Framework 2030
Team 80206

Framework 2030 proposes a reimagining of Montpelier's downtown core that is unlike anything that has been undertaken in any other American city. This proposal envisions a redevelopment of Montpelier's downtown in which the form of the city is no longer determined by the street but by public open space. The transportation hierarchy created by road infrastructure has largely determined the form of the contemporary American city. In most American cities, pedestrians and vehicles are strictly separated, and the scale of the city is dominated by the needs of the automobile. Montpelier is no exception to this fact. However, the advent of the self-driving car has the potential to radically transform the existing transportation hierarchy, as self-driving cars and pedestrians will be able to occupy the same surfaces without danger. Montpelier is poised to take advantage of the possibilities that this revolution in transportation technology has to offer.

Rather than banish the automobile from downtown, this proposal acknowledges that by 2030, autonomous vehicles will be able to occupy the same surface as pedestrians. Indeed, by 2030, mass transit may have begun to incorporate the self-driving car as a replacement for infrastructure-heavy bus rapid transit or light-rail. Framework 2030 proposes that the areas of existing parking lot to be replaced by a single surface on which pedestrians and vehicles can coexist, above which is lofted a network of narrow buildings that encloses a network of public courtyards. The ground surface is largely porous, both to allow for unencumbered movement and to mitigate the danger of the next Winooski River flood, but the spaces on the ground can be incrementally occupied with shops and storefronts.

Above the ground is a framework of building infrastructure. These buildings enclose a network of public squares that can be occupied with different programs. The buildings are envisioned as being constructed of cross-laminated and heavy timbers. Wood is the building material with the lowest embodied energy, thus any proposal with sustainability as a concern should consider replacing concrete and steel with wood construction. The mechanical and electrical infrastructure necessary to support the built space will be kept above the first level in order to avoid damage in the event of a flood. The enclosed spaces in the building network above the ground surface can accommodate a range of uses from traditional single family dwellings to commercial spaces to co-living spaces to workshops to co-working spaces.

