



Jefferson Ave Corridor Plan

Salem City Council | Committee of the Whole
July 27, 2026

Agenda

- Introduction, Agenda & Team
- Project Context
- Developing a Vision
- Community Engagement
- Draft Recommendations
- Proposed Zoning Approach
- Next Steps

Project Team

Dept. of Planning & Community Development (DPCD)

Tom Daniel

*Director of Planning and
Community Development*

Tom Devine

Senior Planner

Robyn Lee

Senior Planner

Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) Leads

Josh Fiala

*Director of
Land Use*

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Manager*

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Johnathan Law

Sr. Team Leader

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Sr. Project Mgr.

Sarah DeStefano

Practice Leader

Jefferson Ave Working Group

Salem State University

Salem Hospital

Mass General Brigham

Salem Partnership

Neighborhood Business Owner

Neighborhood Residents (2)

City Council (2)

Chamber of Commerce

Salem Sound Coastwatch

Planning Board

Design Review Board

Transportation Department

Sustainability & Resiliency Department

US EPA

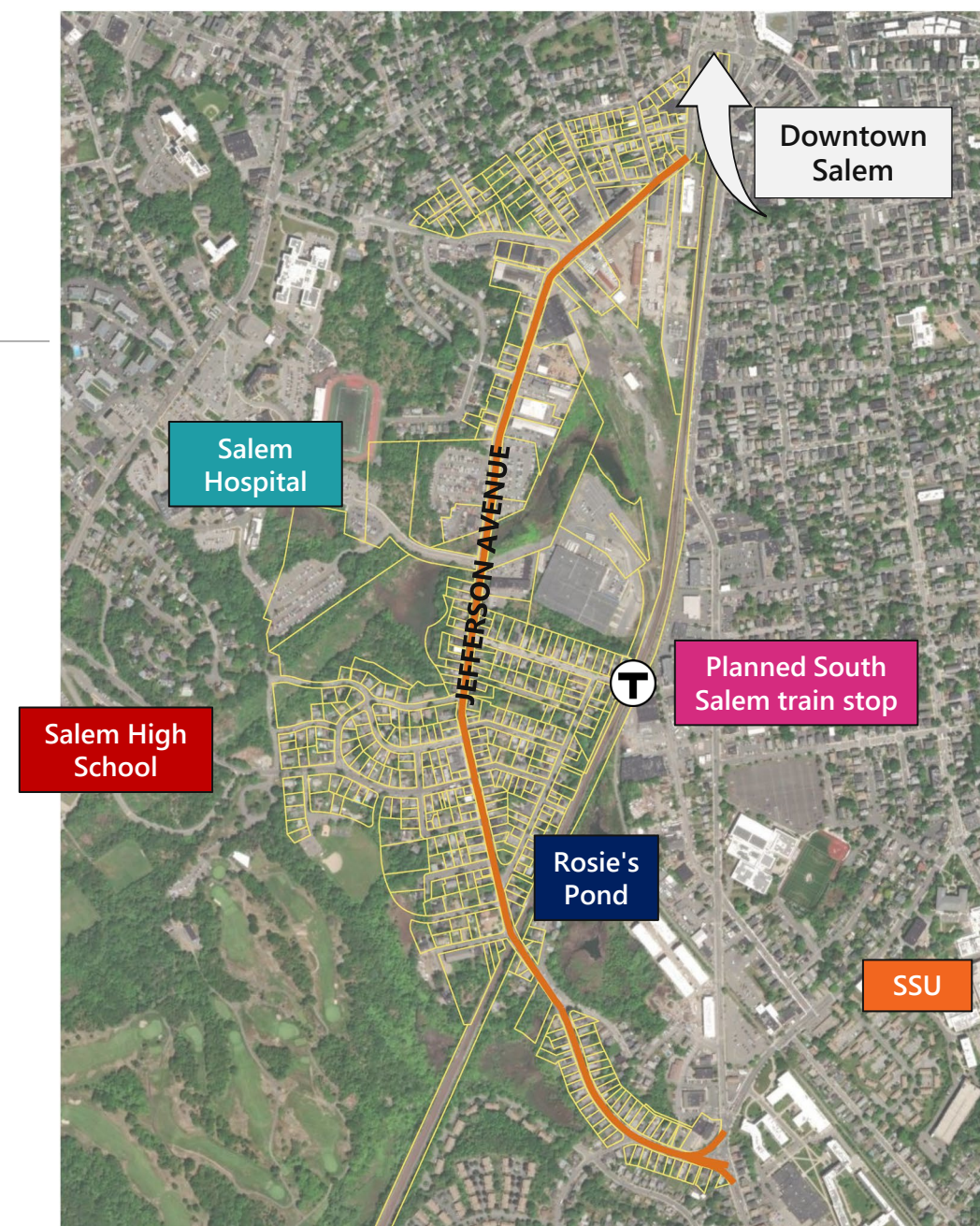
Project Context

Why are we here?

