

# West Upton Visioning Project

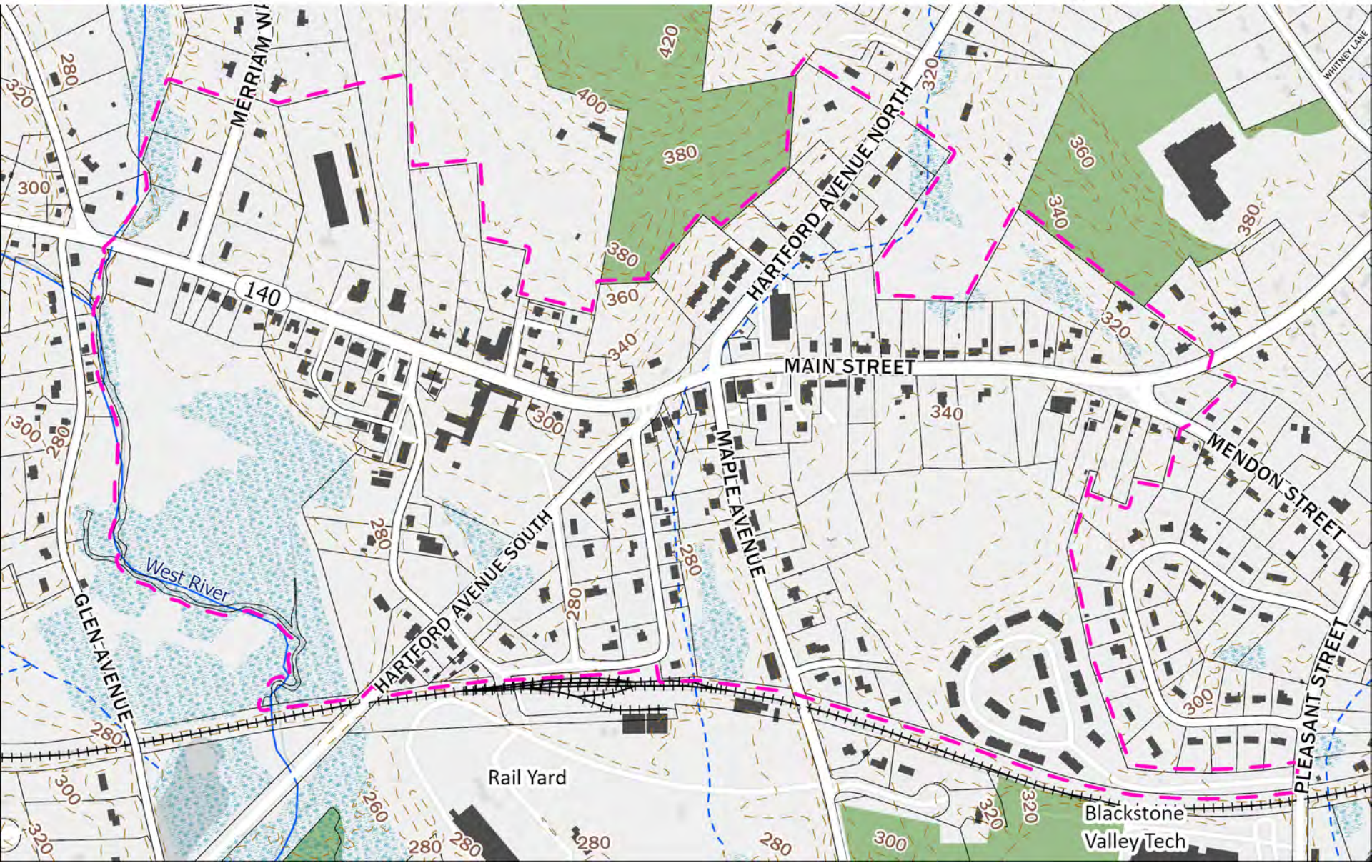
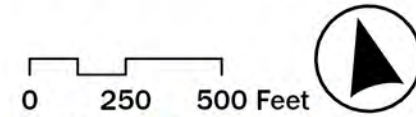


- Presentation (30 mins)
- Q&A (15 minutes)
- Interactive Activities (60 minutes)
- Group Discussion and Visioning (30 minutes)
- Wrap up

# Project Overview



Parcels  
Study Area



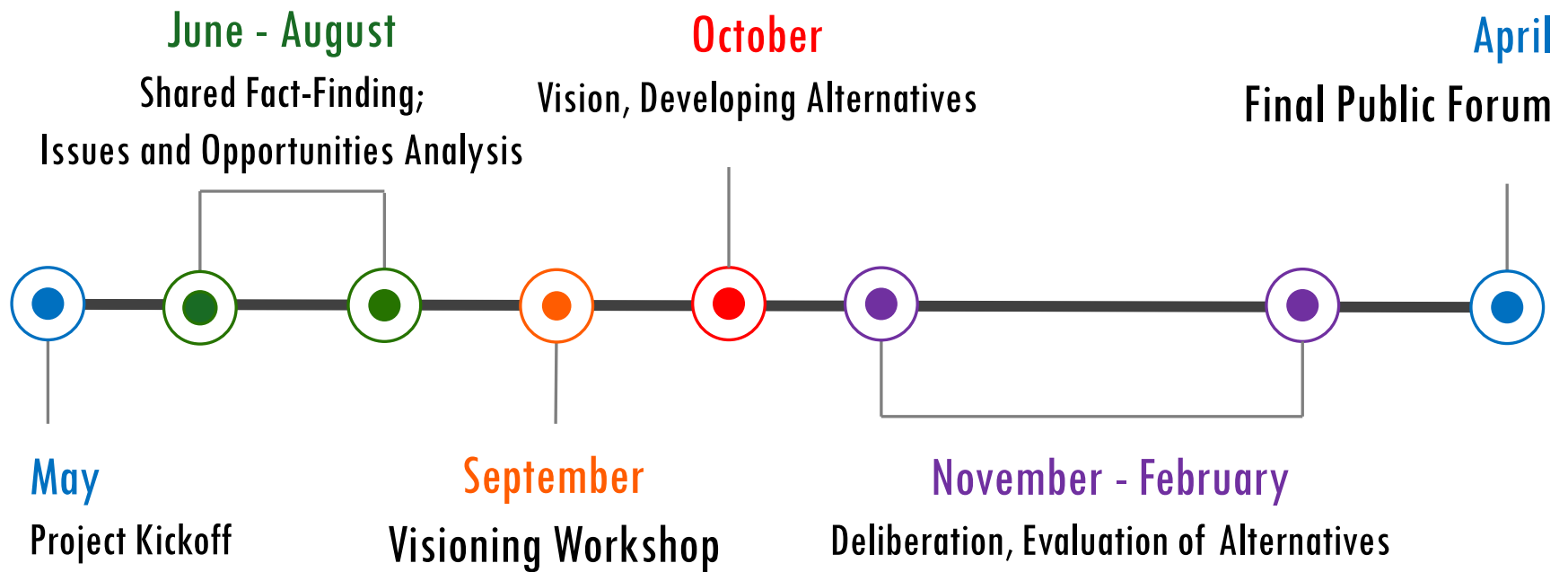
## **Purpose**

Develop a long-term plan for West Upton Center to guide its future.

## **Funding**

Economic Development Committee - EOHLC Chapter 268 of the Acts of 2022 Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund Earmark

# Timeline





834179  
Main Street, West Upton, Mass.

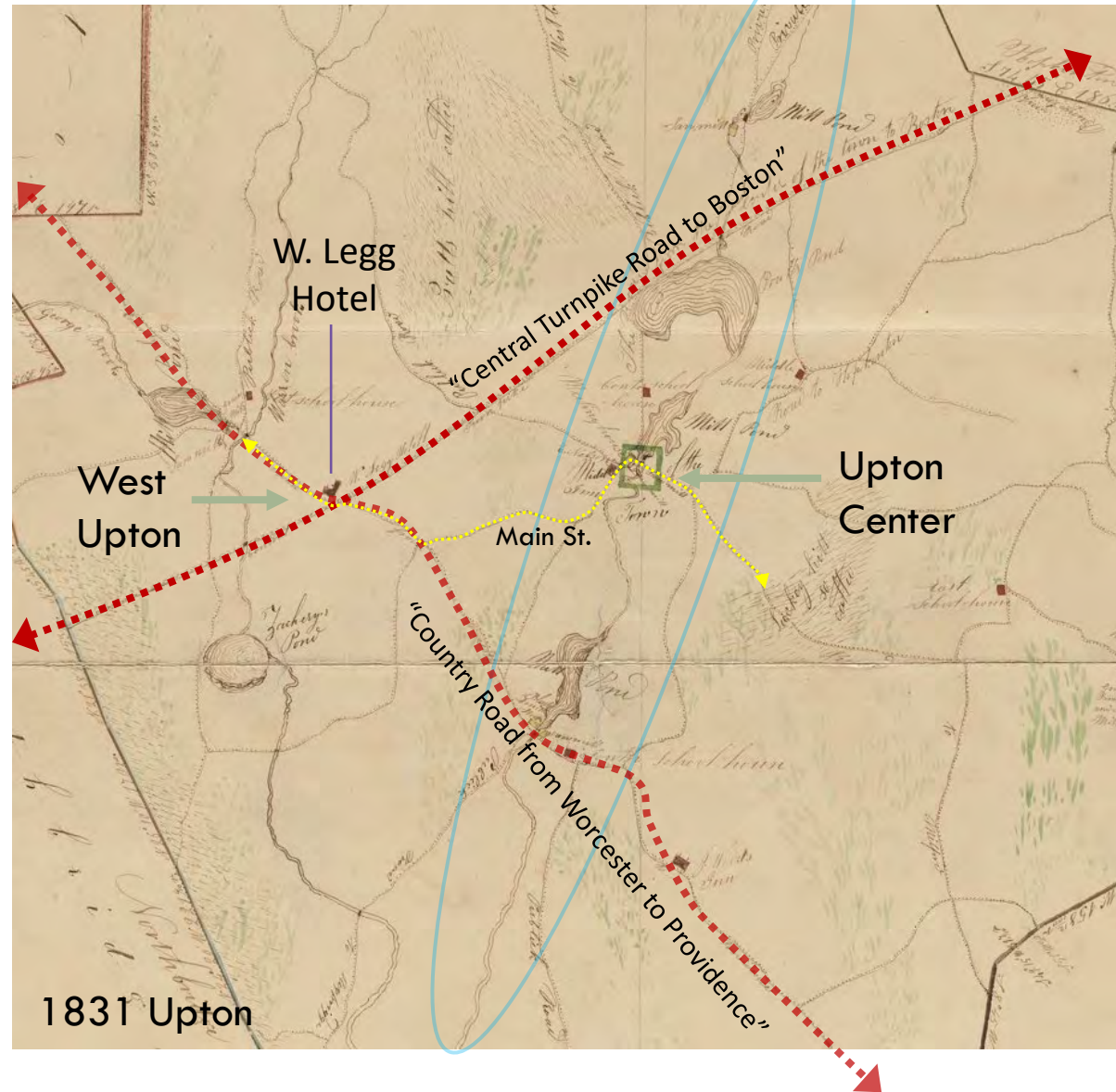
# HISTORY

- What role has West Upton served in the town throughout history? What should its role be in the future?
- Which buildings need to be preserved to maintain the integrity of West Upton?
- Which existing buildings or building elements are the best precedents for future development in West Upton?



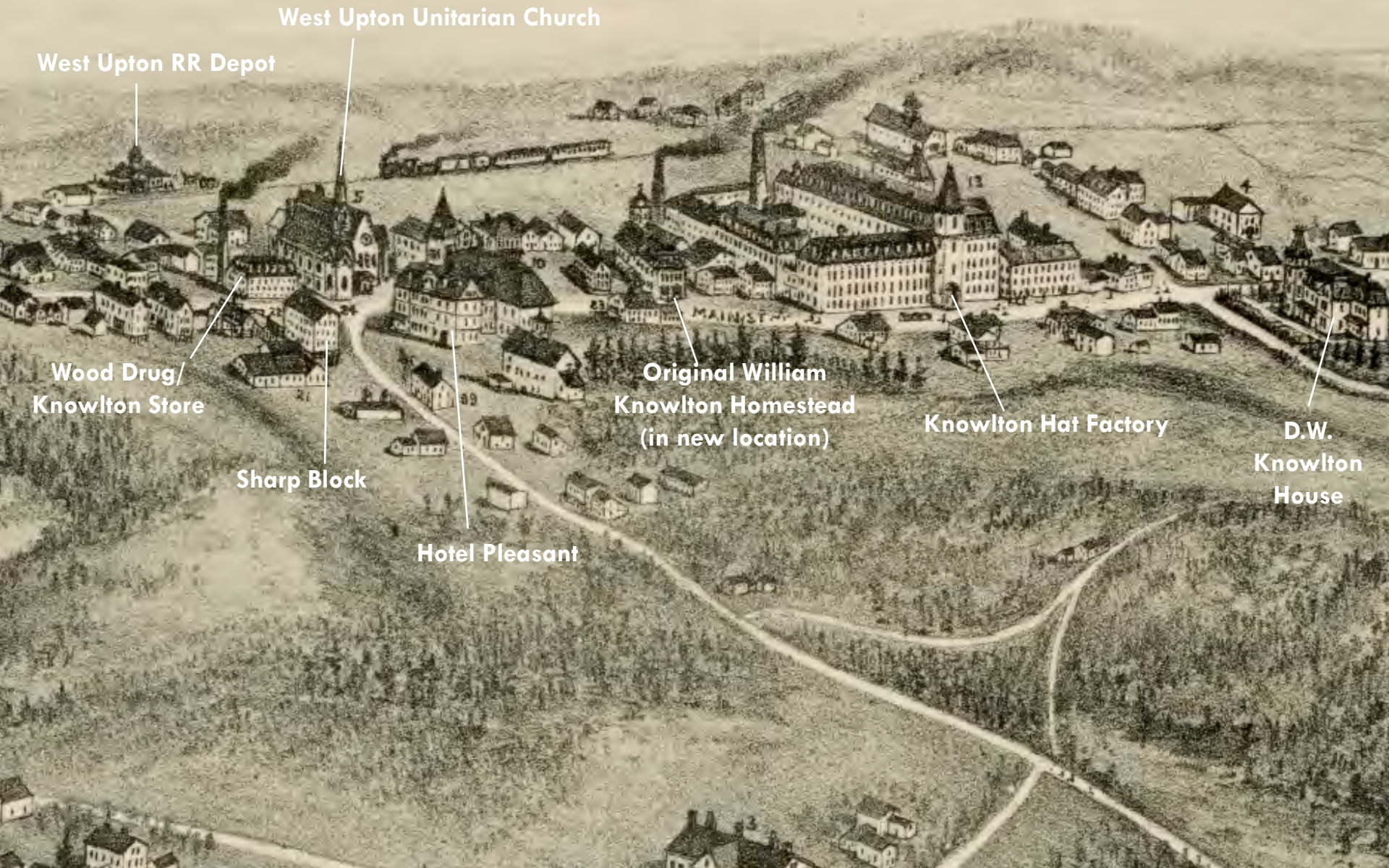
# Early growth in West Upton was transportation-related

- Established as a village in 1735; home to farmers, millers, tanners, weavers, homesteaders
- 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





# 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  
House



# West Upton, 2025



Rail yard

West Upton Unitarian Church

Original William  
Knowlton Homestead  
(in new location)

Milhaus Apartments  
(former Knowlton Hat  
Factory)



# 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

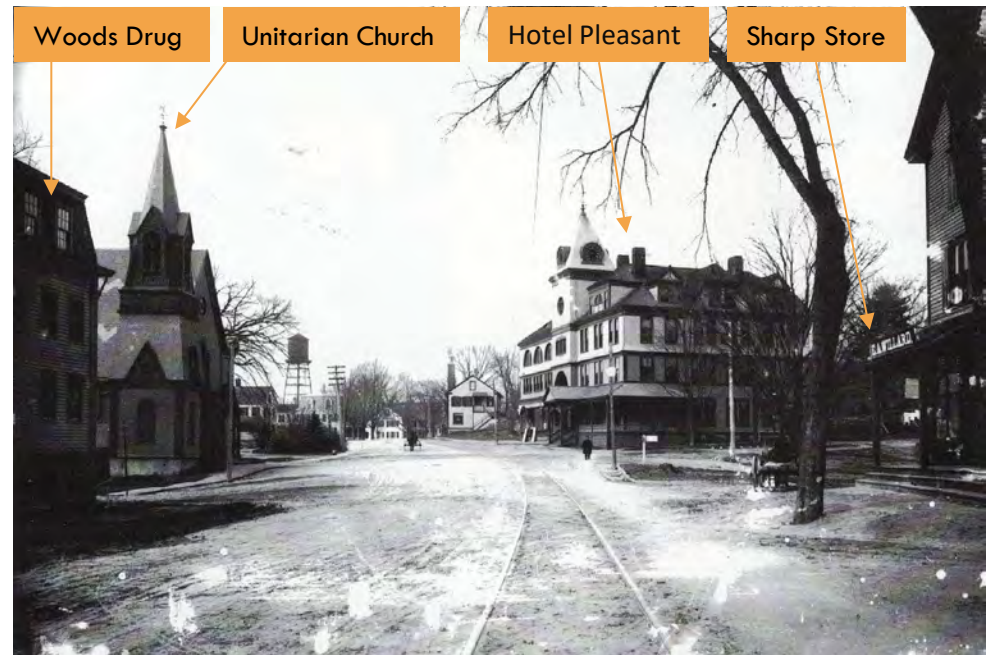


Hotel Pleasant 1886 (demolished 1961)



# Pedestrian to Auto-Oriented

- West Upton's Main St/Hartford Ave/Maple St. once featured a very wide plaza-like streetscape served by trolley
- Multi-story buildings were built close to the street, making a recognizable center
- Mid-20th century saw demolition of key structures and a shift to auto-centered street and site design
- 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




# Historic Resources


 Study Area

 Other Parcels


 Rail Tracks


## Historic Designation


 National Register


 Inventoried Structure


## Structures by Year Built

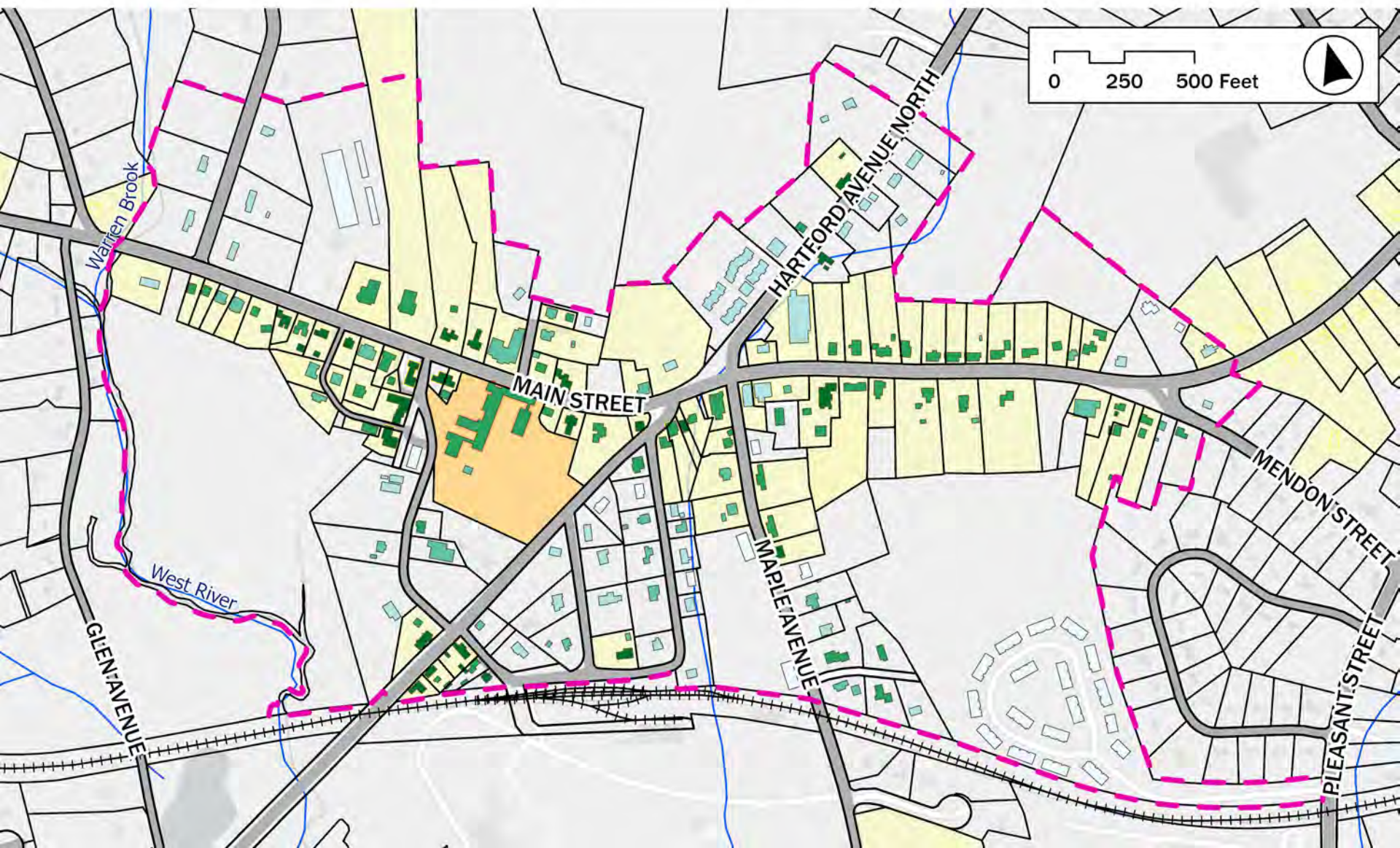
 2000-Present (38)

 1950-1999 (54)

 1900-1949 (43)




 1850-1899 (78)

 Pre-1849 (33)










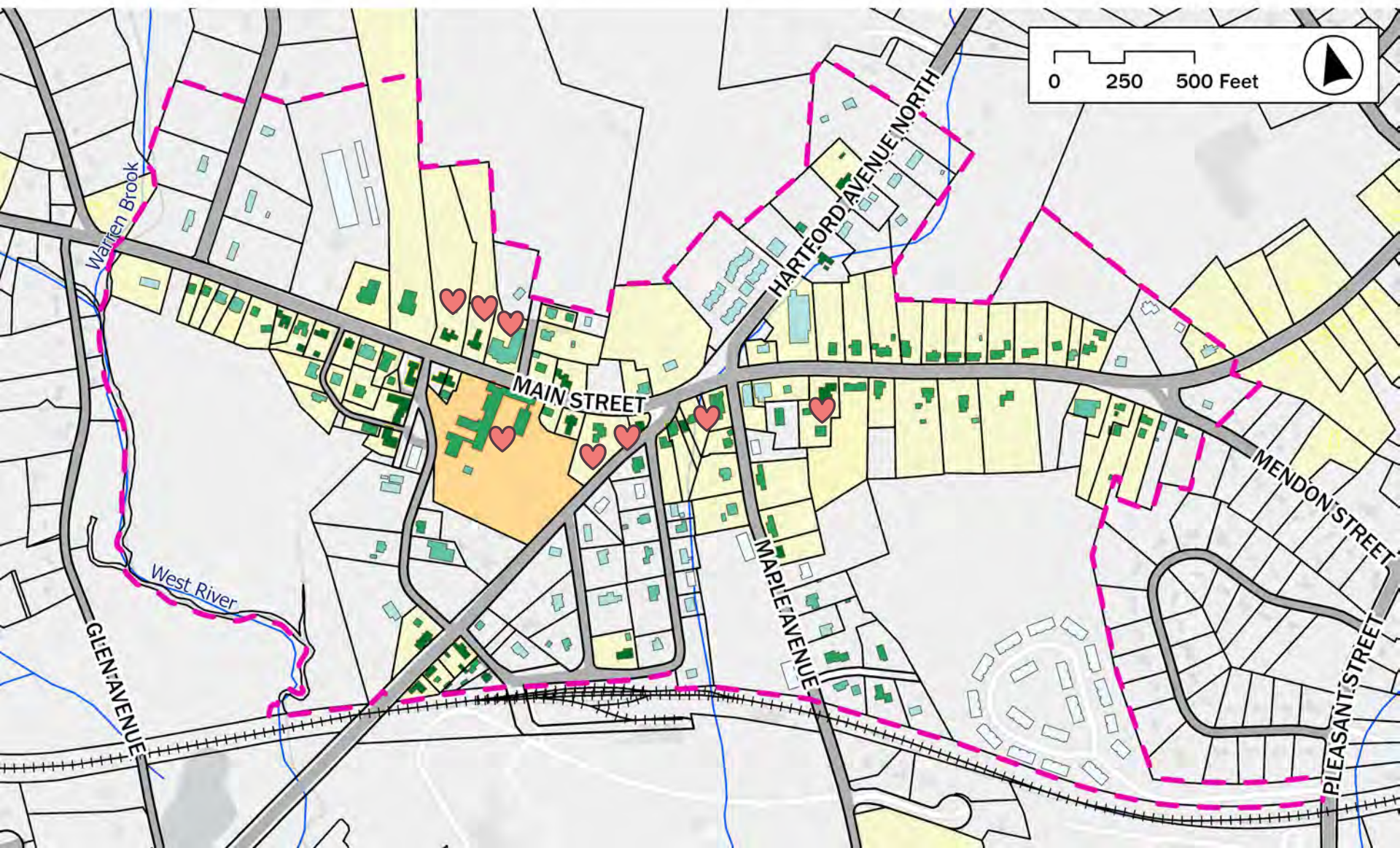
# Historic Resources

-  Study Area
-  Other Parcels
-  Rail Tracks

- Historic Designation**
-  National Register
-  Inventoried Structure

- Structures by Year Built**
-  2000-Present (38)
-  1950-1999 (54)

-  1900-1949 (43)
-  1850-1899 (78)
-  Pre-1849 (33)



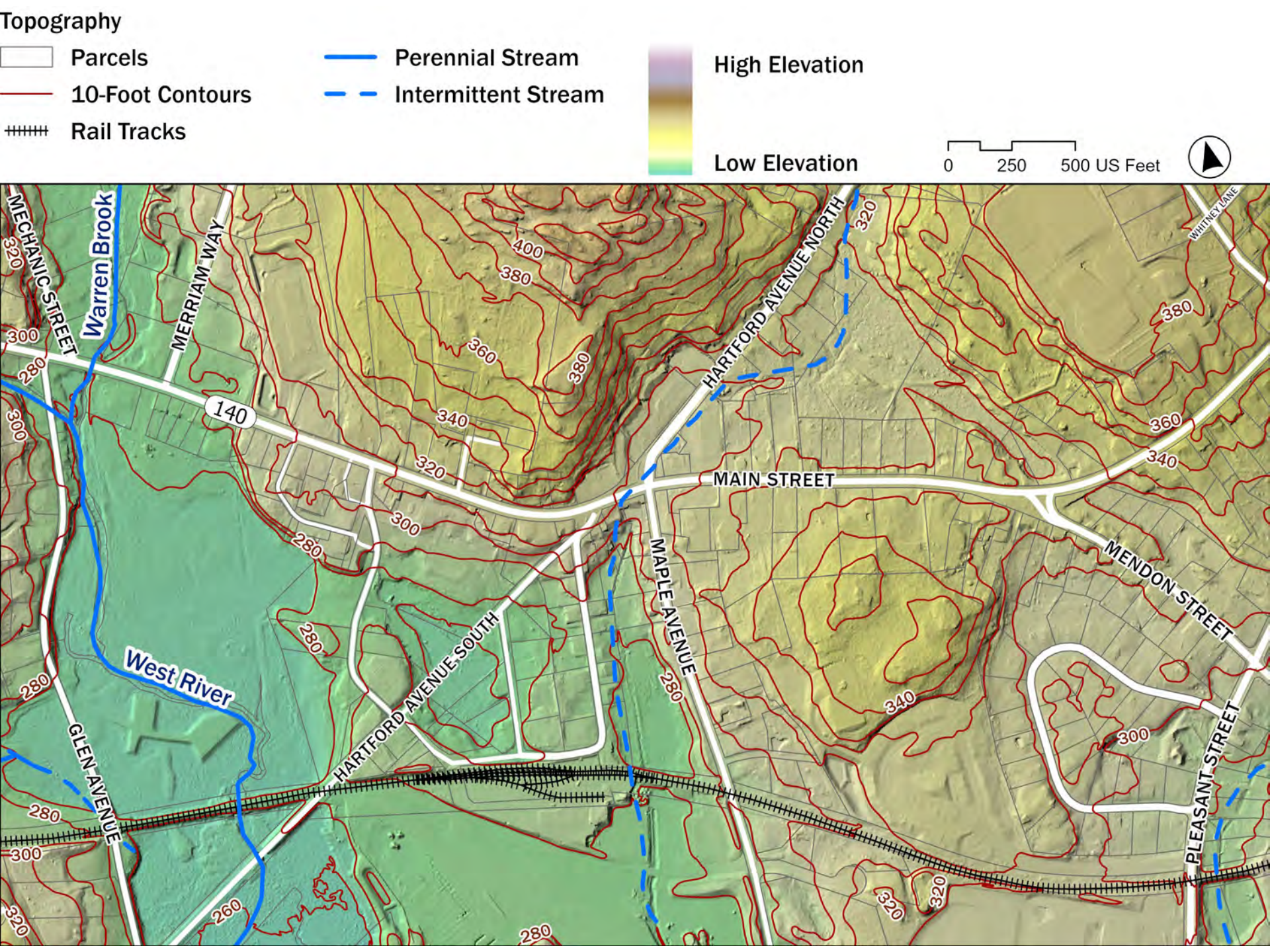


# PHYSICAL SETTING

- What is possible in West Upton based on its physical characteristics?

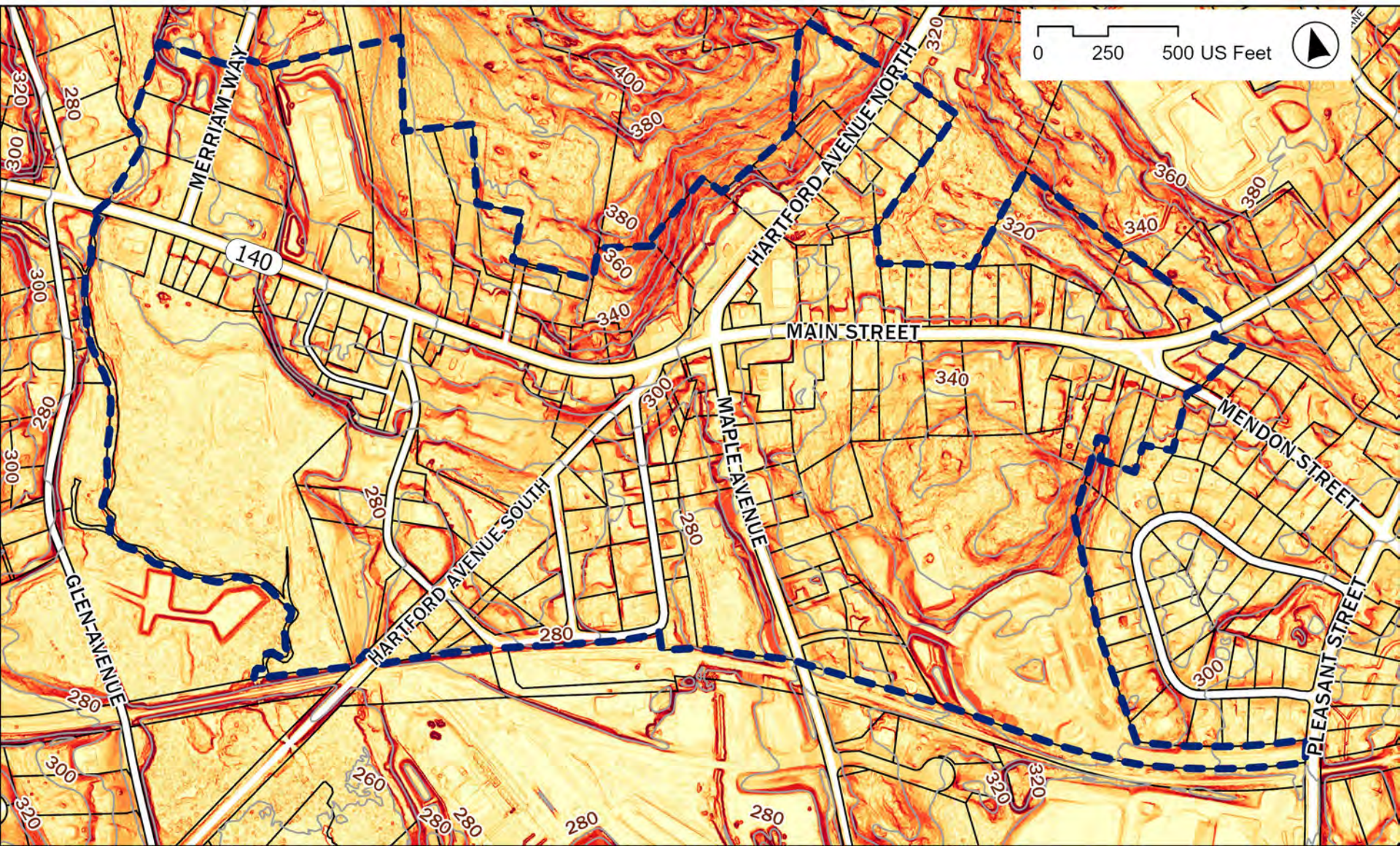








# Slopes by % Rise









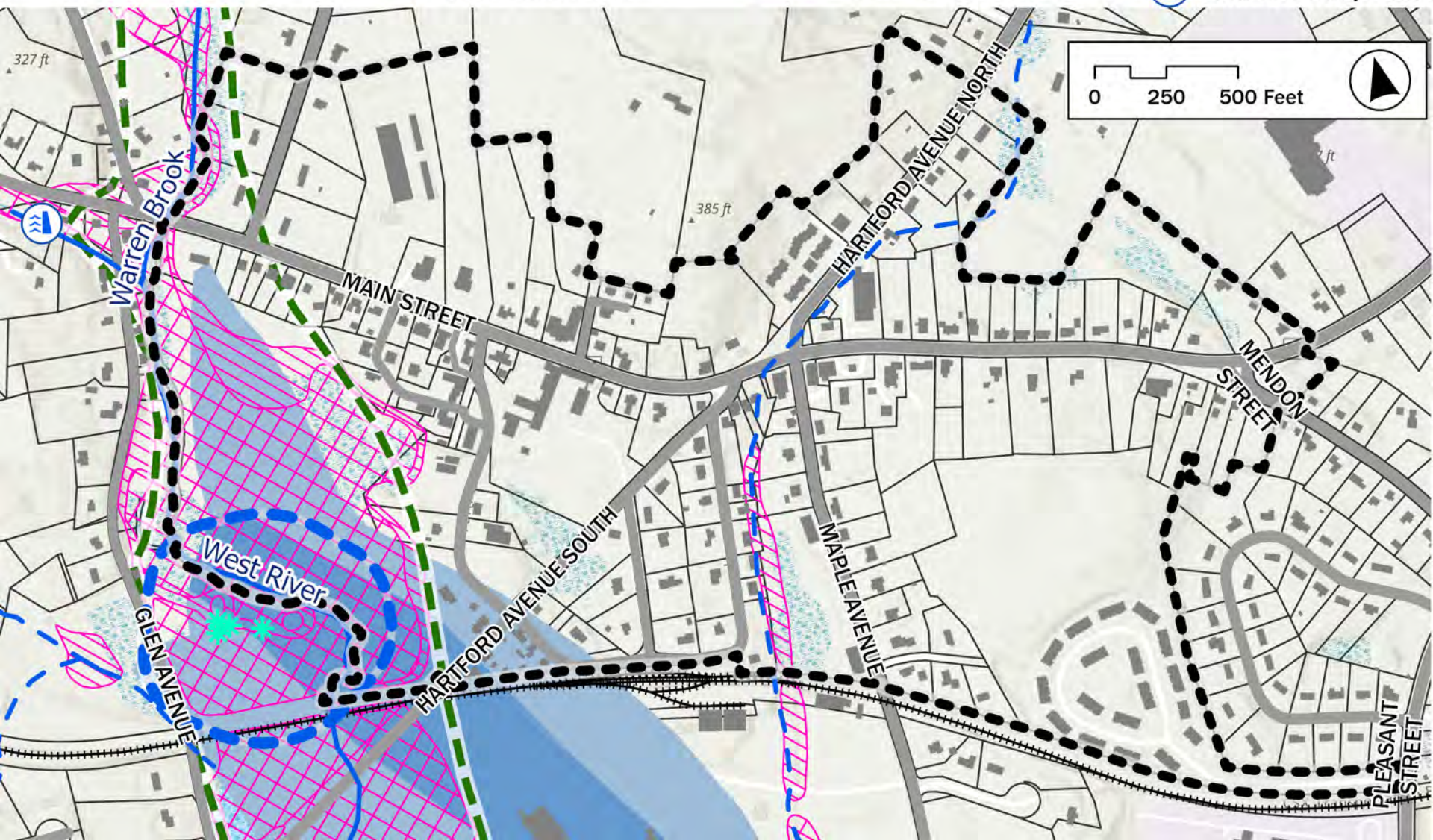
# Water Resources

- Parcels
- Structures
- Rail Tracks
- Study Area

- Wellhead (4)
- Zone I Wellhead Protection Area
- Zone II Wellhead Protection Area

- Aquifers by Yield per Minute
  - >300 Gallons
  - 100-300 Gallons
- Perennial Stream
- Intermittent Stream

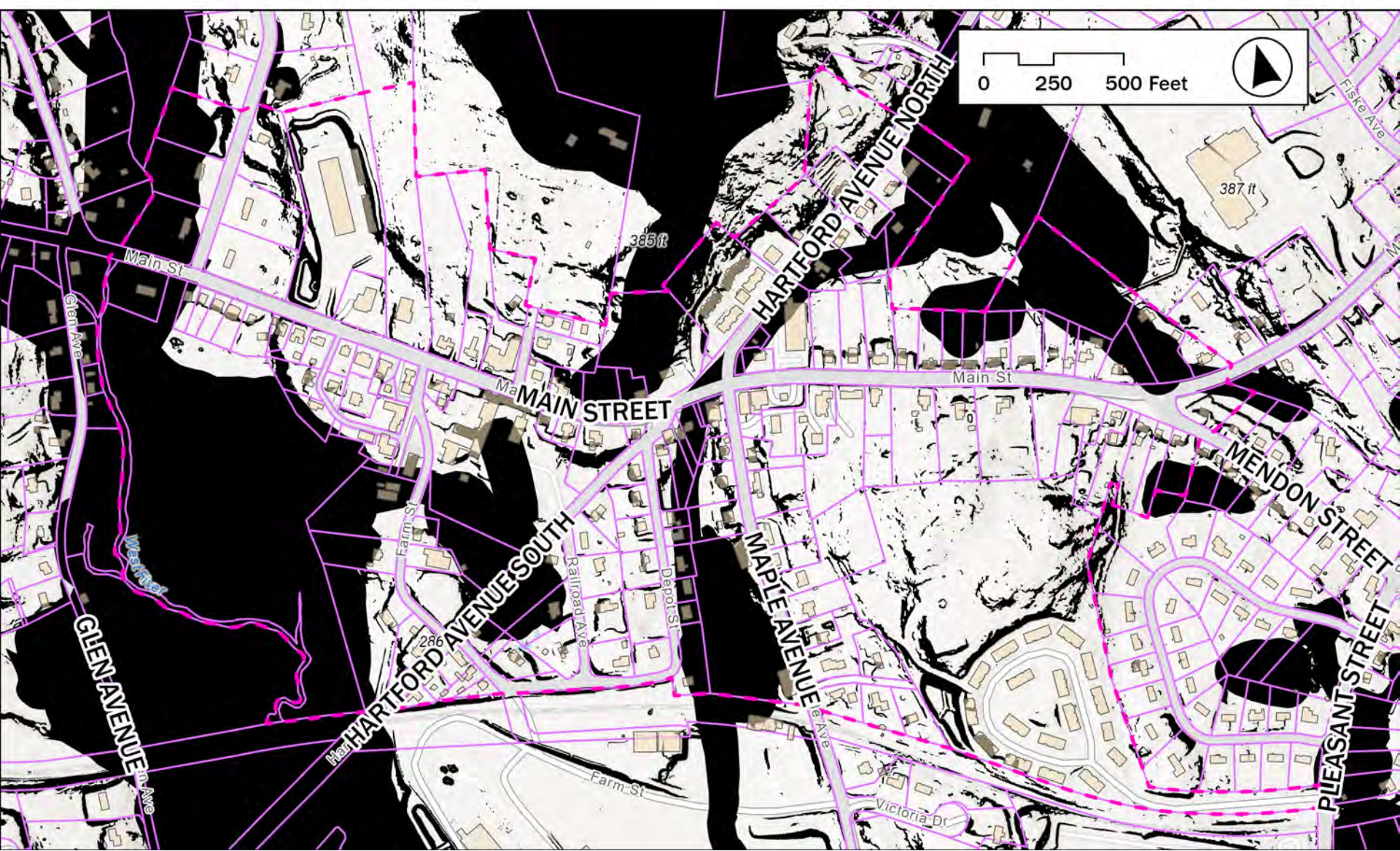
- Wetlands
- FEMA Flood Probability
  - 1% Annually
  - 0.2% Annually
- Old Box Shop Dam





# Physical Constraints to Development

- Parcels
- Structures
- Study Area
- Constraints to Development





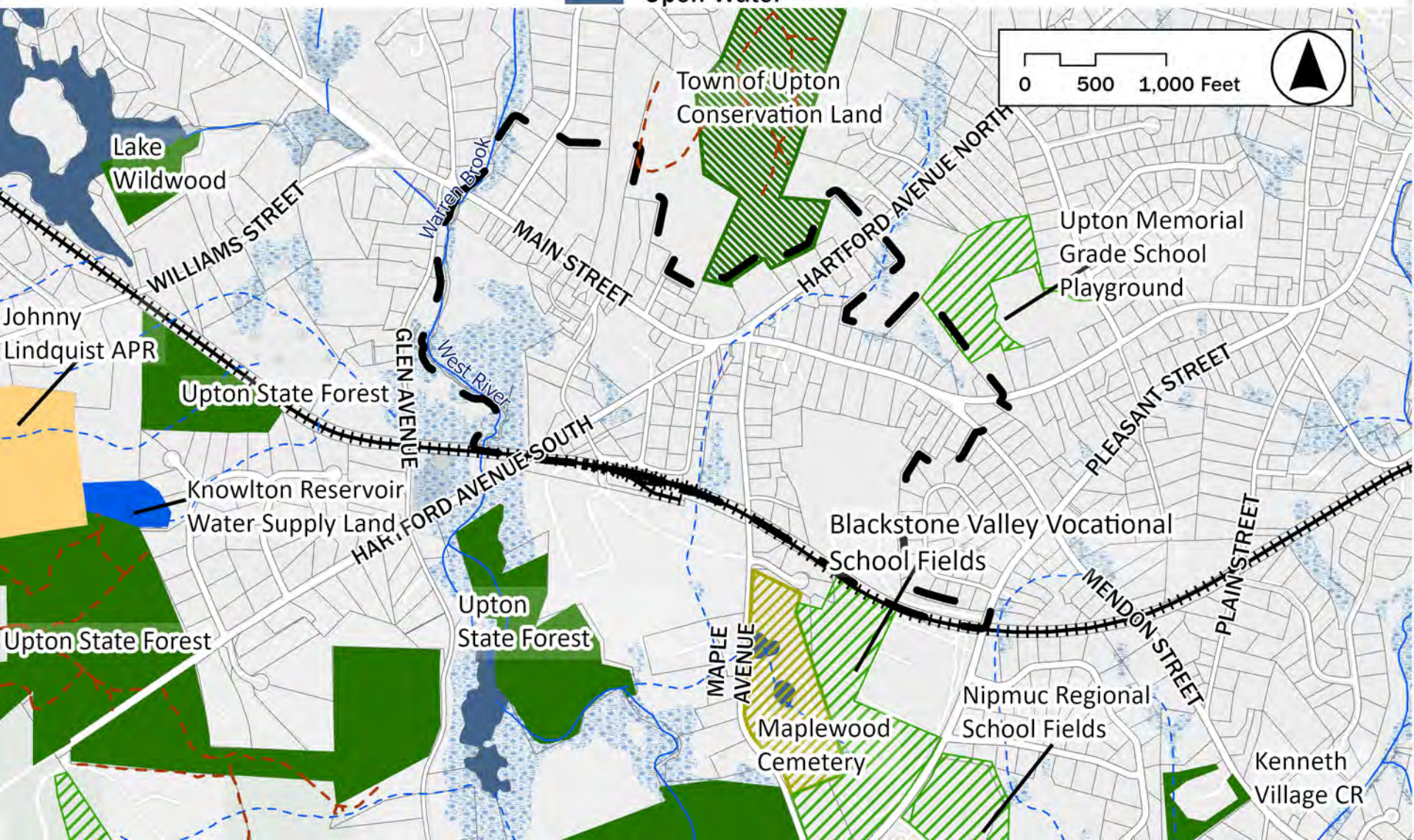
# NATURAL RESOURCES

- Which natural areas near West Upton are most important?
- Is there an opportunity to connect them from West Upton?
- Are there opportunities for additional open spaces?

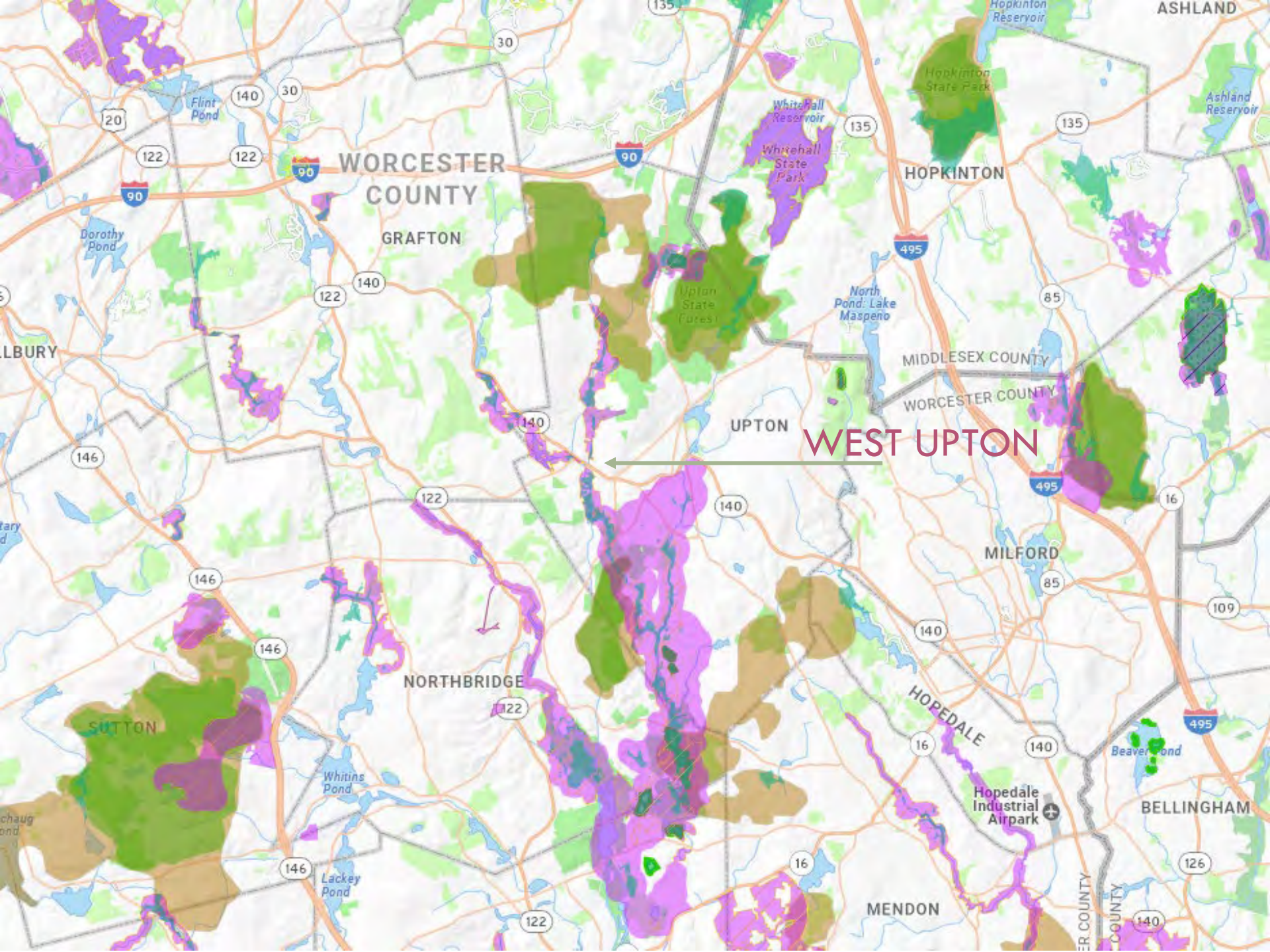




# Open Space by Use and Level of Protection







WORCESTER  
COUNTY

GRAFTON

HOPKINTON

UPTON

WEST UPTON

MIDDLESEX COUNTY  
WORCESTER COUNTY

MILFORD

NORTHBRIDGE

HOPEDALE

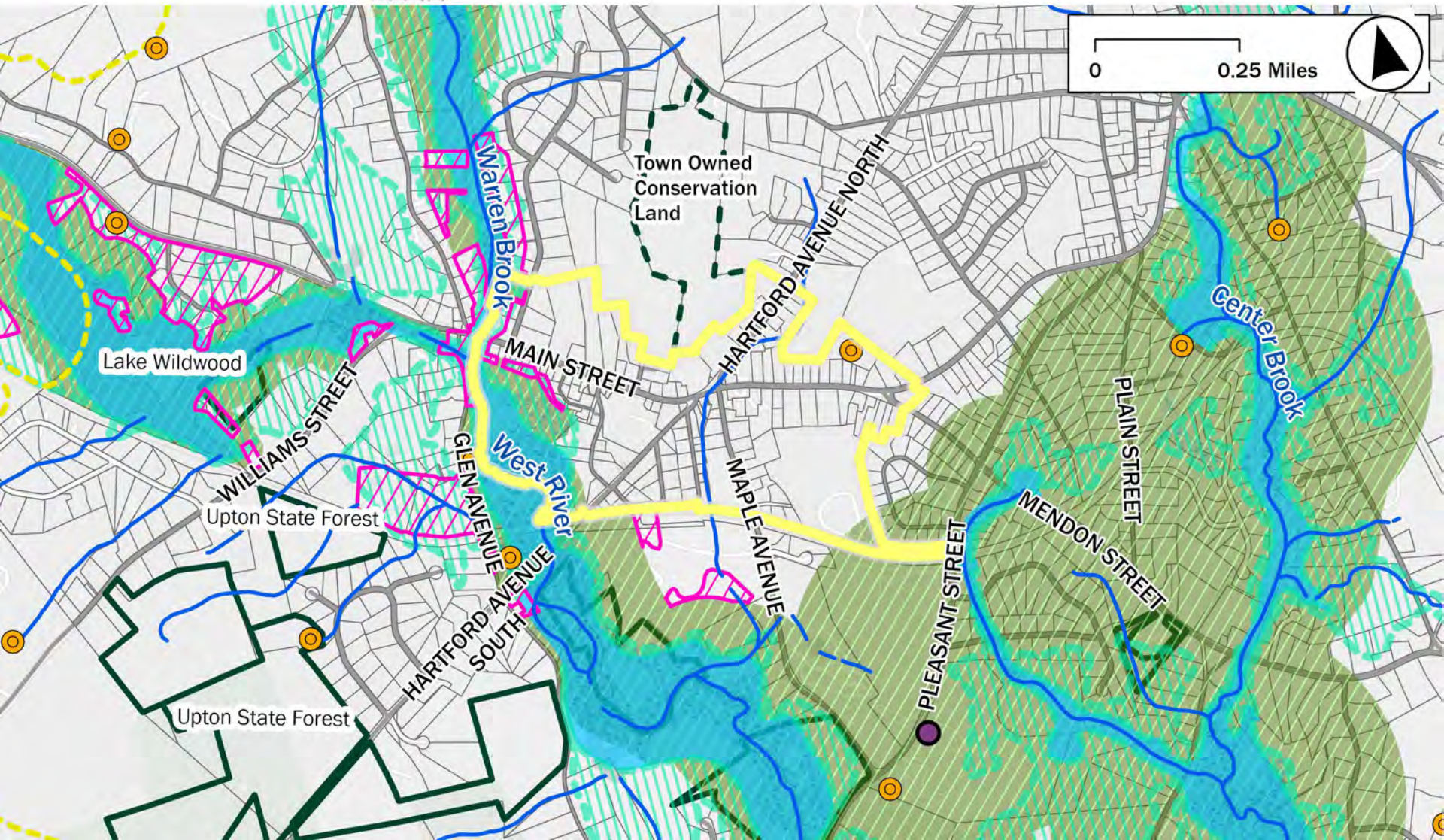
Hopedale  
Industrial  
Airport

BELLINGHAM

MENDON



# BioMap and Protected Open Space





# STREETS, TRAFFIC, AND CIRCULATION

- Are there opportunities for traffic and circulation improvements?
- Which streets need better sidewalks, lighting, trees, landscaping and other streetscape improvements?
- Are there any key pedestrian/bike connection missing?





## General Comments

The area has a lot of pedestrian activity

Not enough crosswalks

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

Want off-road bike trail

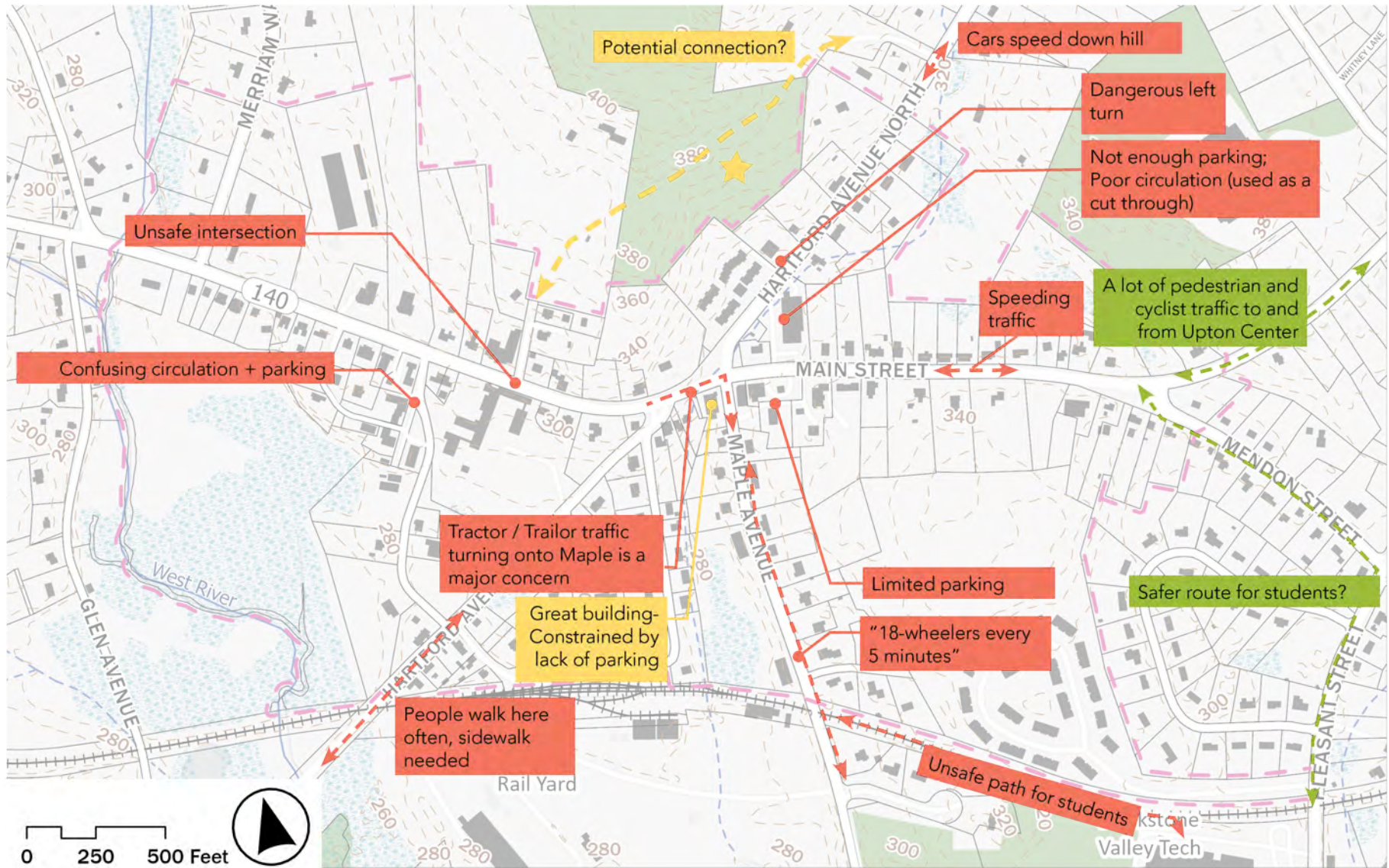
Want walkable shops and services

**Strengths**

## Weaknesses

## Opportunities

## Concerns





# Traffic Volumes

Average Annual  
Daily Trips

<5,000

5,000-6,000

6,000-7,000

7,000-8,000

8,000-9,000

9,000-10,000

>10,000

Open Space

Structures


Parcels

Study Area








# Crash Locations 2019-2024


 Study Area


Number Within Study Area


 Single Vehicle - No Injury (28)


 Single Vehicle - Minor Injury (6)


 Multiple Vehicles - No Injury (61)


 Multiple Vehicles- Minor Injury (11)


 Multiple Vehicles - Serious Injury (1)

 Cyclist - No Injury (1)

 Pedestrian - Minor Injury (2)

 Pedestrian-Serious Injury (1)

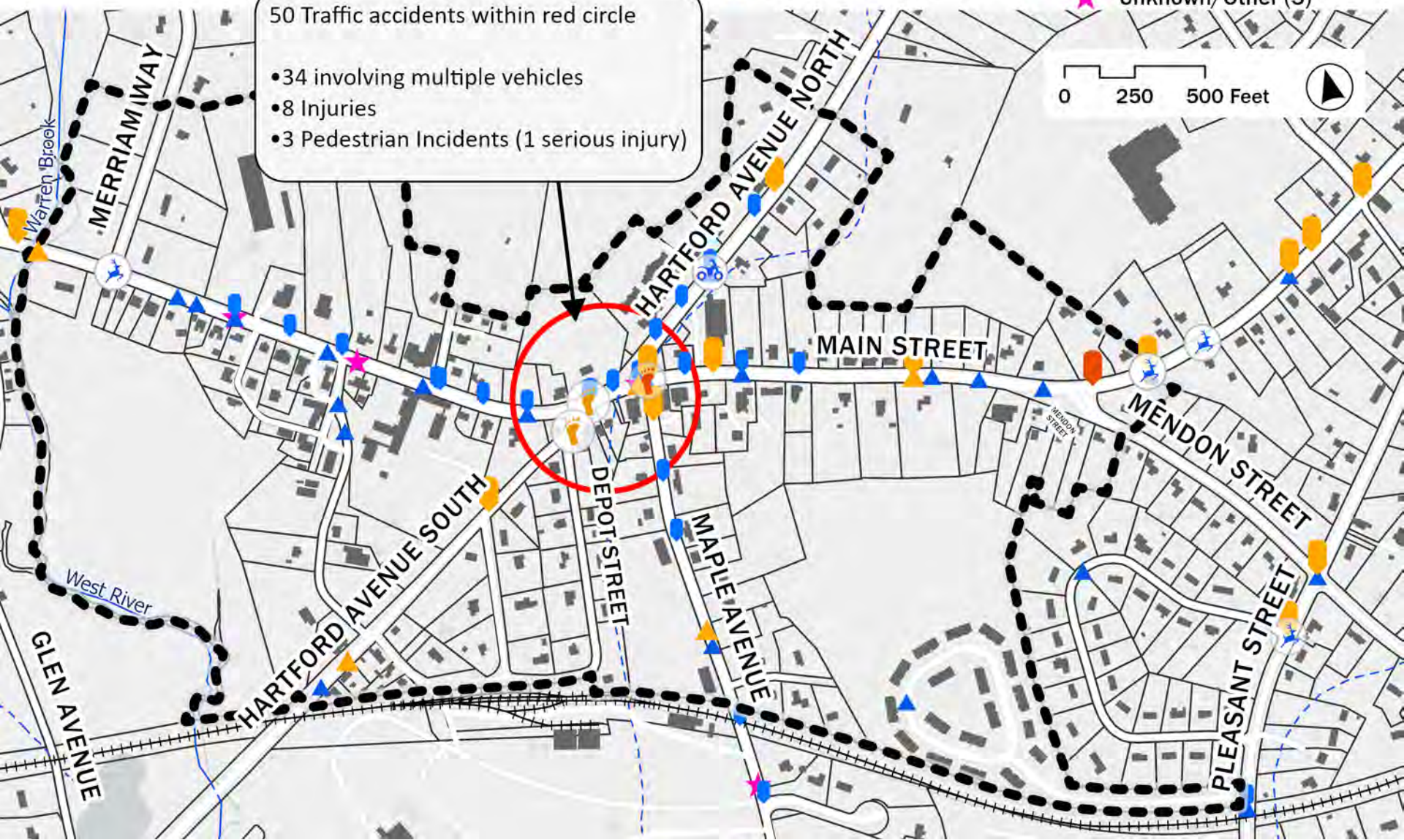
 Animal - No Injury (4)

 Unknown/Other (3)

50 Traffic accidents within red circle

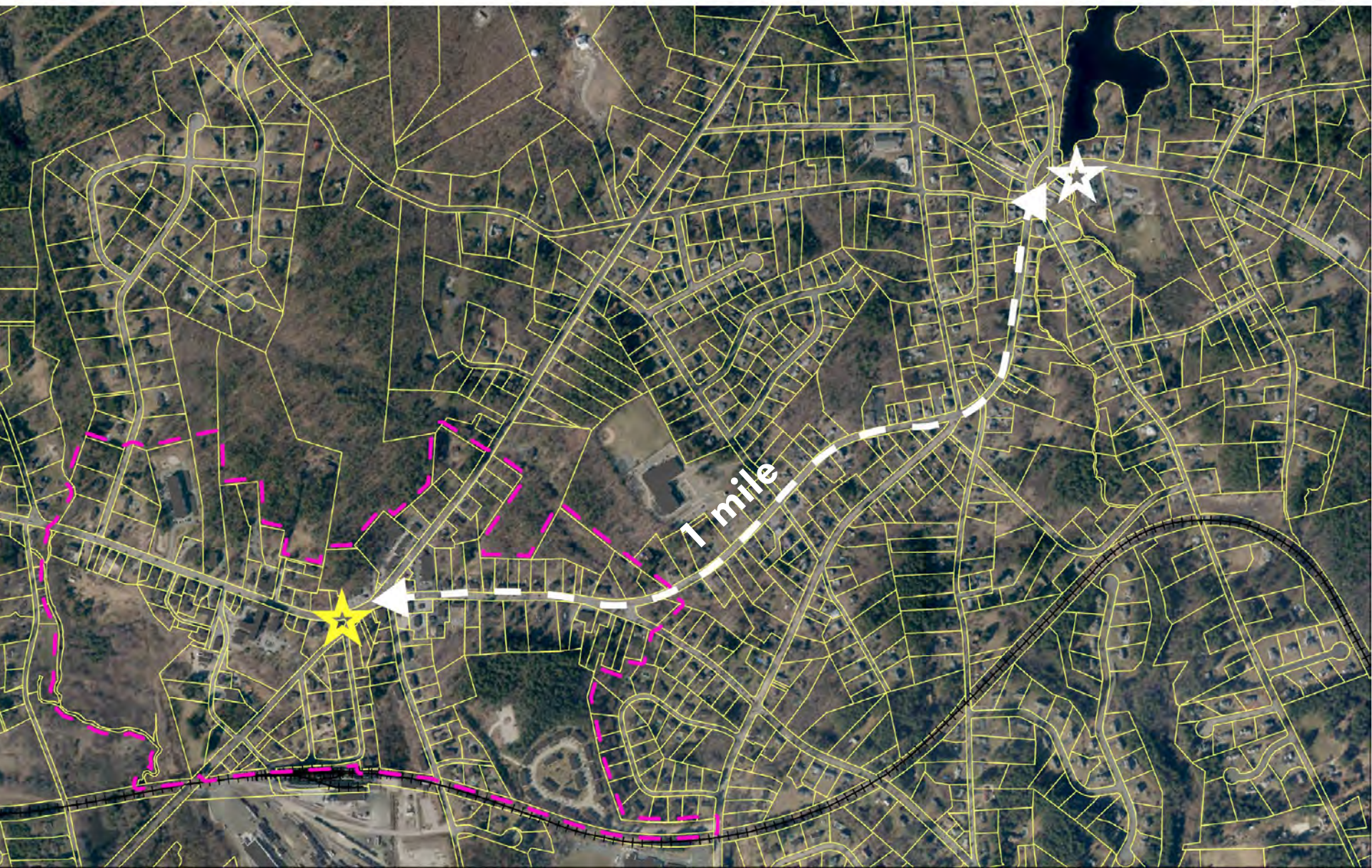
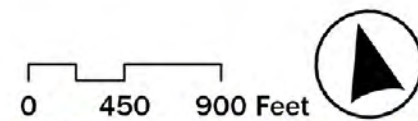
- 34 involving multiple vehicles
- 8 Injuries
- 3 Pedestrian Incidents (1 serious injury)

0 250 500 Feet





Parcels  
Study Area







Looking west towards Main/Hartford Intersection on Main





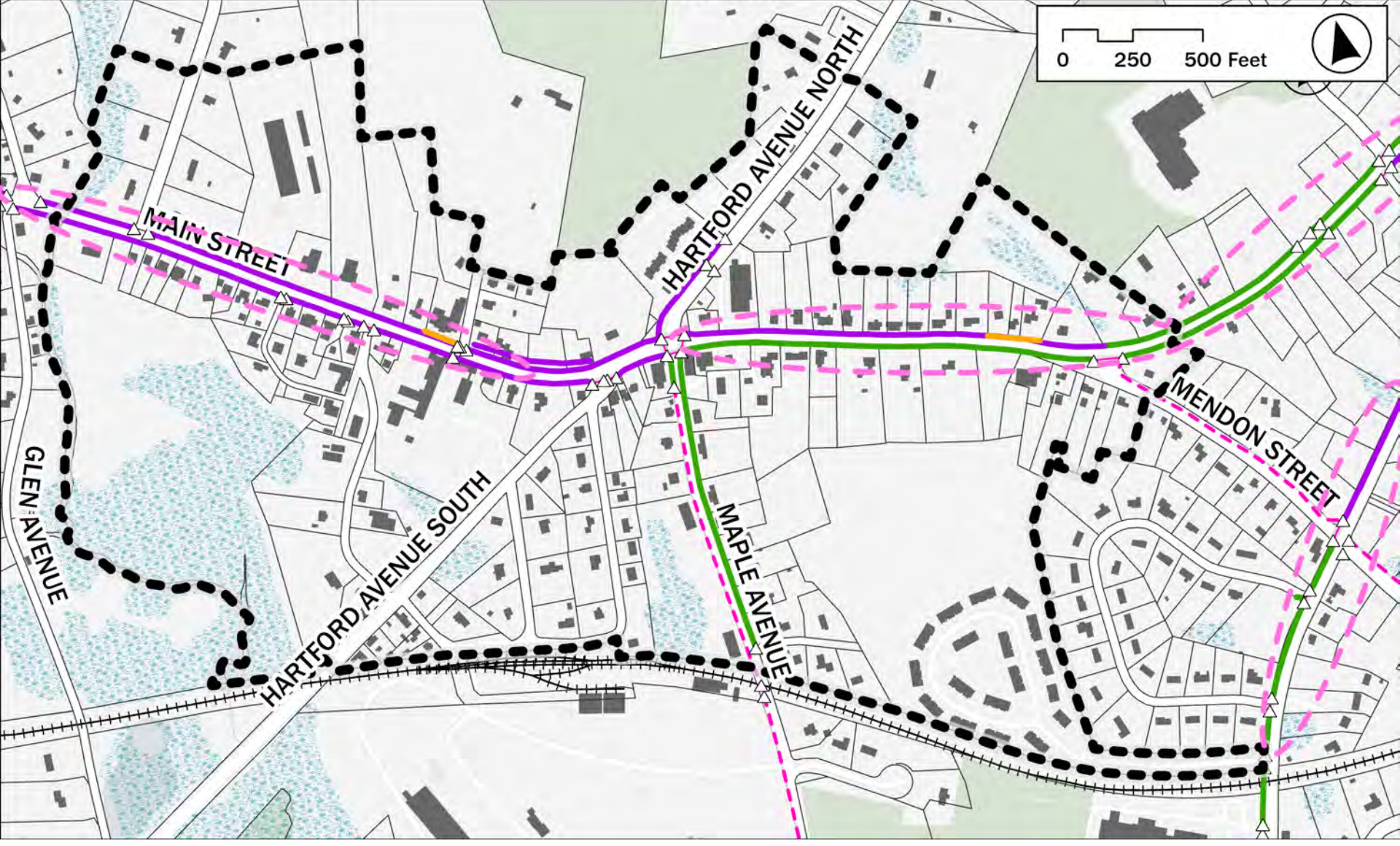
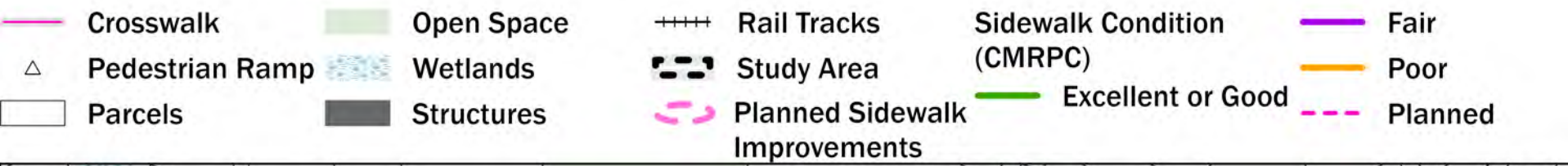




Looking south on Maple Ave.



# Pedestrian Infrastructure





# LAND USE

- What uses are desired in West Upton?





# Land Use

Town Owned Land

Land Use by Parcel

1 Unit Residential

2-3 Units Residential

4-8 Units Residential

>8 Units Residential

Open Space

Retail and Services

Manufacturing

School

Vacant

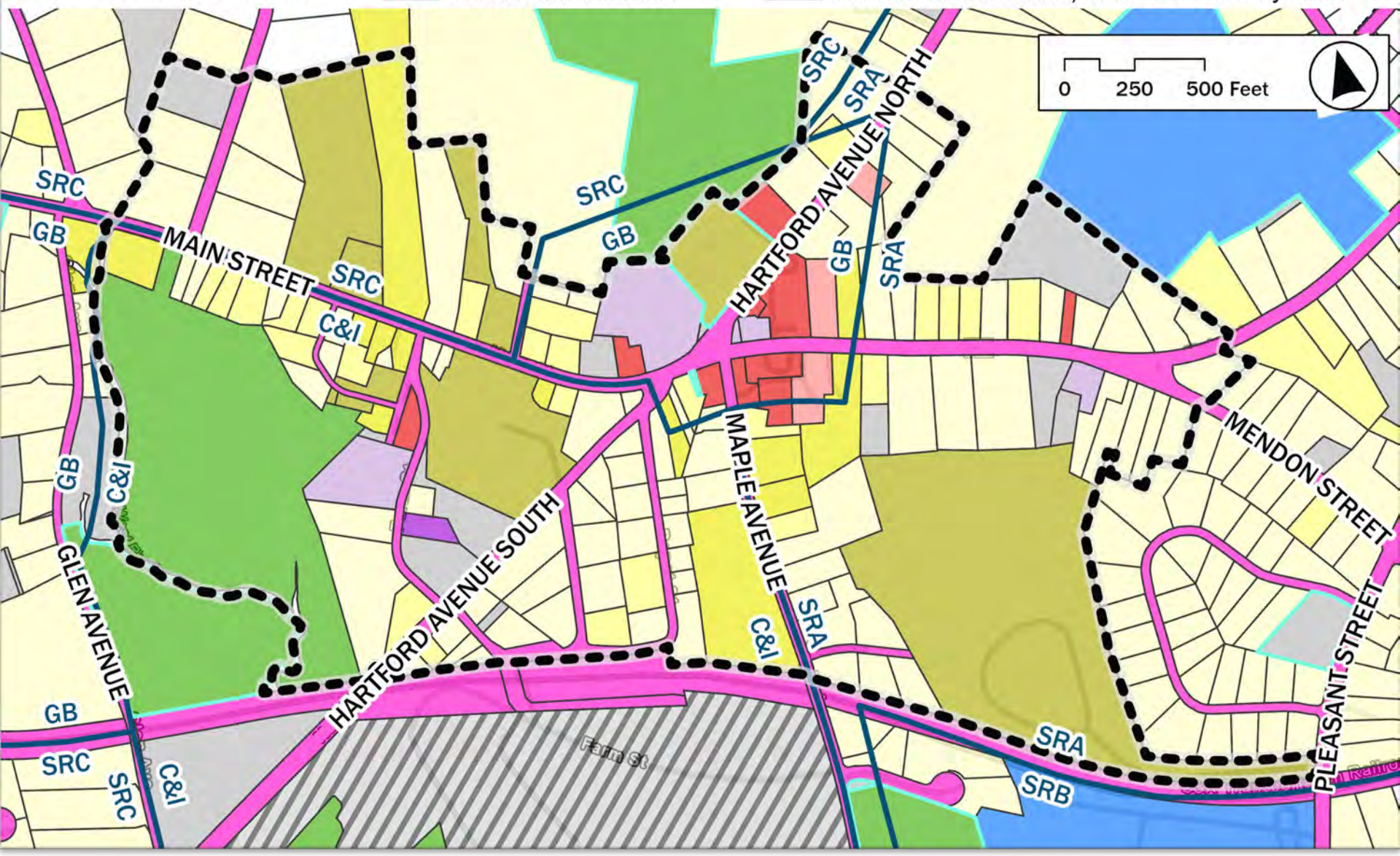
Automotive Services/Gas

General Office

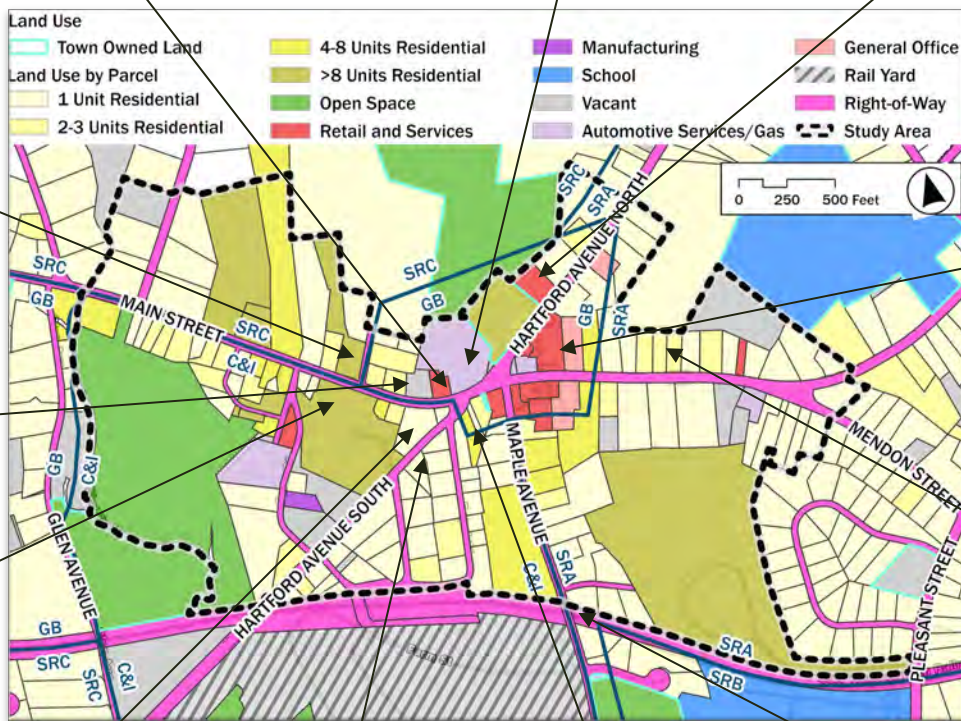
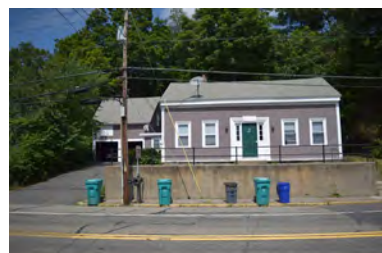
Rail Yard

Right-of-Way

Study Area

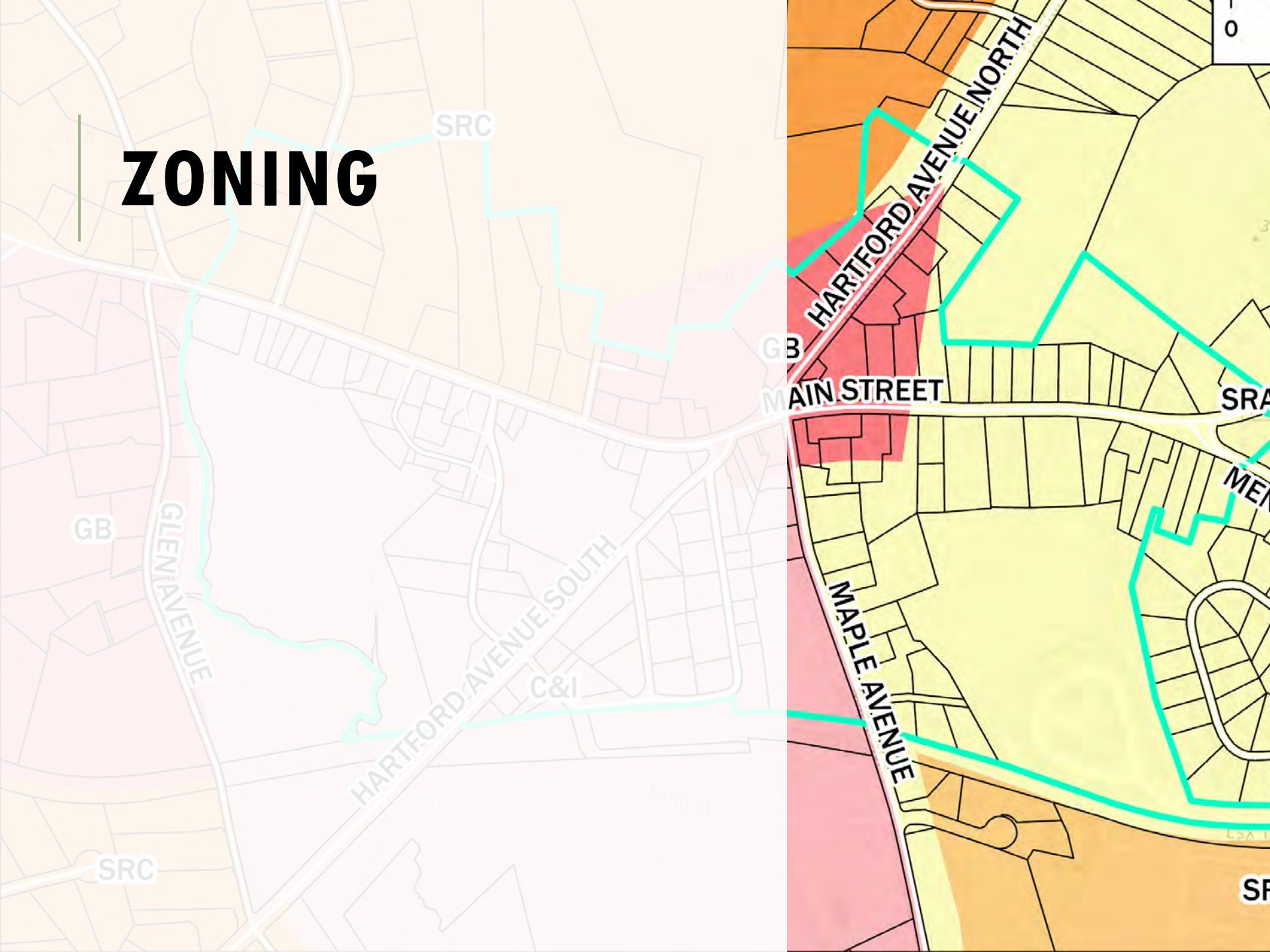








# ZONING





## Zoning


 Study Area

 Parcels


## Zoning Boundaries

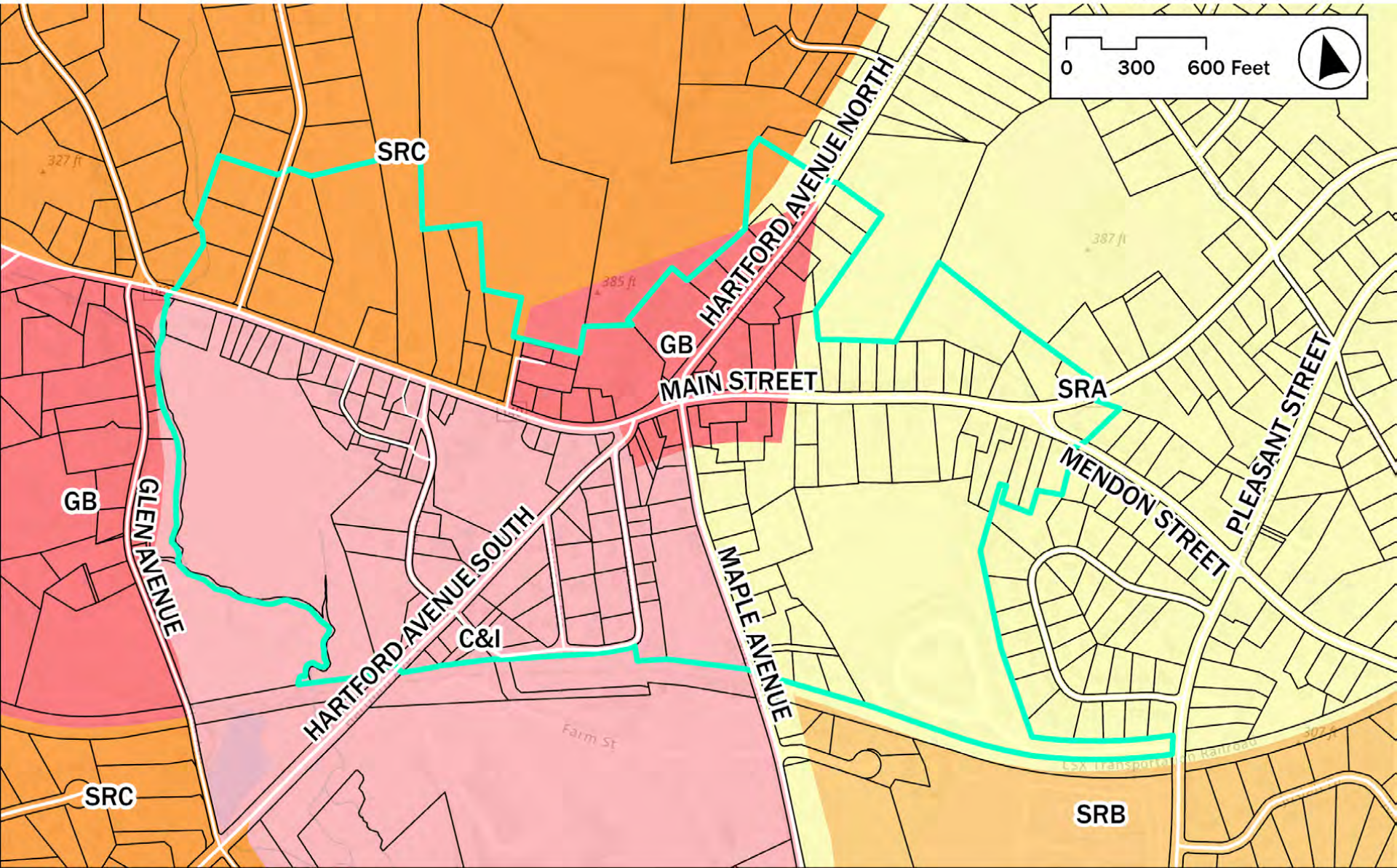
 C&I: Commercial and Industrial

 GB: General Business

 SRA: Single Residential A

 SRC: Single Residential C

 SRB: Single Residential B



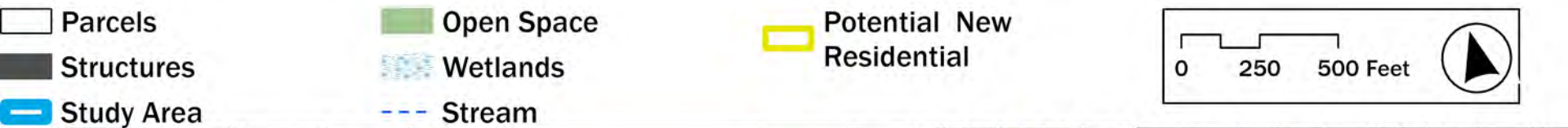


## **From Upton 2021 Economic Development Strategy plan**

“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.”

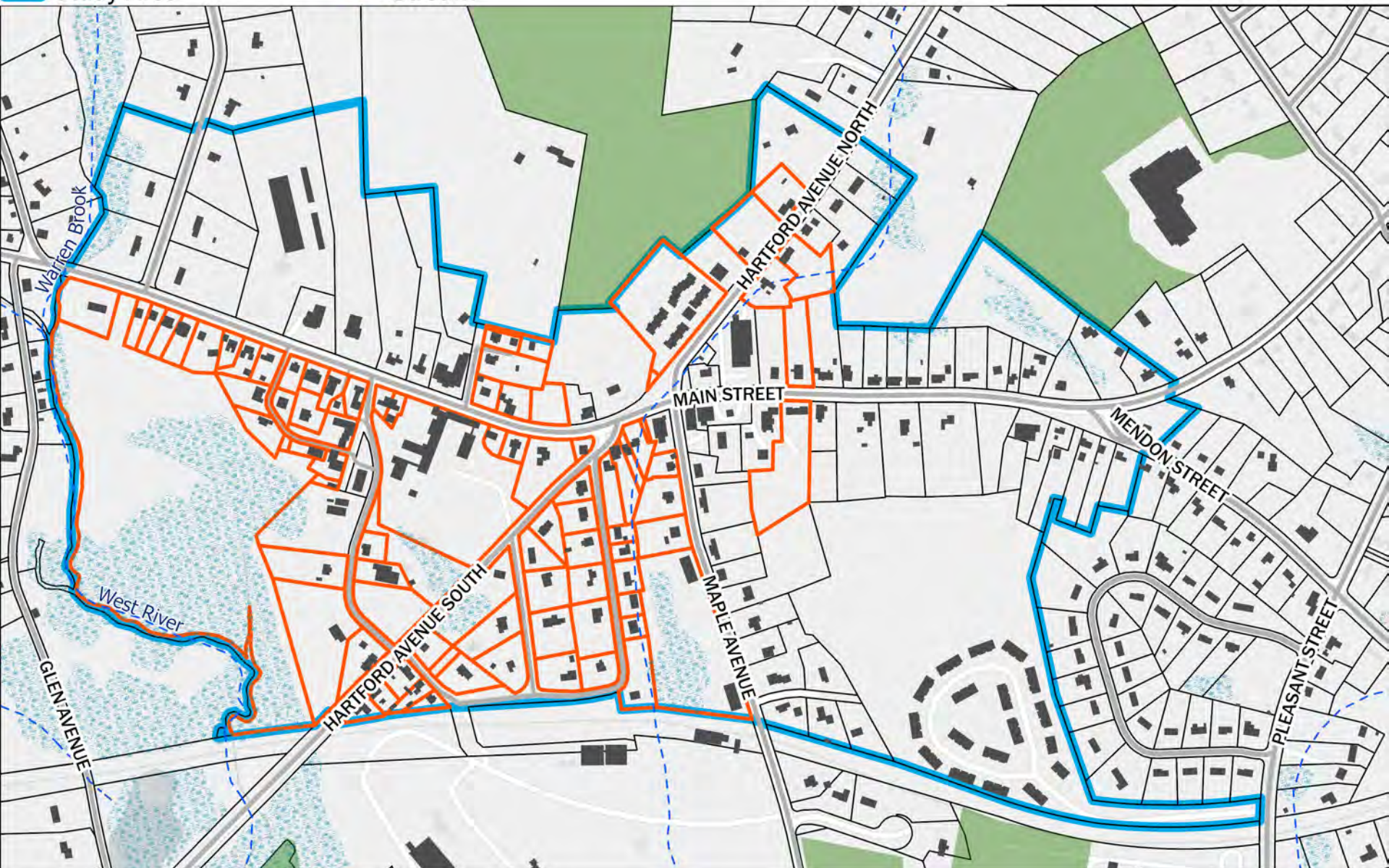


# Build Out Parcels





# Build Out Parcels



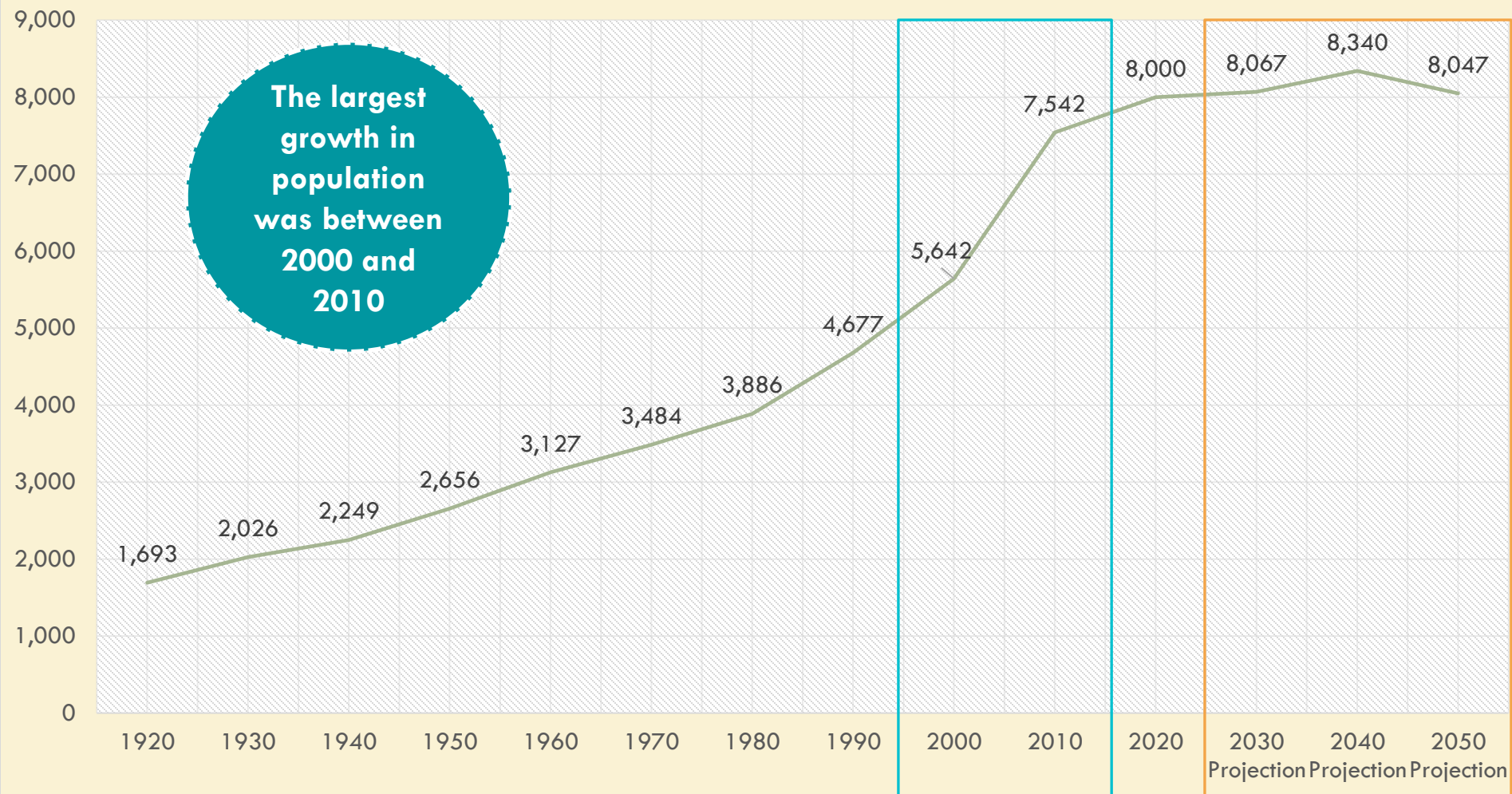


# People and Economy



# Upton's Population

## UPTON POPULATION AND POPULATION ESTIMATES



Source: US Census, UMass Donahue Institute

Note: 1930-2010 data is from Decennial Census

2030 – 2050 Projections are from UMass Donahue Institute



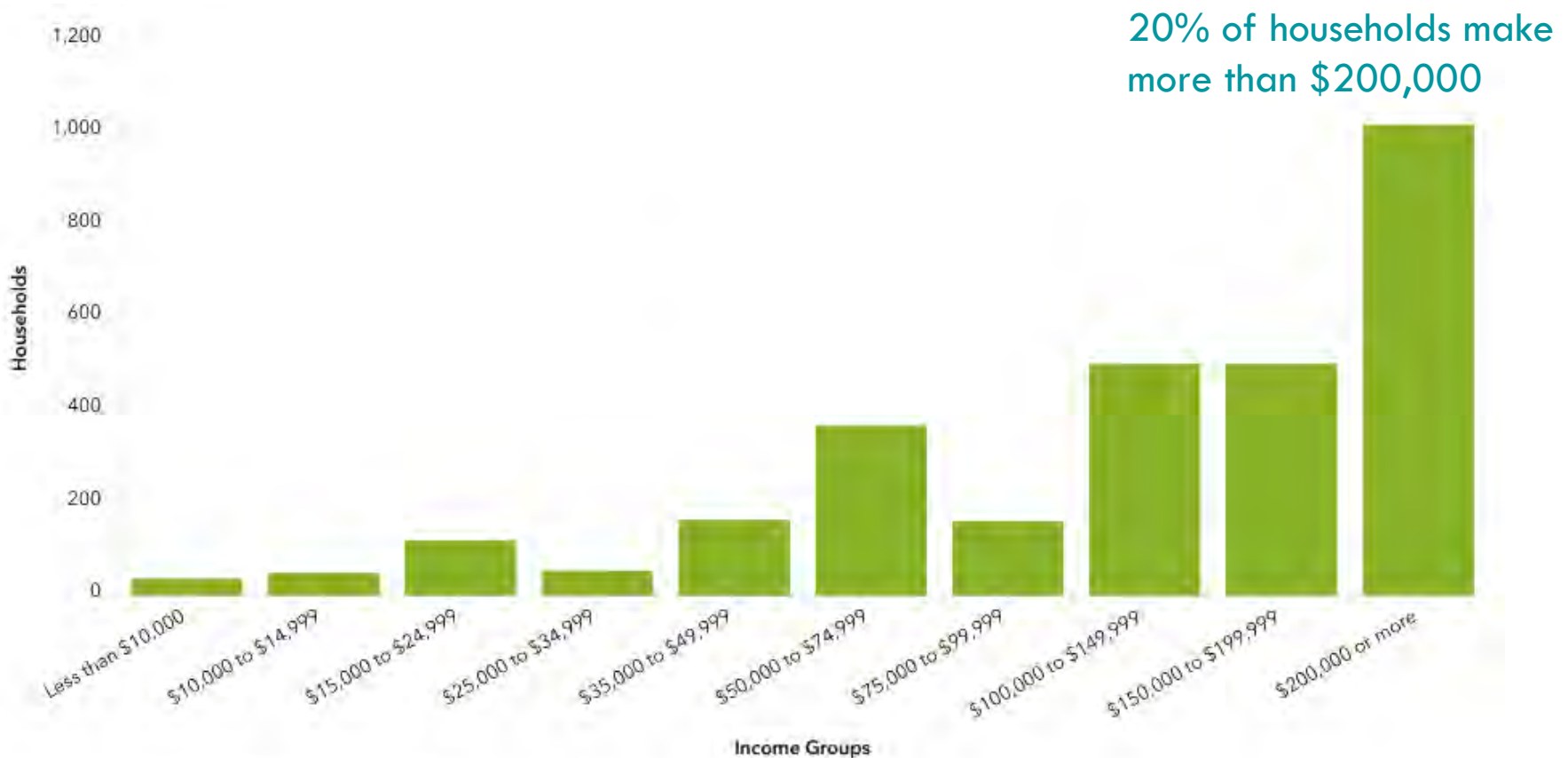
# Income and Employment

## \$155,952

### Estimated Mean Household Income

Worcester County: \$94,099

Massachusetts: \$99,858



Source: 2023 5-Year ACS (table S1901)



## 25%

Upton households that are cost-burdened by housing  
(pay more than 30% of their income towards housing  
costs)

Source: 2023 ACS: Mortgage status and selected monthly owner costs in Upton, Table: B25087

## 6.4%

Subsidized Housing Inventory

*Upton does not qualify for exemption from comprehensive  
permitting allowed by MGL 40B*

Source: 2023 Housing Production Plan



## **Top industries that Upton residents work in:**

- Health care and social assistance (587)
- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (524)
- Educational services (486)

Source: Job Counts by NAICS Industry Sector, 2022, All Workers (Census OnTheMap)

## **Top industries located in Upton:**

- Education and Health Services (451)
- Construction (172)
- Trade, Transportation and Utilities (161)

Source: 2023, MA Dept of Economic Research, Annual Average Employment and Wages All Published Industries by town all ownership

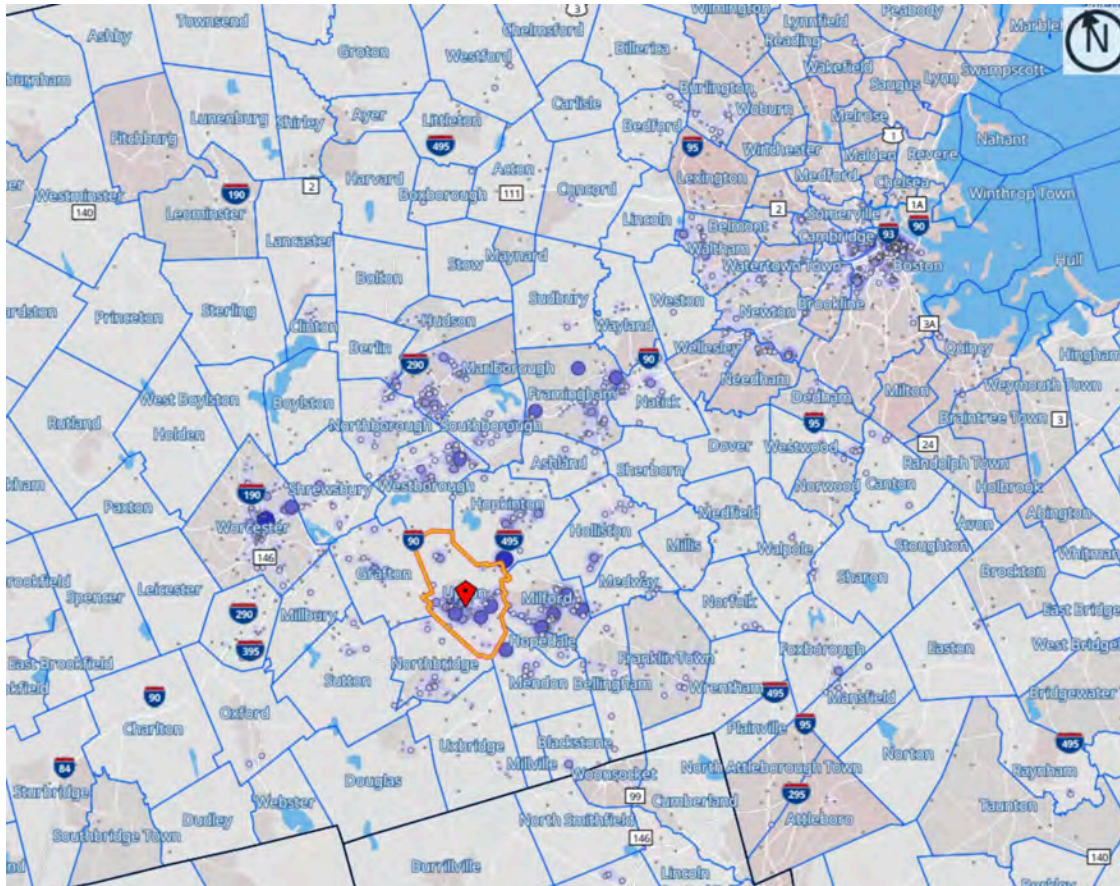


## 37.9 minutes

### Average Travel Time to Work

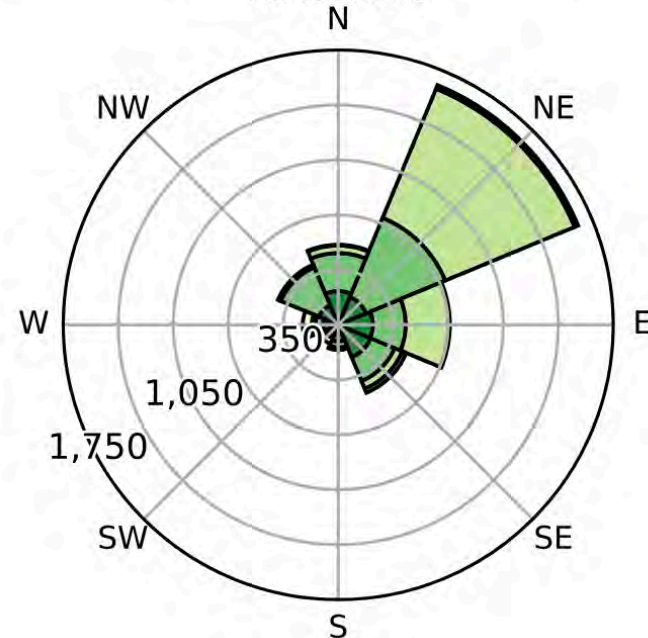
Worcester County: 30.8 minutes

+8 minutes since 2000



	2022	
	Count	Share
Total All Jobs	4,272	100.0%
Less than 10 miles	1,268	29.7%
10 to 24 miles	1,521	35.6%
25 to 50 miles	1,314	30.8%
Greater than 50 miles	169	4.0%

Job Counts by Distance/Direction in 2022  
All Workers



Source: Census On the Map



# Small Business Employment

“Upton has issued 321 business licenses, indicating that the town’s economy is dominated by small businesses and organizations.

[...] an estimated 172 of Upton businesses are home based.”

Source: 2021 Economic Development Strategy



# Breakout Stations



# Upton Center Visioning Project

## **Dodson & Flinker**

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