



UNION STUDIO

ARCHITECTURE & COMMUNITY DESIGN

Donald Powers, AIA, LEED, CNU

www.unionstudioarch.com



The Newburyport Waterfront

Asset, Opportunity, Challenge

Revised Master Plan

June 29, 2013

The City Of
Newburyport

The Newburyport
Redevelopment Authority





DONALD W. POWERS, AIA, LEED AP Founding Principal

Education

Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
Graduate School of Design
Masters of Architecture

University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA
School of Architecture
B.S. Architecture - Awarded Annual Design Prize

Professional Affiliations

Board of Directors, **Grow Smart Rhode Island**
Member, **Congress for New the New Urbanism** (CNU)
Board of Directors, **CNU | New England Chapter**
Founding Board Member, **Institute for Classical Architecture | New England Chapter**
Form Based Zoning Subcommittee—Committee Chairman, **City of Providence Zoning Commission**
Executive Committee & Program Co-Chair, **CNU XIV Providence** (held in June of 2006)



Union Studio was founded in 2001 with one overriding goal: to use our skills as architects and urban designers to make a **civic contribution** to communities of all types.

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Why is Union Studio Here?



Why is Union Studio Here?
(This time)

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Continue..
To explore the possibilities of **enhancing** City's
 waterfront
 & its **connection** to the City



Our understanding of goals and issues comes from review of 30 years of public record, our own public workshop in June, our development and presentation of a draft plan, *and the stakeholder response to it over the last 9*



Goals:

- a. Enlarge park / civic space while preserving an appropriate amount of *improved* parking
 - b. Improve and enrich the experience of the park without “commercializing the waterfront”.
 - c. Maintain access and views to the waterfront park for all – But make more inviting all year round.
 - d. Find a way forward which is self funding and sustainable.
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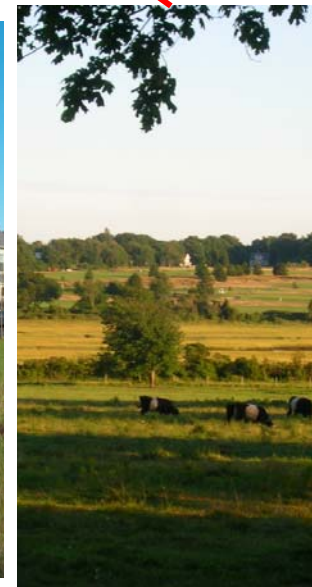
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Our understanding of the world and why it would matter:



Union Studio views the built world through the lens of
“The Transect”

A spectrum of place types, each with their own “rules”.





Newburyport's Downtown falls within the Town Center Transect Zone:





Also applies to our Open Spaces. Spectrum of appropriate types from most informal and undefined (natural) to most formal and enclosed (man-made) based on Transect Zone





Newburyport's park and waterfront fall within the Town Center Zone.....



.....which gives insight into to what may be appropriate here and what might not.

At first workshop (end of June 2012) did not propose a design, but offered some food for thought as the design team began.



“What is appropriate here?”

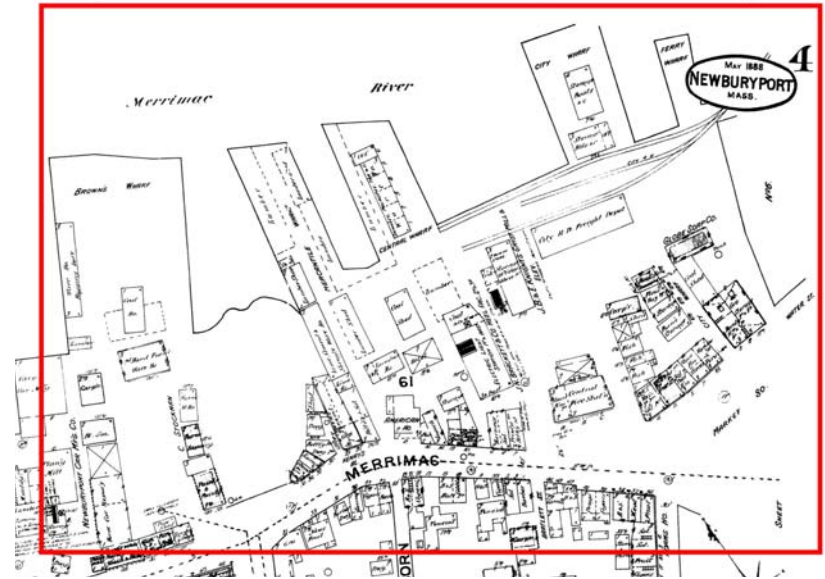
“Should development happen on the waterfront side of Merrimac?”



“If no, why not?”

“If yes, how much?”

“And of what type?”



Historic Views (ca. 1880's)



A vibrant, well connected waterfront, but by 1960 large parts unsightly and blocking views.



Blight – waterfront cut off, buildings derelict

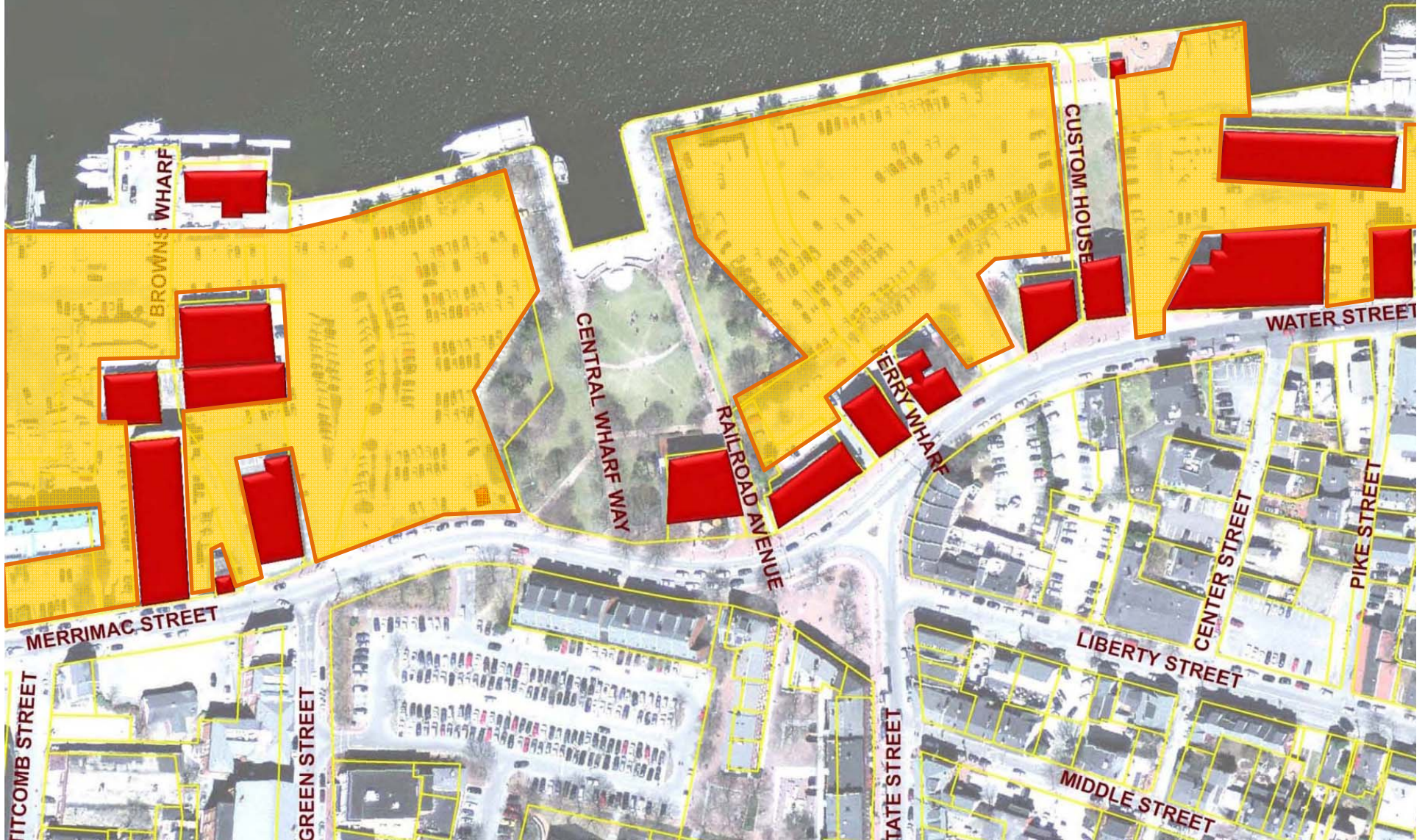


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Urban Renewal & The Newburyport Redevelopment Authority

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Pre- and Post Urban Renewal





Because of Urban Renewal, Newburyport's Use of the Waterfront is much different from prevailing pattern in other seaport cities



Mix of Public & Private functions re-using working piers



Development and recreation at water's edge.

18.—DRIVEWAY ALONG THE CHARLES RIVER ESPLANADE, BOSTON, MASS.



The waterfront park as
“retreat” separate and
removed from “The City”
Works in “opposition” to
the city

Requires
considerable
“depth” to retreat
into. Offers only
one kind of
recreation.





For Newburyport this is both unique opportunity and challenge:
Chance for place of retreat, but also connection to the City.



Currently works in multiple , interesting ways as “meander” and as “gathering place, but could do both better.

Well loved by residents and visitors, but there are opportunities to make it more so.



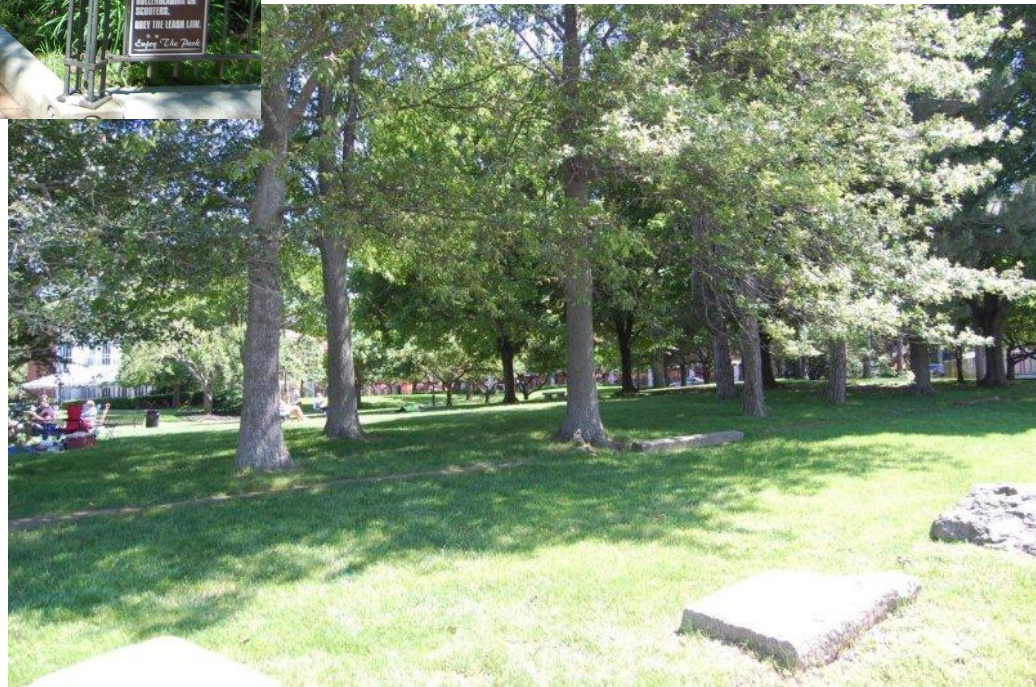


- Three kinds of park space:
- Centralized, focal, gathering space
 - Informal buffer space
 - Linear/circulation (Boardwalk)