➤ **Address critical community challenges**, such as housing costs, climate risk, lack of multimodal connectivity, and limited job access.

➤ **Activate the corridor's key parcels** with community-oriented investment.

➤ **Guide new development** spurred by proximity to downtown and the new commuter rail stop, in an area subject to increased future flooding, through proposed zoning changes.



Building on past planning efforts



Transportation

- South Salem train stop: first contemplated in 1980s, 2018 feasibility study, 2024 USDOT RAISE/BUILD grant, 2025 concept plan, and 2026 MBTA partnership.
- MBTA plans electric locomotive maintenance facility at 15-acre Castel Hill Rail Yard.
- 2018 Bike Master Plan recommends buffered bike lanes on Jefferson Ave.
- Select safety improvements implemented.



Land Use

- Jefferson Ave designated as an Entrance Corridor in 2016.
- MAPC studies market analysis and development potential in 2017 South Salem TOD study.
- 2024 Urban Land Institute (ULI) Technical Assistance Panel identifies Jefferson Ave master plan as key recommendation.



Economic Development

- 2023 NS Alliance Future of Work Study identifies affordable housing and transportation infrastructure as key to diverse job access.



Public Health & Recreation

- 2022 Food Assessment identifies high food insecurity in the corridor.
- 2025 Highland Ave Trails Study evaluates path expansion.



Housing

- 2018 Imagine Salem planning process establishes guiding community principles.
- 2022 Salem Housing Roadmap identifies Jefferson Ave as key transformative area for redevelopment.
- 2024 MassINC Gateway Cities Housing Monitor estimates 2,229 new housing units needed in Salem over next 10 years.



Environment

- 2021 Beverly and Salem Resilient Together sets citywide resiliency goals.
- 2022 Wetlands Ordinance updated to apply buffers to wetlands.
- 2024 Coastal Resiliency Overlay District (C-ROD) established, encompassing much of the corridor.

