

# Public Meeting #2



FORWARD

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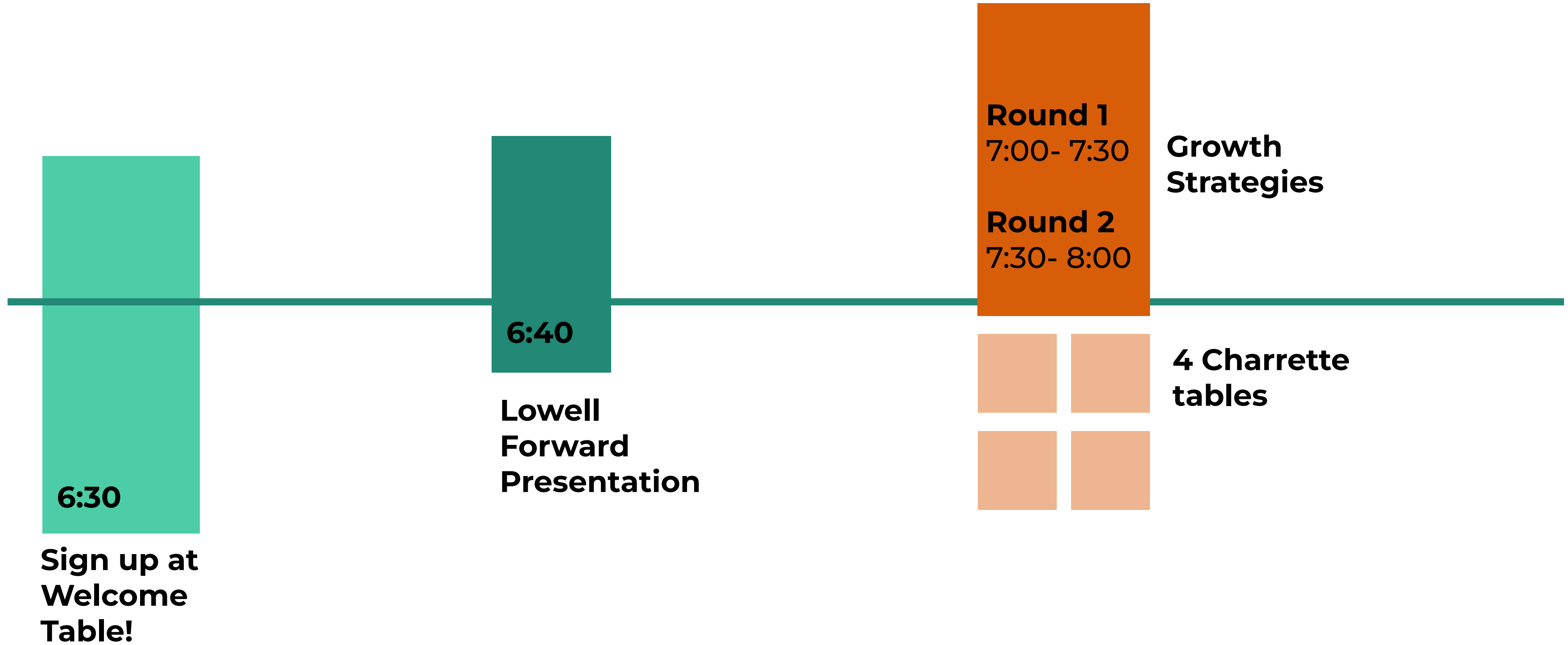
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**Thank You!**

# Today's Agenda



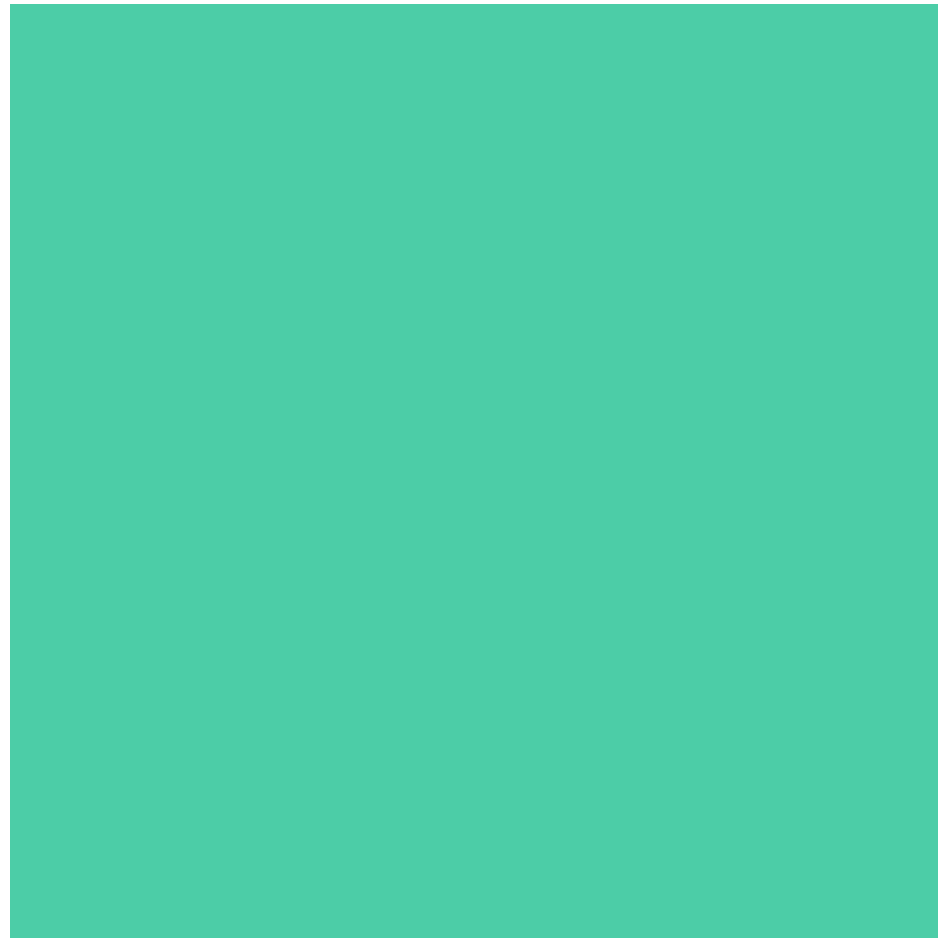
# What is Lowell Forward?

Our city's comprehensive plan for the future.

Together, we will define a shared vision and framework to guide and shape the next 20 years of our city.

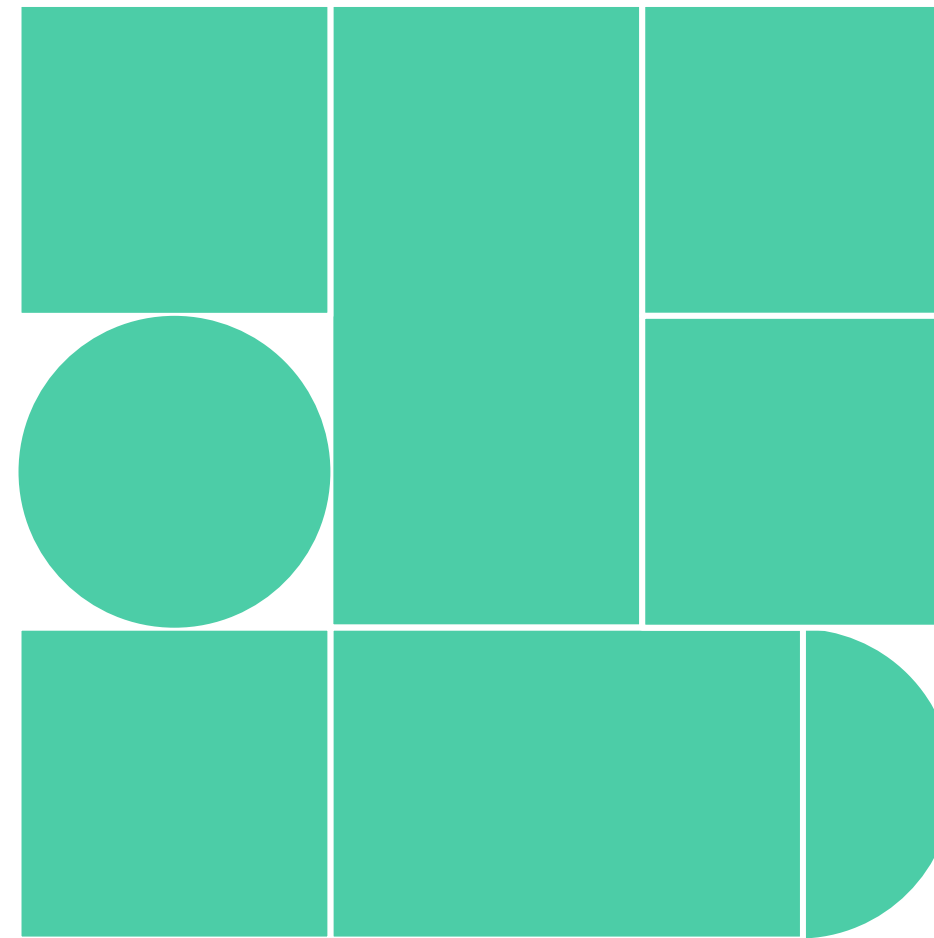
# A reminder of the comprehensive planning process:

## Vision and Foundational Principles



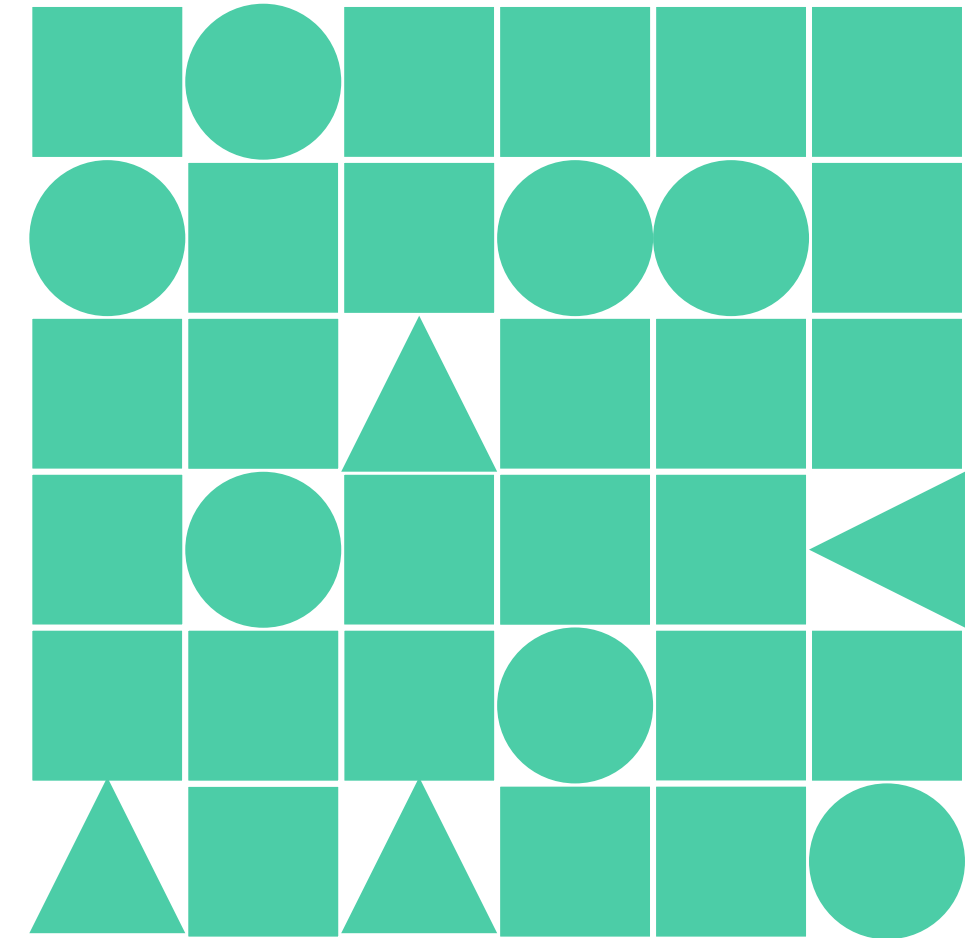
*A shared vision for the city and its neighborhoods*

## Top Goals supporting the vision



*Coordinated goals that support the vision*

## Actions to achieve each top goal



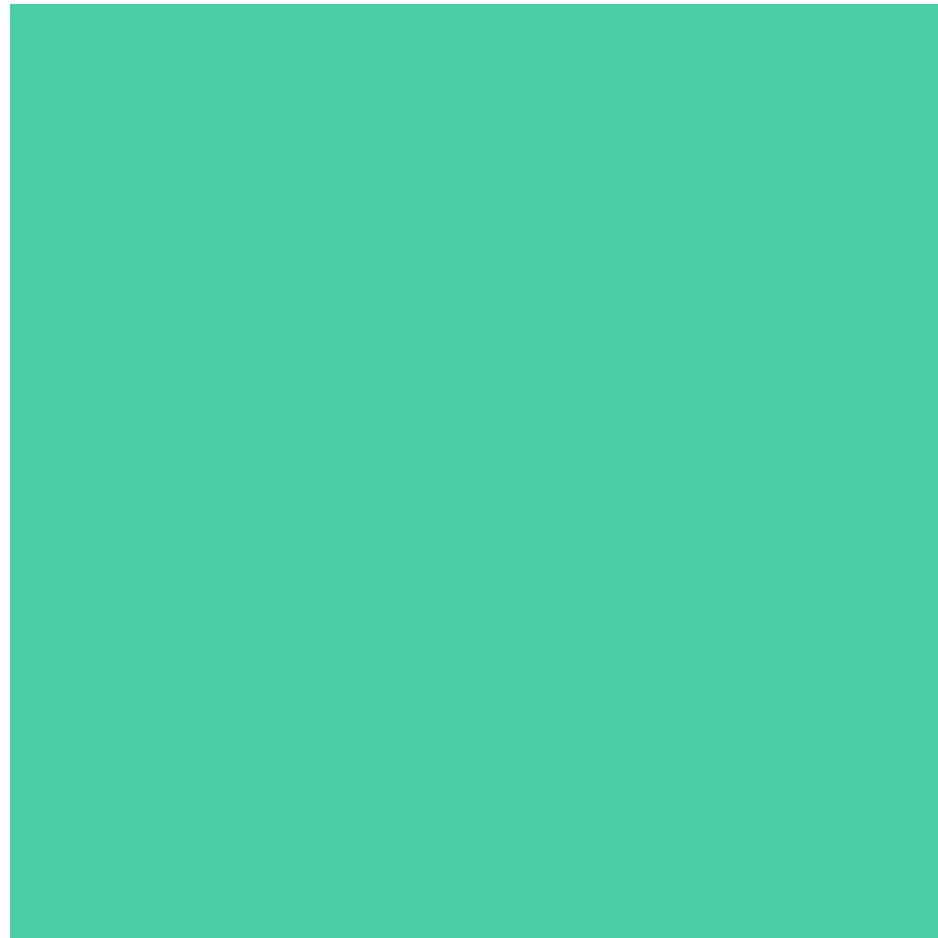
*A guide for policymaking and investments in the near future*

Consider:

- Who is responsible?
- Which grants and/or funds are needed?
- Do they connect to existing initiatives?

# A reminder of the comprehensive planning process:

## Vision and Foundational Principles



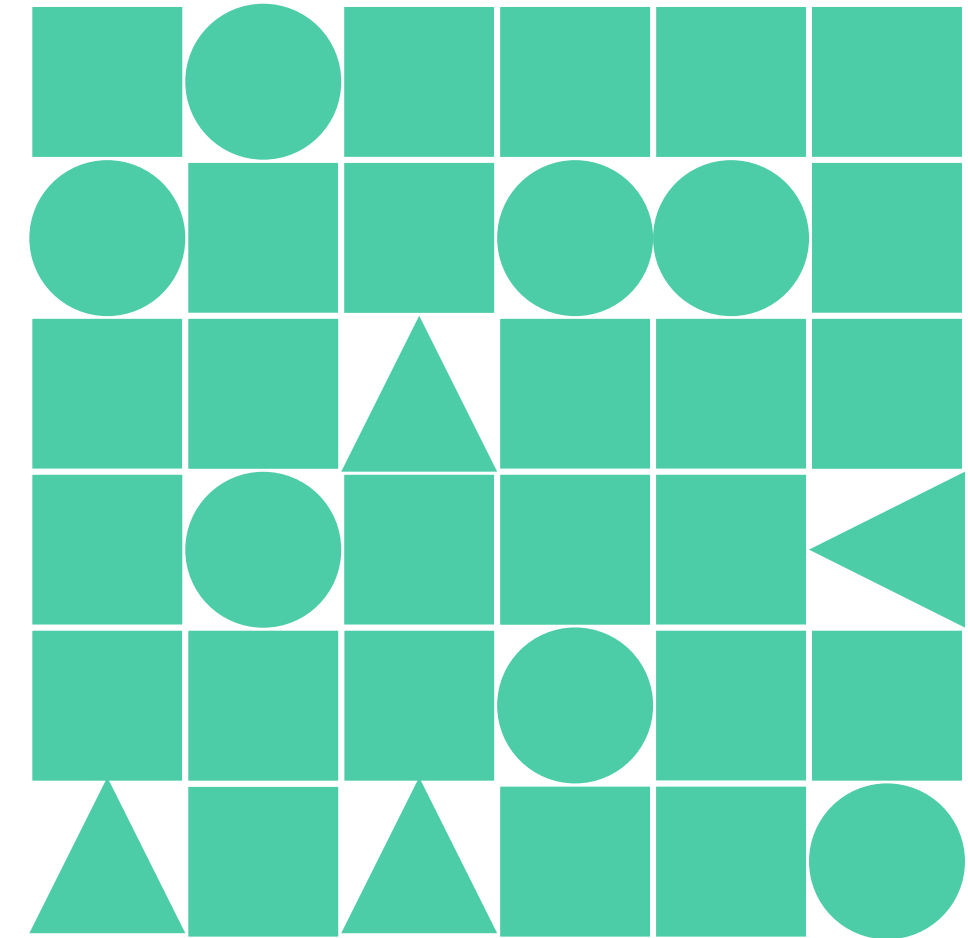
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*A guide for policymaking and investments in the near future*

Consider:

- Who is responsible?
- Which grants and/or funds are needed?
- Do they connect to existing initiatives?

# We're (more than) halfway there!

Where are we today?

Where do we want to go?

How do we get there?

