

SIGNS OF THE TIMES: Clutter, Culture and Corridors

November 2023



architecture
urban design

GAMBLE
ASSOCIATES

omloop
it's all connected



Is this an attractive building?



Let us know!



Just a little facade cleaning...



And symmetry...



Some paint...



A uniform sign band...



Bold paint colors...



Or maybe darker tones



A



C



B



D



Which one do you prefer?
Let us know!



The Broadway Corridor

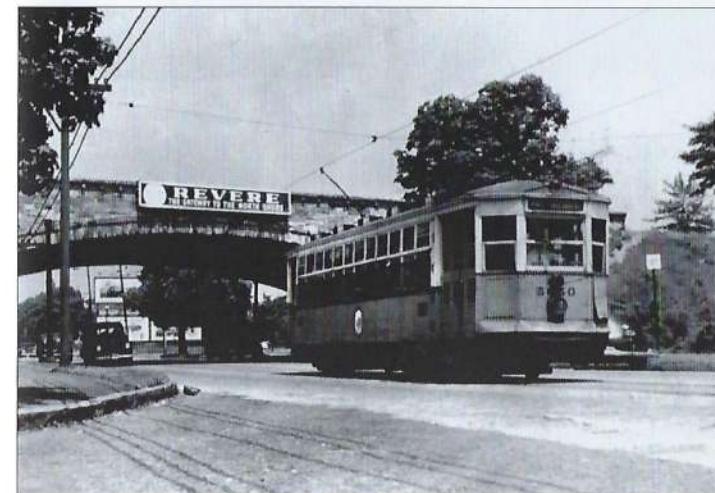


The Broadway Corridor

Busy
Corridor



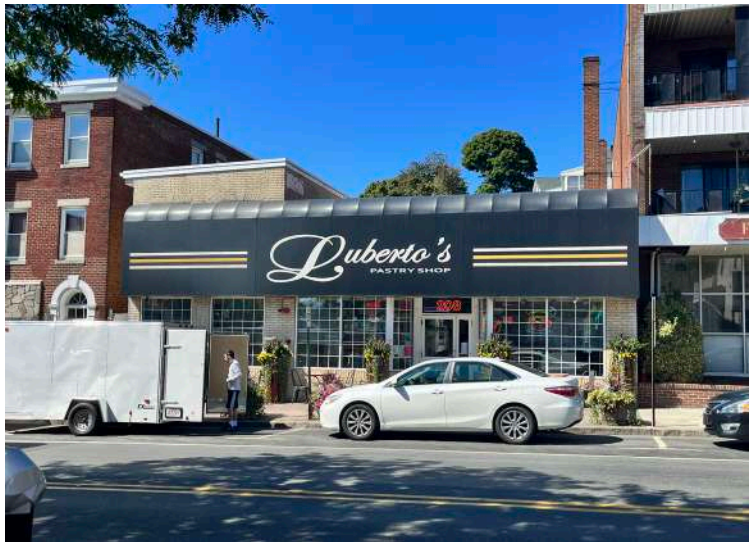
Historical
Layers



This is a seldom seen view of the Cassasa Memorial Bridge before it was widened to accommodate the increased traffic of Revere Beach Parkway. The bridge is named in honor of Andrew Cassasa, the first Italian mayor of Revere.

The Broadway Corridor

Variety of
Commercial
Uses



The Broadway Corridor

Auto-
dependant
uses

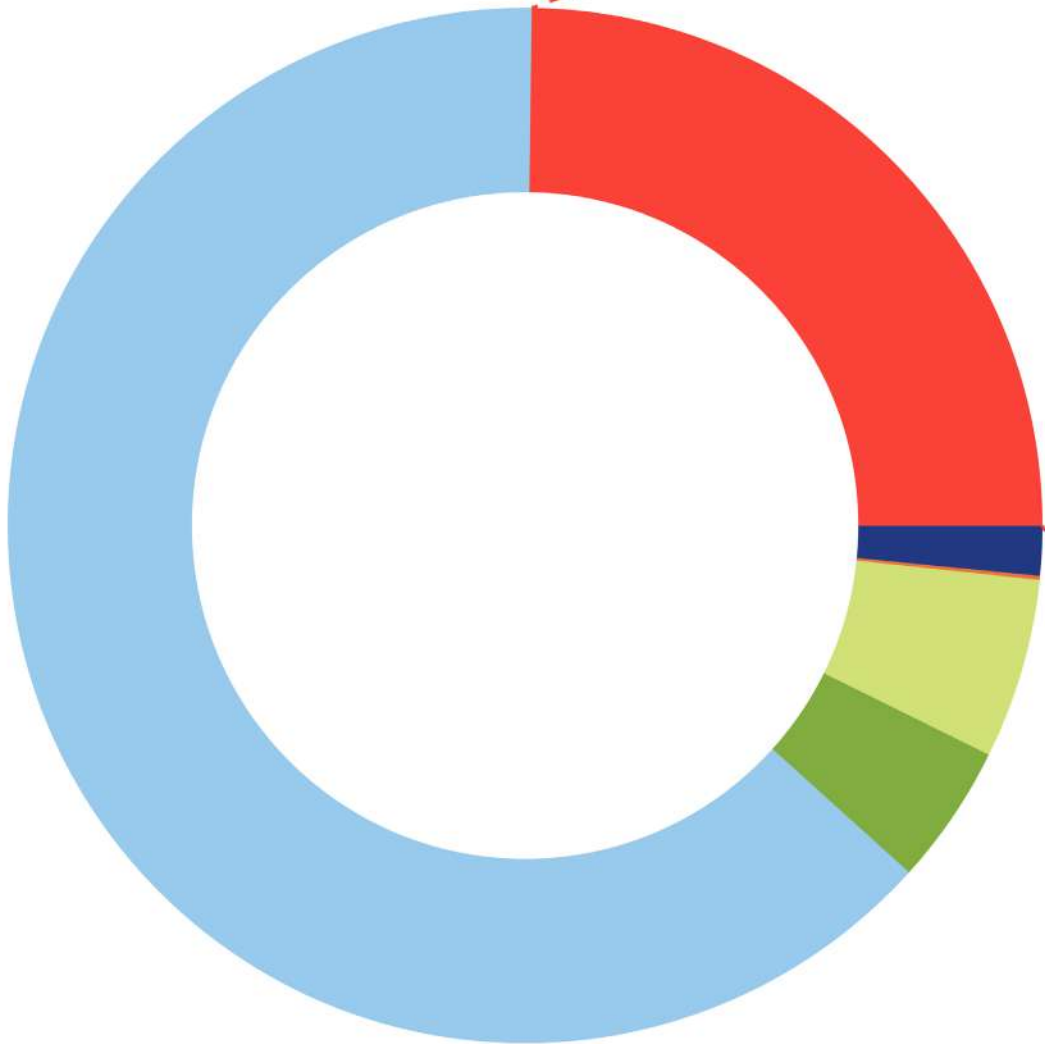


The Broadway Corridor

Revere population breakdown by race and ethnicity

Source: U.S. Census

- Non-Hispanic Other
- Non-Hispanic Native American
- Non-Hispanic Asian/Pacific Islander
- Non-Hispanic Black
- Non-Hispanic White
- Hispanic or Latino/a



Leverage Revere’s cultural diversity

Revere has always been a multi-cultural community. Celebrate this diversity!



