

CONCORD THOREAU DEPOT PLAN



Public Forum 2
June 23, 2020



Agenda

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Presentation

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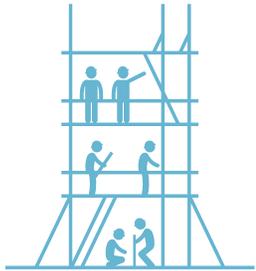
Community

Next Steps

Project Summary | Goals



Develop a **vision** for the Thoreau Depot area



Create the **framework** (i.e., zoning) to help implement the vision



Identify additional **recommendations** (e.g., connectivity improvements) to help implement the vision

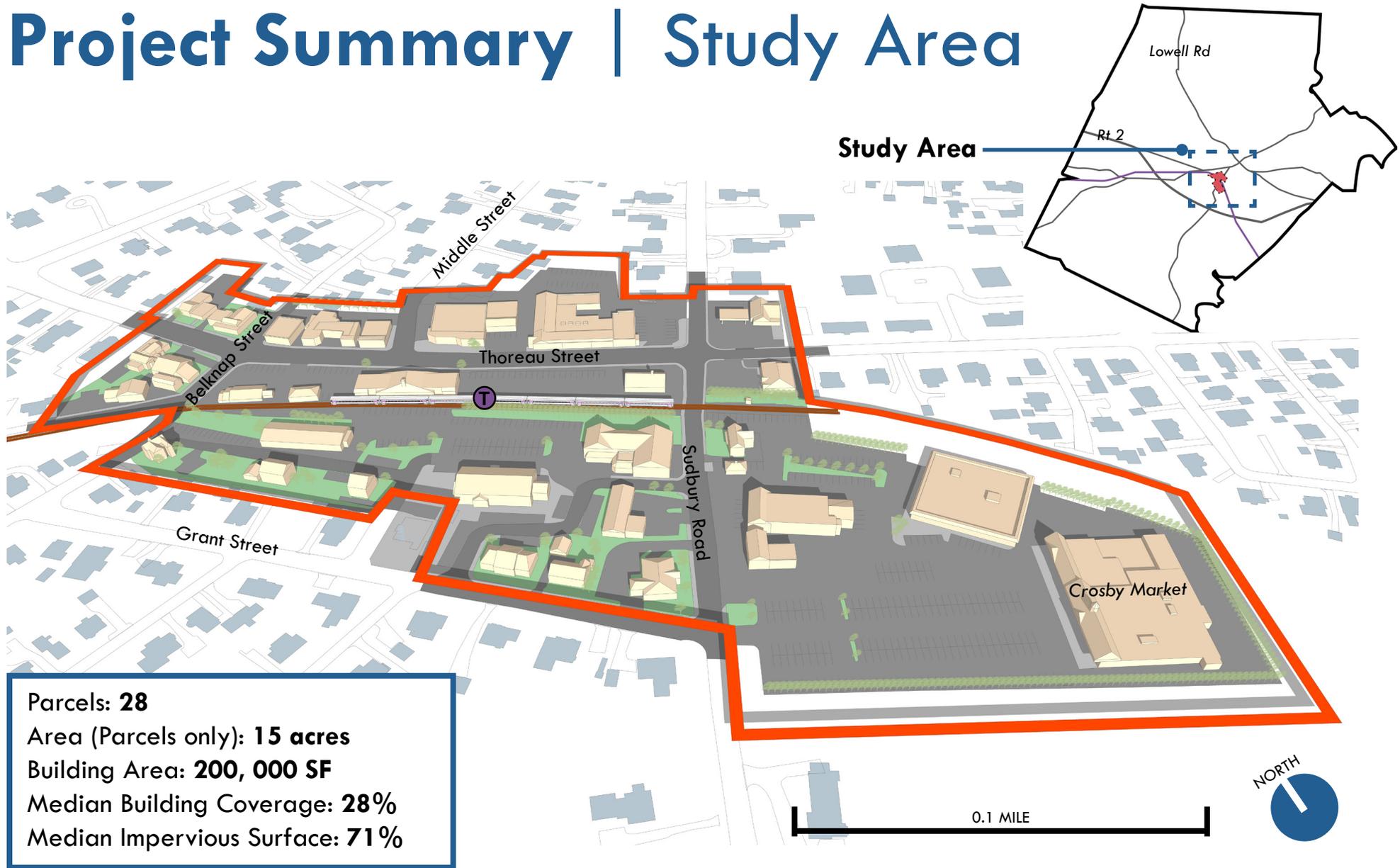
Project Summary | Link to Master Plan

The master plan proposed a number of recommendations, which have led directly to the Concord Thoreau Depot Plan. Selected goals include:

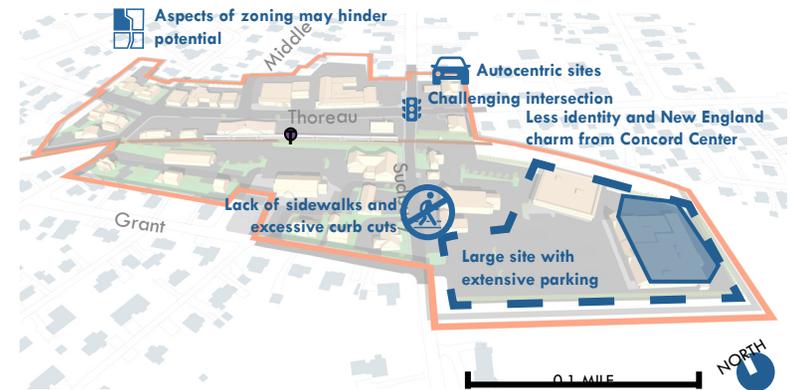
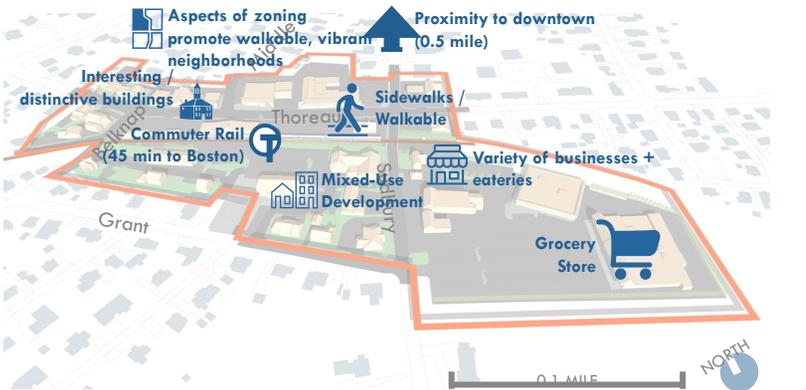
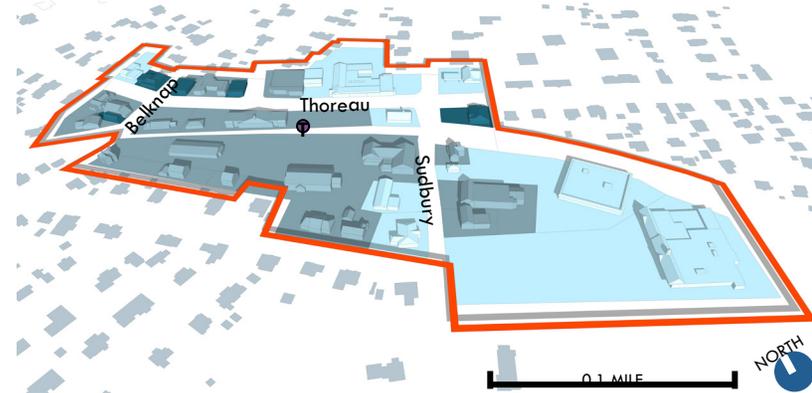
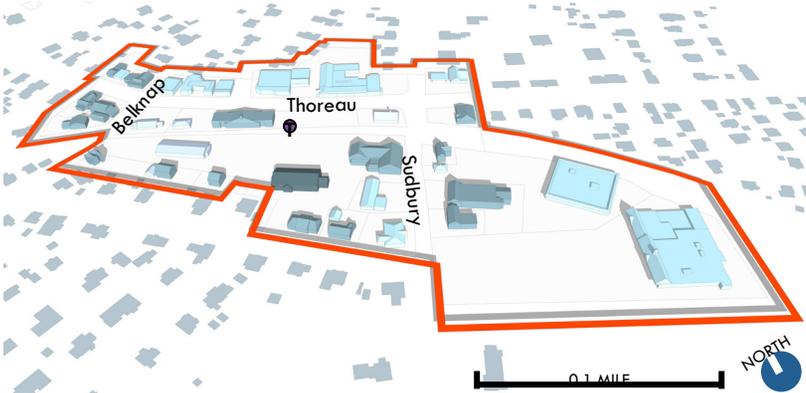
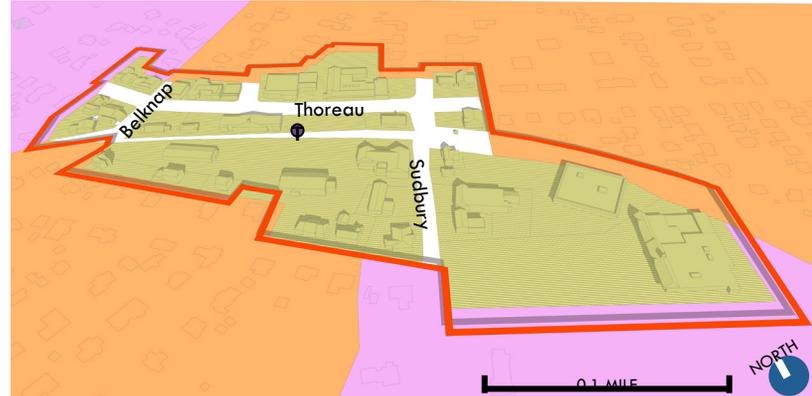
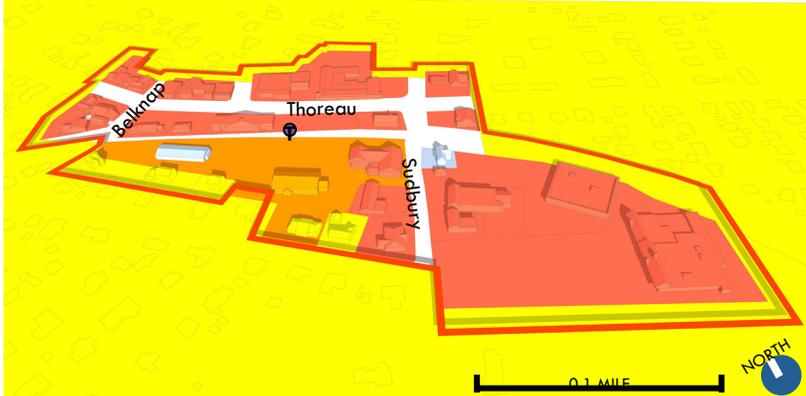
- Renew and improve Concord's village centers -- facilitate mixed-use development as appropriate; improve public spaces and connectivity
- Support strong commercial business success
- Create housing for a range of needs and income levels
- Preserve Concord's New England character



