

KENMORE SQUARE, BOSTON MA

Jannet Arevalo (Urban Design)
Foteini Bouliari (Urban Design)
Nicole Adler (Design Engineering)

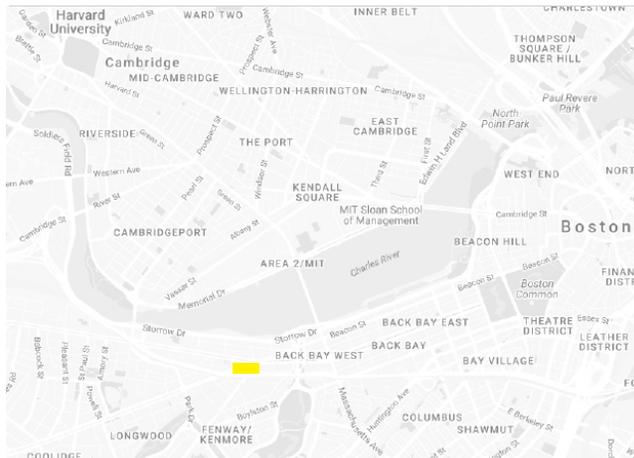
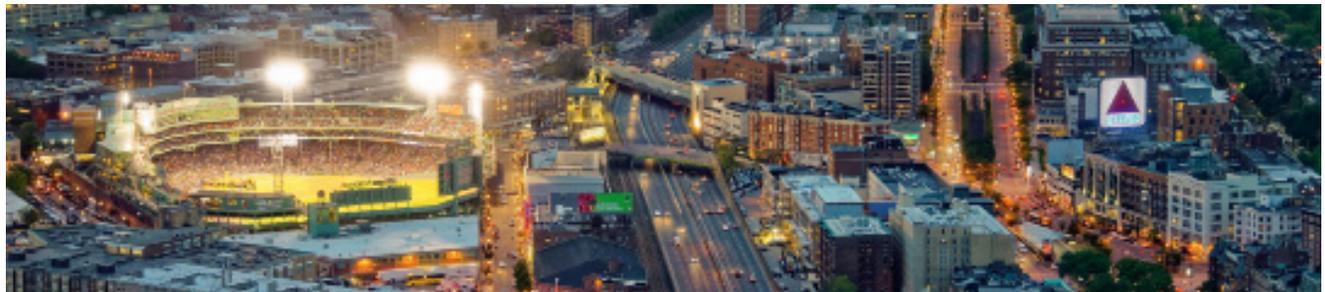
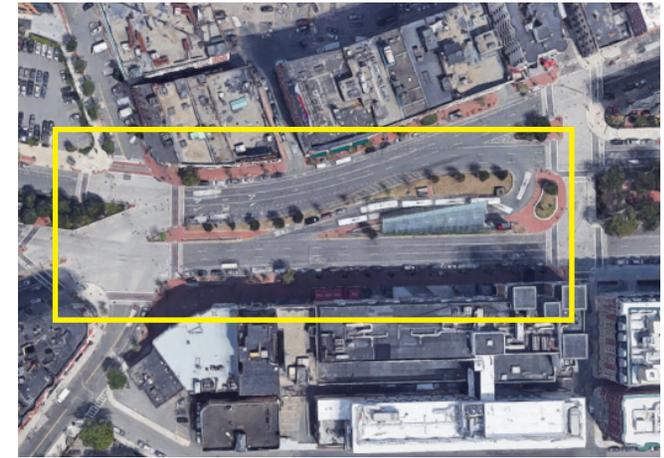
CONTEXT

Kenmore Square is the 2nd busiest intersection in Boston, Massachusetts - just south of the Charles River, it is the commercial crossroads of Commonwealth Avenue, Brookline Avenue, and Beacon Street and surrounds the Kenmore Green Line T stop and bus stop. It is the eastern terminus of U.S. Route 20, the longest U.S. Highway and the location of 25th mile of the Boston Marathon.

Today, the square is probably best known for its association with the Boston Red Sox. Just over the turnpike, less than 350 yards south of the Square are Fenway Park and Lansdowne Street, a center of Boston nightlife (with landmarks like House of Blues).

To the West, Kenmore abuts Boston University (~850 yards) and has the six-story Barnes & Noble @ BU, the largest bookstore in Boston.

The neighborhood's best-known landmark is the famous 60-foot-by-60-foot Citgo Sign - a beacon to visitors and residents on both sides of the Charles since 1965 (the sign's original five miles of neon tubing was replaced in 2004 by 281,000 red, white, and blue LED lights). In 2016, the sign received historic preservation protection as a Boston Landmark.



TIMELINE

1912: Fenway Park opened



Before 1960s: part of Boston's Auto Mile



1970s: The Rathskeller ("The Rat") was cornerstone of Boston's punk rock scene



1947: Boston Elevated Railway (which ran Boston's subways, streetcars, buses) sold its operations to Metropolitan Transit Authority (now MBTA) as it was no longer profitable from competition with automobiles



2002: Hotel Commonwealth construction started; entrance to MBTA moved in hotel

The area that makes up Kenmore Square today was originally Sewall's Point, on the edge of a large tidal marsh along the Charles River. Once the landfill projects were completed around 1900, this area became the intersection of the three major roads.

For years, Kenmore Square was little more than a busy doorstep to Fenway Park. Trolley lines and nearby railroads brought businessmen from Brighton and Brookline and even from as far west as Albany through the square (and many of them found accommodations in the square's hotels). Prior to the 1960s, it was also part of Boston's Auto Mile, famous for more than 100 automobile dealerships.

The 1970s ushered in a new era, when partiers from all over thronged to the infamous Rathskeller, a punk-rock venue that helped launch the careers of the Ramones, R.E.M., and the Police. Other than nightclubs, the square had pizza shops, small record shops, an IHOP, a bong store...The young found it fun, but the square was an eyesore to BU administration: much of the retail space lay vacant, neighborhood's methadone clinic and halfway house attracted homeless, fights spilled out of the nightclubs.

BU chose to get involved to revitalize the area partnering with Barnes & Noble to create one of the largest university bookstores in the country, and buying the block between the Rat and IHOP to help develop the Hotel Commonwealth.

KENMORE SQUARE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

A confluence of events and stakeholder interests were involved in the decade-long transformation of Kenmore Square. In the mid 1990s, the MBTA developed plans to upgrade their train and bus facilities, incorporating new ADA accessibility standards. As part of that plan, the MBTA was required to construct an accessible entry to the below-grade Green Line Station at Kenmore Square.

