

Portsmouth Master Plan Update

Planning Board Meeting – Update #2
March 26, 2026



Agenda

Portsmouth Master Plan – Planning Board Update #2

March 26, 2026

1. Purpose & Process Overview (5 min)

2. Draft Plan Framework (15 min)

- Vision
- Values
- Goals
- Core Narrative
- Spatial Development Framework

3. Adaptation Focus Areas (5 min)

Promoting Adaptation to Reinforce and Cultivate Gateway Neighborhood Centers

4. Key Recommendations (5 min)

- Infrastructure & Capital Investments
- Zoning & Development Review Processes

5. Discussion (30 min)

Legal Requirements of a Master Plan in New Hampshire

TITLE LXIV: Planning and Zoning

Chapter 674: Local Land Use Planning and Regulatory Powers

Section 2: Master Plan; Purpose and Description

Purpose: set down... the best and most appropriate future development of the area under the jurisdiction of the planning board, to aid the board in designing ordinances that result in preserving and enhancing the unique quality of life and culture of New Hampshire, and to guide the board in the performance of its other duties in a manner that achieves the principles of smart growth, sound planning, and wise resource protection.

Content: a set of statements and land use and development principles for the municipality with such accompanying maps, diagrams, charts, and descriptions as to give legal standing to the implementation ordinances and other measures of the planning board. Each section of the master plan shall be consistent with the others in its implementation of the vision section.

Required Sections:

- **Vision:** directs the other sections of the plan
 - Articulates the desires of the citizens affected by the master plan, not only for their locality but for the region and the whole state.
 - Contains a set of guiding principles and priorities to implement that vision

- **Land Use:** basis of all following optional sections
 - Translates the vision statements into physical terms
 - Shows existing conditions and the proposed location, extent, and intensity of future land use based on a study of population, economic activity, and natural, historic, and cultural resources

Optional Sections of a Master Plan in New Hampshire

TITLE LXIV: Planning and Zoning

Chapter 674: Local Land Use Planning and Regulatory Powers

Section 2: Master Plan; Purpose and Description

- Housing
- Economic Development
- Transportation
- Community Design

Foundational Topics

A unified strategy for land use, zoning, and community design integrating these.

- Utility and Public Services
- Energy
- Waste Reduction

Cross-Cutting Topics

Topics that are integral to and woven into the unified strategy articulated for the Foundational Topics.

- Community Facilities
- Recreation

- Cultural, Archeological, and Historic Resources
- Natural Resources
- Natural Hazards
- Coastal Management

- **Neighborhood Plan**

not included per se, but Adaptation Focus Area urban design frameworks are a start in this direction.

- **Implementation**

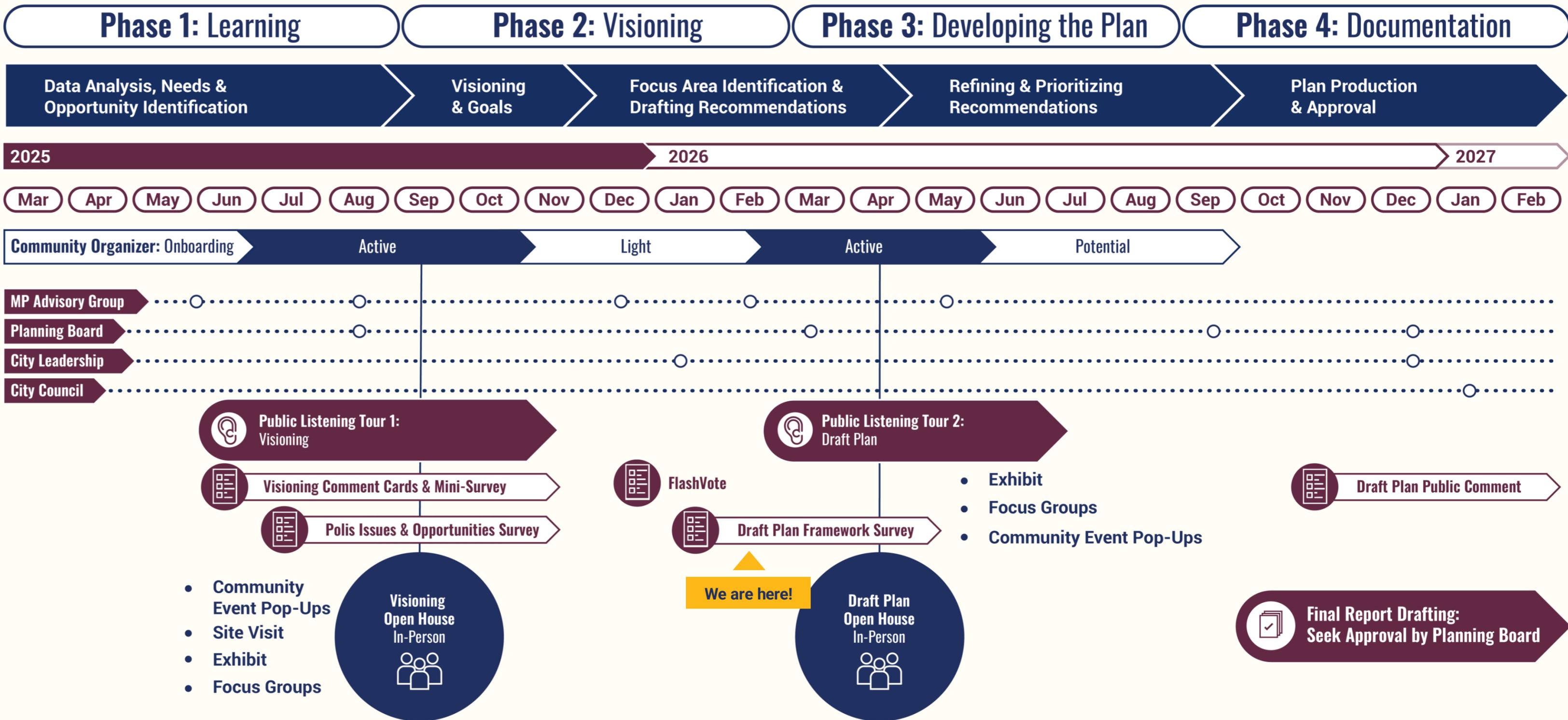
Will be included once recommendations and prioritization has been finalized.

- **Regional Concern**

Describes the specific areas in the municipality of significant regional interest...The intent of this section is to promote regional awareness in managing growth while fulfilling the vision statements.

Will not be a standalone section, but will be discussed as part of the vision and spatial development framework in particular as it relates to housing, transportation, and natural resources and hazards.

Planning Process



Visioning Engagement Update from **Anne Weidman**, our Community Organizer!



General Events

- Market Square Day (6/14)
- Juneteenth (6/19)
- Pride Festival (6/21)
- Prescott Park Festival Shows (7/2, 7/23)
- Farmers' Market (7/12, 8/2, 9/13)
- National Night Out (8/5)
- BIPOC Festival (8/17)
- PorchFest (9/20)
- Westival (9/20)
- Gather Mobile Food Market (9/29 at Senior Center, 10/15 at PHA Gosling Meadows, 10/27 at PHA Margeson Apt)
- Fall Family Fun Fest (10/25)

Targeted Outreach

- 100 Club member social (6/11)
- Plan NH lunch (6/17)
- Seacoast Online/Portsmouth Herald Reader Advisory Group (8/22)

Business Community

- Portsmouth Chamber Collaborative Board Meeting (7/17)
- StreetLife / Portsmouth Chamber (8/13)

Seniors & Accessibility

- PHA Senior Summer Cookout (7/24)
- Krempels Brain Injury Center (8/27)
- Wentworth Senior Living (9/2)
- Senior & Accessibility Focus Group (9/29)

Youth & Students

- Soul Models (8/12)
- Portsmouth Public Library Kid's Book Launch Event (9/29)
- New Franklin School Civics Class

The numbers so far....

28+ events attended

796+ 1:1 conversations & visioning comment cards

592+ polis issues & opportunities survey respondents

Draft Plan Framework Engagement Update from **Anne Weidman**, our Community Organizer!



The winter holiday season was deliberately a quieter time for engagement while we synthesized everything we had learned.

Our current focus is on:

- **Draft Plan Framework Survey** (a.k.a. Vision and Goals Survey)
- **April 22nd Draft Plan Open House**
- **Arts, Culture, Entrepreneurship and Small Business Mini-Survey**

We will be doing targeted outreach through the remainder of March and April to get feedback on draft recommendations and will continue to collect feedback following the Open House.

The numbers so far....

362 FlashVote Responses
(statistically representative sample)

108+ Vision and Goals Survey Responses (still live)

FlashVote Results

What we learned:

- Vision, Values and Goals all had majority support, with approximately 1/3 or less having something to add (34%, 16% and 18% respectively)
- Comments focused on managing growth and development impacts, fiscal health and resident tax burden, as well as affordability, accessibility
- Impatience with lofty/vague/vision language – appetite for concrete, actionable, prioritized recommendations with clear accountability framework

Dates: December 22-24

Profile of Participants

- Representative sample. Can be filtered by residency, age, gender, owner/non-owner, ward, panel membership status.
- Awareness of the Master Plan
 - 54% knew it was happening but hadn't participated
 - 27% had participated at least once
 - 18% didn't really know about it
 - 1% not sure

Draft Plan Framework

Written Component

- Vision
- Values
- Goals

Core Narrative

Spatial Development Framework

- Degree of Change
- Future Place Type Vision
- Adaptation Focus Areas
- Thresholds

Together these make up the **Vision** and **Land Use** components of the Master Plan.

The **Land Use** component will include additional detail to support the Spatial Development Framework which can be interpreted as the spatial expression of the written Vision, Values, and Goals.

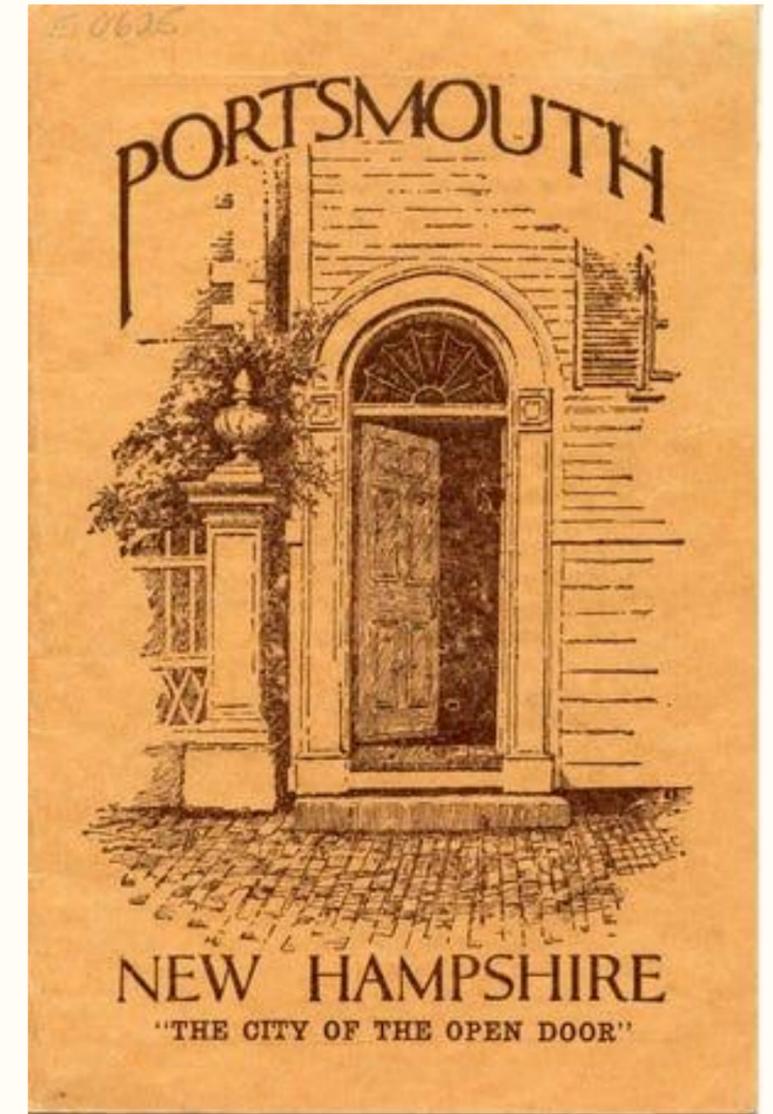
Draft Vision Statement

Portsmouth will continue to cultivate our role as the Seacoast region's cultural and economic hub, protect the places that anchor our shared identity and historic character, and invest in sustainability and resilience.

As the *City of the Open Door*, we will support the people who create our community, expand attainable housing options for residents at every stage of life, and ensure our City is accessible and well-connected.

Together we will work to keep Portsmouth a beautiful, vibrant, and welcoming home for generations to come.

Revisions made the statement more concise and strengthened the connection to attainable housing



According to [Seacoast Online](#), Portsmouth's slogan "The City of the Open Door" first appeared in a series of promotional pamphlets issued in the 1920s by the recently established Chamber of Commerce.

Draft Core Values

We value.....

Vibrancy

Our rich variety of organizations, businesses, and activities.

Authenticity

Our City's historic character and our ability to contribute to the City's ever-evolving identity through self-expression.

Revised
Language

Inclusivity

Welcoming and supporting the full range of ages, incomes, abilities, and identities of Portsmouth community members.

was "Diversity"

Connectivity

Transportation and communication systems that work for everyone and bring our City together.

Addition

Sustainability

Our commitment to being an Eco-Municipality by ensuring our actions protect and reduce our impact on the environment while supporting the needs of all people in Portsmouth today and for generations to come.

Resiliency

The capacity of our residents, built, and natural environment to adapt to a changing climate.

Draft Goals

1

Invest in Quality of Place

Improve the everyday lives of residents and visitors and fulfill the community's desire for a sustainable future by investing in and connecting them to Portsmouth's environmental and cultural amenities.

2

Calibrate and Create Diverse Housing

Enable, incentivize, and produce diverse and attainable housing for all ages and incomes that will support current residents and welcome newcomers.

Revised to emphasize attainable housing

3

Promote Balanced, Fiscally Responsible Development

Promote "smart growth" development patterns and processes that contribute to fiscal health and manage residential property tax burden through aligned land use policy and municipal capital investment.

Addition

4

Cultivate Our Economy

Support the local artists, small businesses, and anchor employers that drive Portsmouth's regional gravity.

5

Protect Core Identity

Safeguard the cultural, historic, and environmental assets that make the City unique and beautiful, and ensure that future development contributes to Portsmouth's character.

Core Narrative

A mature, built-out downtown that is stable and well-loved

Over the last decade, Portsmouth's downtown has expanded with residential and hotel projects, concentrated in the North End. The remaining focus Downtown should be about preserving and surgically fine-tuning to keep it at its best and make sure it continues to be accessible to all.



Ongoing North End construction, Seacoast Online



Downtown Aerial Photo, southernmainecoast.com

Prices are driving locals to gateway neighborhoods

Local residents and businesses are getting priced out of downtown. Many must look beyond areas that are walkable to downtown to find affordable space.

What Can Typical Households Afford?

Low-Income Senior

A retired senior living on their own, dependent on social security for income.

Household Income	\$45k
Affordable Rent	\$1,100
Affordable For Sale	\$180k

Potential Housing

Connors Cottage: low-income senior housing owned by the Portsmouth Housing Authority
1BR rent at \$926 per month



40% AMI

Food Service Workers

Two food service workers earning \$34k per year, with one child at home.

Household Income	\$67k
Affordable Rent	\$1,700
Affordable For Sale	\$270k

Potential Housing

Ruth's Place: affordable and workforce housing owned by the Portsmouth Housing Authority
2BR rent at \$1,298 per month



60% AMI

Office Workers

A business analyst earning \$85k annually married to an office administrator earning \$40k annually.

Household Income	\$125k
Affordable Rent	\$3,100
Affordable For Sale	\$500k

Potential Housing

Brewery 145: recently-built apartment complex in the up-and-coming West End neighborhood
2BR rent at \$3,325



120% AMI

Management

A manager earning \$160k married to a professional earning \$80k annually, with two children.

Household Income	\$240k
Affordable Rent	\$6,000
Affordable For Sale	\$960k

Potential Housing

163 Ocean Rd: A four-bedroom single family home along Lafayette Rd with 2,800 square feet
Listing price \$975,000



240% AMI

Who can buy Downtown?

Business Owner

A successful local business owner earning \$400k per year is married to a teacher earning \$50k annually.

Household Income	\$450k
Affordable Rent	\$11.2k
Affordable For Sale	\$1.8M

Potential Housing

199 Gates St: historic 3-bedroom, 1800 sqft single-family home in Portsmouth's South End
Listing Price \$1.85M



430% AMI

Boston Area Empty Nesters

Two doctors from suburban Boston are downsizing and moving into Portsmouth. They have \$2M in home equity.

Household Income	\$550k
Affordable Rent	\$13.8k
Affordable For Sale	\$2.5M+

Potential Housing

115 Court St: Victorian era 4-bedroom, 2300 sqft single family home in downtown Portsmouth
Listing Price \$2.23M



520% AMI

Buying a home, condo, or townhome in downtown Portsmouth is generally far out of reach for residents working locally, requiring an income more than 4x the local median.

Many downtown Portsmouth homebuyers are likely new to the area, having earned high incomes elsewhere and accumulated home equity in other expensive markets.

