



# CONNECT THE **JUNCTION**

## **Transit Oriented Development Master Plan**

**Planning Commission Presentation**

May 1st, 2025



# Agenda

1. Project overview and revised timeline
2. Discussion on housing capacity increases
3. Discussion on plan actions and potential gaps
4. Next steps



RECAP:

# PROJECT BACKGROUND

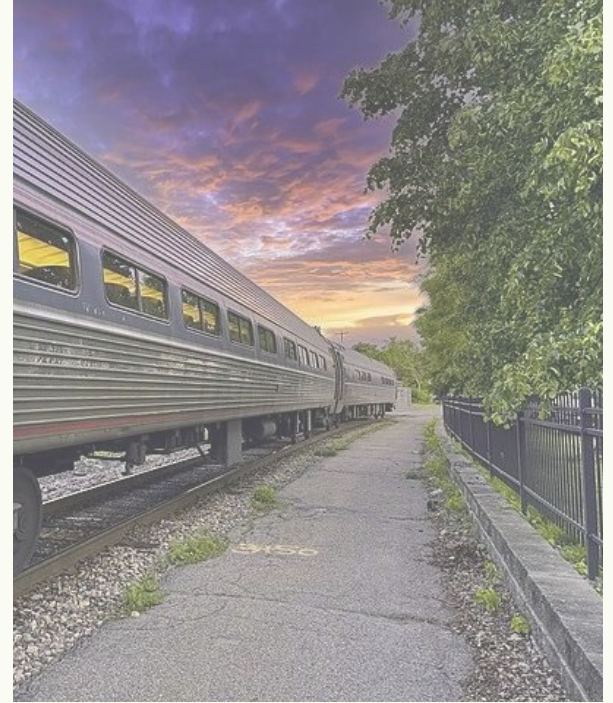


# Project Background

- Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Master Plan
- Federally funded: Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) program
  - 10 communities throughout Northwest Vermont to develop TOD Plans

What is transit-oriented development (TOD)?

TOD focuses on creating dense, walkable, mixed-use development near transit, creating vibrant, connected communities that enjoy easy access to jobs and services.



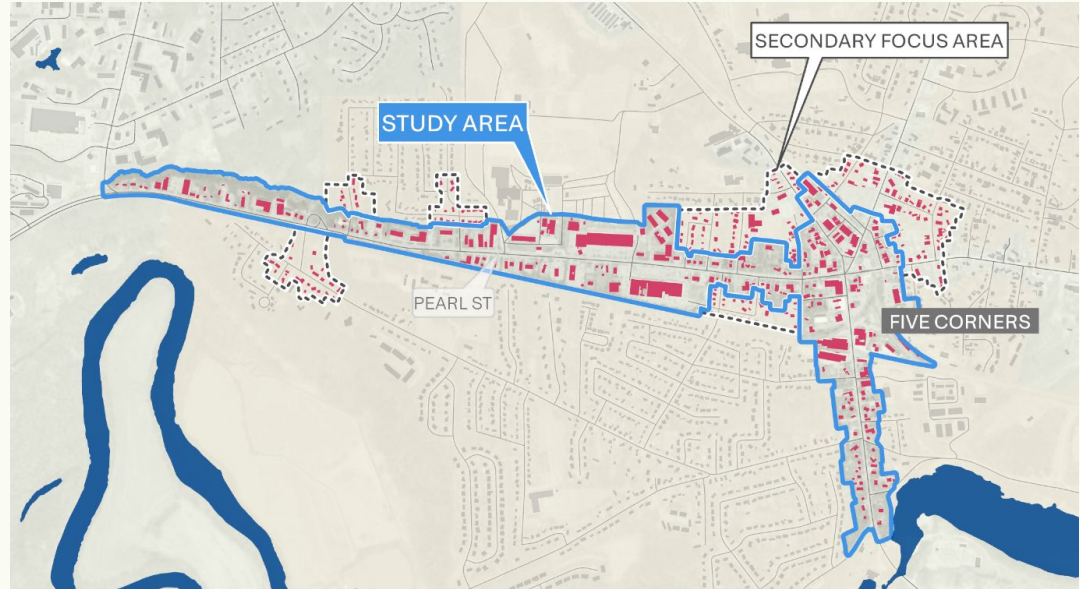
# Project Area

- Primary Focus Area:

Village Center, Park Street, Pearl Street Corridor

- Secondary Focus Areas:

*Potential transition zones*



0 0.25 0.5 MILES



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# Project Schedule

2024

2025

## JULY - SEPT

- Current Conditions report
- Website launch
- *Junction City News* segment
- Focus group meetings

## OCT - NOV

- Charrette review, incorporation of community feedback
- Design concept development
- NOV 7: presentation to Planning Commission of community feedback and master plan concepts