Learning and visioning

Testing future visions

Developing the plan

Lowell Today

Vision, Values, and Goals

Scenario Planning

Actions and Recommendations

Implementation Plan

Plan Production and Approval

SC

SC

SC

SC

SC

SC

2022

Fall

2023

Winter

Spring

Summer

Fall

2024

Citywide Public Workshop #1

KICK-OFF + VISION

Citywide Public Workshop #2

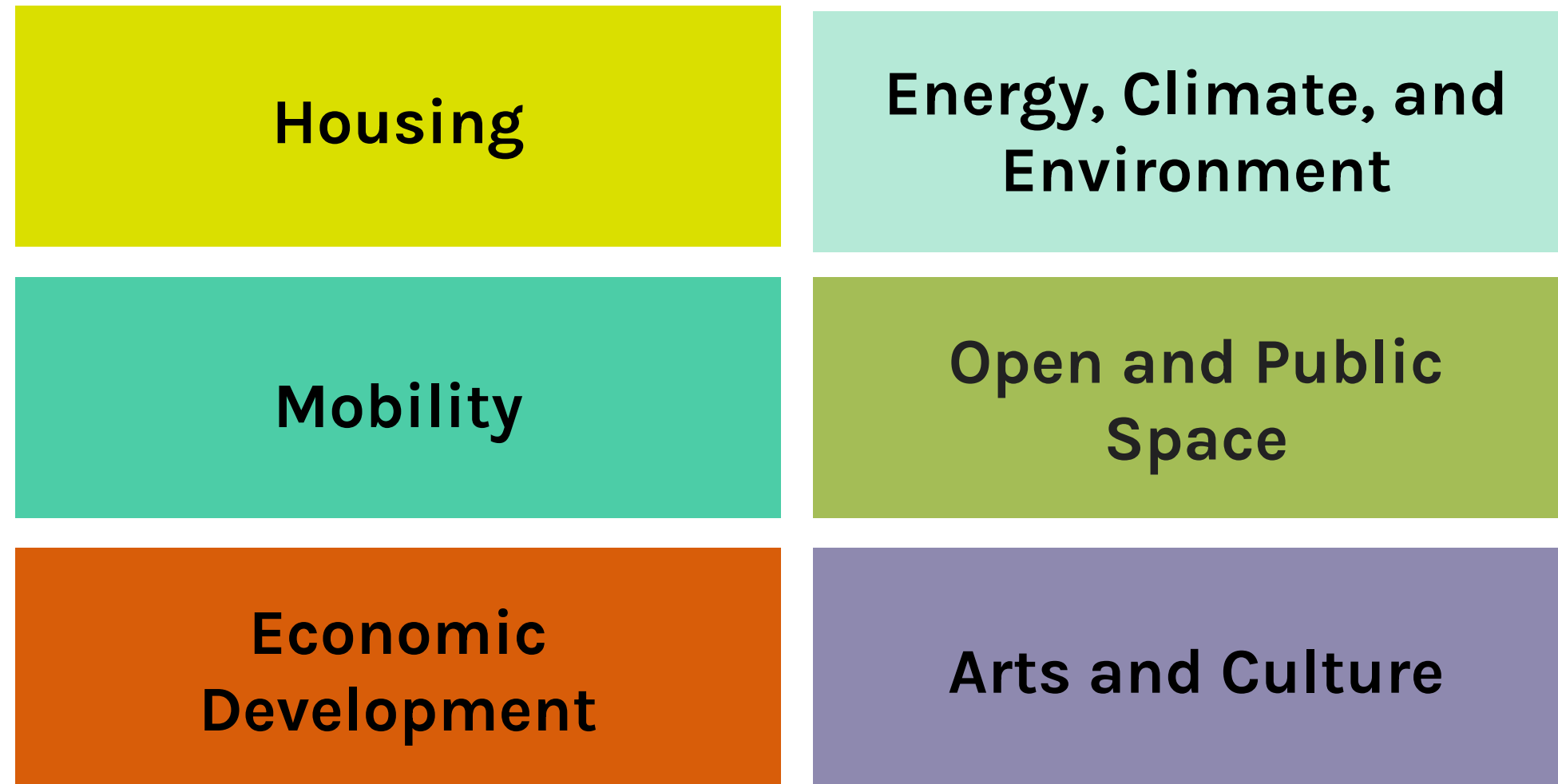
GOALS & SCENARIOS

Citywide Public Workshop #3

ACTIONS + RECS

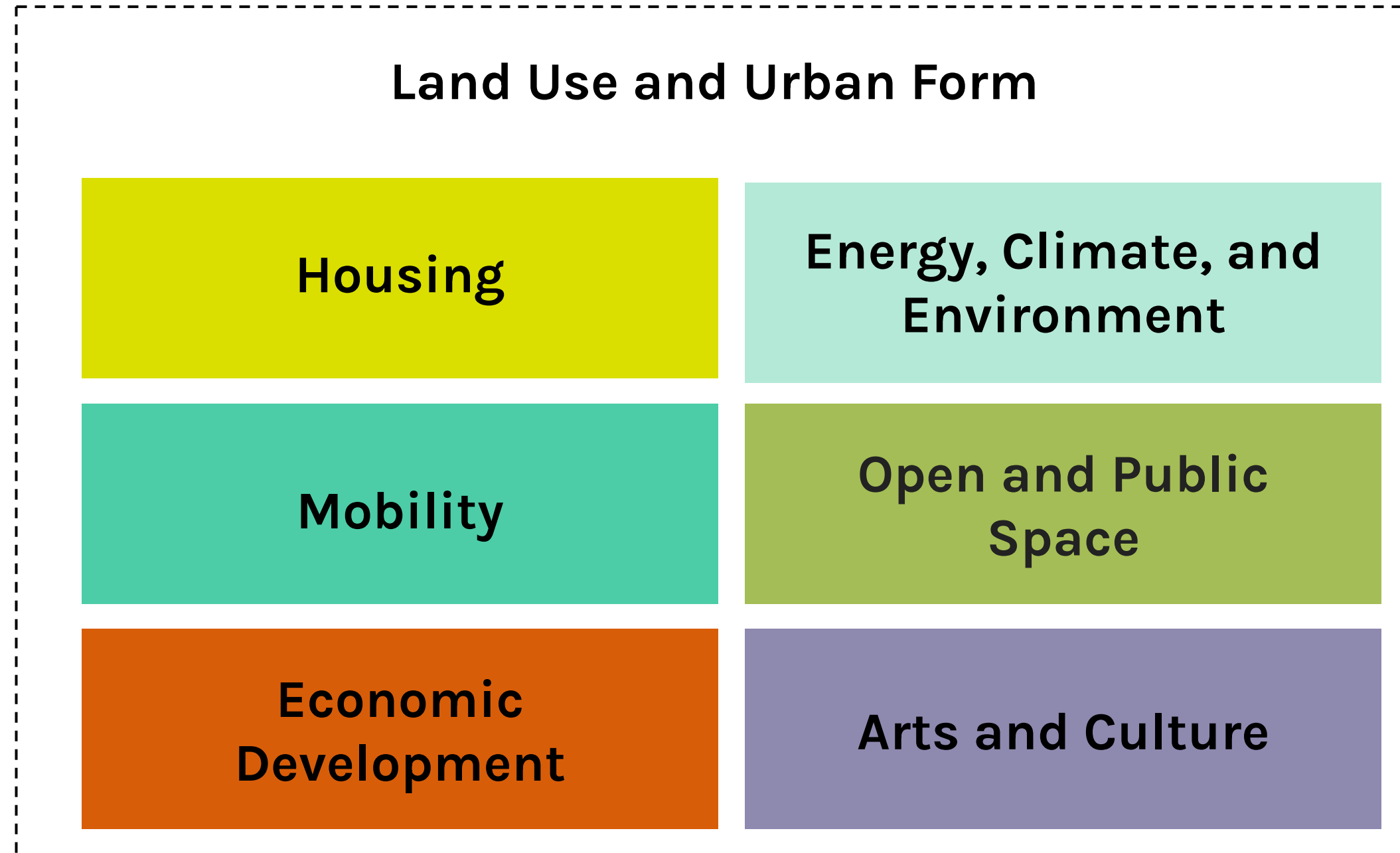
We are here!

# What important topics is Lowell Forward tying together?

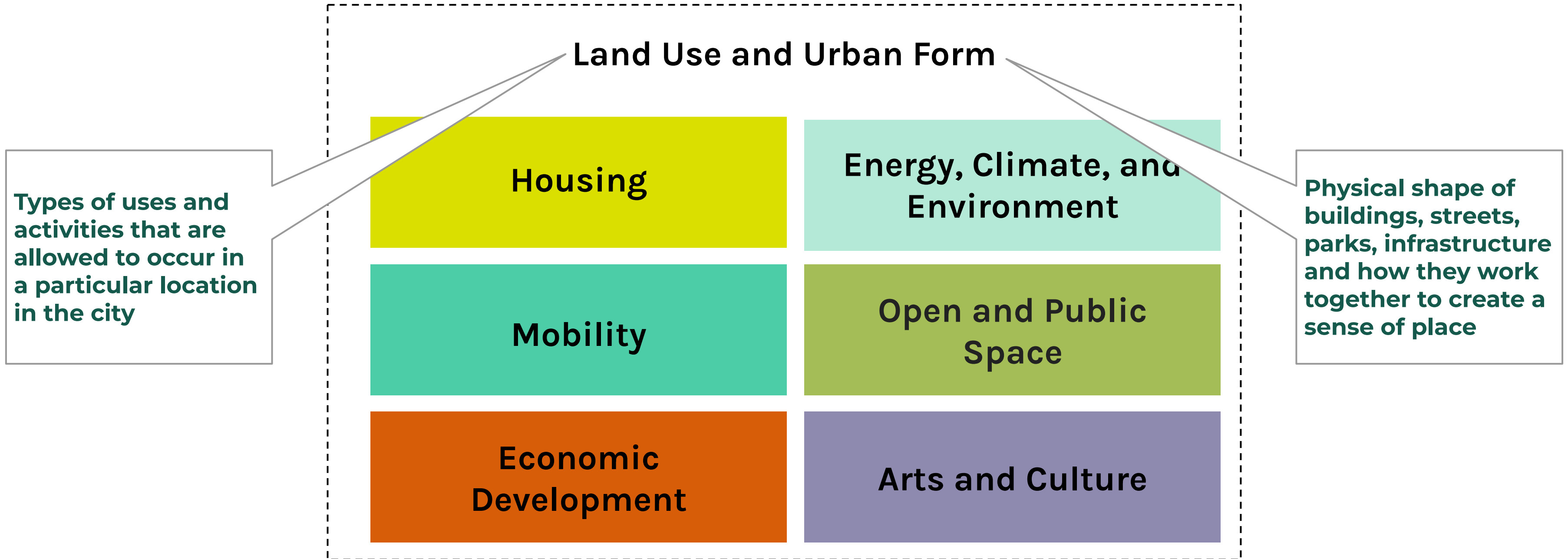




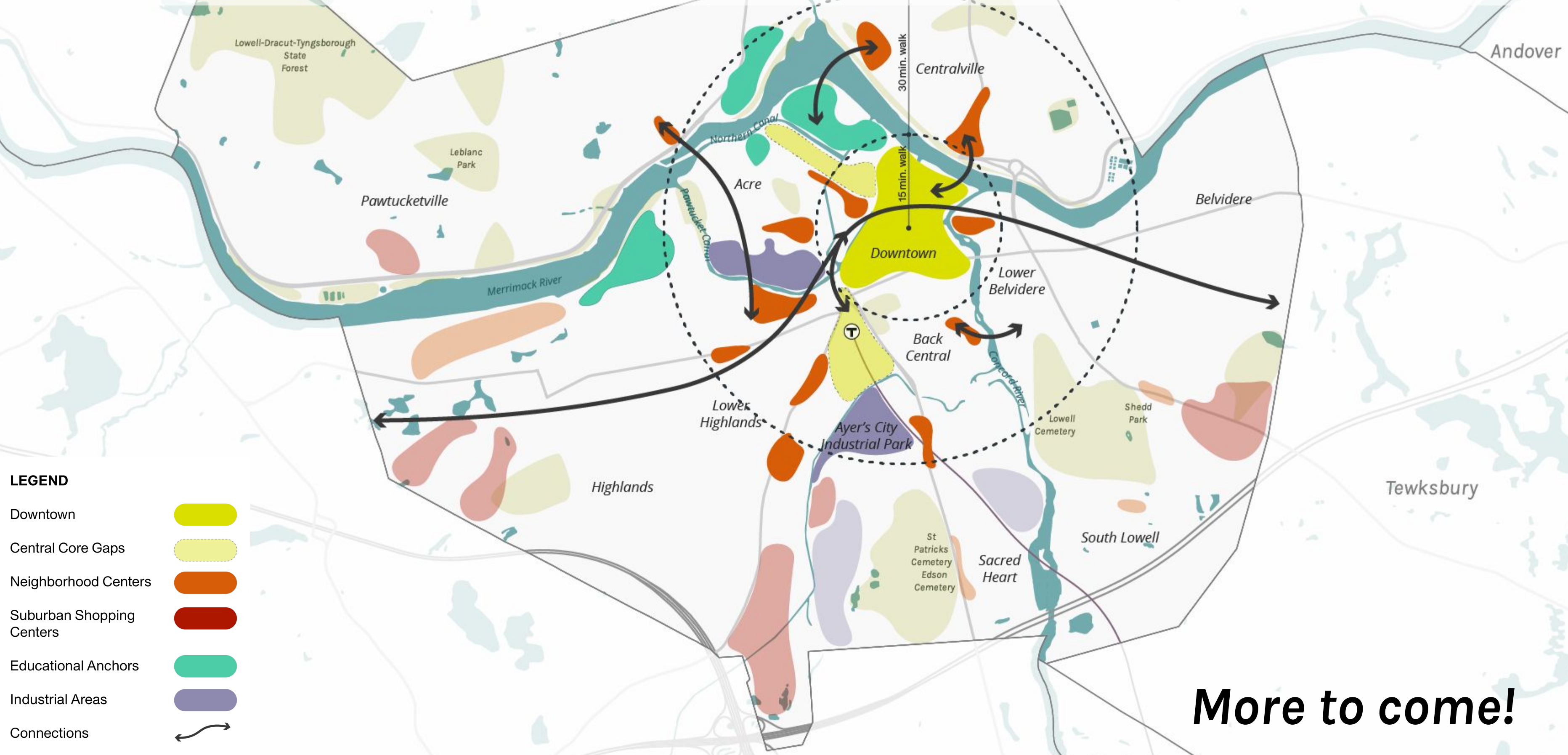
# How is Lowell Forward tying these topics together?



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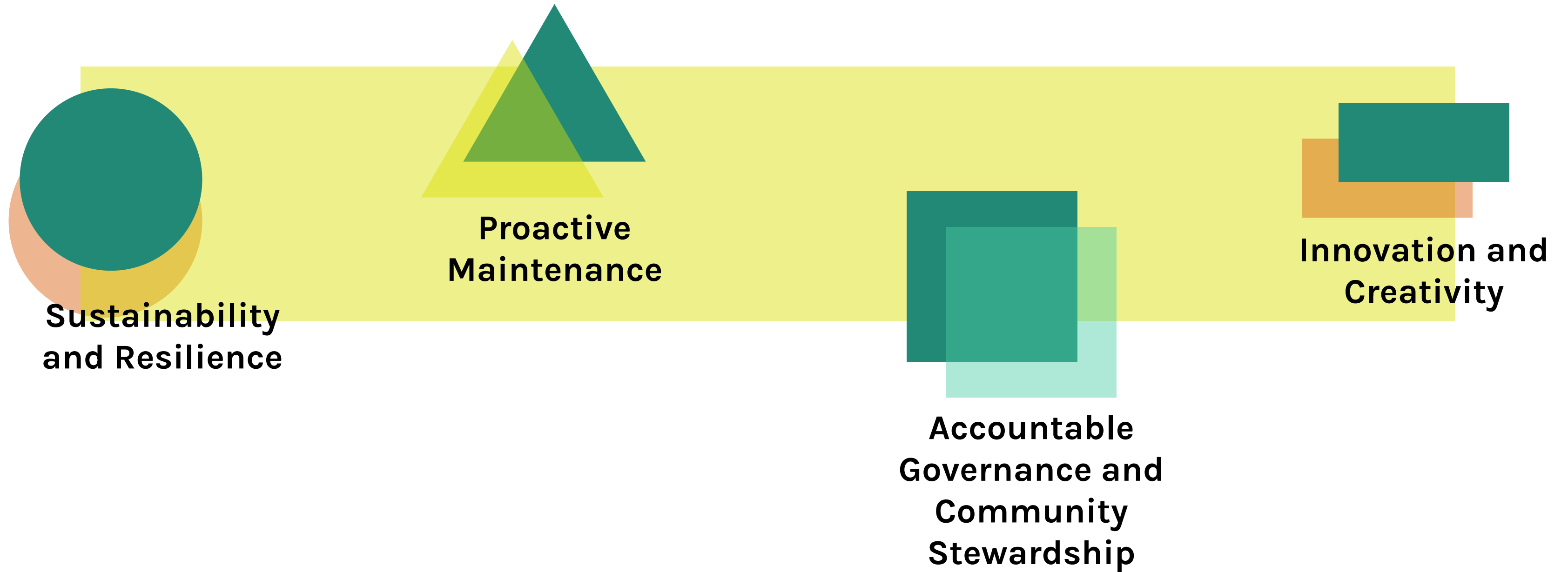


# How is Lowell Forward tying these topics together?



**More to come!**

# Foundation principles and values guiding this Plan



*All our goals and actions for the future will integrate:*

## **Sustainability and Resilience**

Ensuring that our communities, current and future, are prepared to adapt to change whether social, economic or environmental

*All our goals and actions for the future will prioritize:*

## **Proactive maintenance**

Ensuring we have a plan for who, what, where and how we take care of our beloved city and its resources

*All our goals and actions for the future will cultivate:*

**Accountable governance and  
community stewardship**

Ensuring that the community is  
empowered and connected to the local  
government with a shared ethic of  
responsible and equitable  
decision-making

*All our goals and actions for the future will foster:*

## **Innovation and Creativity**


Supporting resources to foster innovation and creativity for individuals and businesses to thrive and adapt to challenges of the future



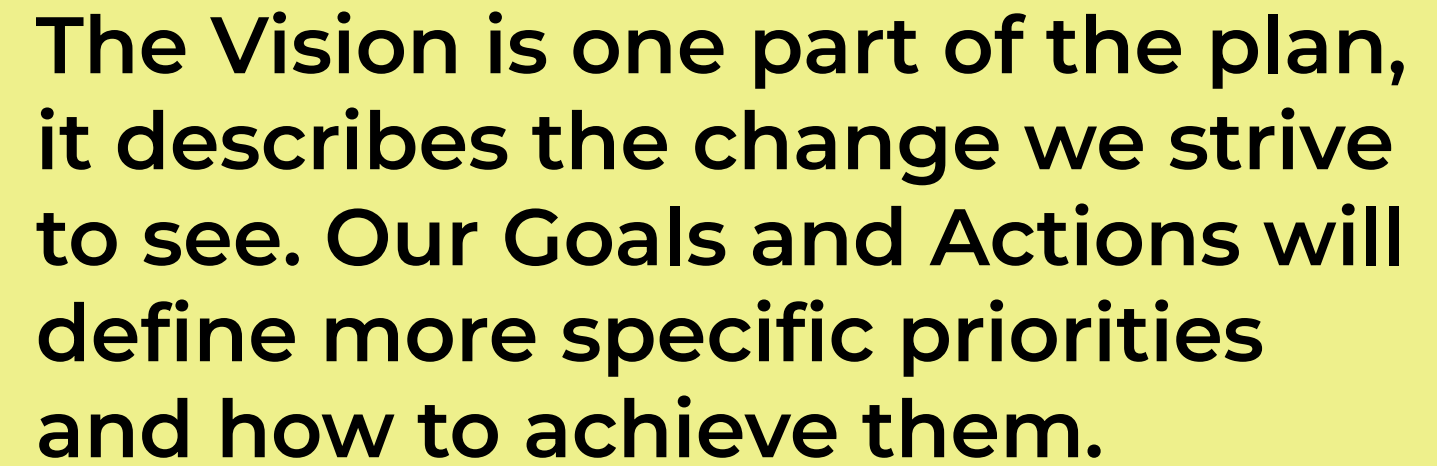
# Our Vision and Top Goals for the Future



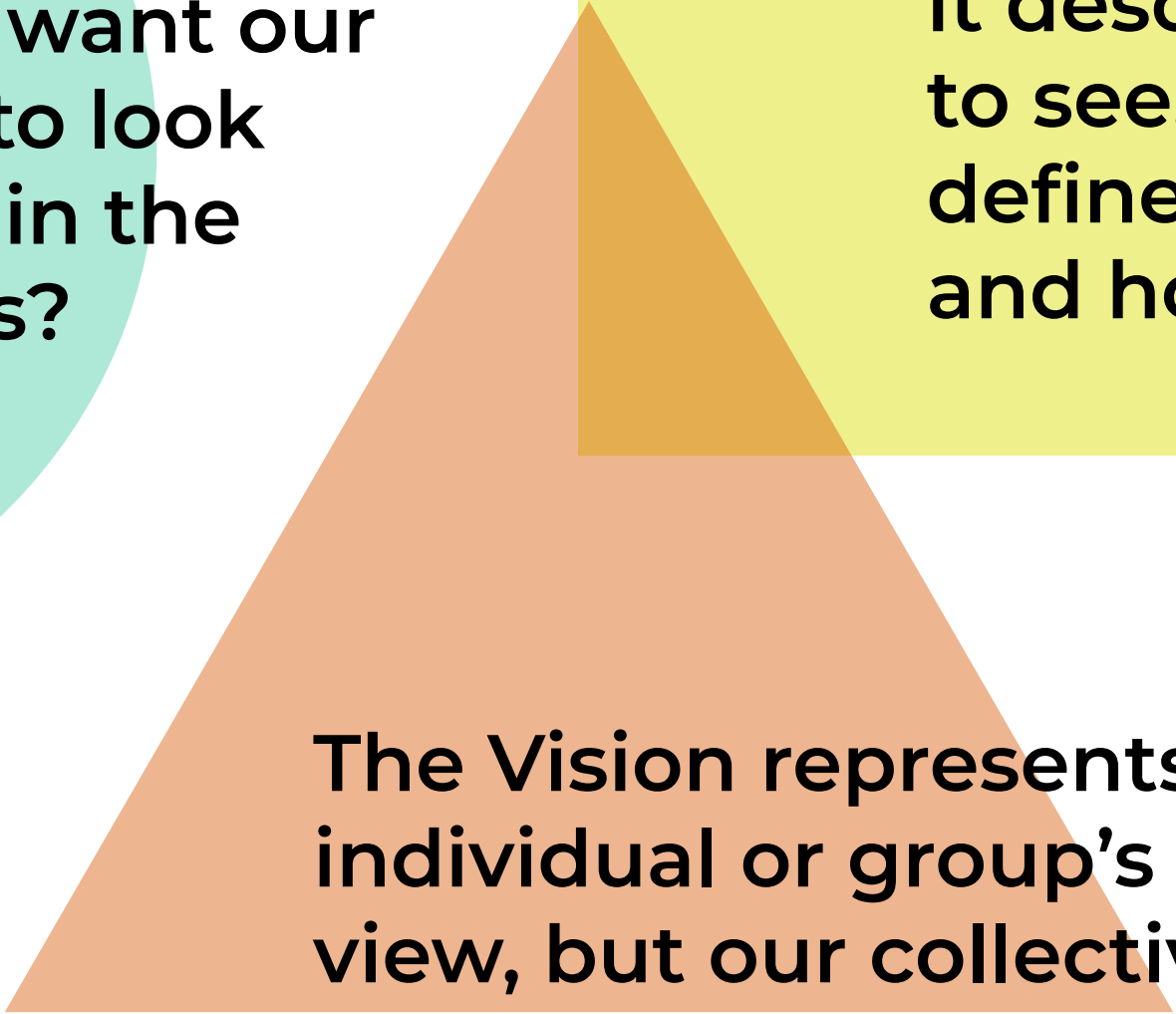
# Why Vision?



