



Our
CAMBRIDGE ST.
a community plan

Draft Recommendations Summary 10.19.22

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Public Engagement Summary, Existing Conditions Summary

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Recommendations

01

OUR PROCESS

REALIZING ENVISION CAMBRIDGE GOALS



BUSINESS

Support small
business community



MOBILITY

Improve infrastructure for
sustainable choices



HOUSING

Address affordability and
supply



PUBLIC SPACE

Increase open
space resources



CLIMATE

Plan for climate
mitigation and resilience

ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Round 1 – Outreach, Engagement and Analysis

Process to understand residents, workers and visitors' interests, preferences and ideas about Cambridge St

- Kick-off event
- Stakeholder interviews
- Online survey
- Pop-up Events
- Existing Conditions Assessment – virtual public meeting

Round 2 – Vision, Goals and Priorities

Two meetings that established the vision and planning priorities for the Cambridge Street community

- **Meeting 1** – Presented results of Community Survey and established a Vision for Cambridge Street
- **Meeting 2** – Round-table discussions with staff and consultant on the topics of **Small Businesses, Housing, and Accessible and Safe Streets** to develop planning priorities, identifying ambitions, while staying pragmatic.
- Focus group conversations with seniors, youth and BIPOC businesses



ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Round 3 – Ideas for Cambridge Street

Based on planning priorities and public feedback, initial ideas were presented at two open house events.

- The themes of **Inviting, Local, Affordable, and Accessible & Resilient** were used to frame draft ideas for community feedback.
- Initial ideas addressed small business development strategies, urban form (density, building heights, setbacks, public spaces), preservation and creation of housing inventory, and resiliency for a climate ready street.
- An engagement summary report of the meeting and associated online survey was created and posted online.

Round 4 – Recommendations

- A final public meeting will present fifteen strategies and associated actions for Cambridge Street.
- Additionally, printed summary collateral will be produced for distribution.



ENGAGEMENT EVENTS



VOLPE POP UP



CURIO POP UP



VIRTUAL MEETINGS



KSA TOOMEY PARK TABLING



SENIOR FOCUS GROUPS



OUTDOOR COMMUNITY EVENT #2



OUTDOOR COMMUNITY EVENT #1



COMMUNITY SURVEY



SECOND THURSDAY TABLING



VISION & PRIORITY WORKSHOPS



YOUTH FOCUS GROUPS

ENGAGEMENT NUMBERS TO DATE

3

COMMUNITY
EVENTS

4

VIRTUAL PUBLIC
MEETINGS

4

IN-PERSON
POP UPS

6

FOCUS
GROUPS

20

CONVERSATIONS
WITH BUSINESSES

990+

SURVEY RESPONSES

1,400+

TOTAL PARTICIPATION



02

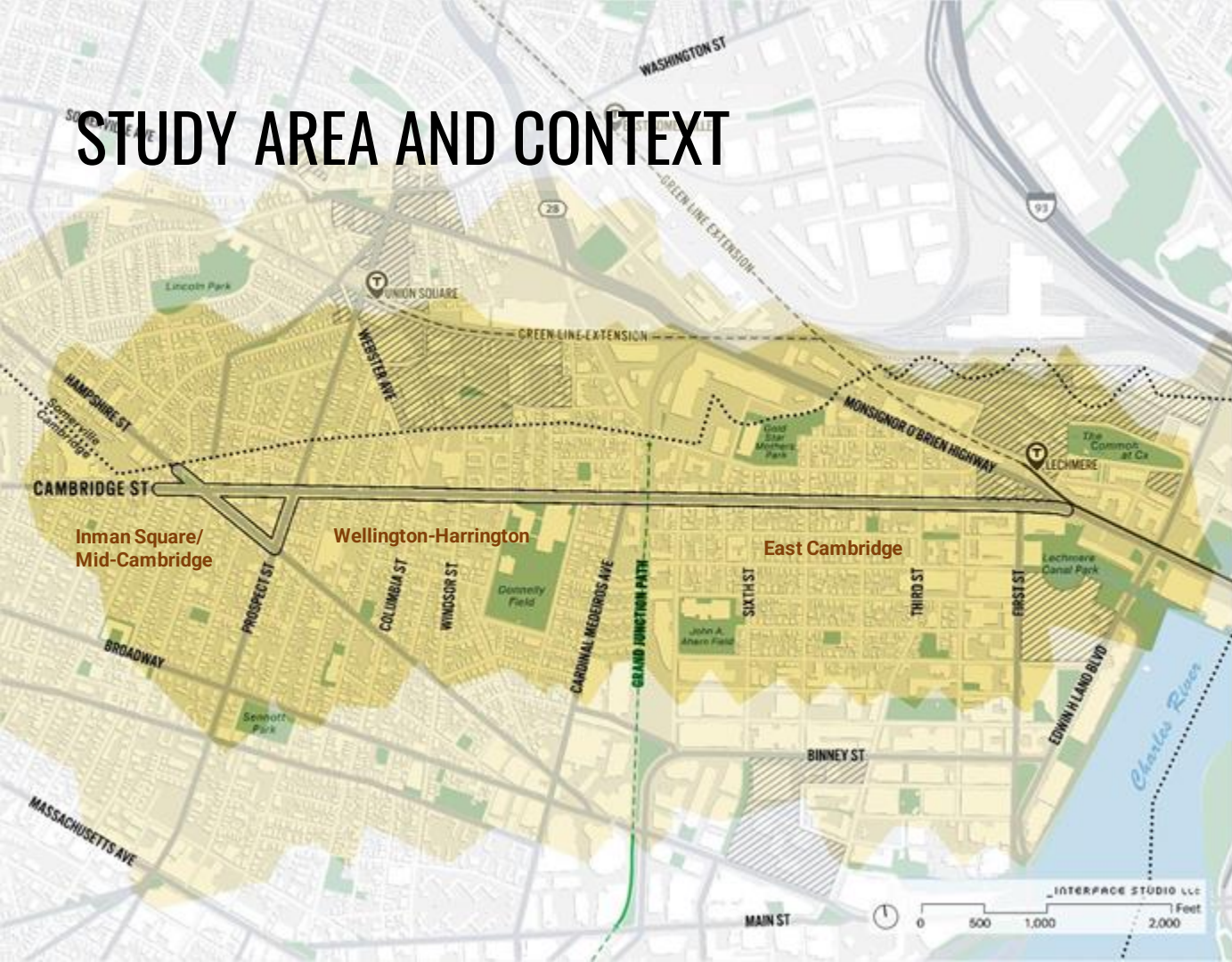
WHAT WE LEARNED

WHO DOES CAMBRIDGE STREET SERVE?

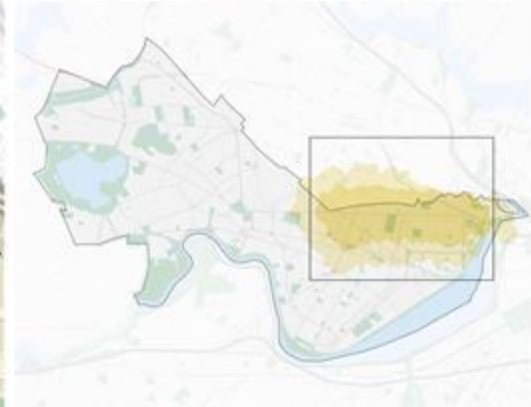
Residents, business owners, workers, visitors, and commuters use Cambridge Street, making it a dense and lively place in the city.