Process

Grant Allocation Scorecard

	Funding Criteria					
	Catalytic Impact	Building and Facade Maintenance	Commercial Vibrancy	Design Guidelines	Matching Supports	Business Longevity
0	Project has no tangible impact on any business	Project has no demonstrable impact on neighborhood blight	Project does not help align the businesses' goals with their customers' goals	Project is not aligned to the Sign and Facade Design Guidelines	Project leverages no additional funding to expand impact	
1	Project impacts one (1) Revere business	Project has some demonstrable impact reducing neighborhood blight	Project somewhat aligns the businesses' goals with their customers' goals	Project is somewhat aligned to the Sign and Facade Design Guidelines	Project leverages at least 50% additional funding to expand impact	Business has existed at this location for less than one (1) year
2	Project impacts two (2) Revere businesses	Project has a clear impact on reducing neighborhood blight			Project leverages at least a 1:1 ratio match to expand impact	Business has existed at this location for less than five (5) years
3	Project impacts three (3) or more Revere business	Project has a clear impact that extends beyond the building to the surrounding block	Project clearly aligns the businesses' goals with their customers' goals	Project is clearly aligned to the goals of the Sign and Facade Design Guidelines	Project leverages a greater than 1:1 ratio match to expand impact	Business has existed at this location for more than five (5) years

Process

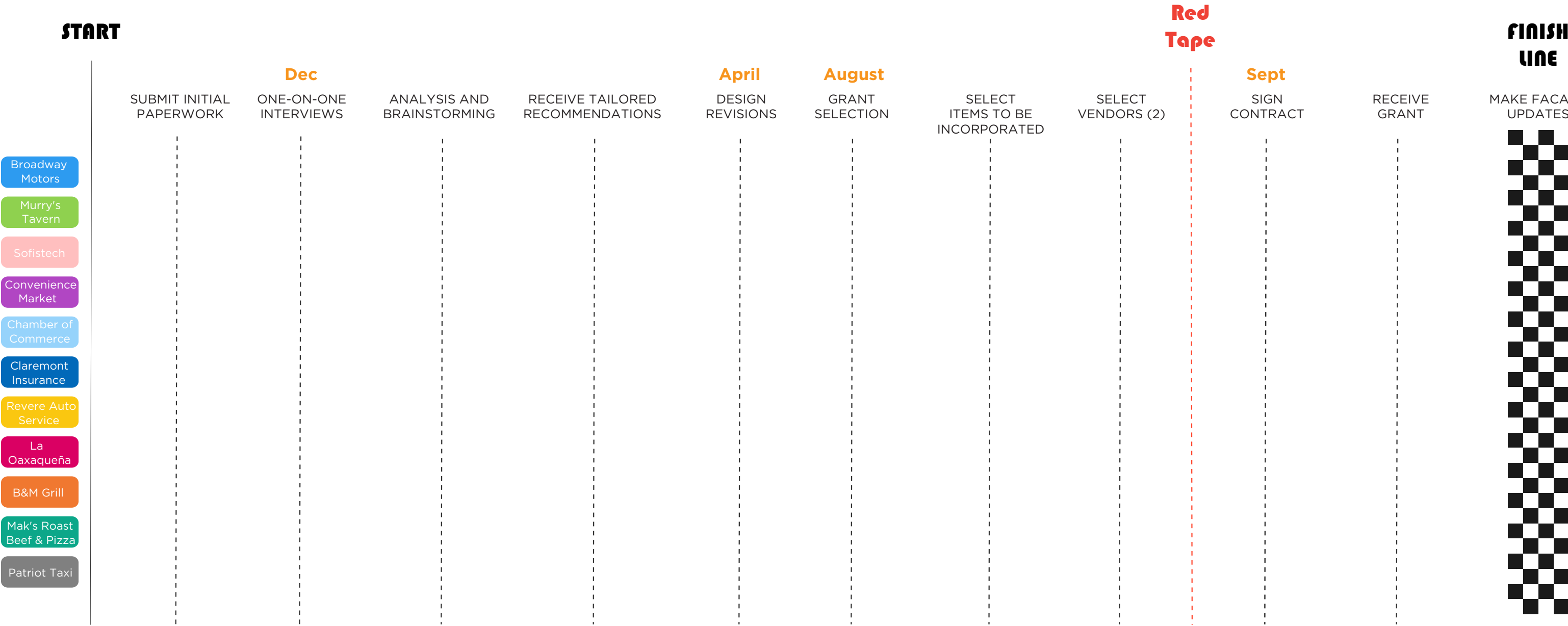
Grant Allocation Scorecard

7 points

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Timeline

from a business point of view



What is “good signage”?

a designer’s perspective

Less Desired



Full window coverage



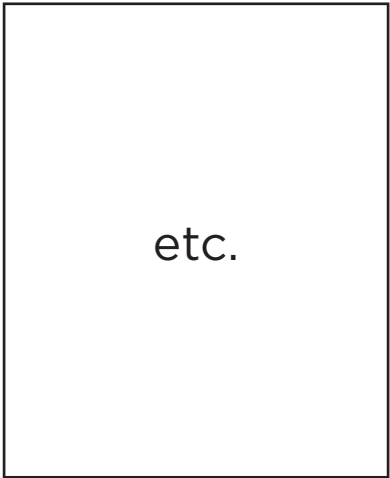
Size & Proportion



Vinyl banners



Enclosed Awnings



But what about different cultural practices?

