

February 2008

# Historic Easton Downtown Plan/Infill Strategies

## Presentation of Initial Downtown Plan and Infill Development Concepts

February 28, 2008



# Tonight's Agenda

- Overview of Assignment
- Overview of planning process
- Review of plan elements
- Review of infill development concepts

## Our Assignment:

*A downtown market and planning assessment focused on infill development strategies*

# Planning Process Overview

- This is the third public workshop
- We have gotten to know your community by conducting
  - Market analyses
  - Retail assessments
  - An historic conditions survey
  - Meetings to gather community input

# Approach to Concept Planning

- Review and integrate
  - Community input
  - Historic district guidelines
  - Project historian input
  - Market-based, realistic development templates

# Market Findings

- New retail and commercial development are supportable in downtown Easton
- There is also enough potential to strengthen existing retail
- Easton can support a diverse range and density of downtown housing
- **Be prepared! There is strong interest in downtown sites.**

# Our Marching Orders

- Downtown retailing needs improvement

**BUT...**

- Don't overwhelm and change Easton's historic character and
- Don't let downtown creep into residential neighborhoods



# Our Marching Orders

- New development needs to be contextual and compatible with historic character

**BUT...**

- It should not mimic or create a static/museum feel



# Our Marching Orders

- New downtown residential opportunities are important
- BUT...**
- Don't add too much density or incompatible housing types



# Our Marching Orders



- Recognize the importance and economic contribution of tourism and visitors

**BUT...**

- Keep the downtown diverse and appealing to a wide range of users



# Our Marching Orders

- Understand that traffic circulation and parking are important downtown issues

**BUT...**

- Don't let traffic and parking dictate or usurp downtown's unique character and pedestrian focus

# Our Marching Orders

- Keep Easton the employment center of the region

AND...

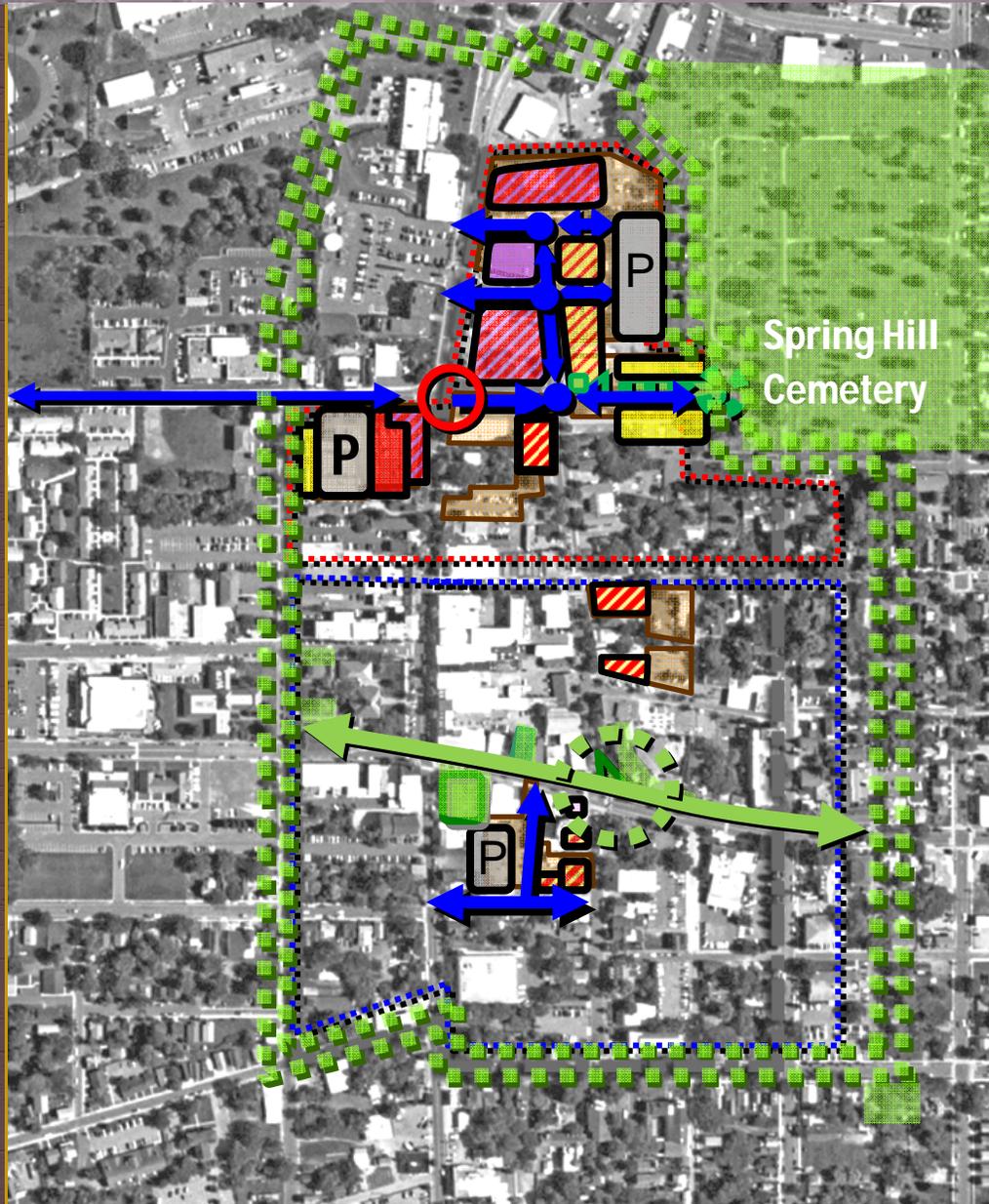
- Make downtown accessible and attractive so daily employees stay longer

# Concept Planning Elements

- Development limitations
- Connections
- Defining downtown
- Open spaces/public spaces
- Green streets approach
- Parking
- Representative site opportunities

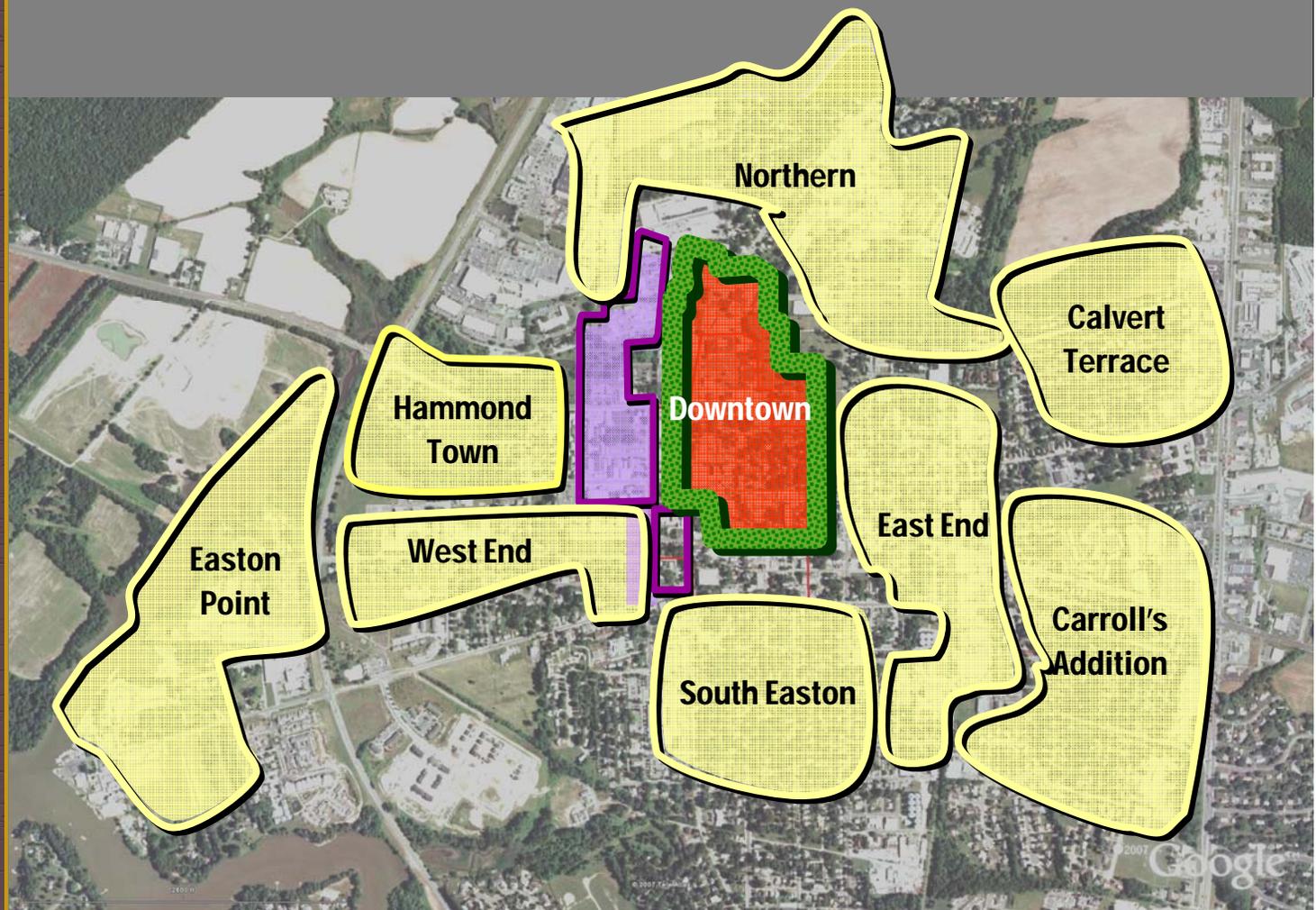
# The Downtown Plan: Key Principles

1. Define *downtown's edges*
2. *Broaden* downtown's *appeal*
3. *Strengthen the retail core*
4. *Redevelopment strategies for key infill sites and underutilized Town-owned parcels*
5. *Streets are the glue* that holds everything together



