University of Michigan
Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning

Master of Urban Design
Fall 2025 semester: Strictly Infrastructural

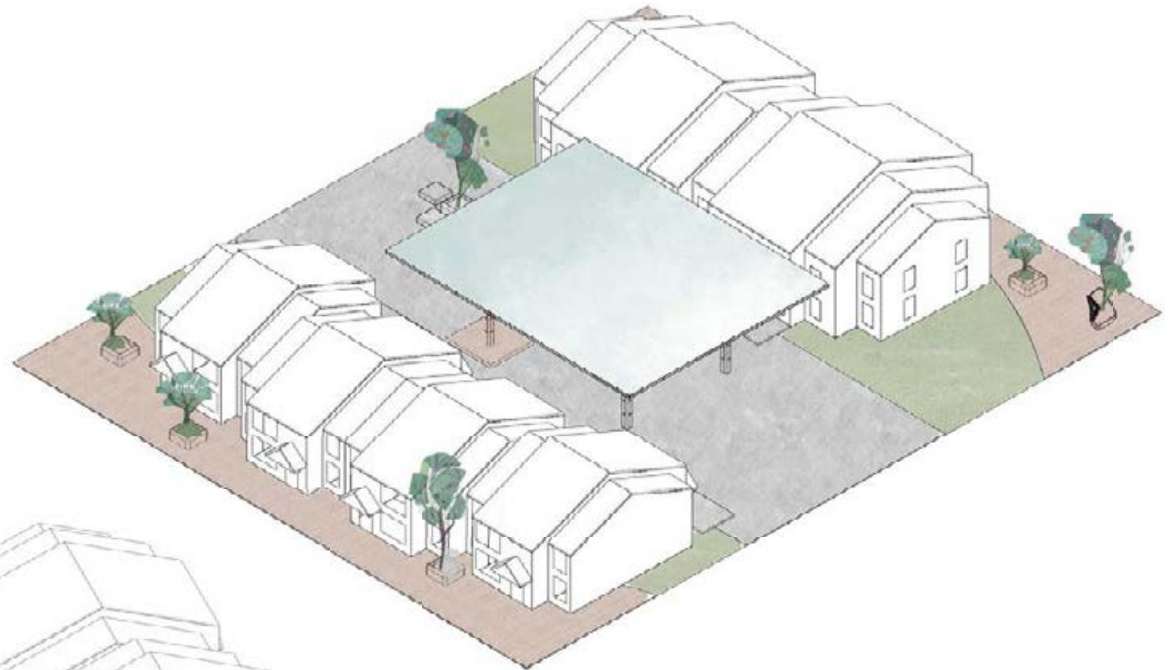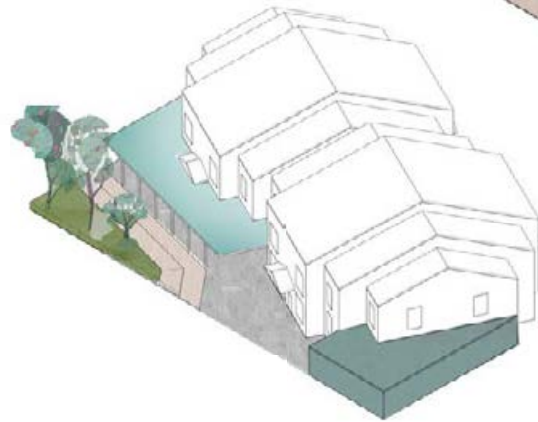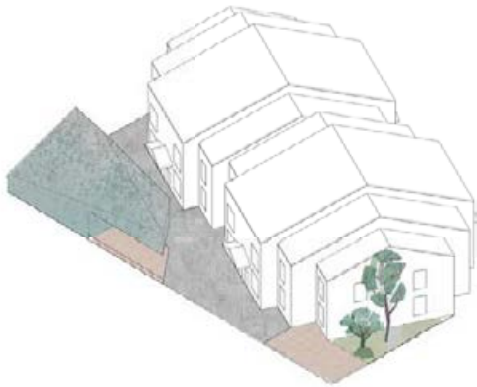Ann Arbor City Planning Commission
December 9, 2025

Instructor: Gabriel Cuéllar gcuellar@umich.edu

Students: Mahleej Gola, Yin-Tuan Hsueh, Carolyn Larsen,
Tianchang Li, Palvi Ramani, Dhvanil Pithava, Minza Shahid

Strictly Infrastructural

STUDENT CITY

Framing Tensions, Systems, Sites
Student Needs VS Residential area in Campus Tissues

Midterm Milestone

Yin-Tuan Hsueh, Tianchang Li

Framing Systems

High percent of student population

Chart
Population Trend, Ann Arbor and University of Michigan

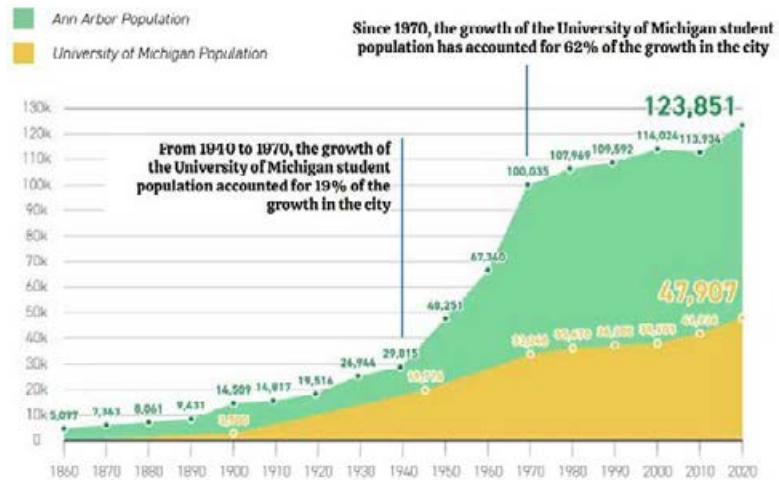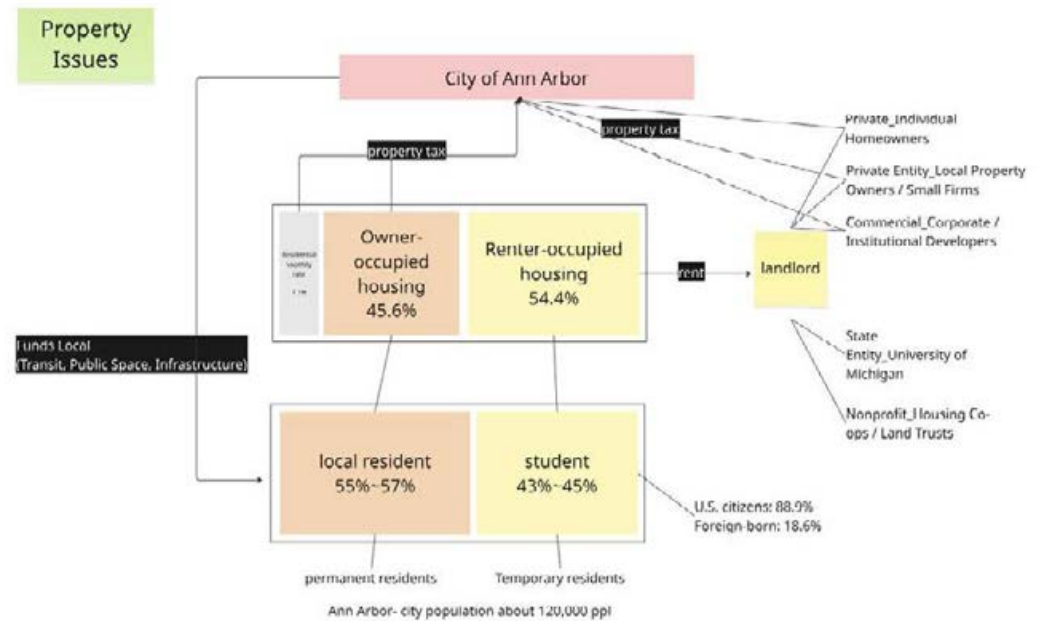source: U.S. Census 1860-2020, University of Michigan Enrollment Reports

Since 1970, the growth of the University of Michigan student population has accounted for 62% of the growth in the city

From 1940 to 1970, the growth of the University of Michigan student population accounted for 19% of the growth in the city

Table
University of Michigan Enrollment Statistics (2015-2024)

source: University of Michigan Enrollment Reports

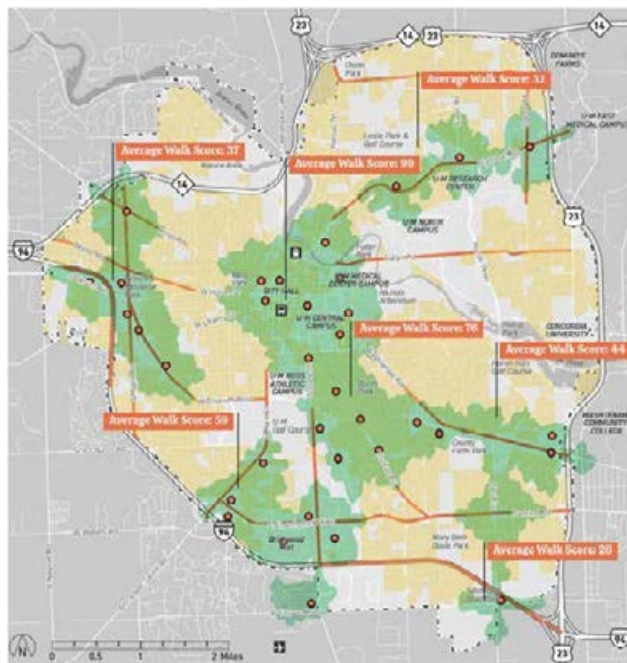|	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
U-M enrollment	43652	44718	46002	46716	48000	47,907	50,278	51,225	52,065	52,855

Over the last 10 years, U-M enrollment has increased an average of over 1,000 students each year, with a record number of applications for Fall 2025.

Property issues between this tension

Property Issues

City of Ann Arbor

Owner-occupied housing 45.6%
Renter-occupied housing 54.4%

local resident 55%~57%
student 43%~45%

permanent residents
Temporary residents

Ann Arbor- city population about 120,000 ppl

Private_Individual Homeowners
Private Entity_Local Property Owners / Small Firms
Commercial_Corporate / Institutional Developers
State Entity_University of Michigan
Nonprofit_Housing Co-ops / Land Trusts

U.S. citizens: 88.9%
Foreign-born: 18.6%
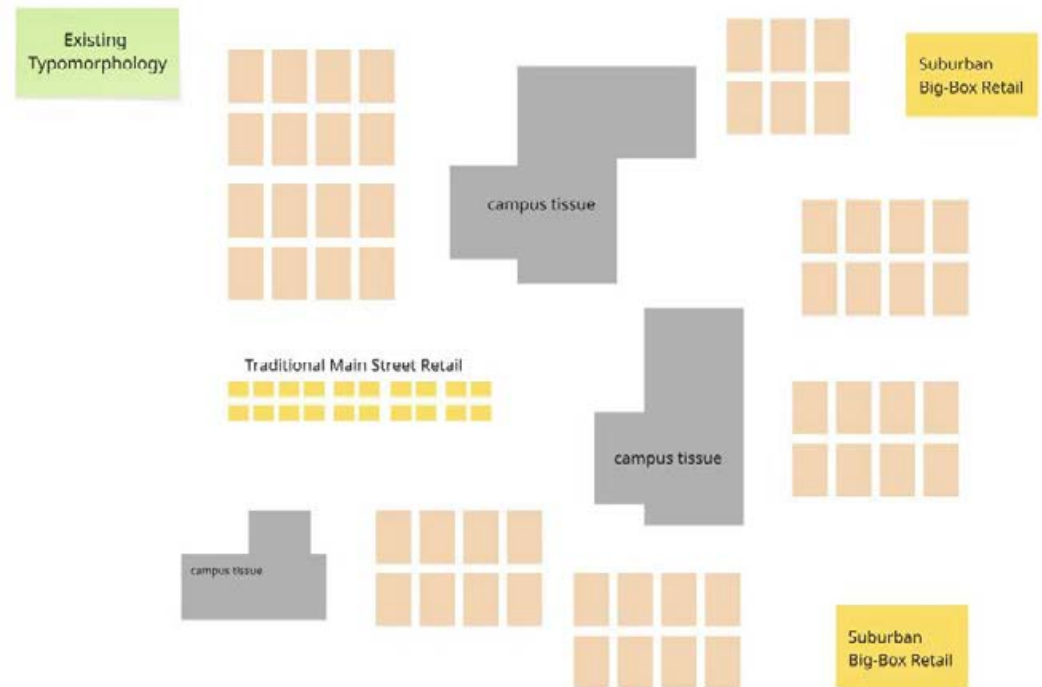
Framing Systems

Retail accessibility

Map
Access to Commercial Amenities & Walk Score

- Shopping Center / Major Commercial Node
- 10 Minute Walkshed from Shopping Center/Node
- Residential Areas
- Major Walking Barriers (thoroughfares of at least four lanes)

source: Walk Score, City of Ann Arbor GIS

NOTE ON METHODOLOGY: Shopping centers and major commercial nodes were identified based on key intersections located within city-designated commercial areas, as well as the presence of larger shopping centers.

Existing typomorphology in AA

Existing Typomorphology

Suburban Big-Box Retail

campus tissue

Traditional Main Street Retail

campus tissue

campus tissue

Suburban Big-Box Retail

Framing Systems

Campus Tissues

"The Anatomy of Sprawl" by"Scheer, Brenda Case"

Three Suburban Tissues

-Static tissues.

-Elastic tissues

-Campus tissues.

Significant areas of the developed suburb are composed of larger tracts of land owned by single entities and developed with multiple buildings.

A spatial fabric centered on the school's teaching area, around which student housing and supporting businesses are organized.

Teaching Area
(Academic Zone)

Residential Area

Commercial Area

Tension:

Mobility constraints confine students within the mono-functional campus tissue, exposing a fractured relationship between campus and city.
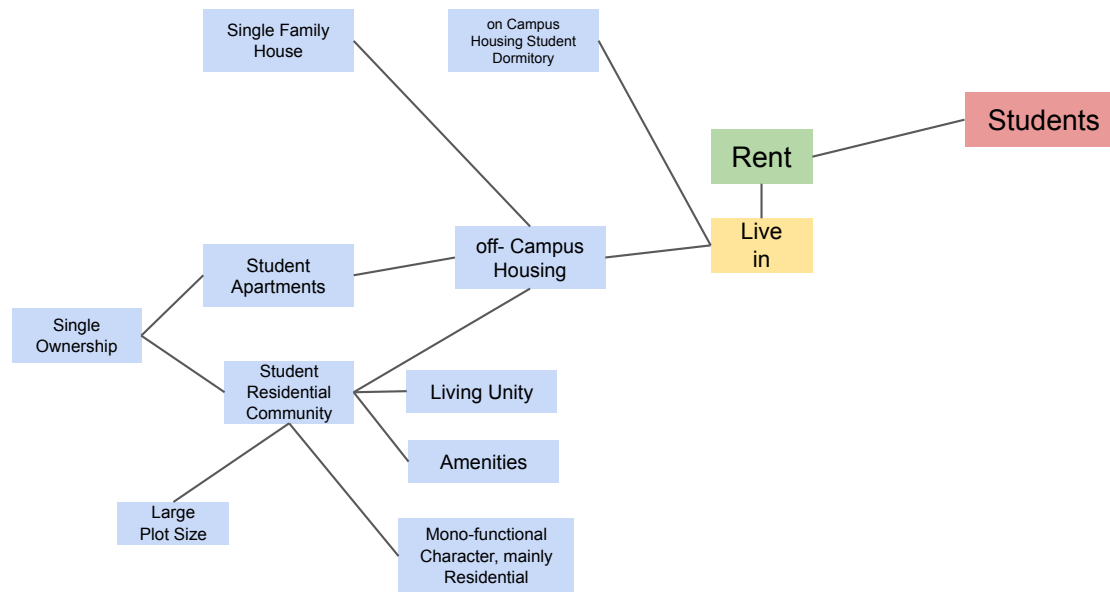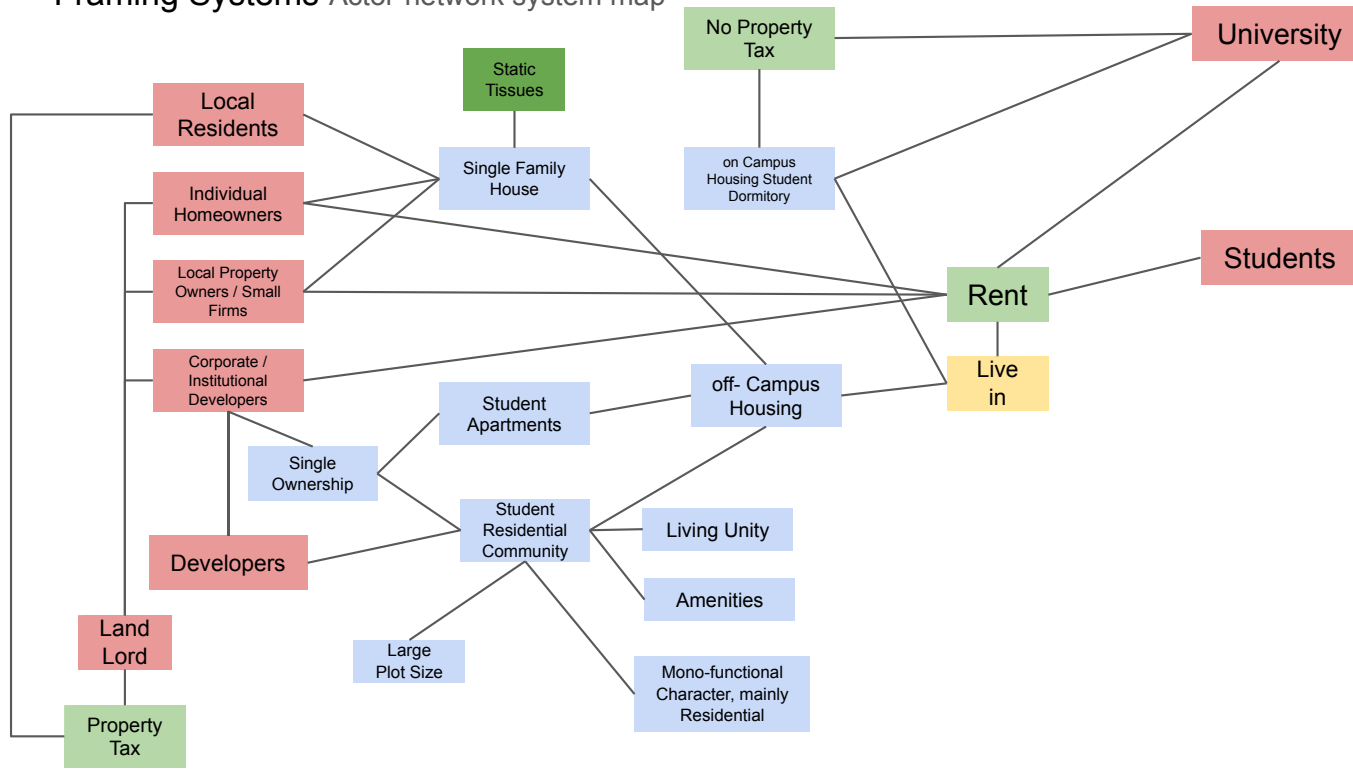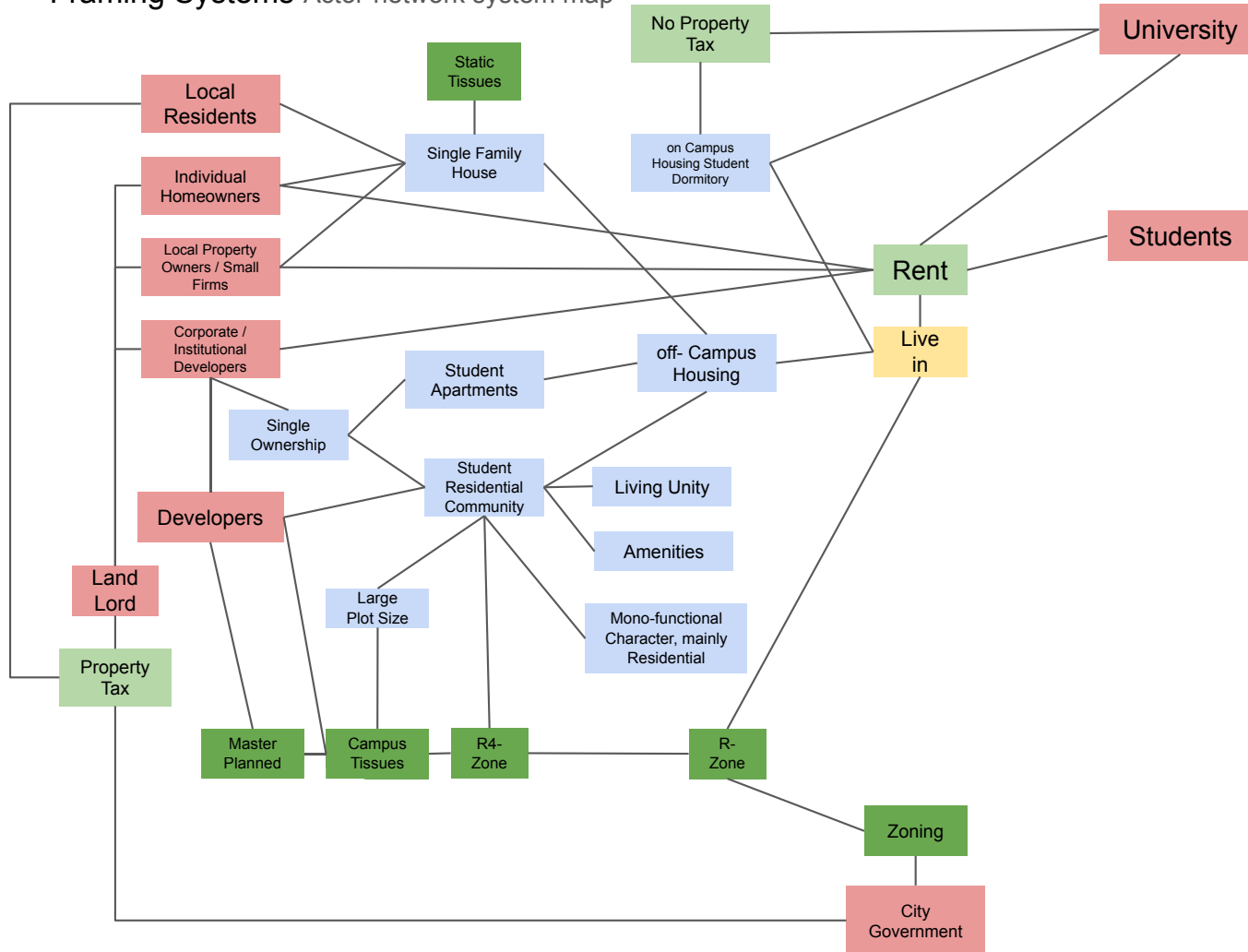
Framing Tensions