**What do we want our community to look and feel like in the next 20 years?**



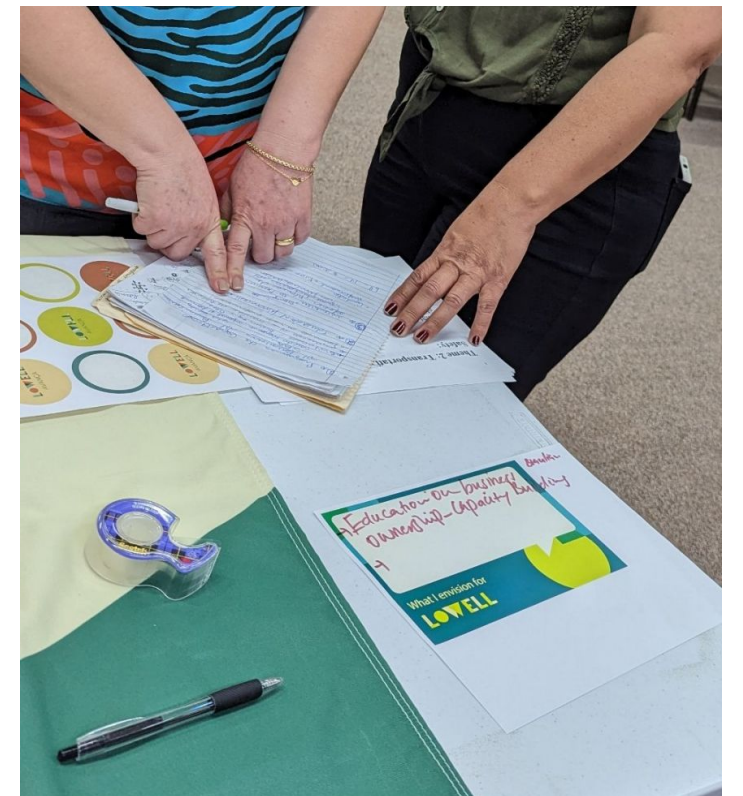
**The Vision is one part of the plan, it describes the change we strive to see. Our Goals and Actions will define more specific priorities and how to achieve them.**



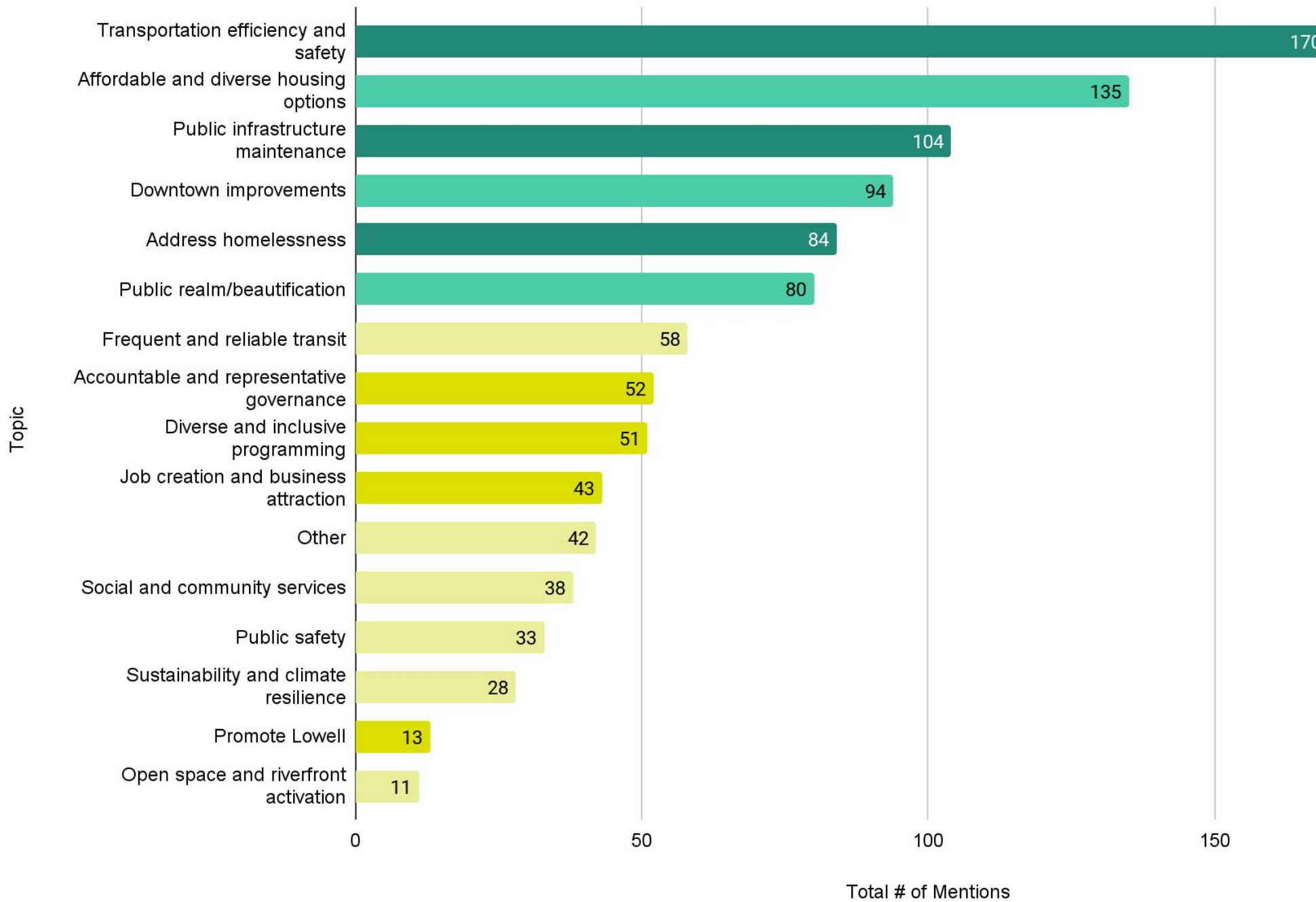
**The Vision represents not one individual or group's point of view, but our collective outlook for the future. It is shaped by all of you!**

# We've connected with so many of you!

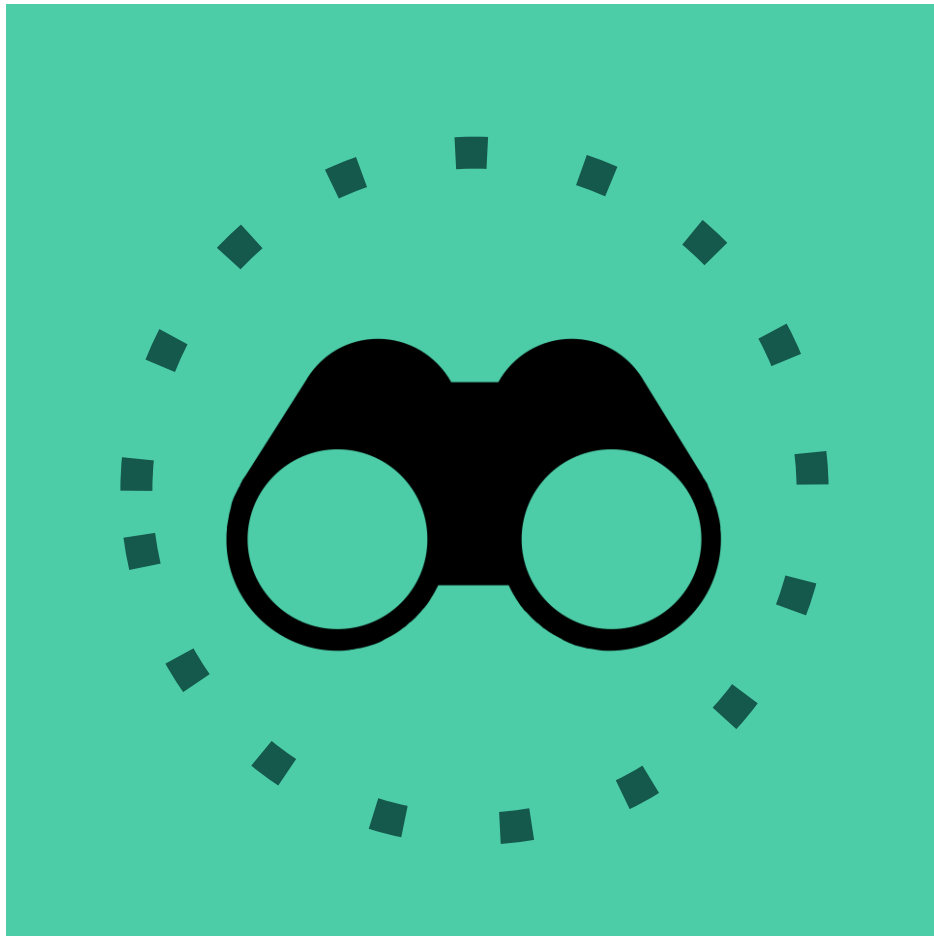
- **Public Workshop 1**
  - 100+ attendees
  - 36 comment cards
  - 284 sticky notes
- **Visioning Survey # 1**
  - 745 + responses
- **Community Organizer**
  - 21 Stakeholder Conversations
  - 7 Focus Groups
- **12+ City-led focus groups**
- **Vision and Goals Survey #2**
  - 360+ responses



# Here's what we heard:



# Vision



## We envision Lowell as a city that

- *Connects our communities to the housing and resources needed to live a fulfilling life;*
- *Conveniently transports us to where we need to go (whether by car, transit, walking or biking);*
- *Cultivates educational, economic and creative opportunity for everyone;*
- *Embraces and celebrates our diverse cultures and unique heritage;*
- *Takes care of our public spaces, natural resources, and each other; and*
- *Prepares for and responds to climate change*

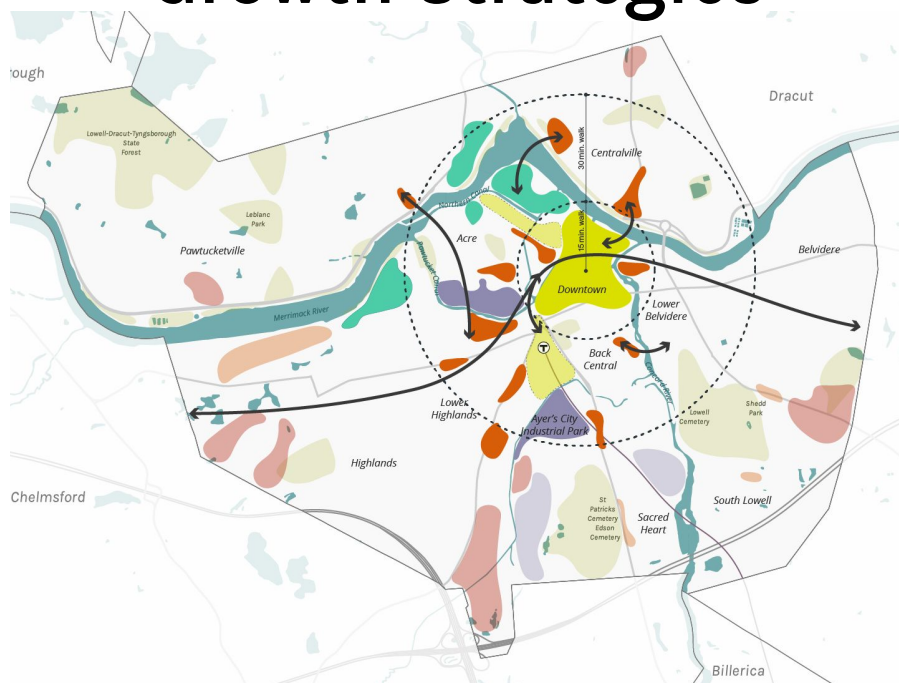
# Top goals supporting each topic

## Land Use and Urban Form

1. Downtown growth
2. Growth in neighborhood activity centers and/or education anchors such as UML
3. Redevelop underutilized industrial areas or heavy commercial areas
4. Improve riverfront access and programming



## Growth Strategies



## Housing

1. Housing affordability
2. Housing diversity
3. Housing quality
4. Provide housing options for Lowell's most vulnerable populations
5. Ensure fair housing policies and practices

## Mobility

1. Safe, equitable and connected mobility network that accommodates walkers, riders, drivers and bikers
2. High-quality, reliable and frequent transit

## Economic Development

1. Downtown revitalization
2. Activate neighborhood commercial centers
3. Promote, support, and grow Lowell's local businesses
4. Expand commercial and industrial opportunities

## Energy, Climate, and Environment

1. Reduce carbon emissions from buildings citywide
2. Protect existing assets such as EV, bike, and solar energy infrastructure
3. Decarbonization of older housing stock

## Open and Public Space

1. Open space improvements: equitable programming and better access
2. Public space improvements: more activity and better maintenance

## Arts and Culture

1. Leverage the arts and support creative placemaking in Lowell
2. Support Lowell's economic vitality through arts, culture and creativity.

# Top goals supporting each topic

## Housing

1. **Housing affordability:** Preserve and expand existing affordable housing resources
2. **Housing diversity:** Enable and incentivize a greater mix of housing options for all income levels and needs
3. **Housing quality:** Provide oversight, funding, design, and management expertise in new and existing housing
4. Provide **housing options for Lowell's most vulnerable** populations
5. Ensure **fair housing policies** and practices

# Top goals supporting each topic

## Mobility

1. **Safe, equitable and connected mobility network** that accommodates walkers, riders, drivers and bikers
  - a. Prioritize the **implementation and maintenance** of transportation-focused investments
  
2. **High-quality, reliable and frequent transit**
  - a. Work with LRTA and MassDOT to develop, fund, and sustain a high-quality integrated transit network that is frequent, reliable, and equitable.



# Top goals supporting each topic

## Economic Development

- 1. Downtown revitalization:**  
Encouraging mixed-use developments and enhancing and maintaining the public realm
- 2. Activate neighborhood commercial centers:**  
Promote appropriate development focusing on design and zoning strategies that improve walkability, expand and enhance the quality of public space, and support small businesses.
- 3. Promote, support, and grow Lowell's local businesses:**  
Connect local entrepreneurs to available resources and ensure new development can accommodate businesses of different types, sizes, and growth stages.
- 4. Expand commercial and industrial opportunities**  
Expand Lowell's commercial and industrial tax base to ensure a diversified revenue stream to help fund existing and proposed City services.

# Top goals supporting each topic

## Open and Public Space

1. **Open space improvements:**
  - a. Ensure equitable maintenance, programming, and improvements in open spaces across Lowell, prioritizing areas with the most need
  - b. Improve public access to open space and recreational areas equitably across Lowell's neighborhoods, prioritizing environmental justice communities and sustainable modes of transportation
2. **Public space improvements:**
  - a. Maximize the public right-of-way to create vibrant and beautiful places for the community
  - b. Prioritize infrastructure enhancement, maintenance, and cleanliness

# Top goals supporting each topic

## Energy, Climate, Environment

1. Reduce carbon emissions from buildings citywide
2. Protect existing assets such as EV, bike, and solar energy infrastructure
3. Decarbonization of older housing stock

# Top goals supporting each topic

## Arts and Culture

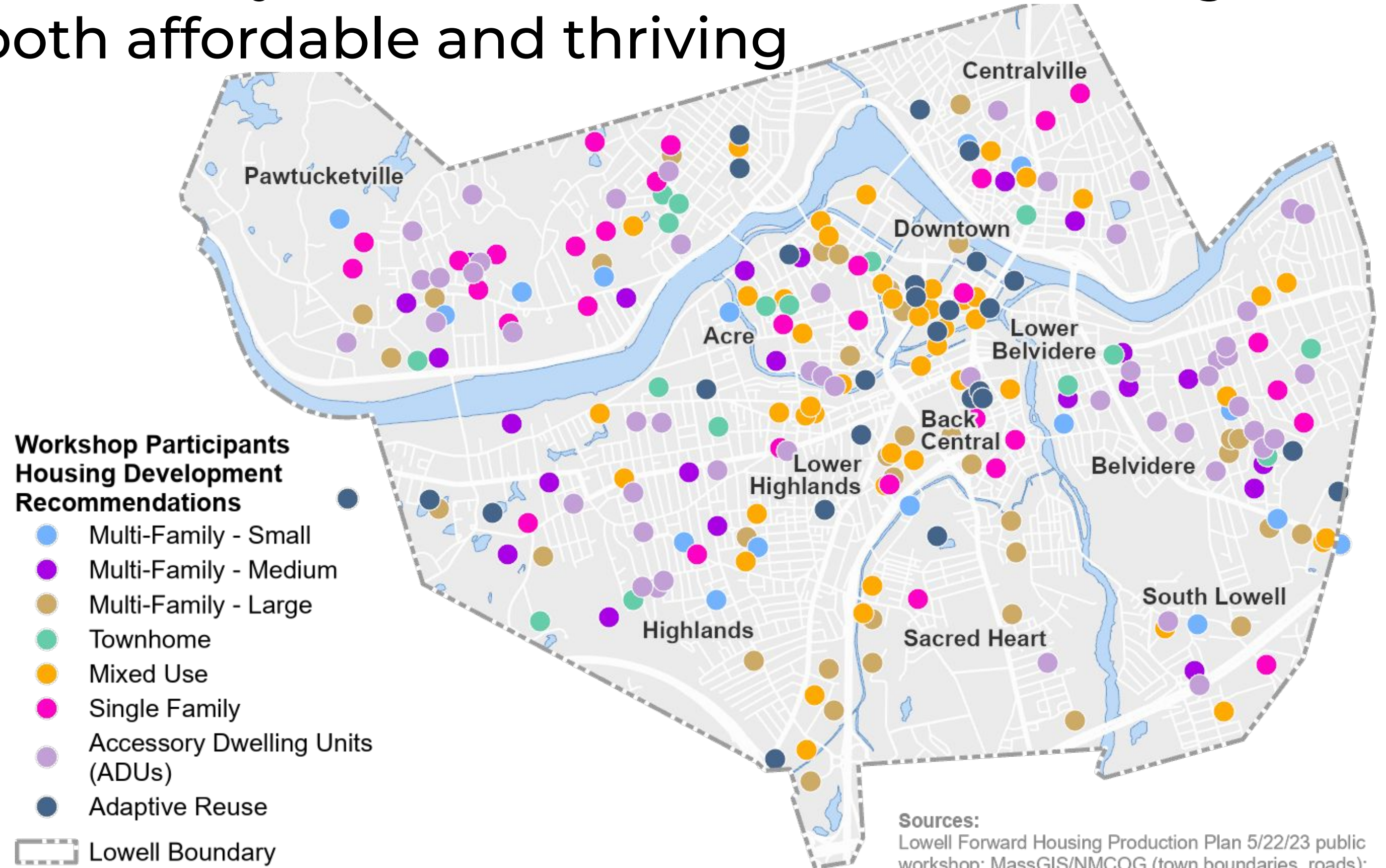
1. Leverage the arts and support creative placemaking in Lowell
2. Support Lowell's economic vitality through arts, culture and creativity.

# Our Strategies for Growth and Change

# **What do we mean by growth? Why do we need it?**

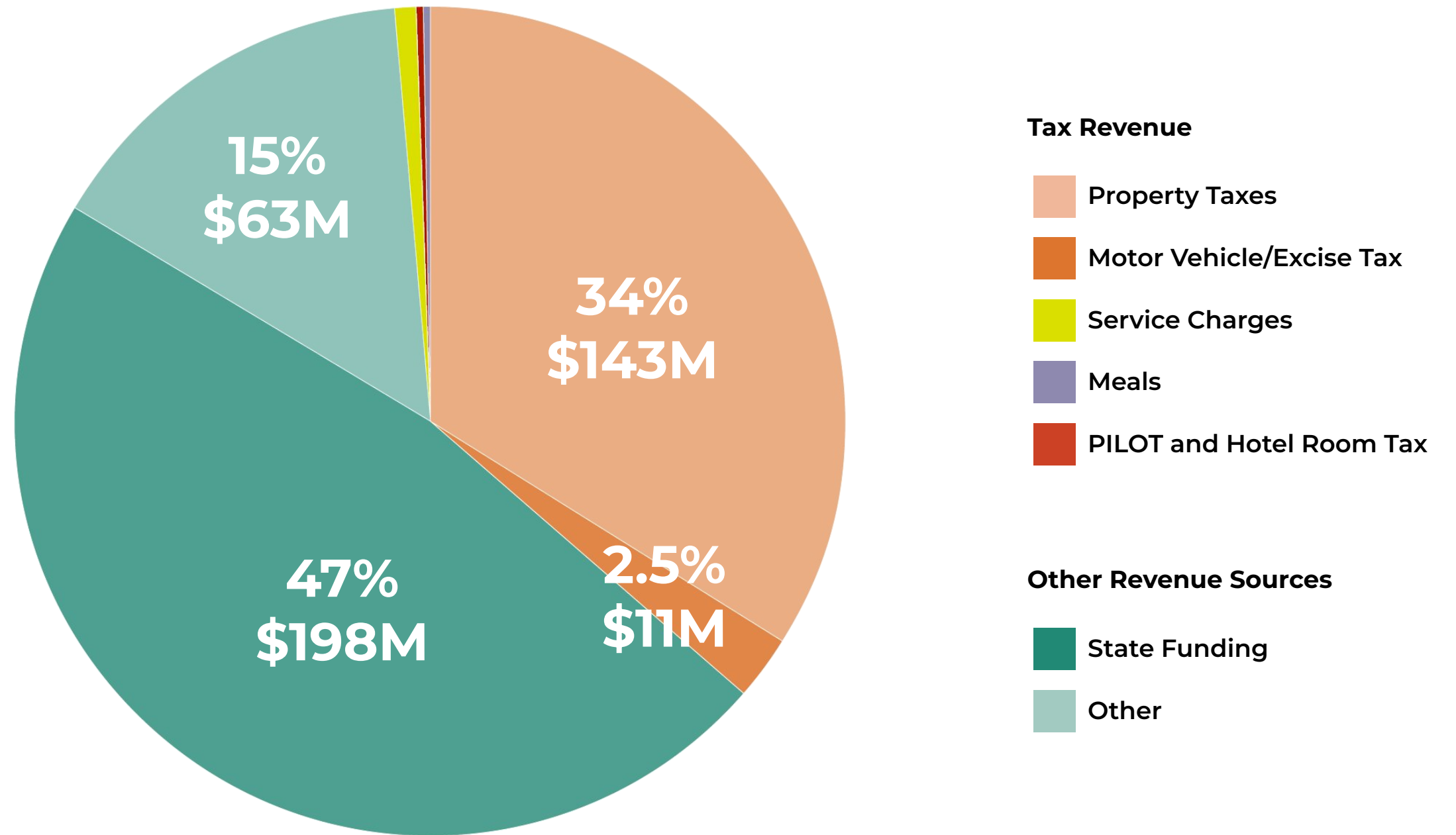
**Housing affordability,  
improved transportation  
options and better public  
infrastructure are key issues  
raised in community input**

# We've also heard from you that we need diverse housing to make Lowell both affordable and thriving



# Intentional changes in land use can support fiscal sustainability.

Most of Lowell's tax revenue comes from its property tax base. Investments in diverse development (including commercial and industrial), infrastructure, and amenities can support property values, and in turn, generate greater resources for public services.