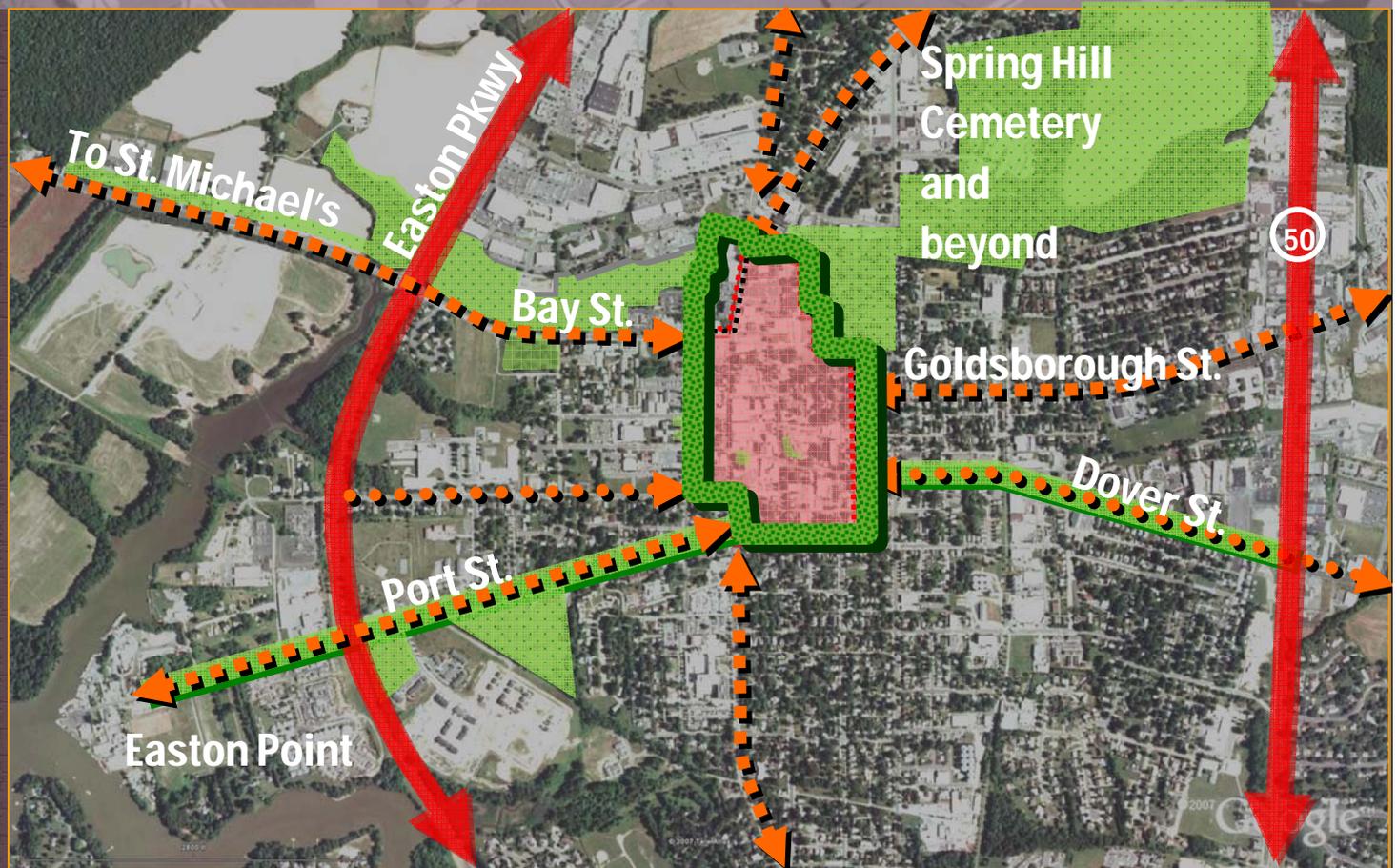
# Defining Downtown : The Challenge

- Focus downtown development in a compact area
- Ensure that adjacent residential neighborhoods continue to coexist with a more intensely used downtown



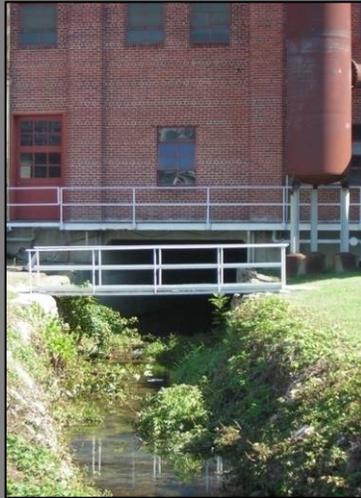
# Defining Downtown: The Green Ring Approach

- Creates a more distinct identity and focuses revitalization efforts
- Links Easton's open spaces to create a cohesive network
- Uses existing assets and becomes an asset for downtown users and surrounding residential areas



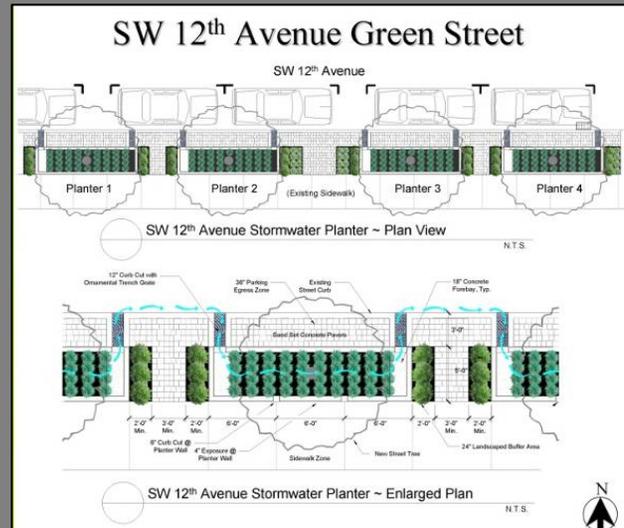
# Defining Downtown: The Green Ring Approach

- Thoroughgood, South, and West Streets could be green streets
- Harrison and Dover provide pedestrian-oriented internal connectivity
- A northern crossing of the green ring at Washington and Glebe can improve the gateway



# Define Downtown's Edges: "Green Streets"

- **Green Streets** allow for:
- **Multiple-modes of transportation** – accommodating bicycle paths as well as cars and pedestrian sidewalks
- **Wildlife corridor** – continuous planting (ie. planting strips, street trees, etc.)
- **Visual impact** – integrate continuous landscaping within the streetscape to establish a high-quality image
- **Stormwater Detention** – design the paving and planting areas to capture and absorb stormwater to divert runoff from the stormwater system



# Broadening Downtown's Appeal: Open Space

- Downtown has several pleasantly-scaled open spaces including the cemetery, but these spaces are not heavily used and do not support downtown retail or residential activity
- Coordinate open space with downtown circulation patterns to activate open spaces



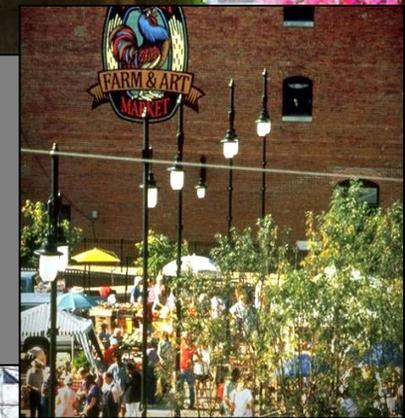
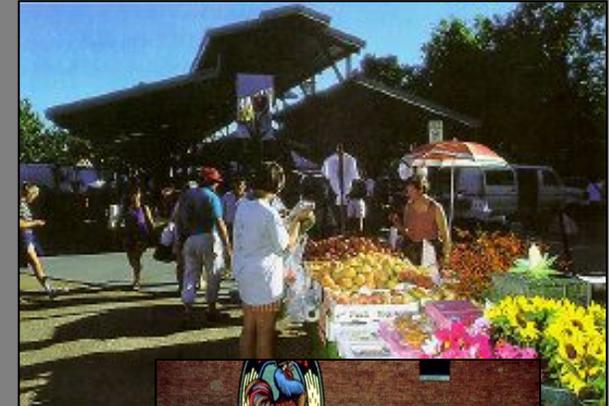
Spring Hill Cemetery



# Broadening Downtown's Appeal: Public Spaces

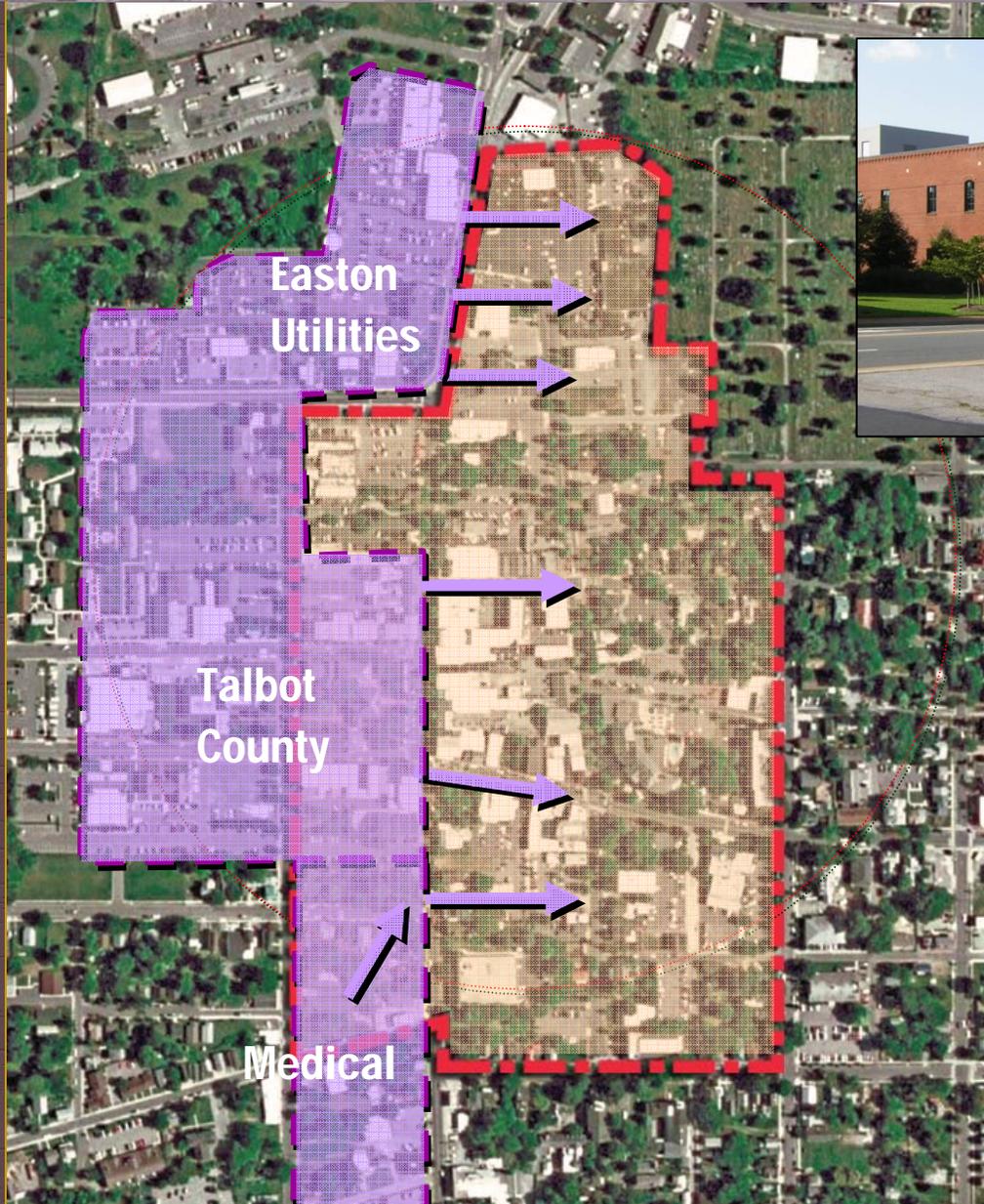
## Multi-use Public Spaces

- Introduce a broader range of open-space programming
- Draw a broader range of people into the downtown
- Lengthen the amount of time they spend there



