



Built form workshop

Central Square Advisory Committee . Goody Clancy . November 3, 2012

Agenda

- Process update
- Built form and use considerations: what we've heard from you
- Context: current zoning and guidelines policies
- Character areas: defining distinct portions of the study area
- Options for density, height and community benefits: scenarios to consider
- Breakout group discussion
- Report-backs



Central Square planning process: where we are

Red Ribbon Commission process

Public meetings

- Defining core themes (June 2011)
- Vision workshop (April 10)
- City Council roundtable (May 30)
- Neighborhood open house/charrettes, Mondays in the Square (summer 2012)

Advisory Committee meetings

- 15 meetings since November 2011 covering Central Square planning history, plan process, emerging vision, public places, retail, development economics, community benefits, transportation, draft vision and strategies, sustainability, Osborn Triangle vision, housing and smart growth, public places
- **Built form workshop (November 3)**
- Consolidate & finalize recommendations (November 7)
- Finalize recommendations (November 28; supplemental dates 11/13, 11/15)

Built form and use considerations: what we've heard from you

- Land use: general interest in...
 - More housing spanning spectrum of affordability – especially middle-income, families
 - More retail space offering broader variety of choices and price points, activating streets
 - Discouraging wet lab research adjacent to neighborhoods and in Central Square



Built form and use considerations: what we've heard from you

- Sites of potential change:
 - City parking lots are valued...
 - As potential (and current) public places
 - As potential housing sites
 - For potential to leverage other community benefits
 - For parking
 - Large sites under single ownership pose opportunities and challenges



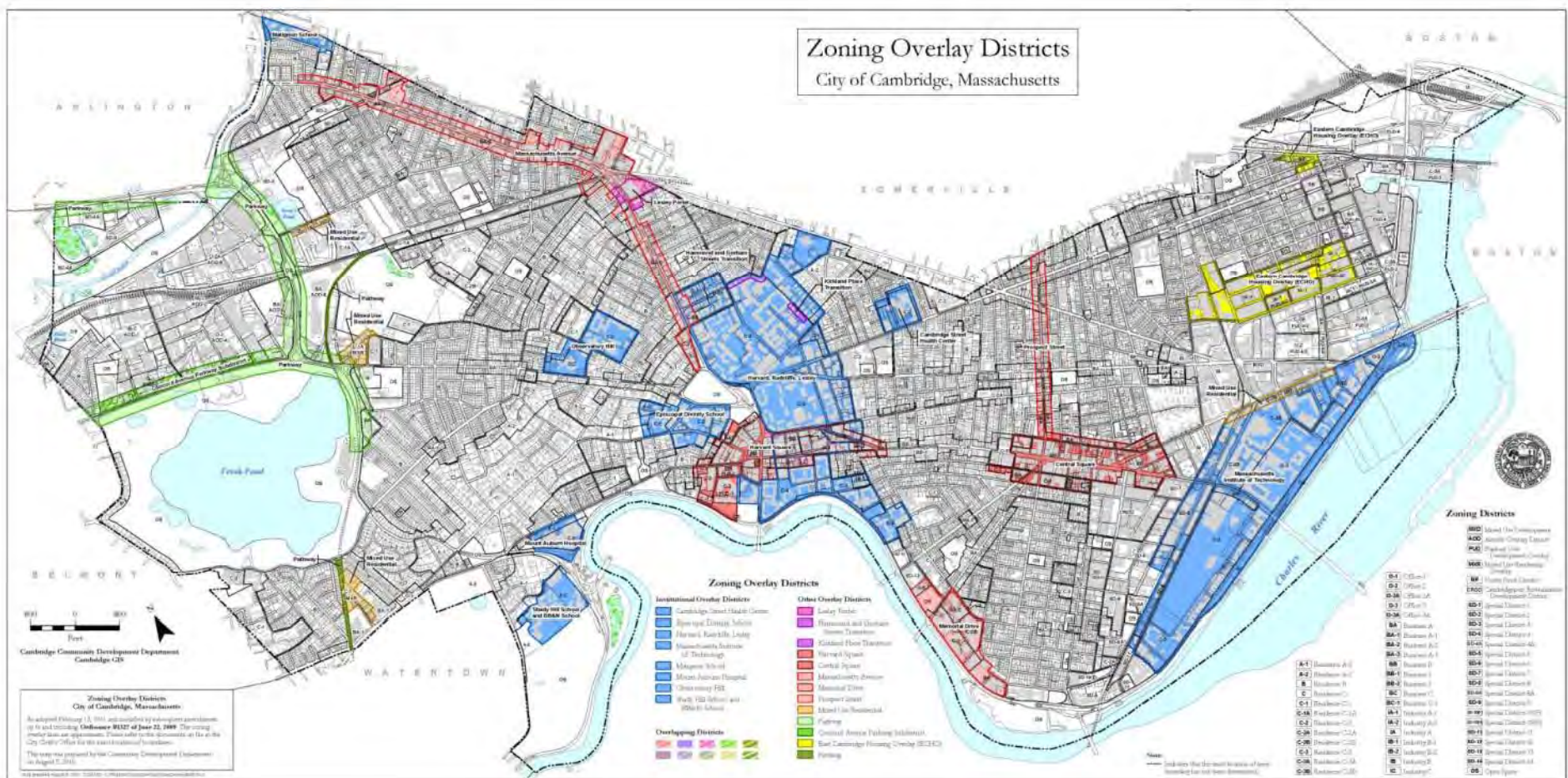
Built form and use considerations: what we've heard from you

- Built form
 - Concern for shadow, sky plane, scale impacts of taller buildings
 - Some acceptance of greater height and/or density if yielding community-defined benefits and located in the right places
 - Interest in design and use that activates streets better
 - Interest in diverse architectural form, height, style, heritage



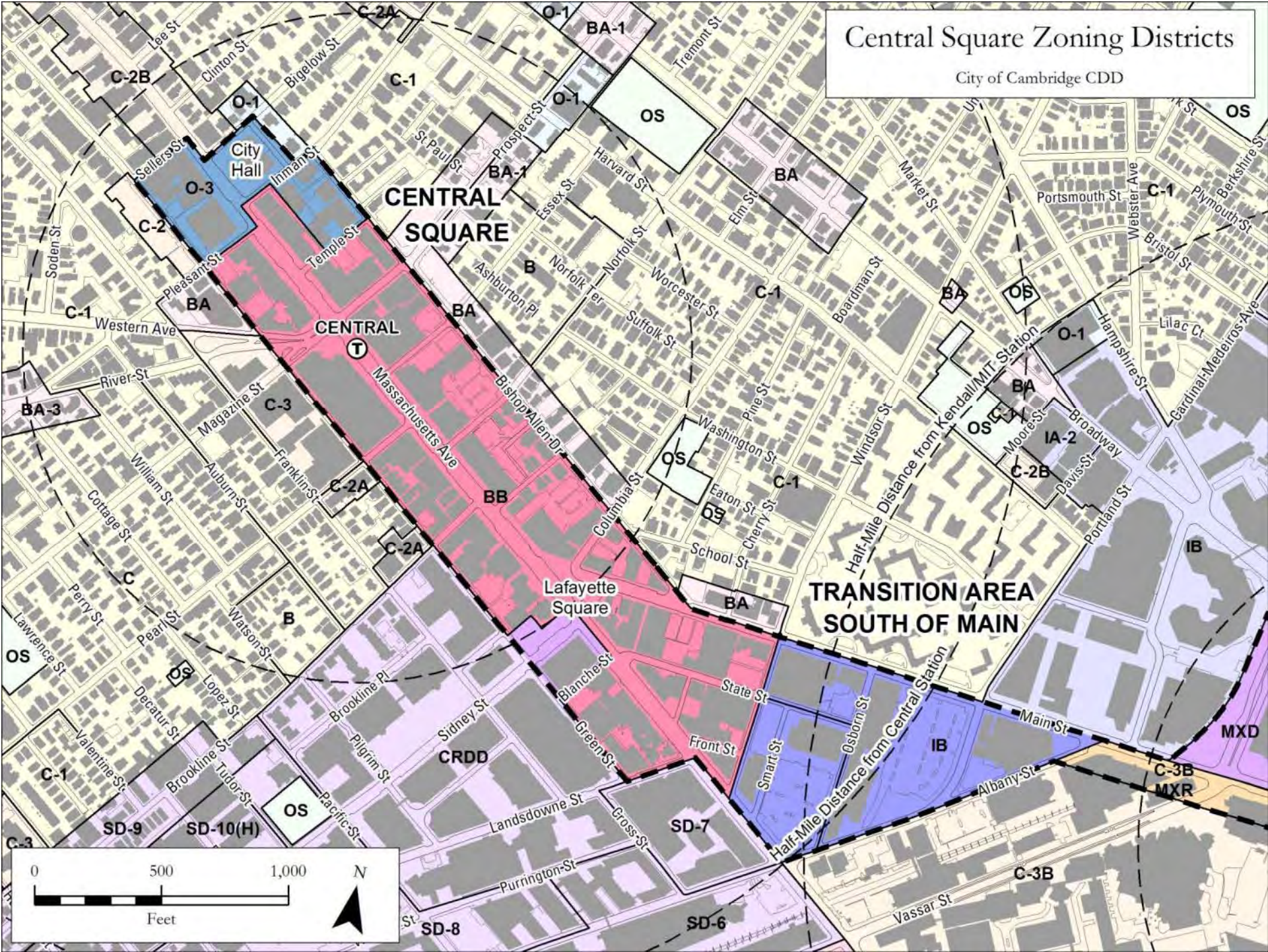
Context: current zoning and guidelines policies

- Article 5, Base zoning districts
- Article 20.300, Central Square Overlay
- Central Square Development Guidelines



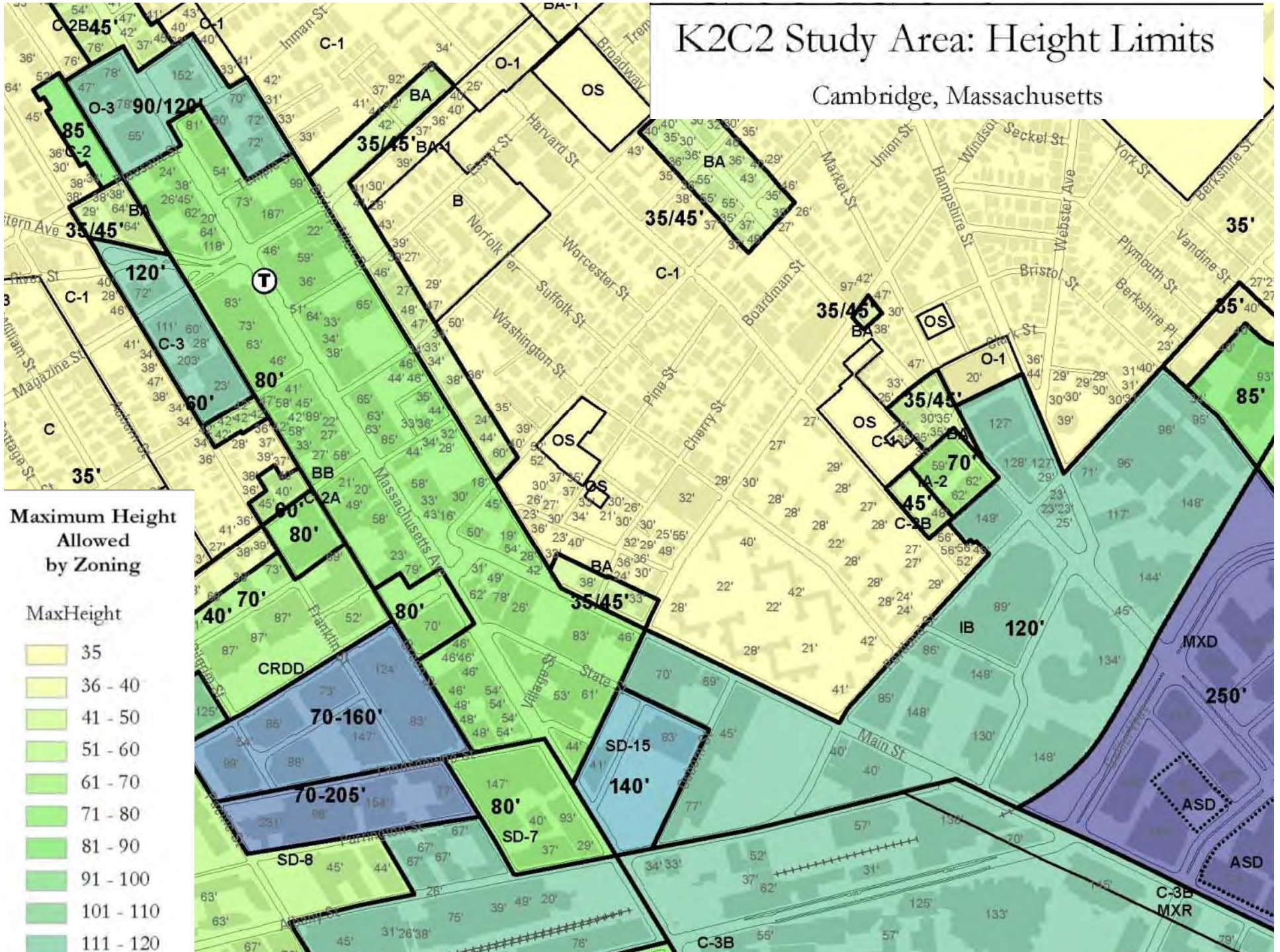
Central Square Zoning Districts

City of Cambridge CDD

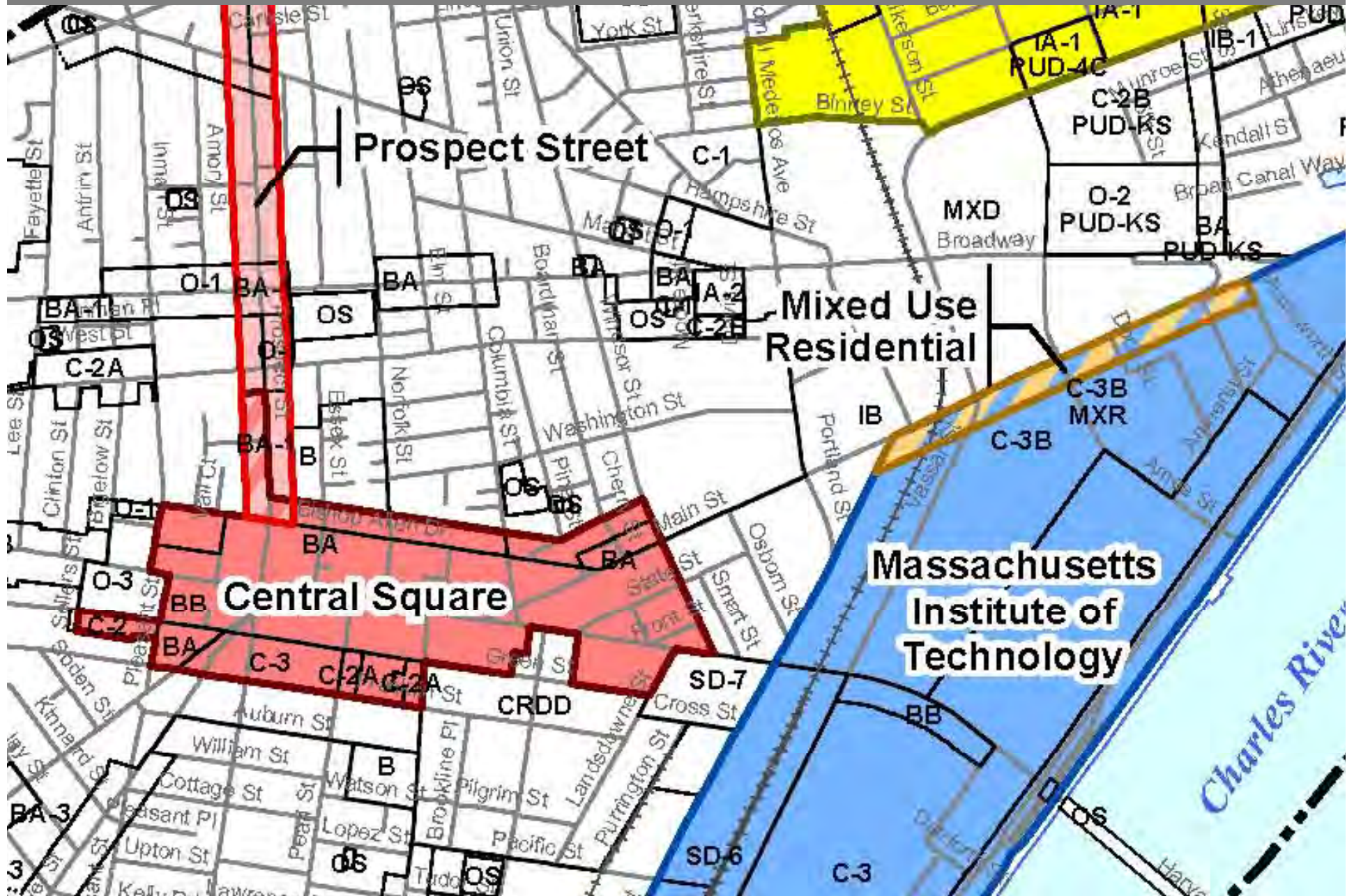


K2C2 Study Area: Height Limits

Cambridge, Massachusetts



Overlay districts

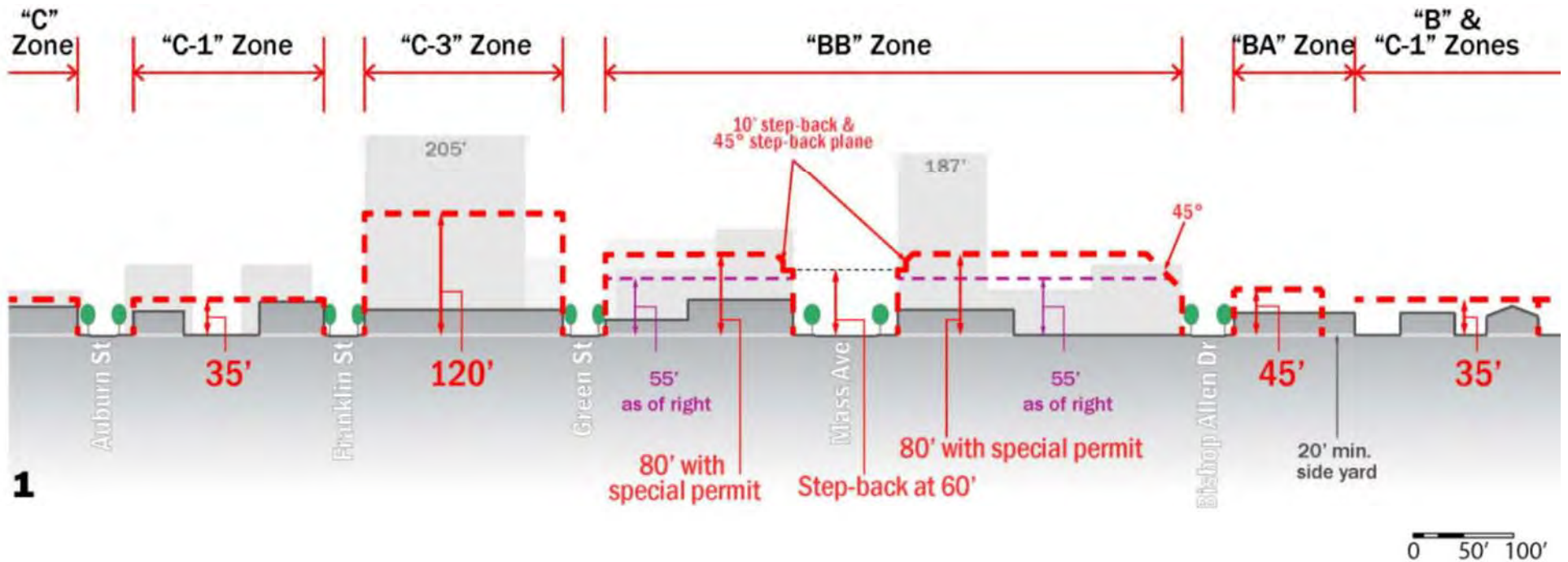


Translating height into stories

- Ground floor retail: 20'
- Housing: 10'
- Research: 15'
- Office: 13'
- Parking: below ground

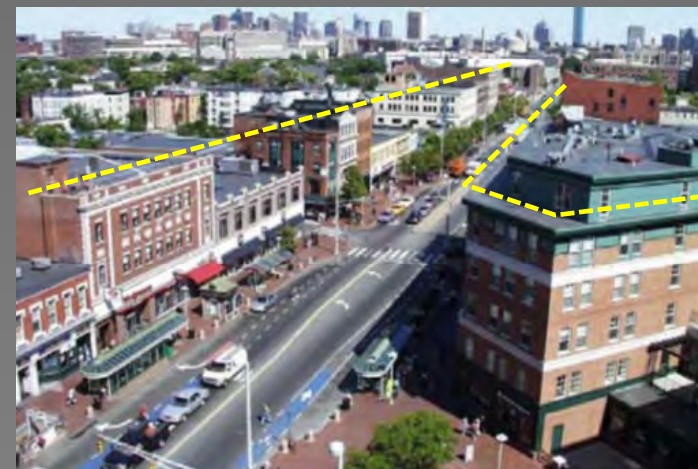
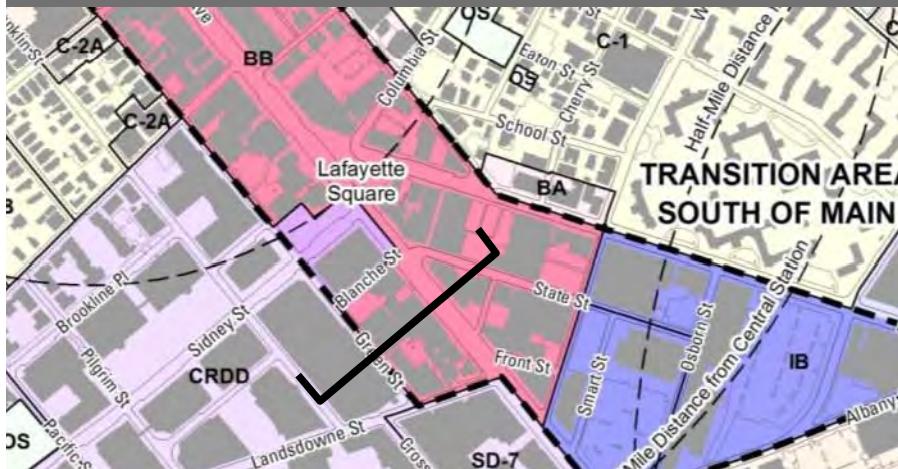
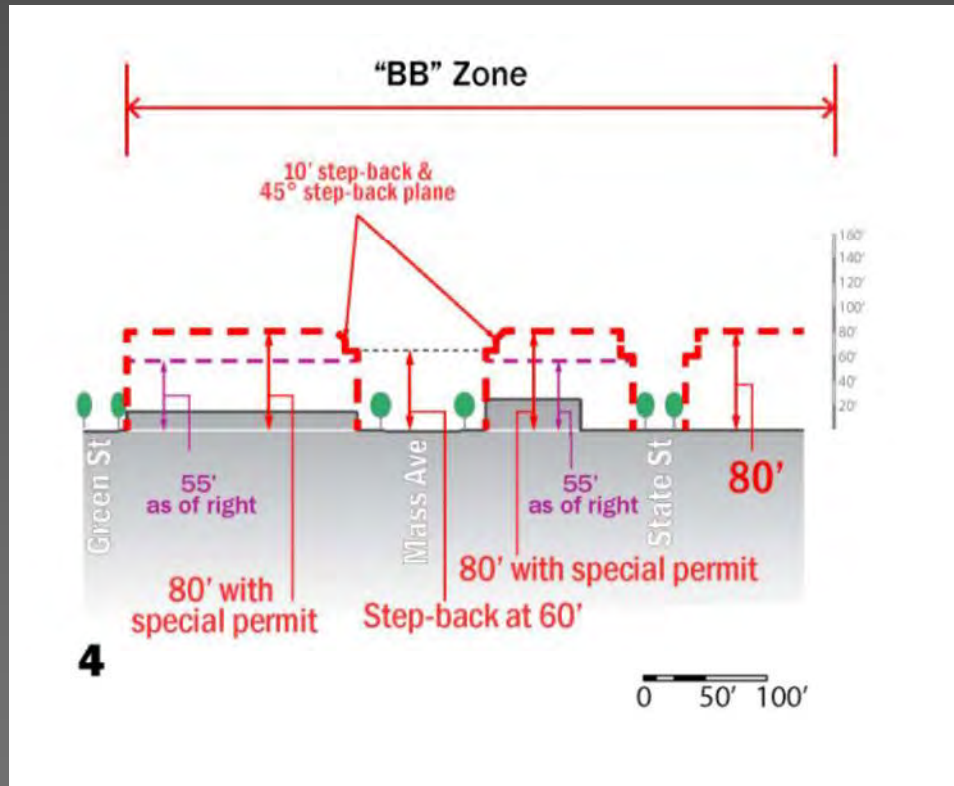


Heights: Mass Ave. at C-3/BB/BA zones



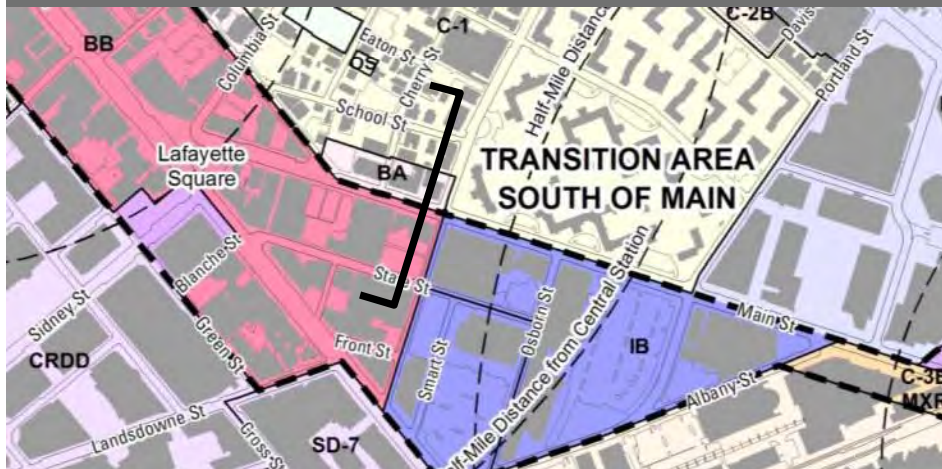
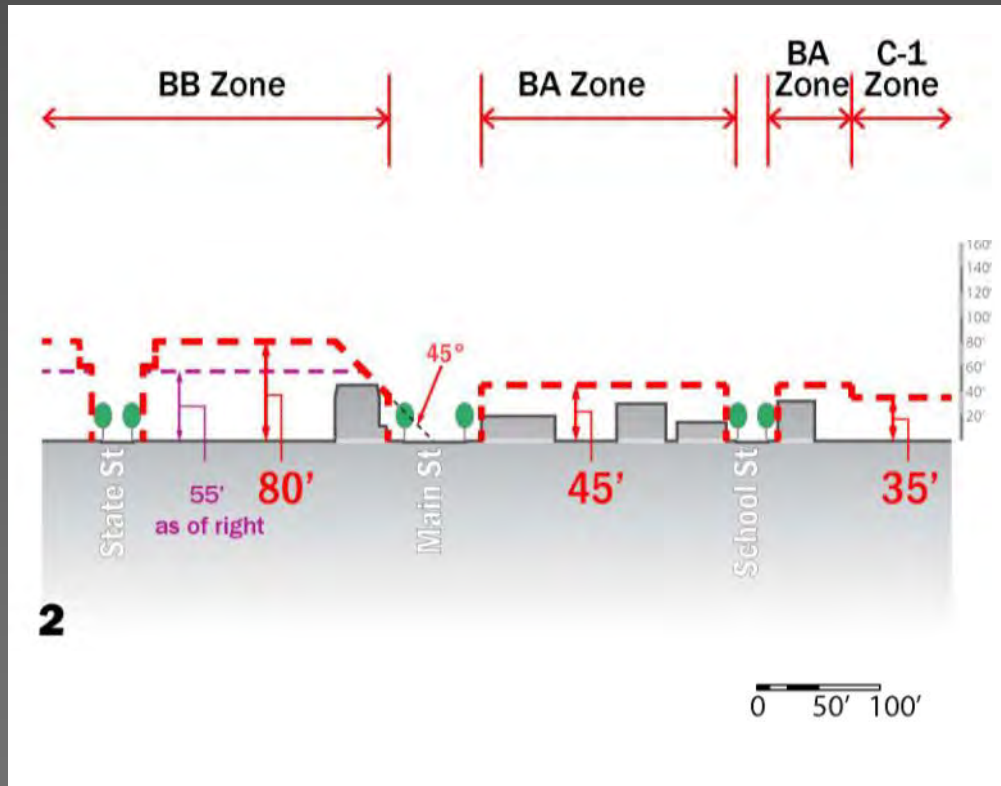
**60'
cornice-
level step-
back**

Heights: Mass Ave. BB zones (All-Asia/Osborn Triangle)

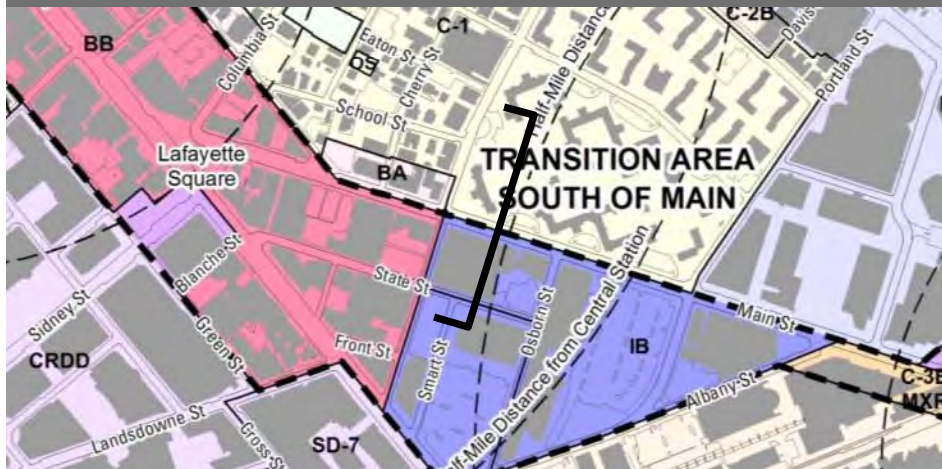
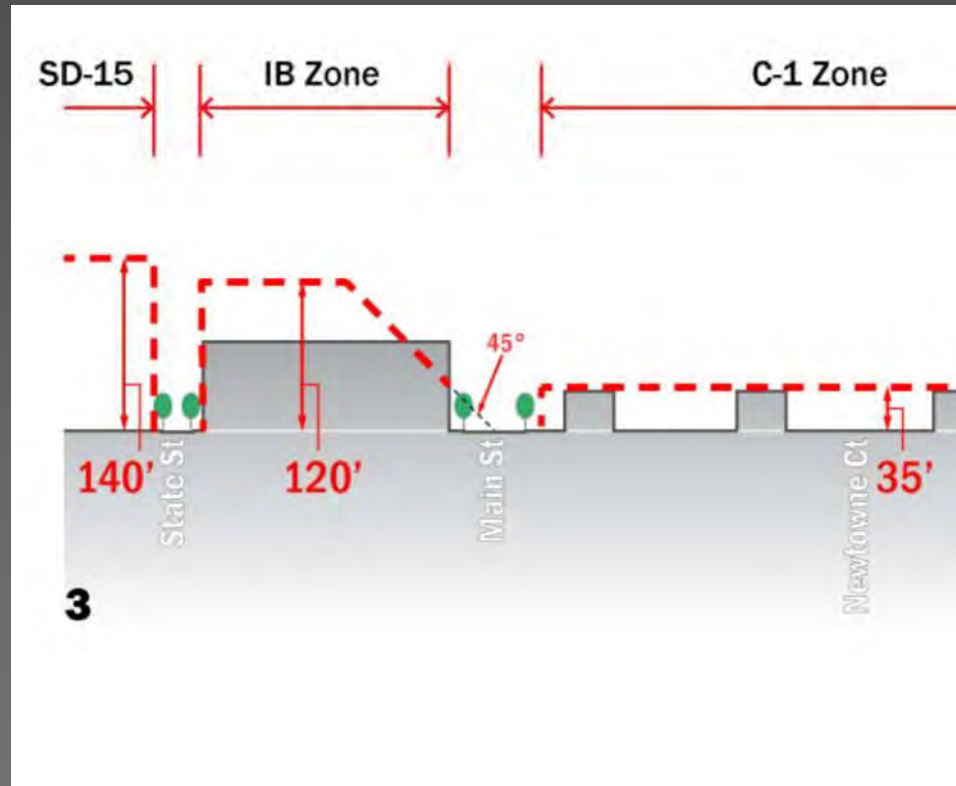


60' cornice-level step-back

Heights: Main Street at BB/BA zones



Heights: Main Street at IB/C-1 zones



Development guidelines

E. Elements of Form

1. HEIGHT

Height of buildings should be consistent within the overall context of the surrounding properties. Whenever possible the greatest height and bulk of the building should be placed on Massachusetts Avenue with a diminution in height and bulk as the project approaches the lower residential uses in abutting areas. Height and bulk should also be arranged to protect sight lines of significant historic structures. In street wall situations it is desirable to relate architectural elements of new construction to the significant architectural elements including cornice heights on adjacent buildings.

2. SCALE

The heavy pedestrian activity in the Square must be recognized in renovations and new construction projects. Treatment of the ground floor plane should relate to the human dimension and be rich in detail to enhance the pedestrian experience.

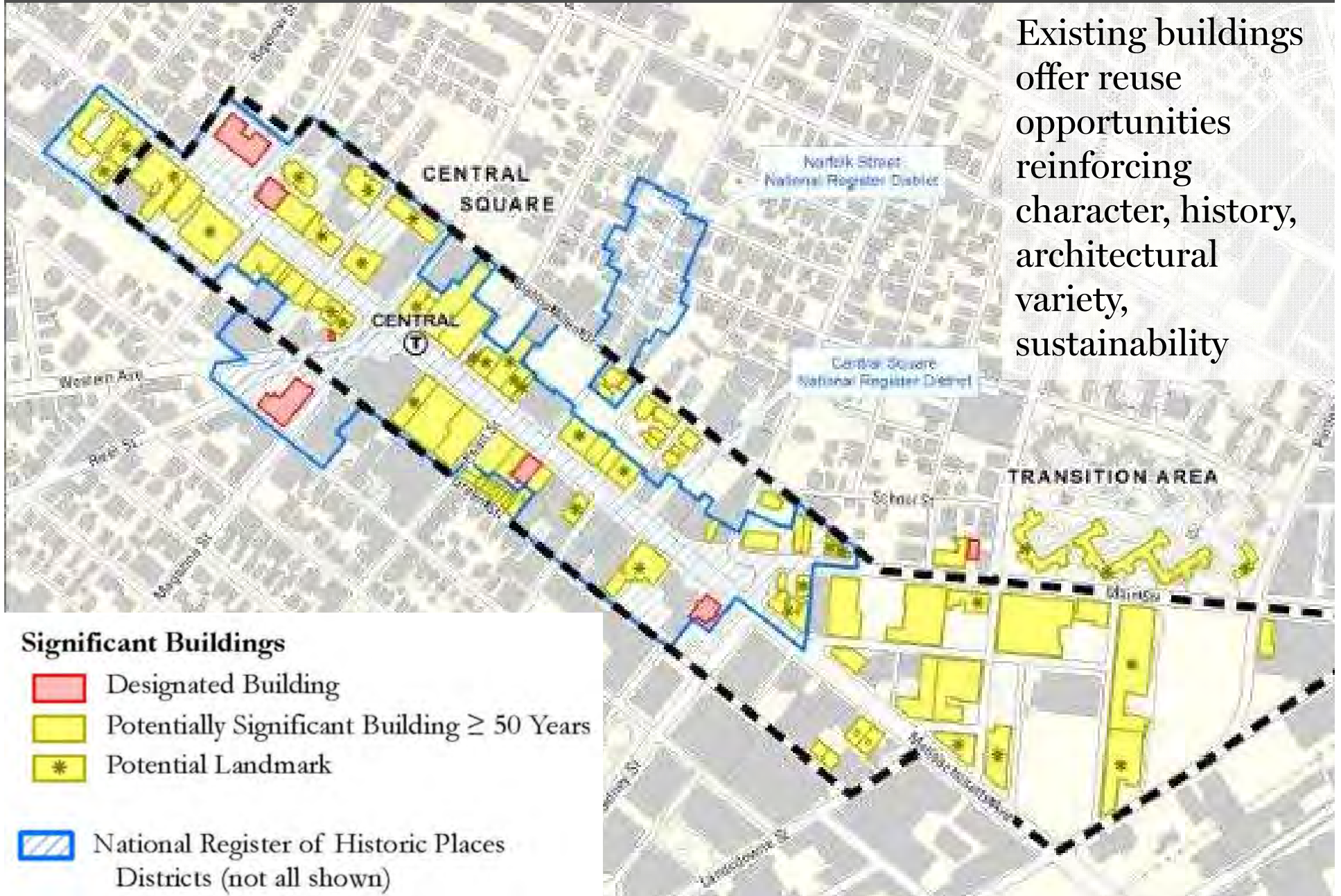
3. MASSING

Continuation of a strong linear retail frontage is critical to preserving the strength and historic character of the commercial district. Building fronts should maintain a strong unbroken linear edge along Massachusetts Avenue. Adjacent structures should build to a common party wall; alleyways between buildings are not encouraged.

Context: Land ownership

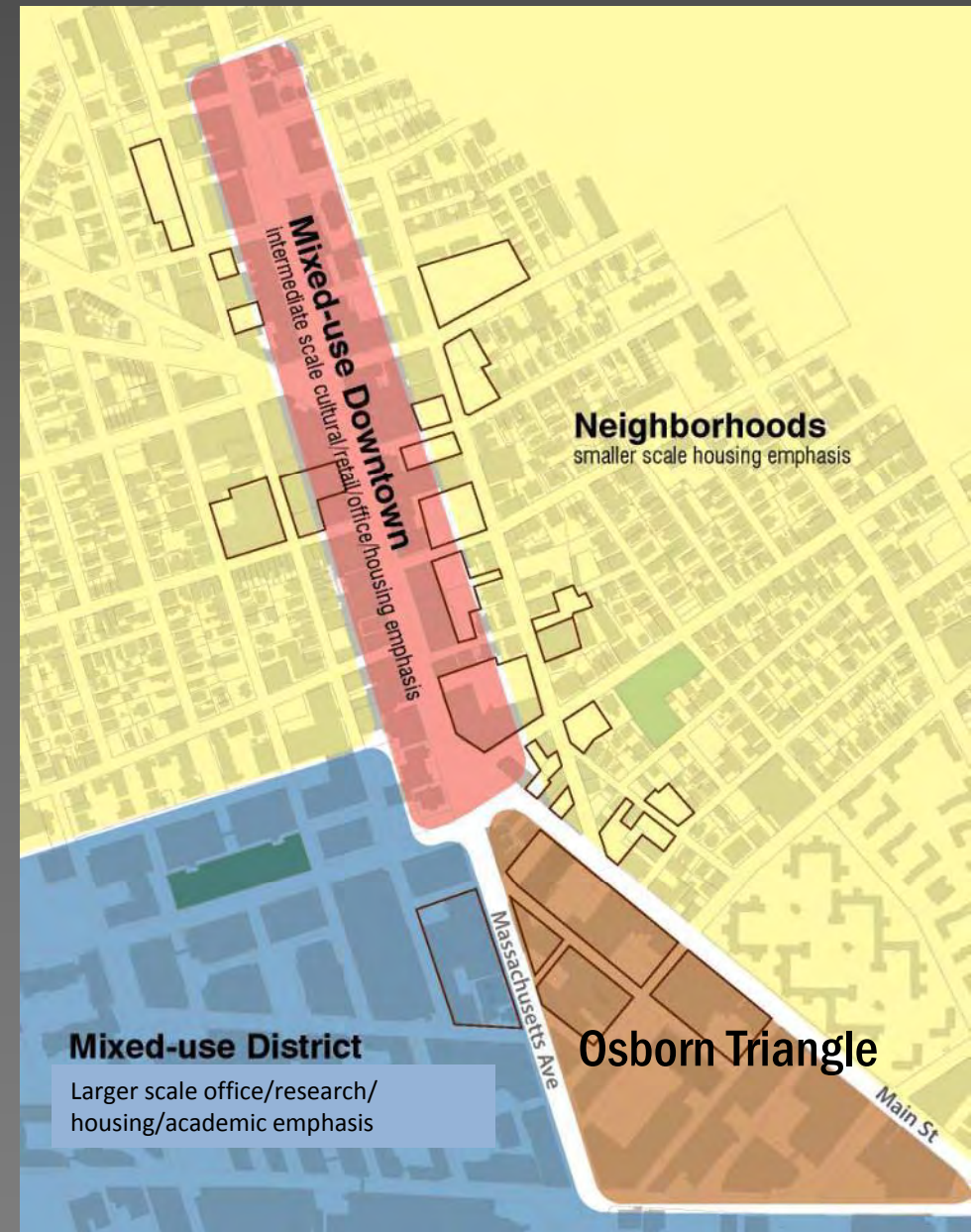


Context: where are there historic resources?

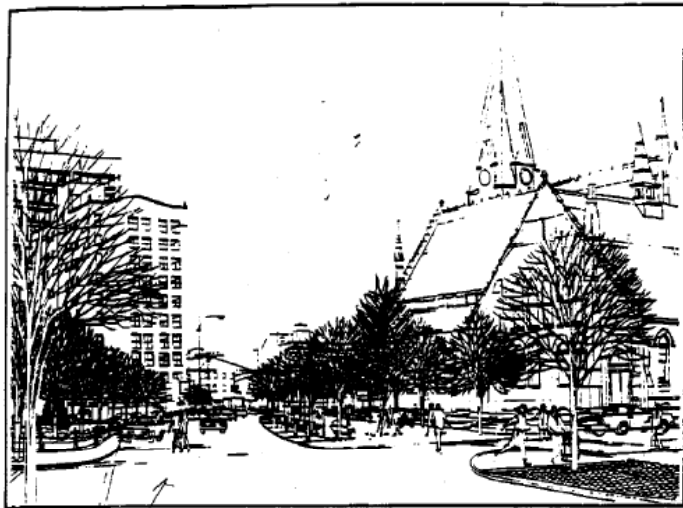


Context: character areas

- Mixed-use downtown
- Osborn Triangle
- Neighborhoods to north and west
- Urban campus district character to south and west, contiguous with University Park, MIT core campus, Tech Square
- Transitions:
 - To neighborhoods
 - From Mixed-use downtown to Osborn Triangle



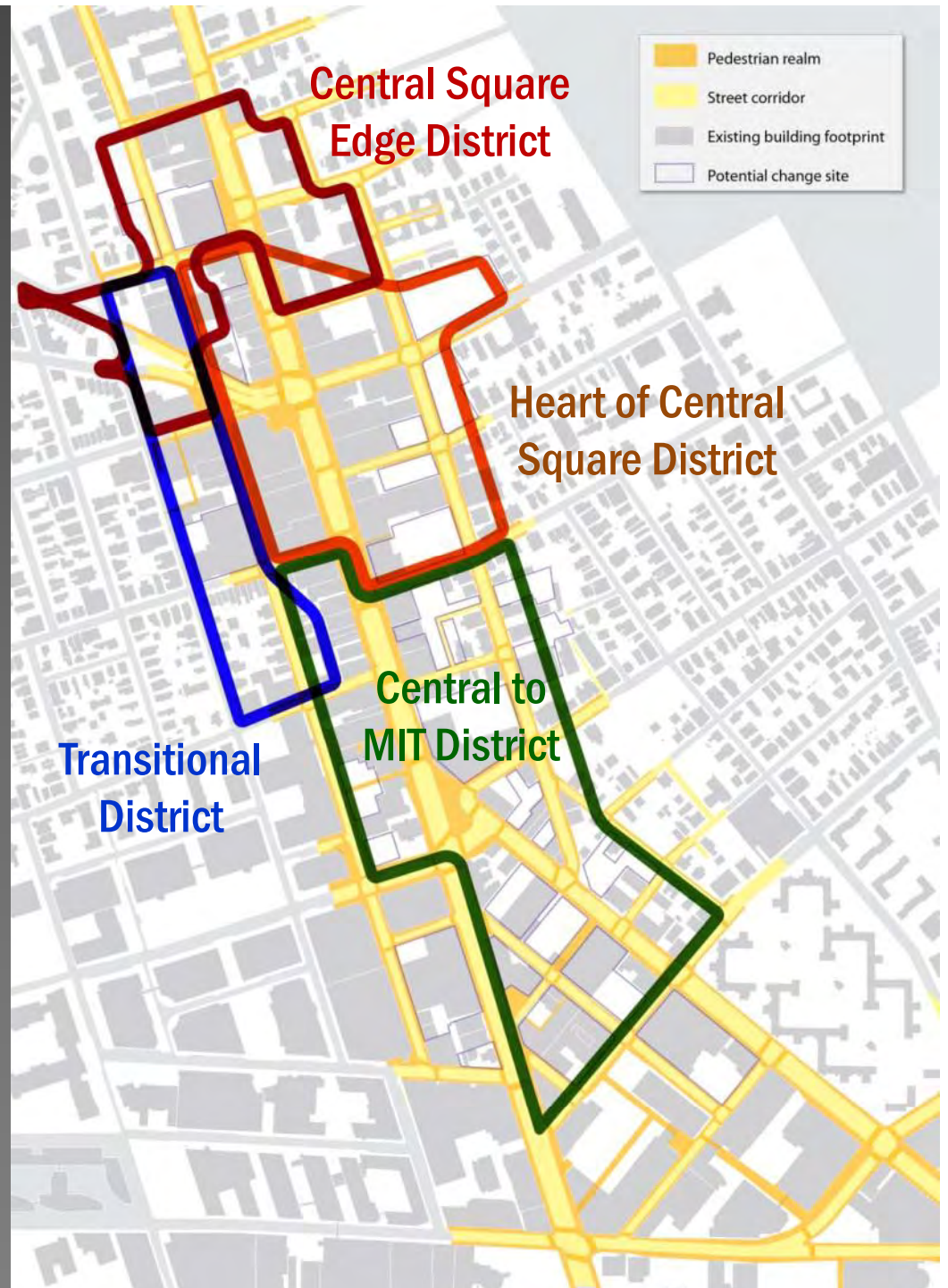
Character areas: 1989 development guidelines



change photo

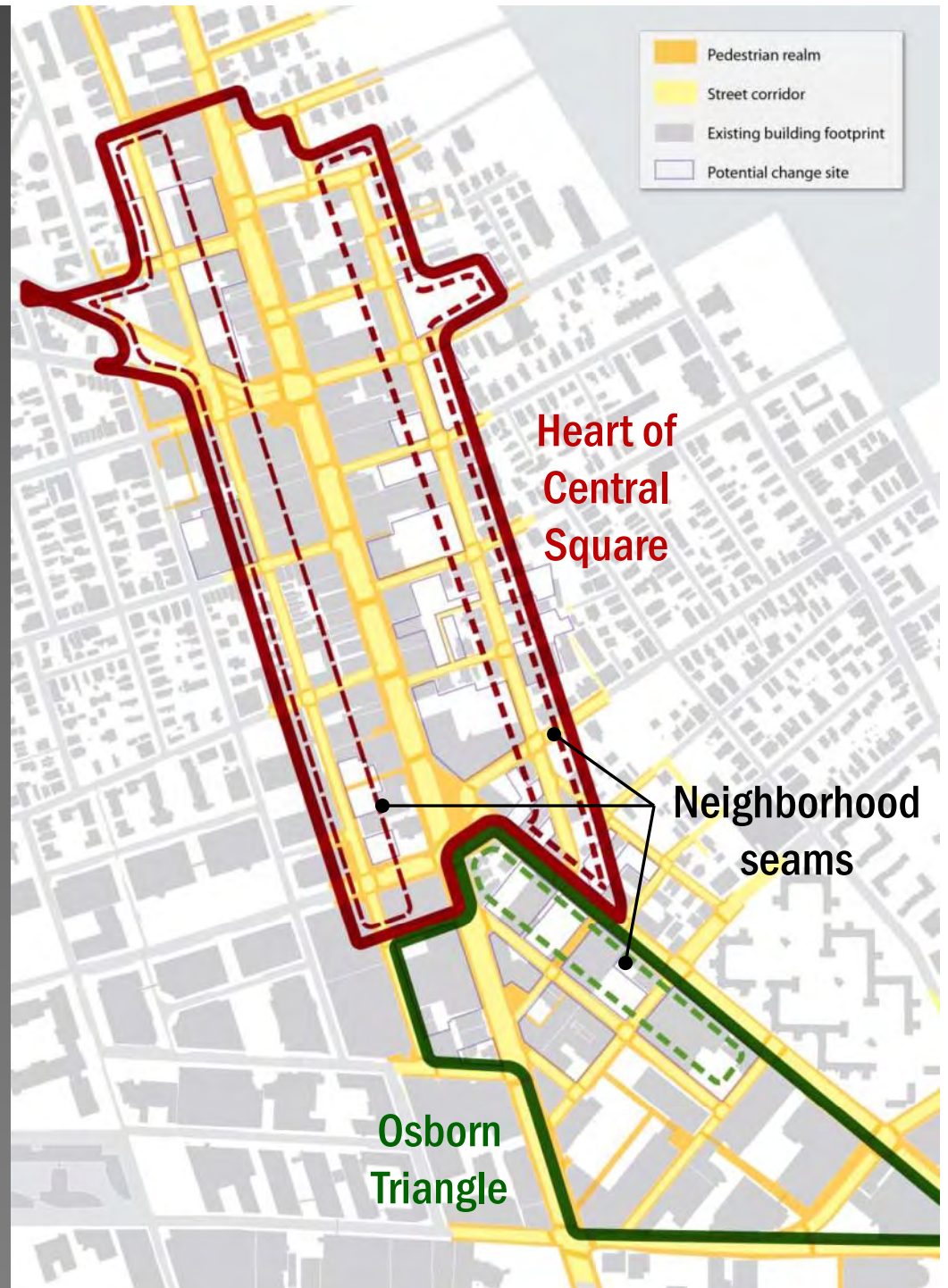
City of Cambridge

CENTRAL SQUARE
Development Guidelines



Character areas: revised concept

- Heart of Central Square
 - Mass Ave core
 - Green Street neighborhood seam
 - Bishop Allen neighborhood seam
- Osborn Triangle
 - Core area
 - Area 4 neighborhood seam



Character areas

Heart of Central Square/Mass Ave core

| Goals | Potential strategies |
|--|---|
| New development: mix of housing, retail, nonprofit office/cultural | <i>Exempt ground floor retail from FAR count. Incent mixed-income housing.</i> |
| Destination attracting full diversity of adjacent areas and all of Cambridge | <i>Incent/maintain a range of affordable retail, nonprofit and housing space choices.</i> |
| Active ground floor uses, consistent parcel to parcel and block to block | <i>Require ground floor space suited to retail, including small spaces favoring unique/local business. Provide startup fit-out assistance. Accommodate market stalls. Continue façade improvement program. Promote interim tenanting strategies. CSBA outreach, marketing</i> |
| Continued daytime and nighttime vibrancy | <i>Promote a safe, inviting nighttime environment: eyes on streets, information, better lighting.</i> |
| Strong sense of identity, coherence | <i>Express with consistent streetscape, signage.</i> |
| Variety of building character, height; historic and contemporary; not monolithic | <i>Continue historic building and landmark policy. Many small parcels/multiple ownerships likely limit development extent, size on those parcels.</i> |

Character areas

Heart of Central Square/Neighborhood seams

| Goals | Potential strategies |
|---|--|
| New development: primarily housing; some retail, nonprofit office, child care | <i>Exempt ground floor retail/office/child care from FAR count. Incent mixed-income housing.</i> |
| Active ground floor uses encouraged; options include housing as well as retail, office, child care, live/work | <i>Require new space to be convertible to retail or housing along side streets.</i> |
| Continued daytime and nighttime vibrancy | <i>Promote a safe, inviting nighttime environment: eyes on streets and parks, information, better lighting.</i> |
| Maintain sun and sky access for neighborhoods | <i>Maintain current 45' height limit and 45 degree height setback plane.</i> |
| Add more green to street corridors: street trees, compact front gardens, green walls where possible | <i>Plant street trees where missing. Encourage green walls on blank walls. Require setbacks for plantings and stoops at housing.</i> |
| Walkable connections to/from Central Square and neighborhoods | <i>Improve City parking lot edges with planted green areas, active ground floors, public art.</i> |

Character areas

Osborn Triangle/Core area

| Goals | Potential strategies |
|---|--|
| New development: mix of housing, office/lab, retail, cultural | <i>Exempt ground floor retail/office/daycare from FAR count. Continue/expand density bonus for housing.</i> |
| Active ground floor uses, consistent along Mass Ave. and Main, encouraged elsewhere. Opportunity for intimate-scale retail connected to Mass Ave. and/or Main | <i>Require ground floor space suited to retail, including small spaces, facing Mass Ave. Require new space to be convertible to retail or accessible housing along side streets within 75 feet of Mass Ave and Main.</i> |
| Continued daytime and nighttime vibrancy | <i>Promote a safe, inviting nighttime environment: eyes on streets, information, better lighting.</i> |
| Variety of building character, height; historic and contemporary; not monolithic | <i>Encourage reuse of historic buildings to support character and/or sustainability.</i> |
| Walkable connections in all directions: along and across Main and Mass Ave | <i>Plant street trees where missing. Encourage green walls on blank walls. Require setbacks for plantings and stoops at housing. Incent new public Mass Ave-Main connection.</i> |

Character areas

Osborn Triangle/Neighborhood seams

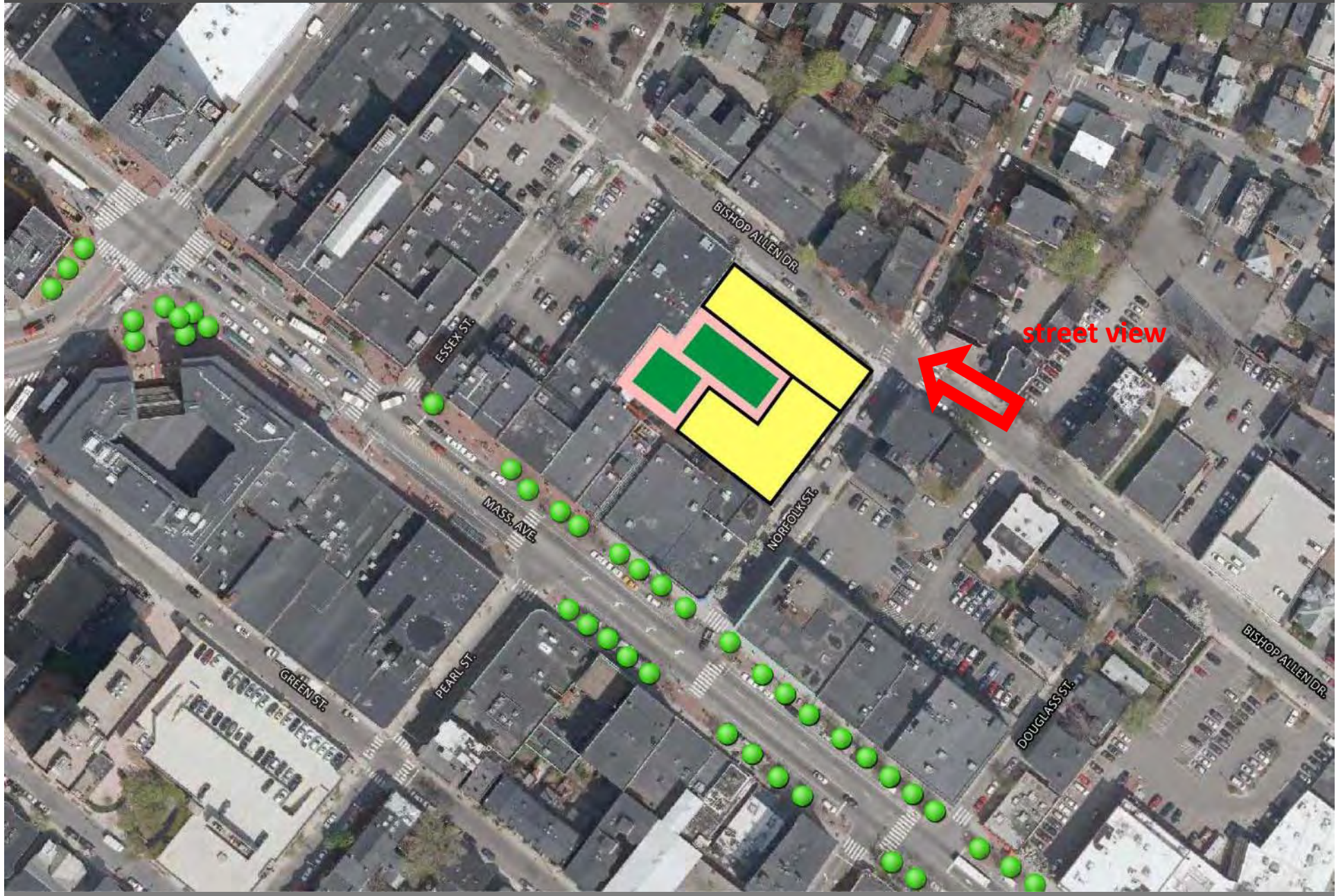
| Goals | Potential strategies |
|--|--|
| New development: housing and active ground floor | <i>Exempt active ground floor uses from FAR count. Continue/expand housing density bonus.</i> |
| Active ground floor uses, consistent along Main. Opportunity for intimate-scale retail connected to Main | <i>Require ground floor space suited to retail or cultural/educational uses facing Main. Require new space to be convertible to retail or housing along side streets within 75 feet of Main.</i> |
| Continued daytime and nighttime vibrancy | <i>Promote a safe, inviting nighttime environment: eyes on streets, information, better lighting.</i> |
| Variety of building character, height; historic and contemporary; not monolithic | <i>Encourage reuse of historic buildings to support character and/or sustainability.</i> |
| Comfortable scale transition across Main | <i>Maintain current 45 degree height setback plane from center of Main</i> |
| Walkable connections in all directions: along and across Main | <i>Plant street trees where missing. Encourage green walls on blank walls. Require setbacks for plantings and stoops at housing. Incent new public Mass Ave-Main connection.</i> |

Making policy choices: key questions

- How should height transitions be handled? Are the current 45 degree plane approaches appropriate where implemented?
- Is it appropriate to allow additional density and/or height as an incentive for community-defined goals (e.g. low/middle income housing?) If so, where? With what conditions? Consider controls on size, public realm proximity, shadow impacts and spacing of taller building forms.
- What is the most appropriate future use of City parking lots?
- If city parking lots should be released for redevelopment, what conditions should be established for resulting benefits and building form?

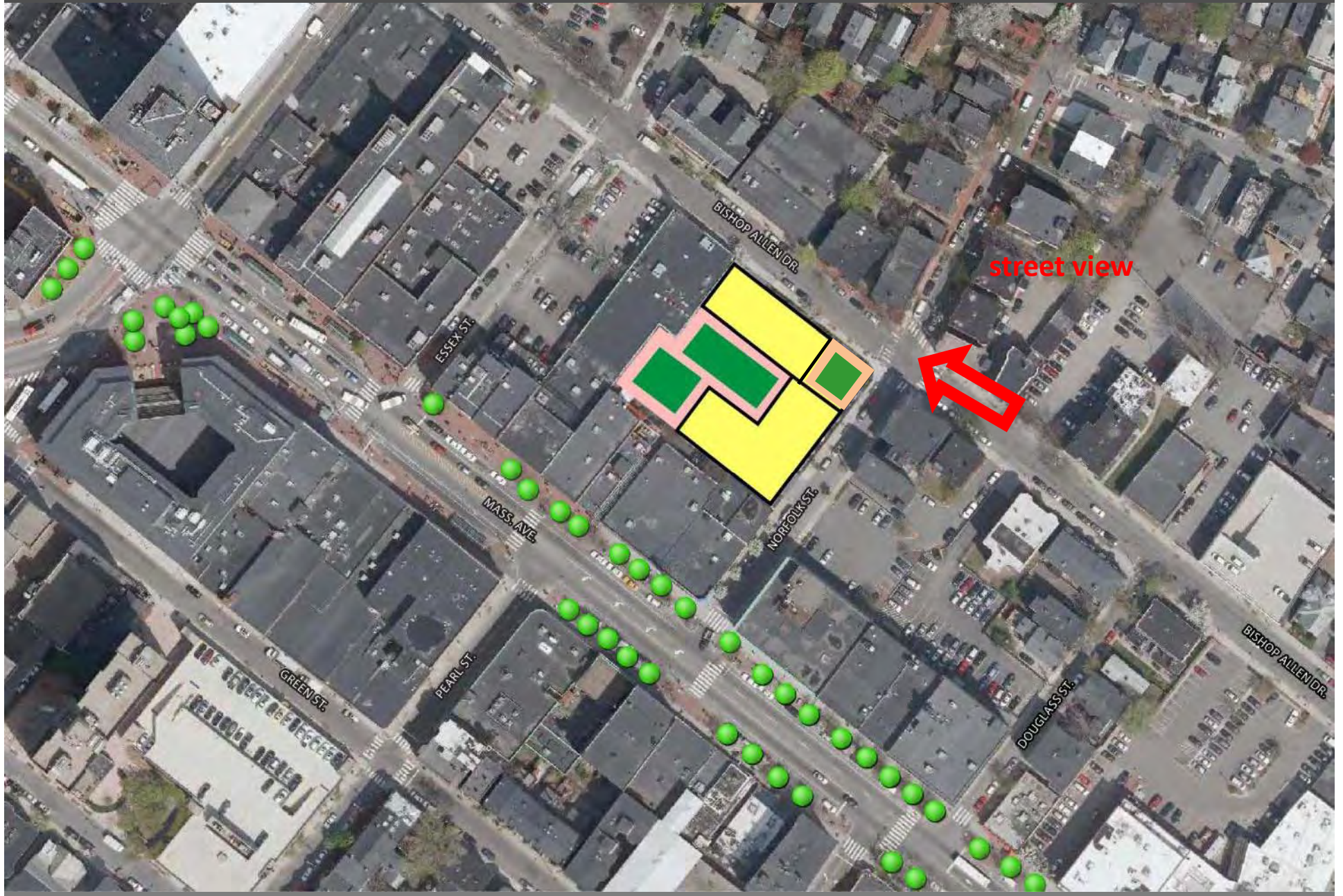
Bishop Allen/Norfolk

New Development at City Parking Lot 5



Bishop Allen/Norfolk

New Development at City Parking Lot 5



City parking lot scenarios: Bishop Allen at Norfolk



45' façade height limit at Bishop Allen. 45 degree height limit plane tapers back above.

Bishop Allen at Norfolk: new mixed-use



45' façade height limit at Bishop Allen. 45 degree height limit plane tapers back above.

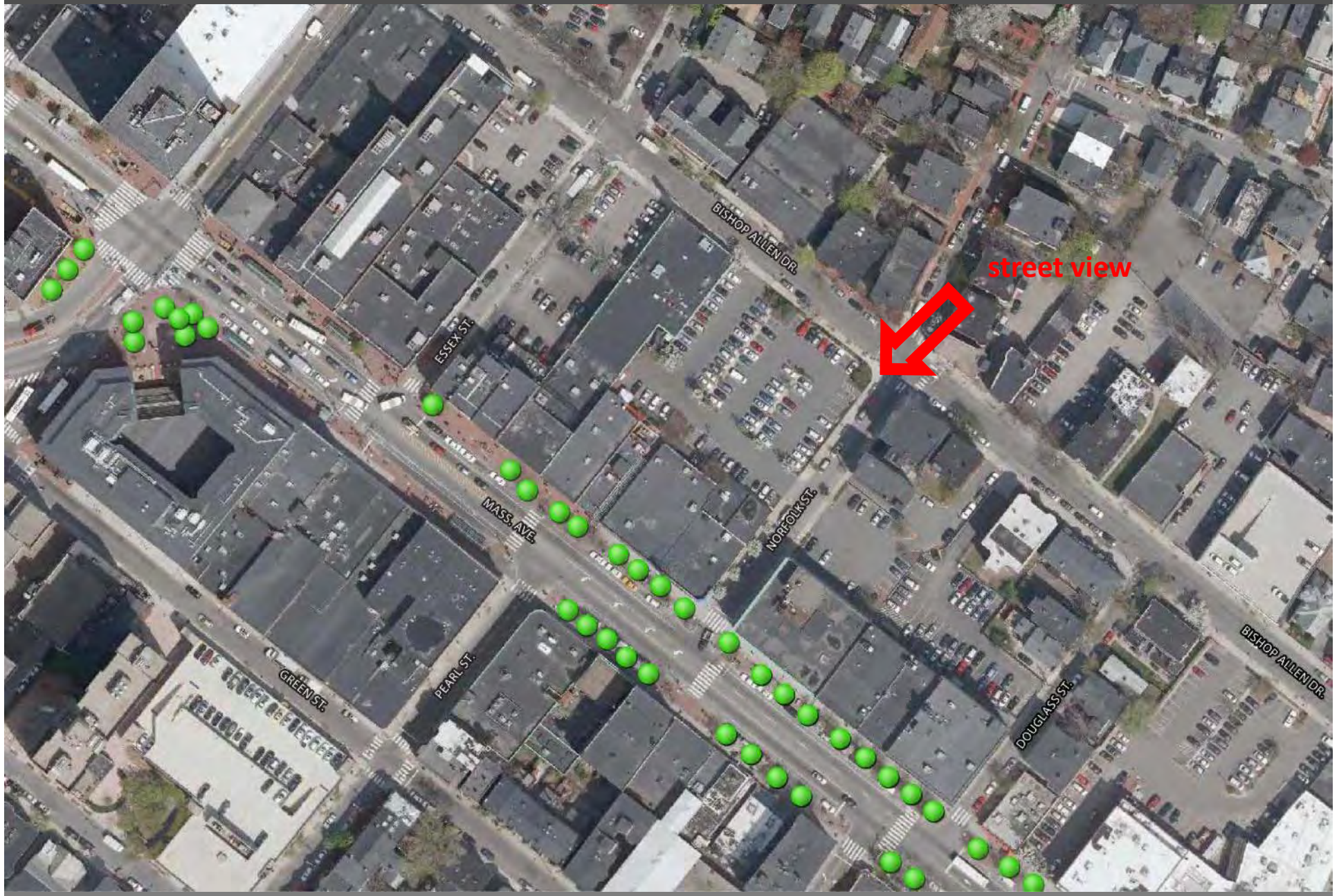
Bishop Allen at Norfolk: with pocket park



45' façade height limit at Bishop Allen. 45 degree height limit plane tapers back above.

Norfolk/Bishop Allen

Existing plan view



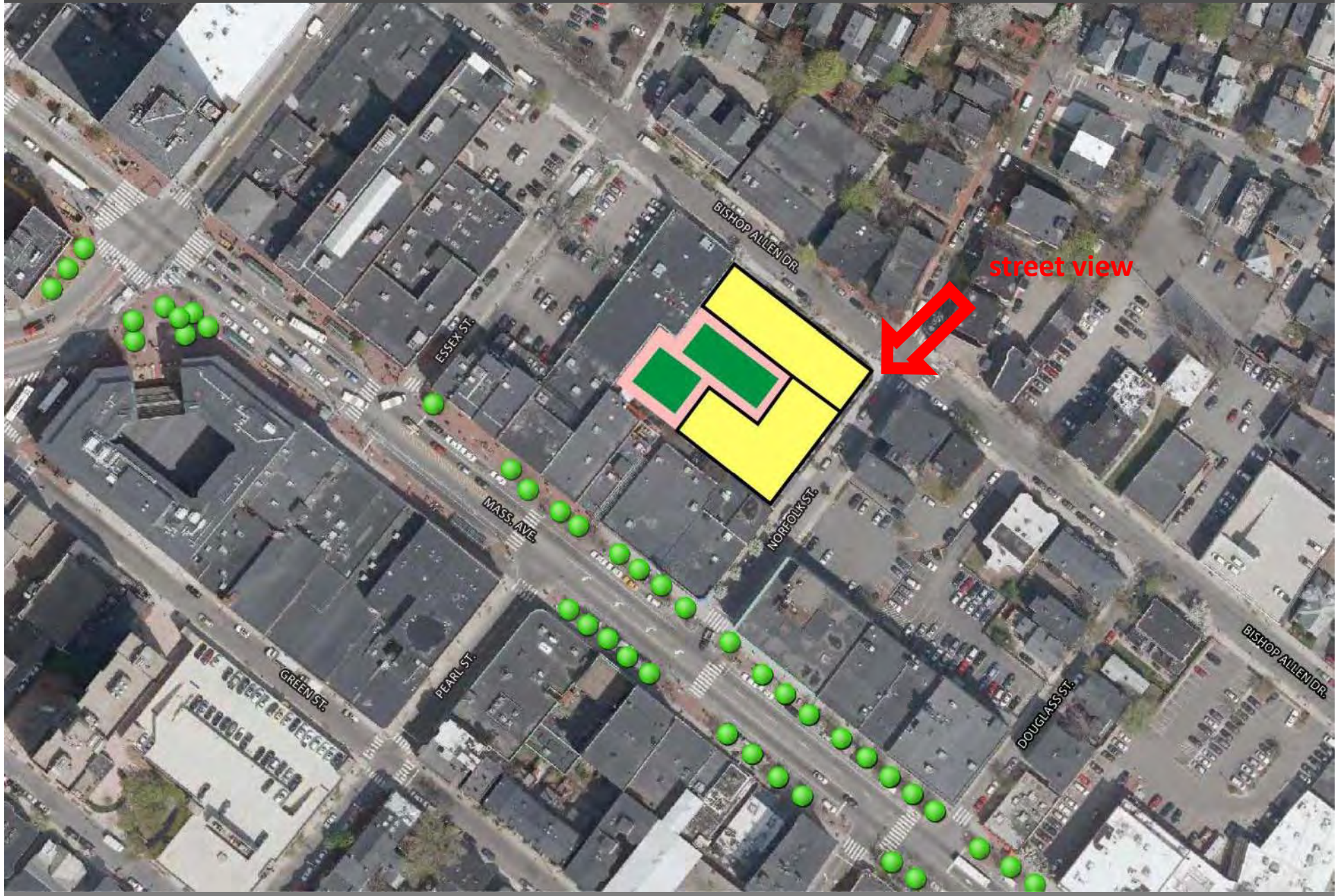
Norfolk/Bishop Allen

Existing Street View



Norfolk/Bishop Allen

New Development at City Parking Lot 5 only



Norfolk/Bishop Allen

Existing Street View



Norfolk/Bishop Allen

New Development at City Parking Lot 5

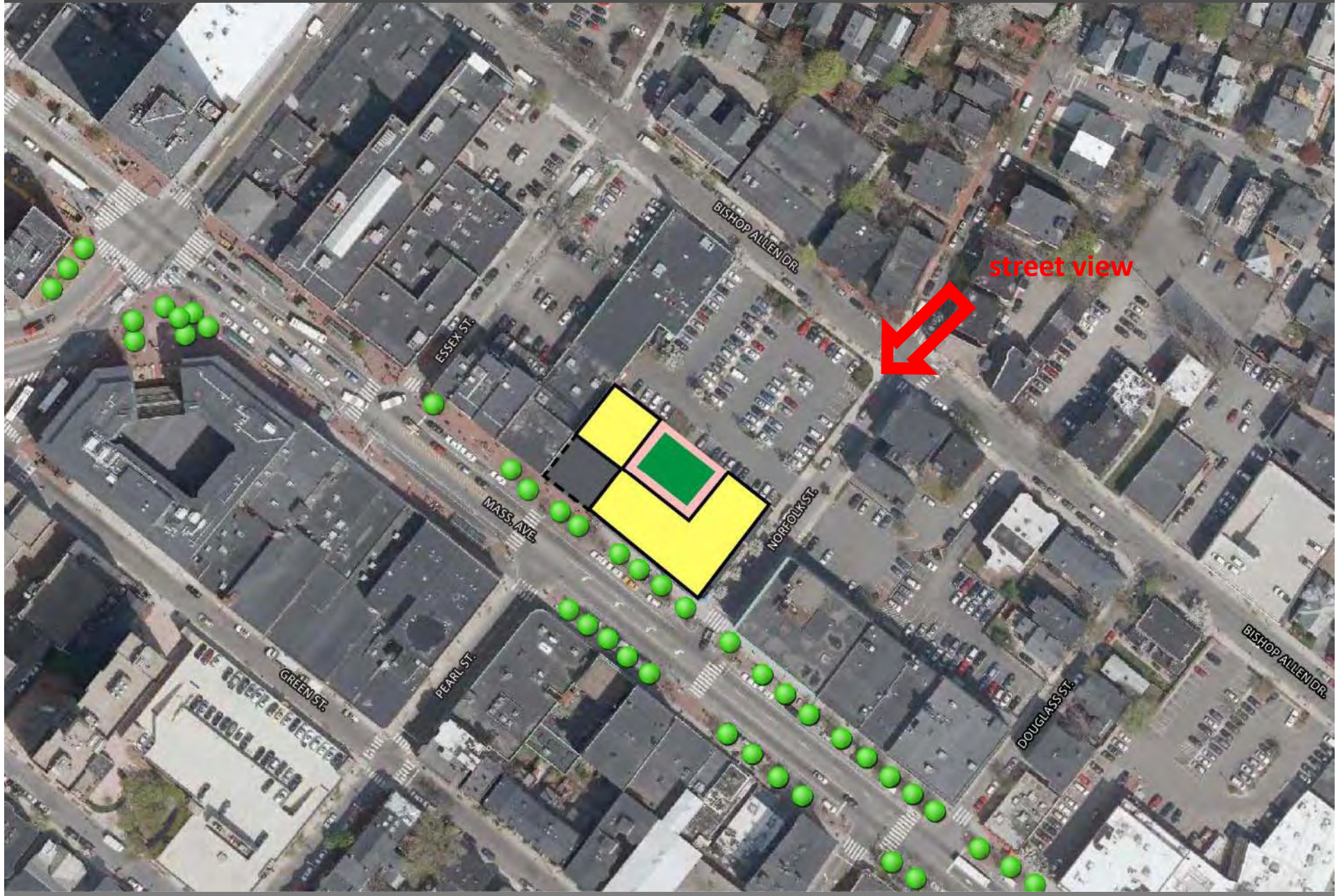


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45' façade height limit at Bishop Allen. 45 degree height limit plane tapers back above.

Norfolk/Bishop Allen

New Development at Nagar Property only



Norfolk/Bishop Allen

Existing Street View



Norfolk/Bishop Allen

Redevelopment at Nagar Property only



45' façade height limit at Bishop Allen. 45 degree height limit plane tapers back above.

Norfolk/Bishop Allen

City lot + Nagar redevelopment: current height limit



Norfolk/Bishop Allen

City lot + Nagar: current height limit, density



Norfolk/Bishop Allen

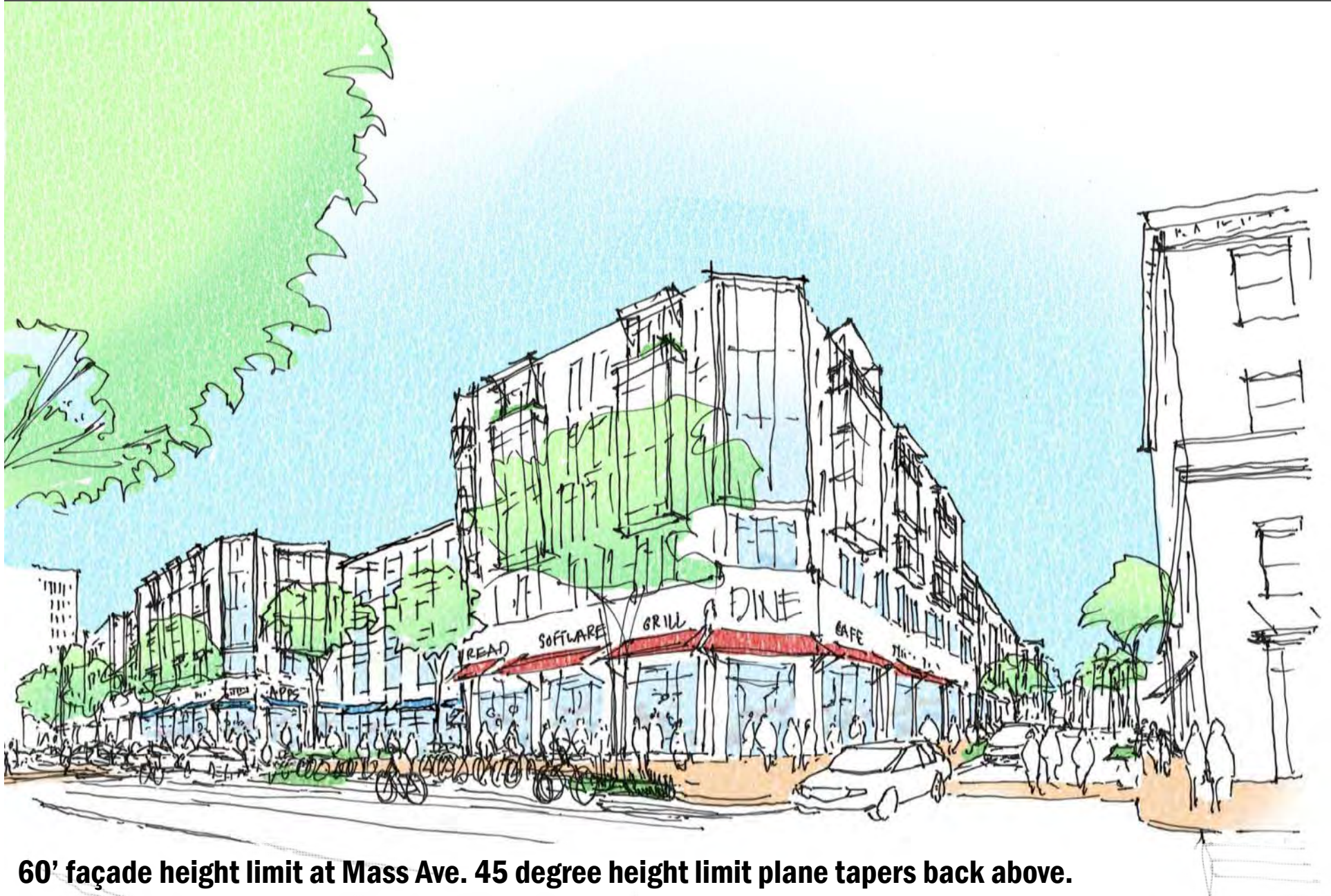
City lot + Nagar: current height limit, density



45' façade height limit at Bishop Allen. 45 degree height limit plane tapers back above.

Mass Ave/Norfolk

City lot + Nagar: current height limit, density



60' façade height limit at Mass Ave. 45 degree height limit plane tapers back above.

Norfolk/Bishop Allen

City lot + Nagar: current height limit, bonus density



Norfolk/Bishop Allen

City lot + Nagar: current height limit, bonus density



Norfolk/Bishop Allen

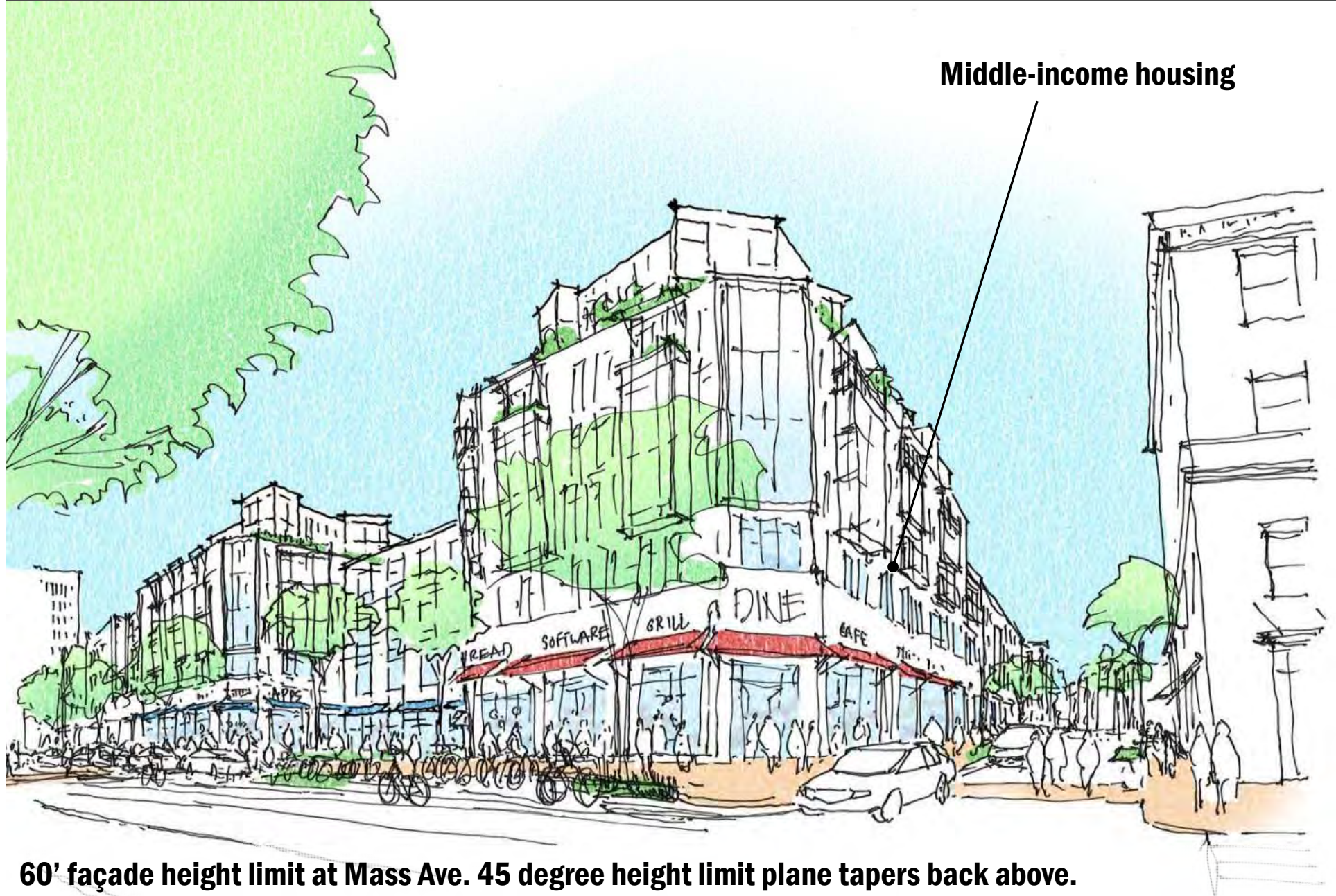
City lot + Nagar: current height limit, bonus density



45' façade height limit at Bishop Allen. 45 degree height limit plane tapers back above.

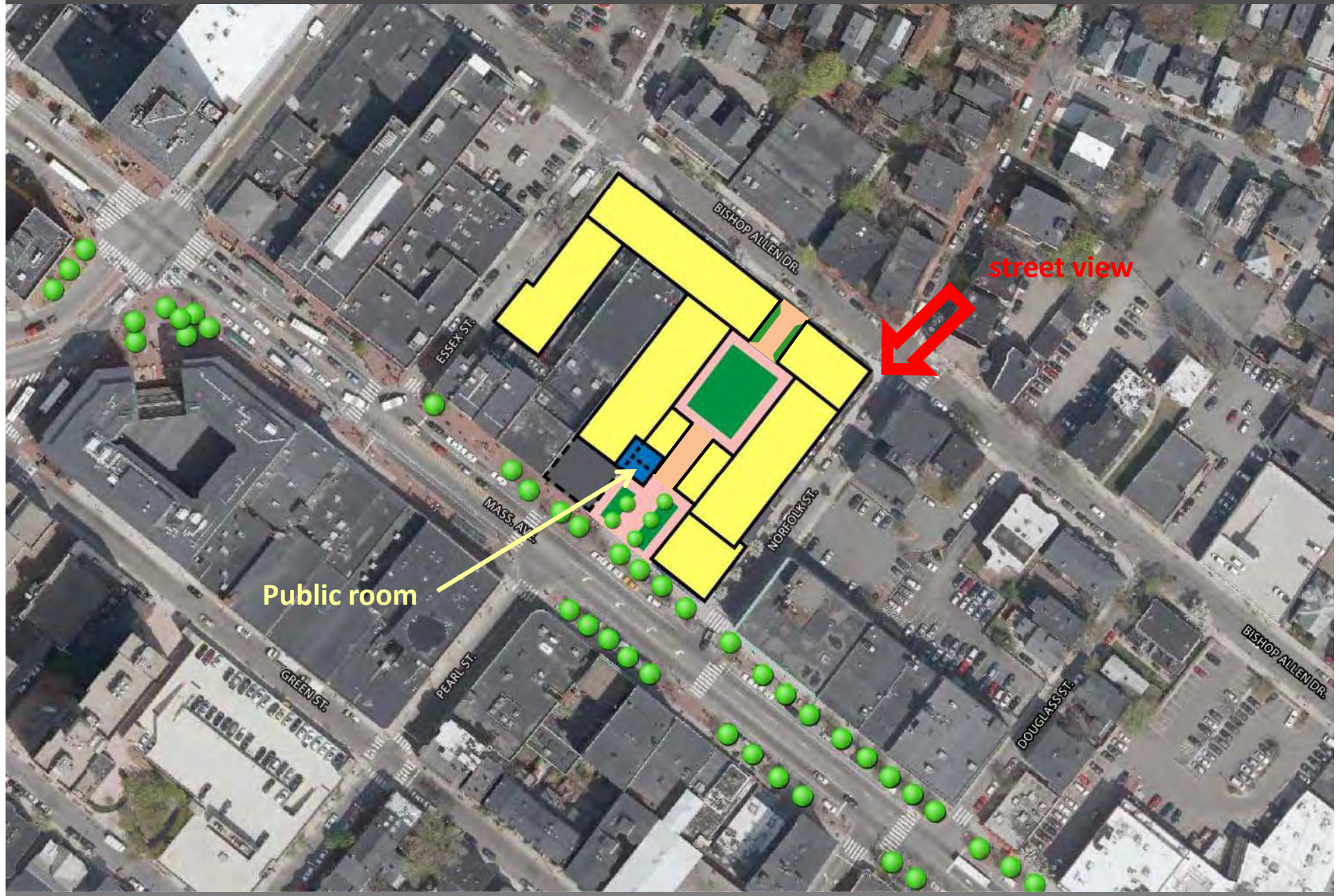
Mass Ave/Norfolk

City lot + Nagar: current height limit, bonus density



60' façade height limit at Mass Ave. 45 degree height limit plane tapers back above.

Norfolk/Bishop Allen City lot + Nagar: increased height limit, bonus density



Norfolk/Bishop Allen City lot + Nagar: increased height limit, bonus density



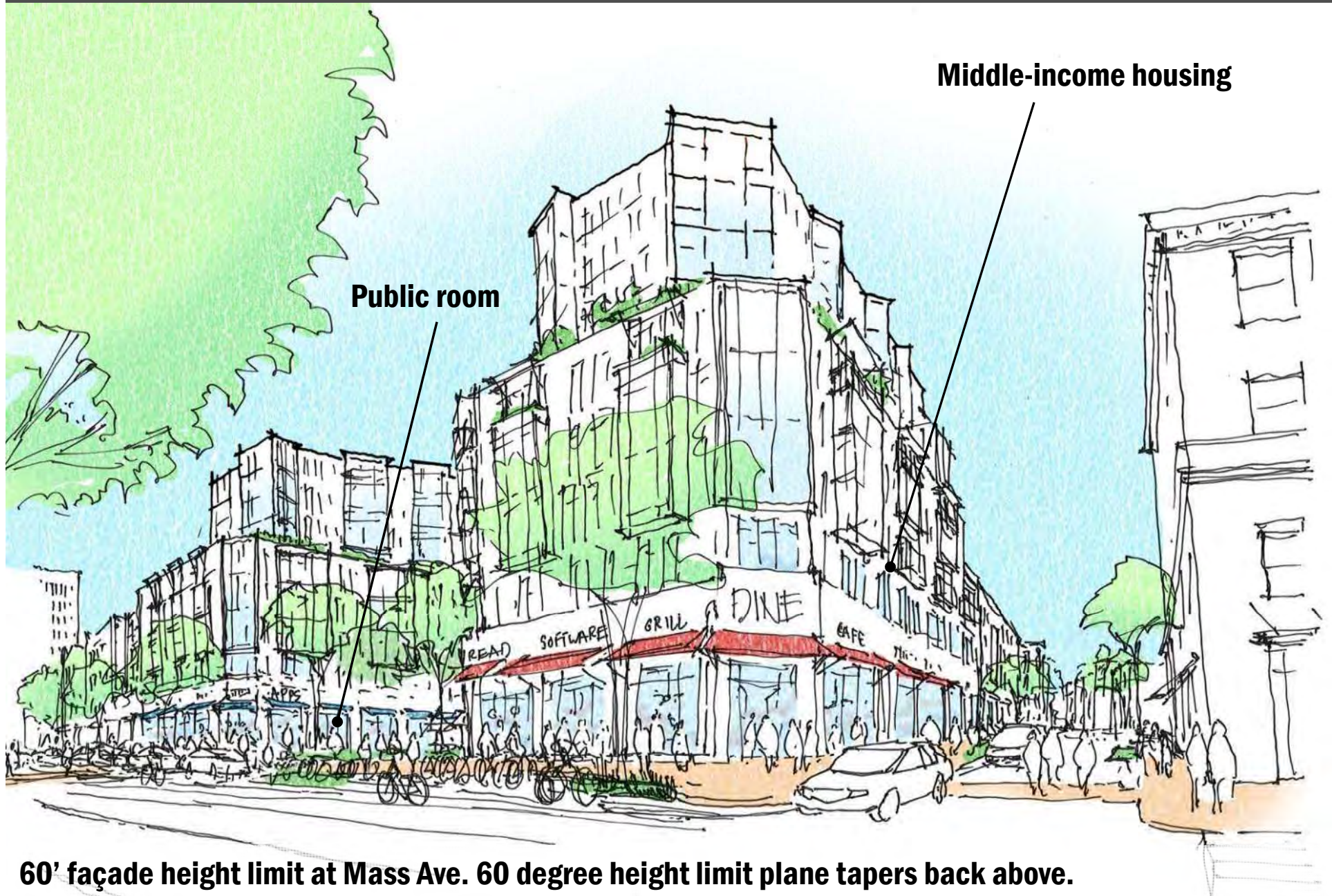
Norfolk/Bishop Allen City lot + Nagar: increased height limit, bonus density



45' façade height limit at Bishop Allen. 45 degree height limit plane tapers back above.

Mass Ave/Norfolk

City lot + Nagar: increased height limit, bonus density



60' façade height limit at Mass Ave. 60 degree height limit plane tapers back above.

Norfolk/Bishop Allen

City lot + Nagar: today



Norfolk/Bishop Allen

City lot + Nagar: current height limit, density



45' façade height limit at Bishop Allen. 45 degree height limit plane tapers back above.

Norfolk/Bishop Allen

City lot + Nagar: current height limit, bonus density



45' façade height limit at Bishop Allen. 45 degree height limit plane tapers back above.

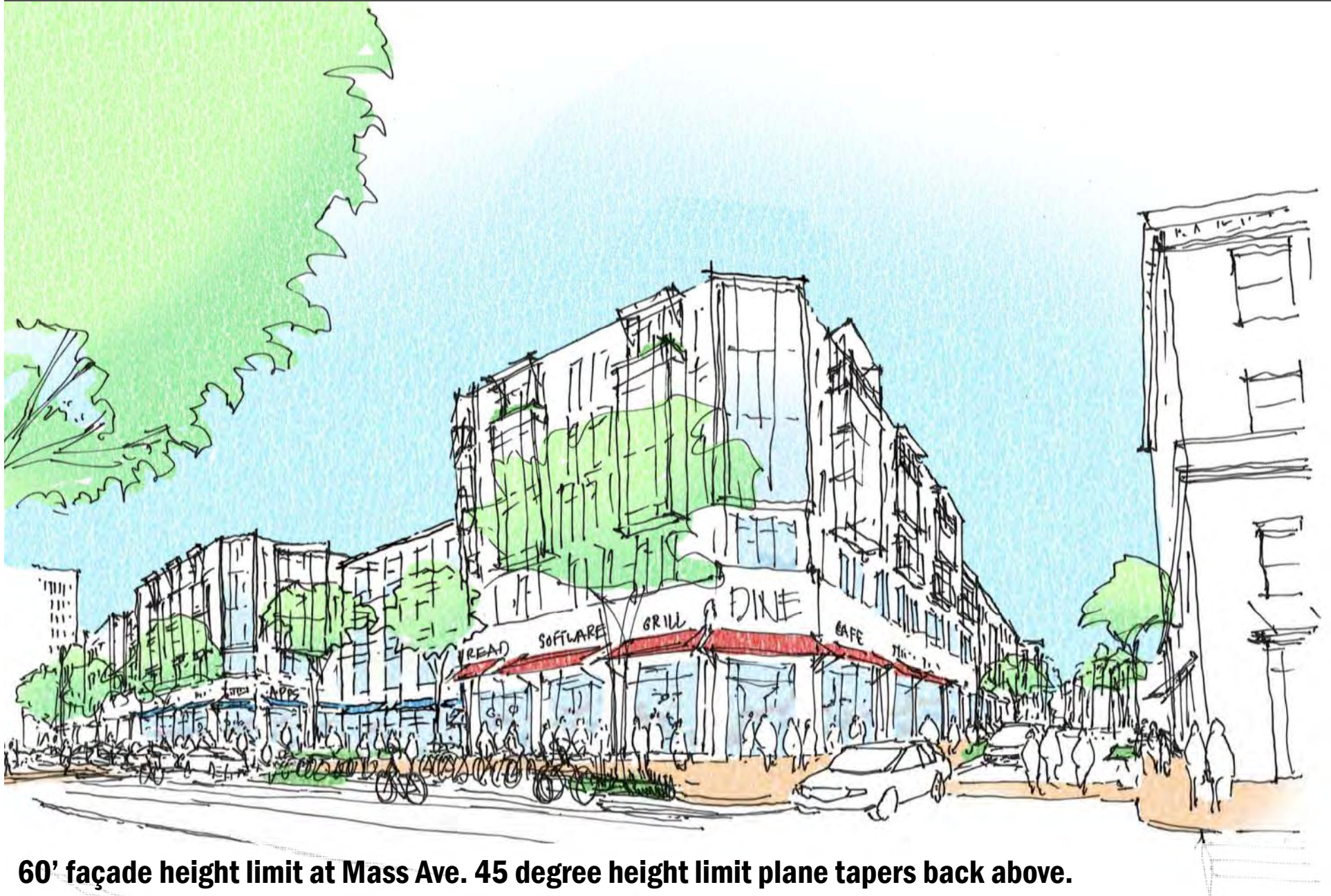
Norfolk/Bishop Allen City lot + Nagar: increased height limit, bonus density



45' façade height limit at Bishop Allen. 45 degree height limit plane tapers back above.