Framework 2030 is a ultimately a program for a participatory design process. The grid of building infrastructure is overlaid on the area of existing parking lots and forms the basic framework of Montpelier's redevelopment. This grid is capable of accommodating the various needs of the brief as well as unforeseen community needs and desires. What you see on the wall is thus not a proposal for a fixed vision of Montpelier's future, but is rather one of a nearly infinite number of possibilities for how to insert Montpelier's needs into this proposed framework. The citizens of Montpelier would be able to participate in the decisions about how to place programmatic elements like the farmer's market, green spaces, convention center, greenhouses within the framework. As the new building space becomes occupied, residents can begin to claim ownership of their adjacent courtyard spaces on a small scale. The ultimate aim of the proposal is a situation in which the citizens of Montpelier are able to claim a greater degree of agency and control over their urban existence.
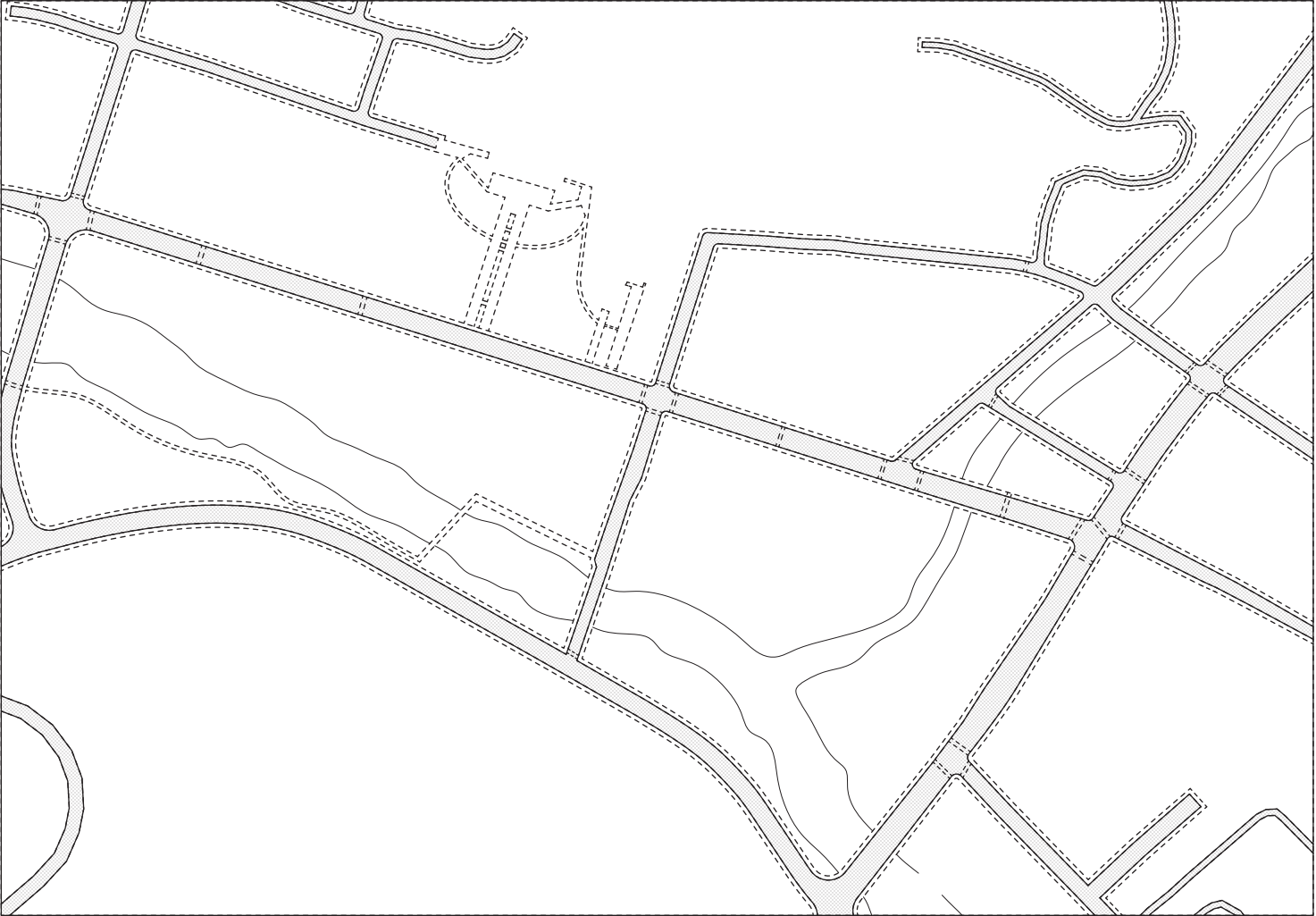
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The ground surface is porous to allow a fluid movement of pedestrians and vehicles, as well as to mitigate flood risk.
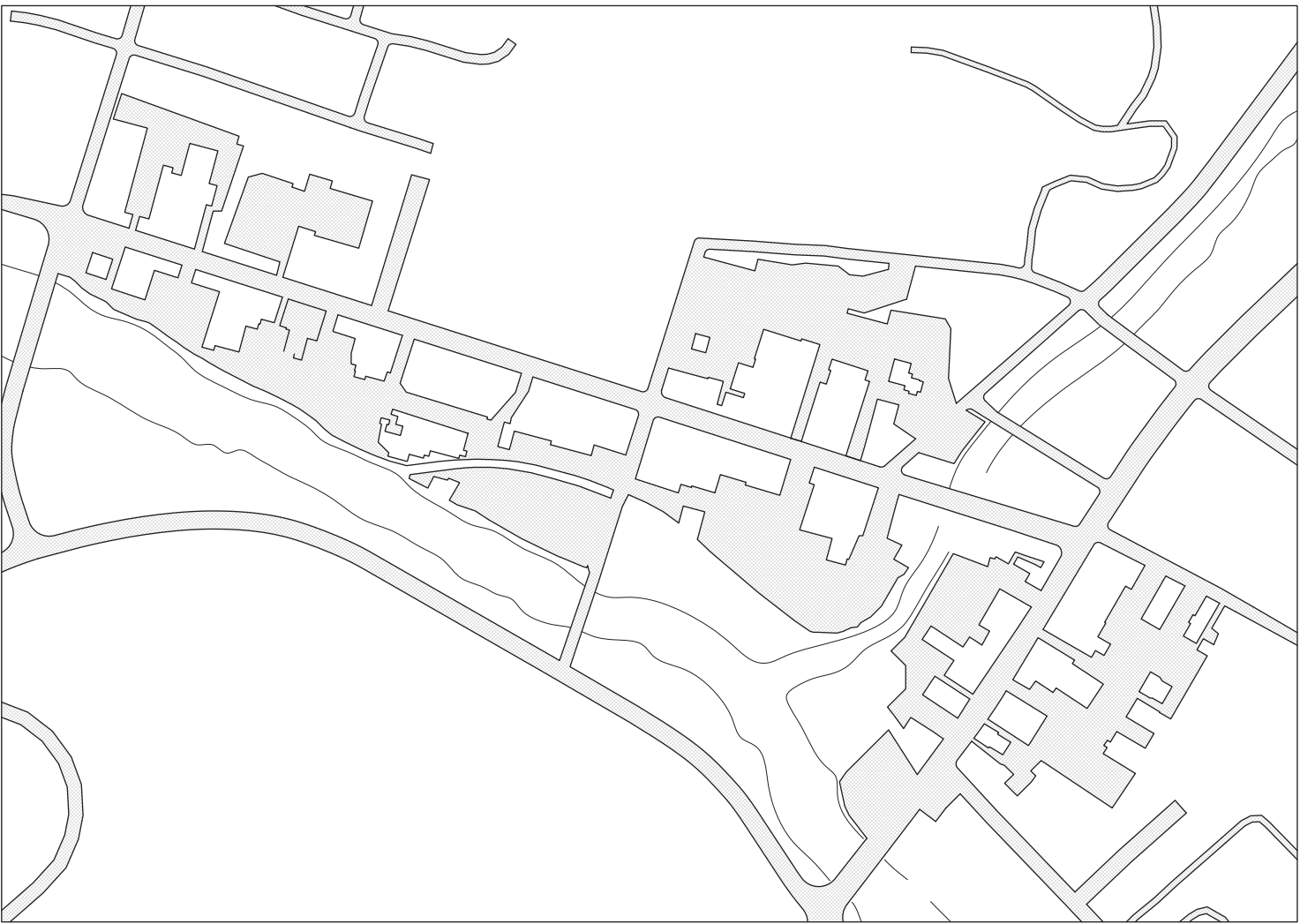

