

WINTER HILL

NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN



Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone
Adopted November 3, 2016



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS

Joseph A. Curtatone, Mayor

Dear Friends,

Neighborhood planning for communities is like retirement planning for individuals, if you don't set goals for where you want to be, it is almost certain you won't get there. This is what happened after streetcar service left Winter Hill. No one planned for how to manage cars and preserve the main street. The outcome is stunning compared to the historic character of the hill.

In 2009 when we started the SomerVision comprehensive planning process, we didn't know where it was going to take us. Seven years later, we have an actionable comprehensive plan and now four completed neighborhood plans. Each is individual and unique. The plans rely on the input of community member and stakeholder participation in the Somerville by Design process.

The Winter Hill Neighborhood Plan sets forth a vision along the main street that supports the daily needs and services of Winter Hill residents. The focus of each design is on the public realm and pedestrian experience. The crux of this vision is the redevelopment vision for the Star Market site. With this, we can move forward in achieving housing, job, and open space goals for Winter Hill while recreating a main street where our local, independent businesses can thrive.

This plan is a testament to the hard work of Winter Hill residents and I thank you. I look forward to working with you on our next steps.

Sincerely,

JOSEPH A. CURTATONE, MAYOR

Michael F. Glavin, *OSPCD Executive Director*

PLANNING & ZONING

George Proakis, *Director*
Dan Bartman, *Senior Planner*
Sarah Lewis, *Senior Planner*
Melissa Woods, *Senior Planner*
Hans Jensen, *Zoning Review Planner*
Sarah White, *Zoning & Preservation Planner*
Kristi Chase, *Historic Preservation Planner*
Brandon Wilson, *Director of Historic Preservation*

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Tom Galligani, *Director*
Sunayana Thomas, *Senior Economic Development Planner*
Max McCarthy, *Urban Revitalization Specialist*
Ben Sommer, *Economic Development Specialist*
Emily Hedeman, *Economic Development Assistant*

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Brad Rawson, *Director*
Arn Franzen, *Director of Parks & Open Space*
Luisa Oliveira, *Senior Planner Landscape Design*
Adam Polinski, *Transportation Analyst*

HOUSING

Michael Feloney, *Director*
Kelly Donato, *Assistant Director & Housing Council*
Evelyn Persoff, *Grants Manager*
Alex Bob, *SNI Program Coordinator*
Mario Beauzille, *Housing Specialist*
Gerry Carrington, *Lead Program Coordinator*
Russell Koty, *Lead & Environmental Programs Manager*
Christine Andrews, *Environmental Programs Coordinator*
Vicki Wairi, *Program Specialist*
Heidi Burbridge, *Housing Programs Coordinator*
Ken Joyce, *Rehab Program Manager*
Seamus Lynch, *Rehab Program Specialist*

Consulting Team

PRINCIPLE GROUP

Russell Preston
Scott Douglass

UTILE

Tim Love
Drew Kane
Jonathan Evans
Sneha Lohotekar

TOOLE DESIGN GROUP

Elizabeth Isler
John Dempsey

URBAN ADVISORS

Edward Starkie
Glenn Kellogg

CARRICO ILLUSTRATIONS

David Carrico

The City would like to thank the residents of Winter Hill that participated throughout the entirety of the Somerville By Design planning process.

The City would like to thank 328 Broadway, LLC for the use of 328 Broadway as the headquarters of Somerville by Design during the planning process.

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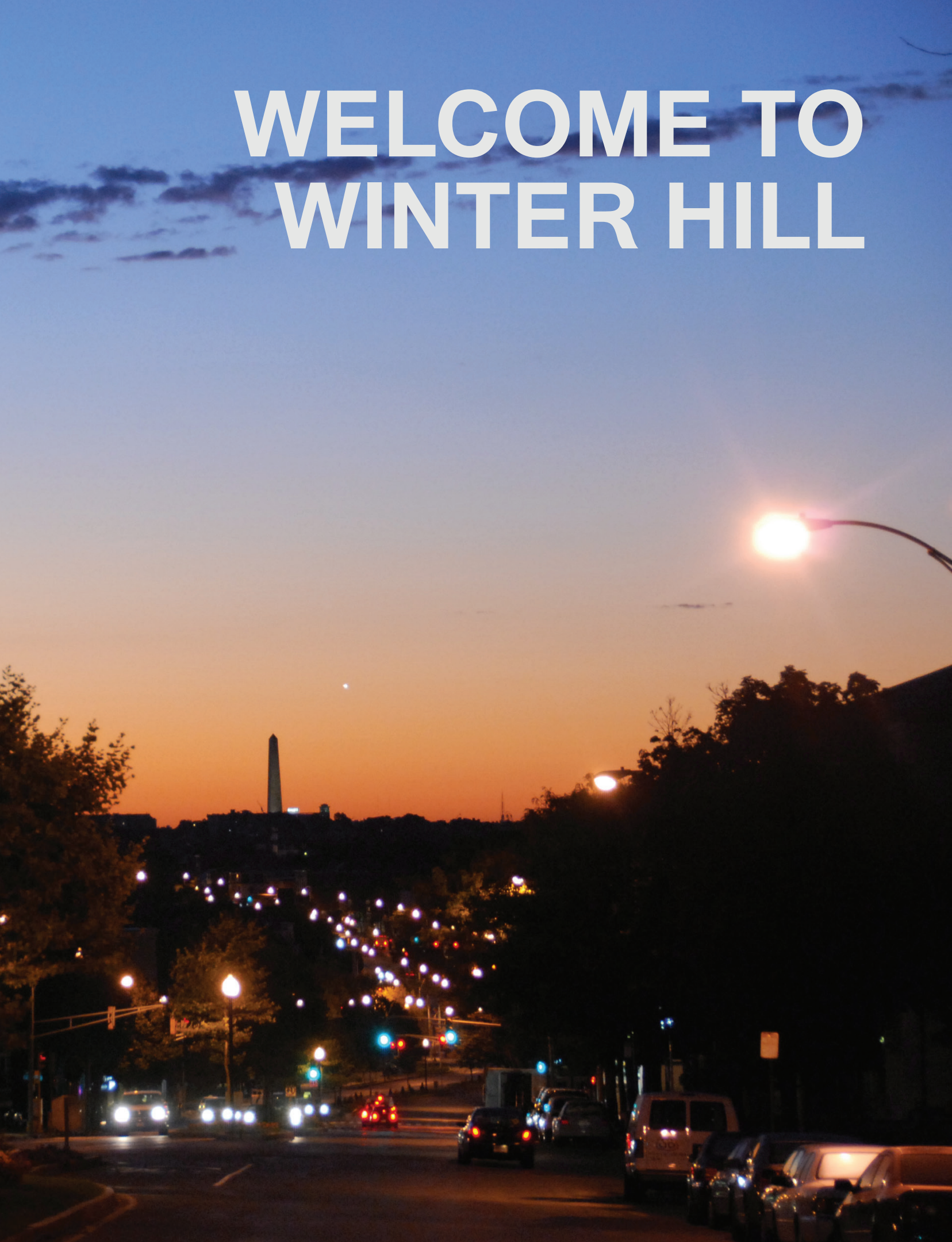
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Photo by Eric Kilby

WELCOME TO WINTER HILL



WINTER HILL IN CONTEXT

"...half of [my life] I've spent reading about us - the collective Citizens Somerville..."
—Bobby Martini in the Foreword of Citizen Somerville

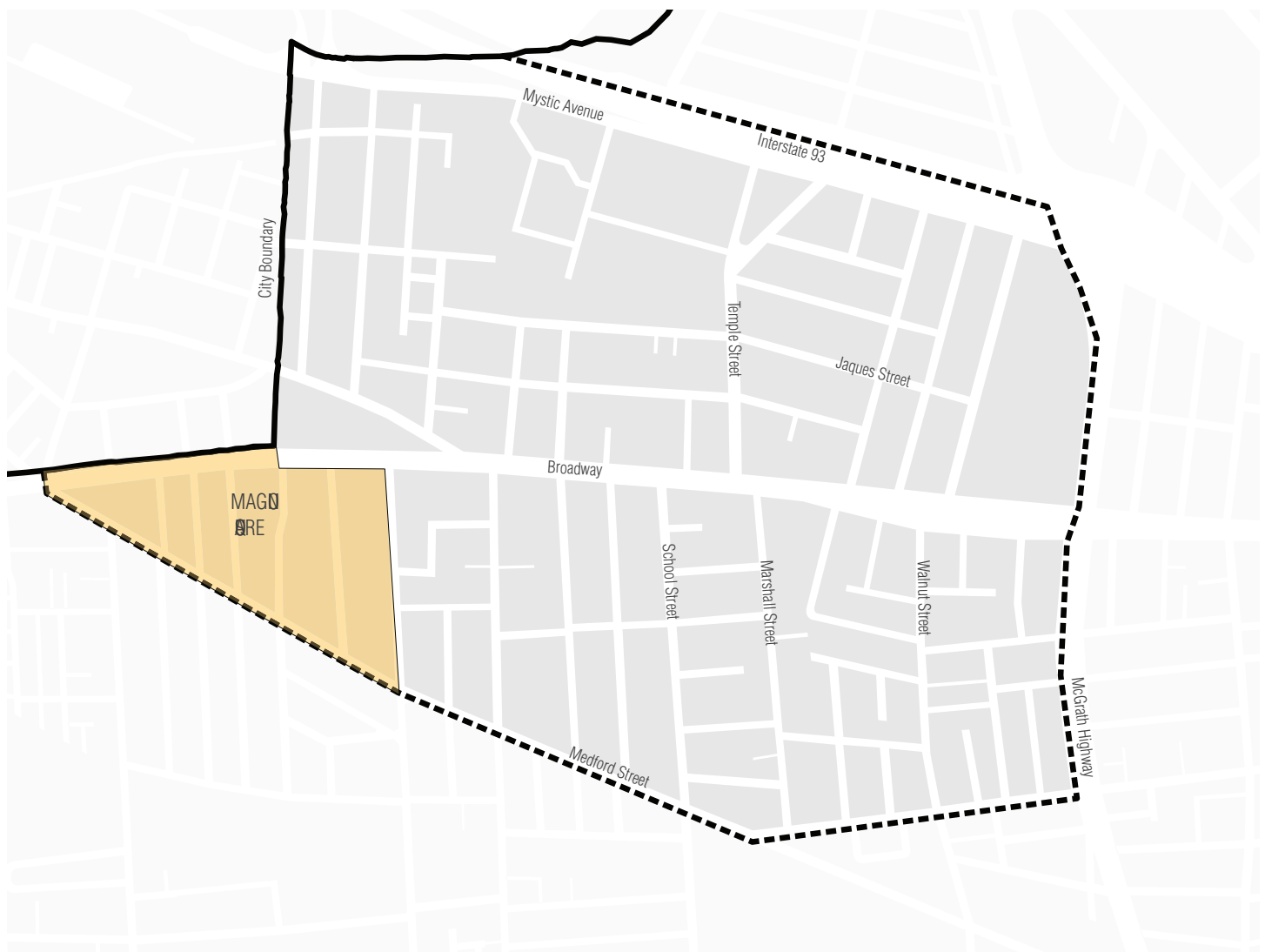
One of 19 neighborhoods in Somerville, Winter Hill is centrally located but also sets part of the City's boundary with Medford. Winter Hill is bounded on the north and east by two man-made obstacles, Interstate 93 which separates it from the Ten Hills neighborhood and McGrath Highway which separates it from East Somerville. On the southern edge, Winter Hill is bound by Pearl and Medford Streets and borders the Spring Hill and East Somerville neighborhoods.

Broadway is Winter Hill's main street, it connects Arlington Center to Sullivan Station of the MBTA Orange line spanning one end of Somerville to another. Through Winter Hill, Broadway transitions from west to east from a primarily residential street with apartment buildings and grand multi-unit buildings to a commercial main street on the eastern slope of the hill. Temple and School

Streets serve as the primary north/south connecting points. Temple Street is also a primary connection for people exiting I-93 northbound whereas School Street connects people to Union Square and points south.

Winter Hill is home to the largest park in Somerville, Foss Park, with 13.62 acres of open space on the northeast edge of the neighborhood. It is owned by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, a state agency. Other smaller schoolyards, neighborhood parks, and playgrounds are scattered throughout the neighborhood.

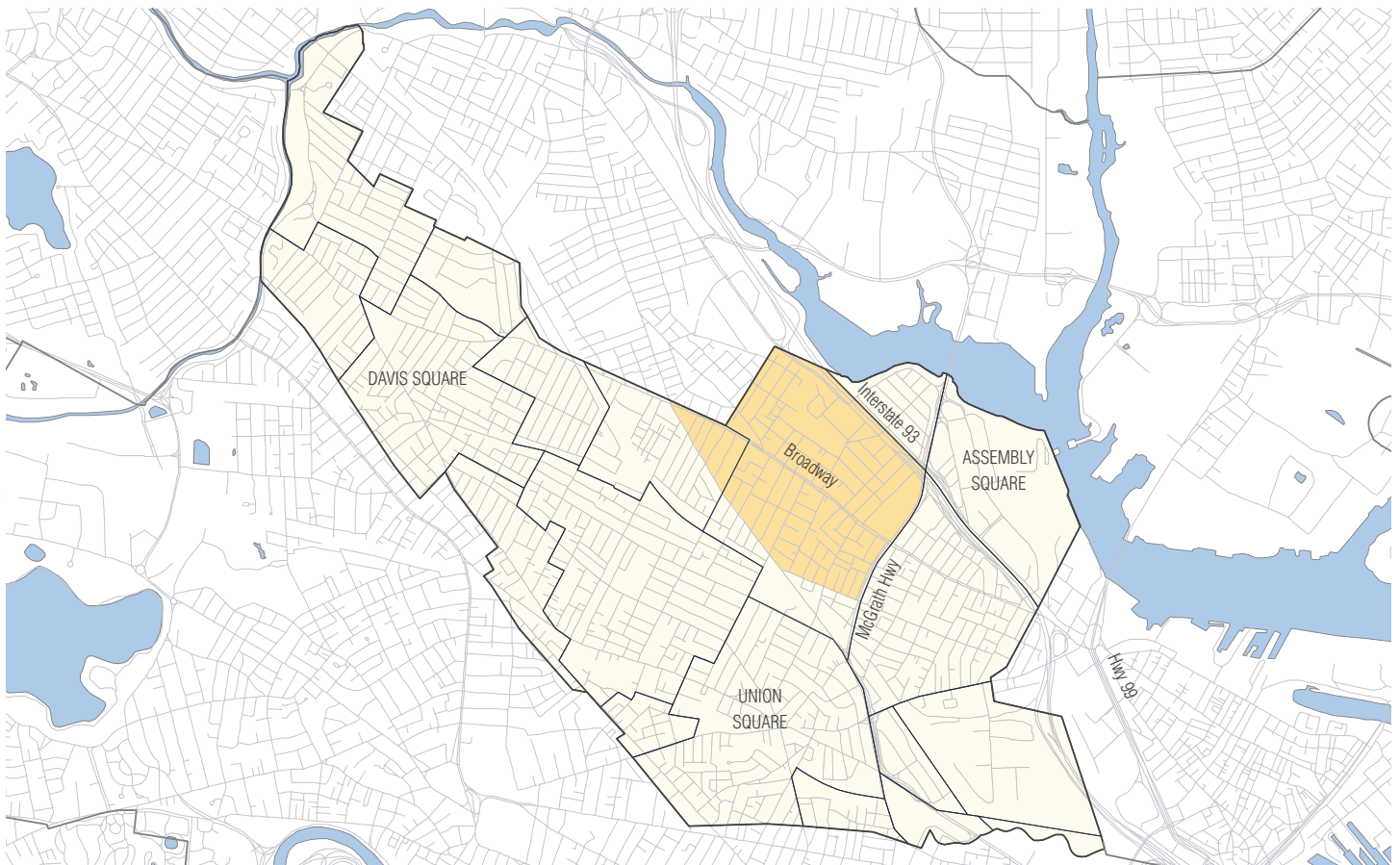
The Winter Hill plan area is 295 acres or .5 square miles. Of the 295 acres, 82 acres or 28% of the land area is transportation infrastructure. The plan area overlaps with another neighborhood of Somerville, Magoun Square.





Above: Winter Hill in context with surrounding communities.

Below: Winter Hill in context with Somerville.



LIVING HISTORY

“This is Barack Obama, formerly of Somerville.”

— Barack Obama calling into WGBH radio to wish Governor Patrick well

Broadway, the heart of Winter Hill, was established in the 1630's as Winter Hill Road. The other major roadways of Winter Hill including Central, School, and Walnut Streets were established as 'rangeways' in 1681-1685. The area was first used as dairy farms in the 1700's and early 1800's. Winter Hill is actually one of the first named neighborhoods in Somerville. When Somerville was part of Charlestown, it was primarily referred to as Beyond the Neck. However, the name Winter Hill, referring to the land form, appears in 18th century maps and land records. A few structures remain from this time period - the Oliver Tufts House built in 1714 is located at 78 Sycamore Street and the Adams-Magoun House built in 1783 is located at 438 Broadway

Broadway was already home to some businesses when the the Boston and Lowell railroad brought rail service through Winter Hill in 1841. The following

year Somerville separated from Charlestown. In 1858, a horse car line was established linking Winter Hill to Charlestown and Boston which spurred residential development. Foss Park was built in 1874 although it was bitterly opposed by the real estate industry. Gas and water service started in the 1860's. In between 1885 and 1890 passenger rail service began. Fifty percent of housing units in Somerville were built between 1890 and 1910. Langmaid Terrace at 359-365 Broadway was built in 1889, the same year electric trolley service up Broadway began.

Somerville's commercial districts developed from 1900-1925. As described in the book *Beyond the Neck*, "In the 1920's, Broadway and Davis Square merchants held night-time 'Great White Way' openings with the streets illuminated by Boston Electric's brightest outdoor lights, and motion pictures projected outdoors against the



buildings of the shopping district.” The former Capitol Theatre at 303 Broadway was also playing motion pictures.

The completion of McGrath Highway in 1925 put a permanent barrier between Winter Hill and East Somerville. By the 1940's, the focus of transportation planning centered on the use of an automobile. Trolley service was suspended in 1958 and the right-of-way was dedicated solely to automobile use. When there was development, it catered to the automobile. After World War II, Winter Hill experienced the same divestment as other urban areas of the country when suburban development was the priority. In between 1965 and 1973,

Interstate 93 was built and Winter Hill became a primary access point to Somerville from the artery.

Winter Hill has had its share of famous residents and 'business owners.' Whitey Bulger, gangster turned FBI informant, set up shop on Marshall Street (if you want to know more, watch the movie). Later, President Barack Obama resided at Langmaid Terrace at 359-365 Broadway in a garden level apartment while he was a Harvard Law student from 1988-1991. These two should not overshadow the everyday heroes and true character of the Winter Hill community.



WINTER HILL TODAY

Focused on positive change

Winter Hill has lost much of its identity as a main street neighborhood. When the trolley service ended and the right-of-way was given over to automobile use, the identity started to fade. This phenomenon in Somerville neighborhoods is not uncommon after the loss of transit. However, in Winter Hill the outcome has been more severe.

As a result, Winter Hill is past being recognized as a destination. This is reinforced by the physical characteristics of the public realm in Winter Hill. Winter Hill's partially isolated location created by Interstate 93 and McGrath Highway combined with the auto-centric design of Broadway has made the neighborhood less of a destination. It's now seen as a place to pass through.

Broadway's varied width, from wide to extremely wide, makes crossing the street mid-block nearly impossible and unsafe. As properties have been redeveloped, most

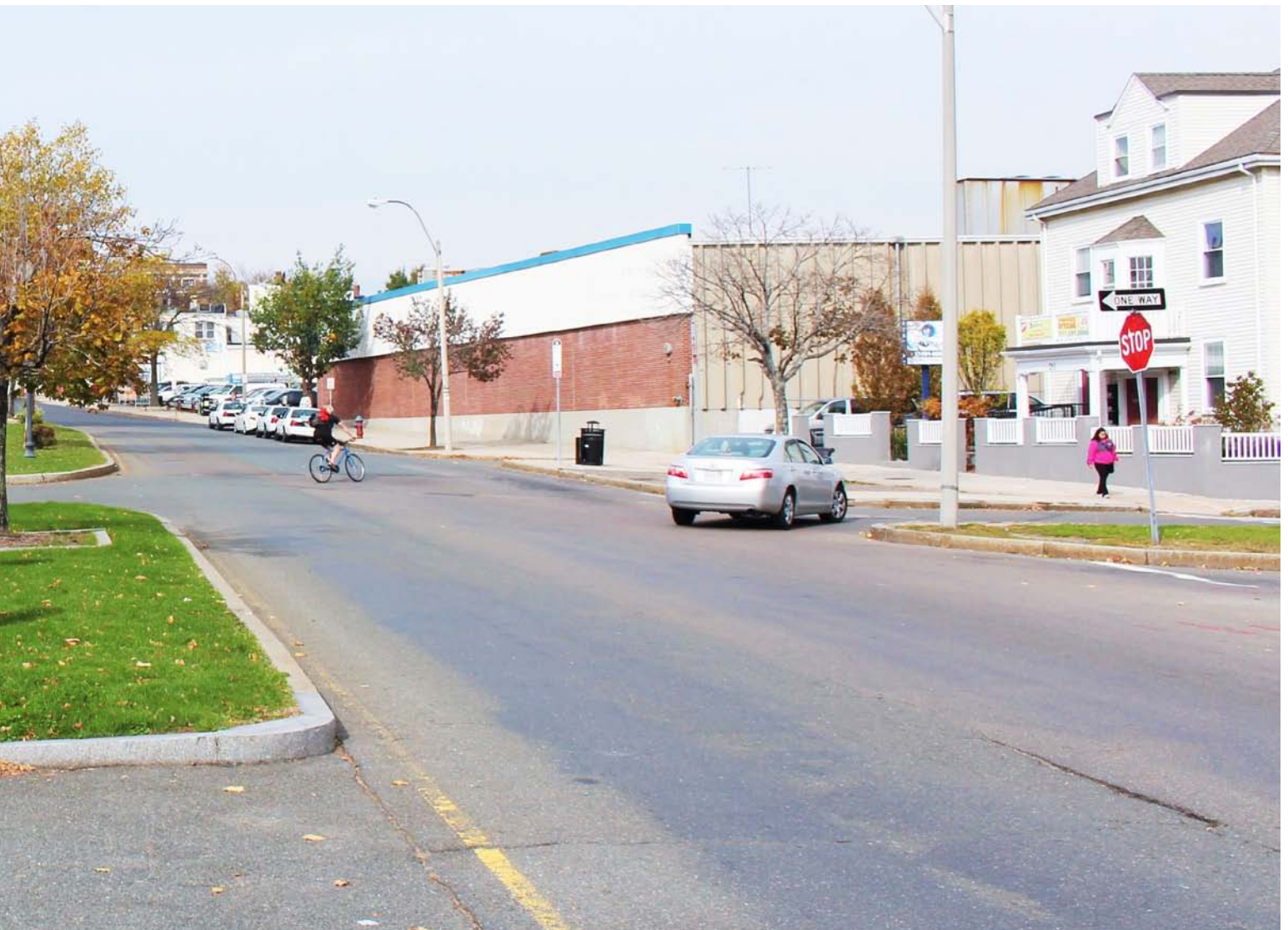
times they reduced both residential and commercial space by removing stories or replacing entire buildings with parking lots. This also resulted in multiple vehicular entrances and parking on the street frontage instead of active uses. This degrades the pedestrian experience: there's less shade, there's fewer things to keep pedestrian interested, and the paving increases the heat island affect. Lastly, whereas residents used to be able to access their daily needs for good and services all along Broadway, this is now not possible given the current uses in the neighborhood and reduced opportunities for new businesses to open.

Seeing the need for change in the neighborhood, the City, through a community process, rezoned the Broadway corridor from McGrath Highway to Thurston Street in 2012. This set the stage for the expectation of new development in the area: pedestrian focused, neighborhood serving, and mixed-use.



Due to the Great Recession it took until 2014 to see any new reinvestment along Winter Hill's main street. Three-fifteen Broadway is currently under construction and is the first new building along Broadway in decades. Others are reinvesting in existing buildings, such as the Winter Hill Brewery which opened in early 2016. Co-founder Jeff Rowe explained to the Somerville Journal that he knows that a lot of people that live in Winter Hill will drive to Union or Davis to go out and it's nice to give people an option that doesn't require them to leave the neighborhood. He hopes his business is the first of many new businesses.

New development, new businesses, and neighborhood activities like the Winter Hill Better Block in 2015 have led to reawakening of the Winter Hill neighborhood and strengthening of the community.

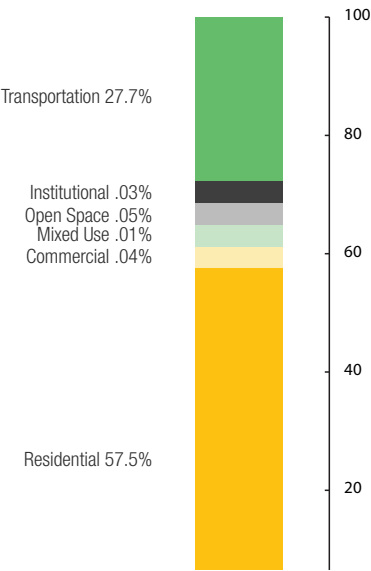


WINTER HILL: AT A GLANCE

LAND USE

AREA 14 MILE

295 acres



HOUSING

TOTAL HOUSING UNITS

5,208

OWNER OCCUPIED UNITS

1,492 29%

RENTER OCCUPIED UNITS

3,265 63%



PEOPLE

TOTAL POPULATION

12,640

UNDER 18

3,146 25%

NON-WHITE

3,880 31%

POPULATION DENSITY

40.2 / acre



HOUSING DENSITY PER ACRE
WINTER HILL

16.5 / acre

OCCUPANCY PER PERCENT
WINTER HILL

2.66

AVE. BEDROOMS / HOUSING UNIT
WINTER HILL

2.25 / unit

VACANCY RATE
WINTER HILL

8.7 %

9 MERVILLE

12.12

9 MERVILLE

2.44

9 MERVILLE

2.23

9 MERVILLE

3.7 %

 TRANSPORTATION
ON STREET PARKING PERMITS**4,667****MA AUTOMOBILE REGISTRATIONS** ESTIMATED**5,098****VEHICLES PER HOUSEHOLD****.98****VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED†** (9,000 ANNUAL MILES/HOUSEHOLD ESTIMATE)**46.87** million/y ear**FUEL USE** (22.3 MPG ESTIMATE)**2.1** million gal./y ear**CO₂ EMISSIONS** (19.60 POUNDS PER GALLON)**41.2** tons/year**FUEL COST** (\$3.689/GALLON ESTIMATE)**\$7.75** million/y ear**TRANSPORTATION COSTS*****\$5,808** /y ear**TRANSPORTATION COSTS*****9.8%** of household income

† Calculated with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Location Affordability Index for address: 315 Broadway.

* Calculated with the U.S. Department of Transportation's Cost of Living Index with a median income of \$59,194/y ear, 2.5 persons/household, 1.21 commuters, and 1 automobile.

 PUBLIC REALM
CIVIC SPACE (WINTER HILL)

PER 1000 RESIDENTS

10.5 acres**.83** acres

NAME	ACRES	TYPE
Fossil Park	13.62	Regional Park
Balsen Park	.06	Landmark
Baldley Community Schoolyard	1.28	Schoolyard
Marshall School Playground	.24	Playground
Mystic Building Development	4.12	Neighborhood Park
Paul Revere Park	.03	Landmark
Winter Hill Community Schoolyard	.97	Schoolyard

 ECONOMY
TOTAL BUSINESSES**78****VACANCY RATE** (OF ALL COMMERCIAL SPACE)**3.8%****LIQUOR LICENSES****3****NATIONAL FRANCHISES****8****AVERAGE COMMERCIAL RENT****\$15-20** per sf

TRANSPORTATION

Car, then Bus, then Pedestrian, then Bike

For the majority of its history, Winter Hill was a streetcar suburb of Boston. Over time, train service changed to bus lines. Winter Hill sees an unfair burden of regional transit by private automobile. On the eastern edge, McGrath Highway connects commuters from the near north suburbs to Kendall Square, East Cambridge, and Downtown Boston. On the northern edge, Interstate 93 carries thousands of commuters to and from farther suburbs. Winter Hill is burdened not only by regional traffic on its edges but by local commuters accessing Interstate 93 through the neighborhood. Even considering these factors, there's still a variety of modes of transportation present in Winter Hill including walking, biking, and transit, presumably because of the nearby neighborhood services and the close proximity to area employment centers.

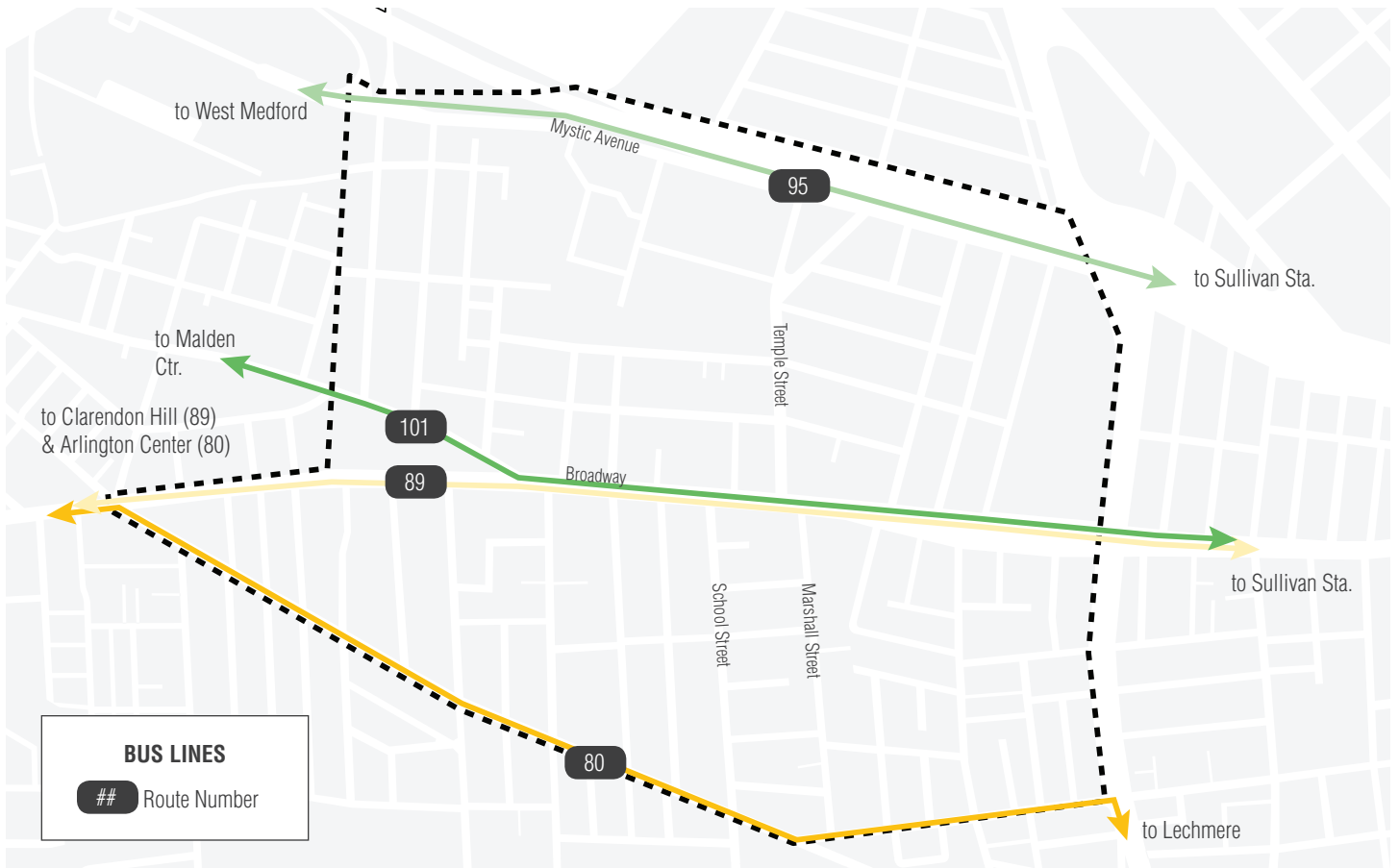
The City launched a Central Broadway streetscape planning project in 2013. Numerous community meetings were conducted in 2013 and 2014 that generated great ideas about pedestrian safety upgrades, bus and vehicular traffic operations, as well as streetscape amenities like plaza spaces, street trees, and lighting. As the project advanced, new information emerged about major water and sewer challenges underneath Broadway.

The project has since increased in size to better address both the subsurface and streetscape needs.

Somerville installed its very first bike lane just over 10 years ago. In that time, very little has been done to improve the cycling infrastructure in Winter Hill. There are only three streets with shared lane markings or sharrows. Sharrows are intended to indicate to a motorist where a cyclist is likely to be on the road and also to remind all modes to share the right-of-way. Three sharrows are insufficient for a connected network. For instance, if cyclists want to ride from School to Temple Streets, they must cross two lanes of traffic in order to turn left off of Broadway. And it's not as if Winter Hill doesn't have cyclists. There were 78 cyclists observed both during the am and pm count times at the Temple & Broadway intersection during the 2014 Annual Pedestrian and Bike Counts.

Four bus lines currently serve the Winter Hill neighborhood. All routes are considered Local Routes (full weekday service between 7 am and 6 pm) by the MBTA. When the Green Line Extension opens, there will be an opportunity to review and improve bus routes and connections in Winter Hill.

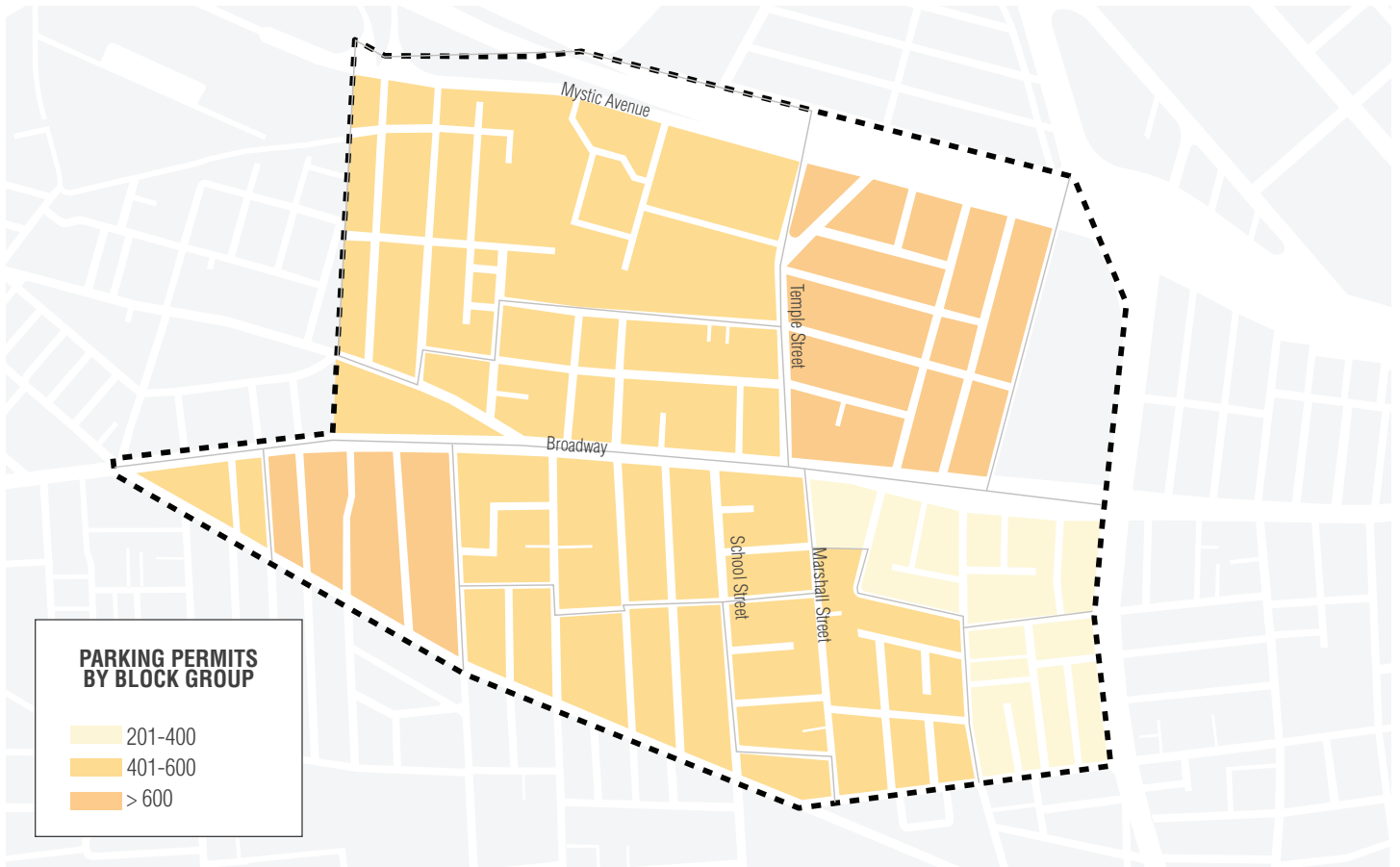




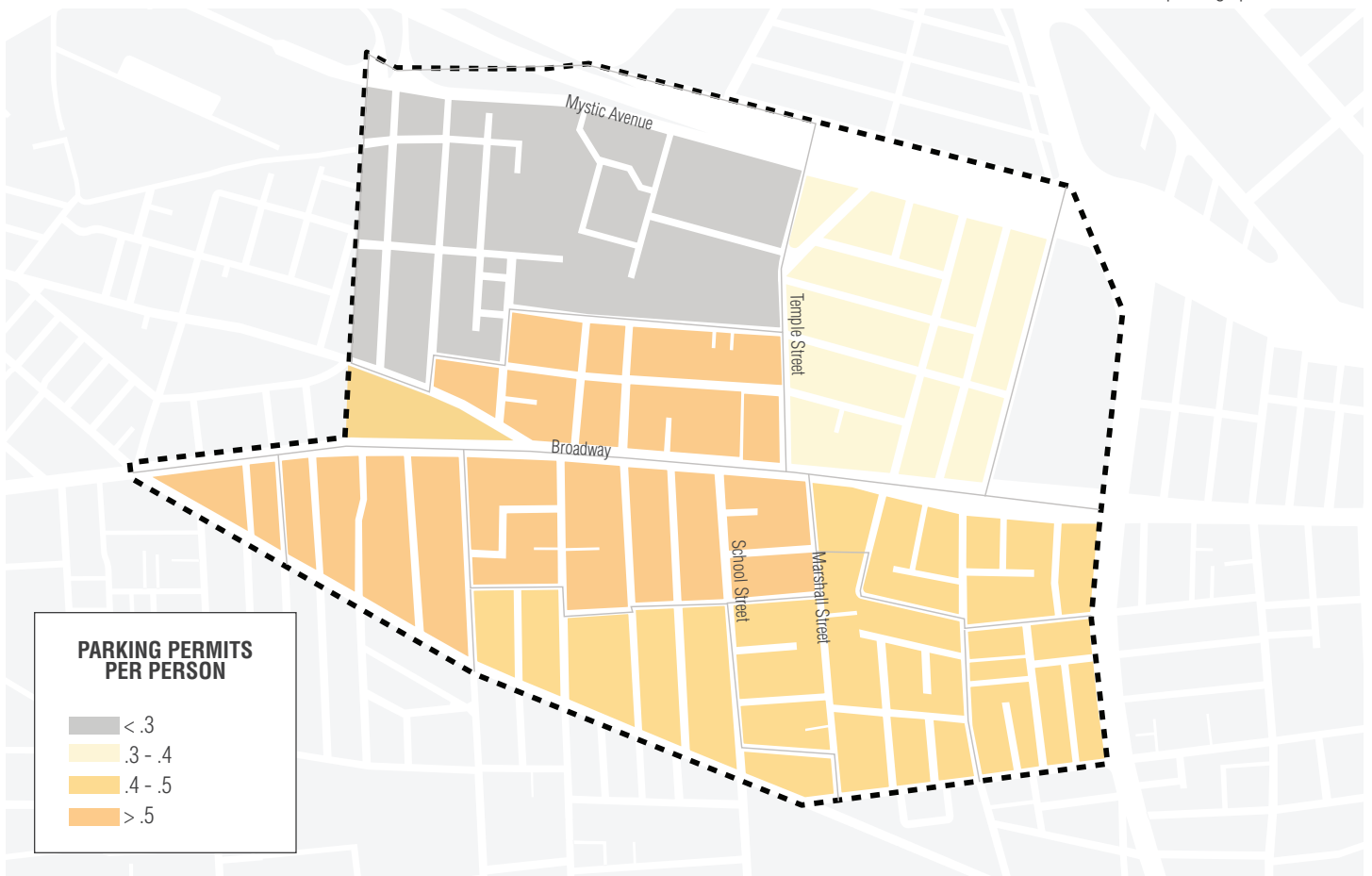


Below: The City installs bike parking during larger streetscape projects and works to address additional need as budget requests are approved by the Board of Aldermen.