At the same time, the complex convergence of vehicular roadways above ground at Kenmore Square created inherent conflicts and unsafe traffic conditions. Pedestrian routes (especially to BU and Fenway Park) were geometrically confusing - the square was dominated by large expanses of undefined asphalt that caused unsafe pedestrian conditions at a complex juncture. Project planners embraced the MBTA accessibility upgrade as an opportunity to simultaneously re-evaluate the design of the landscape, including vehicular and pedestrian circulation. The redevelopment of the Hotel Commonwealth on the south side of the square added further impetus to revamp the area.

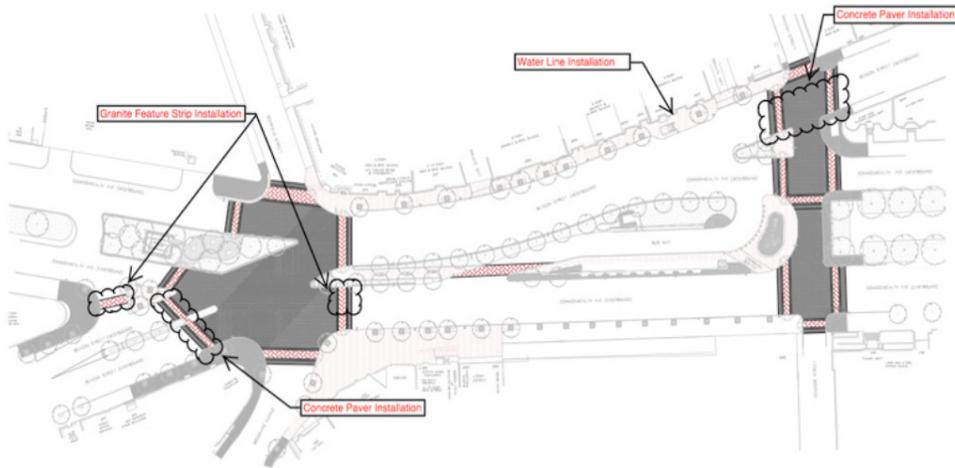


The project began in 1996 and involved a large number of stakeholders, each with issues to be accommodated through the redesign of the square: the MBTA needed to provide accessibility and improved bus service, Mass Highway wanted to improve traffic flow, The Kenmore Business Association wanted better and safer pedestrian access, the BRA and the city were concerned with the urban design issues, BU was focused on their campus "front door" and their recent investment in the Hotel Commonwealth, and the Red Sox was targeting safety, access and flow for pedestrians going to Fenway. While construction was coordinated, The Commonwealth of Massachusetts funded the work to make Kenmore Square safer for pedestrians and vehicles and the Light Rail Accessibility Program funded the accessibility changes.

KENMORE SQUARE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT



POSSIBLE WORK AREAS FOR SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2008
(some of this work may be completed this week)



KENMORE SQUARE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Some radical strategies were suggested including moving the station access and incorporating it into a larger side walk on the Commonwealth Hotel side of the street, reducing the impact of pedestrian movements on the roadway. This was vetoed by the bus drivers who did not want to have to make left turns across traffic. Construction only officially started in the early 2000s and the project was completed in 2010:

Transit changes

- The MBTA Light Rail Accessibility Program (LRAP) installed elevators to provide wheelchair access from the surface busway to the mezzanine and platform levels.
- The existing bus station's bunker-like design (which visually cut the square in half and contributed to motorist confusion about which way to proceed through the awkward alignment of streets) was updated with a new a glass-and-steel canopy architecture which allowed people on one side of the square to see to the other side. The architects drew inspiration from the new Jubilee Line in London where extensive use of glass and transparency had improved security.

Vehicular Traffic changes

- The large expanses of asphalt were replaced with attractive concrete pavers. The pavers are a visual prompt to drivers and pedestrians that they have entered a special zone - the texture and color of the pavers were meant to calm traffic and cause drivers to pause, creating a safer environment for pedestrians.
- New traffic signals, with smarter computer programming were installed.

Pedestrian Safety changes

- Roadways were narrowed slightly to make way for expanded sidewalks at the east and west intersections that define the square.
- Pedestrian circulation was improved by realignment of the Brookline Avenue intersection with Commonwealth Avenue.
- Crossing locations are defined by paver paths in contrasting colors.
- 80 new trees lining both sides of the square, a widened center island, wire-cut brick sidewalks, and street lighting improved the feel and attempted to make Kenmore a destination at the end of the Commonwealth Avenue Mall, rather than a space one merely passes through.



The project was managed by MBTA Design & Construction in coordination with Mass Highway, and the City of Boston Redevelopment Authority. The project designers were DiMella Shaffer Architects and Planners; Civil Engineering firm was Bryant Associates; Landscape Architecture firm was Pressley Associates; Transportation Engineering firm was Howard Stein Hudson.

