

# Rethinking the Retail Strip

## Transforming Old Uses to Meet New Needs



April 26, 2023

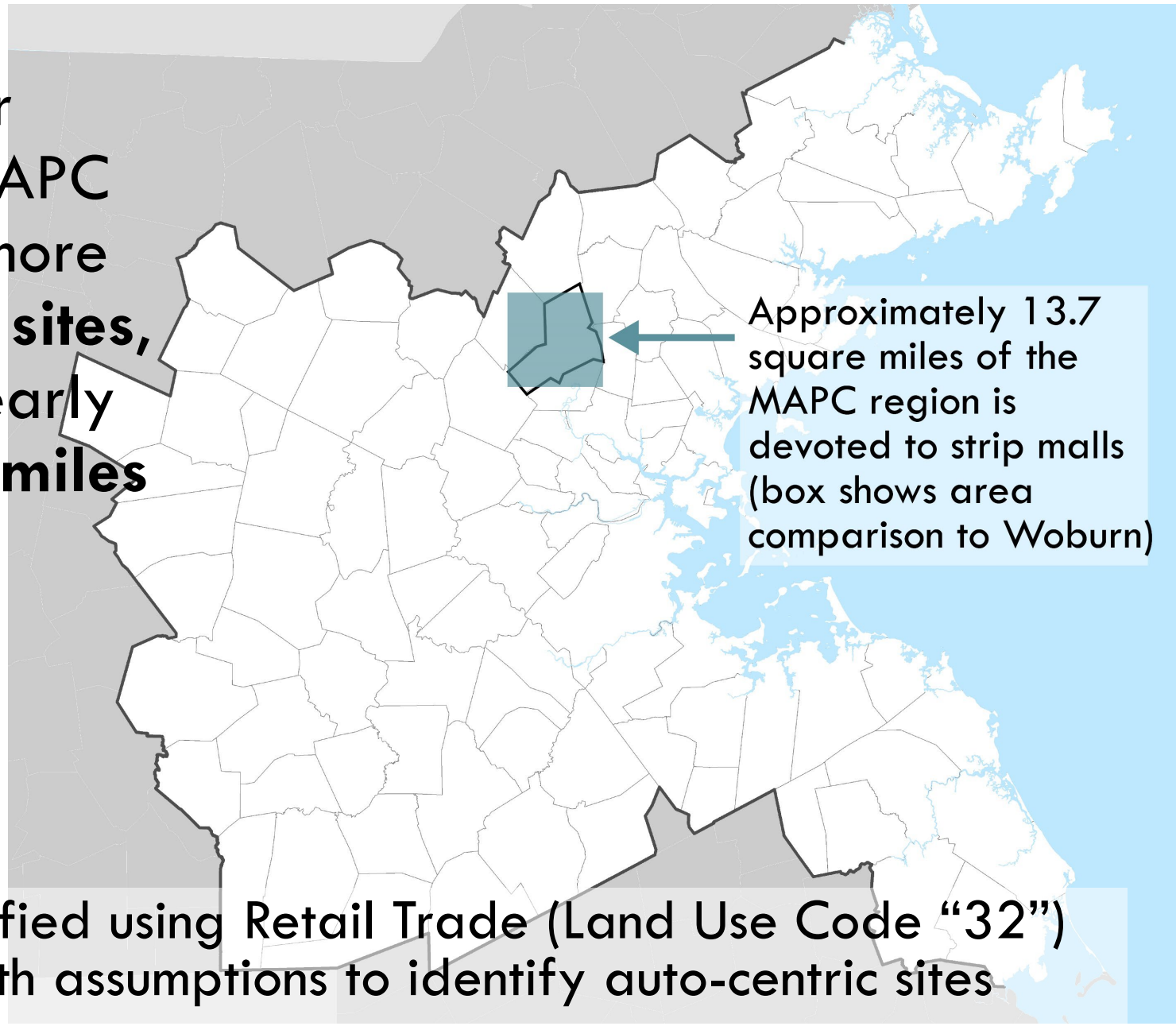


# Why Strip Malls?

- **Ubiquitous.** *The median total area of strip malls for each community is 71 acres*
- **They're often under-performing.** *Our selection of commercial sites is valued at less than \$2.7 million per acre vs. new mixed-use often assessed at \$7.7 million per acre*
- **Cloudy future.** *E-Commerce, changing consumption preference, etc.*
- **Potential for near-term change.** *Smaller sites than other suburban forms can be redeveloped incrementally*

# The Scale of the Opportunity

Through our analysis, MAPC identified more than **3,000 sites**, covering nearly **14 square miles** of area