Tension:
Mobility constraints
confine students within
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a fractured relationship
between campus and city.
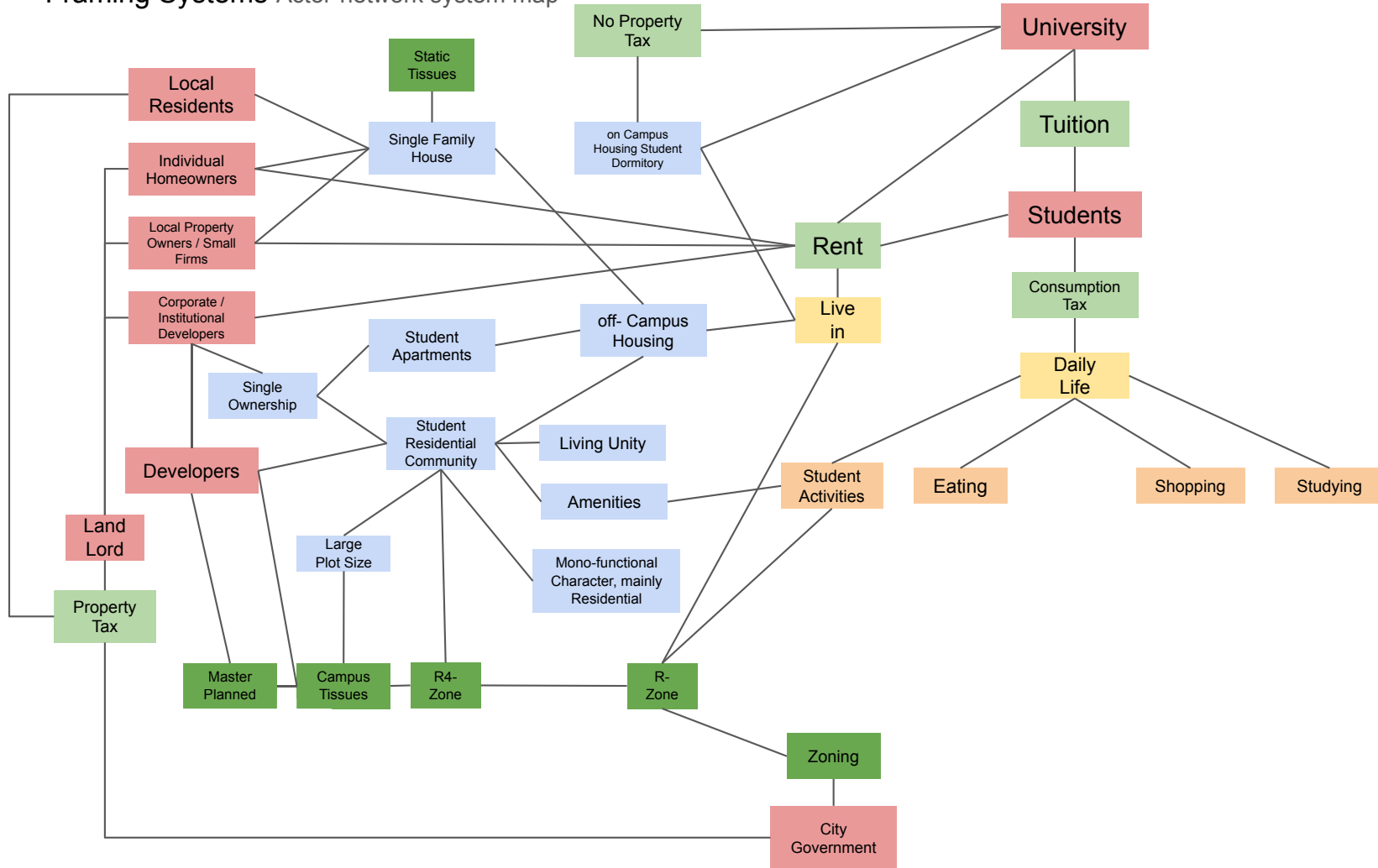
Framing Systems Actor-network system map
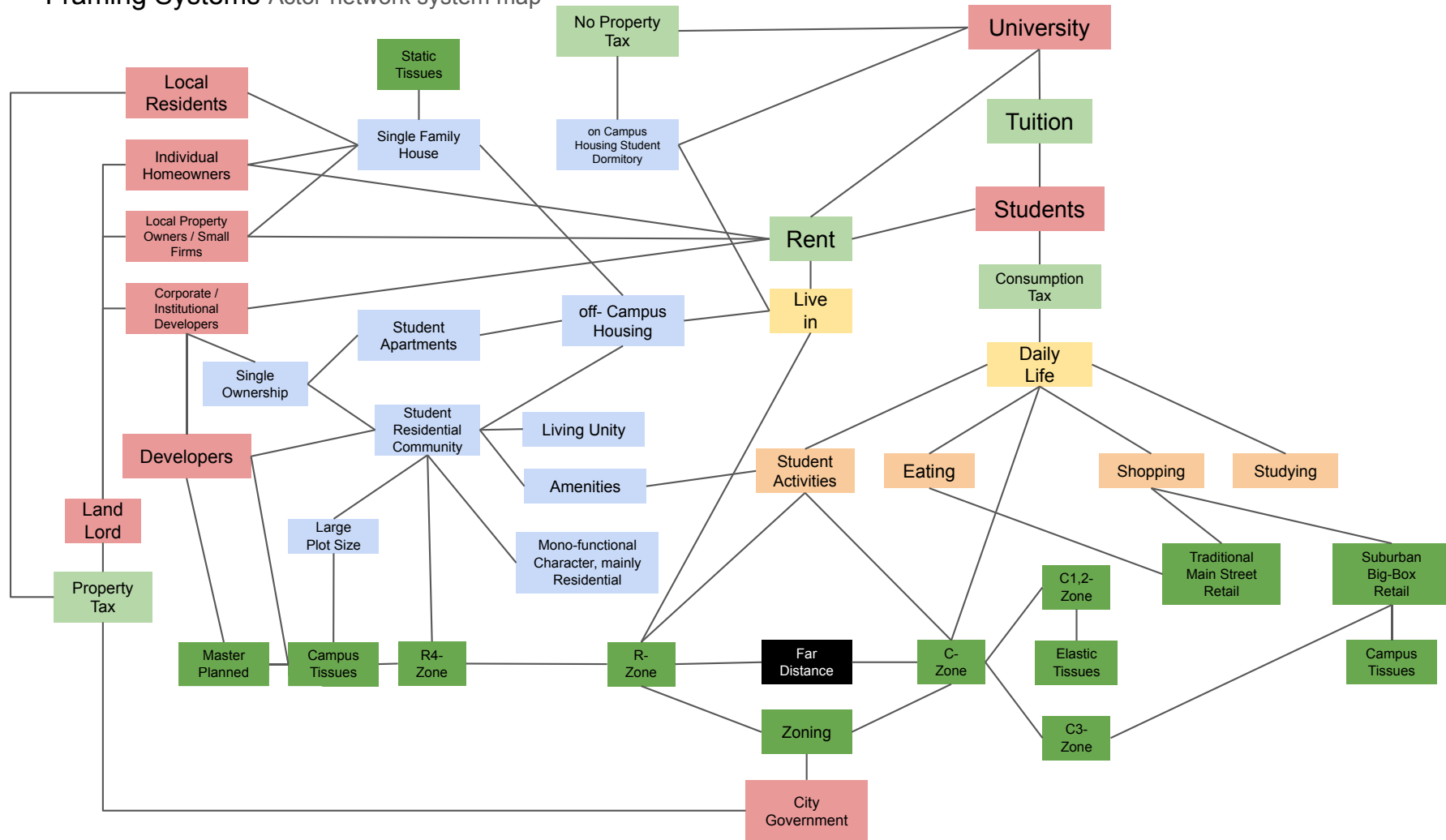
Framing Systems Actor-network system map

Local Residents

Individual Homeowners

Local Property Owners / Small Firms

Corporate / Institutional Developers

Developers

Land Lord

Property Tax

Static Tissues

Single Family House

No Property Tax

on Campus Housing Student Dormitory

University

Rent

Students

Live in

Student Apartments

off- Campus Housing

Single Ownership

Student Residential Community

Living Unity

Amenities

Large Plot Size

Mono-functional Character, mainly Residential

Framing Systems Actor-network system map

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Large Plot Size

Master Planned

Campus Tissues

R4- Zone

R- Zone

Zoning

City Government

Framing Systems Actor-network system map

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Consumption Tax

Daily Life

off- Campus Housing

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Amenities

Student Activities

Eating

Shopping

Studying

Large Plot Size

Mono-functional Character, mainly Residential

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Campus Tissues

R4- Zone

R- Zone

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City Government

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Student Activities

Eating

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Studying

Large Plot Size

Mono-functional Character, mainly Residential

Master Planned

Campus Tissues

R4-Zone

R-Zone

Far Distance

C-Zone

C1,2-Zone

Elastic Tissues

C3-Zone

Traditional Main Street Retail

Suburban Big-Box Retail

Campus Tissues

Zoning

City Government

Framing Systems Actor-network system map

Framing Sites

Campus Tissues_R4A_Community in Ann Arbor

Framing Sites
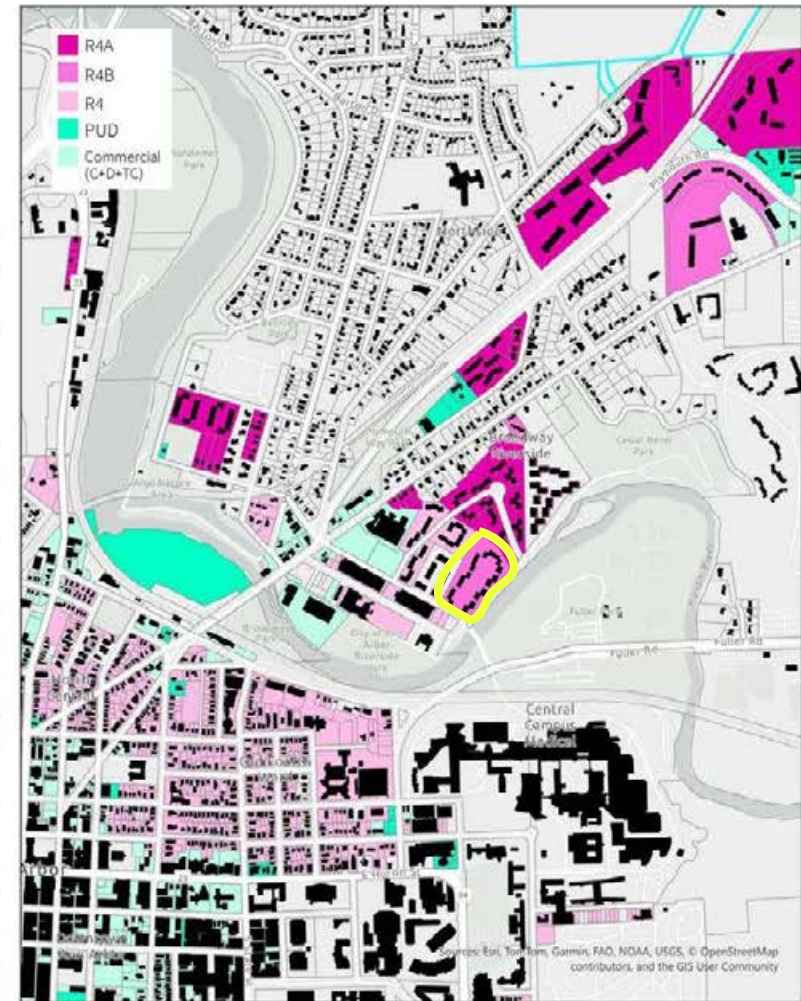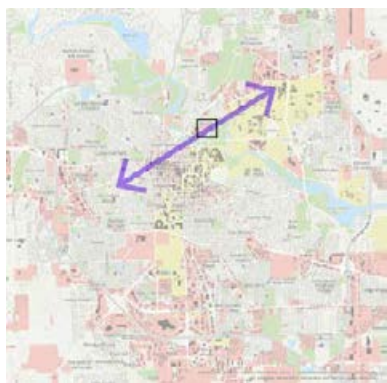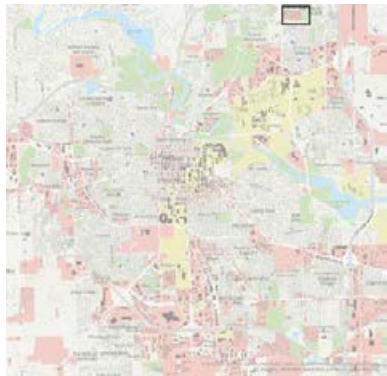
Legend:
- R4A
- R4B
- R4
- PUD
- Commercial (C+D+TC)

Framing Sites

**SITE1–The Villas of Northstar
(Student Residential Community)**

**SITE 2–Island Drive
(Student Residential Community)**

Framing Sites

**SITE1–The Villas of Northstar
(Student Residential Community)**

**SITE 2–Island Drive
(Student Residential Community)**

Intervention Concepts:

Shared Transportation System   +   **Tenants' Association**   +   **Zoning change: PUD**
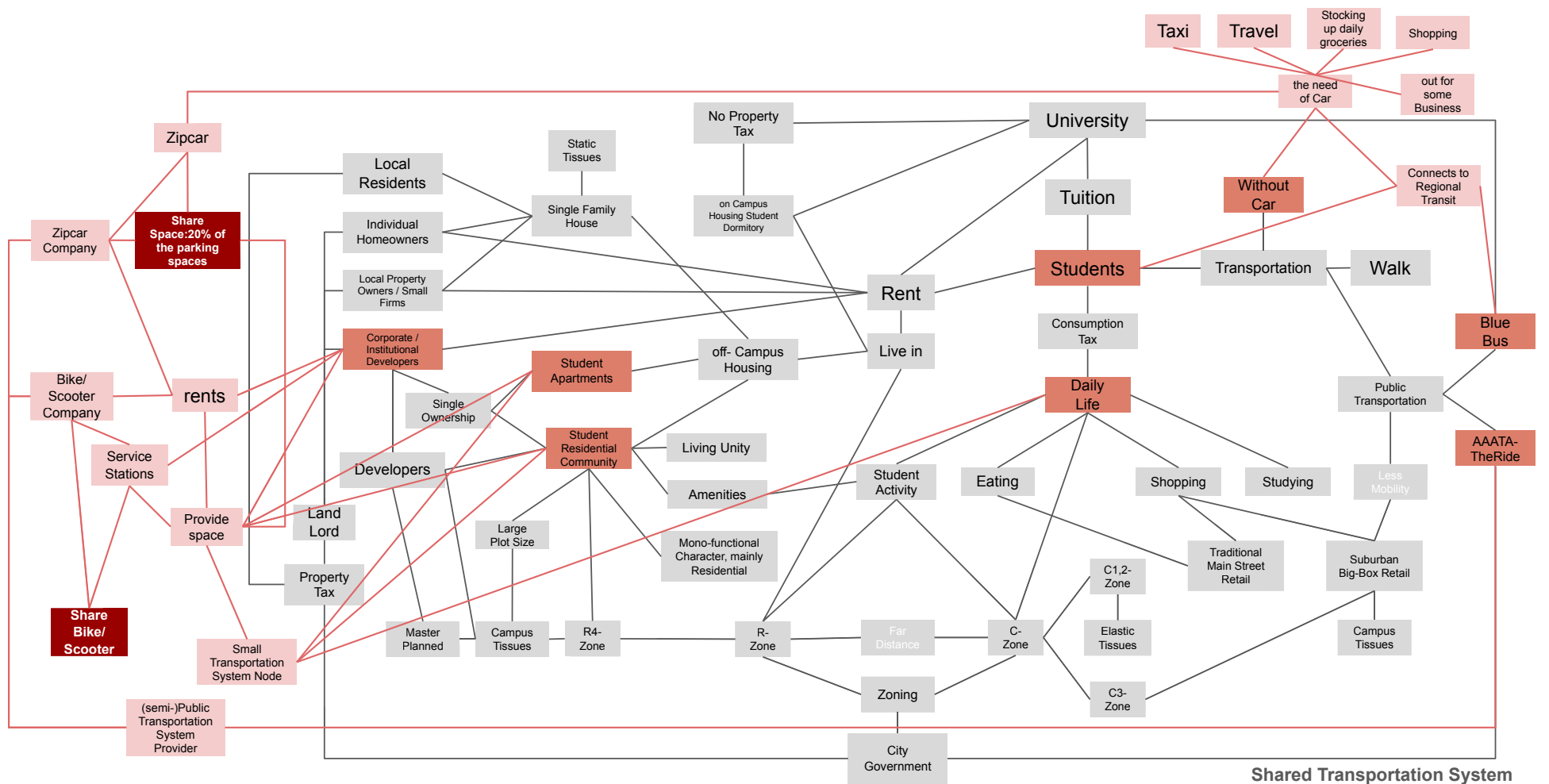
Shared Transportation System

Intervention Concepts scenario- Actor-network system map

Tenants' Association
Intervention Concepts scenario- Actor-network system map

Intervention Concepts:

Tenants' Association Implement Plan

Zoning change: PUD

Intervention Concepts scenario- Actor-network system map

Shared Transportation System+Tenants' Association+Zoning change: PUD
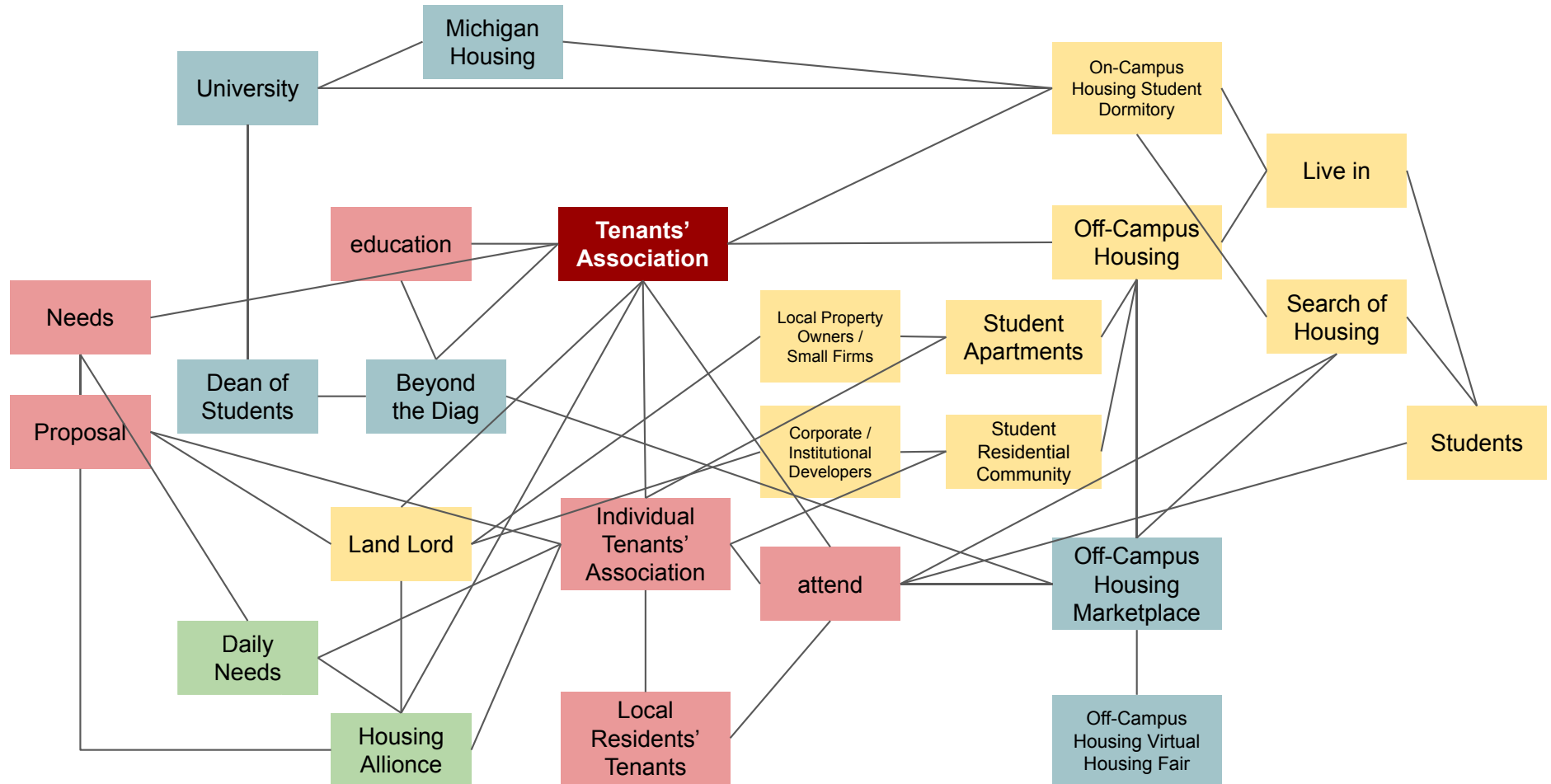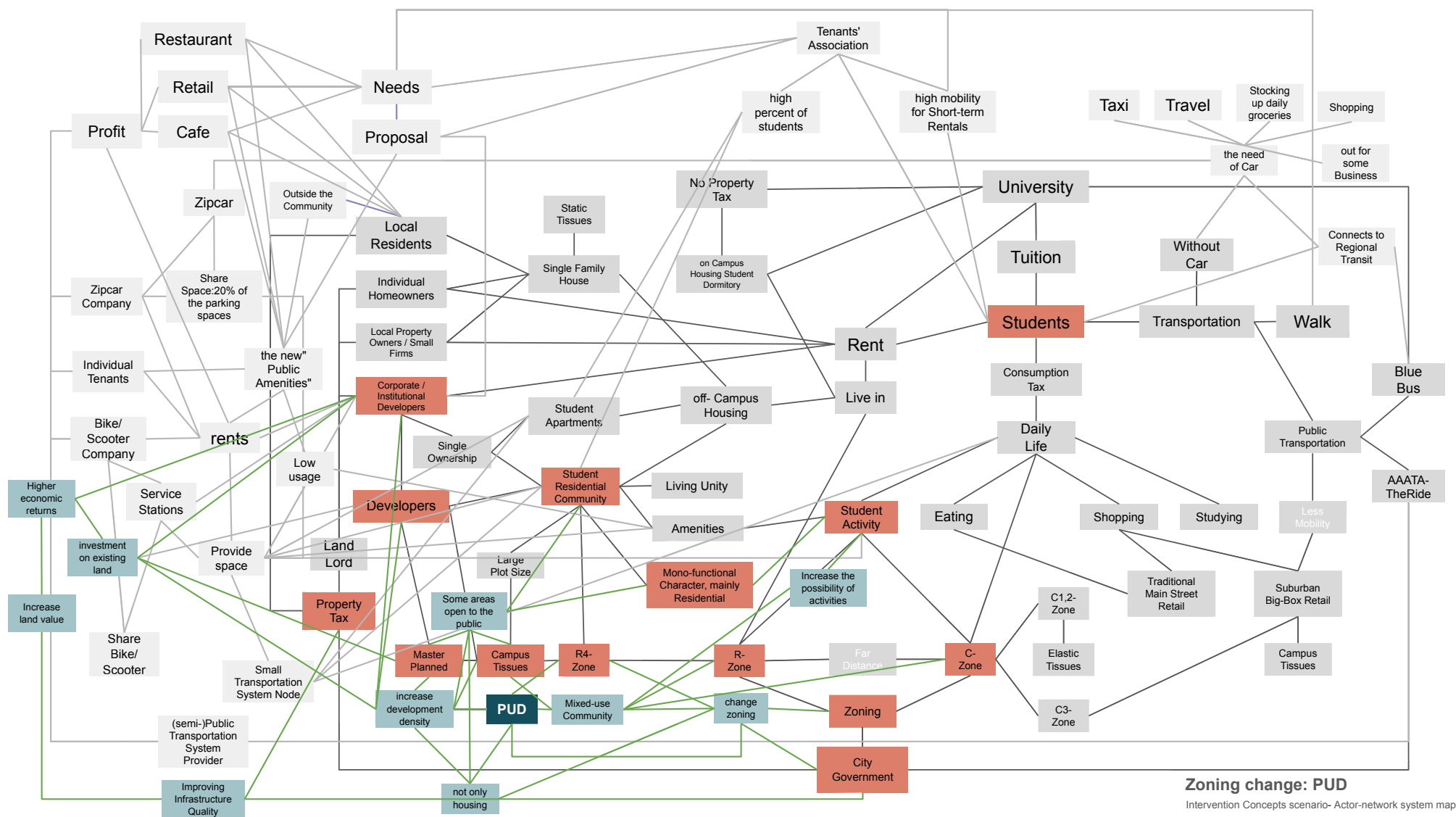
Intervention Concepts scenario- Actor-network system map
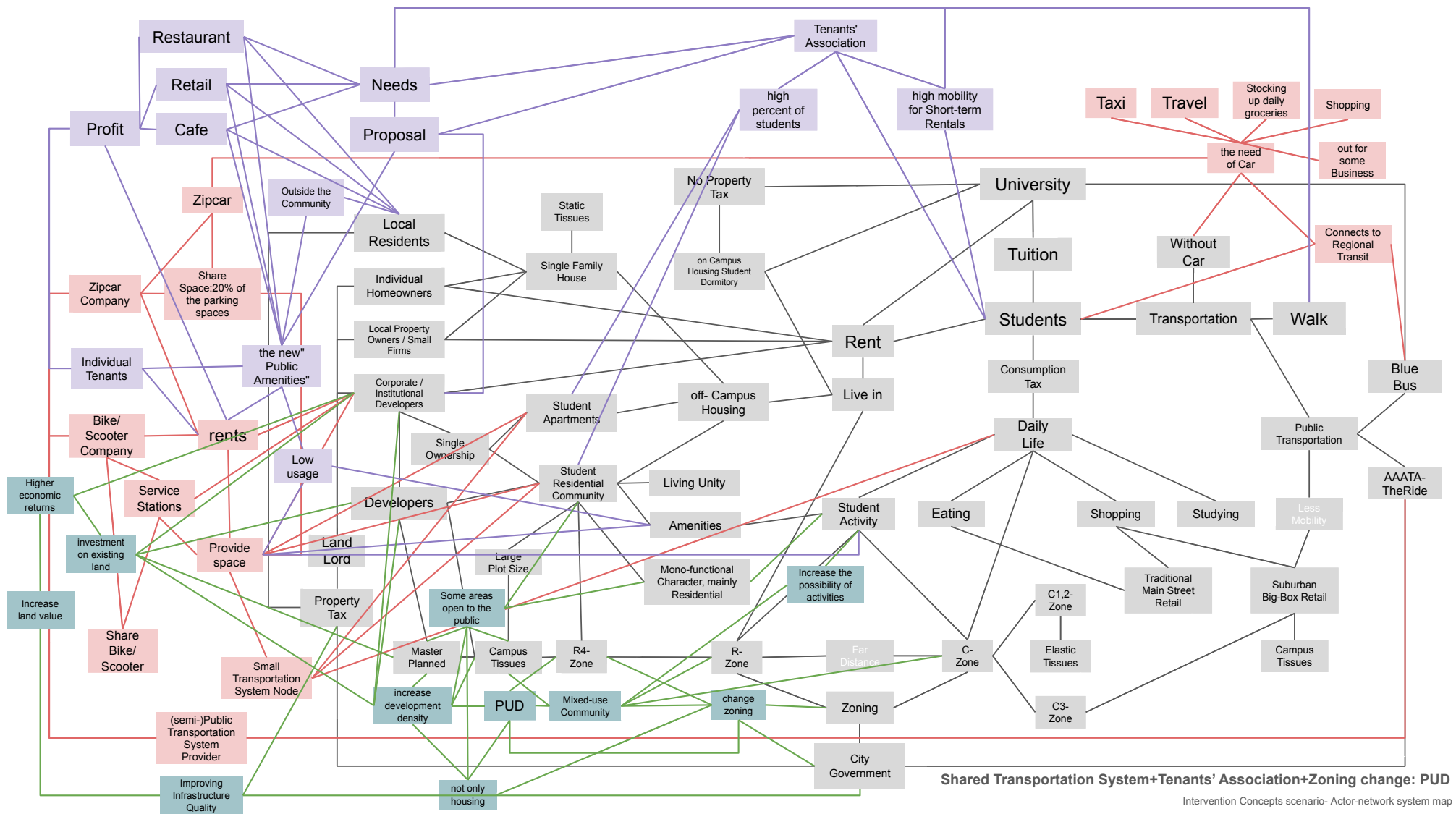
**SITE1–The Villas of Northstar
(Student Residential Community)**
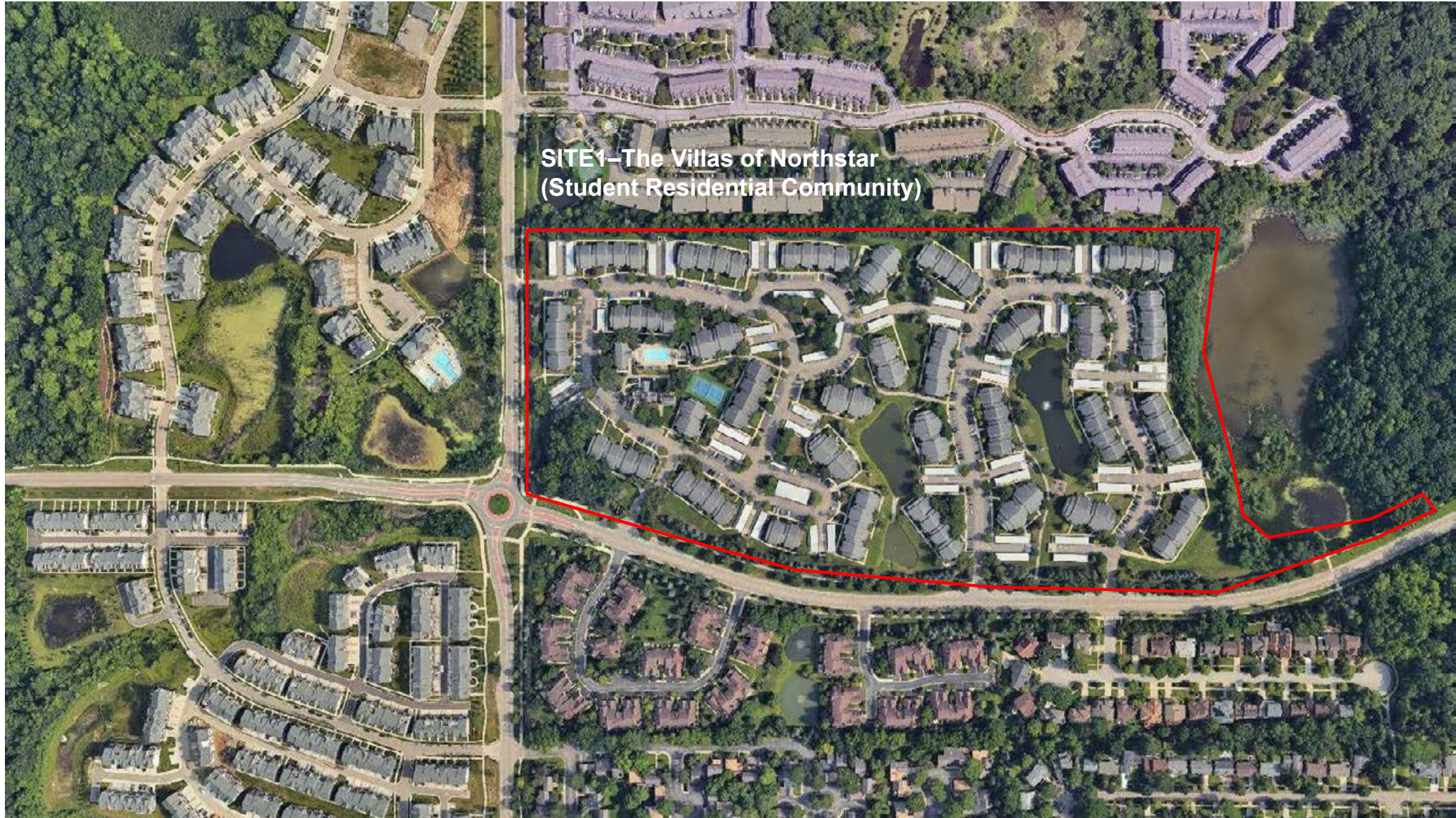
Framing Sites

