BROCKTON

DOWNTOWN ACTION STRATEGY

DRAFT

DOWNTOWN ACTION STRATEGY

Brockton 21st Century Corporation

MassDevelopment

Stantec

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- Stakeholder Engagement: What we're hearing
- Data-driven existing conditions analysis
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ACTION PLAN OBJECTIVE

An economically stronger and vibrant downtown that attracts investment and jobs and celebrates Brockton's diversity

CHALLENGES TO ADDRESS

How can the City:

- attract new businesses and residents that contribute to the financial viability of the City?
- attract a broader socio-economic mix?
- get to the point that people are bidding up the value of properties and apartments—indicating that they value being in downtown Brockton and are willing to pay for it?

WHAT IS THE ACTION PLAN?

- The Action Plan **builds on previous studies**—not necessary to prepare a new Downtown Master Plan
- **More useful** is a redevelopment strategy that:
  - is organized around an economic focus
  - calls for physical improvements
  - sets the stage for development that serves the City's goals
  - delivers an actionable plan
  - investigates the potential of tools, such as DIF and urban renewal/eminent domain

ACTION PLAN STRATEGIES

Bring people downtown, which will in turn bring investment and jobs. Adopt these mutually reinforcing strategies:

- Make the most of **T access.**
- Establish a **critical mass of housing and mixed-use** density that creates a vibrant environment.
- Provide a range of **amenities** that offer choices and give people reasons to be downtown.
- Create a sense of **safety.**

EXISTING PLANS REVIEW

Consistent themes across every previous plan or study:

- Downtown Brockton DIF Analysis (2015)
- Brockton EDSAT Report (2014)
- City of Brockton Development Planning: Downtown Report (2011)
- Downtown Brockton Market Study & Policy Recommendations (2009)
- Brockton Two Rivers Master Plan (2008)

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Consistent themes across every previous plan or study:

- **Improve mix of uses** downtown (cafés, restaurants, other); activate the street level; and provide destinations for pedestrians.
- **Address safety concerns;** implement dedicated beat officer; improve lighting; add pedestrian countdowns at crossing signals.
- **Pursue creation of a historic district,** or register properties on the National Register; facilitate use of federal and state historic tax credits.
- **Cross-market** with state agencies and organizations; enhance marketing efforts to highlight improvements and attract businesses to the downtown.
- **Optimize allocation of DIF revenue** toward improvements in downtown.

Consistent infrastructure recommendations across every previous plan or study:

- Size and site **parking garage** to support new developments as well as support existing uses.
- Allocate funds to advance design of **two-way traffic flow** for select streets. Test the concept and present benefits clearly enough to secure funding for final engineering and construction. Within re-engineering, accommodate pedestrian and cycling uses.
- Extend **greenways** at Salisbury and Trout Brooks; create a network of pedestrian and bicycle lanes as amenities for residents and visitors that connect downtown with the brooks.

STAKEHOLDER INPUT

Stakeholder focus groups:

- Brockton High students
- Downtown business owners
- DBA-B21 members
- City staff and department heads
- Cultural institutions
- Social service providers
- Real estate and development experts
- Current downtown residents
- Historic preservations and arts groups
- WB Mason employees
- Local architects, engineers, and surveyors
- State government employees (survey)

STAKEHOLDER INPUT

Opportunities/strengths:

- Architecturally significant infrastructure
- Great “bones”: human-scaled, strong urban fabric
- 35 minutes by train to South Station
- Good school system
- Affordable housing, retail, and office space
- Good commuting/office location for residents south of Boston
- Diverse ethnic groups
- Emerging interest by local restaurateurs to locate in downtown
- New market-rate housing leases up quickly
- Some amenities already in place (dry cleaner, small pharmacy, Vicente’s, etc.)
- High-speed cable could be available
- Most feel downtown revitalization is gaining momentum

STAKEHOLDER INPUT

Challenges:

- One-way street network creates difficulties in navigating
- There is no unified wayfinding/signage system
- Both reality and perception of crime are major issues
- Panhandling and unsolicited interaction with homeless deter workers, residents, others from going outside both day and at night
- No arts or cultural venues
- Limited restaurant, café, and bar choices
- Limited programming of public events or other initiatives taking place
- Major electrical infrastructure issues in bulk of study area
- Need for a pharmacy (small one in Neighborhood Health Center)
- Failure to celebrate Brockton's rich history

EXISTING CONDITIONS

- **Underused asset:** The BAT provides strong intracity transit, but rail ridership is relatively low.
- **Unmet demand:** Although several developments have added housing in recent years, minimal housing exists within walking distance of the station.
- **Unrealized potential:** Many redevelopment, infill, and rehab opportunity sites exist near the station.
- **Built-in market:** Shifts in demographics and market preferences could support housing near station.
- **Not enough "there" there:** Some amenities exist, but not enough of the right choices are available.
- **Barrier issue:** Perceived lack of safety holds downtown back.

EXISTING CONDITIONS Barrier issue

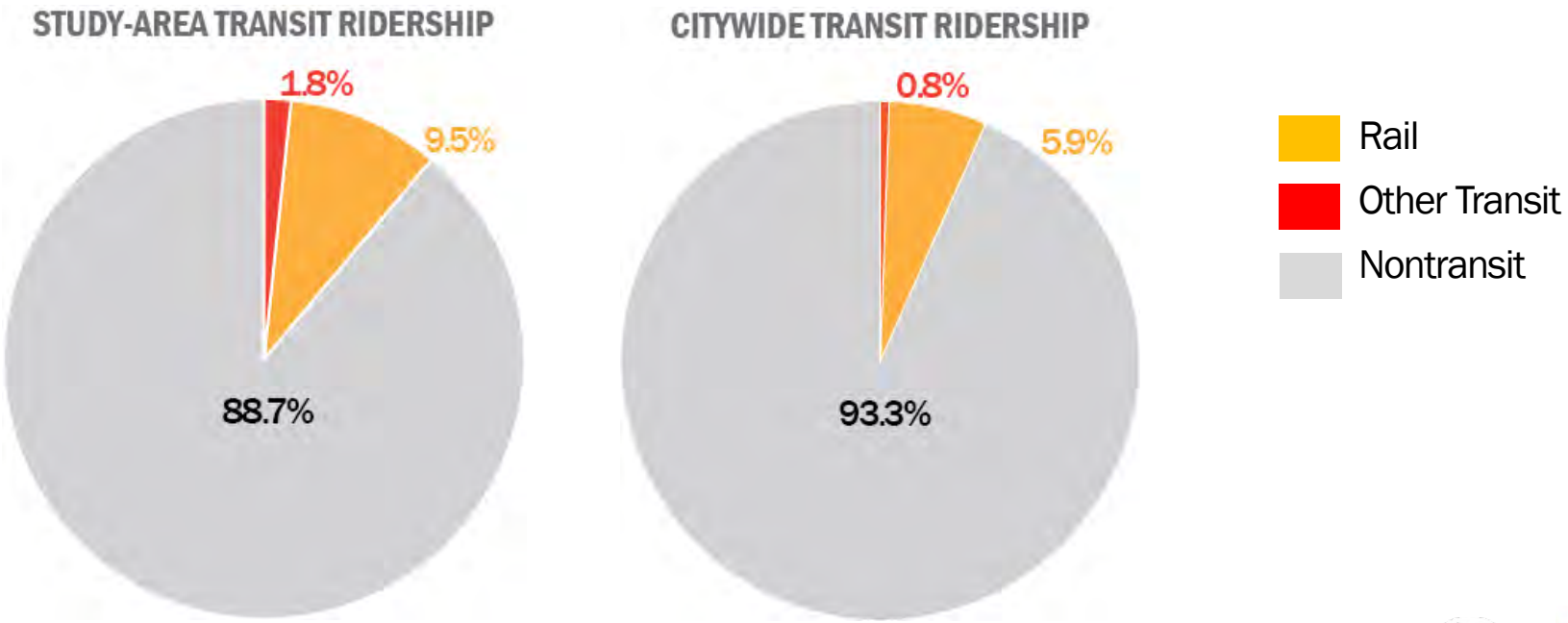
Perceived lack of safety holds downtown back:

- WB Mason employees use a "buddy system" when going to their parking lot at night.
- In a 2013 survey, 96% of downtown residents, workers, and visitors called public safety their top concern.*
- Perception typically lags behind reality. Even as conditions improve, this issue must be addressed.

* Boston Globe, March 2013
https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/regionals/south/2013/03/27/public-safety-concerns-lack-restaurants-keep-downtown-brockton-workers-indoors-survey-says-survey-cites-downtown-problems/DZlSzFWYFGoMWyZzhrX4dL/story.html

EXISTING CONDITIONS Underused Asset

Rail ridership is relatively low, yet statewide and nationally, good transit access drives housing and office demand. **Commuter rail could be repositioned as an asset to drive housing and office growth.**



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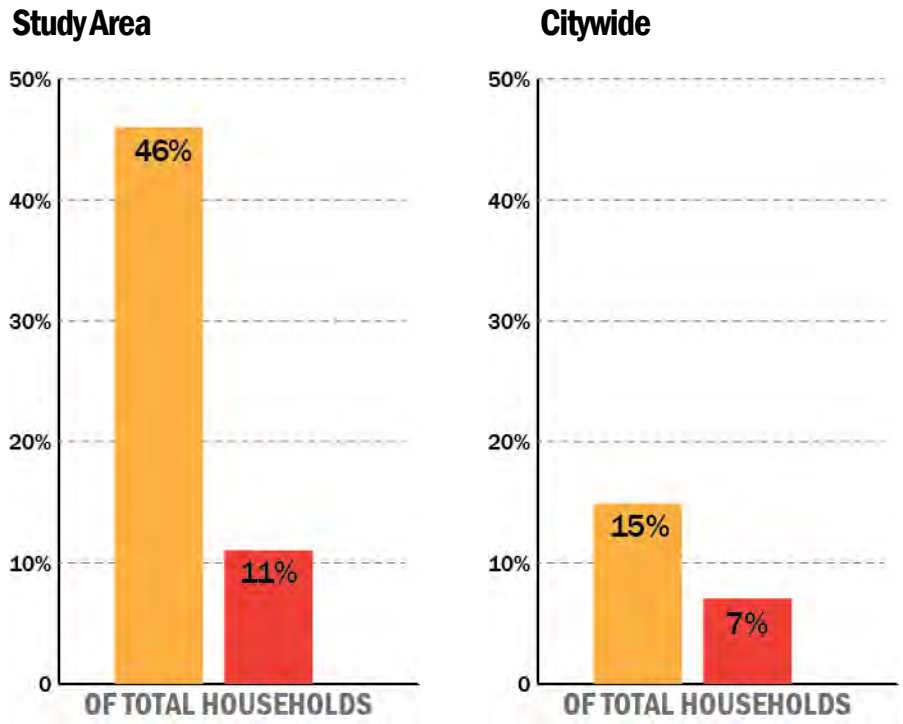
EXISTING CONDITIONS Underused Asset

Rail ridership is relatively low. **Even most people without cars don't use transit.**



EXISTING CONDITIONS Unmet Demand

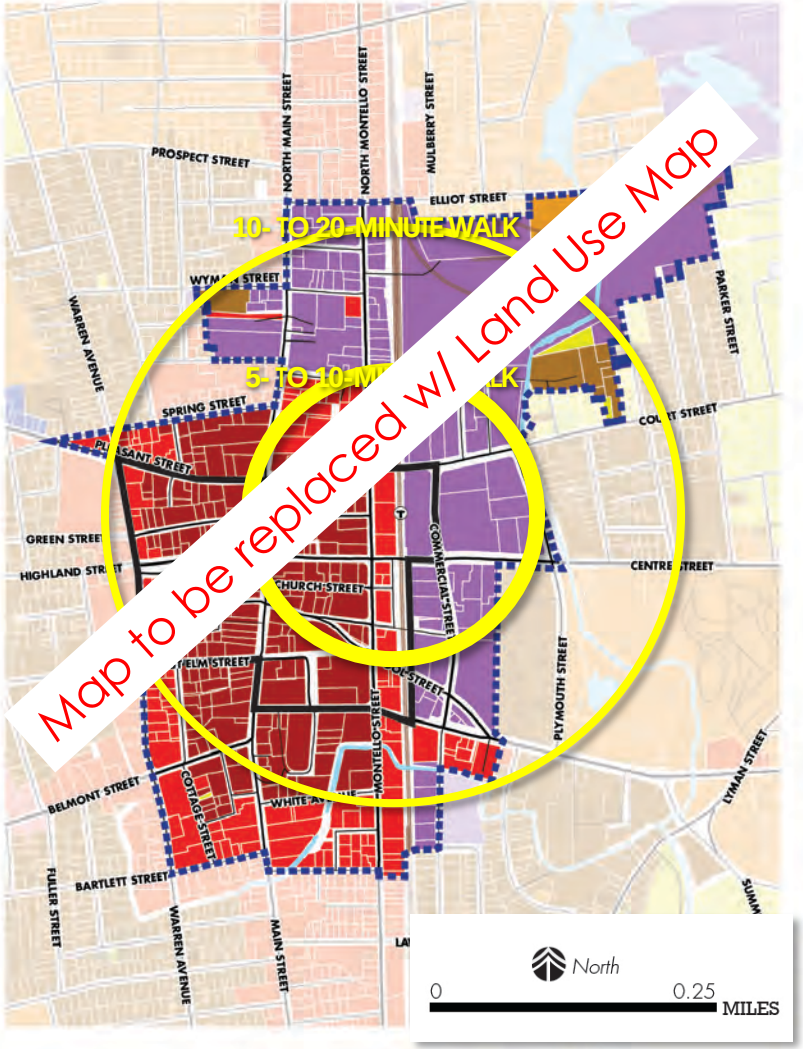
Minimal housing exists within walking distance of the station.