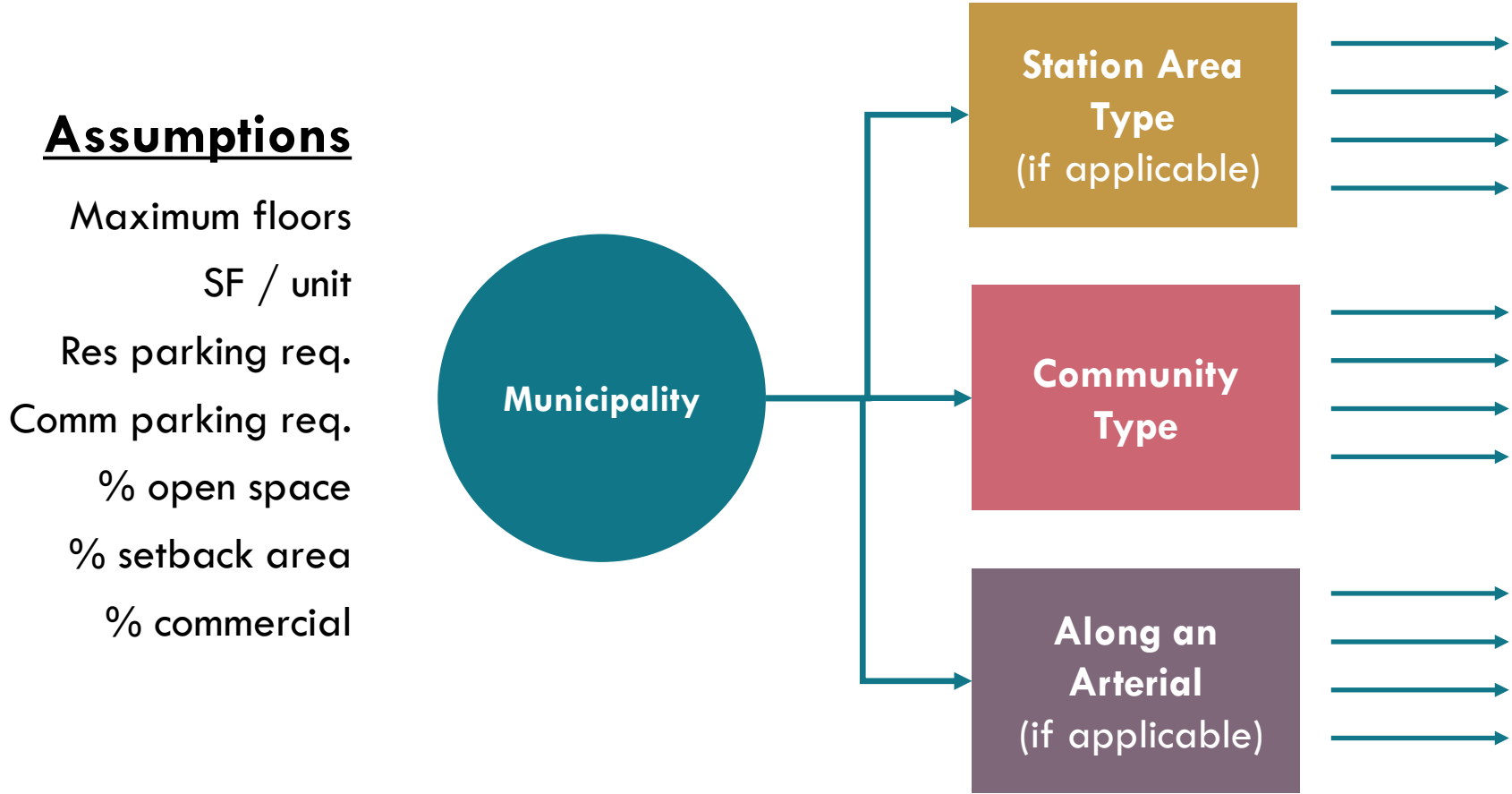


Approximately 13.7 square miles of the MAPC region is devoted to strip malls (box shows area comparison to Woburn)

\* Sites identified using Retail Trade (Land Use Code "32") combined with assumptions to identify auto-centric sites

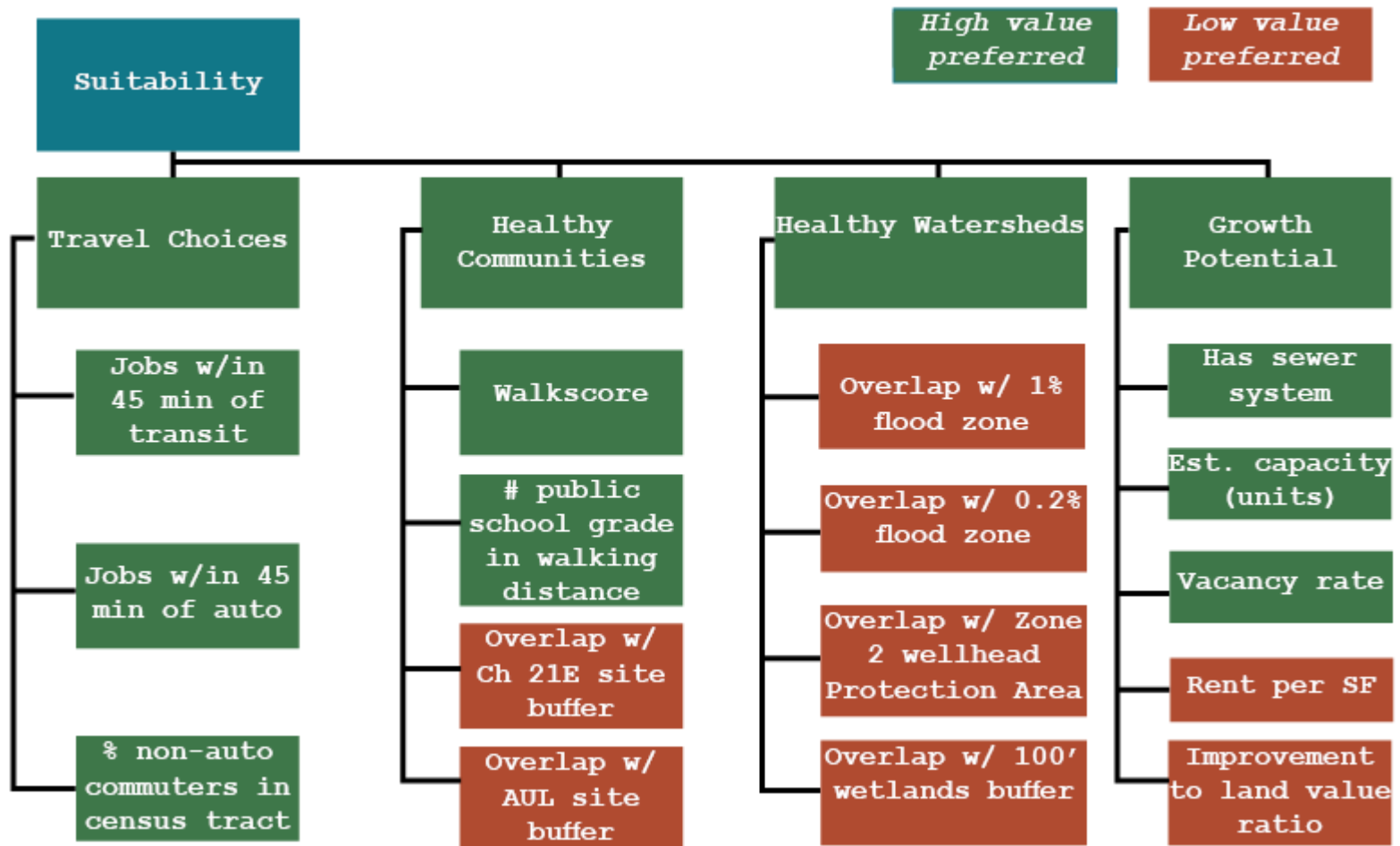
# Capacity Analysis

A critical component of the analysis was estimating the potential housing unit yield on each site. MAPC developed different parameters depending on the community and location within the community



# Suitability Analysis

Not all sites are created equal. The final component of analysis was to prioritize suitability. MAPC developed a weighted model to analyze sites best aimed at achieving regional goals in a sustainable manner.