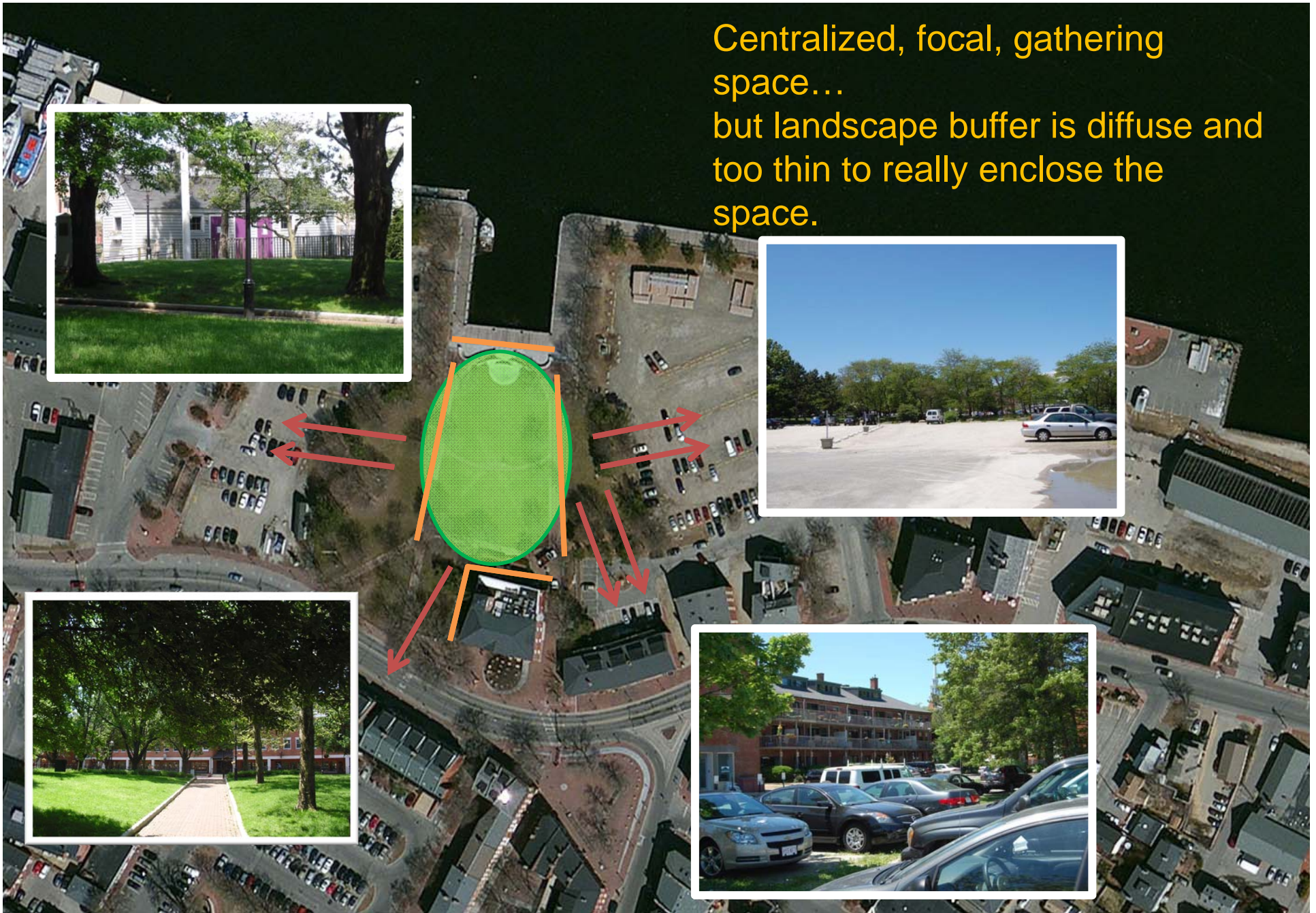


Edges of the main public space are made primarily by pathways and a loose edge of landscape.

Working in spite of the physical layout and lack of enclosure.



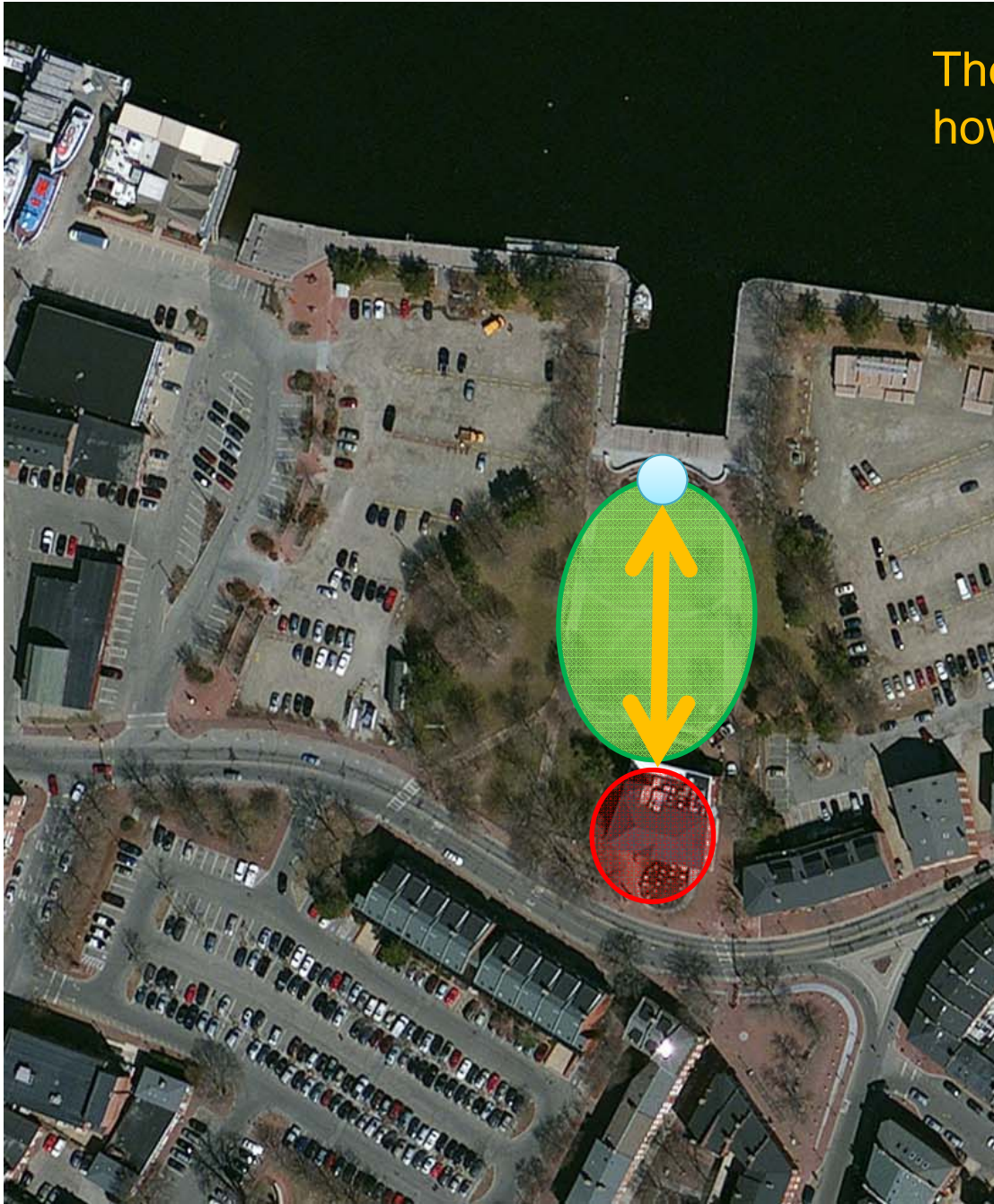
Centralized, focal, gathering
space...
but landscape buffer is diffuse and
too thin to really enclose the
space.



In spite of these weak edges, the space has such a strong focal point that it works.
Can it work better??



The way it currently works suggests how it might be improved.



Architecture in this case helps to create the sense of the place and make it function as an “outdoor room”.