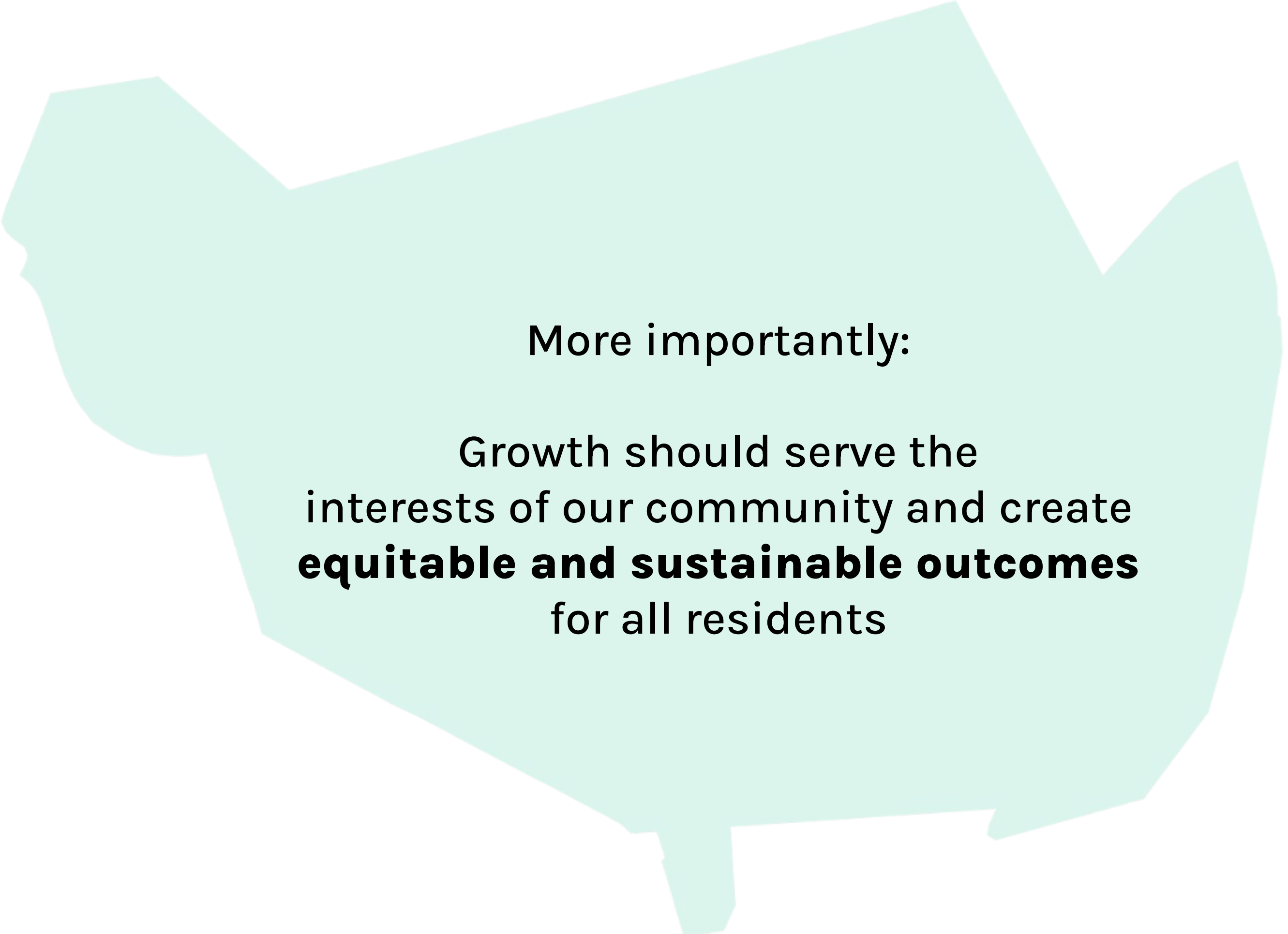
Source: City of Lowell; \*Other revenue primarily consists of intergovernmental revenue, license/permit revenue, and investment income.



Change will come in one way  
or another, how do we want  
to **grow and evolve** as a city  
and community?

Use Lowell Forward to **guide growth** that will improve quality of life, create more opportunities for our residents, businesses, and students to thrive, and create a future Lowell that we're even more proud to call home.

Identify the physical locations in the city where **integrated growth** can help us **achieve multiple outcomes** for our community including housing, mobility, economic development and more.




More importantly:

Growth should serve the interests of our community and create **equitable and sustainable outcomes** for all residents

# In summary: What can growth help us achieve?

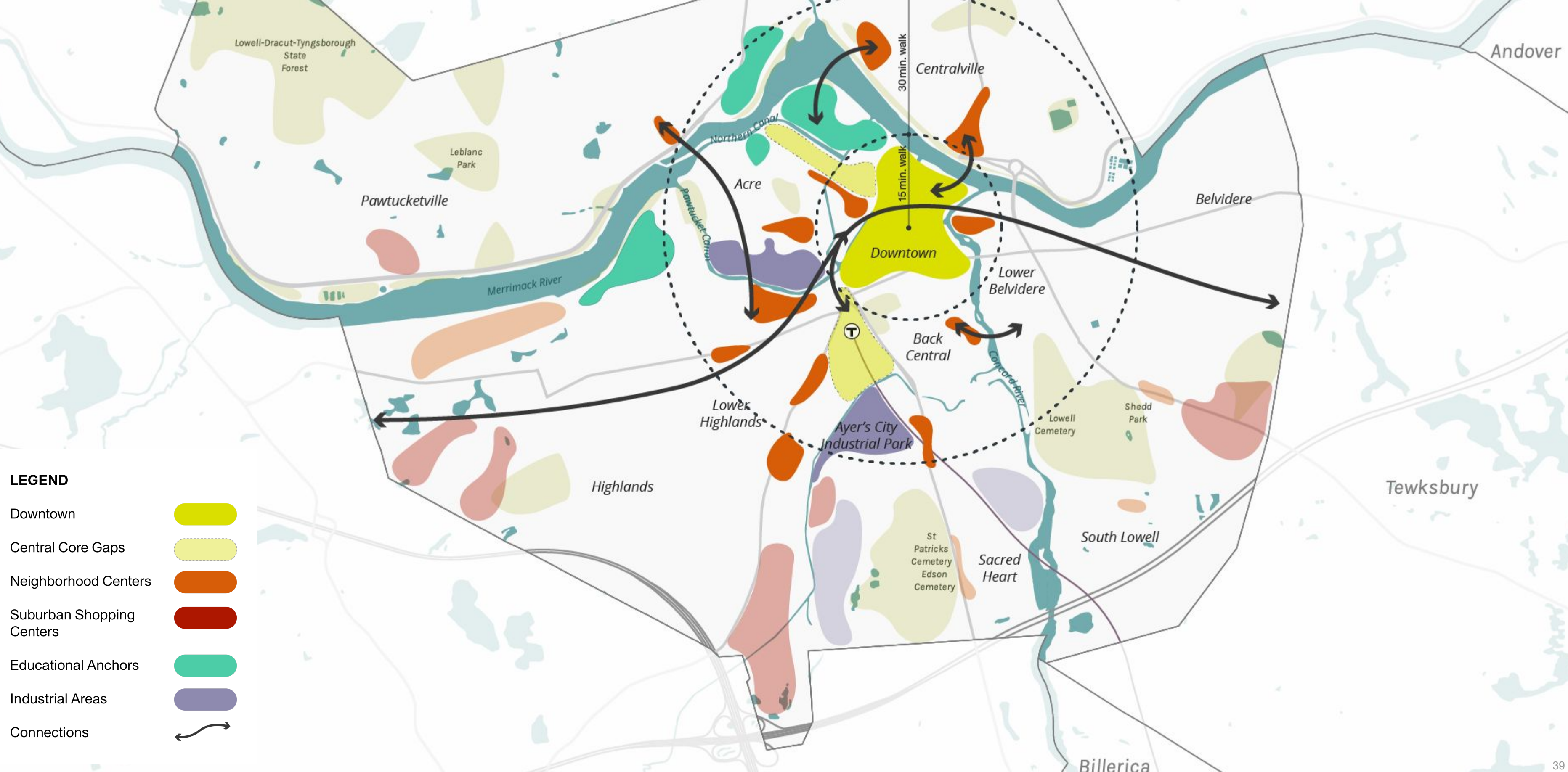
- Keep housing affordable for Lowellians and provide more options for all family sizes and needs
- Support fiscal sustainability for high-quality public infrastructure and services
- Cultivate job, business, and educational opportunities through economic vibrancy and diversification

# What kind of growth strategies will help us achieve our shared vision?










That's what we'll be exploring and workshopping with you all today!

# Framing growth in Lowell

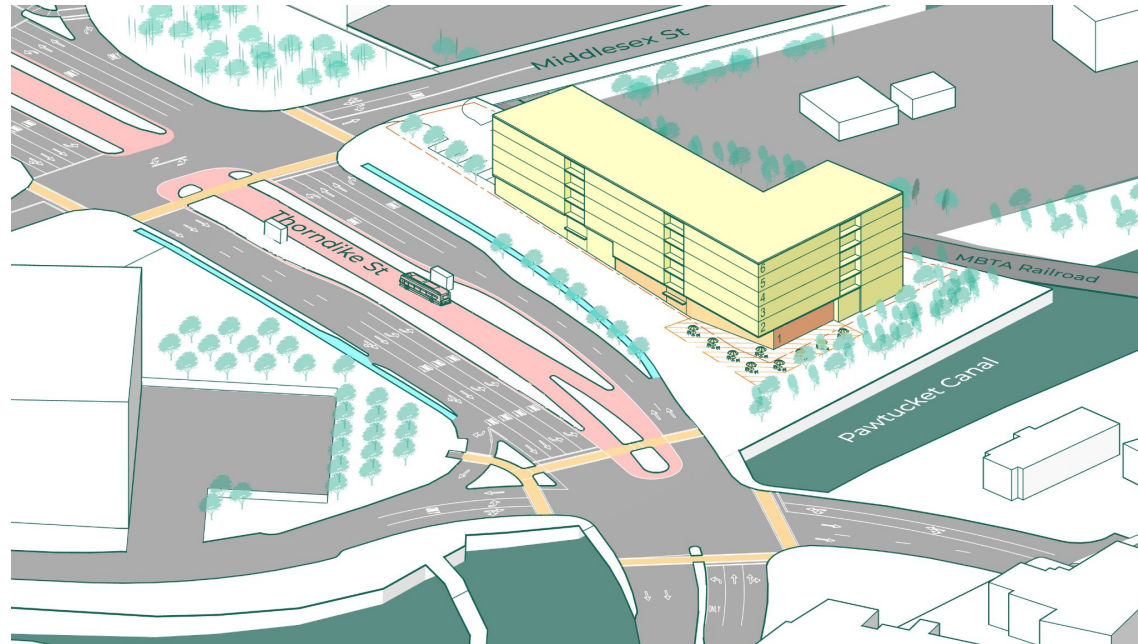


**LEGEND**

- Downtown 
- Central Core Gaps 
- Neighborhood Centers 
- Suburban Shopping Centers 
- Educational Anchors 
- Industrial Areas 
- Connections 

# Growth Strategies

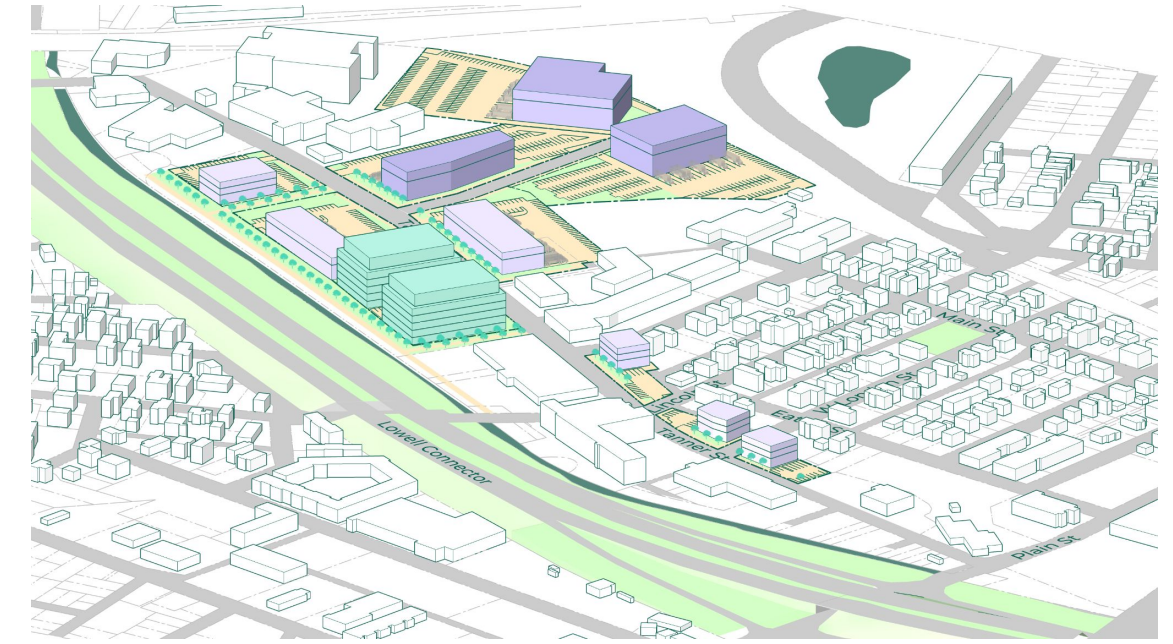
Strategy 1:



Strategy 2:



Strategy 3:



## Grow and Activate our Downtown

- 1.1 Densify, Activate and Connect Downtown
- 1.2 Activate the Riverfront and Canals
- 1.3 Fill the Gaps in the Central Core

## Build on Lowell's Unique Strengths

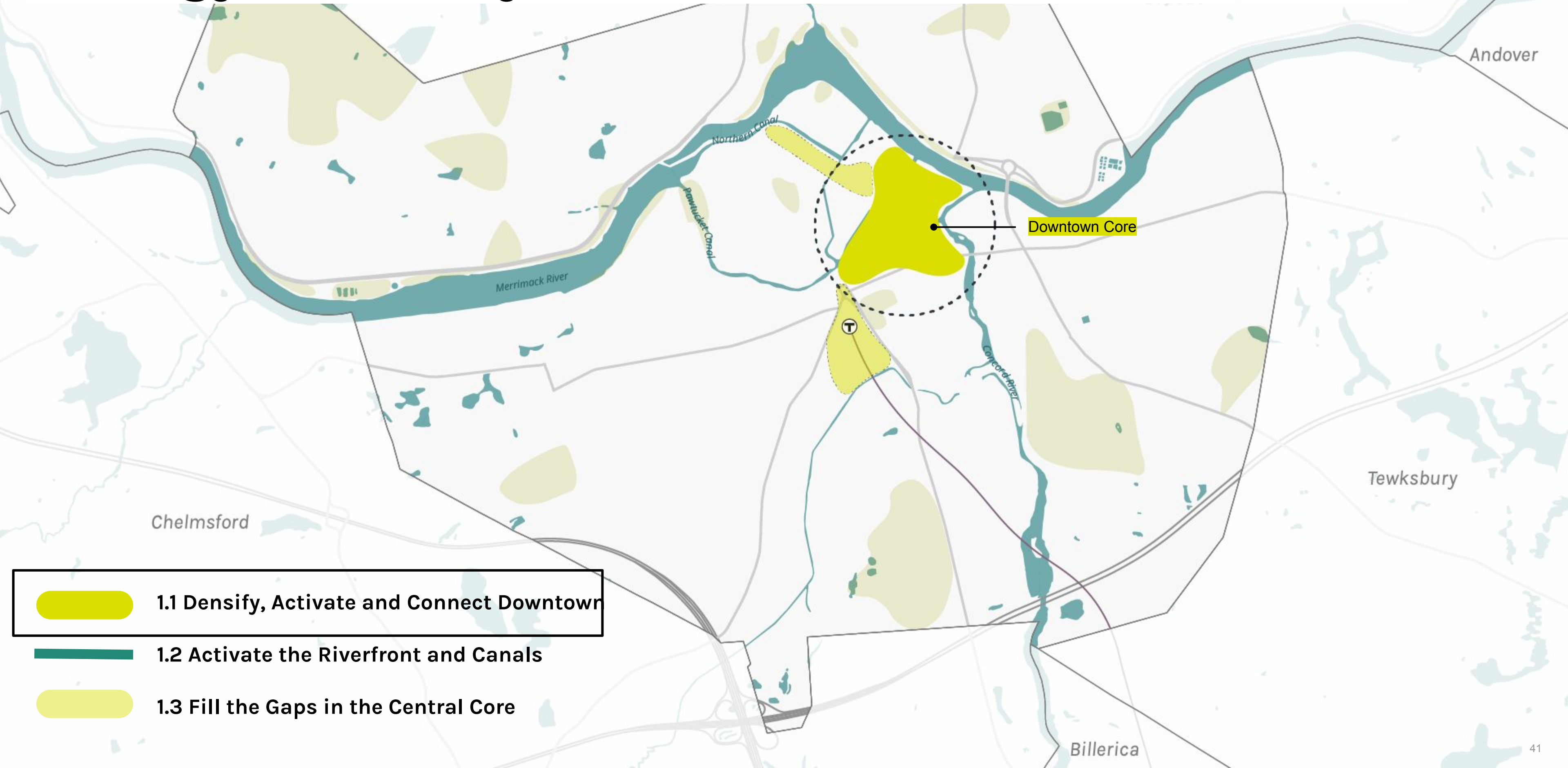
- 2.1 Enhance Neighborhood Centers
- 2.2 Leverage Institutional Anchors

## Create Opportunity in Strategic Industrial Areas

- 3.1 Redevelop Underutilized Industrial Areas



# Strategy 1.1: Densify, Activate and Connect Downtown

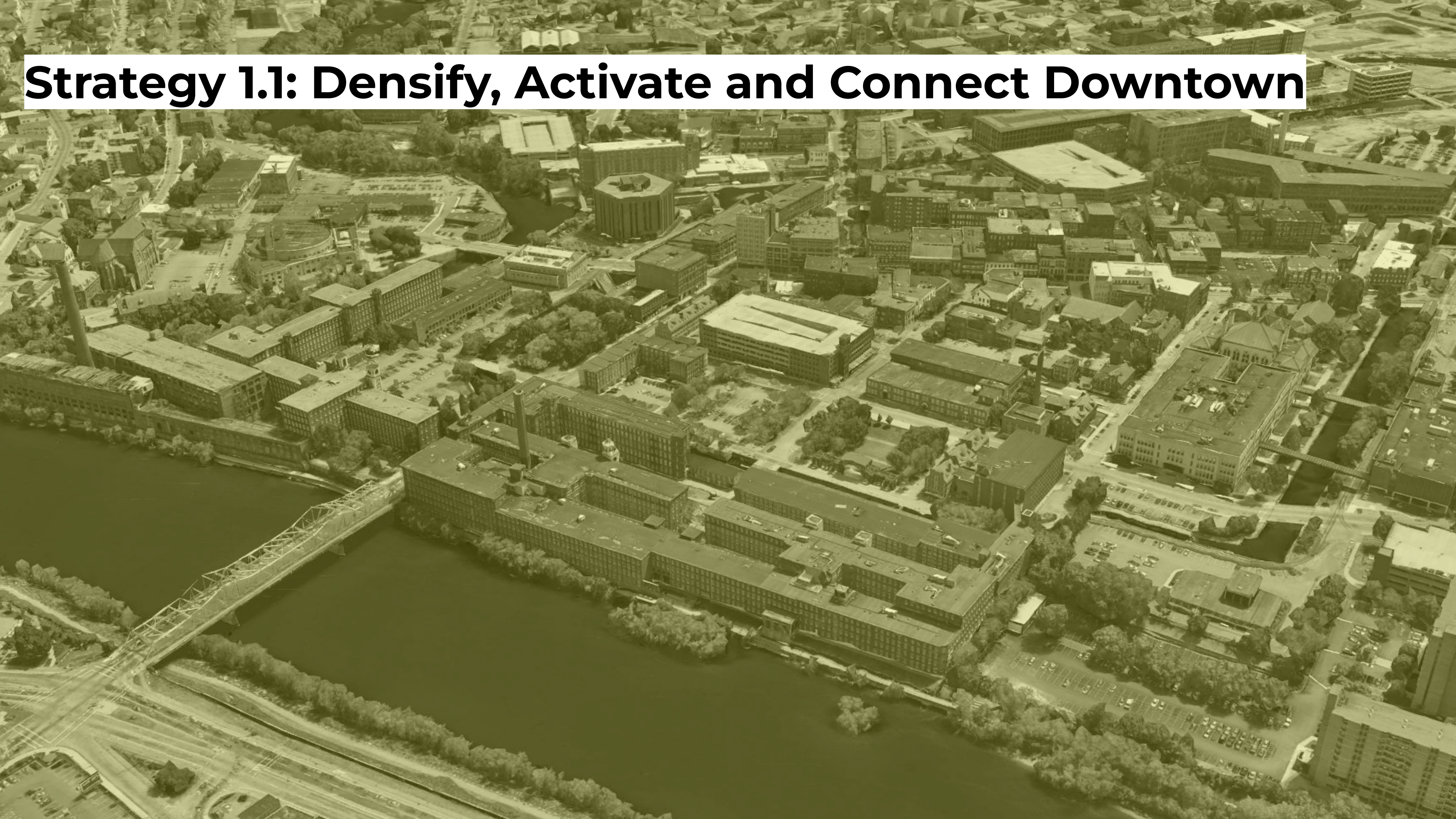


**1.1 Densify, Activate and Connect Downtown**

**1.2 Activate the Riverfront and Canals**

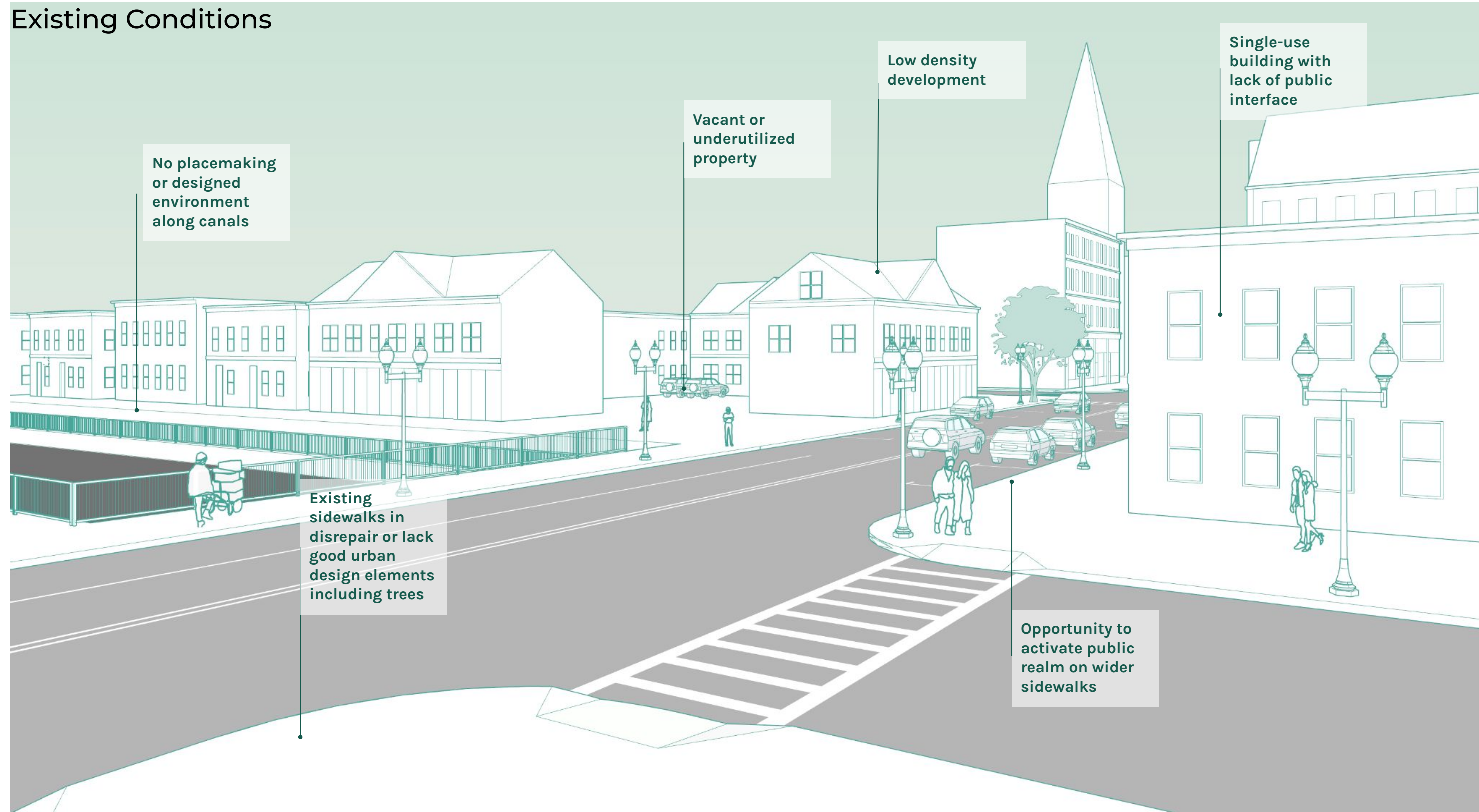
**1.3 Fill the Gaps in the Central Core**

