

An aerial photograph of Union Square in New York City, taken from an elevated position. The square is filled with a large crowd of people, many of whom are walking or standing in groups. Several tents are set up, including a prominent red one in the lower left and a yellow one in the lower right. In the background, a tall brick clock tower with a circular clock face is visible, surrounded by lush green trees. The city skyline, including various skyscrapers, is visible in the distance under a clear sky. The overall scene is vibrant and captures a busy public event.

# UNION SQUARE PLACEMAKING



# AGENDA

**1** Introduction

**2** Placemaking Objectives

**3** Placemaking Ideas

**4** Retail as an Activator

**5** Small-Business Support Program

**6** Exercise



US<sup>2</sup>

A Taste of  
Union Square

# INTRODUCTION

BELLEAU WOOD  
CHATEAU-TIERRY  
MEUSE-ARCONNE

ERECTED BY THE  
WELCOME HOME CLUB  
OF WARD 2 SOMERVILLE MASS  
1920



# Our Mission.



Collaborate to create a viable development plan that realizes the SomerVision goals for the Union Square neighborhood



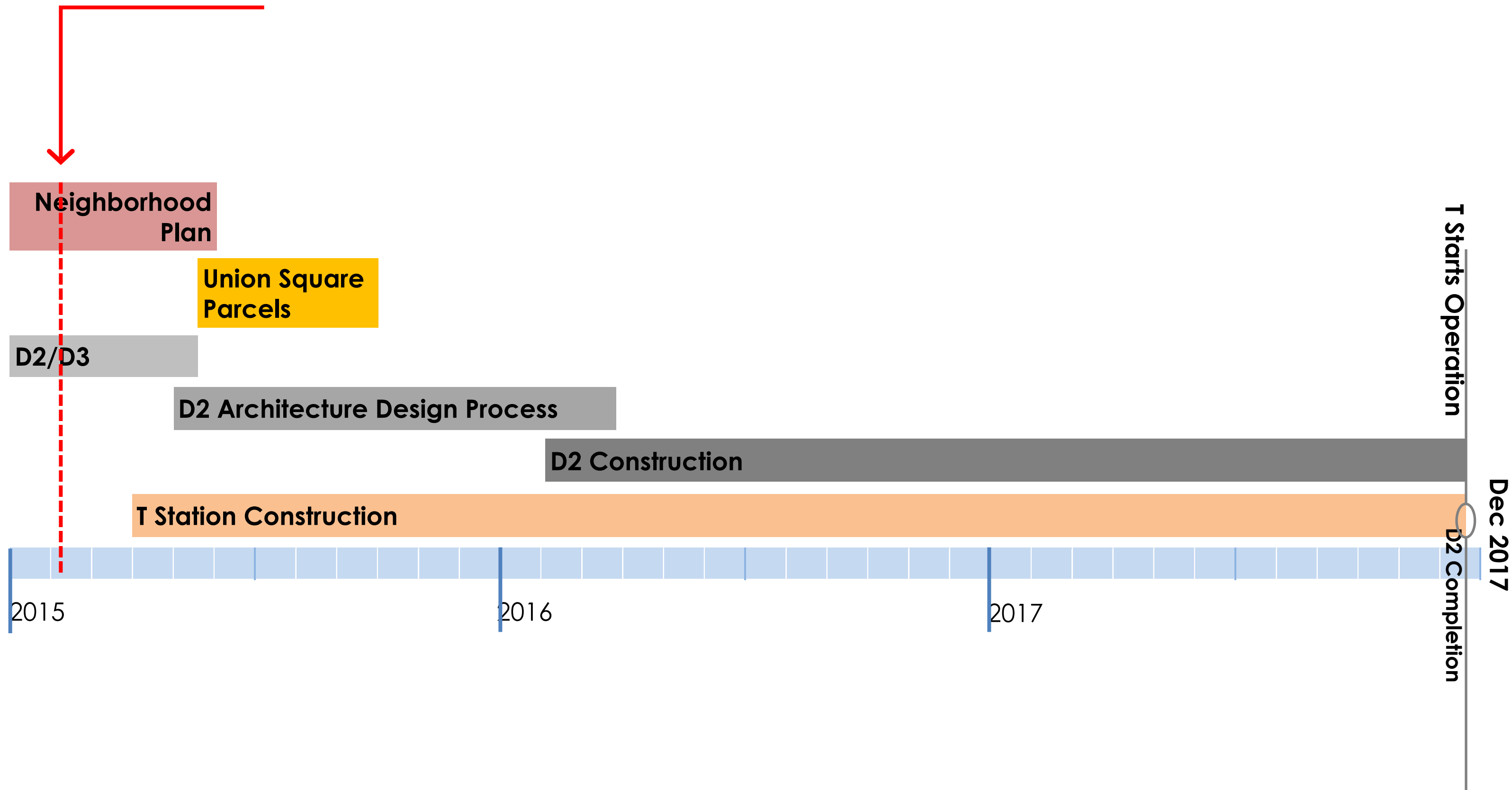
# It starts with you...



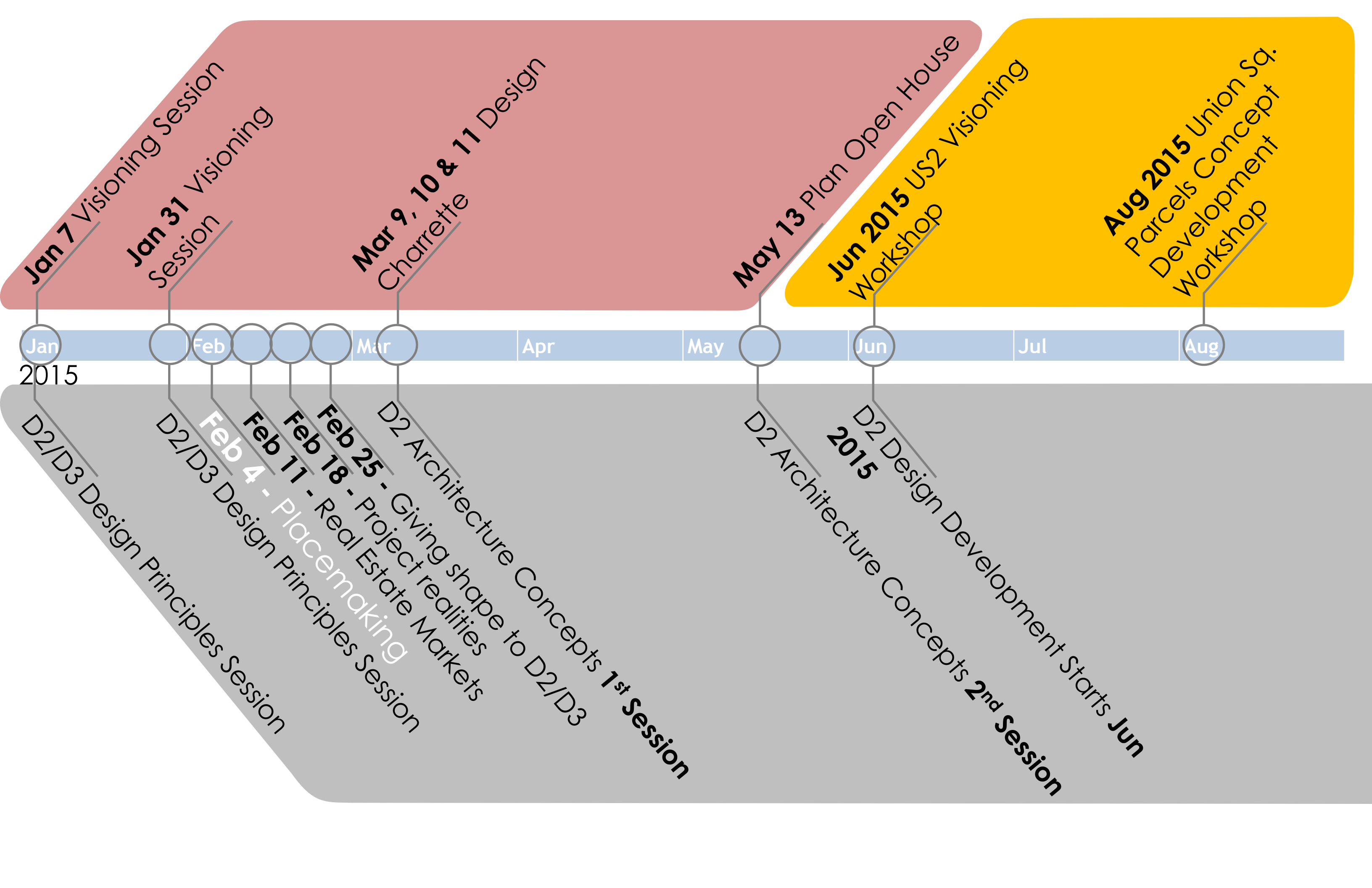
...we will engage, listen, synthesize and create



we are here









# February workshops

Development opportunities and realities

**1** **Placemaking, Retail, Public Realm, Art**  
February 4

**2** **Real Estate Markets/Development Economics**  
February 11

**3** **Project Realities**  
February 18

**4** **Giving Shape to D2/D3**  
February 25





# WORKSHOP GOALS

Discuss our findings with you and learn more about your views





Transportation Authority  
Map

RL  
ALEWIFE

GL  
UNION SQUARE

D2

D3

# WORKSHOP GOALS

Start applying ideas and what we learn to the development plans for D2 & D3...the train is coming!



# WHY PLACEMAKING FIRST?

You asked us to make it a priority.  
In the December survey, **placemaking** and **public spaces** received the most votes as a workshop topic.



# Resources

## Public Realm



# WHY PLACEMAKING FIRST?

## SomerVision, the RFP and the Revitalization Plan Goals

VII. Goal: Design and maintain a healthy and attractive public realm that fosters community connection, including streets, sidewalks, and other public spaces.

A. Policy: The City should plan public realm renovations with attention to energy efficiency, environmental design, visual clarity and ease of maintenance.

1. Action: Continue to increase the number of streets that have active uses.
2. Action: Consider City ordinances to minimize visibility of sale line poles and telecommunications equipment, enforce wire takedown when a communication service is discontinued, and improve visual appearance of infrastructure placed on public poles by private companies.
3. Action: Ensure that all street trees are planted in the Union Square zoning already in place strongly encourage increase the city's urban tree canopy. The Plan has made a priority of expanding sidewalks to the maximum extent possible to include outdoor cafes, markets, public seating, and street trees and other landscaped open areas. Throughout the Revitalization Area, the public realm should include active uses that integrate the public realm outdoors and the private development so that shops and restaurants spill out onto the sidewalk in good weather and people on the sidewalk have a sense of activity and items of interest behind the windows of the building facades. Articulated gateways or thresholds letting people know when they arrive will be encouraged, along with well lit openess and visibility and
4. Action: Base trees

### PUBLIC REALM

The Union Square zoning already in place strongly encourages active uses at creating multiple opportunities to enhance the space in the public realm. It is a priority urban renewal plan to expand sidewalks to the maximum extent possible to include outdoor cafes, markets, public seating, and street trees and other landscaped open areas. Throughout the Revitalization Area, the public realm should include:

- Active uses that integrate the public realm outdoors and the private development so that shops and restaurants spill out onto the sidewalk in good weather and people on the sidewalk have a sense of activity and items of interest behind the windows of the building facades. Articulated gateways or thresholds letting people know when they arrive will be encouraged, along with well lit openess and visibility and



A photograph of an outdoor cafe scene with people sitting at tables under umbrellas, overlaid with text. The scene is set in a sunny, urban environment with trees and buildings in the background. People are seated at various tables, some under large blue and orange umbrellas. The text is centered over the image.

# WHY PLACEMAKING FIRST?

It's critical to a vital mixed-use neighborhood and transformation of Union Square into an employment center.





# PLACEMAKING CONCEPTS






Buildings  
Sidewalks  
Open spaces  
Kiosks/structures  
Trees, creeks, rivers  
Hardware

# Place is space inhabited

Software  
People  
Events and activities  
Art  
Weather  
Culture

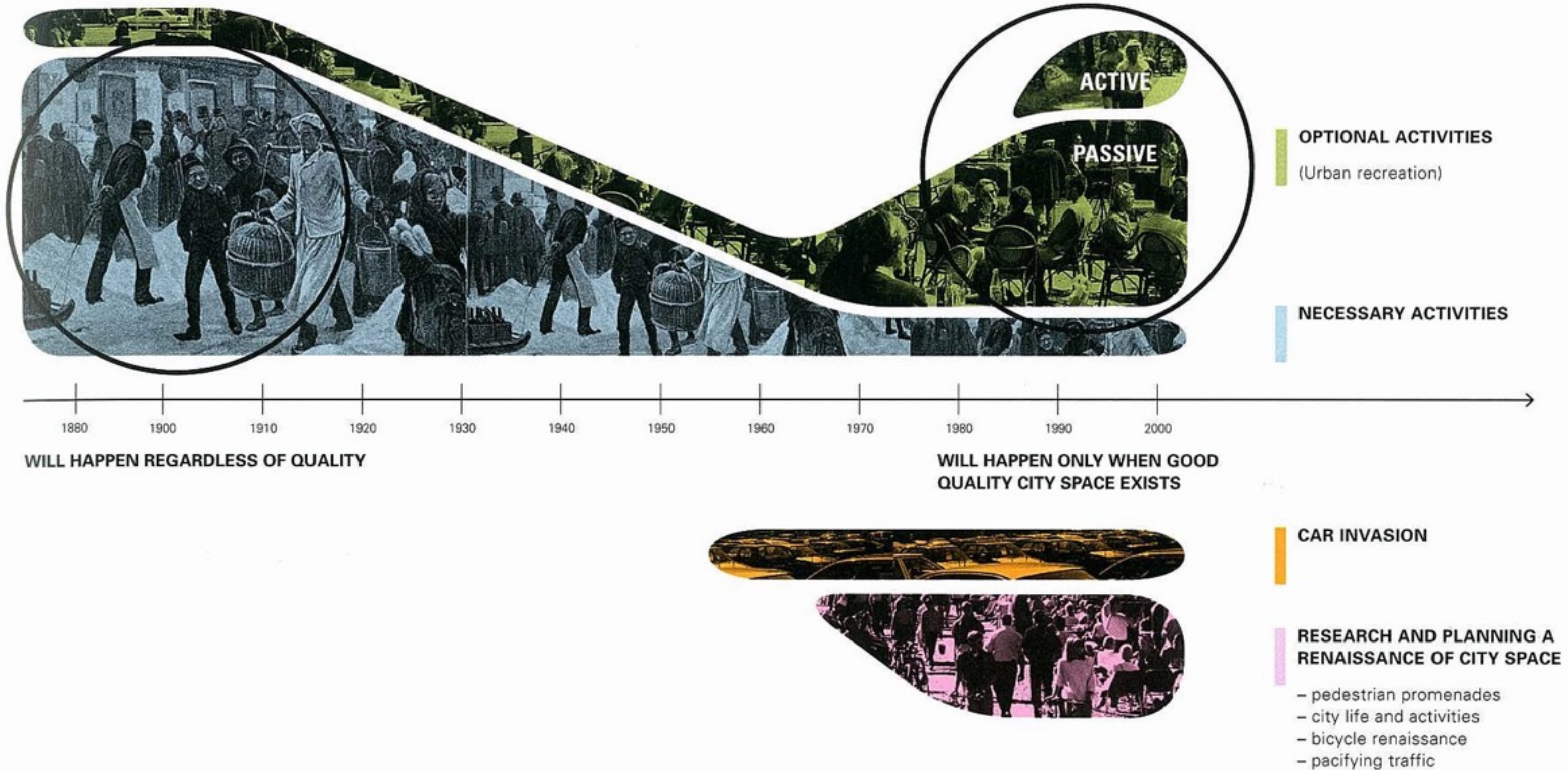




**Pre-requisites:**  
Perception of safety  
Accessibility / convenience  
Activity and things to do  
(high-quality) space



DEVELOPMENT OF CITY LIFE FROM 1880 TO 2005





## Necessary Activities

Will happen regardless of the quality of the environment

Circulation  
Distribution of goods  
Community services

## vs. Optional Activities

Will only happen in high-quality environments

Recreation  
Socializing  
Leisure  
Entertainment  
Cultural



High-social-value areas  
become attractive to  
creative companies  
and business









HARVARD YARD





PALEY PARK, NEW YORK





ATOCHA STATION, MADRID





RUE ST. DENIS, MONTREAL





MONTREAL CBD



New York.  
Essex- & Hester  
Streets.

CALLAHAN  
140 BOWERY

119

MAY

1900

HESTER STREET, NEW YORK, CIRCA 1900

Copyright by Brown Bros. N. Y.

*Handwritten signature or initials*





New York.  
Essex- & Hester  
Streets

Strolling

Commerce

Socializing

Deliveries

HESTER STREET, NEW YORK, CIRCA 1900

Copyright by Brown Bros. N. Y.



New York.  
Essex- & Hester  
Streets.

CALLAHAN  
140 BOWERY

← Entire width of the road  
used as public space →

HESTER STREET, NEW YORK, CIRCA 1900

Copyright by Brown Broa. N. Y.

1893





Retail

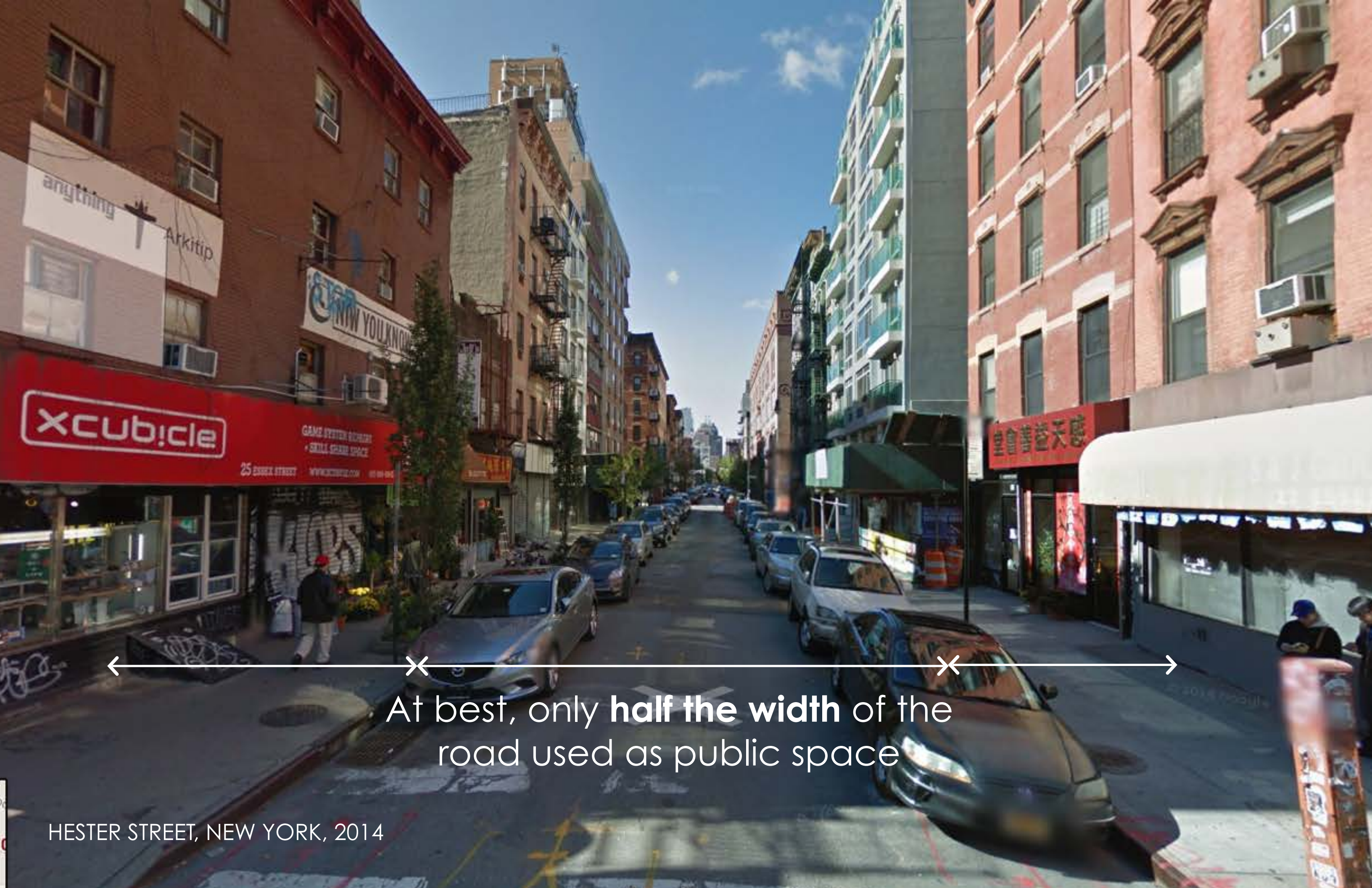
Car circulation

Parking

Sidewalks

HESTER STREET, NEW YORK, 2014





At best, only **half the width** of the  
road used as public space

HESTER STREET, NEW YORK, 2014





Balanced use of the public realm

MERCADO DE SAN MIGUEL, MADRID





Sitting/Staying

Destination

Car circulation

Unobtrusive parking

Residential

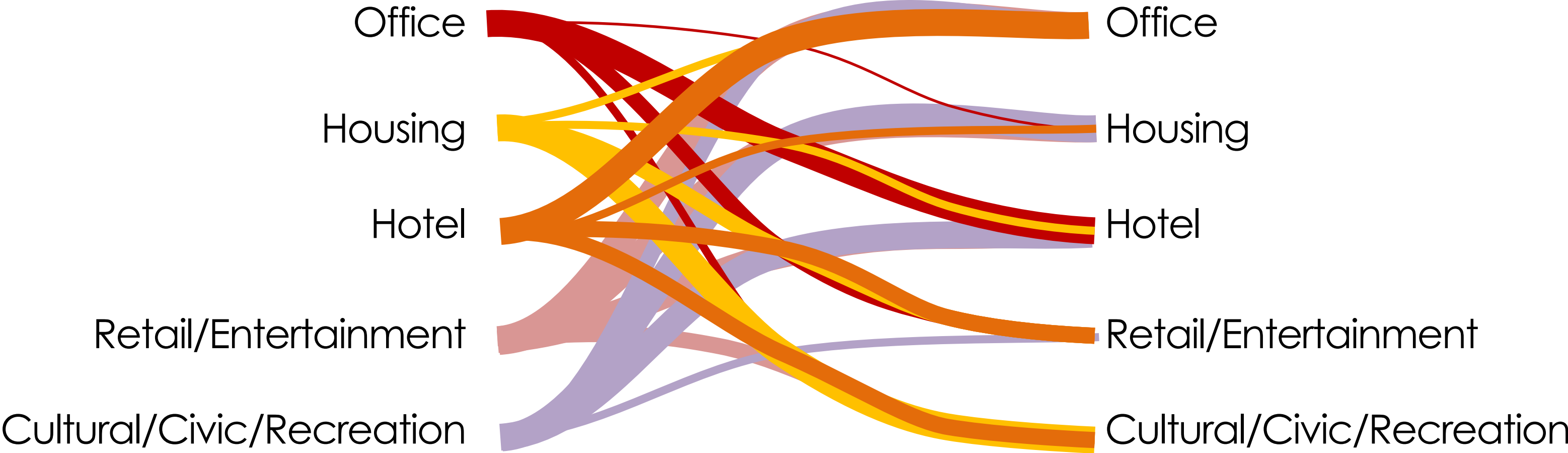
Neighborhood retail

Generous sidewalks

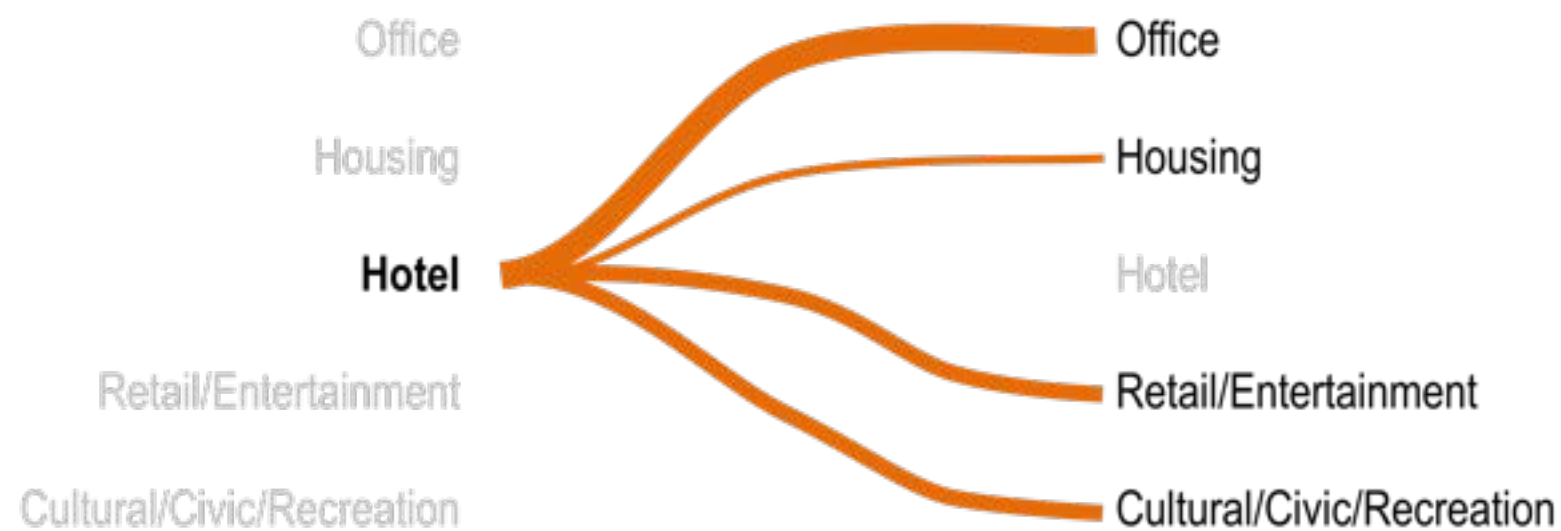
MERCADO DE SAN MIGUEL, MADRID



# Land use synergies







SOURCE: URBAN LAND INSTITUTE



# Guiding Principles for Union Square

- Successful places fuse a great public realm, sensible architectural forms and interesting things to do.

- Places are for people; therefore, they have to create an emotional connection with users.

- Places succeed when they strike a careful balance among activation, design quality and community appropriation.

- Understanding the synergies among different uses gives us a powerful tool for calibrating the mix to a place's specific cultural, social and environmental conditions.