Somerville distributes residential parking permits with a valid registration and proof of residency. There is no cap to the number of parking permits issued although there is a limited amount of on-street parking spaces available.



King of the Mountain, or Not

The "Seven Hills" of Somerville: Central Hill, Clarendon Hill, Cobble Hill, Mount Benedict, Prospect Hill, Spring Hill, and Winter Hill were created during the last Ice Age (110,000-12,000 years ago). During Somerville's early settlement, some of these hills were flattened or lowered to fill in marshes (Cobble and Benedict Hills).

Positively, the steep hillside of Winter Hill creates impressive views to the Bunker Hill Monument to the east and Arlington Heights to the west. Negatively, Winter Hill, Central Hill, and Spring Hill affect the mobility of Winter Hill residents. The hill are particularly intimidating for most cyclists.

Most people experience Winter Hill when travelling in an east/west direction. The hill peaks at 128' of elevation near Glenwood Road. The hill is steeper on the west side, but more elevation is covered on the east side. There's a 79' elevation difference between Powderhouse Circle and the peak of Winter Hill, and 115' elevation between the peak and McGrath Highway.

To traverse the hill in the north/south direction is

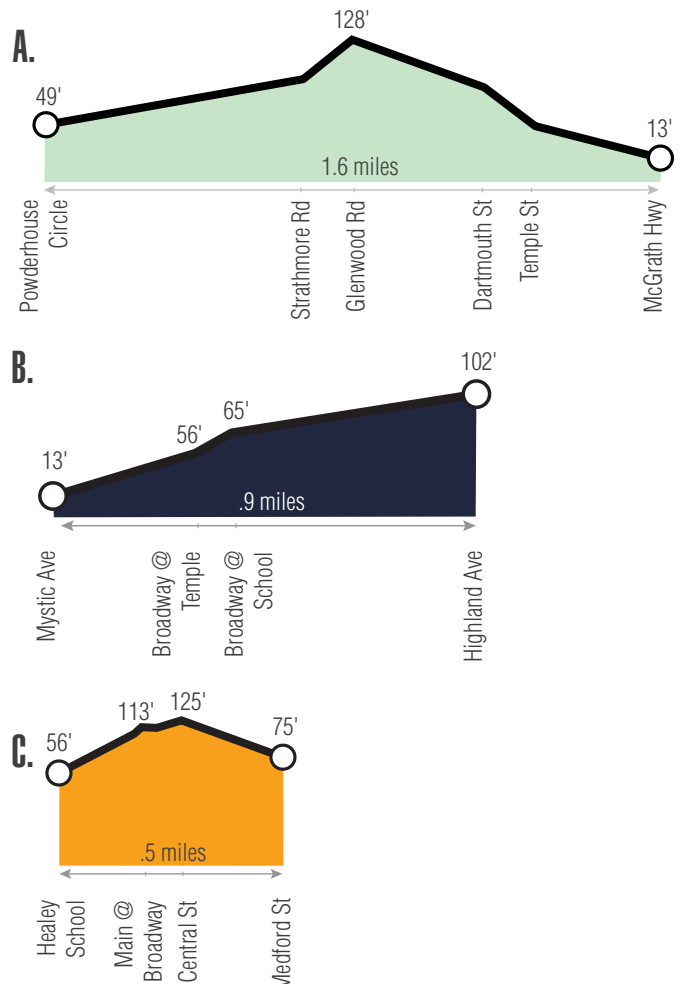
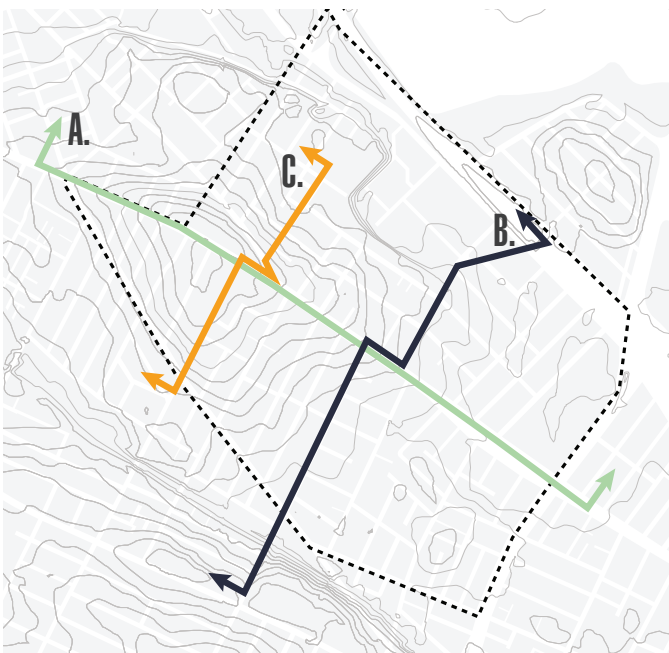
even more challenging than east/west because it is the same grade change, but in less distance. From the Healey School up to Central Street at Broadway is 69' of elevation in just about a ¼ of a mile instead of in 1.6 miles.

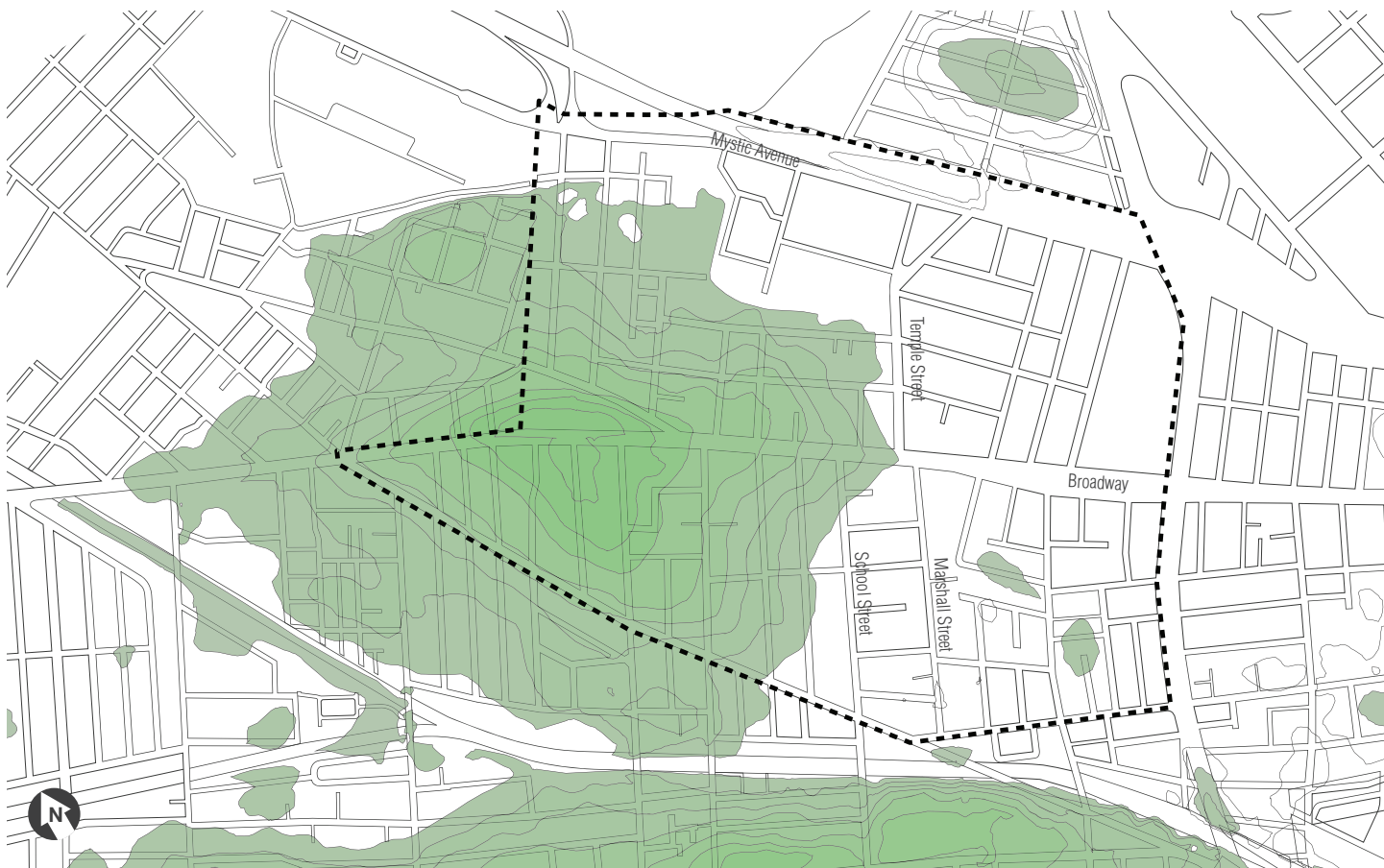
There are ways to avoid climbing the hill, especially when travelling in the east/west direction. However, it is nearly impossible, due to the inconsistent one-way direction of streets, to avoid Central and Spring Hills, just outside the neighborhood. To avoid going over Winter Hill, cyclists can take Temple to School Street. However, Central Hill serves as an obstacle just outside of the plan area. Central Hill seems to rise straight up from Medford Street, 37' of elevation in .17 miles.

The best route to avoid Winter, Central, and Spring Hills, especially east of the Winter Hill peak, is McGrath Highway. However, there are no bicycle facilities on McGrath which is under state ownership and control. The Grounding McGrath project leads to the intersection with Broadway and will address the addition of cycling facilities.

IF HILLS ARE YOUR THING

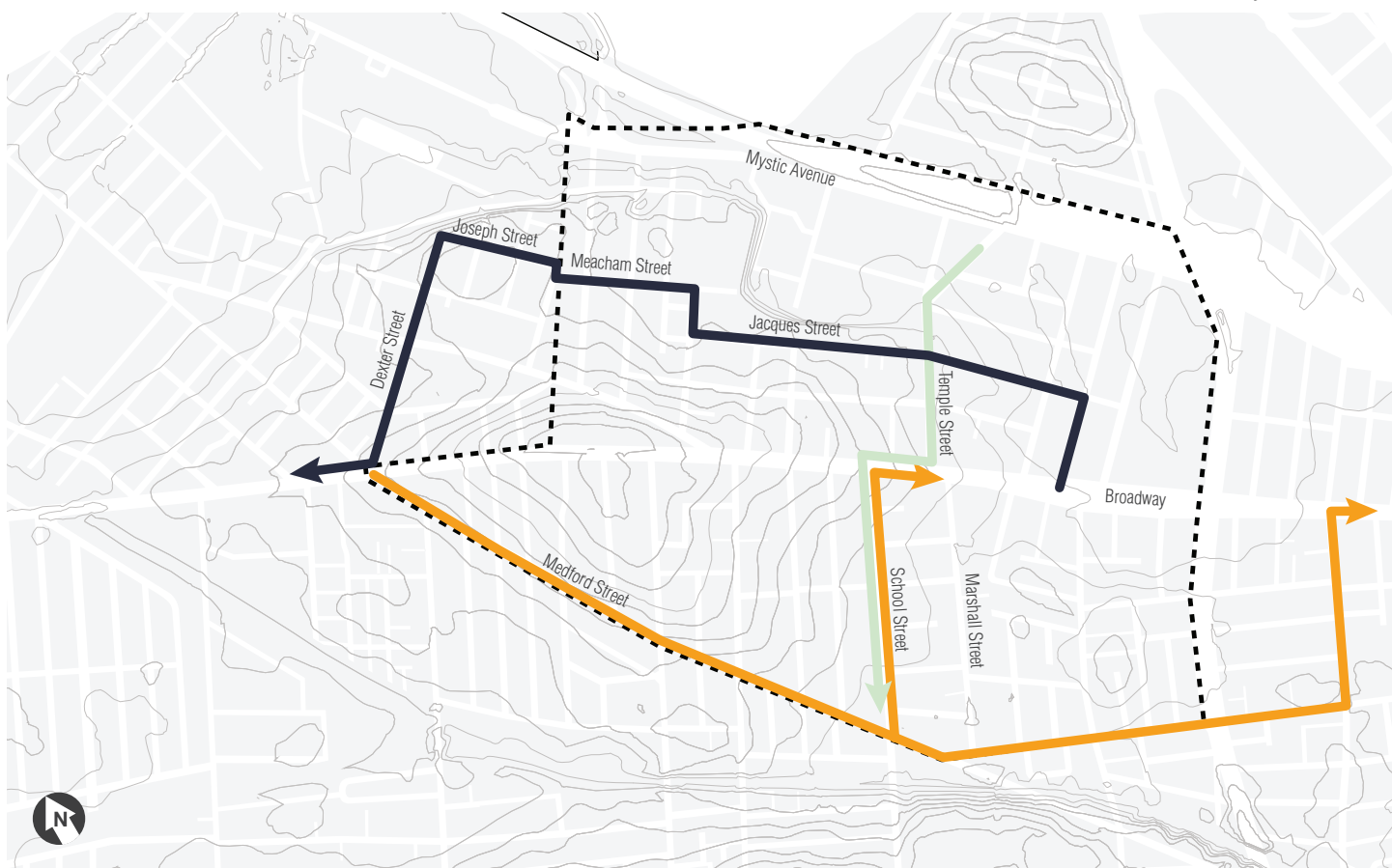
You don't have to go to western Massachusetts to get a taste of the mountains. Gather your peloton and train right on Winter Hill. Clip in and pull your group to the top. You can even use your drops on the way down if you'd like.





Above: The topography of Winter Hill shown with Central Hill at the bottom of the map.

Below: Alternate routes for cyclists to (mostly) avoid the hill. Yes, the westbound route does take you into Medford!



LOCAL ECONOMY

“We're the Rodney Dangerfield of squares lately.”
— Vic Leone (Globe 2010)

Broadway has always been the main street of Winter Hill. Broadway started with offices for brickyards on Mystic Avenue and Ten Hills with a few local services including blacksmith's shops and taverns. At one time Broadway had the best shoe store in Somerville, its first luxury movie theater, a car dealership, more grocery options, an ice cream shop, and many other businesses. This started to decline after the discontinuation of the electric streetcar service in 1958.

The chart on the facing page analyzes the current uses in Winter Hill that cater to the daily and weekly needs of residents. It's very different from when Broadway was in its heyday. Within the plan area, most key uses are present although some are not proportional to the others. Winter Hill has a high rate of café/deli/fast food establishments but there's only one sit down restaurant. The chart is not conclusive as to the reasons why different uses locate in Winter Hill but is a snapshot of what's available to residents and what's possibly needed.

When surveying existing physical space, there is a total of 452,670 square feet of commercial space for lease or sale in the Winter Hill neighborhood of which 52% is retail. Eighteen percent of retail space is vacant. The retail

stock is characterized as older (average year built is 1940) and not transit accessible; it's most frequently suited for smaller tenants because most space is between 3,000 and 5,000 square feet.

The office market within the Winter Hill Plan area is limited and currently has a 100% occupancy rate. What would comprise the square footage of a single commercial building in some markets comprises the entirety of the Winter Hill office market. Excluding healthcare-specific uses, 51,174 square feet of office space is completely occupied. The last office space was built in 1925, with an average age of 105 years, it's easy to assume that these are less desirable office spaces. Walkability is also an issue with office space. Offices average 0.95 miles from rapid transit, which indicates that most users are either driving or are relying on the existing network of buses travelling up Broadway. With space so limited, potential office users overlook the Winter Hill area when locating new businesses.

In 2016, Winter Hill has seen a spike in new uses. Craving Boston published an article in February 2016 about the culinary reawakening in Winter Hill profiling Winter Hill Brewing Company, Tipping Cow, and Somerville Bread



Company. In addition, CareWell Urgent Care Center opened at 337-341 Broadway, taking over the vacant Brunello's Bistro site. However, only highlighting new businesses does not address the story that has developed along Broadway over the last generation.

Broadway is seen as tired, past its prime, and a shadow of its former self. In a 2010 Boston Globe article titled *Endless winter on the Hill*, it lamented Winter Hill's inability to keep up with the positive changes in other parts of Somerville. The City worked with Urban Advisors, an urban and real estate investment consulting firm, to understand the current set of circumstances further. Along the Broadway walkshed, income, income density, disposable income, and education attainment are comparable to both plan area and city-wide averages. So why isn't there successful retailing along Broadway when it has similar demographics to Union Square, East Somerville, and other squares of Somerville?

The physical environment is another key factor in retailing and has several benchmarks. Retail aggregation is poor, the business density is low, and businesses are not complementary to one another which makes shopping

less efficient and therefore less desirable for shoppers. The frequency of visits for business types are a mismatch along Broadway. Think of the frequency difference in buying kitchen appliances versus groceries. The majority of storefronts on Winter Hill are uses that rely on frequent visits to survive whereas developments from the 1960's through 1980's have uses that cater to less frequent visits. Typically, businesses with less frequent visits rely on higher traffic volumes. These are directly competing priorities. The mode access is primarily auto-oriented with a poor pedestrian environment which means travel between businesses may require getting back into the car. To top it off, the experience is perceived as inconvenient with unattractive or poorly maintained buildings, and an ugly streetscape.

As part of SomerVision, the City's comprehensive master plan, residents specifically prioritized supporting small and local independent businesses that help shape the identity of Somerville's commercial corridors and squares. The City offers programs and services to help Somerville's small business community including the handful of dedicated shop owners providing consistent services to Winter Hill.

COMPLETE NEIGHBORHOOD ANALYSIS

Key Uses...	...along Broadway		...in Neighborhood Plan Area	
	if no...	Establishments	if no...	Establishments
BANK		3		4
CAFE/DELI/FAST FOOD		7		13
CIVIC SPACE		1		6
COMMUNITY CENTER		2		17
CONVENIENCE FOOD		2		3
DAY CARE	✕	0		1
HARDWARE STORE	✕	0	✕	0
HEALTH SERVICES		7		7
GROCERY (incl cultural markets)		2		6
LAUNDRY		2		10
PHARMACY		1		2
RESTAURANT		1		5
TOTAL		10 of 12 (83%)		11 of 12 (92%)

A Complete Neighborhood Analysis is a snapshot of businesses, essential to weekly needs that are/are not present within the neighborhood. These are businesses that complete the neighborhood, not necessarily if the quantity of each business represents neighborhood demand. Within the plan area, most key uses are present although some are not proportional to the others. Winter Hill has a high rate of café/deli/fast food establishments but only one sit down restaurant along Broadway. The chart is also not conclusive as to the reasons why different uses locate in Winter Hill. A complete neighborhood analysis can be a baseline for more study or used by city officials to recruit the uses missing in the neighborhood.

Star Market & Neighborhood Grocery Stores

In 2006, the Star Market at 299 Broadway closed. At that time, the Economic Development division of OSPCD worked tirelessly to help recruit a new grocery store. The store, by today's standards is an odd size. Not big enough for big box grocery retailers like Stop & Shop, Market Basket, or Shaw's but not small enough for more boutique grocery retailers like Trader Joe's or Whole Foods. In addition, the building needs work prior to a new tenant moving in. This is handled in two ways, either the landlord makes an investment in the building to justify rent price or the rent price is lowered through negotiations so the tenant can make their own improvements.

When attempts failed to find a grocery tenant, the property owner brought forward an Ocean State Job Lots. The use, because it's over 10,000 square feet required zoning relief. The Planning Board denied the zoning relief because it did not fit within the neighborhood context. Since that time, instead of finding alternative options, the out of town property owner has appealed the zoning and zoning decision instead of finding new tenants or redeveloping.

When grocery stores are looking for new locations they are interested in two things, the population and demographics of the catchment area and proximity to other retailers. Grocery stores want to locate in a place where they can capture the market, they are also extremely protective of that market once established.

The catchment area for urban grocery stores is about a half-mile. The facing map are the existing grocery stores in Somerville with their catchment areas. Roughly half of the Winter Hill plan area is within the catchment of the Stop & Shop on McGrath Highway. Of course, physical obstacles can be deterrents to the likelihood of shopping at that store just the same as price being a factor. The catchment area does not mean that every resident shops there.

Another factor to grocery store location is the population density of the surrounding area. If density is greater, grocery stores can be closer together. If the density is less, the catchment area needs to be bigger. At the 299 Broadway location, 4,500 units would have to be added to meet a grocer's expectation with the existing location of other stores!

Lastly, is a grocer's interest in capturing and maintaining their market. Large grocery stores go through significant efforts to capture and maintain their market. For example, some regional or national chains will take a

loss at a particular location just to hold market share instead of vacating a site and potentially forfeiting to a competitor. Others will sublease the stores that they vacated, just so they can control their sublease tenant and ensure that it does not compete with new stores that they build nearby. While neither of these have happened with the vacant store in Winter Hill, these tactics have occurred in Somerville. For example, the existing Target on Somerville Avenue in Union Square used to be a supermarket. Target subleases from the grocer, and therefore is likely restricted from selling groceries on the site. This lease relationship has continued, even after Target more recently purchased the underlying land. Now they lease to a grocery store that leases back to them. That's an odd arrangement, but it's all a creature of a grocery store's unwillingness to give up market share.

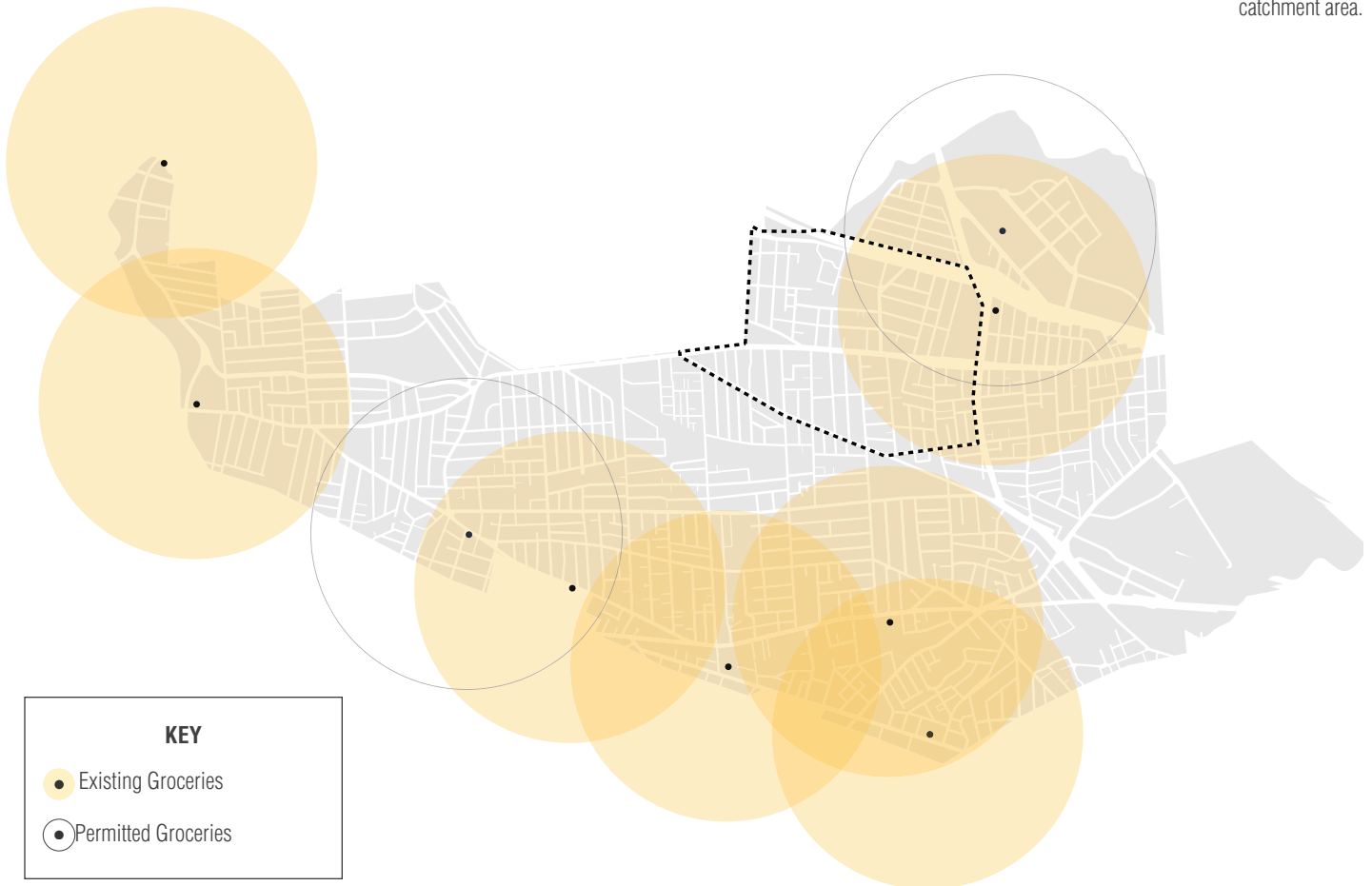
These factors have led to the vacancy of a regional grocery store chain in Winter Hill. However, there are other strengths in the neighborhood. The complete neighborhood analysis (see previous page) shows that there are six food markets within the Winter Hill plan area. These food markets primarily target the needs of a specific cultural group. While this means that there is a diversity of food offerings in the neighborhood, these markets may not fulfill the food needs of the majority of shoppers.

Additionally, Shape Up Somerville and Groundwork Somerville started The Somerville Mobile Farmers' Market in 2011 in response to a survey and focus group data which showed community interest in a neighborhood farmers' market to fill the gaps in healthy food access left by the Star Market closing. The Somerville Mobile Farmers' Market has Massachusetts-grown produce for sale each Saturday from July through October at the Mystic Housing Development between 1 and 3 p.m., and also at three other sites in the city. Anyone who has SNAP, WIC, or Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program Coupons or who lives in Somerville's housing developments receives an unlimited 50% discount on their purchases, helping make fresh food more affordable to all. The market also offers culturally-specific items such as a lalo, callaloo bush, and jiló and also universal staples such as tomatoes, corn, cucumbers, squashes, and berries.

Despite the strengths that exist in the Winter Hill grocery market, residents are still clamoring for a grocer to return in Winter Hill.



Above: The vacant Star Market and parking lot.
Below: The grocery stores of Somerville including their half mile catchment area.



HOUSING

Largest family and household sizes in Somerville

SomerVision includes a set of aspirational targets for economic development, housing construction, and open space improvement, along with guidance on how people should travel and where development should occur within the city. The target for housing construction is for 6,000 new housing units by 2030, with 1,200 of those units being deed-restricted affordable housing.

The City's Special Permit database is the best resource available on housing construction citywide. From January 2010 to December 2015 special permits were issued for 1,564 units, 370 of which are considered affordable under the city's Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance. The Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (OSPCD) estimates a total of 2,000 units have been permitted by-right or by Special Permit by spring 2016, which is 33% of SomerVision's target for housing development in 25% of its timeframe. In Winter Hill, 111 units have been permitted for construction. Of those permitted, 68 are affordable units. Much of Winter Hill's housing development is purpose built affordable units (see the following page).

Over half of the land area in the Winter Hill plan area is the typical Somerville neighborhood, single, two-, and three-family homes. There is a variety of architecture and building types from large and grand Queen Ann style homes originally built as businessmen's homes to more modest and simple workers cottages on small lots. The neighborhoods have gone relatively unchanged with the exception of renovations and additions. Owners and renters have been drawn to Winter Hill because of the quality of the residential neighborhood.

Existing Housing in the Plan Area

OSPCD generated the following housing statistics for the Winter Hill plan area using information available from the Somerville Assessors Office, the U.S. Census Bureau, and the recently completed Housing Needs Assessment.

EXISTING HOUSING STATISTICS

Renter Households	3,265 (63%)
Homeowner Households	1,492 (29%)
Average Family Household Size	3.2
Average Non-Family Household Size	1.6
Affordable Rental Units	125
Affordable Ownership Units	29
Average Rent (2 bedroom)	\$2,048

Somerville's Housing Market

Recently, OSPCD worked with consultants to further analyze Somerville's housing market in preparation for continued neighborhood planning efforts and a new zoning ordinance. The following are summaries from these reports.

MARKET-RATE HOUSING STUDY

To estimate the demand for market-rate housing in Somerville, the City hired Zimmerman/Volk Associates (ZVA), a firm that uses migration patterns and the housing preferences and economic capabilities of potential future households to determine the depth and breadth of the market for housing within a municipality. ZVA provided the City with an estimate of the number of households in the market for new or existing housing each year over the next five years and low, moderate, and high absorption scenarios that estimate the number of those households that might actually move to Somerville.

Market Rate Housing

- Households Interested in Somerville 10,950
- Households Financially Able 4,330 (40%)

ZVA developed three absorption scenarios to estimate how many of the almost 4,500 households that make over 110% AMI might actually be expected to move to Somerville on an annual basis - a 'capture rate'.

Absorption Scenarios

- Low 543
- Medium 759
- High 975

Using the chart above, the demand for market-rate housing ranges from 2,715 to 4,875 units over just the next five years.

By extrapolating these absorption numbers through 2030, the demand for market-rate housing in Somerville ranges from anywhere between 8,145 to 14,625 units within SomerVision's time frame. Some of this demand will be met through the construction of new housing, but the remainder will compete for existing housing that comes onto the market, driving up prices.

ZVA's analysis draws upon data from the Internal Revenue Service to project how future migration patterns will impact the demand for housing. This data set also provides insight into the life stage, economic capability, and housing preferences of the households representing the market for housing.

Housing Types Preferred

• Multi-Unit Rentals	2,185 (50%)
• Multi-Family	960 (22%)
• Multi-Unit Condo	815 (19%)
• Single Family	370 (9%)

ZVA also categories by age demographics. Below is a table summarizing these findings for multi-unit rentals and condos, the principal housing types that will be created by new development in the plan area.

Multi-Unit Rentals	2,185
• Singles & Childless Couples	1,915
• Family-oriented Households	155
• Empty Nesters & Retirees	115

Multi-Unit Condos	960
• Singles & Childless Couples	740
• Family-oriented Households	60
• Empty Nesters & Retirees	160

HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

In August 2015, the City of Somerville hired LDS Consulting Group (LDS), a comprehensive real estate advisory firm, to identify the supply and demand for affordable housing within Somerville. This type of housing analysis is called a Housing Needs Assessment and is crucial to balancing the production of affordable housing with actual demonstrated need.

To complete the assessment, LDS catalogued the full supply of affordable housing units within the city, as well as the supply of market rate two-bedroom rentals, two-bedroom condominiums, and three-bedroom homes available for purchase, and compared that supply to available Census data on existing Somerville households.

A key component to researching the supply and demand of affordable housing is understanding how much a household can afford to pay without becoming cost-burdened. A household is considered 'cost burdened' by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) when they pay more than 30% of their gross income on housing costs. Since 30% of income is different for every household, researchers categorize households into groups earning certain percentages of a region's area median income (AMI) to determine what they can afford to pay. HUD identifies Somerville's region as the Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH HUD Metro FMR Area and in 2015, the AMI was set as \$95,400 (since LDS's report the AMI has been adjusted but is not

reflected in this summary).

Household Income Not in Deed Restricted Housing	
80% AMI	7,649
110% AMI (incl. up to)	12,709

Affordable Housing standards in the SZO allow households with an income at or below 50% AMI (or \$47,700), 51% to 80% (76,320), and 81-110% (104,940) to apply for deed-restricted affordable housing units.

Not all of these almost 13,000 existing renter households are cost-burdened and some are currently renting non-deed restricted housing that was offered at an affordable price in the rental market. However, LDS did find that 8,114 of Somerville's renter households are cost-burdened, representing 38.7% of all renter households. Furthermore, 73.8% of Somerville's existing renter households cannot afford the \$2,384 average monthly rent of apartments rented in the last year. The average price of an apartment rented over the last year would require an annual household income of \$95,360 to be affordable, which is 1.62 times the median income of current renter households in Somerville (\$58,510). This means that when a Somerville renter household finds themselves having to move from their existing apartment, the rental housing in the city becomes stunningly unaffordable.

Winter Hill

• Median Household Income	\$54,278 (66,343 citywide)
• Average Price of Rental	\$2,048 (2,384 citywide)
• Rent Burdened Households	1,451 (8,073 citywide)
• SZO Inclusionary Units Rental	125 (283 citywide)
• SZO Inclusionary Ownership	29 (91 citywide)
• Affordable Rental Housing	806 (3,066 citywide)

Winter Hill has a unique perspective of Somerville's housing challenges because of the dichotomy between renters and owners. Winter Hill has not only the second highest number of renter households (3,265), but also the second highest number of cost-burdened renters in the city. A total of 1,451 renters in Winter Hill are cost-burdened, with 23.8% paying 30-50% of their income and 20.6% paying over 50% of their income toward housing costs. Winter Hill also has the census tract with the highest number of owner occupied households (1,097) and the most affordable units (930 units). The average family household size is 3.2 people which could imply that residents are facing unique challenges in balancing housing costs and raising a family.

CREATING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Affordable housing can be created in several ways. The first is purpose built affordable housing - this is the way that Somerville has historically built most of its affordable units. Developments of this sort often use a variety of financing mechanisms to build new housing units. Units can also be designed to serve specific types of residents, including senior citizens, persons with disabilities, families with children, and even artists. The Somerville Housing Authority (SHA) is a big contributor to this supply. SHA is a state funded agency that builds and maintains affordable housing. In Winter Hill, they maintain several properties including the Mystic View Apartments.

Secondly, the City offers financial incentives and programs to residential property owners in return for temporary affordable housing restrictions in the existing housing supply. For instance, landlords can qualify for grants and loans to perform rehabilitation or lead hazard abatement, if they agree to rent units (or continue to rent) to low- and moderate-income tenants. These incentive programs are particularly important in keeping residential units within the existing fabric of Somerville neighborhoods affordable.

Private development in Somerville also creates deed-restricted affordable housing through the inclusionary housing zoning requirement. The percentage recently increased to a sliding scale of 16-20% depending on the size of development. The amended ordinance also created an additional tier of affordability at 110% AMI for rentals and 140% AMI for homeownership. The new inclusionary requirement is a sliding scale where developers are able to access different tools like a density bonus and reduce parking requirements in exchange for an increased number of affordable dwelling units.

Lastly, construction of new commercial space over 30,000 square feet, triggers a linkage fee paid by the developer to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF). The City uses this fund to either create affordable housing or provide assistance for qualified households. The Community Preservation Act Fund has also contributed to the AHTF since it was established in 2012.

Most units created are filled through an application and lottery process, application and lottery regulations differ for various affordable unit types. Existing Somerville residents are given preference for many of the affordable units created in the City, including those built through the Somerville Inclusionary Housing Ordinance. Through all of these mechanisms, roughly 375 affordable units have been permitted since 2012.



Photo by Joel Howe Photography



Somerville Community Corporation is a community development corporation focusing on sustaining affordability and livability for low income people. SCC has developed 204 affordable units since 1992. Their mission is to serve as a membership organization that provides leadership for sustaining the City of Somerville as a vibrant, diverse, and tolerant community. They offer services and lead community organizing that supports low- and moderate-income Somerville residents in their efforts to achieve economic sustainability and increase civic participation.

Prior to SCC ownership, the property at Temple Street and Mystic Avenue was owned by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston and used by the Saint Polycarp Parish until 1999. There were six buildings on site at the time, a church, rectory, convent, school, library/storage building, and a garage. The Archdiocese put the property up for sale in 2005.

SCC purchased the 3.5 acre property in March 2006 with the purpose of revitalizing an underutilized property. After two phases of work, there are now 84 affordable housing units and commercial space in three new buildings. Of the units provided, 13 units are for households under 30% Area Median Income (AMI), 15 units for households under 50% AMI, and 56 units for households under 60% AMI. The building at the corner of Mystic Avenue and Temple Street has a convenience store and dentist. Sustainability was at the forefront of design, the development includes a green roof and solar panels.

Two buildings were preserved in the process. The church is now occupied by the Missionary Church of the Haitian Community. The former rectory is owned by Just-a-Start. Just-a-Start is dedicated to creating opportunity, strengthening community, and improving lives. At this location they operate a transitional home for young mothers and their children.

