

# WATERTOWN MASSACHUSETTS DESIGN GUIDELINES + STANDARDS



**PUBLIC MEETING 3**  
DATE 1/22/15

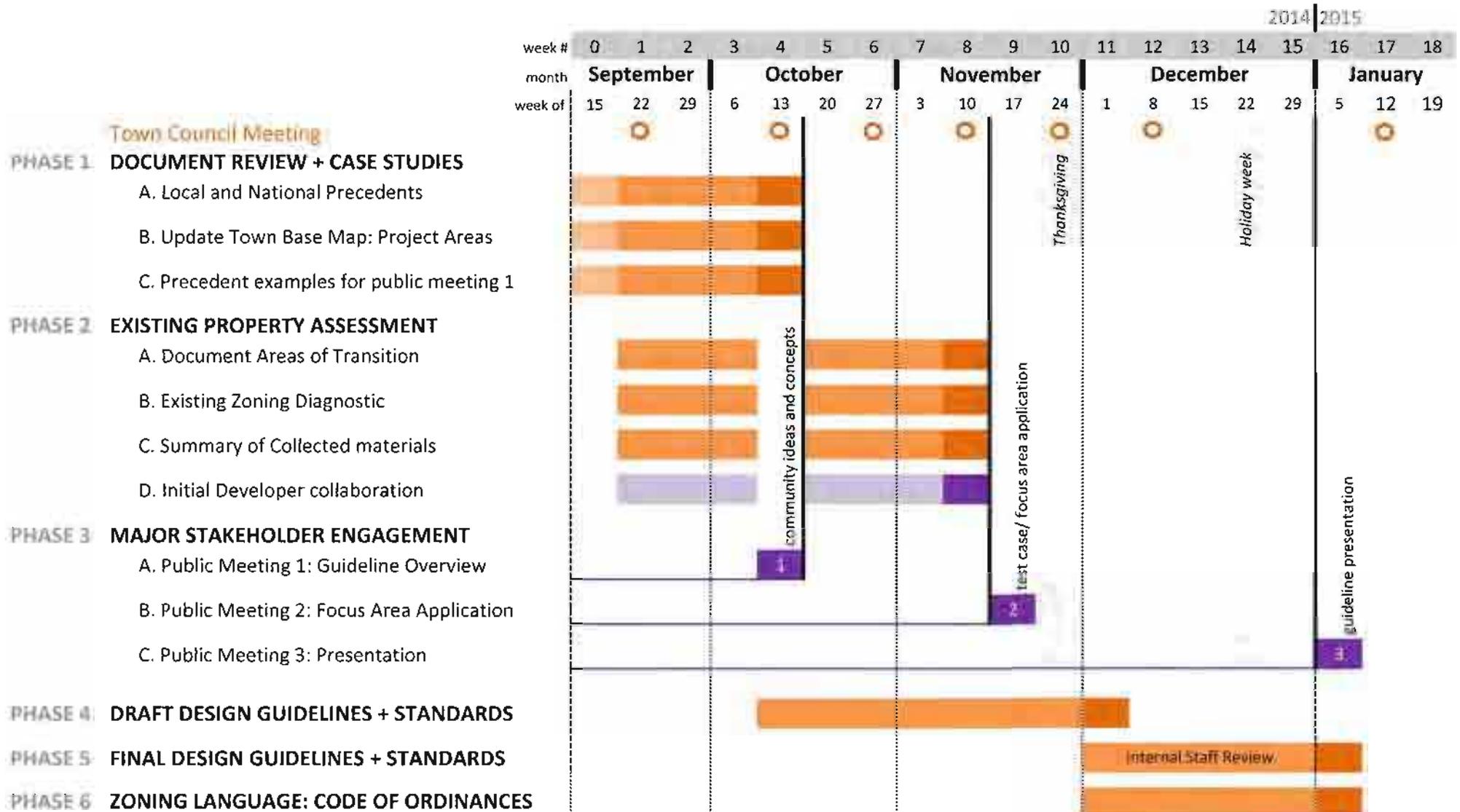
architecture  
urban design

**GAMBLE  
ASSOCIATES**

# WATERTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES + STANDARDS MANUAL

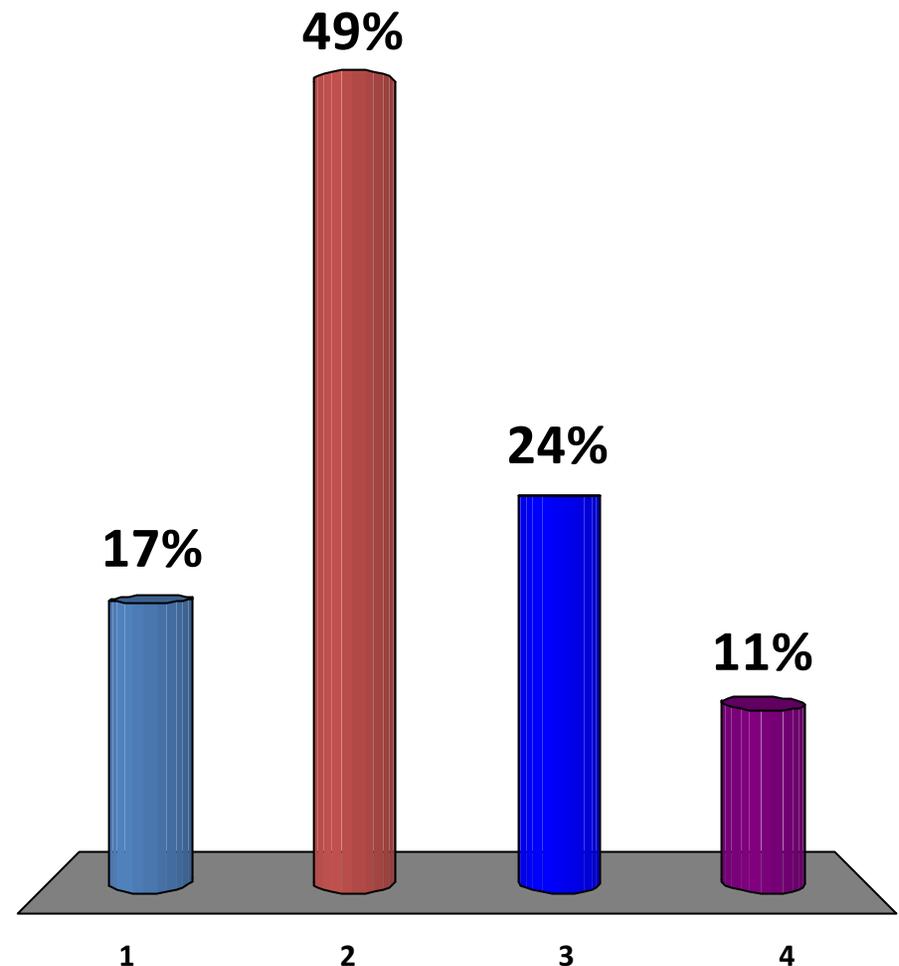
9/19/2014 Draft

GAMBLE ASSOCIATES



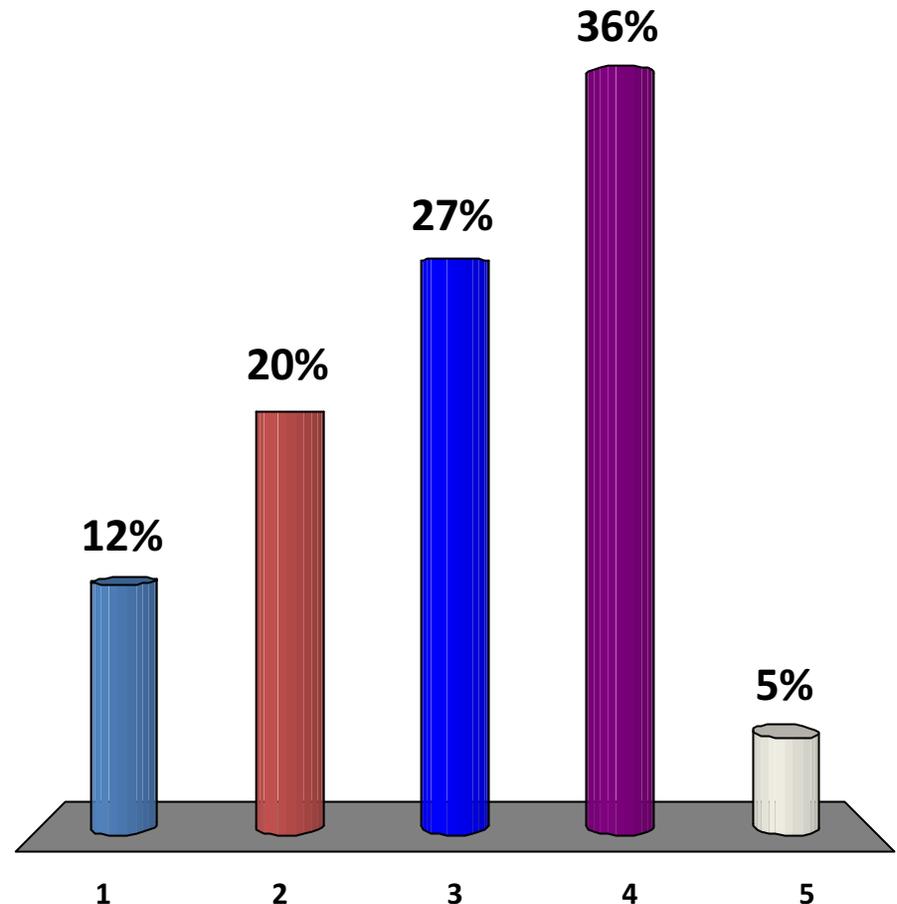
# What is most important in terms of the character of the Town?

1. Preserving and beautifying open space
2. Integrating residential and commercial growth
3. Addressing congestion
4. Enhancing the commercial centers



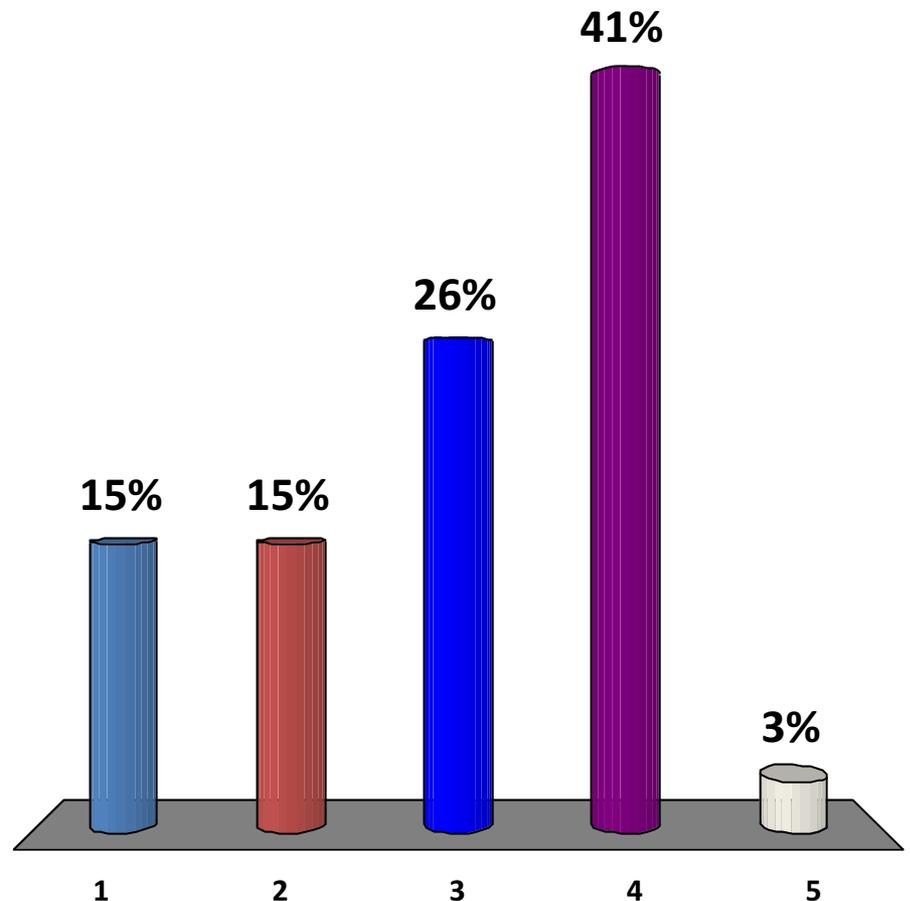
# My biggest cause of anxiety right now is...

1. The amount of new development
2. The scale of new buildings
3. The quality of the private/public realm
4. The lack of a coordinated vision
5. Other

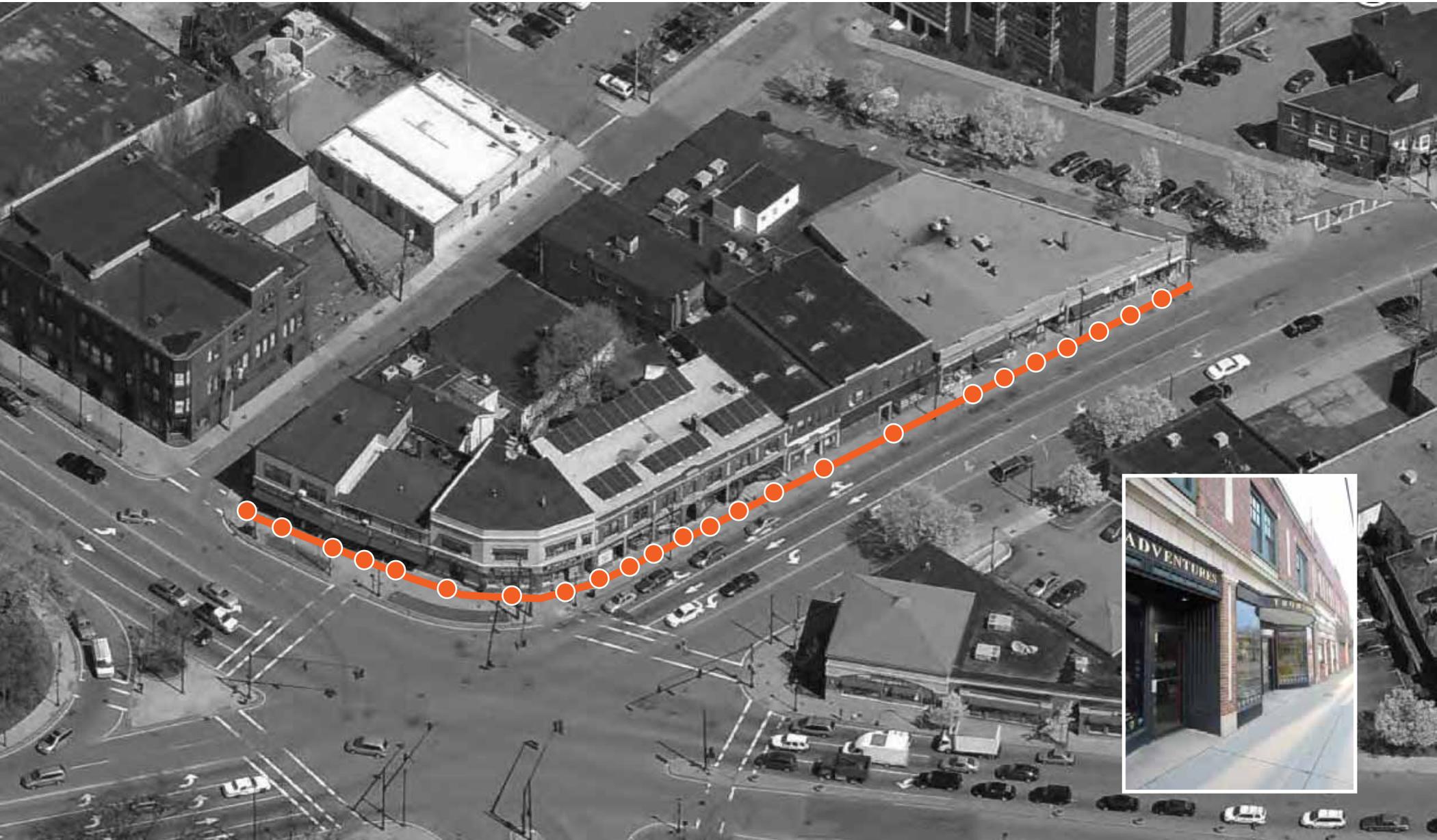


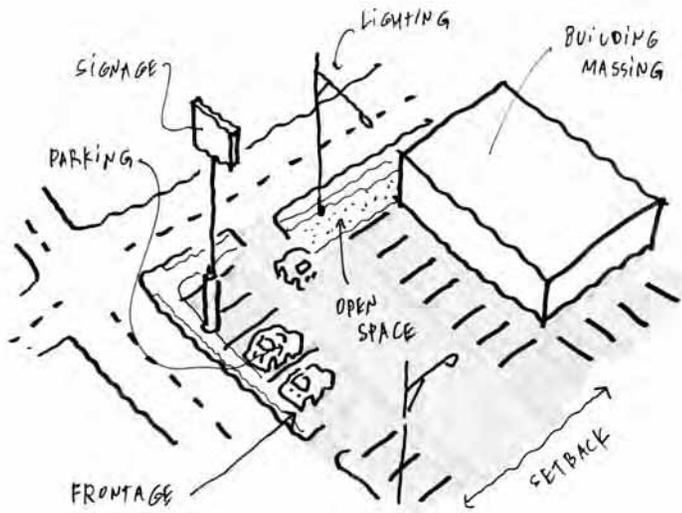
# In terms of new development, what issue is the most important to get right?

1. Building heights
2. Cultivating a mix of uses
3. Site plan design, access and parking
4. Design quality
5. Other



The block in Watertown Square is 430 feet long (but has 24 entrances!)





Along a commercial corridor, bring a building up to the street is only half the battle. It must also enhance the streetlife.



Budweiser

Phone

Baptist m



Coors

GHT  
WORLD SERIES CHAMPIONS

Budweiser  
WORLD SERIES CHAMPIONS 2004

Budweiser

Budweiser

World Series Champions 2004

Coors  
LIGHT

R LIQUORS  
LARGEST  
LIFT BEER  
LECTION  
TOWN

OPEN

Yuengling

LOTTERY CIGARETTE'S  
PHONE CALL CIGARS

KEEP V  
JOHN

Budweiser  
BUDLIGHT



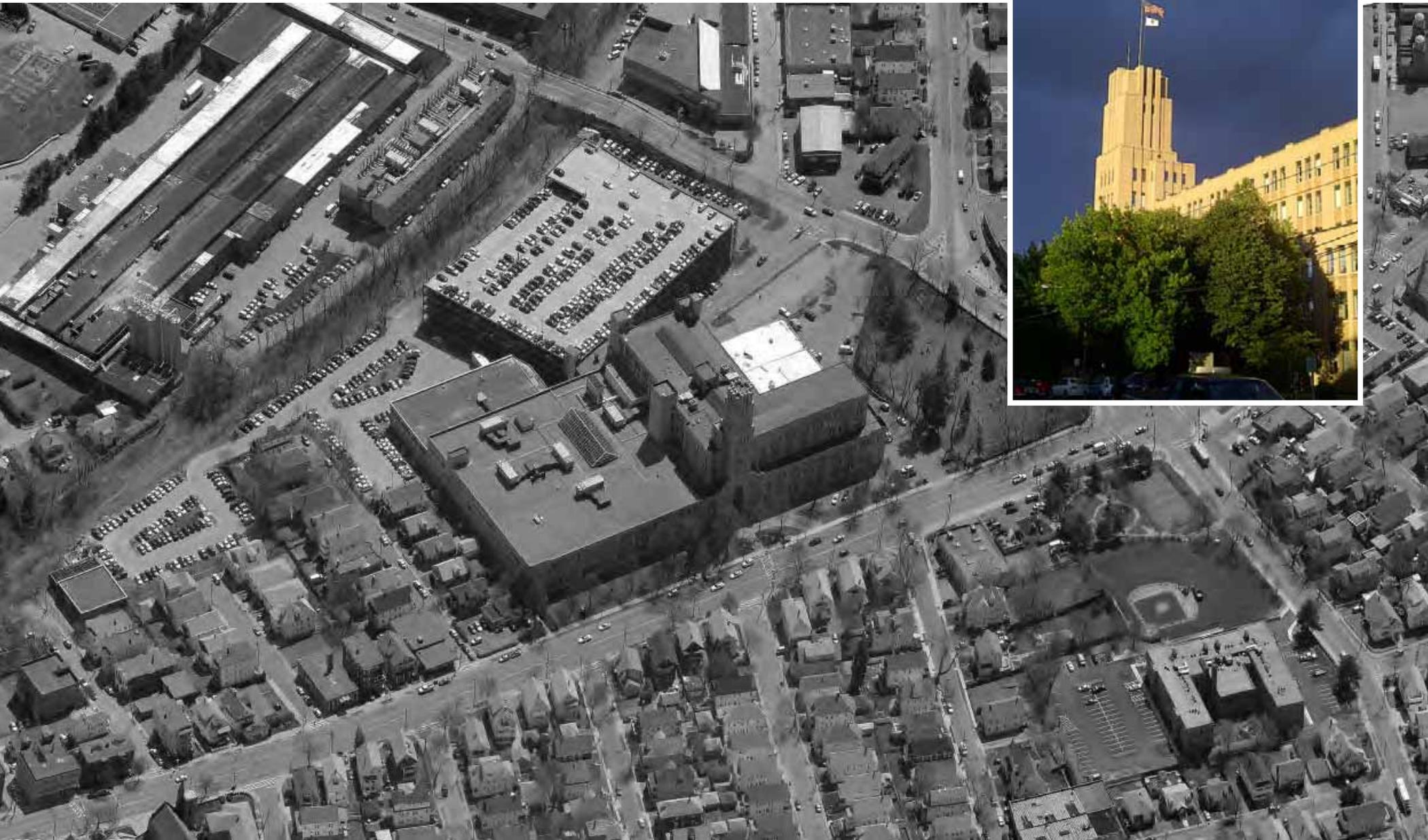


This sign is in neon and there is also a marquee sign ... doesn't it contribute to the character and history of the Town?

“I’d like to see some taller buildings in the mix.”

Height alone is a poor indicator of quality or urbanity.

“Maximum of 3.5 stories!”