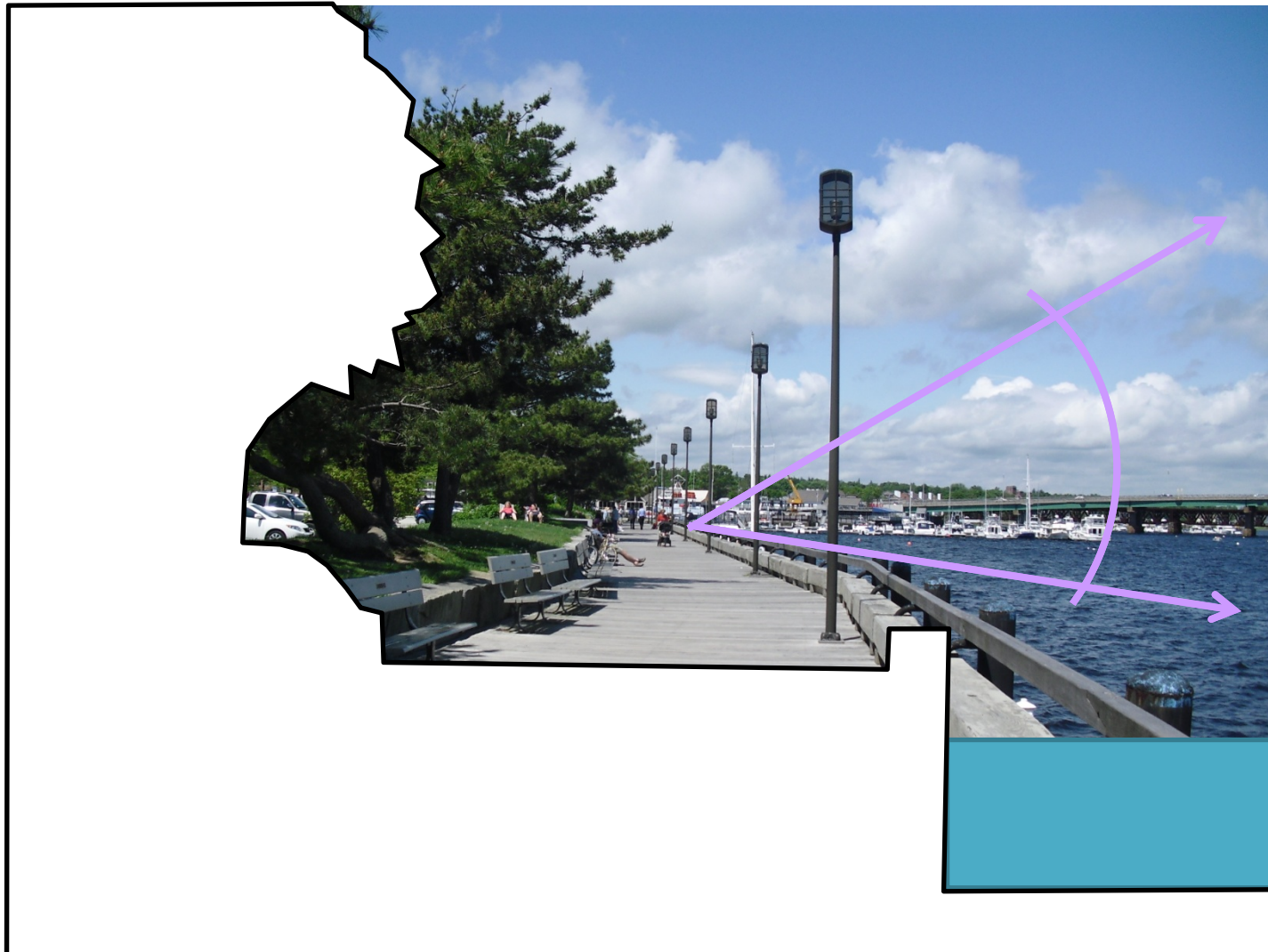
Edge space, circulation,
boardwalk



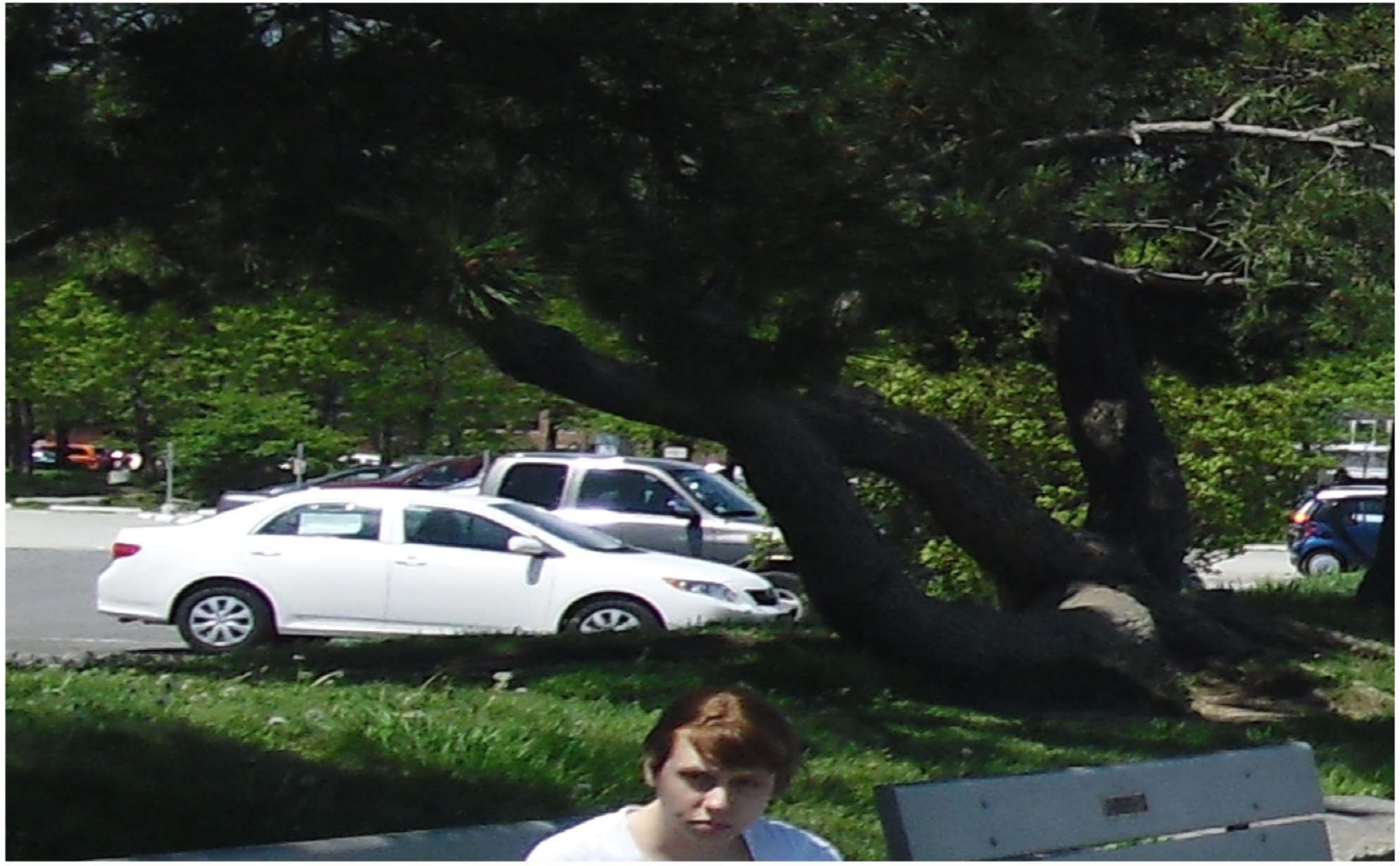
Movemen

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Is pleasant in part because of the enclosure offered by the berm.
Creates a kind of a linear room with the focal point to the water.







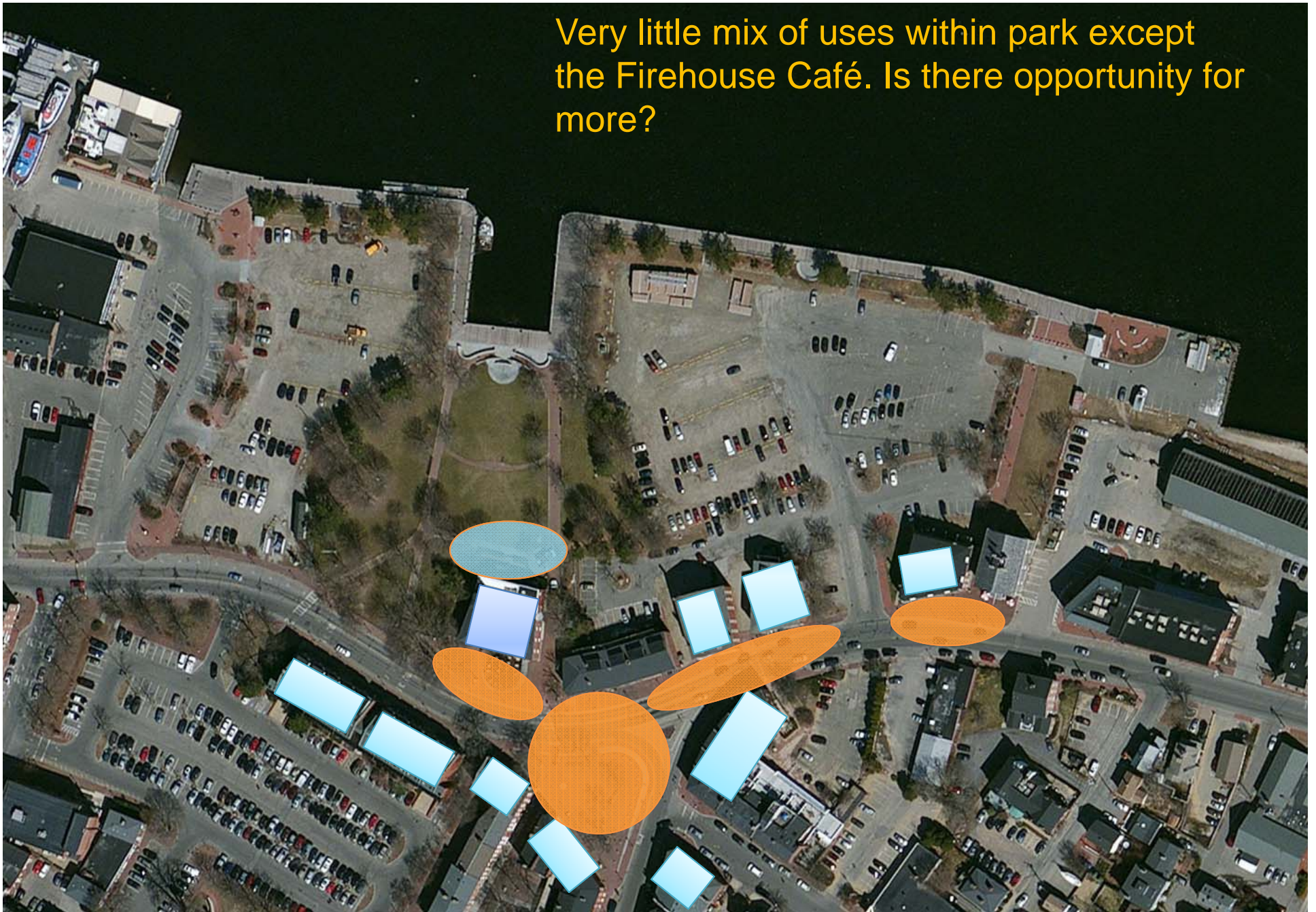
But enclosure is incomplete. Gravel parking lots are very much part of the experience of the waterfront.



Multiple opportunities for visual and pedestrian connections, but most are weak or incomplete. How can they be improved?



Very little mix of uses within park except the Firehouse Café. Is there opportunity for more?



Retail

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Only instance of development fronting the park is successful and adds to use of park.

Connection to Downtown



Firehouse



Market Square

Retail

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Physical and Regulatory Framework Is very complex and limiting

