

Town of Salem

Master Plan



Purpose

The Town of Salem Master Plan is a townwide long-range plan to establish a vision for the future of Salem’s economy, housing, transportation, and much more.

Help us lay the foundation for stability, prosperity, and quality of life for many years to come!

The planning process will help us shape and create:

One of the most important roles of a plan like this one is to “connect the dots” so that all of the Town’s efforts work towards an integrated overall strategy.

A statement of shared values

A strategic vision and roadmap for the future of the city

A framework for implementation

The final plan will establish:

This plan will guide the Town’s policies, regulations, and capital investment programs. It is particularly important for changes to zoning, the rules that govern what can and can’t be built on private property.

Growth Framework

Foundation for zoning reform

Capital investment priorities

Policy and program priorities

Framework for more detailed district and topic-specific plans

The plan will NOT:

Provide a zoning rewrite

Generate detailed topic-area or place-specific plans

Decide exactly how local resources will be spent

Topics

Core Topics

A **unified strategy** for land use, zoning and community design, integrating:

- Economy
- Housing
- Transportation

Potential Topics

Topics that play a **supporting role** for the overall vision articulated for the core topics.

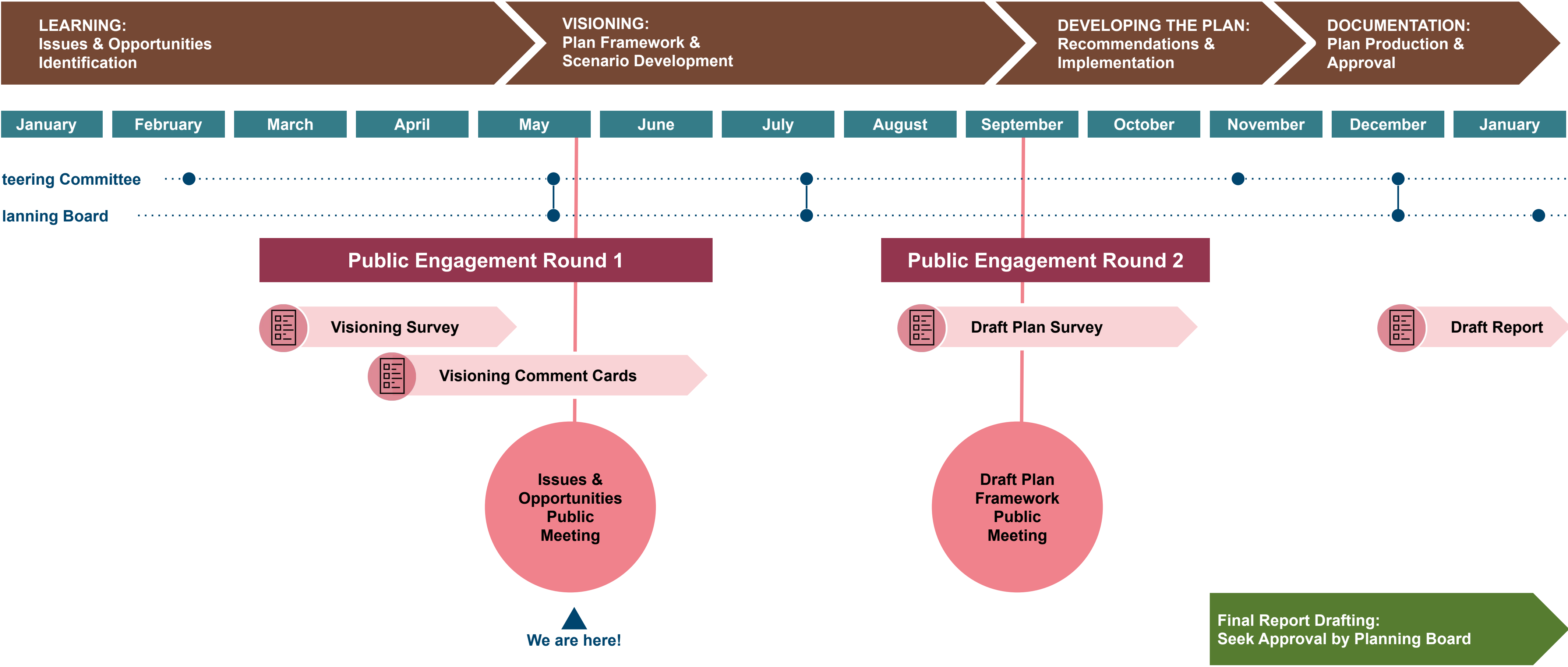
- Recreation & Amenities
- Public Utilities, Services & Facilities
- Natural Resources & Conservation
- Sustainability & Resilience
- Historic Preservation

Likely Focal Places

Places that play an important role in Salem’s shared identity, opportunities, and quality of life.

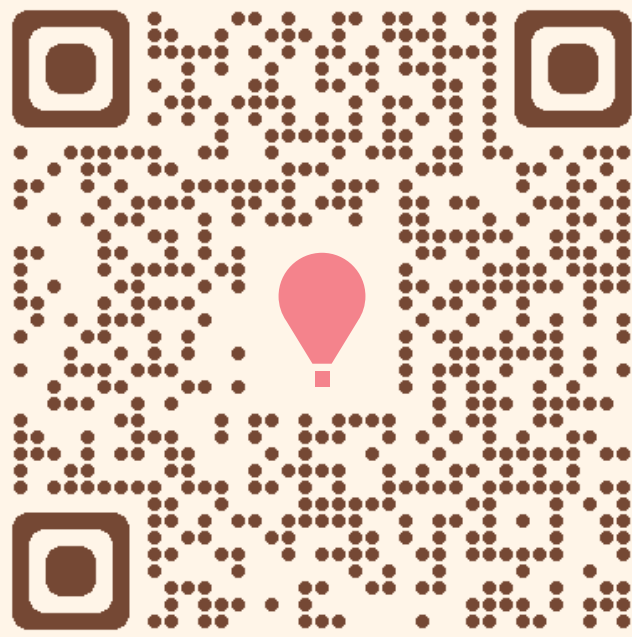
- Depot
- Main St
- Tuscan Village
- Rail Trail
- Route 28
- Lakes & Wetlands

Process



Get Involved!

Step 1. Get informed and connected.



Visit the website to learn more and subscribe to our email updates:
www.SalemNH.gov/MasterPlan

Step 2. Share your ideas.

Add your input on the boards, fill out a comment card, and talk to members of the planning team.



Boards with this symbol are informational.



Boards with this symbol are asking for input.

Step 3. Spread the word.

Tell your friends and family. Take postcards to place at your favorite community gathering place!

What We've Heard So Far

Visioning Survey Results



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By the numbers

This online survey was active for **2 months** from March 12 - May 12, 2024.

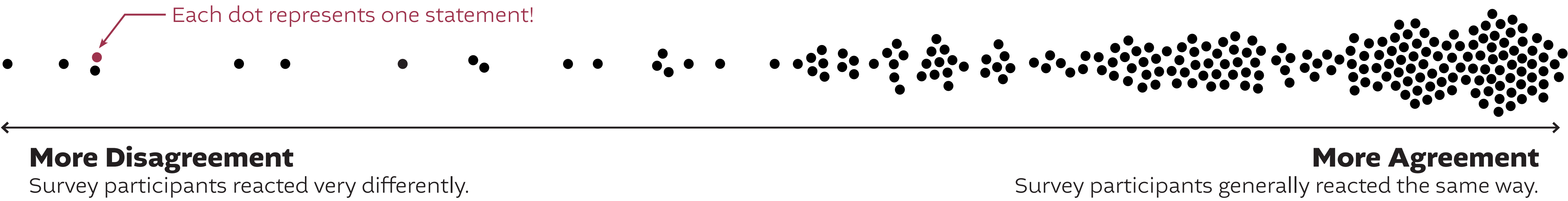
How it works: participants vote on short statements submitted by others who have already voted. Participants can also submit their own statements for later participants to vote on. An algorithm sorts participants into like-minded groups based on their votes and identifies consensus statements that the majority agrees upon.

809 people voted
714 people grouped
423 statements submitted
64,129 votes cast

Who participated?

85% live in Salem
77% homeowners
39% work in Salem
90% shop in Salem

What was the conversation like?



Two distinct opinion groups emerged from the conversation based on different attitudes towards public investment in shared amenities and infrastructure.

Opinion Group A
182 people
91% residents | **84%** homeowners | **93%** shoppers | **52%** workers

This group valued doing the basics well and maintaining what Salem has with cautious public spending on expansion of amenities and recreation infrastructure like bike and pedestrian infrastructure and gathering places.

Statement	Group A			Group B		
Cars are a fact of life in Salem, and focusing on bicycles and pedestrian access is a waste of resources.	66%	20%	13%	13%	72%	13%
Promote/recruit fine arts, theater, etc. Large, diverse park (Windham), appeals to/access all ages.	11%	73%	15%	77%	5%	16%
Salem should invest in more recreational opportunities and locations, placemaking, community spaces, and public art.	14%	69%	16%	80%	4%	14%
Salem needs more sidewalks, parks, and regulation of speed zones around schools.	8%	74%	16%	80%	5%	13%
Salem should focus on walkability improvements and investing in infrastructure to get around town without the need for a car.	16%	69%	13%	75%	9%	14%

Opinion Group B
532 people
83% residents | **75%** homeowners | **89%** shoppers | **34%** workers

This group wanted to see public investment in amenities and infrastructure focused on the environment, recreation, and arts and culture, with a focus around schools and gathering places.

Statement	Group A			Group B		
Salem should invest in more recreational opportunities and locations, placemaking, community spaces, and public art.	14%	69%	16%	80%	4%	14%
Promote/recruit fine arts, theater, etc. Large, diverse park (Windham), appeals to/access all ages.	11%	73%	15%	77%	5%	16%
I support the idea of maintaining, improving, connecting, and expanding natural systems in a linked network of parks, open spaces, and waterways, including street trees and public spaces.	31%	49%	18%	88%	2%	8%
Salem should work to create new recreational spaces, while improving existing ones.	29%	50%	19%	90%	1%	8%
Salem needs public parks, public transportation, and more cultural events.	5%	85%	8%	76%	12%	11%

What are the takeaways?