# Developing a Vision

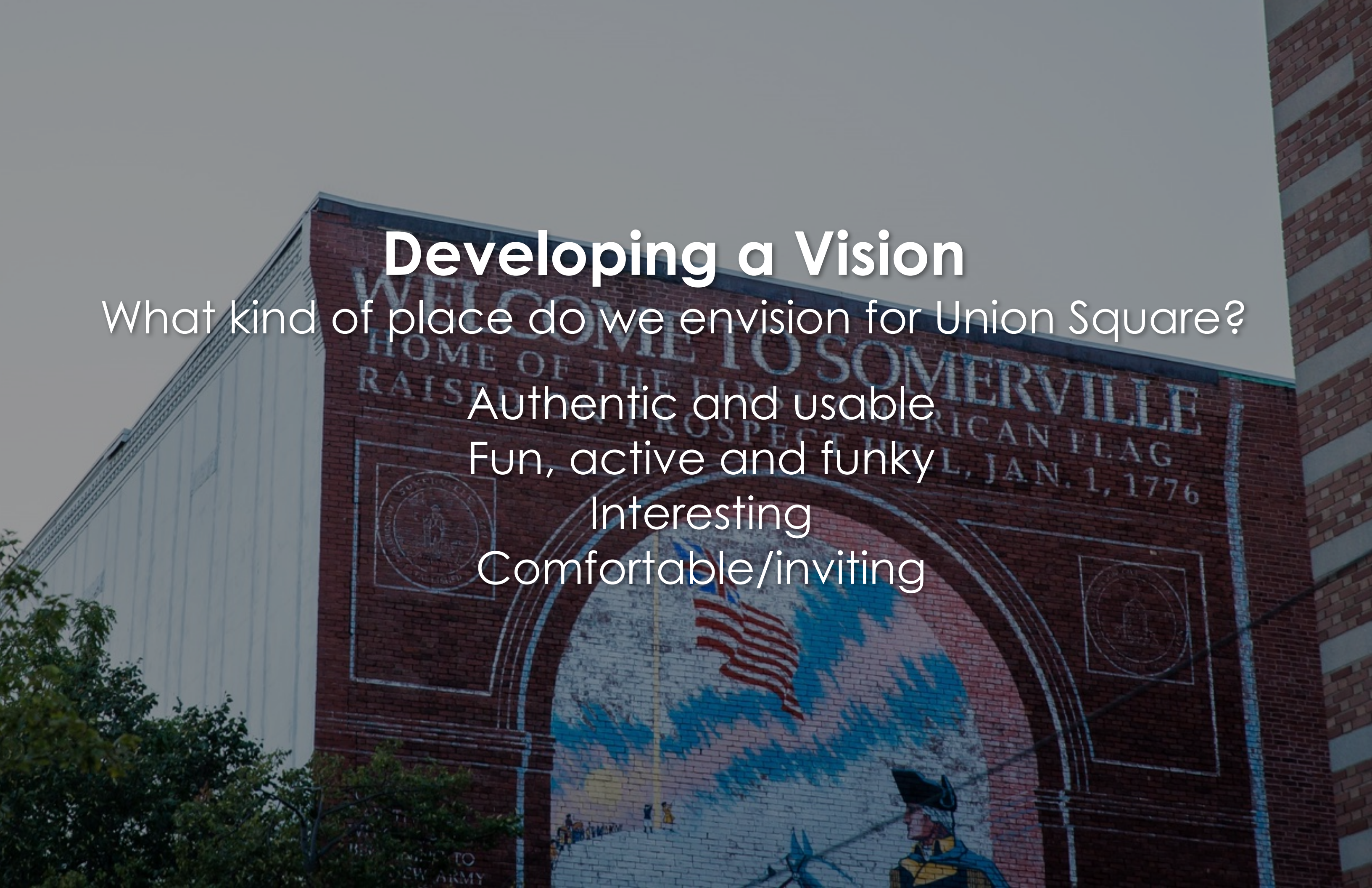
What kind of place do we envision for Union Square?

Authentic and usable

Fun, active and funky

Interesting

Comfortable/inviting





# PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN:

## ART, GREEN SPACE AND THE PUBLIC REALM

DRAFT for Community Review  
October 2014

### COMMUNITY OUTPUT:

The following principles and ideas represent the synthesized output of the three-part community-driven visioning process titled “The Space in Between: Art, Green Space and the Public Realm”.

A complete list of speakers and appears at the end of the report.



- ① Who is the public?
- ② What is art/space?
- ③ What are we going to do about it?
- ④ Who are we going to collaborate with?
- ⑤ How create infrastructure we can interact with?





## PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN:

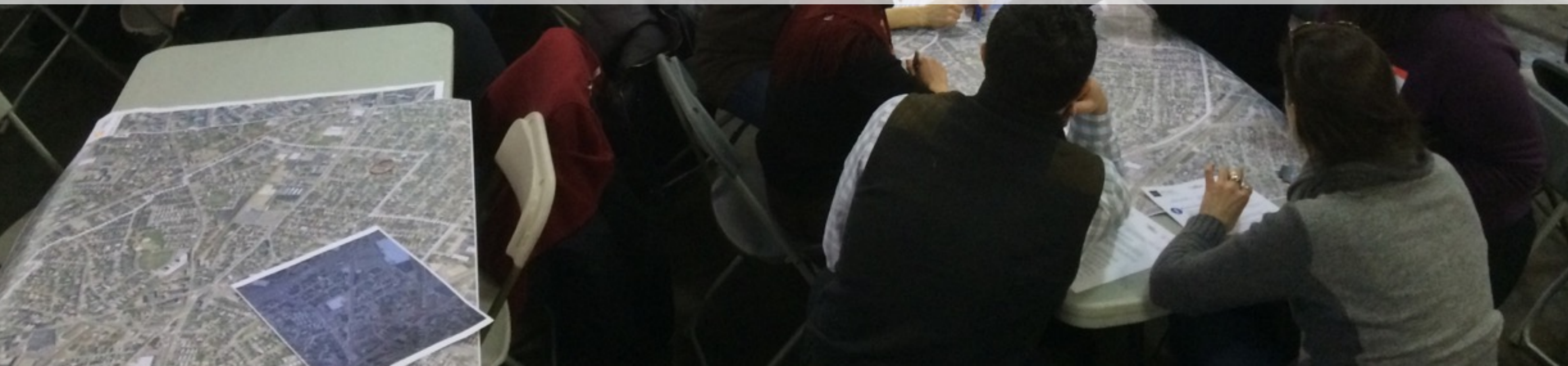
**These concepts have inspired a lot of thinking. Initial ideas include:**

- Re-connect the neighborhood.
- Respect the edge between public and private.
- Recognize the environment as the product of design and financial decisions.
- Use art to bring spaces into the community's awareness.
- Include a bus-stop-consolidation strategy.





You already shared several placemaking ideas at the D2/D3 visioning sessions on January 7 and 31.





# D2/D3 Visioning Ideas





# Your ideas

## Space/hardware:

- Plants/trees
- Wider sidewalks
- Steps/ramp next to T station
- Covered or partially covered stairs
- Variety of materials
- Heated and covered access to T
- Meeting spaces
- Green walls



# Your ideas

## Space/hardware:

- “Interrupted” facades
- Grand stair incorporating sitting/meeting spaces
- Variety of shapes, buildings, storefronts
- Second-level retail
- No monolithic structures
- Internal passages/mid-block connections
- Areas to mingle, public places to sit





# Your ideas

## Inhabit/software:

- **Cultural:** Library, performance space, music venue
- **Retail:** Local retail, no chains, affordable. Larger stores in D3. Grocery store. Dry cleaner. Kiosk. Drugs dispensary. Art supplies store. Book store. Bike supplies. Ricky's flower market.
- **Housing:** Increase density to relieve market pressure. Affordability.
- **Office:** Bring a large employer like Harvard Vanguard in Davis—ideally one that provides a valuable public service.
- **Art:** ...in some form.
- **Making it yours:** Allow skateboard, rollerblade and bike access; events; something that says “Welcome to Somerville”; spaces to mingle.







A Taste of  
Union Square

# **Union Square's Assets**

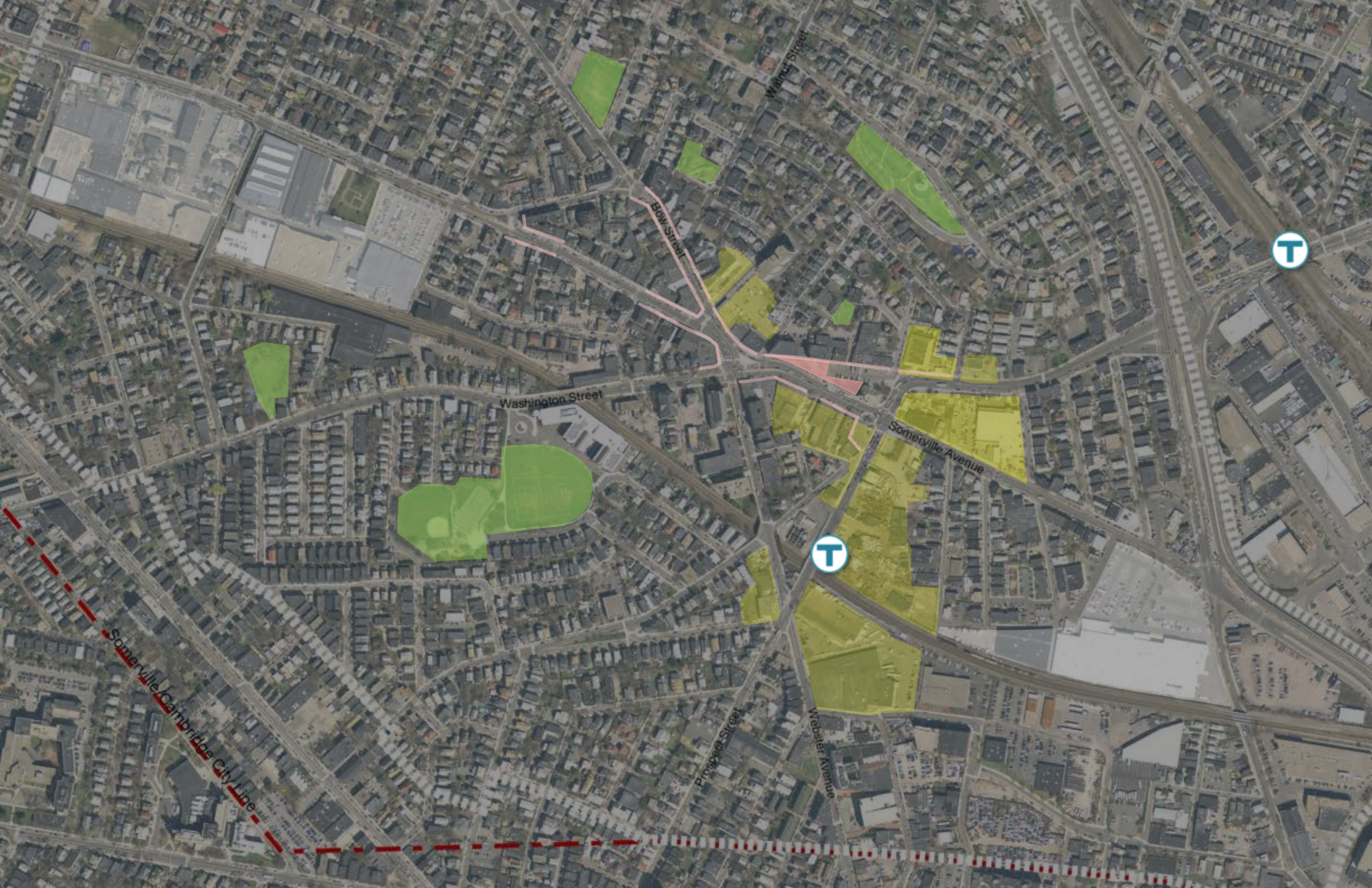
The foundation of a great place





Character  
Identity  
Presence  
History  
Community





Somerville/Cambridge City Line

Washington Street

Bow Street

Walnut Street

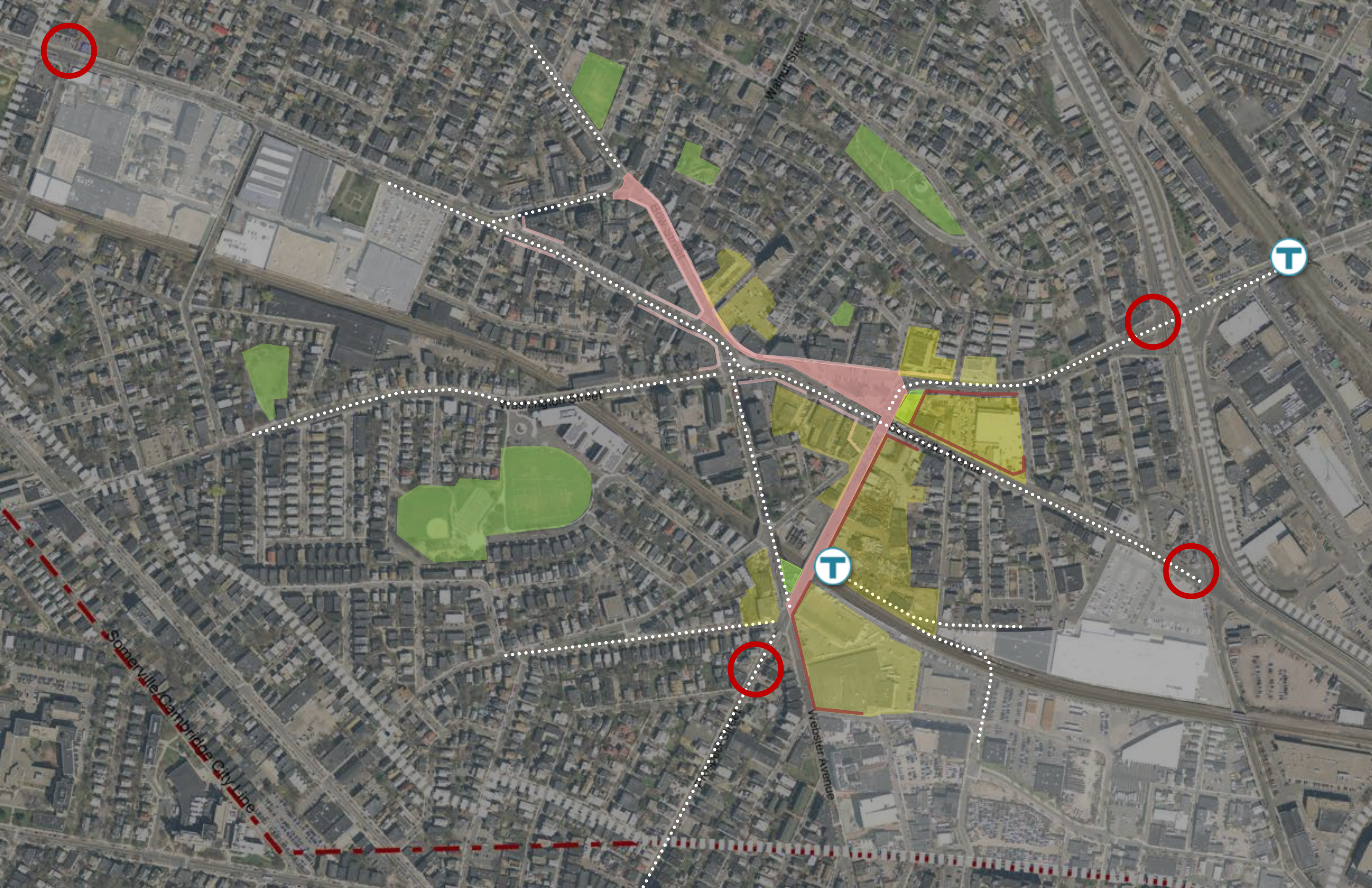
Somerville Avenue

Prospect Street

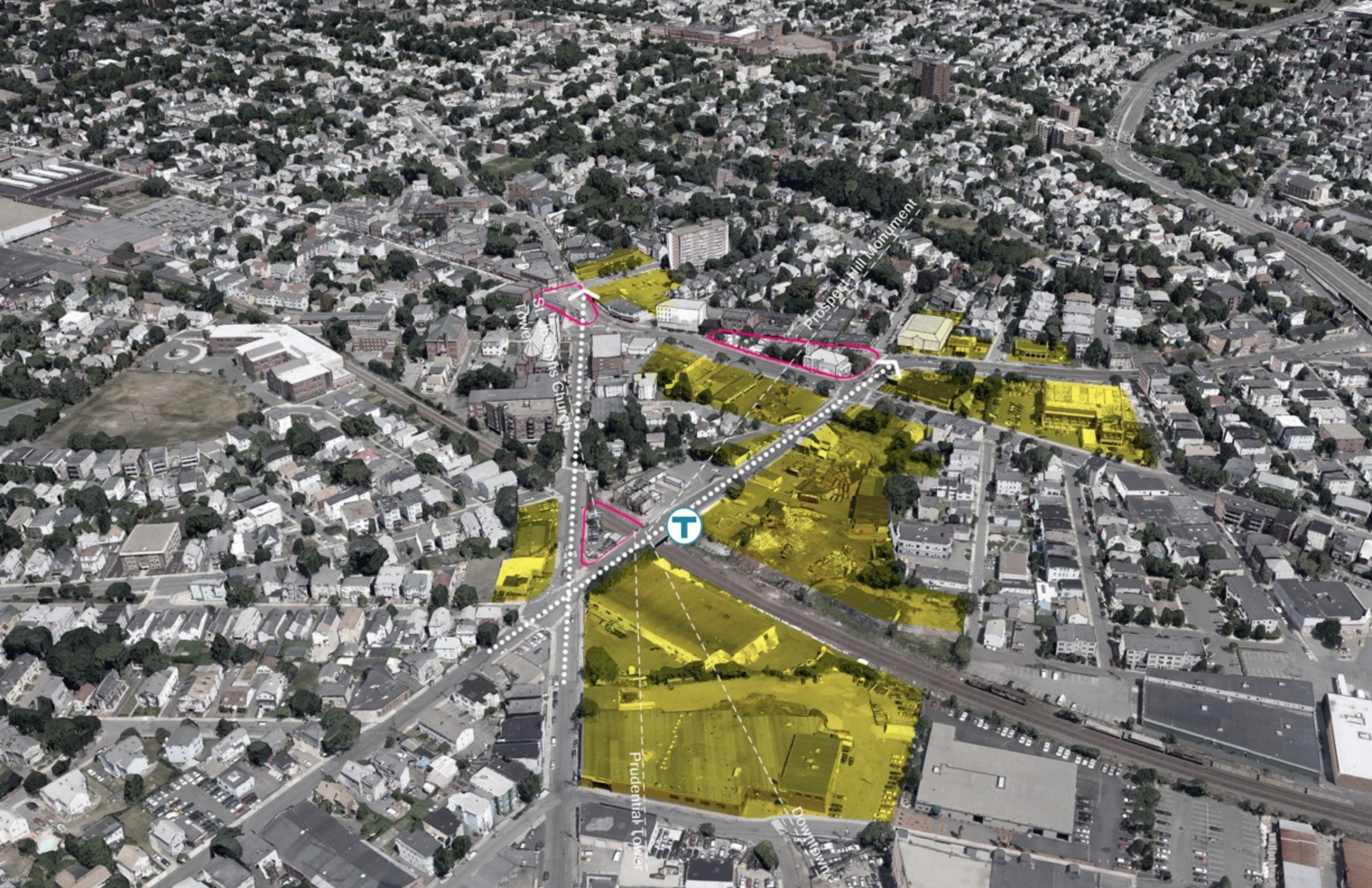
Webster Avenue











St. Joseph's Church

Prospect Hill Monument



Prudential Tower

Downtown



An aerial photograph of a vibrant city street scene, likely in New York City. The street is filled with a large crowd of people, many of whom are walking or standing. Several colorful tents are set up along the sidewalks, including a prominent red one in the lower left and a yellow one in the lower right. In the background, a tall brick clock tower with a circular clock face stands out among the trees. The city skyline, including various skyscrapers, is visible in the distance under a clear sky. The overall atmosphere is one of a busy, lively urban event.

# PLACEMAKING IDEAS



An aerial photograph of Union Square in New York City. The square is filled with a large crowd of people, many of whom are walking or standing in groups. There are several colorful tents set up, including a prominent red one in the lower left and a yellow one in the center. The square is surrounded by lush green trees. In the background, the city skyline is visible, featuring a prominent brick clock tower with a white face and hands. To the right, a building with a "DUCATI" sign is visible. The overall scene is vibrant and bustling, capturing a lively public event or festival.

# WHERE IS UNION SQUARE?





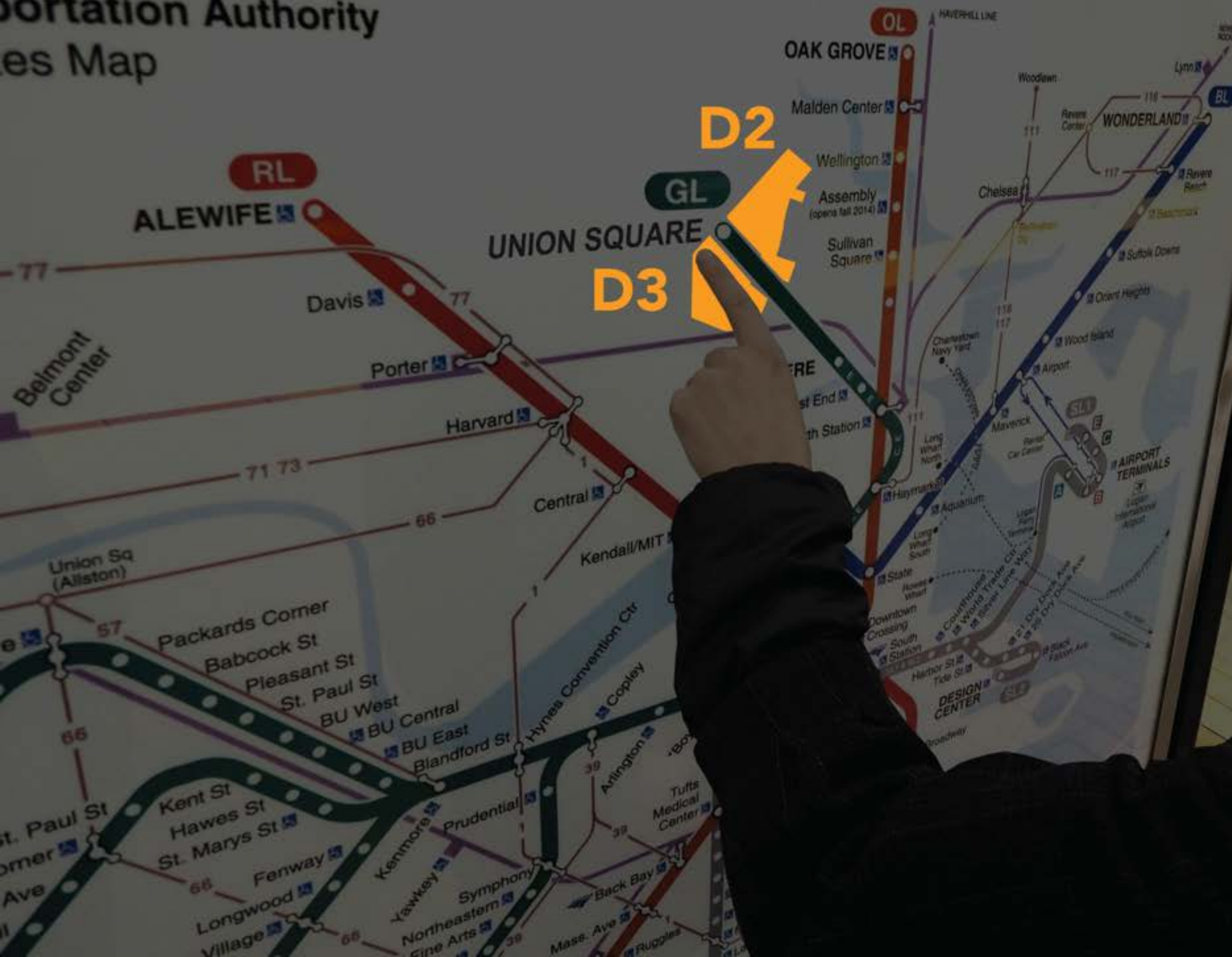


# Transportation Authority Map

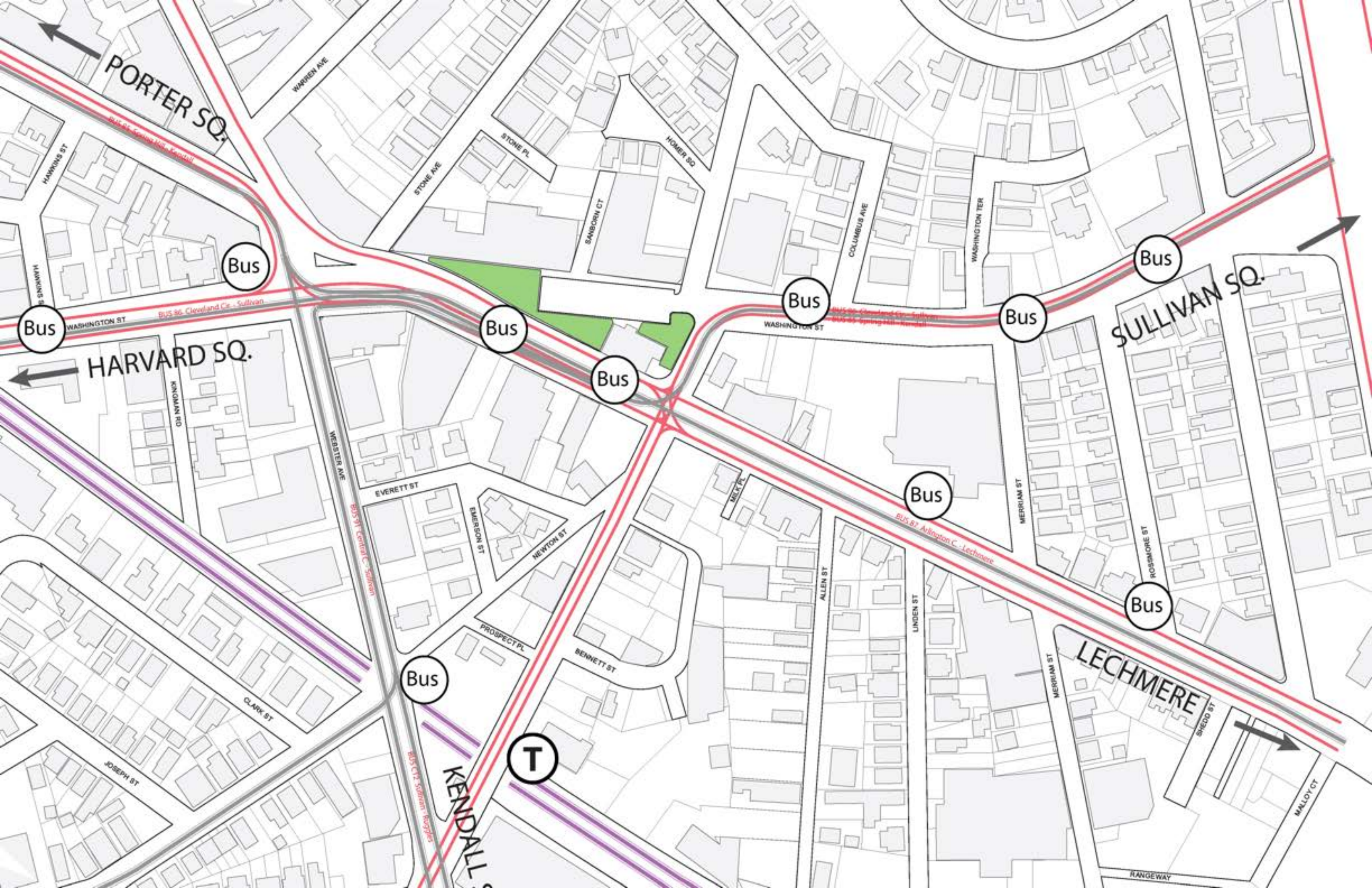




**Transportation Authority**  
**es Map**







PORTER SQ.