Framing Sites

Suburban Location
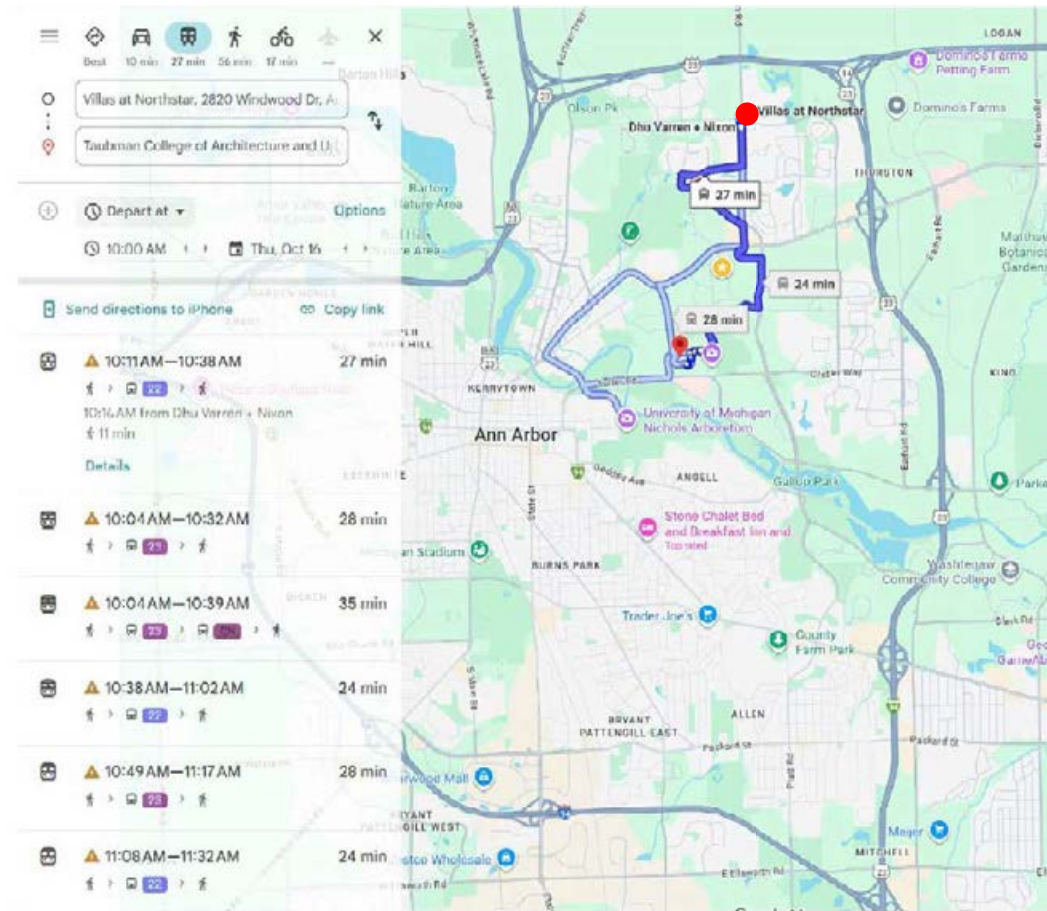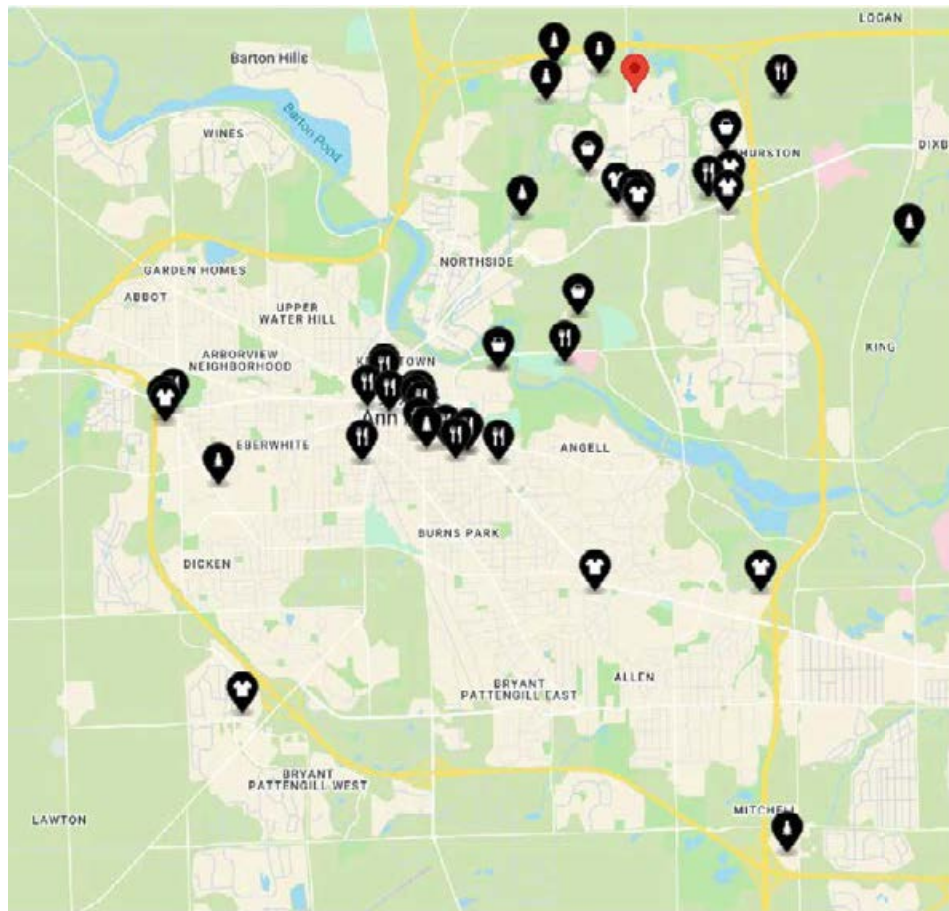
Framing Sites

Excessive Parking Spaces

Framing Sites

Irregular Building Orientation
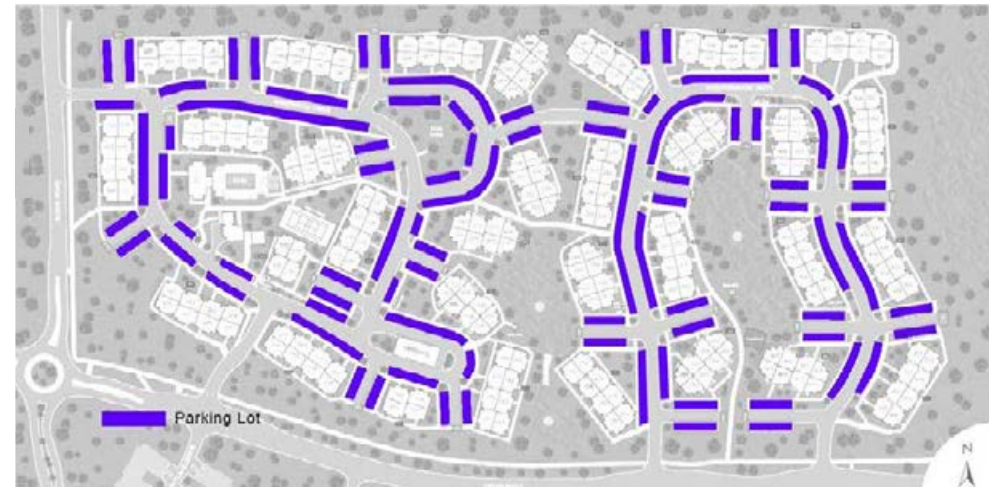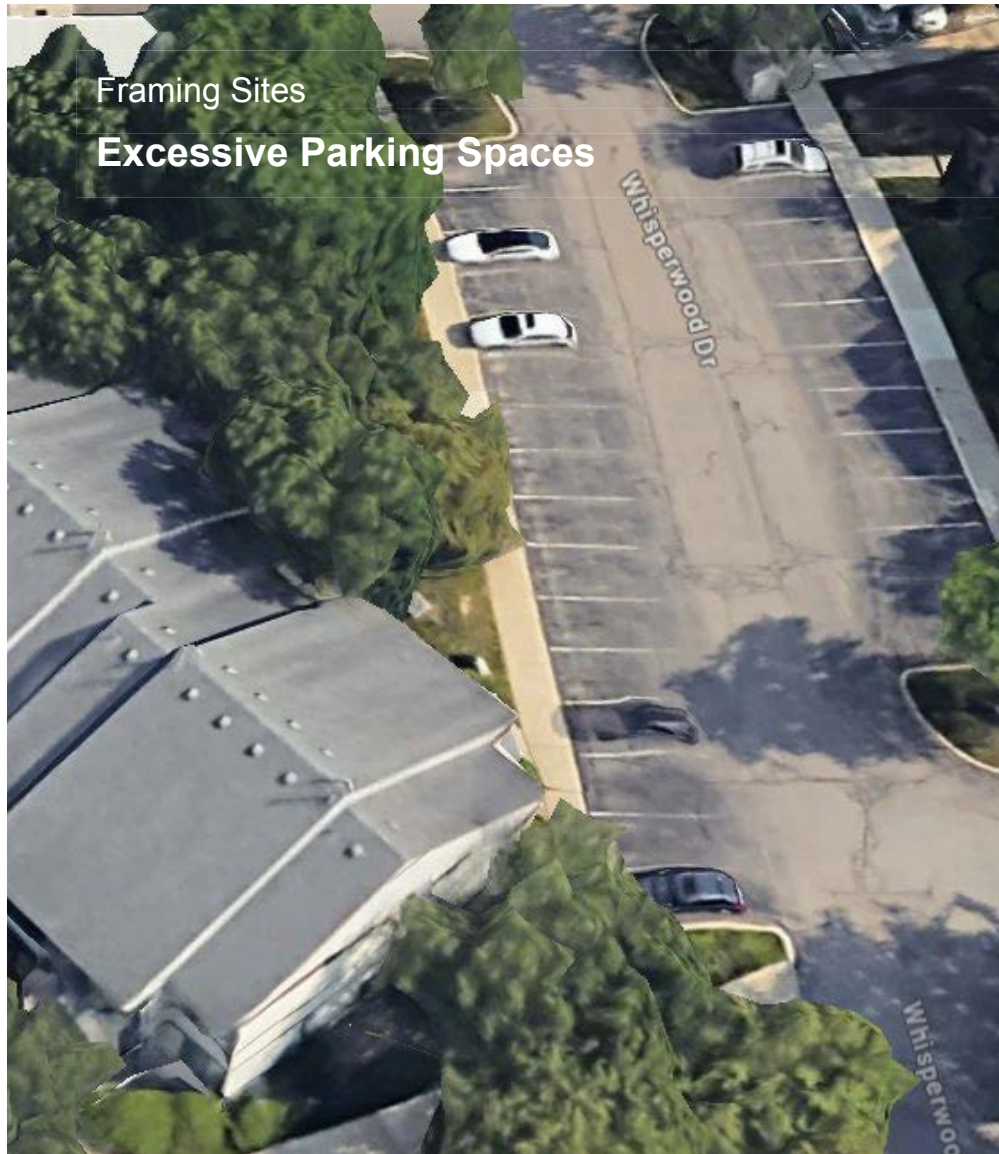
Framing Sites

Extensive Non-Functional Lawns
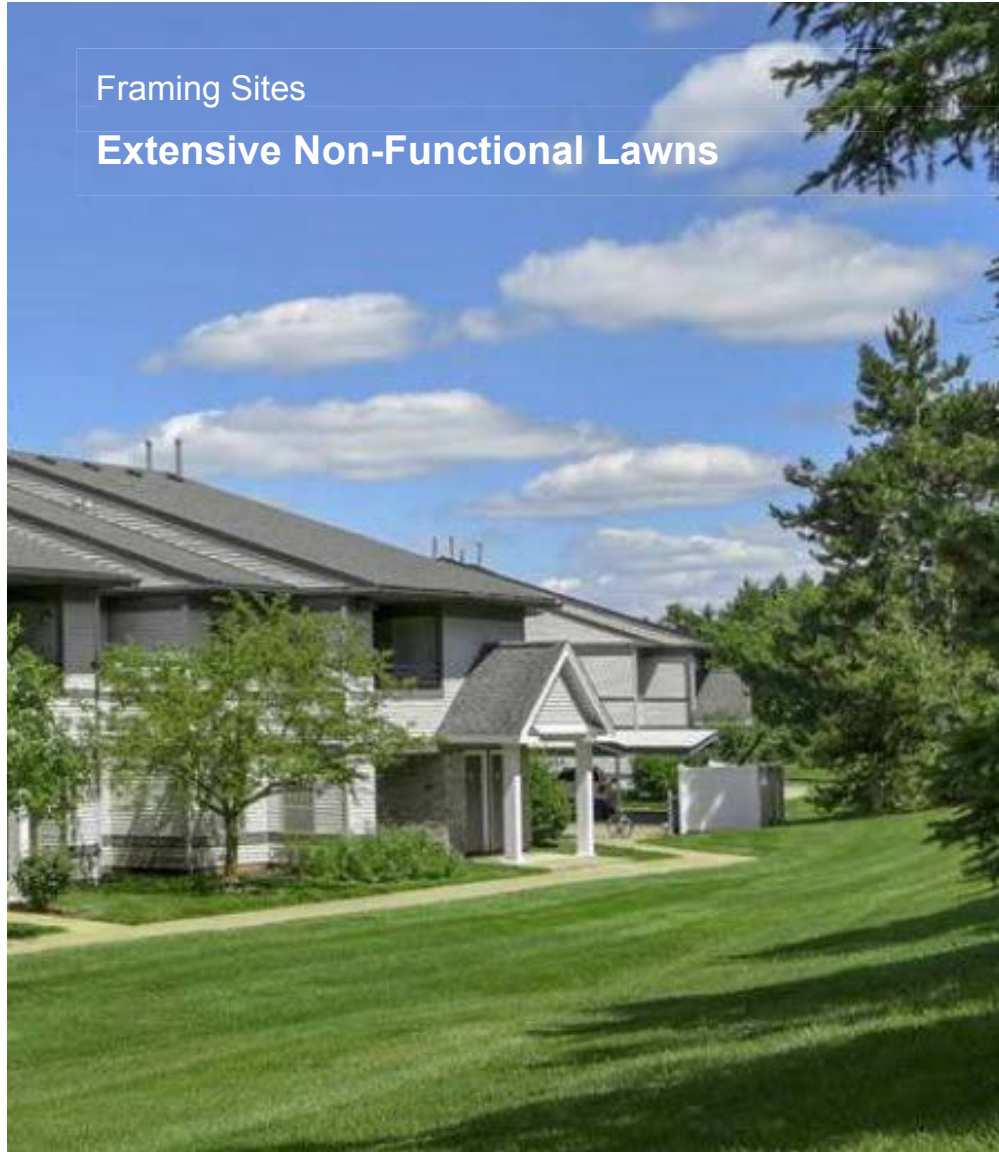
From Intervention Concepts to Spatial Framework

Shared Transportation System → Free up existing parking spaces and roads
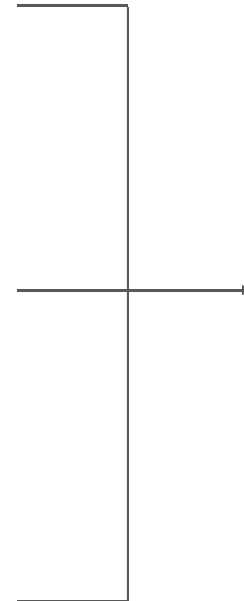
Tenants' Association → Together with Housing Alliance, propose space and usage needs.