KENMORE SQUARE

2007



300 ft

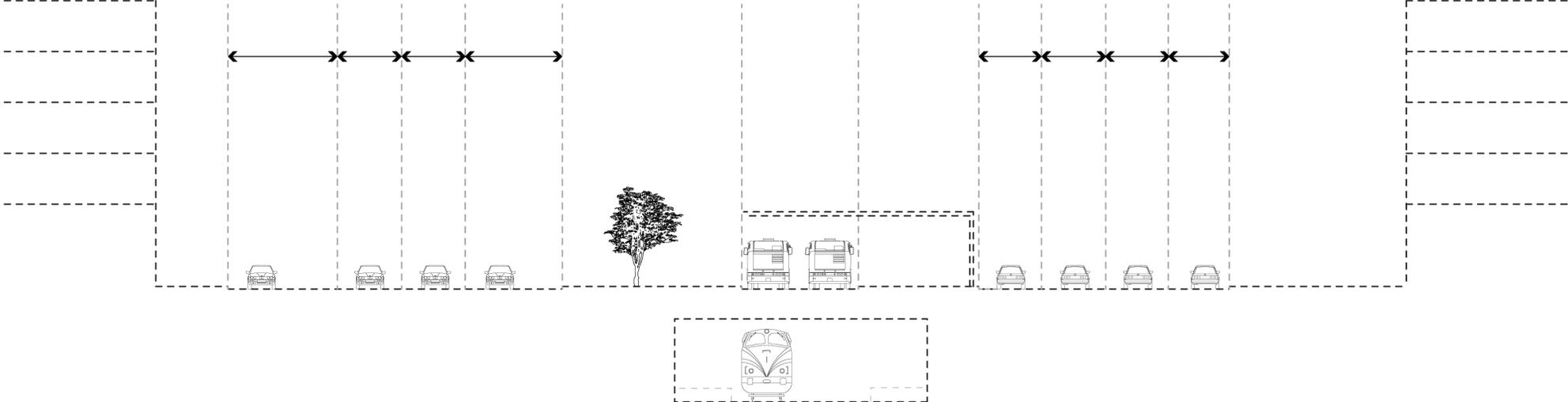
KENMORE SQUARE

2017

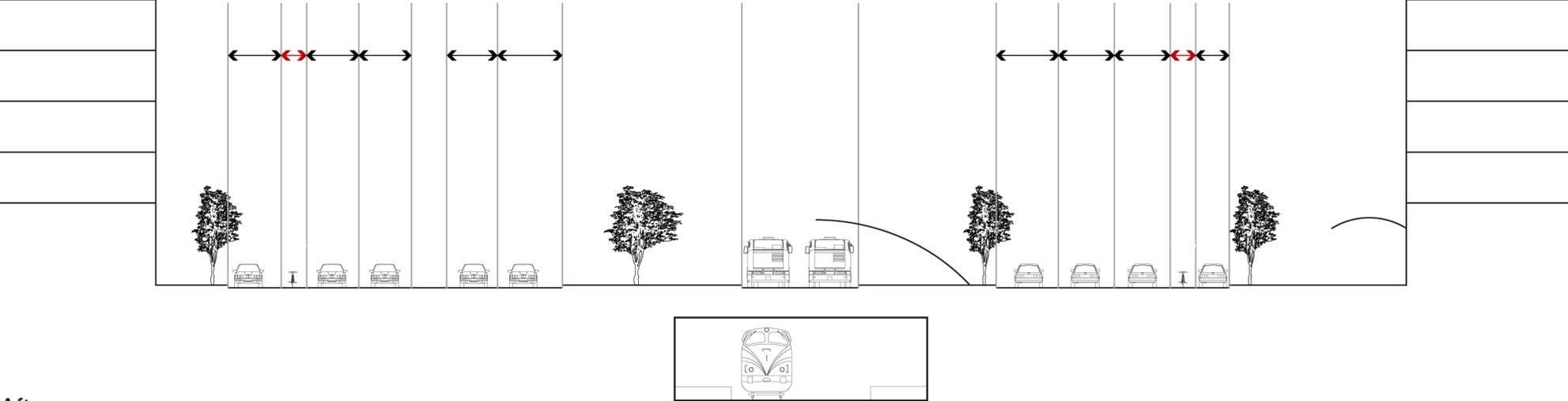


300 ft

COMMONWEALTH AVENUE SECTIONS