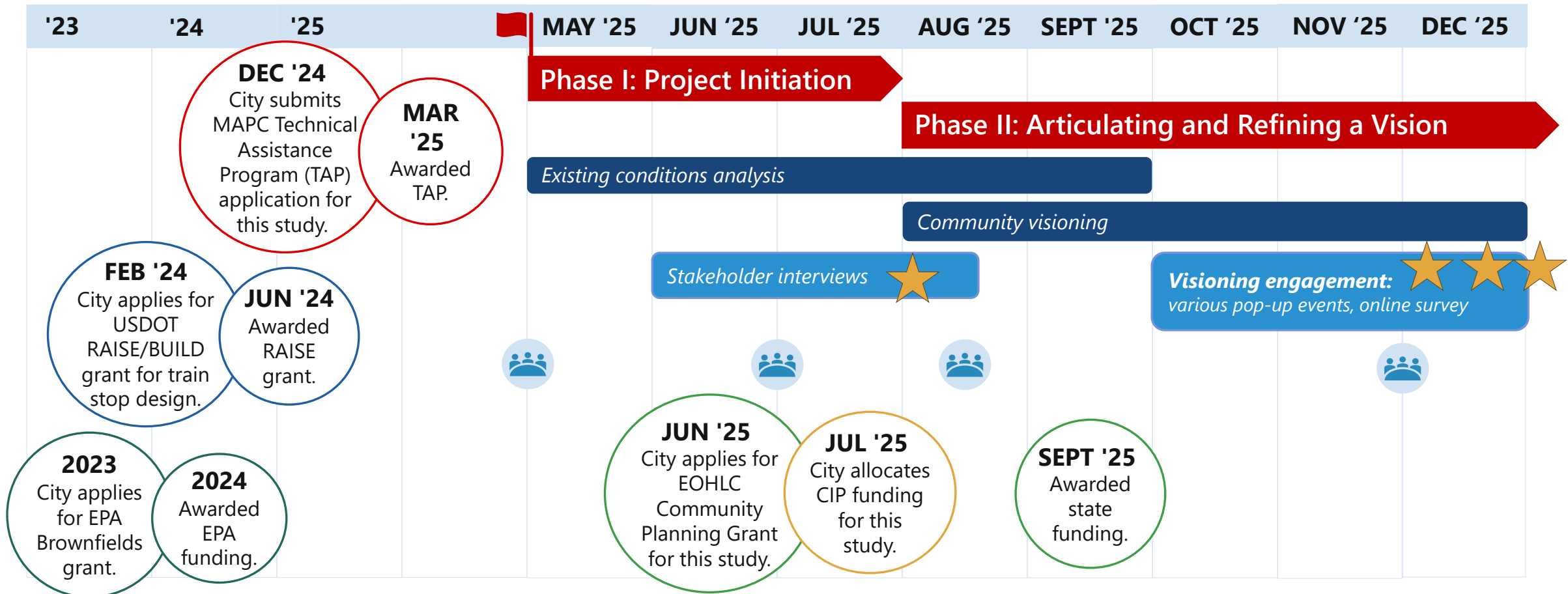


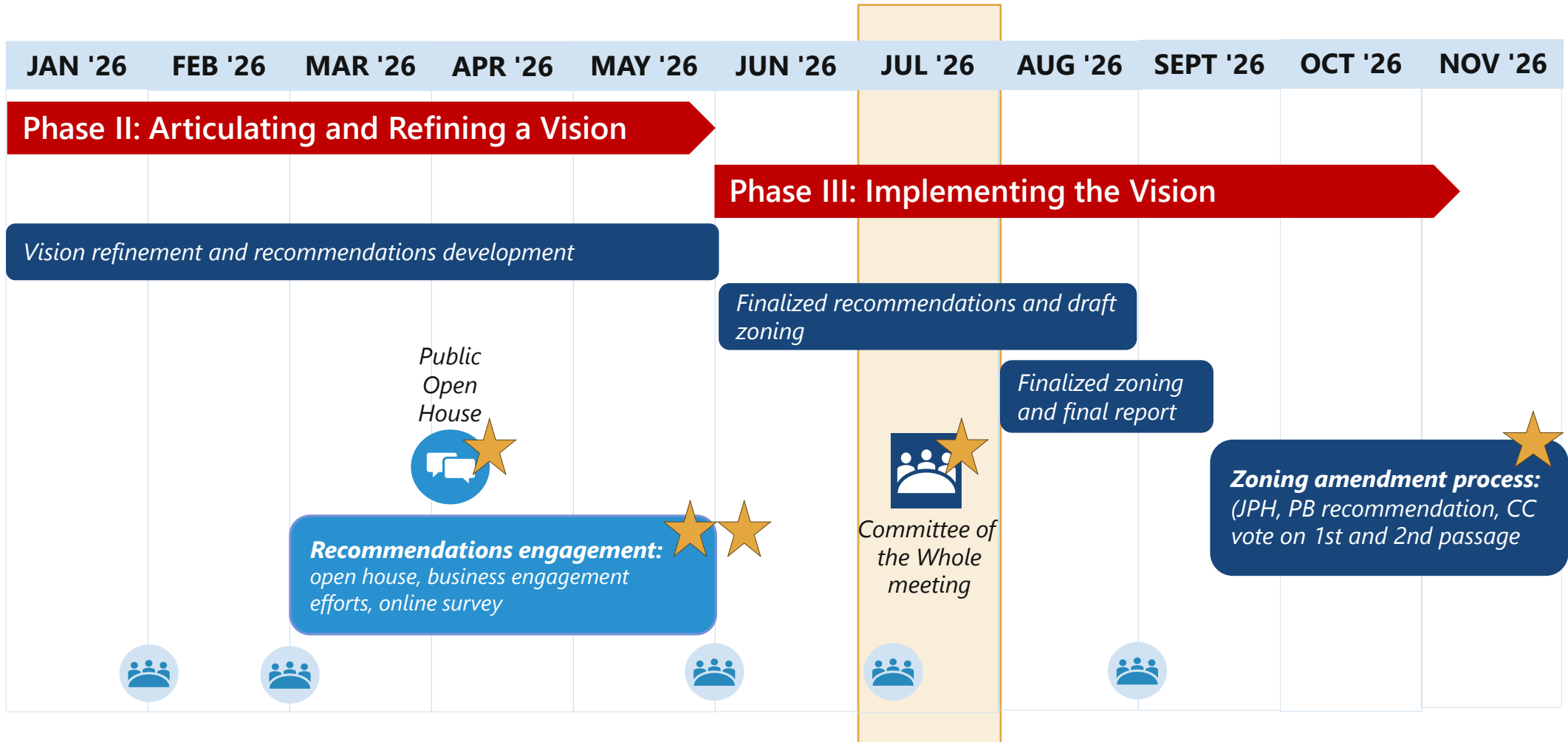
= Opportunity for public participation



= Project Working Group meeting

Project Timeline





Developing a Vision for the Corridor

Understanding existing conditions

Key takeaways:



- Filled river and wetlands are now areas of flood risk and industrial contamination.



- 41% of households are housing cost burdened.



- Unsafe roadway, rail line blocks east-west access, and the corridor lacks fixed-route transit.



- Small-lot residential surrounds cluster of commercial, industrial, surface parking.



- Greenspace is limited to utility corridor and private parkland.



- Zoning embodies some community goals but restricts multifamily development.