STUDY AREA AND CONTEXT



Within a 0.25-mile walk of Cambridge St:
 Total population: 21,799
 Total number of households: 10,519
 Average Household Size: 2



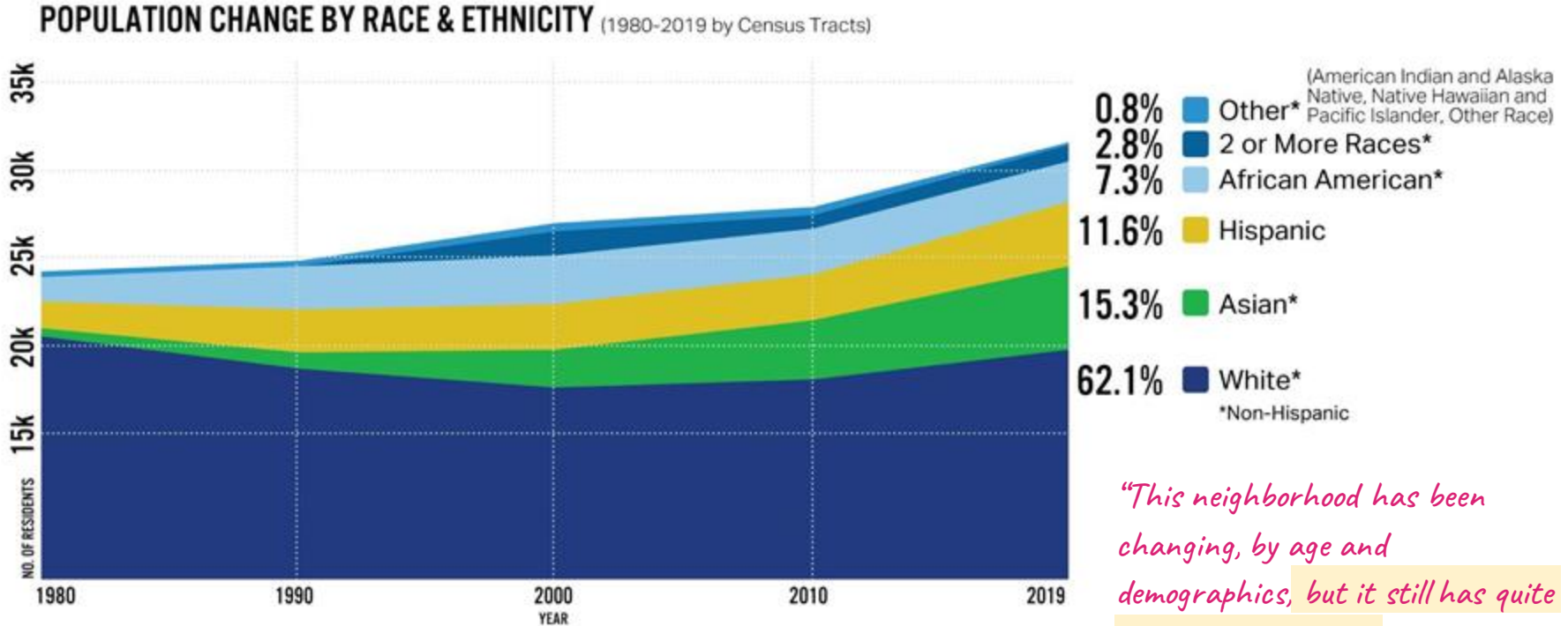
0.25-MILE AND 0.5-MILE CAMBRIDGE STREET WALKSHED

Interface Studio, October 2021

- 0.25-Mile Walkshed
- 0.5-Mile Walkshed
- Parks/Open Space
- Water
- Green Line
- Green Line Extension
- Multi-Use Path
- Multi-Use Path Extension
- High Impact Development
- City Boundary

CHANGE OVER TIME

Like the City, the population of Cambridge Street has grown over the last few decades.



"This neighborhood has been changing, by age and demographics, but it still has quite a diverse population" -resident

CHANGE OVER TIME

The country of origin of new immigrants has shifted but it has always been a diverse community and a place that provides opportunity for immigrant business owners.

PLACES OF BIRTH FOR FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION (% of Foreign-Born Population by Census Tracts)

28-30% OF THE POPULATION HAS CONSISTENTLY BEEN FOREIGN-BORN

Among this group, the top 5 countries have changed over time.

"This neighborhood has been changing, by age and demographics, but it still has quite a diverse population" -resident

2000



2010



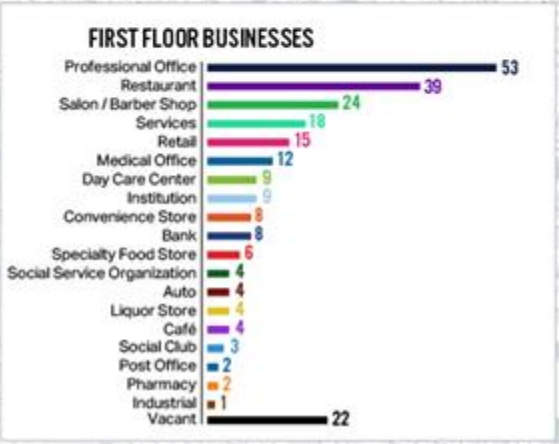
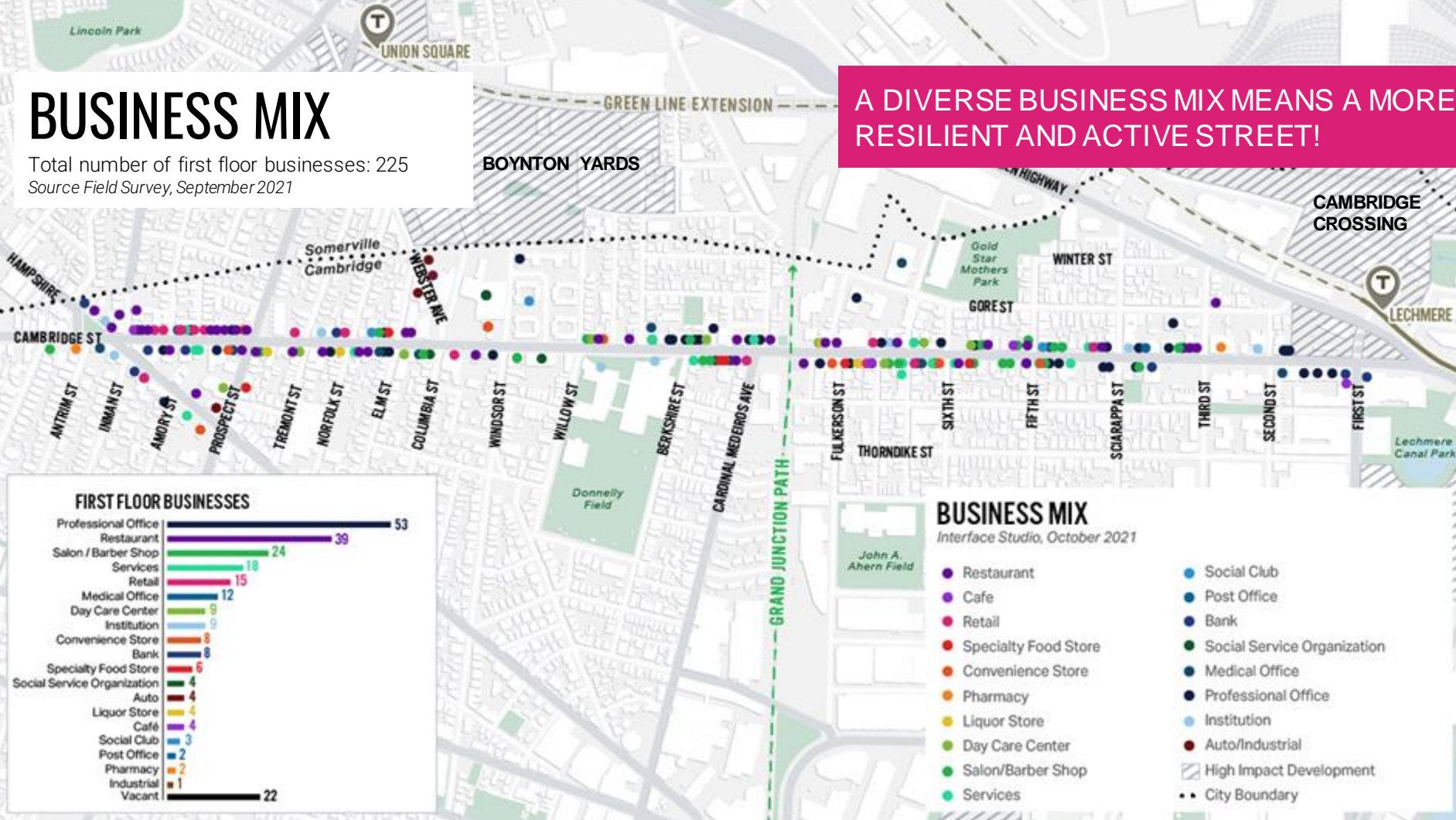
2019



BUSINESS MIX

Total number of first floor businesses: 225
 Source Field Survey, September 2021

A DIVERSE BUSINESS MIX MEANS A MORE RESILIENT AND ACTIVE STREET!