## OCT 4-7

*Community Design Charrette!*

## MAR

First full master plan draft for staff feedback

## APR

Draft for Planning Commission and City Council review

## MAY

Revisions, additional renders, code development

## SUMMER

Final adoption



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Objective:

# PLANNING FOR SMART GROWTH

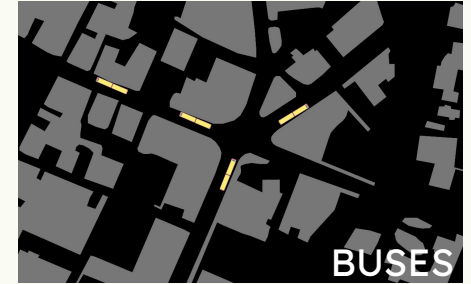
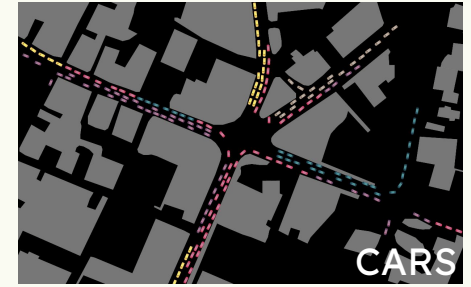


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# TOD = balancing community needs and wants with new housing growth targets

- Chittenden County has released draft housing growth targets of between 1462 and 4392 new dwelling units by 2050 for Essex Junction
- Housing density:
  - Reduces per unit infrastructure costs
  - Supports local business
  - Supports affordability by reducing per unit cost
  - Produces better environmental outcomes
  - Can pay for more public space and improve liveability

Transporting the same number of people...

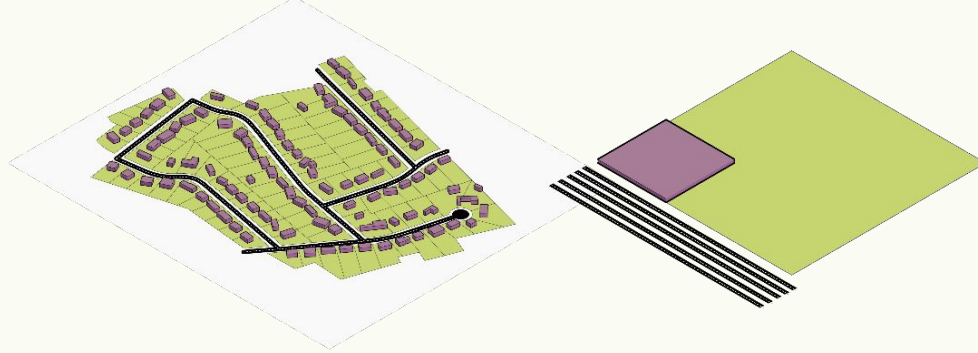




# Efficiently accommodating growth

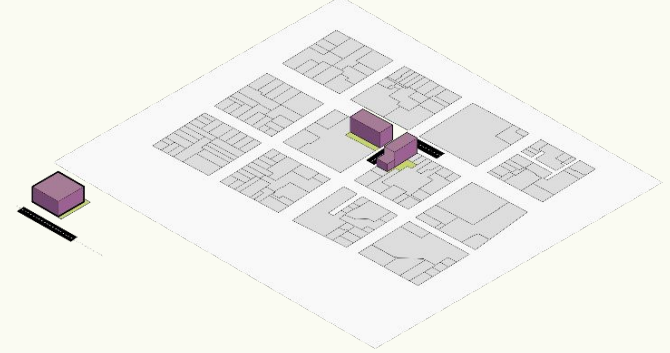
- Connect the Junction proposes updates to the LDC that could allow enough housing density to meet Chittenden County's high growth target by 2050 within the TOD project area.