While opinions varied on how to approach the following goals, over 50% of participants agree that Salem needs to invest in:

- a vibrant **Town Center**
- safer and more connected **sidewalks**
- a linked network of **quality parks, open spaces, and waterways**
- quality **housing** that fits within residents' budgets

See below for detailed voting patterns on key issues:

		% Agreed	% Disagreed	% Passed	% Didn't Vote
Statement		Overall 714	Group A 182	Group B 532	
Amenities & Infrastructure	A vibrant Town Center active through the evening hours will be an asset to the entire town.	70% 16% 12%	53% 34% 12%	78%	9% 12%
	The Town should invest in enhancing and/or connecting existing sidewalks .	71% 18% 10%	40% 47% 11%	84%	5% 9%
	I support the idea of maintaining, improving, connecting, and expanding quality natural systems in a linked network of parks, open spaces, and waterways , including street trees and public spaces.	71% 16% 11%	31% 49% 18%	88%	2% 8%
	Cars are a fact of life in Salem, and focusing on bicycles and pedestrian access is a waste of resources.	29% 57% 13%	66% 20% 13%	13%	72% 13%
Affordability, Housing & Development	If I need to move, I am confident I can find quality housing in the town that fits my household needs and budget.	19% 62% 17%	22% 62% 15%	18%	62% 19%
	Future development should encourage higher density and taller buildings along the Rt-28 corridor.	24% 60% 15%	16% 77% 6%	27%	53% 18%
	I like the idea of adding more multi-family buildings to increase housing supply options in Salem.	33% 53% 12%	6% 84% 8%	43%	41% 14%
	The Town should investigate various energy/electric sources and contract to reduce utility bills .	77% 9% 13%	67% 19% 13%	82%	3% 14%

Salem's Economy Today

Jobs and Commuting



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Salem is a regional job hub, and I-93 is an important gateway.

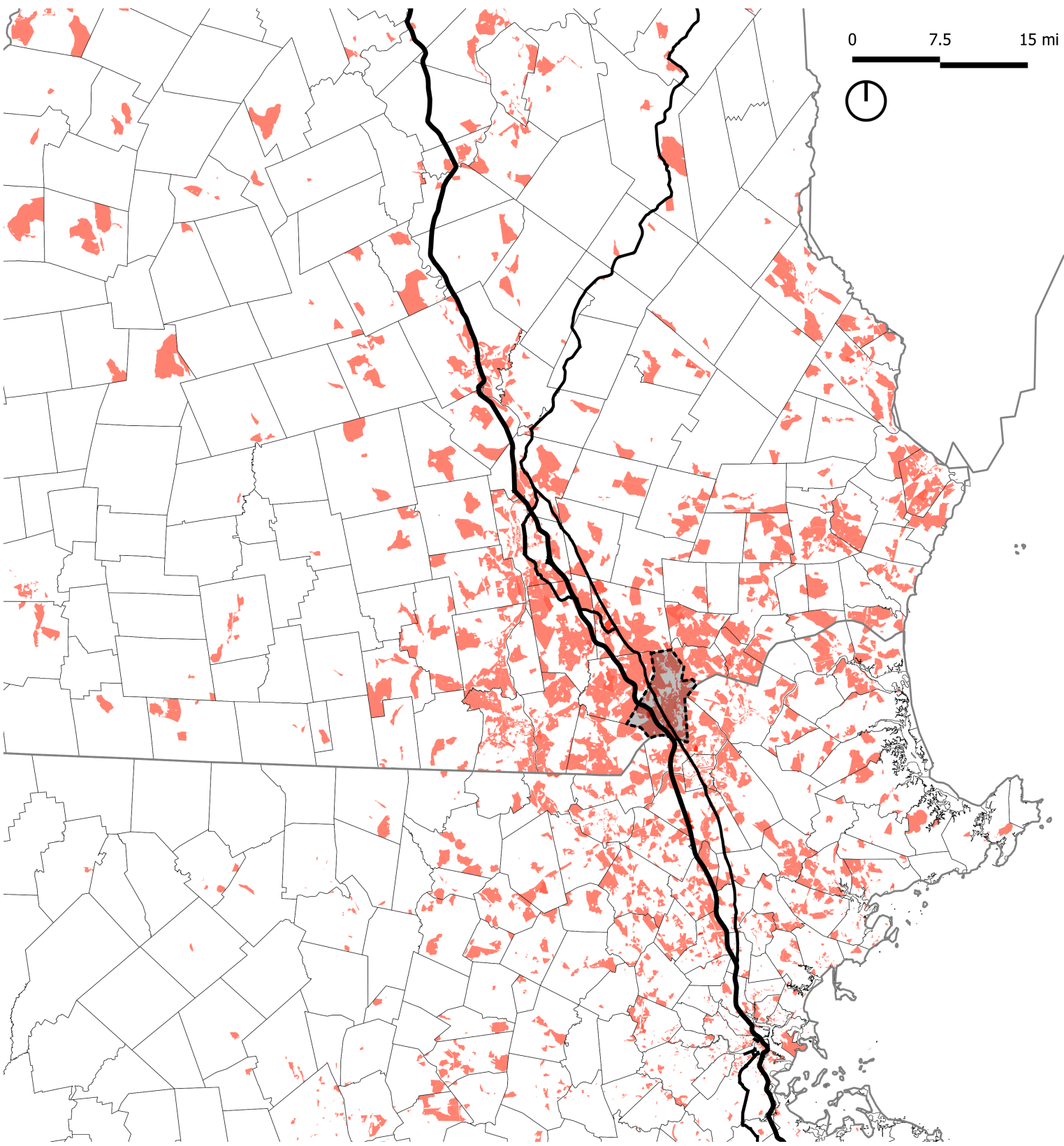
“Half the license plates you see in Salem are from MA...”
-Salem Resident

Salem has strong ties to I-93 and to its nearby communities.

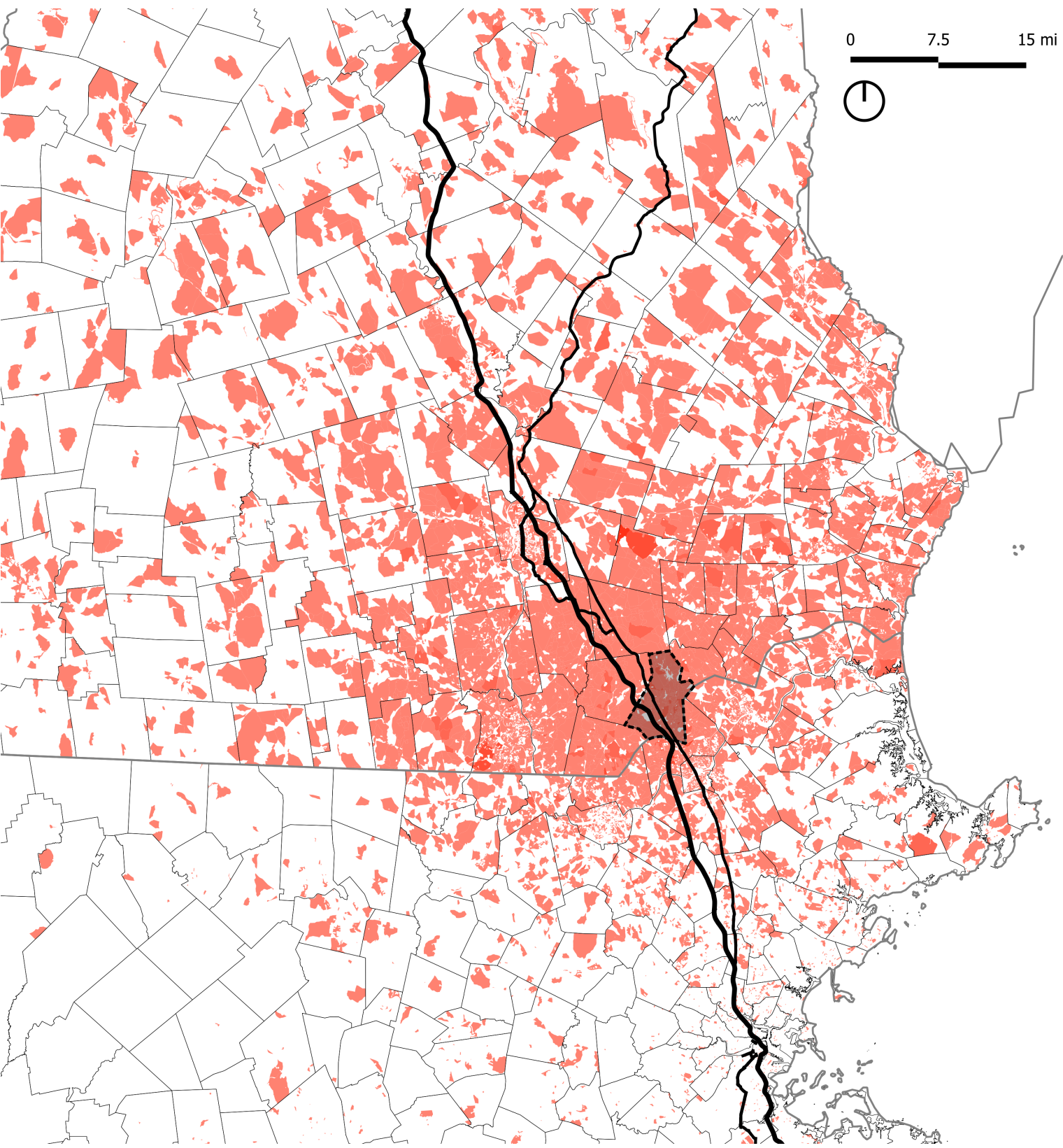
Salem residents mostly work along I-93.

Salem workers live across New Hampshire and into northern MA..

