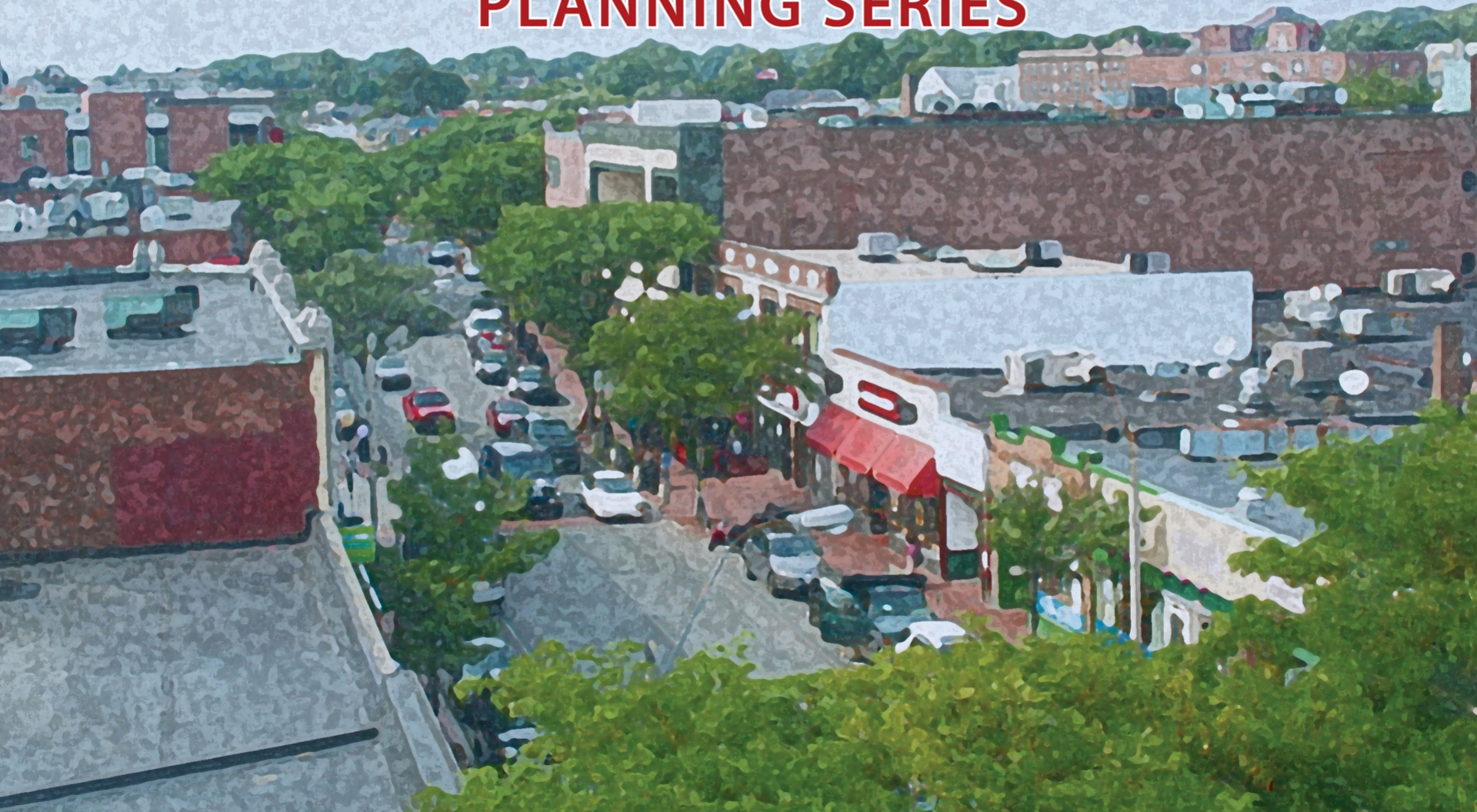


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DAVIS SQUARE PLANNING SERIES



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www.somervillebydesign.com



@somerbydesign



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Facebook

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

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Planning Methodology

The Old Way

DECIDE-ANNOUNCE-DEFEND

Planning Methodology

~~The Old Way~~

~~DECIDE-ANNOUNCE-DEFEND~~

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OUTREACH-DIALOGUE-DECIDE-IMPLEMENT

Planning Methodology

OUTREACH: Crowdsourcing Event
Visioning Session
Online

DIALOGUE: Charrette

DECIDE: Plan Presentation

IMPLEMENT: <Ongoing>

What has happened already?