# Strategy 1.1: Density, Activate and Connect Downtown



# Strategy 1.1: Density, Activate and Connect Downtown surrounding area

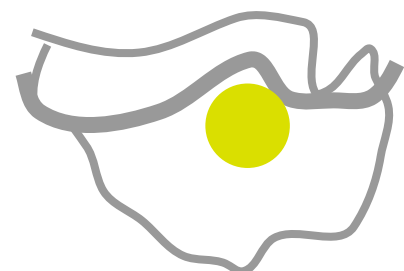
## Existing Conditions



## Strategy 1.1 Goals

Increase residential density and increase occupancy of commercial uses in Downtown Lowell in order to:

- Drive **foot traffic** Downtown to support a vibrant, 24/7, mixed-use district that appeals to a broad range of users
- Support **Downtown retail** that serves residents, workers, students, and others
- Elevate Lowell's city "brand" and make it more **attractive to employers and residents**
- Make living in Lowell more accessible to more people by **increasing housing supply** and impacting housing affordability



# Strategy 1.1: Densify, Activate and Connect Downtown surrounding area

Incremental improvements



Strategic and context-sensitive infill development with diverse and affordable housing options

Ground floor activation including encouraging certain uses, storefront improvements, public space

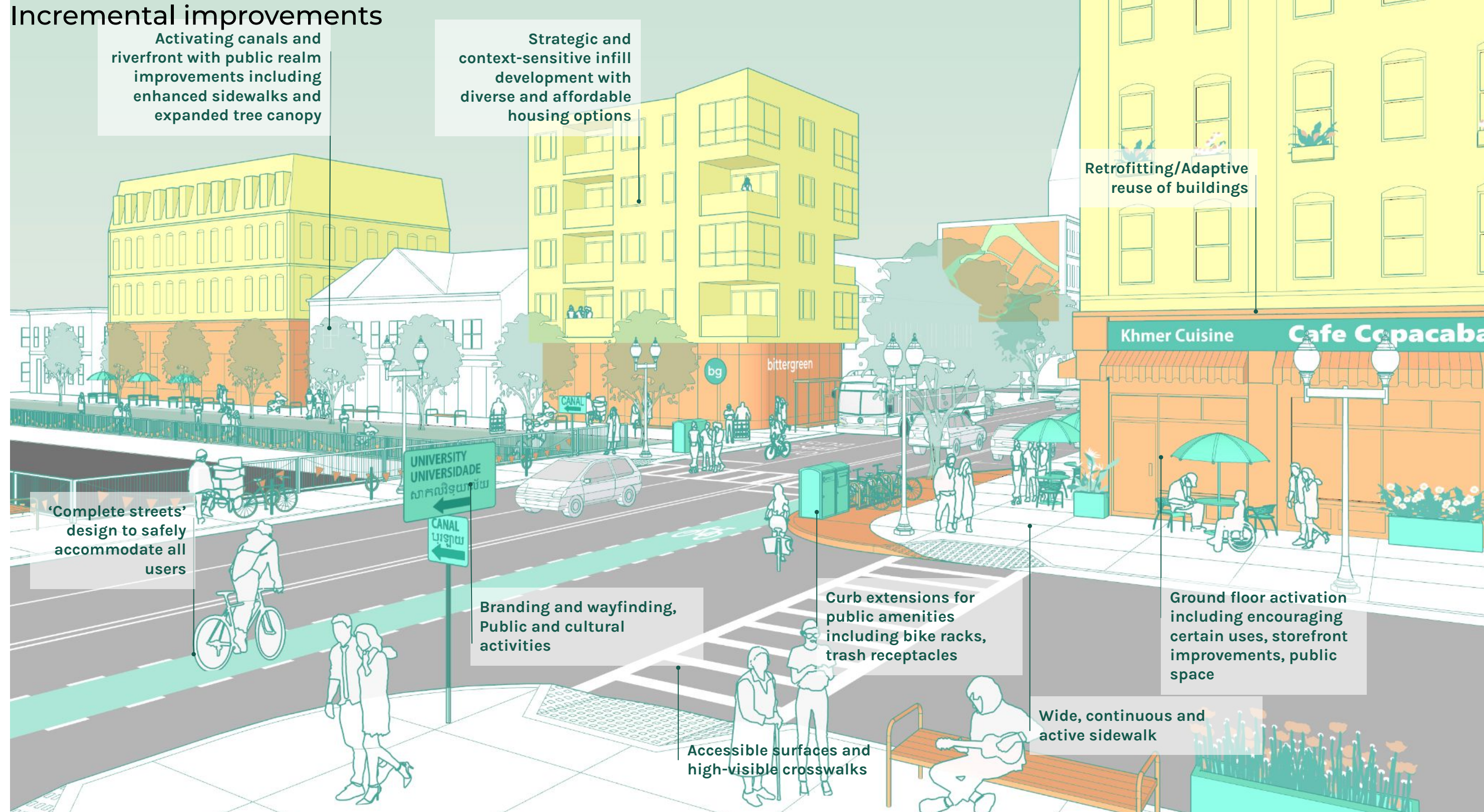
# Strategy 1.1: Densify, Activate and Connect Downtown surrounding area

## Incremental improvements

Activating canals and riverfront with public realm improvements including enhanced sidewalks and expanded tree canopy

Strategic and context-sensitive infill development with diverse and affordable housing options

Retrofitting/Adaptive reuse of buildings



'Complete streets' design to safely accommodate all users

Branding and wayfinding, Public and cultural activities

Curb extensions for public amenities including bike racks, trash receptacles

Ground floor activation including encouraging certain uses, storefront improvements, public space

Accessible surfaces and high-visible crosswalks

Wide, continuous and active sidewalk

Increasing residential density in and around Downtown would drive foot traffic and increase the housing supply, potentially alleviating the cost of housing.

Increasing housing density by 50% in Downtown Lowell and by 25% in Potential Infill Areas would generate:

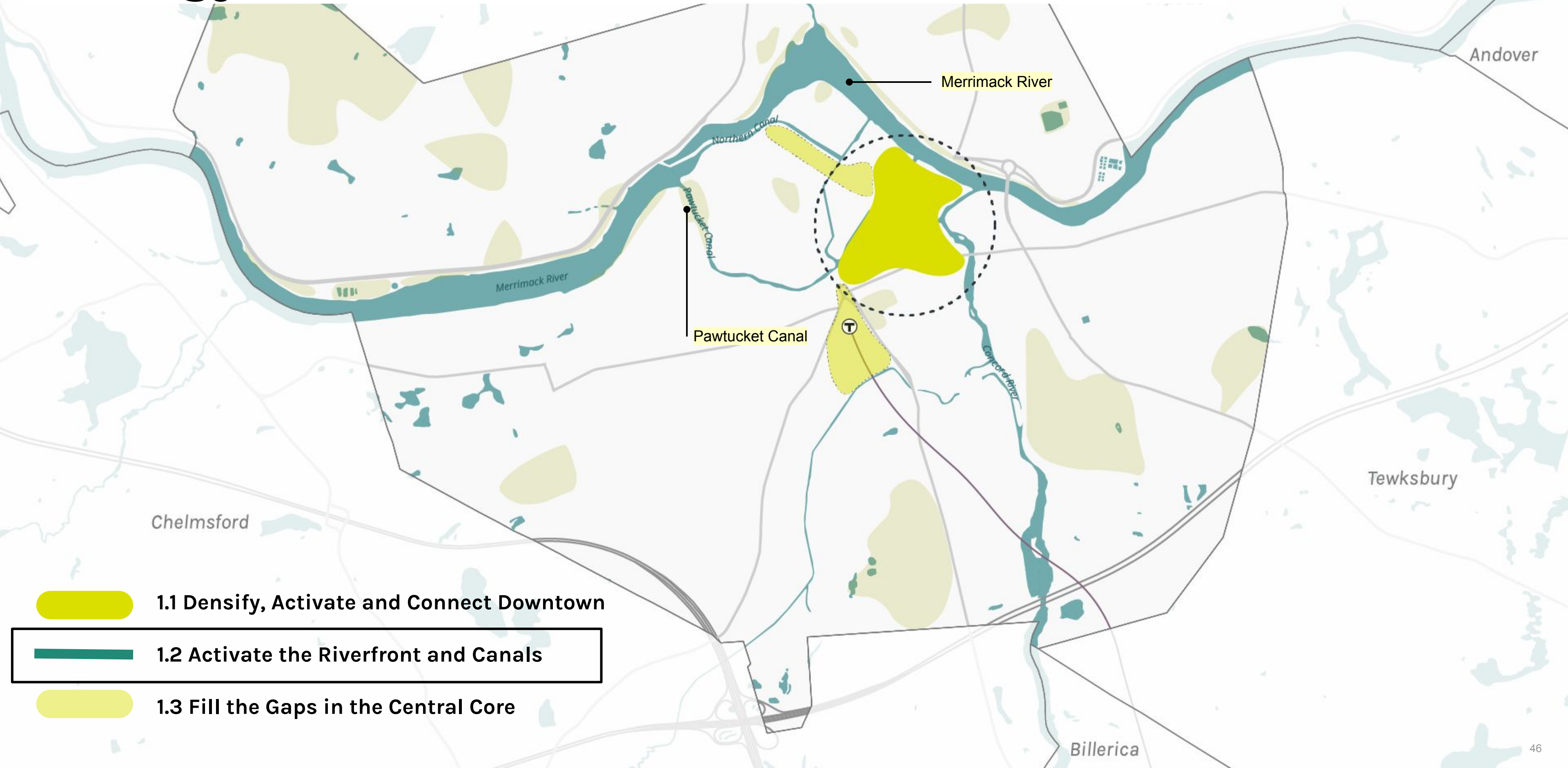
### Existing



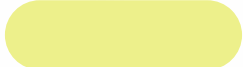
- **3,000** units
- **12** units per acre
- **2.1** average household size

### Potential Generation:

- **+ 1,000** units
- **4000** total units
- **15** units per acre

# Strategy 1.2: Activate the Riverfront and Canals

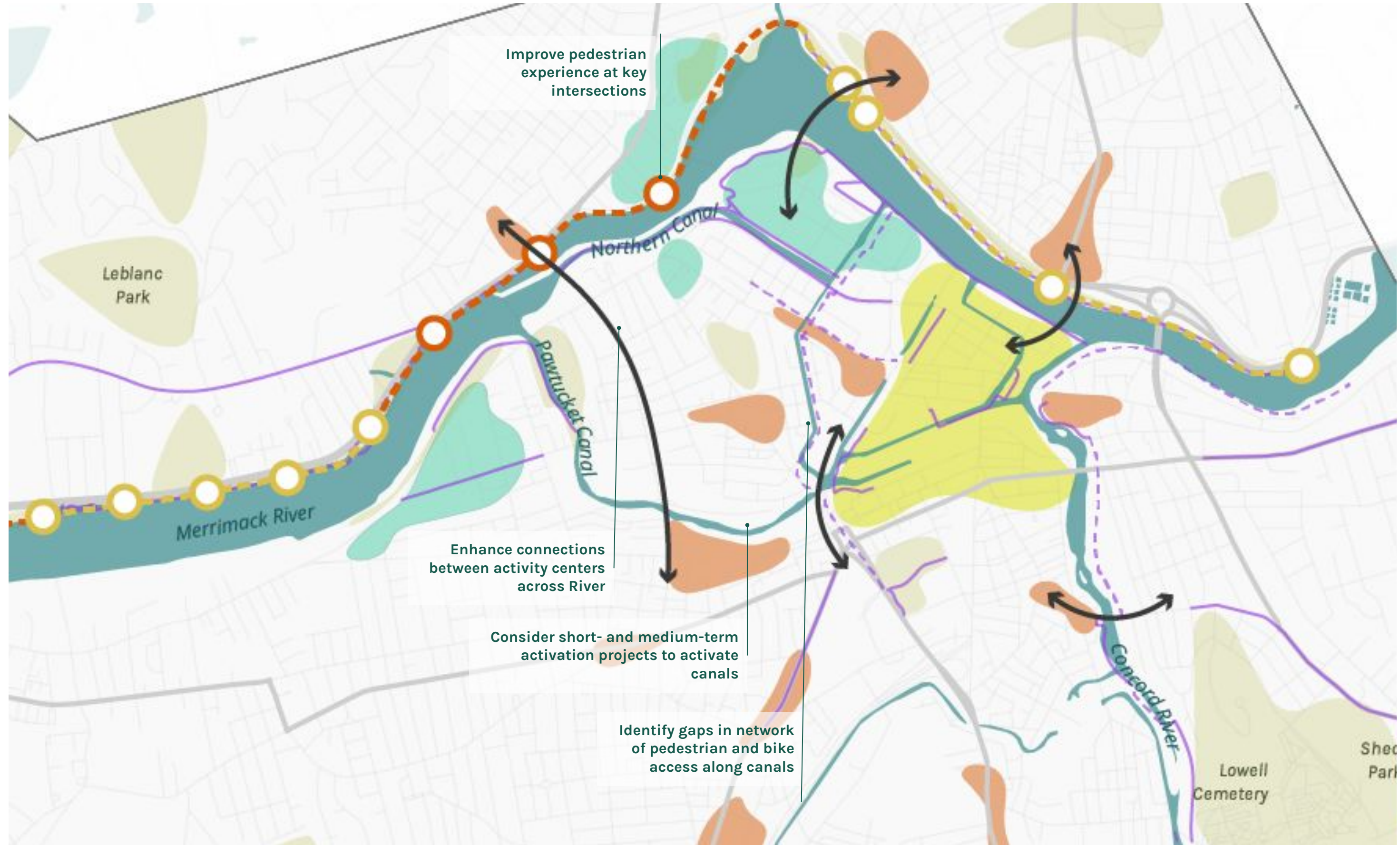


-  1.1 Densify, Activate and Connect Downtown
-  1.2 Activate the Riverfront and Canals
-  1.3 Fill the Gaps in the Central Core

# Strategy 1.2: Activate the Riverfront and Canals



# Strategy 1.2: Activate Riverfront and Canals



## LEGEND

- Existing waterfront pathway
- Existing sidewalk
- Existing crosswalk connection
- Existing cycling route
- Proposed cycling route (Go Lowell)
- Future connection enhancements
- Downtown core area
- Neighborhood centers
- Educational anchors
- Parks and open space



# Strategy 1.2: Activate Riverfront and Canals - *low cost / short term*

Develop a series of events such as neighborhood parties, fairs/markets, concerts series, etc. that could happen at locations along the canals to draw new visitors to new canal locations. Develop a Comprehensive Canal Wayfinding Strategy and Activation Campaign.



Using tactical urbanism to improve sidewalks and crossings in [Durham, NC](#)



Signs with arrows pointing the way to popular destinations, along with average walking times, popped up in Raleigh. [Walk Raleigh](#)

# Strategy 1.2: Activate Riverfront and Canals - *low cost / short term*

Include artists and residents to help tell the story of the canals, the industry that occurred and still occurs along them, as well as installations to interact with.

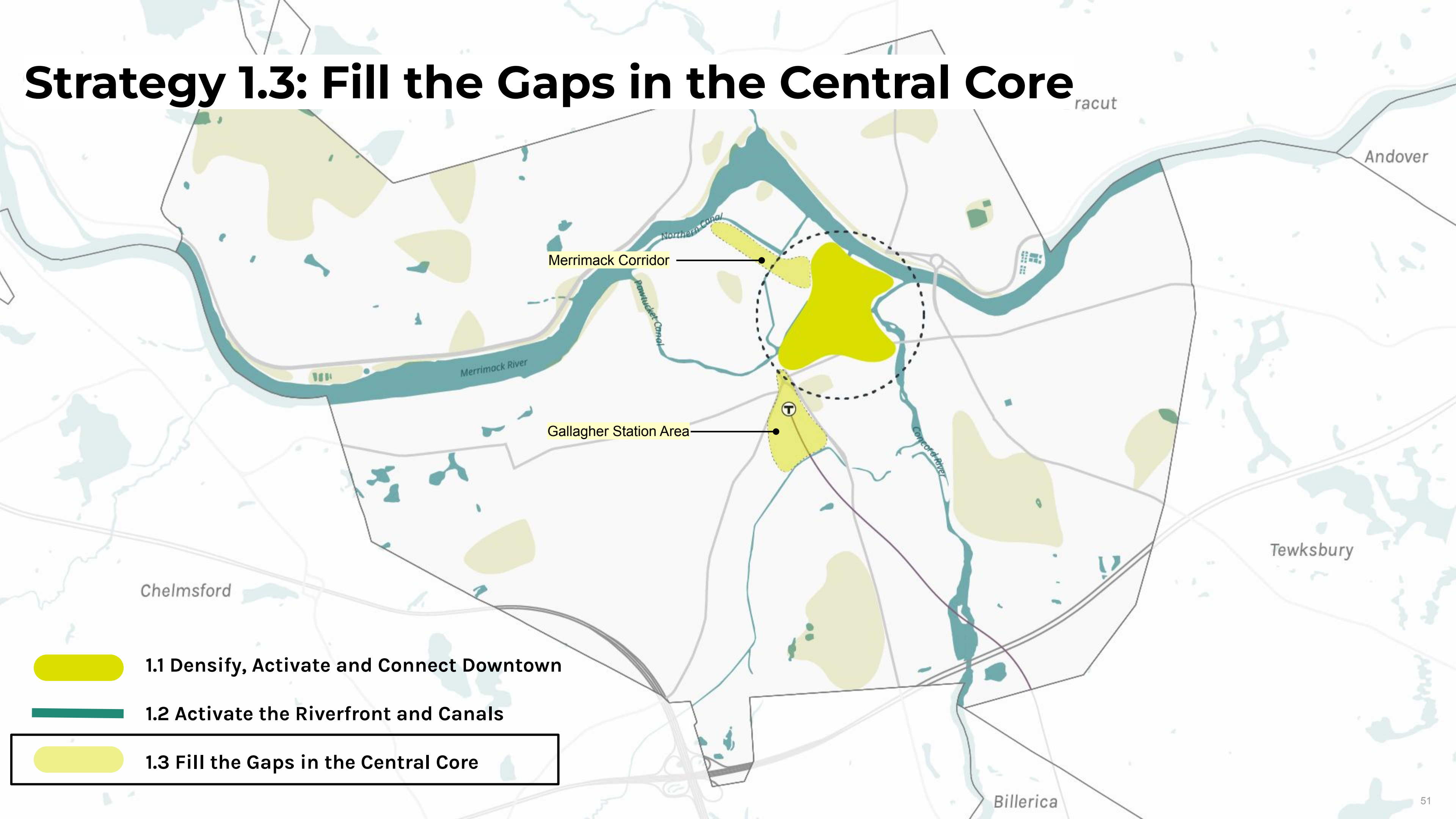





Observer, Observed in the High Line



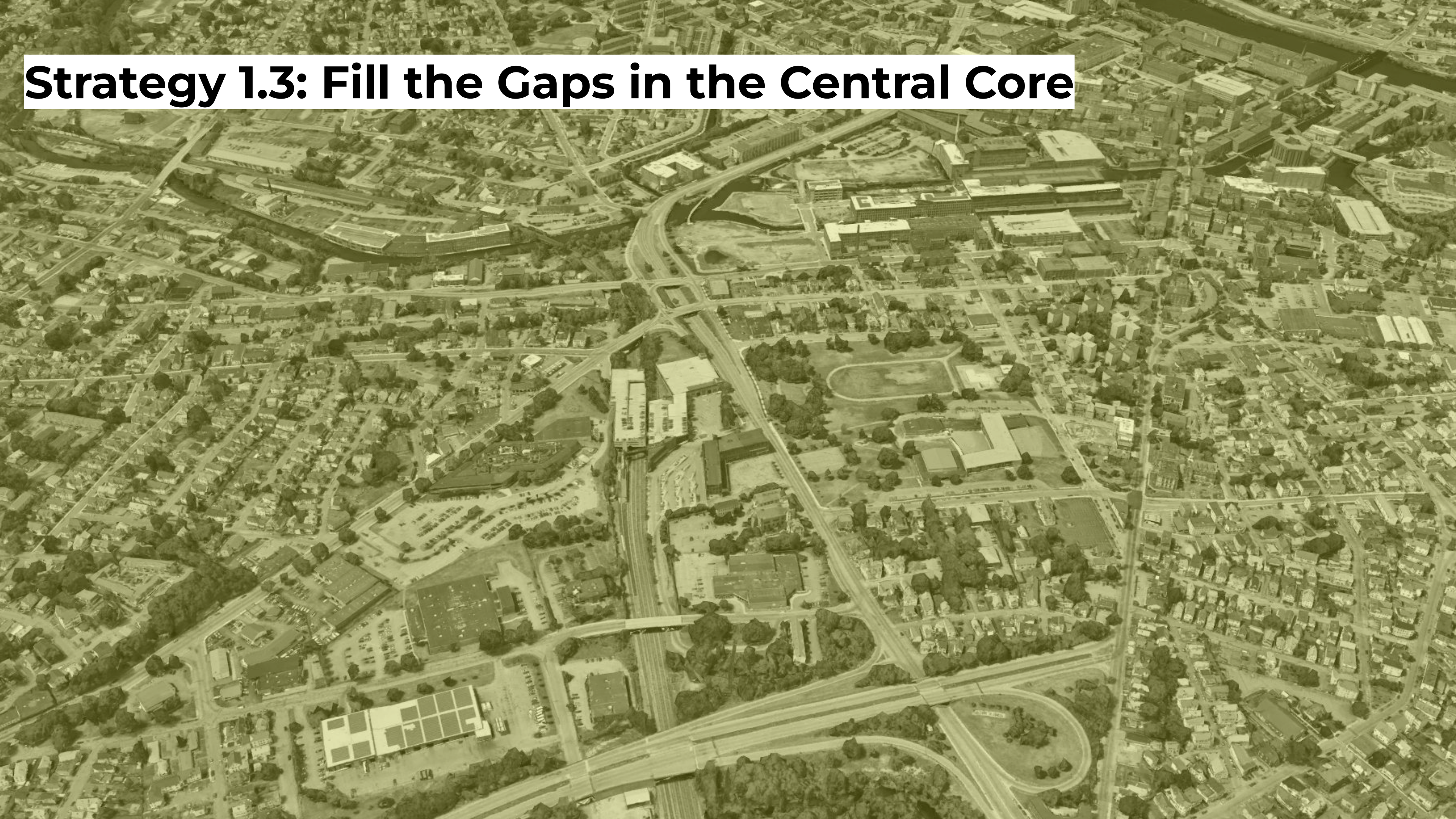
Binoculars artist installation to see the past of a place

