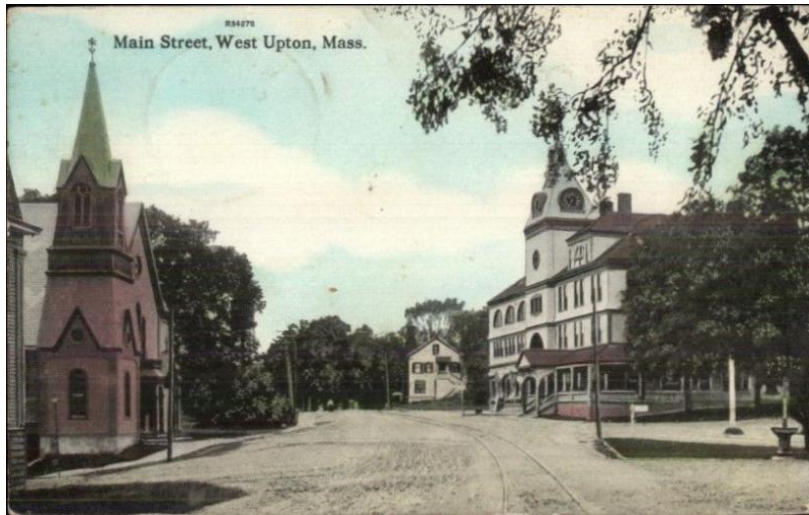


# West Upton Visioning Project



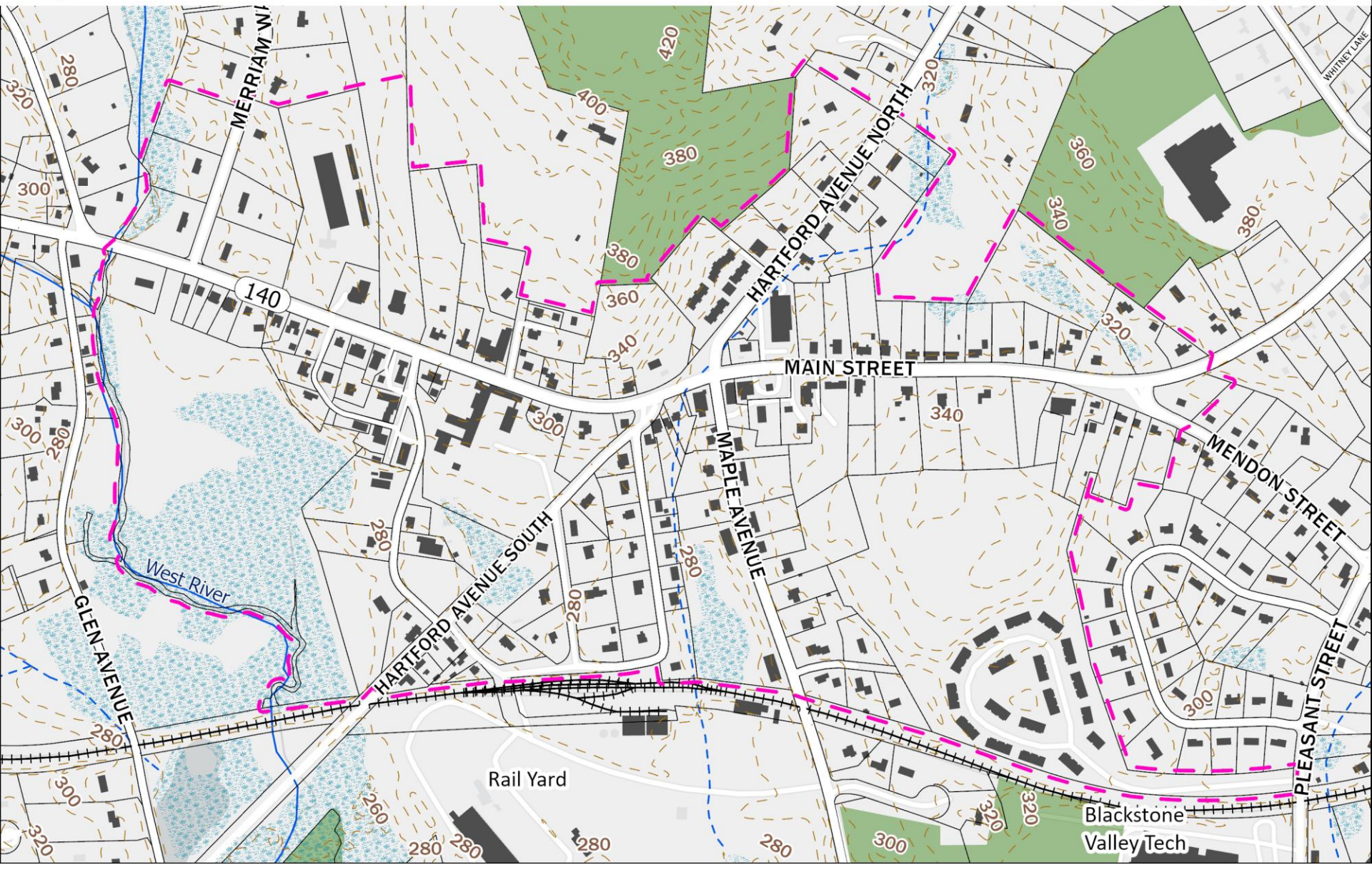
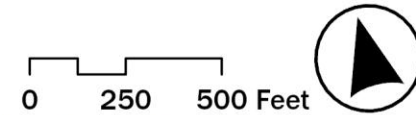
# Tonight's Agenda

- 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



# 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

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

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<b>Other Community Input</b>	<b>September: Public Visioning Workshop</b>
	<b>Jan-Feb: Focus Groups</b>
	<b>April: Final Public Forum</b>

# WG Ground Rules



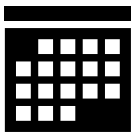
- Ask questions instead of making assumptions
  - Share your views and explain why you hold them
- 



- Critique ideas, not people
  - Work toward shared understanding
- 



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



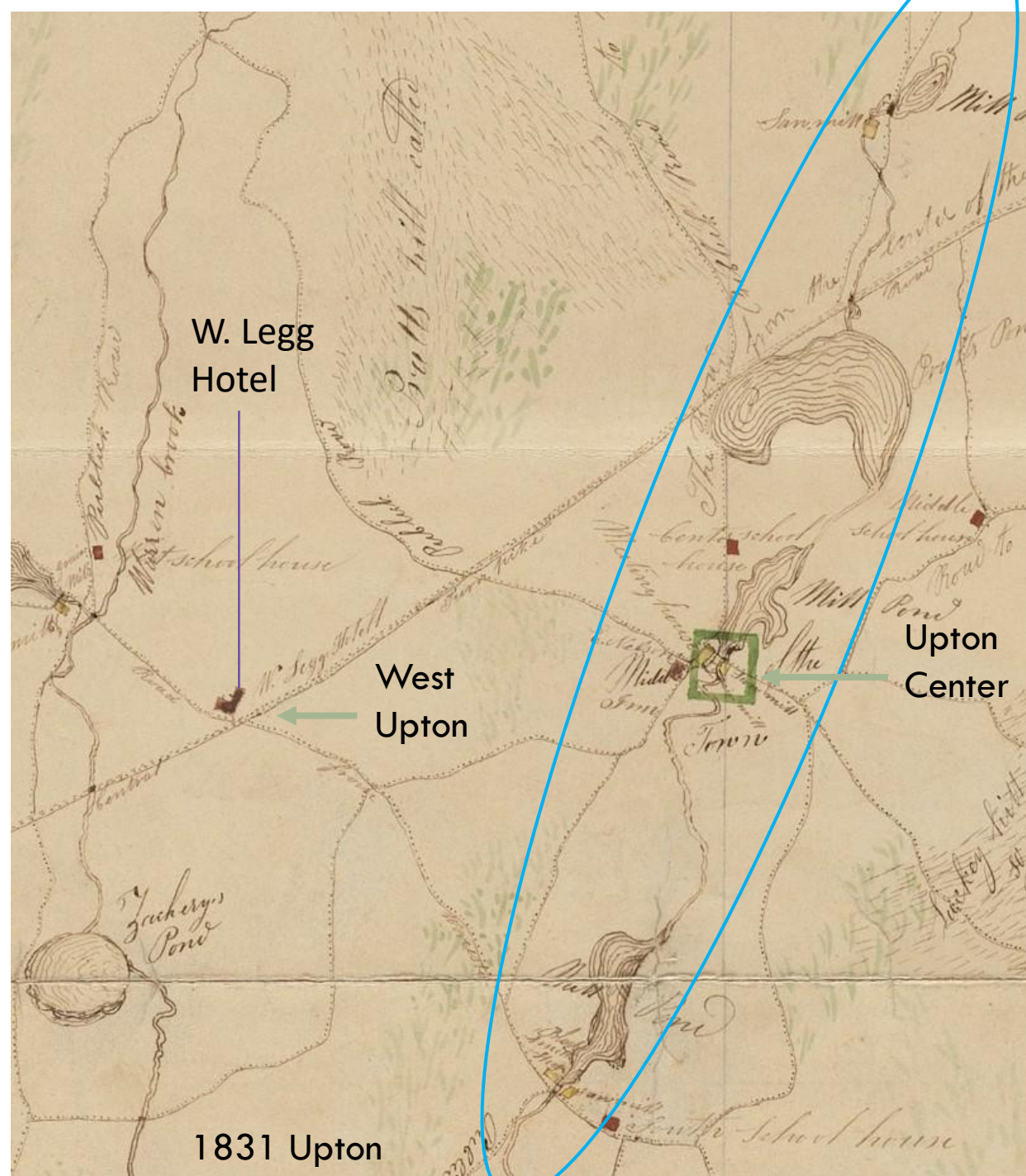
- Commit to attending as many meetings as possible
- Give meetings your full attention



**What shaped West Upton?**

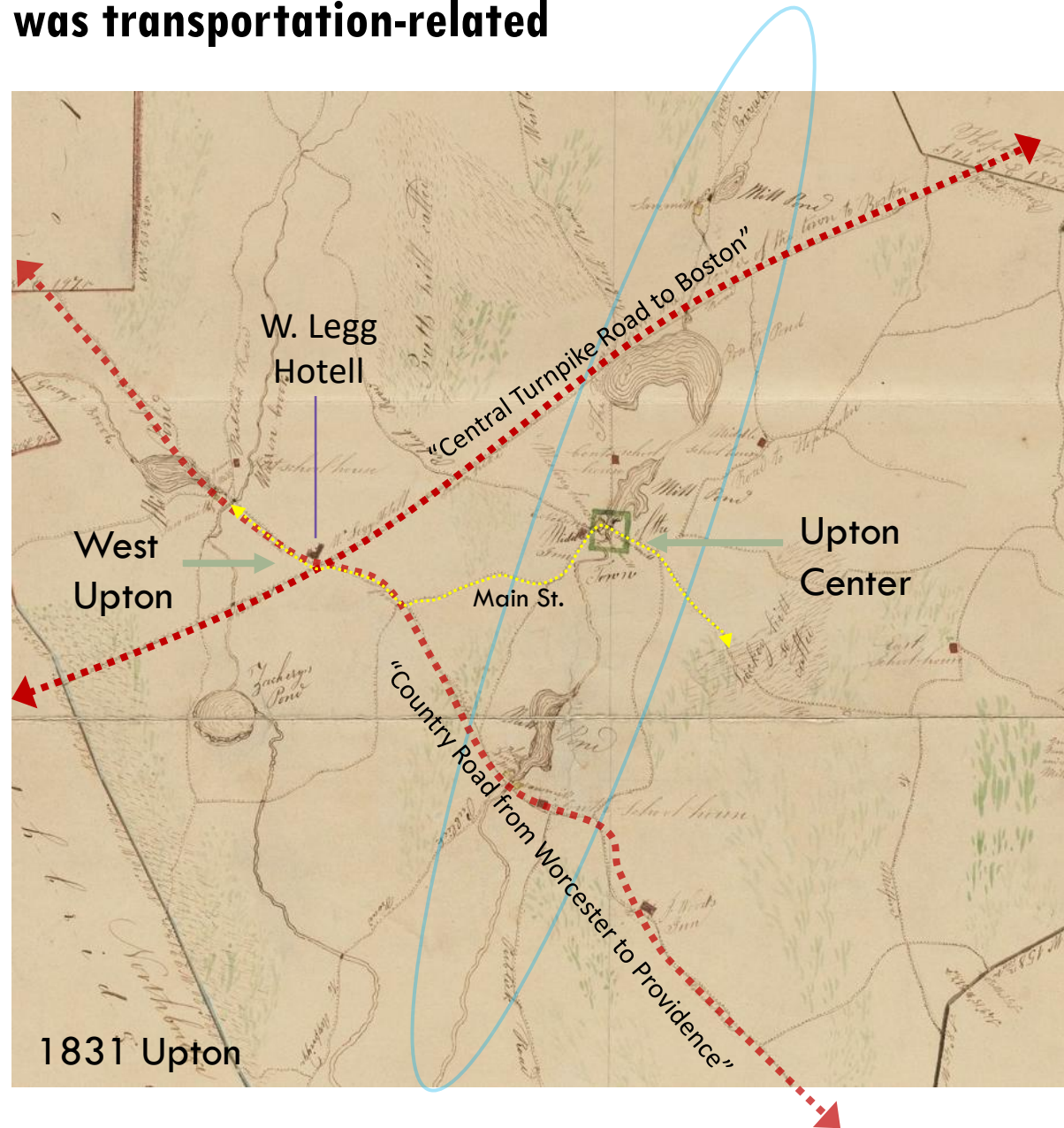
## Early Growth & Development:

- 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

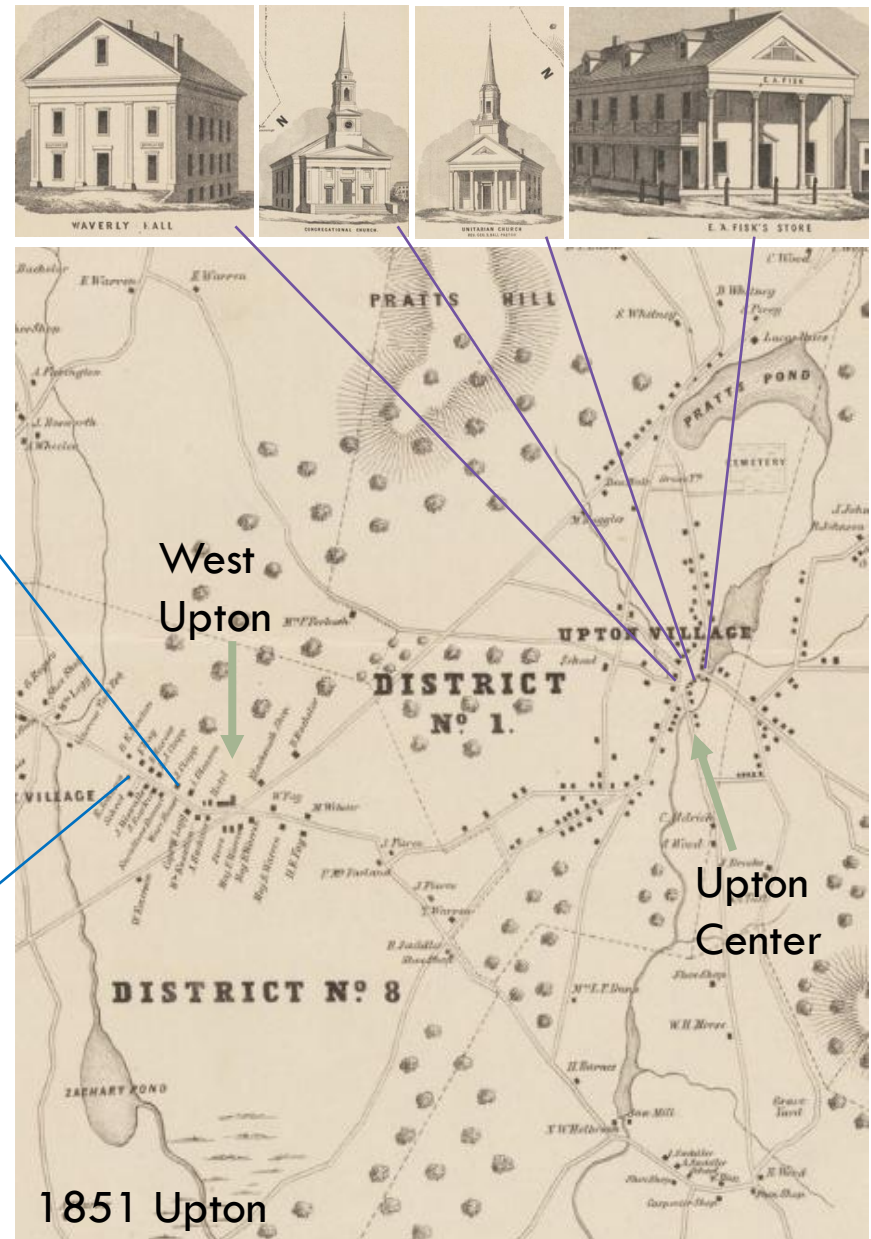
- William Legg house (1824) - oldest in West Upton
- William Legg launched a straw goods business (1825) and W. Legg Hotel
- Partnered with William Knowlton from Upton Center (1832)
- Eli Warren's Tavern ("World's Largest Tavern") catered to travelers
  - Later converted to worker housing and dismantled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



Legg House 1824



Warren Tavern  
1830's





# West Upton Expansion

- 19<sup>th</sup> + 20<sup>th</sup> 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



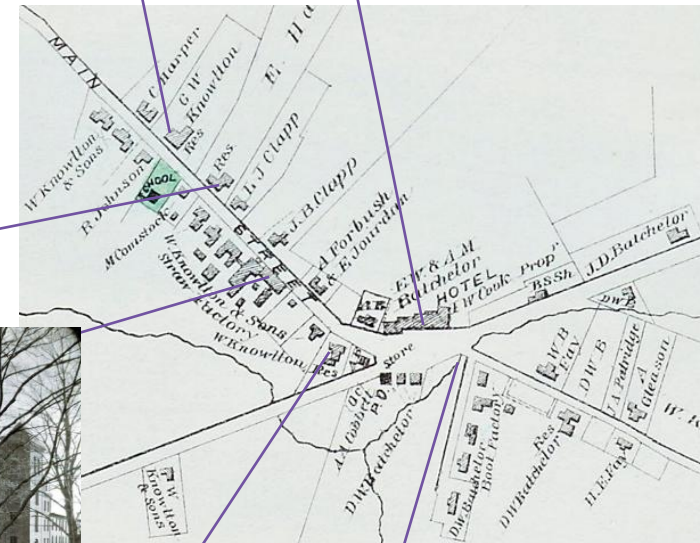
G.W. Knowlton House, 1866



Hotel Pleasant, 1886 (demolished 1961)



D.W. Knowlton House, 1874



## Knowlton Hat Factory, 1850's



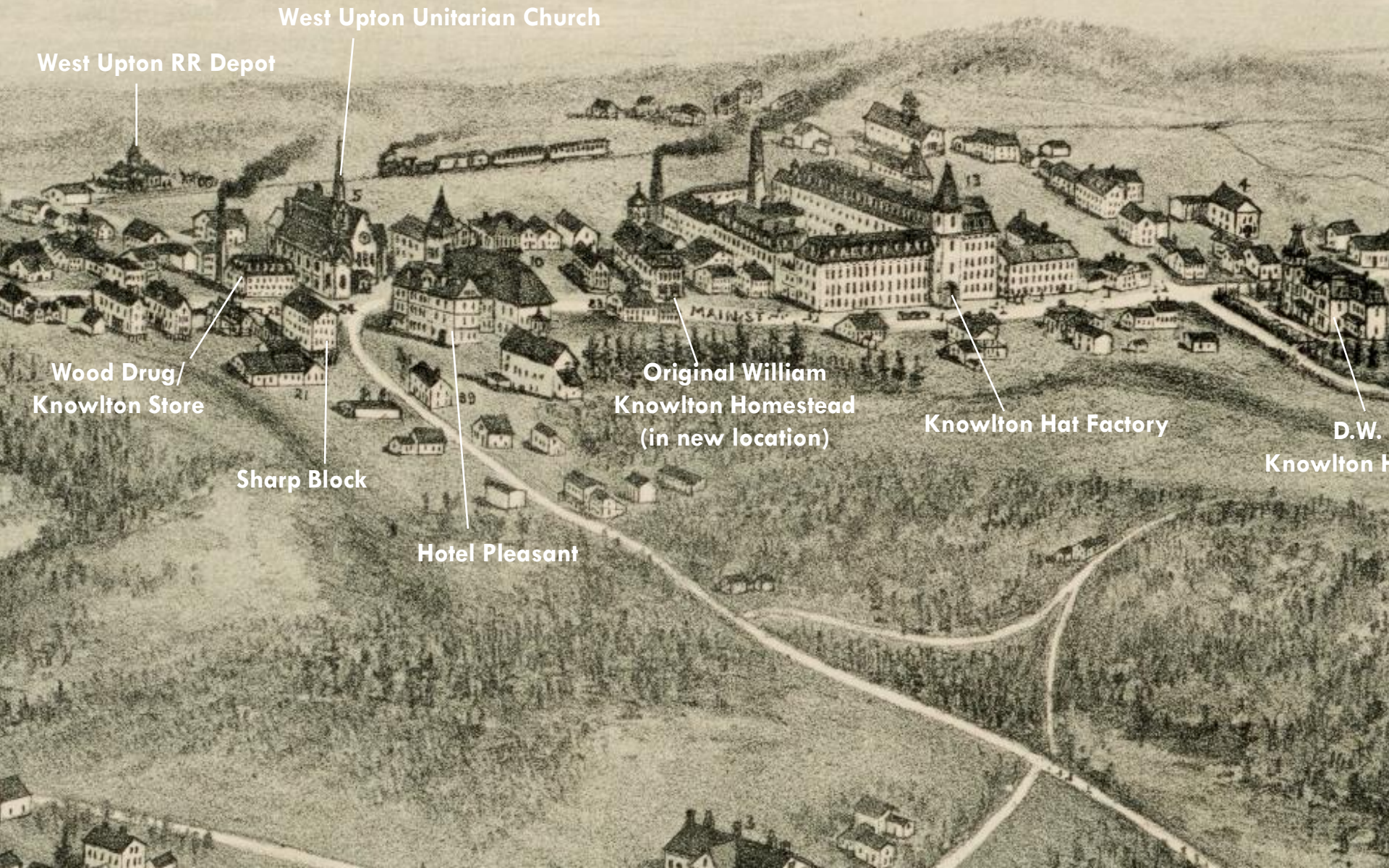
Original William Knowlton Homestead



West Upton Unitarian Church, 1880s



# West Upton, 1888



West Upton Unitarian Church

West Upton RR Depot

Wood Drug/  
Knowlton Store

Sharp Block

Hotel Pleasant

Original William  
Knowlton Homestead  
(in new location)

Knowlton Hat Factory

D.W.  
Knowlton H





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 Hat Factory**

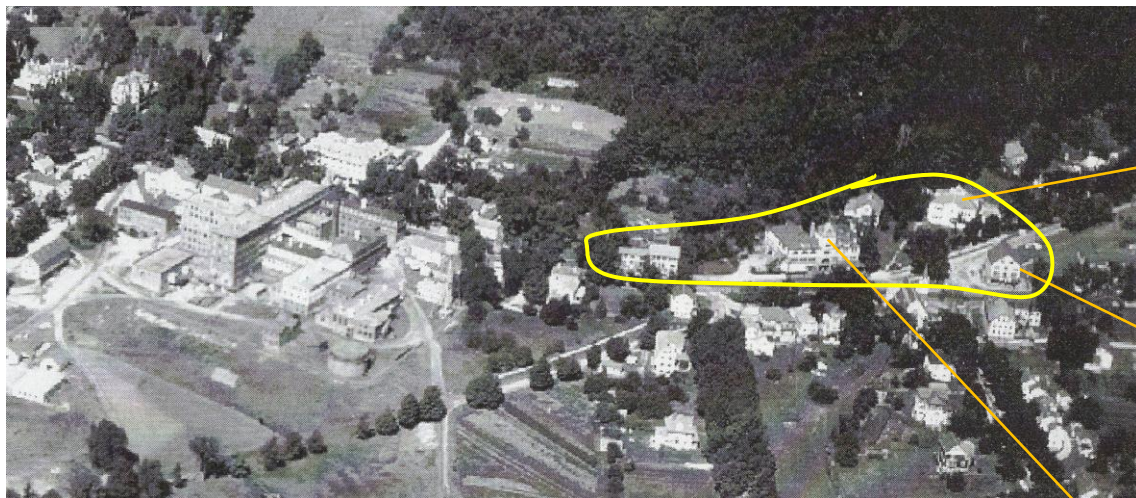
**KNOWLTON & SONS, STRAW GOODS MFG.**

Water Retention: This factory, located on the corner of Main St. and Hartford Turnpike, is a large building, 100 feet long and 40 feet wide. It is a two-story building, with the ground floor used for storage and the upper floor for manufacturing. The building is made of brick and has a gabled roof. The factory is owned by Knowlton & Sons, who have been in the straw goods business for many years. The factory is a well-known landmark in the area and is a source of pride for the community.

