

West Upton Visioning Project



- Project Overview
- Presentation:
 - What shaped West Upton? (*history*)
 - What defines West Upton today? (*current land use and zoning*)
 - What is the vision for West Upton's future? (*planning*)
- Breakout Groups: Issues and Opportunities
- Final thoughts

Project Overview



Parcels

Study Area

0 250 500 Feet



What is a Visioning Project?

Develop a Shared Understanding

What is our history? What is here now? What future trends can we expect?

Articulate Values & Vision

Why do we care about West Upton? What do we want to see happen?

Explore Alternatives

What could help us achieve this vision?

Make Recommendations

Assess ideas and make final recommendations.

Potential topics

- Zoning and regulations
- Pedestrian and bicyclist connections
- Parking
- Traffic circulation
- Building types and uses
- Open spaces
- Community life and place-making

Role of the Working Group

Represent various constituencies in Upton

Bring personal experience, expertise, and diverse perspectives to group discussions

Evaluate information

Help develop and test ideas

Engage in deliberation

Support public outreach

Advise Dodson & Flinker



Working Group Process

May	Kick-off Meeting	Oct.	Working Group #3: Vision & Values, Alternatives
June	Working Group #1: Shared Fact-Finding, SWOT <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intro to Working Group• Review information about the study area and project context• Discuss strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities	Jan.	Working Group #4: Deliberation & Decision-Making <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review revised master plan• Discuss implementation strategies
July	Working Group #2: Shared Fact-Finding, Issues & Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to review information about study area• Discuss key problems and opportunities• Plan for public workshop	Feb.	Working Group #5: Final Review <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review final report and discuss implementation

Other Community Input

September: Public Visioning Workshop
Jan-Feb: Focus Groups
April: Final Public Forum

WG Ground Rules



- Ask questions instead of making assumptions
- Share your views and explain why you hold them



- Critique ideas, not people
- Work toward shared understanding



- Make sure everyone has a chance to speak
- Listen closely to others

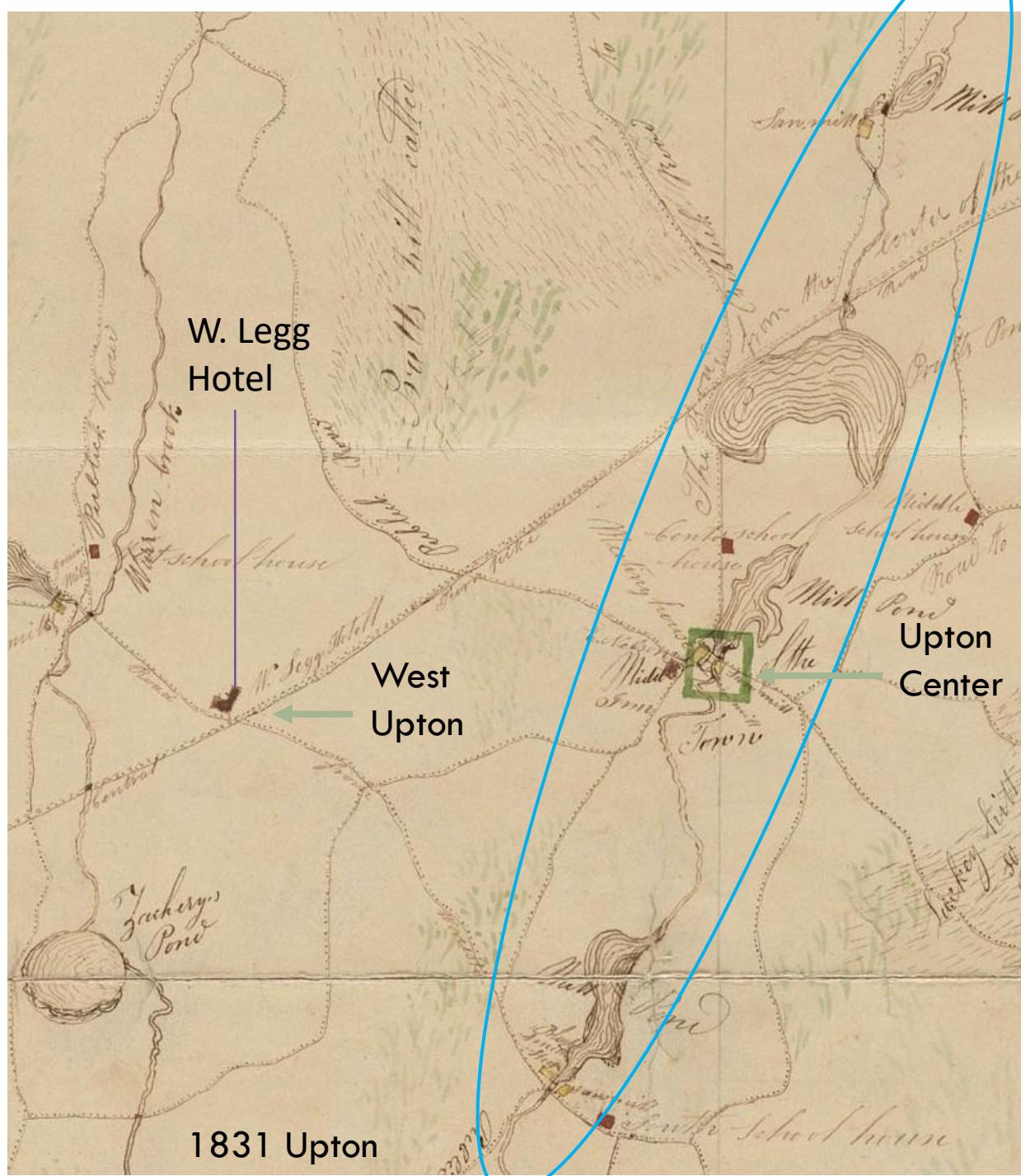


- Commit to attending as many meetings as possible
- Give meetings your full attention

What shaped West Upton?

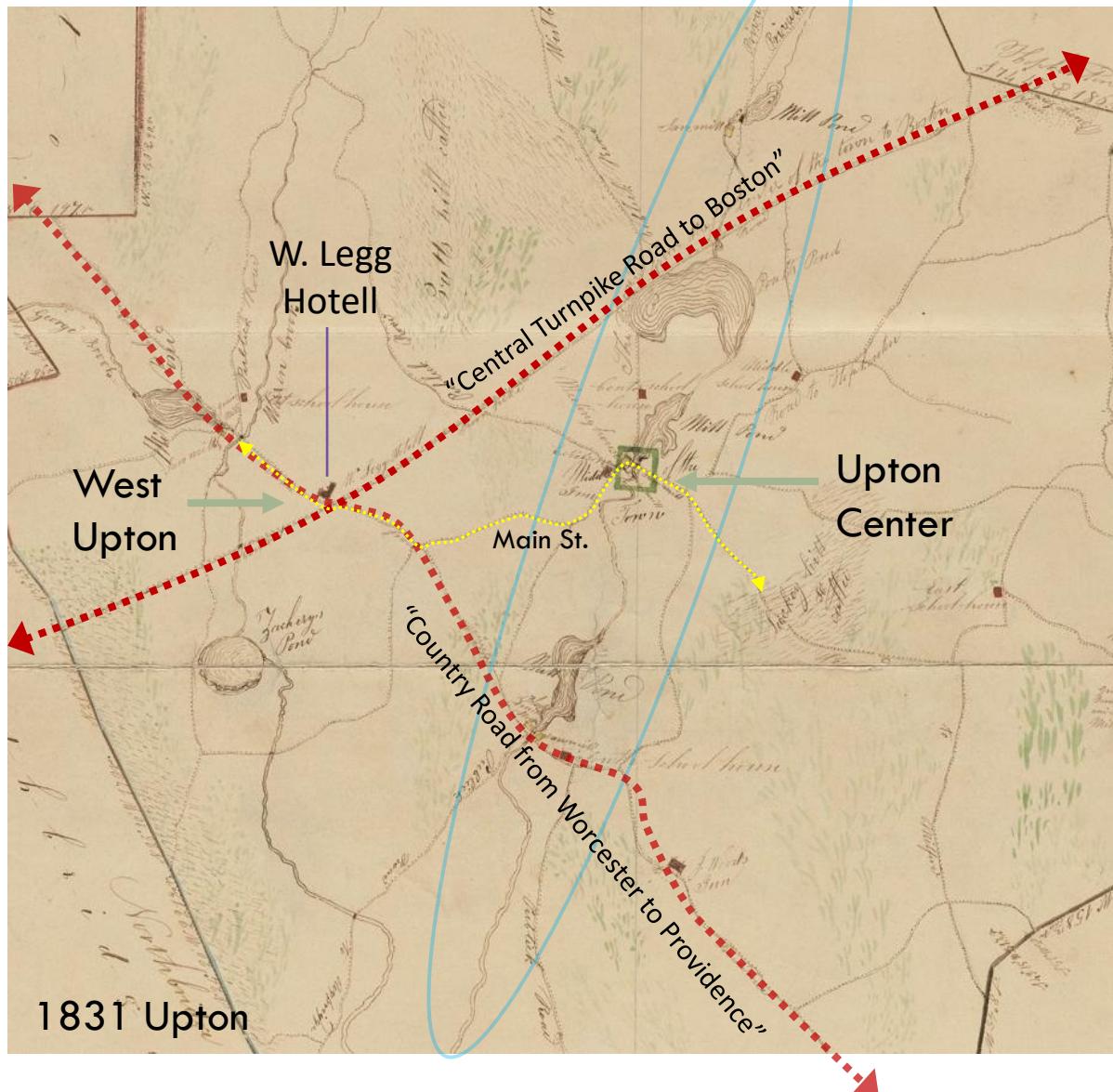
Early Growth & Development:

- Established as a village in 1735; home to farmers, millers, tanners, weavers, homesteaders
- By 1831, grist mills, sawmills, and schools lined the Mill River (north-south)
- W. Legg Hotel located at Main St & Hartford Ave in West Upton—future site of Hotel Pleasant



Early growth in West Upton was transportation-related

- Upton Center grew as a civic and transportation hub from 1771 - 1990s
- Mill River powered small industries throughout the 1800s; including shoe manufacturing
- West Upton developed at key crossroads between Worcester and Providence, Boston and the west; anchored by W. Legg Hotel