Bus

Bus

HARVARD SQ.

Bus

Bus

Bus

Bus

Bus

SULLIVAN SQ.

Bus

Bus

Bus

T

KENDALL

LECHMERE

MALLOY CT

RANGEWAY

HAWKINS ST

HAWKINS ST

KINOMAN RD

WEBSTER AVE

EVERETT ST

EMERSON ST

NEWTON ST

PROSPECT PL

BENNETT ST

MILK PL

ALLEN ST

LINDEN ST

MERRIAM ST

SHEDD ST

WARREN AVE

STONE AVE

STONE PL

SANBORN CT

HOMER SQ

COLUMBUS AVE

WASHINGTON TER

ROSSMORE ST

PORTER SQ.

Bus

Bus

HARVARD SQ.

Bus

Bus

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Bus

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SULLIVAN SQ.

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Bus

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Bus

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ROSSMORE ST





WHO IS HERE?











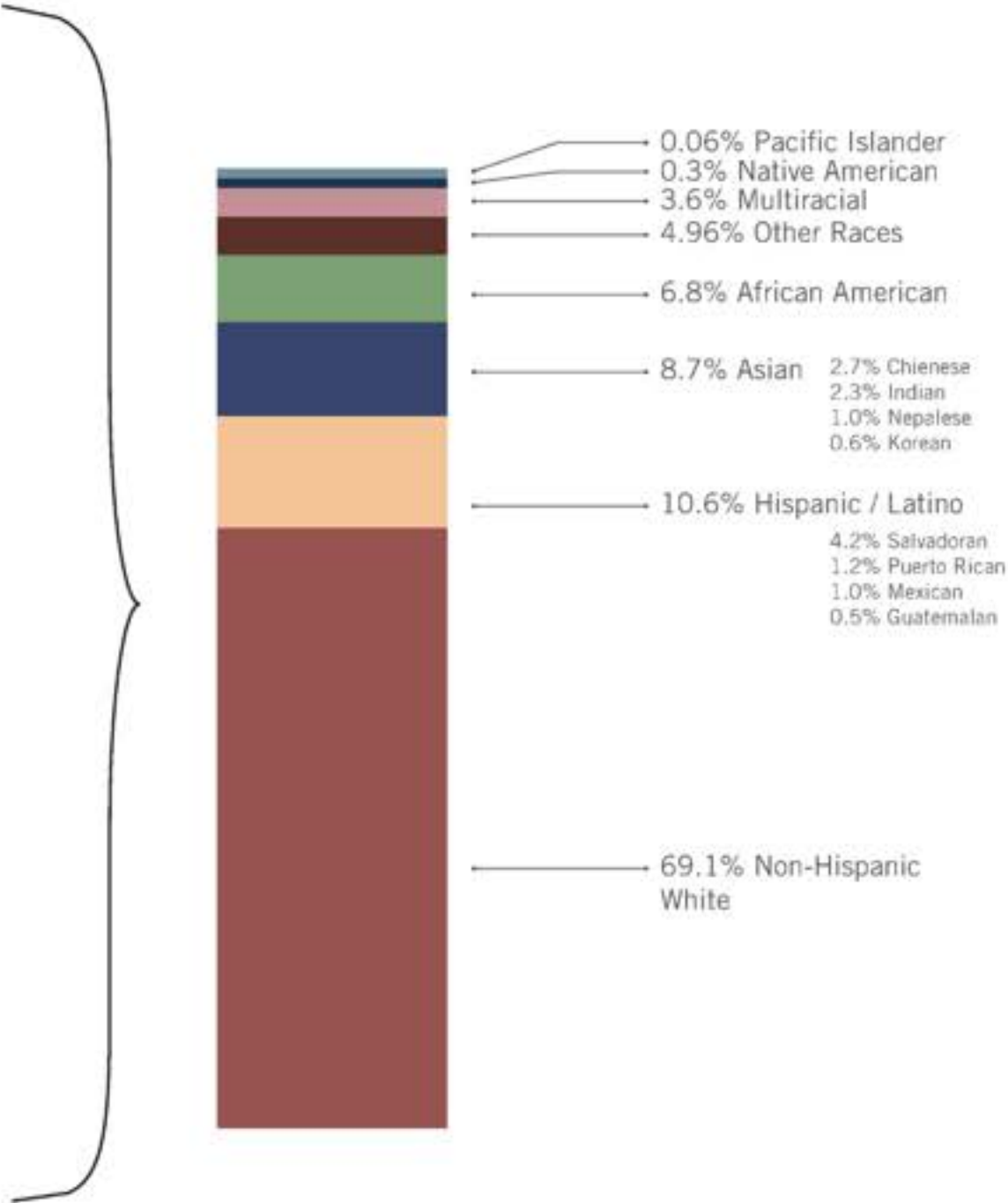






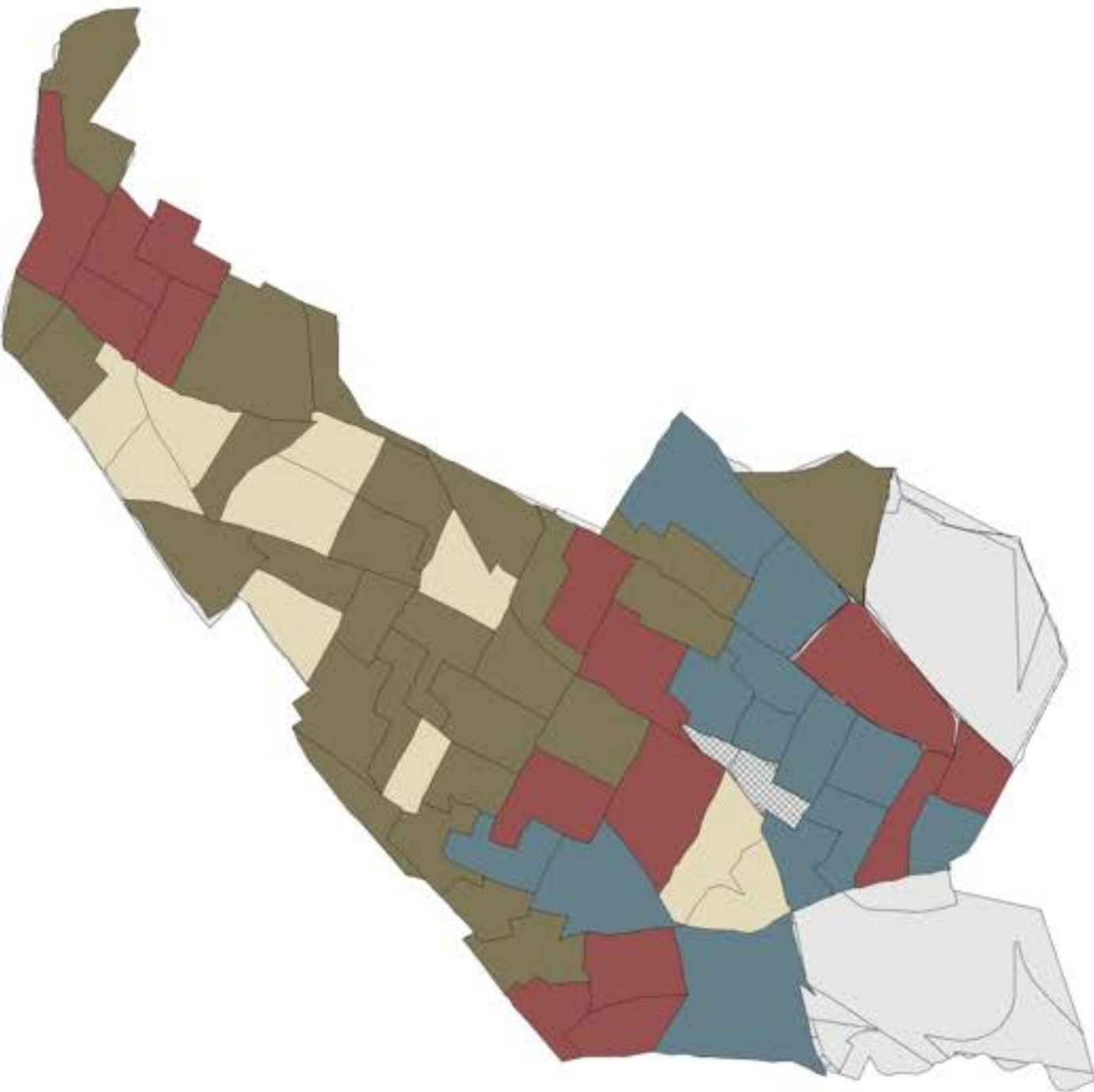


Demographics





Language



- <10% of total population
- 10%-20% of total population
- 20%-30% of total population
- 30%-40% of total population
- >40% of total population
- ASSEMBLY SQUARE BLOCK GROUP

CITYWIDE POPULATION  
=35.7% SPEAK FOREIGN LANGUAGE AT HOME  
(11,110 HOUSEHOLDS)



User Group



Foodie



Artist



Family



Neighbor



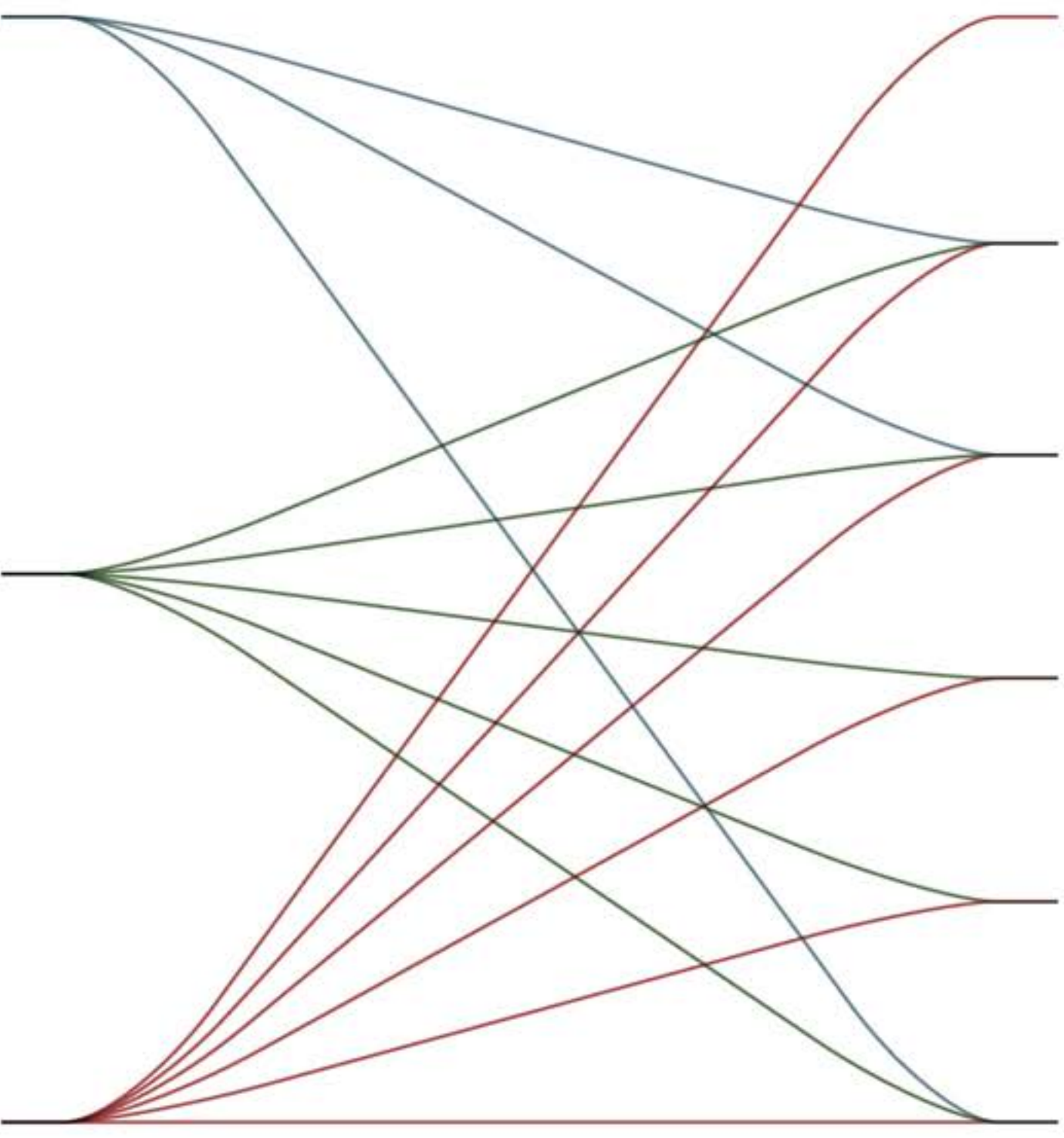
Student



User Activities

USERS

DESTINATIONS



- Office
- Retail
- Restaurants
- Gym
- School
- Market/Fair







A large crowd of people, mostly children and young adults, are gathered on a city street. Many are wearing blue shirts and have their hands raised in the air, suggesting a festive or celebratory event. In the foreground, a person wearing a blue plaid shirt and a black hat is seen from the back, looking towards the crowd. The background features trees with green foliage and brick buildings. The overall atmosphere is lively and communal.

