

VISION + GOALS

Mass Ave in the future -15 years from now and beyond - is envisioned as a great street; a meaningful place with an inviting and engaging public realm that prioritizes the pedestrian experience and supports a host of different users and uses. It will be a street that is attractive and walkable, with trees, active storefronts, and spaces to gather. Encouraging additional density, especially close to mass transit, is a key part to achieving this vision. More density will bring more people to Mass Ave to live, work, learn, play, and shop, supporting businesses, activities, and a thriving community, while also helping the city reduce vehicular travel and meet its sustainability goals.

Themes for Mass Ave:

MORE OF A NEIGHBORHOOD & DESTINATION

TRANSFORM THE CORRIDOR AS A LIVABLE, WALKABLE NEIGHBORHOOD WITH IMPROVED AMENITIES AND PLACES FOR CHILDREN, AND CREATE A MORE VIBRANT ATMOSPHERE BY ENCOURAGING POP-UP SHOPS, EVENTS AND ACTIVE STOREFRONTS.

MOREINVITING

FOCUS ON CREATING A MORE ATTRACTIVE PUBLIC REALM ALONG MASS AVE THROUGH GREENING, PUBLIC ARTWORK, AND MORE PLACES TO GATHER.

EASIER TO GET AROUND

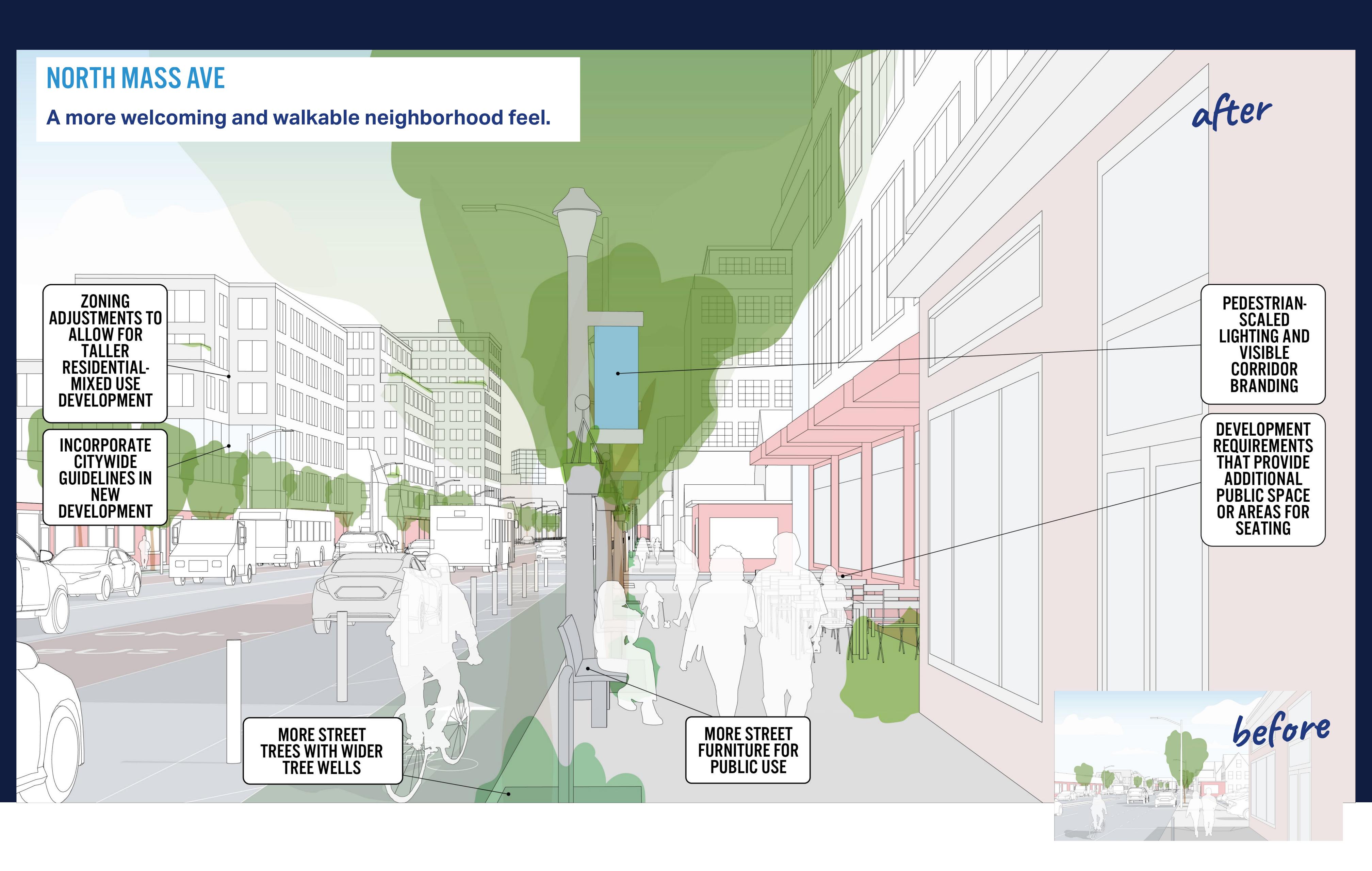
DEVELOP A BALANCED AND INTEGRATED SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK THAT FOCUSES ON ACTIONS TO IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY AND SPACE FOR PEOPLE WALKING.

MORE HOUSING OPTIONS

ACCOMMODATE MORE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT ALONG MASS AVE THROUGH INCREASED DENSITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING. ADDRESS THE NEED FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND INTEGRATE IT INTO THE EXISTING NEIGHBORHOOD FABRIC.

MASS AVE PLANNING STUDY

CAMBRIDGE COMMON TO ALEWIFE BROOK PARKWAY



OUR PROCESS

The Mass Ave Planning Study began in the fall of 2023. The process included eight community meetings and nine MAPS Working Group meetings, alongside targeted stakeholder and focus group meetings designed to gather input, share updates, and refine project goals. The engagement was structured by geography—starting with the South of Porter study area, followed by North Mass Ave and Porter Square—and conducted in four phases. Phase 1 was the project introduction and information gathering. Phases 2 and 3 were area planning focused meetings, and Phase 4 were final recommendations. Once the final plan is complete, implementation phases are set to kickoff in summer 2025.

STAKEHOLDER WORKING GROUP

The 14-member working group, composed of local residents, business owners, employees, property owners, and institutional representatives, was selected through an application process and approved by City Council. Throughout the planning process the team met with the working group nine times, including a walking tour to kick off the project, zoning specific meetings, and a developer roundtable. All meetings were open to the public, and provided the opportunity for public comment.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

There were eight community meetings in four phases. Phases 1 and 4 were for the entirety of the corridor, while Phases 2 and 3 had three meetings each for each of the two study areas - South of Porter followed by North Mass Ave & Porter Square. The City hosted both in-person and virtual community meetings to reach a diverse audience.

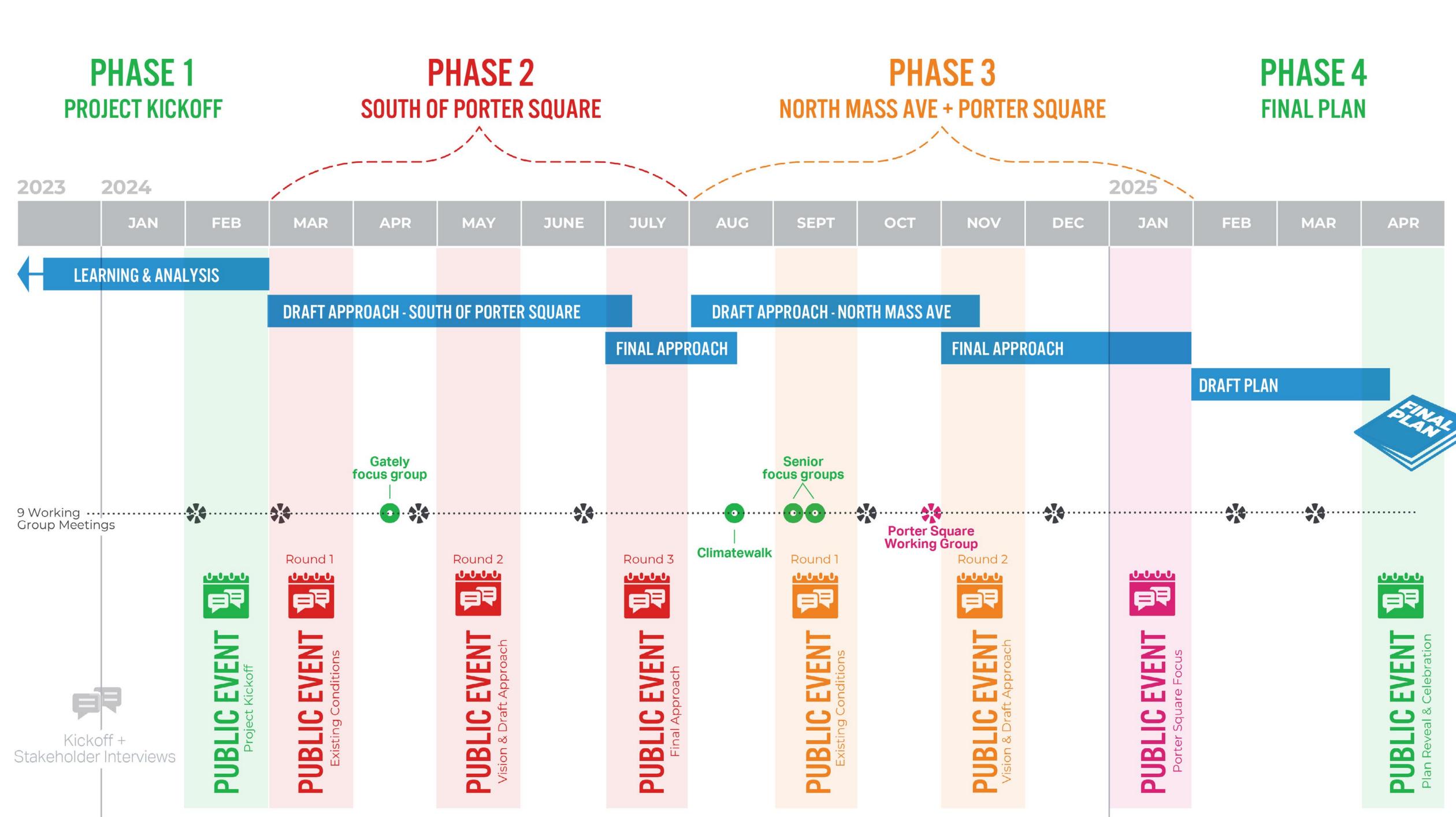
- Phase 1: Project Kick Off
- Phase 2: South of Porter Square
- Phase 3: North Mass Ave + Porter Square
- Phase 4: Final Plan

FOCUS GROUPS

Seven focus groups were conducted to engage in targeted discussions with community organizations, youth and seniors on the corridor.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

The team conducted approximately 30 interviews with a diverse range of businesses and stakeholders, including property managers, developers, and institutions.