PUBLIC REALM & OPEN SPACE

A Lack of Quality Throughout the Neighborhood

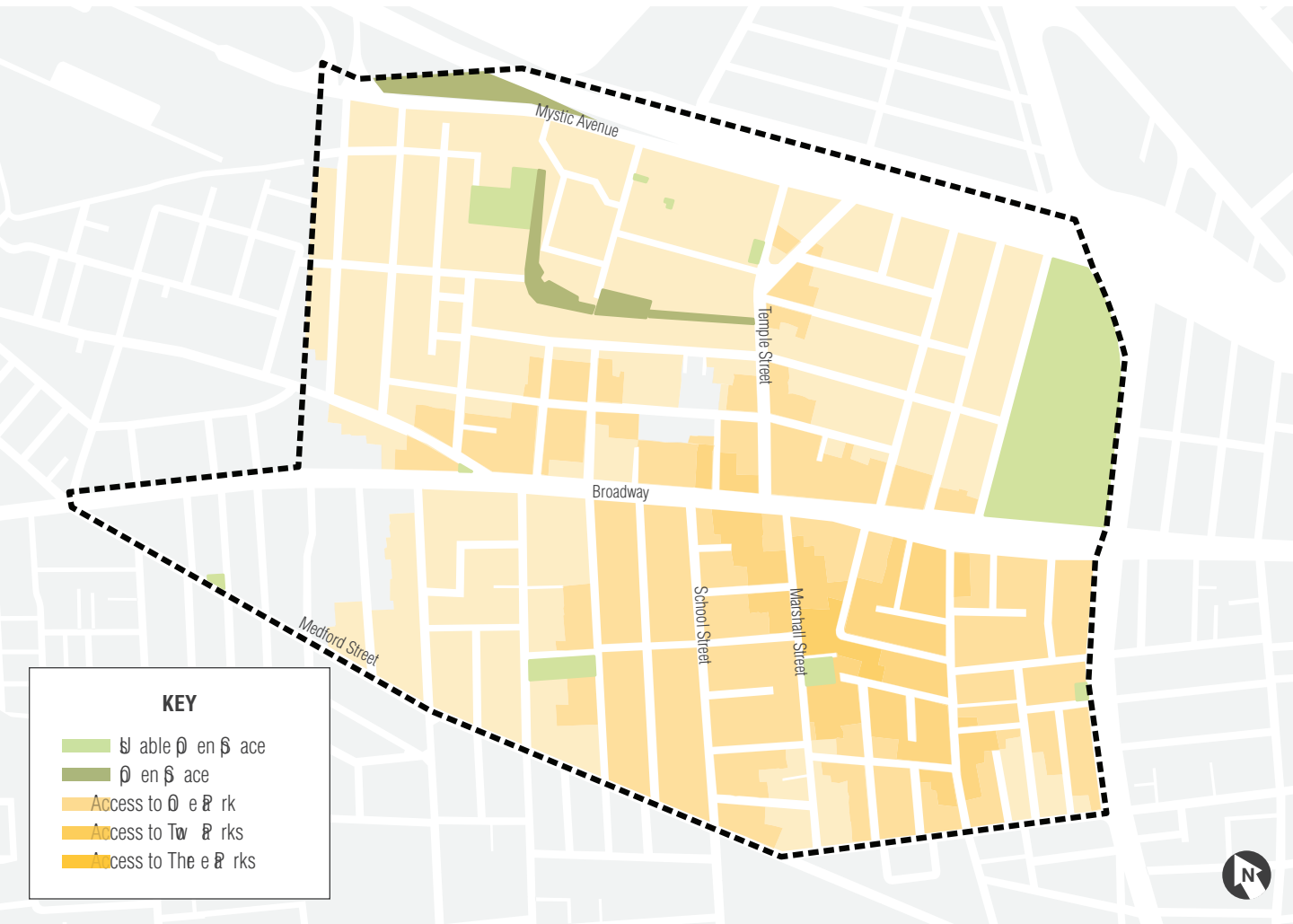
The public realm is simply defined as the space between buildings. Often times it is narrowed down to publicly owned streets and sidewalks, pathways, right-of-ways, parks, and other publicly accessible open spaces. However, privately owned buildings facing the right-of-way and the right-of-way together create the public realm of the place. The quality of the public realm is vital in creating places that people want to live and work in.

Open space is a big part of the public realm. There are different typologies but only a few are present in Winter Hill including landmarks, schoolyards, neighborhood, and regional parks. Marshall Street Park was recently renovated and Cremin Park (formerly Otis Street Park) is currently in construction. At the heart of each neighborhood there should be a small intimate space, something identifiable as the community's and a place where people can relax, rub shoulders, and renew themselves. Winter Hill doesn't have this type of community gathering space. The map below shows the open space in Winter Hill and the 5 minute walking

distance from each. Open space and useable open space less than .1 acres were excluded in this exercise due to their extremely small size.

The public realm is a major focus of this plan because of the current lack of quality. Open space is part of this problem, especially Foss Park. Although the neighborhood has the largest park in Somerville, Foss Park is owned, operated, and maintained by the State Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). Only some parts are well used, others are wasted, and it lacks quality upkeep. Broadway is a means of travel, whether for pedestrians, cyclists, or motorists, but it isn't a place to stop and enjoy a cup of coffee while chatting with a neighbor or read the newspaper. This is also true of other major streets like Temple Street and Mystic Avenue in the plan area.

low: Winter Hill open space w lskhed analysis. This shows a 5 minute walking distance from all usable open space greater than .1 acres. Areas that are darker yellow have more access.



PUBLIC SPACE PUBLIC LIFE STUDY

The Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning & Community Development worked with Gehl Architects to study public space and public life in Somerville in 2015. The process started with a workshop where people identified their favorite places in Somerville. The only place even mentioned in Winter Hill was Foss Park. Gehl Architects, with the help of City Staff and a small army of volunteers, conducted a city-wide Public Space, Public Life survey. This observation helps answer how people use the public realm, what types of activities users engage in, and their age/gender mix. The intersection of Broadway and Temple and Foss Park were studied. The results are summarized in the Public Space Public Life report.

The quality of the public realm can seem subjective but there are traits that ensure successful places. Are there places to gather, informally, formally, in small groups, in large groups? Is there a way to be sheltered from the elements whether wind or sun? When you meet another person, is it quiet enough to hear them talk? Are there pleasant things to look at? The list goes on. One trait missing or one trait prioritized over another doesn't necessarily doom the public realm but each trait leads to its success.

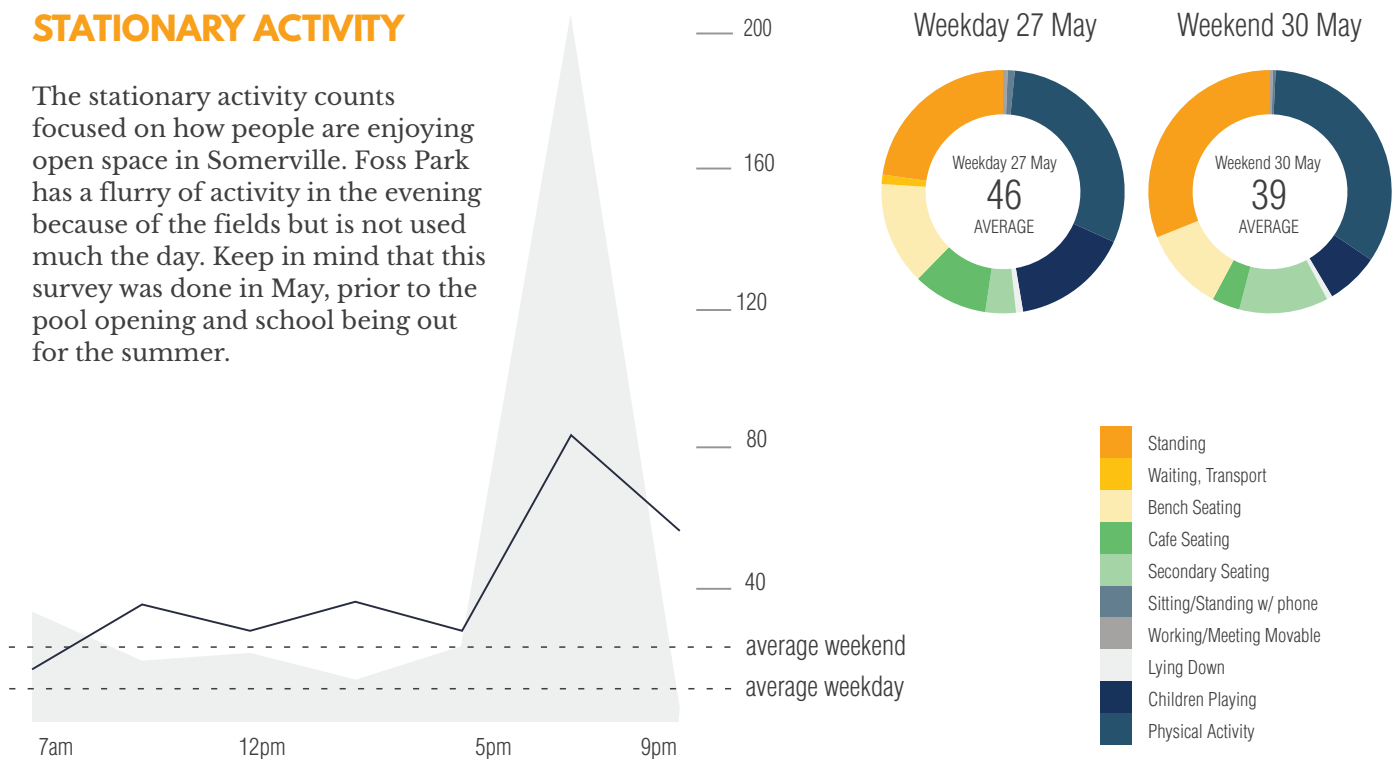
Unlike in many cities where pedestrian movement strongly correlates to employment and rush hour patterns, walking occurs more on the weekends in

Somerville. Average weekend pedestrian volumes are much higher than weekday, with 550 people per hour walking through a single intersection compared to 350 (weekday). This indicates that pedestrians are choosing to walk in Somerville, and are not just there because of work patterns or demands. The outlier in this pattern is Winter Hill. The activity is much higher on weekdays than on the weekend. This could indicate that people are here because they have to be, to commute, not because they want to walk here. Winter Hill also has the lowest pedestrian count other than Concord Square which is in the middle of a residential neighborhood just outside of Union Square. Temple and Broadway also had an imbalance of men and women. Sixty two percent of pedestrians were men at this location. Foss Park, not surprisingly, has a spike of evening sports activity.

How could activity be extended throughout the day? Even with lower pedestrian volumes more people were staying and hanging out in Foss Park whether playing sports, lounging, or playing on the playground. Some of the study's recommendations include taking better advantage of the space that we have – activating Foss Park outside of evening hours as well as creating smaller spaces within larger areas. The City can also take advantage of the streets by using additional space in the right-of-ways to program space for people.

STATIONARY ACTIVITY

The stationary activity counts focused on how people are enjoying open space in Somerville. Foss Park has a flurry of activity in the evening because of the fields but is not used much the day. Keep in mind that this survey was done in May, prior to the pool opening and school being out for the summer.



Cremin Playground



The City strives to not only create new but renovate existing open spaces to meet community needs. Cremin Playground (formerly Otis Street Playground) opened on October 22, 2016.

New play features include climbing structures, musical instruments, and a water spray area. Café seating, colorful murals, new lighting, and security cameras have also been added to enhance the safety and

comfort of the park. The entire playground is now permeable to stormwater and additional street trees have been planted.

The City worked diligently with the state to incorporate abutting property used for the pedestrian bridge over McGrath Highway into the park. The space is now cohesive and provides more opportunities for a variety of ages to play.



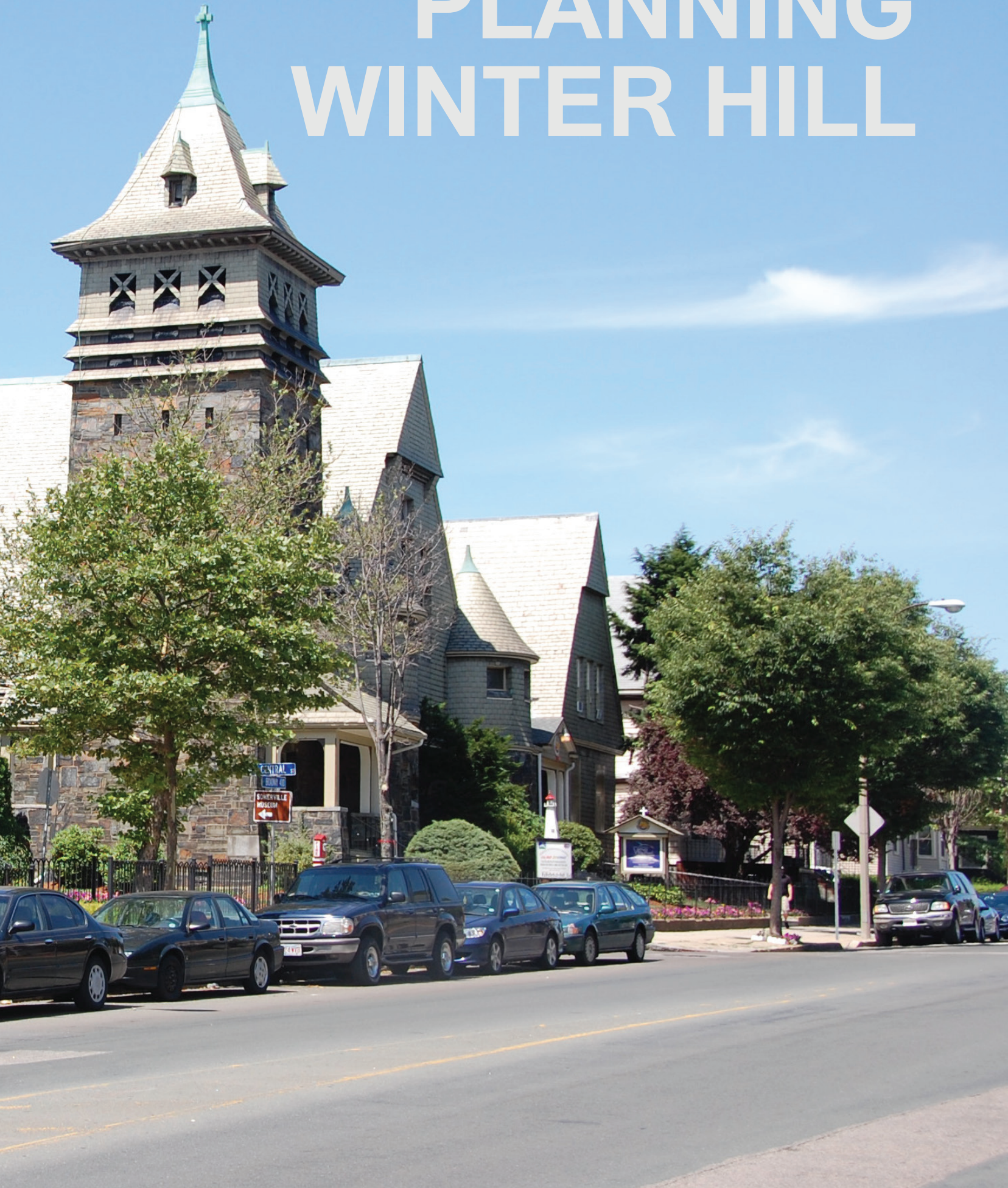






Photo by Eric Kilby

PLANNING WINTER HILL



IT STARTS WITH SOMERVISION

Moving from City-Wide to Neighborhood Planning

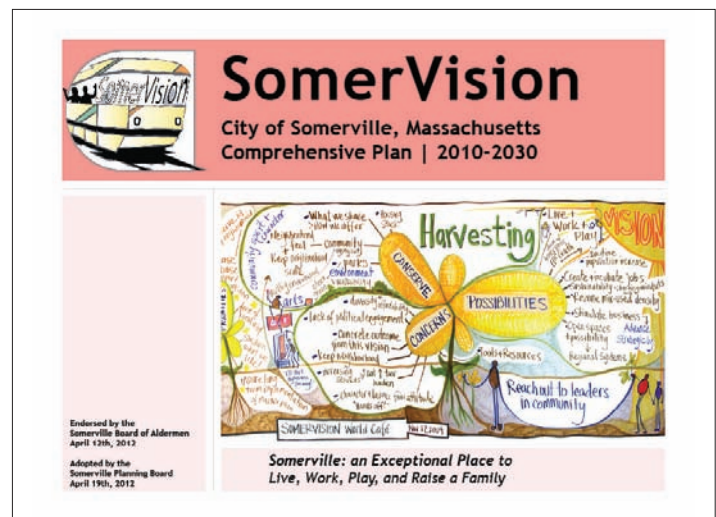
Planning for communities is like retirement planning for individuals: if you don't set goals for where you want to be, it is almost certain you won't reach your goal for the future. Like individual families, communities have unique characteristics and individual needs. In both cases, desired outcomes should be identified after careful thought is given to a range of options so that a coordinated series of actions can be carried out to achieve the determined goals.

SOMERVISION

In 2012, the City of Somerville adopted its first city-wide comprehensive master plan. Entitled SomerVision, this plan was developed to build consensus around strategies to preserve Somerville's identity as an accessible, mixed-income, multi-cultural city; while at the same time outlining an actionable policy agenda to invite and leverage public and private investment in transit-oriented development. The Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning & Community Development coordinated the four year project with a 60 member Steering Committee comprised of residents, business owners, nonprofit agencies, and elected officials. The City generated trust and buy-in among residents and community partners through development of the plan.

SomerVision is based on our shared values as a community and establishes our commitment to:

- Celebrate the diversity of our people, cultures, housing, and economy.
- Foster the character of residents, neighborhoods, hills, and squares, and the strength of our community spirit as expressed in our history, our cultural and social life, and our deep sense of civic pride.
- Invest in the growth of a resilient economy that is centered around transit, generates a wide variety of job opportunities, creates an active daytime population, supports independent local businesses, and secures fiscal self-sufficiency.
- Promote a dynamic urban streetscape that embraces public transportation, reduces dependence on the automobile, and that is accessible, inviting, and safe for all pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users.
- Build a sustainable future through strong environmental leadership, balanced transportation modes, engaging recreational and community spaces, exceptional schools and educational opportunities, improved community health, varied and affordable housing options, and effective stewardship of our natural resources.
- Commit to innovation and affirm our responsibility



to current and future generations in all of endeavors: business, technology, education, arts, and government.

Somerville's comprehensive plan creates clear expectations regarding neighborhood character and neighborhood change through The SomerVision Map (shown at right), which establishes a plan for growth in certain areas of the city and conservation of existing neighborhoods in others. The map illustrates a shared understanding that the City and its partners in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors will work to "conserve Somerville's great residential neighborhoods, enhance our funky squares and commercial corridors, and transform opportunity areas on the eastern and southern edges of Somerville."

THE SOMERVISION NUMBERS

- 30,000 New Jobs
- 125 Acres of New Public Space
- 6,000 New Dwelling units
- 1,200 New Affordable Units
- 50% Trips by Non-Automobile

The SomerVision Map is closely tied to the SomerVision Numbers, a series of aspirational targets for job creation, housing development, and open space improvement. The SomerVision Steering Committee advocated to include these aspirational yet achievable performance measures so that progress can be tracked over time.

SomerVision sets out a course of action that will help make Somerville an even more exceptional place to live, work, play, and raise a family and provides us all with a guide for future growth and development in the City. To implement SomerVision, we must do further planning that translates city-wide goals, policies, and objectives down to every neighborhood, main street, and station-area across the city.

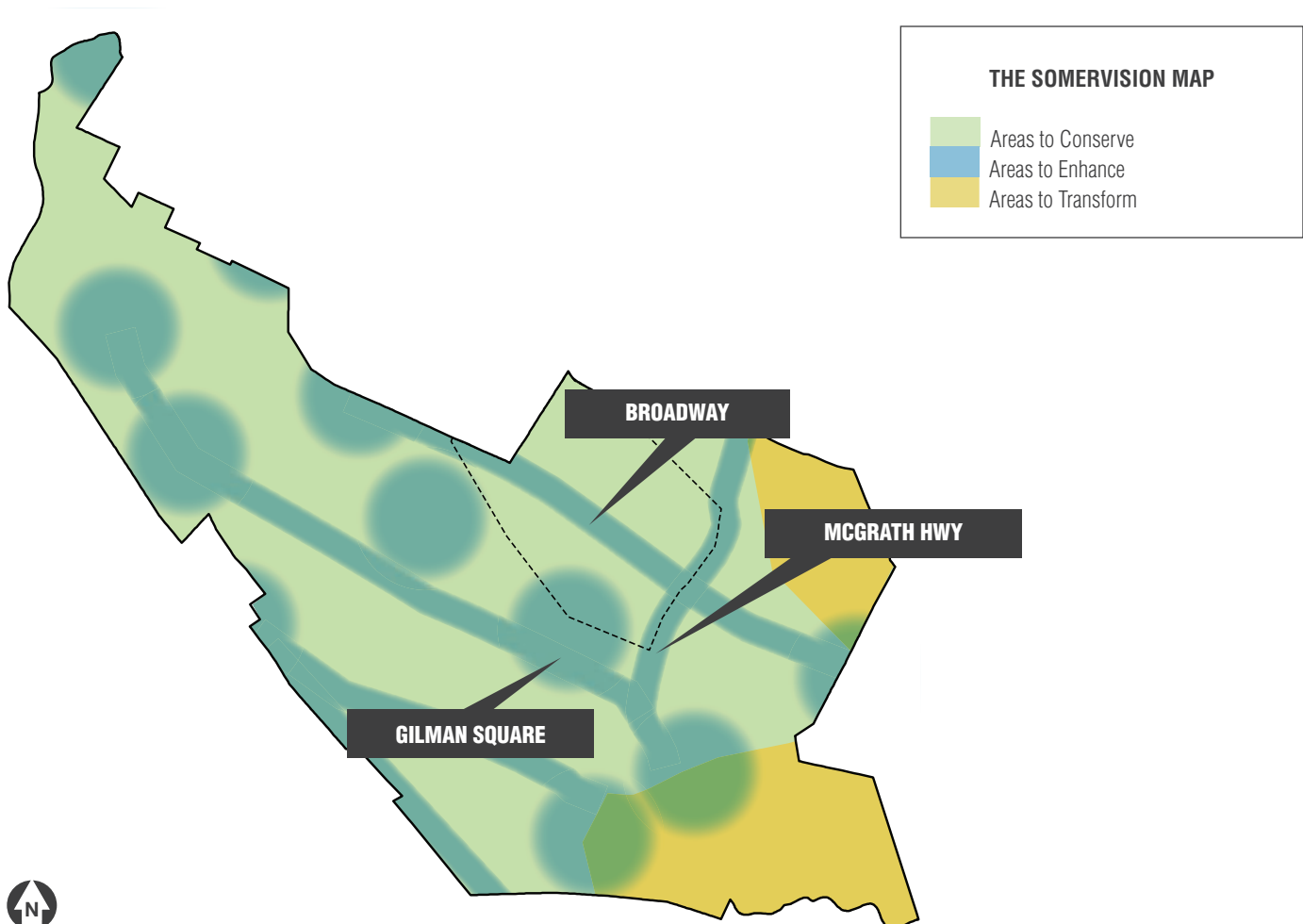
NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING

SomerVision calls for design-based area plans for each neighborhood, station area, and special district across the city. These plans focus at a level of detail that is not possible in a city-wide plan. They also help inform the city-wide zoning overhaul.

Somerville's neighborhood planning efforts are unique in the way they engage the community. They are built upon a collaborative process in which community participants, city staff, and consultants work together

to identify and prioritize policies and development strategies. In the past, planning has too often relied on a model of "decide, announce, and defend," where consultants decide about the future of a community, present it in a meeting to the public and seek to defend their position. The Somerville by Design process flips traditional planning on its head, with a focus on "outreach, dialogue, decide, and implement." The process involves interactive meetings and quick feedback loops; ideas and plans are constantly refined to reflect community input.

To date The Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development has published plans for the Lowell Street Station Area, Gilman Square, and Union Square - all along the future Green Line Extension corridor. Planning efforts and/or plan documentation is in process for the Inner Belt and Brickbottom, East Somerville, and Davis Square neighborhoods.



WHAT IS A NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN?

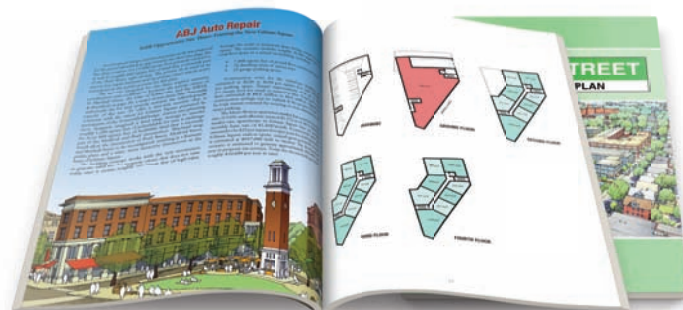
SomerVision's Ground Game

The idea to carry out planning at a smaller scale than an entire city or town began in the late 1900's. This type of focused planning is typically done at the neighborhood level, regardless of its many names - local area planning, specific planning, etc. Although neighborhood boundaries can be hard to define, they are well recognized features of most communities and understood as subareas of a town or city with physical or social characteristics that distinguish one from another.

A neighborhood plan document is the product of the neighborhood planning process. In Somerville, neighborhood plans are adopted by the Planning Board as an amendment and implementation appendix to the SomerVision Comprehensive Plan of the City of Somerville per Chapter 41, Section 81D of Massachusetts General Law. Adoption as part of the Comprehensive Plan means that the vision, goals, and objectives of a neighborhood plan are part of official City policy. Although neighborhood plans are not enforceable like a zoning ordinance, they provide guidance for decision makers and elected officials concerning policy and program proposals that impact the neighborhood.

Coming together as a community to think through challenges and solutions is just as important as publishing a document to record those efforts. The act of neighborhood planning allows members of the community to be proactive, contributing players in shaping the forces of change, instead of merely reacting to change. A plan that expresses a common vision for the future and lays out clear objectives will allow community members and decision makers to provide a timely and well-supported response to proposed projects or programs.

The real value of neighborhood planning lies in establishing relationships, learning about your neighborhood, and understanding local government. Although a planning document is important, the new relationships established during the process, knowledge gained, and activism instigated by the project are pivotal to ensuring that the plan is implemented. An active group of stakeholders can transfer the knowledge gained from the planning process as members of the community come and go over time. This helps advance the goals of the plan. For this reason, neighborhood plans must also change and evolve, while providing strategic programs of action and support to neighborhood residents, property owners, and their supporters.



THE ROLE OF A NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

Broadly, a neighborhood plan takes consideration of the long term future of a neighborhood to identify challenges and opportunities, establish goals and objectives, and put in place a clear path for implementation. Neighborhood plans are an important implementation tool. They rely on public engagement and extensive participation by residents, businesses, and other stakeholders to help translate the city-wide goals of SomerVision to the neighborhood level. To successfully seize new opportunities and address future challenges, the grass-roots energy and shared wisdom of the community members is necessary to successfully achieve the goals and values of SomerVision.

Somerville's neighborhood plans are action-oriented and values based, with a time frame of anywhere from 10 to 30 years. Their primary purpose is to balance city-wide planning objectives with a community driven process that identifies neighborhood priorities and issues and reconciles differences between the two — where they exist. Neighborhood plans can also educate and inform the public, incorporate values into the decision-making process, improve the quality of decision making, effectively allocate government resources, and strengthen the community's social capital and ability to face challenges together.

DEFINING OUR NEIGHBORHOODS

Neighborhood boundaries are notoriously hard to define. In fact, no one ever seems to agree on where they should be. Historically, most of Somerville's neighborhoods formed as areas of housing associated with a node of commercial activity typically referred to as a 'Square'. Some neighborhoods owe their identity to a close relationship with the hilly topography, while others have an independence brought about by hard boundaries created when state highways were built through the eastern side of Somerville. Whatever the boundaries may be, the best way to identify the neighborhoods of Somerville is to ask community members.

In 2015, the website Bostonography.com helped everyday people map the neighborhoods of Boston, Cambridge, and Somerville online by letting them draw their own boundaries and name each neighborhood themselves. The results of this 'crowdsourced' mapping effort were then aggregated to identify the many neighborhoods that community members recognize today. Using these publicly generated neighborhoods, planners from the Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development adjusted the boundaries to closely match census block groups used by the United States Census Bureau. The result is a close representation of the neighborhoods already recognized by the residents that can also be used to inform neighborhood planning efforts carried out across the city.



SOMERVILLE'S NEIGHBORHOODS

- 1 H Ilside
- 2 Teele Square
- 3 Tufts
- 4 Davis Square
- 5 Bowdoin Square
- 6 Porter Square
- 7 Magoun Square
- 8 Spring Hill
- 9 Dock Village
- 10 Ten Hills
- 11 Winter Hill
- 12 Union Square
- 13 Assembly Square
- 14 East Somerville
- 15 Blynton Yards
- 16 Brickbottom
- 17 Inner Belt
- 18 Grand Junction
- 19 North End

A PIECE OF A CITY-WIDE PUZZLE

Implementing SomerVision in Winter Hill

SomerVision provides us with a policy framework that captures our thinking about diversity, community, economy, accessibility, sustainability, and innovation to guide future decisions made in neighborhood planning and capital projects. To achieve all of these aspirations, SomerVision calls for design-based neighborhood plans to guide future development in a way that improves our quality of life. As plans for each neighborhood are created, areas of the city with existing or future rail transit are prioritized because they serve as important economic engines for the city, focal points for community identity, and areas that must adapt to change over time. But, transit rich areas are not the only parts of Somerville seeing reinvestment and with renewed energy from residents, both new and old, neighborhoods like Winter Hill can reflect on the values of SomerVision and discover how their aspirations can fit within the larger citywide context through setting out a plan.

When this plan is published, the City of Somerville will have completed three other neighborhood and/or station area plans since the adoption of SomerVision. The station area plans for Gilman Square and Lowell Street focused on the return of public transit and the likely changes that would result. Gilman Square, located within the Winter Hill neighborhood (and plan area), will likely regain its former status as a neighborhood center, with new mixed use infill restoring what was once a small, but active commercial hub for the neighborhood. The Lowell Street station area is centered deep within the residential fabric of the larger Magoun Square neighborhood (see page 35) and its plan focused on contextual residential infill and creating new opportunities for artists and other creative types. It is unnecessary for the immediate area surrounding the future Lowell Street station to absorb commercial development because two commercial hubs already exist at the edges of the Lowell Street station area: the Highland Avenue main street and Magoun Square itself, a local center. For the Union Square neighborhood plan, planning efforts focused on reinforcing the vibrant local center that already exists today, while setting the stage for the establishment of a new urban employment center in the southeastern parts of the Union Square plan area.

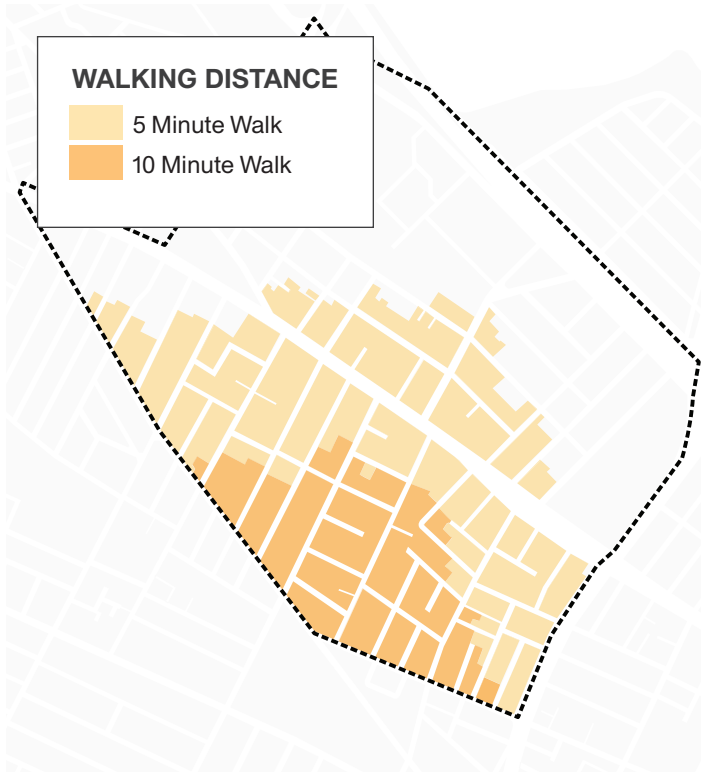
The vision and objectives for each plan mentioned above are customized because each neighborhood is different and helps to achieve the objectives of SomerVision in its own individual way. Every neighborhood in Somerville is better because it is part of the larger whole and no single neighborhood will be able to achieve all of the desires of the larger city. While each of the values articulated by the community in SomerVision are important, each neighborhood gravitates toward specific goals and

objectives in their own way. In Winter Hill, the multitude of comprehensive plan goals coalesced into three important, but not all encompassing, principles to guide planning efforts.

The first principle was to prioritize interaction and involvement with community members not only for the development of the plan, but to help develop the social capital between residents and government that will be necessary to implement the plan's goals and see the neighborhood's aspirations come to fruition. Second, is to develop a pro-business environment and help rejuvenate Broadway in Winter Hill as a commercial main street. Such focus goes beyond opportunistic infill development and includes close involvement between government and small business to help cut red tape and stimulate business development. Less obvious, but perhaps just as important, is to maximize the opportunities available for new business to get off the ground by providing advantageous locations and making small adjustments in our relationship with parking. Business up front, parking in the back, continuous sidewalks, and less curb cuts can go a long way to creating an environment friendly toward neighborhood oriented retail and services, rather than chains and auto-oriented uses. Lastly, is to reconnect Winter Hill to the rest of the city, both physically and culturally. The more that Winter Hill's street system allows residents to move about with ease via multiple modes of travel, the more residents will have access to broader employment opportunities while also inviting visitors to patronize neighborhood businesses and take part in cultural events. Economic mobility and transportation mobility should be understood as going hand in hand.

WHAT DOES 'ENHANCE' MEAN?

SomerVision was groundbreaking because it was Somerville's first-ever comprehensive Master Plan. It was also written with extensive and leading input from residents. Performance metrics called the SomerVision Numbers were included to measure success and the SomerVision Map provides direction about where development interests should be focused. This map steers development primarily into 'transform' areas on the eastern side of the city and, to a lesser extent, to 'enhance' areas in existing squares and along commercial corridors. The remainder of the city is identified as areas to conserve the existing residential context (see page 32 for more about the SomerVision map). The Winter Hill plan area includes both areas to conserve and areas to enhance, but SomerVision does not call for outright transformation in the neighborhood.



WHAT IS TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT?

All patterns of urban development are inherently linked to some form of transportation. Transit Oriented Development (TOD) is a model of land development that directly supports and utilizes investments in public transportation infrastructure (typically rail) in a mutually beneficial way to produce places that are compact, mixed-use, highly walkable, and equitable for people of all ages and incomes. Somerville is pursuing TOD in conjunction with the Green Line Extension project by the MBTA. Planning work in Winter Hill has refocused on walkability and locally serving development after multiple decades of development that was primarily automobile-oriented.

In some ways, planning for transformational redevelopment is easier than planning for enhancement infill in an existing square or along a commercial corridor. SomerVision's call for transformational redevelopment in Union Square and Boynton Yards allowed the City to tap into tools provided by the Center for Transit Oriented Development (CTOD), a non-profit funded by the U.S. Government to promote best practices in transit-oriented development. CTOD created at least seven different types of transit-oriented 'place types' used for planning purposes. Place types provide a common language to compare transit-oriented places at different scales and in different locations and help governments establish development targets to ensure that investments made in transit are as efficient as possible by properly focusing growth around transit nodes. Union Square and Boynton Yards easily correlated with an employment focused *urban center* from CTOD's place types.

The Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development has expanded upon CTOD's place types tool to plan for both enhance and transform areas identified by SomerVision. For areas in Somerville where development is not as closely related to public transit, planners created additional place types including *local centers* like Teele Square that exist where multiple primary streets intersect with one another and main streets like Somerville Avenue where businesses cluster because the street is so well traveled. As mentioned previously, the existing and well recognized part of Union Square was identified as a local center in the Union Square Neighborhood Plan. When combined with CTOD's toolkit of TOD place types, these two additional

place types create a custom set calibrated specifically for Somerville that can be used to guide planning, whether qualitatively or quantitatively.

SOMERVILLE'S PLACE TYPES

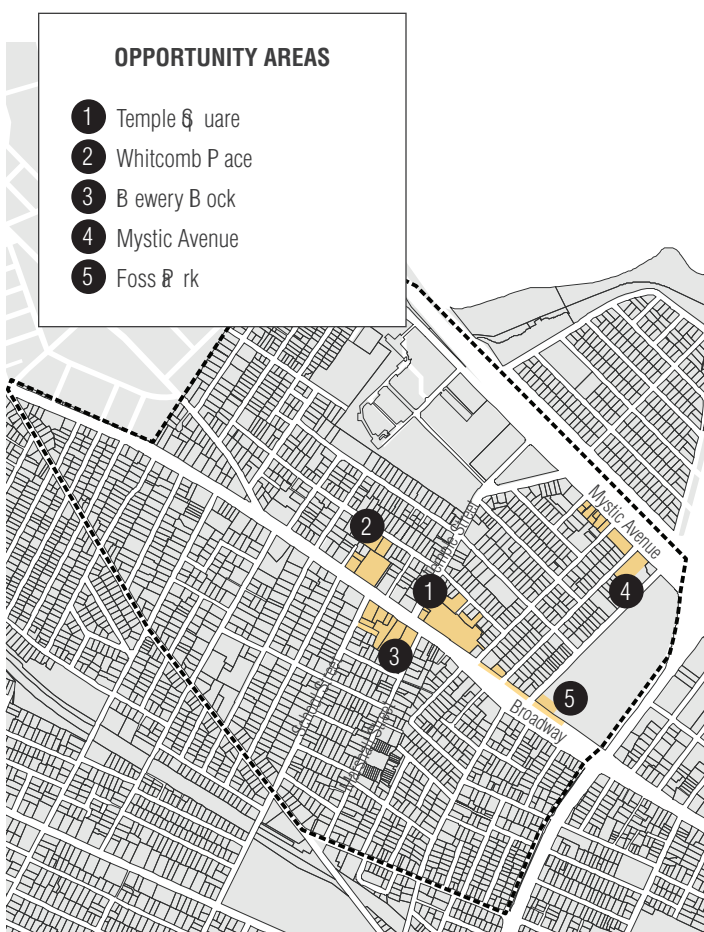
- Urban Center
- Main Street
- Neighborhood Center
- Local Center

Neighborhoods are spatially defined as specific geographic areas within a larger city and functionally as social networks between residents. They develop their names and come into existence through social interaction and historic events that play out over time. Sometimes they are small (Duck Village) and sometimes they are big (Winter Hill). Within the large Winter Hill neighborhood, there are at least two 'place types' for planning purposes. Gilman Square, which has an entire station area plan unto itself, is planned as one of the transit-oriented place types, a *neighborhood center*, in anticipation of the Green Line Extension. Broadway, from Wheatland to Main Streets can be classified as a *main street* place type and is the primary focus of this plan document.

The SomerVision Numbers call for 30,000 jobs, 6,000 housing units, 125 acres of new public space, and 85% of new development to take place in transform areas of the city. The Appendix of SomerVision coarsely estimated that transform areas shown on the SomerVision Map totaled about 292 acres once new streets were accounted for. The Appendix also included an estimate of how new jobs and housing might be distributed across those areas. In contrast, SomerVision does not include a similar

analysis for the remaining 15% of development that is to happen in the enhance areas of the city. However, SomerVision did estimate enhance areas at about 237 acres, only 100 acres less than transform areas. Area for streets is not deducted because they already exist; development in enhance areas happens on existing lots as well. This means about 4,500 new jobs and 900 new housing units would be spread out across the areas to enhance as compared to the concentration of 25,500 jobs and 5,100 housing units in transform areas, which are relatively similar amounts of land (237 for enhance and 292 for transform).