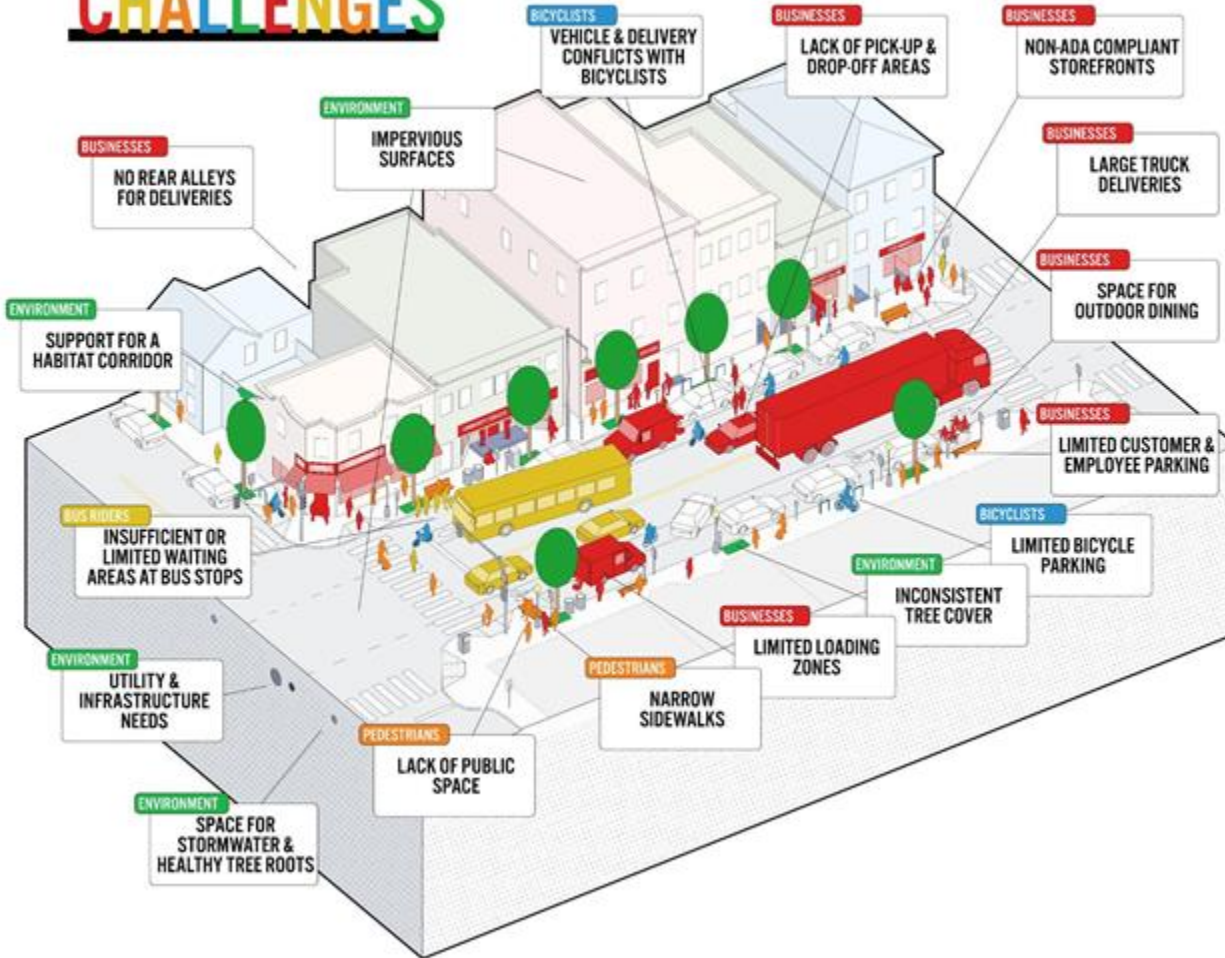


HOW CAN ALL STREET USERS BE ACCOMMODATED?

How does the current design of Cambridge Street support (or not support) its users as well as help the City meet its goals for climate, mobility, economic development and urban design?



CAMBRIDGE STREET CHALLENGES



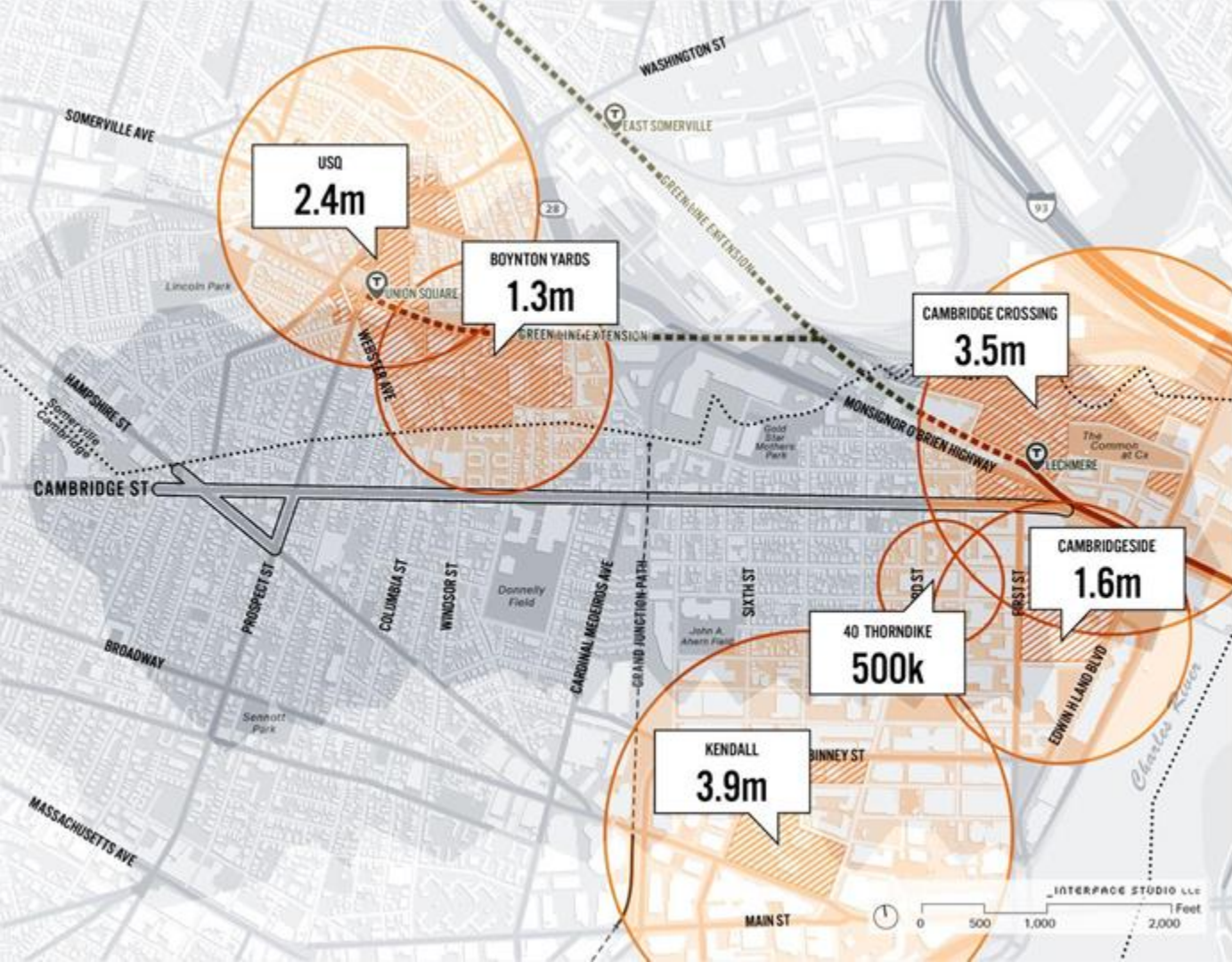
A lot is expected on this street:

- support small businesses
- create new affordable housing
- manage loading
- encourage walking
- improve ADA accessibility
- integrate separated bike lanes
- plant more trees
- manage stormwater...

WHERE ARE THE DEVELOPMENT PRESSURES?

Cambridge Street is surrounded by major development projects that will influence how it changes.





13m+

square feet of development including

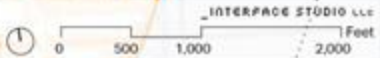
3,313

new residential units are recently constructed, under construction or planned within a 10-minute walk of Cambridge Street

PLANNED DEVELOPMENT SITES

City of Cambridge Development Log, October 2021

- 5-Minute Walkshed
- 10-Minute Walkshed
- Green Line
- Green Line Extension
- Multi-Use Path
- Multi-Use Path Extension
- High Impact Development
- Total Development in Square Feet (SF)



HOUSING

There is an acute need for affordable housing, but residential development faces several impediments, such as:

- High cost of land and construction drives up housing prices
- Suitable sites are limited, and small size of properties limits density
- Competition from commercial development which can pay higher prices for land
- Zoning limits the number of units able to be added to offset cost.



BUSINESS MIX

Several factors will influence the future of neighborhood retail and service providers along Cambridge Street

- Evolving/changing retail trends including online shopping
- Large amount of new retail space coming in nearby will add commercial inventory and expand the customer base.
- Food/beverage businesses have intense delivery needs, which impacts how Cambridge Street operates.
- Small spaces constrain the type of tenants.
- Ownership evolves over time which leads to business turnover.
- We need to make a distinction between active uses and activated street frontages.



Uses like professional offices and daycare centers might not be seen as active uses by some but they can have an active presence on the street and generate spillover activity.

03

VISION & GOALS

Our CAMBRIDGE STREET VISION

Our Cambridge Street is a model for a 21st century Main Street.
It's inviting, local, affordable, accessible and resilient.

Inviting

Continue to welcome diversity and celebrate our history as a destination for culture while embracing change.

Local

Support a mix of vibrant, local, and small businesses that serve the everyday needs of nearby residents, workers, students, and visitors alike.

Affordable

Support families, seniors, children, immigrants, people of color, those with disabilities, and from all economic and educational backgrounds in continuing to call this street home.

Accessible & Resilient

Create a truly safe and sustainable public realm, and a healthy, walkable environment that serves as the heart of our community.

04

**HOW CAN WE ACHIEVE THE
VISION?**



Quitting

Inviting

"More murals to create a sense of place. Murals can reflect the industrial roots of the area."

"Cambridge Street is quirky, dynamic, and lively, and this work should prioritize efforts that seek to amplify its character."

KEY TAKEAWAYS from the engagement process

- There is an abundance of pride for the **history and diversity** of Cambridge Street, and maintaining and celebrating those aspects of the neighborhood should be prioritized.
- Many participants enjoy the community events that happen along the street and would like more opportunities to **bring the community together** with food, local music, and art.
- Participants generally desired **more options for outdoor activities** while maintaining open spaces that are quieter/passive in nature.

Additionally, potential interventions that **create welcoming spaces**, such as signage, public art, and parklets, received positive responses from participants.



Inviting

How can we continue to welcome diversity, and celebrate our history as a destination for culture while embracing change?

1. Celebrate the unique identities along Cambridge St. from one block to the next by:

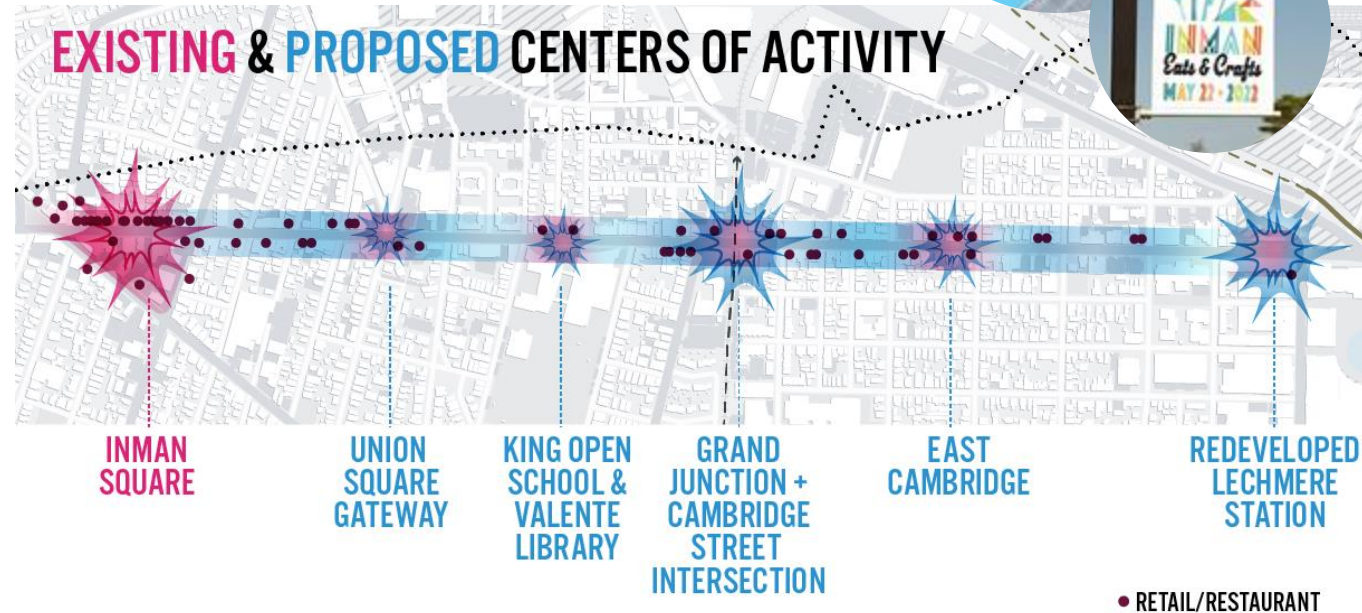
Example of an Intersection mural: Seasonal Turn, Artwork by Graham Coreil-Allen



Example of banners with Inman Eats & Crafts branding



- A. Defining different centers of activity with interventions such as signage, banners, public art and parklets to create welcoming spaces that are representative of the hyper-local character of that area



2. Bring the community together and celebrate diversity by:

- A. Providing additional cultural programming, festivals, and events (and complementing existing ones)

IDEAS FOR ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMING FROM THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS:

- Close Cambridge Street to car traffic at some times (ie. Saturday morning in Inman Sq.) or for more events
- Farmers markets
- Music festivals, evening performances, and general outdoor music
- Multi-cultural food events, food crawls, food truck events
- STEM/Arts events for families and children




As Cambridge Street evolves in the future, it should retain its character, diversity, small businesses and historic nature.