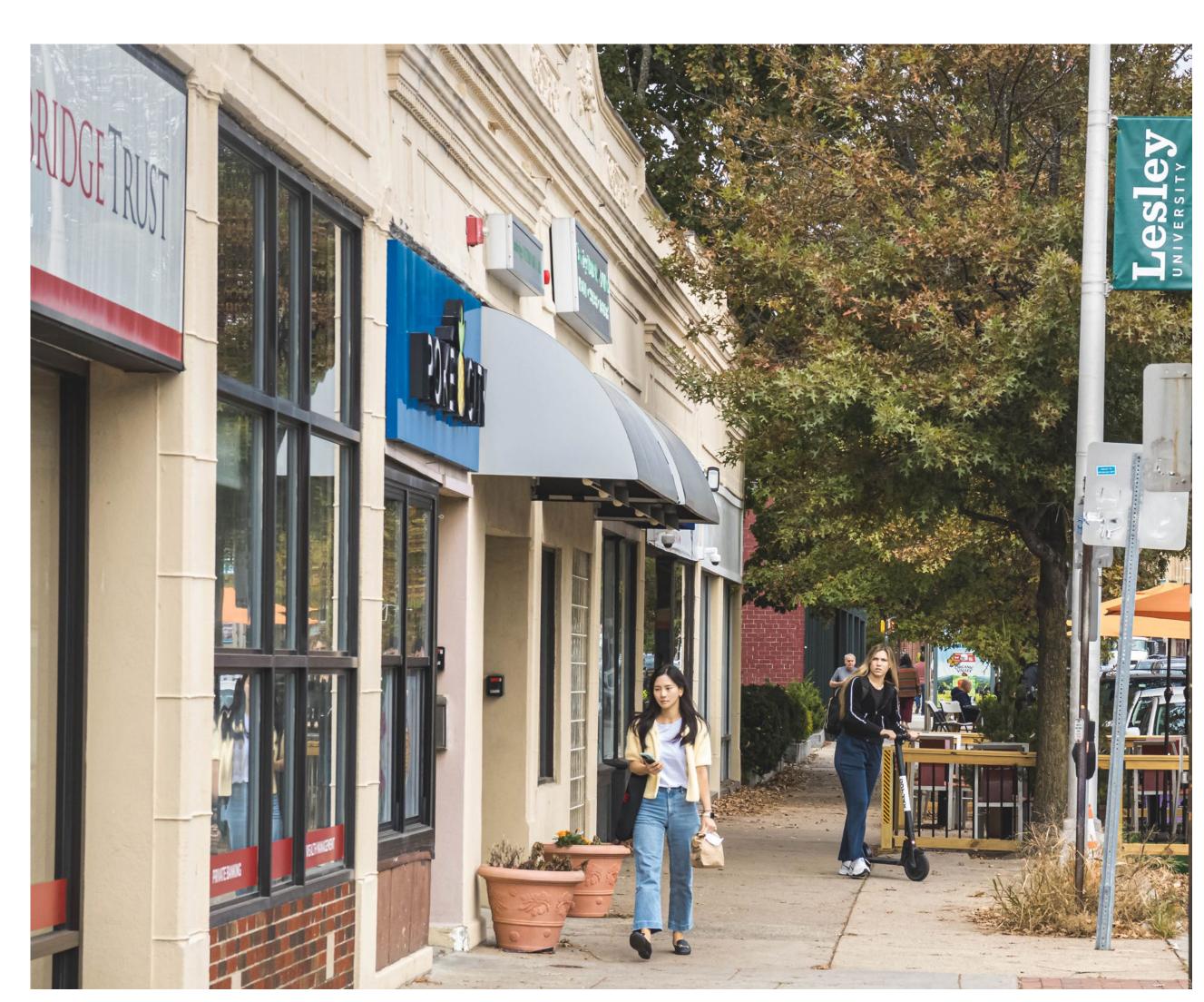




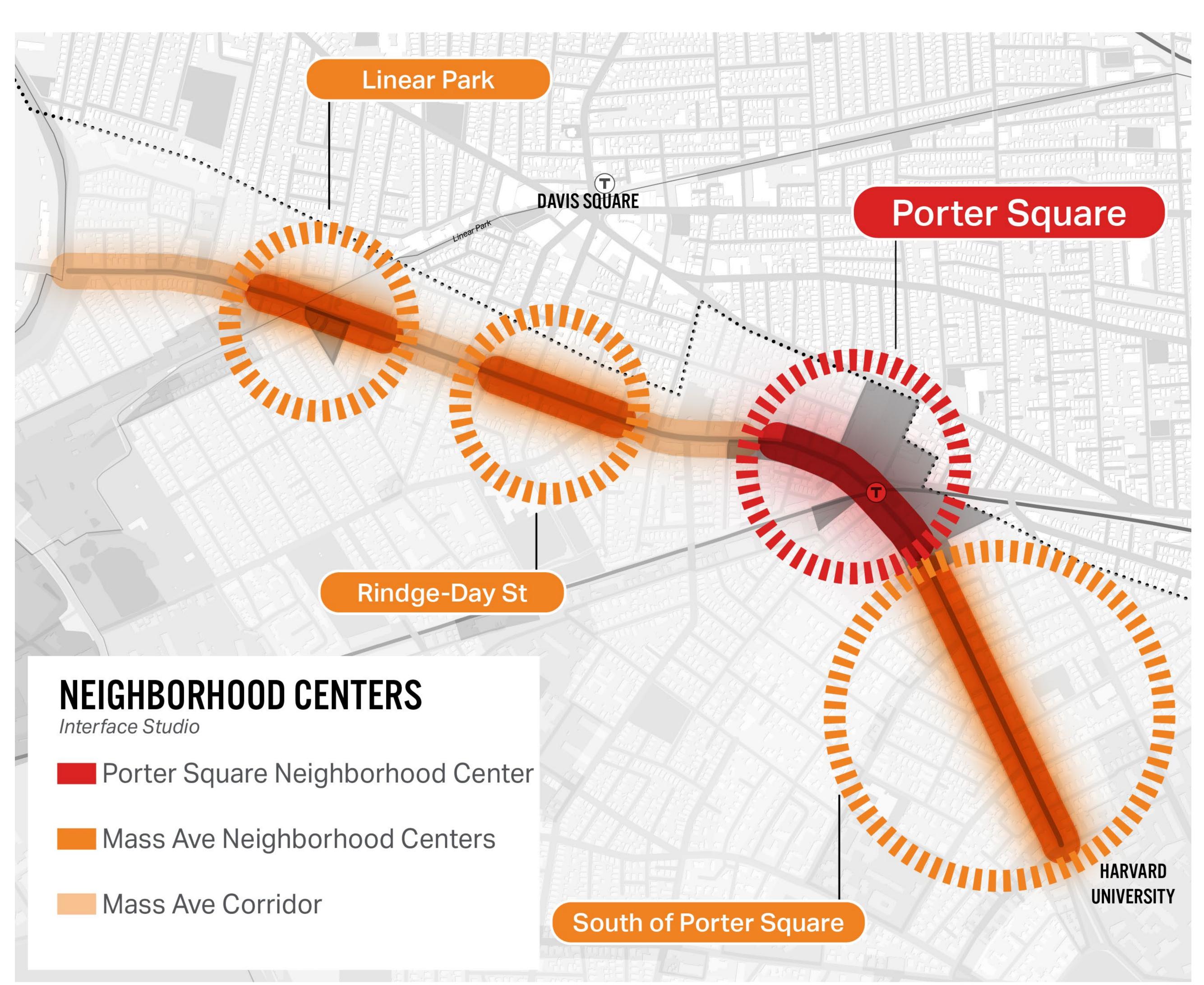


NEGHBORHOOD & DESTINATION

Transform the corridor as a livable neighborhood with places for all ages and create a more vibrant atmosphere by encouraging pop-up shops, events and active storefronts.







FOSTER A MIX OF NEIGHBORHOOD-SERVING, FAMILY-FRIENDLY GOODS AND SERVICES

Supporting local businesses along Mass Ave helps Marketing Mass Ave & Porter Square can boost More neighborhood-serving shops, restaurants, and foot traffic. service providers, we strengthen the local economy, fosterconnectionsamongneighbors, and preserve KEY STRATEGIES: the avenue's distinct character.

KEY STRATEGIES:

- 1. Conduct a feasibility study to understand how businesses in the North Mass Ave corridor, from Harvard Square to the Arlington line, can best organize in a sustainable way, such as a business association.
- 2. Target outreach to existing businesses on available grants and programs.
- 3. Explore ways to keep commercial rents affordable and vacancies low.

MARKET THE CORRIDOR TO SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESSES

- 1. Create and implement a branding strategy to highlight Mass Ave's identity.
- 2. Recruit new businesses to the corridor.
- 3. Provide business and marketing support.

IMAGINE IT!

A pop of color to brand Mass Ave around Porter Square

markets, programming seasonal create an exciting, welcoming, and family-friendly local businesses by highlighting their unique community events and performance art along community where residents can find unique goods offerings through coordinated promotions, events, Mass Ave with a potential business association andessentialservices close to home. By prioritizing and branding efforts to attract visitors and boost can activate public spaces, draw foot traffic to local businesses, and foster a stronger sense of neighborhood identity. By featuring local artists, musicians, and cultural programming, these events create dynamic, inclusive experiences that make Mass Ave a vibrant destination for residents and

ORGANIZE AND HOST MORE

COMMUNITY EVENTS AND

PERFORMANCE ART

KEY STRATEGIES:

visitors alike.

- 1. Partner with local institutions and property owners to organize and fund events.
- 2. Connect with local artists and performers from the community and local student population.