Each design-based neighborhood plan is tasked with taking a hard look at every opportunity site (see map on the right) and running it through an urban design lens to understand its appropriateness for development as commercial, residential, or public space. The character of infill buildings and public spaces are guided by the 'place types' strategy that helps us all understand differences between types of places. Enhancement means understanding an area of the city for the type of place that it is or the type of place it strives to become and then making small tweaks and filling in the gaps to reinforce that place type. The implementation of this type of planning often involves timelines that can take us far beyond the 2030 timeframe of SomerVision. For this reason, it is best to understand how each opportunity for an infill building or new public space identified in this plan might not only contribute towards the SomerVision numbers, but also serve as a piece of a larger city puzzle that goes beyond...for the next comprehensive plan.



REBUILDING NEIGHBORHOOD RETAIL

The Urban Land Institute or ULI is a nonprofit education and research institute with focus on the use of land in order to enhance the total environment. Established in 1936, they frequently facilitate groups of academics, subject experts, and government officials on matters important to land development. Most recently they convened a working group to assemble the Ten Principles for Rebuilding Neighborhood Retail. The following are excerpts from their publication.

1. Great Streets Need Great Champions

Every project needs a champion - someone to initiate the process, fight to ensure it is done right, and follow through to completion.

2. It Takes a Vision

How can neighborhood streets compete when retailing is focused on big-box, endless variety, and entertainment focused shopping? By providing goods and services tailored to the specific needs of each neighborhood in an environment that is convenient, service-oriented, and connected to the urban lifestyles of the neighborhood's residents.

3. Think Residential

Successful retail depends on successful residential neighborhoods. Successful retail needs a growing number of high-quality residents because that is what retailers are looking for. High-quality residents come in all income brackets, residents need to take ownership of their streets and start changing the negatives in their neighborhoods so the environment is right to attract retailers.

4. Honor the Pedestrian

The era when anything developed in an urban neighborhood was considered to be better than nothing is over. When pedestrians are not honored with a pleasant and enjoyable shopping experience, they usually choose competing locations that do a better job of creating such an environment.

5. Parking is Power

Easy accessibility, high visibility, a sense of personal security, and adequate convenient parking are all preconditions for successful retailing. High visibility does not mean surface or street frontage parking. How can communities squeeze enough convenient parking into a pedestrian first environment?

6. Merchandise & Lease Proactively

Retailers are the soul of the neighborhood commercial street, getting right tenant mix and quality will give the street its unique character as well as the diversity of product offerings it needs to compete successfully with more established retail destinations. To achieve this mix, a neighborhood commercial street must be managed and operated like a shopping center. Don't forget, multiple owners and operating in the public realm enormously complicate these tasks.

7. Make It Happen

Neighborhood retailing will not spontaneously regenerate. It takes an aggressive commitment by the public sector in partnership with the private stakeholders to address negative influences before sustainable retail revitalization will occur.

8. Be Clean, Safe, and Friendly

If a neighborhood shopping street is clean, safe, and friendly, customers will be drawn to their favorite shops even though the street as a whole may still be in transition from failure to success. If even one of these characters is absent, some neighborhood residents will continue to shop elsewhere, and few commuters are likely to stop as they drive through.

9. Extend Day into Night

Longer hours equal strong sales, and strong sales define a successful shopping street. It's as simple as that!

10. Manage for Change

Plan for the long term, but manage for constant change. Rebuilding a main street is a long reinvestment process, and market realities will continue to change throughout the ongoing life of the street. If the champion, the city, or the property owners are not prepared to support this dynamic in perpetuity - the project should not be undertaken.

PUBLIC PROCESS IN WINTER HILL

Ready for change

The typical system of municipal planning has sidelined the public for generations, forcing what should be a dialogue about the future into an unproductive, top-down monologue. Critics of the status quo describe it as the “Decide-Announce-Defend” model. SomervillebyDesign is different: it directly involves residents in urban design and economic development decisions facing their neighborhood - early on and in a meaningful way. Our model can be described as “Outreach- Dialogue-Decide-Implement.” This new method for urban planning acknowledges that the best results can be generated when informed residents collaborate with public officials to establish a vision for the future.

SomervillebyDesign helps participants create this vision from the ground up using a series of transparent and collaborative steps:

- Participants identify existing strengths and weaknesses of the neighborhood
- Participants identify examples of future conditions that match their values
- The design team produces a wide variety of design possibilities reflecting participant input
- Designs are edited and critiqued by participants
- Unsatisfactory concepts are deleted based on participant feedback
- Additional rounds of participant review and critique are conducted until consensus is reached
- Final recommendations are described in a plan document and illustrated using high-quality imagery

By documenting the ideas in a visual format, the City and its partners can build and maintain public enthusiasm for projects and programs that are consistent with SomerVision’s framework of conserving Somerville’s great blocks of traditional housing, enhance our funky squares and main streets, and transform under-utilized areas on the southern and eastern edges of the city into new complete neighborhoods. One thing is certain, change is certain. Using Somerville by Design we can orchestrate change together.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Community outreach is part of the entire process including implementation. We used www.somervillebydesign.com, Twitter, Facebook, flyers, email lists, and press releases to reach Winter Hill residents and stakeholders.

Somerville by DESIGN
Monday, October 27th and Tuesday, October 28th

OPEN STUDIO - 328 BROADWAY
9 AM - 8:30 PM
Stop by our Open Studio, where you can speak with Project Team members and get a close-up look at the work in-progress. In addition, topical meetings will be held as follows:

Monday, October 27 th	Tuesday, October 28 th
THE WINTER HILL ECONOMY 11 AM - 12 PM What kinds of businesses and entrepreneurs make Winter Hill great today? What kind of jobs and services are missing? What can be done to bring back the historic “Main Street” feel of the Broadway business district?	SMALL BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE 10-11 AM Broadway and Mystic Avenue have more than 60 small businesses. What issues are important to Winter Hill’s business owners? How can the City and its partner organizations support local business activity?
MYSTIC AVENUE: WINTER HILL’S OTHER “MAIN STREET” 3-4 PM Mystic Avenue is one of the neighborhood’s primary routes for cut-through automobile traffic. It also cuts off access to the Mystic River parklands. Can we imagine a more pleasant street? What would it look and feel like?	FOCUS ON FOOD 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM Winter Hill lost its grocery store in 2007. Today, there is a supermarket across McGrath Highway, a few convenience stores on Broadway, and the Mystic Mobile Market. How can we improve access to healthy and affordable food for neighborhood residents?
LIVING WITH HIGHWAYS 4:30-5:30 PM Interstate 93 brings 250,000 vehicles through Somerville each weekday. McGrath Highway divides Winter Hill from East Somerville and Assembly Square. How can we protect public health, minimize cut-through traffic and improve pedestrian connections?	THE FUTURE OF FOSS PARK 4:30-5:30 PM Foss Park is the largest public open space in Somerville. Is it meeting our community’s needs? If you could change one thing, what would it be? Come sit down with City Parks managers and designers to draw up your ideas for improving Foss Park.
HOUSING CHOICE: AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE? 6-7 PM There is a housing crisis in the Boston region, and Somerville residents are feeling the pressure. Are there enough choices in the market? What can the City do to balance supply and demand? Join us for an important discussion about policies and programs that can help.	GREENING THE NEIGHBORHOOD 6-7 PM People tell us that they want more parks, more trees and less concrete in Winter Hill. How can we create new green spaces? How can street trees, private landscaping, and public parks beautify the neighborhood and improve quality-of-life for residents?
WHERE IS WINTER HILL’S SQUARE? 7:30-8:30 PM Winter Hill residents say they want to create a “square” along Broadway. Where is this possible? What would a new square look and feel like? This will be a fun, visual session, with lots of photos and drawing.	WHAT CAN HAPPEN RIGHT NOW? 7:30-8:30 PM Some projects take many years, but how can we make an impact in 2015? Help the Project Team identify temporary, grassroots demonstration projects that can make a difference in Winter Hill.

Wednesday, October 29th
PIN-UP PRESENTATION
6:00 - 8:00 PM
Join us at the Healey School, 5 Meacham Street, as the Project Team shares what we’ve heard, and asks you to judge the ideas that we’ve worked on together this week.

www.somervillebydesign.com

PROJECT KICKOFF

The kickoff “crowdsourcing” event was held in September 2014. Many residents of Winter Hill attended the launch, a crowdsourcing event intended to help promote the public process and enlist the community in marketing the project.

VISIONING MEETINGS

The visioning meetings attracted roughly fifty residents, community members, and stakeholders. Attendees included many longtime neighborhood activists, as well as lots of folks who are new to community planning.

Interactive group exercises got people talking. First, small groups prepared their own neighborhood maps, using trace paper and magic markers to document where things are working well, and where improvements can be made. The second activity was to build a photo album. Each small group was given the same stack of 37

photographs. The photos showed different types of street scenes and buildings, some from Somerville, and some from other communities. Participants were asked to mark up these photos, highlighting elements of the scene that they liked or didn't like. The main question was: is this scene consistent with your vision for the future of the neighborhood?

DESIGN CHARRETTE

Residents and business owners from Winter Hill filtered through 328 Broadway during the three day charrette that took place in October 2014. While the design team drew plans, the community participated in meetings on different topics, including the Winter Hill economy, food systems, turning infrastructure into assets, and housing. City staff, consultants and stakeholder groups met to discuss their visions and their concerns. Those groups included entrepreneurs and artists, property owners, and small business owners. A pin-up was held on the final

evening of the charrette. This work-in-progress report-out featured ideas for development along the Broadway corridor and amenities for sustainable transit options along Broadway and Mystic Avenue. The community provided the design team with critical feedback that has helped to shape the conversation and the outcomes of the plan. There was a lot of excitement. People don't want to wait!

PLAN OPEN HOUSES

In January 2015, the public was invited back to a Plan Open House to see the latest plans in progress for Winter Hill and neighborhood-wide public space enhancements. The meeting was recapped in June 2015 after the Resistat spring meetings reached newly engaged residents. Since then, the team has been working on documenting this plan.



The graphic features a background image of a street scene with a yellow building and a red sign that reads 'BS LEONE'S'. The text 'Somerville by DESIGN' is prominently displayed in a stylized font, with 'WINTER HILL PLANNING SERIES' in red below it. The graphic is divided into three sections for the planning series events: VISIONING (Sept. 29 at Healey School), CHARRETTE (Oct. 27-29 at 328 Broadway), and OPEN HOUSE (Jan. 15 at Healey School). It also includes the Office of Strategic Planning & Community Development logo and contact information for Joseph A. Curtatone, Mayor.

Somerville *by* DESIGN
WINTER HILL PLANNING SERIES

VISIONING
SEPT. 29
Healey School

CHARRETTE
OCT. 27-29
328 Broadway

OPEN HOUSE
JAN. 15
Healey School

OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Joseph A. Curtatone, Mayor

[@somerbydesign](https://twitter.com/somerbydesign) www.somervillebydesign.com facebook.com/somervillebydesign

Tactical Solutions - Why Wait?

Construction whether new buildings, parks, or streetscapes take a long time. Hopefully not Big Dig sort of time but longer than a kitchen renovation. Residents don't and shouldn't have to wait to see changes in their neighborhood. Short term, low cost, and incremental changes are often called tactical urbanism. At the Winter Hill charrette presentation, several ideas were presented: street festivals, markets, new squares in additional rights-of-way, and bike boulevards.

Street festivals like SomerStreet and Artbeat close streets for a limited amount of time to welcome pedestrians, vendors, with often invited artists and musicians. Who cares that Winter Hill is on a hill? A hill can't stop Somerville's innovative spirit. Similar options include semi-permanent markets, like a fair

weather market near Foss Park in additional rights-of-way. The market area is painted and retailers use trucks, shipping container, and other options that allow them to close in off-hours. In front of the businesses at Main Street and Broadway, a painted plaza can be a place to enjoy lunch and will also shorten crossing distances and reduce the speed of traffic.

The other big idea was improving cycling connections through Winter Hill. Jaques and Heath street can be used as a paired (since they're both one-ways) bike boulevards. Marshall Street could also be used to connect Broadway to Gilman Square. Bike boulevards use signage and paint to welcome cyclists and slow traffic. This is similar to the neighborways concept on Madison, Willoughby, and Montrose Streets



(somerillestreets.com).

In the fall of 2015, the City partnered with Team Better Block (TBB) for a project on Winter Hill to help with our planning efforts. TBB works with cities, developers, and stakeholders to create quick, inexpensive, high-impact changes that improve and revitalize underused properties and highlight the potential for creating great urban places.

The first meeting was the most attended Winter Hill meeting to date! Over 60 people gathered at the future Winter Hill Brewing Company at 328 Broadway. The first decision point, whether there was enough momentum for a Better Block project – boy did attendees answer that question definitively...YES!

The second meeting refined ideas and gathered more

residents in preparation for a December event. People thought we were crazy, an event in December? What if it snowed? How was this all going to come together?

On December 12 and 13th the neighborhood with the help of TBB and the City threw a Winter Festival at 320 Broadway. The first day of the festival was after dark – a rarity for Somerville events. Several dj's performed and there were drinks from Daddy Jones. Sunday there was a live music performance and a space park. Both days had food trucks and vendors. There was more throughout the neighborhood too. The city piloted the first contraflow bike lane from Pearl Street to Broadway, a crosswalk on the west side of Temple and Broadway intersection, and a bump out/parklet at the bus stop at 328 Broadway. viii. The event was a success. So what's next? It's up to Winter Hill residents.









WINTER HILL A VISION



WHAT'S OLD IS NEW AGAIN

Broadway as a Main Street

Throughout the planning process, the community wanted Broadway to regain its sense of place as a main street destination. Through the analysis conducted by Urban Advisors as part of the planning team, Broadway does not have a demographic hurdle in creating a vibrant main street, like a lack of density, but has a design problem. Winter Hill is stuck between being competing physical forms, a strip mall and a main street.

The Winter Hill community identified their love of the neighborhood for both its historic qualities and the sense of community, which are qualities that should be maintained. However, creating a vibrant main street cannot be achieved through just a streetscape project to make Broadway more walkable. Broadway's existing retail storefronts are aging and lack modern amenities. The main street also lacks clustering or a density of complementary uses that attract shoppers looking for efficiency.

In addition, Broadway currently lacks daytime traffic that helps to support a main street during the day when residents are at work. There is only 50,000 square feet of office space available and it's currently 100% occupied. Winter Hill, because of location and transit access, is not anticipated to be a commercial center like Assembly or Union Square. However, Winter Hill is a great location

for the professional service markets. These are architects, attorneys, and other small businesses that occupy second floor commercial spaces or storefronts just off the main street. In addition, these uses have a low impact and do not have the same design requirements as 'Class A' office space, therefore they are more easily incorporated into mixed-use buildings that have retail, commercial, and residential uses.

The following pages address the design problems associated with recreating Broadway as a vibrant main street. The first is implementing the City's Complete Streets ordinance on Broadway to create a pedestrian, cycling, and transit-friendly environment. The second is using opportunity sites to stitch retail back together. Last but equally important is to bring along the community, stakeholders, and City officials in the long process of Broadway's renaissance. For Broadway to succeed, Winter Hill needs to offer an experience which is the primary reason people visit locales to shop. A positive environment that offers an authentic experience and a sense of place is valued more highly than a commodity experience with low prices.

MAIN STREET SUCCESS STORY

The Jefferson East neighborhood in Detroit has been the focus of over 20 years of hard work by business owners and residents with government support to restore the main street that connect the five districts of the Jefferson corridor: Lafayette Park, Rivertown, the Villages, the Marina District, and Historic Jefferson-Chalmers.

Since 2009, \$1 billion has been invested in the neighborhood. To be in the know in the neighborhood, connect with Jefferson East Inc. (JEI), a partnership organization and collaborative catalyst for economic development among the districts. JEI works to increase the viability of business districts and density of residential neighborhoods while creating an inviting sense of place. They do this through innovative programming and community events and by creating and maintaining a clean, safe, and green environment along East Jefferson Avenue.

Two years ago, the district finally hit a tipping point, interest in the neighborhood was on the uptick. Seven new businesses have opened in last year. The City government is expanding a streetscape project that will expand protected bicycle lanes and landscaping. The area is poised to take advantage from spillover from other neighborhoods too. As Detroit is changing after the Great Recession and other fairly devastating political and economic events, the areas with walkable neighborhoods are seeing the most comeback and Jefferson East is ready to welcome everyone.



Photo from Model D Media

Left: An implemented streetscape improvement project in the Jefferson East neighborhood.

Bottom Left: A new record store opened in a historic building along the Jefferson East corridor.

Bottom Right: The expanded context of the street the record store opened on. Jefferson East is also struck between walkable urbanism and strip mall.



Photo from Crain's Detroit



Photo from Crain's Detroit

IMPROVE WALKABILITY

Connect, connect, connect

Winter Hill, by namesake and nature, already has one obstacle. The hill is not for the faint of heart, it challenges pedestrians and takes the breath out of cyclists. The only people that don't mind are the ones in cars who stomp on the gas to get to the top even quicker. To revive Winter Hill's sense of place, the connectivity for sustainable modes has to be improved. By welcoming a variety of users, the area will attract more residents out to enjoy the main streets. The redesign of Broadway is an important element of this plan (see page 66).

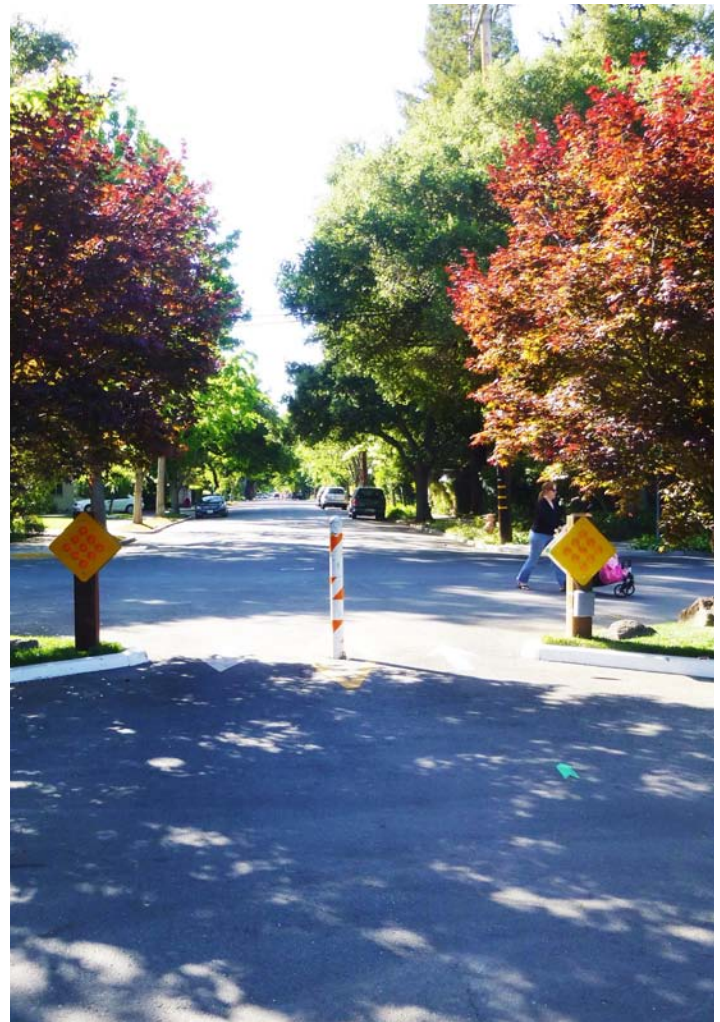
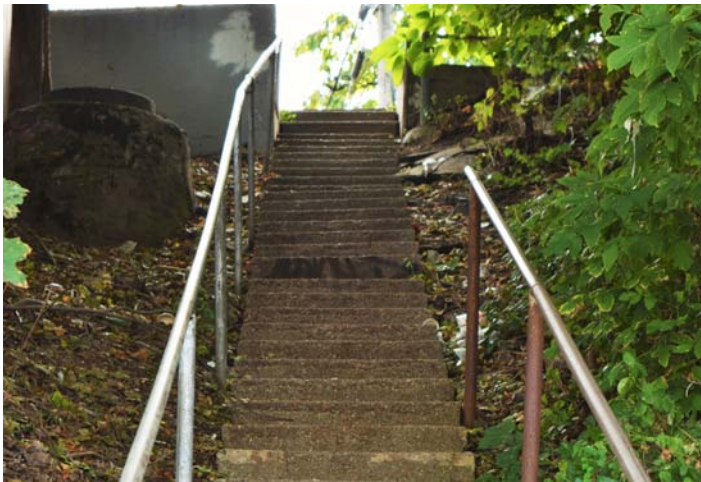
Due to the grade of the hill, especially on the backside, Winter Hill has some unique connectivity issues. There are stairs at Fremont Street, two at Healey School, and two at the separated area of Broadway at the top of the hill. Only the Broadway stairs have an associated ramp. There's also a secret sidewalk connecting Mount Vernon Avenue to Mystic Avenue. Hindering connectivity is the fence at East Albion Street at the city line. The history of this is unknown. A survey would determine if it is on Somerville or Medford property.

It's important to embrace these connections (or open them up) to improve pedestrian access throughout the neighborhood. Many are narrow, poorly kept, and not lighted. Perception of the stairs and connections will start to change with every improvement.

Another connection that could should be considered is from Memorial Road to Jaques Street through SHA property. This route would be 1,000 feet to Broadway, 800 feet shorter than the current route and put the Mystic Housing development within the ideal quarter mile walking distance from Broadway.

Furthermore, connecting residents to the assets immediately outside the plan area is important. The Mystic River mixed-use path leads directly to Assembly Square.

Left Top: The stairs at Fremont Street. Right: A pedestrian and cycling passage, sometimes called a bikeway. Left Bottom: The fence prohibiting access at East Albion Street.





Above: Using the 2013 Pedestrian Accessibility Study, an input in the Neighborhood Streets Reconstruction Program, surveyed and catalogued existing sidewalk conditions. Sidewalks needing repair were ranked based on their proximity to a train station (existing and proposed) and their proximity to a high pedestrian parcel.

Below: Using the 2013 Pedestrian Accessibility Study, an input in the Neighborhood Streets Reconstruction Program, existing sidewalk ramps were surveyed and catalogued. Ramps needing repair to comply with MAAB standards were identified.



SLOW DOWN

Twenty is Plenty

Historically, speed limits on unposted streets are set at 30 mph by Massachusetts state law. To decrease the speed limit, municipalities are required to get approval from MassDOT and the Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV). Before establishing a new speed limit, an engineering study is required to monitor the prevailing speed of motorists so that a speed limit that is ‘safe, reasonable, and self-enforcing’ can be established.

In these studies, traffic engineers use the actual speed that 85 percent of drivers travel at or below to set the speed limit. This ‘85th percentile’ metric is used as a starting point for setting rational speed limits because the actual physical design of a street and a driver’s perception of safety greatly impacts the actual speed we feel comfortable driving and is considered to be the maximum safe operating speed for that location.

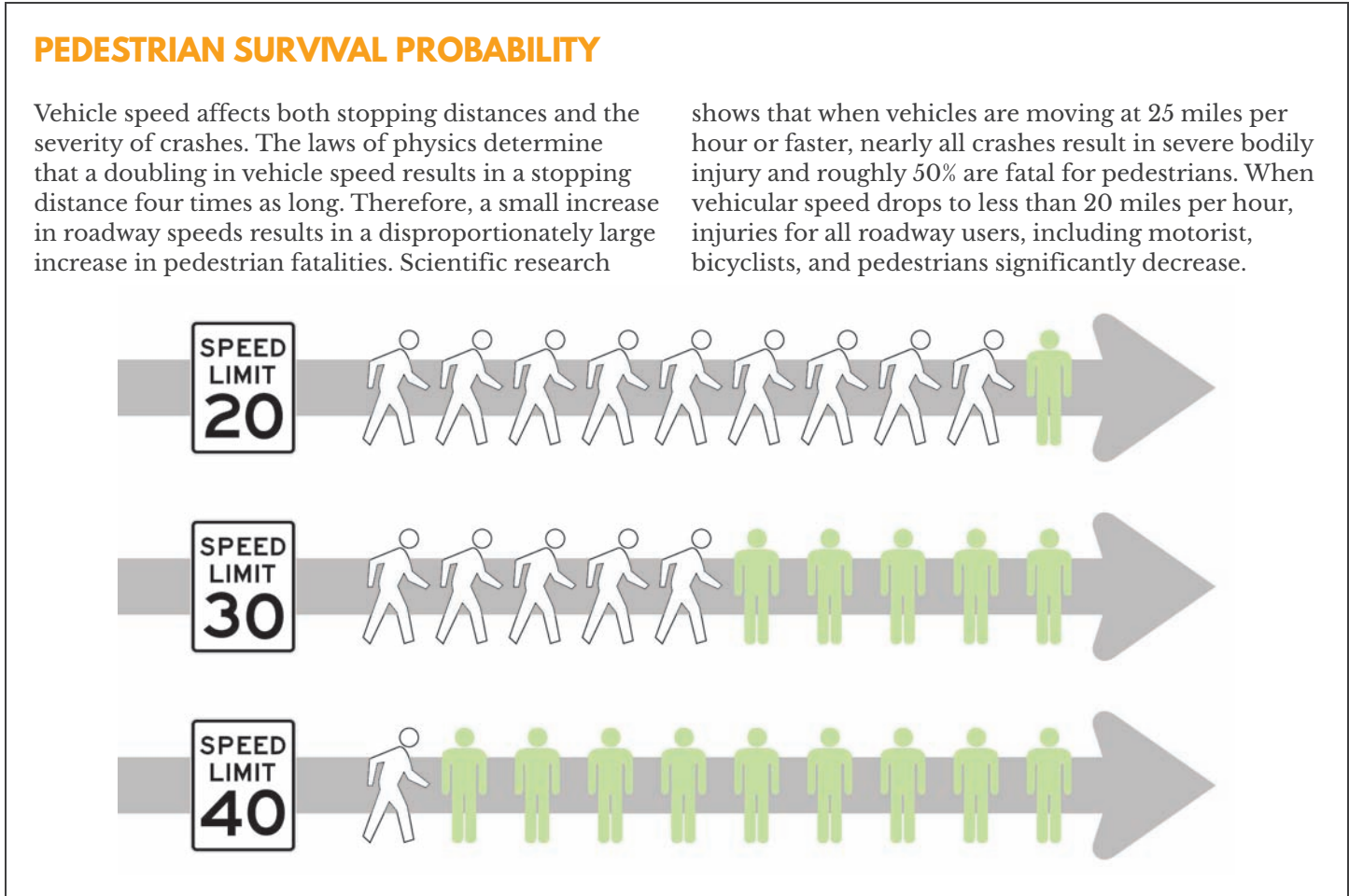
In Spring 2016, the state changed the law (called the Municipal Modernization Bill) to allow municipalities to reduce their unposted speed limit to 25 mph without the process described above. Somerville’s reduced unposted speed limit, after taking the necessary local legislative

steps, will take effect on November 7, 2016. To reduce the speed limit further on a street will require the same process as before.

There are two other initiatives in Somerville aimed at making the streets safer for all users. The first is the designation of “safety zones” that would reduce the speed limit around parks, senior centers, and other civic uses to 20 mph. This was enabled by the Municipal Modernization bill and is currently being studied by OSPCD.

The second initiative is the neighborhood traffic calming program. Petitions for street calming can be submitted to the Traffic and Parking department (a map of current petitions is shown on the facing page). The street is studied for speed, volume, and physical design characteristics by the OSPCD division of Transportation and Infrastructure and Traffic and Parking in order to make a recommendation for traffic calming measures.

Continuing these initiatives will make Somerville streets safer for users of all abilities.





Above: The map shows current petition streets for traffic calming within the Winter Hill plan area.

Bottom: The map below shows places that could potentially have a safety zone (20 mph) around them within the plan area.



Mind the Gap

Curb cuts are breaks in the curblane that allow for the passage of vehicles onto private land. The simplest and most narrow are for private driveways. Other curbcuts are wider and allow two-way traffic into parking lots.

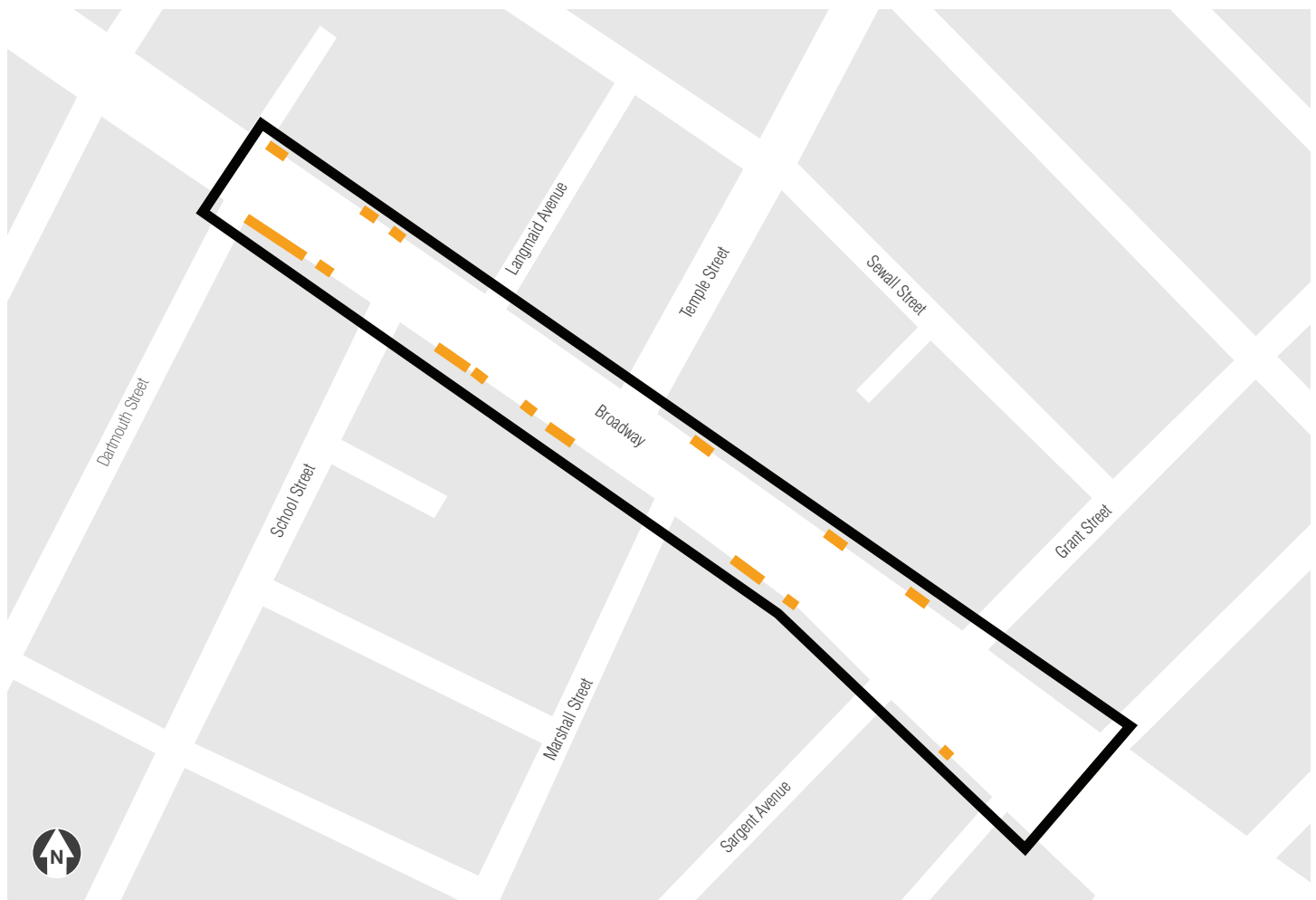
Each curbcut degrades the pedestrian and cycling experience for two reasons. The first is that where there is a curbcut, there is not an active first floor retail use. This space could be used to offer a neighborhood serving use! The second is that each curbcut increases potential conflicts between motor vehicles and pedestrians and cyclists. Curb cuts are a major source of vehicle pedestrian-bicycle conflicts and induce congestion on busy thoroughfares due to left turning vehicles.

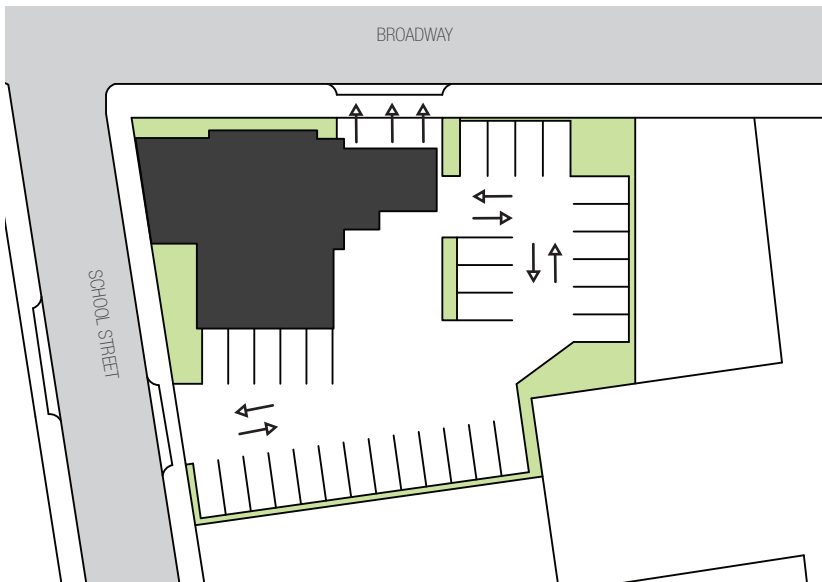
One comparison of the effects of curbcuts on walkability is the difference between Highland Avenue and Elm Street in Davis Square. During the Public Space Public Life survey conducted in the spring of 2015, Highland Avenue had only 39% of the pedestrian and cycling traffic over the course of the entire day when compared to Elm Street. Elm Street has no curbcuts. Highland Avenue has

three. When compiled with other features like uses and parking frontage, Elm Street is a preferred retail street to Highland Avenue because it is better designed for people.

When properties are redeveloped, OSPCD works to improve the streetscape by limiting or reducing curbcuts, especially on main streets like Broadway. But what happens in the meantime? The City can reduce curbcuts for the purpose of efficiency and safety. By limiting driveway curb cuts, it would reduce the frequency of conflicts, providing a safer walking environment. OSPCD, Transportation & Infrastructure, and DPW should work collaboratively with landowners and tenants to close some existing curbcuts to improve the experience for pedestrian and bicyclists.

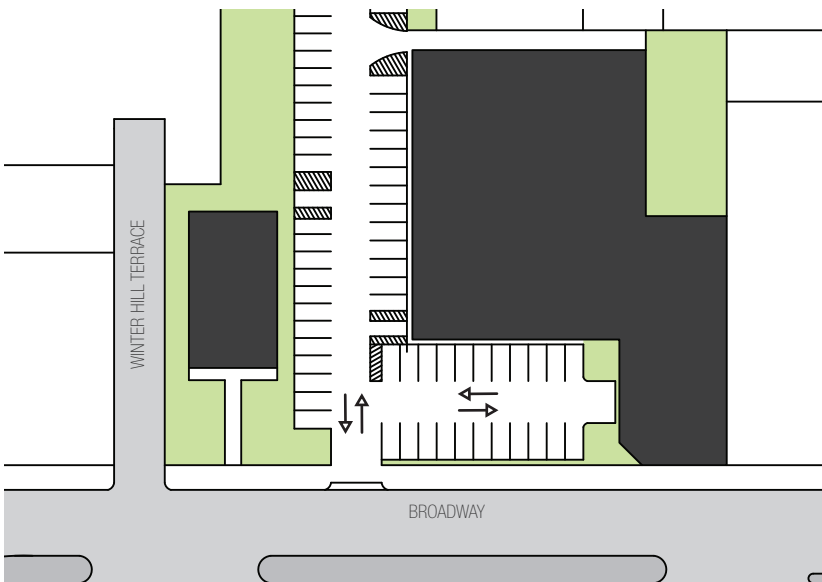
Many properties have multiple curbcuts on Broadway. The graphic below shows that abundance of curbcuts, 16% of the Broadway frontage. The examples on the right show that, through collaboration, access and parking can be maintained and even improved. It's a win-win recipe for property owners and residents of Winter Hill.





CITIZENS BANK

Citizen's Bank has three curbcuts. There is one entrance/exit each on School Street and Broadway. There is an exit only from the drive through on Broadway. There are 26 parking spaces as currently laid out. If the entrance/exit curb cut on Broadway is closed, the parking can be rearranged to accommodate 31 parking spaces and more landscaped area. In this arrangement the curbcut on School Street is shifted to better align with the drive aisle of the existing parking layout. If additional parking is not desired, there can be more landscaping. Closing the curbcut allows for an additional two street trees and metered parking spaces.



CAREWELL/WALGREENS/ WINTER HILL BANK

337-341 Broadway has three curbcuts, all on Broadway. There is one entrance/exit curb cut, one entrance only, and one exit only curb cut. The entrance/exit curb cut is to maintain a left turn on Broadway that might not be necessary since U-turns are allowed at Dartmouth Street. If the entrances and exits to the parking area were consolidated into one curb cut, the parking area is much more efficient. The front area currently parks 20 cars, this layout is 25 cars. It also allows the area in front of Carewell to be either landscape area or a plaza. Fifty feet of curb cut closed would also give opportunity for more street trees and four metered parking spaces.



WINTER HILL BANK

Winter Hill Bank currently has three curbcuts. Of the curbcuts on Broadway, one is entrance only and the other is exit only. The curb cut on School Street is to access garaged parking below the parking accessed on Broadway. The Winter Hill Bank has a drive-through window accessed from Broadway. If the entrance and exit curb cuts were consolidated on Broadway, it maintains access to the banking window and the same parking as before, 10 spaces. The landscaped area is increased as well as opportunity for on-street parking, street furniture, or street trees.

IMPROVE BIKABILITY

Consider Every Type of Cyclist

The only way to increase cycling rates in the plan area is to focus on all types of cyclists. Sure, the hill can be a hindrance too but the difference between a car and cyclist on Winter Hill is that one maintains the same speed. To most cyclists, getting passed by a car going at a much faster speed is incredibly unnerving. By addressing all cyclists' (or potential cyclists') concerns the hill will be less of an obstacle.

FOCUSING ON BICYCLING COMFORT

In 2005, the Transportation Department for the City of Portland, OR was the first to classify the different types of cyclists that exist within a population: the Strong and Fearless (<1%), Enthused and Confident (7%), Interested but Concerned (60%), and No Way, No How (33%). Since then, their research has change the way towns and cities plan for cyclists across the United States.

