

Town Of Burlington, Massachusetts  
Blanchard / Wheeler Corridor  
**VISION PLAN**





# **BLANCHARD / WHEELER CORRIDOR VISION PLAN**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

July 27, 2023

### **Town of Burlington**

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### **VHB**

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Guided by data and public input, the Blanchard / Wheeler Corridor Vision Plan describes proposed improvements for the area over the next five to ten years.

The Blanchard / Wheeler Corridor (“the Corridor”) consists of the roadways and developments surrounding Blanchard Road and Wheeler Road in southern Burlington, MA.

While the area has witnessed significant commercial and residential growth over the past 25 years, improvements to the roadway and general supporting infrastructure have lagged behind.

VHB researched existing physical and market conditions, facilitated public engagement events, and produced a Vision Plan to guide future investment, development, and public programming in the area.



## VISION PLAN DRIVERS

The Town of Burlington set out to achieve the following priorities with the Blanchard / Wheeler Corridor Vision Plan:



**IMPROVE STREETSAPES, STREET SAFETY, AND MULTI-MODALITY**



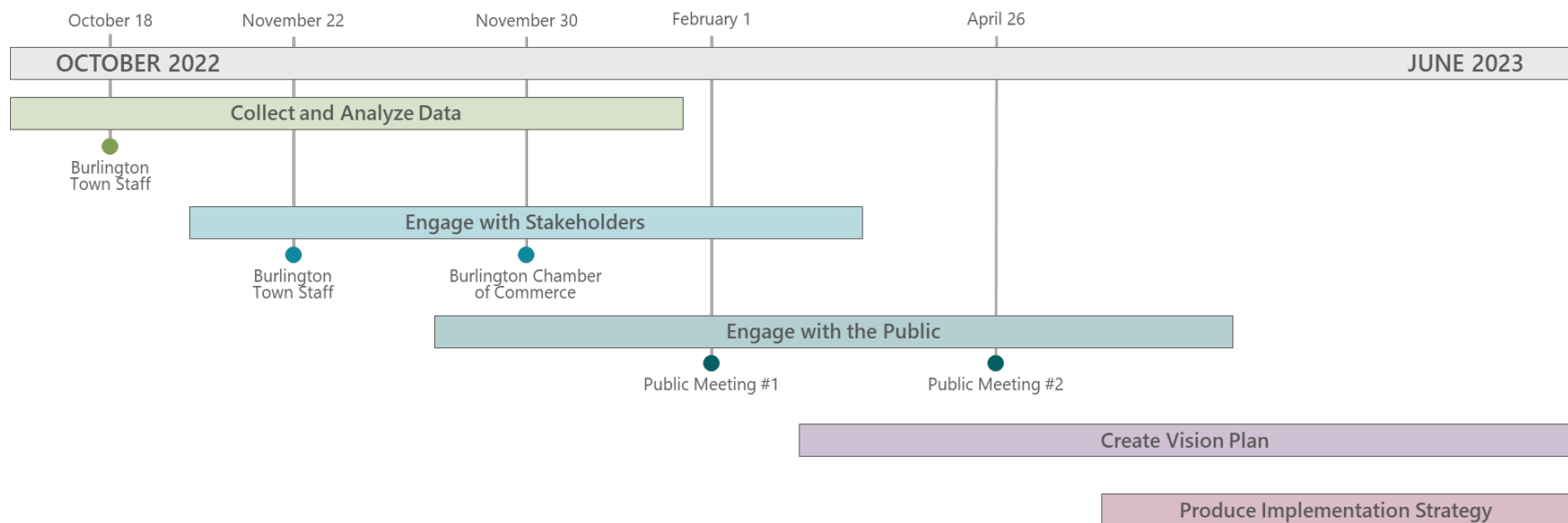
**PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**



**ATTRACT INVESTMENT**

## TIMELINE AND METHODS

This study includes an assessment of existing conditions in the study area and feedback from a series of public meetings and interviews with key stakeholders. The Vision Plan includes a **Vision Statement**, list of **strategic goals** to achieve this vision, and an **implementation strategy** identifying required specific actions and projects.



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

VHB met with two stakeholder groups and facilitated two public meetings to obtain information on topics including housing, economic development, placemaking, access and traffic, preservation of wetlands and open space, and pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure.

Feedback from Burlington staff (first stakeholder meeting) and Burlington Chamber of Commerce (second stakeholder meeting) included:

The Corridor is a **major cut-through** and leads to **one of the most congested areas** of the Town, where the Middlesex Turnpike backs up due to the sequence of lighting systems.

The most significant equity consideration will be providing **access to this area and Mary Cummings Park** for people who can't afford/access a vehicle.



Companies would love to come into the Study Area and create **new retail and restaurant amenities** – we need to focus on getting people to the amenities as opposed to getting the amenities to them.



We need to **act on past transportation, walkability, bikeability studies** to transport people to the amenities without making the Study Area into a Mall Road 2.0.

Approximately 60% of office space is being leased up again, **shedding about 40% of office leasing**.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Feedback from the public was collected through a survey administered during the remote meeting. The following is a selection of responses that contributed to the Vision Plan:

**Do you feel the corridor is safe for pedestrians and bicyclists?**



**What are the corridor’s strengths that should be preserved or emphasized?**

- Connectivity
- Access to Mary Cummings Park
- Wooded sections
- Greenery and wetlands
- Parks and community
- Better sidewalks
- Natural resources
- Views
- Rural nature

**What are the corridor’s shortcomings that should be addressed?**

- Traffic speed
- Too few sidewalks
- Driver visibility around curves
- No bike lane
- Flooding
- Road conditions
- Narrow right of way

**What additional amenities do you think would benefit the corridor?  
(for example: café, gym, etc.)**

- Picnic areas
- Public study area
- Amenity center
- Playgrounds or parks
- Boardwalk through the wetlands
- Restaurant
- Café
- Multi-use path
- Pocket parks



## OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Identified through community engagement and workshops with the Town staff, the following challenges and opportunities helped to shape the Vision Plan.

<p><b>CHALLENGES</b></p>	<p><b>Wetlands</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corridor is low in elevation</li> <li>• Flooding/icing</li> <li>• Wetlands constraints for new development</li> <li>• Lack of boardwalks</li> </ul>	<p><b>Infrastructure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traffic issues (e.g., speeding, congestion)</li> <li>• Lack of connectivity</li> <li>• Lack of mass transit</li> <li>• Poor lighting</li> <li>• Poor walkability/bikeability</li> <li>• Narrow roadways</li> <li>• Blind spots</li> </ul>	<p><b>Private Properties</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Much of the Corridor is privately owned</li> <li>• Underutilized office space and excess parking due to changing work trends</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p>	<p><b>Mobility</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infrastructure to support the Corridor’s high volume of bike/ped traffic</li> <li>• Complete streets</li> <li>• Regional connectivity</li> </ul>	<p><b>Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for multi-unit development</li> <li>• Need for amenities (e.g., cafés, coffee shops)</li> <li>• Right-sizing office spaces</li> <li>• Connectivity to Mall Road area</li> <li>• Northeastern University research and innovation</li> </ul>	<p><b>Parks &amp; Recreation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mary Cummings Park</li> <li>• Increasing access to the Corridor’s natural assets (e.g., wetlands, open space, trees)</li> <li>• Need for parklets/playgrounds</li> </ul>



## THE VISION

The Corridor along Blanchard and Wheeler Road has seen significant development over the past 25 years.

The Corridor will continue to be an **excellent place to live** and a **vital mixed-use hub** for research, technology, and recreation.

Offering employment and a rich natural environment, the Corridor will continue to **foster economic growth, accessibility, and improved connectivity** with safe streetscapes and multi-modal pathways.

Through community dialogue, residents and stakeholders within the Corridor have reflected and explored a vision for the future.

## THE CORRIDOR WILL BE

### **Connected**

The Corridor will provide pathways connecting its employees, residents, and visitors to destinations within the Corridor and surrounding districts. Through creative placemaking, the Corridor will reflect the character of its population, history, and natural environments. Future planning initiatives will involve relevant local and regional stakeholders, including residents, business owners, and institutional leaders.

### **Multi-modal**

The Corridor will serve a range of modal options, supporting complete streets that accommodate all roadway users, including motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists. Roadway improvements and enhanced walkability will provide a safe and enjoyable environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

### **Sustainable**

Future development along the Corridor will be sensitive to environmental impact and support public health and wellness. The Corridor will enhance critical natural resources that aid flood management and contribute to recreational opportunities, including wetlands and open space.

### **Resilient**

The Corridor will be adaptable to changing economic and regional trends by incorporating new innovative approaches to infrastructure, land use, and open space planning.

### **Balanced**

The Corridor will balance new development with the preservation of natural resources, as well as establish a mix of uses that support a vibrant district. It will offer a wide variety of amenities that support all its users and expand the public realm.

### **Vibrant**

The Corridor will be a hub for employment and economic activity, supporting services and thriving businesses both large and small.

## GOALS TO ACHIEVE THE VISION

To achieve this Vision, the Town of Burlington and associated stakeholders must be diligent and forward-thinking in planning for these goals:





## Goal 1: Enhance Connectivity

within the Corridor and with surrounding districts by establishing pathways to destinations.

1A  
1B  
1C  
1D  
1E  
1F

ACTION	PRIORITY	CHAMPION	COST*	FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES	TIMEFRAME
Create multi-modal pathways from Muller Road to Middlesex Turnpike, addressing narrow sections with sharrows or (potentially) boardwalks	Level 1	Planning Department, DPW	\$\$\$\$	Complete Streets Funding (MassDOT) Shared Streets & Spaces Grant (MassDOT) Safe Streets & Roads For All Grant (US DOT)	Short-Term (1-5 Years)
Design and implement solutions for bicyclists on Blanchard between the Oracle bike path and the Howard Dulong bike path at Seven Springs.	Level 1	Planning Department, DPW	\$\$\$	Complete Streets Funding (MassDOT) Shared Streets & Spaces Grant (MassDOT) Safe Streets & Roads For All Grant (US DOT)	Short-Term (1-5 Years)
Conduct a study to determine best strategies for connecting all bike pathways within the corridor, and to other trail networks like the Minuteman Bike Trail.	Level 2	Planning Department	\$\$	Complete Streets Funding (MassDOT) Shared Streets & Spaces Grant (MassDOT) Safe Streets & Roads For All Grant (US DOT)	Medium-Term (6-9 Years)
Perform deferred maintenance on the existing off-street bike paths located in Seven Springs.	Level 2	Winn Residential	\$\$\$	Private funding	Medium-Term (6-9 Years)
Determine a preferred regional bus connection plan and advocate for that plan with the MBTA.	Level 2	Planning Department	\$	Community Transit Grant (MassDOT)	Long-Term (10+ Years)
Improve ped/bike connectivity between the Northeastern Innovation Campus and the Van de Graaff commercial district.	Level 3	Northeastern University, The Trustees of Reservations	\$\$\$	Private funding	Long-Term (10+ Years)

\* (\$) \$10,000-\$20,000, (\$\$) \$20,000-\$50,000, (\$\$\$) \$50,000-\$100,000, (\$\$\$\$) greater than \$100,000

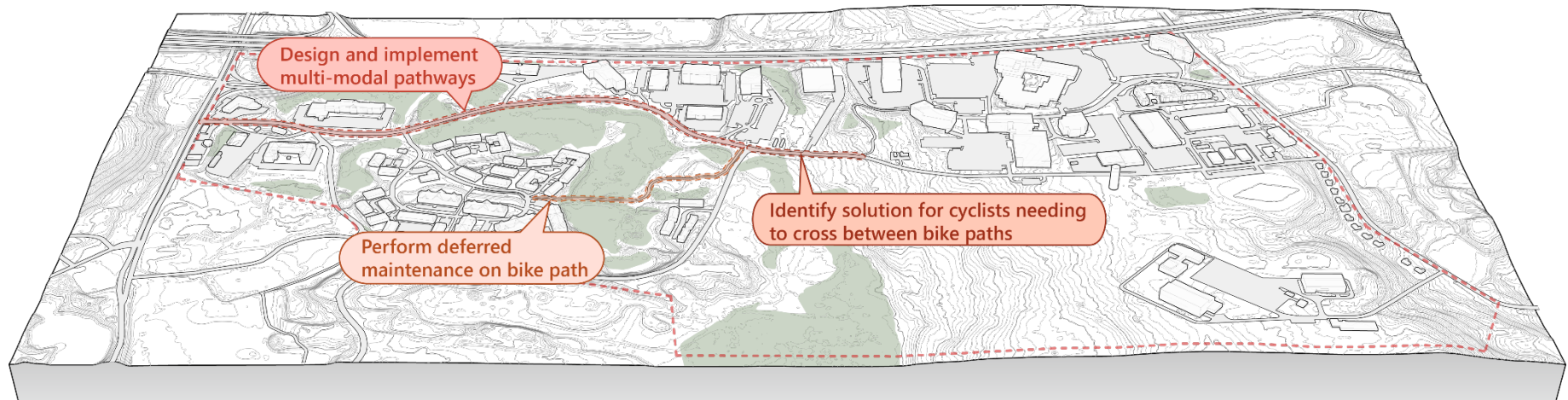


## Goal 1: Enhance Connectivity

within the Corridor and with surrounding districts by establishing pathways to destinations.

Specific concerns and ideas from stakeholders, residents, and business owners helped VHB identify key improvements to implement the Vision Plan, including:

- Adding multi-modal pathways along Wheeler Road
- Performing deferred maintenance in the Seven Springs area
- Optimizing crossing points for bicyclists
- Explore options for a boardwalk across the wetlands





Top Left: A bike path improves safety and enjoyability of biking (Burlington, VT).

Bottom Left: A boardwalk supports recreation and appreciation for nature (Tuckahoe Creek in Henrico County, VA).

Right: During public meetings, residents voiced the need for maintenance on the Howard Dulong pedestrian/bike path at Seven Springs.



## Goal 2: Establish multi-modal transportation

throughout the Corridor with a focus on safety.

2A

2B

2C

ACTION	PRIORITY	CHAMPION	COST*	FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES	TIMEFRAME
Design and implement traffic-calming measures (e.g., sharrows, signalized crossings, bump-outs, warning signs).	Level 1	Planning Department, DPW	\$\$\$\$	Complete Streets Funding (MassDOT) Shared Streets & Spaces Grant (MassDOT) Safe Streets & Roads For All Grant (US DOT)	Short-Term (1-5 Years)
Design and implement shoulder-widening throughout the Corridor.	Level 2	DPW	\$\$\$\$	MassWorks Grant (Mass DOT) Municipal Pavement Program (Mass DOT) Chapter 90 (Mass DOT)	Medium-Term (6-9 Years)
Conduct an updated traffic analysis of Blanchard-Wheeler in light of post-pandemic activity.	Level 2	Planning Department	\$\$	MassWorks Grant (Mass DOT) Municipal Pavement Program (Mass DOT) Chapter 90 (Mass DOT)	Medium-Term (6-9 Years)

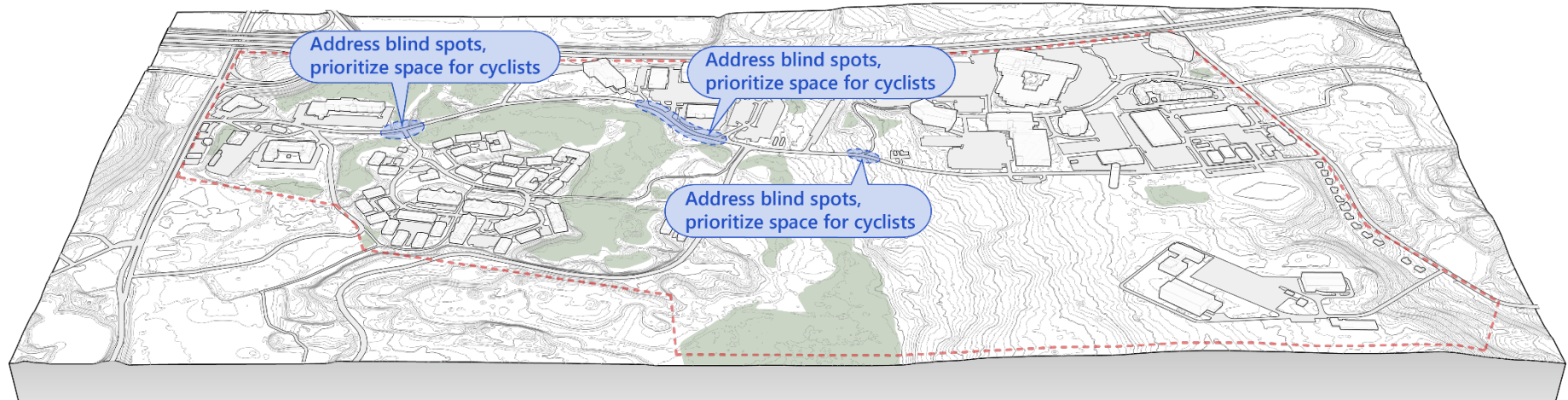


## Goal 2: Establish multi-modal transportation

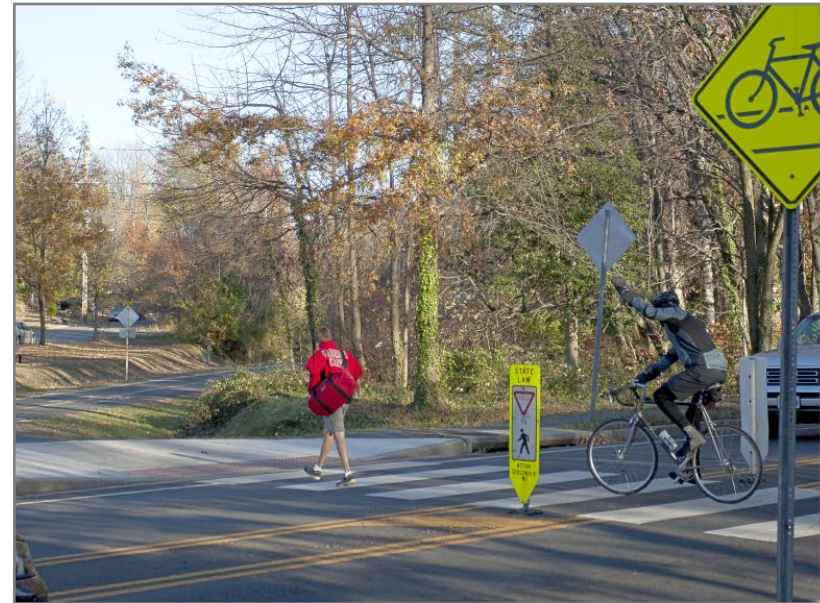
throughout the Corridor with a focus on safety.

Specific concerns and ideas from stakeholders, residents, and business owners helped VHB identify key improvements to implement the Vision Plan, including:

- Addressing blind spots
- Prioritizing space for alternate transportation







Left: Sharrow road marking indicates to drivers that bikers have the right to use the road (New Haven, CT).

Top Right: Signage and road markings notify drivers of pedestrians and bikers (Washington and Old Dominion Trail, VA).

Bottom Right: Curb bump outs increase the visibility of pedestrians, reduce crossing time, and slow oncoming traffic.



## Goal 3: Enhance the public realm

by improving access to open space and amenities.