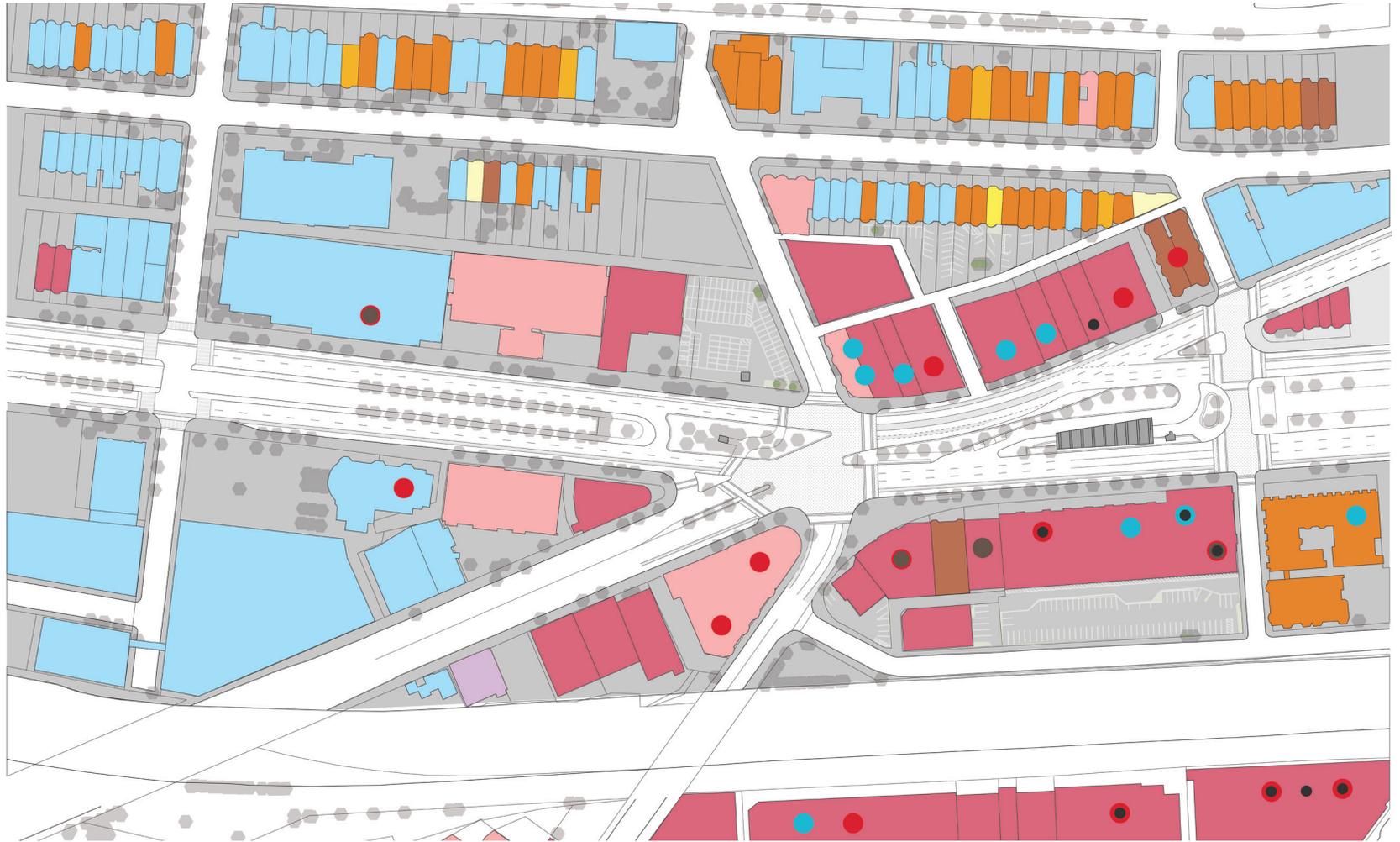
Before



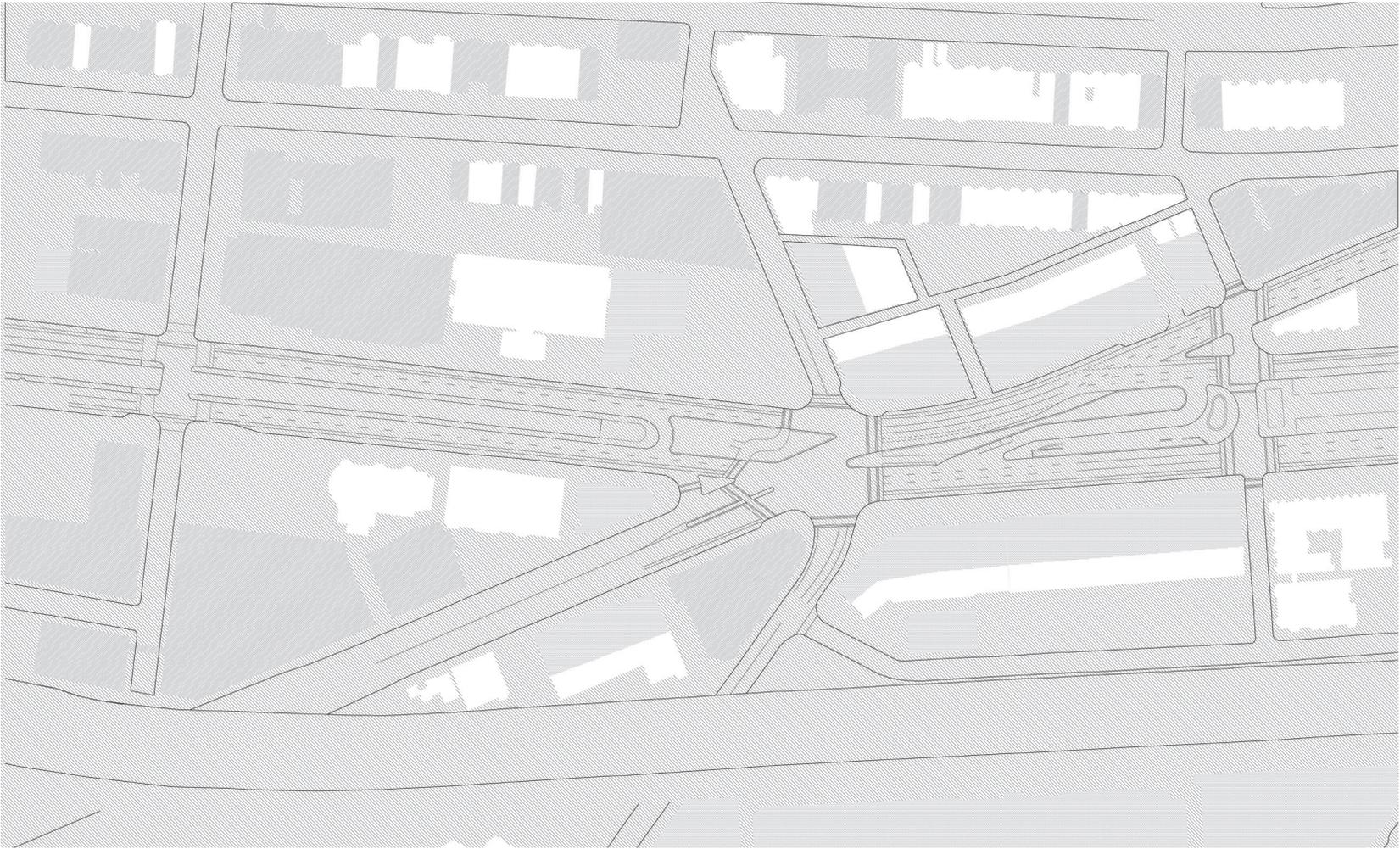
After

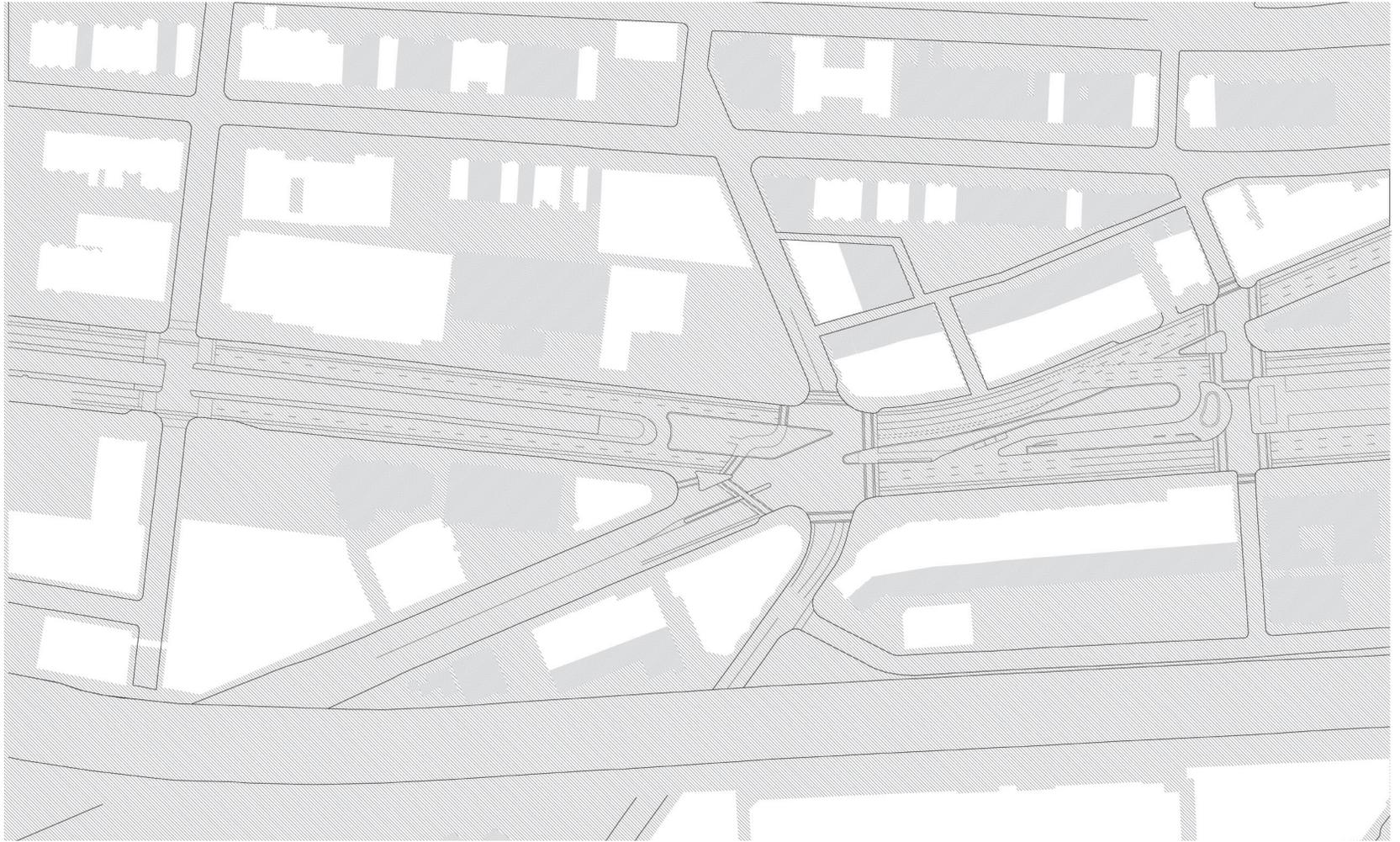
LAND USE PLAN

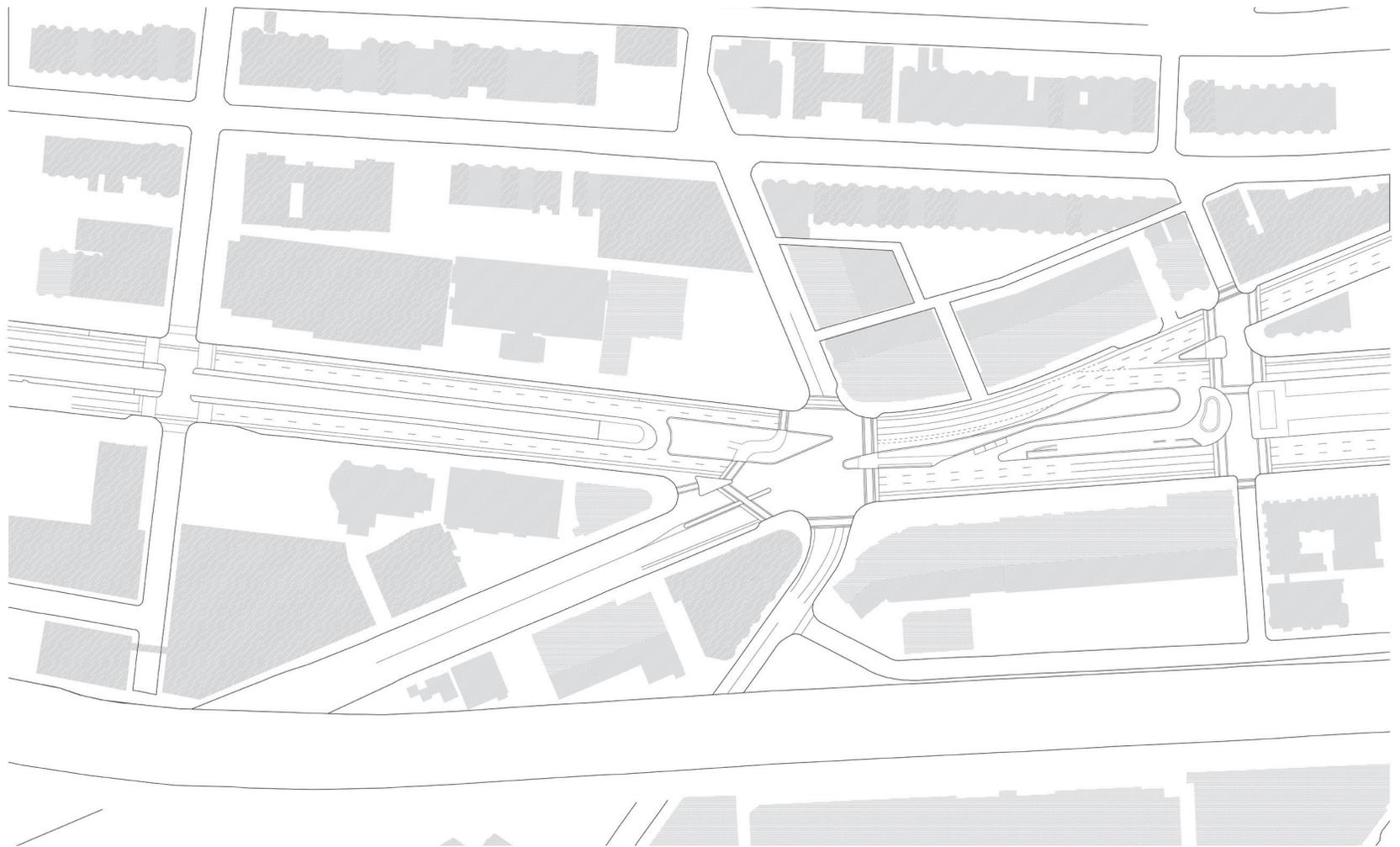
- Single - family
- Two - family
- 4-6 apartments
- Apartment
- Condominium
- Commercial
- Mixed use
- Institutional
- Industrial
- Restaurants
- Shopping
- Nightlife
- Cafes