# Strengthening the Retail Core: Making Connections

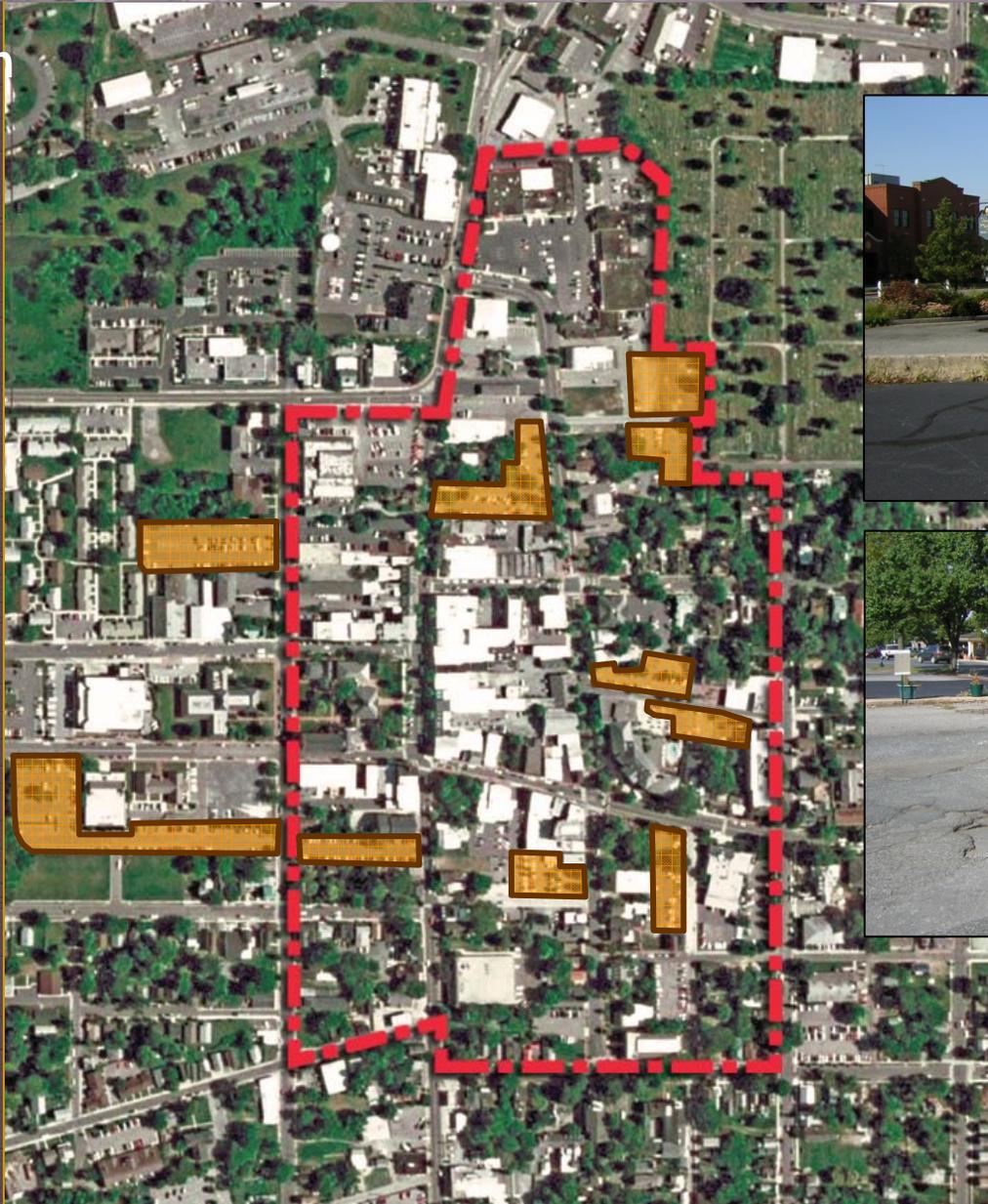
- Enhance links between the retail core and downtown employment
- Create more downtown residential development
- Increase the hours that downtown is active



# Strengthening the Retail Core: a Downtown Parking Strategy

## Parking Downtown Today

- Town lots are evenly distributed but not clearly marked
- Perception: parking shortage
- Surface lots create gaps in the pedestrian experience
- (Re)-development will generate new demand and displace some existing spaces



# Strengthening the Retail Core: a Downtown Parking Strategy

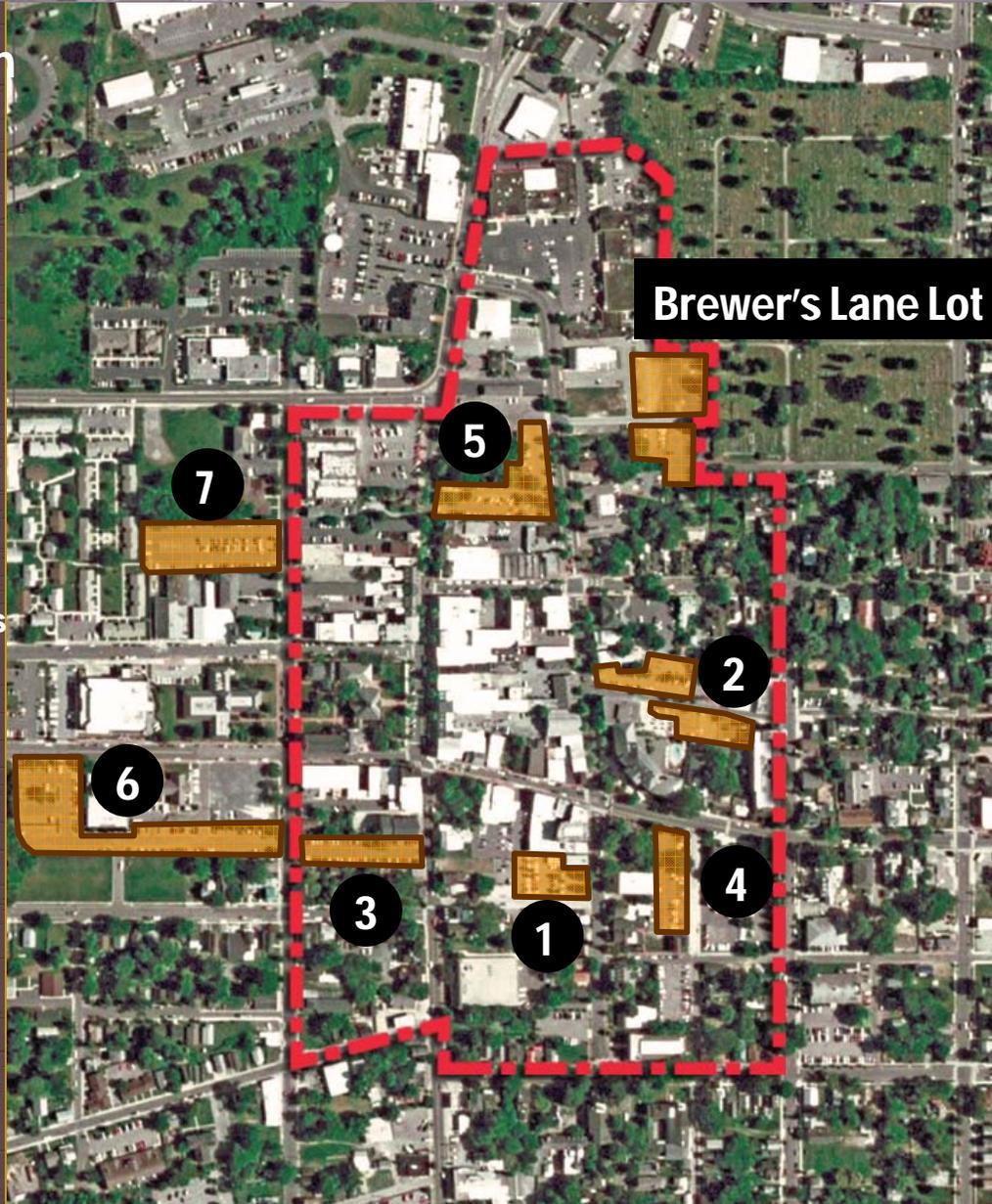
## Parking Downtown Today

### Existing Public Inventory

Lot 1	42 PS
Lot 2	57 PS
Lot 3	52 PS
Lot 4	31 PS
Lot 5	66 PS
Lot 6	152 PS
Lot 7	131 PS
Brewer's	95 PS
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>626 PS</b>

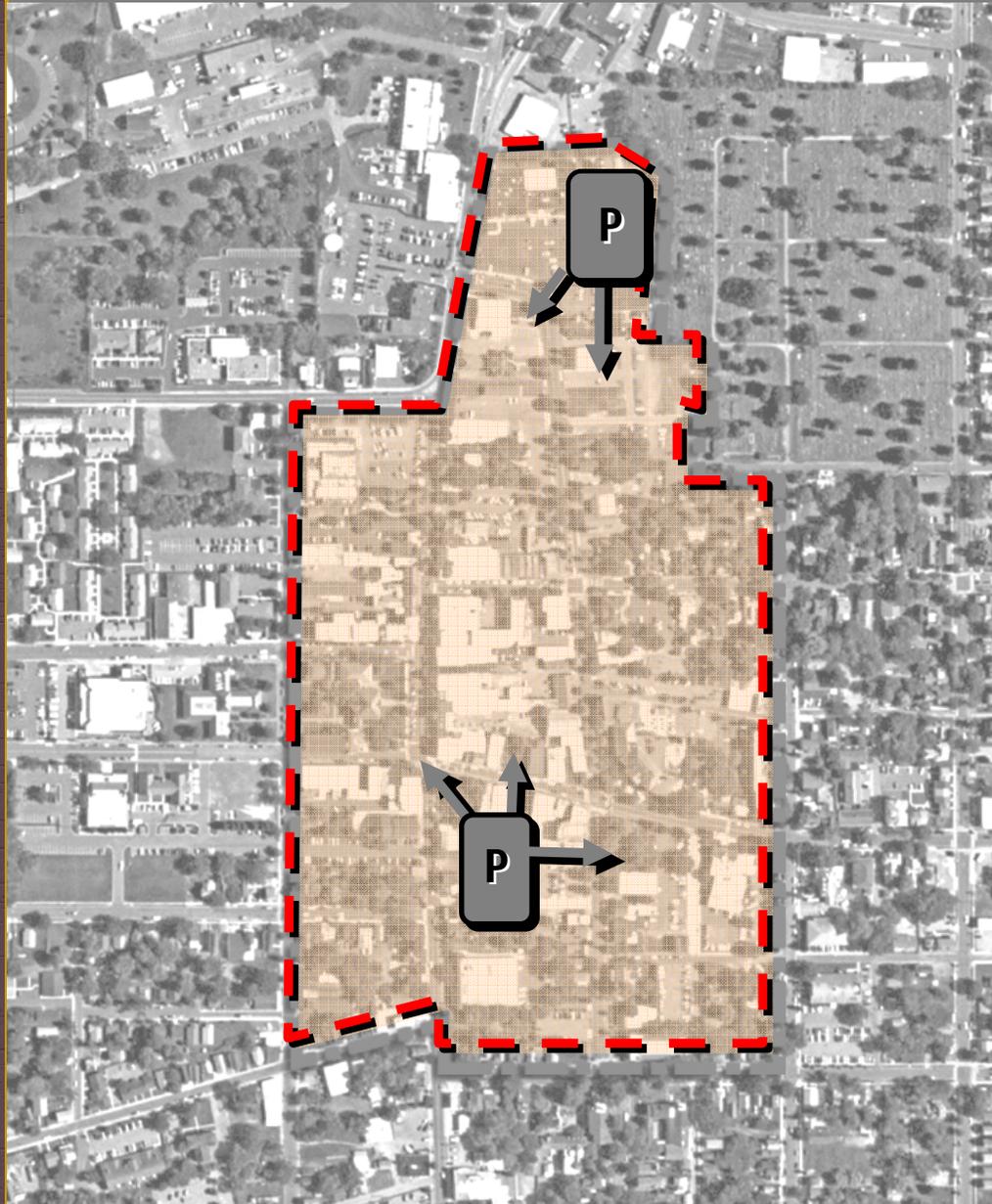
Additional Private Spaces  
Estimated 500 PS