Housing & Early Industry

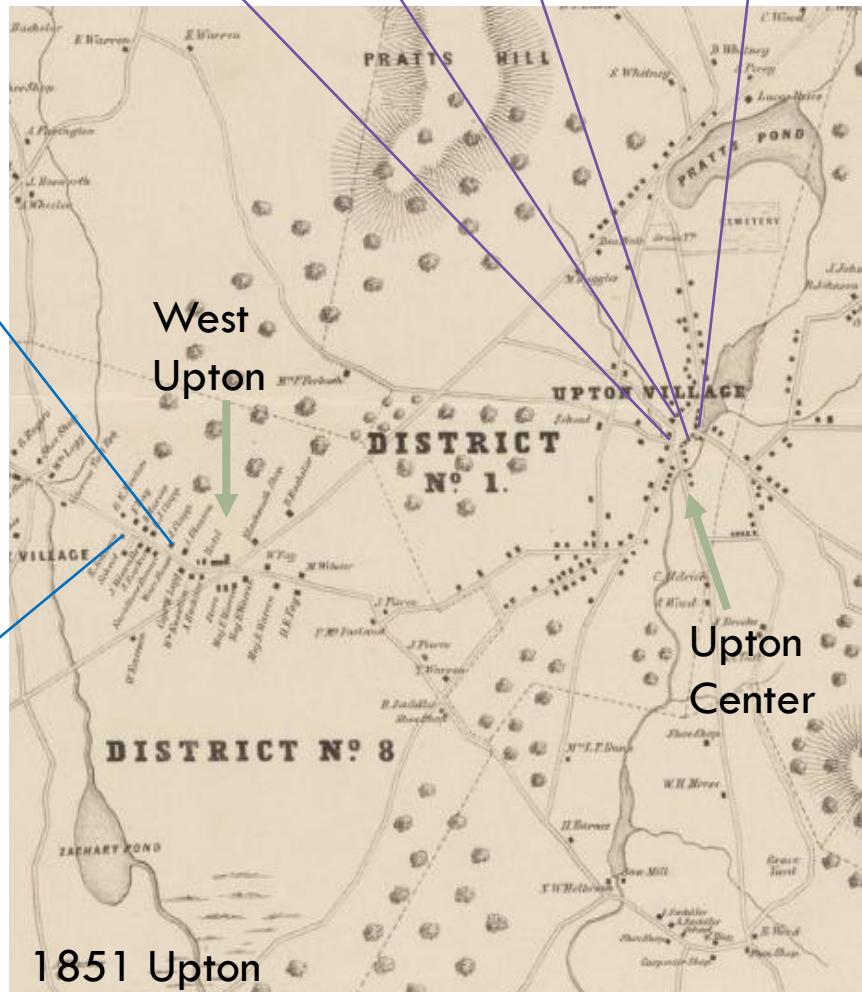
- William Legg house (1824) - oldest in West Upton
- William Legg launched a straw goods business (1825) and W. Legg Hotel
- Partnered with William Knowlton from Upton Center (1832)
- Eli Warren's Tavern ("World's Largest Tavern") catered to travelers
 - Later converted to worker housing and dismantled by the Knowltons by 1885



Legg House 1824



Warren Tavern
1830's



West Upton Expansion

- 19th + 20th c. growth driven by boot, shoe and hat industries
- By 1851: Bachelor's shoe and boot factories and Knowlton Hat Factory in full operation
- 1888: Upton Grafton Railroad extended to West Upton; handled hat factory shipments
- Village saw 75+ new buildings by late 1800s
- Mix of company and private housing provided diverse housing for a range of workers
- Compact, walkable village with jobs and services
- Historic landscape recommended for National Register listing by MACRIS in 1996



G.W. Knowlton House, 1866



Hotel Pleasant, 1886 (demolished 1961)



D.W. Knowlton House, 1874



Knowlton Hat Factory, 1850's

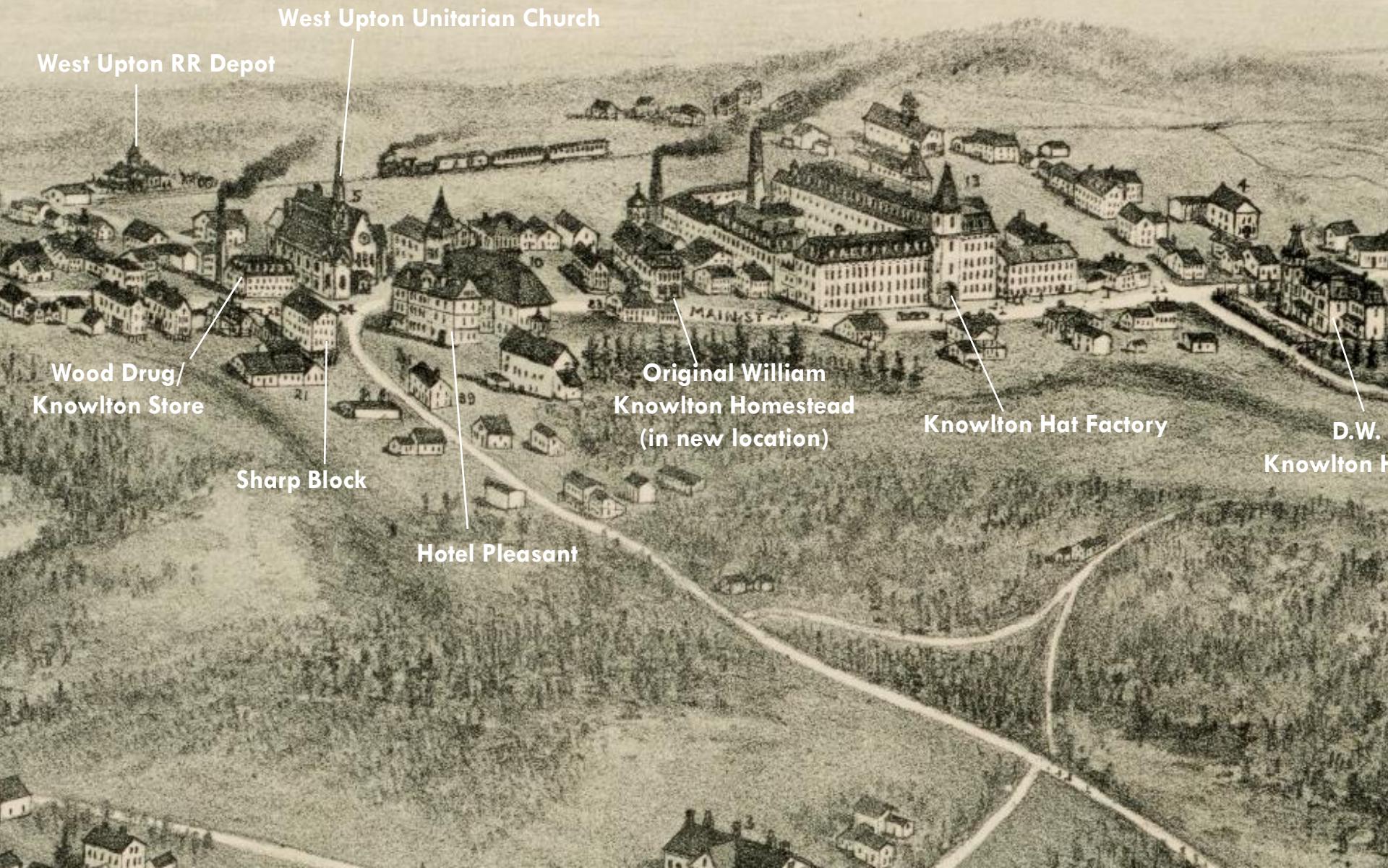


Original William Knowlton Homestead



West Upton Unitarian Church, 1880s

West Upton, 1888



Sharp Store (removed after 1945)

Wood Drug / Knowlton Store (removed before 1945)

Hotel Pleasant (removed by 1961)

Original Knowlton House in new location

Knowlton Houses
G.W. and D.W.

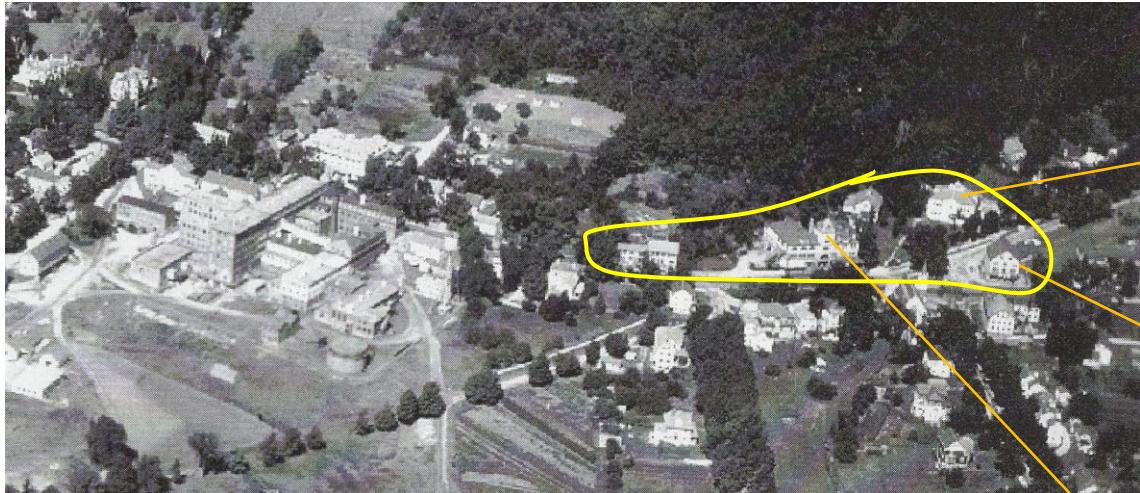
KNOWLTON & SONS, STRAW GOODS MFG.
VISIT, WATERTON: AMERICAN ELEC. CLOCK 22 STATIONS.

Knowlton Hat Factory

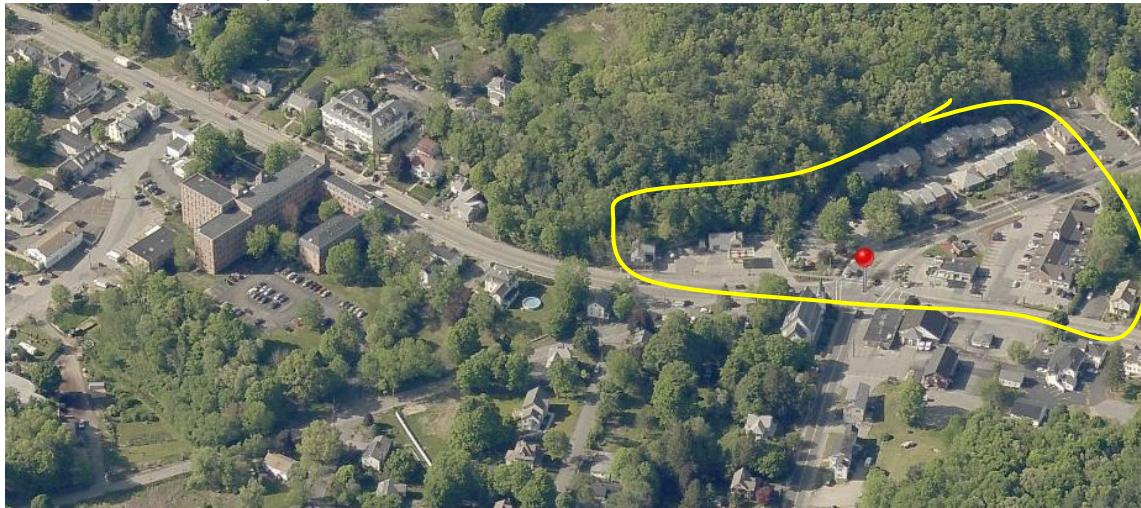


1910

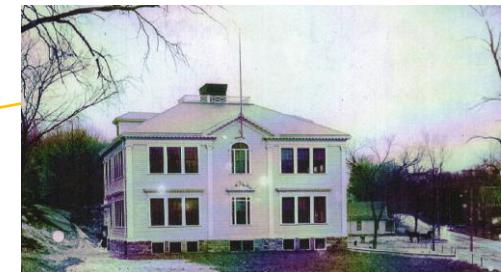
Main St., Hartford Ave, Maple St. area has changed most



Prominent buildings lined the Main St. streetscape and defined the Main/Hartford/Maple St. intersection (1936)



Several prominent buildings removed mid-20th century. Gas stations and parking lots for automobiles now define the Main/Hartford/Maple St. intersection (present)



Knowlton School burned (1964)