OUTREACH



May 21st, 2013

Crowdsourcing

Participation Surveys

Feedback about how to
conduct the
Davis Square Project

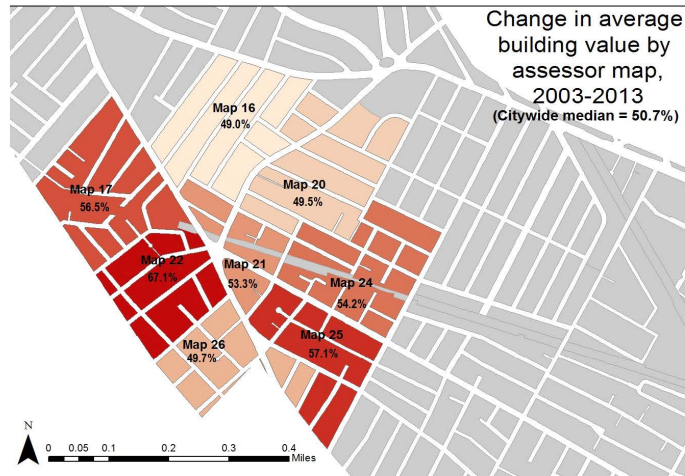
OUTREACH

May 21st, 2013

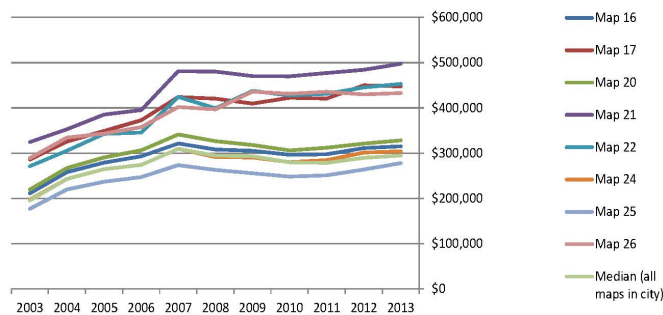
Crowdsourcing

Data Collection

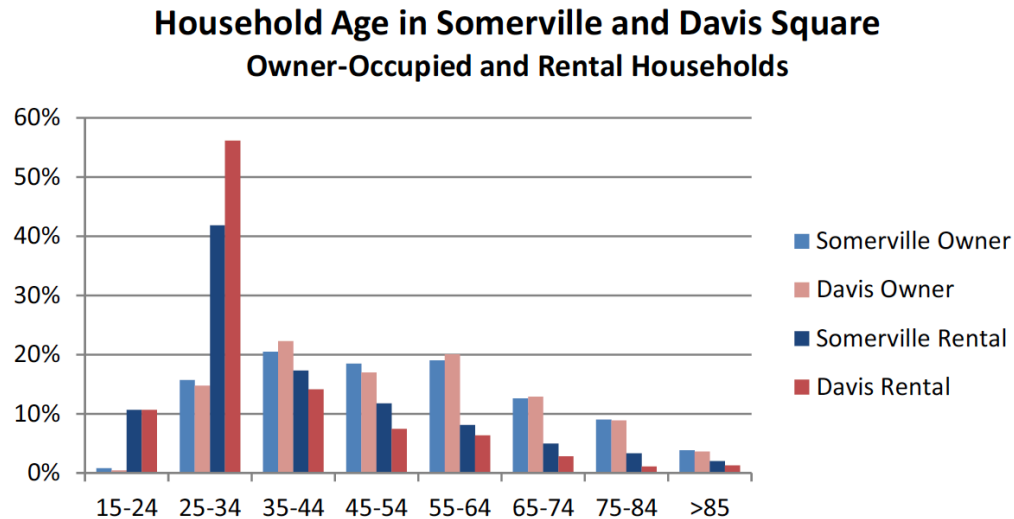
Data sharing and analysis
conducted to understand
Davis Square
(ongoing)



Average Building Value in Davis Square
by Assessor Map



OUTREACH



Crowdsourcing Results and Data Analysis available at

www.somervillebydesign.com

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OUTREACH



July 17th, 2013

Visioning Session

Visual Preference Survey

Feedback the what infill
“fits” in with the character of
Davis Square

OUTREACH



July 17th, 2013

Visioning Session

Asset Mapping

Feedback on the Assets and
Opportunities for
Improvement in the Square

OUTREACH



July 17th, 2013

Visioning Session

Report Out

Participants share their feedback in their own words to the rest of the crowd

Today

July 30th, 2013

Visioning Session, Part 2

(A repeat because it's Summer and we all go to the Cape)

Agenda

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| 6:30 – 6:40 | Presentation: Implementing SomerVision |
| 6:40 – 7:20 | Group Exercise: Visual Preference Survey |
| 7:20 – 7:30 | Presentation: Authentic Places |
| 7:30 – 8:10 | Group Exercise: Neighborhood Asset Mapping |
| 8:10 – 8:30 | Report Out for Each Table |

City Master Plan (2012)