DRAFT

Jefferson Avenue Corridor Plan: Existing Conditions Memo

October 2025 (to be finalized in Summer 2026)



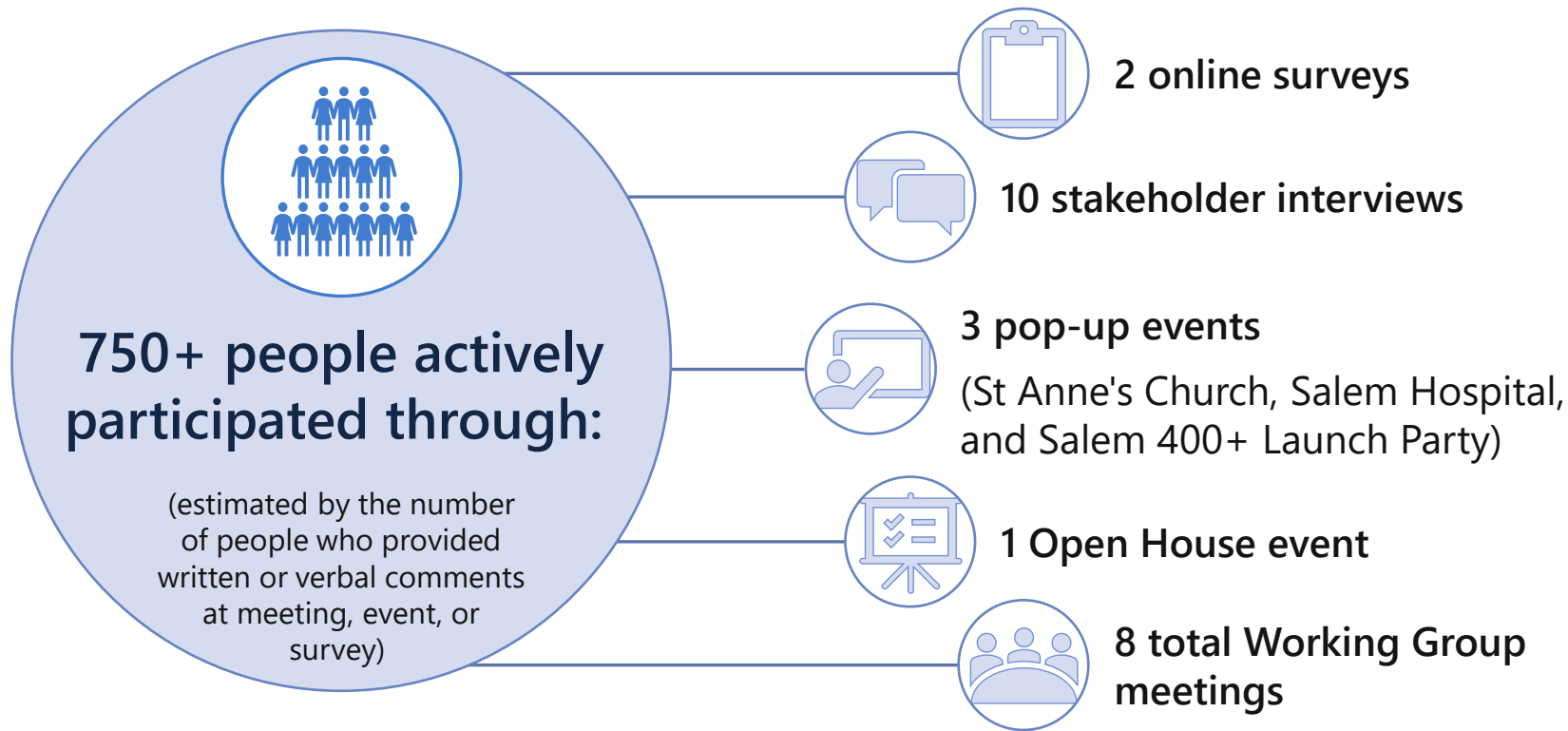
JEFFERSON AVENUE CORRIDOR PLAN: EXISTING CONDITIONS MEMO

1

The complete draft
report is available here:



Community engagement activities



Citywide outreach through various channels.