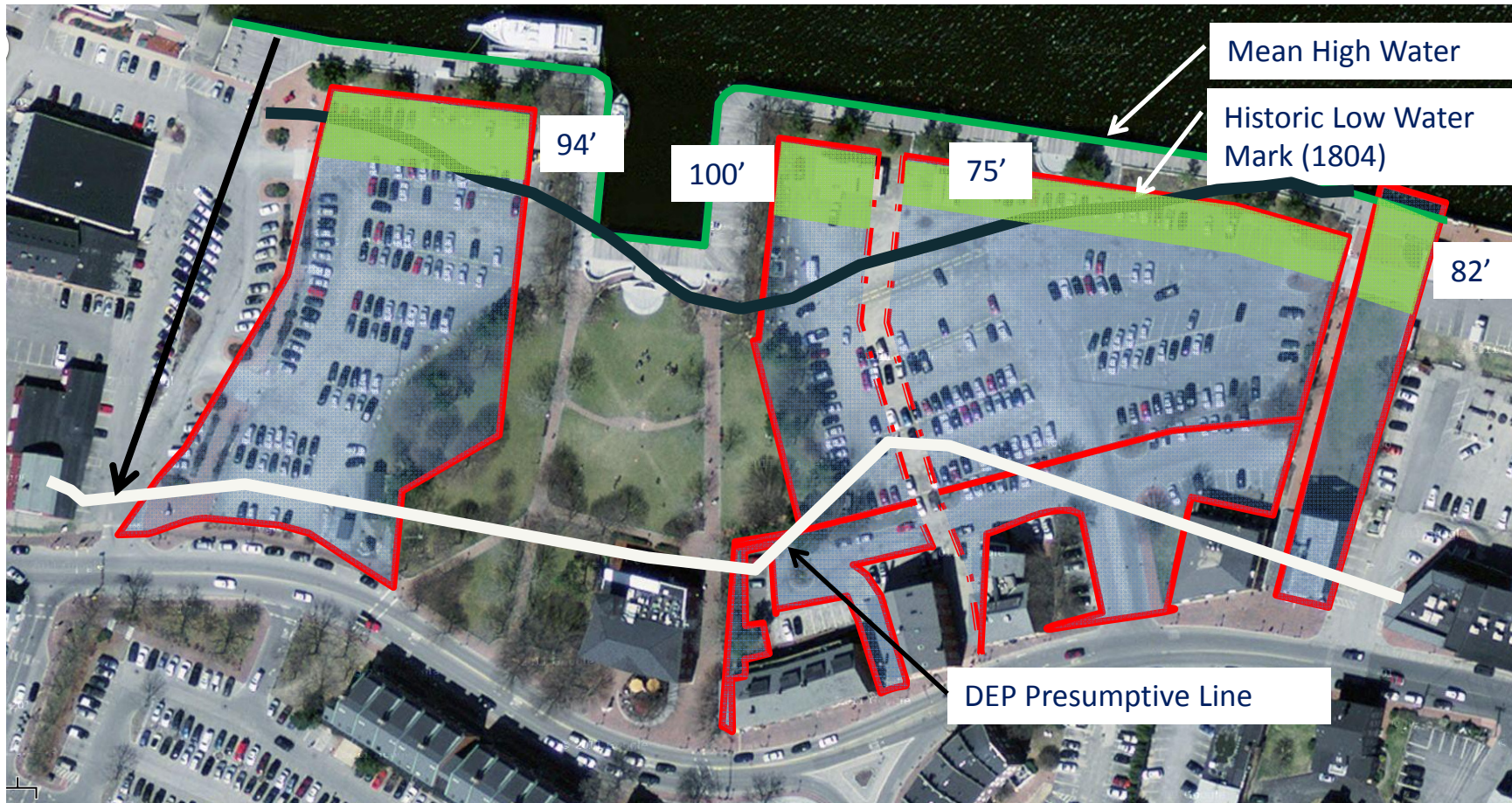
- Physical
- Environmental
- Regulatory



Chapter 91, The Massachusetts Public Waterfront
Act

Chapter 91 – Water Dependent Use Zone

- No Nonwater-dependent Use Structures Allowed
- Setbacks Range from 75' to 100' from MHW
- Includes 0.8 Acres of Parcel Area





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Opportunity to increase enjoyment of water's edge in more ways AND screen parking





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Imagine if some of Main Street turned it's face to the park...
Rather than turning it's back on the park?







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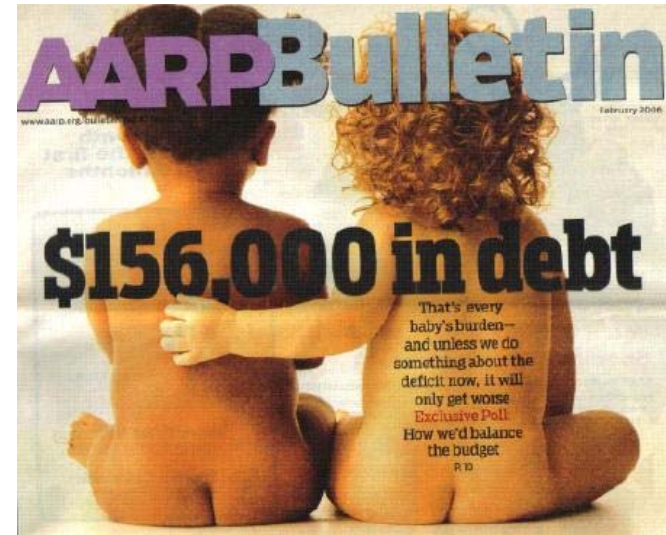
SUSTAINABILITY



ENVIRONMENTAL



ECONOMIC



FISCAL



SOCIAL



- **Waterfront Views Preserved and “framed” to minimize impact of parking**
- **Enhanced “Connections” of the downtown to the waterfront**
- **Main street doesn’t turn it’s back on this exceptional asset**
- **Better park, better downtown**



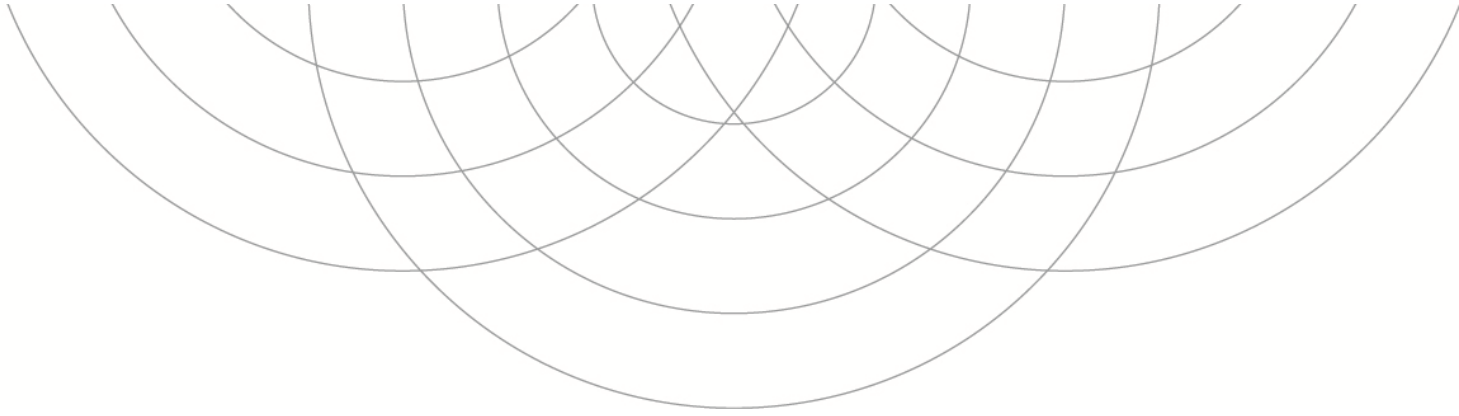
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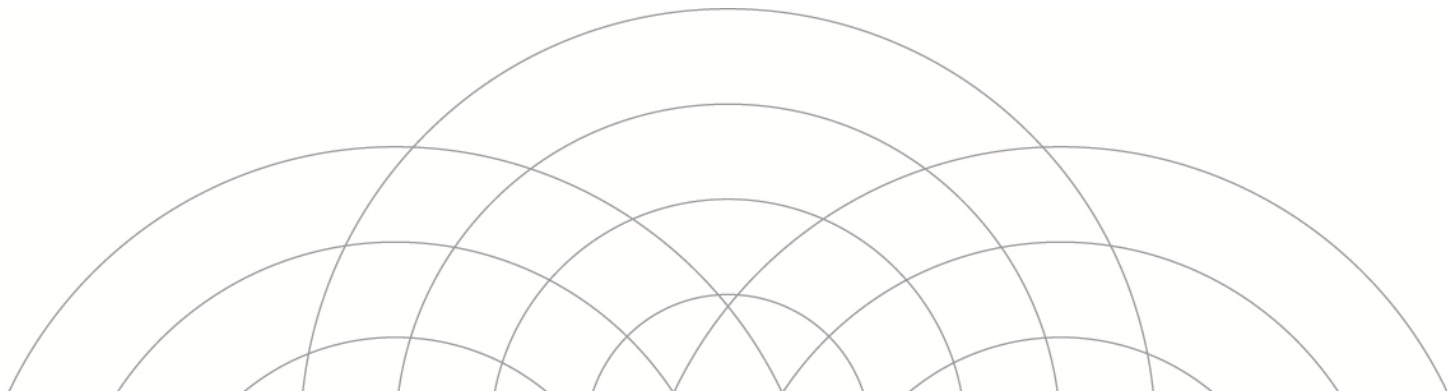




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Proposed Master Plan - Design Process





Existing Condition

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1. Newburyport Redevelopment Authority Parcels