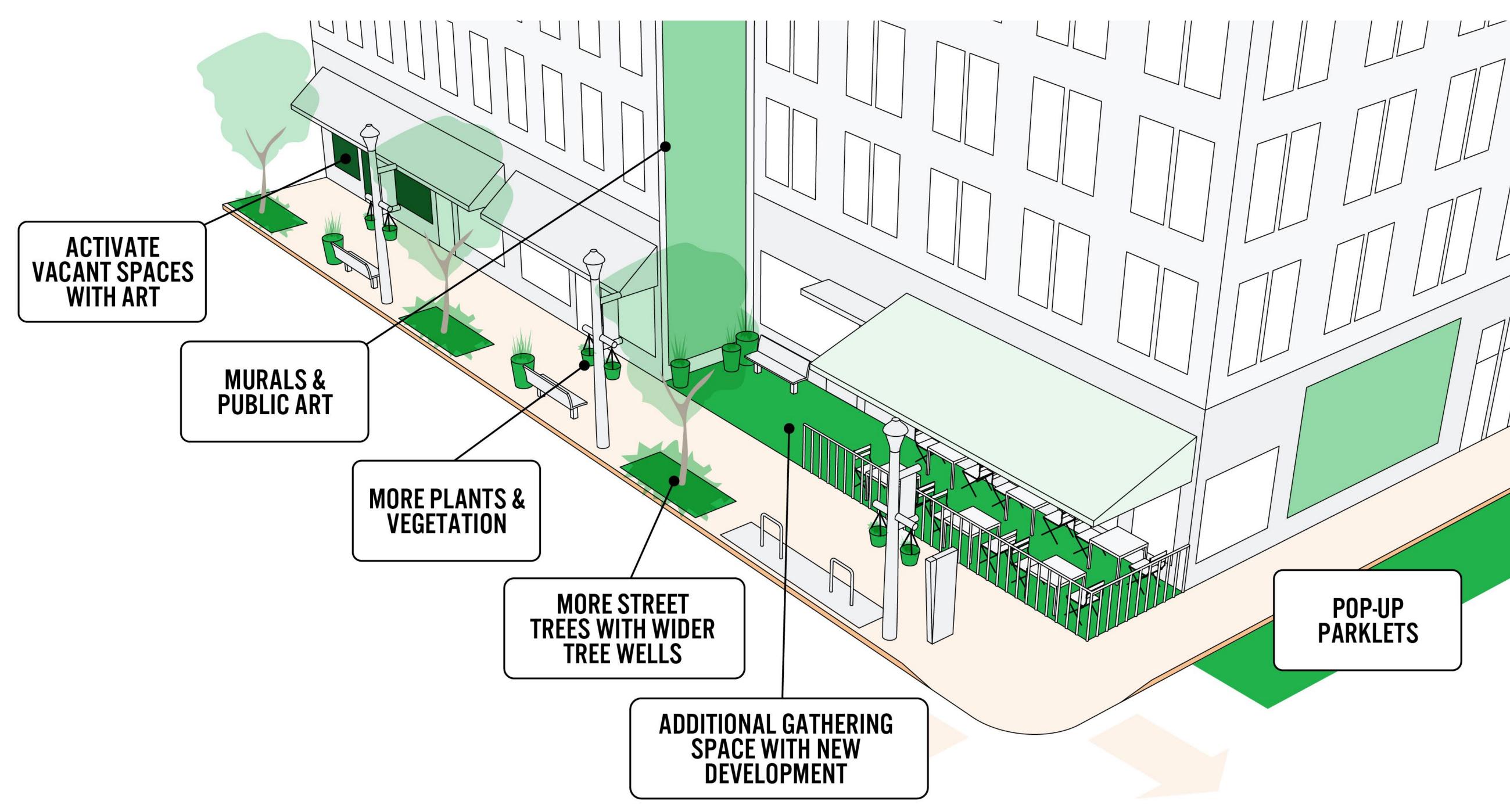




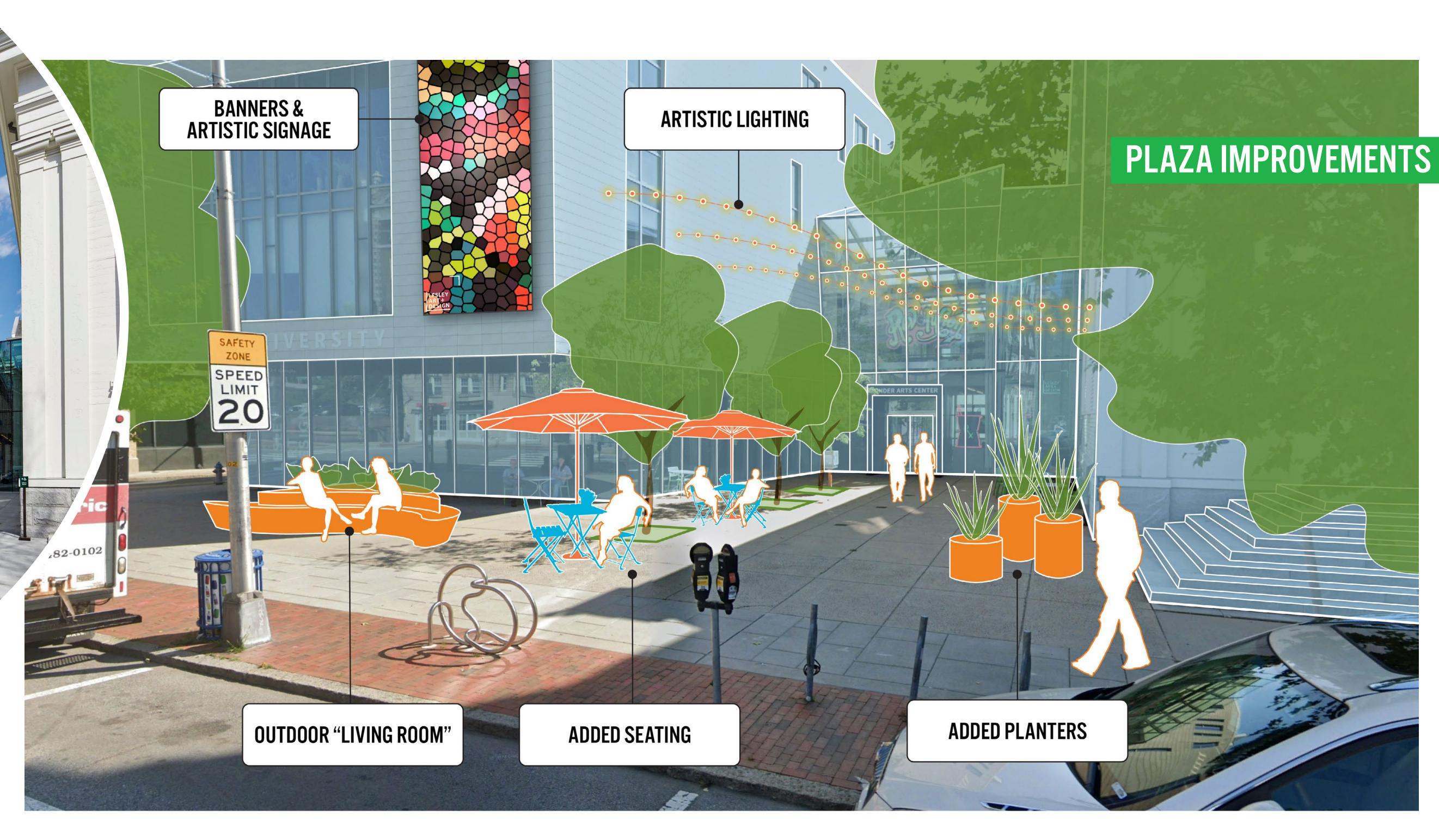


EN MINITING

Focus on creating a more attractive public realm along Mass Ave through greening, public artwork, and more places to gather.





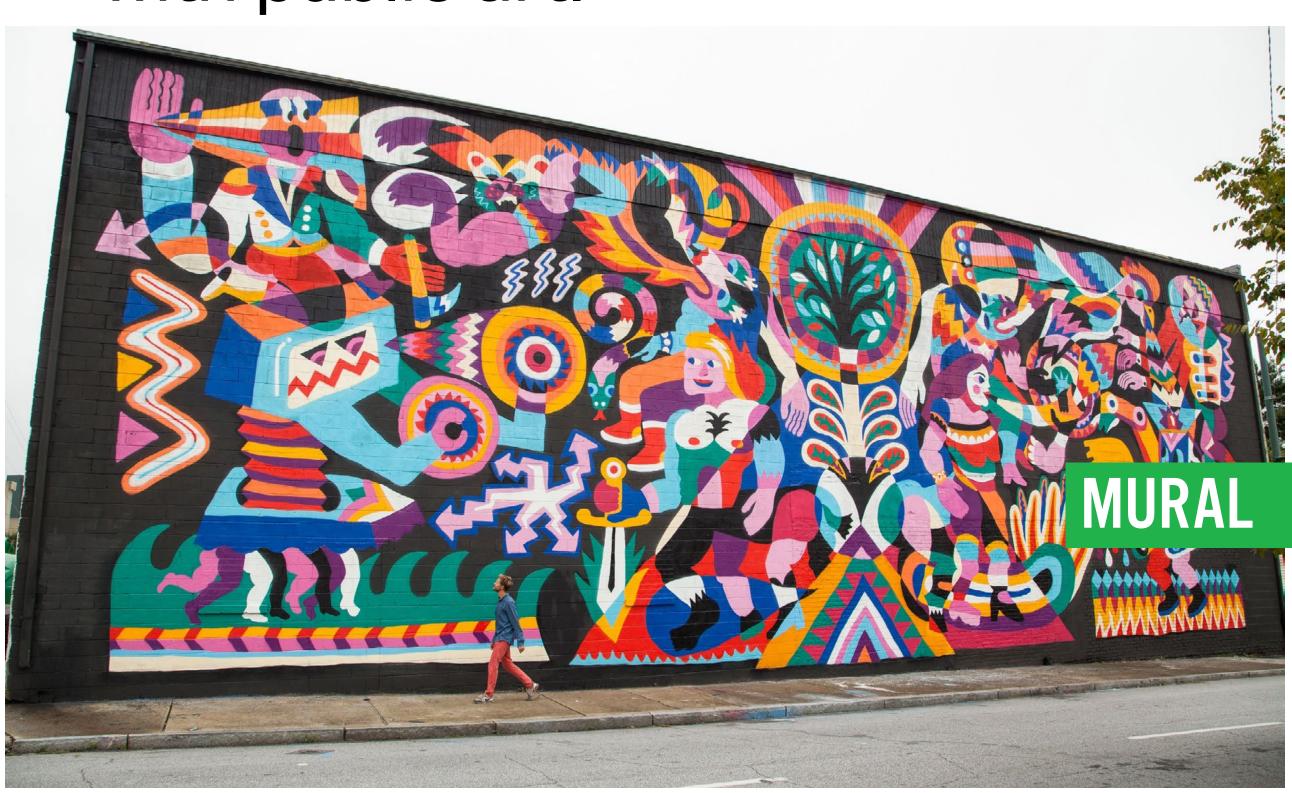


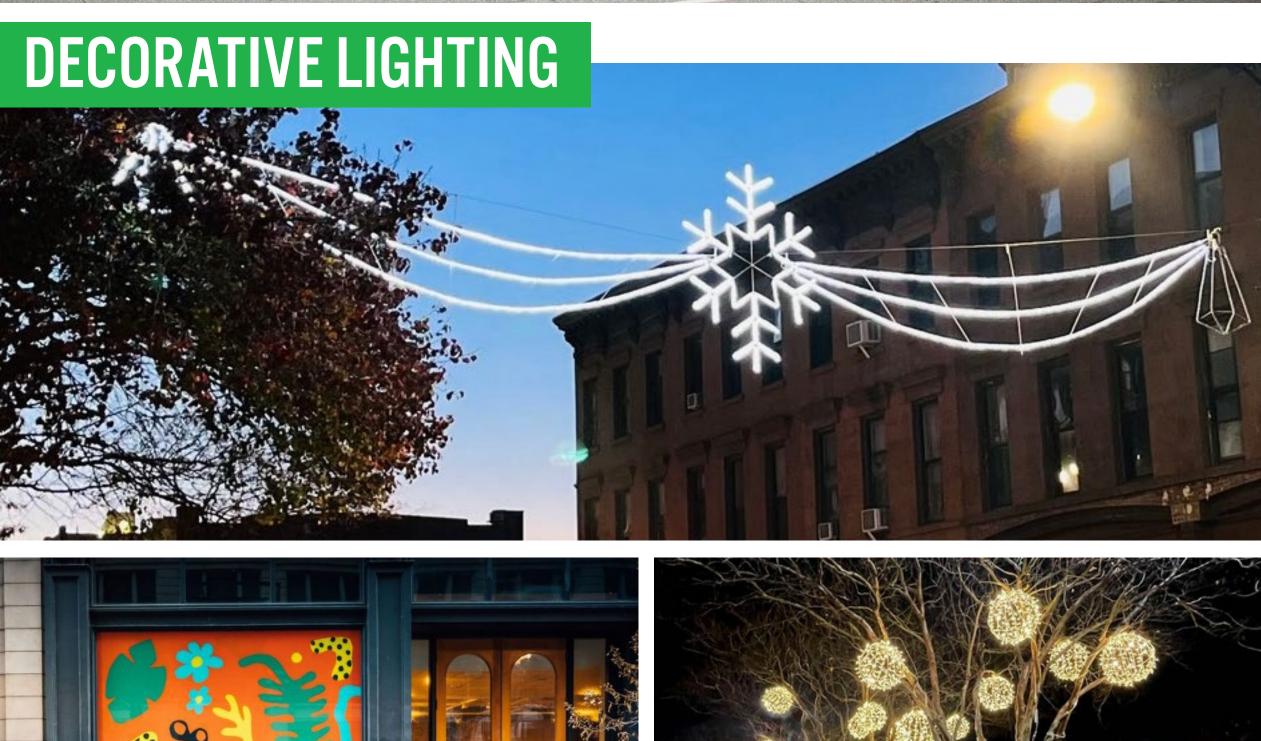
SHARE COMMUNITY IDENTITY THROUGH **CREATIVITY AND ART**

Public art, murals, and creative installations can tell local stories, highlight cultural diversity, and make shared spaces more welcoming and engaging for residents and visitors alike.

