

# Osborn Triangle area vision

# Strategies for diverse retail & nonprofits



**Central Square Advisory Committee . Goody Clancy . October 24, 2012**

# Agenda

- Where we are in the process
- Osborn Triangle
  - Context: character, change, historic resources
  - Framework: Land use, Public Places, Infrastructure
  - Visualizing new possibilities
- Strategies for diverse retail/nonprofit businesses
- Discussion



# 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

- 12 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 area vision, retail (October 24)**
- Housing and smart growth with Barry Bluestone (October 25)
- Public places workshop (November 1)
- Built form workshop (November 3)
- Consolidate & finalize recommendations (November 7)
- Finalize recommendations (November 28; supplemental dates 11/13, 11/15)

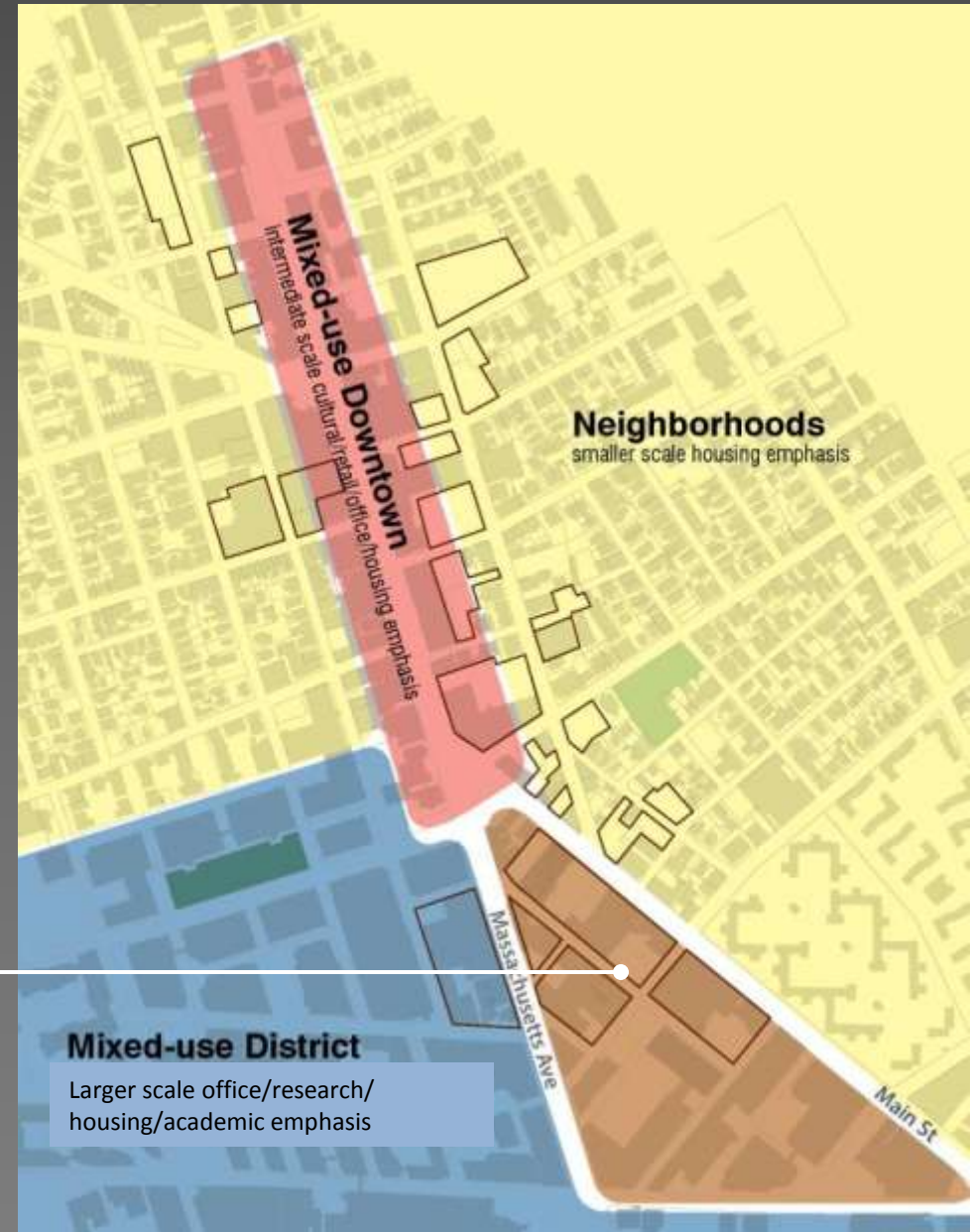
# Osborn Triangle and Environs



# Context: character

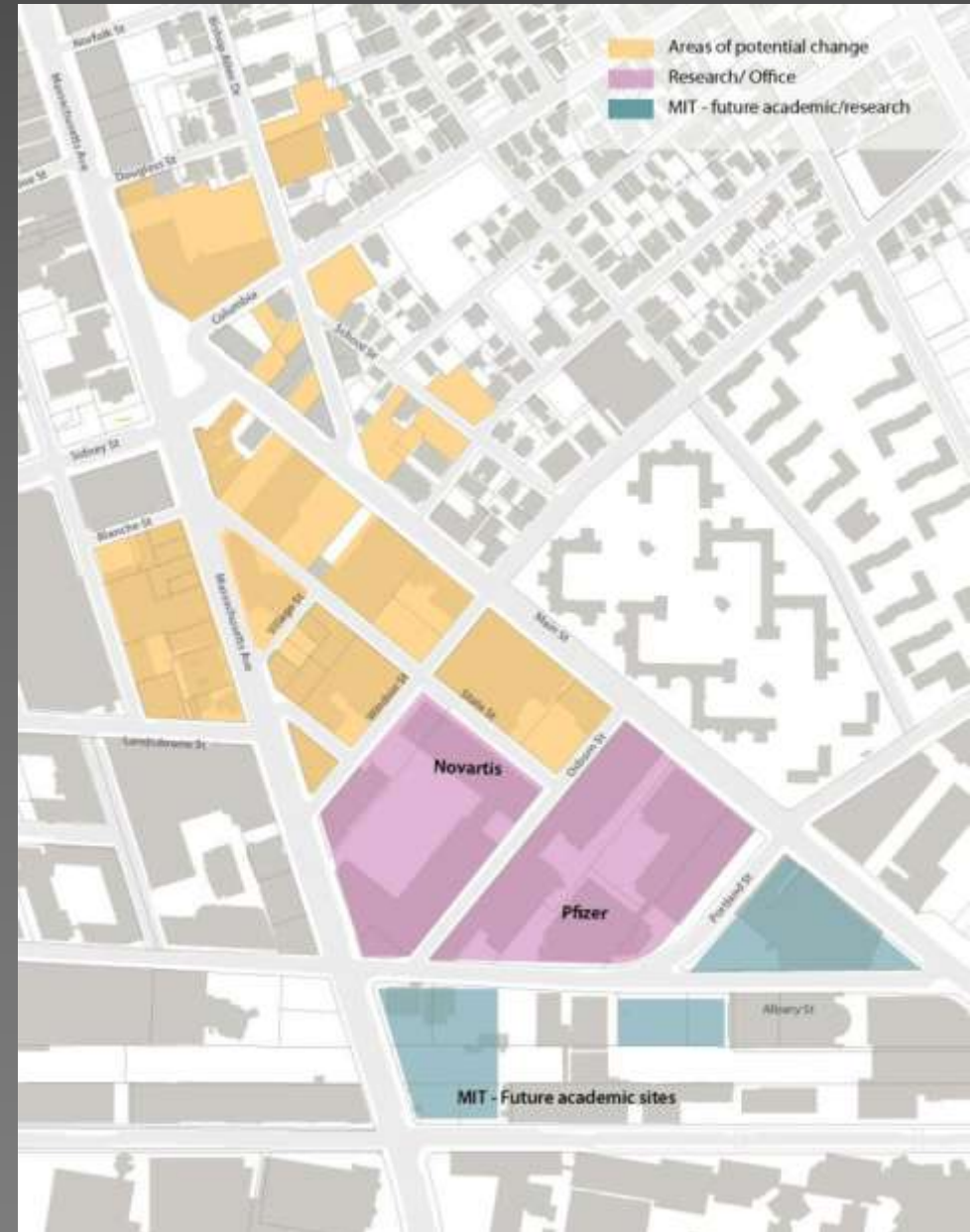
- Urban campus district character to south and west, contiguous with University Park, MIT core campus, Tech Square
- Transition to Area 4 along Main Street
- Transition to Central Square “downtown” character at Lafayette Square

