

# Design Kick-off Meeting North Common & Main St Parking Lot Project

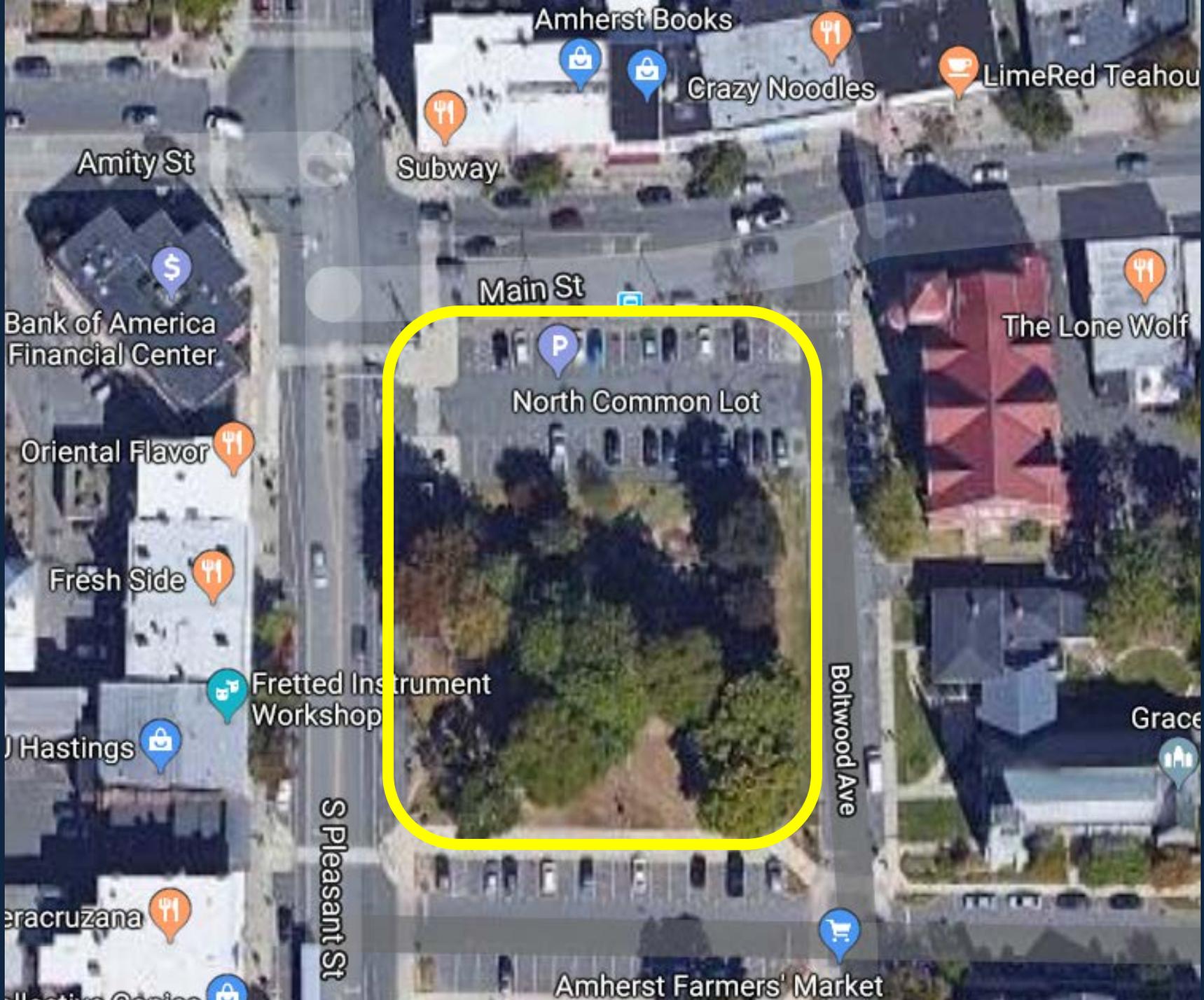


Town of Amherst

Amherst Historical Commission & LSSE Commission

May 29, 2018

Town Room, Town Hall



Amherst Books

Crazy Noodles

LimeRed Teahouse

Amity St

Subway

Main St

The Lone Wolf

Bank of America  
Financial Center

North Common Lot

Oriental Flavor

Fresh Side

Fretted Instrument  
Workshop

Boltwood Ave

Grace

Hastings

S Pleasant St

Veracruzana

Amherst Farmers' Market

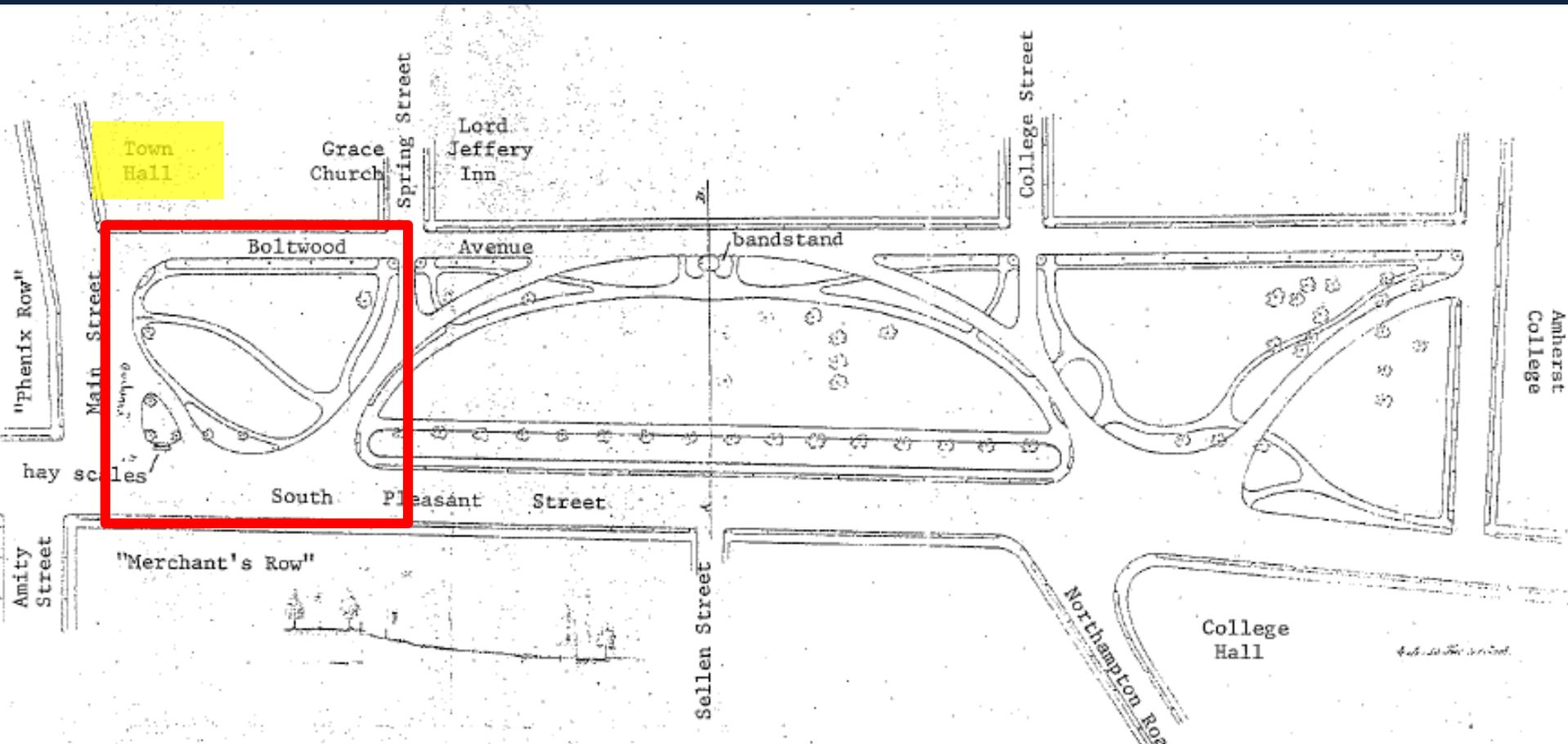
# Purpose of meeting

- Overview of history of the North Common & of this project
- Review goals & comments from previous meetings - January 2013; April 2014; June 2015
- Meet Weston & Sampson, Landscape Architects
- Talk about existing conditions, conceptual design & schedule

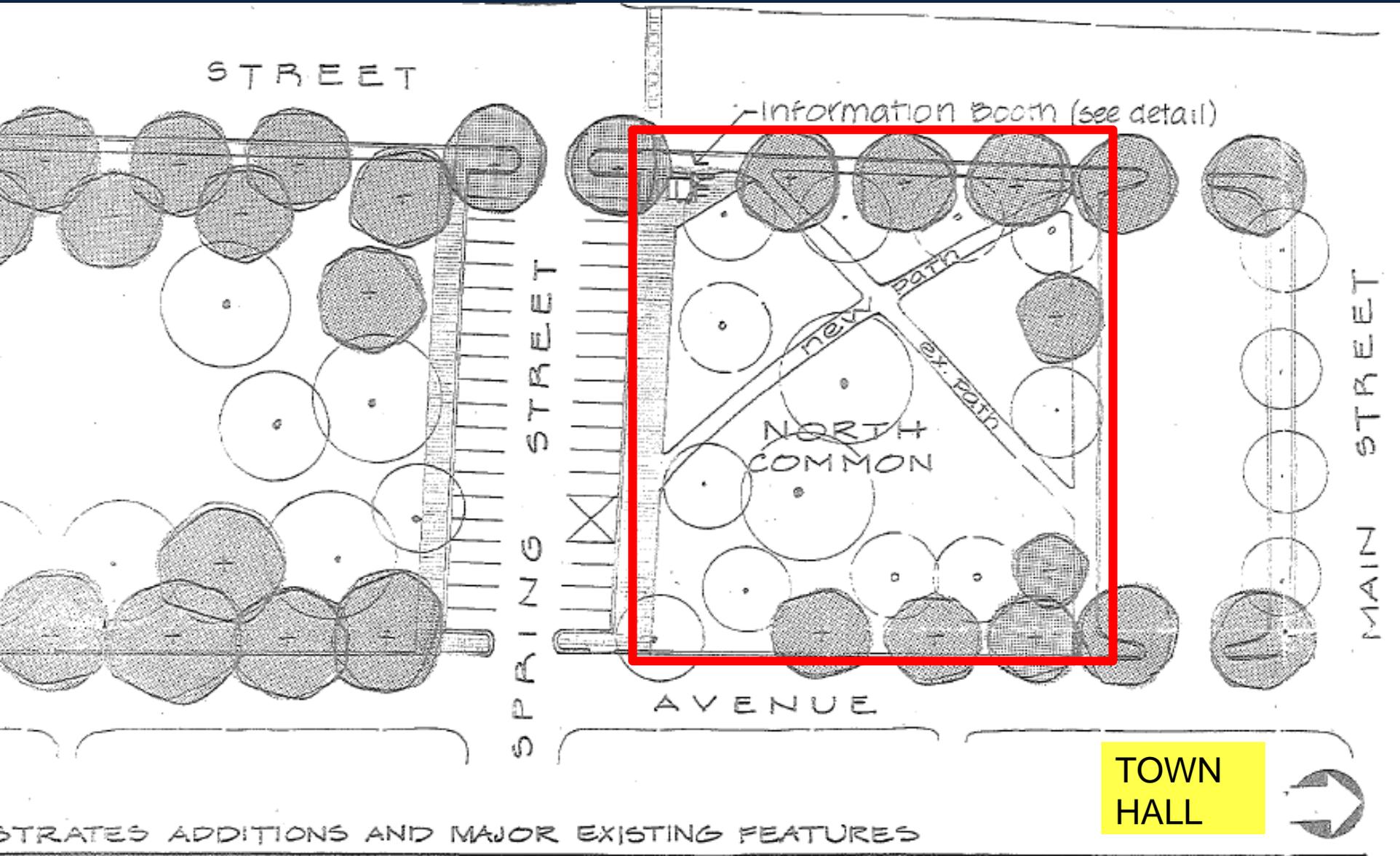
# History of the Town Common

- Town Common is as old as Amherst
- Town Common is part of the road right of way and is not a piece of property
- Amherst Select Board has jurisdiction over the Town Common. Many boards and committees are involved with maintenance and planning of the Common
- It is an original historic common, not a park

# 1874 Frederick Law Olmsted Design of Town Common



# 1986 Conway School of Design—Plan for Town Common



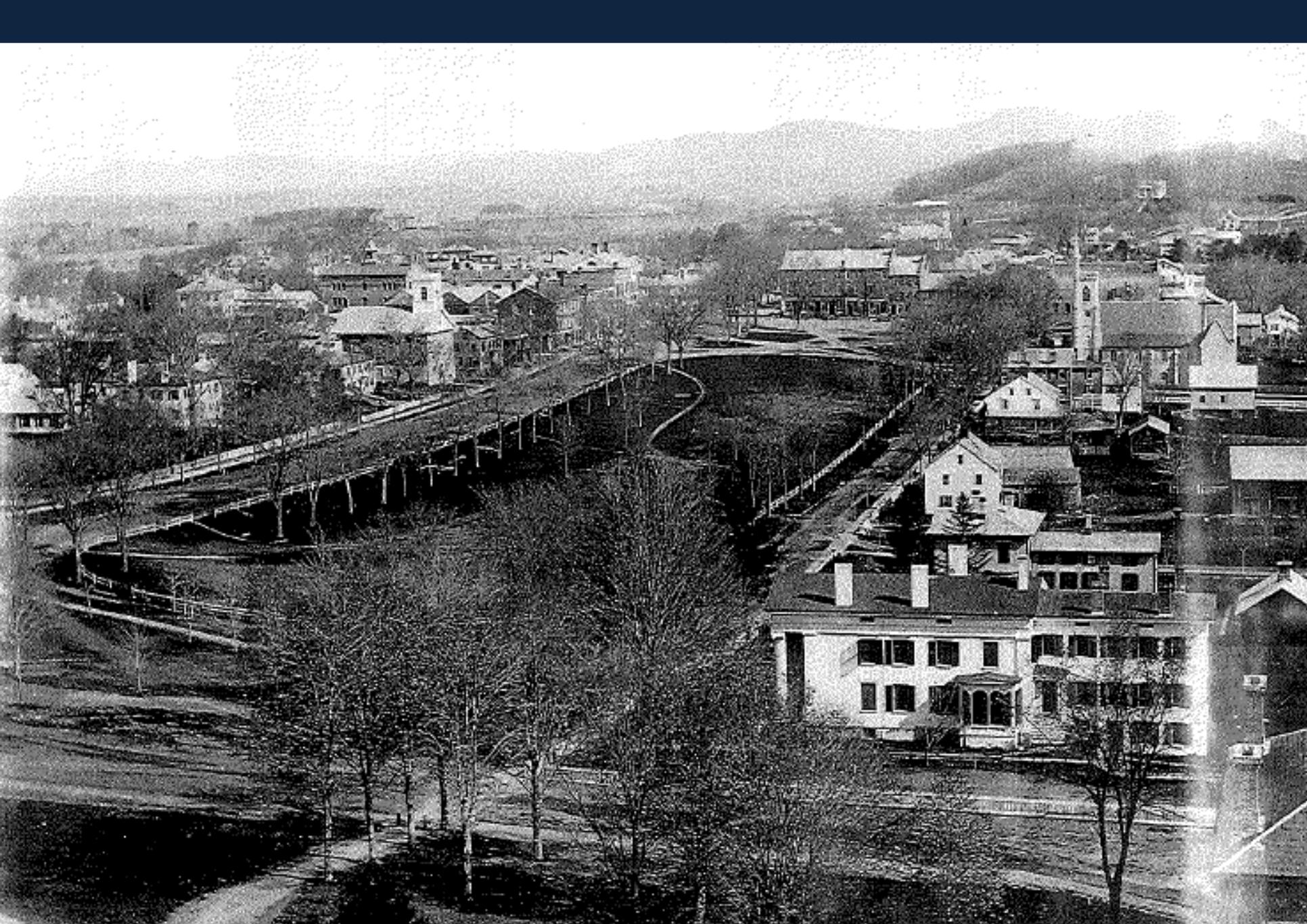
STRATES ADDITIONS AND MAJOR EXISTING FEATURES

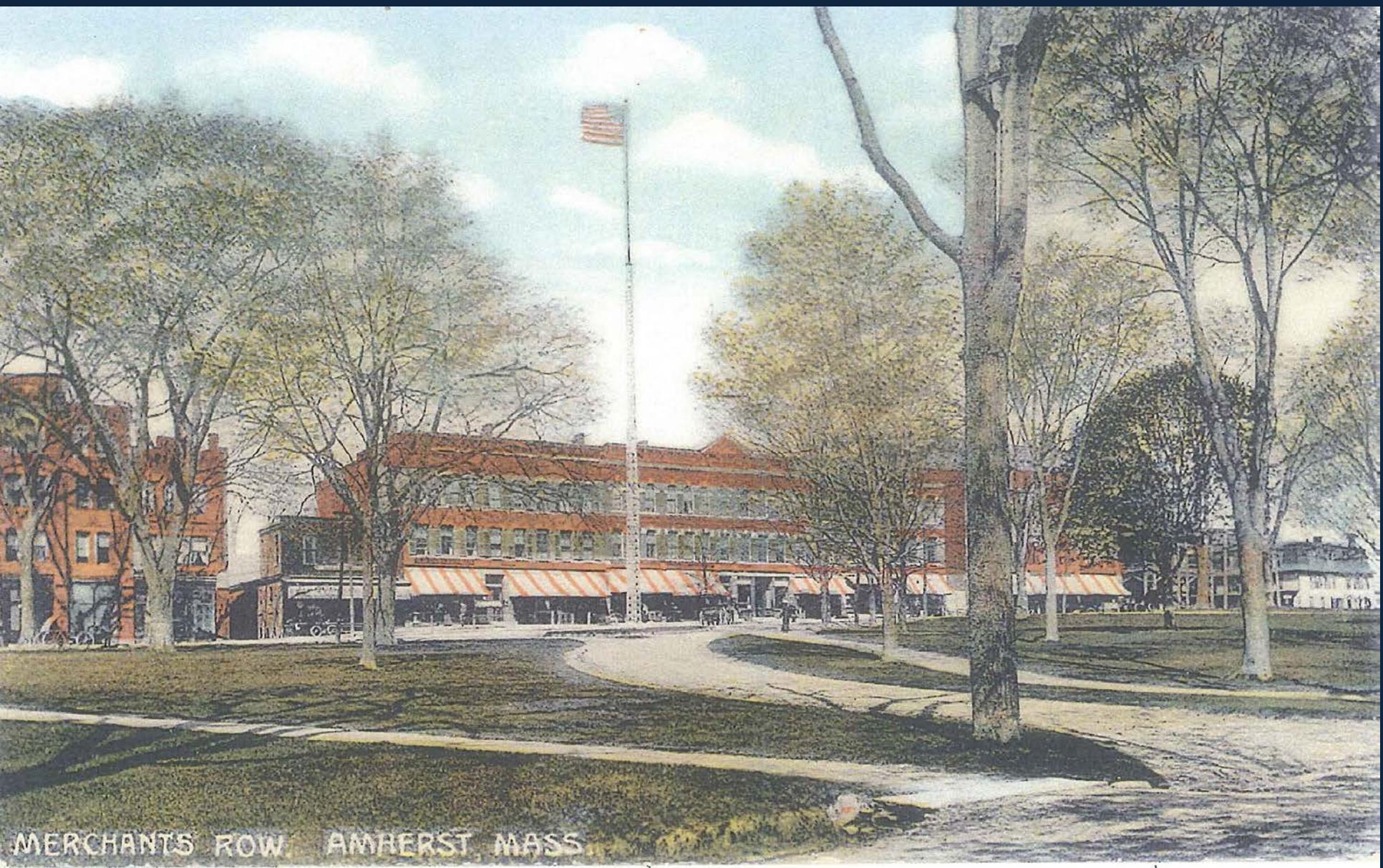
TOWN  
HALL



scale: 1" = 50'

CONWAY DESIGN ASSOCIATES





MERCHANTS ROW, AMHERST, MASS.



**Budget = \$1,000,000**

**CPAC grants for \$550,000 for historic  
preservation & recreation (FY16 & FY18)**

**Town Meeting authorized borrowing of  
\$450,000 for parking lot (Transportation  
Fund)**

# Comments from prior public meetings

- North Common is a destination - the heart of downtown
- Make improvements that will last; think long term
- Keep the green; trees are important
- Include the parking lot
- Create a gathering space
- Include art and sculpture

# Comments from prior public meetings (cont'd)

- Fix drainage and erosion problems
- Consider long term maintenance
- Add sitting areas
- Add benches
- Create a place for children & families
- Improve tree care
- Improve accessibility
- Add Lighting for night-time



*Improvements to*  
**AMHERST**  
**NORTH COMMON &**  
**MAIN STREET PARKING LOT**



*Don't forget our lovely North Common*

May 29, 2018

# PROJECT TEAM

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## **Christine Brestrup**

Planning Director

[brestrupc@amherstma.gov](mailto:brestrupc@amherstma.gov)

## **Town of Amherst**

Dave Ziomek, Assistant Town Manager

Jason Skeels, Town Engineer, DPW

Paul Dethier, Engineer, DPW

Alan Snow, Tree Warden, DPW

Nate Malloy, Senior Planner

Geoff Kravitz, Economic Development Director

Barbara Bilz, Director of LSSE

## **Historical Commission**

Jane Wald, Chair

Jan Marquardt

## **LSSE Commission**

Nate Budington

Sarah Marshall

## **Weston & Sampson Design Studio**

Gene Bolinger, RLA, Vice President

Michael Easler, RLA, Project Landscape Architect

Farah Dakkak, Landscape Designer



# AGENDA

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1

**INTRODUCTION**

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2

**PAST COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

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3

**THE COMMON TODAY**

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4

**THE COMMON REIMAGINED**

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5

**LISTENING & DISCUSSION**

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# CREATING A BETTER COMMON TOGETHER



# What do we honor? What is awesome?

- The foresight of our ancestors
- The history of the property
- The space itself
- The surroundings
- Some of the trees
- The terrain (let's make it work for us!)



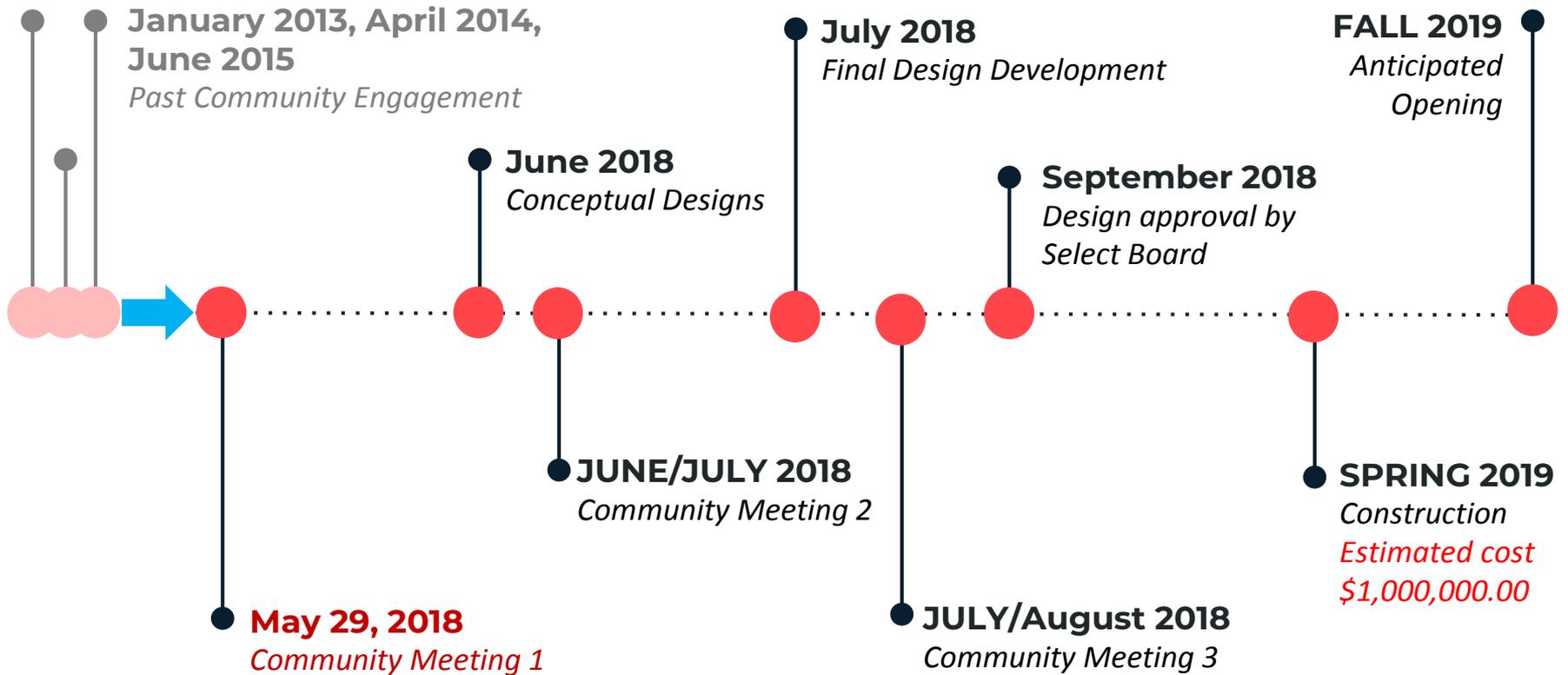
# Opportunities

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- Create a more sustainable landscape
- Create space that inspires
- Create a well-integrated design (one that is ‘grounded’ on this site)
- Accommodate formal and informal uses/activities
- Provide logical pedestrian connections
- Establish stronger connections between the North Common and other open spaces, businesses, and institutions
- Mitigate the surrounding roadway/parking lot fray
- Improve views into the property and from the property to beyond

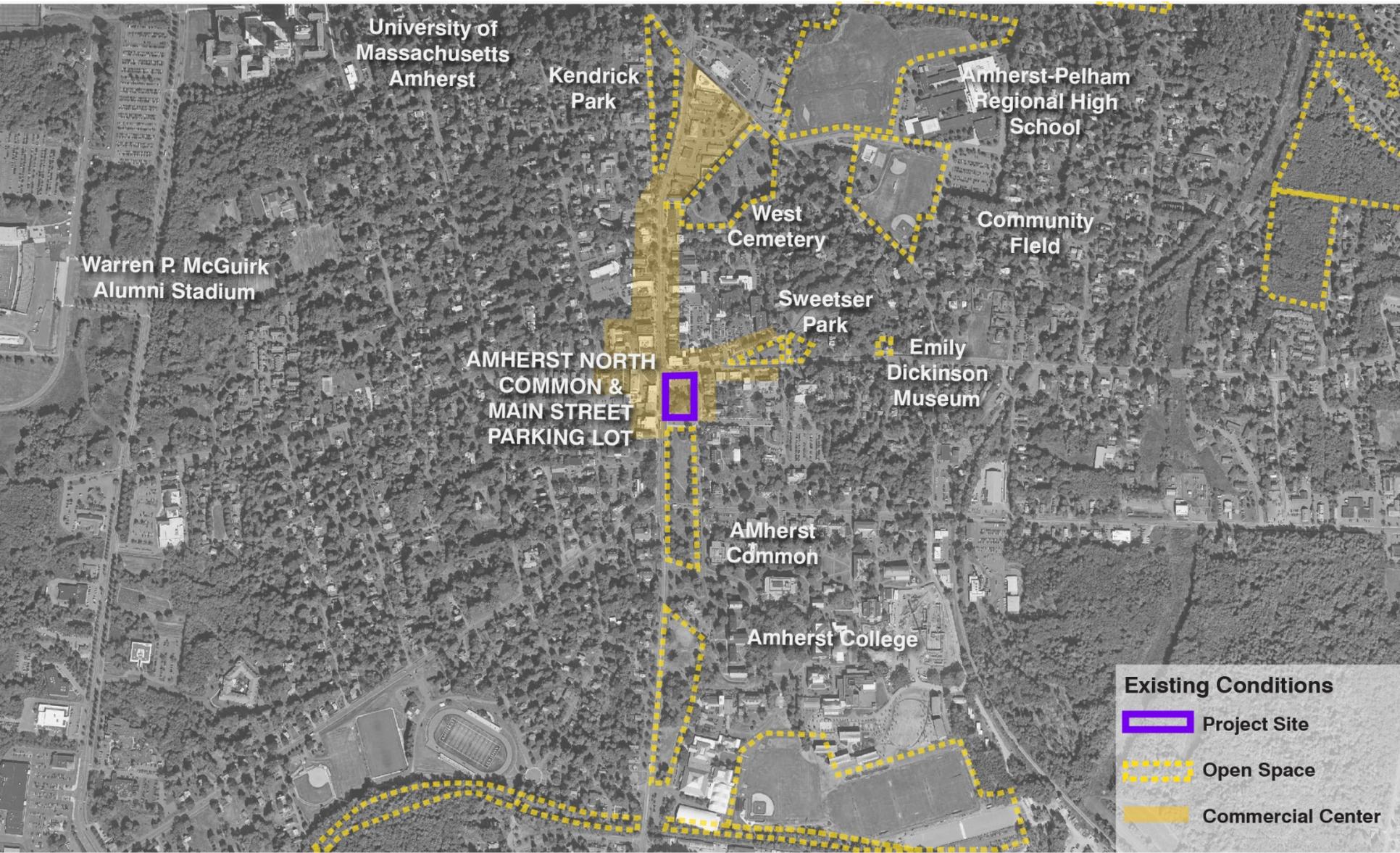


# PROJECT SCHEDULE & FUNDING



# The Common Today

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# The Common Today

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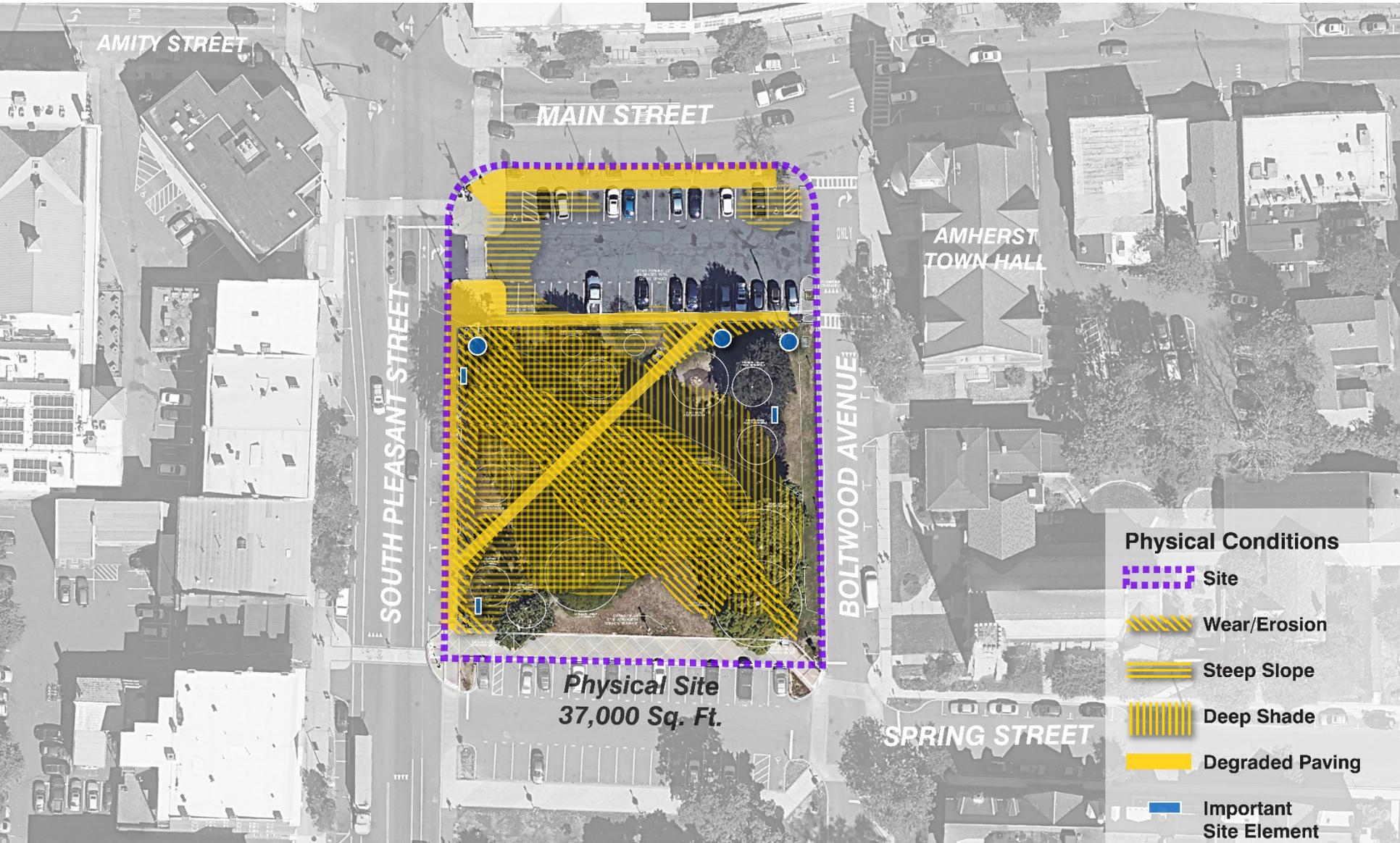
# The Common Today

## Site Movement



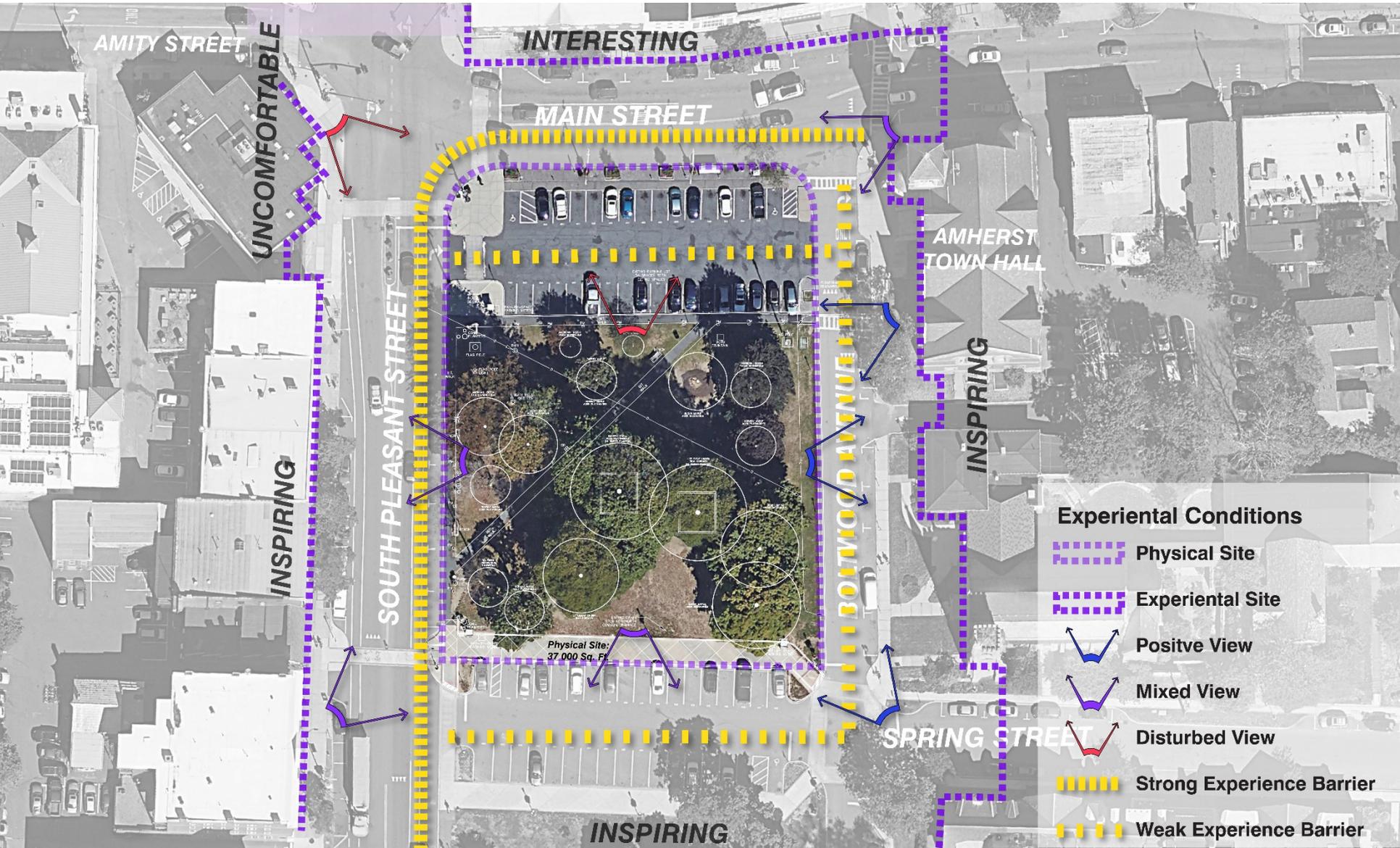
# The Common Today

## Physical conditions



# The Common Today

## Experiential conditions



# The Common Today

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## Worn and eroded open space



# The Common Today

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## Worn conditions



# The Common Today

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## Uncomfortable spaces & conditions



# The Common Today

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## Aging & abandoned infrastructure



# The Common Reimagined

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## Users

- Residents
- Families
- Students
- Tourists
- Local businesses
- Farmers' markets
- Weekly peace vigils
- Veteran's Day/Memorial Day ceremonies
- Holiday ceremonies (Merry Maple lighting)
- Town hall events
- Flag raisings
- Others (to be determined)



# The Common Reimagined

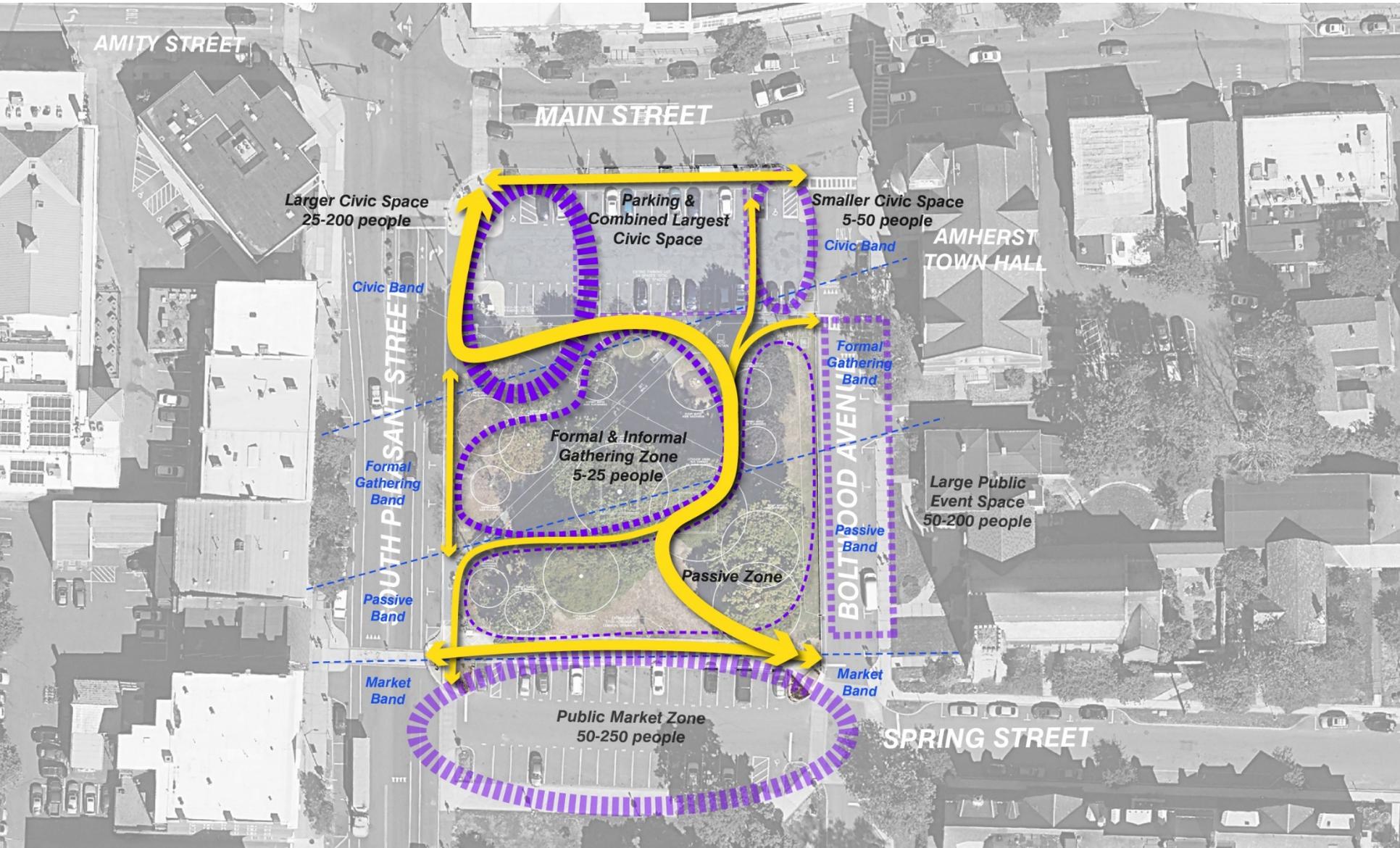
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Users ( this evening )



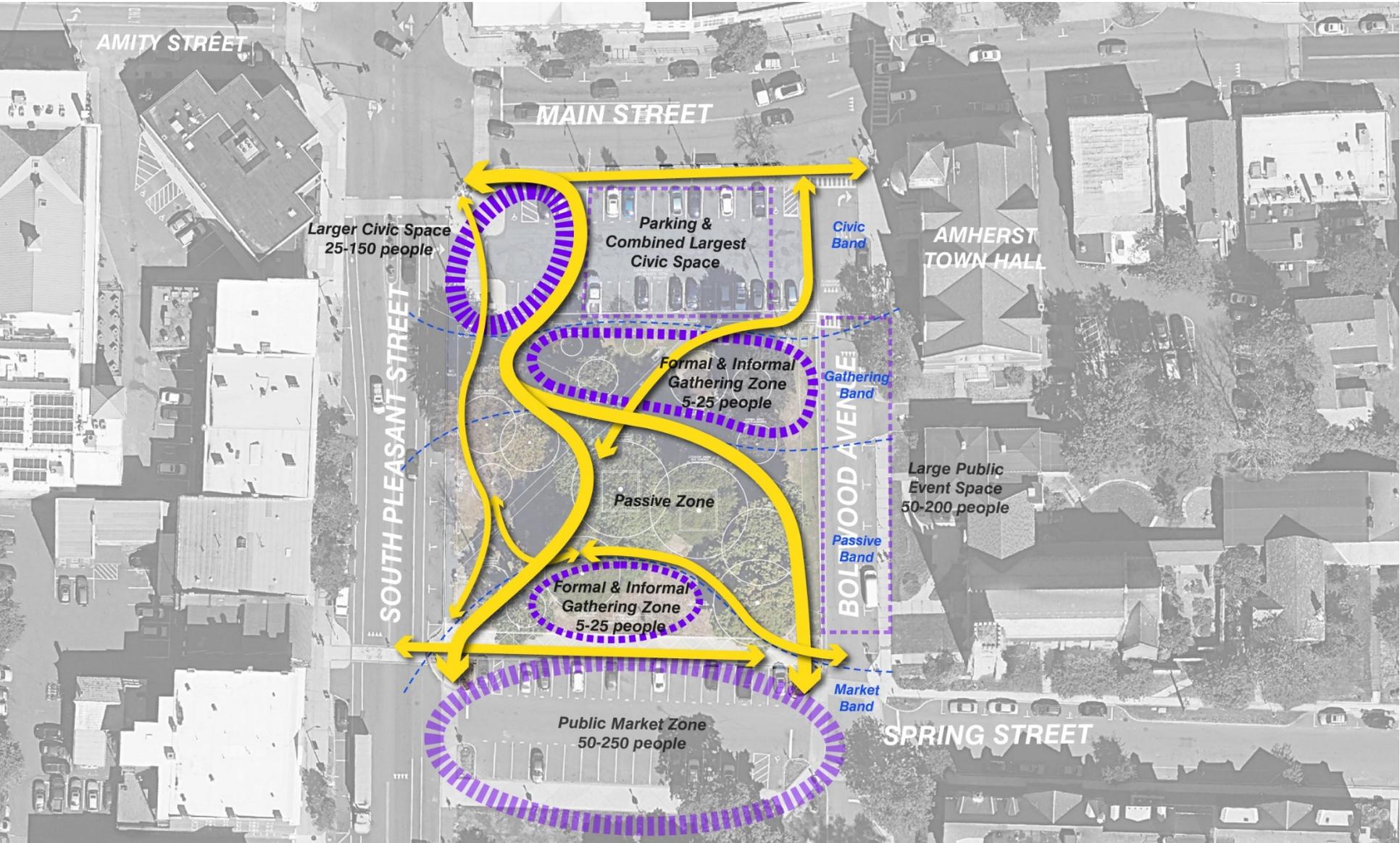
# The Common Reimagined

## Options to activate the space



# The Common Reimagined

## Options to activate the space



# The Common Reimagined

Precedent: Worcester Common, Worcester, Massachusetts



# The Common Reimagined

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## Precedent: Worcester Common, Worcester, Massachusetts

- Public space
- Downtown
- Can hold multiple gatherings of various sizes
- Moveable furniture, lawn, green space,
- Developed tree canopy
- Open, sunny lawn spaces
- Integrated into historic and inspiring surrounds
- Many informal uses supported



# The Common Reimagined

Precedent: Boston Common- Brewer Fountain

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# The Common Reimagined

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## Precedent: Boston Common- Brewer Fountain

- Public space
- Downtown
- Can hold large, medium, and small gatherings
- Lots of lawn, green space, tree canopy around
- Integrated into historic and inspiring surrounds
- Formal space can hold both formal and informal uses
- Informal, formal, and movable seating allows people to create their own spaces

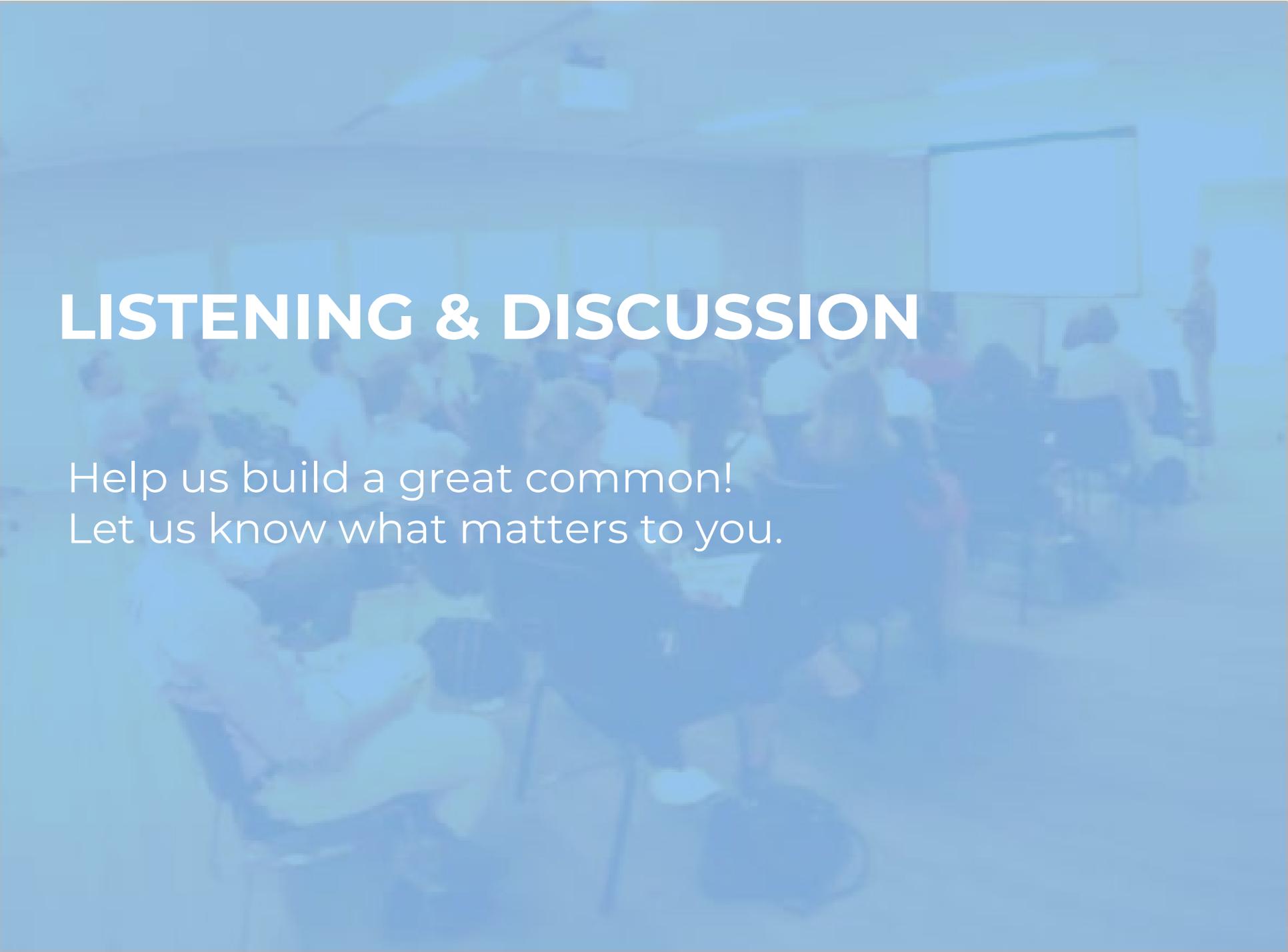


# Next Steps

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- Feedback from tonight will be incorporated and developed into conceptual designs Tonight
- Conceptual designs to be presented for further public, LSSE, Historical Commission and Select Board feedback June/July 2018
- A preferred design presented for final public, LSSE, Historical Commission and Select Board feedback at the third public meeting July/August 2018
- Feedback is incorporated and the Select Board approves final plan September 2018
- Construction documents are developed Fall 2018
- Project is bid February 2019
- Construction begins May 2019  
(post-graduation)
- Project completion Fall 2019





# LISTENING & DISCUSSION

Help us build a great common!  
Let us know what matters to you.



# THANK YOU!

For questions, comments, or concerns, please contact:

**Christine Brestrup**

Planning Director

[brestrupc@amherstma.gov](mailto:brestrupc@amherstma.gov)



May 29, 2018