KEY STRATEGIES:

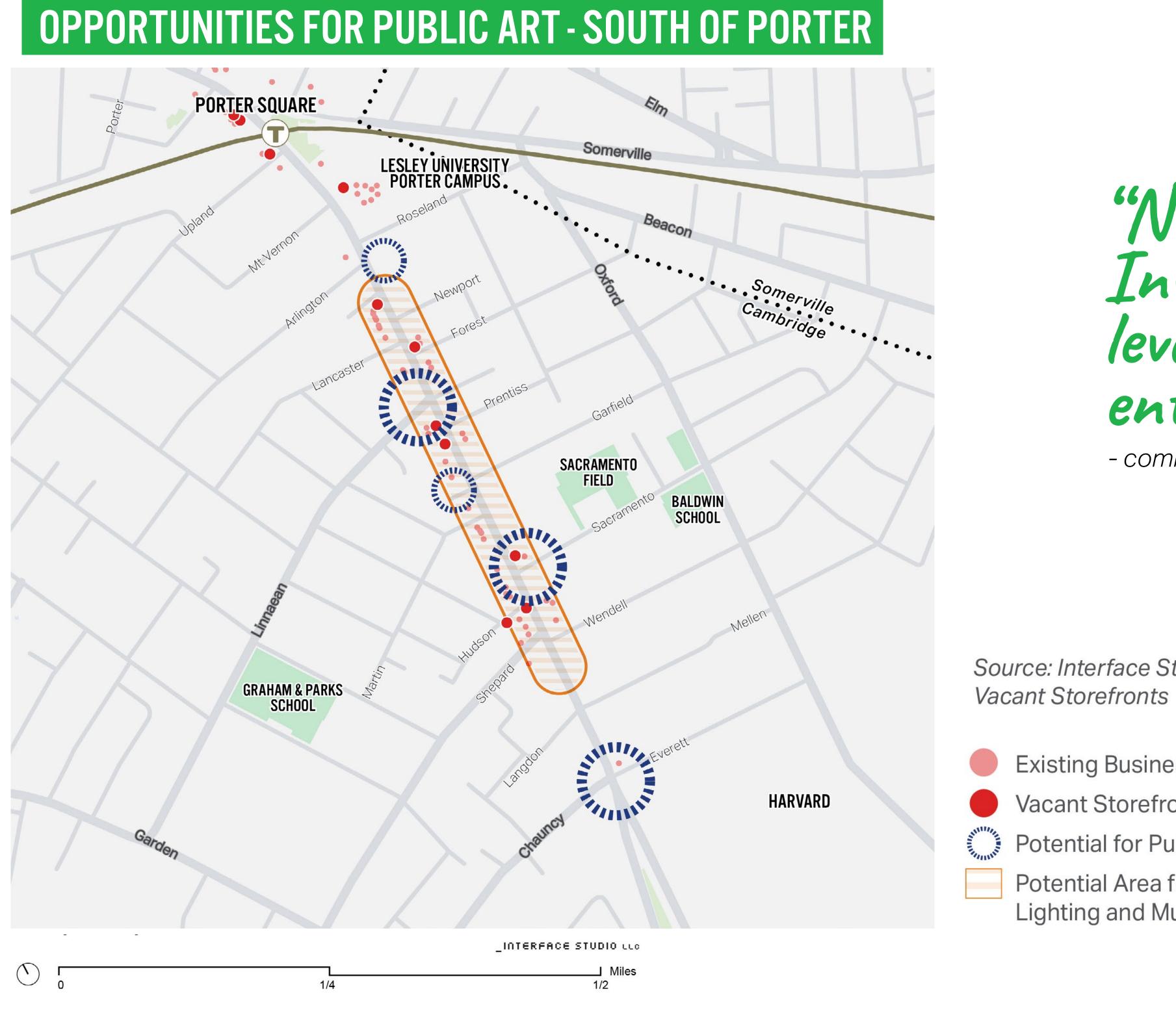
- Target larger walls and open spaces as locations for neighborhood murals and public art.
- 2. Install decorative street lighting and tree lighting in key commercial areas.
- 3. Activate vacant commercial spaces with public art.





REE LIGHTING

- community quote OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC ART - NORTH MASS AVE McCrehan Memorial



"Night lighting! ...
Inviting, human-level lighting along entire length..." - community quote

More
impromptu

Source: Interface Studio, Cambridge Retail

Existing Businesses

Vacant Storefronts

Potential for Public Art Potential Area for Decorative Street/Tree Lighting and Murals

CAMBRIDGE COMMON TO ALEWIFE BROOK PARKWAY

PLANT MORE TREES AND VEGETATION ALONG CORRIDOR AND OPEN SPACES

More trees are needed to help the city create Cool Corridors for all modes of travel and activity. These recommendations are aligned with the Urban Forestry Master Plan.

KEY STRATEGIES:

- 1. Install more street trees and maximize planting in public spaces.
- 2. Enlarge existing street tree wells and provide more space for additional ground-level vegetation.
- 3. Work with property owners to maintain trees and vegetation on their property.
- 4. Explore opportunities to expand public realm space for trees and more plantings.
- 5. Coordinate with citywide green stormwater infrastructure mitigation measures.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR TREES & SHADE - NORTH MASS AVE **DAVIS SQUARE** Rindge Field North Cambridge Catholic Cemetery

OPPORTUNITIES FOR TREES & SHADE- SOUTH OF PORTER PORTER SQUARE SACRAMENTO **GRAHAM & PARKS** SCHOOL HARVARD comfort. _INTERFACE STUDIO LLC

"New development with setbacks could provide space for more greenery and make it easier to - community quote

Source: Interface Studio, Urban Heat Island Technical Report, Cambridge Climatewalks

High Priority Areas that lack street trees and are recommended to explore adding street trees in those locations.

Medium Priority Areas with opportunities to plant more street trees to create a more consistent placement of street trees.

Lower Priority Areas that currently have a consistent placement of street trees.

Shade Priority Areas These are areas that need to be prioritized for tree plantings and near-term interventions to increase pedestrian





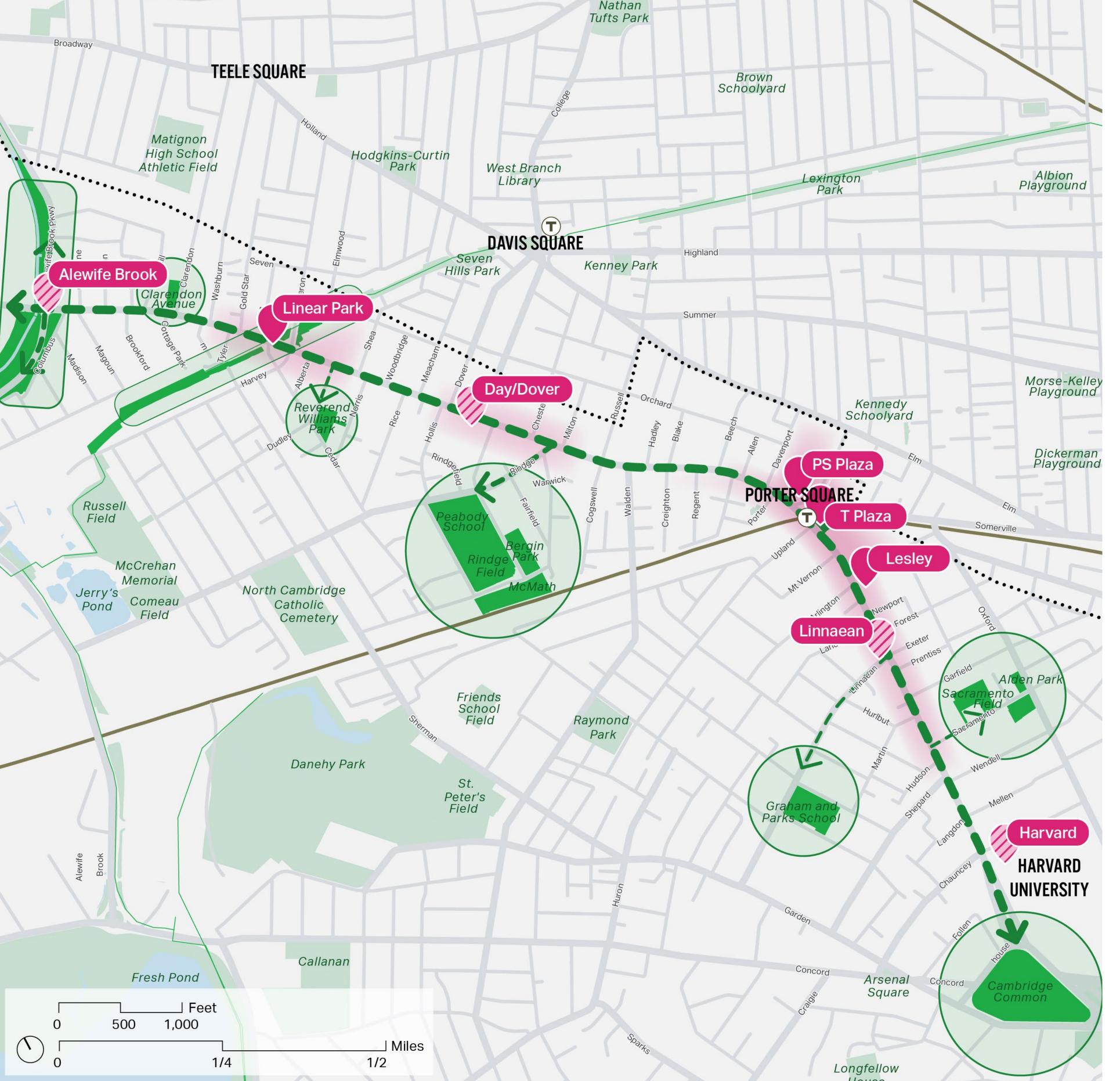
CREATE MORE PLACES FOR THE COMMUNITY TO GATHER

Open spaces are critical for community health and community building. They foster social interaction, recreation, and provide respite from urban heat. However, with limited publicly owned land opportunities and relatively narrow sidewalks, Mass Ave must take an innovative approach to maximizing existing spaces. This could include reclaiming underutilized areas, integrating parklets, enhancing streetscapes with seating and greenery, and designing flexible public spaces that serve multiple community needs.

KEY STRATEGIES:

- 1. Partner with property owners and institutions to activate underutilized spaces.
- 2. Identify opportunities for pop-up parklets and curb bumpouts on Mass Ave and side streets.
- 3. Advocate for affordable indoor community event or meeting space on ground floor in new developments.
- 4. Create meaningful connections to existing open spaces nearby.
- 5. Leverage new large-scale development to create new open space.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVED PUBLIC SPACE



NORTH MASS AVE

Key locations include: - Alewife Brook Parkway - Clarendon Ave Park

- Linear Park

- St. James's Lawn

- Lunder Arts Plaza Create better connections from Mass Ave to: Russell Field, Reverend William Park, Peabody School, Rindge Field,

Gerard Bergin Park, McMath Park

PORTER SQUARE

Key locations include: - Porter Square Plaza - MBTA Plaza

- Potential significant new open space with large-scale redevelopment

SOUTH OF PORTER SQUARE

Key locations include: - Cambridge Common

Create better connections from Mass Ave to: Sacramento Field, Alden Park, **Graham and Parks School**

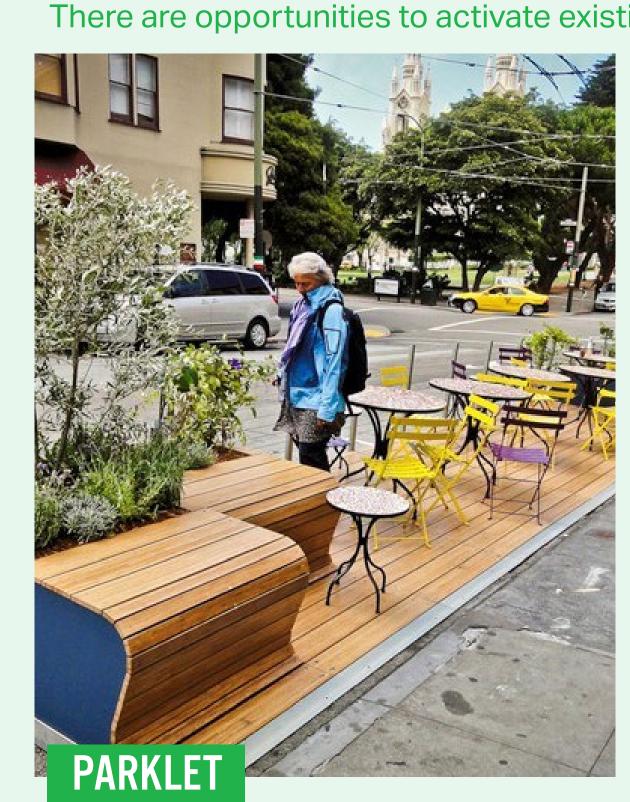
Opportunity to enhance existing

gathering locations Opportunity to create new gathering locations with willing property owners Encourage gathering locations in