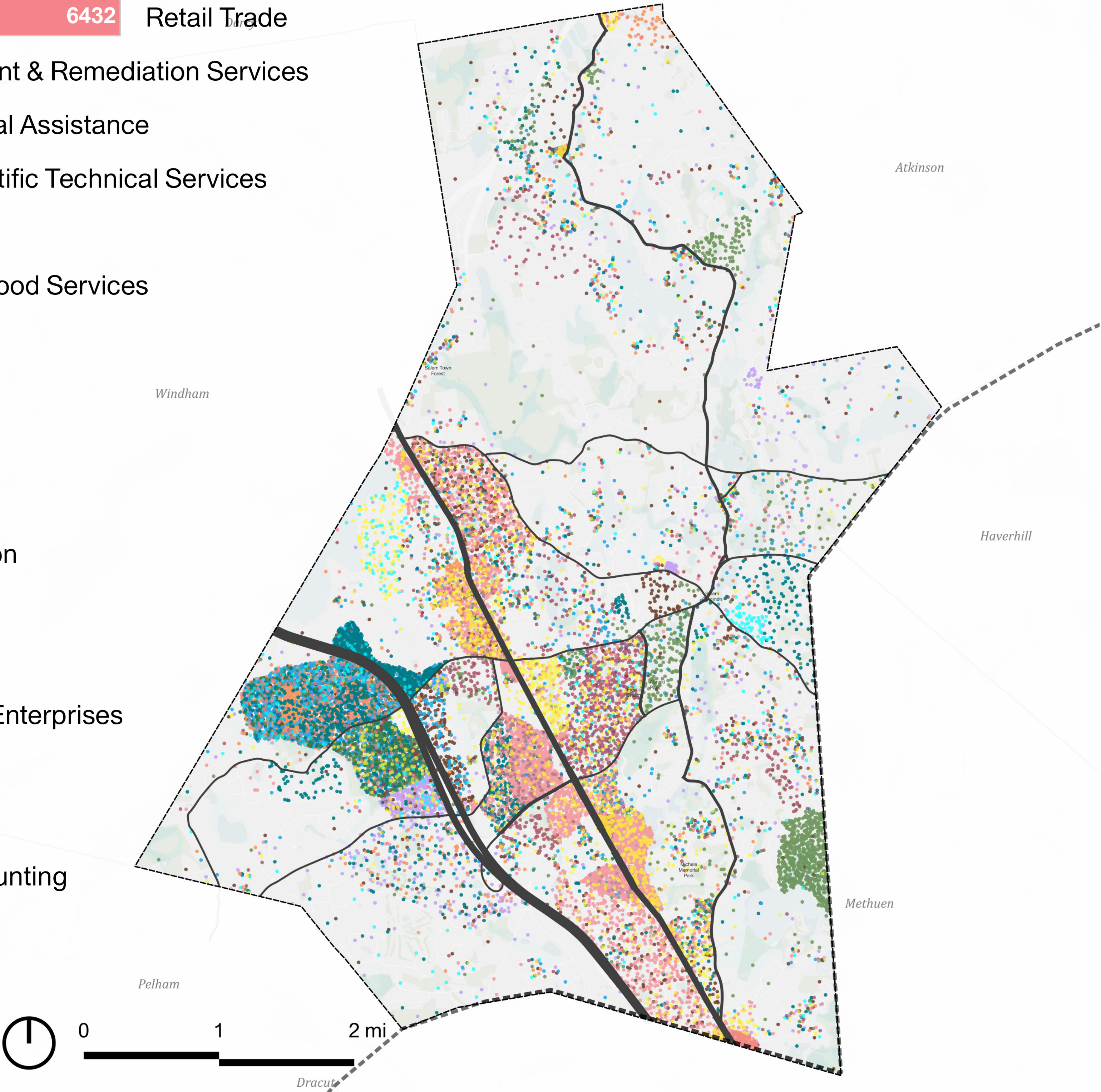
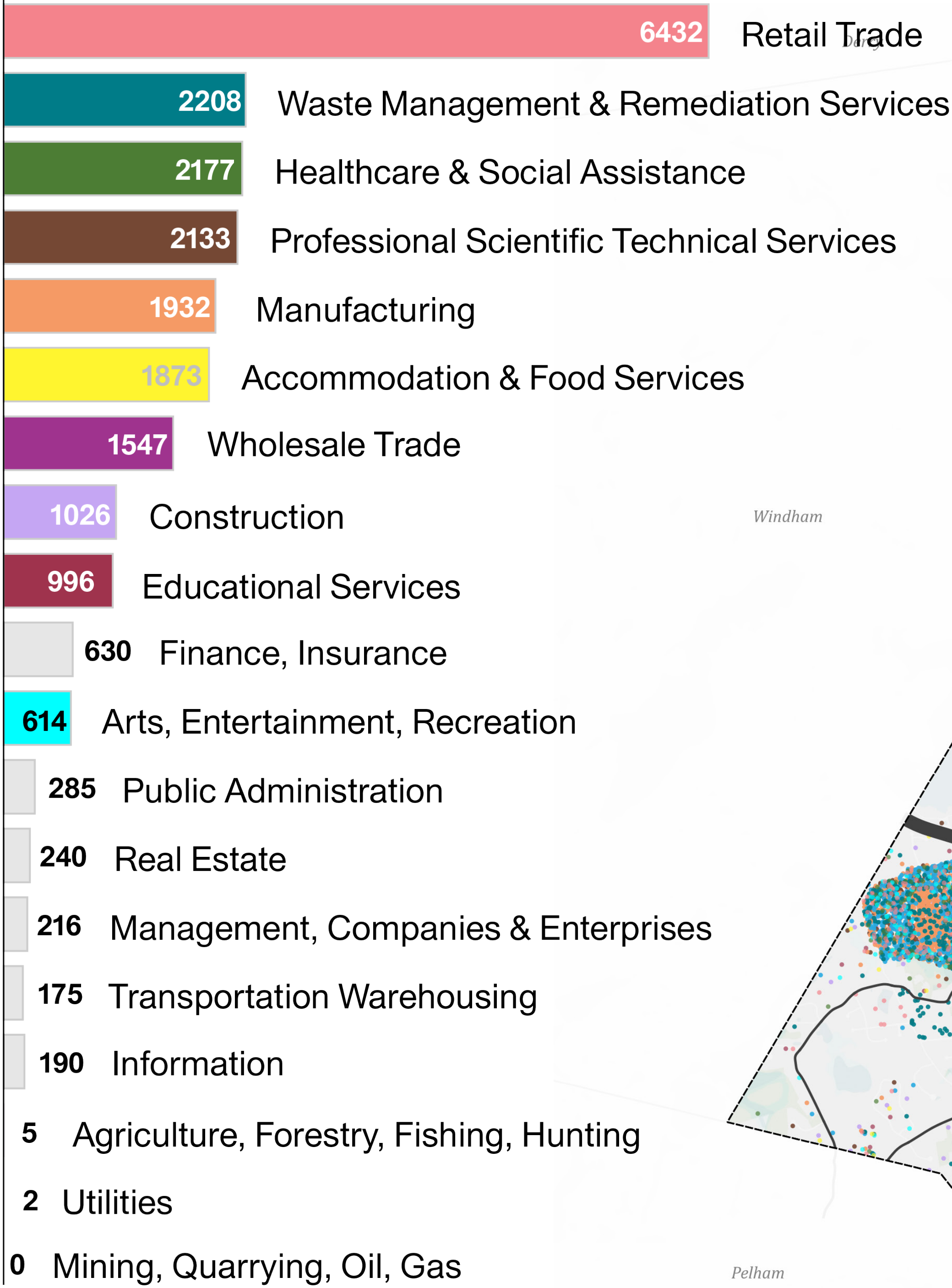
Where Salem Residents Work



Where Salem Workers Live



Salem's job market is heavily weighted towards retail, and job types are clustered in different parts of town.



Housing Salem Today & Tomorrow



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Finding the right mix of housing types and prices

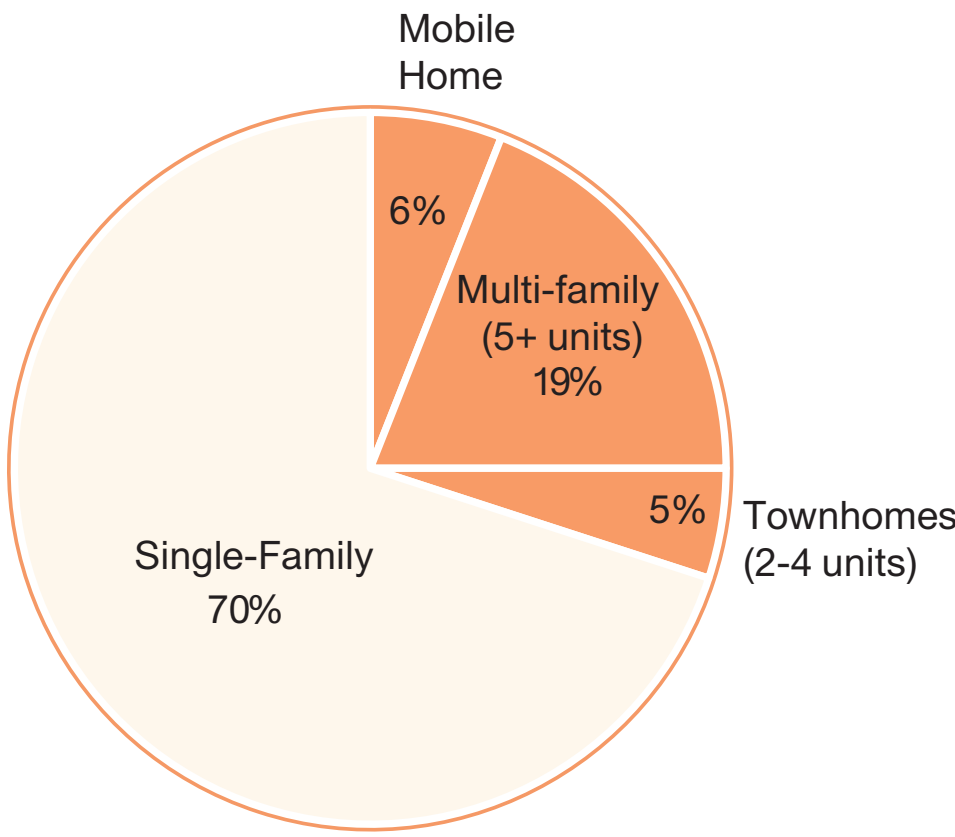
Salem’s Existing Housing & Affordability

Salem has **13,031** homes

77.2% are owner-occupied

70% are single-family

Salem’s current housing mix is **too expensive** for many residents’ budgets.