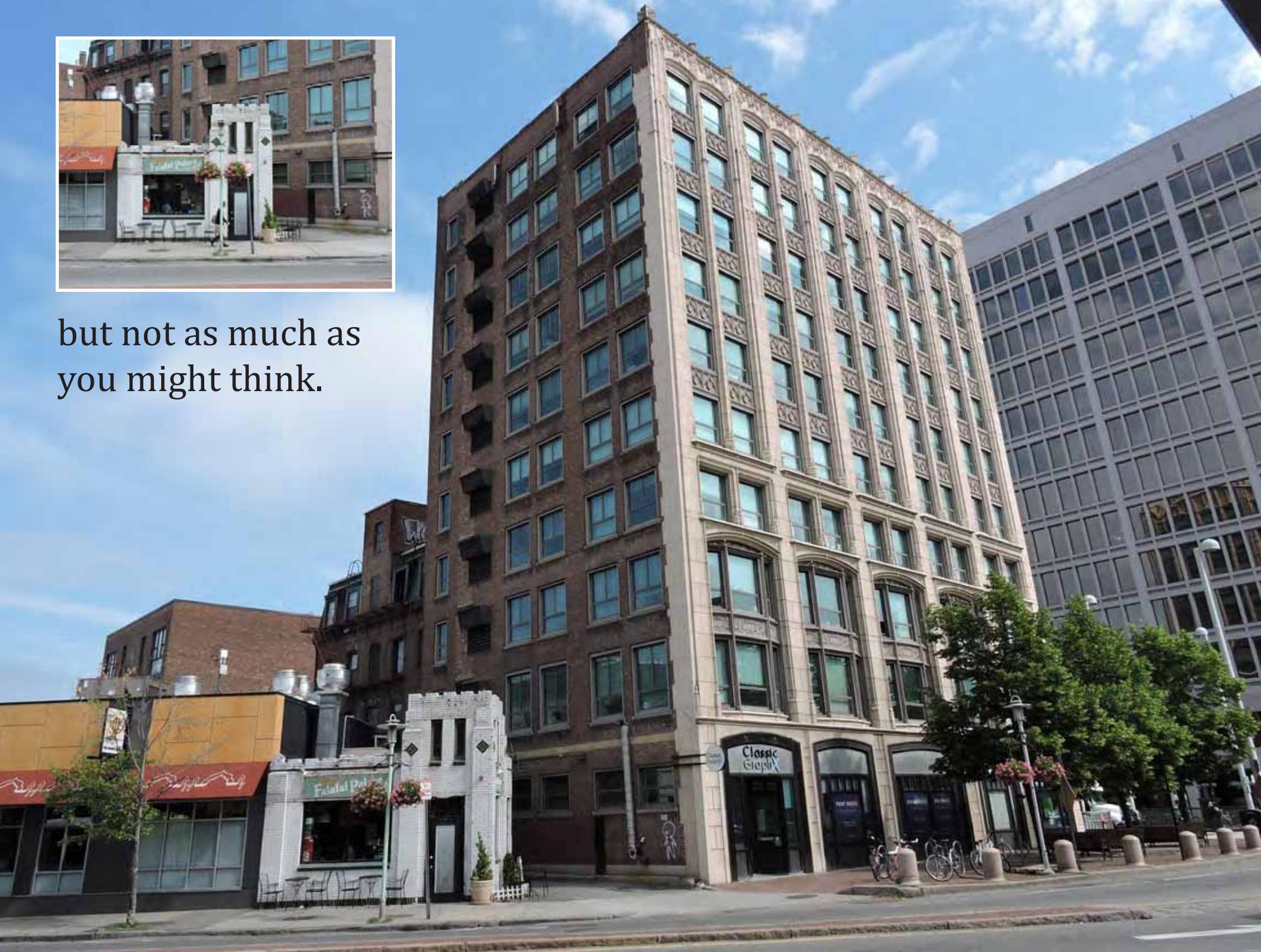




Scale Matters ...



but not as much as  
you might think.



The amount of transparency in a building has an enormous effect on the character of the street.



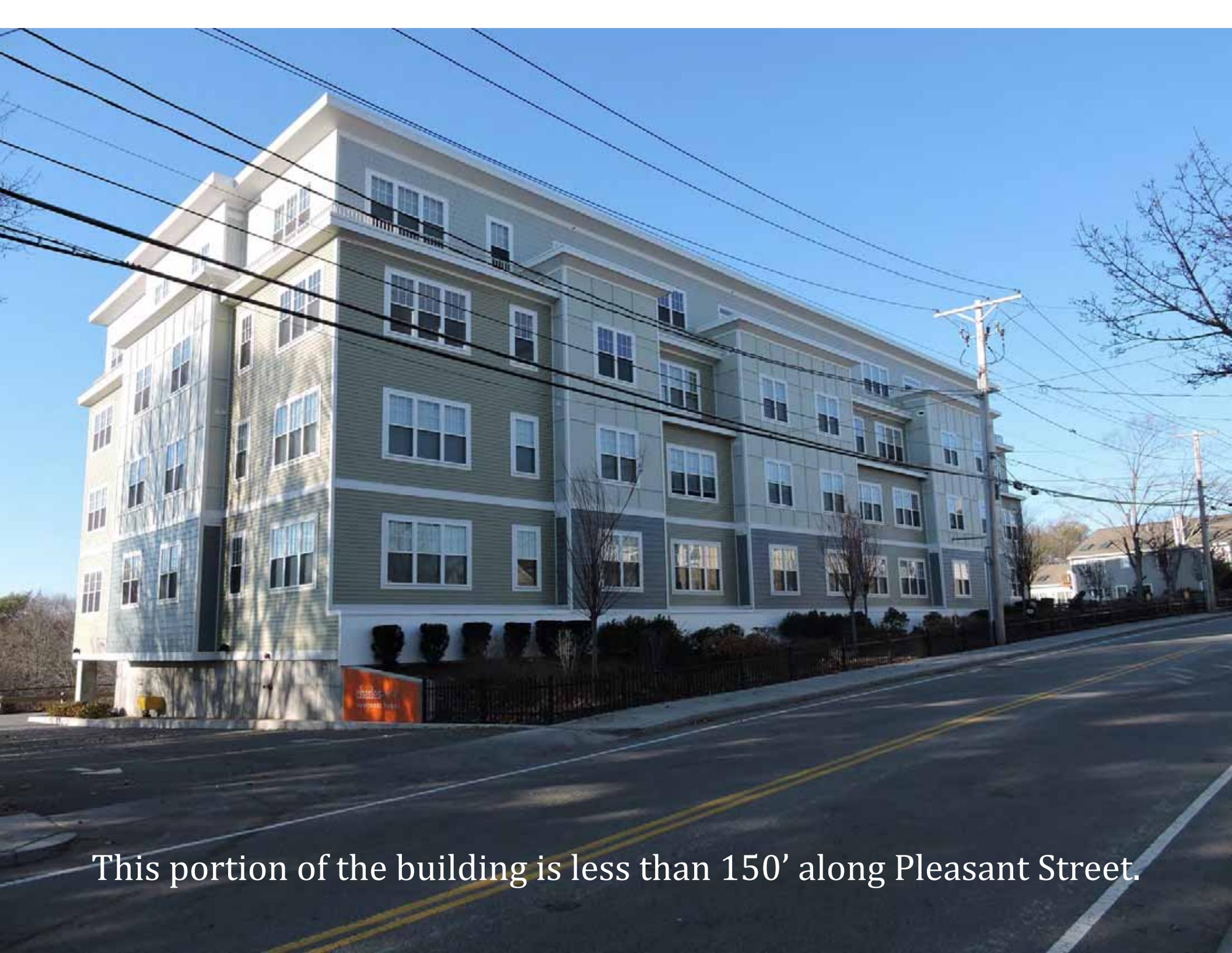
Home Depot

This building elevation is nearly 1,000'.



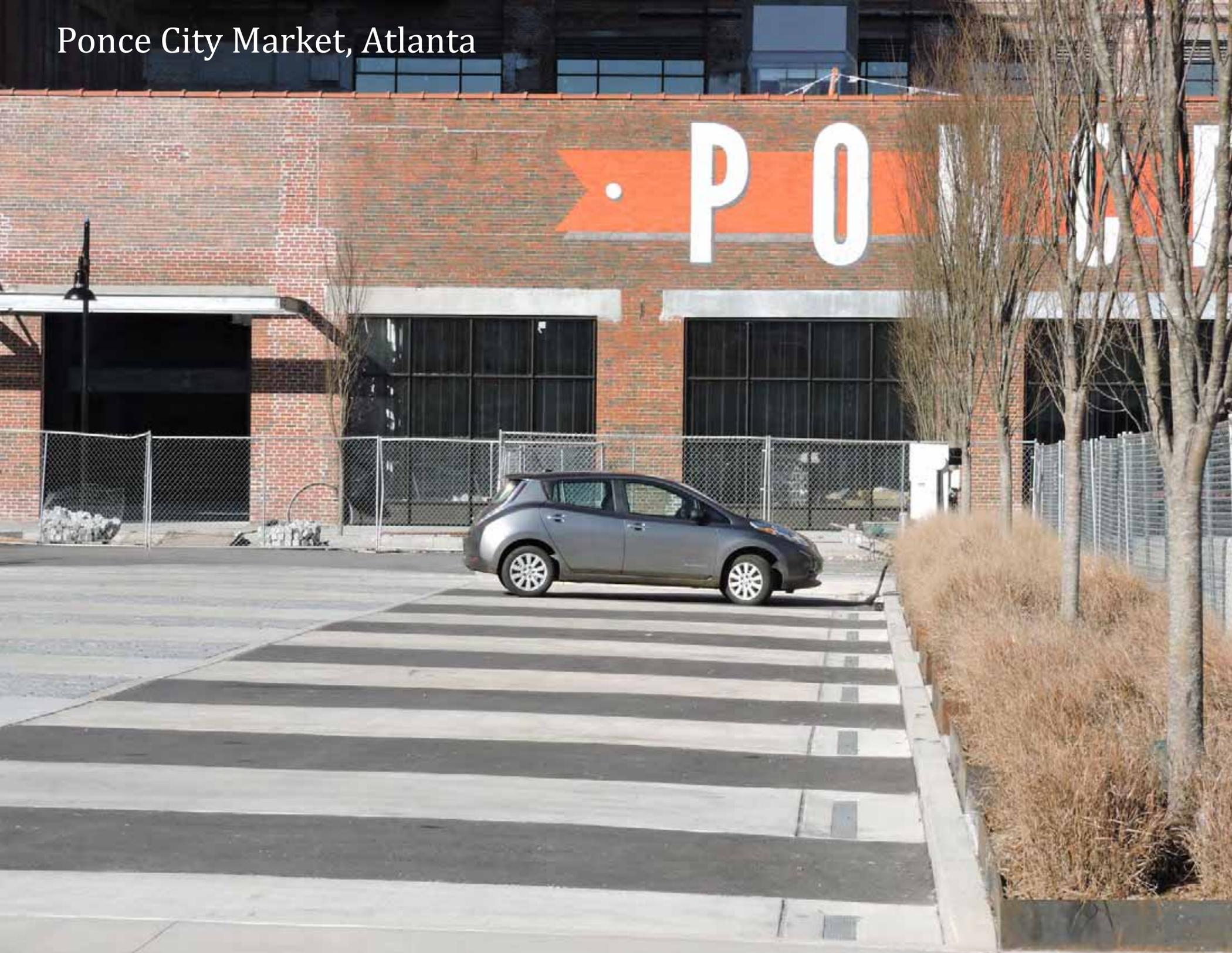
This building is less than 150' long.





This portion of the building is less than 150' along Pleasant Street.

Ponce City Market, Atlanta





125'

**233 Pleasant St**



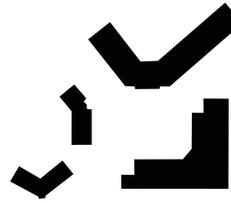
130'

**Olde World**



185'

**CharlesBank**



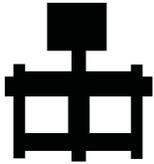
225'

**Alta at the Estate**



275'

**River Bend**



285'

**Perkins School**



300'

**Hanover/Cresset**



430'

350'

**Repton/The Mews**



580'

**River Works  
(Aetna Mills)**



725'

**Elan**



925'

**The Arsenal**



1,015'

**Home Depot (Arsenal Mall)**

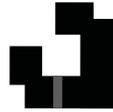
# 233 Pleasant St



125'



# Olde World



130'

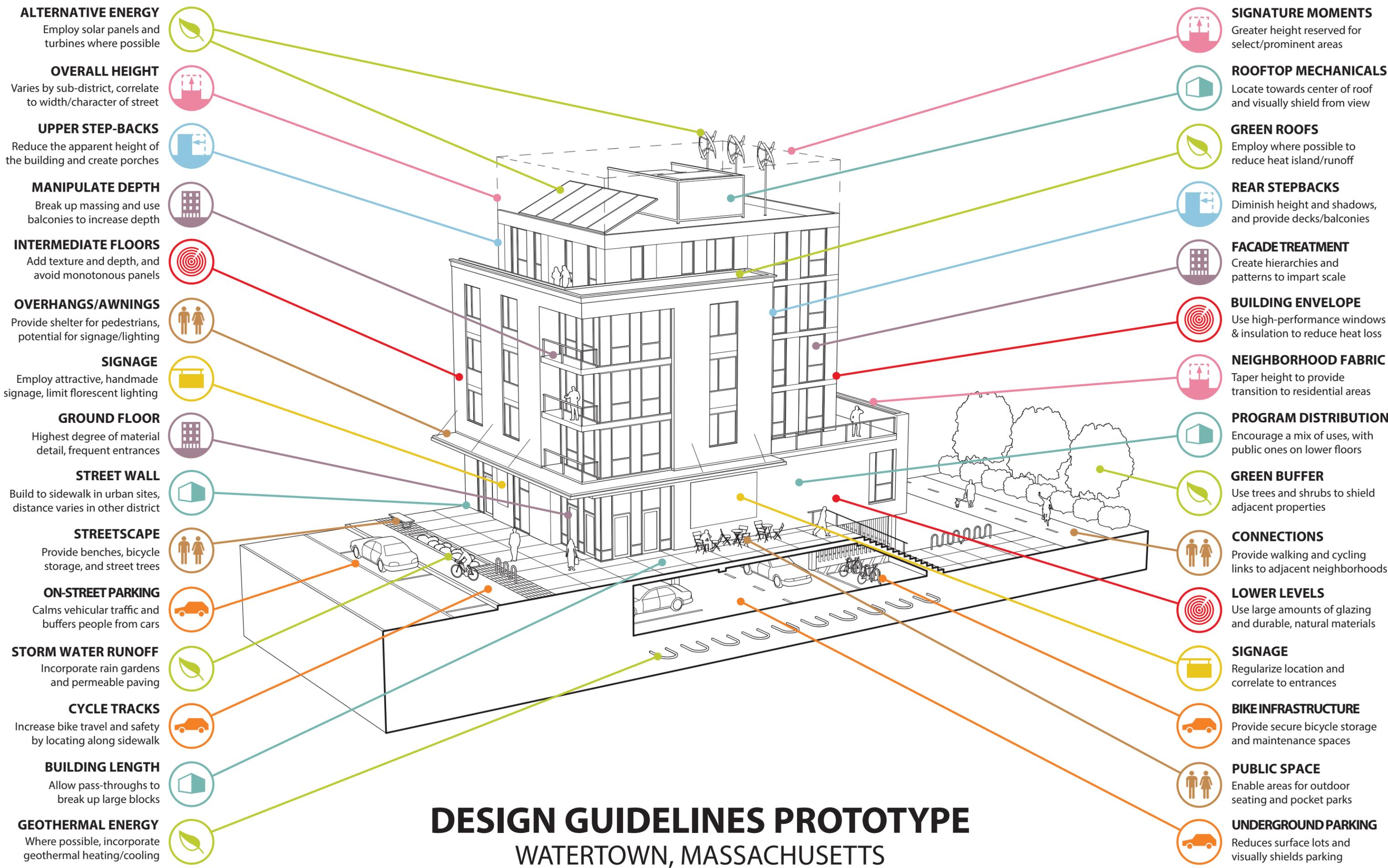


# Charlesbank



185'





**ALTERNATIVE ENERGY**

Employ solar panels and turbines where possible



**OVERALL HEIGHT**

Varies by sub-district, correlate to width/character of street



**UPPER STEP-BACKS**

Reduce the apparent height of the building and create porches



**MANIPULATE DEPTH**

Break up massing and use balconies to increase depth



**INTERMEDIATE FLOORS**

Add texture and depth, and avoid monotonous panels



**OVERHANGS/AWNINGS**

Provide shelter for pedestrians, potential for signage/lighting



**SIGNAGE**

Employ attractive, handmade signage, limit florescent lighting



**GROUND FLOOR**

Highest degree of material detail, frequent entrances



**STREET WALL**

Build to sidewalk in urban sites, distance varies in other district



**STREETScape**

Provide benches, bicycle storage, and street trees



**ON-STREET PARKING**

Calms vehicular traffic and buffers people from cars



**STORM WATER RUNOFF**

Incorporate rain gardens and permeable paving



**CYCLE TRACKS**

Increase bike travel and safety by locating along sidewalk



**BUILDING LENGTH**

Allow pass-throughs to break up large blocks



**GEOHERMAL ENERGY**

Where possible, incorporate geothermal heating/cooling



**SIGNATURE MOMENTS**

Greater height reserved for select/prominent areas



**ROOFTOP MECHANICALS**

Locate towards center of roof and visually shield from view



**GREEN ROOFS**

Employ where possible to reduce heat island/runoff



**REAR STEPBACKS**

Diminish height and shadows, and provide decks/balconies



**FACADE TREATMENT**

Create hierarchies and patterns to impart scale



**BUILDING ENVELOPE**

Use high-performance windows & insulation to reduce heat loss



**NEIGHBORHOOD FABRIC**

Taper height to provide transition to residential areas



**PROGRAM DISTRIBUTION**

Encourage a mix of uses, with public ones on lower floors



**GREEN BUFFER**

Use trees and shrubs to shield adjacent properties



**CONNECTIONS**

Provide walking and cycling links to adjacent neighborhoods



**LOWER LEVELS**

Use large amounts of glazing and durable, natural materials



**SIGNAGE**

Regularize location and correlate to entrances



**BIKE INFRASTRUCTURE**

Provide secure bicycle storage and maintenance spaces



**PUBLIC SPACE**

Enable areas for outdoor seating and pocket parks



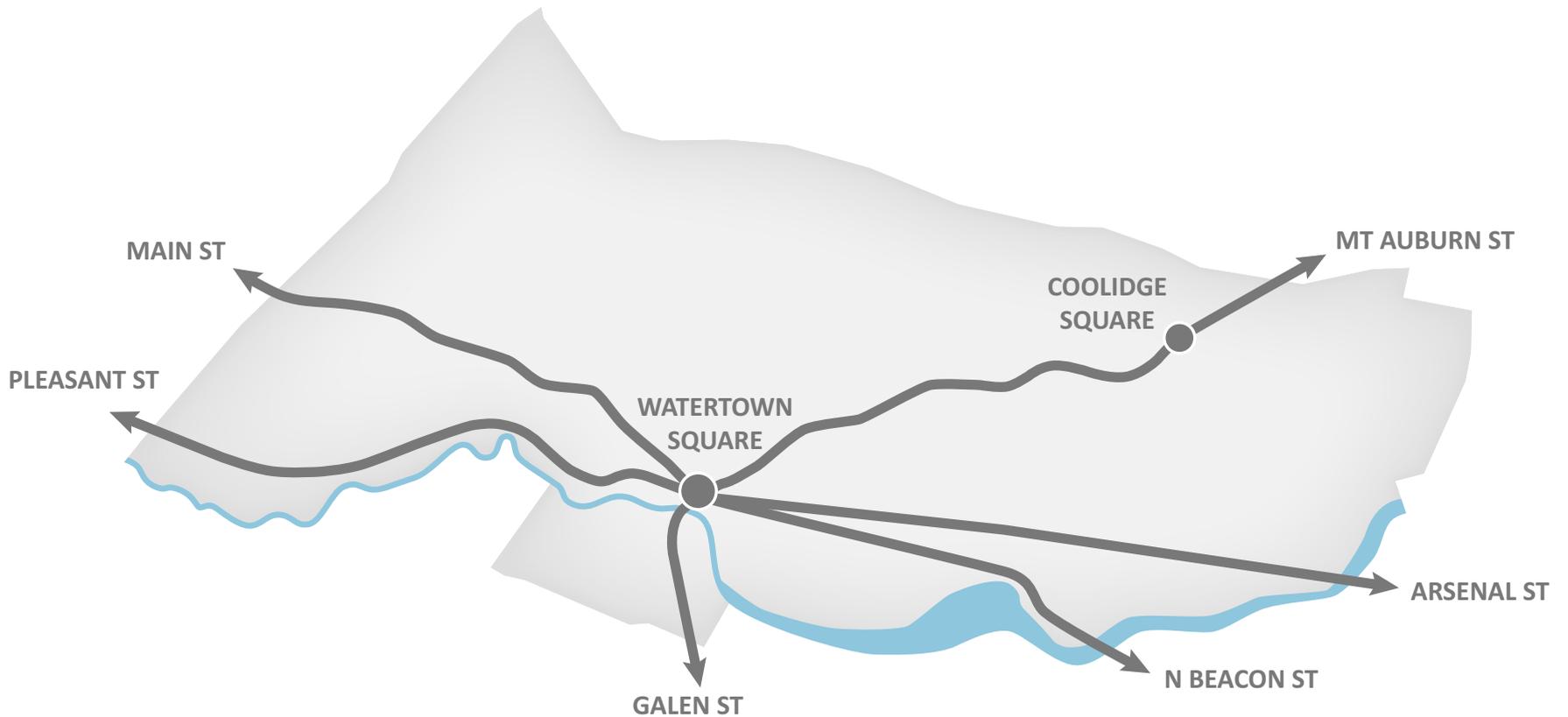
**UNDERGROUND PARKING**

Reduces surface lots and visually shields parking



**DESIGN GUIDELINES PROTOTYPE**  
WATERTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS

# COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS AND SQUARES OF WATERTOWN



Watertown is defined by its relationship to the Charles River, as well as by its squares and the commercial corridors that link them. Together, these stitch together the various residential neighborhoods which make up the majority of the Town.

The Design Guidelines focus on these links and nodes, outlining best practices to guide sustainable future growth. By strengthening the character of these major corridors, greater connectivity and a richer “sense of place” can be achieved.

# OVERARCHING PRINCIPALS

## ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Watertown's Design Guidelines were created to enhance the economic vitality of selected commercial areas through attractive, consistent design. By following these guidelines, each project will complement another, resulting in a cohesive development over time. The guidelines were developed specifically to **provide direction for the design of new infill development in commercial areas**. The goal is not to limit creativity, but rather to recognize potential for architectural diversity while adhering to the overarching principles contained herein. They intend to define expectations for new development while allowing for flexibility and fostering high quality design.

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Urban regeneration means more than simply building anew; **historic preservation is an effective economic development strategy**. The reuse and regeneration of existing buildings should be encouraged in addition to new development as they provide a direct connection to Watertown's past. Existing buildings that have retained cultural or architectural significance can form the basis for economic development and growth.

## DESIGN AESTHETIC

Development in Watertown will occur on a site-by-site basis, with individual projects advanced by different development entities and according to their own schedules. These Design Guidelines cannot depict every possible building configuration on each site. Rather, a prototypical building footprint is shown in a manner that accommodate many conditions that emerge on a project site. The massing is general enough that it can contain a range of uses, but specific enough to highlight the critical areas of concern. Even when closely following these guidelines, each project will take its own form that will differ from the example shown here. **A singular design aesthetic in Watertown is neither viable nor desirable.**

## ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

New development offers an opportunity for sustainable construction practices that acknowledge technological innovation and green building practices. It should strive to address **the highest sustainable and ecological principles**, using advanced green technologies and materials, and promoting high-performance buildings. New buildings should be constructed with local, low-embodied energy materials and constructed with the highest standards for environmental sustainability.