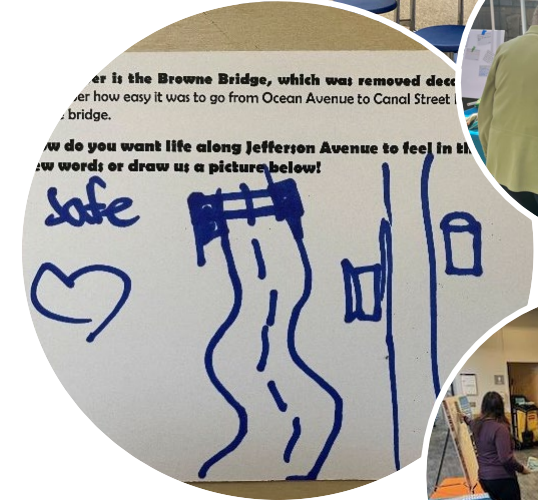
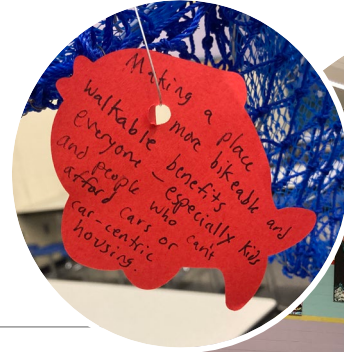
1,200+ mailers and flyers distributed to Jefferson Ave residents and businesses



Materials available in English and Spanish (various in Portuguese).

What did we hear?

- Over 85% of respondents reported that Jefferson Avenue today does not fully reflect their vision for the corridor, demonstrating broad support for long-term change.
- Residents consistently called for a more **walkable, safe, connected, and welcoming** corridor.
- **Key community priorities** included housing affordability, safety, walkability, traffic and transit improvements, flood resilience, trees and open space, and neighborhood-serving businesses.
- **Warehouses, storage/distribution centers, parking lots, and auto-oriented uses** were most frequently identified as over-represented or inconsistent with the desired future corridor.
- The majority of residents expressed support for the draft recommendations.





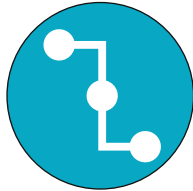
Transformative
land use over
time



Vibrant **streetscape**
and sense of
neighborhood
identity



Resilient buildings
and communities



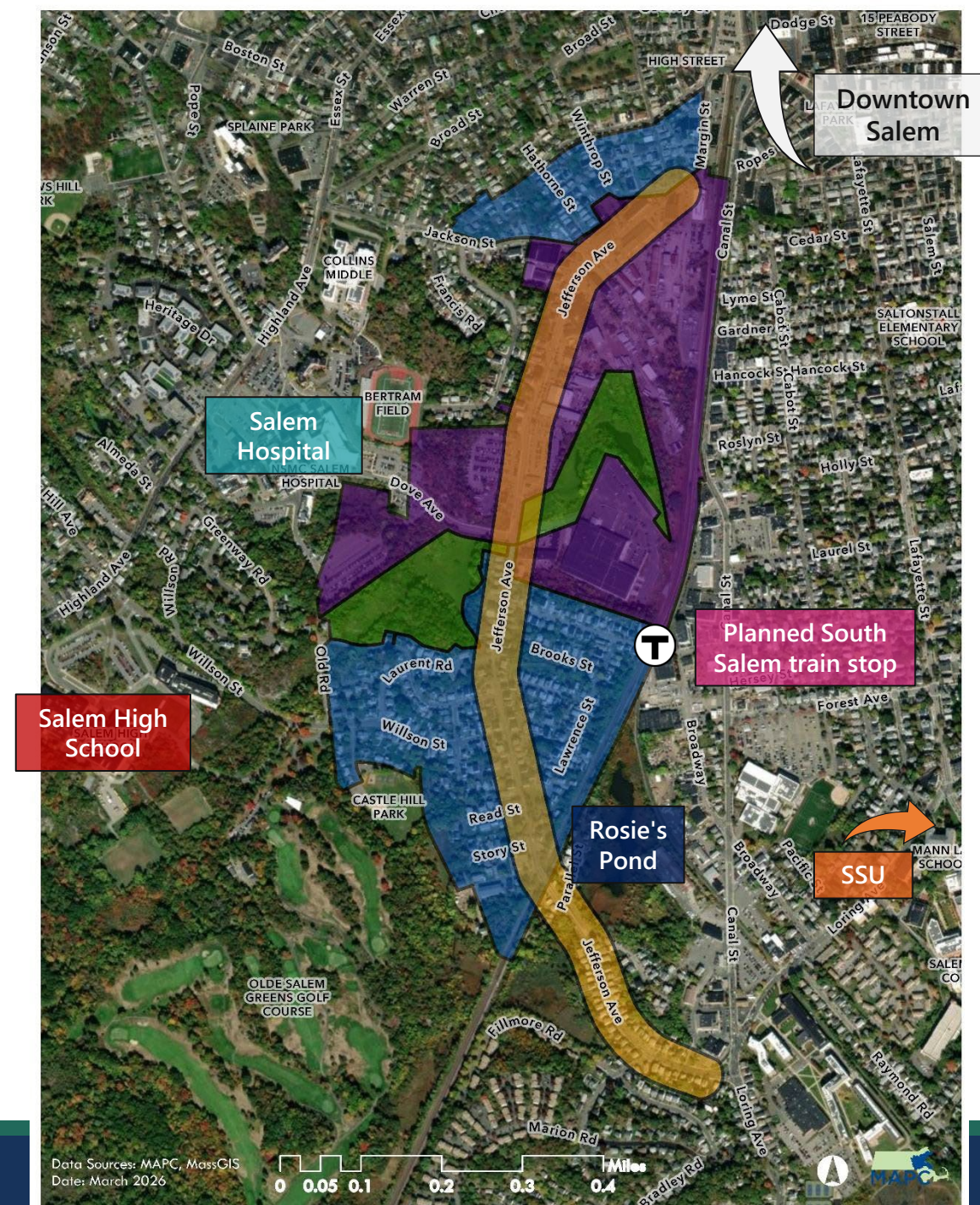
Improved **mobility**
and **connectivity**