# WHAT IS UNION SQUARE'S IDENTITY?



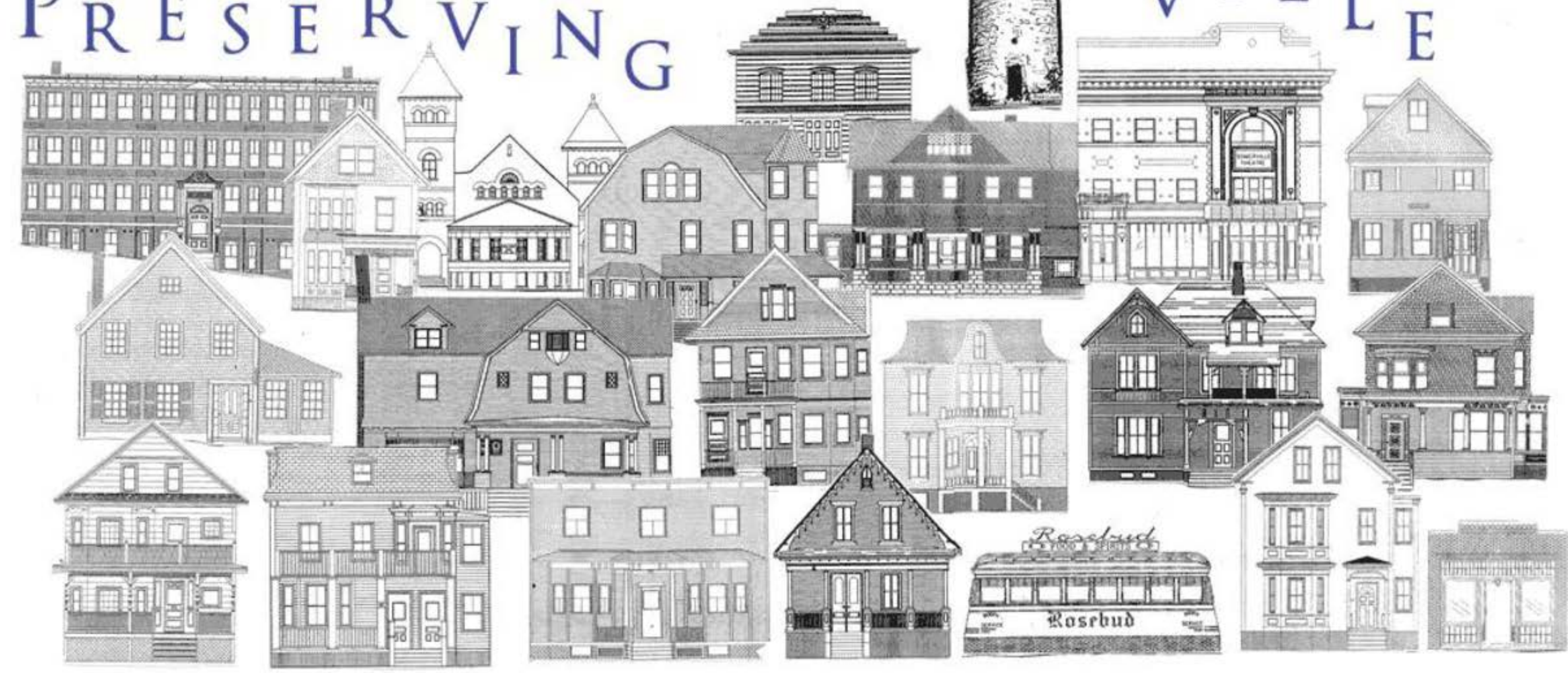








# PRESERVING SOMERVILLE





Found Space as Art Venue







# HOW DO PUBLIC SPACES AMPLIFY SOMERVILLE'S IDENTITY?





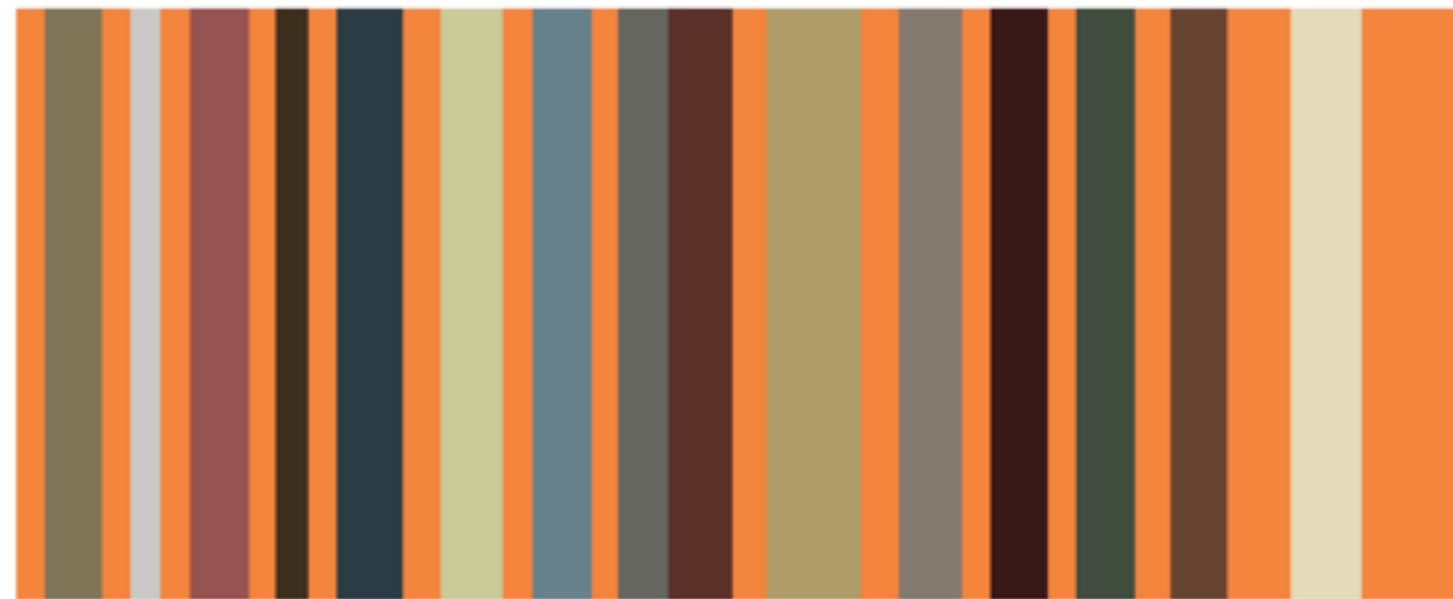








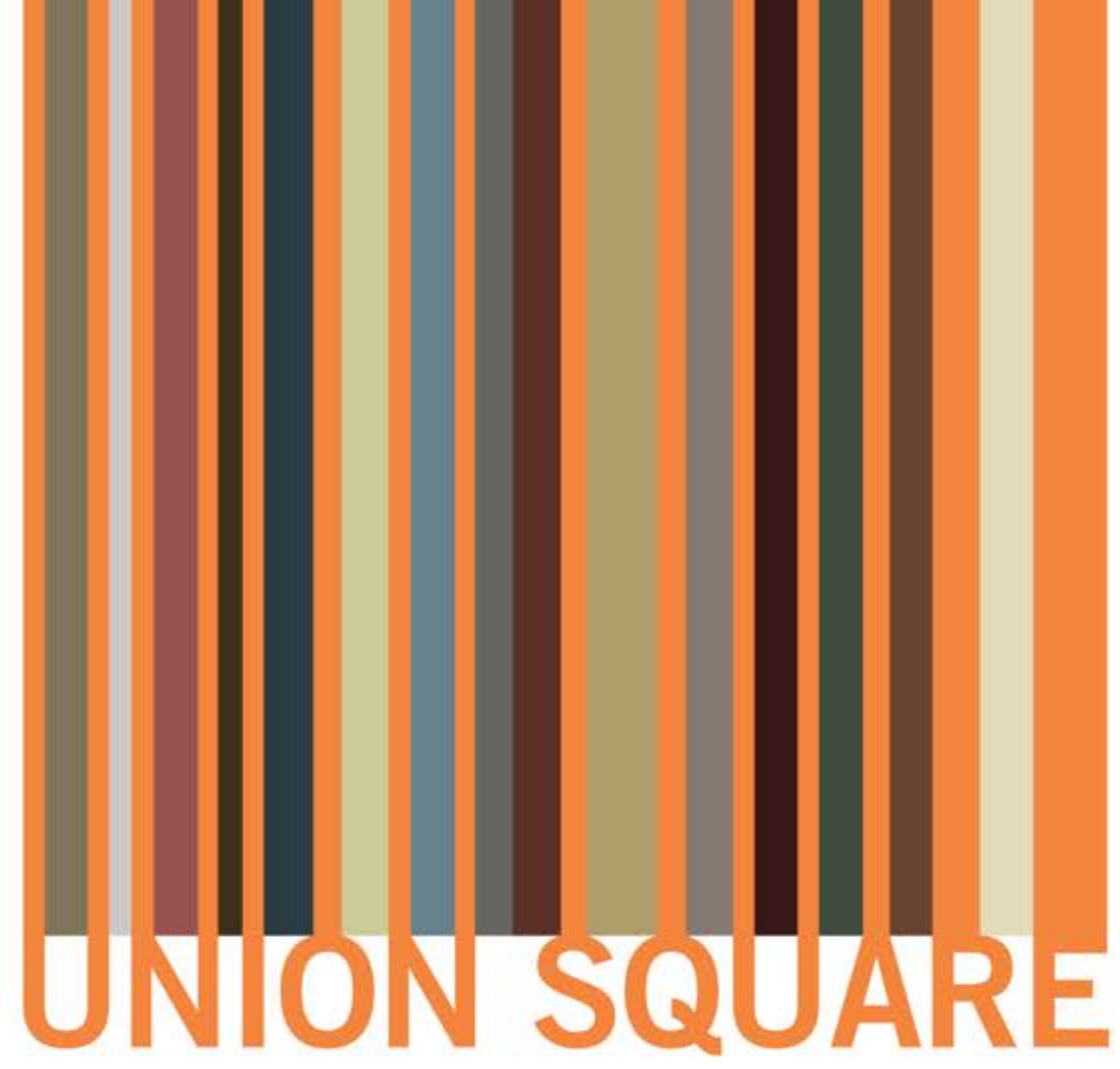




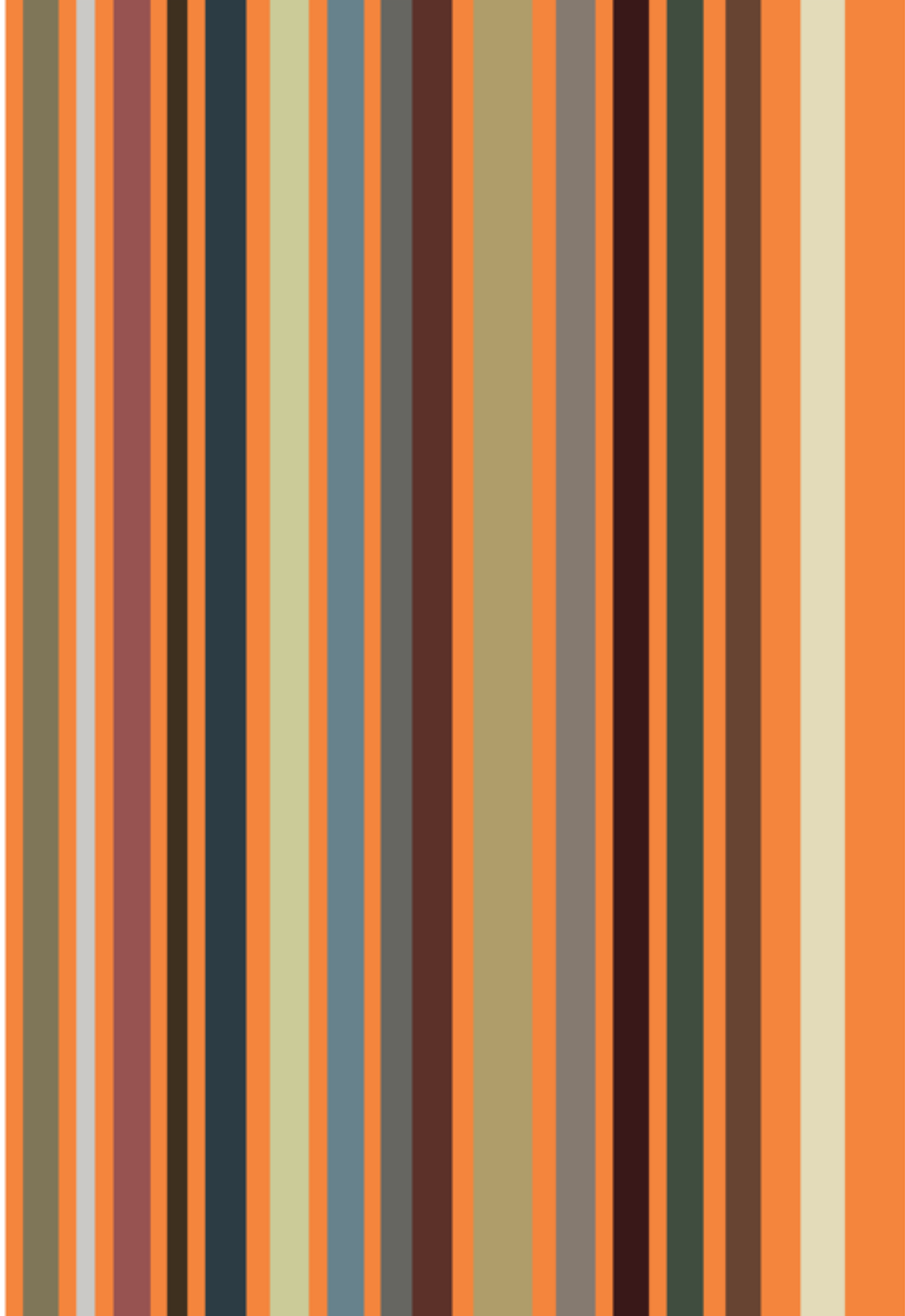




















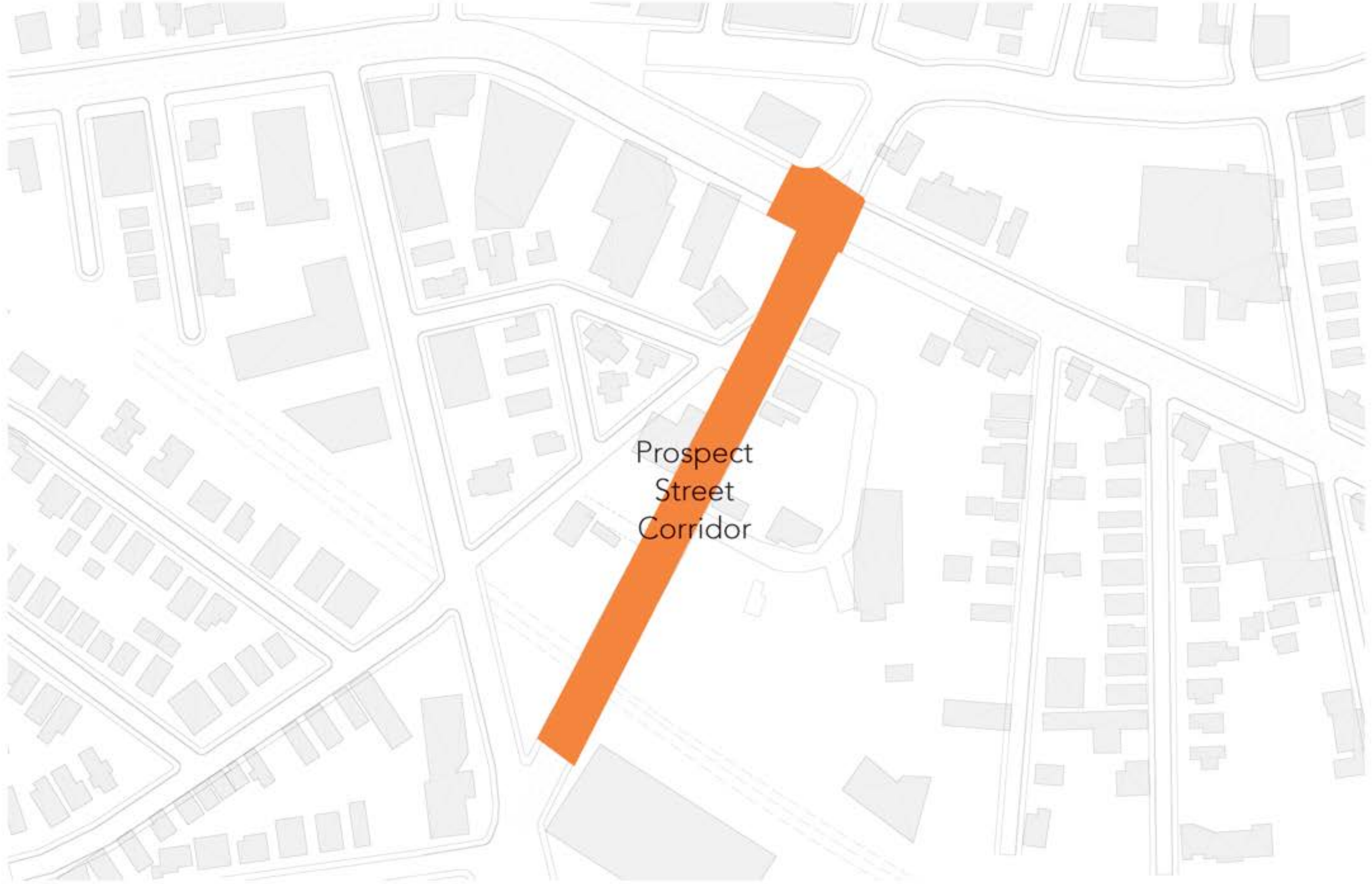


An aerial photograph of a city neighborhood, likely in the mid-20th century, showing a dense grid of residential buildings, streets, and trees. The image has a warm, sepia-toned color palette. Overlaid on the center of the image is the text "AREA OF DESIGN SCOPE" in large, white, sans-serif capital letters.

# AREA OF DESIGN SCOPE



Design Scope 01: Prospect Street



Prospect  
Street  
Corridor



Existing Condition



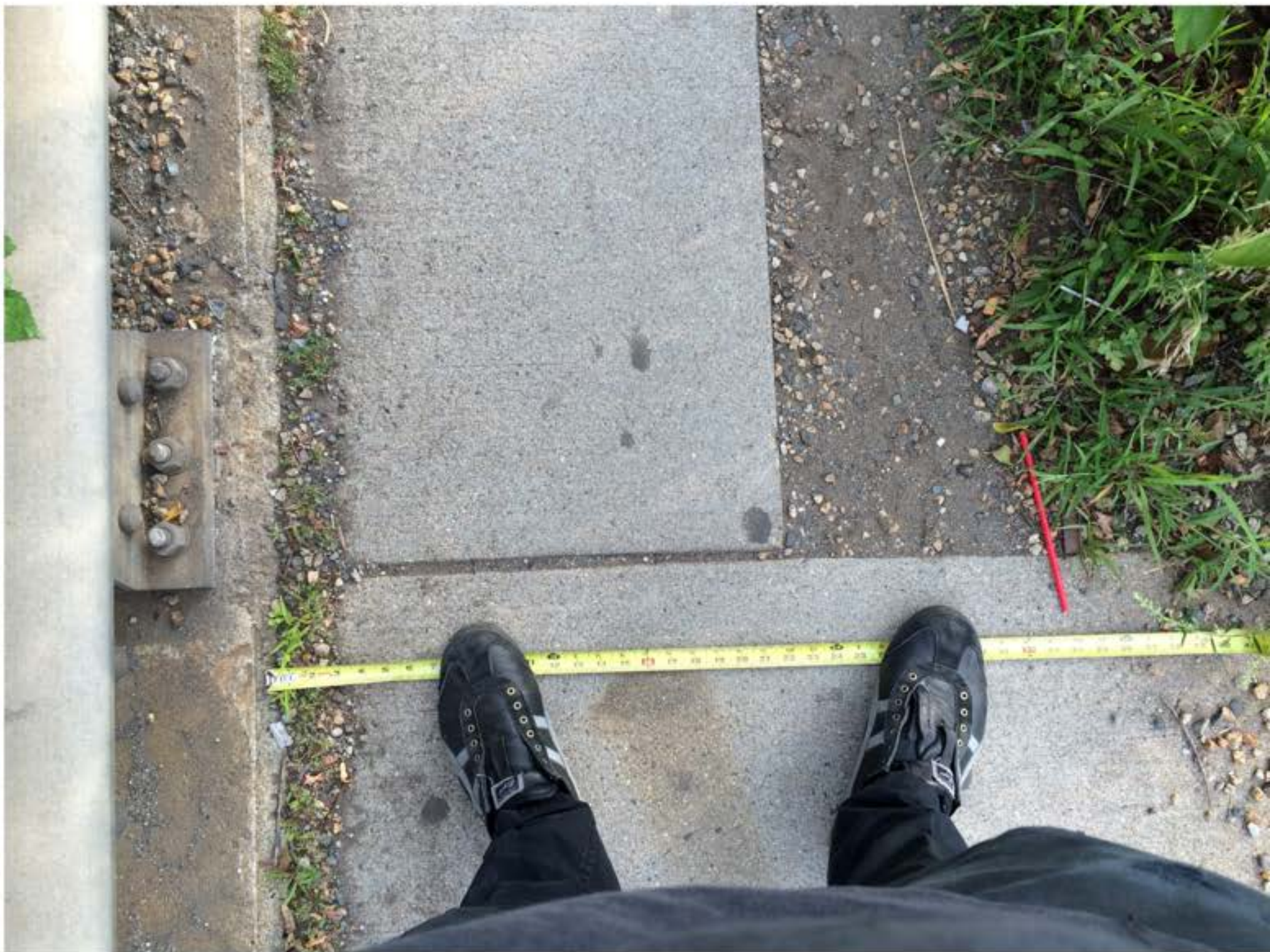


Existing Condition



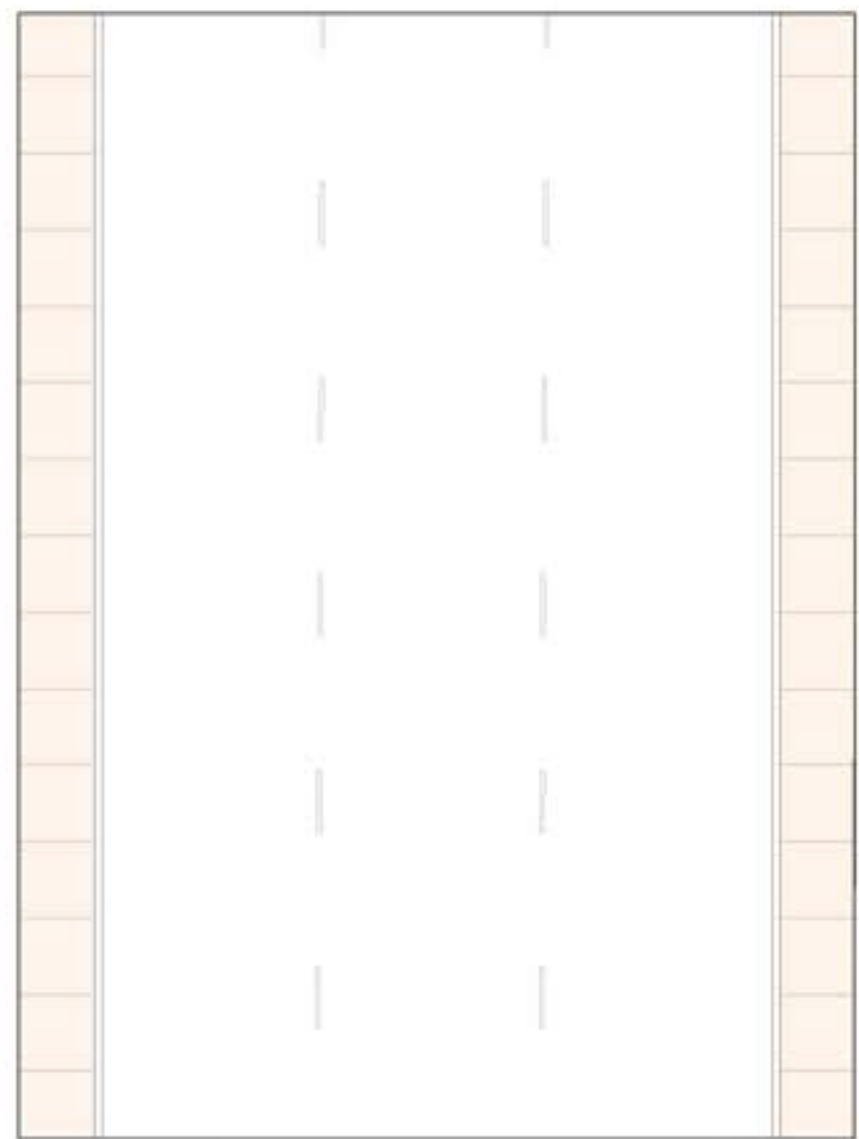
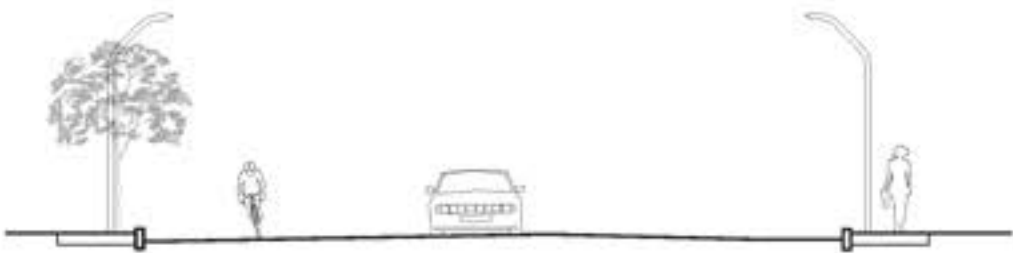
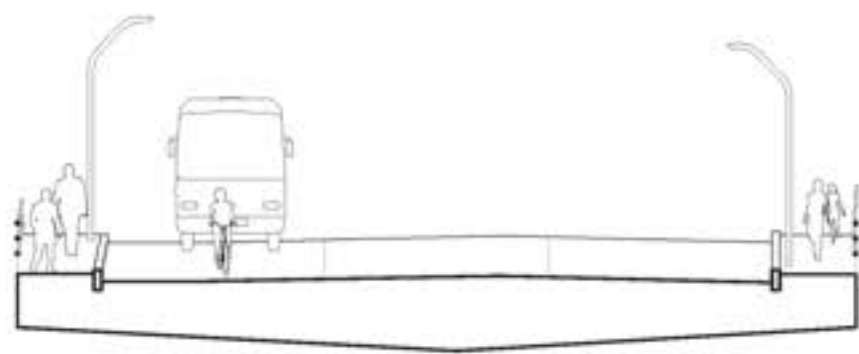