Zoning change: PUD → Mixed-use community portantial

Reconfiguring Campus Tissues

Spatial Framework
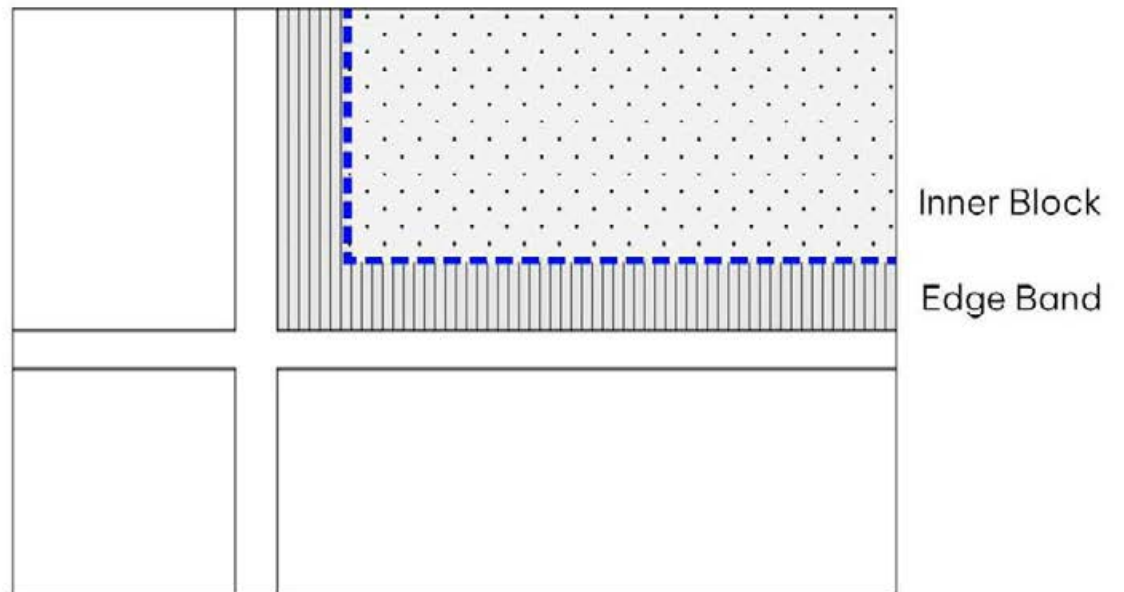Design Strategies- by Edge and inner block

Inner Block:
Couple the Buildings
Generate shared public spaces and
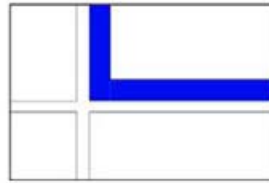insert communal structures.

Edge Band:
Mixed-use perimeter blocks
creating active community streets.
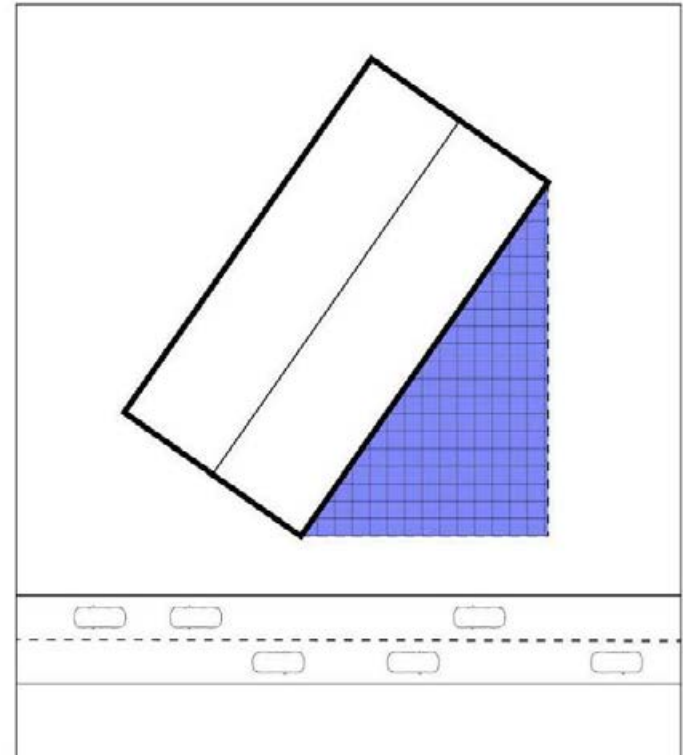
Inner Block

Edge Band

Spatial Framework

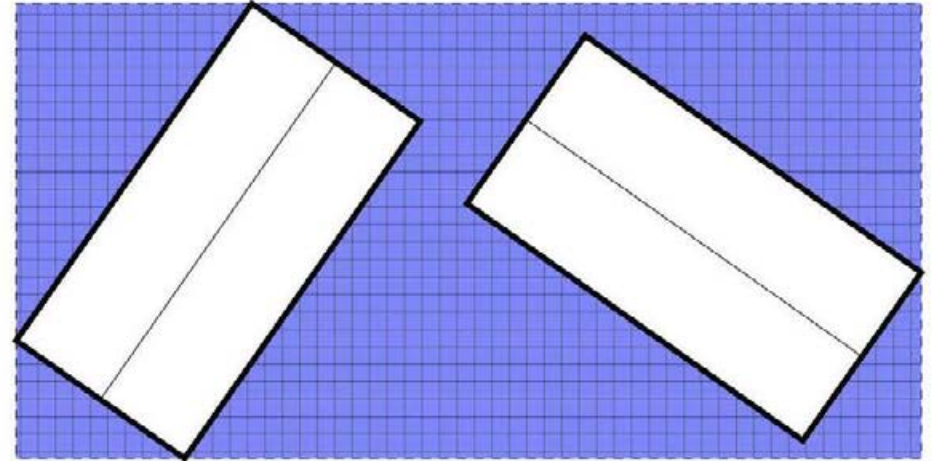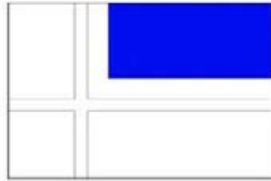Design Strategies- by Edge and inner block

The Edge Band

By framing the existing building's orientation with the street, a diverse commercial strip is created along the street, forming a relatively square street-facing interface to invite pedestrian.
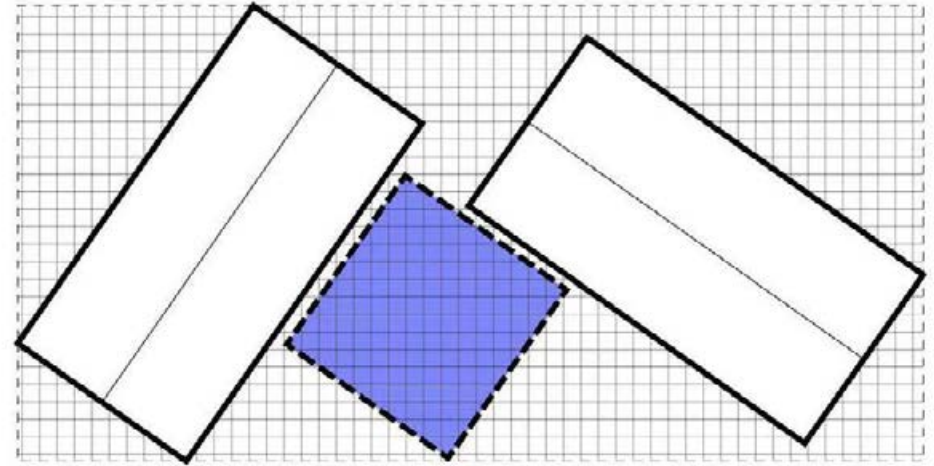
The Inner Block

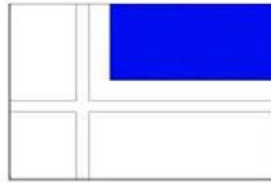Grouping two buildings together creates shared ground and public facilities by utilizing changes in the ground level.

The Inner Block

Using the rooftop to define
semi-outdoor public space between
the two buildings, under which
shared facilities can be located.

Urban Road

If the site area > 250,000 sq ft, urban roads should be introduced to create smaller urban plots and introduce mix-used activities
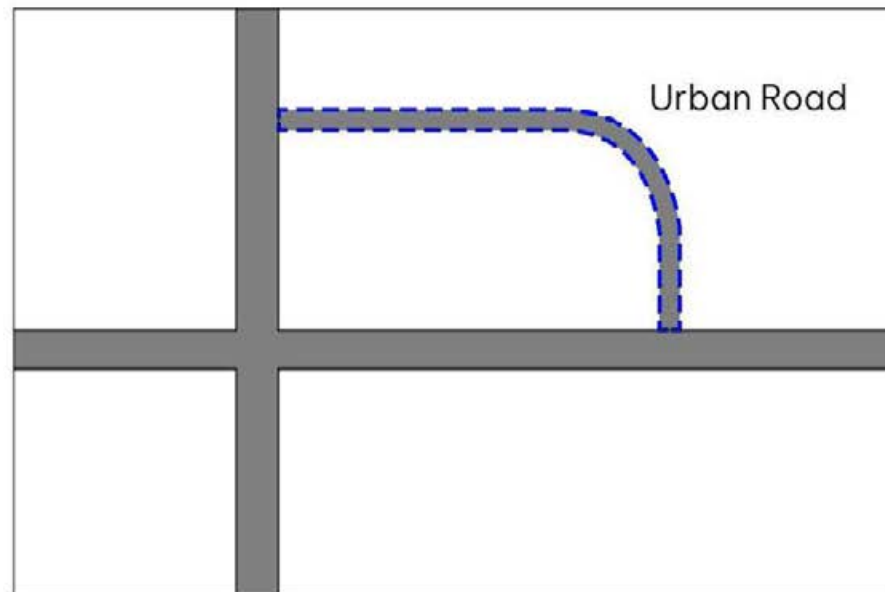
By introducing shared vehicle
facilities, the demand for parking
spaces and road space can be
reduced by 40%, thus reconfiguring
roads.
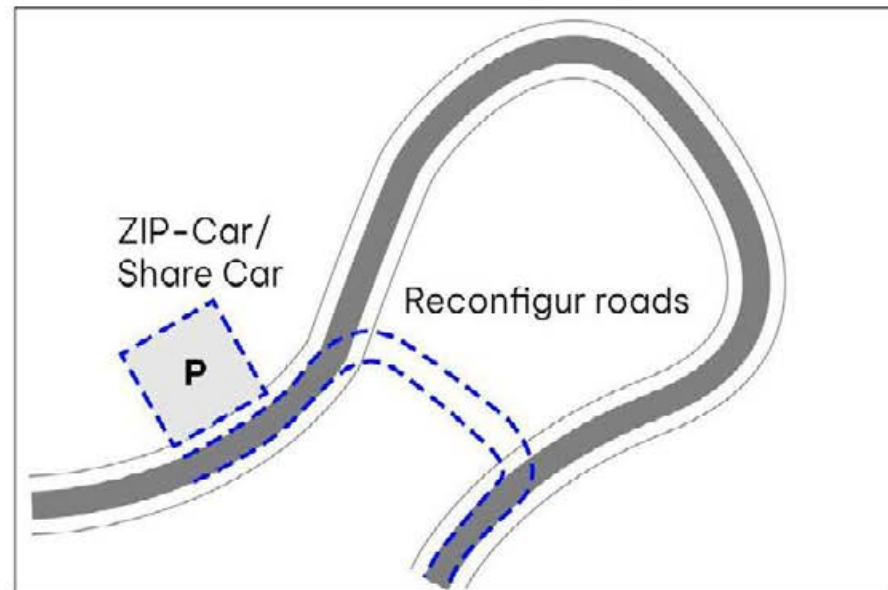
Transform roads into streets;
pedestrian zones; plazas (used for
public events); and even newly
constructed spaces.

Transform roads
into streets
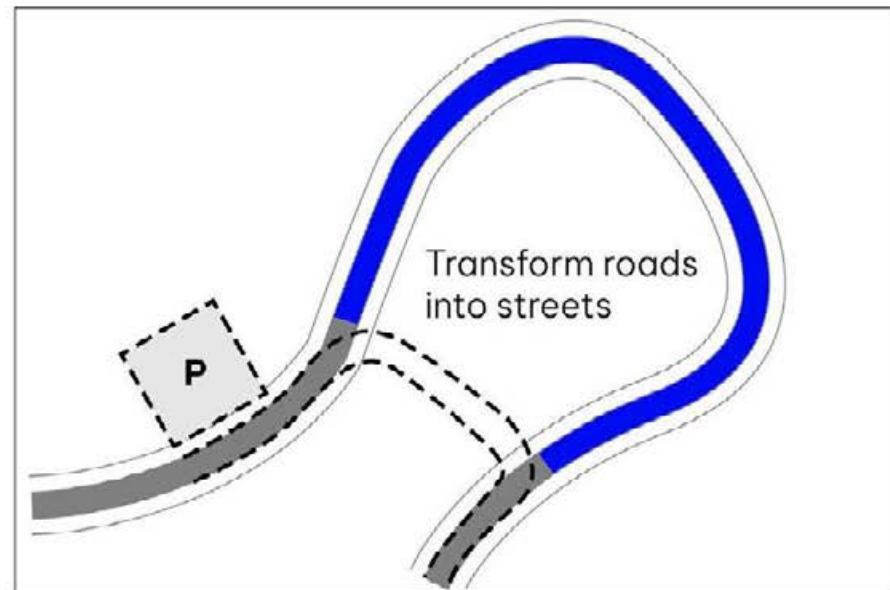
Site1 :Villas at Northstar

Design Strategies on Site1

Existing Condition

Design Strategies on Site1

Edge Band   Inner Block

Separation of Internal Block area and
Edge Band area
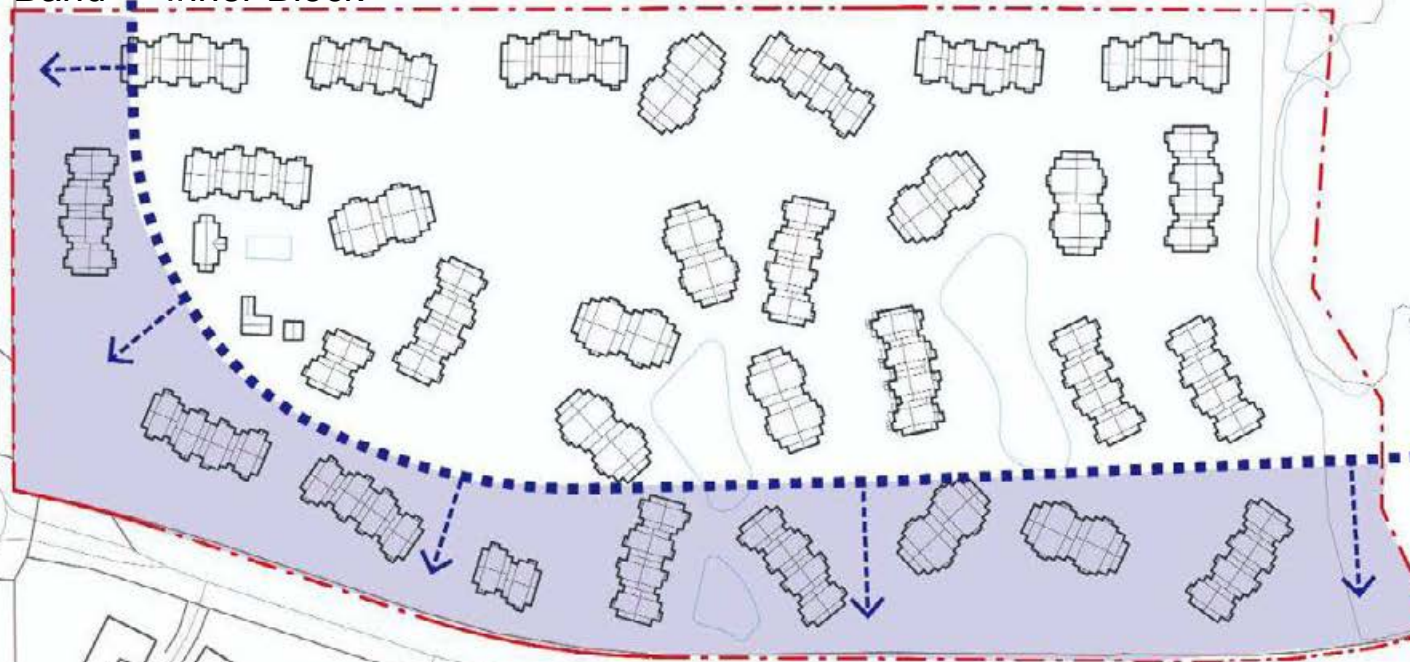
Design Strategies on Site1
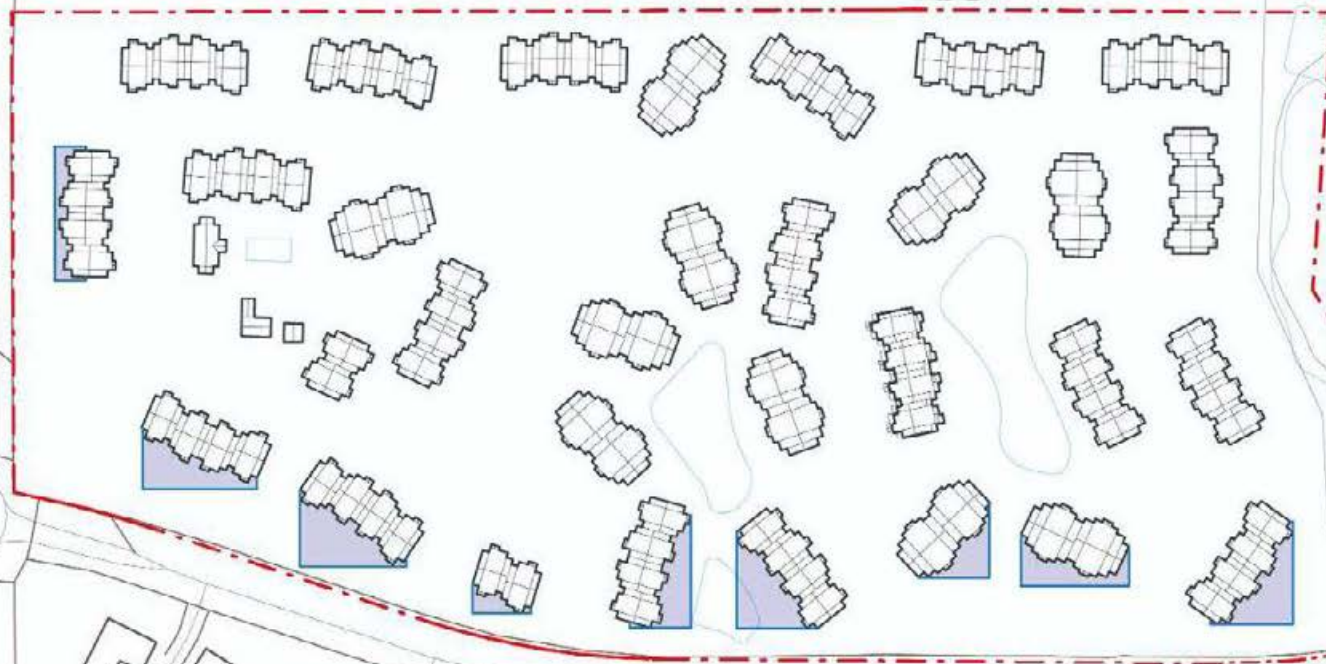
Semi- open interface storefront

Design Strategies on Site1

The Edge Band

Semi- open interface storefront

Mix-used and more density in the frame

Plan   Elevation

Retail

Small alleys

Store Front

Extension Blocks
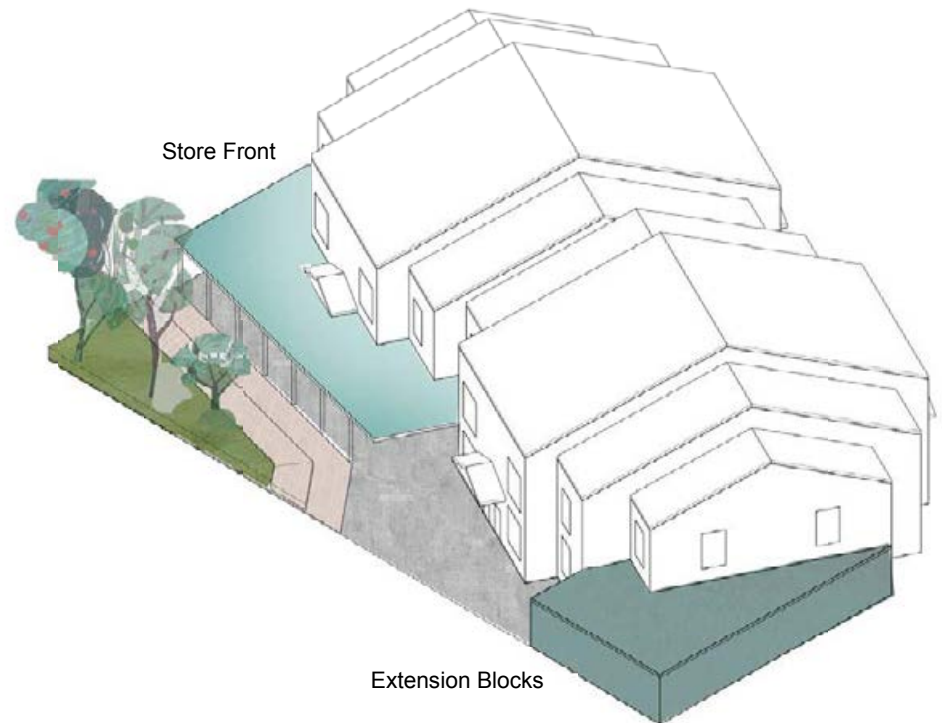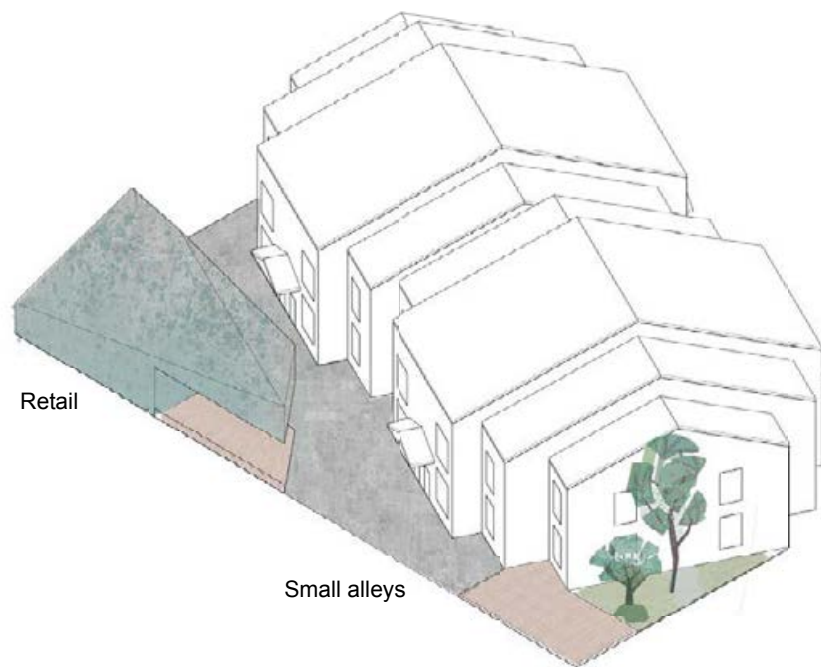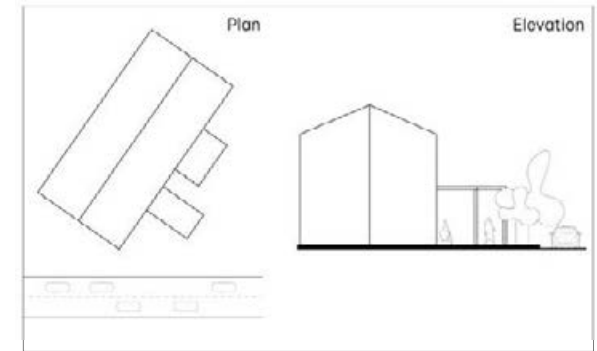
Design Strategies on Site1
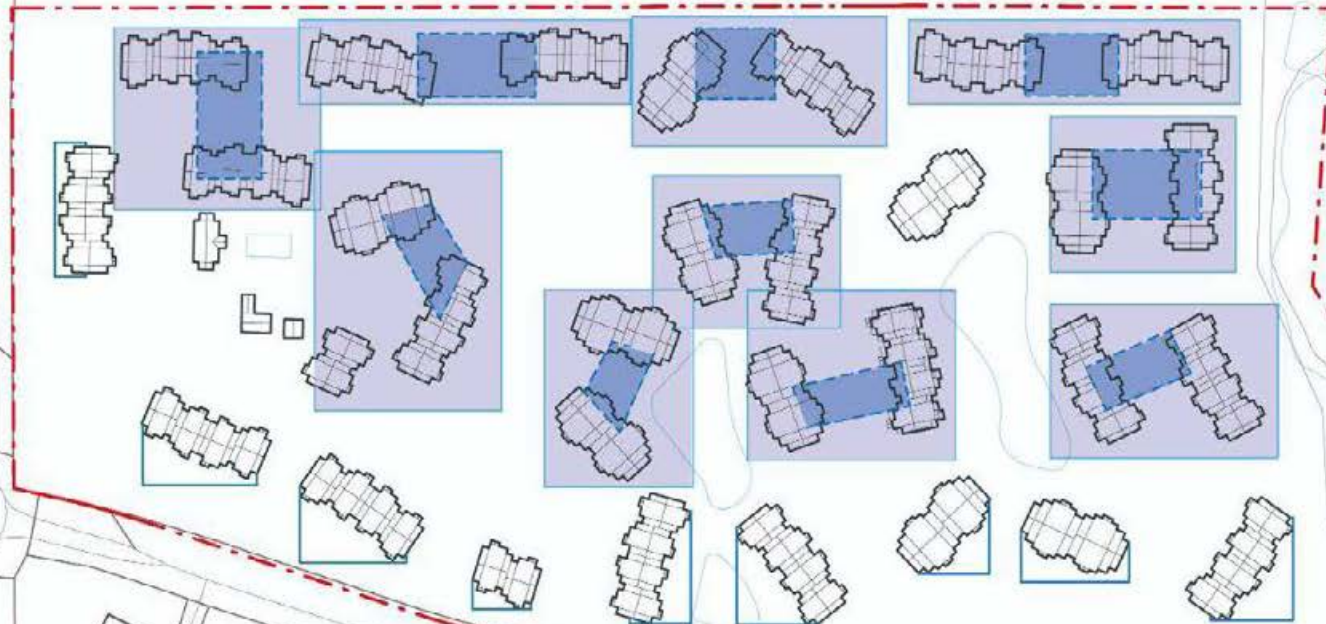
Grouped buildings- shared areas between
each two buildings

