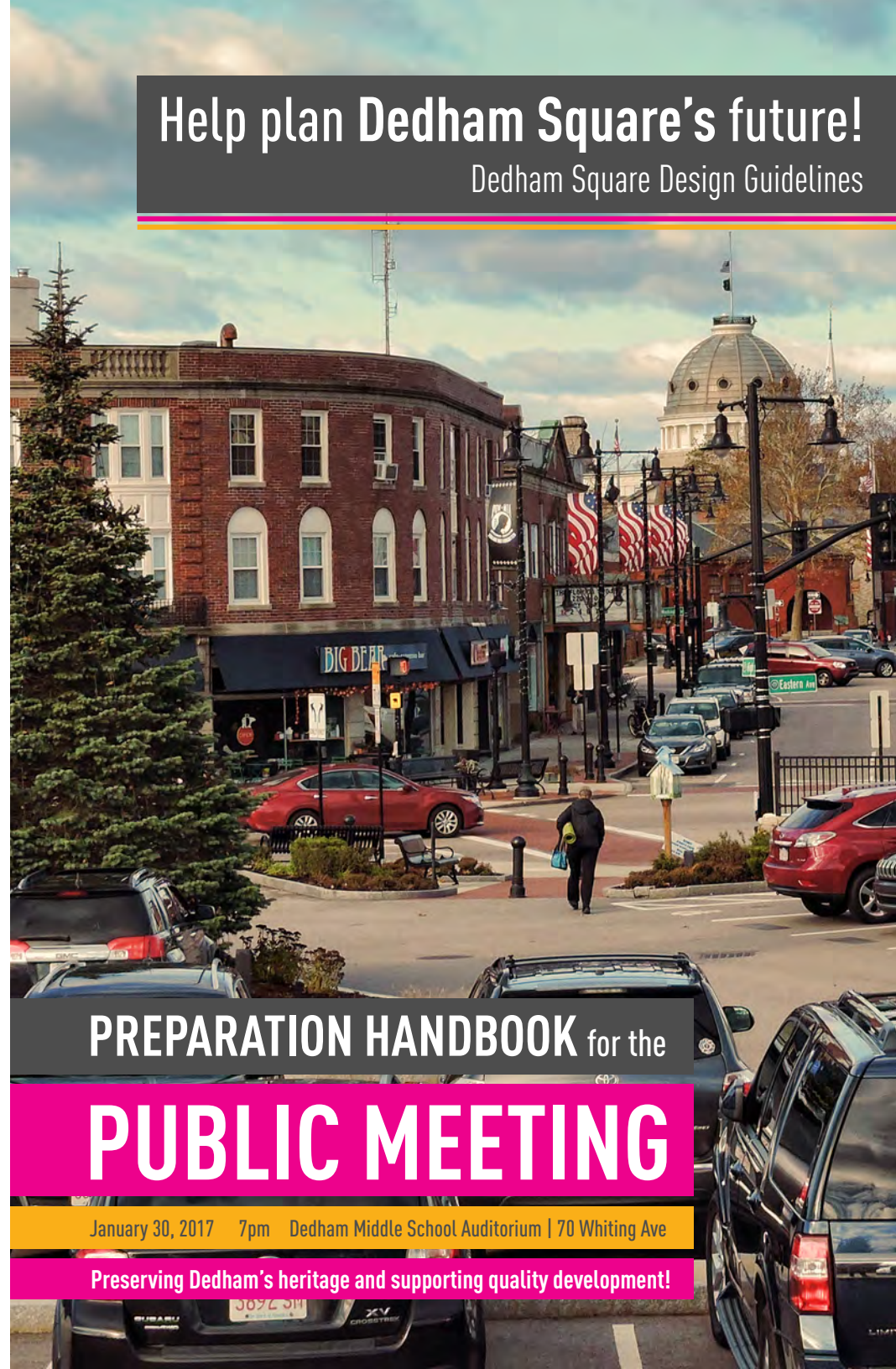


Help plan Dedham Square's future!

