# **Central Square City Lots Study**

COMMUNITY MEETING #3

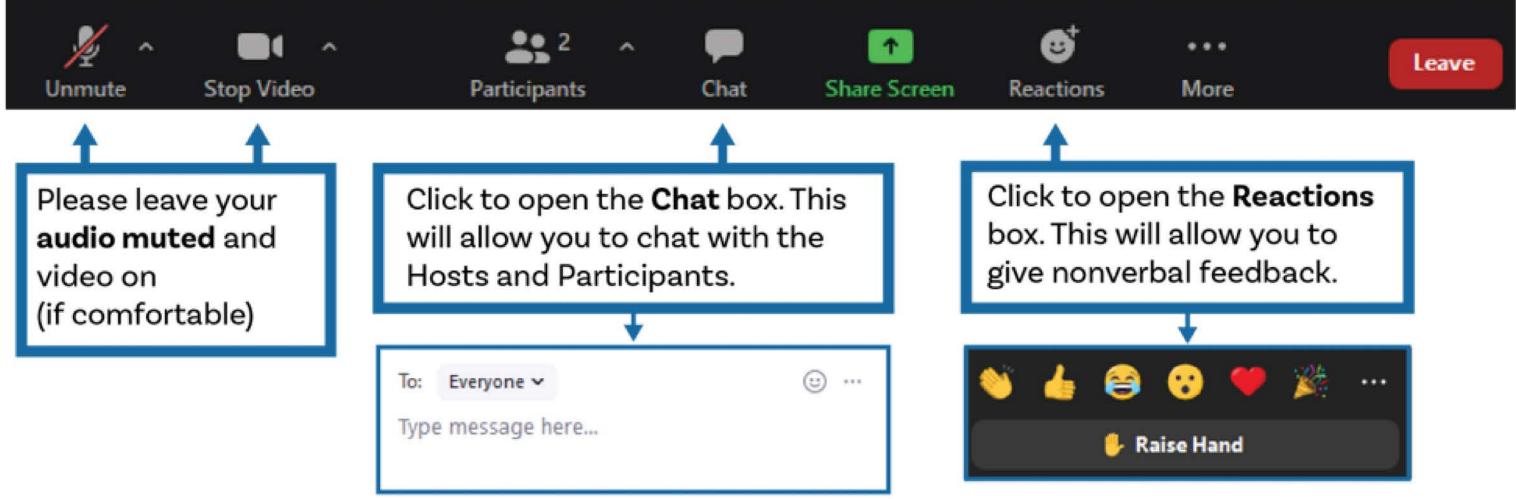


**Agency** Landscape + Planning



#### December 14, 2023

# **GETTING TO KNOW ZOOM**





For Zoom-related questions reach out to Annie Streetman via chat or email annie@agencylp.com



If you're having connectivity issues, call in at 929-436-2866 Meeting ID: 875 2977 7717



### AGENDA

Presentation **30 min** 

Accomplishing Community Goals with City-Owned Sites

Process & Community Engagement

Recommendations

**Considerations for Implementation** 

Breakout Group Discussions 20 min

Report Back 15 min

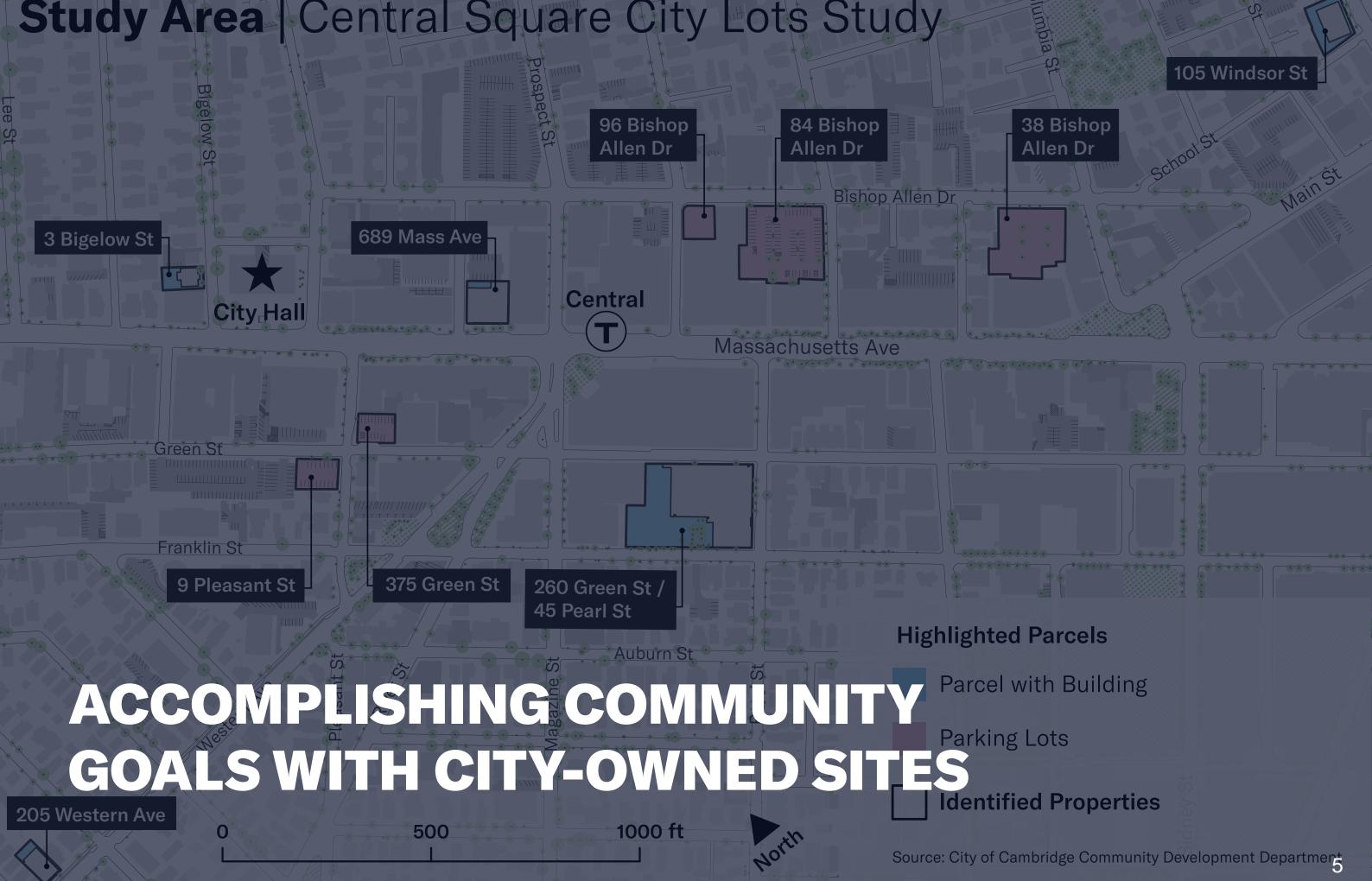
What's Next? 5 min

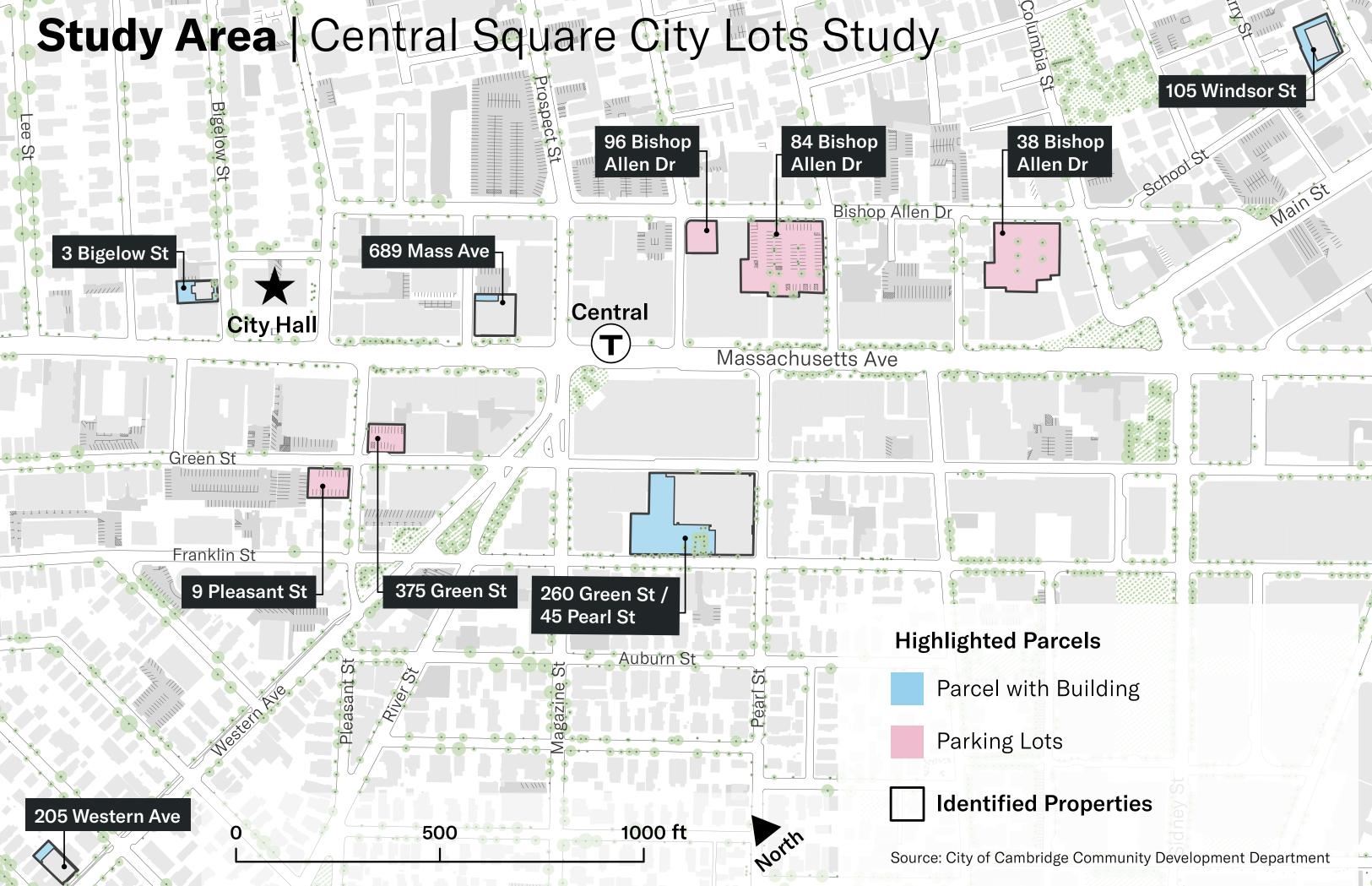
### **SCHEDULE** | Central Square City Lots Study

	Month	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	ост
TASKA: INTERNALTEAM MEI	ETINGS						
Regular coordination meeting	gs	ко	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • •				• • • • • • • • • • •
Regular Working Group meet	ings		wg we		WG	WG	WG
					-	-	C
TASK B: MUNICIPAL PROPERT	<b>TY INVENTORY &amp; EVALU</b>	ATION					weekly Proje
City Staff Interviews							gular Working equency and
Site Tour							oject Kick-off
Parking Demand Assessment	t					PE Pu	blic Engagem
							I
TASK C: OUTREACH AND CO	DMMUNITY ENGAGEME	NT					
Develop Outreach Strategy	/						
Audience Identification					• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •		• • • • • • • • •
Outreach and Engagement	t (online & in-person)		••••	•••••	••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •
TASK D: MUNICIPAL NEEDS	ASSESSMENT AND GOA	AL SETTING					
Additional Interviews		(	wg				
Research and Review of Refere	ence Materials						
TASK E: CENTRAL SQUARE M	MUNICIPAL PROPERTY I	PLANNING STUE	ΟY				
<b>Concept Plans and Test Fits</b>							
Zoning Analysis and Recomme	endations						
Property Use Recommendation	ns						
TASK F: FINAL PLAN							
Final Plan Documents							
Physical Final Plan Outreach							
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### Study Area Central Square City Lots Study