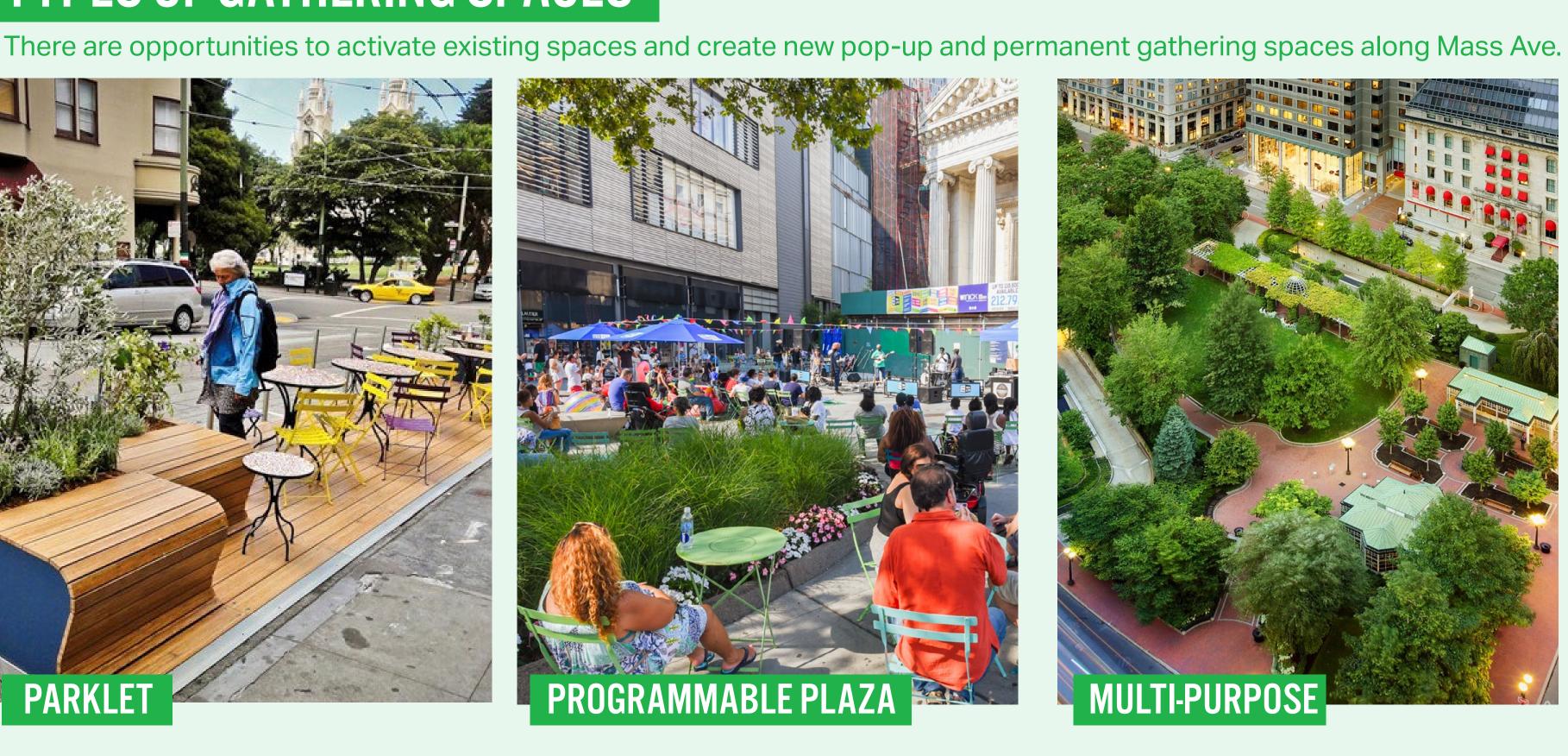
new development that occur within neighborhood centers Connection corridors to nearby

parks and gathering spaces

TYPES OF GATHERING SPACES





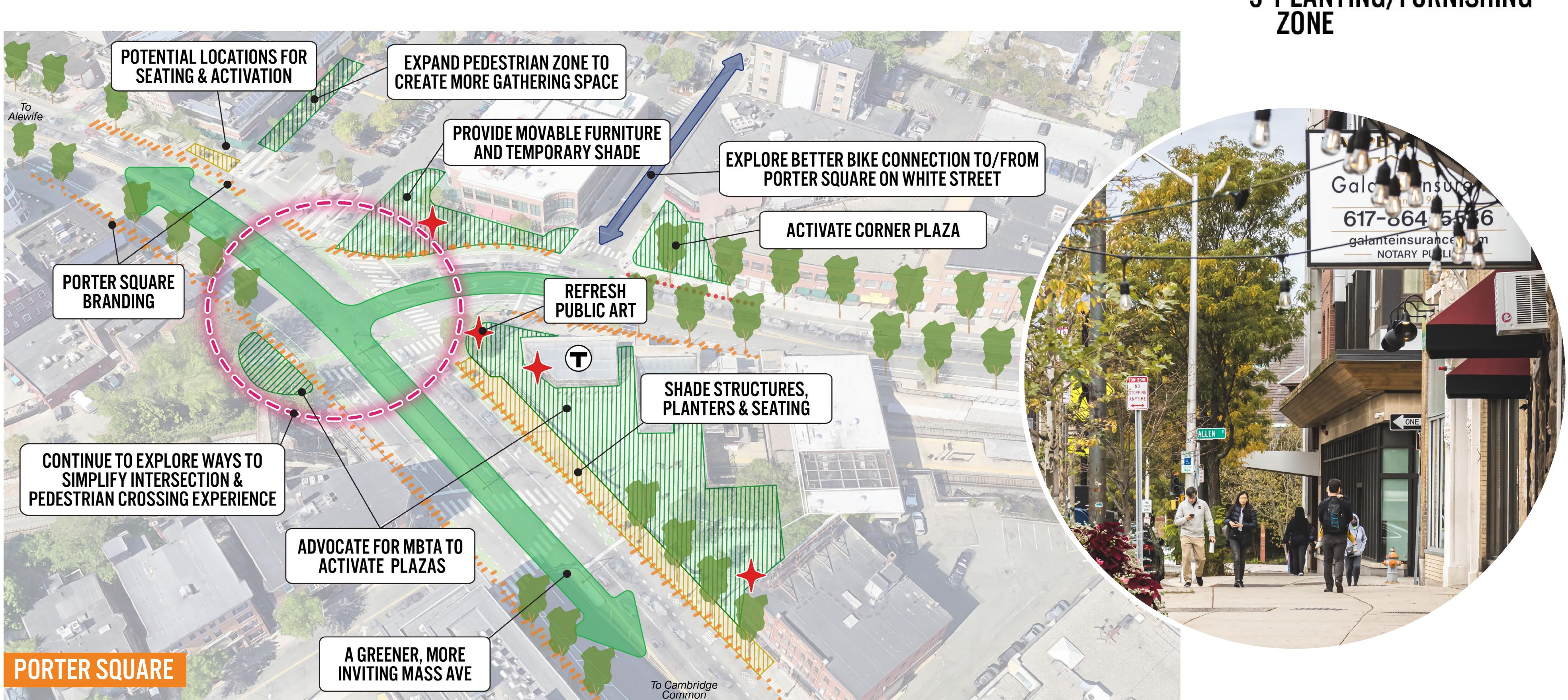




EASIERTO GETAROUND

Develop a balanced and integrated sustainable transportation network that focuses on actions to improve accessibility and space for people walking.

OPTION 1: BUILDING SETBACK NEW DEVELOPMENT SIDEWALK DESIGN -5' BUILDING SETBACK Continue to provide a building setback to expand the sidewalk in new 2' FRONTAGE ZONE developments. This help to create a more ideal sidewalk width of 17 ft. for a 7' PEDESTRIAN ZONE commercial street. 3' PLANTING/FURNISHING ZONE



DESIGN FOR PEDESTRIAN COMFORT AND ACCESSIBILITY

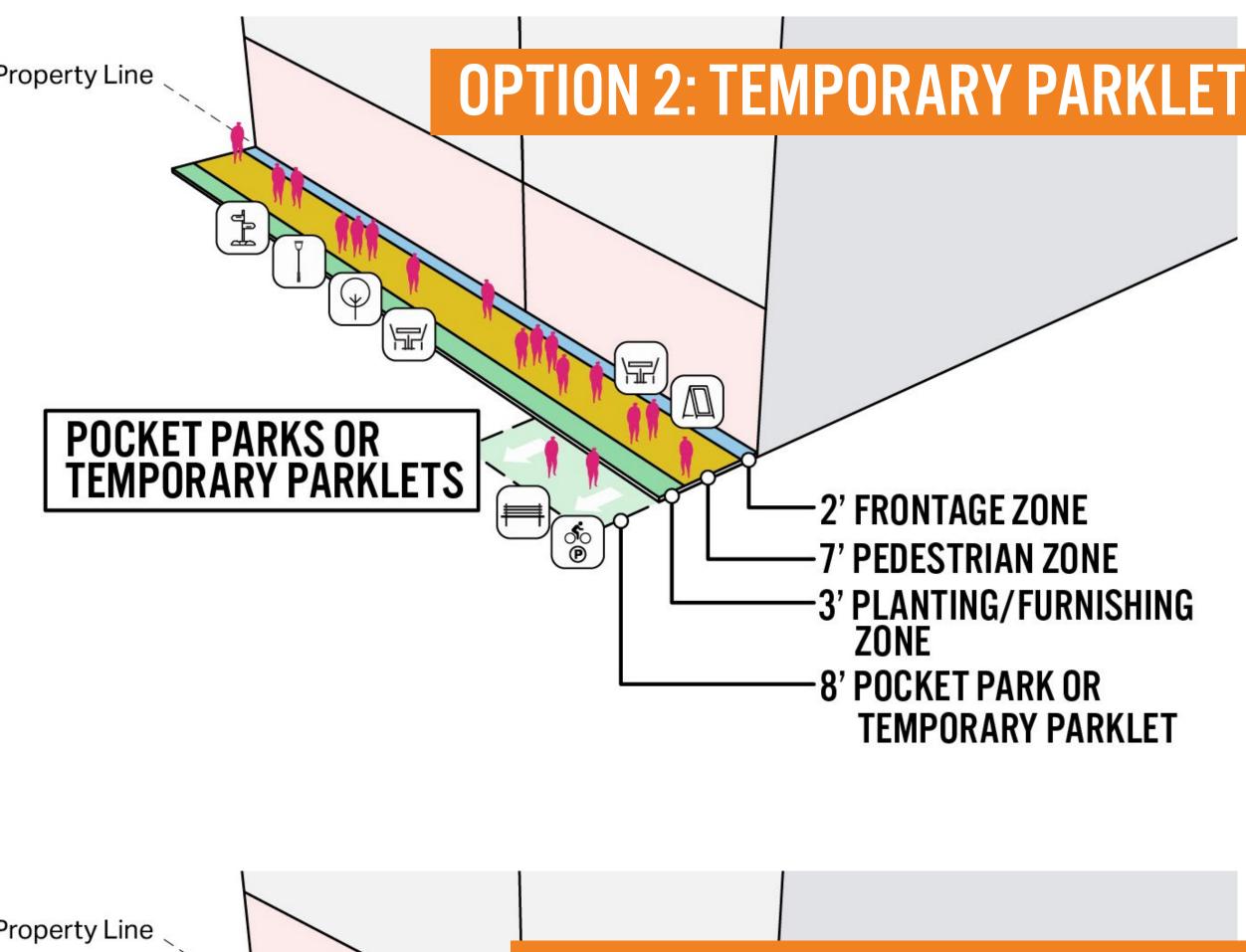
PROVIDE SAFE, CONVENIENT ACCESS TO SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