Data Sources:
 Portsmouth Housing Authority, Zillow

Emerging public and private investment hubs beyond downtown

West End + Senior Center, Portsmouth Green + Community Campus, Outer Woodbury/Gosling



West End Yards, 2022



The Veridian at Portsmouth Green, 2017



The Residences at Durgin Lane, In-Progress



Senior Activity Center, 2020



Community Campus, 2022 - '25



Chris Rice Skate Park, 2024



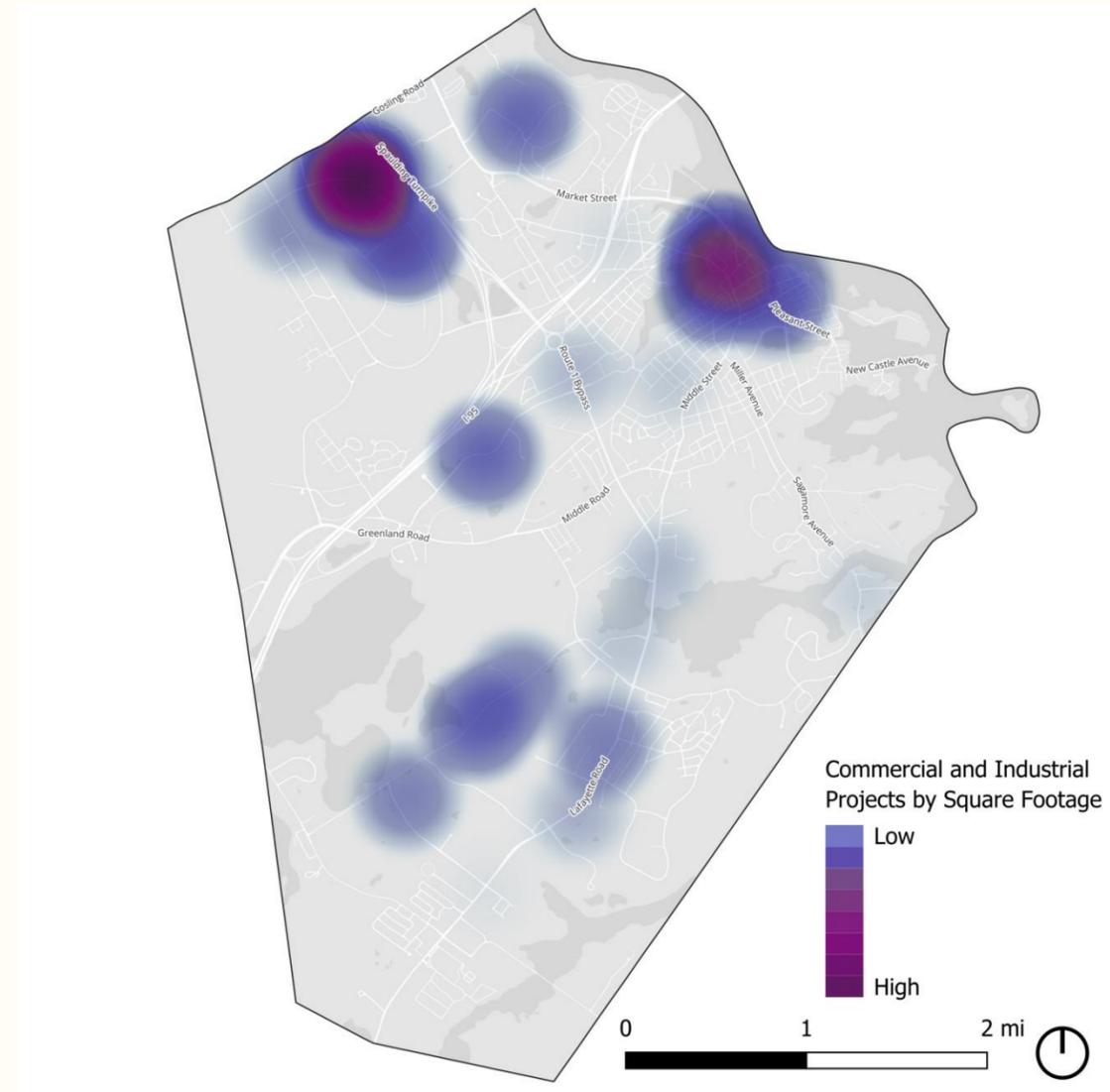
Rail Trail / Seacoast Greenway, 2024

Emerging public and private investment hubs beyond downtown

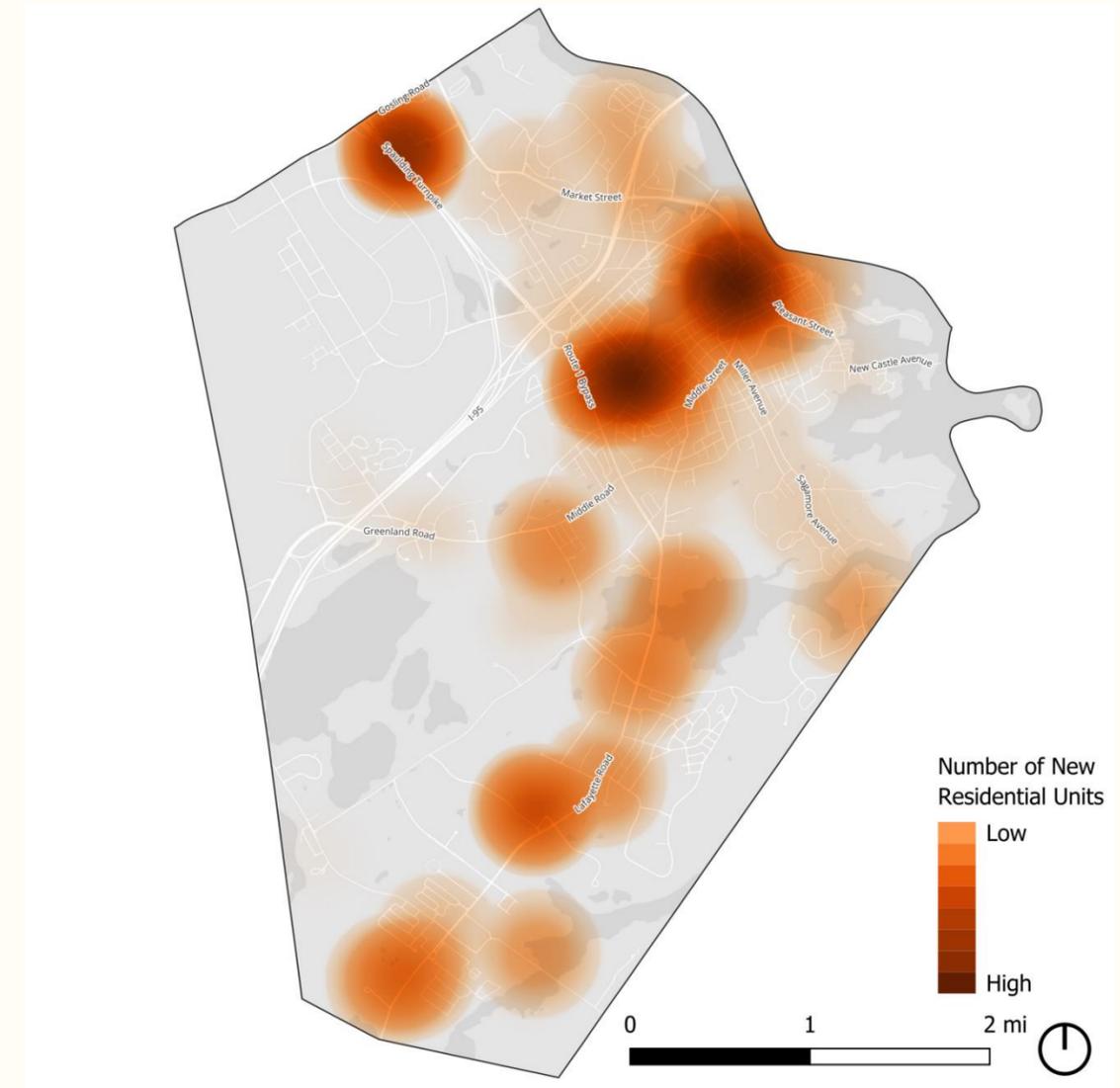
West End + Senior Center, Portsmouth Green + Community Campus, Outer Woodbury/Gosling

Recent development activity hot spots that stand out:

- Downtown's North End (comm + resi)
- Pease (comm)
- West End (resi)
- Lafayette / Rt 1 (comm + resi)



Development Hot Spots
Commercial and Industrial (by square footage)



Development Hot Spots
Residential (by dwelling units)

Planning for Gateway Neighborhoods

The Gateway Neighborhood Districts, adopted into the City's zoning in 2017 to address the need for increased supply and diversity of housing in Portsmouth, have generated a strong response from the real estate development market. Now that we can see what the market is doing on its own, we can see what gaps and rebalancing might be beneficial.



Gateway Corridor (G1)

Gateway Neighborhood Mixed Use Corridor

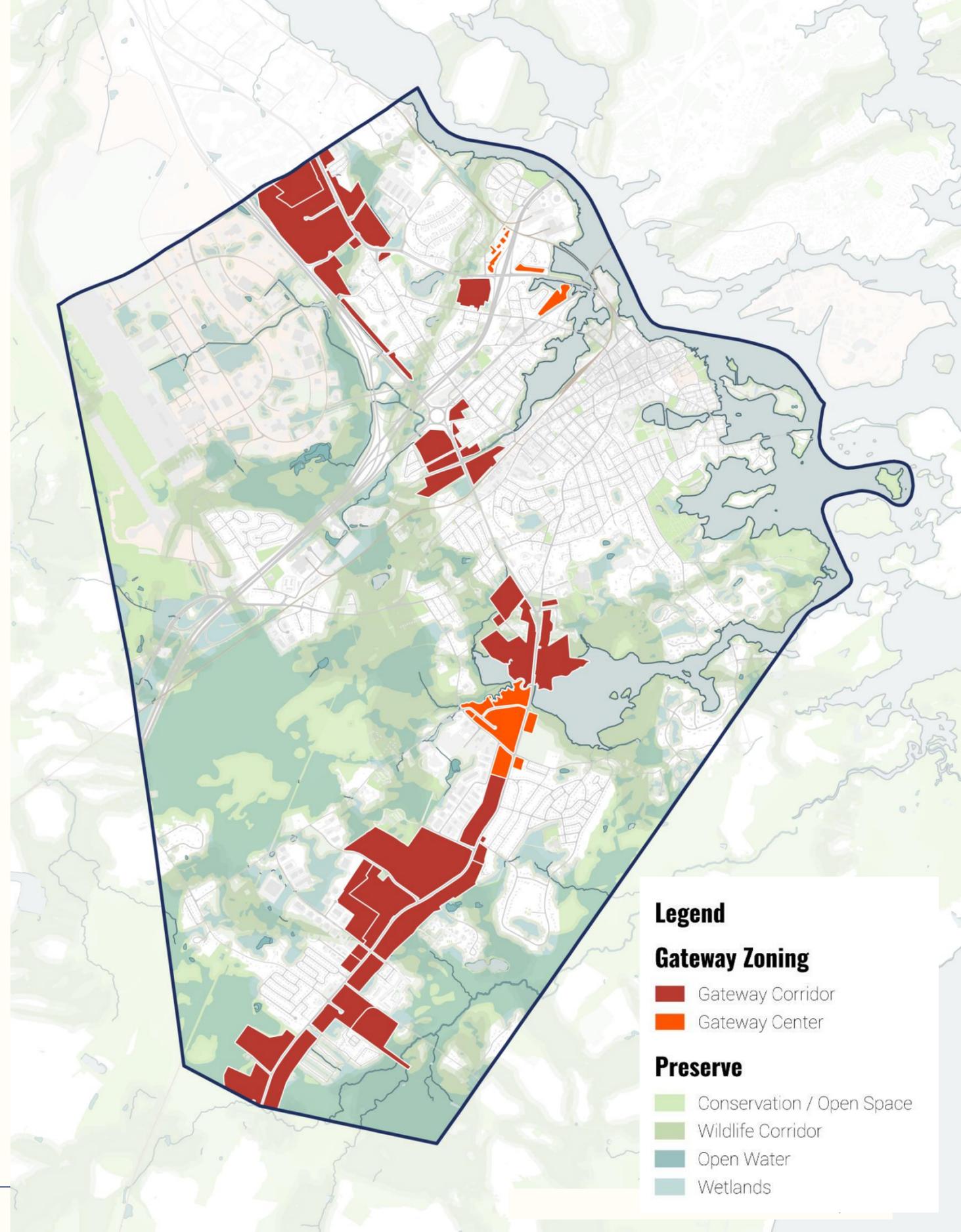
Purpose: to facilitate a broad range of housing types together with compatible commercial, fabrication, and civic uses in a high-quality pedestrian environment with moderate to high density.



Gateway Center (G2)

Gateway Neighborhood Mixed Use Center

Purpose: to facilitate a broad range of residential and mixed use development at a pedestrian scale and moderate density providing commercial uses that benefit residents of the district and surrounding neighborhoods along major corridors.

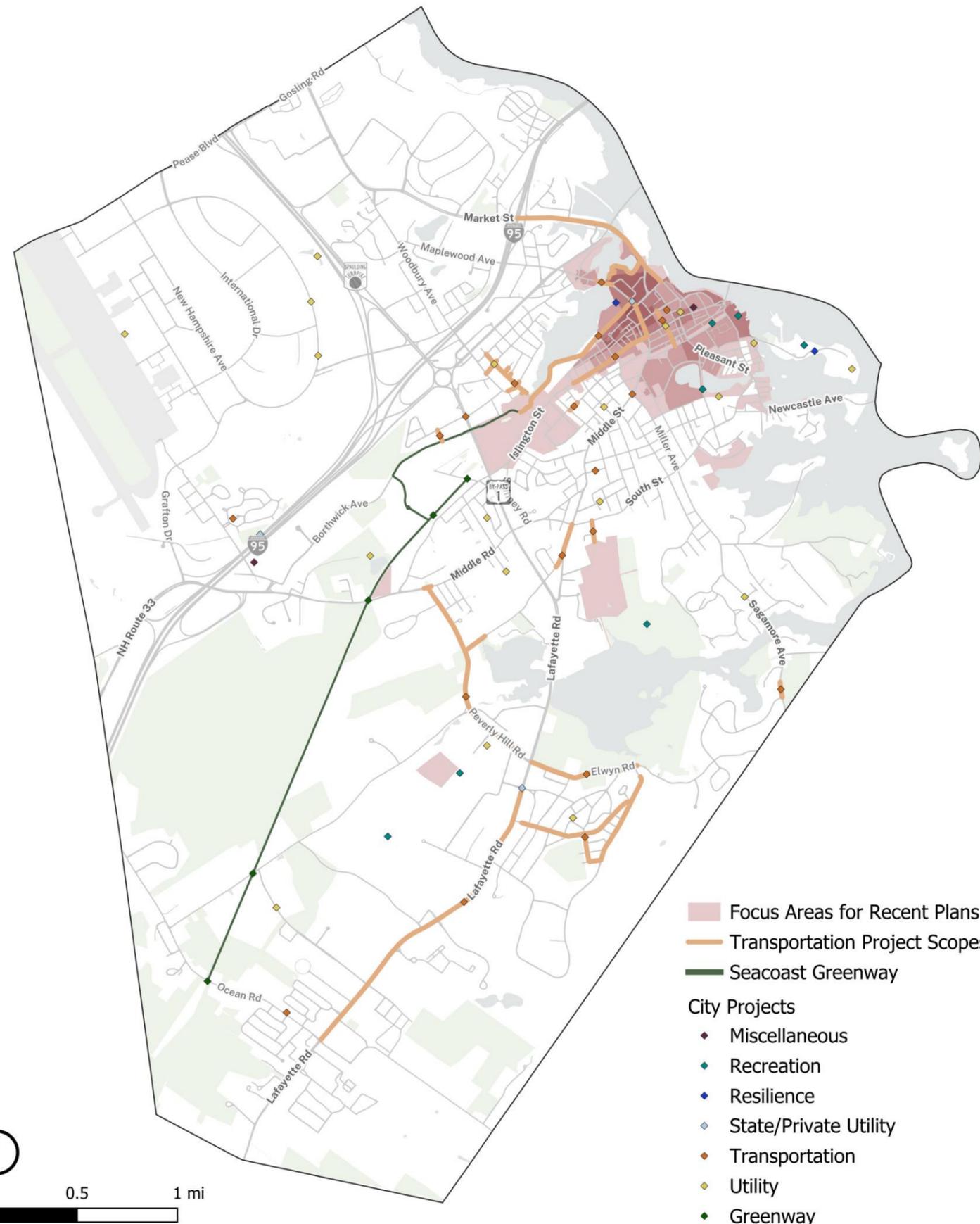


Planning for Gateway Neighborhoods

The majority of district-level planning has been focused on Downtown. Gateway neighborhoods need help tying transportation and recreation investments to land use and development planning so that the whole adds up to more than the sum of its parts.