3A

ACTION	PRIORITY	CHAMPION	COST*	FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES	TIMEFRAME
Perform an analysis of public and private recreational paths and identify improvements.	Level 1	Planning Department	\$\$	MassTrails Program Grant (Mass DCR)	Short-Term (1-5 Years)

3B

Identify existing bicycle parking and docking/charging equipment corridor-wide and plan for improvements.	Level 2	Planning Department	\$\$	Complete Streets Funding (MassDOT) Shared Streets & Spaces Grant (MassDOT) Safe Streets & Roads For All Grant (US DOT)	Medium-Term (6-9 Years)
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3C

Perform a district placemaking study to identify measures for branding the district.	Level 2	Planning Department, Economic Development Office	\$\$	Community Planning Grants (DHCD) Commonwealth Places (Mass Development)	Medium-Term (6-9 Years)
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3D

Design and implement placemaking measures (e.g., pocket parks and public gathering spaces).	Level 3	DPW	\$\$\$\$	Community Planning Grants (DHCD) Commonwealth Places (Mass Development)	Long-Term (10+ Years)
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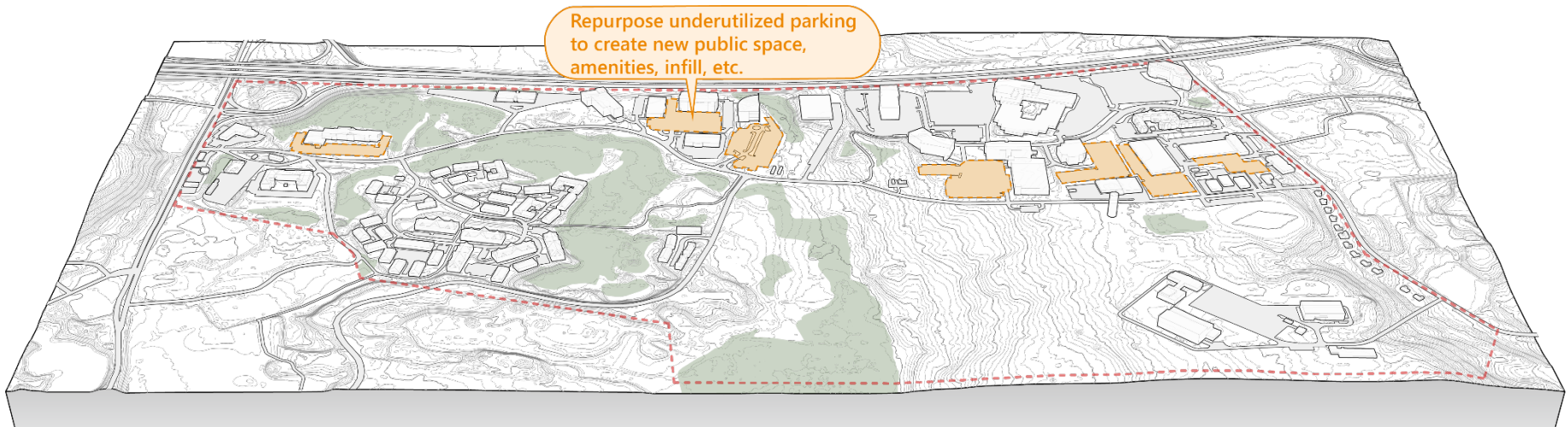


## Goal 3: Enhance the public realm

by improving access to open space and amenities.

Specific concerns and ideas from stakeholders, residents, and business owners helped VHB identify key improvements to implement the Vision Plan, including:

- Repurposing underutilized spaces (particularly in parking areas) to create new public spaces like temporary placemaking programming, pocket parks, and infill development





Top: The “Ink Block” understory beneath Interstate 93 was transformed with the development of walkways and a pocket park (Boston, MA).

Bottom Left: A pocket park can commemorate a historical event such as Arlington Memorial Park (Arlington, MA).

Bottom Right: A small plaza with seating encourages gathering and socialization (Minuteman Trail Bikeway, Bedford, MA).



## Goal 4: Preserve existing wetlands

in balance with future development.

4A

4B

ACTION	PRIORITY	CHAMPTION	COST*	FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES	TIMEFRAME
Design and implement drainage improvements to mitigate flooding and icing at critical points throughout the Corridor.	Level 1	DPW	\$\$\$\$	Wetland Program Development Grant (US EPA) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (DCR) Stormwater MS4 Municipal Grant (Mass DEP)	Short-Term (1-5 Years)
Review and update your wetlands bylaw, zoning bylaw, and other pertinent environmental regulations, to further incentivize sustainable measures (e.g., restorative wetland design, floodplain management, groundwater recharge). Follow-up on recommendations outlined in the June 2022 Vine Brook Watershed Flood and Heat Island Assessment Report.	Level 2	Planning Department, Conservation Commission	\$\$	Wetland Program Development Grant (US EPA) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (DCR) Stormwater MS4 Municipal Grant (Mass DEP)	Short-Term (1-5 Years)

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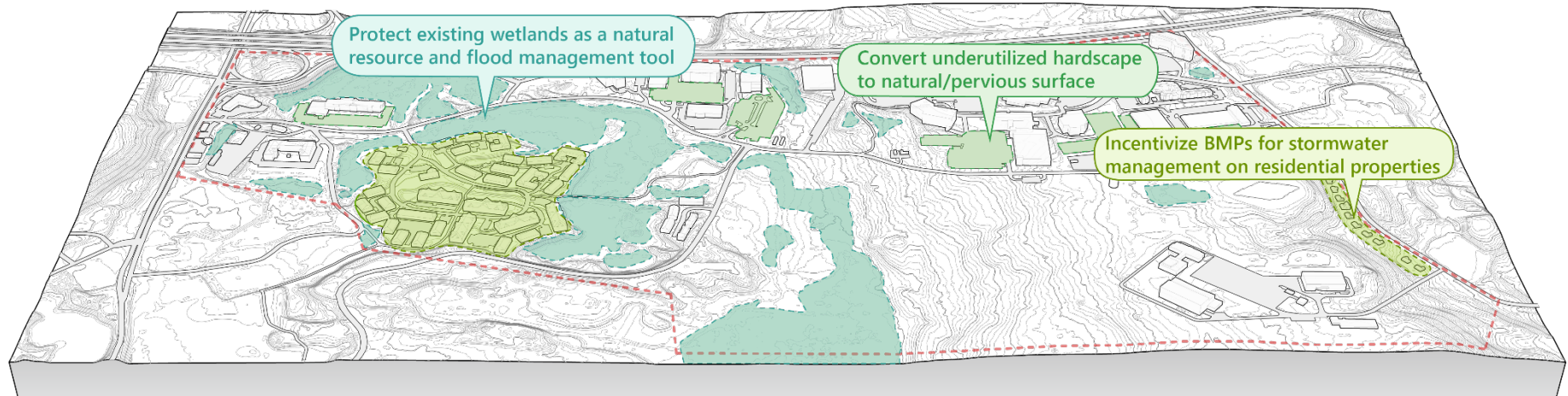


## Goal 4: Preserve existing wetlands

in balance with future development.

Specific concerns and ideas from stakeholders, residents, and business owners helped VHB identify key improvements to implement the Vision Plan, including:

- Protecting wetlands
- Converting hardscapes to landscapes with the addition of plantings and pervious surfaces
- Incentivizing residential stormwater management where possible





Left: Wetlands on the eastern side of Blanchard Road (Burlington, MA).

Right: Improved stormwater management can reduce flooding to protection people and property and reduce (Worcester, MA).



## Goal 5: Foster economic growth and resilience

along the Corridor while maintaining a mix of uses and preserving its scale and character.

5A  
5B  
5C

ACTION	PRIORITY	CHAMPTION	COST*	FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES	TIMEFRAME
Conduct a review of Zoning Bylaws to determine whether regulations support a variety of infill development projects. Add incentives where possible (i.e. parking reductions, density rewards).	Level 1	Planning Department	\$	Town of Burlington	Short-Term (1-5 Years)
Remove or revise parking minimums to align with the latest Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) numbers.	Level 1	Planning Department	\$	Town of Burlington	Short-Term (1-5 Years)
Identify ideal locations for converting surface parking to shared public space and establish easements in these locations.	Level 2	Planning Department	\$\$	Community Planning Grants (DHCD) Commonwealth Places (Mass Development)	Medium-Term (6-9 Years)

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## Goal 5: Foster economic growth and resilience

along the Corridor while maintaining a mix of uses and preserving its scale and character.

Specific concerns and ideas from stakeholders, residents, and business owners helped VHB identify key improvements to implement the Vision Plan, including:

- Revising parking minimums
- Identify locations to convert surface parking to shared public space



**EXISTING CONDITION**



**PROPOSED DESIGN CONDITION**

Parking lot conversions can improve stormwater management, decrease urban heat island effect (the localized increase in temperature resulting from heat absorption of concrete), and provide a recreational opportunity. Credit: VHB



## Goal 6: Maintain a dialogue with stakeholders

throughout the Corridor, including residents, business owners, and institutional leaders, to determine priorities and needs for future planning.

6A

ACTION	PRIORITY	CHAMPION	COST*	FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES	TIMEFRAME
Consider Blanchard / Wheeler properties for inclusion in ongoing MBTA Communities rezoning process.	Level 1	Planning Department	\$	Mass Housing Partnership Grant	Short-Term (1-5 Years)
Coordinate with the form-based code consultant team to ensure consistency with Vision Plan.	Level 1	Planning Department	\$	Town of Burlington	Short-Term (1-5 Years)
Conduct bi-annual meetings with the Blanchard / Wheeler community to coordinate implementation measures.	Level 1	Planning Department	\$	Town of Burlington	Short-Term (1-5 Years)

6B

6C



## Goal 6: Maintain a dialogue with stakeholders

throughout the Corridor, including residents, business owners, and institutional leaders, to determine priorities and needs for future planning.

Specific concerns and ideas from stakeholders, residents, and business owners helped VHB identify key improvements to implement the Vision Plan, including:

- Maintaining open communication efforts through mail, social channel(s), and in-person events.



Burlington Conservation Commission. Credit: Town of Burlington



Mary Cummings Park is managed by The Trustees of Reservations.



**The Blanchard / Wheeler Corridor Vision Plan is a powerful tool for shaping the future of this region.**

By actively engaging in the planning process, residents and stakeholders contributed their unique perspectives, experiences, and ideas. Their input—on challenges, key priorities, and new opportunities—ensures the Vision Plan reflects the aspirations, values, and needs of those who reside, work, commute, and recreate in the Blanchard/ Wheeler Corridor.

Using the Implementation Strategy as a guide for future programming and investment, residents, stakeholders, and Town staff can meaningfully preserve, enhance, and enliven the Corridor, today and in the future.



APPENDIX



## **APPENDIX I: Final Presentation**

The following slideshow is a cumulative report of the Blanchard / Wheeler study, consisting of an analysis of roadway conditions, an assessment of environmental constraints, and notes from stakeholder and public meetings.

Town of Burlington, Massachusetts

Blanchard / Wheeler Corridor

# VISION PLAN

June 2023



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2. WHAT MAKES A CORRIDOR SUCCESSFUL?
3. EXISTING CONDITIONS
4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
5. VISION & GOALS
6. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY
7. APPENDIX
  - I. Right of Way and Lane Widths
  - II. Notes from Public Meeting 1
  - III. Notes from Public Meeting 2

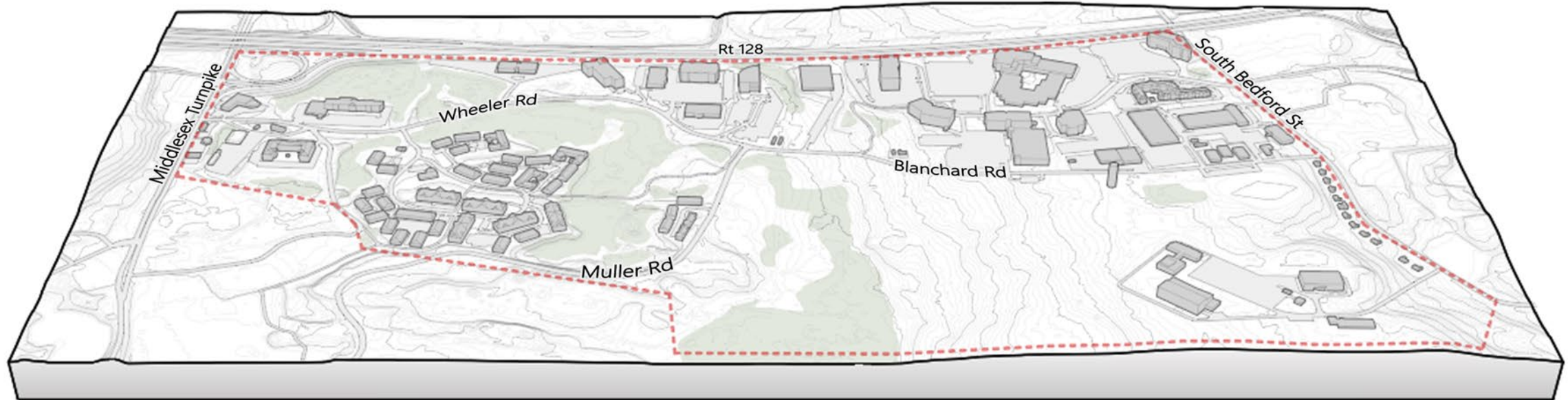


# 1

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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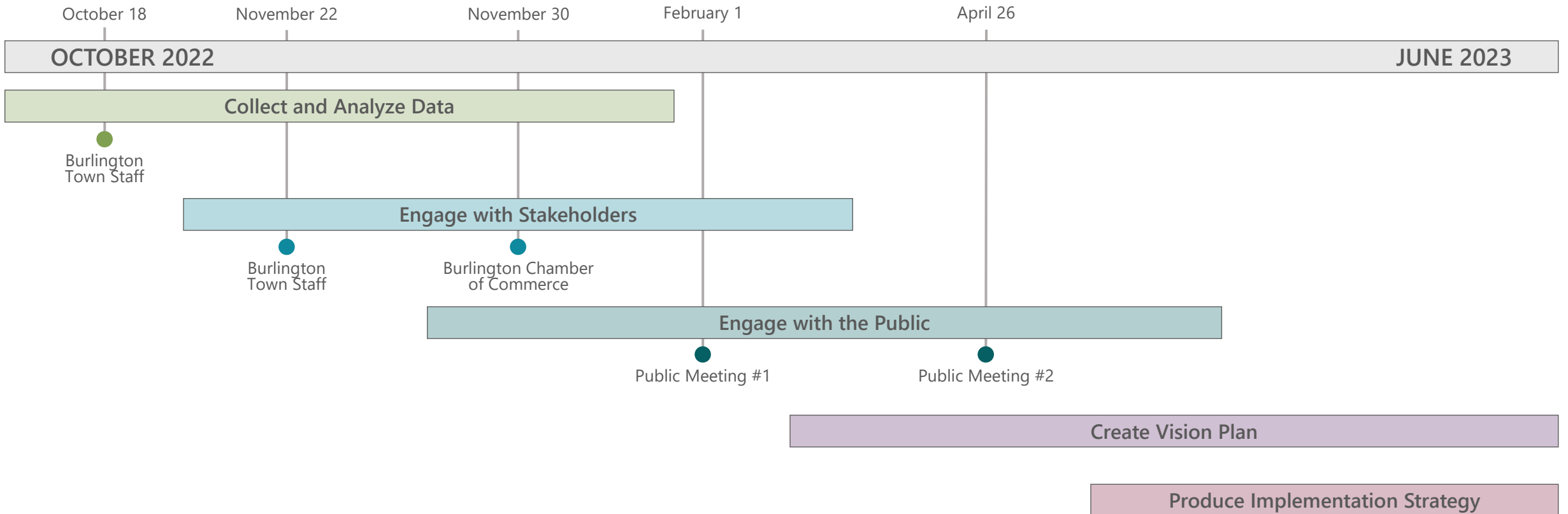


**PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**



**ATTRACT INVESTMENT**

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**KEY CHALLENGES**

<b>Wetlands</b>	<b>Infrastructure</b>	<b>Private Properties</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corridor is low in elevation</li> <li>• Flooding/icing</li> <li>• Wetlands constraints for new development</li> <li>• Lack of boardwalks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traffic issues (e.g., speeding, congestion)</li> <li>• Lack of connectivity</li> <li>• Lack of mass transit</li> <li>• Poor lighting</li> <li>• Poor walkability/bikeability</li> <li>• Narrow roadways</li> <li>• Blind spots</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Much of the Corridor is privately owned</li> <li>• Underutilized office space and excess parking due to changing work trends</li> </ul>

<b>Mobility</b>	<b>Development</b>	<b>Parks &amp; Recreation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infrastructure to support the Corridor’s high volume of bike/ped traffic</li> <li>• Complete streets</li> <li>• Regional connectivity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for multi-unit development</li> <li>• Need for amenities (e.g., cafés, coffee shops)</li> <li>• Right-sizing office spaces</li> <li>• Connectivity to Mall Road area</li> <li>• Northeastern University research and innovation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mary Cummings Park</li> <li>• Increasing access to the Corridor’s natural assets (e.g., wetlands, open space, trees)</li> <li>• Need for parklets/playgrounds</li> </ul>

**KEY OPPORTUNITIES**



## THE VISION

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Offering employment and a rich natural environment, the Corridor will continue to **foster economic growth, accessibility, and improved connectivity** with safe streetscapes and multi-modal pathways.

Through community dialogue, residents and stakeholders within the Corridor have reflected and explored a vision for the future...

## THE CORRIDOR WILL BE...

- Connective
- Multi-modal
- Sustainable
- Resilient
- Balanced
- Vibrant

# 2

## WHAT MAKES A CORRIDOR SUCCESSFUL?

A vibrant and successful corridor requires a mix of uses, mobility infrastructure, and amenities for residents, employees, and visitors to enjoy. VHB presented the following precedent projects and streetscapes to Burlington residents as inspiration for the Blanchard / Wheeler Corridor.



**Complete streets** can ensure a corridor is safe and enjoyable for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists to navigate.

A complete street describes a roadway that provides increased access to jobs, health care, shops, and schools while achieving economic, environmental, and public health benefits ([National Complete Streets Coalition](#)). Narrowing and/or shifting existing vehicle lanes can improve alternative transportation options with sidewalks, bike lanes, bus lanes, safe transit stops, crosswalks, or median islands.



The District in Burlington, MA. Photo by National Development.