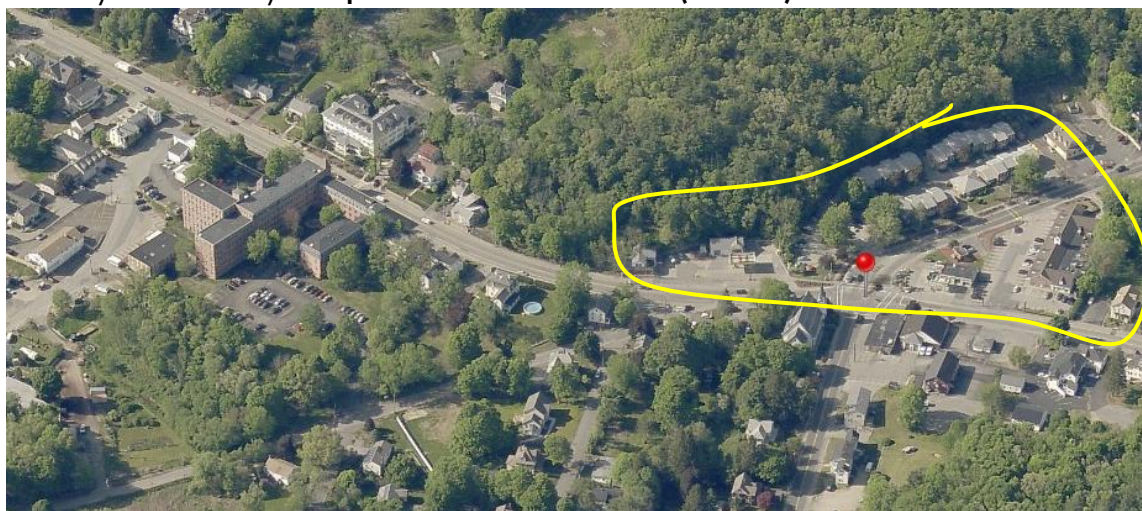
**1910**



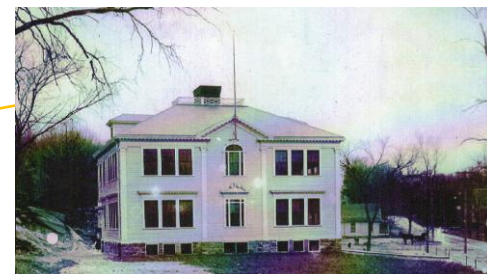
# Main St., Hartford Ave, Maple St. area has changed most



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



Several prominent buildings removed mid-20<sup>th</sup> 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

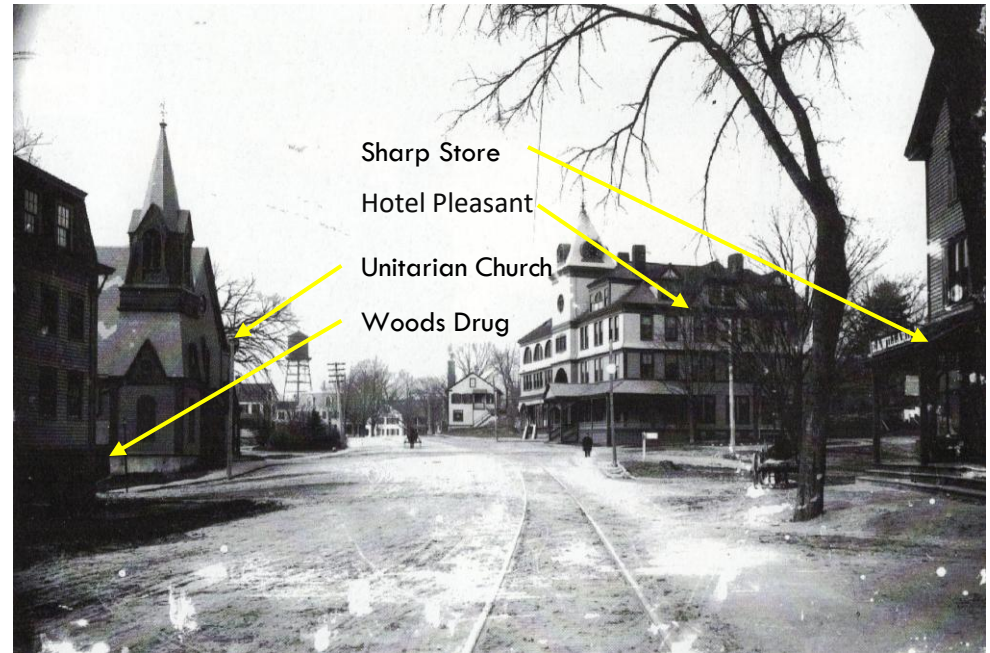


Hotel Pleasant 1886 (demolished 1961)