The Framework can accomodate any number of different uses, like the orchard shown here.

The project area is overlaid with a grid of built space and open courtyards.
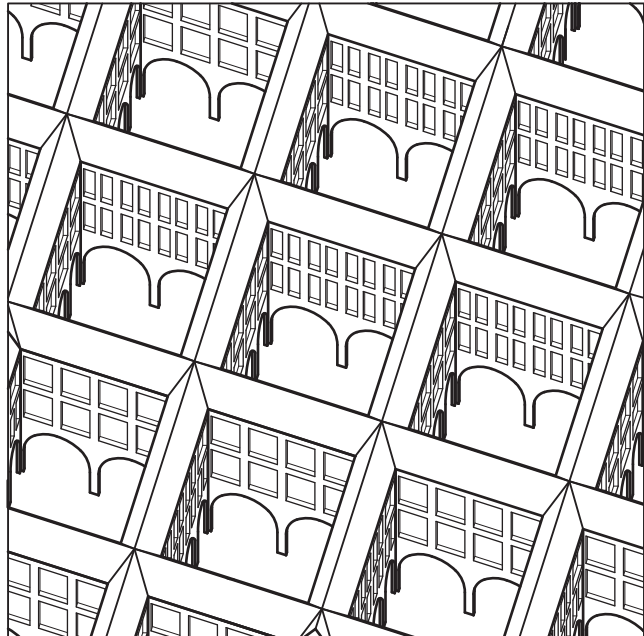