Support for existing
neighbors, critical
institutions, and
businesses

The vision for Jefferson Ave

Recommendations for the Corridor





AREAS OF NEIGHBORHOOD STABILIZATION

-  A. Amplify and expand **anti-displacement and housing stability measures** to protect current homes, neighbors, and important community assets.
-  B. Explore **zoning and preservation tools that support the neighborhood's naturally-occurring gentle density** through future study.
-  C. Create an **east-west pedestrian connection** between neighbors and employees and the key institutions and amenities by bringing back the pedestrian bridge at the train stop (Browne Bridge).
-  D. Implement **place-keeping measures** and spatial storytelling about Castle Hill and the community.



WETLANDS AND OPEN SPACE



- A. Explore **climate-adaptive measures** that work with the area's water and history of the South River.



- B. Evaluate the Jefferson Avenue Open Space areas for **flood-adaptive trail connections** that can connect the eastern side of Jefferson Avenue to the South Salem train stop and the broader city and neighborhood trail network.



JEFFERSON AVE STREETSCAPE

-  A. Support **neighborhood-serving businesses** along the corridor.
-  B. Partner with businesses to invest in **streetscape improvements** and public art along the corridor to attract foot traffic.
-  C. Add **public realm improvements** (green infrastructure, street trees).
-  D. Implement **traffic-calming and safety features** to priority intersections and locations on Jefferson Ave and surrounding streets.
-  E. Mitigate the **effects of surface parking**.
-  F. Implement a **Complete Streets treatment** for Jefferson Ave.
-  G. Expand **Bluebikes** along Jefferson Avenue.



AREAS OF TRANSFORMATION



A. Introduce **flood-adaptive multifamily and mixed-use development** incrementally that can co-exist with current industrial uses as parcels are redeveloped.



B. Support **redevelopment of key sites** (e.g. DPS, Amazon, vacant recycling facility) to spur transformation.



C. Enhance **bike and pedestrian connections** for neighbors and employees across key institutions and amenities.



D. Create **wayfinding and creative placemaking** measures.



E. Implement **safety improvements and traffic-calming measures**.



F. Support **existing small businesses** as potential development occurs.

Preliminary Zoning Framework

Existing Regulations Embody Many Community Values



Resiliency: New development and major renovations require resiliency to 2070 flooding



Affordability: Minimum 10% of units affordable at 60% AMI



Mobility: Car parking ratio for multifamily development set case by case supported with TDM plan



Design: Entrance corridor design review



Wetlands Protection: Wetlands, flood zone impacts reviewed by Conservation Commission