100 units @ R2 density



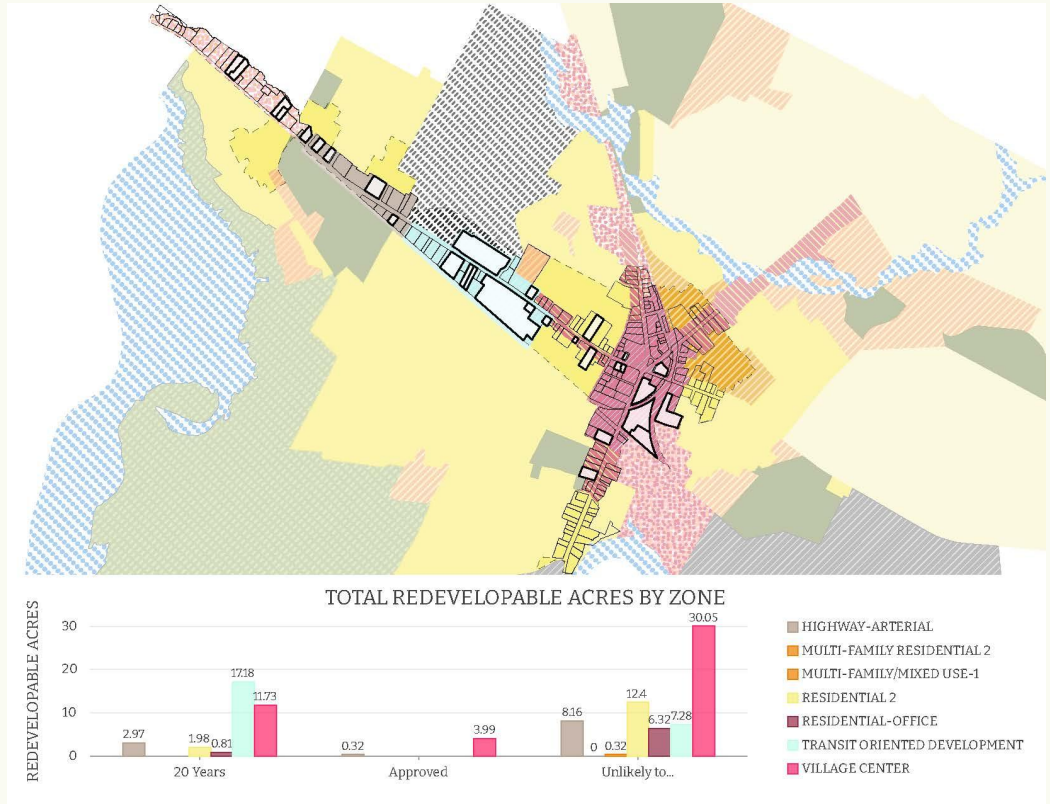
VS.

100 units @ proposed VC density



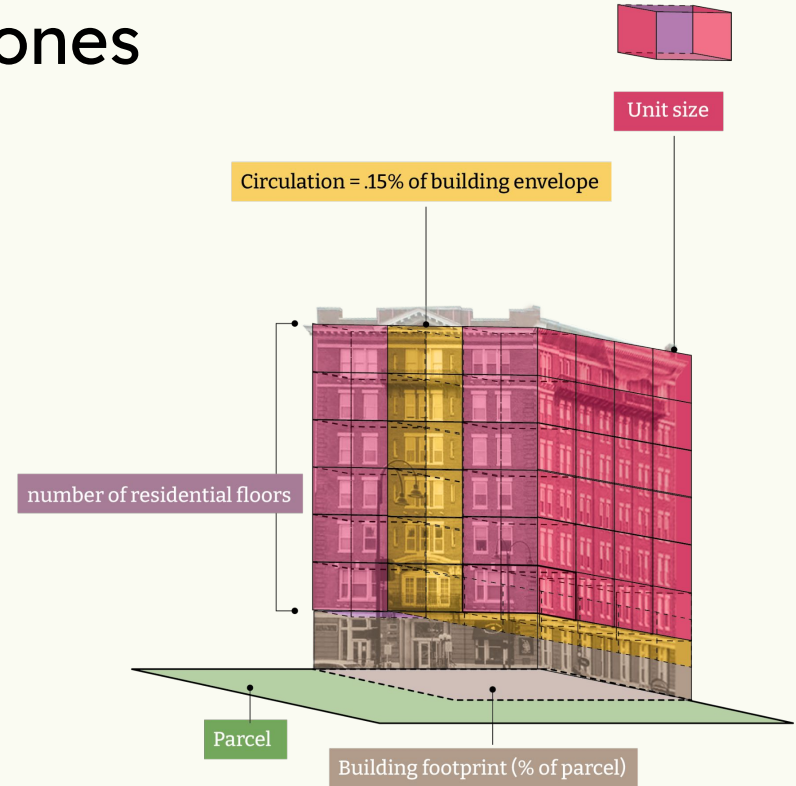
# Calculating growth potential

- The project team identified parcels that are underutilized and likely to be redeveloped



# Right-sizing height in TOD zones

- The project team looked at several different height scenarios for the different districts
- Variables for assessing capacity:
  - Number of residential floors
  - Average size of units
  - Building coverage (% of parcel)
  - Re-developable parcels (acres)



# Height recommendation by zoning district

		Existing regulations	Proposed regulation	Redevelopable acreage	Capacity
VC	Village Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Floors = 4 (1 commercial, 3 residential)</li> <li>Affordability bonus = + 1 floor (5 total)</li> <li>Lot coverage = determined by development review board as part of site plan review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Floors = 7 (1 commercial, 6 residential)</li> <li>Affordability bonus = + 1 floor (8 total)</li> </ul>	11.73	1824
TOD	Transit Oriented Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Floors = 4 (1 commercial, 3 residential)</li> <li>Affordability bonus = + 1 floor (5 total)</li> <li>Lot coverage = up to 100%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Floors = 6 (1 commercial, 5 residential)</li> <li>Affordability bonus = + 1 floor (7 total)</li> </ul>	17.18	2290
HA	Highway Arterial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Floors = 4 (1 commercial, 3 residential)</li> <li>Affordability bonus = + 1 floor (5 total)</li> <li>Lot coverage = 65%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Floors = 5 (1 commercial, 4 residential)</li> <li>Affordability bonus = + 1 floor (6 total)</li> </ul>	2.97	330