Project Summary | Study Area



Project Summary | Existing Conditions



What We Heard | Open House



What We Heard | Visual Preference



- Mixed-Use
- Traditional architectural form and elements
- Peaked roof and shed dormers
- Front setback used for seating
- Street trees, outdoor seating, well-designed signage and lights, brick sidewalk



- Mixed-Use
- Traditional architecture with dormers
- Brick, heavily landscaped sidewalks
- Zero foot front setback



- Commercial
- Mansard roof
- Landscaped setback, outdoor seating, well-design signage
- Landscaped front setback

Buildings or building types the community would like to retain



- Commercial
- Traditional architecture, with Mansard roof and dormers
- Large scale that has both vertical and horizontal modulation
- Zero foot front setback



- Multi-family residential
- Traditional architectural elements
- Large scale building appears likely set back from street
- Large percentage of open space



- Single family attached (i.e., townhomes)
- Traditional style homes with varying rooflines and modulation



What We Heard | Other Aspects

- More places to eat + drink
- More “daily needs” (e.g., daycare)
- Wayfinding (i.e., how to get to Concord Center)
- Outdoor Seating
- Open Spaces
- Sidewalks, crosswalks
- “Traffic calming”
- Intersection safety

Draft Vision | Vision Statement

The Thoreau Depot neighborhood is a charming village center, an asset for Concord's residents, and an inviting gateway for visitors. It's an economically vibrant neighborhood with a diversity of businesses, a place to enjoy a cup of coffee, choose among a variety of restaurants, purchase a fresh loaf bread at the local bakery or purchase the week's groceries. New, thoughtfully-designed buildings are well-integrated into the fabric of the neighborhood, providing a diversity of housing options, where empty nesters can down-size into smaller homes and young adults can easily take the train to Boston. The neighborhood is affordable across a range of incomes.

The sidewalks are wide and comfortable, lined with shade trees and landscaping. Visitors arriving by train can easily and safely walk to Concord's historic downtown. Students walk by on their way to school, residents from other Concord neighborhoods ride their bike to the Depot, and cars move smoothly through orderly intersections and neighborhood streets.

Thoreau Depot is a place to be proud of.

Draft Vision | Principles

The vision statement is supported by a series of principles. These principles provide greater detail for how the vision will be achieved in the future.

High-quality design honors Concord's history: Regulations should ensure that new development, as well as wayfinding, signage, and lighting, contributes to creating a walkable neighborhood with context-sensitive development. Setbacks and standards should help define the public realm and create an engaging streetscape for pedestrians.

Active, commercial uses: Commercial spaces are sized to attract small businesses, and regulations encourage uses that service local residents, such as cafes, bakeries, and general stores.

Pedestrian-focused neighborhood: New development is oriented towards pedestrians—rather than cars—making it easy for new residents to walk to the train. Safe walk-ways connect the Depot to all streets and key neighborhood destinations, and bike parking is secure and convenient. Parking is available for commuters and other users and efficiently located and designed to limit large expanses of asphalt and to encourage a walkable neighborhood and vibrant economy.