# Strategy 1.3: Fill the Gaps in the Central Core



-  1.1 Densify, Activate and Connect Downtown
-  1.2 Activate the Riverfront and Canals
-  1.3 Fill the Gaps in the Central Core

# Strategy 1.3: Fill the Gaps in the Central Core

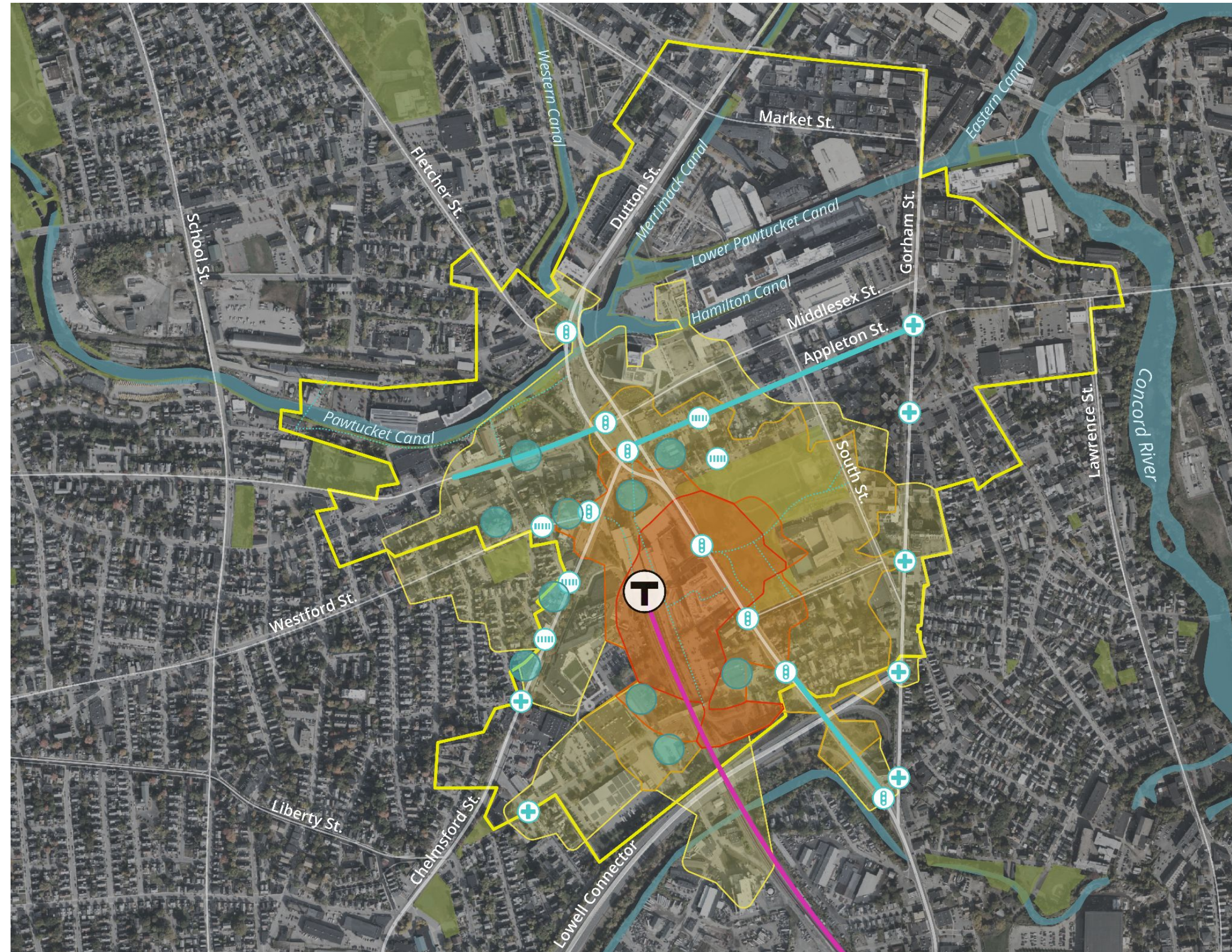


# Strategy 1.3: Fill the Gaps in the Central Core - TOD area

- TOD = Transit Oriented Development
- Area around the MBTA station have potential for densification and improved connectivity
- MBTA Communities Act

**LEGEND**

- Existing 5 min. Walkshed
- Existing 10 min. Walkshed
- Future 5 min. Walkshed
- Future 10 min. Walkshed
- Shared Use Path
- Sidealk Reconstruction / Improvement
- Intersection Upgrade
- Signal Timing Update
- New Crosswalk
- TOD Study Site

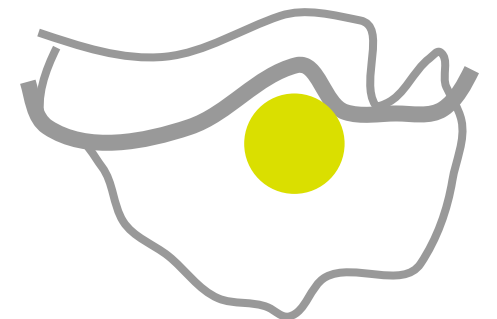


**MBTA Communities Overlay (Section 3A) for Lowell**

The three zones intend to step down from high-density high-rise construction at the MBTA station to midrise on the primary corridors approaching the station, and finally to neighborhood infill around the station at historically-appropriate scale and density.

\*City staff are looking over before submitting for compliance

Data source: Stantec



# Strategy 1.3: Fill the Gaps in the Central Core - TOD site

Test-fit Parcel: Lord Overpass / Middlesex St



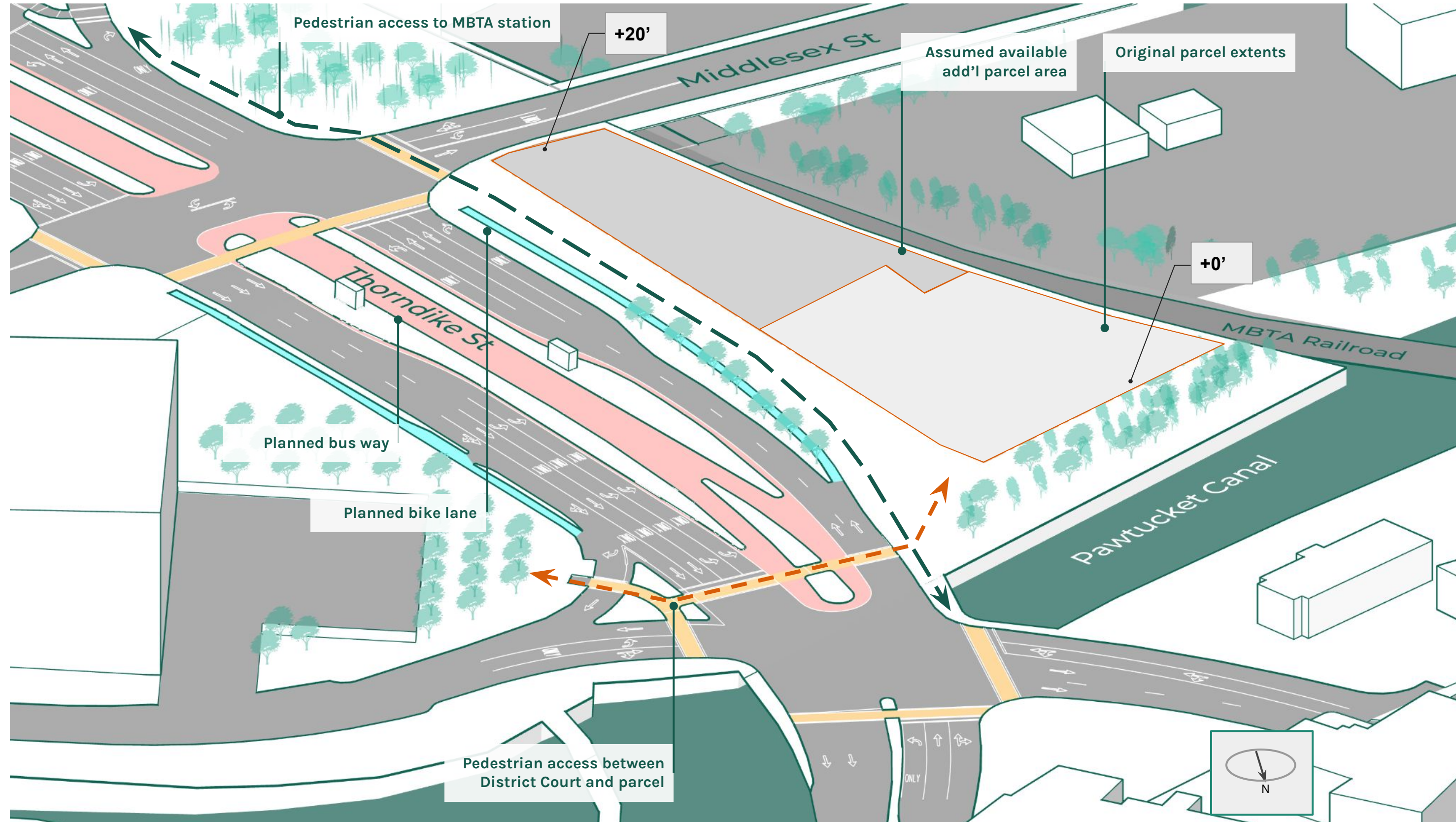
Pawtucket Canal

Middlesex St

Thorndike St

# Strategy 1.3: Fill the Gaps in the Central Core - TOD site

## Site Conditions



### Scenario parameters

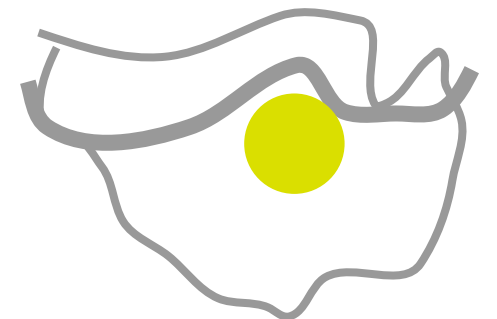
Original parcel area:  
~24,000 SF

Assumed add'l avail. area:  
~18,000 SF

**Total area:**  
**~42,000 SF**

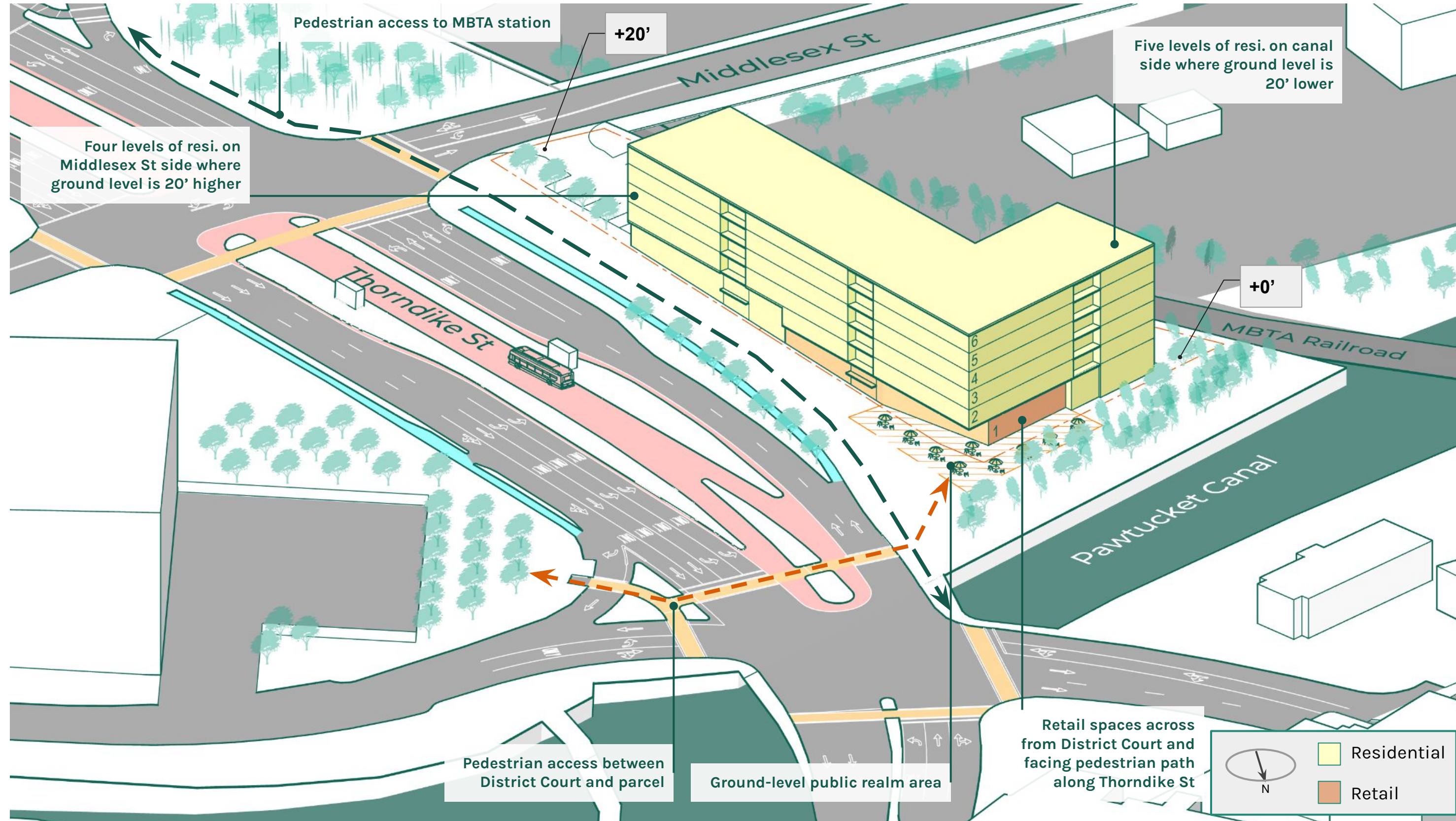
Min. LA/DU per zoning: N/A

Parking spaces/DU: 0.5



# Strategy 1.3: Fill the Gaps in the Central Core - TOD site

Test-fit Scenario: 4.5 Levels of Resi., Ground-level Retail



## Test-fit yield

Gross area: **100,000 GSF**

Building height: **60' - 69'**

## Levels 2-6: Residential

Total resi. area: **95,000 SF**

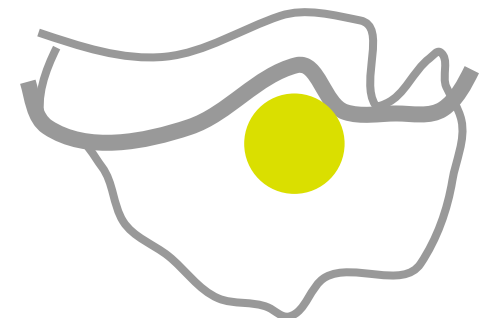
**(90) Total Units**

**(@ 900 SF/unit average)**

## Ground level

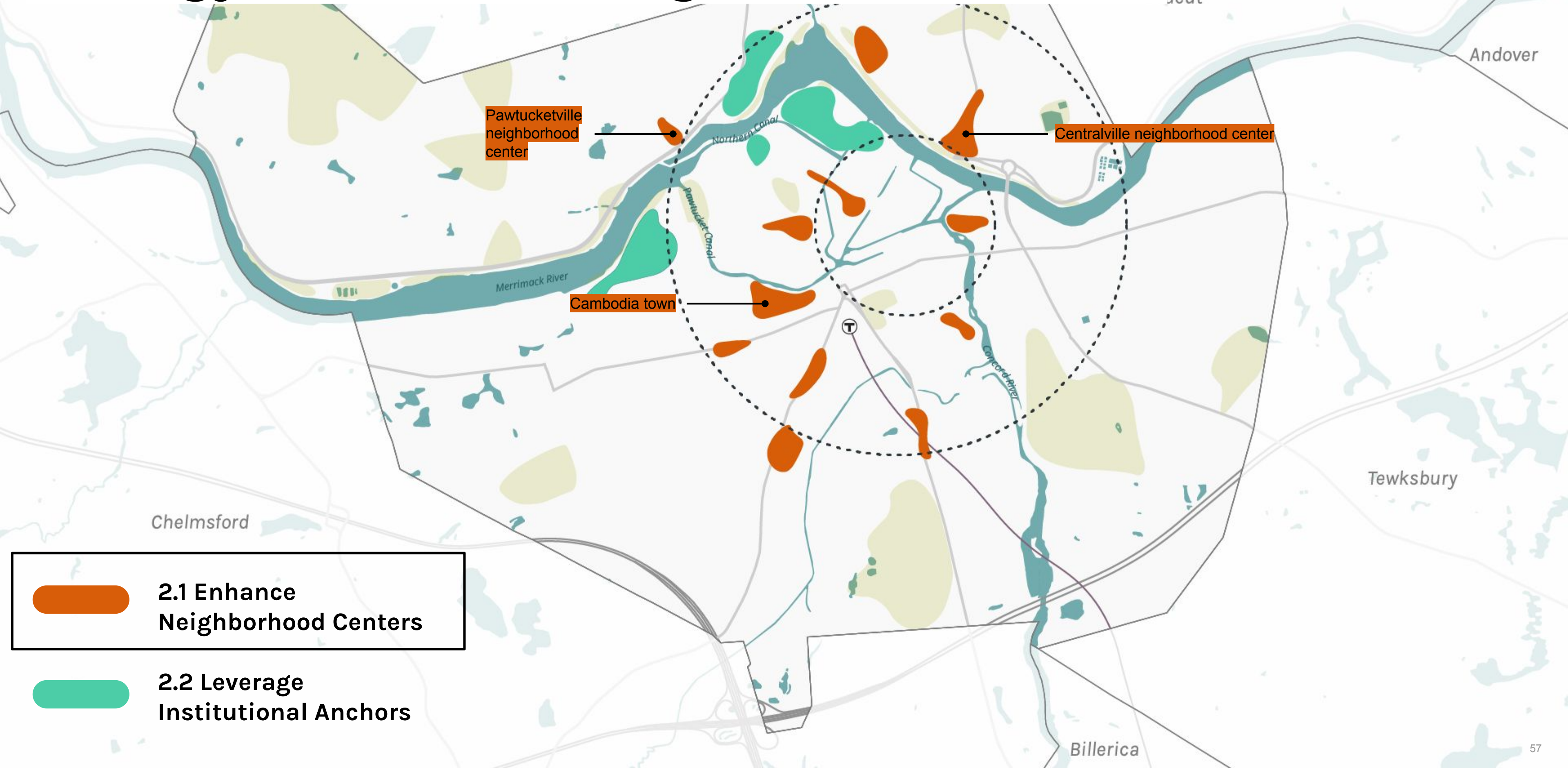
Retail: **5,000 SF**

Parking: **(50) Total Spaces**





# Strategy 2.1: Enhance Neighborhood Centers



 2.1 Enhance Neighborhood Centers

 2.2 Leverage Institutional Anchors

# Strategy 2.1: Enhance Neighborhood Centers



# Strategy 2.1 : Enhance Neighborhood Centers

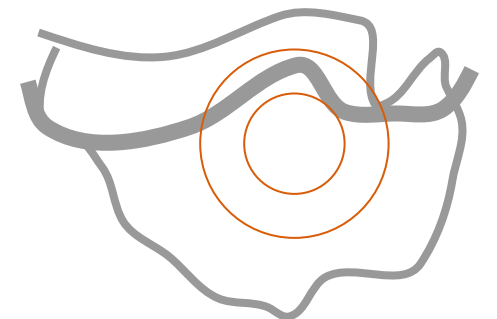
Lowell's small businesses are pillars of the city's economy, however, they face ongoing challenges. According to Lowell small businesses owners and business organizations, major challenges faced are:

- **Lack of experience and knowledge** to run a business
- **Low foot traffic** with limited and irregular business hours
- **Lack of required space improvements** in the places leased for business
- **Language barriers** as many small business owners don't have English as first language
- **Safety and security** concerns that affects both owners and customer base

Source: Lowell Today, Costar

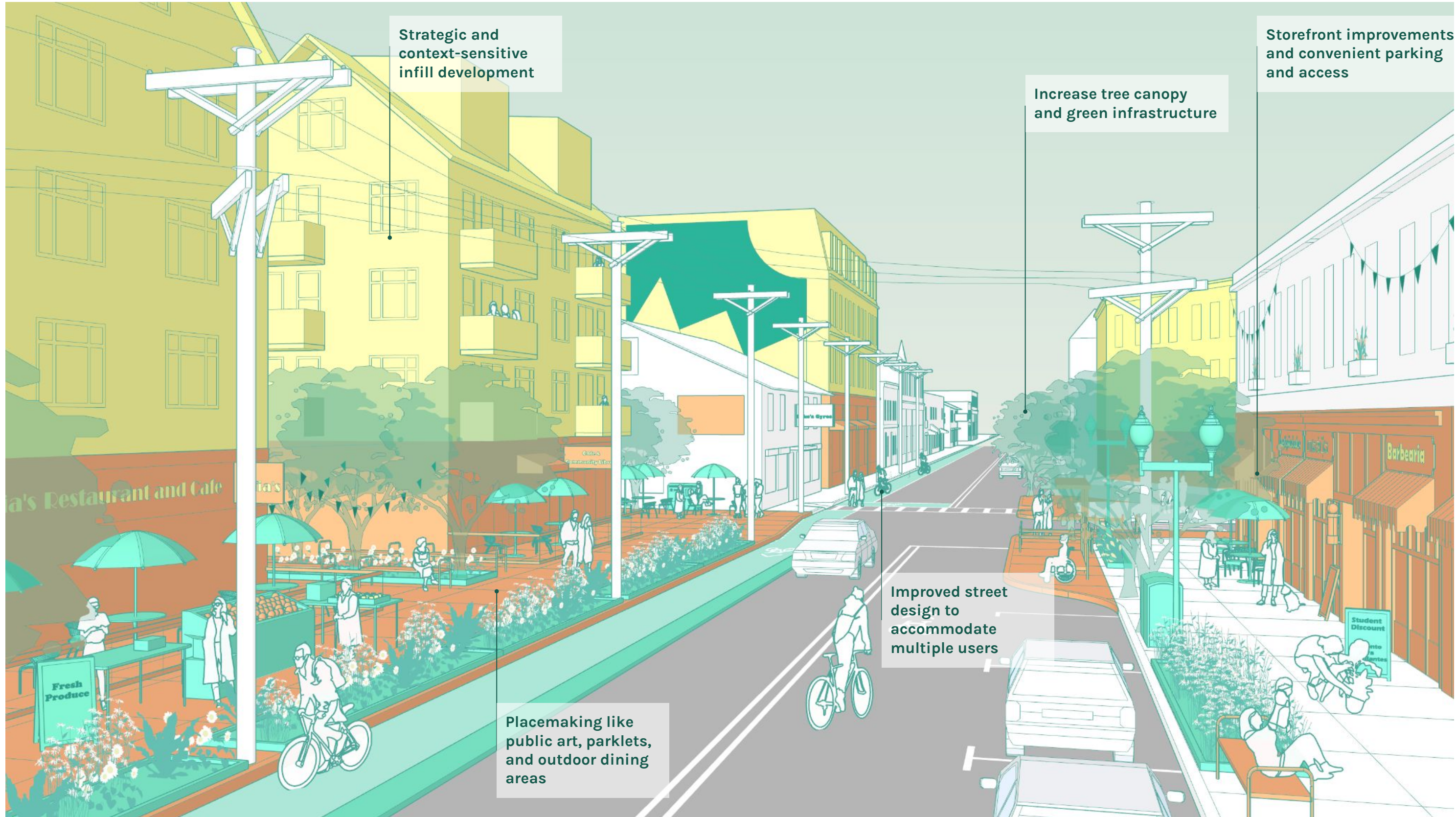
# Strategy 2.1: Enhance Neighborhood Centers

## Typical Conditions



# Strategy 2.1: Enhance Neighborhood Centers

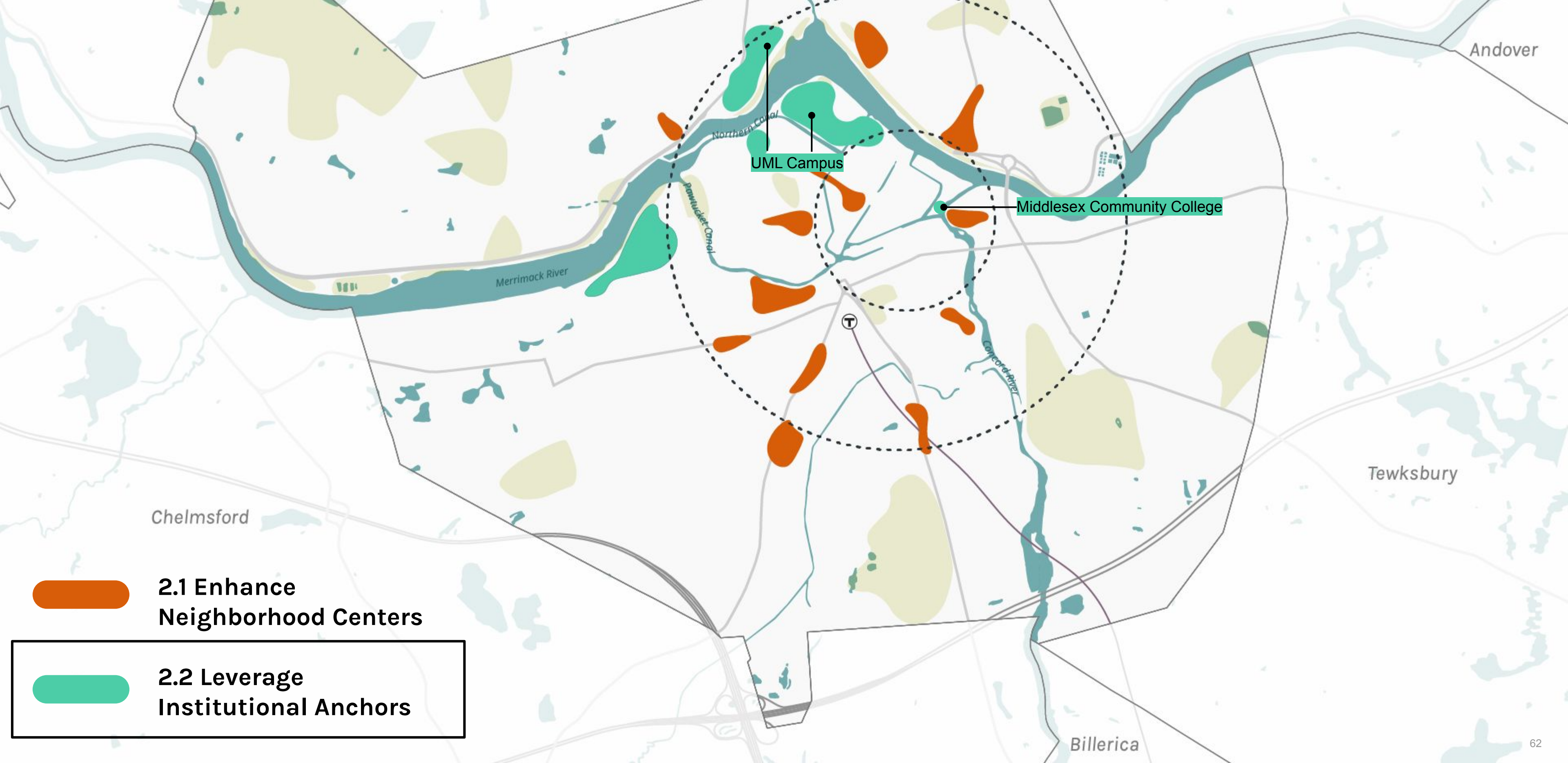
## Future Enhancements



### Neighborhood Center Goals:

- Improve the public realm infrastructure and neighborhood services
- Strengthen connectivity to and within neighborhoods through multimodal options and safe street design
- Encourage contextually sensitive development that enhances neighborhood vitality and celebrates each neighborhood's distinct identity

# Strategy 2.2 Strengthen Institutional Anchors



 2.1 Enhance Neighborhood Centers

 2.2 Leverage Institutional Anchors

# Strategy 2.2 Leverage Institutional Anchors



# Strategy 2.2: Leverage Institutional Anchors

Lowell’s anchor institutions have a powerful impact on the city’s economic growth. They can play a pivotal role in supporting small business growth.



<b>City</b>	Philadelphia
<b>Entity</b>	University of Pennsylvania
<b>Program</b>	Buy West Philadelphia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University requires its large national vendors to partner with local firms and partners with local community orgs. to identify qualified vendors and contractors</li> <li>• Conducted surveys to understand retail needs of residents and students</li> </ul>
<b>Outcomes</b>	Annual local spending increased from just over \$1 million in 1986 to \$57 million in 2000.



<b>City</b>	Baltimore
<b>Entity</b>	Johns Hopkins University
<b>Program</b>	East Baltimore Redevelopment, Inc. (EBRI) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hopkins deeded 100+ properties it owned to EBRI</li> <li>• EBRI launched a \$1.8 billion plan in 2003 to redevelop 88 acres, construction of 2,200 mixed-income housing units, 1.1 million SF of life sciences and biotech labs and offices, and retail space</li> </ul>
<b>Outcomes</b>	The development serves as a magnet to attract new biotech companies to the area, such as Annagen BioTech LLC, Chesapeake Limulabs LLC, and WindMIL Therapeutics.

*Source: Leveraging Colleges and Universities for Urban Economic Revitalization: Anchor Institutions and Urban Economic Development: From Community Benefit to Shared Value (2011)*



# Strategy 2.2: Leverage Educational Anchors

Partnering with anchor institutions to support small businesses will boost the city's economy while creating new jobs and adding a rich character to Lowell businesses.



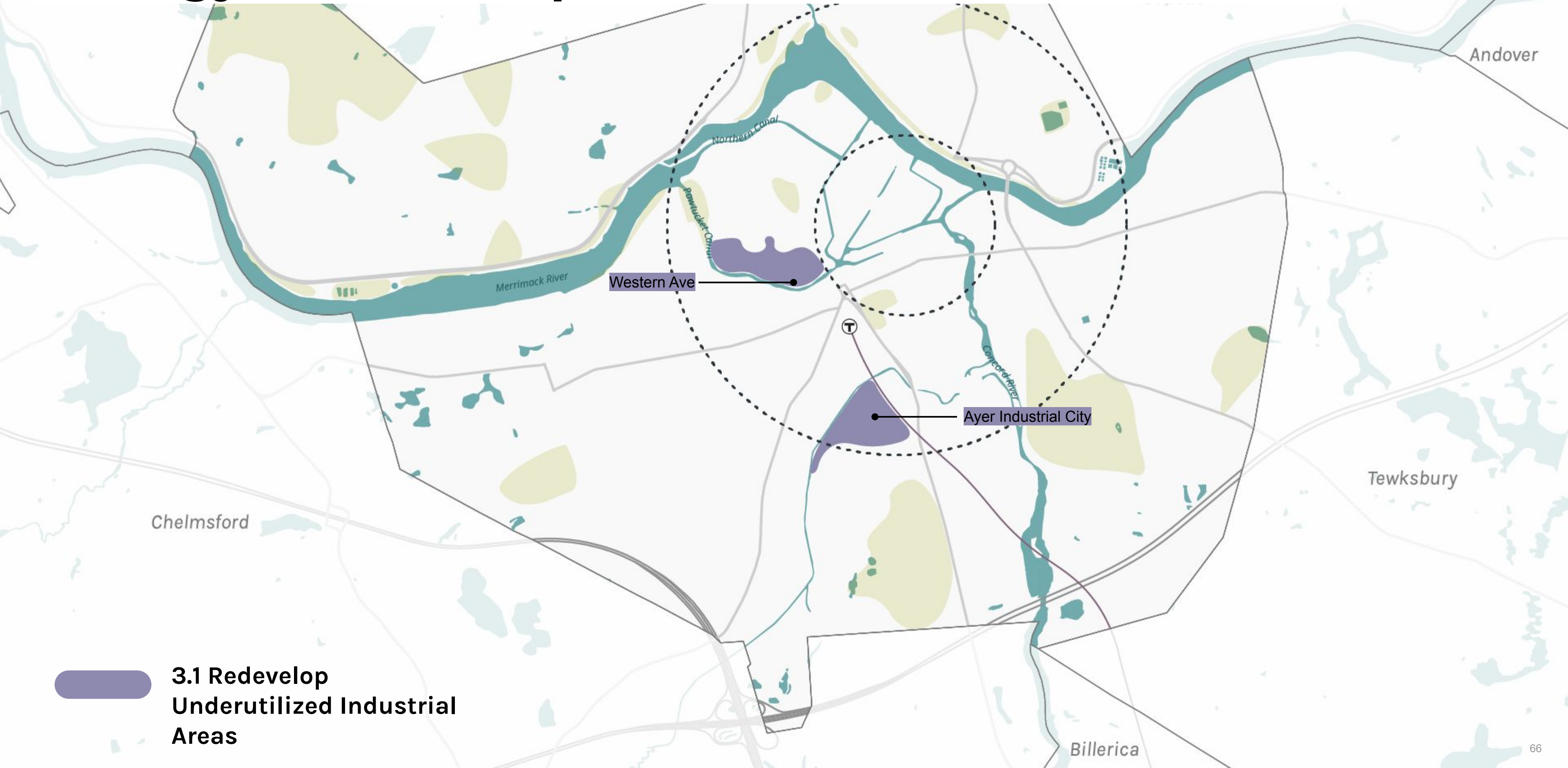
<b>City</b>	Durham (+ statewide presence)
<b>Entity</b>	North Carolina Community College System
<b>Program</b>	<p>Training for Local Businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCCC conducts business-focused training programs that service 600-700 local businesses every year</li> <li>• Services, such as training courses and use of university infrastructure, are free of charge and tailored to the needs of companies</li> </ul>
<b>Outcomes</b>	Till date, NCCC has started 669 businesses with creation/retention of 6,827 jobs.



<b>City</b>	Philadelphia
<b>Entity</b>	University of Pennsylvania
<b>Program</b>	<p>Economic Inclusion Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The program engages local, minority, and women-owned businesses and residents in the University's economic activity through targeted purchasing and hiring initiatives</li> </ul>
<b>Outcomes</b>	In 2015, Penn spent \$122 million with West Philadelphia-based businesses (~13% of the university's total purchasing), and 48% of new hires across Penn and its health system were local residents (1,572 new hires).

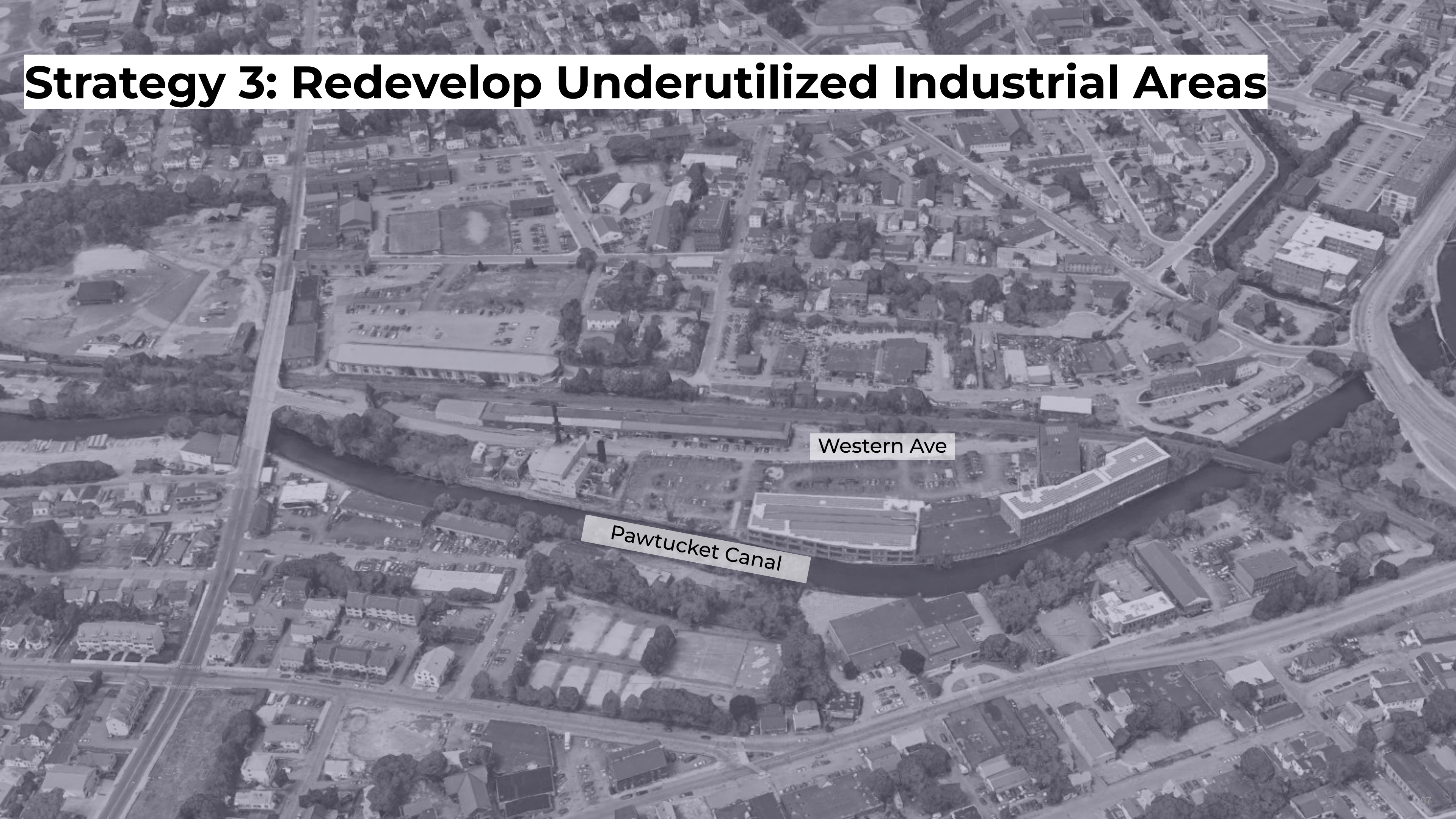
*Source: Leveraging Anchor Institutions to Grow Inner City Businesses – A Resource for Inner City Entrepreneurs (2010), Engaging Urban Universities as Anchor Institutions for Health Equity (2016), North Carolina Small Business Center Network.*

# Strategy 3: Redevelop Underutilized Industrial Areas



**3.1 Redevelop Underutilized Industrial Areas**

# Strategy 3: Redevelop Underutilized Industrial Areas



Western Ave

Pawtucket Canal

# Strategy 3: Redevelop Underutilized Industrial Areas

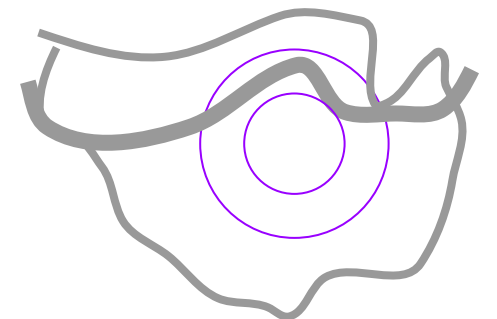
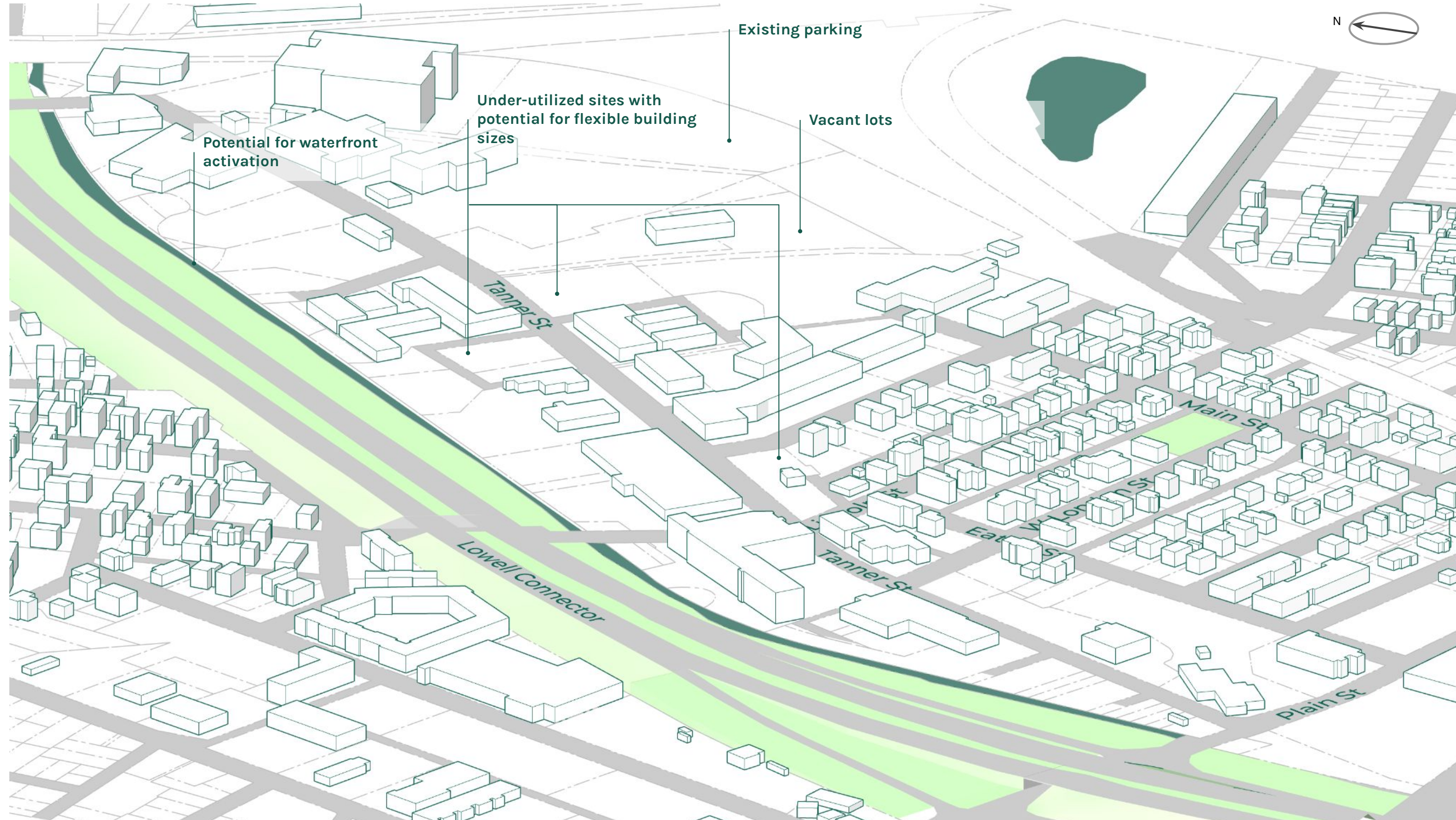