Mass Ave/Norfolk

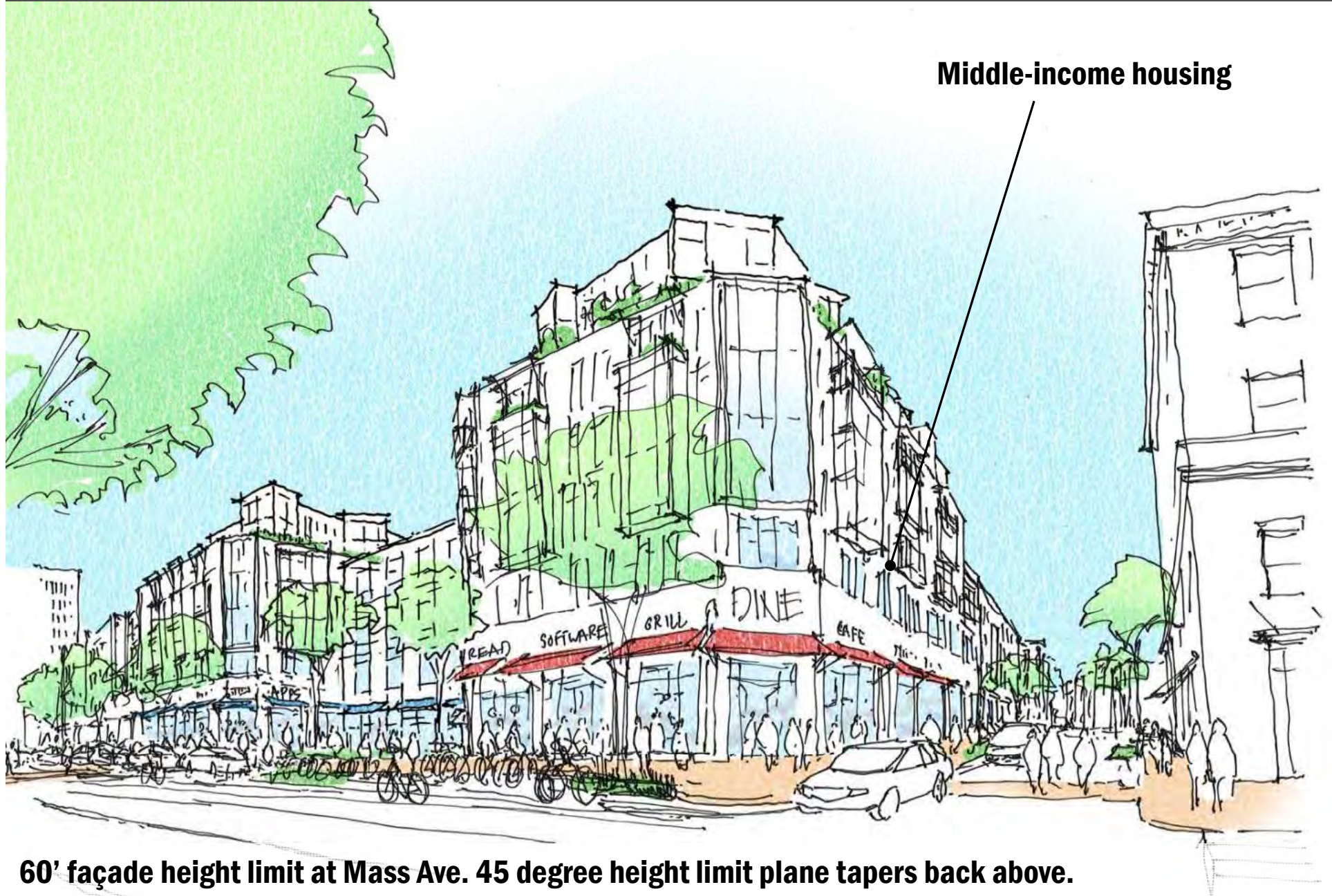
City lot + Nagar: current height limit, density



60' façade height limit at Mass Ave. 45 degree height limit plane tapers back above.

Mass Ave/Norfolk

City lot + Nagar: current height limit, bonus density

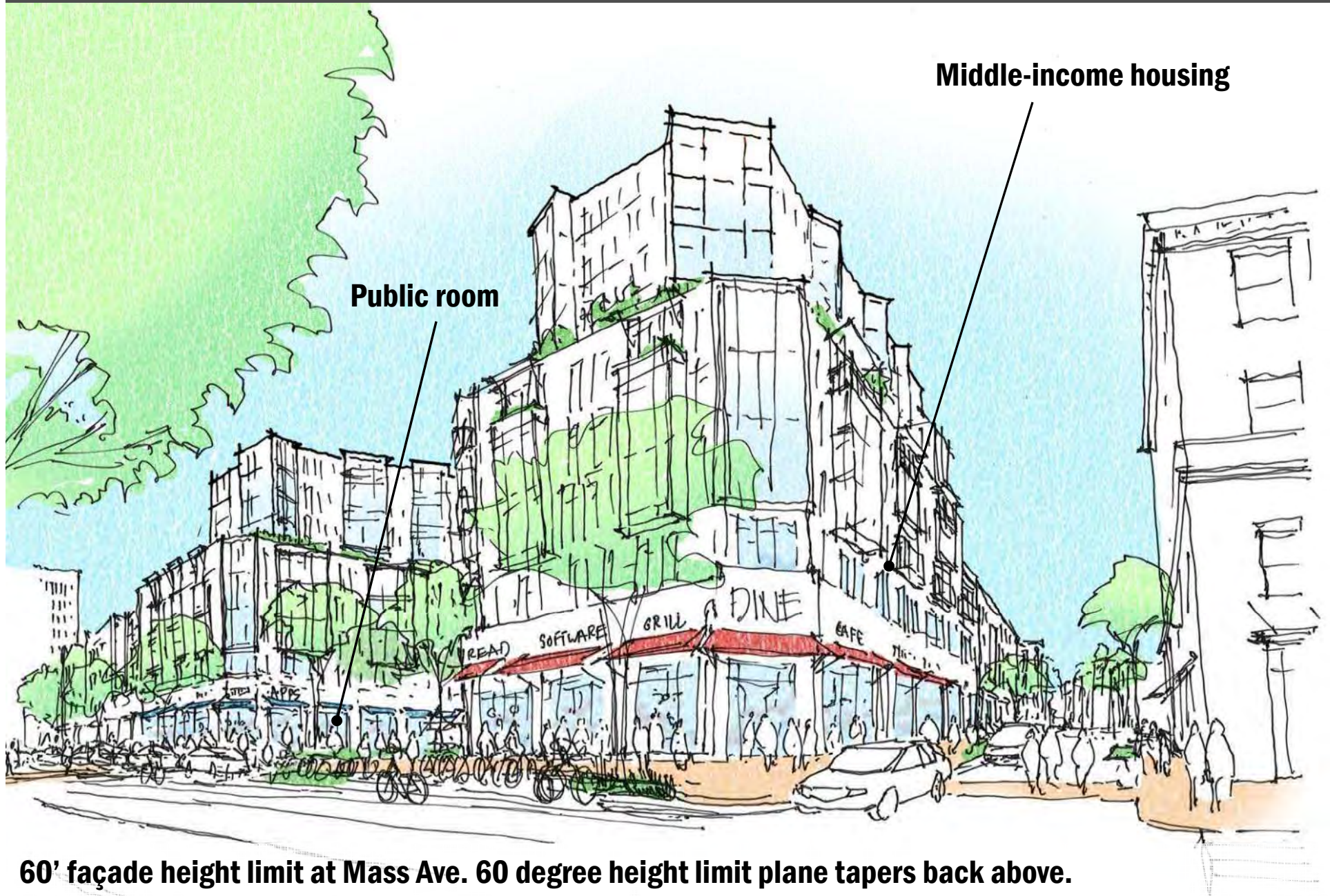


Middle-income housing

60' façade height limit at Mass Ave. 45 degree height limit plane tapers back above.

Mass Ave/Norfolk

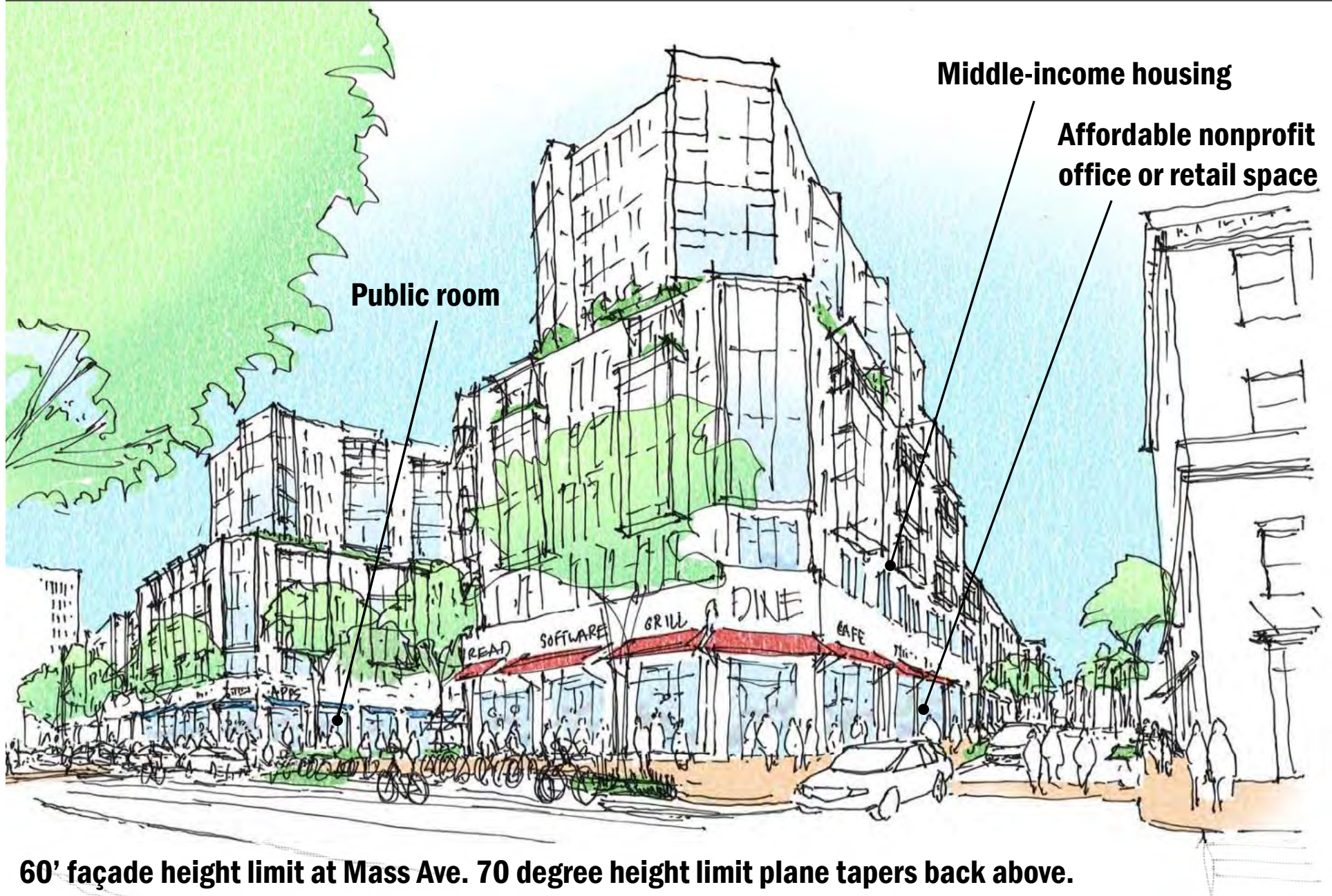
City lot + Nagar: increased height limit, bonus density



60' façade height limit at Mass Ave. 60 degree height limit plane tapers back above.

Mass Ave/Norfolk

City lot + Nagar: increased height limit, bonus density



60' façade height limit at Mass Ave. 70 degree height limit plane tapers back above.

Group exercise

- Consider character areas
 - Heart of Central Square – core and neighborhood seams
 - Osborn Triangle – Core and neighborhood seams
 - Parking lots
 - Other areas of distinction?
- Is it appropriate to offer bonus density and/or height, reduced-cost land, or other incentives, in return for benefits serving community-defined goals?
- If so, where? Yielding what priority benefits? What negative impacts must be avoided?
- What role should City parking lots play?