LEGEND

- Downtown Economic Redevelopment Strategy Area
- Urban Renewal Area

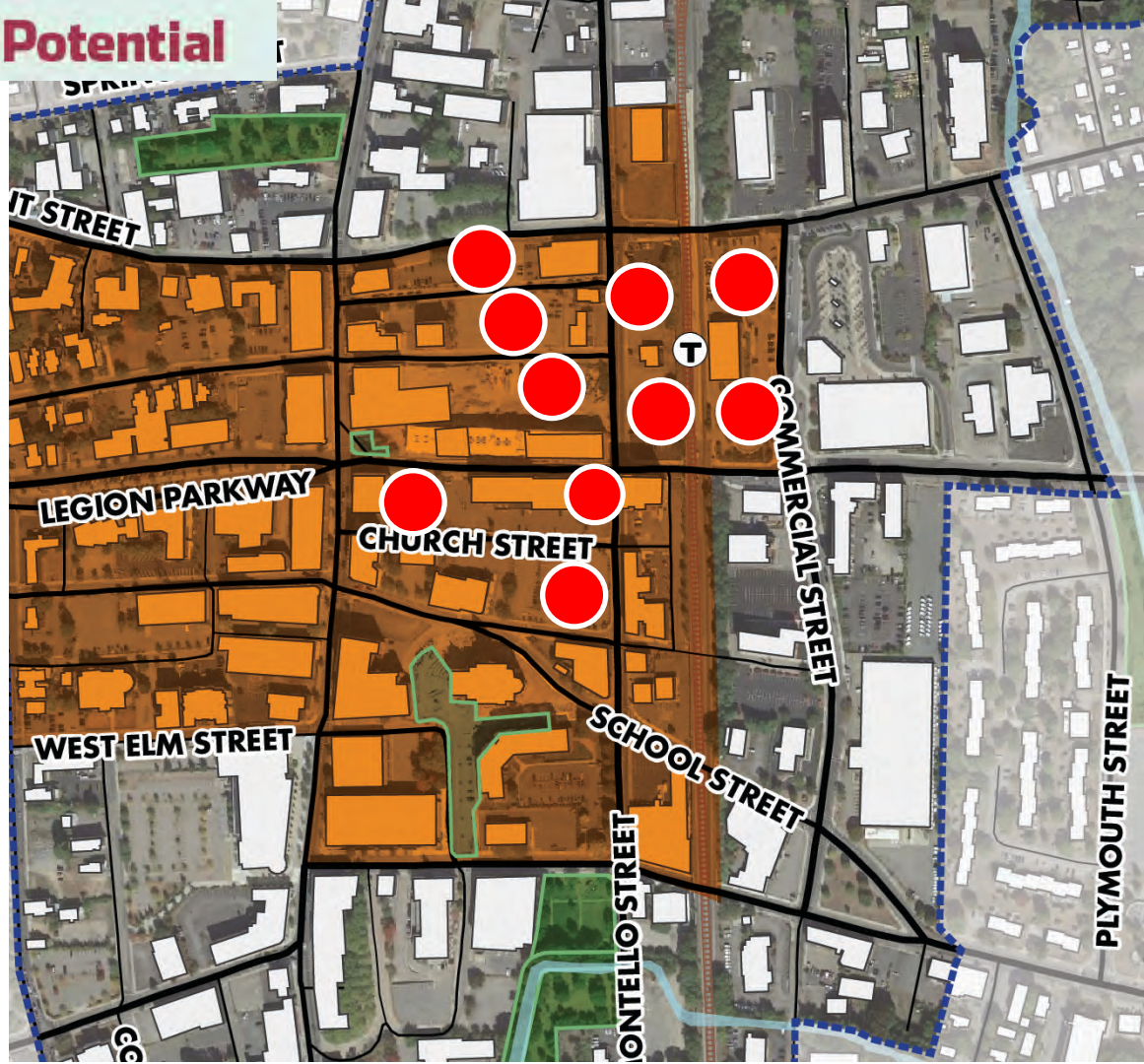
ZONING

- C2 General Commercial
- C3 Central Business
- R1C Single Family Residential
- R2 Multifamily Residential
- R3 Multifamily Residential
- I2 General Industrial



EXISTING CONDITIONS Unrealized Potential

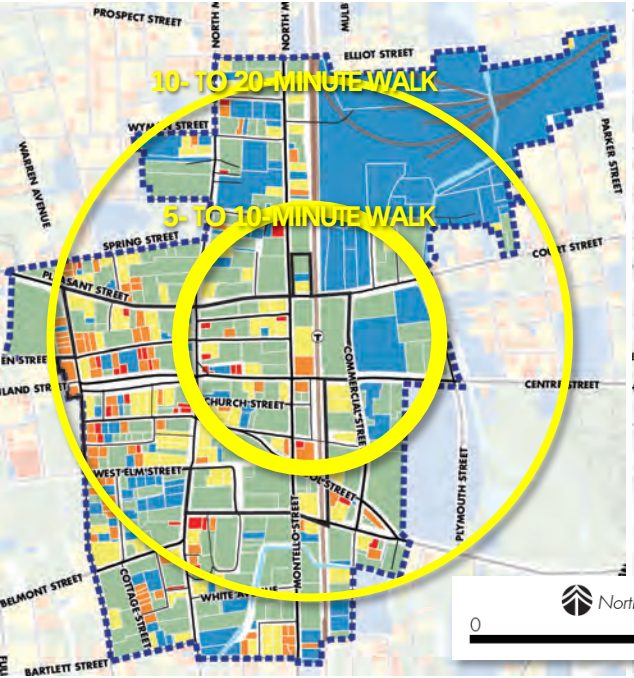
Many sites near the station offer opportunities for redevelopment, infill, and rehab.



EXISTING CONDITIONS Unrealized Potential

Low **land values, building values, and property-utilization rates** show potential opportunities for rehab, infill, and/or large-scale redevelopment near the station.

Land Value



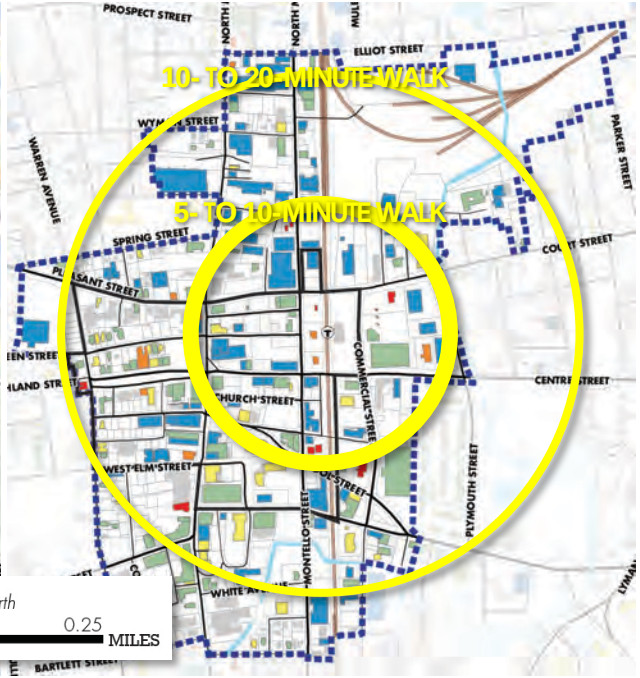
VALUE PER SQUARE FOOT

<$5 | $5-$10 | $10-$15 | $15-$25 | >$25

Downtown Economic Redev. Strategy area

Urban renewal area

Building Value



VALUE PER SQUARE FOOT

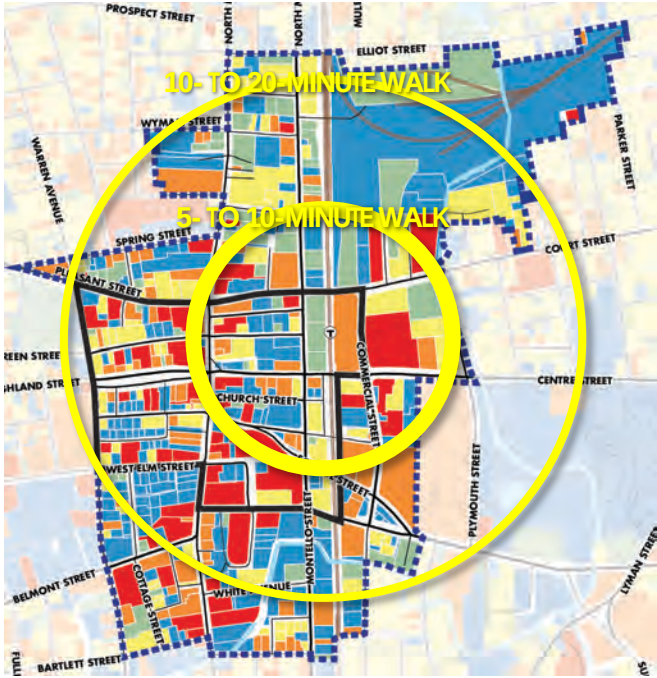
<$20 | $20-$40 | $40-$60 | $60-$80 | >$80

No data available

Downtown Economic Redev. Strategy area

Urban renewal area

Existing Development Intensity



PROPERTY VALUE COMPARED TO LAND VALUE

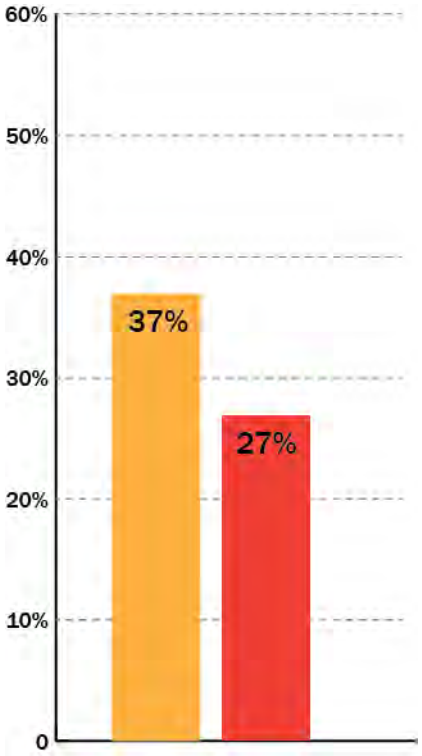
0-0.2 | 0.2-0.4 | 0.4-0.6 | 0.6-0.8 | 0.8-1.0

Downtown Economic Redev. Strategy area

Urban renewal area

EXISTING CONDITIONS Built-in Market

Shifts in demographics and market preferences could support housing development near the station. Statewide and nationally, **seniors and Millennials** prefer rental housing in transit-rich urban environments. **The gap between demand and supply creates an opportunity for housing downtown.**



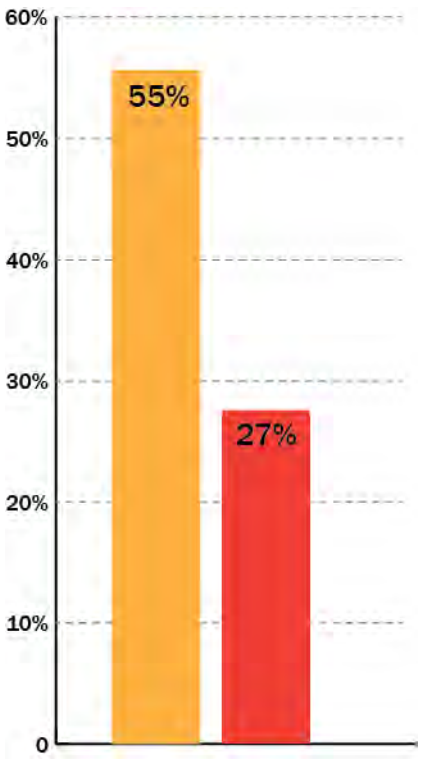
Within 10 miles of downtown

Demand (1- or 2-person hhds)

Supply (rental as % of total units)

EXISTING CONDITIONS Built-in Market

Shifts in demographics and market preferences could support housing development near the station. Statewide and nationally, **small households** prefer rental housing in transit-rich urban environments. **The gap between demand and supply creates an opportunity for housing downtown.**



Within 10 miles of downtown

Demand (1- or 2-person hhds)

Supply (rental as % of total units)

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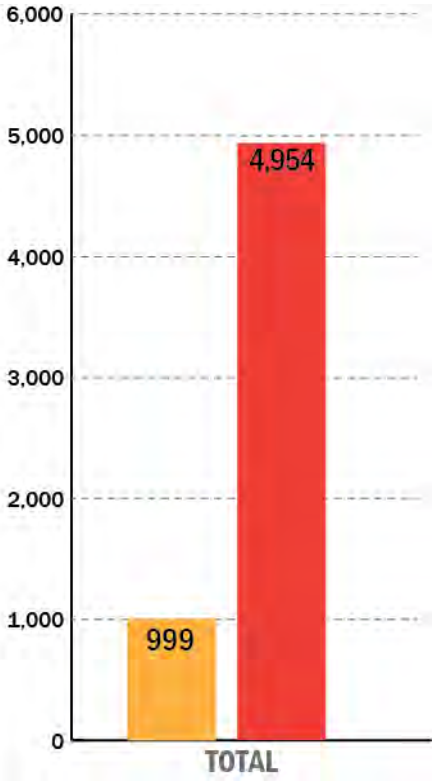
EXISTING CONDITIONS Built-in Market

Shifts in demographics and market preferences could support housing development near the station. Statewide and nationally, people want to **live near where they work**—and walking distance is ideal**. Jobs far outnumber working-age adults in the study area, creating an opportunity for downtown housing.**



Study Area

- Working-age population (20-69)
- Jobs

EXISTING CONDITIONS Not Enough 'There'

A truly livable downtown needs the right mix of amenities within a short walk, bike ride, bus trip or drive:

- **Grocery stores** to stock local kitchens
- **Neighborhood retail and pharmacies** to support daily needs of employees and residents
- **Restaurants** to serve employees and attract visitors who bring the sidewalks to life during the day, evenings, and weekends

Amenities that support livability and foster walkability	How under-served is the downtown market? [demand/supply within a 1-mile radius of 50 Centre St.]		
	ESRI	NIELSON	AVERAGE*
GROCERY STORE	4.4x	2.2x	Demand is **3.3x** local supply
NEIGHBORHOOD RETAIL	10.0x	1.6x	Demand is **5.8x** local supply
PHARMACIES	8.7x	1.6x	Demand is **5.2x** local supply
RESTAURANTS	1.5x	1.9x	Demand is **1.7x** local supply

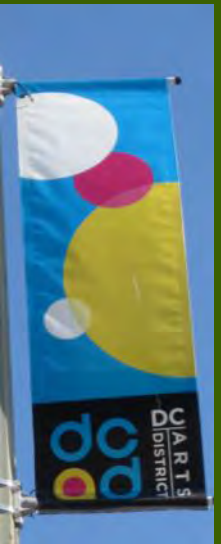
** Because ESRI and Nielson gauge the retail market from different perspectives, averaging their indicators provides a more comprehensive and reliable understanding than considering them independently.*

CORE ACTION STRATEGIES

Reestablish the feel of a vibrant downtown.