Somerville Vision

City of Somerville, Massachusetts
Comprehensive Plan | 2010-2030



Endorsed by the
Somerville Board of Aldermen
April 12th, 2012

Adopted by the
Somerville Planning Board
April 19th, 2012

*Somerville: an Exceptional Place to
Live, Work, Play, and Raise a Family*

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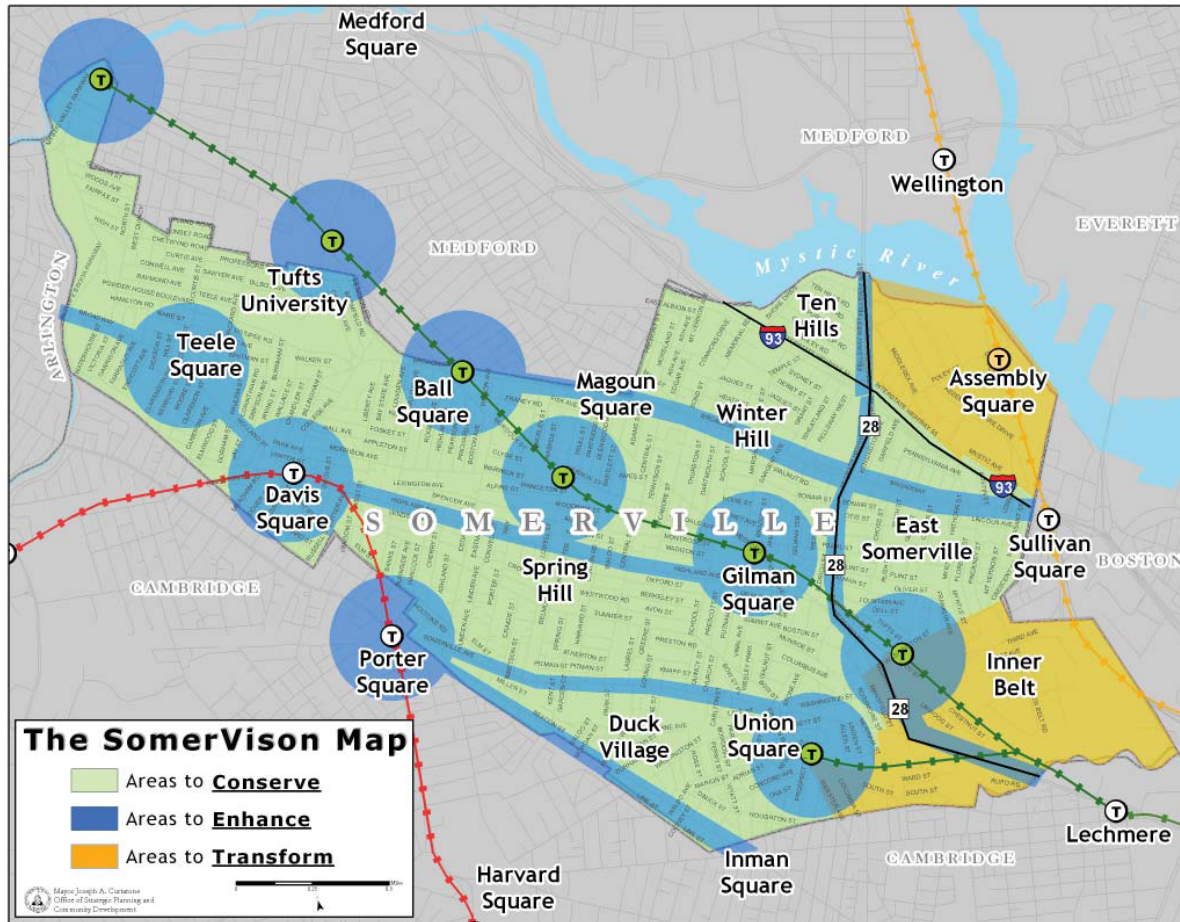
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SomerVision Goals (30 Years)

- 30,000 New Jobs
- 125 New Acres of Open Space
- 6,000 New Housing Units (1,200 Permanently Affordable)
- 50% of New Trips via Transit, Bike, or Walking
- 85% of New Development in Transformative Areas

SomerVision Map



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Transformative Areas

85% of New Development

- 9 million sq. ft. of Commercial Space
- 5,100 Housing Units

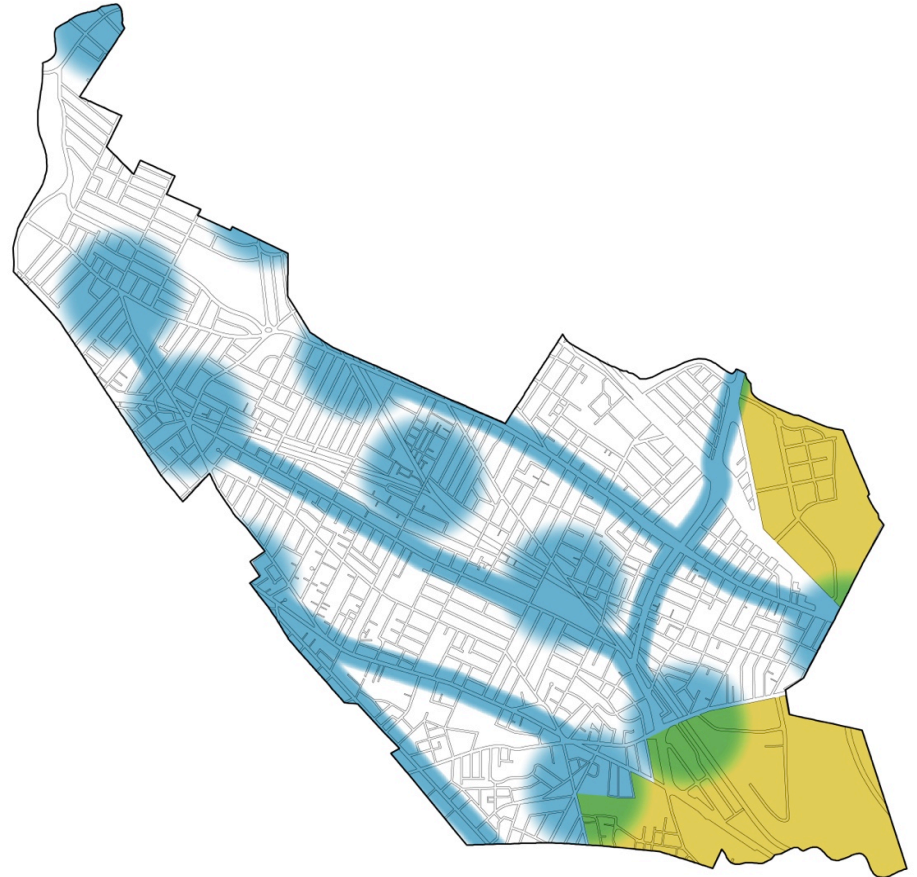


Enhancement Areas

15% of New Development

- 1,750,000 sq. ft. of Commercial Space
- 900 Housing Units

* A small amount of new dwelling units will be built in “Conservation Areas”