2. Shared Access



2. Shared Access



3. Regulatory Setbacks



3. Regulatory Setbacks



4. Voluntary Setback



4. Voluntary Setback



5. Ferry Wharf Way – Existing Right of Way



5. Ferry Wharf Way – Most Direct



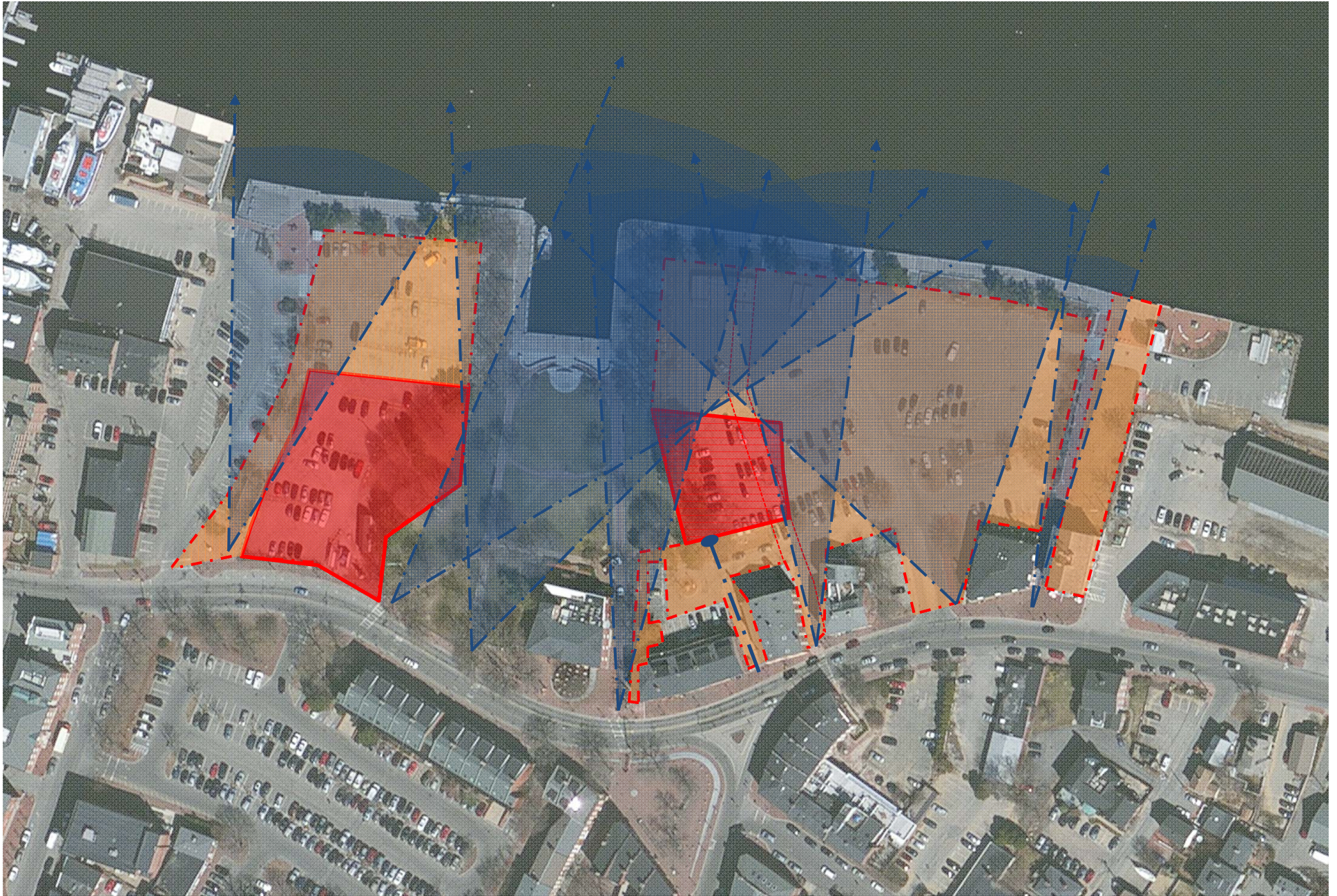
5. Ferry Wharf Way – Most Direct



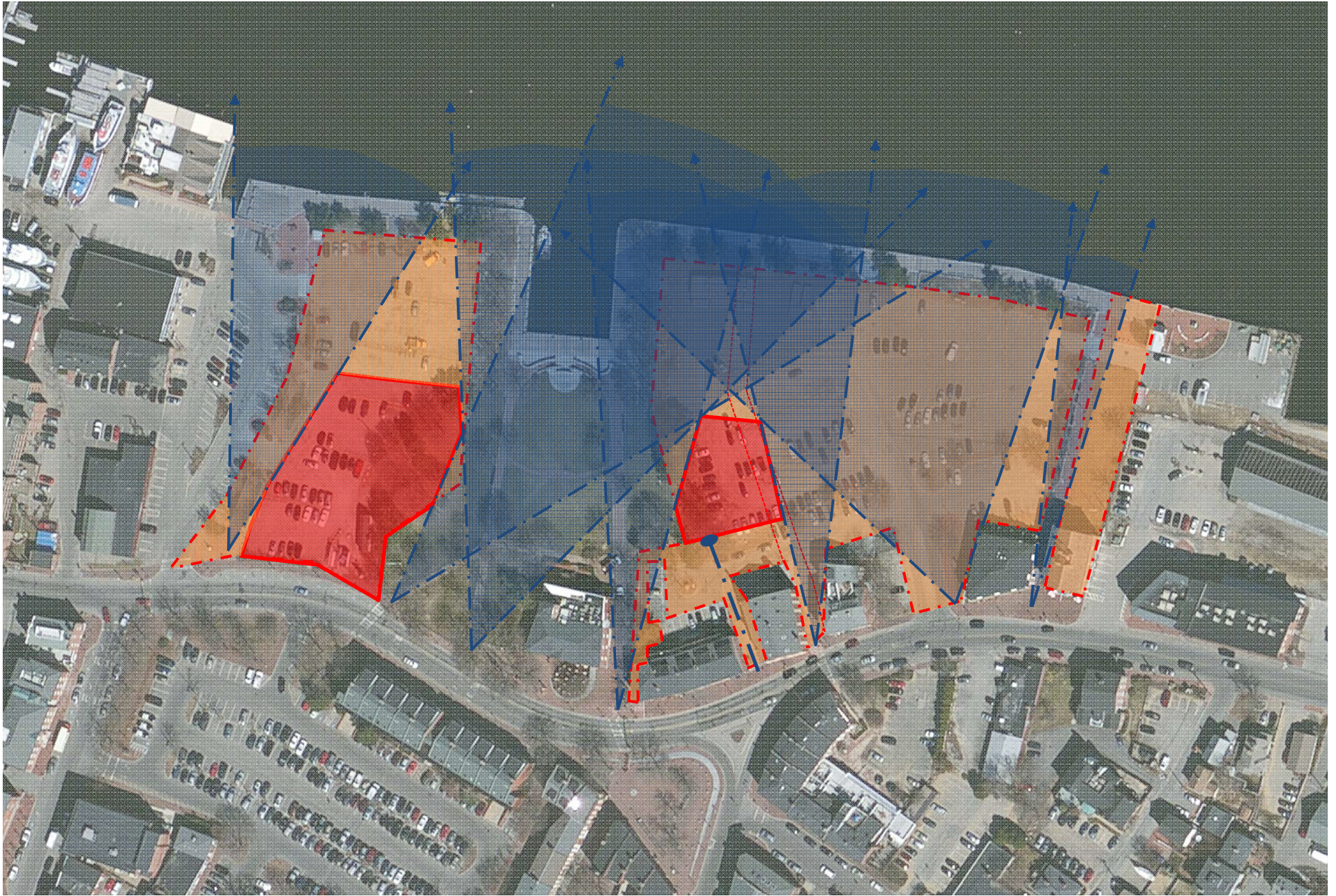
6. *Riverside Park*



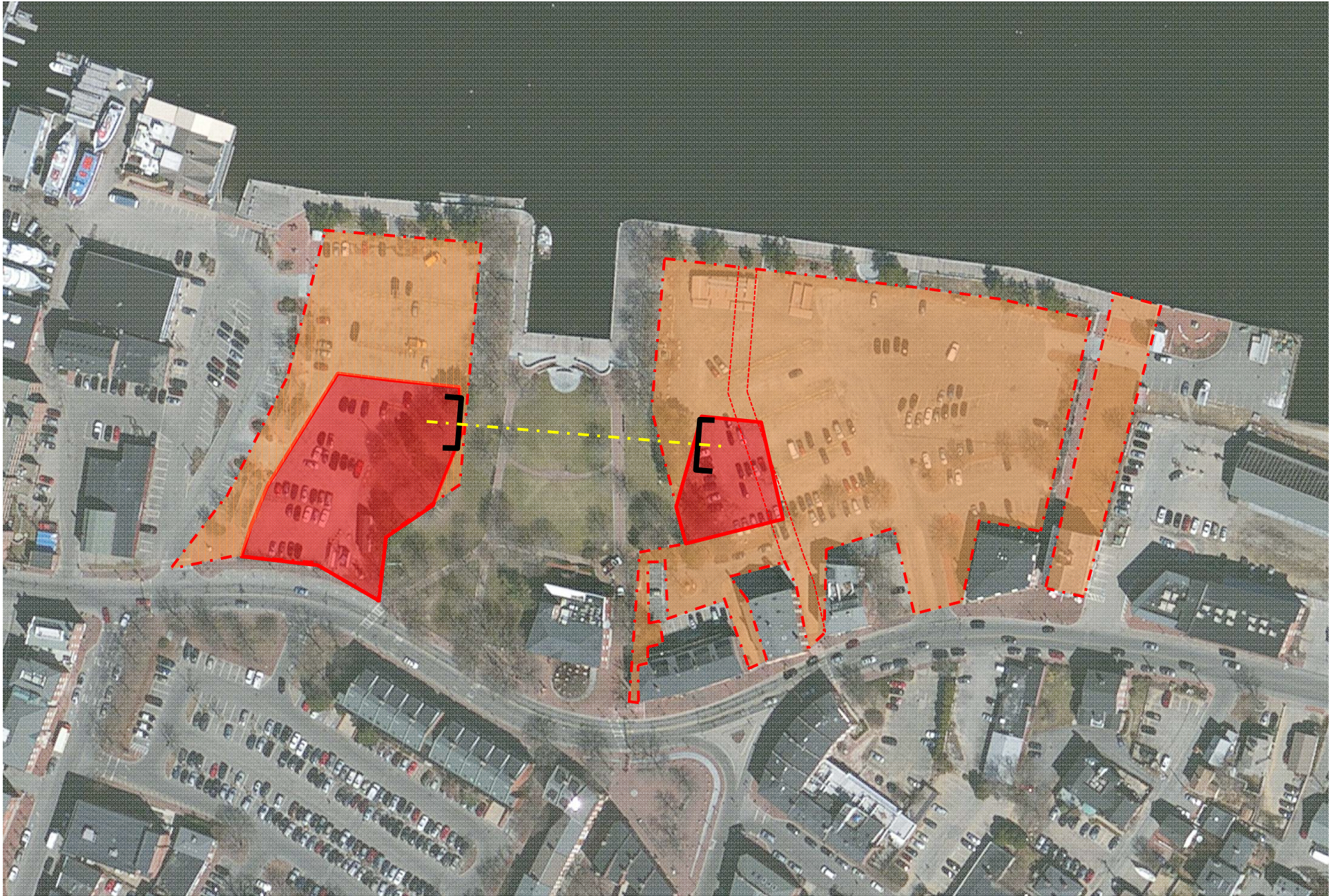
6. Riverside Park



7. Views



7. Views



8. Building Frontage Relationship between Buildings



8. Building Frontage – Merrimac Street



8. Building Frontage – Framing the Park



9. Building Massing – Respect for context



9. Building Massing – Respect for Context

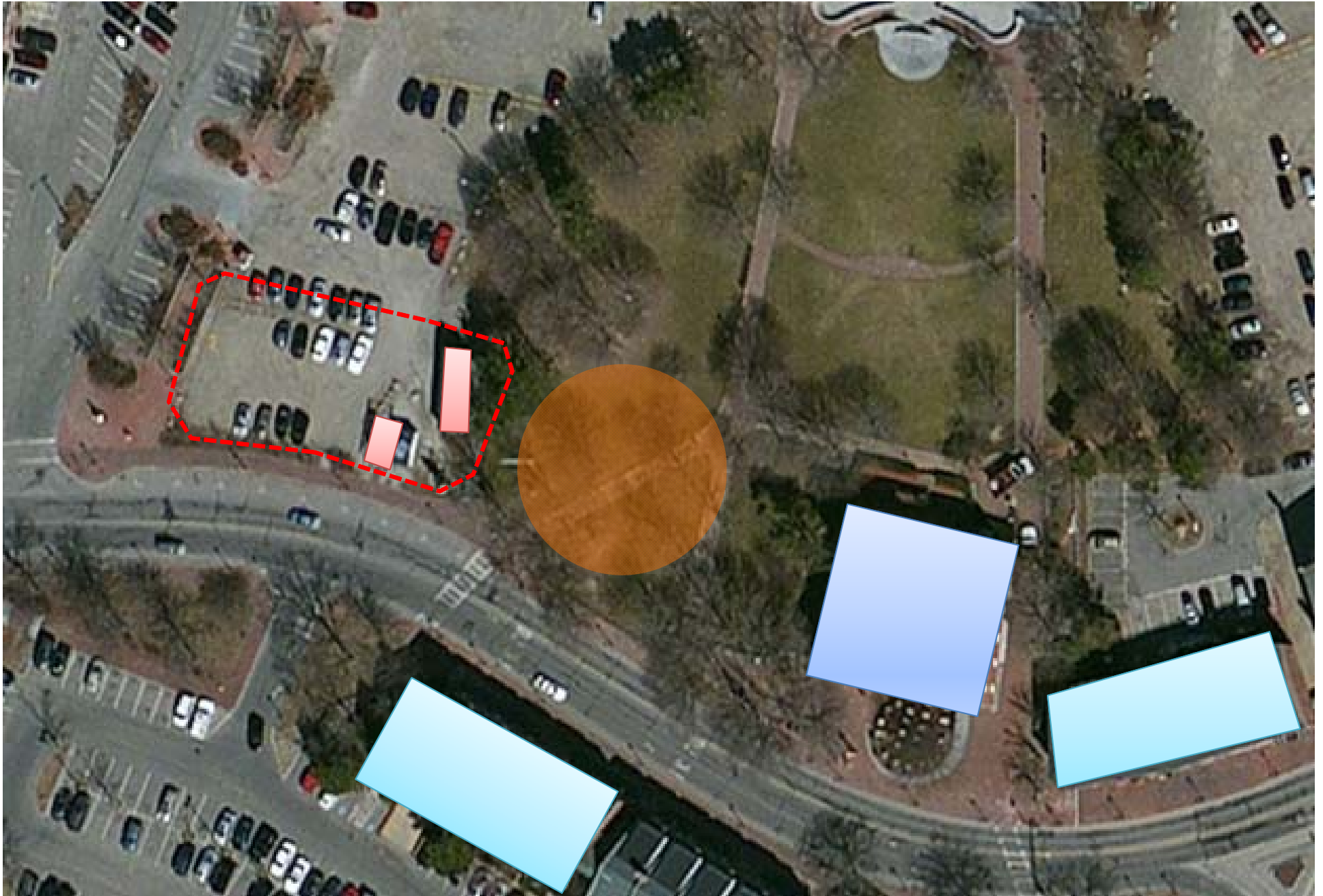


9. Building Massing – Respect for Context



Retail

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Retail

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9. Building Massing – Respect for context