- Add outdoor dining.
- Improve streetscapes.
- 1-2 connected walking streets
- Restore historic buildings/create historic district
- Fill in the "missing teeth" and replace buildings that detract (26 School Street)

CORE ACTION STRATEGIES Possible Models



CORE ACTION STRATEGIES

Provide amenities for residents, employees, and visitors

- 2-3 **restaurants** clustered within the core area
- **Pharmacy** directly adjacent to the core *walking streets*
- **Restaurant incubator** to reduce start-up costs and risk
- Ensure **safe walking connection** to Vicente's
- More **programming** to "get people on the streets"
  - Farmers market
  - Festivals located downtown
  - Music and cultural events
  - Fuller Craft Museum exhibits downtown
  - Pop-up galleries
  - Food trucks

CORE ACTION STRATEGIES **Possible Models**

CORE ACTION STRATEGIES

Encourage entertainment and cultural venues to locate downtown.

- Smaller venue to host local and regional music groups
- Larger venue to act a shared space for Brockton Symphony Orchestra and other cultural groups

CORE ACTION STRATEGIES Possible Models

CORE ACTION STRATEGIES

Encourage a greater and more economically diverse residential population in downtown.

- Focus on adding market-rate, workforce, and affordable housing choices.
- Support mixed-income development:
  - 20% affordable units in new developments
- Create artist live/work space and studios.

CORE ACTION STRATEGIES Possible Models

CORE ACTION STRATEGIES

Promote diversity of community

- Build on strength of Brockton's prime ethnic communities.
- Create shared events attractive to a broader community.
- Improve housing options (both downtown and across the city).

CORE ACTION STRATEGIES

Actively target new small business entrepreneurs

- Breweries/tap rooms/boutique distilleries
- Makerspace
- 2-3 full-service restaurants and cafes
- Restaurant incubator
- Provide temporary pop-up retail spaces for artists to showcase/sell artwork

CORE ACTION STRATEGIES

Significantly improve perception of safety

- ✓ Continue to increase public safety visibility (i.e., foot and/or bike patrols).
- ✓ Continue to increase and improve lighting.
- ▪ Develop new wayfinding system.
- ▪ Work to reduce “nooks and crannies and hiding places” within downtown.
- ▪ Improve and combine social service network:
  - Working in partnership with Mainspring, develop “one-stop” shelter program near but not in downtown.
- ▪ Create and enforce quality-of-life measures:
  - Reduce panhandling.
  - Pursue low-cost measures to resolve lack of public restrooms.
  - Adopt regulations that discourage feeding of homeless people in public parks and parking lots.

CORE ACTION STRATEGIES

Improve Connectivity

- Redesign one-way street configurations (study underway).
- Develop wayfinding strategy.
- Improve reverse commuting trains along MBTA line.
- Maintain or enhance current level of BAT service.
- Add bicycle and pedestrian amenities
- Improve physical environment from major entryways to downtown.

CORE ACTION STRATEGIES

Upgrade and improve infrastructure

- Enable access to high-speed cable.
- Identify and upgrade electrical and other infrastructure within downtown to support new development.
- Establish green stormwater and sustainable infrastructure standards for new development.

CORE ACTION STRATEGIES

Market Downtown

- Provide information to new residents (Insider's Guide)
  - Services
  - Restaurants
  - Cultural activities
- Provide developer marketing/ incentives/factsheet package
- Actively "sell" downtown to local, regional and statewide developers
- Initiate downtown marketing campaign

"If you're headed to downtown Detroit, download the Detroit Insider's Guide app to find all the things to do in The D. This app is the one-stop shop for everything in greater downtown Detroit"

Urban Design Framework

Translating core strategies into physical redevelopment initiatives

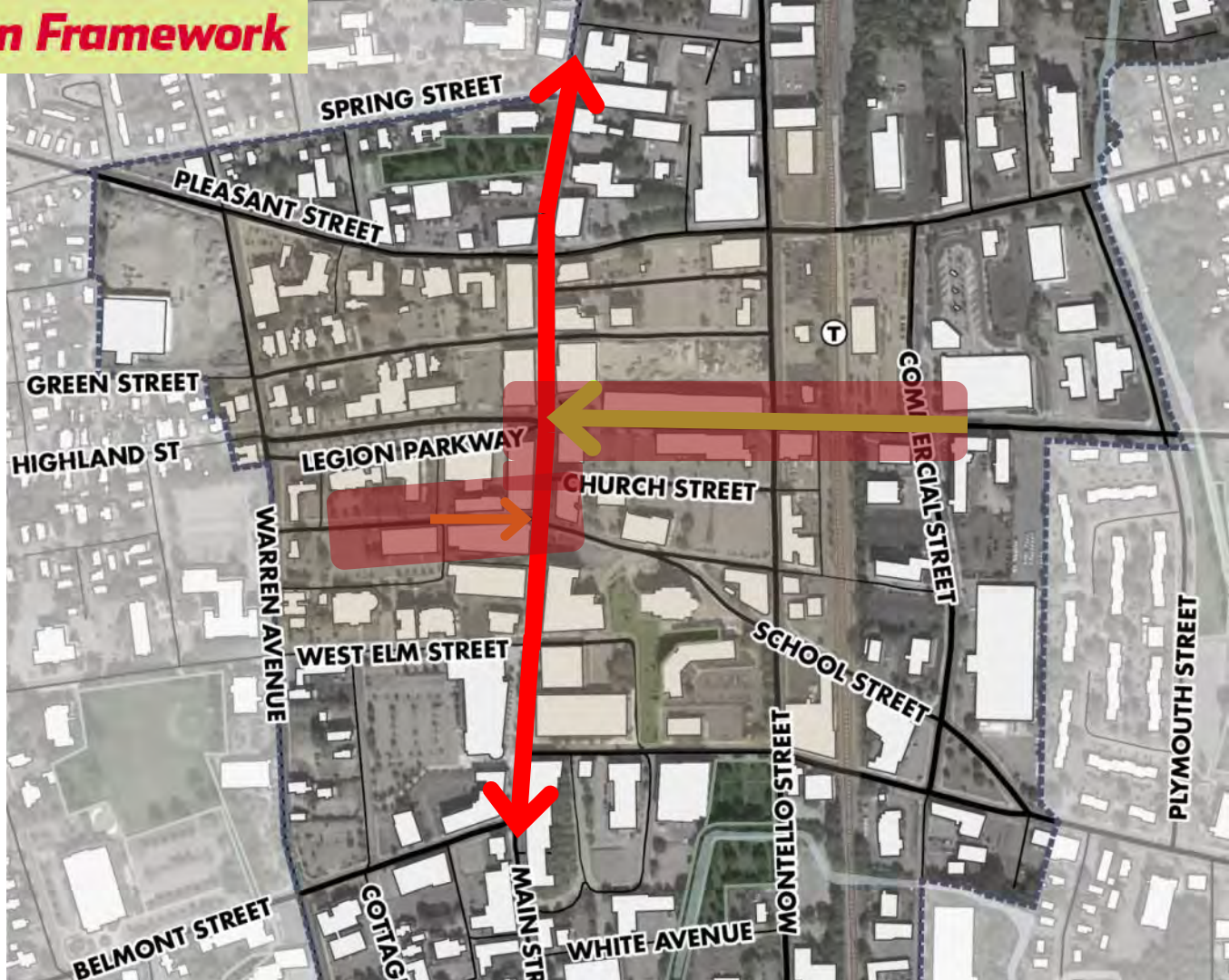
Urban Design Framework

Revitalization strategy: Connect transportation and urban amenity

First priority: Create a critical mass of housing/mixed-use development to connect commuter rail to an emerging "amenity" street.

Second priority: Focus additional housing/mixed-use development to leverage proximity to commuter rail and amenity.

Promote infill development in response to specific opportunities



Urban Design Framework

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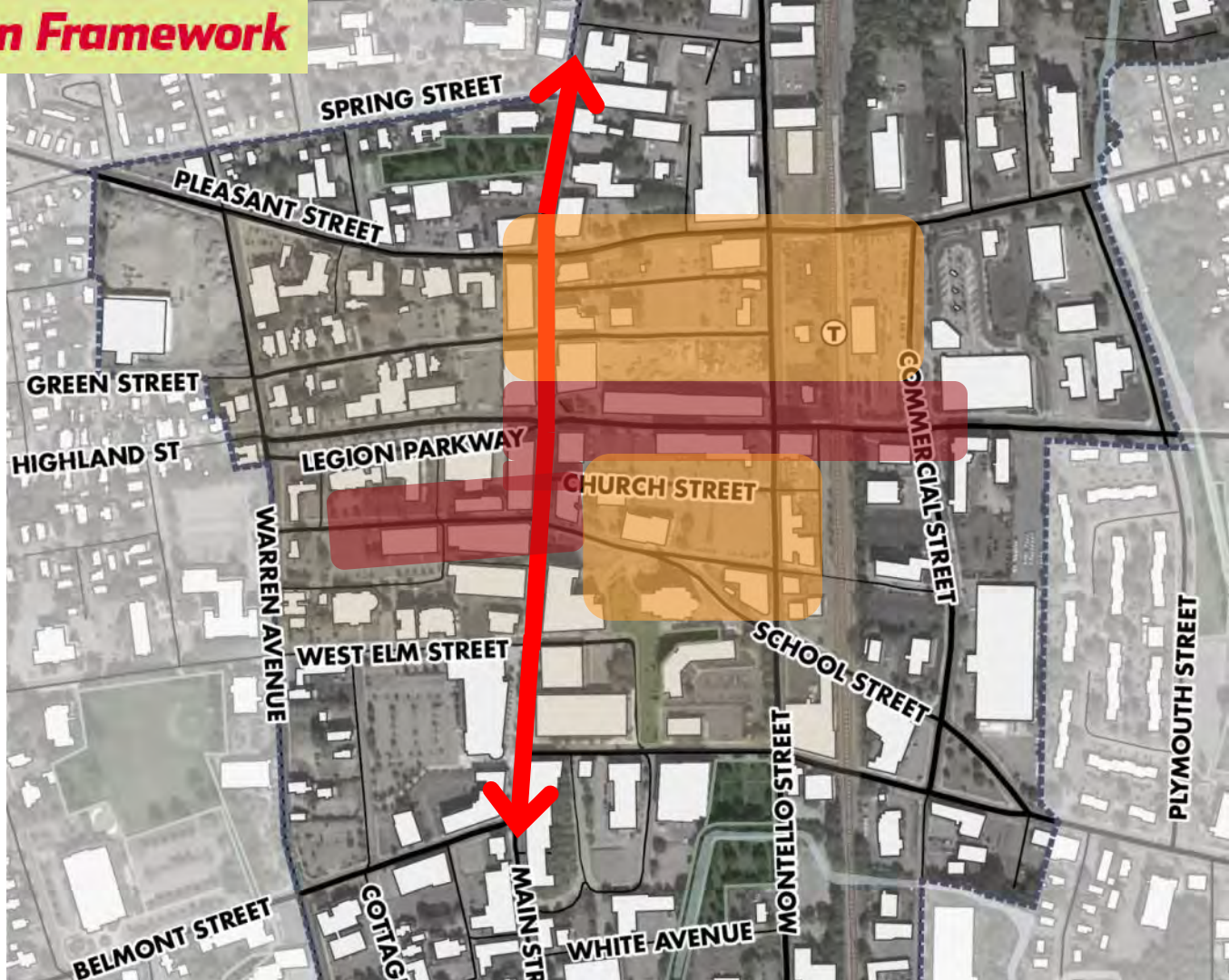
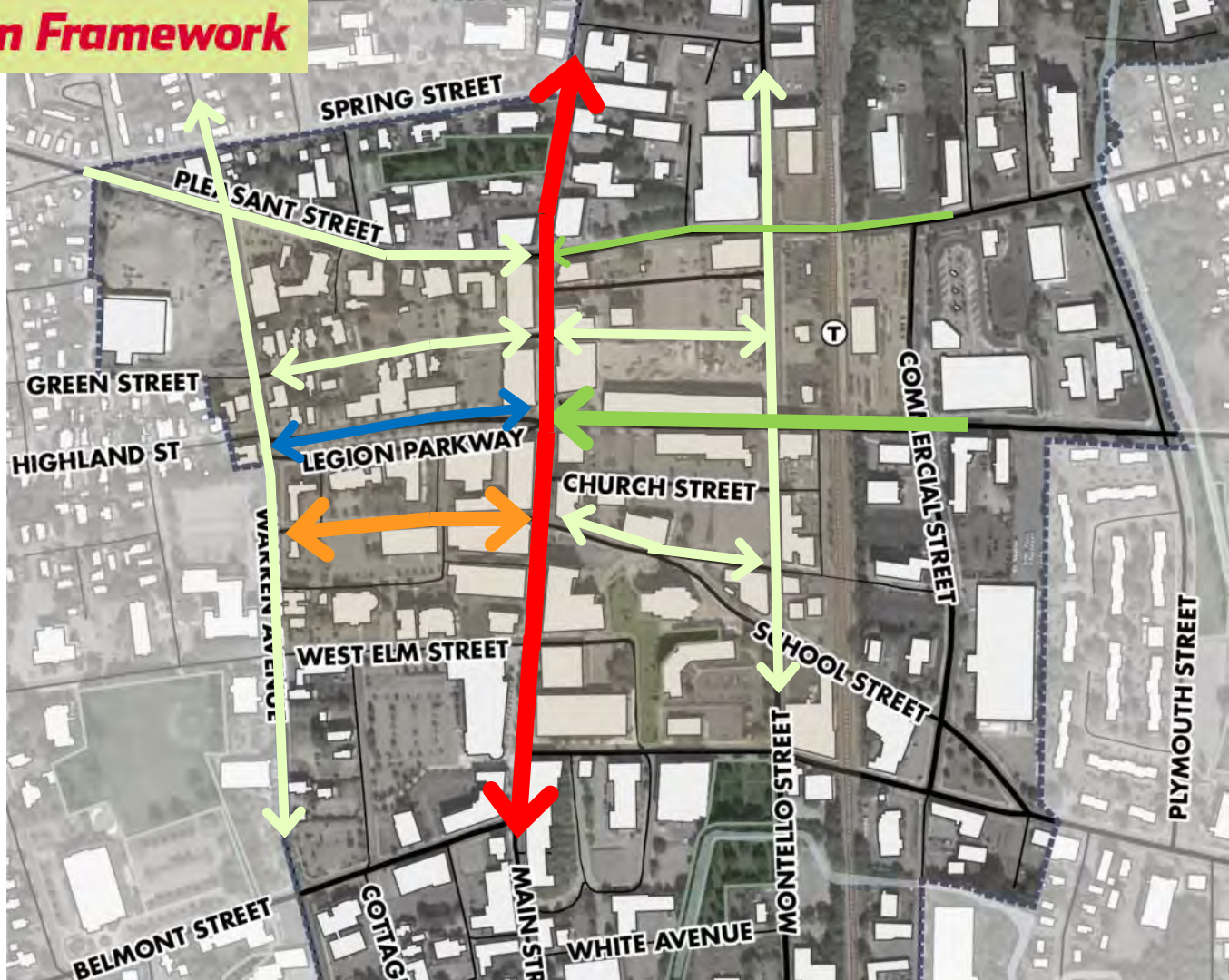