Preferred



Metal Awning



Neon Signs



Wall Signs



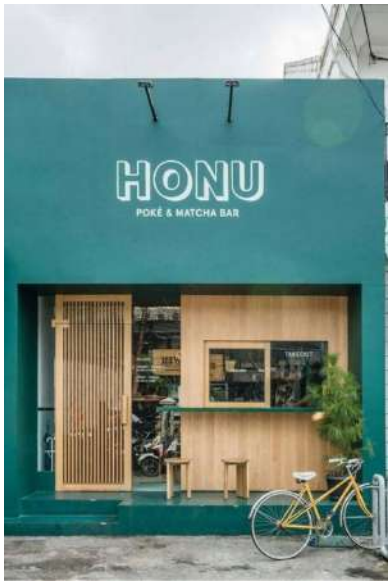
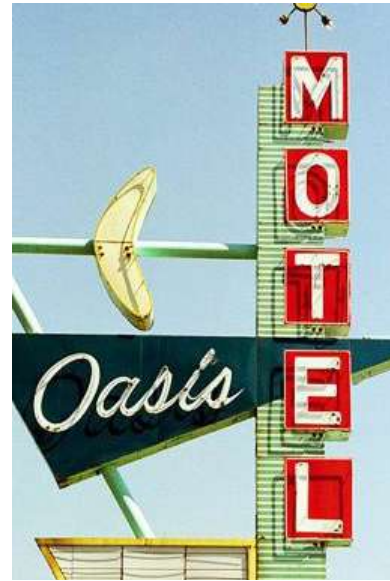
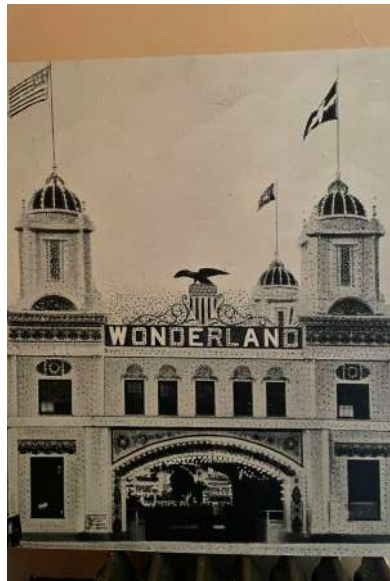
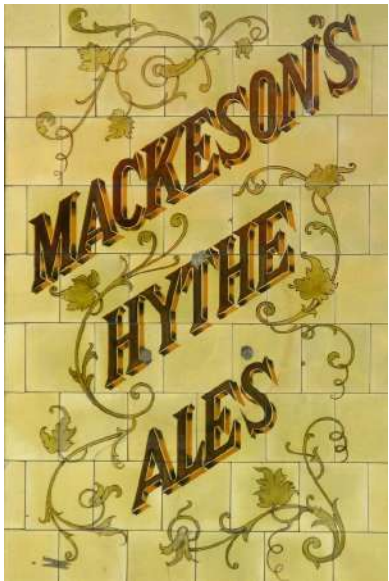
Blade Signs



Murals

Signage Eras

a crash course



COLONIAL

19th CENTURY

EARLY 20th

MID 20th

THE AGE OF NEON

BRANDING

PRESENT DAY

New Restrictions
Sign Ordinances



How do we foster

“good signage” in the public realm?

- Often, there are no craftspeople and no designers - and funds are limited
- The only* way to influence good signage is through guidelines

How do we foster

“good signage” in the public realm?

What are the most important areas to control?