## Assumptions:

- 60% lot coverage
- 1000 sq ft units
- 15% internal circulation deduction

**4444**

+ 52 above high growth target



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Plan Actions:

# CONNECT THE JUNCTION



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# Plan development: guiding questions

- Purpose: to develop actions that maximize the benefits of growth (liveability, walkability, economic development) while minimizing adverse impacts
  - Do the plan actions successfully prioritize quality of life in the TOD area? If not, what aspects need more emphasis?
  - Do the plan actions successfully plan for denser growth? If not, what additional actions should be taken?
  - Can the actions proposed be accomplished with City resources?



# Big Ideas - structure the Plan

- PP Prioritize PEOPLE**  
Improve the experience for pedestrians and cyclists while calming traffic that moves through Five Corners by allocating more right-of-way space for multi-modal transportation, landscaping, lighting, and public space.
- CC Capitalize on the CRESCENT CONNECTOR**  
Leverage the City's investment in the Crescent Connector with complimentary development of open space, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and supportive retail and housing.
- AA Develop to add ACTIVITIES & AMENITIES**  
Ensure that new development includes amenities for residents and visitors through design guidelines and code updates.
- HT Add HOUSING THOUGHTFULLY**  
Increase housing capacity to align with ambitious city and state growth targets through design that fits within the historic City Center fabric and offers diverse options for residents.

- MC Make more CONNECTIONS**  
Create more connections for pedestrians, cyclists, and cars through new and updated crosswalks, public space, roadways, and thoughtful development.
- AS Make the ASSETS SHINE**  
Recognize and leverage existing community assets, including public space, the Champlain Valley Exposition Centre, historical infrastructure, arts and culture.
- EJ ESSEX JUNCTION for ESSEX JUNCTION**  
Support active community organizations and local businesses through programming, marketing, and public space improvements.



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# Prioritize People

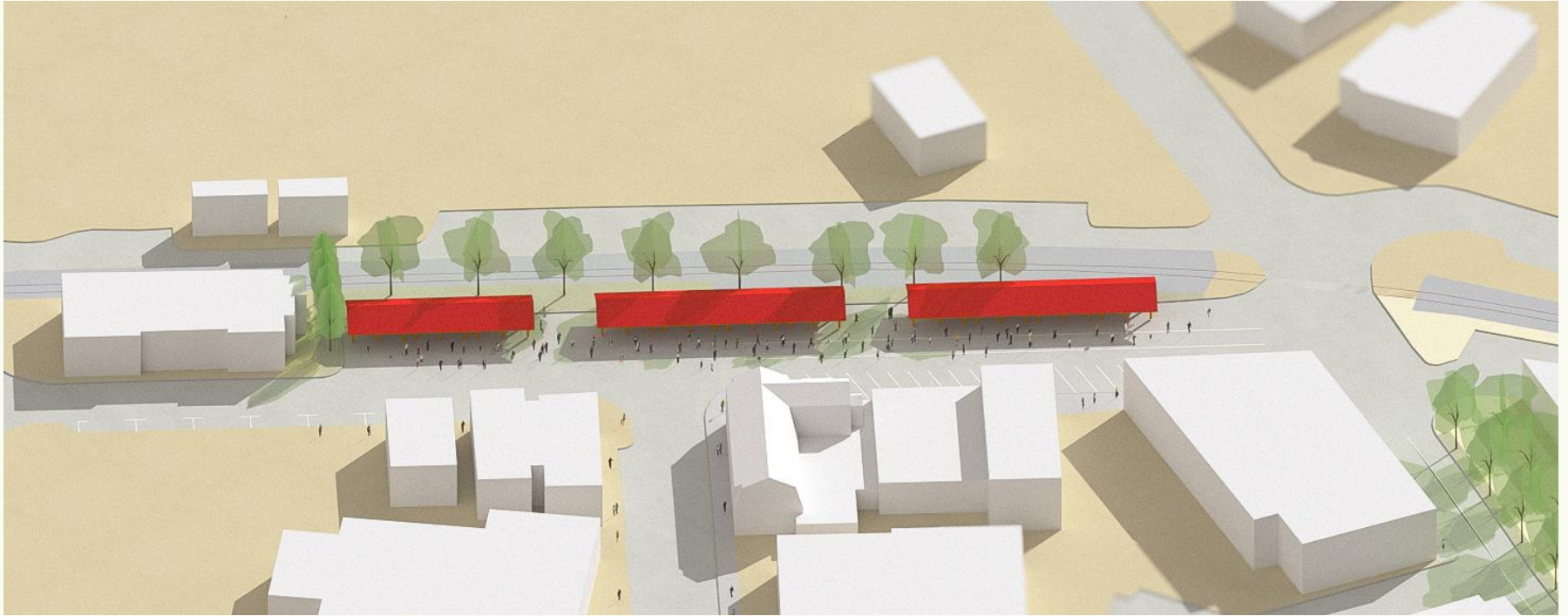
*Reallocate space from single-occupancy vehicles to multi-modal options, public and active transit*