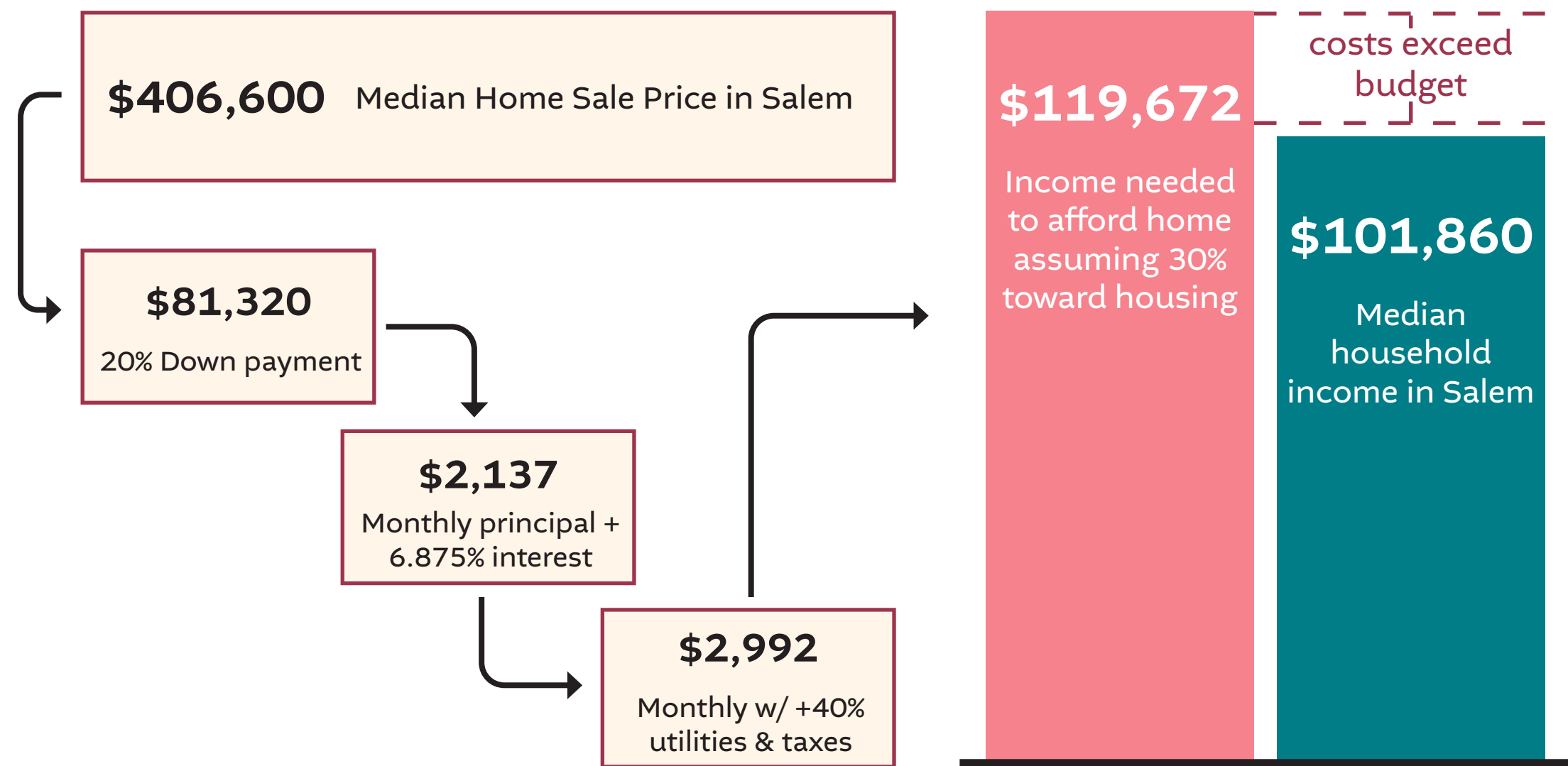
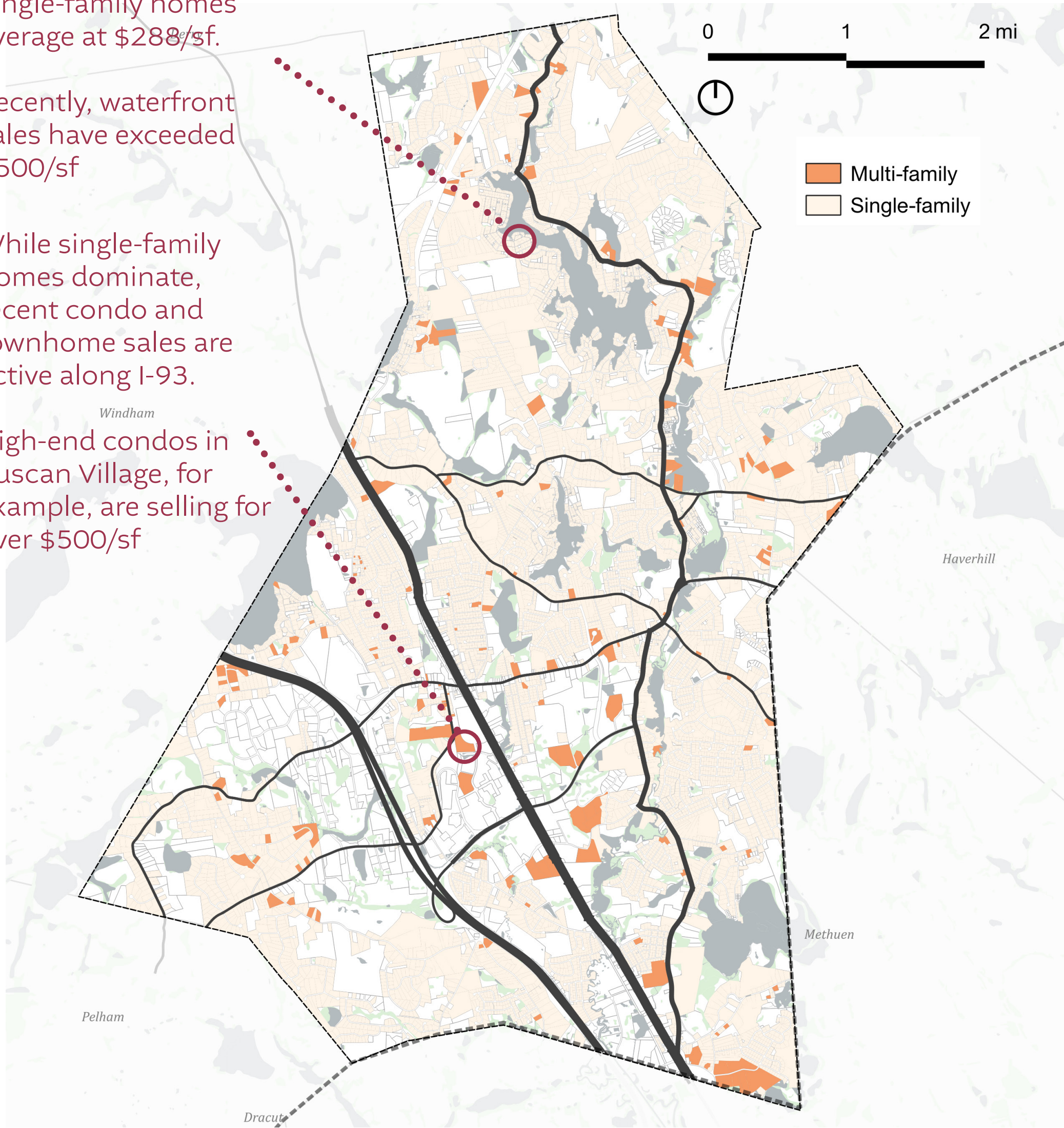


Single-family homes average at \$288/sf.

Recently, waterfront sales have exceeded \$500/sf

While single-family homes dominate, recent condo and townhome sales are active along I-93.

High-end condos in Tuscan Village, for example, are selling for over \$500/sf



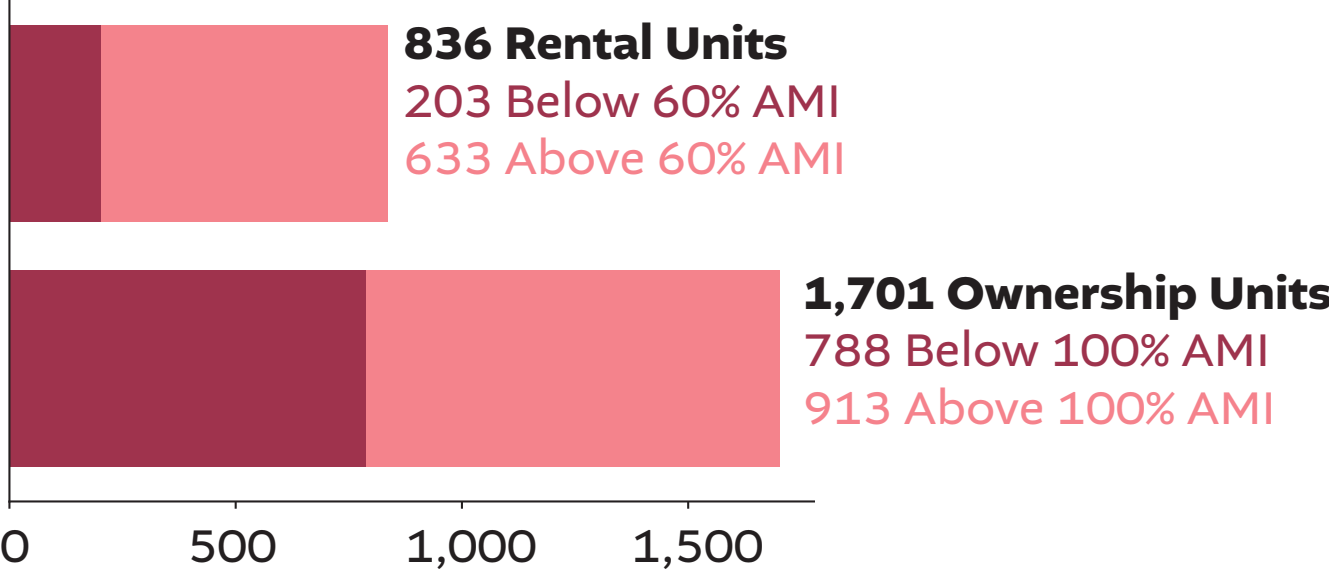
Demographic Trends & Housing Needs

Household trends nationally are towards **smaller households**. As of 2020 Salem’s average household size is just over 2.5 for owners and just over 2 for renters.