Housing options and affordability: As the demographics change, rising demand for smaller units in walkable areas is met with new development in the neighborhood. Inclusionary zoning can ensure that units are affordable to a range of households.

Walkable: Continuous sidewalks that line all streets and connect the Depot to key destinations should be well-maintained. Landscaping and street tree shade canopy create a comfortable environment for pedestrians.

Traffic calming: Streets and intersections should be designed to be safe for all users. Through-traffic should be limited on residential streets.

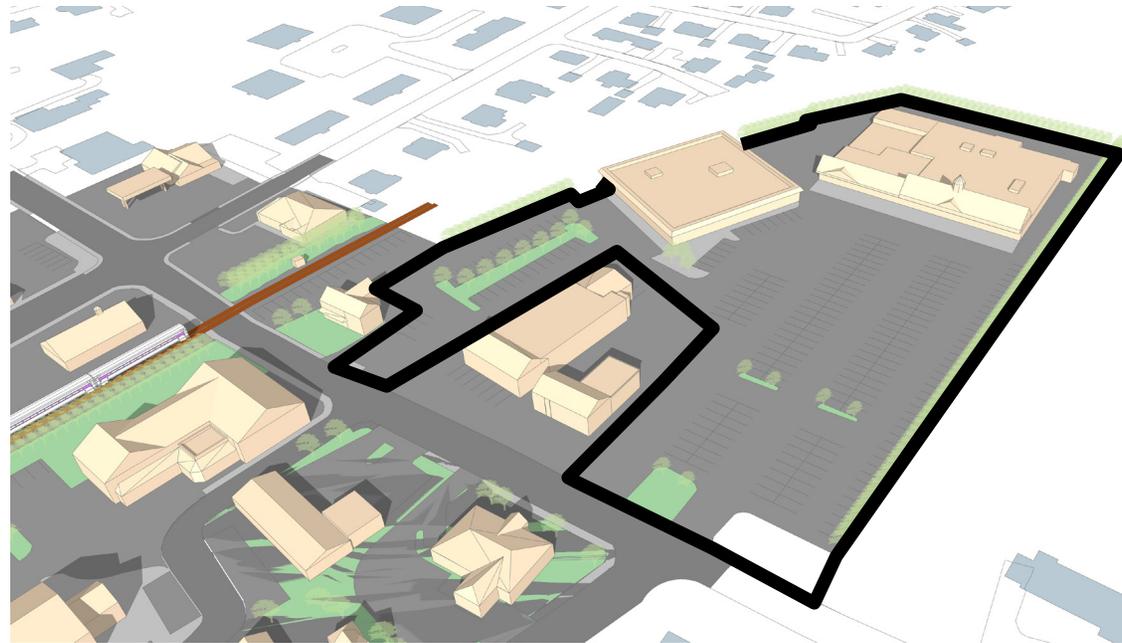
Gathering spaces: Public benches and outdoor seating at cafes and restaurants, as well as pocket parks, courtyards, or other areas can provide gathering spaces for residents and visitors. Programming and events can help make these spaces more vibrant and well-used.

Draft Vision | Hypothetical Example

Note:

This is an example of how a future development could occur that helps advance the vision and achieve the community's goals for the area. **It is hypothetical and not a development proposal.**

Ultimately, it is up to landowners to choose whether to redevelop their properties within the framework of the regulations.



Existing conditions (black line indicates approximate parcel boundaries of the site.)

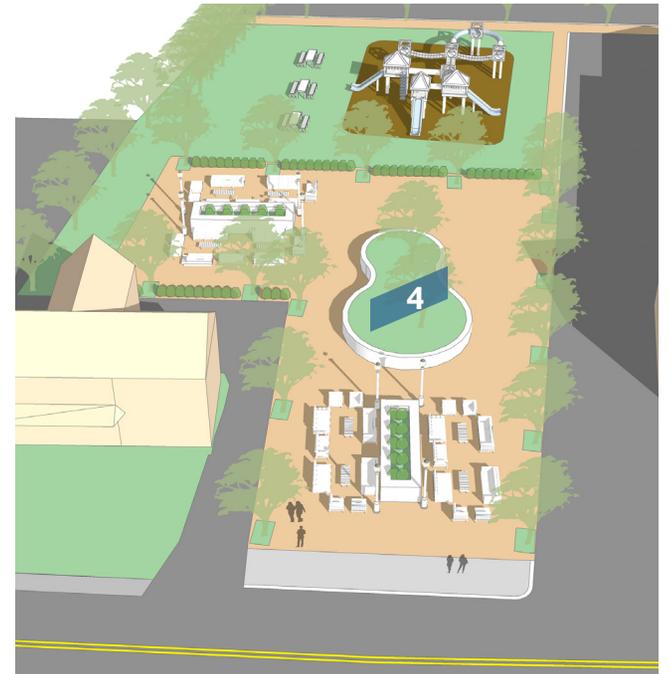


Bird's eye view of hypothetical example (white buildings indicate new buildings).