Dedham Square Design Guidelines



Dedham Square Steering Committee members

Michael Podolski, <i>chair</i>	Planning Board
Peter Smith, <i>vice-chair</i>	At-large member
Mike Butler	Board of Selectman
Amy Haelsen	Dedham Square Circle
Ryan McDermott	Master Plan Implementation Committee
George Panagopoulos	Business owner
Giorgio Petruzzello	Developer
Jessica Porter	Zoning Board of Appeals
Michelle Persson Reilly	Dedham Community House

Submitted to:



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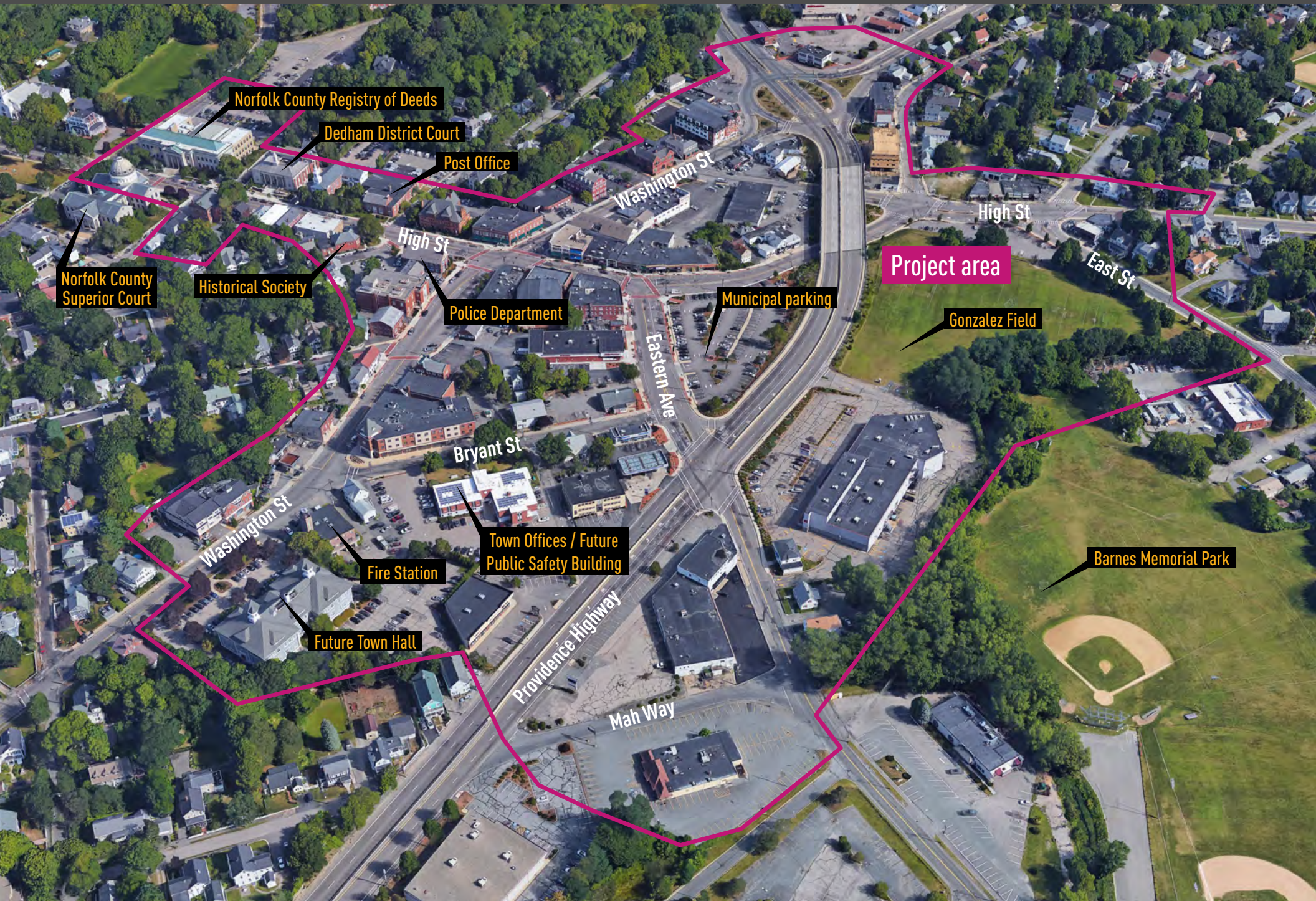
PREPARATION HANDBOOK for the

PUBLIC MEETING

January 30, 2017 7pm Dedham Middle School Auditorium | 70 Whiting Ave

Preserving Dedham's heritage and supporting quality development!

Project area



Norfolk County Registry of Deeds

Dedham District Court

Post Office

Norfolk County Superior Court

Historical Society

Police Department

Municipal parking

Project area

Gonzalez Field

Bryant St

Town Offices / Future Public Safety Building

Fire Station

Future Town Hall

Barnes Memorial Park

Washington St

Providence Highway

Mah Way

Washington St

High St

High St

East St

Introduction



Dedham Square is an outstanding place with a remarkable history. The downtown has a great mix of uses that include over 18 restaurants or places to eat in close proximity to one another. The well-maintained, historic buildings in the center of town represent a diverse collection of past eras and expressions. Recent streetscape improvements in the form of new sidewalks, street lights and tree planting highlight this enviable architectural backdrop.

Such favorable attributes naturally create development pressures. Over the last few years, recent construction is filling in the gaps between historic buildings and raising the level of discourse about what the future of Dedham Square should look like. Crafting Design Guidelines for new development ensures that future buildings will add value to the existing fabric and is in keeping with the character of an historic village.

The Design Guidelines will provide guidance to property owners and potential developers about what is expected in terms of building quality, massing, height and character, as well as the interface with the public realm. However, they do not replace zoning or affect current property uses. The Guidelines will enhance the economic vitality of Dedham Square by defining expectations for new development while still allowing for flexibility that foster high-quality design. It is important to build in the right locations and at the right density.

Signage along High Street

Introduction

Towns and cities compete with one another not only for business, but also to attract and keep the next generation of citizens. Increasingly, they strive to distinguish themselves from one another by capitalizing on their inherent strengths and building from their assets. In this regard, authenticity of place and uniqueness of community character are desperately sought out to differentiate one place from all others. Dedham already has a true sense of place and a keen understanding of why it is a place that residents proudly call home.

It is normal for communities to see a number of (seemingly) small-scale erosions in the circulation system. These incremental changes can, over time, result in challenges that in aggregate become more significant. Communities that develop a well-thought out approach to their street and circulation systems are better off because they balance the demands of vehicles and pedestrians. Fewer conflicts emerge between local traffic and through traffic. Dedham Square needs to address parking demands, but it should not come at the expense of a genuine pedestrian-oriented environment. It will also become increasingly important how the town can overcome the spatial separation caused by the Providence Highway and what role increased pedestrian connections can play.

Dedham Square is a relatively small geography and there is a perception that the Town is built out. However, there is still room to grow. Certain parcels close to Providence Highway are underutilized and would benefit

from greater density and a more robust mix of uses. Paradoxically, potential areas for new growth are also close to the historic building fabric. There are five blocks that are nestled between the historic buildings and the highway which are best positioned for redevelopment. This is the area where Design Guidelines will have the biggest impact.

In the first phase of the project, the design team has developed five (initial) Urban Design recommendations:

- 
- 1. Enhance the Gateways**
 - 2. Transition from Highway to Parkway**
 - 3. Nurture new open spaces downtown**
 - 4. Build a Better Block**
 - 5. Enhance pedestrian connectivity**

1. Enhance the Gateways

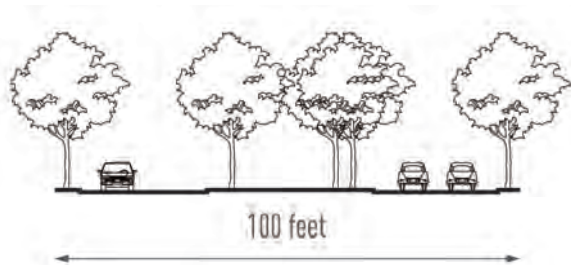
The size and character of Providence Highway is unlikely to change. It is the product of 20th century transportation planning. The heavily-used arterial is the primary thoroughfare for cars into and out of Dedham, ironically following the trajectory of the 19th century rail network that preceded it. On the bi-pass, one travels *over and around* downtown, but not through it.



RECOMMENDATION

The primary two intersections at Eastern Avenue and at the Washington Street roundabout are opportunities to reinforce a sense of place, optimize existing road alignments and enhance the experience of entering or exiting Dedham Square.

2. Transition from Highway to Parkway



There is a vast difference in the character of the street sections leading into Dedham Square. The Veterans of Foreign Wars Parkway transitions abruptly to the Boston Providence Highway and the difference between the two could not be more pronounced. While the right-of-way for the road does not change, the number and scale of curb cuts, light standards, planting and barriers along the highway undermine the aesthetic quality of the Town and reinforce a bland character commensurate with typical suburban strip development. Dedham deserves more.

RECOMMENDATION

Efforts to address this character need to be made in terms of the introduction of landscaping features, street trees and lighting that extend the parkway character further into downtown.

3. Nurture new open spaces downtown

There is a general lack of green space in the downtown core; Dedham Square has no traditional New England Green. Barnes Memorial Park is located across Providence Highway. A small pocket park is envisioned in front of the new Public Safety Building along Washington Street and there may be an opportunity for a small pocket park in front of the Police Station on High Street when that public service moves out. Open spaces are most successful when they are linked together and strengthen the overall network.

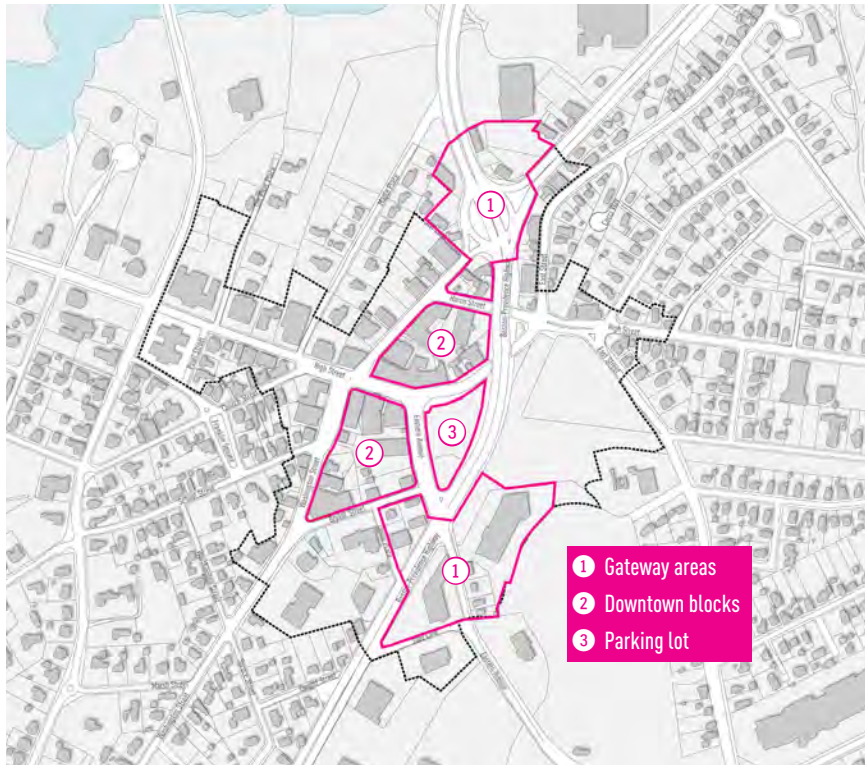


RECOMMENDATION

Investments need to be made to grow the open space system and forge a variety of places that are sustainable and resilient. Dedham should also forge a stronger relationship to the Charles River which is barely visible or accessible today.

4. Build a Better Block

Historic downtowns are defined by the quality of their buildings and streets. The Street itself is a primary public space. Dedham's downtown core has a well-defined streetwall condition with buildings next to one another defining sidewalks. Recent construction around Dedham Square has taken place on a parcel by parcel basis as opportunities arise and as individual property owners make investment decisions. Much of urban design centers around the relationship of the street to the adjacent buildings and the character of the landscape between them.

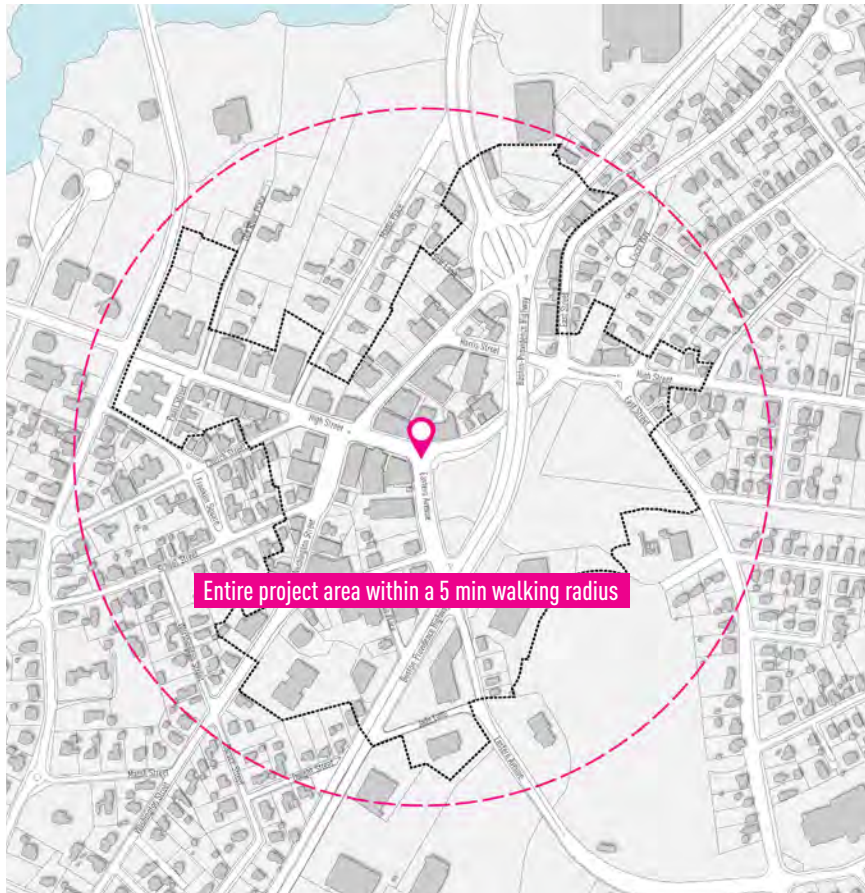


RECOMMENDATION

Opportunities should be sought that transcend individual property lines and help to create stronger blocks that grow the downtown without overwhelming the historic structures surrounding them.

5. Enhance pedestrian links

Dedham Square has a wide variety of amenities which makes it an attractive destination for people living and working around the Square. However, most of the public realm is used for roads and surface parking driven by the desire to park as close as possible to one's final destination. Long waiting periods for pedestrians at traffic lights and missing crosswalks prevent people from walking through the downtown.



Providence Highway

RECOMMENDATION

Future development should anticipate pedestrian circulation and integrate mid-block connections wherever possible.

History

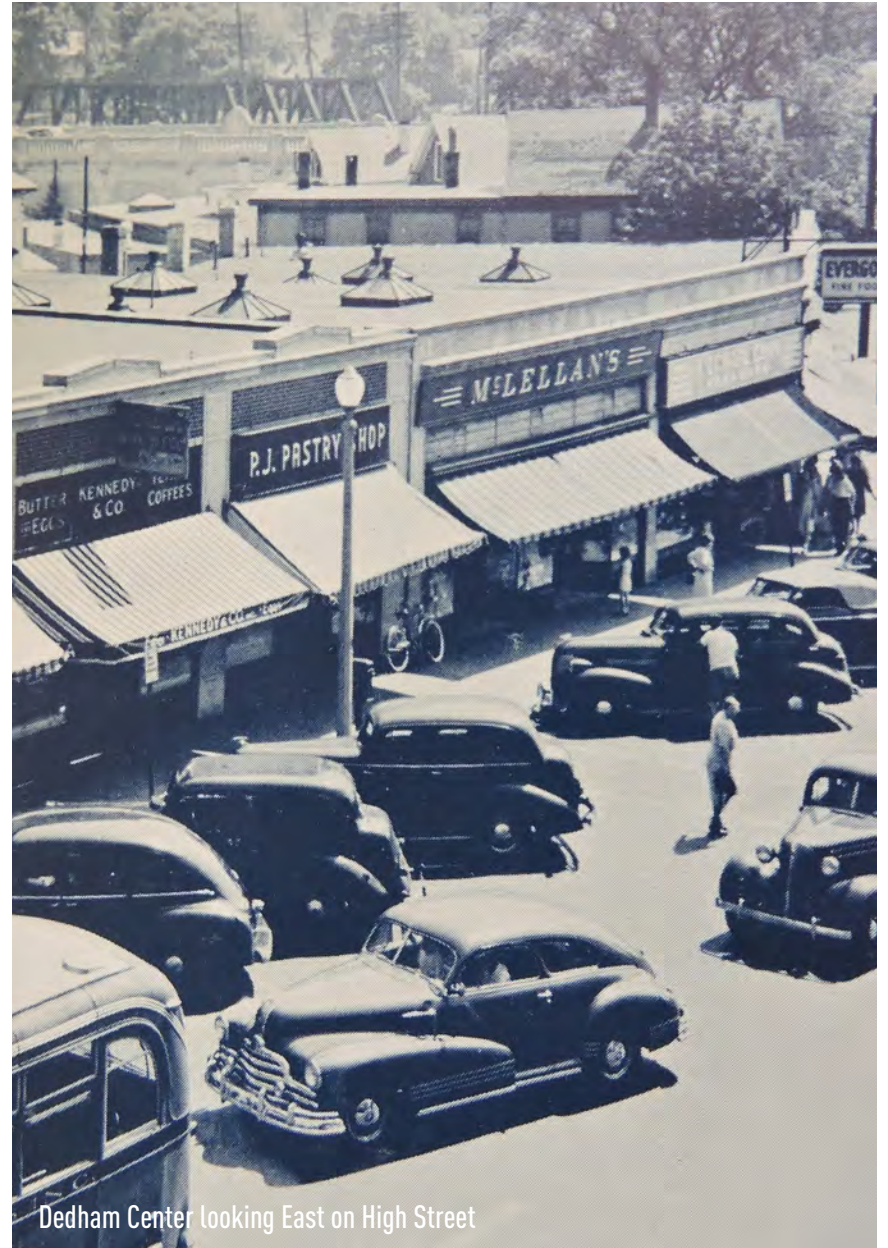
Images: Courtesy of the Dedham Historical Society & Museum



Charles River opposite Spring Street Park



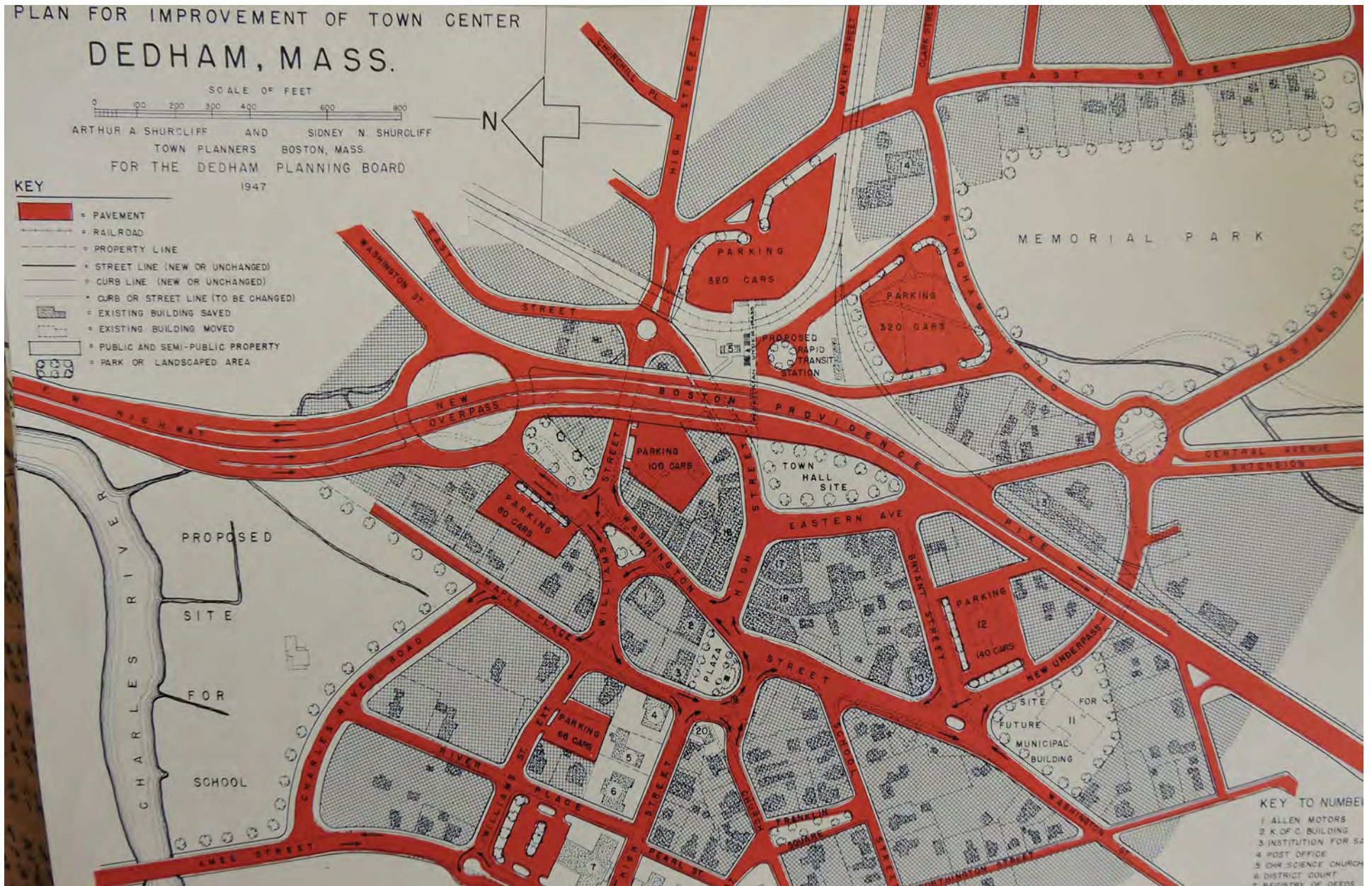
Historic Train Station



Dedham Center looking East on High Street

1947 Master Plan

Image: Courtesy of the Dedham Historical Society & Museum



Existing conditions



High Street view corridor



Future Town Hall



601 High Street



Community Theatre