# CATEGORIES

The Design Guidelines are organized into nine distinct sections, each identified by a specific color and icon:



**PUBLIC REALM INTERFACE**



**PARKING + ACCESS**



**SUSTAINABLE DESIGN**



**BUILDING MASSING**



**BUILDING HEIGHT**



**BUILDING SETBACKS**



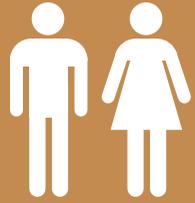
**FACADE TREATMENT**



**MATERIAL SELECTION**

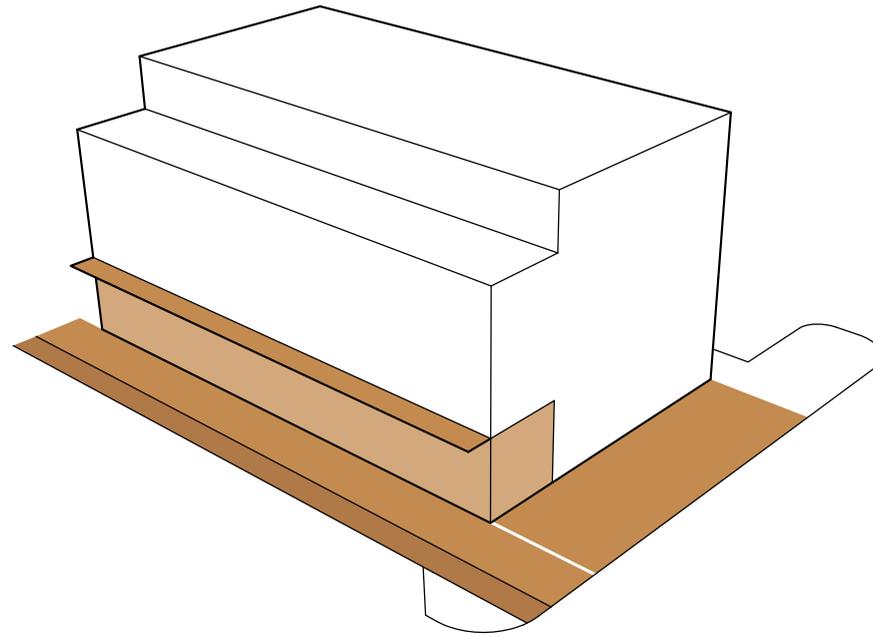


**SIGNAGE**



# PUBLIC REALM INTERFACE

Commercial corridors are most successful when the street edge is defined with active ground floor uses with a high degree of transparency.



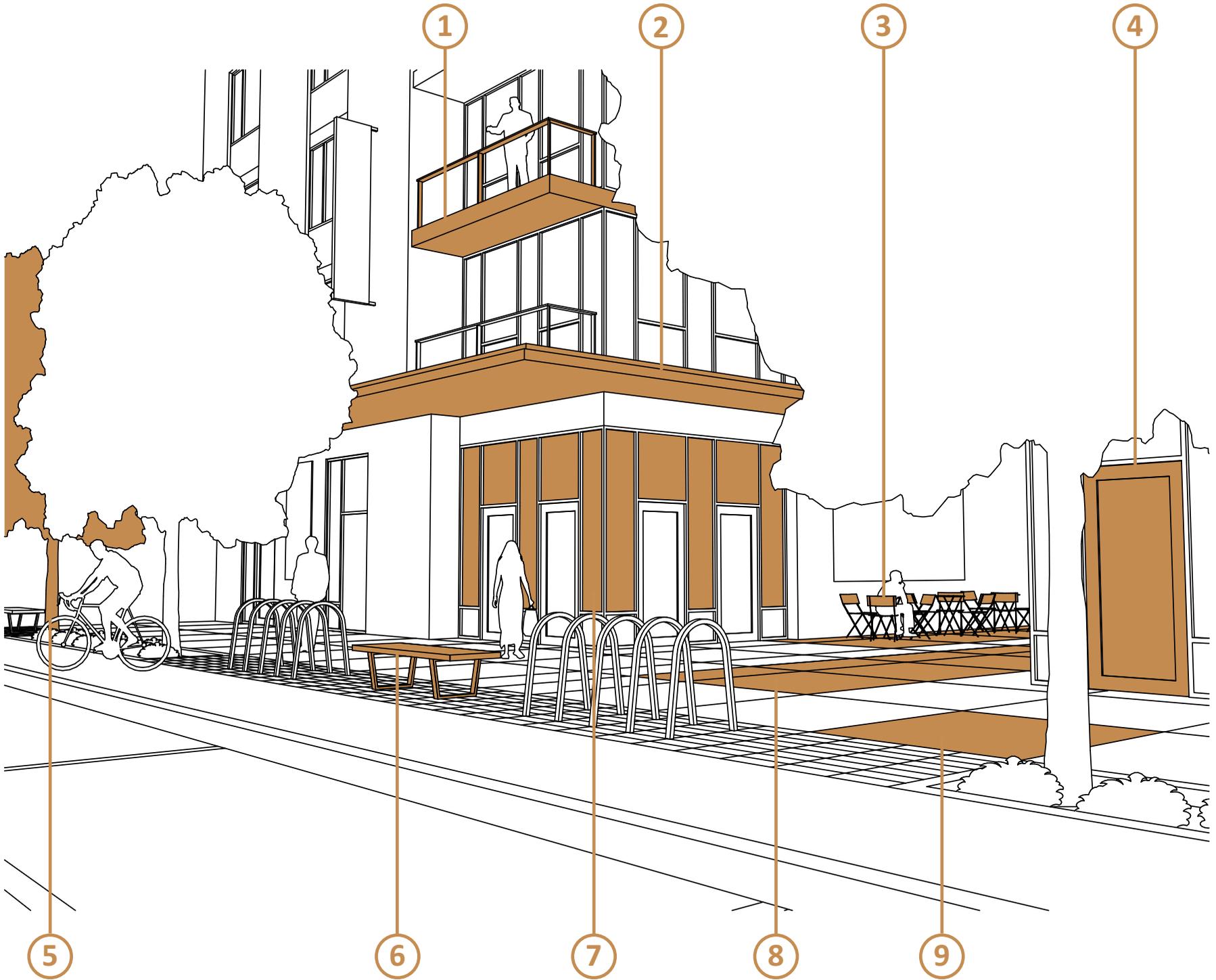
## ASPIRATIONS

The relationship of the building to the street (in the form of setbacks or build-to lines) plays a key role in the ability of a development to enhance or detract from the experience of a place. Commercial corridors are most successful when **the street edge is defined with active ground floor uses with a high degree of transparency**. A vibrant public realm interface is essential for a successful community. How a building relates to the public realm makes an enormous difference in the quality of the development and the degree to which the building contributes to public life.

While the massing of a building and its height, scale, profile and orientation have a significant impact on one's impression of a place, the manner in which it meets the ground is the most critical. Entrances and ground floor windows should be at grade, easily accessible and they should aid in pedestrian comfort, safety and orientation.



PUBLIC REALM INTERFACE



# ELEMENTS

- 1 Upper Level Exterior Spaces**

Creating porches, terraces, and balconies on the exterior of a building help to bring the activity within to the outside, increasing both the safety of the sidewalk as well as enlivening the building façade.
- 2 Canopies and Awnings**

Exterior overhangs and projections protect pedestrians from the elements, create a threshold at the entrances to shops and restaurants, and visually complete the “ceiling” of the public realm.
- 3 Public Spaces**

Well designed, appropriately-scaled, and publicly-accessible exterior spaces create an inviting public realm that becomes an integral part of the surrounding neighborhood.
- 4 Frequent Entrances**

Having frequent entrances along public ways creates a lively and more interesting pedestrian experience. Shops, cafés, restaurants, offices, and lobbies all create destinations that increase foot traffic.
- 5 Street Trees / Vegetation**

Street trees and other plantings help to visually soften the building, create a permeable barrier between the street and sidewalk, reduce solar gain, provide shade, and create a more appealing environment.
- 6 Street Furniture**

Benches, trash receptacles, pedestrian lighting, and other types of street furniture make a welcoming pedestrian realm that invites people to linger.
- 7 Ground-Level Transparency**

Large areas of glazing at ground level dissolve the visual barrier between the interior and exterior of a building, allowing the sidewalk to benefit from the adjacent activity.
- 8 Open Space Networks / Connectivity**

Where possible, new public open spaces around buildings should link to and expand existing networks, whether they be bike paths, walking paths, pocket parks, or pedestrian linkages.
- 9 Paving Patterns**

Varying the paving patterns through the use of colored concrete, pavers, and other materials can help to create a unique sense of place in front of a building and visually brand the location.





# STRATEGIES

## ENCOURAGE:

### **Pedestrian Interest**

Frequent entrances, large areas of ground-level transparency, building permeability, and high-quality materials all contribute to creating an engaging pedestrian experience. Since the ground level of a building is the one the public most frequently interacts with, it should receive the highest degree of detailing so as to enliven the public realm and create a unique sense of place.

### **Appropriately Scaled Sidewalks**

The width of the sidewalk should be calibrated to the height of the adjacent building as well as the width of the street. Taller buildings and larger, multi-lane streets along primary commercial corridors require wider sidewalks. Smaller, more intimate sidewalks are appropriate for residential areas and neighborhood commercial nodes. The level of street furnishings and plantings should scale to the sidewalk environment.

### **Greater Connectivity**

In order to decrease the dependency of accessing a site solely by car, greater emphasis needs to be placed on the pedestrian and cycle connections from the site to the larger context. Developers should carefully design with each mode of transportation in mind to ensure that they are accommodated and share equal priority.

### **Bike Paths**

Efforts should be made to include bike paths and cycle tracks within or adjacent to a site. Developments should anticipate future connections and incorporate them in their site plans to prevent thwarting long-term planning visions. The existing cycle tracks along Arsenal St should be expanded, and on-street bike lanes should be advanced with the town if not already present along the main frontage of a site.

### **Large Caliper Trees**

Often times, small caliper trees are planted that will not achieve the benefits of a tree canopy for a number of years. Additionally, smaller caliper trees have a higher instance of dying due to shock, disease, winter conditions, or the challenging environment of developed areas. By specifying larger caliper trees, there is a higher assuredness of a successful transplant, and a more immediate positive effect from their presence.

### **Appealing, Publicly-accessible Outdoor Spaces**

Pocket Parks, public plazas, outdoor seating space, pedestrian corridors, and exterior shop space all serve to enliven the public realm, and to allow the general public to access and enjoy privately owned spaces. These transition zones between the public right of way and the building are an important interface, and provide the surrounding community with long-term benefits and amenities from a building's construction.

### **Public Art Opportunities**

Where possible, public art and other cultural considerations should be incorporated into a development. This can range from dedicated community gathering and gallery space, to showcasing local artist's work in lobbies and other publicly accessible spaces, to exterior pieces of sculpture, murals, and a number of other mediums. This serves to bolster local artists, enrich the public contribution the building makes, better engage the surrounding community, and enhance the passing pedestrian's experience.

## **DISCOURAGE:**

### **Residual, Privately-owned “Public Spaces”**

New development may meet the letter of the law regarding the percentage of open space without achieving the spirit as intended. This often happens when open space is captured completely within the development, rendering it inaccessible to the public, or is comprised of thin, marginal exterior spaces that lack any distinct sense of place. These are to be avoided; public spaces should be places of adequate size and value that non-users of the site would want to use them.

### **Wide Building Setbacks Along Commercial Corridors**

As opposed to residential neighborhoods, commercial corridors benefit from a coherent, relatively continuous street wall created by the facades of the buildings that line it. Overly generous setbacks remove the building from the public realm, and fail to contribute positively to the vibrancy of street life. Setbacks from the property line along commercial corridors should only be included when the existing right of way doesn't allow for an adequately scaled public realm.

### **Preferencing Automobiles**

All modes of accessing a site should be given equal priority, as opposed to the largely car-centric designs that dominate much of Watertown's commercial corridors. Buildings should front the sidewalk, pushing parking underneath or to the rear. Adequate bicycle storage facilities should be provided at all developments, and emphasis should be placed on pedestrian and cycle connections to existing networks, as well as public transit hubs.

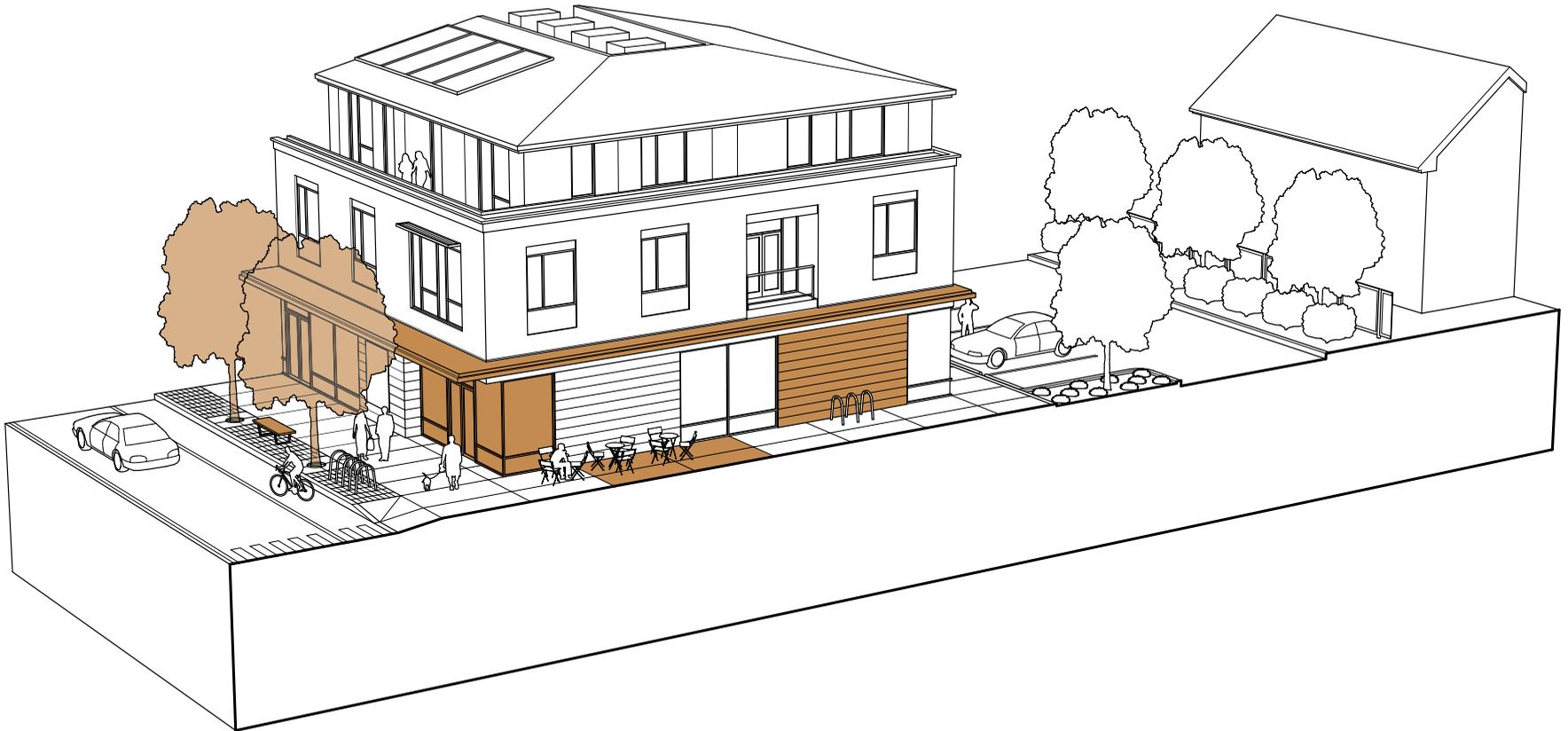
### **Multiple Curb Cuts**

Curb cuts, where a vehicle entrance or exit crosses the sidewalk to access the street, put pedestrians directly in conflict with vehicles, as well as impede the efficient flow of traffic. Developments should seek to minimize the number of curb cuts they employ so as to increase pedestrian and cyclist safety as well as create a less confusing environment for drivers.



# URBAN SCALE OPPORTUNITIES

The manner in which a building meets the sidewalk is critical. Along Watertown's commercial corridors there is an aspiration to have a mix of uses and to enhance the pedestrian experience. This impacts the relationship of a building to its primary street frontage.



# PRECEDENTS



Paving Patterns, General Aviation Facility Logan Airport, Boston MA



Street Furnishings, 315 on A, Boston MA



Outdoor Seating, Millennium Place, Boston MA



Pedestrian Pass-Through, Old Street, London UK



Ground Level Transparency, Brooklyn Botanical Garden, Brooklyn NY





# RECOMMENDED ZONING ORDINANCE CHANGES

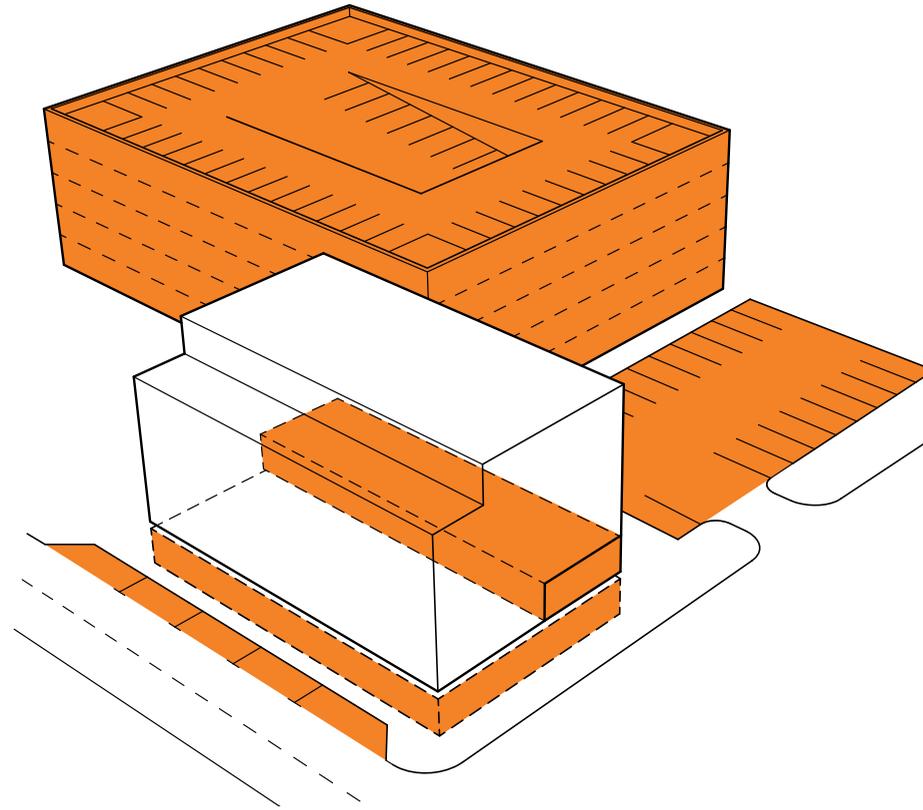
**Minimum of 50% transparency** on ground floor facade that fronts the primary public way.

**Minimum percent of publicly accessible retail / commercial space** on the ground floor level for mixed-use residential and commercial buildings.



# PARKING + ACCESS

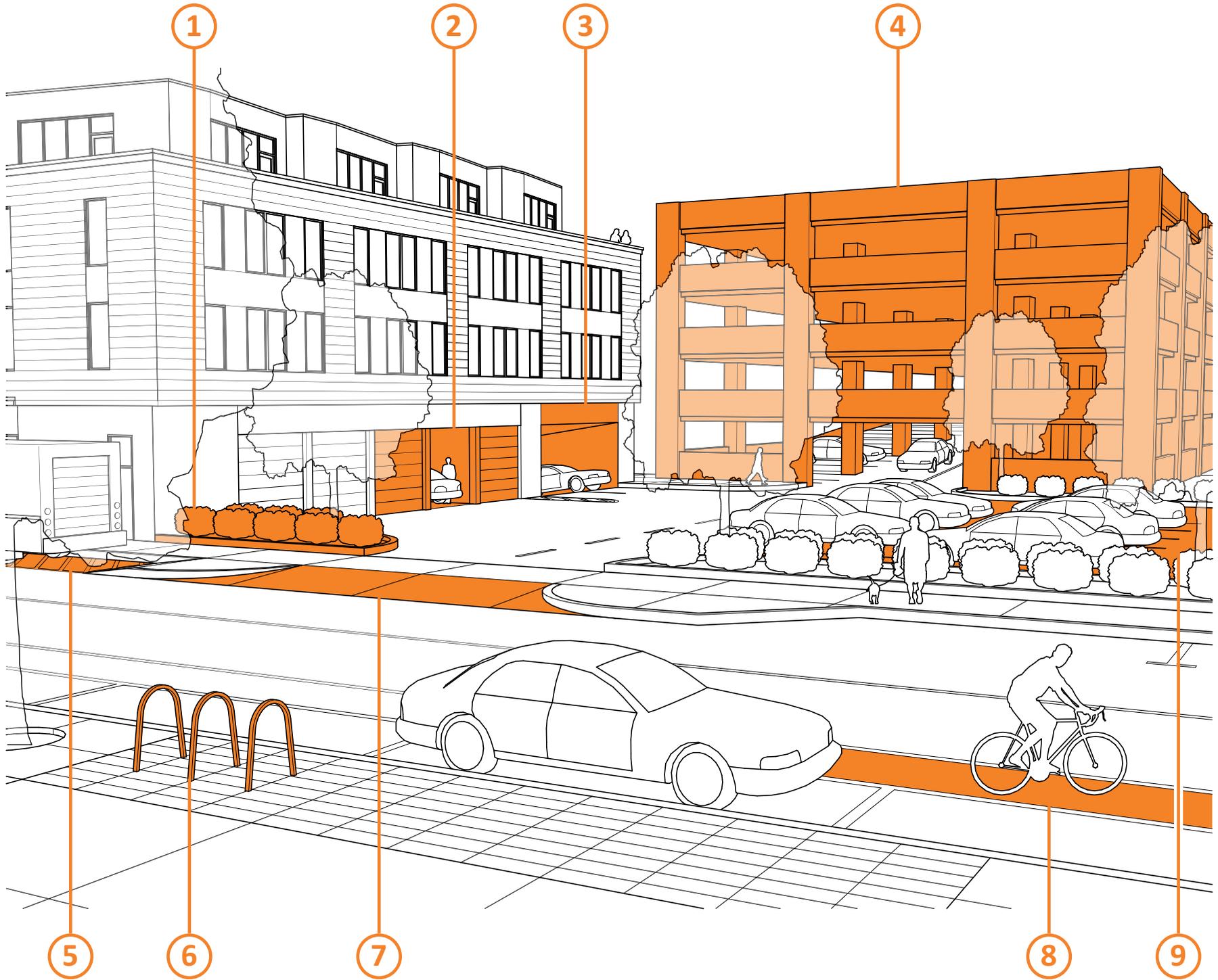
**Development should consider the pedestrian first,  
then bicyclists, then transit and then the automobile.**