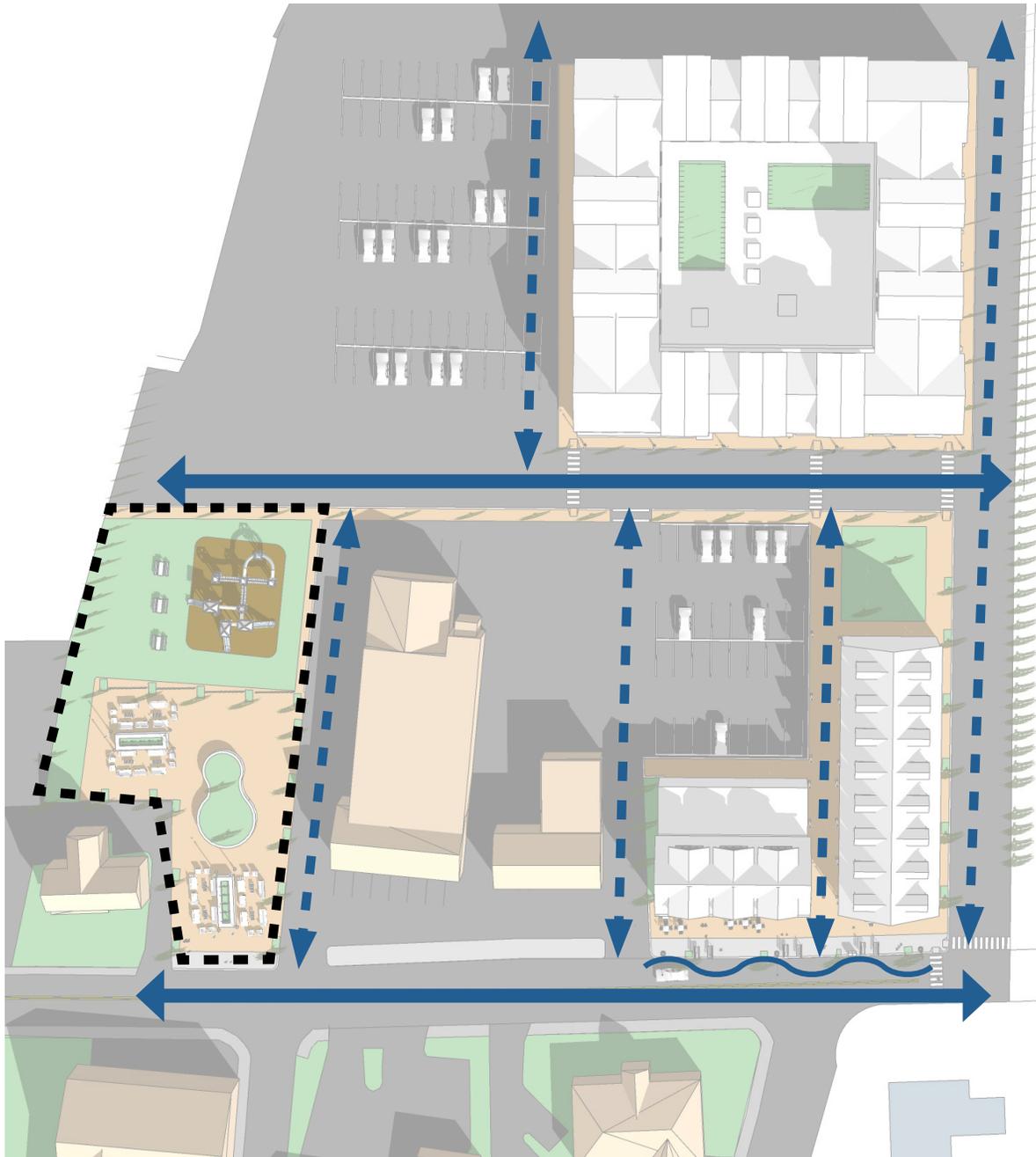
Draft Vision | Hypothetical Example



- 1 Building 1**
Commercial area (ground floor): 4,440 SF
Residential units: 7
- 2 Building 2**
Commercial area (ground floor): 5,800 SF
Residential units: 10
- 3 Building 3**
Commercial area (ground floor): 31,600 SF
Residential units: 46
- 4 Open Space**
15% of total (including seating and pathways on site)



Draft Vision | Hypothetical Example



Block structure

The buildings are organized to help develop a walkable block structure through:

- Sidewalks and vehicular circulation patterns
- Placement of buildings along street edge
- Buildings and open space oriented toward Sudbury Street
- Buildings within the development are connected through strong pedestrian connections

Open Space

The community has desired more outdoor space, including seating, playgrounds, and gathering space. Zoning can require a percentage of minimum percentage of usable open space for certain developments.