10. Distribution of Parking/Open Space



Final Master Plan

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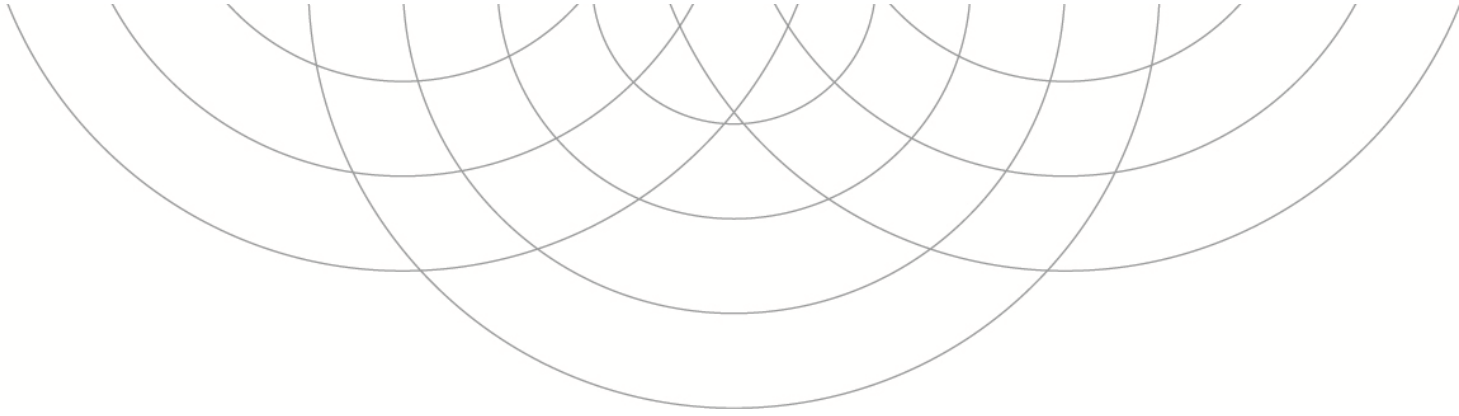


Final Master Plan

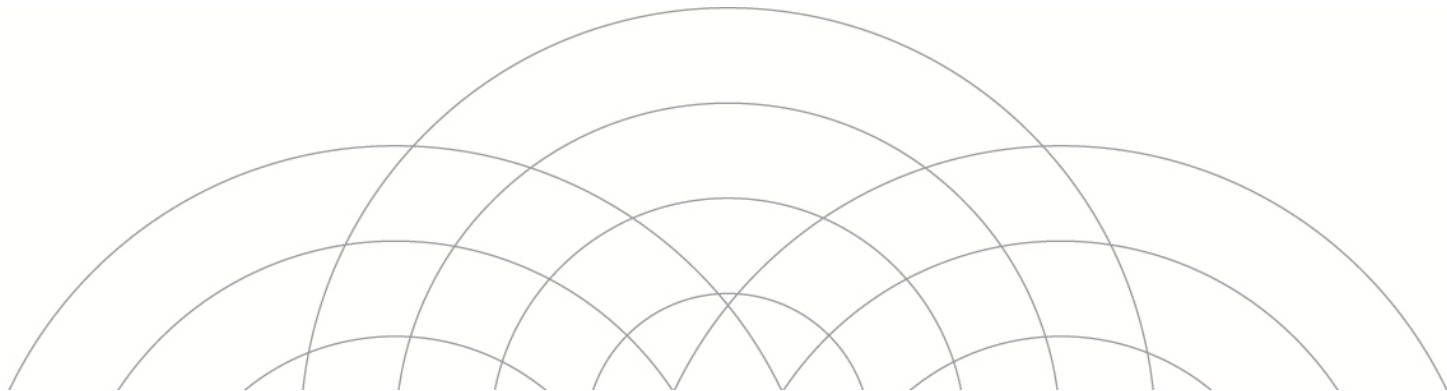
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Opportunities Diagram From June Presentation



Proposed Master Plan - Open Space & Connections





Open Space

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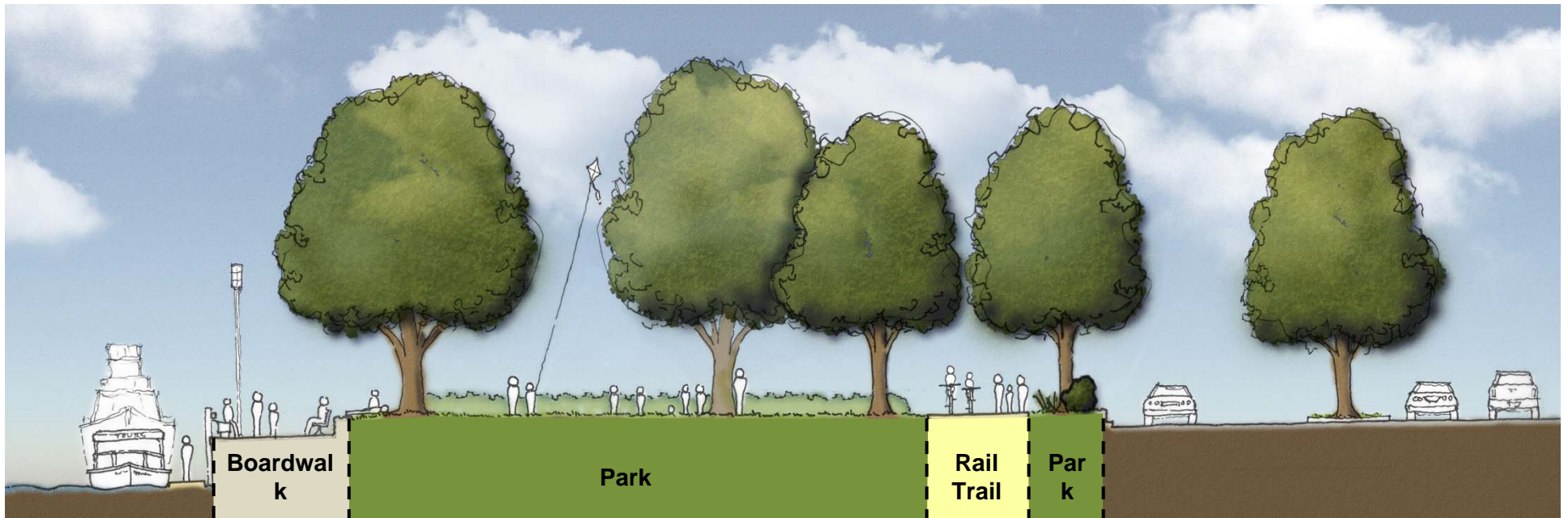
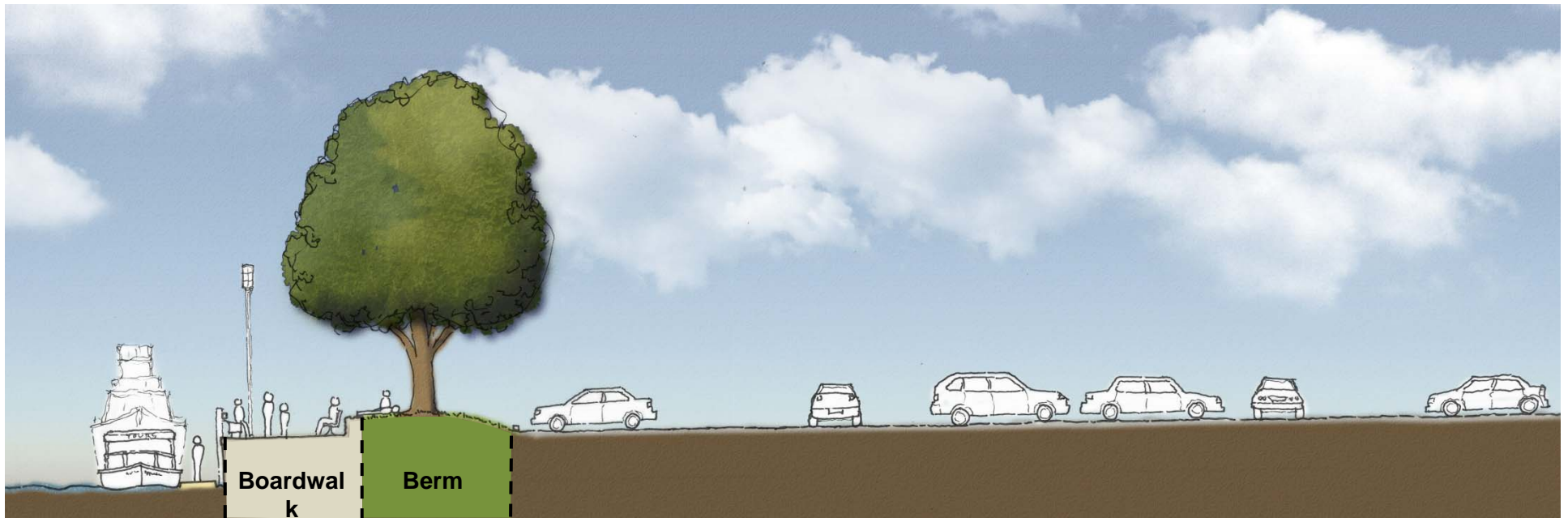
Existing
+/- 3.7
acres

Overall
30% increase



Proposed
+/- 4.8
acres

Open Space



Open Space

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Connections/Circulation – Rail Trail