Existing Condition

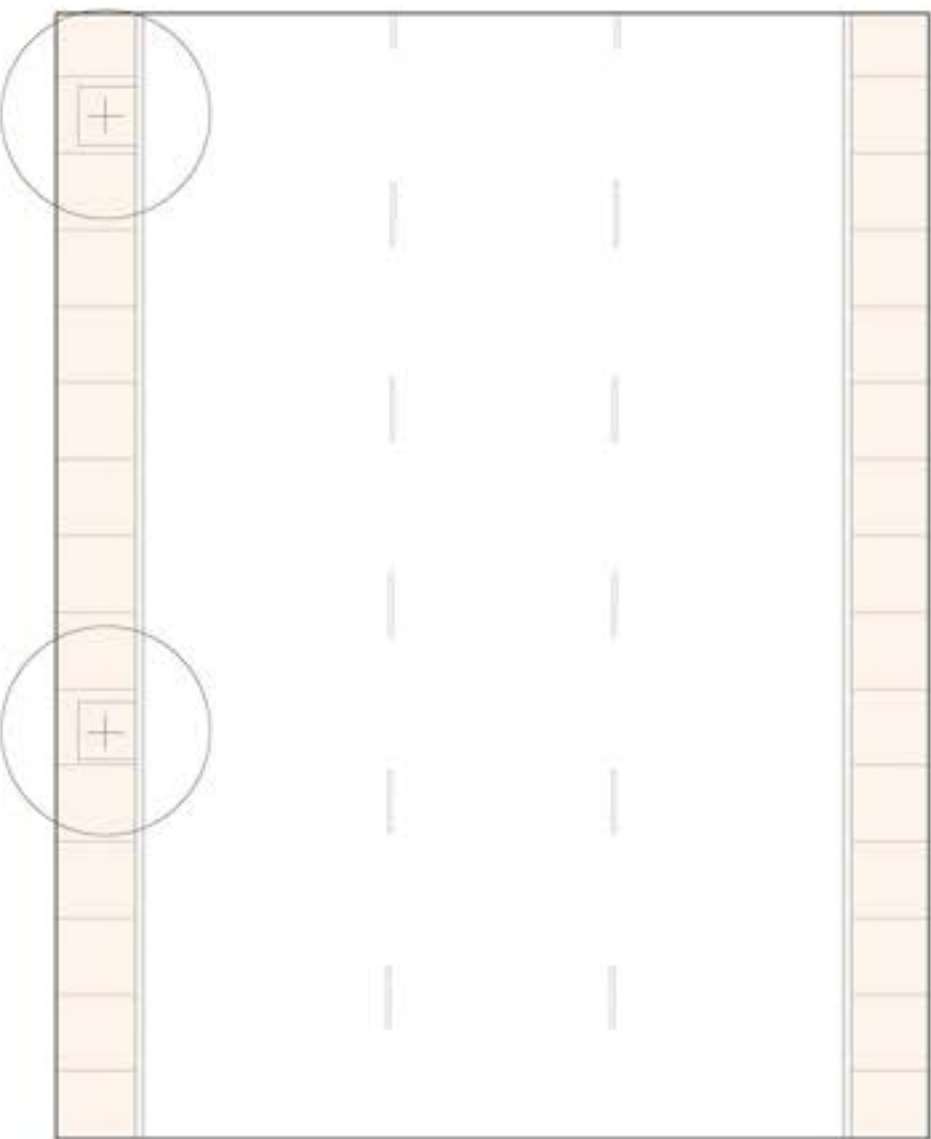




Site Section / Current Condition



Sidewalk      Bus/Car      Car      Car      Sidewalk



Sidewalk      Bus/Car      Car      Car      Sidewalk



## Painted Surface - References





Temporary Surface - Union Square





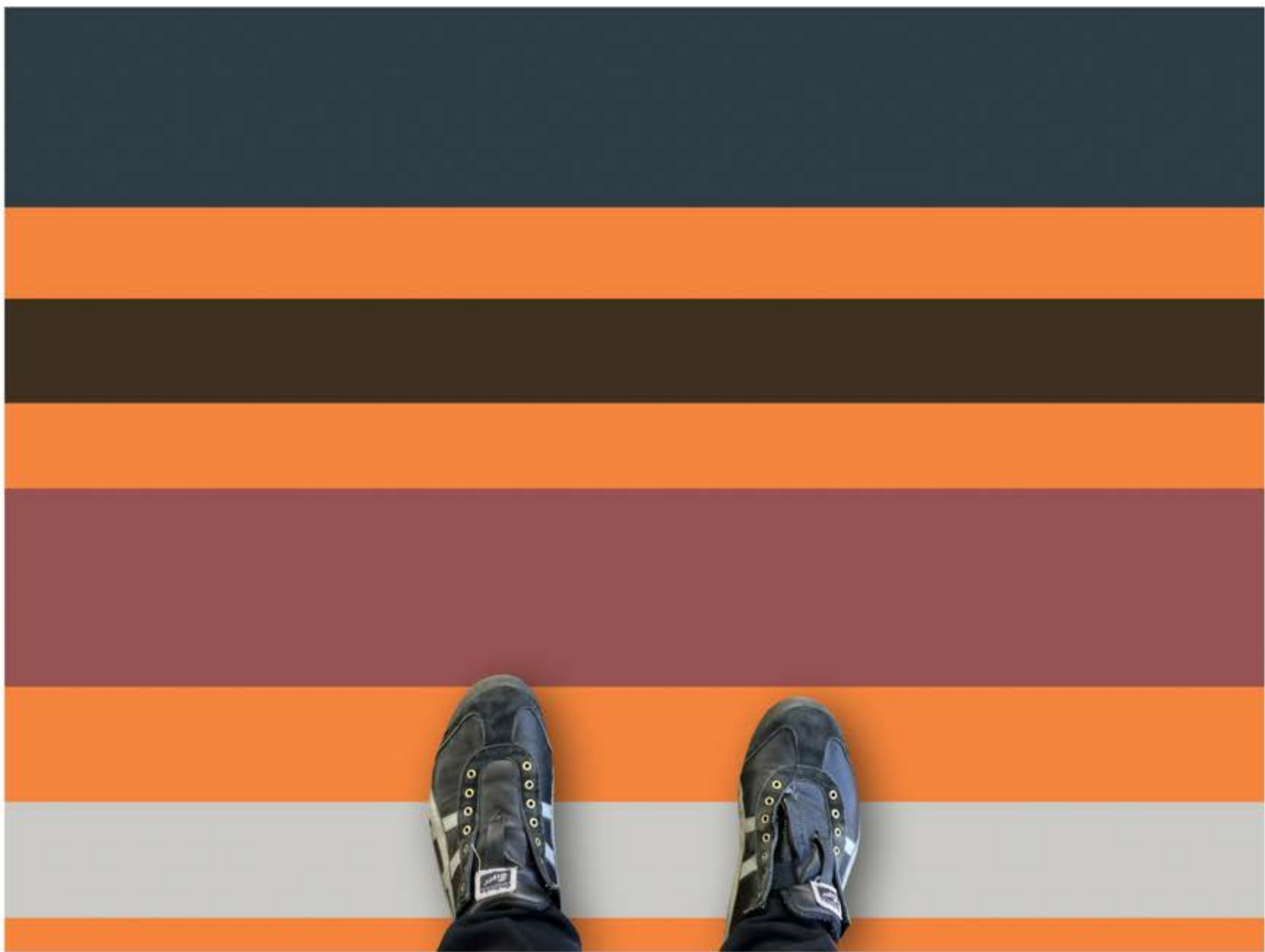
Existing Condition





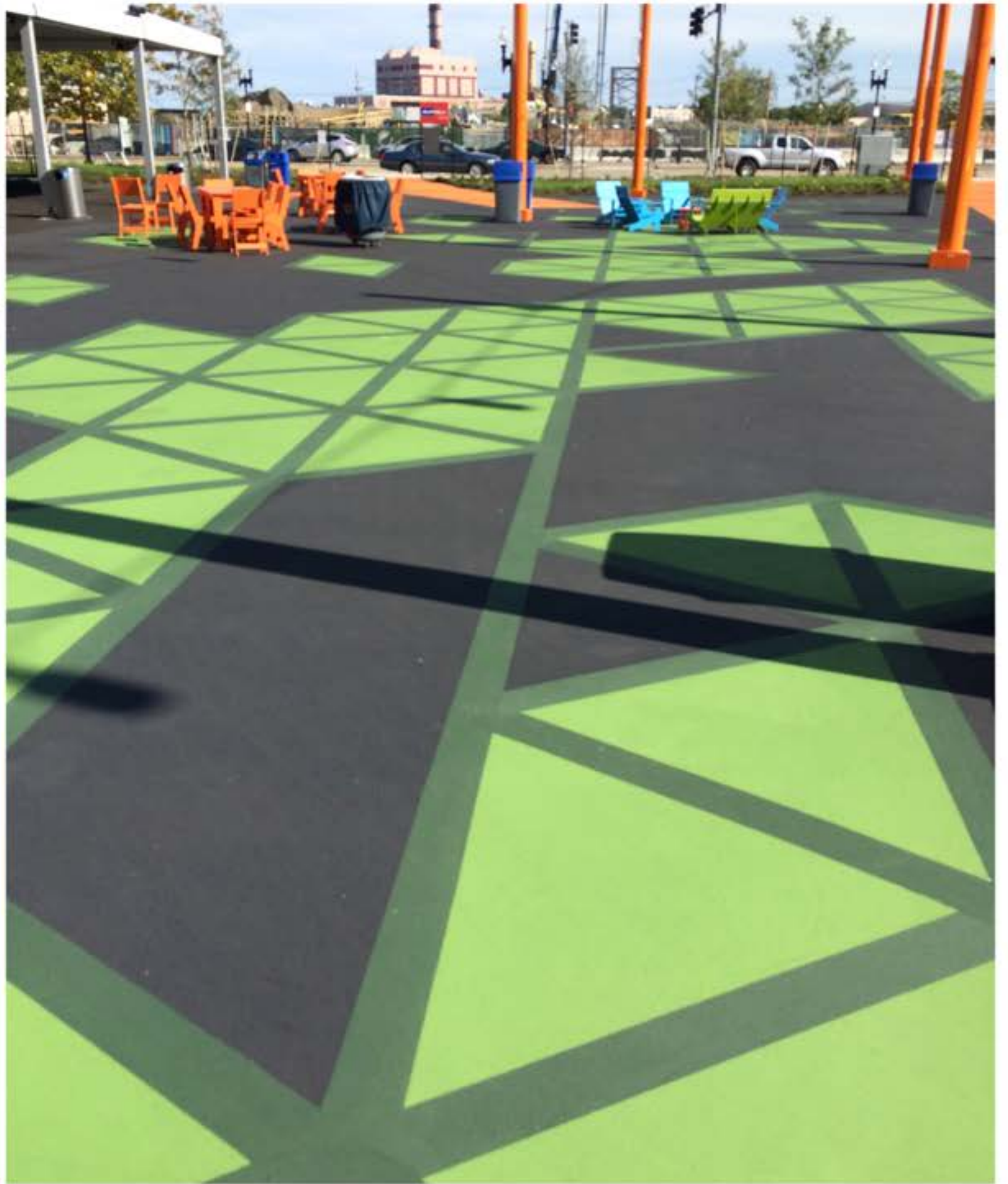






Painted Surface









Existing Union Square Surface



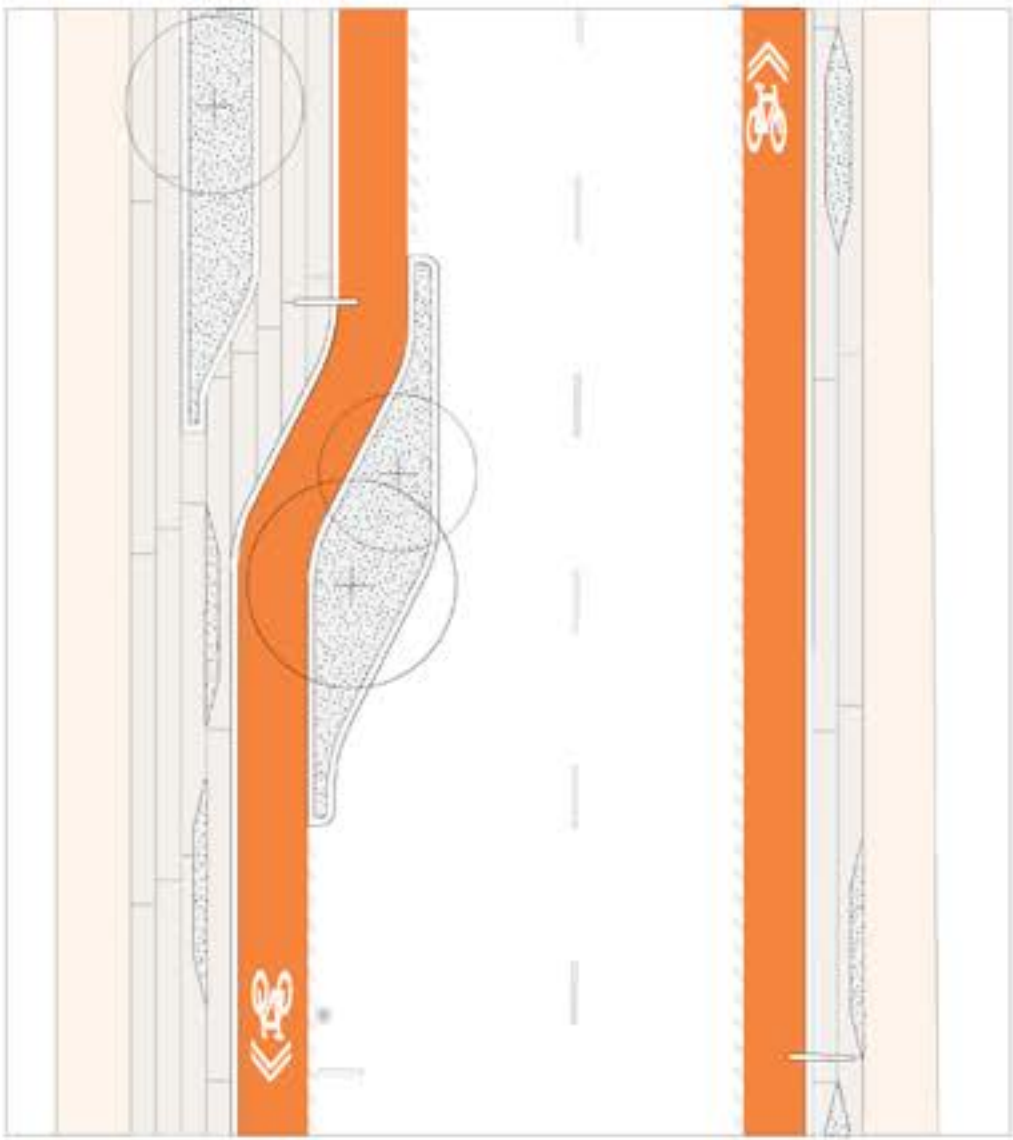
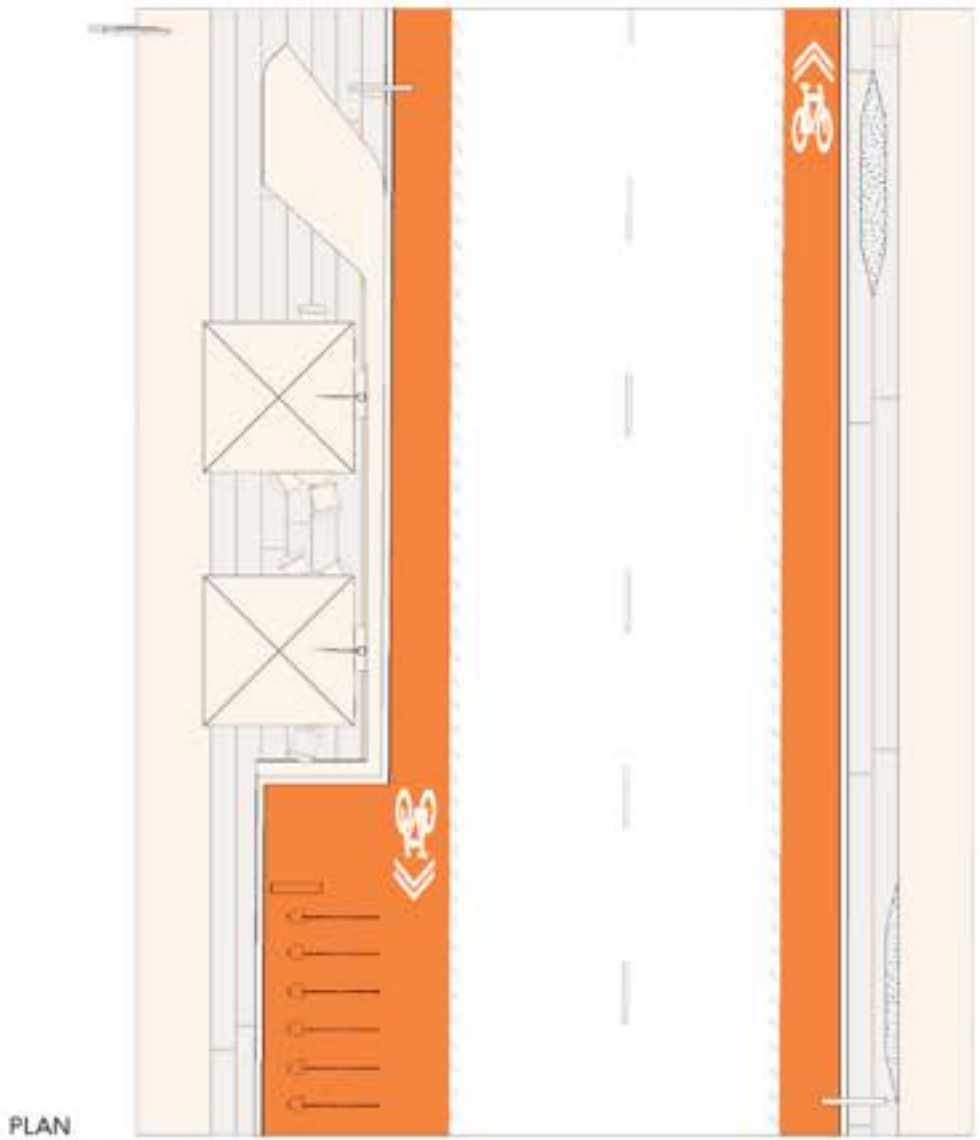
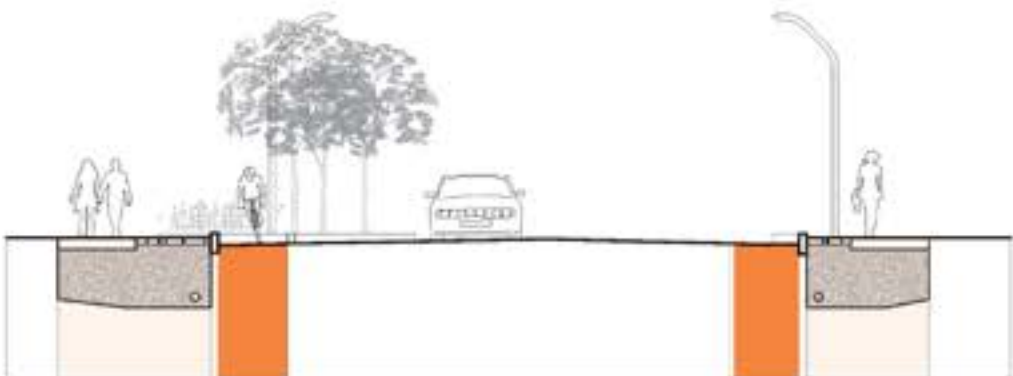
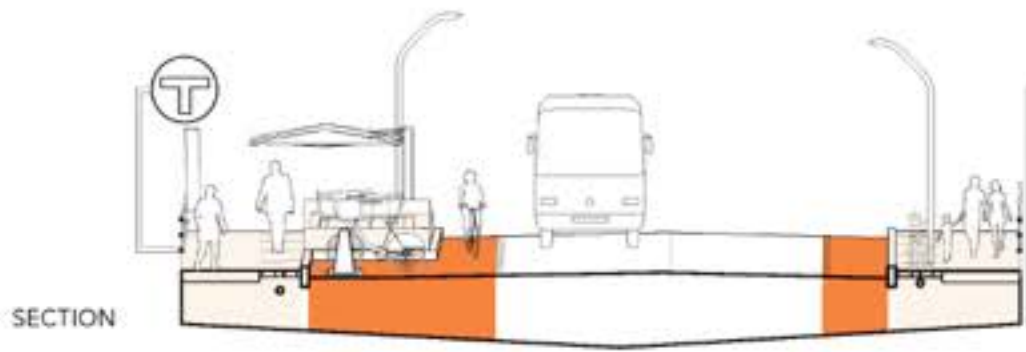
Long Term Surface - Aspirations



Copacabana Beach Boardwalk, Rio de Janeiro/Brazil



Road Diet - Aspirations



Permeable Pavement Concrete Sidewalk  
Habitat  
Bike  
Bus/Car  
Car  
Bike  
Permeable Pavement Concrete Sidewalk

Permeable Pavement Concrete Sidewalk  
Habitat  
Bike  
Bus/Car  
Car  
Bike  
Permeable Pavement Concrete Sidewalk





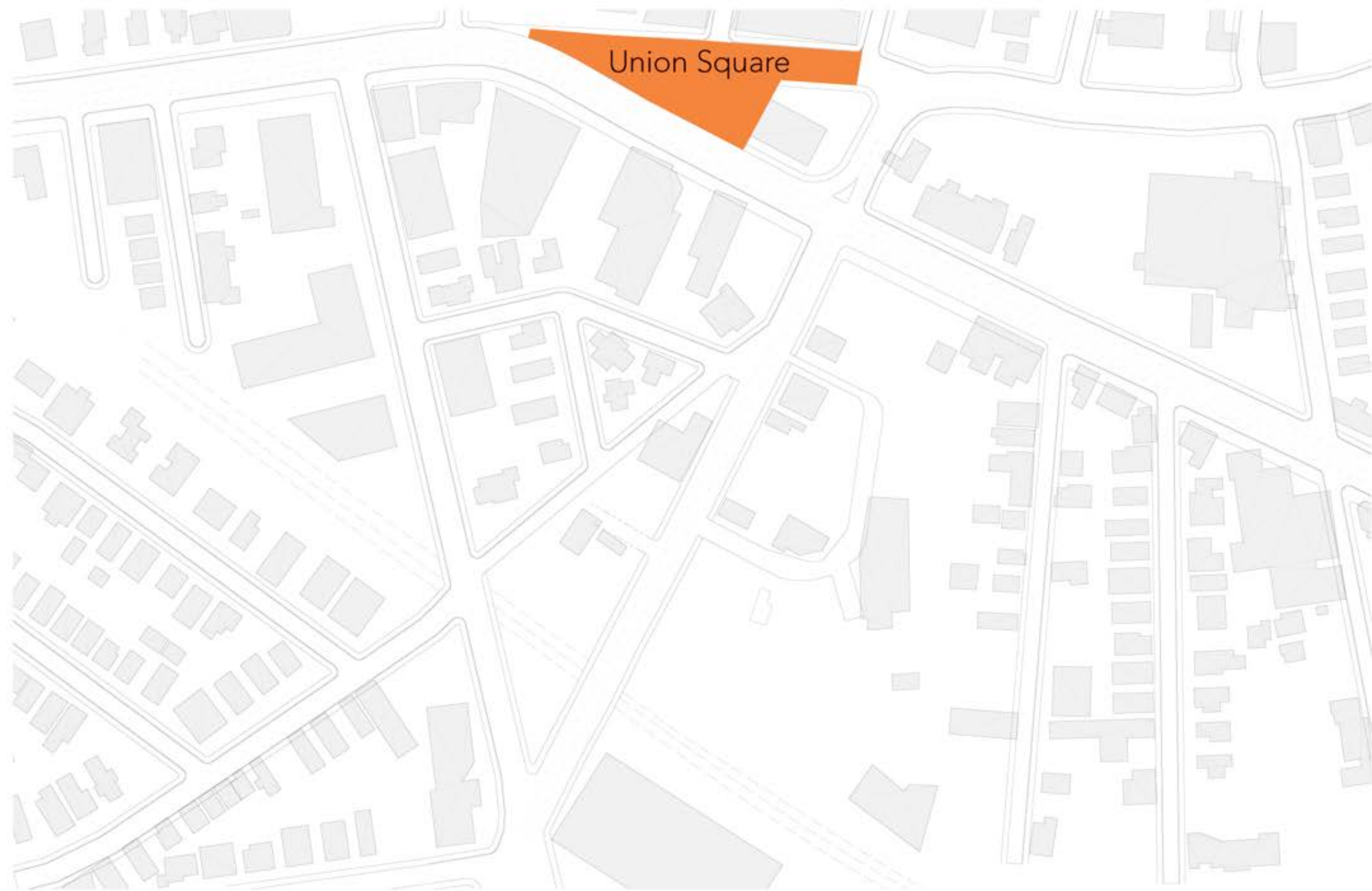


## Road Diet - Aspirations





## Intervention 02: Union Square





Union Square - Existing Condition





Union Square - Existing Condition





Union Square - Aspirations





Union Square - Existing Condition





## Union Square - Aspirations





Union Square - Aspirations

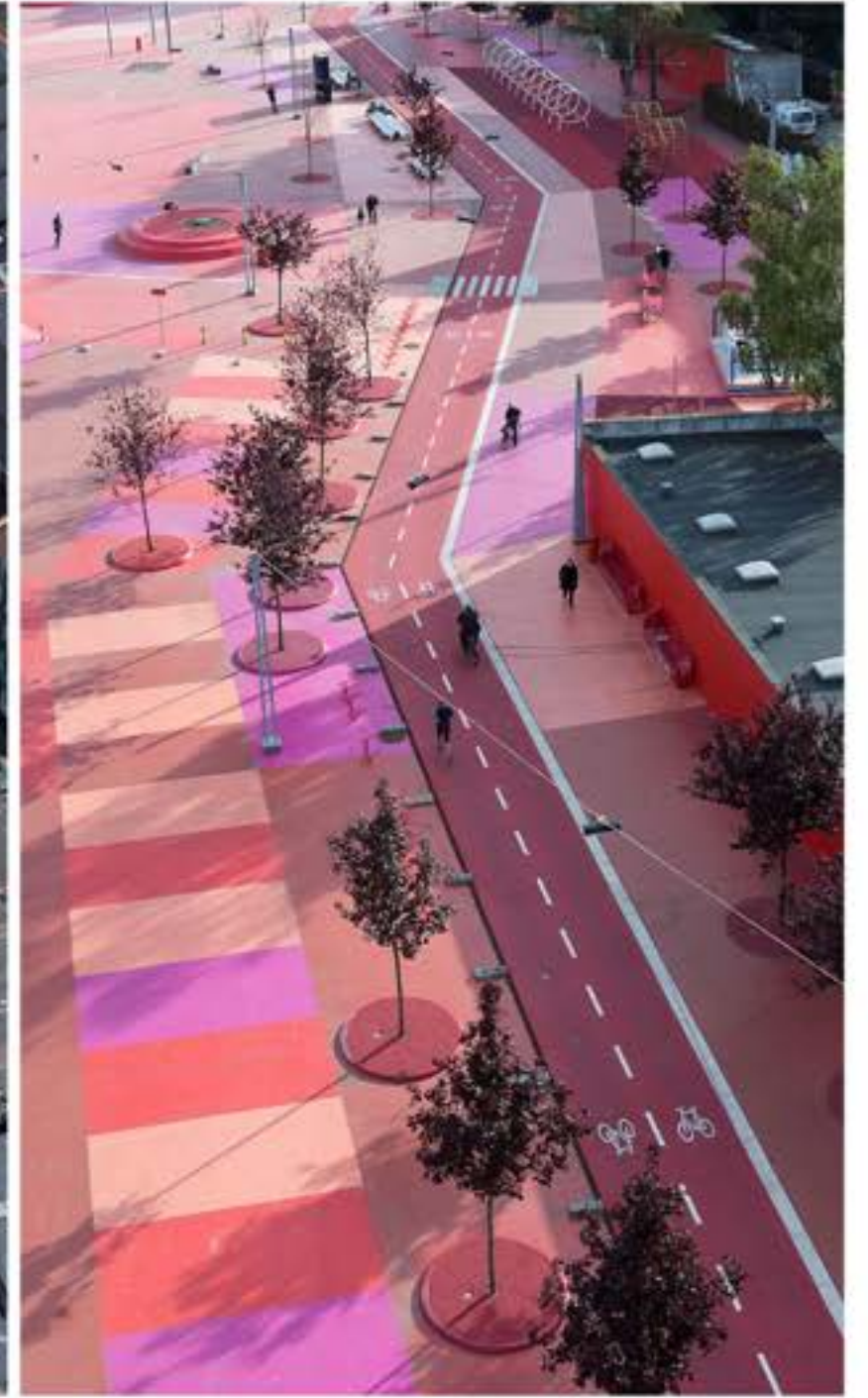
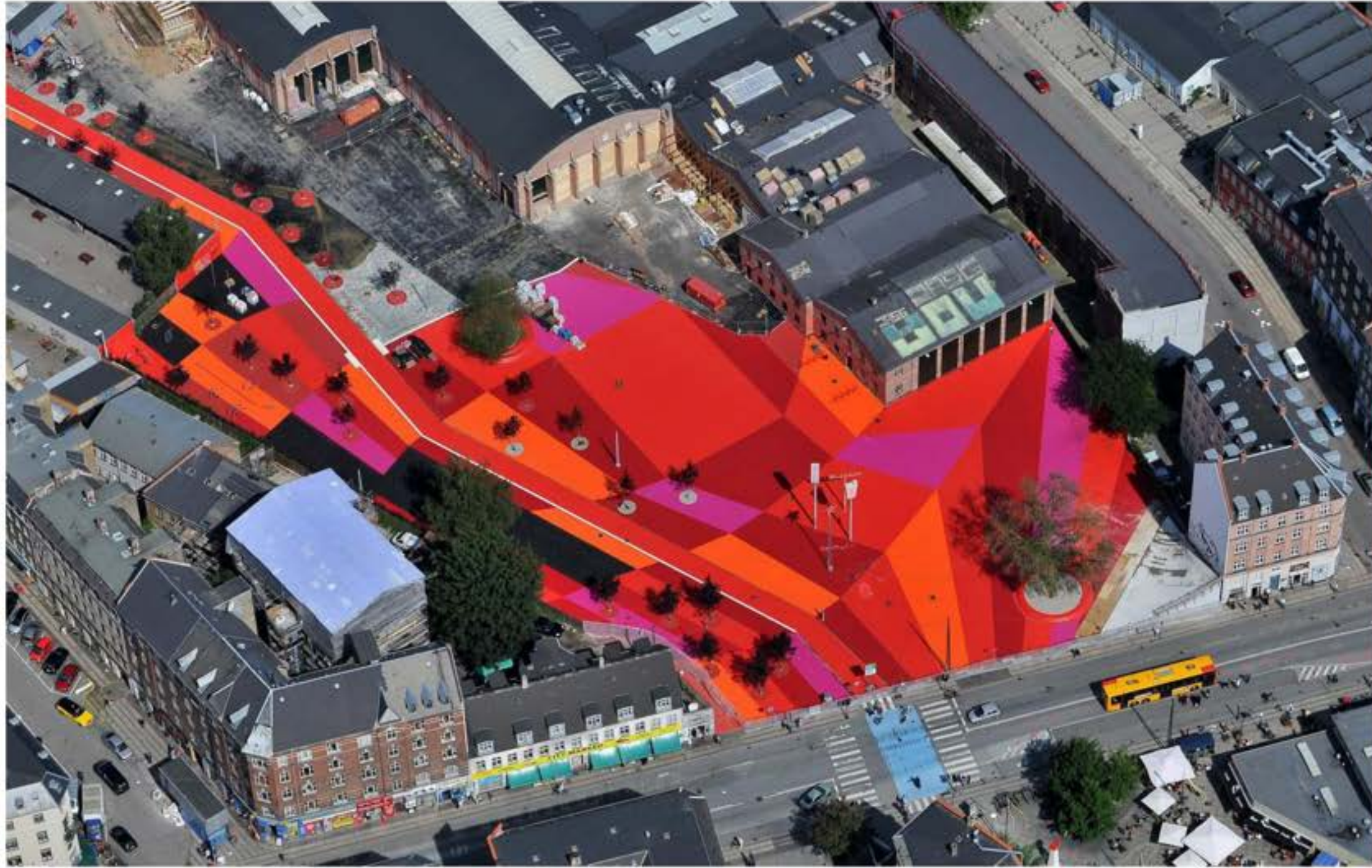