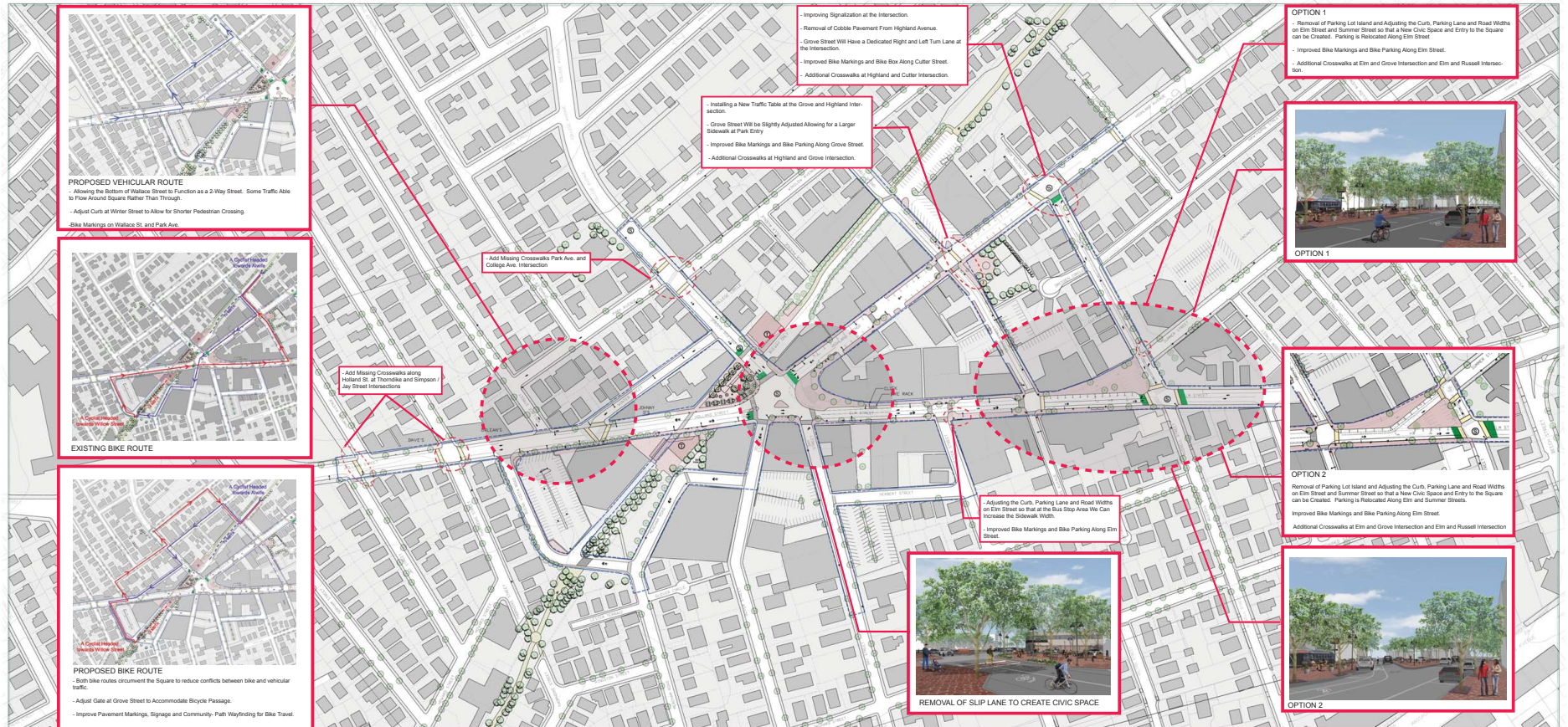
Estimates for Davis Square

15.6% of 15% of New
Development in the City

- 273,000 sq. ft. of Commercial Space
- 140 Housing Units



A Neighborhood Plan is Needed



DAVIS SQUARE
SCALE: 1"=60'