Seniors and empty nesters looking to **downsize and age in place** are an important piece of this trend. Since 2010 Salem’s average age has gone from 42.3 to 45.1 years old.

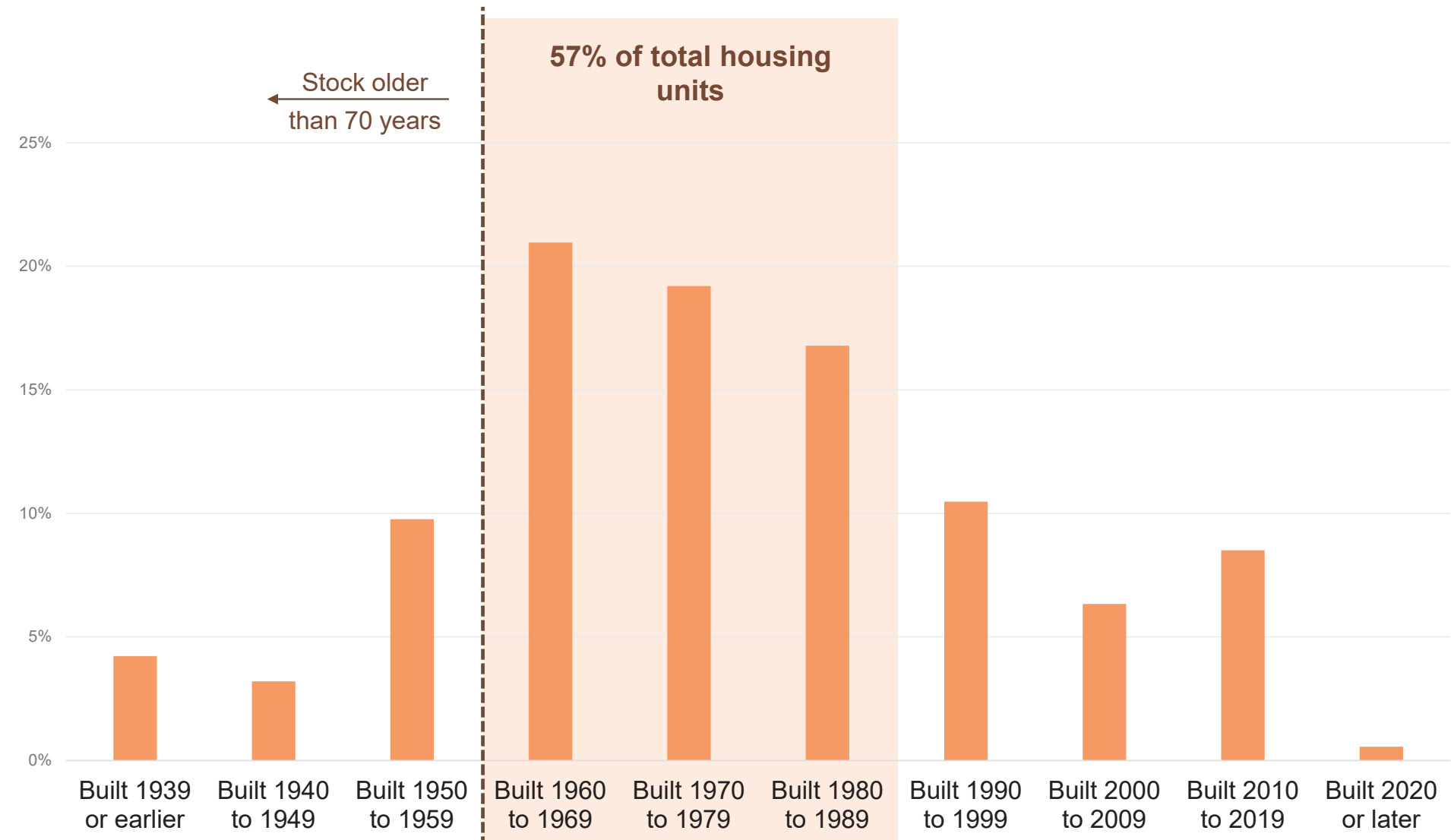
To address these demographic trends, Salem needs more **affordable and diverse housing** options that offer more variety for time of life and lifestyle preferences.

According to the Fair Share Housing Production Model developed by Root Policy Research (which is designed to help municipalities achieve the NH Workforce Housing Statute), Salem should aim to produce **2,537 units** of housing by 2040. These units should offer a mix of rental and ownership that is affordable for a range of incomes, measured as a percentage of Area Median Income (AMI).



Salem’s **housing production** has lagged since 1990, which is when many of the current demographic trends began to show up.

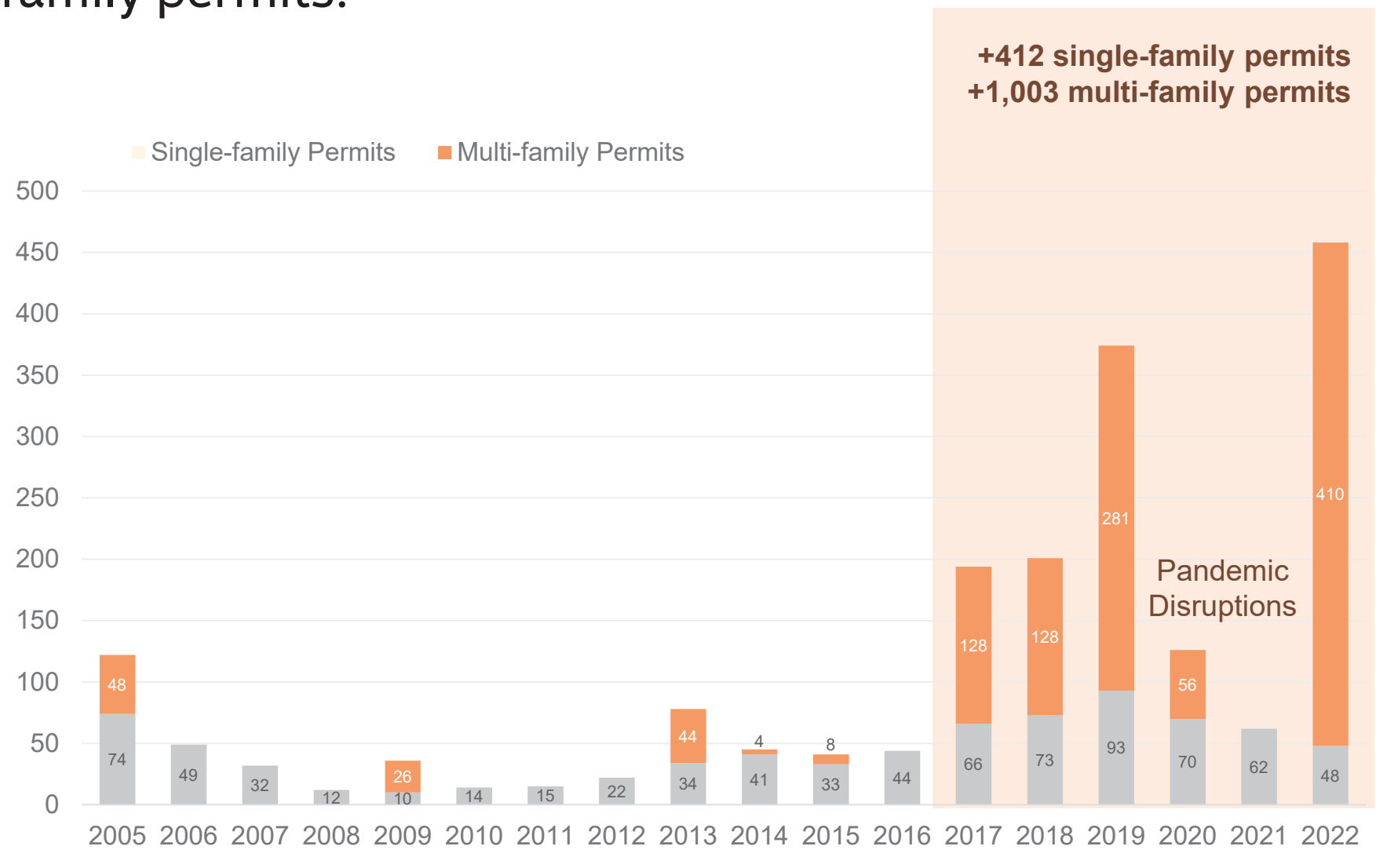
Over half of Salem’s housing stock was built in the period between 1960-1989, after which production fell dramatically. During the 1960s an average of 260 units/year were added.



Source: Landwise Advisors / ESRI BAO 2023, ACS 5-year Estimates 2022.

There has been a significant uptick in **multi-family units** since 2016, likely reflecting Tuscan Village. However, those units are priced such that they don’t fully meet Salem residents’ needs for affordable and diverse unit types.

Over the last six years a substantial number of units have been permitted, but the average is more in the range of 236 units/year with a shift towards multi-family permits.



Source: Landwise Advisors / ESRI BAO 2023, ACS 5-year Estimates 2022.

Housing Salem Today & Tomorrow



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Tell us how Salem should meet housing needs

What kind of housing do you think Salem needs more of?