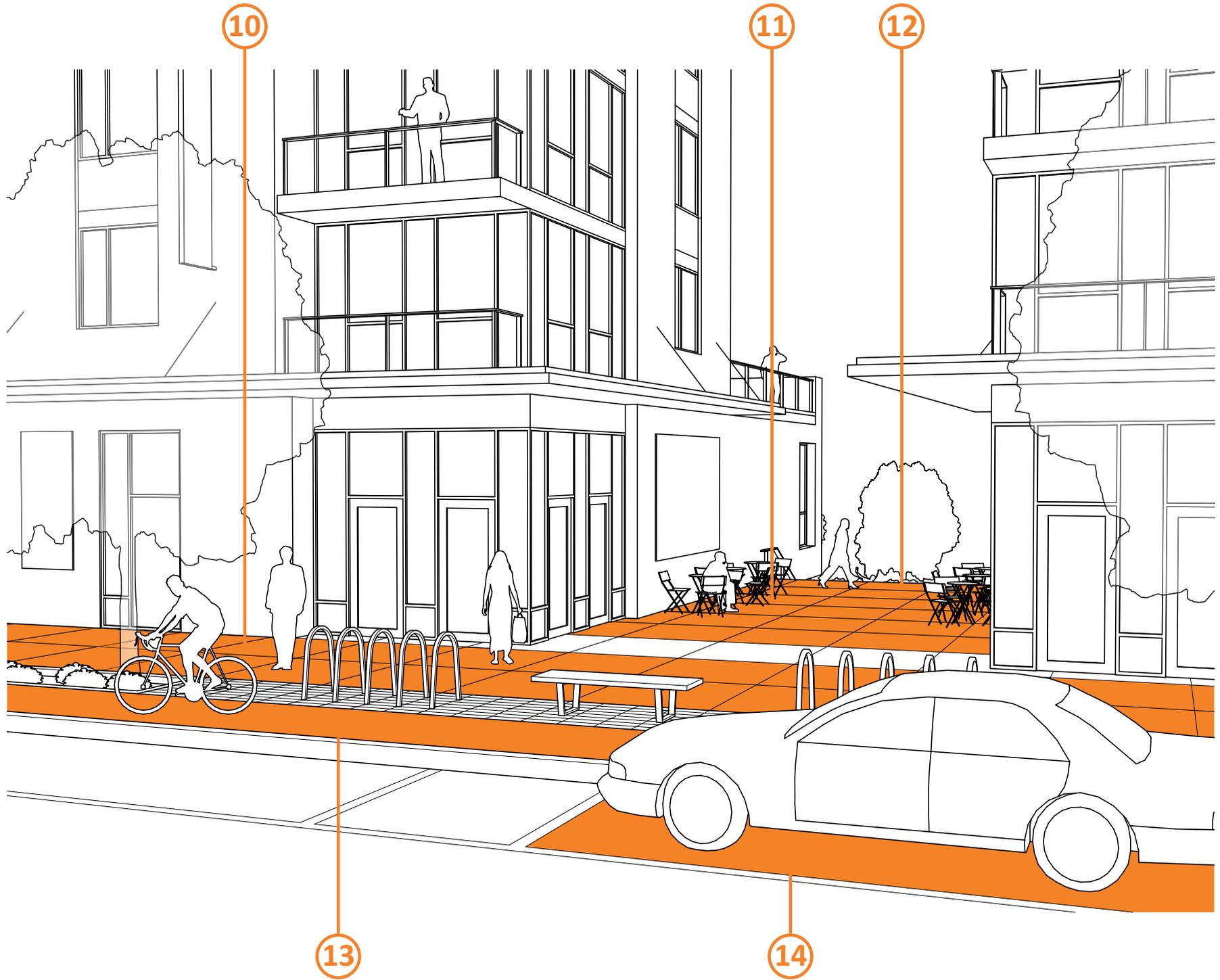


## ASPIRATIONS

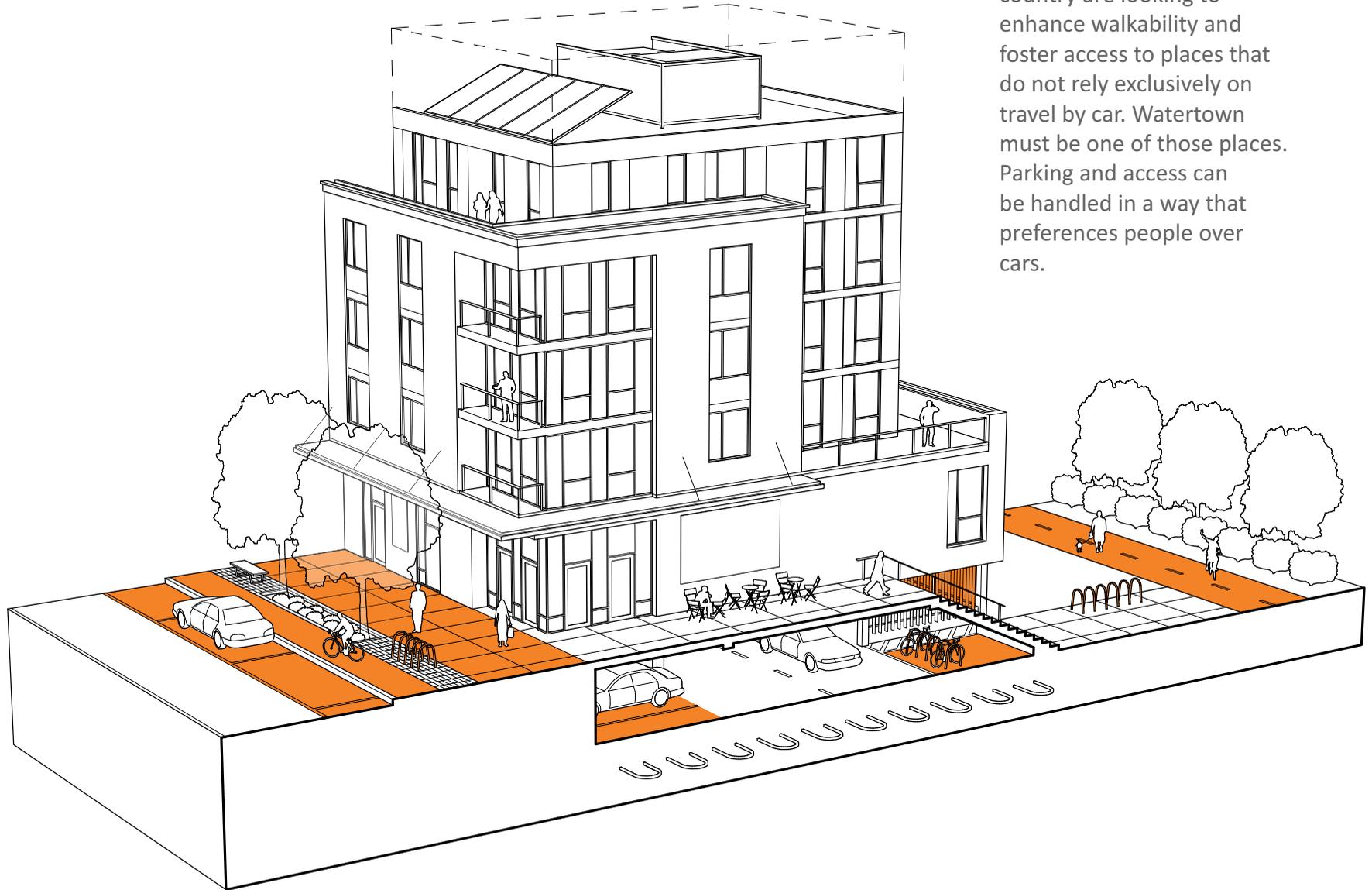
Parking is always a primary consideration and its location on the site can be varied. When parking is located in front of buildings, it often requires multiple curb-cuts for the property it serves. As a result, the relationship of the building to the street favors vehicles, not pedestrians. Surface parking lots located in front of commercial establishments facilitate access for patrons but do little to improve the character of the street or public realm.

Consideration should be given to shared parking opportunities where day and night uses do not overlap. **Opportunities for shared parking** must be pursued to increase development potential wherever possible and diminish the impact of the automobile. This has the added benefit of encouraging alternate modes of transportation and enhanced transit ridership. Regardless of where they are located, existing and future parking lots must be visually buffered by trees and native grasses. Development should consider the pedestrian first, then bicyclists, then transit and then the automobile.





# URBAN SCALE OPPORTUNITIES



Communities across the country are looking to enhance walkability and foster access to places that do not rely exclusively on travel by car. Watertown must be one of those places. Parking and access can be handled in a way that preferences people over cars.

# PRECEDENTS



Shared Street, Winthrop Street, Cambridge MA



Bicycle Racks, Allston Public Library, Allston MA



Cycletrack, MIT West Annex Lot, Cambridge MA



Garage Screening, Lexus, Watertown MA



Vegetated Buffer, The Box Office, Providence RI

## RECOMMENDED ZONING ORDINANCE CHANGES

**Reduce parking** required on average of 25% per unit for larger mixed-use developments.

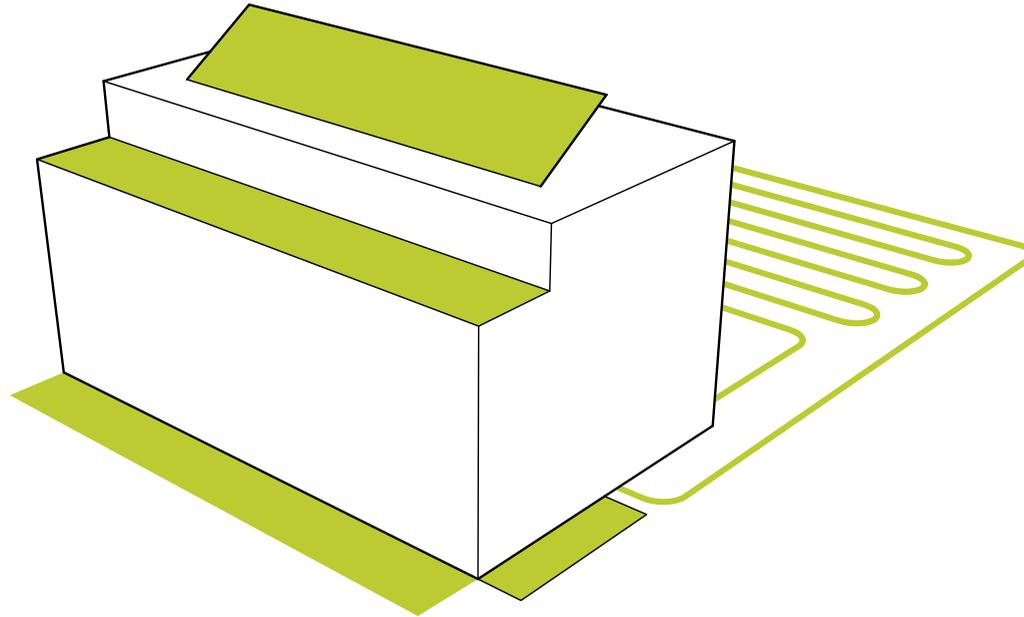
Triple the number of **required bicycle spaces** as a percentage of parking for residential mixed-use buildings.

Advance **shared parking plans** across multiple properties.



# SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

**A sustainable design approach effectively balances environmental and aesthetic concerns.**



## ASPIRATIONS

“Sustainable” is one of the most widely used but increasingly ambiguous and misunderstood terms in design vocabulary. The term is used here to describe projects that are connected with the environment in which they reside. A development that is sustainable utilizes alternative and renewable energy sources for energy generation and retention. Sustainable buildings use less energy through the use of solar panels, wind turbines and geothermal fields. Projects that have rainwater harvesting, green roofs, energy responsive facades, sun-shading devices, natural daylighting, recycled content and low embodied energy materials are sustainable. **A sustainable design approach effectively balances environmental and aesthetic concerns.**

A building’s use, massing, orientation, and design character influence a great deal how a building relates to its context. Deploying sustainable design and construction strategies ensures that these decisions are made in the service of a greater objective which acknowledges the impact that construction has on our environment. A sustainable design approach is one where environmental responsibility is an integral part of the design, and the negative impacts associated with development are minimized. A sustainable ethic involves making careful, ecologically conscious decisions at every point in the planning, design and construction process. A sustainable building treads lightly on the earth.





# URBAN SCALE OPPORTUNITIES

It is essential that new development addresses site specific issues related to the environment. Building and landscape strategies that mitigate the negative environmental effects of construction are no longer aspirations, they are mainstream.



# PRECEDENTS



Rooftop Solar, Gloucester Marine Terminal  
Gloucester City NJ



Shade Trees, The Arsenal on the Charles  
Watertown MA



High-Performance Skin, Artists for Humanity  
South Boston, MA



Green Roof, Alice Paul & David Kemp Residence Halls, Swathmore PA



Rain Garden, Permeable Paving, + Street Trees, 6th Street, Brooklyn NY



## RECOMMENDED ZONING ORDINANCE CHANGES

Require building to meet the level of **“LEED Certified”** as a minimum standard.

**Require solar assesment** for all large mixed-use and commercial projects.

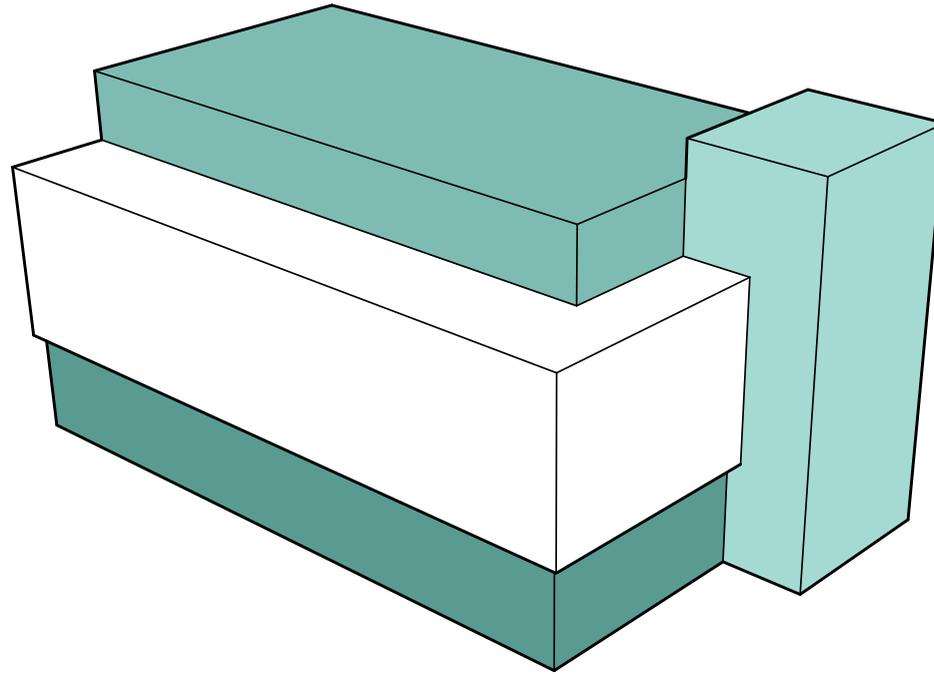
Require landscaping to use **native, non-invasive, and drought tolerant plants.**





# BUILDING MASSING

**As Watertown's density increases and previously vacant or low density sites fill in with new buildings, figuring out how to manage massing becomes increasingly important.**



## ASPIRATIONS

Building massing has to do with the overall proportion of a structure, including the dimensions of the building footprint and its relationship to the context where it resides. As Watertown's density increases and previously vacant or low density sites fill in with new buildings, figuring out how to manage massing becomes increasingly important.

Larger building masses are most appropriate for Watertown Square, the historical commercial center of the Town. Greater building height and mass is recommended in this area. The commercial corridors of Mt. Auburn Street and Arsenal Street - with their traditional mixed-use fabric - are also viable candidates for larger building masses as are portions of Pleasant Street and Main Street. As new development sites get closer to existing residential areas, **a building's mass should taper to relate more closely with the character of established neighborhoods.**





# URBAN SCALE OPPORTUNITIES

The shape, proportion and volume of a building's mass has as much of an impact on the character of the building than other characteristics. Building programs dictate the size of footprints but uses change over time. Building forms, on the other hand, endure.



# PRECEDENTS



Emphasized Corner Entrance, Allston Public Library, Allston MA



Agregate Volumes, Wilkes Passage Lofts, Boston MA



Vertical Elements, First + First, Boston MA



Pass-Through, Harvard University, Cambridge MA



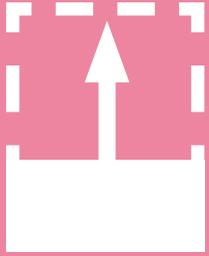
Additive/Subtractive, six9one, Boston MA

# RECOMMENDED ZONING ORDINANCE CHANGES

**Maximum contiguous facade length of 150' and building length of 400'.**

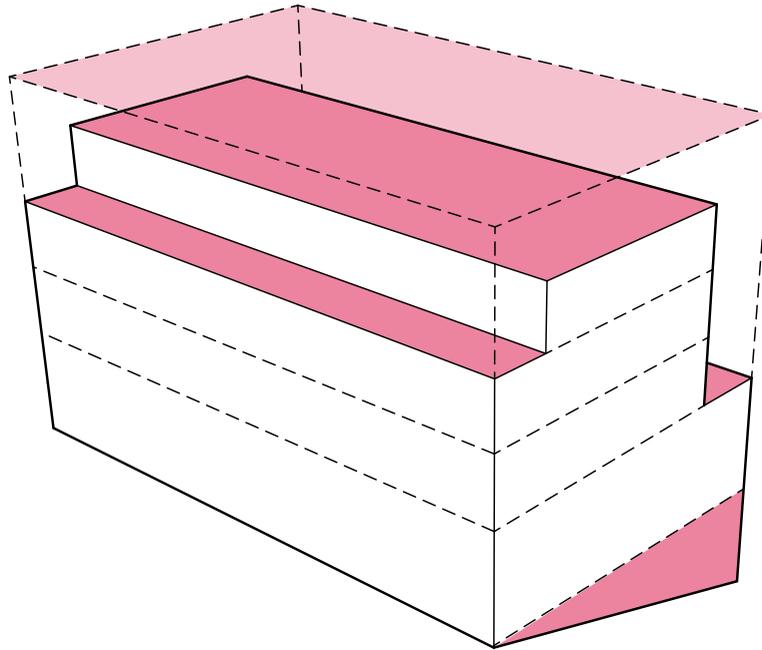
**Minimum offset of 25' for a facade not to be considered contiguous.**

**Minimum separations of 30' between adjacent buildings on the same site.**



# BUILDING HEIGHT

Greater height in certain locations can be beneficial, and increasing heights in some areas can offset the need for building in other places.



## ASPIRATIONS

Height constitutes just one aspect of a building's massing, but it is undoubtedly the most conspicuous. Historical building heights in Watertown vary, with greater height generally reserved for civic buildings, institutions, places of worship, and older manufacturing facilities. The vast majority of the buildings, however, are just one or two stories along the primary commercial corridors. Heights are impacted by a variety of factors including the individual floor to floor dimensions, the type of construction, the contours of a site, use and the scale of the surroundings.

**Greater height in certain locations can be beneficial, and increasing heights in some areas can offset the need for building in other places.** The impact of height can be diminished when offset by the inclusion of open space or a building setback. A taller building will appear less tall when setback from the street edge. When concerns about density arise as a result of a building's height, the relationship of the building façade to the public-right-of-way can have a greater impact than any other dimension. At the same time, what is deemed an appropriate height for a building is relative to the urban context.



# URBAN SCALE OPPORTUNITIES



The vast majority of the buildings along Watertown's commercial corridors are one to two stories. As the town evolves, **greater height along these corridors is warranted.** Modulating the building components is necessary in order to break down the overall mass of the structure. Careful consideration needs to be placed on how new buildings relate to adjoining residential areas.

# PRECEDENTS



Upper Level Setback, Trolley Square, Cambridge MA



Corner Condition, 225 Centre, Jackson Square, Boston MA



Cornice Detail, Fort Point, Boston MA



Contextual Height, 6 Newbury Street, Boston MA



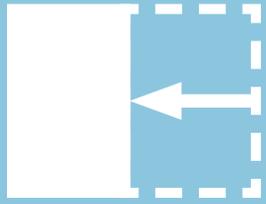
Transitional Height, Charlesview, Brighton MA

# RECOMMENDED ZONING ORDINANCE CHANGES

Building heights calculated on the basis of site topography taken at 30' intervals.

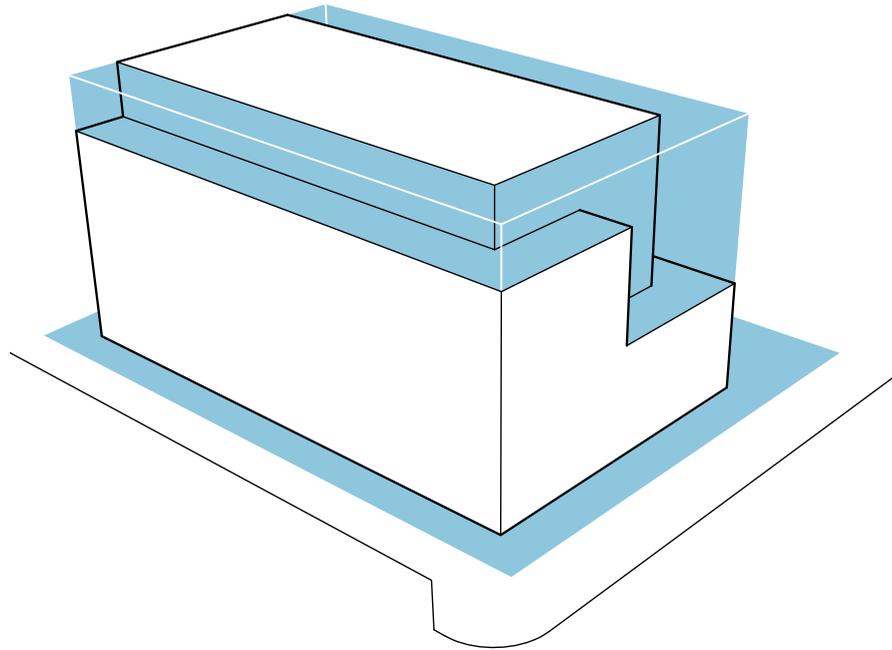
**Minimum height** requirement of 24'.

**Additional height** of up to 10' granted at civic intersections/or in exchange for public ammenities.



# BUILDING SETBACKS

Setbacks that do occur should be used for pocket parks, plazas, seating areas or lush landscape zones that are publicly-accessible.



## ASPIRATIONS

The dimension from a building to the street edge has everything to do with how a space feels. In urban areas with a lot of commercial activity, it is important to maintain a continuous street wall with modest or few building setbacks. **Setbacks that do occur should be used for pocket parks, plazas, seating areas or landscape zones.** What constitutes an appropriate building setback is impacted by the character and scale of the street it fronts, the type of uses on the ground floor of the building and the concentration of pedestrian activity. Urban corridors are most vibrant when they help to define a streetwall.

While aligning an elevation to the property line is most often the appropriate response for a building in an urban setting, there are instances, where some spatial relief is necessary and a building setback should be included as part of a property's development. Along Watertown's commercial corridors, modest setbacks function best for residential buildings and areas of high traffic. Setbacks are also beneficial in mature neighborhoods where the street width is narrow.



BUILDING SETBACKS



# URBAN SCALE OPPORTUNITIES



Setting back upper stories of buildings from the build-to line mitigate the overall impression of height from many vantage points. Watertown's commercial corridors abut residential neighborhoods that intrinsically have another scale to them.