### **Project Sites - Buildings**



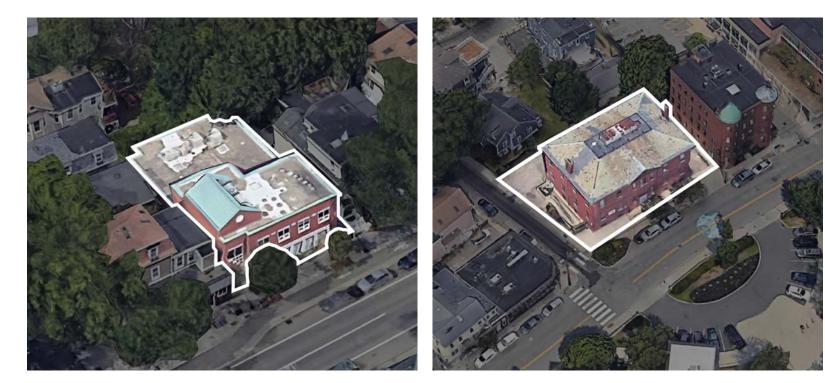
**3 BIGELOW ST** 







**689 MASSACHUSETTS AVE** 



**205 WESTERN AVE** 

**105 WINDSOR ST** 



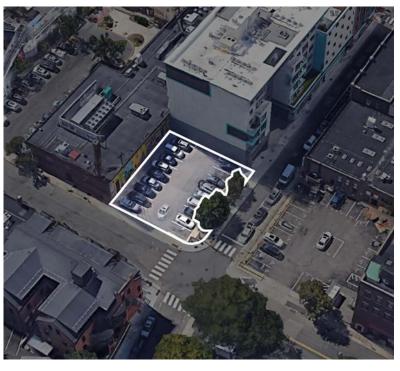
### **Project Sites - Parking Lots**



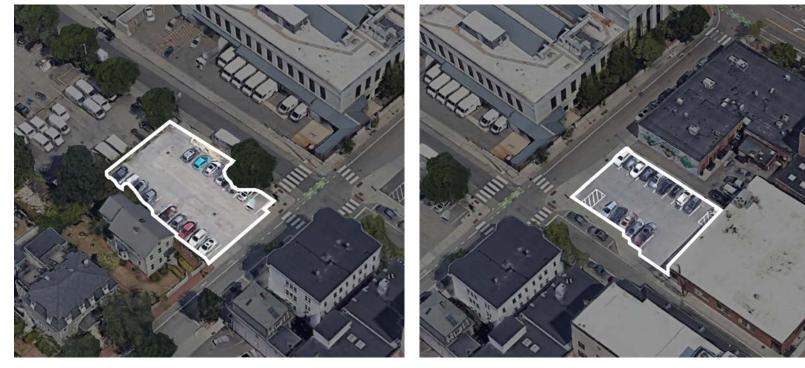
**38 BISHOP ALLEN DR** 



**84 BISHOP ALLEN DR** 



**96 BISHOP ALLEN DR** 



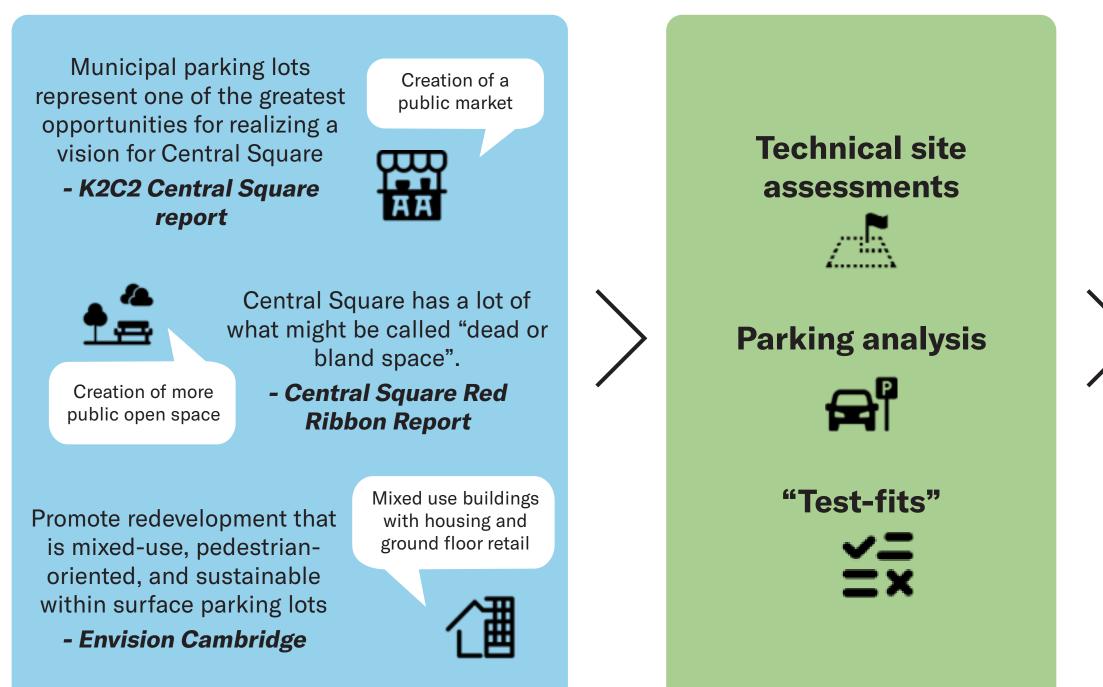
**9 PLEASANT ST** 

**375 GREEN ST** 

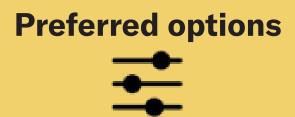
## **"Central Square Lots" Study Process**

# Support & build upon past discussions

# Test what's feasible



# Recommend possible steps



# Phasing considerations







9

# Changes likely to occur over 10+ years



### Study Area Central Square City Lots Study



## **Technical Site Assessments**

Through interviews, research, and site visits, we created technical assessments for each of the project sites.



#### 260 Green St

Cambridgeport Map Lot Nur City of Ca

Site Description he site of the Central S Garage, neighboring a tment building. The library

25.686 19.824 55,828 Site Area (sq ft \$100.244,200 C-3 Zoning Distric 257 Parking Space

91.5%

Site Conditions (Exterior) 260 Green is the site of the Central Square Public Library and adjoining public parking garage. The library main entrance faces Pearl St and can also be accessed on n side of the building via a plaza shared with th

ING CODES.

t District (CRDD), F lay District: YES BA



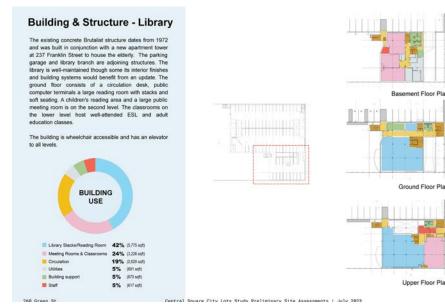
### Site Conditions

Site History

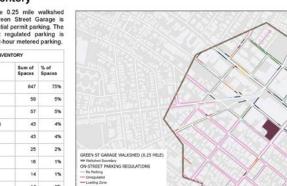


260 Green St

Mapping & Summary Statistics







#### **Environmental Conditions**





**Building Use** 

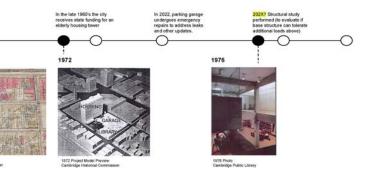
Parking Inventory & Utilization

### **Environmental Conditions**

# 60 Green St has low park access .00 to 0.23 acres of park per persor

**Jrban Hea** 





In the 1930's the City of Cambridge began to acquire and demolish the residential properties along Pearl and Green Streets to create parking lots. By the lat teriors are source source to the second seco

## **Engagement Highlights**

#### **8 WORKING GROUP MEETINGS**

- Internal working group comprised of City staff
- Interviews to review site conditions, and identify opportunities, city needs, and planning objectives
- Monthly meetings to share feedback and provide guidance

+ a Project Website, social media updates and flyering to get the word out!

#### **20+ FOCUS GROUPS** & INTERVIEWS

- Community Engagement Team (CET) Member Focus Group
- CET Resident Focus Group
- Small Business Focus Group
- Arts & Culture Focus Group
- Senior Center Focus Group
- Cambridgeport Neighborhood Association
- Margaret Fuller House
- City staff
- Multi Service Center/C-CAN **Client Focus Group - Unhoused** community
- Moore Youth Center Focus Group

#### **POP-UPS** & **COMMUNITY MEETINGS**

#### • August 2023 Pop-up Events 75+ comments

 Online Survey 90+ comments

• October 8, 2023 **Community Meeting 1** 60+ attendees 700+ voting dots

• October 25, 2023 **Community Meeting 2** 65+ online attendees **150+ registrants** 

• December 14, 2023 **Community Meeting 3 Tonight!** 

## **Engagement Highlights**





#### Central Square City Lots Study

The City is exploring how 10 City-owned properties in and around Central Square can better serve community needs, and support City services and priorities.

The City has been working hard - reviewing plans and community needs, exploring the use of each property, and interviewing city staff. Now its time to hear from you.

If you couldn't meet us in person, fill out this form to tell us what you think Central Square needs!

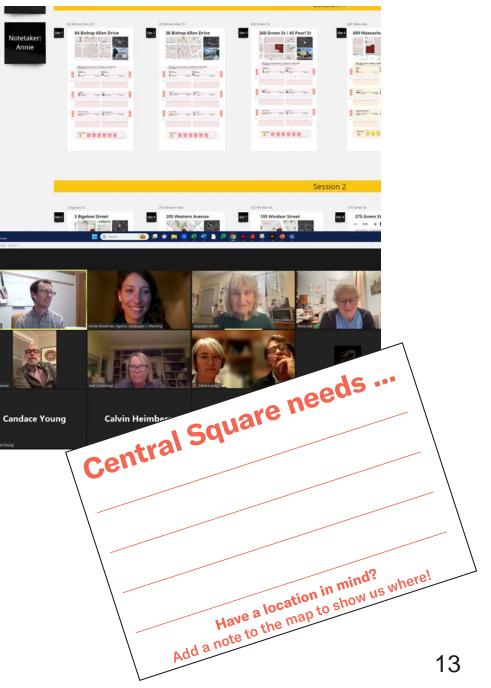
Check out the 10 City-owned properties we're studying!











# **Community Feedback**





#### Housing

City & Community Resources

Open Space, Parking, Infrastructure

### Goals

Housing

City & Community Resources

• Create more housing in Central Square, particularly Affordable Housing

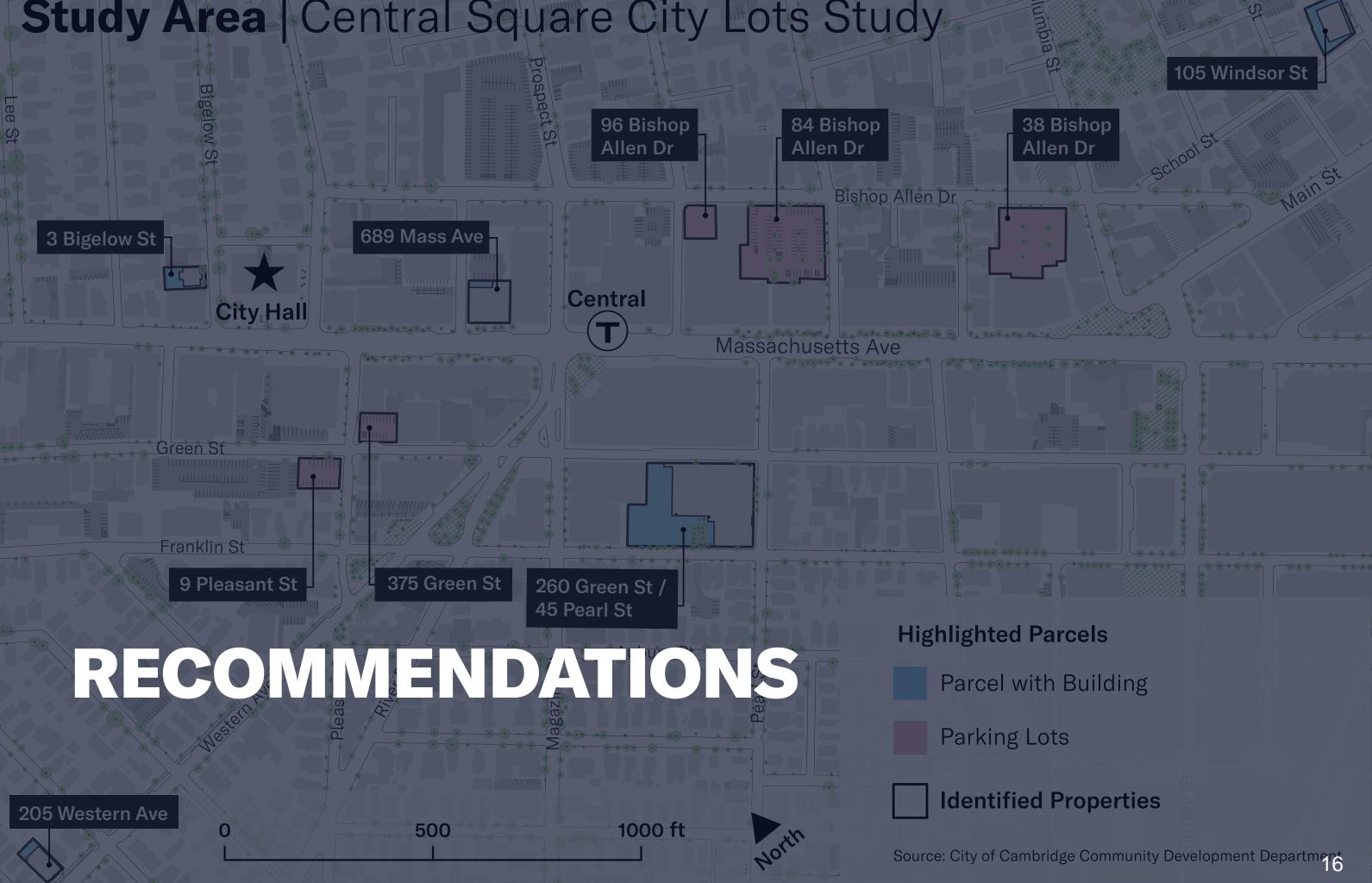
- Accommodate cultural programs, events, and spaces
- Create high quality community services in Central Square
- Provide opportunities for social services to expand and co-locate
- Address city office and collaboration space needs

- <u> Open Space</u> nfrastructure
- Increase parks and open spaces
- Support ongoing infrastructure improvement projects
- Meet parking needs & include transportation demand management

Future Opps

• Plan for future opportunities to connect adjacent private lots

### Study Area Central Square City Lots Study



### **Achieving Goals Across the 10 Sites**



#### **Open Space, Parking,** Infrastructure

**9 PLEASANT ST** 



**84 BISHOP ALLEN DR** 



# **Test Fit Assumptions**

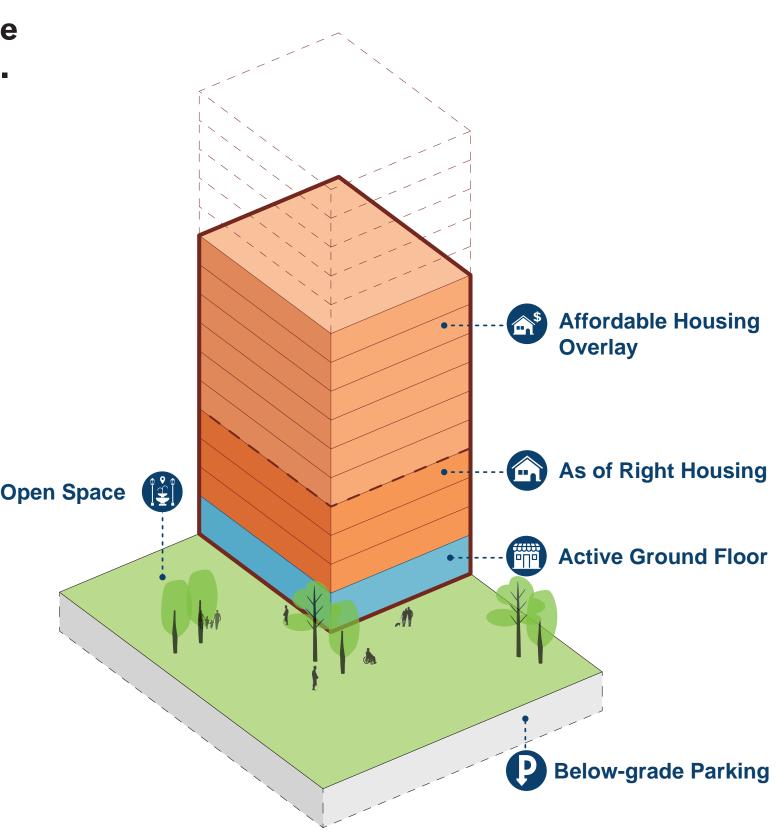
Test-fits are massing studies, not designs. These will change as projects get refined in the future.

#### Match sites to their best uses

 Different types of uses have specific space needs that make them more or less suitable for different building sizes or configurations

#### Test the maximum allowable by zoning

- Zoning informs height, density, setbacks, open space requirements and possible uses (among Open Space other things!)
- The Affordable Housing Overlay Amendment allows eligible buildings in Central Square to exceed zoning heights, up to 15 stories or 170' as a baseline.
- The AHO also provides more flexibility on some setbacks and open space requirements.



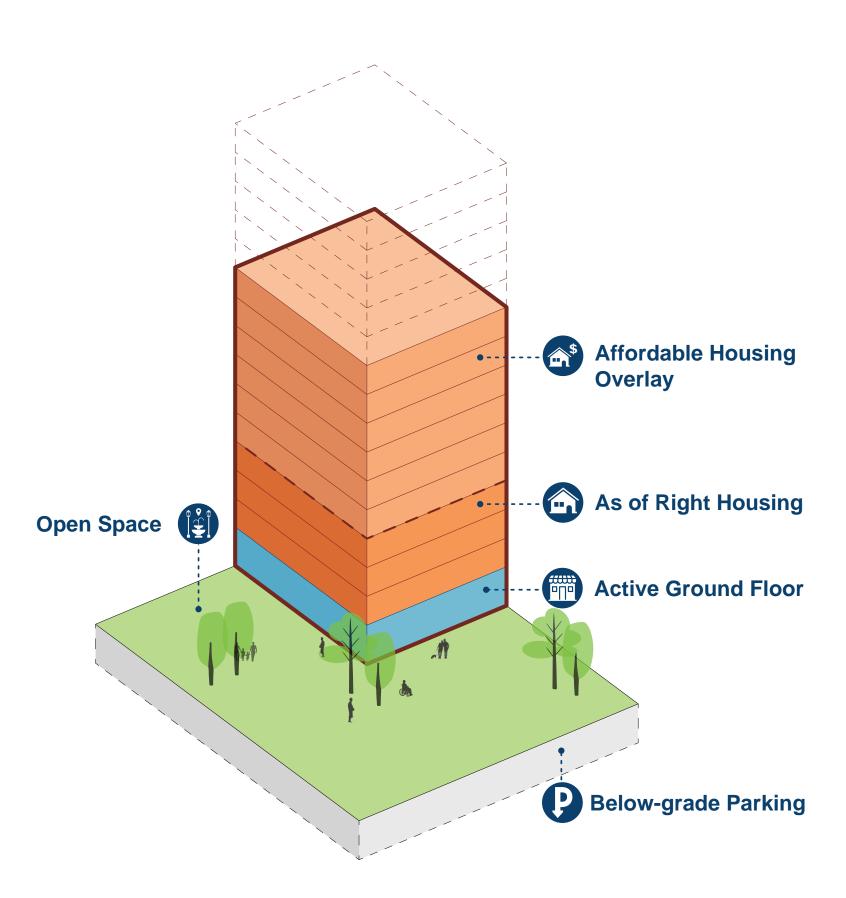
# **Test Fit Assumptions (Continued)**

### Adjust for what's most feasible today

- For small sites, 6 stories is most likely due to construction costs and technology
- Projects show a range of units to reflect a variety of options around unit sizes, common spaces or other variables that influence a building's efficiency

#### **Consider where future steps might adjust** massing

 Design guidelines, program refinements, construction considerations, and relationships with other buildings will likely result in changes to the test-fit massings in future steps



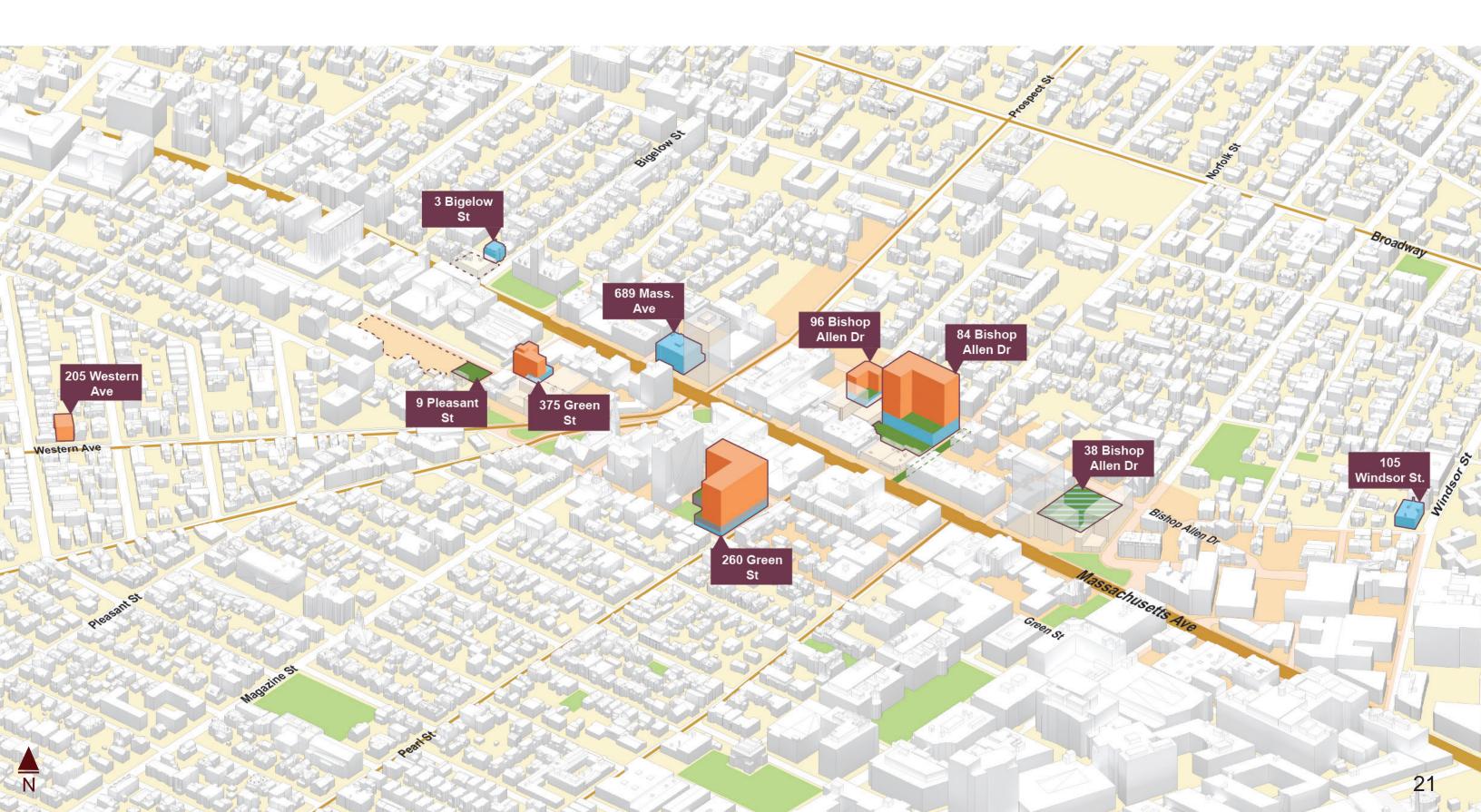
## Existing Area



#### Open Space, Parking, Infrastructure

### **Test-fit Options**

Housing



#### Open Space, Parking, Infrastructure



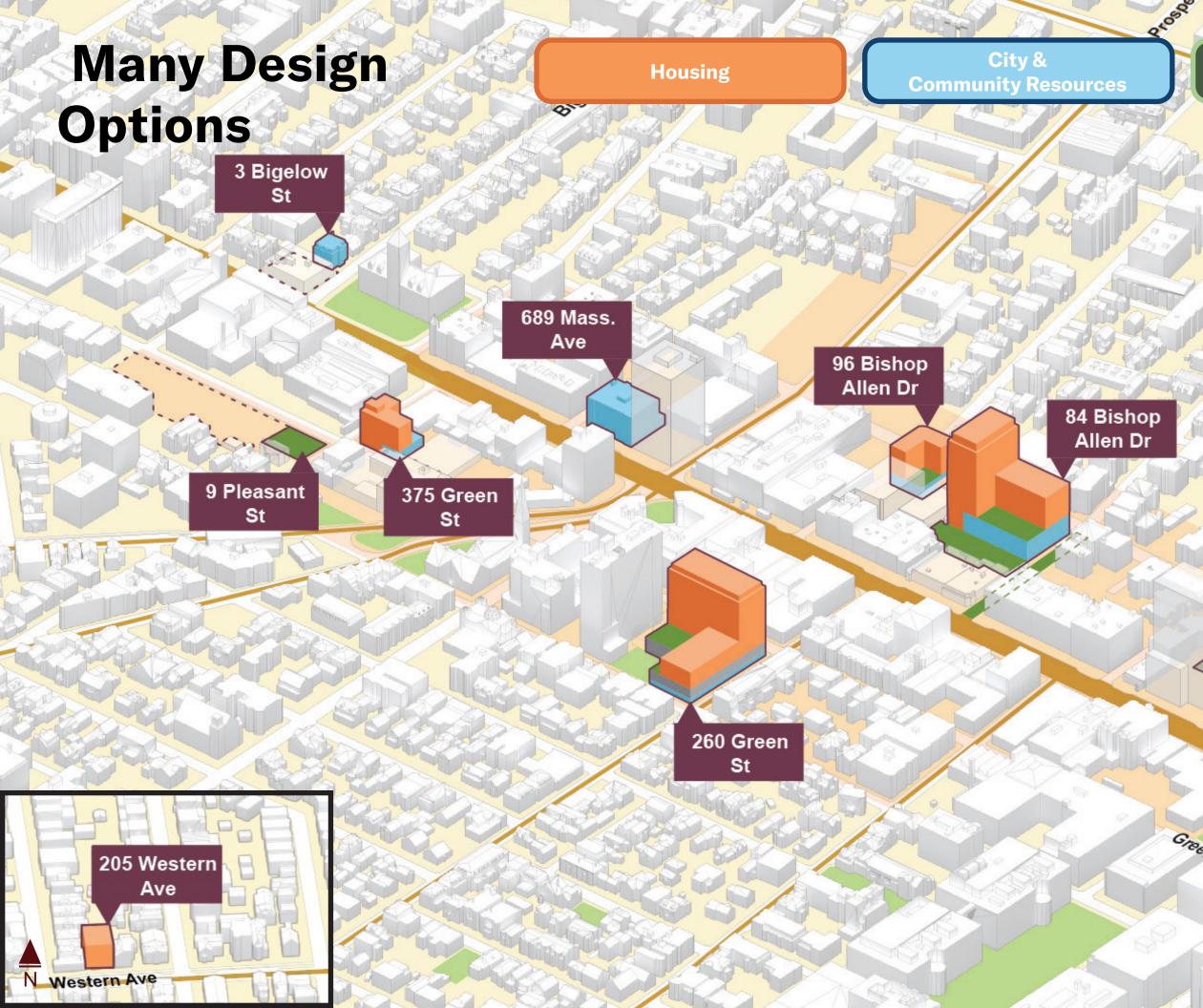
#### **Open Space, Parking,** Infrastructure Noor

õ





Bishop Allen Dr



#### Open Space, Parking, Infrastructure Noor Noor

õ





Bishop Allen Dr





### HOW CAN WE EXPAND COMMUNITY AND CITY SERVICES IN CENTRAL SQUARE?

### **105 Windsor St**

### **689 Massachusetts Ave**

**3 Bigelow St** 



















### **105 Windsor St**





#### **COMMUNITY INPUT HIGHLIGHTS**



Learning Spaces





#### SITE **CONSIDERATIONS**

- Located across from Newtowne Court and near various nonprofit and health providers.
- Originally built as the Alphabet School, the first public school in the Port. Later uses included recreation facilities, the Cambridge Health Alliance and the Windsor House, a Senior daycare facility.
- Rear of site required for above ground utilities.

### EXISTING

**GROSS BUILDING** AREA

13,104 SF

**SITE AREA** 

10,018 SF

**ZONING DISTRICT C-1** 

**NUMBER OF STORIES** 

2



### Advance Community Space at 105 Windsor St

#### PROGRAM

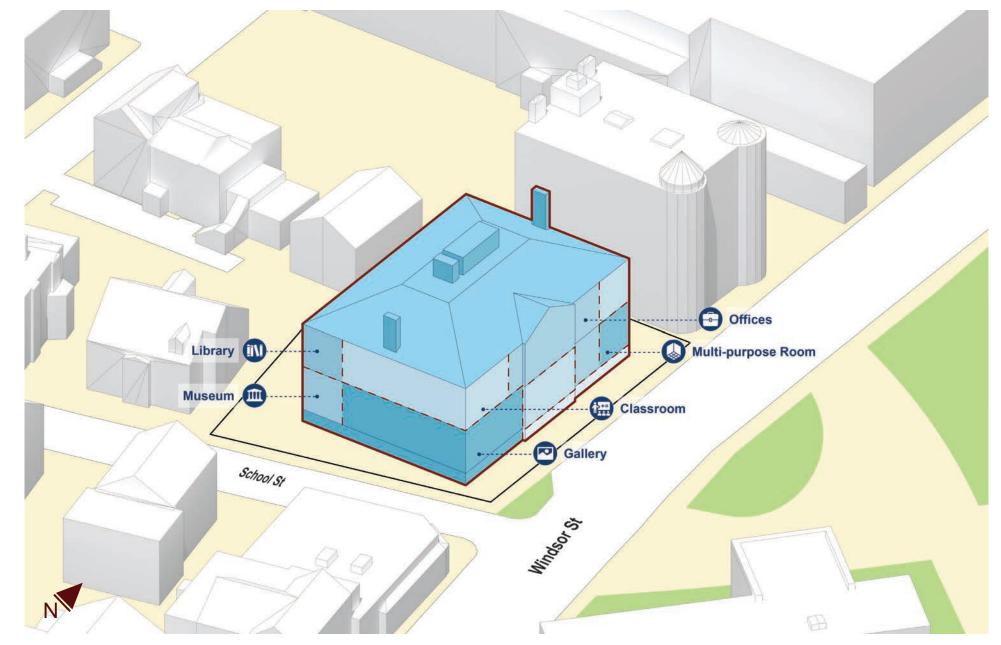
- 2 stories above grade
- Community spaces for the Port neighborhood (e.g. multi-purpose meeting spaces, museum/library space, classrooms/study spaces, small offices)
- Total Building Area (NSF) 11,590
   SF

#### **EARLY ACTION ITEM!**

Community process to finalize uses at 105 Windsor St



community space



Note: these are sample possible program options but will be refined with the community.

### **Advance Community Space at 105 Windsor St**

#### **NOTES**

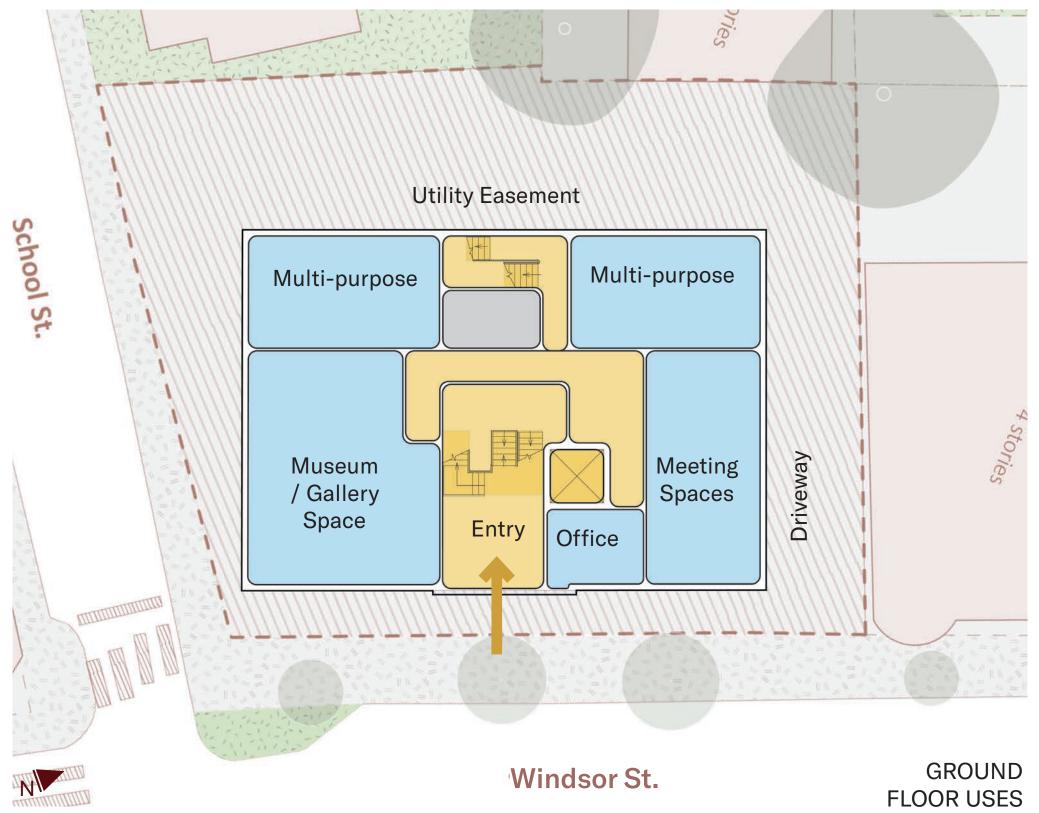
• Programming / space allocation to be determined in tandem with the Port community

#### **EARLY ACTION ITEM!**

Community process to finalize uses at 105 Windsor St



community space



Note: these are sample possible program options but will be refined with the community. 27

### **689 Massachusetts Ave**



#### **COMMUNITY INPUT HIGHLIGHTS**



Cultural Amenities / Spaces



Library Relocation

#### SITE CONSIDERATIONS

- The City recently acquired this building with the approval to use it for municipal uses.
- The building has historic value and limited expansion potential.

### EXISTING

### GROSS BUILDING AREA

33,456 SF

SITE AREA

10,101 SF

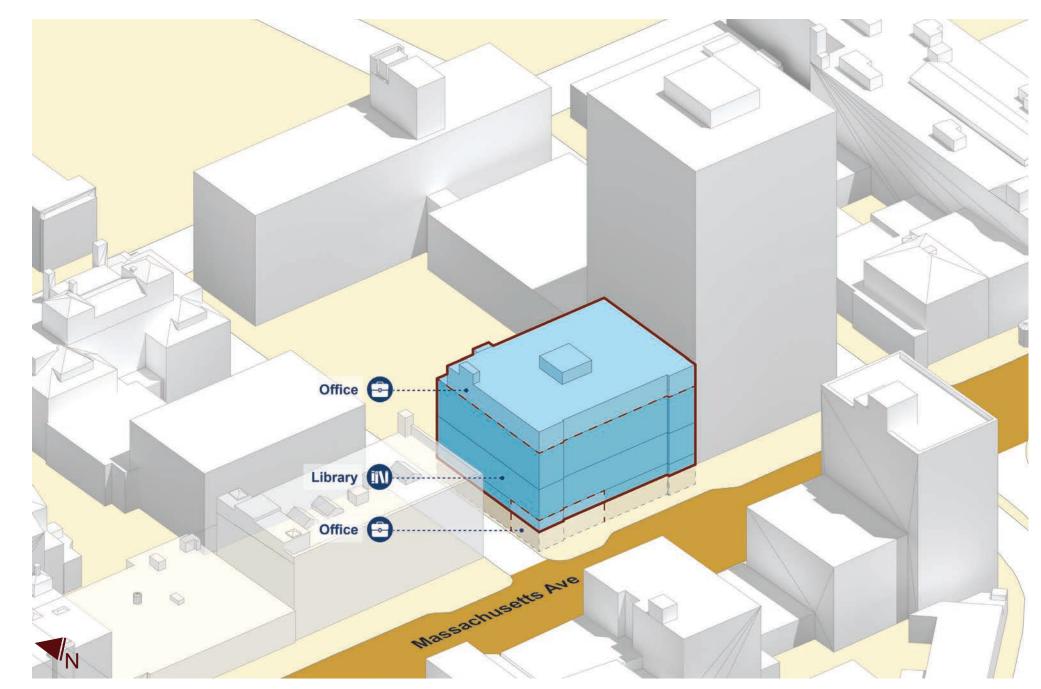
ZONING DISTRICT BB-CSQ

NUMBER OF STORIES

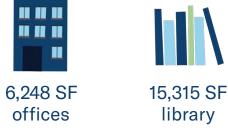


### **Relocate Library to 689 Mass Ave**

- 3 stories above grade
- Community members expressed a desire to see the library in a more prominent and accessible location.
- Additional space is also suitable for offices



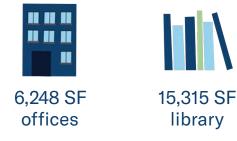
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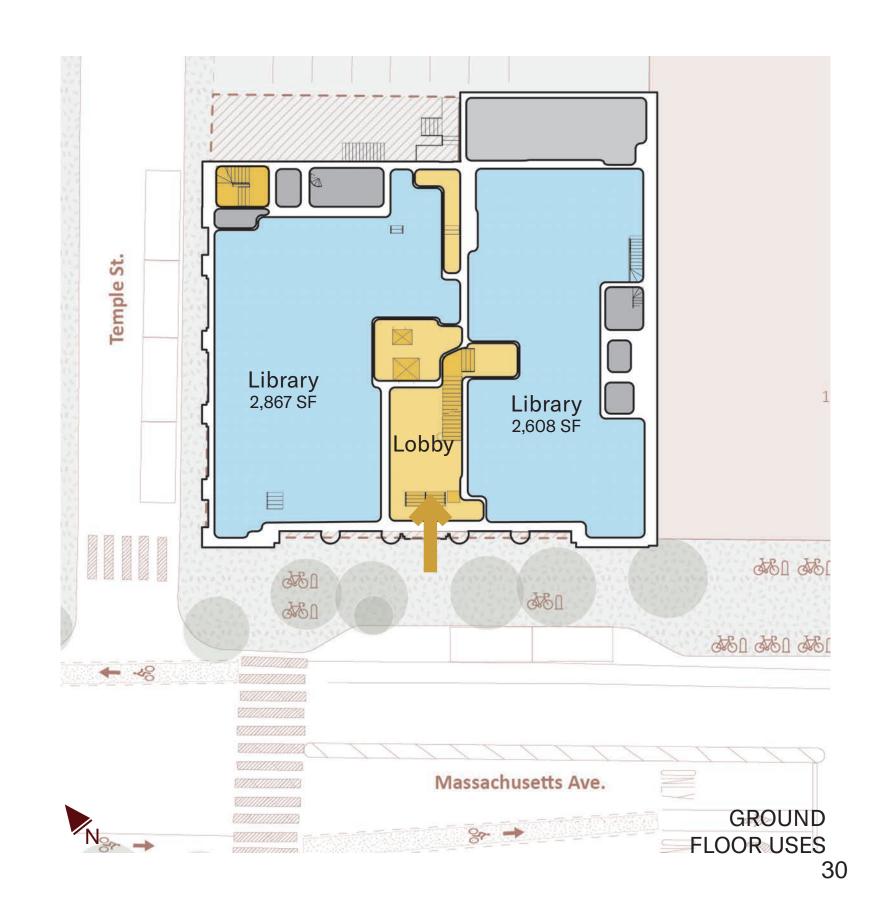


### **Relocate Library to 689 Mass Ave**

#### NOTES

- Current 260 Green Library NSF - 13,699 SF
- Total library area (NSF) (Level 01 & 02) - 15,315 SF
- Office 6,248 SF
- Total Building Area (NSF) -28,757 SF





## **3 Bigelow St**







#### **COMMUNITY INPUT HIGHLIGHTS**



Community Services / One-Stop-Shop



Affordable Housing

#### SITE CONSIDERATIONS

- The building is vacant, requires extensive renovations, and has historic character.
- Most recently used by the Department of Human Services as transitional housing.
- Adjacent to Cambridge City Hall and the Lombardi office building.

### EXISTING

GROSS BUILDING AREA 6,386 SF

SITE AREA 5,175 SF

ZONING DISTRICT C-2B

NUMBER OF STORIES

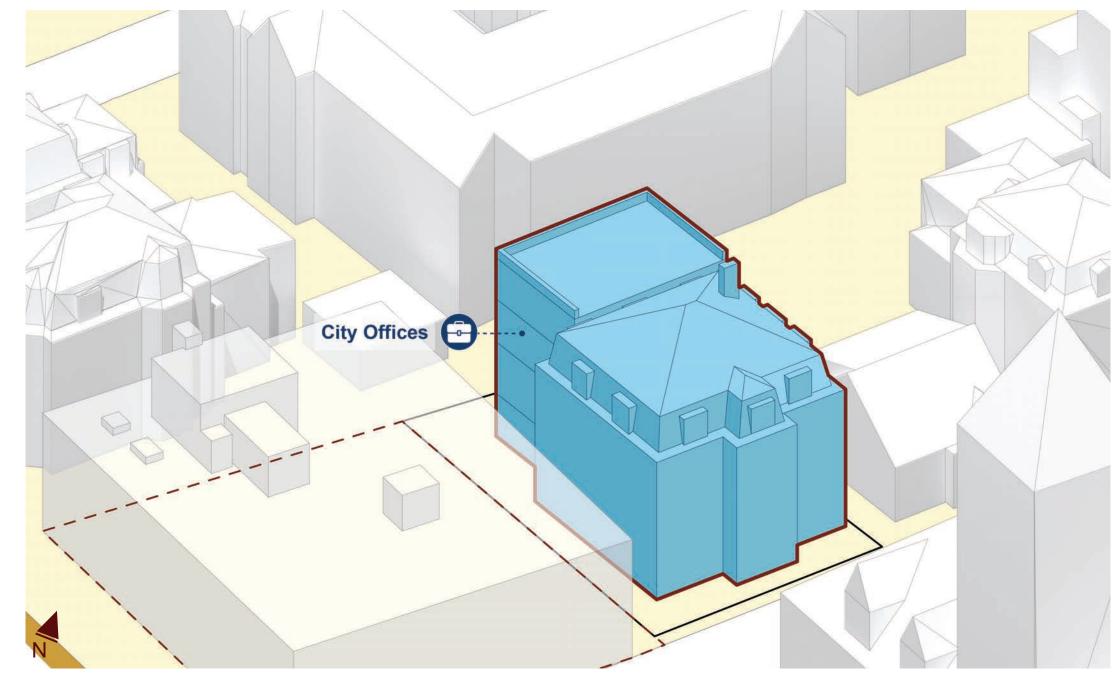




# Expand City Offices at 3 Bigelow St and Potentially Adjacent Sites

#### PROGRAM

- Demolition of existing non-historic rear addition and new addition created to add space and make building accessible.
- Original building renovated for municipal offices
- Total Addition Area (GSF)
   3,036 SF



Note: these are sample test-fits for program direction and are not intended to illustrate building design.



8,475 SF offices

# Expand City Offices at 3 Bigelow St and Potentially Adjacent Sites

 Additional development may be possible if building is demolished and rebuilt in tandem with Lombardi building.



N



8,475 SF offices

GROUND FLOOR USES 33









### **HOW CAN WE INCREASE HOUSING?**

260 Green St / 45 Pearl St 84 Bishop Allen Dr (Lot 5) 96 Bishop Allen Dr (Lot 4) 375 Green St (Lot 8) 205 Western Ave





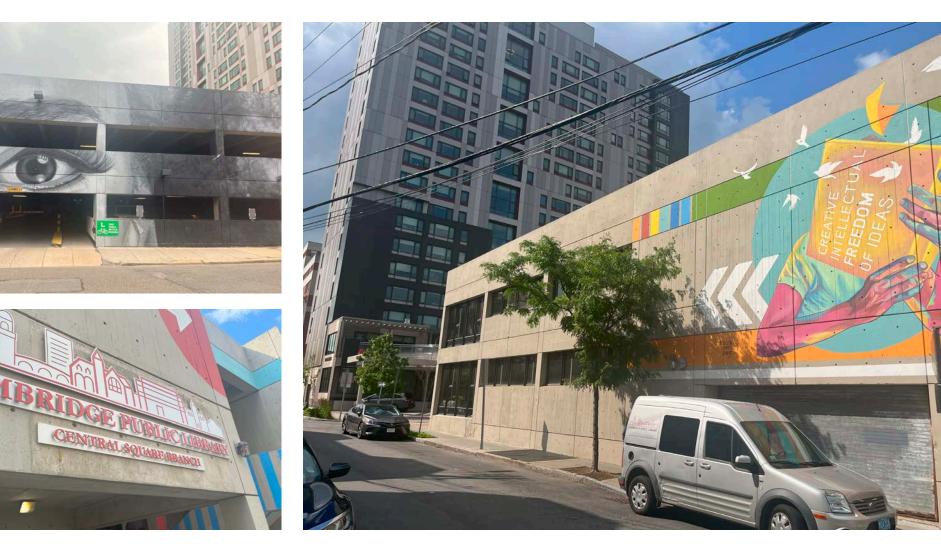






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### **260 Green St / 45 Pearl St**



#### **COMMUNITY INPUT HIGHLIGHTS**

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-

High-density affordable housing



Cultural Amenities / Spaces

#### SITE **CONSIDERATIONS**

- Structural study suggests only 1-2 additional levels may be built on top of existing garage and building.
- Recent analysis shows the garage may have additional capacity and is mostly used by monthly parkers.

### **EXISTING**

### **GROSS BUILDING** AREA 25,686 SF Garage 19,824 SF Library

**SITE AREA** 55.828 SF

**ZONING DISTRICT C-3** 

#### PARKING SPACES

257



### Create a hub of housing, parking, and community space at 260 Green St

- Demolish & replace • Library and Green St garage
- Ground floor public use oriented along Pearl St
- Potential for 12 stories of housing
- Basement, ground floor, • plus two levels of parking garage



housing units

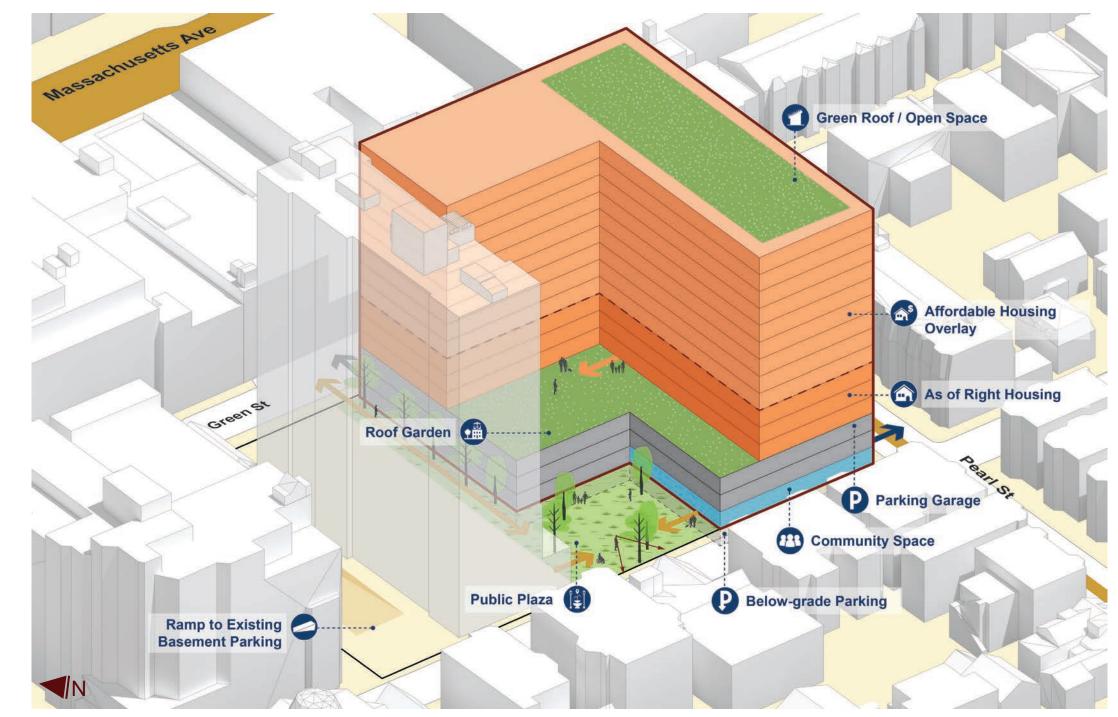


0.12 acres





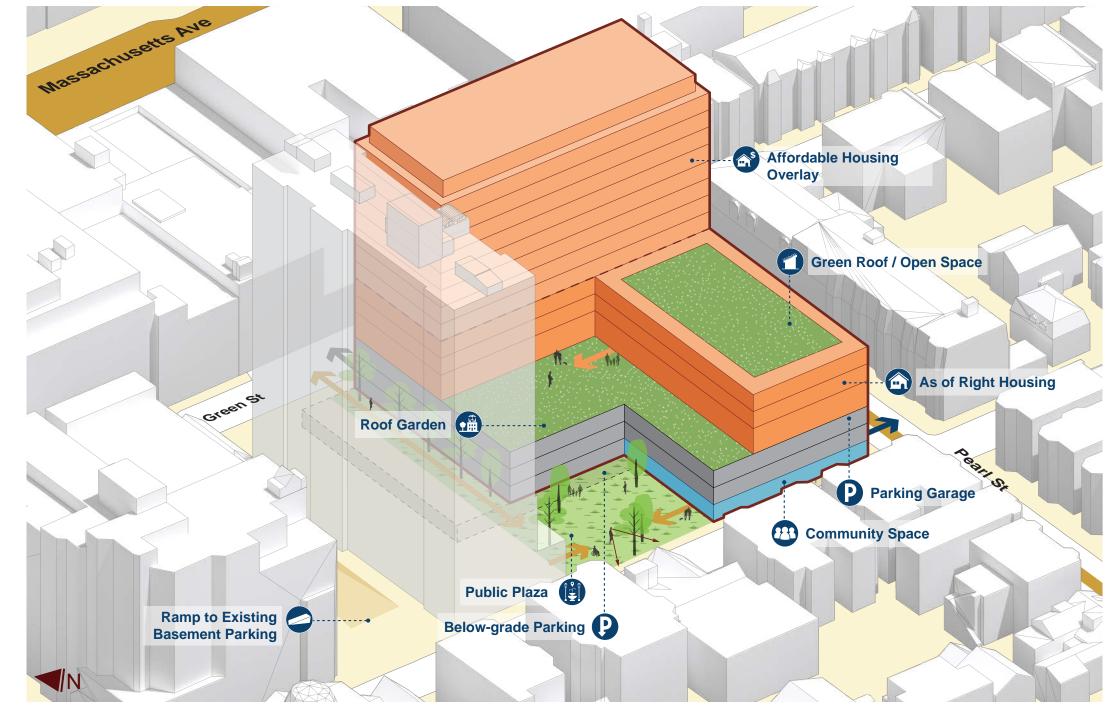
16,000 SF community space



Note: these are sample test-fits for program direction and are not intended to illustrate building design.

# Future design can test the right massing

- Demolish & replace • Library and Green St garage
- Ground floor public use oriented along Pearl St
- Potential for 12 stories of housing
- Basement, ground floor, • plus two levels of parking garage



Note: these are sample test-fits for program direction and are not intended to illustrate building design.





0.12 acres



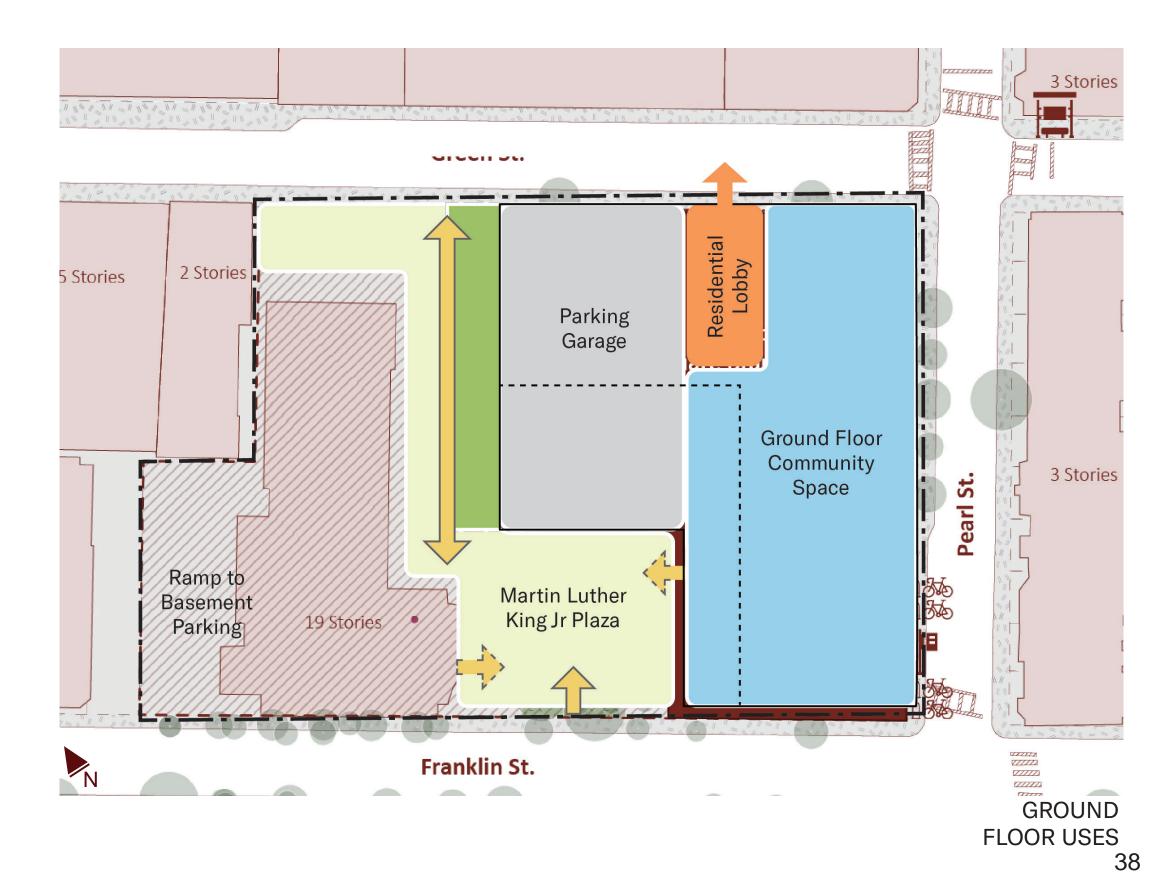


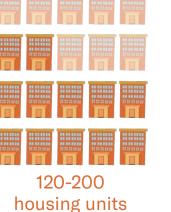
16,000 SF community space

# Create a hub of housing, parking, and community space at 260 Green St

#### NOTES

 Replacement parking and a parking study will be necessary in combination with redevelopment





0.12 acres





16,000 SF community space

# 84 Bishop Allen Dr (Lot 5)

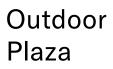


#### **COMMUNITY INPUT HIGHLIGHTS**



Flexible Arts & Market Space





Small Business Incubator



Affordable Housing

### SITE CONSIDERATIONS

- H-Mart and other retailers rely on nearby parking.
- Important public realm considerations include Graffiti Alley, current use as Starlight Square, the Farmer's Market, and other events.

# EXISTING SITE AREA 33,715 SF ZONING DISTRICT BB

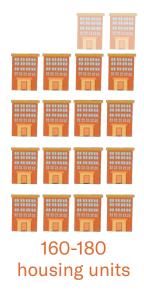
23



# **Develop Housing with Flexible Arts, Plaza, and** Market Space at 84 Bishop Allen Dr

#### **PROGRAM**

- Civic/cultural Space
- Up to 14 stories of housing above retail, civic/cultural space and performance space
- South-facing outdoor plaza
- One level of underground parking • (note: could be tested for more)



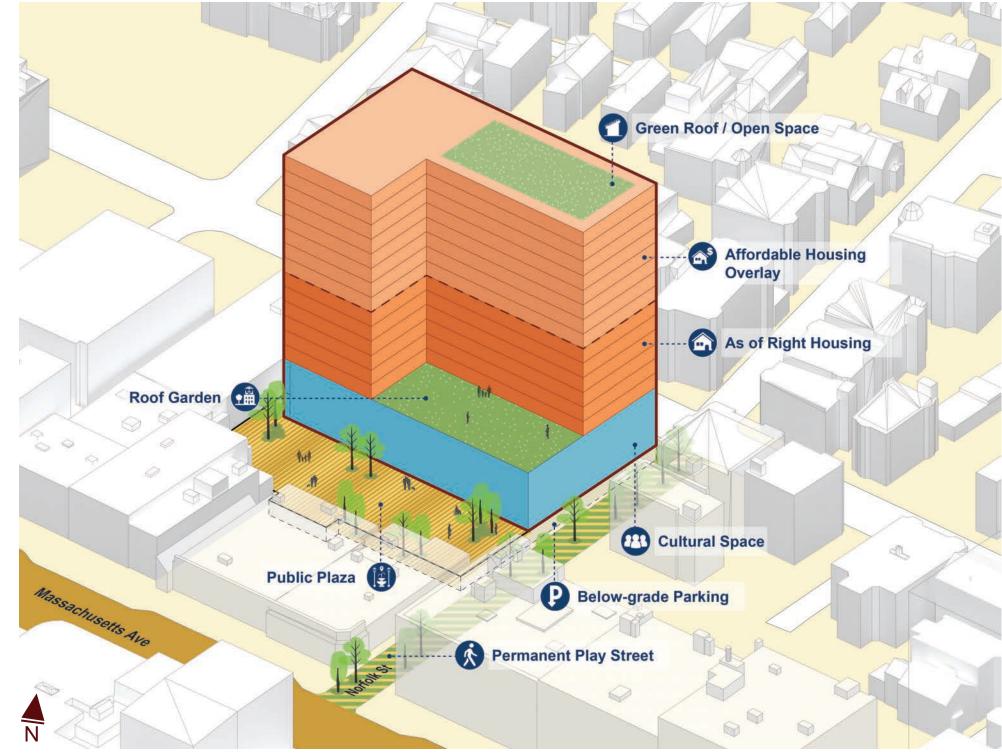


19,000 SF flexible market / cultural / performance space





0.11 acres

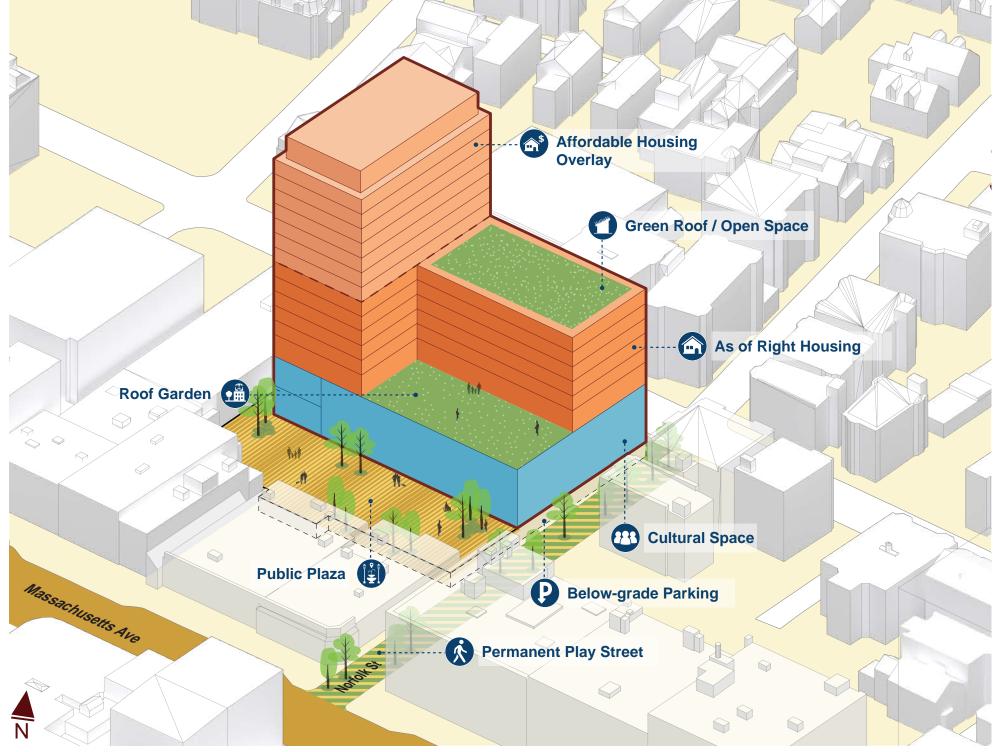


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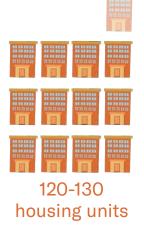
# Future design can test the right massing

#### PROGRAM

- Up to 14 stories of housing above retail and performance space
- South-facing outdoor plaza
- One level of underground parking (note: could be tested for more)



Note: these are sample test-fits for program direction and are not intended to illustrate building design.





19,000 SF flexible market / cultural / performance space

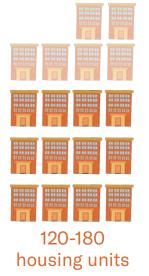




0.11 acres

# Develop Housing with Flexible Arts, Plaza, and Market Space at 84 Bishop Allen Dr

 Preserves access to HMart, Graffiti Alley, and existing retail.



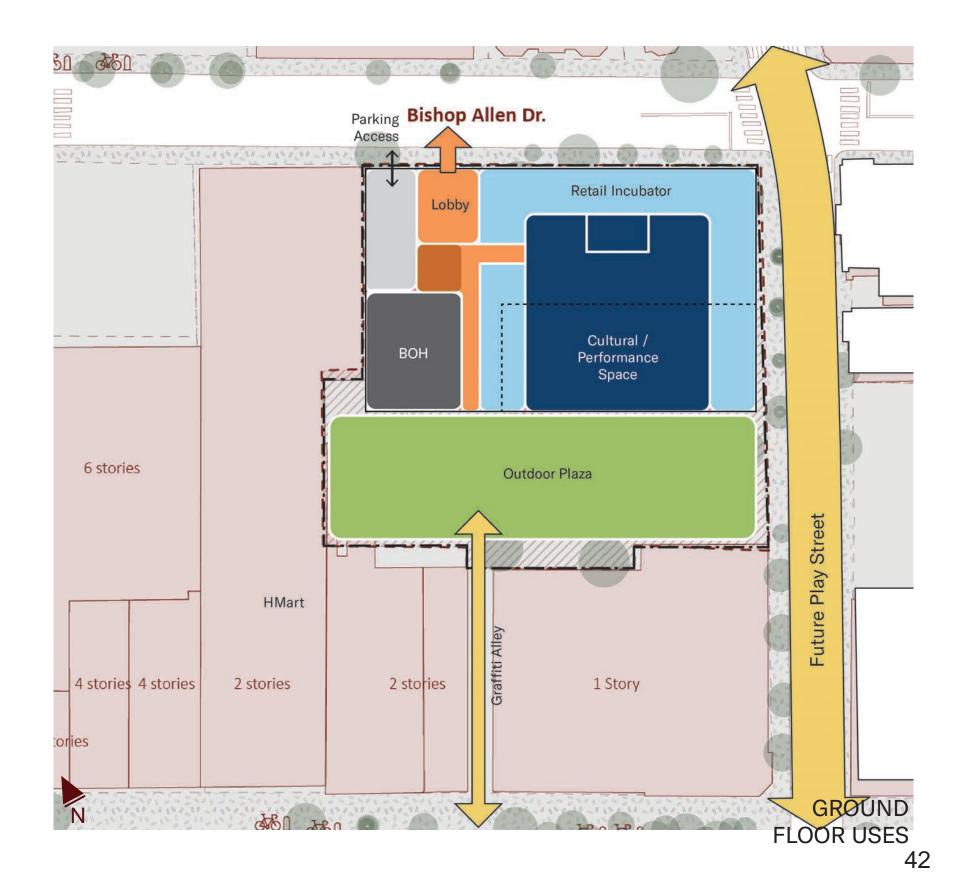


19,000 SF flexible market / cultural / performance space





0.11 acres



# 96 Bishop Allen Dr (Lot 4)







#### **COMMUNITY INPUT HIGHLIGHTS**

No. of Concession, Name

Affordable Housing



Small Business Incubator

### SITE CONSIDERATIONS

- Located on the same block as 84 Bishop Allen Drive (Starlight Square) and HMart.
- Across the street from 99 Bishop Allen Drive, a newly renovated row house development with non-profit office space.

## EXISTING

### SITE AREA

6,210 SF

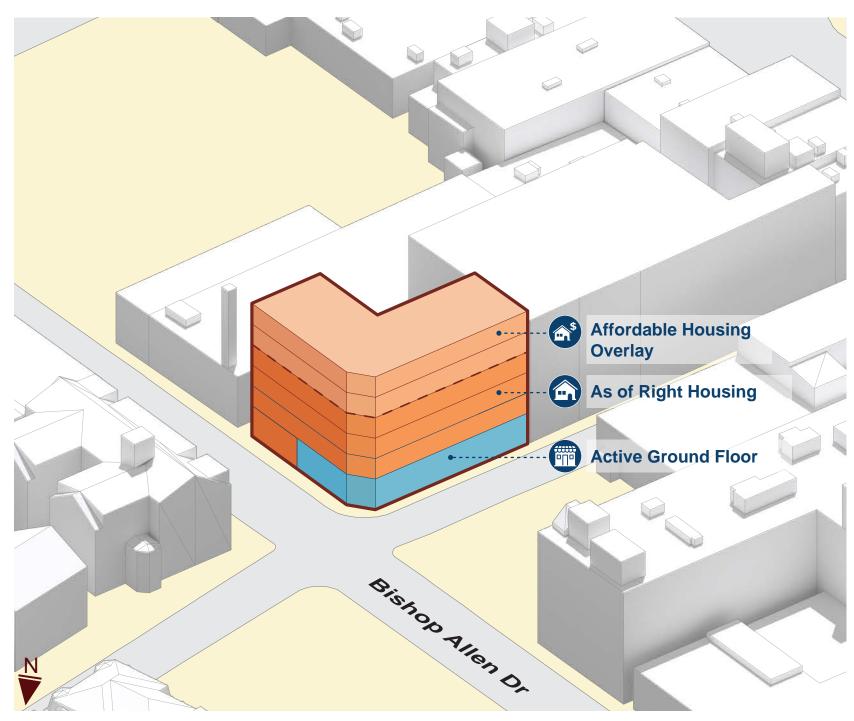
## ZONING DISTRICT BB

# PARKING SPACES



# **Explore Housing Potential at 96 Bishop Allen Dr**

- 15-20 units, 6 stories
- Active community use on the ground floor
- AHO allows height up to 15 stories, but not feasible due to parcel size and construction technologies
- Loss of existing parking spaces; consider relocating lost parking spaces to other sites





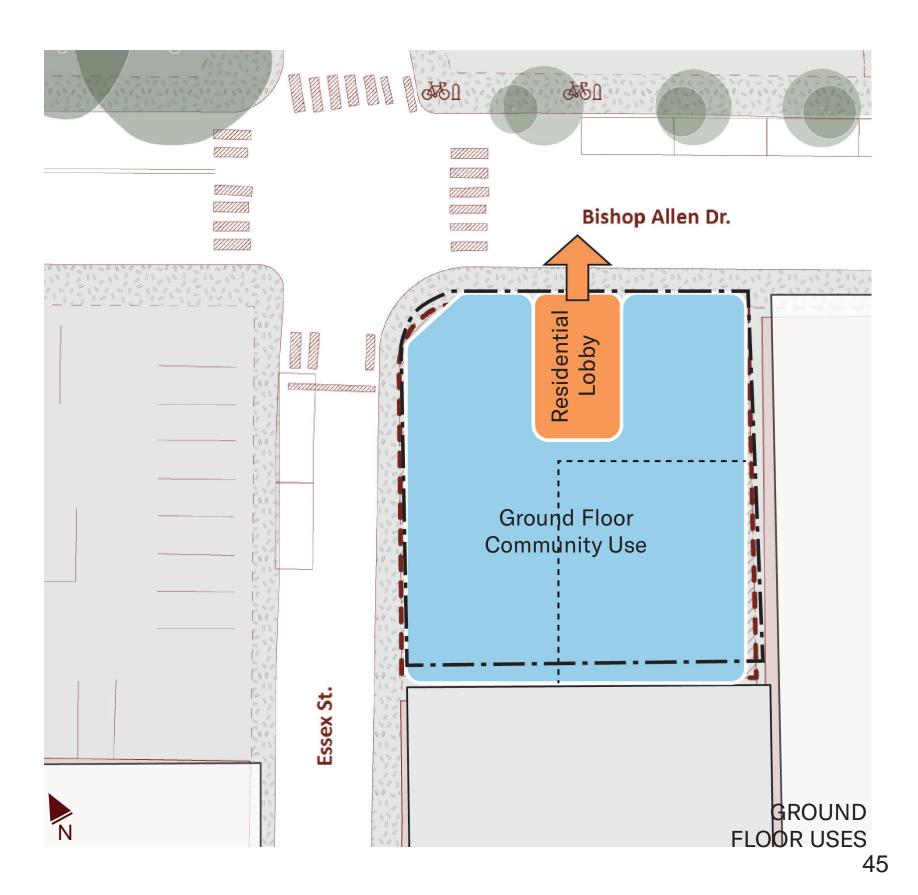




Note: these are sample test-fits for program direction and are not intended to illustrate building design.

# **Explore Housing Potential at 96 Bishop Allen Dr**

- No open space requirement
- Shade conditions at this site make the space less suited for a park or open space





15-20

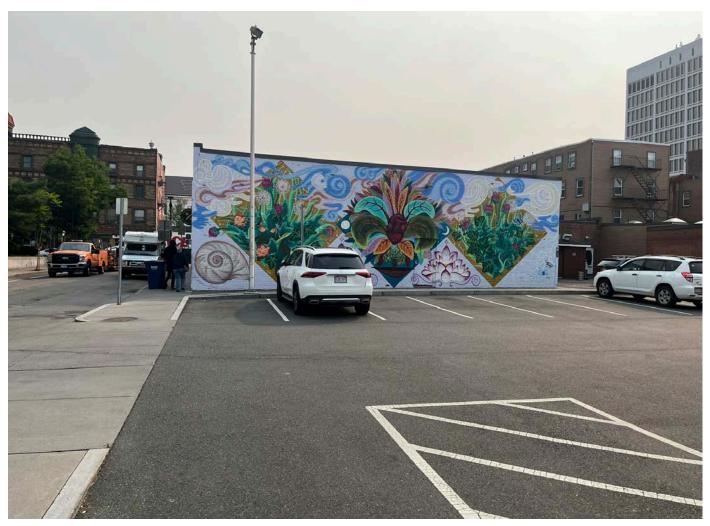
housing units

5,000 SF active ground floor or community use

# 375 Green St (Lot 8)







#### **COMMUNITY INPUT HIGHLIGHTS**

-			
	-		

Affordable Housing



#### SITE CONSIDERATIONS

- Next to building that fronts on Mass Ave.
- Low open space access and potential for flooding.
- Zoning allows for full development of the site.

# **EXISTING** SITE AREA 6,436 SF ZONING DISTRICT BB\_CSQ

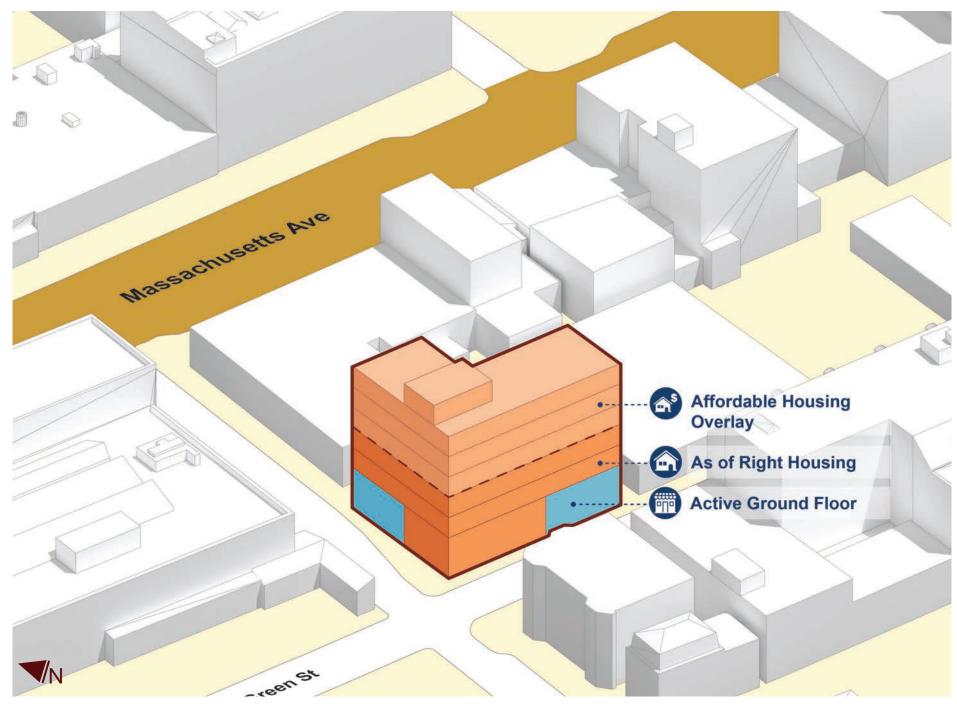
# PARKING SPACES



# Maintain as Parking in the Short-term and Explore Longterm Housing Opportunities at 375 Green St

#### LONGER-TERM

- 10-20 units of housing, 6 stories with retail / active use on ground floor
- AHO allows height up to 15 stories, but not feasible due to parcel size and construction technologies
- Loss of existing parking spaces; consider relocating lost parking spaces to other sites
- No open space requirement



Note: these are sample massing test-fits for program direction and are not intended to illustrate building design.



# Maintain as Parking in the Short-term and Explore Longterm Housing Opportunities at 375 Green St

 No open space requirement



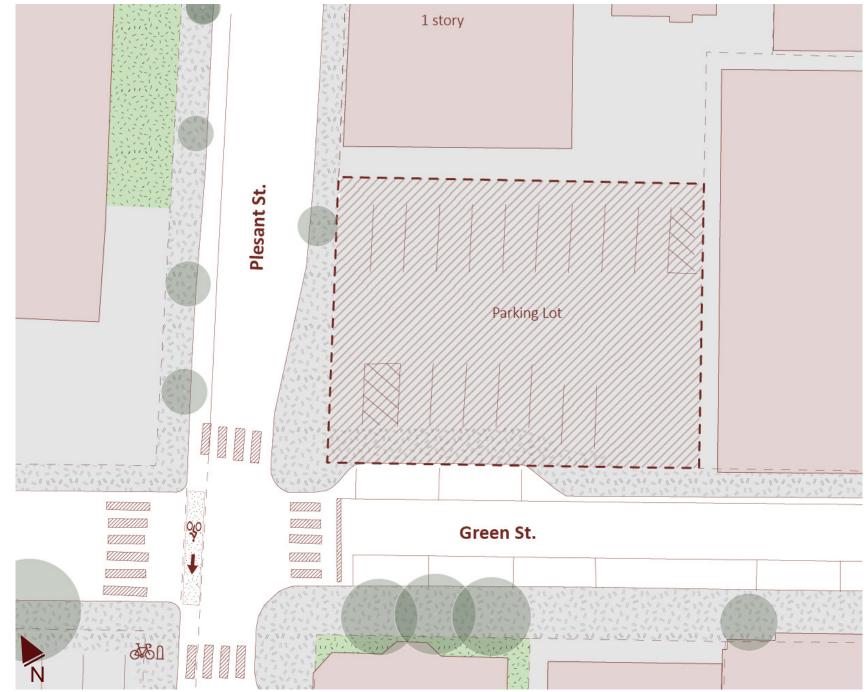


GROUND FLOOR USES 48

# Maintain as Parking in the Short-Term and Explore Longterm Housing Opportunities at 375 Green St

#### **SHORT-TERM**

- Maintain as parking while nearby sites are under construction
- Consider moving cultural / performance spaces from 84 Bishop Allen Dr here during construction



## **205 Western Ave**



#### **COMMUNITY INPUT HIGHLIGHTS**

_	

Supportive Housing



Small Business Incubator



Affordable Housing

#### SITE CONSIDERATIONS

- Building is vacant and requires extensive renovations.
- Does not have significant historic value.
- If demolished, the replacement building may not be able to be as large as is currently built due to current zoning requirements for the site.

## EXISTING

GROSS BUILDING AREA

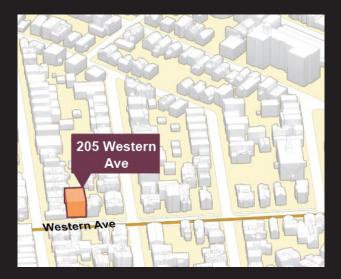
4,280 SF

SITE AREA

5,258 SF

ZONING DISTRICT BA-3

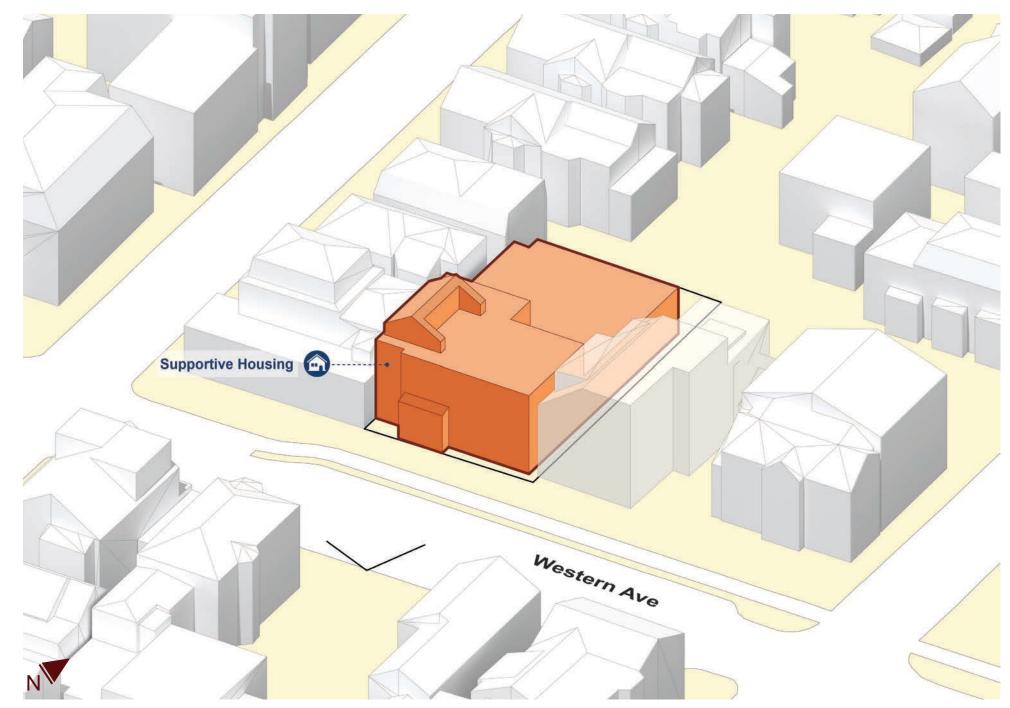
NUMBER OF STORIES
2



# **Tested Housing at 205 Western Ave**

#### **PROGRAM**

- 3 stories above grade
- 8-10 studio units (270-320 SF)
- Assumes one shared common area on ground floor (250 SF)
- Offices 350 SF
- Total Building Area (GSF) 10,624 SF







# **Tested Housing at 205 Western Ave**

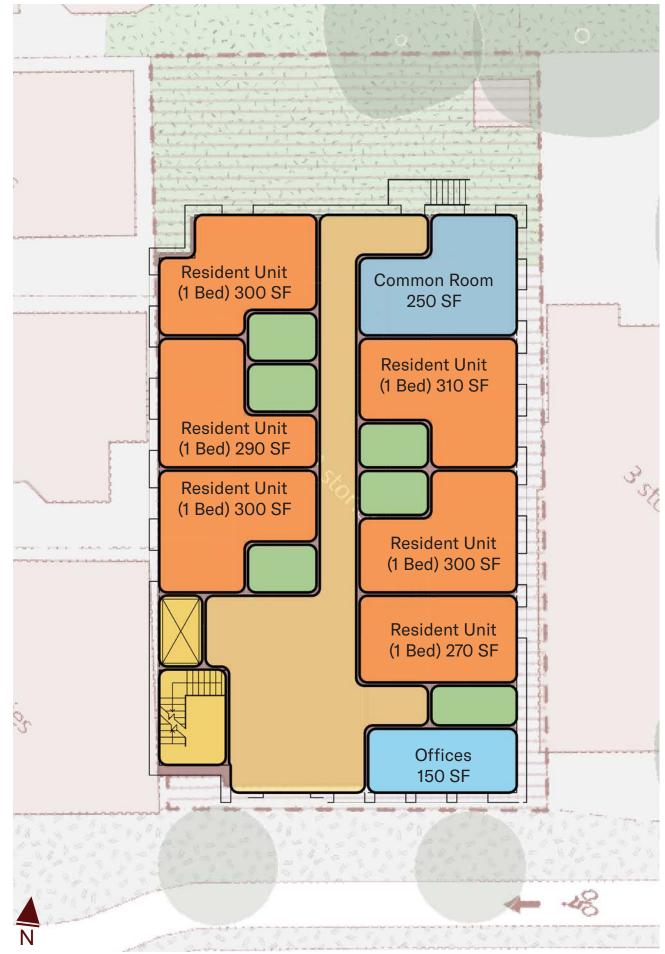
#### PROGRAM

- 3 stories above grade
- 8-10 studio units (270-320 SF)
- Assumes one shared common area on ground floor (250 SF)
- Offices 350 SF
- Total Building Area (GSF) 10,624 SF



GROUND FLOOR USES

Note: these are sample test-fits for program direction and are not intended to illustrate design.









## HOW CAN WE MAINTAIN FLEXIBILITY, MEET INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS, AND INCREASE OPEN SPACE?

# 38 Bishop Allen Dr (Lot 6) 9 Pleasant St (Lot 9)









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# **38 Bishop Allen Dr (Lot 6)**







### **COMMUNITY INPUT** HIGHLIGHTS

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High-density affordable housing



Cultural Amenities / Spaces

### SITE **CONSIDERATIONS**

- Development is limited to certain areas of the site due to underground stormwater retention tanks and an access easement granted to Market Central for garage access and loading. As a result, only the middle section  $(\sim \frac{1}{3})$  of the lot is buildable in the future.
- Surrounded by high density new housing and retail.

# EXISTING **SITE AREA** 27,799 SF **ZONING DISTRICT**

**BB\_CSQ** 

### **PARKING SPACES** 40



# **Leverage Opportunities for Near-term Parking and Long**term Open Space / Infrastructure at 38 Bishop Allen Dr

#### **LONG-TERM**

- Open Space that maintains access for easements
- Allows for addition of another underground stormwater tank
- 170' x 170' / 0.66 acres
- Lawn: 80' x 140'

#### **NOTES**

- 500-1500 people in an event •
- 20-30 tents + 5 trucks





0.66 acres

stormwater tank





# **Leverage Opportunities for Near-term Parking and Long**term Open Space / Infrastructure at 38 Bishop Allen Dr

#### **SHORT-TERM**

- Maintain as parking
- Can serve as parking as other nearby projects move forward





# 9 Pleasant St (Lot 9)







#### **COMMUNITY INPUT HIGHLIGHTS**

Affordable Housing



#### SITE CONSIDERATIONS

- Located across from the US Post Office building and surrounded by public and private parking lots.
- Low open space access.
- Future buildings could be up to 85 tall, but have setback requirements and a 15% open space requirement that limit development opportunities.

## EXISTING

#### **SITE AREA**

7,449 SF

## ZONING DISTRICT C-2

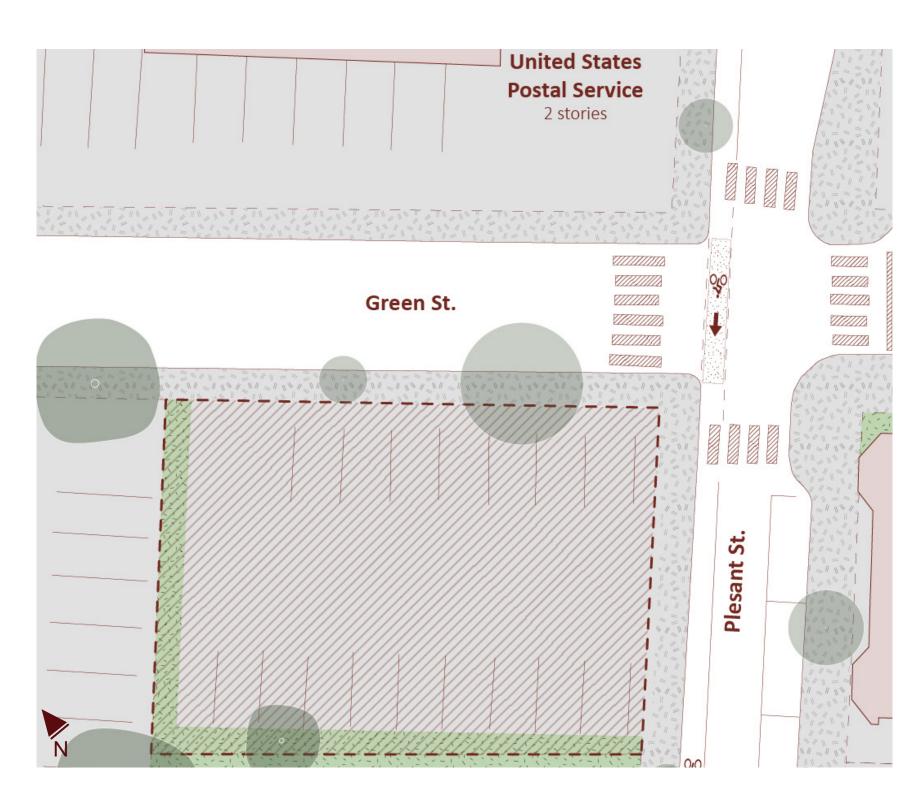
# PARKING SPACES



# Maintain as Parking and Consider for Longterm Open Space

#### SHORT-TERM

- Maintain as parking during construction of other lots
- Opportunity to relocate some open market uses from 84 Bishop Allen Dr during construction as needed



# Maintain as Parking and Consider for Longterm Open Space

#### LONG-TERM

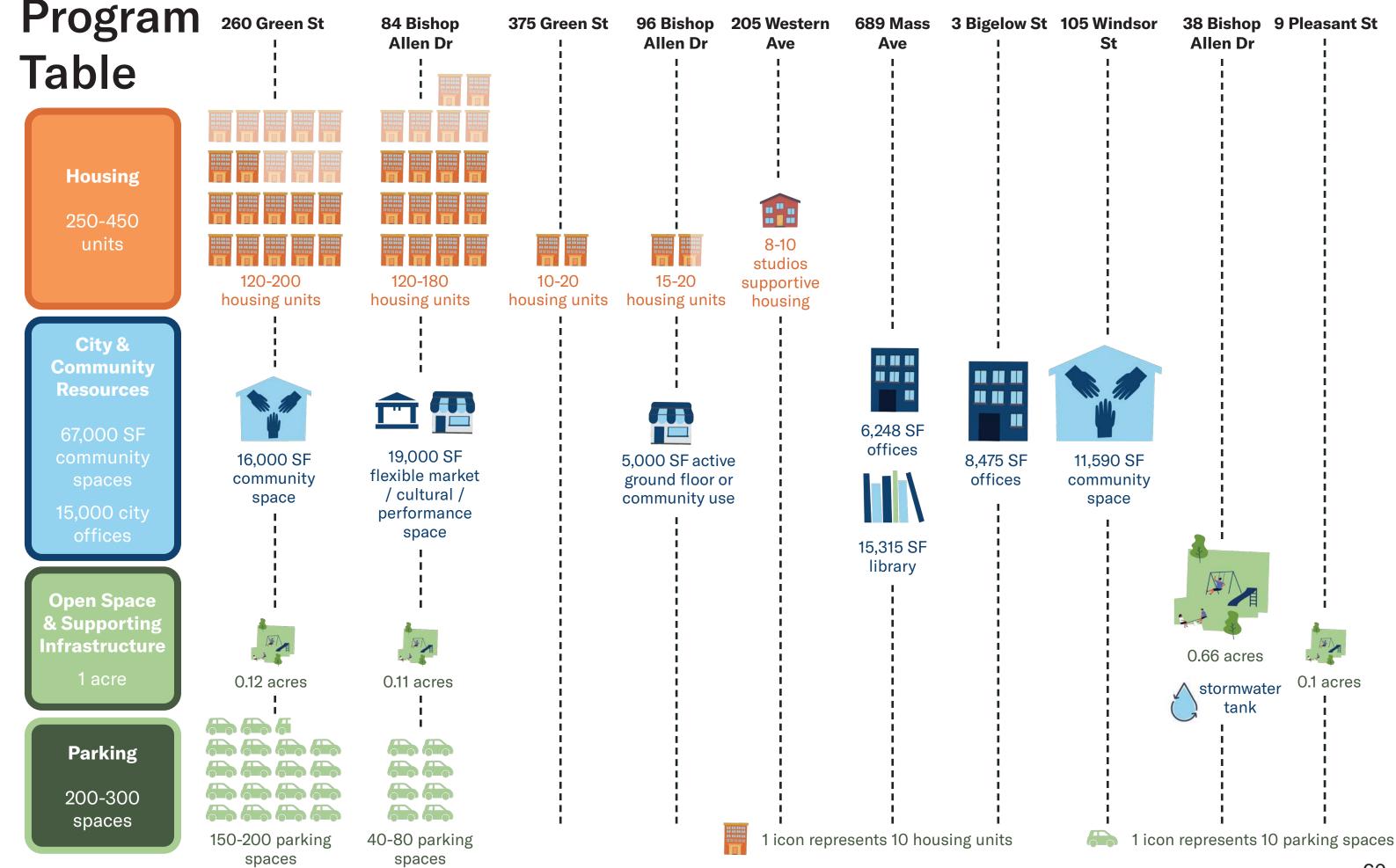
 Create a pocket park (0.14 acres), possibly in tandem with opportunities for housing on adjacent lots

#### NOTES

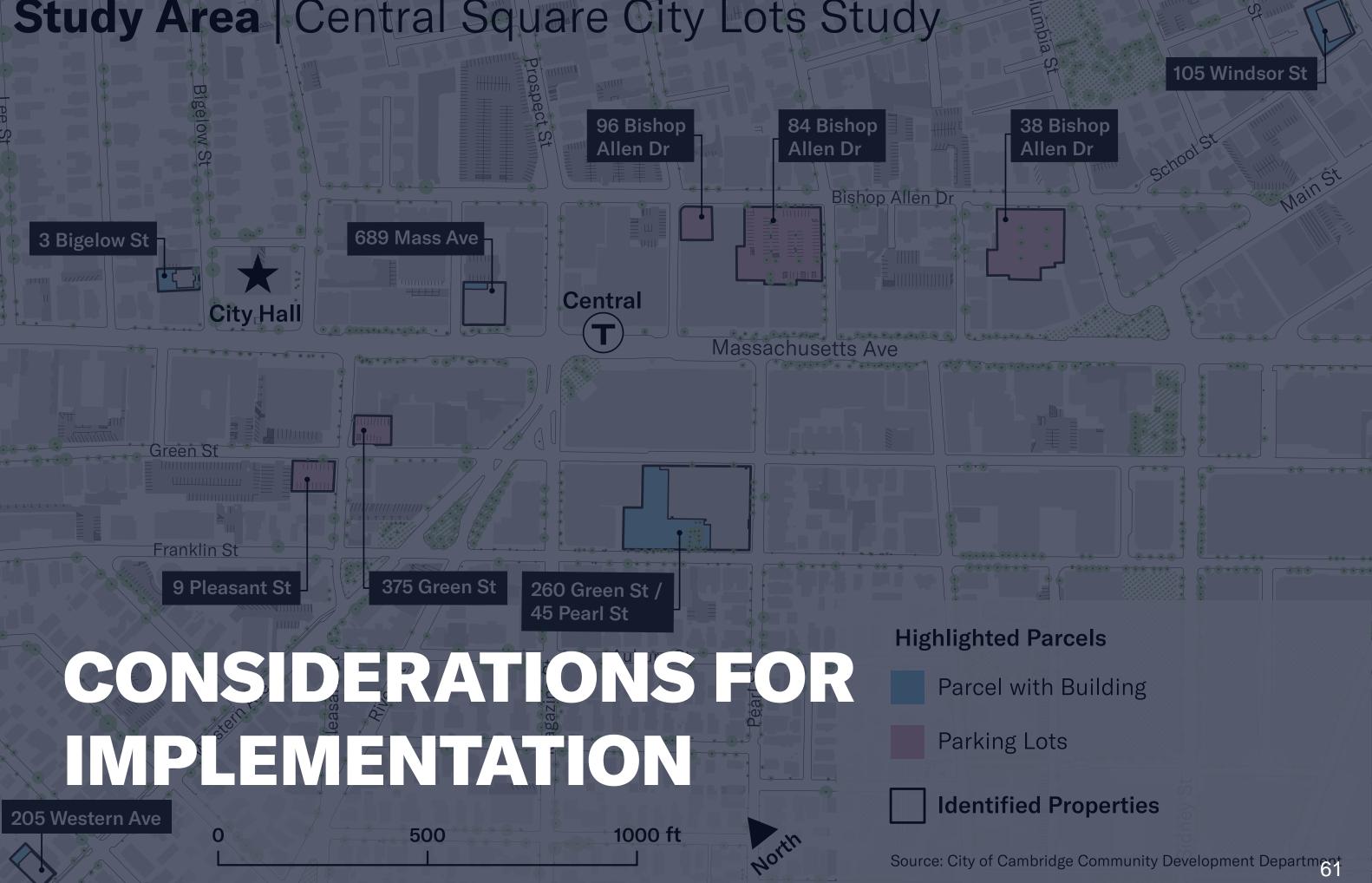
- 500-1500 people in an event
- 20-30 tents + 5 trucks







# Study Area Central Square City Lots Study





Here are some ideas for where to start! - which projects should be early action items and which are part of a longer-term vision?



#### **Transform Bishop Allen Dr**

Move forward on drafting an RFI to create a mixeduse development that meets community goals for housing, civic/cultural space, and public parking on 84 Bishop Allen Dr and 96 Bishop Allen Dr

Leverage 38 Bishop Allen Dr for parking until public parking is replaced at 84 Bishop Allen Dr.

#### Move Forward with a **Community Center at 105 Windsor**

Engage the Port neighborhood to determine uses to include at this community center.

#### **Parking Balance**

Replace as much public parking as possible when sites redevelop. Parking counts in this study serve as a baseline but should be restudied as part of each site's detailed implementation.

#### **Explore Adjacency Opportunities**

Explore possibilities to expand projects to include adjacent sites where feasible.



#### Create a High-Quality Central Square Branch Library at 689 Mass Ave and Housing at 260 Green St

Renovate 689 Mass Ave and move the library into its new location with city offices in any remaining available space.

#### Once library is relocated, redevelop 260 Green St as housing (including affordable) and parking

During reconstruction, leverage City lots such as 375 Green St, 9 Pleasant St, and 38 Bishop Allen Dr to meet parking needs. Explore opportunities to supplement through lease of private lots.

#### Create as Much Housing as Possible while Observing Design Guidelines

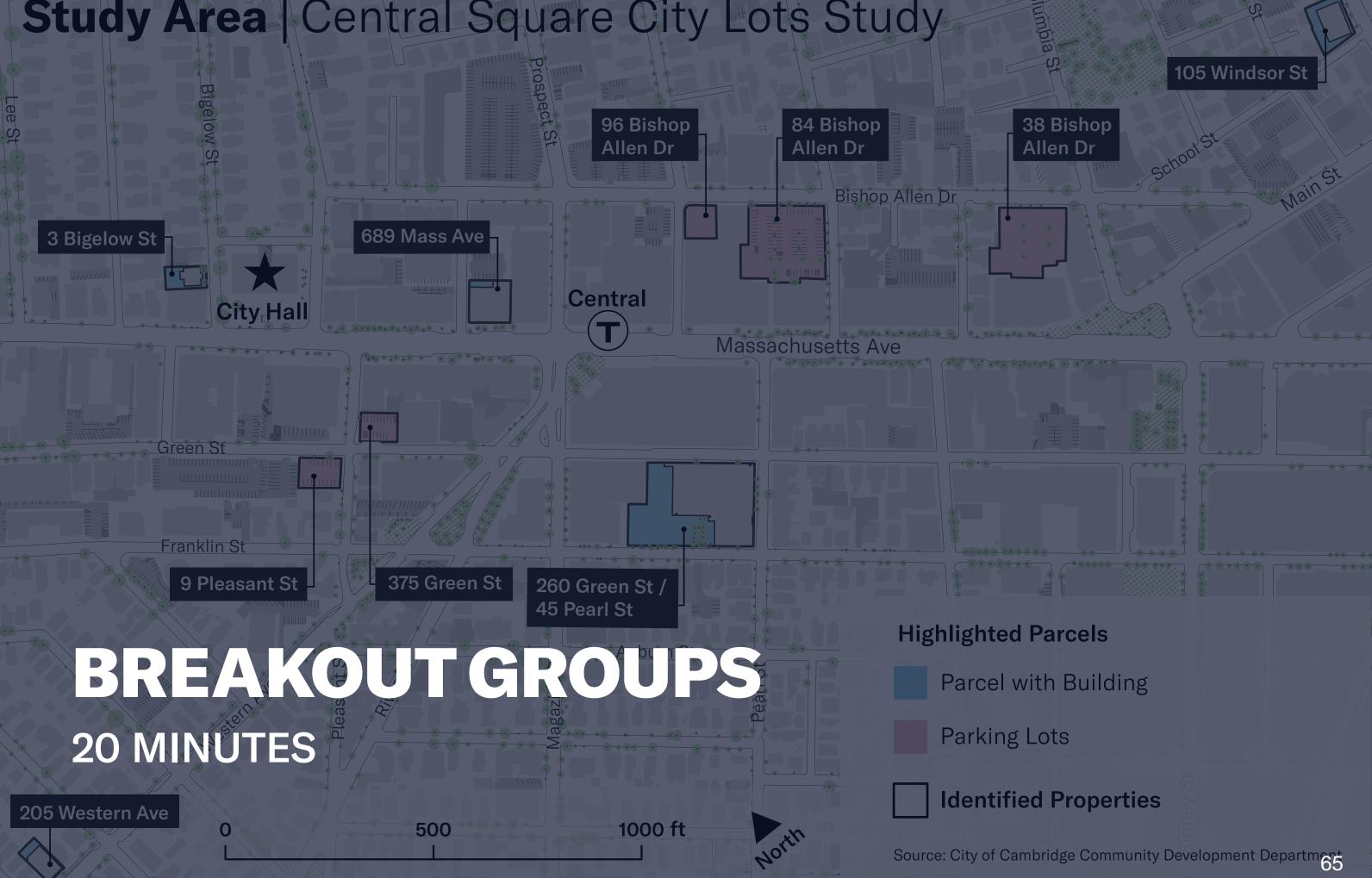
Incorporate the city's design guidelines and community considerations to create quality public realm and massing.

Determine feasibility of supportive housing at 205 Western Ave or elsewhere.

#### Invest in Supporting Parks and Infrastructure

Leverage 38 Bishop Allen Dr and 9 Pleasant St and all lots to support city infrastructure needs (parks, open space, stormwater retention)

# Study Area Central Square City Lots Study



# **Group Discussion Guidelines**

- Be respectful, be kind
- Embrace diverse points of view
- Avoid interruptions, one person speaks at a time
- Listen to understand, not to respond
- All stereotyping and hateful comments are not tolerated

# **Discussion Questions**

- Any questions, revisions, concerns on what was shown?
- Are there projects you're particularly excited to see move forward?
- What other considerations should the City think about as part of a long-term vision for these sites? Are there any design considerations that should be factored into future development?

# **REPORT BACK**

SHARE 2-3 HIGHLIGHTS FROM YOUR GROUP'S DISCUSSION!

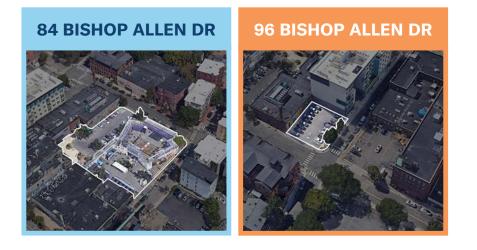
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## **Next Steps**

- Report draft in progress, to be refined based on tonight's discussion
- Submit final report to City Council in January

#### **EARLY ACTION ITEMS!**

Move forward on drafting RFI to create a mixed-use development that meets community goals for housing, civic/cultural space, and public parking on 84 Bishop Allen Dr and 96 Bishop Allen Dr



Community process to determine programming at 105 Windsor St