**Sidewalk Only**



Sidewalk with pedestrian signs. Source: City of Chilliwack

**Sidewalk and On-Street Bike Lane**



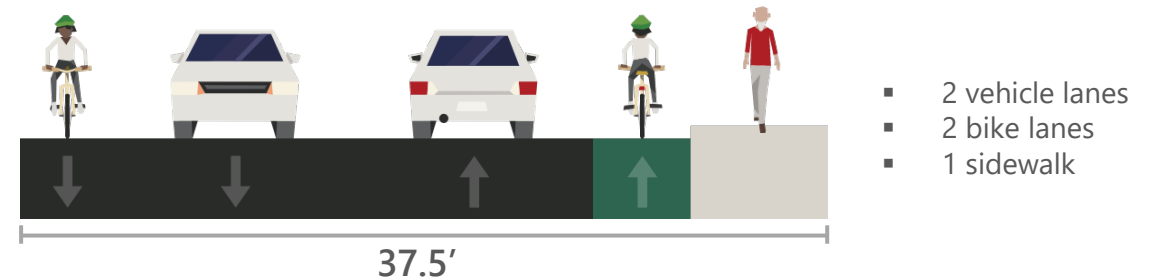
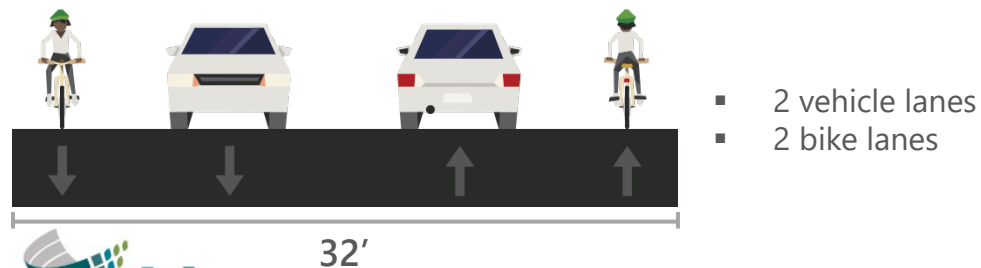
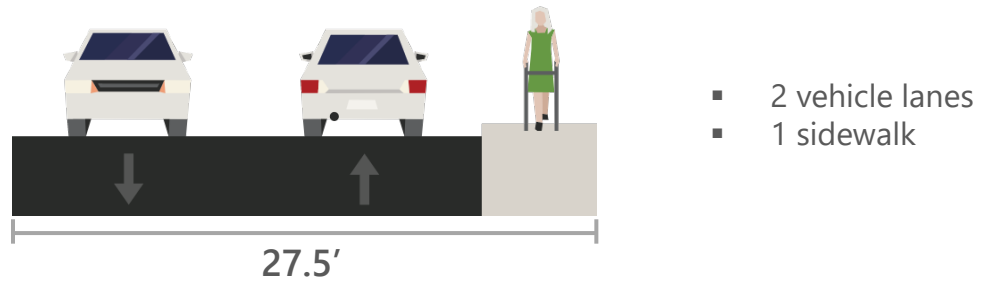
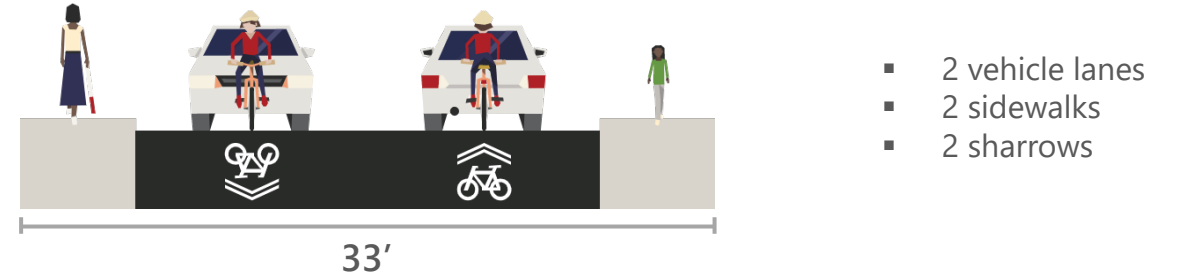
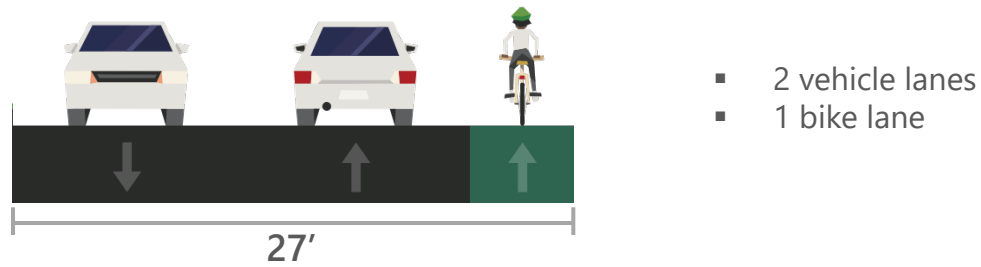
Bike lane in Cambridge, MA. Source: City of Cambridge

**Multi-Use Path**



Multi-Use Trail in Waterloo, Ontario. Source: Global News

The buildable right of way for the Blanchard / Wheeler Corridor varies between 25' feet and 50' feet approximately. The following diagrams represent six alternative roadway treatments that can be considered for various points along the corridor.



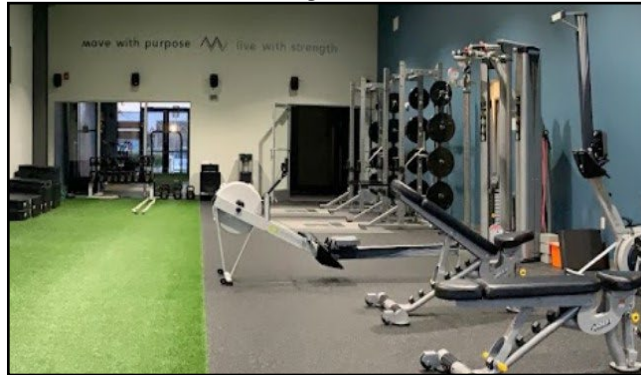


3rd Ave in Burlington, MA. Photo by Bill Horseman / Tighe & Bond Studio.

**Placemaking** refers to a community-based design approach that strengthens the connection between people and public spaces. The most successful placemaking efforts highlight unique physical, historical, and cultural identities that define neighborhood, town, or city ([Project for Public Spaces](#)).

**Amenities** provide locations for people to work, relax, and socialize outside of the home and the traditional office space. Examples of amenities include:

**Gyms**



Movement Workshop in Burlington, MA. Source: Google

**Cafés and Coffee Shops**



Pressed Café in The District in Burlington, MA. Source: Google

**Shared Workspaces**



WeWork in Cambridge, MA. Source: Google

**Pocket Parks**



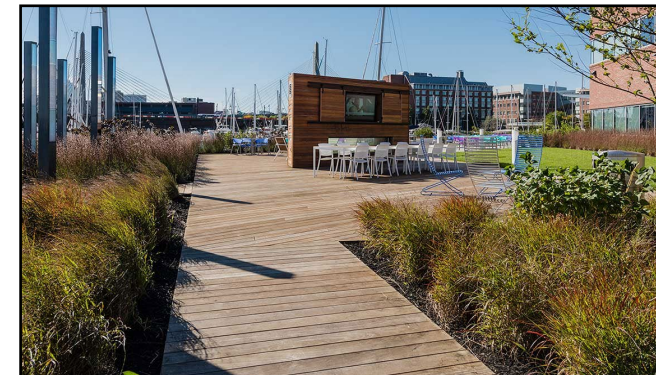
Pocket park in Burlington, MA. Source: National Development

**Playgrounds**



Rahnis Park in Burlington, MA. Source: Seattle Times

**Plazas**



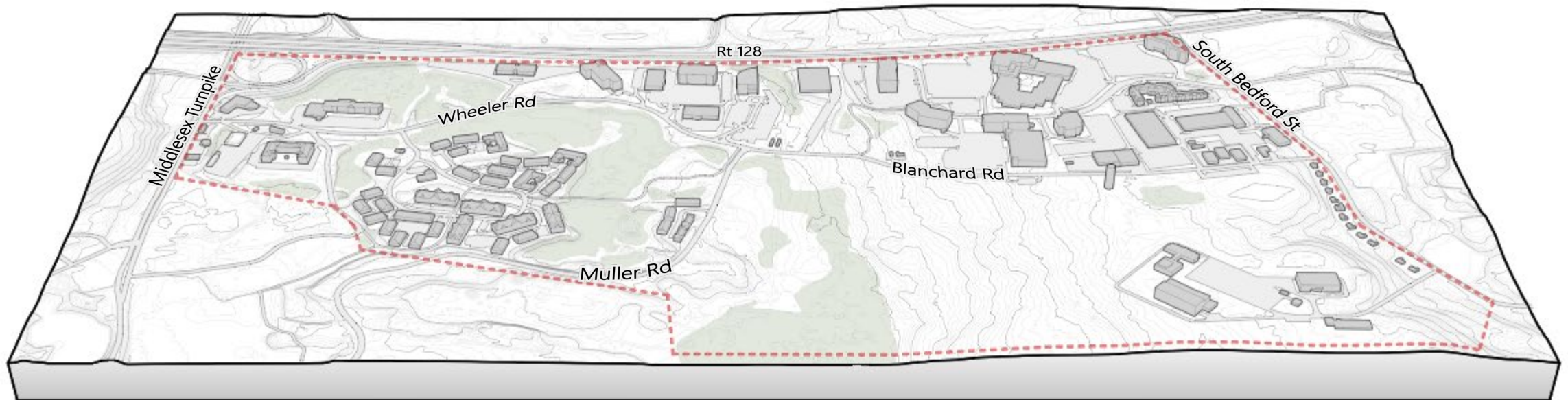
Constitution Wharf in Boston, MA. Source: National Development

# 3

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

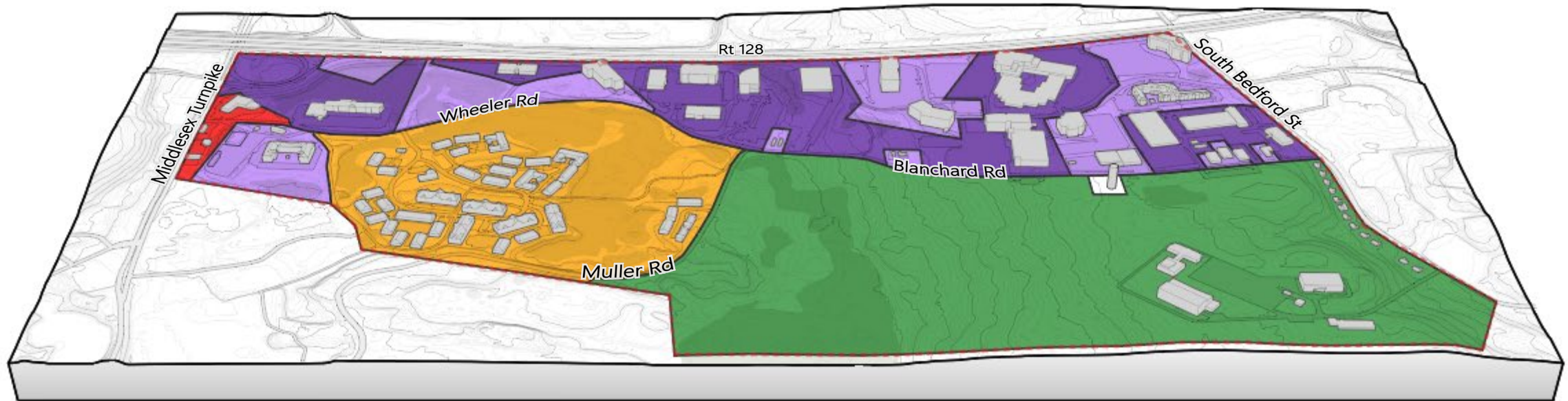
The existing conditions assessment explores current land use, hydrology, zoning, and real estate trends, as well as critical opportunities and challenges for future planning.

The Blanchard / Wheeler Corridor Study Area is approximately 425 acres in size. It is bordered by Interstate 95 to the north, Middlesex Turnpike to the west, and South Bedford Street to the east.



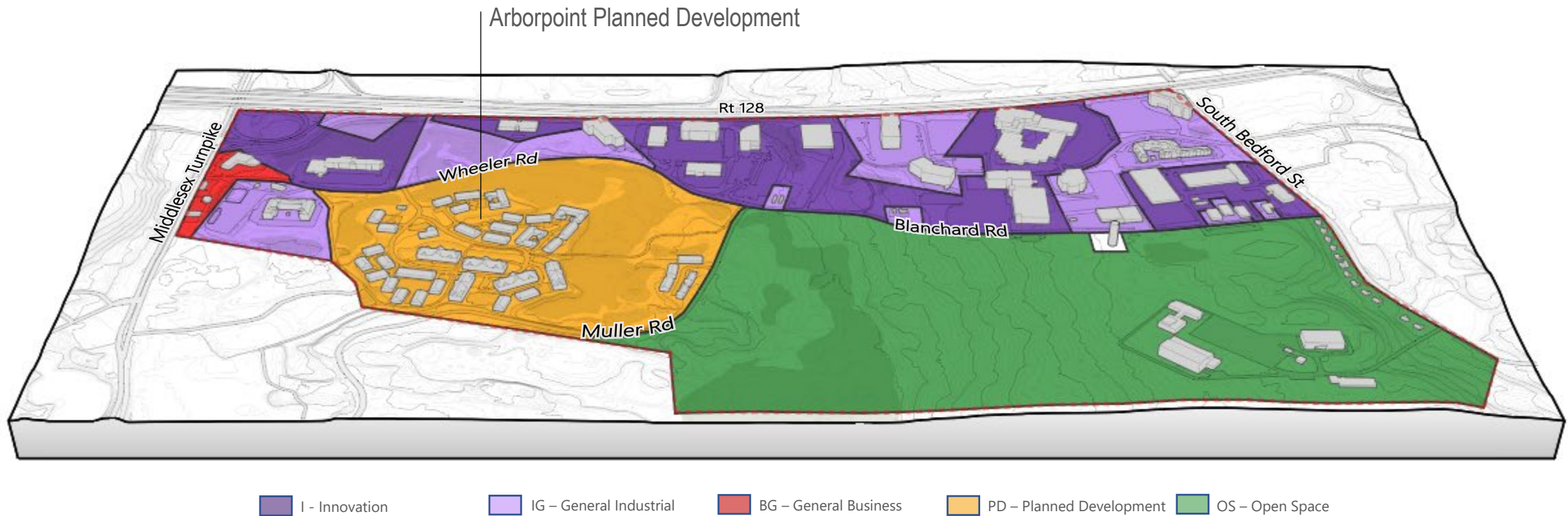
Compared to the rest of Burlington, the Study Area has limited One-Family Dwellings (RO) and General Business (BG) districts, and a greater proportion of General Industrial (IG), Innovation (I), Planned Development (PDD), and Open Space (OS) districts.

Arborpoint Planned Development District (aka Seven Springs Apartments; orange) and Open Space (Mary Cummings Park; green) make up more than 50% of the Study Area.

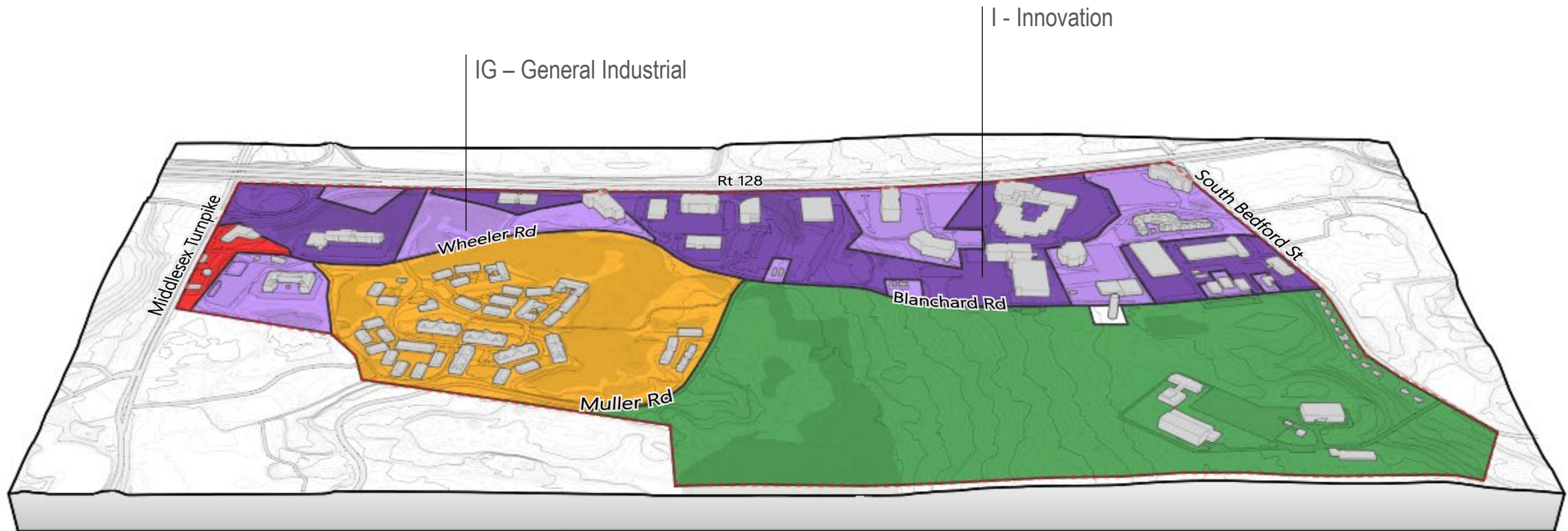




Planned Development District (PDD): The Planned Development District (PDD) is intended to “permit an entity to propose, and for Town Meeting to vote on, a development proposal that specifies a mixture of commercial, industrial, residential, open space or other uses and the site development requirements to be used for a specific site” (Town of Burlington Zoning Bylaws, Sept. 2022). Arborpoint, which now hosts Seven Springs Apartments, was approved as a PDD in January 2004.

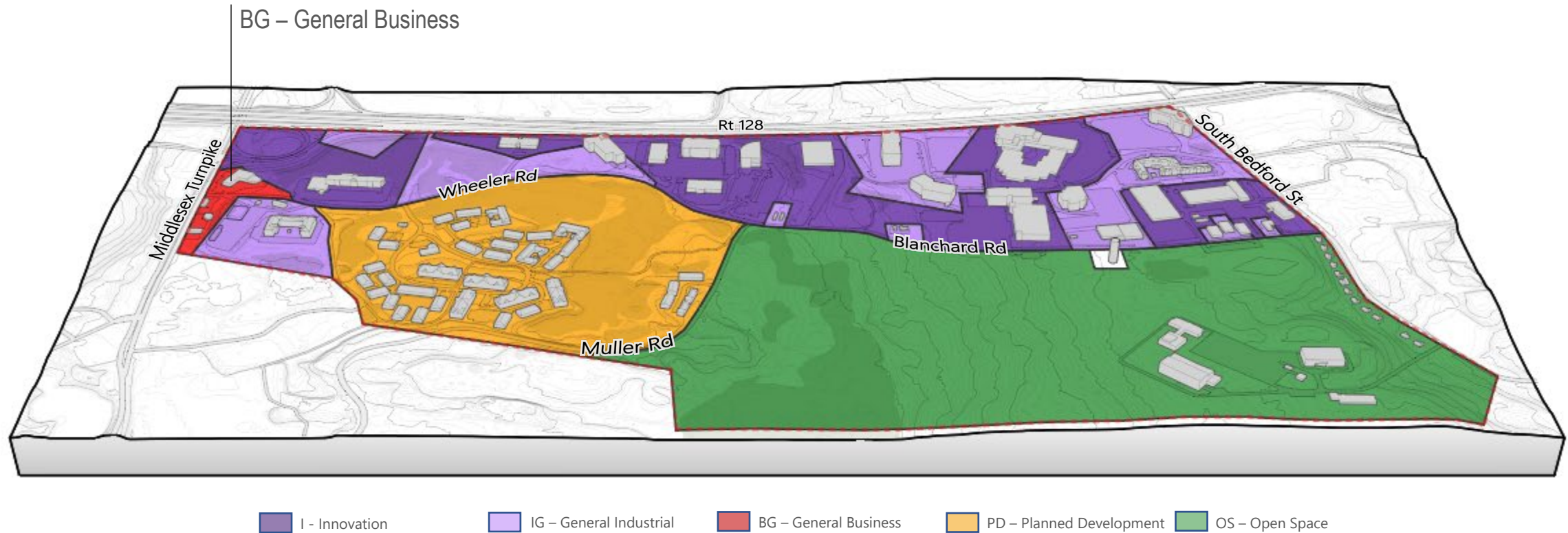


General Industrial (IG) and Innovation (I) Districts: The General Industrial (IG) and Innovation (I) districts are differentiated down to the parcel level. The Innovation district were introduced into the zoning bylaw in 2021 (former district was "High-Rise Industrial"). The primary difference between the two districts is that the Innovation district allows for Life Science / Lab buildings. Neither district permits residential properties as a principal use.



General Business (BG) District: The General Business (BG) district permits retail stores as a principal use. These include (but are not limited to) personal service businesses, convenience food stores, drug stores, retail stores, post offices, and banks.