# PRECEDENTS



Front Setback with seating, Boston Center for the Arts, Boston MA



Planted Terrace within Stepback, Ed Roberts Campus, Berkeley CA



Ground Level Stepback, Meridian Building Wellington, New Zealand



Upper Side Stepback, 537 E First St South Boston MA



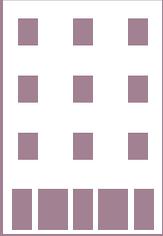
Upper Level Front Stepbacks, FP3 Fort Point, Boston MA



# RECOMMENDED ZONING ORDINANCE CHANGES

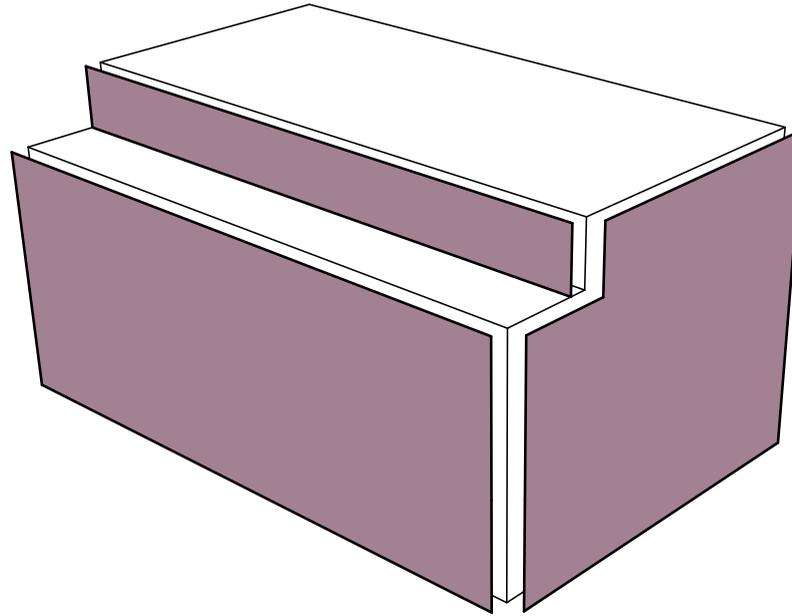
**Maximum and minimum setbacks** along public ways per the “Pleasant Street Corridor District” language.

**Open air porches, arcades, and covered stoops** allowed within required setback.



# FACADE TREATMENT

Durable, high quality materials will add a level of sophistication to a large and/or minimally-detailed façade.



## ASPIRATIONS

The façade is defined as the primary public or streetside of the building in its entirety from the sidewalk or grade level to the uppermost portion of the roofline. Corner buildings have two primary facades. The character of an elevation depends on a number of factors: the proportion and orientation of openings, the composition of the fenestration, the color and patterning of the exterior skin and the relationship between the various parts of the exterior. **Durable, high quality materials** will add a level of sophistication to a large and/or minimally-detailed façade, whereas inexpensive materials make a nicely-proportioned building look cheap. A building's elevation or facade says a lot about the quality and character of a building.

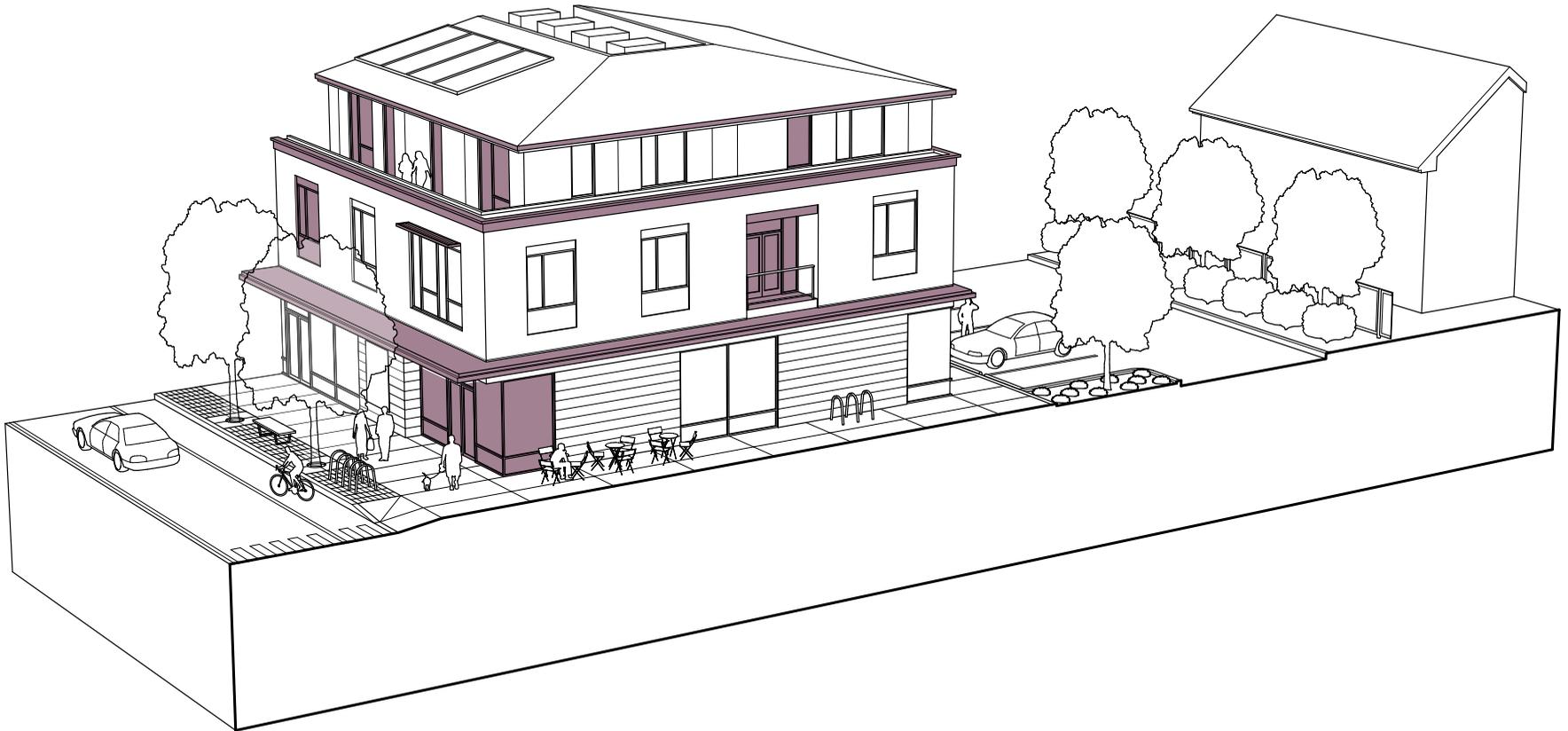
While the overall composition of a façade is important, the greatest amount of detail needs to be reserved for the ground floor. This is the area which garners the most attention and view for pedestrians. However, the roofline is also important, and mechanical equipment and rooftop vents should be minimized from view with parapet walls or screens. Style is subjective. Some people prefer classic over contemporary or historical over modern. What matters most in a building's elevation is quality and consistency.

FACADE TREATMENT



# URBAN SCALE OPPORTUNITIES

The amount of transparency in a building and the proportion and distribution of windows has a big impact on the character of a building. All elevations of a building are important, but the building's primary façade along the commercial corridors and those adjacent to the Charles River are paramount.



# PRECEDENTS



Natural Materials, City Operations Building  
White Rock, BC



Solar Shading, Kirpatrick Oil Field Office  
Hennessey, OK



Facade Patterns, Troy  
South End, Boston MA



Windows, Harry Parker Boathouse, Brighton MA



Retractable Wall, Sonsie, Boston MA



Retail Base Below Housing, Ink Block, Boston MA



# RECOMMENDED ZONING ORDINANCE CHANGE

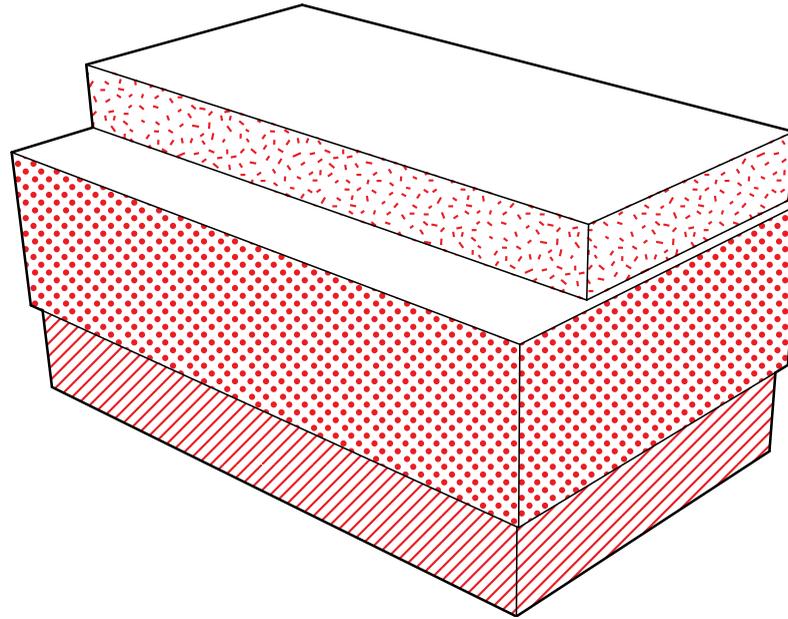
Maximum of **50'** **between entrances** along  
the public way.





# MATERIAL SELECTION

**Products and materials that are specified for construction should be selected with respect to their performative and sustainable qualities rather than just trends or aesthetics.**



## ASPIRATIONS

There is a direct connection between material choice and environmental stewardship. Buildings account for half of all the world's greenhouse gases and consume 50% of its raw materials. **Products and materials that are specified for construction should be selected with respect to their performative and sustainable qualities rather than just trends or aesthetics.** With this in mind, materials should be chosen based on their durability, maintenance and recyclability characteristics, energy use, and consumption profile. In other words, projects should be built with natural and sustainable materials.

Whenever possible, materials should be selected that are locally harvested, have a low embodied energy content and are recyclable. Using local materials reduces the transportation and distribution costs of the product. Products that reduce raw material use should be chosen because of their resource conservation. Zero or low-emission building products should be specified to improve air quality.

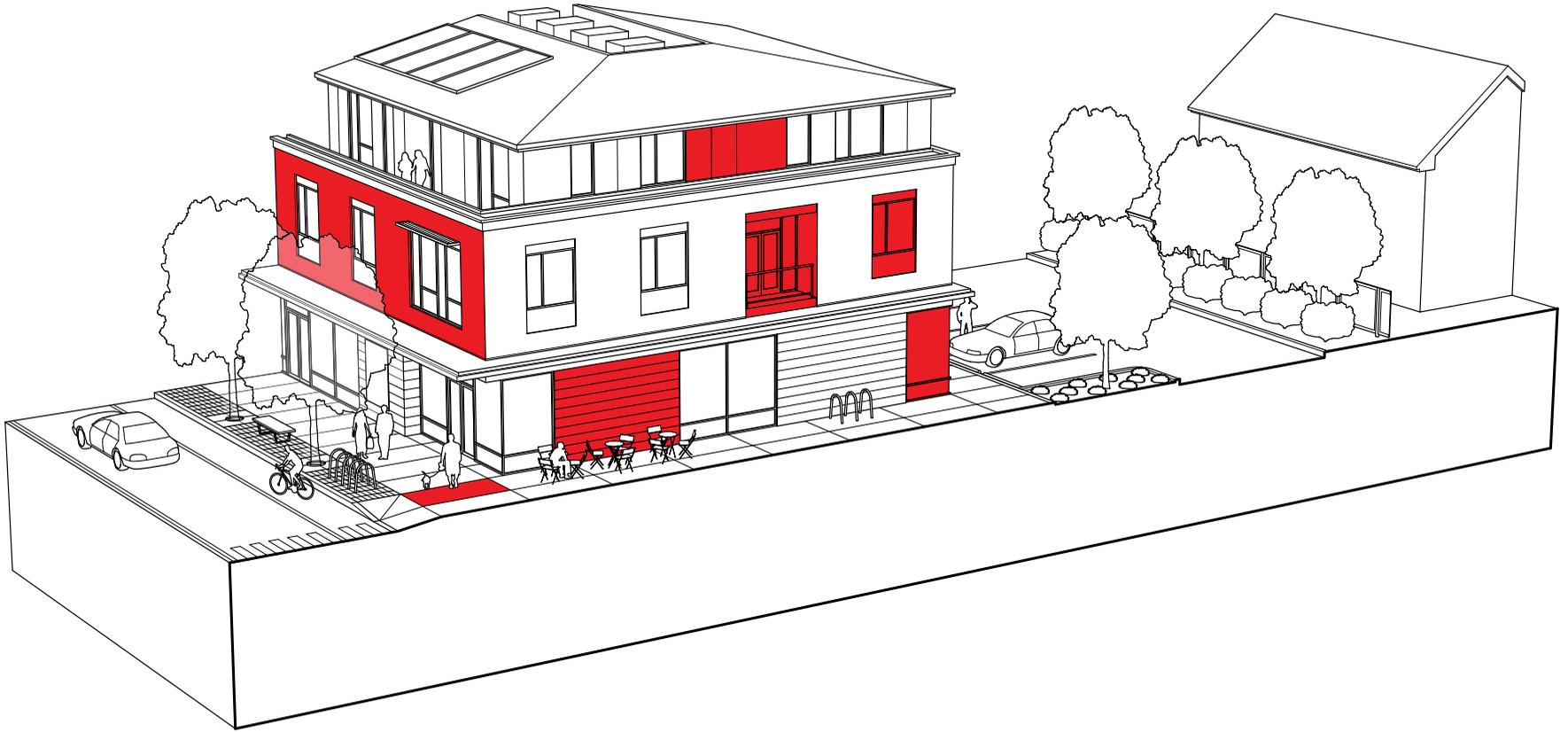


MATERIAL SELECTION



# URBAN SCALE OPPORTUNITIES

MATERIAL SELECTION  
Durable and natural materials ensure that the building is built for the long-term.



# PRECEDENTS



Curtain Wall, Bolling Municipal Building  
Dudley Square, Roxbury MA



Precast Panels, Suffolk Dormitory  
Beacon Hill, Boston MA



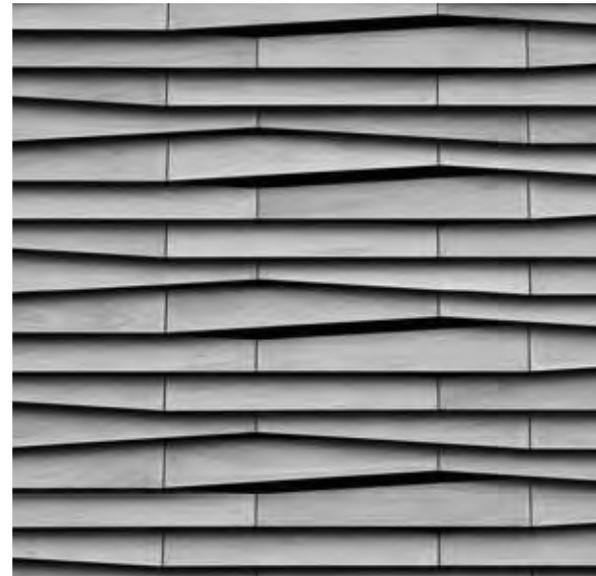
Wood Rainscreen and Operable Shutters, Kripalu Center  
Stockbridge MA



Stone Base, Allston Public Library, Allston MA



Brick Pattern, Millennium Place, Boston MA



Wood Shingles, Harry Parker Boathouse, Brighton MA



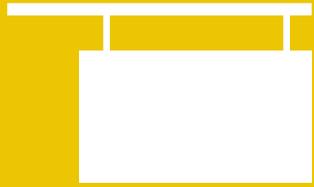
# RECOMMENDED ZONING ORDINANCE CHANGE

## **Prohibited exterior materials\*:**

- Vinyl siding
- Aluminum clapboard siding
- Asphalt panel siding
- Exterior Insulation Finishing System

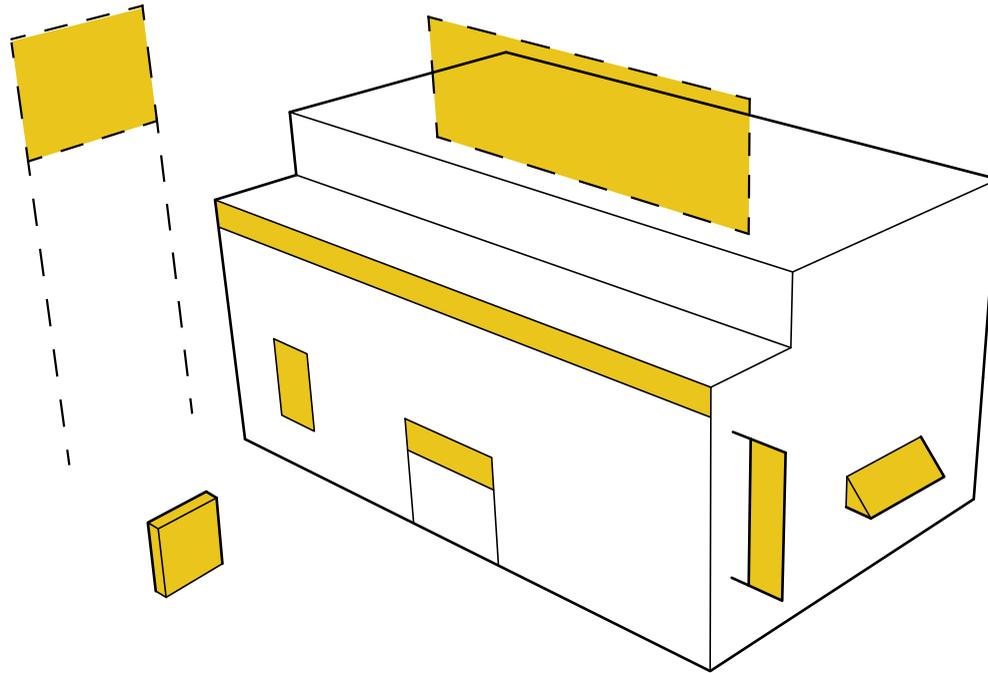
\*Applies to large-scale mixed-use commercial and residential buildings.





# SIGNAGE

**A balance needs to be struck between the desire to call attention to individual businesses and the desire for a positive collective image for Watertown.**



## ASPIRATIONS

Commercial establishments need to advertise. However, advertising signs should be effective and appropriate to Watertown's historic areas without contributing to visual clutter. A balance needs to be struck between the desire to call attention to individual businesses and the desire for a **positive collective image for Watertown**. Signs can either complement or detract from that image a depending on their design, placement, quantity, size, materials, colors and condition.

Certain types of signs are more appropriate to specific areas than others. What is appropriate for a suburban strip mall is inappropriate for a downtown setting. These sign guidelines relate to the commercial corridors.





# URBAN SCALE OPPORTUNITIES

Signage along Watertown's commercial corridors need to operate at a number of scales. Large-scale commercial entities that advertise along Arsenal Street and are seen mainly from the automobile have demands than pedestrian-oriented signs which are attached to small shops in Watertown Square. Size matters but quality is more important.



# PRECEDENTS



Architectural Facia Signage, Thomson Family Adventures, Watertown MA



Applied Street Signage, Channel Center, Fort Point, Boston MA



Projecting Blade Signage, Arsenal on the Charles Watertown MA



Freestanding Monument Signage, MIT Cambridge MA



Projecting Marquee Signage, Town Delux Diner Watertown MA



## RECOMMENDED ZONING ORDINANCE CHANGES

Allow **1 identifying sign** per building entrance.