Strong and Fearless cyclists are the smallest in number but the strongest riders and not deterred by conditions in any way. Enthused and Confident cyclists, a small portion

of any population, are comfortable sharing the roadway with automobiles, but they prefer their own facilities. This demographic is the primary reason cycling has grown over the last 10 years. By adding facilities, cities have been able to tap into this group. The Interested but Concerned group is the largest in number and is curious about cycling. They are mostly riding bicycles for recreational purposes. The last group, No Way, No How, is self-descriptive, but hurdles to cycling are not only based on attitude and ability, but topography and weather can also be a deterrent for many. Although the differences are not hard and fast, these categories have proven to be a fair representation of the spectrum of riders from within any given population.

No matter the category, surveys have found that the number one reason that many people do not consider bicycling as a valid means of transportation is because they are afraid to be on the same roadway as automobiles. Achieving SomerVision's goal for 50% of trips to be via transit, cycling, or walking will require making our streets, wherever we can, as safe and

NAVIGATING STAIRS IN SEATTLE

When you think of hilly places, Seattle might not be one of them. However, stairs are a part of everyday urban life. It's not until you're mobility inspired, have a shopping cart, stroller, bike or the like that you think of them as an obstacle! Many bike friendly cities have started to install runnels for bike access up and down stairways. Runnels are narrow channels on the side of a stairway that fit bike wheels. Bikes can be pushed up (or guided down) the stairwell instead of carried by the bike owner. This is a successful install in Seattle that meets accessibility and cyclist requirements. Images from Seattle Bike Blog and Seattle Department of Transportation.



STRONG AND FEARLESS (<1%)



Comfort Level

- Identifies as a 'cyclist' and riding is a strong part of their identity
- Generally undeterred by roadway or weather conditions
- Comfortable without bike lanes
- Commutes by bicycle to work

ENTHUSED AND CONFIDENT (7%)



Comfort Level

- Comfortable sharing the roadway with automobile traffic
- Prefers operating in dedicated bicycle facilities
- Attracted to streets that work well for bicycling
- Appreciates bicycle lanes and bicycle boulevards

INTERESTED BUT CONCERNED (60%)



Comfort Level

- Likes to ride a bicycle, but is afraid to ride among automobiles
- Prefers quiet neighborhood streets, fully protected bikeways, and off-street paths
- Rarely ventures onto arterial streets
- Concerned about potential injury

NO WAY, NO HOW (33%)



Comfort Level

- Currently not interested in bicycling at all
- Uncomfortable on a bicycle

comfortable for the Interested but Concerned group of the population. To tap into this largest group of potential cyclists, Somerville will need to make transformative investments in bicycle infrastructure.

During Toronto's 2014 elections, an activist-led campaign focused many candidates on a meaningful transportation policy to create what international walking and bicycling advocate Gil Penalosa calls a #MinimumGrid. This initiative is focused on making biking a viable transportation option by creating a fully connected grid of protected bikeways on busy streets and bicycle boulevards through quiet neighborhoods. Penalosa encourages cities to move past the 'nice-to-haves' like signage, maps, bike racks, and shelters that make it nicer to cycle for the 1 to 2 percent of people that are already biking. The nice-to-haves won't deliver the broader public benefits that come from making cycling mainstream.

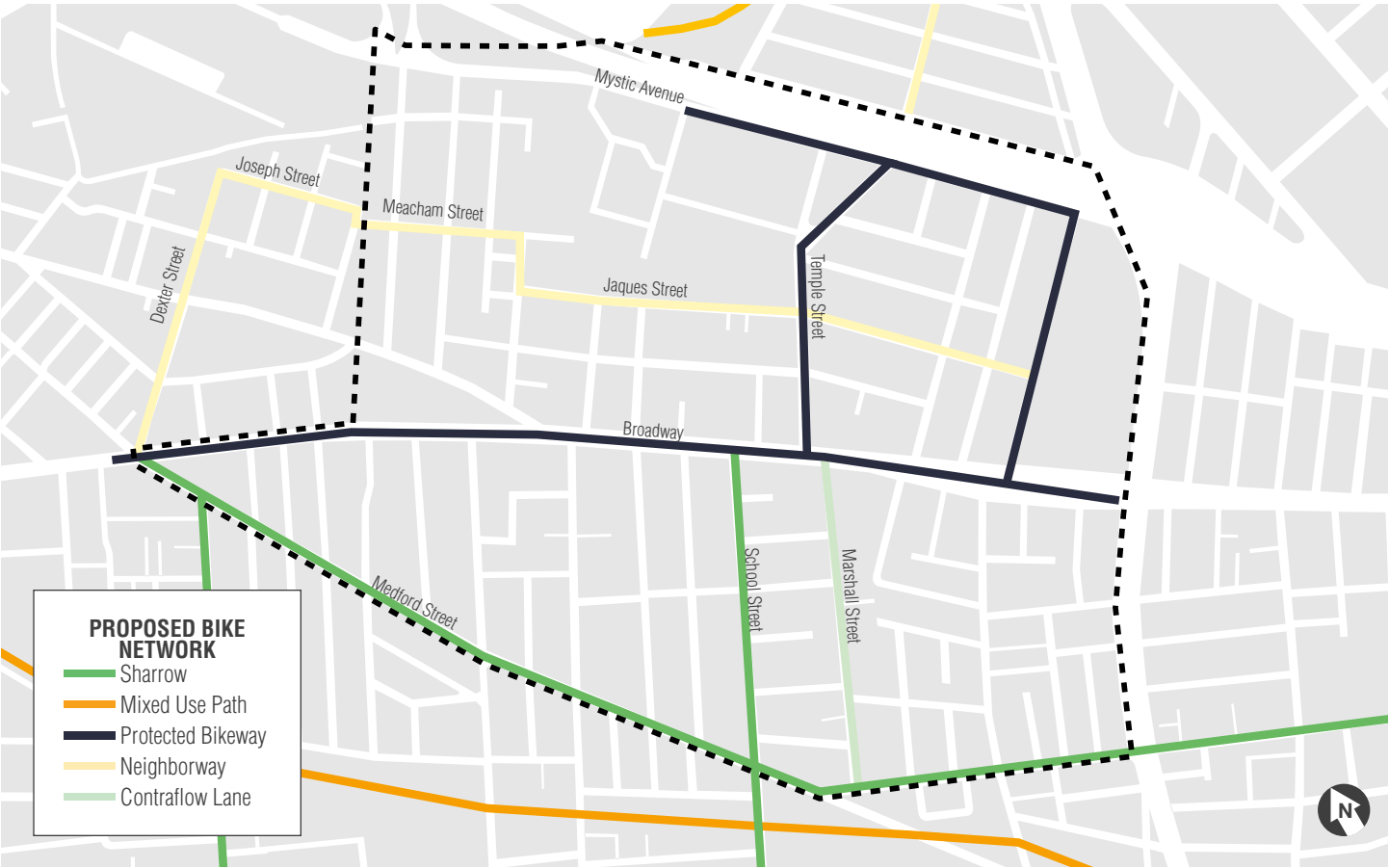
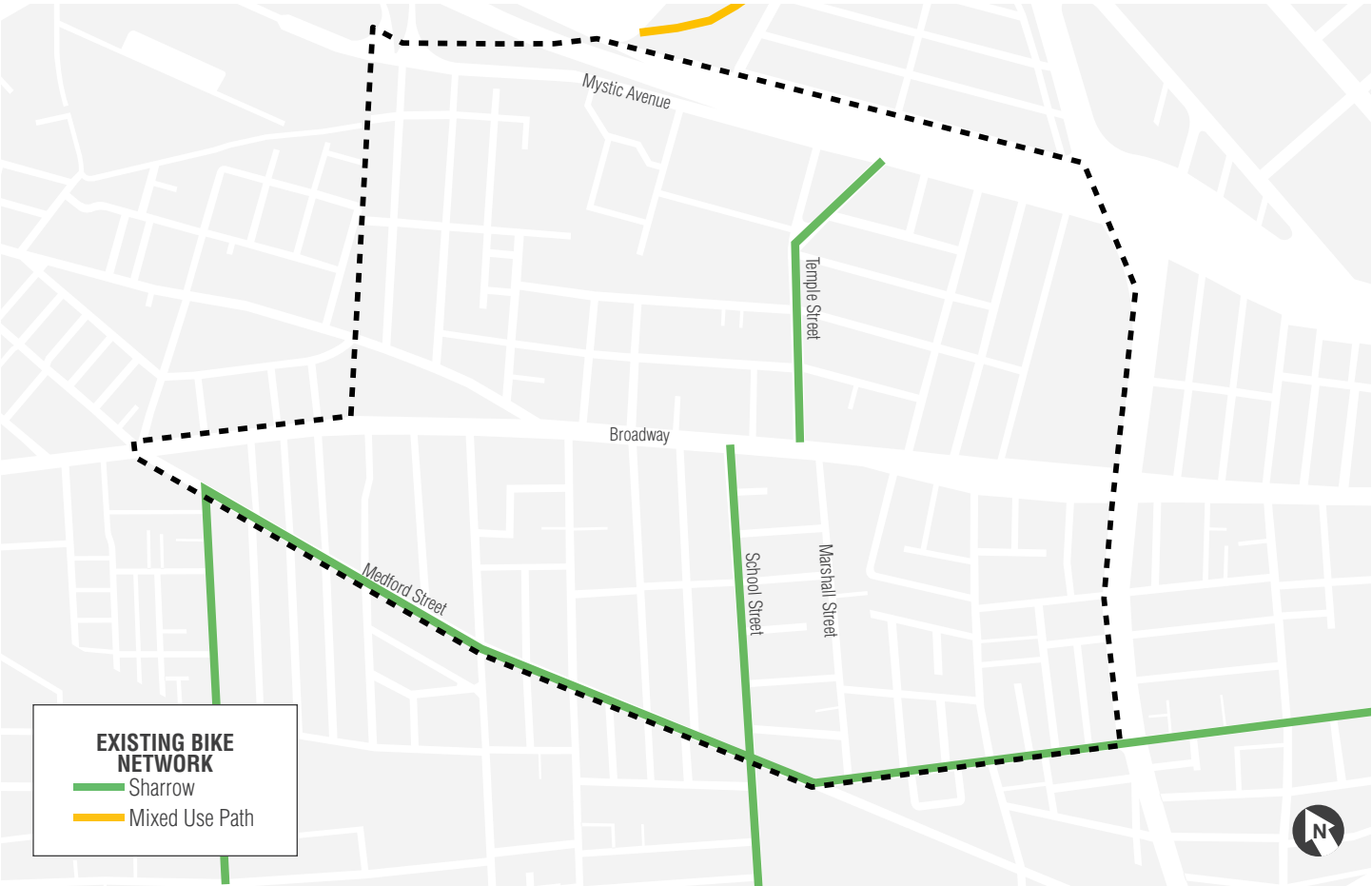
Protected bikeways are a category of bicycle facility that separates bicyclists from motorists. They can be at road or sidewalk level and separation can be created in a variety of ways including parked cars, plastic posts, raised curbs, or even planters. The means of separation can even change along a route depending on the width available and the design of intersections.

In 2016, three cyclists have been killed in crashes with motor vehicles in Somerville and Cambridge. No longer

is a ghost bike ceremony honor enough for those that have lost their lives. It is time for action to be taken to improve our infrastructure so that cyclists are given safe routes. The Boston Globe's opinion piece by Tim Snyder, a freelance writer and bike commuter, is a good reminder that we are all equal.

"I don't want to die, and you don't want to kill me. But you wouldn't know it by watching how we behave on the roads - me on two wheels and you on four, six, or 18. At times, we forget the precarious nature of our situations. How long it takes to stop a thousand-pound vehicle (six car lengths at 30 mph). How easy it is to fall from a 20-pound rubber-shod tightrope. ... I don't want to die, and you don't want to kill me - we have to see ourselves in one another. The seconds we give each other on the road can be easily forgotten over a lifetime, but the seconds we take in moments of inattention or impulse can last forever."

Not every street in Somerville is wide enough for a protected bikeway, but sharrows and even bike lanes will not encourage riders afraid of riding along side automobiles to change their travel behavior. The maps to the right identify the existing bicycling network and streets in the plan area with enough existing right-of-way width to accommodate a bikeway facility of one type or another.



BIKING TO GILMAN SQ STATION

Connecting Desire Lines

A desire path is the term for a trail worn down by foot traffic to create a shorter distance between two points, a desire line is similar but might be on paper or in a place where a path cannot be worn. People innately want to get to where they're going in the fastest way possible so desire paths exist everywhere.

Where paving already exists, a desire line isn't necessarily as obvious because it cannot make a path. This is the case for connectivity to the Gilman Square Station for cyclists. The north south streets connecting the Winter Hill neighborhood are fairly consistent and regularly spaced. However, many have been converted to one-way which makes it illegal for cyclists to bike in the wrong direction. Cyclists that bike the wrong way are called salmons, the name harkening from salmon's migration patterns.

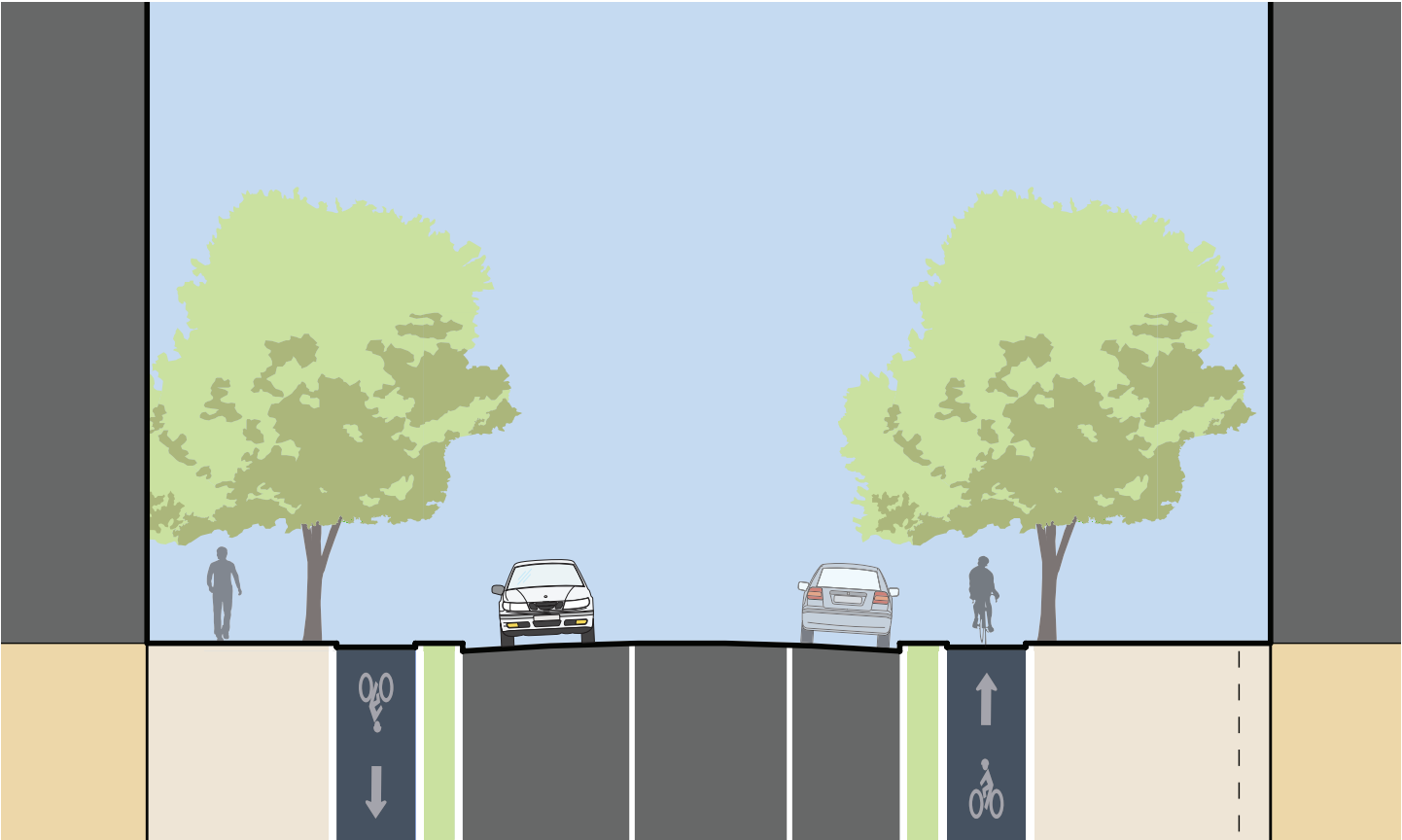
In Somerville, cyclists can bike on the sidewalk with the exception of business districts and parks. Even where biking is permitted on sidewalks, for many cyclists this is not preferred because they want to respect pedestrian's space and using curb ramps at street crossings might not exist or be in an ideal location.

The only condition that permits cyclists to legally bike in the opposite direction is called a contraflow lane. These are signed and painted lanes in accordance to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. During the Winter Hill Better Block in December 2015, the neighborhood was able to pilot a contraflow lane on Marshall Street, the most direct connection to Gilman Square Station that happens to also be one-way. Marshall Street allows parking on the odd side and is fairly wide for a one-way street at 23'. One-way streets only need to be 18' when there is parking on one side.

During the event, speed was monitored on Marshall Street. Due to the reduced lane width, vehicle speed reduced on average by 1.1 miles per hour, an added benefit. The Division of Transportation and Infrastructure as part of OSPCD should investigate the desire lines connecting Winter Hill cyclists and Gilman Square Station. Contraflow lanes are one option to provide an efficient and safe route to the station.

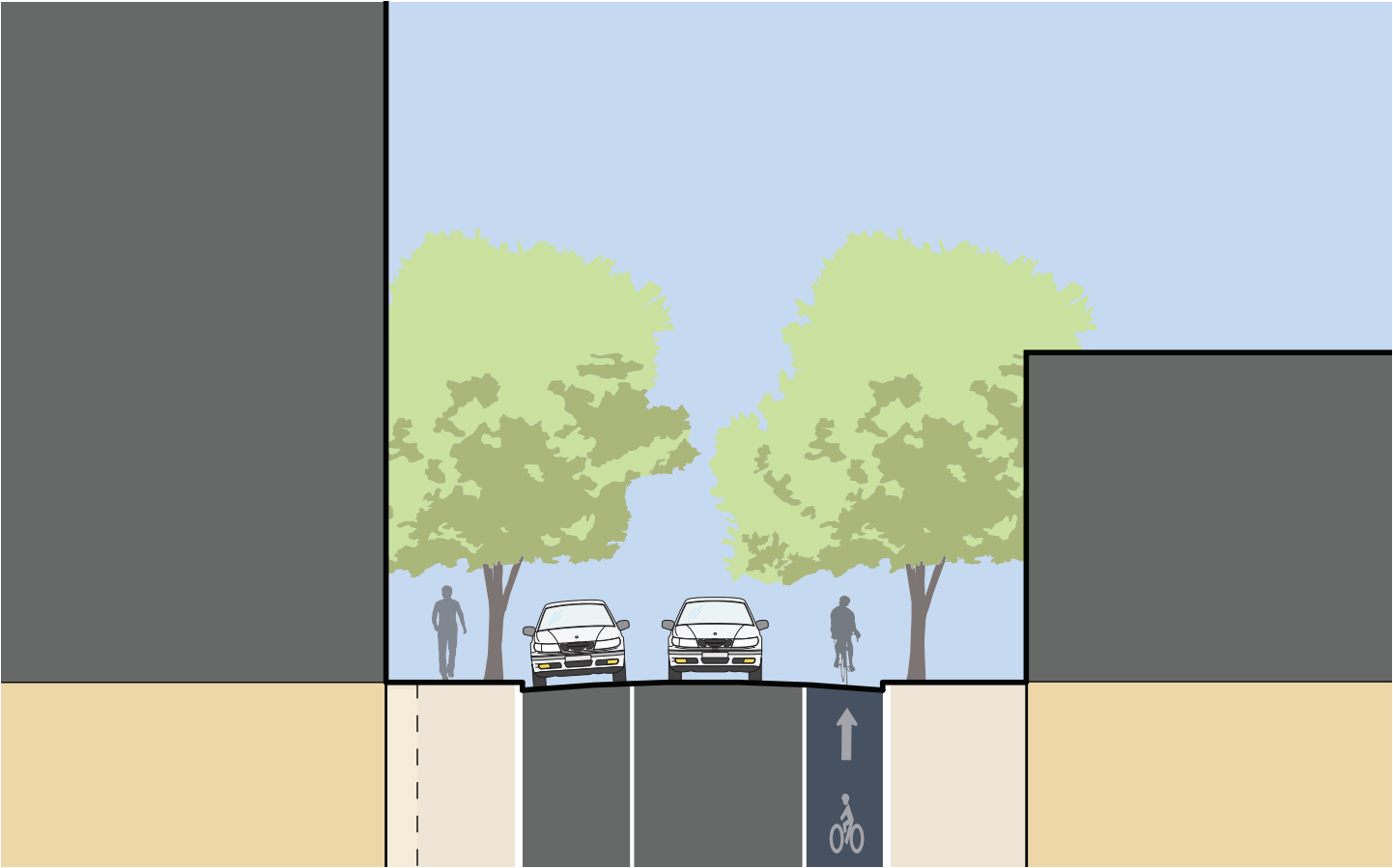
Below: A pilot demonstrating a contraflow bike lane on Marshall Street during the Winter Hill Team Better Block in December 2015.





Above: If the right-of-way is reorganized, Temple Street can have a seperated bikeway.

Below: The piloted contraflow lane on Marshall Street can turn into a reality with the proper engineering, signage, and termination at Broadway.



IMPROVING TRANSIT

Bus Transit the Complements Train Service

The opening of the Green Line Extension will improve transit access and give a one seat ride to downtown Boston (Park Street station) in 24 minutes. Roughly half of the Winter Hill plan area is within a half-mile walkshed of the station. Research shows that within this distance that commuters will likely choose this mode.

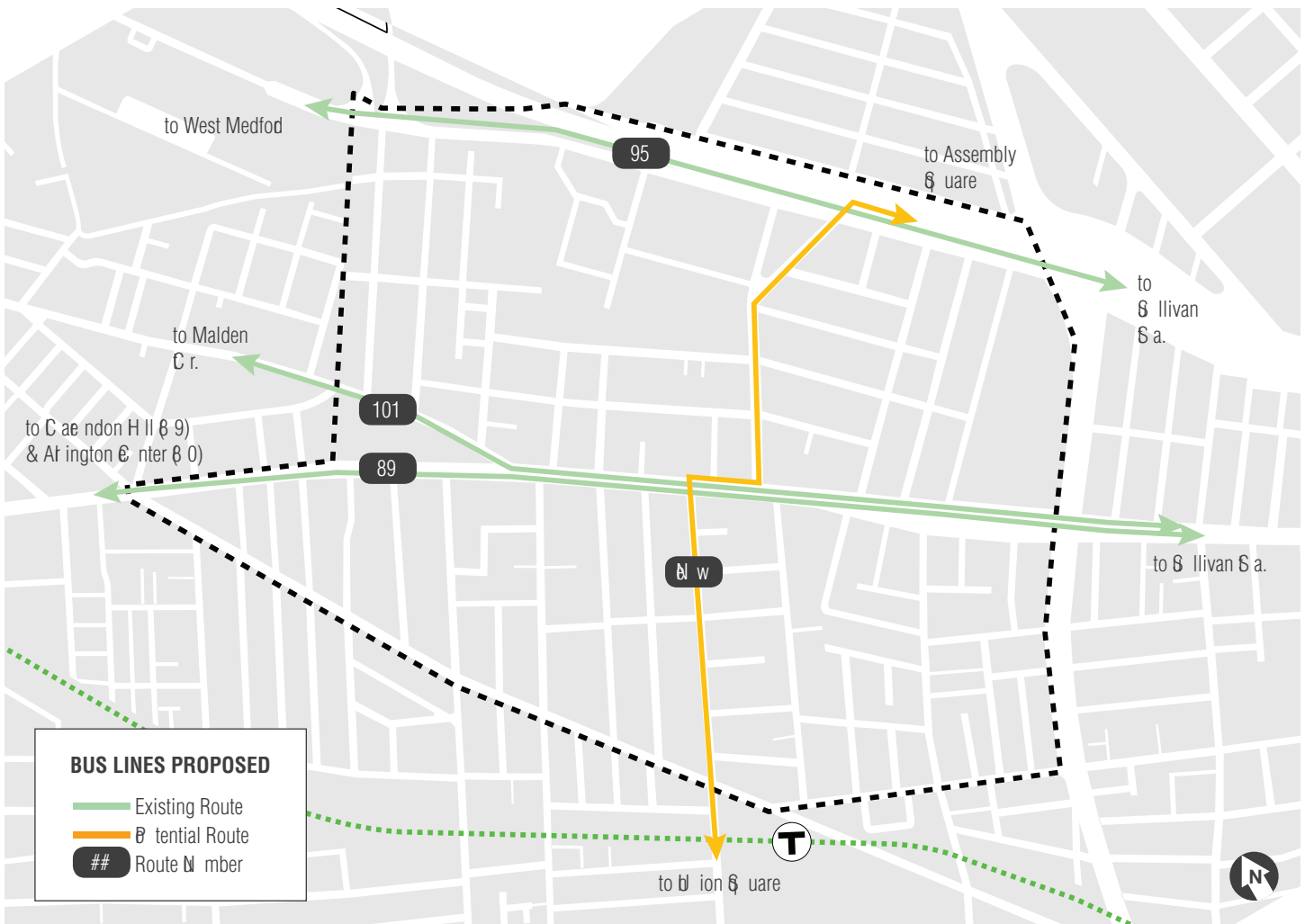
The opening of the station is also an opportunity to review the bus services in the area to make sure the network is providing useful, efficient, and adequate service because the Green Line Extension will be providing faster service, not hindered by traffic, from Lechmere Station to College Avenue, running along the southern edge of the plan area.

The Division of Transportation & Infrastructure, in collaboration with the MBTA, should review the bus service in the area. Upon a quick visual investigation, the 80 bus service runs a very similar route to the Green Line Extension and could be either removed or reconfigured. Buses currently dedicated to this service should either service a new bus line or provide additional service to an

existing line in the Winter Hill neighborhood.

New transit access in Winter Hill needs to connect via north south routes. The entire MBTA system primarily functions on an 'inbound and outbound' approach but planning efforts in Somerville, and other cities, are creating new job centers outside of the historic centers of the Financial District and Back Bay. Winter Hill sits between two future job centers in Somerville, Union and Assembly Squares, and rail stops on the Orange and Green Line. Future service needs to connect these neighborhoods.

Adding transit service, particularly in the north south direction, is more difficult than other routes because of the narrow streets. A standard MBTA bus cannot fit (or possibly fits but cannot make turns) on some of these roads. However, the future of transit is a partnership with public and private agencies. Private shuttles, like Bridj, and neighborhood shuttles, like the Longwood Medical Area shuttles, are more nimble than public agencies and could provide similar services. Bridj's goal is to provide service in areas that is twice as fast as public transit at



the same price. The City needs to work with all parties to connect Winter Hill in a way that provides more useful and efficient service.

In addition to reviewing transit routes, current routes need to be optimized. Route time for buses depends on a number of factors. Of course the first is driving distance. Theoretically, a bus route that covers a longer distance takes longer than one that is shorter with the same speed limit. The second is the frequency of stops. The bus pulls over to pick passengers up and then yields to vehicles already in the driving lane to start moving again. The last is less predictable, traffic. This is something planned into bus schedules but can change by season or day. For instance, in Somerville there is a noticeable shift in traffic during school breaks.

Research shows that commuters are willing to walk from an eighth to a quarter mile to access a bus stop. Therefore, it is recommended that bus stops be placed within that distance. By placing stops efficiently, travel times along bus lines can be improved. The graphic

below shows the eighth mile walkshed for the 89 bus route within the plan area. There are several places where three walksheds overlap. Of course, distance isn't the only factor. A school or hospital may necessitate a stop no matter the walkshed. To provide more efficient and timely service, the bus stop locations should be reviewed throughout the plan area with the goal of consolidating redundant and underutilized stops.

With more efficient stops, the focus can be on stop design that further improves bus service. Shelters, the appropriate amount of lighting, and live route arrival boards are ways to take the hassle out of commuting. Both small changes like this and large route connections will make transit on Winter Hill more accessible and useful.

Below: The 89 bus route with 1/8 mile walksheds shown. Where walksheds overlap, service might be redundant.



COMPLETE THE STREETS

Start with Broadway

The Transportation & Infrastructure Division (T&I) of the Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (OSPCD), the Traffic & Parking Department (T&P), and the Engineering Office work collaboratively to ensure the City's streets are safe and designed for all users. The Somerville Complete Streets Ordinance, the first of its kind in Massachusetts, states: "Complete Streets are designed and implemented to assure safety and accessibility for all the users of our streets, paths and transit systems, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, motorists, commercial vehicles, emergency vehicles and for people of all ages and of all abilities." By adopting this ordinance, the City is committed to incorporating Complete Streets planning and design "into public transportation projects in order to provide appropriate accommodation for bicyclists, pedestrians, transit users and persons of all abilities, while promoting safe operation for all users, in comprehensive and connected networks, in a manner consistent with, and supportive of, the surrounding community."

A PEDESTRIAN FIRST HIERARCHY

To implement this Complete Streets policy, the City is advancing a pedestrian-first modal hierarchy. All transportation projects and programs, from scoping to maintenance, will favor pedestrians first, then transit riders, cyclists, and motor vehicles. This will rebalance Somerville's streets to make them more 'complete', reversing generations of automobile-focused planning and design at the expense of all other transportation modes. This pedestrian-first modal hierarchy resets the

default premise for transportation projects in Somerville by acknowledging that every trip begins and ends as a pedestrian.

IMPLEMENTATION

Adopting a complete streets ordinance is a good start in the effort to make the streets of Somerville a more equitable environment for all users. This type of policy provides guidance to government departments, consultants, developers, and community groups for the planning, design, construction, and operation of our transportation system. An important thing to remember when thinking about the design of our streets is that mobility is a means to an end. Achieving our goals for environmental sustainability, improved public health & safety, social equity, economic activity, and vibrant public life won't happen without actually moving beyond an ordinance and actually building complete streets.

The following pages explore the two major streets in the Winter Hill Plan Area, Broadway and Mystic Avenue. Both streets play an important role in the overall street network and different segments along each of their lengths sometimes serve very different purposes. While surveying and engineering analysis is necessary to design a full street reconstruction project, the street sections and streetscape diagrams that follow provide proof that each of these streets can be improved to meet the needs of all users.

1 Pedestrians



2 Transit



3 Bicycle



4 Motor Vehicle





DESIGNING TO MOVE PEOPLE



PRIVATE MOTOR VEHICLES
600–1,600/HR



MIXED TRAFFIC WITH FREQUENT BUSES
1,000–2,800/HR



TWO-WAY PROTECTED BIKEWAY
7,500/HR



DEDICATED TRANSIT LANES
4,000–8,000/HR



SIDEWALK
9,000/HR



ON-STREET TRANSITWAY, BUS, OR RAIL
10,000–25,000/HR

CENTRAL BROADWAY

Winter Hill's Main Street

A redesign for Central Broadway from McGrath Highway to Magoun Square was started in March 2014. It has garnered significant interest from residents on Winter Hill which is a reflection of its' poor state. Residents believe that pedestrian accommodations, streetscape aesthetics, roadway safety, and bicycle accommodations should be prioritized. The first community process produced three different options which all improved Broadway but sometimes sacrificed pedestrian space for vehicular access.

Furthermore, the streetscape project was put on hold after the development of these three schemes to investigate subsurface conditions. It is fiscally irresponsible to invest in a new streetscape of this scale if the infrastructure, like sewers and water lines, underneath the street are at the end of their usable life. It's the type of thing that is not given much thought by your average community member until it's not working but having these functions is extremely important to everyone's day-to-day life.

The charrette team wanted to take advantage of the break in design to look at Central Broadway in a new light, taking into consideration the wants and desires of the neighborhood. It just so happened that during the charrette, the power went out in Winter Hill. Staff worried that the studio couldn't remain open after the sunset as originally scheduled (it was around 4:00 pm in October). But while staff was worrying, a funny thing happened, the drivers and pedestrians at Temple, Broadway, and Marshall Streets managed to figure out how to navigate the rather complicated intersection and traffic kept moving. The power was restored only about 15 minutes later. With the traffic signals up and running, cars immediately began to back up in all directions. With that fortunate timing, the charrette team got to the drawing board.

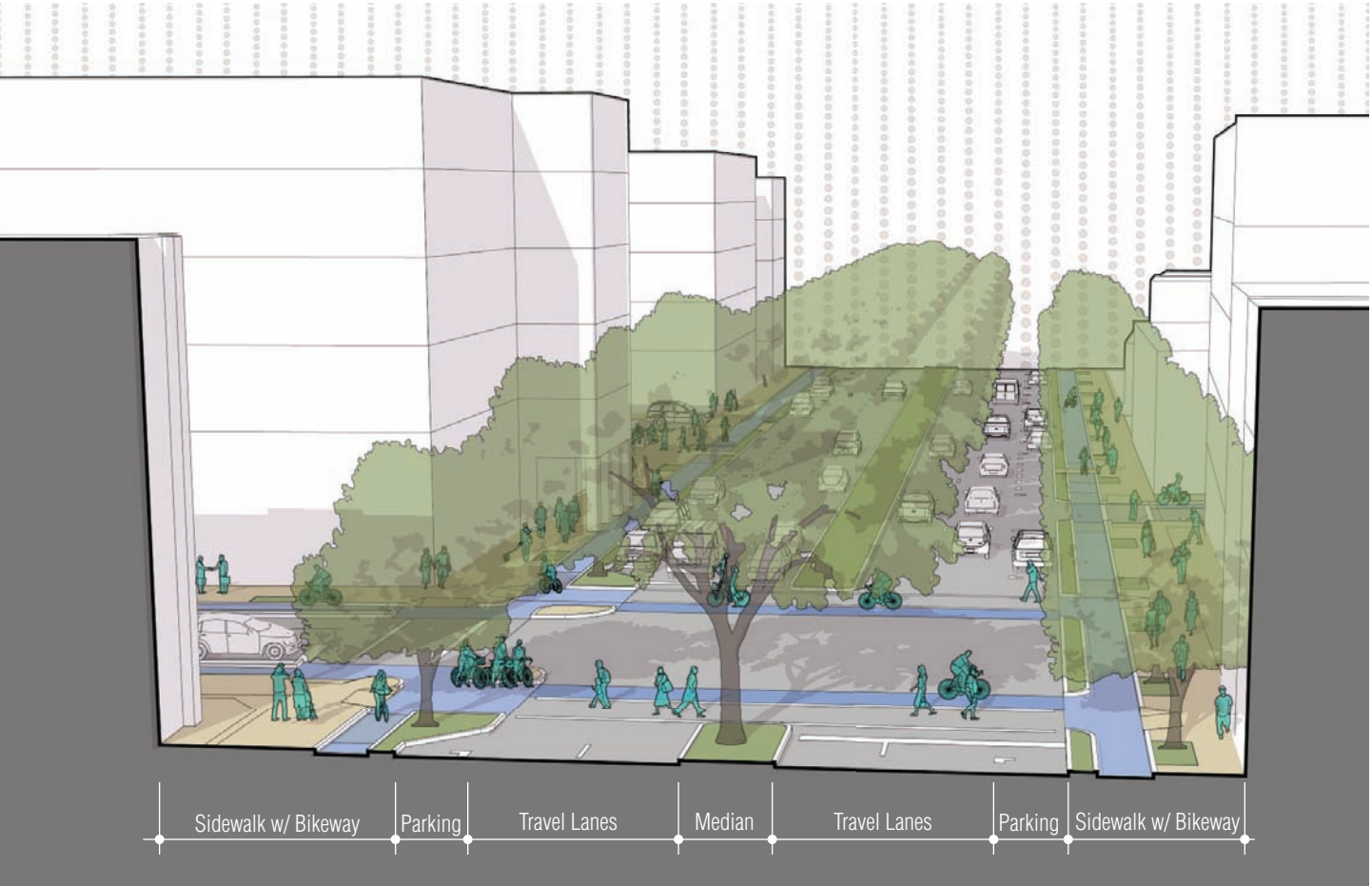
The design is shown at three focus areas: Temple and Broadway, the easterly edge towards Foss Park, and at School Street. Each segment prioritizes modes of transit according to the complete streets ordinance. Due to the quantity of traffic, Broadway needs to remain two lanes from School Street to McGrath Highway but can transition to one lane over the hill. By reorganizing the current right-of-way there's room for all modes, additional open space, an increased tree canopy, and room for public and private seating all along Broadway. Take note to the updates on Temple Street as well as Broadway. Temple Street can have a protected bike lane that connects Broadway and Mystic if re-arranged and designed to complete streets priorities.

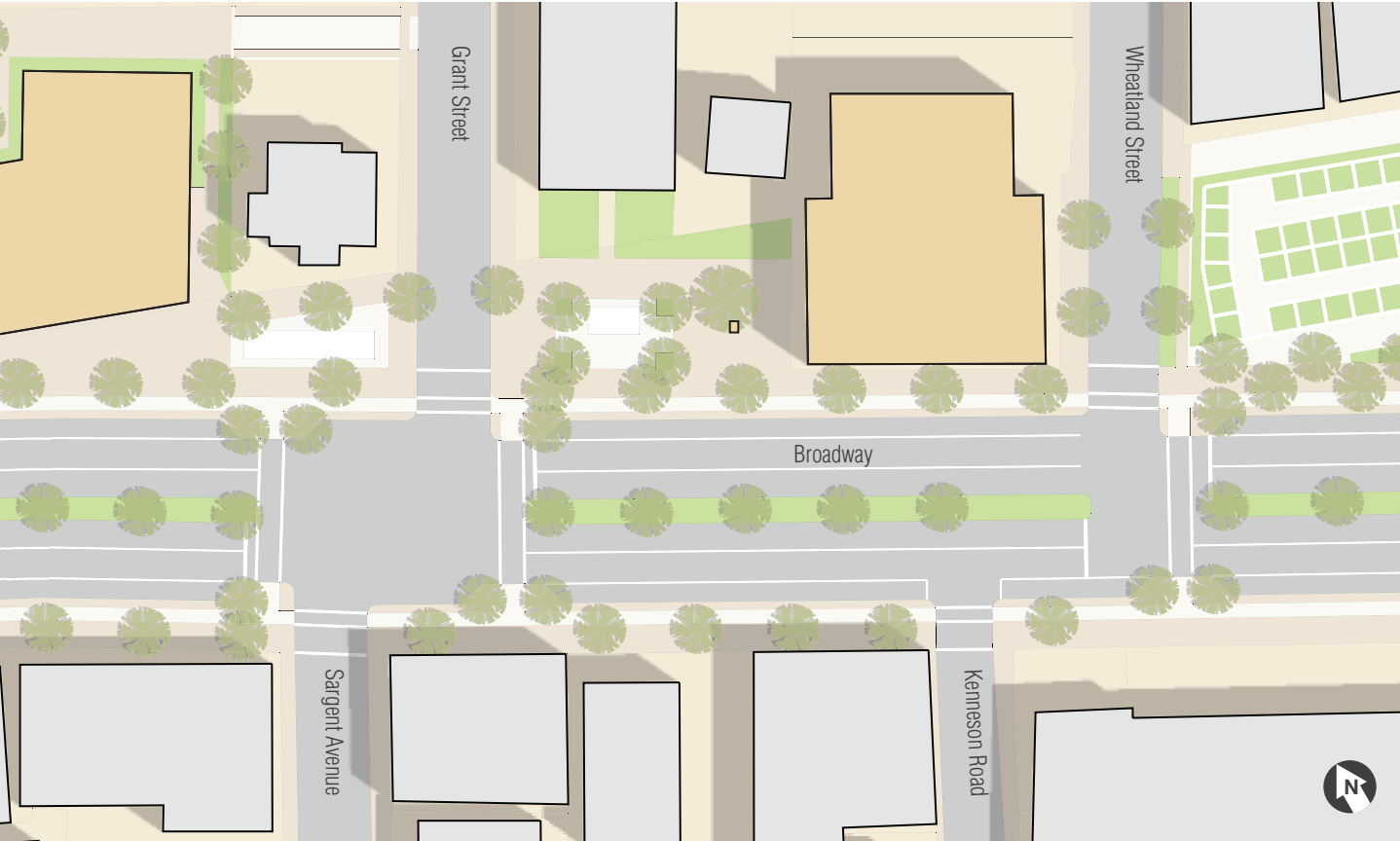
Not analyzed for this plan is the network of one- and two-way streets, mainly these intersect with Broadway and would have an impact in a streetscape redesign. Without digging into the history of each street, streets are usually turned into one-ways to either reduce cut through traffic or to prioritize the movement of vehicles. In either case, one-way streets increase speeds, and often have counter-intuitive effects on neighborhood streets.