1 Number of signs



2 Size & Proportion



3 Location



4 Quality of Materials



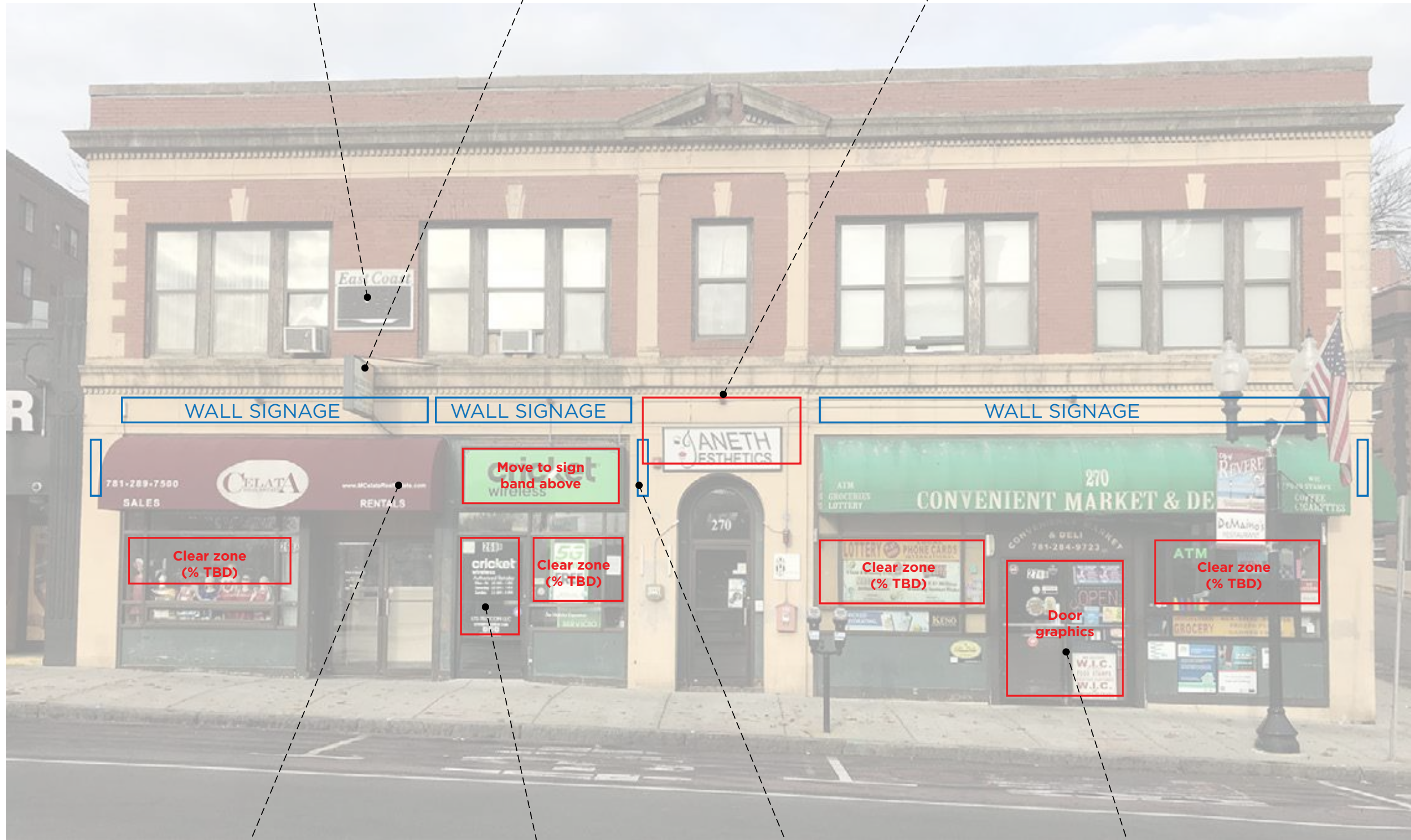
5 Lighting



Upper story tenant ID
Locate on windows, vs. wall

Blade sign
Disrupts architecture
Move to blade sign zone

No signage zone
Disrupts architecture



Awnings
Replace with open sided
non-lit, name on drop only

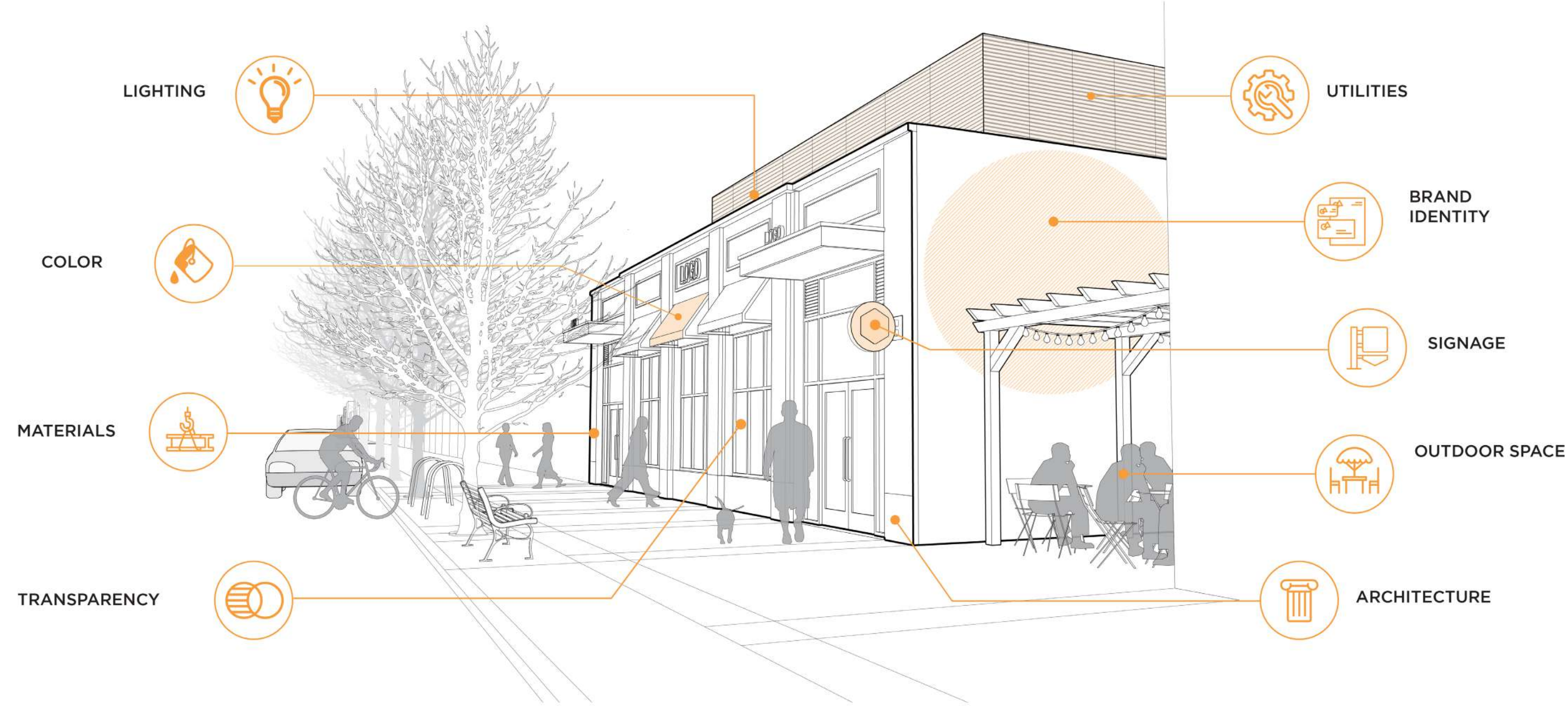
Door graphics
Reduce and
consolidate

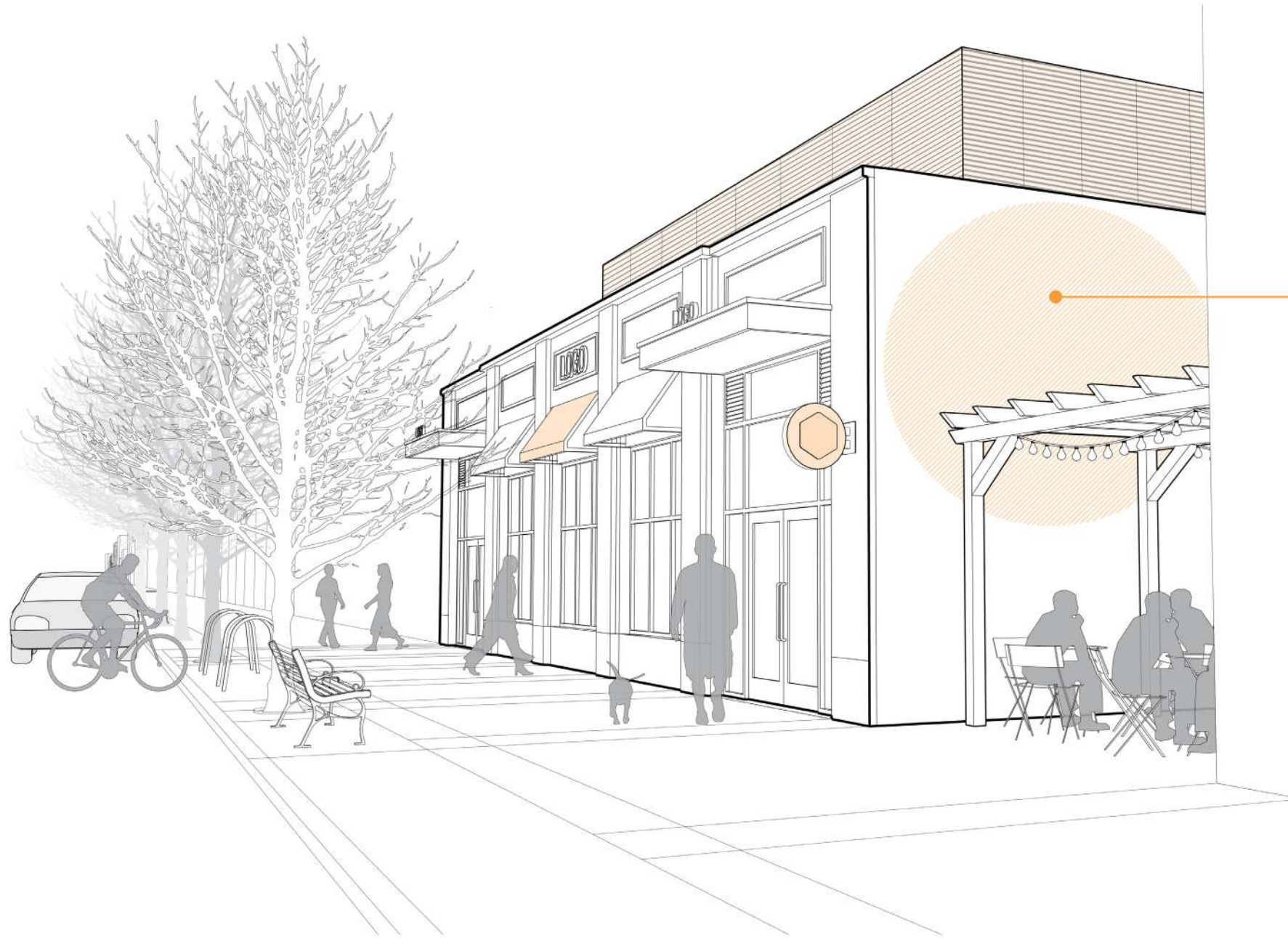
Blade signs
Establish lower zone

Door graphics
Reduce and
consolidate

Streetscape Context

What the Guidelines will address





BRAND IDENTITY

A strong brand identity strengthens a company's presence and popularity. Leverage distinctive elements of the business name, logo, color or design to build a strong visual image on the building or facade.

LIGHTING