**No exposed conduit, junction boxes, and transformers** shall be exposed to public view.

Banner signs must be a minimum of **9' above ground level.**





**PUBLIC REALM INTERFACE**



**PARKING + ACCESS**



**SUSTAINABLE DESIGN**



**BUILDING MASSING**



**BUILDING HEIGHT**



**BUILDING SETBACKS**



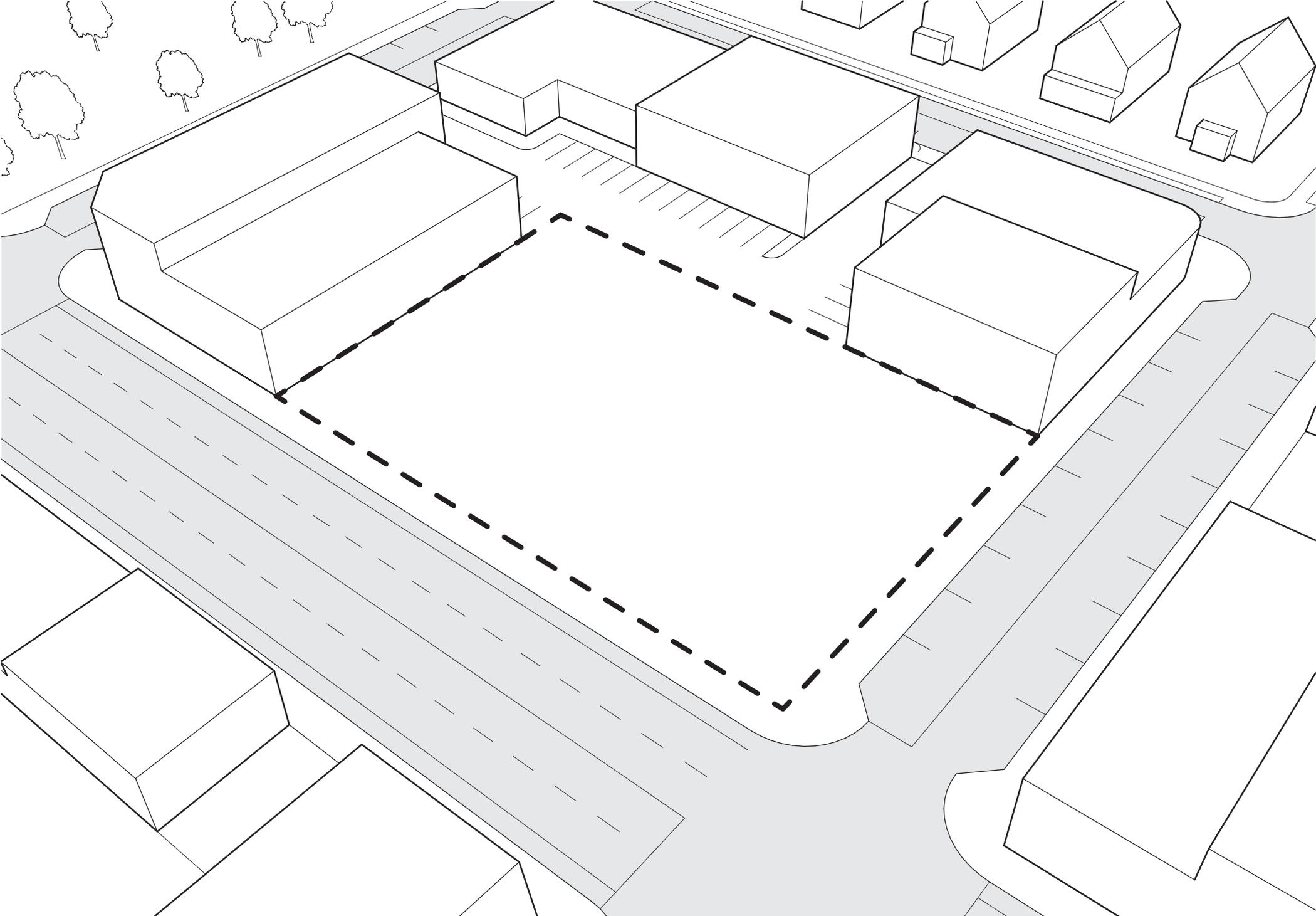
**FACADE TREATMENT**



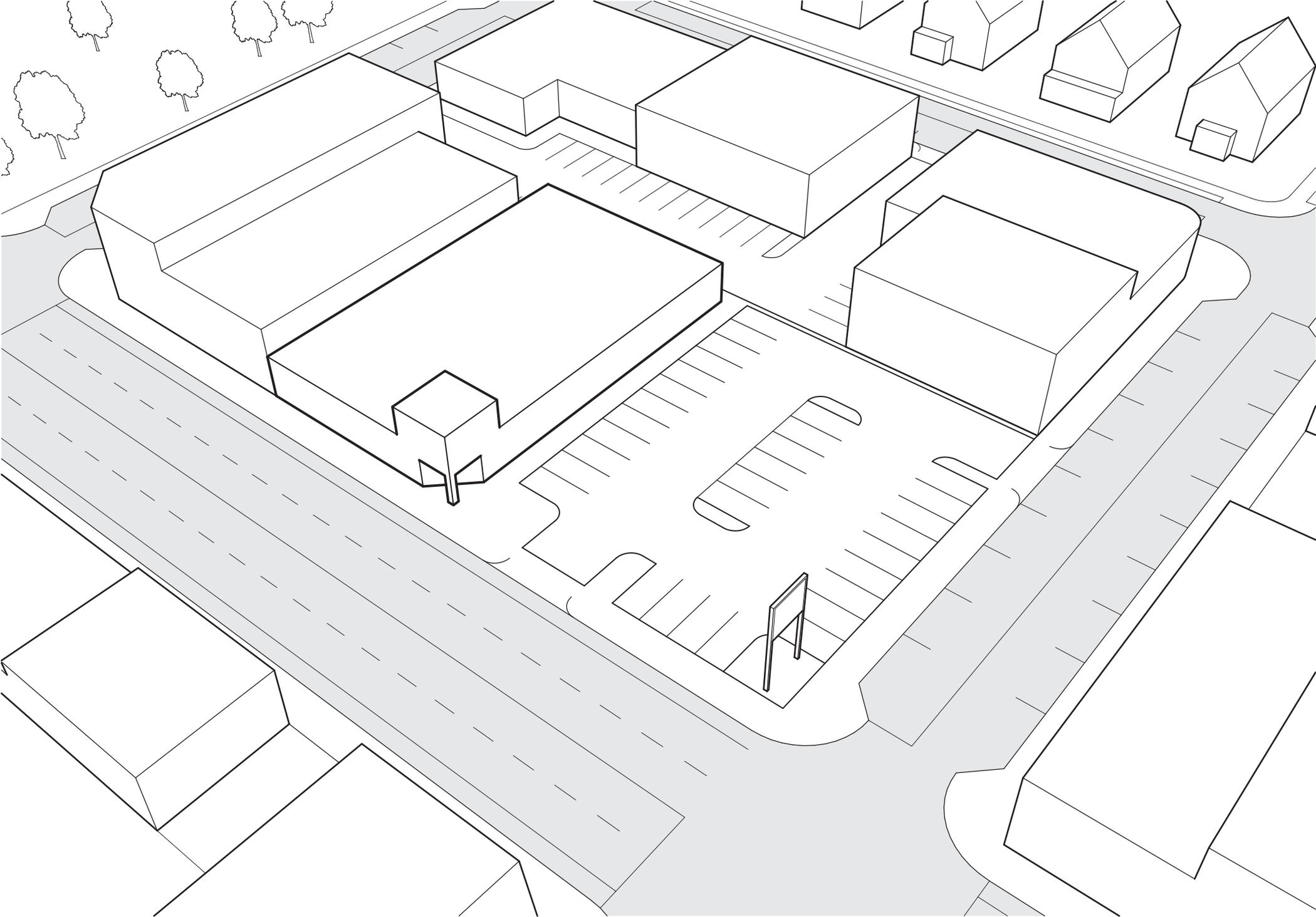
**MATERIAL SELECTION**



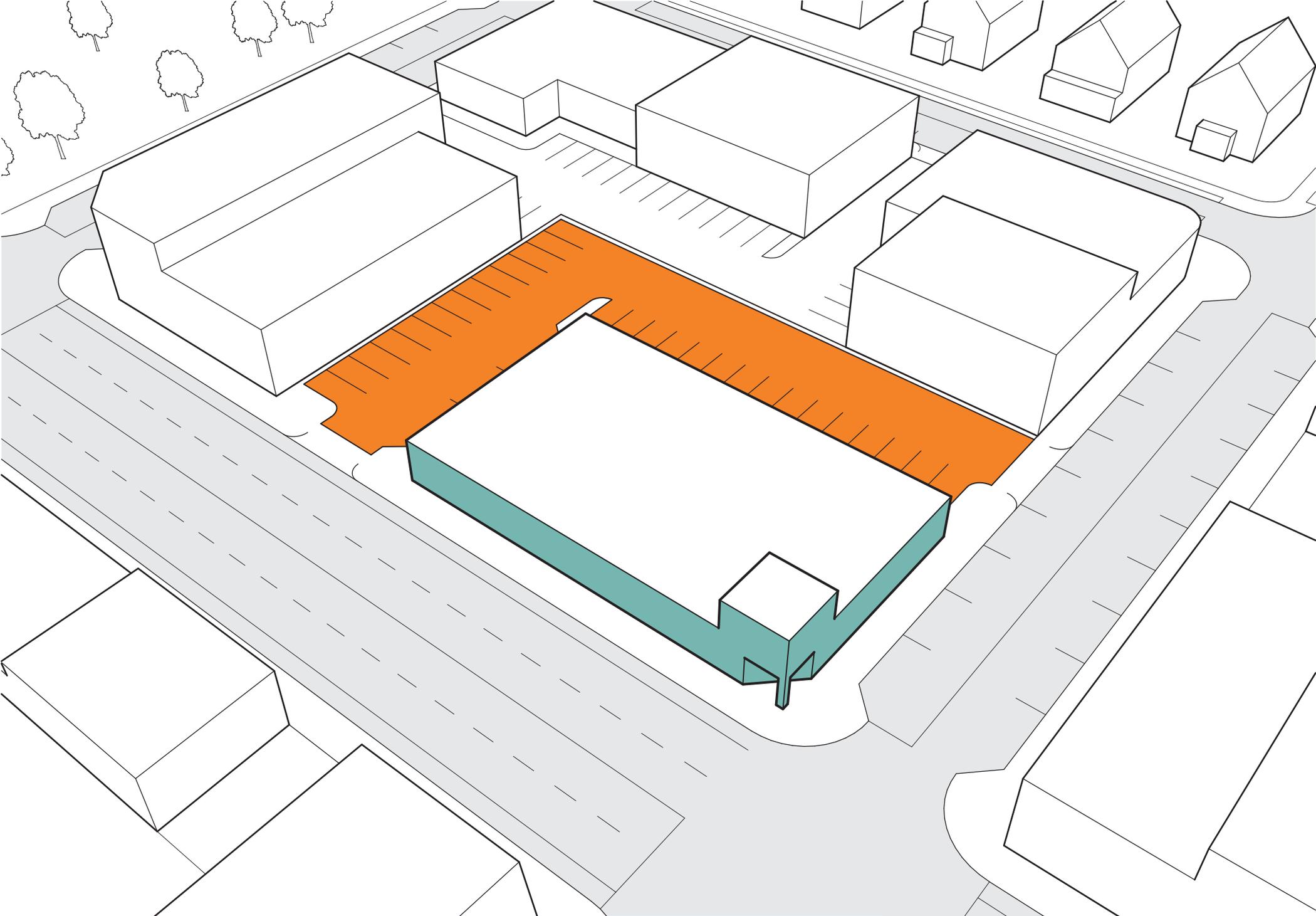
**SIGNAGE**



**GENERIC SITE ALONG COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR**



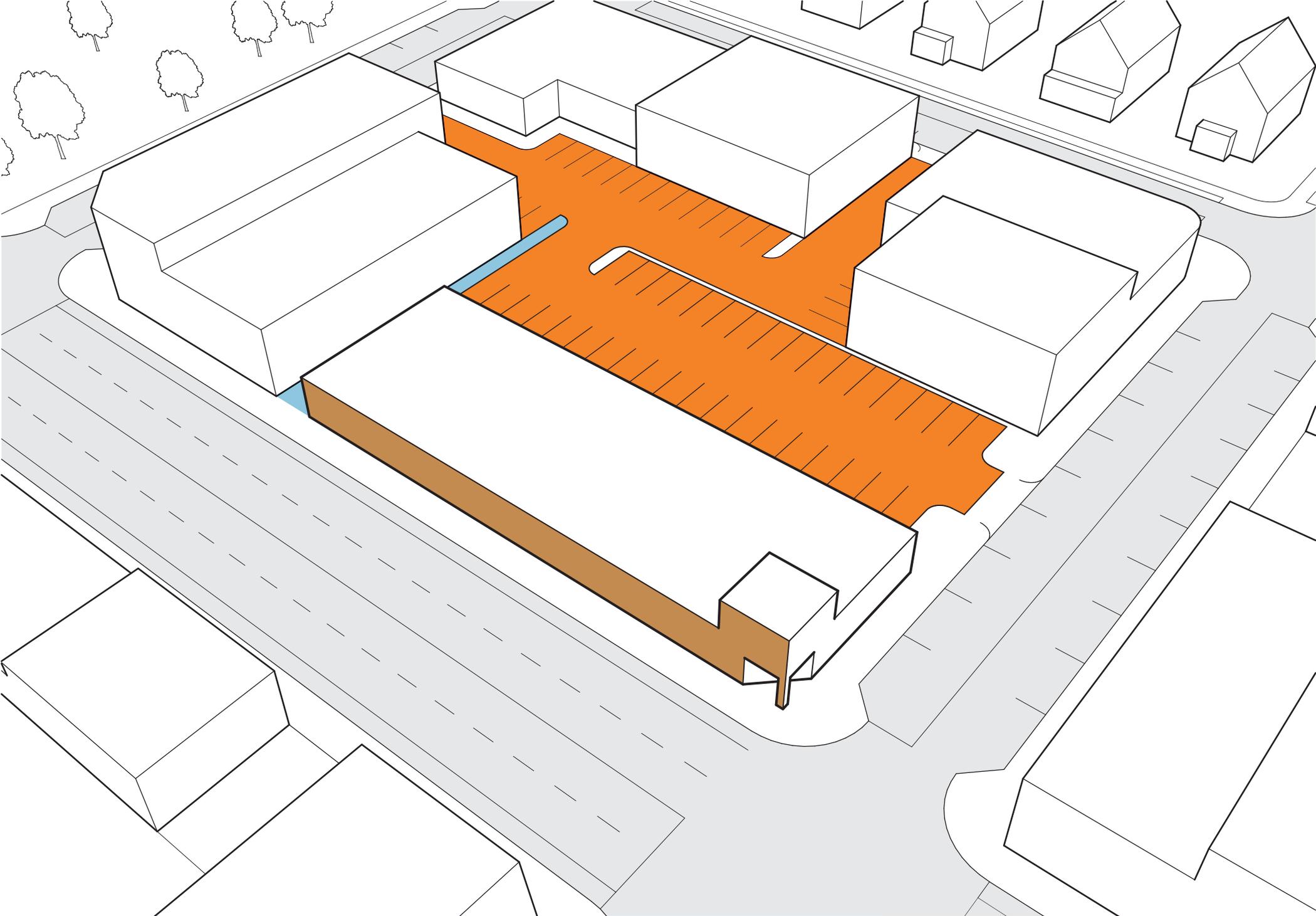
**TYPICAL DEVELOPMENT SCENARIO - SUBURBAN TYPE**