Design Strategies on Site1

The Inner Block

Plan   Axonometric
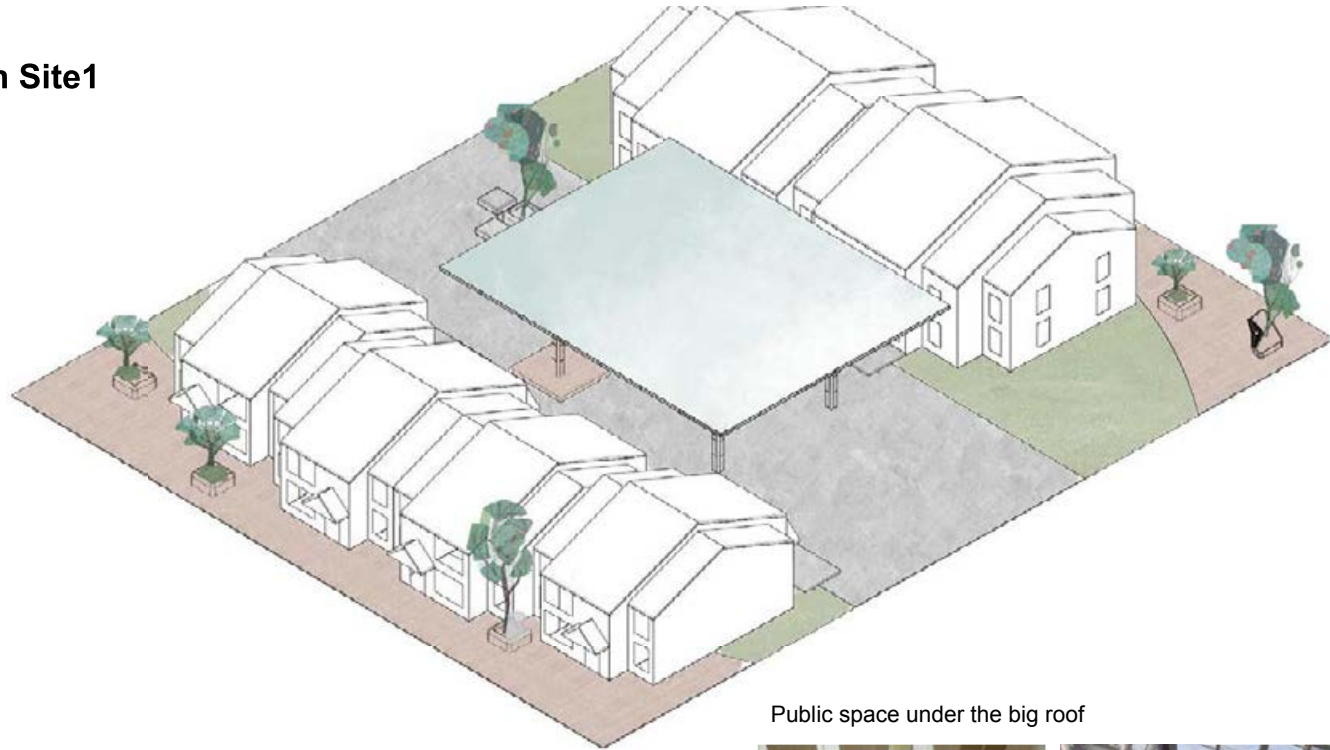
Public space under the big roof
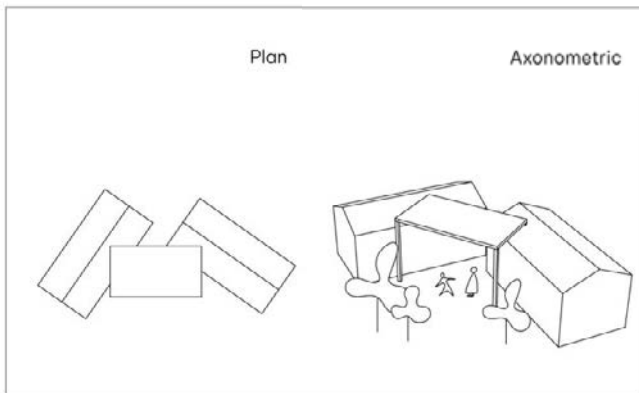
Source :pinterest

Source :Photo

Design Strategies on Site1

Respect the existing road network system and add some connecting sections.

Design Strategies on Site1

Distinguish between pedestrian-use roads and vehicle-use roads

Design Strategies on Site1

Connecting pedestrians using the road system within the
existing site content

Design Strategies on Site1

The Existing "Road"

Road System
designed for cars

Design Strategies on Site1

The Pedestrian "Street"

Closed roads should prioritize pedestrian use, and street furniture and small activity plazas should be added to linear spaces.

Design Strategies on Site1
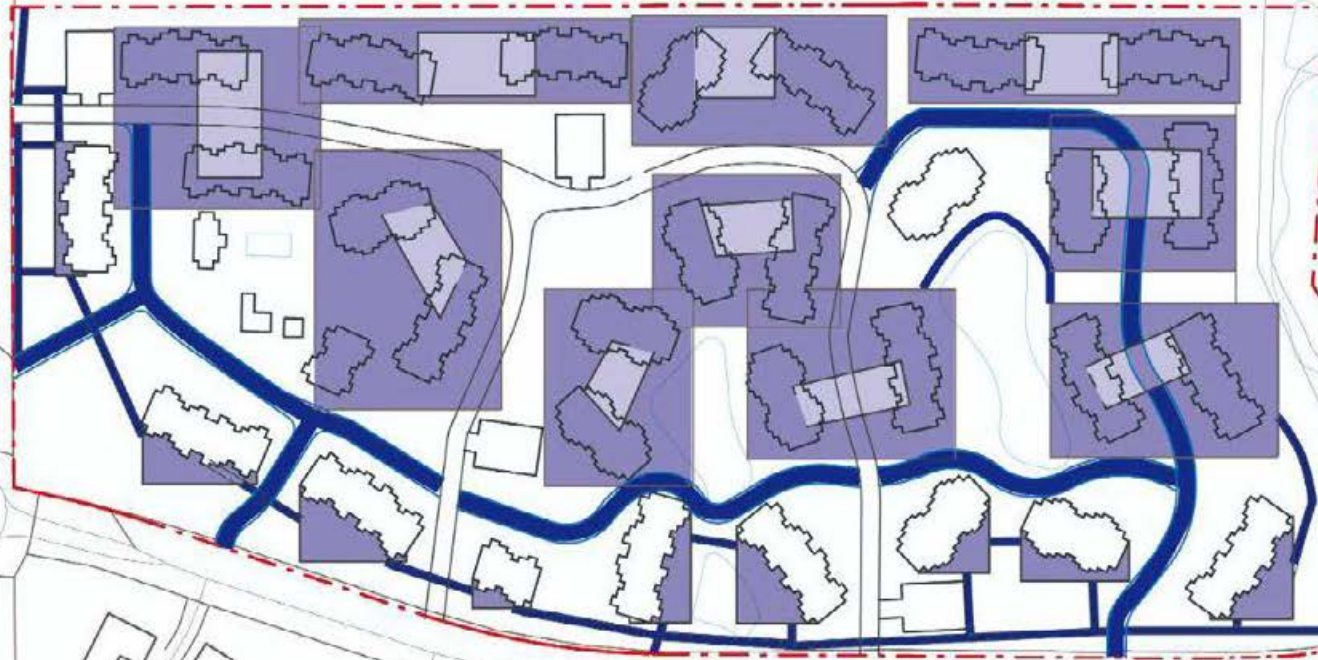
The pedestrian system connects the open spaces of the
Edge Band with the grouped shared areas of Inner Block.

Design Strategies on Site1
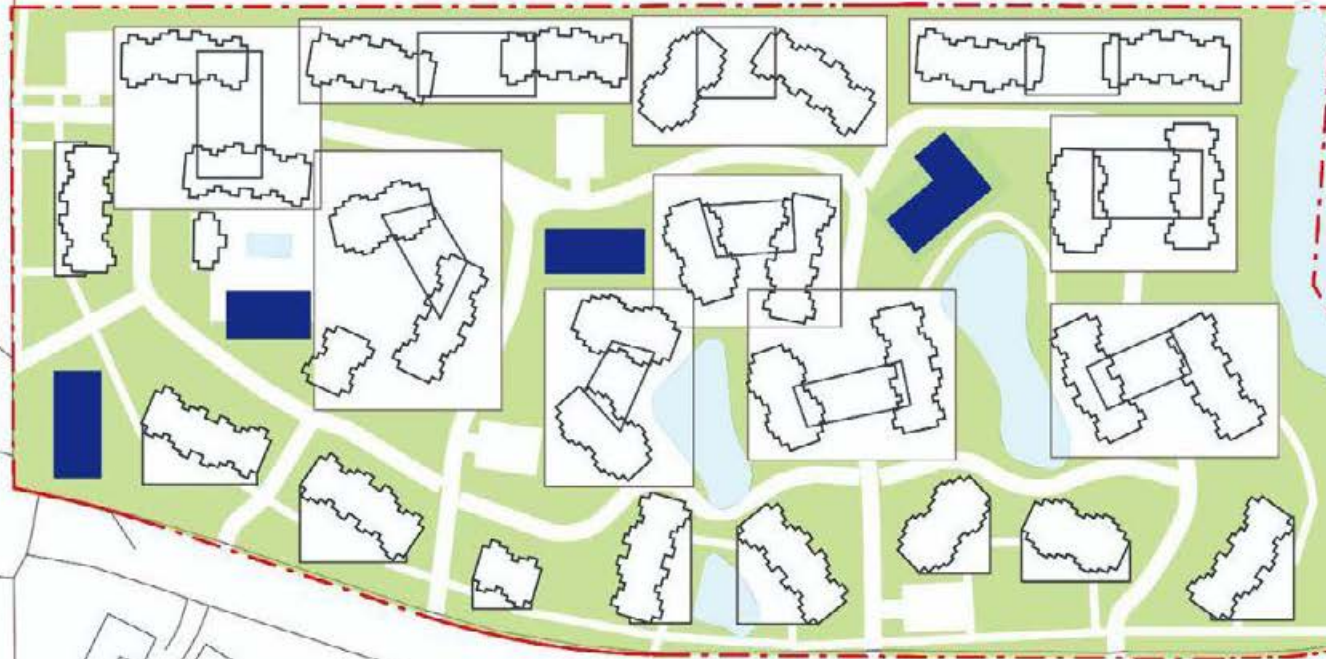
More mix-use/ community use building added to the site

Mobility

1 ZIP Car/ Share car in the Parking
2 Bike/Scooter parking in grouped shared areas
3 Potential of Bus stop

Density/ Diversity/ Mix-Used

4 the Edge Band Storefront mixed use
5 Small retail Centers
6 Shared space/ New Admanities
7 Existing community center and pool

A Urban Road System
B Community Street System

- Student pay! Property tax
- How to engage small fund?
- Population coverage
- 3000ppl for small retail
- cycling paths, jogging routes
- Connection to AA public space－>bus routes
- BOOK>>Retrofitting Suburbia（Ellen Dunham-Jones）
BOOK>>In the Shadow of the Ivory Tower（Davarian Baldwin）

8units*30*2F*2ppl=960ppl

Temporary

- Streets
- Edge/ Community

- Small retail/ events

→

More Density

- Add housing and buildings
- More Population

→

EDGE

- Add retail streets

→

INNER

- Public space
- Turn Road to Streets

Voici votre future
maison de la chanson et
de la musique du Québec
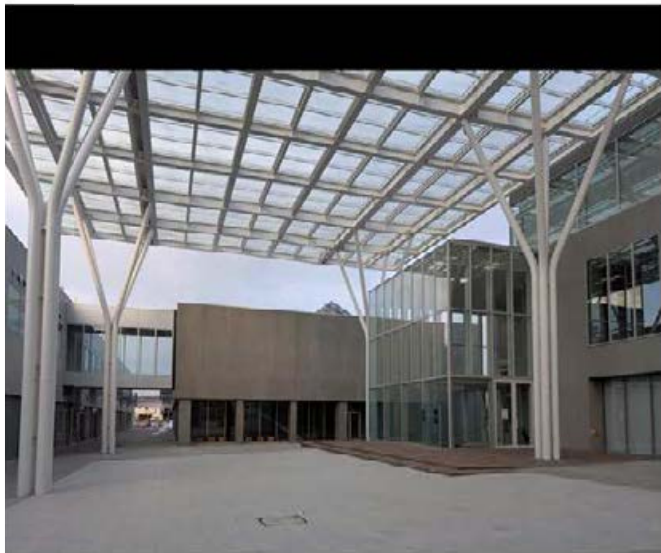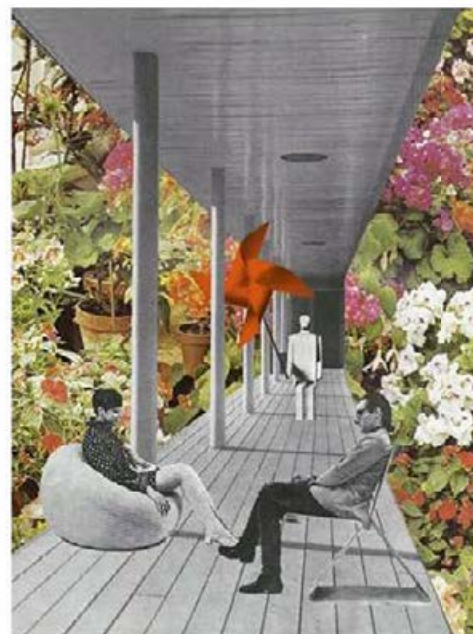
- What is the urban tension at hand?
- What is its relation to property?
- What is your overall approach to address the tension, in simple general terms?
- What is the agenda of your design proposal? What are you trying to accomplish?
What are the multiple design strategies you are using towards that agenda?

- What does each strategy actually do, in terms of 1physical social ecological transformation and 2-catalyzing further change? Why are these strategies effective?

- How do the strategies intersect and/or build on each other?

How have you considered multiple scenarios playing out?

•What does the place look like physically, socially, ecologically, legally once your intervention has started to operate?

•How does your proposal link back to your urban tension identified, your analysis, and attitude to the issue?

STUDENT CITY

URBAN TENSION
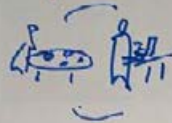
45% ↑ STUDENT
residency / DAILY NEED   V.S.   MONO TONE
                                      RESIDENTIAL
                                      CAMPUS TISSUES

RELATION TO PROPERTY ?

Rent

STUDENT

not own → How to change

OVERALL APPROACH

TENANTS ASSOCIATION → mobility · share car
                                   (city car)
                                   BUS
→ School & general one
→ community & individual other
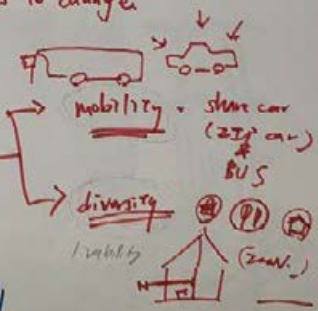
AGENDA OF DESIGN PROPOSAL

DIVERSIFY monotone campus tissues
· create diversity in community
to meet students need.

DESIGN STRATEGIES

INNER - EDGE
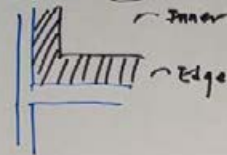
Inner
Edge

Edge - Mixuse

CREATE. SMALL SCALE
STREETS
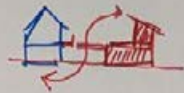
INNER MIXUSE (7 type)

Road / not cross x 3
STREETS. x & z

(→) create
boundary ?

ROADS / STREETS

Reduce Road & Parking → with mobility / share transporation

ROAD → STREET
~~PARKING~~

PARKING → ~~STREET~~/ EVENT PLACE

PoPUP

Inner public space

Node public space

Public ← → Place

Road → Street | Boundary Private Unite
Retail Mixuse | Share Space

neighbour →

← Resident/ Student

INTERVENTION OPERATE → Hierarchy of space
x
STUDENT NEED

Student City

20251117

OP1

Differentiate between the internal block and the external open area first.

OP1
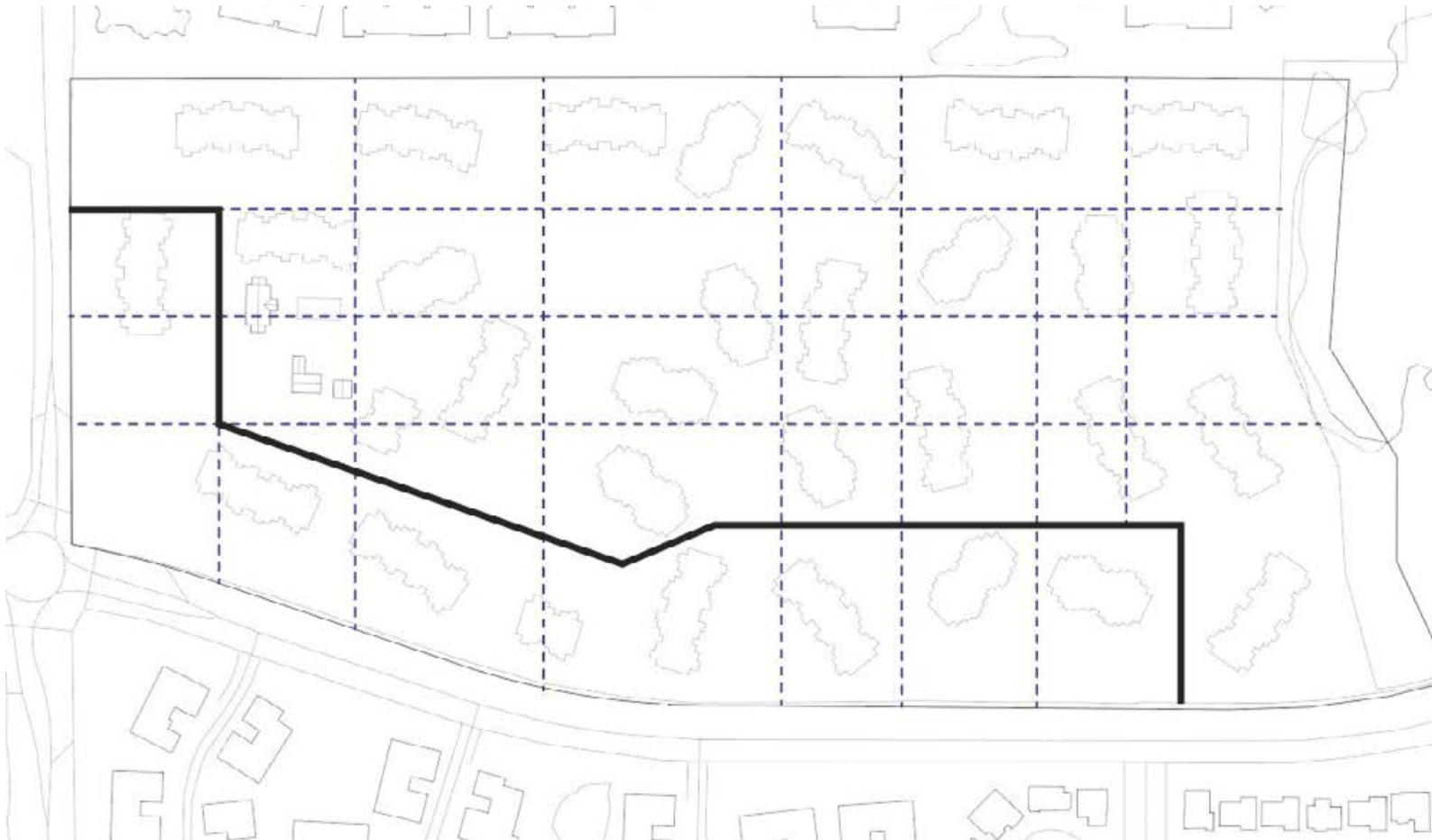
Divide the hierarchy roughly based on the existing houses, along either the X-axis or the Y-axis.

They may represent potential routes, either vehicular roads or streets.

OP1
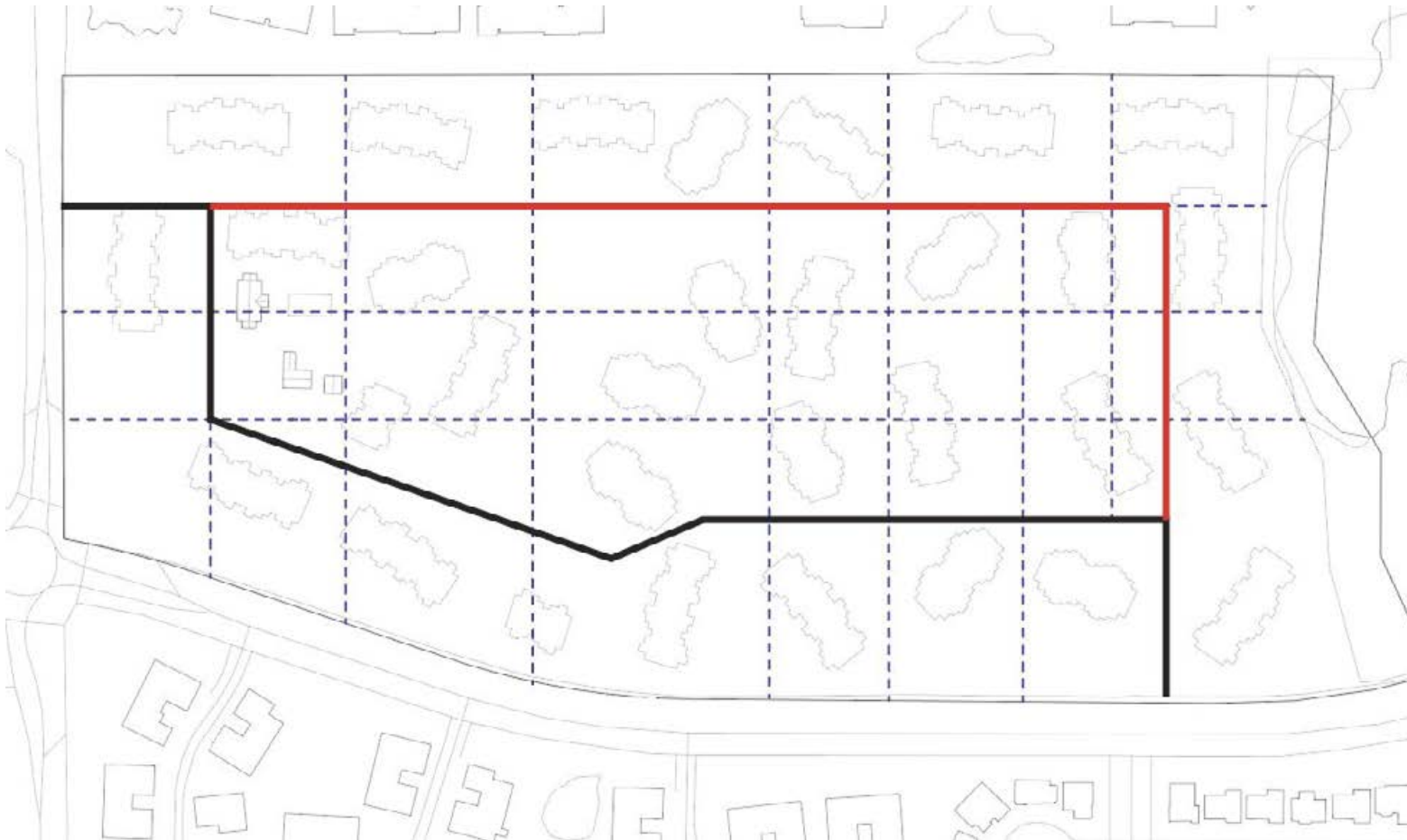
Black and red indicate vehicular roads.