Connections/Circulation – Ways to the Waterfront

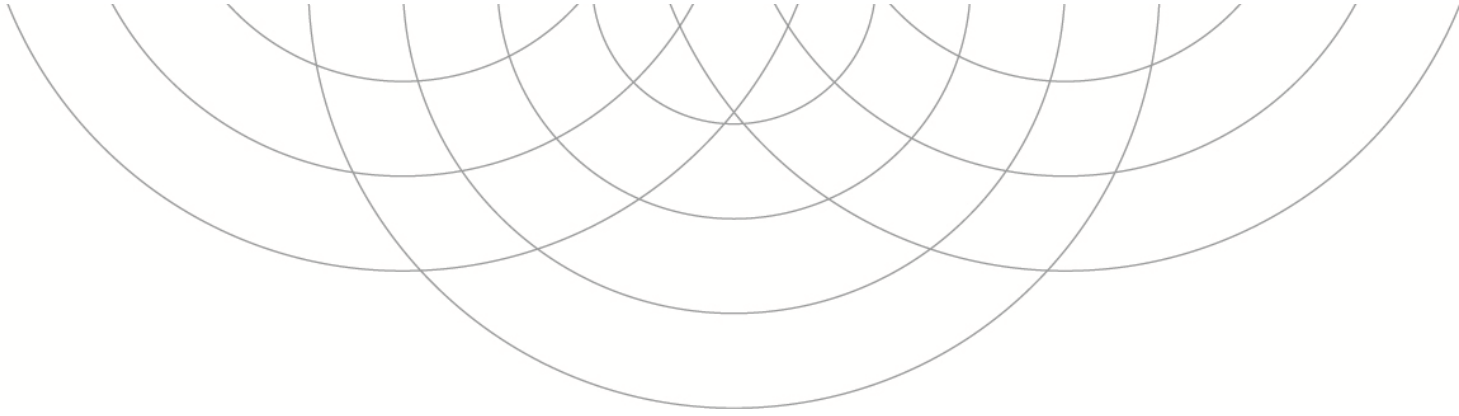
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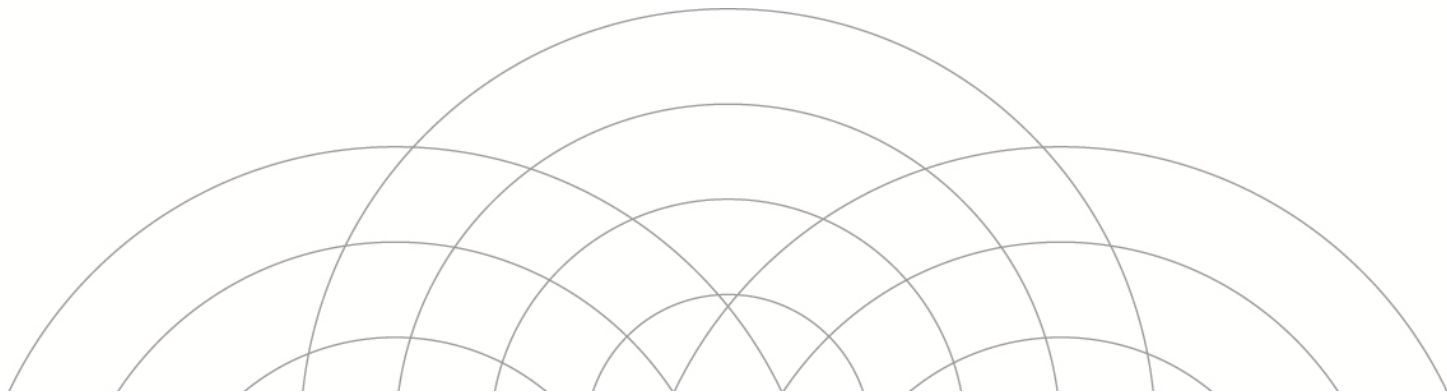
Connections/Circulation – Ways Across the Site



Connections/Circulation – Overall Network



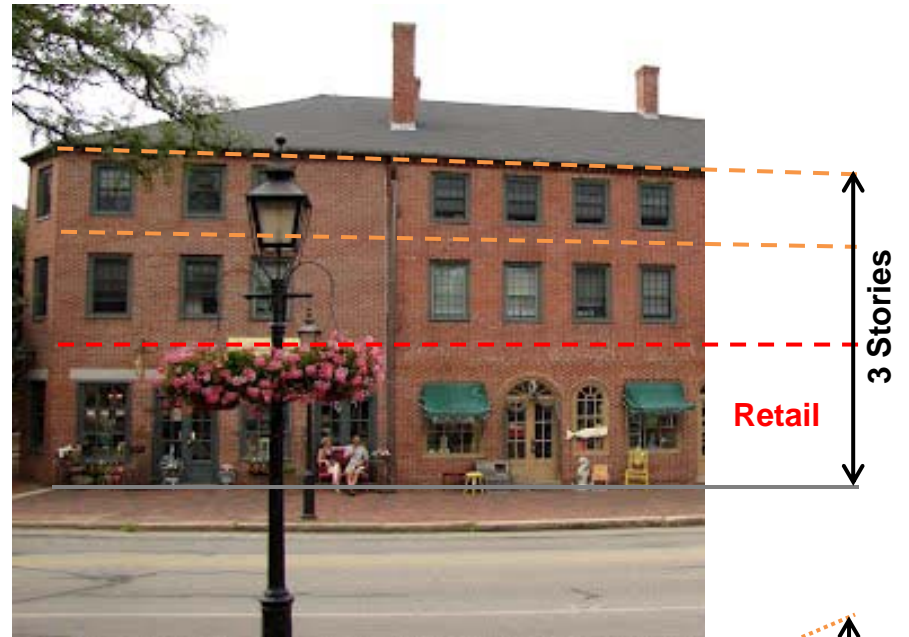
Proposed Master Plan - Scale and Character





Architectural Context – Building Scale

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Architectural Context – Building Disposition



Site Section



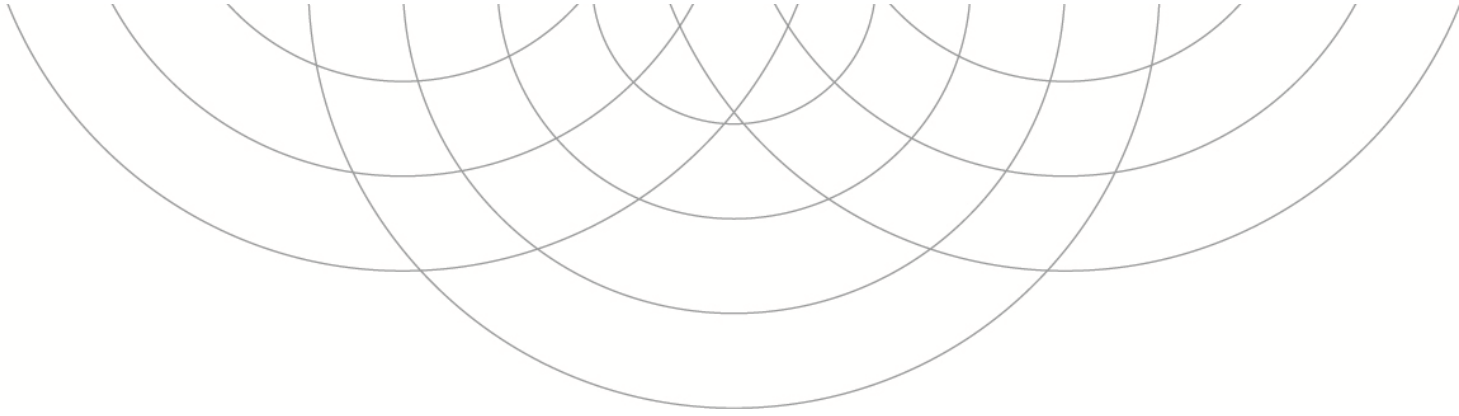
Architectural Character

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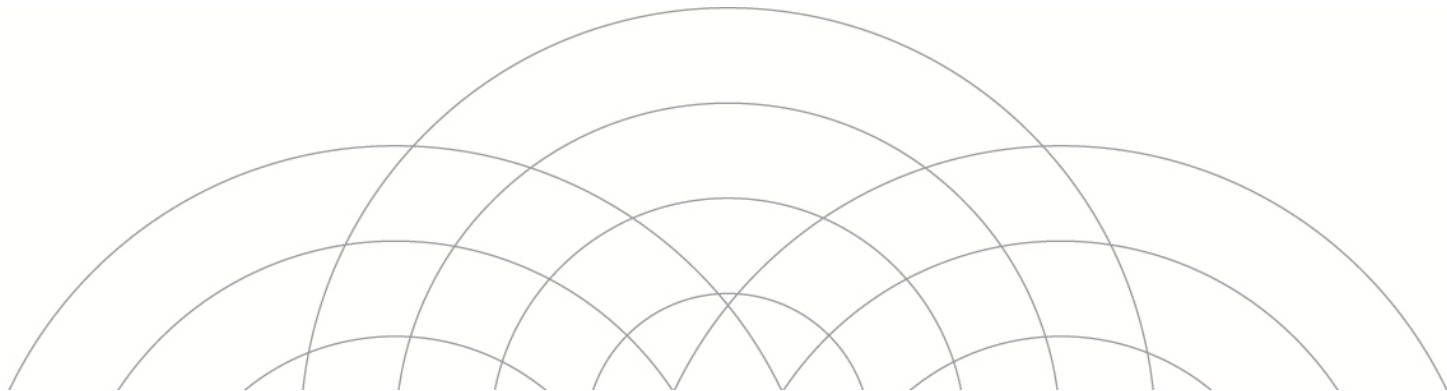


Landscape Character

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Proposed Master Plan - Rendered Views