FRONT THE LOT LINE



PARKING IN REAR



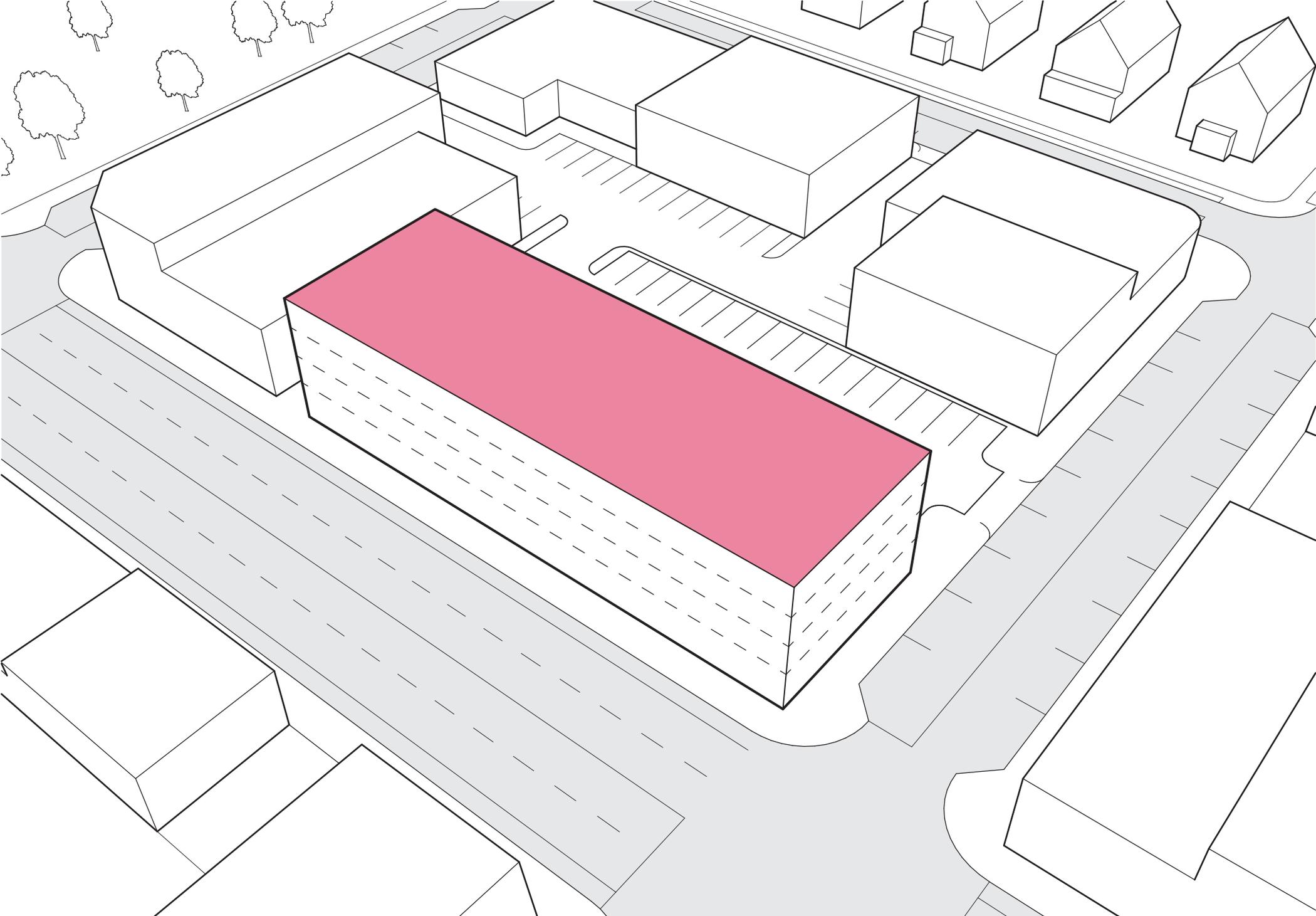
REINFORCE STREET WALL



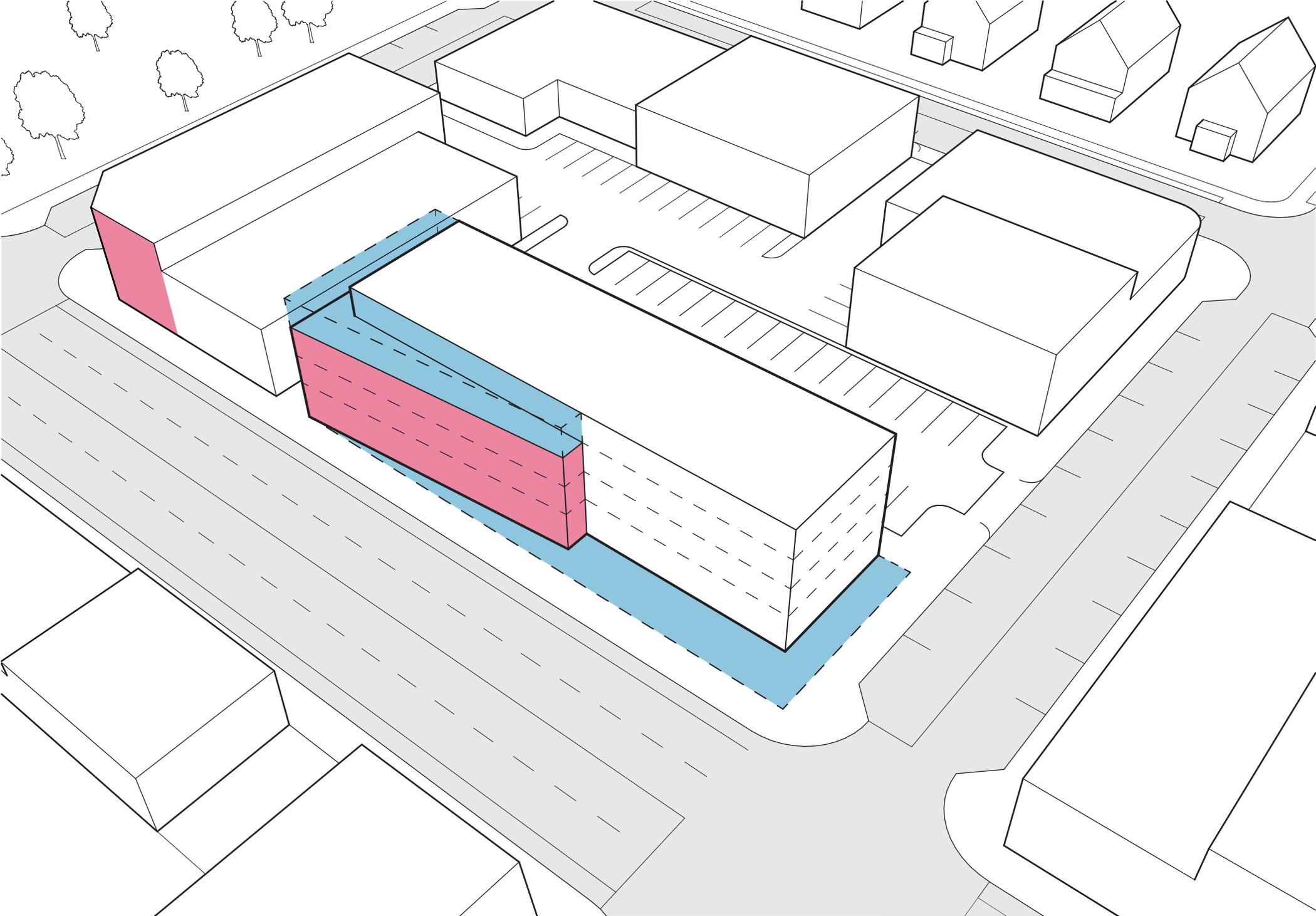
SHARED PARKING

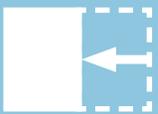


PASS THROUGHS

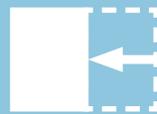


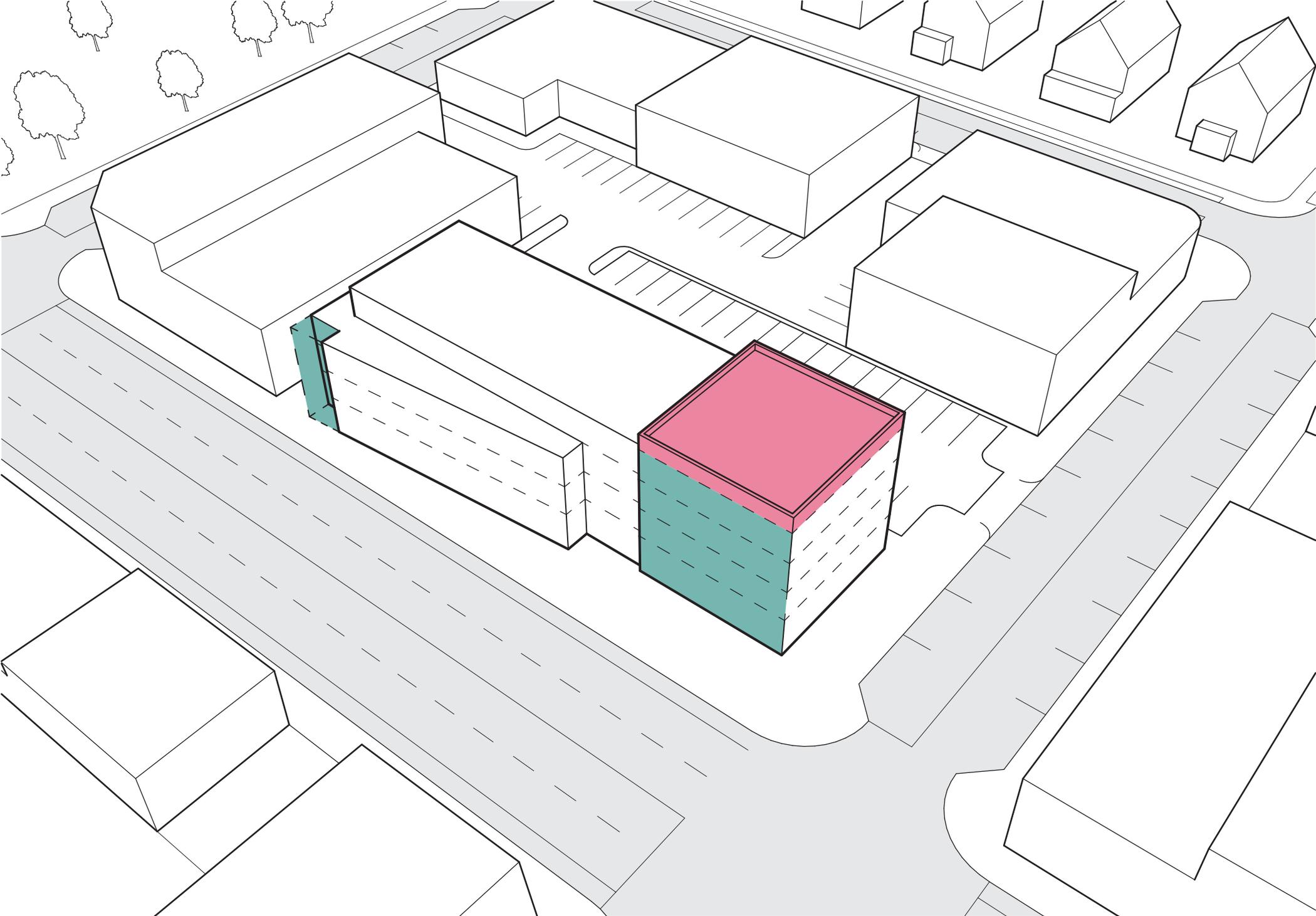
RESPECT ZONING LIMITS



 FRONT/SIDE SETBACKS

 MIRROR CONTEXT

 FRONT/SIDE STEPBACKS



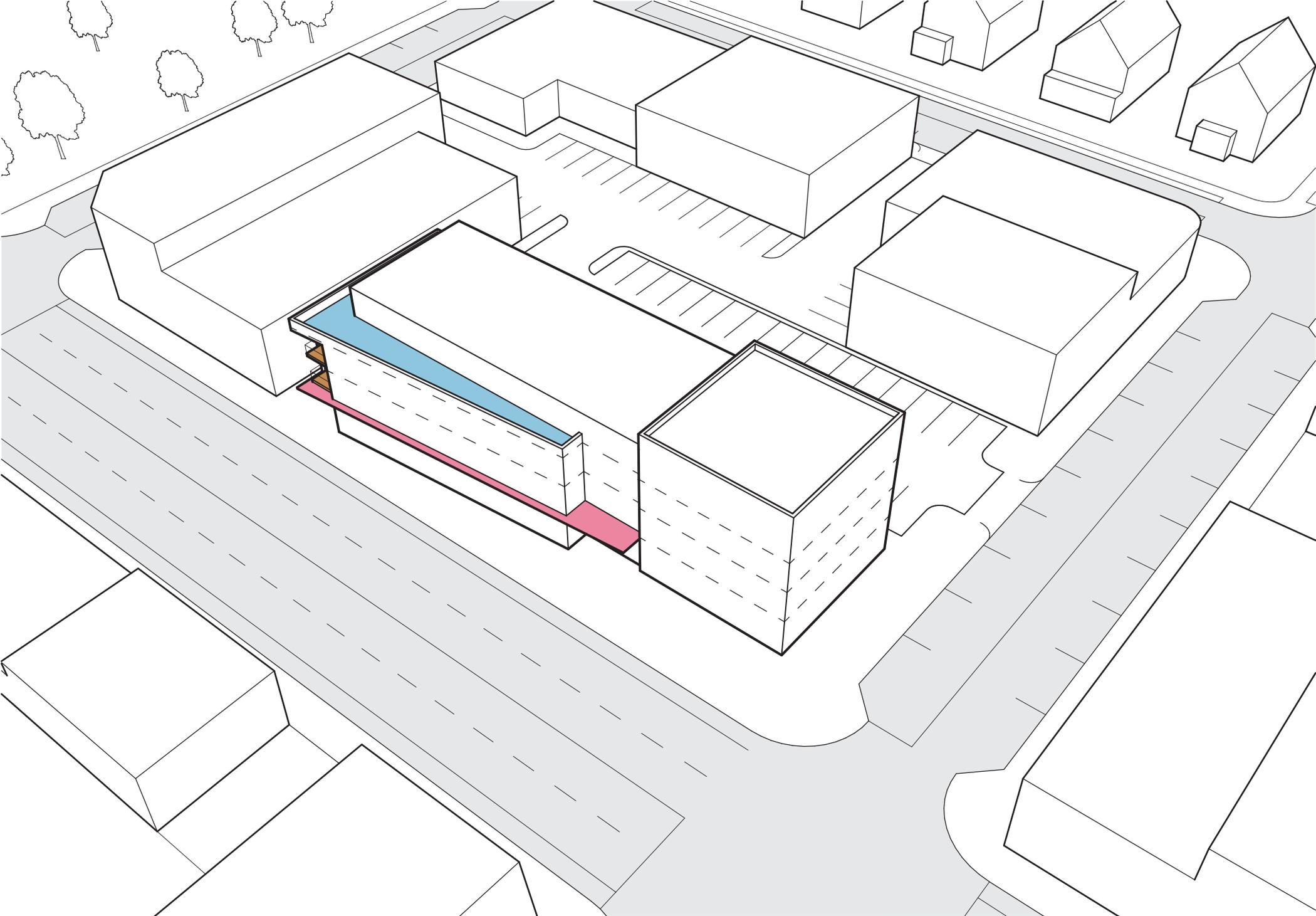
REINFORCE CORNER



VARY HEIGHTS



BREAK DOWN VOLUME



CREATE TERRACES



EMPLOY VERTICAL BREAKS



ENLIVEN FACADE



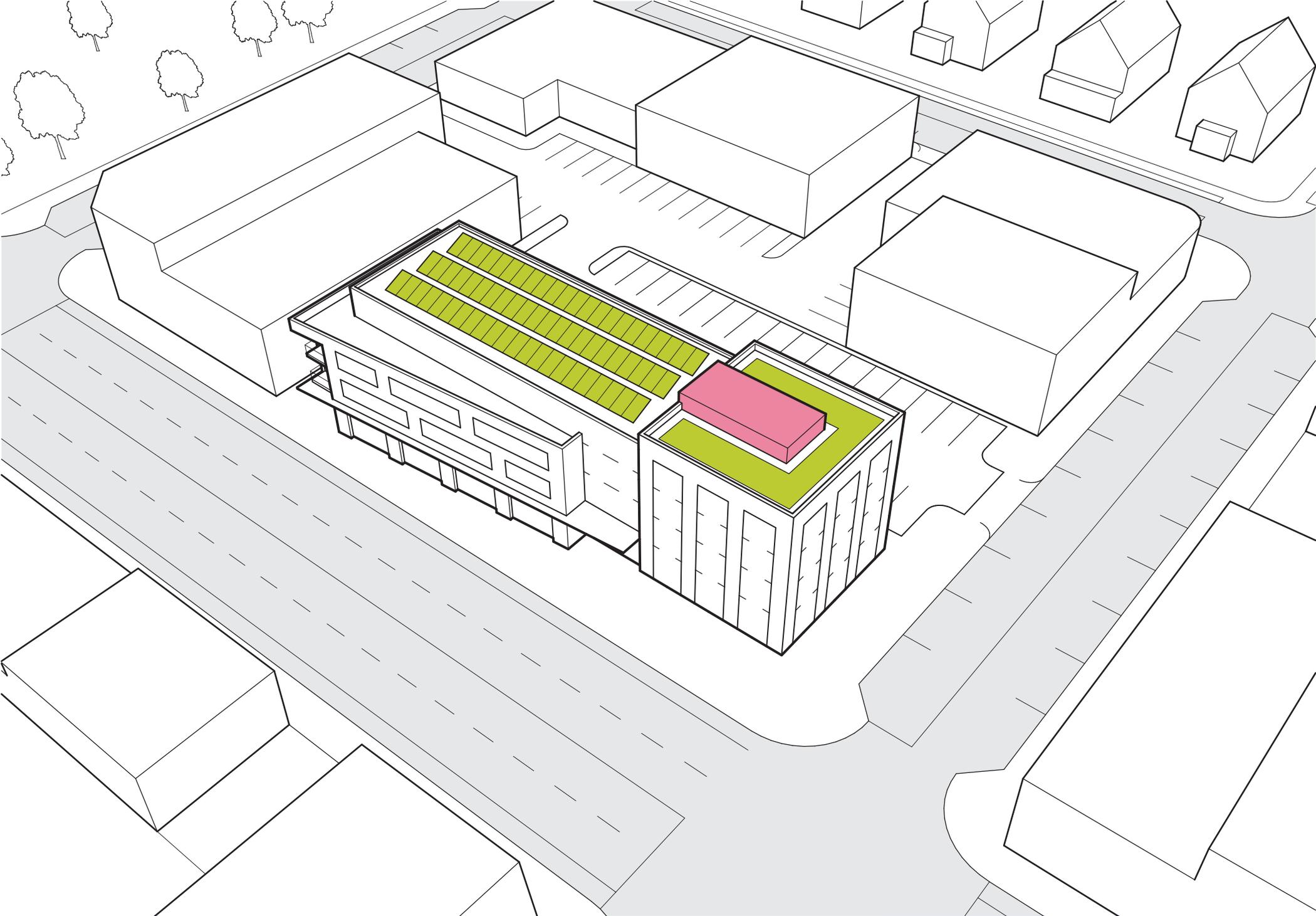
HORIZONTAL ELEMENTS



HIGH TRANSPARENCY



VERTICAL ELEMENTS



SOLAR ENERGY



SHEILD MECHANICALS



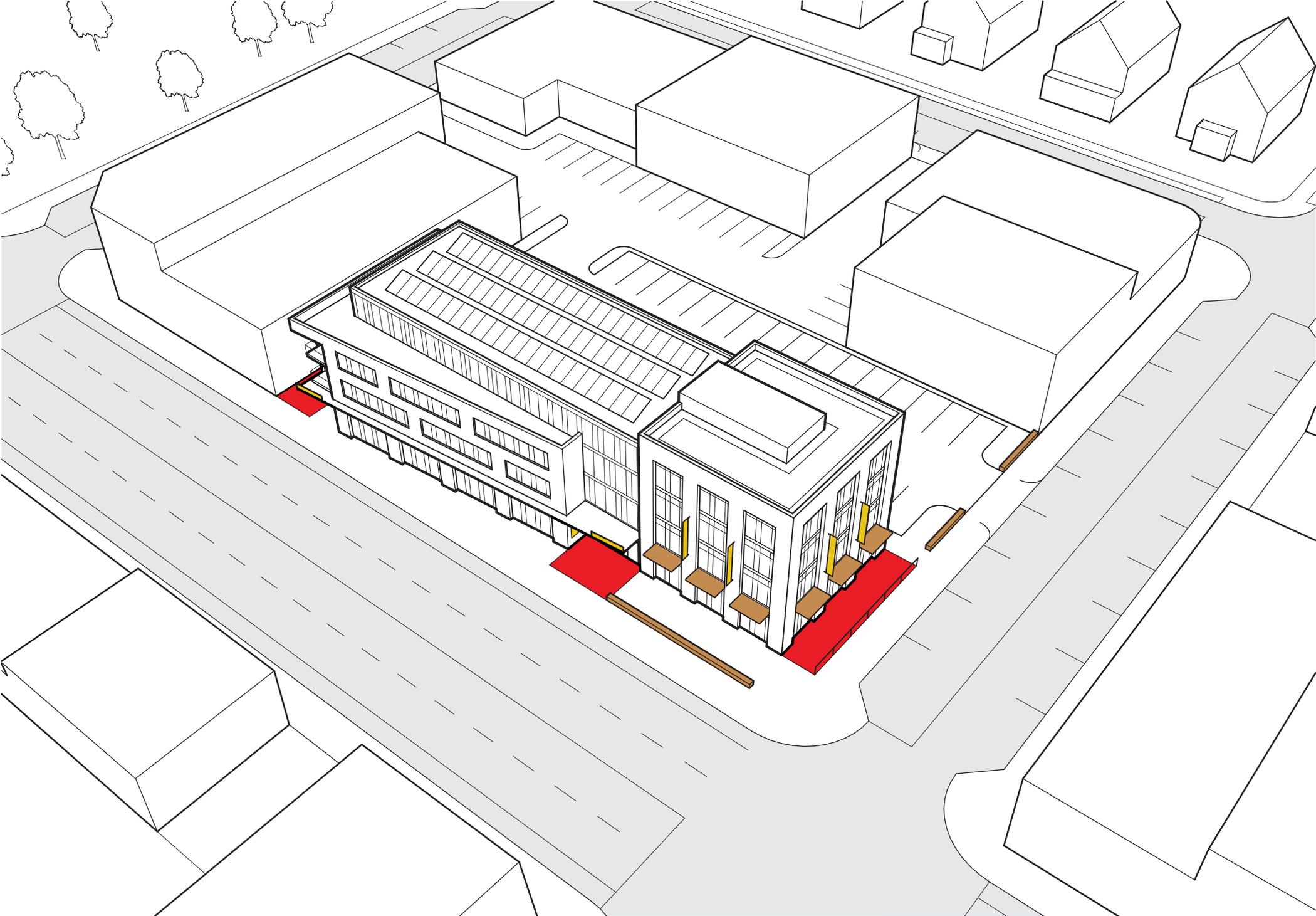
GREEN ROOF