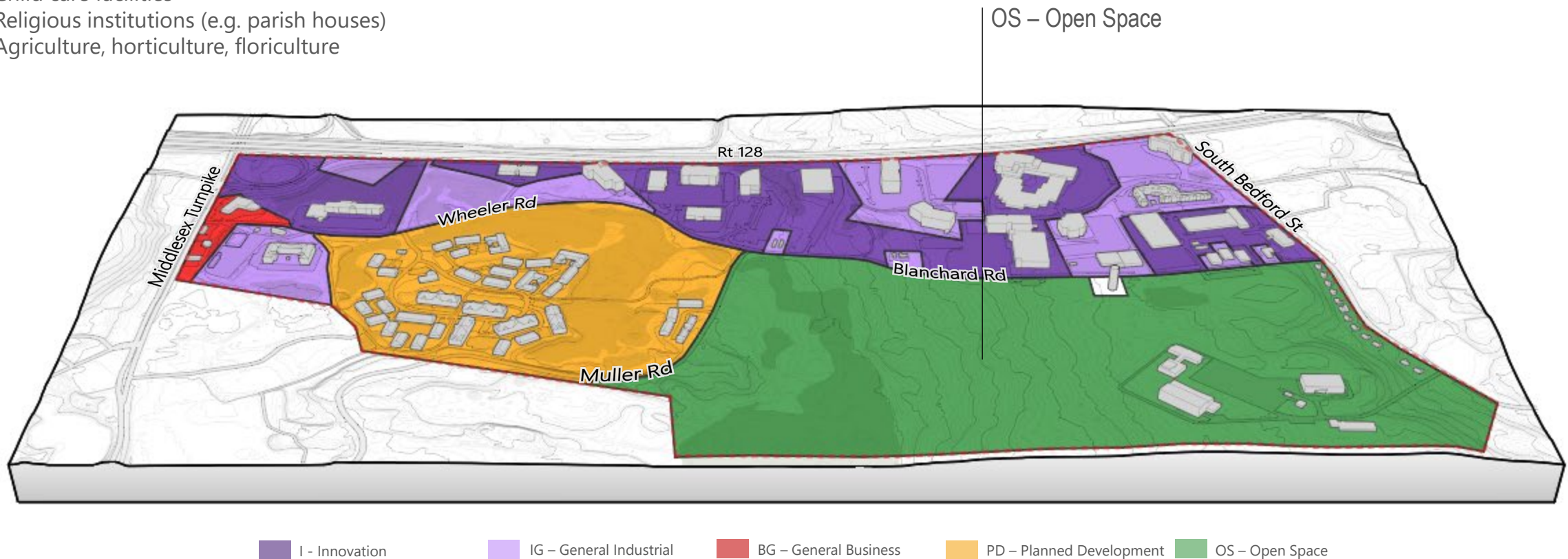
According to the latest bylaw draft (Sept. 2022), this district allows retail, experiential, and commercial interactive venues (venues 20,000 square feet or less permitted by right; venues above 20,000 square feet by special permit).



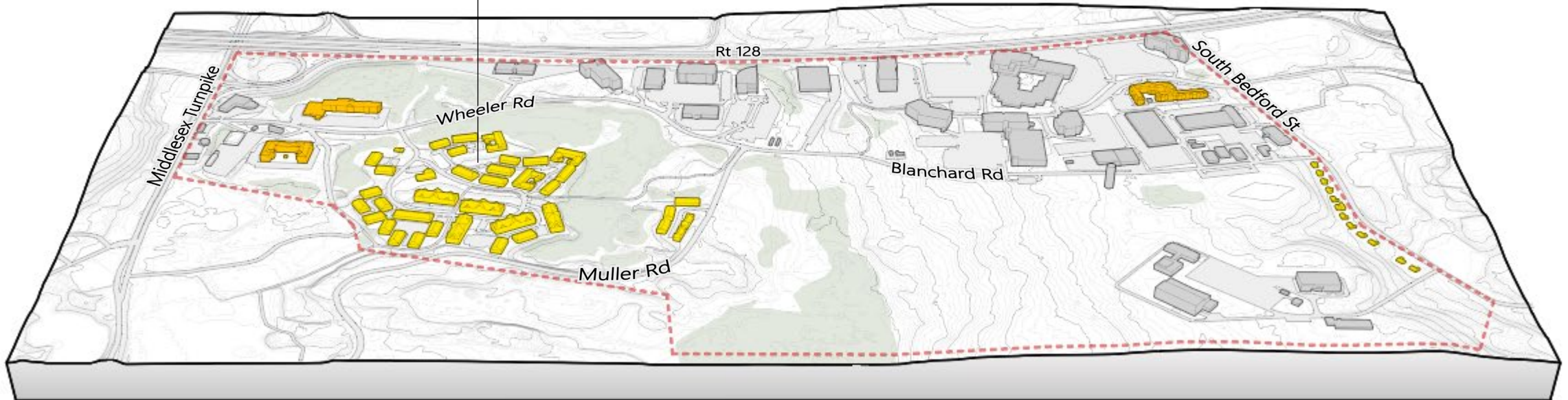
Open Space (OS) District: The primary goal of an Open Space (OS) district is to protect natural resources and environmental sites for conservation, agriculture, and recreation.

Burlington’s bylaws (as of Sept. 2022) list the following permitted principal uses by right:

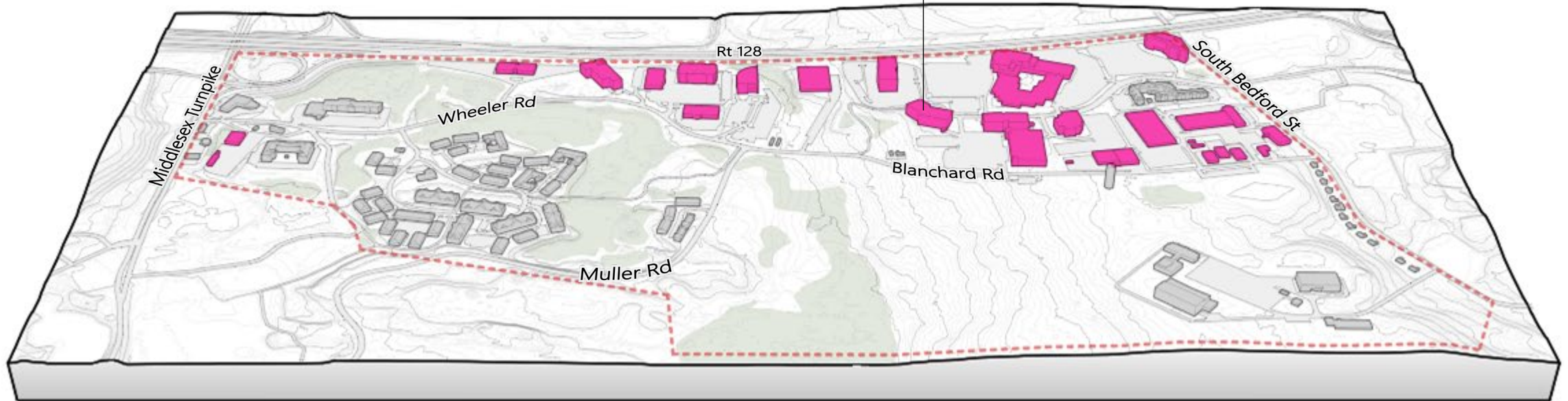
- Public parks
- Child care facilities
- Religious institutions (e.g. parish houses)
- Agriculture, horticulture, floriculture



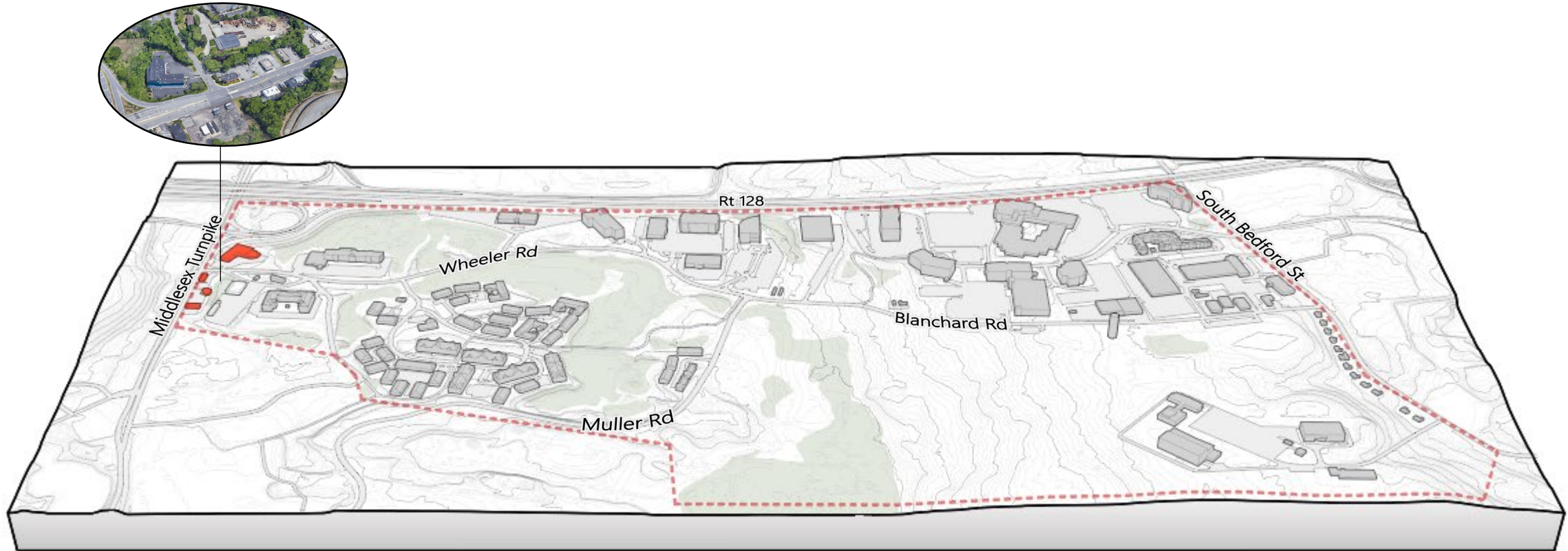
Residential and Hospitality: The Arborpoint residential development (aka Seven Springs) has 425 units, including 93 condos and 332 apartments.



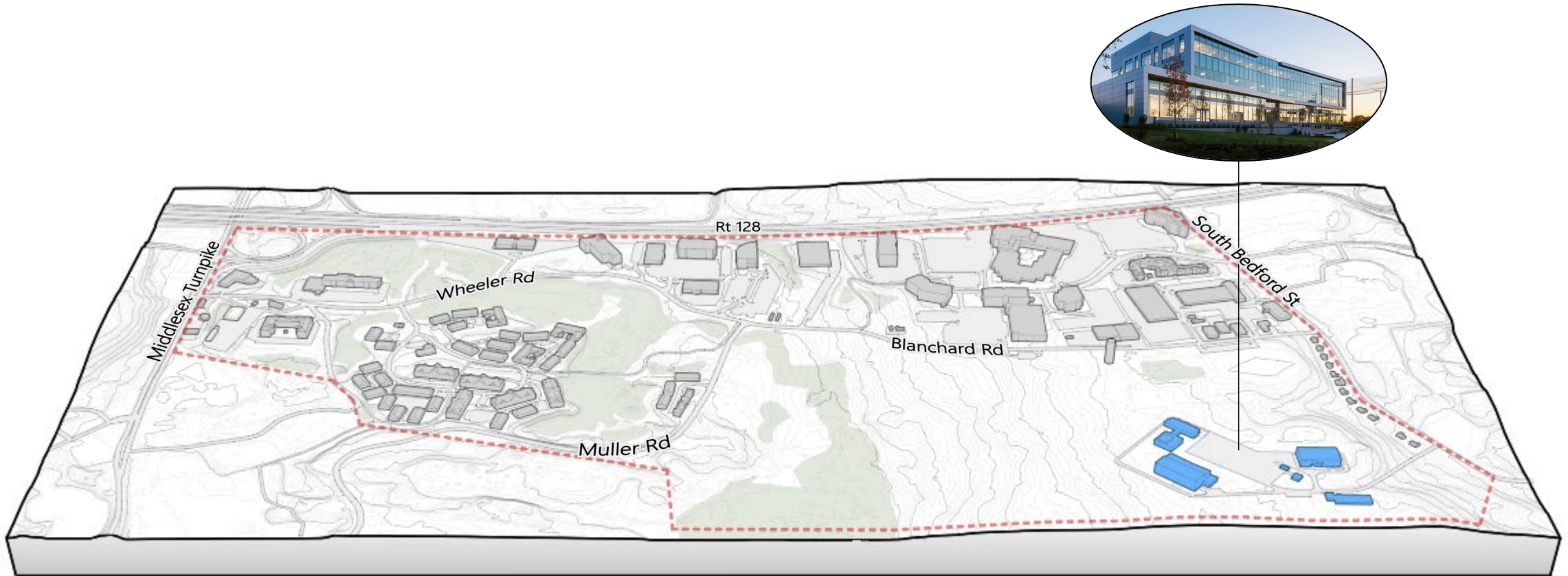
Office, Lab, and Industrial: Approximately 5,000 people work within the corridor. The largest workplace in the corridor is Oracle, with approximately 1,500 employees.



Restaurant and Retail: The corridor is home to only 4 restaurant/retail properties, all located along Middlesex Turnpike. One of these properties (formerly D'Angelo's) is vacant. A second (formerly Ski Haus and NOTB Snowboards; it is also the largest property) is currently being redeveloped into a two-story retail and commercial structure to be called "Gateway Burlington."

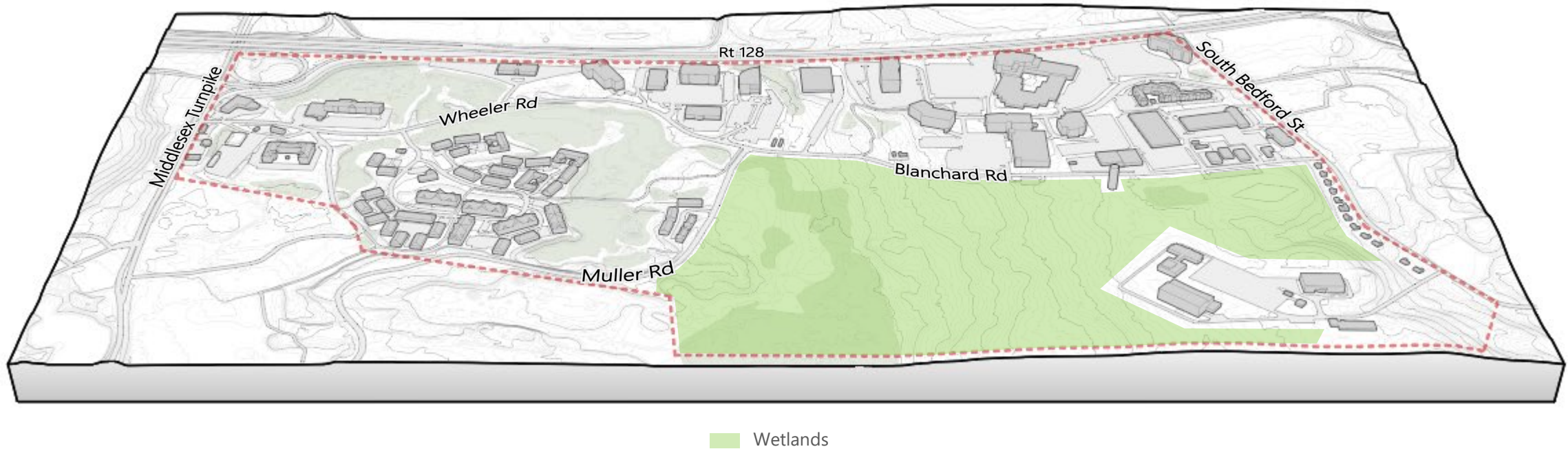


Institutional: The Northeastern Innovation Campus is a 14-acre, 4 building academic and entrepreneurial hub built to “accelerate innovation and discovery in emerging fields, from cybersecurity and nanomedicine to network science and life sciences.”



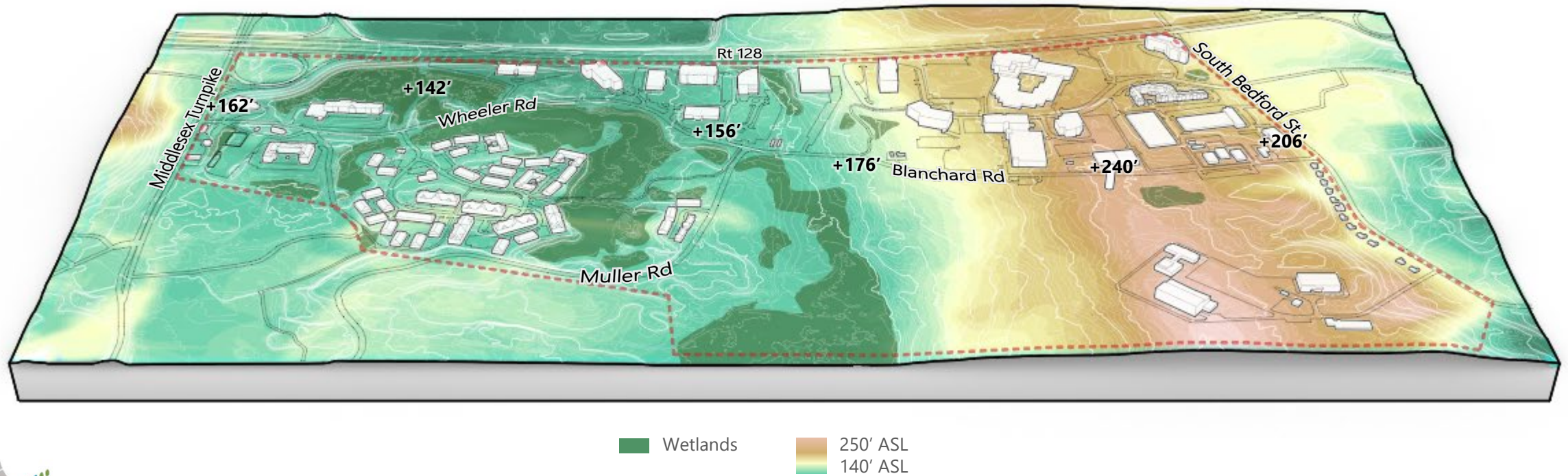


Mary Cummings Park: Mary Cummings Park features 166.5 acres of land in Burlington and 46.5 acres of land in Woburn. Now managed by The Trustees of Reservations, Mary Cummings Park was founded in 2007 with a mission to keep the park “forever open as a public park and playground; to promote recreation consistent with the historic uses of the park and to promote the protection of wildlife habitat and watershed” (MaryCummingsPark.org).



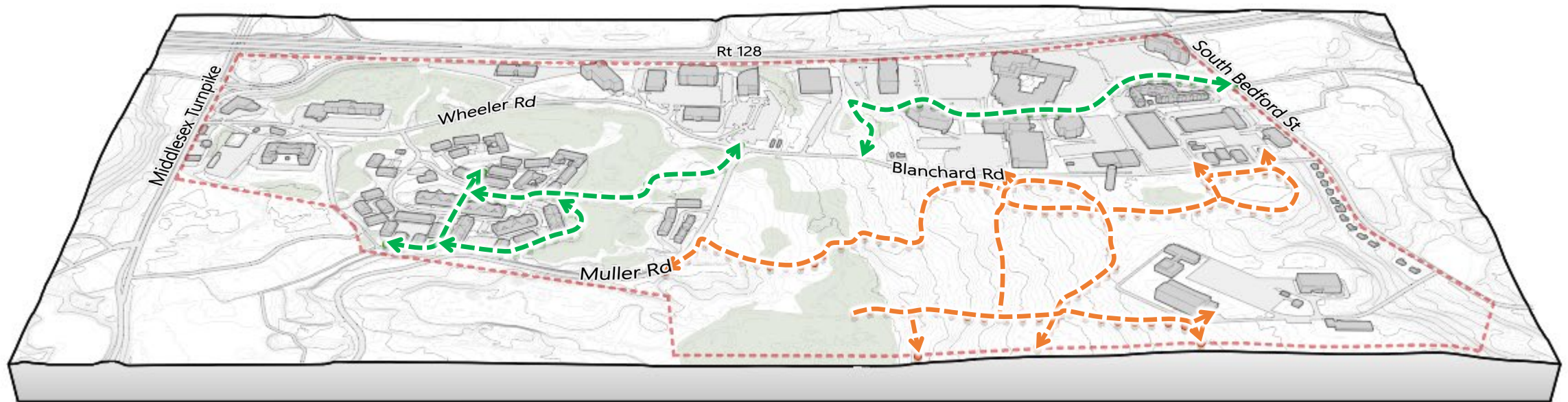
Elevation: According to USGS and NOAA data, the highest elevation within the Corridor, 240 feet above sea level (ASL), is in Mary Cummings Park. The lowest elevation, 142' ASL, is within a wetland adjacent to Wheeler Road.