This example provides a large portion of the open space as easily accessible to the public (from Sudbury Road), helping to fill in a “gap” in the built environment and meeting a key community need.

Additional open space includes the plaza area/ seating along Sudbury Road and smaller area in the rear of building 2.

Draft Vision | Hypothetical Example



Sidewalks

Sidewalks along the road should be wide, comfortable and generally divided into three areas:

- 1** Furnishing zone
Adjacent to the curb with seating, trees, lighting, trash receptacles, etc.
- 2** Walking zone
An area free from clutter and hazards, wide enough for at least 2-3 people to walk abreast
- 3** Active zone
An area with seating and other elements to activate the space and add vibrancy to the streetscape.

Front setback

Along Sudbury Road, a modest front setback provides a buffer from the roadway. Critically, this space should be used primarily for seating, as well as landscaping. The front setback area should not be used for parking, loading, or other uses that do not contribute the vibrancy of the public realm.

These modest front setbacks also respect the context of existing buildings along Sudbury Road in the study area.

In other parts of the study area, e.g., along Thoreau Street, 0' front setbacks are appropriate (given the context) and often necessary (given the small parcel size).

Draft Vision | Hypothetical Example



Building and site planning design elements

A number of elements work together to contribute positively to the public realm and help achieve the community's goals and vision.

1

Roof lines

Community preference indicated a desire for pitched roofs, such as front and side gable roofs. This is especially important for buildings along the frontage, which are easily visible to the public

2

Building components

Building components such as dormers, shed dormers, etc. were present in the buildings chosen through the visual preference station. They add visual interest to buildings while also increasing the amount of usable indoor space.

3

Vertical modulation

Large buildings should be articulated with pilasters, change in materials, cornices, etc. approximately every 40 feet. This reduces the perception of a building's bulk and mass and adds visual interest.

4

Glazing

Buildings along the frontage should have a high percentage of glazing (windows) with transparent glass to activate the street edge. Commercial buildings, especially should have a high percentage (60%).

5

Limit building length

Even when modulated, extremely long buildings along the frontage are not appropriate to the context. In this example building lengths are less than 100' along Sudbury Road, separated by a walkway to the rear building.

Draft Vision | Hypothetical Example



Integrating existing uses into new typology

Crosby's Marketplace is considered a major asset to the neighborhood. Increasingly, grocery stores are being developed as part of mixed-use projects. In this example, the floor plate of the ground floor is similar to the existing building.

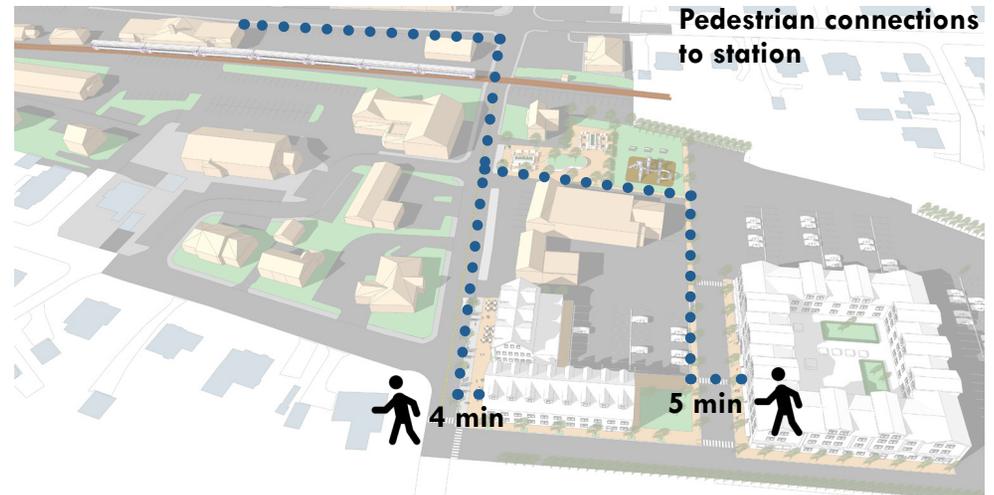
Above the grocery store are 2.5 stories of residences. Buildings sited in the rear of a deep parcel can likely be larger than along Sudbury Road without having any detrimental effects on neighborhood context.

As with buildings along the frontage, buildings in the rear should be articulated and have a high percentage of groundfloor glazing.

Crosswalks and sidewalks should provide a seamless and safe connection into the neighborhood.