This results in vehicle speeds greater than 20 miles an hour and confusion when navigating the street network. For instance, School Street is one of the only streets that connects Broadway to Medford Street. Temple Street is the only street that connects Broadway to Mystic Avenue. The City is currently advocating for the funding of a mobility plan that would review the width, direction, and traffic on all of the streets in Somerville and make recommendations based on data. This data could further inform a Broadway redesign.

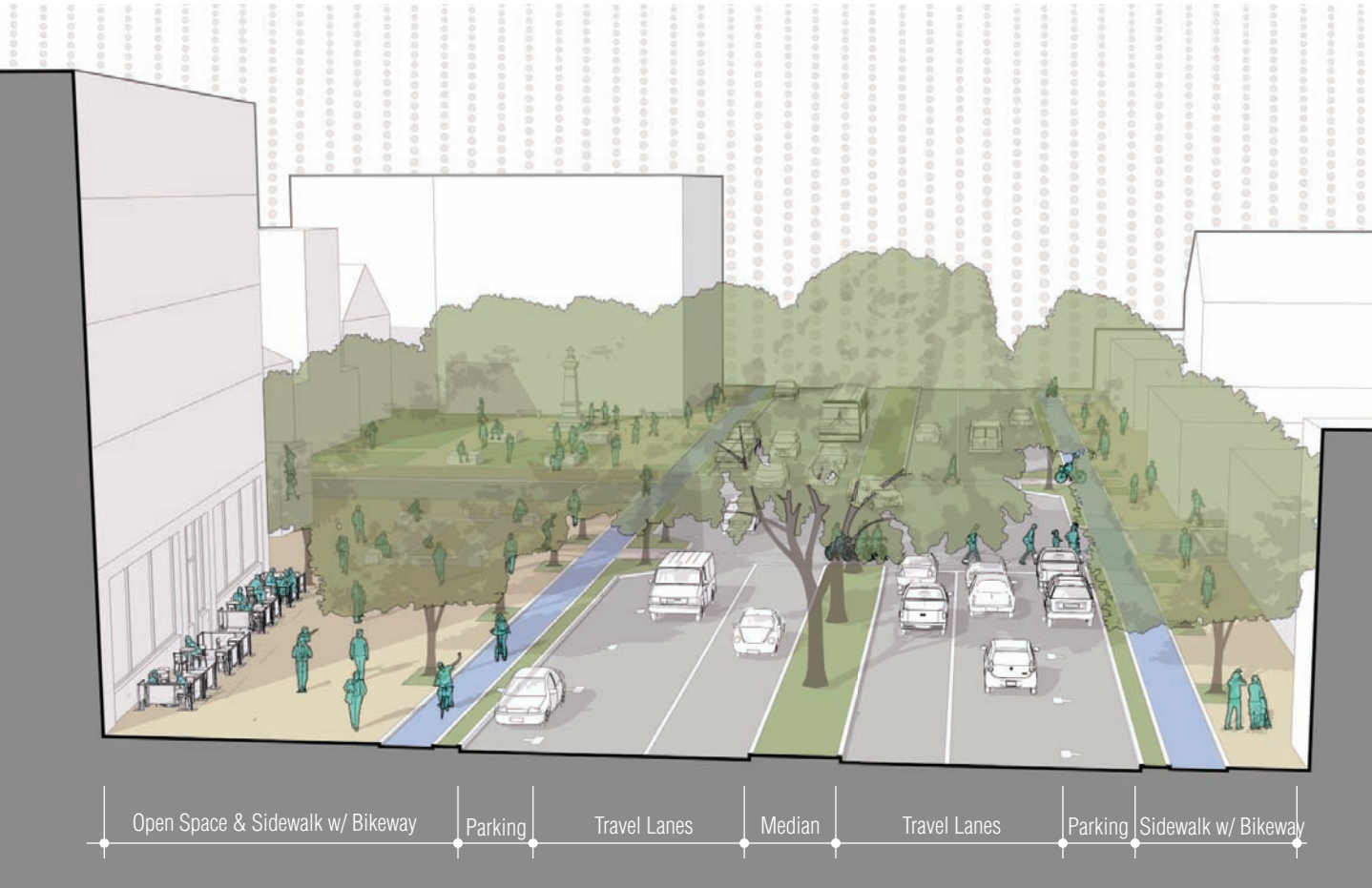


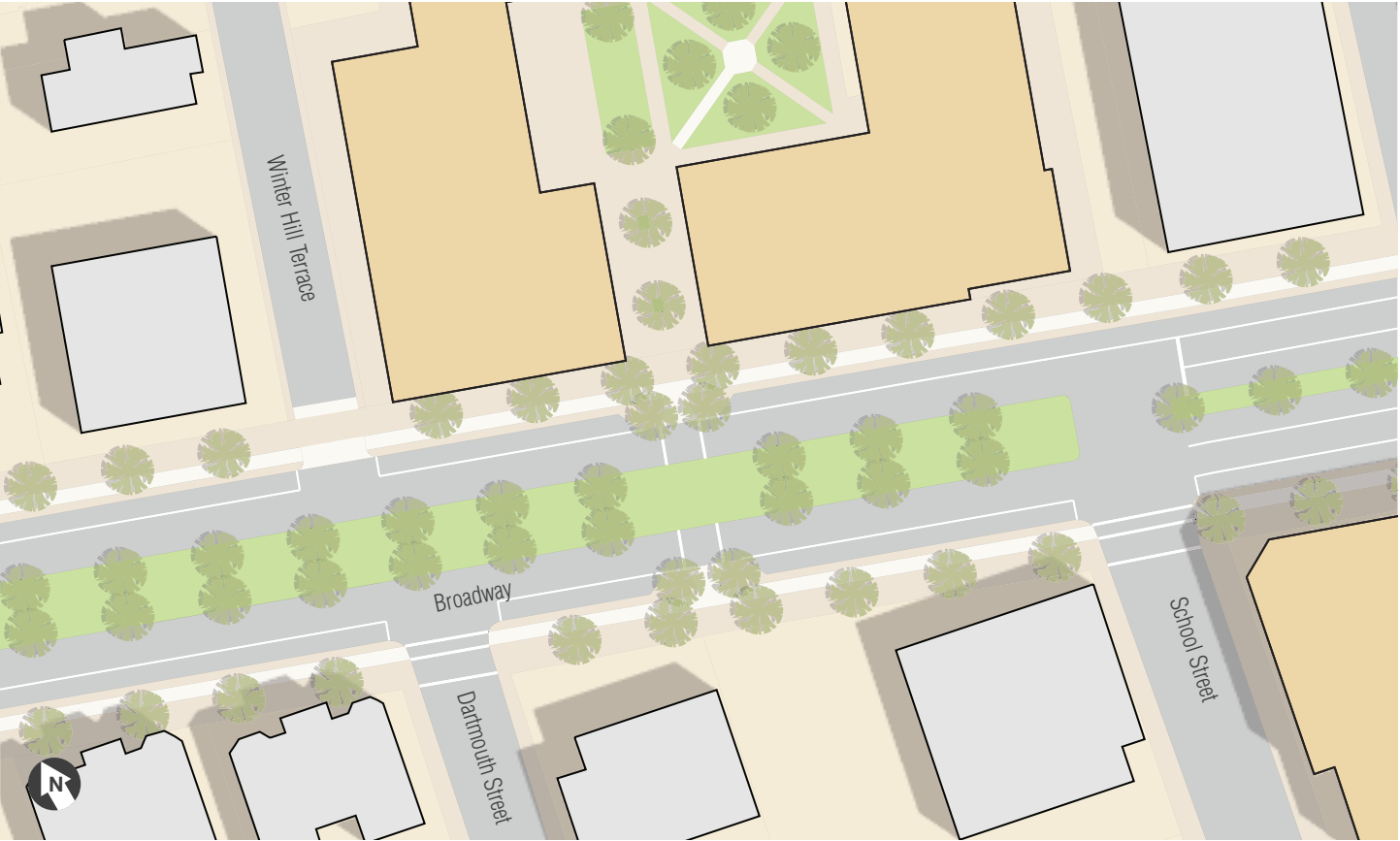
Above: Broadway at Temple Street, the new Temple Square.
Bottom: The Broadway streetscape facing east towards East Somerville.
Temple Street is on the left, Marshall Street is on the right.



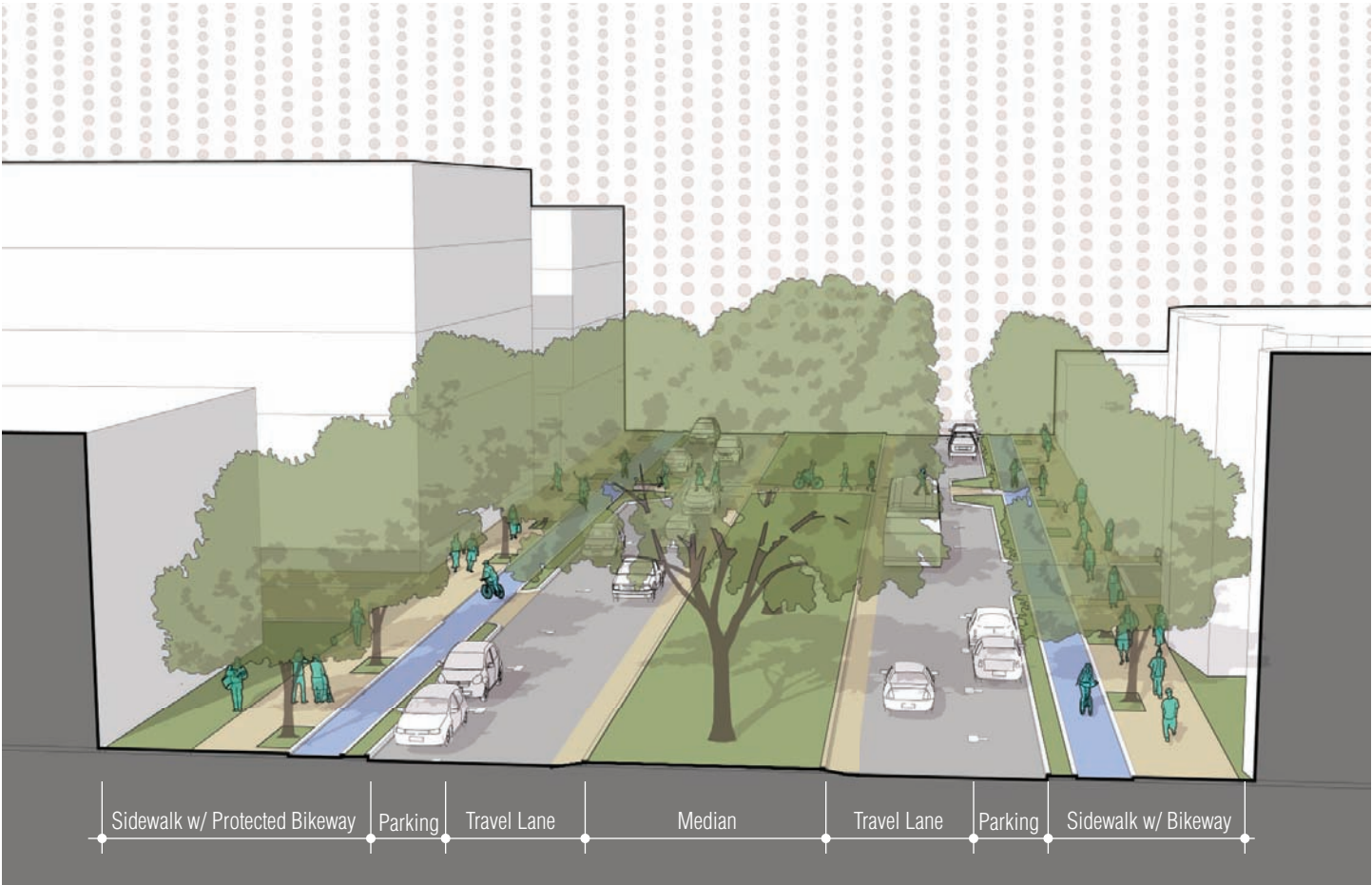


Above: Broadway near Foss Park.
Bottom: The Broadway streetscape facing east towards East Somerville. Grant Street is on the left, Kenneson Road is on the right. In this area, additional right-of-way can expand the park and main street services.





Above: Broadway at School Street.
Bottom: The Broadway streetscape facing east towards East Somerville.
Dartmouth Street is on the right. West of School Street, Broadway can transition to one-lane in each direction instead of two.



MYSTIC AVENUE

Not an On-Ramp

To some, Mystic Avenue, is a long on/off-ramp connecting to Interstate 93. The current design does not discourage this behavior and ignores that Mystic Avenue is an urban street between two neighborhoods, Winter Hill and Ten Hills. The right-of-way is over 70' wide and is designed to engineering standards for interstates not urban streets. These standards have resulted in the spaghetti of Mystic Avenue and McGrath at the northeast corner of Foss Park which is the top crash site in Somerville according to the 2013 MassDOT Crash Report.

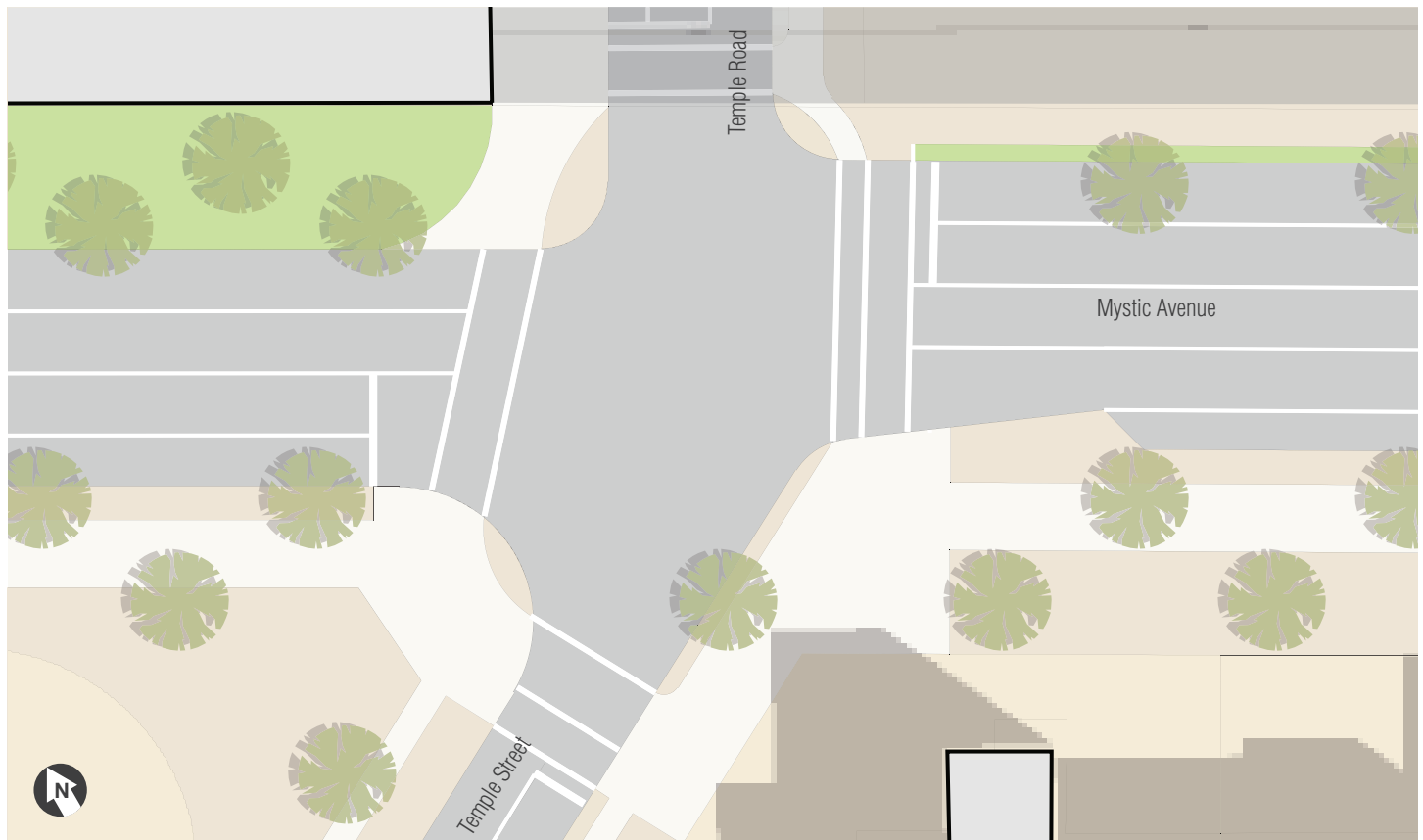
The right-of-way can be used more efficiently to facilitate movement of all modes of transit. Increasing safety for pedestrians and cyclists whether connecting to Ten Hills or East Somerville is very important. Most movement by pedestrians and cyclists will be on the south side of the street, because of Interstate 93, so an increase in sidewalk width, protected bikeway, and a planting area were added. The sidewalks and bikeway connect the entire length of the street to Foss Park. One lane of parking on the south side of the street is also maintained which will support first floor retail uses.

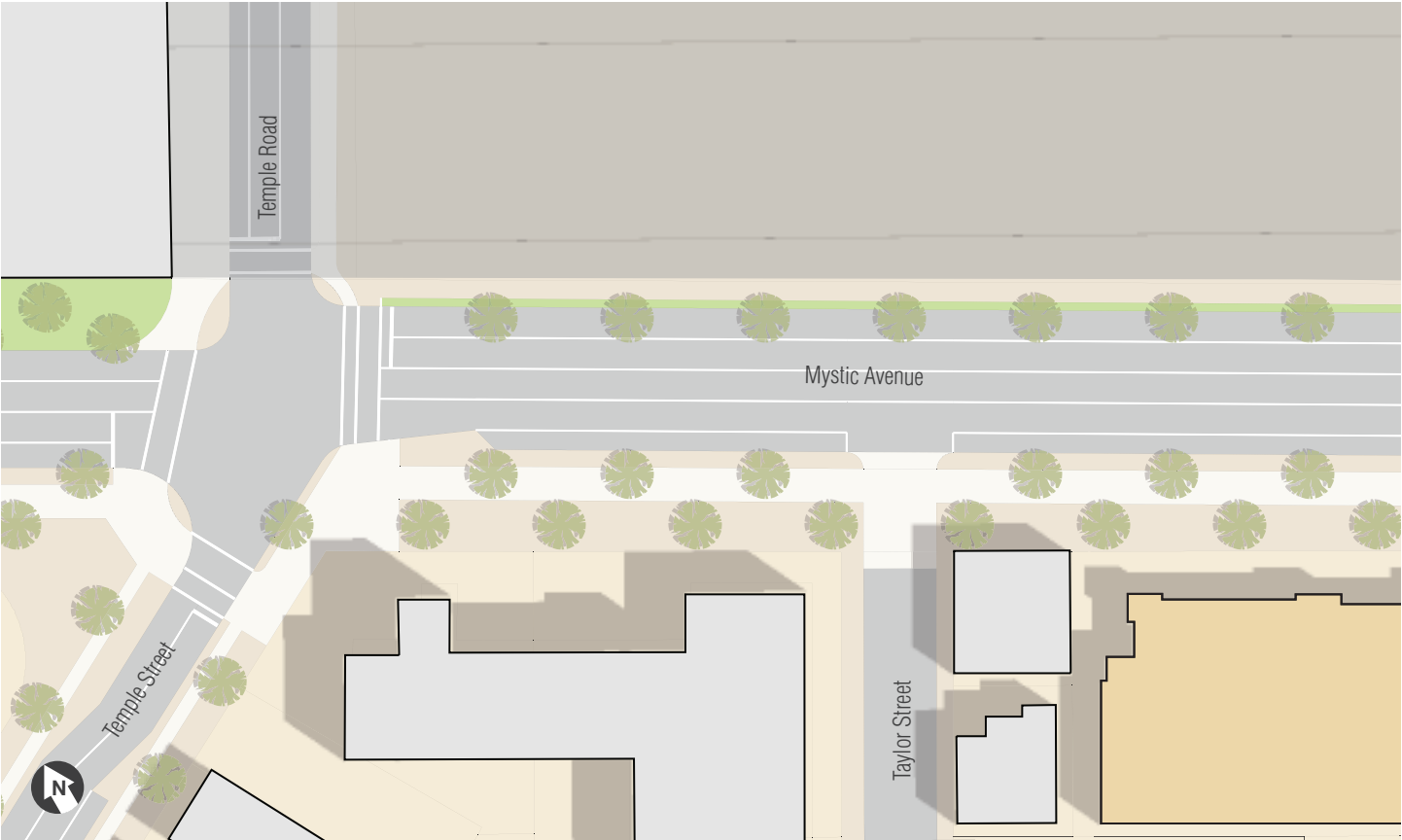
It's important in any redesign of Mystic Avenue to increase connectivity between Winter Hill and Ten

Hills (and therefore Assembly Square) at Temple Road and Shore Drive. There are great open space resources just outside of Winter Hill but Mystic Avenue's current design makes access difficult. The MassDOT Safe Routes to School program is currently working to improve the intersection of Temple Street, Temple Road, and Mystic Avenue because many students at the Mystic Healey School live in Ten Hills. The design will close the slip lane from eastbound Mystic Avenue traffic onto Temple Street and improve signalization and pedestrian crossings. This is a good start and it will help students and other pedestrians, work will be completed in 2017.

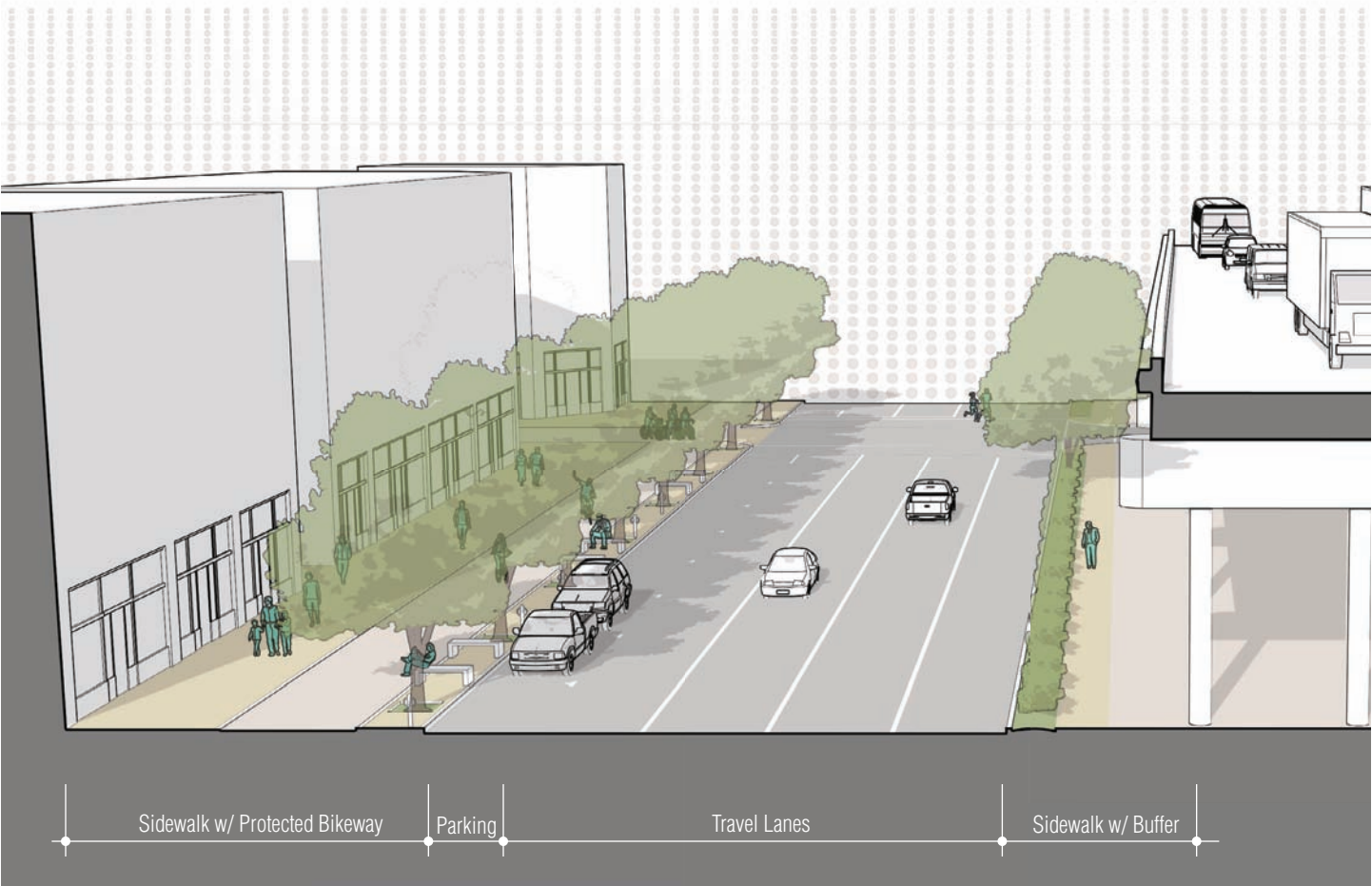
Eversource is anticipating major utility construction on Mystic Avenue in 2018. The City of Somerville is seeking project mitigation that would start to implement "Complete Streets" design principles. In addition, the City is also working with MassDOT to redesign the complex I-93/Fellsway ramp and intersection. A 2015 MassDOT study identified numerous options for improving safety and connectivity for all users. These projects could be the start of implementing the vision for Mystic Avenue.

Below: The crossings at Mystic Avenue and Temple Road/Temple Street and Shore Drive need to be oriented to the pedestrian scale. These intersections serve as the connections between Winter Hill and Ten Hills as well as open space resources like the Mystic Riverfront.





Above: Mystic Avenue at Temple Street and Temple Road.
Bottom: The Mystic streetscape facing west towards Medford. There is enough right-of-way for two-way traffic, street parking, and a protected bike facility.



SUPPORT MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT





TEMPLE SQUARE

Consensus around redevelopment

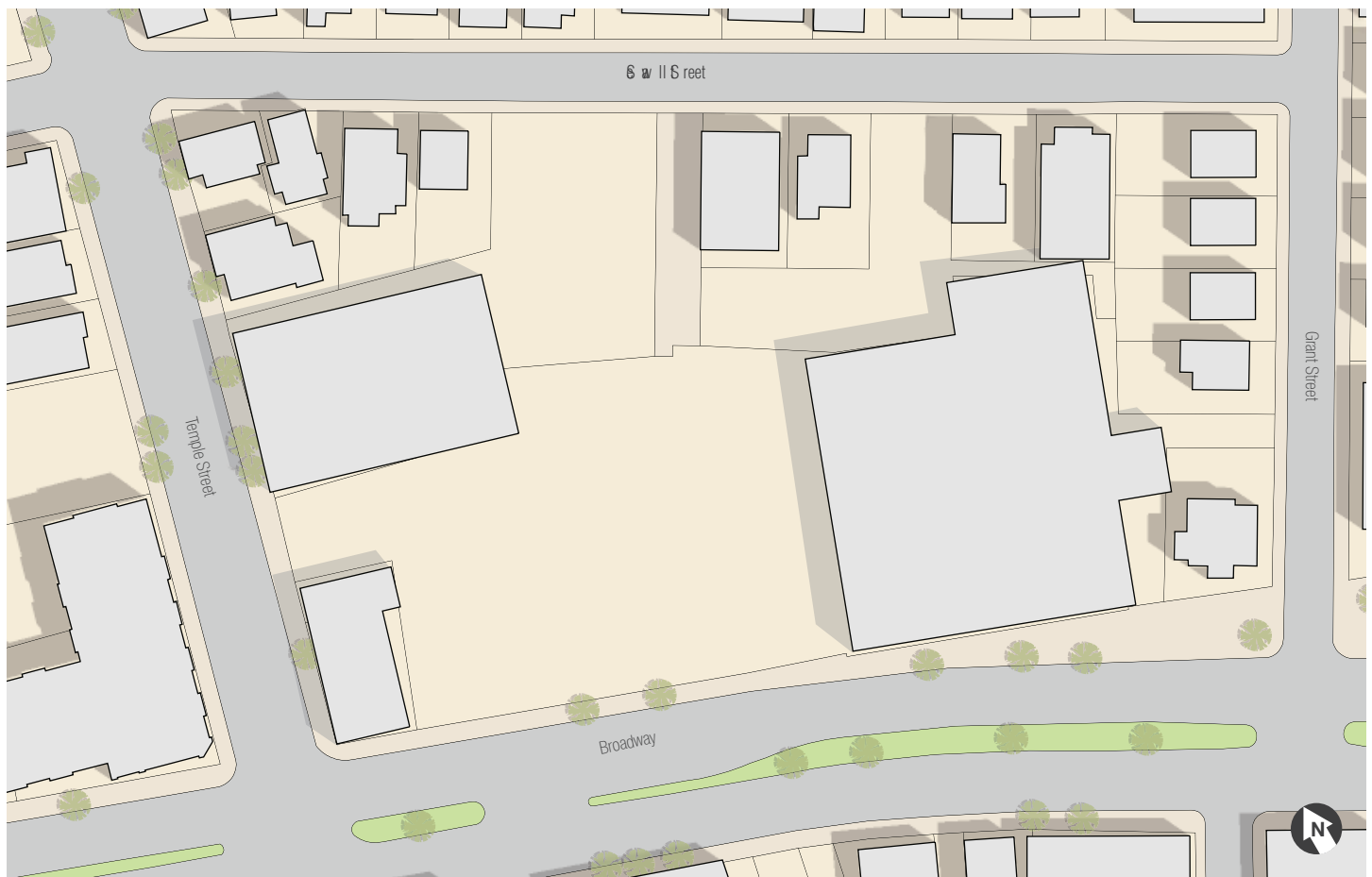
Star Market closed in 2007 and has been empty ever since then. Very little has changed on the property with the exception of store improvements to Rite Aid and the repaving of the parking lot in 2014/2015. In 2015, Walgreens announced it's bid to acquire Rite-Aid which makes the likelihood of having both stores, in the long term, on Winter Hill unrealistic.

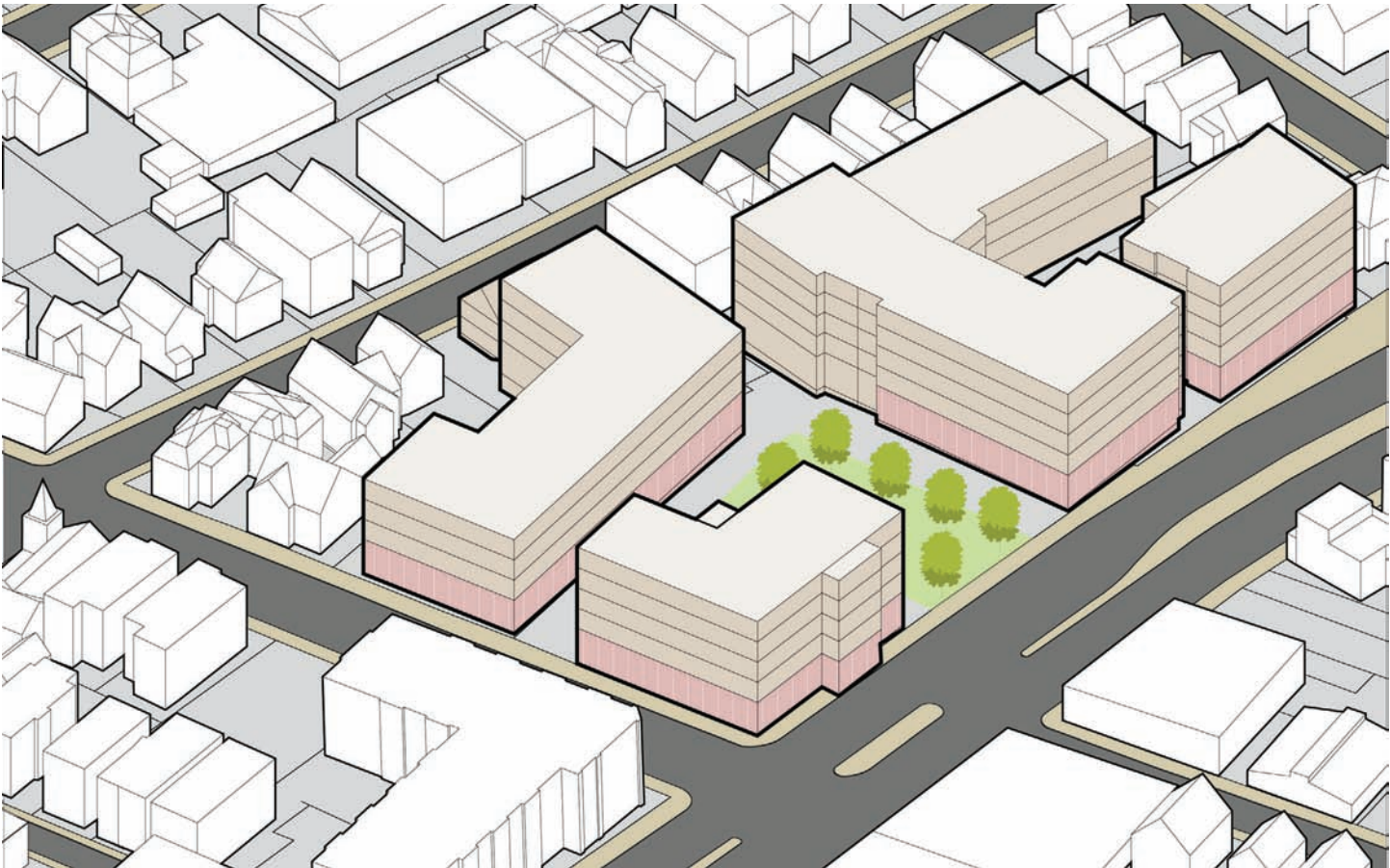
There are two other existing buildings on this opportunity site. The first is the two-story corner building with the Winter Hill Liquor Mart and the Brazilian Times newspaper. The second is the M. James Coiffeur. Since these are at the prominent corner of the site, at Temple and Broadway, it is important to pursue redevelopment with the opportunity to relocate any existing businesses into new development.

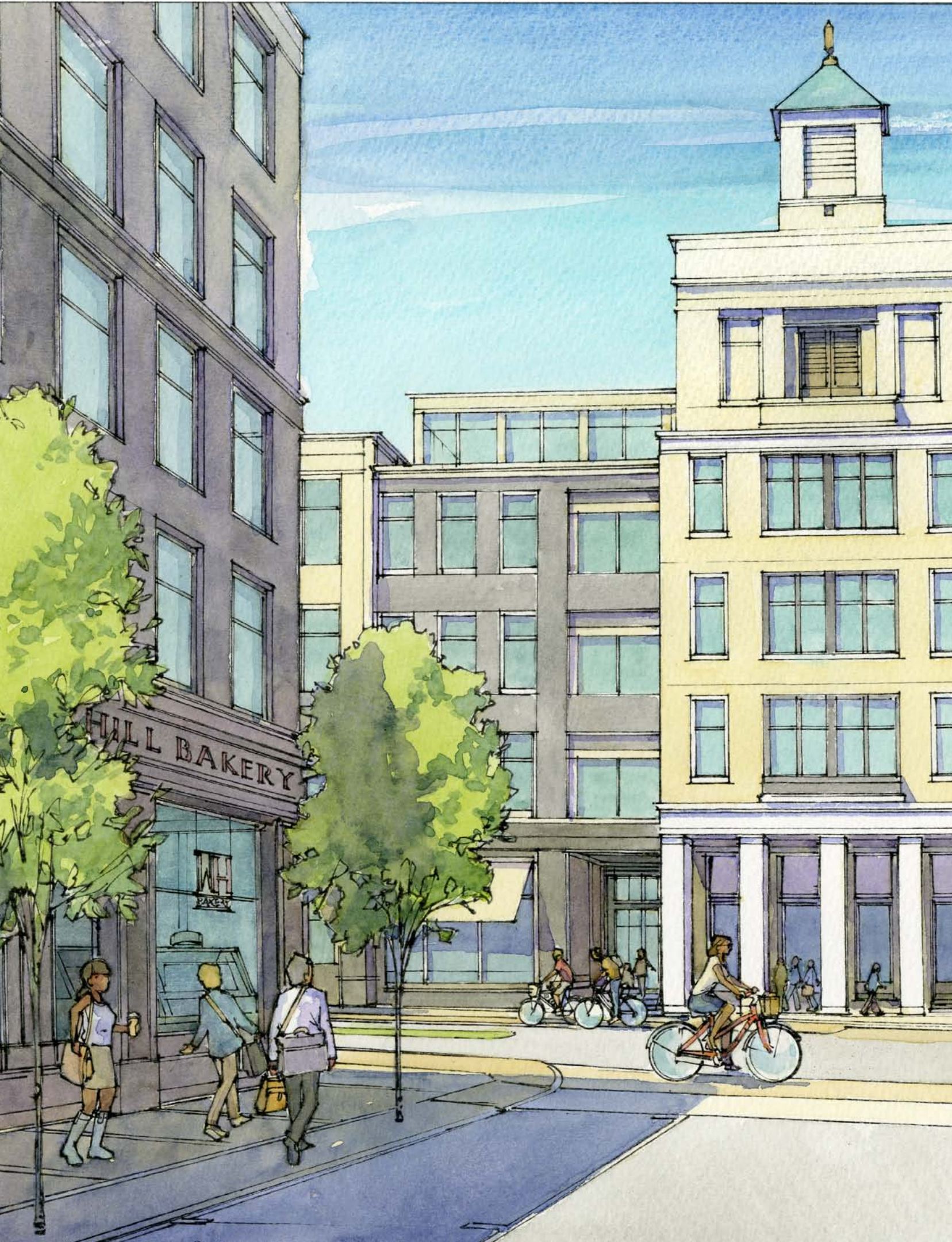
Future development of the site is best if subdivided into three smaller parcels with two new streets. The streets provide access to the sites and break up the large block that exists today. All parking should be underground with

the exception of metered spaces on the new streets. There's opportunity for up to 200 units of housing and 28,000 square feet of retail on site. With a 20% affordable housing requirement, 40 units would be deed restricted affordable. The site transitions from five stories on Broadway and Temple to four stories as it gets closer to Sewall Street, and then to infill houses on Sewall Street on existing paved lots.