Hydrology: There are several wetlands and streams along the Corridor, specifically within low elevation areas surrounding Wheeler Road. Protected by the Wetlands Protection Act and local bylaws, the wetlands present the largest constraint to developments and roadway improvements within the Corridor.



Bike Infrastructure: Bike paths exist within the Seven Springs development and along Van de Graaff Drive.

Pedestrian Infrastructure: Pedestrian paths weave throughout Mary Cummings Park, connecting this open space with neighborhoods to the south and west, with Northeastern’s Innovation Campus to the east, and with businesses to the north. Sidewalks are present only along small sections of the Corridor where street width allows.



--- Bike Infrastructure    --- Pedestrian Infrastructure



# 4

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Through two stakeholder sessions and two public meetings, the Town and VHB solicited feedback on existing conditions and desires for future development and public programming. These responses were vital to the Vision Planning process.

In two stakeholder sessions and two public meetings, VHB prioritized listening and collaboration. Attendees were solicited for feedback on the following topics:

1. General Opportunities and Challenges
2. Economic Development
3. Housing
4. Social Equity and Environmental Justice
5. Placemaking
6. Access, Traffic, and Parking
7. Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure
8. Preservation of Natural Features (specifically open space and wetlands)



On November 22, 2022, VHB facilitated the first stakeholder session with municipal staff in Burlington. Attendees included representatives from the Planning Department, the Economic Development Office, the Conservation Commission, the Department of Public Works, and the Police Department.

The following responses summarize this session's feedback based on the discussion topics listed on page 31:



The Corridor is a **major cut-through** and leads to **one of the most congested areas** of the Town, where the Middlesex Turnpike backs up due to the sequence of lighting systems.

It will be a **challenge working within only town-owned land** or asking private property owners about available land.

The most significant equity consideration will be providing **access to this area and Mary Cummings Park** for people who can't afford/access a vehicle.

The Mall Road hub presents an **opportunity for connectivity** with the Corridor.

**Right-sizing office space and parking** will depend on the type of company and amount of space leased. Parking demand has waned since the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Stormwater management** presents a challenge for developing sidewalks.

There is a need to **expand transportation options** and incentivize their use.



VHB facilitated the second stakeholder session on November 30, 2022 with the Burlington Chamber of Commerce. Attendees included Melisa Tintocalis (Burlington's Economic Development Director), land use/real estate lawyers, and representatives from key businesses surrounding the Corridor including Northeastern University, Cambridge Savings Bank, Wegmans, Beth Israel Lahey Hospital.

The following responses summarize this session's feedback based on the discussion topics listed on page 31:



We need to **act on past transportation, walkability, bikeability studies** to transport people to the amenities without making the Study Area into a Mall Road 2.0.

**Multifamily development** makes sense for the Study Area.

Approximately 60% of office space is being leased up again, **shedding about 40% of office leasing**.

Companies would love to come into the Study Area and create **new retail and restaurant amenities** – we need to focus on getting people to the amenities as opposed to getting the amenities to them.

There is potential in **opening up parking**, particularly for the Mary Cummings property, which could be a major amenity for the commercial area of the Town.

There is a need for a **café or coffee shop** – a social space where people can go outside of work and their home.



VHB facilitated the first public meeting on February 1, 2023. The virtual meeting, held via Microsoft Teams, drew in roughly 40 members of the community, including Town staff, business owners, and residents living in or adjacent to the Corridor.

The goal of this meeting was to generate a Vision Statement based on existing conditions and desires for future development. Part of the meeting included conducting a live poll. The following graphics express key public feedback (read the full notes in Appendix II).

**What are the corridor’s strengths that should be preserved or emphasized?**

- Connectivity
- Access to Mary Cummings Park
- Wooded sections
- Greenery and wetlands
- Parks and community
- Better sidewalks
- Natural resources
- Views
- Rural nature

**What are the corridor’s shortcomings that should be addressed?**

- Traffic speed
- Too few sidewalks
- Driver visibility around curves
- No bike lane
- Flooding
- Road conditions
- Narrow right of way

**What additional amenities do you think would benefit the corridor? (ex: café, gym, etc.,)**

- Picnic areas
- Public study area
- Amenity center
- Playgrounds or parks
- Boardwalk through the wetlands
- Restaurant
- Café
- Multi-use path
- Pocket parks

**Do you feel the corridor is safe for pedestrians and bicyclists?**





VHB facilitated the second public meeting on April 26, 2023. The virtual meeting, held via Microsoft Teams, drew in roughly 30 members of the community, including Town staff, business owners, and residents living in or adjacent to the Corridor.

The goal of this meeting was to solicit feedback on the Vision Statement, Goals, and the Implementation Matrix. This meeting was largely discussion-based, with key points summarized below (read the full notes in in Appendix III).

#### What do you like about the Draft Vision Statement and/or Goals?

- Traffic mitigation measures
- Ped/bike infrastructure and safety measures
- Multi-modal pathways
- Stormwater action items

#### What would you like to see reflected in the Goals?

- Reuse of underutilized parking for recreational purposes (e.g., pickleball)
- Continued collaboration efforts with stakeholders and residents
- Prioritization of safety over economic development
- A better-defined placemaking strategy for the corridor
- Rezoning geared towards entertainment
- Specific alternative uses for vacant office spaces
- A traffic light is needed at the intersection of Blanchard Road and South Bedford Street



# 5

## VISION AND GOALS

The Town developed a shared Vision to guide future planning and development of the Corridor. This Vision will be realized by achieving several key goals.

“

The Corridor along Blanchard and Wheeler Road has seen significant development over the past 25 years.

The Corridor will continue to be an **excellent place to live** and **a vital mixed-use hub** for research, technology, and recreation.

Offering employment and a rich natural environment, the Corridor will continue to **foster economic growth, accessibility, and improved connectivity** with safe streetscapes and multi-modal pathways.

Through community dialogue, residents and stakeholders within the Corridor have reflected and explored a vision for the future...

”

The Corridor will be . . .

### **Connected**

The Corridor will provide pathways connecting its employees, residents, and visitors to destinations within the Corridor and surrounding districts. Through creative placemaking, the Corridor will reflect the character of its population, history, and natural environments. Future planning initiatives will involve relevant local and regional stakeholders, including residents, business owners, and institutional leaders.

### **Multi-modal**

The Corridor will serve a range of modal options, supporting complete streets that accommodate all roadway users, including motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists. Roadway improvements and enhanced walkability will provide a safe and enjoyable environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

### **Sustainable**

Future development along the Corridor will be sensitive to environmental impact and support public health and wellness. The Corridor will enhance critical natural resources that aid flood management and contribute to recreational opportunities, including wetlands and open space.

### **Resilient**

The Corridor will be adaptable to changing economic and regional trends by incorporating new innovative approaches to infrastructure, land use, and open space planning.

### **Balanced**

The Corridor will balance new development with the preservation of natural resources, as well as establish a mix of uses that support a vibrant district. It will offer a wide variety of amenities that support all its users and expand the public realm.

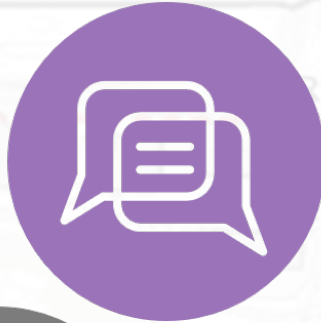
### **Vibrant**

The Corridor will be a hub for employment and economic activity, supporting services and thriving businesses both large and small.



To achieve this Vision, the Town of Burlington and associated stakeholders must be diligent and forward-thinking in planning for these goals:

Maintain a  
Dialogue with  
Stakeholders



Enhance  
Connectivity



Foster  
Economic Growth  
and Resilience



Establish  
Multi-Modal  
Transportation



Preserve  
Wetlands



Enhance the  
Public Realm



# 6

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The Implementation Strategy serves as a roadmap to achieving the Vision and Goals for the Corridor. This roadmap includes a timeline, projected cost for each recommendation, and identified responsible parties and partners.



# Enhance Connectivity

within the Corridor and with surrounding districts by establishing pathways to destinations.

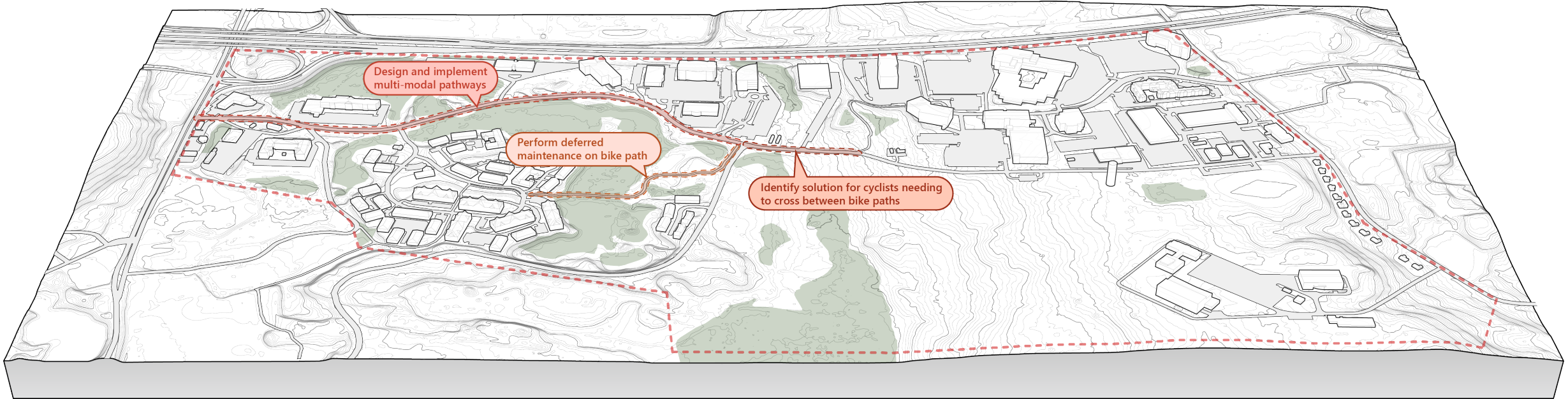
	ACTION	PRIORITY	CHAMPION	COST*	FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES	IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME
1A	Create multi-modal pathways from Muller Road to Middlesex Turnpike, addressing narrow sections with sharrows or (potentially) boardwalks	Level 1	Planning Department, DPW	\$\$\$\$	Complete Streets Funding (MassDOT) Shared Streets & Spaces Grant (MassDOT) Safe Streets & Roads For All Grant (US DOT)	Short-Term (1-5 Years)
1B	Design and implement solutions for bicyclists on Blanchard between the Oracle bike path and the Howard Dulong bike path at Seven Springs.	Level 1	Planning Department, DPW	\$\$\$	Complete Streets Funding (MassDOT) Shared Streets & Spaces Grant (MassDOT) Safe Streets & Roads For All Grant (US DOT)	Short-Term (1-5 Years)
1C	Conduct a study to determine best strategies for connecting all bike pathways within the corridor, and to other trail networks like the Minuteman Bike Trail.	Level 2	Planning Department	\$\$	Complete Streets Funding (MassDOT) Shared Streets & Spaces Grant (MassDOT) Safe Streets & Roads For All Grant (US DOT)	Medium-Term (6-9 Years)
1D	Perform deferred maintenance on the existing off-street bike paths located in Seven Springs.	Level 2	Winn Residential	\$\$\$	Private funding	Medium-Term (6-9 Years)
1E	Determine a preferred regional bus connection plan and advocate for that plan with the MBTA.	Level 2	Planning Department	\$	Community Transit Grant (MassDOT)	Long-Term (10+ Years)
1F	Improve ped/bike connectivity between the Northeastern Innovation Campus and the Van de Graaff commercial district.	Level 3	Northeastern University, The Trustees of Reservations	\$\$\$	Private funding	Long-Term (10+ Years)

\* (\$) \$10,000-\$20,000, (\$\$) \$20,000-\$50,000, (\$\$\$) \$50,000-\$100,000, (\$\$\$\$) greater than \$100,000

Specific concerns and ideas from stakeholders, residents, and business owners helped VHB identify key improvements to implement the Vision Plan, including:



Adding multi-modal pathways along Wheeler Road, performing deferred maintenance in the Seven Springs area, and optimizing crossing points for bicyclists.







# Establish multi-modal transportation

throughout the Corridor with a focus on safety.

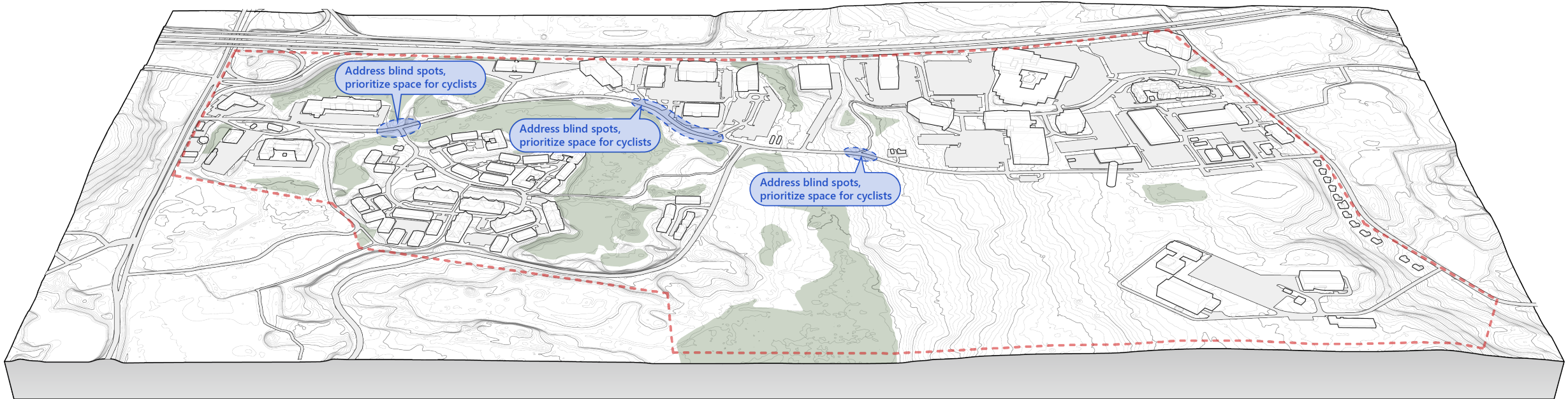
	ACTION	PRIORITY	CHAMPION	COST*	FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES	IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME
2A	Design and implement traffic-calming measures (e.g., sharrows, signalized crossings, bump-outs, warning signs).	Level 1	Planning Department, DPW	\$\$\$\$	Complete Streets Funding (MassDOT) Shared Streets & Spaces Grant (MassDOT) Safe Streets & Roads For All Grant (US DOT)	Short-Term (1-5 Years)
2B	Design and implement shoulder-widening throughout the Corridor.	Level 2	DPW	\$\$\$\$	MassWorks Grant (Mass DOT) Municipal Pavement Program (Mass DOT) Chapter 90 (Mass DOT)	Medium-Term (6-9 Years)
2C	Conduct an updated traffic analysis of Blanchard-Wheeler in light of post-pandemic activity.	Level 2	Planning Department	\$\$	MassWorks Grant (Mass DOT) Municipal Pavement Program (Mass DOT) Chapter 90 (Mass DOT)	Medium-Term (6-9 Years)

\* (\$) \$10,000-\$20,000, ( \$\$ ) \$20,000-\$50,000, ( \$\$\$ ) \$50,000-\$100,000, ( \$\$\$\$ ) greater than \$100,000

Specific concerns and ideas from stakeholders, residents, and business owners helped VHB identify key improvements to implement the Vision Plan, including:



Addressing blind spots and prioritizing space for alternate transportation.





# Enhance the public realm

by improving access to open space and amenities.

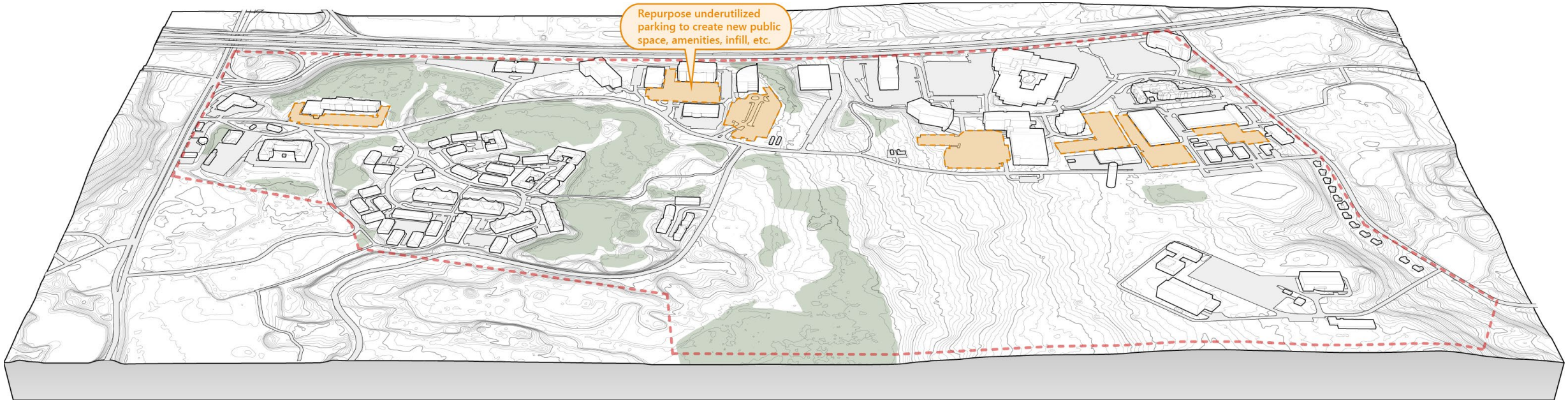
	ACTION	PRIORITY	CHAMPION	COST*	FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES	IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME
3A	Perform an analysis of public and private recreational paths and identify improvements.	Level 1	Planning Department	\$\$	MassTrails Program Grant (Mass DCR)	Short-Term (1-5 Years)
3B	Identify existing bicycle parking and docking/charging equipment corridor-wide and plan for improvements.	Level 2	Planning Department	\$\$	Complete Streets Funding (MassDOT) Shared Streets & Spaces Grant (MassDOT) Safe Streets & Roads For All Grant (US DOT)	Medium-Term (6-9 Years)
3C	Perform a district placemaking study to identify measures for branding the district.	Level 2	Planning Department, Economic Development Office	\$\$	Community Planning Grants (DHCD) Commonwealth Places (Mass Development)	Medium-Term (6-9 Years)
3D	Design and implement placemaking measures (e.g., pocket parks and public gathering spaces).	Level 3	DPW	\$\$\$\$	Community Planning Grants (DHCD) Commonwealth Places (Mass Development)	Long-Term (10+ Years)

\* (\$) \$10,000-\$20,000, (\$\$) \$20,000-\$50,000, (\$\$\$) \$50,000-\$100,000, (\$\$\$\$) greater than \$100,000

Specific concerns and ideas from stakeholders, residents, and business owners helped VHB identify key improvements to implement the Vision Plan, including:



Repurposing underutilized spaces (particularly in parking areas) to create new public spaces. This could include temporary placemaking programming, pocket parks, and infill development.





# Preserve existing wetlands

in balance with future development.