OP1

Along these axes, set up the corresponding streets.

These different linear routes may belong to different hierarchies—streets, pedestrian-only paths, or corridors that include bicycle lanes.

OP1

Within these axes, place small plazas with different functions.

For example, the green blocks represent general parking areas, the yellow blocks could host some retail or a children's play area, and the blue blocks indicate features like pools or water elements.

Use these block parcels to define the structure of this otherwise random community.

OP1–1

Apply the same approach to the external open areas, with the difference that the added buildings follow the flow of the roads, establishing connections with the existing buildings while remaining distinct from the internal block areas.

The added rectangular parcels in the external area can serve other functions, such as the previously mentioned children's play areas, small plazas, bicycle storage points, or clusters of landscape trees.

OP1-1（Axis-free）

OP1–2

The second approach for the external area is that the added buildings still follow the orthogonal orientation, but their overall massing flows along the existing roads.

OP1–2（Axis-free）

Attempt 2_
Use landscape element to create pattern and spatial hierarchy

Scale of the site

560m

20m

100m

280m

Sports field

Frame by landscape(1)

How do deal with the existing (potencial) awkward geometric open space? Sports field size are regulated

Buffer zone + Sports field

......But the pattern doesn't make sense

Frame by landscape(2)

Frame by landscape(3)

Frame by landscape(4)

Larger plaza areas to set patternsc
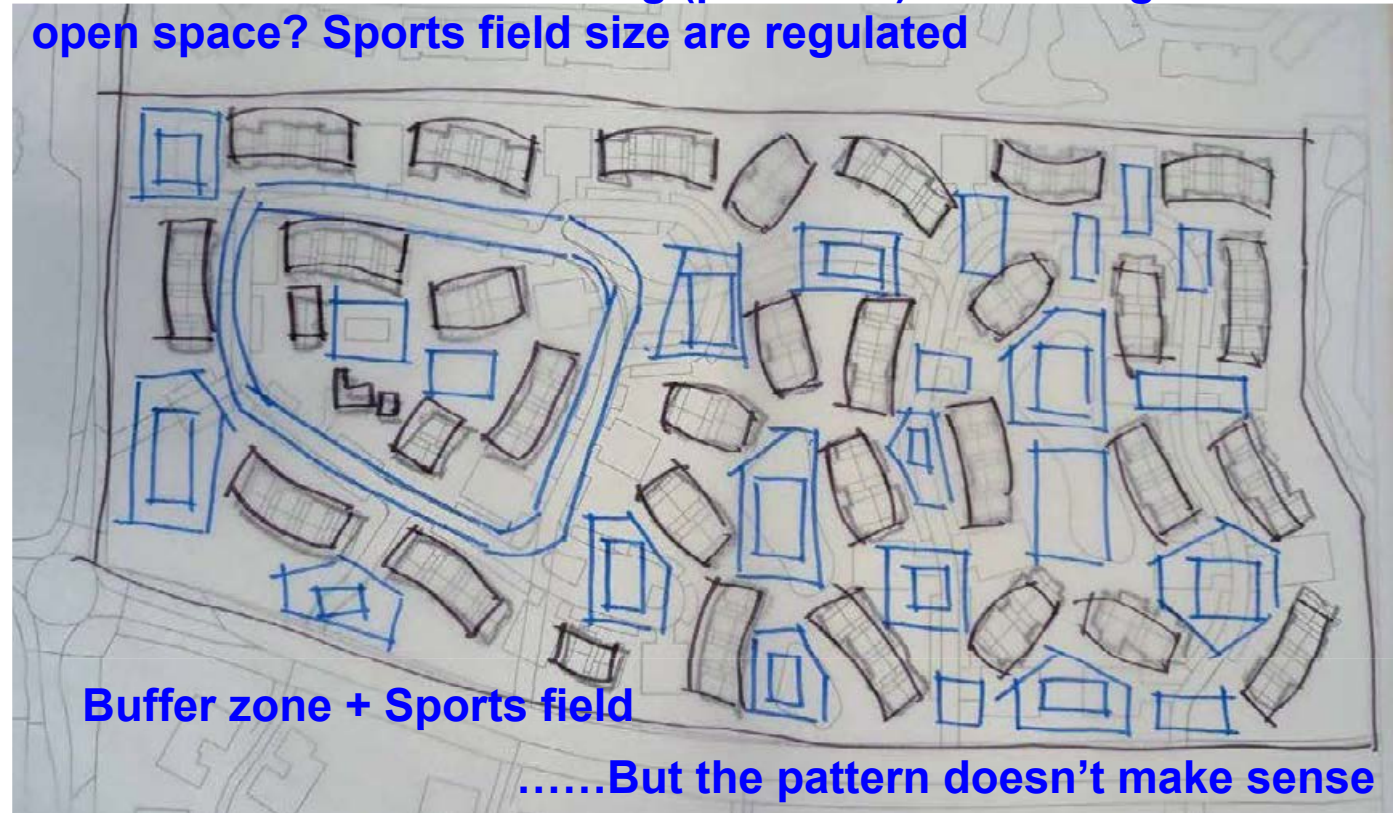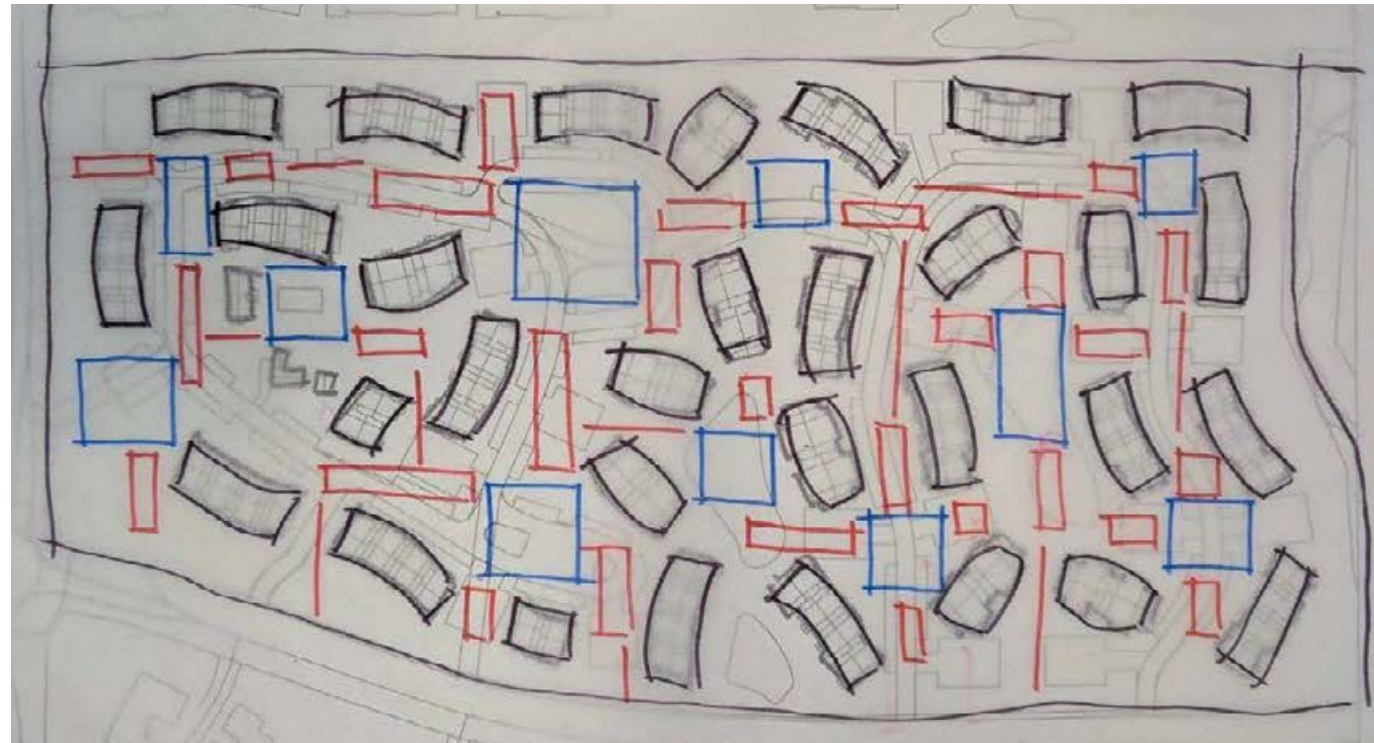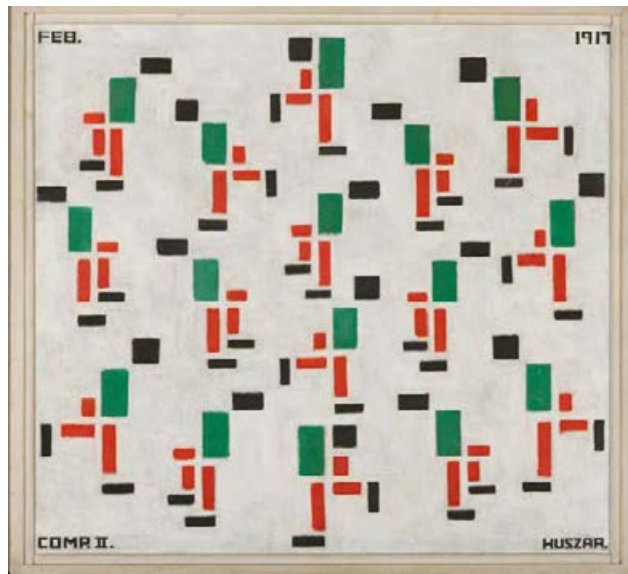
Frame by landscape(5)

How about with some tree elements/ array?
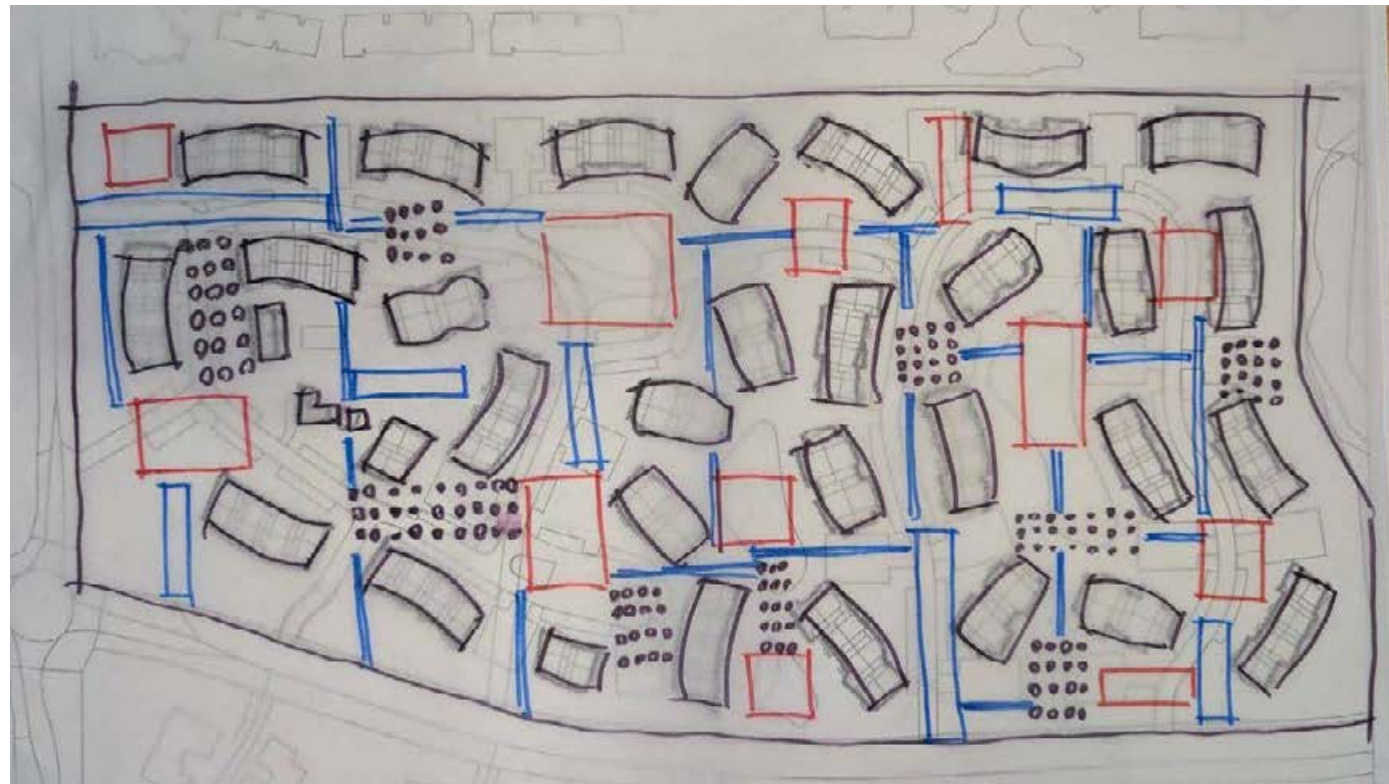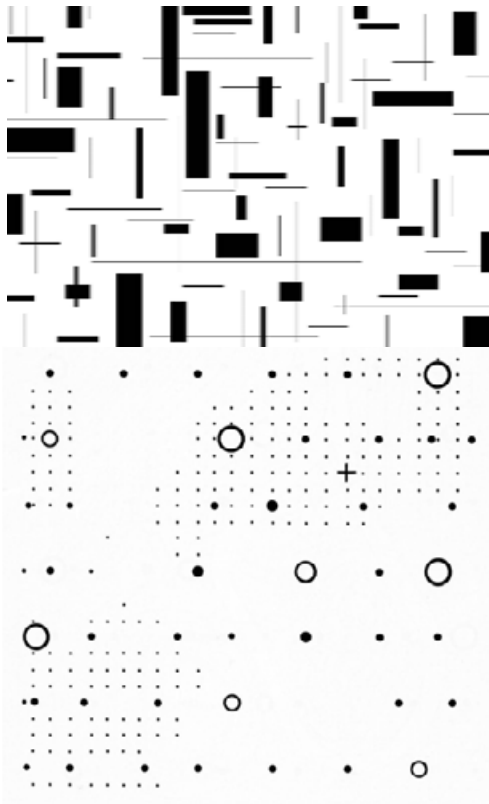
Frame by landscape(3)
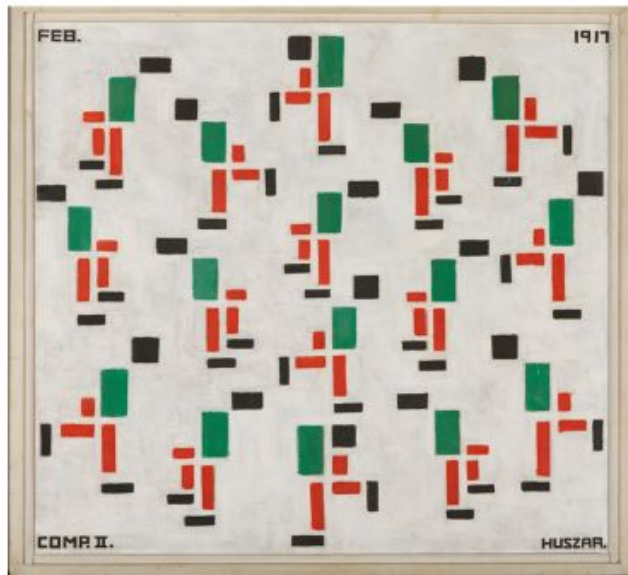
Use Vertical elements to set patterns

11/21/2025

11/21/2025

11/21/2025

11/21/2025

11/21/2025

11/21/2025

New Amenties Clusters
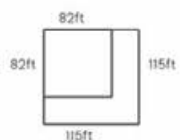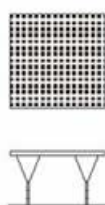
L

82ft · 82ft · 115ft · 115ft

Tree	Roof	Plaza Stage	Basketball Court	Volleyball, Tennis Courts with roof	Swimming Pool	Retention Pond /Wood Deck

M

50ft · 50ft · 65ft

Community Garden	Pet Park	Play Ground	Badminton Court

S

33ft · 33ft · 82ft

Community Kitchen with BBQ	Commercial Buildings / Small Retail	Childcare Center	Community GYM

Linear

196ft · 24ft
98ft · 16ft
82ft · 13ft

PU Rrunning Track	Tree Array	Outdoor Seeting with water

New Amenties Clusters

L

62ft
82ft   115ft
115ft

Tree
Roof
Plaza Stage
Basketball Court
Volleyball, Tennis Courts with roof
Swimming Pool
Retention Pond / Wood Deck
Parking

M

50ft
50ft   65ft

Community Garden
Pet Park
Play Ground
Badminton Court

S

33ft
33ft   82ft

Community Kitchen with BBQ
Commercial Buildings / Small Retail
Childcare Center
Community GYM

Linear

24ft   195ft
10ft   88ft
13ft   82ft
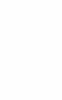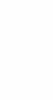
PU Running Track
Tree Array
Outdoor Seating with water
Pavilions
Elevated Terraces and Walkways
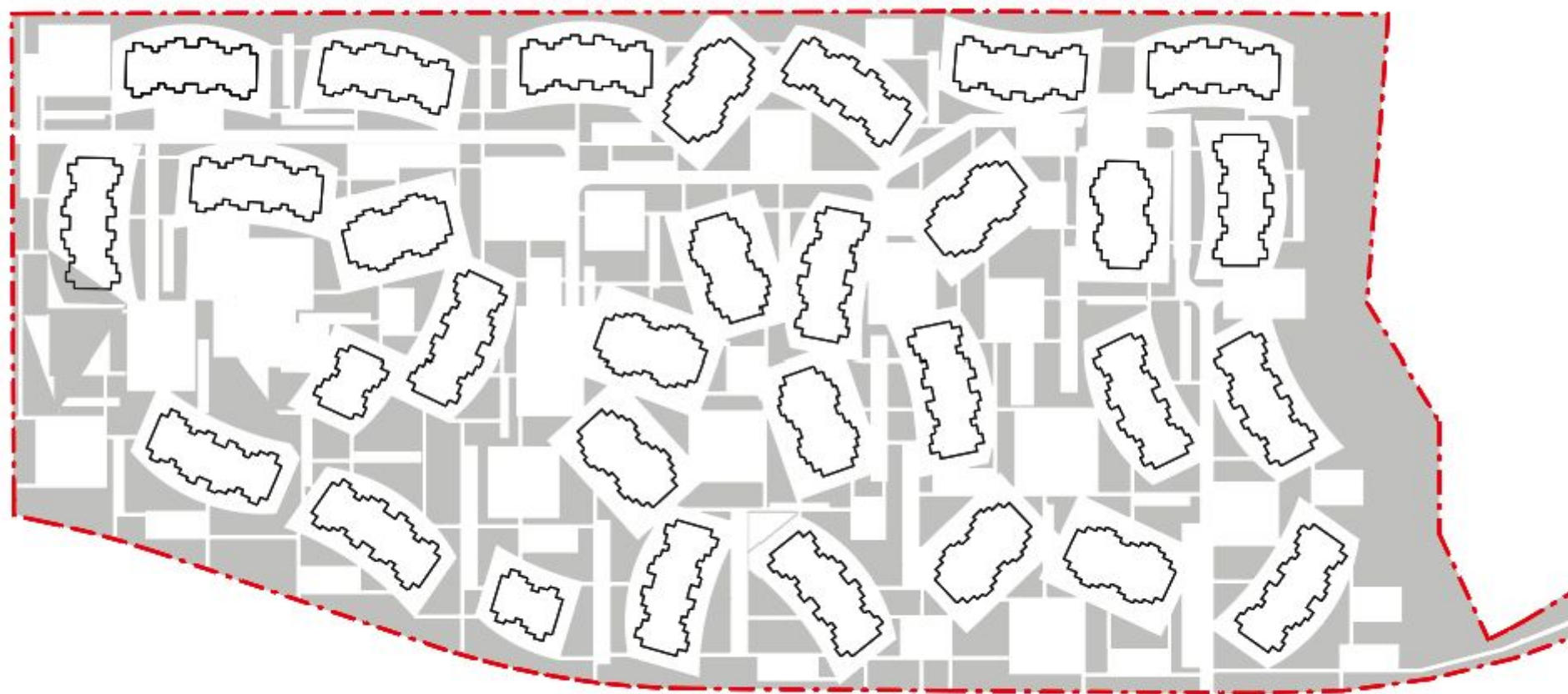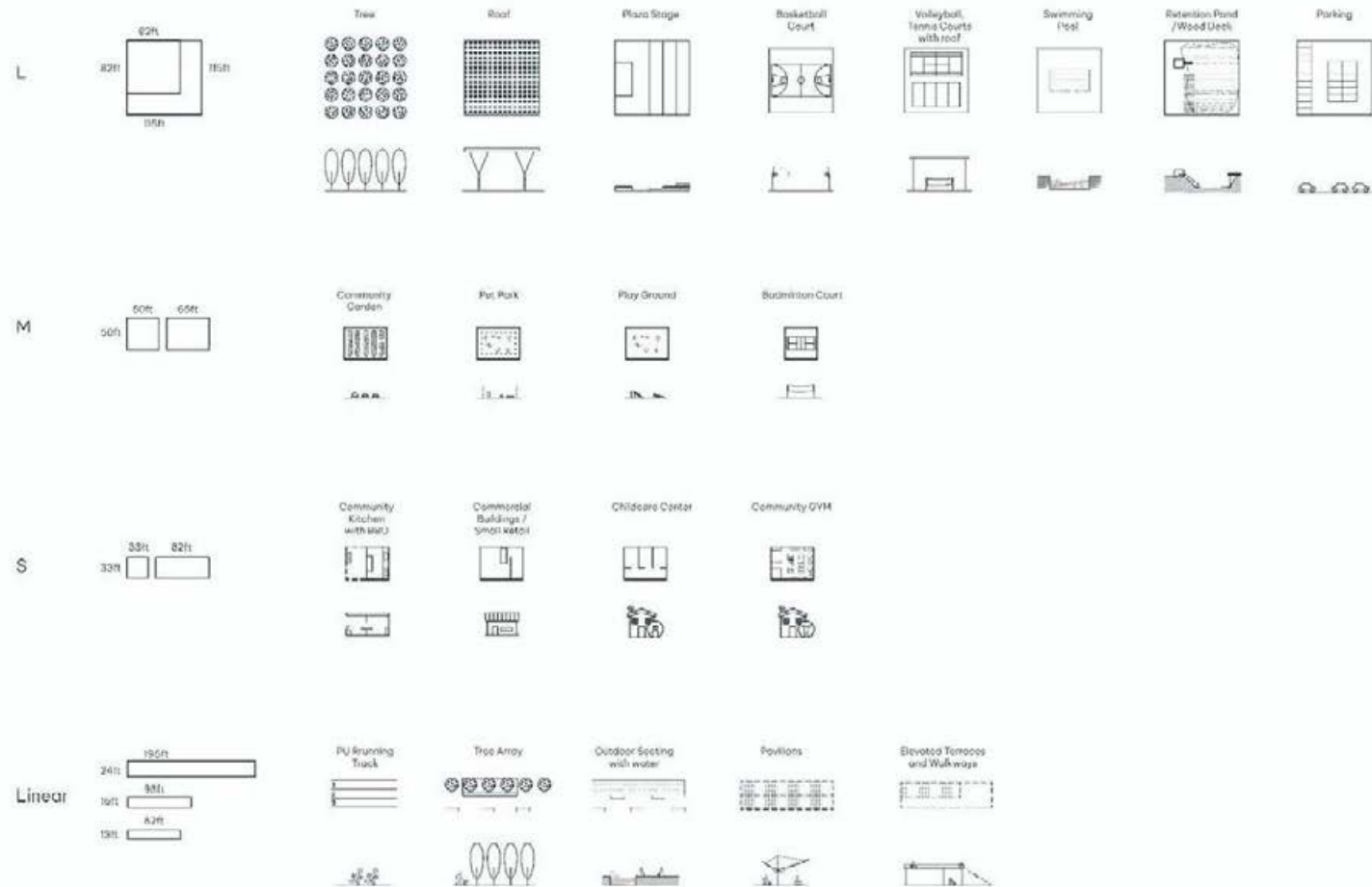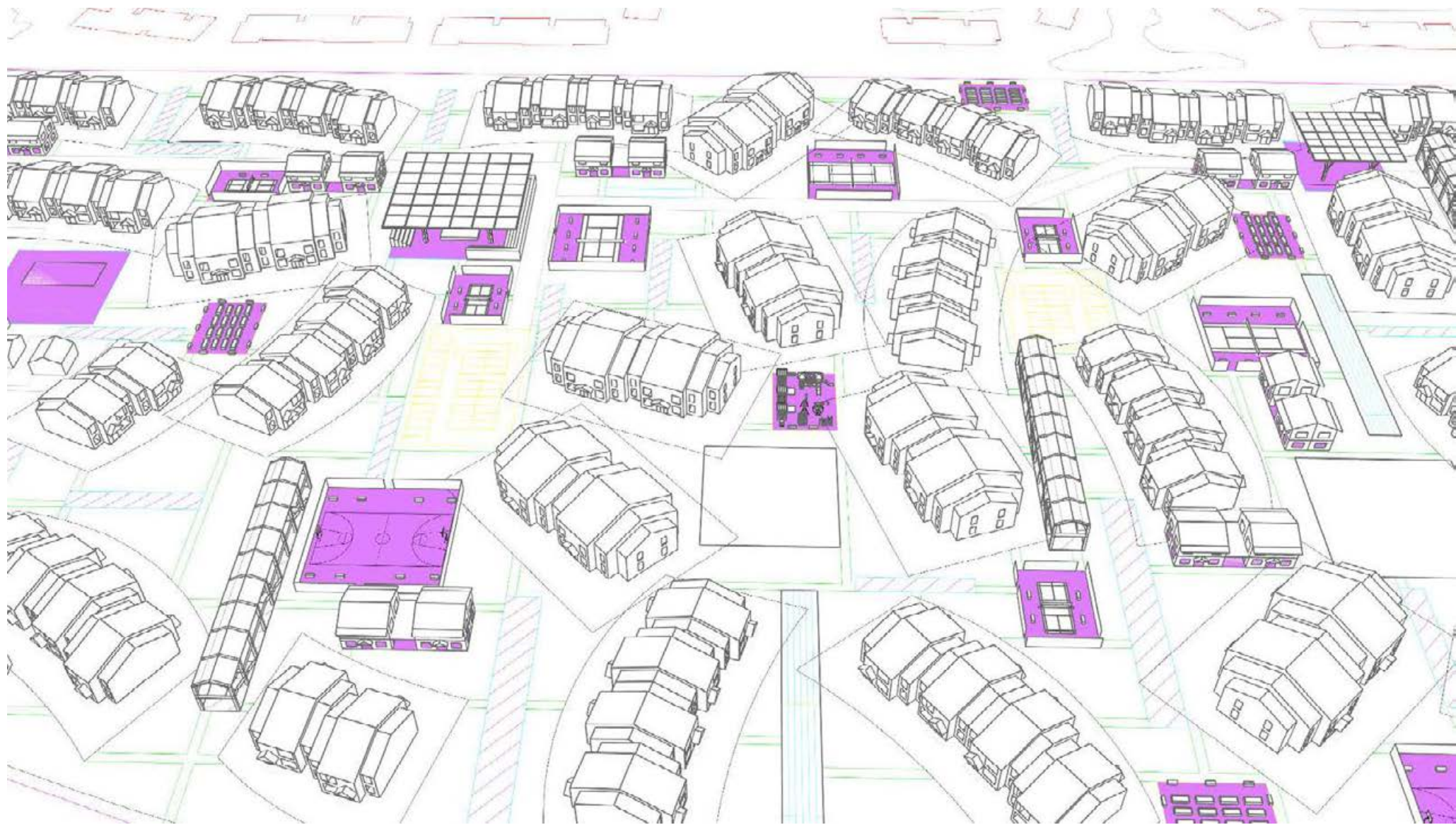
EXISTING Amenties