Perspective Views – Aerial looking from Merrimack River towards Merrimac Street



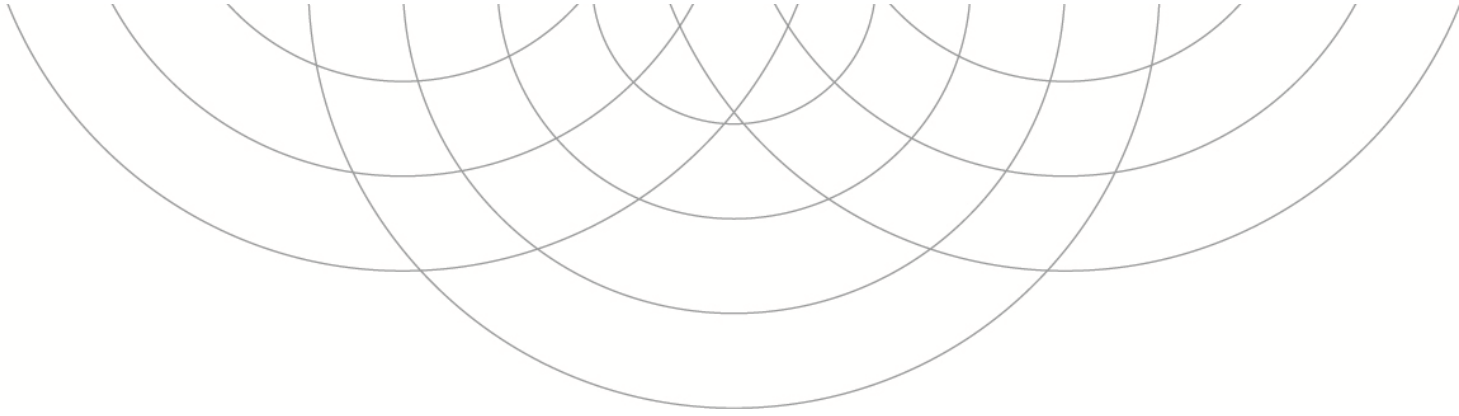
Perspective Views



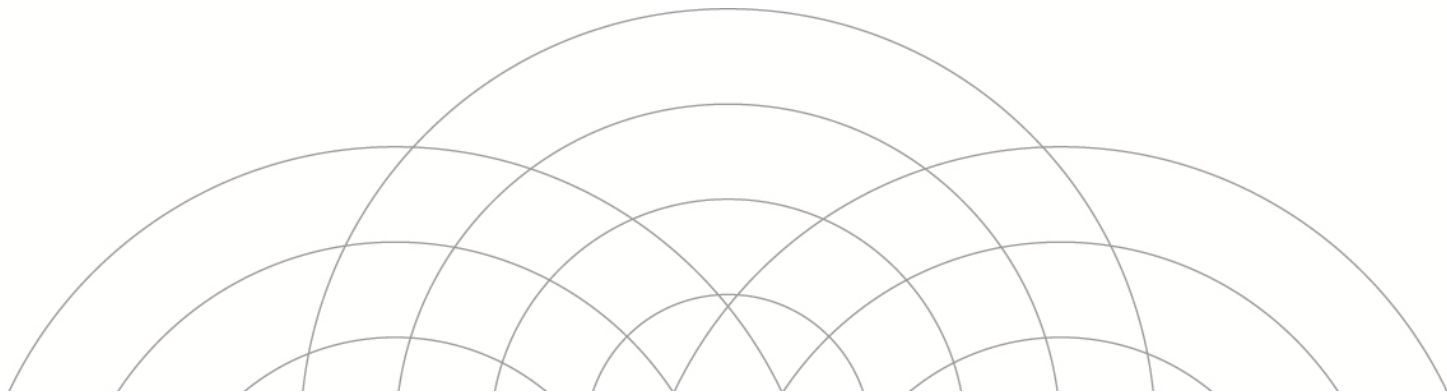
Perspective Views



- Waterfront Views Preserved and “framed” to minimize impact of parking
- Enhanced “Connections” of the downtown to the waterfront
- Main street doesn’t turn it’s back on this exceptional asset
- Make the waterfront a “year round” amenity
- Better park, better downtown
- Find a way to fulfill all these objectives in a way that is fiscally attainable and sustainable



Revised Master Plan





Existing
+/- 3.7
acres

Overall
30% increase



Proposed
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acres

Why A New Plan? – Open Space

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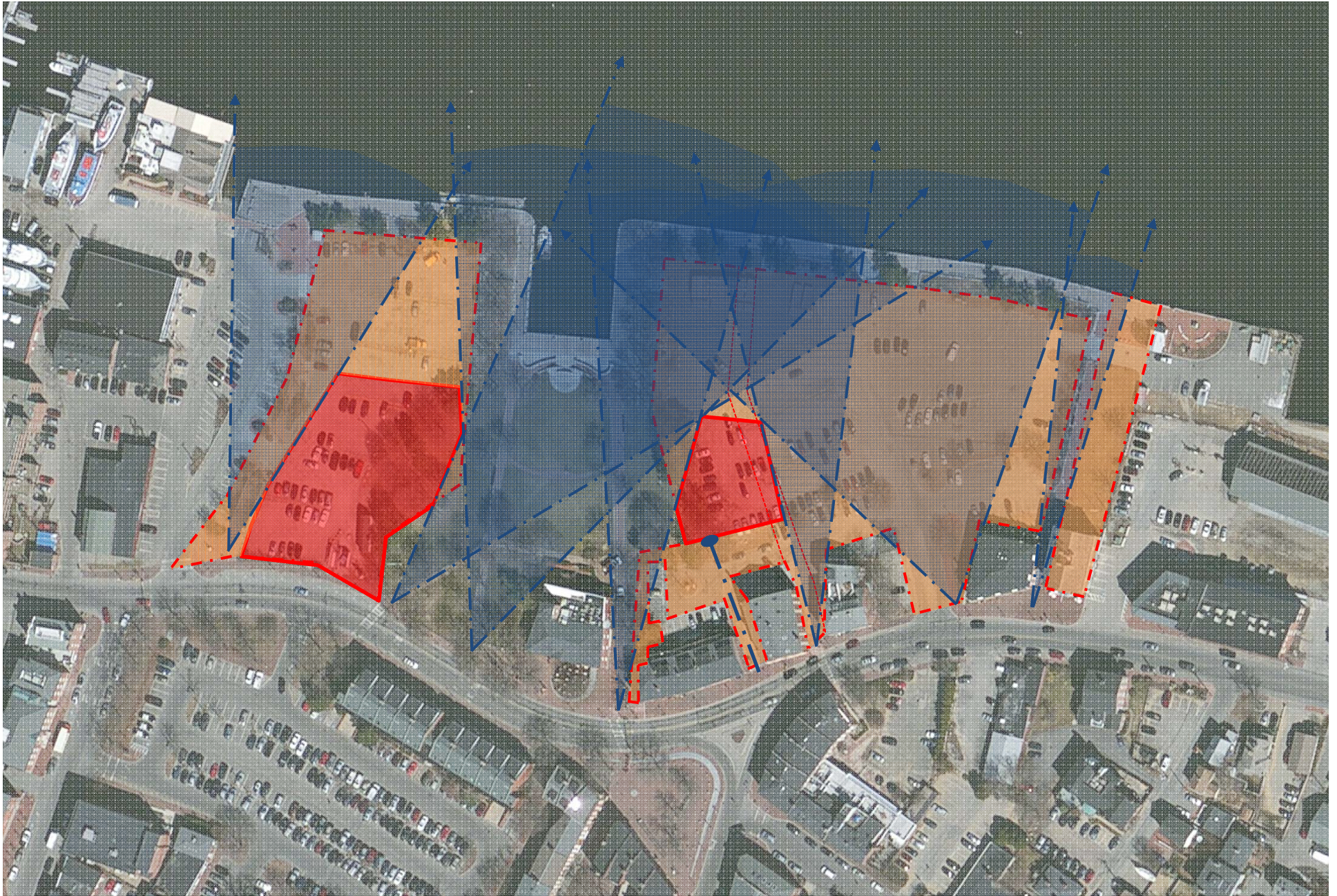
Why A New Plan? – Open Space

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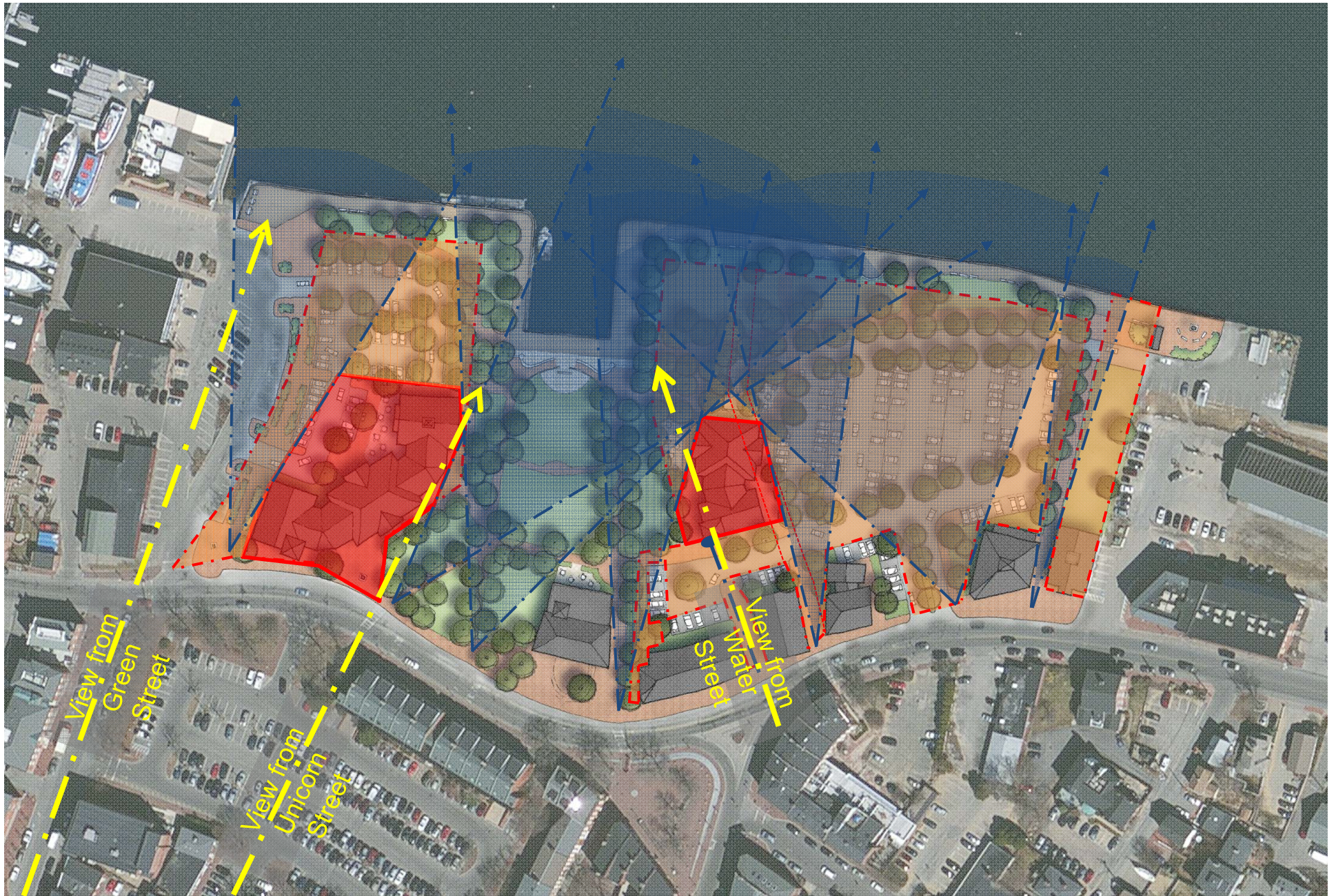
Why A New Plan? – Open Space

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Why a New Plan? - Views

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Why a New Plan? - Views

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Why a New Plan? - Massing

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Why a New Plan? - Massing

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Why a New Plan? - Massing

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Why a New Plan? – Connections/Circulation

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Why a New Plan? – Connections/Circulation

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Architectural Character

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Perspective Views — Aerial looking from Merrimack River towards Merrimac Street



Perspective Views — Aerial looking from Merrimack River towards Merrimac Street



Public Realm

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Perspective Views — Aerial looking from Town towards Merrimack River



Perspective Views — Aerial looking from Town towards Merrimack River

An aerial architectural rendering of a waterfront development. The scene shows a mix of historic-style brick buildings, modern multi-story structures, and lush green trees. A large, open green lawn is situated in the center, bordered by a red brick path. In the foreground, a blue body of water features several sailboats and a small boat. A paved promenade with a railing runs along the water's edge, where many small figures of people are walking. The overall atmosphere is one of a vibrant, walkable community space.

A Walk Around Market Landing



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- All development now better respects existing green spaces, NRA owned or not.
- Increased buffer between new buildings and Market Landing Park
- Smaller, separate buildings on west replaces single, larger building.
- New building locations better preserve all existing views and ways to water.
- Best real estate given to most “public” uses. -restaurant and deck at end of building..



What is currently this..... Could be.....





Questions?