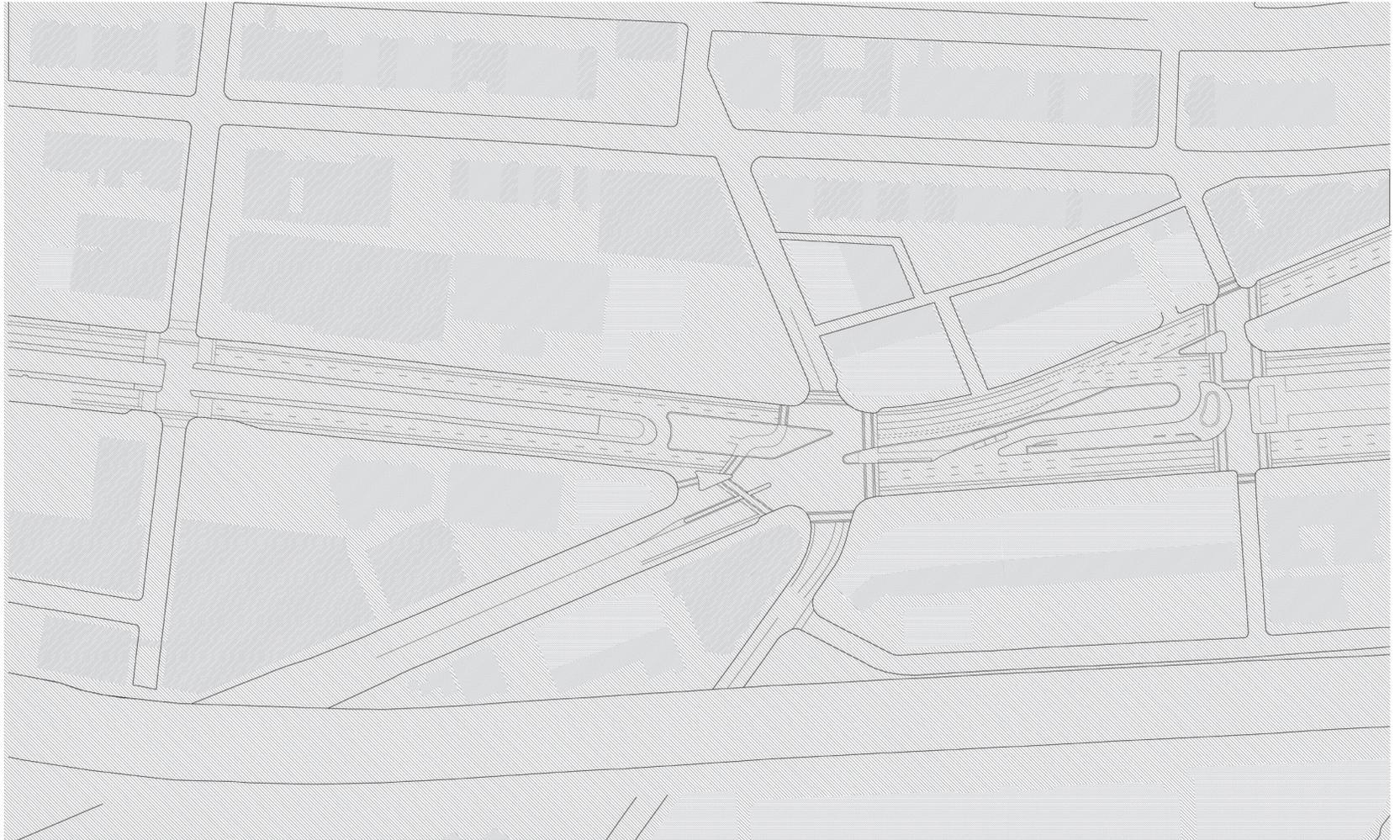


STAN ANDERSON PLANS









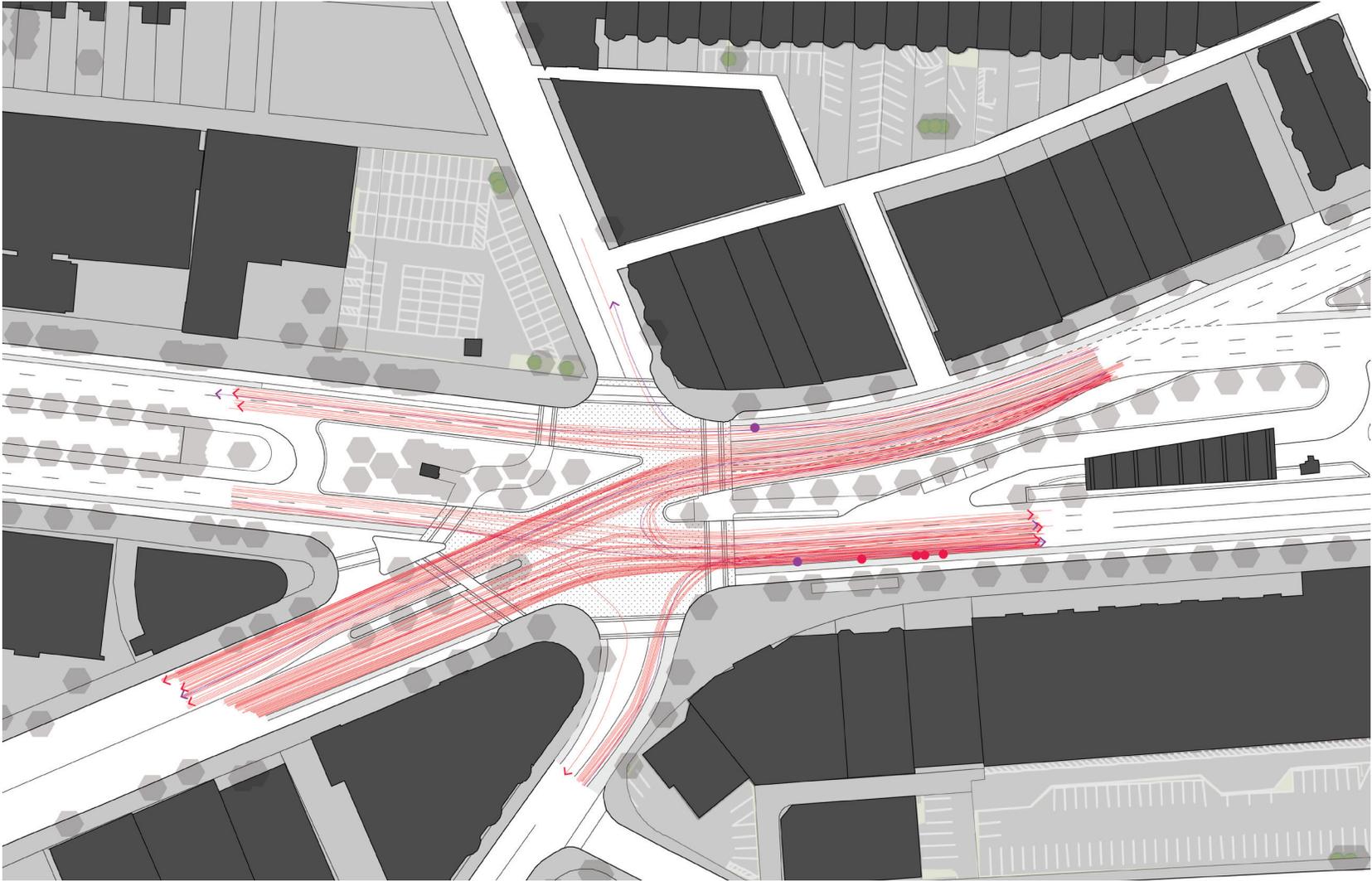
Public - occupational - private

FLOWS



FLOWS

- Cars
- Trucks
- Buses
- Bikes
- Pedestrians
- Delivery Trucks
- Short-term stops



FLOWS

- Cars
- Trucks
- Buses
- Bikes
- Pedestrians
- Delivery Trucks
- Short-term stops