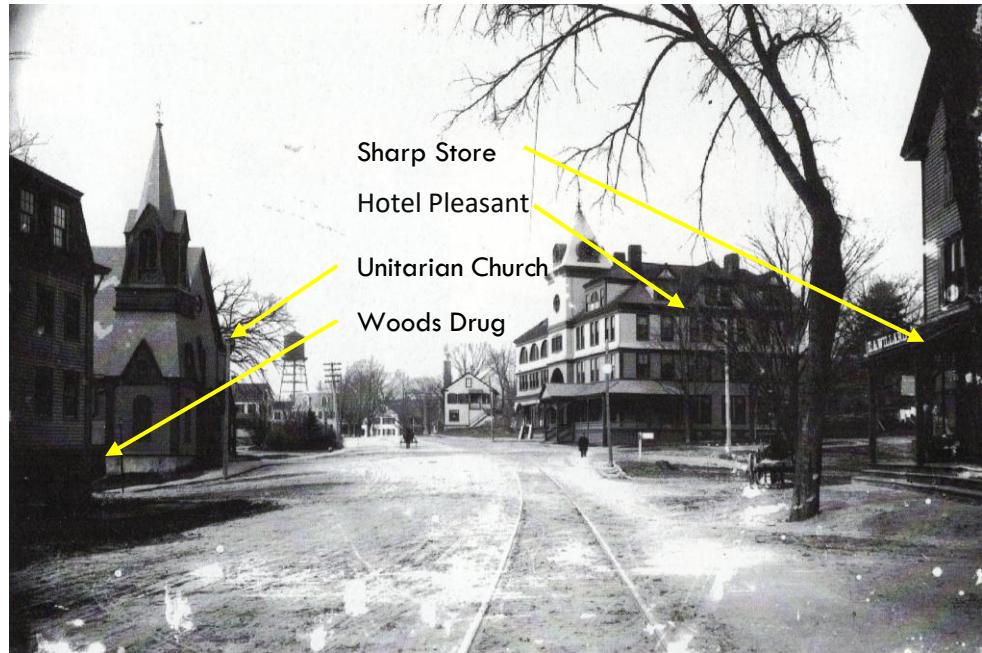
Sharp Store removed after 1945



Hotel Pleasant 1886 (demolished 1961)

Pedestrian to Auto-Oriented

- West Upton's Main St/Hartford Ave/Maple St. once featured a unified, walkable streetscape served by trolley
- Buildings were built to the street, supporting a pedestrian-scale environment
- History of small stores at this intersection
- Mid-20th century saw demolition of key structures and a shift to auto-centered design
- The Unitarian Church remains from the 19th c.
- Today: intersection shaped by gas stations, apartment complex, strip mall, post office, and surface parking



West-facing view of Main St/Hartford Ave intersection in early 1900's



Same west-facing view of Main St/Hartford Ave intersection in August 2022

A Legacy of Mixed Uses and Walkable Streets

- West Upton has long had a mix of industrial, commercial, hospitality, and residential uses in close proximity to each other
- The rise and fall of industries and changes in transportation patterns have shaped West Upton
- West Upton retains a variety of historic structures that give it a unique sense of place
- Some of the most prominent buildings have been demolished—especially near Main St/Hartford Ave—the center of West Upton
- The area's historic compact development patterns make it more suitable for walkable mixed-use development than other parts of Upton



Hat Factory now serves as Millhaus Apartments



West Upton Depot, 1890



Significant growth of residential subdivisions and W. Upton railyard (2017 Pictometry)

What defines West Upton
today?

General Comments

The area has a lot of pedestrian activity

W. Upton is "the hub for seniors" in the area

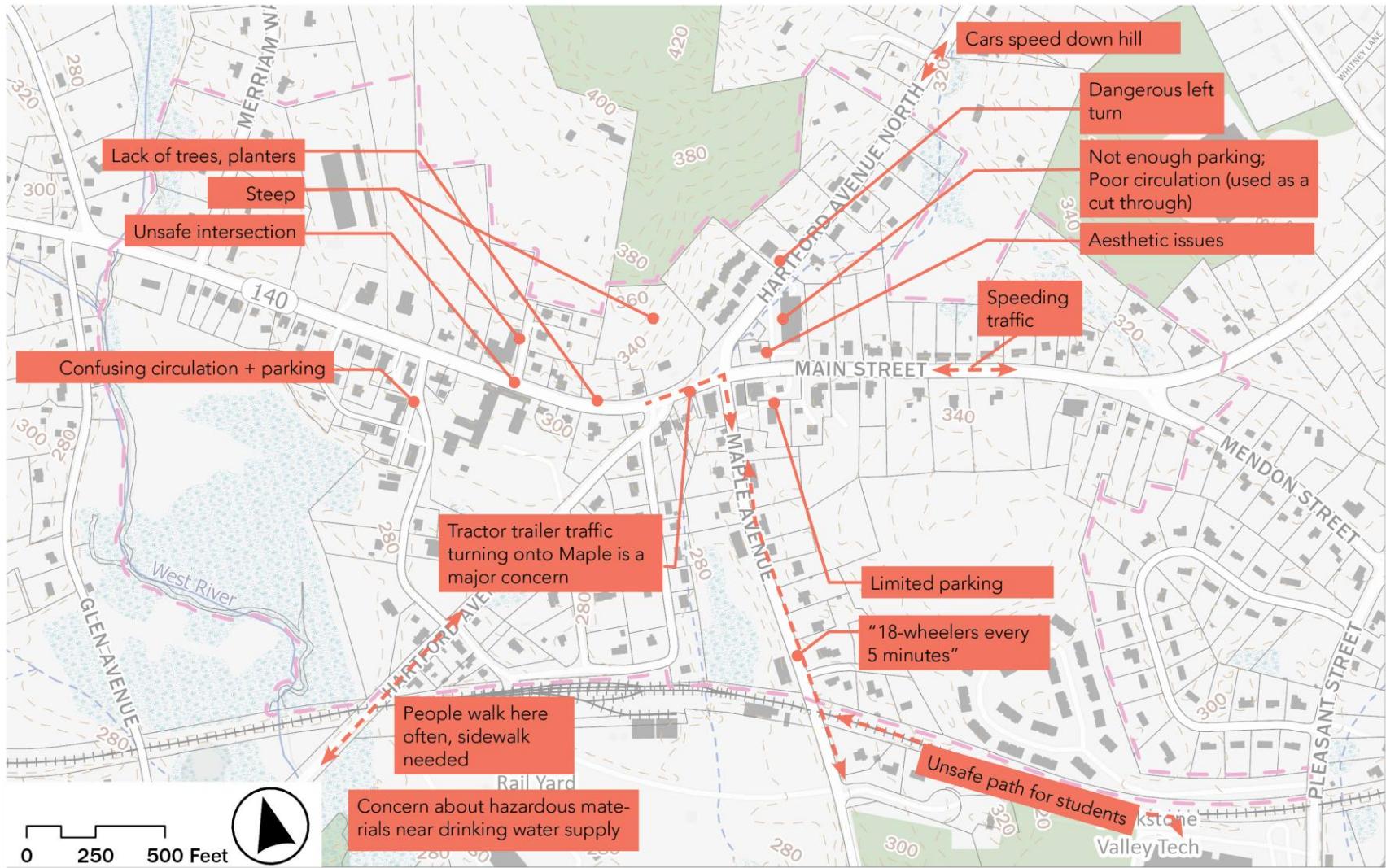
Strengths

Strengths
Favorite places



Weaknesses

Weaknesses



Opportunities

General Comments

Want off-road bike trail

Want walkable shops and services

Restore/beautify historic buildings

Need sheltered public spaces

Most likely market is for residential and professional offices (mixed use)

Would like to see more historical markers throughout W. Upton

Opportunities
Opportunity Parcels



Zoning

Parcels

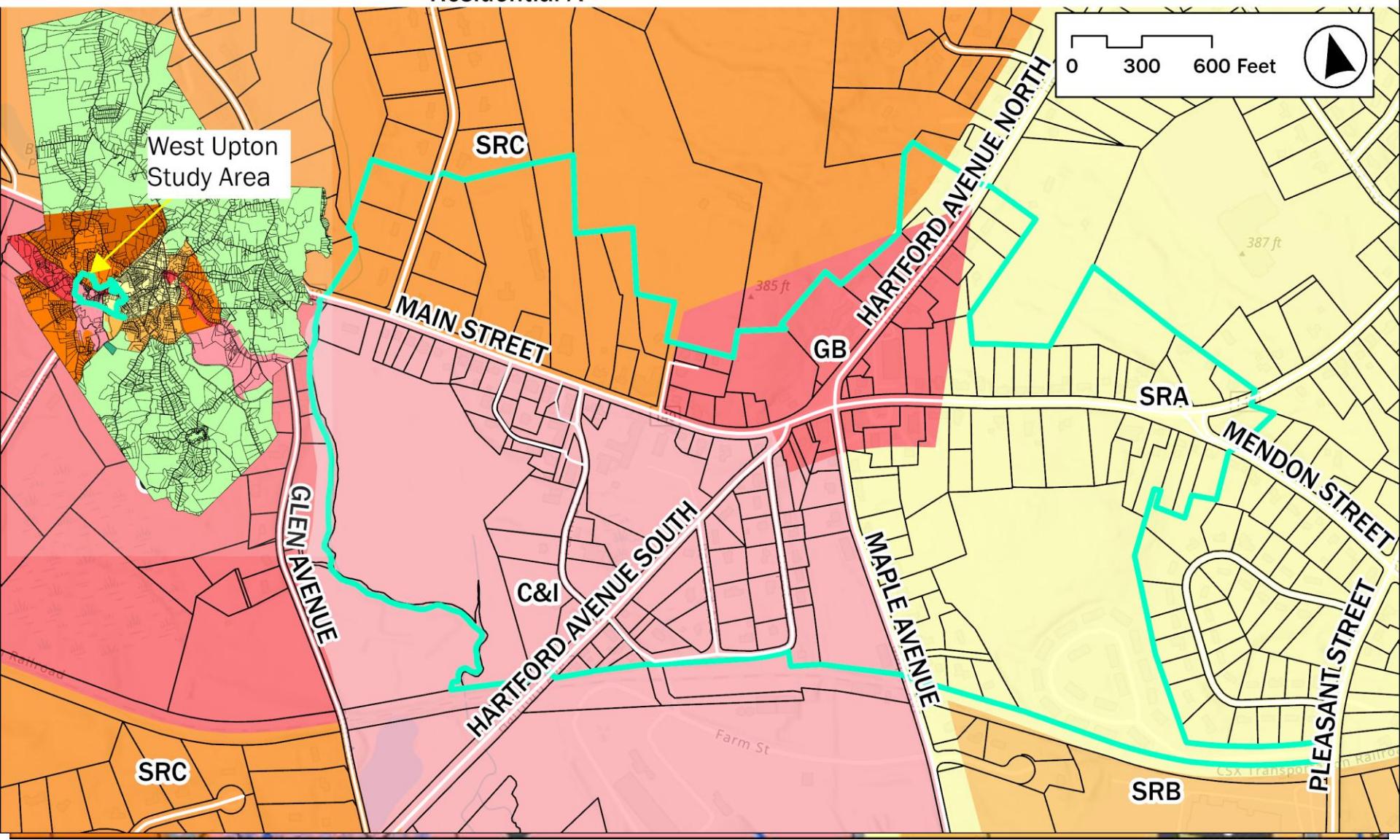
Zoning Boundaries

C&I: Commercial and Industrial

- GB: General Business
- MGF: Municipal Government Facilities
- SRA: Single Residential A

- SRC: Single Residential C
- SRB: Single Residential B

- SRD: Single Residential D
- AR: Agricultural Rural
- Study Area



From Upton 2021 Economic Development Strategy plan

“West Upton Center [...] has been neglected for many years from a zoning perspective. Improvements to zoning and creation of Design Guidelines can help give West Upton center a needed face-lift, which will result in making that area more attractive to prospective new businesses.”