Urban Design Framework

Roles of Key Streets

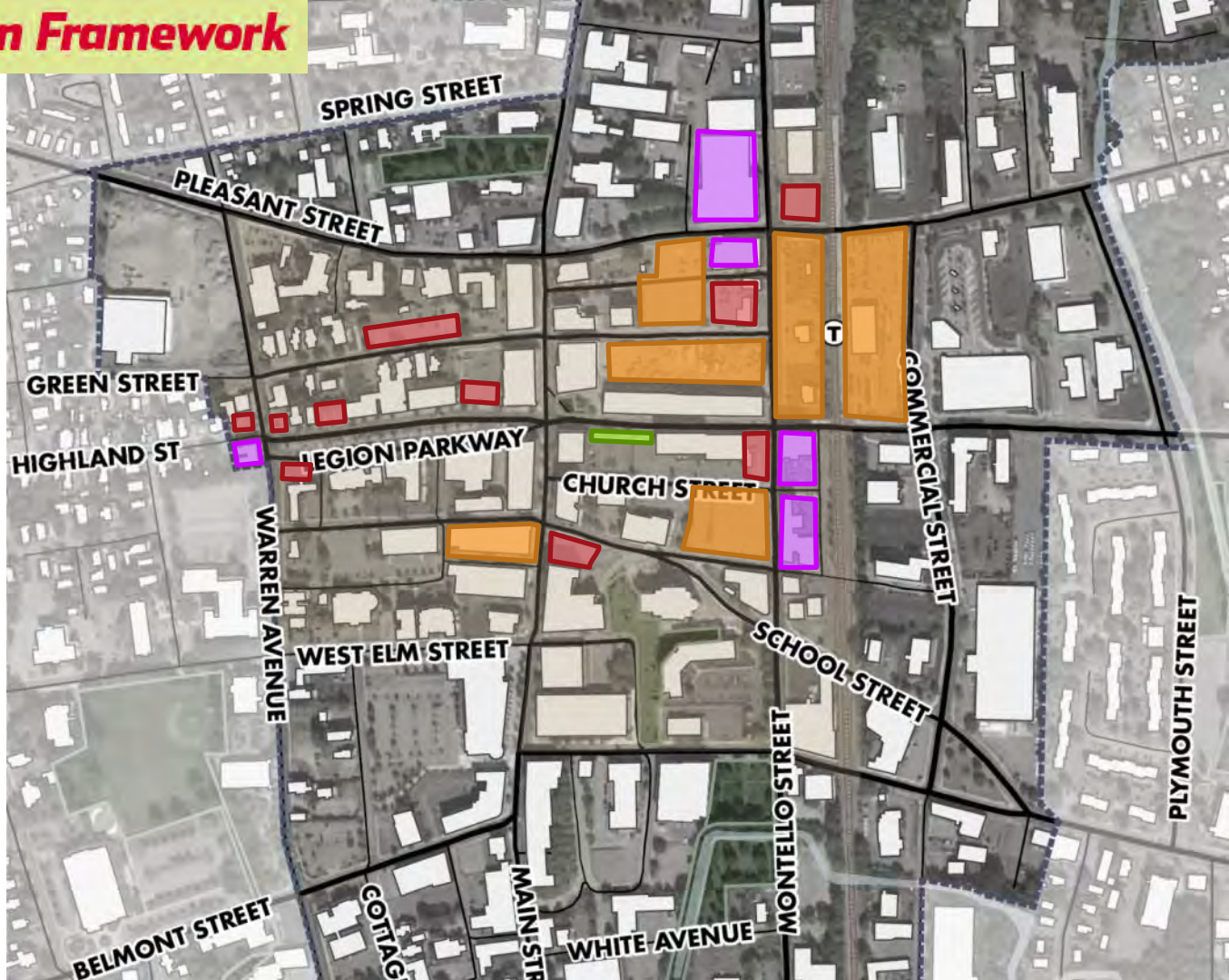
- Main Street
- Focus: Restaurants and nightlife
- Focus: TOD housing and mixed-use
- Secondary street with a mixed-use focus
- Tertiary street with a mixed-use focus



Urban Design Framework

Scale of Potential Development

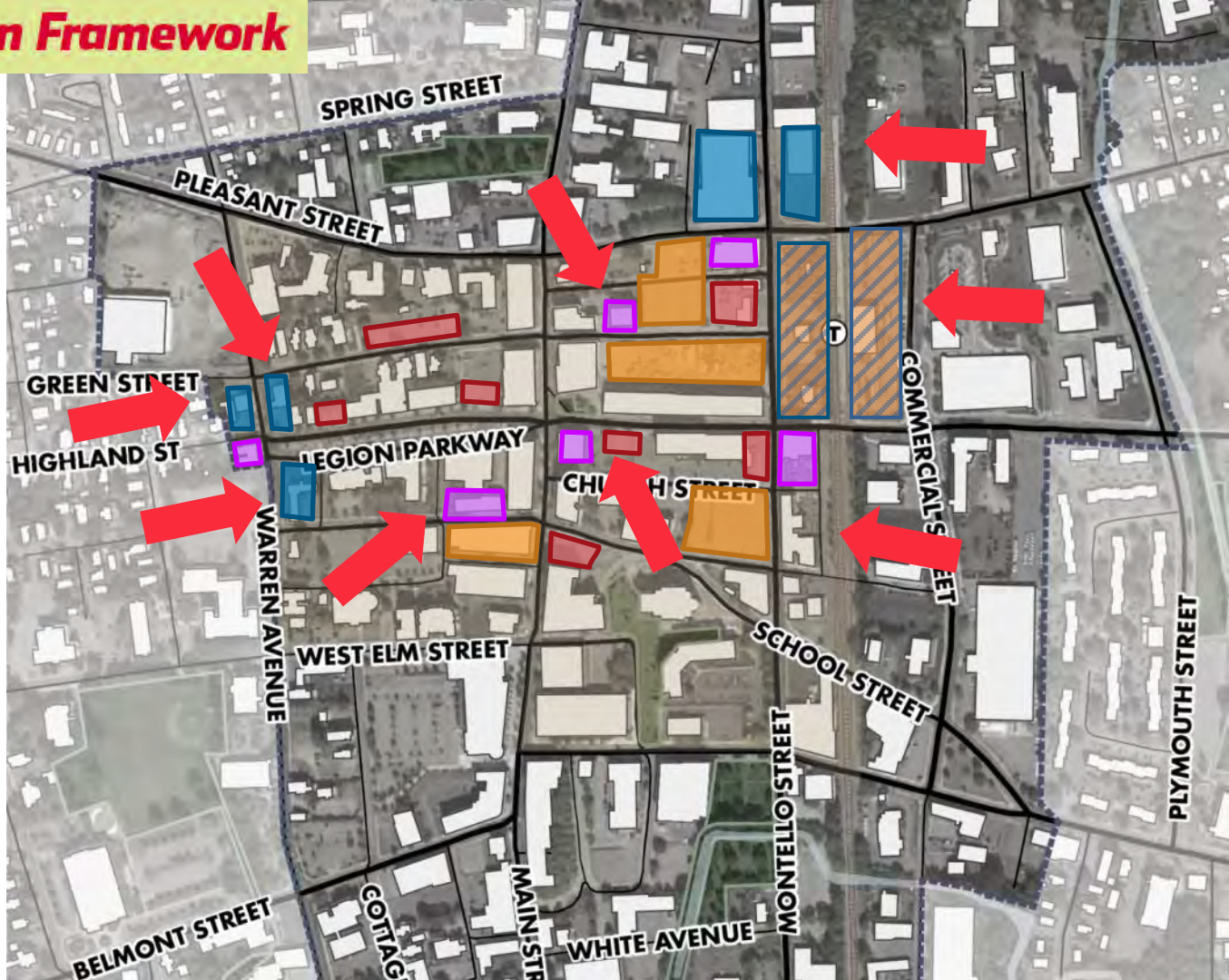
- Green edge
- Large-scale mixed-use/ residential
- Infill mixed-use/ residential
- Existing building rehab/ reprogram



Urban Design Framework

Scale of Potential Development

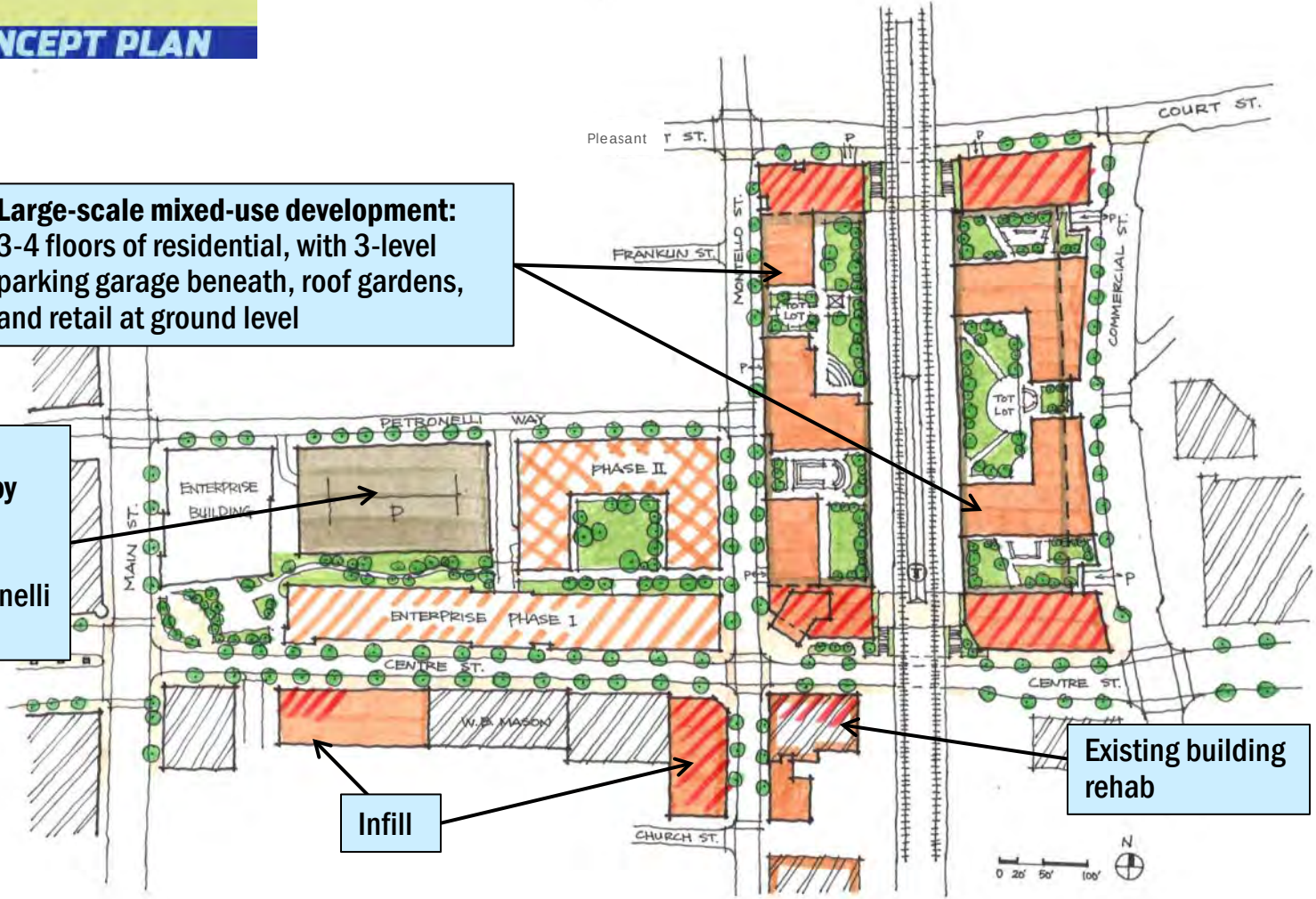
- Large-scale mixed-use/ residential
- Infill mixed-use/ residential
- Existing building rehab/ reprogram
- Demolition/reconstruction