UniverCITIES

THE UNIVERSITY 'MICRO-CITY VS. ANN ARBOR CITY

PRESENTED BY PALVI RAMANI
DHVANIL PITHAVA
MAHLEEJ GOLA

The Presentation
Overview
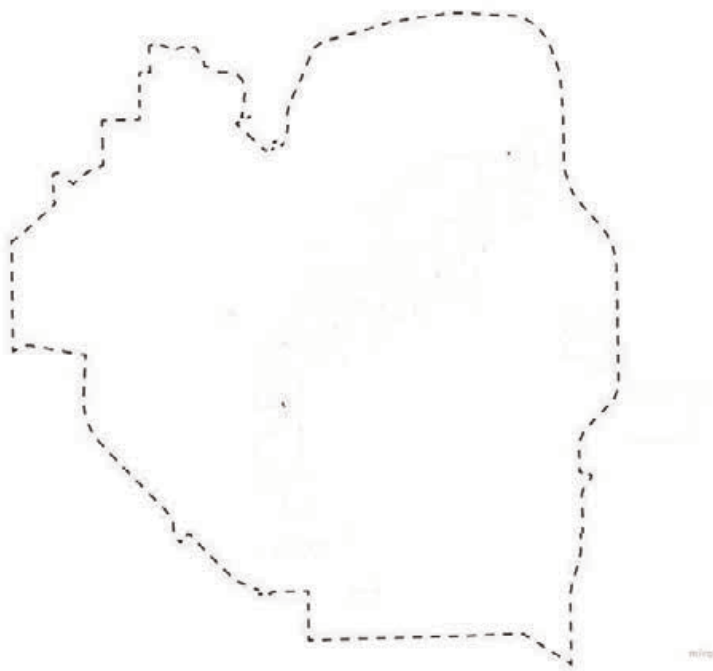
THE SYSTEM

ACTOR NETWORK, DIAGRAMS, GIS ANALYSIS

01

CASE STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE, COMPARISON OF
UMICH AND UOC

02

THE SITE

SITE ANALYSIS,PICTURES,UNDERSTANDING
URBAN-TENSION

03

DESIGN INTERVENTIONS

ACTOR- NETWORK, 3 DESIGN INTERVENTIONS

04

NARRATIVE: SPATIAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE CITY–UNIVERSITY DIVIDE

- As of - Y2024. U-M owned approximately 9.4% of The land within the City of Ann Arbor U-M does not pay property taxes on its land or facilities, but does pay other taxes and makes payments to Ann Arbor including:
- $16M water and sewer fees
- $5.5M for fire protection, police services, review fees, and capital improvements
- -S3M in real estate taxes on the lease of -500.000 square feet in office/research and warehouse space
- -$24.7M Total payments to Ann Arbor

- Fragmented Urban Fabric
- Weak Street Life Between Campus and City
- Monoculture of Student Housing
- Car-Dominated Access and Mobility
- Uneven Public Space Quality
- Underused Land and Edges
- One-Sided Development Patterns
- Land / Municipal Payments

THE SYSTEM

Residents

University Of Michigan

Students

City/ State Government
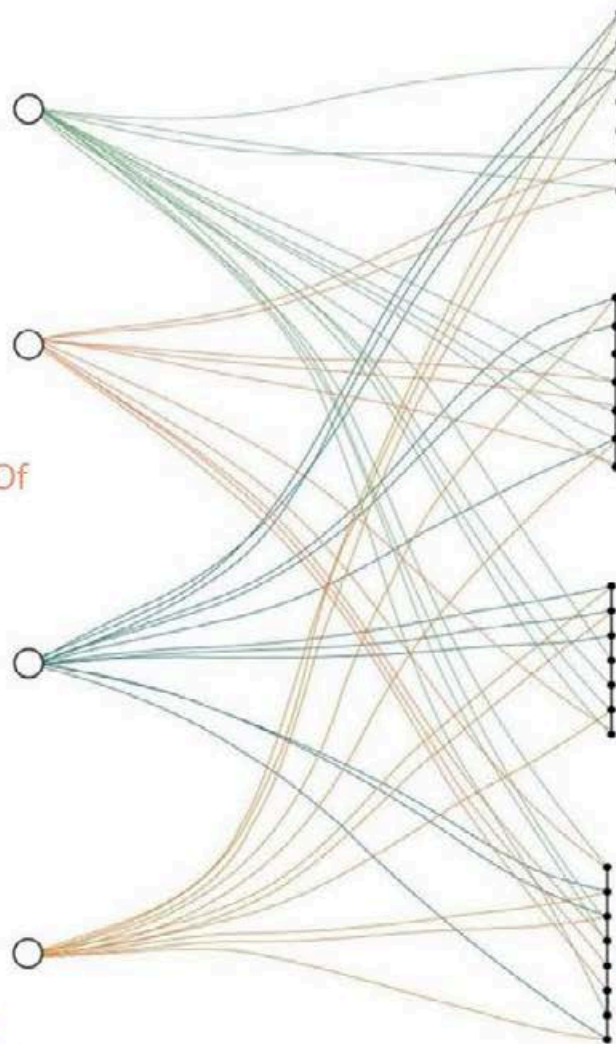
NEEDS

Accessible public spaces promoting daily interaction
Affordable housing and transportation connections
Sustainable infrastructure and energy systems
Educational and research opportunities
Economic stability and equitable growth
Safe, inclusive, and healthy environments
Long-term collaboration between university and city

WANTS

Active cultural and social life around the campus
Opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurship
Improved mobility and walkable connections
Vibrant public events and creative spaces
Recognition and visibility for community initiatives
Participatory role in city planning and decision-making
Balance between student life and neighborhood character

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Strong institutional presence but fragmented urban edges
Economic disparity between campus and nearby neighborhoods
Limited affordable housing for students and residents
Overreliance on cars and limited multimodal infrastructure
Shared cultural heritage but weak communication channels
High-quality academic facilities vs. underused public spaces
Ongoing development pressure impacting social mix

INTERVENTIONS

Co-created urban projects linking university and city
Shared research hubs addressing community issues
Mixed-use and affordable housing models
Green and connected mobility corridors
Adaptive reuse of underutilized spaces
Cultural programming that bridges residents and students
Governance models promoting university–city–citizen collaboration

Building FootPrints
selection

Select Layer By Location
Selecting Features
(Polygons)

AA_Parks

AA_Non_City_Open_Spa

Ann Arbor Limits
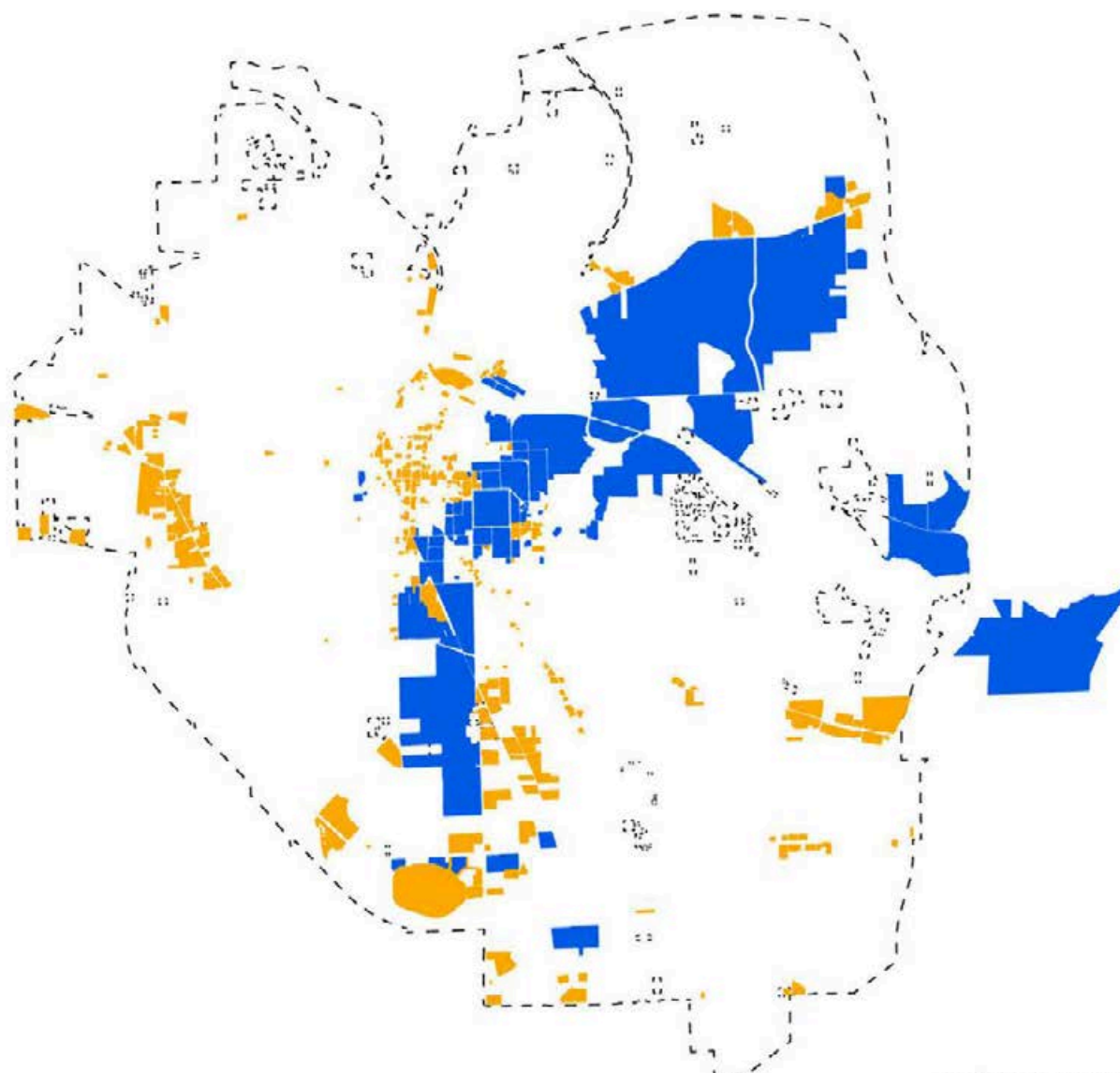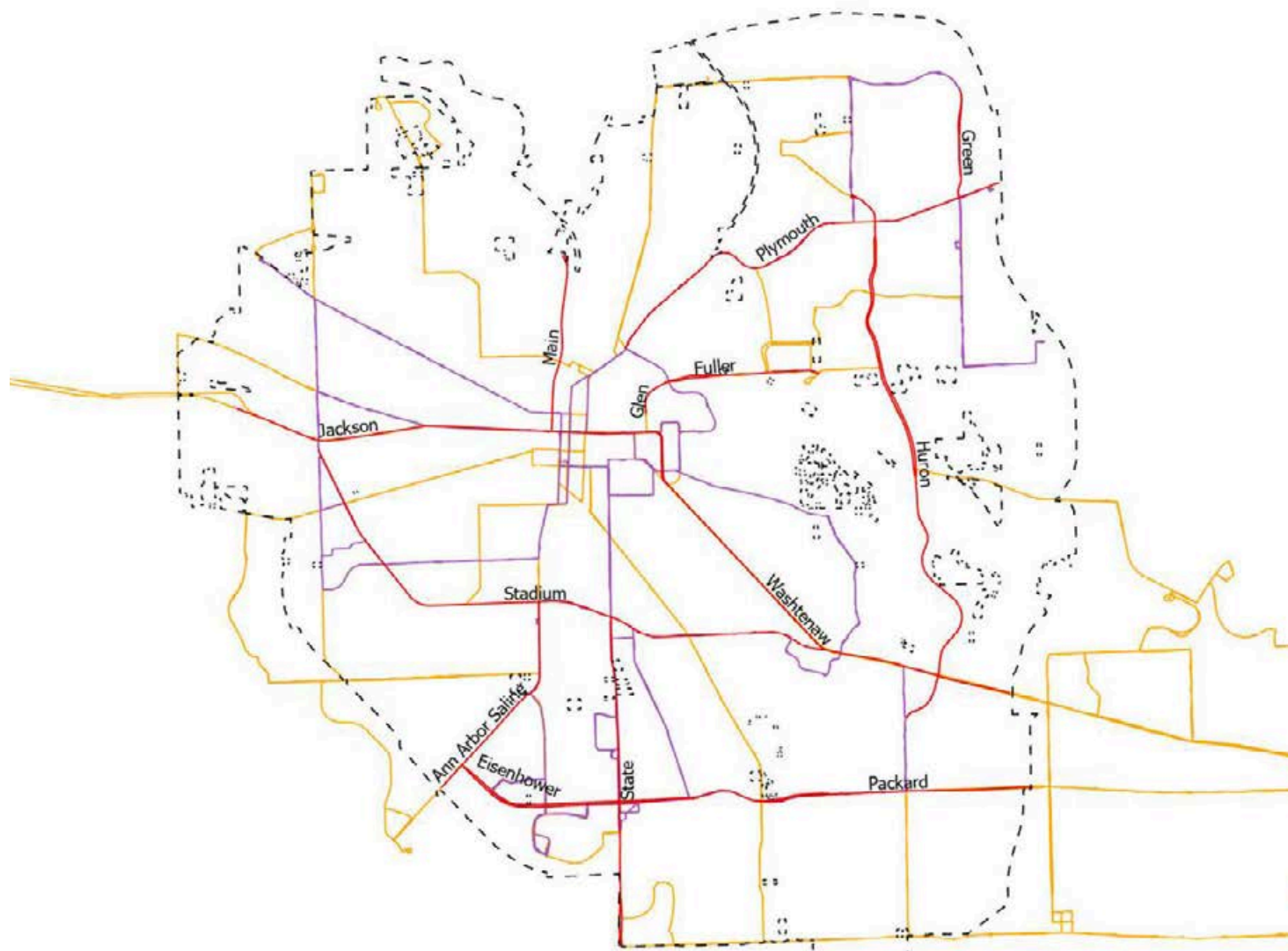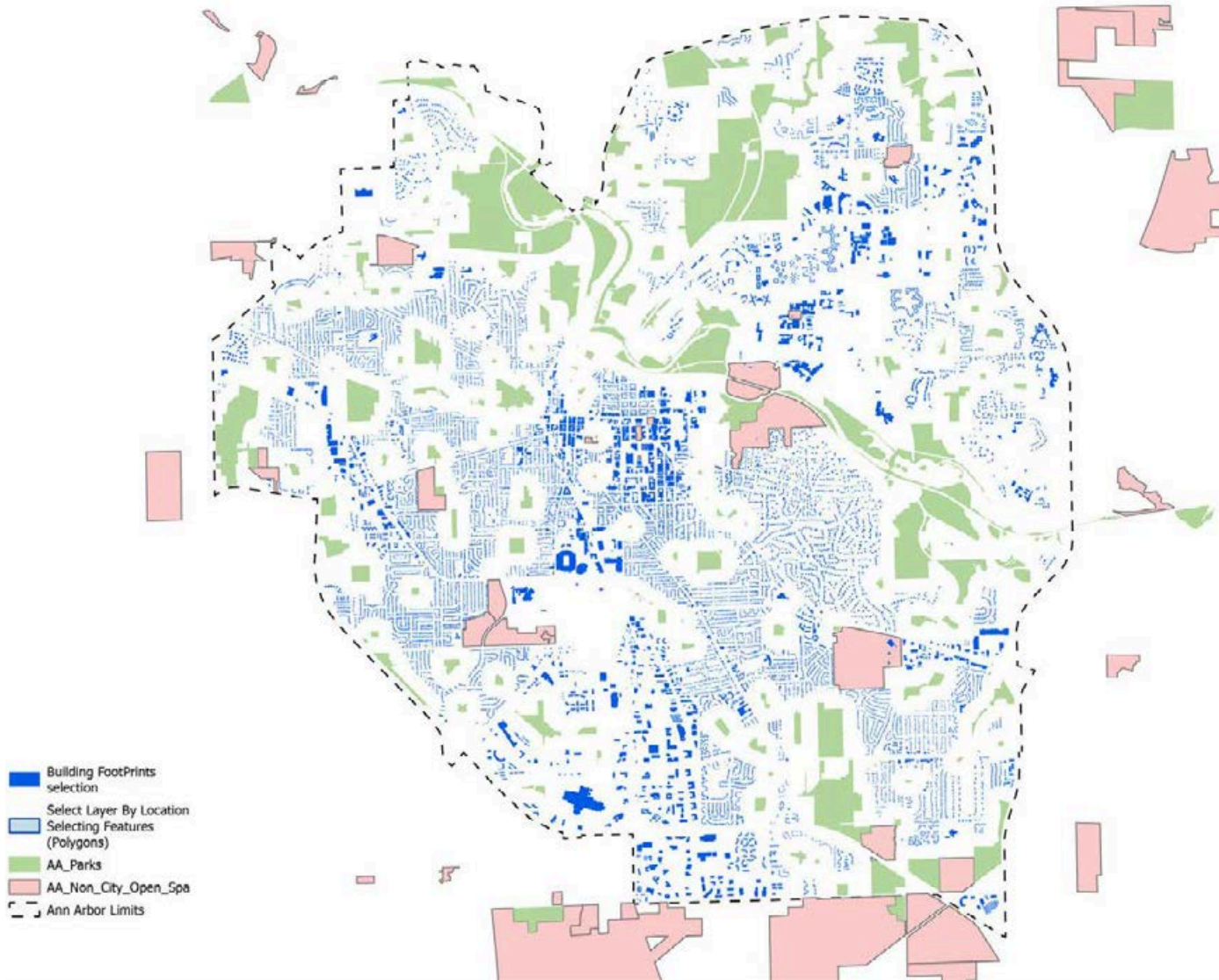
ACTOR-NETWORK MAP

THE SYSTEM

UniverCities

state government

City of ann arbor Government

Zoning Codes

City Budget

City Development Plans

Revenue Generation

Tax-Exemption Law

Education

Property Tax law

History

Public Infrastructure

Residents

Difference of Infrastructure

University of Michigan

Students

Homeowners

City Services

Ann Arbor city

Environmental
(Parks, trees, Water)

Public Spaces

University Land

Academic Building
& Research Centres

Property Owners

Public Events

Housing prices

Students Rental housing

Future expansion land

Local Businesses

Commerce

Residential Pattern

Homelessness

Developers
& Investors

Rentals

Micro-Cities

Big Corporates

Landscape

Underuse Infrastructu

Food

Mixed use Development

Transit Service

Car Centric — Parking lots

Lack of infrastructure

Space Hold Up

miro

University of Cambridge: 'UniverCity'

The University of Cambridge is deeply interwoven into the fabric of the city, creating a rare model of coexistence between academia and urban life. Unlike isolated campuses, Cambridge's spatial configuration is porous — its colleges, courtyards, and greens are dispersed throughout the historic core, shaping the city's structure rather than standing apart from it. This embeddedness allows learning, living, and civic life to overlap seamlessly. Streets are shared between students, residents, and visitors; university buildings line public routes; and open spaces such as the Backs, Market Square, and college gardens serve as everyday social grounds.