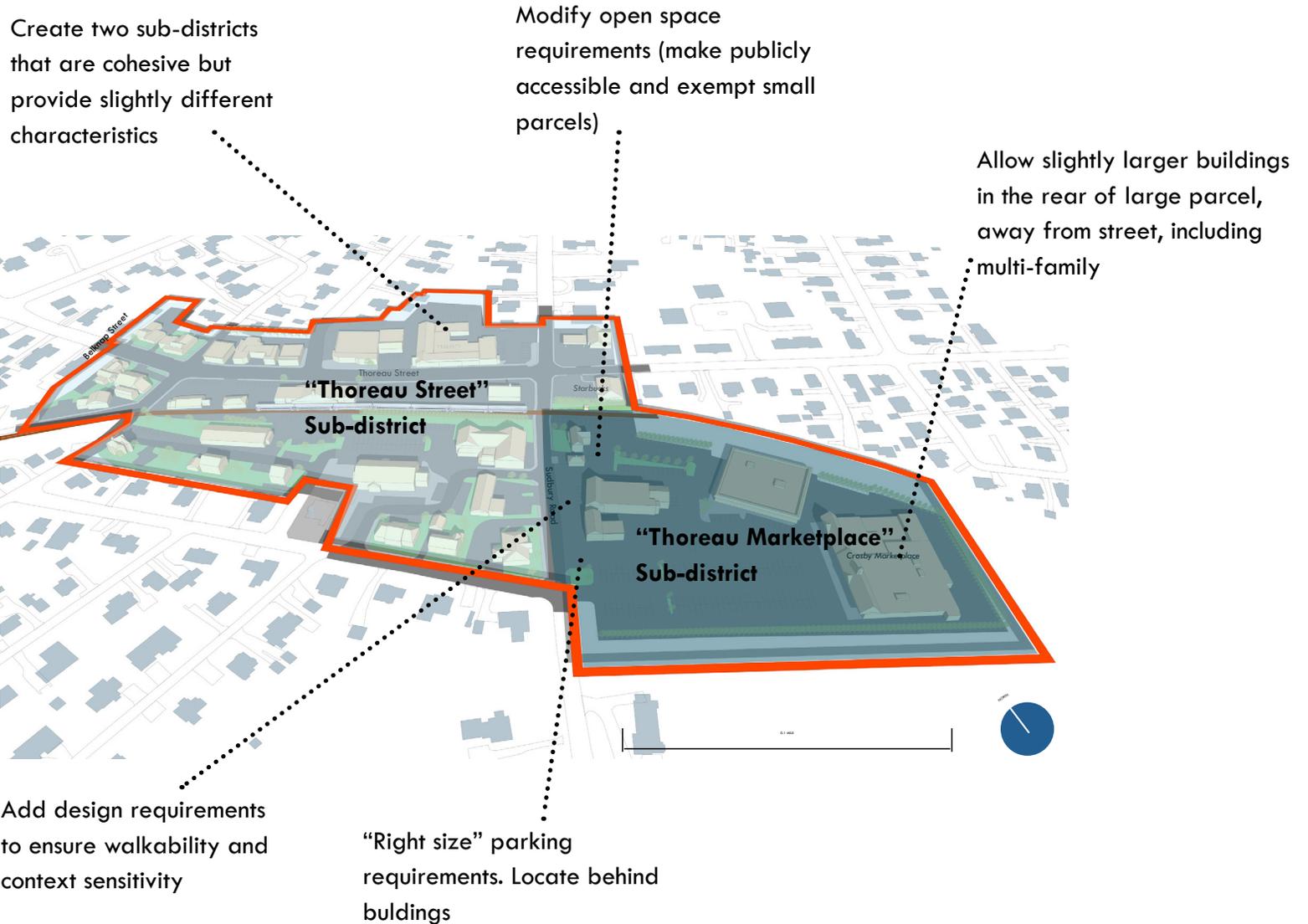


Parking should be located in the rear or side of buildings to minimize the impact on pedestrian experience. The development example combines best practice standards with a shared parking mechanism, requiring 243 spaces. (The example assumes surface parking.)



Draft Recommendations | Zoning

The Highlights



Draft Recommendations | Zoning

The Details (To Review at Your Leisure)

Summary of Existing Zoning vs. Recommended Zoning Changes			
	Thoreau Depot Business (Existing Zoning)	Thoreau Depot, including 2 sub-districts: Thoreau Street and Thoreau Marketplace (Potential Zoning)	
Side design	Lot size	None	No minimum or maximum. Establish design standards to achieve the block structure and building granularity of traditional walkable neighborhoods, while allowing larger lots that are easier to redevelop.
	Setbacks	None, except 10' side and rear yards where a business or industrial use abuts a residential district	Thoreau Street: 0'-10' Thoreau Marketplace: 10'-20' Front yard should be used for seating, landscaping, or other uses that contribute to the area's walkability and sense of place. Front setback area should generally not be used for parking.
	Density	None	Consider establishing a minimum and maximum, potentially based on Ch. 40R standards
	Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Single-family dwelling: 2 spaces per unit; 1.5 spaces for affordable housing or senior housing - Retail store: 1 space / 250 square feet - Restaurant: 1 space / 3 seats capacity plus 1 space per employee on largest shift - Professional office: 1 space / 250 square feet - Joint parking facilities are allowed between certain uses, such as restaurants and banks - No required amount of bicycle parking 	Reduce parking requirements, where possible: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 space per 1 bedroom unit - 1.5 spaces per 2 and 2+ bedroom unit - 1 space per affordable or senior unit Add parking maximum of 2 spaces per unit Require 1 secure, indoor bike space per unit Maintain same commercial and office parking minimums Allow shared parking between residential and commercial uses