Focus Area
CONCEPT PLAN

Large-scale mixed-use development:
3-4 floors of residential, with 3-level parking garage beneath, roof gardens, and retail at ground level

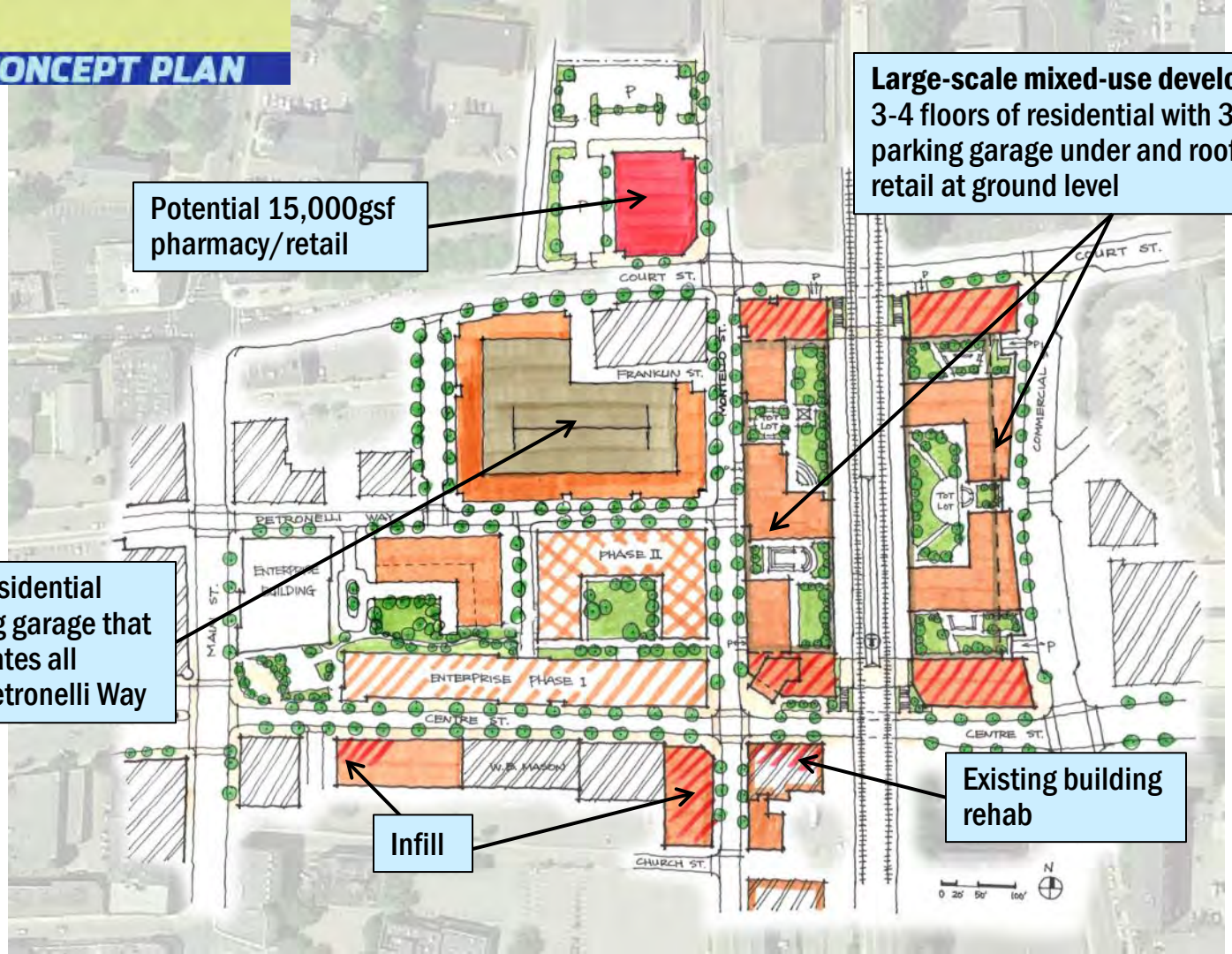
Current proposed development plan by Trinity:
Calls for structured parking along Petronelli Way



Infill

Existing building rehab

Focus Area
CONCEPT PLAN



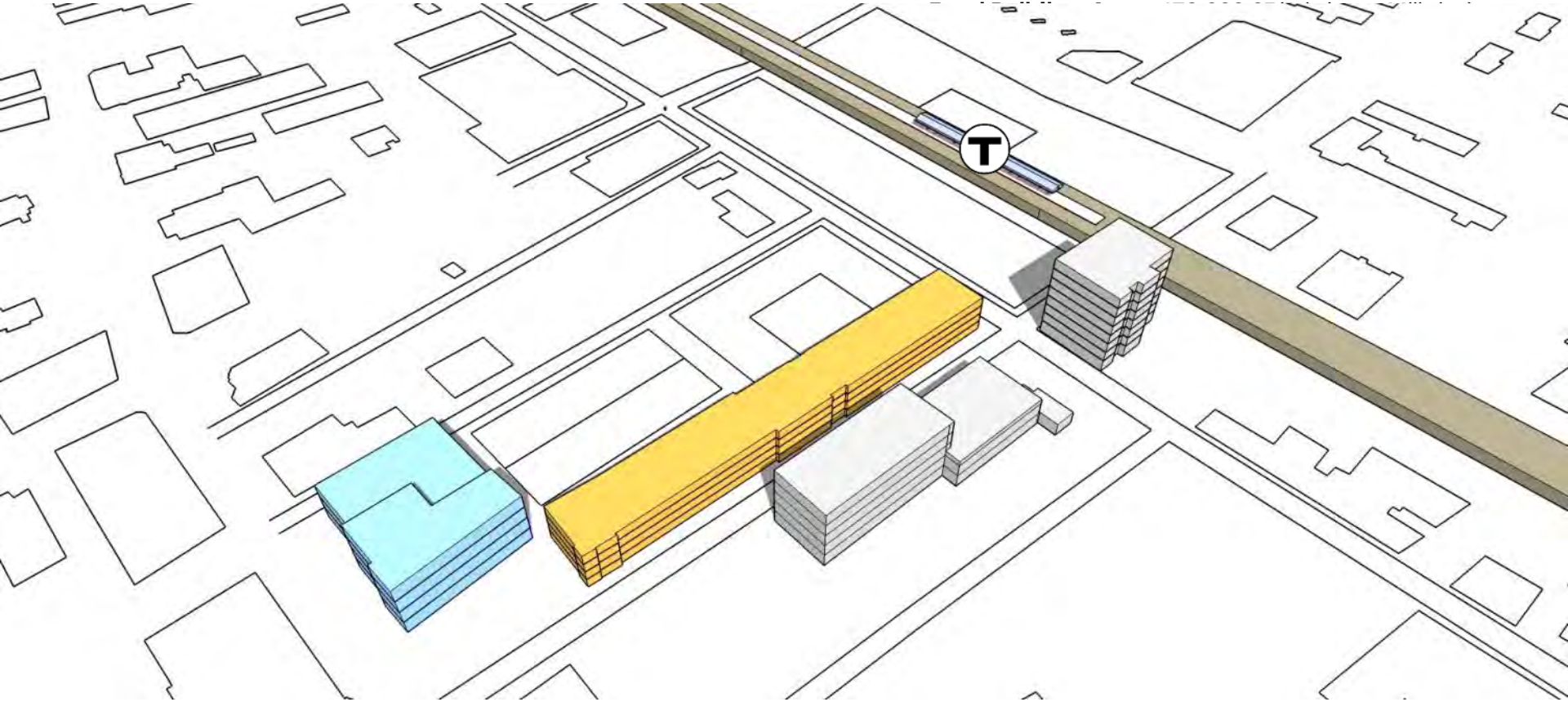
Potential 15,000gsf pharmacy/retail

Large-scale mixed-use development: 3-4 floors of residential with 3-level parking garage under and roof gardens; retail at ground level

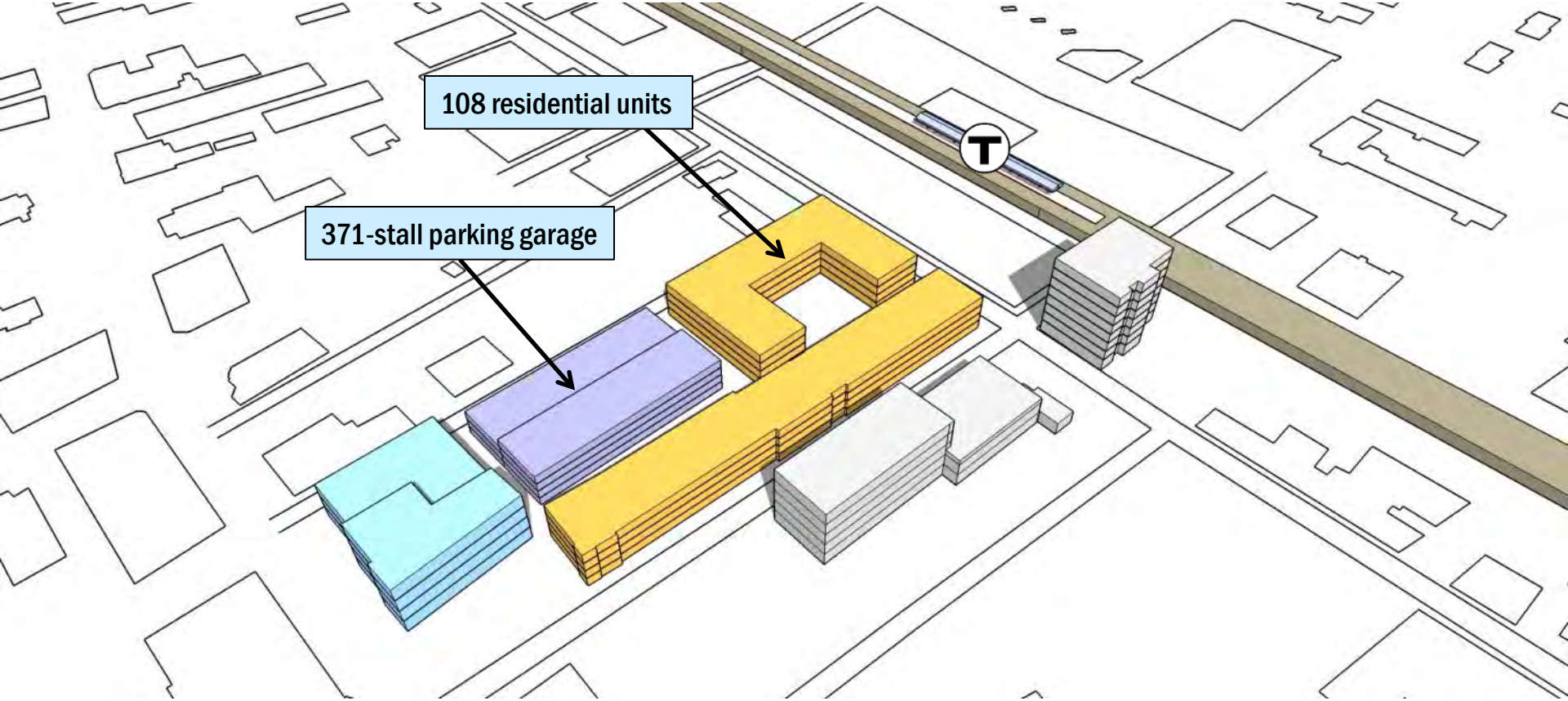
Proposed new residential infill with parking garage that also accommodates all housing along Petronelli Way