Superkilen, Copenhagen (2007) - Topotek1, BIG

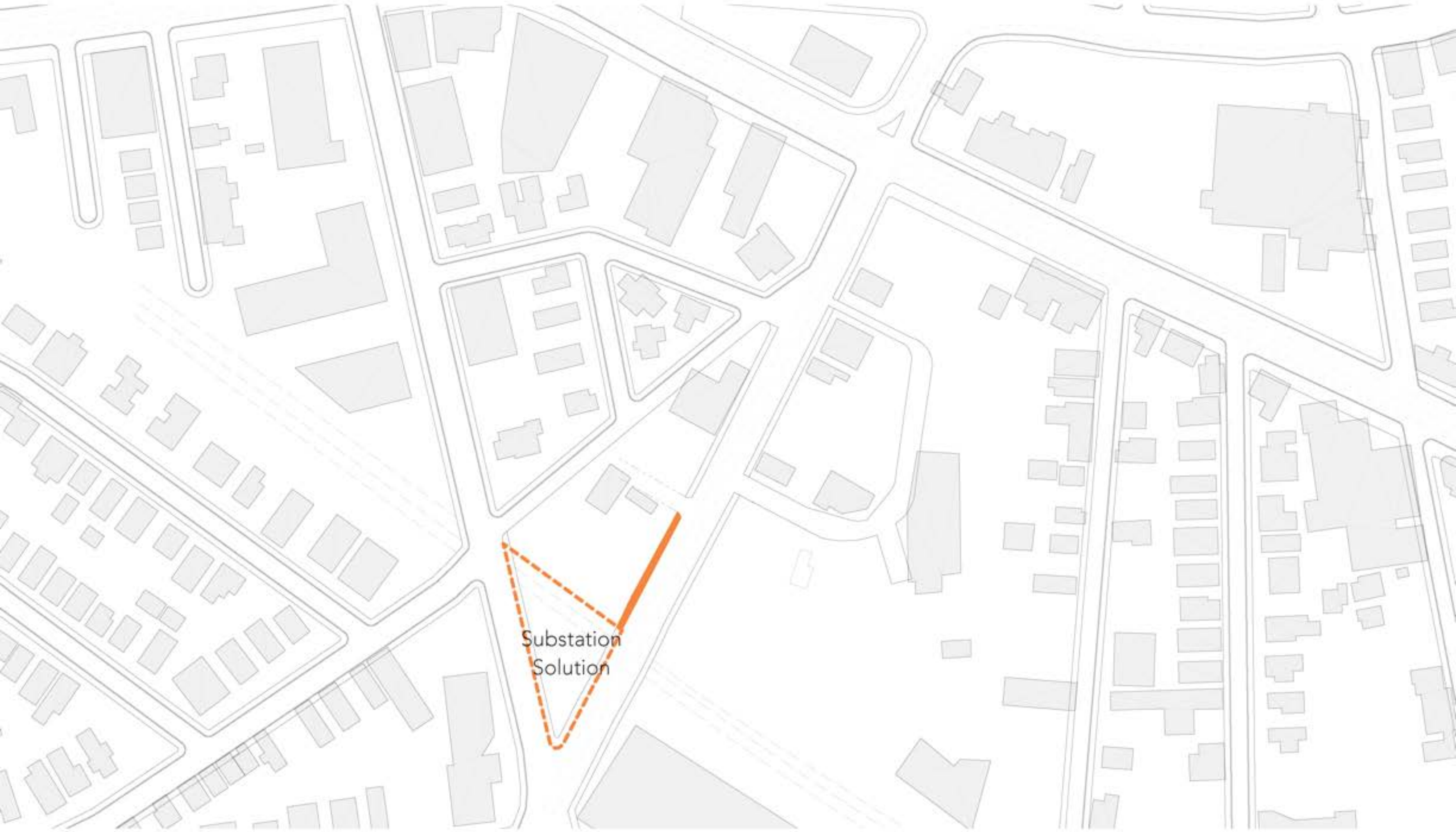




Superkilen, Copenhagen (2007) - Topotek1, BIG



Intervention 03: Sub Station Solution





Prospect Street Bridge / Substation - Existing Condition





Prospect Street Bridge / Substation - Existing Condition





## Road Diet - Aspirations

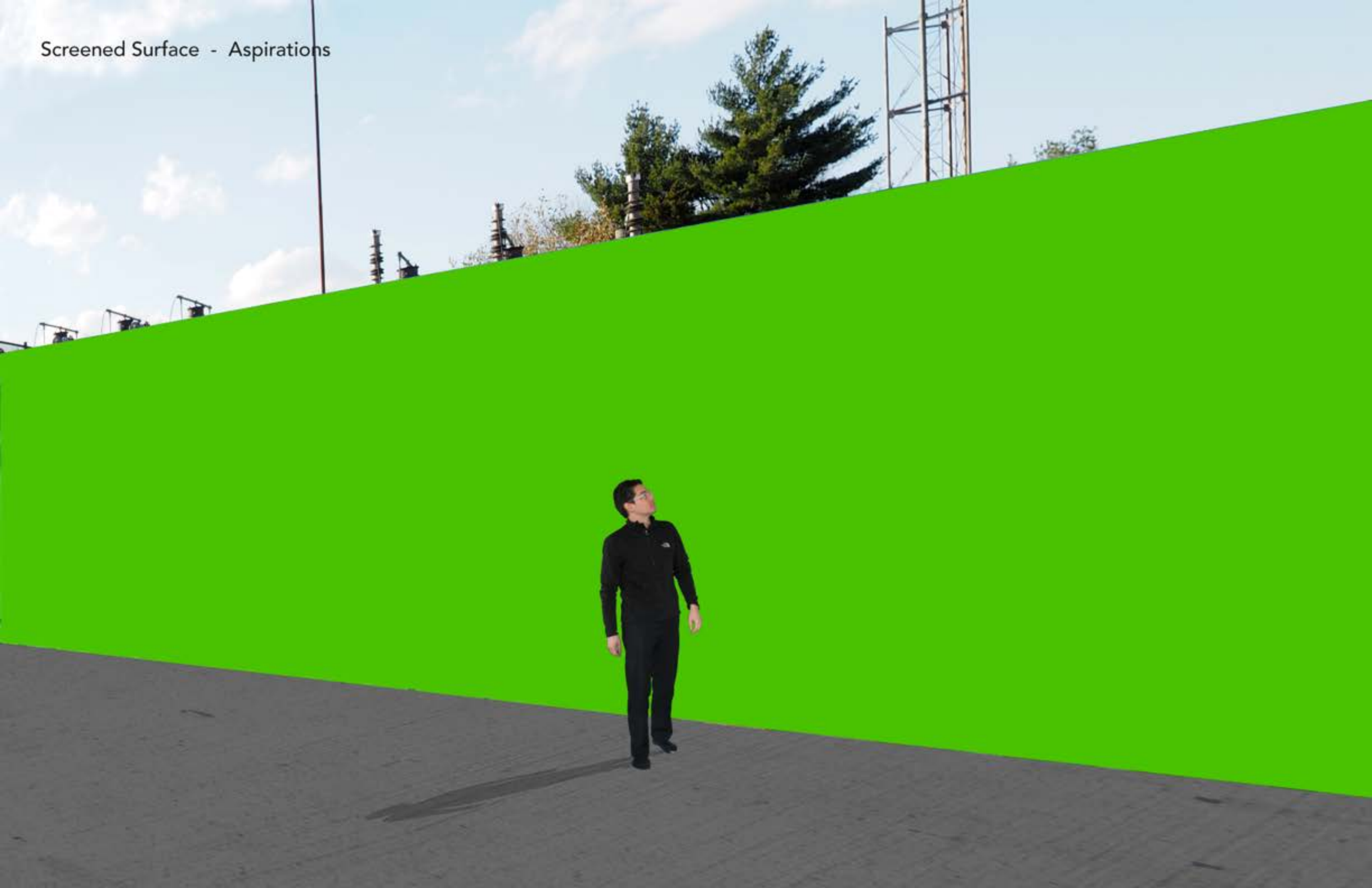




Screened Surface - Aspirations





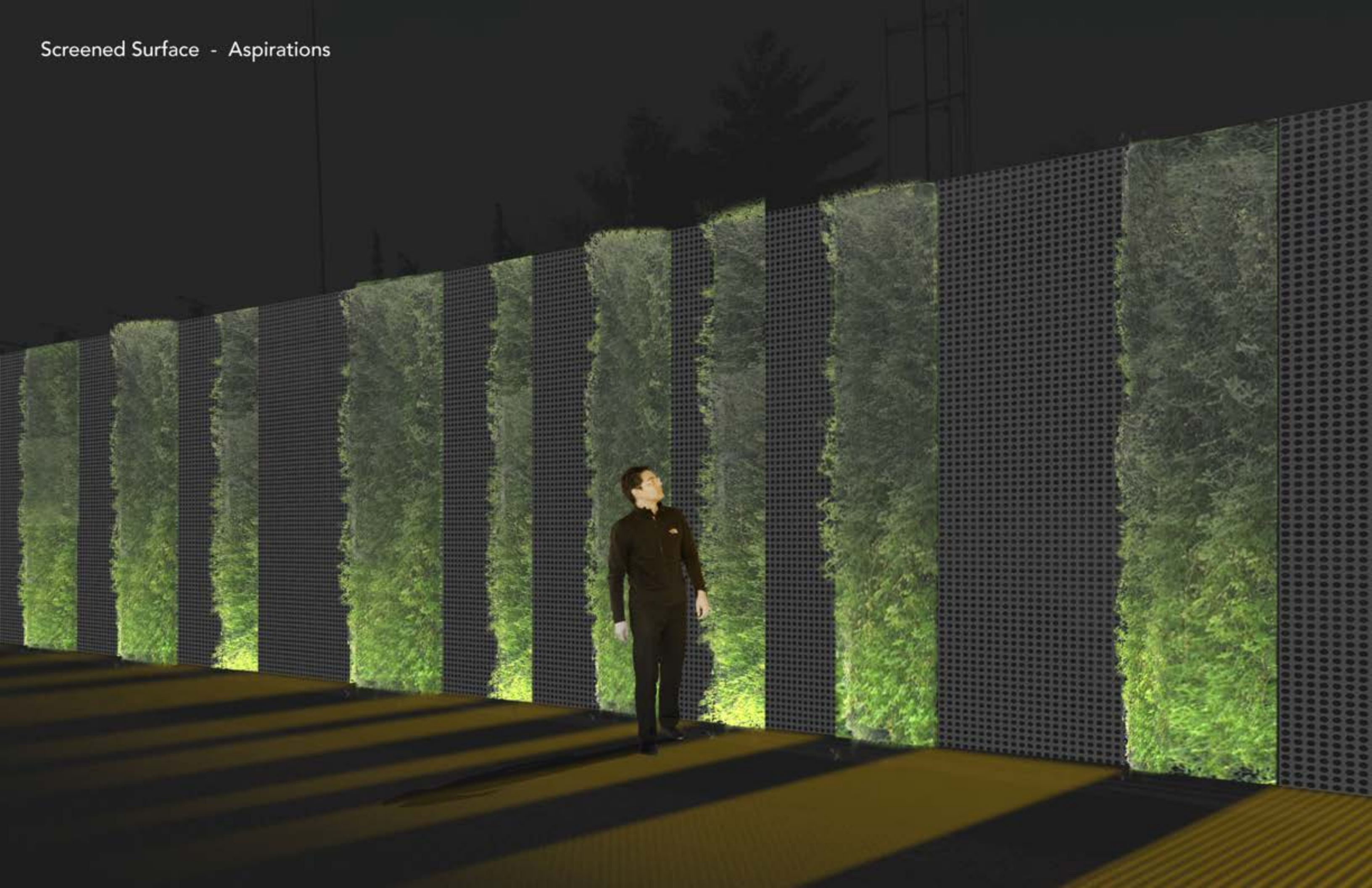




Screened Surface - Aspirations









Intervention 04: Lighting, Current Condition





Lighting - Current Condition

















Intervention 05: Monuments







GEORGE DILBOY  
MEMORIAL



CITY OF SOMERVILLE  
HONOR ROLL



CIVIL WAR MONUMENT



WWI MONUMENT



VIETNAM WAR MEMORIAL



KOREAN WAR  
MEMORIAL



SOLDIERS' MONUMENT



SPANISH WAR  
MONUMENT



PROSPECT HILL  
MONUMENT



DAN STERN OF  
BEYER



"FRACTAL  
SWITCHBOX"



"HIDDEN  
FACES MURAL"



SHEPPARD  
FAIREY



KEN  
RICHARDSON



KIMO GRIGGS



PAULINE LIM



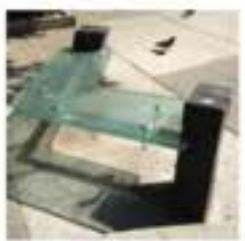
BLAKE ROBERTS



ELLEN JACOBS



"QUOTE SWITCH-  
BACK"



ARON BINKLEY



BE SARGENT  
ALLEN



"METAL TREE"



CHRISTINA LANZI  
PHIL MANKER

19 PIECES OF PUBLIC ART  
WITHIN 0.5 MI RADIUS



TOVA SPETER



TOVA SPETER



"NOT ART" ART



"UNION  
BUSINESS"



RYAN MCENTEE







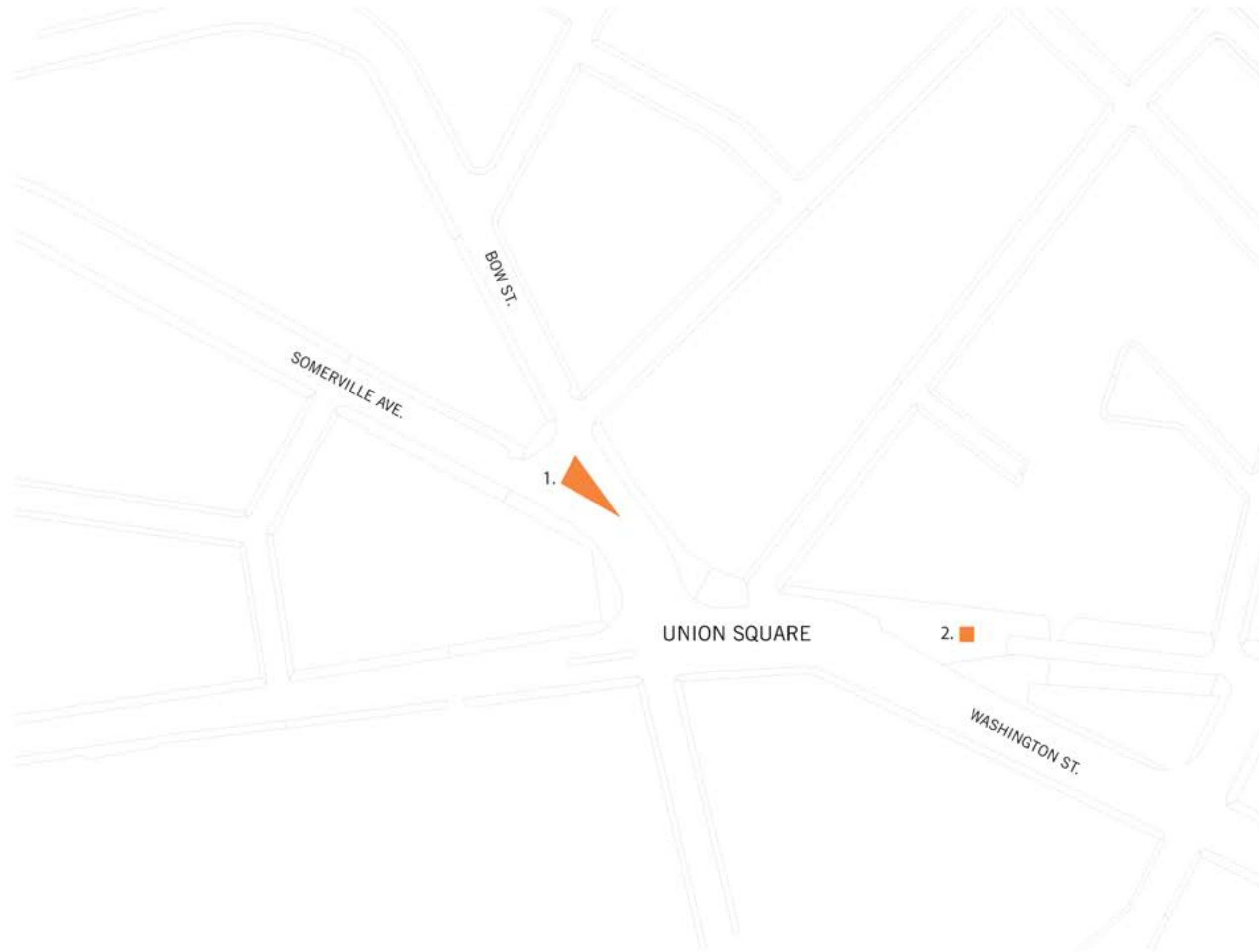


"NEW YORK IS THE ONLY CITY THAT HAS MORE ARTISTS PER CAPITA THAN SOMERVILLE IN U.S."









1. PROPOSED SITE FOR  
PUBLIC ART PLAZA



2. PROPOSED SITE FOR  
PUBLIC ART PEDESTAL





ROTATING ART  
EVERY 2 MOS.



JANUARY  
FEBRUARY  
MARCH  
APRIL  
MAY  
JUNE  
JULY  
AUGUST  
SEPTEMBER  
OCTOBER  
NOVEMBER  
DECEMBER  
JANUARY  
FEBRUARY  
MARCH  
APRIL  
MAY  
JUNE  
JULY  
AUGUST  
SEPTEMBER  
OCTOBER  
NOVEMBER  
DECEMBER

TEMPORARY PUBLIC ART  
EVERY 6 MOS.



JANUARY  
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JULY  
AUGUST  
SEPTEMBER  
OCTOBER  
NOVEMBER  
DECEMBER



Intervention 06: Greens

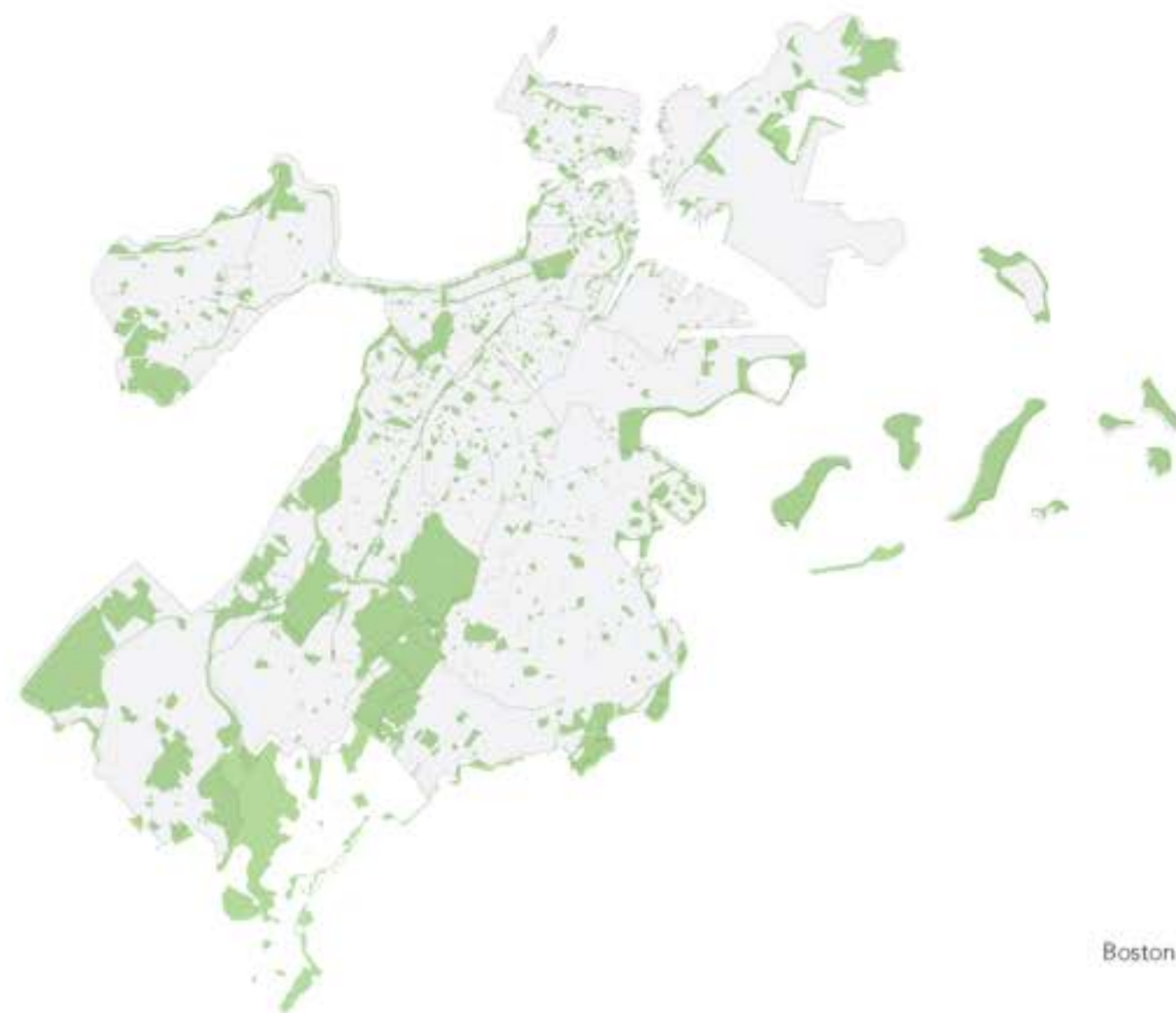






Somerville

12.5%



Boston

8.3%

Green Space Comparison









LANDSCAPE FEATURES, RAIN GARDENS AND BIOSWALES



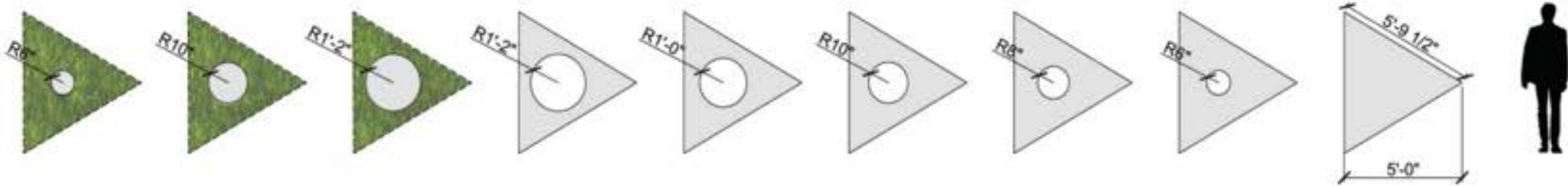
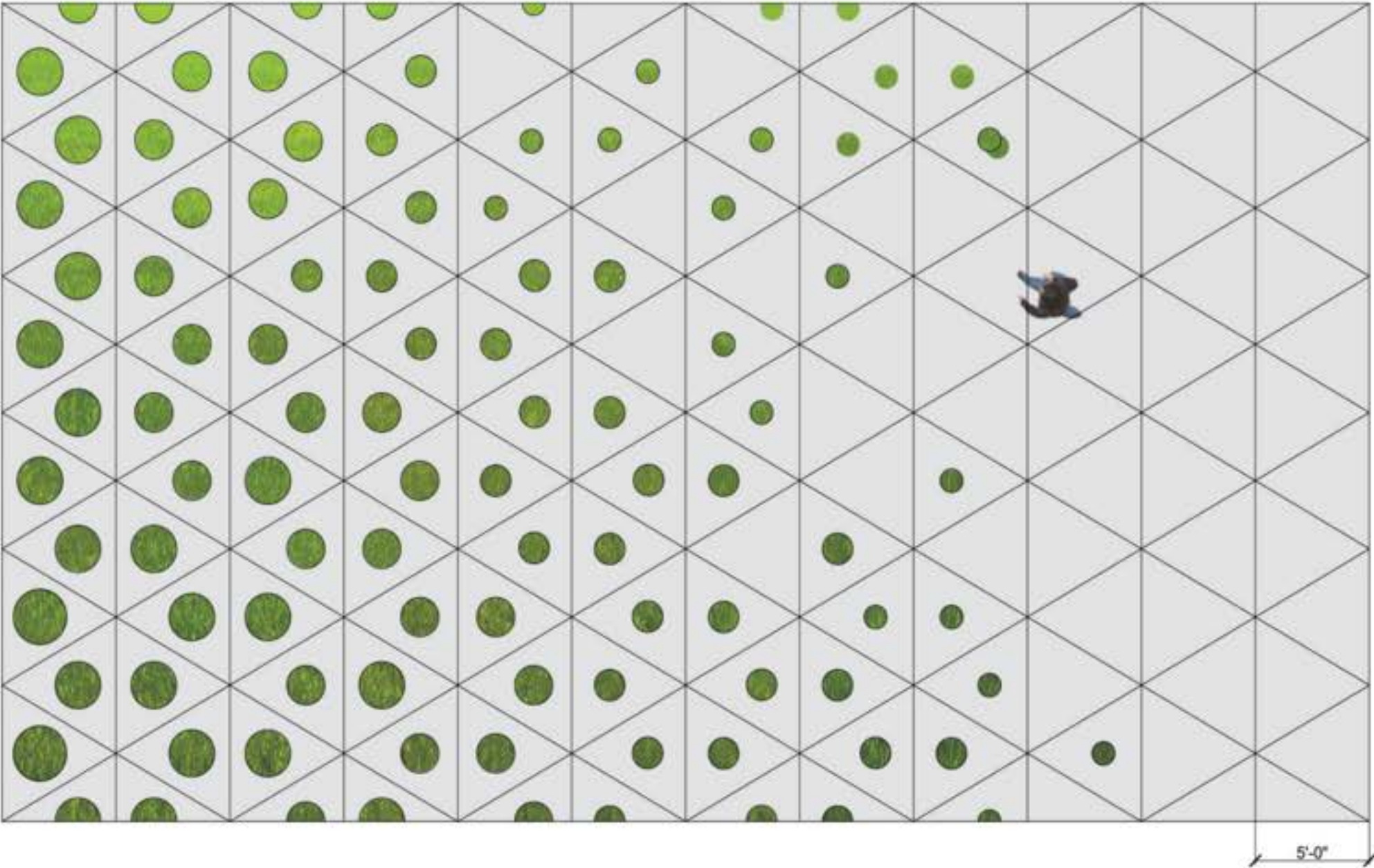
Green Space - Aspirations



parking count : 34



Green Space - Aspirations



TRIANGULAR SCORE PATTERN W/ CIRCULAR HOLES



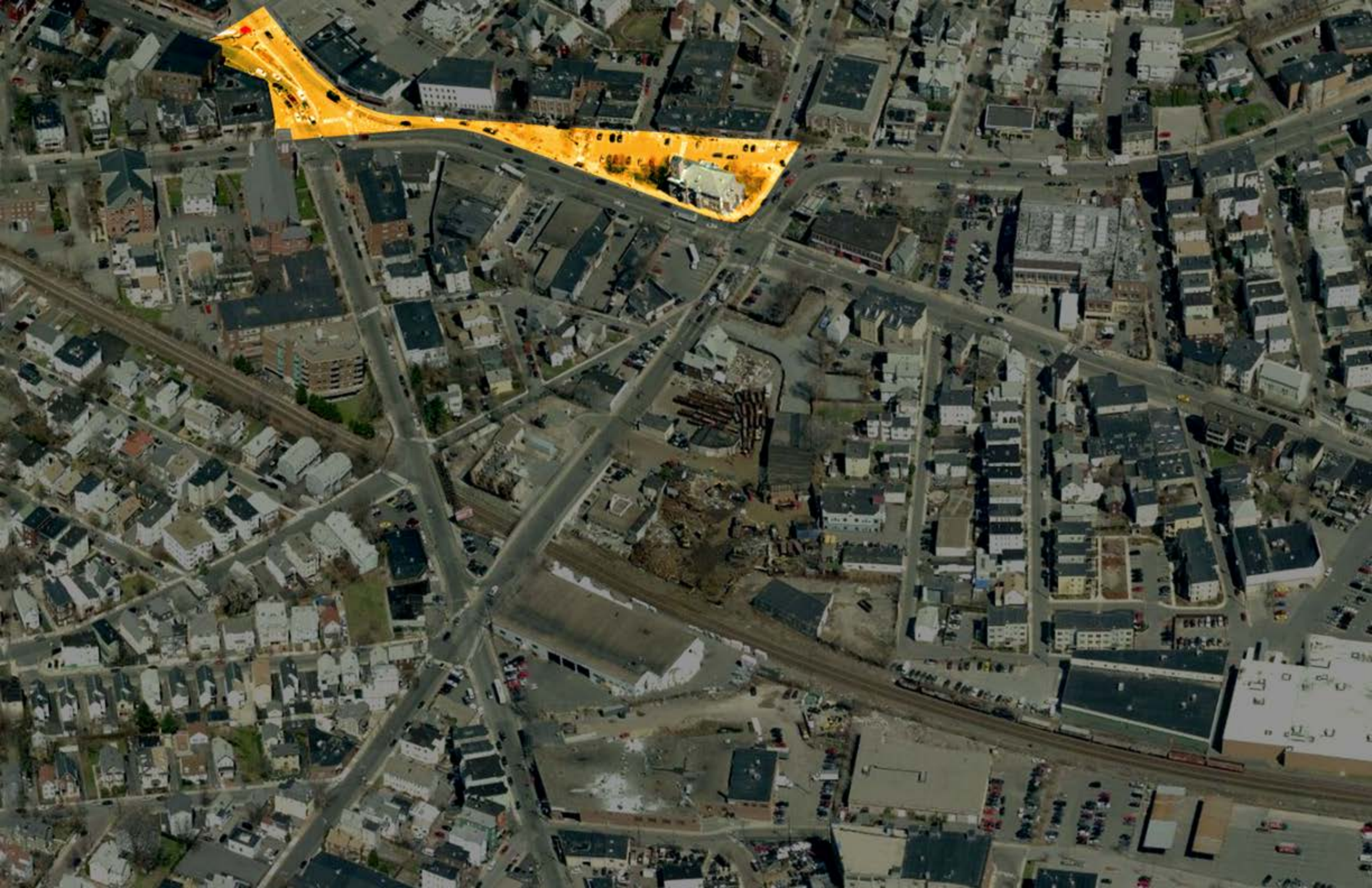


HOW DOES IT ALL COME  
TOGETHER?