- ↑ Traffic Calming
- ↑ Right-of-way for bikes and pedestrians
- ↑ Landscaping
- ↑ Better lighting
- ↑ Public Space





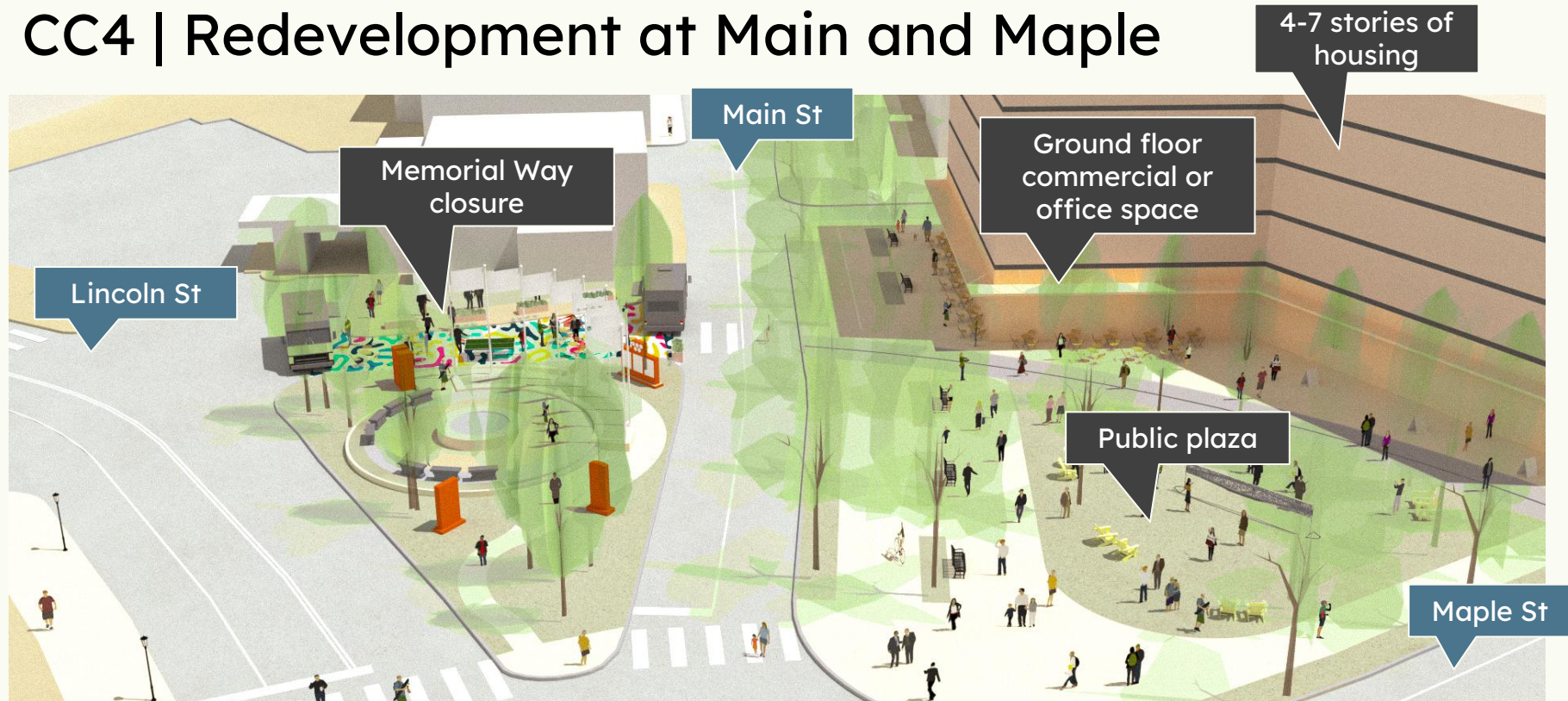
# Activate Railroad Avenue







# CC4 | Redevelopment at Main and Maple



# Overview of proposed traffic revisions

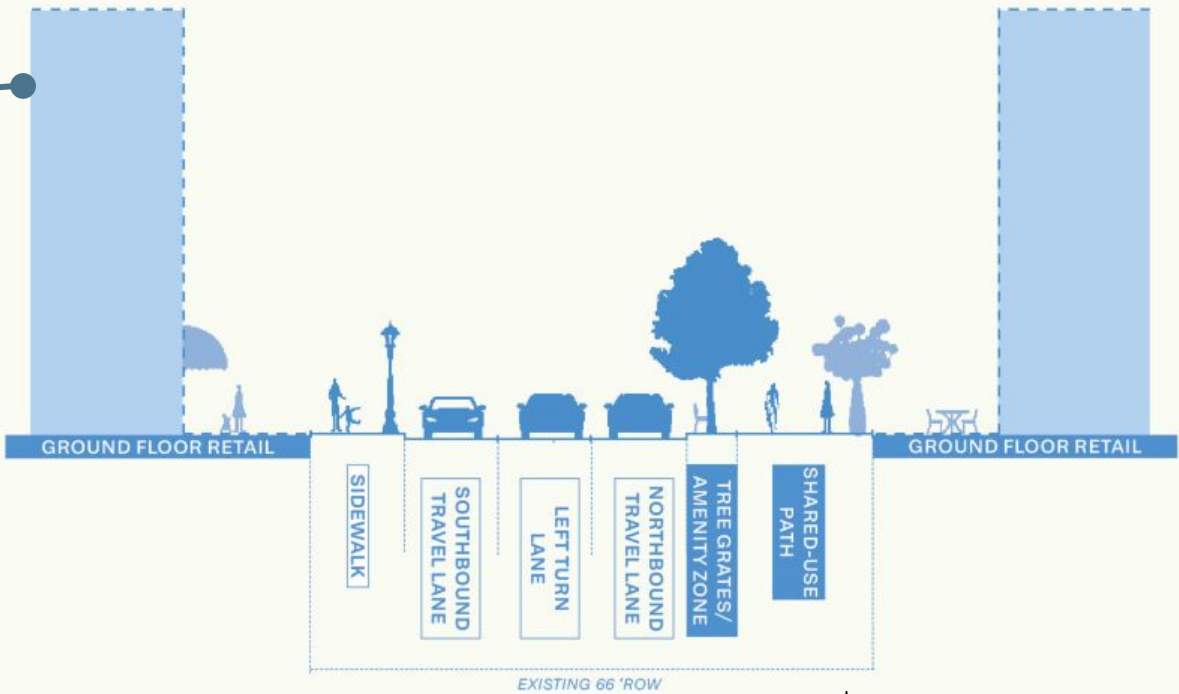
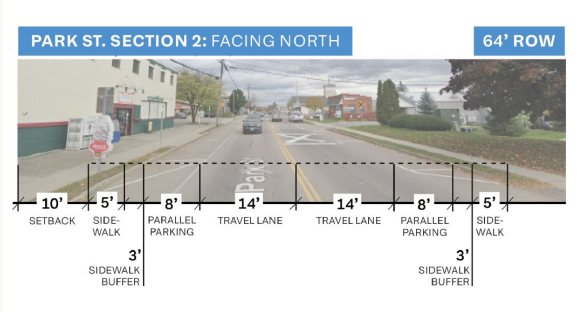




# Main St proposed lane reduction



# Park St proposed lane reduction



# Develop to add activities and Amenities

*Ensure that development includes/supports community needs and wants*

- ↑ Public and open space with development
- ↑ Landscaping
- ↑ Pedestrian-oriented businesses and uses
- ↑ Comfortable and pedestrian-oriented public/private interface