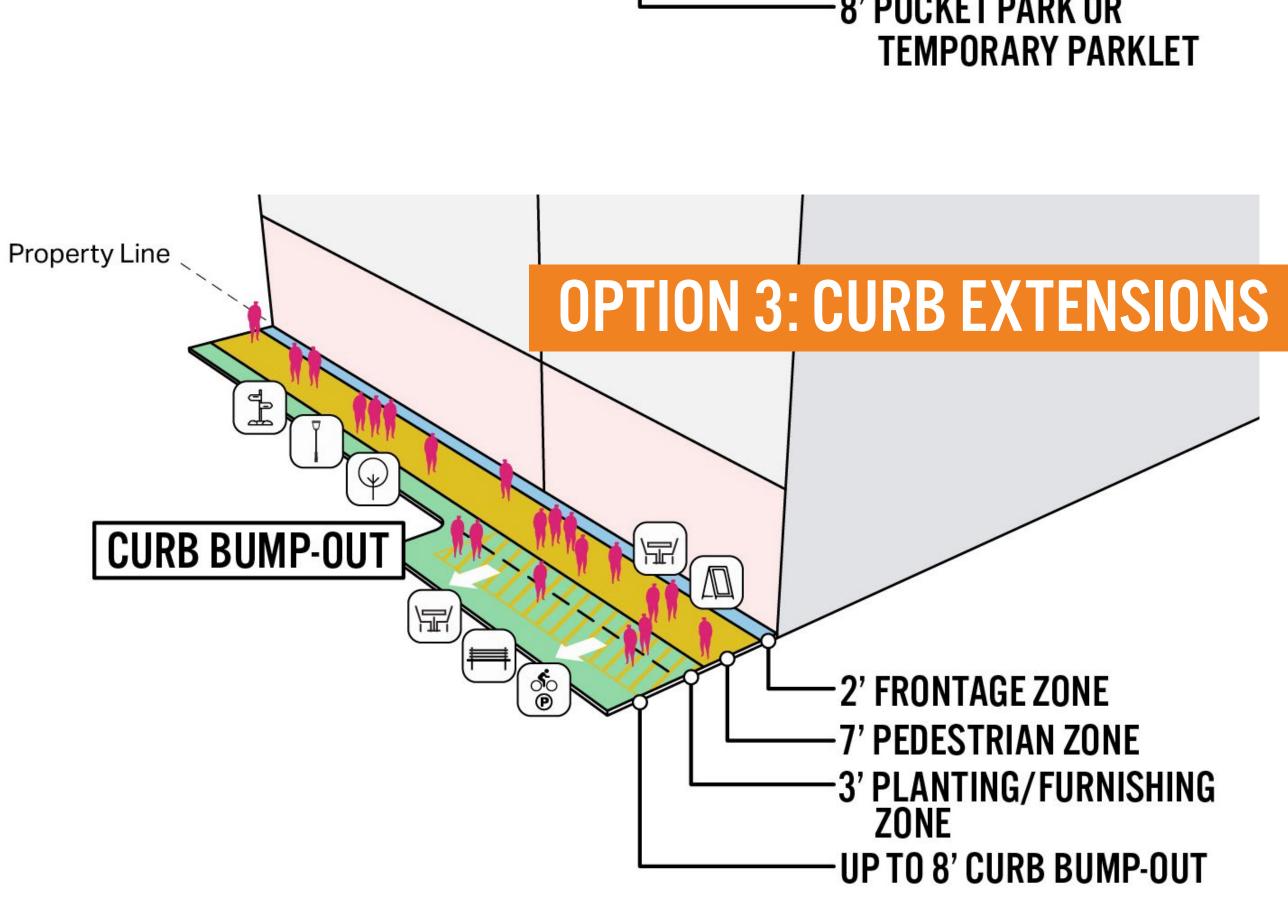
STREAMLINE SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING

for creating a vibrant, inclusive, and accessible options along Mass Ave will promote safer, more will enhance navigation for pedestrians, cyclists, Mass Ave. Prioritizing pedestrian comfort and convenient mobility for pedestrians, cyclists, and and drivers while contributing to a more cohesive accessibility helps to increase foot traffic for transit riders while balancing the needs of local and visually appealing streetscape. Focusing on businesses, promotes social interaction, and businesses and vehicle access. While the scope of clear, well-placed signage at key locations will help enhances safety for all users, including individuals this study does not include street design, continued residents and visitors easily find destinations, transit with disabilities, seniors, and families with young coordination will be necessary for long-term safety connections, and key landmarks, while reducing children.

KEY STRATEGIES:

- 1. Install more benches, shade structures, and other public infrastructure.
- 2. Balance sidewalk activity with access.

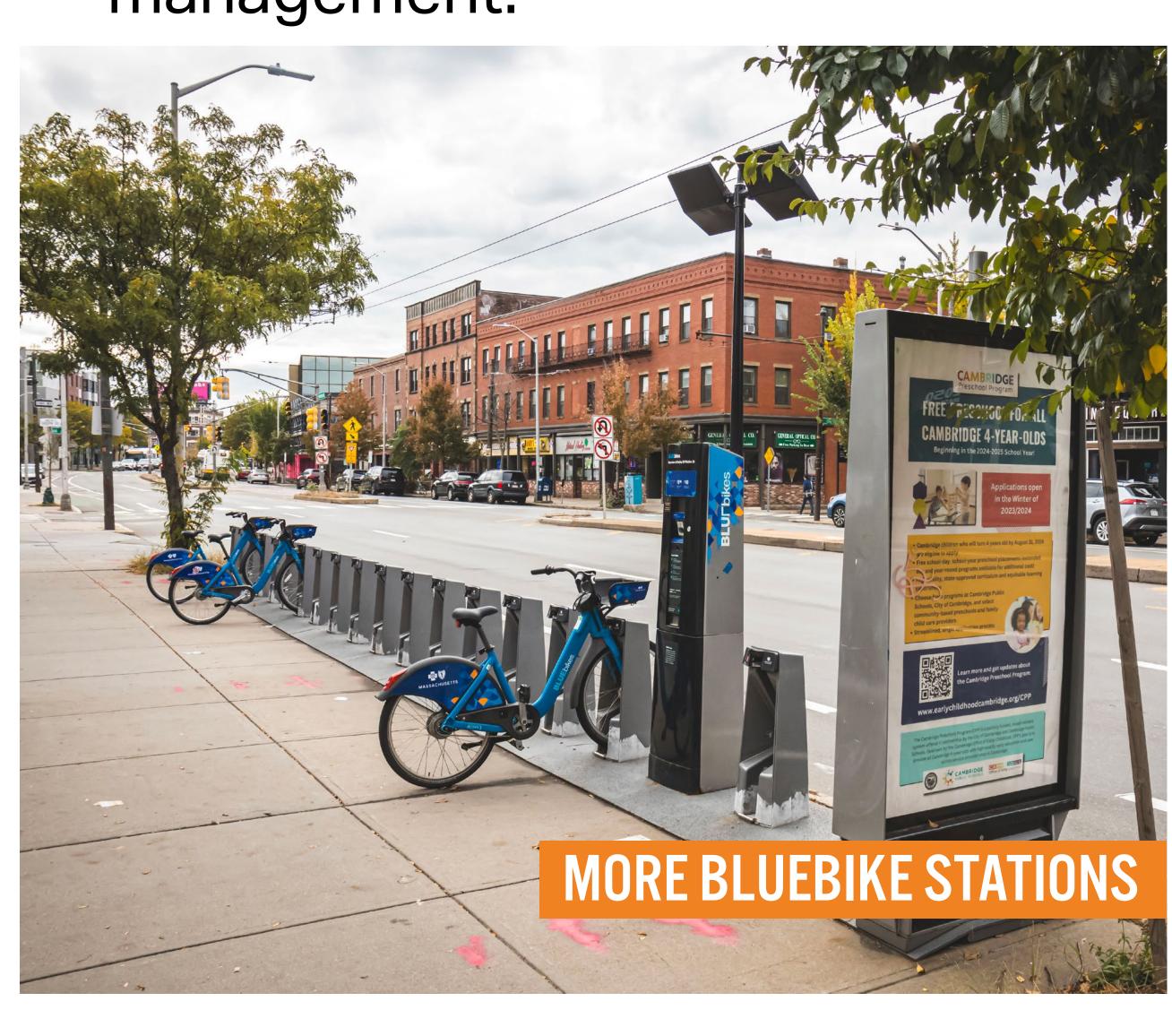




and mobility goals.

KEY STRATEGIES:

- 1. Provide safer, more visible crossings on Mass Ave and intersecting streets.
- 2. Work with MBTA to install more bus shelters where appropriate.
- 3. Provide additional bike parking and Bluebike station areas.
- 4. Encourage shared off-street parking facilities.
- 5. Coordinate for better curb management.



A pedestrian-friendly environment is essential Enhancing access to sustainable transportation Improving signage and wayfinding along Mass Ave visual clutter caused by outdated or redundant signs.

KEY STRATEGIES:

- 1. Locate branded pedestrian wayfinding signage at key gateways and destinations.
- 2. Consolidate and clarify roadway signage.