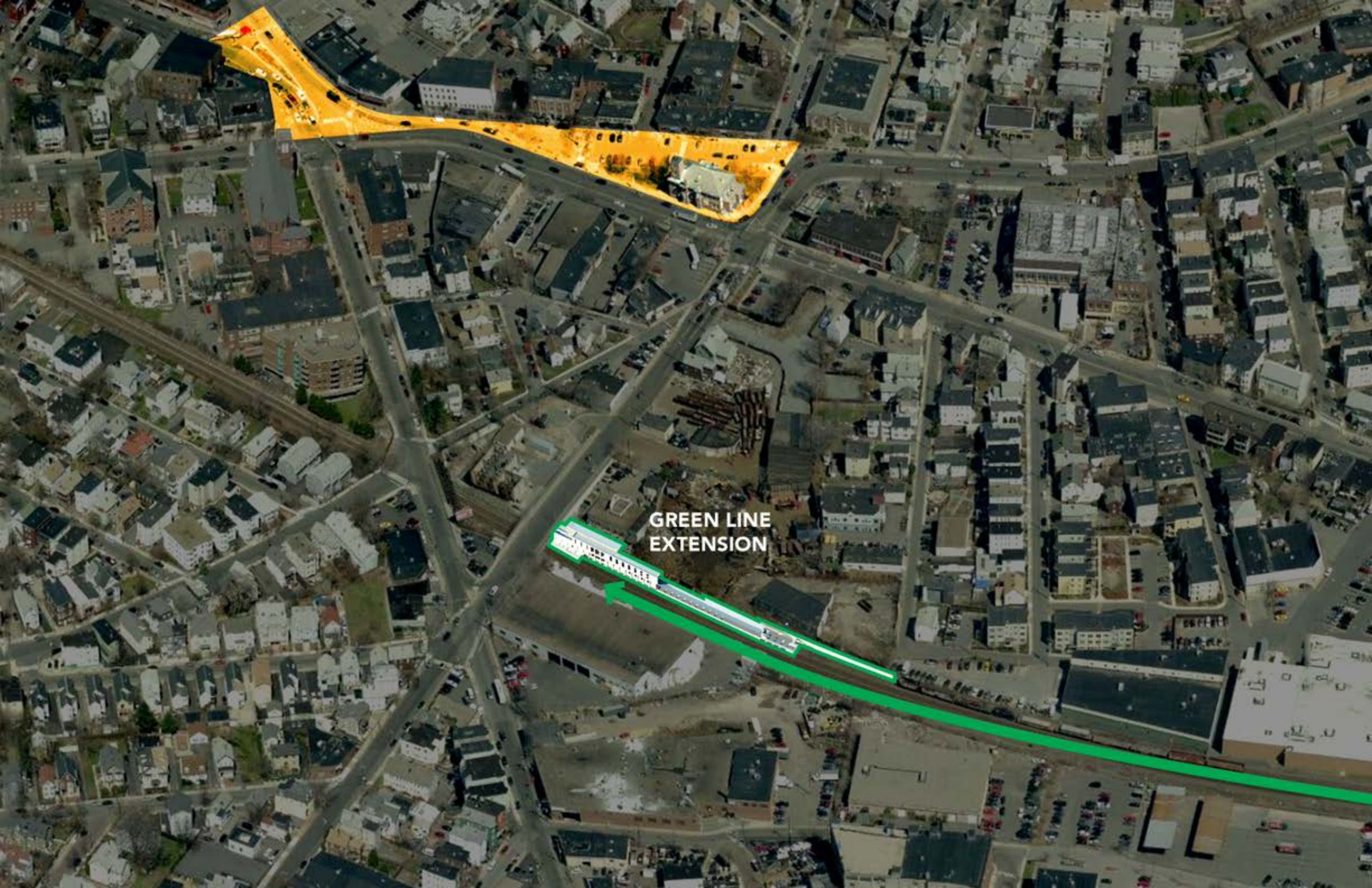






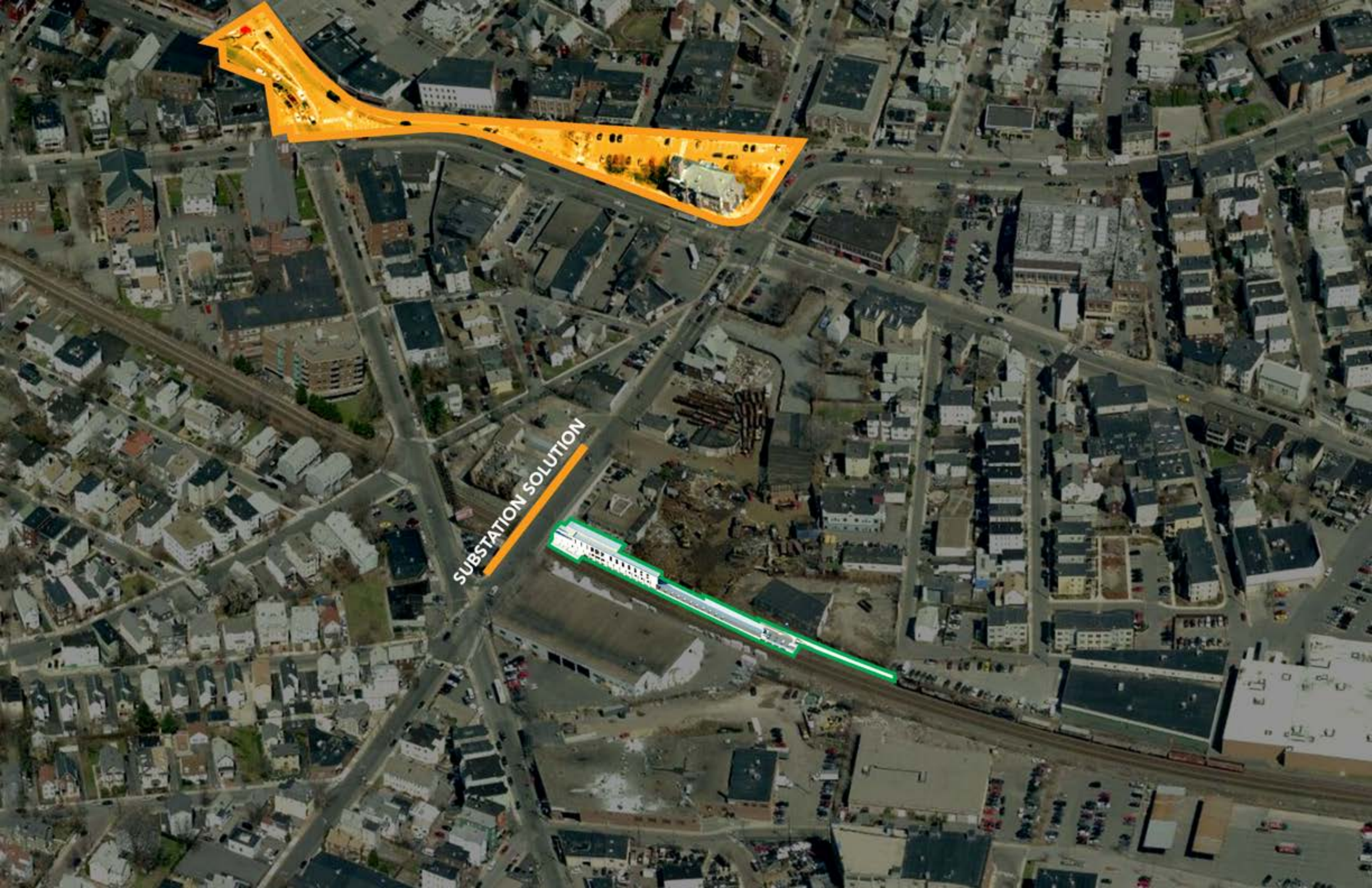






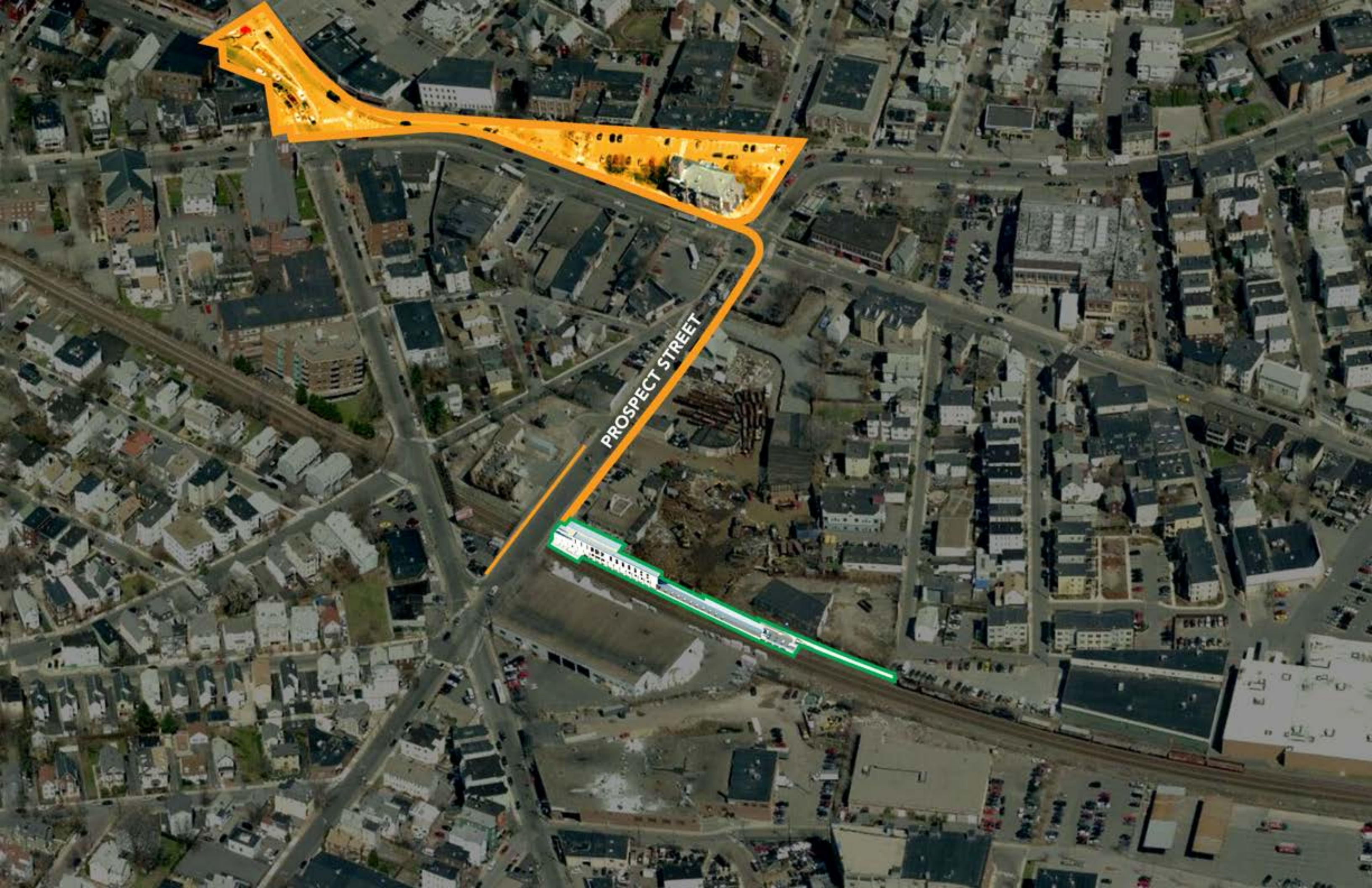
GREEN LINE  
EXTENSION





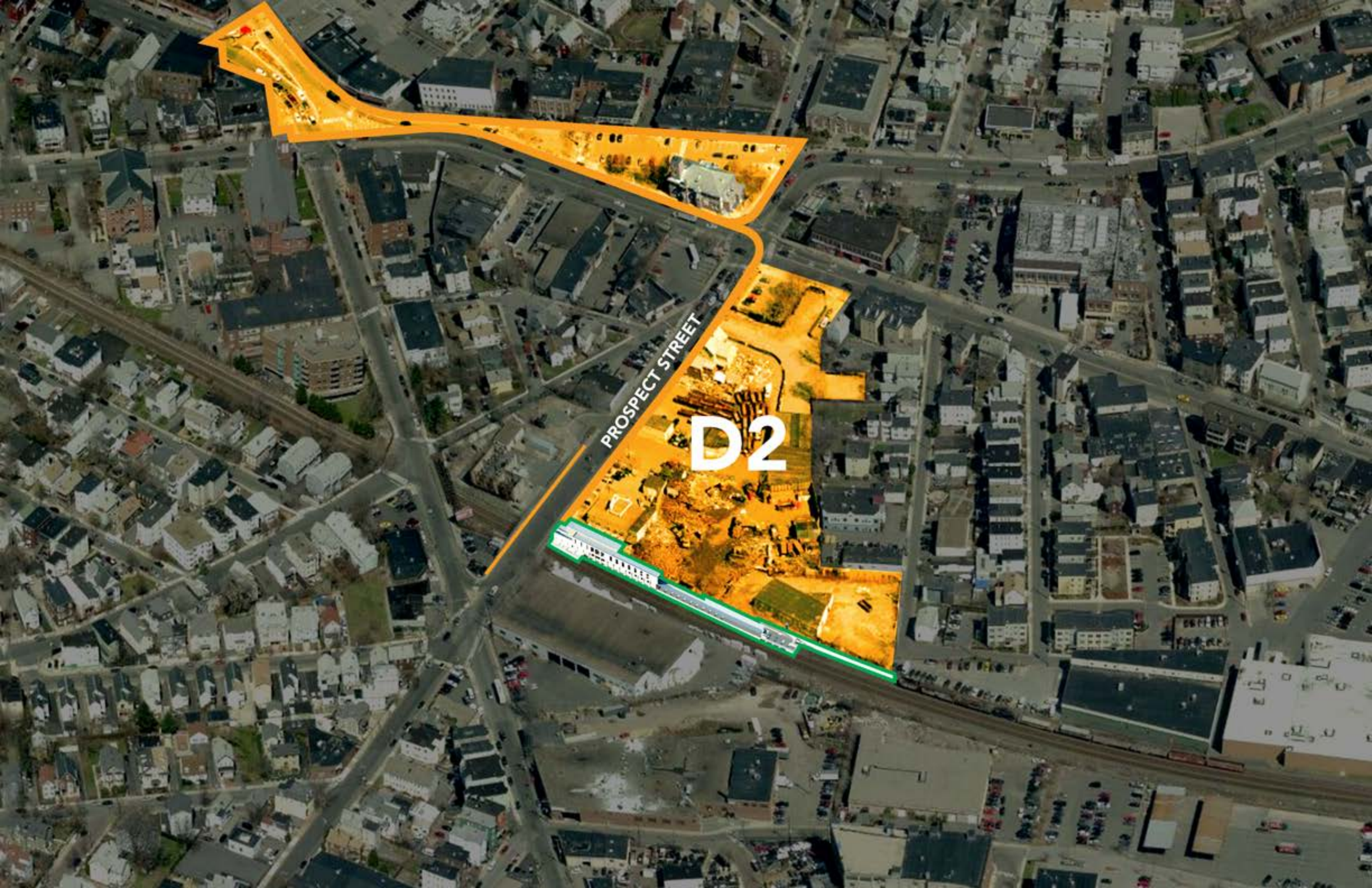
SUBSTATION SOLUTION





PROSPECT STREET

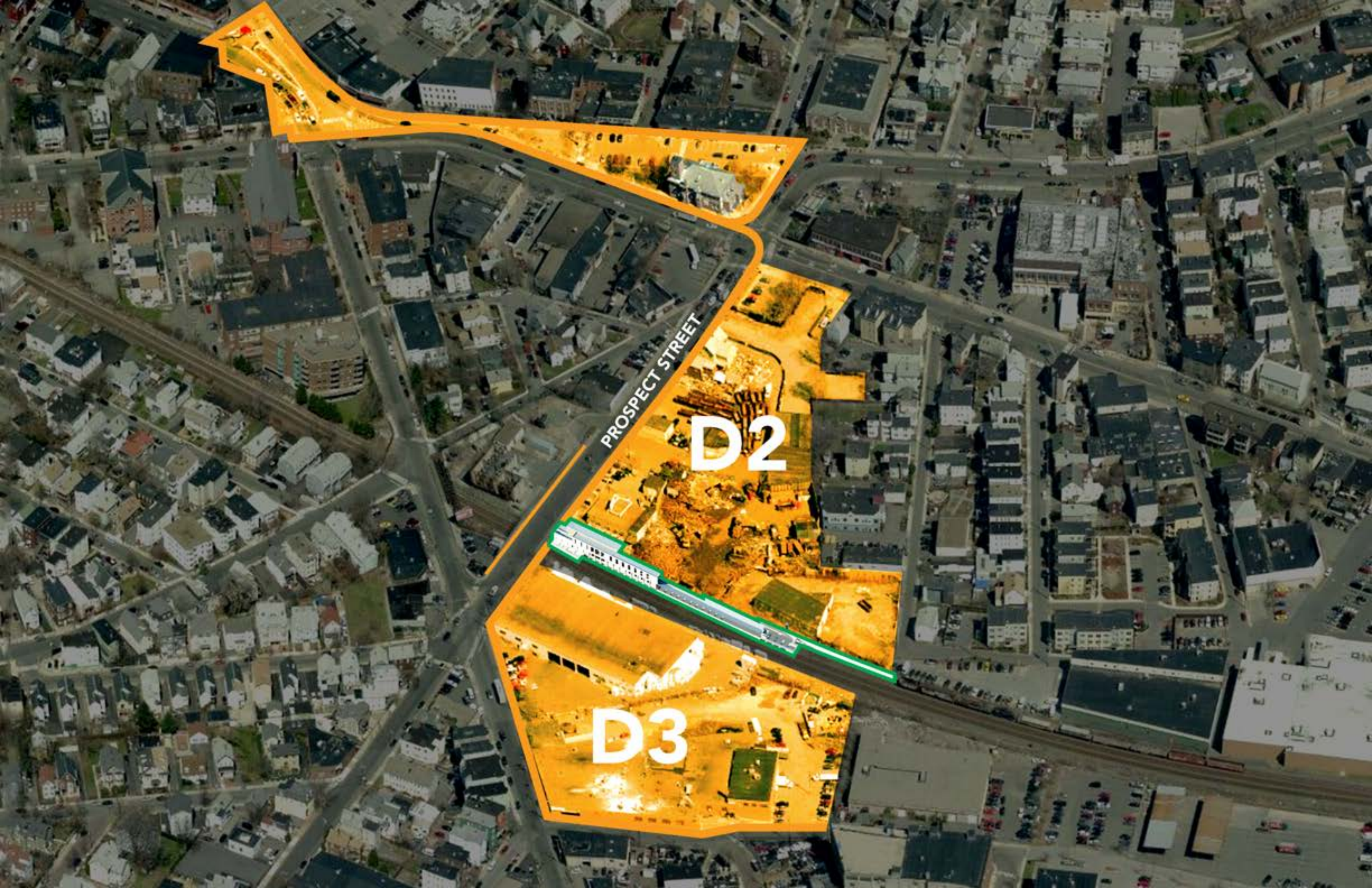




PROSPECT STREET

D2





PROSPECT STREET

D2

D3





PROMINENT  
INTERSECTION

PROMINENT  
INTERSECTION

WEBSTER AVENUE

PROSPECT STREET

D2

PROMINENT  
INTERSECTION

D3

PROMINENT  
INTERSECTION



**GATEWAY**

PROSPECT STREET

**D2**

**D3**



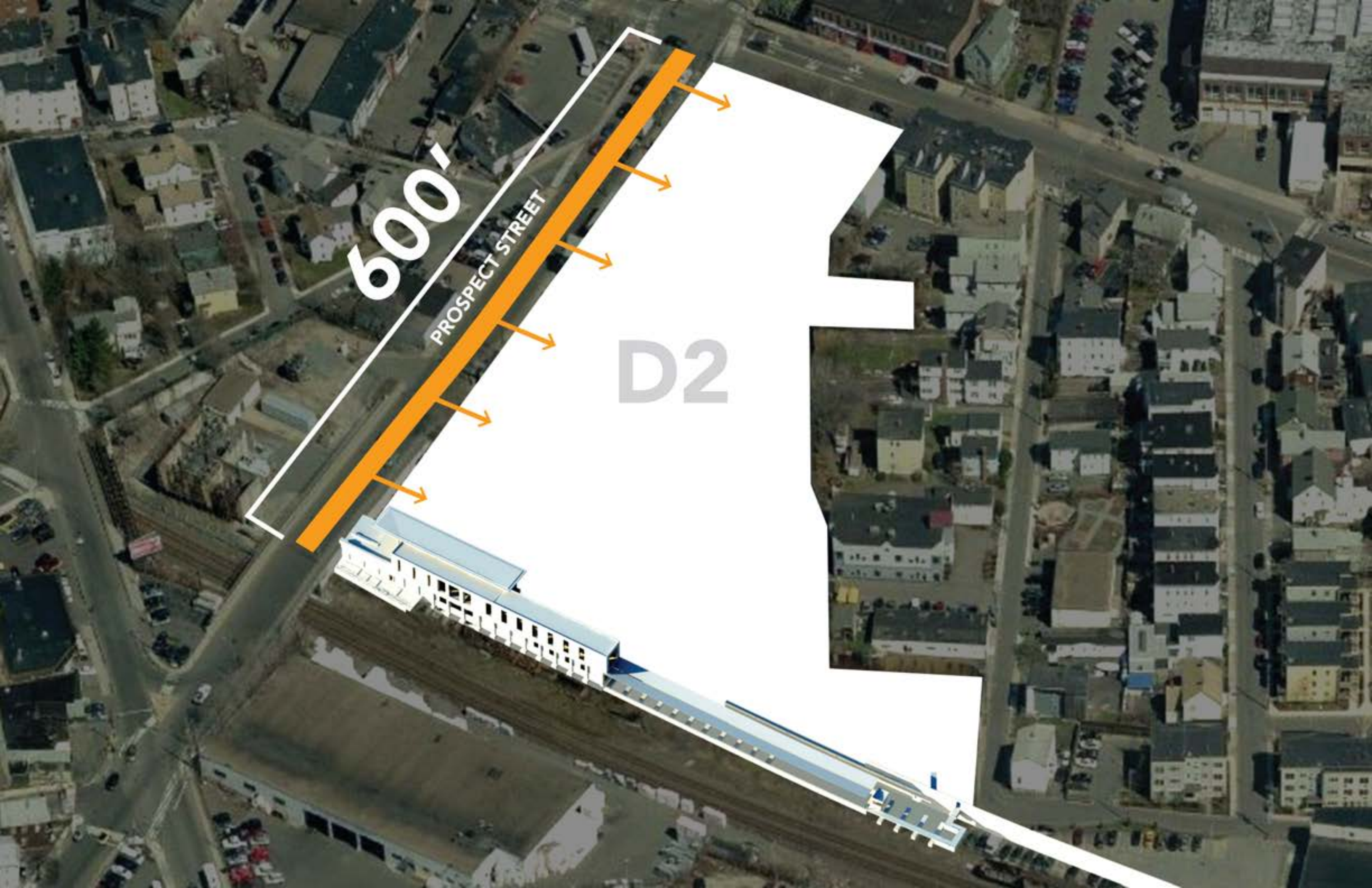




PROSPECT STREET

D2







600'

PROSPECT STREET

D2

HOW DO WE MAKE  
THE FIRST 600'  
AWESOME?





currently  
on the way to  
Union Square ....









INTENSE  
ENFORCEMENT  
AREA

CROSSFIT







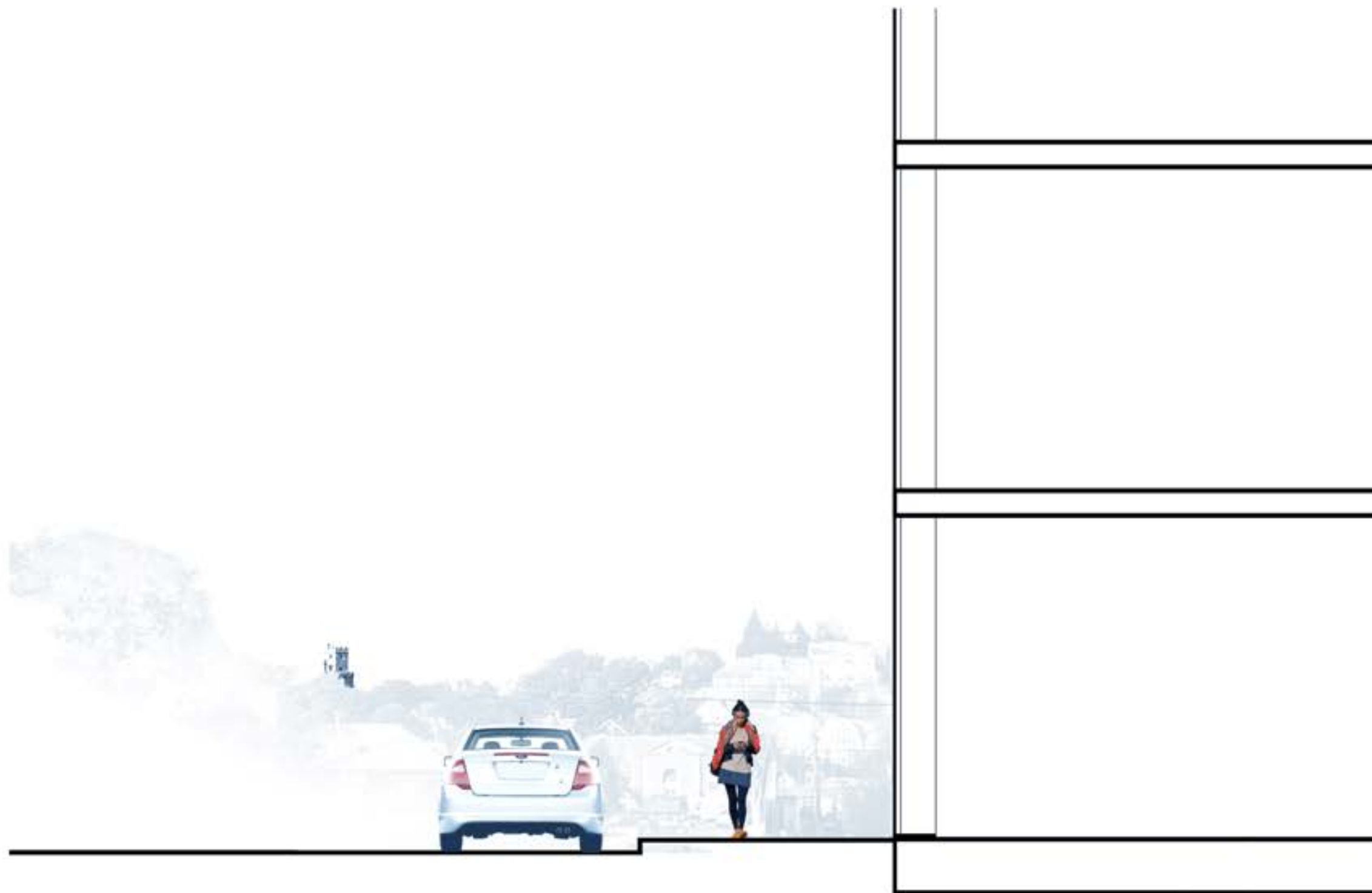




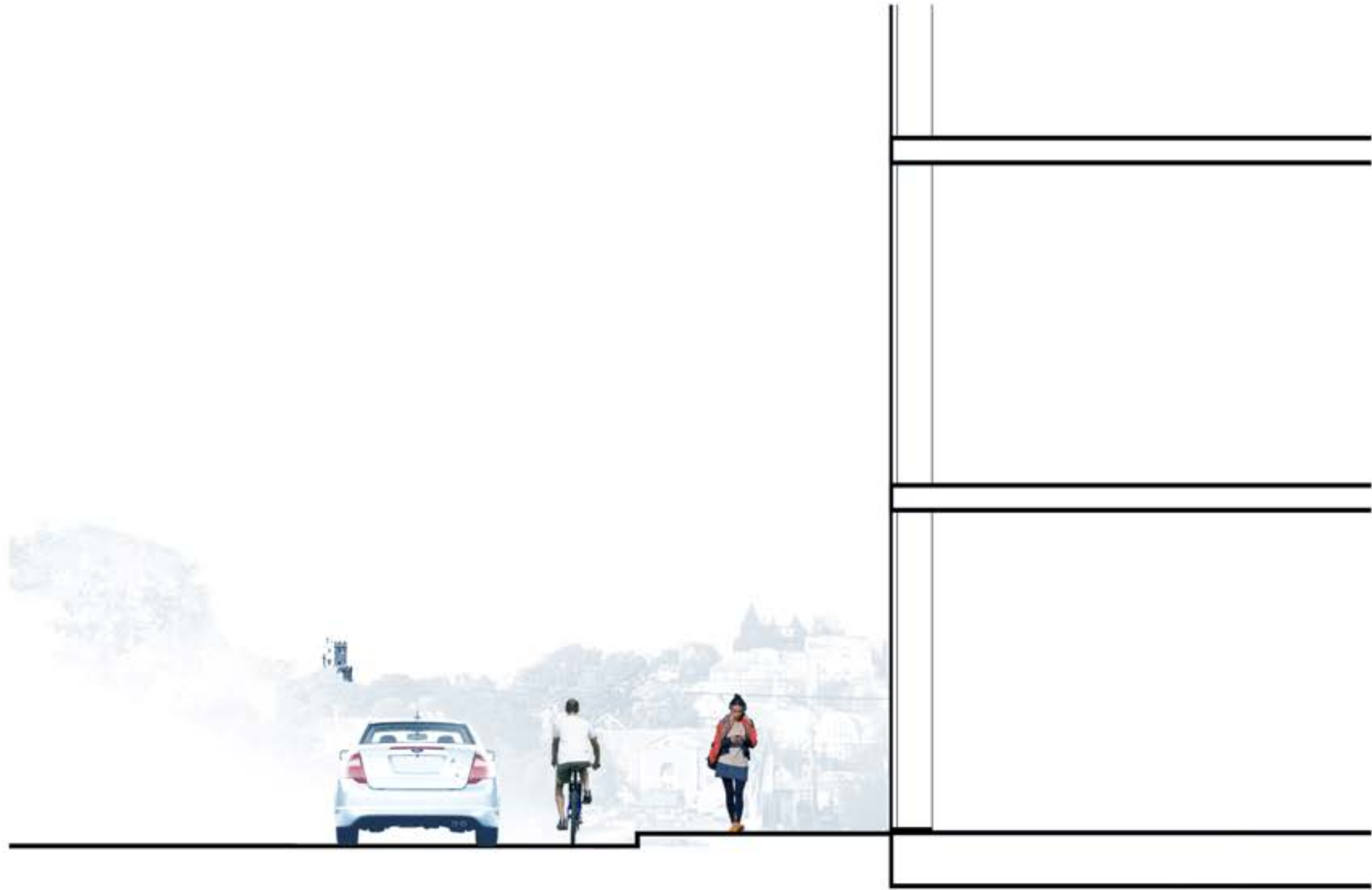
lets avoid this ....