Infill

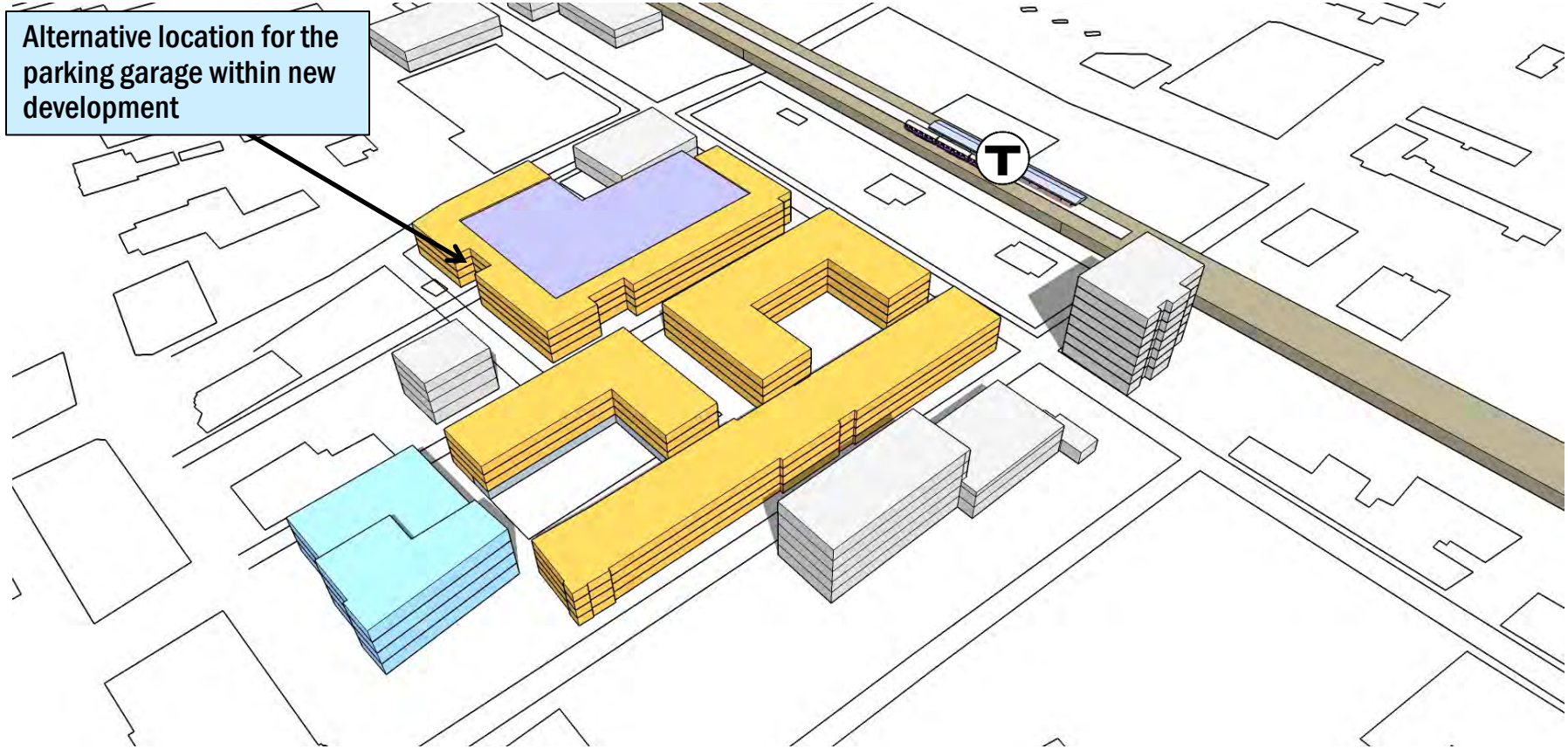
Existing building rehab



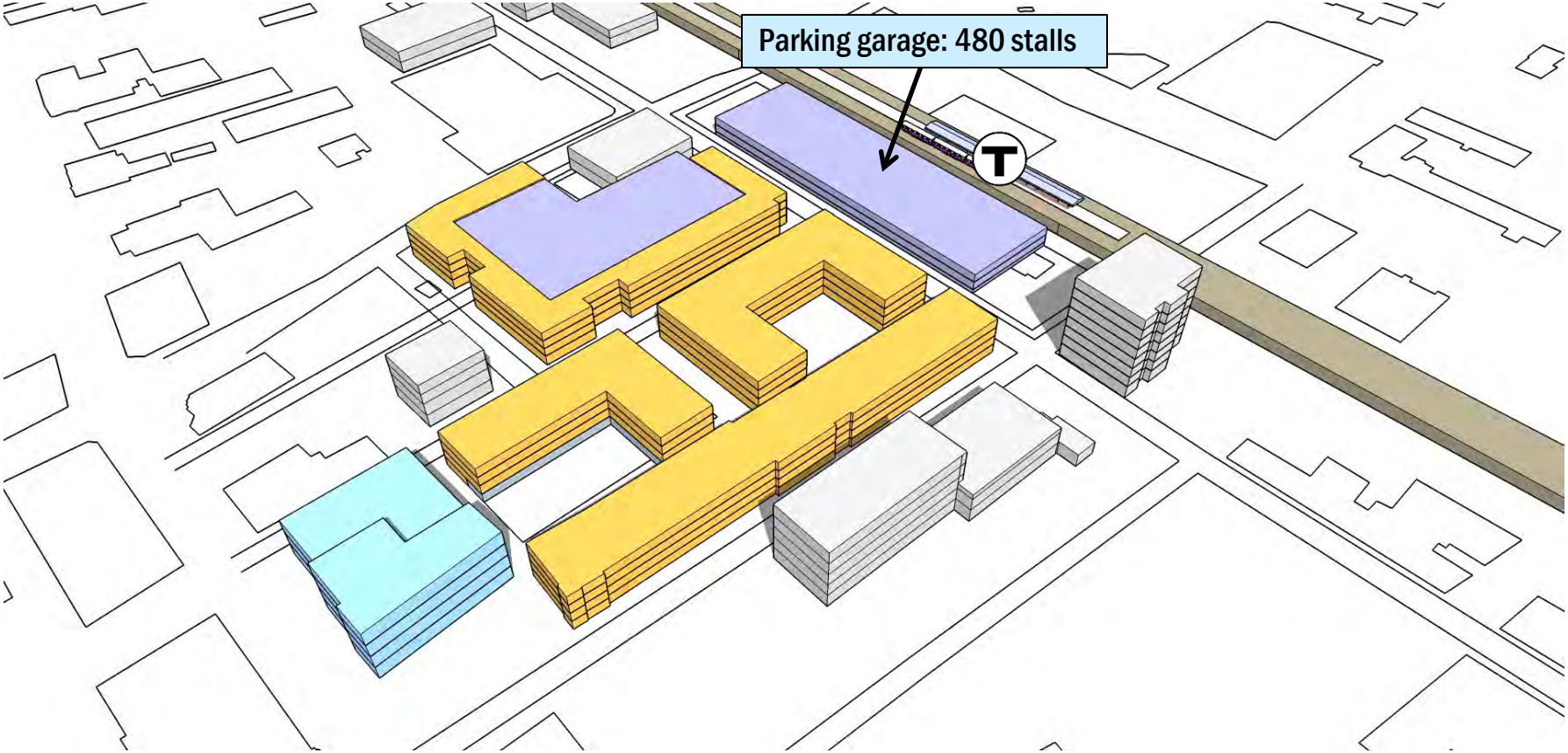
Existing Enterprise Phase I



Proposed Enterprise Phase 2 - Permitted

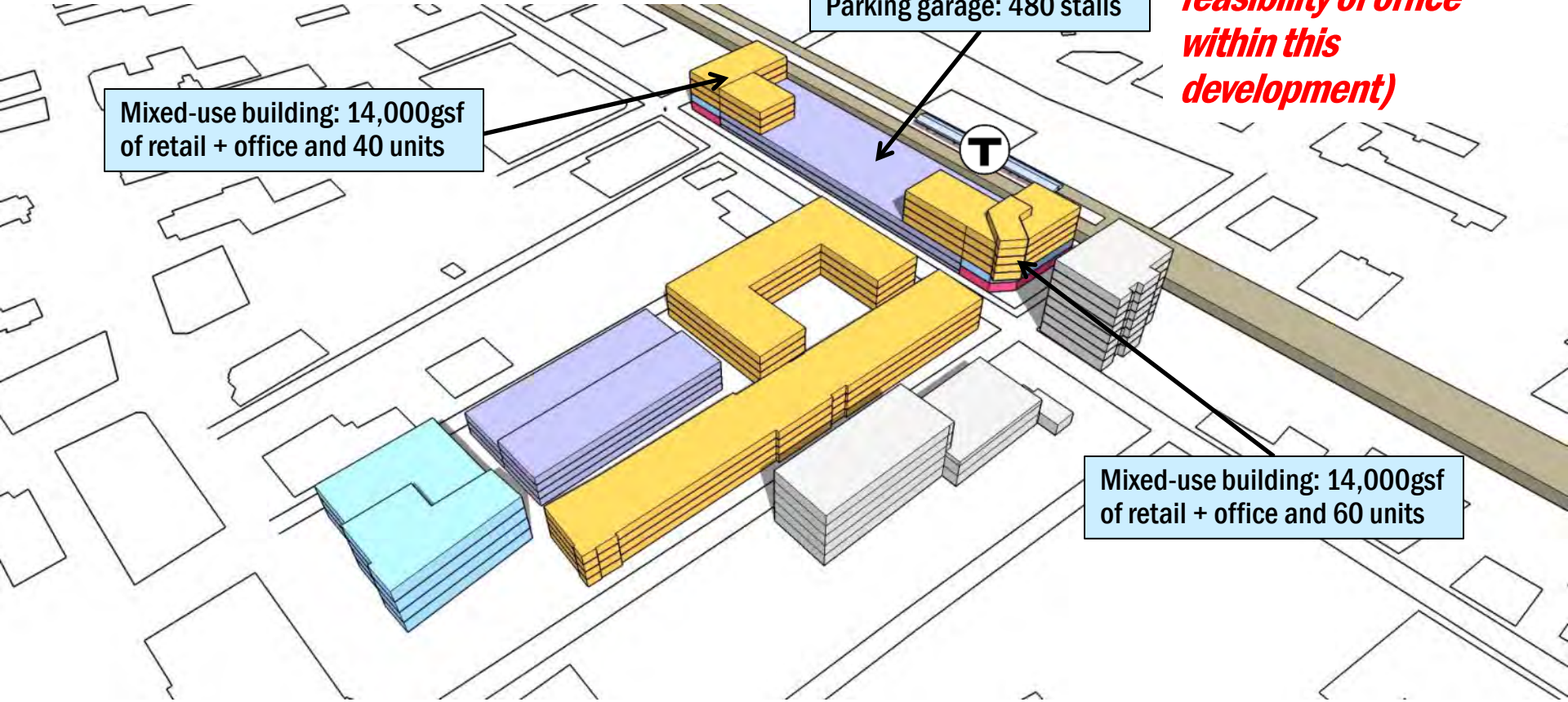


Alternate Enterprise Phase 2

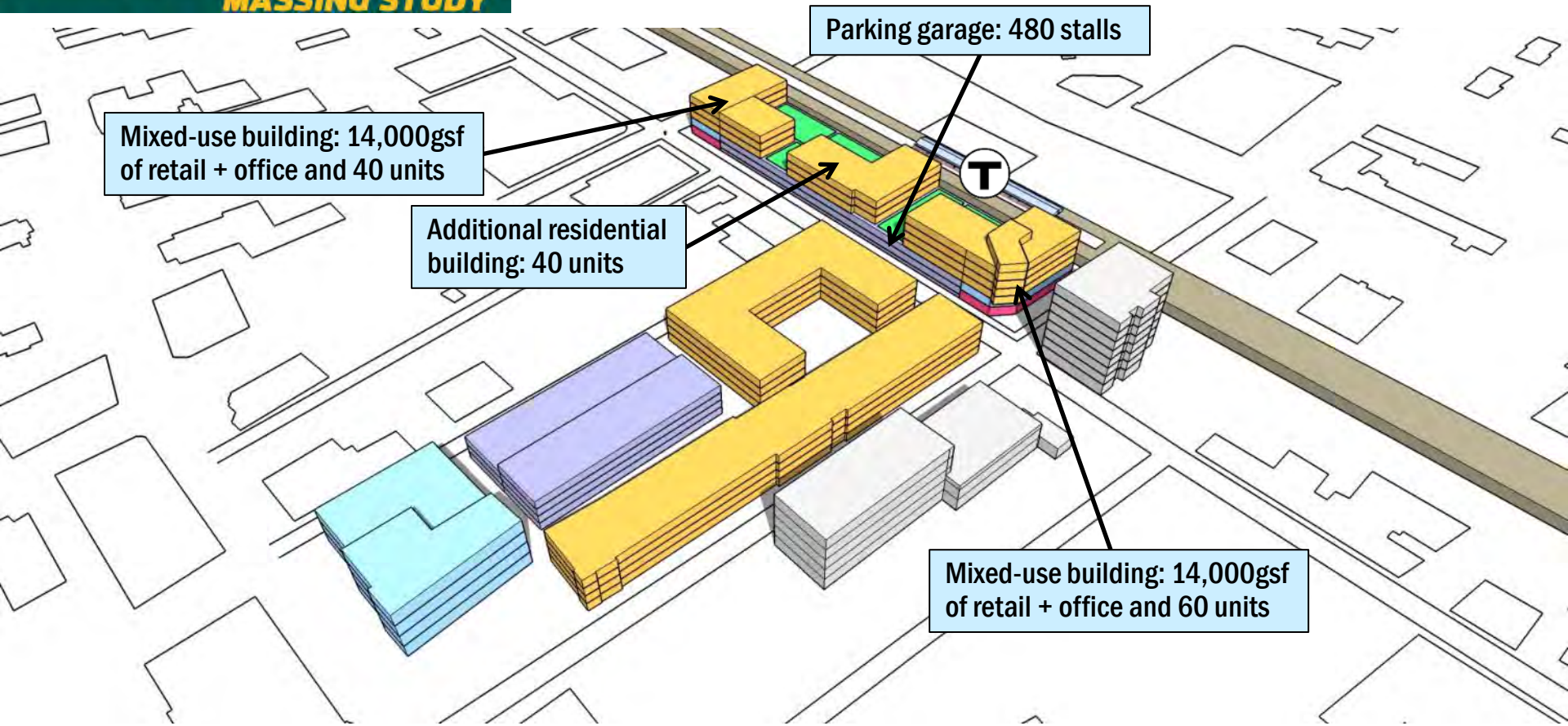


Montello Development – Phase I

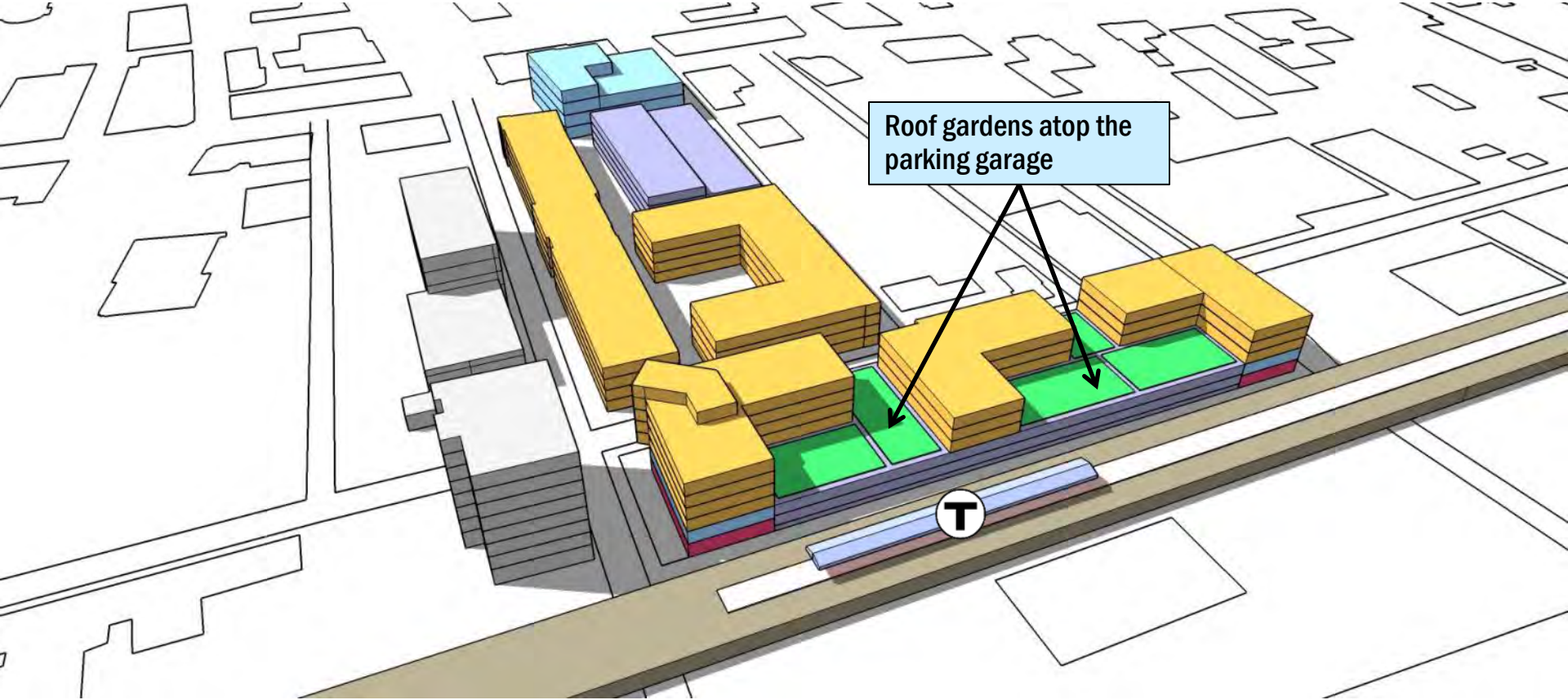
(Need to determine feasibility of office within this development)