Night lighting extends street life after retail business hours, highlights the interior, showcases products and activates the corridor. Effective lighting increases the pedestrian experience and sense of safety.



TRANSPARENCY

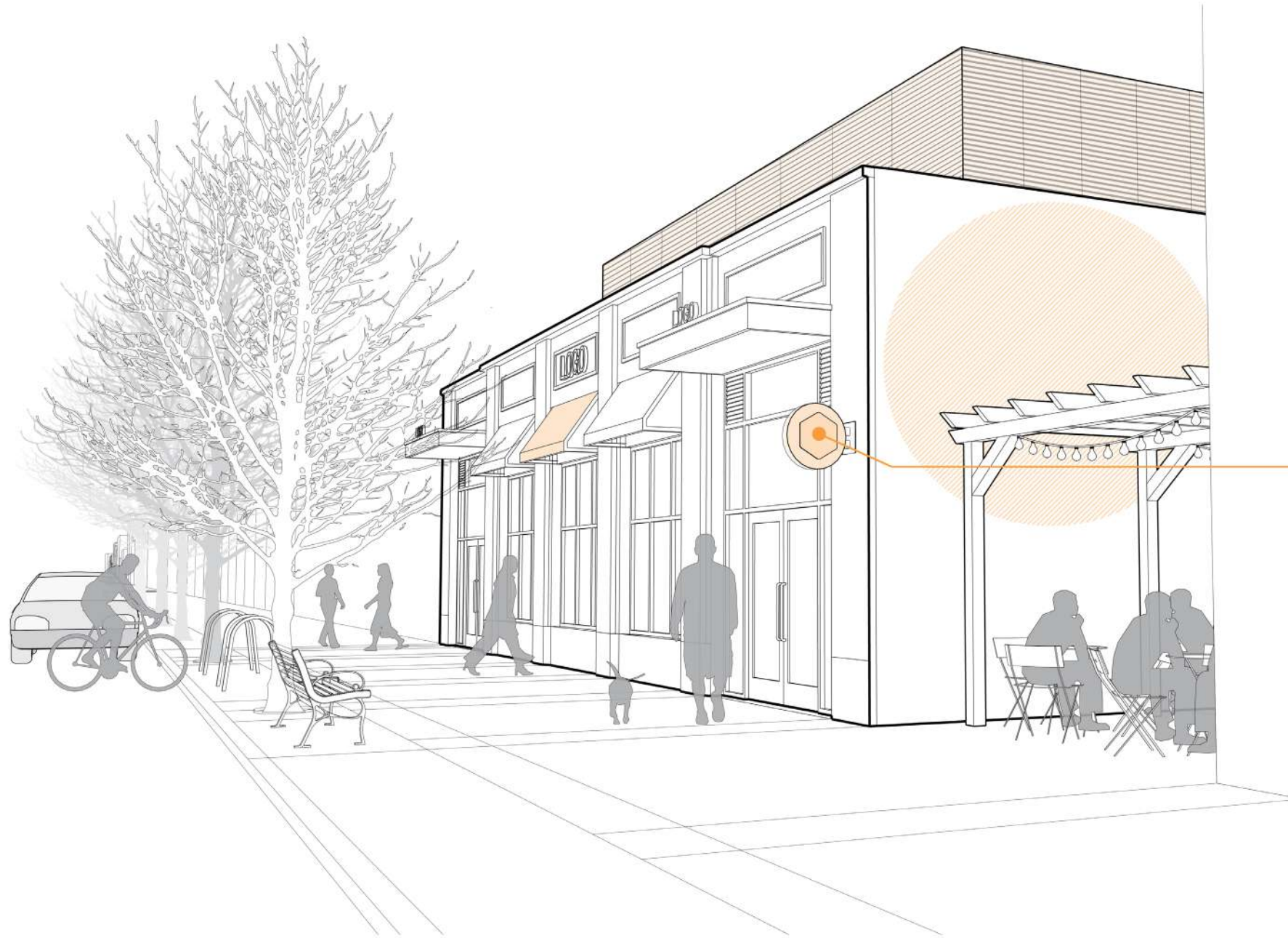
The display zone for a ground floor commercial spaces need to reinforce the visual connection between the interior and exterior environments and allow for effective window shopping and merchandising.



MATERIALS

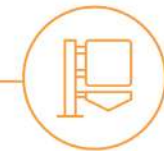
The storefront, interior and signage need to be of the highest quality and assembled with craftsmanship in mind. Materials need to be durable, finished and easily maintainable with the method of attachment concealed.





SIGNAGE

Signage must be of high-quality construction, materials, details and finishes. They should be compatible with the overall design of the tenant's space and invite customers to browse and shop.