- In C&I and GB, residential uses require a Special Permit (single family, one-to-two family conversion, townhouses, garden apartments, and lodging/B&Bs) .
- Zoning section about garden apartments does not appear to apply in C&I or GB. Other types of multi-family housing are not allowed.
- Senior housing communities are prohibited in GB and C&I.

- Businesses such as retail, personal services, eating establishment, offices, banks are allowed by right in GB and C&I.
 - The bylaw lists the specific business types allowed and the list is not all-encompassing. Some flexibility for “similar businesses” provided via footnotes.
- Drive-throughs by special permit in GB and C&I
- Vehicle repair and vehicle-related businesses are by special permit in C&I and GB
- Mixed-use prohibited in SRA, SRC, and C&I.
Mixed-use by special permit in GB.
- C&I allows some industrial and storage uses by special permit (light manufacturing or packaging, truck and machinery repair and storage, storage facilities and warehouses, trucking terminal or motor freight station).
- Planned village by special permit in C&I. Provisions are unclear.

Dimensional Requirements

District	Minimum Lot Dimension (Note 1)		Minimum Setback Requirements			Maximum Building Height		Maximum Coverage Including Accessory Building
	<u>Area</u> Square Feet	<u>Frontage</u> Linear Feet	<u>Front</u> Linear Feet	<u>Side</u> Linear Feet	<u>Rear</u> Linear Feet	<u># of stories</u>	<u>Height</u> Linear Feet	
GB	15,000	100	30 (Note 2)	10 (Notes 3 & 8)	20 (Notes 4 & 8)	2	25 (Note 7)	40%
C&I	15,000	100	30 (Note 2)	20 (Notes 3 & 8)	20 (Notes 4 & 8)	1	25 (Note 7)	40%
SRA	15,000	100 (Note 2)	25 (Note 2)	10 (Note 8)	30 (Note 8)	2.5	30 (Note 7)	30%
SRC	40,000	180 (Note 2)	40 (Note 2)	25 (Note 8)	30 (Note 8)	2.5	30 (Note 7)	30%

SRA

15,000 SF Minimum Lot Area

100' Minimum Frontage

Max. Lot Coverage (by built structures, including accessory buildings) is **30%**.

There is **no off-street parking space requirement** for residential uses

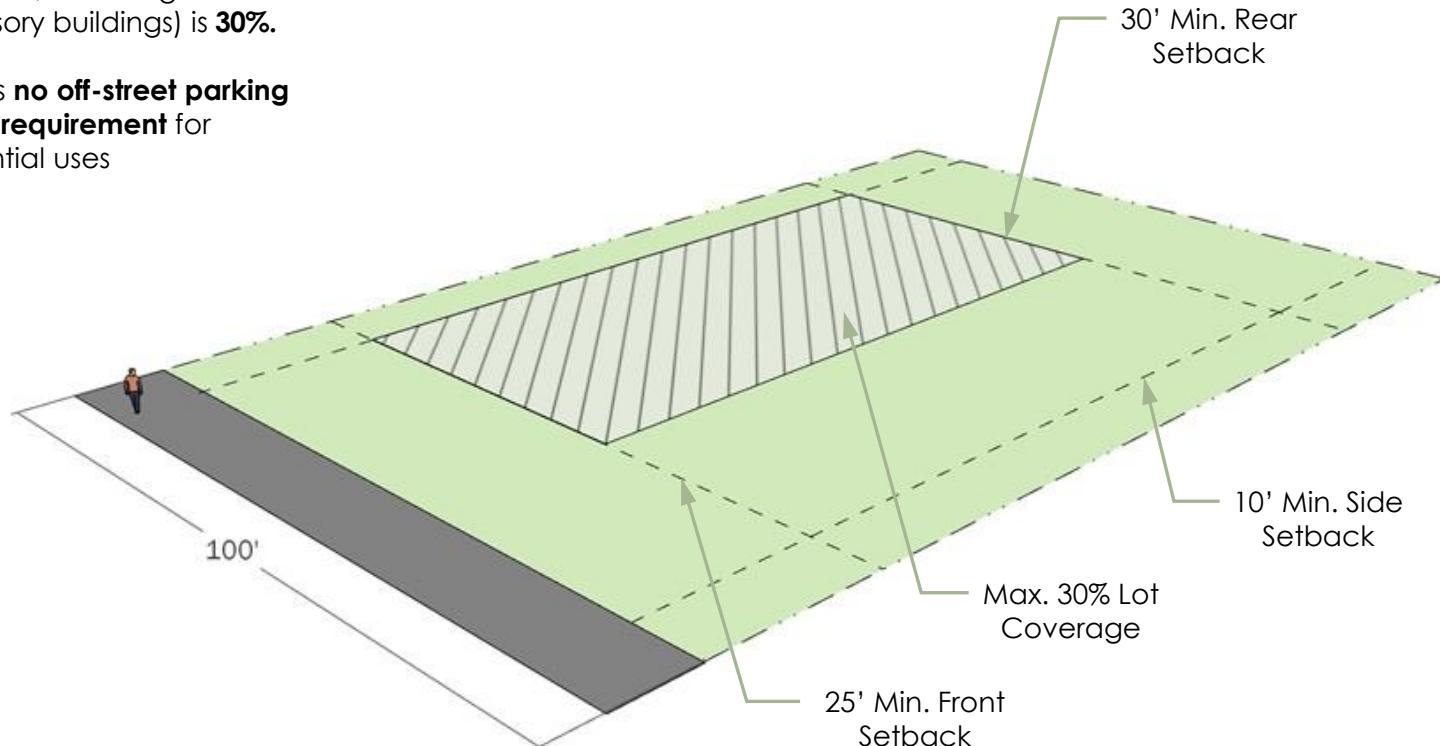


Diagram based on 15,000 sq ft lot

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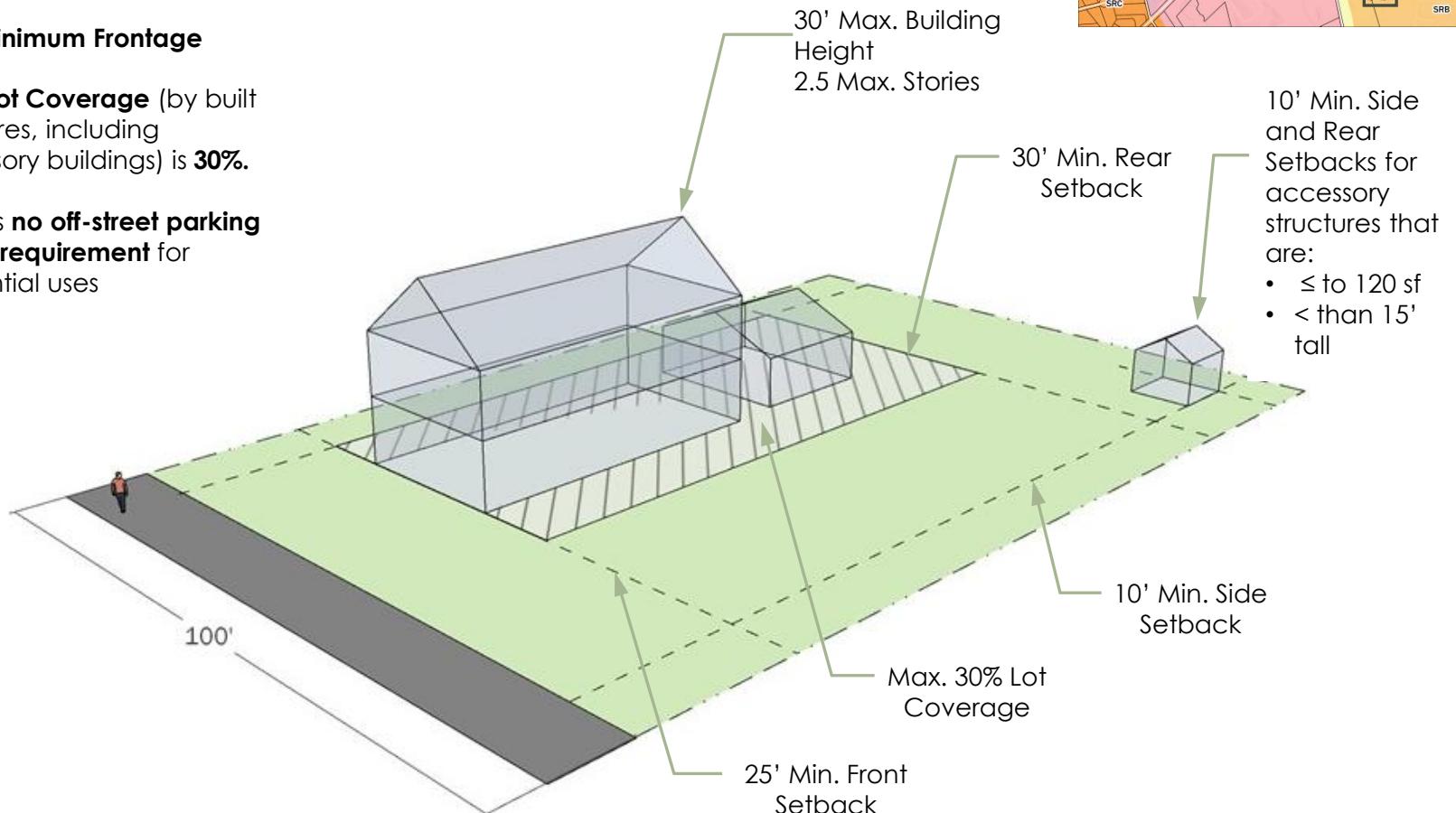


Diagram based on:

- 15,000 sf lot
- 2,500 sf single family home with 2-car garage and garden shed

SRC

40,000 SF Minimum Lot Area

180' Minimum Frontage

Max. Lot Coverage (by built structures, including accessory buildings) **is 30%**