## Osborn Triangle



# Context: where should we anticipate change?

- Two research buildings under way (Pfizer, Novartis)
- Third research building proposed (Forest City)
- Multiple sites on the market north & east of Lafayette Square
- Planned academic development sites along Albany Street
- Six blocks nearest Lafayette Square and Area 4 show potential for change



# Context: where are there historic resources?

- Existing buildings offer reuse opportunities reinforcing character, history, sustainability



## Significant Buildings



Designated Building



Potentially Significant Building  $\geq$  50 Years



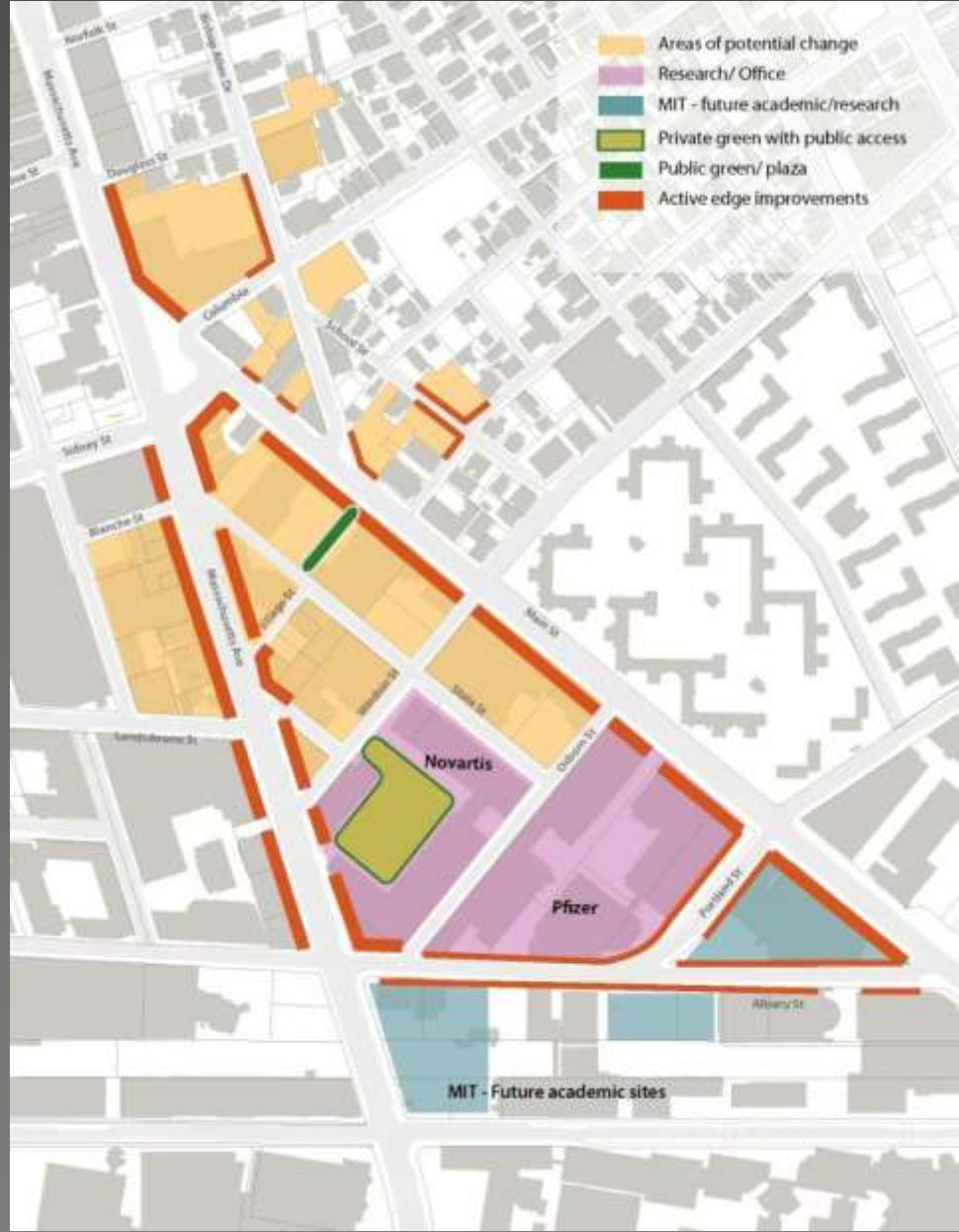
Potential Landmark



National Register of Historic Places  
Districts (not all shown)

# Vision framework: land use

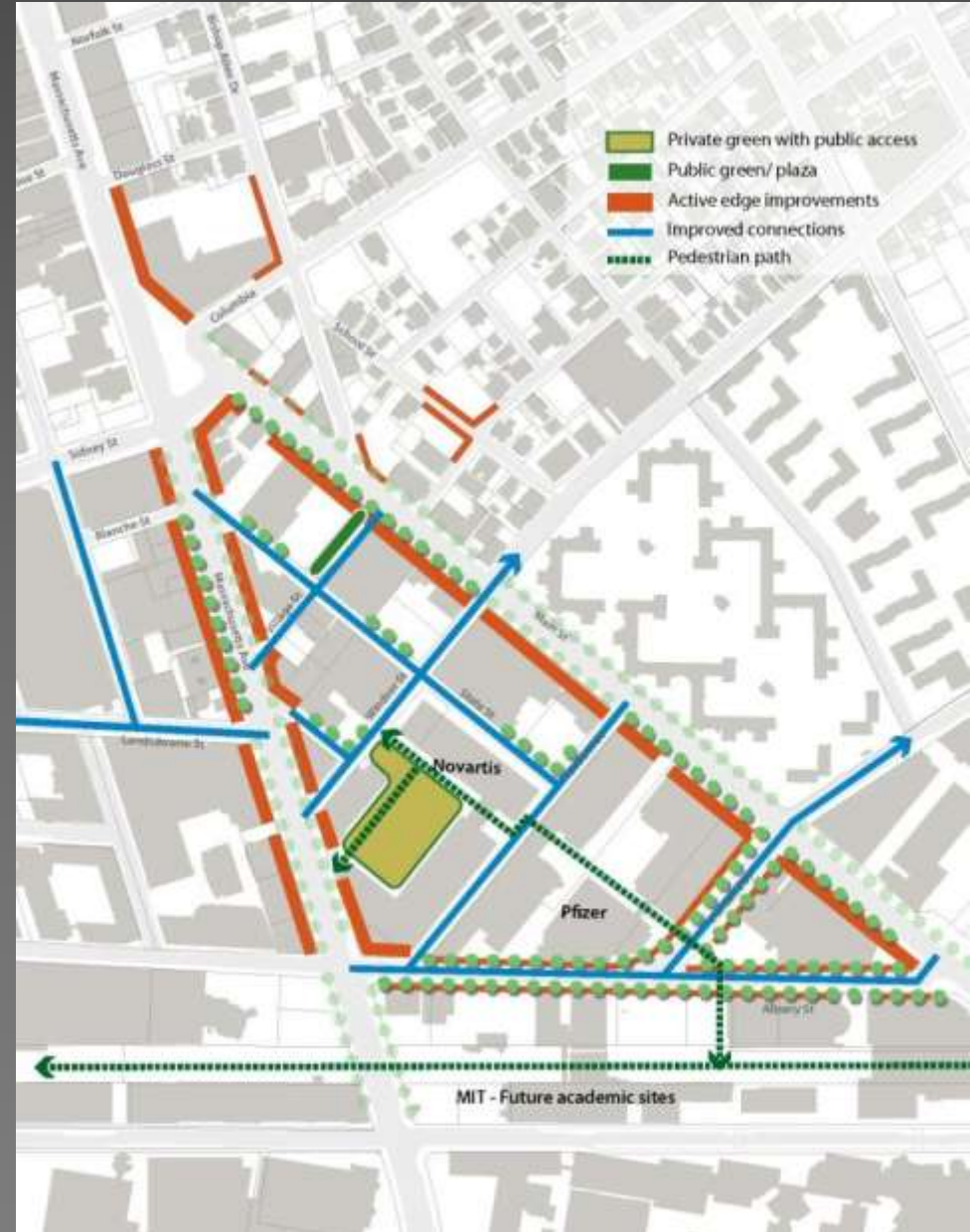
- What is the right mix of land uses on sites likely to change?
- How should land uses accommodate a comfortable transition between research and neighborhood character?
- How should building scale accommodate a comfortable transition between research and neighborhood character?





