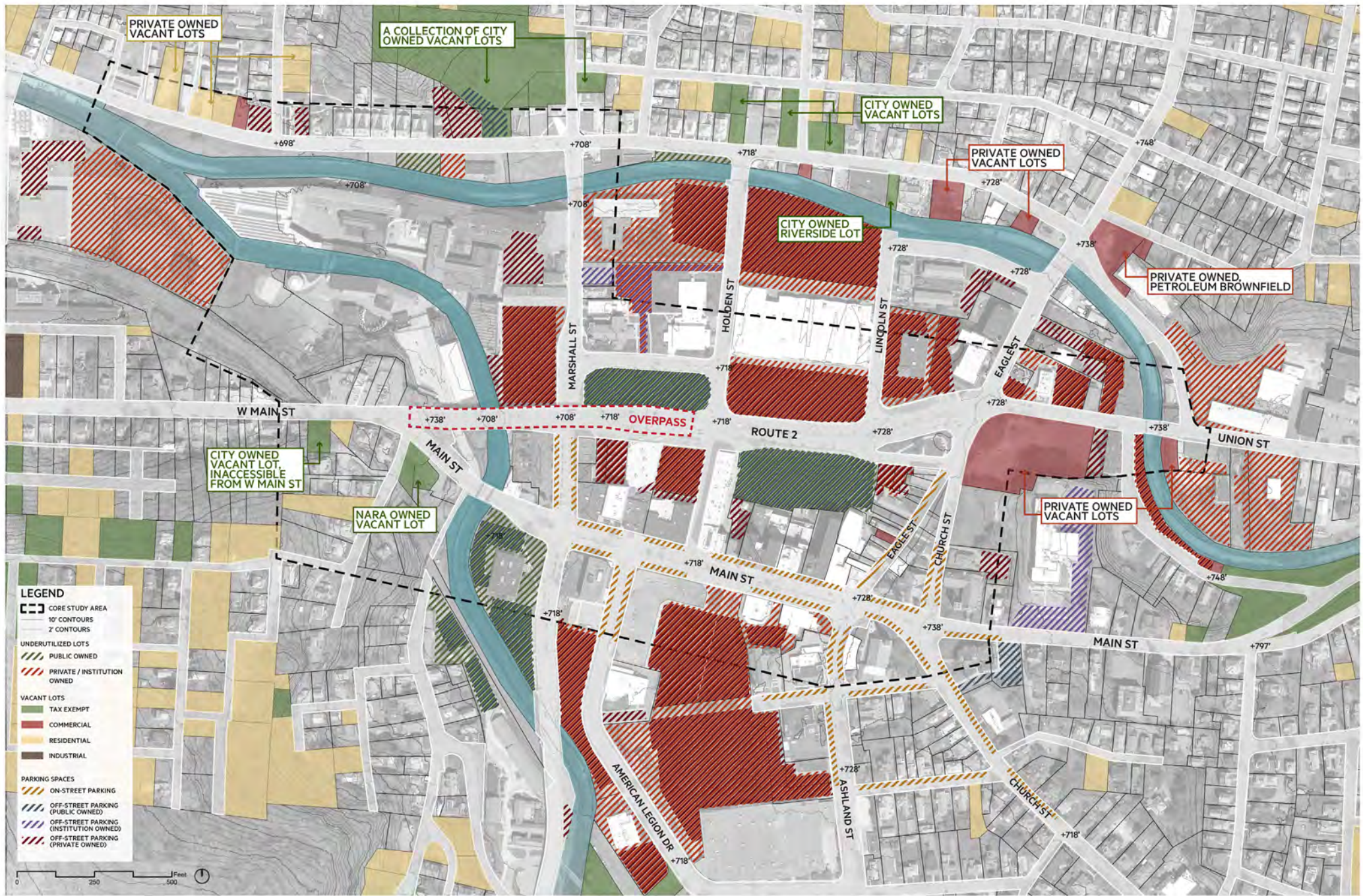
SITE ANALYSIS: PARKING INVENTORY



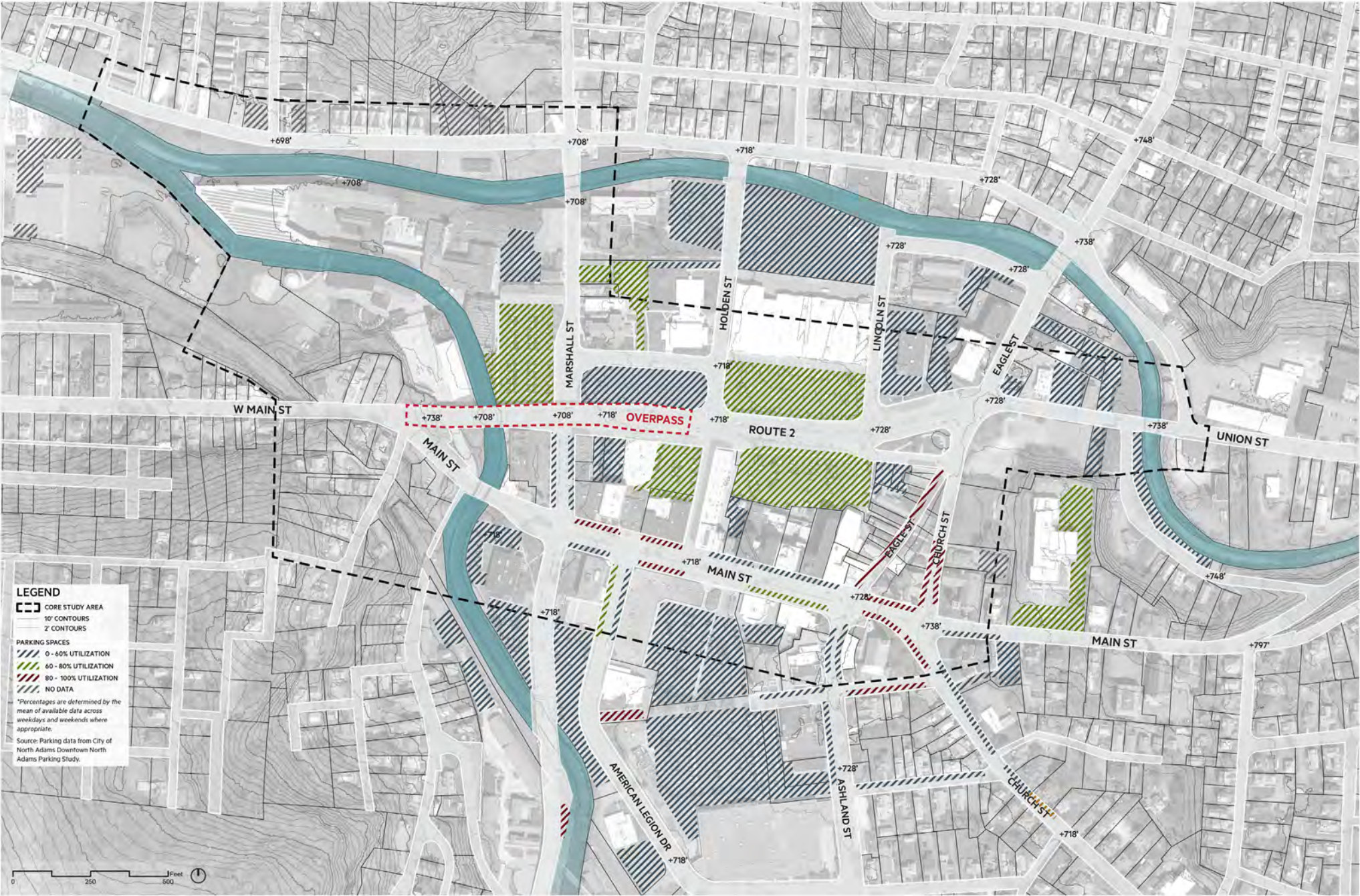
SITE ANALYSIS: PRIMARY CIRCULATION ROUTES



SITE ANALYSIS: UNDERUTILIZED PLOTS



SITE ANALYSIS: PARKING UTILIZATION



SITE ANALYSIS: RICH SOCIAL HISTORIES