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Lowell Connector

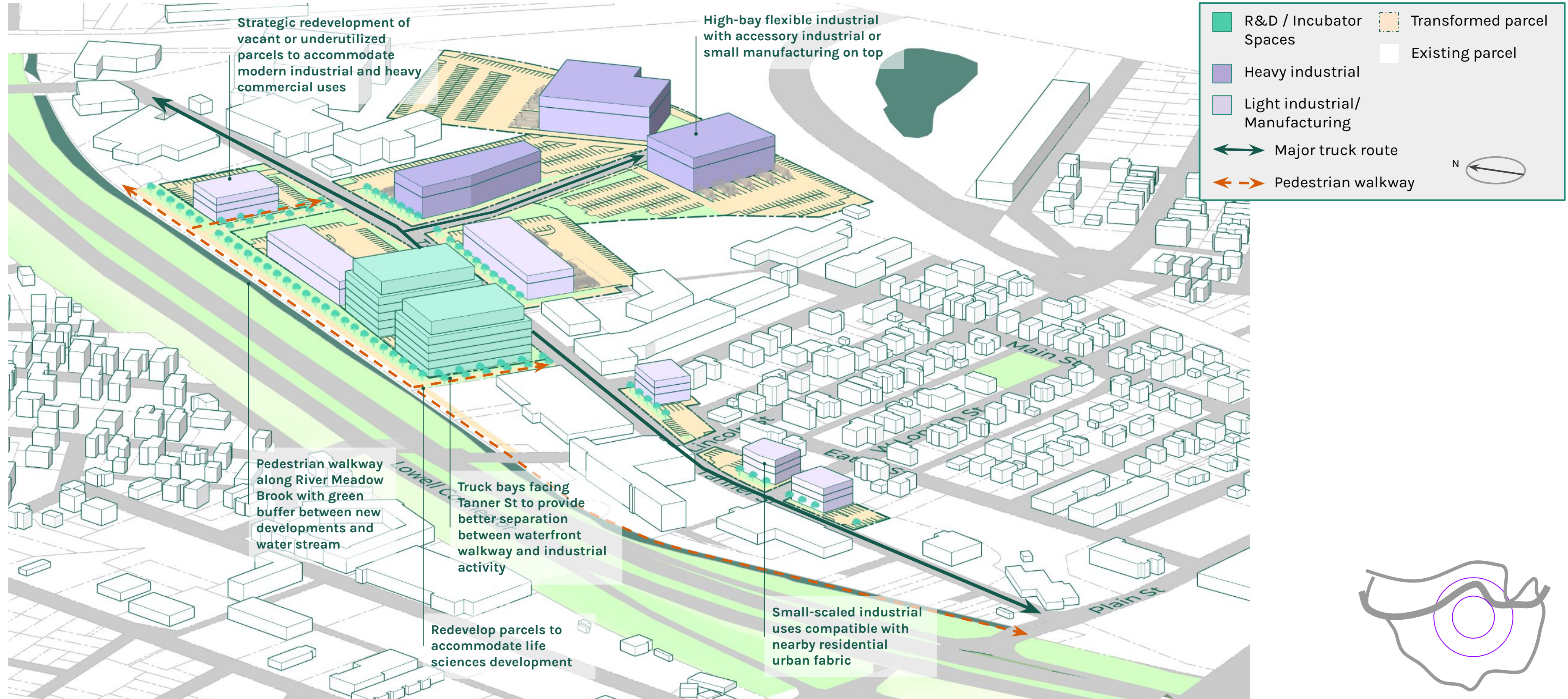
# Strategy 3.1: Redevelop Underutilized Industrial Areas

## Existing Conditions



# Strategy 3.1: Redevelop Underutilized Industrial Areas

## Potential improvements



# Next Steps



# Next Steps

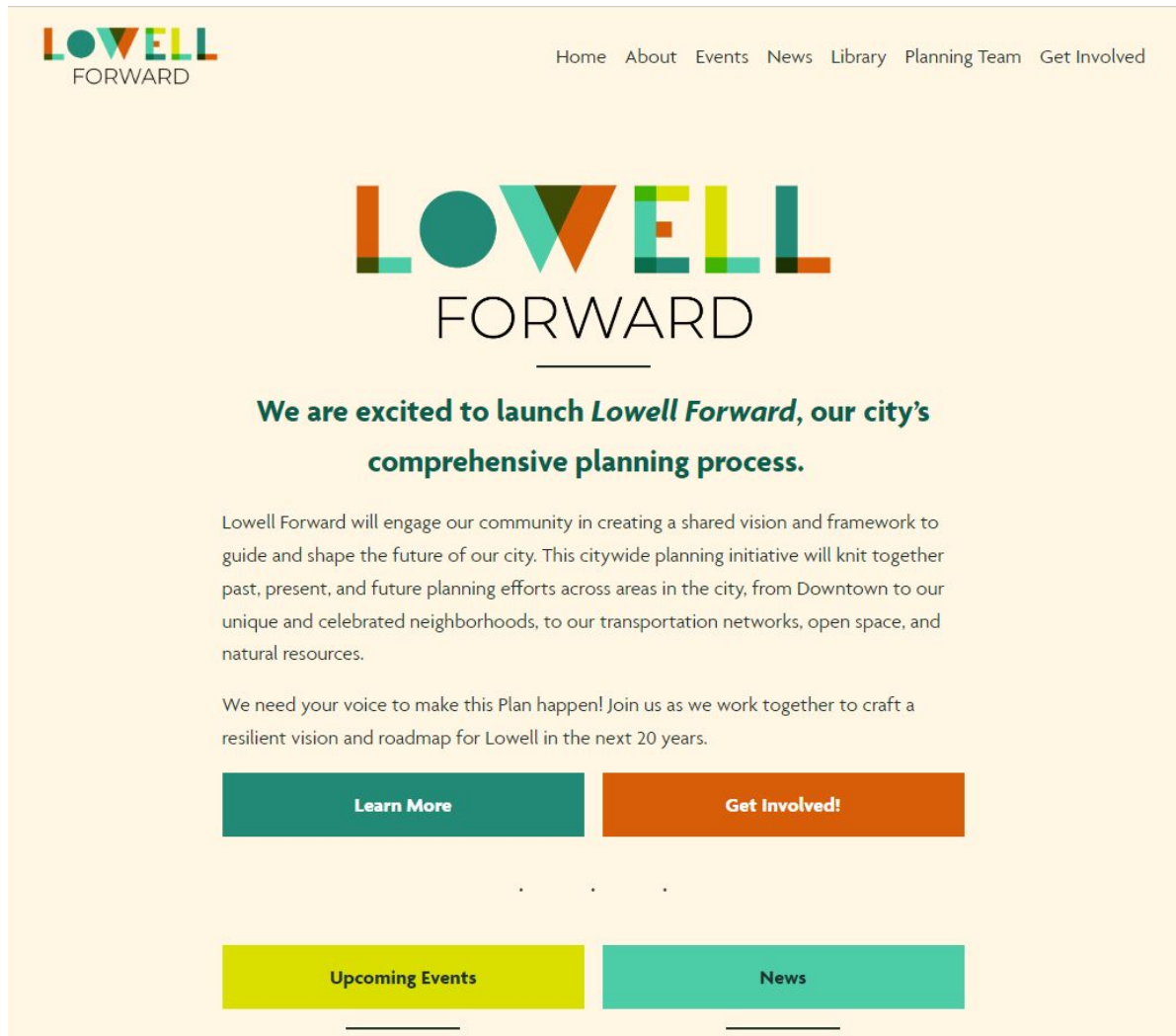
1. Review and refine growth strategies (feasibility, considerations, etc)
2. Goals, Actions and Implementation Matrix
3. **Public Workshop 3 in October**; focused on defining actions and implementation strategies
4. **Take the Lowell Forward Homes, Housing, and Community Survey**  
Follow the QR code →



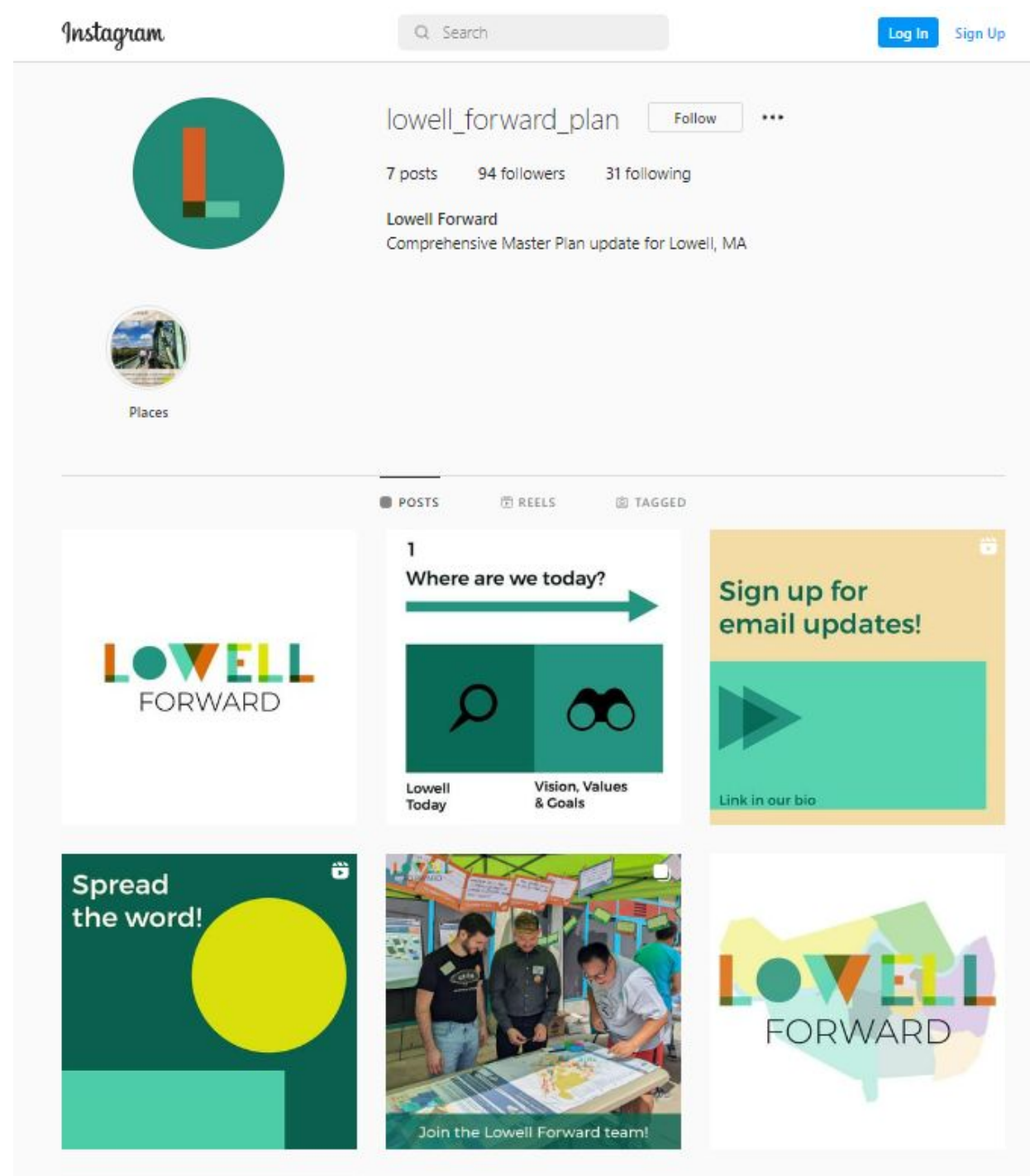


# Stay connected

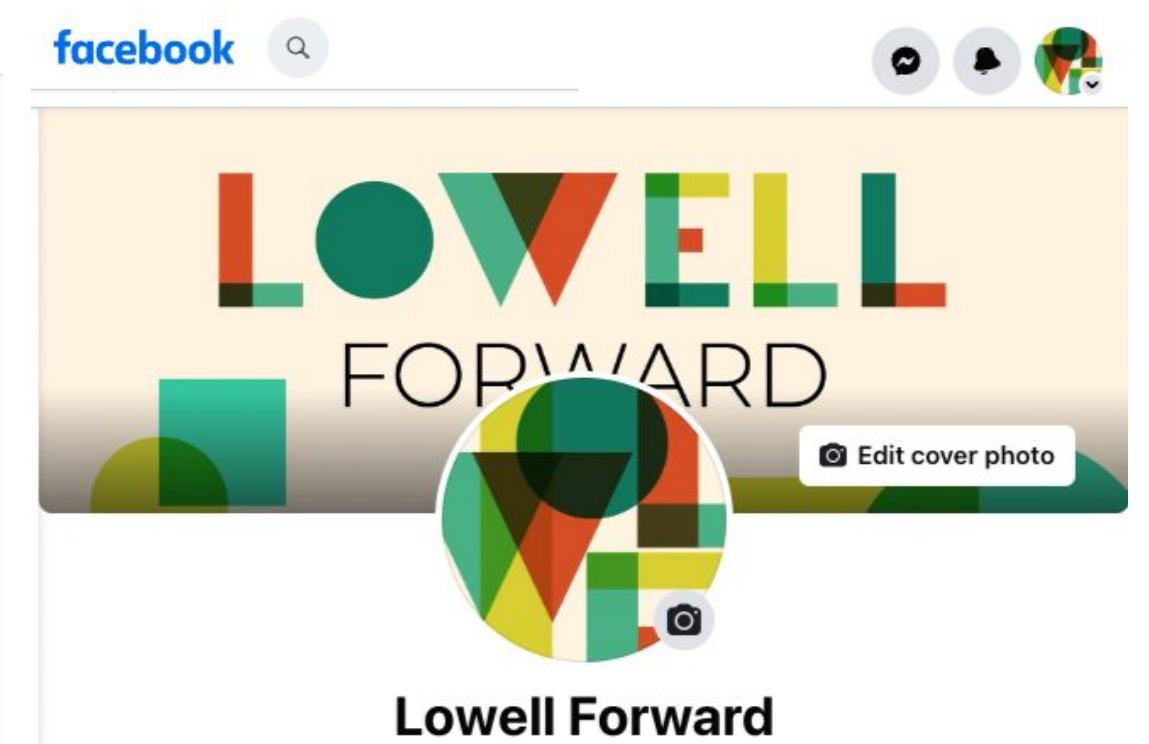
[forward.lowellma.gov](http://forward.lowellma.gov)



[@lowell\\_forward\\_plan](https://www.instagram.com/lowell_forward_plan)



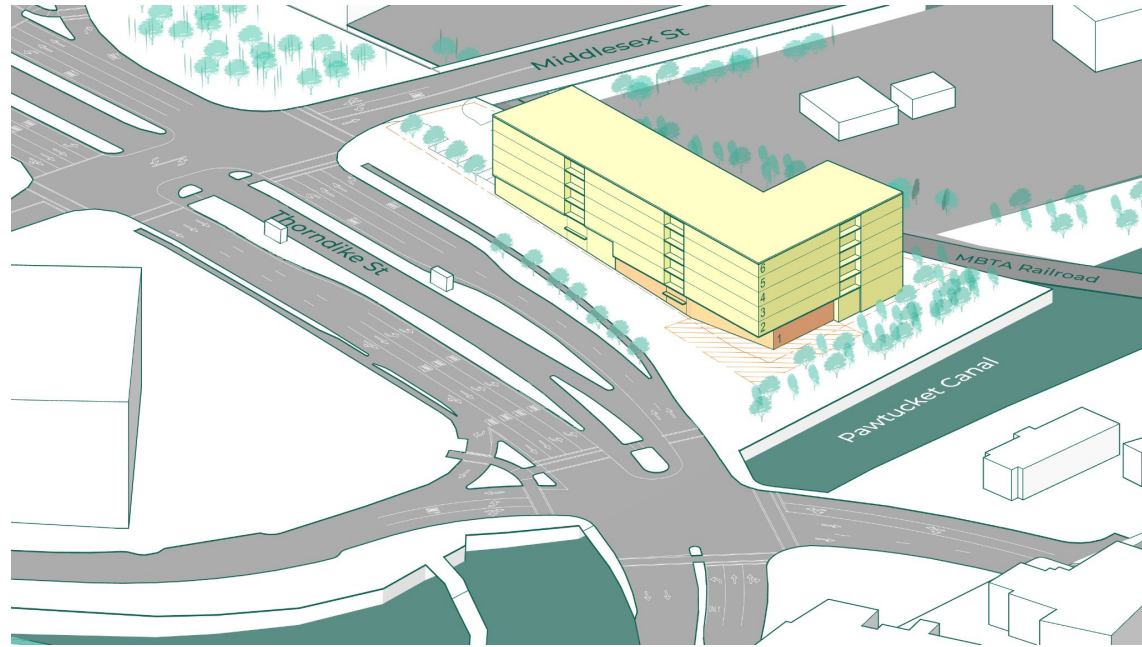
[Lowell Forward](https://www.facebook.com/lowellforward)



*Follow us for updates, actively participate on comment sections, and help us spread the word!*

# Today's Event: Growth Strategy Charrettes

Strategy 1:



## Grow and Activate our Downtown

1.1 Densify, Activate and Connect Downtown

1.2 Activate the Riverfront and Canals

1.3 Fill the Gaps in the Central Core and Transit Oriented Development

Strategy 2:

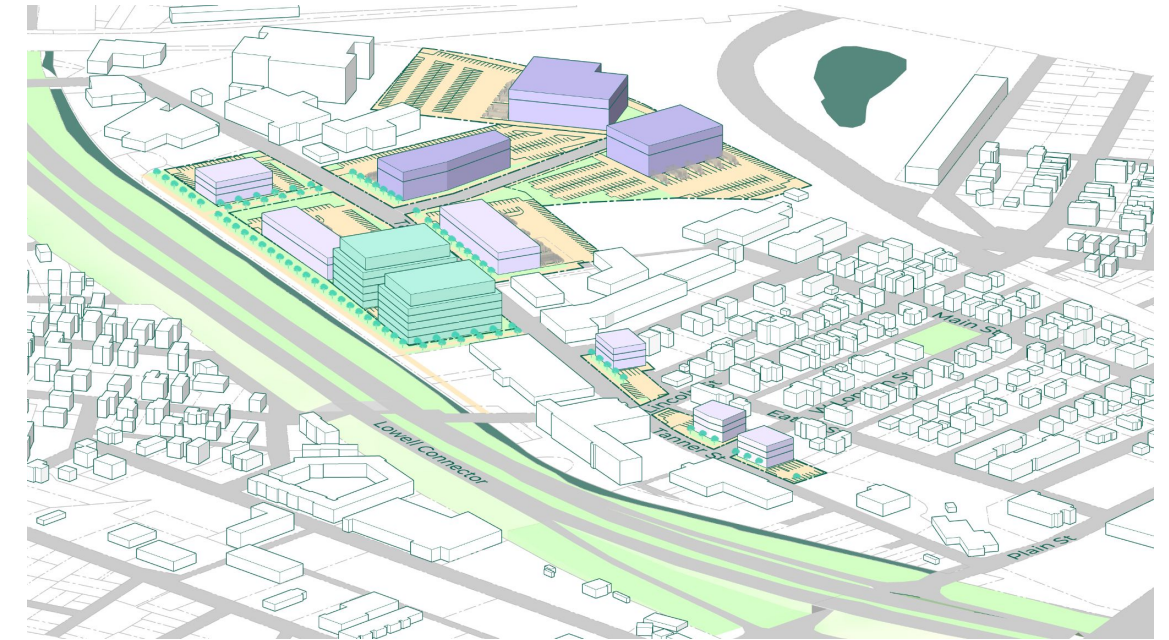


## Build on Lowell's Unique Strengths

2.1 Enhance Neighborhood Centers

2.2 Leverage Institutional Anchors

Strategy 3:



## Create Opportunity in Strategic Industrial Areas

3.1 Redevelop Underutilized Industrial Areas

Table 1

Table 2

Table 3

Table 4

**Thank You!**

**LOWELL**  
FORWARD