# Results of Analysis

If looking at just the top 10% of most highly suitable sites, the implications of redevelopment are huge:

- Number of new homes: **125,000** (mixed-use development)
- Number of affordable homes if produced as 40R: **25,000**
- Additional tax revenue: **\$587 million**
- Emissions averted (compared to multifamily of greenfield sites): **400,000 metric tons of carbon emissions**
- Acres of new impervious surface averted (compared to multifamily of greenfield sites): **10 square miles**

MAPC's analysis shows that **29% of the identified sites are within a half mile of transit** – sites that can help meet the requirements of Section 3A of the MBTA multifamily requirement.

# Data Tools

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## Potential Retail Retrofit Sites in MAPC Region

### Summary Statistics

- 3,028 Sites
- 8,750.0 Acres Sites Area
- 883 Sites Near MBTA Transit
- \$370,516 Average New Tax Revenue Per Site
- 125,095 Potential Units, top 10% of sites
- \$586,395,680 Potential New Tax Revenue, top 10% of sites

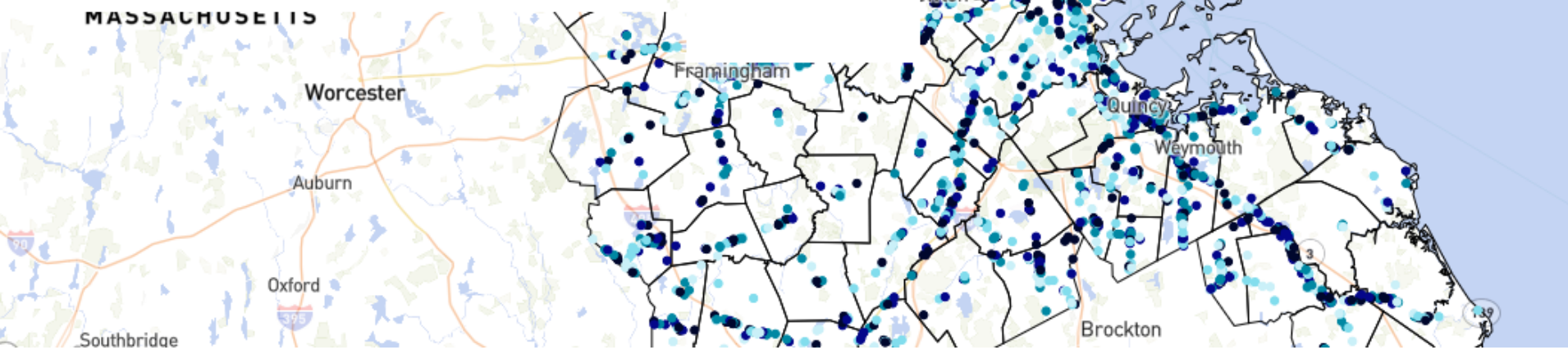
**Legend**

**Site Score**

- Most Favorable
- Very Favorable
- Favorable
- Less Favorable
- Least Favorable

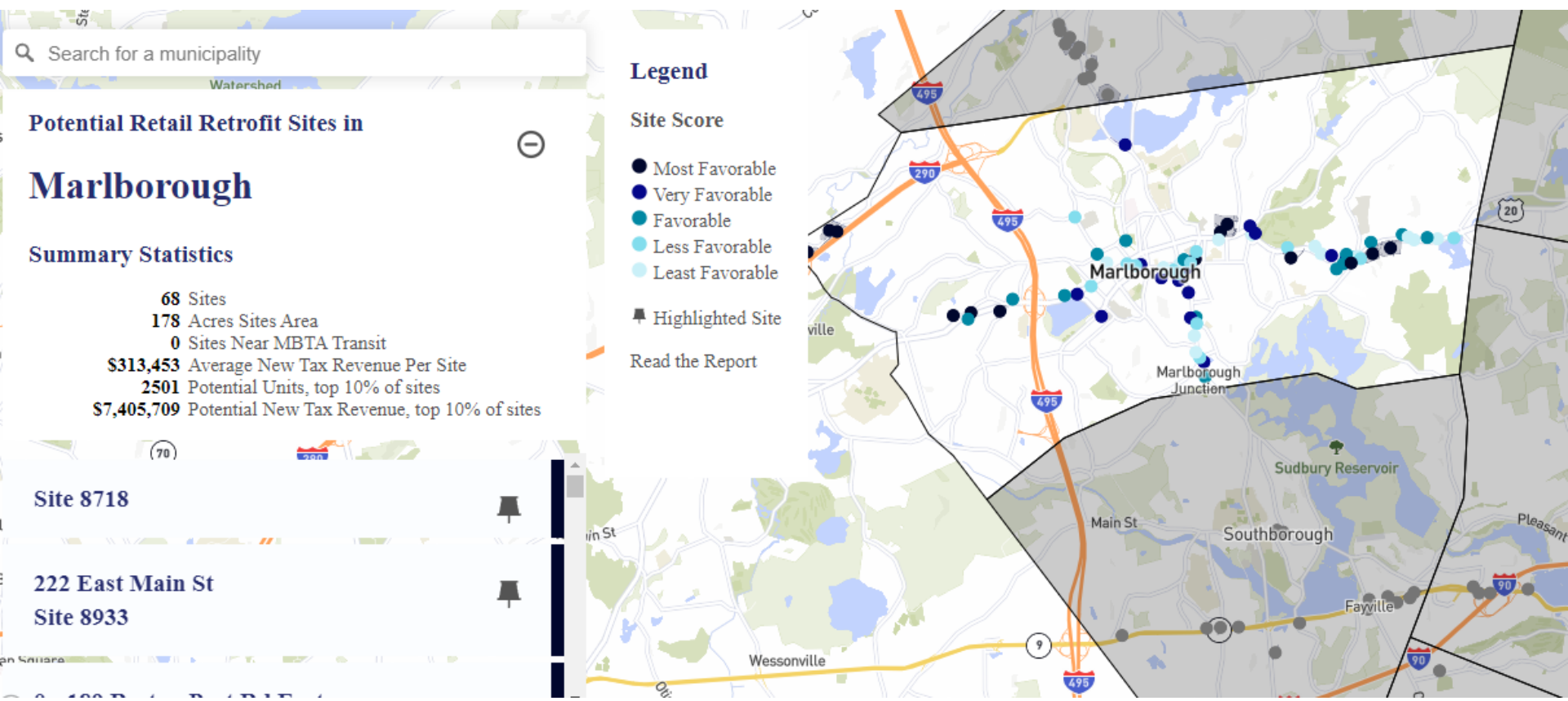
📍 Highlighted Site

[Read the Report](#)



<http://rethinking-the-retail-strip.mapc.org>

# Data Tools



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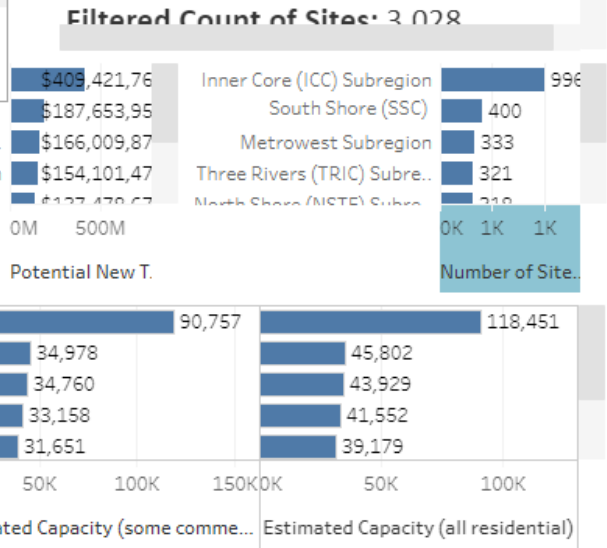
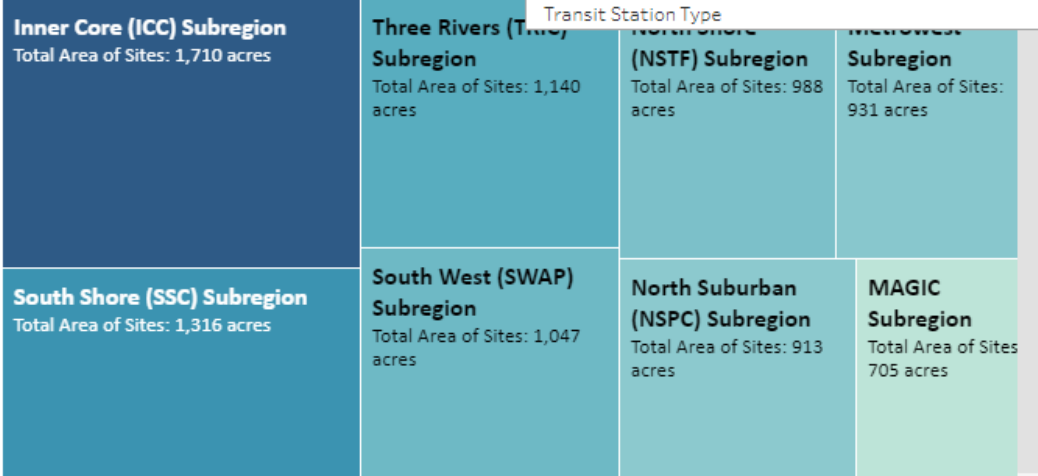
# Data Tools

Site Information By Geography Data Table