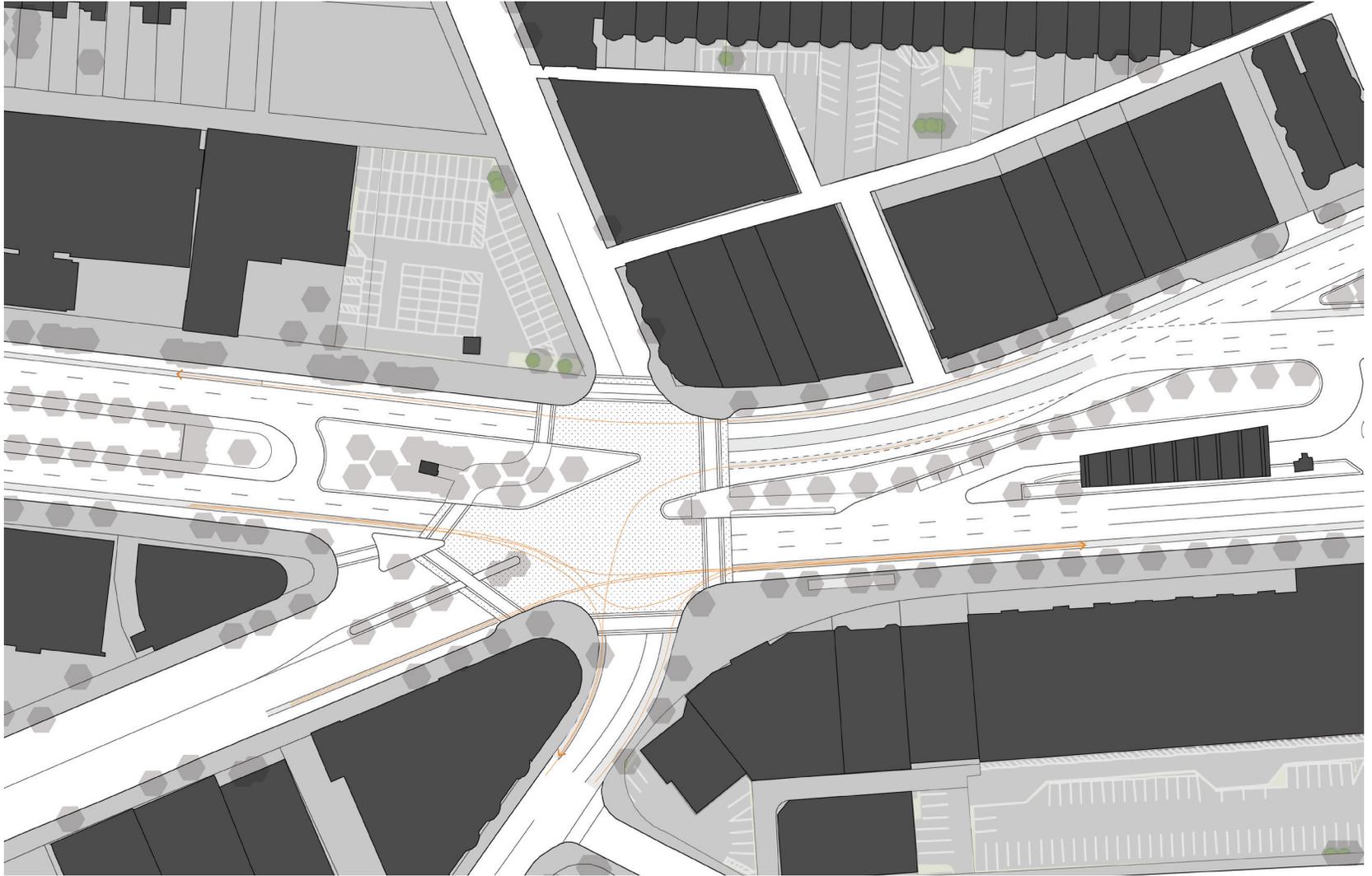
FLOWS

- Cars
- Trucks
- Buses
- Bikes
- Pedestrians
- Delivery Trucks
- Short-term stops