Street Spaces  
Estimated 300 to 500 PS



# Strengthening the Retail Core: a Downtown Parking Strategy

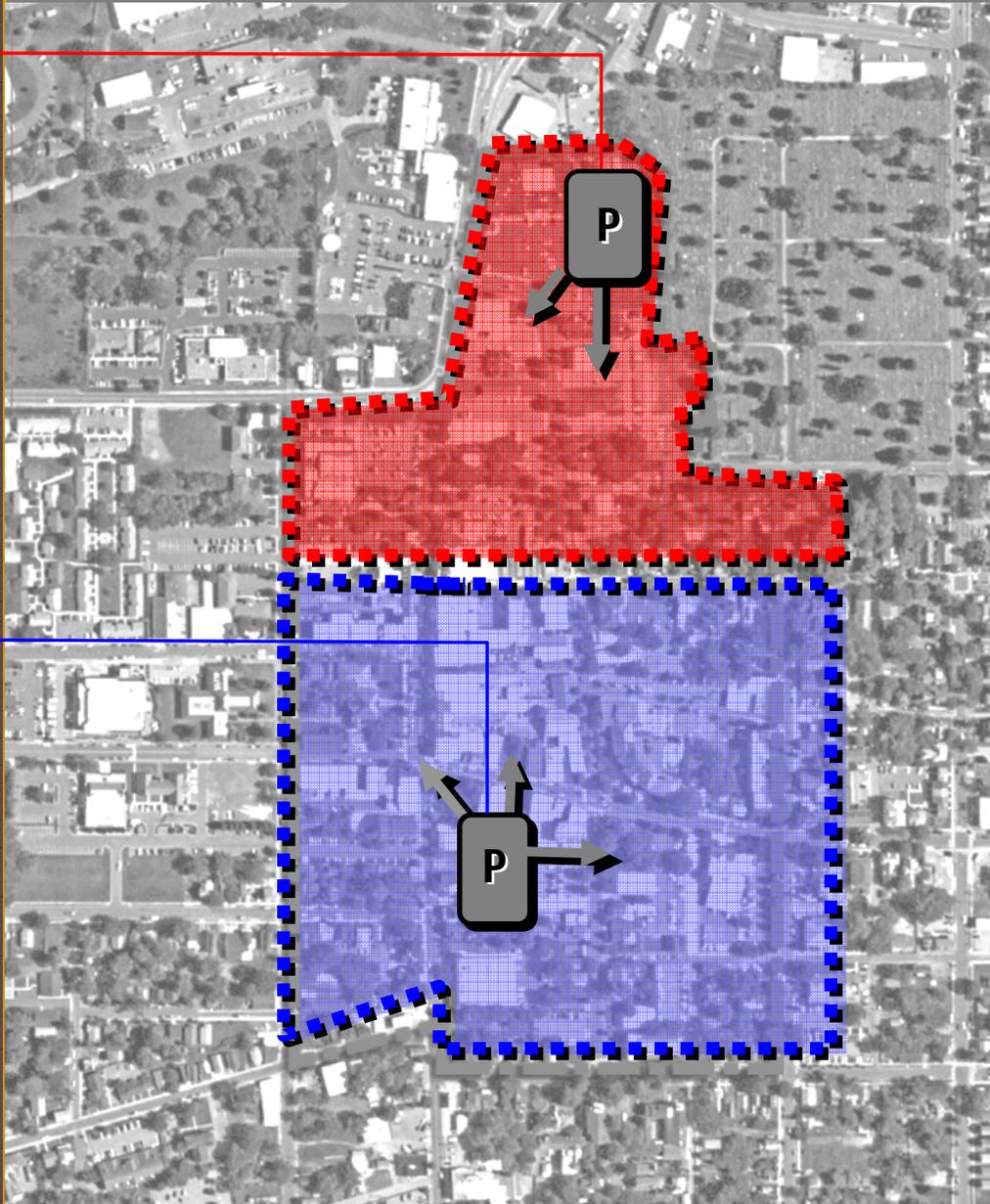
- Additional parking can support new development revitalize underused areas
- Parking structure efficiently accommodates different uses at different times
- Frees existing lots for more productive uses



# Infill Strategies: Integrating structured parking into the fabric

## North of Goldsborough

structured parking developed in conjunction with new development



## South of Goldsborough

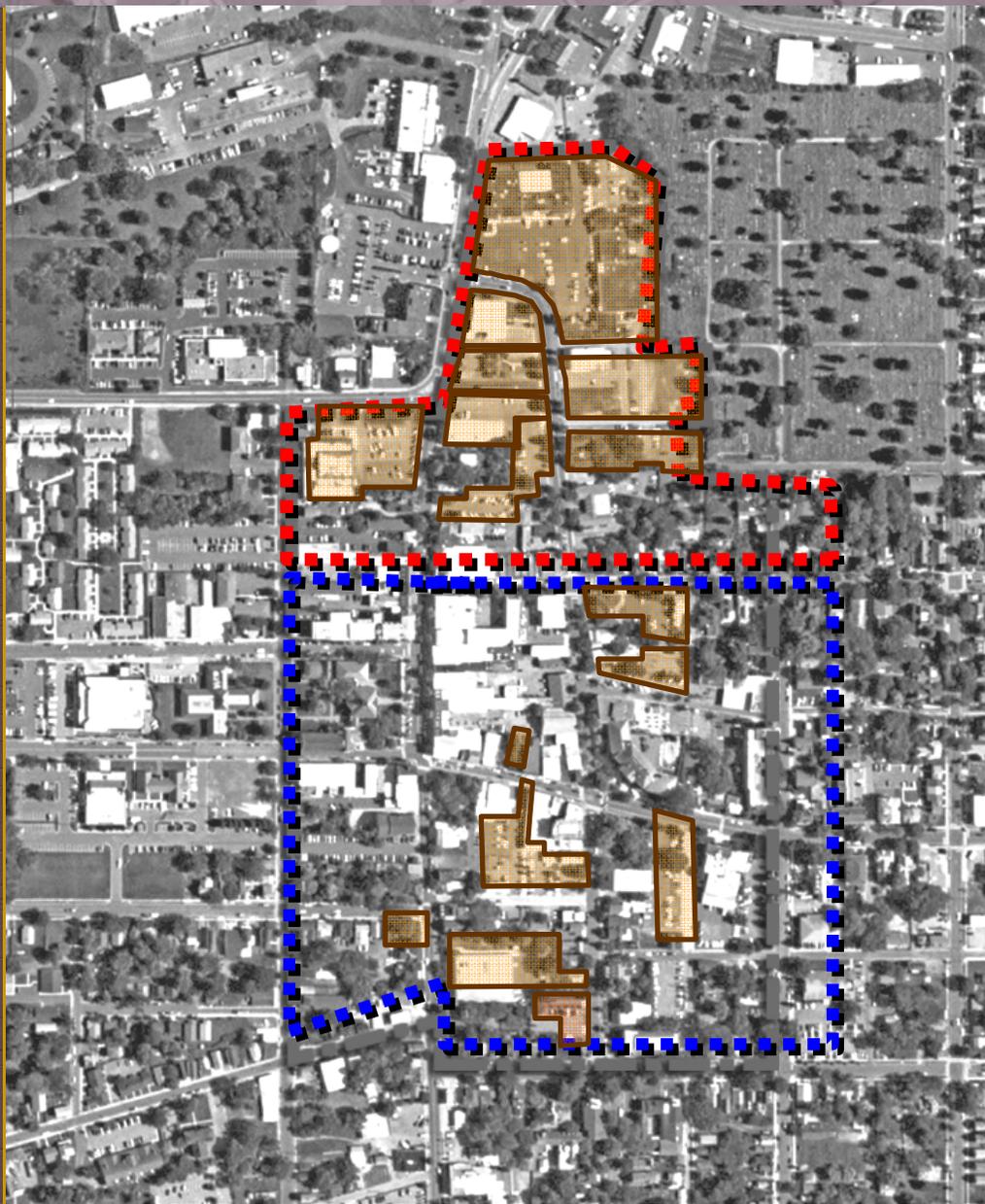
New structure to support Avalon events, retail and restaurants, and county offices west of Washington St.