There is **no off-street parking space requirement** for residential uses

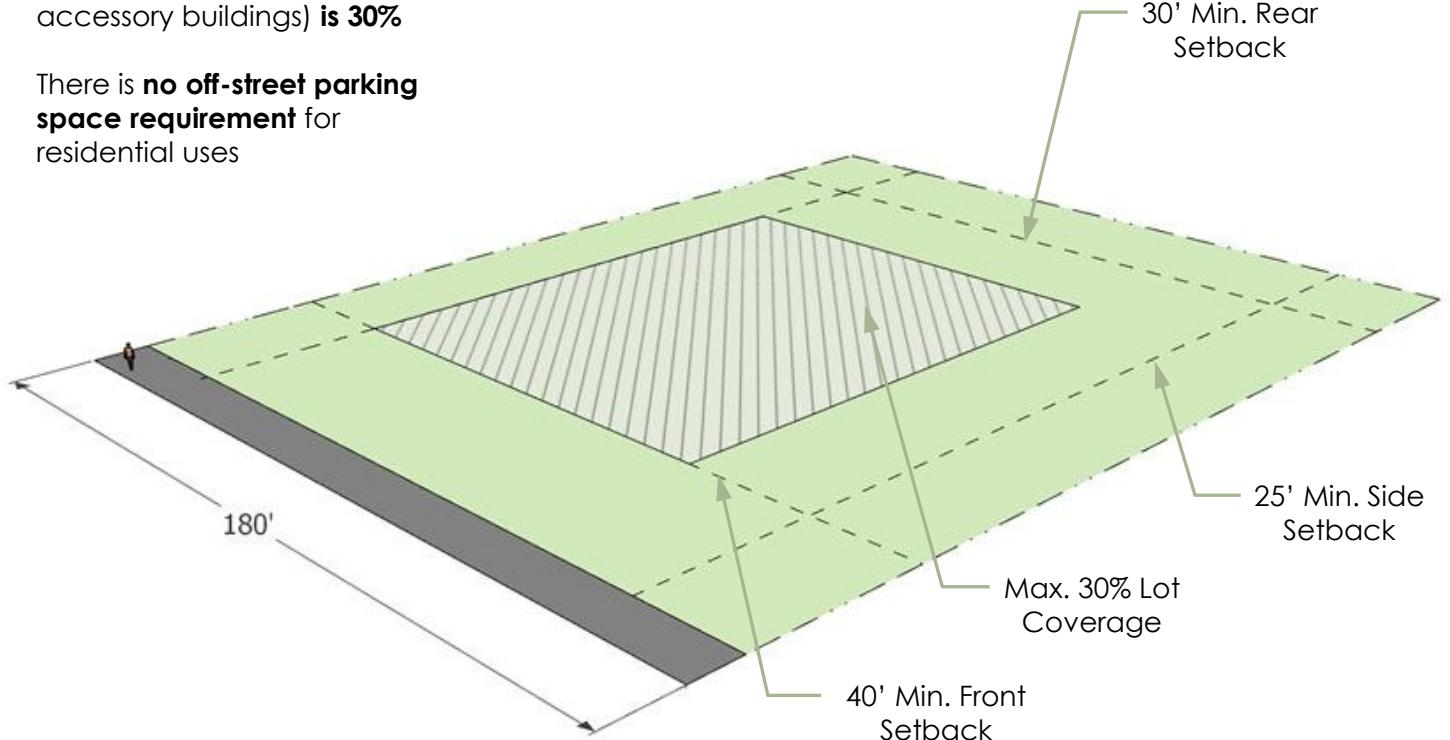


Diagram based on 40,000 sf lot

SRC

40,000 SF Minimum Lot Area

180' Minimum Frontage

Max. Lot Coverage (by built structures, including accessory buildings) **is 30%**

There is **no off-street parking space requirement** for residential uses

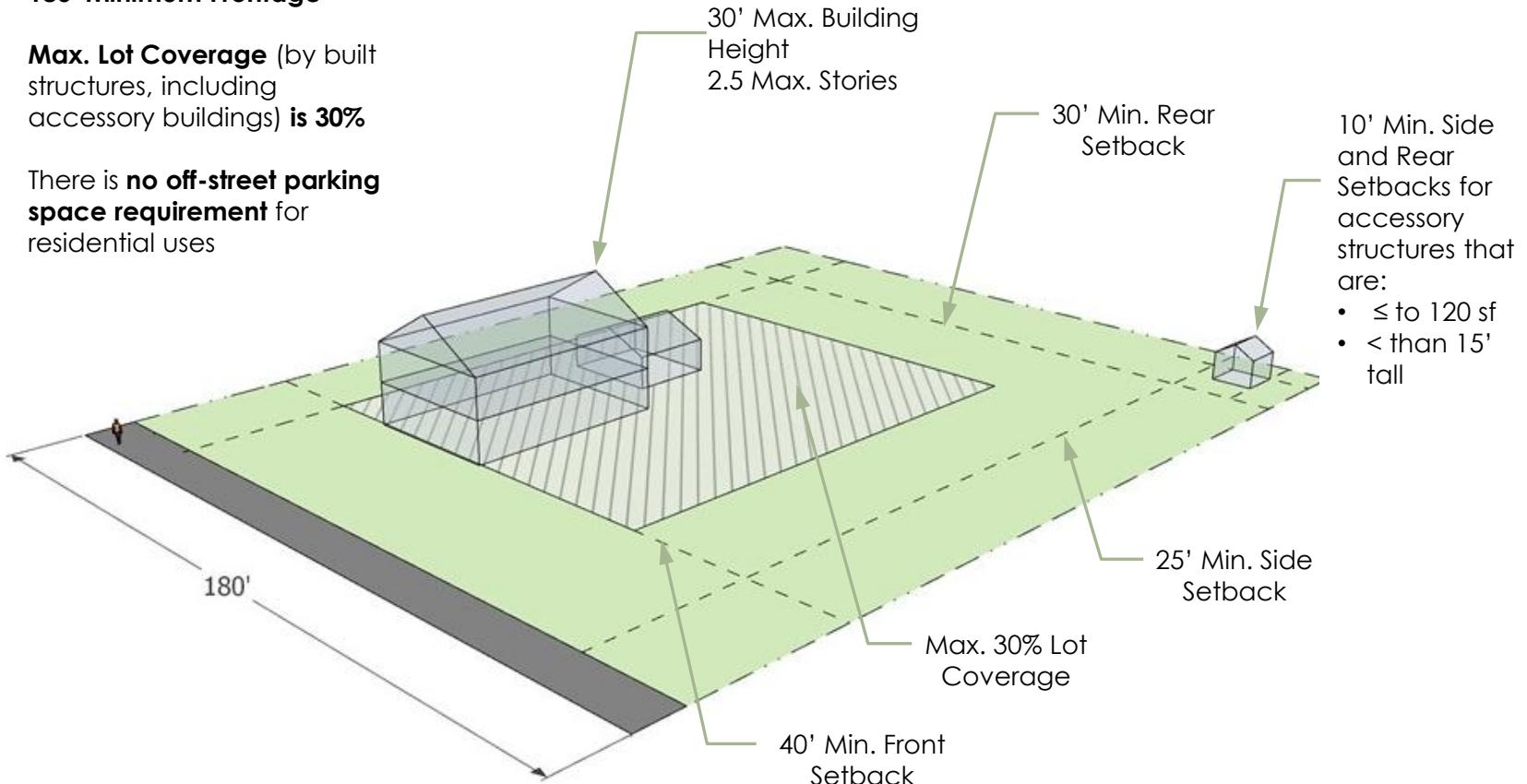


Diagram based on:

- 40,000 sf lot
- 3,500 sf single-family home with 2-car garage and garden shed



Existing Zoning Characteristic of:



Google Maps

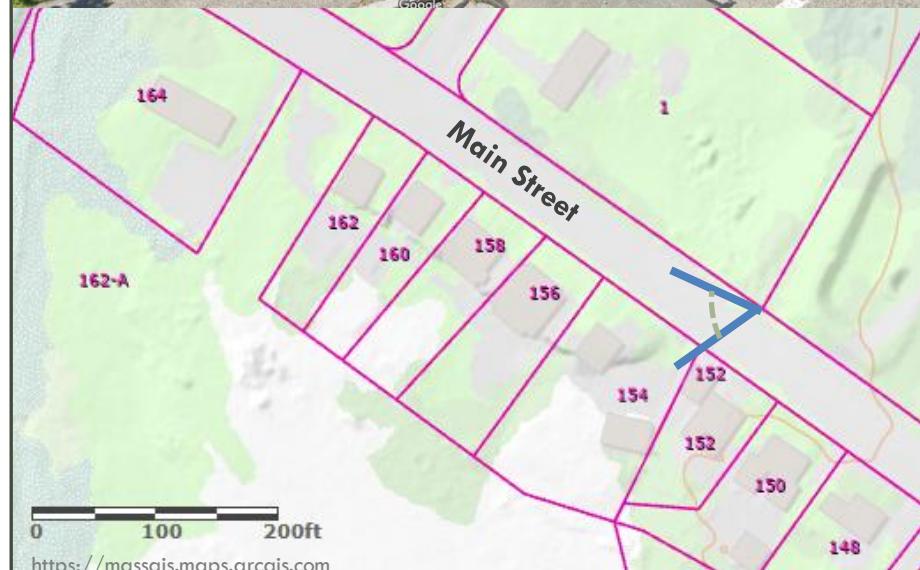


<https://massgis.maps.arcgis.com>

Historic residential area of West Upton Village Center:



Google Maps



<https://massgis.maps.arcgis.com>

GB – Mixed Use Build-out

15,000 SF Minimum Lot Area*

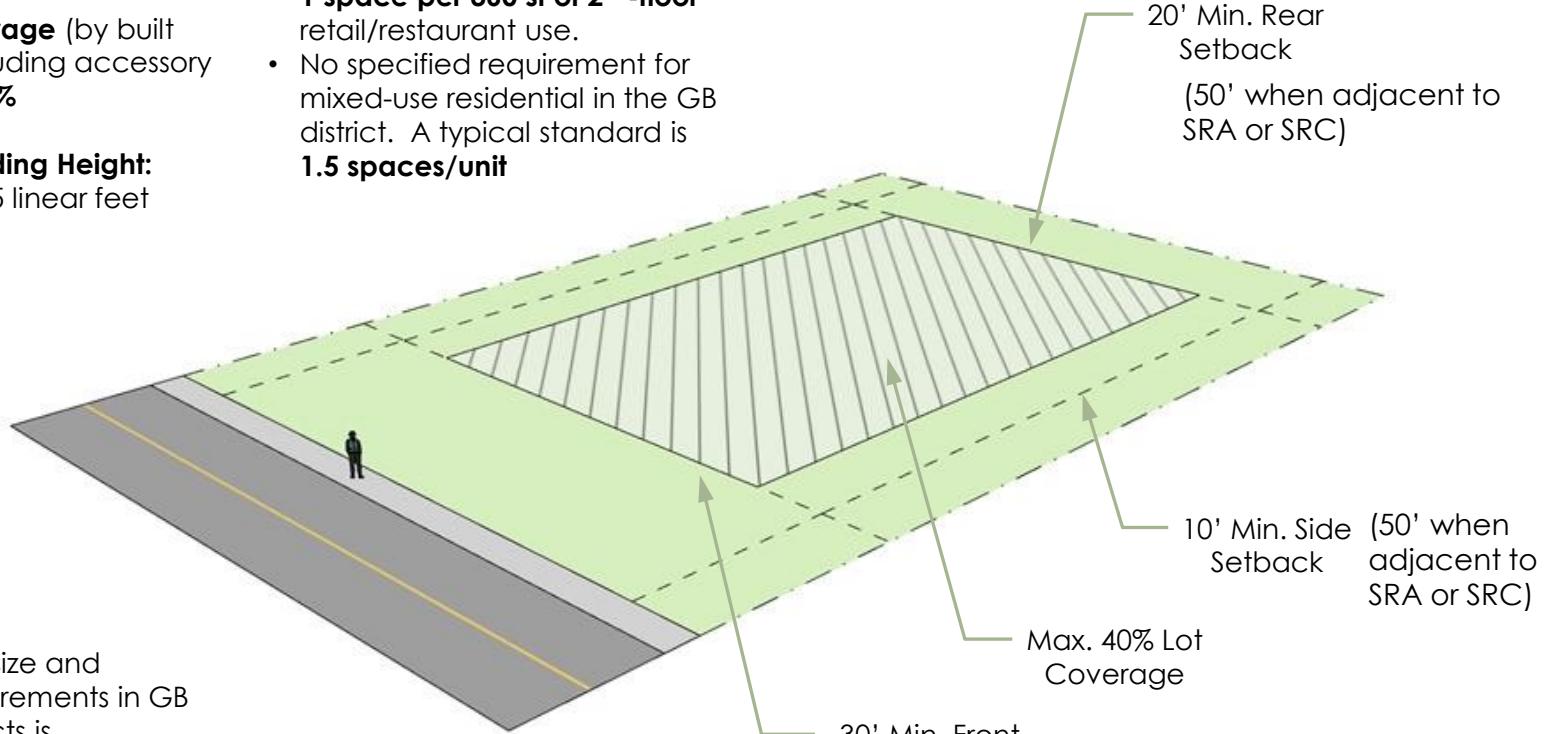
100' Minimum Frontage*

Max. Lot Coverage (by built structures, including accessory buildings) **is 40%**