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Neighborhood Plan Examples

- 1982 Davis Square Action Plan
- 2013 Gilman Square Station Area Plan

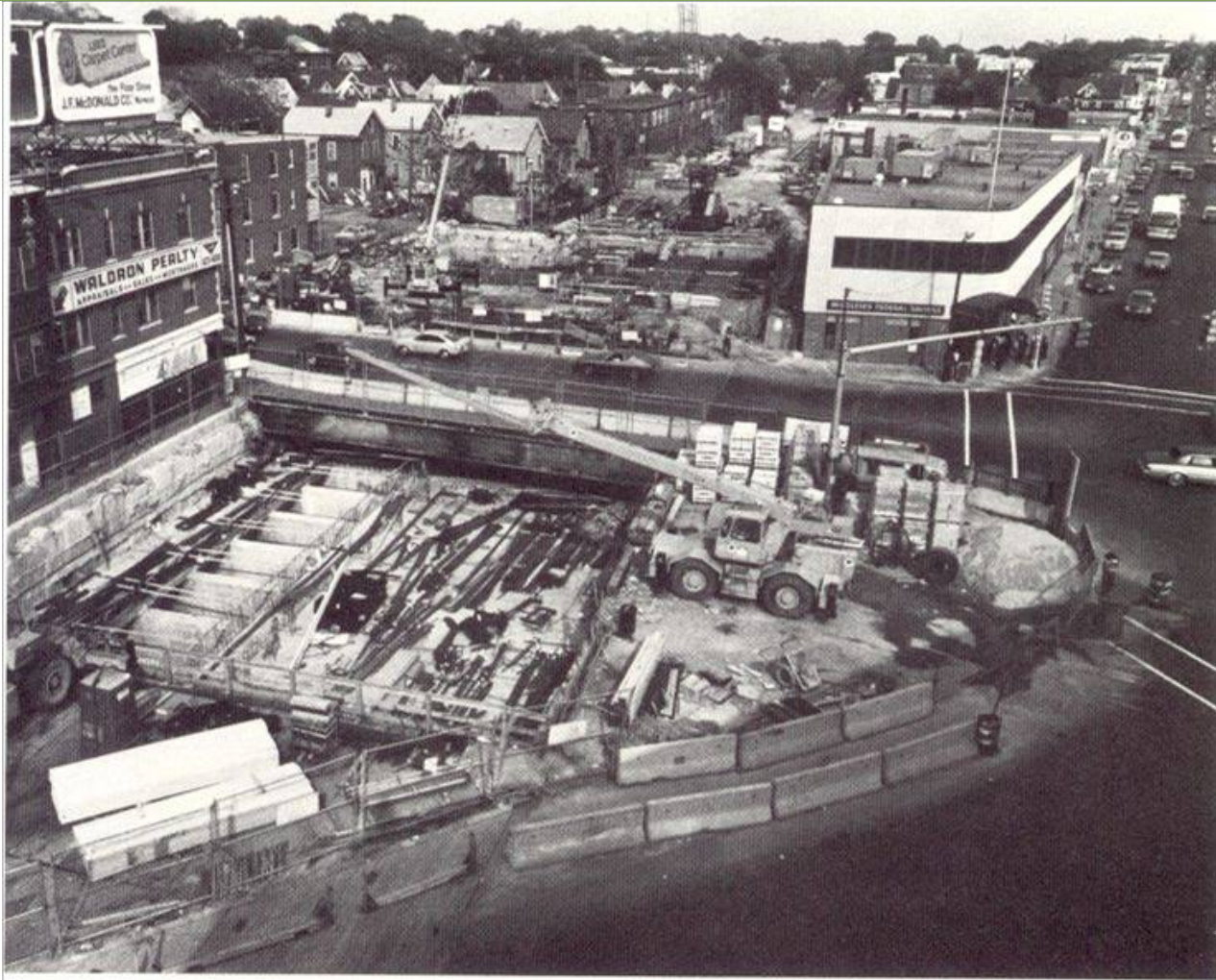
It happened 30 years ago...

**The Red Line
is Coming!
The Red Line
is Coming!**



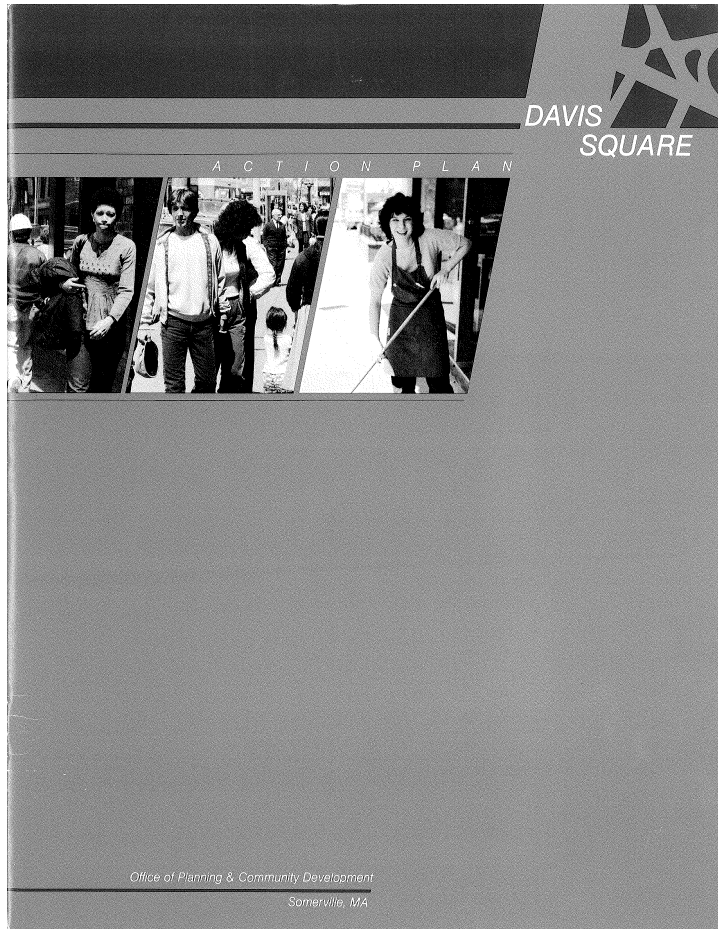
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Construction of the Red Line