Montello Development – Phase II

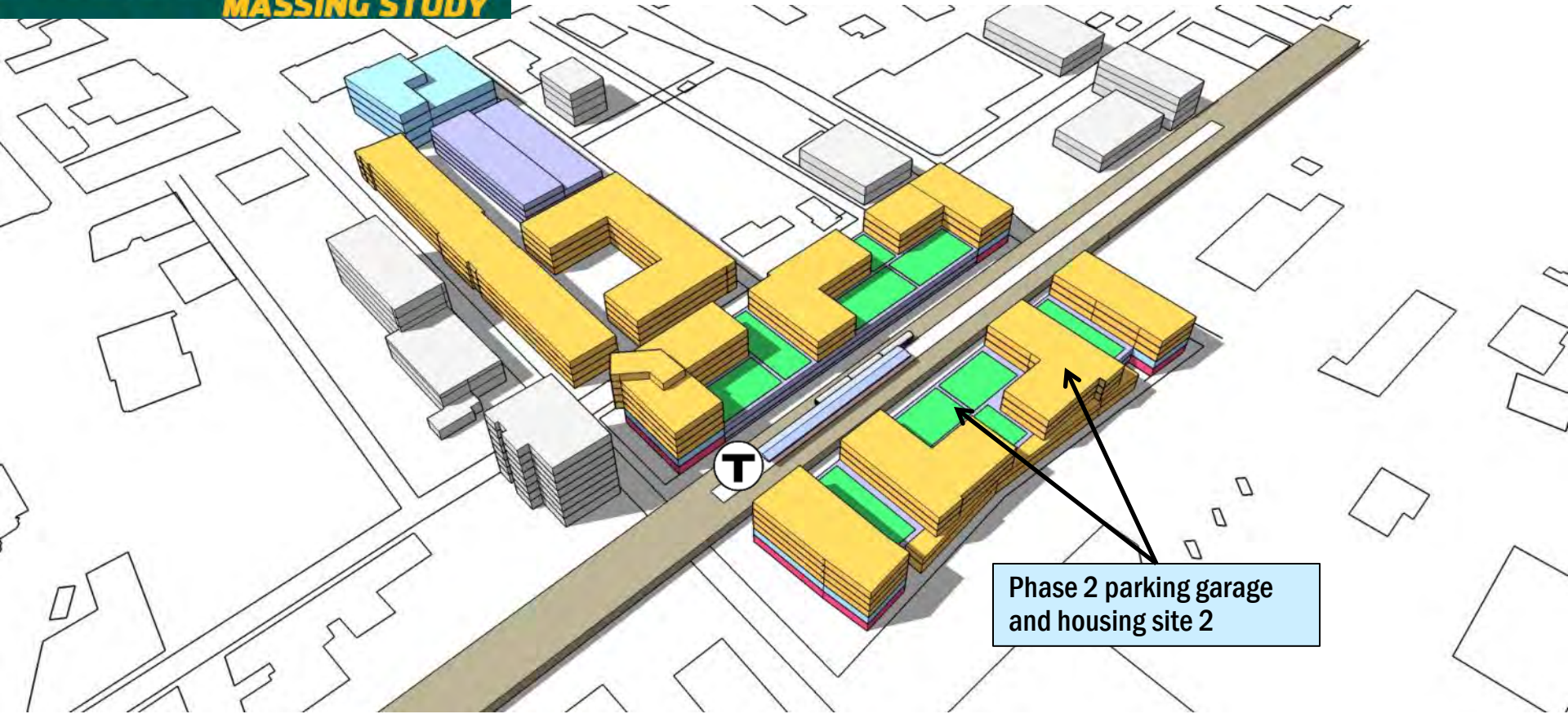


Montello Development – Phase III



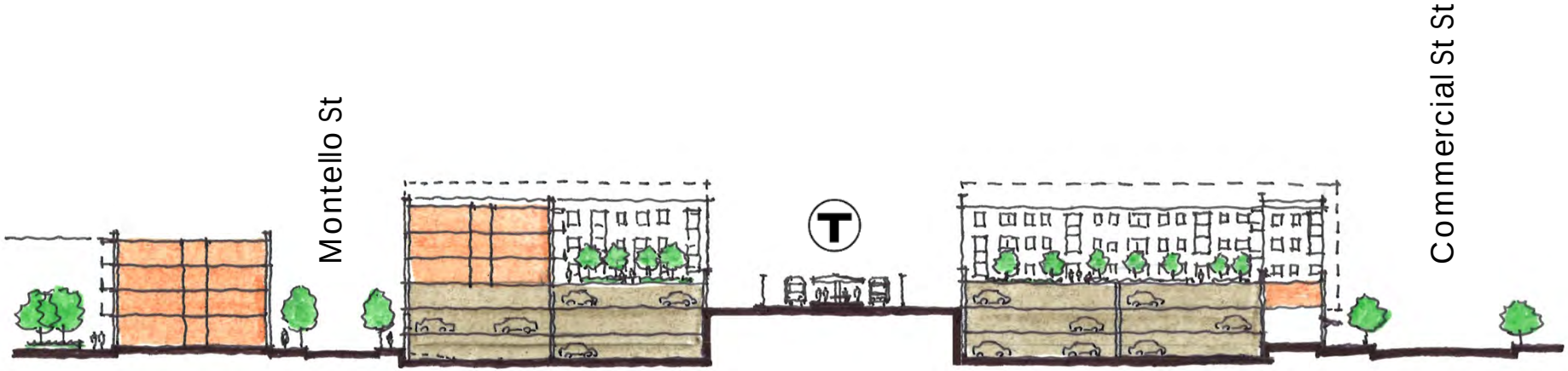
Montello Development – Phase III

Focus Area
MASSING STUDY



Commercial Street Development

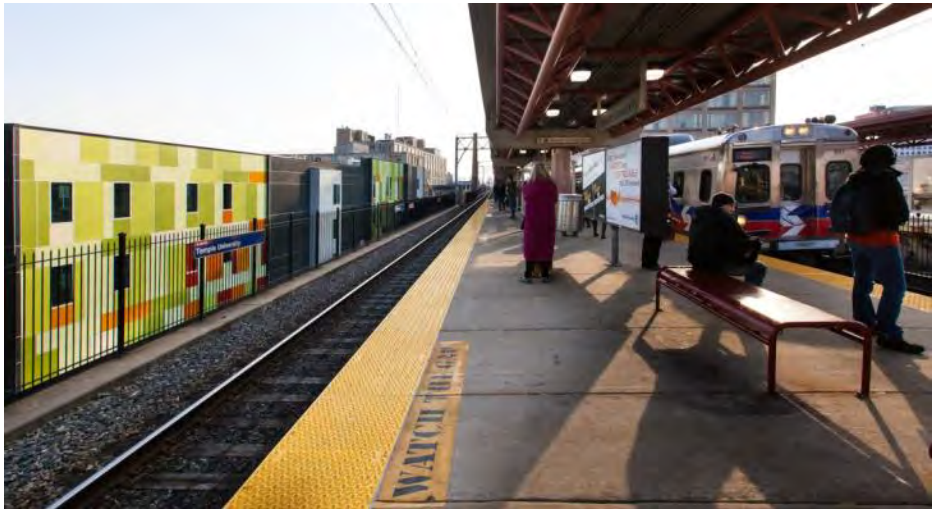
Focus Area
STREET CROSS SECTION

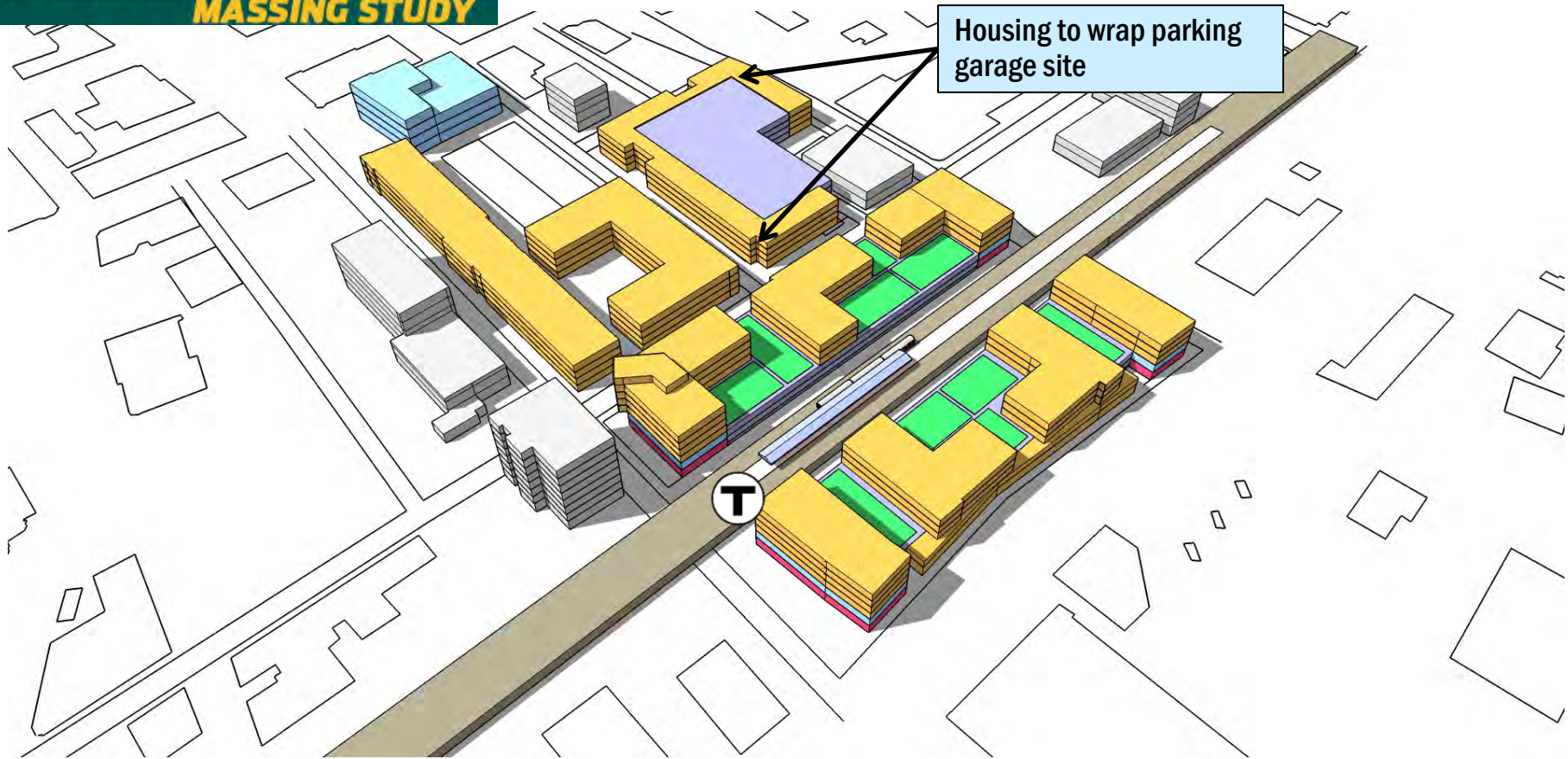


Section Through MBTA Station

CASE STUDY

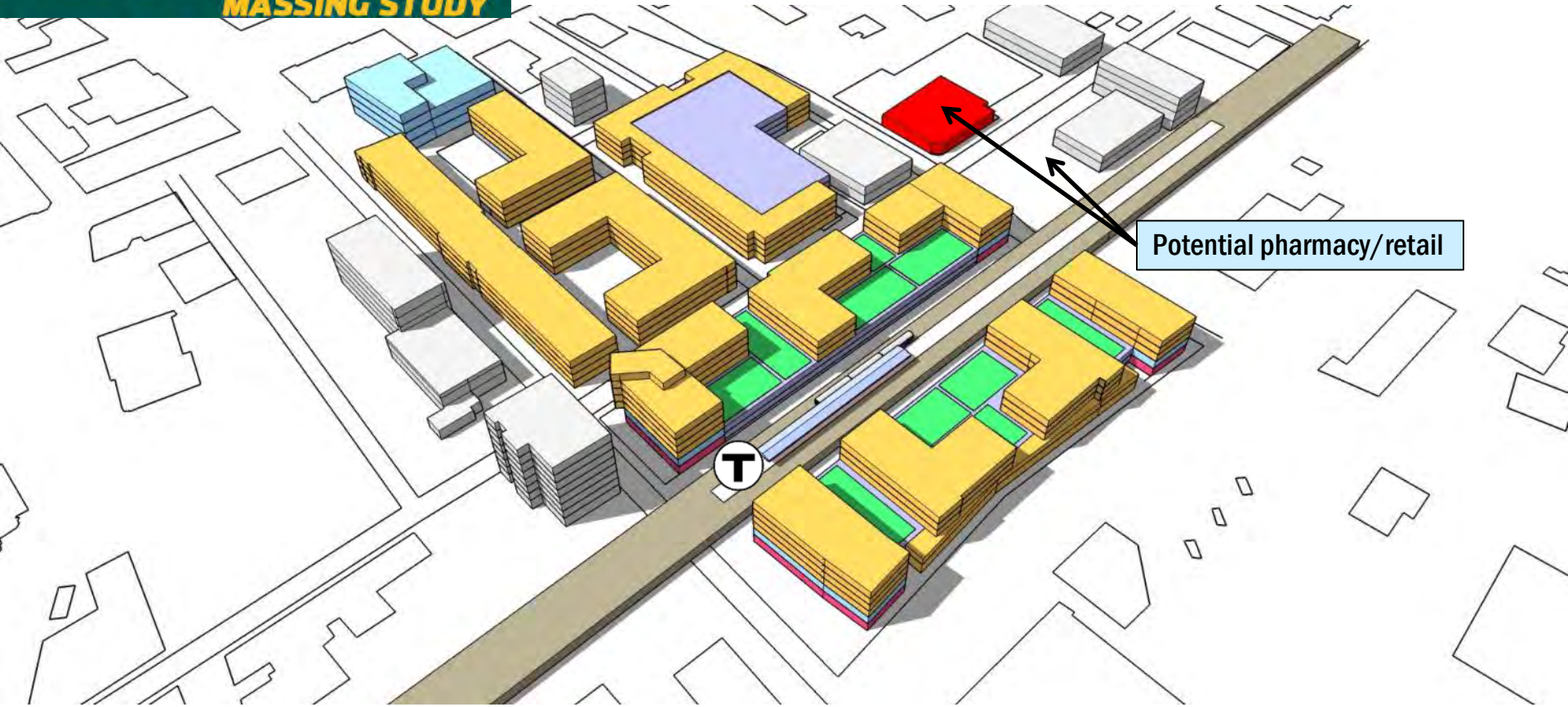
PASEO VERDE, PHILADELPHIA





Petronelli Garage Wrap

Focus Area
MASSING STUDY

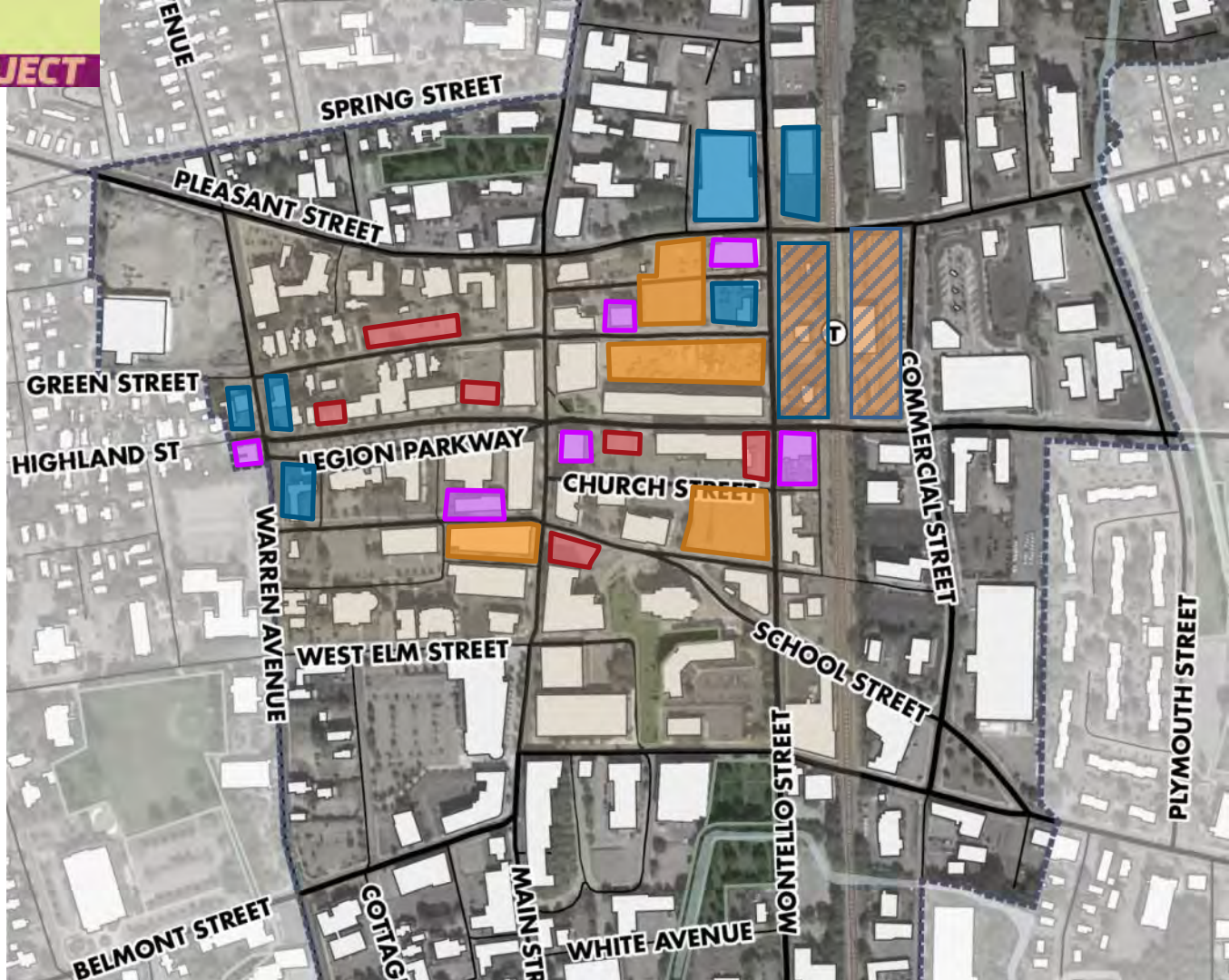


Court Street Development

Focus Area
CATALYST PROJECT

Scale of potential development

- Large-scale mixed-use/ residential
- Infill mixed-use/ residential
- Existing building rehab/ reprogram
- Demolition/reconstruction

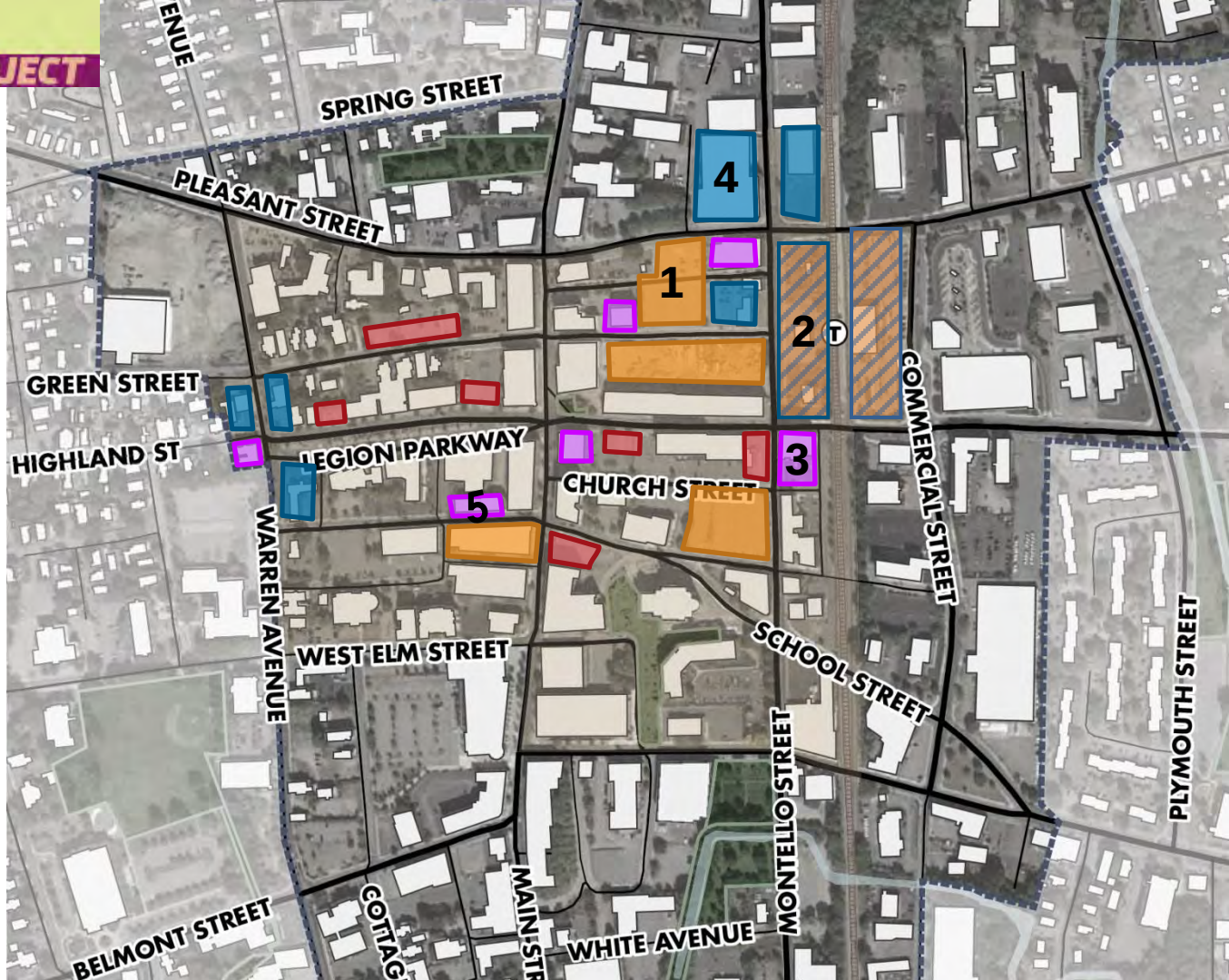


Focus Area
CATALYST PROJECT

First-phase development initiatives

1. Mixed-use residential development with structured parking to support phases I and II of Trinity development
2. Mixed-use development with structured parking to support WB Mason & Furniture Building
3. Furniture Building rehabilitation
4. Pharmacy to create key residential amenity
5. Restaurant incubator to create destination

- Large-scale mixed-use/ residential
- Infill mixed-use/ residential
- Existing building rehab/ reprogram
- Demolition/reconstruction



Frederick Douglass Ave: Existing condition

Focus Area
CATALYST PROJECT

Frederick Douglass Ave: Restaurant Incubator

CASE STUDY

SIDEWALK CAFÉ AND PARKLET

Quebec City:
Signage, canopies and planters bring a narrow sidewalk to life

San Francisco: Convert on-street parking spaces to parklet

Paris: outdoor seating on narrow sidewalk

NEXT STEPS

- Conduct September 30 workshop
- Complete final draft plan w/catalytic sites
- Review draft Action Strategy document
- Urban Renewal Plan study