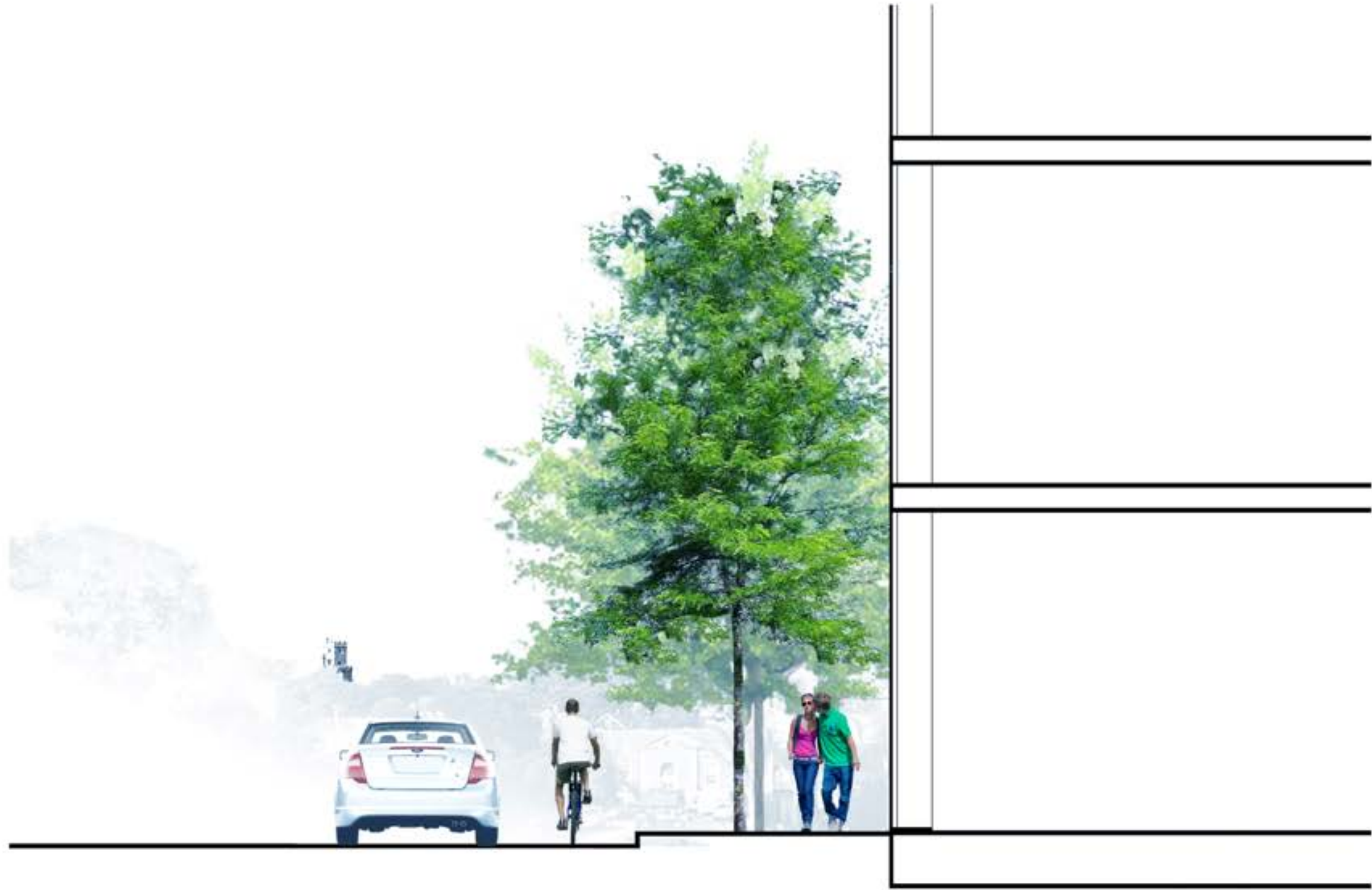








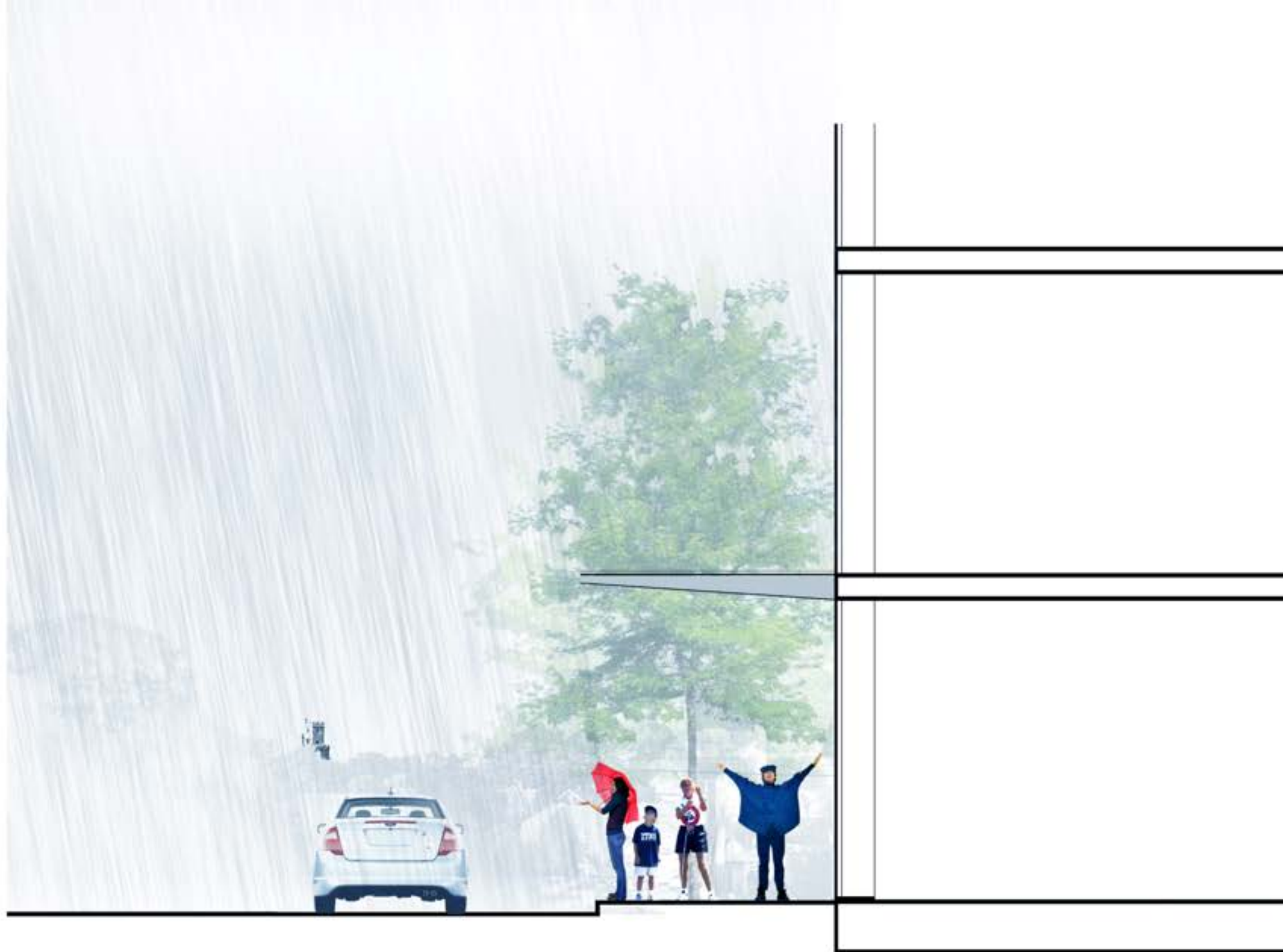




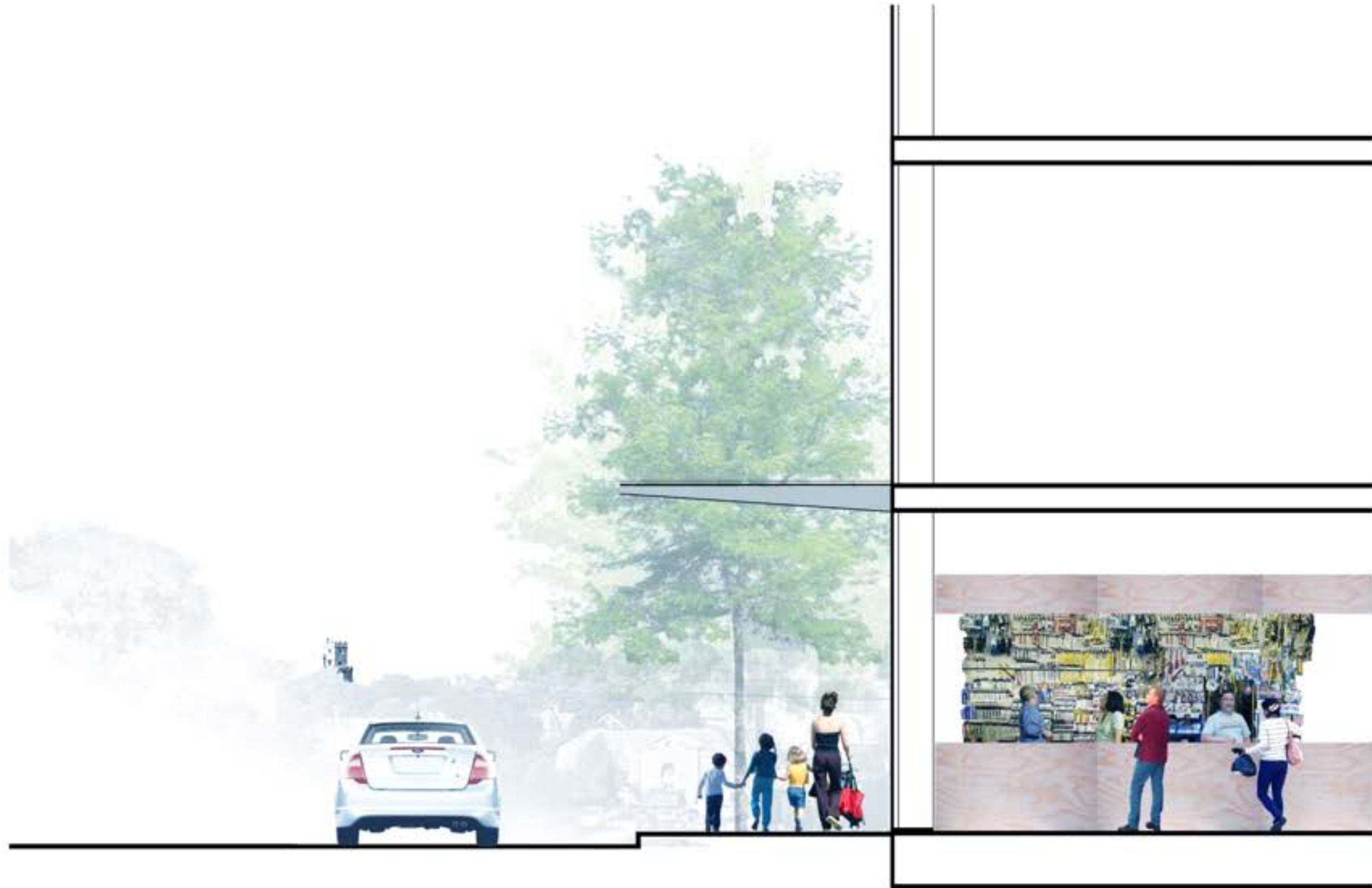




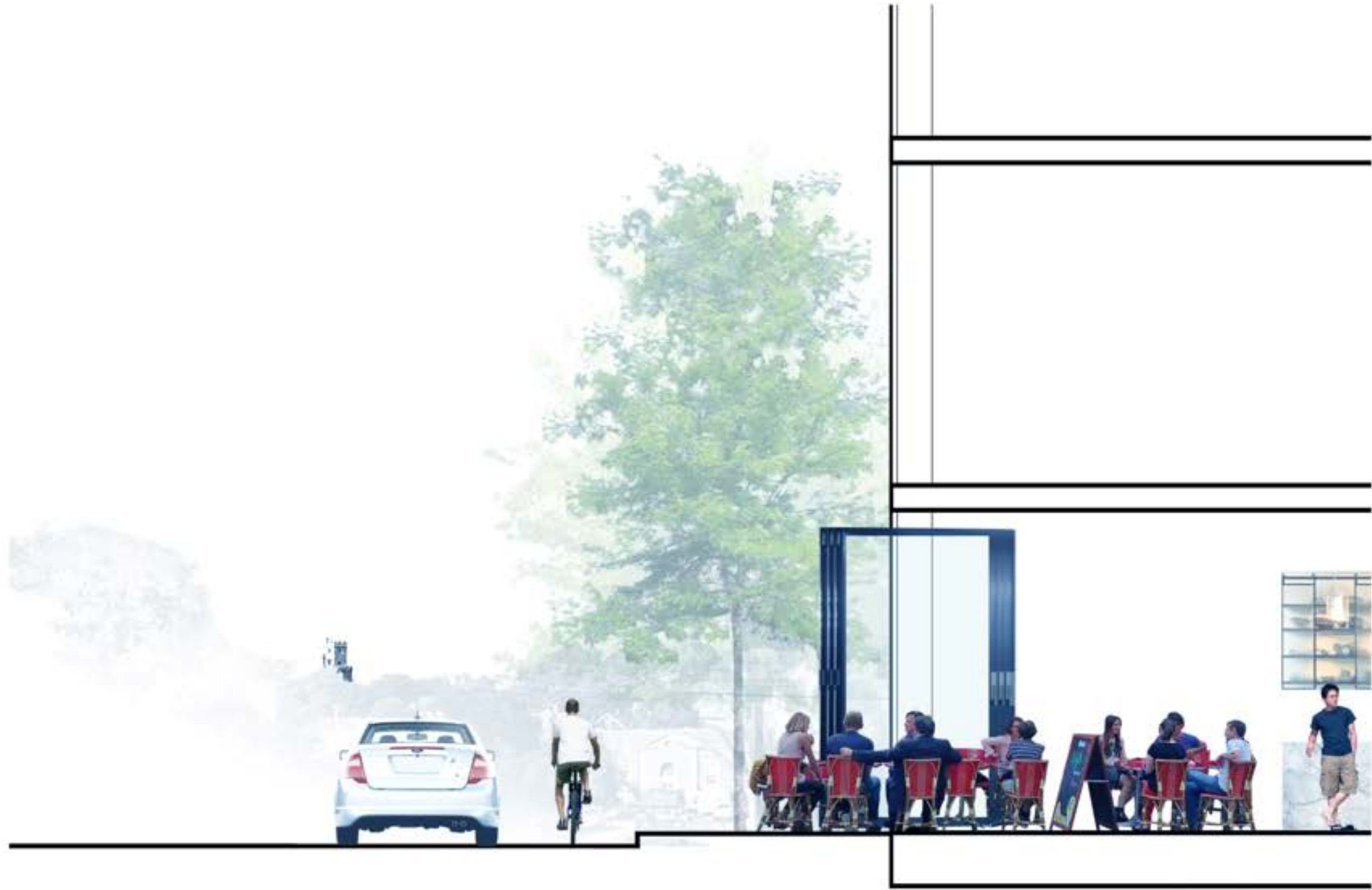
















FOSTER THE FUNK





# RETAIL AS AN ACTIVATOR



# Retail...

- Creates safer, brighter streets.
- Enhances walkability.
- Acts as a catalyst for public life.
- Works as an amenity for residents and workers.
- Establishes brand and identity.



# Listen | | Plan | | Recruit | | Execute









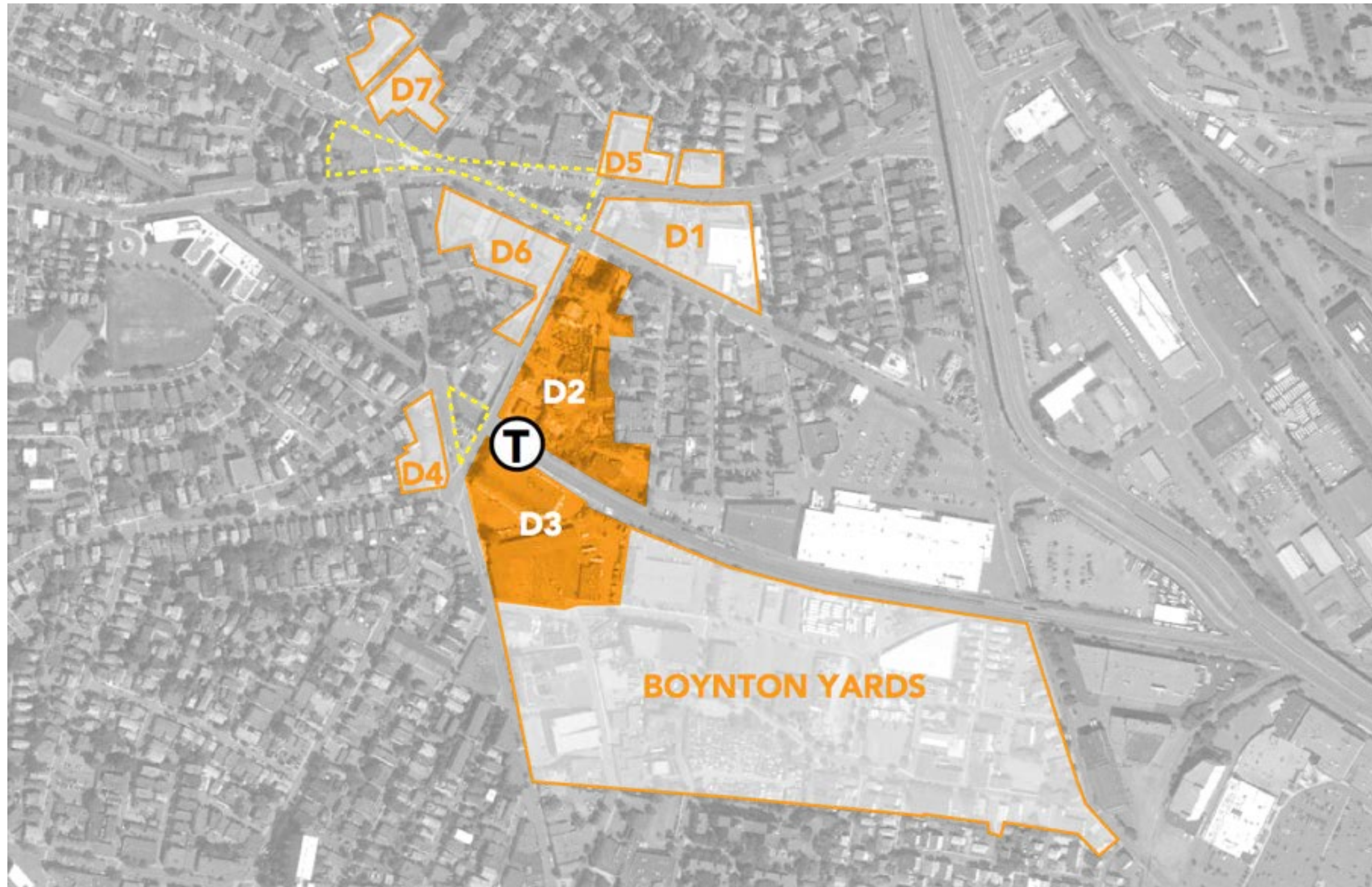
Listen | | **Plan** | | Recruit | | Execute

- Zones—Where in the square(s)?
- Premises SF, constraints, cost
- Retail use preferences
- Independents vs. chains
- Public and private realms
- Data and research



Listen | | **Plan** | | Recruit | | Execute

- Zones—Where in the square(s)?





Listen | | **Plan** | | Recruit | | Execute

- Premises SF, constraints, cost





Listen | | **Plan** | | Recruit | | Execute

- Type: Use preferences

## Can't just be about cafes, what's missing from the main street?



**FOOD**  
Cafe -  
Bar -  
American -  
Italian  
Asian -  
Middle Eastern  
Pizza  
Seafood -  
Bakery  
Vegetarian  
Latin -  
Ice Cream  
Breakfast  
Grocery -  
Deli -  
Sports Bar -  
Irish -  
Fine Dining -  
Brewery -

**RETAIL**  
Gift -  
Home Accessory -  
Furniture -  
Sporting  
Liquor -  
Apparel - womens -  
Apparel - mens -  
Apparel - junior -  
Apparel -  
Shoes  
Technology  
Toys  
Music  
Books -  
Apothecary  
Personal Accessories  
Pharmacy -  
Hardware  
Handmades -  
Antiques -

**SERVICE**  
Dry Cleaner -  
Laundromat  
Bank -  
Gym -  
Shipping/Copying -  
Locksmith -



Listen | | **Plan** | | Recruit | | Execute

- Type: Independents vs. chains





Listen | | **Plan** | | Recruit | | Execute

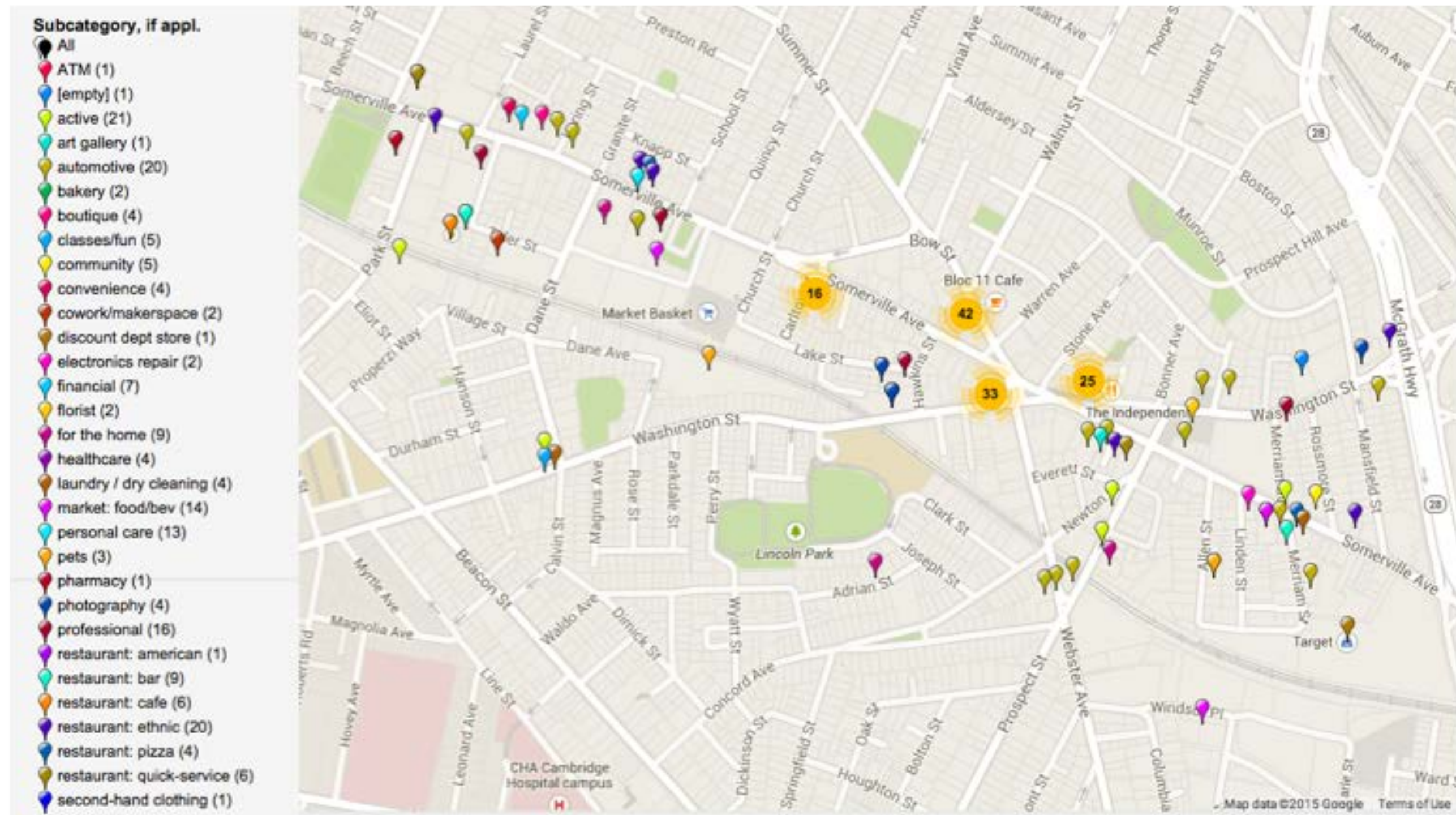
- Public and private realms





Listen | | **Plan** | | Recruit | | Execute

- Data and research





Listen | | Plan | | **Recruit** | | Execute

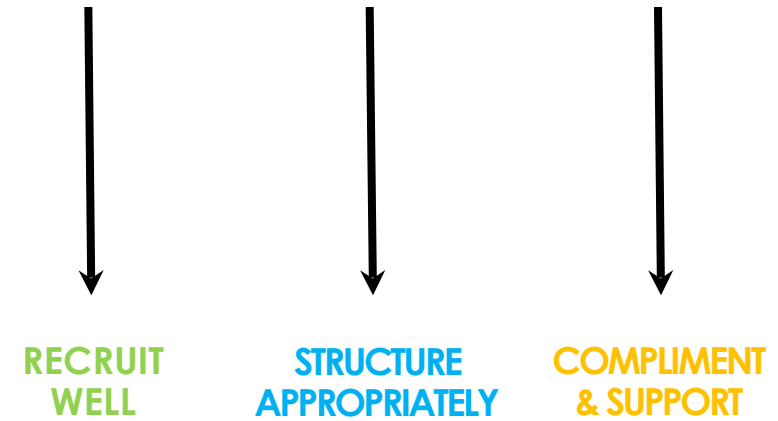
- Amplify and enhance existing value set
- Local first, local most
- Provide needed/missing services
- Artisans, innovators and makers
- Food as culture



Listen | | Plan | | Recruit | | **Execute**



“a diverse mix of businesses that can **start here**, **grow here**, **stay here**”







*Mabell's*  
*Hair Salon*

**SMALL BUSINESS  
SUPPORT PROGRAM**



US2 and the City of Somerville introduce  
**Retail Visioning On-Site Technical Assistance**

**Helping improve your business...**

- For a new audience.
- So you can do well during and after construction, as you prepare for new competition.
- Because it's good for Union Square!



# On-Site Technical Assistance

## What we can help with.

- Refreshing the look of your store.
- Re-positioning an outdated concept.
- Finding new ways to market your business.
- Helping you deliver better customer experience.



# On-Site Technical Assistance **Step 1**

## On-site meeting with Retail Visioning:

- 1–1.5-hour meeting in your store, salon, restaurant to assess the entire customer experience.
- We take lots of pictures.
- We listen to **you**.



# On-Site Technical Assistance **Step 2**

## **Retail Visioning produces a recommendations report:**

- 4 or 5 specific recommendations for improving your business.
- The report tells you the “why” and the “how.”



# On-Site Technical Assistance **Step 3**

## Implementing the recommendations:

Retail Visioning works **with** you—investing time, expertise and up to \$1,000 *from the program*—to help carry out recommendations that will meet **your** goals and improve **your** business.



## ON-SITE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

# Case Study: Mabell's Hair Salon

- Updated front windows to improve on-street visibility
- Added face-flattering lighting at each styling station
- Created a website to help new clients find the salon





## ON-SITE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

# Case Study: Royal Bengal Restaurant

- Designed a wall to separate kitchen from dining area
- Installed a 6'x6' menu next to a window for placing orders
- Created new catering menus and a new website to reach both of his business-critical audiences







EXERCISE





GRAFFITO 

Höweler + Yoon Architecture