STRATEGIC, TASTEFUL  
HEIGHT INCREASES

**DA1.1**

MAINTAIN & CREATE  
NEW OPEN SPACE

**DA4.3**

MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

**DA1.2**

DIVERSE PEDESTRIAN AMENITIES

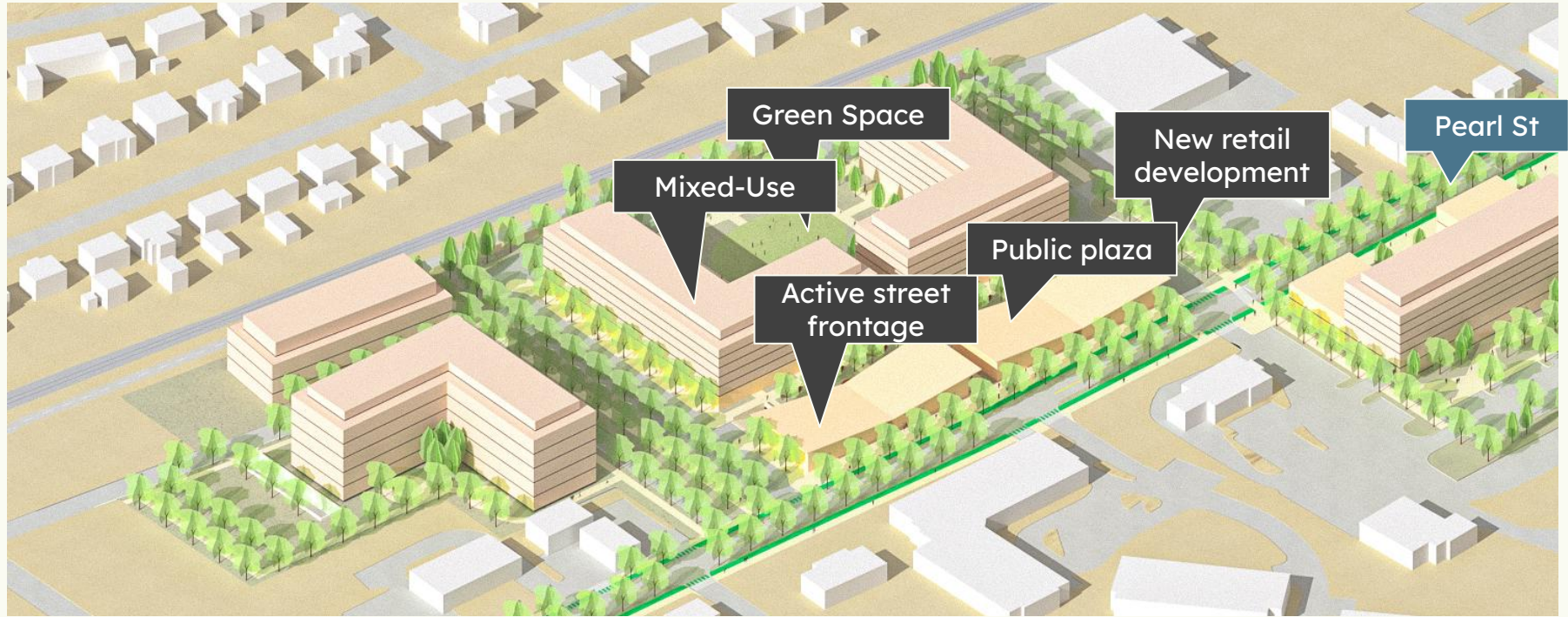
**DA1, DA3**



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## DA2 | Add retail along Pearl St. frontage of Post Office Square





# Add housing thoughtfully

*Fulfill growth targets while offering diverse options for residents  
& blending into/adding to existing historic fabric*