# Infill Strategies: Downtown's Two Neighborhoods

North of  
Goldsborough

South of  
Goldsborough



# Infill Strategies: Downtown's Two Neighborhoods

## South of Goldsborough

- smaller parcels
- finer scale
- historic buildings,
- few gaps in the street-wall
- small-scale infill
- make what's there now work better



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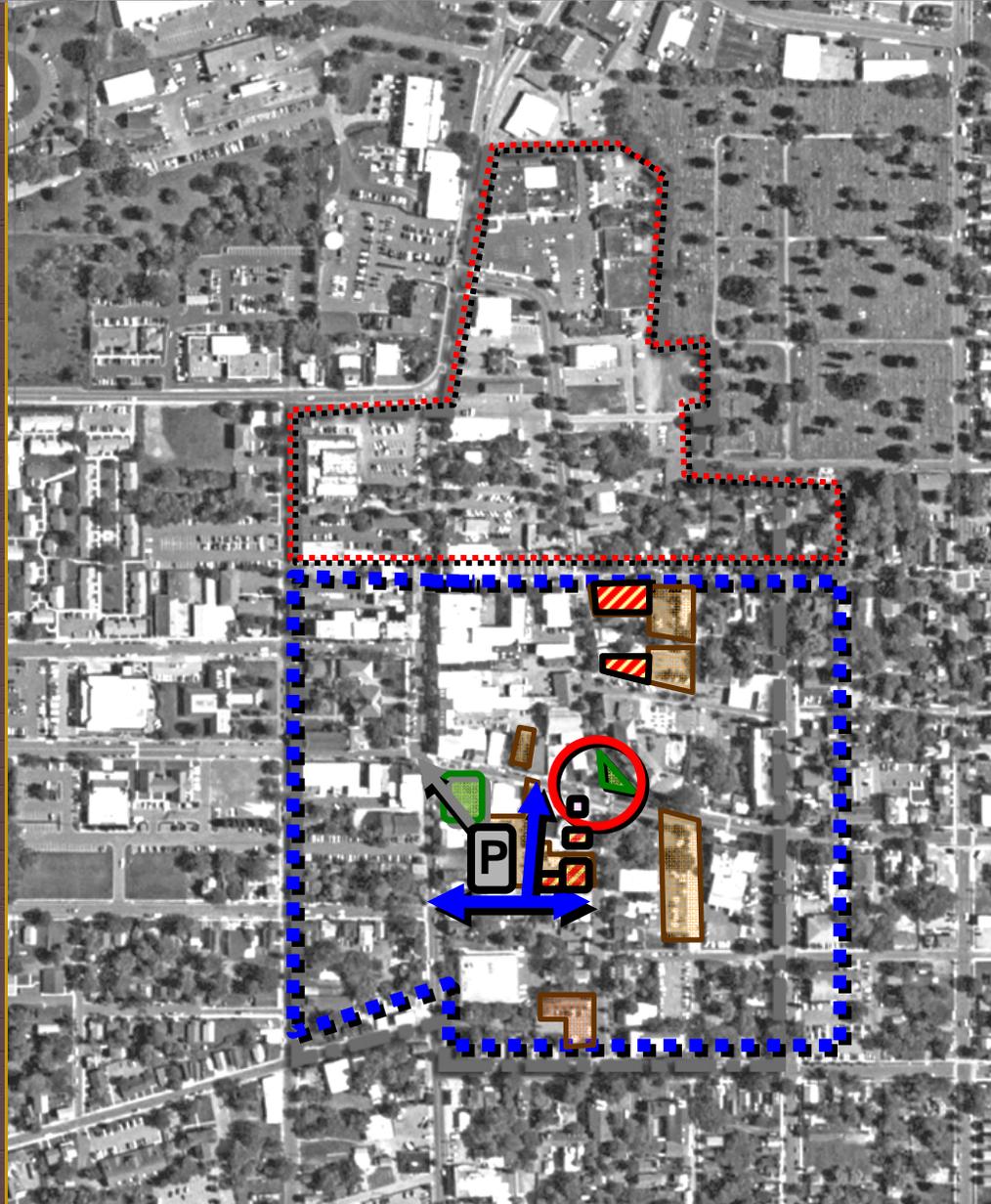
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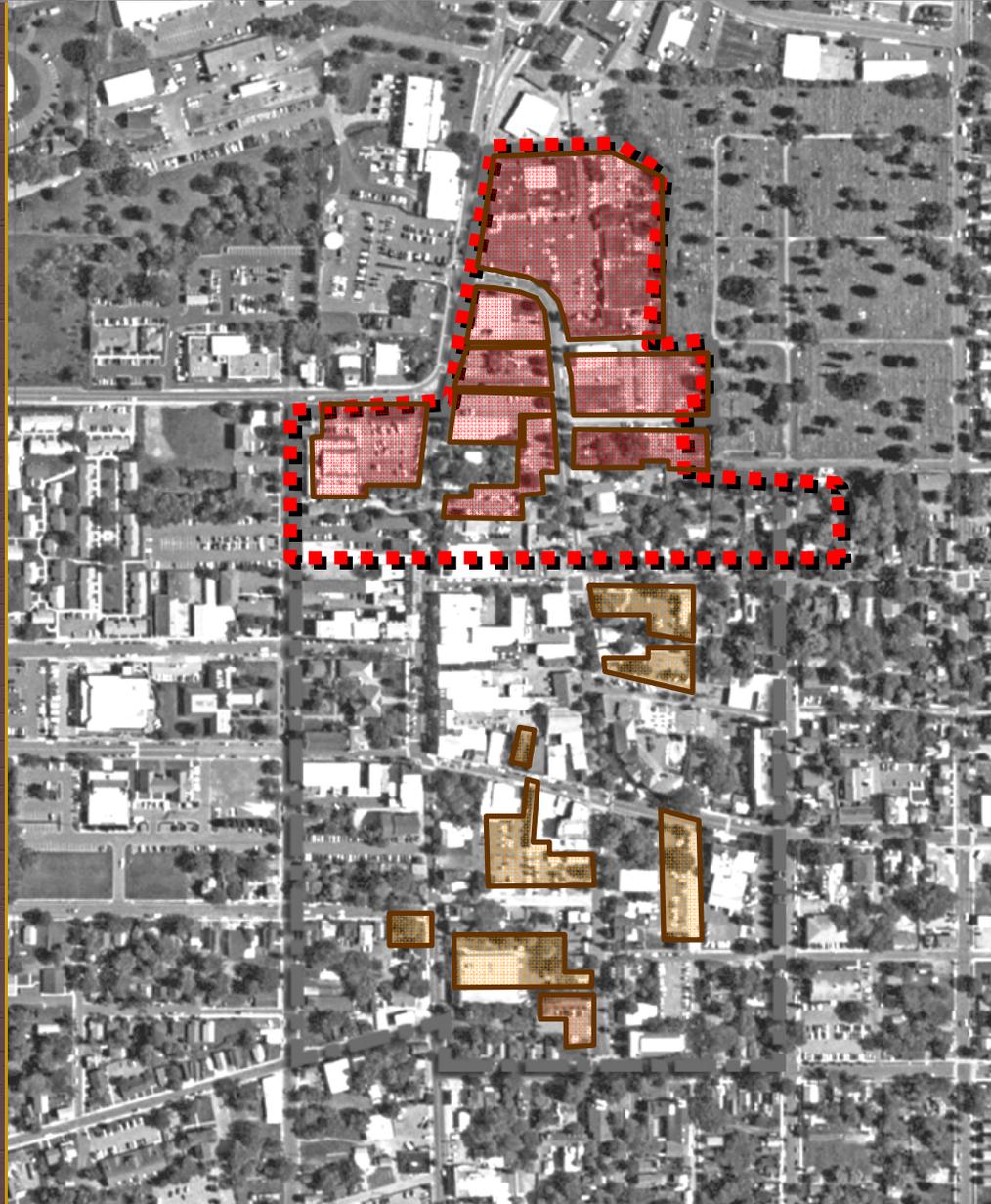
- Small-scale infill along Harrison Street
- Make what's there now work better
- Create secondary east-west connections



# Infill Strategies: Downtown's Two Neighborhoods

## North of Goldsborough

- larger parcels
- more gaps
- fewer historic buildings
- larger-scale infill development
- Mixed- and multi-use formats



# Infill Strategies: Downtown's Two Neighborhoods

## North of Goldsborough

- Larger parcels
- Fewer historic buildings
- Buildings set back from the street
- Dominated by larger surface parking lots
- more gaps along the street



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# Infill Strategies: Downtown's Two Neighborhoods

North of  
Goldsborough





# Infill Strategies: North of Goldsborough

## *Make it More Walkable*

Close up gaps in the street-wall and activate the street at ground level



# Infill Strategies

*Ensure that new development is sensitive in scale and materials with the historic fabric:*

- Moderate scale
- Vertical rhythm
- Vertical openings
- Predominantly Brick
- High Quality storefronts



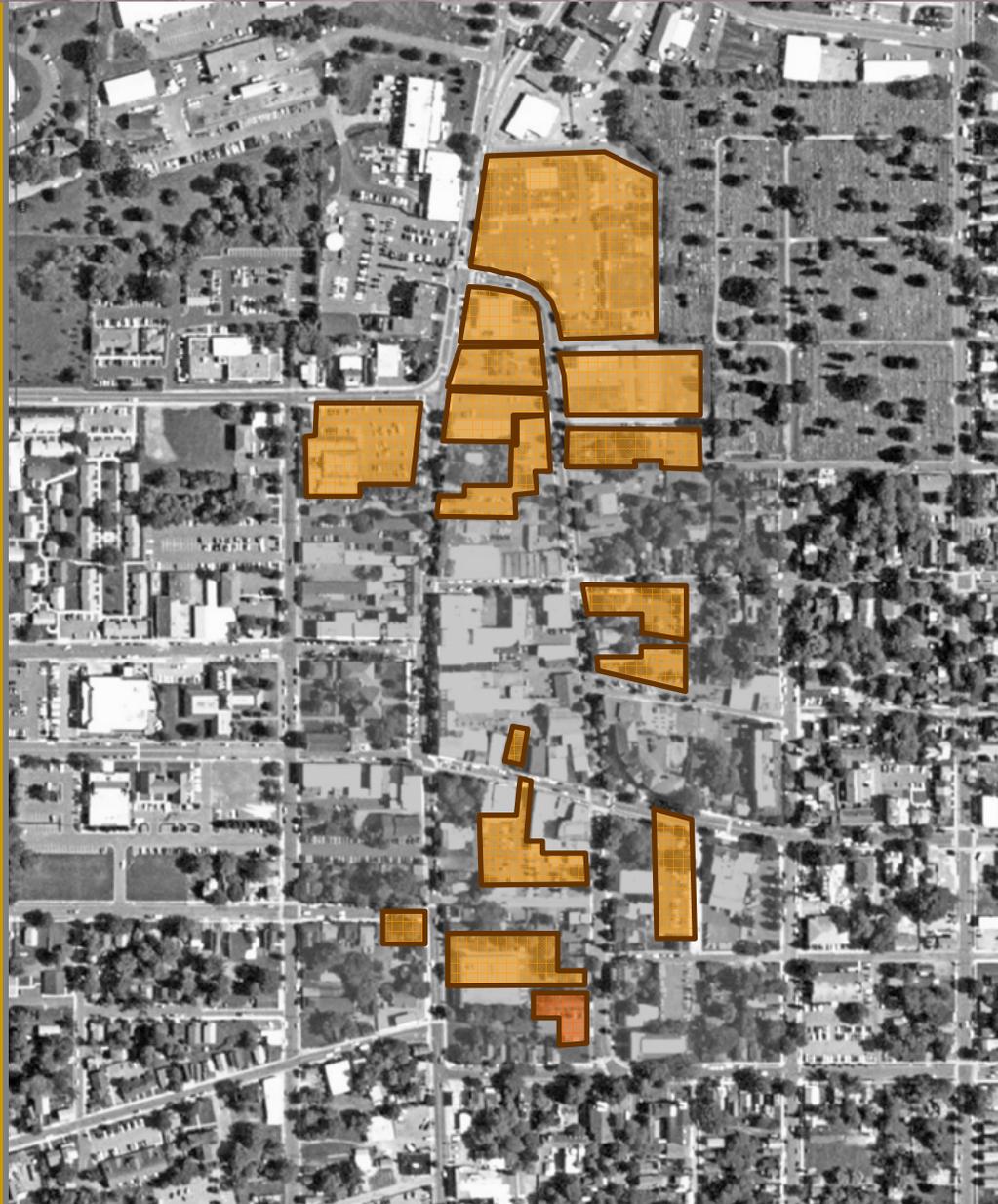
# Infill Strategies: Streets are the Glue