Maximum Building Height:
2 stories and 25 linear feet

Off Street parking requirements:

- **1 space per 180 sf of ground-floor retail or restaurant use, plus**
- **1 space per 360 sf of 2nd-floor retail/restaurant use.**
- No specified requirement for mixed-use residential in the GB district. A typical standard is **1.5 spaces/unit**



*Minimum lot size and frontage requirements in GB and C&I Districts is determined by the minimum lot size and frontage requirements "for the least restricted Single Residential District adjacent thereto." (SS 300-4.2 Town of Upton General Bylaws)

Diagram based on 15,000 sf lot

GB – Mixed Use Build-out

15,000 SF Minimum Lot Area*

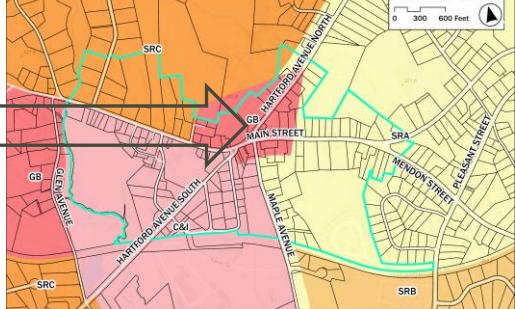
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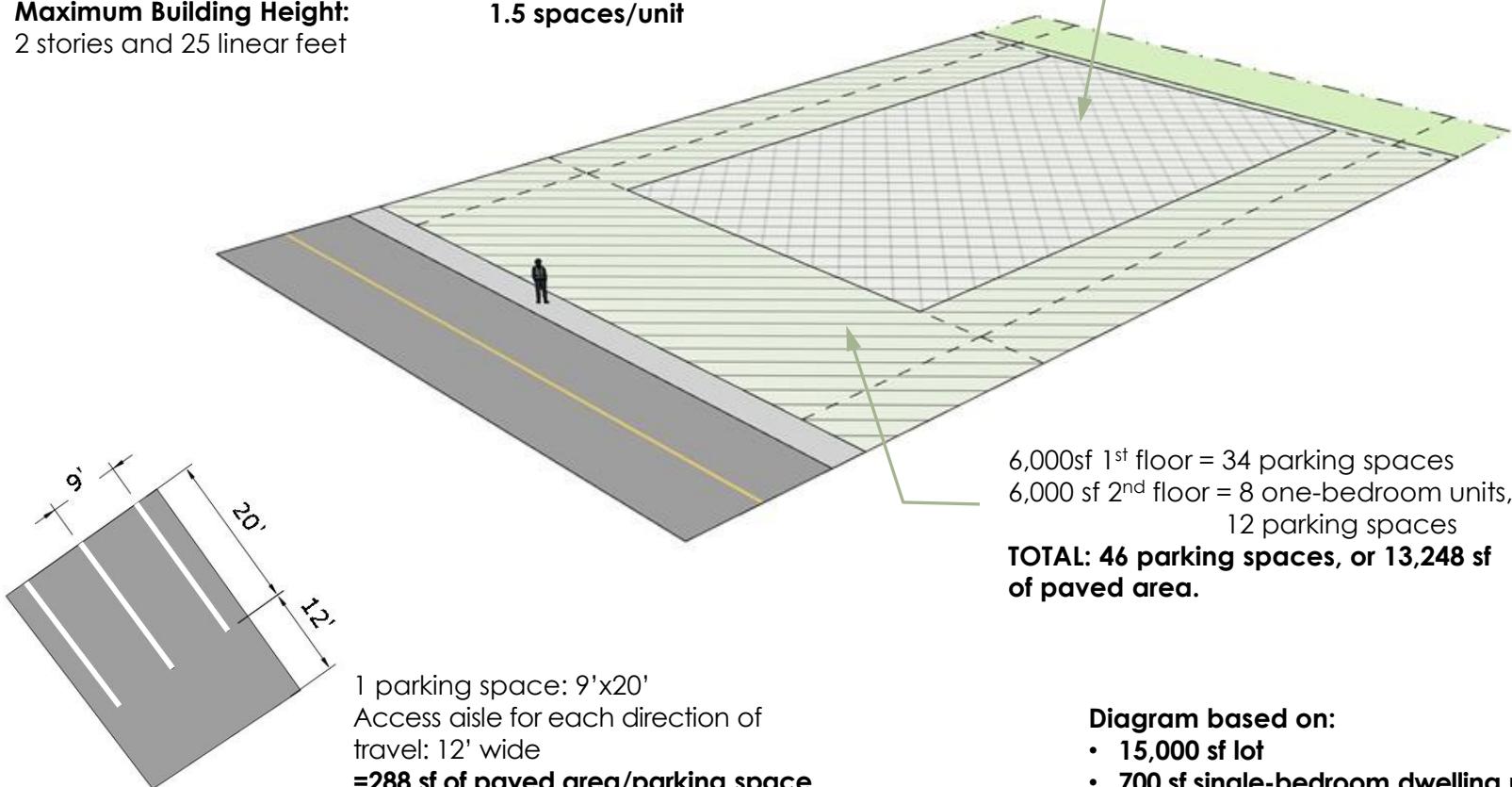
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A building using the maximum allowed lot coverage would have a **footprint of 6,000 sf**



GB – Mixed Use Build-out

15,000 SF Minimum Lot Area*

100' Minimum Frontage*

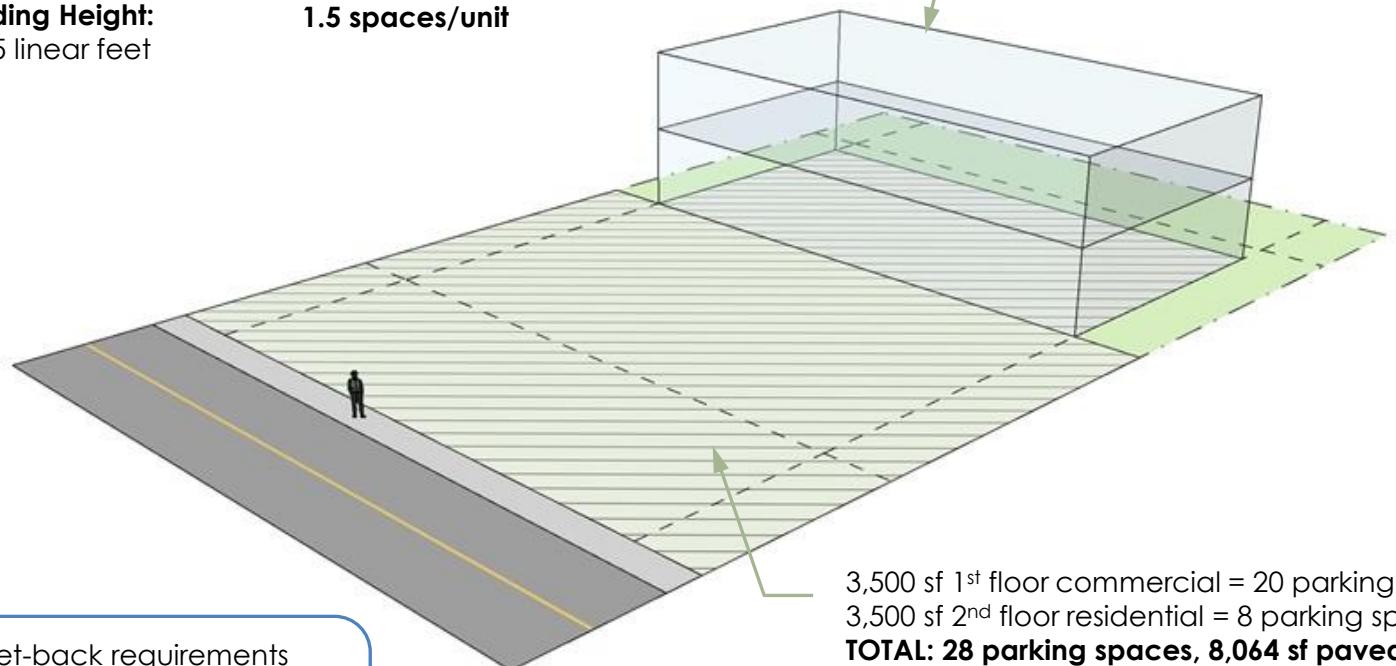
Max. Lot Coverage (by built structures, including accessory buildings) is **40%**

Maximum Building Height:
2 stories and 25 linear feet

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- No specified requirement for mixed-use residential in the GB district. A typical standard is **1.5 spaces/unit**

Maximum building footprint of two-story mixed-use building that allows adequate space for required parking is **~3,500 sf**



Larger front set-back requirements combined with higher parking requirements results in locating parking on the street front, to make most efficient use of the lot.

3,500 sf 1st floor commercial = 20 parking spaces
3,500 sf 2nd floor residential = 8 parking spaces
TOTAL: 28 parking spaces, 8,064 sf paved area

Diagram based on:

- **15,000 sf lot**
- **700 sf single-bedroom dwelling units**
- **288 sf paved area/parking space**

Existing Zoning
Characteristic of:



New England Village
Center Character:



C&I – Commercial Use

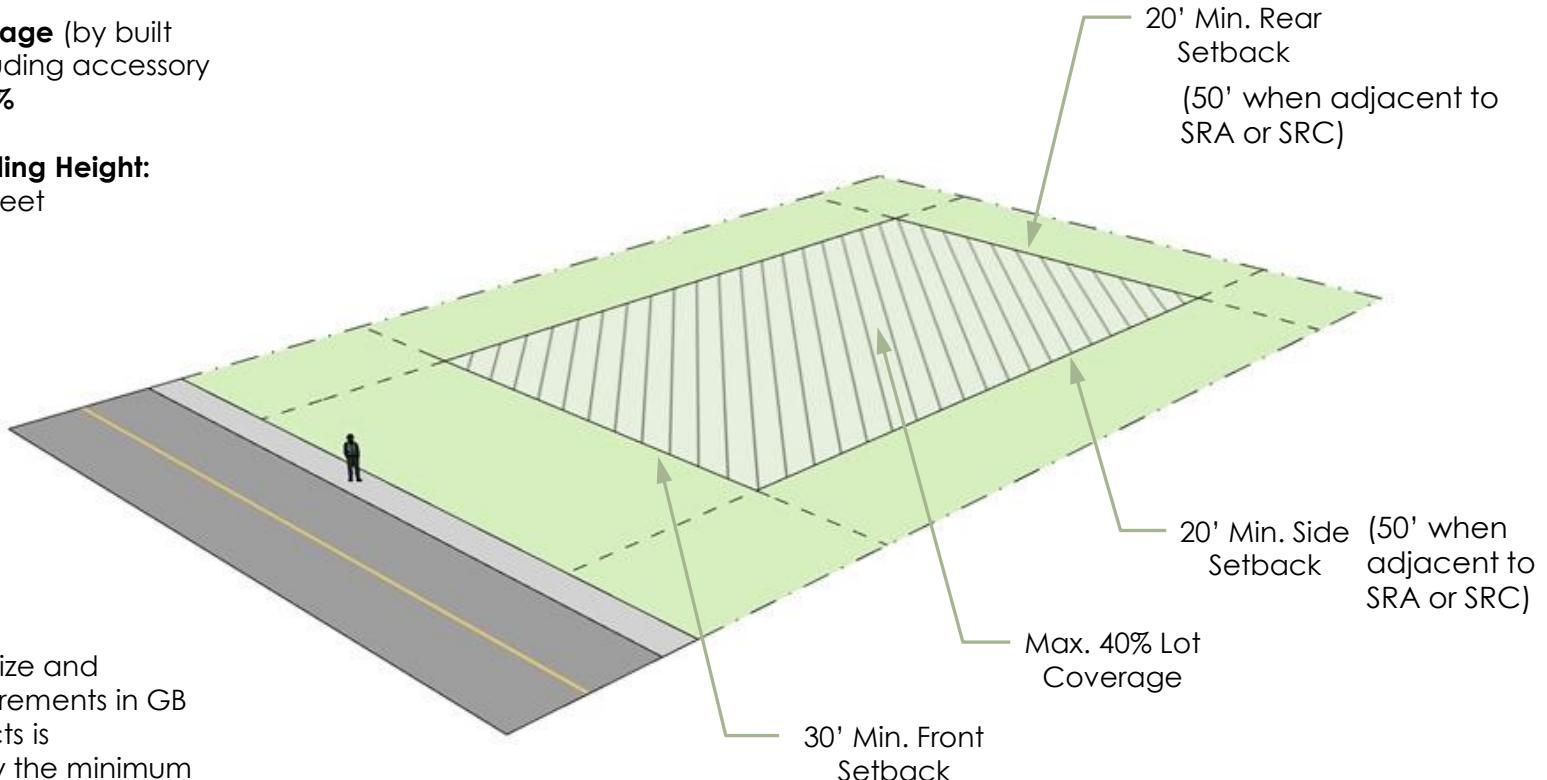
15,000 SF Minimum Lot Area*

100' Minimum Frontage*

Max. Lot Coverage (by built structures, including accessory buildings) is **40%**

Maximum Building Height:
1 story and 25 feet

Off Street parking requirements:
1 space per 180 sf of ground-floor retail or restaurant use



*Minimum lot size and frontage requirements in GB and C&I Districts is determined by the minimum lot size and frontage requirements "for the least restricted Single Residential District adjacent thereto." (SS 300-4.2 Town of Upton General Bylaws)

Diagram based on 15,000 sf lot

C&I – Commercial Use

15,000 SF Minimum Lot Area*

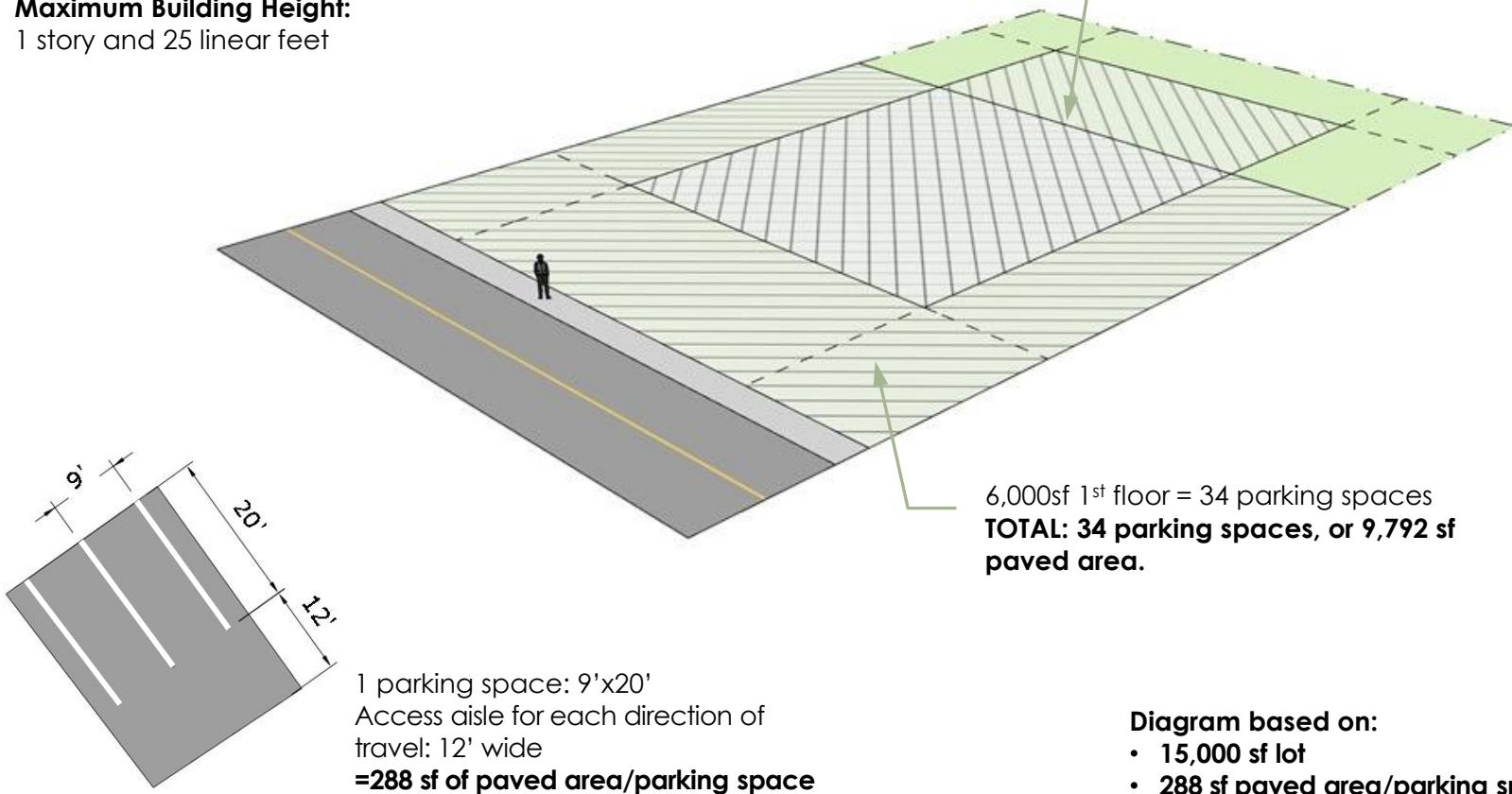
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1 story and 25 linear feet

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C&I – Commercial Use

15,000 SF Minimum Lot Area*

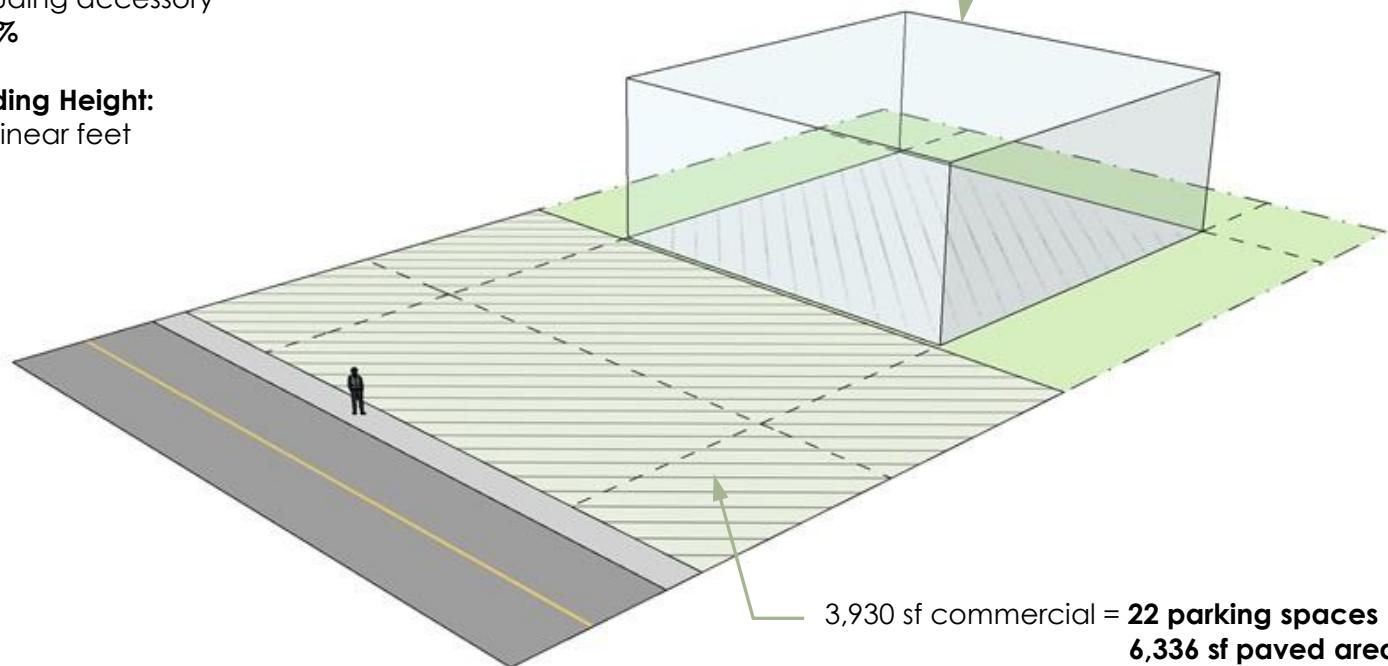
100' Minimum Frontage*

Max. Lot Coverage (by built structures, including accessory buildings) is **40%**

Maximum Building Height:
1 story and 25 linear feet

Off Street parking requirements:
1 space per 180 sf of ground-floor retail or restaurant use

Maximum building footprint of one-story commercial building that allows adequate space for required parking is
~3,930 sf



Larger front set-back requirements combined with higher parking requirements results in locating parking on the street front, to make most efficient use of the lot.