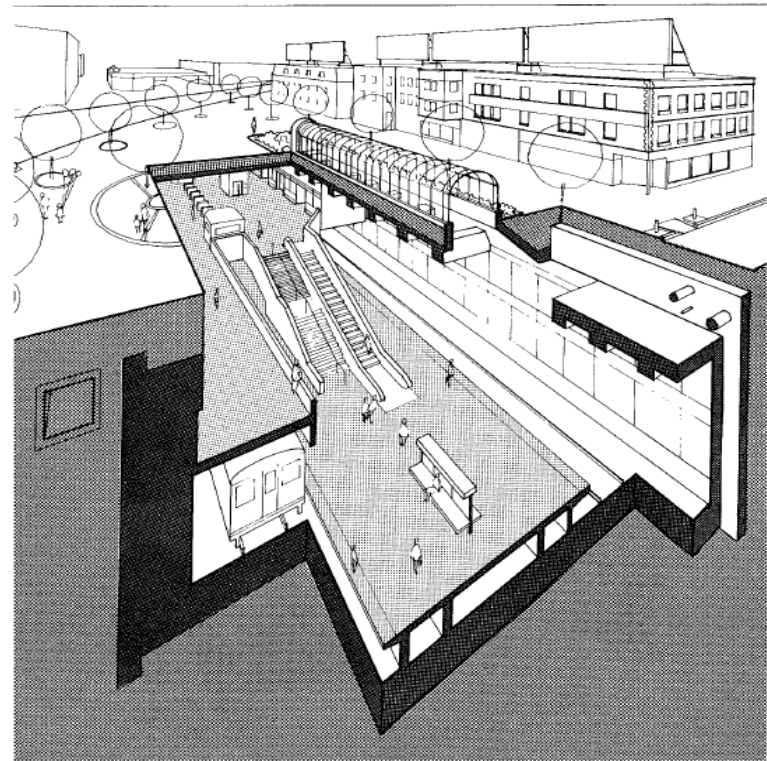


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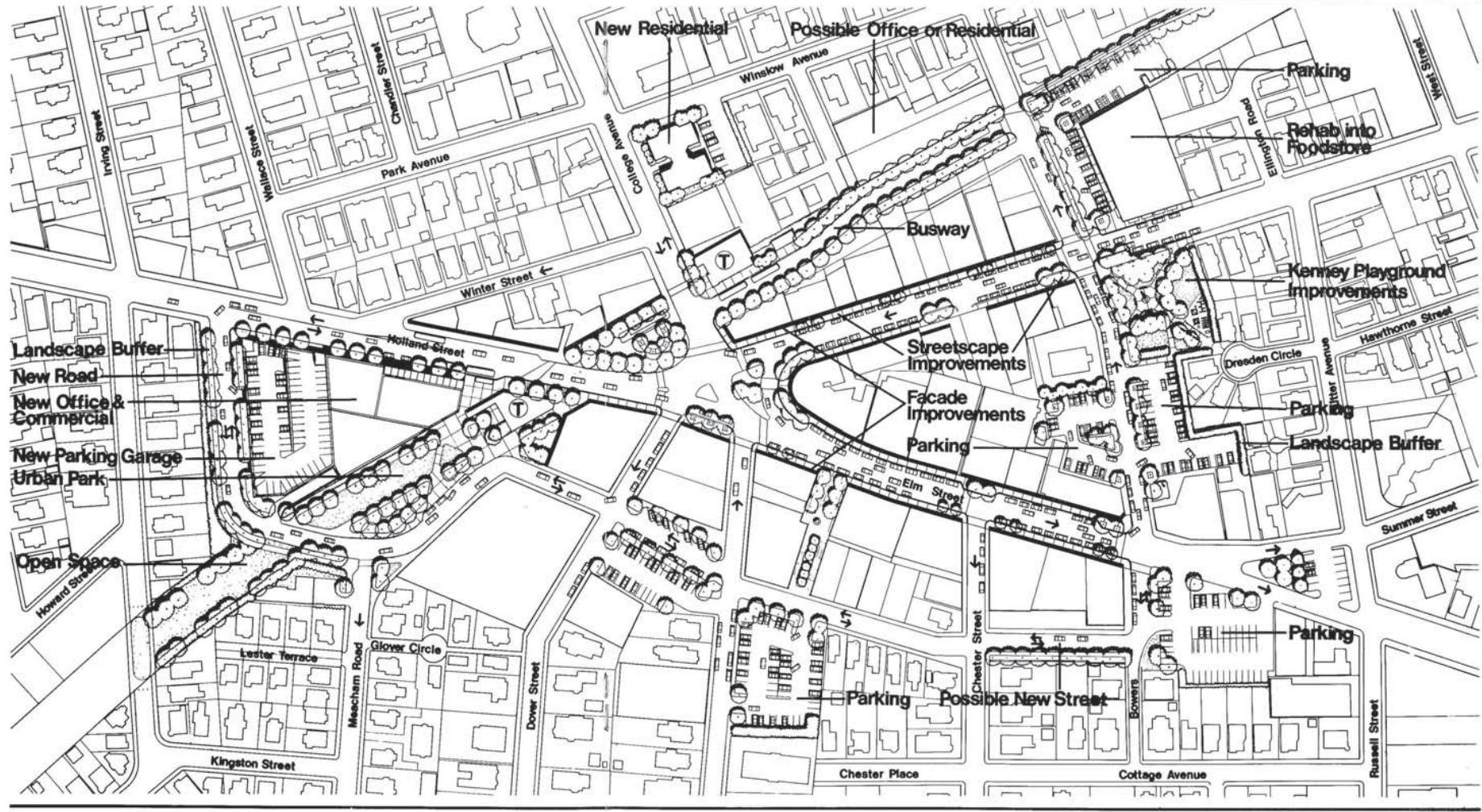
Davis made a plan



Davis Square Action Plan (1982)



14 of 16 Objectives Implemented



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Change is happening elsewhere...