# Infill Strategies: The Sites

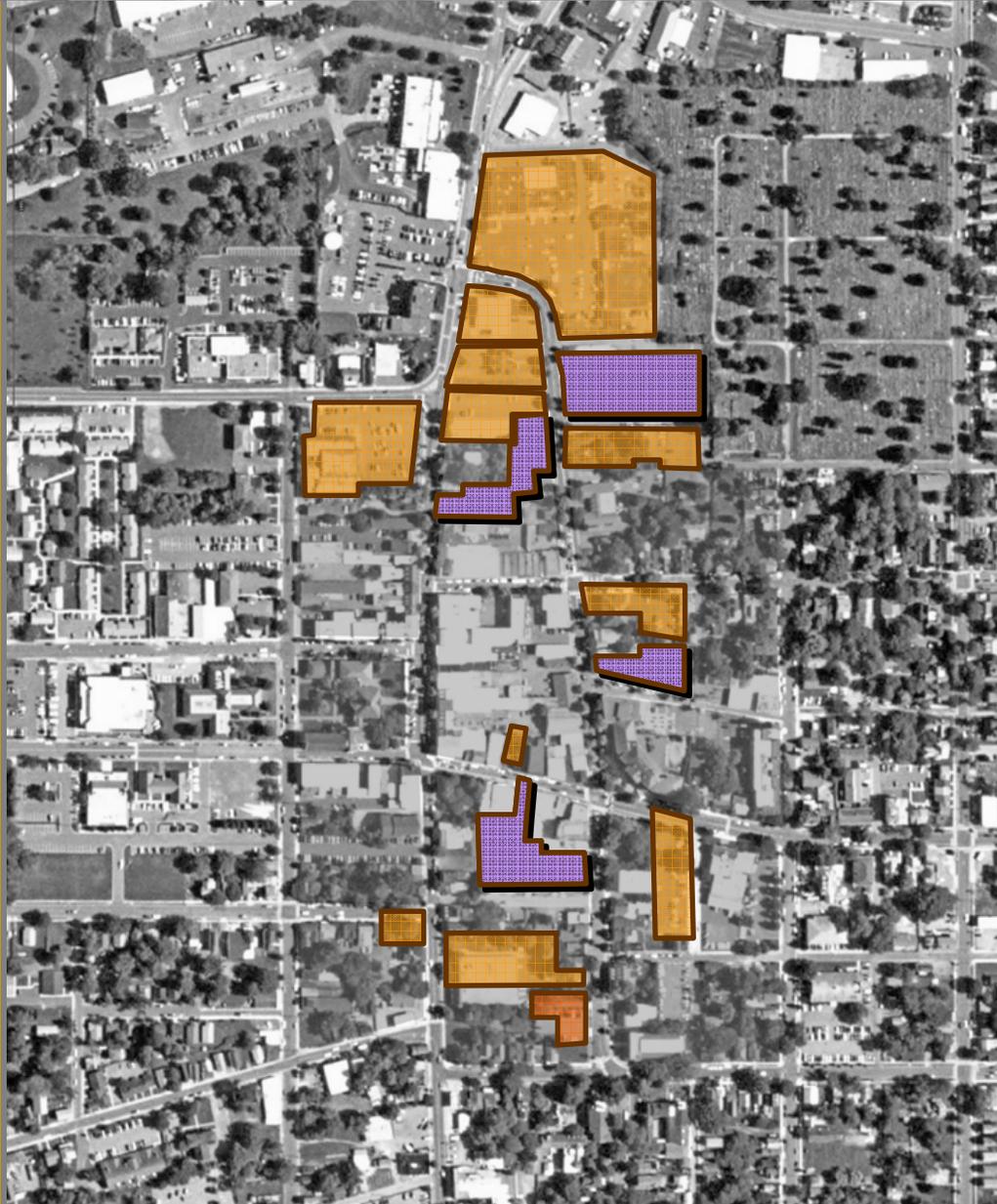
## Two types of Sites:

- Strategic infill sites
- Typical infill sites



# Infill Strategies: The Sites

- The Town or county own over 11 sites
- These sites are not fully utilized or well located for public use
- These sites are also not on the tax roles
- The Town's sites should be consolidated to create parcels that are more efficient and support strategic goals for the Downtown,
- Underutilized town-owned parcels should be used for private development



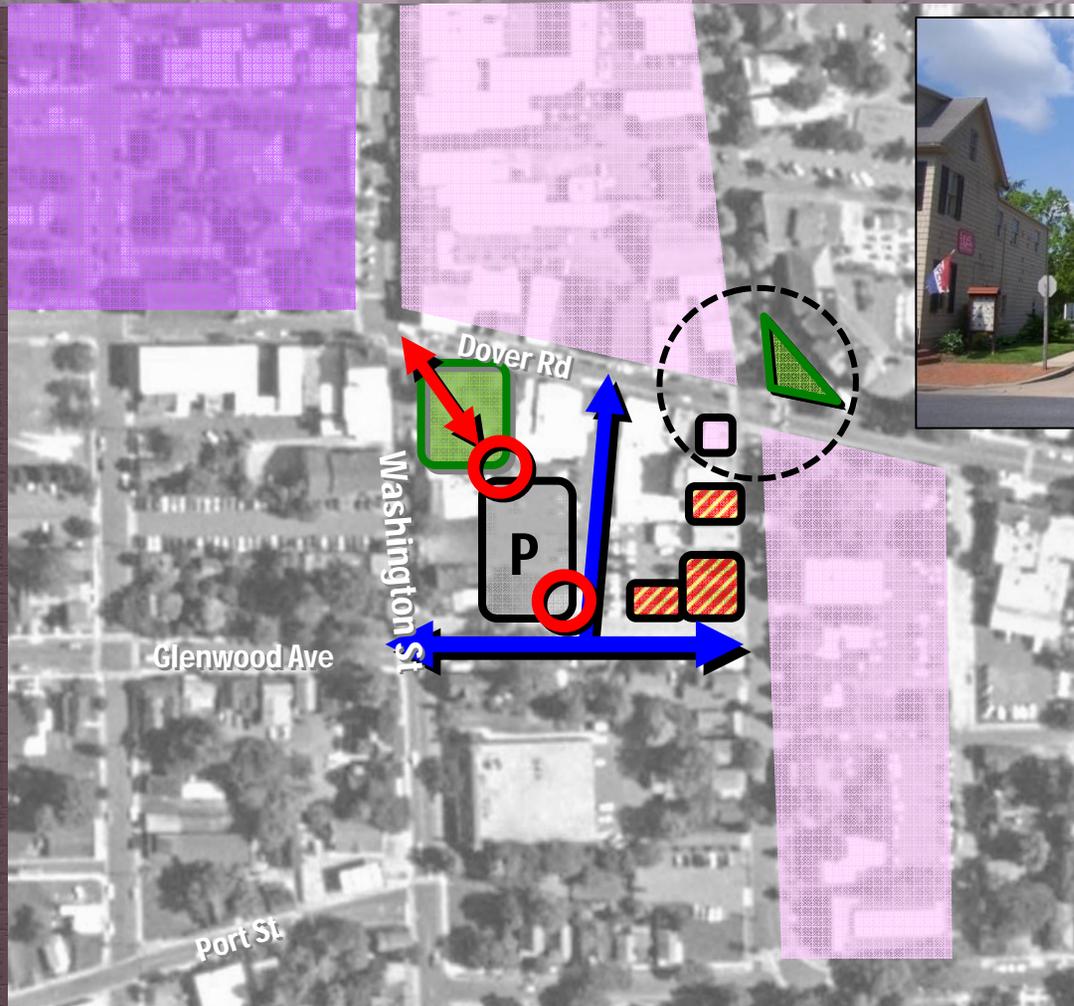
# South Side Strategic Infill Site: Glenwood Avenue

- Currently used primarily for parking
- In addition to Town parking lot the site comprises portions of other private lots primarily already used for parking
- Would require a public/private partnership



# Glenwood Avenue: Development Principles

- Potential as a mid-block public parking garage
- Parking could support the Avalon Theater, restaurants, and art galleries
- Pedestrian passage onto Dover Street via mid-block passage and to the street could activate corner park at Washington and Dover



# Glenwood Avenue: Concept Plan

- This south side of the site can be developed as a pedestrian passage which would work together with new storefronts that activate the alley