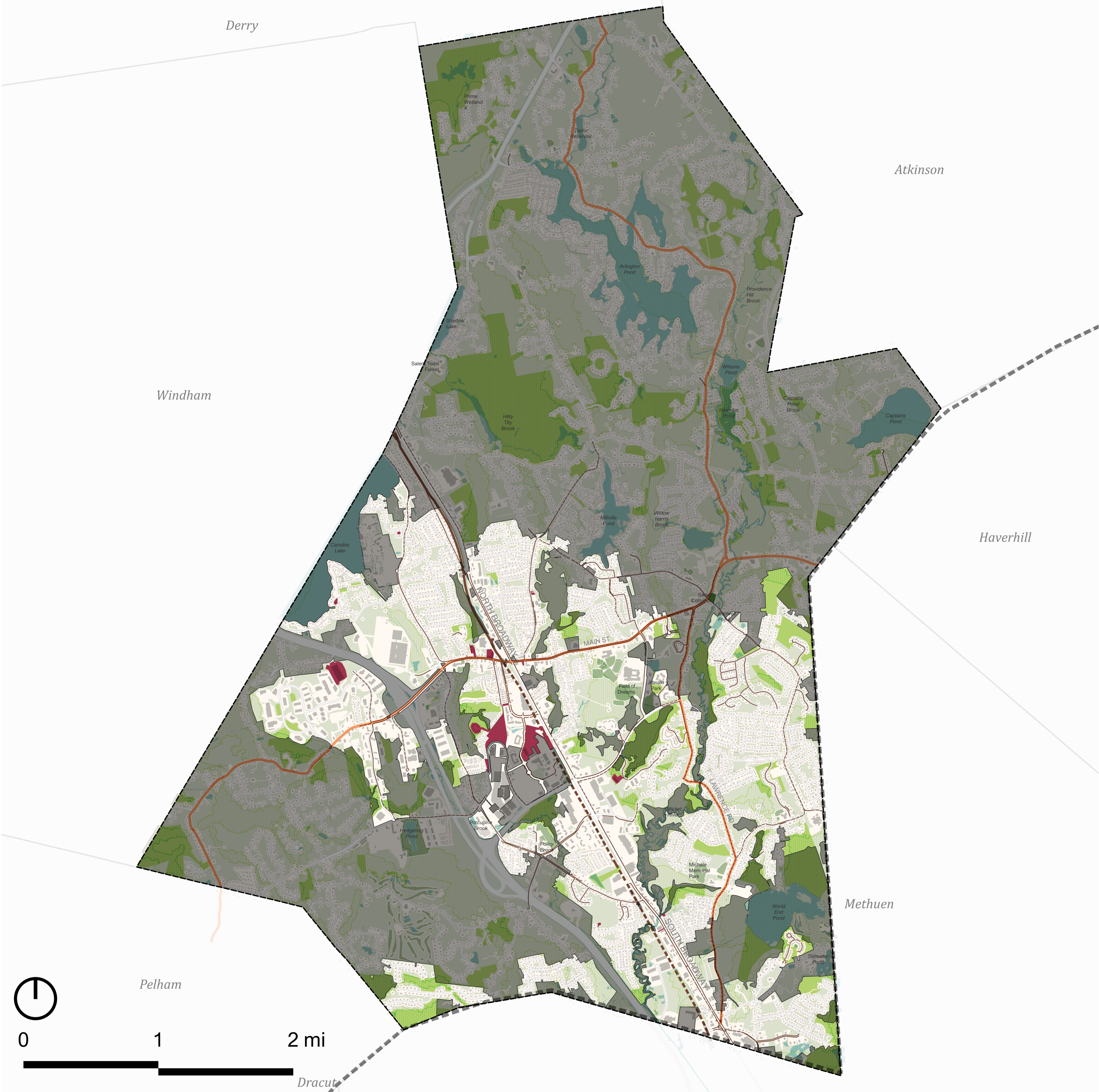
Place your
sticky note
here!

Where in Salem do you think new housing should go?

Some parts of Salem are not well suited to support additional housing due to constraints like wetland conservation restrictions or lack of sewer access.

Keeping that in mind, **place a dot on the map** where you think new housing should go in Salem!

- Neighborhood corridors
- Rail trail: complete
- Rail trail: incomplete
- Sidewalk: existing
- Sidewalk: proposed
- restricted growth areas (wetlands + no sewer access)
- vacant parcels (outside restricted growth areas)



Salem's Development Patterns

What has shaped development?

Town of Salem Master Plan

The role of wetlands

Wetlands play an important role in shaping Salem's development patterns. Can you find any buildings in the wetlands zones?

- Wetlands
- RT-28
- I-93
- Neighborhood corridors
- local wildlife corridors

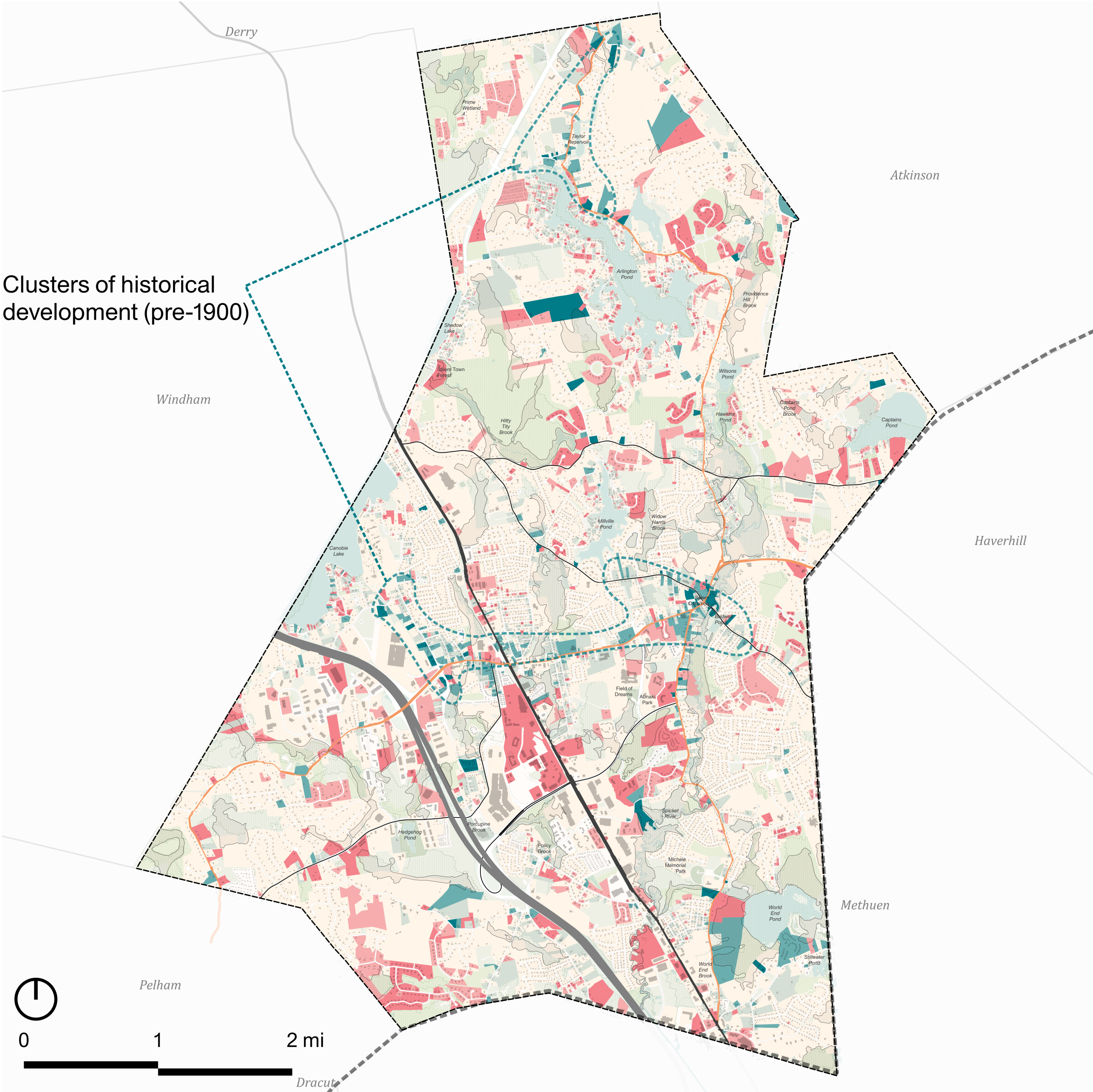


Eras of development

Historic development followed regional transportation routes including trolley and rail corridors, and clustered along the Town's water bodies.

Compare the patterns in this map to the wetlands and waterbodies in the map above. Which of Salem's rivers and lakes hosted the historic clusters?

- Wetlands
- Age of buildings (by parcel)
 - 1640 - 1800
 - 1801 - 1900
 - 1901 - 1950
 - 1951 - 2000
 - 2001 - 2010
 - 2011 - 2023



Town Center

Defining Salem's Town Center(s)