# Vision framework: public places

- How should an approach to walkable connections differ among:
  - Massachusetts Avenue
  - Main Street
  - Other streets
  - Pedestrian walks
- What are the priority activities, users and locations for public park/plaza space?
- Where can parklets help?



# Vision framework: district infrastructure

District energy and/or water network potential due to:

- Mixed uses
- Large scale buildings
- Possible tie-ins:
  - Existing steam system
  - Planned stormwater retention near Lafayette Square
  - MIT campus plant
  - Green spaces



# Visualizing new possibilities



# Main Street



# Main Street





**Archstone, Binney/3<sup>rd</sup>  
Street, Cambridge**



**Appleton Mills, Lowell, MA**  
Vacant textile mill converted to affordable artists lofts



## City Museum , St.Louis MO

Abandoned shoe factory converted to children's play area and downtown conference facility with recycled materials.





**“Bumblebee” housing and laboratory, Binney Street, Cambridge**



Alley 24, South Lake Union, Seattle



Main Street, Chattanooga



Belltown, Seattle

# State and Osborn Streets





South Lake Union, Seattle



Piazza at Schmidt's, Philadelphia

# Missing connections...



# From State to Main





# Village Place







Cady's Alley, Georgetown, Washington DC



Piazza at Schmidt's, Philadelphia



Design Research Building passage, Harvard Square

# State Street/internal streets





Dartmouth Street, Back Bay, Boston