4A

ACTION	PRIORITY	IMPLEMENTATION LEADER	COST*	FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES	IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME
Design and implement drainage improvements to mitigate flooding and icing at critical points throughout the Corridor.	Level 1	DPW	\$\$\$\$	Wetland Program Development Grant (US EPA) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (DCR) Stormwater MS4 Municipal Grant (Mass DEP)	Short-Term (1-5 Years)

4B

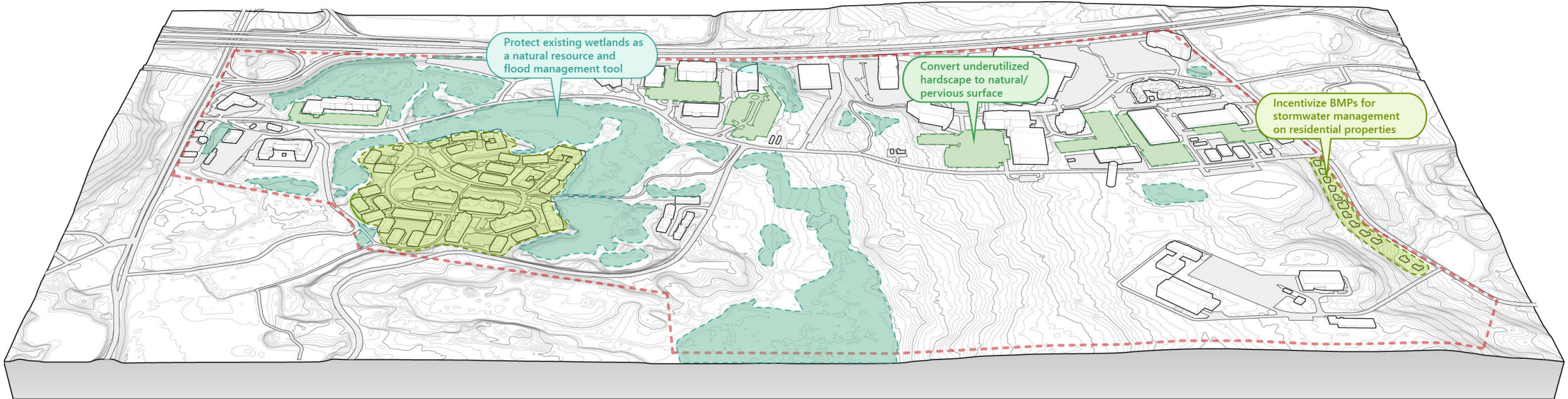
Review and update your wetlands bylaw, zoning bylaw, and other pertinent environmental regulations, to further incentivize sustainable measures (e.g., restorative wetland design, floodplain management, groundwater recharge). Follow-up on recommendations outlined in the June 2022 Vine Brook Watershed Flood and Heat Island Assessment Report.	Level 2	Planning Department, Conservation Commission	\$\$	Wetland Program Development Grant (US EPA) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (DCR) Stormwater MS4 Municipal Grant (Mass DEP)	Medium-Term (6-9 Years)
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\* (\$) \$10,000-\$20,000, (\$\$) \$20,000-\$50,000, (\$\$\$) \$50,000-\$100,000, (\$\$\$\$) greater than \$100,000

Specific concerns and ideas from stakeholders, residents, and business owners helped VHB identify key improvements to implement the Vision Plan, including:



Protecting wetlands, converting hardscapes to landscapes with the addition of plantings and pervious surfaces, and incentivizing residential stormwater management where possible.





# Foster economic growth and resilience

along the Corridor while maintaining a mix of uses and preserving its scale and character.

5A  
5B  
5C

ACTION	PRIORITY	IMPLEMENTATION LEADER	COST*	FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES	IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME
Conduct a review of Zoning Bylaws to determine whether regulations support a variety of infill development projects. Add incentives where possible (i.e. parking reductions, density rewards).	Level 1	Planning Department	\$	Town of Burlington	Short-Term (1-5 Years)
Remove or revise parking minimums to align with the latest Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) numbers.	Level 1	Planning Department	\$	Town of Burlington	Short-Term (1-5 Years)
Identify ideal locations for converting surface parking to shared public space and establish easements in these locations.	Level 2	Planning Department	\$\$	Community Planning Grants (DHCD) Commonwealth Places (Mass Development)	Medium-Term (6-9 Years)

\* (\$) \$10,000-\$20,000, (\$\$) \$20,000-\$50,000, (\$\$\$) \$50,000-\$100,000, (\$\$\$\$) greater than \$100,000



# Maintain a dialogue with stakeholders

throughout the Corridor, including residents, business owners, and institutional leaders, to determine priorities and needs for future planning.

	ACTION	PRIORITY	IMPLEMENTATION LEADER	COST*	FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES	IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME
6A	Consider Blanchard / Wheeler properties for inclusion in ongoing MBTA Communities rezoning process.	Level 1	Planning Department	\$	Mass Housing Partnership Grant	Short-Term (1-5 Years)
6B	Coordinate with the form-based code consultant team to ensure consistency with Vision Plan.	Level 1	Planning Department	\$	Town of Burlington	Short-Term (1-5 Years)
6C	Conduct bi-annual meetings with the Blanchard / Wheeler community to coordinate implementation measures.	Level 1	Planning Department	\$	Town of Burlington	Short-Term (1-5 Years)

\* (\$) \$10,000-\$20,000, ( \$\$ ) \$20,000-\$50,000, ( \$\$\$ ) \$50,000-\$100,000, ( \$\$\$\$ ) greater than \$100,000



The Blanchard / Wheeler Corridor Vision Plan is a powerful tool for shaping the future of this region.

By actively engaging in the planning process, residents and stakeholders contributed their unique perspectives, experiences, and ideas. Their input—on challenges, key priorities, and new opportunities—ensures the Vision Plan reflects the aspirations, values, and needs of those who reside, work, commute, and recreate in the Blanchard/ Wheeler Corridor.

Using the Implementation Strategy as a guide for future programming and investment, residents, stakeholders, and Town staff can meaningfully preserve, enhance, and enliven the Corridor, today and in the future.

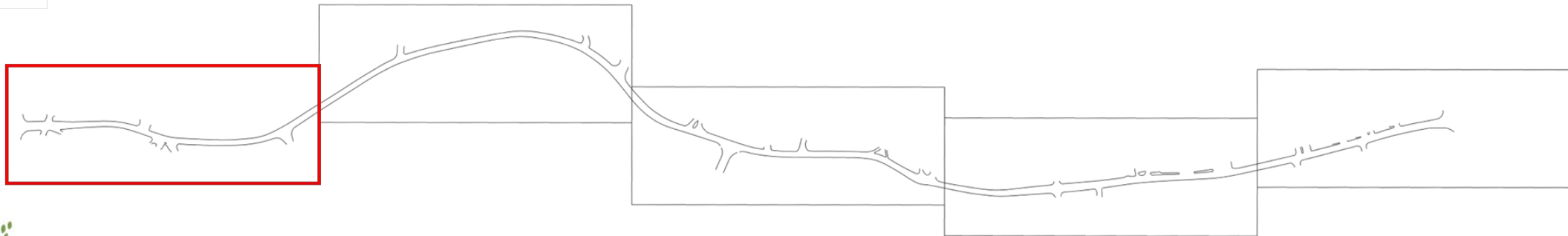
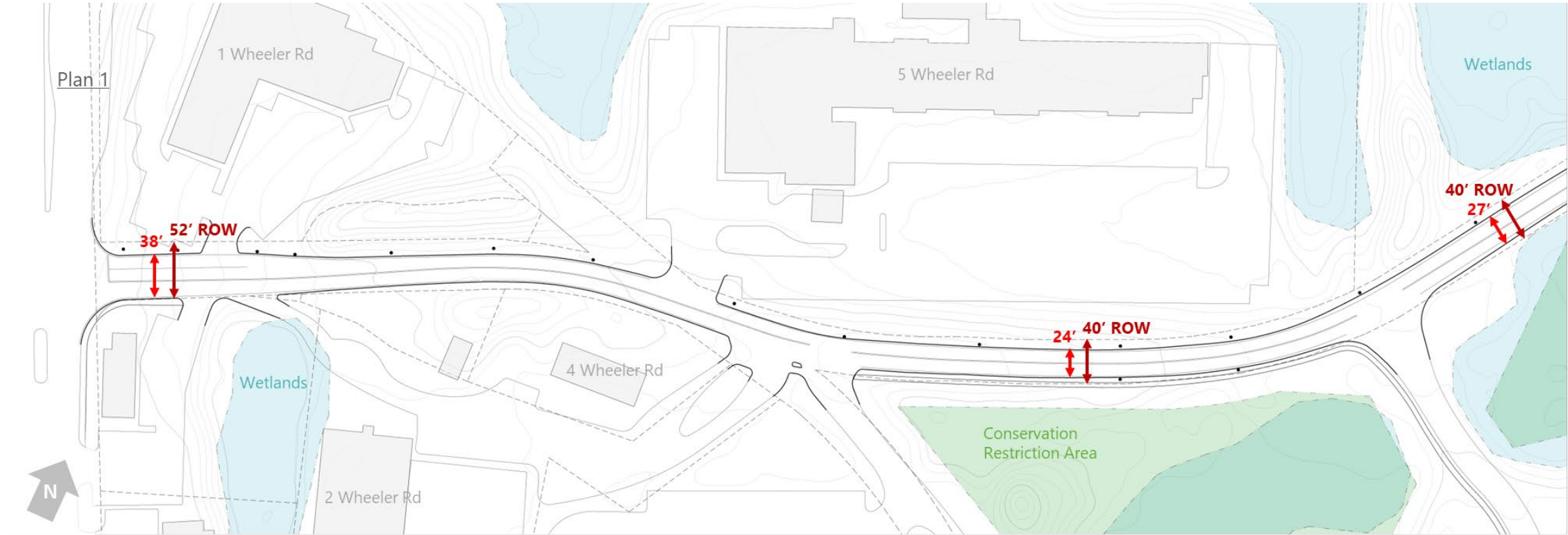


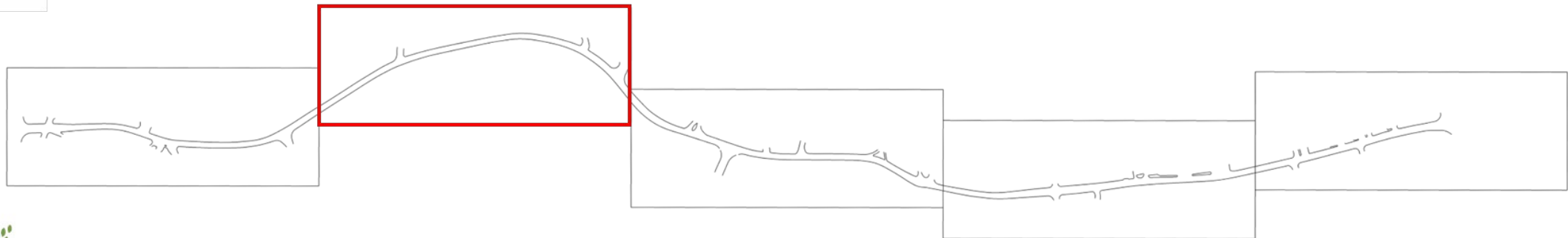
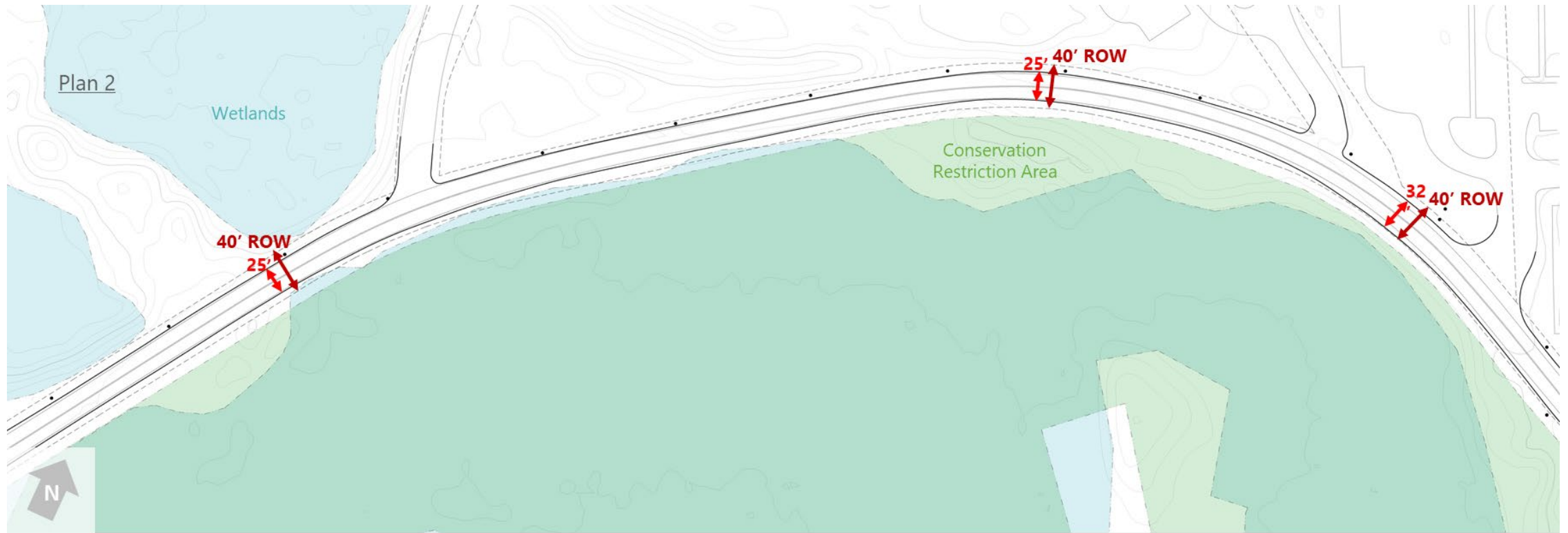
# 7 APPENDIX

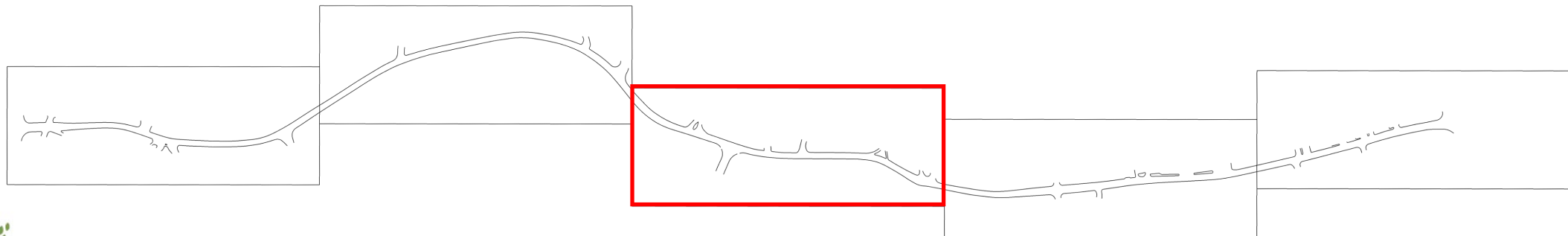
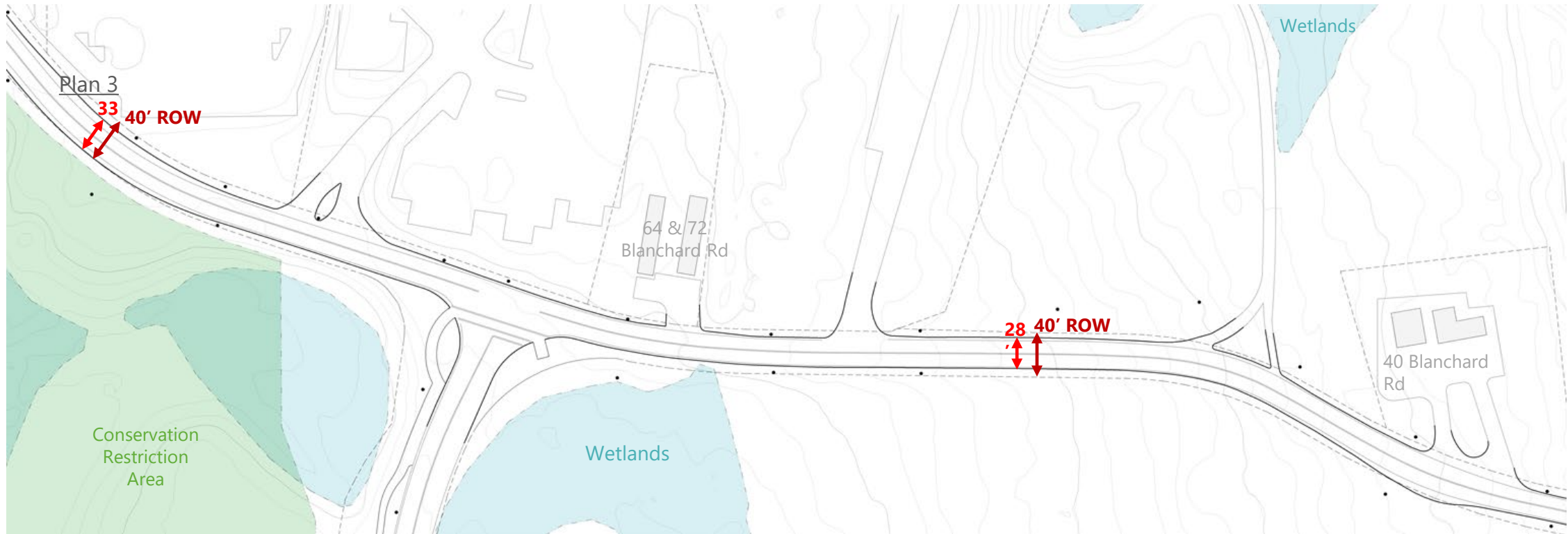
## APPENDIX I: Right of Way and Lane Widths

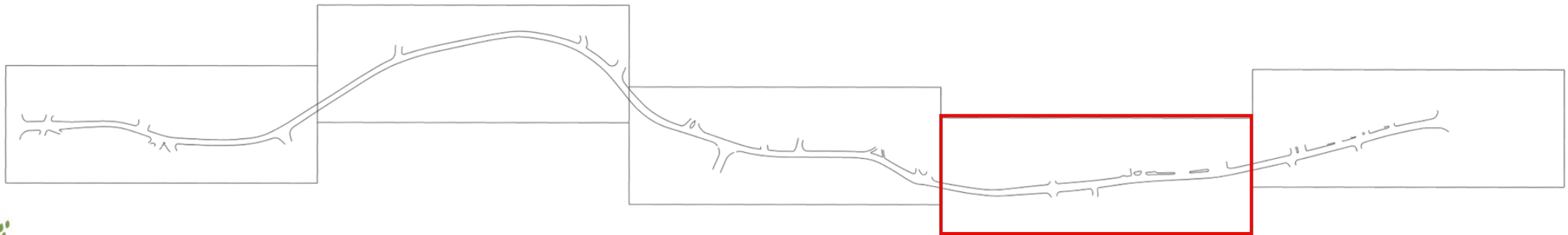
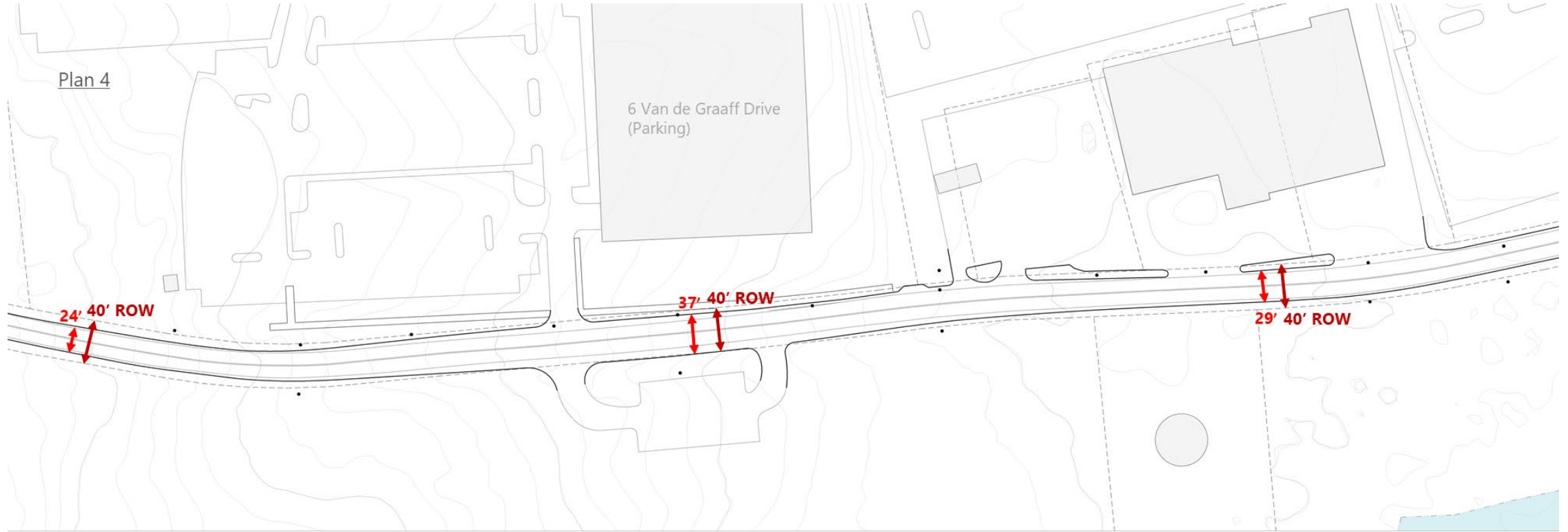
In December 2022, VHB visited the Corridor. The objective was to measure the street widths of Blanchard Road and Wheeler Road, observe traffic at intersections and pinch points, investigate parking lot usage, and assess pedestrian and bicycle accessibility.