Gilman Square Station

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Gilman needed a Plan

GILMAN SQUARE

STATION AREA PLAN

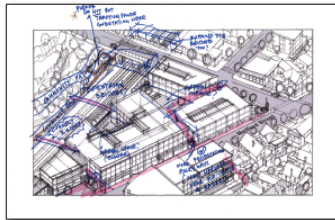


March 2013
Joseph A. Curtatone, Mayor



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Vision



Based on public feedback at the October 17th Visioning Session, the design team sketched a conceptual redesign of the City-owned Homans Building and the privately-owned X-Tra Fuels gas station and convenience store. At the November Design Charrette, participants were asked to critique these conceptual sketches.



The early design sketches also included the intersection of Pearl Street, Marshall Street and Medford Street. The sketch honored public feedback from the Visioning Session, which called for preservation of key historic commercial buildings, and modestly-scaled, traditionally-designed redevelopment of surface parking lots and other opportunity sites. A triangular public plaza was originally envisioned for the intersection, based on historic photos from the early 1900's.

30

THE GILMAN SQUARE VISION

Local Plans, Local Input

- Partner with the MBTA to fully design and construct the new Gilman Square, which were voted as the most liked element of this plan

Get Walkability Right

- Improve sidewalk segments identified as high priorities in the City's 2013 Curb and Ramp Inventory
- Improve all deficient crosswalks identified as high priorities in the City's 2013 Curb and Ramp Inventory
- Improve all deficient curb ramps identified as high priorities in the City's 2013 Curb and Ramp Inventory
- Reform zoning to encourage, rather than discourage urban building types that enhance walk appeal and encourage walking

Plan for Complete Neighborhoods

Reform zoning to allow by-right establishment of new retail and service uses
Preserve some older buildings to maintain a diverse stock of commercial spaces and a range of price points for business tenants

Prioritize Public Space

Fully design and construct the new Gilman Square
Partner with the MBTA to create a high-quality shared space at the lower entrance to the Green Line station
Partner with the MBTA to fully design and construct the accessible path across the hillside behind the Green Line station

Design Complete Streets

Improve sidewalks, crosswalks and curb ramps identified as high priorities in the City's 2013 Curb and Ramp Inventory
Add bicycle lanes and bicycle parking facilities as appropriate

Address Diverse Housing Needs

Reform inclusionary zoning to provide clear incentives for family-sized housing units
Provide expedited building permits for projects that offer a family-friendly mix of residential unit sizes
Design, finance, and construct a purpose-built affordable housing project in the core of Gilman Square

Capture the Value of Transit Investments

Reform zoning to include a 10% set-aside for local arts, publicly-accessible open space, and/or infrastructure improvements
Sell or lease publicly-owned land for development in the core of Gilman Square

Promote Appropriately Scaled Development

Reform zoning regulations for the core of Gilman Square to encourage four-story, mixed use buildings.
Replace the Homans Building with a building of similar size and style, but which accommodates a mix of uses.

Get Smart about Parking Requirements

Establish maximum parking ratios for new development
Reform zoning to require no more than one off-street parking space per residential unit for development projects in the core of Gilman Square
Eliminate off-street parking requirements for small retail and restaurant uses

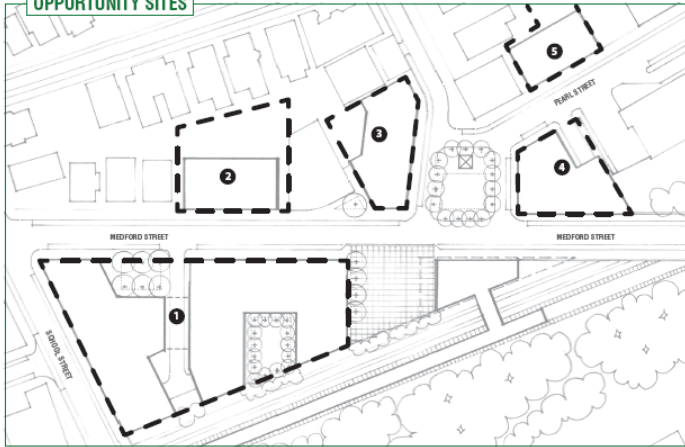
Keep the Plan off the Shelf

Prepare and adopt a new, transparent Somerville by Design Zoning Ordinance
Prepare and adopt an Urban Renewal Plan to implement the land swaps necessary for construction of the public square
Prepare a federal Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA) designation under the Community Development Block Grant program to channel federal funds to Gilman Square
Encourage establishment of a Business Improvement District to organize property owners and fund

31

Opportunities

OPPORTUNITY SITES



HOMANS BUILDING & X-TRA FUELS

Site #1 is a large, trapezoidal-shaped site at 350-360 Medford Street comprises a vacant City-owned warehouse as well as a privately-owned gas station and convenience store. Following discussions between the City of Somerville and the private property owner, Site 1 was selected for a detailed redevelopment study, which is presented on page 40.

GOOD GAS

Site #2 is a small, rectangular parcel at 345 Medford Street currently used as a full service gas station and auto repair garage. The private owners recently reinvested in the property, and it is very well-maintained. To respond to resident interest, a basic four-story infill building is illustrated in the rendering seen on the previous page that is roughly 20,000 square feet of built space. Since near-term change is not expected on this site, more detailed studies were not conducted.

ABJ AUTOMOTIVE

Currently, site #3 is a rectangular parcel that is a key element of the entire plan for the Gilman Square Station Area. As detailed on page 34, the discovery of a large storm water pipe running underneath the site led the planning team to redesign the station area's main intersection, resulting in a reshaped parcel of land for site 3 and the creation of the new public space at the core of the plan. Conceptual architectural

renderings and floor plans for reshaped site can be found on page 42.