Apart from citywide plans, a majority of district and neighborhood-specific plans focused on **Downtown or areas immediately abutting Downtown.**

- Market Square Master Plan (2025)
- Historic Properties Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment (2018)
- Prescott Park Master Plan (2017)
- Vaughan Worth Bridge Revitalization Strategic Planning Committee Final Report and Recommendations (2017)
- Deer Street Parking Garage & Deer Street Associates Development Traffic Impact and Access Study (2016)
- North End Vision Plan (2015)
- West End Vision Plan (2015)
- Maplewood Avenue Complete Street Study (2014)
- Parking Supply and Demand Analysis + Strategies (2012)
- Downtown Parking Focus Group Report (2010)
- Islington Street Corridor Improvement Action Plan (2009)
- Market St Extension Gateway Streetscape Improvements Study (2008)



Spatial Framework

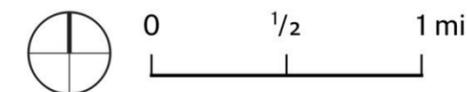
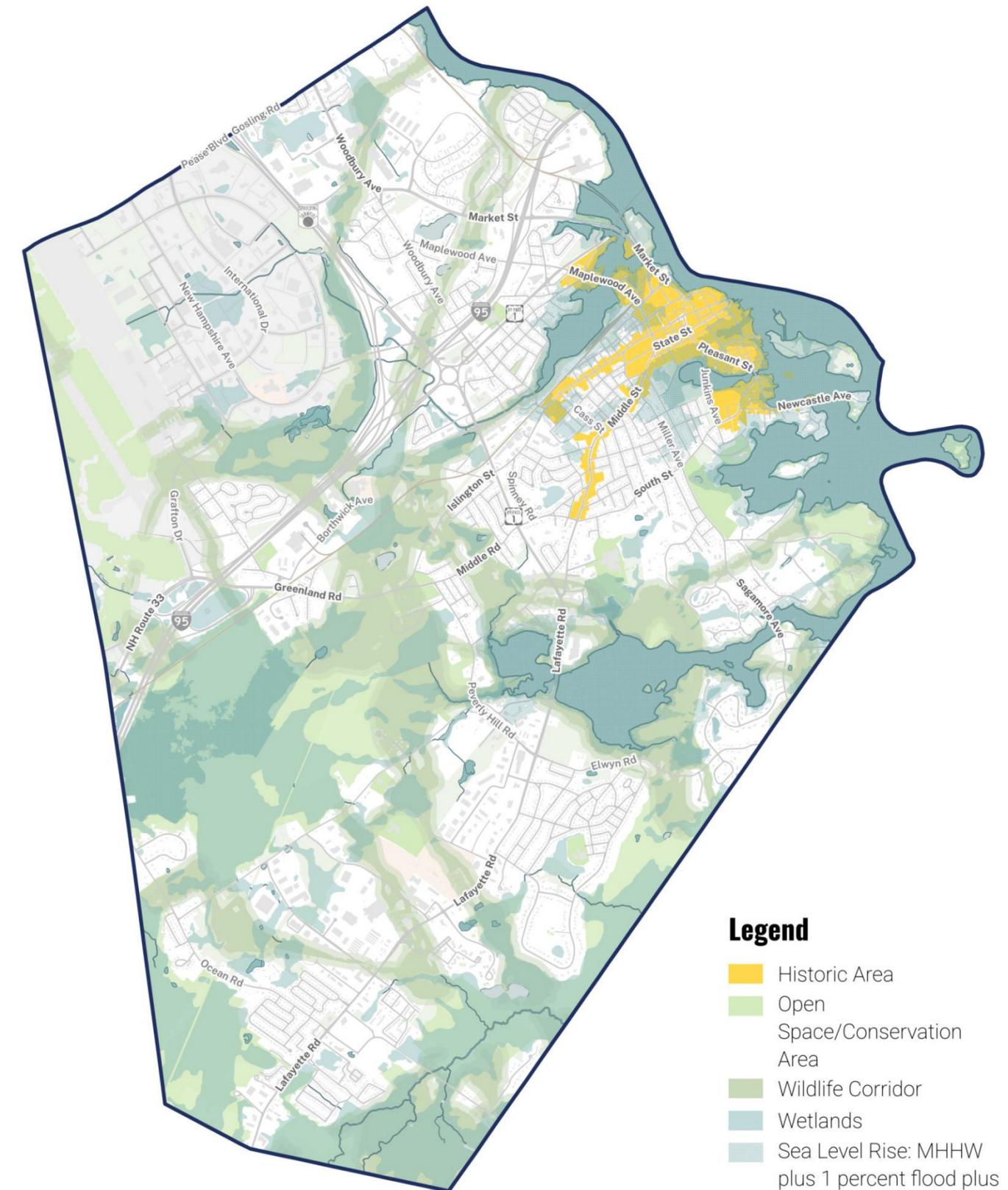
Development Constraints
Degree of Change
Future Place Type Vision
Adaptation Focus Areas

Development Constraints

- Identifies constraints on future development in Portsmouth:
 - Environmental
 - Coastal flood risk
 - Wetlands
 - Conservation Areas and Open Space
 - Ecological & Wildlife Migration Corridors
 - Infrastructure (water/sewer)
 - Historic designation

- Provides a framework for identifying where there is existing capacity or future potential to support additional development.

Development Constraints



Degree of Change

This map from the Public Visioning Open House shows a vision for how Portsmouth will shape and direct changes in the existing development patterns of the City.

Preserve – encourage adaptive reuse, restoration, conservation

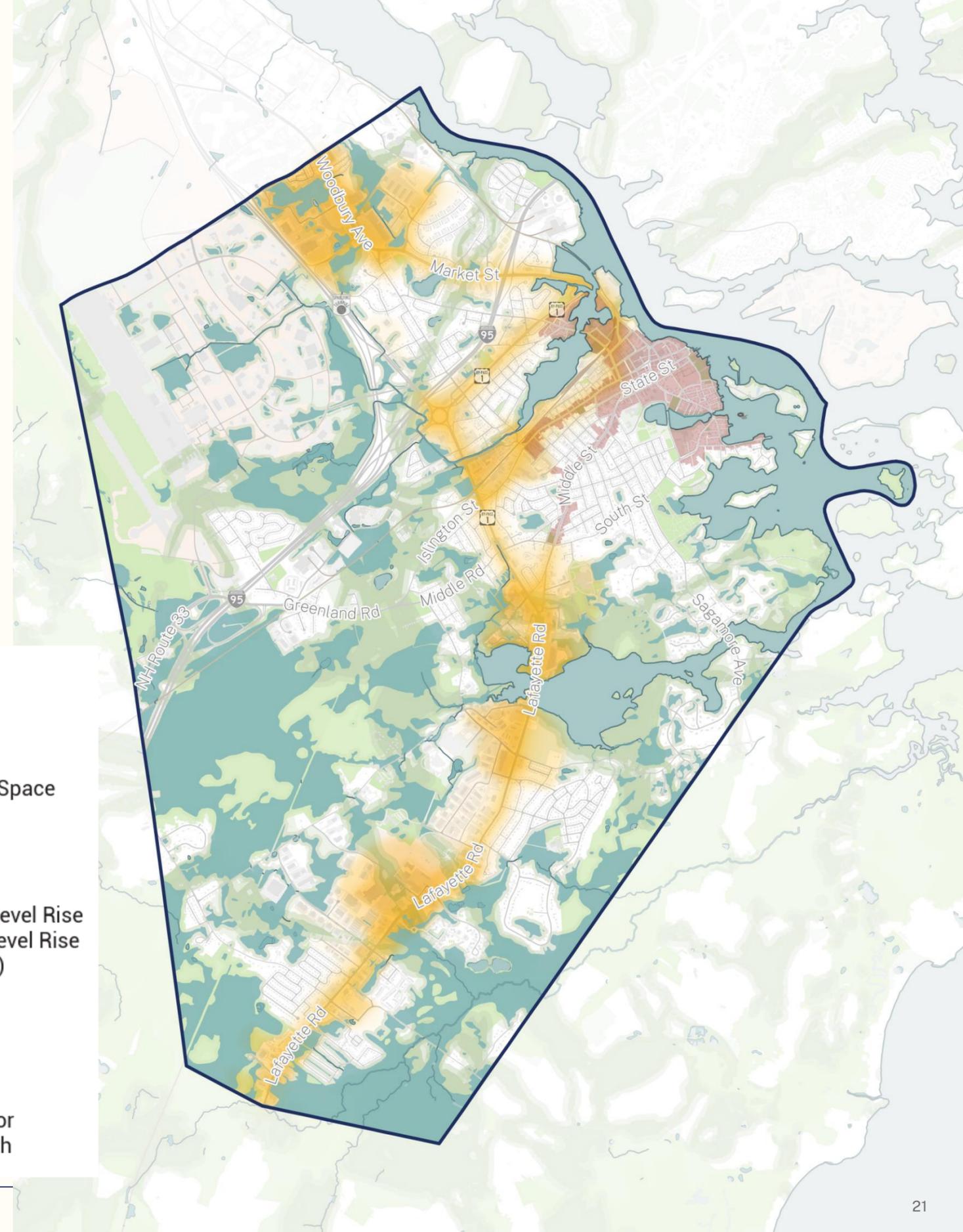
- Characteristics: significant collective ecological and historical value to Portsmouth’s identity, quality of life, sustainability, and resilience
- Investment: focus on functional and experiential improvements within environmental, infrastructural, and cultural resource constraints
- Regulation: align allowable future development to constraints

Enhance – targeted improvements for flexibility and quality of life

- Characteristics: built out and have strong existing development patterns and norms, capable of supporting Portsmouth’s needs in the coming decade
- Investment: enhance mobility, public realm, and amenities and services for quality of life
- Regulation: calibrate zoning to support diversity and flexibility where needed

Adapt – promote a shift in development pattern

- Characteristics: single-use or mobility-limited areas where the development pattern is more fragmented or less versatile and flexible in supporting the full range of Portsmouth’s needs (these tend to be more auto-oriented with disconnected street networks)
- Investment: promote connected street and trail networks, with supportive utilities, services, recreation, and open space amenities
- Regulation: promote denser, clustered development at a pedestrian scale with clear mixed-use commercial cores and diverse housing types



Legend

Preserve

- Historic Designation
- Conservation / Open Space
- Wildlife Corridor
- Open Water
- Wetlands
- Flood Risk with Sea Level Rise (1% Flood + 6ft Sea Level Rise at High Tide - MHHW)

Enhance

- Established Patterns

Adapt

- Areas with capacity for adaptation and growth

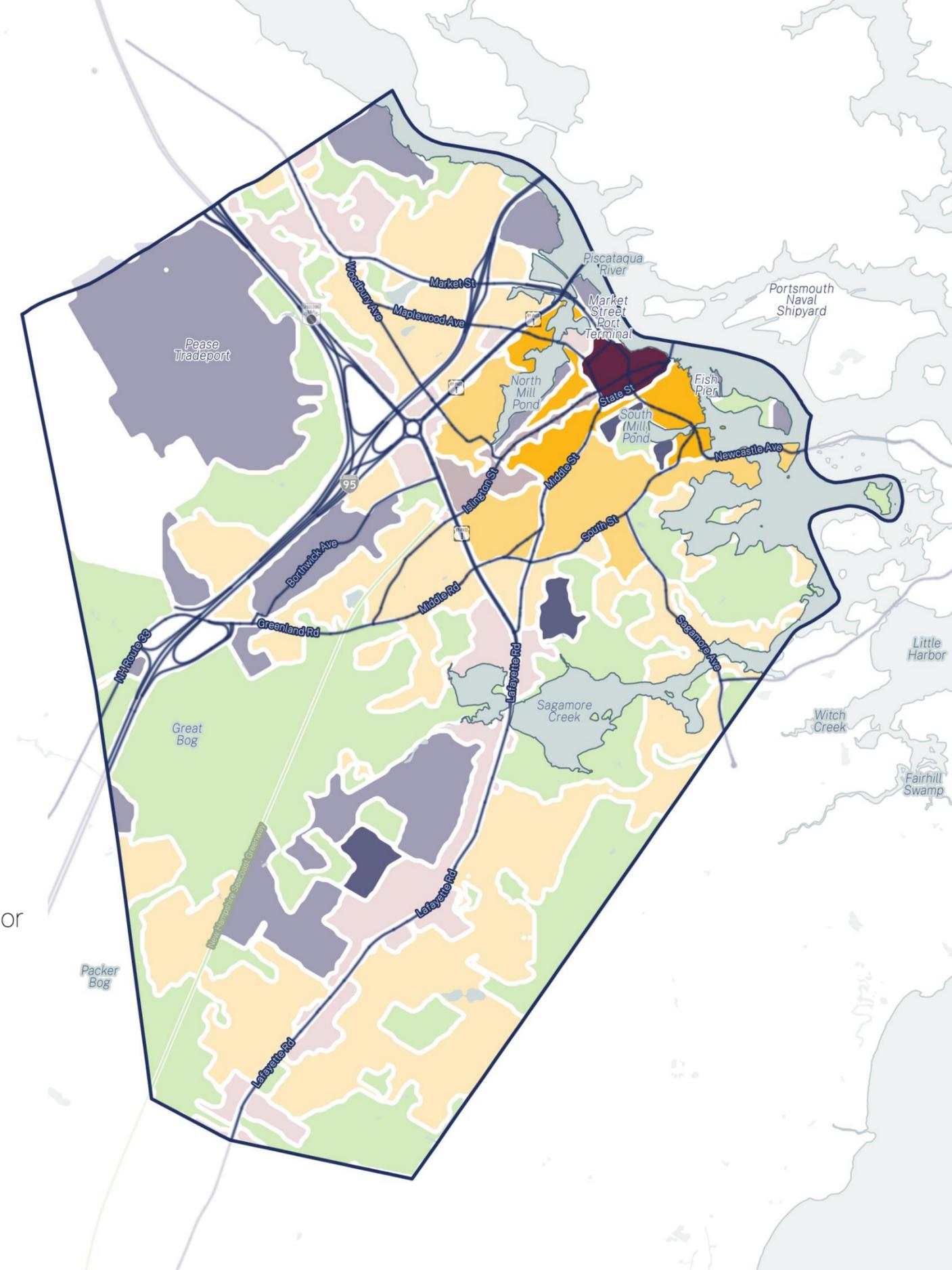
“Mental Map” of Place Types Today

This mental map blends form, network connectivity, and land use patterns.

- This hybridizes form-based development patterns by also considering use, network connections, and role in neighborhood structure and experience.
- This is the starting point for thinking about how Portsmouth wants to shape these places

Place Types

- Urban Core
- Neighborhood Corridor
- Suburban Corridor
- Urban Neighborhood
- First Ring Suburb
- Second Ring Suburb
- Civic Hub
- Employment Hub
- Corridor



Place Type Definitions

Centers & Corridors

Centers and corridors are the mixed-use activity hubs of Portsmouth.

Urban Core

Regional destination with dense and dynamic mix of housing, commercial uses, public spaces, institutions, and infrastructure.



Neighborhood Corridor

Mixed-use, linear local destination that is a hub of social and commercial activity with resident-oriented services, amenities and small businesses.



Suburban Corridor

Auto-oriented linear regional destination for "big box" recreational, commercial, and industrial businesses that typically have large surface parking at the front.



Neighborhoods

Portsmouth's residential neighborhoods offer distinctive lifestyles and patterns.

Urban Neighborhood

Portsmouth's oldest residential fabric characterized by colonial-era walkable street networks with buildings close the street, often with no front yard.



First Ring Suburb

Portsmouth's pre-war residential fabric characterized by small front yards and a network of generous streets for transit, driving, biking, and walking.



Second Ring Suburb

Portsmouth's post-war residential fabric characterized by auto-oriented development with large front yards and disconnected cul-de-sac street networks.



Special Use Districts

These are destination districts typically dominated by a primary use type. Citywide

Civic Hub

hubs of civic activity, including places like City Hall, government departments, schools, libraries, nursing homes, and community centers.



Employment Hub

Regional hubs of governmental, industrial, and commercial jobs and services that support the region.

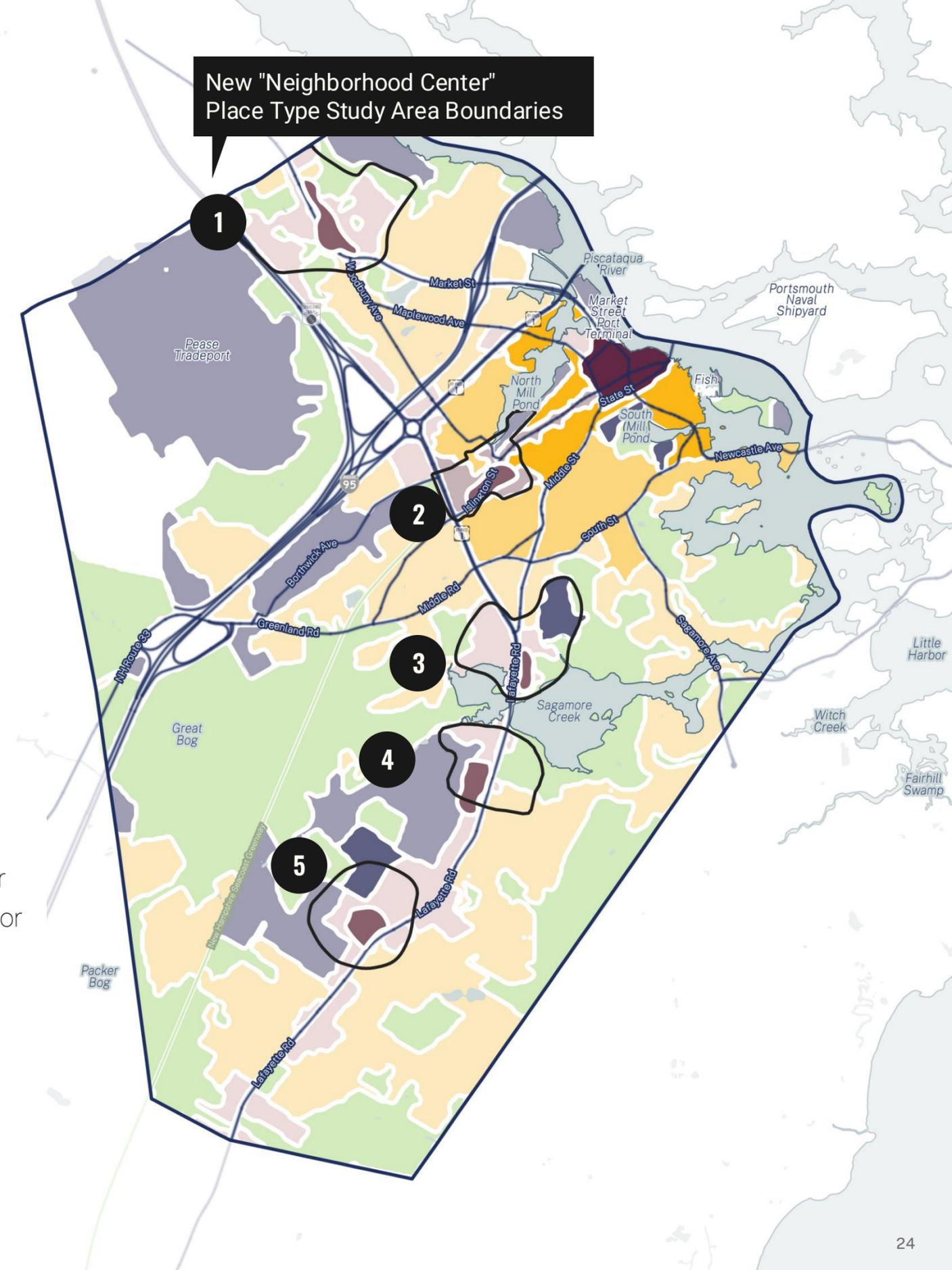
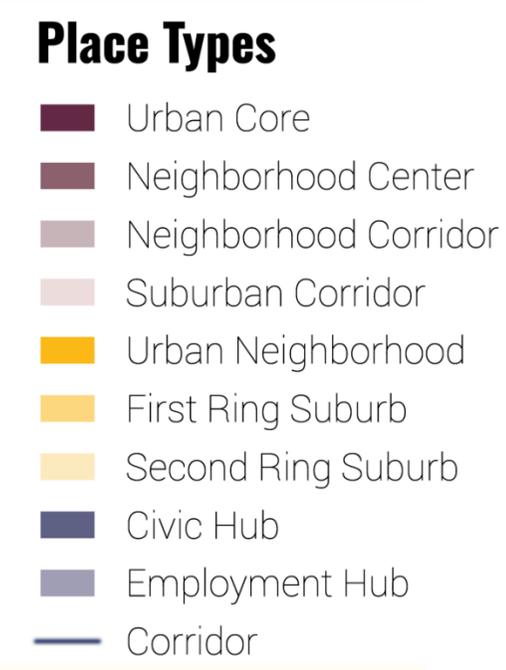


Future Place Types Vision

A mental map of the future land use and development vision that blends form, network connectivity, and land use patterns.