From an urban design perspective, Cambridge functions as a "city-university," where institutional and civic realms continually interact. The distributed layout encourages walking, chance encounters, and informal social exchanges — key components of a vibrant urban life. The mix of uses and scales, from intimate lanes to open quads, supports a sense of accessibility and belonging. The university also sustains the city economically and culturally, attracting global talent while maintaining a strong local identity. Its stewardship of historic architecture and landscapes ensures that academic expansion reinforces, rather than disrupts, the city's urban character.

Ultimately, Cambridge's success lies in its integrated form — a university not placed within the city, but as the city itself. This spatial and social interdependence fosters continuous dialogue between knowledge and community, making Cambridge an enduring model of how educational institutions can enrich civic life through thoughtful urban design.

CASE STUDY
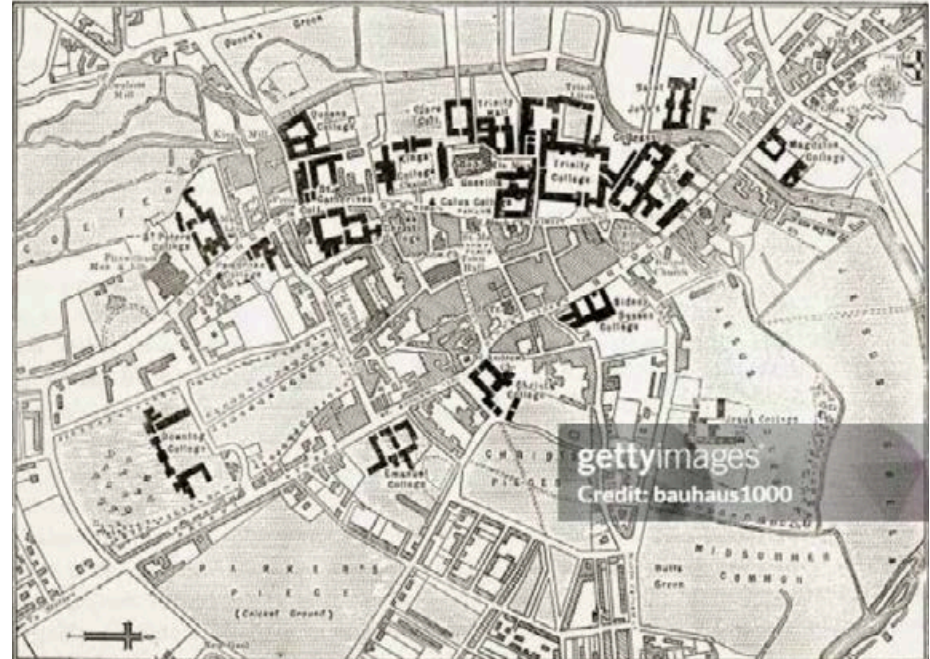
1. INTEGRATED URBAN FABRIC – BLURRING CAMPUS AND CITY

At Cambridge, the university is not a separate campus but woven into the city's grain. Academic buildings, housing, shops, and public streets coexist, creating daily overlap between students, residents, and visitors.

2. CLUSTERED COURTYARD SYSTEM – HUMAN-SCALED ENCLOSURE

Cambridge's colleges are organized around courtyards and quads, creating semi-enclosed public realms that balance openness with identity. These spaces anchor social and academic life, offering layers from private to public.

3. PEDESTRIAN NETWORK AND PERMEABILITY

Cambridge's compactness supports a walkable network of lanes, greens, and passages, promoting casual encounters and strong visual continuity.

SPATIAL CONFIGURATION BETWEEN UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE AND UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

The University of Michigan has a more campus-based, zoned spatial configuration, where academic, residential, and athletic areas are separated into distinct districts. Large blocks, wide roads, and surface parking create fragmentation and clear boundaries between the university and the surrounding city. The campus often functions as an enclave, with limited integration into adjacent neighborhoods.

In contrast, the University of Cambridge is fully embedded within the city's urban fabric. Its colleges and facilities are dispersed throughout the historic core, forming a network of interconnected courtyards, streets, and greens that blend seamlessly with civic life. Cambridge's small-scale, walkable pattern encourages interaction between students, residents, and visitors.

Essentially, Michigan operates as a campus within a city, while Cambridge exists as a city-university — spatially continuous, porous, and socially integrated.

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

■ University

Thresholds: Clear public-to-private progression — street gate, court, chapel / hall.

Experience: Human-scale, semi-private "outdoor room"; social life concentrated inside courtyards.

Thresholds: Direct street access; open, civic character.

Experience: Monumental and public; great for large gatherings but less spatial intimacy.

2–4 storeys, pitched roofs intimate façades

Simillar scae Residence

Human scale and enclosed

30'-0" Residence

4–6 storeys, wide gaps between buildings, broad greens.

Very large Scale and institutional

Enclosure ratio: 1 : 1 to 1 : 1.5 built-edge, open-space).

Enclosure ratio: 1 : 4 built-edge : open-space.

Typical Cambridge Building
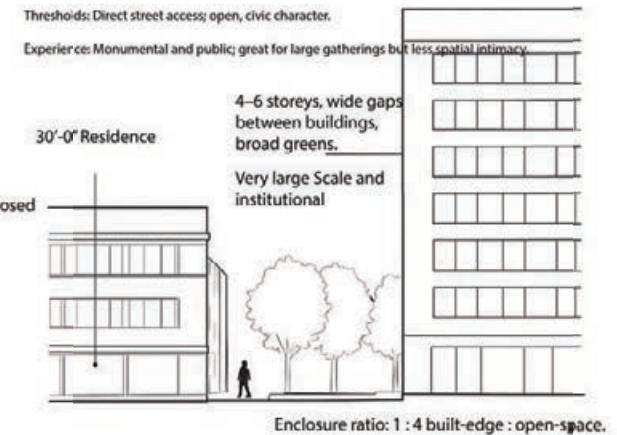
Ann Arbor Diag/Quad

SPATIAL CONFIGURATION BETWEEN UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE AND UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

University of Michigan

University of Cambridge

The South Quadrangle area in Ann Arbor roughly bounded by State Street, Hill Street, Packard Street, and Hoover Avenue is a unique urban zone where the University of Michigan's institutional land directly meets the residential fabric of the city. It represents a key interface between campus and community, with mixed land uses, fragmented ownership patterns, and contrasting spatial conditions.

To the north, the area connects to the main Central Campus — including academic buildings, the Law Quad, and student housing like West Quad and South Quad dormitories. These are dense, pedestrian-oriented spaces with enclosed courtyards and structured circulation that reflect the university's internal order.

To the east, across State Street, lie more university facilities such as the Athletic Campus and Yost Ice Arena, gradually transitioning toward the Michigan Stadium and Ferry Field. This side has larger institutional blocks and limited permeability, contrasting the finer-grained residential fabric to the west.

To the south and west, the fabric shifts to city-owned land and private houses, mainly older single-family homes and student rentals. Streets like Packard and Hill form a transition zone, with cafes, convenience stores, and rental apartments catering to both students and long-term residents. These edges often experience tension socially and spatially as university expansion pressures the surrounding neighborhoods.

What's notably absent in this area is a clear public interface or shared civic space that connects the institutional and residential sides. The boundaries are porous yet uncoordinated university lawns end abruptly at private yards, and circulation routes don't align. This lack of integrated planning leads to fragmentation, despite physical proximity.

In essence, the South Quadrilateral is a threshold zone a landscape of overlapping ownership, contrasting spatial scales, and blurred urban identity offering potential for design interventions that balance university growth with community connection.

THE SITE

The South Quadrangle area in Ann Arbor roughly bounded by State Street, Hill Street, Packard Street, and Hoover Avenue is a unique urban zone where the University of Michigan's institutional land directly meets the residential fabric of the city. It represents a key interface between campus and community, with mixed land uses, fragmented ownership patterns, and contrasting spatial conditions.
To

THE SITE

THE SOUTH QUADRILATERAL

CITY HOUSES

ST DIVISION STREET

GIS ANALYSIS
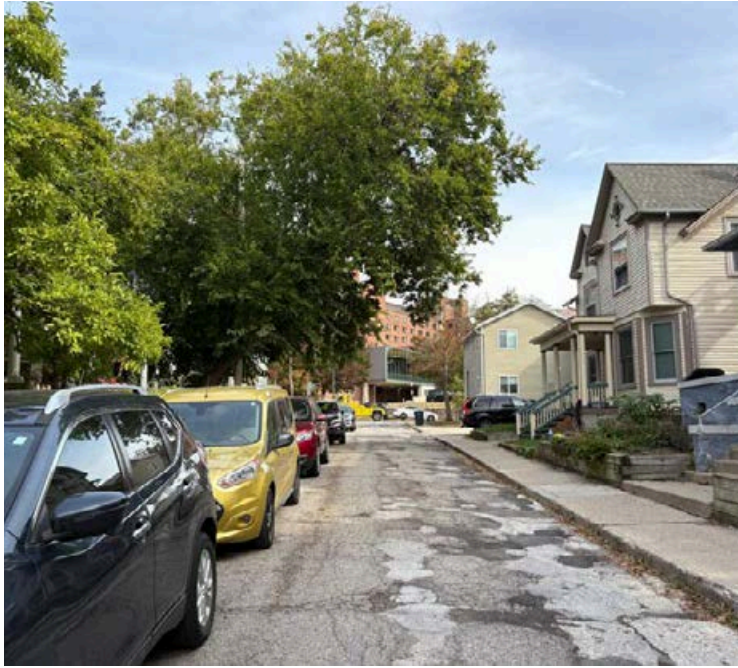
DESIGN INTERVENTIONS

STAGE 1 . URBAN COLLECTIVE

STAGE: 2 CLUSTERED COURTYARDS WITH PODS

STAGE: 3 GREEN CORRIDOR

Future Land Use
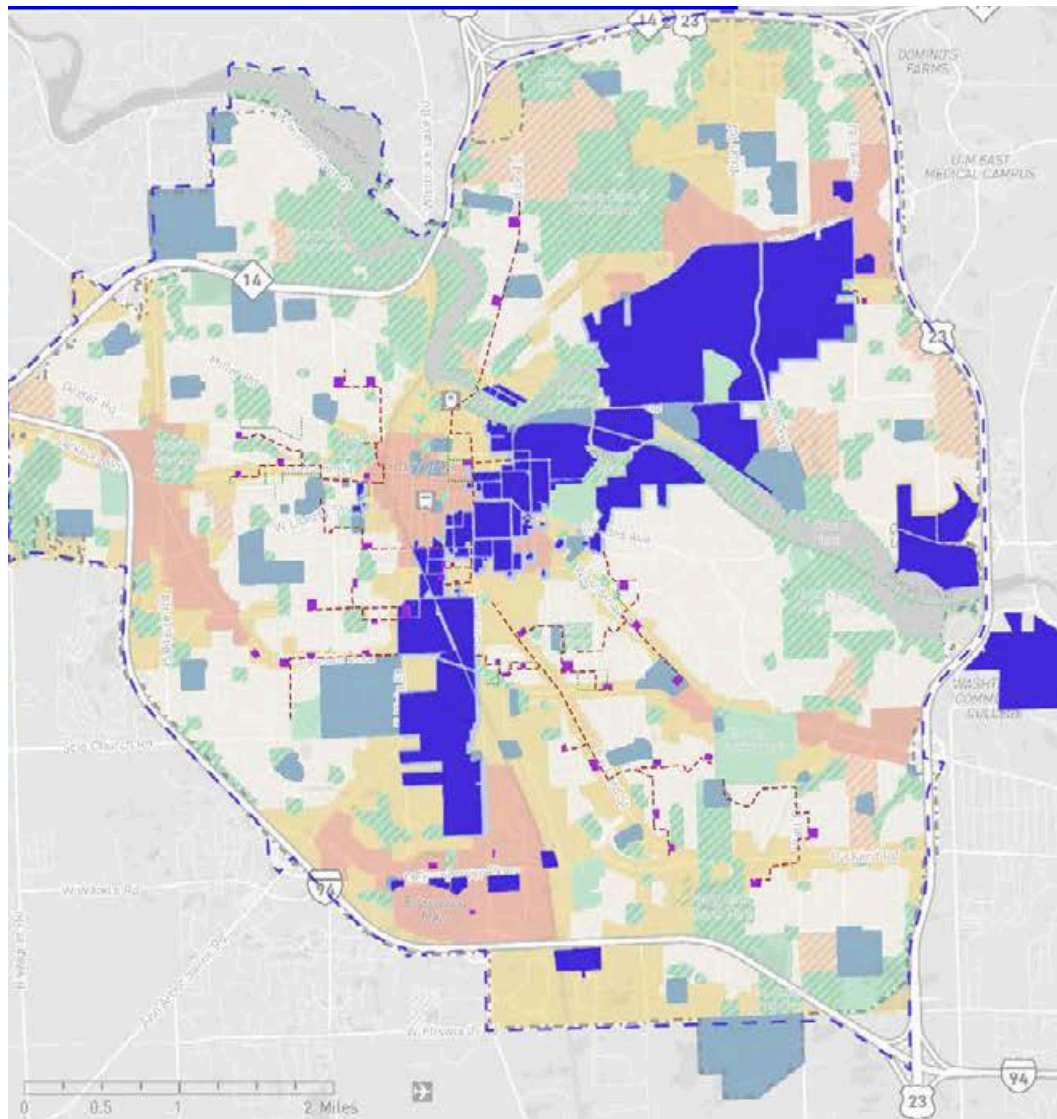
Legend

- Residential
- Residential or Transition
- Transition
- Hub

Public:
- City/County/School District
- University of Michigan
- Parks/Open Space/Recreational Facilities
- City Owned Park

STAGE 1 . URBAN COLLECTIVE

This proposal reimagines that relationship through the lens of collective campus urbanism — where the University and the City collaborate as co-stewards of the urban environment. The project introduces a Civic Engagement Body, a joint planning and funding entity that coordinates interventions such as green corridors, shared mobility infrastructure, modular markets, and ecological retrofits. Through these initiatives, institutional resources are reinvested into the city's social and ecological fabric.

The outcome is a model of mutual prosperity: the University benefits from a vibrant, sustainable city that supports its students and research, while Ann Arbor gains equitable infrastructure, new public amenities, and long-term revenue through shared stewardship. This collective framework transforms tension into partnership — envisioning a future where campus and city thrive together in a connected, liveable, and regenerative Ann Arbor.

DESIGN INTERVENTION

UniverCities

ACTOR-NETWORK MAP

state government

City of ann arbor Government — City of Ann Arbor PLanning commisions

Urban Wellbeing

City Budget

Revenue Generation

City Development Plans

Zoning Codes

Tax-Exemption Law

Education

Property Tax law

History

Public Infrastructure

City Services

Residents

Environmental
(Parks, trees, Water)

Homeowners

Public Spaces

University of Michigan

Students

Transit Service

Ann Arbor city

Walkability

Civic engagement Body

Bike lanes

Ann Arbor city Land

University Land

Academic Building & Research Centres

Housing prices

Property Owners

Future expansion land

Local Businesses

Commerce

Students Rental housing

Homelessness

Developers & Investors

Rentals

Underuse Infrastructure

Big Corporates

Mixed use Development

Food

Space Hold Up

Lack of infrastructure

Revenue Generation

SUB-STAGE: A

This separation is visible in the physical fabric: the University's unified green spaces, cohesive lighting, and high-quality maintenance stand in contrast to the city's fragmented sidewalks, aging infrastructure, and uneven investment. As the University continues to expand outward — often into tax-exempt land — it further reinforces a boundary between institutional space and public urban life.

SUB-STAGE: B

The University's steady growth has been marked by the consolidation of large, contiguous land parcels — forming self-contained zones for academic, athletic, and medical functions. Over time, these parcels merged into an expansive institutional core that operates under its own governance, funding, and design standards.

SUB-STAGE: C

Through a series of joint initiatives, both institutions begin to treat the city not as a divided landscape of ownership, but as a collective campus — a network of shared infrastructures, public amenities, and ecological systems that support all residents.

A new Civic Engagement Body acts as a coordinating platform, aligning university investment with city priorities. Together, they implement collaborative projects such as green corridors, shared mobility infrastructure, modular market halls, and public recreation spaces.

STAGE 2. CLUSTERED COMMONS AND MODULAR PODS

This intervention proposes a fleet of modular, semi-portable units that can be deployed temporarily in these spaces to host community and university activities. Each unit can serve as a small workspace, café, gallery, classroom, or gathering pod creating an adaptable network of "third places" that bridge the divide between institutional and civic life.

By introducing these flexible structures, the project directly challenges the city's mono-functional zoning, replacing single-use emptiness with layers of social and cultural exchange. Managed jointly by the University and a new Civic Engagement Body, the pods become shared infrastructure: open to students, residents, and local entrepreneurs alike.

More than temporary objects, they represent a new way of thinking about ownership, access, and community within Ann Arbor's urban fabric where city and university co-create spaces for learning, collaboration, and everyday connection. This systemic form of tactical urbanism transforms leftover land into living public territory, demonstrating how small, mobile interventions can generate collective, long-term urban change.
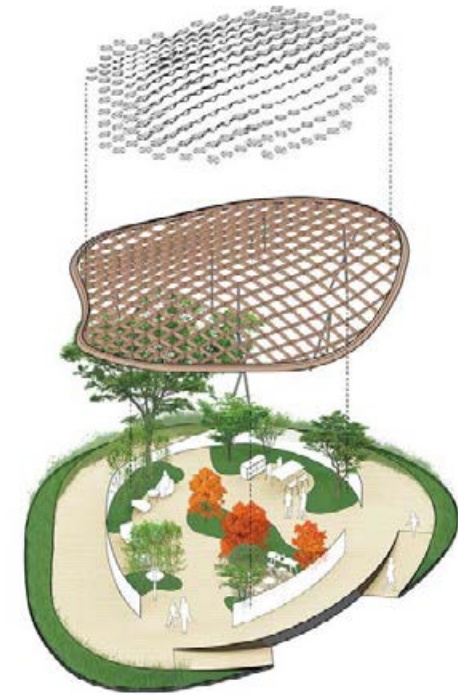
CONCEPT

DESIGN INTERVENTION

ACTOR-NETWORK MAP

UniverCities

state government

Inclusivity

Community Empowerment

City of ann arbor Government

Zoning Codes

Recreation Opportunities

City Budget

City Development Plans

Civic Engagement body

Revenue Generation

Tax-Exemption Law

Education

Property Tax law

History

Public Infrastructure

Residents

Difference of Infrastructure

University of Michigan

Students

Homeowners

City Services

Ann Arbor city

Environmental (Parks, trees, Water)

Academic Building & Research Centres

Opportunities

Public Spaces

University Land

Property Owners

Revenue Generation

Public Events

Housing prices

Students Rental housing

Future expansion land

Local Businesses

Commerce

Residential Pattern

Homelessness

Developers & Investors

Rentals

Micro-Cities

Underuse Infrastructure

Big Corporates

Landscape

Food

Mixed use Development

Transit Service

Dining Halls

Car Centric

Parking lots

Lack of infrastructure

Space Hold Up

NGOs/ Communities

Food Distribution Hubs

miro

SUB-STAGE: A

These courtyards become extensions of civic life places for conversation, rest, community gardening, and small events

Transforming university courtyards into publicly accessible spaces. By opening these green, enclosed areas to residents, students, and visitors alike.

SUB-STAGE: B

Connecting the courtyard to make it large publically accesible park and they act as civic commons that promote inclusivity, transparency, and engagement for community and also hub for different activities

SUB-STAGE: C

Activating courtyards and open spaces as hubs for community care and connection. Through initiatives like free food distribution

fleet of modular, semi-portable units that can be deployed temporarily in these spaces to host community and university activitieslike small workspace, café, gallery, classroom, or gathering pod

STAGE 3. GREEN CORRIDOR

A new, expanded street will be redesigned to prioritize people, featuring protected bike lanes and a bold, cobalt blue pedestrian walkway that will act as a clear, guiding thread through the neighborhood, stitching together the campus and the community.

This will be more than just a path; it will be a living corridor. Bioswales will line the street, cleansing stormwater runoff, while a City-University program will provide DIY rain garden kits to empower residents to transform their own parking strips into mini-ecosystems. The entire route will be activated with new, elegant street lights and frequent benches, creating a safe, inviting, and beautifully connected space for students and residents alike to share.
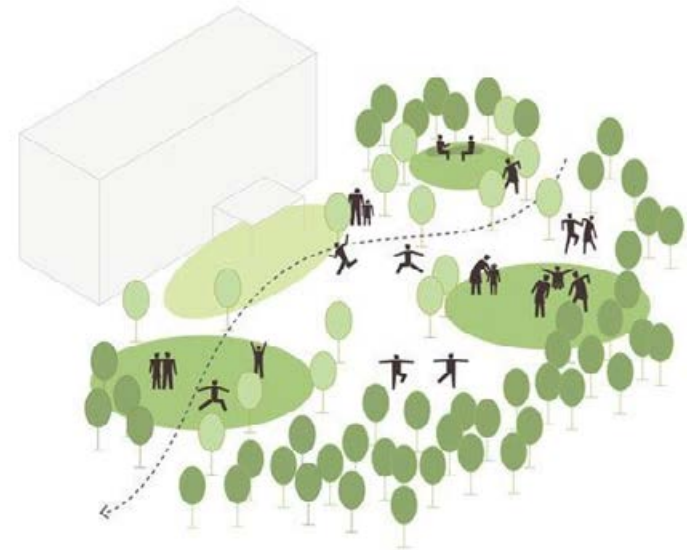
DESIGN INTERVENTION

CONCEPT

UniverCities

state government

City of ann arbor Government

Zoning Codes

Sustainable Goals

Walkability

Carbon neutrality

Public Right of way

City Budget

City Development Plans

Revenue Generation

Tax-Exemption Law

Property Tax law

History

Education

Public Infrastructure

Residents

Difference of Infrastructure

University of Michigan

Students

Homeowners

City Services

Ann Arbor city

Environmental (Parks, trees, Water)

Civic Engagement Body

Developers & Investors

Public Spaces

University Land

Academic Building & Research Centres

Housing prices

Local Businesses

Ground Floor Reuse

Students Rental housing

Future expansion land

Property Owners

Pedestrian Priority

Mixed use Development

Residential Pattern

Housing Crises

Walkable

Micro-Cities

Landscape

Connectivity

Permeable Pathways

Green Corridors

Transit Service

Sustainable

Pathways

SUB-STAGE: A

street network expands

SUB-STAGE: B

residents maintaining DIY rainwater garden

new bike lane introduce

bioswell for
storm water
management

SUB-STAGE: C

buss transit route

residents maintaining DIY rainwater garden

new padetrian street network

new bike lane introduce

bioswell for storm water management

West Huron street

Residential	school	Commercial	clinics	food pantry

| | Residential | | school | | Commercial | | clinics | | food pantry |

University   civic commons

West Huron Street

Legend: University | civic commons

Nixon Road

Legend: Residential | School | University | Mixed-use

Thank You
For Joining Us

PRESENTED BY PALVI RAMANI
DHVANIL PITHAVA
MAHLEEJ GOLA

Bioswale Network

Public Spaces

Stormwater Commons

Vegetation Swales

Shared Vegetation

Raingardens

Curb Raingardens

Road Chockers

Road Chockers

Pedestrian Pathways

Bus Stop

New Bus Route

Existing Bus Route

Road Chockers

Retail Intersection

Public Plaza

Shared Greenhouses

ADUs

ADUs

Recreation Center

Public Plaza

Food Trucks

Mixed Use Building

Mixed Use Building

Vegetation Swales

Bus Stop

New Bus Route

Existing Bus Route

Food Trucks

Road Chockers

Public Plaza

Rain gardens

Shared Greenhouses

Bioswale Network

ADUs

Shared Vegetation

Pedestrian Pathways
Public Spaces

ADUs

Recreation Center

Mixed Use Building

Public Plaza

Cul Road Chockers

Retail Intersection

Stormwater Commons

Mixed Use Building