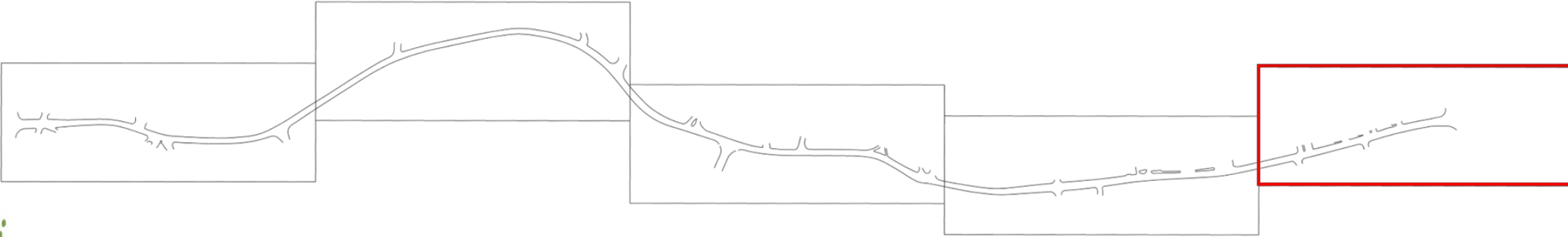
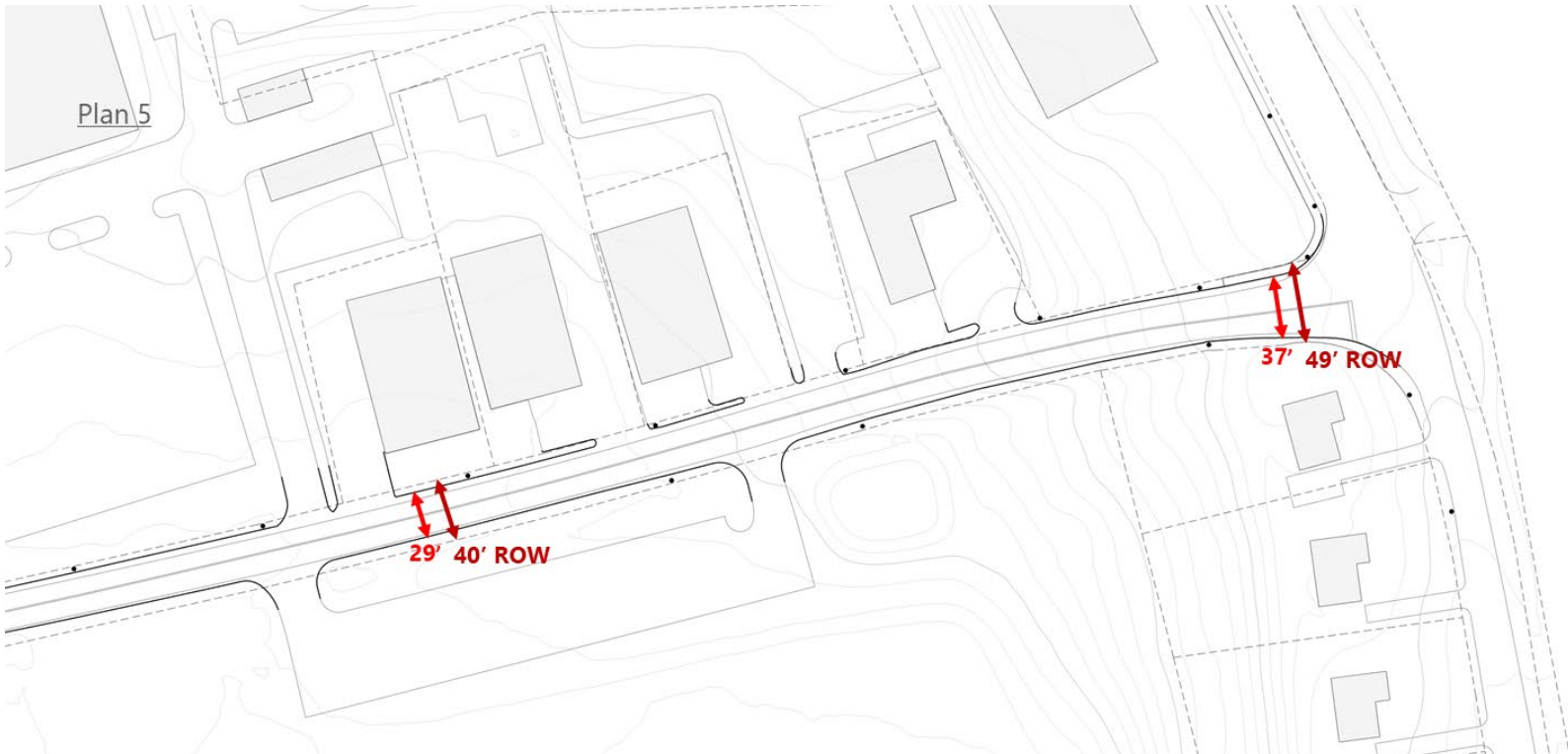
The following graphics illustrate findings from Burlington-provided geographic surveys and VHB-collected site data.