- In most cases, we suggest that municipal capital investments and development regulations reinforce the development and use patterns of existing Place Types, while allowing for greater use flexibility and promoting non-vehicular modes of travel.
- The primary shift is the identification of emerging and potential **"Neighborhood Center"** Place Types study areas throughout the "Gateway Neighborhoods" of Portsmouth to encourage more compact, connected, and sustainable development capable of supporting a high quality of life.

*A **Neighborhood Center** is a local destination with a dynamic mix of housing, commercial uses, public spaces, institutions, and infrastructure serving the immediate neighborhood surrounding it.*



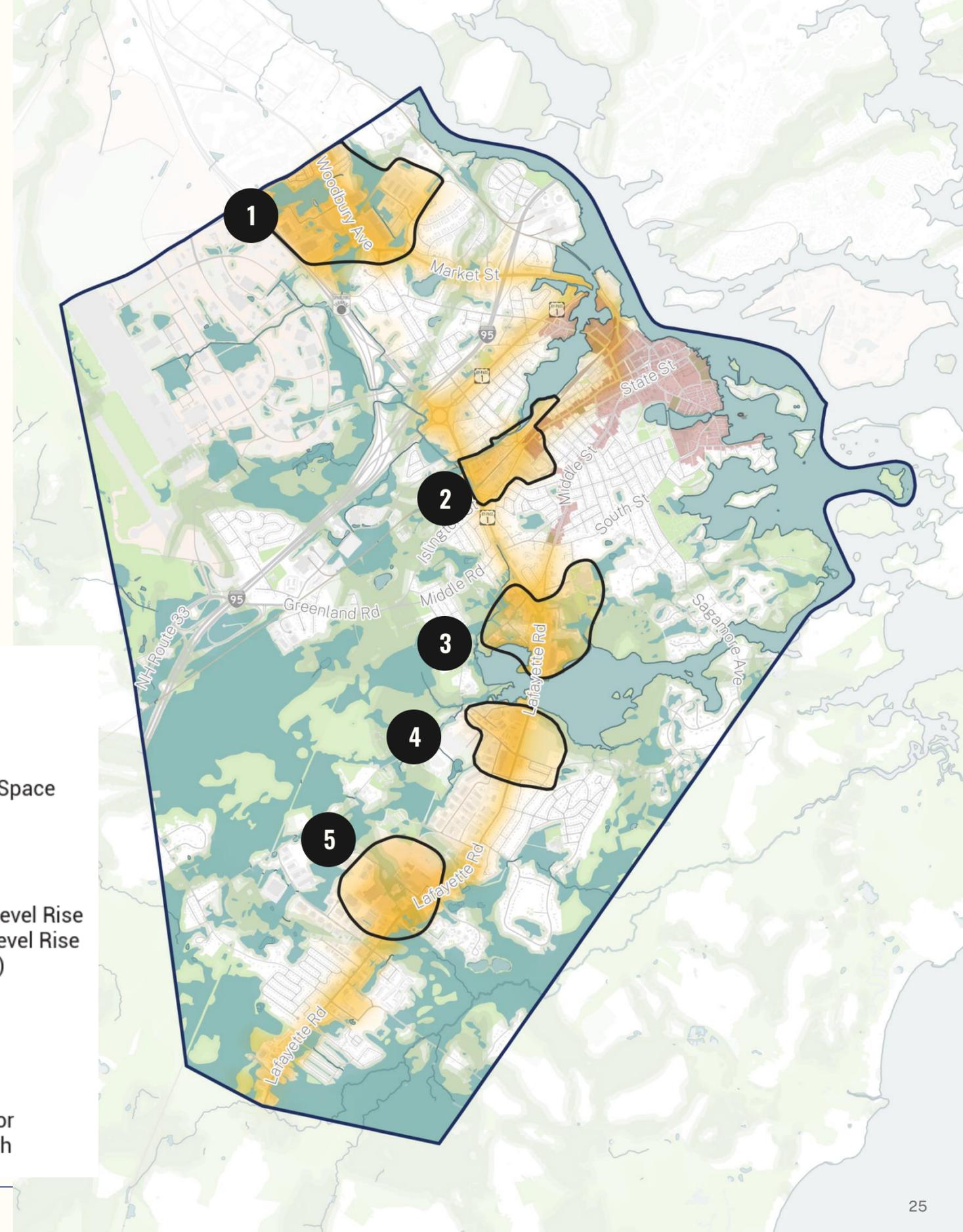
Gateway Neighborhood Center Study Areas

(Adaptation Focus Areas)

Note: adaptation in this context is not referring specifically to climate change adaptation, but rather a more general adaptation of urban development patterns.

- The Gateway Neighborhood Center Study Areas are **Adaptation Focus Areas** because they have unmet potential or unaddressed issues and need more guidance and direction to effectively shape future development and/or investment in infrastructure and quality of life amenities and services. These are generally where adaptation of the current development pattern is both feasible and desirable.

NOTE: Generally, these are areas that have already been experiencing market-driven redevelopment or transition of uses and have been mapped as Gateway Corridor and Gateway Center districts in recent rezoning. In this context, the Master Plan can be an effective tool to address the pressures and feeling of being in flux by providing clear vision and direction for these areas.



Legend

Preserve

- Historic Designation
- Conservation / Open Space
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- Open Water
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- Flood Risk with Sea Level Rise (1% Flood + 6ft Sea Level Rise at High Tide - MHHW)

Enhance

- Established Patterns

Adapt

- Areas with capacity for adaptation and growth

Adaptation Focus Areas

Promoting Adaptation to Reinforce Gateway Neighborhood Centers

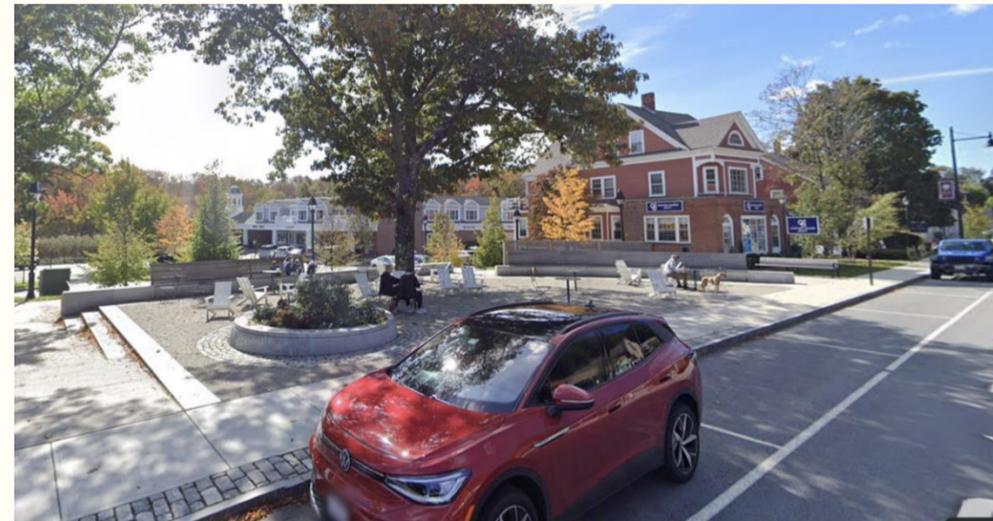
Cultivating Gateway Neighborhood Centers

Adaptation requires more comprehensive tools that blend public and private investment.

This plan can help create a shared framework for adapting the gateway neighborhoods to better serve what Portsmouth needs today and tomorrow. This is fundamentally about tying land use and development to the capital investments that support quality of life and environmental health.



Western Ave Bikeway, Cambridge, MA



Weston Town Center Plaza, Weston, MA



Latest phase of Tuscan Village in Salem, NH.

Infrastructure + Mobility

- Water supply + service network
- Wastewater treatment + service network
- Stormwater management
- Connected, walkable street network
- Transit priority infrastructure
- Bike and micro-mobility infrastructure
- Sidewalks + crosswalks
- Safe multi-modal intersection design

Civic, Recreation + Amenities

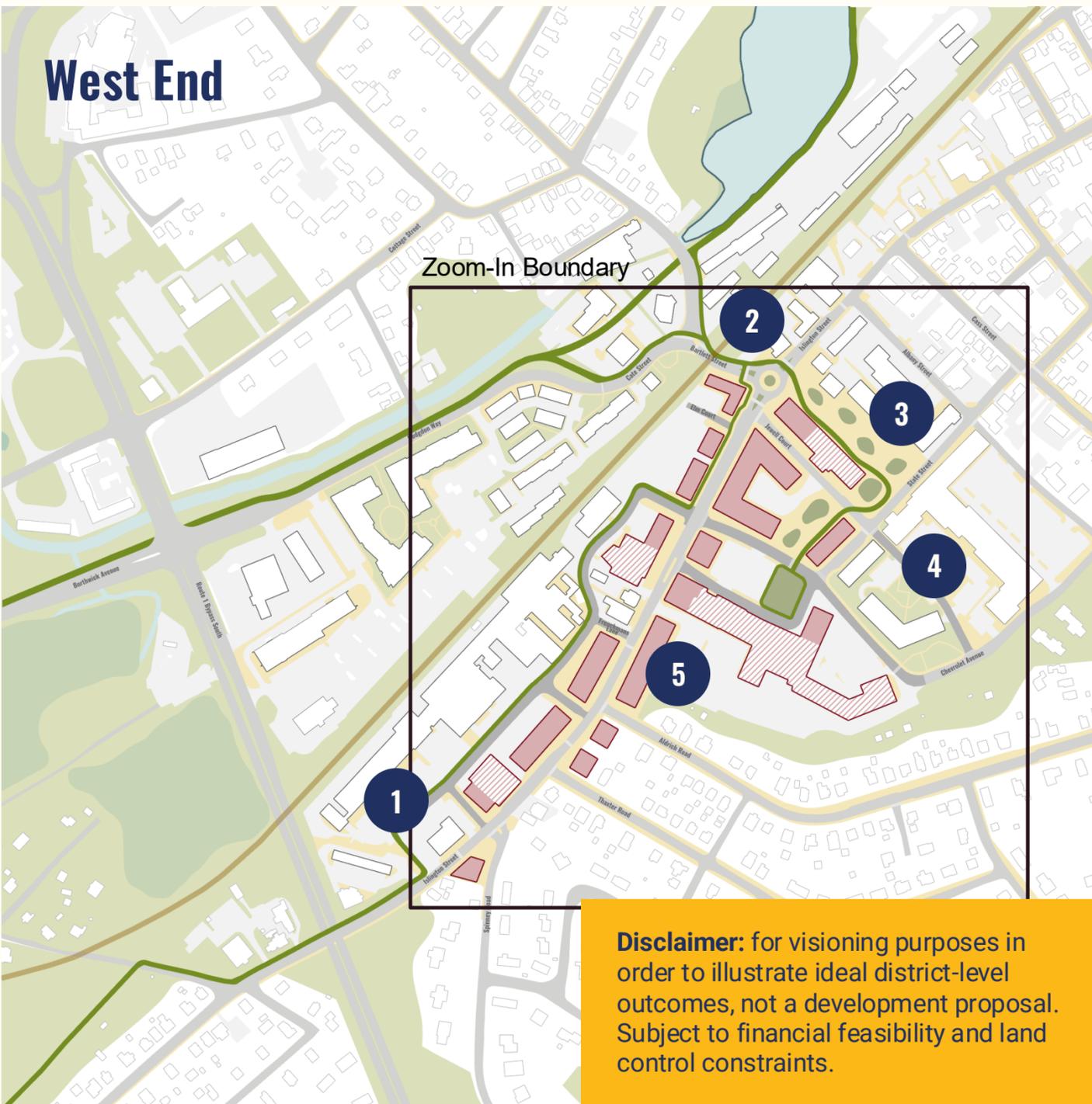
- Critical Commercial Services (grocery and pharmacy)
- Schools
- Libraries
- Recreation Centers
- Parks
- Open Spaces + Natural Areas

Density + Vibrancy

- Mixed-use core with varied businesses
- Dense multifamily surrounding core
- Thoughtful, place-specific economic development and cultural sector strategy
- Public realm and streetscape standards

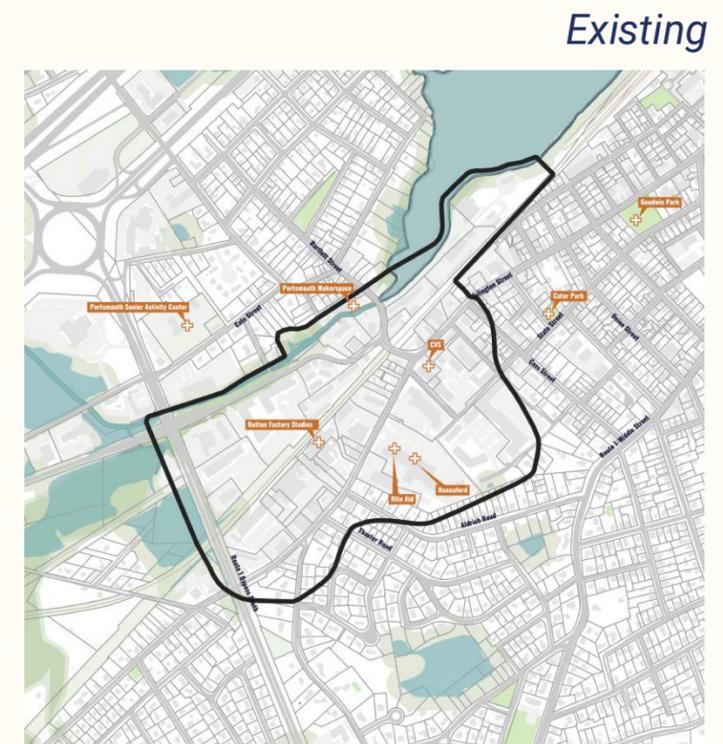
Urban Design & Development Principles Illustrated

Clustered, Connected, Accessible & Inclusive, Healthy, Sustainable & Resilient



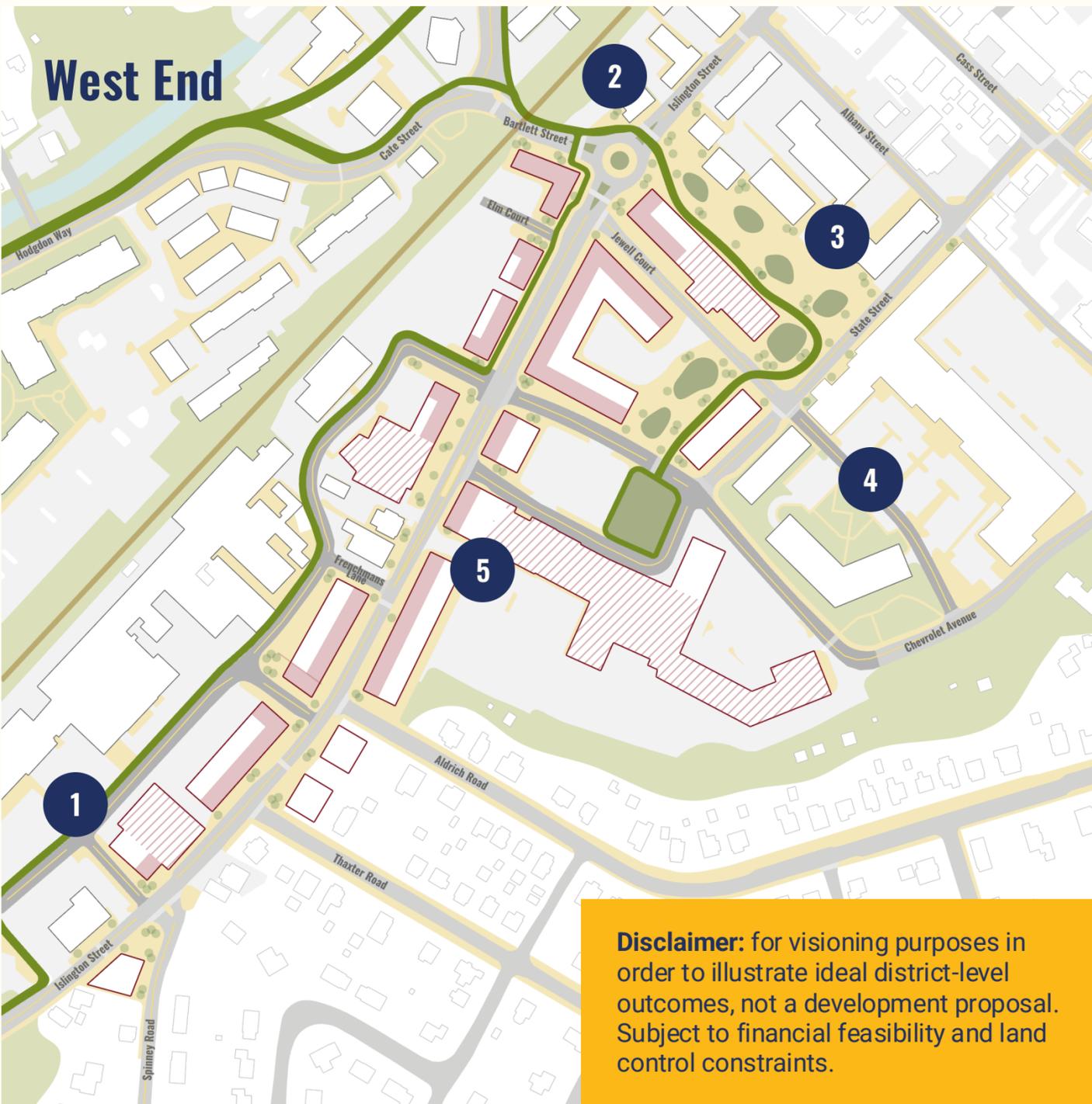
Key Features

1. Bike and pedestrian connections strengthened throughout
2. The Islington/Bartlett intersection is replaced with a 100' roundabout.
This accommodates a WB-50 using the interior mountable apron. A WB-67 may require additional mountable aprons on the perimeter and crossing islands, but should also be able to traverse. We expect WB-67 to be rare in this context as it would have trouble fitting under the existing railroad bridge.
3. Programmable, well-defined plaza-style open space with green infrastructure draws people into more protected rear common areas suitable for markets/events.
4. Shared "park once" district parking approach with parking pushed to rear
5. Street-facing infill development encouraged to line the street while retaining existing rear commercial and historic buildings (this requires parking requirement reductions and leveraging a "park once" approach)