The existing transportation hierarchy strictly segregates pedestrians and vehicles.
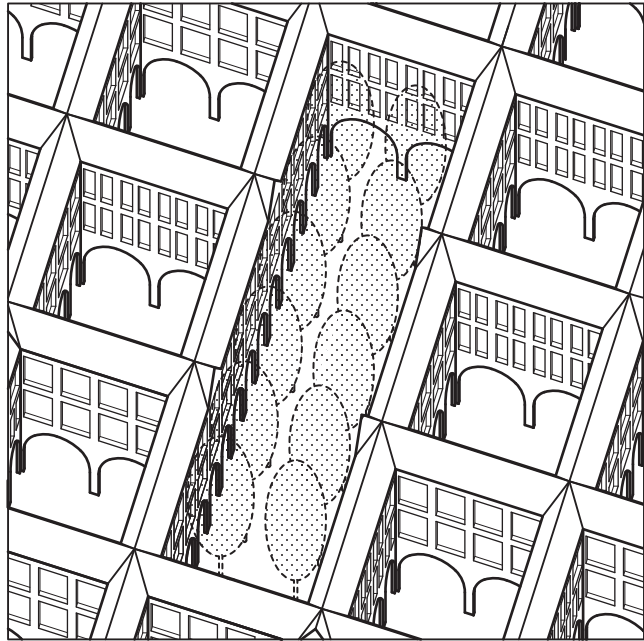

The proposal anticipates a situation in which pedestrians and self-driving cars can occupy the same surface.
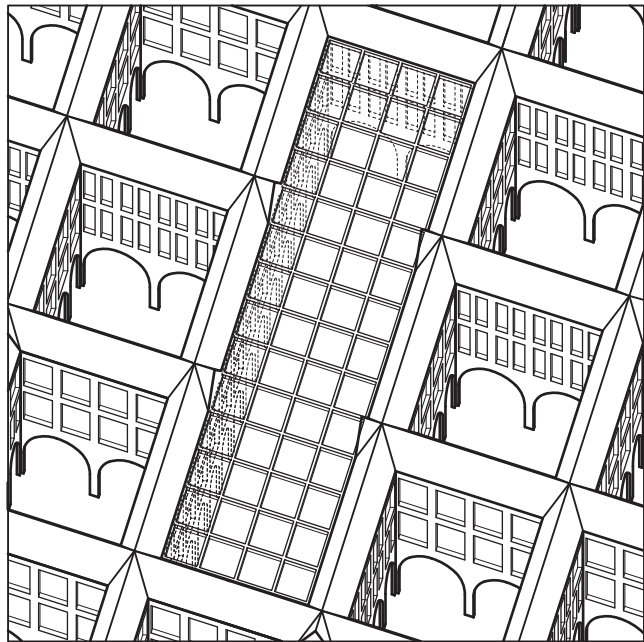