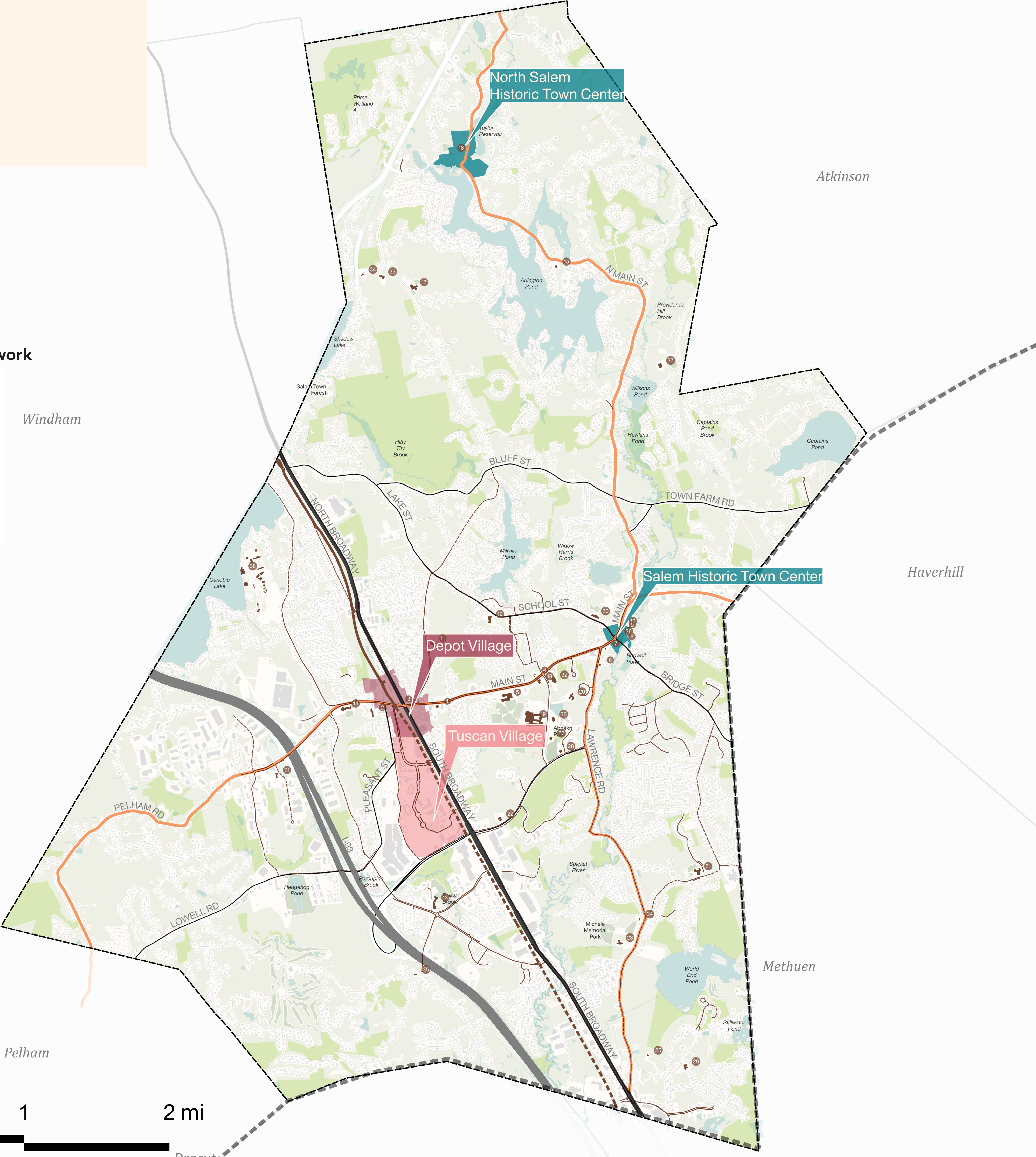
Place a dot at the place you think has the most potential to be a vibrant Town Center for Salem.

Community Anchors

- 1 Central Fire Station
- 2 St. Joseph Church
- 3 Chamber of Commerce
- 4 St. David's Episcopal Church
- 5 Woodbury School
- 6 First Congregational Church of Salem
- 7 Our Lady of Mt Carmel Church
- 8 Hose House #2
- 9 Old Town Hall
- 10 Alice Hall Mem. Library
- 11 Lancaster School
- 12 First Baptist Church
- 13 Soule School
- 14 Fisk School
- 15 North Fire Station
- 16 Palmer School
- 17 North Salem School
- 18 Kelley Library
- 19 Salem High School
- 20 Salemhaven Skilled Nursing & Rehabilitation Center
- 21 Rockingham Christian Church
- 22 Salem Police Dept
- 23 Mary Queen of Peace Church
- 24 South Fire Station
- 25 Diprima Eternal Light Memorial
- 26 Salem Town Hall
- 27 Salem District Court
- 28 Ingram Senior Center
- 29 Granite United Church
- 30 Haigh School
- 31 Barron School
- 32 Boys & Girls Club of Greater Salem
- 33 Triumphant Cross Lutheran Church
- 34 Grace Assembly of God Church
- 35 Ararat Armenian Congregational Church
- 36 Veterans Park Gazebo
- 37 Salem Transfer Station
- 38 Canobie Lake Park

Recreation & Mobility Network

- Rail trail: complete
- Rail trail: Incomplete
- Sidewalk: existing
- Sidewalk: proposed
- Neighborhood corridors
- I-93
- Rt-28
- Parks / open space



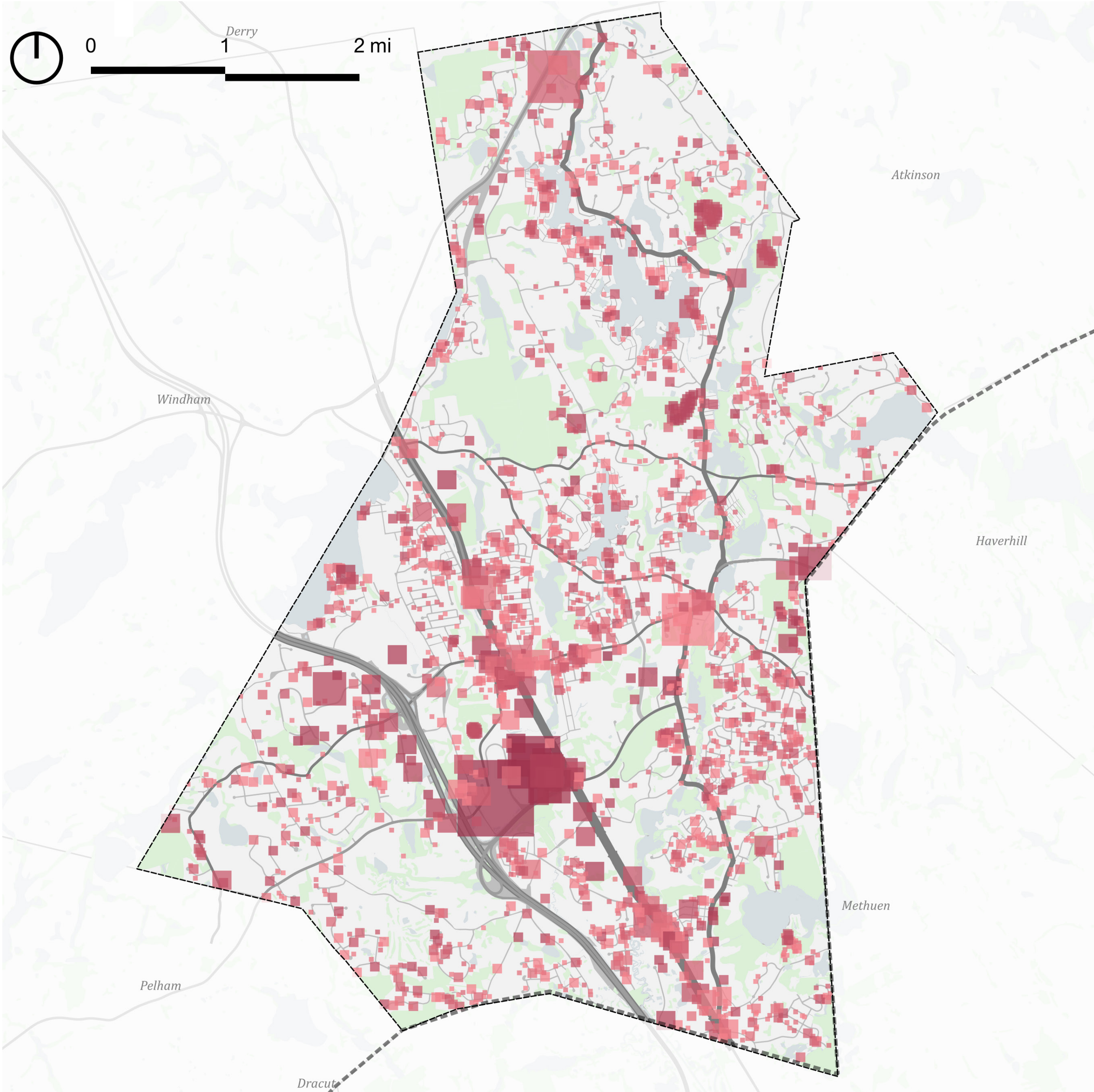
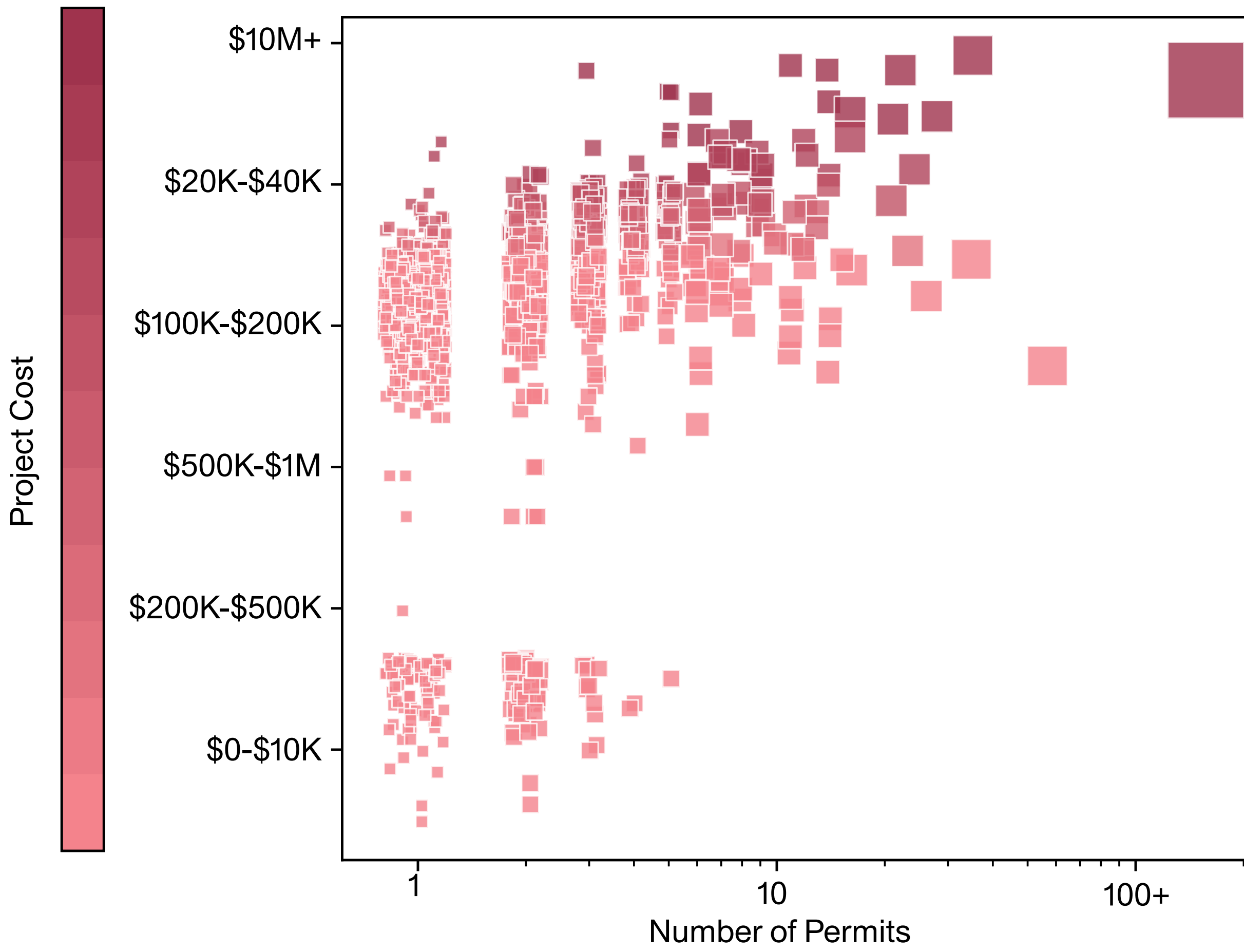
Shaping Growth



Cultivating growth in the right places

There has been a lot of investment in Salem recently, concentrated in certain parts of town.