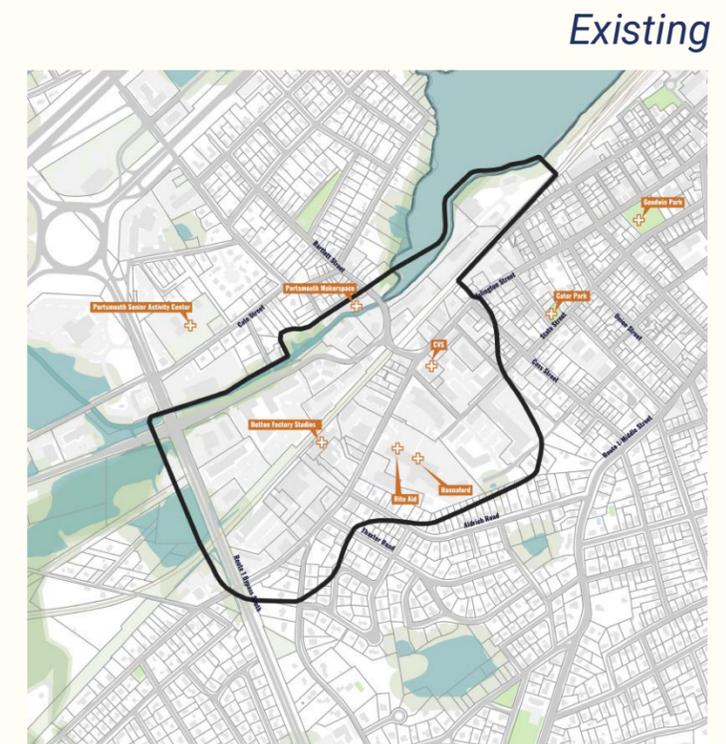
Urban Design & Development Principles Illustrated

Clustered, Connected, Accessible & Inclusive, Healthy, Sustainable & Resilient



Key Features

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Gateway Neighborhood Center Design & Development Principles

- **Clustered**

- Mixed-use commercial, amenity, and service core in the area with strongest market and infrastructure
- Dense, diverse multi-family housing surrounding the core to promote viability and vibrancy

- **Connected**

- Promote connected, walkable street networks
- Link residential and commercial development to nearby open space, recreation, and trail assets with high-quality, protected connections, especially the Greenway, Community Campus, and water bodies
- High-visibility, conveniently and safely located public transit and shuttle stops
- Prioritize a safe and enjoyable experience for those walking, cycling, and using micro-mobility devices (curb cuts, parking in rear, protected/off-street bike lanes, well-located bike parking)

- **Accessible & Inclusive**

- Incentivize affordable residential and commercial space
- Promote Universal Design principles for accessibility

- **Healthy, Sustainable & Resilient**

- Invest in tree canopy and green infrastructure that enhances air, water, and soil quality for human and ecosystem health
- Increase conservation of and access to natural spaces, promote flood resilience through wetland ecological restoration
- Promote energy efficient and resilient new development



All of the urban design framework diagrams use this visual language.

Outer Woodbury / Commerce Way

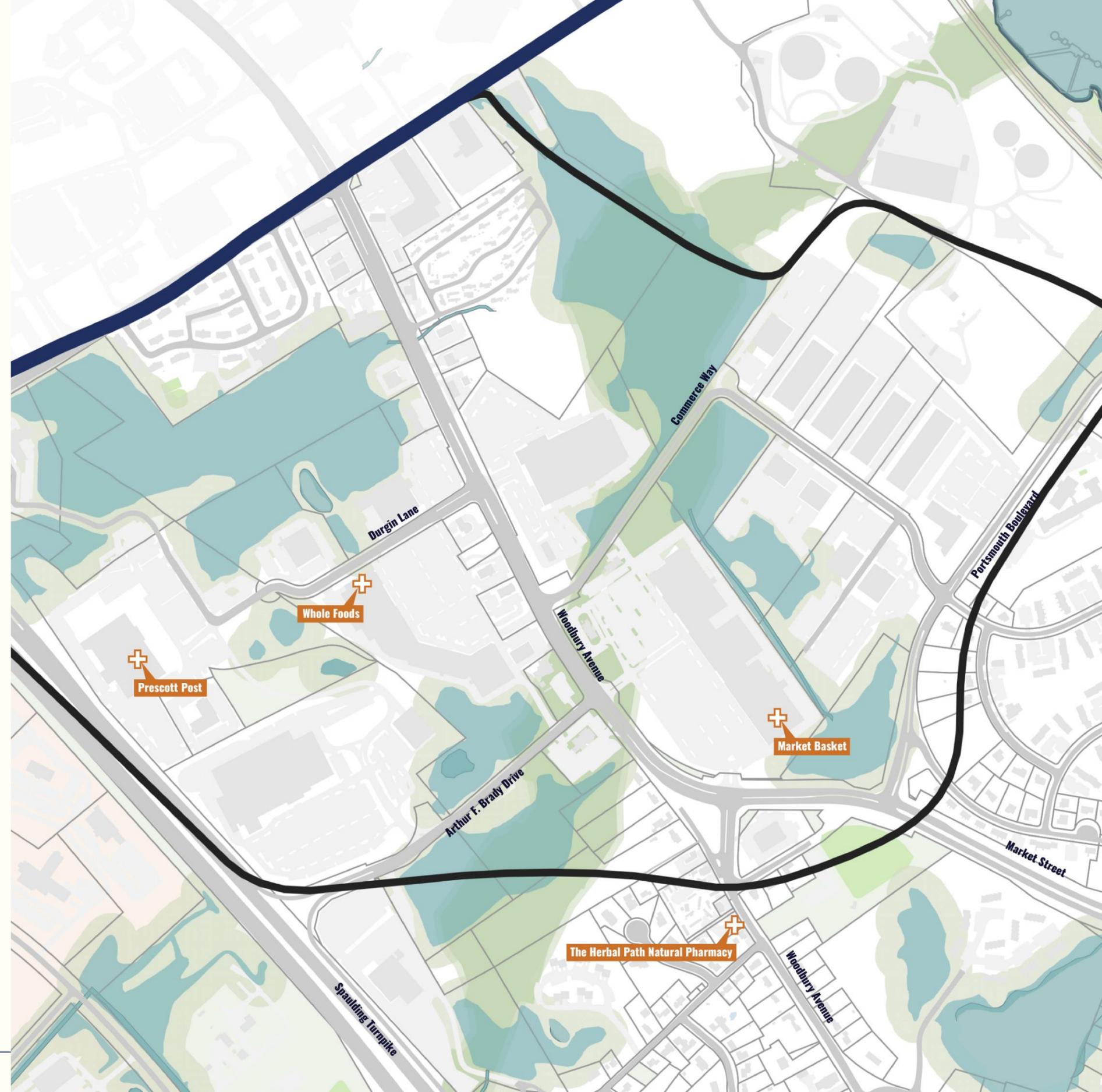
Gateway Neighborhood Center Study Area Boundary

Key Assets

- Grocery Stores: Whole Foods & Market Basket, Trader Joe's just over the municipal line
- Pharmacy: The Herbal Path Natural Pharmacy (Rite Aid closed)
- Proximity to Newington & Pease
- Prescott Post redevelopment at 100 Durgin Lane

Key Issues & Opportunities

- Market St & Woodbury Ave are barriers
- Southern stretch of Woodbury Ave has undesirable high-speed cut-through traffic
- Significant wetland areas disrupt fluidity of development
- Spinnaker Point is isolated from nearby amenities



Outer Woodbury / Commerce Way

Gateway Neighborhood Center Design Vision

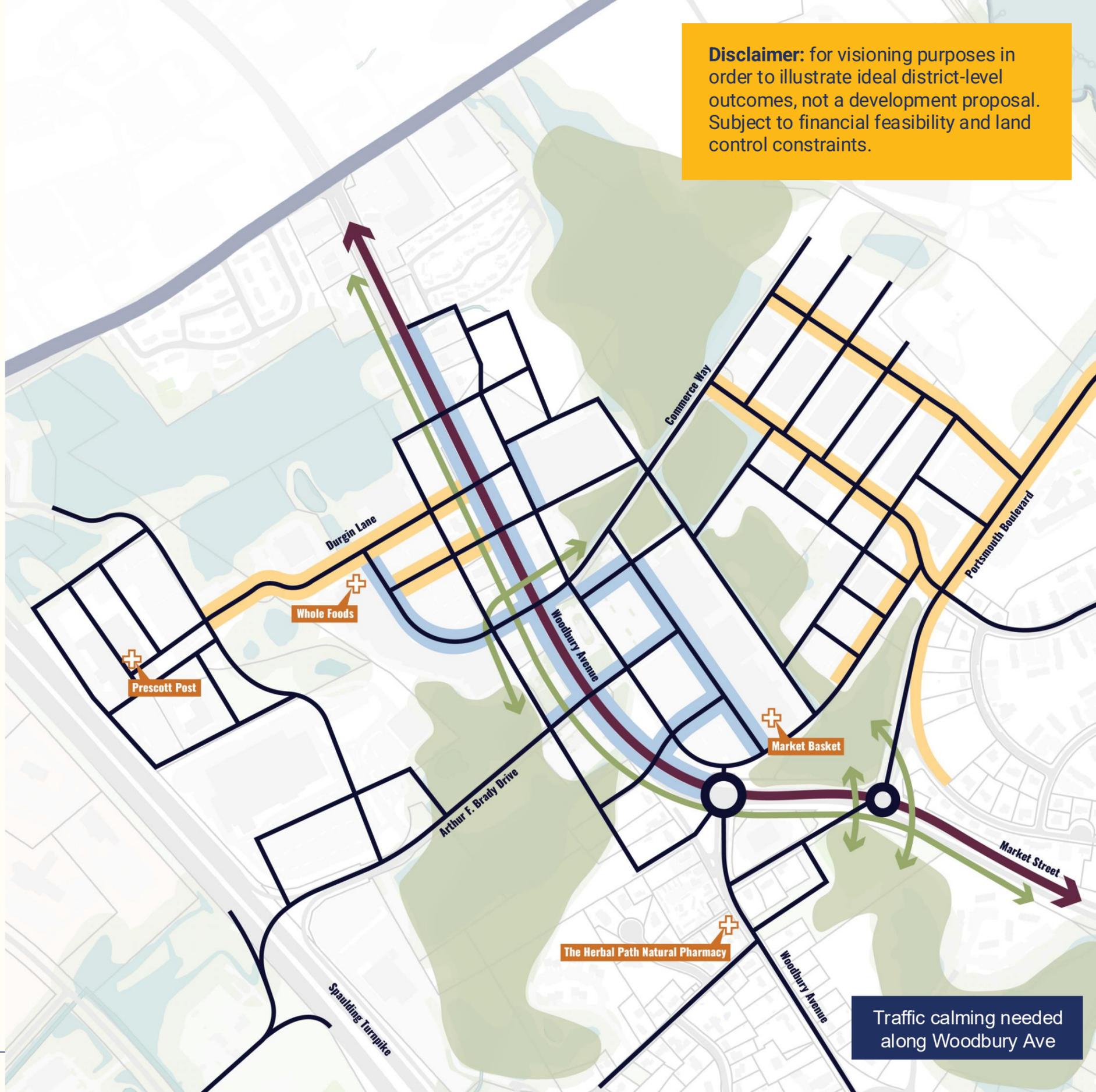
Key Strategies

- Create increased cross-street connections to unify east and west sides of Woodbury Ave
- Alter roadway design to reduce Woodbury Ave cut-through traffic
- Focus mixed-use and commercial development close to Woodbury, set residential multifamily back with strong connections to mixed-use areas
- Strengthen greenway connections to nearby natural areas and enhance recreational value
- Establish local through-connection to Pease

Disclaimer: for visioning purposes in order to illustrate ideal district-level outcomes, not a development proposal. Subject to financial feasibility and land control constraints.

Legend

- ↔ Improved Transit Corridor
- Mixed-Use
- Multi-Family Residential
- ▨ Proposed Development
- ▭ Parking
- ↔ Roads/Thoroughfares
- Green Space
- ↔ Multi-Use Pathway
- ▨ Existing Greenway



West End

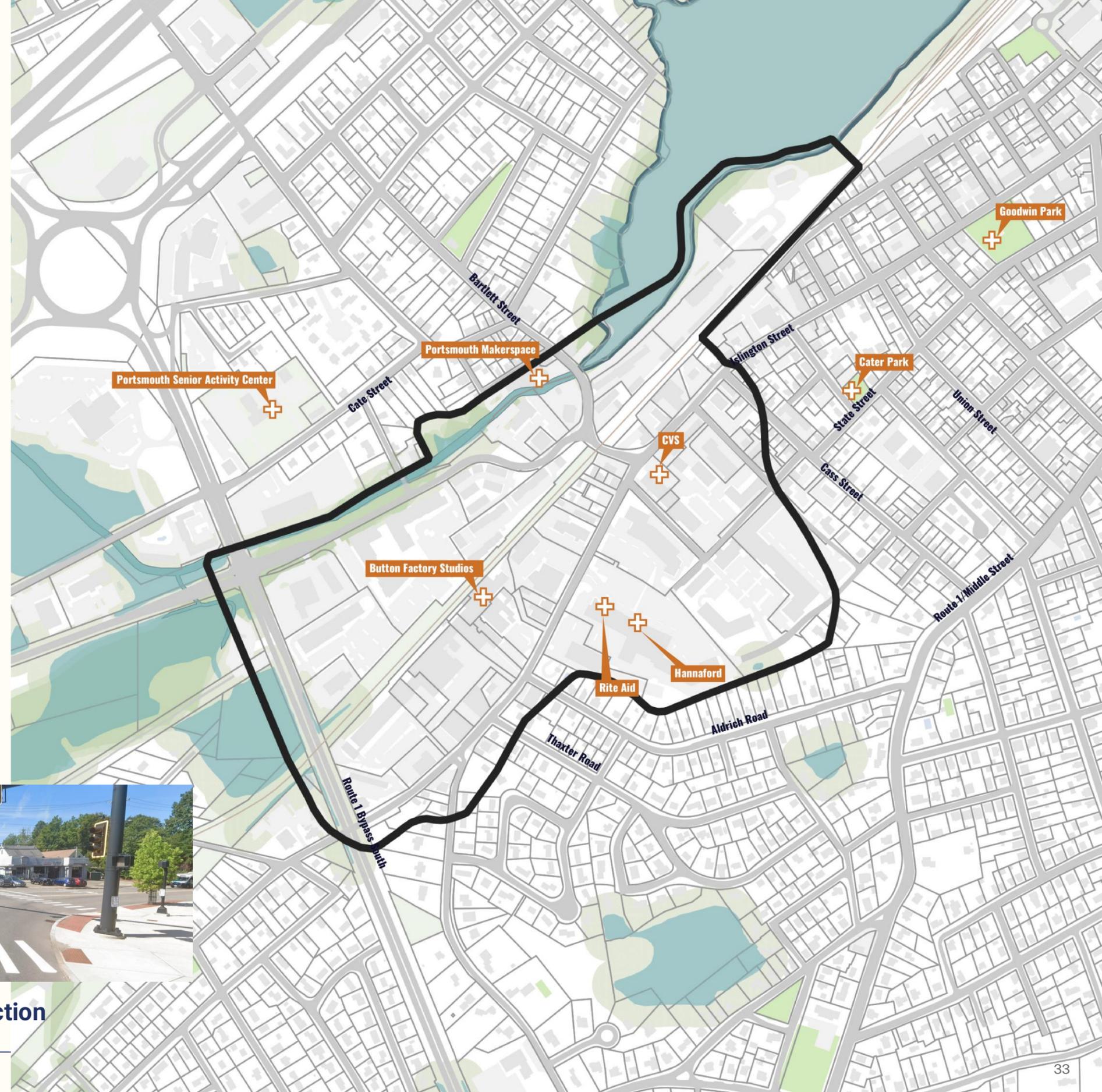
Gateway Neighborhood Center Study Area Boundary

Key Assets

- Portsmouth Senior Activity Center
- Neighborhood Parks: Goodwin Park, Cater Park
- Grocery: Hannaford
- Pharmacy: Rite Aid, CVS
- Arts & Culture: Button Factory Studios, Port City Makerspace

Key Issues & Opportunities

- Uses set back from Islington have confusing circulation and poor intuitive visibility and inter-connection with one another – they are too reliant on individual curb-cuts and parking areas loaded directly off Islington.
- Lack of connection to Greenway and assets on the northern side of North Mill Pond / Hodgson Brook
- Bartlett Street under-bridge crossing and intersection with Islington is problematic and unsafe