Existing (dotted) and proposed (cross-hatched) green space.
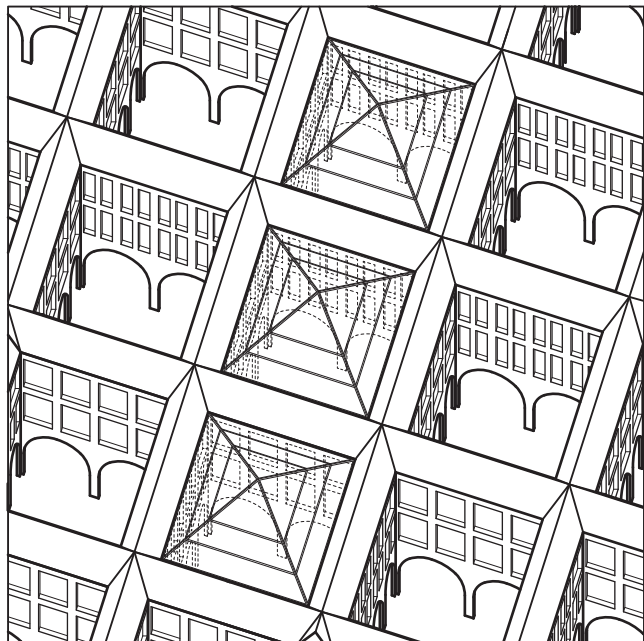

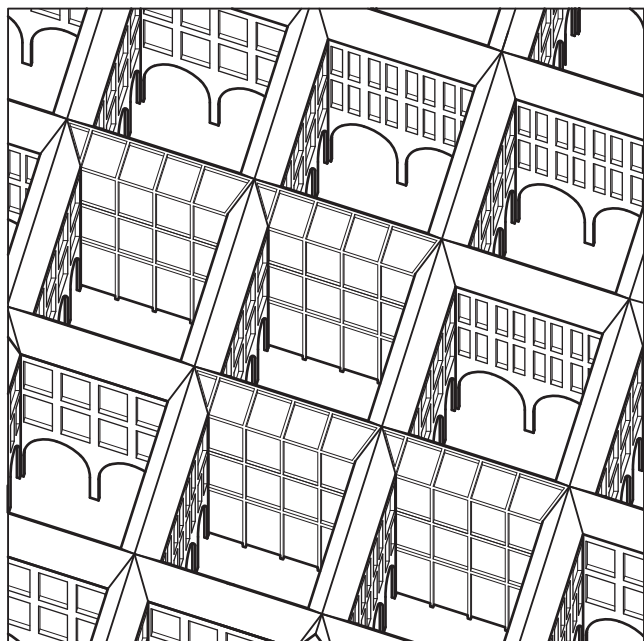The basic framework can absorb multiple programmatic elements.

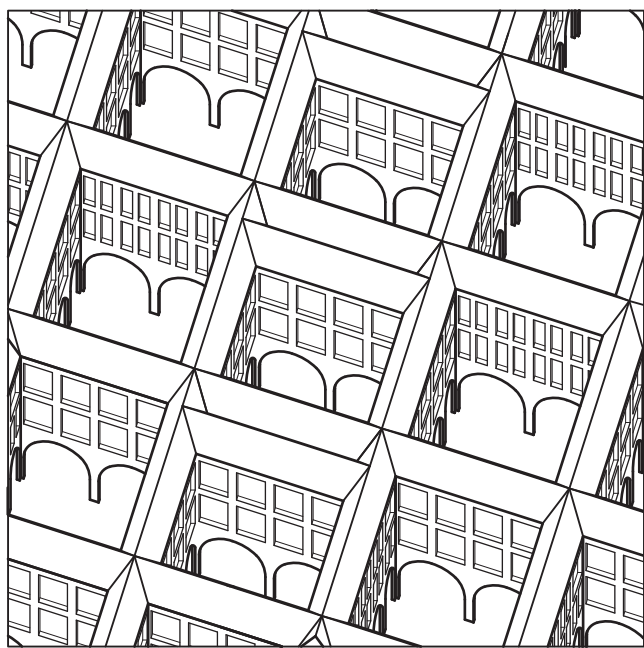

Enlarged courtyard.

Conference center.

Enclosed farmer's market.

Greenhouses.

Double-wide building.

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This drawing represents a work in progress. It is not a static proposal but is rather a proposal
for a framework that can accomodate Montpelier's needs as they change over time.
Montpelier's citizens can become involved in the process of inserting programmatic elements
into the framework, thus taking a greater degree of control over their urban existence.