4. GILMAN TRIANGLE

Until roughly 1940, the four-story "Citizen Building" occupied site #4. The site is envisioned for a modestly-sized replacement building, representing roughly 28,000 square feet of space. This four-story, infill building is vital to properly frame the new Gilman Square public space and both Pearl and Medford streets. The slope running from Medford to Pearl can be solved using the building and the grade change provides an opportunity for underground garage parking on site for approximately twenty spaces.

5. PEARL STREET PARKING LOT

This parking lot on Pearl Street is divided between two private owners: the eastern half serves the Mad Oyster Studios building, while the west half serves the former Paddock building. Residents recalling historic photos of Gilman Square requested a small infill building be shown in this plan to illustrate what the streetscape of Pearl Street might look like if the gap was filled. The design team sketched a four-story building with a 5,000 square foot floorplate, but since the parking lot is actively used by two distinct property owners with numerous tenants, any redevelopment of the site would be far in the future.



Objectives

GILMAN SQUARE STREET LIFE

Creating Spaces for Socializing, Recreating, and Doing Business

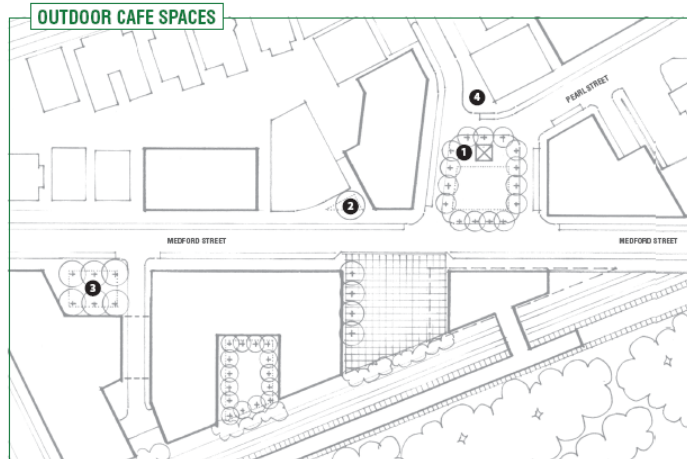
The redesign of the Marshall-Pearl-Medford intersection calls for the City to invest in Gilman Square through the development of an actual public space to serve as the social and economic heart of the neighborhood (see #1 below). This new 'Gilman Square' will provide a central social space for the public, an accessible path for pedestrians to the Transit Station, and a landmark that will help reinforce neighborhood identity. Construction of a new public square will also contribute toward achieving SomerVision's overall goal of developing 125 acres of new civic and recreation space citywide.

However, because Somerville's urban fabric is densely woven, with relatively few parks and open spaces compared to the size of the population, achieving this open space goal will also require a creative, entrepreneurial approach from private property owners to design and build publicly-accessible outdoor spaces on their land. This Station Area Plan illustrates possibilities for additional outdoor spaces incorporated into wider sidewalks and the infill and redevelopment projects that could happen on properties surrounding the new civic space.

If the Marshall-Pearl-Medford intersection and Gilman

Square are redeveloped according to the plan presented here, the ABJ Automotive site (#2 below) would be slightly reshaped, creating the opportunity for a small protected plaza on the north side of Medford, framed by the Knights of Malta building and a new four-story, mixed-use building on site. Redevelopment of the X-Tra Fuels / Homans Building site could include a roughly 2,000 square foot commercial plaza or pocket park (see #3 below) internal to the lot area on the southern side of Medford Street. Finally, reorganization of the intersection creates an opportunity to bump-out the sidewalk in front of the Litchfield Block building, site of the new Oleana restaurant, that is appropriate for outdoor seating open to the public or as a dining patio for patrons (#4 below).

The sum total of these new open spaces is roughly half an acre of land area, but their impact cannot be measured simply by quantity. Gilman Square residents want to bring back the street life that once existed in the heart of this Square. High-quality, useable outdoor spaces represent a key strategy to achieve our community goals of healthy living, economic vitality, traffic calming, and cultural activity.



44

The new Gilman Square is a return to Somerville's roots. It will provide a gathering space for the public, an accessible path for pedestrians to the Transit Station, and landmark that will help contribute toward neighborhood identity. The tower has been designed with enough space to realistically contain a small coffee or newspaper stand serving Green Line commuters.



The southern end of the building that is envisioned for the ABJ Auto site will be one of the most valuable commercial spaces in Gilman Square. Generous sidewalks, particularly on the western side adjacent to the historic Knights of Malta building create excellent opportunities for window-shopping, or for outdoor dining, all in clear view of the Green Line station and the Somerville Community Path.



The recessed plaza between the X-Tra Fuels site and the Homans Building site is large enough to feel like an urban park. It is designed to feature enough land area to support large canopy trees that can offer shade for café tables and other seating, adding value to adjacent commercial and residential space.



The restaurant space formerly known as the Paddock is currently being renovated by a well-known chef, and is expected to open for business in fall of 2013. With a focus on reinvestment in and support for existing assets, the plan to create a real 'Gilman Square' calls for a sidewalk bump-out on Marshall Street to allow for outdoor seating for this new restaurant, while simultaneously slowing traffic and increasing pedestrian safety.



45

...but it's been 30 years for



Meet the Team

- Russ Preston, Principle Group
- Mike Lydon, Street Plans Collaborative
- Skip Smallridge, CSS
- Deneen Crosby, CSS
- Jason Schriber, Nelson Nygaard
- James Steves, ConsultEcon
- Michael Tremblay, Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates
- Steve Price, Urban Advantage
- City Staff

...and YOU



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