The potential design provides a new green and courtyard as part of the redevelopment. Shared streets adjacent to the green can also expand park space during programmed events or specific times. Although design of this space will be through a community process, the vision is for Temple Square to be the gathering place that's currently missing in the neighborhood. Think of Winter Hill's own unique space inspired by Davis or Union Square plaza. This is .5 acres of open space that will contribute to SomerVision goals and increase access to open space for residents between Temple and Wheatland Streets (see graphic on page 24).









WHITCOMB PLACE

Walgreens has committed to long-term lease

The site that currently houses CareWell, Walgreens, and Winter Hill Bank used to be a car dealership. It was renovated substantially about a generation ago when Somerville was still struggling with its identity. Somerville was too dense and too close to Boston to be a suburb but was trying to retrofit itself into one. The site has two one story buildings with an expanse of parking that reaches all the way back to Heath Street, the former dealer lot.

The name for this site, Whitcomb Place, was inspired by Irvine Whitcomb, a former resident of Winter Hill. Irvine made a living selling packaged travel excursions up and down New England railways. Planning Staff liked honoring a resident that was ahead of his time in the neighborhood plan, although the name is just a placeholder.

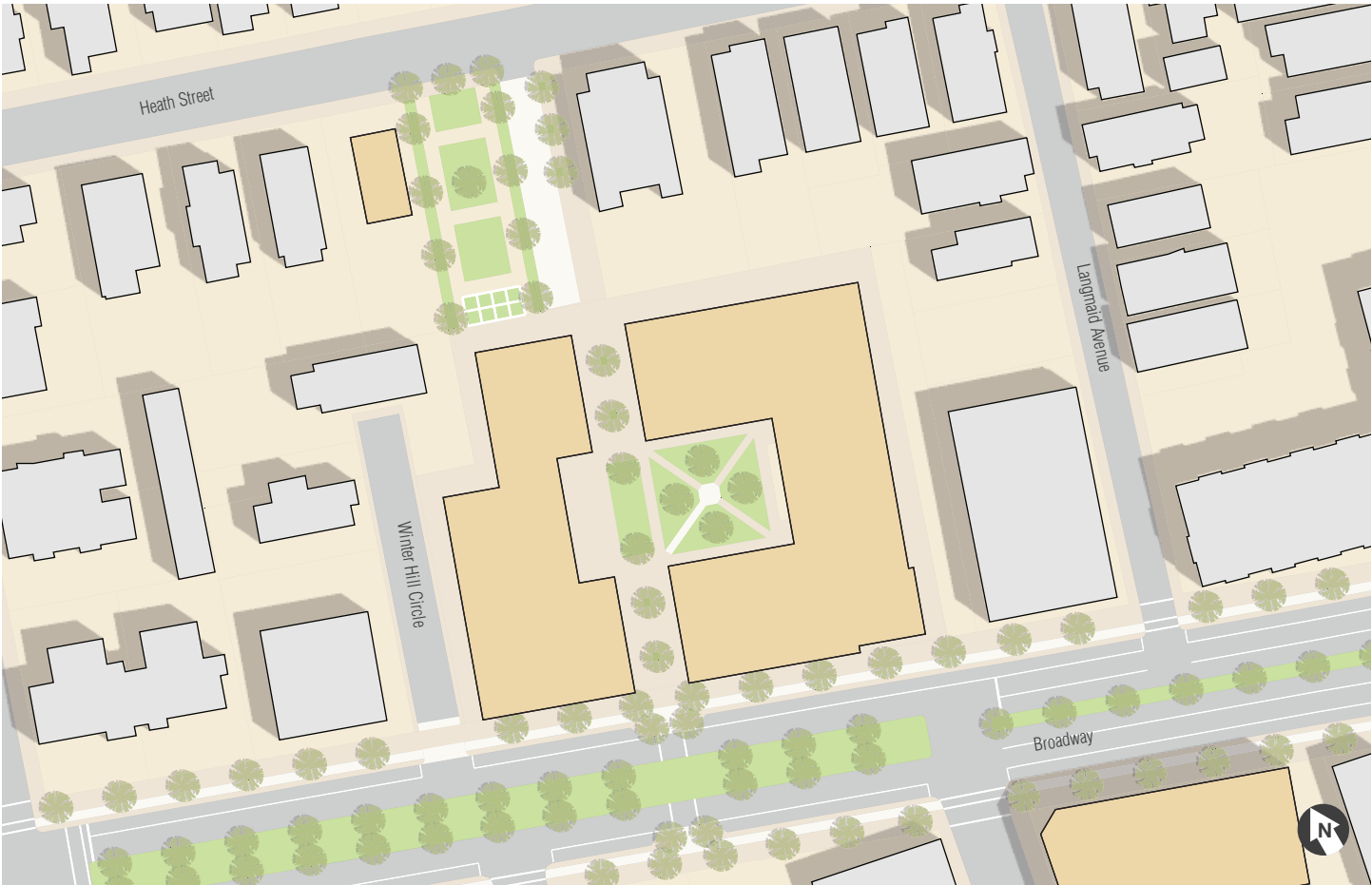
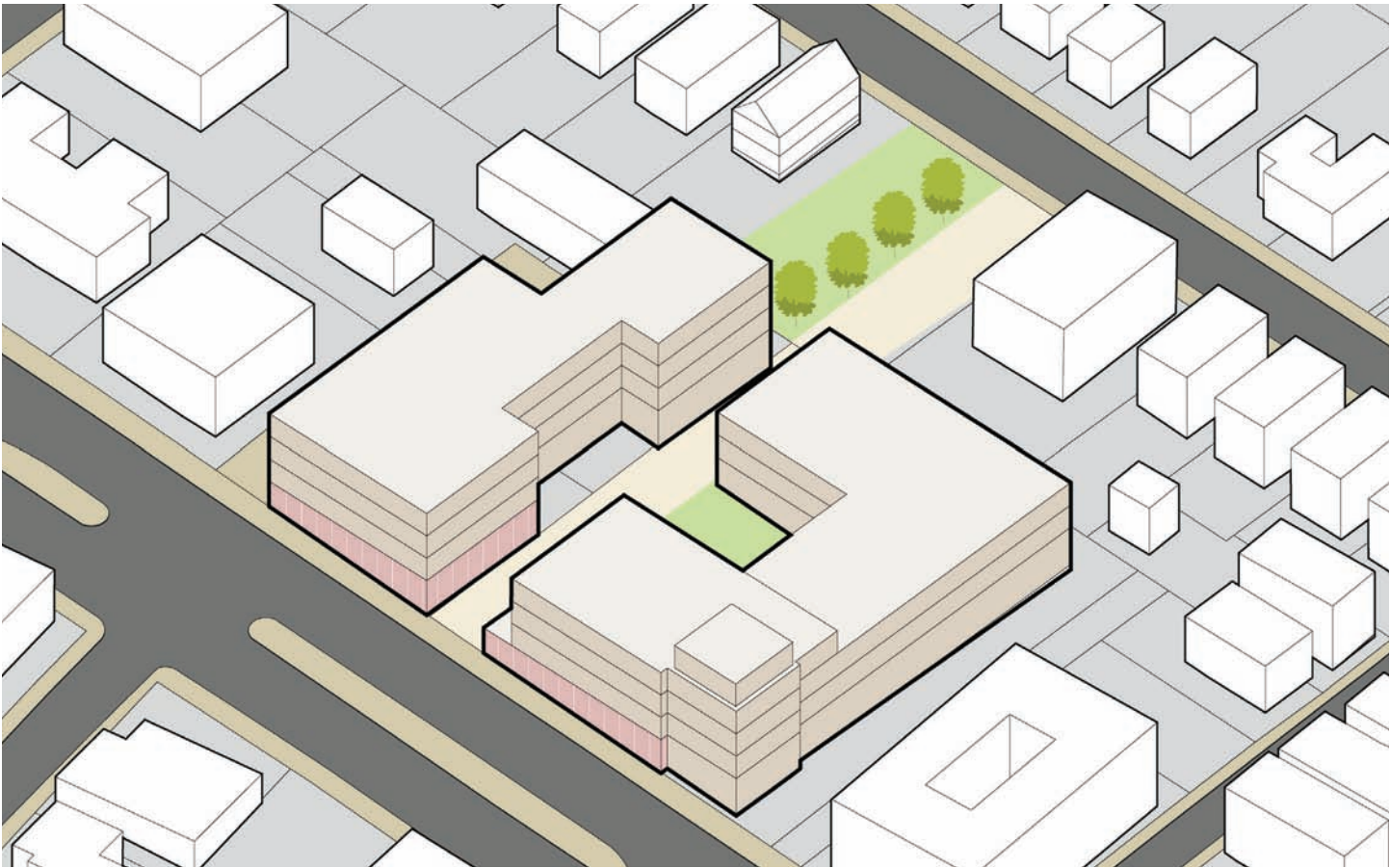
The redevelopment of the site should focus on Broadway and further emphasize it as a main street. Access should be from Heath Street but parking should be underground. The natural landform of Winter Hill makes underground parking easier than in other

Somerville neighborhoods. In design, the buildings should honor the historic apartment building next door while providing a new terminating vista on School Street. This cue will start to link Winter Hill to the Gilman Square area.

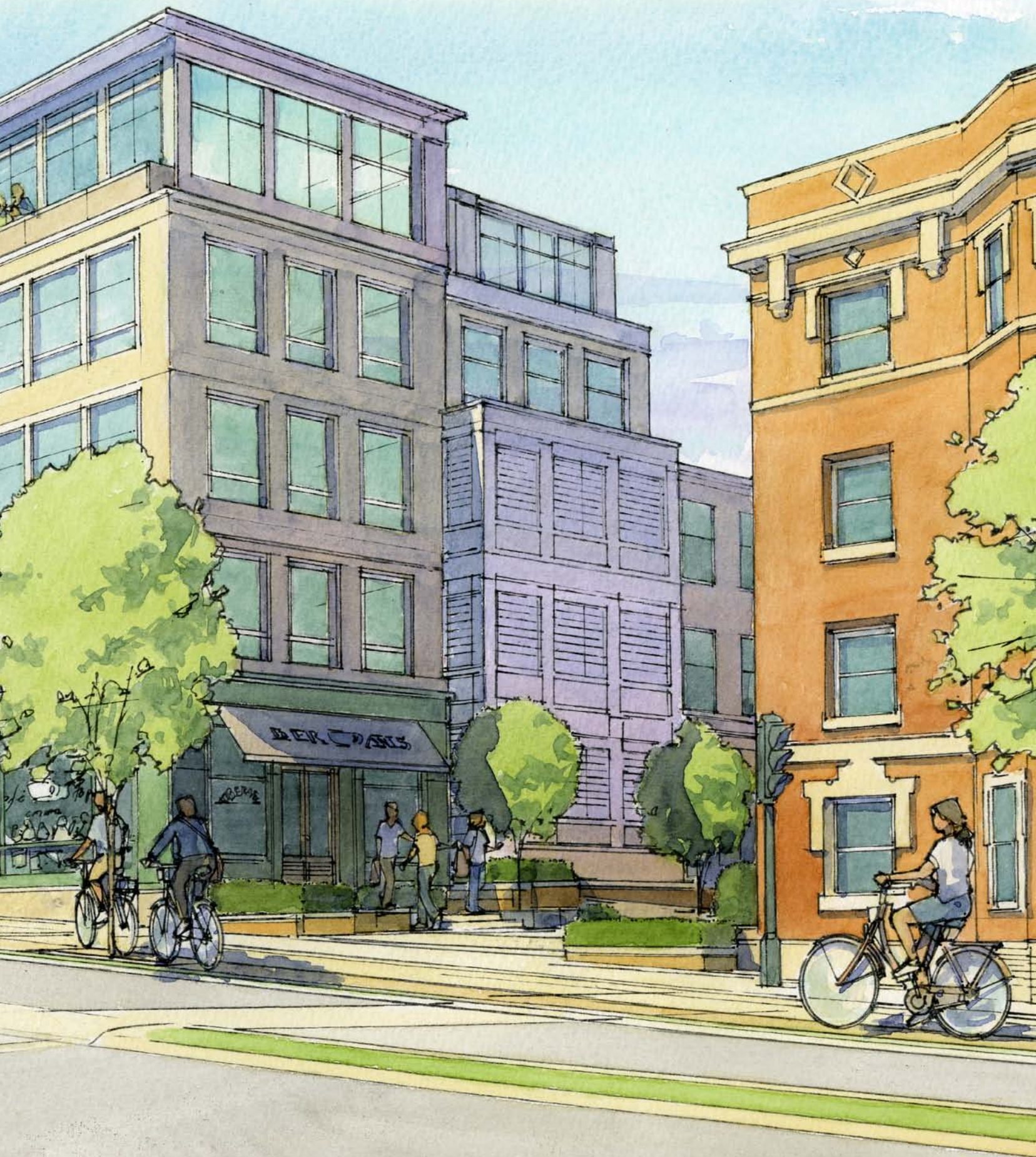
The redevelopment on the site consists of three buildings with a total of up to 130 units and 8,700 square feet of retail space. With a 20% inclusionary housing requirement, 26 units would be deed restricted affordable. All but two units are in the two buildings fronting Broadway. Since the site goes through to Heath Street, a new house and pocket park, in scale with Heath Street are shown. The courtyard building lends itself to townhouse style units within a mixed-use building - a style desired by families.

The site has an unique feature, a pedestrian path with an allée of trees connecting Broadway and Heath Street. The promenade can be used for retail display or restaurant seating for potential tenants of the building. It will also lead people to the pocket park on Heath Street. The site adds .4 acres of open space.









BREWERY BLOCK

New use will be preserved

The existing block between Marshall and School Streets has multiple owners which makes redevelopment complex. There are five owners: 310 Broadway, the one story retail building with the houses at 9 and 13 Marshall Street; 320 through 328 Broadway, the post office building and brewery; 326 Broadway, the Bradford Condos; 338 Broadway, the Citizens Bank; and 257 School Street, a house. Infill development will make an impact in this area since almost half of the street frontage on this block is parking or curbcuts. The Citizen's Bank building is a suburban model of banking, low rise with three drive through lanes. The owner of the Post Office building has expressed an interest in better utilizing the abutting site around a neighborhood vision.

The planning team decided to nickname this block the Brewery Block after Winter Hill Brewery opened. It was more catchy than the block between Marshall and School Streets but is currently a placeholder.

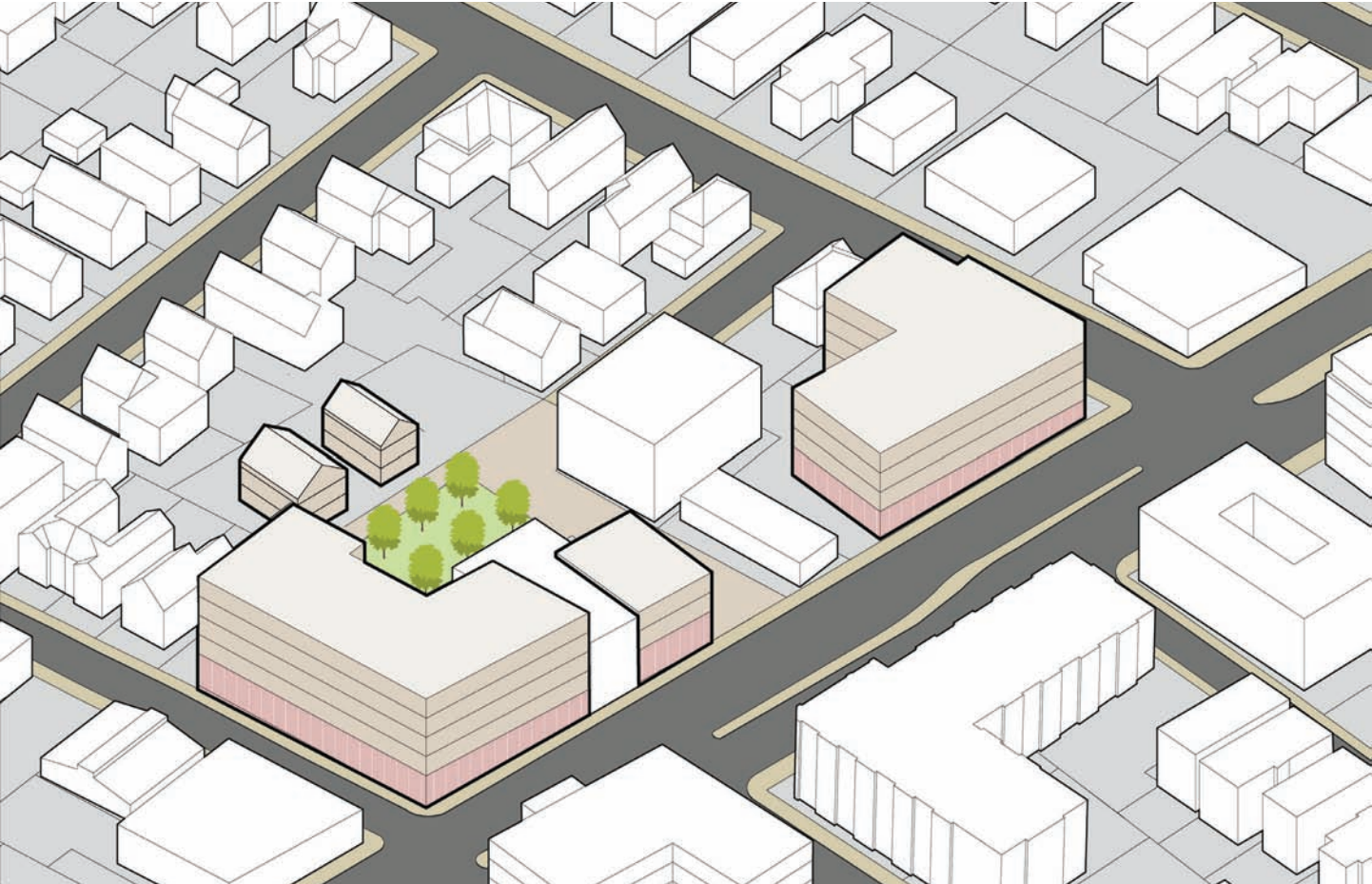
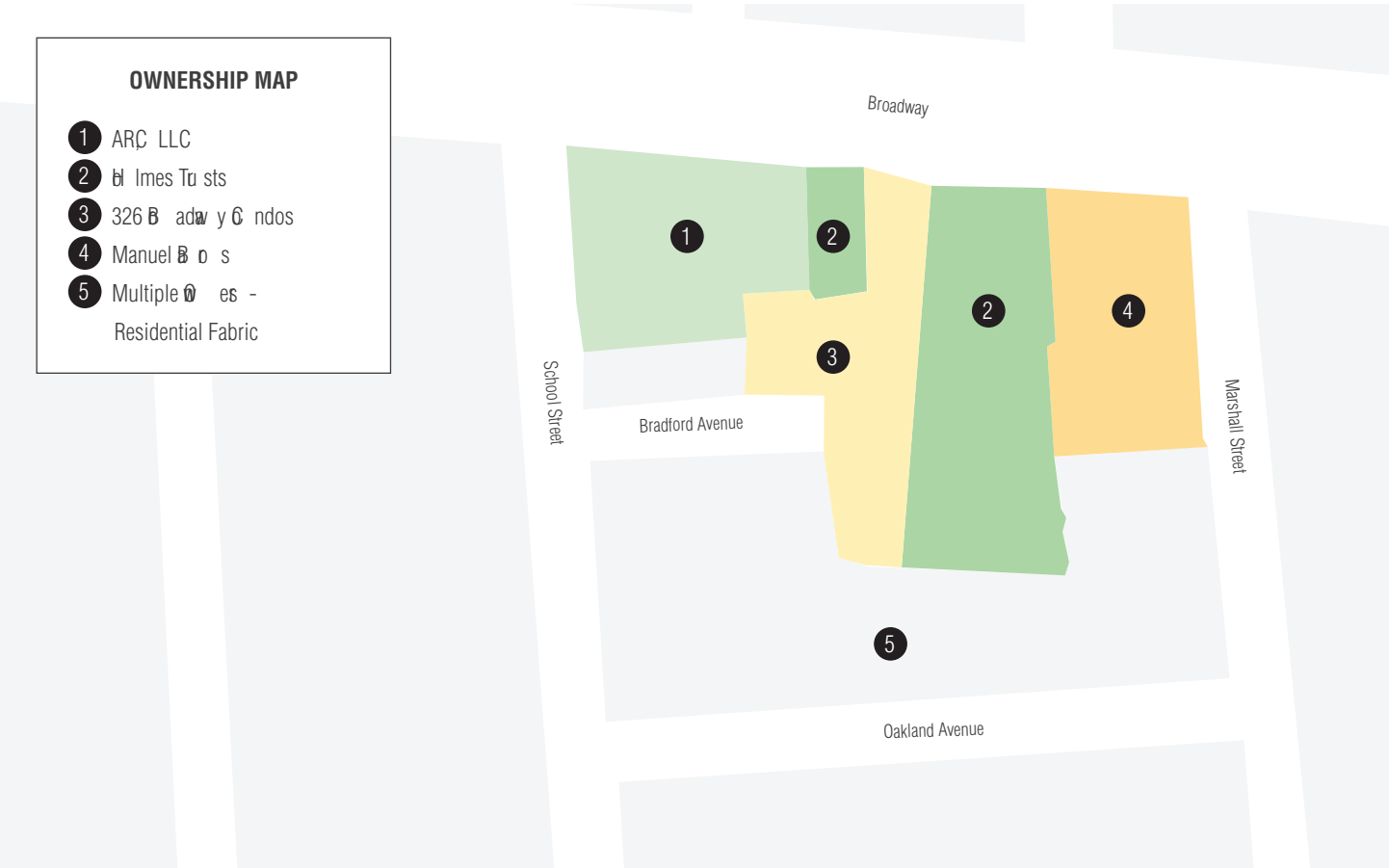
To facilitate any redevelopment of these sites, it's important to change the vehicular access. Currently, the post office, commercial tenants above, and the Bradford

Condos enter and exit the site off of Broadway. These curbcuts only have access from the eastbound direction which creates additional movements on Broadway.

To provide access to the sites and improve walkability on Broadway, Bradford Street needs to extend to provide access to the entire site. Interestingly, the Winter Hill Bakery already uses the driveway between 9 and 13 Marshall Streets as an alley to loading at the rear of the building. Parking for mid-block development can be accessed from Bradford Street. Additional parking created on Bradford Street could possibly be restricted to residents only.

In this redesign, the Citizen's Bank, post office addition, and Winter Hill Bakery redevelopment are mixed use-with first floor retail and residential above with potential for up to 81 new units. In addition to the parking provided for the owners of the Bradford Condos, two new houses can match the existing context of the street. The brewery now overlooks a public courtyard that adds .2 acres of new open space on Broadway.









MYSTIC AVENUE

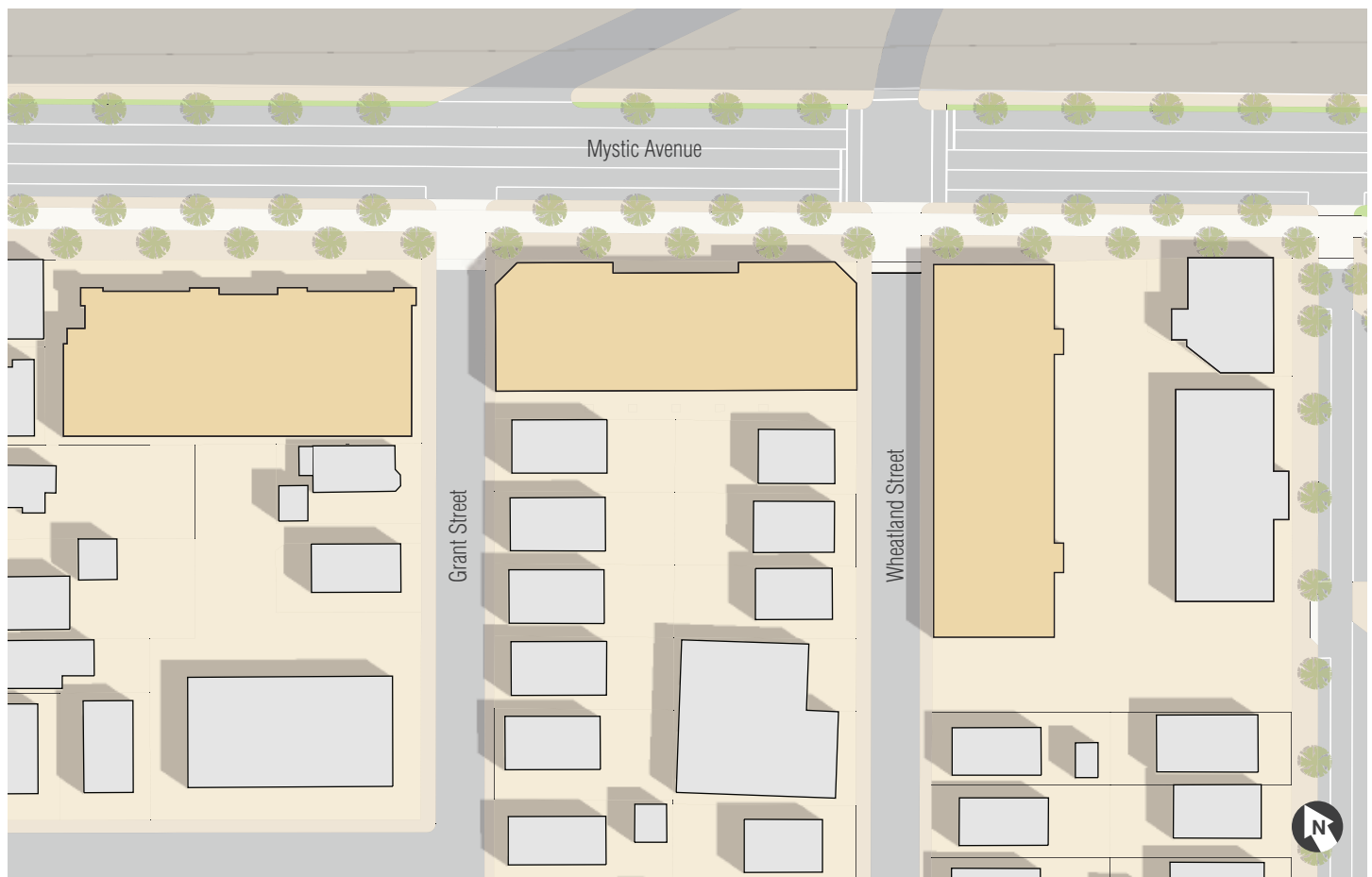
Highly visible redevelopment

Before the construction of Interstate 93, Mystic Avenue was similar to many of Somerville's streets today. Think Beacon Street, a mix of residential and commercial uses at a small to medium scale. After Interstate 93, the street became one-sided and overrun by cars looking to leave, not enjoy the neighborhood. Uses transitioned to auto-oriented and less neighborhood-serving.

The development along Mystic Avenue in some segments is established; from Temple Street west Somerville Community Corporation and the Somerville Housing Authority have built housing developments that meet community need. There are three opportunity blocks between Temple Street and Fellsway West. First floor, neighborhood-serving retail in this area should be emphasized. These uses can complement the use mix on Broadway and can even duplicate depending on demand.

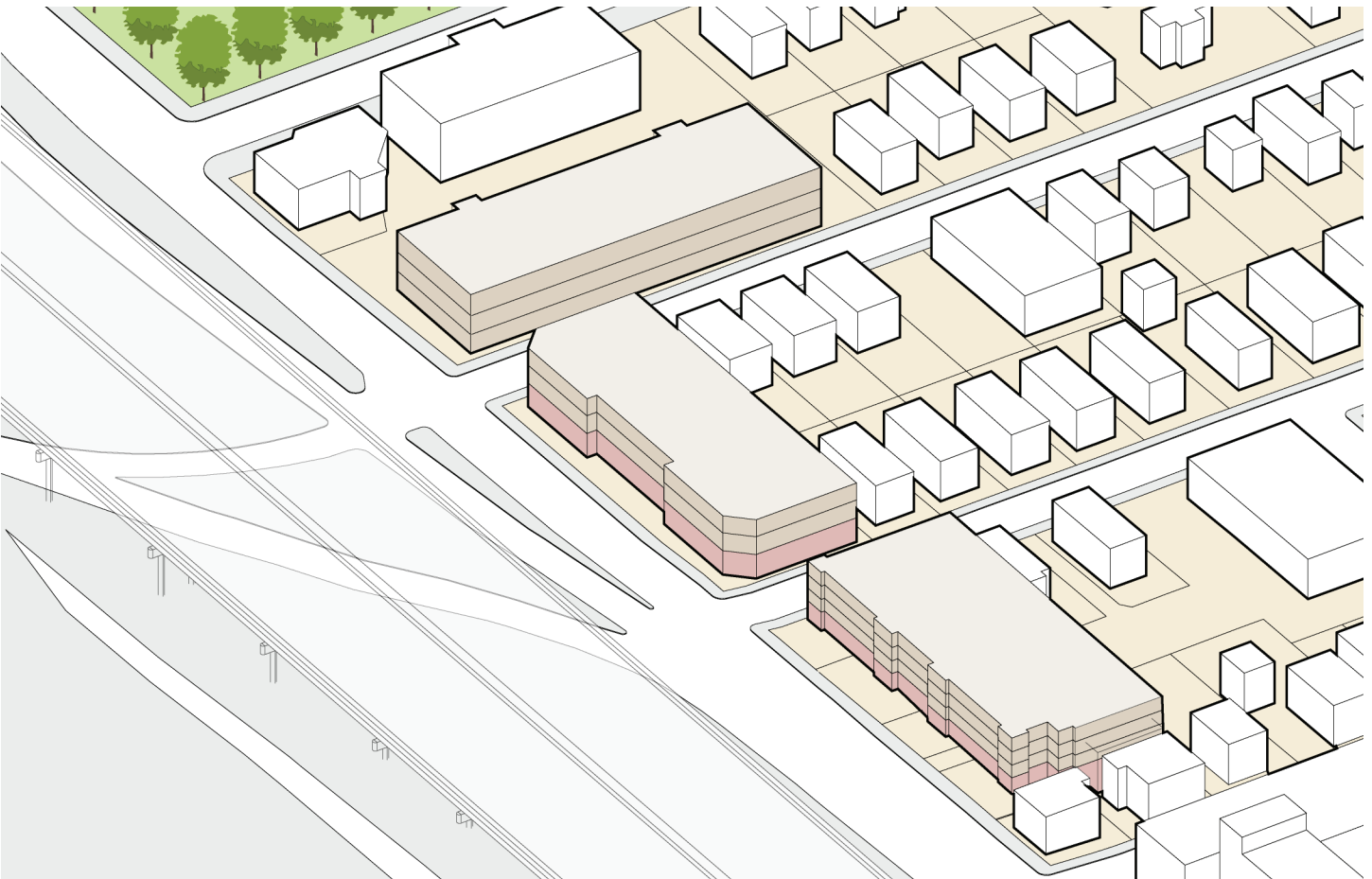
These blocks, for one building, are particularly long for urban design standards. However, to break them up into multiple buildings can be inefficient to the point that they're possibly not financeable because of the shallow depth of the lot. It is important that the design of these buildings is done in a way that breaks down the long façade of the building. By using different elements on a building, the eye perceives the massing differently. Bays, including the alignment of balconies, and architectural elements like a focal point at the residential entrance are design elements that can be used to better fit the context of Somerville.

Mystic Avenue, and the redevelopment of any building on this street, is visible by the thousands of cars on Interstate 93 every day. Although these buildings need to serve the neighborhood, they will also serve as another front door to Somerville.





Above: An example elevation of how design elements can break up the massing of longer buildings.



GROCERY CONVENIENCE

Geographic Opportunity Towards Magoun Square

The market potential for a new grocery store was analyzed. At the former Star Market site, sales exceed demand by approximately \$4.2 million and there are two groceries within a half-mile. A typical market study would deem this market to be saturated. However, looking at the map there is one area of Somerville, also within the Winter Hill plan area, that does not have coverage.

Within the half-mile radius of the Magoun Square area there is approximately \$34 million in demand, enough to support a 40,000 to 50,000 square foot grocery store. Three sites were identified: the Salvation Army family store at 483 Broadway, the Pini's Pizza block at 511 Broadway, as well as a block on Medford Street in Magoun Square.

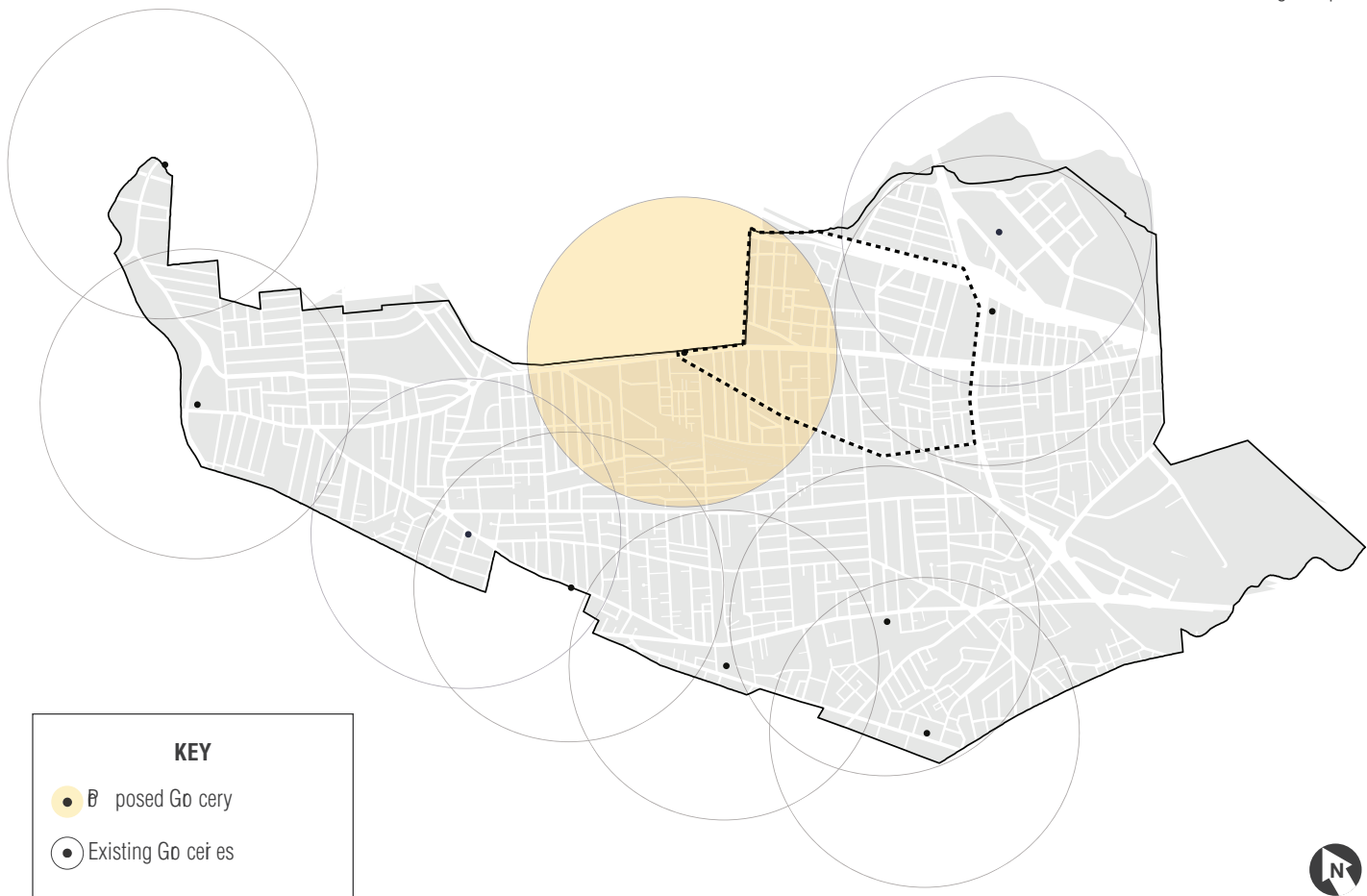
For the purposes of this plan, we've illustrated the idea of the Salvation Army building being converted into a local grocery retailer. Although 40,000-50,000 square feet is not the size of the former Star Market site, it's still an adequate size to bring fresh produce and staples to an

area that currently has no access.

It will be a team effort to recruit a small grocery store to Magoun Square. The OSPCD division of Economic Development in collaboration with Shape Up Somerville can tap into the community of local entrepreneurs and small grocery retailers to make the market in this location known.

Success of this scale has happened in other communities. Hart's Local Grocers was a dream of a Rochester, New York resident that wanted local food, regional cuisine, and daily grocery needs met in his own neighborhood. In his business research, he discovered a former grocery store, named Hart's, that was a neighborhood staple until the 1940's. The idea started there in 2012 and opened in downtown Rochester in 2014. This is a success that's competing with the other successful regional grocer in Rochester, New York, Wegmans.