CREATE PATTERNING



REINFORCE MASSING



PAVING MATERIALS



AWNINGS / BENCHES



SIGNAGE LOCATIONS



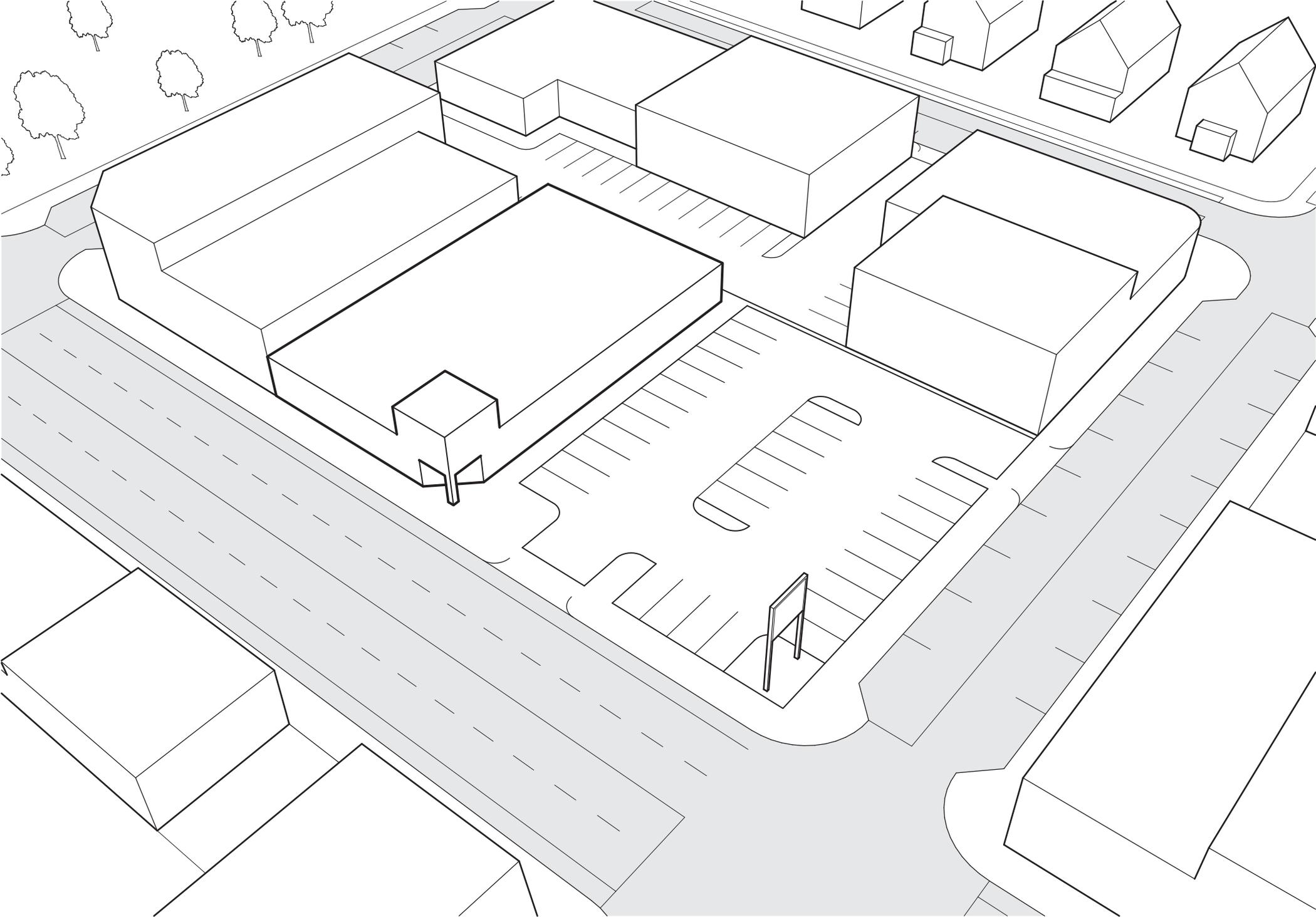
PERMEABLE MATERIALS



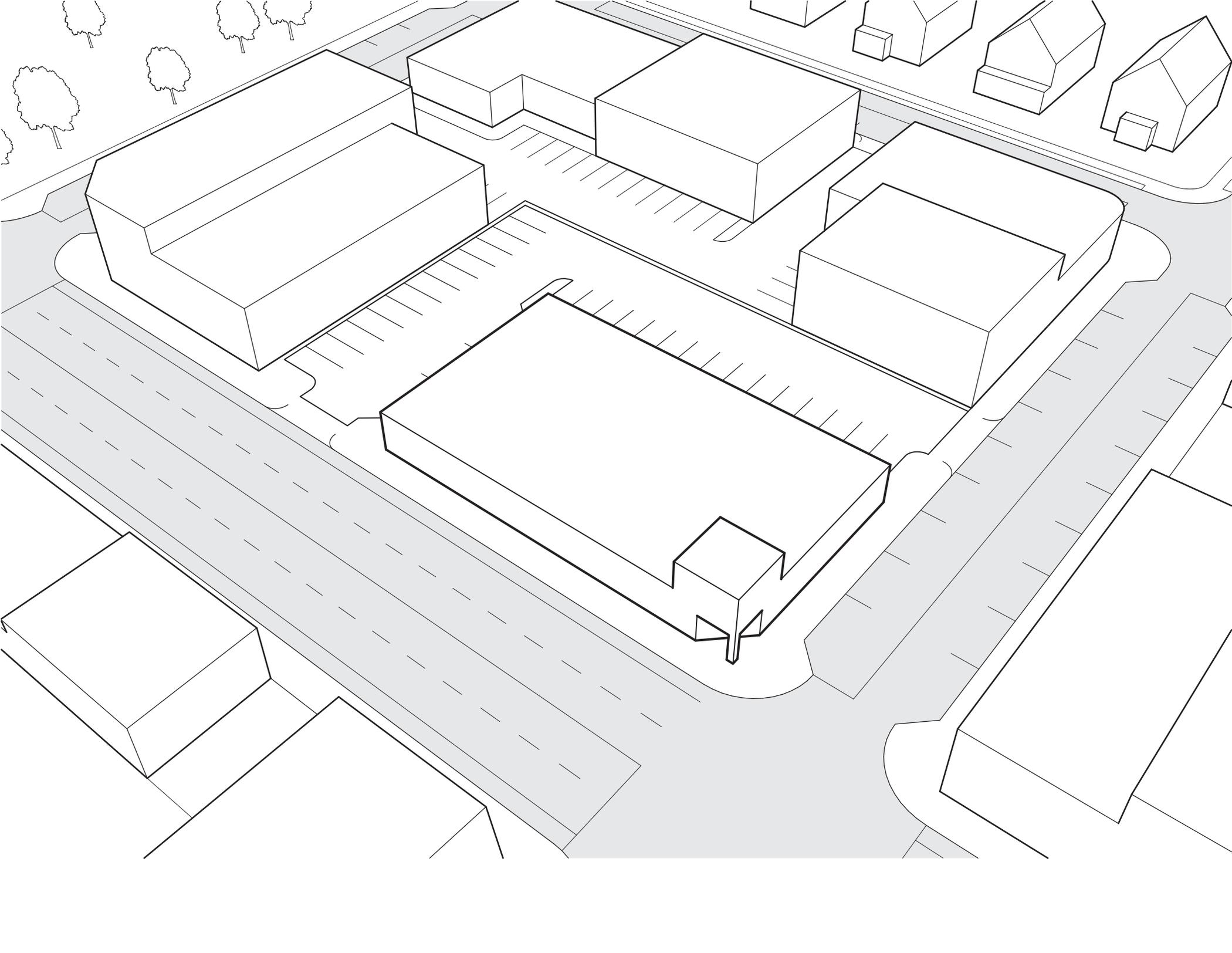
BUFFER PARKING

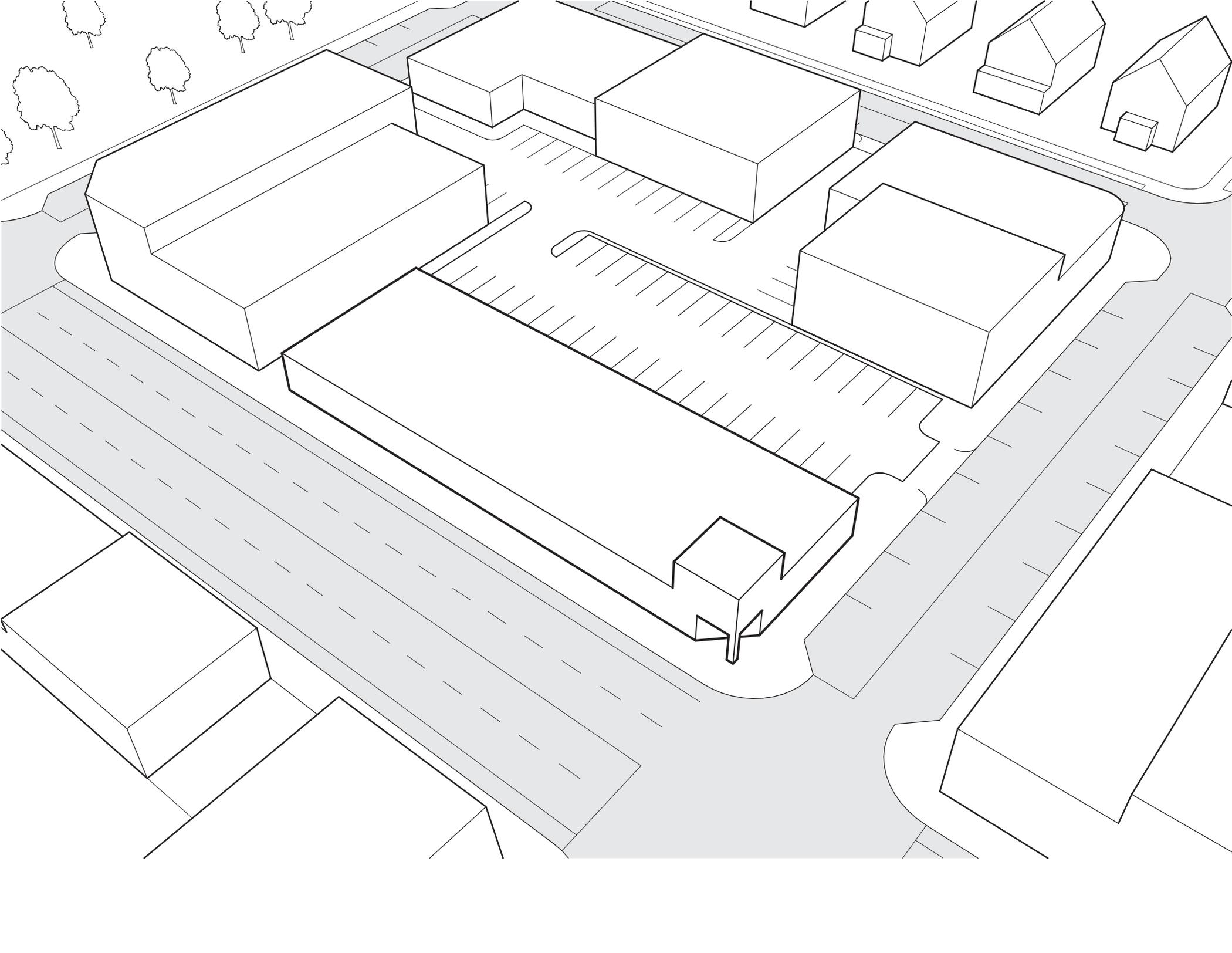


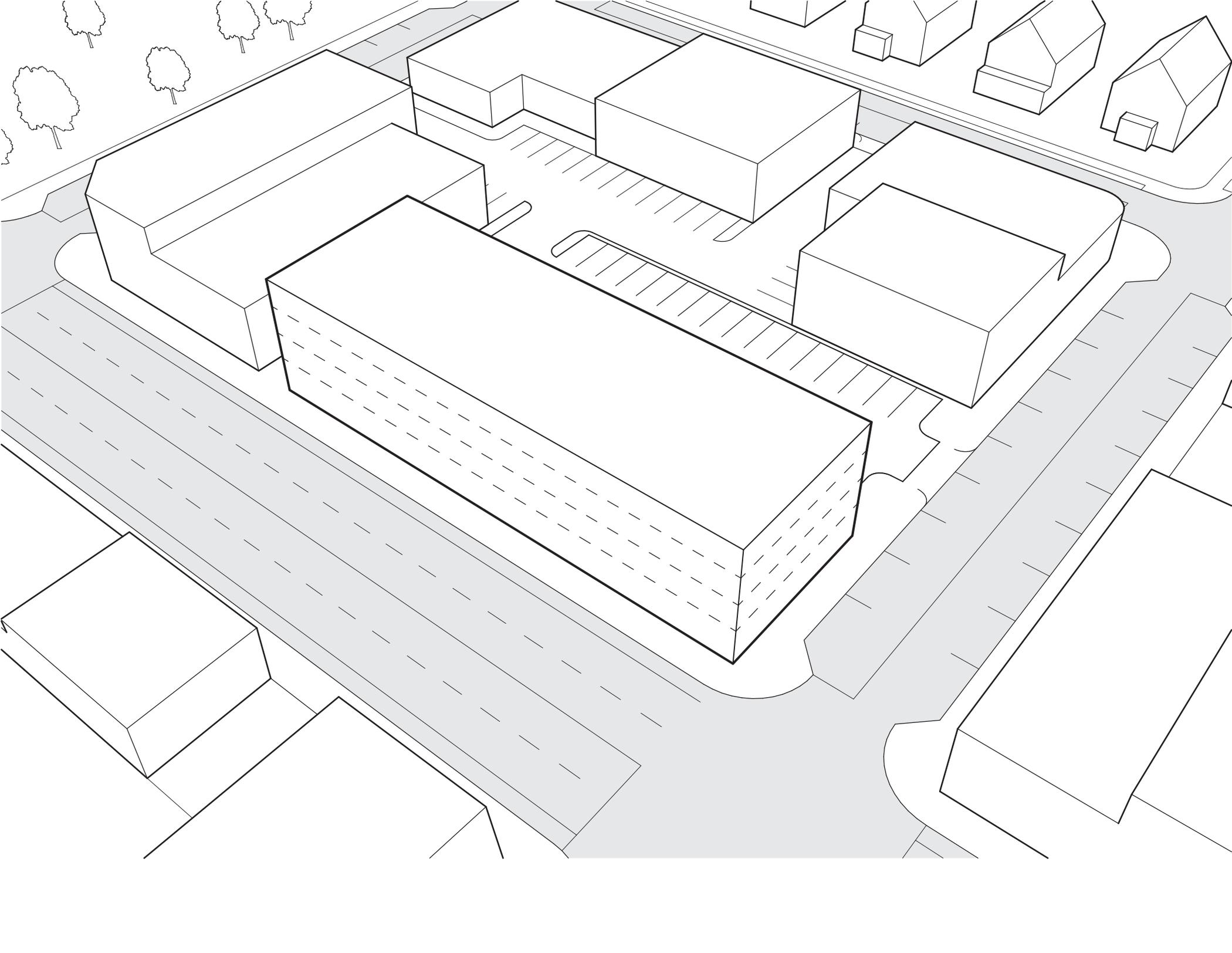
PLANTINGS / TREES

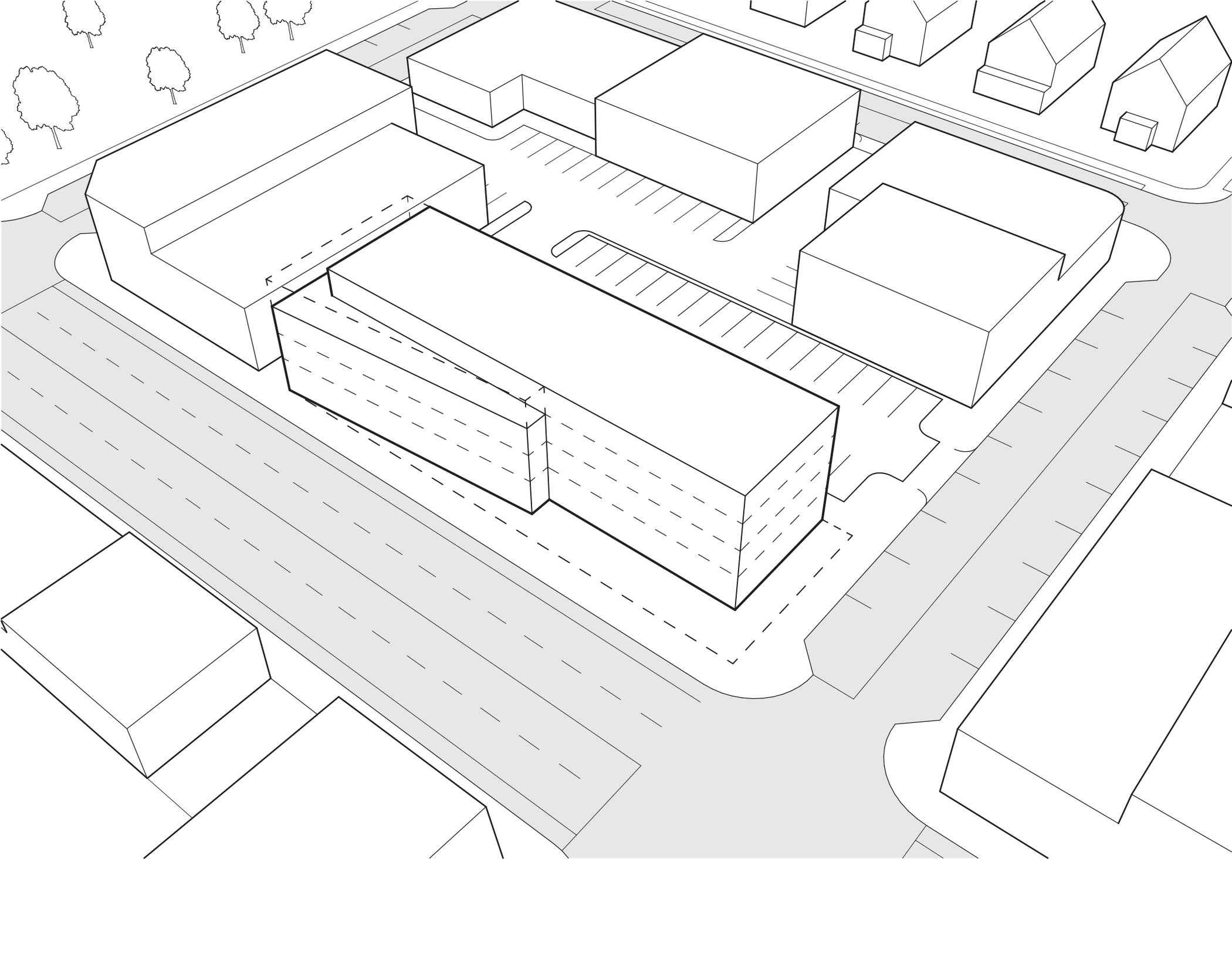


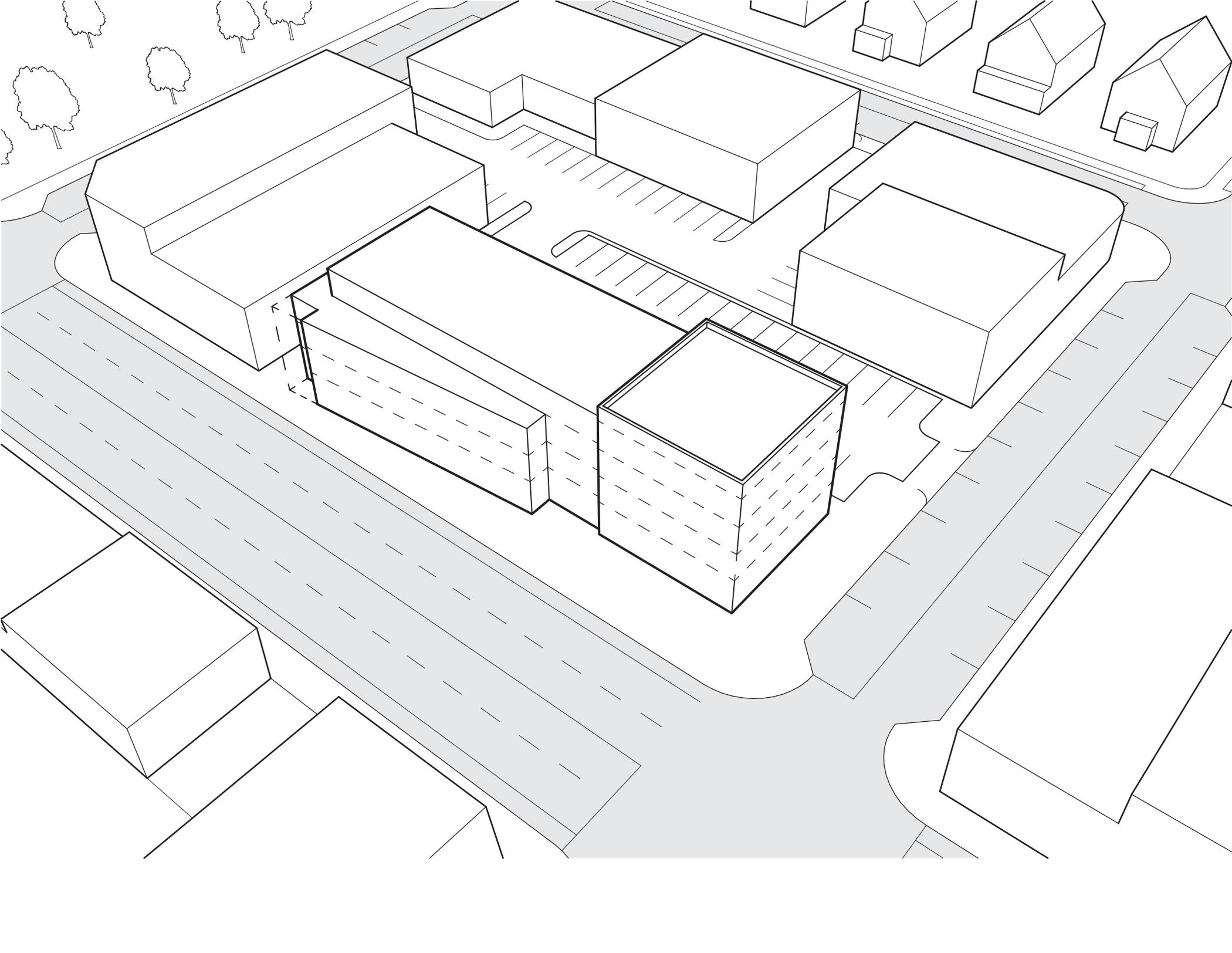
**TYPICAL DEVELOPMENT SCENARIO - NATIONAL CHAIN STORE**

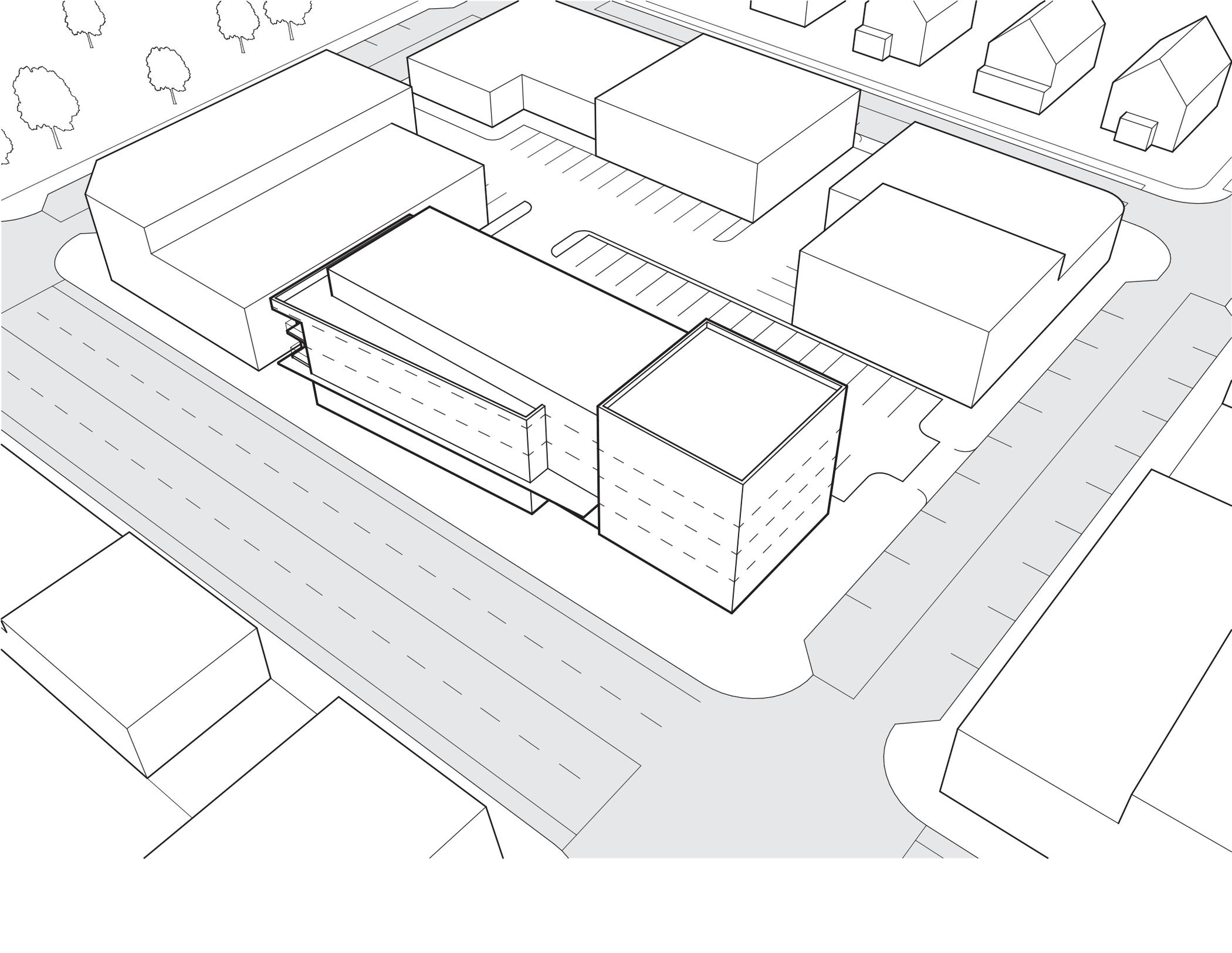




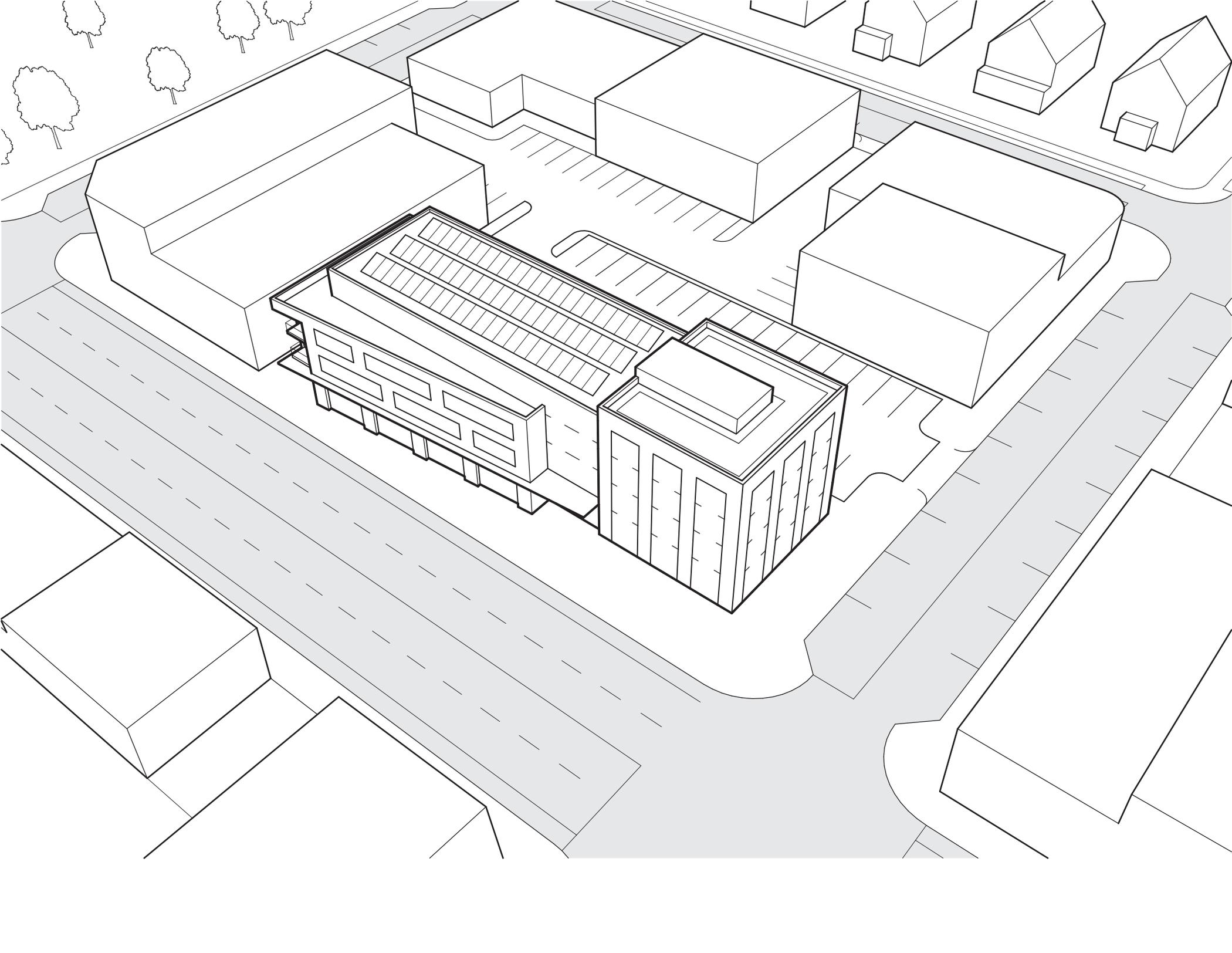






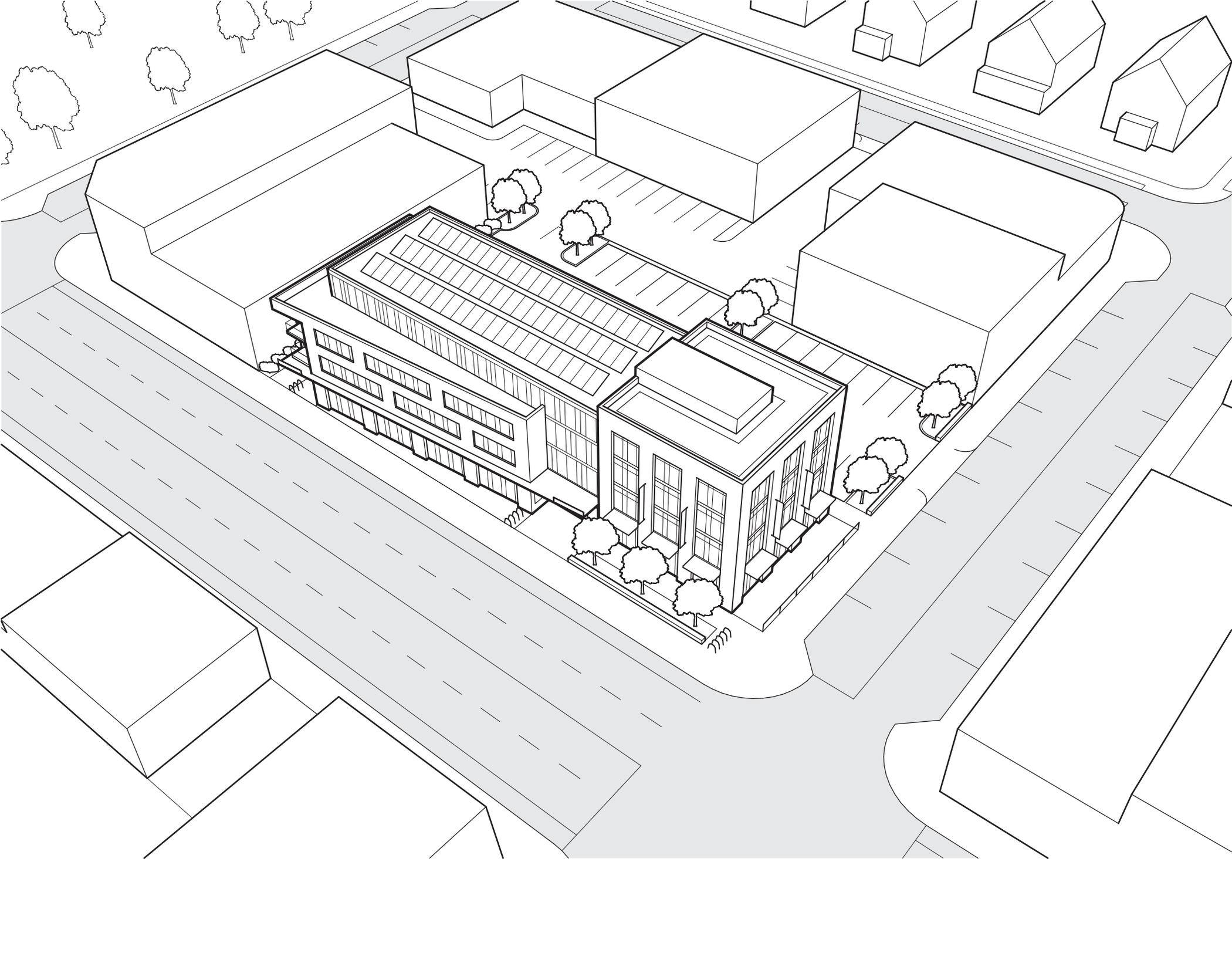












# WATERTOWN MASSACHUSETTS DESIGN GUIDELINES + STANDARDS



**PUBLIC MEETING 3**  
DATE 1/22/15

architecture  
urban design

**GAMBLE  
ASSOCIATES**