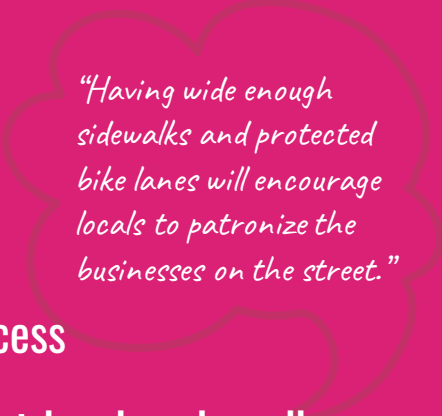
Local



Local



"Make the city grant programs for small businesses easier to find info about and apply to."



"Having wide enough sidewalks and protected bike lanes will encourage locals to patronize the businesses on the street."

KEY TAKEAWAYS from the engagement process

- Key to the character of the corridor is **supporting a mix of vibrant, local, and small businesses.**
- Because of this, there is community support for assisting existing small businesses, managing uses that tend to price out other small businesses and keeping commercial spaces affordable.
- Improving outdoor and pedestrian space adjacent to businesses is important for potential customers and increased commercial activity.

In addition to the existing businesses that are celebrated by the community, some participants would also like to see **more "daily needs" stores** along Cambridge Street.



Local

How can we support a mix of vibrant, local, and small businesses that serve the everyday needs of nearby residents, workers, and visitors alike?

3. Help businesses create active ground floor frontages by:

- A. Marketing and executing City programs that provide street activation, such as outdoor dining, public patios and parklets
- B. Targeting marketing of the City's storefront improvement programs and accessibility upgrades





EXCELLENT

EXCELLENT POTENTIAL

IN-BETWEEN

UNFAVORABLE



12.6%

EXCELLENT

5.3%

EXCELLENT POTENTIAL

55.4%

IN-BETWEEN

25.5%

UNFAVORABLE

1.2%

NOT ASSESSED

% OF LINEAR FEET

STREET ACTIVATION

Interface Studio

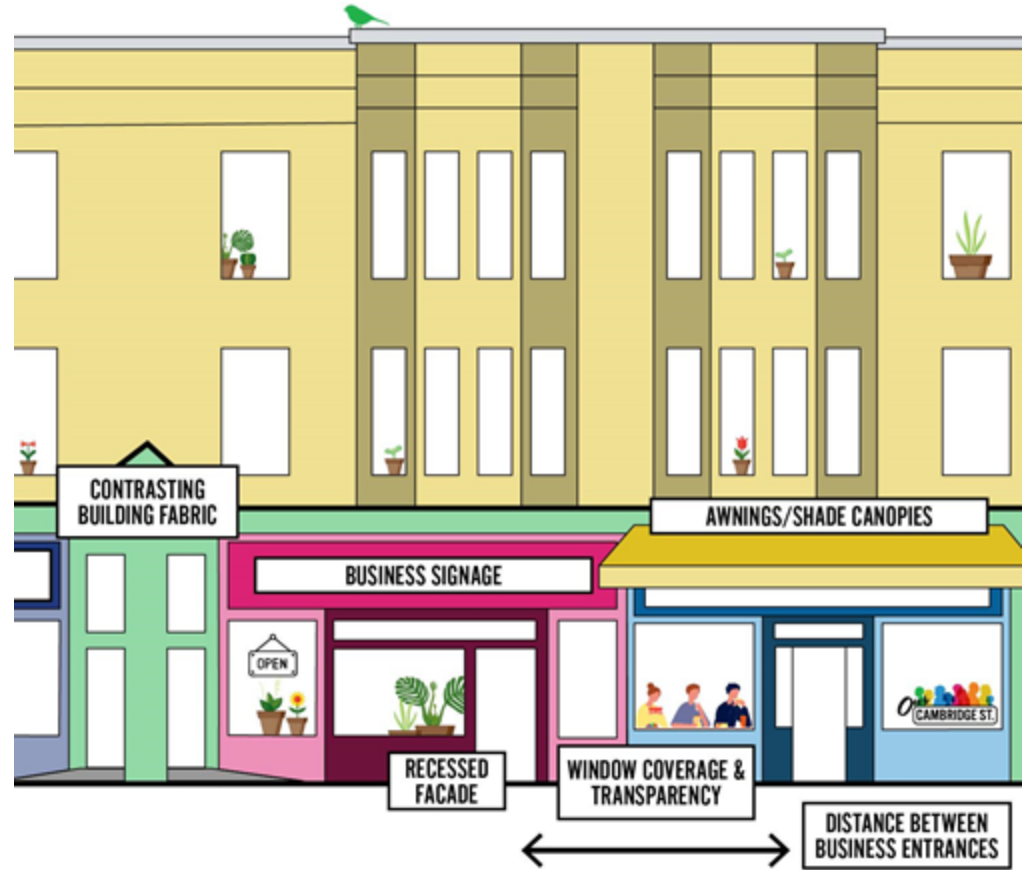
- City Boundary
- Gateway to Cambridge St.
- Excellent
- Excellent Potential
- In-Between
- Unfavorable
- Not Assessed

Analysis of Street Activation by Interface Studio

3. Help businesses create active ground floor frontages by:

C. Developing design guidelines for ground floor treatments and new development, and aligning with the Citywide Urban Design Guidelines

- The Cambridge Street guidelines will address:
 - window coverage/transparency,
 - upper-story stepbacks,
 - spacing of building entrances,
 - frequent entrances to ensure commercial spaces are adaptable over time,
 - subdividable ground floor spaces,
 - building setbacks for publicly accessible spaces,
 - incorporating climate resilient measures where applicable, and
 - activation strategies for dormant ground floor spaces, i.e. banks or vacant storefronts



4. Continue to celebrate diverse businesses by:

A. Targeting recruitment efforts to further uplift women- and minority-owned businesses.

- Continuing to recruit diverse businesses to join ECBA
- Actively targeting diverse businesses for City small business programs
- Implementing recommendations of the BIPOC Business Advisory Committee

B. Adding grants and technical assistance to existing legacy business program



5. Work to maintain a supply of affordable commercial spaces for local diverse businesses by:

A. Leveraging new development to subsidize more affordable storefronts for local businesses

- Study the feasibility of creating inclusionary commercial spaces.
- Consider incentives in exchange for creating commercial and retail spaces.
- Explore shared control of a small network of storefront rentals through a master lease model for businesses that rent at a predetermined price, working with entities such as a land trust or other partner organizations.





Affordable

Affordable

"Low income housing is important, but people that are middle income or in their mid-20's also need to be able to afford Cambridge."

"More density with reasonable limits (5 floors) and mixed use zoning to reduce need for cars."

KEY TAKEAWAYS from the engagement process

- **Affordability** in Cambridge is a concern for most community members.
- While the majority of participants generally support **higher density mixed use development** and more housing units along Cambridge Street, there are concerns about traffic and congestion that could result from increased density.

Some participants that supported higher densities added there should also be limits to height and that **buildings that are sensitive to the context of the street** are important if more density is going to be added.

- Supporters and opponents of higher density both support additional open spaces and greening



Affordable

How can families, seniors, children, foreign born residents, people of color, those with disabilities, and from all economic and educational backgrounds continue to call this street home?

6. Preserve existing housing stock by:

A. Studying options to discourage the replacement of housing with only commercial use

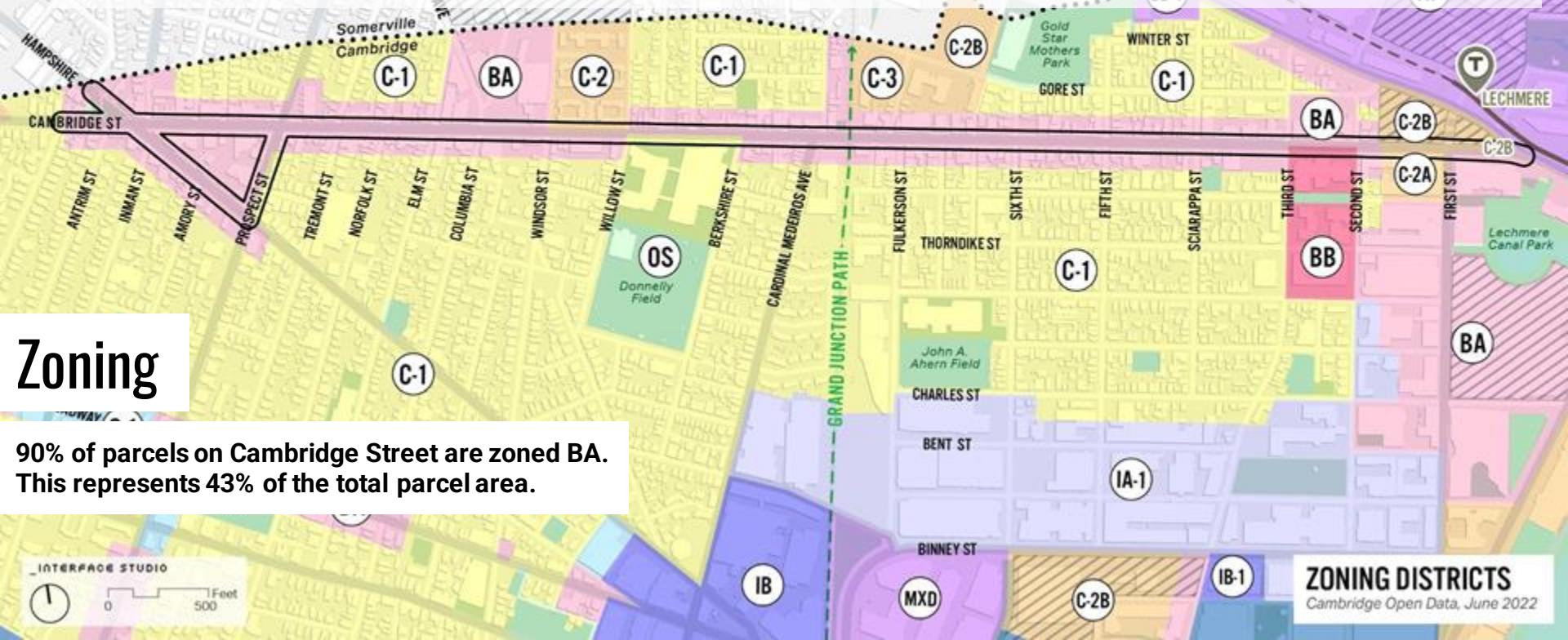
- There are approximately 1,555 residential units along the length of Cambridge St. Limit conversion of preexisting residential use to commercial only use to help maintain the housing supply.

B. Building awareness of the City's Home Improvement Program (HIP) loans for building retrofits and rehabs

- Publicize available programs that can help owners keep rent and maintenance costs down, such as the City's Home Improvement Program.



7. Encourage higher density mixed use residential development along Cambridge Street by considering zoning changes:



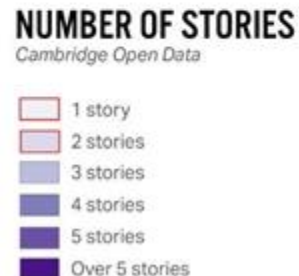
Zoning

90% of parcels on Cambridge Street are zoned BA. This represents 43% of the total parcel area.

7. Encourage higher density mixed use residential development along Cambridge Street by considering zoning changes:



There are opportunities for higher density along Cambridge Street. **1/3** of the parcels have buildings that are 1-2 stories.

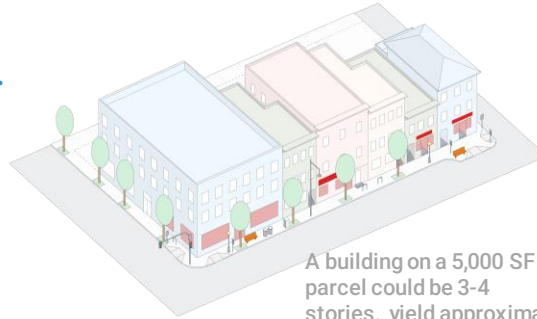


Example of what can be built with proposed zoning changes

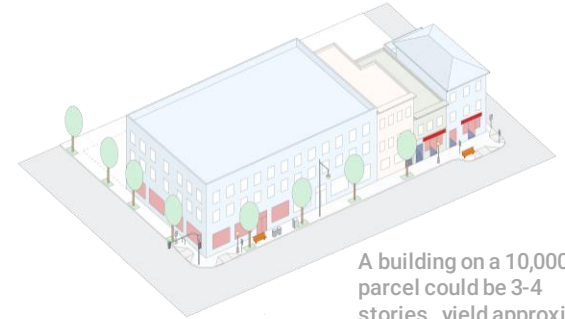
A. Increase residential density and building height maximums to encourage a mixed-use residential typology over ground floor active-use.

- Increase the maximum building heights from 4-stories to 6-stories to gain more housing
- Increase the residential density
- Maintain existing commercial density

Current Zoning:



A building on a 5,000 SF parcel could be 3-4 stories, yield approximately 7 units*

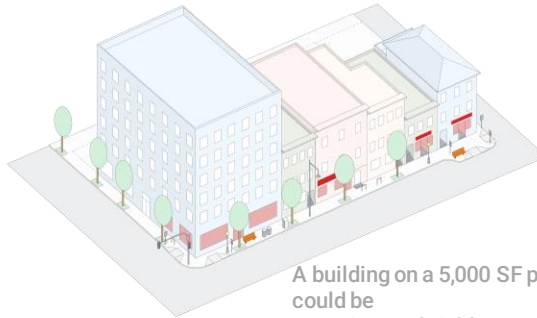


A building on a 10,000 SF parcel could be 3-4 stories, yield approximately 10 units*

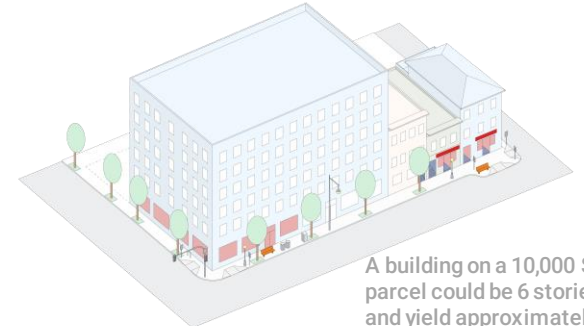
B. Reduce minimum parking requirements

- Reduce the residential parking requirements since building off-street parking, especially structured parking, drives up construction costs, and therefore, housing costs.

Proposed Zoning:



A building on a 5,000 SF parcel could be 6 stories, and yield approximately 16 units*



A building on a 10,000 SF parcel could be 6 stories, and yield approximately 24 units*

*1 unit = 1,000 SF

Examples of denser buildings on 3-story streets

[Design matters!]



unfavorable



favorable

8. Limit certain types of lab use on Cambridge Street

A. Distinguish types of lab uses to mitigate impacts on Cambridge St

- There were different opinions on the presence of labs on Cambridge Street. Some people want them excluded, while others feel some uses may be acceptable, if they are not a nuisance to the neighborhood.
- Maintaining current height and density for commercial use on Cambridge Street will limit the size and scale of lab development.
- Design guidelines for ground floor transparency and activity will address the street level presence.
- In light of a Citywide assessment of different lab uses, Cambridge Street should be examined as an area that could be affected by the outcomes of this evaluation.



Proposed laboratory development on the former commercial/residential mixed use property for 621-629 Cambridge Street. Image Source: Peter Quinn Architects Cambridge Historical Committee Application



*Accessible
&
Resilient*

KEY TAKEAWAYS

“More green spaces devoted to nature and biodiversity.”

“Whatever it takes to make the street safe for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit.”

- There is support for making Cambridge Street **safer for everyone**, especially people walking, biking, and taking the bus and Green Line. Improving the safety and accessibility of sidewalks, crosswalks, and intersections is a top priority among participants.
- The ability to park on Cambridge Street continues to be a common concern among some residents and businesses.
- Ideas for **activating underutilized spaces** on Cambridge Street to bring the community together include a farmers market, more outdoor dining, more programming and events, and places to sit and ‘people watch’.
- Climate resilience and more green space is still a priority, with 97% of participants supporting ideas to make Cambridge Street greener and more sustainable. **Adding more trees** to the street is one of the most common requests from participants.



*Accessible
&
Resilient*

How can we create a truly safe and sustainable public realm, and a healthy, walkable environment that serves as the heart of our community?

9. Look for opportunities to enhance the street for people WALKING by:

- A. **Improving crossings** – Consider raised intersections at key street crossings, such as Prospect St, Cardinal Medeiros Ave and Third St
- B. **Repairing uneven sidewalks and keeping them clear of obstructions**, especially for seniors and with mobility devices.
- C. **Improving walkability to better access the new Union Square Green Line Station**
 - While Webster Ave. has had recent enhancements, consider enhancing additional routes to the station such as crosswalk striping, street trees and wayfinding signage.
- D. **Enhancing pedestrian comfort through more seating, trees/shade, and community gathering spaces**, especially for seniors and people with mobility or stamina limitations



Example of poor sidewalk conditions along Cambridge St.

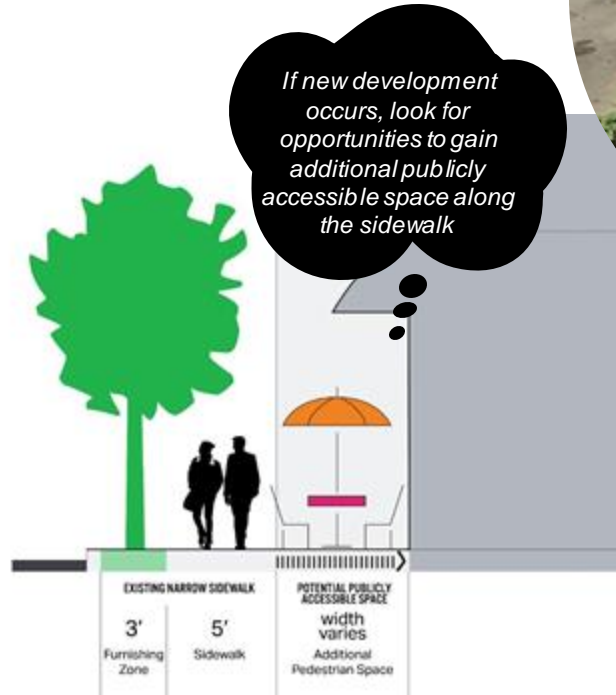


Example of maximizing space to provide seating and tree protection.

9. Look for opportunities to enhance the street for people WALKING by:

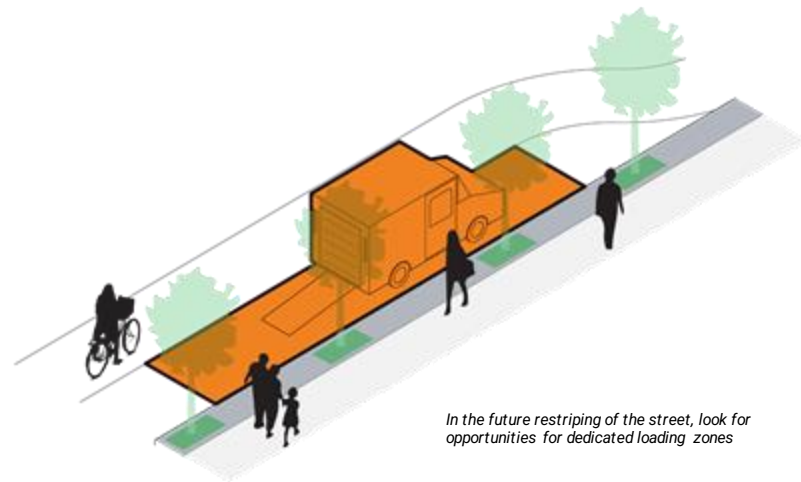
E. Encouraging ground floor opportunities for open space in new development to create wider sidewalks, where appropriate

- Find opportunities for additional sidewalk width as part of new construction to allow for additional pedestrian amenities and lessen competition for sidewalk space.
- Additional sidewalk could also be used to address resiliency requirements or to provide enhanced ADA accessibility.



10. Look for opportunities to streamline DELIVERIES to support local businesses by:

- A. Clearer designation and better enforcement of existing loading zones
- B. Exploring conducting a delivery study to examine new trends and better delivery management
 - This proposed study can help to research ideas to improve deliveries and logistics on the street, and include limiting 18-wheeler through traffic, and loading/unloading time enforcement.
- C. As part of future changes to the street, ensure the needs of the businesses can be met, such as for loading and delivery on each section of the street and, potentially, side streets.



In the future restriping of the street, look for opportunities for dedicated loading zones

PRECEDENT: Santa Monica Zero Emissions Delivery Zone

Santa Monica is piloting a program that incentivizes electric delivery vehicles through priority curb space in a one mile test zone, utilizing various types of zero emission transportation technologies (i.e. e-bikes and electric trucks). The spaces are marked by signage and are monitored by video surveillance.

11. Look for opportunities to address PARKING concerns by:

A. Aligning with the current Citywide Parking Study

- Analyze current regulations and propose a set of changes to parking regulations.
- Align the findings of the citywide study to address parking concerns of Cambridge Street residents and business owners.

B. Considering conducting a parking and utilization study to develop a shared parking model and identify opportunities to use existing spaces as efficiently as possible

- Inventory how much parking is provided; how it's being utilized, and if parking demand exceeds the amount of parking that is available.
- Identify opportunities of spaces that could be put to shared use (e.g. the King Open School Garage, First St. Municipal Garage or the proposed Boynton Yards garages)

B. Exploring technology and dynamic pricing of meter rates in peak hours to maximize efficiency of existing parking

- Technology, such as a parking availability app, has been created in other cities to manage the availability of parking spaces in real time.



PRECEDENT: *SFpark*

SFpark in San Francisco is a parking management system that utilizes technology to improve parking by quickly identifying available parking. Drivers can quickly find open parking spaces reducing congestion by limiting circling. Real time data is also used for demand responsive pricing to encourage drivers to park in underutilized areas and garages to reduce demand for parking at areas that are at capacity.

12. Look for opportunities to enhance the street for people BICYCLING by:

A. Continue to add more bikeshare stations along Cambridge Street

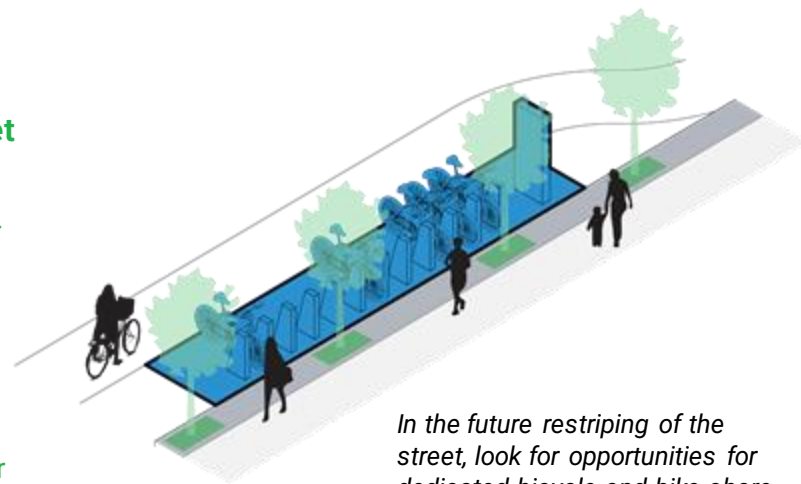
- More stations should be added along the length of the street, particularly in underserved areas in East Cambridge, to make it easier to get to Cambridge St. via bicycle

B. Incorporating bicycle amenities (such as parking) along the length of the street and at key destinations

- Incorporate bicycle amenities such as secure bike parking, bike corrals, pumping stations, etc. which can help to increase the number of people opting to bike to and along Cambridge Street

C. Incorporate separated bicycle facilities along the length of Cambridge Street*.

- Separated bicycle facilities will connect those in Inman Square with those at the eastern end into O'Brien Highway. The process for this work will follow the protocols laid out by the Cycling Safety Ordinance.



In the future restriping of the street, look for opportunities for dedicated bicycle and bike share parking.

**Operational changes like separated bike lanes, dedicated bus lanes will be addressed in a future study/engagement process*

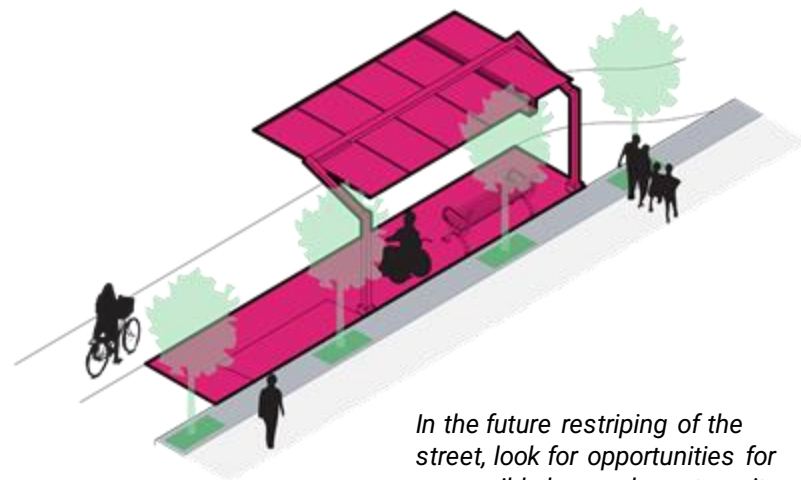
13. Look for opportunities to enhance the street for people RIDING THE BUS & THE RIDE by:

A. Enhancing bus stops to provide comfortable seating and shade, especially for people with decreased mobility and limited stamina

- At designated bus stops along the route, explore enhancing bus stops to be comfortable for transit users, including covered/shaded seating.

B. Considering curb access for paratransit

- Accessibility was of top concern to many seniors who participated in the engagement process for riders on The Ride.
- As part of future changes to the street, consider how the RIDE vehicles access the curb to safely pick-up or drop-off passengers.

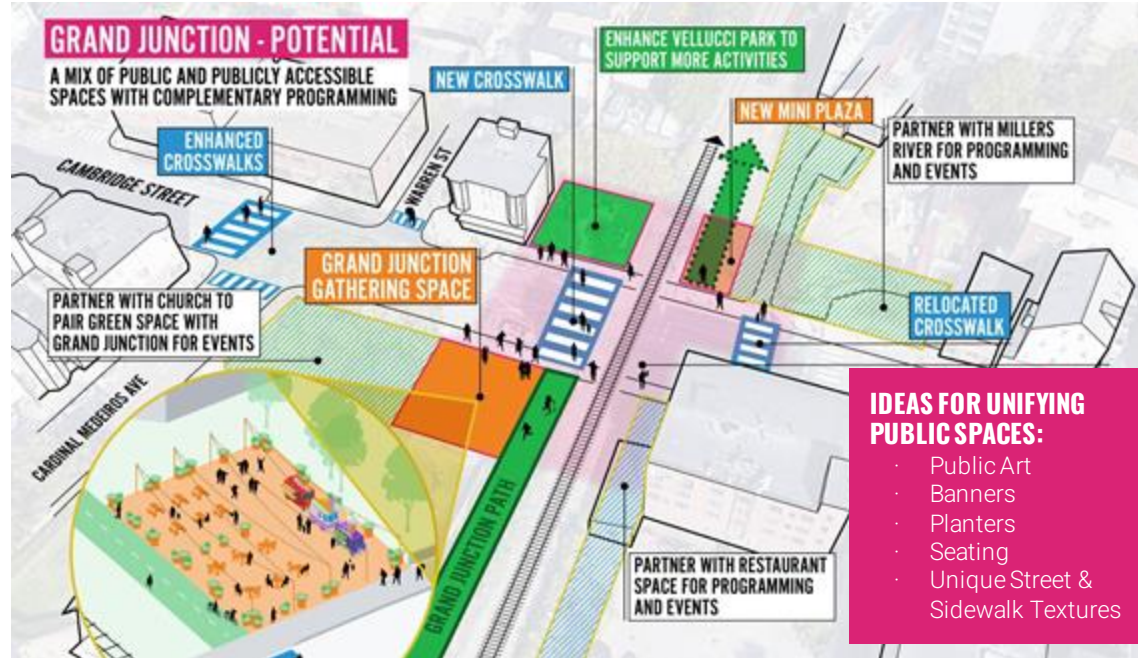
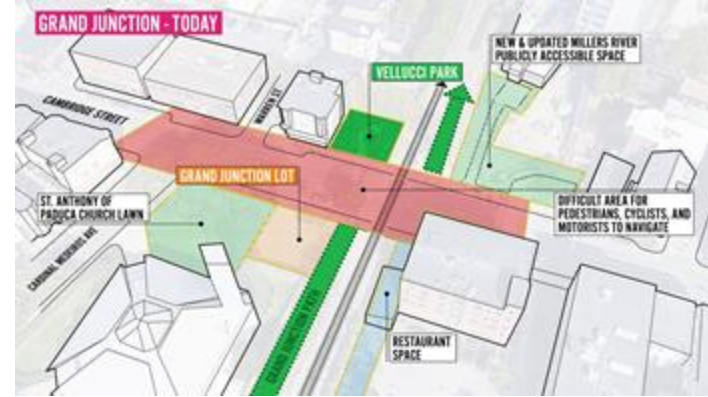


In the future restriping of the street, look for opportunities for accessible bus and paratransit pick up and drop off.

14. Maximize all open spaces as community assets to cultivate community interaction by:

A. Transforming existing public spaces to be more comfortable and welcoming for people of all ages

- In the public engagement process, participants wanted to see more opportunities to socialize and interact on Cambridge St.
- Maximize all adjacent open spaces along the length of the street to provide welcoming places to gather and be outside
- The four corners of the Grand Junction Path and Cambridge St. intersection has the potential to act as a center of activity, with opportunities for activation on all sides.



IDEAS FOR UNIFYING PUBLIC SPACES:

- Public Art
- Banners
- Planters
- Seating
- Unique Street & Sidewalk Textures

14. Maximize all open spaces as community assets to cultivate community interaction by:

B. Partnering with private property owners to create temporary public spaces on underutilized spaces or parking lots

MINI PLAZA



PARKING LOT



BUILDING SETBACK



15. Integrate measures to future proof Cambridge Street for climate resiliency by:

- A. Increasing tree canopy coverage and landscaping to support urban biodiversity and reduce heat impacts
- B. Increasing permeability by incorporating porous pavements and/or larger planting strips where possible.
- C. **Advocating for climate adaptation measures for new development, and existing structures when feasible, to reduce heat impacts, mitigate flooding impacts, and reducing energy use**
- D. Exploring the feasibility of shared green energy and efficient systems for private property owners, such as a shared energy district (GeoGrid).
- E. **Mitigating street flooding by incorporating green infrastructure**



Next Steps:

1. Review recommendations with the community
2. Finalize plan & begin implementation

Thank you!