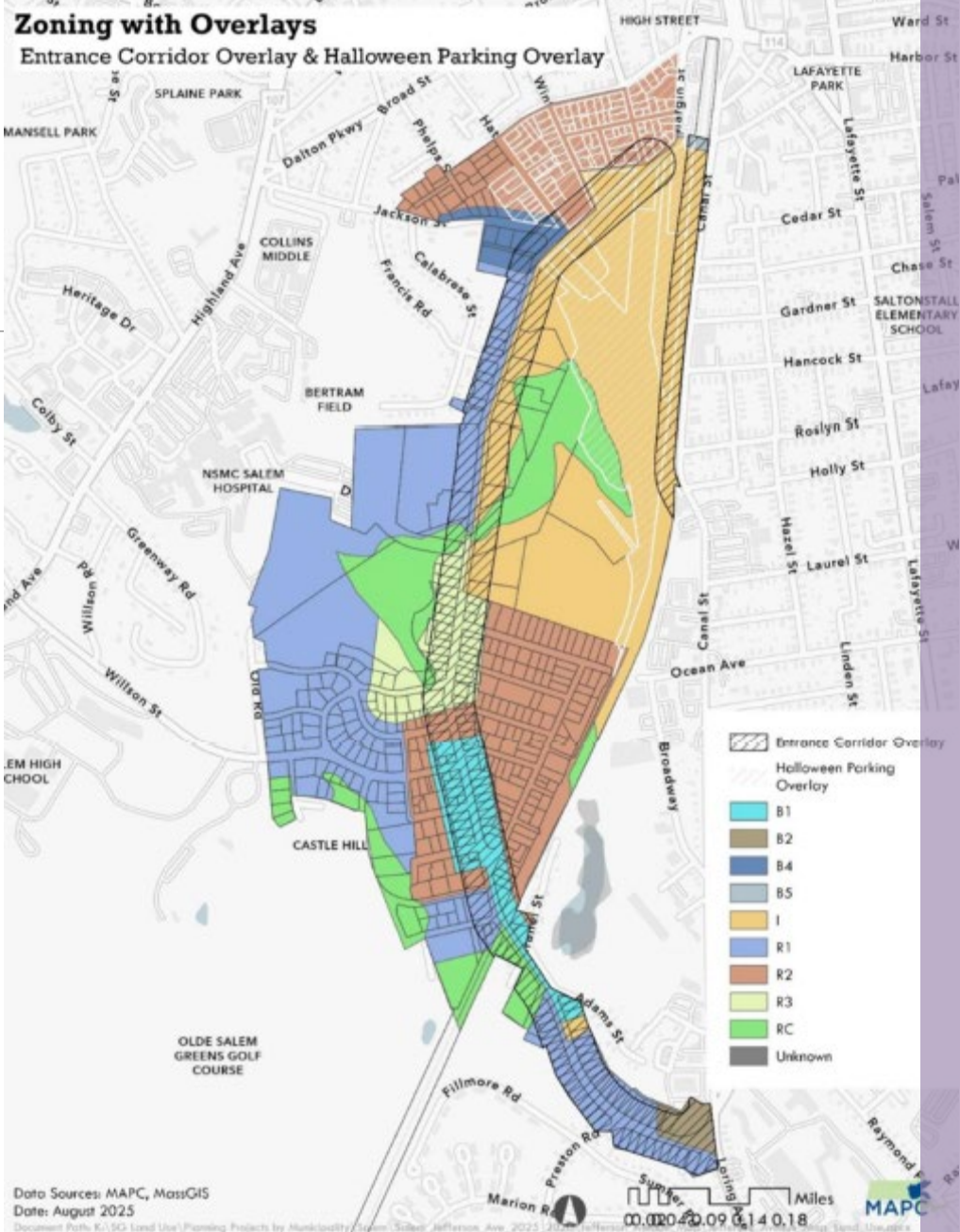


Historic Preservation: Demolition delay ordinance

Existing districts limit multifamily housing

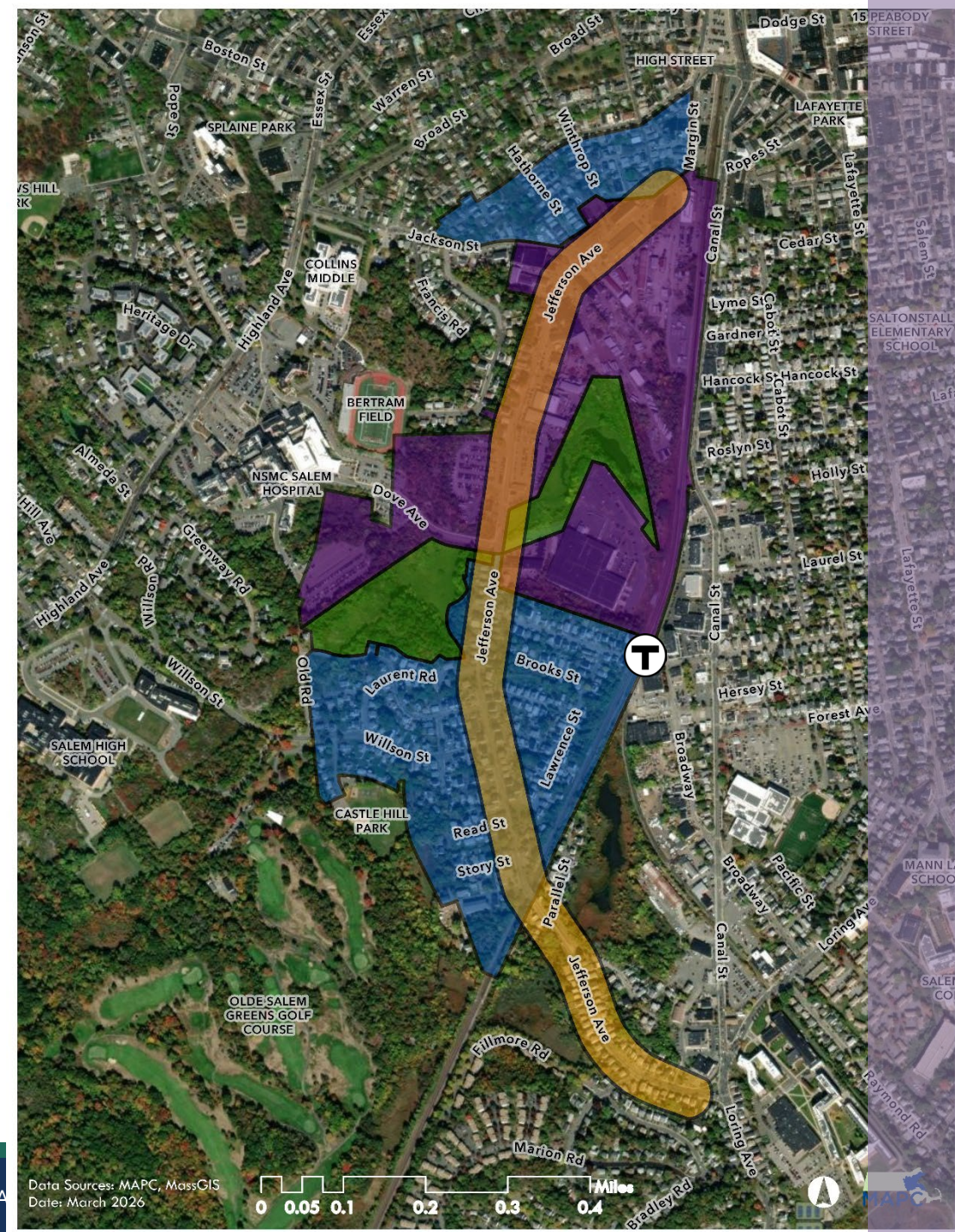
- ❌ Patchwork of zoning limits multifamily and mixed use
- ❌ Narrow path through special permit for expansion of nonconformity, PUD, and friendly 40B