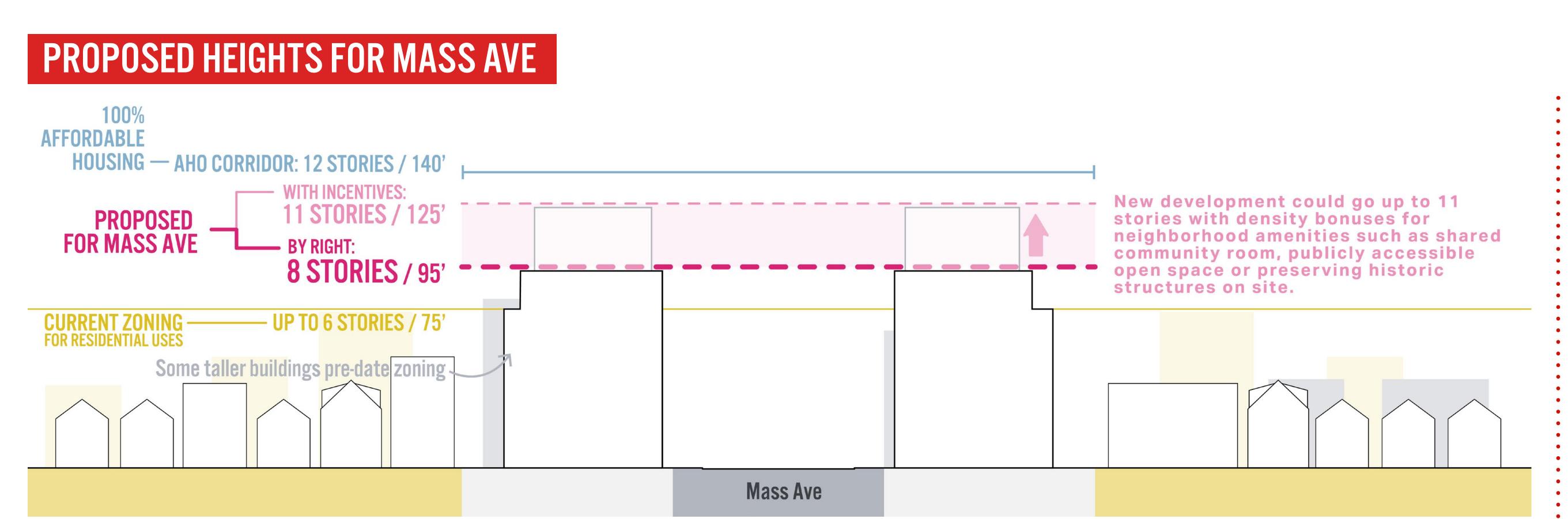
STUDY SPECIFIC LOCATIONS AND INTERSECTIONS ALONG MASS AVE

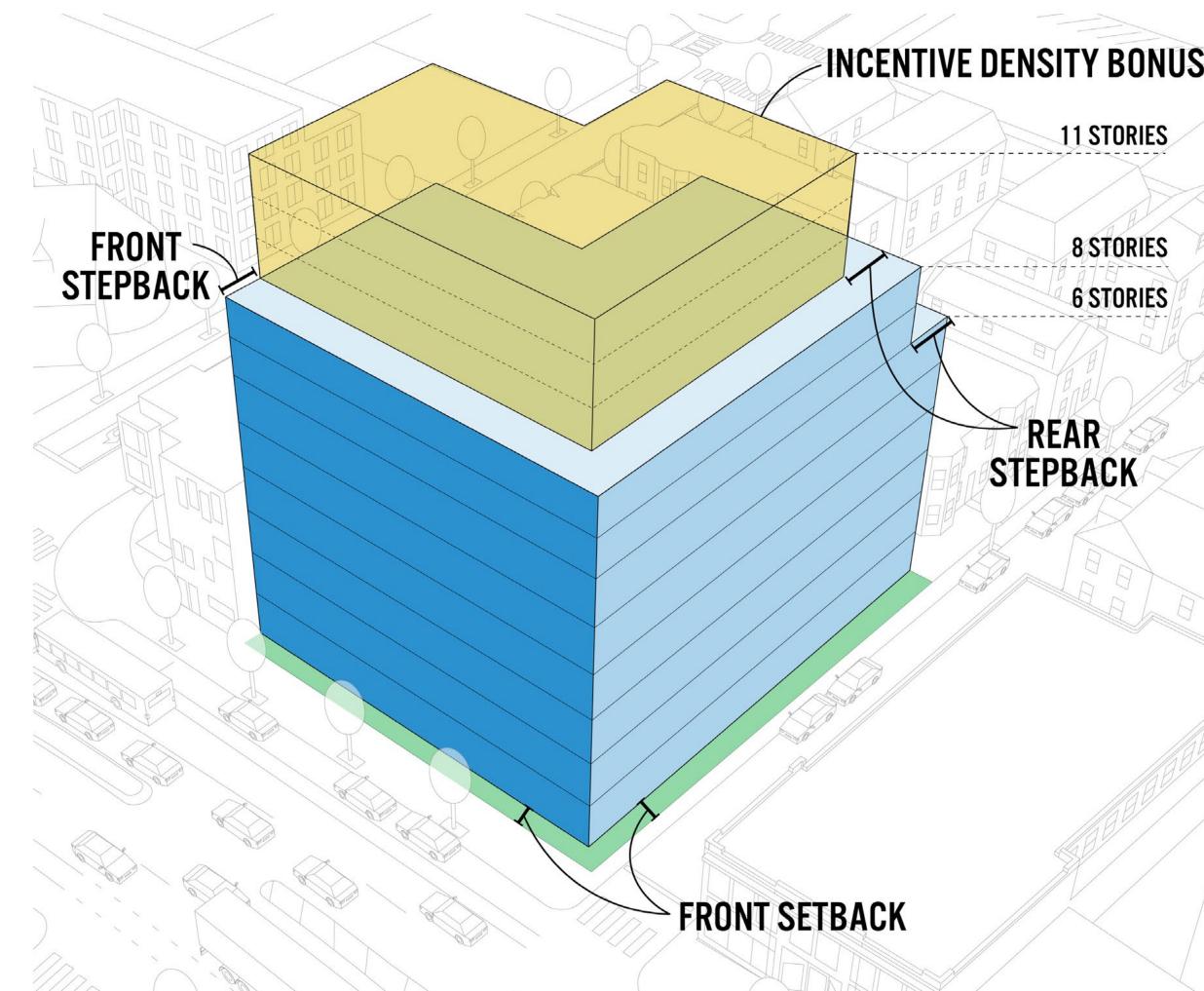
This plan recommends further study of Porter Square, Linear Park crossing, and Alewife Brook Parkway in greater detail. These locations experience high volumes of pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles, creating complex circulation challenges that requires ignificant data collection and traffic analysis to identify targeted improvements. Future studies should explore potential solutions such as signal optimization, intersection redesigns, pedestrian safety enhancements, and bicycle infrastructure improvements.

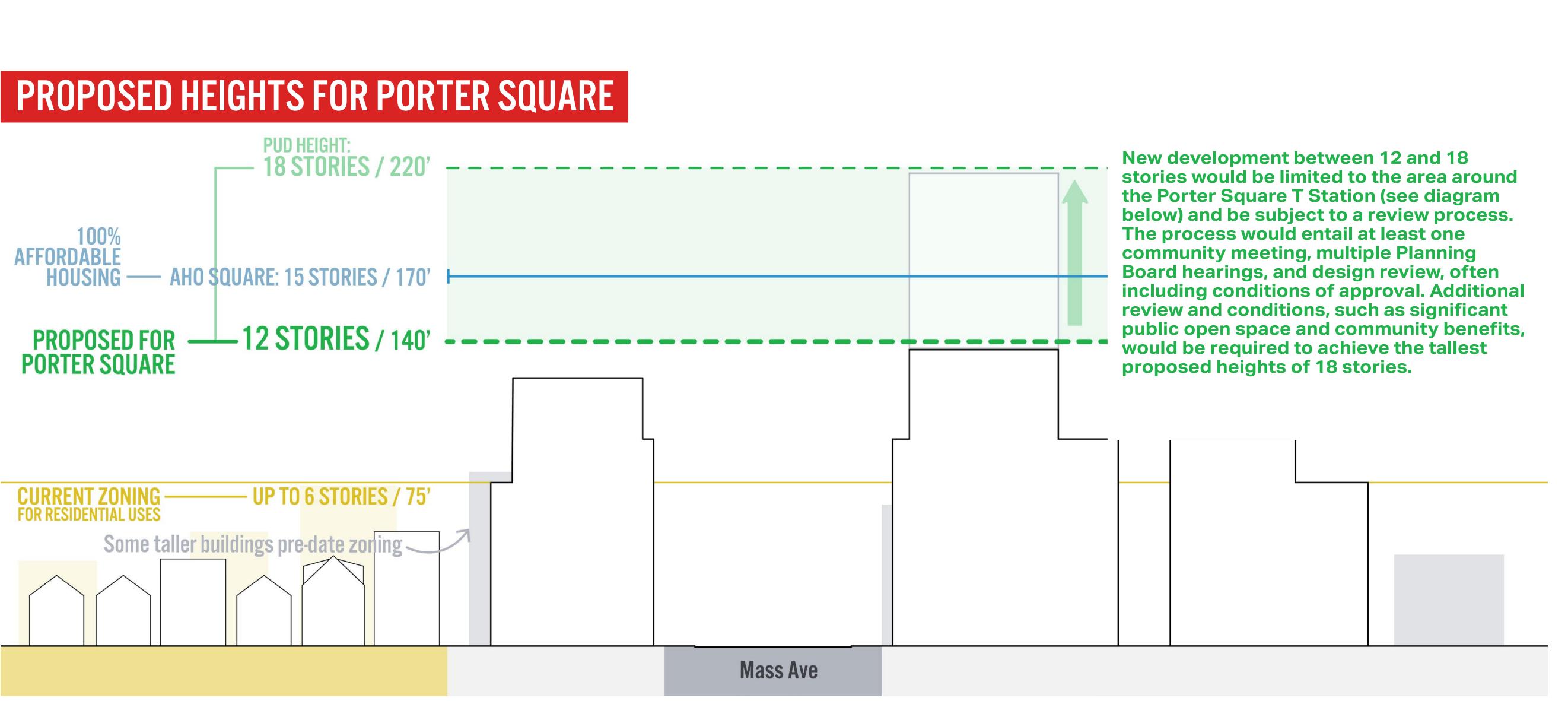
AVE PIANNING STUDY

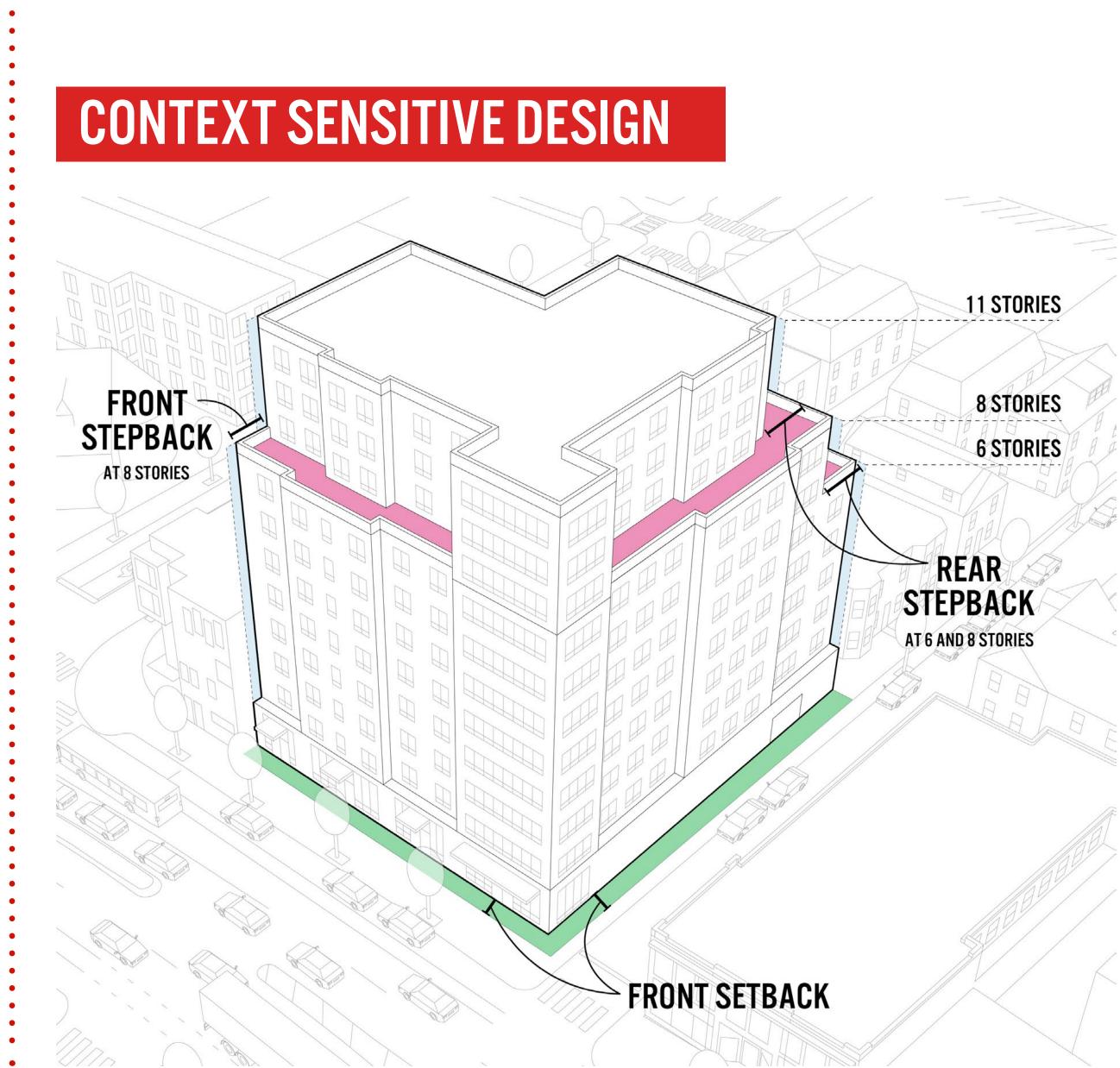
HORE HOUSING

Accommodate more housing development along Mass Ave through increased density and infrastructure planning. Address the need for affordable housing and integrate it into the existing neighborhood fabric.