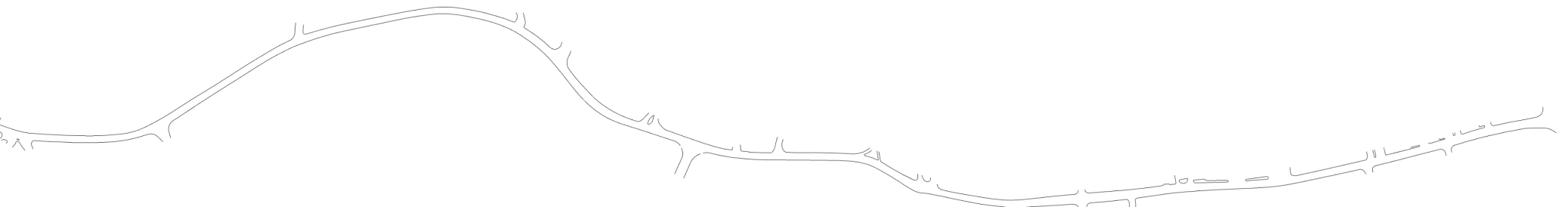


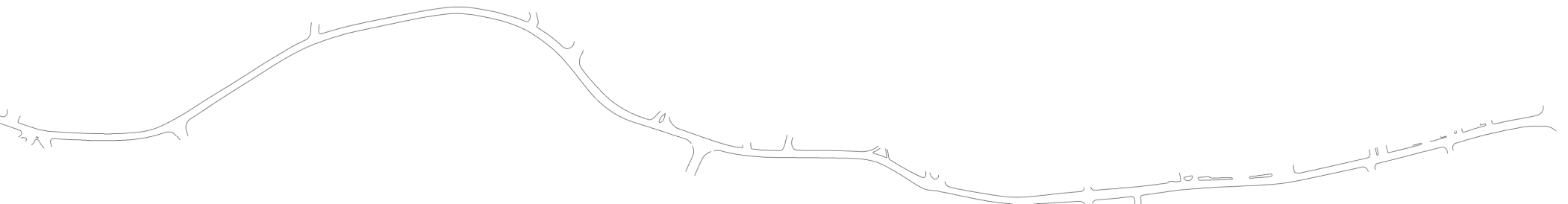


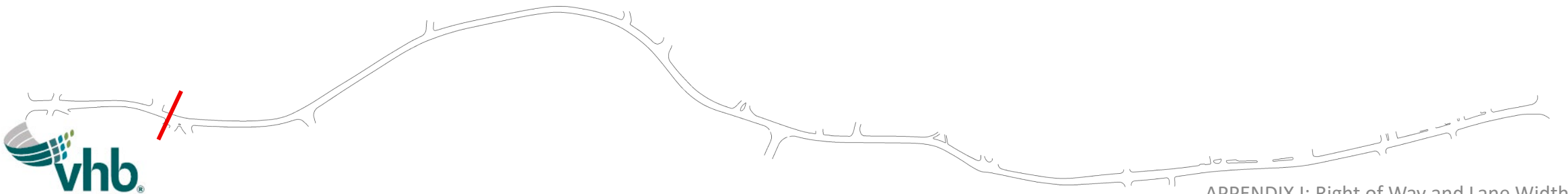


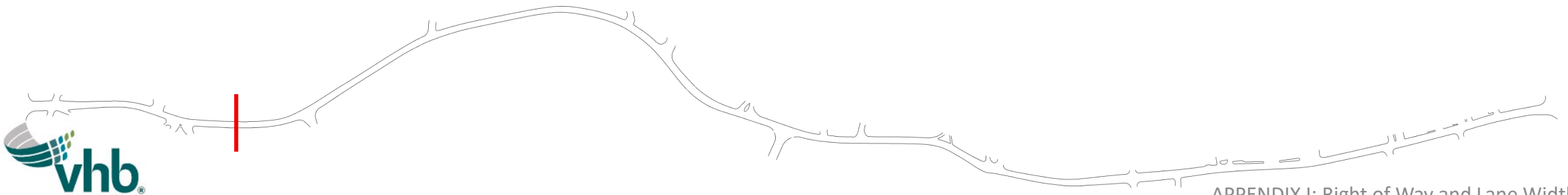


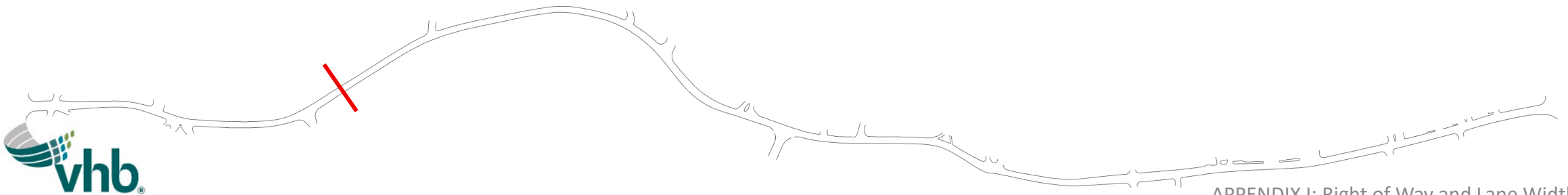


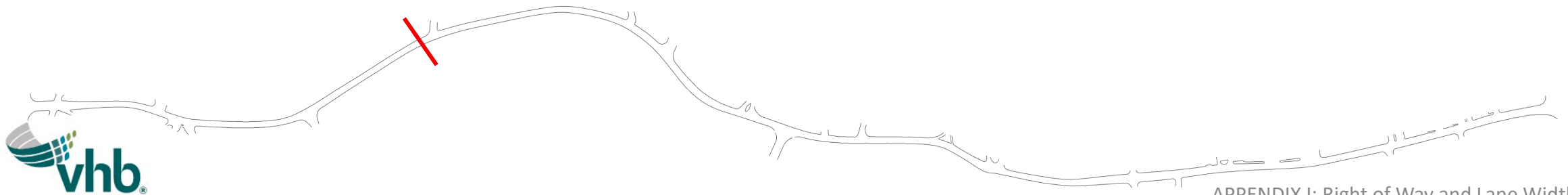


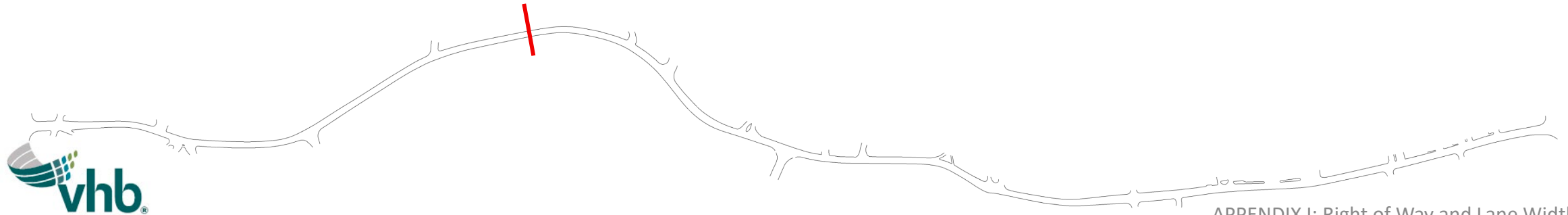


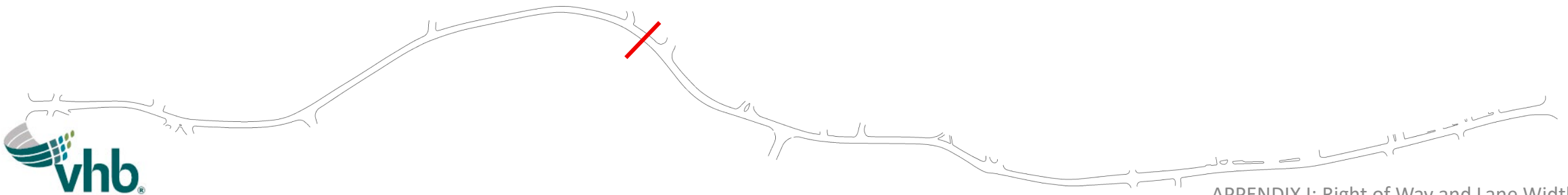








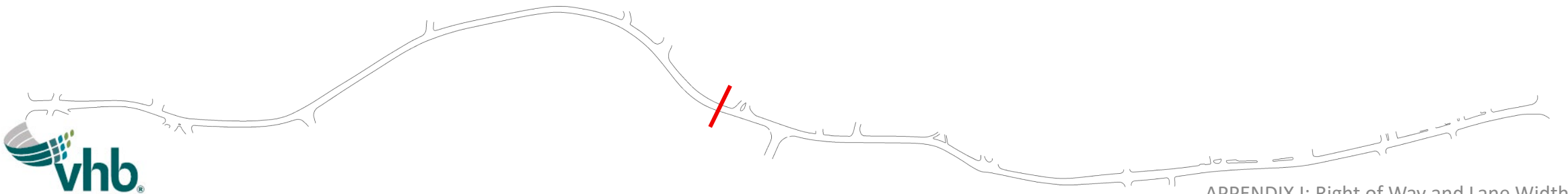


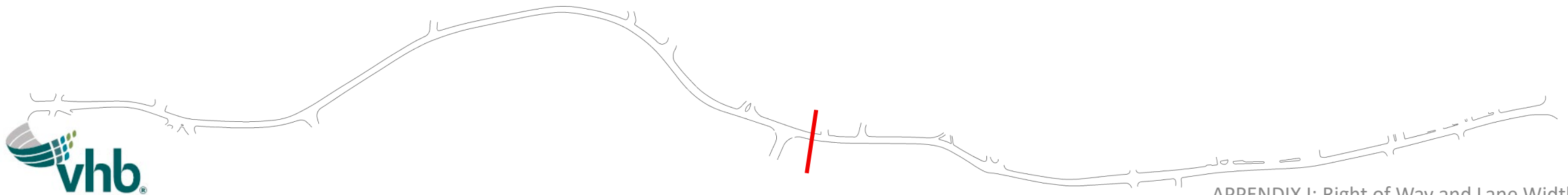


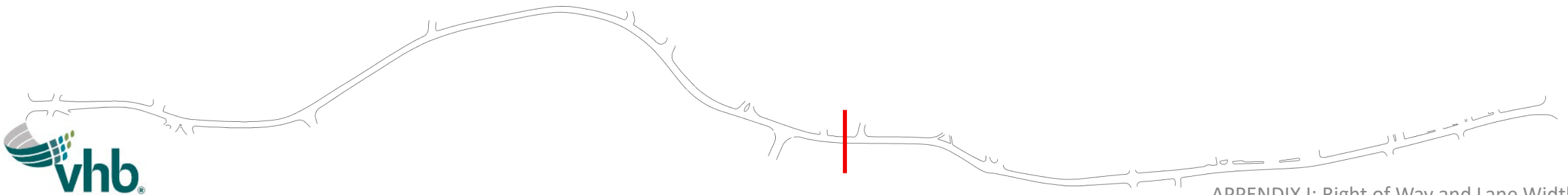


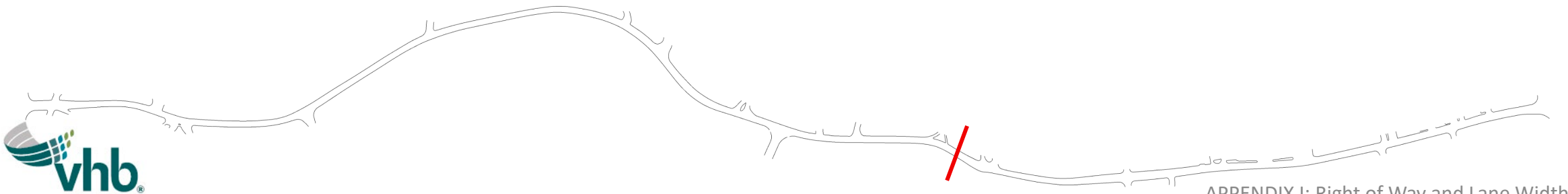


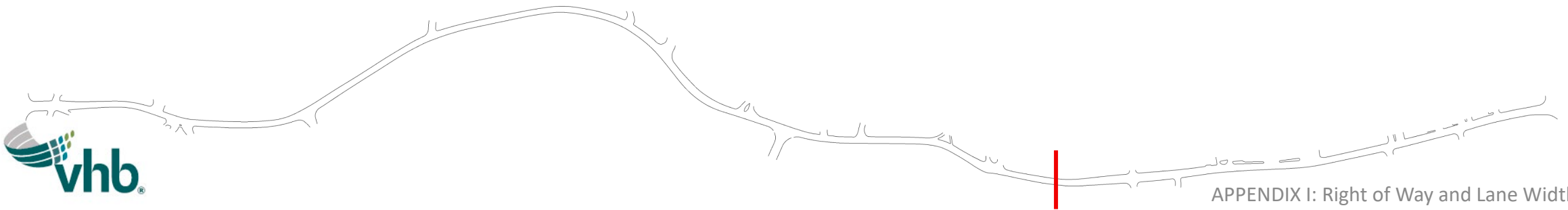
Wetlands

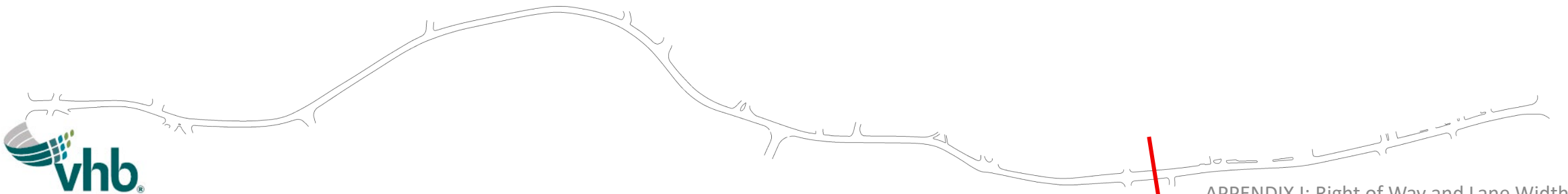


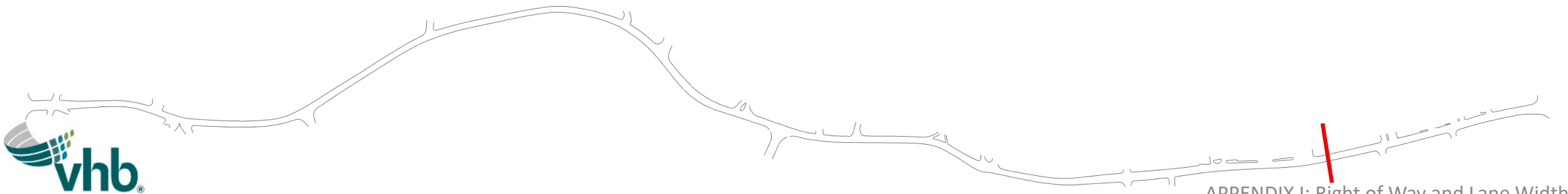


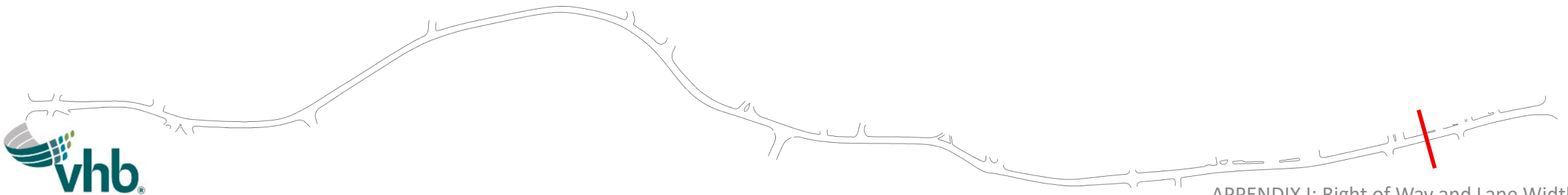




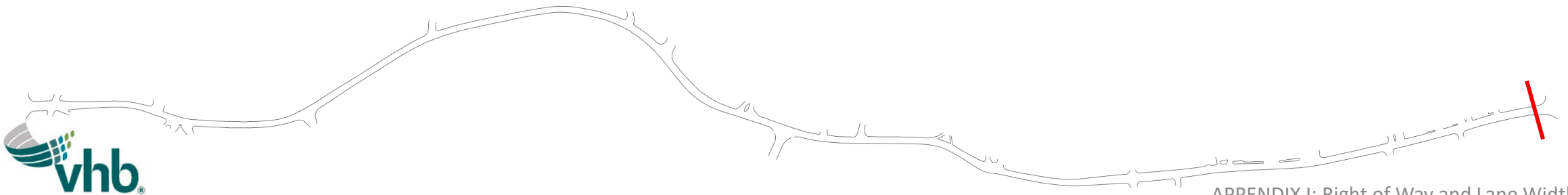










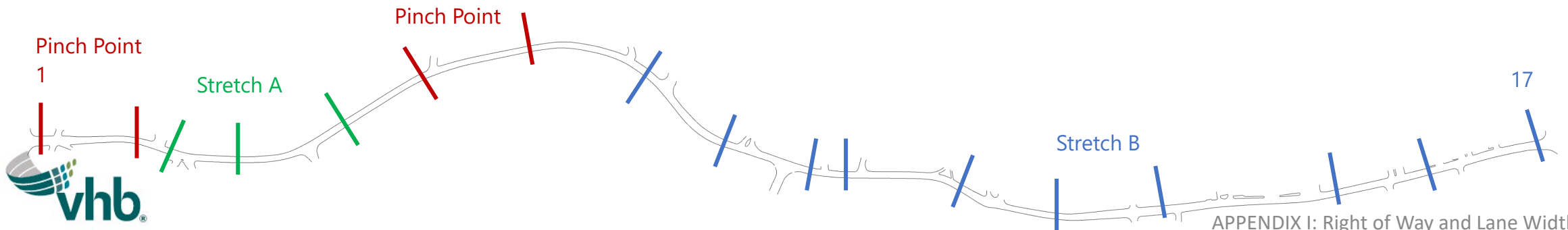


Determining Usable Space

The previous cross sections allowed us to

1. Identify **pinch points and street segments** (Stretch A, Stretch B, pinch points)
2. Establish **conservative and bold width estimates** for each segment
3. Recommend **design options** based on width estimates

Segment	Cross Section Number(s)	Conservative Usable Space (estimate, in feet) <i>(CANNOT move utility poles, approach wetlands, or obtain easements)</i>	Bold Usable Space (estimate, in feet) <i>(CAN move utility poles, approach wetlands, and obtain easements)</i>
<b>Pinch Point</b>	1,2	46' (section 1) 24' (section 2)	50' (section 1) 26' (section 2)
<b>Stretch A</b>	3-5	27.5'	37.5'
<b>Pinch Point</b>	6,7	25'	30'
<b>Stretch B</b>	8-17	32'	38'



## APPENDIX II: Public Meeting 1

On February 1, 2023, the Town and VHB conducted a virtual community meeting with approximately 52 individuals attending via Microsoft Teams. VHB and Town stakeholders presented to the public, including an overview of the study, a review of existing conditions, and relevant planning concepts (i.e., complete streets, placemaking, amenities). VHB administered two anonymous polls via Microsoft Teams, followed by discussion in breakout groups, including questions designed to identify and contextualize prevalent challenges and opportunities regarding the study area and to identify ideas for the future of the corridor. Summarized below are the feedback received during this meeting, organized by prompts.

**POLL 1 – SAFETY, STRENGTHS, SHORTCOMINGS**

**How often do you travel along Blanchard and/or Wheeler Road?**

The majority of participants who participated in this poll (75 percent) travel along the corridor more than one time per week, with 29 percent traveling the corridor more than one time per day. One quarter of participants who participated in this poll travel the corridor less than one time per week.

	<i>Never</i>	<i>Less than 1x per week</i>	<i>1-2x per week</i>	<i>3-5x per week</i>	<i>1x per day</i>	<i>More than 1x per day</i>
<i>Number of Respondents</i>	0	7	5	6	2	8
<i>Percentage</i>	0%	25%	18%	21%	7%	29%

**Do you feel the corridor is safe for pedestrians and bicyclists?**

A significant majority of participants who participated in this poll (89 percent) rated one star, the lowest safety rating out of five, regarding the corridor's safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.

	<i>1 Star</i>	<i>2 Stars</i>	<i>3 Stars</i>	<i>4 Stars</i>	<i>5 Stars</i>
<i>Number of Respondents</i>	24	2	1	0	0
<i>Percentage</i>	89%	7%	3%	0%	0%

**What are the corridor’s strengths that should be preserved or emphasized?**

Participants were prompted to provide open ended responses regarding the corridor’s strengths. Responses comprised the following categories:

- Natural features (e.g., greenspace, wetlands, trees, open space, vernal ponds, Mary Cummings Park)
- Connectivity and access for pedestrians
- Economic vitality



**POLL 1 – SAFETY, STRENGTHS, SHORTCOMINGS****What are the corridor’s shortcomings that should be addressed?**

Participants were prompted to provide open ended responses regarding the corridor’s shortcomings. Responses comprised the following categories:

- Poor lighting
- Poor walkability
- Poor sightlines (e.g., blind curves)
- Lack of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure/pathways (e.g., sidewalks, multi-use path)
- Lack of connectivity
- Lack of shoulders
- Lack of mass transit
- Lack of boardwalks
- Narrow roadways
- Unsafe conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists (e.g., narrow roadways, poor lighting, windy conditions)
- Traffic speed
- Traffic congestion
- Flooding/icing issues and lack of storm drains



**POLL 2 – AMENITIES, FUTURE FOCUS**

**What additional amenities do you think would benefit the corridor (ex: café, gym, etc.)? (open-ended)**

Participants were prompted to provide open ended responses regarding the amenities that would benefit the corridor. Responses comprised the following categories:

- Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure/pathways (e.g., public transportation shelter, sidewalks, bike lanes, multi-use paths, boardwalk, nature trails)
- Restaurants and retail (e.g., cafés, pubs, gym)
- Indoor shared workspaces
- Playgrounds
- Improved connectivity to nearby amenities (e.g., Wayside Commons, Middlesex Market Basket)
- Greenspace and infrastructure (e.g., planted buffers, pocket parks, open space, picnic areas)
- Amenities at Mary Cummings Park (e.g., bathrooms, parking, trails)

**How could the Town improve connectivity along the corridor (ex: between businesses on Van de Graaff and Seven Springs)? (open-ended)**

Participants were prompted to provide open ended responses regarding opportunities to improve connectivity along the corridor. Responses comprised the following categories:

- Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure/pathways (e.g., trails with signage, walkways, bridges, dedicated bike paths, boardwalks, multi-use paths, safe roadway crossings)
- Wider roadways
- Complete streets
- Connections to surrounding districts (e.g., shuttles)



**POLL 2 – AMENITIES, FUTURE FOCUS****Are there other improvements that you think would benefit the corridor? (open-ended)**

Participants were prompted to provide open ended responses regarding future improvements to the corridor. Responses comprised the following categories:

- Public transit
- Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure/pathways (e.g., sidewalks, shoulders)
- Flood mitigation
- Improved roadway conditions (e.g., lighting, maintenance of roadways markings, clearing of dead trees and trash, addition of a turning lane at intersection of Muller and Blanchard, burying of overhead utilities)
- Traffic management (e.g., installation of traffic light at Bedford and Blanchard)
- Preservation of open space
- Connectivity with surrounding districts (e.g., potential access across I-95 to Mall Rd, access to H Mart/Trader Joes/Market Basked from Wheeler Rd)
- Improved walkability and amenities
- Manage building heights along roadways



## GROUP DISCUSSION

Based on preliminary research and the participants' first-hand experience on the corridor, VHB facilitated discussions in three virtual meeting rooms during the Microsoft Teams call. The discussions were framed around the following questions:

- Issues and Opportunities for the Corridor
  - What are major issues within the corridor?
  - What needs improvement?
- Formulating a Vision Statement
  - What should be VHB's focus for the planning process?





**GROUP DISCUSSION: NOTES FROM VIRTUAL MEETING ROOM 1**

Discussion Round 1 - Issues and Opportunities for the Corridor  
What are major issues within the corridor?

- Sidewalks are a huge issue. The participant would not ride a bike on Muller road due to blind spots going around curves.
- On Blanchard and Wheeler there is significant work day traffic leading up to lights on either end. Traffic gets backed up almost to the exit by the shopping center.
- There is a prominence of limited uses within the corridor, constrained to a few different types, and a question of how to look to the future and incorporate community values. The challenge associated with this is getting the regulatory framework down.
- Question of how to incorporate complete streets despite the expense and make meaningful changes in design and utility (question of infrastructure financing).
- Not a lot of people get to enjoy Mary Cummings Park due to lack of parking and connectivity.
- Complete streets are a huge determining factor in the success of the corridor. However, the corridor should not be built up with unnecessary amenities. The focus should be on moving people around without the use of a car.
- Blanchard and Wheeler should be widened with the addition of a pedestrian walkway and bike path. The corridor also needs better lighting at night and overhanging trees should be cut back more frequently.
- Issue of vehicles speeding along the corridor.
- A participant noted concerned for traffic generation from 1 Wheeler Rd.
- Lack of connectivity throughout the corridor, no bike paths, every route, and pathway are dead ends. The participant noted concern for protecting wetlands, connectivity, and traffic patterns.
- Food trucks
- Appropriate walkways from Van de Graff
- A participant noted the benefit of Mary Cummings park and existing green space. The Town should embrace this within the corridor as an amenity in and of itself rather than adding new development
- A participant noted that it doesn't make sense for the type of development comprising Northeastern's properties to continue. The bird nest cage has no activity in it, and it is very visible from Mary Cummings park – people who don't even live in Burlington question why that building exists.
- A participant noted that from a development point of view, they don't see anything happening on left side of Wheeler Rd.

**GROUP DISCUSSION: NOTES FROM VIRTUAL MEETING ROOM 1 (CONT.)**

Discussion Round 2 - Formulating a Vision Statement

What should be VHBs focus for the planning process?

- This plan should incorporate the spirit of open space and support more walkability.



**GROUP DISCUSSION: NOTES FROM VIRTUAL MEETING ROOM 2**

Discussion Round 1 - Issues and Opportunities for the Corridor  
What are major issues within the corridor?

- Muller Road is residential and narrow and we want to funnel traffic away from there rather than through there... but people will inevitably want to avoid the intersection with Middlesex Drive. There are lots of choke points. At one time, the intersection of Wheeler and Middlesex to take a right turn down Muller but that was part of a design thing that may have never gotten approved. When Oracle was going in, the difficulty with putting in sidewalks was the wetlands - boardwalks were suggested but that's very expensive
- I would at least like to see sidewalks (or boardwalks) there, especially since 5,00 people work in the corridor. I think this is poor foresight with speed management - cars go very fast. It is not safe to walk.
- I think human-scale development would slow traffic and would help people take advantage of the resources there. It is not very nice for people on the ground walking.
- To the point of the number of employees, Oracle, pre-pandemic, still had a large percentage of employees WFH. They reported the only reason they needed the parking was for quarterly meetings. With video meetings, these might not even be in-person anymore.
- I have a bunch of thoughts. It's important to have the Trustees' feedback because biggest chunk is MC Park. I also biked through Van de Graaff and it was almost completely deserted. I would hate to see more development go in when so much is empty. Plus, the traffic along Blanchard/Wheeler at rush hour is a nightmare; more development would worsen this. The Town also voted against the Northeastern Innovation Campus - we don't have any control over their future expansion because of the Dover Amendment. I would love to see a lovely boardwalk rather than try to enlarge Blanchard road which would be difficult. It would "an incredibly lovely thing" to put a boardwalk through the wetlands that allow for ped and bike traffic. I further would like to see people from the commercial area, from Seven Springs be able to walk all the way up Blanchard -- this boardwalk could span through the wetland, parallel to the road, and then it could be translated into a path within MC Park through until the parking lot or even South Bedford.
- The whole area is tough for biking. Plus, the Seven Springs bike path is not maintained at all. The biggest problem is the large gap where you have to go on the road to connect the two bike paths.
- I drive down this road every day. It is narrow, I do see bikes, and it is definitely narrow and windy.



**GROUP DISCUSSION: NOTES FROM VIRTUAL MEETING ROOM 2 (CONT.)**

Discussion Round 2 - Formulating a Vision Statement  
What should be VHBs focus for the planning process?

- I would ask that new amenities encourage pedestrian and bike (and not car) traffic.
- I think that the needs/interests of the company's in Van de Graaff should be listened too, but you should also spend time with the Trustees. In my opinion, anything that you do should NOT degrade the experience of people who want to enjoy MC Park.
- The two things I'll add would be, Brendan Eagan should be good to talk to since Burlington has a license on the far side of the property near Blanchard. It would also be good to look at the utilities to see what would be possible to move below ground. The water tower, when it has to be drained, just turns the road into a river. So it would be nice to look at the utilities and how they affect the corridor.
- Oracle has a big dining room... could be a communal space.



**GROUP DISCUSSION: NOTES FROM VIRTUAL MEETING ROOM 3**

Discussion Round 1 - Issues and Opportunities for the Corridor

What are major issues within the corridor?

- Major problems with Wheeler Road flooding
- Thick ice along the road
- No shoulders on Wheeler Road
- Putting more development on the part of the road is not ideal, put less buildings
- More walkways for people in the area
- Continuous walkway from south Bedford down to Middlesex
- Sidewalks there sporadically
- ENHANCE WHATS THERE, NO MORE DEVELOPMENT
- Dips and curves along the road
- Davis Road in Bedford
  - Put in boardwalk for half a mile
  - Off chutes to viewing platforms to experience the space
  - They did it through CPA
- What needs improvement?



**GROUP DISCUSSION: NOTES FROM VIRTUAL MEETING ROOM 3 (CONT.)**

Discussion Round 2 - Formulating a Vision Statement

What should be VHBs focus for the planning process?

- Improving access and safety to what is already there
- Potential boardwalk walkway



## APPENDIX III: Public Meeting 2

On April 26, 2023, the Town and VHB conducted a virtual community meeting with approximately 30 individuals attending via Microsoft Teams. VHB and the Town presented to the public, including a review of the draft Vision Statement and Goals, followed by discussion in breakout groups centered on reactions to the presentation. A recording of Community Meeting #2 is available through the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Em1NR4xZvs>.

Summarized below are the feedback received during this meeting, organized by prompts.

## GROUP DISCUSSION

### What are your concerns with the Draft Vision Statement and/or Goals?

Participants were prompted to provide open-ended responses regarding the Draft Vision Statement and Goals. Responses comprised the following categories:

- Ensuring proper engagement with current residents of the Corridor, including direct abutters
- Attracting new residents to the Corridor
- Prioritization of residential concerns over commercial concerns
- The Corridor already has sufficient restaurant and retail development (e.g., Wayside Commons) – need for better connectivity to existing retail uses
- Need for more affordable housing and increasing activity along the Corridor outside standard work hours (potential reuse of underutilized office space)
- Concern regarding overdevelopment and desires to preserve the Corridor’s quiet/rural character
- Concerns with the volume of existing vehicle traffic along Blanchard, Wheeler, South Bedford, and Muller
- Unsafe environment for pedestrians/cyclists and the need for more signalized crossings along Blanchard Road
- Concerns with narrow roadways and infringement on existing wetlands (feasibility of widening roadway)
- Utilities would need to be buried along Blanchard / Wheeler to make any changes to the roadway
- Need for regional and local public transportation
- Feasibility of interventions requiring the use of privately owned land (e.g., Jumbo Capital storage facility)



## GROUP DISCUSSION

### What did you like about the Draft Vision Statement and/or Goals?

Participants were prompted to provide open-ended responses regarding the Draft Vision Statement and Goals. Participants noted the following:

- Creating a boardwalk through existing wetlands
- Agreement regarding the issue of motorists speeding throughout the Corridor
- Importance of bicycle connectivity and multi-modal pathways along the Corridor
- Importance of involving stakeholders in the conversation looking ahead to implementation as well as continued public collaboration
- Appreciation for stormwater action items



## GROUP DISCUSSION

### What is missing from the Draft Vision Statement and/or Goals?

Participants were prompted to provide open-ended responses regarding the Draft Vision Statement and Goals. Participants noted the following:

- Enhancement as well as preservation of existing wetlands (e.g., addition of a boardwalk)
- Enhancement/maintenance of existing recreational facilities (e.g., Mary Cummings Park, existing baseball fields) and partnership with relevant stakeholders, including the Trustees of Reservations
- Reuse of underutilized parking for recreational purposes (e.g., pickleball)
- Need for dedicated bike lanes, not just sharrows or widened shoulders
- Wayfinding signage throughout the Corridor
- Need for a traffic light at the intersection of Blanchard Road and South Bedford Street to address rush hour traffic congestion
- Specified alternative uses for vacant office space
- Opportunities for innovation regarding underutilized parking space and the Town's response to the MBTA Communities Act
- Prioritization of safety over economic development
- Better-defined placemaking strategy for the Corridor
- Retrofitting for stormwater - There are permits in place for new stormwater work.
- Engagement with property owners
- Specific strategies to improve walkability throughout the Corridor (e.g., addition of sidewalks)
- Rezoning geared towards entertainment uses (e.g., sports complex)



## GROUP DISCUSSION

### Additional Notes for Consideration

Outside of the breakout group prompts, participants noted the following regarding the presentation and meeting structure:

- Need for additional detail regarding funding for implementation
- Need for more specific detail and less “clipart”
- Concern regarding outreach for these public meetings and desire for improved outreach with the general public and not just Town committees
- Participants noted that they could not read the text on the slides and would’ve liked to have viewed the presentation content ahead of time (they could not capture all thoughts and observations through notetaking during the presentation). Participants noted they did not have enough information to provide proper feedback, given this is the last public meeting in the planning process.
- Need for another meeting