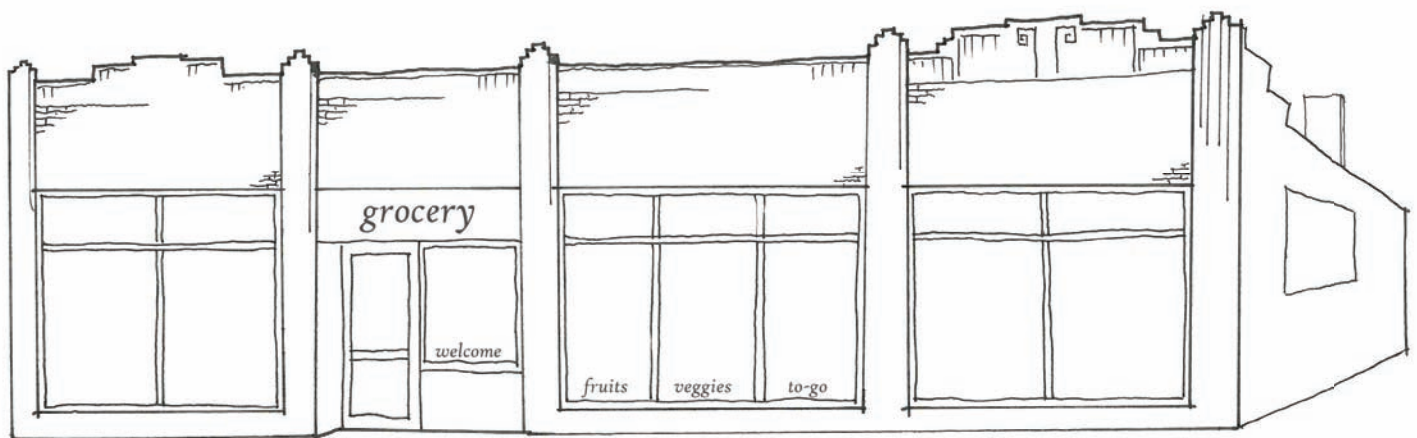
Below: The ideal geographical location for a new grocery store is towards Magoun Square.





Above: The existing Salvation Army building today.

Below: An idea of a grocery storefront in the Salvation Army building



IMPROVE THE PUBLIC REALM

Opportunity for utilization of too-wide street section

SomerVision sets a target of 125 new acres of open space by 2030. Open space can be increased through a number of means: land acquisition, repurposing existing city-owned property, or through the development of privately owned public spaces (POPS) (see the Open Space and Recreation plan for more information on all types). In addition to expanding the amount of open space, the City has made a concerted effort to improve existing open spaces over the last decade to address community needs. In Winter Hill alone, the City is planning 2.35 acres of improved open space at WHCS schoolyard, Healey schoolyard, and Helly Hanson Park.

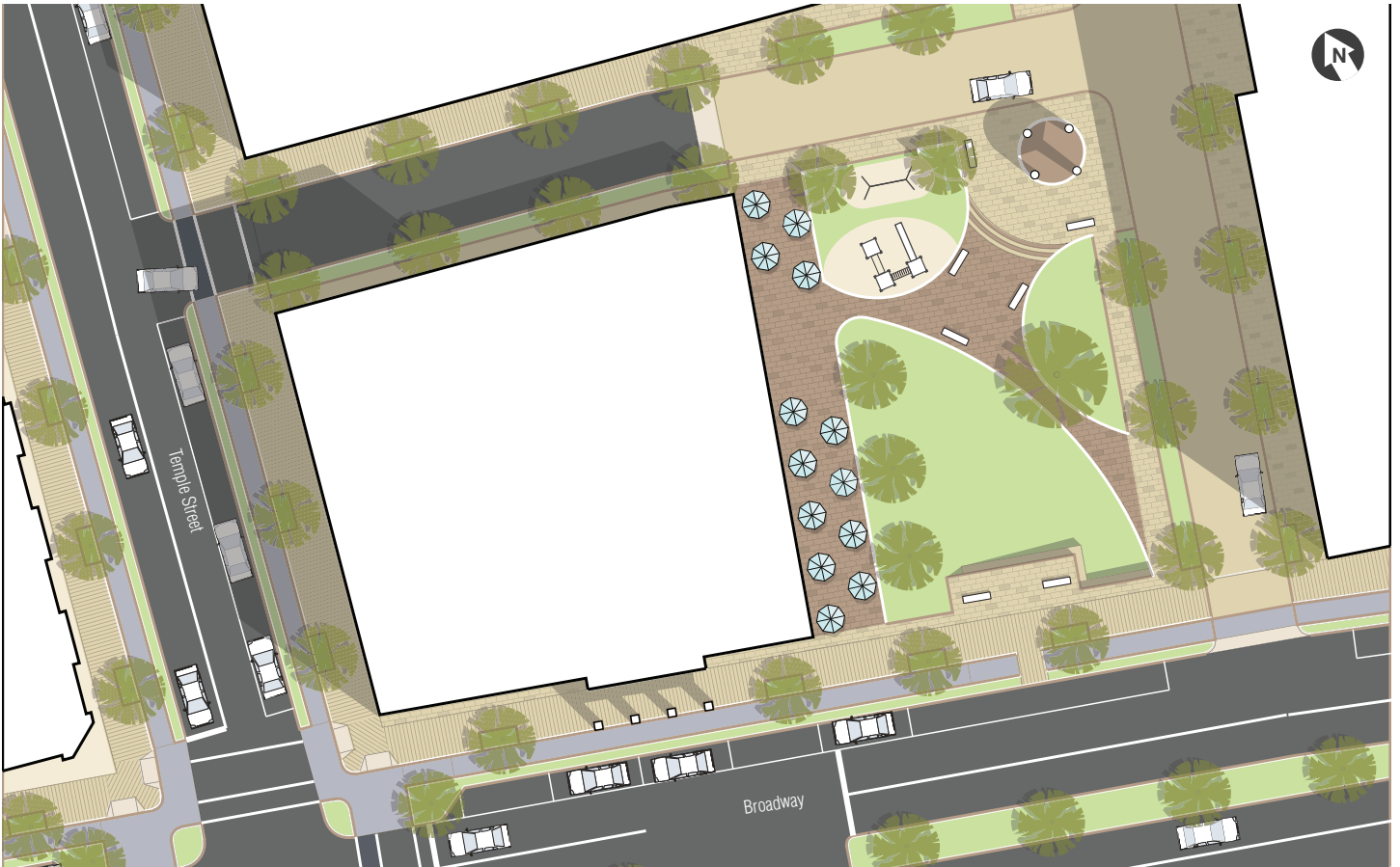
All of these strategies were in consideration during the planning process. The Transportation & Infrastructure Division of OSPCD leads a community process, informed by the Fields Master Plan and Open Space & Recreation Plan, for every new or renovation park project. In this process, they can incorporate the needs identified in city-wide plans as well as neighborhood ideas. Designs shown are for illustrative purposes only.

Two of the three strategies to increase open space were used in creating new open space in this plan. In the redesign of most of the opportunity sites, 15% of open space was maintained as POPS. Additionally, Foss Park was increased in size by right-sizing the area for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles. In total, 1.9 acres of open space was created.

The biggest disparity in access to open space is on the western side of the plan area (see analysis on page 24). However, City staff was not able to identify any parcels in the area with a likelihood of being available for open space acquisition in the near future. During the redesign of Broadway, any additional right-of-way should be considered for additional open space.

Although a property to create more open space wasn't identified. The City is always looking for opportunities to expand and create new open space. The CPA has approved the creation of an open space acquisition fund. This fund will help the City be more nimble if an open space opportunity arises.





Above: The open space created by the redevelopment of Temple Square.
 This space should be the new gathering space for the community.
 Below: Open space created by the redevelopment of Whitcomb Place
 which includes a pocket park on Heath Street.



Mystic Healey Master Plan

In 2015, the Friends of the Healey School with the Mystic Learning Center applied for Community Preservation Act funding to master plan their schoolyard and create a connection to the Mystic River including the Mystic Housing Authority and the Blessing of the Bay Boathouse.

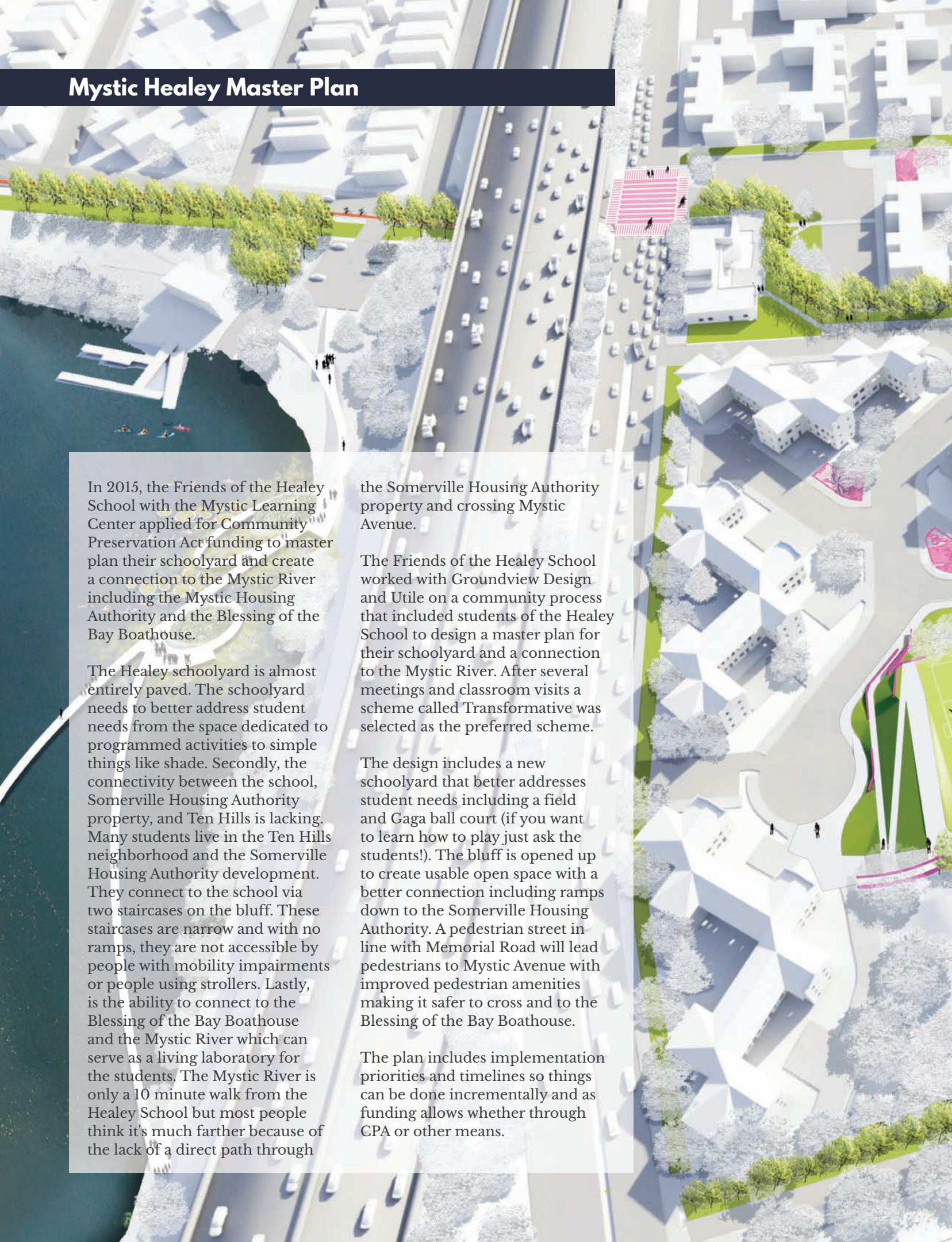
The Healey schoolyard is almost entirely paved. The schoolyard needs to better address student needs from the space dedicated to programmed activities to simple things like shade. Secondly, the connectivity between the school, Somerville Housing Authority property, and Ten Hills is lacking. Many students live in the Ten Hills neighborhood and the Somerville Housing Authority development. They connect to the school via two staircases on the bluff. These staircases are narrow and with no ramps, they are not accessible by people with mobility impairments or people using strollers. Lastly, is the ability to connect to the Blessing of the Bay Boathouse and the Mystic River which can serve as a living laboratory for the students. The Mystic River is only a 10 minute walk from the Healey School but most people think it's much farther because of the lack of a direct path through

the Somerville Housing Authority property and crossing Mystic Avenue.

The Friends of the Healey School worked with Groundview Design and Utile on a community process that included students of the Healey School to design a master plan for their schoolyard and a connection to the Mystic River. After several meetings and classroom visits a scheme called Transformative was selected as the preferred scheme.

The design includes a new schoolyard that better addresses student needs including a field and Gaga ball court (if you want to learn how to play just ask the students!). The bluff is opened up to create usable open space with a better connection including ramps down to the Somerville Housing Authority. A pedestrian street in line with Memorial Road will lead pedestrians to Mystic Avenue with improved pedestrian amenities making it safer to cross and to the Blessing of the Bay Boathouse.

The plan includes implementation priorities and timelines so things can be done incrementally and as funding allows whether through CPA or other means.





FOSS PARK

Opportunity for utilization of too-wide street section

Foss Park is the largest park in Somerville at 13.62 acres. It is a great resource but underutilized and poorly maintained. The City has a history of working collaboratively with DCR to improve, maintain, and program state owned parks. The OSPCD division of Transportation & Infrastructure should work to enter into a license agreement for use and control of Foss Park.

With control of Foss Park, the City can work to implement design priorities outlined by stakeholders during the event including a strong connection across the park between Jaques Street and Blakeley Avenue, a reasonable buffer at the park to mitigate air pollution impacts, and programmed space identified as being needed in city-wide plans. Other design features mentioned were an amphitheater, site paths, an improved pool facility, increased water amenities, and outbuildings including washrooms and concessions.

In addition to improving Foss Park, open space can be

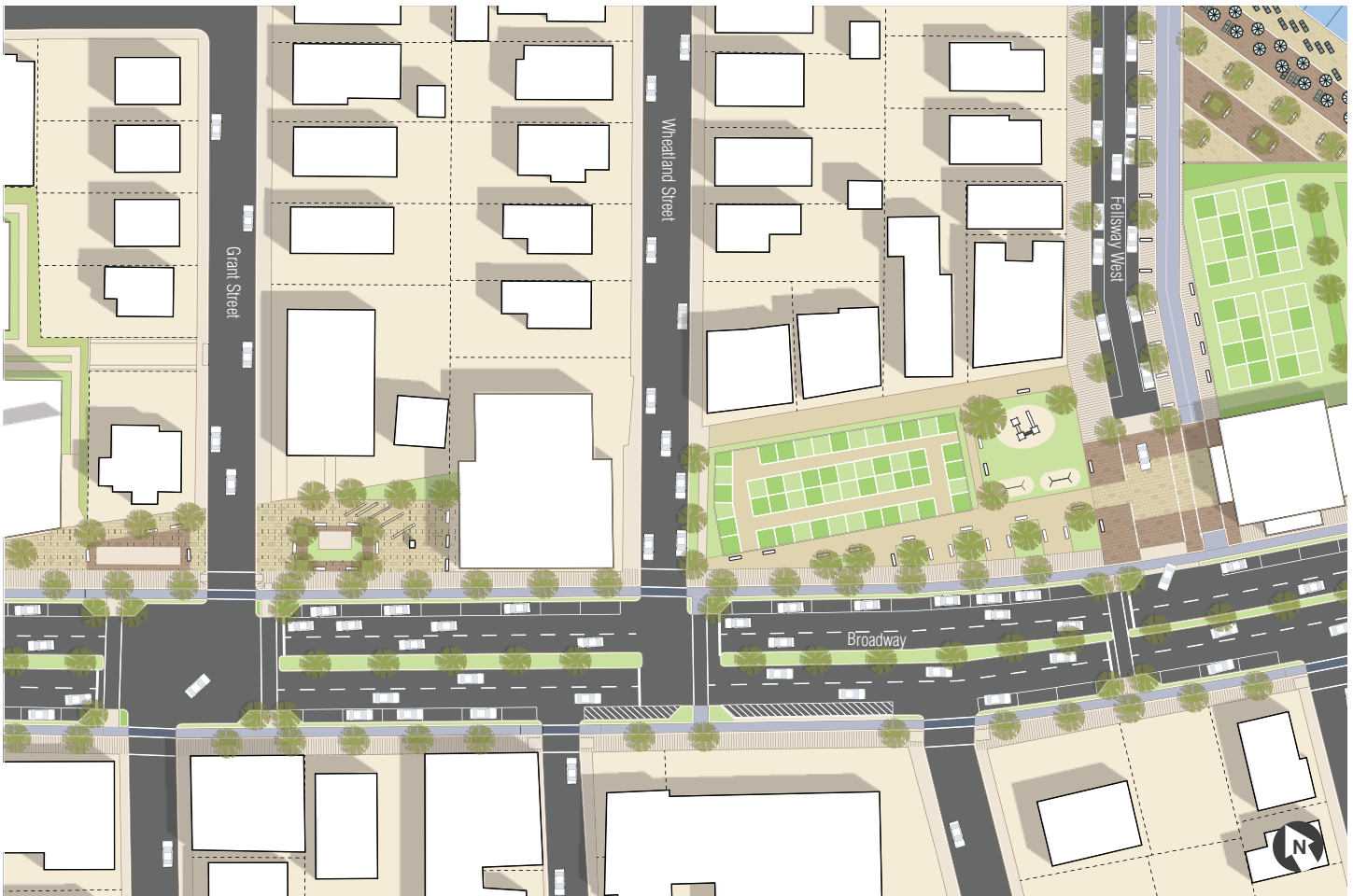
reclaimed in the too-wide right-of-way along Broadway. By right-sizing the Broadway street section, .82 new acres of open space can be created.

Another idea is for an increased civic or non-profit presence at Foss Park. This could take shape in many forms including the City Recreation and Parks Department, the Boys and Girls Club, or the YMCA. At one point in Foss Park's history, the summers were jammed packed with programming and kids running around in the sun. City government or a non-profit is vital to bringing that energy and exuberance back to the park.

The images to the right is one idea of how the goals of the community could be implemented in Foss Park. This is not a final design and would go through a much larger community process when the opportunity to renovate and control Foss Park is executed.

Right: An idea of how Foss Park could be laid out to address community needs and wants.

Below: Expanded open space opportunities by right-sizing the width of Broadway.





TURN AN EYESORE INTO A GEM

Reclaim Wasted Space

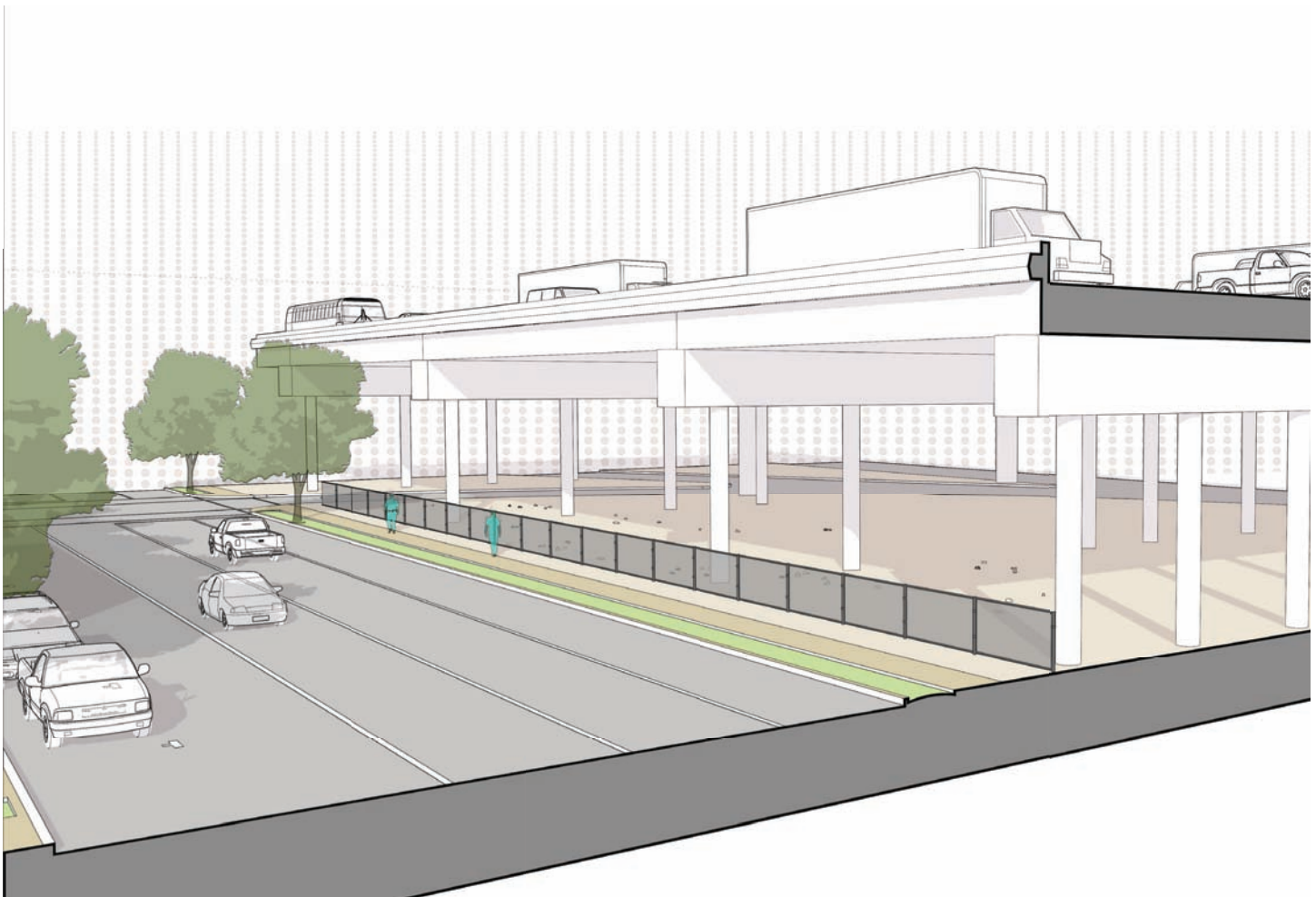
Interstate 93 takes up roughly 5.5 acres of land on the edge of the plan area. The space underneath is dark and scary - it's a mix of highway connectors, the occasional sidewalk, and storage. This area used to be a walkable neighborhood and can be again. In order to knit Winter Hill and Ten Hills back together, it's important to clean up and program these spaces.

Under Interstate 93, a two-pronged solution could provide multiple benefits to the neighborhood. Somerville has a vibrant artists community. The buildings that lend themselves to this use with modest rent costs, high ceiling heights, structure fitting for light industrial uses, open floor plans, and loading docks do not currently exist in Winter Hill. The space below the interstate is a good fit for fabrication uses. The buildings

would increase space available, be separated enough from other uses to not be a nuisance, and provide small enough spaces for new artists. The structures should address air pollution with HVAC systems being in this location.

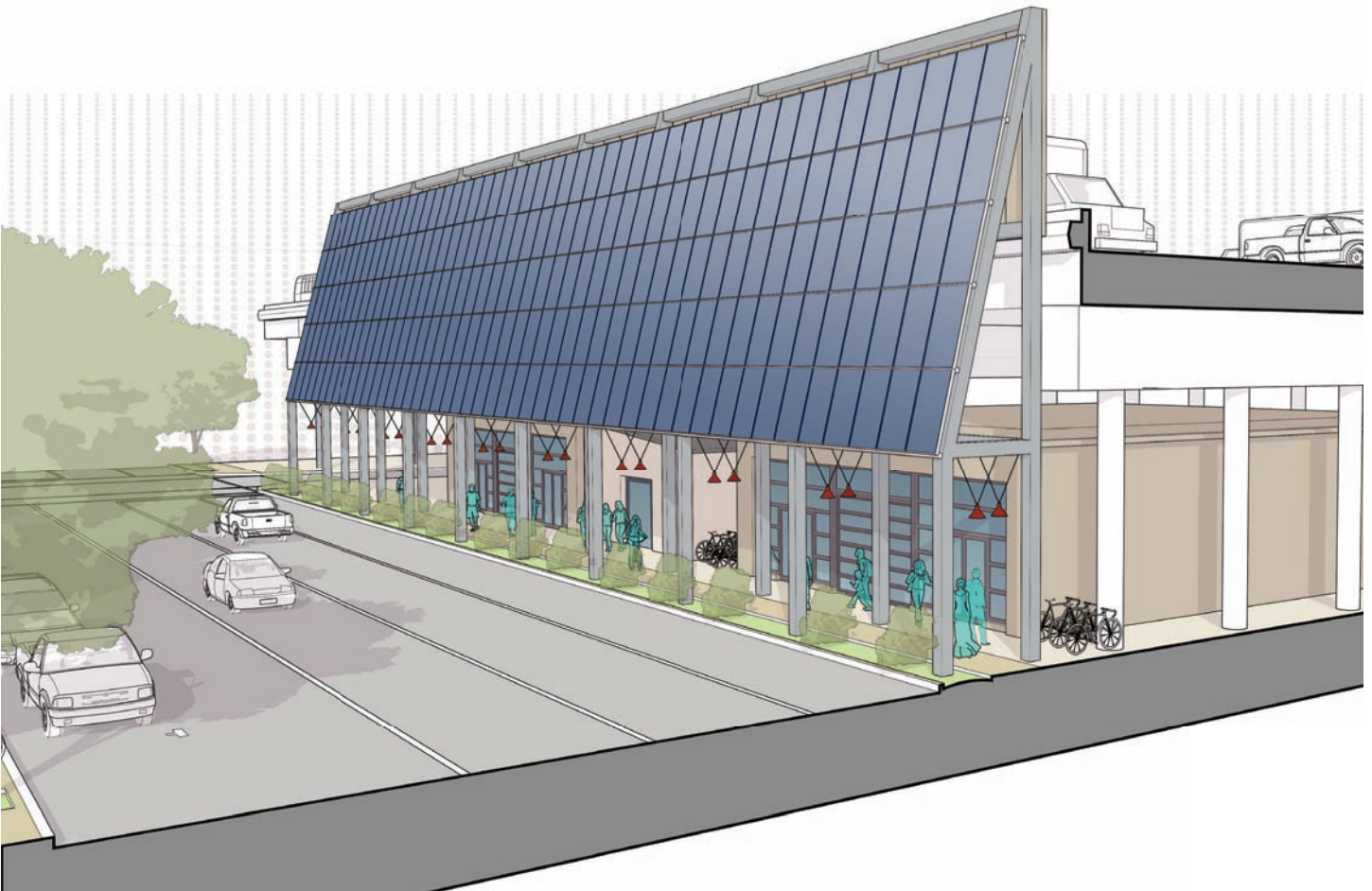
This segment of Interstate 93 lacks the sound barrier that the majority of Interstate 93 abutters in other neighboring communities have. In addition to activating the space underneath the interstate, erecting a sound barrier - but In a Somerville way - will increase livability next to an interstate. The state has been working on piloting solar panels on state land along the Mass Pike. A solar array that both shields the sound from Winter Hill residents and produces energy is an added benefit.

B low: Interstate 93 today.





Above: Interstate 93 with fabrication uses below.
Below: Interstate 93 with a multi-purpose sound barrier that is also a solar array and the fabrication spaces.



MORE THAN DEVELOPMENT

It Takes a Village

The preceding pages lay out a plan for streetscape improvements and infill development that tackle specific problems in Winter Hill's retail market but it might not be enough. Other communities, as summarized in the Urban Land Institute *Ten Principles for Rebuilding Neighborhood Retail* whitepaper, have to rely on collaboration between public and private stakeholders to rebuild a main street. There's no reason why Somerville and Winter Hill would be any different.

As part of SomerVision, the City's comprehensive master plan, residents specifically prioritized supporting small and local independent businesses that help shape the identity of Somerville's commercial corridors and squares. The City will continue to offer programs to help Somerville's small business community in Winter Hill and throughout the city.

Somerville's Technical Assistance Program offers no-cost, one-on-one retail consulting and support on implementing recommendations designed to increase sales, boost confidence, and leverage private investment. Support focuses on customer experience, social media marketing, website development, merchandising, and more. The program recently served eight businesses in the Winter Hill plan area.

The Commercial Property Improvement Program also provides incentives for businesses and property owners to improve the quality of their storefront and improve the aesthetic appeal of the neighborhood. Through a two-tiered structure, participants are eligible for a 100% reimbursement for up to \$7,500 in aesthetic improvements in addition to a 50% reimbursement for up to \$35,000 in structural improvements. The City has served approximately 50 businesses within the program since 2008, including 5 within the last year in East Somerville and Winter Hill. In addition, there are several projects in process in the Winter Hill plan area.

To help market commercial properties, the City created SiteFinder, a database of vacant commercial properties the help link entrepreneurs looking to open new businesses or existing business owners looking to relocate. The City also maintains relationships with local lenders, Somerville Chamber of Commerce, the Main Streets program, Somerville Local First, and other institutions that provide local financing and networking opportunities.

Still, more programs could benefit Winter Hill and need to be further explored. The complete neighborhood analysis (see page 17) starts to uncover what's missing in the neighborhood but Winter Hill needs a neighborhood

market analysis to uncover what businesses are missing and identify what the market can bear. For example, Winter Hill has a gap between food service and a relatively low supply of food service businesses. There should be more sit-down restaurants in Winter Hill to meet this large demand. This type of information is important for property owners and the City in recruiting new tenants. It could also be used to inform use changes in the zoning code to encourage the type of uses needed by providing by-right paths for those goods or services as well as inform any potential tenant recruitment pilot incentives to encourage missing businesses to locate in Winter Hill.

NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION

While work continues on real estate strategies, tenant recruitment, and incentivizing private investment, there are other community-based strategies that can be used to activate a main street or commercial district. In the field of neighborhood revitalization, placemaking has emerged as viable, low-cost strategy in bridging the time before large scale private investment and anchor tenant recruitment occurs. Placemaking can be defined broadly, from short-term events like Winter Hill Better Block, public art projects, pop-ups, and temporary installations, but they are typically united in an interest in cultivating neighborhood "brand" while also being facilitated by a community-based organization. This organization would likely be a quasi-public/private organization and could be the lead sponsor in "activating" Winter Hill while directly and indirectly supporting tenant recruitment by assisting in neighborhood branding. The City needs to research and move forward with the creation of this third party that is dedicated to the success of Broadway. It will take a collaborative effort by residents, business owners, property owners, and the City to achieve the vision for Winter Hill and can build on the success of the Winter Hill Better Block event last winter.

In Massachusetts, these types of organizations can be funded in a variety of ways. The first is with District Improvement Financing (DIF) which takes a percentage of future commercial growth minus existing commercial development to make investments in an identified district. The City could establish an Enterprise Fund from an existing or new revenue stream like a portion of parking meter fees. Another approach is to establish a Business Improvement District (BID). To create a BID requires a vote of the Board of Alderman and State approval, because it increases taxes for commercial properties within the district. Depending on how the district would be defined, a BID would also require a majority of property owners to sign onto a required

additional fee to fund a neighborhood organization. Based on the City's previous successes in helping to organize Main Street organizations in East Somerville (eastsomervillemainstreets.org/) and Union Square (unionsquaremain.org), the City could also establish a Main Streets Organization. Somerville Main Street organizations are currently funded through Federal Community Development Block Grant funding and would require the City working with the federal government in assessing the feasibility of adding a third Main Streets organization. Lastly, the City could fund an organization through General Fund Expenditures, but this would take away from other City priorities.

None of these organizations exist in a vacuum. Theoretically, a volunteer-based neighborhood organization could grow into a Main Streets organization through some level of financial contributions. This organization could evolve and grow into a more formal BID with a larger budget. All of these neighborhood organizations require strong local buy-in and leadership to build a sustainable infrastructure and guide local activities. While the City could provide guidance based on previous work in other parts of the city as well as, potentially, some level of funding, the success of these types of organizations is built upon strong local volunteers.



TYPES OF DISTRICT MANAGEMENT

In Massachusetts, neighborhood management organizations can be funded in a variety of ways. Each comes with its own pro's and con's that are not fully covered here.

District Improvement Financing

District Improvement Financing or DIF's take a percentage of future commercial growth minus existing commercial development to make investments in an identified district.

Enterprise Fund

An Enterprise Fund, in simple terms, is a separate account from the City's general fund. An enterprise fund can be funded from an existing or new revenue stream like a portion of parking meter fees in the Winter Hill neighborhood.

Business Improvement District (BID)

To create a BID requires a vote of the Board of Alderman and State approval because it increases taxes for commercial properties within the district. The BID legislation in Massachusetts is out of date and has not resulted in a large quantity of districts.

Main Streets Organization

Winter Hill is eligible through Federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for a Main Streets organization. These already exist in Union Square and East Somerville but funding is limited so staff generally help organized events and market the district with the help of volunteers and other resources. Due to the funding source, the City would have to work with the federal government to address feasibility of a third main streets program.

General Fund Expenditure

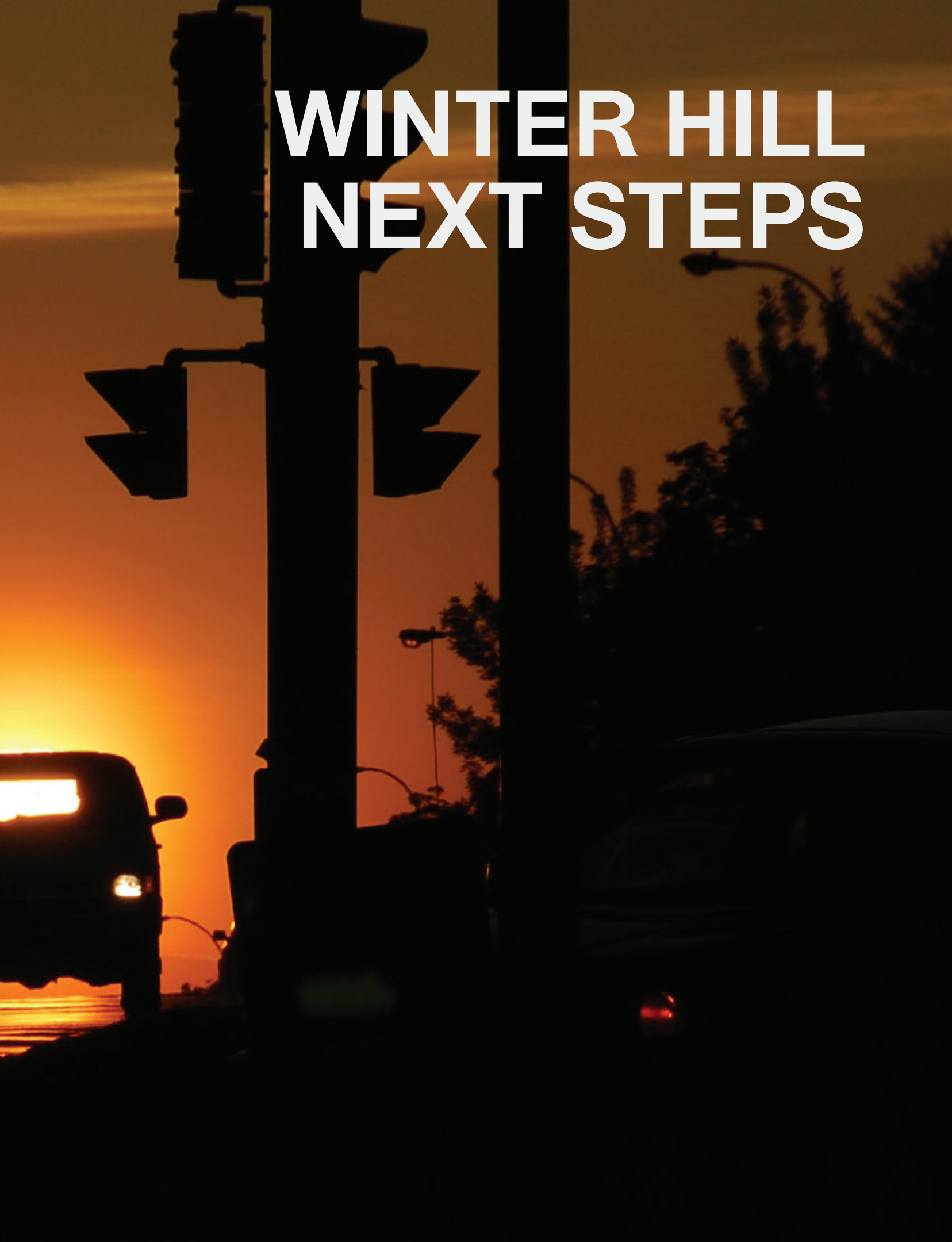
The City could fund a Winter Hill organization from the City's general fund but this would take away from other city priorities.

Left: Union Square Main Streets helps in organizing the Fluff Festival, now in its' 11th year.



Photo by Eric Kilby

WINTER HILL NEXT STEPS

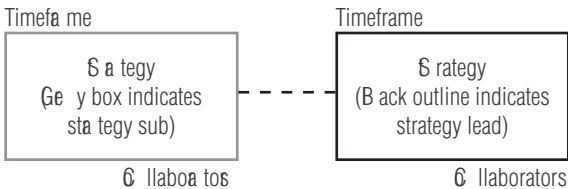


IMPLEMENTATION

Let's get it done

How will Broadway regain its history and become a walkable vibrant main street again? To implement this plan, requires the work of community members, stakeholders, property owners, and government. Currently the real estate market is strong. However, a strong market alone may not be enough to implement a plan. A plan needs private sector partners. In 2015, the City stated their intent to develop a Revitalization Plan under the state's urban renewal law in Winter Hill. The Revitalization Plan is the best tool for implementing a community's goals when the private market is not moving to assemble and redevelop lots that might be holding back the future of a community. This is only one step in implementing this plan and will go along with a greater community conversation about the tools used including a conversation about public benefits in Winter Hill.

KEY



Planning & Zoning

2016-

Continue to try and identify open space opportunities in WH

2017

Implement Zoning that Fulfills the Vision of this Plan

2017

Winter Hill Revitalization Plan

DHCD

Board of Aldermen

As opportunities arise

Close Redundant Curb Cuts

Traffic & Parking

2016-2017

Further Investigate civic and non-profit uses in Fossil Park

2020-

Investigate opportunities under I-93 & release RFI

MassDOT

Transportation & Infrastructure

2016-

Continue to try and identify open space opportunities in WH

2016-

Continue work on Safety Zones

Traffic & Parking

2016-

Expand Bike Network in Winter Hill

Traffic & Parking
Bike Committee

2016-

Improve Transit Service

MBTA

Close Redundant Curb Cuts

Traffic & Parking

As opportunities arise

Improve Connections in Winter Hill

Capital Projects
Community

2016/2017

Further Investigate civic and non-profit uses in Foss Park

2016/2018

Fund and Execute the Mobility Plan

Board of Aldermen
Traffic & Parking

2017-

Continue to enhance Improvements incl. Alley & WB

CPA
School Dept.

2020/2025

Broadway Streetscape

Capital Projects

2018-

Mystic Avenue Streetscape

MassDOT
Capital Projects

2018/2019

Foss Park License Agreement

Board
Legal
Recreation

Economic Development

2016-

Continue to all Business Support

CDB

2016-2017

Identify & Implement best strategies for Neighborhood Org.

Community

2017

Winter Hill Revitalization Plan

Board of Aldermen

2017-2018

Identify & Implement best strategies for Neighborhood Org.

Community

2016-2017

Further Investigate civic and non-profit uses in Foss Park

2017-2018

Conduct a Neighborhood Market Analysis

2016-

Market Magoun Square as a potential Grocery Store location

Shape Up Somerville

2020-

Investigate opportunities at I-93 & release RFI

MassDOT
Arts Council
Office of Sustainability

Somerville *by* DESIGN



**STRATEGIC
PLANNING &
COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT**