

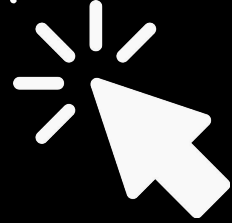
Phase 3:
North Mass Ave
Community
Meeting #1

9/26/24

Welcome!

PLEASE SIGN IN

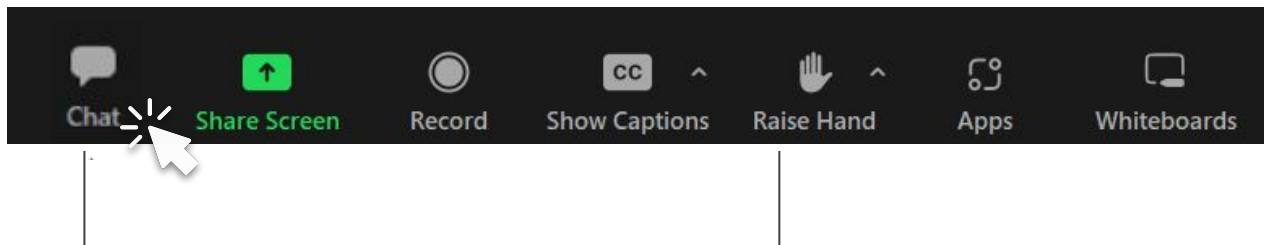
Click the link to sign in



Or scan:



Questions and Tech Questions



Tech Questions: Use **chat** to type a question and send to **"O_Information"** in the dropdown menu

Project Questions for the Q&A: Write in a question anytime **using the Q&A** feature. You can also **raise your hand** during the Q&A to ask live **(or press *9 if you've dialed in)**.

We'll go over this again later!

OUR TEAM

PROJECT LEAD:

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT (CDD)

Melissa Peters, Chief of Planning Strategy

Drew Kane, Senior City Planner

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:

CDD - EOD (Economic Opportunity and Development) Division

CDD - Environment & Transportation Division

CDD - Housing Division

CDD - Zoning & Development Division

CDD - Community Planning Division

DPW - Dept. of Public Works

TPT (Traffic, Parking, and Transportation)

CHC - Cambridge Historical Commission

DHSP - Department of Human Services Program (Council on Aging and Commission for Persons with Disabilities)

CDD CET - Community Engagement Team

GIS - Geographic Information System

CONSULTANT TEAM:

INTERFACE STUDIO

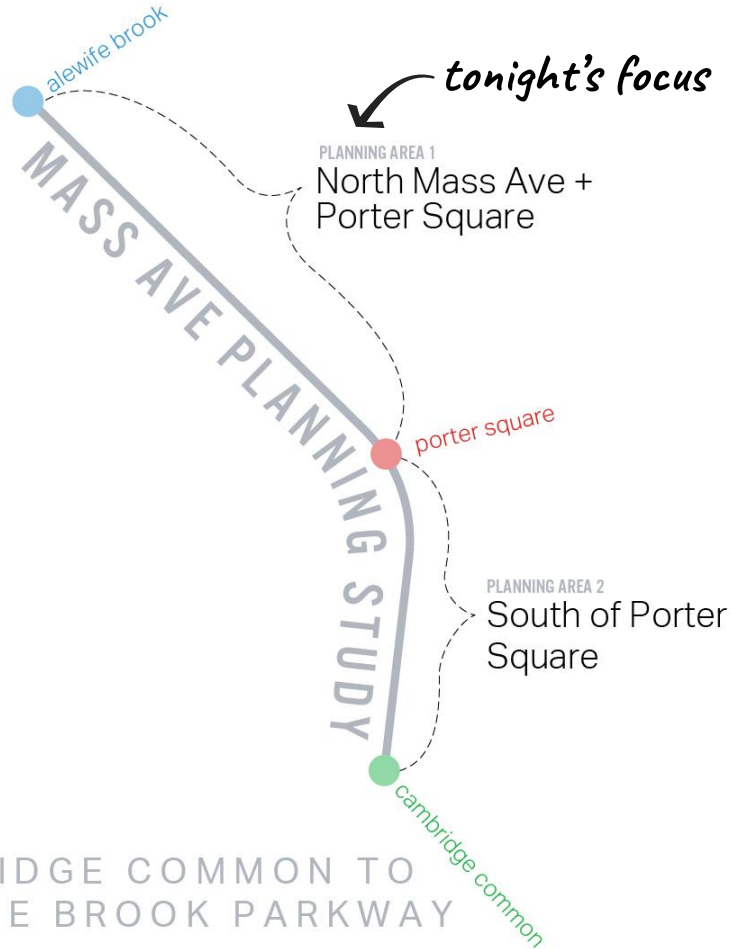
Lead, planning and urban design

CAMBRIDGESEVEN

Architecture

CONSULTECON

Real estate and housing

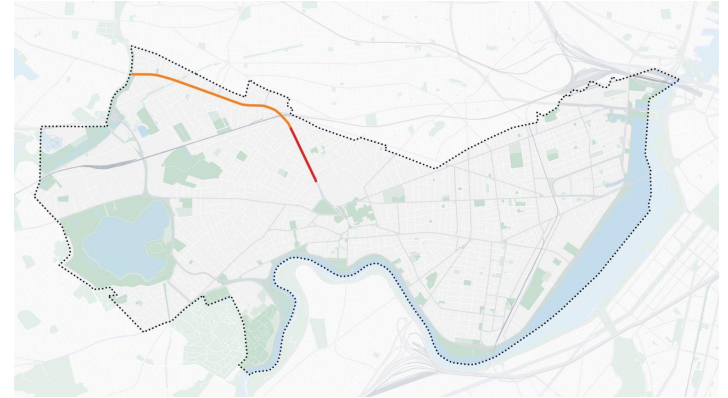
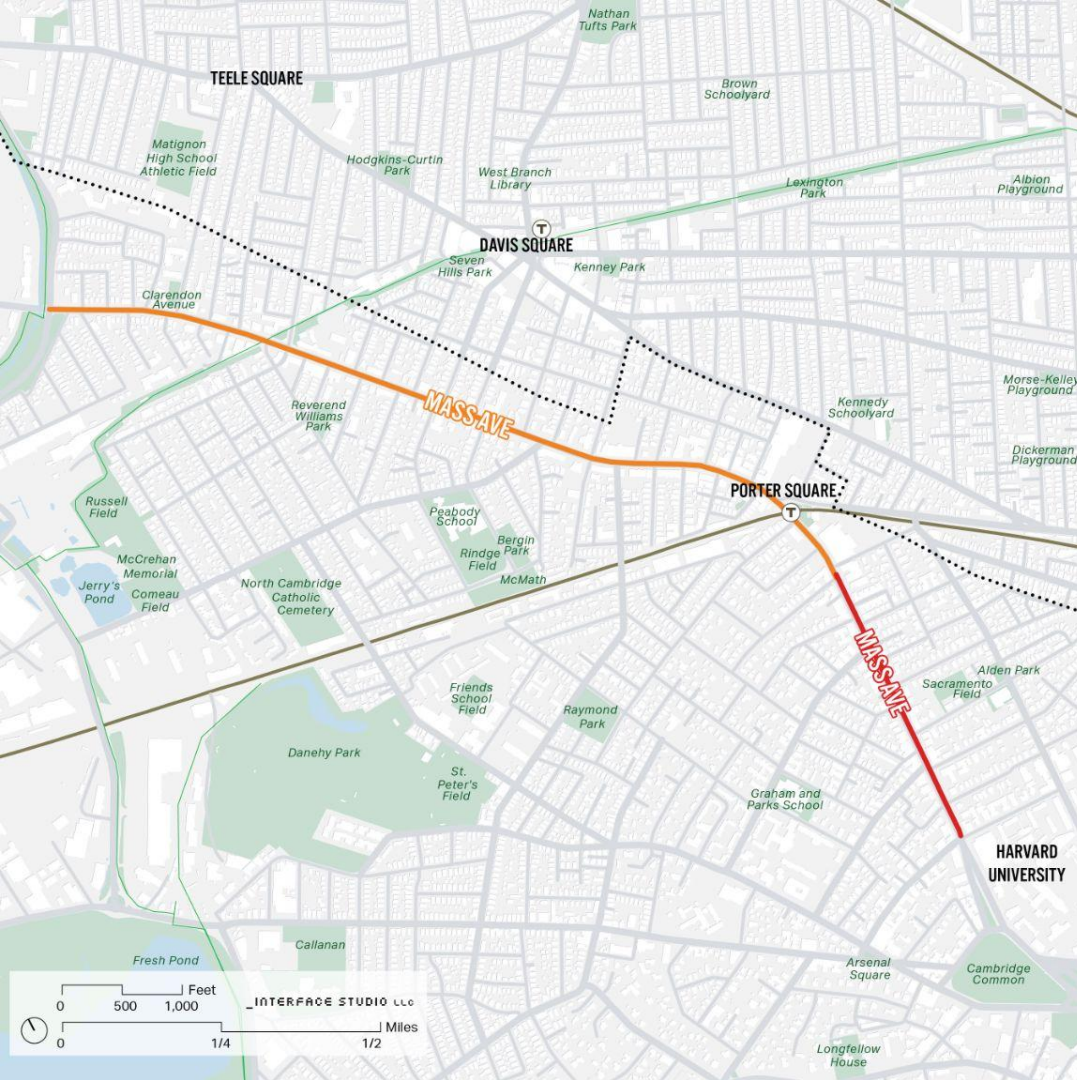


CAMBRIDGE COMMON TO
ALEWIFE BROOK PARKWAY

AGENDA

- 01** Project Background Recap
Study Area and Project
- 02** Phases 1 and 2 Summary
Community Process
- 03** Phase 3:
North Mass Ave + Porter Square
Existing Conditions
- 04** How Is This Different?
Breakout Groups: Vision and Goals
- 05** Next Steps
- 06** Q&A

PROJECT BACKGROUND



STUDY AREA

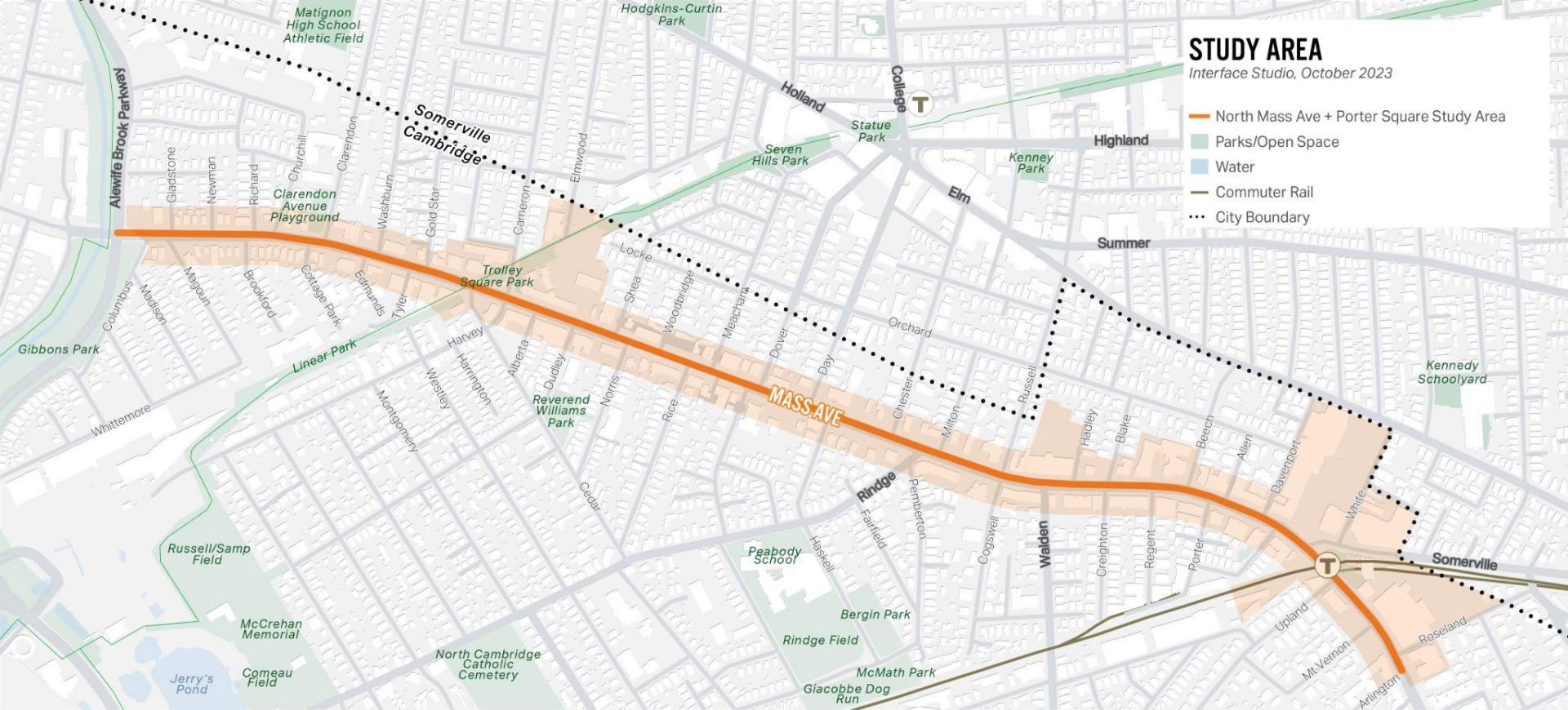
Interface Studio, October 2023

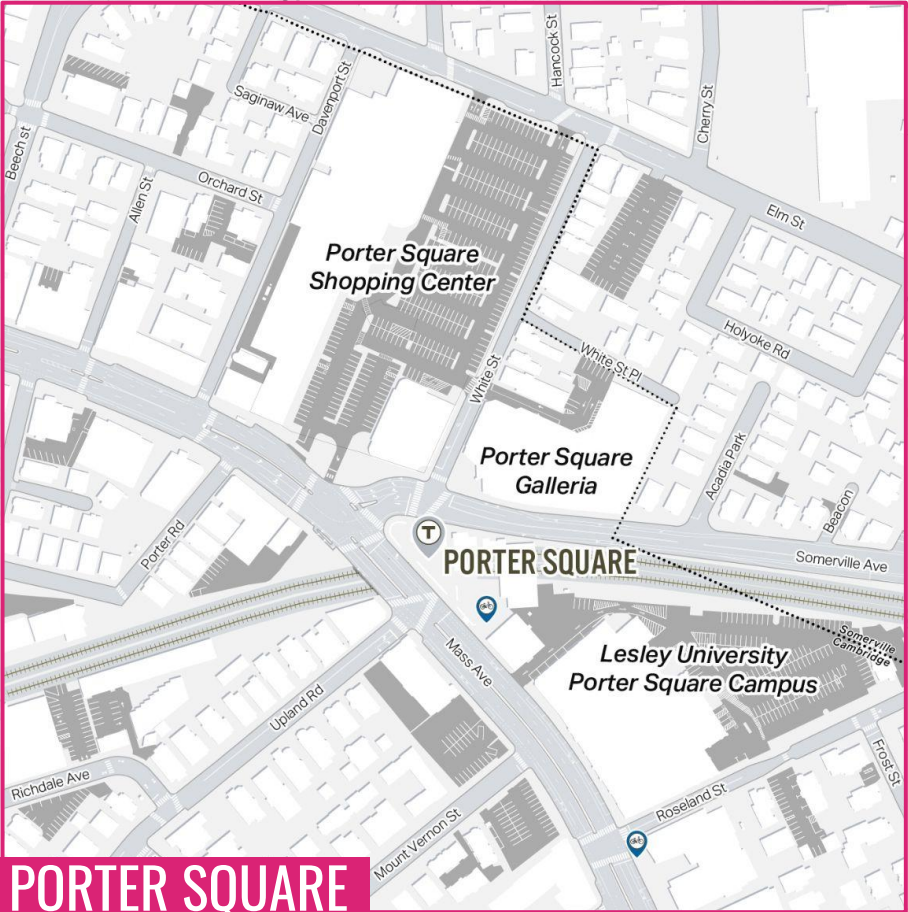
- South of Porter Square Study Area
- North Mass Ave + Porter Square Study Area
- Parks/Open Space
- Water
- Commuter Rail
- City Boundary

STUDY AREA

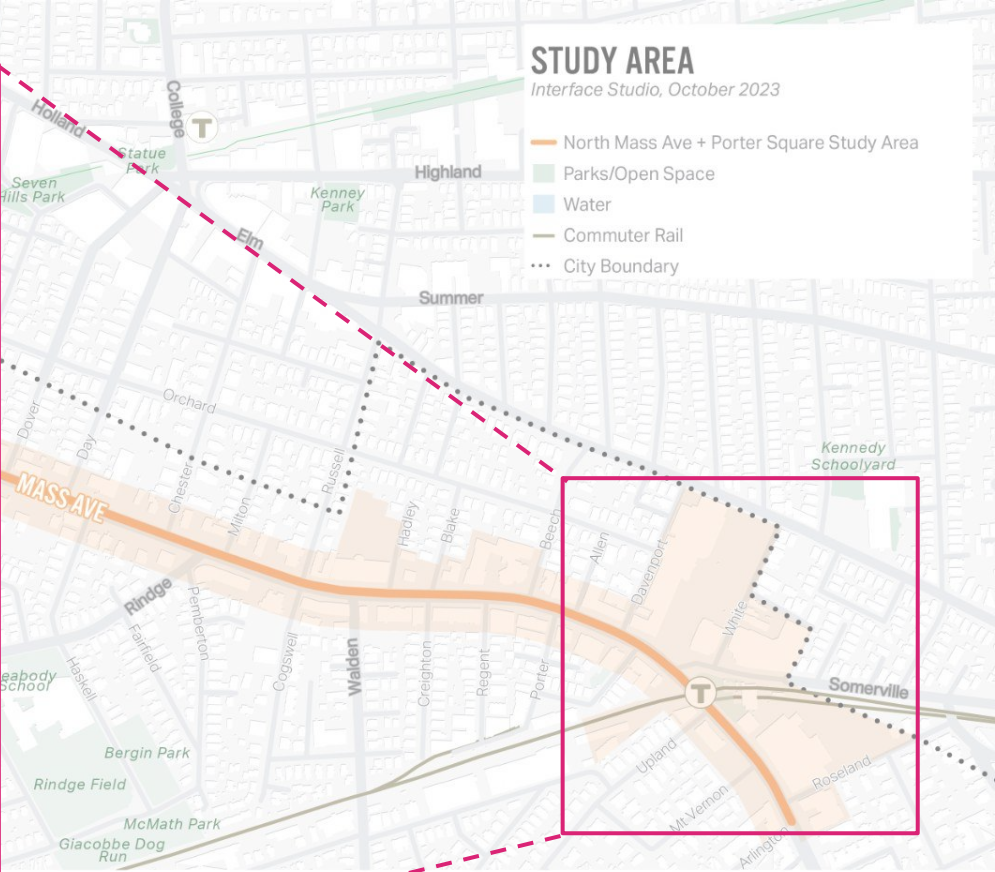
Interface Studio, October 2023

- North Mass Ave + Porter Square Study Area
- Parks/Open Space
- Water
- Commuter Rail
- City Boundary





PORTER SQUARE



STUDY AREA

Interface Studio, October 2023

- North Mass Ave + Porter Square Study Area
- Parks/Open Space
- Water
- Commuter Rail
- City Boundary



INTERFACE STUDIO LLC

OUR CHARGE:

**WHAT DOES
MASS AVE
LOOK LIKE 15
YEARS FROM
NOW?**

... and HOW do we get there?

- Prioritization of goals and implementation
- Coordination with other planning initiatives
- Policy recommendations
- Proposed changes in zoning
- Complementing future Citywide Design Guidelines
- Long term infrastructure projects (public realm, open spaces, sidewalks, etc)

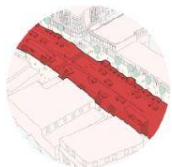
OUR ROLES:

WE ARE ALL
CONTRIBUTING
TO A COMMON
VISION AND
GOALS

ROLES CLARIFICATION

- **The Community** is informing the goals and strategies of the plan
- **Working Group** is a representative body that serves as a sounding board that guides and advises the planning efforts
- **Planning Department** is authoring the plan
- **City Council** is the deciding body and adopts proposed policy changes
- **City Departments** are implementing the plan

FOUR CONCURRENT CITY INITIATIVES



PARTIAL CONSTRUCTION

Planning and Design of
the separated bike lanes
along Mass Ave

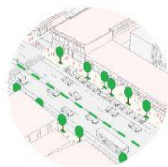
Near term



IMPACT STUDY

Assessing economic
impact of bike lanes to
businesses along Mass
Ave

Annually For The Next Five Years



COMBINED SEWER OVERFLOW MITIGATION

Exploring Green
Stormwater
Infrastructure Mitigation
measures to prevent
Combined Sewer
Overflow events on
North Mass Ave.

Five -10 Years From Now

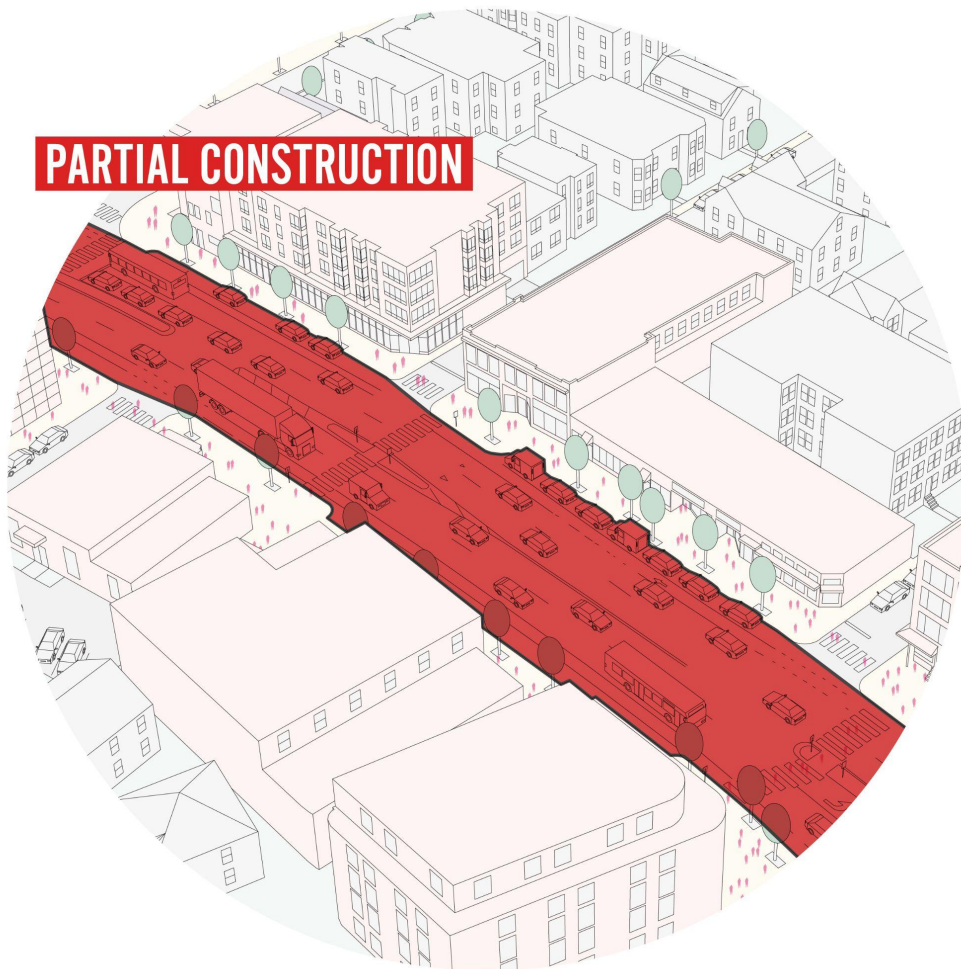


PLANNING STUDY

Vision plan for the
properties surrounding
Mass Ave, including
Zoning, Urban Design,
Housing and Business
Supports.



15 Years From Now



The Mass Ave Partial Construction is focused on the near term street design of Mass Ave, curb to curb. The project was initiated in response to the city's Cycling Safety Ordinance (CSO) and includes:

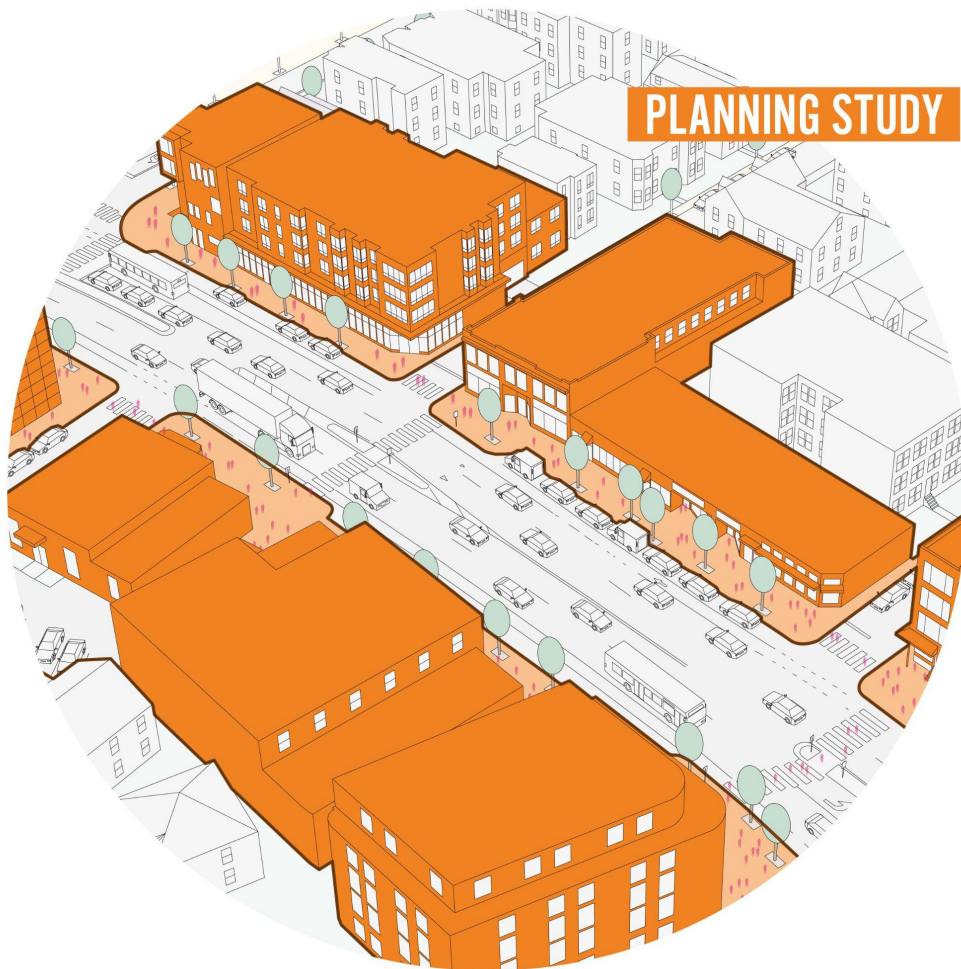
- The design of **separated bicycle lanes**
- Evaluating existing crossing locations for pedestrians and recommendations for additional crossing opportunities
- Curb use regulations (i.e., understand where parking/stopping/loading is possible and not possible)
- Options for bus priority to reduce travel times and improving the reliability of MBTA buses

For more information:

cambridgema.gov/massavepartialconstruction

Questions or comments? Contact:

massave4@cambridgema.gov



This Mass Ave Planning Study (MAPS) is a planning effort help map Mass Ave's future for the next 15 years and will focus on areas including:

- Increasing density & housing opportunities along the corridor
- Addressing affordability issues
- Supporting small & local businesses
- Creating and enhancing vibrant sidewalks & public spaces

For more information:

www.cambridgema.gov/massaveplan

Questions or comments? Contact:

Drew Kane, Senior City Planner
dkane@cambridgema.gov

FOUR CONCURRENT CITY INITIATIVES

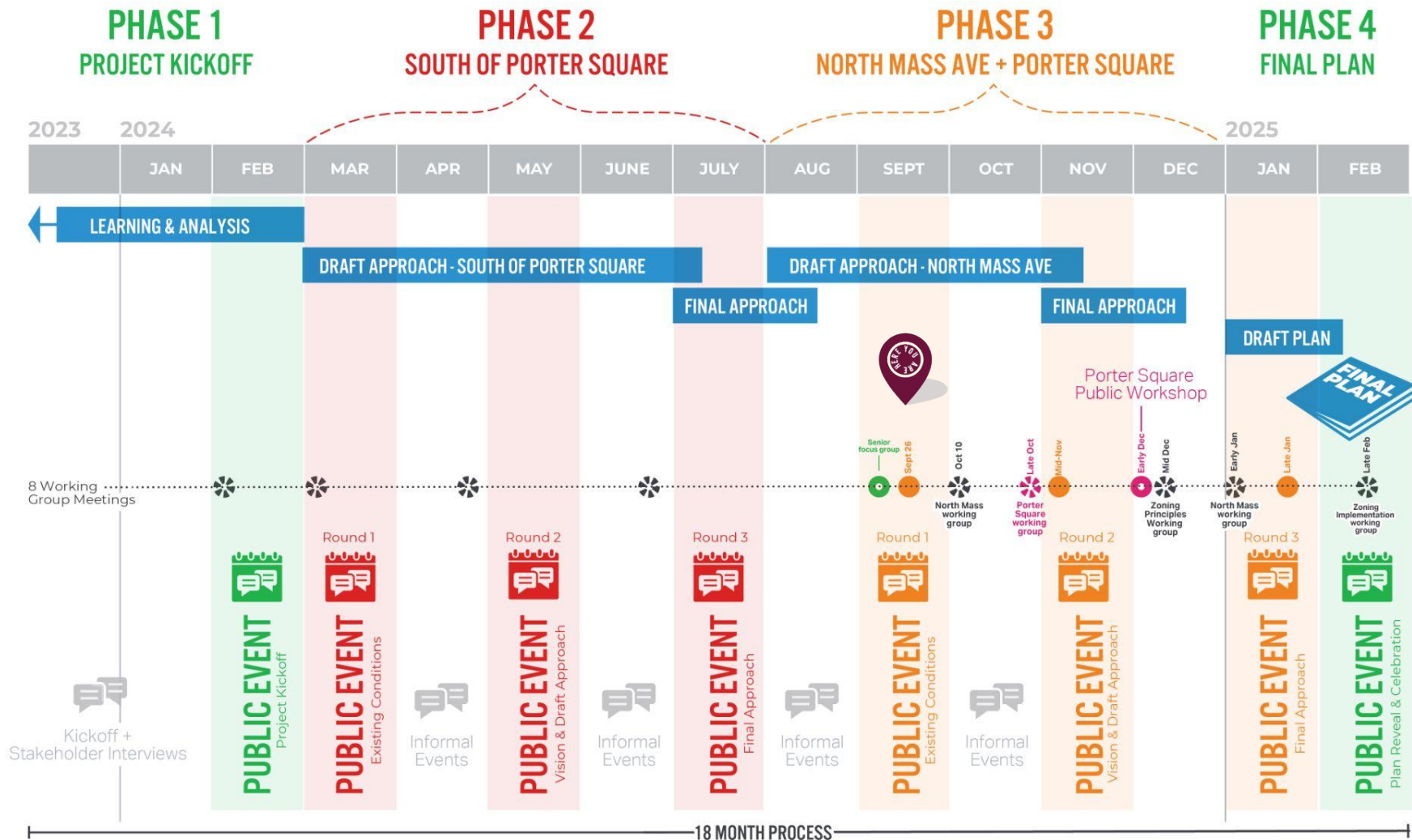


For more information on the Partial Construction:

cambridgema.gov/massavepartialconstruction

Questions or comments? Contact: massave4@cambridgema.gov





PHASE 1 AND 2: COMMUNITY PROCESS SUMMARY

PHASE 1: DEFINING THE GOAL BUCKETS

FEBRUARY 29, 2024

Attendees

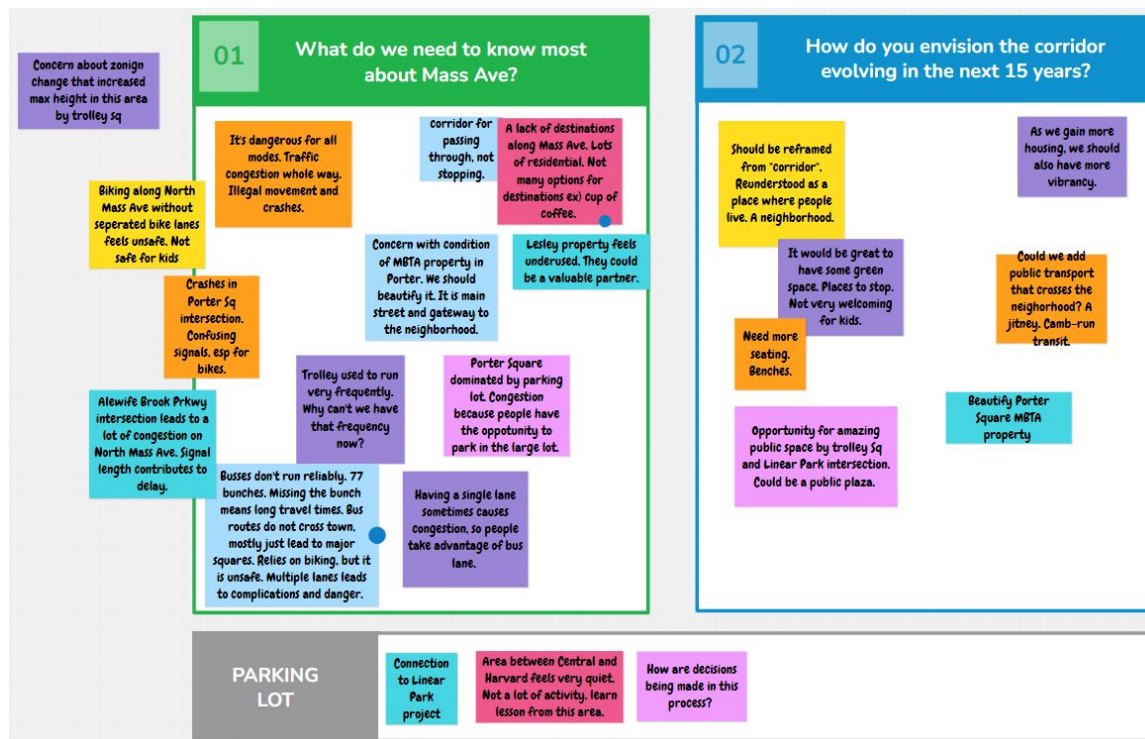
80 Participants, including 11
City/Consultant Facilitators and 1 CART
Professional

Purpose

1. Project Introductions
2. Q+A
3. Breakout Room Discussion

Outcomes

Goal Buckets for Both Study Areas



COMMUNITY MEETING 1 - WHAT WE HEARD

How do you envision the corridor evolving in the next 15 years?

- **More of a Neighborhood and a Destination:** Reframe the corridor as a livable walkable neighborhood with improved amenities, including green spaces and places for children. There's also more pop-up shops, events, and active storefronts to create a more vibrant atmosphere.
- **It's more Inviting:** Focus on creating a more attractive Mass Ave and public spaces through greening, public artwork, wider sidewalks, and adding more benches.
- **It's easier to Get Around:** Aim for a balanced and integrated transportation network that prioritizes pedestrians and improves accessibility.
- **It's more provides more Housing Options:** Balance density and traffic concerns with the need for more housing and commercial development along Mass Ave. Address the need for affordable housing, particularly for seniors, and integrate it into the existing neighborhood fabric.

THE BUCKETS WE'RE STARTING WITH TONIGHT

**MORE OF A
NEIGHBORHOOD
& DESTINATION**

**MORE
INVITING**

**EASIER
TO GET
AROUND**

**MORE
HOUSING
OPTIONS**

THE BUCKETS WE'RE STARTING WITH TONIGHT

Later, we'll ask how North Mass Ave and Porter Square may be different!

MORE OF A
NEIGHBORHOOD
& DESTINATION

MORE
INVITING

EASIER
TO GET
AROUND

MORE
HOUSING
OPTIONS

QUICK POLL

Is there something we should consider adding for North Mass Ave?

Add your open ended comment in the pop up box.

PHASE 2: SOPO'S INITIAL IDEAS

MARCH 27, 2024

Attendees

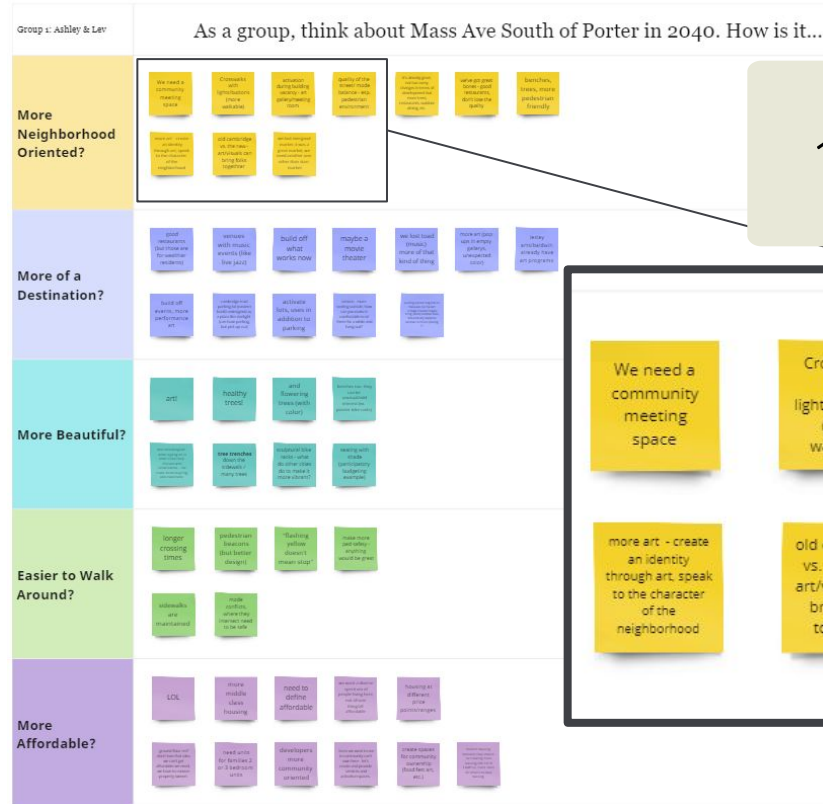
109 Pre-Registrants
50 Participants including 11
City/Consultant Facilitators

Purpose

1. SOPO Existing Conditions
2. Breakout Discussion: Visioning

Outcomes

Initial Ideas for SOPO
Recommendations



124 Ideas + Insights!

We need a community meeting space

Crosswalks with lights/buttons (more walkable)

activation during building vacancy - art gallery/meeting room

quality of the street/ mode balance - esp. pedestrian environment

more art - create an identity through art, speak to the character of the neighborhood

old cambridge vs. the new - art/visuals can bring folks together

we lost evergood market. It was a great market. We need another one other than starr market

PHASE 2: REVIEWING SOPO DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

MAY 31, 2024

Attendees

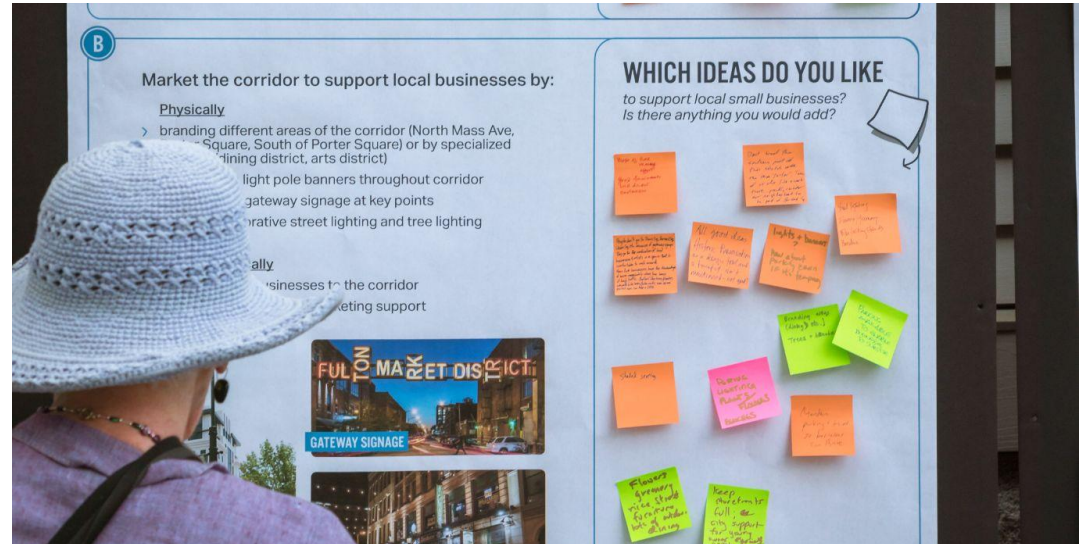
>100

Purpose

- Share draft recommendations
- Gather feedback on priorities, place-based observations, and preferences for recommendation revisions

Outcomes

Refinements for SOPO
Recommendations





on our crowdsource map: bit.ly/MAPS_map

Mass Ave Comments

Location

Click the map to draw the location.

Enter an address to search



Share your thoughts!

I want to share

Select...

Select...

A favorite place

An issue

An idea

Map Comment

Report It

Cancel

SCAN:

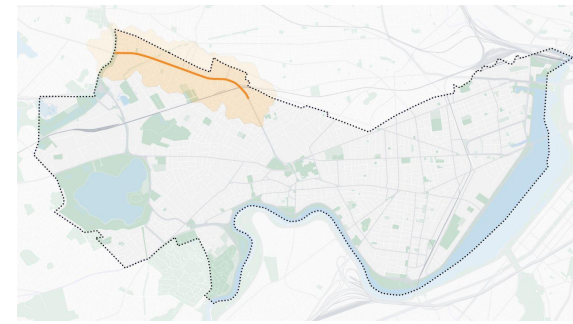
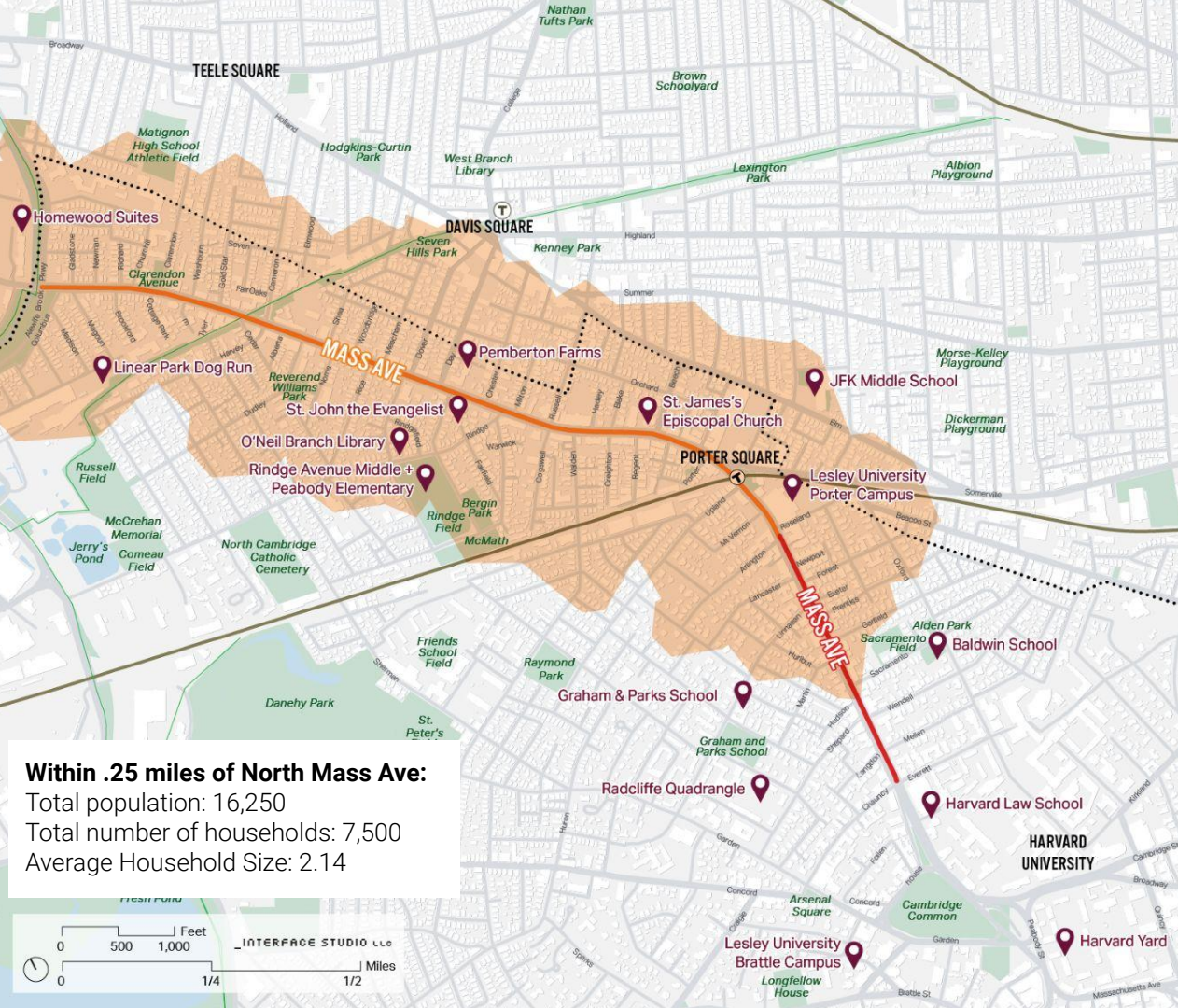


bittly

+ Add a thought

NORTH MASS AVE and PORTER SQUARE

(PORTER SQUARE TO ALEWIFE BROOK PARKWAY)

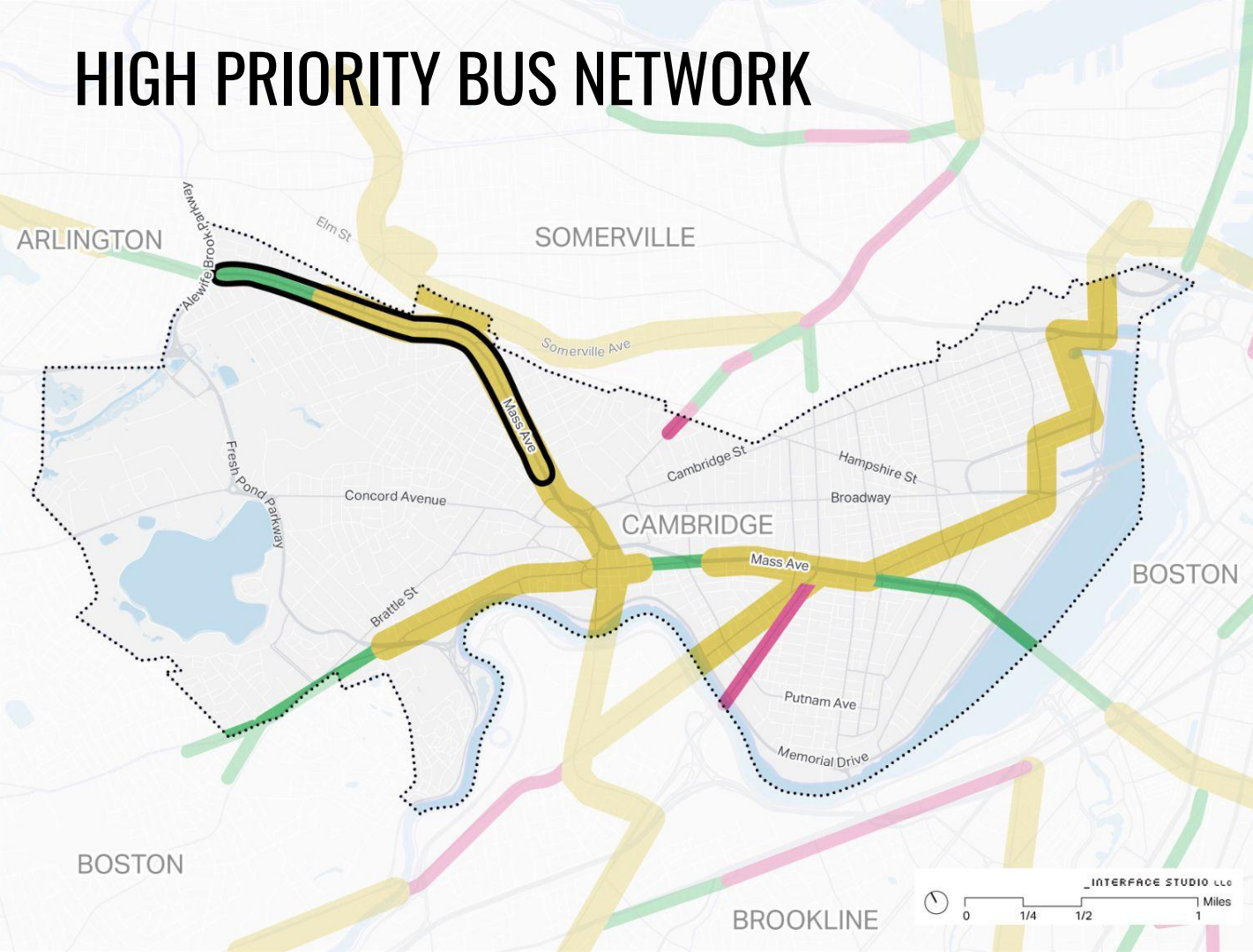


NORTH MASS AVE PRIMARY SERVICE AREA

Interface Studio, October 2023

- South of Porter Square Study Area
- North Mass Ave + Porter Square Study Area
- Parks/Open Space
- Water
- Commuter Rail
- ... City Boundary

HIGH PRIORITY BUS NETWORK



STUDY AREA + REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY

MBTA, Interface Studio, January 2024

- Study Area
- City Boundary
- Bus Priority - Existing
- Bus Priority - Planned / Underway
- Bus Priority - Needed



COMMUTERS PER DAY



1,900

BICYCLISTS

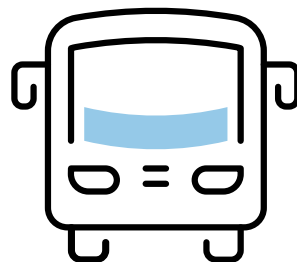
Weekday Bike Count
2022¹



21,000+

VEHICLES

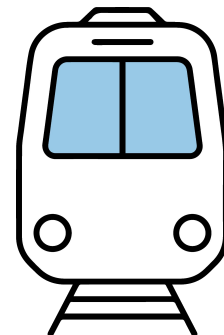
Average Daily Traffic Count
2020²



12,000+

BUS RIDERS

Average Weekday Boardings
2022³



~6,900

RAIL USERS

Average Weekday Boardings
2023

Porter Square Red Line and Commuter Rail

¹ [Cambridge Open Data](#) - Average Weekday Citywide Bicycle Counts, 2022; from the Total Bike Count on 9/22/22 at Cedar St & Massachusetts Avenue and Massachusetts Avenue & Somerville Ave Locations.

² [Cambridge Open Data](#) - Cambridge updated Bike Lane Comfort dataset. Average of counts from multiple segments along Massachusetts Avenue. 2020.

³ [Bus Ridership](#): MBTA Bus Ridership by Time Period. 2022. Bus stops at and between Alewifebrook Parkway and Cambridge Commons.

⁴ [Train Ridership](#): City of Cambridge

PORTER SQUARE COMMUTERS



NORTH MASS AVE DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT



YOUTH UNDER 18

12% 1,870 residents

7%
South of Porter Square



MEDIAN AGE

37

29 Citywide 32 South of Porter Square



SENIORS OVER 65

15% 2,494 residents

14%
South of Porter Square

HOUSEHOLDS BELOW POVERTY

7% 519 households

12%
South of Porter Square

FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS

38%

40% Citywide 29% South of Porter Square

2023 MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

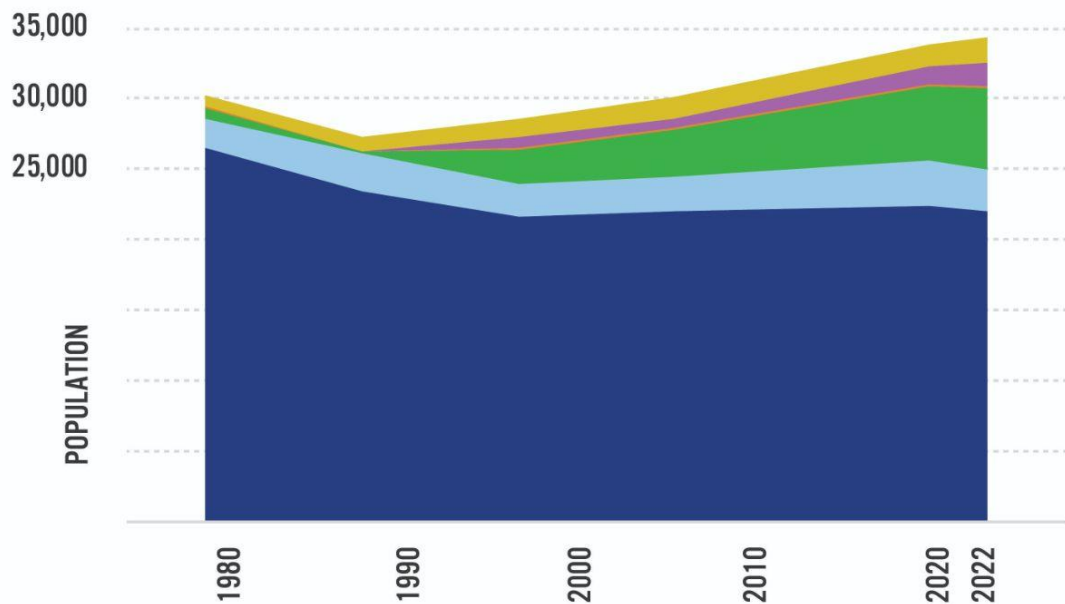
\$155,000

\$121,000 Citywide \$122,000 South of Porter Square

NORTH MASS AVE: CHANGE OVER TIME

RACE + ETHNICITY

Census Tracts within .25m of North Mass Ave Study Area,
December 2023



DYNAMIC STREET, DIFFERENT QUALITIES



GENERALIZED LAND USE - EXPERIENCE

Interface Studio, January 2024

- Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Residential
- Institution
- Parks and Open Space
- Transportation



BUSINESSES

Mass Ave is home to many legacy businesses that have served diverse communities in Cambridge. It is fairly mixed in terms of what types of businesses are there.

Although most businesses are neighborhood serving, some destination retail exists.

Rapidly changing retail consumer patterns (ie. online shopping, food delivery) put added pressure on retailers.

HOW CAN WE HAVE MORE NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES AND ALSO BE A DESTINATION?



QUIZ GAME

*What's the most common type of business on North Mass Ave
and in Porter Square?*



BUSINESSES

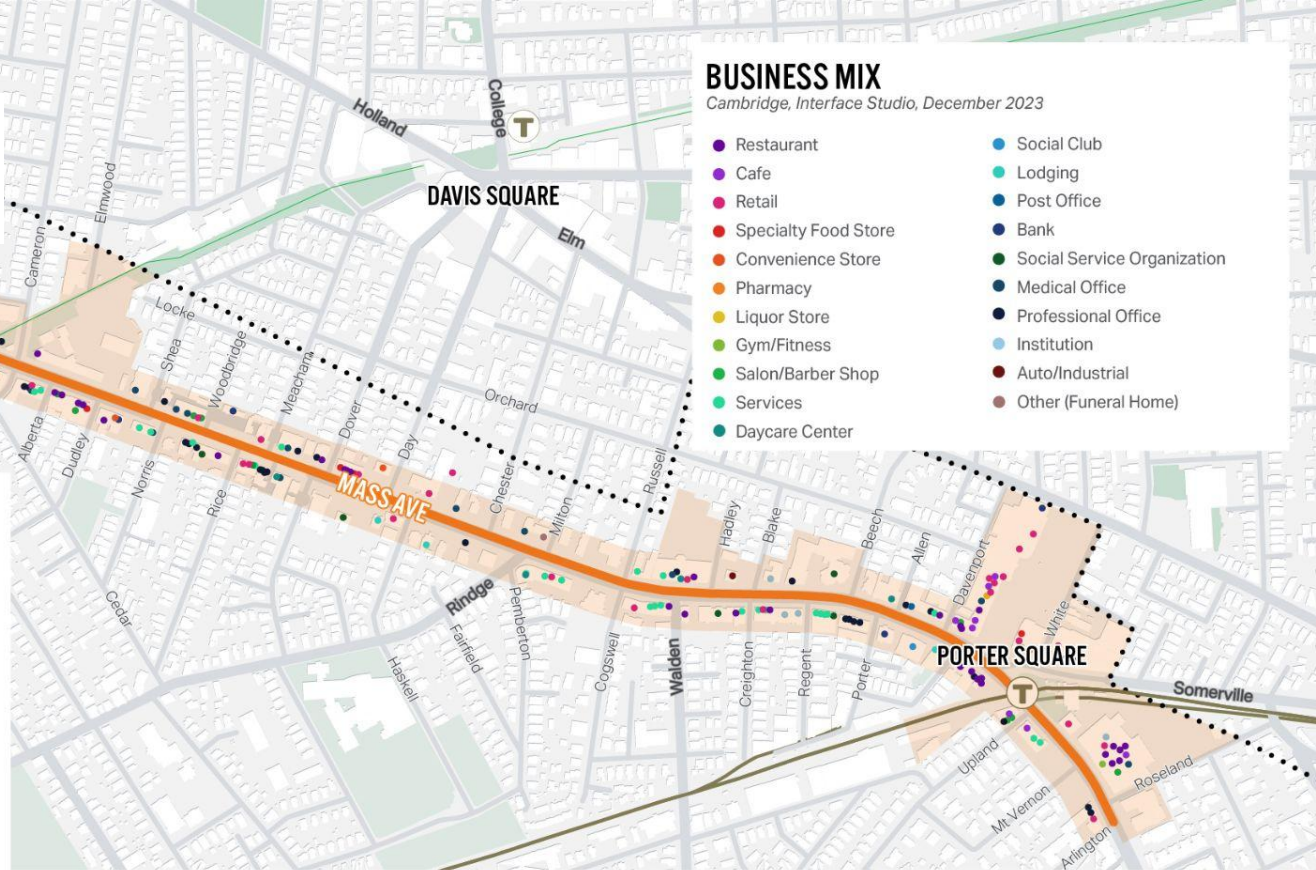
Total number of first floor businesses: **203**

STOREFRONTS



BUSINESS MIX

Cambridge, Interface Studio, December 2023



0

1/4

1/2

Miles

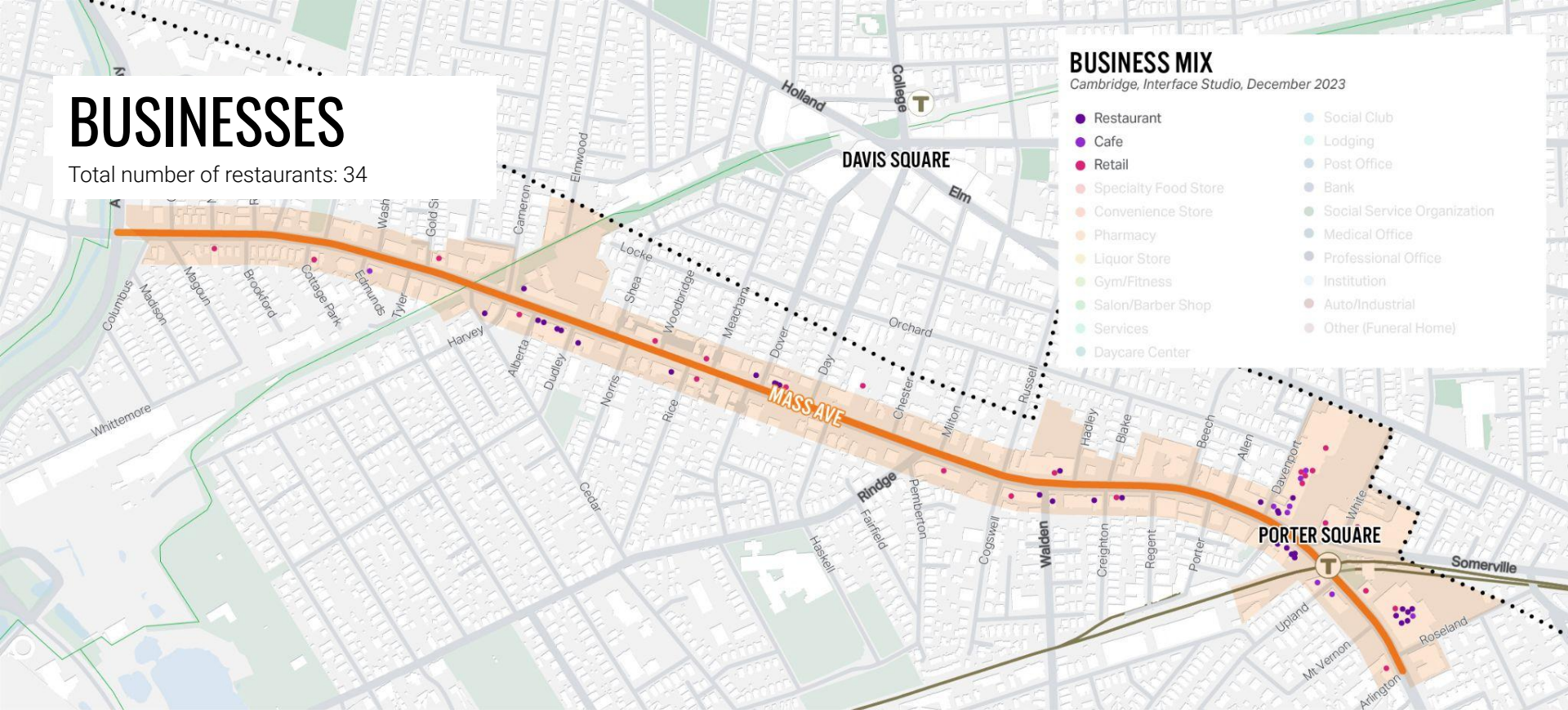
BUSINESSES

Total number of restaurants: 34

BUSINESS MIX

Cambridge, Interface Studio, December 2023

- Restaurant
- Cafe
- Retail
- Specialty Food Store
- Convenience Store
- Pharmacy
- Liquor Store
- Gym/Fitness
- Salon/Barber Shop
- Services
- Daycare Center
- Social Club
- Lodging
- Post Office
- Bank
- Social Service Organization
- Medical Office
- Professional Office
- Institution
- Auto/Industrial
- Other (Funeral Home)



0

1/4

1/2

Miles

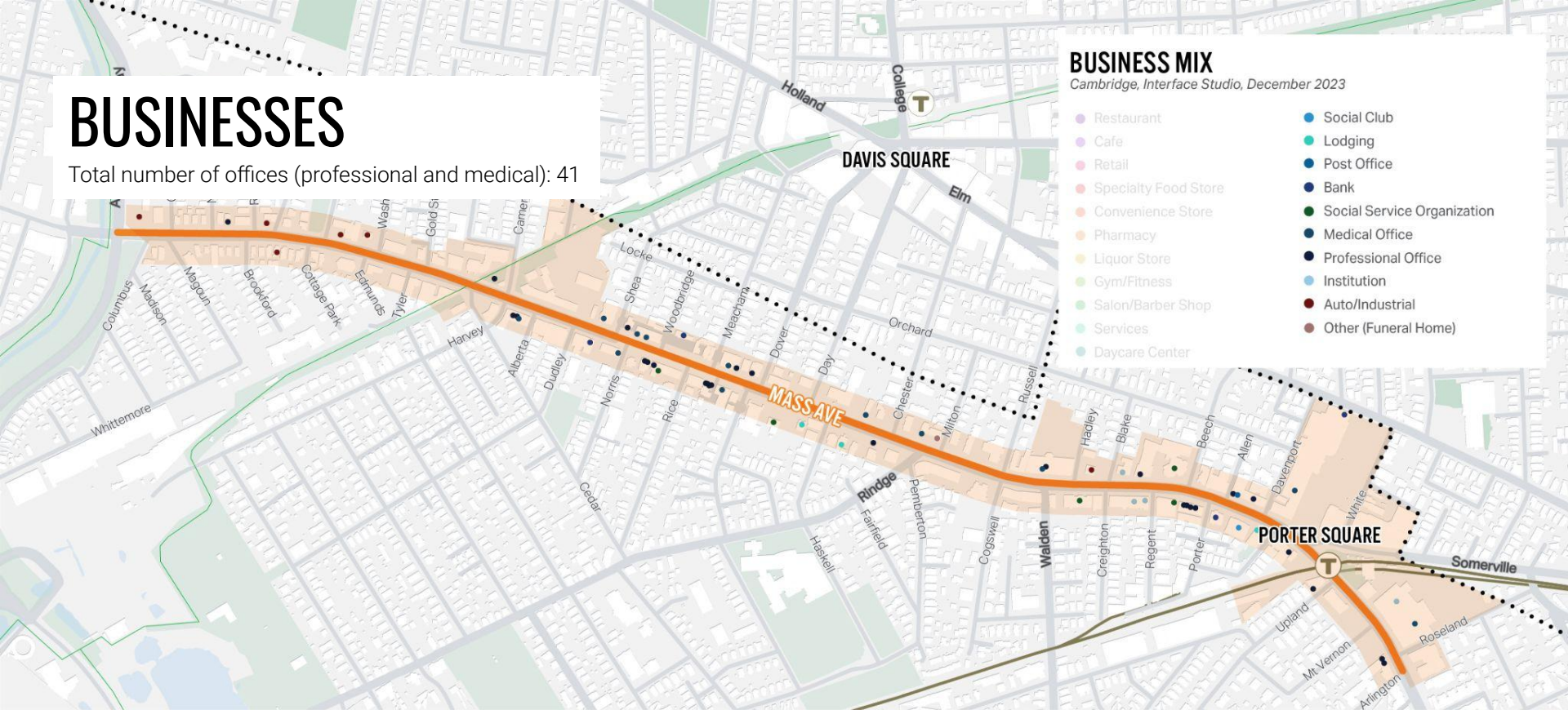
BUSINESSES

Total number of offices (professional and medical): 41

BUSINESS MIX

Cambridge, Interface Studio, December 2023

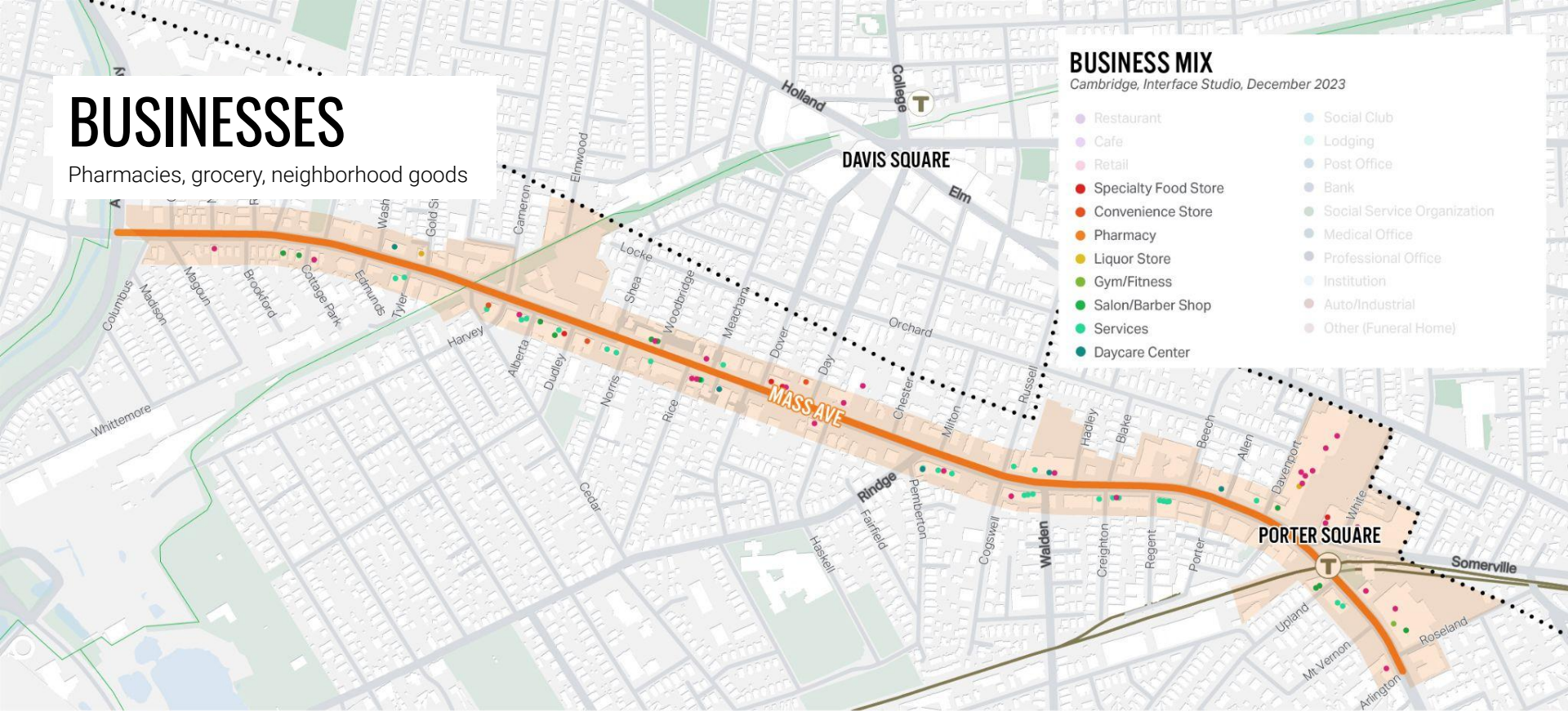
- Restaurant
- Cafe
- Retail
- Specialty Food Store
- Convenience Store
- Pharmacy
- Liquor Store
- Gym/Fitness
- Salon/Barber Shop
- Services
- Daycare Center
- Social Club
- Lodging
- Post Office
- Bank
- Social Service Organization
- Medical Office
- Professional Office
- Institution
- Auto/Industrial
- Other (Funeral Home)



0 1/4 1/2 Miles

BUSINESSES

Pharmacies, grocery, neighborhood goods



BUSINESS MIX

Cambridge, Interface Studio, December 2023

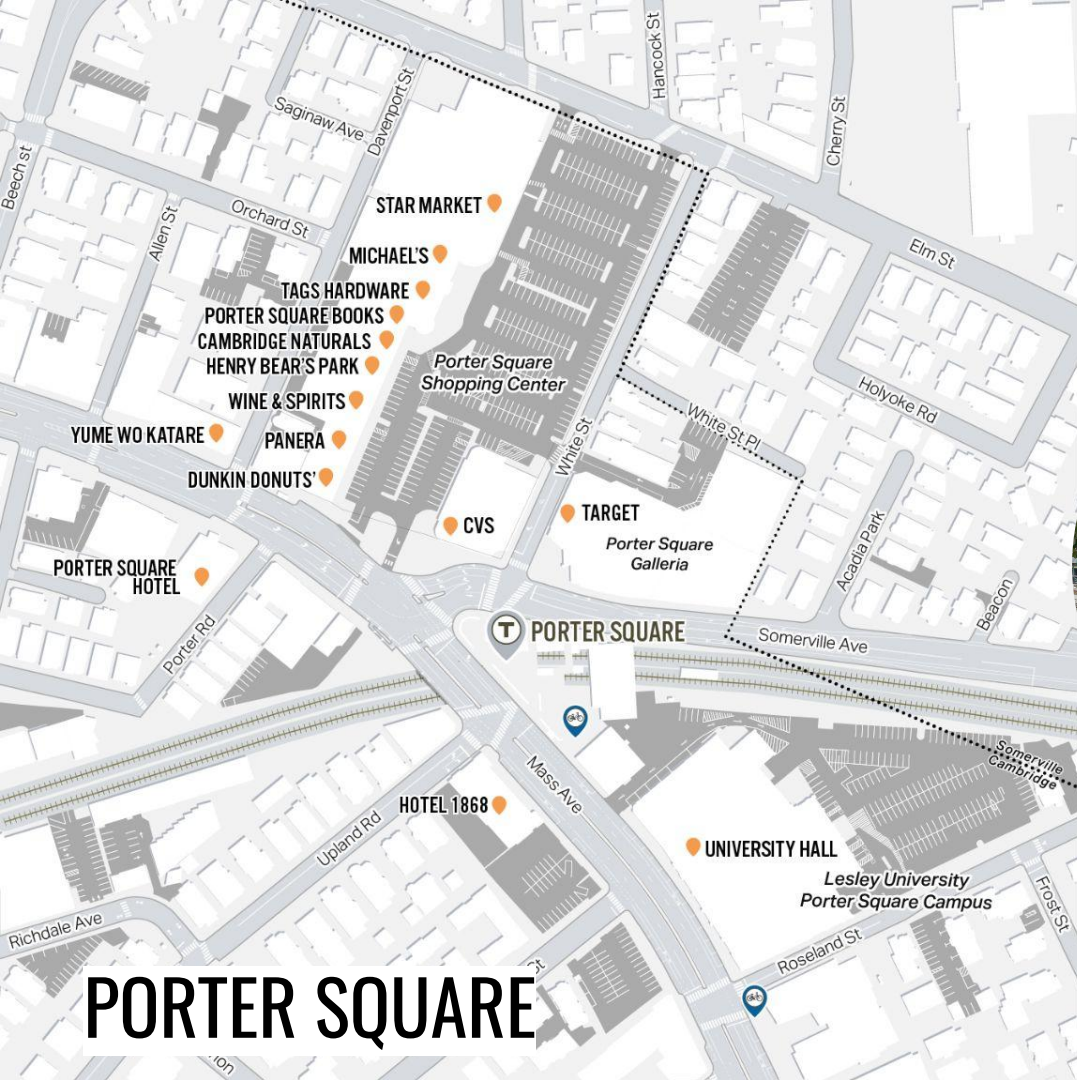
- Restaurant
- Cafe
- Retail
- Specialty Food Store
- Convenience Store
- Pharmacy
- Liquor Store
- Gym/Fitness
- Salon/Barber Shop
- Services
- Daycare Center
- Social Club
- Lodging
- Post Office
- Bank
- Social Service Organization
- Medical Office
- Professional Office
- Institution
- Auto/Industrial
- Other (Funeral Home)



0






1/4

Miles
1/2



PORTER SQUARE

Interface Studio, August 2024

-  Rail
-  City Boundary
-  Blue Bike Station
-  MBTA Station
-  Selected Identifying Points



INTERFACE STUDIO LLC

HOUSING

HOW CAN HOUSING BE MORE AFFORDABLE?

Interest rates and the high costs of land and construction are **cooling the housing market.**

At the same time, the demand for more and affordable housing continues to **increase.**

The updated **Cambridge Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO)** has named corridors like Mass Ave as places that can support more density by right under AHO zoning.



HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PIPELINE

Cambridge Open Data: Development Log, Affordable Housing Overlay Pipeline, Somerville Permits 2022-Present, Interface Studio, January 2024

- South of Porter Square Study Area
- North Mass Ave + Porter Square Study Area
- ... City Boundary

Market Rate Development Pipeline

Developments in Service Area

- | | | |
|---|-----------------|----------|
| 1 | 1 Cedar St | 8 Units |
| 2 | 2400 Mass Ave | 56 Units |
| 3 | 2161 Mass Ave | 8 Units |
| 4 | 3-5 Linnaean St | 5 Units |

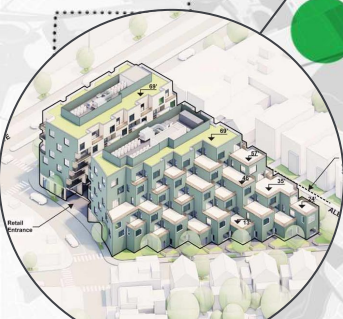
Affordable Housing Overlay Development Pipeline

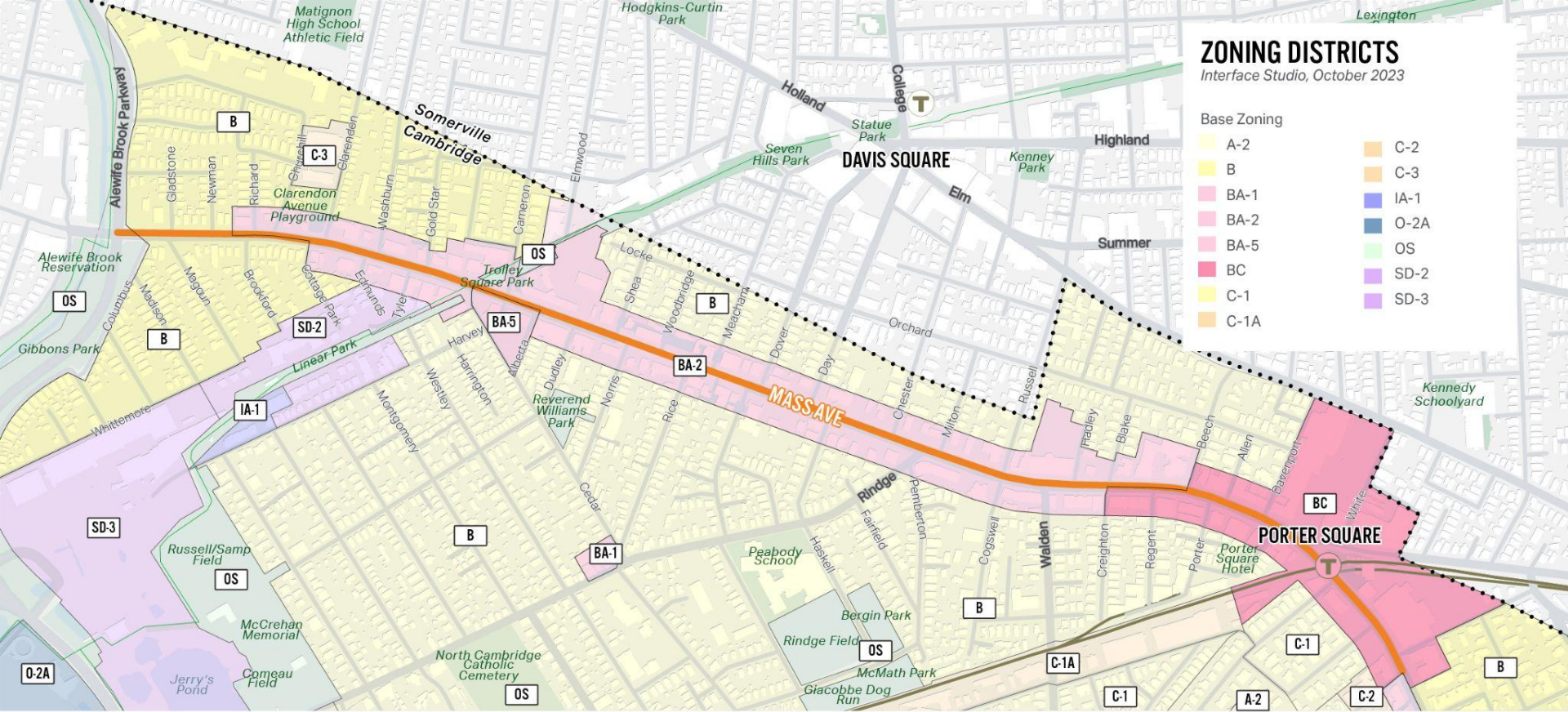
Developments in Service Area

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|----------|
| 5 | 2072 Mass Ave | TBD |
| 6 | 28-30 Wendell St | TBD |
| 7 | 1627 Mass Ave
("4 Mellen St") | 29 Units |

2072 Mass Ave
100% Affordable Units
Design update coming soon

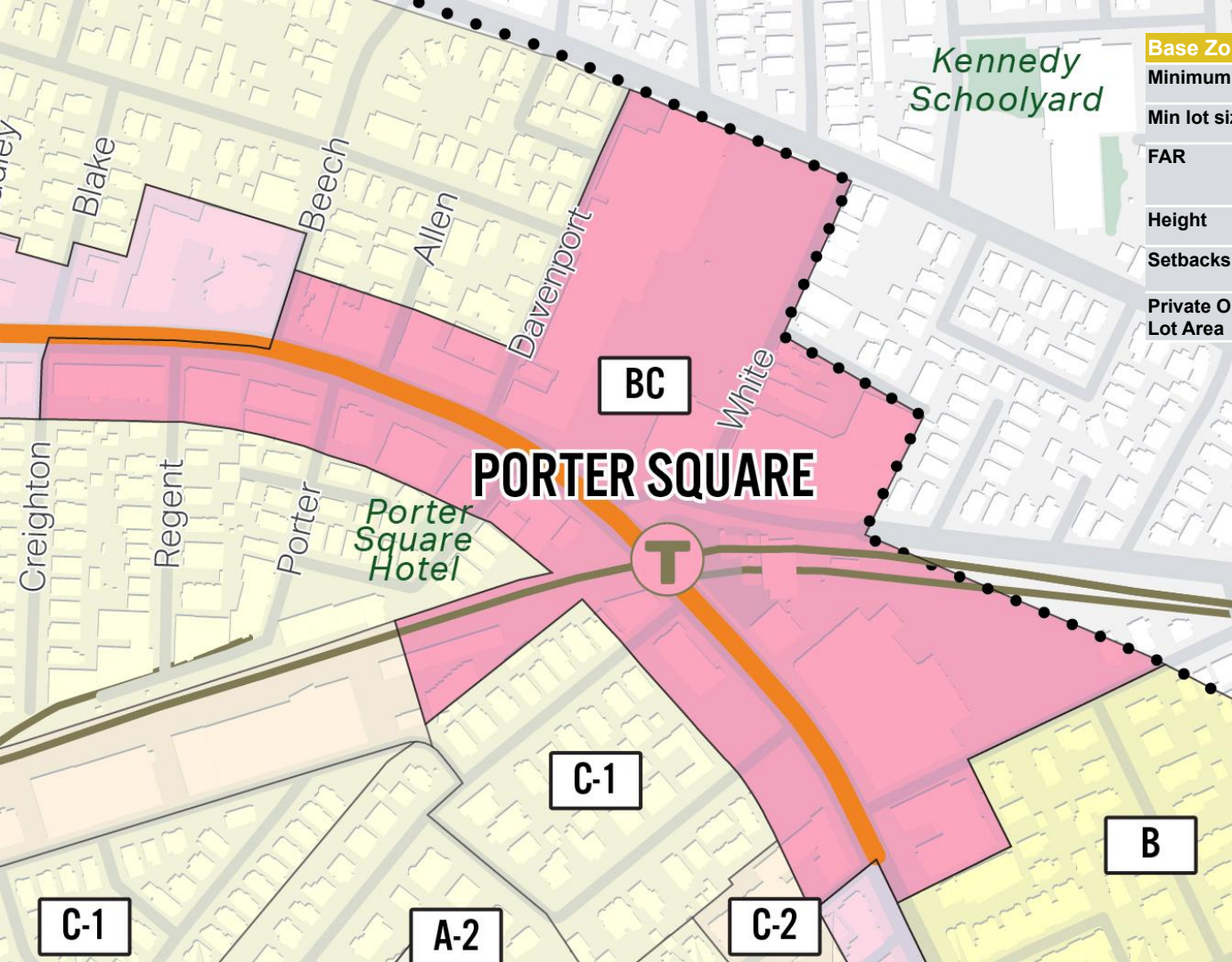
2400 Mass Ave
(56 Units)





BASE ZONING

Most of North Mass Ave is currently zoned BA-2.



Kennedy
Schoolyard

Base Zoning: BC	
Minimum Lot Width (ft)	None
Min lot size (SF)	None
FAR	Commercial 1.25 / Residential 2.0
Height	55' Max Height
Setbacks	20' rear
Private Open Space to Lot Area	None

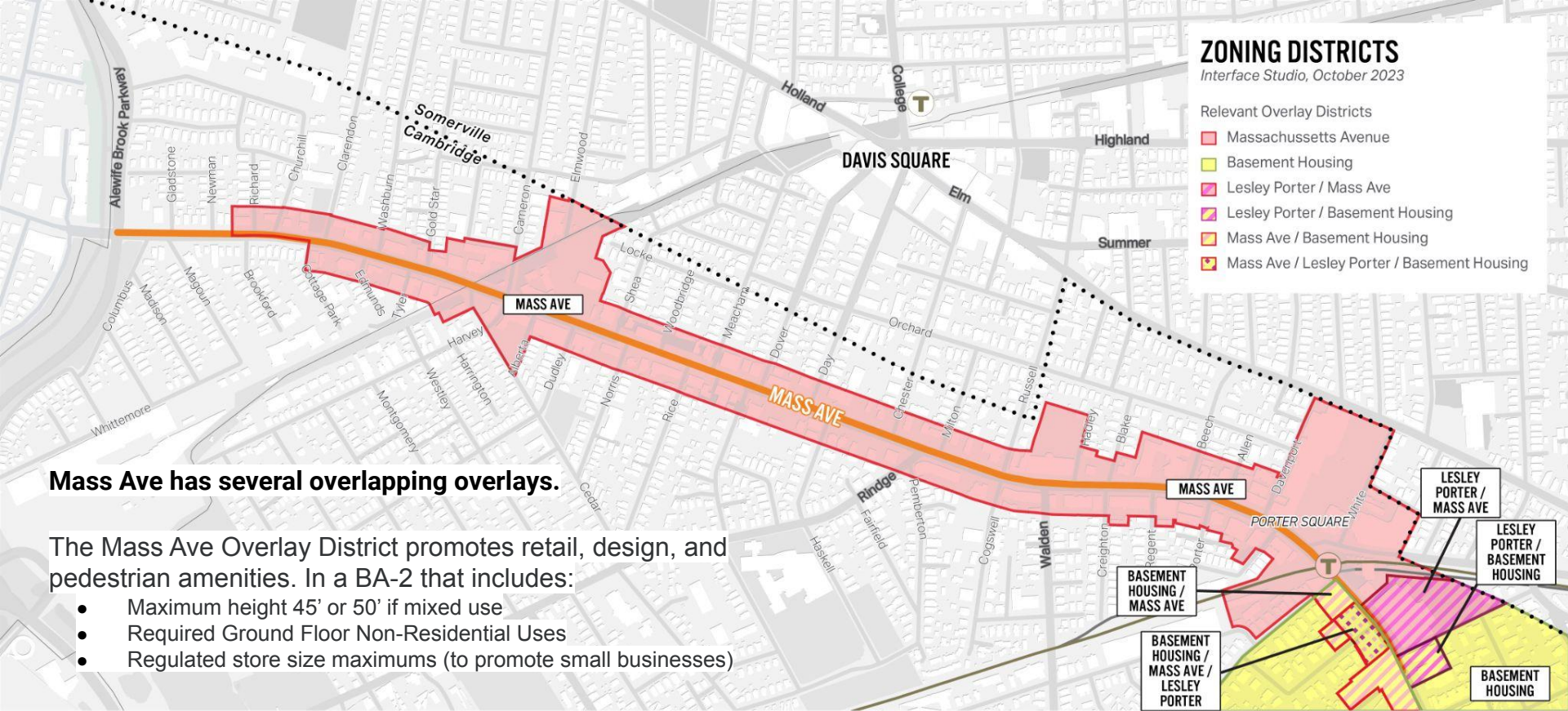
PORTER SQUARE

ZONING DISTRICTS

Interface Studio, October 2023

Base Zoning

- | | |
|------|------|
| A-2 | C-2 |
| B | C-3 |
| BA-1 | IA-1 |
| BA-2 | O-2A |
| BA-5 | OS |
| BC | SD-2 |
| C-1 | SD-3 |
| C-1A | |



ZONING OVERLAYS

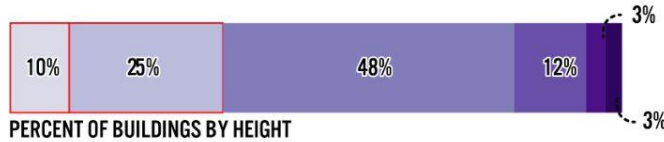
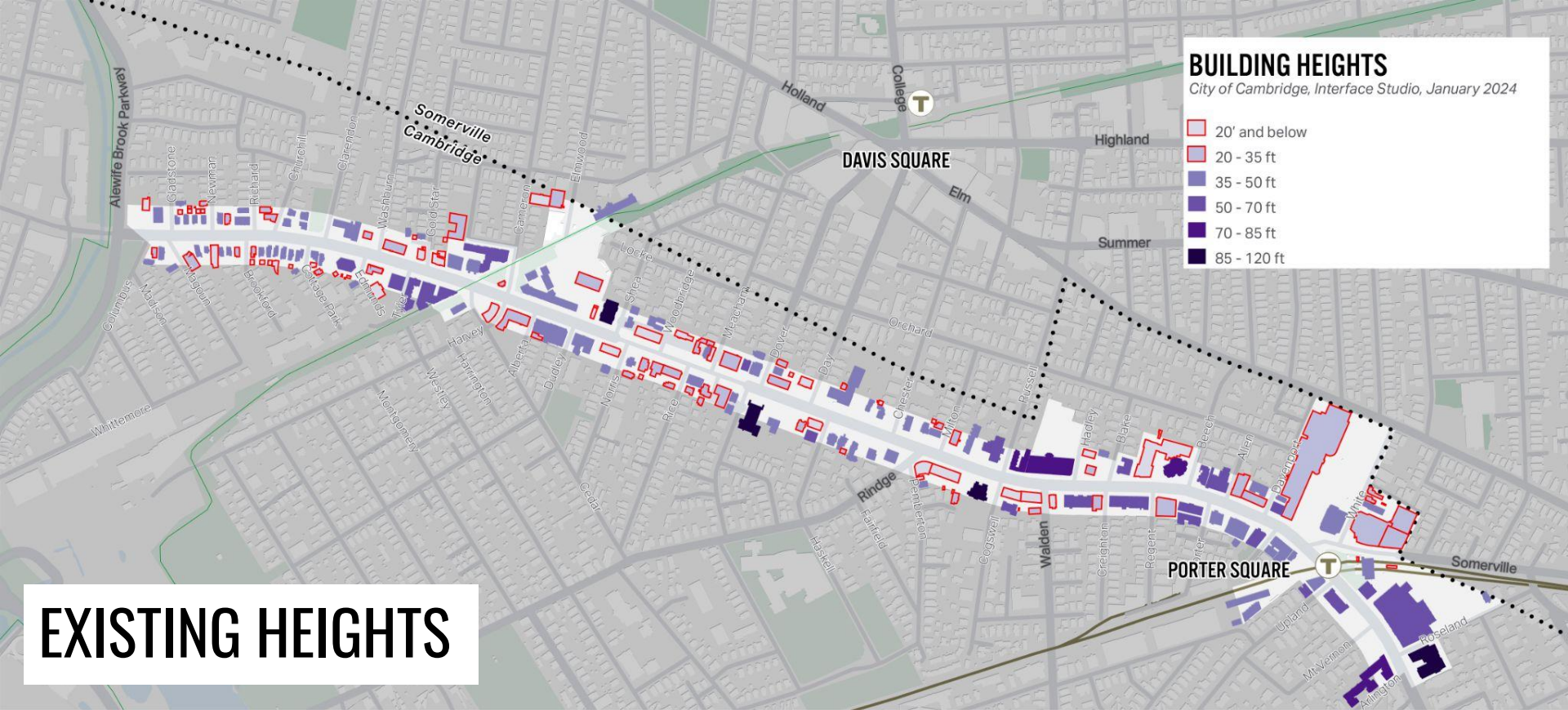
North Mass Ave has several overlapping zoning overlays.

EXISTING HEIGHTS

BUILDING HEIGHTS

City of Cambridge, Interface Studio, January 2024

- 20' and below
- 20 - 35 ft
- 35 - 50 ft
- 50 - 70 ft
- 70 - 85 ft
- 85 - 120 ft





Selected Historic Places

- 1** St. John's Roman Catholic Church
- 2** Residential Homes
- 3** Henderson Carriage Repository
- 4** St. James Episcopal Church
- 5** Masonic Temple
- 6** North Avenue Congregational Church



0

1/4

1/2

Miles

_INTERFACE STUDIO LLC

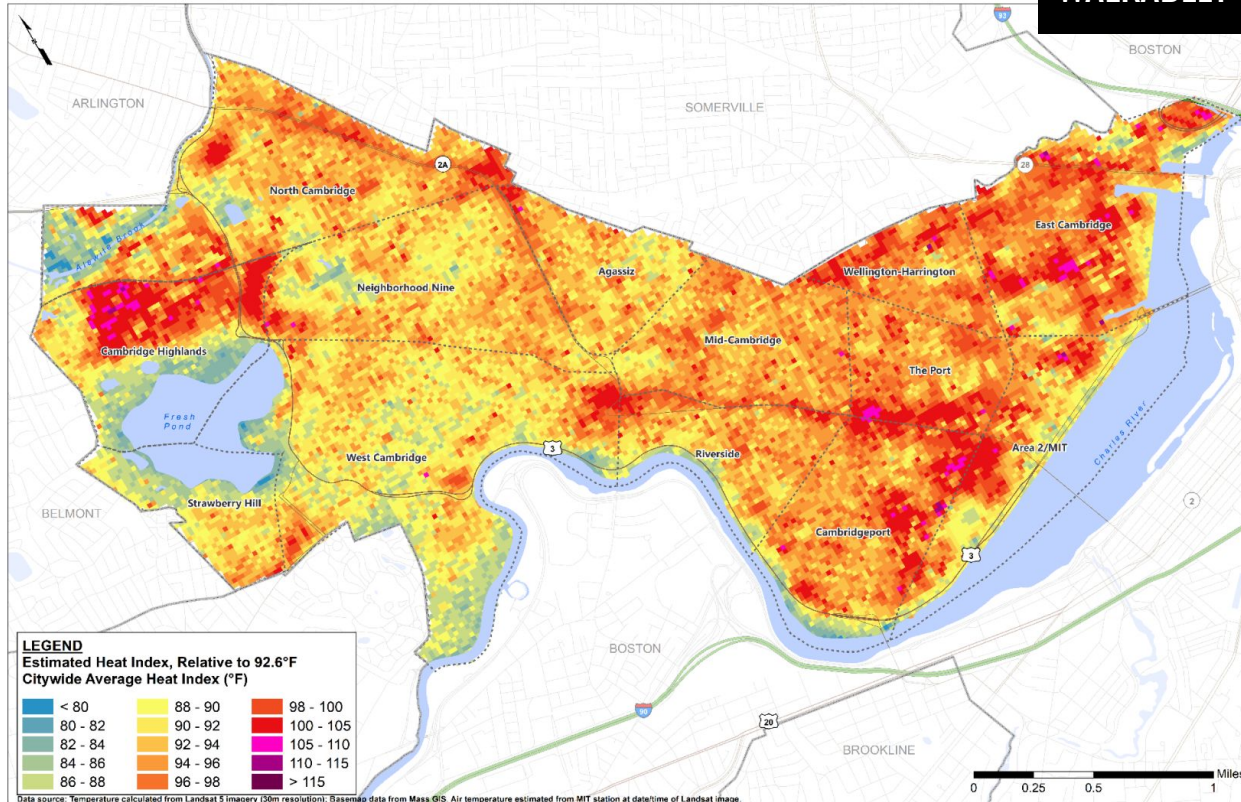
QUIZ GAME

What's the tallest building height on this section of Mass Ave?



HEAT IMPACT

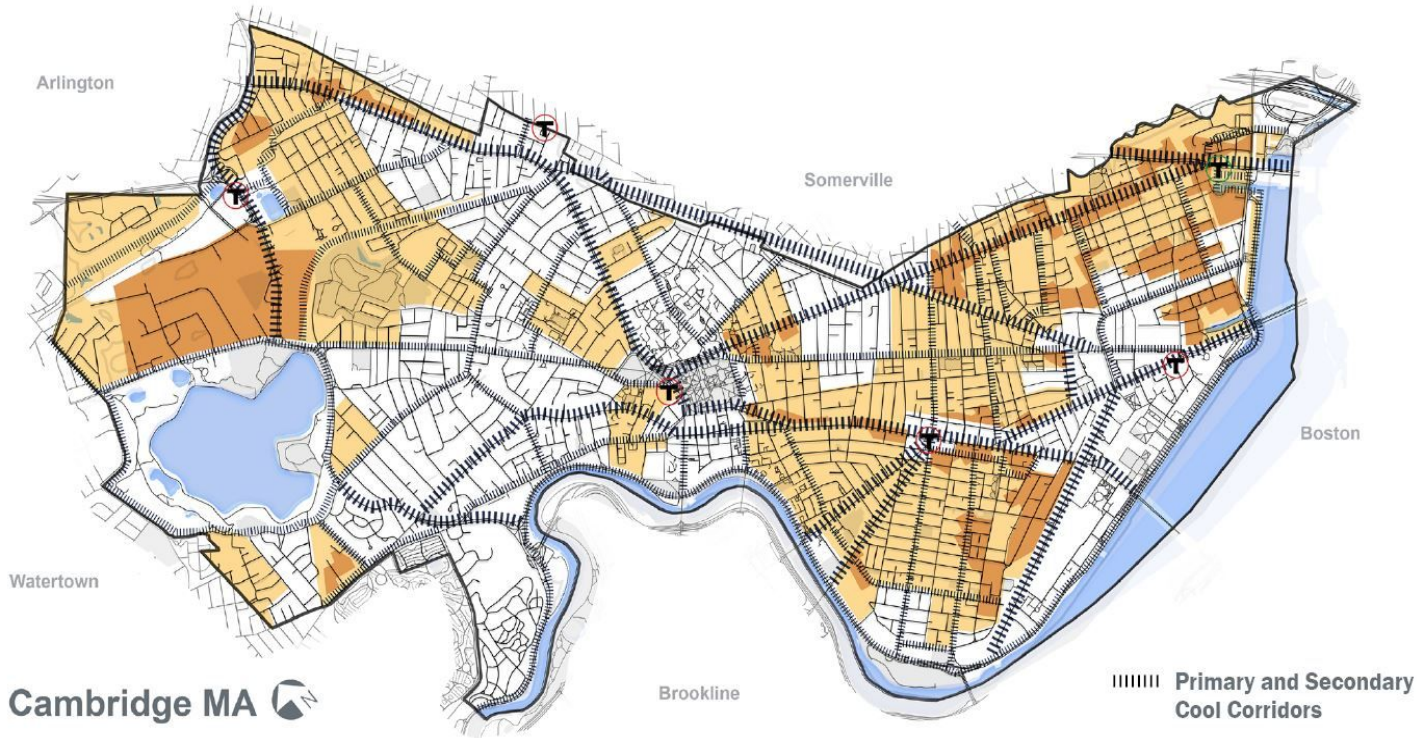
HOW CAN MASS AVE BE MORE RESILIENT AND WALKABLE?



Mass Ave (particularly Porter Square) is vulnerable to heat and is a primary Cool Corridor on the Resilient Cambridge plan.

Source: Urban Heat Island Technical Report

PRIMARY COOL CORRIDORS



Climate Walk on Mass Ave

CAMBRIDGE IMPERVIOUS SURFACES AND TREE CANOPY

Interface Studio, Cambridge Open Data,
February 2024

- Impervious Surfaces
- Parks/Open Space
- Street Tree Canopy



Mass Ave - and many of its
open spaces - are impervious

A gap in the tree
canopy is present
in the study area

INTERFACE STUDIO LLC



0

1/4

Miles
1/2

OPEN SPACES + PARKS





LINEAR PARK ACCESS

Interface Studio, August 2024

- North Mass Ave
- North Mass Ave + Porter Square Study Area
- Parks and Open Space
- Linear Park / Somerville Community Path
- Public Access Point
- Private/Semi-Private Access Point
- City Boundary



MINI POLL!

Which open space nearby do you use most often?



EXPERIENCE

Interface Studio conducted an assessment of experiential qualities to better understand where there are opportunities to help activate the street.



Public Realm Opportunities

Blank Walls



Open Space Activation Opportunities

Unprogrammed Plaza



Potential Redevelopment Opportunities

Vacant Lot



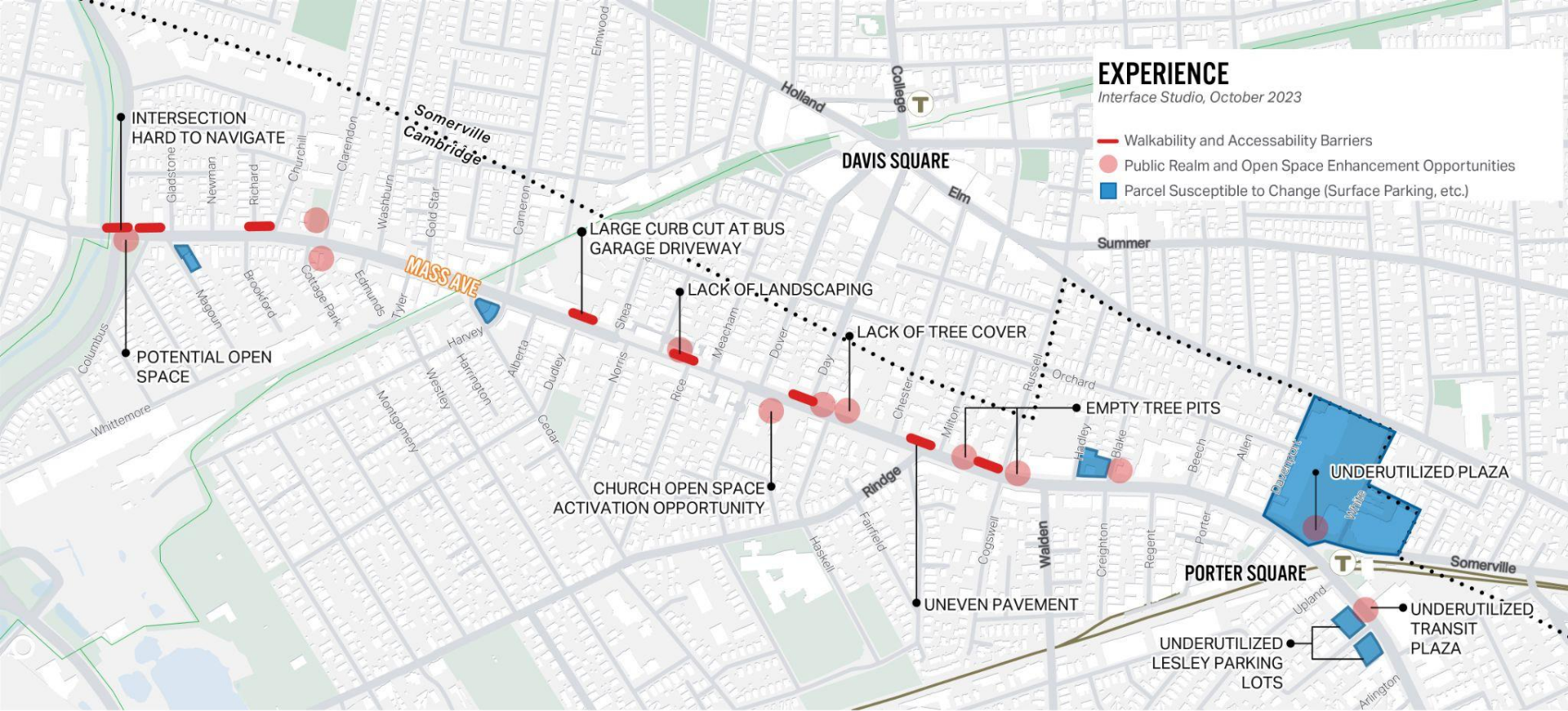
Pedestrian Mobility and Comfort

Lack of Tree Cover

EXPERIENCE

Interface Studio, October 2023

- Walkability and Accessibility Barriers
- Public Realm and Open Space Enhancement Opportunities
- Parcel Susceptible to Change (Surface Parking, etc.)



GENERAL OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS

- South of Porter Square has more students and institutional anchors whereas North Cambridge has more families
- South of Porter Square has less vacancy and a higher density of walkable blocks. North Cambridge has more auto oriented business
- Key anchors include Porter Square, Linear Park and Alewife Brook Parkway
- Porter Square requires its own meeting to dive deeper

QUESTIONS?

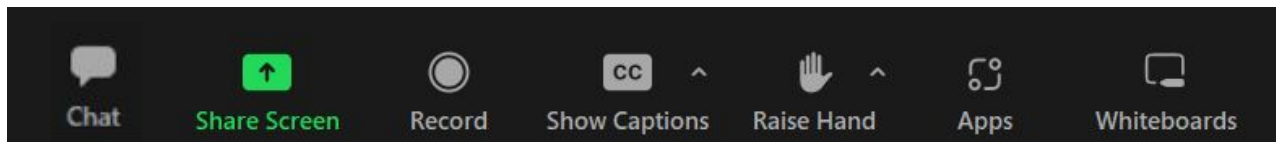
Your feedback is important

Here are the guidelines for tonight's discussion:

- We want to give **as many people as possible the opportunity to be heard**. If you've already had a chance to speak, or if someone else has voiced your comment, please let people with new ideas be heard.
- Respect the experiences of others
- Listen to each other & divergent perspectives
- Stay on topic and strive to be succinct
- Each person has **two minutes** to speak.
- If we're unable to hear from all raised hands before our breakout groups, you can **send your comments/questions directly to Drew Kane** by phone: 617-349-4640 or by email: dkane@cambridgema.gov.

Visit www.cambridgema.gov/massaveplan to sign up for our email list!

Q+A: RAISE YOUR HAND TO ASK A QUESTION



Use **chat** to type a question and send to **"0_Information"** in the dropdown menu

Use **Raise Hand** to ask a question and we will unmute you!






On your phone, use *9 to request to speak, we'll read the last 4 digits of your phone number when it's time for you to speak.

BREAKOUT GROUPS

(30 MINUTES)

Main discussion questions:

1. **What do we need to know most about North Mass Ave and Porter Square?**
2. **How might it be different than Mass Ave, South of Porter Square?**
3. **What are your hopes for the future of North Mass Ave and Porter Square?**

		North Mass Ave?	Porter Square?
What do we need to know most about...			
How might it be different [than SoPo]?			
What are your hopes for the future?			

NEXT STEPS

October:

- Reconvene our **Stakeholder Working Group**

Early November:

- Host the next **Community Meeting** to discuss draft ideas for North Mass Ave

Early December:

- Host a **Community Workshop focused on Porter Square**

You can send your comments/questions directly to Drew Kane by phone: 617-349-4640 or by email: dkane@cambridgema.gov

Visit www.cambridgema.gov/massaveplan to sign up for our email list!



Mass Ave Collaboration Map

So far *there's 800+ comments and 3,800+ votes!*



Last chance!
MAP your thoughts

on our crowdsource map: bit.ly/MAPS_map

Mass Ave Comments

Location

Click the map to draw the location.

Enter an address to search



Share your thoughts!

I want to share

Select...

Select...

A favorite place

An issue

An idea

Map Comment

Report It

Cancel

SCAN:



bittly

+ Add a thought