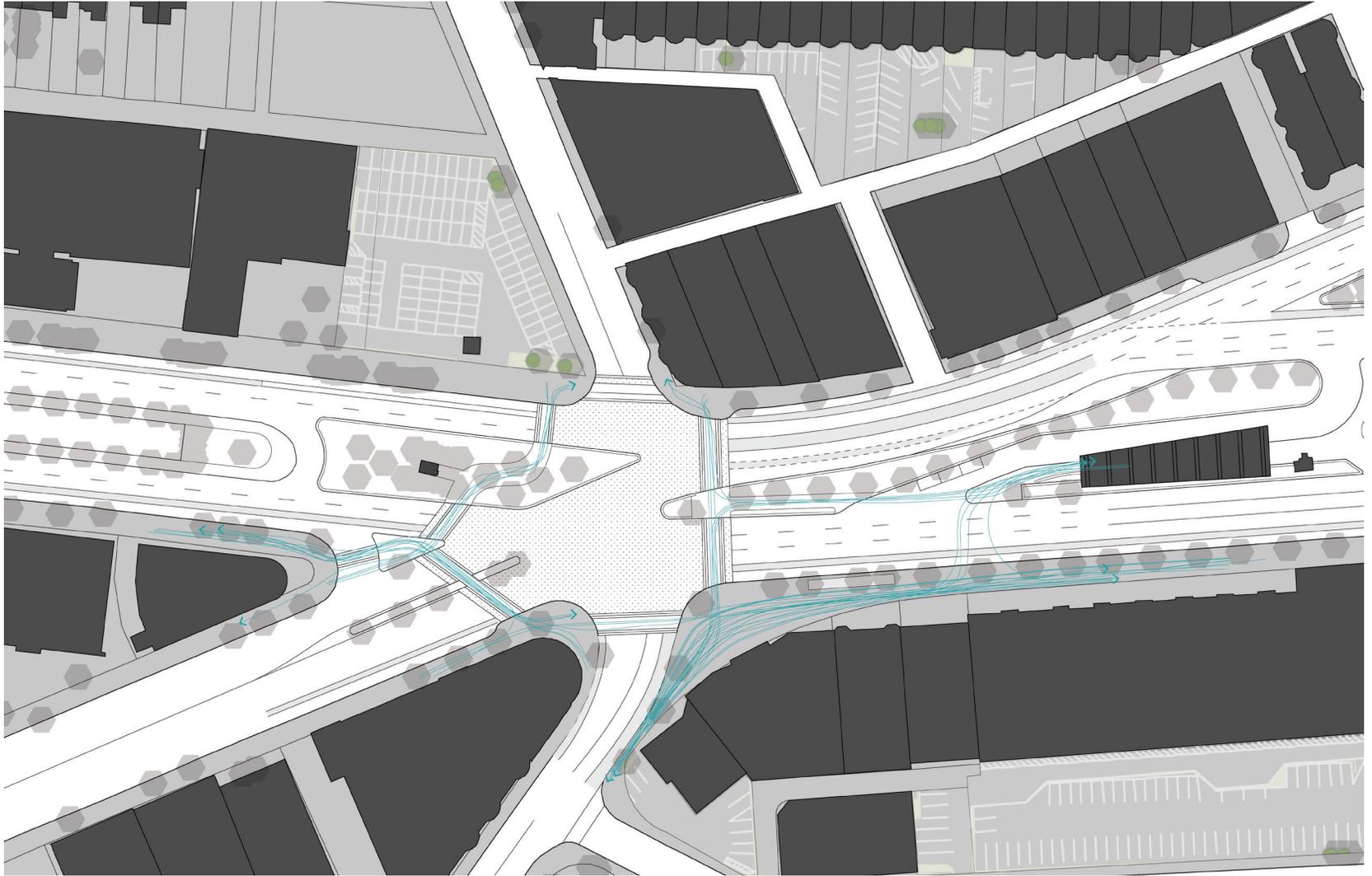
FLOWS

- Cars
- Trucks
- Buses
- Bikes
- Pedestrians
- Delivery Trucks
- Short-term stops



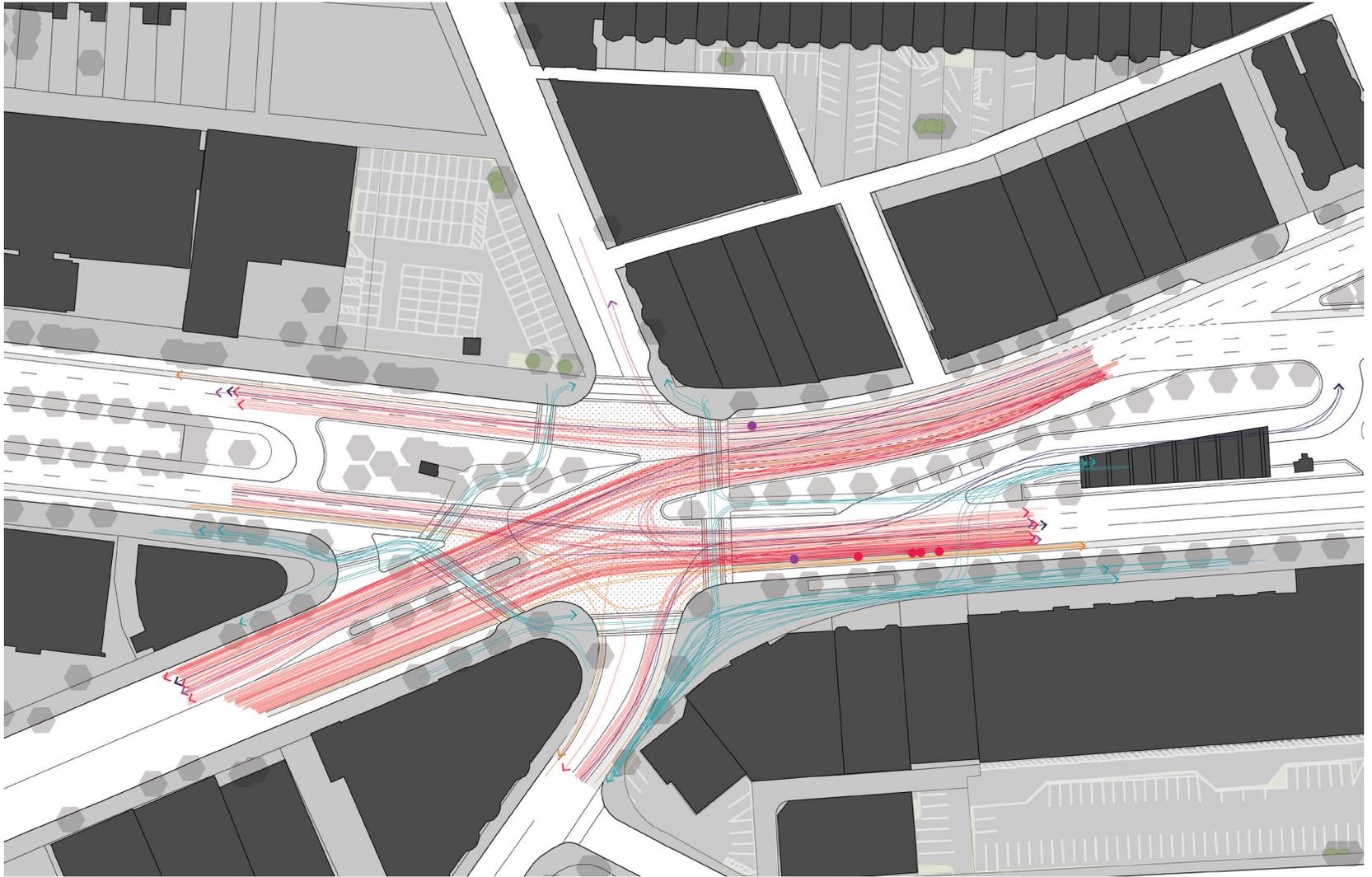
FLOWS

- Cars
- Trucks
- Buses
- Bikes
- Pedestrians
- Delivery Trucks
- Short-term stops



FLOWS

- Cars
- Trucks
- Buses
- Bikes
- Pedestrians
- Delivery Trucks
- Short-term stops



MODAL COUNTS

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| a. Pedestrians | 856 |
| a1. Jaywalkers (Bus stop) | 41 |
| a2. Using Sidewalks | 815 |
| b. Bikes | 136 |
| c. Cars | 2584 |
| c1. Short-term stops | 48 |
| d. Trucks | 120 |
| d1. Delivery Trucks | 8 |
| e. Buses | 84 |

March 6, 2018

Tuesday 9:15 am to 9:30 am (extrapolated to an hour)

OUTCOMES vs INTENTIONS

SAFETY:

Addition of dedicated bikes lanes

Better conditions for pedestrians with shorter crosswalks, but still catered to cars.

The bus stop remains in the center causing jaywalking.

Delivery trucks for retail obstruct bike lanes.

Slow traffic?

PLACE-MAKING:

1/3 of street retail is a chain / fast food, few local joints.

Bigger destinations surround it.

ACCESSIBILITY:

ADA compliant