Select Geo... Subregion

Filter by M... Community Subtypes

- Subregion
- Municipalities
- Transit Station Type



<http://rethinking-the-retail-strip.mapc.org>

# Data Tools

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Site Information By Geography

Data Table

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Select Mu...

Municipal	Parcel Addr	Site ID	Overall Score	Regional Rank	Municipal Rank	Number of Parcels on Site	Estimated Capacity (all residential)	Estimated Capacity (some commerci..)	Buildable area (ac)	Site area (acres)	FAR (current)	Overlap with 1% FEMA SFHA (%)	Overlap with 0.2% FEMA flood zones (%)	Growth Potential Score
Burlington	0, 2, 3, 4, 5 BURLINGTON ..	11528	3	1187	14	3	3,792	3,037	74.62	82.95	0.48	1	9	0.7
	0, 154, 156, 160 CAMBRID..	11788	3	265	1	4	352	282	6.92	6.92	0.31	0	0	0.8
	1 WHEELER RD	11372	3	1605	20	1	74	59	1.46	1.84	0.21	2	5	0.5
	2 WAYSIDE RD	11550	3	1214	16	1	777	622	15.29	16.12	0.30	0	0	0.6
	4 ADAMS ST	11299	3	2010	27	1	62	50	1.22	1.25	0.35	0	10	0.5
	6 CAMBRIDGE ST	11474	2	2803	38	1	27	22	0.54	0.54	0.13	0	0	0.2
	13, 17, 19, 53 THIRD AVE	11574	3	544	3	4	820	657	16.13	16.64	0.64	0	0	0.6
	15 WALL ST	11560	3	1396	19	1	51	41	1.00	1.07	0.24	0	0	0.6
	20 THIRD AVE	11578	3	1099	12	1	124	99	2.44	2.52	0.25	0	0	0.5
	21 - 23 CAMBRIDGE ST	11492	3	2399	30	2	39	31	0.77	0.97	0.55	0	0	0.3
	26, 28, 34 CAMBRIDGE ST; ..	11540	3	1100	13	5	1,071	858	21.08	28.07	0.23	0	0	0.7
	28 WINN ST	11594	2	3021	43	1	13	11	0.26	0.26	0.24	0	0	0.0
	32, 36, 38 WINN ST	11598	2	2924	41	3	22	18	0.44	0.60	0.26	0	0	0.3

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# Barriers

## **Local Barriers (i.e., zoning)**

- Prohibited uses
- Overly restrictive dimensional requirements
- Excessive parking
- Discretionary process

## **Infrastructure Barriers**

- Lack of water capacity
- Waste-water disposal

## **Landowner Barriers**

- Individual owners, not professional developers
- Steady income stream
- Costly and complex development process

# Woburn Mall (pre-development)



WOBURN VILLAGE | WOBURN, MA // BOSTON MSA



# Principles

1. Plan holistically
2. Center equity
3. Prioritize walkability and alternative modes
4. Mitigate commercial displacement
5. Capture increased value
6. Provide predictability

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Woburn Village  
Principles in Action





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Woburn Village  
Principles in Action

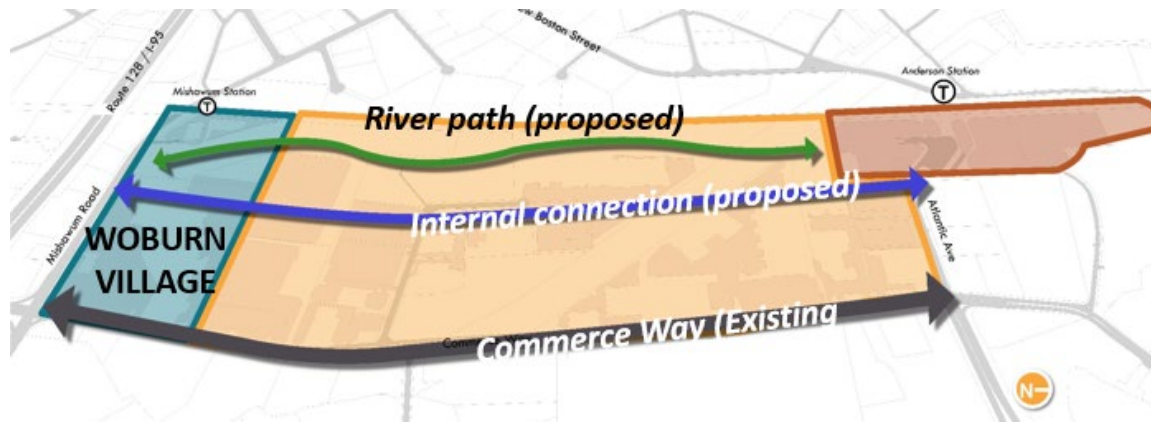
**88 of the 350  
units are deed-  
restricted  
affordable at  
80% AMI**



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## Woburn Village Principles in Action



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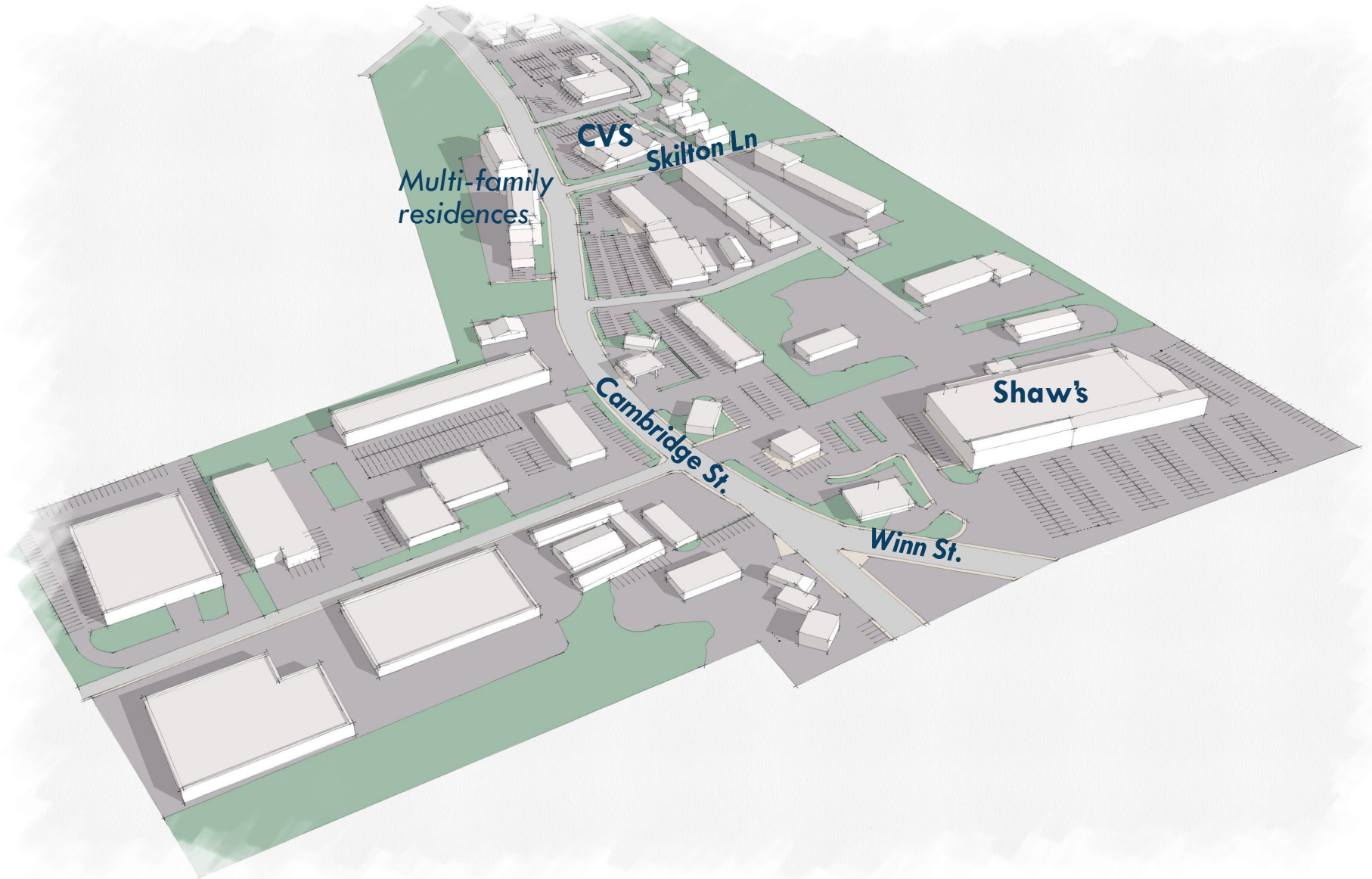
Woburn Village  
Principles in Action



# Principles | Burlington Center Case Study



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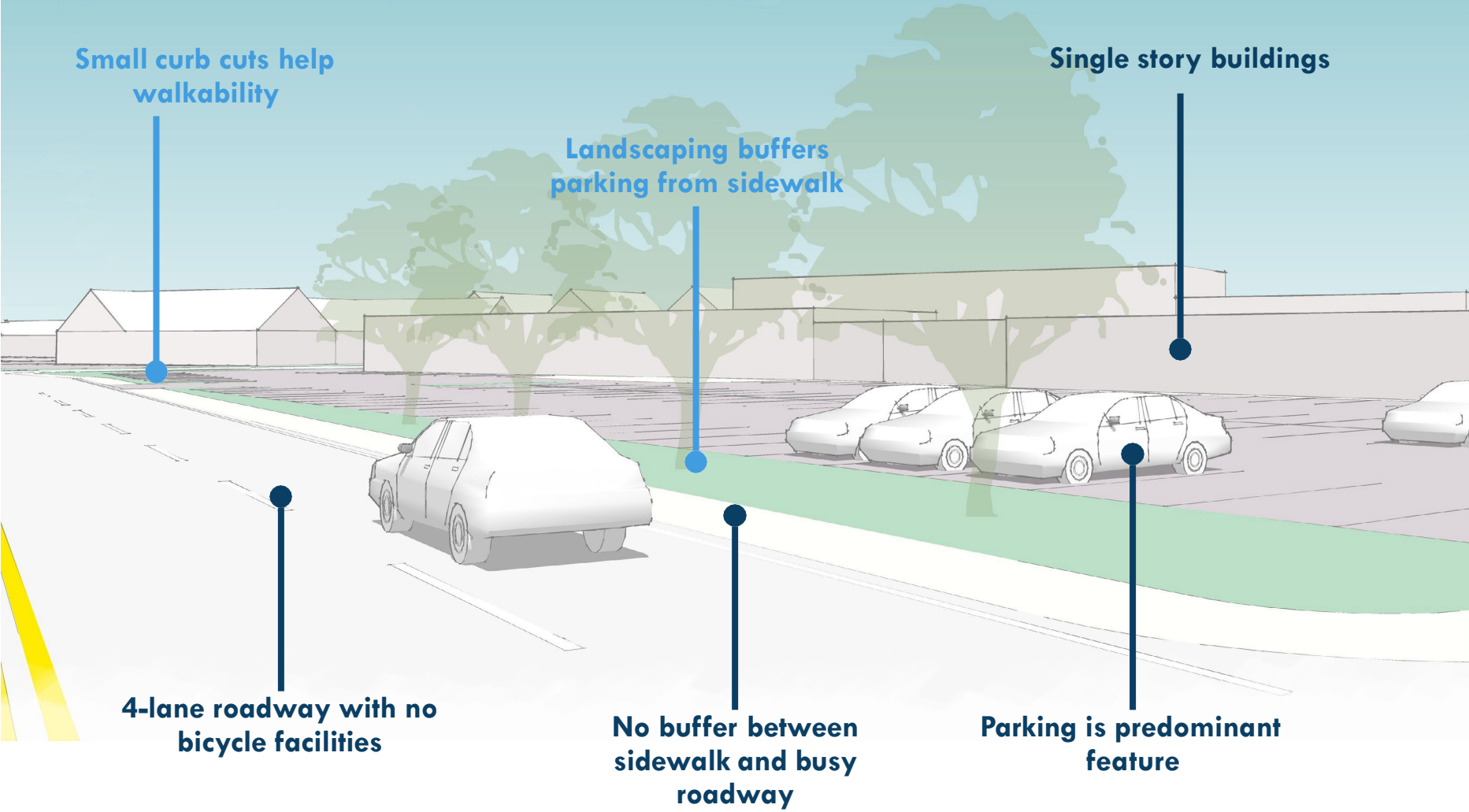
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Small curb cuts help walkability

Landscaping buffers parking from sidewalk

Single story buildings

4-lane roadway with no bicycle facilities

No buffer between sidewalk and busy roadway

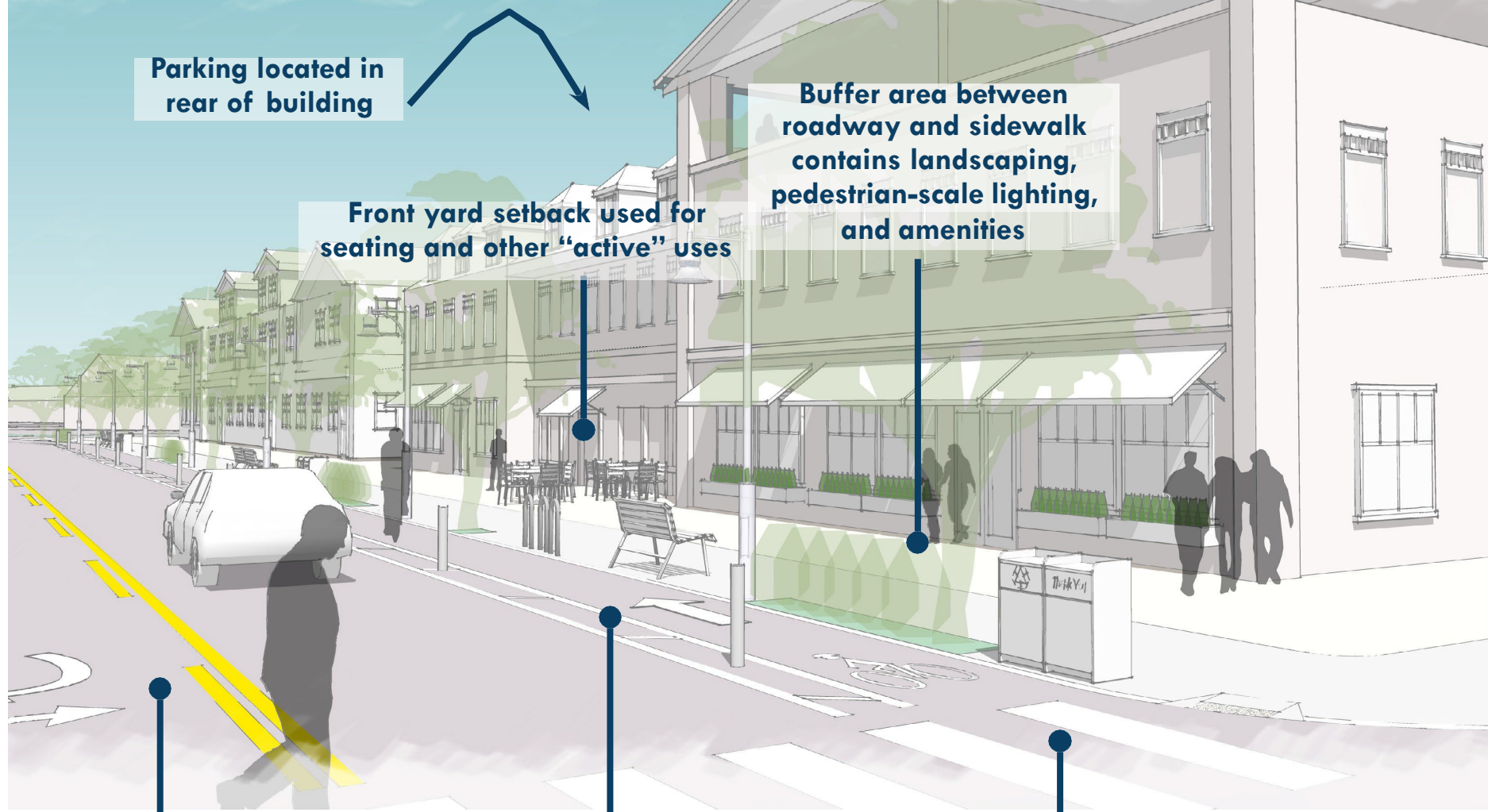
Parking is predominant feature



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Parking located in rear of building

Front yard setback used for seating and other "active" uses

Buffer area between roadway and sidewalk contains landscaping, pedestrian-scale lighting, and amenities

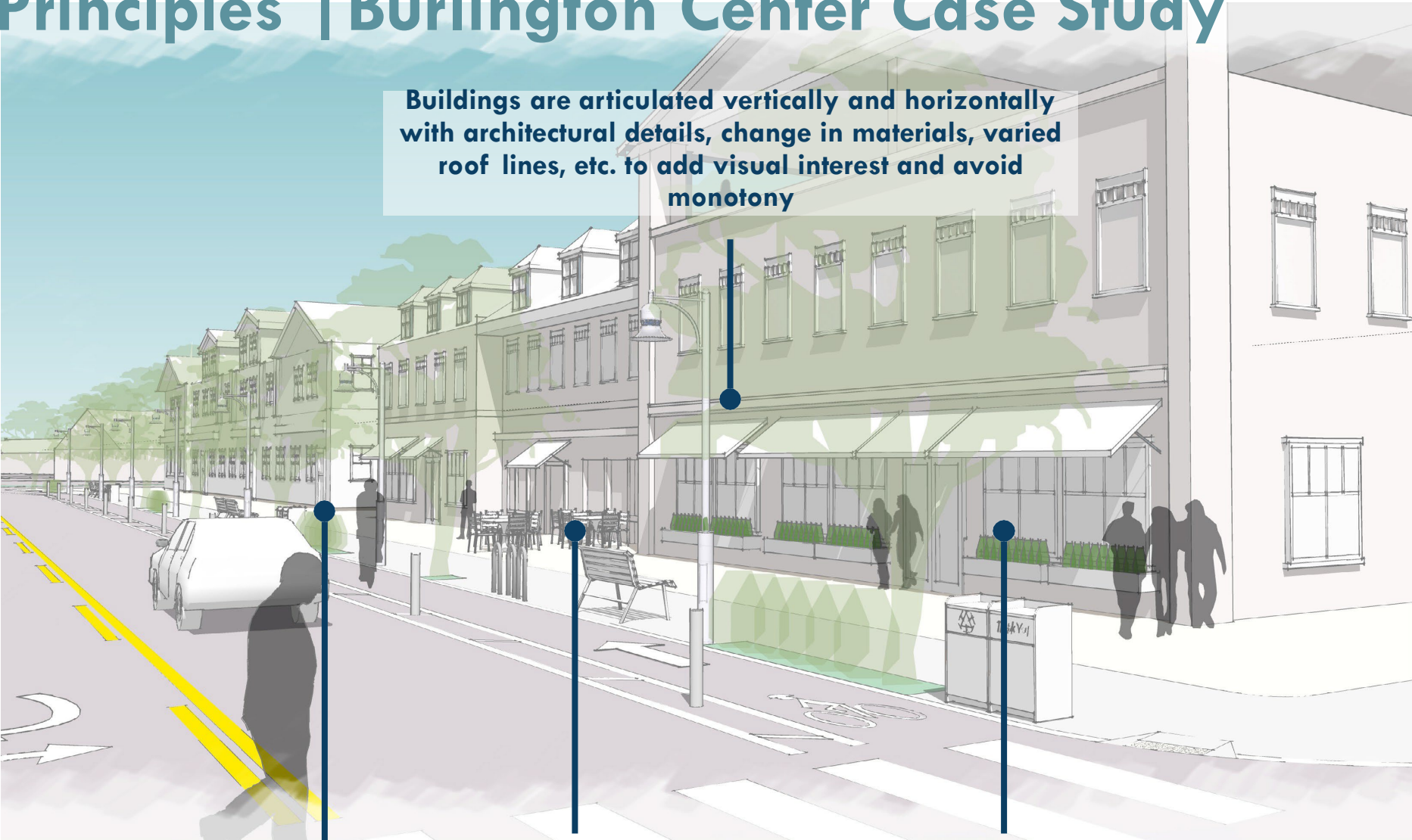
"Road diet" uses center turning lane

Road diet allows space for separated bicycle facilities

High visibility crosswalks (continental or ladder style)

# Principles | Burlington Center Case Study

Buildings are articulated vertically and horizontally with architectural details, change in materials, varied roof lines, etc. to add visual interest and avoid monotony



Pedestrian access between buildings to parking

Large building broken down into multiple bays to “read” as multiple buildings

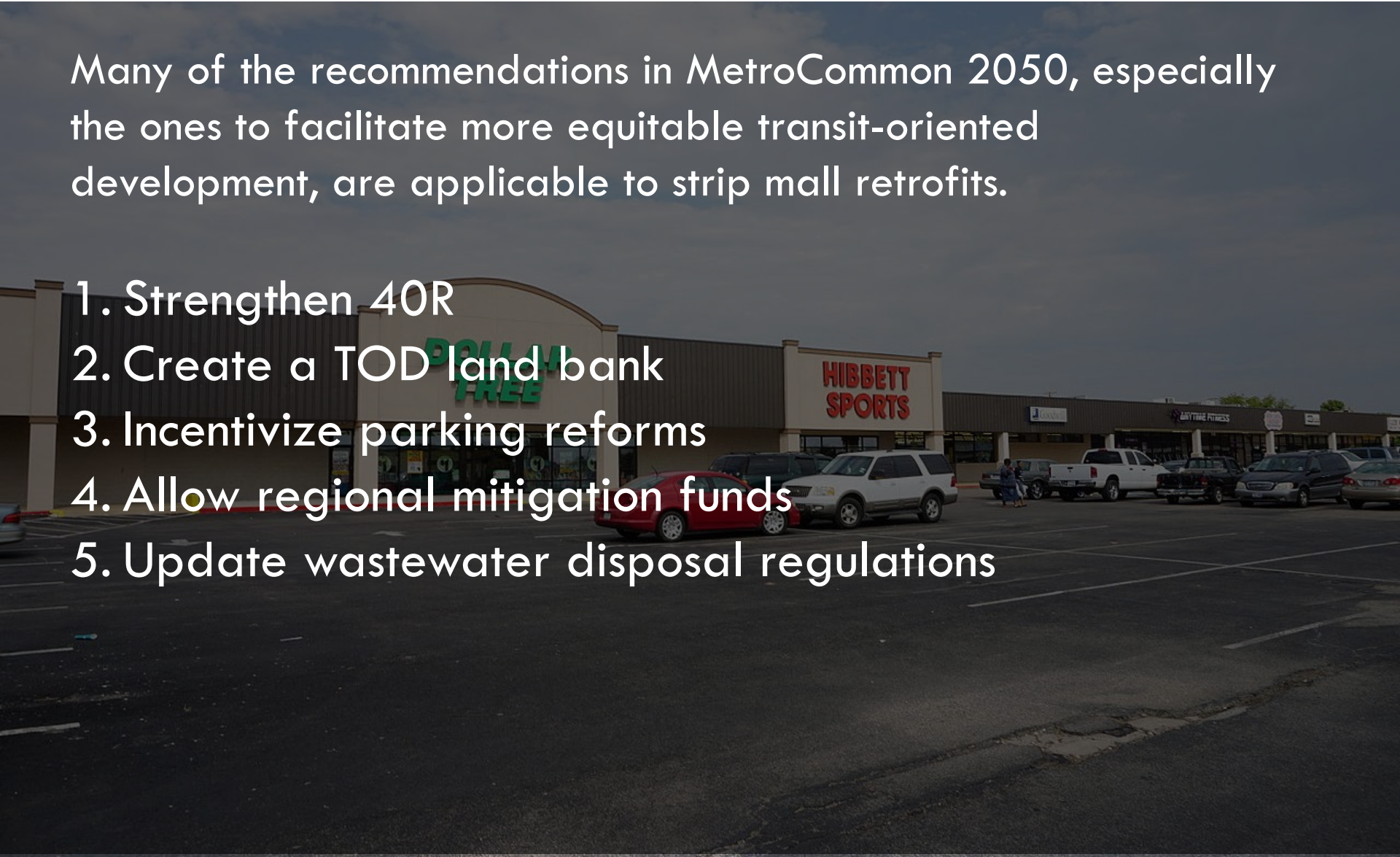
Ground floor contains high percentage of windows

# Policy Actions | Local Actions

1. Incorporate analysis into planning
  2. Create a vision and plan
  3. Adopt zoning
    - Allow residential into the mix
    - Incorporate affordability
    - Establish design guidance
    - Right-sized parking
    - By-right development
    - Consider 40R where appropriate
  4. Promote small and local business
    - Limit chains
    - Subsidized commercial spaces
  5. Enact TDM
  6. Implement complete streets
  7. Take advantage of state funding and grants
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# Policy Actions | State Actions

Many of the recommendations in *MetroCommon 2050*, especially the ones to facilitate more equitable transit-oriented development, are applicable to strip mall retrofits.

1. Strengthen 40R
  2. Create a TOD land bank
  3. Incentivize parking reforms
  4. Allow regional mitigation funds
  5. Update wastewater disposal regulations
- 

# Thank You!

<http://rethinking-the-retail-strip.mapc.org>

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MAPC

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