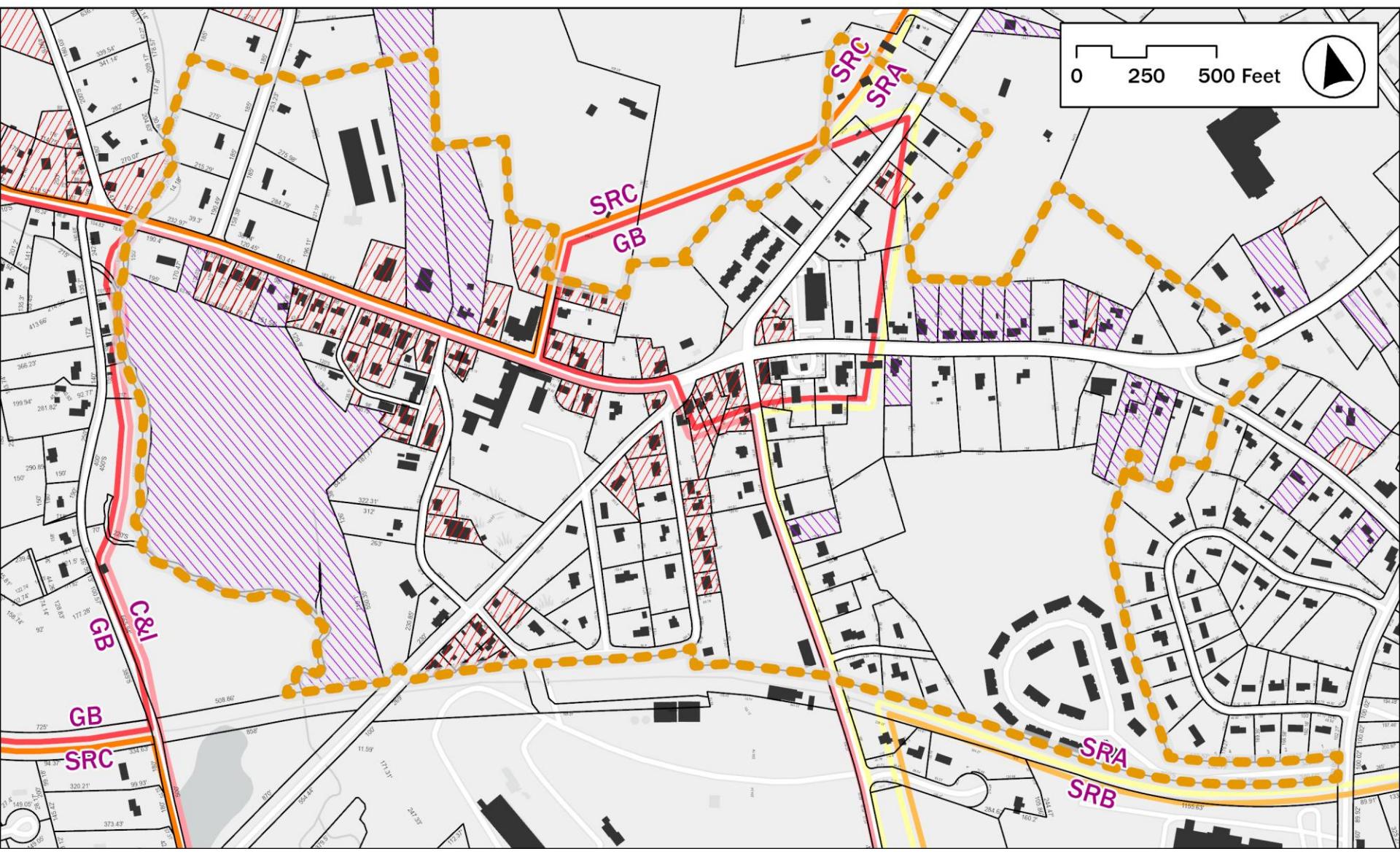
Diagram based on:

- 15,000 sf lot
- 288 sf paved area/parking space

Zoning

- Non-conforming by frontage
- Non-conforming by lot size
- Zoning Boundaries
- C&I: Commercial and Industrial
- GB: General Business

- SRA: Single Residential A
- SRC: Single Residential C
- SRB: Single Residential B
- Study Area



Land Use

Town Owned Land

4-8 Units Residential

Manufacturing

General Office

Land Use by Parcel

>8 Units Residential

School

Rail Yard

1 Unit Residential

Open Space

Vacant

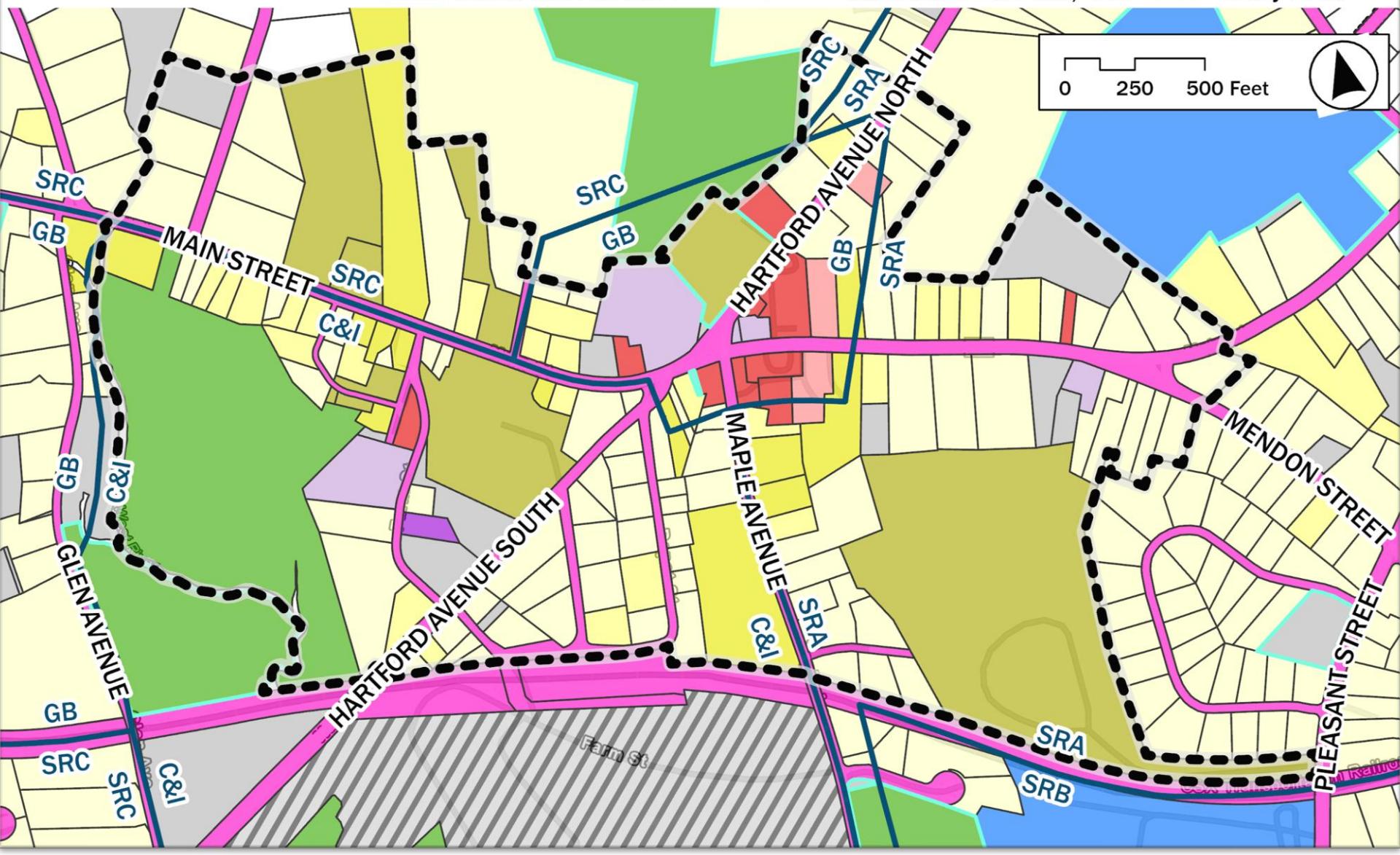
Right-of-Way

2-3 Units Residential

Retail and Services

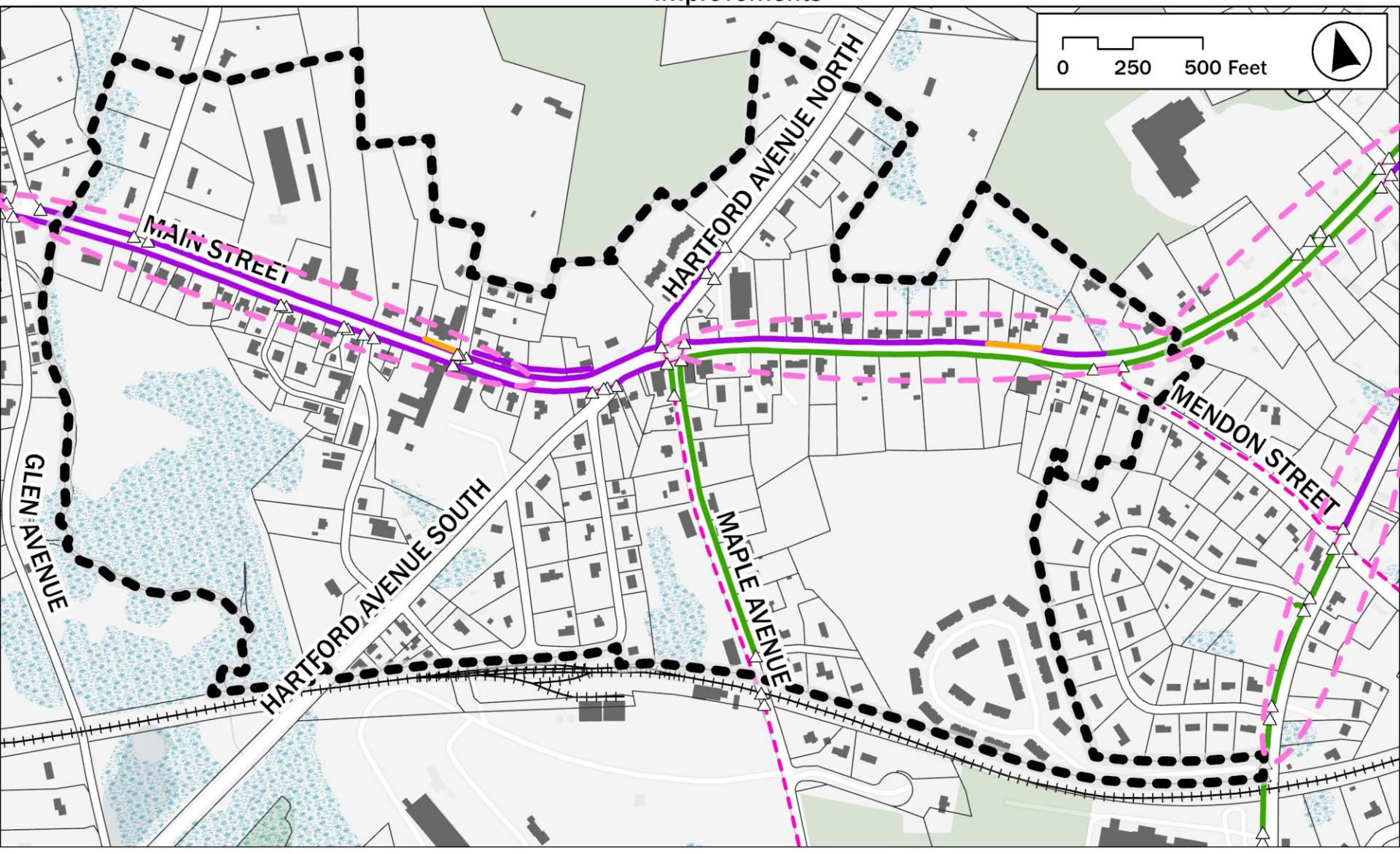
Automotive Services/Gas

Study Area



Infrastructure

Pedestrian Infrastructure



Public Workshop

Public Workshop

- September 13th, 9 am – 1 pm
- Agenda:
 - **9 am – 10 am: Walking Tour**
 - meet in West Upton
 - **10 am – 1 pm: Meet at Community Center**
 - Presentation
 - Visioning Activities



We need your help!

- We will email flyers and draft email messages to you around **August 15**. Please send them out to your friends, neighbors, and other Upton connections!
- Please attend, participate, and listen on 9/13

West Upton Visioning Project

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