Residential—28 DU  
Retail - 9,500 SF  
Parking – 204 PS



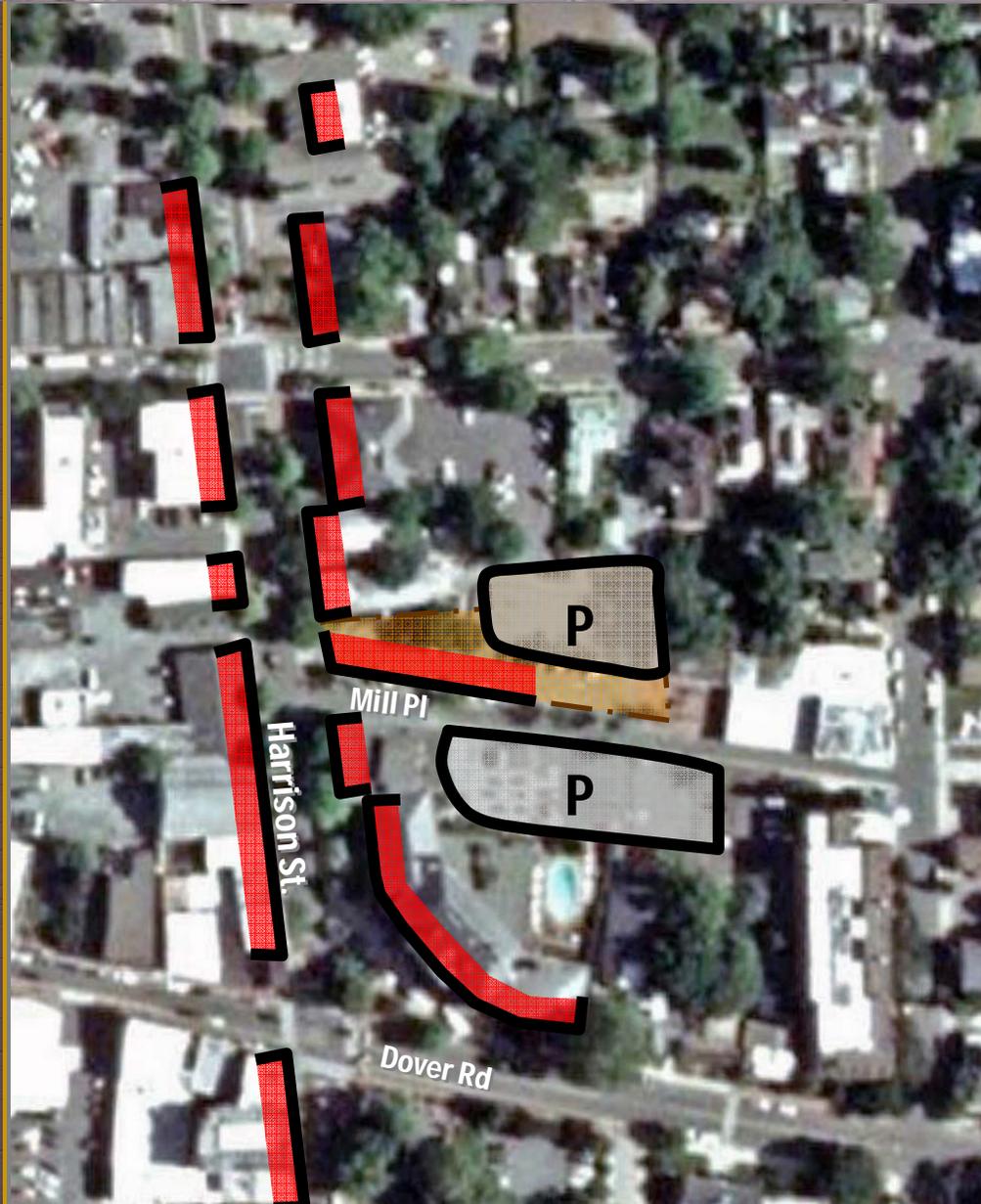
# South Side Typical Infill Site: Mill Place

- This site creates a gap between the south and north sides of Downtown
- Example of a small infill strategy applicable elsewhere in downtown



# Mill Place: Development Principles

- Potential for higher density mixed-use or residential development
- Street-level retail should focus on Harrison St. corner to fill the street wall gap
- Maximum height: 4-5 stories. Massing transition from Tidewater to lower scale of buildings toward Goldsborough



# Mill Place: Concept Plan

Parking: on the east side of the site

Residential—12 DU  
Retail—6,000 SF  
Parking—26 PS



# North Side Strategic Infill Site: Safeway

- Represents an opportunity to keep a grocery store (a key downtown amenity) while introducing more intense development to complement the site's key location at one of Downtown's main gateways
- Can work together with the underutilized lot across West Street



# Safeway: Development Principles

Downtown scale and denser development would allow for continued grocery use but also create new anchor leveraging the site's key location



# Safeway: Concept Plan

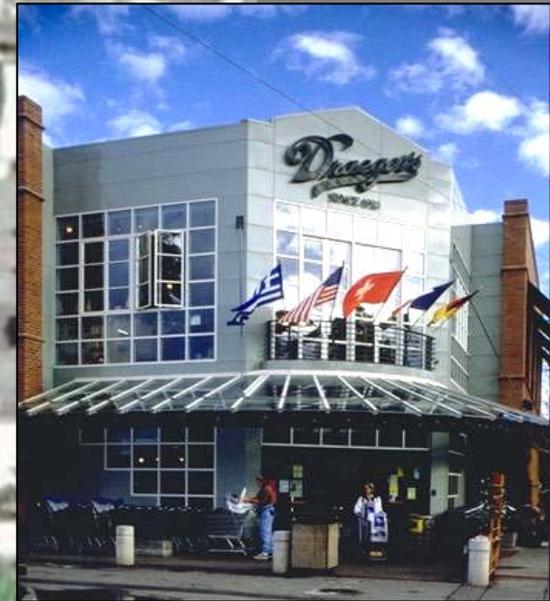
- Street-level retail with office above
- Grocery can be setback from Washington to allow for smaller in-line retail along Washington Street
- Emphasize the corner to create a gateway from the north and south
- Maximum height should be three levels above retail

Residential—12 DU

Retail—29,500 SF

Office—36,000

Parking—160 PS



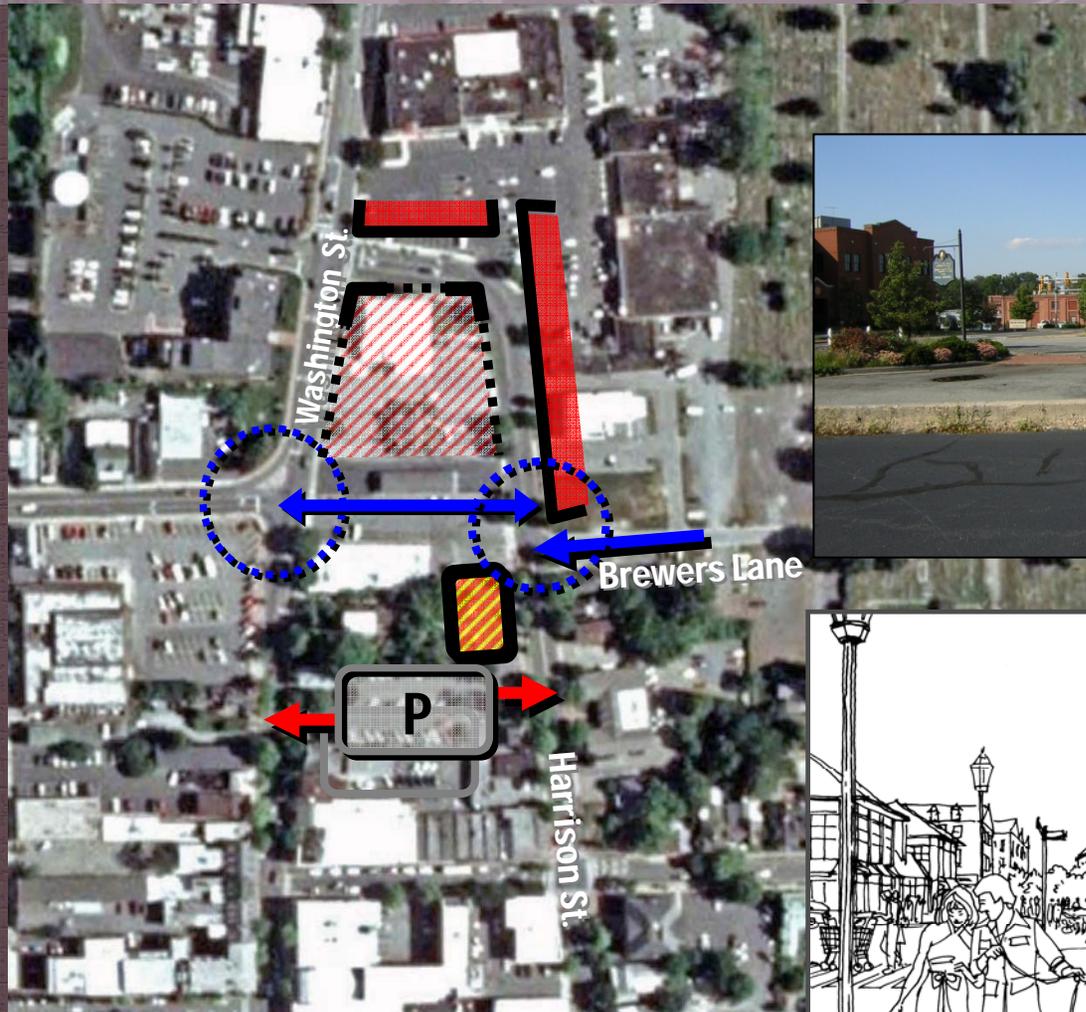
# North Side Strategic Infill Site: Harrison/Washington

A key site in the future direction of north side of Downtown



# Harrison/Washington: Development Principles

- Reinforce the street wall and pedestrian experience continuity with street-level retail
- Make the Bay Street connection with Brewer's Lane work with the open space network
- Open space could serve as a civic anchor host to the farmer's market, etc.