# 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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



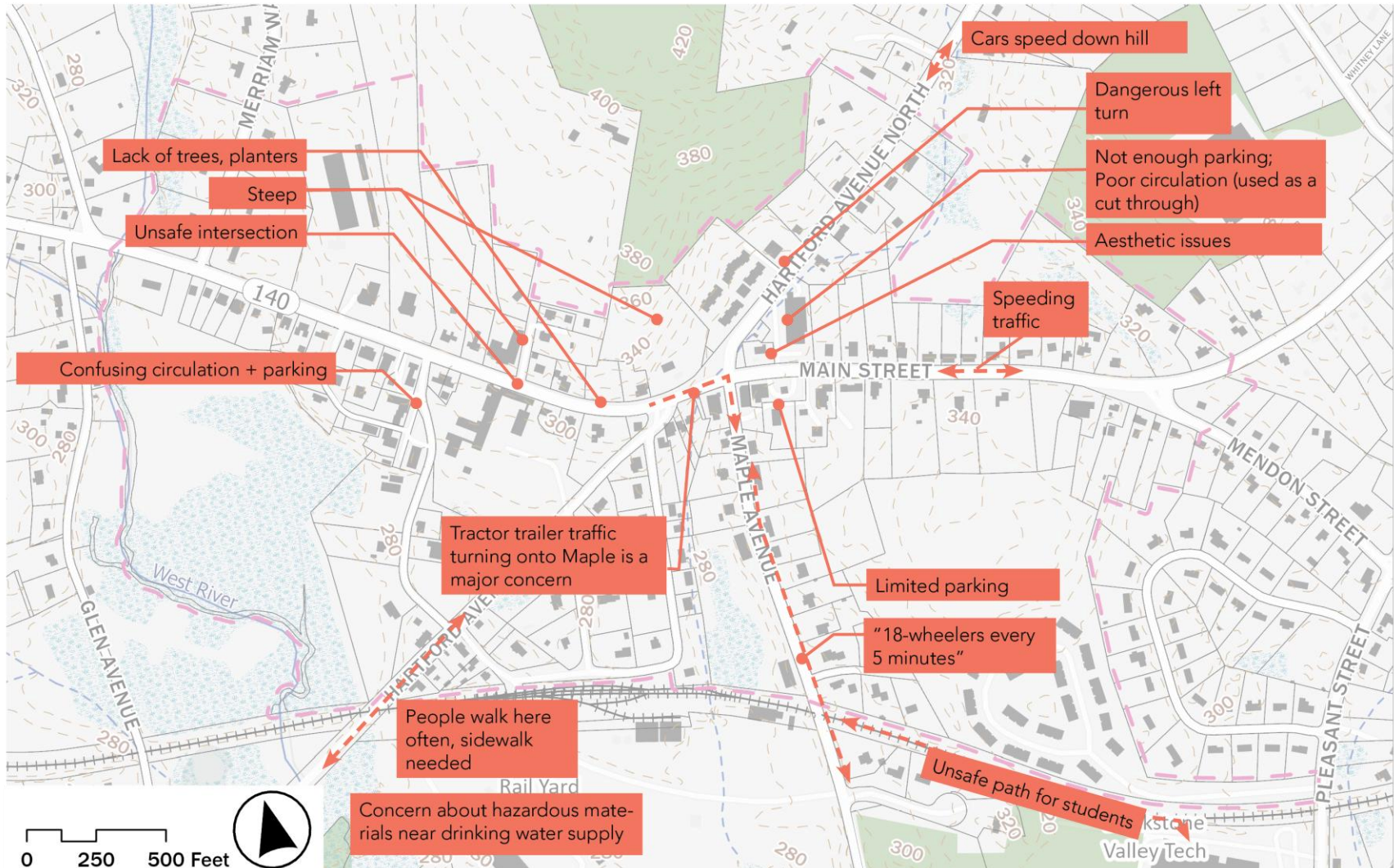


# Weaknesses

Weaknesses

Not enough crosswalks

Doesn't always feel safe for pedestrians, especially in inclement weather





## General Comments

Want off-road bike trail

Want walkable shops and services

Restore/beautify historic buildings

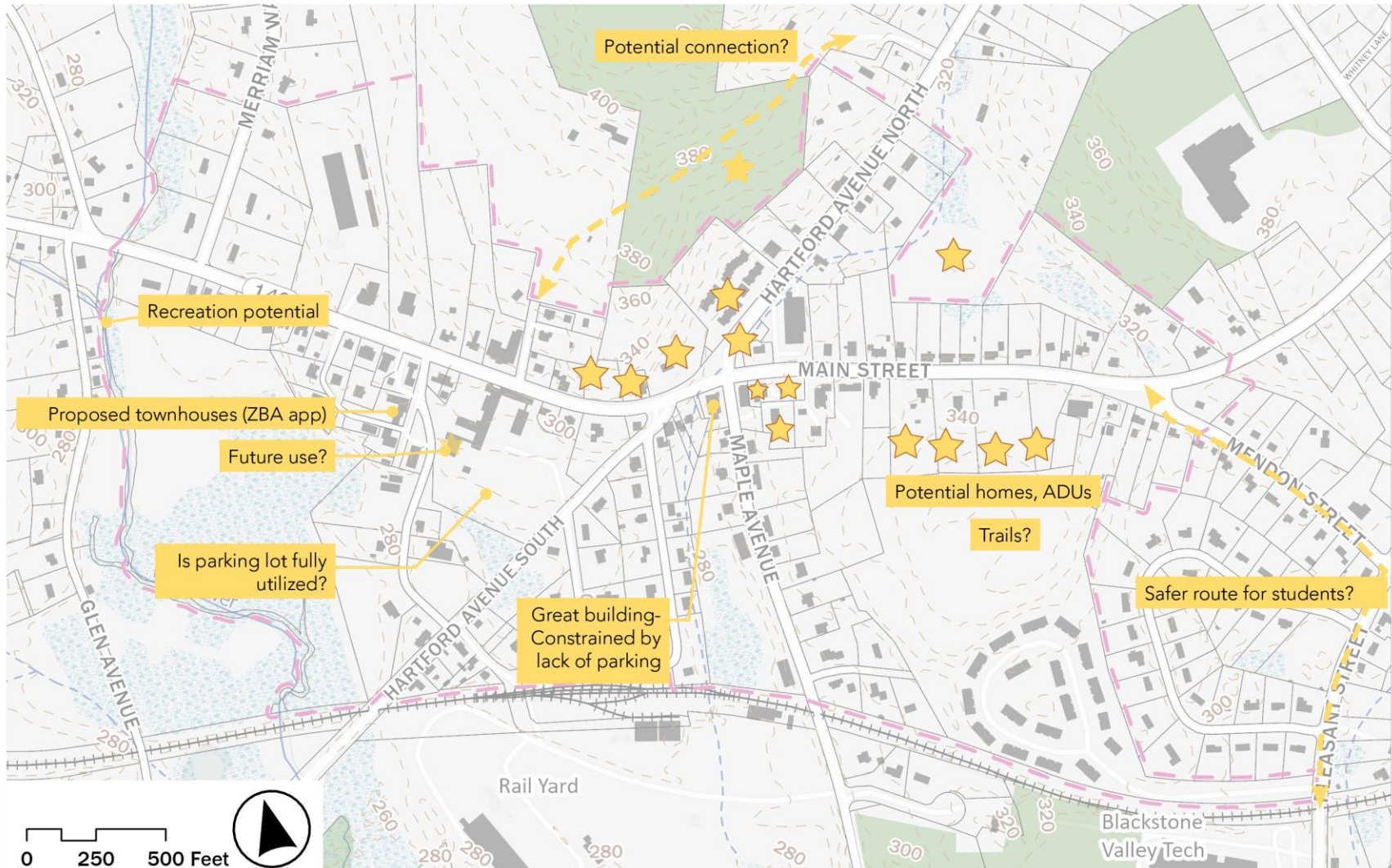
Need sheltered public spaces

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

Would like to see more historical markers throughout W. Upton

# Opportunities

- Opportunities
- Opportunity Parcels





# Zoning

Parcels

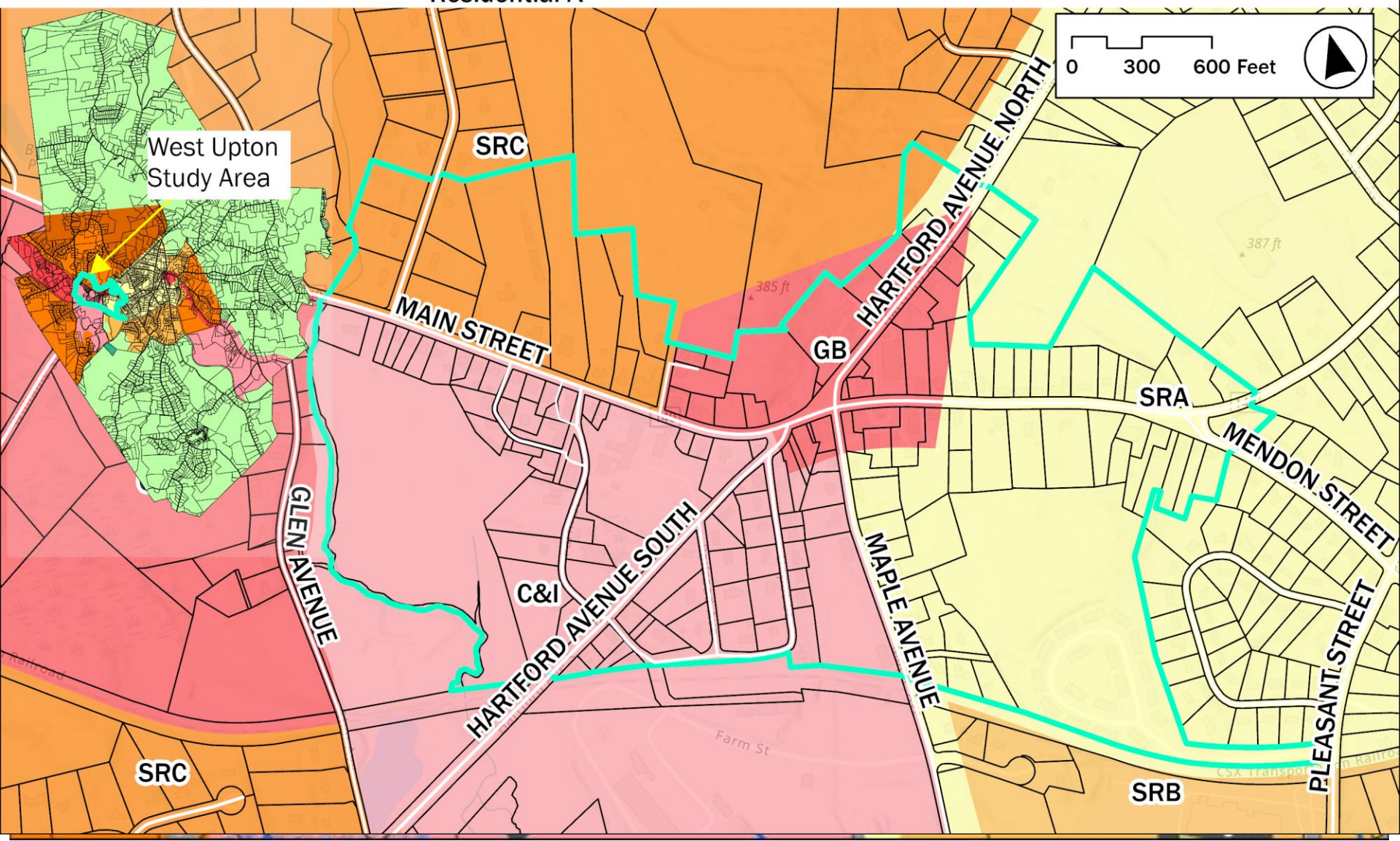
## Zoning Boundaries

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-list, 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

	Minimum Lot Dimension (Note 1)		Minimum Setback Requirements			Maximum Building Height		Maximum Coverage Including Accessory Building
District	<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	
<b>GB</b>	15,000	100	30 (Note 2)	10 (Notes 3 & 8)	20 (Notes 4 & 8)	2	25 (Note 7)	40%
<b>C&amp;I</b>	15,000	100	30 (Note 2)	20 (Notes 3 & 8)	20 (Notes 4 & 8)	1	25 (Note 7)	40%
<b>SRA</b>	15,000	100 (Note 2)	25 (Note 2)	10 (Note 8)	30 (Note 8)	2.5	30 (Note 7)	30%
<b>SRC</b>	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

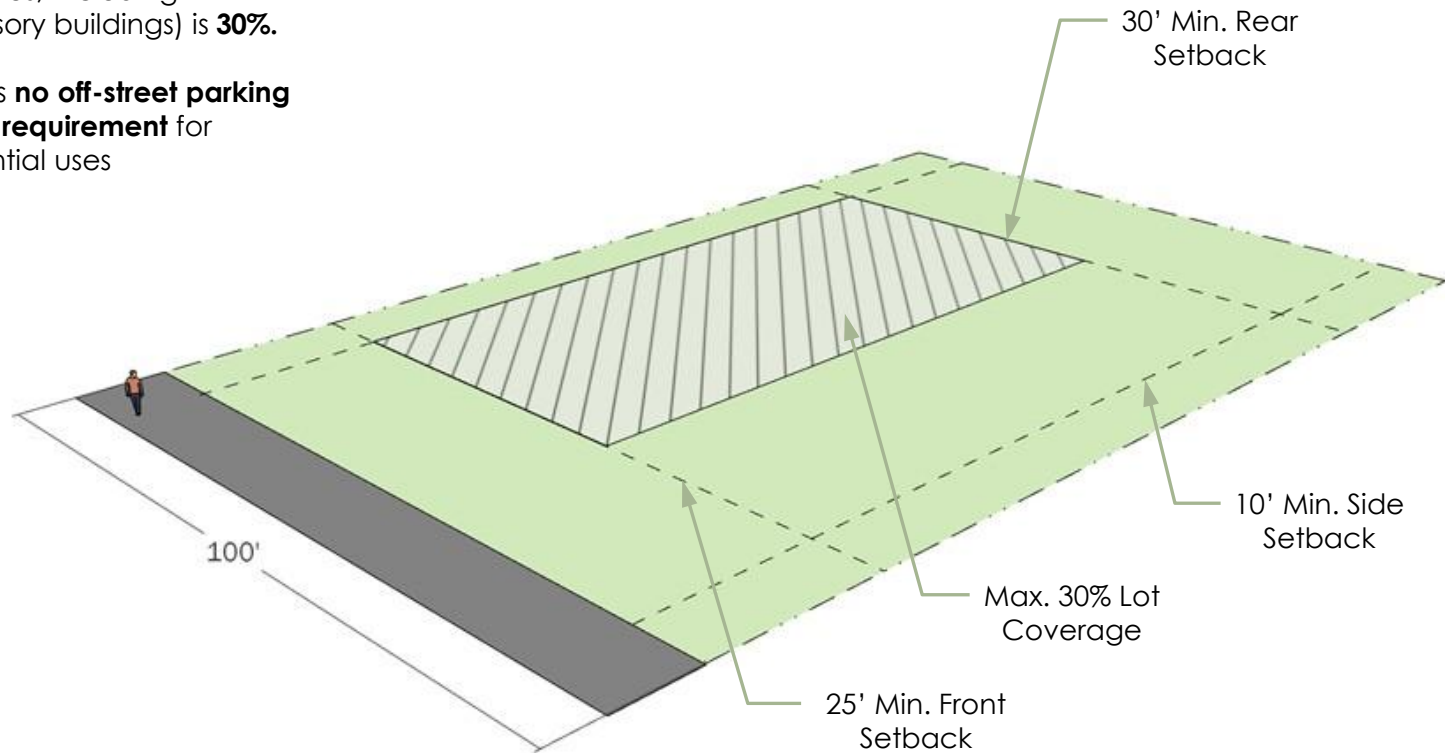
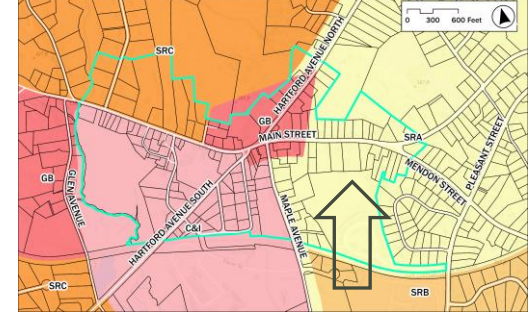


Diagram based on 15,000 sq ft lot

# SRA

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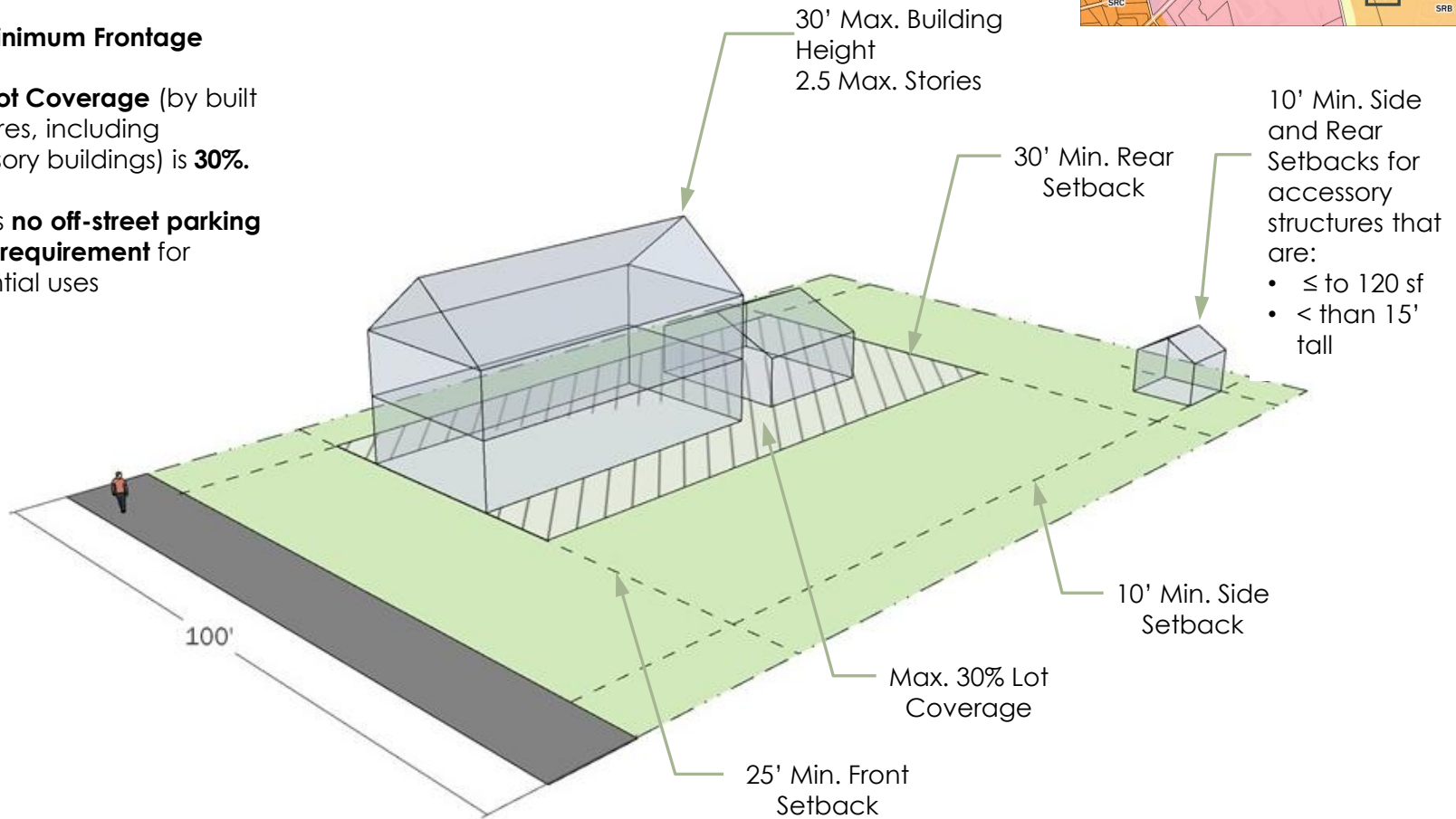


Diagram based on:

- 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

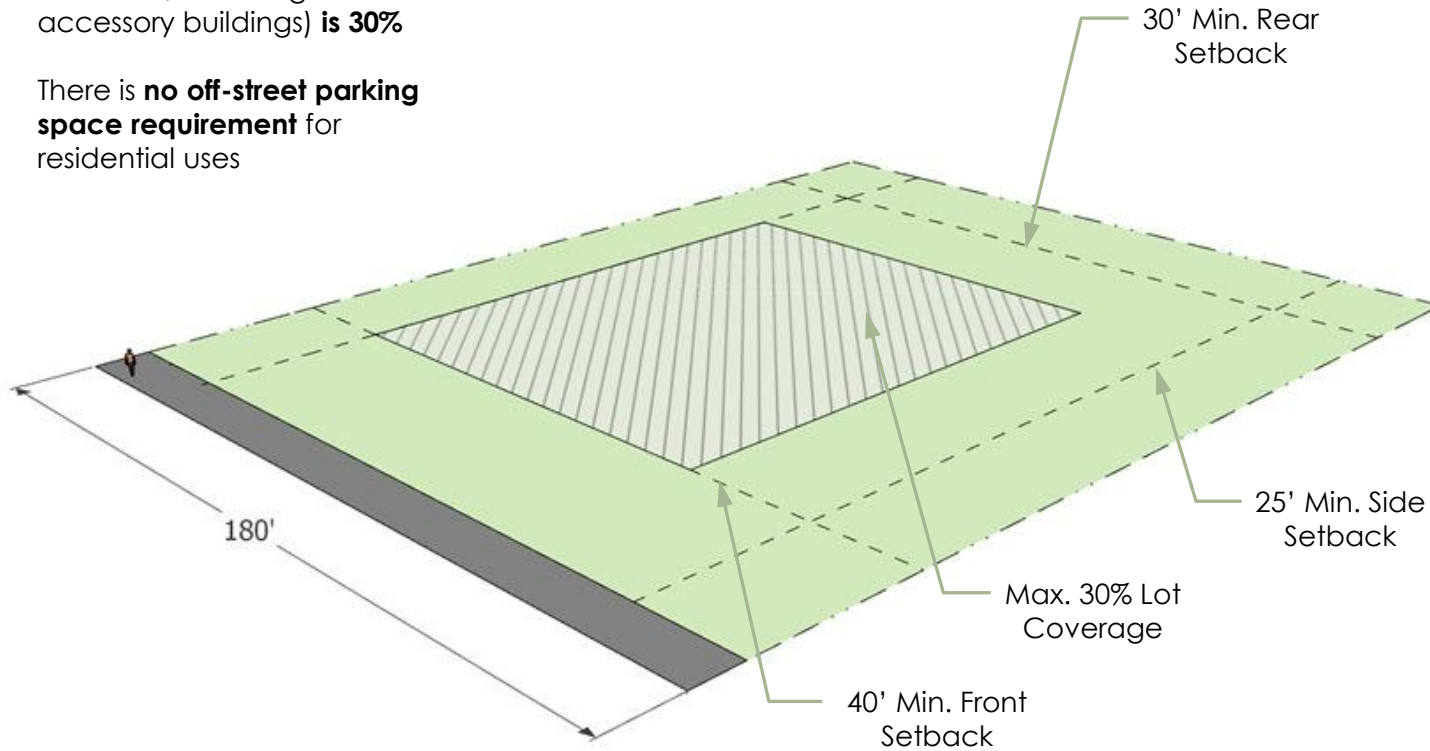
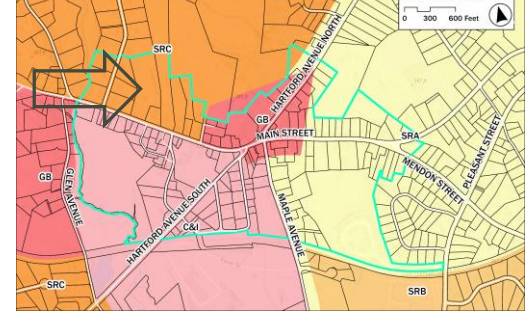


Diagram based on 40,000 sf lot





# 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

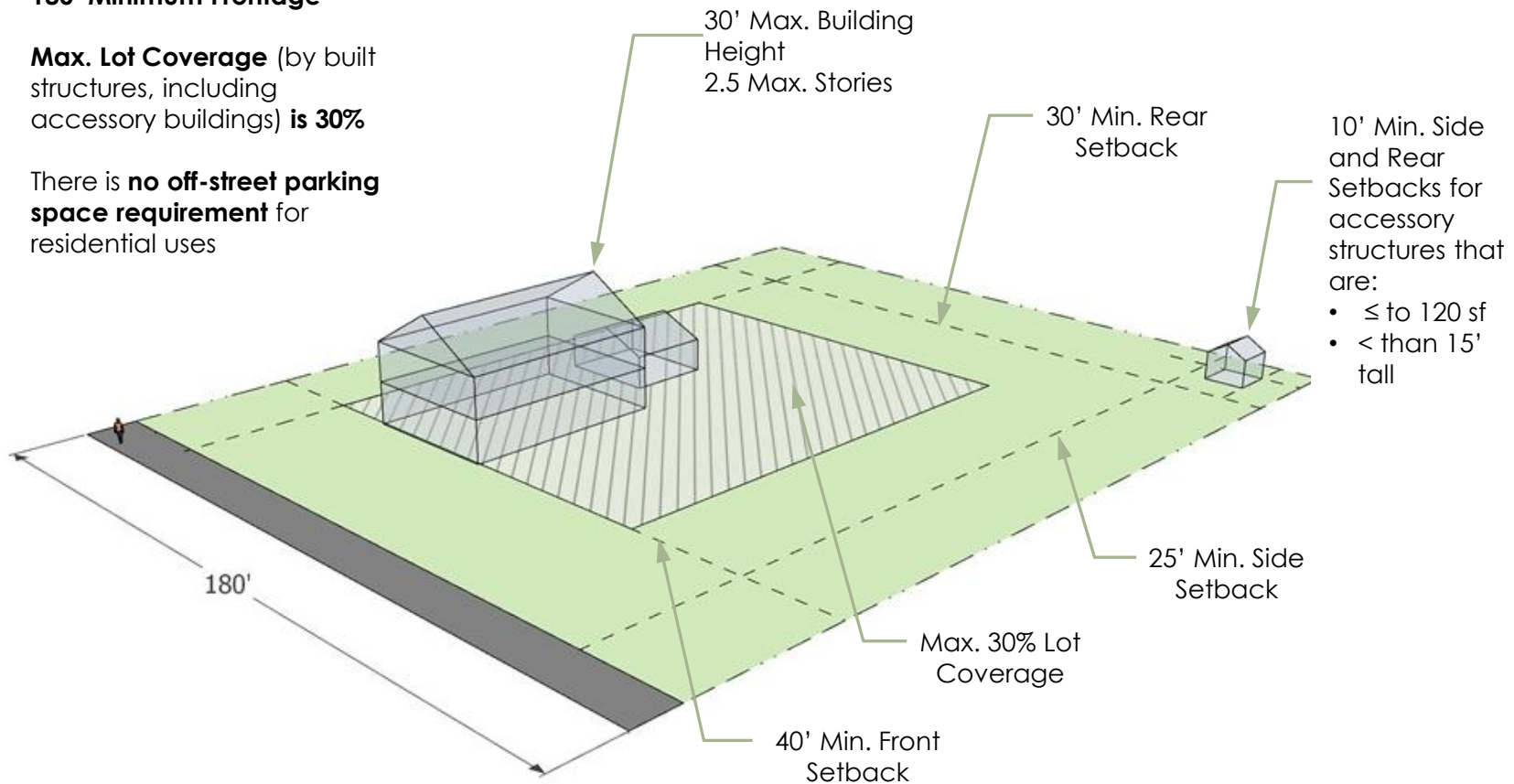
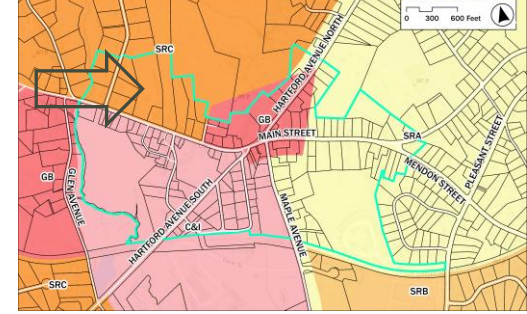


Diagram based on:

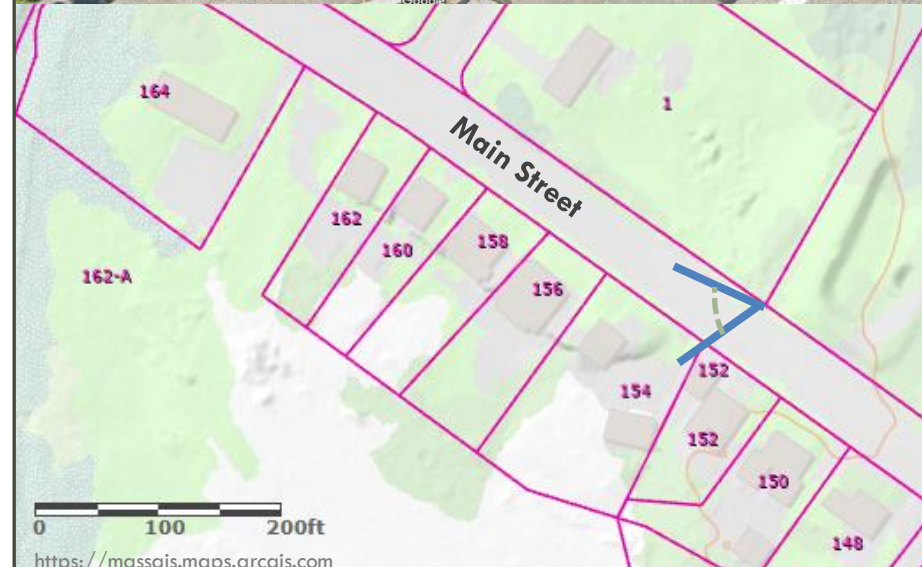
- 40,000 sf lot
- 3,500 sf single-family home with 2-car garage and garden shed



## Existing Zoning Characteristic of:



## Historic residential area of West Upton Village Center:





# GB – Mixed Use Build-out

**15,000 SF Minimum Lot Area\***

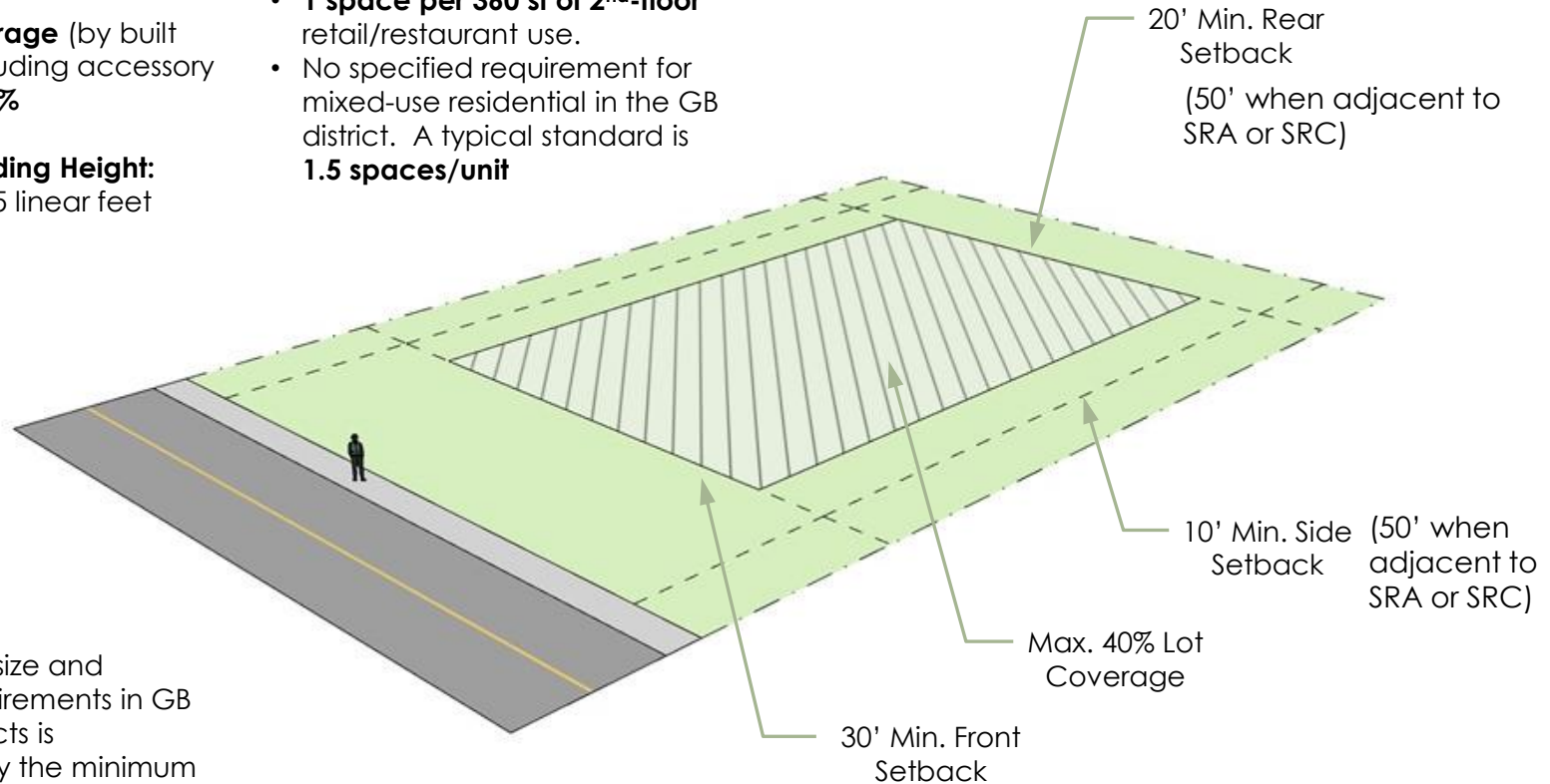
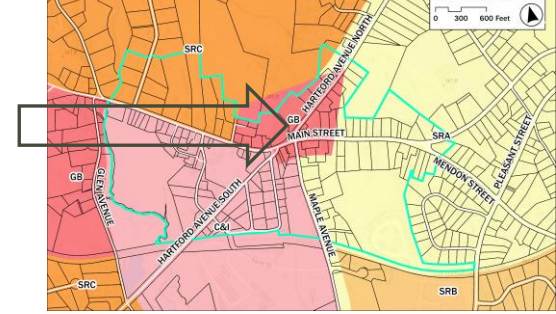
**100' Minimum Frontage\***

**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 2<sup>nd</sup>-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\***

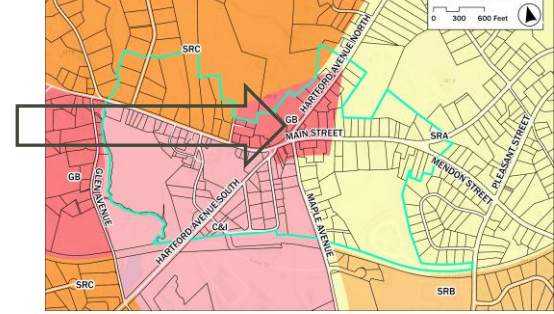
**100' Minimum Frontage\***

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

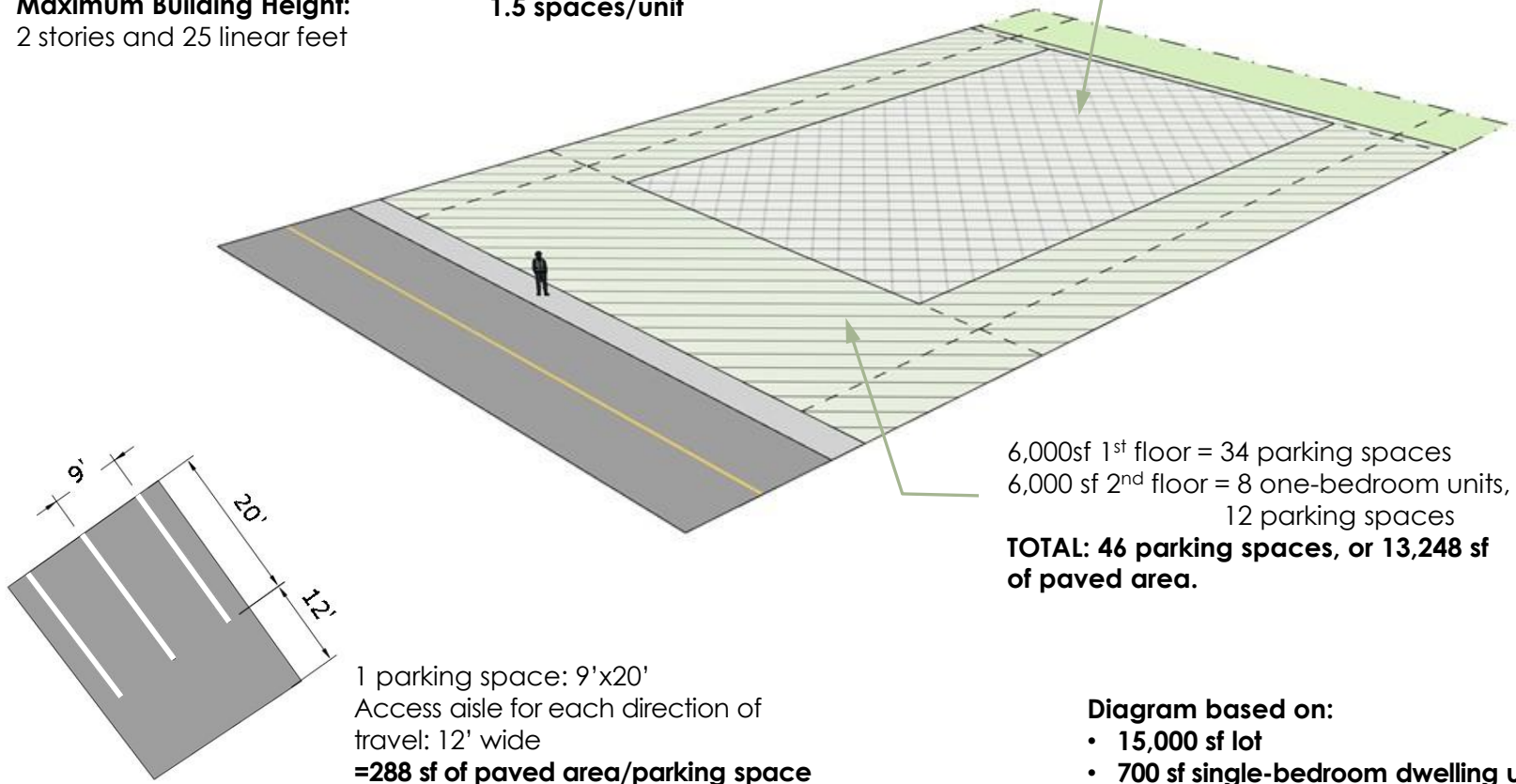
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- No specified requirement for mixed-use residential in the GB district. A typical standard is **1.5 spaces/unit**



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\***

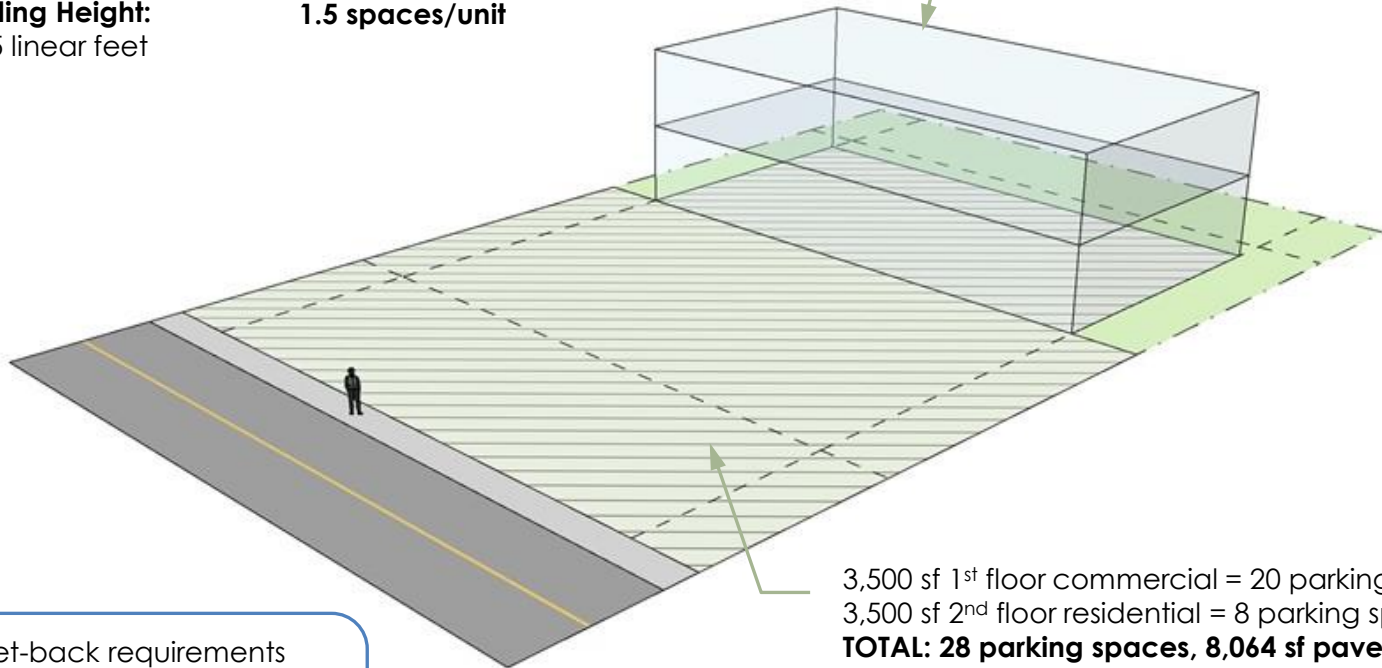
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- **1 space per 180 sf of ground-floor** retail or restaurant use, **plus**
- **1 space per 360 sf of 2<sup>nd</sup>-floor** retail/restaurant use.
- No specified requirement for mixed-use residential in the GB district. A typical standard is **1.5 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 1<sup>st</sup> floor commercial = 20 parking spaces  
3,500 sf 2<sup>nd</sup> 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\***

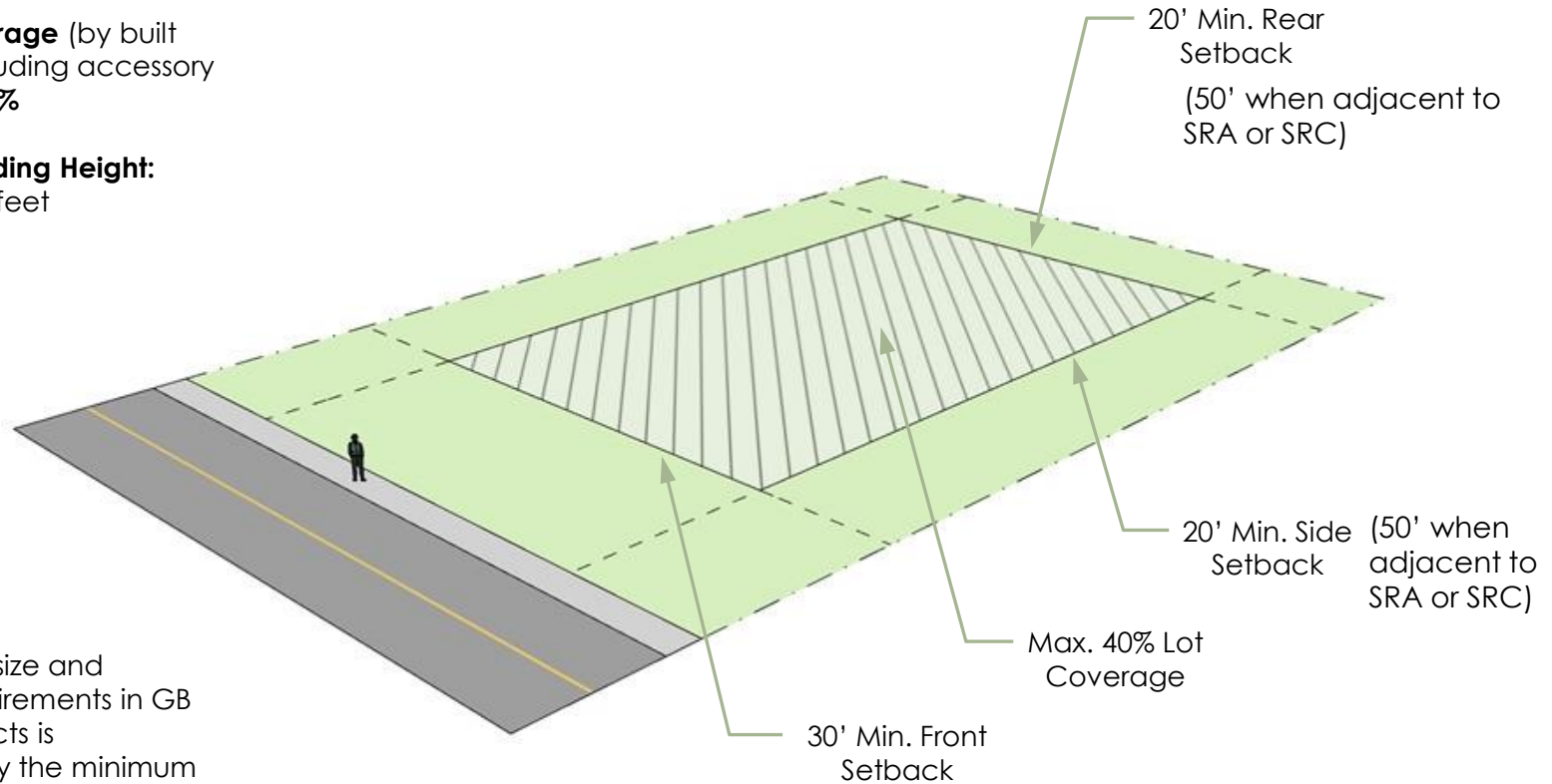
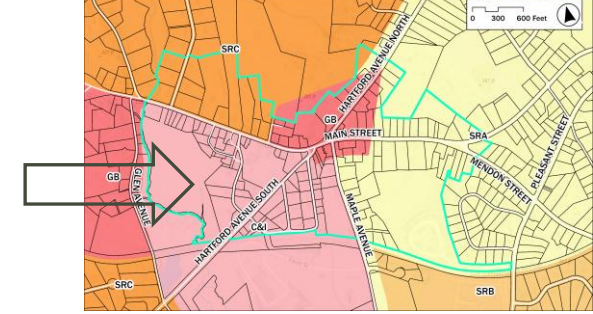
**100' Minimum Frontage\***