COLOR

There is no universal symbolism for colors; different cultures assign different meanings to colors. However, if properly applied, color reinforces the organization and hierarchy of elements in a design.





UTILITIES

Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC), as well as electrical, fire alarm/life safety and plumbing should be carefully integrated into the storefront and interior design concept of the business and building.



OUTDOOR SPACE

Outdoor areas that are contiguous to a building should allow for landscape zones, furnishings, fixtures and shade structures that are well designed and accessible to people of all abilities.





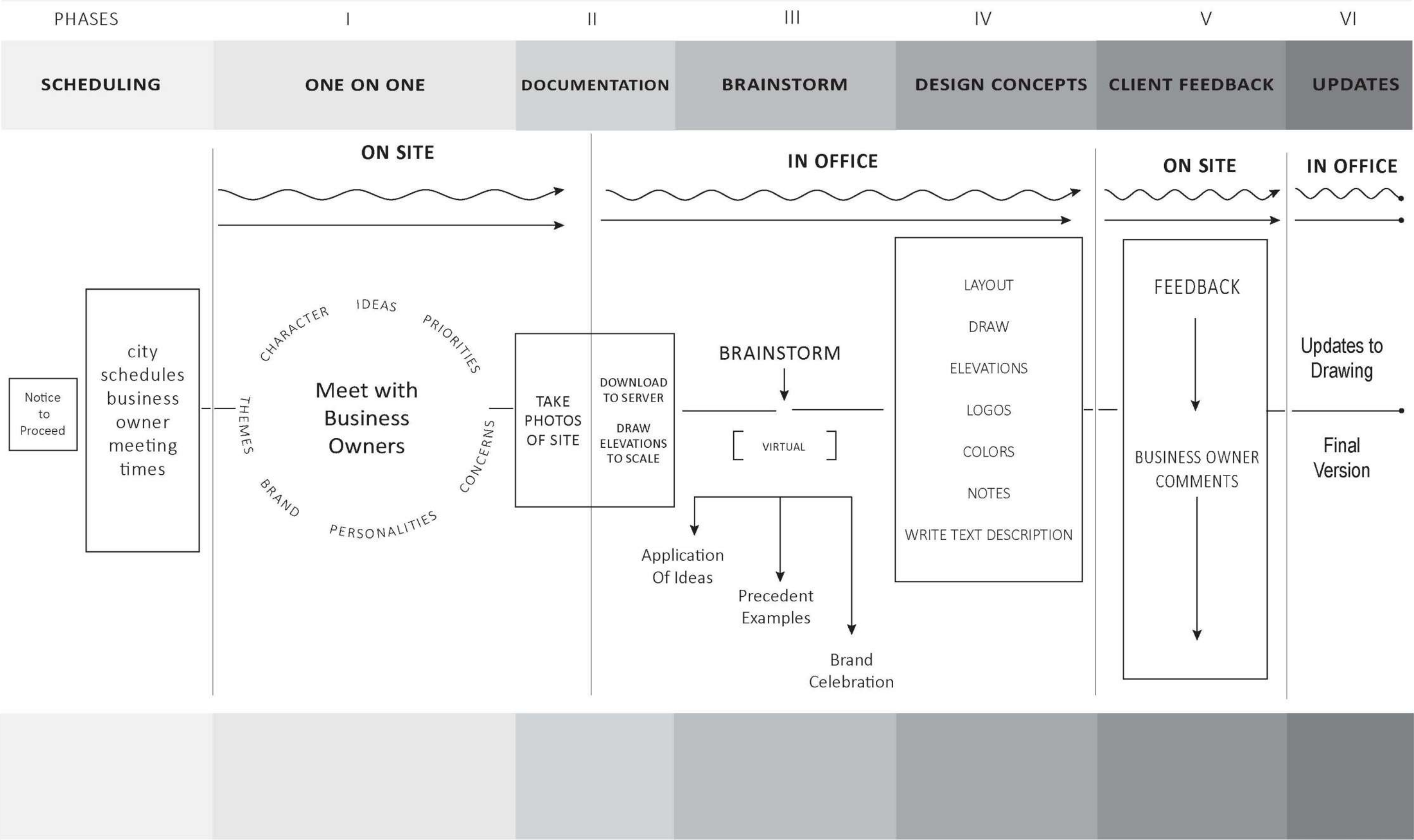
ARCHITECTURE

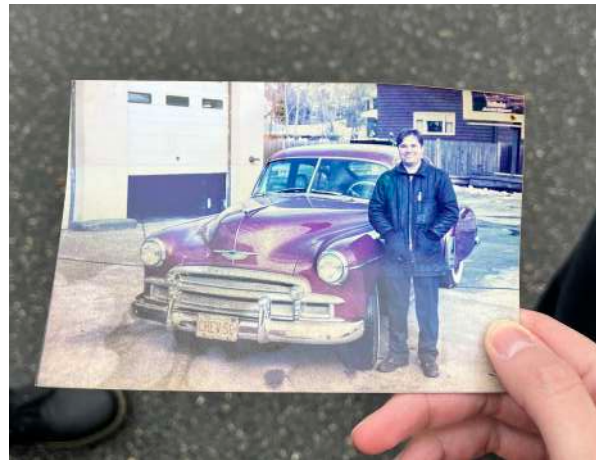
Storefronts have their individual identities and histories. They should enhance the pedestrian experience, be unique expressions of a tenant's brand and meet or exceed the quality of the base building's architecture.



PROCESS OF ENGAGEMENT

ONE CLIENT





One-on-ones Toolkit



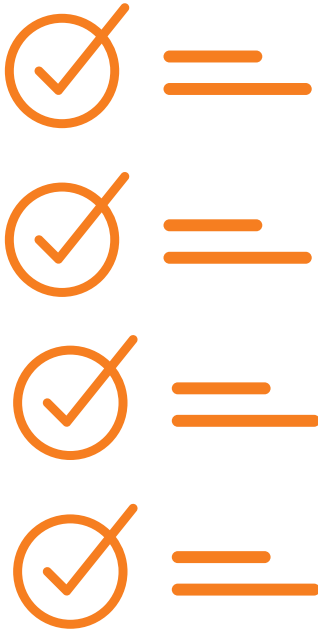
Case Studies



Bilingual Abilities



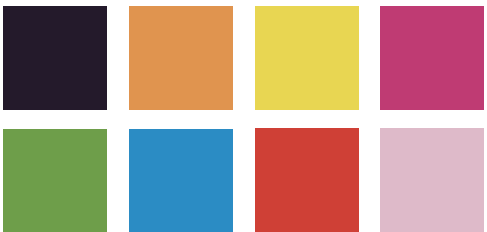
Knowledge of Sign Types



List of Questions

Branding and marketing materials

Provided by business owners



Implementation

Signage Recommendations



* Not to scale / No estan a escala
 *** FOR REFERENCE ONLY **
 This is not a final design

Reference Images



Painted
Parking Sign

Large colorful painted
graphic inspired by "stencil
cut" flags from interior



* Four stencil cut (metal, outdoor grade plywood or Sintra), size to be determined (8'x8' total is a good reference).



DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR REVERE'S COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

A POCKET GUIDE to understanding the Design Guidelines
for Business Districts in Revere, MA



There are many varied buildings, styles of architecture and types of businesses that contribute to Revere's vibrant commercial corridors.

WHAT THIS INITIATIVE IS:

- An opportunity to strengthen corridor character
- An economic development incentive to stimulate activity
- An opportunity to celebrate the city's diversity

To promote Revere's unique commercial districts, the City hired Gamble Associates and omloop, Architects, Urban Designers and Planners to develop storefront and signage design guidelines for Revere's commercial corridors. The goal is to **preserve the individuality of small businesses that are staples of the city's commercial districts** and the consumers they serve.

This pocket guide provides examples of storefront and signage improvements that can be explored and implemented by small businesses and property owners when upgrading their facades. The Design Guidelines are organized into nine categories and summarize concepts that emerged from conversations with individual business owners and city planners. They are intended to **enhance buildings and the public realm interface that stimulate economic activity.**

SIX OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

1. Leverage the City of Revere's cultural diversity

Revere has always been multi-cultural. Celebrate it!

2. Keep it local

Celebrate the uniqueness of the brand

3. Remove clutter

Uncover the materials that have covered up the past

4. Right-size the scale of the signage

Update or install signs that are in proportion to the façade

5. Use a light touch

Reduce the number of elements; less is more.

6. Integrate lighting

Ensure the building is properly lit, safe and attractive.

Taken together, these principles direct property owners and tenants to take steps that beautify their buildings and businesses and increase vitality.

VERSION I

architecture
urban design
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DESIGN + PLANNING

August 1, 2023

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BRAND IDENTITY



TRANSPARENCY



SIGNAGE



COLOR



LIGHTING



ARCHITECTURE



MATERIALS



PUBLIC SPACE



UTILITIES

BRAND IDENTITY



Every business has a brand, a unique identity with colors and font styles and sizes. Many have logos that are distinctive. These elements can be amplified with signage and through the application of color. **The most effective brands work at a variety of scales** and can be seen on the building as both a pedestrian on the sidewalk and from the street traveling at the speed of a car. Take advantage of the most compelling aspect of your brand to increase traffic to your business, store, restaurant or shop.

ENCOURAGE

- Decorative or well made signs that reflect the individuality of the business
- Cultural references and elements that make a store unique
- The incorporation of logos on the building facades
- Historical (ghost) signage that recalls a building's past life

DISCOURAGE

- Too many colors (two main colors and three accents are usually enough) or color schemes that conflict with the brand's identity or signage
- Clutter (layers built up over time)
- Mixed messages
- Long mottos or business slogans



COLOR



Every business has one color scheme that defines it. Choose a backdrop color that makes the business brand or logo stand out through contrast or one that harmonizes and complements the building's facade. Colors are trendy and what constitutes a "good" color is subjective, however **an effective color for a building will accentuate historical details of the architecture** that make it unique, such as the cornices, parapet or window trim or one that reinforces the building's massing and proportions.

ENCOURAGE

- The identity of the building or brand through the use of color
- Color to highlight or express cultural affiliations or products

DISCOURAGE

- The presence of deteriorating signs, awnings, billboards and equipment
- Colors that compete with the architectural elements of the building



MATERIALS



Materials should be selected with respect to their performative characteristics and sustainable qualities rather than just trends or aesthetic appeal. With this in mind, durability, maintenance, recyclability characteristics, energy use and consumption needs should be taken into account. When feasible, **use natural and sustainable materials**. Durable and natural materials will ensure a high degree of quality and long-term viability.

ENCOURAGE

- The use of durable, high-quality materials that are locally-sourced
- Sustainable materials with low embodied energy and are recyclable
- Materials that are historically appropriate for Revere

DISCOURAGE

- The use of vinyl, plastic or poor-quality building finishes
- Faux materials that mimic other materials



TRANSPARENCY



Increasing the amount of visibility into a business brings a number of benefits. For one, **greater transparency enables pedestrians to view into the space which increases safety and security**. Second, more natural light allows more products or services inside the space to be seen from the outside. Third, the organization of what is sold (or the services provided) can be better organized or displayed as a result of increased visibility.

ENCOURAGE

- Increase visibility into the store with more areas of glass
- Return size of openings to their historical scale or proportion
- Organize merchandise in a manner that reinforces the brand interior or accent lighting

DISCOURAGE

- The build-up of posters and advertisements on windows
- Painting over or covering glass with solid panels
- The haphazard organization of goods or products
- The use of awnings that are in poor condition



LIGHTING



A successful commercial corridor is a compelling place to be at all times of the day, even at night when businesses may be closed. Effective lighting calls attention to a store or business or restaurant while also capitalizing on the architectural features of the building. There are many varieties of light fixtures - from cove lighting to spot lighting to wall washers to sidewalk projections - but **an effective lighting strategy will reinforce brand identity** while also providing safety and security. The application of lighting needs to be strategic.

ENCOURAGE

- Accent lighting that highlights architectural details
- Full cut-off downlights and recessed fixtures
- Cove, neon and sidewalk projection lighting
- Energy-efficient fixtures

DISCOURAGE

- Internally lit plastic signs
- Light sources that create glare
- Motion, flashing or animated lighting



PUBLIC SPACE



Great urban streets are great places. Incorporating street trees, planting beds and natural green buffers provide shade and increase comfort. **The environmental benefits of landscaped areas reduce heat island impacts, assist with ground water recharge and filter pollutants**. Even small amounts of planting areas have a large visual impact. Where possible, remove impervious surfaces such as asphalt and concrete to facilitate the greening of the site.

ENCOURAGE

- The use of landscape buffers to shield adjacent properties and parking
- Planting of local, drought tolerant plants that address stormwater
- Maintenance and growth of existing trees on the property
- Removal of asphalt or concrete where permeable pavers are possible
- The incorporation of outdoor spaces for seating and gathering

DISCOURAGE

- Large expanses of asphalt from property line to property line
- Improvements that are not ADA accessible
- Unscreened or unenclosed trash receptacles
- Broken or weathered outdoor dining equipment



SIGNAGE



Commercial establishments need to advertise. However, signs should be appropriate to Revere without contributing to visual clutter. A balance needs to be struck between calling attention to an individual business and forging a positive collective image for the corridor. Signs can either complement or detract from that image depending on their design, placement, quantity size, materials, colors and condition. **Effective signage works at many scales**. Identifying the most appropriate scale for signage without overwhelming the building is key.