Bartlett St Underpass



Bartlett St / Islington Intersection

West End

Gateway Neighborhood Center Design Vision

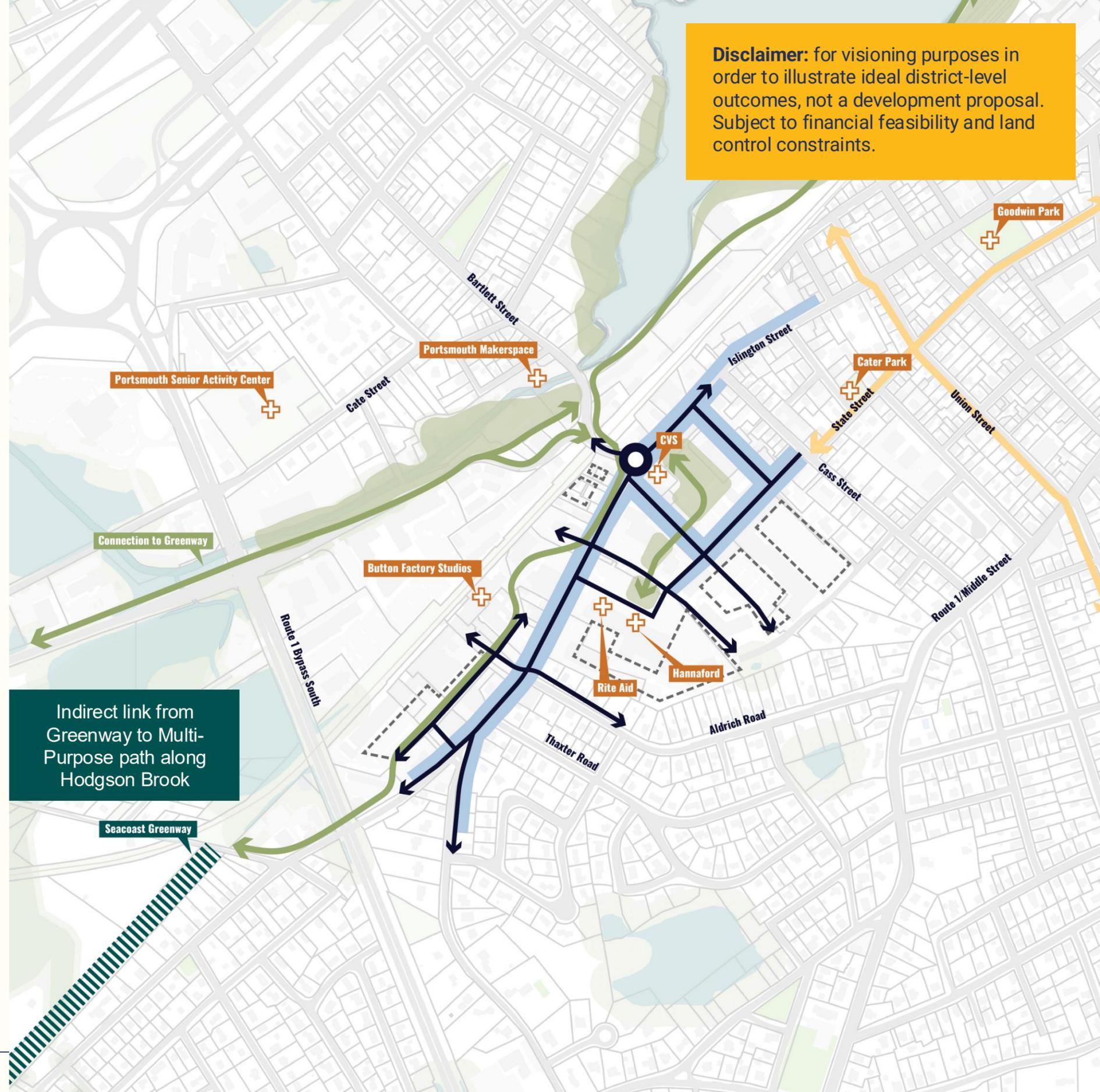
Key Strategies

- Activate street frontage with development
- Develop shared district parking solutions at less valuable rear-lot locations
- Strengthen visibility and non-vehicular connections to rear lot development
- Integrate off-street trail network connections, strengthen connection from existing Greenway to Hodgson Brook multi-purpose path

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Legend

- ↔ Improved Transit Corridor
- Mixed-Use
- Multi-Family Residential
- ▭ Proposed Development
- ▭ Parking
- ↔ Roads/Thoroughfares
- Green Space
- ↔ Multi-Use Pathway
- ▨ Existing Greenway



Indirect link from Greenway to Multi-Purpose path along Hodgson Brook

Route 1 Gateway / Lafayette North

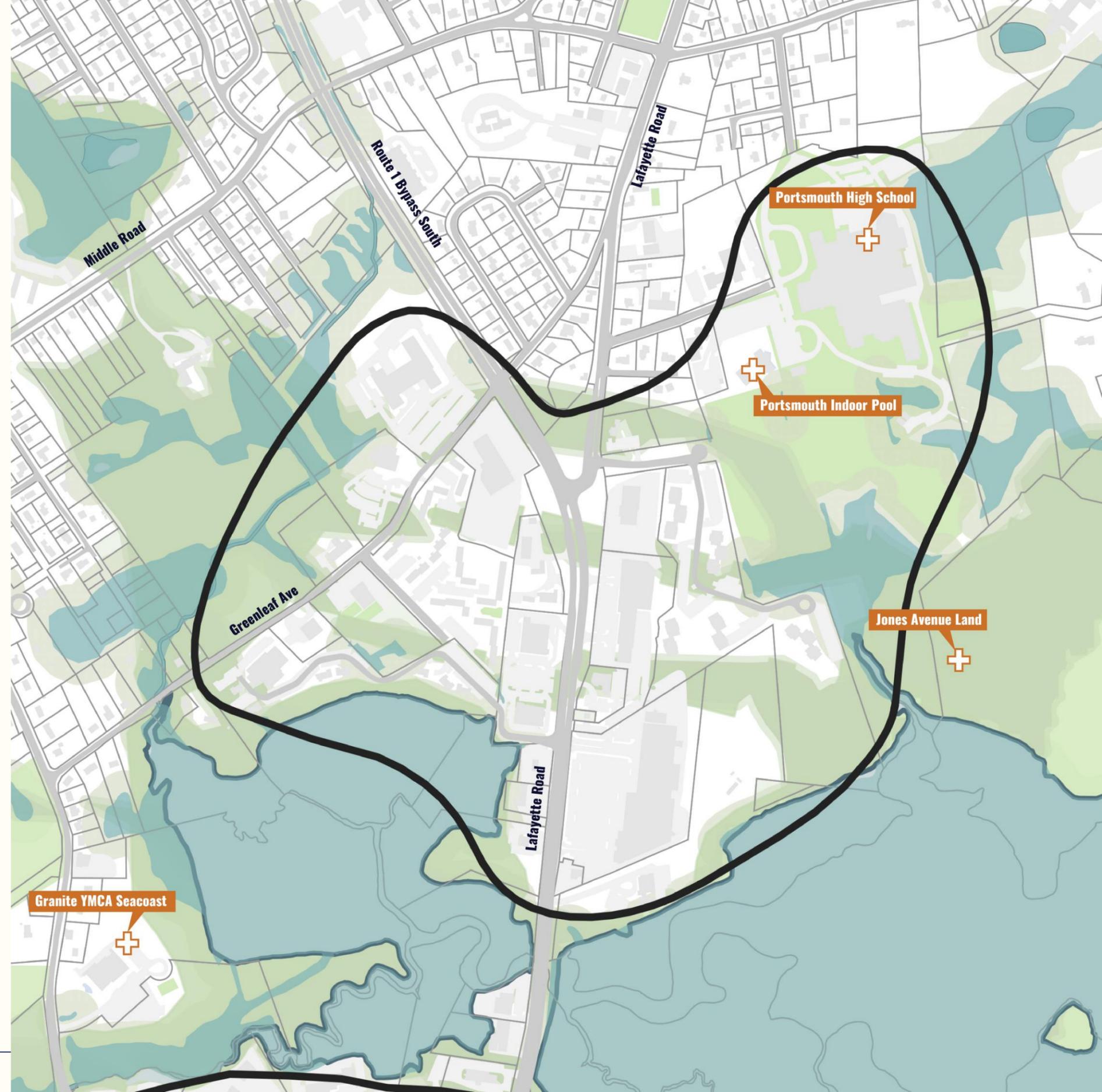
Gateway Neighborhood Center Study Area Boundary

Key Assets

- Portsmouth High School
- Portsmouth Indoor Pool
- Jones Avenue Land
- Sagamore Creek Headlands (just south of Study Area)
- The Granite YMCA of the Seacoast (just outside Study Area)

Key Issues & Opportunities

- Route 1 Bypass / Lafayette Rd is a barrier to fluidity of development and access to assets on east side
- Significant wetland and waterway barriers to more fluid development patterns
- Lack of visible and user-friendly access to natural areas for recreational use



Route 1 Gateway / Lafayette North

Gateway Neighborhood Center Design Vision

Key Strategies

- Establish connective street network that links across Lafayette/Rt-1
- Connect high school and recreation assets to commercial and residential development
- Reinforce commercial hub on east side of Lafayette/Rt-1

Legend

- ↔ Improved Transit Corridor
- Mixed-Use
- Multi-Family Residential
- ▭ Proposed Development
- ▭ Parking
- ↔ Roads/Thoroughfares
- Green Space
- ↔ Multi-Use Pathway
- ▭ Existing Greenway

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Elwyn Crossing

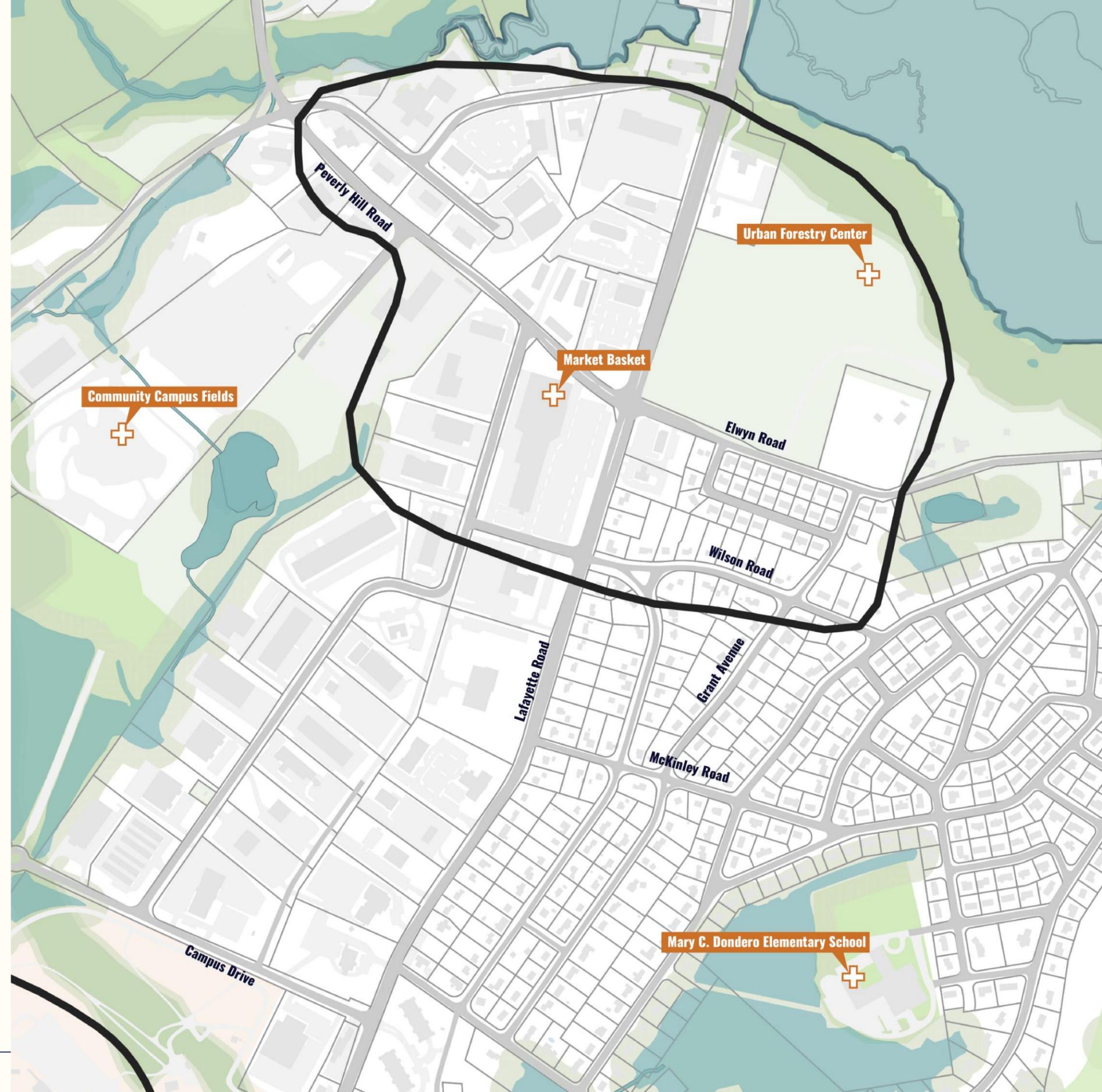
Gateway Neighborhood Center Study Area Boundary

Key Assets

- Recreation:
 - Community Campus Fields
 - Urban Forestry Center
- Grocery: Market Basket
- Mary C. Dondero Elementary School

Key Issues & Opportunities

- Underperforming commercial in NW corner of Pevery Hill Rd / Elwyn Rd intersection with Lafayette/Rt-1
- Preserve light industrial uses along West Rd and existing residential fabric on east side of Lafayette
- Lack of sidewalks within existing residential neighborhood precludes safe, walkable access to local Elementary School
- Lack of safe non-vehicular connection to Urban Forestry Center and Community Campus from nearby residential neighborhoods



Elwyn Crossing

Gateway Neighborhood Center Design Vision

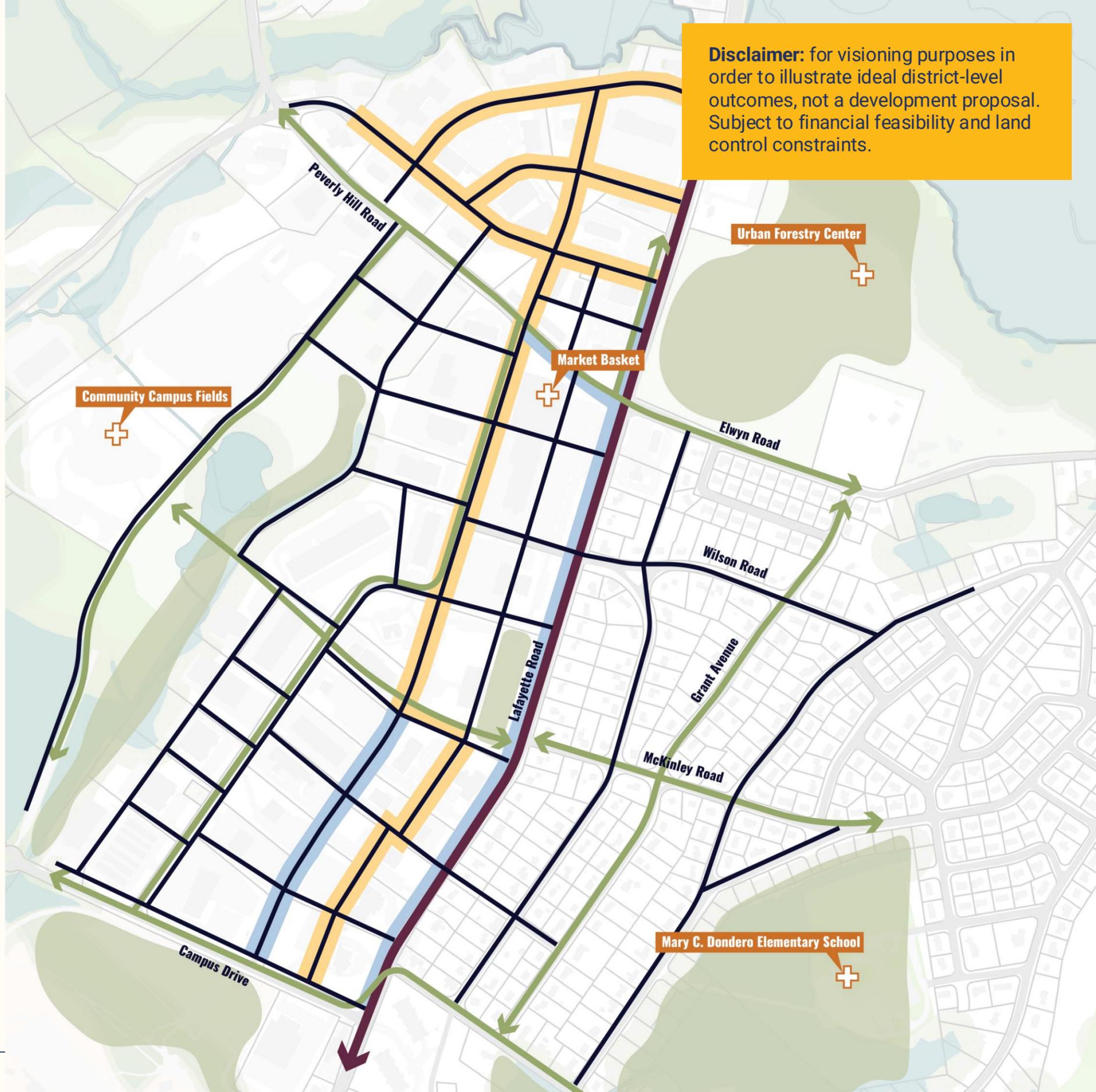
Key Strategies

- Promote multifamily residential development in NW corner of Peverly Hill Rd / Elwyn Rd intersection with Lafayette/Rt-1
- Establish connected street network with sidewalks and off-street multi-purpose pathways to connect residential areas to Elementary School, Urban Forestry Center, and Community Campus
- Reinforce Market Basket as a commercial anchor