40<sup>th</sup> Street, West Philadelphia

# State Street at Mass Ave



South Lake Union, Seattle



# Jill Brown-Rhone Park



# Jill Brown-Rhone Park







Sansom Commons at Penn, 36<sup>th</sup> /Walnut Streets, West Philadelphia



Tanner Place, Portland

# Mass Ave





Novartis mixed research/office/retail





Penn, 34<sup>th</sup> St  
West Philadelphia



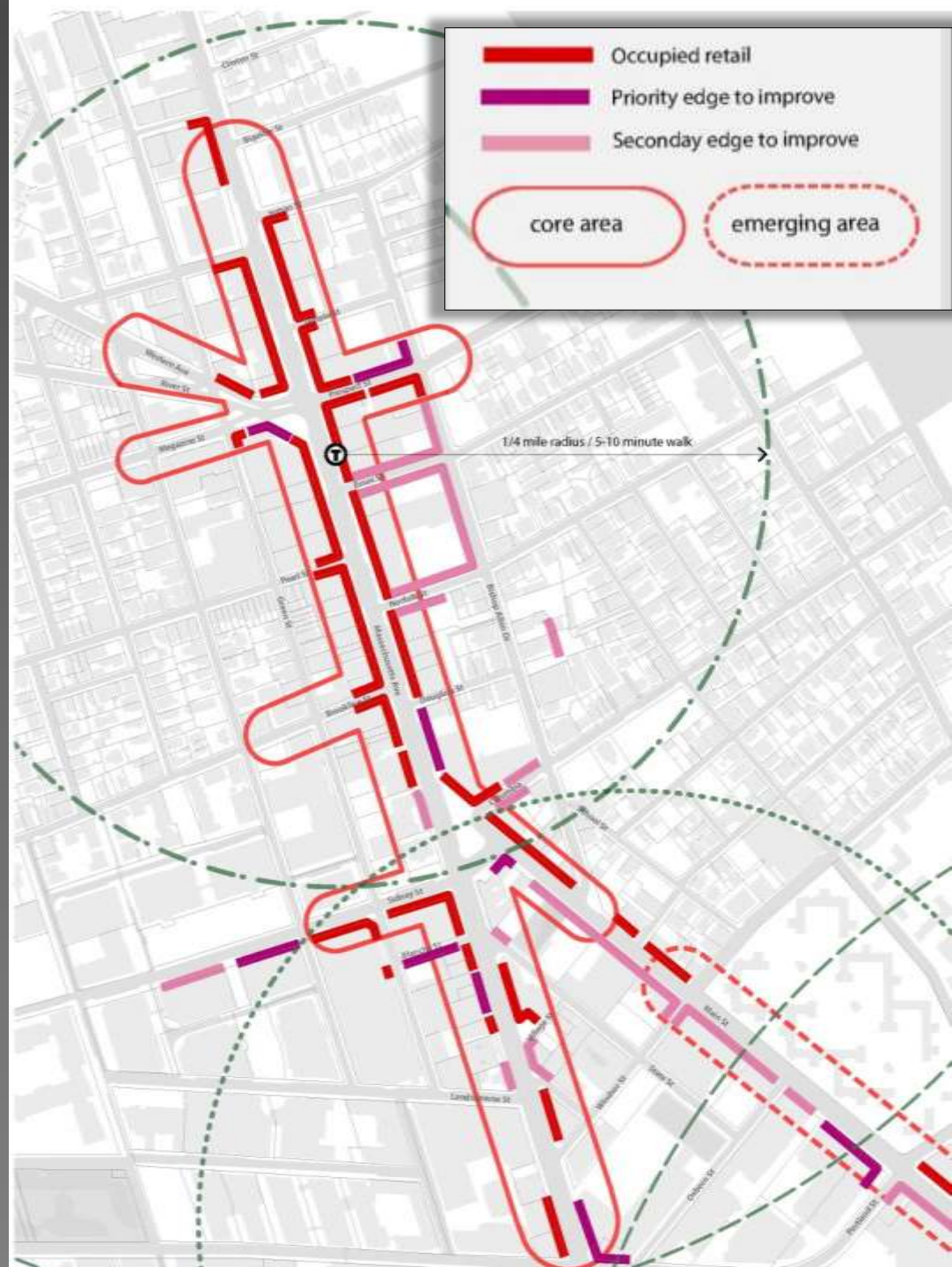
# Discussion



# Strategies for diverse retail & non-profits



# Strategies for diverse retail & non-profits



# Size retail for small and local business

- In new development projects and those involving more than 50,000sf of renovation, require that at least one third of retail floor area be devoted to businesses occupying 2,000-3,000sf or less, and no more than one third of retail floor area to businesses occupying more than 10,000sf (areas are preliminary, subject to refinement). Avoid floorplate dimensions that favor national “formula retail,” i.e. encourage depths of 60 feet or less
- Consider waiving priority retail space types from FAR count



Minimum one-third of space



Maximum one-third of space

# Encourage side-street retail and services

- On selected side street areas, require ground floor space to be convertible to retail (adequate ceiling height, accessibility, services, storefront). Allow and encourage child care, arts uses, non-profit office space and similar community –serving uses where retail has limited market potential.