ENCOURAGE

- Attractive signs that are proportional to the building
- A diversity of sign types visible to pedestrians and moving cars
- Signs that are located above the storefront (frieze or transom)
- Colors that complement the building
- Open face metal channel letters with period script styles
- Signage cut through a surface and illuminated from behind
- Reverse channel "halo" letters
- Externally illuminated signage: carved, raised or free-standing

DISCOURAGE

- Cabinet signs (fabricated sign boxes with backlit plastic faces)
- Vacuum-formed plastic letters
- Digitally-printed flat panel signs
- Visible name, stamps, or decals of the sign manufacturer
- Non-ornamental hardware or brackets used to attach signs



ARCHITECTURE



Revere's commercial corridors have buildings as diverse as their businesses. The corridors evolved incrementally over many years; diversity of architectural styles is a good thing. **A singular design aesthetic is neither possible nor necessary**. Foreground elements of a building such as cornice lines or roof profiles that make it unique through color, material, signage and/or lighting and background and obscure things that are less important. Service entries or mechanical equipment should be painted to visually recede and be screened from view.

ENCOURAGE

- Consider the building elevation as a whole unit/composition
- Capitalize on the details of the building that make it distinctive
- Universal (and ADA compliant) design for people of all abilities and ages
- If several businesses share one building: develop a common strategy and team up with other tenants/owners rather than as individuals (choose a building color that benefits all, etc)

DISCOURAGE

- A wide variety of canopies and architectural elements
- Stand-alone signs not designed as a part of the building
- Temporary fixes that become permanent over time



UTILITIES



Buildings have significant heating and cooling requirements, regardless of the size of the building. Rooftop mechanical units and/or window air-conditioning units are necessary for comfort. However, their location and placement can easily overwhelm a building's facade. **Rooftop mechanical equipment should be setback from the primary building elevation and screened from view from the public right-of-way**. Remove outdated equipment and, where possible, replace legacy units with contemporary, high-performance options that are more environmentally-responsive.

ENCOURAGE

- The coloration of mechanical elements that can camouflage them
- Visual screening with louvers for rooftop mechanical areas
- The removal of old or outdated equipment
- Centralized areas for utility locations

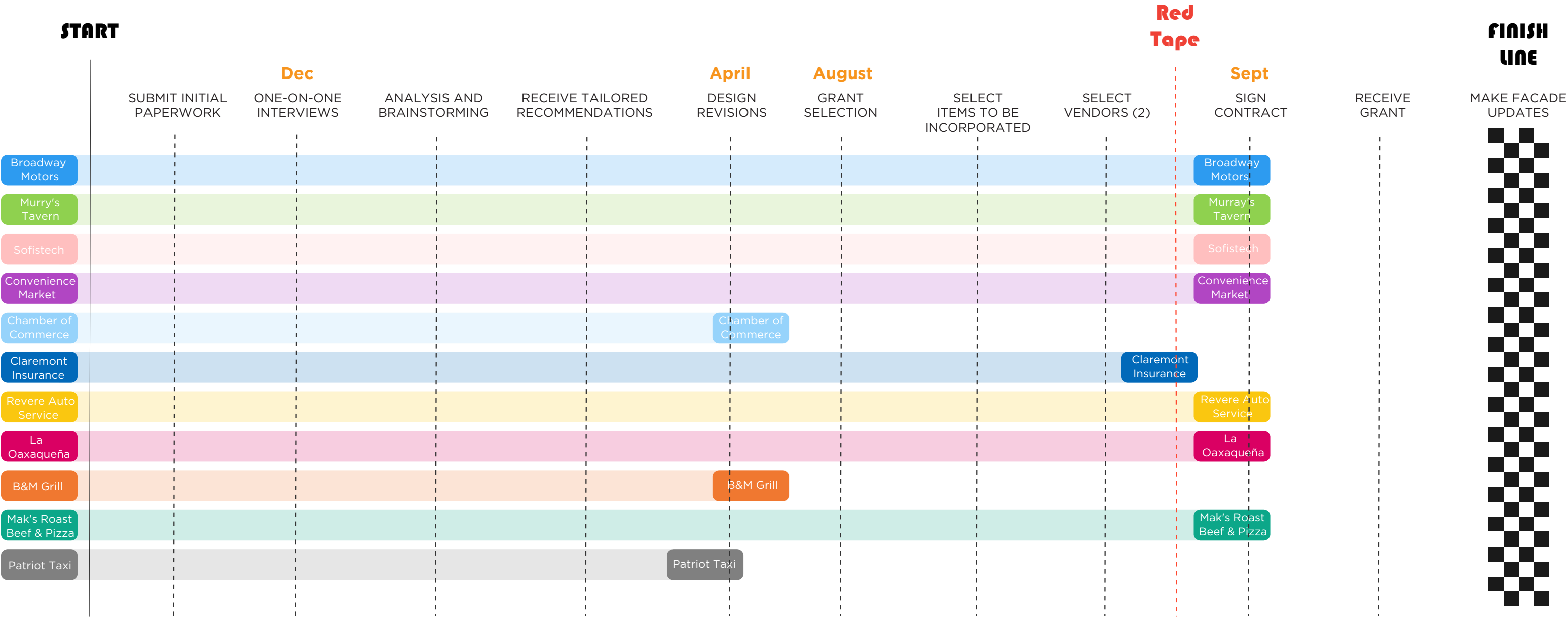
DISCOURAGE

- Haphazard or unintentional locations for utilities
- Exposed electrical conduit
- Broken or cracked utility covers, vents or screens



Timeline

from a business point of view



Lessons Learned

- Quick wins can help avoid planning fatigue
- Contextuality is important
- Clear and transparent scoring criteria is key
- Guidelines need a strong visual component to be understood
- Budget more time for hand-holding than you thought necessary

Challenges

- Signage materiality! How to be specific without designing each one
- Language barriers
- Cultural/aesthetic barriers
- Red tape: state and federal grants (strings, time consuming, intimidating, complex)
- Not one size fits all
- Maintaining relationships with scarce resources

Next Steps

- New and improved phase 2
- Initiating a Broadway Master Plan
- Determining a post-ARPA vision for Sign and Facade work
- Leveraging relationships into long-term change



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it's all connected



Thank You!