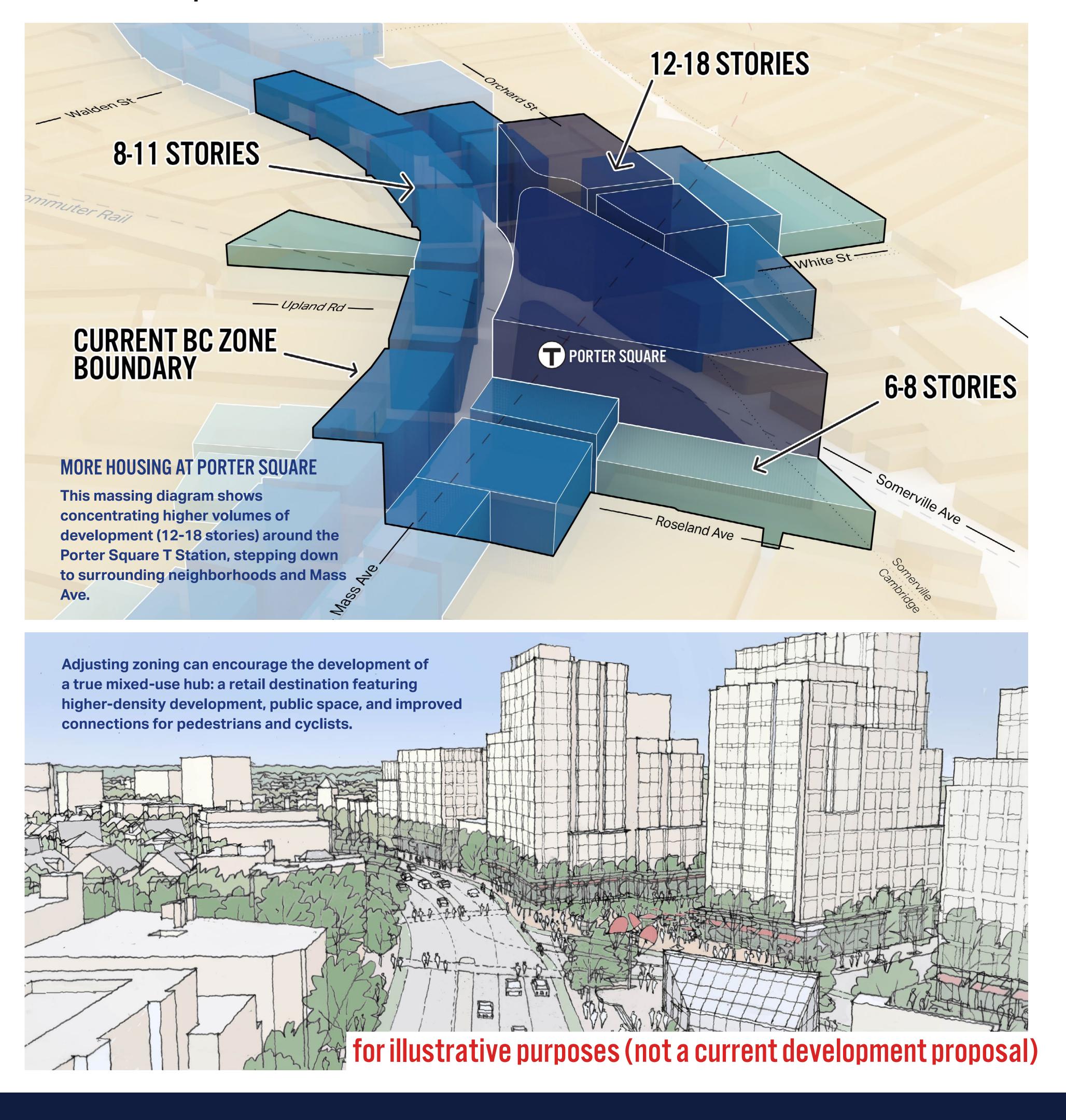


ENCOURAGE MORE HOUSING ON THE CORRIDOR

More housing and residents on the corridor will help to support more retail activity, transit ridership and non-car travel, and help reduce some of the housing pressure due to limited supply. Increasing density can also provide opportunities to gain community benefits, such as active ground floor uses and additional public space.

KEY STRATEGIES:

- 1. Simplify the zoning code and streamline processes.
- 2. Adjust zoning along the corridor to achieve zoning objectives to build more housing and prioritize mixed use development.



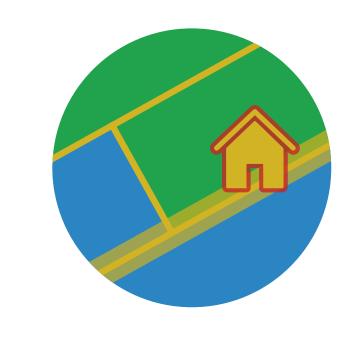
CONTINUE TO SUPPORT CITY POLICY FOR A DIVERSE MIX OF HOUSING PRICE POINTS

As Mass Ave evolves over the next 15 years, it is essential to ensure that new development contributes to a range of housing options at different price points, with a strong emphasis on affordability. Supporting the city's broader housing goals means encouraging both market-rate and incomerestricted affordable units, expanding access to housing for a diverse range of residents.

KEY STRATEGIES:

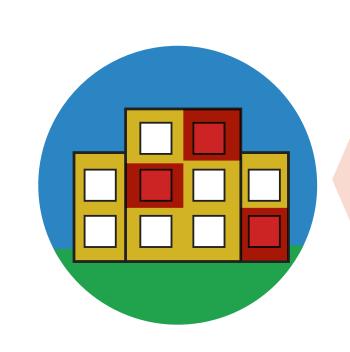
- 1. Encourage the development of both market-rate and affordable housing.
- 2. Explore other strategies and funding mechanisms for encouraging affordable and mixed-income housing.

The City of Cambridge and developers are adding affordable units to the market in a few ways. New affordable housing is created through funding, zoning and other tools:



The AHO allows the creation of new, permanently affordable housing that is denser than what might be currently allowed.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING OVERLAY



Market-rate developments of ten or more units are required to allocate 20% of residential floor area for low- and moderate- income tenants or home buyers.

INCLUSIONARY HOUSING



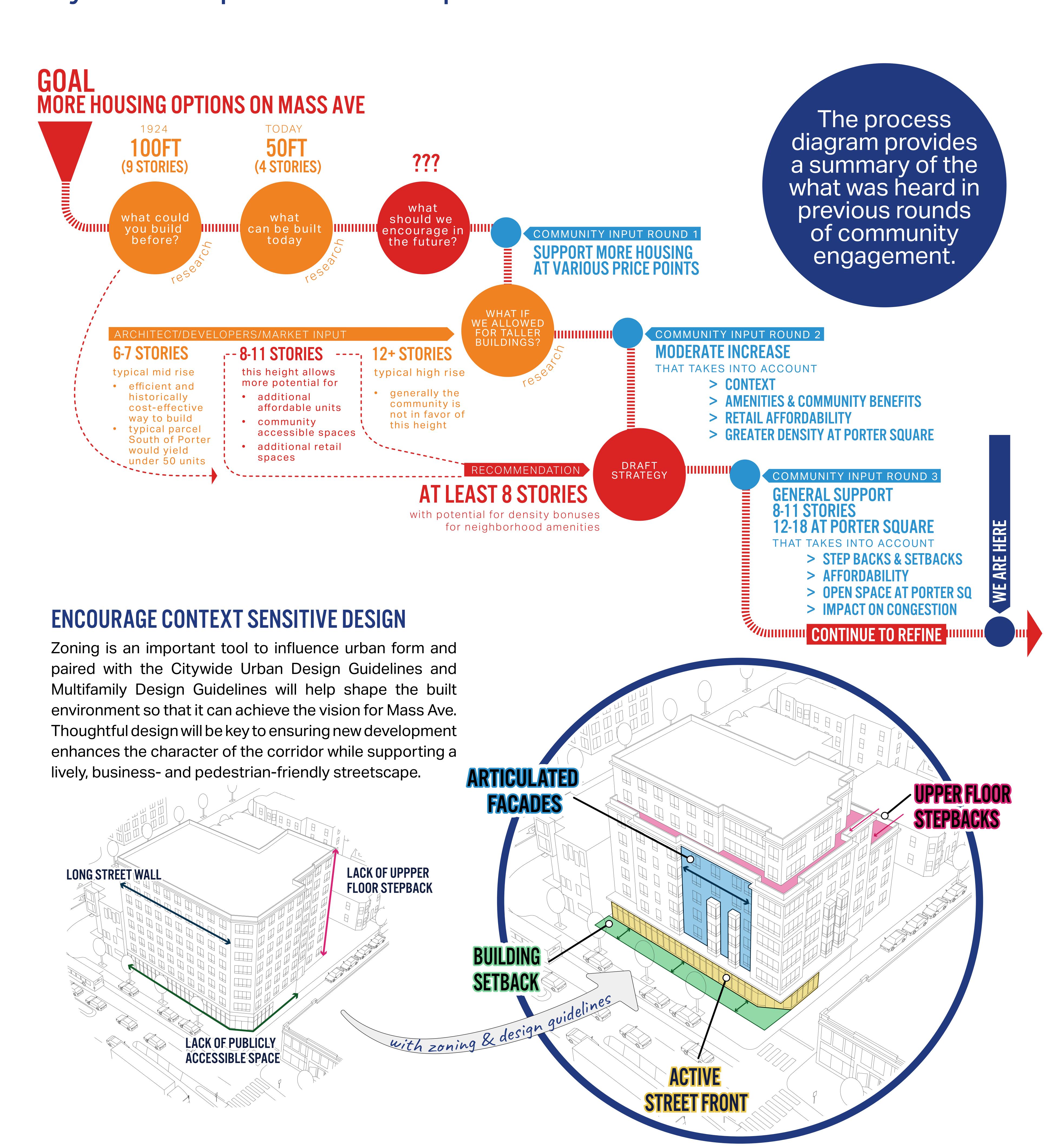
City funding and funding from contributions from

non-residential developers of large projects.

CAMBRIDGE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST

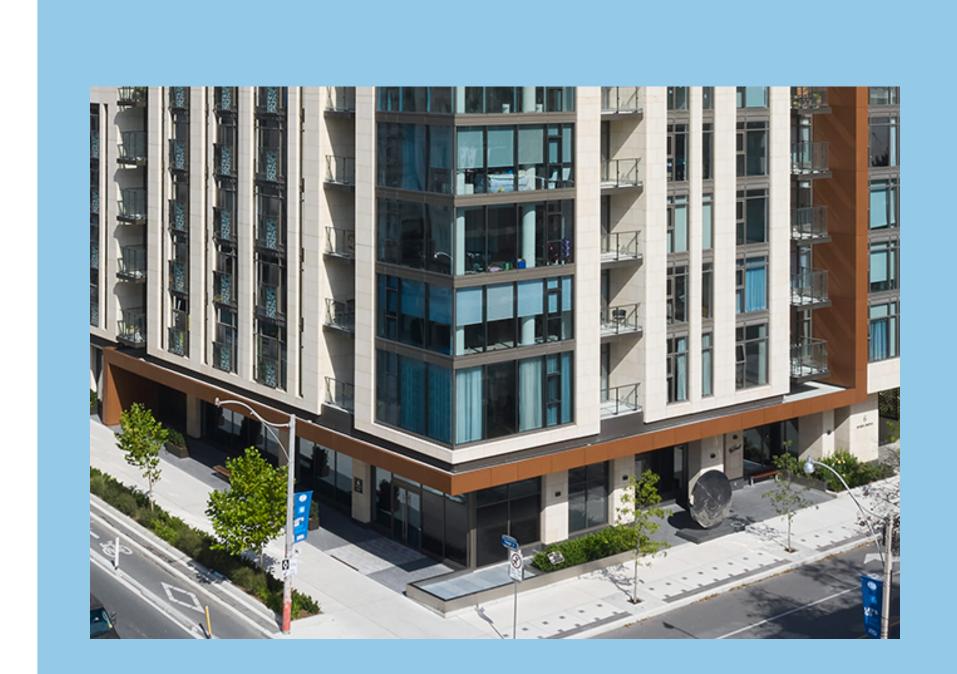
URBANIFORM & ZONING

Envision Cambridge, the City's plan for 2030, calls for new housing of all types to improve affordability. Major corridors like Mass Ave have been highlighted for increased housing density. This plan explores how to achieve that density in a way that respects and responds to the context of the corridor.



ARTICULATED FACADES

Articulated facades means the pattern of a building's windows, doors, balconies, and bays. Using articulated facades can add depth, interest, and even shelter from sun, wind, and rain.



BUILDING SETBACK

A building setback pushes a building away from the street to allow for widened sidewalks, plazas, porches, street-trees, and rain gardens. Setbacks can add additional ground level activity, whether public or semi-private.



UPPER FLOOR STEPBACKS

Stepbacks reduce a building's volume as it rises. Stepbacks can reduce a building's shadows, its mass, and overall sense of scale.



ACTIVE STREET FRONT

An active street front typically includes restaurant or retail use but other active uses, including office and residential can contribute to energetic street life. A ground floor that is designed for transparency, access, and flexible programs can be active.