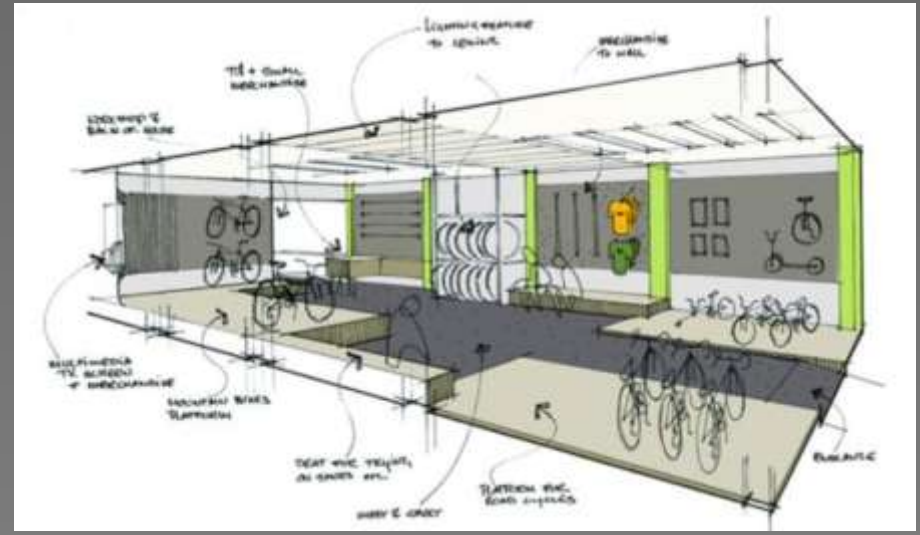
Child care in downtown setting



Flexibility for retail, small business, live-work

# Assist business start-up with fit-out/rent incentive

- Consider requiring, in return for bonus density or as a condition of city parking lot redevelopment, a one-time up-front subsidy such as waived rent for 6-12 months or free fit-out of space for eligible businesses. Focus the fit-out subsidy in building elements that would also have value for a future tenant should the first tenant fail within a limited time period (i.e. HVAC, kitchen facilities). Criteria for eligible businesses may include:
  - Limitation on floor area of subsidized space (i.e. 2,000sf)
  - Not a retail format associated with chains (i.e. fast food)
  - Limit on total number of outlets (i.e. no more than 5)



Scenario: fund 2,000sf fit-out @ \$60/sf with \$120,000 value from 2-3 bonus housing units

# Create market stalls

- Verify costs, feasibility and management of small market stall rental to merchants. Consider expansion of current farmer's market program. Locate the market stalls in a highly visible, marketable area with significant passing pedestrian traffic such as adjacent to a major public plaza and/or public room. Create market space through city parking lot redevelopment criteria and/or density bonus.



Outdoor market (North Market, Columbus)



Indoor market (Pike's Place, Seattle)

# Continue façade improvement grants

Before

After





# Proactively keep storefronts occupied

- Proactively work with owners of vacant spaces to suggest opportunities for installation of public art, temporary or “pop-up” retail, or other occupancy that contributes to overall economic prosperity and character of the Square
- Establish convenient mechanisms to help temporarily fund insurance, utilities and/or related costs that may impede short-term occupancy



Temporary retail



Cambridge Arts Council Art Up Front program

# Continue, expand CSBA initiatives

- Promote Cultural District identity through branding, events etc.
- Connect people to businesses, organizations and events
- Organize public events featuring local businesses, organizations, artists
- Monitor/share data on retail occupancy, inventory to aid priority tenanting
- Explore feasibility and desirability of Business Improvement District to enhance management capacity

The screenshot shows the website's navigation bar with tabs for Business Directory, News, Events, Central Square, and The CSBA. Below the navigation, there are two search filters: 'FIND A BUSINESS' and 'FIND AN EVENT', each with a dropdown menu labeled 'Select from Below...'. The main content area features the CSBA logo on the left, a section titled 'The CSBA History of the CSBA' with a dark background, and a photograph of a building sign that says 'CENTRAL'. The text on the page describes the CSBA's long history and its commitment to the neighborhood.

**Business Directory** | **News** | **Events** | **Central Square** | **The CSBA**

**FIND A BUSINESS** | **FIND AN EVENT**

Select from Below... | Select from Below...

**CENTRAL SQUARE BUSINESS ASSOCIATION**

**The CSBA**  
**History of the CSBA**

The Central Square Business Association (CSBA) was created in 1931 in order to address the commercial, industrial, and public interest needs of the Central Square area.

Central Square has long been the shopping center of Cambridge and the CSBA began as a way to bring the various business owners, city officials and shoppers together in order to unify and promote the neighborhood.

Throughout its over 75 year history, the CSBA has overseen the transformation and growth of Central Square. Drawing on the business owners' strong commitment to the neighborhood, the CSBA continues to make Central Square a great "Downtown Cambridge" destination.

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# Discussion