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Legend

- ↔ Improved Transit Corridor
- Mixed-Use
- Multi-Family Residential
- ▨ Proposed Development
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- ↔ Roads/Thoroughfares
- Green Space
- ↔ Multi-Use Pathway
- ▨ Existing Greenway



Constitution Ave / Portsmouth Green

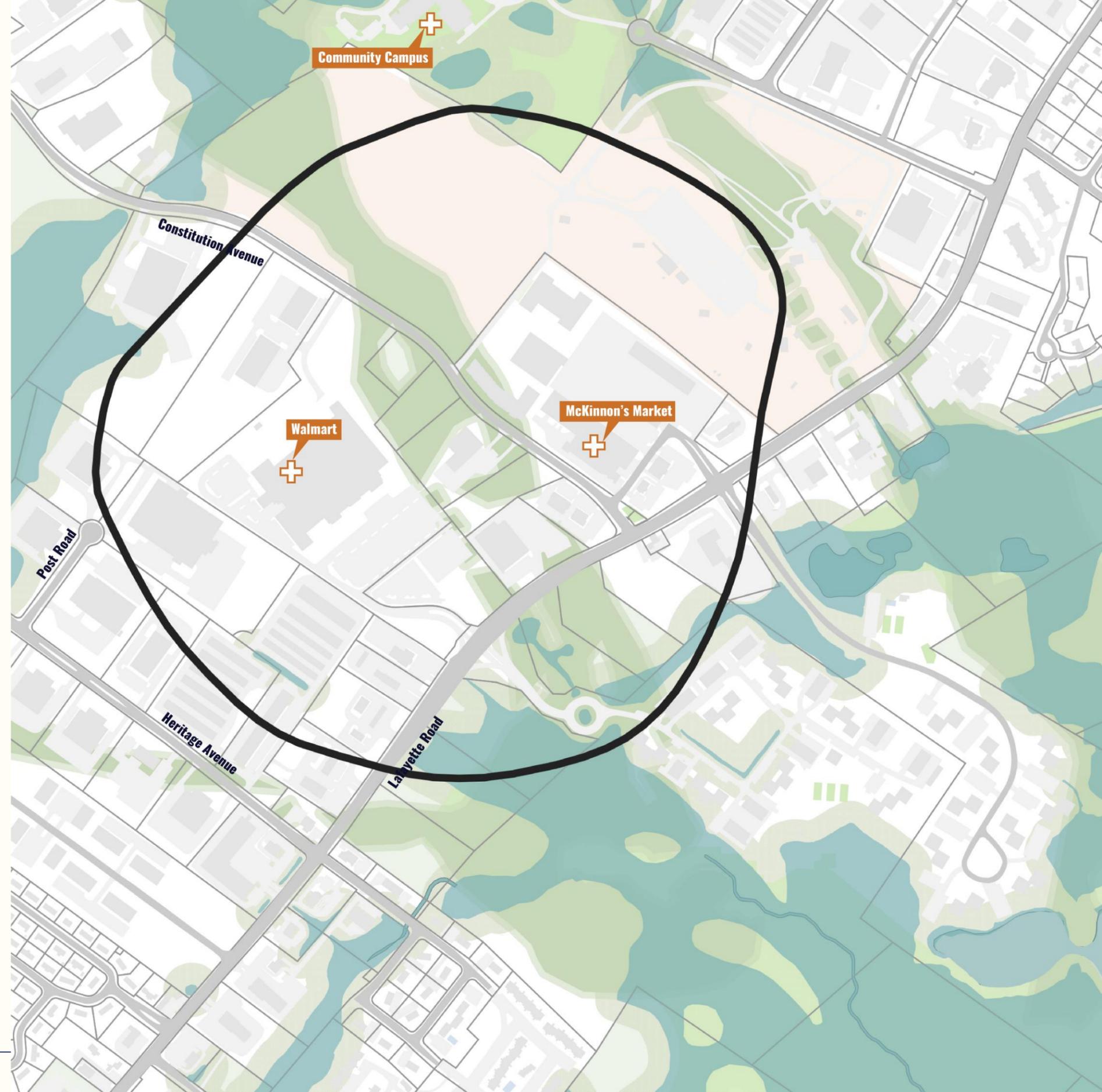
Gateway Neighborhood Center Study Area Boundary

Key Assets

- Community Campus
- Portsmouth Green / McKinnon's Market
- Walmart
- Water Country Water Park (major landowner, destination activity)

Key Issues & Opportunities

- Lack of NE to SW connections parallel to Lafayette/Rt1
- Lack of connection to Community Campus and Greenway
- Lack of open space and natural assets
- Opportunity for additional multi-family housing development



Constitution Ave / Portsmouth Green

Gateway Neighborhood Center Design Vision

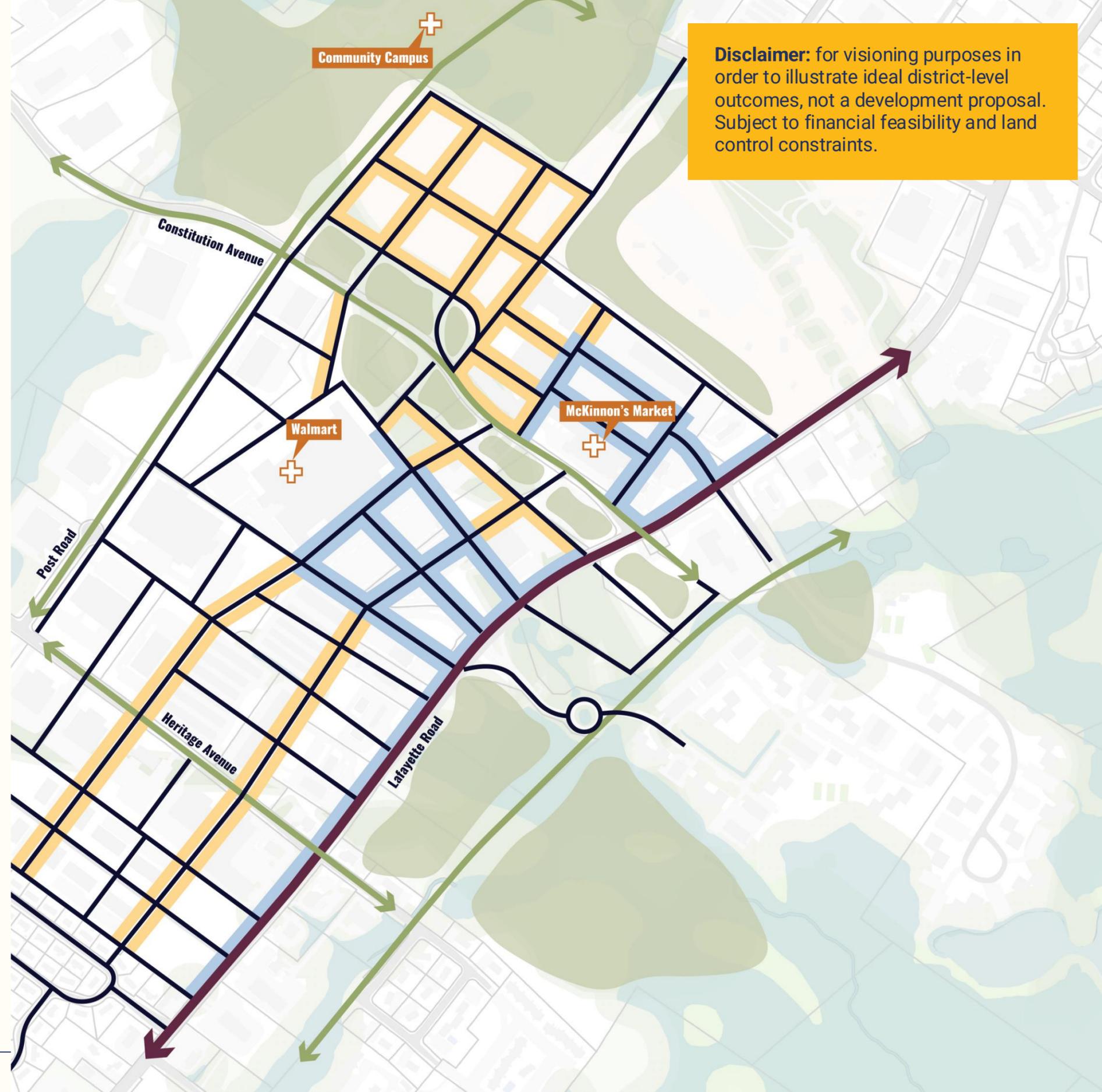
Key Strategies

- Focus activity and development on NW side of Lafayette/Rt1
- Greenway network along State-suggested wildlife corridor
- Increased street network connectivity throughout
- Dual mixed-use core with NE to SW connectivity parallel to Lafayette
- Deliberate connections to lower density residential uses in SE

Legend

- ↔ Improved Transit Corridor
- Mixed-Use
- Multi-Family Residential
- ▨ Proposed Development
- ▭ Parking
- ↔ Roads/Thoroughfares
- Green Space
- ↔ Multi-Use Pathway
- ▨ Existing Greenway

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Key Recommendations

Infrastructure & Capital Investments

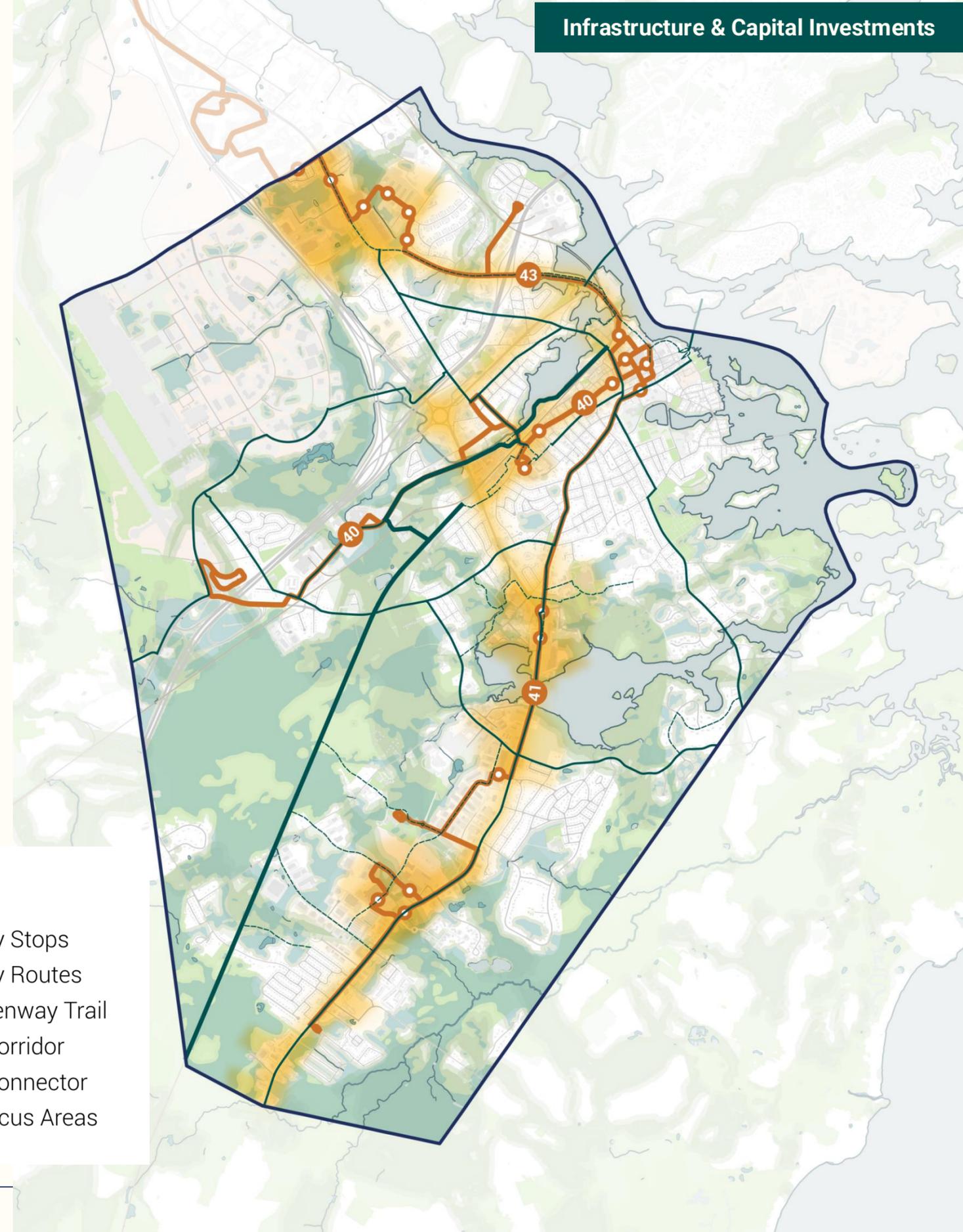
- Strengthening mobility alternatives
investments in utilities, sustainability, and resilience to be shared at the Public Open House

Zoning & Development Review Processes

- Enabling "Smart Growth" through zoning and land use regulation changes
- Urban design and simple form-based guidelines understandable by developers and predictable for neighbors

Strengthening Mobility Alternatives

- **Walkability & Intersection Safety** prioritizing pedestrian experience and accessibility for all ages and abilities, especially where the Transit and Bike Priority corridors interact with the rest of the road network.
- **Bike Priority Network** connecting key employment and recreational destinations to neighborhood centers (based on Bike/Ped Plan)
- **Motorized Micro-Mobility Framework** planning and policy to encourage use and promote good behavior.
- **Transit Priority Routes & Stops** connecting downtown to outer neighborhood centers with higher frequency service.



Thresholds (formerly “Gateways”)

- **Thresholds** are important areas of transition and access points that would benefit from safety, accessibility, wayfinding, and public space enhancements to address the complexity of use and overall experience. These are often characterized by a change in character from one place type to another or traversing a transportation barrier such as a highway or rail line.

NOTE: Generally, these transitional areas were chosen because they have an outsized impact on citywide perceptions and behavior.

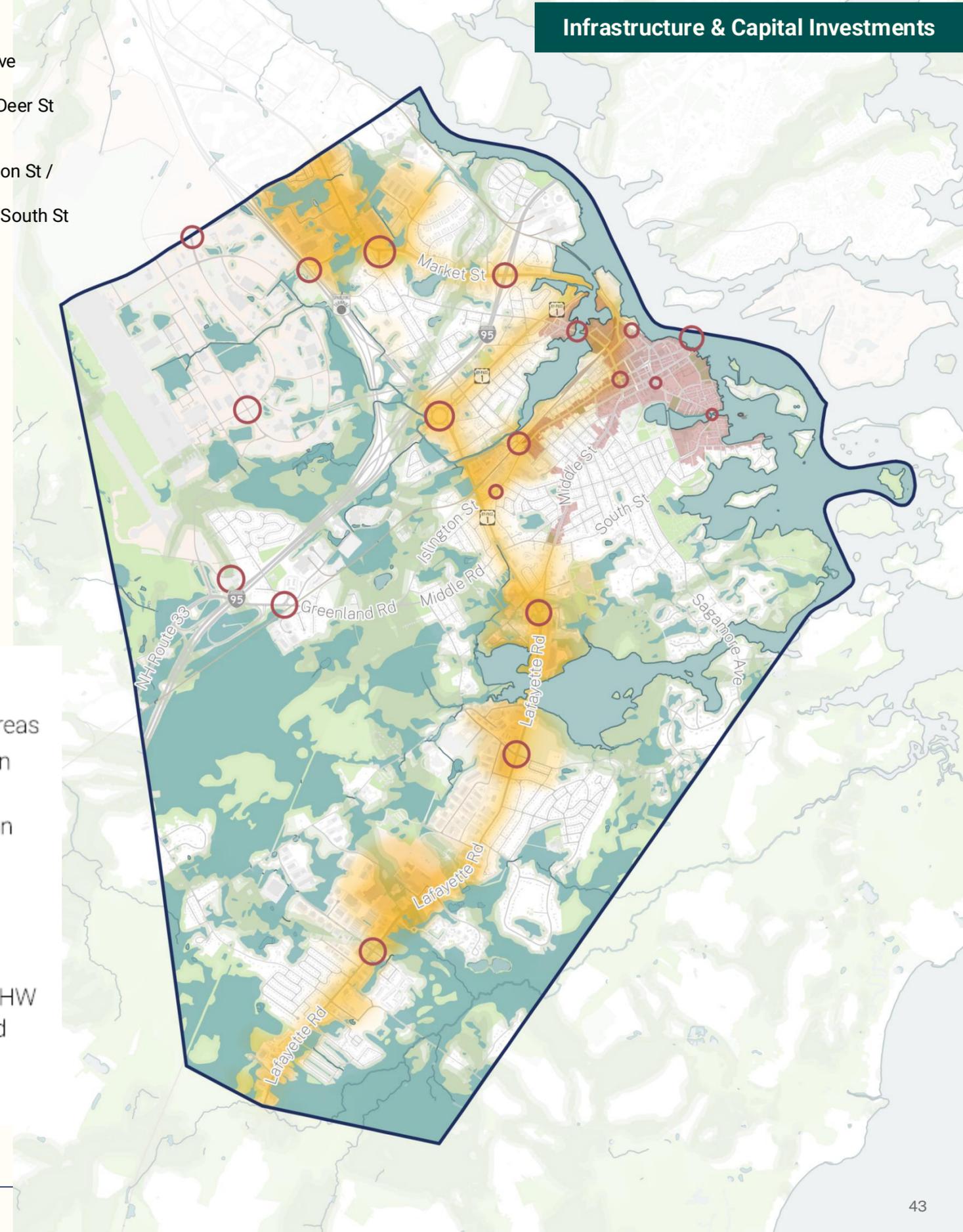
This will be a prompt at the upcoming Draft Plan Open House to test our analysis so far and invite input on other problem areas that should be highlighted and prioritized via the Master Plan.