	RC	R1	R2	R3	B1	B2	B4	B5	I	B P D
Dwelling, multifamily	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N
Multifamily development	N	N	N	BA	N	N	N	N	N	N



Proposed Zoning Approach

- Uses:
 - Allow **multifamily and mixed-use buildings, 3-6* stories** (tested through pro forma analysis)
 - Encourage **active first floors** with neighborhood commercial, community space, resident amenities.
- Boundaries: **"Area of Transformation"** only
- Zoning type: **Overlay district** to respect existing uses through area's transition (prohibiting select uses conflicting with corridor vision)
- **Design standards & guidelines: Area specific** for building orientation, scale, massing, bike/ped/auto circulation, basic design elements
- ***Height bonus** for further alignment with vision?





North River Apartments
28 Goodhue St.



Halstead Salem Station
Flint and Mason Streets

North River Canal Corridor Example

- River corridor with flood risk and industrial contamination
- Multifamily and mixed-use redevelopment subject to area-specific design standards
- Projects comply with affordability, wetlands, and flood resiliency requirements in effect at time of permitting
- Very gradual redevelopment even with vacant sites

Gradual Transformation of Jefferson Ave

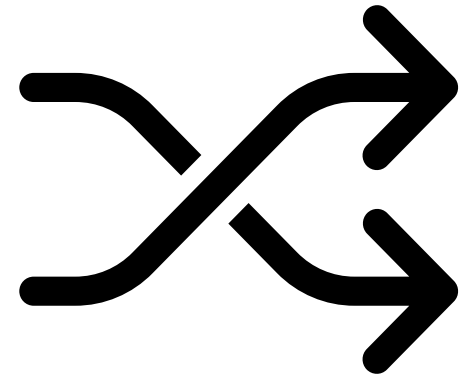


Address	Use	Status
5 Jefferson Ave.	DPS facility	City studying relocation
53 Jefferson Ave.	Vacant recycling facility	Currently being marketed
24/65/108 Jefferson Ave.	Hospital parking	City to explore feasibility of replacing surface lots with parking garage
20/25 Colonial Rd.	Amazon distribution warehouse	Long-term lease



Next Steps

- Short term
 - Develop design standards and guidelines
 - Finalize zoning language and legal review
 - Final report published
 - City Council & Planning Board hearings
- Long term
 - Train stop design and construction
 - Support for redevelopment of key sites
 - Implementation of plan recommendations



Ongoing Opportunity for Input

- Tonight: Committee of the Whole
 - Fall: City Council / Planning Board Joint Public Hearing
 - Anytime: Contact project team
 - Robyn Lee | Senior Planner
rlee@salem.com
 - Tom Devine, AICP | Senior Planner
tdevine@salem.com
-  DPCD: 978-619-5685

Stay up-to-date with the project by visiting our website:
<https://www.mapc.org/resource-library/jefferson-ave-plan/>



Discussion and Public Comment