Draft Recommendations | Zoning

The Details (To Review at Your Leisure)

Summary of Existing Zoning vs. Recommended Zoning Changes			
Uses	Residential	By right: Single-family, boardinghouse, hotel/motel Special Permit: Two-family, accessory dwelling units, Residential Compound, Residential Cluster Development, and Planned Residential Development allowed by Special Permit.	Add multifamily residential uses by right or by Special Permit Prohibit new single-family houses
	Commercial	By right: Retail, personal service, craft shop, restaurant, indoor amusement, outdoor amusement, funeral home, repair shop and building trade, financial and business office, professional office, medical center and lab, auto service, auto repair, vehicular dealerships, boat sales and rental, parking facility, grocery store Special permit: Transportation services	Allow uses that best meet the needs of creating a walkable, vibrant commercial village.
	Industrial	By right: Warehouse, storage yard, open-air sales, R&D and Light manufacturing, packaging, process, testing	Prohibit most industrial uses
	Mixed-Use	By right: Combined business/residence*	Revise inclusionary and open space requirements for mixed-use development to ensure development balances public benefits with financial feasibility
	Other	“Extensive”- by right: forestry, agriculture, conservation, private recreation; special permit: Earth removal Institutional- by right: educational, child care facility, religious, philanthropic, hospital, cemetery, lodge and club Government and utility uses- by right: Town of Concord municipal use, underground utility, aboveground utility, large ground-mounted solar voltaic installation Accessory- by right: customary home occupation, workshops and classes, gift shops, kennels, stables, farm product sales, aviation facilities, and more	Prohibit “extensive” uses and low-density “accessory” uses, such as kennels Make some “accessory” uses by right commercial uses, such as gift shops and workshops/classes Add temporary commercial uses, such as coffee stands, cut-flower stands, fresh vegetable markets, etc.

Draft Recommendations | Zoning

The Details (To Review at Your Leisure)

Public benefit	Affordable housing	Combined business/residence buildings of more than 4 units need to include >20% affordable	Potentially consider adjusting the threshold and percentage requirement Apply affordable housing requirement to multifamily housing
	Open space	Combined business/residence buildings need to have open space provided on the lot equal to twice the gross floor area of the residential area, decks can count if they are >25 square feet	Potentially consider publicly-accessible open space requirements for new development of a certain size Apply private open space requirements to multifamily housing
	Climate resilience	None	Potentially add Low Impact Design guidelines Potentially add incentives for clean energy, including EV charging infrastructure and onsite renewable energy
Building design	Height	35 feet	Thoreau Street: 38 feet (peaked roofs) Thoreau Marketplace: 38 feet for building along the street (peaked roofs), potentially increasing to 4 stories for buildings without frontage
	Design standards	None	Potential inclusion of standards to ensure high quality design, including massing, fenestration, frontage types, and building components

Notes:

* Combined business/residence requires 20% affordable units for all developments of 4 or more units, and open space equal to twice the gross floor area of the residential portion of the building. The open space and parking may be relaxed, and the height can increase to 40 feet with a Special Permit.

Draft Recommendations | Other

Connectivity and Public Realm

- Safety improvements to Thoreau St / Sudbury Rd
- Sidewalks on northbound side of Sudbury Rd
- Reduce curb cuts
- High visibility crosswalks
- Sidewalks cleared in winter
- Bike lanes along Sudbury Rd
- Sidewalk amenities, pedestrian-scale lighting, street trees
- Bicycle parking
- Parklets
- Wayfinding
- Programming

Draft Recommendations | Other

Economic Development

- ***Programs to assist existing property owners*** (facade and sign improvement programs, workshops and resources)
- ***Programs to support local businesses*** (working with retailers to implement best practices, educating on resources, setting up a revolving loan fund)
- ***Market Thoreau Depot*** (creating cohesive branding materials, identifying + recruiting new retailers, providing incentives to attract retailers, working with brokers, utilize Town website to post econ dev resources)
- ***Expand the market*** (increasing local residences)

Discussion

Please feel free to send additional comments or questions to:

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