Gateways

- Market St & Woodbury Ave
- Market St & I-95
- Market St & Russell St / Deer St
- Memorial Bridge
- Maplewood Ave Bridge
- Maplewood Ave & Islington St / Congress St
- Pleasant St & Marcy St / South St
- Rt-1 Traffic Circle
- Bartlett St & Rail Underpass / Islington St
- Islington St Overpass of Rt-1 Bypass
- Miller Ave / Sagamore Ave & South St
- Greenland Rd & Grafton Rd
- Greenland Rd & Sherburne Rd
- Rt-1 Bypass & Lafayette Rd
- Rt-1 / Lafayette Rd & Heritage Ave

Legend

- Potential Growth Areas
- Historic Designation
- Open Space/Conservation Area
- Wildlife Corridor
- Open Water
- Wetlands
- Sea Level Rise: MHHW plus 1 percent flood plus 6ft
- Gateways



Degree of Change >> Zoning

Across the board, there is a need to streamline the Portsmouth zoning districts to clearly communicate priorities to developers and landowners.

Preserve – limited, conservation-focused investment/development

align allowable future development to constraints

>> Simplifying Downtown Zoning

Enhance – targeted improvements for flexibility and quality of life

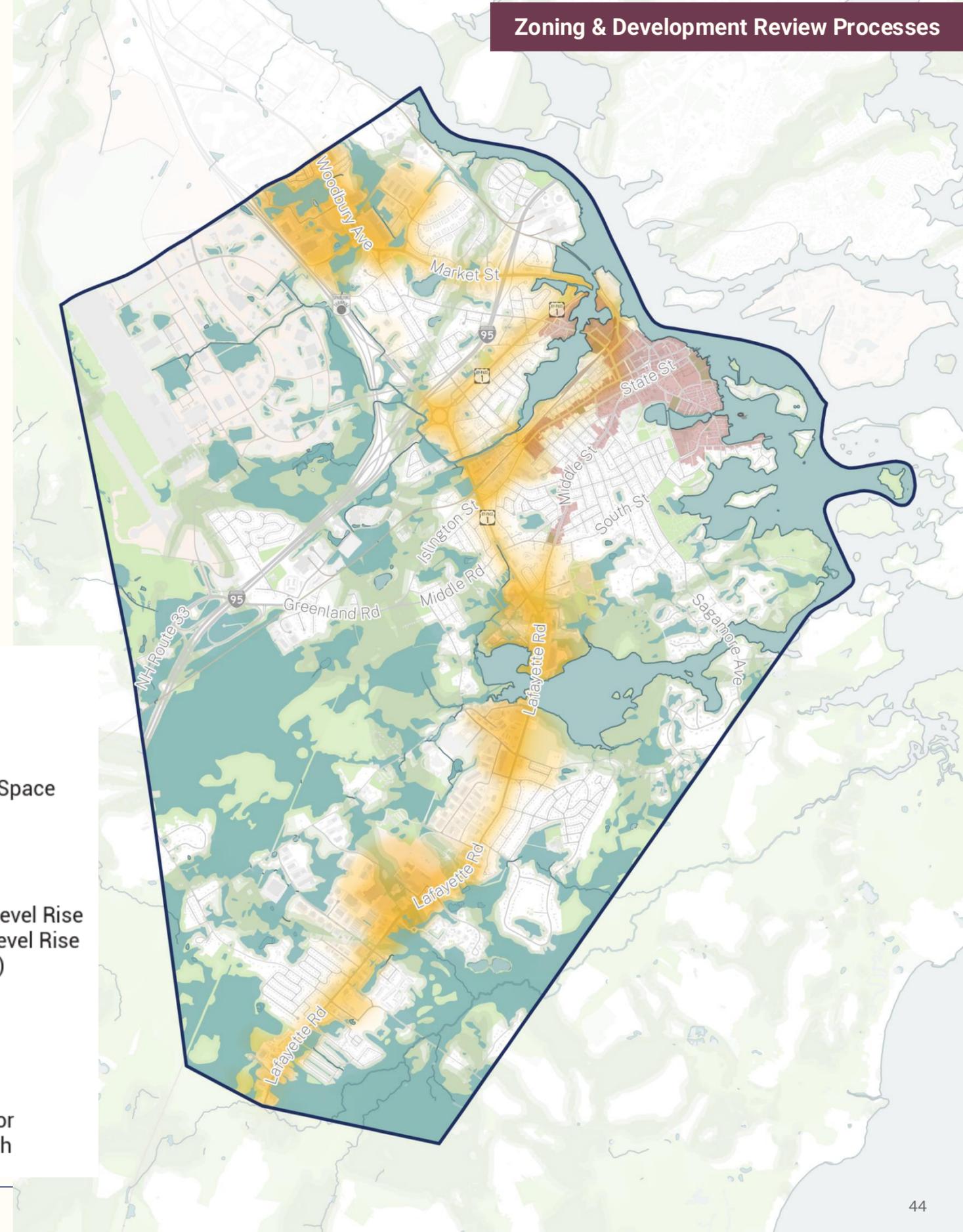
calibrate zoning to support diversity and flexibility where needed

>> Existing Residential Zoning District Analysis

Adapt – promote a shift in development pattern

promote denser, clustered development at a pedestrian scale with clear mixed-use commercial cores and diverse housing types

>> Gateway District Analysis & Focus Area Urban Design Visions



Legend

Preserve

- Historic Designation
- Conservation / Open Space
- Wildlife Corridor
- Open Water
- Wetlands
- Flood Risk with Sea Level Rise (1% Flood + 6ft Sea Level Rise at High Tide - MHHW)

Enhance

- Established Patterns

Adapt

- Areas with capacity for adaptation and growth

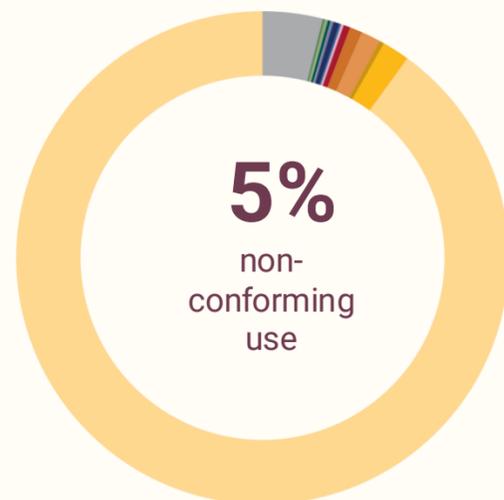
Streamlining Zoning & Approval Processes

- **Streamline Zoning.** Simplify and streamline Portsmouth's zoning ordinance and associated procedures to promote clarity of intention, efficiency of process, and consistency of outcomes. Identify opportunities to consolidate districts to improve the conceptual clarity of the zoning map and allow for reasonable flexibility of use and dimensional standards.
- **Publish Design Guidelines.** For districts with strong form-based and design goals, like the Character and Gateway Neighborhoods Districts, publish clear, objective design guidelines in lieu of more open-ended discretionary design review.
- **Promote Efficient Process.** Continue to enhance alignment, efficiency, and predictability in the development review and permitting process. Identify opportunities to expand administrative approvals, leverage digital intake and review systems, and provide resources and supports that improve application quality.

Enhance: Single Family Zoning District Analysis

Single Residence B (SRB) District

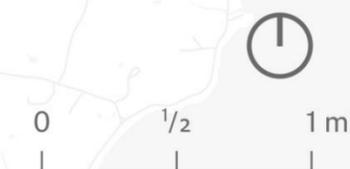
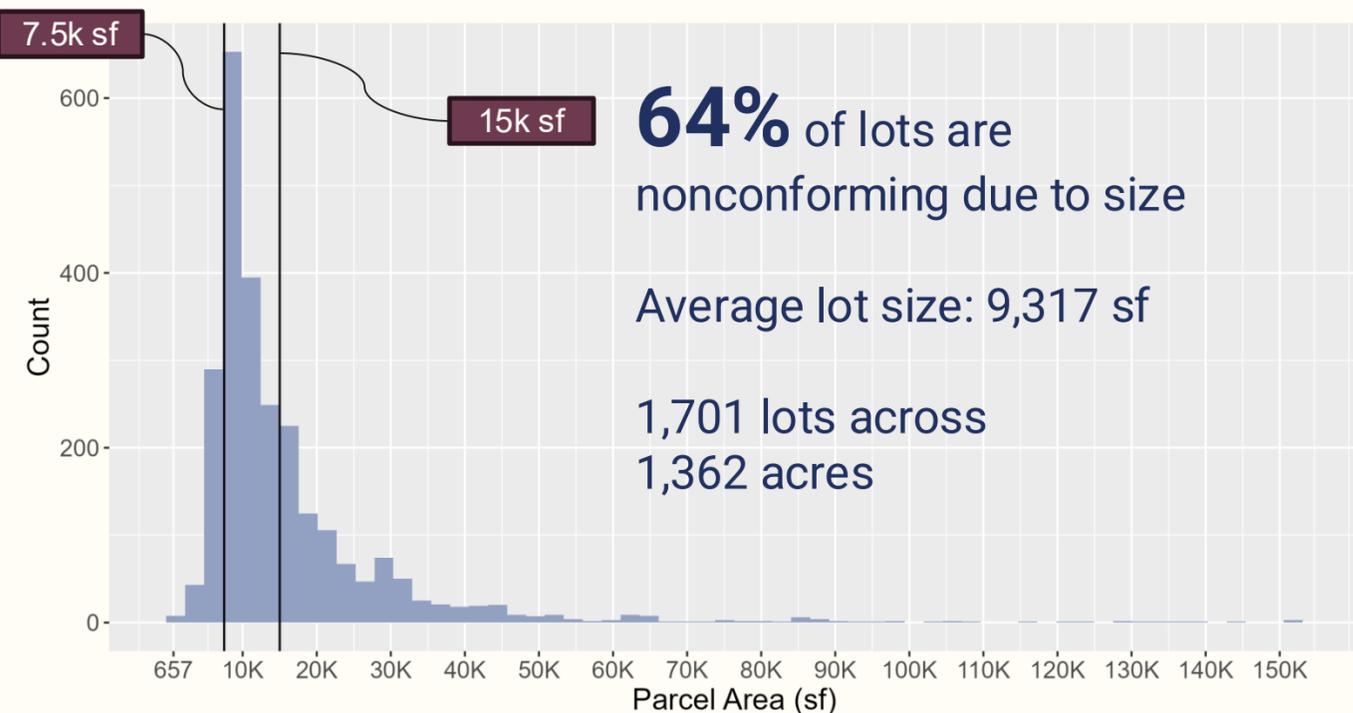
	Existing	For Discussion
Min. Lot Size	15,000 sf	7,500 sf
Allowable Uses (by right)	single family	single-family two-family small multi-family* by special exception



Inspired by Byron Matto's analysis, coordination of findings in progress

Key Observations:

- Significant lot size nonconformity
- Prioritize for lot size and two-family use by-right, allowing ADU addition without variance
- Explore how to pair with preservation incentives and form-based controls to align to existing patterns of development



Enhance: Single Family Zoning District Analysis

Single Residence B (SRB) District

150 US Route 1 Bypass – Non-conforming by Use



Key Observations:

- Permitted number of units: 1
- Number of units: 48
- Land Use: Condo
- Permitted Minimum Lot Area: 15,000 sf (0.34 acres)
- Lot Area: 130,201 sf (3 acres)
- Parking located behind building away from ROW or below grade
- Set back by 75' with green buffer

38 Summit Avenue – Non-conforming by Lot Area



Key Observations:

- Permitted number of units: 1
- Number of units: 1
- Land Use: Single-Family
- Permitted Minimum Lot Area: 15,000 sf (0.34 acres)
- Lot Area: 7,056 sf
- Parking is directly beside instead of between unit and ROW
- Set back by 7' with direct unit access from ROW

Enhance: Single Family Zoning District Analysis

Takeaways

- Focus on SRB as low-hanging fruit with the maximum impact, maximum alignment with "smart growth" development approach
 - Stage 1: reduce minimum lot sizes, allow for greater subdivision, and allow two-family with updated dimensional standards
 - Stage 2: allow small multifamily with updated dimensional standards
- Across all districts (including General Residence A, B, and C), align dimensional requirements for primary structures and ADUs to existing patterns and norms as well as current market-viable building typologies and in-demand housing types and consider preservation incentives

Adapt: Gateway Neighborhood Mixed-Use Districts

The Gateway Districts, adopted into the City's zoning in 2017 to address the need for increased supply and diversity of housing in Portsmouth, have generated a strong response from the real estate development market.



Gateway Corridor (G1)

- **Uses:**
 - broad range of housing types
 - compatible commercial, fabrication, and civic uses
- **Design and Density:** high-quality pedestrian environment and moderate to high density

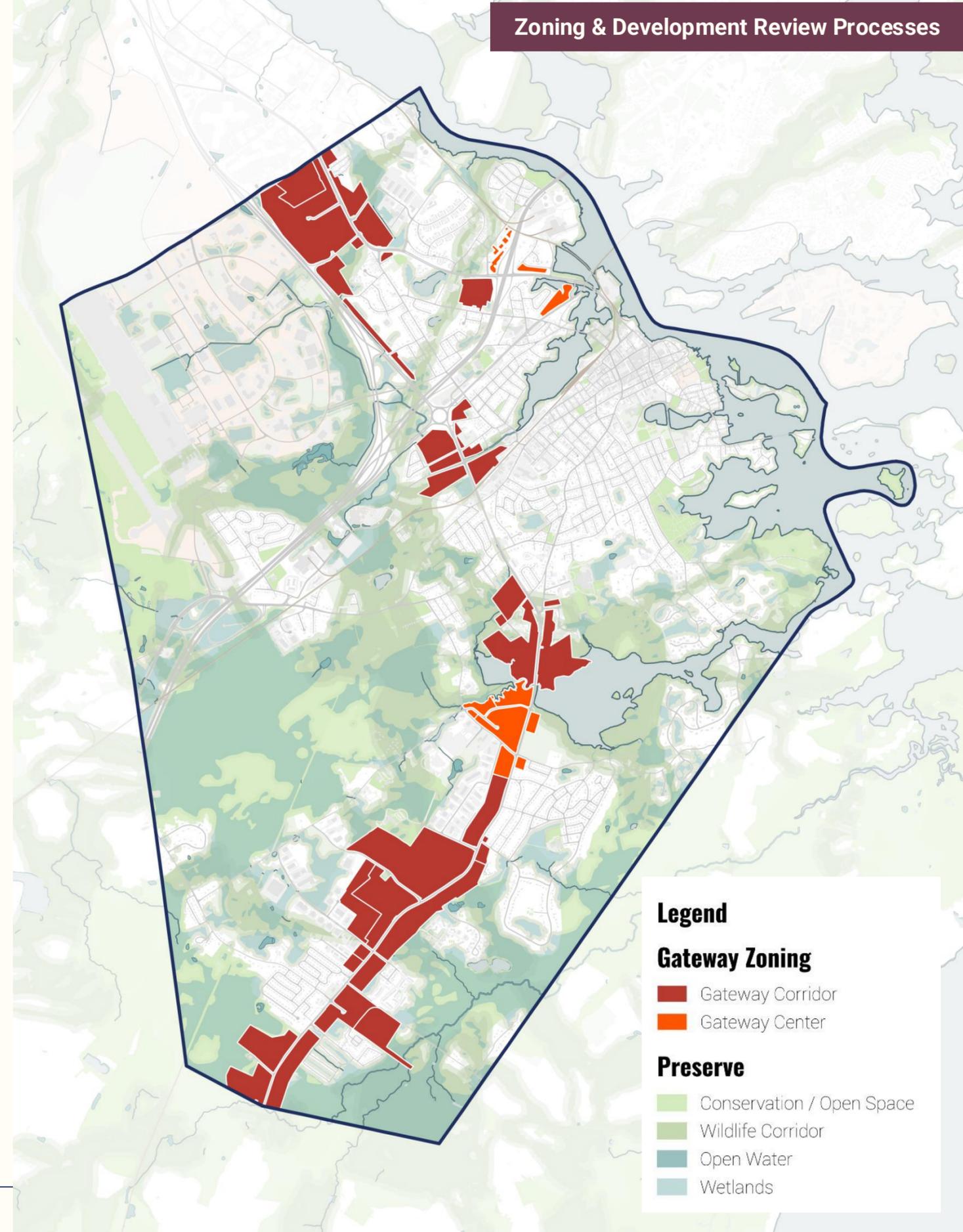


Gateway Center (G2)

- **Uses:**
 - broad range of residential and mixed-use development
 - commercial uses that benefit residents of the district and surrounding neighborhoods
- **Design and Density:** pedestrian scale and moderate density

Areas of Continued Refinement:

- Incentives and bonuses to promote affordable housing and commercial/residential development balance
- Process and design guidelines to promote genuine mixed-use, alignment with infrastructure delivery, and increased connectivity and pedestrian-focused design
- Potentially re-aligning and introducing more G2 districts nested inside G1 to convey desired neighborhood centers, aligned to Future Place Types Vision



Legend

Gateway Zoning

- Gateway Corridor
- Gateway Center

Preserve

- Conservation / Open Space
- Wildlife Corridor
- Open Water
- Wetlands

Next Steps

1. Draft Written Recommendations

Drafted, to be shared via email for comments from Planning Board members once City staff has had the opportunity to review. We are currently projecting 4/3. Comments will be due back to Peter S. no later than 4/13 for incorporation prior to the Public Open House.

2. Public Outreach Outlook

- Public Draft Plan Open House: April 22, 6PM @ Community Campus
- Draft Plan Framework Survey (digital, can develop printed version if helpful)
- Supplemental Targeted Outreach:
 - Arts, Culture and Small Business Mini-Survey:
Business Community, Arts/Culture Sector, Service Workers
 - Social Service Providers
 - School-Age Children & Families
 - Leaders in Black and Indigenous Portsmouth communities

3. Planning Board & Committee Meetings

- Sustainability Committee: February 26
- Planning Board: March 26
- Economic Development Committee: April 3



*Scan QR code to visit the
Portsmouth Master Plan website.*



Thank You!

Stay in touch with our outreach leads:

Anne: weidman@utiledesign.com

Monte: mrbohanan@portsmouthnh.gov

Let us know if you notice something we can be doing better to promote understanding and participation.



Scan QR code to visit the
Portsmouth Master Plan website.