Number (scaled by color) and cost (scaled by size) of building permits (2020-2024) by parcel.

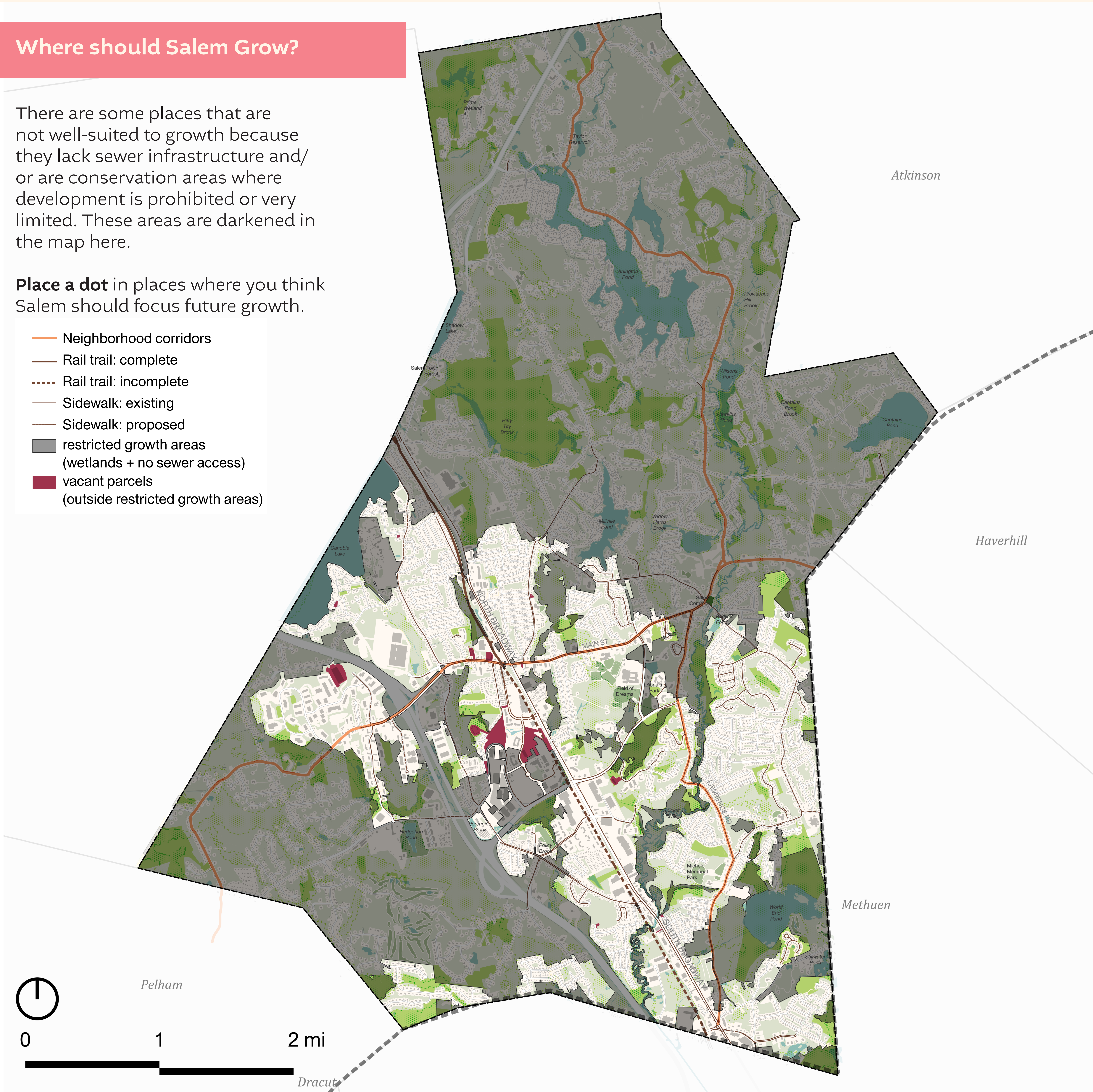


Where should Salem Grow?

There are some places that are not well-suited to growth because they lack sewer infrastructure and/or are conservation areas where development is prohibited or very limited. These areas are darkened in the map here.

Place a dot in places where you think Salem should focus future growth.

- Neighborhood corridors
- Rail trail: complete
- Rail trail: incomplete
- Sidewalk: existing
- Sidewalk: proposed
- restricted growth areas (wetlands + no sewer access)
- vacant parcels (outside restricted growth areas)



Recreation & Access

Getting around Salem



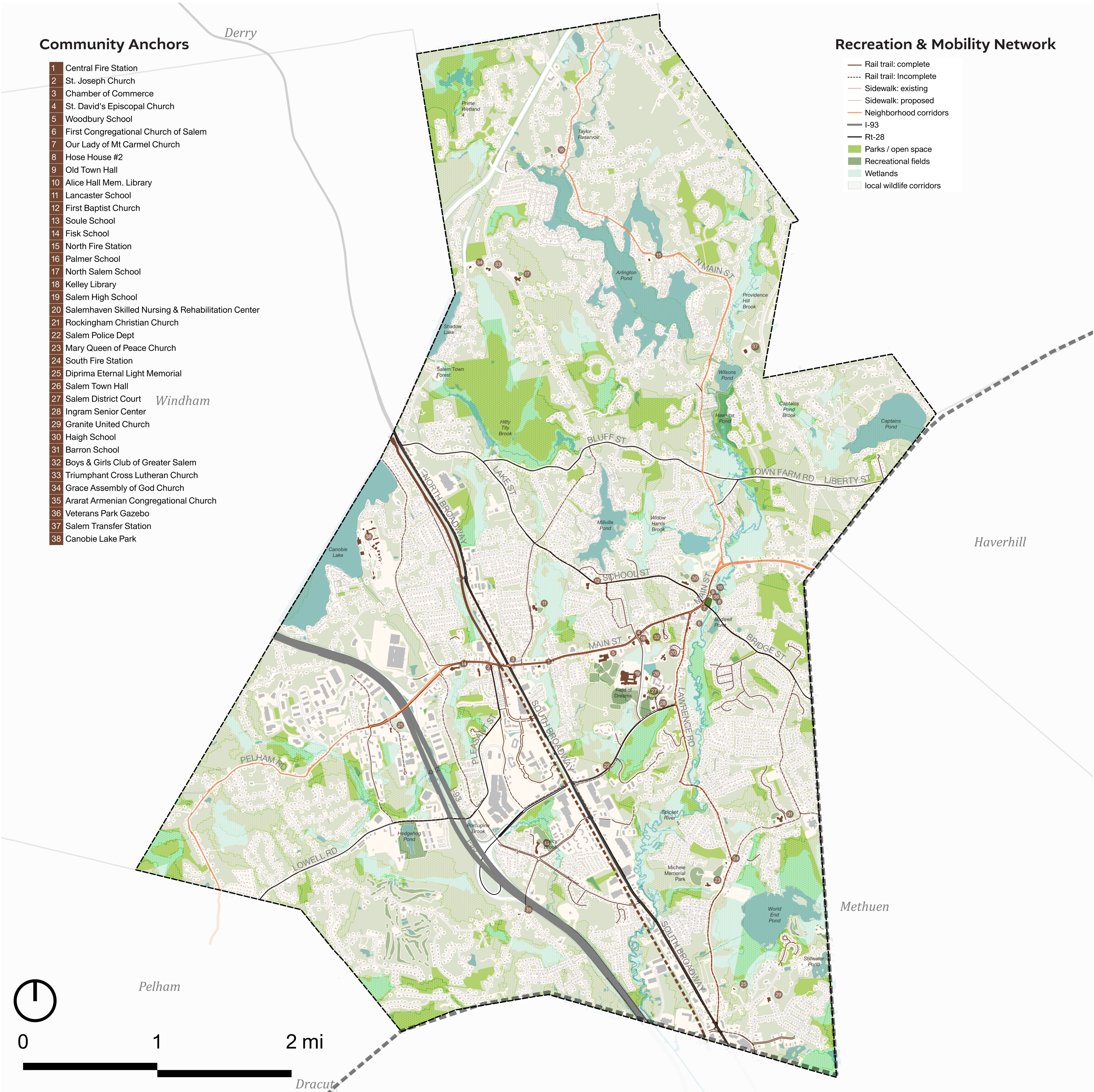
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Where should Salem prioritize for traffic calming, safety and recreation network investments?

Place a dot for a key intersection you think should be prioritized for traffic calming and safety improvements.

Draw a line for a recreation connection you think should exist that doesn't exist now, or is a weak connection now that you'd like to see strengthened.

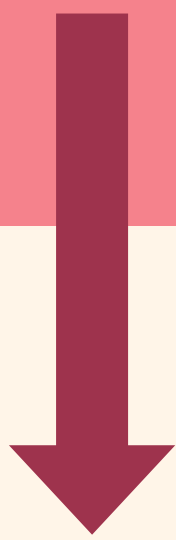


What’s Missing?



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What else should this plan address?



Place sticky notes below

What other issues should this plan address?
What ideas do you have for Salem’s future?

Place your
sticky note
here!