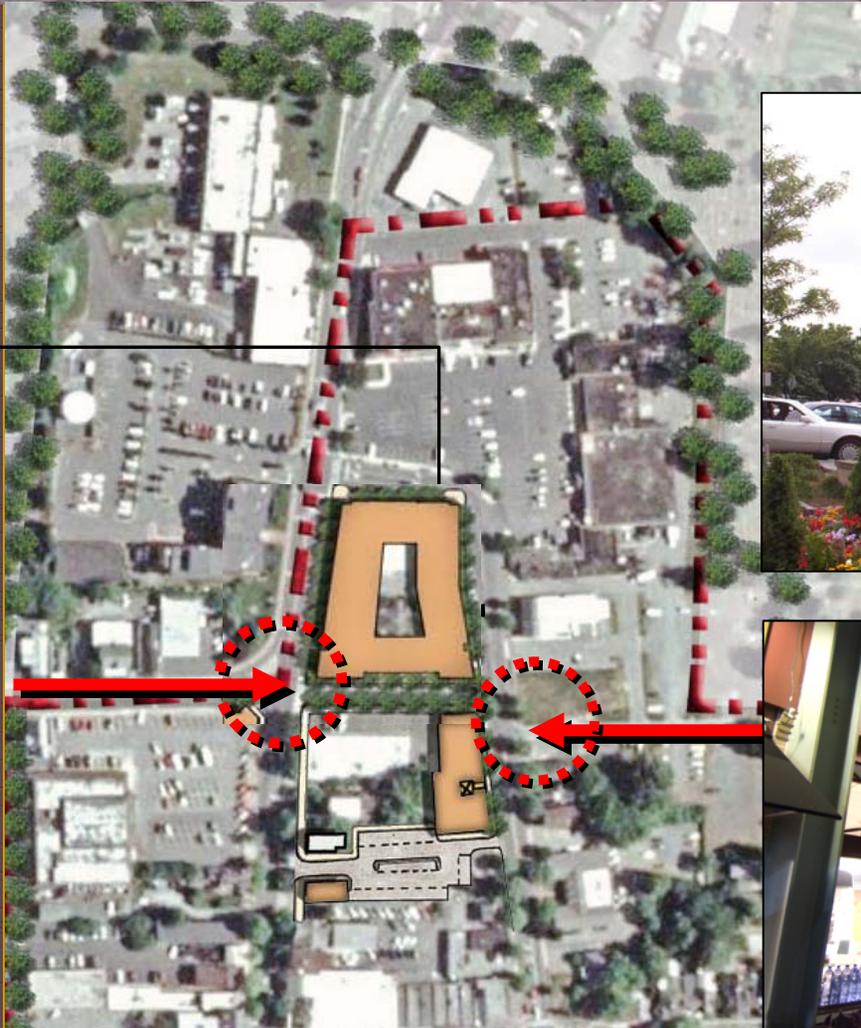


# Harrison/Washington: Concept Plan

Maximum height should be two-to three levels above retail

Potential Farmers Market site

- Retail—55,400 SF
- Office—7,600 SF
- Parking—80 PS



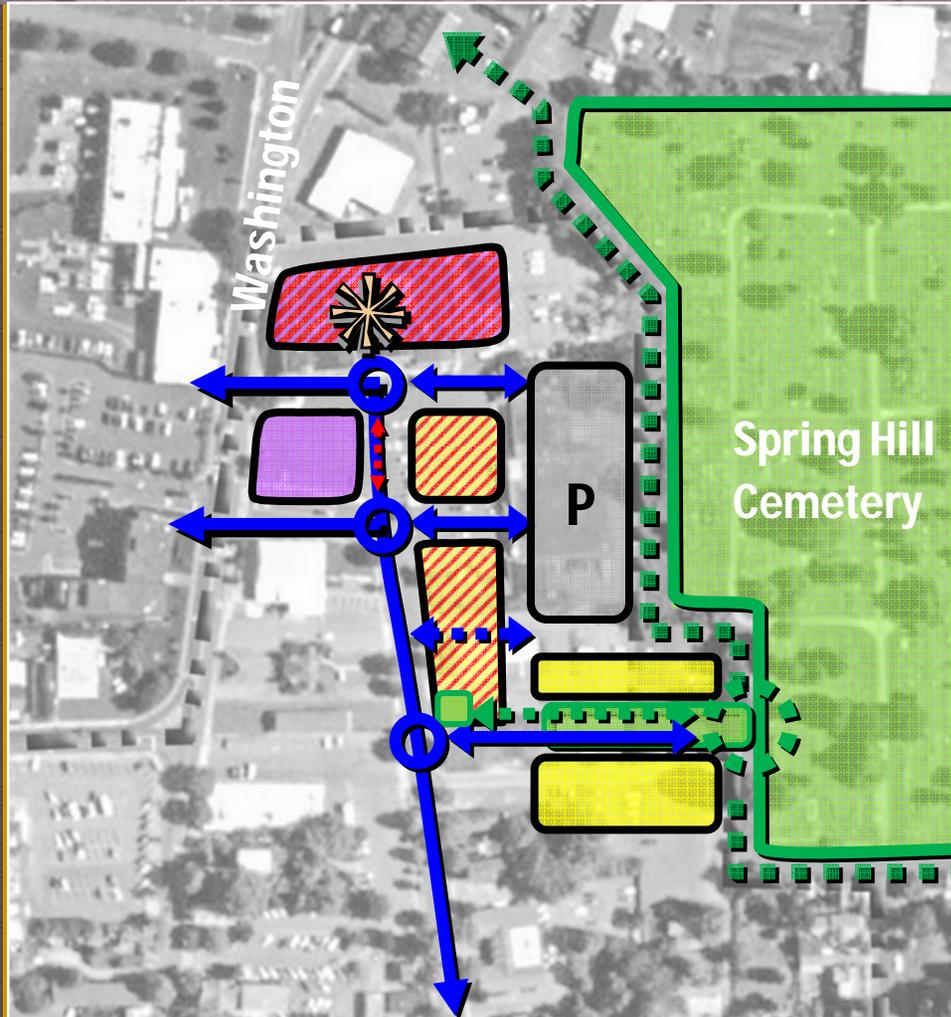
# North Side Strategic Infill Site: Talbot Town/Brewers Lane

- Includes Talbot Town and the publicly owned parcels flanking Brewer's Lane
- Should be the northern anchor to Washington St. for pedestrian traffic but is too set back from Harrison Street retailers
- Surface lot splits Harrison St. from Washington St.
- Retail offerings are not compelling
- Deep, with little frontage



# Talbot Town/Brewers Lane : Development Principles

- Create critical mass
- Extend Harrison Street into the site and connect to Washington Street
- Link Harrison Street to cemetery and green street system
- Reinforce street wall and activate pedestrian experience with street-level retail
- Multi-purpose parking deck screened from Harrison Street
- Small scale residential development flanking Brewer's Lane



# Talbot Town/Brewers Lane

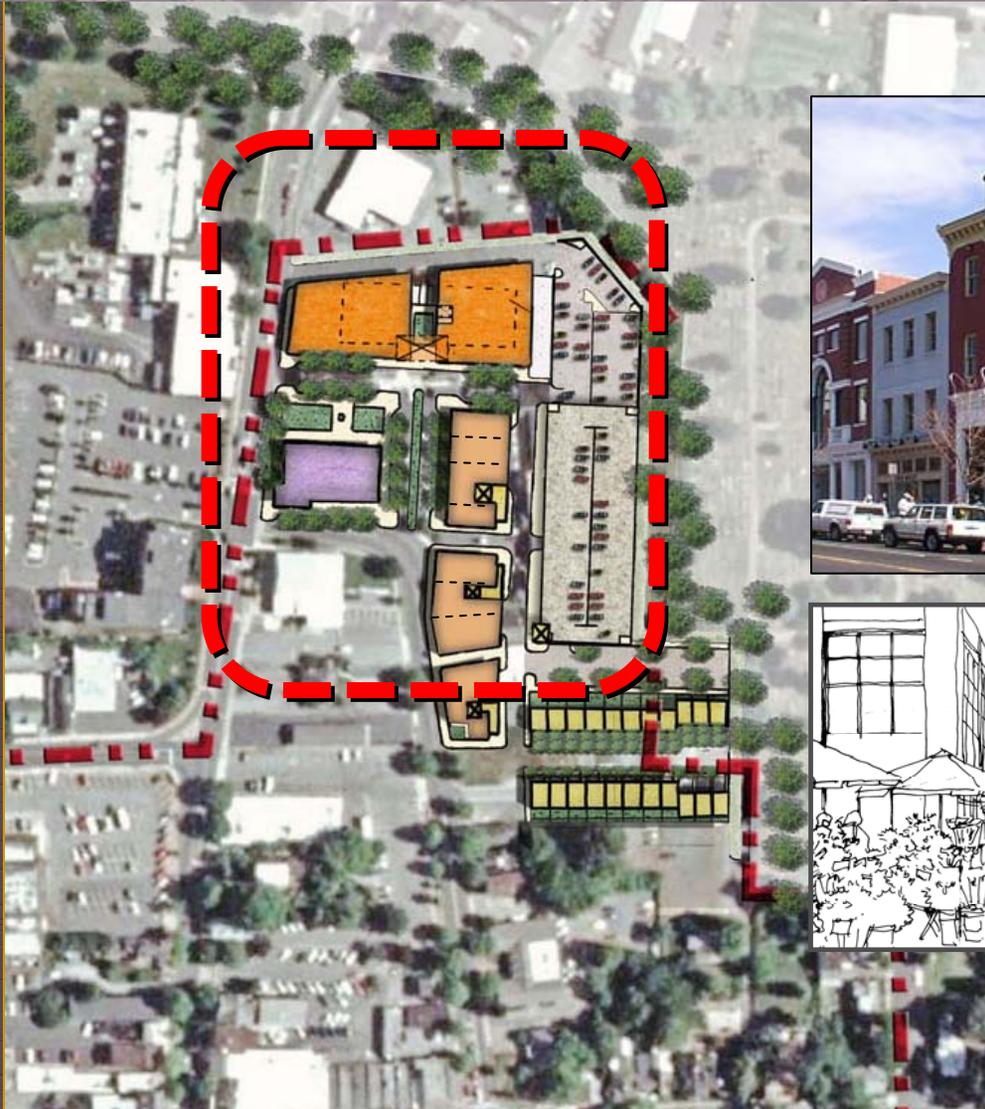
**Brewers Lane:**  
an intimate  
new  
residential  
address

- Residential-60 DU
- Retail-62,200 SF
- Office-75,000 SF
- Public, institutional, or other anchor tenant-13,500 SF
- Parking: 320 PS



# Talbot Town/Brewers Lane

- Mixed-use
- Three- to four levels
- Buildings built up to the street
- Active ground level uses for a better pedestrian experience
- Break-up into separate buildings to break up the scale
- Residential-60 DU
- Retail-62,200 SF
- Office-75,000 SF
- Public, institutional, or other anchor tenant-13,500 SF
- Parking-320 PS



# Development Program Summary

SITE	RESIDENTIAL (DU)	RETAIL (SQ FT)	OFFICE (SQ FT)	PARKING (PS)	INSTITU TIONAL (SQ FT)	TOTAL
T. Town/Brewers Ln	60	62,200	75,000	320	13,500	158,000
Wash/Harrison	12	55,400	46,800	80	0	102,200
Safeway	12	29,500	36,000	160	0	65,500
Mill Street	12	6,000	0	26	0	6,000
Glenwood Street	28	9,500	0	204	0	9,500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>162,600</b>	<b>157,800</b>	<b>790</b>	<b>13,500</b>	<b>344,700</b>

# Traffic Perspective

- New development will not overwhelm downtown traffic
- Represents new traffic but also redistributed traffic
- Should result in shorter trips, more walking

# Traffic Perspective

## Reasonable estimates tally

- Less than 50 residential auto trips in any given hour
- Up to about 300 new retail auto trips on Saturday peak hours
- Up to about 150 office auto trips in peak morning and evening hours

# Parking Perspective

- Currently about 1,500 plus spaces in downtown in municipal, private, street spaces.
- This is about 3 per 1,000 square feet, more than is needed based on typical downtown and smart growth standards.
- Net new growth of about 250,000 sf would conservatively add demand for about 500 to 625 spaces
- Net growth in parking spaces would be between 400 and 500 spaces
- New capacity added to existing spaces would serve existing and future needs

# Infrastructure Needs

- No immediate concerns about stormwater runoff or high groundwater
- Design for low-lying parcels with relatively shallow ground water
- Account for existing utilities and possibly re-routing them
- Use opportunities to implement smart site practices

# Next Steps

- AKRF Team
  - Refine concepts
  - Develop design guidelines
  - Financial pro forma assessment
  - Prepare summary report
- Town of Easton
  - Prepare for implementation
  - Adopt and enforce guidelines
  - Be pro-active in dealing with new development interests

# Questions & Answers

# Smart Site Practices\*

- Assess site for prior environmental contamination and identify restoration opportunities
- Daylight and restore Tanyard Brook, incorporate stream into a greenway
- Minimize new impervious surfaces
- Utilize low impact stormwater management practices:
  - Encourage re-vegetation using native plant species, landscaped buffer
  - Reduce rooftop runoff by using “green roofs,” rain gardens, and rain barrels
  - Design open spaces to reduce and treat stormwater runoff.
  - Take advantage of downtown's compact form and non-automotive transportation options

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*\*Source: Smart Site Practices for Redevelopment and Infill Projects, October 2001, Center for Watershed Protection*