**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\***

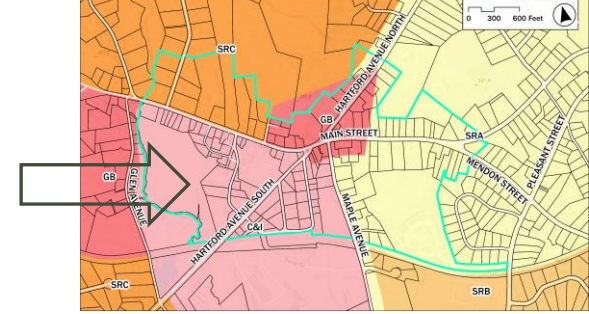
**100' Minimum Frontage\***

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

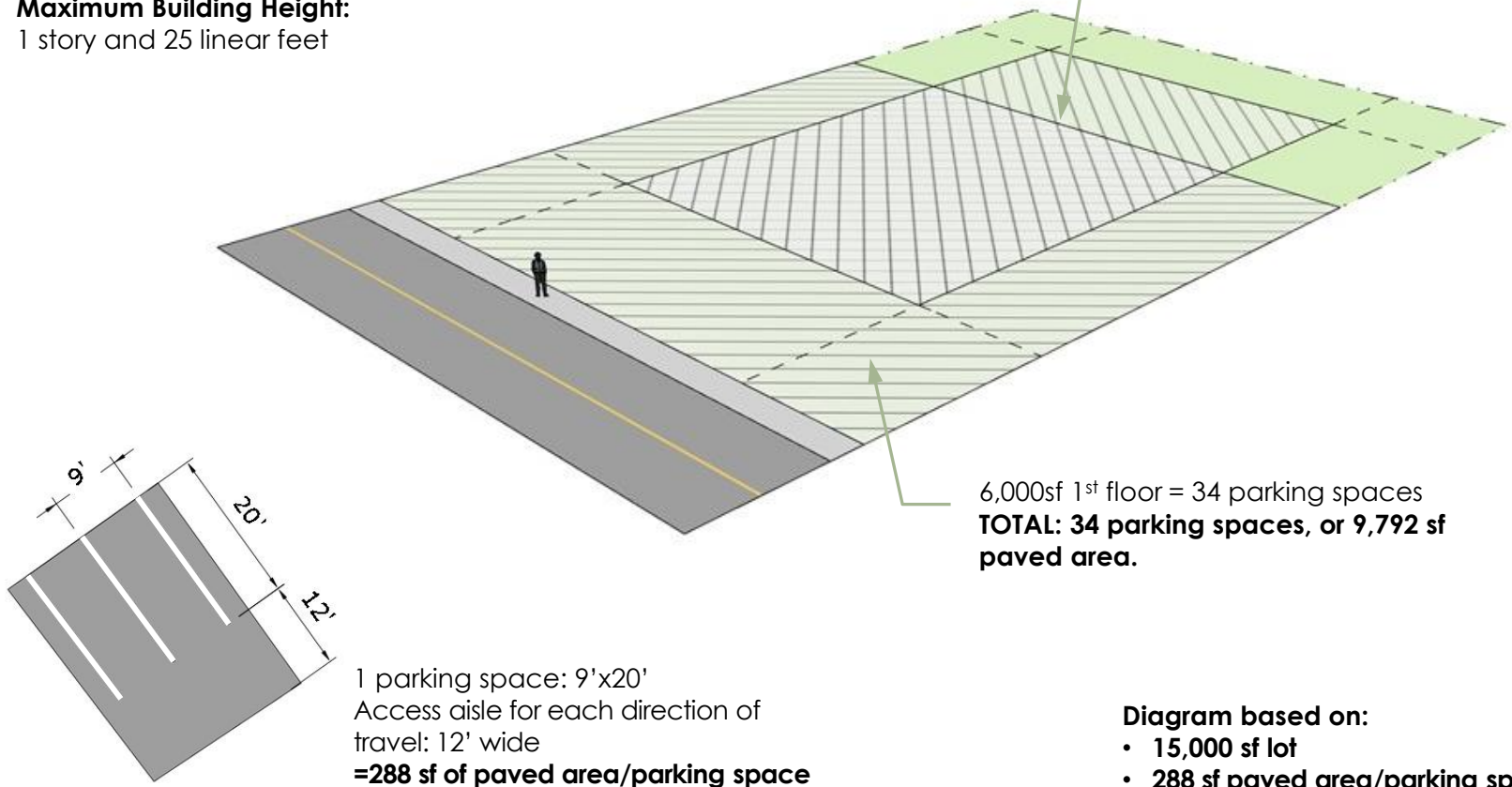
**Maximum Building Height:**

1 story and 25 linear feet

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



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



**Diagram based on:**

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

# C&I – Commercial Use

**15,000 SF Minimum Lot Area\***

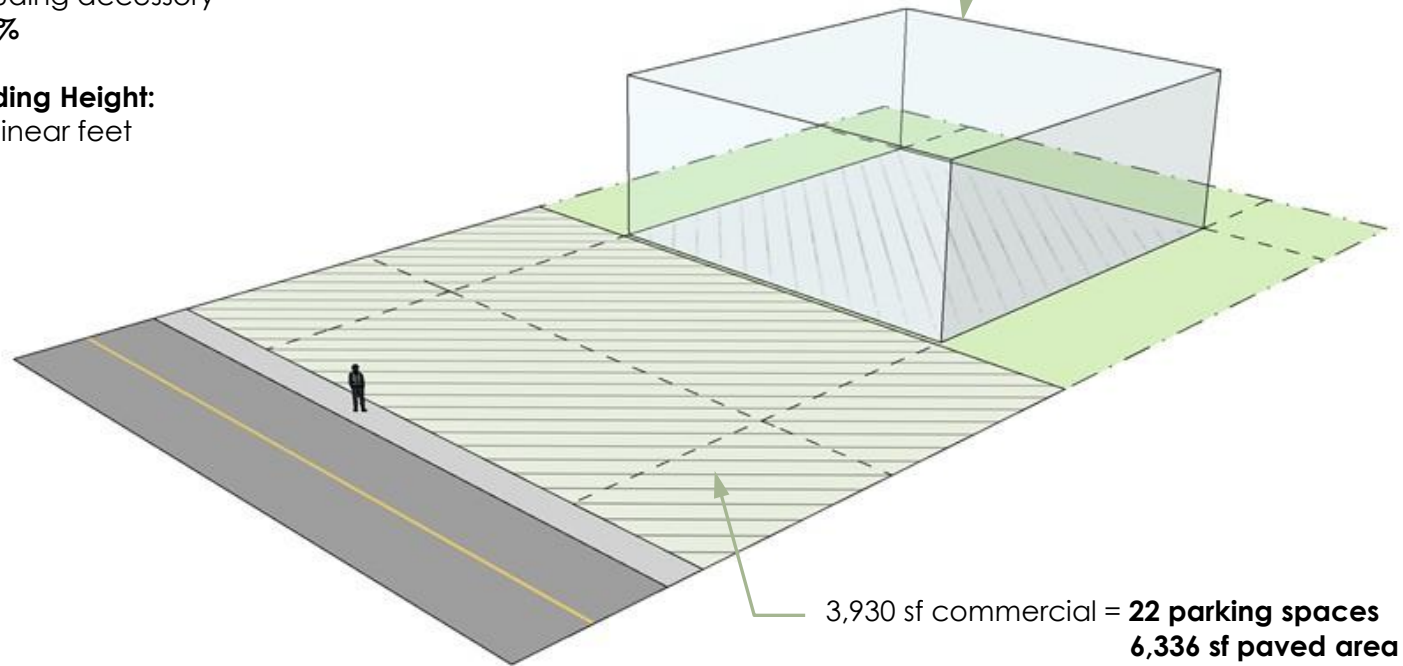
**100' Minimum Frontage\***

**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**

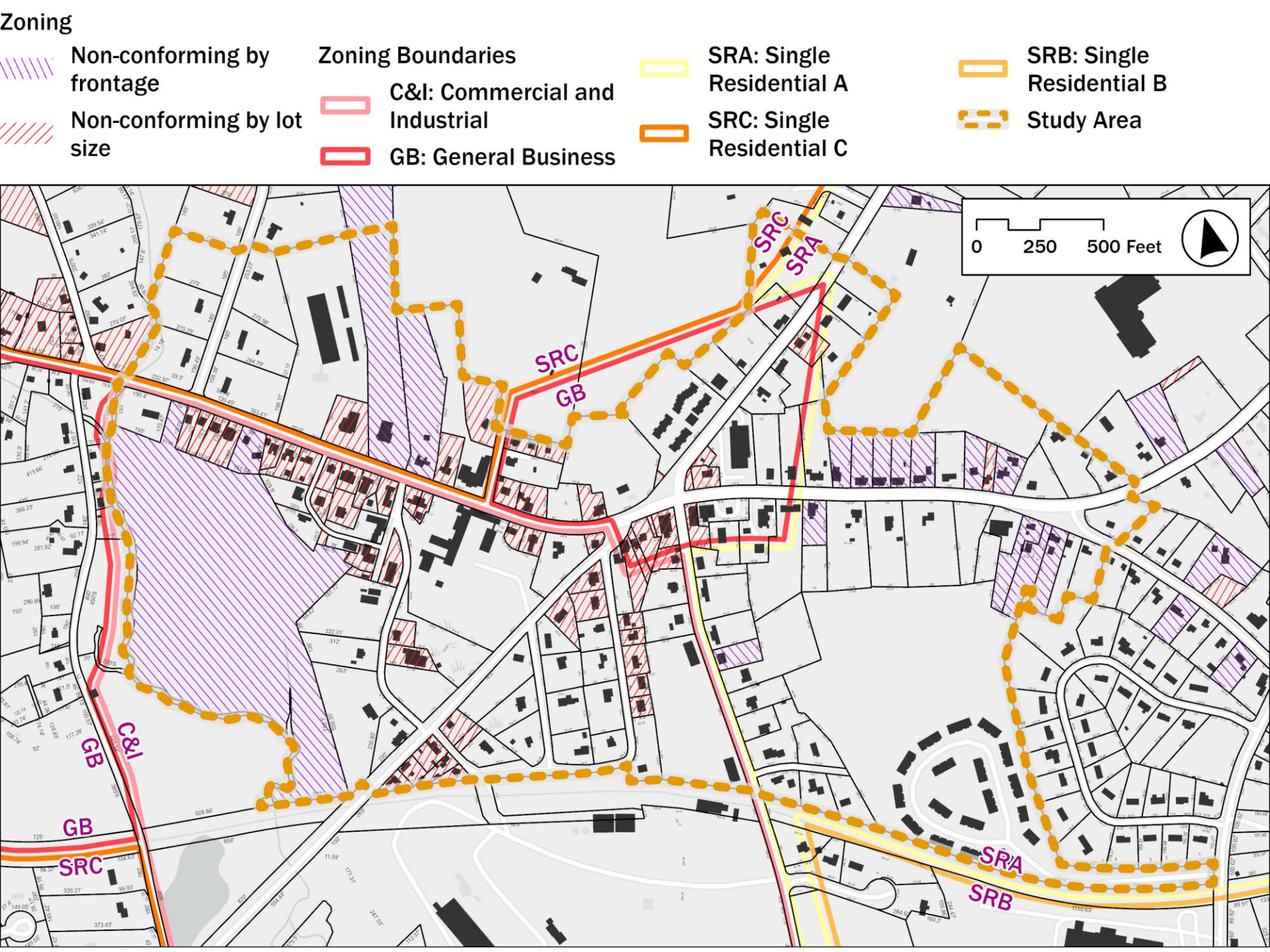


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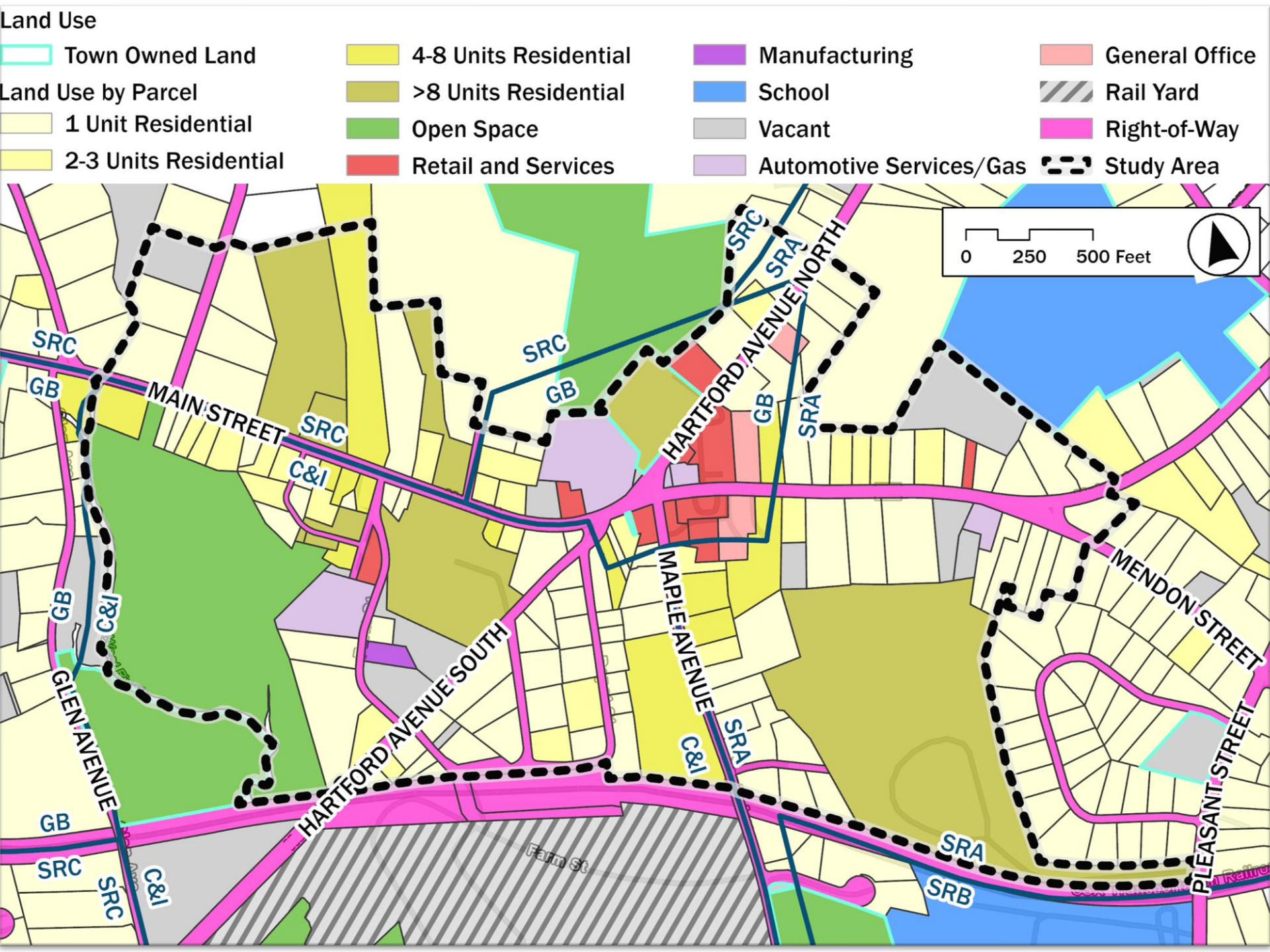
**Diagram based on:**

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





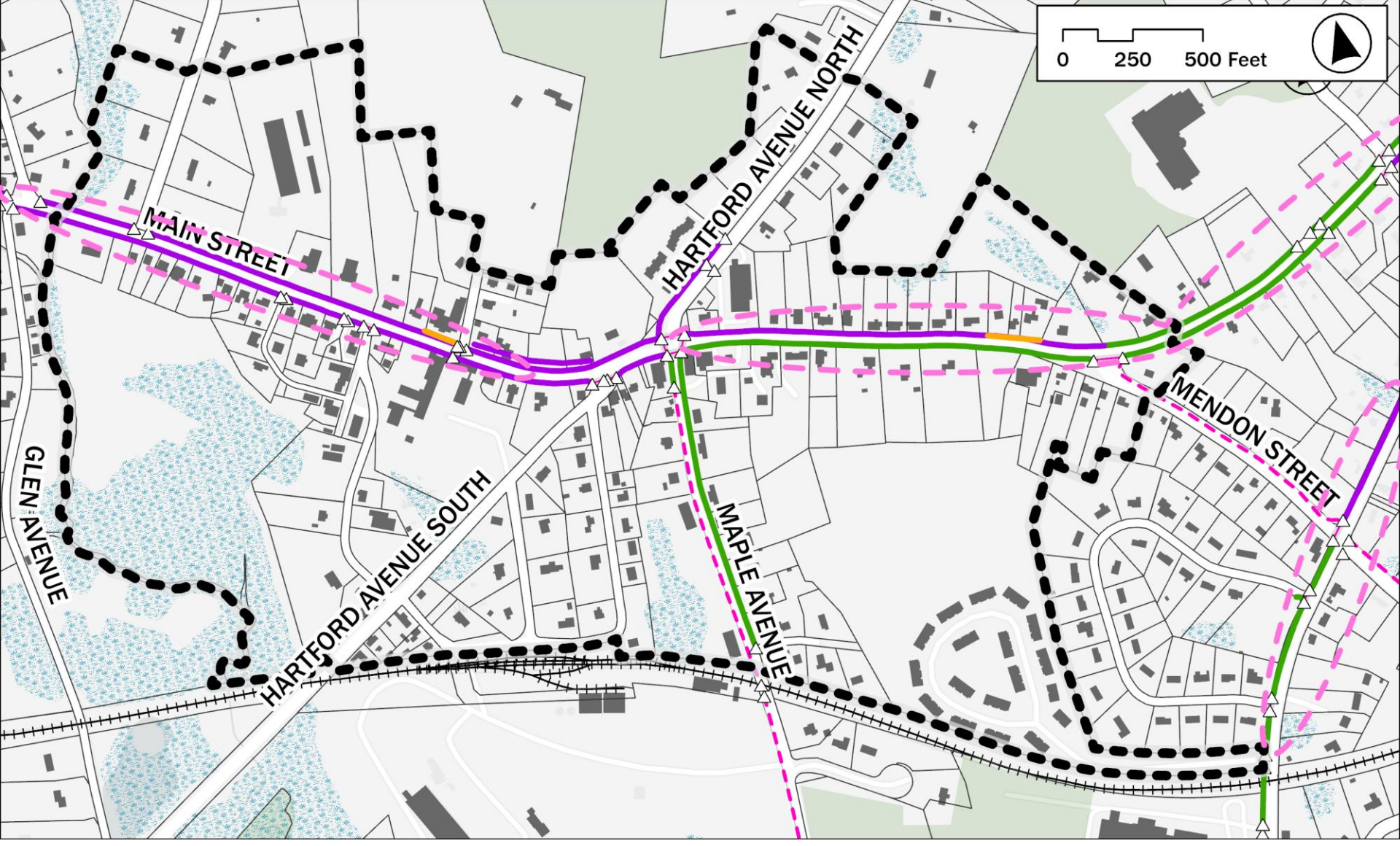
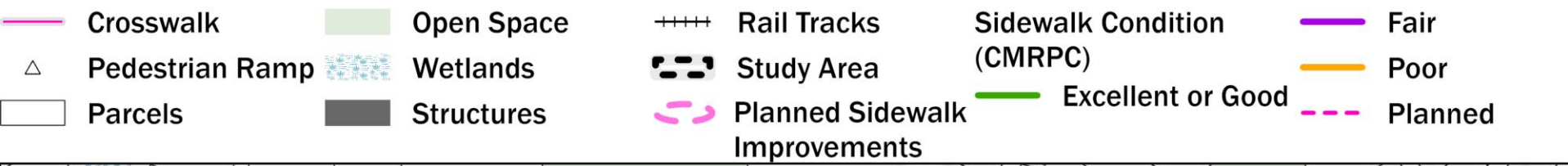






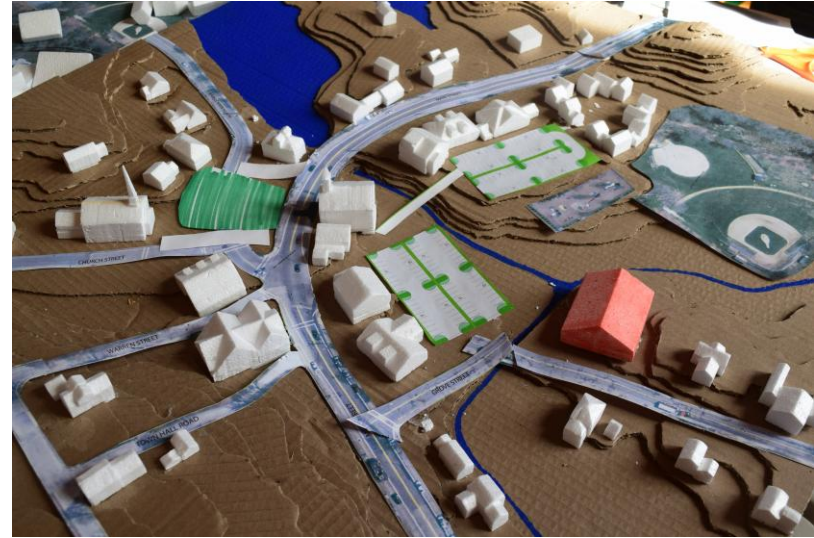


# Pedestrian Infrastructure



# Public Workshop

- September 13<sup>th</sup>, 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

## **Dodson & Flinker**

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