↑ Housing capacity

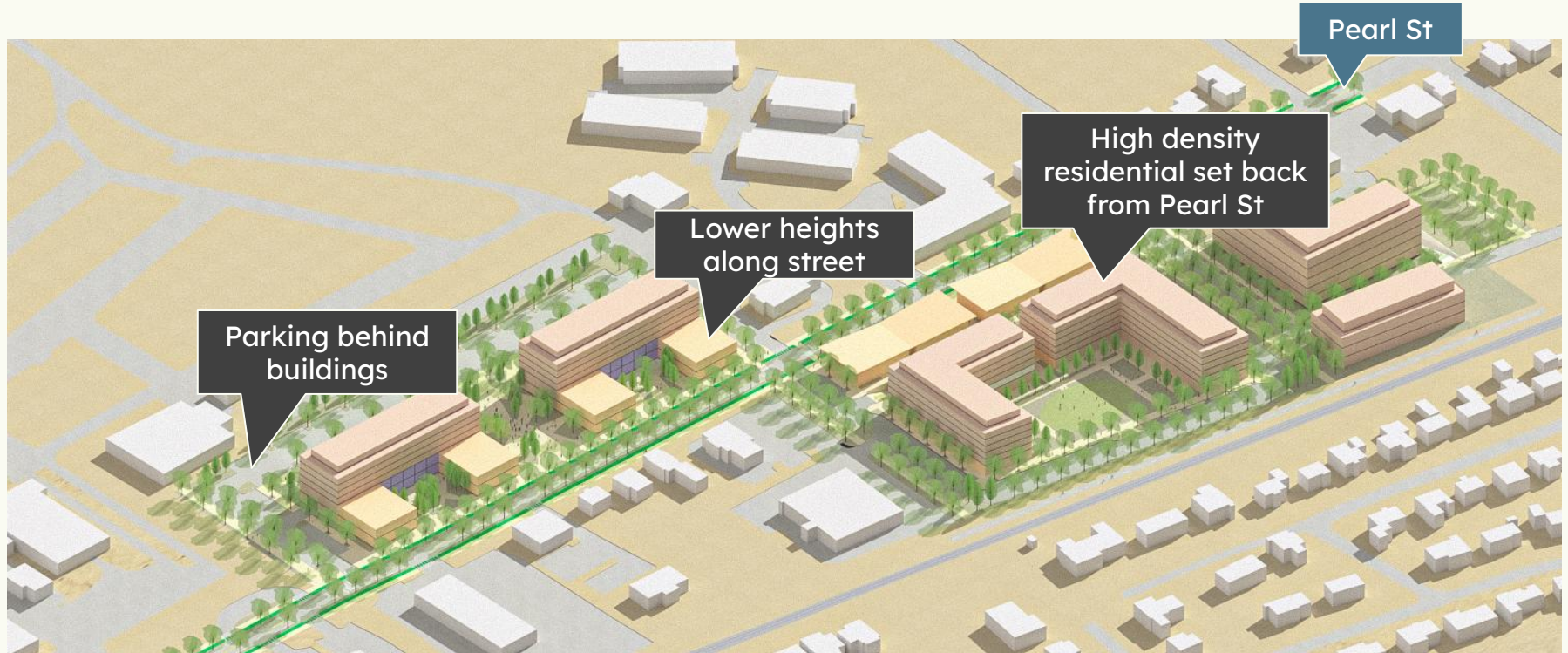
↑ Height increases

↑ Design guidelines/standards to  
reduce feeling of scale

↑ Mixed-use to co-locate housing  
and amenities



## HT1.2 | Consider a lower height limit along certain street frontages including Pearl St.



# Make more connections

*Focus on the big picture of TOD... visual, physical, social connections for a more functional city system*

- ↑ Increased contiguity
- ↑ Integrated pedestrian and transit network (crosswalks, trails to transit)
- ↑ Space for cyclists and pedestrians





# Make the assets shine

*Recognize and boost existing community resources*

- ↑ Enhanced park space to support increased density
- ↑ Historic structures foregrounded
- ↑ Public art



COMMISSION MURALS &  
OTHER PUBLIC ART

AS4

IMPROVE PUBLIC SPACE  
SURROUNDING EXISTING ASSETS

AS4



WAYFINDING & PLACEMAKING  
ELEMENTS IN EXISTING PUBLIC SPACES

AS1.1

MORE ACTIVITIES &  
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

AS1



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# Essex Junction for Essex Junction

*Highlight and support the people and character that make up Essex Junction - existing and new residents, community organizations, and local businesses*

- ↑ Community/business capacity-building
- ↑ Marketing
- ↑ Community events
- ↑ 5 Corners activation

HIGHLIGHT THE CITY'S  
BEST QUALITIES

EJ3, EJ4

BRING THE COMMUNITY  
TOGETHER

EJ2, EJ4

THINK TO THE FUTURE,  
RECRUIT DESIRED BUSINESSES

EJ1

INVEST IN EVENTS &  
PROGRAMMING

EJ2



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# Plan development: discussion

- Do the plan actions successfully prioritize quality of life in the TOD area? If not, what aspects need more emphasis?
- Do the plan actions successfully plan for denser growth? If not, what additional actions should be taken?
- Can the actions proposed be accomplished with City resources?
- Do the proposed heights within the study area feel appropriate especially when paired with actions intended to mitigate feeling of scale?
- Is there anything else we can provide to help with decision making?



# NEXT STEPS



# Add your comments to Konveio

Please review and provide feedback by  
Monday, May 12th

Add feedback  
here!

framework Community Engagement

## Connect the Junction TOD masterplan DRAFT review

Please submit your comments in the document below!

In this draft we are looking to finalize the plan actions. Please review the document, paying particular attention to whether the plan actions and subactions balance community desires while addressing state and county housing needs (see the plan background for a description of those needs), and if not, what additional actions should be considered? Please also indicate if there are actions that could be clarified or expanded upon to make implementation easier.

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Click anywhere in the document to add a comment. Select a bubble to view comments.

**Big Idea** | OA Develop to add activities and amenities

**Action** | DA2 Add retail along Pearl St. frontage of Post Office Square

**Description** | Currently, Pearl St. is primarily fronted by parking lots, with commercial uses set back far from the street. Adding retail to the front of Post Office Square would begin to create a friendlier, more walkable thoroughfare that is more supportive of transit riders. This action suggests a phased approach starting with temporary liner buildings in the interim before development.

BELOW: Rendering showing in-fill development fronting Post Office Square, creating a more pedestrian-friendly corridor along Pearl, increasing opportunities for small business development, and expanding the public realm with additions of plazas and greenspace.

MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT GREENSPACE PUBLIC PLAZA





# What comes next?

## 1. Master Plan

- a. Revisions
- b. Additional site concepts (May include Lincoln Inn, properties adjacent to Steven's Park, and Pearl St between West St Extension and Susie Wilson Rd.)

## 2. Code Updates

- a. Implement the master plan concepts

## 3. Implementation Strategy

- a. Specifics to include responsibilities, planning-level cost estimates, timeline, priorities
- b. Monitoring





# CONNECT THE **JUNCTION**

a transit-oriented development plan for responsible growth

# THANK YOU!



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