Providence, RI Urban Design Studio
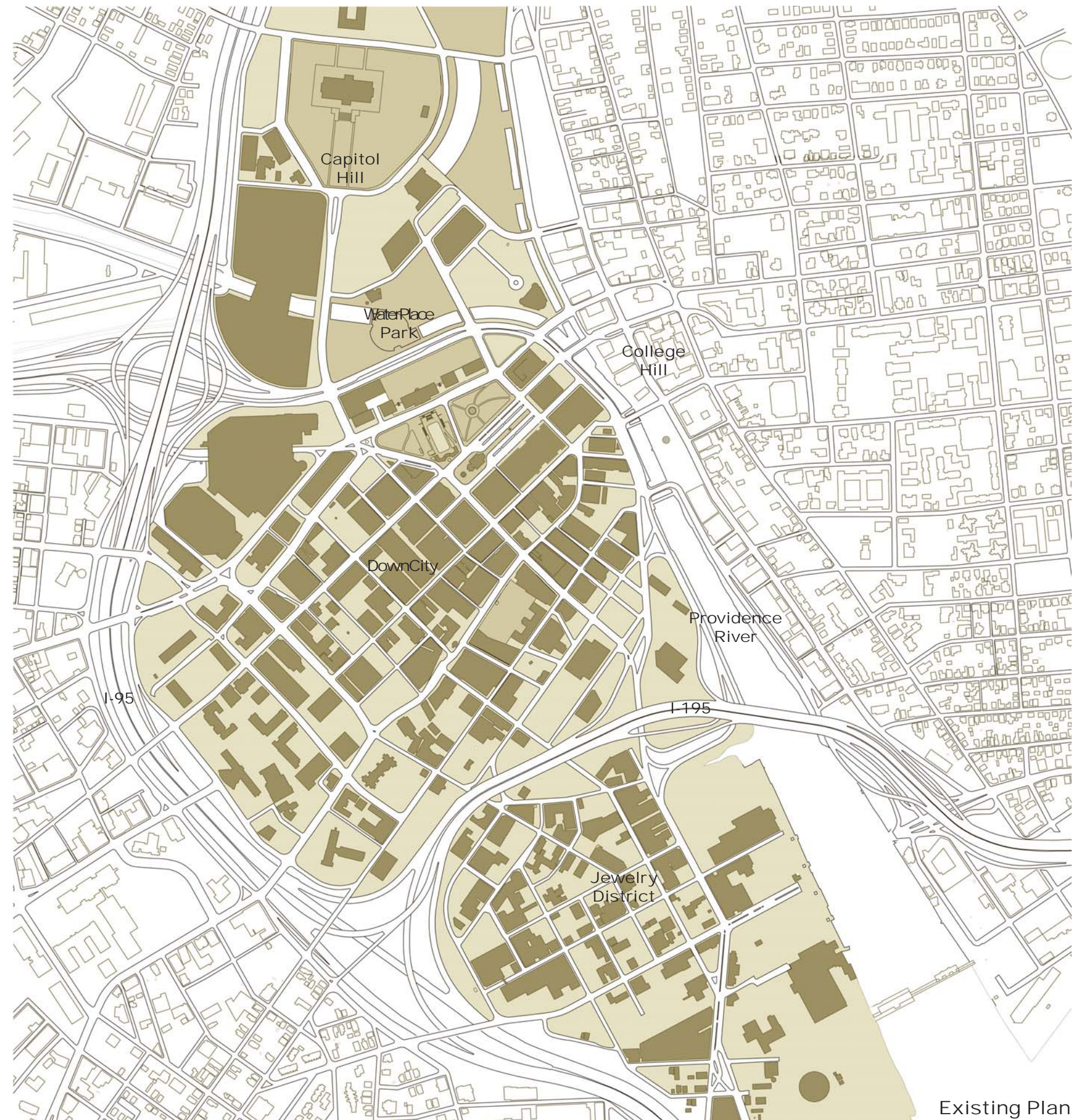## Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Spring '05

The story of Providence, Rhode Island, is dominated by rivers, Providence River and Woonasquatucket River, and highways, Interstate-95 and Interstate-195. The rivers and highways enclose the various city neighborhoods creating compact and identifiable districts. At the same time, the creation of districts reduces the contiguity in the urban fabric and patterns of urban activities. This study focuses on three districts - Capitol Hill, Downtown or Downcity, and Jewelry District. College Hill is another district, which is separated from these three districts by Providence River, is held together by the presence of Brown University and Rhode Island School of Design.
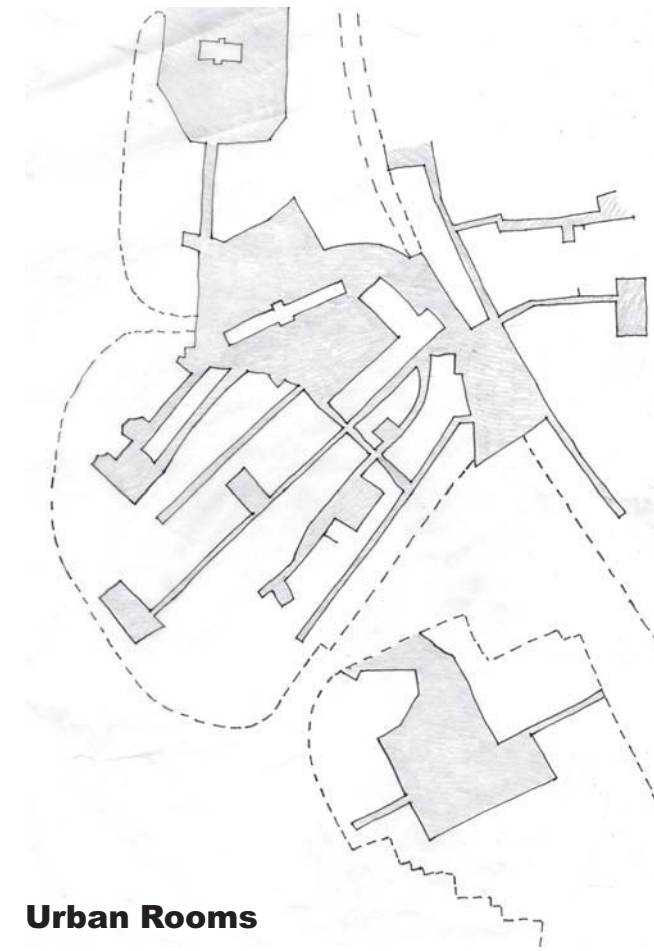
Over the past decade, the City of Providence has pumped enormous public funds to reviving the river and creating a bustling event place around it, placing Providence on the arts and culture map. As a consequence, the river has been transformed into a connecting public realm between College Hill and Downcity. This renaissance effort has definitely revived the areas along the riverfront but has lacked penetration deep into the heart of the city. Public activity tends to be limited to the public walks and parks along the rivers, Kennedy Plaza at the City Hall and the commercial areas on Westminister Street and Dorrance Street.

Downcity is the economic hub for the metropolitan region and is facing increasing pressure from commercial, office and residential development. The Jewelry District is an interesting mix of rehabilitated industrial buildings and activiites ranging from art studios to research laboratories. With the opening of Providence Place Mall and WaterPlace Park, Capitol Hill is seeing new development activity, mostly office buildings. Adding to this bustle of development is the proposed relocation of I-195 from its present location between DownCity and Jewelry District to a location just south of the hurricane barrier at the mouth of the Providence River.
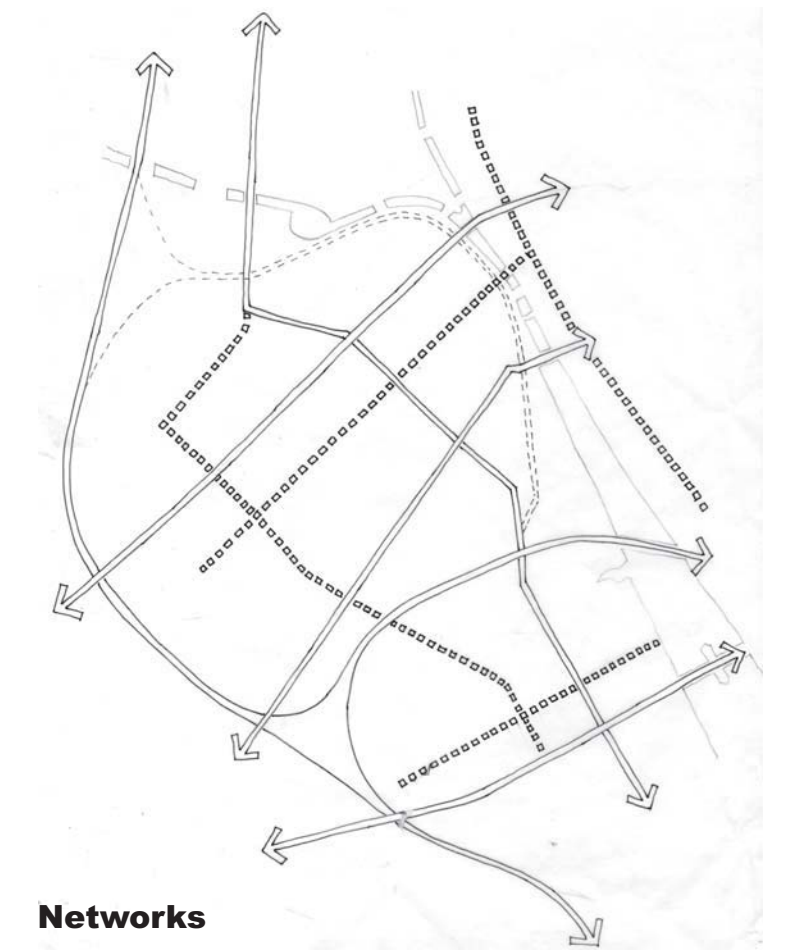
This proposal for Providence attempts to reconnect the various districts into a cohesive livable city while maintaining the individual identities of the neighborhoods. More specifically, the plan focuses on the area between DownCity and the Jewelry District, returned to the city by the rolcation of I-195.
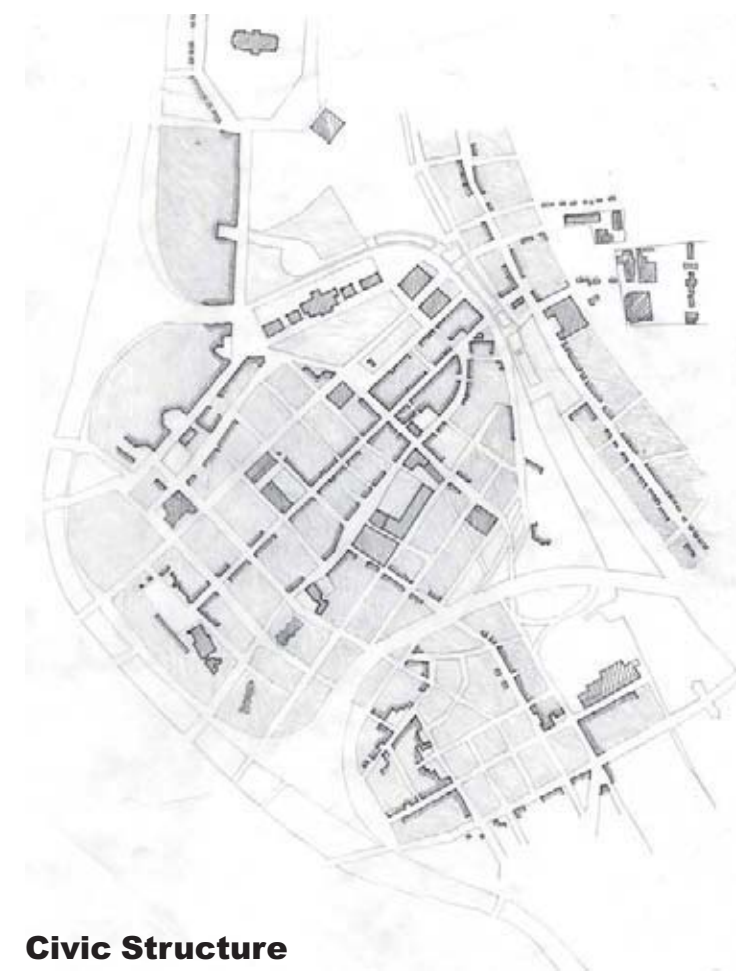
Existing Plan

Providence, RI Urban Design Studio
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Spring '05

Urban Rooms

Networks

Civic Structure

Districts
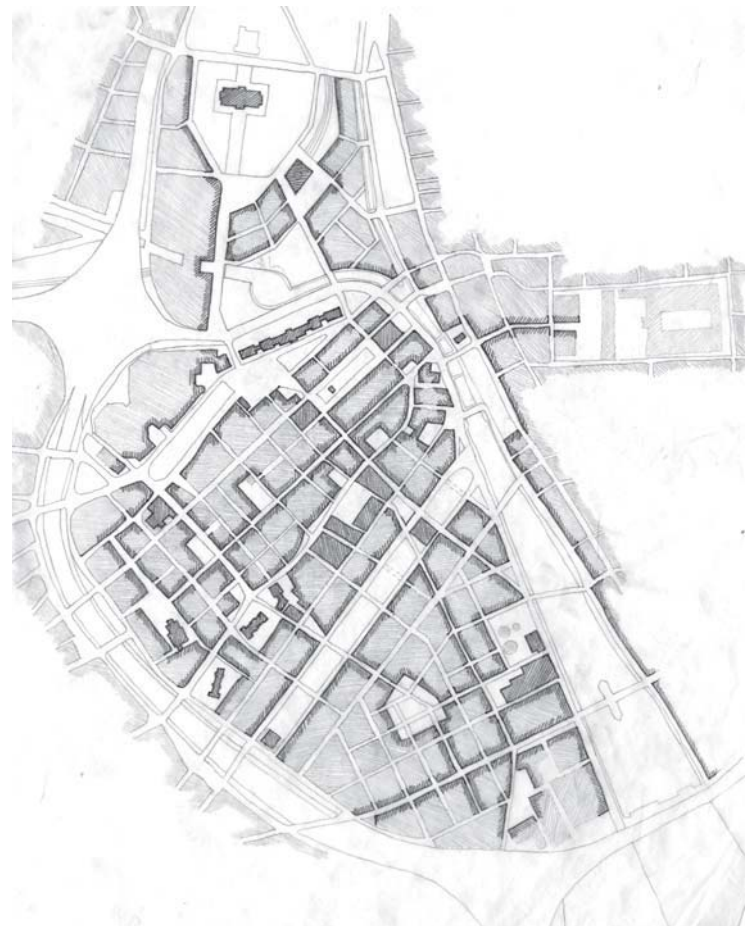
Providence, RI Urban Design Studio
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Spring '05

Ideas about the reuse of the land, released by the relocation of I-195, progressed from simply reweaving the built fabric around a boulevard to maintaining the entire land as a park and settled on a middle ground concept - **Park Blocks**. A linear open space forms the core of a predominantly residential district, which reconnects DownCity and the Jewelry District and stretches the public realm along the waterfront into the core. A similar linear open space pulls the activity from Kennedy Plaza and City Hall to the Arena and Convention Center area. The relocated highway is proposed as a surface boulevard, with another linear open space in the middle, completing the connection to College Hill through Fox Point.

The Boulevard

The Park

The Park Blocks

Proposed Civic Structure

Proposed Plan

Providence, RI Urban Design Studio
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Spring '05

Existing

Proposed

Providence, RI Urban Design Studio
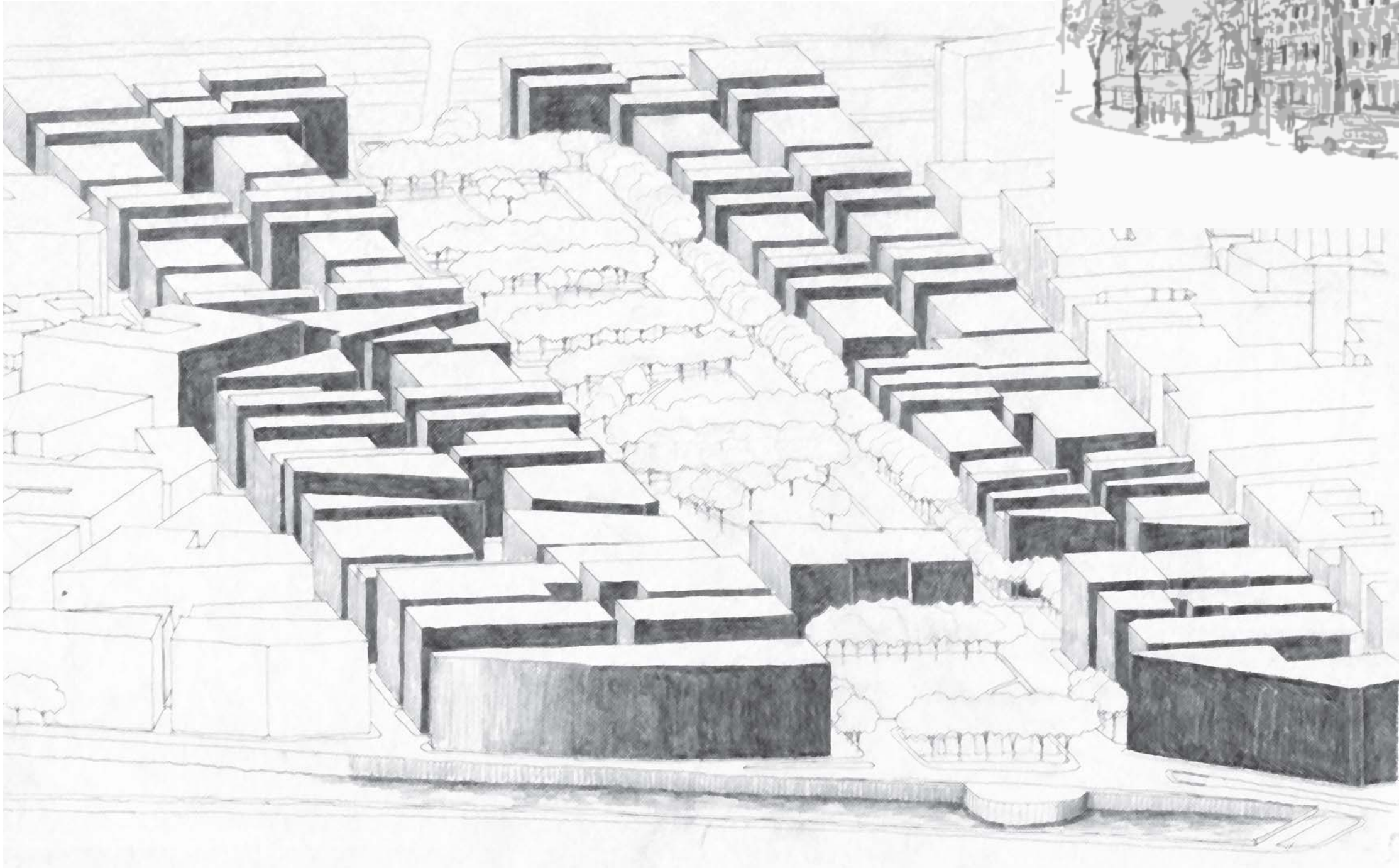## Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Spring '05

24' 36' 6' 175' 6' 36' 24'

Typical Section thru Park Block

Park Block Plan

Providence, RI Urban Design Studio
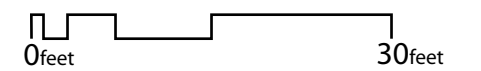## Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Spring '05

Street View

Bird's Eye View of Park Blocks

providence ud studio

0 feet   30 feet

providence ud studio

0 feet   30 feet

providence ud studio

0 feet   30 feet